

## Immortal 591

### Chapter 591: Midnight Visitor

Zu An didn't make them bow down in the end. The Sang clan's father and daughter became more and more moved, their expressions filled with admiration. They used to be enemies, so they understood just how far this young man went, and how formidable he became now.

"By the way, Ah Zu, how did you manage to keep your life in front of the emperor?" Sang Hong was curious. Sang Qien and Zheng Dan's beautiful eyes were also staring at him. This was what all of them were confused about. After all, all of them believed that he was dead for certain when they set out for the capital before.

"Perhaps it might just be his majesty's benevolence." Zu An said. "I offered up the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra to him. After reading it, he gave me some words of praise, and then bestowed upon me the title of baron."

His transaction with the emperor was the greatest secret. He naturally couldn't let others know about the truth.

"Benevolence?" A hint of mockery flashed past Sang Hong's eyes. If his emperor was benevolent, then he wouldn't be in the state he was in right now. After all, he had always devoted himself to working for the emperor, offending countless officials in the process. Yet in the end, he was discarded as soon as something happened.

He knew that this was an inevitable conclusion. Normally speaking, he wouldn't be too bothered by it, but it was because of this that his only son died, cutting short his lineage. How could he possibly view this situation rationally?

Sang Qien frowned and said, "Could it be that the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra cannot truly grant immortality?"

This was the only explanation. Otherwise, there was no way his majesty would have any reason to let him live.

Zu An smiled. "Immortality has always been a vague and imaginary concept. The truth has already been long distorted."

This was what he and the emperor agreed upon to say. Together with how the emperor dealt with him, most people would believe this. This way, Zu An would no longer be hunted down by everyone.

But King Qi was different. As the emperor's opponent, there was no way he would trust the emperor's unilateral words. He would definitely confirm it himself before he would feel relieved. Otherwise, if the emperor really ended up secretly obtaining immortality, then all of the scheming and arrangements he did throughout his entire life would become a joke.

Sang Hong instead had a ruminating expression on his face. With his understanding of the emperor, he knew that there was definitely something deeper to this matter. However, he didn't continue to ask about it and instead said in a meaningful manner, "Ah Zu, you've shown our Sang clan great grace. You

can ask us for anything you need in the future. Even though you have always been blessed with good fortune, it's still easy to be easily ripped apart inside of this capital city's great storm. That is why being careful is the most important."

"Thank you Sir Sang." Zu An was happy to hear that. After all, he knew far too little about the capital city's powers. But with Sang Hong, this old fox who had already been involved with the political circles for decades, everything would go much smoother.

Sang Hong continued, "But my age is already great, so I fear that I will not be as useful as before. I have suffered a great mental blow after experiencing the death of my son. You can seek out little Qien in the future if you need anything. She is not inferior to myself in terms of wit. I believe she can be of help to you."

Zu An was stunned. Only now did he realize that when he was in Brightmoon City, even though Sang Hong was already aged, his eyes were still filled with fighting spirit. Now, they were filled with a feeling of decline. He looked like he aged another decade during this time.

He sighed. He cupped his hands towards Sang Qien and said, "I will have to trouble Lady Sang in the future."

"Big Brother Zu is too polite." Sang Qien smiled. She gave her father a puzzled look. She obviously picked up on the fact that his father was playing matchmaker between Zu An and herself. But father, do you know that he and sister-in-law already... sigh.

"Oh, right." Sang Hong suddenly said, "My request to his majesty has already been approved, so we will set out for our home in a few days and bury Sang Qian's coffin together with the Sang clan's ancestors. This might take some time."

"Huh?" Zu An subconsciously looked at Zheng Dan. They were going to separate after just meeting each other again?

He knew about Zheng Dan's tricky situation. She shouldered the responsibility of this clan. Even though she didn't complete the ritual kneeling during the wedding ceremony, she was the Sang clan's officially wed daughter-in-law. As long as the Sang clan and Zheng clan do not annul the wedding agreement, then she cannot leave.

Of course, she can leave if she wants, but she would easily take on infamy and pressure from society. The Zheng clan would then be involved as well.

Zheng Dan also felt remorseful. She didn't want to leave either. She already persisted with waiting here for a few more days precisely out of worry for Zu An. Now that her lover was fine, she already felt at ease.

As for herself, she planned to stay with the Sang clan through these hardest times first. After all, the Sang clan lost their only son and were now arranging funeral matters. It wouldn't be too insincere if she brought up a divorce now.

Sang Qien snorted. These two are exchanging flirty looks in front of my eyes! Do you think I'm blind?

Also, my father has always been incredibly shrewd. Why hasn't he noticed anything regarding my sister-in-law?

Sang Hong coughed. He suddenly said, "By the way, Ah Zu, there is something I should remind you about. I heard that you became the crown prince's secretary. You must be careful in the eastern palace. The crown prince, even though he is a bit... Cough cough, a bit simple and honest, you cannot treat him like an ordinary fool. His deeper nature is actually extremely cruel, furthermore not bound by enough rationality. He has always done whatever he pleased. There are already far too many eunuchs and palace maids who have inadvertently provoked him and died because of it. That is why you must absolutely not offend him."

"Thank you Sir Sang for your reminder." Zu An recalled those unfortunate eunuchs earlier and nodded. It wouldn't be a big deal if an ordinary family gave birth to a stupid son, but it was different when this was the crown prince. He possesses tremendous authority naturally as a crown prince. Once he turned to evil, then the damage would be huge.

Sang Hong continued, "Right, there is one other matter. There was that Shi clan's young master who didn't get along with you in Brightmoon City. He is also one of the crown prince's important men."

"Huh?" Zu An almost forgot about that guy. Back then, that young master was in a hurry to leave Brightmoon City and flee back to the capital. Who would've thought that they would meet again so soon? It really was a small world.

Sang Qien said with a smile, "Big Brother Zu can even kill Mosquito Daoist, so a trifling Shi Kun is definitely not a problem. Furthermore, he has obtained his majesty's appreciation, so I do not think the Shi clan dares to pressure him with their status anymore."

"Thank you for your praise, Lady Sang." Zu An gave Sang Qien a strange look. Even though what she said was indeed true, why did it sound like she enjoyed watching him suffer?

They chatted for a while longer before Zu An bid his farewell. Even though he really wanted to spend more time with Zheng Dan, he couldn't do much with the Sang clan's father and daughter here.

He returned to Ding Manor. Uh, wait, no, this was now his own home.

Zu An discovered with shock that everything inside already looked completely new. The inside of the rooms had clearly been meticulously sorted out, and even the bedding and other things had been changed.

His first reaction was that Zhuxie Chixin sent someone to sort everything out, but he quickly rejected this thought. Those Embroidered Envoy knew how to kill, but there was no way they were adept at these tasks.

He noticed that the surrounding environment became a bit similar to the Chu clan in Brightmoon City. It was quite similar to the small courtyard he used to live in.

He was moved when he smelled the leftover scent of plants in the air. He knew that this was the work of Qiao Xueying.

Only she was this capable, moreover this familiar with the Chu clan.

"Snow, where are you Snow?" Zu An quickly looked around for that petite figure. He didn't know how she cleaned this entire courtyard. This was definitely a huge workload!

Even though she could use countless vines in place of her hands, she managed to turn such a large courtyard into such a comfortable place in such a short time. He wondered just how much sweat and effort she put into it.

But he didn't find her even after searching the entire courtyard. In the end, he found a letter by his bed, written in graceful calligraphy, "Something happened back in the clan that needs urgent attention. The master didn't return yet, so we will meet again in the future."

Zu An felt a bit apologetic. He could imagine how Qiao Xueying cleaned up the entire courtyard alone and waited for him with great expectation, and then the disappointment she felt when he didn't come.

He wondered what happened to her clansmen. He hoped that everything went smoothly.

He suddenly realized that all of the girls at his side seemed to shoulder great responsibility. Their lives were full of compromises and helplessness. He was the only one who was entirely alone, who seemed a bit more free.

He already toiled for several days on end. He decided to take a nice hot bath to relax. Even though the cultivators of this world wouldn't become dirty once they reached a certain point, he already spent a long time as a mortal before traveling to this world. There were some habits that he couldn't change

Even though no one helped him heat up some water, it wasn't anything difficult. He drew some water into the bathtub with his Blue Mallard ability, and then he summoned Daji to heat up the water with her fox fire.

