

## Immortal 231

### Chapter 231: I Wouldn't Usually Laugh...

Zu An was rendered speechless.

No matter how thick his skin was, his face still couldn't help but flush red.

However, he calmed down as he noticed Mi Li's slightly-flushed cheeks. "Big sis empress, there's something I'm curious about. Since you are in soul form, I can understand if you can create clothes and such. However, why can I see you blushing?"

Mi Li suddenly turned around, shooting him a vicious look. "Are you feeling cocky now? Let's see if you still feel cocky after I cut off your hateful thing!"

After saying this, the Tai'e Sword flew directly towards his crotch.

This scared the living daylights out of Zu An. He jumped back into bed, wrapping himself tightly within the comforter. "Big sis empress, don't act rashly! This concerns the happiness of the second half of your life!"

"Hm?" Mi Li arched her slender brows. The Tai'e Sword came to a halt, its point lowering slightly.

Zu An hurriedly explained, "If someone with my level of libido can't continue living on as a man, there won't be anything to live for anymore! If I end my life just like that, it won't be good for big sis either, will it?"

"Your level of libido?" Mi Li snorted. "It seems like you at least understand yourself well."

She finally retracted the sword, and Zu An heaved a sigh of relief. A thought came to him. Is this sword still mine or not? Why is it completely obedient to her now?

"Put on your clothes. This empress has some things to talk to you about." Mi Li stood with her hands behind her back and averted her gaze.

Hearing her serious tone, Zu An set aside his mischievous attitude and dressed quickly. While putting on his clothes, his gaze was drawn to a captivating red stain on the bed sheets, and his lips spread in a slight smile.

When he was done, he asked hurriedly, "Big sis empress, what did you want to talk about?"

Mi Li turned around. Seeing him fully-dressed, her expression finally softened. "I wanted to talk to you about your physical state. When I saw you fight against Zhang Han and the others, you were as slippery as an eel. However, when I fought against you later on, your movements seemed to have become much more rigid. It was the same when that Shi Lezhi or whoever was chasing after you last night. What is going on?"

After all, possessing a miraculous movement technique like this was the same as having an additional life-saving weapon. She wanted Zu An to possess as many such skills as possible.

When she brought up this topic, Zu An immediately became depressed. "I'm really going to cry if we keep talking about this... this movement technique seems to have been specially made for eunuchs!"

"Eunuch?" Mi Li was momentarily stunned. Her gaze subconsciously drifted down between his legs, as she wondered how this fellow could possibly have anything to do with a eunuch.

Zu An's face flushed red. "Um... you better not laugh at what I'm about to tell you!"

Mi Li scoffed haughtily. "Do you know how much strife and turbulence this empress has witnessed? Why would I laugh at some random words spoken by someone like you?"

What kind of joke was this? The empress of a country was trained in such matters since childhood. Maintaining a composed exterior was the most basic of basics! If she suddenly laughed while facing the court councilors, she would have embarrassed the entire imperial family!

Zu An hid a sigh of relief, and proceeded to tell Mi Li about the Sunflower Phantasm and his previous seal.

As she listened to his tale, Mi Li's expression grew strange. Her red lips slowly spread open as her gaze swept over his face and his legs. In the end, she laughed out loud.

Zu An's face darkened. "You promised me you wouldn't laugh!"

Seeing Zu An throw a tantrum like a spoiled child only fueled Mi Li's mirth. The smile on her face grew bigger and bigger, and her entire body began to rock back and forth from laughter.

Zu An's face darkened even further, and steam threatened to come out of his ears.

Mi Li tried to curb her laughter. "I'm so, so sorry, I wouldn't usually laugh! Only when I cannot..."

Another peal of laughter rocked her before she could even finish her sentence.

Thoroughly humiliated, Zu An flew into a rage. "Laugh then, laugh all you want! Why don't you just laugh yourself to death!"

Only after a long time did Mi Li's breathing finally start to steady. "I really didn't expect that... you actually had such a miserable past."

Zu An turned his back to her. "I don't want to talk to you anymore."

Mi Li snuggled closer. "Don't be so tight-lipped... come, come, tell me about everything that has ever made you unhappy. Not only will you be able to release your pent-up frustrations, but I would be able to get some enjoyment out of it as well! Isn't this what you call a win-win situation?"

Zu An was completely shell-shocked.

This woman really knew how to hit a man while he was down! If he hadn't been afraid that he couldn't defeat her, he would've spanked her ass a long time ago.

"No wonder everyone had on such strange expressions when they found out you had given the Evanescent Lotus to Chu Chuyan! It turns out that was your seal-breaking medicine." Mi Li reached out a

long and slender finger, which glistened slightly as if lightly coated with an immortal elixir. She gently hooked it around his chin while saying, “You really do go all-in with women...”

Zu An’s body froze as he felt the soft sensation beneath his chin. “Aren’t you just a soul? How am I able to feel your finger like this?”

Mi Li pulled her hand back. “Hmph, my current state is more accurately described as a half-soul body, existing between an incorporeal and a material state. As long as I wish it, I can make it tangible to others.”

Zu An stared blankly. Couldn’t the two of us do some naughty things, then?

\*Smack!\*

A sharp and clear sound rang out. The Tai’e Sword trembled slightly.

Zu An gasped, clutching at his palm. “What’re you doing?”

“Who told you to have such despicable thoughts?” Mi Li snorted.

Zu An bolted to his feet in an instant. He pointed at her and yelled, “You told me that you couldn’t read my thoughts!”

Mi Li narrowed her eyes at him. “This empress had eons more experience than you! What kind of subtlety could a brat like you possibly possess? I can see right through you with a single glance!”

Zu An wasn’t convinced. “Why can you talk to me directly through my mind, then?”

Mi Li replied with an indifferent tone, “That is merely the result of a mysterious connection formed by the Life-and-Death Contract between us, which allows our souls to communicate naturally via a special frequency.”

Zu An’s eyes widened. “How do you even know a word like ‘frequency’?”

“Didn’t I just say that our souls are intimately linked? The words I use will be automatically translated into something you can easily understand, and that you are most familiar with.” Mi Li explained.

“Is that really how it works?” Zu An was still skeptical.

Mi Li was in no mood to argue the matter with him, and moved on to a more pressing issue. “Brat, even though your cultivation is low, your knowledge and experiences are not. You were actually able to quickly deduce that your Sunflower Phantasm is only suited for eunuchs. Someone at the eighth rank would normally find such a deduction difficult, let alone someone at your level of cultivation. Don’t tell me you really are a legendary genius?”

“But of course! Take a good look at who you are talking about!” Zu An’s expression was full of pride, but on the inside, he continuously thanked Invincible East, Yue Buqun, Ling Pingzhi and all the other godfathers.[1]

Mi Li pondered a moment before saying, “Explain the Sunflower Phantasm’s ki flow to me in detail. Do not omit the slightest bit of information.”

Zu An nodded. Without hesitation, he revealed everything he knew about the Sunflower Phantasm.

After listening intently to what he had to say, Mi Li fell deep into thought. A good while later, her red lips finally opened gently. "This movement technique is indeed miraculous, but some parts of it are not quite accurate. Let me modify it for you slightly, and mix in a bit of my own movement technique. When you transfer your ki in the future, the various acupuncture points need to be used in such ways..."

She demonstrated her points as she explained them, her figure dancing about gracefully. She was truly as elegant as a goddess descending from the moonlit clouds. Her body fluttered about like snowflakes in a gentle breeze.

Zu An was completely entranced. That emperor really was a heartless creature, to seal away a goddess like this for thousands of years.

Mi Li finally finished her demonstration, and noticed his somewhat dazed expression. "Were you paying attention or not?!" she snapped in annoyance.

"Of course I was!" Zu An immediately replied.

"How much of it do you remember, then?"

"Pretty much all of it."

"Is that so? Then why don't you go through it once for me?" Mi Li sneered. This fellow was completely enchanted by me just now. How could he have possibly concentrated on learning the technique? This is a good chance for me to properly discipline him.

"No problem!" Zu An spent some time recalling what she'd said. His eyes flew open, and took a step forward. There were suddenly two copies of him, both of them possessing an aura similar to his own. The resemblance was so uncanny that he himself found it almost impossible to distinguish them.

Unfortunately, when he took a second step, his energies suddenly became chaotic. He staggered and crashed heavily to the ground.

Zu An's face flushed with embarrassment. "I made a mistake just now. Should I try again?"

Mi Li was stupefied. "Have you studied this before?"

"Of course. Aren't these just some modifications made to the basic Sunflower Phantasm? The only thing different is these clones." As he replayed what had just happened in his mind, he discovered that this movement technique was already far better than his previous one.

The previous Sunflower Phantasm had excelled in its fast speed and fiendishly elusive movements, and it did not telegraph in which direction the user was moving. Now, this set of movements also had powerful illusion effects.

Such an effect would perfectly confuse any enemy he was fighting, especially if what the enemy saw was not just an afterimage, but copies of him that carried the same exact auras as himself. His enemies would not know which figure to attack. This was pretty much an entire extra life!

Mi Li stared at him. "No, I was talking about my directions just now."

“No, I haven’t. You’ve only shown this to me once. Is it supposed to be hard?” A strange expression suddenly appeared on Zu An’s face. “Big sis empress, how long did it take you to learn this?”

Mi Li turned her head away in disdain, her expression haughty. “When this empress studied this before, I was able to immediately produce four copies! Your trifling two copies is just barely a pass.”

Despite her words, she felt thoroughly ashamed inside. Back then, it had taken her an entire month just to produce two copies!

1. Invincible East, Yue Buqun, and Ling Pingzhi are characters from The Smiling, Proud Wanderer.

## **Chapter 232: Pleasant Countenance**

Zu An didn’t doubt her words. After all, Mi Li’s powerful aura and her invincible form in the underground palace had made a deep impression on him. In his opinion, what she had described was only proper.

“Let me give it another try.”

Spurred on by his competitive nature, he began to practice the movement technique again.

After countless tries, he almost managed to make a third figure appear. However, each time he got close, his energies would turn chaotic, causing him to trip over himself and fall miserably.

After one final, unsuccessful try, he climbed back to his feet with a long sigh. “It seems I can’t compare to big sis empress after all. I’ll have to keep up my earnest practice if I want to be like big sis and make four copies.”

“Honestly, you’ve already done quite well. Practice earnestly and you will slowly improve.” Mi Li encouraged him the way a wise senior would, but inside, she was pretty shaken up.

Transcendent-class aptitude really is worthy of its legendary reputation! Not only does his blood essence possess extraordinary effects, he also learns things far faster than ordinary people.

Her own aptitude already far surpassed others. Back then, her feat of producing two copies after just a month of training had already stunned countless people. And yet, this freak had actually succeeded after listening to her describe it once!

Excessively comparing oneself to others could really anger one to death.

Despite her feelings, his dispirited expression made her worry that her mischaracterization of her success would affect his mentality and hinder his cultivation. Therefore, she had immediately tried to lift his spirits and bring him back to the right path.

Zu An seemed relieved at her words. “By the way, big sis empress, what do you call this movement technique?”

Mi Li shook her head. “There are many things that would only bring you more harm than good if you learn of them too soon. Wait until you can make nine clones before asking me again. Since this technique is still integrated into your Sunflower Phantasm, you can just continue calling it the Sunflower Phantasm.”

"Forget it, then." Zu An was slightly disappointed. The name 'Sunflower Phantasm' gave him some anxiety. It brought up the image of Old Mi, which made him feel deeply uncomfortable. He would much rather look at this pretty empress' body instead.

Sigh... I really care too much about outward attractiveness. That Old Mi actually treats me quite well, even though his motives are a bit strange...

\*Knock knock, knock knock...\*

Someone was knocking excitedly on his door.

"Young master, young master, Master invited Divine Physician Ji over!" Cheng Shouping's unique voice came loudly through the door.

"I'm going into hibernation for a bit, and it will most likely be some time before I wake up again. The 'Red Tears of Lady Xiang' poison has already affected my soul, so I have to concentrate on neutralizing its effects." Mi Li's beautiful eyes gazed deeply into his. "Remember, if you want to become strong, you can never subconsciously rely on someone else. In the end, you have to face all challenges and dangers alone."

"When will we meet again?" Zu An had begun to mock her inwardly. If you were so worried about the poison, why did you still waste so much time watching me suffer earlier? However, when it struck him that he wouldn't be able to see her again for a long time, he immediately felt regretful.

"That's hard to say. Perhaps a few months, perhaps a few years." Mi Li's fierce expression mellowed as well. "You must take care of yourself during this period. Don't go courting disaster. The movement technique I taught you should be more than enough for you to take care of yourself."

"Hahaha, do I really look like someone who'll court disaster?" Zu An patted his own chest to reassure her.

Mi Li only blinked at him.

Why did she feel like this brat's words weren't at all reliable?

