

Immortal 431

Chapter 431: My Wife Is as Clear and Pure as Ice

Zheng Dan's face immediately turned red. There are so many people watching, why does this guy have to...?

She was willing to try anything with him in private, but she had nurtured the classy, elegant and refined image of the Zheng First Miss for over ten years. She desperately wished for a hole to squirm into and hide in.

Sang Qian's face immediately went red as well, but it was from anger. He roared at Zu An, "You bastard! You're going too far!"

If not for the bars of the prison carriage obstructing his way, he would have already leapt out to take Zu An's life.

You have successfully trolled Sang Qian for 999 Rage points!

Zu An had an innocent look on his face. "I was just offering a suggestion to help everyone out and save us some time. What's wrong, is young master Sang scared of going to the capital? I feel no fear even though I've offended the emperor, so why is young master Sang so scared? As a man, you really shouldn't be so cowardly all the time."

"No way! I'm not! I'm..." Sang Qian was about to faint from anger. Was this what he was getting upset about? It was clearly because this bastard had teased his wife in front of his face!

But he was too worked up right now, and his thoughts were all over the place. It was hard for him to even formulate what he wanted to say.

You have successfully trolled Sang Qian for 666 Rage points!

"Enough, enough! Qian'er, you're no match for him. Stop quarreling with him already." Seeing his son being toyed with like this had given Sang Hong a huge headache. He immediately stopped his son from arguing further.

King Liang snorted. "Switch the criminal's wife with Sang Hong. We'll keep him and Zu An in here."

There was no way he would let Zu An and Zheng Dan stay together.

Sang Qian's eyes immediately lit up when he saw that Zheng Dan was going to be in the same carriage as him. His anger immediately turned to joy. "Let's do that!"

Sang Hong's face darkened. Is this how badly you want to leave your father?

Zheng Dan's face paled when she heard these arrangements. She buried her head in her arms.

Zu An obviously didn't want to see this happen. "Respected king, I really cannot understand your choice. Are you really going to place a newly wed bride and groom together in the same carriage? Do you want

to give them a chance to consummate their marriage? They're both so young and vigorous, what if sparks suddenly fly? Are you doing this for the Imperial Guard to enjoy?"

King Liang was stunned. He seemed to realize that this was slightly inappropriate as well. "Then..."

As soon as his eyes shifted to Sang Hong, Zu An said, "It's even more improper to put Miss Zheng with Sir Sang. Who leaves a father-in-law and new bride in a room together? If some gossip gets out, it won't be good for your reputation, respected king!"

King Liang was so angry that he felt like laughing instead. "Does that mean I should be putting you and Miss Zheng in the same carriage?"

Zu An nodded. "Of course! I am an outsider to begin with, so no one has to worry about anything weird happening. Moreover, I am Miss Zheng's teacher at the academy, and we have shared a classroom in the past. No one will find this strange. Miss Zheng is also known for her composure and grace, so there's no way she would allow me to disrespect her in any way. Lastly, we're all sealed up, and there are so many eyes everywhere. What can go wrong?"

"This..." King Liang slowly fell silent. What this fellow said wasn't completely unreasonable.

Sang Qian immediately panicked. "No way! Definitely not..."

Zu An cut him off before he even finished his sentence. "What's wrong? Do you not trust Miss Zheng's character? Perhaps you believe that she will do something with another man in front of everyone else's eyes?"

Sang Qian was hard-pressed. "My wife is as clear and pure as ice, and as flawless as the finest white jade! Of course I trust her! But..."

Again, Zu An cut him off. "Are you questioning King Liang's integrity, then? Do you think he'll shield me if I do something bad as a way to spite the father and son of the Sang clan?"

Sang Qian immediately waved his hands frantically when he saw King Liang's unkind gaze shift to him. "Not at all! How would I dare to doubt the respected king? It's just that..."

Zu An promptly cut him off a third time. "Respected king, since young master Sang agrees to my suggestion, how about we just do things this way?"

Sang Qian was about to blow his top and say something else, but his father pulled him down. "Sit."

"But..." Sang Qian was really panicking now.

Sang Hong said coldly, "Do you think King Liang is stupid? He won't make that kind of arrangement. Zu An is just messing with you! Please don't turn yourself into a laughingstock. You're embarrassing our Sang clan!"

King Liang was still hesitant. Even though putting Zheng Dan together with either Sang Qian or Sang Hong was somewhat inappropriate, putting her together with Zu An was equally inappropriate!

Zu An said in a hushed tone, "Respected king, do you think I would do something as dangerous as keeping the original copy of the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra on me?"

"Of course not," King Liang replied subconsciously. The Embroidered Envoy had already searched his body, after all, and found nothing.

"No one would keep something so precious on them, right? For the sake of my own safety, I've memorized all of it in my head, and then destroyed the original," Zu An said with a chuckle.

King Liang grunted. "Why are you telling me all of this?"

He understood his own position well enough. The Phoenix Nirvana Sutra wasn't something he should have any thoughts about. Once he handed this fellow over to the emperor, his job would be done.

As for how the emperor was going to get this secret manual out of his mouth, that was none of his business.

Zu An chuckled. "I just wanted to remind you that sometimes, if someone becomes agitated, unhappy, or experiences other such negative emotions, it might affect their mood. If their mood is affected, it might cause them to misremember things, or even forget them altogether. Once this reaches the emperor..."

King Liang's expression changed instantly. He knew what Zu An was trying to say. He snorted and said, "Lock Zu An up in this prison carriage. We've already wasted enough time. We are setting out immediately!"

Sang Qian was incredulous. He couldn't believe his ears!

Sang Hong's jaw fell open as well.

Sang Qian couldn't help but look at his father, "Dad, didn't you say that it wouldn't end up like this?"

Sang Hong's face went red. "I have no idea why this is happening either! What the hell is King Liang planning?"

Sang Qian was about to say something else, but King Liang's subordinates had already received their instructions. They sealed up the vocal acupoints of both father and son so that they could no longer speak.

Sang Hong frowned. He stared at King Liang with eyes full of resentment.

Zu An smiled at Zheng Dan when he entered the carriage. Zheng Dan's heart skipped a beat. She immediately picked up her dress and moved over to the other side of the carriage, staying as far away from him as possible.

Her actions drew praise from everyone else present. "Miss Zheng really is the role-model for all distinguished daughters. She still maintains her distance from other men even in this sort of situation."

When he heard this, Sang Qian's expression finally eased a little.

"Ah Zu!" Chu Zhongtian and Qin Wanru rushed over. They clearly found it hard to accept this reality.

Zu An waved his hand. "Master, Madam, please do not feel bad. Who knows, I might even reunite with you all soon."

Qin Wanru couldn't hold back a snort. "Are you cursing us to die?"

After all, in most people's eyes, Zu An seemed doomed.

Zu An chuckled. "Of course not! Right, there's still one more thing. Once Chuyan comes back, tell her not to remarry so quickly! I still plan on coming back and marrying her again!"

The husband and wife pair of the Chu clan knew that Zu An had already made a clean escape, yet he had revealed himself because he wanted to save the Chu clan. Tears welled up in their eyes. Qin Wanru said, "If you manage to return, then we will definitely marry Chuyan off to you again."

Zu An then said, "Oh yeah, don't marry Huanzhao off too early either. Once I get back..."

When he saw Qin Wanru's brows stand up vertically, he hurriedly said, "When I come back, I'll need to vet her suitors to make sure she has a decent one! Haha... ha..."

Qin Wanru's tears turned to laughter. "Brat, you're always so indecent."

However, she knew that there was no chance of him returning. He was saying this just to console them.

She felt horrible inside. She continuously wiped away her tears.

Chu Zhongtian sighed again and again. His face was clouded with worry.

"Master, Madam, are we really going to let the young master be brought away like this?" Yue Shan had silently arrived by their side. With him were others who were also furious at this injustice, including Cheng Shouping, Jiao Shan, and others.

Chu Zhongtian sighed. "We cannot risk the lives of everyone else in the clan. Ah Zu has sacrificed himself for us, so we should all treasure our lives."

Everyone in the Chu clan was saddened when they heard this. Even Chu Hongcai, who was still resentful over his father's death, let his grudge go completely. He didn't think he could have been as courageous, if he were in Zu An's shoes.

Qin Wanru said, "Don't worry, we will try to save Ah Zu. The Chu clan has a little influence in the capital as well."

Even though this was what she said, she knew that hope was already beyond fleeting.

Chapter 432: Maling

A sudden thought occurred to Chu Zhongtian as he heard this. "By the way, isn't Chuyan in the capital? Have her make some preparations and see if she can do something about this."

Qin Wanru shook her head. "She should already be on her way back to Brightmoon City. I lent the recording mirror to Zu An, so we have no way of contacting her."

Chu Zhongtian stared blankly for a moment, then sighed. "Is this fate?"

...

While the Chu clan was in despair, the others around them bustled with energy.

Xie Yi took his leave after saying a few things to Chu Zhongtian. He was in a rush to report the matter of the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra to King Qi.

Quite a few people here had similar ideas, although they all had different powers behind them.

Jiang Luofu gazed in the direction the carriage had taken. Her beautiful brows were knit together in a frown. This was an extremely difficult problem.

“This kid keeps making others worry for him!” She said with a huff. With a flicker, she disappeared.

Within another building, a beautiful figure stood behind a window. Even though her face was hidden by the window, her voluptuous figure still gave away her identity.

Pei Mianman continuously twirled her hair between her fingers. She muttered to herself, “This guy never fails to surprise me! Sigh... if I had known this was how things were going to turn out, I would have brought you over to my side earlier! But this is fine as well. At least I don’t have to fight Chuyan for you anymore.”

Her smile quickly disappeared. Fighting against the emperor was much more difficult.

“It looks like I need to go back and beg my clan for help. I’m pretty sure they’ll be interested, though.” With that, she turned and left, leaving nothing but a faint fragrance lingering in the air.

At the same time, within the academy, a young lady was resting her chin on her hand. “Stinky brother-in-law, it’s been so long already! Why aren’t you back yet?”

...

“Achoo! Achoo! Achoo...”

Zu An sneezed again and again in his prison carriage. He sighed. “There are definitely beauties thinking about me, and more than one at that.”

