

Immortal 441

Chapter 441: Madam's Mission

A group of people entered the manor, led by King Wu and his wife. The first order of business was to examine the prison facilities that King Wu offered. Zu An was just too important, after all. Even though King Liang and Liu Yao wanted to get drunk and enjoy themselves that night, this was the one thing they could not screw up.

There was an isolated courtyard in King Wu's manor which had a clear view all around it. It would be difficult for an enemy to approach it without being seen.

Several rooms were spread out inside, which made it easy for them to set up a defensive perimeter.

Most importantly, it wasn't far from the banquet hall. If something happened, King Liang and Liu Yao could rush over immediately.

Huang Huihong nodded continuously as he examined this place. He was quite satisfied with this temporary prison.

King Liang stroked his beard and said, "King Wu has really put in the effort to prepare such a suitable location for us in advance."

King Wu smiled in return. "It wasn't too inconvenient—we merely renovated one of the guest courtyards in the manor. I am glad that this suits your needs."

"It's excellent. Commander Huang, we'll have to trouble you to settle the rest of it," King Liang said to Huang Huihong.

Huang Huihong clasped his fist respectfully. "It's no trouble at all. It is my duty, after all."

King Wu smiled. "The manor's guards will keep watch outside. Please feel free to let them know about any needs the commander may have."

Huang Huihong said, "Thank you, respected king. However, please do not let them get too close to this courtyard. We want to prevent any unnecessary misunderstandings."

King Wu replied, "Of course. Unless Commander Huang issues the order, none of them will approach this courtyard."

"Thank you, respected king." Huang Huihong said in gratitude. What worried him most was that a spy could have infiltrated the manor's guards. Now that he'd secured the other party's guarantee, he was free to cut down anyone who approached. The Embroidered Envoy acted with the emperor's authority anyway, so they were free to kill anyone who crossed them, whether they were servants of the manor, or even officials.

King Wu nodded, the warm smile on his face making him seem like a most agreeable person. He turned his attention to someone else. "King Liang, General Liu, this way! This humble king has prepared some of North Order City's most special food, drink and entertainment for all of you to enjoy."

Liu Yao laughed heartily. "Excellent. We will enjoy what your North Order City has to offer!"

King Liang also stroked his beard with a smile. The entertainment—especially the singing and dancing—was what he was most interested in to begin with. He wondered what the girls of North Order City were like.

Suddenly, he noticed Madam Wu out of the corners of his eye, a smile resting on her immaculate face. It was already evening. The faint moonlight seemed to add a layer of sparkling radiance to her fair complexion, lending a holy and divine aspect to her beauty.

King Liang immediately put on a serious and reserved expression, afraid that his frivolous smile would ruin this sacred feeling.

What the hell is this? I'm a king who has always had my way with women over the years. Why am I acting in such a reserved manner in front of someone a generation younger than me?

As soon as these thoughts appeared, King Wu asked him a series of questions about the capital. He replied to them one by one, and the strange thoughts from earlier slowly faded.

"Sigh, it's been almost a decade since I left the capital. The memories of my past have already grown blurry." King Wu laughed at himself. "By the way, has my father been well?"

"His majesty's cultivation is unmatched, and his constitution is naturally excellent as well! However, he is only growing older, and the battles against the foreign tribes have left behind some old scars. He cannot be compared to his younger self," replied King Liang.

It was common knowledge that the emperor already had one foot in the grave, and that he probably only had a few years left to live. However, how could anyone dare say this out loud? He had to rack his brain to find out a more suitable way of putting things.

King Wu immediately looked distressed. "It truly is a pity that I cannot serve at father's side. This is one of my greatest regrets in life."

King Liang hurriedly said, "I will definitely pass on your innermost feelings to His Majesty when I return to the capital. I am sure the emperor will be happy to learn of King Wu's filial piety."

The Great Zhou Dynasty was governed by filial piety. Everyone, from the high officials down to the commoners, would use various methods to express their filial piety towards their parents, and it was truly hard to distinguish whether they really meant what they said.

Regardless of their true intentions, however, no one would ever try to expose another, but would show their support instead, to avoid becoming targets of public criticism themselves.

Liu Yao was less than pleased by this comment. "The Zhou Dynasty has its own laws. Kings are to leave the capital and hold positions in vassal states. The crown prince is in the capital supporting the emperor. There is no need for King Wu to feel troubled."

What if the emperor really did recall him to the capital in a moment of weakness? King Qi was already enough of a headache! The situation facing the crown prince would become even more difficult if another king—King Wu—joined the fray!

King Wu apologized at once. "This humble one has misspoke. My affection for my father and mother has made me momentarily forget the rules of the court. I hope the general does not take offense."

King Liang quickly stepped in to resolve the dispute. "We were just discussing family. Why the need to get so serious all of a sudden? We're here to have a good time! Let's not discuss other matters."

King Wu's humility led Liu Yao to feel somewhat embarrassed. King Wu was the host after all. He took the opportunity to say, "What King Liang says is correct. I was the one who was too inflexible."

Yun Yuqing gave her husband a worried look. She was the only one who had seen the flash of resentment in his eyes.

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Meanwhile, in the guest courtyard, Huang Huihong was conducting a personal examination of the courtyard with his subordinates. He'd refrained from doing it earlier out of consideration for King Wu, but he had to inspect it now. It would spell trouble if there were any secret mechanisms or hidden pathways lying around unnoticed.

Zu An and Zheng Dan were removed from their carriage and placed inside the courtyard, together with Sang Hong and Sang Qian. They all sat together, eyeing each other awkwardly.

"Hey, Zu brat, did you do anything to Dan'er?" Sang Qian's eyes were about to pop out.

"That's something you should ask Miss Zheng." Zu An smiled. "If you ask me, I will only say that I did everything that should and shouldn't have been done. I really don't mind going into the details if you want to listen."

"Fuck you!" Sang Qian was furious. He was about to pounce on Zu An when an embroidered envoy pressed him back into a seat.

You have successfully trolled Sang Qian for 999 Rage points!

Zheng Dan looked at Zu An in annoyance. "Can you not say such irresponsible things?!"

She knew that Zu An wouldn't really tell Sang Qian, and was just using this chance to anger him. However, this really left her in quite a tight spot!

Zu An shrugged.

Sang Hong coughed and said, "Zu An, I'm impressed that you informed the world about the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra. Even though it seems as though you brought more danger upon yourself, you actually managed to turn the inevitable death facing you into a situation of potential survival."

He changed the topic on purpose to prevent his son from being led by the nose.

"Mister Sang is too kind with your praise. I didn't think about it that much, I just did what I felt like. That's just the sort of person I am! If someone makes me feel bad, I'll make sure they don't have it easy either." Zu An clasped his fist towards him. "Speaking of which, I haven't yet thanked you for your help previously."

He had only made it out of the Sang clan that time because Sang Hong had stepped in to hold off King Liang.

Sang Hong gave the embroidered envoy guarding them a look, then said with a smile, "That's definitely not something I will dare claim to have done. My offenses are already severe enough. I do not want to add more sins to my name."

Zu An smiled as well. "I fully understand, but I'll still keep this favor in mind. I will return it if there is a chance."

"If I had known that you were so capable, I would never have made an enemy of the Chu clan," Sang Hong said with a sigh.

Zu An's face darkened. "You might have decided to eliminate me as quickly as possible instead."

Sang Hong laughed. "Indeed, indeed! This little brother really understands how I think."

Sang Qian gave a derisive snort. He didn't like seeing his father get along with Zu An at all.

"There's one thing I am quite confused about, however. From what I understand about you, you would never do anything to endanger yourself. What do you plan to do now?" Sang Hong couldn't help but ask.

Zu An yawned and said, "Mister Sang makes me sound like some slick old fox. My mind isn't so complicated."

Sang Hong wasn't surprised by his unwillingness to reply. "In that case, this old one can only wait and see what kind of shocking plans this little brother has."

"Stop chatting! Throw them into the rooms." Huang Huihong had completed his inspection by this time. He noticed how the prisoners were chatting pleasantly amongst themselves, and he was worried that they might end up hatching some sort of scheme.

Fortunately, there were many rooms available, so they were each escorted into their own room.

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Meanwhile, King Wu continued to propose toasts with King Liang and Liu Yao, while he sent a voice transmission to his wife. "From here on out, everything will depend on you. You must complete the mission I've entrusted you with."

Chapter 442: The Demon Race

Yun Yuqing felt her mind drift, and the scene of the conversation she'd had with her husband in their room appeared in her mind:

"The contingent escorting the criminal will definitely pass by our North Order City. We cannot miss such a good chance." King Wu's face bore no trace of its usual friendliness. Instead, his expression was one of extreme excitement.

Yun Yuqing was confused. “Isn’t our current life considered quite good? Why must we take such a big risk?”

King Wu snorted coldly. “Do you think I like living in this shitty North Order City, in the middle of nowhere? Isn’t this all because I was born of a concubine?! My mother isn’t the empress, so I could never become the crown prince. Instead, I was thrown out of the capital and made to serve here. I was originally willing to accept my fate, but I never anticipated such a great opportunity!

“It seems like the heavens have noticed my sincerity, and granted me this blessing! There really is a time and place for everything! I’ve laid low all this time precisely for this day!

“With a legendary technique like the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra that grants eternal life, I can close the distance between myself and the crown prince! This is a world where the strongest rule, after all!”