Zu An bathed comfortably in the bathtub. Even though the technology of this world wasn't as developed as his previous world, with the abilities of cultivators, he could still raise his quality of life to a suitable standard.

The people of this world only used cultivation to kill. It really was a waste of resources.

Daji, who was kneeling beside him, was expressionless. If she retained her intellect and knew that she was using her own fire to help him take a bath, she might be so angry she'd beat him to death.

While he was leisurely bathing, there was a light knocking sound by the entrance.

## **Chapter 592: Questioning Life**

"Who is it?" Zu An was alarmed. He had just arrived at the capital and didn't know many people. Who would come to seek him out at this time?

"I..." A timid and lovable voice sounded from the entrance. Zu An was overjoyed. He was just about to undo the restrictions when he suddenly heard someone climbing over the walls.

He cursed inwardly, these restrictions really were shoddy! They weren't anything like his Embroidered Envoy residence in the palace. It would only stop some small thieves at best and didn't do anything against those with higher cultivation.

He quickly put Daji away to prevent this intruder from seeing her.

A black robed figure leapt over soon afterwards. Zu An waved his hand towards her. "I'm over here!"

This unknown visitor was dressed in a black cloak that wrapped around her entire body. She was stunned when she saw that Zu An was currently inside a bathtub. "You... are taking a bath."

Her voice was lovable and pleasant. This was clearly a girl.

Zu An patted the water. "Wanna come in?"

"Hmph, no way." The woman took off her cloak, her clothes inside were pure white. It was surprisingly Zheng Dan, who he had just met with. He told her his address earlier, and this place wasn't too hard to find.

"Why are you still wearing this?" Zu An asked curiously.

Zheng Dan curled her lips. "I couldn't help it, I sneaked out of the house. I still have to go back later, so it was too troublesome to change. If you don't like it, then how about I change here?"

"Nope, that's perfect." Zu An pulled her towards him.

"Ah..." Zheng Dan staggered a bit. Soon afterwards, she understood what he meant. Her pretty face became red. "Pervert."

Zu An laughed. He raised his hand and brought her into the bathtub. Her clothes were completely soaked through and pressing against her skin.

Before Zheng Dan could voice her surprise at her sudden increase in strength, she was overwhelmed with shame and embarrassment. "How am I supposed to go back afterwards?"

A flame appeared on Zu An's hand. "I'll dry your clothes later."

This was the good thing about the cultivation world. He could take care of many things without borrowing an external device.

"You've awakened a fire element ability?" Zheng Dan was shocked. Even though she was happy to see her lover grow stronger, the ability he awakened was the fire element!

Sang Qian was also a fire element cultivator after all. She felt like they only ended up the way they did because they were incompatible like fire and water, but now, her real lover was also a fire element cultivator! She couldn't help but feel worried that this was an ominous sign.

Zu An knew what she was thinking. He said with a chuckle, "Don't worry, I didn't only awaken the fire element. I can control water too." His finger spun, and then some water moved towards it.

The Blue Mallard ability allowed him a certain degree of water element control when there was water. However, he wasn't able to use the water element in the air for battle, and his control over the same element was also a bit inferior to someone who mainly cultivated this element.

But its greatest ability was allowing him to become more intimate with water, allowing him to even freely breathe underwater like a fish. Furthermore, it would become much easier for him to learn water element movement techniques and combat skills in the future. The only part that was lacking right now was awakening this water element ability. It looked like his only hope for this was summoning a water element valkyrie.

Zheng Dan's worry immediately changed to happiness. "Ah Zu, you're so awesome!"

Zu An moved over and said by her ear, "You know that there is something else about me that is awesome."

"You're so annoying..." Zheng Dan said, but her eyes were gleaming.

Zu An suddenly erupted with an unexplainable thought when he saw her soaked snow-white mourning gown. How could he still hold himself back? He threw himself at her with a growl.

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Meanwhile, on the other side, Qiu Honglei finally managed to convince the capital city division. She rushed towards Zu An's courtyard in the evening.

She was extremely excited when she thought about their reunion.

She already had a good impression of him when they were in Brightmoon City. Later on, they fought together on the way to the capital. He risked his life to protect her, and she also helped him suck out poison...

Ahhh was I too reserved back then? His wife Chu Chuyan is an ice beauty. Does he like her type more?

Hmph, isn't she just pretending to be decent? Do you think I can't do the same?

With a thought, her flirtatious smile immediately disappeared. Her aura instead became extremely dignified like the daughter of a prestigious house.

But her features were just too charming. Even if she was deliberately putting on this dignified appearance, she still gave off a feminine charm.

She took out a small mirror when she was outside of Zu An's manor and looked at the reflection.

Not bad, I washed my hair before I came out and put on some light makeup.

She could already tell from their previous interaction that Zu An didn't care too much for heavy makeup.

Her bearing seemed spot on too. She didn't look as flirtatious as usual. Yup, he'll definitely fall for me as long as I keep this up.

She put away her small mirror with a content smile. Then, she quietly walked up to knock on the door.

What, did you think I'll jump over the wall? Even though the restrictions aren't a big deal at all for me, jumping the wall is something a crude woman would do. As a wise and virtuous woman, of course I'll enter from the front.

Her lush green fingers were just about to knock on the door when she suddenly picked up some faint sounds from within. Her smile instantly froze.

She was so angry she kicked a rock on the side of the road. If she knew it was going to be like this, she should've just had those capital city division members burn down this whole place!

I'm so mad!

You have successfully trolled Qiu Honglei for +999 +999 +999...

Unfortunately, Zu An was completely preoccupied right now. He didn't notice the Rage points at all.

Qiu Honglei was about to leave, but she felt like leaving just like this was too frustrating.

Hmph! Is that Chu Chuyan inside? She always has that ice queen appearance on the outside, but look at her now! She's even more wild than those girls from Immortal Abode!

She decided to take a look at her 'disgraceful appearance' for herself. That way, she definitely wouldn't feel any inferiority when she met her face to face in the future.

She could no longer hold back when this thought emerged. She scaled the walls and leapt in.

She knew that both of them were experts, so she had to be careful. She moved about like a cat without making any noise.

Those excited sounds became louder and louder. She crept closer.

"They're doing it in the bathtub? Is Chu Chuyan that bold? Is her ice queen appearance just a front?" Qiu Honglei silently cursed.

She quietly peeped in. Her eyes immediately shone brilliantly.

She didn't take off her clothes? Because of the angle she was looking from, she couldn't see the girl's face too clearly. However, it was the same white clothes Chu Chuyan normally liked to wear.

She suddenly began to question life. What the hell is wrong with this world? Why would you take a bath with your clothes on? Aren't you guys in too much of a hurry?

Huh? Wait a minute... there's other uses for the mouth than just eating?

Who is the one from the Devil Sect here...

Only when the two of them came out from the bathtub and Zu An dried the girl's clothes with a fire he created from his hand did she snap out of her daze.

Zu An awakened the fire element? The quality of the flames looked pretty high too. They don't look like ordinary flames.

Hold on, this girl isn't Chu Chuyan!

She met Chu Chuyan on the way to the capital, so she knew that she was not Chu Chuyan, but rather the Sang clan's daughter-in-law Zheng Dan. She wasn't wearing a white dress either, but rather mourning clothes.

She snorted. What a vixen! Her husband had just passed away, yet she was already with another man.

Even though she already guessed at these two's true relationship, speculations were speculations. Seeing it for herself was something else. The scene she just saw was just too shocking!

After her clothes were dried, Zheng Dan quickly put on a cloak and left, clearly in a hurry to return.

Her legs almost gave out after running a few steps. Qiu Honglei's brows jumped when she saw this. Serves you right! It's your fault for going at it like a lunatic!

She couldn't help but be distracted for a moment while mocking Zheng Dan. There was a gap in her concealment.

"Show yourself!" Zu An knew that this person probably saw everything, so he didn't plan to show this person any mercy.

But he didn't expect the other party to not evade at all. She continued to stare at him coldly from the treetop she was hiding in.

### **Chapter 593: A Dangerous Job**

Zu An was shocked when he saw her face. He quickly redirected the force of his palm strike. This sudden change in stance was too much for him, and he crashed into the ground.

