

## Immortal 211

### Chapter 211: Less Than a Beast

"Who's concerned about you? I'm just reminding you on Miss Chu's behalf! I'm feeling unwell now, so I shan't talk to you anymore," spat Qiao Xueying coldly.

After saying her piece, she flipped her body over and directed her back toward him, as if she had gone to sleep.

Ji Xiaoxi also tugged Zu An's sleeves and said softly, "Miss Qiao is severely injured. It's beneficial to her recovery to rest more, so you shouldn't interrupt her."

Zu An burst into laughter. This lass is as kind as ever, always assuming the best of a person. Isn't it obvious that Qiao Xueying is just feigning sleep?

"Very well, we shall head to the side to talk then. Let's not disturb her rest." It just so happened that Zu An had something to talk to her about.

Listening to the departing footsteps of the duo, Qiao Xueying, who was indeed feigning sleep, gnashed her teeth in frustration. Just what does that fellow intend to say that he needs to do it behind my back?

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +233 Rage!

Zu An was amused to see the inflow of Rage points

"Big brother Zu, what are you laughing at?" Ji Xiaoxi looked at him with her large, innocent eyes.

"Nothing much," replied Zu An. "Why are you calling me big brother Zu again? Call me Ah Zu instead."

"Oh..." Ji Xiaoxi couldn't understand why Zu An was so fixated on this address.

"Thanks for your clothes earlier on," said Zu An. Looking at the innocent lady before him, Zu An really couldn't raise any thoughts of besmirching her. "I apologize for causing the misunderstanding earlier. I'll explain it to them later on."

"It's fine. We know that we're innocent, and that's all that matters," replied Ji Xiaoxi with a shake of her head. Her eyes were as clear as water, carrying not a hint of other thoughts at all. "Ah, you managed to find the Evanescent Lotus, right?"

Zu An was taken aback. "How did you know?"

Ji Xiaoxi's face reddened a little as she lowered her head in embarrassment. "While I was checking your pulse earlier, I noticed that your injuries have fully recovered, and the area under your ki core has become... normal."

In fact, she noticed that the pulsation from that area was far more powerful even when compared to other cultivators, but of course, a young lady like her couldn't possibly say those words aloud.

Zu An nodded and said, "I did manage to find the Evanescent Lotus. Speaking of which, I really have to thank your father's pill for this."

He chose not to mention that the Evanescent Lotus had been consumed by Chu Chuyan, or else it would be hard to explain to Ji Xiaoxi how he managed to break free of his seal. After all, she was well-versed in medicine, so it would be hard to fool her with typical excuses. However, he couldn't say the truth to her either as he had already promised Mi Li not to reveal the existence of the Primordial Origin Sutra to anyone else.

"I didn't expect the pill to actually be effective. I was still worried that things might go wrong," Ji Xiaoxi patted her chest and heaved a deep sigh of relief.

"???" Zu An.

Wait a moment, there's something really weird about this reaction.

The embarrassed Ji Xiaoxi explained meekly, "It was the first time my father was making the unsealing medicine from some of the ancient medicine manuals. He was only 50% confident of success, and it was so as to not make you worry that he kept it from you."

She didn't want to lie to him if possible, thinking that a physician should always inform his patient the truth. However, her father told him that the psychological state of the patient was also important to the treatment. Thinking that it did make sense, she reluctantly went along with her father.

Thinking that it made sense, she reluctantly kept the matter from Zu An, only revealing it now that the treatment was over.

"..." Zu An.

Ji Dengtu, that damned scammer!

It was lucky that I encountered another fortuitous encounter, or else if I failed to recover after consuming the Evanescent Lotus, I might just lose all hope in life and end my misery there!

Damn it, I'll make sure to settle the score with him!

However, thinking about Ji Dengtu's unfathomably powerful cultivation, those thoughts swiftly evaporated from his mind. Forget it, I'll settle the score in some other way.

"Speaking of which, Xiaoxi, how is your leg doing?" asked Zu An. He remembered Bai Susu saying something along the lines that she had accidentally sprained her leg while looking for help. Feeling touched, he stretched his hand forth as he asked, "Shall I help you massage it?"

"Don't worry, I'm already feeling much better." Ji Xiaoxi's face reddened as she retracted her leg and subconsciously pulled her skirt down a little.

It was due to her knowledge that Zu An wasn't a real man that she didn't mind those physical contact with him previously, but now that he had recovered, she couldn't help but feel a little shy around him.

On the other hand, Zu An was taken aback for a moment before realizing that he had accidentally went too far. Somehow, toward this incredibly kind and adorable little lady, he found himself unable to tease her without feeling guilt-ridden. So, he quickly put on a solemn expression and replied, "Xiaoxi, I'm sorry. It was due to me that you ended up wasting your time in the dungeon and wasn't able to harvest anything good."

“That’s not it. I think that the time I spent with you was quite fruitful!” replied Ji Xiaoxi excitedly. “I’ve never met with something as thrilling as this in my entire life. The experience in the mountain valley was definitely far more than anything I could wish for! As for the treasures, that means nothing much to me. My father has plenty of precious medicinal herbs anyway, so I’m not lacking in ingredients.”

“...” Zu An.

Wow, rich people do think with a different mindset compared to us, ordinary folks.

Despite what Ji Xiaoxi said, Zu An still couldn’t shrug off the guilt he felt. He felt that he should make up for it somehow.

All of a sudden, a thought surfaced in his mind, and he took out a ki stone that was emanating a blood-red glow from his robe and stuffed it into her hands, saying, “Here, I’ll give this to you.”

Mi Li’s clothes back at the underground palace were donned with many precious ki stones, be it her coronet, empress gown, or waist belt. While her clothes later disintegrated from age, these ki stones remained perfectly intact. While Mi Li was changing her clothes, he secretly picked them up and stowed them away.

The largest ki stone of all was the one embedded at the center of her coronet. Considering the possibility that it might have some significance to Mi Li, he decided to keep it for the time being so as to construct another coronet with it for her. Instead, he chose to take out the second largest, the one that was embedded on her waist belt.

Mi Li would probably be thankful when she finds out that I actually showed so much concern for her, right?

“What’s this?” Ji Xiaoxi took a closer look at the ki stone, only for her face to warp in astonishment. Her mouth grew so big that one could stuff an entire egg in. “Heaven grade ki stone!”

Just like diamonds in his previous world, the ki stones in this world had different grades too. The ones that were commonly seen in the market and distributed by Brightmoon Academy were ordinary grade ki stones.

A tier above that would be the earth grade ki stones. In terms of the quantity and concentration of ki, it was far superior to the ordinary grade ki stones. It was often used by major clans to nurture their core members.”

Beyond that would be the heaven grade ki stone. It was said to be a resource monopolized fully by the imperial family, and it was said to be extremely rare. Only the emperor, empress, crown prince, and favored princes were qualified to use it. Most other princes, unless with a special exception, wouldn’t even be able to come into contact with it.

Zu An was taken aback, not expecting it to be a heaven ki stone. He had learned about the classification of ki stones from the academy, but he had never seen one in person so he couldn’t recognize it.

“I can’t accept something as valuable as this!” exclaimed Ji Xiaoxi as she handed the crimson ki stone back to Zu An.

“How can I possibly take back a gift? Don’t worry and accept it.” Even though Zu An knew that this ki stone was precious too, he still unhesitatingly insisted for Ji Xiaoxi to accept it.

He recalled the turmoil he had been through ever since transmigrating into this world, especially the suffering he had suffered from Qiao Xueying. With such thoughts in mind, he directed a vicious glare at the culprit.

However, Ji Xiaoxi’s presence brought warmth to his life. When she became cognizant of his affliction, she quickly thought up of ways to help him. Even in this dungeon, she also desperately tried to garner help in order to save him from the zombie soldiers too.

“It’s simply too precious. I can’t accept it!” Ji Xiaoxi shook her head vehemently. Due to how anxious she was, her fair complexion ended up turning a little red.

Zu An grabbed her hands and said, “Xiaoxi, no matter how important this ki stone is, it can’t possibly be more important than you.”

Ji Xiaoxi found her heart beating furiously as she wondered... Is he confessing to me?

“If it wasn’t for you, I would have already died numerous times by now. On top of that, I wouldn’t have recovered from my affliction either,” said Zu An solemnly. “Does my life not mean as much as this ki stone in your eyes?”

“Of course not...” Ji Xiaoxi heaved a sigh of relief upon realizing that she was overthinking things. Yet, at the same time, she felt a profound emotion that she couldn’t really put her finger on in her heart.

“Since that’s the case, you should just accept it. I might just have more requests to ask for you in the future, and I shan’t be paying the consultation fee then, alright?” said Zu An.

“Since that’s the case... I’ll accept it then.” Feeling the burning warmth of Zu An’s hands, Ji Xiaoxi found herself at a loss as to whether she should retract her hands or not. “Actually, if you look for me, you wouldn’t have to pay consultation fee anyway... though I can’t say the same for my father.”

Thinking about the greedy and lustful Ji Dengtu, Zu An couldn’t help but chuckle in response. “Indeed, hahaha.”

The two of them continued chatting for a while as they shared what they had encountered over the last few days. Soon, Ji Xiaoxi caved in to her exhaustion and dozed off on his shoulder.

Her eyelashes quivered slightly in the wind. Sunlight shone through the cracks of the tree leaves above them, bringing a gentle spotlight to her fair complexion.

Zu An found himself feeling a little touched. She must have hardly slept a wink out of worry of my safety over the last few days. Now that she finally knows that I’m safe, her body finally succumbs to her exhaustion.

“Cough!”

Zu An turned to look at Qiao Xueying, only to see that she was seated with her back facing him. Her slender body had an alluring curvature to it, from the narrowing of her waist to the expansion toward her bum and thighs.

“That woman sure is beautiful when she finally sits still,” evaluated Zu An.

Seeing that she wasn’t reacting at all, he thought that she was simply murmuring in her dreams, so he turned his attention back to Ji Xiaoxi and tucked the strands of hair fluttering loosely on her face to the back of her ears.

“Cough cough!”

The coughing sounded a little more discontented this time around.

Zu An burst into soft laughter. “Why don’t you just get to the point if you’re already awake? There’s no need to cough over there to catch my attention.”

“I just wanted to see if you would do anything despicable to that young lady like a beast.” Qiao Xueying finally turned her body around and rolled her eyes at him. She descended from the lineage of the elves after all, so her life force was far more plentiful compared to most other people. After having undergone Ji Xiaoxi’s treatment, she was in a much better state than before.

“Does this show that I’m a gentleman then?” asked Zu An with a smile.

“No, it only shows that you’re a pervert without any guts. In other words, you’re less than a beast.” Qiao Xueying harrumphed.

“...” Zu An.

He never thought that he would ever receive this evaluation.

Qiao Xueying stretched her hand forth and asked, “Where’s mine?”

Zu An was confused. “What do you mean?”

Qiao Xueying harrumphed coldly and said, “I braved through death with you in the underground palace, even using my most precious Half Life’s Fate on you. I don’t see you gifting me anything in compensation, but you seem to be oddly generous with that young lady over there, hm?”

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +256 Rage!

Zu An’s face heated up. It did seem like he was really a bit biased here. So, he quickly took out another ki stone that was previously embedded on Mi Li’s gown and handed it over.

Unexpectedly, Qiao Xueying tossed it right back at him and sneered, “You gave her with such a big one, only to present me with this small pea? No thanks!”

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +512 Rage!

Zu An hurriedly handed over all of the remaining ki stones to her and said, “This is all I have left; you can take it all. It should add up to be larger than hers.”

“That won’t do!” Qiao Xueying wasn’t going to compromise at all. “I want a complete one that’s not any smaller than hers.”

Zu An was immediately put in a spot. The only one larger than Ji Xiaoxi’s was the ki stone embedded on Mi Li’s coronet. Should I give it to her?

Considering that Qiao Xueying had saved his life and handed over half of her lifespan to him, he did feel that his actions were a little unreasonable. However, just as he was about to take out the largest heaven grade ki stone, a cold voice suddenly sounded in his mind, "Are you using my items to flirt with other woman?"

You have successfully trolled Mi Li for +999 Rage!

## **Chapter 212: There's Something Wrong With Your Gaze**

Zu An was taken aback. "You're awake?"

"If I don't wake up now, are you going to give all of my possessions away to other women?" sneered Mi Li.

Zu An scratched his head sheepishly, feeling awkward at having been caught in the act. He immediately put his expert level skill of changing the topic into play and asked, "How did you manage to speak inside my head? Are you able to hear my thoughts?"

"The Life-and-Death Contract we've sealed previously, in some ways, tied our souls together. Naturally, this means that we can communicate via our souls. As for listening to your thoughts..." Mi Li paused for a moment to let out a sneer, "... you need not worry about that. I have no interest in those filthy thoughts in your mind."

"It's one thing for you not to be able to listen, but another for you not to listen!" Zu An immediately felt nervous. It felt like he had been stripped bare of his clothes before another person.

"Anything involving souls and thoughts tend to be extremely cryptic. Unless one uses the Soul Searching Art, it won't be that easy to listen to another person's thoughts. In fact, even with the Soul Searching Art, one can only listen to bits and pieces of his mind, and it would inflict irrecoverable damage on the target too," explained Mi Li coldly. "If you still feel worried about it, why don't you try listening to my thoughts then?"