Zheng Dan rolled her eyes at him. “Teacher Zu truly is as narcissistic as ever.”

There were so many eyes around them, and Sang Qian’s ears were sure to be constantly perked up, so she didn’t dare to say anything out of the ordinary. She could only interact with Zu An through her persona of Zheng First Miss.

Zu An laughed. “What can I say? It can’t be helped that I’m so welcome wherever I go.”

Zheng Dan couldn’t hold back a sigh. “I don’t know if I should praise Teacher Zu for your optimism, or laugh at your stupidity. Do you know that your fate is already sealed, now that you are being brought to the capital?”

She used her mocking words to mask her inner concern for him. She just couldn’t understand why this fella would show himself like that.

You have successfully trolled Zheng Dan for 233 Rage points!

Zu An was stunned by the sudden inflow of Rage points. However, he quickly caught onto what was going on. "Could Miss Zheng somehow be jealous?"

Zheng Dan flicked her head to the side. "Please conduct yourself with dignity!" she said with a huff.

That's what I'm talking about! In the other prison carriage, Sang Qian's face immediately lit up when he heard his wife's words. If not for his restrictions, he would have cheered and given her a round of applause.

Zu An scooted over towards Zheng Dan just a little, and shot Sang Qian a taunting look. "What are you looking at? Come at me if you have the guts!"

Sang Qian worked his jaw visibly.

I'm going to fucking kill you!

He was on the verge of exploding when he saw Zu An inching closer and closer to his wife, yet he couldn't do anything about it. He was making a bunch of sounds, but he couldn't speak any words because the acupoint in his throat was sealed.

This only made him even more angry.

You have successfully trolled Sang Qian for 999 Rage points!

He could only continuously smack the bars of the prison carriage while screaming towards the soldiers.

"What is it?" The soldier that was looking after the prison carriage turned around impatiently.

Sang Qian pointed at Zu An and gestured to describe his anger.

That soldier said impatiently, "They're not even close to each other. What are you getting so anxious about?"

Sang Qian became even more distressed. Wouldn't it be too late once the two of them were next to each other?

Another soldier berated him as well. "What can he do, with so many people watching? Please get your mind out of the gutter! We'll have no choice but to treat you poorly if you don't quiet down!"

If it had been any other time, they might have treated Sang Qian and his father a little better. After all, Sang Hong was at the eighth rank, and there was still a chance for them to make a comeback.

However, King Liang's instructions had made it clear to them that the father and son of the Sang clan were both finished.

King Liang had access to more information than them. If even he didn't care to treat these two with any respect, it surely meant that there were too many problems facing these two. As subordinates, they might not be skilled at other things, but they were masters of reading the situation.

It was obvious to them that they didn't have to treat Sang Qian with much respect. Furthermore, given how much King Liang cared about Zu An, they knew which of them was the real young master.

Forget about Zu An sitting a little closer, they wouldn't even have stopped him if he really threw himself at Zheng Dan. Either way, they would be treated to quite a scene—why would they be against that?

Of course, Sang Qian was still an official, and he clearly understood what was happening. He was completely furious. You bootlicking dogs, just wait until I get out! I'm going to kill that Zu An first, and then I'll slaughter the two of you!

Sang Qian's manic activity did not escape Zheng Dan's notice. She couldn't help but say, "Why do you have to provoke him?"

Zu An laughed and said, "It can't be helped. We just don't get along! He gets irritated when he sees me, and I get angry when I see him as well."

Zheng Dan gave him an annoyed look. "Haven't you bullied him enough already?"

Zu An laughed. This was a secret only the two of them shared.

The beauty in front of him was dressed in a magnificent wedding dress that had been carefully prepared for her. It was decorated with ninety-nine gemstones, which had been the Sang clan's betrothal gift. They made her seem even more gorgeous and glamorous.

He didn't have the time to admire it before. Now that he could see her up close, Zu An was stunned. He sighed and said, "You really are stunning. You look so beautiful even when you're angry."

"Mmmm mm mm!" Sang Qian slammed his hands against the side of his carriage again. This bastard is taking advantage of my wife!

The sight of his own delicate and beautiful wife being teased by this scoundrel was enough to send blood shooting into his eyes.

You have successfully trolled Sang Qian for 1024 Rage points!

Zu An turned around. "Hey man, what the heck is wrong with you? Just ask anyone here! They'll all agree with me that Miss Zheng is pretty! Should I curse her for being an ugly hag? Would that make you happy? You're so fucking weird."

"Exactly!" The soldiers all directed scornful looks at Sang Qian. What's wrong with praising your wife for being pretty? Aren't you a little too sensitive?

Sang Qian couldn't contain himself anymore.

I'm going to fucking... The other party clearly has ill intentions. Why is this somehow my fault?

He almost fainted on the spot!

You have successfully trolled Sang Qian for 999... 999... 999...

Sang Hong reached out a hand and pushed him back down. He wrote on the ground with his finger, "Eyes closed, mind at peace."

Sang Qian was so angry that he was about to vomit blood. His thoughts were obvious from his expression. "Am I supposed to just let him bully my new wife?"

Sang Hong continued to write, "Has he done anything yet? And even if he has, have you already forgotten what I told you before?"

Sang Qian stared blankly for a moment. Then, he remembered the advice his father had given him when he first used his wife as a honey trap to investigate the mysterious expert supporting Zu An. Back then, his father had said that, even if his wife really did do something, he should never act out on the spot, but find the proper way to maximize his own benefit instead.

However, understanding this logically was one thing. Whether or not he could accomplish this was something else. Seeing the bastard cheekily eyeing his new bride was enough to set a malicious flame burning within him.

Zu An was even a bit worried when he saw how many Rage points were coming in. This guy really is malding... I hope he doesn't go completely bald.

Chapter 433: An Unexpected Scene

Just like that, he chatted with Zheng Dan while harvesting Sang Qian's endless stream of Rage points. If not for the ice cold prison carriage that constantly reminded him of his current situation, Zu An might have even felt as though he was on a holiday trip.

The carriage left through the city gates. Zu An's mind grew distracted as he watched the majestic city walls slowly grow further and further away.

When he first arrived in this world, he had slowly entered Brightmoon City through this very gate in Chu Chuyan's carriage.

But now, he was leaving, and he was leaving in a prison carriage.

"What are you thinking about?" Zheng Dan found his sudden silence a little strange.

"I wonder if I'll ever have the chance to come back," Zu An sighed. Even though he had some plans, he had no idea how it would really turn out in the end.

Based on what he'd learned in the academy, this world was much larger than Earth, yet it lacked airplanes, high-speed rails, and other modes of transportation. Distance alone became a huge barrier between family and friends.

Zheng Dan sighed. "That doesn't seem too likely."

Leaving Zu An aside for the moment, even her own future looked grim. She had no idea what fate awaited her.

Suddenly, a voice sounded from not far off. "Wait!"

The carriage slowed down. The discordant sounds of several people arguing could be heard from up ahead.

Zu An was stunned. He had released the information about the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra precisely because he foresaw that it would draw the attention of various factions. But he never expected any of them to arrive this quickly. They hadn't even left Brightmoon City yet!

He leaned over to the side to take a look. A sloppy middle-aged man and a petite young lady had been stopped by the Imperial Guard.

Zheng Dan cried out, "Teacher Zu really is extraordinary! You have beautiful female friends sending you off even in this sort of situation!"

Zu An chuckled. "Dan'er, please don't get jealous. This only means that you know how to pick your man."

Zheng Dan panicked. She gave Sang Qian's carriage a guilty look, but she saw that his eyes were closed restfully. He had probably done this because listening to them any more might actually have caused him to die from anger.

"Zu An is a criminal! No visitors are allowed!" The Imperial Guard tried to chase them off. If not for Ji Xiaoxi's extremely delicate and lovely appearance, they might've already used their weapons.

"I only want to say one sentence to him!" Ji Xiaoxi begged. She blinked her large, misty eyes at them.

Even the hearts of these crude, fierce men melted when they saw her large and beautiful eyes. How could they bear to treat her roughly? However, they didn't dare agree to her request.

"What is going on? Why haven't you dealt with it yet?" King Liang demanded impatiently, having arrived with a group of men.

When he saw Ji Xiaoxi's cute and lovely appearance, his eyes couldn't help but light up.

Unlike those youngsters who liked women who were more mature, those of his age were more fond of cute and lovely little girls.

"I want her captured... ahem ahem. Since she is seeking out a criminal, she is probably an accomplice. Capture her too." King Liang was more than proficient in utilizing such methods, and he swiftly gave his order.

Besides, after they had captured her, it would all be up to him how she was handled!

"Ahem, ahem!" A burst of dissatisfied coughs sounded from nearby. King Liang reluctantly pulled his gaze away from Ji Xiaoxi, wondering who it was that had dared to disrupt his good mood.

He was just about to erupt in fury when he caught sight of the offending party. He was immediately startled. "Ji... Divine Physician Ji?"

Ji Dengtu offered him a sneer. "It seems the respected king still hasn't forgotten about my humble self."

King Liang's expression immediately turned resentful. How could he possibly have forgotten? This fellow had brought disaster upon all the livestock and pets of every clan!

He had made it sound great, calling it an experimental drug, but after his medicine had been fed to them, all of them had gone on a crazy mating spree!

Ji Dengtu smiled, revealing teeth that were yellowed from smoking. "That's my daughter. The two of them spent some time together in the academy, and she has something that she wants to tell him. Respected king, please be accommodating."

"So that's who she is! Of course that's okay with me." King Liang smiled. He remembered how close-minded this doctor was. Even though he only possessed an ordinary strength, it was almost impossible to defend oneself against poison.

Moreover, his poisons were all extremely sinister. In days gone by, the Qin clan's finest steeds, after being poisoned by this guy, had ravaged eighteen female horses each before finally dying on the spot.

King Liang thought about his little one, which had long since gone limp and flaccid. If he were afflicted by such a poison, wouldn't he just die?

"Thank you, respected king!" Ji Xiaoxi said happily. She quickly ran over to Zu An.

"Wait!" King Liang held her back. "Leave your bag here. You can't bring anything with you."