Qiu Honglei put on her usual, seductive smile. "What's wrong, young master? You're bowing as soon as you see me? How can I accept something like that?"

To hell with all that cold and aloof nonsense! This guy clearly appreciates the flirty and seductive type! If I hadn't spent some time undercover in the Immortal Abode, I would be far inferior to that Zheng Dan!

Zu An crawled back to his feet in embarrassment. "So it was you, Honglei. Haha..."

She cut him off before he could finish. "Honglei? Are the two of us that close?"

Zu An was left speechless.

Isn't that what I called you before? You were all smiles back then...

Zu An pretended that nothing had happened. "Why didn't you say something before coming over?"

Qiu Honglei snorted. "How could I have witnessed such a stunning scene if I had let you know ahead of time?"

"About that... haha..." No matter how shameless Zu An was, he was still in a rather fine pickle. "I'm really glad that I got to see you again."



Qiu Honglei sneered. "Really? It almost seemed like I'd arrived at a bad time, and was interrupting something."

"You're not interrupting anything at all! We were already done... ahem, ahem. Honglei, how did you know that I was here?" Zu An changed the topic again. It seemed like his bath was pointless. He was drenched in sweat again, and not just from the heat.

"Lord Ding, who used to live here, belonged to my Holy Sect, but you swooped right in and cleared him out. Of course I had to come to take a look." Qiu Honglei's regret was slowly building. She really should have had her subordinates clean this place out. Let's see if this playboy dares to keep messing around after that.

"So, he was one of yours..." Zu An was apologetic. "Sorry about that, really. I had no control over that matter. Zhuxie Chixin's men moved too quickly."

"No one can stop Zhuxie Chixin from killing the people he wants dead." Qiu Honglei wasn't upset because of this. She was upset because she had dolled herself up for him, but had been rewarded with that disgusting scene instead. She hadn't fully expressed her anger yet.

Zu An said, "Honglei, could you come down from that tree, please? Talking to you like this is making my neck sore."

With her in the tree and him on the ground below, he was forced to tilt his head upwards to look at her.

"No way. It feels pretty good to have you speaking to me like this." Qiu Honglei's lips curved upwards, her legs swinging in the air. Her mood had improved significantly.

Zu An couldn't help but point out something. "Um... You're wearing a dress. I can see..."

Before he finished, Qiu Honglei shrieked in alarm and jumped down from the tree. She smoothed down the front of her dress and stared at him, her face red. "Why didn't you say so earlier?!"

"I was trying to be tactful about it, but you didn't get my message!" Zu An looked extremely wronged.

Qiu Honglei stared at him, speechless.

Zu An chuckled. "Honglei, let's chat inside. It's a little chilly out here."

"It's your fault for not dressing properly," Qiu Honglei retorted with an angry huff. She turned her head away to avoid looking at his naked body.

Zu An laughed in embarrassment, and quickly found an outfit to put on.

Qiu Honglei looked around inside. "Oh? It's only been a short while, but you've cleaned up the interior rather nicely. I didn't expect you to have such skills."

"Haha... you're too kind..." Zu An obviously wasn't about to tell her that this was Qiao Xueying's work. Even though his relationship with Qiu Honglei wasn't quite sorted out yet, his survival instincts still told him that he should not reveal this to her if he did not want to die.

Qiu Honglei dropped herself into a random chair. Enough time had passed, and most of her annoyance had dissipated. "I didn't expect you to make it through such a tough situation alive. It's a feat worth praising, whether we are friends or enemies."

"I was just lucky. I should be thanking you for taking care of me along the way. If not for you, I wouldn't have been able to reach the capital safely," said Zu An sincerely.

"Hmph, you are making me sound like a rebel of the Holy Sect," replied Qiu Honglei. "You managed to escape death because of your own prowess. It had nothing to do with me."

Zu An nodded. "Of course, of course."

The two of them looked at each other in silence. They did not require words to express their true thoughts to each other.

Qiu Honglei coughed lightly. "Did you really hand the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra to the emperor?"

Zu An grunted in acknowledgement. Of course, there was no way he would tell anyone that he had tampered with the sutra.

"If that was your plan all along, you should have just handed it to my master. Who knows, you might have even been appointed vice sect master. That's much better than being a mere baron." Qiu Honglei was slightly unhappy.

"But that might have led to the emperor wiping out your sect," replied Zu An.

Qiu Honglei fell silent. It was true that, in its current form, the Devil Sect did not have the strength to fend off a full-scale offensive from the emperor. "But why would the emperor let you live? Unless... the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra cannot really grant immortality?"

Zu An smiled ambiguously, "I've already lost track of how many times I've been asked this question. Indeed, the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra cannot truly grant immortality."

This wasn't a lie. Even the real Phoenix Nirvana Sutra would not be able to grant immortality if it was cultivated on its own.

"Then why didn't you just release that information to the world earlier? Instead, you were forced to run for your life," Qiu Honglei complained, as she recalled the dangers he had encountered along the way.

"No one would have believed me even if I'd said it earlier," said Zu An with a bitter smile.

Qiu Honglei knew the truth in that statement. After another moment of silence, she said, "I've heard that you're now the crown prince's palace secretary?"

"That's right."

"Does the palace secretary keep him company during the day, or at night?"

Zu An looked at her strangely. "During the day, of course. The eastern palace is within the inner palace. How could they allow other men to remain inside at night?"

"That's good then, that's good." Qiu Honglei sighed in relief.

Zu An was puzzled. "Why would you suddenly ask that?"

"It's nothing. Just an idle question." Qiu Honglei's eyes sparkled. After a slight hesitation, she continued, "You shouldn't get too immersed in your role as the crown prince's secretary. Leave each day once you're done with your duties. Don't stay there too long."

Zu An looked her in the eye. "Are you saying this because you know that something will happen soon?"

"Nothing will happen." Qiu Honglei had calmed down as well. "However, there are rumors that maids and eunuchs often go missing in the eastern palace. I'm just worried that something might happen to you too."

Zu An felt a surge of warmth within him. "Thank you, Honglei, but I shouldn't have any trouble protecting myself."

"Okay," replied Qiu Honglei. She did not seem inclined to speak for much longer. "I'm relieved that you're all right. I'll head back, then."

"You're leaving so soon?" Zu An was reluctant to see her go.

Qiu Honglei turned around and gave him an ambiguous smile. "You did all that with another girl, and now you're coming onto me? Don't you feel like you're fooling around too much?"

Zu An forced a smile. "You know that's not what I meant."

Qiu Honglei snorted. "It's already getting late, so I have to go back. There's still a lot that I need to take care of back at the sect."

"Let me know if you need any help in the future," Zu An offered quickly. "I'm now a court official, after all. I can take good care of you."

Qiu Honglei gestured at the courtyard they were in. "The last official who worked with us had his entire clan wiped out. Are you trying to follow in his footsteps?"

Zu An was momentarily at a loss for words.

"I'm only helping you, not the Devil Sect."

"Hmph, isn't helping me the same as helping the Devil Sect?"

Despite her tone, Qiu Honglei felt her mood lighten. "Since you're having such thoughts, our friendship hasn't been in vain. We'll meet again if fate wills it."

With a tap of her feet, her dress fluttered about, and she took off.

Zu An quickly waved at her. "Oh, I forgot to say that your eyebrows look prettier than usual."

Upon hearing this, Qiu Honglei turned around and smiled sweetly at him. I guess I didn't pretty myself up for nothing.

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When Zu An entered the palace the next morning, his mind was filled with images of Zheng Dan's wonderfully supple figure, as well as the smile that Qiu Honglei had flashed at him just before she left. Each girl truly had their own unique charm, and it was really hard to say who had the upper hand.

I really am trash...

Even he was disappointed in himself.

It didn't take him long to reach the eastern palace. After his identity was verified, he was brought to the crown prince's study.

"The crown prince is inside. Please report on your own."

Zu An nodded. Standing outside the door, he announced, "Newly appointed crown prince secretary Zu An requests an audience with the crown prince."

"Come in, come in," came the crown prince's voice.

He could imagine just how excited the crown prince was from his tone. Zu An chuckled and pushed open the door, but was instantly on guard as a gust of wind blew towards him.