Needless to say, there was no way Zu An would feel safe at the possibility of having his mind read. He immediately tried to listen to Mi Li's thoughts through his willpower, but no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't hear anything at all.

"Could this woman be lying to me?" Zu An wondered. After all, he lacked common sense regarding this world, and it was obvious that Mi Li was an extremely knowledgeable person who was well-versed in many skills. Perhaps, the art of reading another person's mind might be a skill requiring some sort of special technique.

An idea popped into Zu An's mind, and he immediately visualized the image of Mi Li kneeling on the floor calling him 'master'...

Pah!

The Tai'e Sword suddenly leaped up and slapped his face before slotting back into its sheath. It was so fast that Zu An didn't have time to react at all.

“Didn’t you say that you can’t read my mind?!” roared Zu An angrily.

“There’s something amiss with your gaze,” replied Mi Li nonchalantly.

“...” Zu An.

Please, you’re hiding in the Tai’e Sword, and the sword is right behind me. How in the world are you able to see my gaze?

“Alright, I’ll be heading back to sleep now.” Mi Li harrumphed. “You aren’t allowed to give my stuff away to anyone, or else I’ll kill anyone whom I see is in possession of my items. As a man, don’t you feel embarrassed to use another woman’s items to flirt around? Have some pride, you scumbag!”

Mi Li made sure to thoroughly put down Zu An before falling back into hibernation.

Zu An was rendered speechless. She said earlier that she’ll be going into deep sleep in order to repair her soul, but she leaped out as soon as I took out her stuff... Is she really sleeping or feigning it?

“What are you doing muttering to yourself?” Qiao Xueying eyed Zu An doubtfully as she noticed how his face was flickering with many emotions, as if he was deep in thought. “Also, what’s wrong with that sword of yours? Why is it moving on its own accord?”

Zu An and Mi Li did exchange quite a few words via their telepathic communication, but hardly a second had passed in realtime throughout the process, so Qiao Xueying didn’t sense anything amiss.

“It’s nothing much,” replied Zu An. “I just thought of a new sword art, so I tried simulating it a little.”

“Your new sword art involves smacking your own face with it?” Qiao Xueying was unconvinced of the excuse Zu An thought up of.

“Of course not. That’s why it’s a failed simulation,” replied Zu An. He mustn’t allow others to think that he had some weird masochistic tendency.

Qiao Xueying finally snapped out of her daze and remembered her primary intention. With a huff, she demanded, “Wait a moment, why are you thinking about some other sword art when I’m asking you to give me a present? Forget it! Since it’s that difficult for you, I don’t want it anymore.”

Just the thought that Ji Xiaoxi had received a ki stone larger than hers made her incredibly displeased, and from Zu An’s expression, it seemed like he didn’t have anything larger either. After all, he couldn’t possibly take back what he had already given to Ji Xiaoxi, right?

It was one thing to understand his difficulties rationally, but emotions simply didn’t conform to logic. The more she thought about it, the angrier she became.

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +333 Rage!

Zu An also felt his head hurting after seeing her Rage points. Mi Li had already made her stance clear—he couldn’t give away any of her items to other women. But of course, he couldn’t possibly let Qiao Xueying walk away without anything at all after all she had done for him...

What else do I have then? I left the underground palace in a hurry, so I didn’t manage to get anything good at all.

Zu An searched his body, and all of a sudden, he thought of something—the Marrow Cleansing Pill!

He quickly took a look at his Rage points and saw that he had managed to earn 33,595 of it within such a short period of time.

Oh my, I'm really a prodigy! I really have to thank those cute classmates of mine for their generous contribution.

He quickly bought a Marrow Cleansing Pill with 10,000 Rage points, only to remember how he had remarked previously that only a fool would waste so much Rage points to buy this...

Damn it, I really should stop raising flags!

Upon taking out the Marrow Cleansing Pill, he suddenly noticed a flicker in the price of the Marrow Cleansing Pill. He quickly took a closer look. At first glimpse, nothing seemed to be off, but upon careful inspection, he realized that there was an additional '0' behind.

The price had jumped to a whopping 100,000 Rage points!

What the hell!

Zu An leaped up in fury. The price would actually inflate?! It used to be 10,000 previously, and now it's 100,000? Doesn't that mean that it'll leap up to 1,000,000 the next time?

His complexion turned incredibly awful. He was still planning to give one of it to everyone around him, but it seemed like he couldn't afford that anymore.

On second thought, it did make sense too. Items that could raise one's aptitude were precious and rare in this world. He thought that 10,000 Rage points was expensive in the past, but upon learning how important a cultivator's aptitude was, it was actually a pretty good deal.

It's understandable why the Keyboard would gradually increase its price. I guess I should exchange for it only when I really need it. Otherwise, if its price leap to 10,000,000 or something, that would definitely be far out of my reach.

Zu An gently placed Ji Xiaoxi against the tree before walking over to Qiao Xueying's side. He handed the Marrow Cleansing Pill to her and said, "I don't have any other heaven grade ki stone anymore, so I'll give you something more precious."

Looking at the inelegant pill presented to her, Qiao Xueying scoffed in disbelief, "What else could possibly be more valuable than a heaven grade ki stone?"

"Try eating it then." Zu An delivered the pill to her mouth.

"What is this?" Qiao Xueying instinctively leaned backward to avoid the medicine as she eyed him warily. "It can't be aphrodisiac, can it?"

"..." Zu An.

Am I that kind of person in your mind?

"Yes, it is. Are you going to eat it or not?" Zu An's patience was gradually hitting its limits.

Qiao Xueying's face reddened a little. She smelled the fragrance coming from the pill, and somehow, there was something in the depths of her soul that seemed to crave for it, inducing her to gulp down her saliva. "I reckon that you wouldn't have the guts to feed me aphrodisiac!"

So, she opened her mouth and swallowed the pill whole.

When her tongue accidentally slicked across Zu An's finger, the latter's body shuddered a little. Even her mouth feels soft as well.

On the other hand, Qiao Xueying found her heart skipping a beat as an unnatural look appeared on her face. She quickly changed the topic and asked, "What does your pill do?"

"It can raise a person's aptitude by a level," replied Zu An.

"How could there be such a convenient pill in the world?" asked Qiao Xueying with a frown, refusing to believe his words.

"You'll know it soon enough." Zu An couldn't be bothered to explain it.

Qiao Xueying was just about to say something else when she suddenly felt a heat spreading throughout her body, gushing through her veins. Every pore on her body seemed to be tingling in delight.

Astonished, she quickly focused her attention on assimilating the medicinal energy.

Some time later, she slowly opened her eyes. Her pupils looked brighter than before, and the surrounding air smelled sweeter and fresher than ever. She could clearly see the fluttering wings of a dragonfly in the distance, as well as the rhythmic swaying of the grass. It was the same changes Zu An experienced when he consumed the Marrow Cleansing Pill back then.

"T-this... It really can raise a person's aptitude!" exclaimed Qiao Xueying in disbelief.

Zu An rolled his eyes. "You didn't believe it when I told you earlier. Do I look like the kind of person to give out empty promises?"

Qiao Xueying rolled her eyes. How am I to know whether you're lying or not when you keep boasting all day long?

That being said, she was currently still fully immersed in her shock and delight that she ended up apologizing, "I'm sorry."

Zu An was taken aback. "Why are you apologizing to me?"

Qiao Xueying had a complicated look on her face. "A medicine that increases one's aptitude is completely unheard of. This is indubitably one of the most precious medicine in the world. If others were to know of it, it would surely cause a huge flurry. If I hadn't pressured you for a present, you wouldn't have to waste such a precious pill on me."

"How could this be called a waste?" replied Zu An with a smile. "Besides, nothing else is more valuable than your Half Life's Fate. We're comrades who have braved through death together. You're being too formal by saying those words."

“Comrades...” Qiao Xueying felt a tingle in her heart when she heard those words. She suddenly lowered her head, making it impossible to see her expression. There were many words that lingered in her heart, but they eventually coalesced into two simple words, “Thank you.”

“Compared to that, I think that you should be more concerned about is your hygiene. You don’t smell too good at the moment,” Zu An fanned his hands before his nose as he remarked teasingly.

Qiao Xueying froze up for a moment before she noticed the layer of filth on the surface of her skin. It seemed to be the impurities that had just been forced out of her body under the effects of the Marrow Cleansing Pill.

Women tended to put great emphasis on their appearances, so she glared at Zu An in a mixture of anger and embarrassment as she exclaimed, “Why didn’t you say that earlier?”

This fellow really is a bastard! It was just a moment ago that I was so moved by him, but in the next moment, he starts infuriating me once more!

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +250 Rage!

Zu An tried his best to stifle his laughter as he said, “There’s a river over there. You can change your clothes there.”

He noticed that the male students had run in that direction to wash their eyes earlier.

“Do you need to borrow a set of spare clothes from Xiaoxi?”

“There’s no need for that!”

Qiao Xueying struggled to sit upright before taking out a clean set of clothes from the ring on her finger.

Zu An was surprised to see that she had a storage ring. He couldn’t help but remark, “How selfish. I was in such an awkward dress-up earlier, but you didn’t offer me any change of clothes.”

“Oh? Are you sure that you wish to try on woman clothes?”

Qiao Xueying slowly got to her feet. In the first place, elves tended to recover fast from their injuries during to their great life force, and she had consumed Divine Physician Ji’s pills and the Marrow Cleansing Pill earlier on. While she wasn’t fully recovered yet, she was well enough to barely move around.

“No thanks!” Just the thought of being known as a cross-dresser in the academy made Zu An shudder in horror. He quickly shook his head. “You seem to still have difficulties moving around. Do you need me to wash your body?”

“Scram!” replied Qiao Xueying sharply before heading all alone to the river.

Zu An subconsciously glanced at the Keyboard, only to shake his head in frustration. Where’s the Rage points?

It was then that Qiao Xueying suddenly halted her footsteps and beckoned for him with her hands.

Zu An's eyebrows shot up. "Why? Have you thought things through and decided to have me wash your body for you? You should know that I used to be known as a master scrubber!"

Qiao Xueying rolled her eyes and said, "I need you to stand guard for me lest someone comes by."

"But what if I were to see your body?" asked Zu An.

"Then I'll dig out your eyes!" Qiao Xueying harrumphed before walking away. There was a visible hint of redness crawling up her neck.

### **Chapter 213: Me and My Incredible Mouth**

Zu An looked at the sleeping Ji Xiaoxi, but he couldn't rest easy leaving her alone here, so he decided to call her along. However, her rhythmic breathing showed that she was having a good sleep at the moment, and he found himself unable to bear to wake her up. So, he carried her up instead.

"Mmm~" Ji Xiaoxi seemed to sense his movement and mumbled a bit as she adjusted her posture to a more comfortable one, leaning her head against his chest.

Zu An felt as if he was holding onto a cat in his arms, and gradually, he found his heart falling at ease.

On the other hand, Qiao Xueying was delighted to see the clear river, so she immediately turned around to say something to Zu An, only to be met with the sight of him holding onto Ji Xiaoxi dotingly.

Her mood immediately grew irate as she spoke annoyedly, "Make sure you keep a lookout properly and don't allow anyone to come near!"

"Don't worry. It's my loss if anyone comes near, so I'll make sure to do a proper job at it," replied Zu An.

Tsk, I'm the one who's going to make a loss here, Qiao Xueying thought. "Also, you mustn't peek as well. Otherwise, I'll gouge your eyes out!"

"Hey, that's going a little overboard! We're comrades who have braved through life and death, remember? Besides, I've already seen everything that you have. It's not as if you'll lose a piece of flesh just because I take a peek on you right now," mumbled Zu An in dissatisfaction.

"You!!!" Infuriated, Qiao Xueying's hair began growing once more.

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +404 Rage!

Zu An was appalled. "Wait, calm down! Fine, I won't look, alright? It's not as if you have any assets worthy of peeping at anyway."

This woman sure has a fiery temper. As soon as she recovers a bit of energy, she doesn't hesitate to use her force at all. Isn't she afraid of worsening her injuries?

Qiao Xueying gnashed her teeth in fury, seriously contemplating whether she should whip him into place. However, recalling how exhausted he was at the moment, as well as the fact that this was simply the type of person he was, she eventually chose to let the matter slip.

She waved her hand, and a wall of water formed behind her. It was only then that she finally disrobed and slowly walked into the river. She was unable to swim, so she chose to remain close to the shore. It was fortunate that the river wasn't too deep, so there was nothing for her to be afraid of.

To be honest, even though Zu An was keeping a lookout to keep any peeping toms at bay, there was actually not much need for it since the students that were here earlier had left. There was no one in the area anymore.

So, Zu An relaxed a little and calmly shot a discreet glance toward the river.

A pity it was he didn't see what he wanted to see. There was only a veil of water mist, similar to what he saw when he first met Ji Xiaoxi in the river. Qiao Xueying had used her ki to cover her surroundings, preventing anyone from peeping on her.

"Tsk! Who are you guarding against?" murmured Zu An in displeasure.

He could hear the splashing of water sounding in the river, and his mind amazingly filled in the gaps for him, painting out an erotic scene in his head. If this was a novel, a venomous snake should appear at this moment and bite her sensitive parts. This way, not only would he be able to play the hero, but he could make use of this opportunity to suck out her poison too.

Hm, which novel did I read this from? I don't remember it anymore.

Zu An laughed doltishly to himself when an exclamation suddenly sounded from the river.

"Ah!"

It was Qiao Xueying's voice.