Mi Li sniffed lightly. "I hope you keep your word. Otherwise, it'll be one corpse but two lives."

With a flicker of flowing light, she disappeared into the Tai'e Sword.

"Young master, young master!" Cheng Shouping's knocking grew louder and more insistent.

Zu An put away the Tai'e Sword. When he opened the door, a figure immediately tumbled into his embrace.

With his hand pressed against those two hair buns, Zu An issued a stern warning. "Don't touch me!"

"What..." Cheng Shouping backed up slightly, a hurt look on his face. "Young master, do you not dote on me anymore?"

Zu An resisted the urge to slap him.

“You had better stop using those weird words with me. This young master is a straight man through and through.” Zu An’s expression grew uglier by the second. “You don’t have a thing for my body, right?”

Cheng Shouping giggled and said, “It’s a pity that this humble one isn’t a girl, or else I’ll definitely keep young master company every day.”

Zu An snorted at his wanton flattery. “What did you come yelling about so early in the morning for? What does Divine Physician Ji’s arrival have to do with me?”

Cheng Shouping shuffled over, lowered his voice and said, “Young master, don’t you want to pay the young miss a visit to express your concern? After all, the first miss is the one Master and Madam loves most dearly. For better or for worse, if young master plays his part well, Master and Madam might just pair you with the second miss out of a moment of happiness.”

Zu An let out a resigned sigh. “The Chu clan is truly blessed to have a servant like you!”

“Young master is too kind with your praise.” Cheng Shouping rested his chin on his balled-up fists, a happy expression on his face.

All jokes aside, Zu An figured that it would be good to take a look, whether it was out of affection or for any other reason. While he knew that there would be no complications as long as Chu Chuyan underwent his acupuncture treatment each day, Qin Wanru was not privy to that information.

Given Qin Wanru’s lack of fondness for him, he knew that, if he didn’t head over, this would be yet another reason for her to yell his ears off.

Zu An arrived outside Chu Chuyan’s residence. After the previous night’s disturbance, the security along the way was much more strict.

The residence itself was lightly guarded. It was clear that Madam didn’t want news of Chu Chuyan’s state to leak out.

Two other people were waiting at the entrance. One of them had huge bags under his eyes that any master of time management would be proud of, and the other was elegant and polished, but stout. These were none other than Chu Tiesheng and Chu Yuepo, of the Chu clan’s second and third branches respectively.

“I pay my respects to second and third uncles.” Zu An clasped his fist in formal greeting. Even though, back in the ancestral hall, these two had kicked him while he was down, etiquette still had to be maintained.

Chu Tiesheng acknowledged him with an indifferent grunt. On the contrary, Chu Yuepo was much more cordial, his chubby face full of smiles. “Ah, so it’s little An...”

Before he could finish, Zu An interrupted, “Please call me Ah Zu.”

“Ahem...” Chu Yuepo was momentarily startled, but recovered quickly. “Ah Zu, what exactly happened to Chu Chuyan? Why was there a sudden need to invite Divine Physician Ji over?”

Zu An’s heart skipped a beat. He hadn’t expected Qin Wanru to hide the truth even from the two of them. In that case, he was clearly not dumb enough to reveal it. “I don’t really know either.”

“How could you not know? Aren’t you two husband and wife? Since both of you came out of the dungeon together not too long ago, you should at least know something.” Chu Yuepo pulled him to one side. Even Chu Tiesheng pricked up his ears.

Before Zu An had time to reply, a gentle voice called him from not too far away. “Ah Zu, you’ve arrived! Hurry up and come inside.”

The three of them turned towards the sound of the voice, and saw a graceful and beautiful woman walk out from the residence. Who else could this be but Qin Wanru?

“I pay my respects to Madam.” Zu An was slightly overwhelmed by her sudden kindness. He had never seen Qin Wanru treat him so pleasantly before.

An abnormal glint flashed across Chu Tiesheng’s previously-listless eyes as he caught sight of Qin Wanru’s wonderful figure, but he concealed it instantly. He walked over to her in a leisurely manner and said, “Sister-in-law, what exactly happened? Why can’t we enter?”

“Exactly,” Chu Yuepo echoed. “We received news that Chuyan had fallen ill so we came to take a look, yet the guards outside the gates wouldn’t even let us in.”

Qin Wanru smiled faintly. “I was the one who ordered that no one be allowed inside. Chuyan is experiencing some feminine ailments, and it isn’t appropriate for others to visit her.”

These words stopped them from persisting further. They took out some ancient medicinal mushrooms and offered them to her. “Since the two of us can’t help personally, the best we can do is offer these to speed Chuyan’s recovery.”

Qin Wanru bowed slightly, and gave Zu An a sharp look. “Many thanks to you both. Ah Zu, why aren’t you receiving them?”

With a start, Zu An hurriedly collected their offerings and thanked them.

“I must ask brother-in-laws to take their leave. Chuyan isn’t suffering from anything serious, and we have Divine Physician Ji with us.” Qin Wanru’s dignified and graceful appearance soothed their hearts, as if they had been caressed by a cool autumn breeze. As expected of a duchess, they thought.

Zu An scoffed inside. Why do you always show me a completely different side?

After sending the two of them off, Qin Wanru brought Zu An into the residence.

Zu An followed behind her, admiring her swaying figure. He contemplated making Chu Chuyan eat a little more, just so she could also develop this type of feminine charm.

Just then, he heard Qin Wanru’s ice-cold voice right next to his ears. “You didn’t say anything unnecessary to them just now, did you?”

### **Chapter 233: Daughter-Doting Devils**

“What do you mean by ‘unnecessary’?” Zu An asked, turned his head towards her.



Qin Wanru's breath caught for a moment. "You can't be stupid enough not to know such things, can you?"

Zu An shrugged. "They were both Chuyan's uncles, so why can't I tell them anything?"

"You told them?" Qin Wanru's eyes widened in anger.

"I didn't. I just don't know why I can't tell them." Zu An said. He wanted to take advantage of this situation to figure out what was really going on inside the Chu clan.

"That's good." Qin Wanru's expression mellowed. "This matter concerns our Chu clan's future, so we have to keep it quiet."

When Qin Wanru thought about how they would all be living under the same roof, and how difficult it would be for him to avoid contact with the second and third branches in the future, she added, "Even though they are Chuyan's uncles, they aren't from the same branch. Everyone has their own considerations, so it's best to be careful."

Zu An nodded. "Understood."

It looks like the three branches of the Chu clan only seem to get along on the surface... but this isn't too shocking. In a large clan, a clash of interests will make even blood brothers hostile towards each other, and Chu Tiesheng, Chu Yuepo and Chu Zhongtian are only cousins.

The two of them swiftly arrived at Chu Chuyan's room, which was being guarded by the butler, Hong Zhong.

A flash of surprise crossed Hong Zhong's face when he saw Zu An accompanying Qin Wanru, but he quickly made it disappear. He stepped aside to allow them to enter.

The two of them walked into the bedroom. Chu Zhongtian was seated slightly away from the bed, a grave expression on his face. Ji Dengtu was on one side of the screen, holding three thin threads that were connected to Chu Chuyan's wrist. His eyes were closed, and he stroked his beard subconsciously while sensing her pulse.

Bao Youlu stood beside him with an envious expression. This type of suspended-thread pulse-measuring method was something he never had the privilege of learning. As expected of the publicly-acknowledged divine physician!

Chu Huanzhao sat beside her older sister on the other side of the screen, her expression nervous. Even though Zu An had reassured her the previous day, she was unable to fully banish her anxiety.

Chu Zhongtian nodded slightly to acknowledge their arrival, before returning to his own thoughts.

Ji Dengtu turned his head towards Qin Wanru, a cheeky expression on his face.

Qin Wanru's brows furrowed slightly. However, she didn't lose her temper, but sat quietly at Chu Zhongtian's side, gently holding his hand.

When he saw this, Ji Dengtu clicked his tongue, his expression clearly annoyed.

Zu An watched calmly as this mini-drama unfolded. It seems like the rumors of Ji Dengtu pursuing Qin Wanru in his younger years were true! However, Qin Wanru is surprisingly devoted to Chu Zhongtian.

This does make sense though. Not only is Chu Zhongtian handsome, he is also a mighty duke, a high-quality man in any world. Even though Ji Dengtu doesn't look too bad himself, he is a bit too sloppy, and is only a doctor. There's no way for him to compete with a glorious duke.

Isn't it obvious who the ladies would pick?

Zu An sighed inwardly. Having a pretty wife means you'll always be the target of others' envy! The previous Chu Tiesheng, now Ji Dengtu, even Shi Leizhi from yesterday!

Father-in-law, be careful not to let your backyard catch fire!

Ji Dengtu retracted the three threads. The members of the Chu clan immediately got to their feet and asked, "Divine Physician Ji, how is her condition?"

Ji Dengtu answered, "I've just finished my examination of young miss Chu's pulse. Even though the frost has entered her body and the condition looks hopeless, I can still vaguely sense a hint of vitality. It isn't as bad as how all of you previously described it to be."

Zu An noticed Ji Dengtu's body giving off some sort of radiance as he spoke. Although this fellow always seemed sloppy, it seemed that his aura was completely different when speaking about his specialization.

Did this scoundrel rely on this side of him to swindle Ji Xiaoxi's mother back then? Otherwise, it's really too hard to imagine how the mother of that pretty and lovely Ji Xiaoxi actually ended up with this slovenly lecher!

Speaking of which, Ji Xiaoxi has yet to mention anything about her mother. I didn't see a lady boss the last time I visited their house, and I know nothing at all about her mother.

"Is that really the case?" Chu Zhongtian actually jumped for joy.

Bao Youlu was skeptical. After all, when he had checked Chu Chuyan's pulse the day before, she had already been beyond saving. However, Ji Dengtu's reputation was just too great... There was a moment of doubt, and he slowly lost confidence in his own diagnosis.

Ji Dengtu shot Chu Zhongtian with an annoyed look. "Dumb Chu, are you really doubting my skill in my own field?"

Hearing his past nickname used in front of the juniors, Chu Zhongtian's face flushed beet red. At any other time, he might have tried to pummel him there and then. However, the health of his own daughter was on the line, so he swallowed his urge to snap back at him. "How should we treat her, then?"

"Don't celebrate so quickly." Ji Dengtu's expression turned solemn. "Your precious daughter's situation is extremely strange. Even though there is a strand of vitality in her pulse, this life-force seems to lack roots, as if it might disappear at any time. The frost in her body has already permeated all of her internal organs, making it practically impossible to extract through external means. Those areas are far too weak. The slightest mistake from an outsider would leave behind irreversible injuries, and perhaps even end her life directly."

On the other side of the screen, Chu Chuyan's expression flickered. What Ji Dengtu said was identical to what Ah Zu had said last night. Just where exactly did this fellow learn all this medical knowledge?

"What if she tries to eliminate the frost herself?" Chu Zhongtian probed. "Chuyan's cultivation has always been the strongest among her peers."

His face was full of pride as he said this.

Ji Dengtu snorted. "Dumb Chu, what do you know? Chu Chuyan practices an ice cultivation technique, so her elemental ki is also ice-based. Using cold to fight against cold will only worsen her injuries and speed up her demise."

Even after being put down by Ji Dengtu, Chu Zhongtian restrained himself. After all, it was his own rotten idea.

Ji Dengtu savored Chu Zhongtian's constipated expression. He had never felt such a refreshing feeling before. The duke's face was flushed entirely red, but there was no way for him to refute Ji Dengtu's admonishment.

Seeing her husband bullied, Qin Wanru couldn't help but become upset. She said coldly, "Since we do not know what to do, what does Divine Physician Ji wisely suggest?"

Ji Dengtu's expression stiffened. With an embarrassed laugh, he said, "This... is something I still have to ponder. However, even if she is treated, young miss Chu's cultivation is most likely forfeit. At the very least, it will be far more inferior than before."

"What?!" His pronouncement shocked everyone present. Qin Wanru's reaction was strongest. "This won't do, this definitely won't do. Chuyan has always been the strongest among her peers. If... if..."

She couldn't finish her sentence.

Ji Dengtu's expression turned grim. "You need to understand that, with young miss Chu's current condition, keeping her alive would be the best we can do. Nothing is perfect in this world."

Bao Youlu echoed his sentiments. "Indeed. It is a pity that this old one's skills are inferior, and was insufficient to even save young miss Chu's life. If Divine Physician Ji can save her, that is already far beyond my expectations. Preserving the young miss' cultivation might be impossible even if a daoist immortal descended upon this room."

Zu An's wore a strange expression. He wondered if he should step forward and at least put on some sort of act.

Behind the screen, Chu Chuyan and Chu Huanzhao were both looking at him clearly sharing his thoughts.

Sensing their pleading gazes, Zu An's chest puffed out slightly.

Forget it, forget it. With big sis empress still asleep, it's better for me to keep a low-profile. The nail that sticks out gets hammered down. I'll only end up bringing disaster onto myself.