#### **Chapter 594: Falling Into Your Own Trap**

Zu An quickly dodged backwards. He saw some dirty yellow liquid pour down from above the door, and there was a cask below. He could smell the contents from far away.

He finally realized that someone placed a bucket of piss above the door ahead of time. Once someone pushed open the door and went inside, they would be covered in pee. Even though it wasn't anything life threatening, it would be incredibly humiliating.

Shi Kun's appearance appeared in his mind when he recalled Sang Hong's reminder. He sneered. You got away pretty quickly from Brightmoon City last time, but watch how I deal with you this time.

As such, he summoned Blue Mallard and sent back the dirty yellow liquid with even greater speed.

There were two people giggling behind the door. The fatty was obviously the crown prince, while the man next to him was much more handsome, a pretty boy no matter how you looked at him. It was just a pity that his sinister gaze ruined the feeling he gave off. But no matter how much it ruined his appearance, he was still much nicer to look at than the big fatty next to him.

This man was naturally Shi Kun. He almost exploded from anger when he found out that Zu An became the crown prince's secretary. What right does Zu An have to deserve this? He is nothing more than a scoundrel off the streets! Not only did he get the goddess he had chased after for so long, now he became the crown prince's secretary, equals with him?

This guy is a freaking lucky bastard! That was why he decided to arrange a bucket of piss to ruin his blasted luck.

The crown prince was stupid to begin with, and he loved this type of stuff the most. He was naturally easily convinced.

But he didn't expect the other party to react so quickly. After all, he even arranged a wind element formation by the entrance. The pile of piss was something not even a sixth rank cultivator could avoid.

When he saw the yellow liquid that was flying back, the crown prince's mouth opened wide. He couldn't avoid it at all on his own.

Shi Kun had the chance to block this stuff in his place, but that meant that he had to cover himself in this disgusting stuff. He even made sure to get the piss of the smelliest and dirtiest eunuch! His eyelids jumped, he really didn't want to be covered in this stuff.

As such, he decisively shifted to the side. The crown prince was not so lucky. Even though there was a eunuch who wanted to block in front of him, he was still covered from head to toe in this filth.

After the crown prince's initial shock, he broke out crying. "Wah... retch... Whose pee is this? Why does it smell so bad? I am definitely going to... retch..."

Shi Kun's eyelids jumped. He was really glad that he didn't take this stuff for the crown prince. Otherwise, he might be scarred for life.

Zu An was also stunned. He knew that things were going to be a problem from how the fatty was crying.

This damn fatty really is stupid! Even if you are going to prank someone, you don't have to stand right behind the door, right?

Shi Kun stepped out and said, "Brazen! You dare try to assassinate the crown prince? This is a great offense punishable by the eradication of your entire clan!"

The eunuchs all voiced out their criticism as well. After all, quite a few of them had piss on them too. Whose pee is this? Why the hell does it smell so bad?

The crown prince was about to say something, but his mouth was wide open earlier, so there was quite a bit that got in. He immediately threw up as soon as he opened his mouth. "Retch..."

Zu An's eyelids jumped. He could only look at Shi Kun and say, "It's you again. You're like a freaking haunted ghost."

Shi Kun harrumphed. "You can give up on any thoughts of sucking up. You attacked the crown prince! No one can save you now."

This was another reason why he didn't block in front of the crown prince. He was just trying to vent some anger by pranking Zu An, but if the crown prince was the one who was pranked instead, then that would be an absolute disaster. This brat Zu An was dead for sure.

A group of guards rushed over when they heard the news. They were stunned when they saw the situation in the room. What the heck is going on? Why is the crown prince's study so filthy?

But they noticed the crown prince's situation. Furthermore, with how Shi Kun was pointing at Zu An, all of them pointed their blades at Zu An to arrest him.

"Wait!" Zu An pointed at Shi Kun. "You said that I tried to kill the crown prince. Then what did I use to do so?"

“Of course it’s...” Shi Kun was just about to point at the piss bucket, but he suddenly couldn’t continue. What assassin would use a bucket of piss to kill? Who would believe him? It’s all his fault for trying to accuse Zu An with the worst crime possible. His first reaction was an assassination attempt.

Zu An immediately said, “It looks like you wanted to say this pile of piss, right? Everyone knows that I didn’t come in with anything when I entered the palace, all of the guards along the way can confirm that. Then that means that if it was my accomplice who prepared this bucket of piss, then his clan also needs to be eradicated too, right?”

Shi Kun immediately felt a headache. The one who prepared this bucket was him! Many people in the crown prince’s palace knew about this, he couldn’t hide this fact even if he wanted to. How could he have predicted that his prank would backfire like this?

Zu An was an orphan, and he even divorced Chu Chuyan. He really was alone, so it made no difference to him if he was punished with nine generations of clan eradication. However, he was different! The Shi clan was a huge clan. If they really were involved because of this, then he might be skinned alive!

He could only change his wording and say, “Even if it wasn’t an assassination, everyone saw you splash piss on the crown prince’s body. This is a great crime of disrespect and ought to be punished!”

“Indeed... retch...” That big fatty immediately agreed. He really was beyond grossed out. How could he still remember yesterday’s camaraderie?

Shi Kun laughed. This fella was dead for sure now that he had the crown prince’s support.

Zu An remembered Sang Hong’s warning. This fella indeed inherited his father’s mercilessness and viciousness.

But he also thought of a solution during this time. He used Blue Mallard, and then he sucked away all of the yellow liquid.

To a certain degree, pee was also a type of water after all.

The crown prince was originally entirely drenched, yet he became dry again a moment later. Even the disgusting smell in his mouth disappeared.

A yellow sphere gathered in front of him. It was clearly made of that disgusting liquid.

Zu An waved his hand, and then the ball flew towards Shi Kun’s mouth.

Shi Kun was laughing happily, so his mouth was wide open. How could he react in time? “Ugh... cough cough... retch...”

He clutched his own throat to vomit it out, but he couldn’t make it in time at all. The disgusting smell filled his senses. He could no longer hold back and threw up everything he ate from the night before.

Zu An, you fucking bastard!!!!

You have successfully trolled Shi Kun for +999 +999 +999...

Unfortunately, he couldn’t say anything right now. His mouth only instinctively retched. This wasn’t it, tears were pouring out of his eyes. Whose fucking piss is this? Why is the smell so strong?!

Zu An didn't pay him any more attention. He used his skill 'Befriend a Rich Man' on the crown prince. A hundred thousand taels of silver instantly vanished just like that, but the crown prince already subconsciously thought of him as a friend.

"This is fun! This is fun!" The crown prince clapped his fat hands. "Big bro, you have to teach me how to do that!"

Zu An sighed in relief when he saw his intimate expression. The last two uses of this 'Befriend a Rich Man' didn't go so well, he never got what he wanted. He was even instinctively worried that he might be scammed this time as well. Fortunately, it finally did something. It looked like this skill wasn't a complete scam after all.

Shi Kun was stunned. He didn't know why the crown prince would suddenly no longer blame Zu An. Wasn't the crown prince pretty petty and easily angered?

"Sure. However, crown prince, please do not call me big bro in the future. This doesn't conform with the rules." Zu An was worried that others might use this against him in the future, so it was best if he stopped this earlier.

The crown prince didn't pay this much attention. "Oh yeah, it's not only this, you have to teach me how to be invulnerable."

"Invulnerable?" Zu An was stunned.

The crown prince pointed at Shi Kun and said, "That's what he said. He said that your cultivation was clearly not high, but even though so many assassins came after you on your way to the capital, they still couldn't kill you. He said that the reason for that was because you were invulnerable to blades."

Shi Kun threw up so much he almost threw up his own bile. But he was already at the sixth rank, which made him a high ranking cultivator. He finally used his ki to expel the piss from within him. He carried that bucket and vomited again and again, almost filling it up.

When he heard the crown prince say this, he quickly explained, "Exactly! If the crown prince doesn't believe me, then have him stand by the door and throw knives at him."

## **Chapter 595: Vicious Tactics**

"Okay, okay!" The big fatty exclaimed, clapping his hands excitedly.

Zu An was speechless. This guy really is simple-minded. Even though he now considered Zu An a friend, he was blatantly willing to disregard his friend's safety for his own amusement.