"Holy shit, is it really happening?"

Zu An hurriedly turned his gaze over, only to be met with a sight that left him dizzy.

Qiao Xueying had leaped out of the river into the sky, such that there was nothing veiling her body anymore, revealing her fair skin and beautiful waist. Her skin was covered in droplets with water which glistened under the brilliant sun, giving her complexion a ravishing glow. For a moment there, she looked like a goddess.

It was then that a massive red snake rushed into the sky as well and opened up its gaping mouth to bite down on Qiao Xueying.

Zu An was utterly speechless. Am I actually a prophet or something?

Not daring to hesitate, he quickly drew the Tai'e Sword and rushed in to save her.

Qiao Xueying twisted her body and forcefully moved sideward with a few inches, barely dodging this possibly fatal attack. Following that, she flicked her finger and sent two needles directly toward the snake's eyes.

The snake hissed in agony before spurting out a pink mist from its mouth.

Qiao Xueying was already severely injured from the very start, and the earlier evasion had taken up all of her strength. She wanted to dodge the pink mist, but her body wasn't moving as smoothly as she wanted, resulting in her being struck squarely.

She tried to hold her breath, but it was of little help. Vertigo swiftly consumed her as she found herself losing control over her body and falling back to the ground.

"This is bad!"

There were many rocks along the river, such that even if she wasn't stabbed by the sharp edges to her death, it was likely that she would end up disfigured. Unfortunately, her ki seemed to have been sealed by the pink mist, refusing to budge at all. She could only watch helplessly as she came closer and closer to the jagged surface under her.

It was then that she felt herself falling into a warm and reassuring embrace. A familiar voice sounded, "Snow, are you fine?"

Qiao Xueying shook her head and said, "Be careful. This is a Crimonscale Python, a fourth rank beast. Its fighting prowess is nothing worthy of note, but its poison can be hard to deal with."

Zu An nodded in response. Aren't pythons supposed to be non-poisonous? Haaa, I guess anything is possible in the world of cultivation.

Qiao Xueying couldn't help but feel incredibly worried. Zu An might be stronger than the average third rank cultivator, but it would still be extremely dangerous for him to fight against the Crimonscale Python. She could have been able to deal with a fourth rank beast with ease had it not been for her severe injuries.

Nevertheless, she still tried to step forward to help, but the numbness enveloping her body prevented her from gathering her strength at all. She knew deep well that this was the effects of the python's poison, and it made her incredibly frustrated. Left with no choice, she could only pray for the best for Zu An.

At this very moment, the python was thrashing furiously in the water, infuriated by the loss of its vision. Zu An made use of this opportunity to push the Tai'e Sword toward the python's heart. There was no way the python could survive if he could land a critical blow on it.

However, his heart immediately skipped a beat right after. He subconsciously resorted to Sunflower Phantasm, but his body had already regained its yang energy. The clash in ki caused his body to come to an abrupt halt.

It was also at this very moment that the python lashed its tail over. Even without its eyes, it could still perceive the surroundings through vibrations on the ground.

Zu An quickly pulled his sword in front of him, only to be struck by an immense force that sent him flying for tens of meters.

"Ah Zu, are you fine?" The worried Qiao Xueying quickly rushed forward in concern. It was common knowledge that beasts tended to be more powerful than human cultivators, and such a strike would be hard for even a fourth rank cultivator to bear, let alone Zu An.

Unexpectedly, Zu An didn't suffer any fractures or ligament tears as a result of that. He climbed up from the ground as if nothing happened at all.

It wasn't just Qiao Xueying who was surprising here; even Zu An was puzzled too. He knew that he shouldn't have been able to bear such an attack under normal circumstances, but to his surprise, his strength was actually much greater than before.

He quickly took a look at his own internal condition, only to find that the seventh formation and eighth formation had been filled up.

The seventh formation would require 987 Ki Fruits and the eighth formation would require 1597 Ki Fruits, such that it should have taken him a long time to fill them up through the lottery.

How did it get filled up so quickly?

He quickly thought back about what had happened thus far, and he suddenly remembered how he had been struck to the verge of death by Mi Li multiple times in order to save Qiao Xueying, barely holding on with the power of the Heiress' Ball of Delights. This was the first time he had suffered such grievous injuries.

He couldn't even remember how many times he had risen from the bloodied ground around him. It was probably the endless cycle of suffering severe injuries and standing back up that the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra worked its magic and raised his cultivation greatly.

Damn it, Mi Li sure is vicious!

Just thinking about it made Zu An feel deeply fearful. It was fortunate that he had the Heiress' Ball of Delights to maintain the final bit of his health bar back then. However, he had also ended up expending its final use, which meant that he would have one less trump card to resort to in the future.

It was then that the Crimonscale Python charged in his direction once more. This time, Zu An didn't use Sunflower Phantasm but chose to dodge it manually instead.

To his surprise, his movement speed was incredibly fast. It was true that he had made a breakthrough, but his speed and strength were far too exaggerated. It was no joke to say that he could almost match a fifth rank cultivator.

What's going on?

"You fool! The Primordial Origin Sutra has tempered your body too, remember? It goes without saying that your physical capabilities have been greatly enhanced as a result of that. On top of that, you've cultivated the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra. The two secret arts complement one another, increasing your speed to be far beyond that of the other cultivators in your rank. You should be around pinnacle fourth rank at the moment, possibly on par with the weaker fifth rank cultivators," said Mi Li.

"You're awake?" Zu An was surprised and delighted.

Given Mi Li's sharp eye of discernment, it was unlikely for her judgment to be off.

Previously, he had to get into a severely injured state and activate the berserk mode of the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra in order to achieve such strength and speed, but he was already at this level now even while he was still at full health.

“Hmph! How could I remain asleep when you’re in danger? I’ve no intention of dying a dog’s death with you. I thought that you have encountered some thousand-year-old monster, but it turns out to just be a measly snake. How pathetic,” sneered Mi Li in scorn.

“Measly snake?” Zu An looked at the python, which had a circumference even thicker than a bucket, and he fell speechless. But again, a fourth rank beast was probably no different from an ant in Mi Li’s eyes.

It was then that the Crimonscale Python suddenly lurched forward once more. By this point, Zu An was already starting to get used to his newfound strength and speed. He looked for an opportune moment to whip out Poisonous Prick and stab it into the python’s body.

Black runes swiftly formed around the nick he had left on the python, and the latter suddenly shuddered intensely before collapsing to the ground. It was dead.

“That dagger of yours is quite meaningful,” remarked Mi Li. “I’ll have a good look at it when I have time. I’ll be returning to rest now. You actually awoke me over such small fries. Tsk.”

Mi Li’s voice soon faded.

This woman really appears and leaves like a ghost. I really wonder if she’s just feigning sleep over there.

However, Zu An was in no mood to ponder over that at the moment. He quickly rushed over to Qiao Xueying’s side to check on her condition.

Qiao Xueying breathed a sigh of relief upon seeing that he had killed the massive python. Then, as if the tension had left her body, she finally succumbed and began falling to the ground. Luckily, Zu An managed to make it in time to catch her.

“Clothes... Help me put them on...” Possibly out of embarrassment, Qiao Xueying’s fair skin was dyed red, as if someone had smeared rose extract over her body.

#### **Chapter 214: Sucking Out Your Poison? Leave It To Me!**

Zu An fell into a daze. She was simply too beautiful that he forgot to avert his gaze.

Qiao Xueying pulled her arms before her, one to cover her chest and the other to cover her legs. However, how much could her small hands possibly be able to cover?

“C-clothes...”

Seeing that Zu An wasn’t moving at all, Qiao Xueying raised her eyes, only to be met with his searing gaze. That made her feeling of embarrassment even more intense.

It was only then that Zu An finally snapped out of his daze. He quickly grabbed her clothes and wrapped them around her.

In order to alleviate the awkwardness, he said, "How are you feeling? You were still fine earlier on, but you suddenly seem so weak now."

Qiao Xueying glared at him sharply before responding, "I was struck by the poisonous mist of the Crimonscale Python..."

"Poisonous mist? Are you fine? I'll get someone to treat you right now!" Zu An was horrified. His Primordial Origin Sutra had only reached the second rank, so he couldn't use it to treat others yet. If she was afflicted with some sort of rare poison, he would really be put in a spot.

"There's no need for that..." Qiao Xueying pulled his sleeves and shook her head. "The Crimonscale Python's poison isn't lethal. It's just that the snake is lustful in nature, so its poison has a strong... aphrodisiac effect..."

After saying those words, she quickly lowered her head. Her face was so red that it looked as if it was going to seep out blood.

"This..." Zu An was also left awkward. He never thought that he would encounter this sort of event. So, he coughed a little before replying, "It should be fine once the effect fades."

He couldn't understand why characters who had fallen for aphrodisiac desperately needed to have sex in order to treat their condition. Wouldn't it be fine to just give it some time and let the effects fade? The human body was extremely good at detoxification, after all!

Qiao Xueying shook her head and replied, "The Crimonscale Python isn't a powerful beast. Its body doesn't have any inner cores, and its skin and flesh serve no purpose at all. Despite so, it's still an incredibly valuable beast. Do you know why?"

"Is it due to its poison?" asked Zu An.

Qiao Xueying nodded. "Its poison has the effect of inducing a person's lust while rendering her completely powerless to resist. Thus, it's one of the items which those officials and nobles fancied a lot. Due to the excessive hunting, it's extremely rare to spot a Crimonscale Python in the outside world anymore. I didn't expect to encounter one here in this dungeon."

Zu An fell silent. It looks like regardless of which world one is in, it's those who possess power and affluence that tend to play the wildest.

"If it only evokes one's lust, it wouldn't have been so popular amongst the officials and nobles," explained Qiao Xueying. "The key thing is that if the poisoned individual doesn't... get an amalgamation of yin and yang with another man, the poison would start to erode one's ki meridians, possibly leading to death. Thus, the officials and nobles often use this in order to dominate a woman whom they can't easily win over."

"Ah, you should have said that earlier. We're already so close to one another, so there's no way I would hesitate to treat your poison. Don't worry, I'll definitely give it all I got. I won't stop until I finally eradicate the poison completely from your body!" said Zu An determinedly.

As he said those words, he began taking off his clothes.

"..." Qiao Xueying.

It was then that a gentle voice sounded from behind, "What are... you all doing?"

Zu An turned around, only to see Ji Xiaoxi standing not too far away, looking at them with large innocent eyes filled with curiosity.

"Miss Qiao has been poisoned, so I'm intending to treat her." Her innocent gaze somehow made Zu An's face heat up in embarrassment.

Meanwhile, Qiao Xueying buried herself in his embrace and feigned unconsciousness. It was simply too embarrassing.

Ji Xiaoxi blinked her eyes and said, "Is it the poison of the Crimonscale Python? That's easy to treat. I've got a Heartcalming Pill here."

"..." Zu An.

If it was possible for him to collect his own Rage points, that would surely have been a '+1024 Rage' there!

"The Crimonscale Python's poison seems to be quite formidable. Can it really be cured with such a simple pill?" Zu An accepted the pill Ji Xiaoxi was offering him reluctantly.

"Of course. Back then, my father heard that a maiden has been taken advantage of by scion using the Crimonscale Python's poison, so he specially concocted this medicine for me so that I can fend against... the toxicity of that horrible poison."

"..." Zu An.

He never thought that the perverted Ji Dengtu would actually protect his daughter so well, taking every single possible threat into account! But again, it was probably because he was a pervert himself that he knew what sort of things other perverts would do, allowing him to make better precautions.

Ji Xiaoxi's face reddened as the same thoughts arose in her mind too.

I know that my father has an erotica hidden in his bed, under his blanket. I saw it while I was cleaning up his room!

Out of curiosity, she had flipped it open to take a look back then, but the content she saw was so horrifying that she tossed it away instantly. She finally understood why her father's complexion had been so pale during that period of time.

Hmph! If I ever find out the person who gave my father that kind of book, I'll make sure to give him a harsh scolding he'll never forget!

It was then that she suddenly remembered yet another incident, where she saw her father rushing to his room excitedly with a woman's dudou in hand, only to be caught red-handed by her little aunt, who happened to visit at the moment. Her little aunt immediately confiscated it with an awful look on her face and berated him harshly.

My father is really ridiculous...

Ji Xiaoxi sighed deeply.

Zu An was also cursing Ji Dengtu in his mind for concocting such medicine for no reason, causing him to lose such a golden opportunity with Snow.

"Give it to me..." Qiao Xueying could hear their conversation loud and clear. She noticed that Zu An was holding onto the Heartcalming Pill intently, not feeding it to her at all, so she could only ask for it herself.

Zu An had no choice but to feed the pill to her. Still unwilling to give up, he said, "If it's not enough to treat the poison, you can feel free to call me anytime."

Qiao Xueying's face heated up. This fellow is really thick-skinned!

After swallowing the Heartcalming Pill, she felt a cold surge of energy gradually diffusing throughout her body, dispelling the heat that had previously enveloped her. Overjoyed, she turned to Ji Xiaoxi and said, "Your father is truly an incredible physician!"

"You're flattering him," replied Ji Xiaoxi with a shy smile.

Zu An couldn't help but feel even more disappointed. He could only change the topic and try not to think about it. "Ah, I didn't see the traces of any beasts in the river earlier. Why would such a huge python appear out of nowhere?"

After all, there were quite a few male students who headed over earlier to wash their eyes, but none of them got attacked.