Divine Physician Ji elaborated on a few other noteworthy matters before getting up to take his leave. He still had to ponder over the treatment method.

Even though Chu Zhongtian was full of bitterness, this man had indeed saved his daughter's life, so he had to see him off.

He never expected that Ji Dengtu would wave a dismissive hand at him. "Just seeing your face makes me irritated. You don't have to see me out."

Chu Zhongtian's face immediately turned darker than charcoal. Beside him, Qin Wanru gently patted his hand in consolation before ordering Hong Zhong to see the divine physician out.

"There's no need, really. It's enough if this brat accompanies me." Ji Dengtu randomly pointed at Zu An.

Everyone in the room was stunned. None of them expected this divine physician to regard Zu An so highly!

Only Zu An alone roughly guessed the real reason.

Qin Wanru's brows furrowed. She said to Zu An, "Since Sir Ji wants you to see him out, then you should do it properly. Sir Ji is our estate's esteemed guest, so you must not act carelessly."

Zu An cursed silently. If you let me borrow two sets of your underwear, he might not even be offended if I spat in his face.

He obviously didn't dare say this out loud. He merely bowed to show that he understood.. He then looked towards Ji Dengtu. "Divine Physician Ji, this way please."

"Hmph!" Ji Dengtu wore a proud expression, strutting out in front without a single look at Zu An.

Not long after the two had left the residence, Chu Tiesheng and Chu Yuepo emerged from goodness-knows-where. Both of them greeted Divine Physician Ji fawningly while giving him some precious gifts, trying to ferret out any information they could about Chu Chuyan's condition.

Ji Dengtu was no fool. He happily accepted their gifts, and rattled off a load of nonsense without actually saying anything.

They left the two of them behind in a confused muddle, completely at a loss as to what Divine Physician Ji's words really meant.

Zu An was inwardly impressed. This fella takes money without doing any work, yet he can somehow avoid incurring any resentment. Just how many gifts did he receive in order to train this skill?

After noticing that there was no one left around them, Ji Dengtu dropped his cold, prideful demeanor in favor of a flattering smile. He looped an arm intimately around Zu An. "So, my little bro, about that book you wrote last time. Where's part two?"

"I didn't write it, I don't have it, don't speak any nonsense." Zu An refuted him directly three times.

"I understand, I understand." Ji Dengtu put on the knowing expression of a fellow bro. "Your literary skills are so cultured and refined, heheh, if Xiaoxi's little aunt were to see it..."

Dark streaks appeared on Zu An's forehead. I'm suffering more injustice than Dou E! If I had known ahead of time that I would run into that gorgeous principal, I would've given you something else.[1]

“What happens in the second half? Come on, I need an update! I promise I won’t tell anyone else.” Ji Dengtu pressured him. The book really did get his blood pumping, but it lacked freshness, having been used too many times. He needed some new inspiration.

“I’ll check to see if there’s a sequel when I have the time.” Zu An felt a huge headache coming on. He had planned to stop doing this, but he really didn’t want to offend such a powerful divine physician.

“Hahaha! Good, good. I don’t know how you managed to write such a masterpiece even though you can’t use your thing. Could it be that the more pure the man, the better you are at imagining these things?” Ji Dengtu cackled.

Zu An ground his teeth so hard it hurt.

Where’s my damned knife?

“That’s right, I heard from the Chu clan that you fed the Evanescent Lotus to Chu Chuyan. You were actually willing to part with something like that?” Ji Dengtu had a strange smile on his face. “Did your thing recover?”

“Go ask your daughter, she knows.” Zu An scoffed in annoyance.

Ji Dengtu stopped dead in his tracks.

“What did you just say?!” a maddened voice yelled out.

You have successfully trolled Ji Dengtu for 999 Rage points!

A wave of powerful pressure swallowed Zu An, completely immobilizing him.

1. Dou E is the main character in the play The Injustice to Dou E. She was framed for a crime by a jilted suitor, and was wrongfully executed.

## **Chapter 234: Retaliation**

Ji Dengtu immediately grabbed his collar. “What did you do to Xiaoxi?”

“Big bro, calm down, calm down.” How could Zu An have anticipated such a reaction? He immediately cried out in injustice. “I didn’t do anything to her!”

“Then why are you making me ask her if that thing of yours has healed or not?” A dangerous glint shone in Ji Dengtu’s eyes. His usual, sloppy demeanor was nowhere to be seen.

“She asked me about it, so I told her everything that happened!” Zu An was completely stupefied. Do all fathers become like this when other men approach their daughters? Do they just presume that they will all act like hungry pigs presented with cabbage?

Only then did Ji Dengtu’s expression ease. However, he immediately thought of something that made his brows shoot up again. “Why would you two be talking about such matters?”

“Miss Ji is a naturally kind person. After all, isn’t it normal to show concern for a friend?” Zu An tried to peel the divine physician’s hand away from his collar. “Besides, she has always studied medicine

earnestly. When presented with such a difficult case, she would obviously be interested in the treatment method.”

After saying this much, his temper began to flare. “How could you have the nerve to bring this up? If Xiaoxi hadn’t told me, I wouldn’t have known that your seal-lifting pill was just haphazardly put together! You didn’t even know if it would work or not!”

This allayed the last of Ji Dengtu’s suspicions. He loosened his grip and said with an embarrassed chuckle, “I didn’t tell you about that because the psychological aspect of treatment is also extremely important. On top of that, I had seventy- to eighty-percent confidence in the medicine working...”

He slowly trailed off, his voice becoming quieter as his self-belief waned.

Heh! Zu An sneered. Like I’ll believe you! Old bastard, you really are something. If my body hadn’t undergone that Primordial Origin Sutra’s tempering, I would’ve been completely scammed twice over!

“Please don’t be so angry,” Ji Dengtu chuckled, “Aren’t you all fine now? I can tell that your vitality is brimming, and your Sea of Yin Pulse far stronger and steadier than the average man’s. Shouldn’t you be happy instead?”

Happy my ass! However, in reality, Zu An was a little scared. This guy measured my pulse in the brief moment he grabbed my collar... This level of medical expertise really is frightening.

Ji Dengtu suddenly put away his smile. “Even so, stay further away from Xiaoxi in the future. You’re not allowed to get close to her anymore,” he said seriously.

“Why?” Zu An was stunned. Ji Xiaoxi was cute and kind, and she treated him well. Who wouldn’t want a friend like that?

“There is no ‘why’.” Ji Dengtu snorted. “I didn’t mind the two of you being friends before because your thing was useless. Now that it’s working fine, there’s no way I’ll let you harm my precious daughter.”

Zu An’s eyes flew wide open when he heard the word ‘useless’. Could you not be so direct...

Ji Dengtu looked at him with a strange expression, adding, “Besides, you even wrote that type of book. Your head is definitely filled with trash. How could I possibly feel at ease knowing you’re around my daughter?”

Zu An just stared.

I’m being bloody wronged here!!! Wasn’t it you who wanted to read those types of books? I didn’t even author those books!

“Let’s stop talking about such gloomy matters.” Ji Dengtu changed the topic, looping his arm around Zu An again. “Let’s not let such things come between men like us... by the way, when can I get part two of Principal Gao’s story from you?”

“The second part of that story is temporarily unavailable.” Zu An said through gritted teeth, “But there is another story available. Do you want it or not?”

“Ah... there is no part two?” Ji Dengtu’s face was filled with disappointment. “Is the new story as good as that other one?”

“It is, it’s definitely even more exciting and wonderful. I guarantee that you’ll feel things you’ve never felt before.” Zu An had a rather strange smile on his face. Back then, for the sake of receiving Ji Dengtu’s treatment, he’d prepared several books in reserve to cater to his tastes.

There were all sorts of different books. He just didn’t know which one this fellow would like.

Who would’ve thought that a single story of Principal Gao was enough to do him in? As such, he hadn’t been in a rush to give out any of the other books.

Now, however, a special opportunity finally presented itself.

“Even more exciting and wonderful?” Ji Dengtu’s eyes lit up. He demanded impatiently, “Where is it? Hurry and give it to me, give it to me!”

“Wait here for a bit.” Zu An quickly ran back to his room. He fished out a green-covered book from the chest beneath his bed, an evil smile spreading across his face.

He rushed back to Ji Dengtu, who was looking about anxiously, constantly pacing about like a cat on a hot tin roof.

“Here.” Zu An tossed the green booklet into his hands.

Ji Dengtu’s eyes widened, and he couldn’t resist taking a peek. Zu An immediately stopped him. “Go read it by yourself when you get home. It won’t be good if you get caught reading this in the Chu Estate”

His words made sense to Ji Dengtu. If he got worked up while reading, there was no way he could do anything to himself in such a public place. It would be much better if he slowly enjoyed it in his room. Once he was in the mood, he could close the curtains, and then...

Ji Dengtu looked like a man who had just obtained a priceless treasure. Zu An sneered inwardly. This work is a bit special... the color of its cover reflects its contents. [1]

While some of these elements were present in books like the one he had previously given to Ji Dengtu, the focus was still on the main girl and the side chicks. It was enough just to substitute one of those side chicks or the main girl with someone familiar. The male lead was but a pitiful tool.

However, this book was different. It was written in the form of a traditional novel from start to finish, completely from the male lead’s perspective, which compelled the reader to imagine himself in his place. Once he was sucked into the lush green plot, it would be too late for him.

As the plot unfolded, and the numerous intimate possibilities began to grow and develop, the reader would find his excitement aroused, leaving him throbbing in anticipation of his fantasies being fulfilled... only to be hit in the face with wave after wave of green-tinted shame.

Apart from a few freaks who found such a story satisfying, most ordinary people who read this would be completely depressed. For some, it could even cloud their minds permanently, like a kind of mental impotence.

It's all Ji Dengtu's own fault for bullying me just now. This'll teach him a lesson.

He could already see the depression and lack of faith in the world that would surely engulf Ji Dengtu's face after he finished the book. He subconsciously smiled at the thought.

"Brat, what are you laughing about?" Ji Dengtu looked at him suspiciously.

"It's nothing. I was just happy that my seal was removed." Zu An explained.

"That's indeed something to feel happy about." Ji Dengtu's relief was palpable. By this time, the two of them had already left the Chu estate. Looking around furtively, he dragged Zu An to a remote corner.

"By the way, since you were able to get Qin Wanru's underwear last time, could you grab another set for me?"

"What happened to the set I got you the last time?" Zu An's brows furrowed. He really didn't want to talk about this matter anymore. Previously, Snow had been a hated enemy whom he had thought to get rid of more than once, and so he'd passed off her underwear as Qin Wanru's. Who would have expected the two of them to grow so close afterwards?

His spirits fell immediately. I really suffered a huge loss this time...

"When I got home the last time, Xiaoxi's little aunt found out and confiscated it..." Ji Dengtu's voice was filled with grief. That sister-in-law of his was a horrible person through and through!

"What?!" Zu An looked as regretful as Ji Dengtu on the surface, but he was overjoyed inside. Gorgeous principal, you're the best! I'll have to find a chance to properly thank you later!

"Help me look around. If you find another set, I'll agree to anything you ask of me!" Worried that Zu An wouldn't take his request seriously, Ji Dengtu patted his chest in a gesture of reassurance. "This Ji Dengtu's reputation is still worth something! Far too many people want me in their debt, but the disdain I feel towards these contemptible creatures cannot be fathomed!"

Zu An cursed silently. You want me to steal Madam's personal clothes for you? Won't I be beaten to death if I'm caught? On top of that, how could I ever face Chu Chuyan in the future?

However, the words this lecher had used finally hit home. "You'll really agree to anything?"

It seems this fella really has been infatuated with Qin Wanru for too long, he is actually willing to put up so much. If a piece of damn cloth really can be exchanged for that cute and adorable Ji Xiaoxi, then it might be worth the risk.

"Anything." Ji Dengtu suddenly froze. As if he had read Zu An's mind, he immediately added, "Except my daughter."

"Am I really that type of person?!" Zu An yelled immediately. However, it seemed a strange coincidence. How did this fellow end up thinking along the same lines as himself? Could it be that they were the same type of person after all?

"All right. It's settled, then."



Not only had he been able to berate Chu Zhongtian, his long time adversary, as if he were scolding a grandchild, he had even obtained a new book and secured such a wonderful deal.

Ji Dengtu's mood was excellent. He swaggered off with his head high and chest out, walking home like he was the hottest thing on the block.

...

In contrast to his high spirits, in a study within another of Brightmoon City's residences, Shi Kun paced back and forth anxiously.

There was a sudden knock at the door. He was usually one to wait patiently as others opened it, but this time, he found himself at the door not a second later. "What is it? Has Elder Shi been found?"

"Not yet. We've already checked all possible locations, but there is still no sign of Elder Shi," his subordinate reported with a grave expression.

"How could this be?" Shi Kun muttered to himself. He staggered backwards a few steps and fell into a chair.