He included Shi Kun in his ire. If you're going to drink piss, just drink it quietly. Why are you spouting so much garbage?

Shi Kun had a savage expression on his face. Not only had he failed to prank Zu An, he ended up embarrassing himself instead! How could he leave things like this?

He didn't know why the crown prince would let Zu An go after being drenched in piss, but now that the chips had fallen in this manner, he had to adapt his strategy.

He'd improvised when the crown prince found himself drenched in piss. This was the real plan that he'd carefully prepared.

He took out some blades he'd prepared beforehand and handed them to the crown prince. These had been specially withdrawn from the Shi Clan's treasury. They were heaven-grade weapons, the Immortal Beheading Knives. They could penetrate the defenses of cultivators and wound their souls.

Anyone struck by these knives would suffer damage to their souls, and it would take decades to fully recover from such an injury. Even for the greatest of geniuses, losing several decades of cultivation would be impossible to recover from.

If the injury was serious enough, it could even prevent the cultivator from making any further progress.

Putting aside those at the fifth or sixth rank, even someone at the eighth or ninth rank would never want to face such weapons. Even they would not be able to withstand their lethal effects. Of course, a low-level cultivator would not be able to hit an eighth or ninth rank expert with these knives.

Zu An frowned as he stared at the knives. There was a faint yet dangerous aura surrounding them. They did not look special on the outside, but it was possible that they had some special or unique feature to them.

He wasn't about to fall into Shi Kun's trap. He clasped his fist towards the fatty and said, "Crown prince, I do not have any ability to turn myself invulnerable. There's no need to test it out."

The crown prince hesitated. Inexplicably, Zu An seemed to be his friend, and since his friend was unwilling to go along, then he would let the matter drop.

However, Shi Kun quickly spoke up. "Everyone knows about the stunning skill young master Zu displayed in the Clans Tournament in Brightmoon City, as well as his outstanding achievements in the Ursae Dungeon. He even defeated a multitude of experts on his way to the capital, and learned the method to immortality, which piqued His Majesty's interest. Why does someone like that act so humbly?"

The crown prince's eyes lit up. "Big bro, you're actually that awesome?"

"Not at all." Zu An was speechless. Shi Kun surely had bad intentions if he was praising him like this.

Sure enough, Shi Kun added, "This humble servant knows that the crown prince has always been simple and kind-hearted, but this person knows the method to gain immortality. Even if he suffers an injury, he should be able to recover immediately. There's no need for the crown prince to be concerned."

Zu An almost burst out laughing. Simple and kind-hearted? Judging from their interaction so far, the crown prince was only simple-minded, with nary a trace of kindheartedness!

He sneered. "Brother Shi, have you perhaps forgotten His Majesty's order that all those who mention immortality idly are to be killed?"

Shi Kun's expression became solemn. "Of course I remember. However, I am not talking about immortality, I am merely saying that the technique you cultivate is formidable, admired even by His



Majesty. He even granted you the title of baron. Since you came to serve as the crown prince's secretary, you should help the crown prince broaden his horizons."

"Yes, yes, yes, I want to see this!" The crown prince was bouncing with excitement, his eyes full of expectation.

Zu An frowned. "I'm afraid it will be difficult to demonstrate the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra alone. Young master Shi, are you willing to cooperate with me in this demonstration for the crown prince?"

Shi Kun's expression changed. He had almost been killed at the entrance to the dungeon behind Brightmoon Academy previously. Even though he had grown in strength, Zu An had managed to stay alive even through his encounters with Mosquito Daoist, the Devil Sect's Solitary Eight, the dark elves, and all manner of assassination attempts. He didn't dare fight someone like that. If Zu An used this opportunity to exact revenge, he'd be dead before he could even begin to feel sorry for himself.

Thinking quickly, he said, "Young master Zu's skills are renowned. This humble one doesn't dare make a fool of himself."

"If you're not willing to put some skin in the game, then why are you talking so much smack?" Zu An snorted, looking at him with unfiltered disdain.

Anger surged within Shi Kun. This man was a rascal from the streets after all! He really had no idea why Chu First Miss had ended up favoring this man.

You have successfully trolled Shi Kun for 456 Rage points!

Shi Kun took a deep breath. "This isn't the time for us to duke it out amongst ourselves. We are here to demonstrate your incredible resilience to the crown prince, by allowing him to throw these knives at you. The crown prince is only slightly better than an ordinary person. Could it be that you're afraid to do this?"

Zu An said with smiles. "Young master Shi, are you implying that the crown prince's cultivation is low, and that he is a fool?"

"Shi Kun, is that what you are saying?" the big fatty asked, staring at him angrily.

Shi Kun immediately broke out in cold sweat. "Clearly that's not what I meant! The crown prince is the heir to the throne, and does not need to cultivate at all. That's what cultivators like us are here for! We are here to serve, and take on the most dangerous assignments on your behalf."

The crown prince nodded in satisfaction. "That's more like it."

Zu An had to admit that Shi Kun's reaction time and his eloquence were both top-notch. He'd even been able to tactfully extract himself from such a situation.

Afraid that Zu An would say something else, Shi Kun seized the initiative to speak. "The crown prince merely wishes to see your skills. What is the meaning behind all these excuses? Are you looking down on the crown prince?"

"Exactly, exactly!" A frown appeared on the crown prince's chubby face. He was clearly growing unhappy as well.

The guards seemed to be taking this situation very seriously. They were ready to arrest someone as soon as the crown prince gave the word.

Zu An knew that there was no way out of this. Therefore, he made his own proposal. "It seems a little boring to make me take on the blades alone. How about we make a bet? Let's see who can survive more of these blades—me, or young master Shi."

The crown prince immediately grew excited. "Yes, yes, yes! Shi Kun, go with him!"

Shi Kun felt the blood drain from his face. He never expected that he would end up shooting himself in the foot.

But he reacted quickly as well. He immediately remembered that this fellow might not know about the power of the Immortal Beheading Knives. He could just stall for time, and let him go first. That way, Zu An would immediately be seriously injured, which would prevent him from doing anything else. Once that happened, he could rely on his glib tongue to trick the crown prince further, and make it through this ordeal safe and sound.

If they kept stalling, though, another unexpected variable might just pop up. That was why he agreed to it immediately. "Fine. Young master Zu, please be my guest and go first!"

Zu An didn't object to it. Getting struck by a blade wasn't too hard to take, since he still possessed the Primordial Origin Sutra's powerful regenerative properties. Either way, he would have an edge over Shi Kun.

He began to think about how he was going to deal with Shi Kun.

Soon enough, several eunuchs escorted Zu An over to the wall behind the door. They made him spread his arms with his back against the wall. Apples were placed on his head, hands, and in between his legs.

Shi Kun grinned evilly, his scheme finally coming to fruition. He handed the knife to the crown prince.

"Crown prince, make sure to aim for the apples. With your skill, I'm sure you'll make every throw."

"Of course! I've been a master at throwing knives ever since I was young." The crown prince picked up the knife, eager to give it a try.

Shi Kun added, "Not only is this competition about individual cultivation, it's about courage as well. Anyone who flinches or makes the apples fall will be considered the loser. The loser will have to lick the other party's shoes and learn how to act like a dog. Do you agree?"

He sneered. Once Zu An does this, I'll let the entire world know what happened! Let's see how you'll face young miss Chu then! Not just young miss Chu—you won't be able to face another living being!

"Act like a dog? That sounds fun!" The crown prince was practically jumping up and down. It had been too long since he last experienced something as interesting as this.

Zu An sighed. The crown prince truly was simple-minded. However, he still nodded and said, "It's settled, then!"

Shi Kun wasn't expecting such a straightforward answer. He also realized that this guy probably intended to take the knives head on, and rely on his defense and his body's natural recovery. However, Zu An had no clue about the true power of these knives!

Even though it would be a pity that Zu An wouldn't really be able to lick his shoes like a dog afterwards, he'd still become a cripple for life. That was good enough.

He understood the crown prince well. The man couldn't be considered a cultivator at all. His Majesty had bestowed countless precious resources on him, and several individuals had forcefully transferred their own ki into him as well. Even though he was stronger than an ordinary person, he had zero clue how to utilize his ki.

Forget about making every throw—it would be a miracle if he hit even a single apple. Zu An was about to be turned into a porcupine!