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Noticing the sudden excitement in her usually quiet husband, Yun Yuqing couldn’t help but remind him, “The Phoenix Nirvana Sutra is but a legend—something that has never been successfully cultivated for thousands of years. It might not be that incredible after all. Look, even this Zu An was captured, despite having such an amazing technique! This only proves that this technique isn’t as great as the rumors make it out to be.”

King Wu roared with laughter. “From our sources, Zu An was just a good-for-nothing, living on the streets, yet he seemed to have become a completely different person in just a few months. Isn’t this concrete proof of the wonders of the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra? Even a piece of trash could be transformed into a genius! With my aptitude and cultivation, I’ll surely become even more formidable.

“There is another matter that you might not know of as well. A few decades ago, my father, the emperor, secretly sent out powerful experts led by his trusted eunuchs on an exploration into unknown lands. The goal of this expedition was to locate the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra! Back then, everyone thought that the entire group had been wiped out, and that the legendary secret manual didn’t exist. However, from more recent intelligence, it appears that those men succeeded in finding the manual, but the eunuch in charge let greed take over, and killed all of his companions. He then hid within the Chu clan in Brightmoon City, and ended up helping Zu An.”

Yun Yuqing’s beautiful brows drew together slightly. “Doesn’t this mean that the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra is something the emperor absolutely must have? Aren’t you provoking him by interfering?”

“Seizing it for ourselves directly is just begging for our own doom.” King Wu gave his wife a meaningful look. “That’s why I need your help.”

“Me?” Yun Yuqing was confused.

King Wu snorted. “Have you already forgotten that you are part of the demon race, after living in the human world for so long?”

“The demon race...” Hearing those words made Yun Yuqing’s beautiful face turn pale.

King Wu walked over to the side of the bed with his hands behind his back. “Even though our human race prevailed after centuries of war, I have to acknowledge the strengths of the various other races.

“For example, the dark elves naturally excel in assassination, while your demon race possesses extreme physical beauty, and the ability to charm others.

“With your abilities, not only will you be able to snare the inexperienced Zu An, even the resolve of father’s Embroidered Envoy would falter if they are caught off-guard. That is why you are the one who is most suitable for this task.”

Yun Yuqing was clearly distressed. “If it hadn’t been because of the war, no one of the demon race would have willingly used our appearances to charm others.”

King Wu’s tone also softened when he saw her sorrowful appearance. “Madam, I have no choice either! I am but an abandoned king. Many officials show me little to no respect, even in North Order City. That is why I am helpless even if I want to do something about it. However, if I can rise to the throne, everything will be different! The world’s resources will be at my disposal! It’ll be much easier for me to help your clansmen out of their distress, and free them from slavery, which is controlled by the nobles.”

Yun Yuqing bit her lip, her expression flickering several times. “Okay, I can try. But I know how much humans care about chastity. If I try to seduce him, even if nothing happens, there is no way for me to prove that I remain pure. Will you turn your back on me because of this?”

King Wu laughed and said, “Of course not! I will never do that, even if something does happen. I’ll instead be extremely happy.”

“Happy?” Yun Yuqing was momentarily stunned.

King Wu had unintentionally exposed one of his peculiar interests, so he immediately corrected himself. “What I am trying to say is that I trust you a hundred percent. Moreover, given the emotions we share, no matter what happens, I will stand by you unconditionally. I will love you, dote on you, and trust you. Do you have such little trust in our affection for each other?”

“You beautiful man, I love you so much!” Yun Yuqing’s gloominess was dispelled immediately, replaced by a beaming smile. She nestled gently against him.

There was a darkness hidden behind King Wu’s smile. He had a weird fetish that no one else in the world would be able to understand.

However, he always felt a mysterious sense of stimulation and expectation whenever he thought of it.

Of course, his fetish didn’t cloud his rationality. His wife was so beautiful and loved him so much. That was why he would always feel a powerful sense of guilt whenever this thought emerged.

Unfortunately, Yun Yuqing didn’t know about this side of her husband. She only wanted to complete her task properly, and help share some of her husband’s worries. Completing this mission might even help her clansmen out of their distress, which motivated her even further.

She excused herself from King Liang and the others. “Great uncles, please enjoy yourselves. This humble one isn’t feeling too well, so I will have to take my leave for now.”

“Madam, please go ahead and get some rest.” King Liang and Liu Yao had been constantly sneaking looks at this devastatingly beautiful woman. They both seemed more than a little disappointed when they heard that she was leaving.

But they also knew that it was unreasonable to make her keep them company while they were drinking, and so they didn't urge her to stay.

After leaving the banquet hall, Yun Yuqing didn't return to her residence, but called over some maids instead. They brought with them some food that had been prepared beforehand, and went to the courtyard where the prisoners were kept.

"Halt!" They made no attempt to conceal themselves, so Huang Huihong's subordinates quickly noticed them.

Yun Yuqing smiled. "You all have worked hard. We have prepared this food for everyone. I've brought it over for all of you."

These guards were immediately captivated by her smile. Their tone also softened considerably. "I... I'll let Commander Huang know immediately."

Huang Huihong rushed over when he received the news. He was shocked when he saw her, but he quickly greeted her. "Why did Madam personally deliver the food?"

Yun Yuqing's smile was dazzling. "I was worried that something might happen along the way, especially given the dark elf's assassination attempt earlier. If anything happened, the blame would fall on our manor! That is why I decided to deliver this personally."

"Madam is too kind." Even Huang Huihong felt his heart beating more quickly as he took in her enchanting appearance. He subconsciously lowered his head, not daring to look at her face-to-face.

Ever since he'd been chosen to serve in the Embroidered Envoy, he'd let heart turn as hard as a rock. Right now, however, for some strange reason, he felt like a youth who was experiencing the first awakening of love.

"Why are all of you standing around? Quickly, help them bring the food in!" He immediately berated his subordinates to hide his own embarrassment.

Yun Yuqing smiled. "There's no need. I'll just have my maids bring it in, so that none of you have to leave your posts."

"This..." Huang Huihong hesitated. This went against the rules. Right now, besides themselves, only King Liang and Liu Yao were allowed inside.

However, as he gazed upon Yun Yuqing's beautiful smile, he found it hard to refuse. What she said made some sense as well. With that, he let them inside.

Besides, it's just the pretty and gentle Madam Wu, along with several delicate maids. It should be fine, right?

Chapter 443: A Demonic Eye

"Distribute the food among the soldiers," Yun Yuqing ordered the maids after they entered the courtyard.

In a nearby room, Sang Qian sighed. Even her voice was so beautiful... His body was about to go weak just from hearing her voice! Sigh, how lucky her husband must be, to be able to touch her soft body whenever he wants to, and hear her warm words of love.

Meanwhile, in the next room over, Sang Hong was much calmer than his son, who was panting heavily. Madam Wu was indeed beautiful, but she wasn't as tempting to someone of his age and mental fortitude.

Instead, something else piqued his curiosity. The Wu Manor seemed a little too enthusiastic about all of this. It would have been enough for some servants to bring over the food. Why did Madam Qi have to come personally? It's all a little strange...

The most chilled out person was none other than Zu An. He was reclining on his bed, watching Madam Wu give her maids instructions. He clicked his tongue. The woman's waist really was slim!

Even though she dressed rather conservatively, it did nothing to hide her enchanting curves. Together with that devastatingly beautiful face and her pure and sacred aura, it was no wonder all those guards were completely captivated.

Something occurred to Madam Wu, and she said to Huang Huihong, "Should those prisoners eat something too? Their fates are already miserable enough; we shouldn't let them starve as well. I've had my servants prepare some things for them too."

Huang Huihong sighed. "Madam really is beautiful and kind."

He gestured with his eyes, and then his subordinates took the food that had been brought by the maids. It was still best if the criminals didn't interact with outsiders.

His subordinates brought out a silver needle to test the food. When they detected no poison, they relaxed a little more.

Madam Wu pretended not to have noticed at all. She only asked with a smile, "Hm? Why are some of the soldiers not eating? Is the food not to their liking? Should I have the kitchen prepare something else?"

"There is no need," Huang Huihong said, immediately offering an explanation. "It's a rule that we follow. We won't all eat the same food at the same time as a precaution, so that we won't all be affected if there is some trick involved."

He couldn't help but add awkwardly, "Please forgive us, madam. It isn't that we suspect you—rather, it's just one of our ironclad rules."

"I understand. I was the one who was being rude." Madam Wu smiled. "No wonder the Embroidered Envoy has always been held up as the elite of the elites."

"Madam is too kind with your praise." Even though Huang Huihong and the others were wearing masks, their voices still betrayed how ecstatic they were.

As the old saying goes, a beautiful view can make one forget about their hunger. The soldiers couldn't help but feast their eyes on the stunning beauty in their presence.

At the same time, they were incredibly envious of Huang Huihong. Their commander was able to interact with her so closely!

Huang Huihong's heart was pounding. The elegant fragrance that she gave off was really making him go crazy.

"Hm?"

Huang Huihong finally realized something was amiss. Every single embroidered envoy went through strict training, and extremely pretty girls were used to forge their immunity towards the temptations of the opposite sex. From time to time, girls were used as honey traps to seduce them. If any of them fell prey, they would immediately be stripped of their position.

Every one of the Embroidered Envoy was a hardened veteran. He was even a commander himself, so his willpower should have been much higher than an ordinary soldier of the Embroidered Envoy.

