

Immortal 1661

Chapter 1661: Moving Through the Night

The others were shocked. They all looked at Yun Jianyue with ill expressions. They had felt that Peng Wuyan's style wasn't quite like that of the daoist sects from the very start. Could it be...

Zu An also looked at Peng Wuyan in shock. No wonder he'd always had a familiar feeling! Could this really be the one he knew? He stared at the woman's face, but he didn't see anything strange.

Yun Jianyue was also surprised, but she remained calm. She said, "Twenty years ago, we discovered a group of Devil Sect disciples wandering around Emptiness Isle, so we eliminated them and found a blade. It was none other than this Moon Demon Blade." Ding Tianle had gone missing over a century ago, and the blade had never made another appearance. Couldn't she make up whatever story she wanted?

Sure enough, the others clearly loosened up when they heard her reply. They all said in praise, "Elder Peng is a heroic woman, as expected. The Devil Sect's villains ought to all be eliminated!"

Yun Jianyue narrowed her eyes. She engraved those words firmly in her heart. She planned to pay them back later.

Wang Wuxie frowned, but he couldn't find any proof either. He could only say, "Lady Peng is quite fierce and doesn't seem to resemble a member of the righteous sects. It might be because of this demonic blade's influence. As she is an inheritor of a daoist sect, using a weapon from the Devil Sect might draw scorn if news gets out."

Zu An said with a chuckle, "I don't share that sentiment. Whether or not a blade is demonic or not depends on the user. It has nothing to do with the weapon itself. Blades are used to kill, so what's the difference between the daoist sects' and the Devil Sect's blades? The Devil Sect stole the daoist sects' weapons to bring chaos to the innocent. Could it be that the same weapon would thus become evil? On the contrary, if the orthodox faction were to use a demonic blade in a righteous manner, helping the dying and healing the injured, that blade would no longer be a demonic blade."

Yan Xuehen nodded to herself. This kid does have some knowledge. He isn't someone who only knew how to womanize.

Yun Jianyue and Qiu Honglei had even bigger smiles on their faces. This little rascal really is a good match for us.

Wang Wuxie wasn't pleased at all. He said seriously, "This blade is different from a normal blade; it was the Great Demon Ding Tianle's blade. Who knows how much blood it has shed over the years? Together with it being a heaven-grade weapon, it already has a spirit soul of its own and can imperceptibly influence the user's will. Martial niece Peng's ruthlessness in her fights is likely a sign of that."

The other sect masters nodded. That was indeed a possibility.

Yun Jianyue harrumphed. "Our Emptiness Isle naturally has a way of dealing with this demonic nature. I do not need Brother Wang to worry about it."

Wang Wuxie wanted to say something else, but Yun Jianyue couldn't help but say with a sneer, "What is it? Could it be that Brother Wang can't take a loss either, and is coming up with some excuse to invalidate a match?"

Wang Wuxie's expression changed. As the other party had brought that up, what else could he say? He was the State Teacher, the current number one person among the nine sects. Furthermore, Yan Xuehen was even still watching from the side. How could he do the same thing as the other sect leaders?

"I was merely worried that martial niece might head down the wrong path. As Emptiness Isle is aware of this matter already, I will not say anything else," Wang Wuxie said calmly. Then, he congratulated Emptiness Isle for winning.

The other sect leaders all inwardly admired his temperament.

The general assembly quickly scattered. The sects' disciples all passionately discussed the results of the battle. This was the first time they had witnessed Peng Wuyan's real strength. She wasn't inferior to Wu Xiaofan and Wan Guiyi! Her victory wasn't a fluke the way many people had been thinking.

Yun Jianyue and Qiu Honglei had been discussing whether to privately seek out Zu An. After all, there was only one final round left, so the effects of being exposed wouldn't be as severe as before. However, the sects all came to curry favor with them, making it so that the two didn't have any freedom to move around at all. They could only put on fake smiles and deal with them.

...

Zu An descended from Golden Peak, then found a chance to look for Yan Xuehen. However, as soon as he got closer, he saw the white-clad Yan Xuehen walk out.

"Shush! Chuyan is meditating inside. Don't disturb her," Yan Xuehen said. It was almost as if she had already been waiting inside for a long time and only came out when she sensed his arrival.

"Oh," Zu An said. He couldn't help but become a bit curious. "Just when is her match with the Devil Sect's Saintess?"

The battles here were wrapping up, but he hadn't seen Qiu Honglei anywhere. Only Chu Chuyan was here, cultivating bitterly alone. He had heard them discuss that only if Chuyan won would she have the right to enter the secret dungeon. Now, the other thirteen spots had already been decided.

"A few days later. Normally, they would already be here, but I don't know why I still haven't seen any sign of them yet," Yan Xuehen said. She was also a bit curious.

Zu An was surprised. He asked, "The fight will take place here? But there are daoist sect experts everywhere here! Won't they be ripped apart by these people?"

Yan Xuehen rolled her eyes and retorted, "So you still have a brain in that head of yours after all, remembering that these are daoist sect members! Do you think we'd do things like the Devil Sect? Regardless, I still respect that witch a bit. She actually dared to propose holding the battle here. That level of courage is something few men from the righteous sects can compare with."

Zu An was surprised. He asked, "It was big sis Yun who suggested doing the fight here?"

“Of course. Both sides discussed the location of the fight several times before, but neither side was satisfied. Eventually, that witch said we might as well just hold it in our own dao rite, so the matter was decided just like that,” Yan Xuehen said. “But don’t worry. We already sent people to investigate the area to make sure that there are no Devil Sect movements. I believe that she’s just doing this to raise her prestige in the Devil Sect. But as the righteous faction, how can we allow her to carry out her schemes as she wishes?”

Zu An frowned. He just felt that Yun Jianyue wouldn’t be that reckless. The Twin Dragon Mountain rebel army he encountered had received news to move in this direction, so there was definitely some kind of plan being carried out. However, he just didn’t have enough information to make any judgments. For now, he’d just wait until he could contact Yun Jianyue, and ask her directly then.

...

Violet Mountain was full of disciples. Even if the two of them tried to take more secluded paths, it would still be hard to not draw attention. As such, Yan Xuehen had Zu An take the lead while she followed far behind. That way, no one would see the two of them walk together and carry any suspicions.

Zu An thought, This woman really knows how to carry herself like a celebrity. Still, he was the one asking her for help, so he couldn’t really say anything. Thus, he walked ahead by himself. He could hear the ‘Fairy Yan’ greetings in the distance and thought, Her reputation among the daoist sects really is high.

Eventually, they finally arrived at the back half of the mountain, where there were fewer people. Zu An found a secluded place and took out the Wind Fire Wheels. He gestured toward her and said, “We have to hurry. We won’t make it in time if we dilly-dally.”

Yan Xuehen’s face reddened as she replied, “I can fly myself.” She had needed him to carry her on his back when she was injured, and the two of them had flown on the Wind Fire Wheels just like that. She naturally couldn’t go through that again.

Zu An retracted his hand with regret. He had just offered out of habit. To be honest, though, he really missed the feeling of her soft waist.

The two rushed into the sky and headed toward Yi City. Along the way, Zu An tried to start some idle conversation, but Yan Xuehen’s expression remained cold as she said, “I am just helping you with a business deal. There is nothing else I have to discuss with you.”

Zu An’s expression darkened. He replied, “We were clearly already friends on the Fiend races’ side, so why do I feel as if we’re getting further and further apart?”

Yan Xuehen said, “Our status dooms us to never be suitable as friends.”

Zu An opened his mouth, but he didn’t know what to say either. Just like that, the two of them entered an awkward silence.

...

By the time they arrived outside Yi Commandery, the sky was already starting to grow dark.

Zu An found a place to land and said, “Let’s change clothes here first.” He didn’t move away, and began to change right there and then.

Yan Xuehen's heartbeat quickened. She turned to one side.

"Are you not going to change?" Zu An asked, not moving. "Aren't you worried that King Yan Manor's people will find out that the White Jade Sect's Master Yan is here?"

Yan Xuehen was left in a difficult situation. She said, "I didn't bring anything." She did have some clothes in her storage pouch, but the style was too obvious. They would immediately know that it was her even if she changed.

Zu An now remembered that with her personality, there was usually no need for her to do anything secretive at all. He took out a set of black clothes and gave it to her, saying, "I have some. You should change into them on your own."

Yan Xuehen received them. When she saw the black color, she felt an instinctive dislike. Then, she suddenly asked, "Why do you always have female clothing on you?"

Zu An replied, "I know what you're like; it was obviously prepared for you."

Yan Xuehen's ice-cold lips couldn't help but curl into a grin when she heard that. She quickly took the clothes and hid in the trees, saying, "You're dead if you try to peep on me with your soul sense!"

Zu An replied helplessly, "You're already a grandmaster, so you can clearly shield yourself with a soul barrier."

Yan Xuehen was alarmed. Why did I suddenly overlook that? She quickly changed clothes and emerged.

Zu An's eyes couldn't help but light up. A goddess was a goddess! Even in all-black stealth wear, it didn't cover up her beauty at all. On the contrary, it further accentuated her figure in a way that her white clothes didn't.

Yan Xuehen felt really uncomfortable. She was about to say something when she suddenly saw a beautiful figure next to Zu An. Her expression changed as she asked, "Tell me, how did you change her clothes?"

Chapter 1662: Like a Vacation Stroll

Zu An gave the black-clad Daji a look and replied, "Her? She changed her clothes by herself, of course."

This wasn't the first time Yan Xuehen had seen Daji. When she saw the voluminous gown wrapped around Daji, her expression immediately turned a bit suspicious.

Zu An suddenly realized what she was thinking. He burst into laughter and said, "Don't worry. she only put on another layer outside her own clothes. Are you worried that she changed in front of me?"

Yan Xuehen's face heated up. She replied, "Whether she takes them off or not has nothing to do with me. Why would I be worried?"

Even though this wasn't the first time she had met Daji, she still couldn't help but be amazed by the woman's beauty. She was so beautiful, and yet she didn't have a soul.

Zu An chuckled. He reached out his hand to grope Daji, but his hand was smacked away. He said, "See? We're just master and servant. There's nothing vulgar, despite what you were thinking."

Yan Xuehen grinned, but she wasn't willing to admit to anything. She said, "Lady Daji is so guarded against you even without a soul. Are you still not going to admit that you're a lecher?"

Zu An was speechless. However, he didn't get angry. He replied, "What did you call me? Why don't you call me that again?" For some reason, when someone like her said that, it sounded strangely nice.

"Lech..." Yan Xuehen began, but halfway through, she realized something and harrumphed. Then, she changed the topic. "Do we need her to be with us this time?"

Zu An said seriously, "Yes. We'll need her later. It'll be hard to explain if she appears out of nowhere."

Yan Xuehen knew that there would be others there later. This guy isn't holding anything back and is even telling me about something so secret...

"Please don't say anything once we start, to avoid your identity being exposed. I'll take care of everything," Zu An warned her.

"When have I ever spoken that much to anyone other than you to begin with?" Yan Xuehen instinctively replied. Then, she was stunned, and her cheeks heated up a bit.

Zu An smiled and said, "I almost forgot how cold you normally are. Let's go."

He took the lead and flew toward the city afterward. Watching his back recede into the distance, Yan Xuehen bit her lip and followed along.

...

Even though there were normally a lot of guards patrolling Yi City, the place wasn't at war. With the pair's cultivation, they didn't end up alerting anyone. They quickly arrived at the secret rendezvous point.

Zhang Zitong and Xiao Jianren were already waiting there. They became vigilant and moved their hands to their blades, calling out, "Show yourself!"

Zu An raised his golden token and replied, "It's me!"

"Sir Eleven!" All of them sighed in relief when they heard his familiar voice.

"These two are...?" Zhang Zitong asked, quickly noticing Yan Xuehen and Daji beside him. Even though they were masked and dressed in all-black stealth wear, those stunning eyes showed that they were definitely extraordinary beauties.

Her expression became a bit strange. What kind of a relationship did Sir Eleven have with them? Why had he brought them on such a dangerous mission?

Yan Xuehen directly ignored Xiao Jianren and the others. She looked at this woman and thought, This woman's legs are so long.

This damn kid has beauties all around him, and even his subordinates are like this. As expected of a womanizer.

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +111 +111 +111...

"They are the helpers I've brought with me," Zu An said. He was confused as to why Yan Xuehen had suddenly become angry, but he couldn't ask her about it now. He looked at the Silver Token Envoys and asked, "Has King Yan left his manor yet?"