Qiao Xueying pondered for a moment before replying, "It could be the smell of blood on me."

"Smell of blood?" Zu An had a bizarre look on his face. "You're having your period?"

"..." Qiao Xueying.

"..." Ji Xiaoxi.

"It's the blood from the injuries I suffered earlier on! Just what the hell is your head filled with?!" Qiao Xueying glared at Zu An furiously.

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +250 Rage!

Zu An replied with a sheepish smile, "Hahaha, I'm just concerned about you, that's all."

At the same time, he couldn't help but notice the feeling of guilt welling up in his heart as he earned Qiao Xueying's Rage points. It had felt much more exhilarating when she was an enemy.

"You should hurry up and leave. I'm going to change my clothes." Qiao Xueying gradually regained her strength and pushed him off. "It'll be enough to have Miss Ji here with me."

"Alright, I'll head over to the side. Call me if anything happens." Zu An carefully put her down by the side before walking away. His intent would be too obvious if he insisted on staying here under such circumstances.

After he left, Qiao Xueying quickly began putting on her clothes as she murmured softly, "Miss Ji, about what happened earlier on..."

Ji Xiaoxi smiled softly and replied, "Big Sister Qiao, don't worry. I won't tell anyone."

“Thanks...” Qiao Xueying wasn’t sure whether she was referring to her getting poisoned or her baring her body before Zu An earlier on, but in any case, she didn’t dare to ask.

After quickly putting on her clothes, she began engaging Ji Xiaoxi in a conversation, completely ignoring Zu An. It made him completely confused as he wondered how had he offended her.

Some time later, Chu Chuyan finally returned. In truth, she hadn’t walked too far away; she simply didn’t know how to face Zu An for a moment there.

Upon hearing that there was a battle here, she quickly rushed back out of fear that something had happened. When she saw the Crimsonscale Python’s corpse, she heaved a sigh of relief.

She quickly asked about what had happened earlier, but both Zu An and Qiao Xueying gave really vague explanations. Even Ji Xiaoxi had a weird look on her face, which really rose doubts in her mind. However, she wasn’t too interested in getting to the bottom of this matter since she had never been one to meddle in the affairs of another.

They spent the next two days recuperating from their injuries and cultivating. Soon, it was the day that the dungeon exploration came to an end.

Zu An thought that they would have to return back to the starting point, and he was confused why the other students weren’t heading back to gather. However, Chu Chuyan informed him that the dungeon would automatically send them out once time was up, and there was no need for them to return through the same gate.

Soon, the surroundings began to distort slightly as a familiar feeling of weightlessness enveloped them. Zu An couldn’t help but find this sensation familiar as he had experienced this multiple times when he entered the Soul Suppression Seal. Is that considered a dungeon inside a dungeon then?

By the time he finally regained his consciousness, he realized that he was already back at the mountain behind the academy. Chu Chuyan, Qiao Xueying, and Ji Xiaoxi were standing by his side. Those from the other academies were also gradually being teleported out one after another.

Zu An took a look at the surroundings, and he suddenly spotted Shi Kun’s silhouette. Recalling all he had been through, hatred gushed into his head as he whipped out his Tai’e Sword and charged at him. “Die, Shi Kun!”

The other students were all in the midst of looking through their gains in the dungeon, and the other teachers were also busy taking a headcount to determine the casualties. No one expected Zu An to suddenly make such a move.

Shi Kun was feeling quite crestfallen when he was teleported out, and the realization that Zu An was alive horrified him. He instinctively drew his weapon to protect himself.

Clang!

To everyone’s disbelief, Shi Kun’s sword was actually slashed into two halves right away!

How could this be?

This was implausible to them as Shi Kun's weapon was an earth grade weapon. Besides, even if he was only wielding a wooden stick, he should have been able to easily crush Zu An with his fifth rank cultivation.

There was no way they could imagine that Zu An's sheer strength and speed were already comparable to a fifth rank cultivator, and the Tai'e Sword was a legendary ancient weapon. Even with its sword spirit damaged, it was definitely a heaven grade at the very least.

Not to mention, there was a huge vast in their mental states too. One was charging forward angrily with hatred whereas the other feeling deeply guilt-ridden. Given such conditions, it was only normal for Shi Kun's weapon to be broken so easily.

Shi Kun didn't expect such a turn of events either. He watched helplessly as Zu An's sword swiftly closed in toward his chest. His body was completely stiffened, unable to react on time at all.

"How dare you!"

But a bellow echoed all of a sudden, and a figure carrying immense pressure rushed forward to attack Zu An.

### **Chapter 215: Arguing**

Zu An didn't even have to look to know that the person protecting Shi Kun was Shi Lezhi as he had received an advanced notification from the Rage points coming in.

You have successfully trolled Shi Lezhi for +444 Rage!

That very instant, Zu An found himself unable to breathe. The gap between the two of them was too huge; it was beyond his means to deal with an eighth rank cultivator at the moment.

He wanted to dodge, but it was hard for him to even move his fingers under the other party's pressure. Left with no choice, he could only channel the Primordial Origin Sutra so hurriedly temper his body so as to withstand Shi Lezhi's incoming attack.

It was then that a white silhouette flashed across.

If there was anyone who knew in advance that Zu An was going to make a move, that person would be no other than Chu Chuyan. She knew deep well that the other party was doing it in order to exact vengeance for her.

She was forced to a point where she ended up collapsing her own ki meridians, and it was only by chance that they found the Evanescent Lotus that she was able to barely survive. If not for all of the fortuitous encounters they had afterward, she would have already been a cripple by now.

Not to mention, Shi Kun even dared to lust for her even when he knew that her life was already withering away.

In truth, even if Zu An hadn't made a move earlier, she would have settled the scores with Shi Kun. So, upon seeing him make a move, she prepared herself as well, knowing that Shi Lezhi was likely in the vicinity.

Bam!

A loud explosion sounded. Shi Lezhi stood steadfast before Shi Kun whereas Chu Chuyan, holding Zu An in her hand, was sent skidding back over thirty meters before she finally regained her footing. A trail of blood seeped from the edges of her lips.

Even though she was already nearing the seventh rank, she was still more than a cultivation rank weaker than Shi Lezhi.

Zu An hurriedly asked, "Are you alright?"

What am I to do if she gets herself severely injured just after I barely managed to treat her injuries? Oh... Doesn't that mean that I have another reason to get snu snu... cough, I mean treat her once more?

Chu Chuyan shook her head and replied, "It's just some superficial injuries."

"Oh..." Zu An was disappointed.

His reaction confused Chu Chuyan, wondering what was wrong with him that he looked so unhappy that she was alright.

The surrounding crowd also swiftly snapped out of their daze and started whispering amongst themselves.

"As expected of the strongest expert of our academy. To think that she's actually able to stand her ground against eighth rank cultivators!"

"Isn't it obvious that the expert of the Shi clan went easy on her? Otherwise, an eighth rank cultivator would surely be able to slaughter a fifth rank cultivator as easily as butchering a chicken."

"Yes, it does look like the Shi clan has gone easy for Miss Chu."

There were also some indignant voices mixed into the crowd too.

"You speak as if the Shi clan would really dare to touch Miss Chu here! We're in Brightmoon City right now! If the Shi clan dares to touch Miss Chu, putting aside the wrath of the Brightmoon Duke, even the academy wouldn't let this matter slip easily!"

Meanwhile, Shi Lezhi stared at Chu Chuyan with a shocked look on his face. He knew deep well that he hadn't gone easy on Zu An since this was a rare opportunity for him to take Zu An's life, but Chu Chuyan actually managed to receive his attack and got away with just light injuries. Is she really a fifth rank cultivator? Why does it seem like she's already approaching the seventh rank instead?

"What are you doing?" a cold voice suddenly sounded.

"Principal Jiang!"

The teachers and students of the academy quickly bowed to her, including Bai Susu and Lu De. The latter two visibly heaved a sigh of relief at her presence.

The only exception was Zu An, whose first reaction was to look at her thighs. Wow, it's still as long and slender as ever. Ahh, I can't pick a single flaw with it. She isn't wearing her usual stockings, but her skin is glistening with such radiance that it stands out even more than ever.

Zu An was glad that he didn't have a stocking fetish like Wei Suo, who was only satisfied when he saw one. Just a pair of pretty and well-proportionate legs was enough to leave him refreshed.

"Principal Jiang, it's not that I want to cause trouble, but that scoundrel tried to kill our young master earlier. Based on what I know, isn't it the death penalty to make an attempt on the life of another student?" asked Shi Lezhi.

Jiang Luofu nodded in response. "Yes, it's indeed the death penalty. Zu An, what do you have to say for yourself?"

The other students also began gossiping amongst themselves.

"That Zu An is really getting ahead of himself! How dare he try to kill young master Shi?"

"Indeed! Does he not know just that he's just a mere ant before young master Shi?"

"So what if he's big down there? A man should count on his strength!"

...

A lot of male students nodded in agreement. So what if you are blessed with a giant stick that allowed you to conquer a couple of inexperienced young ladies? Why don't you try that with the mature Principal Jiang too?

Zu An was rendered speechless by the steady stream of Rage points coming in. Seriously, shouldn't you all be envious of Shi Kun instead? Why are you hating on me here?

Despite his retort, he was still fairly happy about it. After all, these were all precious Rage points to him!

"Principal Jiang, I agree deeply with what he said about an attempt on a student's life warrants a death penalty," replied Zu An.

"Are you admitting to your crime?" Jiang Luofu harrumphed coldly.

Ji Xiaoxi and the others were anxious to hear the chilling edge to Jiang Luofu's voice, but Zu An knew deep well that Principal Jiang was giving him a chance of explain despite her sharp tone. If she had really wanted to do him in, she could have simply pinned the crime on him right away.

"I attacked him out of rage earlier because Shi Kun sent his subordinates after me earlier in the Ursae Dungeon, nearly taking my life," replied Zu An calmly.

"Utter rubbish! Only the students of Brightmoon Academy are allowed to enter the dungeon, and Principal Jiang is the one who personally chooses them. How could any clan possibly slip their subordinates into the dungeon? Are you trying to cast doubt over Principal Jiang's character?"

Before those from the Shi clan had replied, Wu Qing had already interjected in. For some reason, she found Zu An absolutely abhorrent, possibly because he was Chu Chuyan's husband or that he had bullied her once before.

Even though Wu Qing wasn't particularly popular in the academy, her words did make perfect sense and won the agreement of many students.

Toward that, Zu An replied, "Of course, there's no way I would cast doubt over Principal Jiang's character. However, what if the Shi clan bribes our students beforehand? Many of those who attacked me earlier were students from the Earth class, and it's obvious that they are following the orders from the same person."

"Is that so?" Jiang Luofu frowned. She had already received a report that there had been a disproportionately higher number of casualties as compared to previous times. This could be considered as a severe incident, such that she would have to report this matter to the Ministry of Rites personally in the future.

Wu Qing also fell silent too. Having born from a major clan, she did know some of the underground deals that were often going on. Putting aside the Shi clan, even the Wu clan had some subordinates in the academy too. After all, there were plenty of students that had no power and background, making them easy to win over.

By this point, Shi Kun had also finally recovered from his shocked state to begin his retaliation. "A load of rubbish! Our Shi clan has never done such a thing before! You must have encountered some sort of valuable treasure with those students in the dungeon, which piqued your greed. So, you made use of that opportunity to kill them off and pin the blame on me!"

Many of the close acquaintances of the Shi clan voiced their agreement with Shi Kun's statement. Other than Xie Xiu, Pei Mianman, and Zheng Dan who knew the truth, most of the students found Shi Kun's statement rather credible too.

After all, their impression of Shi Kun was a refined gentleman whereas Zu An was like an unruly hoodlum. Subconsciously, they would rather believe Shi Kun's words more.

Zu An frowned upon hearing those words. He had no proof of what happened in the dungeon since most of those who went after his life was already dead. In the first place, Shi Kun had decided to make a move in the dungeon because he knew that there would be no evidence left behind.

Qiao Xueying opened her mouth to say something, only to be stopped by Zu An. He knew that the Shi clan definitely had some leverage over Qiao Xueying so as to ensure that she was under their control, so he didn't want to put her in a spot.

Besides, it wouldn't matter even if Qiao Xueying testified on his behalf. Shi Kun could just deny it the same way too.

On the other hand, Shi Kun's eyes turned sharp when he noticed that Qiao Xueying was still alive, but he knew that this wasn't the time to confront her yet. He chose to focus his efforts on Zu An instead, saying, "If you hadn't taken them off guard, how could a third rank cultivator like you possibly injure those fourth rank seniors from the Earth class?"

Zu An was amused to hear those words. “You really do have the cheek to say that. If I recall correctly, you’re a fifth rank cultivator, no? But if your servant didn’t step in to save you earlier, you would have been slaughtered like a helpless chick under my blade.”

“You!” Shi Kun’s face reddened. Till now, he still hadn’t made sense of what had happened earlier on. He viewed it as a huge humiliation to be cornered by Zu An before such a huge crowd.

You have successfully trolled Shi Kun for +888 Rage!

Meanwhile, Shi Lezhi’s eyelids twitched upon hearing the word ‘servant’. He was well aware that he was indeed a servant of the Shi clan, but no matter what, he was still an eighth rank cultivator. Even the Shi clan would treat him with respect. Yet, this fellow actually used such a derogatory term on him!

“You brat! You’re courting death!” With a furious roar, he charged forward.