Madam Wu was extremely pretty, almost like a goddess, but there was no reason for him to feel this way.

At that moment, there came the sound of heavy, muffled thuds, and several soldiers fell to the ground.

"Enemy attack!" A chill ran through Huang Huihong's body. He quickly took out his Soul-reaping Chains. At the same time, he raised his other hand, preparing to sound the alarm and contact King Liang and the others.

Without warning, a pair of purple eyes suddenly swam into view.

He had never seen such beautiful eyes before. They vaguely resembled Madam Wu's, but instead of Madam Wu's pure and sacred aura, these eyes seemed to possess an aura of indescribable seduction.

It wasn't just him. Everyone else could see these beautiful eyes as well.

Madam Wu and her maids seemed to have completely vanished from their view. The only thing remaining were those purple eyes, both stunning and dangerous.

Whirlpools seemed to form within the depths of those eyes. All of those affected suddenly lost their reason, and couldn't help but be sucked in.

"A member of the demon race!" Huang Huihong was more experienced than the rest of the soldiers here. He realized what was going on right away, but it was already too late. His body had stopped obeying him completely. His struggle lasted a moment longer than the others, and then his vision faded into darkness.

Zu An also felt his mind shudder. He'd just been admiring Madam Wu's figure a second ago.

He never expected that the beauty before him would suddenly disappear, to be replaced by those piercing eyes.

He also felt as though he was about to sink into darkness. Suddenly, the Hundredwarble imprint within his body lit up, and a strange bird took form beside his ear.

An invisible sound wave rippled outwards. Zu An trembled, and then those large purple eyes disappeared, and everything returned to normal.

No—everything hadn't, in fact, returned to normal. Huang Huihong and the rest of his Embroidered Envoy were still staring blankly ahead, as if they couldn't see anyone around them.

Madam Wu strolled over. Her gorgeous figure and face made her seem like a goddess that had descended from above, untainted by everything around her.

A faint smile played across her red lips. She had lost her pure and sacred aura, however. Instead, a powerful feeling of sensual seduction radiated from her entire being.

"Holy shit, this is surely a perfect union of angel and devil." Zu An ridiculed her inwardly. This woman's style changed way too quickly!

He also noticed that her eyes had turned purple. Those purple eyes he'd seen a moment ago were probably hers.

"I'm done for, I'm done for..." Zu An gulped. This woman was clearly after the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra! The reason he'd informed the world about the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra was to balance out the pressure that the emperor had been putting on him.

Who would've thought that Huang Huihong's men would be so unreliable! They had been done in too quickly!

This woman seemed to have used some kind of witchcraft to deal with all of the guards. Forget about his ki being sealed—he couldn't beat her even if he was at his peak! What was he supposed to do?

Madam Wu was still walking in his direction. She suddenly cried out in surprise. "I've heard that Lord Sang is quite a resourceful person, and it has been proven to be true. Despite your cultivation being sealed, you still managed to evade my Demonic Eye."

Sang Hong sighed, his eyes still closed. "Who could have expected that I would still be unable to escape your detection? The pure and holy Madam Wu is actually a member of the demon race! The fact that I managed to unravel this secret before I passed on is already worth it."

Madam Wu smiled sweetly. "Does Lord Sang believe that I will silence you?"

Sang Hong's voice was cold. "Don't tell me you're not going to? Or are you saying that you're going to leave me alive and risk having your identity as a demon exposed?"

There was something else that he wasn't saying. Those maids of hers were likely part of the demon race as well. There was no way King Wu would be blind to the fact that there were so many of the demon race within his manor.

The revelation of this would completely blow apart his low profile. Colluding with the demon race was just too big of a matter!

Madam Wu smiled. "Indeed, there is no way I would let you go unharmed. However, you are a criminal that has severely offended the court, and it would be quite troublesome if something happened to you here. That's why I know a better way of dealing with you."

She had already entered Sang Hong's room. Her fine fingers rested against his forehead, then her beautiful eyes erupted with a purple brilliance. Sang Hong grunted, then fainted.

"Sleep well. When you wake up, you will have forgotten everything that has just happened." Madam Wu said this as she headed towards Zu An's room. "Next, it's our little cutie's turn."

Chapter 444: Exposed

Seeing Yun Yuqing walking ever closer with a smile on her face, Zu An's panic grew exponentially. How was he supposed to deal with this situation?

His mind moved at warp speed. Unfortunately, the door was pushed open before he could think of a solution.

He was completely helpless. He could only do his best to remain expressionless, just like Huang Huihong and the others outside.

Those fellows attacked by bears in the wild had managed to somehow get out alive by playing dead. His best option was to pretend to be under the Demonic Eye's control.

Yun Yuqing closed the door behind her. She then sized up the man in front of her with great interest.

This guy had been a good-for-nothing living on the streets just a few months ago, and yet he'd ended up taking the number one beauty of Brightmoon City as his wife. He even managed to make quite a name for himself.

Many highly-rated experts failed to even make a name for themselves in this world, yet this fellow, despite being at the fourth or fifth rank, had already accomplished it.

She walked up to Zu An, then slowly circled around him, examining him curiously.

"You don't look half-bad. No wonder you caught the attention of Chu First Miss. However, you really are quite daring. You are already a criminal, yet you still dare to make fun of me in King Wu's territory." Yun Yuqing let out a snort. His earlier statement clearly hadn't escaped her ears.

You have successfully trolled Yun Yuqing for 233 Rage points!

Zu An groaned when he heard her words. This woman really knew how to bear a grudge! So much time has already passed! Why do you still remember that?

However, he still had to give her credit for her stunning beauty. Now that she was up close, he could admire her in even greater detail. He couldn't pick out a single flaw in her. Her fine, supple skin could steal the heart of any man.

The most fatal part of her was that sweet fragrance that seemed to linger around her body. It wasn't something that could be bought, and it made men go absolutely wild.

He remembered Sang Hong saying that this woman was a member of the demon race. Are all demon race women this pretty? It's quite different from what I'm used to.

"Oh my, I almost forgot what I actually came here for." Yun Yuqing slapped her own forehead in a cutesy manner, acting as though she had suddenly remembered something. Of course, after seeing how she had toyed with so many experts, Zu An couldn't associate her with the word 'cute' at all.

Yun Yuqing sat down casually in front of him. Her fine fingers gently fiddled with the teacup in her hand. "Do you really have the 'Phoenix Nirvana Sutra'?"

This was a technique that only existed in legend. She had never heard of anyone successfully cultivating it before. She was worried that this was just a ploy of the emperor's, so she had to confirm it.

"Yes." Zu An said in a dull voice.

Yun Yuqing's eyes lit up. However, she still had more doubts. She continued, "How did an ordinary person like you obtain such a miraculous technique?"

"The gardener in the Chu Estate, Old Mi, was a eunuch who had escaped from his service in the imperial palace. He was the one in charge of finding the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra," Zu An replied. Since the emperor already knew that he had the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra, it would not be long before the events surrounding it leaked out as well. There was no point in concealing all this.

Yun Yuqing nodded. It seemed as though the conclusion she and King Wu had reached was more or less correct. "Old Mi is unrelated to you in every way. Why would he pass on something so precious to an outsider?"

This was what confused her the most.

"He was an eunuch, and wanted to find a vessel to possess. Since I was handsome and suitable, he chose me," replied Zu An.

"He thought you were handsome?" Yun Yuqing was stunned for a moment, then she burst out laughing. Her laughter was even more pleasant than the song of an oriole. "I've heard that you were quite the narcissist, but I never expected that you could still say such things when in this state!"

Zu An resisted his urge to react.

"All right, all right." Yun Yuqing quickly stopped laughing. "Then why don't you tell me more about this Phoenix Nirvana Sutra?"

"Understood." Zu An began to recite a passage of scripture in a slow and wooden manner. "Jade shatters under the cries of the phoenix, flowers that were wilting are now full of cheer. Everything before the twelve gates thaw, twenty-three wisps leave the emperor in awe..."

He had already prepared for such a situation. In years gone by, Huang Rong had deceived Ouyang Feng using a 'Nine Yin Sutra' that was seventy percent truth. He only needed to do the same thing here.[1]

Only by telling most of the truth would you be able to deceive a true expert. Moreover, if one modified the key areas, not only would these experts not be able to successfully cultivate the technique, they might even slip into madness.

Yun Yuqing nodded as she listened to him. When he finished, a pensive expression appeared on her face. "These chants are indeed profound and mysterious. You might have been able to deceive someone else. Unfortunately, you encountered me."

Zu An was speechless.

Despite his sudden shock, he quickly calmed himself. He was worried that she was deliberately provoking him, so he continued to show no response, maintaining his stupefied act.

Yun Yuqing chuckled at his appearance. "Your ability to stay calm is admirable. Unfortunately, you aren't familiar with the characteristics of the Demonic Eye."

Yun Yuqing slowly stood up. She smoothed out her dress, as though she was always mindful of her appearance no matter where she went. "The Demonic Eye can influence one's mind, but it cannot completely control it. I need to jump through some hoops in order to reach my objective.

"For example, if I were to order someone to kill themselves using my Demonic Eye, this would go against human instinct, and so they would definitely resist. However, I can instruct them to walk to the edge of a cliff, and then tell them to jump forward. Jumping forward is an extremely simple task, so that person wouldn't resist. He would respect this order, and I would get what I want.