Xiao Jianren replied, "I've been watching him all this time. He just left about a stick of incense's time ago."

Zu An nodded and replied, "Good!"

He then assigned them their missions. Zhang Zitong would follow him into the manor, while Xiao Jianren and the others would receive them outside just in case, as well as alert them if King Yan returned ahead of time.

Xiao Jianren was a bit jealous that he was being left out. However, this mission wasn't one in which the more people there were, the better it was. Besides, he wasn't particularly skilled in cultivation. If he joined the infiltration of such a tiger's den, he would most likely be a hindrance. As such, he quickly calmed down and said, "Understood. Sir Eleven and Lady Zhang, please be careful!"

Zhang Zitong nodded. She had already changed into stealth wear as well. She followed Zu An to the manor's surrounding area. When she looked at the patrolling servants, she lowered her voice and said, "The security outside the manor is extremely professional and strict. Even with my observations of the patrol and my experience inside last time, I barely managed to grasp a pattern. But there are some areas I'm still not sure of. You should follow... huh?"

She saw that their group had already jumped in before she could even finish her sentence. "Don't do anything reckless!" she hissed as she quickly followed along. Soon, however, she was completely stunned.

The ice-cold woman walked at the very forefront, moving as if this were her own home. Guards patrolled around them from time to time, but didn't run into them a single time.

When he saw Zhang Zitong's shocked look, Zu An thought to himself, Yan Xuehen is a glorious grandmaster who can cover this entire place with her divine sense. The layout of this entire king manor is bright and clear to her.

Zhang Zitong didn't understand. She thought to herself, Just some random friend of Sir Eleven is so formidable... Sir Eleven really is unfathomable!

...

Under Yan Xuehen's lead, the group quickly arrived near the study. Although it was called that, it was actually a large courtyard surrounded by a wall. The infrastructure inside was beautiful and exquisite. Everything had clearly been designed with utmost care.

There was an older-style building at the very center that vaguely exuded a mysterious pressure. That was clearly where King Yan spent most of his time. His grandmaster pressure had already accumulated there after a long time.

There were guards outside, with even tighter security around the courtyard and main entrance. There were many layers of guards guarding both positions, making it impossible to escape their detection.

Zhang Zitong said nervously, "Those guards in front are all sentries that don't move. There are also hidden guards watching. There are no gaps in their coverage, so there's no way for us to sneak in."

Sir Eleven hadn't told her how they were going to deal with this problem, so she was full of worries.

Zu An nodded toward Daji. She nodded slightly, then slowly walked in.

Zhang Zitong widened her eyes. She reflexively wanted to pull Daji back, but couldn't reach her. She nervously asked Zu An, "Sir Eleven, what is she doing? She'll be found out!"

"The plan is for her to be found out," Zu An said with a smile.

Zhang Zitong was stunned when she heard the reply. She really couldn't figure out what he meant.

"Who is it?!" the guards exclaimed as they noticed Daji. They all surrounded her.

However, Daji didn't say anything as she slowly undid her veil. The guards were shocked at first by her extraordinary beauty, but then they remembered their duty. They were about to draw their blades when they saw a strange light emerge from her eyes. Their movements stopped. Then, a confused and lost expression appeared in their eyes, and they seemed to be entranced.

"What is going on?" Zhang Zitong was completely stunned. This mysterious woman hadn't done anything apart from removing her veil. Why had they become like this? Now, even she wanted to see what this woman looked like. How could she have such a ridiculous amount of charm?

Zu An nodded in admiration. As Daji's strength rose, her Voice of the Devil also increased in grade. Her skill could now be used on many people at once. On top of that, she was already at the seventh rank. No matter how elite King Yan's soldiers were, there was no way he would be so extravagant as to use seventh rank or higher experts to watch the entrance. The guards thus immediately fell for her skills. Fortunately, there weren't many guards in the courtyard. If there had been more, Daji's skill wouldn't necessarily have been effective.

Zu An walked in confidently and leisurely while gesturing for Yan Xuehen and Zhang Zitong to follow along.

At first, Zhang Zitong was a bit nervous because the guards' eyes were still open. However, there was no reaction in their eyes as the group passed at all. Forget about her, even Yan Xuehen was a bit shocked. Daji's skill really was a bit too horrifying.

Fortunately, Zu An could still be considered good-natured. Otherwise, if he wanted to commit evil, he would be far scarier than those great demons of the Devil Sect.

...

The group quickly stopped in front of the study's entrance. Zhang Zitong was a bit alarmed. She had thought that this was going to be a tiger's den, but how was it that under Sir Eleven's lead, this all felt like a vacation stroll?

She shook her head and did her best to snap out of her daze. She pointed at a faintly discernible light blue formation on the window and said, "This is a formation created by a runemaster after King Yan

spent a tremendous amount of money. Using force to break through it would easily alarm everyone here. Even King Yan himself would notice something.”

She secretly looked at Daji while speaking, but unfortunately, Daji’s veil was already back on. Zhang Zitong couldn’t see what she really looked like at all.

Zu An didn’t have to say anything. Yan Xuehen walked over and made some hand seals. Daoist symbols appeared around her slender jade-like fingers, and with a gentle tap on the door, blue began shining. The entire formation appeared in front of her.

Zhang Zitong was startled, thinking that they had tripped some kind of alarm. She quickly grabbed her weapon in preparation of an attack, but everything remained calm. Nothing happened. She only saw Yan Xuehen standing in front of the entrance while carefully examining the formation runes on the door.

After some time, Yan Xuehen suddenly moved. A translucent, cold rune appeared between her fingers again. Then, a complicated and mysterious imprint appeared. Several snow-white, translucent formations spun around her body.

Zhang Zitong’s mouth hung open. To her, the entire process carried a sort of quiet and elegant beauty. Even though the mysterious woman was dressed all in black, she was like a goddess above the clouds. Zhang Zitong really didn’t know where Sir Eleven had found someone this formidable.

Suddenly, Yan Xuehen pointed toward the formation in front of her, and the magic rune entered it. The formation around her also spun rapidly, and the blue formation around the door turned white.

Ka-cha!

Finally, the door slowly opened.

Zu An gave Yan Xuehen a big thumbs up, and entered the room first. He swept his divine sense outward, and immediately frowned. He sensed a great deal of killing intent inside.

Chapter 1663: Darkness

The entire room looked completely ordinary, no different from a regular study. However, Zu An could clearly sense several spots full of killing intent, where if he was even the slightest bit inattentive, he would die on the spot.

He remembered that Zhang Zitong had mentioned these mechanisms before. With his and Yan Xuehen’s cultivation, normal mechanisms couldn’t hurt them at all. However, if activating them would alert the others in the manor, that would make things troublesome.

As such, he said to Zhang Zitong, “It’s your turn to shine!”

Zhang Zitong immediately snapped to attention. She had felt as if she were about to go blind with envy from how dazzling the others Zu An brought with him were. As an Embroidered Envoy herself, how could she let other women outshine her?

It was finally her turn. She stood at the forefront, then carefully examined the layout of the room. A while later, she said, “All of you, stand there and don’t move.”

She kicked off the ground as soon as she spoke. Then, she leaped several meters away toward another position.

Zu An stared at the spot she had just jumped over. There was some killing intent concentrated in the area, clearly a trap waiting to be activated.

Then, Zhang Zitong sometimes moved and sometimes stopped. Sometimes, she took several steps forward, while at other times, she backed up a few meters. Sometimes, she jumped through the air, while other times, her back arched and she turned to one side. It was as if there was something invisible in the air that she wanted to avoid.

At first, she proceeded at a careful but steady pace. Suddenly, however, her expression changed and she bent backward all the way down, almost as if her back had broken. Her body ended up being completely supported by her arms. She then flipped backward a few times. During the entire process, her long legs were especially stunning.

Yan Xuehen thought to herself, This woman's flexibility is quite good. If not for the fact that she had noticed a nearly-transparent thread stretched through the air, she would have thought that this woman was trying to seduce Zu An on purpose. That was because Zhang Zitong seemed to be dancing this entire time. She almost seemed to be showing off her legs in all sorts of ways.

After avoiding that potential disaster, Zhang Zitong sighed in relief. She patted her chest, then proceeded. The others could tell that she was much more careful than before. In the end, she arrived at the wall behind the desk. There was an eagle statue on the wall.

She took a deep breath. Then, as if she didn't have any bones in her body, she twisted into a stance that was completely impossible for a normal person. One hand rested on the table to support her, while her legs split in opposite directions. One foot remained on the ground, while the other hooked upward along the wall.

Yan Xuehen's breath caught in her throat. She could vaguely sense the many nearly-transparent threads near the statue. No wonder this woman was holding herself in such a strange position.

But...

She looked at Zu An next to her. This guy's eyes were about to pop out of their sockets!

Finally, Zhang Zitong's legs completely straightened. Unfortunately, the tips of her toes were still an inch from the statue. She couldn't reach it even after several attempts.

She gritted her teeth, and did her best to lower herself further. She groaned painfully, and her toe tips finally touched the falcon statue. Her body trembled as she used her tiptoes to rotate the wings of the eagle to one side. With a rumble, a slit appeared in the previously seamless floor, revealing a secret path.

Zhang Zitong sighed in relief. She then retracted her foot. Her whole body trembled, as those movements had really exhausted her greatly. She gestured toward Zu An and said, "You can come straight over now. The system has been deactivated."

Zu An and the others walked over. Sure enough, they didn't run into any dangers.

When he saw how she was dripping with sweat, Zu An said in amazement, "It's a good thing we had you with us today. Otherwise, it would have been quite hard to activate this mechanism."

Zhang Zitong's legs were exceptionally long, and she was really flexible too. Apart from her, no one else could perform such movements.

Zhang Zitong's eyes immediately lit up when she heard his praise. She had finally proven her worth! There was no incompetent trash among the people at Sir Eleven's side.

Zu An couldn't help but look at Yan Xuehen. Her body was also really soft, and he had personally experienced how supple and strong it was. She should also be able to do this, right...

When she sensed his gaze, Yan Xuehen clearly realized something. She gave him an annoyed look.

...

The group slowly descended the stairs into a cave. Along the way, Zu An asked Zhang Zitong, "Why do you know so much about the traps here?"

Zhang Zitong replied, "Sir Seven previously taught me that there are only so many styles of traps in this world. As long as you can identify the source, everything else merely makes some slight alterations to the foundation."

Zu An nodded. He thought back to his previous world's feng shui. Even though people always made it sound mysterious and profound, it was just that the ancients had always followed the same rules when they designed imperial tombs. As such, people in the present were able to retrace that knowledge to find those tombs.

As they continued downward, the lighting dimmed more and more. Zhang Zitong clearly became nervous. She said, "Sir Eleven, we'll soon reach the place of absolute darkness. Not only will there be no light, one's ki senses will also be greatly reduced. I heard that even a master rank cultivator could be done in if they came to this kind of place. Have you thought of a way to deal with this?" They had already gotten this far. She really didn't want everything to be for nothing.

"It's fine," Zu An said, his tone extremely calm. He continued forward just like before.

When Zhang Zitong sensed that he was prepared and recalled everything leading up to this point, she also calmed down.

Not long after, their surroundings became completely dark. Even though Zhang Zitong knew it was useless, she still reflexively took out a match to start a fire.

Still, even though it clearly lit up, the light seemed to be sucked away by something. There was only an extremely small red point at the very tip, and nothing around it could be seen.

"Put out the fire, or else we'll be painting targets on our backs," Zu An reminded her.

Zhang Zitong's face heated up. She normally wouldn't make such a mistake, but people always had an indescribable fear of darkness.

A low voice called out in front of them. "I don't know how you arrived here, but now that you're here, everything will end now."

Then, an ear-splitting grinding noise filled the air; it was the sound of blades being drawn. They were deliberately drawn slowly, almost as if the wielders were trying to erode their enemies' fighting spirits with the sound.

Zhang Zitong nervously clenched her weapon. Unfortunately, the sword ki she released seemed to completely dissipate into nothing. She couldn't sense where her enemies were at all. She could only estimate that there were eight to ten enemies from the sounds of the blades being unsheathed.

These warriors had been carefully selected. All of them were blind from birth, and they always remained in this dark room. They already knew everything within like the backs of their hands. Thus, while their enemies felt blinded, they themselves felt the same as always. If a fight broke out, it would be nothing more than a one-sided slaughter.