After sending Shi Lezhi out the day before to catch that traitor Qiao Xueying, he had waited patiently in this room. He had been full of expectation, looking forward to enjoying that elf princess for himself.

However, after waiting for a long time without receiving any news, he'd ended up dozing off. When he awoke with a start the next morning, Shi Lezhi had yet to return.

His first reaction was to erupt in anger. He thought that Shi Lezhi had somehow acted on his own, perhaps even bringing Qiao Xueying to a secluded place to use her for his own pleasure.

After all, Shi Lezhi had brought a Shi family's special aphrodisiac with him that could make even the purest girl completely lose herself. Snow was such a pretty thing, and so it wouldn't have surprised him if Shi Lezhi had been unable to hold back.

However, he calmed himself down and cast aside this suspicion. Shi Lezhi had served the Shi clan for many years, and had always remained loyal and devoted. He also understood the price of betraying the Shi clan, and would never have chosen such folly.

As such, the only possible explanation was that something had gone wrong.

He immediately sent out all of the men he had under him, yet none of them could find Shi Lezhi.

"Could it be the Chu clan?" Another subordinate asked. "I heard that an assassin intruded into the Chu Estate last night, and the Chu clan members... killed him."

1. Green is the color of cuckolding. The Chinese phrase "to wear a green hat" is used to describe a cuckold.

## **Chapter 235: Drawing Suspicion**

“There’s no way...” Shi Kun shook his head. “Just last night, we received news that Chu Zhongtian had left the city in a hurry. Who else in the Chu Estate could possibly be a match for Elder Shi?”

“Elder Shi is an eighth rank cultivator! Even if he isn’t a match for Chu Zhongtian, he is surely strong enough to protect himself. How could he possibly die quietly at the hands of someone in the Chu clan?”

The subordinate named Bian Tai remarked, “It’s just too big of a coincidence! Elder Shi went missing yesterday, just when an intruder was discovered by the Chu clan. On top of all of this, we’ve lost contact with all of the scouts outside the Chu Estate.”

This time, apart from sending Shi Lezhi to protect Shi Kun in Brightmoon City, the Shi clan had also dispatched the meticulous Bian Tai. Only with these two around Shi Kun did the Shi clan’s master feel at ease.

Bian Tai’s cultivation was far inferior to Shi Lezhi’s, but he was an excellent schemer. The previous assassination attempts in the dungeon had been his doing, and should have been guaranteed to work. However, who would have expected them to end up facing a cheat like Zu An?

Shi Kun felt a moment of trepidation. “Those men who were watching the Chu Estate have also gone missing?”

“That’s correct,” Bian Tai confirmed. He continued, “Based on all the information we currently have, this is the most likely scenario that could have taken place:

“In order to escape pursuit, Qiao Xueying might have subconsciously sought shelter within the Chu Estate, since she is very familiar with it. Elder Shi most probably followed her there. However, perhaps fearing an encounter with Chu Zhongtian, he didn’t dare to enter immediately.

“He could have met up with the men we had stationed around the Chu Estate, who then informed him that Chu Zhongtian had left. This could have allayed his fears, and made him decide to follow her inside. After all, he knows how important Snow is to young master.”

As he spoke, Bian Tai kept a watchful eye on Shi Kun. As a trusted aide, he naturally understood what the two of them had planned.

“However, none of them expected there to be a hidden expert in the Chu Estate. Regardless of whether it was a head-on clash or a sudden ambush, in the end, Elder Shi was killed. Thereafter, the mysterious expert left the estate, silencing all of our scouts in the vicinity.”

If Zu An were here, he would have definitely sighed in admiration. This person had actually laid everything out as if he had witnessed everything himself—his suspicions were nearly identical to the truth.

“Could the Chu clan be harboring a mysterious expert like that?” Shi Kun’s face was full of disbelief. “How could this be possible? Even Chu Zhongtian can’t kill Elder Shi so easily! Are you telling me that this individual is even stronger than Chu Zhongtian?!”

Bian Tai wore a forced smile. “It seems inconceivable to me as well. However, if we eliminate everything that is not true, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.”

Just then, another scout returned with a report. "Reporting! This is news from within the Chu Estate. Last night, Madam Chu suddenly gathered all of the estate's guards and initiated the highest level of alert. They suspected that the intruder was an eighth ranked expert."

"What?!" Shi Kun immediately straightened in his seat. Beside him, Bian Tai also turned a curious gaze on the newly-arrived scout.

If the intruder was confirmed to be at the eighth rank, who else could it be but Shi Leizhi?

After all, the number of eighth rank cultivators in Brightmoon City could be counted with one hand!

"What happened then?" Bian Tai asked.

The scout replied, "Madam Chu brought the guards to search for the intruder, and they discovered that he had already been killed by Zu An."

"Zu An!" Even Bian Tai was shocked, not to mention Shi Kun.

How could this be?!

Shi Lezhi was an eighth rank expert, while Zu An was merely at the third rank. The former could kill the latter with hardly any effort, so how did he end up being killed by Zu An instead?

"Are you certain that it was Elder Shi?" Bian Tai was the first to gather his wits.

"According to the information from within the Chu clan, the intruder was struck in the head by Zu An's 'Six Pulse Divine Sword'. Half his head was blown apart, and the face was completely unrecognizable. It was impossible to confirm if the deceased was Elder Shi." The scout's voice trembled as he spoke.

"Six Pulse Divine Sword?" Bian Tai narrowed his eyes. "Young master, 'this one is still ignorant and inexperienced. Have you heard of this battle skill before?'"

Shi Kun said furiously, "How would he know of a bullshit skill like the 'Six Pulse Divine Sword'? I chased him down like a dog in that dungeon. Why didn't I see him use it then?"

You have successfully trolled Shi Kun for 999 Rage points!

(Zu An sneezed. Just who is thinking about me now?)

When Shi Kun first heard about this fellow half a month ago, he didn't regard him as anyone important. There was no way such a scoundrel was worth treating as a rival.

However, the most perfect and beautiful wife in his eyes had already been seized by Zu An, and he'd been left covered in grime time and time again while chasing that brat through the dungeon. And now, even Elder Shi had met his end at the hands of this fellow?

This was impossible!

No matter what skill this scoundrel had, there was no way that he could have killed Elder Shi!

Bian Tai spoke up. "In the mountains behind the academy, Zu An was able to cleave through young master's sword in one move. The strength he displayed at that time was surely beyond a third rank

cultivator. Could he have had some type of encounter in the dungeon that taught him this ‘Six Pulse Divine Sword’?”

“Not a chance.” Shi Kun’s face was a dreadful mask. This aide of his was normally brilliant, so why did he keep bringing up such possibilities now?

“Elder Shi already analyzed him previously. That fellow’s strength is indeed a bit strange, and he can’t be classified as a true third rank cultivator. However, at his peak, he wouldn’t exceed the fifth rank in terms of strength. He cannot control any elemental force either, so he isn’t even a match for a true fifth rank cultivator. There is no way Elder Shi’s analysis was wrong.”

Bian Tai opened his mouth to say something, but stopped himself.

Shi Kun snorted coldly. “Don’t bring up that piece-of-trash Yuan Wendong. At the critical moment, he actually had the nerve to be distracted and talk to his opponent. Let’s not forget that Zu An even prepared a secret weapon to specially restrain his flying swords. Without it, Zu An wouldn’t have stood any chance, no matter how distracted Yuan Wendong had let himself become.”

Bian Tai pondered for a moment, then said in a low voice, “I concur that, with Zu An’s strength, being able to kill Elder Shi is somewhat unrealistic. If that is the case, the most probable explanation is that he has a mysterious master behind him.”

“Mysterious master?” Shi Kun was stunned.

“Indeed.” Bian Su’s thoughts moved like electricity, his words tumbling out of his mouth. “Just like the intelligence Miss Qiao gave us before...”

He noticed that Shi Kun’s face became as dark as charcoal, and he hurriedly added, “Even though Qiao Xueying has now betrayed young master, she was previously a loyal and devoted servant. Her reports from before should still be accurate.

“How else could Zu An, Brightmoon City’s notorious good-for-nothing, undergo such a transformation during this period of time, even to the extent of being able to face young master?

“There is definitely a hidden expert with profound cultivation instructing him. Only such a powerful cultivator could completely transform that piece of trash.”

Bian Tai sighed deeply. “Going back further, perhaps him becoming the Chu clan’s young master wasn’t anything unexpected. It wasn’t that the Chu clan had lost all reason. Perhaps, through this mysterious person behind him, all these irrational things can be explained.”

“A mysterious master...” Shi Kun still struggled with the possibility. He wasn’t stupid—on the contrary, he was considered extremely smart. He wouldn’t have been able to reach his level of cultivation at such a young age otherwise. After listening to Bian Tai’s analysis, he turned things over in his mind, and was shocked to discover that it was indeed the only possibility.

“Why would someone like him be deserving of all of this?!” His understanding of the situation merely inflamed his hatred further. “Why would such an incredible and mysterious person favor trash like Zu An? Wouldn’t it be easier to choose someone with better aptitude to teach?”

If they could easily kill Elder Shi, then their cultivation must at least be at the pinnacle of eight rank, with a possibility that they were even at the Master stage.

How could he—who had enjoyed the finest garments and the most sumptuous of meals from birth—have never had the privilege of being guided by such an individual, while this little bastard did? The thought of it sent him berserk with a jealous rage.

You have successfully trolled Shi Kun for 1024 Rage points!

Bian Tai shared his confusion. “Perhaps that expert had been treated kindly by Zu An’s ancestors, or he is somehow conspiring against the Chu clan... I will have my people look into these things immediately.”

“There’s no need.” Shi Kun raised a hand to stop him. “Let’s return to the capital city as early as possible.”

“Return to the capital?” Bian Tai was shocked. “We are going back just like this?”

Shi Kun exploded with fury. “Do you think I want to?! However, my life-saving artifact was used up in the dungeon, and now, even Elder Shi has been killed! On top of all of this, you’re telling me that a terrifying and mysterious expert is lurking about, who might very well be Zu An’s master. That scoundrel Zu An is my mortal enemy. If he asks his master to act against me, how could I possibly face him?”

Bian Tai’s brow furrowed. “An expert on this level shouldn’t act against juniors. Moreover, young master possesses extraordinary standing. How could the Chu clan dare to act publicly against young master?”

“Just how precious do you think my life is? I cannot take the slightest bit of risk. There is no need to discuss this matter further. You can withdraw to make preparations. I am going to pay the Sang estate a visit.” After saying this, he sought out the guards with the highest cultivation levels and left with a grave expression.

Bian Tai sighed inwardly as he watched Shi Kun’s departing figure. He understood the temperament of this young master of the Shi clan better than anyone else. His aptitude was extremely high, and while in public, he treated everyone perfectly. However, in reality, his personality was completely rotten.

Shi Kun had everything handed to him on a silver platter since birth, and everything went too smoothly for him. It was too easy for him to obtain whatever he wanted, and so he never treasured anything. Whenever he suffered a setback, he would immediately erupt in anger.

He sensed a difference in the young master ever since he had returned from the dungeon. Shi Lezhi’s tragic fate seemed to be the final straw that broke this camel’s back.

Shi Kun hurried to the Sang estate. Of course, this Sang estate wasn’t the Governor’s Estate where Sang Hong resided. Rather, it was where River Patrol Commander Sang Qian lived.

Sang Qian was surprised by Shi Kun’s arrival, but still went out to greet him with a smile.

“I didn’t come here for nonsense. I came to meet your father.” Shi Lezhi’s death had cast a terrible shadow on Shi Kun’s mood.

His rude tone of voice caused Sang Qian to curse inwardly, and his brow furrowed. However, the Shi clan’s standing was too great, and he could not afford to offend the young master. He tamped down on

his anger and said, "Young master Shi must be joking. My father lives in the Governor's Estate. Why would he be in Brightmoon City?"

The Governor's Estate was located in the capital city of Linchuan Commandery, not in Brightmoon City. Sang Hong usually remained in the Governor's Estate and seldom appeared in Brightmoon City, to forestall any rumors that he was somehow neglecting his duty.

"There's no need for this meaningless charade, considering our close ties. I have urgent business to discuss with your father, so hurry and bring me to him." Shi Kun said impatiently.

With Shi Kun being so direct, there was nothing else for Sang Qian to do. After ensuring that they were alone, he escorted Shi Kun all the way to a private room in the rear hall.

Sang Hong had come to Linchuan Commandery for the sake of dealing with the Chu clan. Naturally, then, he had to be in Brightmoon City to oversee this effectively.

Of course, there was no way to publicly reveal this, and so he usually lay low in his son's estate.

"Just what is it that has made young master Shi so anxious?" Sang Hong inquired casually, calmly pouring a cup of tea.

He was still feeling disgruntled. This fellow had barged in so directly, he was sure to have attracted attention from all directions.