"For you, the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra is the most important thing to you, and it isn't too much of an exaggeration to consider it to be your very life. How could you possibly show no resistance when revealing it?"

She looked at him with her large, beautiful eyes, and Zu An knew that he had been exposed. He sighed. "Madam really is sharp. I am truly impressed."

"To be honest, I admire you more. All of those experts outside have been controlled by my Demonic Eye. Your cultivation was clearly sealed, yet you could still withstand my Demonic Eye. How did you achieve this?" Yun Yuqing's mouth was slightly open, betraying her stunned surprise.

Zu An smiled. "Of course it's because of the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra."

He could only rely on this as his bargaining chip. The more he touted the strength of the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra, the better.

"That was what I suspected as well." Yun Yuqing smiled. The gentle and soft expression tugging at the corners of her lips was enough to make even the toughest hearts melt. "Let's talk about the most important thing, then. What will it take for you to hand over the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra willingly?"

Zu An shook his head. "That's a question I should be asking you. Just what can you even offer that would be worth the exchange for me?"

Yun Yuqing's expression turned cold. "It seems you still do not understand your current situation. You are but a prisoner right now, and your cultivation is sealed as well. Even if you were at your peak, it would still be too easy for me to kill you. What right do you have to demand anything of me?"

Zu An's expression remained calm. "Madam, please don't kid yourself. How could you possibly dare to kill me? Everyone knows that I am in the Wu Manor right now. If I'm killed here, then both you and King

Wu are done for. The emperor will be utterly furious. Given his cultivation, how easy would it be for him to kill the two of you?"

He glanced towards Huang Huihong and the others as he spoke. "Didn't you leave all of them alive because you wanted a way around this?"

He'd only just figured out all of this too. His panicking heart gradually calmed down.

Yun Yuqing gave him a look of surprise. "I really have a new level of respect for you. Not only were you able to continue your act through all of that, you were able to think so meticulously. No wonder those who have obtained the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra become the targets of everyone's envy!"

"Being praised by a great beauty like Madam makes me feel strangely good." Zu An looked quite pleased. "Do you have anything flowery left to say? Please, don't stop."

Yun Yuqing narrowed her eyes.

However, she quickly smiled again and said, "So? What do you think about me? Am I pretty?"

Chapter 445: An Impossible Condition

Zu An's eyebrows slowly lifted as he examined the beauty in front of him without restraint. "Those who ask this sort of question usually resort to seduction immediately afterwards. I really hope you don't disappoint me."

Yun Yuqing was taken aback. "You really are quite special. You're different from most men."

Zu An laughed. "There are many ways in which I am different from most men. Please feel free to try me!"

From the aggressiveness in his eye, Yun Yuqing knew that he was trying to provoke her. However, she did not grow enraged, but smiled sweetly instead. "You still haven't replied to my question," she said?

"Are you pretty?" Zu An laughed when he recalled her question. "Why does Madam ask a question you already know the answer to? If Madam isn't beautiful, then I fear that there are no beautiful people in this entire world."

"I wonder, then, where do I rank in your mind?" A flicker of radiance rippled across Yun Yuqing's eyes.

Zu An secretly put up his guard. Surely she was chatting with him like this to get him to relax, and then seize that opportunity to control him, right?

With that in mind, he said nonchalantly, "If I had to guess, I'd put you somewhere in the top ten."

"Top ten?" Even though she knew that he was saying this on purpose, his reply still rubbed her the wrong way. "It seems that you've encountered your fair share of beauties despite your young age. I wonder who the young master thinks is prettier than me?"

You have successfully trolled Yun Yuqing for 444 Rage points!

Zu An sneered inwardly. Hah! Women!

Most of the girls he'd interacted with were extremely petty about this.

He coughed lightly and said, "The first is obviously my wife."

Yun Yuqing nodded. "First miss Chu is known as Brightmoon City's number one beauty. She is also your wife. Taken together, it's understandable that she would be number one. Then what about the others?"

"Number two is the previous number one beauty from the capital, Yu Yanluo. You're still a little inferior compared to her," said Zu An.

"You know Yu Yanluo?" Yun Yuqing was incredulous.

"Know her? It goes way beyond that—I even saved her life once. She said she was going to pay me back, but she vanished. I'm honestly a bit pissed off about that," Zu An said angrily. Yu Yanluo had given him a blank check back then, but he hadn't seen any sign of her after all these months.

"Maybe she had something else to attend to." Yun Yuqing's eyes flickered with radiance. She said with a giggle, "Miss Yu was incredibly popular back in the capital, so I can accept her being ranked in front of me. Anyone else?"

"Naturally, the third most beautiful is Pei Mianman." Zu An replied.

"The Pei clan's first miss? I've heard a bit about her, but I didn't expect her to be that pretty. I need to find a chance to meet with her in the future." Even though this was what Yun Yuqing said, she was still unconvinced.

"Don't worry, there's no way you can compare to her." Zu An's eyes landed on her chest. "Your figure isn't bad, but it's still quite lacking compared to hers."

Yun Yuqing gritted her teeth silently.

She obviously knew what he was implying! This guy really was a scoundrel!

You have successfully trolled Yun Yuqing for 514 Rage points!

Seeing that this was working, Zu An continued, "The fourth is my Brightmoon Academy's Principal Jiang. She gives off such a mature aura, and her long legs, clad in those stockings she always wears, is not something Madam can compare to. Of course, if Madam wants to prove me wrong, you can show me your legs, and I will render an impartial judgment."

Yun Yuqing was shell-shocked.

The way he was going on and on so freely was truly driving her crazy.

Just what kind of lunatic was he? Was he so unaware of the situation he was in? Was he really going to list off these beauties one by one?

You have successfully trolled Yun Yuqing for 666 Rage points!

"It seems as though Madam isn't confident in comparing herself to these others anymore, so I'll just continue on to the next one. The fifth is of course everyone's idol in the academy, Teacher Shang Liuyu. She is beautiful, kind, and she is proficient in music. She truly gives off an otherworldly charm, as though

she really doesn't care about the things of the material world. It's very different from the way Madam pretends to behave. She is truly like a goddess trapped in the vile world of men. Sigh, I thought we shared a close relationship, but I haven't seen a single sign of her ever since this disaster befell me. Don't you think she's being cold?" Zu An got quite worked up as he spoke.

Yun Yuqing was about to blow her top.

"As for the sixth one, that's of course—" Zu An was cut off before he could finish.

"Enough!" Yun Yuqing's face darkened. She had only planned to tease him a little—she never expected him to truly go on and on about all the girls he thought were more beautiful than her! The more she listened, the angrier she had become.

Zu An curled his lips. Is that all? I didn't even bring out my trump card big sis empress yet. Compared to her, you all are nothing.

He did his best to flatter her, but Mi Li didn't respond at all. It looks like this woman really did go to sleep.

"I almost fell for your schemes. You wanted to drag things out to buy some time for King Liang and the others to come back, didn't you?" Yun Yuqing snorted. "I advise you to give up on that thought. King Wu is holding them up on his side. There is no way they will come here any time soon."

Zu An sighed in his heart. This woman really was careful! However, his smile remained plastered on his face. "What is Madam saying? Why would I rather be with those disgusting old men than with your gorgeous self?"

"Disgusting old men?" Yun Yuqing was initially stunned by this, but she quickly burst out laughing.

"Indeed, they are indeed two disgusting old men."

Did they really believe that she hadn't noticed all the sneaky looks that they had directed towards her? Hmph, those two really are disgusting.

She was more annoyed with Liu Yao than the other, because he had opposed King Wu at every turn. She quickly collected herself and looked at Zu An. "Young master, you're putting me in a difficult spot. I can't kill you, and I can't bear to hurt you. What do you think we should do, then?"

"Madam can try to seduce me. I'm impervious to everything else, but I'm really weak to honey traps!" Zu An said with a serious voice.

Yun Yuqing stared at him blankly for a second.

"I have eighteen maids with me, and all of them are the most beautiful ladies from the demon race." She pointed outside the window. "If you give me what I want, then you can choose whoever you want outside. Of course, if you have the ability, you can do what you want with all of them."

Zu An shook his head. "I don't want to. All of them added together cannot compare to one of Madam's fingers."

"You want me?" Yun Yuqing had an ambiguous smile on her face, but a dangerous glint flashed across her eyes. "Didn't you just say that I was inferior to all those other girls you know?"

"I always rate the ones I am closer to more highly. Feel free to change my mind, Madam." Zu An went all out as well. He wasn't going to be killed, since the emperor wanted him alive, and they couldn't hurt him, since that might damage his intelligence. What did he have to be scared of?

"You really are quite daring. If I ever encountered anyone who dared to offend me like this, King Wu would have immediately had them chopped up and fed to the dogs," Yun Yuqing said coldly.

Zu An laughed. "Aren't you here at King Wu's prodding, though? I wonder if he told you to seduce me as well."

Yun Yuqing's beautiful brows drew together in a frown. It seemed like he'd hit the nail on the head.

Zu An continued, "I believe Madam is also aware that I am already a dead man once I reach the capital. In that case, I might as well make the most of my current situation."

Yun Yuqing's expression eased a little. "I'm glad the young master is willing to talk. That makes things easier. We actually come with great sincerity. If the young master wants gems, gold, weapons, or secret manuals, as long as we are able, we will satisfy your desire."

Compared to the legendary Phoenix Nirvana Sutra, it would be worth it even if King Wu emptied the entire manor.