"Sir, what do we do?" Zhang Zitong asked, but she suddenly felt a penetrating chill. It was as if she wasn't in an underground room of darkness, but rather amid snowy mountains full of roaring winds. Even with her cultivation, she couldn't help but shiver. She felt as if all of her blood would freeze over.

Suddenly, she was shocked to discover that the blade sounds had stopped. Cold sweat dripped down her temples. Could it be that they've already hidden themselves in the shadows and are waiting to attack us?

Zu An said just then, "Let's continue."

Zhang Zitong was stunned. She murmured, "Those people..."

"They've already been dealt with," Zu An replied. This darkness might have been effective against master ranks, but what about a grandmaster?

Even though Yan Xuehen's soul was being restricted a bit by the material used to build the space, she didn't need to care about that at all. The room wasn't that small, but it wasn't that large either. All she had to do was unleash a blizzard and freeze everything apart from the three of them.

No matter how good those warriors were at hiding in the dark, they couldn't do much against an area of effect attack. They were instantly overwhelmed.

In the darkness, Yan Xuehen was walking at the forefront when she felt someone grabbing her hand. What else could that familiar feeling be but Zu An's hand? She tried to pull her hand away while asking through ki, "What are you doing? Let go!"

Zu An replied, "This place is pitch-dark and I can't see, so I'm scared."

Yan Xuehen was speechless. She thought, This guy has already fought against who knows how many terrifying beings. He even dared to kill the Fiend Emperor and sleep with the Second Empress. Someone like that knows fear?

She shook his hand away with a scowl. Unfortunately, his hand seemed to be stuck to hers and he didn't let go. However, she didn't dare to make too much of a disturbance for fear of Zhang Zitong overhearing it.

Zu An said, "Don't worry, no one can see right now."

For some reason, his words carried a mysterious charm that made Yan Xuehen gradually stop struggling. In the outside world, she was the White Jade Sect Master, as well as Chuyan's master. She had too many things to worry about, so there was simply no chance for the two of them.

However, in this place that was completely dark, no one knew who she was, nor could they see what she was doing. This thing that had always left her vexed seemed to have disappeared. In that instant, she felt as if this dark place became a bit warmer. She didn't even really want to leave anymore.

Suddenly, Zhang Zitong called out, "Sir Eleven, it doesn't seem as if we'll be able to find the exit here." She couldn't find anything even after groping around.

Normally, with their group's resourcefulness, if they could see, it wouldn't be too hard to find the exit at all. However, they couldn't see a thing and could only rely on touch. This space wasn't that small either, so it wasn't easy to find an exit. More importantly, time was of the essence. It would be really tricky if King Yan came back.

Chapter 1664: Speed Is a Crucial Asset in War

Zu An frowned. The situation was indeed a bit tricky. He asked Yan Xuehen through ki, "Big sis Yan, can you sense if there are any exits around us?"

Yan Xuehen shook her head slightly and replied, "The only thing I can sense is that there aren't any clear exits in this room. It's probably hidden by some kind of mechanism."

"Then can you find that mechanism?" Zu An continued.

"This room's material is special. The walls, floor, and ceiling all contain Soul Drain Stones, and there are also special formations that greatly reduce the efficacy of the soul here. The soul can only explore a very small area. It might be difficult to find anything quickly," Yan Xuehen answered. As she felt the warmth coming from his hand, her cheeks turned red. Fortunately, they were in complete darkness, so she didn't have to be scared of other people seeing her. "Also, I can't see any formation patterns, so there's no way for me to break the formation here."

"This King Yan really did invest quite a lot here. He actually managed to create such an incredible place," Zu An said with a sigh. Her hand is so soft...

Zhang Zitong asked worriedly, "Then doesn't that mean we're completely stuck here? Sooner or later, King Yan will notice that something is strange here."

Zu An frowned. After all, the amount of time he could keep the guards outside distracted with Daji was also limited. "There's no other way, I guess," he said with a sigh. He raised a hand and called out, "Let there be light!"

As soon as he spoke, a beam of light suddenly appeared in the room. As it appeared in the midst of absolute darkness, the two women reflexively narrowed their eyes.

However, Yan Xuehen reacted even more quickly. She quickly flung Zu An's hand away in a firm and decisive motion.

Zhang Zitong slowly opened her eyes, gradually acclimating to the light. Even though it wasn't as bright as daylight, they were all powerful cultivators. This degree of light was already enough for them to see inside the area.

"Sir Eleven, how did you manage to do this?!" Zhang Zitong exclaimed, feeling shocked and overjoyed. After all, she had tried to start a fire, but the light had always been absorbed by the special formations around them. And yet, the light coming from his hand didn't seem to be affected by the surrounding space at all.

"Don't worry about that right now. Hurry up and look for the mechanism," Zu An shouted.

"Oh!" Zhang Zitong exclaimed as she quickly looked around. This was her forte.

When Zhang Zitong left, Yan Xuehen snapped with an unhappy expression, "You lied to me!"

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +100 +100 +100...

"How did I lie to you?" Zu An asked in confusion. His mind moved quickly to try and find a solution.

"You clearly could have used a light, and yet you continued to touch in the dark..." Yan Xuehen trailed off, too embarrassed to continue, but her gaze was completely cold.

Zu An suddenly let out a cry. Then, his body fell weakly to one side.

"What's wrong?" Yan Xuehen exclaimed, startled. She instinctively caught him.

"You should know already, right? I have to pay a price to use this skill," Zu An said weakly.

Yan Xuehen's expression changed. She realized that he had used that mysterious Soulspeak skill, so she quickly sent ki into his body, saying "Alright, don't speak anymore and adjust your breathing. I'll help supply you with ki."

Zu An grunted in response and lay down in her arms. Her touch was ice-cold and soft. He really wanted to be like this forever.

Yan Xuehen was suddenly stunned. But when she remembered the price he had needed to pay, she bit her lip and didn't say anything. She could only try to convince herself that, because she was wearing a mask right now, no one knew who she was.

When she saw Zu An faint, Zhang Zitong was terrified. She was just about to approach when Yan Xuehen said coldly, "Finding that mechanism so he doesn't have to use this skill anymore would be the best form of help for him."

Zhang Zitong shivered and didn't dare to waste any more time. She quickly looked around. At the same time, she thought to herself, Sir Eleven's relationship with this woman really is special. He immediately fainted in her arms.

Yan Xuehen knelt down on the ground and rested Zu An's head on her thighs. When she saw that his eyes were tightly closed and his brows were furrowed, she couldn't help but feel a bit of pity.

This fellow was always doing things like this! He had actually used his Soulspeak in such an exaggerated manner, even in such a situation.

Meanwhile, Zu An was actually laughing inwardly. Even though this big sis Yan of his said she didn't like him, didn't she still treat him pretty well?

He had used Keyboard Come to create a beam of light. Of course, for fear of the rebound, he hadn't dared to add the words 'God said' before it. This wasn't the first time he had summoned light, so the side-effects were still at a tolerable degree. Of course, it was still better to act as if he was in a bit more pain in front of Yan Xuehen...

A while later, Zhang Zitong exclaimed happily, "I found it!" Then, she jumped onto several floor tiles in a certain pattern.

Ka-ka-ka!

With the sound of a mechanism activating, a secret door opened, revealing a hidden room behind it.

Zu An was actually a bit unhappy that this woman had found the mechanism so quickly. He couldn't even rest here for a bit longer!

Yan Xuehen said with concern, "We found the exit. You don't have to release the light anymore."

Zu An then 'slowly' opened his eyes and said, "Ah, we already found it?" Then, the light in his hands went out.

Yan Xuehen supported him to his feet and asked, "How do you feel right now?"

"My body feels alright, but I feel a bit dizzy. I think I've exhausted my mind a bit too much," Zu An replied. He knew that Yan Xuehen was a grandmaster and could sense his condition through the ki she sent into him. There was no way of hiding that his body was fine, so he could only claim to be in trouble on the mental side. After all, there was no way of examining one's mental strength.

Sure enough, Yan Xuehen frowned. However, she continued to support him as they entered the room.

The room inside didn't contain any special formations or Soul Drain Stones. Zhang Zitong quickly lit a torch. The inside of the room was rather simple, with a stone platform and a chest on it. The entire thing gave off an 'I have something really important inside' feeling.

Zhang Zitong explained, "This is the Exquisite Sevenfold Lock. It's an extremely tricky device that fewer than ten experts in the world can unlock."

She didn't get the reaction she was hoping for out of them, so she could only add unhappily, "I just happen to be one of them."

She took a hair clip out of her hair as she spoke. Upon closer inspection, one end of it resembled a fine curved needle. She gently inserted the needle through the opening and tilted her head to one side, trying to hear the fine noises coming from the inside of the lock.

Yan Xuehen looked at her with astonishment. She thought to herself, Why are all of the women at Zu An's side so skilled?

Ka-cha!

After a while, the lock sprung open with a light click.

Zu An leaned against Yan Xuehen's soft body. He wondered, "Even though this lock is incredible, isn't it a bit too simple as the final barrier?"

Compared to the others, this one seemed easier.

Zhang Zitong replied, "I believe King Yan had absolute confidence in the previous barriers, so he didn't spend too much attention to this. But apart from this lock, he set up another trap inside. If this account book is removed, it will activate an alarm, and the entire room will self-destruct."

Zu An nodded. It was easy to become negligent once one reached this final step, thinking they had already succeeded.

Zhang Zitong took out an account book that looked identical. "Which one of you is confident in using your hands? We need to swap the two account books."

Yan Xuehen reflexively looked at Zu An. Zu An's expression immediately turned strange. Yan Xuehen quickly reacted to what Zhang Zitong said. Her face became completely red and she pushed him away.

In order to hide her awkwardness, she stepped forward and said, "Let me try."

Zhang Zitong looked at her in a daze. How was this woman's voice so beautiful? It wasn't like something from this world at all.

Yan Xuehen took the booklet from her. She calmed herself down, then suddenly moved.

"It's done," she said as she handed the account book to Zu An. Even though she wasn't particularly great in terms of dexterity, for better or for worse, she was still a grandmaster. This sort of thing wasn't too difficult for her.

Zhang Zitong rubbed her eyes. She didn't dare to believe what she was seeing. She hadn't even seen the other woman move. She's that fast? Just what level of cultivation does she have?!

Zu An took it from her. His expression soon turned grave. Even calling this King Yan daring wasn't enough of an adjective!

...

Then, the group left King Yan Manor. When the nervously watching Xiao Jianren saw them, he sighed in relief. He asked, "Did you succeed?"

Zu An nodded. Everything had gone smoothly. He had thought that something unexpected could happen, but when he thought about it, having Yan Xuehen at his side was complete overkill. It would be stranger if something had happened.

"Is King Yan still at the governor manor?" Zu An asked.

"Indeed. Governor Zhang was even more reliable than we imagined and has been holding him up all this time," Xiao Jianren replied.

Zu An nodded and said, "Let's go and visit the governor manor."

"King Yan is still there..." Xiao Jianren said hesitantly.

"It's precisely because he's there that I'm going. How can you catch a criminal if the criminal isn't there?" Zu An replied nonchalantly.

"Oh..." Xiao Jianren reflexively replied. Only after taking some steps back did he react and exclaim in alarm, "What? We're going to arrest King Yan?"

"What else?" Zu An replied as he raised the account book in his hands. "We already have proof. Speed is a crucial asset in war."

"With just the few of us?" Xiao Jianren swallowed with difficulty.

"It's enough," Zu An replied casually, leaving all of the Silver Token Envoys ashen-faced.

Chapter 1665: Frontal Clash

"Enough?" Xiao Jianren exclaimed, aghast.

Are you kidding me? King Yan is a grandmaster, and this is his terrain! There are experts everywhere, and he even has his own private army! We'll be blown away instantly!

He had always felt that Sir Eleven was profound and mysterious, but that depended on who you were comparing him to! His decision this time really was way too reckless!

"Sir, perhaps it would be better if we took some more time in making our decision?" Xiao Jianren continued, swallowing nervously. He felt that perhaps it would still be better if he convinced Sir Eleven otherwise. "We haven't investigated the contents of the account book yet. Just an account book alone isn't enough to bring down a king!"

Zu An shook his head and said, "Being swift and resolute in your actions is important. He'll find out that the account book has been stolen soon, and he'll start to destroy the evidence. We need to detain him first, then track further evidence through the account book. Without their leader, King Yan Manor's people will be much easier to investigate."

"But what if the account book is fake? Slandering a king is a serious crime..." Xiao Jianren replied weakly in a final protest.