You have successfully trolled Shi Lezhi for +999 Rage!

Jiang Luofu casually stepped forth to stand between the two of them. She didn’t say a word at all, but her intention was made clear. She wouldn’t allow an outsider to deal with a member of the academy without her permission.

Shi Lezhi was enraged. Even though they were both eighth rank cultivators, he knew deep well that Jiang Luofu was still young and had great potential in her, giving rise to a huge gap in their standings. He dared not to offend this mysterious woman, so he had no choice but to back down here.

It’s no wonder why Zu An is known to be a moochlord in the academy. He always has a woman to stand up for him!

Of course, he didn’t really believe that Zu An would be able to mooch off the great Jiang Luofu.

Chu Chuyan also stepped in and spoke up too, “I can testify for what happened in the dungeon. I didn’t see with my own eyes how those students chased after Ah Zu, but Shi Kun did attempt to kill the both of us afterward.”

Meanwhile, Zu An shook his head in dismay at how honest his silly wife was. She could have just insisted on whatever she wanted, and everyone would have simply sided with her without any hesitation.

A huge commotion broke out amidst the crowd. If they were just enjoying the drama a moment ago, the knowledge that Chu Chuyan had been in danger earlier evoked their anger.

How dare you make a move against our goddess? We won’t let you off the hook no matter how handsome you are!

Xie Xiu opened his fan and walked out of the crowd, saying, “Miss Chu, based on what I know, young master Shi should be slightly weaker than you. Even if he had assistance from his subordinates, it doesn’t seem likely that he’ll be able to pose a threat to you.”

This was the same doubt shared by many present. They directed doubtful gazes in Chu Chuyan’s direction.

**Chapter 216: Only Women!**

Chu Chuyan knew that Xie Xiu was intentionally voicing out the doubt in everyone's mind so as to give her an opportunity to explain herself lest it resulted in any complications afterward. "That's because the Shi clan has prepared an artifact for Shi Kun in times to danger. He has a ring with the spirit of an ancient beast named 'Devouring Kun' sealed within it."

"Devouring Kun?"

A huge commotion broke out upon hearing that name.

Some of the less knowledgeable students turned to those around them to enquire about it whereas the smarter students made use of this opportunity to flaunt their knowledge.

"Devouring Kun is an ancient beast that spans over a hundred meters in length. It can continuously evolve through devouring the body of its enemies. Even the weakest Devouring Kun could rival a ninth rank cultivator upon adulthood..."

The crowd gasped in shock upon hearing the explanation. They couldn't help but wonder how such a massive beast could possibly float in the air.

Some of the students who were in the dungeon earlier also widened their eyes in realization. They recalled sensing a powerful pressure and a massive shadow in the sky at one point in time, just that it vanished soon after. It was a shocking encounter, but they didn't think much of it since they thought that it was natural for anything to happen in the mysterious dungeon.

Not even in their wildest imagination could they have fathomed that it was released by Shi Kun. If that was really the case, the Shi clan's ability to turn such a powerful being into their servant was truly frightening.

However, there was one thing that they were more curious about. They couldn't fathom how Chu Chuyan could have escaped under the watch of such a terrifying being.

Hearing the doubts from the surrounding crowd, Chu Chuyan answered, "The Devouring Kun was just a soul fragment of its former self, so it's much weaker than usual. Nevertheless, it's still a being far beyond my means to deal with. Left with no choice, I could only resort to my forbidden art to subdue it. While I successfully destroyed the Devouring Kun's soul fragment, it also resulted in the internal collapse of my ki meridians as well, turning me into a cripple."

A huge commotion broke out upon hearing those words. They were astonished to learn that Chu Chuyan was even to defeat even a ninth rank ancient beast. As expected of the number one prodigy of our academy!

There were also some who wondered what Chu Chuyan's forbidden art was to actually allow her, as a fifth rank cultivator, to defeat such a powerful opponent. Of course, they also understood that this was one of her greatest secrets, so there was no way she would reveal it to them.

However, most people were simply shocked to hear that her ki meridians had collapsed and she had turned into a cripple due to her forbidden art. One must know that Chu Chuyan had always been a lofty goddess in their eyes. Even if she was now married, it did little to mar her charms.

On top of that, there were news going around that Zu An and Chu Chuyan still hadn't consummate their marriage yet. Those rumors were oddly convincing since no one thought that the Chu clan would really treat the good-for-nothing Zu An as their son-in-law...

... though the happenings at the Clan Tournament and the revelation of Zu An's 'strength' had shaken the faith of those men.

Even so, Chu Chuyan still remained their dream lover.

So, the knowledge that Chu Chuyan's ki meridians had collapsed left them infuriated. Many even started speaking up against the Shi clan.

Jiang Luofu was horrified as well. She immediately rushed over to Chu Chuyan's side and grabbed her pulse to take a look. When she confirmed that her pulse was steady—in fact, it was stronger than ever—she heaved a sigh of relief.

"What a joke! Are you really trying to claim that you've been crippled when everyone has seen you fending against my attack earlier?" sneered Shi Lezhi.

Jiang Luofu also looked at Chu Chuyan doubtfully. Toward that, Chu Chuyan replied, "That's because Zu An desperately did everything he could to save my life. He found and fed me an Evanescent Lotus, which eventually led to the recovery of my ki meridians."

She was too embarrassed to dissect the exact process of how Zu An saved her life, so she could only vaguely attribute it to the Evanescent Lotus. Even so, her cheeks still began burning up.

"The Evanescent Lotus!"

Everyone exclaimed in shock! That was a legendary treasure which even a small petal could raise one's cultivation by a step!

There were indeed rumors that there could be an Evanescent Lotus in the dungeon, and that was the ultimate treasure that many of them were aiming for too.

It was just a pity that none of them was able to find it despite combing through the dungeon. They thought that it was just a rumor, but who could have thought that it was really existent.

Everyone immediately began glaring at Zu An with complicated looks on their faces.

"Isn't Zu An's luck way too good? How can heaven be so unfair as to let him stumble upon a treasure of that caliber?"

"I'm more surprised to hear that Zu An was actually generous enough to give the Evanescent Lotus to Miss Chu instead. It looks like he's going all-in this time around."

"It's no wonder why so many women stand steadfast for him. He does have some qualities that are deserving of their affection. At least, I don't think that I'll be able to do the same as he did."

"I think that he's far too reckless. Such a gift could touch a woman's heart for a while, but as the gap between the two of them grow larger and larger, they would still inevitably drift apart in the end."

“Yeah, I share the same thoughts too. Isn’t it much better for him to use it for himself? Once he becomes strong, he could have his free pick of ladies. Even Miss Chu would have a far higher opinion of him by then. In this world, it’s one’s strength that counts!”

...

In contrast to the logical analysis by those envious men, the women present stared at Zu An with shining eyes. A man who would give his all for the woman he loved; wasn’t this the love that they had been pursuing all their life?

Pei Mianman bemoaned the poor decision she had made. She should have insisted on tagging along with Zu An back then. If so, she could at least get a share of the loot. To make things worse, Zu An’s sacrifice had most likely won him Chu Chuyan’s heart, such that their ‘partnership’ was going to fall apart.

And most importantly of all, while she was a close friend to Chu Chuyan, she thought of the latter to be a rival too. She viewed herself to be inferior in no way to Chu Chuyan; in fact, she believed that her cultivation was a slight bit higher than that of Chu Chuyan’s.

However, Chu Chuyan’s consumption of the Evanescent Lotus meant that her cultivation had at least risen by an entire rank, and the fact that she could stand her own against Shi Lezhi earlier hinted at just how powerful she had become.

In other words, Chu Chuyan had just taken a huge lead over her.

To make things worse, she knew that they were equal in terms of aptitude and resources. If she couldn’t encounter a huge fortuitous encounter herself, it was likely that she would never be able to catch up with Chu Chuyan her entire life.

The thought that she would always have Chu Chuyan towering over her for life made her feel incredibly irritated. She shot a glare at the culprit who landed her in such a state. It’s all his fault!

You have successfully trolled Pei Mianman for +666 Rage!

Meanwhile, Zheng Dan also had a complicated look on her face. She had been wondering all this while how Zu An managed to escape from the elaborate schemes Shi Kun had concocted to kill him, and her doubts had finally been answered.

I never thought that he would be such a sentimental man.

Unlike the others, from her very first encounter with Zu An, Zheng Dan could already tell that he wasn’t a good-for-nothing as the rumors put him out to be. She could sense an air of mystery looming around him, and this air of mystery was a fatal charm to her.

The knowledge that he carried such deep feelings for Chu Chuyan left her feeling a little wistful. She wondered if her fiancé, Sang Qian, would be able to do the same for her if they had been in the same position.

She soon shook her head as a bitter smile emerged on her lips.

Even Wu Qing couldn't help but direct a look of admiration toward Zu An. It looks like I've misjudged his character all this while.

Only Jiang Luofu directed a bizarre glance at Zu An. She was one of the rare few who knew just how what the Evanescent Lotus meant to him. He was actually willing to make such a huge sacrifice to save his wife in name?

Sensing the gazes from the gossiping crowd around him, Shi Kun's face turned livid as he turned to Shi Lezhi for help.

Shi Lezhi hadn't lived so many years in vain, so it didn't take long for him to figure out a solution. "Rubbish! In this entire world, who has ever heard of anyone with collapsed ki meridians recovering back to its original state? At the very most, the Evanescent Lotus should have only restored her mobility. She would have been weaker than an average human! Besides, the Evanescent Lotus is only known for its ability to raise a person's cultivation; there are no records of it reconnecting one's ki meridians. If you don't believe me, you can look for Divine Physician Ji and ask him about it!"

The close acquaintances of the Shi clan quickly chirped in agreement too.

Jiang Luofu also frowned upon hearing those words. She didn't recall the Evanescent Lotus being able to reconnect a person's ki meridians either.

Shi Lezhi's statement gave some inspiration to Shi Kun. He stood forward and spoke aloud, "Even though Divine Physician Ji isn't here, his daughter, Ji Xiaoxi, is here. Everyone knows that Miss Ji has inherited her father's legacy, so why don't we get her to give her analysis on this matter?"

Everyone immediately turned her sights to Ji Xiaoxi.

Ji Xiaoxi was a shy person, and having so many eyes on her made her even more flustered. She found herself unable to say a word despite opening and closing her mouth repeatedly.

"Miss Ji, everyone knows that you aren't able to lie. Your opinion represents the authority of your father as well, so I suggest that you think things through carefully before making your statement," said Shi Kun grimly.

Zu An immediately protested angrily, "Hey, Shi Kun! Are you trying to threaten an eye-witness here?"

"Threaten? I'm just giving her a reminder lest a vile miscreant tries to blind her eyes!" Shi Kun harrumphed in response.

No matter how he racked his brain, he couldn't figure out why, for a period of time, he actually thought of Zu An as his own friend. The matter made him feel so disgusted that he could puke.

The only one who wanted to puke wasn't just him though. Zu An was feeling utterly distressed that the 100,000 silver taels he had spent had gone down the drain just like that.

The same went for the 100,000 silver taels he had spent for Zhang Han too. It was not utterly useless there, but its effects weren't so great as to be worth such a staggering sum. It looked like he would have thought twice before using the 'Befriending a Rich Man' skill in the future since it was weaker than he had expected it to be.

Ji Xiaoxi fell silent for a moment. Perhaps it was due to Shi Kun's words reminding her that this was a professional evaluation, her attitude suddenly grew solemn as she analyzed, "Based on what I know, there are no records of the Evanescent Lotus having the ability to reconnect one's ki meridians."

Shi Kun burst into laughter upon hearing those words. He turned to Chu Chuyan gleefully and said, "Do you hear that? Even Miss Ji has said so! It's obvious that you're spinning up a lie here!"

Chu Chuyan frowned. She had indeed lied on this matter, but there was no way she could bring herself to reveal the truth before such a huge crowd.

However, Ji Xiaoxi soon added, "However, even though there are no records of the Evanescent Lotus reconnecting one's ki meridians, we can't conclude that there isn't such an effect. The Evanescent Lotus is simply too precious that no one would use it on a crippled person, so naturally, we wouldn't have evidence of it. If what Miss Chu said is real, this would be a major breakthrough in the medical field, bringing a ray of hope to those who are crippled by their collapsed ki meridians."

Chu Chuyan's face heated up. It would really be disastrous if she really misled the patients all over the world due to the lie she had spouted.

She subconsciously shot a glance at Zu An as she made a mental note to clarify the matter with Ji Xiaoxi privately, telling her that it would be better for the patients with collapsed ki meridians to seek Zu An's help instead.

Zu An seemed to understand the significance behind Chu Chuyan's glance. Well, those male patients should stay as far away from me as possible, and if the female patients are beautiful, I guess I could at least give it a try...

## **Chapter 217: Lusting Over My Body**

Shi Kun was displeased to hear Ji Xiaoxi's words. "Miss Ji, don't you find your words incredibly meaningless?"

Ji Xiaoxi's face reddened as she knew that her analysis had been far too vague. In truth, her medical knowledge told her that it was unlikely for the Evanescent Lotus to be able to reconnect one's ki meridians, but she chose to present the possibility forward in order to help Zu An anyway.

Before she could give her response, Jiang Luofu had already joined the scene. "She's doing her job by pushing forward the list of possibilities clearly here, so why are you saying that her words are meaningless?"