Even though he was scared of Ji Dengtu, Zu An was a criminal, so he couldn't afford to be sloppy. He would have strictly prohibited others from approaching him, let alone pass him anything. Regardless of whether it was giving him something or taking something from him, he would leave no room for that to happen.

Ji Xiaoxi's face reddened. She removed all of the things she was carrying. "Is this good enough?"

King Liang frowned. Even though it all looked fine on the surface, who knew if she was still hiding something on her body? However, it wasn't appropriate to search for her right now. If he'd known something like that was going to happen, he would've brought a few female servants with them from Brightmoon City.

"Of course you can." As he said this, he sent Liu Yao a voice transmission. "General Liu, I have to trouble you to monitor the situation. Do not let anything happen."

Liu Yao snorted loudly. This old fox is pushing the responsibility onto me! But there was nothing he could do but follow Ji Xiaoxi to the prison carriage.

Zu An sighed when he saw the young lady who had walked over. "Xiaoxi, thank you for seeing me."

Ji Xiaoxi bit her lip. "Sorry, I can't do anything for you."

Zu An laughed. "What is there to be sorry about? I'm already extremely happy that you came to see me."

"If I'd known things would turn out like this, I wouldn't have been angry at you for so long..." Ji Xiaoxi blushed like an apple.

Zu An knew that she was talking about the time she had been accidentally poisoned by the 'Eighteen Spring Winds'. He laughed and said, "I'm the one who was in the wrong. It was completely normal for you to get angry."

Liu Yao and the surrounding imperial guards were speechless. They thought that she had stood in the way of all these fully armed soldiers because she had something important to say. In the end, all she wanted to do was exchange some words of endearment?

Despite this, they couldn't help but feel a little impressed. Zu An looked rather ordinary from the outside, yet not only was the number one beauty his wife, the City Lord's daughter had even taken such risks for his sake, and now this pure and lovely young lady was dead set on talking to him before he left.

Sang Qian ground his teeth in anger. Are these girls blind or what? Why are you all throwing yourselves at him?!

You have successfully trolled Sang Qian for 555 Rage points!

Liu Yao coughed. "Lady Ji, time is almost up. We need to be on our way."

He clearly didn't feel great watching this play out from the sidelines.

"I'm almost done." Ji Xiaoxi flashed him an apologetic smile. She walked over to the prison carriage and waved towards Zu An. "Zu An, there's something I need to tell only you."

Zu An was stunned. He moved closer. "What is it?"

Zheng Dan pricked up her ears too. Her woman's intuition had sensed a sudden hint of danger.

Liu Yao, and even King Liang and Ji Dengtu who were further away, stared in her direction. They were all curious as to what she was about to say.

"Bend down a little more," Ji Xiaoxi said quietly.

Zu An grew more and more confused. What did this little girl want to say? Did she not know how many experts there were here? Even if she spoke right into his ear, she still wouldn't escape their detection!

Despite this, he still subconsciously bent closer to her. He was just about to say something when a pair of soft lips pressed against his. His nose was filled with a pure and sweet fragrance.

Everyone around them was stunned. They had all been curious as to what this lovely little girl wanted to say, but they were tricked into watching this revolting public display of affection!

A French kiss? Are you kidding me?

You're a monster! How can you do this to such a pure and innocent young girl?

You have successfully trolled the Imperial Guard for 666... 666... 666...

Zu An had a look of injustice on his face. He wasn't the one who initiated this! It was her tongue that first reached into his mouth!

However, his expression quickly changed. He noticed that her tongue had pushed something against the side of his teeth.

Chapter 434: Madam Wu

“What the hell?” Ji Dengtu had just been talking to King Liang and reminiscing about his past glories. It felt as if he’d regained his youth! However, when he turned around and glanced in his daughter’s direction, he was met with this outrageous scene!

He had been over the moon just a second ago, yet just a second later, it was as if his entire clan had been robbed. He was about to explode on the spot!

You have successfully trolled Ji Dengtu for 1024 Rage points!

He immediately went mad and charged towards them, but he was stopped by the imperial guards. They might have allowed a delicate and harmless young lady to get close to the criminal, but there was no way they would let such a powerful man do the same.

These soldiers of the Imperial Guard were all respectable warriors, and the Embroidered Envoy was present as well. Not even someone with Ji Dengtu’s cultivation could get past them.

This only made him even more angry.

You have successfully trolled Ji Dengtu for 999... 999... 999...

The pearl that he’d carefully cultivated all these years had been ravaged by a pig! He felt as though he could write ten books about what he was currently feeling.

King Liang quickly stopped him as well. He said with an embarrassed smile, “My friend Ji, please do not let yourself be too bothered about matters between youngsters.

“Of course, as an old friend, I must respectfully offer my advice. If you don’t want your esteemed daughter to live as a widow, you should find her a son-in-law as quickly as possible. I fear that this one won’t survive much longer.”

Ji Dengtu’s eyes burned with righteous fire.

What do you mean, son-in-law? Why the hell would I accept someone not even that bastard Chu Zhongtian wants as a son-in-law?

Hold on, my daughter is so cute and adorable. I don’t even want her to be defiled by a son-in-law. I hate that term!

Ji Xiaoxi finally separated from Zu An. She hid her face in her hands and ran.

Ji Dengtu gave Zu An a hateful glare. “Brat, how dare you bully my Xiaoxi?! If you don’t bring me ten novels the next time I see you, I will kill you even if the emperor doesn’t!”

With that, he immediately took off after his daughter, crying out ‘Xiaoxi’ in a loving manner the entire time.

Something had truly been wrong with him earlier when he agreed to bring his daughter to meet with Zu An. If he knew things would turn out like this, he would never have read this kid’s books.

But I really want to know what happens next... damn it...

King Liang was momentarily speechless. Just how had this Zu An managed to gain the favor of so many girls?

No wonder Sang Qian got so mad when he saw Zu An placed in the same carriage as his wife. They were both from Brightmoon City, so he probably already knew just how much of a lady-killer Zu An was. That explained why he was so worried.

If Sang Qian were able to read his mind, he might just faint from anger. King Liang could already visualize the man screaming away.

Why would I be scared of Zu An's charm?!

Who would be happy seeing their wife alone with another young man?!

"Stop standing around already. We're moving out immediately!" King Liang and Liu Yao waved their hands, and their group continued on.

Zu An licked his lips. He looked as though he still hadn't snapped back to reality.

Zheng Dan said in a slightly sour voice, "I know Miss Ji's lips are sweet, but do you have to savor the taste of them like that?"

Zu An chuckled but didn't say anything. There were too many people watching, so he had to choose his words carefully.

The secret message that Ji Xiaoxi had passed on to him appeared in his mind. "If you find yourself in a situation where death seems inevitable, break this pill. This is a Play Dead Pill that I made. Once you ingest it, your body will be just like a corpse for twelve hours, and no one will be able to tell the difference. Whether or not this can help you get away will depend on your own luck."

Ji Xiaoxi had used the pretense of kissing him to press this pill against the side of his teeth. It suddenly felt as though he had an extra tooth. He felt around it, but it felt just like any other tooth to him. He had no idea how she'd managed to place the pill there so quickly.

This girl's tongue is so nimble and agile, if this skill was used somewhere else...

Zu An's face heated up. He immediately began to repent for having these thoughts.

Even the usually timid Xiaoxi gathered the courage to see me. Where the heck are big Manman and big sis Shang? Given their friendship, he'd expected that the two of them would at least send him off.

Hmph, women are heartless after all. I'm going to give you all a good spanking once I'm back!

Wait. If it's big Manman, I'll have to hit her somewhere else...

To alleviate the boredom, Zu An let his imagination run wild. Just like that, their group proceeded along the government road.

He suddenly noticed that Zheng Dan seemed rather uncomfortable. Only then did he realize that there wasn't anything blocking the sunlight from shining down into the prison carriage.

Girls always took great care of their looks. A distinguished daughter like Zheng Dan would have made sure that she was protected from the sun whenever she went out. When did she ever have to go through something like this?

As such, he began to kick up a fuss. King Liang and Liu Yao rushed over when they heard the news. They gave him an impatient look. "What is it now?"

Zu An said, "I want to change carriages."

"Why?" The two of them looked at Zheng Dan. It can't be that you're unhappy being together with a beauty like this, can it?

Zu An said, "This carriage is completely open, and there are always people looking at us. I feel like a monkey in a zoo! Not to mention, I was sexually harassed by a girl earlier because this carriage wasn't covered up!"

Those around him cursed him immediately when they heard this.

You call that shit 'sexual harassment'?

You clearly reached your tongue out happily!

We'll gladly accept this sort of sexual harassment!

You have successfully trolled the Imperial Guard for 666... 666... 666...

King Liang also gritted his teeth in anger. If you give this kid an inch, he takes a mile! However, his previous threat was still fresh in his mind, so he said with a snort, "Send someone to fetch a cover! Cover up this carriage."

Zu An immediately shook his head. "I won't sit in a prison carriage, I want to sit in a carriage like yours!" He pointed at the spacious and luxurious carriages that the two imperial leaders occupied.

"An actual carriage?" Liu Yao burst out laughing. "Who do you think you are? You want to sit in such a carriage even though you're a criminal?"

In the other prison carriage, Sang Qian cursed Zu An for being an idiot. He'd actually brought up this sort of impossible request!

However, Zu An's face remained completely straight. "I know that I'm a criminal, but I'm not an ordinary criminal. The emperor surely wants my Phoenix Nirvana Sutra, and it's stored in my head. If you guys treat me well on the way there, who knows, I might just happily recite the sutra for him! But if you guys treat me poorly, I will tell the emperor that I don't want to recite it anymore because of you guys."

"Whether you recite it or not is not up to you," Liu Yao sneered. "Besides, the emperor is a mighty and heroic figure. Do you think he will be deceived by these small tricks of yours?"

Zu An smiled. "Feel free to give it a try! I don't think it's that hard for you guys to transfer me into a different carriage. You guys have barely anything to lose. However, if you offend me, you may be taking a huge risk yourselves. For example, I might tell the emperor in private that you guys tried to force the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra out of me."