"Elder Shi died last night." Shi Kun said with a sullen expression.

"What?" Sang Qian cried out in alarm.

Sang Hong gave his son a dissatisfied look. This fellow was nothing like him, and had absolutely no composure. He took his time to return his teacup to the table before asking, "Shi Lezhi died? Who in all of Brightmoon City could possibly kill him, or would even dare to kill him?"

He understood Shi Lezhi's cultivation well. In all of Brightmoon City, he was at least one of the ten strongest individuals, perhaps even in the top five.

Among those ten, only three or four possessed the ability to kill him. However, they were all individuals with high standing who were deeply entwined with the various other powers in the country. If any of them made a move, they would affect the balance of powers tremendously. How could such an individual possibly afford to publicly offend the Shi clan?

Shi Kun's handsome face twitched, and he spat out a name through clenched teeth that Sang Hong hadn't expected at all.

## **Chapter 236: Masked Individual**

"Zu An?"

Sang Qian's exclamation was pitched an octave higher than his usual speaking tone.

It was extremely difficult to even associate Zu An with an eight rank expert like Shi Lezhi, let alone believe that Shi Lezhi had somehow been killed by him.

“Brother Shi, could there have been some mistake?” Sang Qian asked doubtfully. He wondered if this fellow had been too frightened after having almost tasted Zu An’s sword in front of the dungeon entrance, and was now portraying Zu An as such a powerful foe in order to make his experience seem less embarrassing.

However, to say he was capable of killing an eighth rank expert was just too ridiculous.

Sang Hong was similarly disbelieving. However, he didn’t lose his cool like his son, but looked calmly at Shi Kun instead. He knew that there was more to this.

Sure enough, Shi Kun said bitterly, “I really wish I were wrong as well...”

He recounted the events of the previous night, as well as what Bian Tai had deduced. Of course, he left out some details that the two of them didn’t need to hear, such as poisoning Qiao Xueying. He only said that they were catching a traitor.

“Ninth rank...” Sang Hong remained silent for a long time, seemingly deep in thought.

Sang Qian spoke into the silence. “Brother Shi, there isn’t a single ninth rank cultivator in all of Brightmoon City. Could there be some misunderstanding on your part?”

Knowing that Sang Qian didn’t believe him, Shi Kun sneered and said, “I’ve already told you everything I should. I’ll leave it up to you two whether you want to believe it or not. Either way, I’m about to return to the capital. If something goes awry on your end, it’ll have nothing to do with me.”

“Young master Shi is returning to the capital?” Sang Hong asked.

“Correct. The clan has contacted me and ordered me to return early.” There was no way Shi Kun would admit to being frightened, and so he had to come up with a reason.

With that, he exchanged a few final pleasantries before leaving hurriedly.

When Shi Kun had left, Sang Qian said in puzzlement, “Father, why would the Shi clan order him to return at such a time?”

Sang Hong said indifferently, “Shi Kun’s plans have all been completely ruined, and so, remaining here is meaningless for him. Moreover, Shi Lezhi’s death must have completely horrified him. He’ll obviously want to use this as an excuse to leave.”

“What do you think about what he just said? Could there really be a mysterious ninth rank expert here?” asked Sang Hong curiously.

“Whether or not it’s true, we can just ask and we’ll know.” Sang Hong rose to his feet. He reached out to turn a porcelain bottle on a nearby bookcase. The bookcase opened up, revealing a private room.

A masked man strode out from within. Sang Qian assessed the figure from head to toe. He couldn’t understand why his own father would hide anything from him. Even at this stage, he still had this fellow wear a mask.

Sang Hong said in a low voice, "You should've heard Shi Kun's words earlier. What do you think?"

"Ninth rank? There shouldn't be anyone like that in the Chu clan." The man shook his head, then said in a mocking tone, "If they really did have a ninth rank ally, the one at the head of the clan wouldn't be Chu Zhongtian."

Sang Hong nodded. "That is my deduction as well. However, Shi Lezhi's death in the Chu Estate doesn't seem to be false. Just what is going on here?"

The masked man tapped his temple. "I just recalled something. During the previous Clans Tournament, Zu An became an overnight celebrity. He was interrogated by the Chu clan's Madam, and she found out that he seemed to have received some techniques from a mysterious individual, who imparted the knowledge of cultivation to him before leaving.

"Could it be that he wasn't telling the truth, and that this strange person hadn't left, but remained by his side?"

Sang Hong nodded. "This is definitely a possibility. This can also explain how Shi Lezhi could die such a quiet death. I believe that, after he found out Chu Zhongtian had left the city, he decided to use the opportunity to infiltrate the estate and capture Zu An. After all, that brat has left Shi Kun in a rather sorry state. There's no doubting that he wanted revenge.

"However, who would have expected Zu An to have a mysterious expert backing him? If Shi Lezhi was ambushed by this mysterious individual, even if their cultivation was around Shi Lezhi's level, they could have killed him whether they intended to or not."

Having gotten a rough grasp of the situation, Sang Hong looked towards the masked individual. "The issue now is, just who exactly is that mysterious expert?"

The eyes of the masked individual betrayed a hint of puzzlement. "I've been in the Chu clan for so many years, and yet I've never noticed anyone like this... Could it be that Zu An's father had some connections, and that this person isn't from the Chu clan?"

Sang Qian spoke up. "Back then, when the Chu clan chose Zu An as their son-in-law, we investigated his background. We suspected he might have some special background, but it turned out he was only an orphan raised by his uncle, who passed away not long ago.

"We looked into his uncle as well. He was merely an ordinary person, and there was nothing special about him."

"Orphan..." Sang Hong pondered a moment. "We weren't able to find out anything about his parents?"

"There was nothing." Sang Qian shook his head. An alarming thought struck him. "Could he really have some sort of mysterious background?"

"That is most likely the case." Sang Hong's eyes flickered. "There is no kindness without cause or reason in this world. I refuse to believe that a piece of trash deserves the earnest fostering of a mysterious expert. Qian'er, dive deeper into his background. See if you can find any clues regarding his parents."

"Understood!" Sang Qian acknowledged immediately, but he wore a slightly troubled expression. "I just fear that we might not find anything, since the previous investigations were extremely detailed."



"We cast a wide net the last time. Now that we know what we are looking for, we might unexpectedly find something." Sang Hong had a considerable amount of experience in this field. He turned his gaze back to the masked individual. "Of course, aside from Qian'er, I must also trouble your distinguished self to investigate within the Chu clan as well, to see if you can learn anything about that mysterious figure."

"If they exist in this world, then they will definitely have left behind some traces, no matter how mysterious they are. If we examine everything carefully, we should be able to find some clues."

The masked man had a serious look in his eyes. "All right. I really want to find out just what kind of expert is hiding in the estate."

If there was really such a top-notch expert hidden in the estate, how could he possibly feel at ease?

"Thank you for your trouble." Sang Hong moved on to a different line of questioning. "By the way, how many people know about the matters regarding the Chu and Wang clans' merchant caravans? Would they end up suspecting you?"

The masked individual clasped his fist respectfully. "I thank you for your concern, but there is no need to worry. I did not participate in that; it was something I heard about through a different channel. Even if they started investigating, they would not be able to trace anything back to me."

Sang Hong smiled. "As expected of an experienced man like yourself."

"Since I am taking care of matters for your respected self, it is only natural that I take extra precautions." The masked individual hesitated a moment, then added, "However, regarding the things that were previously promised to me..."

"Don't worry. I have always been a man of my word," answered Sang Hong. "Chu Zhongtian shows no understanding of the times, so he is destined to be eliminated. At that time, the Chu clan will be yours, as well as the one you yearn for."

The masked man was visibly embarrassed. "I've let your respected self see a shameful side of me."

"Fair, graceful, and virtuous women belong to those of noble character; there is nothing abnormal about that. What is there to mock you for?" Sang Hong revealed a faint smile. "Why did Chu Zhongtian suddenly leave the city? It seems like young miss Chu fell ill? Did he really spend the night trying to find Divine Physician Ji?"

"Indeed, something has happened to Chu Chuyan's health." The masked man replied. "It is a pity that the Chu clan's Madam has kept her condition an absolute secret. Not even I understand the exact situation."

"It could be side effects from the Evanescent Lotus." Sang Hong fell deep into thought. After returning from the dungeon, Chu Chuyan's strength had increased sharply. Her ingesting the Evanescent Lotus was an open secret.

"I've already sent some people to approach Zu An to inquire about Chu Chuyan. I will immediately contact your respected self when I receive any further news." The masked man said.

Sang Hong bowed slightly. "All right. I leave this matter in your capable hands."

“Master Sang is too polite.” The masked man hurriedly rose to return the greeting.

After chatting for a while longer, the masked man bid his farewell and left.

When he had left, Sang Qian grumbled, “Father, just who is that person? Why do you have to hide his identity even from me?”

Sang Hong answered, “That is his request. His identity is sensitive, and he is only willing to reveal it to me. Since I agreed to his request, it isn’t proper for me to renege on my promise.”

Knowing that his father had always been one whose words carried enormous weight, Sang Qian didn’t dare say anything more. Instead, he began to mutter to himself, contemplating who the mysterious man could be, and why keeping his identity a secret was so important to him.

Sang Hong shook his head inwardly at his reaction. His son was indeed too impatient and reckless. No wonder the masked man had made such a request.

He suddenly thought of another matter. “Right, I heard that you had Zheng Dan approach Zu An again?” he said in a cold voice.

### **Chapter 237: Courtesan's Meeting**

Sang Qian jumped. “Why do you know about this?”

“The only way anything can truly remain hidden is if you silence all those involved.” Sang Hong said with a cold snort. “A honey trap! Of course it would be someone like you who comes up with something like that!”

Sang Qian flushed red with embarrassment. “I was just trying to take over the Plum Blossom Sect’s business! After all, we have a gambling parlor ourselves...”

“Enough. I don’t want to know about such things.” Sang Hong cut him off with an impatient expression.

“Ah...” Sang Qian cursed endlessly in his heart. You’re noble and virtuous, and you don’t covet riches at all. However, a vast amount of wealth is needed to rise through the ranks of the royal court, so how can an official’s salary be enough?

Despite that, he tried to defend himself. “Those with grand ambitions do not bother with mere trifles. Moreover, history has proved time and again how extremely useful sexual entrapment can be!”

Sang Hong glared at his son. “Are you actually dumb? Others use carefully-groomed female spies to lay their honey traps. Who in the world uses their own fiancée?!”

Sang Qian chuckled sheepishly. “I couldn’t find a suitable candidate on such short notice, so I had Zheng Dan give it a try. Don’t worry, she has a graceful and reserved disposition, and she is quite intelligent. She won’t really let Zu An take advantage of her.”

Sang Hong snorted coldly. “I really don’t know where you get your confidence. This is playing with fire! A single mistake and you’ll end up giving away your wife too.”

“Don’t worry, father. How could he possibly match up to me in terms of appearance, family background and ability?” Sang Qian said arrogantly. “Miss Zheng has always had such high standards, so how could she ever fall for such a guy?”

Sang Hong frowned at how lightly his son was treating this matter. He was surely being a bit too cocky. However, he too had met that child Zheng Dan before. Although she looked gentle and sweet-tempered on the surface, she was definitely a headstrong girl. She had a distinguished background as well, so the chances of her falling for a mere drafted son-in-law was extremely low.

Reassured by his reasoning, he let himself relax a little. “Forget it. Since things are the way they are, give her another task. See if she can find out anything about that mysterious expert behind Zu An.”

Sang Qian was stunned. “Didn’t you already task me and that masked man to look into this separately?”

Sang Hong shook his head. “If that mysterious expert is concealing himself intentionally, they may not be able to root him out in the Chu clan. The same can be said on your side. That is why we must hope that Zu An will end up getting ensnared by her beauty and accidentally reveal something.”

His face was lined with worry. He had been supremely confident that he could complete what he had set out to do in Brightmoon City. However, the news of this mysterious expert suddenly introduced more unknown variables. The success or failure of his plans might very well hinge on this matter. That was why he had to determine what these variables were as soon as possible.

“Alright, I’ll talk to Zheng Dan.” Sang Qian agreed. He felt a sense of injustice. He had just been lectured on using his own fiancée as a honey trap, yet, in the end, his father had resorted to using this method at the earliest opportunity.

After a slight hesitation, Sang Hong said, “There is one other matter I need you to keep in mind. If Zheng Dan really ends up doing something that lets you down, what do you plan to do?”

“How dare she?!” The image of Zheng Dan being defiled under Zu An appeared in Sang Qian’s mind, and his eyes almost popped right out of their sockets. “If she dares do anything that lets me down, I will make sure not even her family’s dog is left alive!”

“As usual, your anger is driven by your ignorance!” Sang Hong angrily rebuked. “If something like that really happens, you have to pretend as if nothing happened—”

He was cut off before he could finish. “Isn’t that the same as willingly becoming cuckolded?!”