Shi Kun belatedly realized that Jiang Luofu was Ji Xiaoxi's little aunt and recoiled a little. He was too agitated when he saw that Ji Xiaoxi was speaking up for Zu An that he forgot about their relationship, so he quickly apologized, "Pardon me, I've misspoken."

"The two of you insist on your own statements. As there are no conclusive evidence and eye-witnesses here to prove that either of you are right, I'm not in a good position on what is right or not. So, the academy will launch a detailed investigation into this matter, especially the cause of death of those who

have died in the dungeon, their backgrounds, and who they associate themselves with. I trust that the truth will come to light soon,” said Jiang Luofu deeply.

As she said those words, her eyes lingered meaningfully on Shi Kun for a moment.

Shi Kun’s heart skipped a beat, but he kept his eyes firm as he replied, “Thank you for redressing my grievances, Principal Jiang.”

As long as he wasn’t incriminated on the spot, everything else was acceptable to him. He believed that the Shi clan should have enough resources to work this case to his favor.

Meanwhile, Chu Chuyan frowned in displeasure toward this verdict. She knew that there were no conclusive evidence since access to the dungeon had already closed, and that the powerful Shi clan would surely do everything it could to prevent Shi Kun from being ruled guilty.

As for Zu An, he simply shrugged casually. He had expected such an outcome since this was no minor matter. One must know that declaring Shi Kun guilty here meant sentencing him to capital punishment. Even as Brightmoon Academy’s principal, Jiang Luofu wouldn’t dare to take such a gamble unless they had definite proof on the matter.

It was also for that reason that Zu An resorted to the simplest method earlier on to resolve this matter, but he didn’t expect Shi Lezhi to be camping in the vicinity all this while.

Jiang Luofu clapped her hands and said, “Enough. All of you are to report your encounters and gains from the dungeon to the academy. Don’t worry, the academy will not attempt to confiscate anything you have acquired. This procedure simply allows our teachers to provide you some constructive advice and pointers on how you can best use what you’ve gained lest you go astray in your cultivation. Of course, we’ll also be compiling the information for your juniors so that they can refer to your experiences for guidance.

“Once you’re done, you should head back home and rest. You have three days to freshen yourself up!”

The crowd cheered in delight. They had remained tense during the period of time they were in the dungeon, worried about the unknown dangers lurking everywhere while desiring to stumble upon a fortuitous encounter that would allow them to leap ahead of the others. The accumulation of stress had made them incredibly exhausted, so this short break to let loose was more than welcomed.

As the crowd gradually dissipated, Pei Mianman made use of the opportunity where Chu Chuyan was still engaged in a conversation with Qiao Xueying to walk over to Zu An’s side and ask, “Does our agreement still hold?”

“What agreement?” Zu An blinked his eyes in response.

This woman is simply too seductive. Her peach blossom eyes twinkle as if they’re smiling, and it can easily melt the heart of any man. It’s lucky that I have the number one beauty as my wife, greatly raising my immunity toward beauties, or else I might have just fallen for her trap.

Pei Mianman sighed softly and said grudgingly, “I knew that you would have forgotten about the promise we made with one another.”

“...” Zu An.

What's with your tone? You're acting as if I'm an unfaithful man letting you down... though honestly, would any man really bear to abandon a woman like you?

"It looks you have no intention of finding the accounting book for me," said Pei Mianman as she reined in her smile.

Zu An replied with a shrug, "You didn't help me get close to Chu Chuyan either."

Chu Chuyan and I have gotten so close to one another that the distance between us has been negative at one point in time. Do you think that I would still need you to matchmake us now?

Pei Mianman had also thought of this point as well. "It looks like the two of you have gotten much closer after the time you have spent in the dungeon. Haaa, if I only I knew that it would turn out like this, I would have gone along with you too."

Those words brought a weird look onto Zu An's face. If you had gone along with us and ended up getting your ki meridians collapsed as well, wouldn't I have to save the two of you then?

He thought about the laborious effort it would take him to save them and remarked deeply, "Ah, it would indeed be good if you had come with me."

Pei Mianman was stunned, not understanding the meaning behind his words. She felt that there was something really weird about his expression that she couldn't help but pull her clothes tighter around her. "I didn't help you previously because I didn't think that you would be able to settle Chu Chuyan so quickly. Why don't we do this instead? We'll continue with our previous promise, but I'll offer you something else instead. What do you think?"

"What can I ask for?" asked Zu An with a smile.

"Your smile looks a little frightening," said Pei Mianman despite not showing the slightest hint of fear on her face. "What do you want?"

"If I say that I want you, would you agree to it?" asked Zu An.

"You'd have to try asking for it to know," replied Pei Mianman with a dangerous smile.

Zu An carefully assessed her seductive eyes for a moment before finally shaking his head, saying, "Forget it, I don't want to be a scumbag who messes around with my wife's close friend."

"..." Pei Mianman's smile froze up.

Why does those words sound so awkward? You've tried to seduce me so many times before, but all of a sudden, you're acting like a gentleman?

If you aren't that kind of person, are you trying to say that I'm the one who is trying to seduce you then?

You have successfully trolled Pei Mianman for +256 Rage!

"How about this? I haven't thought of my condition yet, so I'll inform you after making up my mind. For the time being, I'll try to keep a lookout for the accounting booklet on your behalf," said Zu An.

Since Chu Chuyan was officially his wife now, there was no way he would allow an outsider to undermine the Chu clan's businesses. However, he was worried that Pei Mianman would try to work together with others if he turned her down, and that would make it much harder to guard against her.

Since that was the case, it would be better to go along with him for the time being and see what she was up to.

Yeap! That's my intention. It's definitely not because she has huge breasts!

"That's a wise decision~" Seeing that Chu Chuyan and Qiao Xueying were making their way over, Pei Mianman directed a flying kiss toward him before leaving with a seductive smile.

"What did you tell her that made her so happy?" asked Chu Chuyan doubtfully.

"I said that I would take her in as my concubine in the future so that she can call you 'big sister' in the future. That made her so happy that she simply wouldn't stop smiling. Ah, I guess she really lusts over my body," remarked Zu An.

"..." Chu Chuyan.

"..." Qiao Xueying.

This fellow is sure as shameless as ever!

Chu Chuyan hesitated for a moment before remarking, "It would be best for you not to rile her up. Despite her gentle and amicable appearance, she's actually incredibly vicious. Her black flames can easily reduce you to ashes, so make sure not to let your guard down around her."

She was afraid that Zu An would accidentally provoke Pei Mianman. If the latter really chose to burn him down on a whim, there would be nothing she could do to save her.

However, she belatedly realized that her words sounded a little too naggy, so she quickly added, "I've already spoken to Snow, and she'll be bidding her farewell soon."

"Bidding her farewell?" Zu An was surprised.

Qiao Xueying nodded in response. "I'm thankful to Miss Chu's care and concern over the years, but my identity is a little sensitive. It's not suitable for me to continue remaining here."

"Why are you only thanking her? What about me? I also took good care of you too!" remarked Zu An in displeasure.

"..." Qiao Xueying.

She gritted her teeth furiously and said, "If anything, you should be the one thanking me instead!"

Zu An smiled sheepishly and said, "Fine fine, we're both thankful to one another, alright? Besides, you didn't make much of a loss anyway. As long as you work hard in your cultivation, you should be able to recoup the loss in your lifespan."

Qiao Xueying fell silent. She knew that he was speaking the truth. The enhancement of her aptitude would allow her to cultivate much faster, thus recouping some of her lost lifespan.

In truth, she didn't mind having used her Half Life's Fate anymore. Whenever she thought about Zu An rising from a puddle of blood to protect her back at the dungeon, she felt that it wasn't that bad of a decision for her to give him half of her lifespan. It was just that Zu An had far too foul of a mouth that she always ended up bickering with him whether she wanted to or not.

"What are the two of you talking about?" Chu Chuyan looked at them doubtfully.

"Nothing much," replied Qiao Xueying with a shake of her head. Somehow, she didn't want to let Chu Chuyan know about this matter.

Zu An also reined in his smile and asked, "Are you really leaving?"

Qiao Xueying nodded. "There are things I need to settle back at the capital. I have many brethren whom I need to save."

Zu An sighed deeply and said, "What a pity. It hasn't been long since we got to know one another once more, and all of a sudden, we're already parting ways. Oh well, I wish you a smooth journey then."

Qiao Xueying had a complicated look on her face. She looked at him and Chu Chuyan for a moment before offering her blessing, "I wish you and Miss Chu a happy life together."

"Why are you suddenly bringing me into this?" Chu Chuyan's face swiftly turned red. She initially intending to just be a couple in name with Zu An, but who could have thought that they would end up consummating their marriage in the dungeon. This unexpected development derailed her plans, leaving her at a loss as to how she should face Zu An in the future.

So, when she heard Qiao Xueying's words, she stomped her feet furiously and walked away out of embarrassment.

Qiao Xueying hesitated for a moment before saying, "The young miss might look cold on the surface, but she's actually a little girl who harbors many fantasies. She tends to be very shy when it comes to such matter, so don't pay too much heed when she suddenly gets angry. Give her some time, and I believe that she'll come to accept you with time."

The two of them had spent many years together, so she had a good grasp of Chu Chuyan's character too.

A gentle smile curled on Zu An's face. He hadn't known Chu Chuyan for a long time, but he already had a rough idea as to what kind of person she was. "I know. Let's not talk about her now. Will we meet again in the future?"

"If fate permits, we'll meet again." Qiao Xueying had no idea what brought her to say those words, but her face quickly turned bright red. Then, she turned around and left in a fluster, leaving behind just a trace of her fragrance.

Not too far away, Shi Kun looked at the trio and spat coldly, "How dare Qiao Xueying betray me!"

"I'll get rid of that traitor for you tonight," said Shi Lezhi.

However, Shi Kun shook his head as a chilling smile appeared on his lips. "No, it would be far too much of a pity to simply kill her. She's a rare beauty after all, not to mention that she's an elven princess. It's

only because she has given her all to serving me thus far that I have never laid my hands on her before. However, since she has chosen to turn her back on me, there's no reason for me not to make full use of her assets."

A smile that was implicitly understood by all men emerged on Shi Lezhi's face. Clearly, he had done plenty of such stuff over the years. "I understand. I'll capture her and bring her before you."

## **Chapter 218: I Also Feel Helpless About It**

After bidding farewell with Ji Xiaoxi, Zu An departed the area with Chu Chuyan. In view that the academy had already granted them three days' worth of leave, they decided to head back to the Chu Manor.

Chu Chuyan needed to report everything that had happened in the dungeon to her parents, especially about the fallout with Shi Kun lest they were taken off guard.

As soon as they walked out of the academy, a short-haired woman suddenly leaped toward them with outstretched hands, shouting, "Big sister, brother-in-law!"

Given how passionate his sister-in-law was, how could Zu An possibly not reciprocate? He stretched his hand forth to hug her as he said, "What a good child our Huanzhao is~"

Aww, she's still as adorable as ever.

Chu Huanzhao's face turned red. She completely ignored Zu An and leaped into Chu Chuyan's embrace instead. "Big sister, you're finally out! I heard rumors that the dungeon is far more dangerous than before, so I was really worried about you."

"..." Zu An.

He awkwardly pulled his hands back. Damn it, I shouldn't have praised her.

All of a sudden, another person leaped into his embrace, crying with a choked-up voice, "Young master, I didn't think that you would miss me so much! I'm moved to tears!"

The two buns on Cheng Shouping's head tickled Zu An's nose. He was stunned for a moment before hurriedly pushing him away.

Why does he always act in such a manner... Could it be that he really swings that way?!

Meanwhile, Chu Chuyan stroked her younger sister's head dotingly and said, "We did encounter some danger in the dungeon, Come, let's head back home first. I'll share the details with you later on."

"Alright!" Chu Huanzhao waved her fist around excitedly. "You must tell me every single detail, alright? It's such a pity that I didn't manage to join the dungeon expedition. I've already recovered from my wounds, but our mother simply wouldn't allow me to go!"

"Our mother is just afraid that you would meet with danger inside. Besides, this dungeon is much different from before. If you have really went in, something might have just happened," said Chu Chuyan with a reddened face.

Needless to say, there was no way she was going to share every single detail with Chu Huanzhao, especially regarding that matter.

“What could possibly happen to me?” Chu Huanzhao thought nothing about it. She pointed a finger at Zu An and said, “Even someone of his caliber is able to make it out safely, so why would it be any different for me?”

“...” Zu An.

What do you mean by someone of my caliber?!

“Huanzhao, it has only been a few days since we last met, but it looks like you’re itching for a beating, huh?”

Chu Huanzhao immediately hid behind Chu Chuyan and exclaimed, “Big sister, look! He’s bullying me again!”

Chu Chuyan knew her younger sister’s personality well, so she smiled helplessly and said, “Alright, you should stop messing around. He isn’t as weak as you think him out to be. Didn’t you see his performance in the previous Clans Tournament?”

“I did, but our mother said that he simply lucked out,” replied Chu Huanzhao. “So, big sister, does he really have any true capabilities?”

Zu An chuckled softly, knowing that Chu Huanzhao was intentionally asking this question to help strengthen his relationship with Chu Chuyan. That silly lass. She doesn’t know that I’ve already reached that step with her older sister.

Chu Chuyan glanced at Zu An with a weird expression before finally nodding in response. “Yes, our mother seems to be mistaken. He’s pretty strong. He nearly killed Shi Kun with a single strike earlier.”