“Absolute nonsense!” King Liang and Liu Yao’s expressions flickered. They did not think that the emperor would care much if Zu An brought up his poor treatment on the way to the capital, but it would definitely be a huge issue if Zu An falsely accused them of forcing the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra out of him.

This was a technique that granted eternal life! This was something the emperor desired most of all! How could mere subjects like them even think of acquiring it for themselves?

Even though they could defend themselves, the risk was just too high.

Zu An continued, “Oh yeah, there’s something else I need to remind you guys about. News of the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra has probably already spread, and people along our route will surely find out about it soon enough. Since this carriage isn’t covered, anyone can tell that it’s me from a distance, and might start crafting up all sort of plans. Who knows, maybe an arrow will come whistling over, and I’ll breathe my last. How will you explain that to the emperor?”

The commander of the Embroidered Envoy, Huang Huihong, became upset. “With us present, no arrows will reach you.”

“You might be able to stop the arrow of an ordinary archer, but what about a high level cultivator? For example, a ninth rank, master rank, or even a grandmaster rank?” Zu An asked.

King Liang and Liu Yao’s expressions grew more uncertain. This possibility really did exist.

After all, there were too many people who did not wish to see the emperor gain eternal life. It wasn’t impossible for a grandmaster to get involved in this matter.

Even though they didn’t fear a grandmaster in a straight fight, they really couldn’t do anything about an arrow fired from far away.

King Liang issued his orders. “Make some room in General Liu’s carriage and move him there! General Liu will stay in my carriage.”

Liu Yao’s face darkened immediately, but it quickly eased a little when he heard the latter half of his order.

Zu An pointed at Zheng Dan. “She’s coming with me, because...”

Before he had even finished, King Liang waved his hand tiredly. “Enough already. Put Miss Zheng with him.”

He’d already had his fair share of this kid’s mouth. If he allowed him to keep speaking, he might just blurt out another pile of hot garbage. For the sake of his own mental health it was better to stop listening to him altogether.

Sang Qian immediately began to grunt again. He wasn’t expecting them to really permit Zu An to sit in a carriage, let alone having Zheng Dan accompany him!

You have successfully trolled Sang Qian for 1024 Rage points!

He had still been able to see everything that was going on before, since the prison carriages were only made out of some bars. However, they were now being moved into a different carriage, and these

carriages that were prepared for important figures were all tightly covered! He wouldn't be able to see what was happening inside at all!

King Liang snorted. "With so many people standing guard, we'll know about everything that happens inside. You don't need to worry about those trivial things."

He couldn't be bothered with Sang Qian any further. Explaining this to him was already showing him quite a bit of respect.

Both he and Liu Yao returned to their carriage. The two of them didn't really get along to begin with, so it felt rather odd for them to share a carriage.

They were both pissed when they thought about how all of this was because of Zu An.

You have successfully trolled King Liang for 233 Rage points!

You have successfully trolled Liu Yao for 846 Rage points!

Liu Yao was much more upset, because he had to give up his personal carriage.

The two of them sat in silence within the carriage. The mood was terribly awkward. In the end, it was Liu Yao who broke the silence. "We'll be passing King Wu's territory once we leave Linchuan Commandery. Do you think that he will..."

King Liang shook his head. "I don't think so. King Wu is a prince born from his majesty's concubine, and he usually maintains a low profile. I don't think he will entertain any thoughts that he knows he shouldn't."

"That's good then." Liu Yao sighed. Then, he smiled and said, "This King Wu is also a little too low-profile. Others in his situation would marry into a large clan, yet he ended up taking the girl of a third-rate clan as his wife."

King Liang said with a laugh, "Even though Madam Wu's doesn't have the most illustrious background, I've heard that she is quite the beauty. Everyone claims that King Wu cherishes beauties over worldly glory."

Liu Yao snorted. "Worldly glory wouldn't want to have anything to do with him even if he'd married a woman from a great clan."

Chapter 435: Such a Pity

King Liang smiled but said nothing. Liu Yao was the empress' uncle, so he represented the crown prince's interests, while King Wu wasn't the empress' son. The two of them naturally didn't get along, so it was expected that he would subconsciously be suspicious of him.

Unlike the Liu clan, King Liang didn't really care at all which of the sons became the next emperor. It wouldn't really affect his status either way.

He laughed again and shifted his focus. "Rather than worrying about King Wu, I think there are other parties that we should be more concerned about. That brat Zu An might be annoying, but what he said was reasonable. Many parties will surely come after our convoy after hearing the news."

Liu Yao's voice was full of venom. "That kid really is hateful! He told everyone about the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra on purpose! If I'd known that this was going to happen, I would have locked down the entire Brightmoon City so no information could get out."

King Liang smiled bitterly. "How could we possibly completely keep such information from spreading? Those powers all have their own special information channels. They can communicate even without people coming and going from the city. Even City Lord Xie Yi is part of King Qi's faction. Do you think he would have allowed you to lock down the city?"

Liu Yao snorted. "These fellows continue to pay us lip service, but they're all opposing us in private! Once the crown prince takes the throne, we will deal with them one by one!"

King Liang coughed lightly and said, "Brother Liu, please speak cautiously."

Liu Yao was shocked. He suddenly realized that he had gone too far. When would the crown prince rise to the throne? Obviously only after the current emperor passed away!

Hadn't he just wished death upon the emperor?

This was what the emperor had obsessed over the most in recent years. There had been a chef who mentioned the word 'death' while slaughtering a chicken, which just happened to reach the ear of the emperor as he was passing by. That chef ended up being executed.

"Thank you, respected king, for your reminder." Liu Yao had a grateful expression on his face.

King Liang said with a smile, "There is no need for that. Our journey will definitely be a rough one, so we need to take care of each other."

To be honest, if it wasn't because he still needed Liu Yao and his Imperial Guard, he couldn't have cared less if this man courted disaster on his own.

Liu Yao disapproved of his statement. "He is someone the emperor himself has deemed a criminal. We are personally escorting him, and we even have the Imperial Guard and Embroidered Envoy with us. Do you really think anyone would be brazen enough to try and seize him from us?"

King Liang sighed deeply. "The allure of eternal life is too fatal for too many people, let alone the fact that there are also many who do not wish to see his majesty gain eternal life."

Liu Yao fell silent. Leaving others aside for the moment, even... wouldn't wish to see the emperor gain eternal life.

...

Compared to the tense atmosphere of this carriage, the mood in the carriage behind it was much more cheerful.

Zheng Dan was huddled in the corner, a strong blush burning in her cheeks. "You! Why did you have to drag me into this carriage?"

Zu An smiled. "What's wrong? Now you won't have to worry about the wind and sun anymore. You can enjoy yourself in this comfortable carriage."

His eyes wandered about the interior of the carriage. This Liu Yao was filthy rich! This carriage was decked out like a freaking Rolls-Royce!

Zheng Dan realized that Zu An had noticed her using her hand to shield herself from the sun earlier, which was why he'd stopped everyone to demand a change of carriages. Everyone thought that he was just being annoying, but she knew that he'd done this for her. This thought softened her heart a little.

However, being in a dark and enclosed space with him while so many others looked on made her extremely uncomfortable. How was she going to live this down?

"Come over here and massage my legs for me. Staying in a carriage for so long made my legs go numb." Zu An propped his legs up on her lap.

Zheng Dan gave a startled jerk, and immediately pointed outside.

Zu An wasn't worried at all. "There's nothing to fear. The prison carriage is far away from this carriage. They can't hear anything."

Zheng was embarrassed and annoyed. She pointed next to the carriage. She wasn't only worried about Sang Qian! The Embroidered Envoy was nearby as well, watching them.

Zu An realized what was going on. "Come on, I took you out of that prison carriage and into this comfortable one, but you won't even massage my legs? Commander Huang, don't you think that that's a little unreasonable?" He directed the latter half of his complaint outside.

Huang Huihong snorted. "You'd better watch yourself. Her husband is still watching from behind us."

"I understand! Commander Huang is saying that playing around is fine, as long as I don't go too far." Zu An chuckled. "As for Sang Qian, he can watch if he wants. Too bad he can't see anything though."

Huang Huihong almost choked.

Like hell that's what I meant!

However, he didn't feel like correcting Zu An at the moment. This kid really was hard to deal with. His task was to escort him safely to the capital city, and that was it. He couldn't be bothered about anything else. It wasn't his wife that was being taken advantage of.

Zu An laughed and said to Zheng Dan, "See? He doesn't even care."

Zheng Dan bit down on her red-painted lip. There wasn't much she could do about it. She glared at him resentfully, then began rubbing his legs gently.

The two of them actually did quite a bit of this in private, but it was hard for her to let go of her public image in front of so many other people.

"Sigh... Miss Zheng's hands really do feel as comfortable as usual." Zu An looked at her with a smile. Zheng Dan was stunning to begin with, but she was even more enchanting in her wedding dress.

Zheng Dan's heart began to pound. Fortunately, there was no response from outside. No one had picked up anything from what he'd said.

Zu An patted his own lap, clearly inviting her to sit.

Zheng Dan was given a fright. She frantically shook her head. Are you kidding me? There were so many people paying attention to what was happening inside! What was she supposed to do if someone else found out?

Zu An mouthed silently, "Don't worry, I won't do anything. I just want to hold you in my arms. I don't think there'll be many chances for us to be like this anymore."

Zheng Dan grew sad. Indeed... even if she and the Sang clan still had a sliver of a chance at survival, Zu An was definitely a dead man. He'd offended the emperor, after all.

She put aside her rational thought and slowly melted into his embrace. The two of them snuggled against each other for warmth.

He sensed her trembling slightly, and he knew that she wasn't as strong as she looked on the outside. Zu An gently patted her shoulders.

He still had things that he could depend on, but how could a young woman like her handle so much?

"Thank you..." Zheng Dan felt a surge of warmth well up within her heart.

"Is there still a need for that between us?" Zu An looked down at the beautiful woman in his arms. She was wearing her wedding dress as well, which made her look even more stunning. Passion erupted within him.

A pair of soft red lips moved to cover his. It was as though heavenly lighting had struck the ground and rent it asunder, leaving boiling magma pouring forth. He immediately tightened his embrace around the beauty in his arms.

Zheng Dan seemed to have poured all of the fear, terror, despair, and all the other negative feelings that had accumulated within her into this moment.