"I previously investigated some issues in Cloudcenter Commandery. The account book's contents more or less match what I saw. So, there should be no issues with it," Zu An replied.

Seeing that he had already made his decision, Xiao Jianren sank into utter despair. He gave Zhang Zitong a look, hoping for her to speak up and advise him. However, all he saw was a look of adoration on her face, as if she had already been completely won over by his heroic nature.

He loosened his collar and stuck out his chest. Then, with a light cough, he said, "We Embroidered Envoys have always wandered along the brink of death. For the sake of righteousness, for the sake of upholding the court's laws, I will advance despite any difficulty!"

When he sensed that Zhang Zitong was looking at him in a favorable manner, he felt that the Embroidered Envoy uniform he was wearing seemed a bit more handsome.

Zu An gave him a strange look. What the heck is this guy doing?

Yan Xuehen gestured for him to talk with her off to one side. Zu An followed her to a corner, where she asked with a frown, "Are you really going to arrest King Yan?"

"Does it look like I'm joking?" Zu An replied. Then, he added, "I know that big sis Yan's status is special, so I won't trouble you further. I don't need you to interfere in the following arrest. You can return to Violet Mountain first."

Yan Xuehen was a bit unhappy. That was clearly not what she meant. She looked at Zu An and asked, "Didn't you exhaust a lot of mental strength, and isn't your body weak?"

With the strength he had displayed in the Fiend King Court, even if he couldn't successfully capture King Yan, it wouldn't be too difficult for him to keep his life. However, he had just used the Soulspeak ability, leaving him in a weakened state.

"Don't worry. Thanks to big sis Yan feeding me ki and protecting me, I'm still in good shape. But it's still not quite enough. How about you give me a bit more?" Zu An replied as he moved closer to her with a bashful expression.

"Get lost!" Yan Xuehen snapped, realizing that she had fallen for his schemes again. Her expression turned completely cold. Inwardly, however, she wanted to laugh. This guy was such a scoundrel. Just how had someone like Chuyan ended up liking him?

Zu An had a strange expression. This woman's words were harsh, but she hadn't even gotten angry at all...

However, he also became serious and said, "Big sis Yan, I know that you're worried about me, but you are the White Jade Sect Master. It isn't suitable for you to get involved in King Yan's arrest. Please return to Violet Mountain first. I'll look for you after completing this."

"Who is worried about you?" Yan Xuehen retorted, rolling her eyes. "Also, once you're done, stay as far away from me as possible. You're not allowed to look for me." She turned around and left afterward.

...

Zhang Zitong ran over when she saw Yan Xuehen leave, asking, "Why is she leaving?"

That other mysterious woman had also disappeared mysteriously. Now that someone with such incredible cultivation left, their side had been weakened again.

"It's fine. Just our current group is still enough," Zu An said, waving his hand. "Let's go."

Xiao Jianren and the others' faces turned pale. However, the way things stood right now, they could only brace themselves and continue. Still, they all thought that they were dead for certain. All they were hoping was that the court would empathize with their loyalty and take care of their families.

When they left, Yan Xuehen actually returned. She couldn't help but stomp her feet a bit, muttering, "That kid really is too unreliable. How can King Yan be so easy to deal with?!"

She bit her lip. In the end, she was still too worried and secretly followed along.

...

Meanwhile, in the governor manor, there were all sorts of festivities going on. The music was beautiful, and the dancers were even more alluring. However, the mood at the main table wasn't so enthusiastic.

King Yan looked at Zhang Jie with narrowed eyes, saying, "It has been so many years since Sir Governor has invited me to a feast. I wonder what all of this is about?"

Zhang Jie said with a smile, "Your respected self is a great king who rules over a great region. I am merely a governor assigned here by his majesty, so we should be cooperating to begin with. Because of various past events, there may have been some misunderstandings between us, so I invited King Yan for all of us to get closer to each other."

King Yan had an ambiguous smile as he replied, "Why do I feel that this banquet of Sir Zhang's seems to harbor malicious intentions?"

He naturally didn't believe the excuse. Their positions were naturally in opposition, so how could they possibly just get along? They weren't three-year-old children. Unfortunately, he couldn't figure out Zhang Jie's motive. He could only continue to sound things out while signaling for his subordinates to be on alert.

Just like that, they continued, but King Yan didn't notice anything. He was starting to get a bit annoyed, feeling that staying here was completely meaningless. As such, he got up to leave. He didn't change his mind no matter how much the other party tried to keep him.

Zhang Jie grimaced inwardly. He had already done everything he could to keep King Yan here. He wondered if Sir Eleven had finished what he wanted to do on his side.

Not long after King Yan left his seat, a cold voice suddenly called out, "So it turns out it was this lively here."

Zhang Jie's eyes lit up. At the same time, he was a bit confused as to why Sir Eleven would be here.

"Embroidered Envoy?" King Yan said with a frown. He gave Zu An's clothes a look. Golden Token Envoy!

He didn't hesitate to ask directly, "Did Golden Token Seven die? And this distinguished one is?"

"Golden Token Eleven," Zu An said, showing him the golden token.

King Yan harrumphed. He said in a haughty tone, "Nowadays, the Embroidered Envoy seems to act without any rule or order. You aren't even going to show this king any courtesy upon meeting me?"

Zu An calmly replied, "If it were another time, it would indeed be correct to greet King Yan. However, things are a bit special today. King Yan, you've been exposed."

King Yan's subordinates' expressions all changed as soon as they heard those words. They instantly drew their swords. It seemed that a battle was on the verge of breaking out.

Zhang Jie swallowed. What is going on? Didn't Sir Eleven say that he was investigating a case? Why does it look as if he's going to arrest King Yan? Most importantly, he only brought a few people! Who's going to capture whom here?!

King Yan was also stunned. Then, he burst into laughter that made all of the tiles in the governor manor tremble.

He suddenly turned to look at Zhang Jie, saying, "Amazing. I was wondering why Sir Zhang suddenly went out of his way to invite me. So it was because of this."

"A misunderstanding, there has to be some kind of a misunderstanding here!" Zhang Jie exclaimed, wiping away his sweat. How could he have anticipated that Golden Token Eleven would be so direct and reckless, carrying out an arrest right in the governor manor? He hadn't even sent notice ahead of time so preparations could be made.

Even if Zhang Jie could survive this conflict, after the fact that a king had committed mutiny got out and news reached the court, as the governor, it went without saying that his head would fly. His thoughts moved rapidly as he began thinking about how he could shift the blame onto Golden Token Eleven.

When he saw Zhang Jie's distress, Xiao Jianren actually felt a bit calmer. It wasn't just me after all, even a glorious governor feels this way! It's Sir Eleven who was too reckless this time.

Zu An took out the account book and said, "King Yan is suspected of colluding with the Fiend races, smuggling military goods, and harboring a private army. Please cooperate with us in this investigation. If anyone else resists, it will be viewed as conspiring against the empire!"

King Yan's subordinates' expressions changed again when they heard those words. After all, the power of the emperor and the court was deeply embedded in their hearts. Which one of them dared to bear the crime of treason?

When he saw the account book in Golden Token Eleven's hands, King Yan's eyes rapidly contracted. He immediately realized that Zhang Jie had invited him to a feast to lure the tiger from its den. He gave Zhang Jie a resentful look, then said with a harrumph, "I do not know what Sir Eleven is saying. Is any random account book enough to wrongly accuse this king? What a joke."

He released his grandmaster power as he spoke. A terrifying power enveloped the entire governor manor. Those with lower cultivations immediately collapsed onto the ground and found it hard to breathe. Even elites like Xiao Jianren and Zhang Zitong could only barely hold on, without much fighting strength left.

Zhang Jie was covered in cold sweat too. At the same time, his expression changed several times. He began to weigh his options, wondering whether to try to arrest King Yan with Golden Token Eleven, or work with King Yan to oppose Golden Token Eleven. After fighting against King Yan for so many years, the governor manor had accumulated some hidden strength.

"Any random account book?" Zu An replied, remaining unfazed. He opened the account book and began to read. "... fourth of the eighth month, eight thousand jin of fine iron left Yi Commandery in secret to Cloudcenter Commandery and reached the Fiend race territory through the Pegasus Merchant Group... eighteenth of the ninth month, ten thousand jin of rice reached the Fiend race territory in the north by route of water..."

As he chose a few to read aloud, Governor Zhang Jie's expression quickly turned grave. Even many of King Yan Manor's followers revealed looks of shock. After all, the smuggling was an absolute secret that not everyone knew about.

"Shut up! Stop deluding people with lies!" King Yan exclaimed furiously. He reached out, and a massive hand immediately appeared above the account book.

Chapter 1666: The Best Backer

King Yan didn't move from his original position. And yet, with just a seemingly casual grab of his hand, it was as if a dark cloud covered everything. All of the Embroidered Envoys were completely surrounded.

Zu An harrumphed and stretched out a hand to face it.

A loud noise resounded. All of the nearby houses rocked back and forth. However, King Yan's terrifying claw dissipated.

The onlookers were completely stunned. The legendary Golden Token Envoys were known to be formidable, but wasn't this one a bit too much? He was actually able to stop the attack of a grandmaster! Perhaps King Yan didn't use all of his strength?

King Yan was overwhelmed with shock. He hadn't gone all out, but in order to make sure he seized back the important account book, he had used roughly seventy percent of his strength. He had thought that it would be way more than enough to deal with a Golden Token Envoy, as he was aware of how strong they were on average.

However, when they clashed just now, he felt as if his power had popped like a needle against a balloon. It was as if something had sucked it all away.

That's probably a skill he saves for self-defense. Golden Token Envoys shouldn't be underestimated after all.

He made his move again, completely vanishing from his original location. He didn't dare to be careless this time and used practically all of his strength. He had to seize that account book back!

That terrifying power made it hard for the others present to even breathe, let alone try to move out of the way. Xiao Jianren wanted to rush over to help, but he discovered that his entire body seemed to be frozen in place. He couldn't control himself at all.

Governor Zhang's expression changed. He hadn't expected King Yan to actually go all out! Even though his own cultivation wasn't low, there was still a tremendous difference between him and King Yan. After some hesitation, in the end, he still didn't choose to help.

Those present all thought that this Golden Token Eleven was dead for certain, and that he would soon pay the price for his recklessness. But who would have thought that he would suddenly raise his hand?

King Yan was stunned. This guy is still able to move under my pressure, and so quickly at that? But what kind of skill is this? Why can't I see anything amazing about it at all?

He intended to cripple the hand the opponent raised, but then when he saw the golden token in the center of Golden Token Eleven's palm, he suddenly recalled a rumor. His eyes rapidly contracted.

The Embroidered Envoy monitored the entire world. Their cultivation clearly wasn't that high, but why were they like tigers among the world's endless officials? It was because they received orders from the son of heaven! Rumor had it that they could invite the emperor himself to act!

However, King Yan quickly calmed himself down. He had heard that in order to request the help of the emperor, the Embroidered Envoy had to carry out a kind of ceremony. That delay would be more than enough for him to seize the account book back several times over. He even wondered whether to just take the life of this Golden Token Envoy who was ridiculously overestimating himself.

However, right at that instant, an even more terrifying power suddenly surged from the golden token. King Yan's aura was already terrifying enough, but compared to this, it was like a firefly's flicker of light compared to the brilliance of the sun and moon.

A golden figure appeared in midair. The boundless aura of the emperor spread in all directions. Even those who could still barely hold on under King Yan's pressure now kneeled down on the ground, trembling.

"You... You..." King Yan murmured. Even he was so scared that all of his hairs were standing on end. He had never expected the Golden Token Envoy to bring out the emperor so quickly!

Only Zu An remained completely calm. He stood in place and stared at the projection in midair. It was identical to Zhao Han's appearance.

When he first witnessed Zhao Han's power back in Brightmoon City, he had been completely in awe. However, as he grew and even learned about the higher cultivation ranks beyond grandmaster rank, he now knew more about the presence in the sky. He wondered, Is this Zhao Han's yin spirit or yang spirit?

Even though Zu An didn't fear King Yan, why would he fight personally if he didn't have to?

When he defeated Elder Xu from Purity Temple on Violet Mountain, the opponent had just been at the master rank. They weren't that different in level, so he could barely explain it. However, if he defeated King Yan, things could become really tricky. This was a well-known, bona fide, old-school grandmaster! He wouldn't be able to talk himself out of such a thing. Emperor Zhao Han would definitely start to become guarded against him. Being paid that kind of attention by such a terrifying being wasn't a good thing.