“Is our brother-in-law that formidable?” Chu Huanzhao immediately ran up to Zu An and assessed him intently. “As expected of a man whom I have high expectations for. You were actually able to beat his ass up!”

Chu Chuyan frowned. “Huanzhao, you should watch your tone. A lady shouldn’t use... that sort of language!”

Chu Huanzhao shrugged nonchalantly. “Aiyo, it’s more than enough to have you around for the demure feminine stuff. Just let me live however I want to, alright?”

“...” Chu Chuyan.

She knew her younger sister well enough to know that it was futile to tell her off. So, she could only heave a helpless sigh and let it slip.

Chu Huanzhao continued staring at Zu An intently before suddenly stretching her hand forth and asking, “Give it to me.”

“What?” Zu An was stunned.

“My gift. Didn’t you promise to bring a gift back for me?” Chu Huanzhao frowned. “You can’t have forgotten about it, did you?”

“This...” Zu An scratched his head awkwardly. He really forgot about this matter, but it couldn’t since he had been put through a series of life-threatening situations ever since entering the dungeon, so there was no way he would have any spare attention to think about that.

Chu Huanzhao could tell that Zu An had forgotten from his expression, and the expectant look on her face immediately crumbled. “Stinky brother-in-law, I shan’t talk to you ever again!”

With a cold face, she turned around and stomped off. No matter how Zu An shouted for her, she refused to turn her head around.

Watching the entire scene, Cheng Shouping shook his head. It looks like our young master really doesn’t understand a woman’s heart. How could he forget about something as important as this? I really have to give him some pointers in the future.

I should share with him the great amount of knowledge I’ve amassed from reading those romance novels!

Chu Huanzhao ignored Zu An completely the entire journey back to the Chu Manor. She was intending to return back to her room to sleep when Chu Zhongtian and Qin Wanru suddenly started asking them about their experience in the dungeon, which compelled her to stay out of curiosity.

Chu Chuyan quickly shared everything that had happened in the dungeon, and Zu An supplemented on some of the details. Somehow, the two of them shared the same idea not to mention that matter.

Chu Chuyan was simply embarrassed whereas Zu An was afraid that Chu Zhongtian and Qin Wanru would tear him into shreds upon learning the truth. Qin Wanru had never had a good impression of him in the first place. Chu Zhongtian did treat him fairly well, but as a father, it was inevitable that he would be infuriated when his precious daughter had been taken advantage of by a good-for-nothing.

So, he decided to wait till he finally assimilated more into the family before announcing this joyous news.

Chu Zhongtian, Qin Wanru, and Chu Huanzhao didn’t notice their occasional exchange of glances due to how shocking their experiences were, especially when they learned that Chu Chuyan’s ki meridians had collapsed at one point in time.

Even though it was relieving that Chu Chuyan was currently standing before them safe and sound, Chu Zhongtian and Qin Wanru still hurriedly stood up and checked her pulse. It was only after ensuring that she was really fine did they finally sigh in relief.

Qin Wanru shot a sharp glare at Zu An and bellowed, “Our Chuyan nearly got crippled in order to save you. You really are a curse to our family!”

You have successfully trolled Qin Wanru for +481 Rage!

“???” Zu An.

What in the freaking world? Why the hell are you blaming me for this? Are we nemesis in our past lives? It's your Chu clan who have made enemies out of everyone; why the hell are you blaming me for everything that happens?

Chu Huanzhao was still angry with Zu An a moment ago, but her mother's words immediately incurred her displeasure. "Mother, you're going too far here. What does this have to do with my brother-in-law?"

Qin Wanru looked at Chu Huanzhao and said, "Huanzhao, as the daughter of a ducal clan, you must learn to weigh the pros and cons of whatever you do. Not all lives are equal in the world. It's not that you shouldn't help those in need, but if doing so places you in danger as well, you should prioritize your safety instead."

Chu Chuyan also frowned and remarked, "Mother, if not for Zu An finding the precious Evanescent Lotus and feeding it to me, I might have already been dead by now. Not to mention, he even saved me afterward..."

"If not for him, you wouldn't have been in danger in the first place! Isn't it normal for him to save you?" Qin Wanru harrumphed.

Chu Chuyan was a little displeased to hear those words. While she knew that her mother was a headstrong person, she didn't think that it was much of an issue in the past. However, at this very moment, she felt that her mother was being a little too unreasonable here.

It was fortunate that Chu Zhongtian was around to mediate the situation. "Enough. The Evanescent Lotus did save Chuyan and further her cultivation by an entire rank. We should be thanking Ah Zu here instead. Ah Zu, don't take your mother-in-law's words to heart. She's a little anxious after hearing about the danger Chuyan has faced in the dungeon."

Qin Wanru was unhappy with her husband's words, but she chose not to refute him.

"Don't worry, father-in-law. I understand."

Zu An was frustrated at how Qin Wanru was pinning everything on him as if it was his fault, but he knew that he couldn't do anything else other than to ignore her.

Qin Wanru was Chu Chuyan and Chu Huanzhao's mother, after all.

...

Meanwhile, in the governor's residence, Sang Hong was in the midst of listening to Zheng Dan reporting the happenings in the dungeon to him.

Zheng Dan was extremely uptight in front of her future father-in-law, fearing that she would accidentally do anything to offend him. She revealed everything she knew about to him honestly.

Looking at the tender woman in front of her, Sang Hong nodded his head silently. Her appearance and disposition are top-notch. While her acting does go over the top at times, it's not a bad thing for her to be a little calculative. Her personality would complement my son's recklessness.

After listening to the full story, Sang Hong sighed deeply and said, "I thought that Shi Kun's plan was too immature, but I turned a blind eye to it since it would be to everyone's advantage if it works out. I

wouldn't have to dirty my hands here too. However, since he has already utterly failed here, I'd have no choice but to make a move personally then. Haa, I really hoped that I wouldn't have to come to this point."

## **Chapter 219: Even a God Can't Save Her**

Zu An walked out of the study room gloomily, feeling an unprecedented feeling of loneliness.

Chu Zhongtian and Qin Wanru had pulled Chu Chuyan aside to ask her for more details. Chu Huanzhao had spoken up on his behalf earlier, but she was still angry at him for forgetting her present. Even Snow wasn't around anymore, or else he could have bickered with her.

As for Cheng Shouping, he was definitely out of question. Anything that he was informed of would become known to the world the following day.

Looking at the bright moon in the sky, Zu An suddenly felt deeply wistful.

He recalled a poem that went 'Raising my head to gaze at the clear moon, only to lower it out of nostalgia for my home'. He couldn't understand this feeling in his previous world since he could always contact his home with a call, and even if he was at the opposite end of the globe, it would only take a day's journey at most.

In the modernized world with all sorts of convenient transportation technology, it was hard for him to understand the feeling of missing one's home. It was only when he came to this foreign land and had been picked on by Qin Wanru so many times that he finally understood it. The Chu clan wasn't his home after all.

He suddenly found himself missing his home, and it made him sigh deeply.

It looks like I should really think about the matter of leaving.

He did contemplate this question previously, but back then, he had just transmigrated over not too long ago, knew nothing about this world, and had no money on him at all. Leaving abruptly clearly wasn't a wise decision.

However, things were different now. He had hundreds of thousands on him, and he had officially become a cultivator too. Granted that his cultivation wasn't too high, he still shouldn't have too much difficulty protecting himself. More importantly, he even had an official position as a teacher of the Brightmoon Academy. He definitely had the ability to go independent now.

Just as Zu An's thoughts were drifting afar, a pleasant voice suddenly sounded in his ears, "What are you thinking of?"

Zu An turned around, only to see that Chu Chuyan was standing behind him. Her smooth black hair reached all the way to her waist, contrasting beautifully with her pale skin. Under the gentle moonlight, it looked like she was cloaked in a layer of divine light, making her seem like a fairy who had descended from heaven.

She was currently staring at him with glistening eyes that seemed to contain a world of stars.

Zu An found himself awed once again. The number one beauty of Brightmoon City indeed. Even the simplest gaze from her could easily drive countless men into a frenzy.

"Nothing much," replied Zu An.

Despite being awed by her appearance, he wasn't in his usual mood to tease her.

Chu Chuyan noticed that he had a complicated look on his face, which prompted her to observe him even more closely. It didn't take her long to sense the gloomy vibe around him, which astonished her.

All along, Zu An had always seemed to be a happy-go-lucky person who acted and spoke as he pleased. It was hard for her to imagine what was going through his mind for him to reveal such an expression on his face.

"I'm really apologetic about what happened earlier. My mother bears no ill-will; it's just that she's too worried about me. She has always been blunt with her words, so don't take what she said to heart," explained Chu Chuyan.

Zu An was a little surprised to hear Chu Chuyan explain on behalf of her mother. He had known her to be quite a cold and lofty individual. She would rarely take the initiative to speak to him, let alone bothering to explain about such matters.

He finally revealed a smile and said, "I'm living my life out with you, not her. There's no way I would pay her words too much heed."

Chu Chuyan's face reddened. Looks like I'm worried about him for nothing. He's still as thick-skinned as ever...

For some reason, she had a feeling that Zu An was making fun of her mother with those words earlier, but thinking that the notion was far too ridiculous, she tossed it to the back of her mind.

"That's good. You must be exhausted after everything we've been through. You should have a good rest," said Chu Chuyan before she turned around and left.

But a moment later, she suddenly halted her footsteps and turned around to look at the man behind her in bewilderment, asking, "Why are you following me?"

Zu An shrugged in response, replying, "Didn't you tell me to have a good rest?"

Chu Chuyan frowned. "Why are you following me then? Your room is over there."

Zu An put on a shocked look at those words. "Honey, you can't possibly have forgotten what you promised me in the dungeon, right? You said that you would live together with me! Well, my room seems too small for the two of us, so it would be better for me to move to yours instead..."

Hearing as Zu An started prattling about how the room ought to be renovated, Chu Chuyan suddenly felt a migraine setting in. "When did I promise you to live together?"

Zu An stared at her intently. "Are you feigning ignorance now? I know that cultivation prodigies like you have a photographic memory. Is this an attempt to renege on your promise?"

"I..." Chu Chuyan finally realized that she had indeed said something along the line, and her face immediately reddened. "That won't do. I only said those words due to the special circumstances. Furthermore... I didn't fully agree to it either."

"That's too much!" Zu An was displeased. "How could the first miss of the Chu clan renege on her promise? Fine, I'll get everything to judge this matter on my behalf and determine who's right here!"

He immediately stomped off after saying those words.

"W-wait a moment!" Chu Chuyan stopped him in a hurry. She had always been a shy person, and she wouldn't dare to walk out in the streets anymore if others were to learn of this matter.

However, Zu An continued walking away without paying her any heed.

This made her incredibly anxious, and all of a sudden, a chilling sensation gushed up her throat, and she spat out a mouthful of blood.

Noticing her peculiar condition, the horrified Zu An immediately turned around and supported her. "What's wrong? I was just joking with you. Surely you don't have to get so anxious as to start spurting blood, right?"

It was then that he noticed several shards of ice in the blood she had spurted earlier, and it left him stunned.

He was just about to ask her about it when her body suddenly succumbed and collapsed sideward. He quickly rushed forward to hold her, and it was only then that he noticed that her lips had gone completely pale, and there was a chilling frost enveloping her body.

"Honey, what's wrong?" asked Zu An anxiously.

"I... I'm fine. It's just an old problem..." said Chu Chuyan weakly. She wanted to explain that this was an affliction she had been suffering from over the years, just that it had worsened after the Clans Tournament, but she ended up fainting before she could finish her words.

"Honey, don't worry. I'll bring the physician over to treat you!" exclaimed Zu An as he carried her up.

"Don't bother wasting your effort. Normal physicians wouldn't be able to treat her."

A euphonious voice that sounded both lofty yet seductive suddenly sounded. It was from Mi Li.

"Big sis empress! You're awake?" Zu An was overjoyed.

Mi Li harrumphed coldly in response, "I woke up a long time ago. I need to check on your surroundings to see if there's any potential threat around you lest I get done in by your foolishness."

"So, did you find anything?" asked Zu An curiously.

"I haven't found anything at the moment, but..." Mi Li suddenly changed her tone and remarked sharply, "I saw how that woman named Qin Wanru humiliated you earlier. I thought that you were quite a figure, but who could have thought that you're such a scorned individual in this manor?"

Zu An was frustrated about it too. "What can I do about it? She's the matriarch of the Chu clan after all, not to mention that she's Chuyan and Huanzhao's mother."

"That won't do. The more I think about it, the angrier I become. I felt almost as if she was scolding me." Mi Li's tone suddenly grew frighteningly sharp. "A mere wife of a duke dares to act so arrogantly. Back then, even the princes and their consorts dare not to breathe loudly in my presence. Hmph! Shall I secretly pull her elsewhere and get rid of her? Having someone like her around will only bring great trouble in the future."

Zu An's safety concerned her safety too. In her view, all threats should be nipped in the bud. In comparison, Qin Wanru's life and death meant nothing to her at all. She was the type of person who would rather massacre thousands than let a person who posed a threat to her run free.

"That won't do!" exclaimed Zu An in horror.

He wasn't fond of Qin Wanru either, but to kill her over this was far too overboard.

"Ah, I understand it now." Mi Li nodded in realization. "That Qin Wanru does have a good face and nice figure. I never thought that you would be into older women. Fine, I'll do you a favor and capture her so that you can do whatever you want to her. We can always get rid of her after you have your fun with her."