Zu An's hands wandered across her curvaceous body, but something suddenly left him stumped. This wedding dress was incredibly pretty, but it was way too extravagant! He had no idea how to undo these clothes!

Zheng Dan pressed down on his hand. She shook her head while biting her lip. Her large and intelligent eyes seemed to speak, warning him that there were still many people outside. Sneaking kisses was okay, but she didn't dare go any further.

"Wouldn't it be okay if we don't make any sound?" Zu An wrote on her body.

Zheng Dan's heart was pounding fiercely. She began to hesitate.

Seeing the chink in her defenses, Zu An continued on his offensive.

Zheng Dan's own passion was quickly ignited as well. Her arms wrapped around his neck, pulling him closer.

Zheng Dan suddenly smiled in embarrassment. She reached to undo her own collar.

Zu An grabbed her hands and mouthed silently, "Don't take it off. It's more interesting if you keep it on."

Zheng Dan glared at him in annoyance. The two of them were already beyond familiar with each other. How could she not know what he meant?

Zu An slowly wrote on her palm, "It's such a pity that your wedding lacked a wedding night. I guess I have no choice but to make up for your loss myself!"

Zheng Dan was embarrassed and ashamed. She bit down viciously on him. Was a wedding night with her husband something that another man could compensate for?!

Chapter 436: Seeking Your Own Doom

Zu An chuckled and said no more. He wrapped his arms around her, and slowly moved her on top of him.

Zheng Dan's entire body shook. How could she possibly have the energy to resist? She bit her lip tightly, afraid that she would unwittingly make a sound.

Huang Huihong's voice cut in suddenly. "Miss Zheng, are you okay?"

Zheng Dan's mind trembled. She quickly controlled her voice to stop it from shaking. She pretended to be calm as she replied, "I'm... I'm fine. Why would you ask that?"

"Ah... I didn't hear anything at all for a while, so I thought that something might have happened. I'm just asking out of concern for you," Huang Huihong said with a smile. He was the one supervising them after all, and Zheng Dan was the wife of an official. It wouldn't be good for his reputation if he let something happen to her.

Zu An immediately became upset. "Commander Huang, what the heck are you saying? Do you think I'm that sort of person?"

Zheng Dan hit his chest with her fist. It would be stranger if you weren't that sort of person!

She really didn't know where he got the audacity to say such nonsense. What if this rascal ended up pushing that commander to check on what was happening inside?

This thought made her extremely nervous, and her body shook uncontrollably.

Zu An had a strange look on his face. He sucked in a deep breath.

Huang Huihong snorted and said, "Miss Zheng, if anything at all happens, just yell for us."

He clearly didn't want to acknowledge Zu An, but he didn't want to provoke him either. This fellow was just too hard to deal with, with all those weird tricks up his sleeves. He definitely didn't want to bring any trouble upon himself.

"I understand. Thank you, Commander Huang," Zheng Dan replied in a refined and courteous manner. At the same time, she hit Zu An a few more times. This guy really was annoying!

Sang Qian craned his neck to look in their direction. Unfortunately, besides the carriage rocking a little, he didn't see anything else.

"Stop looking. It's meaningless." Sang Hong couldn't resist offering him a reminder. Their throat acupoints had already been undone.

Sang Qian gritted his teeth. "Are we going to just let Zu An bully Dan'er?"

Sang Hong glared at him. "Can't you see what situation we're in right now? How can you still be concerned about relationship matters?! We should be looking for a way out of our current crisis! Given your father's own skills, we'll bounce back from this sooner or later. If worse comes to worst, won't it be enough if I get you ten such distinguished daughters?"

"But I still feel like Dan'er suits me the best," Sang Qian mumbled to himself. "Besides, I don't want to see that bastard Zu An get his way."

Sang Hong could only shake his head in despair.

This child was hopeless. The two of them were facing death, yet he was still so concerned about such petty things.

He completely abandoned all hope for his son. He just hoped that his daughter would be a little more decisive and not as stupid as her older brother.

A glimmer flickered within Sang Hong's eyes as he looked towards the direction of the capital, his thoughts moving rapidly.

...

Their convoy soon entered a valley. Suddenly, countless boulders tumbled down like a landslide.

"Be careful!" Huang Huihong yelled out in warning. He flung a Soul-reaping Chain towards the boulders in the sky.

The force of his chain smashed the falling boulders to pieces.

The other Imperial Guards also unsheathed their weapons and thrust out. Most of them were able to destroy the boulders falling towards them, but some unlucky individuals were struck by these rocks.

The entire convoy was thrown into chaos. Suddenly, a massive rock fell from the mountaintop, threatening to crush the carriage that Zu An was in.

Given the weight and size of the boulder, Liu Yao's carriage would be squashed flat as a pancake no matter how tough it was.

Alarm bells rang in Huang Huihong's mind. They were still dealing with the other rocks, and there was no way they could deal with this boulder in time.

Suddenly, a greenish blade appeared in midair, slicing through the giant boulder.

"It's the Guard General's blade ki!" Most of them recognized this blade ki, and excited cries filled the air.

Even though this boulder was massive, there was no way it could endure the full power of a ninth rank cultivator!

It was cleaved in half by this formless blade ki. The two halves tumbled to the side and exploded with a huge crash.

Liu Yao rushed into the sky. His feet tapped lightly against the mountain cliffs, quickly bringing him to the very top of the slopes.

There came the brief sound of weapons clashing, which quickly morphed into miserable screams. Then, everything became quiet.

King Liang had brought a bunch of men to check on the carriage that Zu An was in. He flung open the carriage door, and Zu An and Zheng Dan both sat up.

He sighed in relief when he saw that Zu An was unharmed. The emperor would never forgive him if something happened to Zu An.

His gaze fell on Zheng Dan, who was beside him. The Sang clan really had found a good daughter-in-law. She was indeed quite the beauty.

Why was her face so red, though?

He was about to ask her about this when Liu Yao flew down, dragging a few captives behind him. These captives all had horrified expressions on their faces.

"Who are you? Who sent you?" King Liang demanded.

Faced with the pressure of a master rank cultivator, the individuals eagerly blabbered, "We are from the Blackwind Stockade! We heard that Zu An killed our master Chen Xuan, and that he is to blame for our miserable lives. We heard that he was passing by, so we brothers came here to get revenge. We set up this trap, but we never expected that his escort would be... would be so strong..."

"Blackwind Stockade?" King Liang was puzzled. Someone immediately rushed over to inform him about the Blackwind Stockade.

"You all dare attack the Imperial Guard with your measly cultivations?" Liu Yao was so baffled that he laughed. He hadn't even seen many fourth rank cultivators in the battle earlier.

"We've fought against officials before, but none of them were as strong!" Those people quickly replied. Back then, with their boss to lead them, they were always the ones putting the hurt on Brightmoon City's officials. None of them expected they would suffer so disastrously without their boss here.

It was all that bastard Zu An's fault for killing their boss!

You have successfully trolled the Blackwind Stockade for 233... 233... 233...

Zu An was speechless as well. Even after all this time, no one had been able to find the Blackwind Stockade's nest. What's wrong with keeping a low profile? Why did you have to run all the way over here and lead your group to destruction?

Your boss Chen Xuan was only at the sixth rank, but you guys decided to fight an armed troop led by a master and a ninth rank cultivator. What the heck were you guys thinking?

When he saw that he wouldn't be getting any more information out of them, Liu Yao snapped their necks and tossed them aside. "We're continuing with the journey!"

This small incident wasn't worth any further attention.

As their convoy started to move again, Sang Hong said from inside his prison carriage, "Qian'er, what have you noticed from this matter?"

"That the Blackwind Stockade overestimated themselves?" Sang Qian replied. This was a group that even he had faced before. Unfortunately, after Chen Xuan's death, these fellows had dissolved into a disorderly mob, and their strength was greatly decreased.

Sang Hong shook his head and said quietly, "It's not just you. King Liang and Liu Yao have likely overlooked something important as well. Earlier, the men of the Blackwind Stockade said that they'd heard Zu An was passing by. They didn't mention who it was that told them, nor did they say why they trusted the one who told them."

It was still pretty noisy after the chaos of the attack, so he wasn't too worried about others overhearing what he was saying.

Sang Qian was shocked. "Dad, are you saying that there is someone else behind them?"

"Of course." Sang Hong sniffed. "That person probably wanted to use the Blackwind Stockade as cannon fodder to test the waters. This would have provided them with a wealth of information that they can then use to make their own plans."

Even though their cultivations were high, it seemed that neither King Liang nor Liu Yao understood the art of war, and they were poor at strategy as well. They had only sent out several scouts to conduct a rough and careless survey before entering such a dangerous valley. This was, in his opinion, an extremely rudimentary mistake.

They had also missed out on the clue that the men of the Blackwind Stockade had let on...

It looks like we'll have quite a few surprises waiting for us during this journey.

The smile on his father's face confused Sang Qian. "Dad, why are you so happy? If they aren't as wary as they should be, wouldn't that be bad for us? We've offended quite a few clans ourselves. If one of them takes advantage of the situation to attack us, won't we be done for?"

"You don't understand anything," Sang Hong snorted. "If they were too smart, we wouldn't even stand a chance."

Chapter 437: Killing Intent

Back inside the carriage, Zu An smiled at Zheng Dan. "Shall we continue?"

"No!" Zheng Dan frantically shook her head. The sudden developments just now had scared the living daylights out of her. If she had moved just a second later, they would have been exposed, and she would surely have died from embarrassment.

"Don't worry. What are the chances that something unexpected will happen again?" Zu An continued to pester her.

However, Zheng Dan kept shaking her head, no matter how he tried to cajole her.

Meanwhile, outside the carriage, Huang Huihong frowned. Did this Zu An have some sort of fetish for having his legs massaged?

Only a scoundrel like him would make a distinguished daughter and the wife of an official do such a thing.

Huang Huihong shook his head. He couldn't be bothered about this right now.

That ambush had set off some alarms within him. A bunch of nobodies had almost successfully killed Zu An. He didn't dare show any more carelessness.

It wasn't just him, either. The entire Imperial Guard seemed to share his nervousness.

However, the next few days passed peacefully. The second ambush that they'd anticipated never materialized.