"Didn't I already state what I wanted?" Zu An looked straight at her. "I'm going to die anyway, so what good would material possessions be? If I can feel Madam's warmth, I would be willing to leave this world with no regrets."

He wasn't actually planning to recite the manual for them, so he proposed a condition that neither King Wu or Madam Wu would be willing to accept.

Unexpectedly, Yun Yuqing's expression flickered several times, and then she nodded her head. Her voice grew warm. "Very well!"

Chapter 446: Guest Becomes the Host

Shock was written all over Zu An's face.

Madam, I don't even know what to say...

He merely wanted to throw out something that would be impossible for her to accept, and then stall for more time while they argued back and forth. Who would've thought that she would straight up agree to it?

Just as he was about to speak, purple light erupted from the other party's eyes.

It was as if he had sunk into a purple world. Nothing else existed for him anymore, apart from this sinister purple.

Soon, he found that his body was no longer under his control. Then, even his consciousness became blurry.

The instant before he completely lost consciousness, the Hundredwarble imprint within him suddenly shone again.

A bright red bird emerged, flying around the purple world as if angry at being disturbed. Wherever its red figure flew to, the purple haze there would gradually scatter.

Soon, the purple world was completely split in two by Hundredwarble, and Zu An slowly began to regain his consciousness.

A groan came from beside him. Yun Yuqing's face was pale, and a streak of blood flowed out from the corner of her lips. She had clearly been injured by this interaction.

The purple color in her eyes swam chaotically, and quickly dispersed. Unfortunately, she didn't notice that a faint trace of red had been mixed in with it as well.

"What was that strange red bird?" Yun Yuqing couldn't comprehend what had happened. Even though Hundredwarble did not exist in the material world, she was still able to sense it because it clashed with her spiritual world.

Fear still lingered within Zu An's mind. Thank heavens he had been brought back to consciousness by Hundredwarble! Otherwise, he would've been done in by this woman without even realizing it!

"That's a secret." Zu An smiled. "Secrets make men seem more charming."

Yun Yuqing wanted to beat her head against a wall.

Why is this guy so freaking annoying?!

Zu An said, "Say, Madam, wasn't that a little dishonest of you? The two of us were clearly having a business discussion, but you suddenly attacked me. What's up with that?"

Yun Yuqing smiled sweetly. "Don't tell me you don't know how incredibly fickle women can be! That's why you should never trust a woman so easily!"

Zu An snorted. "Hmph, that's none of my business. I was being utterly sincere, and yet you've insulted me. How do you plan to compensate me for my mental anguish?"

"How about I apologize to you?" Yun Yuqing said, bowing gracefully. Her stance was graceful and perfect.

Even though Zu An knew that she was making use of her beauty, he couldn't bring himself to stay angry. "Forget it. I guess I can just barely bring myself to forgive you. Let's return to our discussion from before. If I am not mistaken, Madam seems to have agreed to my request?"

Yun Yuqing's face went red. I only said that because I wanted to catch you off guard! Did you really think I was serious?

"Something as important as that should be discussed with my husband."

She knew that her Demonic Eye was completely useless against him, and she might not be able to obtain what she needed from him. That was why she needed to go back and explain everything to her husband first.

Zu An was taken aback. "I don't think this is the sort of thing you talk to your husband about, is it?"

Yun Yuqing had no words for him.

What the heck even goes on inside this brat's head?!

I was going to talk to my husband about how we should deal with you! Do you really think that this was what I wanted to discuss with him?

"Young master does not need to worry about that. My husband and I will definitely reach a conclusion." Yun Yuqing got up to leave. As she reached the doorway, she suddenly turned around. "Young master is a smart person. I believe you know what you should and shouldn't say, right?"

Since her Demonic Eye was useless against him, there was no way for her to erase his memory. It would be troublesome if he mentioned these matters to King Liang and the others.

"No, I'm really dumb. Can Madam remind me again about what I shouldn't say?" Zu An said with a smile.

Yun Yuqing felt a wave of helplessness. Are you the criminal, or am I the criminal? Why do I feel like our roles have swapped?

In the end, she still explained, "You are already doomed to die once you reach the capital, but you might still be able to live if you work with us. Before our negotiations are complete, I believe that the young master wouldn't be so rash as to go about spewing nonsense."

Zu An laughed. "Who is Madam trying to fool? The emperor is the world's number one expert! If he wants me dead, how can Madam possibly save me?"

Yun Yuqing fell silent. What Zu An said was true. This fella really was too sharp! It was almost impossible to fool him with insincere words.

Zu An continued, "King Liang and the others will return soon, and I will definitely tell them what happened here. If you guys start fighting, who knows, I might even be able to find a chance to escape!"

Yun Yuqing's face grew cold. "Are you forcing me to kill you?"

The temperature of the room seemed to drop a few degrees. Her killing intent was clear to Zu An. He said indifferently, "If you really dare to kill me, then there wouldn't be a need for you to waste so much time talking to me."

The air in the room became heavy. Yun Yuqing's expression flickered several times.

He continued with a smile, "Of course, if Madam gives me a kiss, I might just decide not to say anything."

Yun Yuqing was speechless, unsure of what to do.

A light knocking came from outside. One of her maids offered a quick reminder. "Madam, we need to move quickly. King Liang and the others are about to return."

Zu An smiled. I should give this maid a sticker when I get the chance to. Her timing was just too good! "Madam, we don't have much time left. You should think things through. Do you want to bring disaster

onto the entire King Wu manor, or just give me a kiss? It's really not that hard of a choice if you ask me. It's just a kiss. What do you even have to lose?"

Yun Yuqing's complexion flickered between red and white. She subconsciously glanced out the window and saw the signal that she had agreed on with her husband, which indicated that King Liang was about to return.

Even though she was more or less certain that Zu An wouldn't actually tell King Liang and the others about this, the entire manor, as well as the future of the demon race, rested on this. She didn't want to take any risks.

"Close your eyes!" Yun Yuqing looked at him, her face red. She never imagined that she, the glorious wife of a king, would fall so low as to be toyed with by a prisoner like this.

"No way! What if you made someone else do it for you?" Zu An said with a smile.

"You!" Yun Yuqing bit her red lip. She was clearly extremely conflicted. However, time waits for no one, and she couldn't think of any better ideas. Left with no choice, she walked over to his side, got on her tiptoes, and moved her lips towards his cheek.

A little peck like this wouldn't matter much, right? She would just keep it a secret from her husband.

How could she have known that Zu An had already predicted this? In that instant, he suddenly turned his head so that his mouth was facing hers, instead of his cheek.

"Ah!!!" Yun Yuqing cried out in alarm and backed away in a flash. She stared at him, covering her mouth.

You have successfully trolled Yun Yuqing for 999... 999... 999....

Zu An was amused by the Rage points flowing in. Isn't it just a kiss? Do you really have to get that mad?

Killing intent flashed across Yun Yuqing's eyes. She was just about to attack, but a maid's urgent voice sounded. "Madam, we have no more time! Hurry!"

She could only give Zu An a hateful glare, before disappearing through the window. There was the sound of a snap, and the guards all gradually recovered their awareness.

"Hm? What happened?" Huang Huihong instinctively felt that something was not right, but when he searched his memories, he only remembered that Madam Wu had brought over some food, and had left shortly afterwards with her maids. Nothing else seemed to have happened.

The Demonic Eye had clearly altered his memories, and replaced them with rational untruths.

Despite this, Huang Huihong still felt uneasy. He quickly went to Zu An's room to take a look, and sighed in relief when he saw that he was still there. "Hurry up and go to sleep already! Why are you smiling so stupidly?"

Zu An shook his head. What do you know? You were simping so hard for Yun Yuqing earlier, but your goddess agreed to kiss me of her own volition!

Zu An slowly savored the memory of that feeling amidst the lingering fragrance, so sweet and soft. It wasn't a bad feeling at all.

In the manor, King Wu was already waiting anxiously in a secret room. He saw his wife return, and immediately rushed up to her and asked, "How did it go?"

Chapter 447: By Any Means Necessary

Yun Yuqing shook her head. "That guy is too cunning. I wasn't able to succeed."

King Wu was furious. "How is that possible?! How could Zu An possibly escape your grasp, given his cultivation? Do you know how much I've invested in this mission?!"

Yun Yuqing was dazed when she saw her usually gentle and refined husband yelling at her. She had never seen her husband lose control like this before. In all their years of marriage he had never ever shown her such aggression.

King Wu was anxious and agitated. He paced back and forth across the room. "Do you know what I had to do to get King Liang and Liu Yao to enter the manor? I had to put so much effort into just stalling them! Now you're telling me that you've come back empty-handed? That everything was for naught?!"

Yun Yuqing remained silent, her face going pale.

King Wu was about to launch into another tirade when he noticed the blood on his wife's lips. He was shocked. "You're hurt?"

"It's not a big deal," Yun Yuqing said indifferently. "It's just a small injury."

King Wu sensed his wife's bitterness, and immediately explained himself. "I lost my composure just now. I didn't want to blame you. You know how many years I've laid low, preparing for just such an opportunity."

Yun Yuqing nodded. "I know."

King Wu knew that she was probably still hurt, but he couldn't be bothered with that right now. He would let time slowly do its thing. "How were you injured? Did an expert interfere?"

Yun Yuqing shook her head. "No. Everything went smoothly, but I was injured by Zu An."