"What is it?" Zhao Han's projection asked as he slowly opened his eyes. He swept his gaze over the area, then his eyes landed on Zu An.

Zu An pointed at King Yan and called out, "King Yan is planning a rebellion!"

Zhao Han frowned. His gaze turned to King Yan.

King Yan almost vomited blood on the spot. He glared at Zu An and exclaimed, "Nonsense. When did I rebel?!" He didn't dare to put on even the slightest of airs in front of the emperor.

You have successfully trolled King Yan for +444 +444 +444...

Zu An harrumphed. "I am a Golden Token Envoy his majesty personally designated, someone in charge of investigating our lands. What could it be other than a rebellion for you to attack me?"

King Yan replied in a panic, "What do you mean, attack you? It was only because you were speaking nonsense, so I wanted to talk some reason into you."

"Talk reason? I believe you wanted to destroy the evidence, no?" Zu An retorted as he raised the account book in his hands. King Yan was left dismayed.

Zhao Han asked, "What exactly is going on?"

Zu An replied, "This account book records King Yan's illicit dealings with the Fiend races, including proof of smuggling military goods and raising a personal army."

"I'm being wronged! I don't know where he got that random account book to frame me, but I've always dedicated everything to earnestly defend this area for your majesty! I definitely don't have even the slightest wrong thought!" King Yan cried out in an aggrieved tone at nearly the same time, because he knew that he could still have a chance at survival if he absolutely refused to admit to the truth.

"Oh?" Zu An laughed and replied, "Then in that case, why did the king suddenly act up in rebellion, attacking me to seize the account book in my hands?"

"It was only because you were unjustly accusing this king, so I wanted to teach you a lesson, that's it. It's nothing like the destruction of evidence you were talking about!" King Yan responded quickly. He felt as if his mind had never worked faster in his life than at this moment. He was dripping with cold sweat. Under Zhao Han's glare, even though it was just a projection, it was enough to make even breathing difficult.

Zhao Han didn't give Zu An a second glance. Instead, he looked at Governor Zhang and said, "Zhang Jie, speak. What exactly happened here?"

Zhang Jie's expression changed several times. If he continued to support King Yan here, Golden Token Eleven would most likely be done for. If he supported Golden Token Eleven, King Yan would be finished. However, if he supported Golden Token Eleven, then there was no turning back. He would become completely opposed to King Yan. If this matter concluded without King Yan being accused of any crime, he would then end up facing King Yan's ruthless revenge.

After some hesitation, his expression became resolute as he began, "Replying to your majesty. While managing Yi Commandery over the years, I've heard some rumors surrounding King Yan..."

Even though he was expressing support for Golden Token Eleven, he didn't use the most harsh sounding words. He didn't say that he had discovered that King Yan was colluding with the Fiend Races. That way, if something unexpected really happened, there would still be a chance of turning back.

"Zhang Jie, you ignorant man!" King Yan exclaimed, feeling shocked and furious. This was a trap set up by Zhang Jie after all!

Zhao Han glowered, saying, "Arrest King Yan for now. Zhang Jie will work with Golden Token Eleven to investigate the related evidence."

"This humble servant has accepted the order!" Zhang Jie replied, overjoyed. His enemy of so many years had finally been taken down!

In contrast, King Yan Manor's people were absolutely devastated. They were loyal and devoted to King Yan, to the extent that if it were just Golden Token Eleven and Zhang Jie here, they would still protect King Yan and slaughter their way out. However, with the descent of the emperor, they had completely lost all will to resist. Over the years, Zhao Han had already become a deity-like presence in the hearts of his people. He was invincible!

King Yan's expression changed. He seemed to be preparing for a final struggle. After all, Zhao Han hadn't personally arrived, so it wasn't as if he didn't have any chance...

That projection gave him a look as soon as that thought emerged. King Yan immediately felt goosebumps and knelt down in ruin, saying, "This subject has been treated unjustly. I will wait for my innocence to be proven in court!"

Zu An gave Xiao Jianren and Zhang Zitong a look, saying, "What are you all just standing around with blank stares for?"

They finally snapped out of their daze and rushed over to bind King Yan in Soul Reaping Chains. Even though he was a grandmaster, once he was locked up in those chains, he wouldn't be able to use his cultivation anymore. Still, they were left in a daze. They had actually arrested the tyrannical King Yan just like that?

Zhang Jie, on the other hand, was still fairly clear-headed. He gestured for everyone else to cooperate and arrest the followers who had come with King Yan. Otherwise, they could end up causing further trouble.

Zhao Han nodded when he saw that King Yan had been locked up. Then, he said to Zu An, "You there. This emperor has something to ask you."

Zu An followed the projection to a distant courtyard. The massive head in the air turned into a streak of golden light, eventually taking Zhao Han's appearance. Apart from his body being sparkling and translucent, it wasn't much different from Zhao Han's true form

Zu An clicked his tongue. You can even do that with your spirit? No wonder they say an earth immortal's spirit can wander ten thousand miles in a single night. I wonder if the Zhao Han back at the Imperial Palace has to exhaust anything to do this.

Zhao Han stood there with his hands behind his back as he asked nonchalantly, "How are Violet Mountain's repairs progressing?"

"Everything is proceeding in a regular and thorough manner," Zu An answered, although he naturally knew the emperor wasn't actually asking about that. He added, "But the nine daoist sects' great competition is being held right now, so there are experts gathered all around Violet Mountain. I worry that perhaps their presence might be unfavorable to your majesty."

"People like them?" Zhao Han sneered in response.

Zu An thought to himself, Look at this guy showing off. He's actually a bit like me in that regard.

"Continue your investigation then. This emperor is leaving." Zhao Han's golden figure disappeared as soon as he finished speaking.

Zu An suddenly muttered to himself, "The emperor's decree, carried by the grace of heaven..."

"Do you know how many Embroidered Envoys do not dare to summon this emperor their entire lives?!" Zhao Han snapped as he reappeared. He did his best to remain calm, but he couldn't hold back a sharp and vicious glare.

You have successfully trolled Zhao Han for +666 +666 +666...

After all, an ordinary Embroidered Envoy didn't have the right to summon the emperor just like that. They needed to be granted an Imperial Edict during special missions. Even so, most of them chose not to use it in the end. The first reason was that the power of the Imperial Edict was normally already enough, and the second was because they didn't want to appear useless in front of the emperor.

However, Golden Token Envoys were different. They didn't need to use an Imperial Edict. They could summon the emperor purely through their token. Of course, the emperor needed to specially grant them that ability before leaving the capital.

In all these years, there hadn't been many instances in which Zhao Han had to make an appearance, and yet this kid had already summoned him several times! Zu An had even summoned him twice in succession! In that instant, he almost felt as if he were being made a fool of.

"I just wanted to see if there were any limits to this summoning. Otherwise, I really wouldn't feel that safe if I encountered another situation like today's again without your majesty's help," Zu An said with a sincere expression.

"You are not permitted to summon this emperor unless it is an emergency! Do not do this again!" Zhao Han harrumphed and disappeared.

Chapter 1667: Other Hidden Motives

The whole affair caused a massive disturbance, as even the emperor himself had personally come. The important officials from Yi Commandery rushed over when they heard the news, including Yi Commandery's Martial Supervisor Yang Sheng and Yi City Lord Liao Ling.

Of course, some of King Yan's officials also arrived without knowing about the situation. When they heard that King Yan had been detained, their expressions changed greatly. However, Zhang Jie didn't give them the chance to leave. He seized the chance to take all of them into custody too.

The only regretful thing was that Yan State's Xiang Minister Sun Xun hadn't come. It was rumored that he was away.

When Zu An returned to the courtyard, the way people looked at him was different. Previously, even though his status as an Embroidered Envoy was frightening, there were quite a few local bigwigs present, so they hadn't been that scared. However, after finding out that he could summon the emperor at any time, who wasn't scared of him?

They had heard that Embroidered Envoys could summon the emperor, but that the ceremony was incredibly complicated. When had they ever summoned the emperor just like that, so quickly and easily?

Furthermore, this Sir Eleven was clearly different from other Embroidered Envoys. According to the intelligence they had gathered, when other Embroidered Envoys summoned the emperor, it would just

be an emotionless projection that would disappear after he was summoned. But this time, it was as if the emperor himself had really come!

"Sir Eleven has both wisdom and bravery, as expected. He was able to capture King Yan so quickly," Zhang Jie said, giving him a thumbs up. He couldn't hold himself back from offering praise.

The others also rushed over to praise Zu An. Even the normally aloof Liao Ling's expression changed a bit when he looked at him. Zu An's mood wasn't all that great, however, because he had just met with Zhao Han. He didn't feel as good about all of the praise as usual.

...

After he ordered Zhang Jie to arrest any related individuals, he found a chance to meet with King Yan alone. Normally, that wouldn't be too appropriate, but his prestige was extremely high at the moment. Who would dare to criticize his actions?

The previously high and mighty King Yan was bound up in Soul Reaping Chains. He looked just like an old man with one foot already in the grave. He sat quietly in the corner just like that, as if he would decay away at a moment's notice.

When he saw Zu An arrive, King Yan raised his head. A hint of resentment flashed through his eyes as he said, "Very good! This king never expected to be pecked in the eye by the goose he was hunting."

You have successfully trolled Zhao Li for +555 +555 +555...

Zu An said coldly, "You should have anticipated that this would happen to you one day from the moment you decided to conspire with the Fiend races."

He felt a bit strange after saying that. He was the glorious Fiend races' Regent, the adoptive father of the little emperor and the lover of the Second Empress. And yet, he was accusing someone else of conspiring with the Fiend races?

Sigh, even though I told the Second Empress to do her best to cut off any news about me being the Regent, the Fiend race territories are so big. The court will find out sooner or later one day.

King Yan harrumphed. There was no one else here, so he didn't bother defending himself meaninglessly.

Zu An calmed himself down and said, "I came here to ask you about something this time. How did you kill Golden Token Seven?"

King Yan gave him a cold look and shot back, "What, do you think a rebellion isn't enough of a criminal accusation, so you want to accuse me of even more?"

Zu An said indifferently, "We're all people in the know. Is there any meaning in your quibbling here?"

"Heh." King Yan sneered and said, "And I was wondering just how brilliant and heroic of a man you are. It turns out you thought that I was the one who killed Golden Token Seven!"

Zu An was alarmed, replying, "Don't tell me you're not?"

"Of course not," King Yan said, his eyes flickering. It seemed almost as if he had learned something interesting, which gradually calmed his mood. He continued, "With how things are, there would be no reason for me to lie about something like this."

Zu An frowned. Compared to the crimes of smuggling and rebellion, killing Golden Token Seven indeed seemed unimportant. However, it was hard to say too. After all, those crimes he had been accused of could end up not being proven. There was a chance that he just didn't want to admit to the murder of Golden Token Seven.

As if sensing that Zu An didn't believe him, King Yan continued, "It's true that Golden Token Seven always got in this king's way, so I loathed him and had thoughts of getting rid of him. However, his status was too sensitive. He was someone his majesty personally appointed. In a place like Yi Commandery that is full of the emperor's eyes, touching him would have been the same as publicly rebelling against the empire. This king knows at least that much."

"But all of the evidence so far seems to point toward you," Zu An said, looking into his eyes.

"Were you the one who captured Sir Huo?" King Yan suddenly came to a realization and said angrily, "That guy doesn't do things properly and just causes more trouble."

That person was normally antisocial and strange. Sometimes, he left to do some mysterious things, only to return a few days later. Thus, he hadn't been too worried at first, thinking it was a normal occurrence. Only now did he realize that something had happened to Sir Huo.

"Do you have nothing left to say?" Zu An replied with a sneer. "Back then, Golden Token Seven was hit by a spirit element attack. That was how he died in such a mysterious way."

"So it was because of Sir Huo that you suspected me," King Yan said, suddenly realizing the truth.

"You have the strongest motive. You have a spirit element expert, Sir Huo, under you as well. Who else could it be but you?" Zu An retorted. His expression was calm, but all kinds of possibilities appeared in his head.

"Since you've captured Sir Huo, then did he confess to killing Golden Token Seven?" King Yan sneered.

Zu An frowned. Indeed, Sir Huo didn't seem to have admitted to that when he was caught. The group had then focused on Golden Token Seven and King Yan's grudge, however. Then, they had all begun to search for the account book proving King Yan's betrayal. Everything seemed to be rational and clearly structured...

Seeing that Zu An had fallen silent, King Yan harrumphed. "This king knew that I would be the biggest suspect following Golden Token Seven's death. That's why I sent some people to investigate this case as well."