Despite this, be it Zu An or Sang Hong, both understood that this was merely the calm before the storm. On the other hand, King Liang and Liu Yao only maintained their vigilance for the first few days, after which they both gradually eased up, seeing that nothing was happening.

Within half a month, their convoy had left Linchuan Commandery and entered King Wu's territory.

In the distance, they noticed a cavalry unit charging in their direction, and a nervous energy immediately enveloped the convoy again.

King Liang and Liu Yao exited their carriage, their expressions serious and vigilant.

After observing for a while, they noted that the cavalry unit did not assume an offensive posture, and their expressions thus eased a little.

Soon, the cavalry unit reined in their horses, and three of the horsemen walked forward and stood in front of King Liang, led by a middle-aged scholar. He said, "This humble officer, Sun Buqi, pays my respects to King Liang and General Wei."

"Sun Buqi? This name sounds familiar." King Liang stroked his beard.

Beside him, Liu Yao said, "I heard that you and Cheng Hong serve as King Wu's right and left arms, one as a civil official, the other as a military officer. It is because of the two of you that King Wu's manor is well-managed."

The Liu clan paid close attention to any powers that stood a chance of threatening the crown prince's position. As a prince himself, King Wu was naturally the subject of careful investigation.

“General Liu is too kind with your praise.” The middle-aged scholar laughed. “I merely help out with some miscellaneous affairs in the manor. I do not deserve such compliments. I came here today to receive your distinguished selves on behalf of King Wu. My king wanted to personally welcome you, but he was busy preparing a worthy reception, so he sent me in his stead. I hope your distinguished selves do not mind.”

King Liang smiled. “There is no need to speak so seriously. We aren’t such petty people. However, we are escorting some criminals, so I fear we won’t be staying for too long. We can only thank King Wu for his kindness.”

Sun Buqi clasped his fist and said, “King Wu has specially instructed me to show proper hospitality to our two distinguished guests. You have endured a long and strenuous journey so far while escorting these criminals, and King Wu wishes to do his part for the court as well. Moreover, the two of you are King Qi’s seniors as well, and since King Wu does not live in the capital, there aren’t many chances for him to meet you. Today is a great opportunity, so he naturally needs to assume the role of a welcoming host...”

King Liang was the current emperor’s uncle, while Liu Yao was the empress’ uncle. As such, strictly speaking, these two were both King Wu’s elders. Sun Buqi made full use of this relationship to implore them. In addition, King Liang and Liu Yao normally lived lavish and luxurious lives, and this journey had been quite the ordeal for them so far. They had already planned to get some rest in a decent place.

This was especially true for Liu Yao. With his carriage currently occupied by Zu An, he had to spend all day in the same carriage as King Liang, and the two of them both felt awkward around each other. This was a good chance to request for a carriage from King Wu, to avoid any future annoyances.

King Liang suddenly realized an issue. “We have so many people with us. Would entering the city be inconvenient?”

Sun Buqi quickly replied, “King Liang need not worry. Our Clan Master has been busy making arrangements these past few days, and many residences have been prepared beforehand near the king’s manor. There is also a military drill ground nearby that is large enough for the accompanying Imperial Guard to settle in temporarily.”

King Liang nodded. If King Wu had suggested that the Imperial Guard set up camp outside the city while inviting only the two of them into the manor, they would have suspected something was wrong.

After all, the matter they were handling was just too important. Even though King Wu had always maintained a low profile, King Liang didn’t dare make any guarantees that he wouldn’t suddenly make a move.

“Would we be disturbing the people if we do this?” Liu Yao said with an insincere smile.

Sun Buqi’s breath caught momentarily, but he reacted quickly as well. “The general need not worry. We were informed that the Embroidered Envoy was coming, so many families voluntarily offered up their homes. Our master has given all of them appropriate compensation as well, so these arrangements would cause no disturbance to the people.”

King Liang sneered. This guy is acting as though he’s someone who works for the common people. Do you really think we have no idea what kind of circles you hang around with?

Despite these small disturbances, their final decision was unaffected.

The order went out quickly, and the soldiers of the Imperial Guard all cheered when they heard that they could enter the city to take a rest.

Inside the prison carriage, Sang Hong frowned. He said with a sigh, "Our country has enjoyed too many years of peace. Look what state the Imperial Guard is in now."

Sang Qian said, "It's to be expected if they live like princes in the imperial city day in and day out."

Forgetting about the Imperial Guard for a moment, even Brightmoon City's River Patrol Army was full of useless wimps. Comparatively speaking, this Imperial Guard was already pretty decent.

A hint of worry flashed across Sang Hong's eyes. "Everyone in the Zhou Dynasty worships the emperor as the world's most powerful being. They all believe that none of the foreign tribes would dare make a move. However, the emperor cannot protect the Zhou Dynasty by himself forever..."

Zu An heard the excited cheers of the Imperial Guard outside. He said out of curiosity, "King Wu?"

After being around him all this time, Zheng Dan knew that he lacked a lot of general knowledge regarding this world. She explained, "King Wu is the current emperor's fifth son. However, his biological mother is one of the emperor's concubines and not the empress herself, so this Wu Commandery was arranged for him quite early on."

Zu An nodded. He vaguely remembered hearing Chu Chuyan talk about this before. Wu Commandery was adjacent to Linchuan Commandery. The governing buildings were located in North Order City, so named because it was located north of the Order Mountain Range that ran through the territory.

"By the way, what is King Wu's reputation like? What kind of personality does he have?" he asked.

It was always good to gather intelligence while in someone else's territory. That way, it would be much easier to deal with any matters that might arise.

Zheng Dan shook her head. "King Wu usually keeps to himself. He doesn't have a bad reputation, but no one praises him for being wise and capable either. I don't know much about him myself."

Huang Huihong had a surprised expression on his face. Zu An had humiliated Miss Zheng, yet Miss Zheng had still replied to his question with such patience. This woman's personality really was amazing!

Inside the carriage, Zu An wore a pensive expression. So he's just a prince with shitty leftovers! This dude either didn't want to get involved in the affairs of this world, or he's cooking up something huge. Hard to say...

"Now that you mention it, there is one matter that King Wu is most famous for. He took in the daughter of a small clan as his wife." Zheng Dan recalled some of what she'd heard before. "He is still a glorious king after all, and others in his position would consolidate their position by securing a marriage with a great clan. This is what made his decision rather surprising."

"It was only when people laid eyes on the woman King Wu had chosen as his wife that the mystery was solved, because his wife was absolutely stunning. This made King Wu's choice much more

understandable.” Zheng Dan couldn’t help but give a disdainful sniff. “You men only care about appearances.”

Zu An laughed to hide his annoyance. “Don’t you girls all like hot guys too? Those girls from my hometown go even crazier over male stars than boys do over female stars!”

Zheng Dan found this truly shocking. “Your hometown really is... really is quite something.”

Her upbringing in a distinguished clan made it hard to imagine something like this, although she had to admit that she was a little envious as well. Those girls he’d described didn’t seem to be bound by so many rules.

With Sun Buqi in the lead, their convoy slowly entered North Order City. Zu An quietly lifted the curtains to take a look. “This place doesn’t seem as prosperous as Brightmoon City.”

“But of course! Brightmoon City has its salt and iron industries, and has gathered the richest merchants from all different lands to itself. It’ll naturally be more prosperous than most other places.” Zheng Dan’s voice carried more than a hint of pride. Everyone had a bit of this when it came to their own hometowns.

The common people of North Order City filled the streets. They were all curious what the imperial city’s Imperial Guard were like. More and more came streaming out, contributing to the liveliness of the place.

With a sudden start, Zu An spied a familiar figure in the crowd. This person was currently disguised and mingling together with the rest of the onlookers.

A streak of black light suddenly flew towards him from within the crowd.

Chapter 438: The Dark Elf

Zu An sighed when he laid his eyes on that figure. There’s no way he wouldn’t recognize this person! Even if she was wearing scraps, she still wouldn’t look anything like a commoner!

From those charming facial features to those voluptuous curves, they all betray your identity!

Quite a few men were sneaking subconscious looks in her direction, and even a few, harboring unkind intentions, pretended as though they were being squeezed towards her by the crowd.

Whenever someone was about to make contact with her, though, an invisible wall pushed them away, preventing them from getting close to her.

Zu An knew that Pei Mianman was holding back in order not to draw too much attention to herself. Otherwise, there would have been no way that these men would be able to get within even a zhang of her.

If they’d been out in the wilderness and she was in a bad mood, her black flame would have burned them up instantly, with no traces left over.

Pei Mianman smiled sweetly in Zu An's direction when she noticed that she'd been found out. "I thought that you would've been mistreated after being arrested, but look at you now! They gave you such a luxurious carriage, and even a beauty to keep you company. How enviable!"

Zu An knew that she was speaking to him through voice transmission, but his ki was sealed up, so he couldn't reply in the same way. He decided to speak out loud instead. "It would be even better if I had big Manman to keep me company."

She should be able to hear him, given her cultivation.

Sure enough, Pei Mianman's face turned red. "You just love to give others ridiculous nicknames! I really should get Chuyan to discipline you properly. Oh, I almost forgot, the two of you are no longer husband and wife."

Zu An gritted his teeth.

Does this woman really have to sound so happy about my misfortune? Aren't you supposed to be Chuyan's close friend?

"Big manman? What is a 'big manman'?" Huang Huihong turned around and asked. Zu An's comment clearly hadn't escaped his ears.

Zu An was just about to tell him that it was none of his damned business, but Pei Mianman sent him a sudden, alarmed warning. "Be careful!"

Just as she said this, Zu An saw a streak of black light fly towards him from within the crowd.

This streak of black was traveling extremely fast. An instant after it first appeared, it seemed to already be in front of Zu An.

In that split second, it seemed as though he could even smell the metallic aura and killing intent emanating that streak of darkness. He had no way to describe the sensation of this killing intent. It made chills run through his entire body, and all of the hair on his body stood on end. He felt as though he was facing an imminent death.

There was no time to think. He immediately used Grandgale, grabbing Zheng Dan and blinking a foot away.

The instant he moved, that trace of black light struck his afterimage. It practically brushed right past the tip of his nose.