"How is that possible?" King Wu was confused. "Given what we know, Zu An only has four or five ranks of cultivation! How could he possibly injure you? I even took a look at him myself earlier on. His cultivation was sealed up by the Embroidered Envoy, so there should have been no chance for him to retaliate!"

"Even though his cultivation was restrained, his mind wasn't. I tried to use Demonic Eye to control him, but I was the one injured by his counterattack instead." Yun Yuqing produced a white handkerchief and began to wipe away the traces of blood around her mouth. She still felt a twinge of fear when she recalled that strange red bird.

"Does Zu An really have some type of magical treasure or trump card?" King Wu could not believe it. "Your Demonic Eye was ineffective, and he even managed to injure you somehow! This is absolutely outrageous."

"I believe it is a feature of the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra," said Yun Yuqing. She didn't completely trust Zu An, but that red bird shared some similarities with a phoenix, which led her to this conclusion.

King Wu grew cautiously excited. "The Phoenix Nirvana Sutra is extraordinary after all! In just a few months, Zu An managed to become strong enough to injure you. I must obtain it!"

However, his expression quickly fell. "It's such a pity that we failed this time... King Liang and the others are heading out tomorrow. There won't be another chance."

Yun Yuqing hesitated, then said, "I think we still have a shot. If we can keep them here for another day, I should be able to negotiate with Zu An."

King Wu frowned. "Those embroidered envoys might suspect something if you keep visiting repeatedly."

"It's fine." Yun Wuqing smiled. "Huang Huihong and the others have been afflicted with my Demonic Eye's spiritual imprint. As long as I trigger it, then they will obey me. We don't need to worry about them at all."

"Will the emperor discover anything, though? Given his cultivation, we might not be able to hide the truth from him." Just thinking about how terrifying his father was was enough to make King Wu's face pale.

Yun Yuqing shook her head. "You don't need to worry about that. The imprint will disappear on its own after three days without a trace. I refuse to believe that they can make it back to the capital within three days."

King Wu laughed loudly. "Madam, you really are a good wife! You've solved all of my worries so easily! Let's do that, then. I'll do something about King Liang and Liu Yao. We'll keep them for one more day. You must deal with Zu An tomorrow!"

Yun Yuqing's beautiful brows came together in a frown. "There's an issue with that. My Demonic Eye cannot control Zu An, so we can only rely on ordinary methods. However, he is wanted by the emperor, so we cannot kill or hurt him. He knows this too, which is why he has made all sorts of crazy demands."

"Crazy demands?" King Wu said, "I'm not scared of the price he will set, I'm scared that he wouldn't even want to negotiate! As long as I, King Wu, am able to obtain it, I will willingly give it to him. Once I obtain the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra, I have confidence that the imperial throne will be mine in the future. When that happens, the entire world would be mine! What wouldn't I be willing to give up?"

Yun Yuqing's face instantly became red. "But he wants something special."

"I am willing to give it up no matter how special it is!" King Wu roared with laughter. He was already starting to fantasize about obtaining the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra.

"Listen to what I have to say first!" Yun Yuqing was both ashamed and furious. "He wants me!"

It took King Wu a moment to understand her words.

"He wants you?" King Wu was so stunned that he was unable to react. "What do you mean?"

"It's exactly what you are thinking." Yun Yuqing turned her head away. Even her neck was a little red. "That's why I came back to discuss this with you first, to see if you can come up with anything else that might stir his heart."

"This bastard is going too far!" King Wu yelled furiously. "He is just a rat from the streets! He should be thanking the heavens that he managed to land first miss Chu, yet he now wants my wife?!"

You have successfully trolled Zhao Yan for 666 Rage points!

He suddenly broke into an intense fit of coughing.

Yun Yuqing's heart softened when she saw how angry her husband was getting. She quickly rushed over to pat his back. "Dear, please don't harm yourself out of anger! That fellow is nothing more than a ruffian, he doesn't understand respect. These are merely the words of a random scoundrel. Let's think about what we can offer to make him change his mind."

"Okay." King Wu nodded. A strange brilliance flickered in his eyes. No one else knew what he was thinking.

The two of them began to discuss what they could use to convince Zu An. They proposed many different ideas, but each was shot down one after the other.

In the end, only two or three plans that could possibly succeed were left over.

King Wu was still unsure. "Do you think Zu An will accept these conditions?"

Yun Yuqing shook her head. "I don't know either. Our interaction taught me that he is incredibly vicious. I cannot figure out how he thinks."

King Wu's voice grew angry. "Hmph! If not for all this uncertainty, I would have just thrown him into prison and beaten it out of him through torture! Instead, we are now the ones being led around by the nose..."

Yun Yuqing's brow furrowed tightly. Clearly, she shared her husband's thoughts.

King Wu hesitated, then suddenly said, "Yuqing, what if he doesn't agree to any of these proposals?"

Yun Yuqing fell silent for a moment. "Then we'll keep King Liang and the others for another day. As long as I can chat with him a few more times, I believe we'll find a way."

King Wu shook his head. "King Liang and the others have their duty to complete. Keeping them here for another day is already the limit. There is absolutely no chance of them staying for a third day."

Yun Yuqing sighed deeply. "In that case, we might have to just give up. After all, coveting the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra is already an act of defiance against the emperor. Giving up might not necessarily be a bad choice."

"No!" King Wu firmly refused this. "Absolutely not! I was banished to this remote land, all because I wasn't a child of the empress! Meanwhile, that brother of mine is clearly a loser, but he holds the position of crown prince just because his mother is the empress? Why?! All these years I've been planning in secret, just so I can seize back what I deserve!

“However, I have a limited amount of resources at my disposal, and there was no hope at all. This Phoenix Nirvana Sutra is a chance bestowed upon me by the heavens themselves! I cannot let it go!”

Yun Yuqing tried her best to console him. “We’ve already done everything we could. Sometimes, you cannot force things to happen.”

“No, we haven’t exhausted every option yet.” King Wu stared at his wife. “If—and I am saying if—all of those plans fail, you should agree.”

Chapter 448: Those Who Achieve Great Things do not Bother with Trivialities

“Agree to what?” Yun Yuqing took a while to recover from her shock.

King Wu hesitated a little, but he still said it in the end. “Agree to his condition, of course.”

“What?!” Yun Yuqing’s complexion instantly lost all of its color. She stared at her husband with a blank expression.

Zu An had already taken advantage of her earlier. That already made her feel like she had let her husband down, and was causing her to suffer endless guilt. Who would have thought that her husband would actually make her accompany another man?

Since he’d already said it out loud, there was no point for King Wu to mince his words any further.

“Yuqing, you know what this opportunity signifies for me. You also know what it means for your demon race if I’m able to take the throne.”

Yun Yuqing bit her lip and didn’t utter a single word. Even though she understood his reasoning, she couldn’t help but feel hurt. Her husband was pushing her onto another man for the sake of all this... she felt her entire body go weak.

King Wu was equally pained by his wife’s reaction. However, he quickly collected himself. Those who achieve greatness didn’t bother with trivialities. Compared to obtaining the imperial throne, this amount of sacrifice was nothing.

He continued, “There’s something else I’m worried about. From our previous information as well as your most recent experience, it seems like Zu An is quite cunning. Even if he really does reveal to us the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra, we have no way of verifying if it is the real deal.”

“That guy is indeed cunning.” Yun Yuqing agreed. She still remembered how he had pretended to be under her control, and then gave her the fake chants.

“That is why I need you to verify it.” King Wu looked at his wife. “From what I know, your demon race has a technique that allows you to sense another party’s ki flow while the two of you are joined together. This way, even if he gives you a fake chant, you can obtain the real one.”

Yun Yuqing’s face paled. The imperial household of the demon race did indeed possess such a technique. She just never thought that the day would come when she would have to use this skill herself.

King Wu's own feelings were extremely complicated as well. On one hand, he felt great pain that his beautiful wife was going to become the plaything of another man. On the other hand, however, he felt a strange sense of excitement at the prospect of obtaining the chance to fight back against the injustice he had suffered..

However, even he himself wasn't sure if this was the only thing that he was excited about.

When he saw that his wife still wouldn't say anything, King Wu changed his strategy. "Yuqing, we've already been married for many years."

Yun Yuqing grunted in agreement. She didn't know what he was getting at.

King Wu continued, "I know that you've always wanted a child, but there's something I've never revealed to you. In my earlier years, I tried all sorts of cultivation methods in an attempt to prove to my father that I deserve the throne more than my brother. In the end, my cultivation deviated. Even though I was able to survive, my body suffered irrecoverable damage."

"I know that. Your condition has always been poor, and you start coughing if the weather becomes even slightly cold." Yun Yuqing felt a wave of pain overtake her when she thought about her husband's illness. She had looked for doctors everywhere, and even employed some secret methods of the demon race, but nothing was effective in treating him.

"It's not just this cough." King Wu looked embarrassed, but in the end, he still chose to tell her. "I've already lost my ability to reproduce. I cannot have a child in this lifetime."

"What?!" Yun Yuqing was horrified. She stared at her husband in shock.

"This matter is too important to me. The royal family will never choose an infertile prince to become the new emperor, so I silenced everyone who knew about this matter. You are the only one who knows about this. You are my wife, which is why I trust you with this secret." King Wu gazed quietly at his wife's stunning face.

Tears were already streaming down Yun Yuqing's face. She held her husband's hand. "Dear, I don't care about any of that! We can still adopt a child."