"Oh? You had your own investigation?" Zu An asked. His surprise was real this time. "Who did you send?"

"That's something I can't tell you." King Yan said mysteriously.

Zu An frowned slightly. He didn't know whether King Yan was deliberately making things complicated, or if something really had happened. Still, that helped him make many connections between the details he knew.

"There's just one thing that I don't understand. You should have investigated the Hub of Freedom back then. Why did you investigate me instead?" King Yan spoke up again. His expression was full of confusion.

Zu An thought of something and said, "So you actually bought out that Embroidered Envoy."

Previously, the traitor's description had ended up involving the Hub of Freedom's Tang Tian'er. However, they hadn't expected him to know Tang Tian'er personally.

"Was that Embroidered Envoy later silenced?" Zu An asked. Later, Xiao Jianren's group had investigated everywhere, even going to his home, but there was no news of him at all.

"There was someone who wanted him silenced, but it wasn't me," King Yan replied with a chuckle, as if he had thought through some things.

"Where is he now?" Zu An asked. This traitor didn't seem to just be a simple nobody.

"You haven't even told me why you didn't investigate the Hub of Freedom and instead came after me. Why do I have to tell you that?" King Yan bluntly refused.

Zu An frowned. That subject was related to too many things. Tang Tian'er was his friend, so he didn't want to involve her.

"Even though I don't know why you weren't willing to investigate the Hub of Freedom, I'll still give you a word of advice. In the case of Golden Token Seven's death, the Hub of Freedom is likely involved," King Yan said with a smile. After the initial alarm of being arrested, he seemed to have realized some things. He was more relaxed now.

Zu An asked him about a few more things, but he didn't say a word. Zu An gritted his teeth when he saw that. He really wanted to use the Ikuu Experience card against this guy. However, after some hesitation, he didn't do so and instead left the prison.

...

Zu An summoned Zhang Zitong and Xiao Jianren, ordering them to work with Zhang Jie's officials to investigate the account book's details, as well as to secure any related human testimonies and evidence.

The two of them were both excited. This was a big case! If they succeeded, they would obtain several years' worth of merits!

Zu An then talked to Zhang Jie, Yang Sheng, Liao Ling, and other local officials of Yi Commandery. He had them track down the rest of King Yan's people, and tasked them to detain people such as King Yan's heir and Xiang Minister Sun Xun as quickly as possible.

After assigning all of those tasks, he left. He had too many doubts that he had to look into.

...

As soon as he left the governor manor, he suddenly felt something. He turned to look in a certain direction. He saw a figure slowly walking out from behind a large tree. Even though she was dressed all in black, with that familiar figure and outstanding aura, who else could it be but Yan Xuehen?

"Big sis Yan!" Zu An exclaimed. His previously irritable mood suddenly became calm.

"I was not doing this because I was worried about your safety or anything! I just sensed the emperor's power, so I could not hold back my curiosity and came to take a look," Yan Xuehen said with an unnatural expression.

Zu An sighed and said, "You're finally here! I was almost killed by the emperor just now." He had a weak expression. He closed his eyes and fainted, falling to one side. A cry of alarm filled the air, and then he could feel that he was leaning against a soft body.

"What's wrong?" Yan Xuehen asked nervously. She checked his pulse. However, her expression quickly changed and she pushed him away, exclaiming, "You tricked me again!"

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +33 +33 +33...

However, Zu An wasn't pushed away. In fact, he latched onto her like as if they were stuck together.

"Let go!" Yan Xuehen cried, struggling more fiercely. However, in the end, she didn't use her grandmaster rank power out of fear of accidentally hurting him.

Zu An sighed and said, "Big sis Yan, it looks like you clearly worry about me. Why do you have to lie to yourself?"

"Who is worried about you? I already told you that I suddenly noticed the emperor... Mmm..." Her mouth was covered by scorching hot lips before she could even finish her sentence. Her beautiful eyes immediately widened, and her mind also went blank.

A while later, she finally snapped out of her daze and pushed him away. She was both ashamed and annoyed, snapping, "What are you doing?" Meanwhile, she reflexively looked around.

"Don't worry, there's no one else here," Zu An said, looking at her with a smile. An icy peak crowned with a touch of rosin really was an incredibly beautiful sight.

"Is this an issue of whether there's anyone around us or not? You actually dare to treat me with disrespect!" Yan Xuehen cried. Her entire body was shaking, perhaps because of anger or alarm.

"Is this called disrespect? Then what would you call what we did before?" Zu An retorted, looking directly into her eyes.

Chapter 1668: Two Hours

"You...!" Yan Xuehen trailed off, staring at Zu An. Her chest rose and fell intensely, showing just how shaken up she was. After some time, she took a deep breath and said, "I already said that I've already forgotten what happened at that time."

"Did you really forget?" Zu An replied. He gave the Rage system a look, but he didn't see any Rage points. He couldn't help but grin.

"Of course!" Yan Xuehen replied, her expression turning cold. She immediately turned around to leave.

Zu An sighed and said, "If you really forgot, you would already have fought me to the death the moment you were kissed just now."

With Yan Xuehen's normal personality, forget about kissing her, just being touched by a man would result in that very hand being chopped off.

Yan Xuehen almost fainted on the spot. She turned around and stared at him with an unkind expression, exclaiming, "Are you an idiot? You won't be satisfied unless I kill you or something?"

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +99 +99 +99...

Zu An roared with laughter, saying, "Of course I'm satisfied. I'm actually really happy. This just means I'm actually still important to you!"

Yan Xuehen took a deep breath to calm herself down, saying, "Don't be too much of a narcissist. The only reason I haven't killed you is because you're Chuyan's husband. It's just that I don't want her to feel brokenhearted."

"Fine, fine, fine. I believe you," Zu An said, looking at her with a big smile. This woman is quite interesting when she's upset.

Yan Xuehen almost stamped off in fury when she heard his clearly insincere words. She snapped, "What is your real intention?" She made up her mind that if he dared to say any more of those foolish words, she would immediately draw her sword and cut his tongue off.

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +222 +222 +222...

Zu An put away his smile and said with a serious expression, "I know that there are many, many problems standing in our way, and I don't know how to deal with them. I don't want to make you unhappy either... In that case, why don't you just become my two-hour girlfriend? Then, we'll part ways and I won't get involved with you anymore."

"Two-hour girlfriend? What do you mean?" Yan Xuehen asked with a frown. She clearly should have felt relieved when he said that he wouldn't get involved with her anymore, but why didn't she feel happy at all?

"It'll take about two hours to return to Violet Mountain from here. Let's just be lovers during the trip back. Once we return to Violet Mountain, we'll just become strangers. I'll forget everything and not bother you anymore," Zu An explained.

Yan Xuehen was stirred up inside. If she could get him to stop being involved with her anymore in exchange for that, it wasn't all that bad of a deal...

Her reason finally won out in the end. There had to be a resolution between the two of them eventually. Spending two hours together as lovers, then sealing up those memories, could serve as a way to fully calm herself down. She wouldn't have to worry about her own personal gains and losses anymore.

She took a deep breath and said, "Fine, but you're not allowed to do anything strange!"

"If we're going to be lovers, then of course we have to do what lovers do," Zu An said. However, when he saw her expression change abruptly, he quickly explained, "But we definitely won't do what you're thinking. After all, we have to fly back."

He suddenly recalled what had happened in Bluefield Country. Doing it all the way up there wasn't completely impossible, and that fox queen was soft and amazing...

"I just can't help but feel as if that smile of yours holds bad intentions," Yan Xuehen said, frowning slightly. However, when she thought about how they were going to be flying, she thought that he wouldn't really have any opportunity to do anything over-the-top. As such, she agreed and said, "Fine. I hope you abide by your word."

Zu An happily ran over and grabbed her hand. It was cold to the touch, as if he were holding jade.

Yan Xuehen trembled all over. She reflexively wanted to pull her hand back, crying out, "What are you doing?!"

"Isn't this normal between lovers?" Zu An asked, looking at her in confusion.

Yan Xuehen's breath caught in her throat. She then thought about how this was only going to last two hours. After some hesitation, in the end, she didn't resist.

The two of them walked together under the evening sky just like that. The chirping of the bugs around them from time to time only made the place seem even more peaceful.

When she felt the heat coming from his hands, Yan Xuehen felt uncomfortable all over. In order to ease the awkwardness, she asked, "What exactly happened over at the governor manor?"

Zu An gave her a rough description of what had just happened. As he breathed the faint fragrance wafting through the air, he really felt happy.

"The emperor is really strong, so I didn't even dare to get too close earlier for fear of being discovered," Yan Xuehen said. She still felt some lingering fear.

"Was that an earth immortal's yin or yang soul?" Zu An asked. She was a grandmaster who had already been famous for a long time, so she probably knew more about that than him.

"Judging from what you were saying, that was definitely his yang soul. But even though he's made an appearance several times, I've never heard of him revealing his yang soul. Looks like he really does treat you differently," Yan Xuehen said, feeling moved.

"What do you mean, he treats me differently? Isn't it just because he was worried that something strange was happening here on Violet Mountain?" Zu An replied disdainfully.

"What do you mean?" Yan Xuehen asked, stunned. She clearly picked up the implications behind what he said.

Zu An didn't hide the truth and told her that Zhao Han had sent him to repair Violet Mountain's palaces, but his real mission was to check for hidden dangers there.

Yan Xuehen grinned and said, "So you were suspicious that the people of the daoist sects were actually here because they wanted to act against the emperor. In that case, why did you tell me about this? I'm also from the daoist sects."

Zu An stared calmly into her perfect, flawless face and said, "Because we're lovers. Lovers are the closest and most intimate people to each other in the entire world. Why would I hide this from you?"

Yan Xuehen was deeply touched. Was that the weight of the term 'lovers'?

However, she still couldn't handle his scorching gaze and shifted her gaze slightly, saying, "Don't worry. The emperor is so formidable. Not even the nine sects added up together would be his match. Why would we overestimate ourselves and do something like that?"

"That's hard to say for certain..." Zu An trailed off. His expression suddenly changed and he said, "Oh no. If I can summon the emperor at any time with the golden token, can he monitor everything I'm doing through the golden token if he wants?"

He was a huge criminal. There were too many opportunities for the emperor to find out his secrets.

Yan Xuehen couldn't help but smile when she saw how nervous he was. She said, "Don't worry. He only left a trace of aura on your golden token. It's just enough for him to sense and come to you when needed. There's no way he could constantly monitor you unless he actually stored a portion of his yang soul in that token. But that would be too dangerous for an earth immortal, because if you encountered some really powerful foe and that portion of soul got destroyed, that would deal a serious blow to the emperor's strength."

She looked at Zu An before continuing, "Even though you have a lot of secrets, in the emperor's eyes, there's no way you would be worth taking that big of a risk. Furthermore, you usually store your golden token in the storage subspace too. Even if he did do something to the token, he still cannot monitor your actions."

Zu An couldn't help but sigh before becoming much more relaxed. He said, "It seems you were always watching over me. You even know that I kept the golden token in my storage space."

Yan Xuehen's expression became a bit unnatural. She harrumphed. "I'm not blind, you know." Then, she continued, "Right, judging from what you were saying just now, it sounds as if you believe King Yan when he says he wasn't the one who killed Golden Token Seven?"

"Yeah. That old fox wouldn't tell me the truth even after ending up in his current situation, still telling me to investigate the Hub of Freedom," Zu An sneered. "In that case, he deserves everything that's coming to him."

"It sounds as if you don't really want to investigate the Hub of Freedom," Yan Xuehen said, blinking. She carefully observed his reaction.

After some hesitation, Zu An still nodded and said, "I won't hide it from you. I have a friend in the Hub of Freedom who treats me quite well. Why should I investigate them just because of what King Yan said? Either way, King Yan had the motive and ability. The proof is already enough."

“Your friend from the Hub of Freedom is a woman, right? And definitely a really pretty woman,” Yan Xuehen sneered. However, she still felt warm inside, because he had shared such a deep secret.

Zu An’s expression stiffened. He replied, “What does this have to do with being pretty or not? The main thing is that she’s my friend.”

“But of course. They can’t be your friends if they’re ugly, though,” Yan Xuehen said, rolling her eyes. She seemed to have seen straight through him.

Zu An was speechless. This woman looked like a cold and silent beauty, and yet she had such a sharp tongue to her too?

Yan Xuehen suddenly said, “You should keep some distance from the Hub of Freedom in the future. There are no benefits to being too close to them.”