### **Chapter 596: How is this Possible?**

Zu An suddenly spoke up. "I've agreed to this, but what if young master Shi goes back on his word after I take my turn?"

"Why would I go back on this agreement?" Shi Kun sneered. "With the crown prince here, and so many eunuchs and guards as witnesses, what is there to worry about?"

"Exactly! If he goes back on his promise, I'll kill him." The big fatty patted his chest as a promise.

Zu An sneered. If you were born an ordinary person, you might have actually been granted that authority. Unfortunately, you're a fool, so you don't wield any real power as crown prince.

Of course, if he wasn't a fool, he would never have sanctioned this preposterous competition.

Zu An shook his head. "If it was anyone else, I wouldn't be concerned. However, I've heard that young master Shi's father is the Grand Court Minister of War, one of the venerable Eight Dukes. Even His Majesty needs to show him some respect. There's nothing we can do to him even if he does shame himself today."

Shi Kun frowned. "What are you proposing, then? In my opinion, you're just making a ton of excuses because you're scared."

Zu An's tone was nonchalant. "If you truly wish to compete with me, then let's swear an oath, with the world as our witness."

He was always curious as to why the contracts of this world could not be violated. As his cultivation deepened, he gradually understood the workings of natural law. Contracts made under oath often resonated with the natural world, and therefore, there was no way of getting out of them.

Shi Kun found himself in a terrible spot. He had planned to chicken out later, but once he made this oath, he would have no choice but to take his own turn. He knew of the crown prince's sh\*tty aim, and he really wasn't looking forward to becoming a cripple as well.

A thought struck him, and he immediately raised his arm and made the oath. In moments, both of them sensed a wave of natural laws entering their bodies.

Shi Kun wasn't worried, since he'd woven a loophole within his oath. He had only promised that he would also take his turn once Zu An had taken his. He would have to stand against the wall as well, but he could admit defeat before a single knife was thrown.

Either way, Zu An would already be unconscious, thanks to his soul being ripped apart, so he wouldn't be forced to lick his shoes and pretend to be a dog anymore. He'd have much more leeway once that happened.

He was truly going for broke. For the sake of crippling Zu An, he did not hesitate to place himself in danger.

Seeing that he had sworn the oath, Zu An nodded in satisfaction. He leaned casually against the wall, and even leisurely checked the freshness of the apples. "I'm ready. Please begin, crown prince."

Little Xu and Little He, who had arranged the apples for him, wore looks of sympathy. Several years ago, the crown prince had decided to learn how to throw knives on a whim. He had placed apples on the bodies of eunuchs as well, and would only stop when he managed to hit all of the apples.

At the crown prince's level of skill, he would only hit one out of every dozen or so throws, mostly out of sheer luck. Each time, a dozen or so lesser eunuchs would suffer.

If they weren't hit in a vital spot, they could still recover after a period of recuperation. However, the unlucky ones who were hit in a vital area would die on the spot. This crown prince's secretary was probably done for. "Hurry up, get out of the way! I'm going to begin!" The crown prince waved the eunuchs away impatiently.

None of the eunuchs dared to stay where they were, and quickly slinked away. The guards also moved as far away as possible. They all stood several zhang away from where Zu An was standing.

Zu An felt his skin tingling. Is this crown prince's aim so bad that all these people have to stand that far away?

Shi Kun wore a massive grin. He could already picture Zu An's miserable ending.

Zu An's gaze fell on the blade in the crown prince's hands. The feeling of danger grew stronger and stronger, and he did not dare to take them head on, no matter how quick his regeneration was.

There's definitely something wrong with these knives!

Even though he didn't know what exactly was strange about these knives, Shi Kun had wanted him to go through with this really badly. This could only mean that he had definitely done something to them. Zu An was not about to face them straight up.

He stared intently at the crown prince. The crown prince's expression suddenly went blank, then he threw the blade.

\*Thud!\*

The knife hit the apple on Zu An's head with absolute precision and stabbed into the wall. It's hilt was still shaking slightly.

A strange silence fell across the entire room, as all its occupants stared at this scene with the same stupefied expression.

"How?!" Shi Kun rubbed his eyes. He thought that his eyes were deceiving him.

The knife was still stabbed straight into the wall, and the reactions of the eunuchs and the guards proved that he wasn't seeing things.

The crown prince was truly incredibly lucky! Damn it!

This sort of thing had happened before. After about a dozen knives, the crown prince would somehow manage to get one on target.

Shi Kun sighed in relief when he remembered this.

The crown prince threw a second blade, and Shi Kun was stunned by the way he had thrown it. He felt his heart thud. Why is his form so steady?

He whipped around. That knife had landed right between Zu An's legs, splitting the apple between them cleanly in half.

"Outstanding! The crown prince is amazing!"

Little Xu and Little He had overcome their initial shock. How could they let go of such a perfect opportunity to suck up to the crown prince? They both cheered wildly.

The guards joined in as well. Throwing with such accuracy wasn't difficult for them, but this was the crown prince! This was a feat worth praising!

Calm down, calm down. This must be a coincidence. Yup, a coincidence. Shi Kun consoled himself continuously, but sweat had already begun to trickle down his temples. None of his self-consolation seemed to be working. His conviction was already starting to waver.

The crown prince flung out two more knives, which struck the apples balanced on Zu An's right and left arms perfectly. Zu An was untouched! Shi Kun felt as if a bucket of ice water had been emptied over his head. His entire body went limp, and he was unable to support his own weight. He fell into the chair behind him, and even that didn't seem to be enough. He had to wiggle about several times to prevent himself from sliding all the way to the floor.

"How is this possible, how is this possible..." Shi Kun was panicking inside. It wasn't just because he couldn't successfully harm Zu An, though. He was worried about something else as well. Landing one throw could be a coincidence, but how could landing four in a row be coincidence as well?

Could it be that the crown prince was feigning simple-mindedness all along? Was he deliberately putting on such an appearance to fool everyone?

That makes sense. His Majesty is utterly incredible. How can someone like that give birth to an idiot? How could he insist on passing down the throne to him even if he knew that he was an idiot...?

This father and son duo are surely planning something huge!

They deliberately made the son seem foolish in order to bait out any disloyal subjects, so that they could capture them all in one go!

I'm done for! I haven't been all that respectful to the crown prince all these years, and often played and acted as though he was a fool. The crown prince surely remembers all of this. I'm done for, I'm done for...

Zu An didn't know that all of this was going on in Shi Kun's mind. He was the only one who knew the truth.

This crown prince wasn't hiding anything at all. His intelligence was truly at the level of a child.

This was exactly why he could use the jade badge to temporarily control the crown prince!

The badge was useful against creatures of lower intelligence. Zu An had considered this the first time he had met the crown prince. An ordinary person couldn't be controlled by the jade badge, but the crown prince was extremely stupid. To a certain degree, he could be considered a lower intelligence lifeform. Zu An was intrigued to know if the jade badge could control him.

He wasn't able to test this theory out before, but with this huge disaster looming over him, he had to give it a try. It was rather difficult at first, but once he used 'Befriend a Rich Man', the crown prince wasn't as resistant to him. He discovered that he could just about control him, which made him overjoyed. Only then did he agree to take part in this gamble with Shi Kun.

Zu An had used the jade badge to take control of the crown prince just now. In a sense, the one who had thrown the knives wasn't the crown prince, but him.

Given Zu An's cultivation, hitting the apples from such close range was easy enough.

Of course, he could only control the crown prince for a short amount of time, but it was already more than enough.

Zu An secretly counted his blessings. He moved away from the wall, removing the knives that were stuck in it and handing them back to the crown prince. Only then did he look at Shi Kun, draped limply in the chair. "Young master Shi, I believe it's your turn," he said, a huge smile on his face.

## **Chapter 597: A Tragic Sight**

Shi Kun's eyelids twitched, and he forced a smile with great difficulty. "Brother Zu completed the task so perfectly, there's no way I could do any better. I won't make a fool out of myself."

"Oh? Young master Shi, are you going back on your words?" scoffed Zu An. "You made an oath just now. Don't you remember?"

Shi Kun was about to cry. He never expected to shoot himself in the foot! He felt as though he was in a dream. He really couldn't understand how the crown prince had managed to land all four knives!