“Of course it isn’t!” Sang Hong said furiously, his tone hard as iron. “If you want to achieve great things, you must be able to endure far more than an ordinary person. When something really does happen, you cannot blame Zheng Dan without getting to the root of the matter first! Otherwise, you will only end up pushing her further into the embrace of another man.

“What you have to do is console and forgive her, completely ease her heart, and do as much as you can to make her continue working for you. Only after the overall situation has been resolved can you settle matters with her.”

Sang Qian didn’t really approve of this, but his father had always been strict, so he felt disinclined to argue. “I got it.”

His half-hearted tone caused Sang Hong to narrow his eyes. However, he refrained from saying anything further. He hoped that child Zheng Dan was smart enough not to head down the wrong path.

Sang Hong sat down again. "I just remembered. Weren't you planning to go to the Courtesan's Meeting?" he inquired, leisurely sipping on some tea.

"Yes. I heard that the Immortal Abode's courtesan queen Qiu Honglei is even going to entertain a single guest in private. Lady Qiu's skills in the arts are exceptional. Countless men have prostrated themselves before her, and yet she has remained a pure woman to this day, only entertaining with art and never with her body. The men of this city have pined after her for a long time, and I'm going to try my luck tonight as well..."

As he spoke, he suddenly noticed that his father's eyes had begun to smolder dangerously, and his mouth snapped shut in embarrassment. Talking about such things with his father was far too inappropriate.

Sang Hong snorted derisively. "There's no need for you to go tonight. A glorious court official visiting a place for prostitutes... what could come next?!"

"Visiting brothels is commonplace for the suave and elegant. There's nothing unacceptable about it," Sang Qian defended himself.

"There's more to that Qiu Honglei than meets the eye." Sang Hong said with a heavy voice. "I even sent someone to look into her..."

Ah, it turns out my father also has an interest in her. Sang Qian's face betrayed a knowing look. No wonder you're stopping me from going! It's because you're afraid I'm competing with you for her affections.

With a single glance, Sang Hong knew immediately what kind of nonsense was going through his son's mind. His face became as dark as charcoal. "Absolute nonsense! I just wanted to make sure I had all the information I needed to complete the task I was assigned. That woman is famous in Brightmoon City, so of course I would look into her. It is a pity that she is only an ordinary courtesan."

"Was she always a courtesan to begin with?" Sang Qian wondered where his father was going with this.

"This is what's strange." Sang Hong looked out the window, toward the south of the city. "She was born with such great beauty that her reputation spread far and wide. If she was only an ordinary courtesan, how could she have possibly retained her purity after so many years?"

"Ah..." When his father put it this way, he also realized that something was off.

Sang Hong carried on, "Furthermore, you've just announced your engagement with the Zheng clan, and yet you're already looking for some courtesan. What exactly are you trying to show Zheng Dan and the entire Zheng clan? In order to deal with the Chu clan this time, we need the full support of the Zheng clan. I do not want there to be any friction between our two clans because of your 'opportunity'. Stay at home today. You aren't permitted to go anywhere!"

Sang Qian was crestfallen. However, he understood that he couldn't go against his father's orders. He looked towards the south of the city, where the Immortal Abode was located, and his heart was filled with bitterness. He wondered which lucky bastard would end up picking this exceptional flower.

...

After Zu An saw off Ji Dengtu, he returned to his room to carry out meditation cultivation. Qin Wanru was watching Chu Chuyan right now, so there was no way for him to head over to her.

Not long after he sat down, there came a persistent knocking. "Ah Zu, Ah Zu are you there?"

Zu An stared blankly for a moment. There was something familiar about this voice. After thinking for a bit, he recognized the voice as belonging to Chu Yucheng, the junior from the third branch that he had met during the Clans Tournament. They had also exchanged some greetings in Chu Estate before, but hadn't interacted much beyond that.

What does this guy want from me? Zu An was puzzled. He got up to take a look. Sure enough, a chubby ball of a youngster stood at the entrance, a big smile plastered on his face.

His eyes were so narrowed that they almost formed a line.

Zu An didn't dare underestimate him. During the Clans Tournament, this fella had roved around like a small tank, his fat acting as the perfect meat shield, overwhelming his opponent without giving him a single chance to retaliate.

Even more shocking was the presence of another person at his side. His hands were folded in front of him, hugging a sword. His face was cold and proud; this was none other than Chu Hongcai, of the second branch.

"Is there something the two of you need from me?" Zu An asked curiously.

"Of course! We need you for something good!" Chu Yucheng walked over and draped his arm around Zu An's shoulders, the knowing smile of a fellow bro on his face. "Tonight is Immortal Abode's Courtesan's Meeting! You in?"

### **Chapter 238: Stop Talking, I Can Already Picture it!**

"Courtesan's Meeting?" Zu An's eyes brightened. How could such courtesans, who used the arts to entertain instead of selling their bodies, be missing from the historical dramas and novels in his past life? His interest was immediately piqued.

He never expected to be able to experience such things personally! Just as he was about to agree, a sudden thought struck him. He shook his head and said, "Take a good look at this pure and upstanding face of mine. Do I really look like someone who would go to a brothel?"

Chu Yucheng was speechless.

His eyes, which had been reduced to slits by his excessive smile, instantly widened.

This brat... that's exactly the type of person you are!

Even Chu Hongcai, who had been standing aloof by the side, turned around in astonishment. The fellow in front of him truly was shameless beyond imagination.

Zu An snickered inside. He hadn't been in the Chu estate for long, but it had been long enough that he wasn't a stranger here. Neither branch had chosen to engage with him much during this period, and yet, they were suddenly inviting him to some Courtesan's Meeting? How could that not seem suspicious to him?

If he ended up going with them, only for them to suddenly rat him out to Qin Wanru or Chu Chuyan, he might be forced to take his own life to avoid their wrath.

Chu Yucheng's round little eyes twitched. He seemed to guess Zu An's thoughts, and said with a smile, "Ah Zu, you're thinking too much. Visiting brothels is a noble and distinguished affair in our Great Zhou Dynasty. As long as you don't bring anyone home, no one would consider it a big deal, not even your own cousins."

"That's correct!" Chu Hongcai chipped in with a nonchalant affirmation.

Zu An narrowed his eyes at him. This fellow really cherished his words like gold! At least his bearing was more suave than that father of his with the dark eyebags.

Chu Yucheng said with a laugh, "The two of us were planning to head over ourselves, but we suddenly thought of inviting Ah Zu to join us for this happy occasion. You've already been in the estate for so long, and yet we are still not close at all! This would be the perfect chance to give you a big welcome. Don't worry, we'll foot the bill this time. You can just focus on enjoying yourself."

Zu An's suspicions grew. Were these two fellas really that nice?

Their voices sounded sincere, however, and there was no hint of a lie.

Ah, could this be because I was too brilliant during the Clans Tournament? I even rescued Chu Chuyan from the dungeon! They must feel that my position is pretty much secure. That's why they are trying to curry favor and get on my good side!

Noticing the change in his attitude, Chu Yusheng reached out his chubby hand to tug at his sleeve. "We must hurry, or else there'll be way too many people later on. By then, we won't even be able to squeeze our way in!"

"Could it really be that bad?" Zu An was extremely doubtful.

"We can't blame you for not knowing." Chu Hongcai's eyes glittered, and he dropped his proud and reticent attitude. "Ever since Qiu Honglei arrived in Brightmoon City two years ago, she immediately became the undisputed number one courtesan. Not only is she devastatingly beautiful, she is exceptionally talented in the arts, and is perfect in every respect. Her zither skills and the way she dances are even more dazzling. In my opinion, if not for her status as a courtesan, not even Chu Chuyan would be able to sit comfortably on her throne as Brightmoon City's number one beauty."

"Ahem ahem..." Chu Yucheng hurriedly tugged at his cousin's sleeve. "What are you saying? Qiu Honglei is a brothel girl! How can you compare her to our cousin?"

Chu Hongcai snorted irritably, but didn't argue further. He clearly acknowledged what had just been said.

"Qiu Honglei?" This name seemed very familiar. Zu An suddenly remembered how that lecher Ji Dengtu had offered to treat his condition, as long as he could obtain the personal underwear of several ladies. Qiu Honglei had been one of those mentioned.

Even though he didn't need that old dirtbag to treat him anymore, his curiosity about this woman remained. After all, she was a woman that even Ji Dengtu couldn't forget, and the others he had mentioned—Yu Yanluo, Shang Liuyu, and even Qin Wanru—were all one-in-a-million beauties.

Hm?

A thought came to his mind. "How old is this Qiu Honglei?"

Yu Yanluo and Qin Wanru were both from Ji Dengtu's generation. There was no way this was true for this courtesan as well right?

When he thought of a courtesan auntie...

Zu An's expression immediately turned bizarre. However, as he thought about how Yu Yanluo and the others still maintained their exceptional appearances, he became less concerned with Qiu Honglei's age.

Since this was a world of cultivation, living to a few hundreds of years, or even over a thousand years, was completely possible. Once a cultivator reached a certain level of cultivation, they could prevent aging from affecting their physical appearance, making a person's age less of a consideration.

"No one knows her exact age. However, from the various fanclubs' rumors, she should be about the same age as our cousin." Chu Hongcai spoke like one who was exceedingly familiar with the matter. If Chu Yucheng hadn't hurriedly cut him off, he might even have started preaching about the different Qiu Honglei fanclubs in Brightmoon City.

Zu An was completely stunned. This fella's aloof and reserved appearance was falling apart! It turned out that he was also a celebrity-chasing fanboy!

Pah, what celebrity? Isn't this just lusting after someone's appearance and figure?!

"Let's head out first. We can talk about these things along the way. Otherwise, we really won't be able to find any seats." Chu Yucheng pulled them forward, one in each hand, hurrying them along.

"Wait!" Zu An still remained hesitant. "Chuyan is sick, yet we are still going out for such... Ahem ahem... Isn't it irresponsible for us to go out for some cultural appreciation while she's in such a state?"

Chu Yucheng stared blankly. "Isn't she just experiencing a minor problem? What is there to worry about?"

"Exactly." Chu Hongcai echoed him. "She will get better after resting for a few days, but Qiu Honglei's Courtesan's Meeting is a one-time deal! According to the rumors, Lady Qiu might even choose someone to meet her in private."

His eyes sparkled brilliantly as he spoke those words. It was clear that he had already begun to fantasize that he would be the lucky one chosen.

Zu An gave them his best smile. "You're right, Chuyan will get better after a few days anyway. We have to go pay this courtesan a visit."

Chuyan my love, it's not that I want to go about womanizing, but I have to in order to hide your condition! This humble husband can only pretend to follow them in a carefree manner. Sigh... I must sacrifice my actual feelings and entertain those vixens!

"Ah Zu, what's with that wide grin? What are you thinking about?" Chu Yucheng patted his shoulder with a meaty palm.

Zu An was startled. "No... nothing," he said with a guilty conscience. He looked around to make sure no one else had noticed anything, then sighed in relief.

Several fine steeds had been prepared for them at the gates of the Chu Estate. Since they were all men, there was no need for them to go by carriage.

Zu An studied their little group, and realized that he had forgotten to bring Cheng Shouping along. He was just about to call for him, but the other two rushed to stop him, their expressions altering noticeably. "Ah Zu, you mustn't fret over trifles!"

"Indeed, we brothers merely wish to drink merrily together with some girls. Why would we bring any subordinates?"

Noticing their strong reactions, Zu An began to suspect them of setting a trap for him, and reminded himself to be vigilant. However, he recognized that, even if he were to fall into a trap, Cheng Shouping's presence wouldn't really make a difference, and so there was no need for those two to fret like this.

He peered closer and saw the nervousness in their eyes, and a ray of understanding struck him. It seemed that, having stayed with the Chu clan for so long, Cheng Shouping's reputation as a blabbermouth was already common knowledge. If he accompanied them to the brothel, it was certain that everyone in the Chu clan would know of their visit within half a day's time.

Even though visiting prostitutes in the Great Zhou Dynasty wasn't a shameful act, it wasn't anything to brag about, either. If word of their visit reached the Master's or Madam's ears, he would be in big trouble.

Having considered these issues thoroughly, Zu An decided not to bring Cheng Shouping along after all. Thus, the trio mounted up and rushed towards Immortal Abode.

"By the way, I am slightly curious. Is it true that this Qiu Honglei doesn't provide sexual favors, but instead takes pride in entertaining others with her artistic talents?" Zu An asked along the way.

"Yup, this is common knowledge, and not just in Brightmoon City." Chu Hongcai seemed extremely proud as he said this. "Tales of Lady Qiu's beauty have spread far and wide, and even people from the neighboring commanderies flock to catch a glimpse of her. It is precisely because she has remained principled and incorruptible that so many men have gone crazy over her."