Zu An was stunned. He picked up some implications from her words and asked, “Why?”

After some hesitation, Yan Xuehen slowly said, “Don’t tell anyone else what I’m about to tell you, and especially not to those from the court.”

Zu An shivered and replied, “Alright!”

“Because of the White Jade Sect’s history, I learned that the Hub of Freedom might have some connection to the Meng Dynasty’s royal family,” Yan Xuehen slowly said.

“Meng Dynasty? The previous dynasty?” Zu An asked, shocked.

Yan Xuehen nodded and explained, “The reason for the Zhou Dynasty’s power is that it was built on the Meng Dynasty’s foundation. In the past, the Meng Dynasty was also a glorious age. The daoist sects received a lot of benefits back then... But there was a dispute between brothers over the throne, so once the emperor ascended, he was always on guard against his brothers and other imperial clan members. The succeeding emperors never let go of those policies, not allowing the other clan members to gain any authority.

“That behavior alone wasn’t that surprising, but it just so happened that the emperors who succeeded the throne all had rather short lifespans. Because of that, some important ministers became elders. Because the emperors were young, as the wars with the Fiend races continued, authority was gradually seized by those elders instead.”

Zu An sighed and said, “The ancestor of this dynasty was none other than the subject with the greatest authority back then.”

After arriving in this world, he had frantically tried to gather historical knowledge. Even though this part of history had been modified, after becoming an Embroidered Envoy, he had still been able to access some information ordinary people didn’t have.

Yan Xuehen nodded slightly and said, “That’s right. The founding ancestor of this dynasty had established tremendous prestige in the wars against the Fiend races. In time, taking over the Meng Dynasty was only to be expected. The other elders who were protecting the Meng Dynasty had already been beaten down for many years, so they no longer had the strength to stop him.

“Of course, it was still a glorious dynasty in the end. The Meng Dynasty was dissatisfied with the Zhou Dynasty’s ancestor taking the throne. They gathered their forces and launched several large scale rebellions. But in the end, they were all defeated. The court’s officials also carried out a cruel suppression of the Meng Dynasty’s faction. From then on, news of the Meng Dynasty rarely appeared again.”

She paused for a moment, then added, “And the Hub of Freedom rose up in that time.

“There are fewer than three people total in all of the White Jade Sect who know of this. So, I hope you won’t make things difficult for me.”

Zu An was beyond shocked. He hadn’t expected the Hub of Freedom to be related to the previous dynasty! The Embroidered Envoy didn’t necessarily know about that. The only reason why Yan Xuehen had such information was probably because the White Jade Sect and Meng Dynasty had had quite a considerable relationship back then.

He couldn’t help but hold Yan Xuehen’s hands and say in a moved tone, “You even told me such a great secret of the White Jade Sect?”

Yan Xuehen blushed. She pursed her small lips and said, “Aren’t we lovers? You said that lovers don’t have to keep anything from each other.”

Under the moonlight, her features glistened like sparkling jade. There was a layer of hazy light covering her entire body that made her look absolutely enchanting. Zu An was really moved. He couldn’t hold himself back and pulled her into his firm embrace.

Yan Xuehen’s body stiffened. She instinctively wanted to push him away, but after raising her hand several times, in the end, she gently hugged his shoulder. Either way, it was just going to be for a short time...

Chapter 1669: I Have a Friend

Yan Xuehen had the ‘two-hour’ excuse that helped her relax considerably. She clearly also planned to devote everything to this two-hour romance, as only then would she be able to end their relationship without any regrets. Then, she could completely cut off those emotions.

After their embrace, their relationship clearly became a bit more natural. The two of them held hands as they walked together.

Perhaps it was because Yan Xuehen was embarrassed, or maybe because she felt awkward, but in the end, she couldn’t hold herself back and asked, “Are you not going to investigate Hub of Freedom at all after knowing about their background?”

“What is there to investigate? It has nothing to do with me,” Zu An said, looking at her carefully. “Furthermore, even if there is a relationship, it’s nowhere as important as you. I don’t care about anything else during these two hours. Spending time with you is the most important thing.”

Yan Xuehen was a bit alarmed. Was this the so-called feeling of a romantic relationship? She felt both happy and bashful right now. At the same time, there were some mysterious feelings of alarm mixed in.

The two wandered around under the moonlight just like that. No one said anything, as if they both really treasured the brief period of peace and silence.

After walking together for a while longer, Yan Xuehen looked in Violet Mountain's direction. In the end, she couldn't help but say, "If we continue like this, we won't reach Violet Mountain even by the time the sky becomes bright again."

Zu An figured that what she said made sense. There could end up being all sorts of rumors if the two of them just happened to be missing during dawn. As such, he took out the Wind Fire Wheels. Then, he made an inviting gesture to Yan Xuehen.

Yan Xuehen reflexively shook her head and said, "I can fly on my own."

"We're lovers, so shouldn't we be intimate and passionate?" Zu An said with a chuckle.

Yan Xuehen's cheeks heated up. "Didn't we already agree that there wouldn't be any of those kinds of things?"

The hug and hand holding were the most she could tolerate.

"We have less than two hours of time left," Zu An said, his frivolous expression gone. Instead, his voice was full of a sense of loss and loneliness.

When she saw his expression, Yan Xuehen felt a mysterious pain within her. She thought, Right, there are only two hours left. Either way, it's not as if it's something ridiculous. I've ridden on the Wind Fire Wheels with him before. Upon having that thought, she no longer resisted. With a light kick off the ground, she arrived at his side.

Zu An took her into his arms and carried her firmly. They soared into the sky together on the Wind Fire Wheels. Yan Xuehen felt as if arcs of electricity were running through her entire body as she rested in his arms. There was a strong air of masculinity all around her. She felt goosebumps all over, and her breath quickened. Even though there were cold winds roaring past her ears, she could only feel his gentle and warm exhaling breath.

"What did you say just now?" Yan Xuehen suddenly asked, feeling a bit embarrassed. Even though there were roaring winds around them, she was a glorious grandmaster! They were so close, and yet she actually couldn't hear what he said... Her head was definitely a mess because of how she was being carried.

Zu An raised her arm and said, "I told you to do it like this."

Yan Xuehen trembled under his touch. She quickly said, "Don't... Don't touch me. I'll move by myself."

However, when she spread her arms out, she was a bit confused. She asked, "What is the meaning of this? This will just increase the air resistance of our flight."

"Just stay like that," Zu An said as he gently held her soft, willowy waist, then rested his chin on her shoulder. The two of them remained close to each other just like that.

"What... What are you..." Yan Xuehen trailed off, her voice trembling a bit. Their cheeks were pressed against each other. They were so close to each other that they could hear each other's breathing.

"This is a classic pose from a love story from my hometown, between the male and female lead..." Zu An slowly replied, seemingly reminiscing about something.

"What love story?" Yan Xuehen asked, stunned. She was quite knowledgeable, but why had she never heard of such a thing before?

"A long time ago, there was a young man named Jack and a wealthy miss named Rose..." Zu An told the story the way he remembered it.

Yan Xuehen couldn't help but frown as she listened. "Why do I feel strange? Doesn't this Rose have a fiancé who loves her dearly? Why would she do something to let down her fiancé and her family?"

Zu An choked. He hadn't expected her to focus on that detail. He hurriedly explained, "Uh... she was forced into an arranged marriage. She doesn't actually love that fiancé. She and Jack are true lovers, and this was the happiest time of her life. For the sake of love, she bravely broke the shackles of their engagement. Meanwhile, for her sake, Jack gave up his life..."

Yan Xuehen suddenly said, "Are you telling me this story because you're implying that I should break the rules and be with you?"

Zu An was speechless. Isn't there something wrong with the way this woman thinks? He replied, "Uh... That's not what I meant. It's just that we're flying through the sky, so I instinctively felt like doing this classic pose. At the same time, I wanted to share a story with you..."

Yan Xuehen grinned. It wasn't that often that she got to see him looking hard-pressed. But does this kid really think I don't know what he's planning? She continued, "If Rose and Jack really loved each other, then after Jack died for her, she should have just remained alone for the rest of her life. Why did she still marry another man and give birth to so many children?"

Zu An scratched his head and said, "As for that... I guess we can just say that their culture is different. Sacrificing yourself for love wasn't considered something worthy of advocating for..."

Yan Xuehen shook her head and said, "I just feel that your story is strange. There are many parts that don't make sense."

Zu An felt a bit dejected. It really was as Yun Jianyue said; Yan Xuehen really was a stone cold woman! She had actually focused on the plot holes in such a touching story of romance.

However, Yan Xuehen felt a bit conflicted too. In Zu An's story, Jack and Rose had kissed each other after embracing each other like this. What was she going to do if he kissed her here?

Even though she wasn't willing to admit it, she knew that she wasn't resisting him as much as before. After all, the two had already experienced the most intimate things together. They had already kissed once before, so what was another...

Ahhh! Yan Xuehen, Yan Xuehen! What kind of nonsense are you thinking?!

The only thing I agreed to with him was these two hours. This can be considered an ending to our ill-fated relationship.

But apart from a kiss, I definitely won't let him do anything else!

Especially those mischievous hands of his. If he dares to move them wantonly, I'll definitely freeze them!

Let alone anything that goes even further...

That memory of Great Snowy Mountain couldn't help but surface in her mind. Her skin turned a faint pink, and her entire body became a bit softer.

A while later, she pursed her lips. Why is this kid so obedient today? He's not kissing me, and his arm is only gently hugging my waist. He's not doing anything else?

A while later, she couldn't help but bite her lip. They were almost at Violet Mountain, and yet he still hadn't kissed her. There wasn't going to be another chance.

However, as they arrived near Violet Mountain, Zu An only hugged her gently. He didn't do anything else.

"This is the first time I've been unhappy with how fast the Wind Fire Wheels are," Zu An said with a sigh. He let her go and continued, "Let's just separate here. There are many grandmasters on the mountain and divine senses are sweeping around everywhere. Your reputation will be harmed if we are noticed by them." He waved toward her and headed up the mountain with a forlorn expression.

Countless scenarios of Zu An pestering Yan Xuehen had run through her mind, including how she would deal with them one after another. She hadn't expected him to just give up so easily. At that instant, she felt really out of sorts.

She had already prepared herself, thinking that she would devote herself completely to this two-hour romance. It was to the extent that as long as he didn't cross that final line, she could have accepted anything. That was how she had wanted to end things so that she wouldn't have any regret and could have a proper conclusion. Then, she could just forget about everything she felt about him. After that, she could face him and Chuyan as a proper senior. From then on, there would only be a Sect Master Yan, never again that 'big sis Yan'.

However, things hadn't gone according to her plans. This guy had suddenly become a proper gentleman, leaving her confused.

Her lips opened and closed several times, but after some hesitation, she didn't say anything for a long time. How could she be the one to speak about such things first?

...

When she changed her clothes and returned to her courtyard, she saw that Chu Chuyan was waiting for her.

"Master, where did you go?" Chu Chuyan asked, sighing in relief when she saw Yan Xuehen return.

"I went out for a stroll." Yan Xuehen said, feeling a bit annoyed. She couldn't just say that she had gone on a two-hour date with Chuyan's husband, right?

Chu Chuyan looked at her in surprise, saying, "Master seems to be annoyed by something. Maybe you can tell me about it and I'll see if I can help you?"

"You're overthinking things. I'm fine," Yan Xuehen said. She naturally didn't want to say too much.

Chu Chuyan didn't back down, continuing, "Master, we've already lived together for so long. How could I not be able to tell that you have something on your mind? I know that you don't want me to be distracted, but master is also important to me."

Yan Xuehen knew that she couldn't deceive her quick-witted disciple that easily. She shook her head, feeling a guilty conscience as she said, "You won't be able to help me with this."

Sigh, just how would she view her own husband if she found out the truth?

"That's hard to say," Chu Chuyan said, clinging to Yan Xuehen's arm. "Master definitely knows far more than I do in terms of cultivation matters, but master might not have as much experience in secular affairs. I might be able to offer a different insight."

For better or for worse, she had operated a great clan in Brightmoon City for so many years. She naturally knew more about the secular world than her aloof master.

Yan Xuehen was about to refuse, but she couldn't withstand Chuyan's eager gaze. She could only say, "Um... Actually, this is what happened. I have a friend, and they... unknowingly made a mistake. But if they spoke about this mistake, it would harm the ones closest to them. However, if they didn't talk about it, it would make them feel really restless and uneasy."