The crown prince was still buzzing with excitement. "Exactly! Hurry up and go already. I feel great today, and I want to enjoy this feeling a little more."

He was still a person, after all, and there was a limit to how long Zu An could control him. He was already incredibly thankful that he had managed to make it past the knife-throwing. The crown prince was now back to his usual self.

The crown prince himself felt as though he were drifting in the clouds. He had somehow made all four throws, yet he still sensed a strange emptiness within him. He wanted to do it again to relive the sensations.

Shi Kun looked at the crown prince in shock. Just a moment ago, the crown prince had given off a deep and unfathomable aura. Why did he now seem like an idiot again?

Is he doing this to get back at me?

No way. I've been at the crown prince's side for so long! Even if I never made any huge contributions on his behalf, I've still worked hard! I should still be closer to him than Zu An, right? The crown prince surely plans to help me out and strike the four apples as well. That way, everyone will be happy.

With this thought, the boulder weighing down on him finally disappeared.

Zu An was growing impatient. "Young master Shi, if you aren't going to compete, then just admit defeat. Crawl up to my feet and start barking like a dog."

Wait... Having your feet licked by a grown man seems a little gross. Is this guy a freak? Why did he come up with these stakes? I guess I can just about put up with it if I get to see him act like a dog.

Shi Kun believed that he had figured out what the crown prince was thinking, so there was no way he was going to put up with this. His rage boiled over immediately. "Screw you! Do you think I'll lose to you? If I have to do it, then I will!"

You have successfully trolled Shi Kun for 999 Rage points!

He walked over to the wall and spread his arms. "Come, put the apples on me! What do I need to worry about when the crown prince never misses?"

He showered the crown prince some praise, just as a failsafe.

"Of course! I don't miss." The crown prince's eyes weren't large to begin with, and there was so much meat on his face. He was smiling so hard from all the praise he was hearing that his eyes completely disappeared.

Little Xu and Little He felt their own eyelids twitching. Crown prince... How could you say that? Aren't you afraid that the spirits of all those little eunuchs that you killed would come back to haunt you?

After the apples were put in place, the crown prince suddenly muttered to himself, "I've already made four in a row. If I make another four in a row, that won't really show off my skills. How about I blindfold myself, and make the throws that way?"

Fear stabbed into him, and Shi Kun felt his confidence shatter. He immediately said, "The crown prince is wise and honorable. Zu An and I made a wager, and it must be conducted fairly! The crown prince can practice throwing blindfolded another day!"

Little Xu and Little He cursed him silently. What the hell are you saying? Who else would be the targets if the crown prince were to practice throwing while blindfolded on a different day?

But they were only lesser eunuchs, while Shi Kun was the heir of the Minister of War, someone of venerable status whom they could not afford to offend. They had no choice but to hold in their resentment.

"Oh, is that right?" The crown prince felt slightly dejected. "All right then, I'll begin. Hm... I guess I'll start with the head."

Shi Kun felt his knees begin to quiver.

"Crown prince, you are supposed to aim at the apple, not the head..." he reminded him weakly.

The crown prince's eyes went wide. "I know that! Do you think I'm dumb? If you keep talking, I'm really going to throw it at your head."

Shi Kun immediately apologized. "This subject doesn't dare!"

He was cursing the crown prince silently. Given this fellow's track record, it's probably better if he aims for my head. That way, he would surely miss it.

After witnessing the earlier miracle for himself, though, he didn't dare voice these thoughts.

The crown prince nodded in satisfaction, then raised the knife and took aim.

Shi Kun's heart was pounding. The crown prince hadn't done this earlier on! Every single throw had been quick, clean and efficient, yet he was taking his time to aim right now! Shi Kun couldn't help but sense something amiss.

He stared at the crown prince's hand. His heart seemed to be quivering in time with the motion of that hand.

The waiting was really the worst part. It would be better if he threw it right away.

As if sensing his thoughts, the crown prince finally threw the knife.

The knife was wobbling left and right, and did not have any of the grace of the previous throws.

Shi Kun was stupefied. What the hell?

Didn't you say you were going to aim at the apple on my head?! Why are you aiming down there? Are you aiming at the one between my legs?

But the angle doesn't seem right. It's a little too high. If it doesn't strike the apple, it'll strike me in the vital area below my belt!

He had the luxury of thinking so many thoughts because the crown prince's knife was travelling rather slowly. Shi Kun was a sixth rank cultivator, so he could clearly observe the knife's trajectory.



The surrounding eunuchs and guards nodded. This was more in line with the crown prince's usual skill. Wait, no, he's actually doing pretty well. It's only a few feet away from the target. After all, when he first started, there was an even chance that the blade would fly several zhang away from the target.

Shi Kun broke out in cold sweat. What do I do? What the heck do I do now?!

Is the crown prince trying to discipline me? But these aren't normal knives! If they were normal knives, he could still brace himself and go along with it, but these Immortal Beheading Knives wounded the soul of their targets! He would be crippled if it hit, let alone being hit in his most precious area!

Not only would his prospects be ruined, he wouldn't be able to live as a man anymore!

Just as the knife was about to reach him, he finally made his decision. Screw it! The most important thing is to retain my strength. After all, in this world of cultivation, one's strength determines how high one can climb.

This was why he moved. He reached out his hand to grab the incoming blade. The tip of the blade was barely an inch away from his precious jewels.

He sighed in relief. His mind was already trying to work out his next move. There was no way Zu An would let him off the hook. Did he really have to kneel down and lick his shoes?

Before Zu An could say anything, the crown prince said unhappily, "Shi Kun, what are you doing? Why did you suddenly move? The apples have all fallen as well. Is it because you thought that I, the crown prince, would miss?"

Shi Kun resisted the urge to curse aloud. Can't you see where you're aiming? I almost became Eunuch Shi!

He was just about to say something when the door slammed open. "What nonsense are you all coercing the crown prince into now?!"

A beautiful woman was standing in the doorway, staring angrily at everyone. This was none other than the crown princess, Bi Linglong, who Zu An had met earlier.

Bi Linglong had been born into one of the Great Zhou Dynasty's greatest clans. She was born beautiful and competent, so she had always been proud and arrogant. She was different from other women. Even though she was young, she boasted extensive knowledge, and harbored powerful ambitions.

She was married to the crown prince, the future empress. It should have been a dream for her, yet her husband just had to turn out to be a fool.

She would get angry whenever she saw her husband's stupid appearance, but since she was already married to him, what else could she do? She tried her best to urge the crown prince to study hard. The crown prince's aptitude at cultivation wasn't anything special, which meant that he should apply himself to studying how to manage the affairs of government. Either way, given his status, he did not really need to attend to anything personally.

When all was said and done, even if he didn't know how to handle government affairs, she would still be happy if he could become more like a normal person.

However, this stupid husband of hers never failed to cause her trouble. His shenanigans over talking to frogs the day before had already become the joke of the capital. Today, the crown tutor was supposed to arrange some assignments for him to aid in his study, yet she had suddenly heard from a maid that the crown prince seemed to be playing a game with some secretaries.

How dare you! Her rage had boiled over immediately, and she stormed over, even slamming the door open.

She couldn't openly criticize the crown prince, so she had to vent her anger on those around him. She had already decided that she had to discipline the people around the crown prince. Let's see who dares go along with the crown prince's nonsense then!

If this had been any other time, those at the crown prince's side would have already been begging for forgiveness. Now, though, no one was even looking at her. All of them were looking behind the door.

Her beautiful eyebrows knit together in a frown, and she turned around in confusion. She discovered that Shi Kun was standing behind the very door she had slammed open, his face deathly pale. He was holding onto a blade which had been stabbed into his crotch. Blood was still flowing down his legs, quickly forming a huge puddle.

Bi Linglong was stupefied. What the hell were these people playing at? They're stabbing themselves? Down there?

#### **Chapter 598: Repaying Evil with Evil**

Zu An gasped. He felt a chill run through his legs, and his hand subconsciously moved towards his own precious equipment. This is way too tragic... This dude might need to change his name in the future.[1]

It wasn't just him. Everyone else subconsciously closed their legs as well. Even the two eunuchs, little Xu and little He, swallowed. The scene confronting them made them recall their own purifying ritual.