She couldn't remain angry at him, knowing that her husband had been shouldering such a heavy secret all this time. She was filled with pity and compassion.

King Wu shook his head. "That won't work. It would only expose my inability to have a child, and I will lose my right of succession completely. I cannot accept that! That is why, if I want a child, you must give birth to one. Only then will no one suspect anything."

Yun Yuqing remained silent.

"I wanted to find a chance to talk to you about this matter, but we can kill two birds with one stone this time." King Wu felt much more relaxed. Speaking about this seemed to have massively unburdened him. "Not only are you helping me obtain the imperial throne and change the fate of the demon race, you can also obtain his seed. We can kill three birds with one stone."

Yun Yuqing felt extremely conflicted. She was both embarrassed and angry. "How can you describe this in such a manner?!"

King Wu sighed. "I know that I am letting you down, but we really don't have any other choice! Yuqing, I cannot think of any other way. You have to help me!"

Yun Yuqing stood up and flung his hand away. Her face was entirely red. "How am I supposed to help you with something like that?!"

King Wu was confused. "From what I know, members of your demon race are more open-minded than us humans! Why is this so hard to accept?"

"Not all members of the demon race are like that!" Yun Yuqing stamped her foot and stormed off.

"Ahem, ahem..." A burst of intense coughing came from behind her. When she turned around, she saw that King Wu's face was red. He spat out a mouthful of blood.

"Dear!" Nothing else mattered to Yun Yuqing. She rushed over to examine his condition.

It took King Wu some time to catch his breath. "I'm fine. I know that this matter is very troubling to you. Forget it, then. I'll just accept my fate and serve as a king. I will try to protect as many of your clansmen as I can. Later on, I'll find a chance to adopt a child. I won't need to fight over the imperial throne anyway, so if everyone wants to laugh at me, then let them laugh."

Yun Yuqing bit her lip when she heard how discouraged he was. They had lived together for so many years. How could she not understand what the imperial throne meant to her husband? All of his preparations these years had been for the sake of gaining the imperial throne, and even his illness was a result of his desire to succeed the throne. Giving up on this now was the same as severing whatever hope he had left in his life.

Her husband always cared about appearances and honor. If he took in an adopted child and exposed the fact that he was infertile, then living on might be even worse than death.

She definitely couldn't bear to see him suffer like that. She would still end up finding another man to give him a child later on anyway, so she might as well make use of this opportunity. She could obtain the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra, and at the same time sacrifice herself for the sake of the demon race...

"Dear, please don't be discouraged! I'll do it!" Yun Yuqing's eyes were misty, as though tears might fall out of them at any time.

"Really?!" King Wu was overjoyed. "Thank you, Yuqing!"

Yun Yuqing took a step back, refusing his hug. In that instant, she felt as if her husband seemed somewhat unfamiliar.

It took her a while to finally calm down, after which they began to discuss the details of the plan. "There's still a problem. In such a short time, I might not be able to... be able to get pregnant."

Just thinking about how she would need to find another man if this plan failed was enough to drive her crazy.

"It's all right. I already have a plan," said King Wu. "I will find a way to stall King Liang and Liu Yao for an entire night. You and Zu An can feel free to... ahem, ahem. In any case, the Phoenix Nirvana is incredibly powerful. You might need some time to take it all in."

Although he felt both furious and aggrieved as he pictured the various scenes in his head, his entire body somehow still felt like it was about to burst from excitement. He had no idea why.

Yun Yuqing stared at him quietly.

She hadn't expected her husband to have thought things out that thoroughly. Her heart immediately grew ice cold.

Chapter 449: A Walk in the Park

Meanwhile, in the guest courtyard, Sang Hong awoke with a strange expression. He sat down by the window and stared pensively into the night sky. For some reason, he felt as though he had forgotten something important.

Zheng Dan's first instinct after she came to was to examine her clothes. When she saw that she was still dressed properly, she sighed in relief. Why had she suddenly fallen asleep?

She moved over to the wall and carefully tapped it. Her cell was next to Zu An's.

Zu An's teasing voice soon came from the other side. "What's wrong? Could it be that Miss Zheng can't sleep because she misses me?"

Zheng Dan sighed with relief when she heard his familiar voice. She knew that he was talking to her in this manner to deceive the others outside. As such, she replied in annoyance, "Like hell I'd be missing you. I'm just surprised you haven't died yet."

Huang Huihong had a strange smile on his face. Even a rabbit would bite when pushed into a corner. It was easy to imagine just how much Zu An had harassed the usually gentle and graceful Miss Zheng for her to turn on him like this.

King Liang and Liu Yao returned after a night of drinking. Satisfied that all of the prisoners were safe and sound, they returned to their own chambers to get some rest.

The next morning, just as they were about to bid King Wu farewell, King Wu invited them to stay for another day. "We were in too much of a rush yesterday, and were unable to prepare many of North Order City's specialties in time. For example, North Order City's most famous courtesan queen..."

King Wu had already prepared many enticing options, and his attitude was extremely sincere.

His subordinate Sun Buqi was similarly eloquent. "I've heard that you faced all sorts of ambushes along the way here, so heading on rashly might not be the best idea. How about we send some men ahead to scout out the situation first? It would make your departure much safer..."

The two of them were finally convinced. King Liang stroked his beard. "Out of respect for Little Yan's consideration, we'll stay for another day. However, we really can only stay for one more day. We cannot stay on tomorrow."

King Wu smiled. "Of course, of course. Little Yan wouldn't dare to interfere with the official business of the imperial court."

Yun Yuqing forced herself to smile. She was hoping that King Liang's group would insist on leaving, so that she wouldn't have to carry out her task. Unfortunately, it looks like I still have to go through with it...

Soon, it was evening. King Wu held a banquet that was even more splendid than the previous night's. Even King Liang and Liu Yao, who tasted all manner of luxury in the capital, found it refreshing.

Yun Yuqing accompanied them for a while, then got up to bid them farewell. King Liang and Liu Yao naturally didn't insist on her staying.

Even though their grandnephew's wife was pretty, she wasn't someone they could touch. They were much more interested in the dancing girls.

If she stayed, they might instead be the ones who would have to hold back.

King Wu nodded towards his wife and sent her a voice transmission. "Yuqing, please, you must obtain the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra."

Yun Yuqing didn't reply. Her fair face lacked the slightest trace of emotion. She walked straight out of the hall, her beautiful figure slowly disappearing into the distance.

King Wu was also overwhelmed with emotions. He knew that this was also the last chance for him to stop her. Once his wife left, it would be too late for him to stop what happened next.

He raised his hand several times, but in the end, he didn't call his wife back.

He didn't know whether his decision was right or wrong. His heart was pained, yet he also felt excited. The conflicting emotions within him were so strong that even his body began to shudder subconsciously.

He raised his wine cup and drained it in one gulp, using the alcohol to hide his expression.

For the sake of the imperial throne, everything was worth it!

He continuously told himself this, but at the same time, several thoughts began to emerge from the darkest corners of his heart, throwing his spirit into disarray.

He drank another cup to suppress his emotions.

King Liang smiled when he saw this. "It seems Little Yan is in high spirits today!"

King Wu smiled apologetically. "It is a rare chance for me to be able to share a drink with my great uncles, and I couldn't help but get a little excited."

King Liang said with a laugh, "Little Yan is truly filial, and you are an excellent husband as well. You've grown up well. I will make sure to let everyone know about this once I return to the capital."

When he heard the words 'good husband', King Wu flinched a bit. His smile couldn't help but become a bit forced. He didn't know how far Yuqing was now.

...

Meanwhile, Yun Yuqing called over her demon race maids and headed to the courtyard where the criminals were being housed.

She'd already done this once yesterday. This second trip was a walk in the park.

Those guards had the Demonic Eye imprints on their souls, so they were quickly subdued again.

Once she made sure that all of them were controlled, Yun Yuqing had all of the maids stand guard outside. She went in to talk to Zu An alone.

Zu An couldn't hold back an admiring sigh as he watched Yun Yuqing walk over slowly under the moonlight. Her entire body seemed to be giving off a divine radiance. "Madam, are you sure you're from the demon race and not a goddess from heaven?"

Yun Yuqing was feeling rather gloomy and indifferent. Only when she heard this did she offer a faint smile. "Our demon race is very different from how we are portrayed in the folk tales of the human world. Who said that members of the demon race had to be evil and sinister?"

"That's why it's always better to see for yourself." Zu An carefully examined her flawless face. "Oh? Madam seems to have put a lot of care into your appearance today."

Yun Yuqing sighed inside her heart. It hadn't been her choice. Rather, her husband had sent some maids to do this for her. Her heart slowly grew colder.

"Young master must be joking. This is how I look every day." She wasn't willing to admit to this and let him take advantage of her.

Zu An didn't really care either way. "Beautiful people always speak more confidently. So, since you've chosen to come here today, what did you and your husband decide?"

Yun Yuqing took a deep breath to calm herself down. Then, she said, "We can promise you that the Chu clan will not be attacked, and we can also ensure their continued prosperity."

"This is the condition you guys came up with after discussing it all day?" Zu An snorted. "Everyone knows that I'm not a part of the Chu clan anymore. In any case, even if I were still a part of the Chu clan, why would I give a crap about them when I myself am in this sort of situation?"