Zu An's heart was pounding. Even though he'd already faced the threat of death many times over, this was the first time he was experiencing danger like this while unprepared.

Only then did he discover what that streak of blackness was. This was a special arrow! It had stuck itself in the carriage wall, managing to burrow a hole even into the walls of this sturdy carriage. Its tail feathers were still shaking. He could well imagine what it would have been if this arrow had really landed. Half his body might have exploded on the spot!

"Ah Zu!" Zheng Dan finally reacted to what happened. Her face was deathly white. She immediately reached out her hands to check his body for injuries.

Another black streak flew towards them. The assassin wasn't planning to give him any time to breathe.

Huang Huihong had reacted by this time. He'd been momentarily distracted earlier when he asked Zu An a question, and the hidden archer had seized this opening to strike. How could he possibly let this assassin get his way?

With a roar of anger, his Soul-reaping Chains whipped forward to meet that streak of black.

With what sounded like a loud slap, the black streak was smashed to pieces. Huang Huihong's entire body trembled. Even he had found it difficult to handle the tremendous power within that arrow.

The Embroidered Envoy and Imperial Guard reacted instantly, rushing towards the direction from which the black arrow had been fired.

"Ah!!!" Wild, panicked screams erupted among the common people in response to this unexpected assassination attempt. They had only come here to enjoy the atmosphere. Absolute chaos broke out, with the onlookers all running in different directions.

Pei Mianman smiled in his direction when she saw that he was fine, then left together with the crowd. She wanted to avoid the inevitable complications that would arise when the Imperial Guard began their investigations and interrogations.

"We'll meet again soon," Pei Mianman transmitted to him before leaving, her tone full of ambiguity.

Although it was a completely normal phrase, the way she spoke always made the imagination run wild.

Zu An's expression was rather strange. He had a sudden feeling of déjà vu... This was exactly what Snow had said to him after she'd been exposed and had to leave the Chu clan. He wondered how she was faring in the capital now.

"What happened?" King Liang and Liu Yao rushed over when they heard the news, accompanied by Sun Buqi and several others from King Qi's manor.

"A scoundrel within the crowd tried to assassinate Zu An..." Huang Huihong gave a rough explanation of what happened. Fear still lingered in his mind. The enemy had seized upon the one instant he'd been distracted! If Zu An really was killed while under his watch, there was no way he could escape blame.

"Where is the assassin?" King Liang's face was overcast. He'd been in a good mood just now, thinking about how he was going to find a hot spring and have some lovely young maids dance for him. However, all of this had ended up happening. Didn't all this spell the end of his dreams?

"My subordinates have already gone after him, but the current situation is rather chaotic, so I fear..." Huang Huihong's voice was hedged with hesitation.

The embroidered envoys that had taken off earlier quickly returned. "The assassin possessed a very quick movement technique, and he blended into the crowd as well. We lost him."

Sun Buqi was quick to speak. "Pass down my order immediately! Seal up the city gates! We must find that damned assassin!"

Liu Yao said coldly, "How could your measly city gates stop an assassin who eluded the pursuit of both the Embroidered Envoy and Imperial Guard?"

King Liang nodded. "Indeed. There is no need to disturb the people. It'll only lead to further chaos."

"I understand. Thank you, respected king, for your advice." Sun Buqi had no choice but to call back his men.

Liu Yao snorted. "This happened in your North Order City, so you all owe us an explanation. I can't help but feel like we were set up. You were sent to hold us up, while an assassin waited for a chance to strike."

This accusation greatly alarmed Sun Buqi, who replied in a panic, "What is General Liu saying?! My king has always remained faithful and true to His Majesty! He would never dare to commit such a disgraceful act! Ignoring all that has happened today, it has always been understood that King Qi would suffer punishment if something happened to a criminal in our territory. How could we dare make such a foolish decision? This is our territory, and the assassin acted in broad daylight! I believe that someone is framing us on purpose, to drive a wedge between King Wu and His Majesty."

Liu Yao said with a sigh of admiration, "It is common knowledge how capable King Wu's subordinate by the name of Sun is. It seems you really are capable of eloquent speech as well."

Sun Buqi smiled bitterly. "I'm not just trying to talk my way out of this. This is the truth of the matter. I hope King Liang upholds justice today!"

King Liang gave no reply. To be honest, he believed what Sun Buqi said was true. Just how stupid would King Wu have to be to do something like this?

Even Liu Yao probably understood this as well. He'd only said what he said to scare the other party a little.

However, now that this event had occurred, there had to be an explanation for it.

Huang Huihong's voice cut in at this time. "The assassin is a dark elf."

He held a special arrow in his hand, an arrow with black feathers. This was none other than the arrow that had pierced the inside of the carriage.

"This arrow belongs to a dark elf! No wonder it was so hard to detect." King Liang took it from him.

"Those damn foreign tribes!" he cursed. "They are all evil and vicious."

"Dark elf?" Zu An muttered to himself. One of Shang Liuyu's classes had mentioned the dark elves. Unlike other elves who were peaceful and loved nature, dark elves lusted after battle. They enjoyed the sight of blood and slaughter, and were one of the races that excelled in assassination.

Countless important figures had been assassinated by them, be it from the foreign tribes or from the human race. He hadn't expected to be granted the honor of personally experiencing it for himself.

King Liang's voice suddenly rang out. "A dark elf wouldn't make a move unless they are sure they will draw blood. How did Zu An avoid this arrow?"

Chapter 439: A Match Made in Heaven

Everyone turned towards Zu An, their expressions clouded with suspicion.

Even Zheng Dan gave him a surprised look. After all, both of their cultivations were sealed, so there should have been no way for them to evade that arrow. Still, Zu An had moved far too quickly just now, even faster than she could when unsealed.

Had he managed to recover his cultivation?

After this momentary, distracting thought, she immediately began to worry for him. After all, they were facing so many experts. It was going to be hard for him to lie his way through this.

Zu An's heart also began to race. However, he reacted quickly as well, and said, "I don't know what is going on either. I dodged to the side, and this arrow seemed to deviate somehow. Look, there's still a red mark on my nose."

As he spoke, he nudged his nose towards them.

Liu Yao snorted. "Who are you trying to fool? Dark elves pride themselves on achieving success with a single strike. Even a vigilant expert will find this arrow difficult to avoid. How could you possibly avoid it when your cultivation was sealed?"

Zu An shrugged his shoulders. "How am I supposed to know? Maybe the assassin got food poisoning, or suffered from heat stroke? Maybe something happened to his arm as he was firing?"

King Liang frowned. He stepped towards Zu An and examined his pulse. A moment later, his frown deepened. "His ki flow has been completely sealed. The seal hasn't been undone."

Zu An grew even more worked up when he heard this. "Hello? I'm the victim here! Why are you all interrogating me? Oh, I understand. I guess you guys are feeling kind of frustrated since you couldn't catch that assassin, so you wanted to take it all out on a victim like me."

Liu Yao exploded straight away. "What are you saying, brat?!"

You have successfully trolled Liu Yao for 345 Rage points!

He swiftly collected a series of Rage point donations from King Liang and the others. They obviously had no idea how to deal with someone like him.

Fortunately, Huang Huihong gave him a way out. "There was a woman in the crowd who did something. She might have been the one who affected the assassin's precision."

"Woman?" King Liang was shocked. He quickly asked, "Where is that woman?"

Huang Huihong shook his head. "Everyone was chasing after the assassin, and that woman disappeared quickly as well. The situation was too chaotic for us to find either one of them."

King Liang frowned, but the other party's special status made it hard for him to reprimand him much further. He could only say, "I wonder who that woman was. Just what sort of relationship does she have with that assassin...?"

They discussed this among themselves for a bit, and came up with all sorts of suspicions.

Zu An snorted. Why aren't you guys even considering the possibility that she came to save me?

He'd been saddened that Pei Mianman hadn't come to send him off when they first left Brightmoon City. Now, though, it seemed as though he could still depend on his charisma after all.

The sound of horses' hooves came from up ahead, and a group of soldiers approached swiftly from a distance.

The one in the lead looked to be around twenty years of age. He was dressed in official robes, and rode a handsome white horse. There was no need for any introductions; this was definitely King Wu.

"Zhao Yan greets King Liang and the General." King Wu got off his horse and walked over and offered his greeting, a humble smile never leaving his face.

"There's no need for King Wu to show such deference." King Liang and Liu Yao both reached out their hands to help him up. It was one thing for him to show such respect to King Liang, but Liu Yao's own status wasn't even as high as King Wu's, so he was understandably uncomfortable with this level of courtesy.

"The two of you are Little Yan's seniors, so this amount of respect is to be expected." King Wu had exceptional facial features and a handsome appearance, but his figure was slightly too thin, which prevented him from possessing the typical masculinity common to most men. It made him look a little weak.

Both King Liang and Liu Yao were deeply satisfied by his humility.

Liu Yao quickly said, "Little Yan, the days have grown colder recently. Your body has always been rather weak, so you need to take good care of yourself."

"Thank you." King Wu replied with a smile, before breaking out into a sudden fit of coughing.

Zu An nudged Zheng Dan. "This king's constitution looks quite poor..." This man seemed to be wearing much more clothing than an ordinary person.

This really was quite strange. Cultivators possessed bodies that were clearly superior to those of ordinary people. Since this man had been granted the title of king, his cultivation should at least be at the master rank. Regardless of whether this was because of the imperial family's resources or not, he was still a master. There was no way his body should have been this weak.

Was he born with congenital deficiencies, or did his process of cultivation somehow leave him with irreversible injuries?

Of course, there was another possible reason. Even though the bodies of cultivators were superior to that of ordinary people, this didn't mean that they lived longer. Otherwise, the current emperor wouldn't be so much closer to the grave than either Liu Yao or King Liang.

Whether or not a superior body would lead to a longer life was probably an entirely different subject that was worth looking into.

"I think he's quite handsome. A beautiful and gentle prince like him is far better than those boorish musclemen. Girls like this type of guy," Zheng Dan said with a smile. The reason she liked being with Zu An was precisely because she felt free and unrestrained while she was around him. She always had to hold herself back by all types of etiquette and rules in other settings, but she didn't have to worry so much when she was with him.