"If it's the ones closest to them, they'd definitely forgive that person for that unintentional mistake," Chu Chuyan replied. At the same time, she wondered who this friend her master was talking about was. Martial Uncle Chen? Martial Aunt Xiao?

Yan Xuehen shook her head and said, "This kind of mistake isn't one that the closest person to them could forgive. If they found out, the two would no longer be the closest people to each other, and they could even become enemies."

"So it was like that... Then that is a bit tricky," Chu Chuyan said. She frowned and became silent.

Yan Xuehen smiled bitterly. It's more than just tricky...

Chu Chuyan suddenly raised her head. "Master, that friend of yours... If they had a chance, would they make that mistake again?"

Yan Xuehen was completely stunned when she heard the question.

Chapter 1670: Missing

Yan Xuehen had never considered the question before. Now that Chu Chuyan had mentioned it, she began to think to herself again. In the past, Zu An had risked his life several times to save her, to the point that his body had ended up on the brink of collapse. Would she really just stand there without doing anything and watch him die?

When she thought of that, she slowly said, "They would probably do it again."

Chu Chuyan said with a smile, "In that case, what else is there for that friend to feel vexed over? Even though it was an inadvertent mistake, it's enough that they don't regret it. As for the consequences,

they could just deal with that later. They could just cross the bridge when they got there, as they could always find a way.”

Her master normally had a calm and collected demeanor. She was a complete ice queen from the peak of a frozen mountain. She didn’t have even a touch of worldly vulgarity. That was why Chu Chuyan didn’t think that this honorable master of hers could be the very friend she was talking about. Her first thought was that it was someone Yan Xuehen knew.

However, with her master’s nature, she only had a few people she would consider friends in her circle, and none of them seemed to really match her earlier description. There was no way it could be the Devil Sect’s Yun Jianyue, right?

When Yan Xuehen heard her disciple’s advice, she mysteriously felt better. She said, “Chuyan, thank you.”

Chu Chuyan smiled and replied, “I’m happy that I was able to take on a share of master’s worries.”

Yan Xuehen was alarmed and quickly said, “I will find a chance to pass this on to that friend of mine.”

Chu Chuyan didn’t suspect her. She happily started discussing the following competition.

...

The next morning, the various sects’ disciples gathered at Golden Peak, eager to see who would be the final champion. They all speculated as to who would come out on top.

Based on days of observation, more of them favored Peng Wuyan. After all, Pei Mianman had struggled even against Zhi Yin during the group stage, and she had even been injured quite a bit. Zhi Yin hadn’t even reached the master rank yet!

Meanwhile, Peng Wuyan had more accomplishments and had won against many representative disciples. She had even won against Wu Xiaofan, who had been widely acknowledged as number one!

Of course, Pei Mianman’s supporters insisted that because Zhi Yin had an immortal-grade weapon, his real strength was no lower than the master rank competitors, Wu Xiaofan and Wan Guiyi.

The judges also appeared one after another. Wang Wuxie naturally sat in the main seat. His eyes secretly darted toward Yan Xuehen’s position. When he saw that familiar white figure, he immediately became a bit happier. Even though he had already gotten over his past crush and didn’t vainly hope to have anything between the two of them, just being able to see her was already something that filled him with delight.

However, intentionally or otherwise, Yan Xuehen was glancing toward Zu An’s direction. Not only had that so-called two-hour love not granted her the fulfillment she was looking for so that she could cut off all of her feelings, it had only left her even more perplexed. Fortunately, after the enlightenment Chu Chuyan had granted her, her current plan was just to take things one step at a time.

Zu An noticed Yan Xuehen’s gaze. He nodded slightly toward her, then continued to talk with the people around him.

Yan Xuehen suddenly felt a bit empty. She was used to him brazenly calling her 'big sis Yan' and taking all sorts of 'disgraceful' liberties with her. Now that he was suddenly acting so estranged, however, she didn't know how to react.

She was suddenly a bit stunned when she recalled what they had agreed on, that they would have nothing to do with each other after the two-hour lovers' experience. Don't tell me he really plans to follow through with that?

That was what she had been hoping for, and yet when it really happened, she was actually caught off guard.

When he saw Yan Xuehen's beautiful brows furrow, the Heavenly Sorrow Sect's Guan Chouhai couldn't help but ask, "What seems to be on Sect Master Yan's mind? Perhaps we can offer you some thoughts if you share it with us. With our cultivation and abilities, there are few things in this world that we cannot solve." With so many people here, he couldn't bring himself to be so shameless as to call her Fairy Yan.

Wang Wuxie frowned slightly. He had almost forgotten that Guan Chouhai was previously a fervent pursuer of Yan Xuehen as well. However, he wasn't too worried. Someone as sleazy as Guan Chouhai wasn't even a threat to one such as himself. He refused to believe that someone as pure and aloof as a goddess would favor someone like him.

Sure enough, Yan Xuehen said coldly, "Sect Master Guan must have misunderstood. I am only curious as to why the other contestant has not arrived yet."

The previous night, when her disciple asked her the same question, she had felt a bit touched. But this Guan Chouhai had nothing to do with her. What right did he have to try to help her with her worries?

When he sensed the coldness in her tone, Wang Wuxie almost laughed out loud. This Guan bastard really overestimates himself. I'm too embarrassed to even try to get her attention, and yet even someone like you thinks you can?

However, he quickly thought about what Yan Xuehen had said. He looked at the stage and sure enough, only Pei Mianman was there. Peng Wuyan was nowhere to be seen. It wasn't just her; Emptiness Isle's Elder Peng and the other disciples hadn't come at all.

Wang Wuxie frowned. He summoned Feng Wuchang and said, "Junior brother, please check on the situation for me."

Feng Wuchang nodded. Then, he flew in the direction of Emptiness Isle's courtyard.

The disciples below immediately broke out into a commotion.

"Don't tell me Peng Wuyan didn't come because she was scared?"

"What kind of joke is that? Peng Wuyan's cultivation is clearly higher, so why would she be scared?"

"Then something probably happened. There's no way this Pei girl is going to win this competition entirely through luck, right?"

...

All sorts of discussions happened below. Zu An was also stunned. The luck pill's effects weren't supposed to last so long, right? Why had Pei Mianman won again without fighting?

Suddenly, a figure rushed back angrily. It was none other than Emptiness Isle's Elder Peng. Feng Wuyan couldn't even catch up to her as he followed behind her.

All those in the judges' seats became a bit uneasy when they saw how she was acting and hurriedly asked, "What exactly happened, Elder Peng?"

"Wuyan went missing!" Elder Peng replied, her expression completely overcast.

The place erupted with noise. Was Pei Mianman's luck really just that good?

Guan Chouhai asked curiously, "What do you mean, she went missing?"

Elder Peng shot him a look and replied, "Are your ears not working? What else can missing mean? She wasn't in her room when I went to look for her this morning! The disciples and I looked all over, but didn't find her anywhere."

Guan Chouhai immediately swallowed his next words down. He had almost started a fight with her on the spot, but stopped when he realized how distressed she looked.

The elders in the judges' seats looked at each other in dismay. In all of the years of the great daoist competition, such a thing had never happened before.

Wang Wuxie couldn't help but ask, "Could it be that she encountered something and had to leave?"

"How could that be?" Elder Peng directly retorted. "She has no one she knows here, and she has her championship match here today. How could she leave? Someone definitely kidnapped her!"

"But that should be impossible. With Violet Mountain's security, it should be really hard for any outsiders to come in. Furthermore, worthy niece Peng's cultivation is already at the very top among her peers. With Elder Peng residing in the same residence, who else could have taken her away without drawing any attention?" Wang Wuxie immediately replied in return. This was Violet Mountain's territory. If any security breaches were to happen, a lot of responsibility would fall on him.

Elder Peng sneered. "Sure, it might be difficult for anyone among her peers to harm her, but what if it was someone of the older generation? It seems there are some people who do not wish for our Emptiness Isle to take the championship."

The expressions of the people in the judges' area immediately changed when they heard those words.

Even Wan Guiyi couldn't help but look at his father. If Peng Wuyan disappeared, the one with the most to gain would naturally be Jadedfall Palace. That way, Pei Mianman would win again without needing to fight and become the winner. He still carried a rather good impression of Peng Wuyan, who gave off a presence of power. Furthermore, with his personality, he couldn't be satisfied with such under-the-table tricks.

Wan Tongtian almost strangled his son when he saw those looks. If even his son was looking at him like that, what about everyone else?

As such, he hurriedly explained, "I was together with junior sister Huo Ling to help with Manman's training the entire day yesterday. We taught her how to deal with today's competition, so how could we have done such a thing?"

"You were together with Elder Huo Ling?" Guan Chouhai replied with an 'oh' of surprise. There was an amused look in his eyes.

When she saw people's gossipy gazes, Elder Huo Ling's face reddened for the first time. Wan Tongtian panicked and said, "Mister Guan, it's not as filthy as you are imagining. We were just chatting normally."

When she saw him frantically try to explain himself, Elder Huo Ling only felt really annoyed. She got angrier and angrier.

"You stayed in the same room and chatted together for an entire night? That sounds quite normal to me, alright," Guan Chouhai said mockingly. The Heavenly Sorrow Sect and Jadedfall Palace had never gotten along that well, so he wasn't worried at all about any further drama that could ensue.

"Mister Guan, it seems we really can't expect anything good to come out of the mouth of a dog!" Elder Huo Ling snapped furiously. She fired back with curses.

Guan Chouhai was still a sect master for better or for worse. Being cursed in front of so many people was something he couldn't just swallow down. He also slammed the table and got up, retorting, "What, are others even not allowed to talk about the things that you did, or you might have done yourselves?"

"Enough!" When he saw that these two important individuals were arguing like mere juniors, Wang Wuxie couldn't continue to listen. He said, "We need to discuss the case of worthy niece Peng's disappearance. Do not drag in anything else."

He looked at Elder Peng afterward and continued. "Worthy niece Peng's cultivation isn't low, and you were also there by her side. I just cannot figure out who across all of Violet Mountain would have the ability to silently kidnap her."

People's gazes all fell onto Elder Peng. Right... Elder Peng's cultivation might not be the highest here, but kidnapping her disciple without alerting her at all would be practically impossible.

"There was a mysterious person who left a letter yesterday, saying that there was something they wanted to discuss with me and that it was related to today's competition. Even though I felt that it was rather underhanded, it was related to today, so I didn't dare to lower my guard. I set out to meet with them just as the letter stated," Elder Peng said with an annoyed expression. "But I didn't find the one who arranged the meeting at all."

Wan Tongtian and Elder Huo Ling both cried out in surprise. They seemed to have thought of something similar.

Wang Wuxie looked at them and asked, "Did you two think of any clues?"

"No," The two both replied in unison. How could they let anyone else know about their awkward incident? Wouldn't that make them a laughingstock in the daoist sects?

Elder Peng continued and said, "I went straight back after. I thought that there was nothing to it and just assumed it was a mischievous prank. Now that I think about it, something probably happened to Wuyan during that time."

The White Jade Sect's Li Changsheng asked curiously, "Did you not think to confirm whether your disciple was still there, thus only noticing that she disappeared today?"

"Wuyan fought several battles in a row. What she needed the most at that time was rest, and not to be babysat until the last minute," Elder Peng said while staring coldly at Wan Tongtian and Huo Ling.

Wan Tongtian and Huo Ling both felt annoyed. They harrumphed to express their disagreement.

Then, Elder Peng continued to cause havoc on Golden Peak. She claimed that the sects weren't willing to see their disciples lose, so some older generation figures acted without any regard for their own status.

Now, even the Kunlun Void Sect, Supreme Mystery Cave, and the other sect representatives' expressions became unhappy. Even Wang Wuxie didn't look that happy, because their disciples had all lost to Peng Wuyan.

However, the others couldn't help but look at Wang Wuxie. It was one thing if they lost; there was no reason for them to do something so shameless. It was different for Wang Wuxie, though. Wu Xiaofan was Wang Wuxie's disciple, the one who was publicly acknowledged as having the greatest chance of winning this competition. Wang Wuxie had even given him the Green Scale Armor, proving just how much he wanted him to win. Furthermore, this was Violet Mountain's domain. Wang Wuxie's cultivation was high as well, so he had the motive and ability to do such a thing.

When he saw the looks of suspicion, Wang Wuxie's face heated up. This really was a frustrating situation!

Yan Xuehen spoke up and asked, "Could it be that Devil Sect's Yun Jianyue did this? I feel that this fits her style of doing things."