"There is no need for you to pretend that you do not care. If you really did not care, then why did you sacrifice yourself back then to save the Chu clan? You knew that you could have escaped back then," said Yun Yuqing. She'd clearly gone over their intelligence on Zu An several times.

"So what if I did? Either way, I've already helped the Chu clan out once. I can't continue to babysit them forever, right? It's not like I'm their holy mother," Zu An replied.

"Of course, if the young master doesn't cooperate with us, we can immediately cause the downfall of the Chu clan. Your wife, your sister-in-law whom you have a good relationship with, and even your mother-in-law might be thrown into the government brothels. I'm sure that's not the sort of tragic fate you would want to witness." Yun Yuqing's tone was full of foreboding. She finally seemed a little more like a demon.

"Are you threatening me?" Zu An was furious. He stared at her coldly.

"It's not necessarily a threat. I just want to make things clear to you, young master." Yun Yuqing was incredibly calm.

Zu An snorted again. "I already said that I helped them out once, that's all. There's no way I can keep looking out for the Chu clan. Good on them if they prosper, but if they collapse, then that's that. None of it has anything to do with me anymore.

"Anyway, there's a reason that the Chu clan has existed for a thousand years, and why not even the emperor could do anything about them. I refuse to believe that a mere King Wu can defeat the Chu clan."

Yun Yuqing bit her lip, but did not retort. It was a while before she spoke again. "Fine. We won't talk about anyone else, then. Let's just talk about ourselves. I can try to give you a chance to run, and I can also let you have your pick of all sorts of secret manuals and beauties. You'll be free to roam the world at your leisure."

"Run? Why would I run?" Zu An shook his head. "The entire world belongs to the emperor. Where would I be able to run to?"

Yun Yuqing seemed a little uncertain. "Young master, are you not aware that you will surely die if you go to the capital? If you run, you would at least have a chance at survival."

Chapter 450: Out of Thin Air

"I'm still dead even if I run," Zu An said nonchalantly. "Who knows how many other people want to get their hands on me, besides the emperor? At least I have the Imperial Guard to protect me right now, and can live a few days in peace."

"If the young master is worried about that, we of the demon race can offer you protection," Yun Yuqing said in panic.

"Do you think I'm stupid?" Zu An refused her immediately. "Isn't that the same as leaving a tiger's cave and going straight into a den of wolves? I'll be more surprised if the members of your demon race didn't hang me up and torture me for information."

"Our offer is sincere." Yun Yuqing felt her head begin to ache. This brat was just too sharp! There was no way she could deceive him.

"Sincerity?" Zu An laughed. Even though he looked happy and willing to negotiate, he was fully aware that without the protection of King Liang and his Imperial Guards, she might have already thrown him into the torture chambers.

Yun Yuqing had no choice but to offer him the proposals she had discussed with her husband. Unfortunately, Zu An showed no interest in any of them.

She fell silent. Could it be that she really had to go that far?

Zu An's own mind began to work. What exactly could he try to obtain from the Wu Manor that would help him with his plan in the capital? Unfortunately, he knew far too little about the capital, so it was hard to make a decent decision. He was looking to get some ideas from her here, but everything she proposed was useless.

He was just about to prompt her again when Yun Yuqing suddenly said, "Fine. I agree."

Zu An's face scrunched up in a puzzled frown.

I haven't even said anything yet. What are you agreeing to?

He was just about to ask, but Yun Yuqing had already begun to slowly remove her white coat. She removed her outer garments, revealing the skintight clothes inside. Her figure looked even more seductive and enchanting.

"Um..." Zu An was stunned. Why are you stripping for no reason? Is this another demon race trick?

Yun Yuqing slowly walked up to him. Her face was gorgeous enough to draw the breath out of his lungs, but her expression was cold and indifferent. "Are you going to be a man of your word?"

Zu An swallowed. He suddenly remembered his joke from yesterday. "You discussed something that important with your husband?"

"Don't mention him here." Yun Yuqing's voice was icy. "Just answer me. Are you going to keep your word?"

They were so close to each other. Zu An was swallowed up within her enchanting fragrance, and he began to feel a little dizzy. "Of course I am, but don't tell me you really are—"

His words came to a screeching halt as she answered him with her actions.

Yun Yuqing slowly undid the sash around her waist. Her pure white dress slowly slid down her body, enhancing the smooth, soft texture of her skin.

Zu An's breathing instantly sped up as he took in the stunning figure in front of him. No man could remain calm in such a situation, and he was clearly no exception.

"Can you tell me the chants for the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra now?" Yun Yuqing felt her goosebumps rising, now that her entire body was exposed to the frosty night air. However, the chill of the air around her was not as intense as the ice that she felt within her heart.

With some difficulty, Zu An managed to force out some words. "Madam, you are..."

Yun Yuqing took it that Zu An wasn't about to act without more of an incentive. With a sigh, she slowly walked over to him, and then lowered herself into his lap.

"I am yours tonight. If you are going to do anything, then please hurry." She turned her face to the side. Her eyelids continued to tremble. A flood of emotions was roiling within her.

Even though there was a soft, warm body in his lap, Zu An instead found himself at his wits' end. After all, she looked for all the world like a young lady at the mercy of a villain, which made him feel slightly apologetic. "Um, even though it might sound a bit dumb to say this now, but I'm really not that..."

"Do you want me to take the lead?" Yun Yuqing misunderstood his intentions. She sighed in her heart. Since they were already at this point, it wouldn't matter much to take it another step further. Let's just get this done as quickly as possible.

Zu An reached his hands out and was just about to help her up, but Yun Yuqing moved closer to him instead, and kissed his neck gently. At the same time, her fine, jade-like hands slowly undid his clothes for him.

Zu An's hands, still hovering in midair, clenched immediately. How could he remain unmoved?

Silent tears trickled down Yun Yuqing's face as she sensed his body's reaction.

She actually didn't blame Zu An at all. Everyone had their needs, after all. There was nothing to criticize.

He wasn't even forcing her to do this—she was the one who was in full control.

She only felt resentment towards her husband, while also laughing at the bitterness of fate.

However, she did not lose sight of the goal of this mission, or the future of the demon race. She secretly wiped away her tears and resolved to complete this mission as quickly as possible.

She sensed something strange. She lowered her head to look, and was given a fright. "You... are you a beastman?"

Zu An was stunned. "Beastman? No?"

"Then are you a mixed-blood?" Yun Yuqing asked.

"You are the one who is mixed. I'm one hundred percent human." Zu An immediately got mad. "Why would you ask that?"

"No... it's nothing." Yun Yuqing felt a blush spread across her face, and her expression became unnatural. She was completely overwhelmed.

She glanced out the window, vaguely making out the lively, joyful atmosphere in the distance. She knew that holding up King Liang and the others wasn't easy, and she wondered if her husband felt as terrible as she did.

She sighed and bit her lip. Her legs could no longer support her, and she let herself sink completely into the abyss.

In this instant, a hint of pain creased her beautiful brow. It was obvious that she wasn't used to this feeling...

...

Meanwhile, in the banquet hall, Liu Yao couldn't help but joke around. "Little Yan seems a little weak today. It's not even that late yet! Why is your face already so red?"

"Really?" King Wu rubbed his cheeks, and sure enough, they felt rather hot. He said with a smile, "There's no way I can compete with you when it comes to drinking, great uncles."

Liu Yao said with a laugh, "Relax and drink up! Either way, your wife will surely prepare some wonderful recovery soup for you tomorrow. You're not like we old men, who have no one to care for us."

At the mention of Yun Yuqing, King Wu's hand, which was holding his wine cup, trembled slightly. However, he reacted quickly. "There's no need to worry at all, great uncles. If my lords find any of these entertainers and maids to your liking, take your pick. I promise that they will serve you well."

"Hahaha, even though Little Yan looks a little delicate, you sure are quite direct and straightforward! Come, cheers!" King Liang was also in high spirits.

King Wu smiled and drank from his cup, his mind drifting elsewhere. Who cares about some dancers and maids? I even...

I wonder what Yuqing is doing right now.

He was clearly in great pain, yet, as several different scenes played out in his mind, he felt a strange feeling of satisfaction. His heart was pounding like a drum. He could only keep drinking to hide his strangeness.

...

Elsewhere, Zu An and Yun Yuqing's fingers were intertwined together in the throes of passion. Spurred on by this, he moved to kiss her.

Unfortunately, Yun Yuqing turned her head to the other side and refused to kiss him.

Zu An laughed. He didn't mind.

He had to admit that this girl was an unrivaled enchantress. Her entire body was truly blessed by the heavens themselves, and she completely combined the purity of an angel and the allure of a succubus. Is there something wrong with King Wu? Why would he make such a perfect wife do something like this?

Or was it Yun Yuqing's own decision?

Is she doing this for the sake of the demon race?

He soon lost the will to think about these matters. It would be too much of a waste to spend this time dwelling on such thoughts.

The knot between Yun Yuqing's brows had eased, but she was still full of confusion. Why can't I sense any ki flow within him? Is he not yet stimulated enough?

She bit her lip. She had already sacrificed so much, and there was no option for her to stop halfway. She would be letting too much go to waste if she didn't obtain anything right now!

As such, she endured the humiliation. She let her waist grow even softer, and allowed herself to be tossed and turned by this storm...

Right at that moment, a ripple that resembled a black hole appeared several meters behind her, and a black figure rushed out from within. A thin, pitch-black longsword stabbed towards the center of her back.