Zu An found her comment puzzling.

The minds of women really were difficult to fathom. They didn't like tough men, but liked these sickly-looking ones instead?

He remembered how obsessed the fangirls of his previous world were over their pretty-looking idols, and immediately felt a little dejected.

"Husband, please take your medicine," said a gentle voice, and a beautiful woman quickly ran over to him.

The noise around them quietened immediately. King Liang, Liu Yao, many of the Imperial Guard soldiers, and the other ordinary folk who were still lingering in the area focused their attention in their direction.

Even Huang Huihong and the Embroidered Envoy, who should have been trained to the point where they were like machines, couldn't keep themselves from looking in that direction.

Perhaps because this side of the Order Mountain Range was too cold, the woman wore a snow white fur coat around her, as well as another layer of white outside of that. She looked like a snowy mountain goddess, beautiful and pure, as if she didn't belong to this world of mortals.

The brief exertion caused a blush to appear on her fair and beautiful cheeks. This finally seemed to have added a bit of worldly charm to her loveliness.

She brought out a porcelain bottle, and the red pill that she removed from it contrasted with the fairness of her skin. She gave the pill to King Wu urgently. It was as if King Wu was the only thing in her world at that moment. She didn't even give the Imperial Guard soldiers, the father and son of the Sang clan, or Zu An and Zheng Dan a single look.

"With a wife like this, what else can you ask for?" Sang Qian felt as if his entire body had been struck by lightning. He was completely beside himself, sighing in admiration.

Her beauty was truly otherworldly! In that instant, his heart was instantly captured.

Not only that, he was captivated and incredibly touched by the concern she was showing for her husband.

Zheng Dan had originally been a perfect wife in his eyes as well, with her grace and elegance. Every single action of hers was perfect, and exactly how a distinguished daughter should be. Recently, however, she had completely submitted herself to all sorts of unreasonable humiliations at the hands of Zu An, which left him absolutely furious.

Even though I don't have the ability to protect you, you can't just let Zu An do whatever he wants to you, right? I heard that you even massaged his legs!?

Look at King Wu's wife! Her husband is the only man in her eyes!

Zheng Dan also sighed when she looked at these two. "They truly are a pair of perfect lovers."

The man was gentle, like an elegant and graceful prince, while the woman was exceptionally beautiful. When they stood together, they truly looked like an ideal couple.

Most important of all was the deep love that existed in the way they looked at each other. It made it seem as though they were radiating a brilliant, precious light, and in that moment, they had become the center of the entire world.

Chapter 440: Yun Yuqing

No wonder King Wu hadn't chosen any other daughters with distinguished backgrounds, but insisted on marrying the daughter of a third-rate clan.

"Who cares how pretty she is? It's not as though she'll ever be mine, anyway." Compared to the others, Zu An was rather calm.

King Wu turned around and looked in his direction. His slender brows came together slightly in a frown, although it was unclear if it was because of what Zu An had said.

The surrounding imperial guards also turned angry looks upon him, but they did not know what to retort with. After all, it was true that their fates would never intersect with hers in this lifetime.

Would King Wu's wife ever care about a nobody like you, though?

You have successfully trolled the Imperial Guard for 66... 66... 66...

"Stupid skirt-chaser! You're being rude to this beauty." Zheng Dan snorted angrily, without bothering to be polite. Everyone had seen how she'd been bullied the whole way here, and her anger was understandable.

Zu An had a helpless look on his face. "Am I wrong, though?"

"Thank goodness King Wu is magnanimous, and holds no grudge against you. If you really managed to offend King Wu, you'd die without even knowing how." It looked as though Zheng Dan was scolding him, but she was actually warning him off, and advising him to curry favor while he was in someone else's territory.

Zu An showed no intention of giving a damn. "Who cares? I've even offended the emperor himself. Do you think I'll care about someone small like King Wu?"

Zheng Dan had no words for him.

This guy really didn't seem to care anymore.

However, what he said did make some sense. Since he'd already offended the emperor, offending King Wu didn't really make a difference.

King Wu was full of apologies. He said to King Liang and the others, "I am truly sorry. My condition is quite poor, and I've ended up making a fool of myself."

He didn't even give a single look in Zu An's direction. It was as if he hadn't even heard what he'd said.

Zheng Dan couldn't help but nudge Zu An. "Look at how open-minded he is."

"Open-minded?" Zu An had a pondering expression on his face, because he'd received a system notification.

You have successfully trolled Zhao Yan for 458 Rage points!

This fellow really is good at putting on an act! He's nothing like me. Look how frank and honest I am!

King Liang said, "Since Little Yan is not doing so well, please, head back in and get some rest. We can take care of the matters here."

King Wu shook his head. "An assassination has taken place here. It was this humble king's shortcomings that allowed something like this to happen. How can I wash my hands of this?"

Seeing that he was taking the initiative to bear the responsibility, King Liang and Liu Yao didn't feel comfortable heaping further blame on him. They both said, "What are you saying? We've already found out that the assassin is a Dark Elf. It's extremely difficult to detect one if they decide to infiltrate, no matter how tight security is."

Zu An could barely hide his disdain. These guys were clearly pointing fingers not too long ago and criticizing his subordinate. Now that the master himself has come, they instead act as though they're all one happy family? Just how two-faced can you get?

After some more small talk, King Liang finally said, "Since your condition is poor, let's not remain outside like this. We'll follow you back to your manor first."

"Indeed, indeed. It was I who was negligent." King Wu laughed. "This way. Oh, right! Yu Qing, come here and greet your great uncles."

Madam Wu walked over in a stately manner, a gentle smile painting her lips. "Yu Qing greets my great uncles."

Her gracefulness left both the boorish members of the Imperial Guard, as well as the two old men, King Liang and Liu Yao, in a daze.

King Liang was the first to snap out of it. He coughed to hide his awkwardness. "I've heard that my great nephew's wife was outstanding, but those rumors are nothing compared to the person herself! Little Yan is really lucky to have a wise and gentle wife like you."

Madam Wu smiled sweetly. "Great uncle is too kind with your praise."

While they were talking among themselves, Zu An asked Zheng Dan out of curiosity, "By the way, what clan did this Madam Wu come from again?"

"I believe she's from Northland Commandery's Yun clan. The Yun clan cannot be considered a great clan even locally, let alone the rest of the world." Zheng Dan's expression took on a gloomy hue. In terms of family background, the Yun clan might even be inferior to Brightmoon City's Zheng clan.[1]

Brightmoon City was much more prosperous than Northland Commandery, after all. However, since the Yun clan had married well, their prospects for the future were endless, while the Zheng clan was already in an imminent crisis. Sigh. All matters lie at the mercy of the whims of fate.

Zu An remembered Shang Liuyu mentioning the Northland Commandery in one of her extracurricular classes on the geography of the world. This was the northernmost region of the Zhou Dynasty. It was in a state of constant warfare, and could be considered to be the front line of the war against the foreign tribes. They were rough and tough folk, and it was unexpected that such a place could produce a gentle and refined girl like that.

Wait, her family name is Yun?

Didn't that mean that her name was Yun Yuqing? He wondered if there was anyone named Jia Baoyu in this world.

After exchanging a few more words, their party quickly made their way towards King Wu's manor.

King Wu explained the local customs and traditions of North Order Commandery to Liu Yao and King Liang along the way, sparing an occasional nod for Huang Huihong.

The Embroidered Envoy enjoyed a special status, after all. They were the emperor's personal force! If a king like him was seen interacting with them too closely, he might be accused of scheming against the imperial palace. That would be a huge offence!

Madam Wu walked by his side, smiling gently all the way. Her eyes were always on King Wu, her expression full of love. This was something that everyone could sense.

The imperial guards were all envious of King Wu. He had actually managed to find such a perfect wife!

Some of them even tried to picture themselves in King Wu's place.

However, they quickly abandoned these fantasies. King Wu was a glorious descendant of the emperor, while they were just mere soldiers. There was no comparison at all!

"Madam Wu really loves King Wu," Zheng Dan said with a sigh. There was a melancholy expression on her face, and it was hard to tell what she was thinking.

Zu An was not inclined to agree. "How can you be so sure?"

"There's no way that loving gaze of hers is fake!" Zheng Dan replied.

"Not necessarily. This seems like the sort of look that women can easily pull off." Zu An thought back to those female stars of the variety shows in his previous world. They might not have been that great at acting, but if they wanted to flirt with a man, their expressions truly were convincing enough to make one's entire body go limp.

That was why he refused to believe that the way in which a girl looked at you could represent true love.

“Hmph! You just refuse to believe that they can be happy together!” Zheng Dan said angrily.

It wasn’t only her. Even his Embroidered Envoy escorts glanced over at him with unhappy expressions.

“What are you all looking at? You’re not part of the married couple in question. Did you guys let your fantasies run too far?” Zu An snorted. He pulled the curtains down roughly.

You have successfully trolled Huang Huihong for 220 Rage points!

You have successfully trolled the Embroidered Envoy for 111... 111... 111...

If this kid wasn’t so important, we would have already kicked his ass today!

After they arrived at the Wu Manor, the Imperial Guard settled into a nearby military drill ground, which was already equipped with barracks and other required rooms.

King Wu himself invited King Liang and the others into the manor for a banquet. They invited Huang Huihong as well, but he refused. The Embroidered Envoy needed to guard Zu An. There were to be no more slip-ups.

“It is still a long way to the capital. There’s no way you can remain so tense all the way. Could it be that Commander Huang does not trust our Wu Manor’s defenses?” King Wu said with a laugh.

Madam Wu smiled at King Liang and said, “Great Uncle, help us convince him as well! If they remain outside the manor and guard the criminal on their own, we might not be able to provide them with timely aid in case of a sneak attack!”

King Liang grunted and said, “Indeed. Let’s all go inside the manor then. That gives us all a chance to promptly deal with any matters that may arise.”

The arguments made sense to Huang Huihong as well. Besides, he couldn’t bear to refuse someone as stunning as Madam Wu. “All right, then. However, we will not drink wine. It will be enough for us to trouble King and Madam Wu to bring us some food.”

“But of course!” Madam Wu smiled. She and King Wu exchanged a look, full of strange and mysterious intent.