"..." Zu An.

What in the world do you understand at all?

"Why is your default solution to all problems killing off the person?" Zu An was exasperated. "She's the mother of my wife..."

Before he could finish his words, Mi Li had already interjected with a cold harrumph, "You only think that way because your lowly birth doesn't allow you to come into contact with how vile humans can be. Over the course of history, how many people have betrayed their families? Looking just at the imperial family, it's common for brothers to kill one another and claim their wives... What I'm doing is already nothing much!"

"..." Zu An.

He was quiet for a long while before finally remarking deeply, "The circle of nobility sure is complicated."

"Sour grapes. You're just saying so because you're still too weak to even get into the upper society," sneered Mi Li.

"Let's talk about that next time. What's with my wife's current condition? Why did you say that a normal physician wouldn't be able to treat her?" asked Zu An hurriedly as he noticed that his wife's body was getting colder and colder.

"There's a problem in the cultivation technique she practices, or should I say that this is a common problem that all ice elemental cultivators suffer from? Anyone who practices ice element cultivation techniques has to absorb frost into their body, and over time, it'll lead to an accumulation of frost in their ki meridians, body, and internal organs."

“While there are known ways to alleviate the negative effects arising from the accumulation of frost, it’s impossible to get rid of them. After all, cultivation is a fight against heaven. It’s only normal to suffer some retribution.”

Zu An was confused. “If there’s such a huge risk to ice element cultivation techniques, why would anyone even learn them?”

“Despite the downsides of ice element cultivation techniques, they’re incredibly powerful, possessing many advantages that other elements cannot compete with,” explained Mi Li. “It’s only normal to sacrifice some things for greater power.”

“That being said, while most ice elemental cultivators tend to have shorter lifespans and suffer from low fertility, it usually doesn’t pose a direct threat to their life. Your wife’s condition seems to stem from her hasty growth. On top of that, she has found another different angle to ice elemental cultivation techniques which greatly enhanced the might of her attacks and growth, but at the same time, it made the negative effects even more pronounced too.

“On top of that, you fed her the Evanescent Lotus, which forcefully raised her cultivation by a rank. That shook her foundation, further magnifying the problems she was already suffering from. The strike against that old man from the Shi clan was the last straw that finally unleashed all of the problems she has accumulated thus far. Right now, the frost has already permeated all of her vitals. Even a god would find it hard to save her.”

## **Chapter 220: What Do You Want Her Heart For?**

Zu An was horrified. He thought that it was just a minor problem since it didn’t seem like a big deal to spurt blood in the world of cultivation. He himself had probably spurted at least liters of blood by now, such that he had already gotten perfectly used to it.

Yet, Chu Chuyan’s problem turned to be so severe, such that even Mi Li evaluated it to be incurable.

“How could this be...” murmured Zu An.

It was then that a voice suddenly sounded, “Chuyan, what’s wrong?”

A beautiful figure rushed over and pushed Zu An aside to snatch Chu Chuyan from his arms. Upon noticing that she had fallen unconscious, her face paled in horror. She turned to Zu An and roared, “What did you do to my daughter?”

“She was still fine when I spoke to her earlier, but she suddenly spurted blood and fainted. It might be due to her ice cultivation technique progressing too fast, resulting in her suffering a backlash from being unable to control the frost in her body...” replied Zu An.

But before he could finish his words, Qin Wanru had already interrupted him, roaring, “What do you know? My daughter is a prodigy! It’s only normal for her cultivation to progress swiftly! I know that you have stood out quite a bit over the last few days, but you’re still nothing compared to Chuyan! You have no right to criticize her!”

Qin Wanru was already angry, and hearing such an evaluation from someone she had always looked down on further infuriated her.

You have successfully trolled Qin Wanru for +502 Rage!

She carried her daughter up and rushed off to look for her husband. Why did I even waste time arguing with this fellow!

You have successfully trolled Qin Wanru for +9 +9 +9...

Staring at Qin Wanru's departing silhouette, Zu An snorted in response. The only good thing about this woman is that she produces a lot of rage.

"How about it? Do you want to reconsider my suggestion?" Mi Li's gleeful voice sounded in his ears.

"..." Zu An.

"You know, there are times that I wonder if you are actually not an empress but a demoness."

"I'm flattered by your compliment," replied Mi Li gracefully. "Who in the world said that an empress has to be virtuous and compassionate?"

Surprisingly, Zu An found those words oddly convincing. There were plenty of 'evil empresses' in history, and Mi Li seemed to fit right into the stereotype.

However, he was too worried about Chu Chuyan to listen to Mi Li's belief as to what an empress should be like. He quickly followed Qin Wanru.

Chu Zhongtian also rushed over upon hearing the news. While infusing his ki into her body to dissipate the frost, he waited impatiently for the clan physician to arrive.

Chu Huanzhao came over too, and she tightened her grip anxiously. While she had often bickered with her older sister because her mother was extremely fond of comparing the two of them, she knew deep well that her older sister doted on her a lot. They were actually on close terms with one another, and it pained her to see her older sister in such a state.

Not too long later, a white-haired old man rushed over with a group of servants. Zu An recognized the other party to be the clan physician, Bao Youlu.

In the entire Brightmoon City, his medical skill was only inferior to that of Ji Dengtu. Given his abilities, he wouldn't lower himself to just serve a single ducal manor, but he was indebted to the Brightmoon Duke from an incident in his earlier years. On top of that, he was also getting old, making it harder from his travel around. As a result, he decided to stay at the Chu clan to return the favor.

A maidservant had already prepared a silk cloth and wrapped it around Chu Chuyan's wrist. Bao Youlu read Chu Chuyan's pulse through it, and soon, a tight frown formed on his forehead and he sighed deeply. His reactions made Chu Zhongtian and Qin Wanru extremely worried.

A long time later, he finally retracted his fingers, and Qin Wanru immediately asked anxiously, "Physician Bao, how is my daughter?"

Bao Youlu seemed a little hesitant to speak. Chu Zhongtian quickly dismissed all of the servants from the room. In view that Zu An was Chu Chuyan's husband in-name, he was allowed to stay.

Once the others had left the room, Bao Youlu sighed deeply and said, "Master, Madame, the frost has permeated the young miss' ki meridians and internal organs. There's no saving her anymore. It'll be best if you could prepare yourself for the inevitable."

"???" Chu Zhongtian.

"???" Qin Wanru.

"???" Chu Huanzhao.

"..." Zu An.

While they could tell that Chu Chuyan's condition was more severe than before, they didn't expect it to be at such an extent. When they heard this nightmarish diagnosis, all of them stiffened in place.

Meanwhile, Zu An sighed deeply as well. It was the same verdict as Mi Li had come to.

"H-how can this be? My daughter was still completely fine earlier! Why would she suddenly..." Qin Wanru began sobbing halfway through her words.

Chu Zhongtian also asked anxiously, "Indeed, Physician Bao! Chuyan has just made an advancement in her cultivation, so how could she possibly suddenly fall ill?"

A glint flashed across Bao Youlu's eyes when he heard those words. "May I know how the young miss made a breakthrough in her cultivation?"

This concerned his daughter's life, so Chu Zhongtian didn't dare to hide the details at all. He quickly told Bao Youlu about how they had found the Evanescent Lotus in the dungeon.

"I see." Bao Youlu stroked his beard contemplatively. "I was still wondering why the young miss' condition would suddenly deteriorate despite being healthy all this while. It turns out that the root of the problem lies here.

"It's common knowledge that practicing ice cultivation techniques is harmful to one's body, but this effect is usually negligible. However, the young miss had her ki meridians severed in a dungeon. Even though she managed to reconnect them afterward, it still damaged her ki foundation. To consume the Evanescent Lotus in such a condition and forcefully raise her cultivation by an entire rank further magnified the instability, placing a huge burden on her body. This resulted in the current situation."

It was the same as what Mi Li said earlier, which proved that her skill was indeed the real deal.

Everyone was stunned to hear those words. Bao Youlu's analysis made perfect sense, and it finally sunk into them that Chu Chuyan was indeed in danger.

"It's all your fault! If not to save you, our Chuyan's ki meridians would have never been severed! If you hadn't fed the Evanescent Lotus to her, she would have never suffered such an ill fate! You're the one who caused all of these problems!" Qin Wanru stood up and roared at Zu An like a tigress, looking as if she would pounce on him at any moment.

You have successfully trolled Qin Wanru for +1024 Rage!

Zu An was in no mood to even bother with her at the moment. He was busy communicating with Mi Li telepathically. "Big sis empress, is there really no way to save her?"

"Didn't I tell you that even a god wouldn't be able to save her?"

"But you mentioned that you were skilled in runes and medicine back at the dungeon. Even if a god is unable to save her, I believe that big sis empress will be able to pull it off!" exclaimed Zu An.

Mi Li's laughter sounded in his head. "You're indeed good at bootlicking. You're right. If Ying Zheng is able to compete with even the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors, how could I possibly lose to a mere god? I do have a way to save her."

"Big sis empress, please enlighten me!" urged Zu An.

Mi Li harrumphed coldly. "After how that woman treated you, are you sure you want to save her daughter?"

"The one I'm saving here is my wife; it has nothing to do with Qin Wanru at all. Don't worry. If it's Qin Wanru that's lying there right now, I wouldn't even bother raising a finger for her," replied Zu An.

"A man should at least know how to keep a grudge. If you repay enmity with kindness, how are you going to repay kindness then? Enmity should always be repaid with enmity!" Mi Li's tone finally alleviated a little. "Your wife is in a tough position because the frost has seeped into her organs and ki meridians. What we need to do right now is to expel the frost from her body, but the slightest carelessness could easily destroy her ki meridians and inflict heavy damage on her organs. That would make her die even faster.

"She's the one who is the most familiar with her own body, be it her ki meridians or her organs. So, she should be the one dispelling the frost personally. The problem is that she's in no state to channel her ki at the moment, and her ki attribute is ice too. If she channels ice elemental ki into her body right now, it'll only worsen the problem.

"But putting aside these technical problems, you do have the simplest way out to cure her, and that's to undergo the amalgamation of yin and yang as the two of you did previously so as to expel the frost via heat. On top of that, you can channel the primordial ki toward her damaged ki meridians and organs to protect them. Through this, she should be able to recover fully in half a month to half a year's time."

Zu An asked in surprise, "Why does it take that long?"

There was a trace of mirth in Mi Li's voice as she replied, "That's a dumb question. Do you think that doing it seven times a night is the same as doing once a night for a week?"

"..." Zu An.

"But this treatment method is a little too unconventional."

"Stop putting on that act. I know that you're already celebrating this unexpected bliss," remarked Mi Li coldly, seeing right through his righteous facade.

Zu An's face heated up as he said, "I mean, it's indeed something happy for me, but I'm not sure if Chuyan would be willing to do it."

"Is that something you should be concerned about right now?" snapped Mi Li in irritation.

Regarding that, Zu An replied, "It's easy to attain a person's body, but winning a person's heart is a different matter. I hope that she can accept me willingly in the future instead of having me to take advantage of her at times like this."

He scorned himself a little for saying that. Honestly, it was because he already had her body once that he wanted more.

"What do you want her heart for?" replied Mi Li disdainfully. "As long as her body accustoms to yours, it's just a matter of time before her heart becomes yours too. Youngsters like you really don't understand how the human mind works. Love is something that's bred over time."

"..." Zu An.

Is that an innuendo?

"Big sis empress, you mentioned that that's the simplest method, which means that there's a not-so-simple method too. May I know what it is?" asked Zu An.

In the Tai'e Sword, Mi Li's face turned livid as she said, "Hmph, I really don't know whether you're feigning dumb or not. You keep acting like a little pervert all the time, only to act righteously at times like this. Forget it! Listen well, the difficult method involves..."

...

Back to the room, Chu Huanzhao stopped the agitated Qin Wanru and said, "Mother, you're being too much again. My big sister has already said earlier that this has nothing to do with brother-in-law!"

"Shut up! You only know how to side with outsiders! Who is he to you? Is he more important than your big sister? Is he more important than your mother?" bellowed Qin Wanru.

Chu Huanzhao pouted in displeasure. "That's not what I mean."

"Enough!" Chu Zhongtian finally lost his patience. He turned to Bao Youlu and asked, "Physician Bao, is there really no way out of this?"

Bao Youlu shook his head and replied, "Pardon my ignorance, but I really can't figure out a way to treat her. Perhaps Divine Physician Ji might have an unconventional treatment to this, but I don't think that the young miss' condition looks too hopeful. On top of that, I heard that Divine Physician Ji left for the neighboring city a while ago."

"I'll find him back right now!" said Chu Zhongtian.

Qin Wanru quickly interjected, "I'll go instead. You aren't on good terms with him."

"How can I do that?" exclaimed Chu Zhongtian.

Wouldn't this be practically sending his beautiful wife into the mouth of a lecher? He still remembered clearly that Ji Dengtu was one of Qin Wanru's suitors back then!

It was then that a voice sounded, "I do have an idea in mind."

Bao Youlu turned around to take a look, only to be displeased when he saw that the one speaking was Zu An. It was just a moment ago that he said that he had no way out of this when Zu An suddenly said that he had an idea. Such an action put Bao Youlu in a spot.

Besides, he had never heard about the drafted son-in-law of the Chu clan being well-versed in medicine before.