“The brothel has so many gentle and beautiful girls, yet none of you cherish them. All of you insist on scrambling madly for this unobtainable girl. Tell me, isn’t this kind of rude?” Zu An couldn’t help but sigh.

Chu Hongcai and Chu Yucheng exchanged incredulous looks.

Only after a moment did Chu Yucheng break out in laughter. “Ah Zu, even though your words are somewhat crude, you have hit the nail on the head! This is human nature.”

“Also, as for Qiu Honglei’s purity, who could confirm such a thing? Do we just have to trust her on this?” Zu An shook his head. “I still can’t believe it. If she really has the body of a goddess like you all say, there’s no way she could remain untainted after spending so many years in a brothel.”

Chu Yucheng was completely stunned. “This... has indeed never been proven before.” How would one even go about proving such a thing? Moreover, if it was confirmed that she had been with a man before, wouldn’t it mean that she wasn’t pure anymore?

Chu Hongcai couldn’t hide his displeasure. “Brother Zu, Lady Qiu isn’t that type of person. Please do not speak nonsense about her or bring disgrace to her spotless reputation!”

You have successfully trolled Chu Hongcai for 168 Rage points!

Spotless reputation?

Zu An almost choked. How could a famous brothel courtesan ever have a spotless reputation? There was no way he would believe that.

He laughed and said, “This isn’t idle speculation, but rather, logical deduction. Think about it. Not only is she a ravishing beauty, she is also a brothel girl. You can easily imagine how many big shots are drooling over her. Moreover this is a world of cultivation, where the strong prevail. Could a brothel ever be in a position to refuse a request?

“Perhaps a certain official of high standing developed a strong interest in her. Would he be deterred by a flimsy claim that she was only selling her artistic talents and not herself?”

Chu Hongcai had been full of indignation, and was ready to counter Zu An. However, as he listened to this string of arguments, his complexion gradually mellowed. These really were reasonable deductions.

When he thought about how the perfect goddess in his heart had been pushed down and toyed with by who knew how many bigwigs, he immediately felt extremely unwell.

Chu Yucheng noticed how his cousin’s soul seemed to have left his body, and acknowledged how formidable Zu An’s mouth really was. He hurriedly said, “Brightmoon City is part of our Chu clan’s fief. Master has always acted with fairness, so he naturally wouldn’t get involved in such a thing. The city lord is also known for being generous and refined, so there’s little chance of him engaging in such disgraceful behavior either. With the two of them overseeing things here, who else would dare do something like this?”

Zu An frowned and said, “That may be true, but I just feel like this matter is still far from settled. If someone were to completely lose themselves to mindless desire, let go of all restraint...”

Chu Hongcai immediately cut him off, covering his ears and shaking his head fiercely. "Stop talking, stop talking! I am already starting to picture things!"

Chu Yucheng laughed. "Our plan is to enjoy ourselves, so let's not talk about things that will spoil the fun. Ah Zu will understand once we lay our eyes on Qiu Honglei."

### **Chapter 239: Do You Think You're All That Just Because You Have Money?**

Zu An was thoroughly intrigued. Just how beautiful is this Qiu Honglei that she can drive so many men crazy?

There was no need to talk about that old pervert Ji Dengtu.

But even Chu Hongcai, this habitually aloof and quiet man, seemed completely smitten.

The three of them made haste towards the Immortal Abode. Even though Zu An had never ridden a horse before, he could just learn by watching the others. He was a cultivator after all, so maintaining his balance wasn't too difficult.

Along the way, Chu Hongcai and Chu Yucheng kept trying to find chances to ask him about Chu Chuyan's condition.

Zu An was fully aware of their attempts, and he bluffed his way through them.

Soon, they arrived at a street filled with a mysterious fragrance.

Chu Yucheng winked at Zu An, but his small eyes, set within his excessively chubby face, made it difficult to notice. "New Apsara Lane has far more than just the Immortal Abode! This street has over a hundred different brothels. It is a man's paradise, not only in name but also in reality!"

"Over a hundred?" Zu An was completely stupefied. Brightmoon City had such a big market for this?

Even though Brightmoon City was a large city, it still paled in comparison to the international metropolises of his past world. Most of the people were also poor commoners without much disposable income. Were there really enough customers to support this level of business?

Chu Hongcai spoke, his face filled with pride. "This is why I say you are lacking in culture. Brightmoon City is a well-known and bustling city, and it serves as the commercial hub for the nearby commanderies. This place even produces salt and steel, and is a populous city well-known to all the rich and famous.

"Not only does Brightmoon City have a huge population, it is also crisscrossed by an endless stream of trade routes from many different places. This has caused all sorts of professions to spring up and grow, creating the bountiful beacon of prosperity that is Brightmoon City."

His explanation gave Zu An a rough understanding. This place was like Ancient China's Yangzhou.

With a hundred thousand coins strung up by the thousands, we ride a crane to Yangzhou.

It was a place that many ancient people had yearned for.

Brightmoon City was experiencing a similar boom.

His eyes scanned the street, and sure enough, he saw brightly colored buildings of all different shapes and colors. There were many girls in skimpy clothing that exposed half their bodies. Some of them covered their mouths while giggling, and others were bold and unconstrained... their methods for attracting customers were as varied and miraculous as the eight immortals.

Chu Yucheng took a deep breath and said with an intoxicated voice, "Even the air is filled with the sweet aroma of seduction! This fragrance must be the sweet scent of all the ladies here. This place really is the paradise of men after all."

Zu An couldn't help but remark, "Are you sure that it isn't just the smell of cosmetics?"

This fatty normally seemed rather polite and adorable. Who would have thought that he would be such an experienced veteran in this field?

Chu Yucheng felt like he'd been strangled.

He had felt hot blood surging within him, and the words of fiery passion roaring within him were ready to set the whole place ablaze. However, Zu An's comment had caused him to choke, and all his words died in his throat.

Zu An used this chance to take in his surroundings more deeply. Even though this New Apsara Lane was full of brothels, the most eye-catching place here was definitely the Immortal Abode.

A tall building with several floors, it rose steeply from the ground. In terms of design and scale, it far exceeded the other brothels around it.

The reason Zu An noticed this building wasn't because of its rich ornamentation, of which every detail would have been praised in his previous world as a shining example of ancient cultural heritage. Nor was it because of the flamboyant calligraphy with which the establishment's glorious name, 'Immortal Abode', was depicted on a plaque above the main entrance.

It was because of the ocean of human flesh that had already gathered around the entrance. Amidst the sea of people, many were screaming the name of Qiu Honglei.

Zu An was completely stupefied. This scene was playing out exactly as if some celebrity had appeared in a downtown area in his previous world. Qiu Honglei hadn't even shown herself yet, so who knew what these people were hollering about.

How can none of these people be aware that this goddess they are so crazy about will end up as a mere plaything for the strong?

"Good thing we came early! There aren't too many people here yet." Chu Hongcai sounded pleasantly surprised.

Zu An blinked at the mass of people in front of him. Bro, what's wrong with your eyes?

Sensing Zu An's confusion, Chu Yucheng explained with a chuckle, "These people are only here because they enjoy a good commotion. They don't actually have the qualifications to enter the Immortal Abode. Second brother Hongcai isn't wrong—we can still be considered among the early arrivals. It seems like we can grab some good seats today."

As he spoke, he squeezed his way through the ground. His body was thick, at least twice as wide as a normal person's. This fellow had been a tank in the Clans Tournament, so he had no trouble moving through these ordinary people.

Chu Yucheng's chubby palm pushed forward, and the people in front of him staggered out of the way like drunks.

His actions drew curses from those he offended, but when they realized his strength, not a single one dared to go beyond hurling a few tough words.

Seeing all these people around him, Zu An's eyes began to twitch. These were all living sacks of Rage points! How could he let them go so easily? He began to yell loudly, "Losers, please move out of the way. You all can't even go in, so why are all of you crowding around here blindly? You're just blocking the way."

Even though none of them had heard of the word 'loser' before, it wasn't hard to infer that it was a derogatory term. The crowd were quick learners, and in short order, all of them became furious.

You have successfully trolled Loser A for 99 Rage points!

You have successfully trolled Loser B for 99 Rage points!

You have successfully trolled Loser C for 99 Rage points!

Zu An sighed in satisfaction at the influx of Rage points. How pitiful, his Keyboard System didn't even find these side characters important enough to be named.

Chu Yucheng continuously wiped the sweat off his brow as he kept a keen eye on the swarm of people around them. His chubby body sweated easily, but he knew that the sweat he was currently producing definitely came from the anxiety stirred up in him by the fellow behind him.

Chu Hongcai followed him, gripping his sword tightly. Even though their cultivation was far greater than these people around them, he knew there was no way they could stand against so many of them together, especially since many of these people were cultivators themselves.

The two of them rattled off a constant stream of curses under their breath. There really was something wrong with this guy's head! Just what did the first miss see in him?

You have successfully trolled Chi Hongcai for 222 Rage points!

You have successfully trolled Chu Yucheng for 222 Rage points!

Fortunately, they managed to squeeze their way to the entrance. The guards from the Immortal Abode stepped in to assist, holding back the furious crowd for them.

A young man yelled out from somewhere in the crowd, "Tsk, do you all think you're all that just because you've got a bit of money? Do you think that it gives you the right to do whatever you want?" His voice was dripping with disgust.

When he heard this, Zu An stopped in his tracks. He turned around and flashed the youngster a wide smile. "We're going in right now, but all of you can only watch stupidly from outside. Sorry, but money talks."

He even shrugged a perfect textbook shrug.

You have successfully trolled Loser A for 199 Rage points!

You have successfully trolled Loser B for 199 Rage points!

You have successfully trolled Loser C for 199 Rage points!

...

Seeing even more Rage points pour in than before, Zu An almost orgasmed. He finally understood why villains always loved saying such cheesy, scripted lines.

It really feels so damned good!

He giggled as he put his arms around Chu Hongcai and Chu Yucheng. "You guys definitely have to bring me to more lively places like this in the future!"

He wouldn't obtain many Rage points even if he bent over backwards trying to farm points off a single person. Meanwhile, just a random holler here had gotten him over ten thousand points.

"Sure, sure..." Chu Yucheng took out a handkerchief to mop up the sweat on his face. I'll have to be batshit crazy to invite you out again!

The guards from the Immortal Abode were afraid that he would start a riot, so they quickly led the trio inside in a hurried and flustered manner.

When they entered the establishment proper, Zu An's eyes were immediately drawn to the gleaming, crystalline river not too far away. Only now did he realize that the Immortal Abode was constructed along the bank of the Brightmoon River.

He even noticed some pleasure boats by the riverbank.

Aren't there already enough brothels here? Why are there still so many pleasure craft?

The people in this city really know how to play...

Zu An sighed. It seemed he still lacked imagination.

"How many silver taels did you have to spend to meet with this Qiu Honglei?" Zu An noticed that his two companions had fished out exquisite invitation cards, and the guards smoothly let them through.

"Entering actually doesn't require any money. Immortal Abode has sent out invitations to all of the well known figures in Brightmoon City, as well as all other respectable figures. Each invitation allows one to bring a companion. As for your expenses afterwards, that will depend on how hard you play." Chu Yucheng wiggled his brows, giving him a knowing look.

Why is this damn fatty looking more and more like that actor Qiao Shan? Zu An thought jokingly. Then, he suddenly realized what the other party said, and immediately became upset.

The Immortal Abode had issued an invitation to all respectable figures. If even the juniors of the side branches, Chu Yucheng and Chu Hongcai, were given one, where was his damn invitation?!

Were they looking down on him?!

This Immortal Abode can eat shit!

He immediately turned to leave, his face as dark as a storm cloud.

“Ah Zu, what’s wrong?” Chu Yucheng was shocked by this, and hurried over to check on him.

Zu An said with a snort, “This Immortal Abode has the nerve to not send me an invitation. They clearly don’t give a shit about me! Why do I have to show them warmth when all they show me is their callousness? That whatever pretty courtesan or whatever, can she be as attractive as my wife? Forget it, forget it, I might as well go home to embrace my wife.”

When they heard his words, the people in the hall all turned to look at him. Just which idiot was saying such things? He actually dared to claim that Lady Qiu isn’t as pretty as his wife?

Is his wife a goddess?!

These men had all been worried that they might not have the chance to show themselves off before Qiu Honglei. Now, an opportunity had come knocking on their doors.

“Aren’t you a shameless fool? Your wife...” Several of the men closest to him jumped to their feet, about to pummel the idiot who had dared slander their goddess. However, when they saw Zu An’s face, they immediately looked like they had eaten a mouthful of shit. The rest of their words slinked back down their throats. “Apologies, we’ve disturbed you.”

This fellow’s wife really was prettier than Qiu Honglei. After all, Chu Chuyan was publicly acknowledged as the number one beauty in Brightmoon City! No matter how pretty Qiu Honglei was, her standing was still incomparable.

In a private room on the second floor, a pretty young heir watched this scene through the curtains, and scoffed, “Not a trace of elegance! A complete rascal! I really don’t know what Chu Chuyan sees in him.”

The voice was gentle and pleasant to the ear. Despite the generous dollop of anger, the words had the precise and unhurried cadence befitting a simple yet elegant scholar.

In reply, another man with delicate features said with a bitter smile, “Sis, you cannot let yourself be deceived by his outward appearance. There is definitely more to him than meets the eye. Beneath his wanton and unrestrained exterior is a cool-headed and crafty mind.”

If Zu An were here, he would have definitely recognized this person as none other than the city lord’s young master Xue Xiu, while the pretty heir was actually his older sister, dressed as a man.

## **Chapter 240: Pervert**

“Is that brat really as formidable as you say?” Xie Daoyun was still unconvinced. “Even though he didn’t perform terribly during the Clans Tournament, his strength is still pretty limited...”

Xie Xiu shook his head. "That guy seems brash and unrestrained, but he is actually extremely cool-headed and intelligent. Sometimes, even I cannot see through him."

"I couldn't care less about him, Chu Chuyan can have this headache all to herself." Xie Daoyun turned her gaze away. In his current state, Zu An was clearly still not worthy of any special attention from her. She looked towards the pearl curtains hung on the second floor. Unfortunately, there was still no one there. "When is this Qiu Honglei going to show herself?"

She heard that Qiu Honglei's artistic skills were peerless, and that her poetry and her singing ability were unmatched. Since she herself was serious about music, she had decided to come and see what she could learn from this renowned artiste. She hadn't the slightest interest in Qiu Honglei's other talents.

Xie Xiu explained, "I fear we might have to wait a bit longer. Sis, what I am more worried about is that you might be recognized. Even though you are dressed as a man, a more observant person would definitely see through your disguise. If that happens, our father won't let me off easy..."

The more he spoke, the more regretful he became. Bringing his big sister here had truly been too reckless of a decision.

Women were terribly jealous and competitive creatures, and his big sister, who was usually content with a simple life, was no different.

Xue Daoyun sneered. "Hmph, aren't you always causing trouble? Why don't I ever see you so scared of our father all those times?"

Seeing her younger brother's face scrunch up, she relented. "All right, all right. If you don't speak about it and I don't either, how would our father ever find out? I won't even show myself later. If I have something to say or a comment to make, I'll let you speak for me. Would that be enough?"

Xie Xiu's eyes immediately lit up. "Really?"

He knew that he wasn't the most skilled with words. When compared to those with true talents, he wasn't even worth a second look. However, with his sister's help, there was a high chance that Qiu Honglei might look favorably on him. Who knows, he might even be the one chosen to meet her personally.

"Of course! But if Qiu Honglei decides to meet with you, you'll have to bring me with you."

"What?" Xie Xiu's expression fell immediately. He had envisioned an alluringly romantic date, where the two of them would engage in deep, intimate conversation that would continue naturally into the bedroom. However, with his sis accompanying him, all of this went up in smoke.

"Normally, I leave you alone no matter how many girls you play around with, since they are all girls from respectable clans. However, this is different." Xie Daoyun pinched her brother's ear. "No matter how pretty or how talented Qiu Honglei is, our father will still never allow a brothel girl into the Xie clan."

Xie Xiu began to mumble to himself. "I was just looking forward to having some fun... I never said I was going to bring her home."

“That’s even worse!” Xie Daoyun narrowed her eyes at him in annoyance. “Even though Qiu Honglei has a good reputation, her background makes it such that she would never climb up the social ladder. Since you have no intention of taking her as a wife, then don’t harm her chances of finding an ideal husband.”

Xie Xiu said with a bitter smile, “Sis, those who ask a girl in this type of place to marry and leave her trade are usually extremely foolish... heh...”

He trailed off. If another man had made the same argument, he would have looked down on them and given them an earful. However, since it was his big sister who said it, there was no way he could put her down.

“You men always treat girls like playthings!” Xie Daoyun said hatefully. Her expression suddenly stiffened. Her gaze had landed on Zu An, who was in the hall below. “You really are something! All of you are jackals of the same trade!” she yelled in a fit of anger, her face reddening.

Confused by the sudden outburst, Xie Xiu followed her line of sight, and was immediately struck dumb.

Zu An had his hands around a slender girl, and his hands seemed to already be moving inside her dress.

This guy, why... How did he suddenly become so bold? With a goddess like Chu Chuyan as his wife, why would he still... Don’t tell me that Chu Chuyan isn’t enough?

The extremely shocking scene that he had witnessed in the dungeon appeared in his head again.

With something like that, perhaps a normal girl really might not be enough... Bloody hell...

Xie Xiu’s face had gone as dark as charcoal. He had finally freed himself from that psychological shadow not too long ago, and yet he’d ended up remembering it again.

He drained the cup of wine in front of him in one gulp to drown out these thoughts.

...

Just as Zu An threw his tantrum and threatened to leave, one of the brothel-keepers in heavy makeup quickly strolled over.

“Aiyo~ It’s the young masters from the Chu clan! How long has it been?” As she spoke, she gently waved the handkerchief in her hands.

Chu Yucheng waved back excitedly. “Long time no see! Sister Hua has become so much more voluptuous, I see.”

This is how women should be! Most women are as skinny as sticks. He really didn’t understand what was wrong with some people’s eyes.

Chu Hongcai took the opportunity to explain to Zu An, “Sister Hua’s full name is Hua Weimian. Back in the day, she was also a famous courtesan within her region. However, as she got older, she became a brothel-keeper instead. In order to broaden their networks, many great figures maintain good relationships with her.”

Zu An stared blankly. Who would have thought that this damn fatty, Chu Yucheng, was such a veteran despite being so young?



However, wasn't this fellow's taste a bit eccentric? He seemed to prefer those who were quite a bit older. Also, wasn't this Sister Hua a little too big?

His doubts were allayed as he considered Chu Yucheng's own rotund figure. Perhaps, in his eyes, only bigger girls could be considered slim.

"You little demon..." Sister Hua teased playfully. Her gaze suddenly shifted to Zu An. "And this one is...?"

She had spent so much time in these love houses, and her eyes were incredibly sharp. With a single glance, she took in Zu An's youthful facial features, his slight discomfort, and the curiosity in his eyes, and knew that he had never been to such an establishment before.

However, his clothing was made of very fine material, and he had accompanied the two young masters from the Chu clan, which made him someone wealthy and respectable. As such, she didn't dare act carelessly.

A servant from the Immortal Abode whispered a few words in her ear, and her expression became jovial. "So you are young master Zu! No wonder young miss Chu ended up falling for you! You are clearly a talented person with a fiercely handsome face!"

Those in her trade knew the major players of Brightmoon City like the back of their hand. A recently-risen personage like Zu An was not only the young master of the Chu clan, he was also a teacher at Brightmoon Academy, and she had already prepared a dossier on him. However, this was the first time she was seeing his face.

Even though her words were clearly flattery, Zu An still felt amazing listening to them. Everyone always described him as a useless drafted son-in-law, and that he was nothing but trash. Only this female brothel-keeper had called him young master Zu, and didn't even mention anything about him marrying into his wife's family, instead saying that Chu Chuyan liked him. He immediately felt a closeness to this woman.

No wonder she was able to do so well for herself in this city!

Chu Yucheng patted her bottom. "My brother was upset that you had intentionally left him out by not giving him an invitation! Hurry and find some nice girls to help him cool off."

"You wrong us, young master! Young master Zu is young miss Chu's sweetheart, and he is also Brightmoon Duke's ideal son-in-law. Even if I had ten times more courage, I still wouldn't dare to send him an invitation! If I incurred their wrath, our Immortal Abode would be put in a tight spot!" However, Sister Hua knew that Chu Yucheng was giving her a way out, so she hurriedly added, "As an apology, we'll waive all of young master Zu's expenses here tonight."

Spending a night in the Immortal Abode was an expensive affair, but it was well worth it to establish a good relationship with Zu An. After all, he was the young master of the Chu clan and a teacher at Brightmoon Academy.

Furthermore, rumors abounded that he had won over a million silver taels through gambling. If he were pampered well, it would make him more than willing to come back to play again in the future.

Envious whistles greeted her announcement, as the other patrons nearby overheard her.

Chu Yucheng tried his luck. "Sister Hua, you waived the bill for my brother, but what about us? Aren't you showing too much favoritism? Besides, the two of us are already so close."

Sister Hua rebuked him with a sharp laugh. "Who here doesn't know that the head of the third branch of the Chu clan is a great salt merchant? The amount of money that our Immortal Abode brings in each month is equal to what your business makes in a single day. If I waive the bill for you, wouldn't I be showing you great disrespect?"

Chu Yucheng rolled his eyes. "Your Immortal Abode is well-known as a place to blow money away. I might have believed you if you had said the opposite."

Sister Hua was all smiles. "Aiyo~ let's stop flattering each other over our businesses. How about this—I'll arrange for some beast-clan girls to keep you company. These girls have just arrived and they haven't even entertained any other guests before!"

As she spoke, she gestured towards the back of the hall. Three gorgeously-dressed girls walked over.

"They've never had customers before?" Chu Yucheng snorted disdainfully. He cast a skeptical eye over the approaching ladies. If you really insist that they've never entertained guests before, then this chubby young master is a pure and chase choirboy.

However, beast-clan girls were indeed a rare sight. When the humans had fought with the foreign tribes a thousand years ago, most of the foreign tribes had retreated to the borders of the empire. However, some of their clansmen had chosen to remain in the human territories.

Their fates were normally extremely pitiful. If they weren't captured to serve as slaves or servants, they were sold to places like these. The most fortunate ones among them managed to marry one of the ordinary folk and lived simple lives.

Despite their tragic plight, beast-clan beauties were still considered rare treasures. Chu Yucheng had yet to have a chance to play with one, even after all these years.

With these thoughts in mind, he made no move to unmask Sister Hua's lies.

Sister Hua sighed in relief as she noted their satisfied expressions. "Girls, treat these young masters well! I am going to receive other guests first. There's just so much to do for today's Courtesan's Meeting, and I must beg young masters' forgiveness."

"Go, go, go!" Chu Yucheng was impatient to discuss the intricacies of life and the importance of proper ideals with a beast-clan beauty, and so he was naturally eager for her to leave.

Sister Hua smiled slightly and walked off, shaking her hips in an exaggerated manner.

Chu Yucheng pulled the largest and most well-developed girl of the three into his embrace. Then, he pushed the most slender and delicate girl towards Zu An.

The one left for Chu Hongcai was the most ordinary and mediocre one out of them.

However, he didn't mind at all. He was whole-heartedly devoted to Qiu Honglei to begin with. None of the other girls could match up to his standards. Having an extra beast-clan girl at his side was just like having an extra person to drink with. The more the merrier, after all.

Chu Yucheng said to the young lady in Zu An's embrace, "This is my brother's first time in such an establishment, so serve him well! Don't scare him away, now."

The slender young lady's face colored slightly. She lowered her head and said, "It's also my first time."

Chu Yucheng laughed loudly, not bothering to argue with her. He immediately began to work the girl in his arms. "What race are you?"

That girl lay in his embrace, her arm hooked around his neck. Her charming eyes were like silk. "This humble one is from the bear race," she said.

"The bear race? That's perfect! This is the sort of build I'm talking about!" As he said this, Chu Yucheng buried his head into the curves of her body.

This perverted fatty! Zu An was completely speechless. He still found such directness jarring.

He looked at the young lady who had been unceremoniously pushed into his arms and asked, "What is your name?"

"My name is Leng Shuangyue..." The young lady replied shyly, her gaze lowered and her voice as soft as the buzzing of a mosquito.[1]

Zu An was stunned. Her name was completely unexpected, especially for someone who worked at a brothel like this! Could it be a fake name?

He was not swayed by her bashful expression.

Just because he had never done anything like this before didn't mean he was completely clueless.

In his previous world, he had read the stories of too many experienced veterans. Those in her trade sometimes deliberately pretended to be fresh and pure to suit their customers' tastes.

That was why all trades and professions had to be run by businessmen!

"What race are you?" The fluffy ears that stuck out from her hair had piqued his curiosity. He'd only ever seen beastmen on TV before, and had never expected to actually have a chance to embrace and play with one after arriving in this world.

"I am a cat woman." Leng Shuangyue replied.

"Catwoman?" Zu An's eyes lit up. His mind conjured up the svelte figure of Catwoman, Batman's nemesis, leaning over a motorcycle.

His impression of the woman in his arms immediately improved.

"I've always wanted to know. Do you beastmen have tails?" As he posed his question, he reached a hand behind her. Looking down from the second floor, the angle made it look as if he was reaching straight into her dress.

"This damn pervert!"

It wasn't just Xie Daoyun who was furious. In another private room, another blushing woman spat with disgust.