Back then, there were many procedures that had to be met before they were purified. They couldn't drink water for a few days leading up to it, and they lived in a warm silkworm room. The blade was disinfected, and those with some money could bribe their attendants into giving them some anesthetic to numb the pain. Even so, they were in so much pain afterwards that they couldn't even take care of themselves.

But this Shi Kun had made no preparations at all! Furthermore, he didn't even scream during the entire process! He was truly a real man!

Wait, no. From this day forward, he won't be a man anymore...

Shi Kun's face was as white as a sheet of paper. Huge beads of sweat poured down his face. It wasn't that he didn't want to scream—rather, he was in so much pain that he didn't even have the strength to scream.

It was not just physical pain—his soul was in agony as well.

After all, the Immortal Beheading Knives were able to wound the soul directly.

Shi Kun could feel that something was now missing from his consciousness. He knew that it was likely that he wouldn't be able to cultivate much more.

Worst of all, he had been maimed in his most precious spot. He would not be able to call himself a man anymore.

If Zu An was the one who had done this, he could have leaned on the strength of his clan to make Zu An pay with his life, but this was the crown princess' doing...

The knowledge that he would be forced to swallow this grievance overwhelmed his mind with anguished fury. His eyes rolled backwards, and he fainted.

"What in the world are you all doing? Why would he..." Bi Linglong was stunned. She knew that Shi Kun enjoyed special status, and that he wasn't someone to be treated carelessly. The fact that he had suffered such a serious wound while in the company of the crown prince could cause an upheaval within the court.

Everyone was looking at her with the same strange expression. Only the crown prince didn't seem to mind. "He was holding the knife in his hand while standing behind the door," he explained with a smile "When you slammed the door open, the knife stabbed into him. Didn't you hear the sound of the blade slicing into him?"

Bi Linglong was speechless.

Now that she thought about it, she did hear something like that. But she had been so angry that she paid little attention to it.

She felt like she was losing her mind. What the hell is all this?! She was a glorious crown princess, yet she had personally castrated a man! If news got out, it would cause a terrible misunderstanding.

Zu An coughed and spoke up. "This isn't the crown princess' fault. Even if the crown princess hadn't been here, he still would have been wounded down there. The two of us swore a binding oath, and he has no one but himself to blame. If the crown princess hadn't come in, according to the provisions of the oath, he might have lost his life right away. The crown princess actually saved his life."

Little Xu and little He spoke out in agreement. They hadn't expected their grievance against the young master to be settled so quickly. You can offend anyone else, just don't offend us eunuchs![2]

Bi Linglong finally snapped out of her daze. She suddenly found Zu An much more pleasing. She coughed lightly, then quickly gestured towards some servants. "Quickly, notify Physician Xuan... have him brought to the imperial hospital. Tell the physicians to use the best medicines to treat him."

The blood gushing out of him was way too horrifying. She turned away resolutely. Out of sight, out of mind.

As Shi Kun was brought out, Bi Linglong was in no mood to berate the crown prince any further. On the contrary, she interrogated the eunuchs and guards about what had happened, and made sure that they got their stories straight, to hopefully prevent any bad blood between the Shi clan and her own family.

Zu An was left more or less alone. No one seemed to be paying any attention to him.

He looked at the knives on the ground. The crown prince had thrown them aside earlier on, fearing that the crown princess was going to scold him further.

Feeling curious, Zu An picked them up. Right from the start, he could sense that they were special.

After all, given his current strength and regenerative abilities, not even heaven-grade weapons should be able to pose such a great threat to him.

Shi Kun's reaction proved his suspicions. The pain that the young man had felt did not seem to only be physical—it seemed to also affect the soul.

He touched the blade, and the ice-cold sensation made his soul extremely uncomfortable.

As one walked the path of cultivation, one would use the ki of the world to temper one's flesh. From master rank onwards, one would then temper the soul.

Only after reaching the ninth rank and stabilizing the flesh, would the flesh become powerful enough to harness the power that came from the consumption of the soul.

Of course, this did not mean that those below master rank did not possess souls. The soul was always in existence, but master rank cultivators could manifest their souls and use it to attack their enemies.

For cultivators below the master rank, the soul was invisible and intangible, but it was still there.

If one suffered a wound to the soul, that was the end of their prospects for cultivation.

Shi Kun had actually brought out something so vicious to use against him! Zu An's expression grew cold. Shi Kun deserved every last bit of what he'd got.

Since no one was paying attention to him, he secretly stowed the knives away inside his Brilliant Glass Bead. Even though these blades were incredibly treacherous, there was no denying that they were priceless treasures. They might come in handy later on.

He noticed the characters 'Immortal Beheading' carved on the blades.

Immortal Beheading Knives?

Zu An was stunned. He remembered that, in the world of the 'Investiture of the Gods', there was a Daoist, Lu Ya, whose strongest weapons were the Immortal Beheading Knives!

He quickly shook his head. Even though these knives were formidable, the Immortal Beheading Knives of legend could cut down gods and devils alike. These were definitely not the same.

He counted them up. There were three in total. For some strange reason, he sensed that they weren't a complete set.

Wait... one is still stuck in Shi Kun's crotch.

Zu An's eyelids twitched when he remembered where the knife had embedded itself in. Suddenly, it seemed that he didn't want it anymore.

However, he knew that the entire set of this treasure, when used together, would be much stronger than if they were used individually, just like how equipment in his previous world functioned more effectively when the right sets were used together.

Since the crown princess was still busy admonishing the servants of the eastern palace, he headed straight for the hospital. He could use this chance to familiarize himself with the interior of the imperial palace.

He was stopped and questioned by several guards along the way, but each time, he whipped out the token that marked him as the crown prince's secretary and said that he was visiting the injured Shi Kun, on the orders of the crown prince and princess.

None of the guards doubted him. After all, they had never seen anyone who would dare lie about the crown prince's orders.

Of course, Zu An was a transmigrator, so he did not share the same superstitions as the natives of this world. Besides, it would be completely normal for the crown princess to send someone to check up on the wounded individual. Perhaps not now, since she had yet to recover from her shock, but she would surely send someone later on. Taking the initiative to make the trip was a favor to her. She might even feel grateful afterwards.

He arrived at the imperial hospital, which was buzzing with activity. All those within were clearly busy tending to the seriously-wounded Shi Kun, and could spare him no attention.

Zu An wandered around, and quickly found a bloody throwing knife lying on a desk.

His nose wrinkled in disgust when he thought about where the blood had come from, so he picked up a pot of tea and rinsed it thoroughly, then wiped it clean with a piece of cloth.

The people around him who noticed his actions thought it strange, but they took note of his eastern palace uniform, and did not say anything. At the moment, all of their attention was on Shi Kun.

The imperial physician's voice boomed across the hospital.

"Has the wound been cleaned yet?"

"After I reconnect it with my water element technique, immediately apply the flesh reconnection ointment and fasten it in place! Be quick about it!"

"Also, why isn't the medicinal decoction[3] ready yet? We need him to drink it as soon as we are done with the procedure! Remember that you cannot add too much water!"

...

Zu An had a strange look on his face. He didn't think that this world was capable of reconnecting tissue! The world of cultivation and the world of science really did achieve the same result through different means.

As he sighed in astonishment, he suddenly heard Shi Kun's mumbled curses.

"Go to hell, Zu An... you bloody bastard... I hope your corpse gets chopped up to a million pieces..."

“Asshole...”

...

You have successfully trolled Shi Kun for 999... 999... 999...

Shi Kun’s words were muffled, so Zu An couldn’t hear them too clearly, but Shi Kun was surely cursing Zu An even while unconscious. It was easy to imagine just how intense his hatred of him was.

Zu An’s eyes narrowed. You’re the one who wanted to harm me, and it was the crown princess who wounded you. Why are you hating on me instead of her?

Zu An’s expression grew cold. This twisted snake had been constantly scheming against him. How should you repay evil? With evil, of course!

Even though he always considered himself a good person, he was no Mother Teresa. Since you want to kill me, I have no choice but to kill you first.

He looked around. There were so many physicians around Shi Kun, and they were watching him closely, and he was surrounded by people with powerful cultivations as well. It was way too hard to kill Shi Kun right now.

### **Chapter 599: Explosion After Reconnection**

As Zu An was fretting over the medicinal decoction, the physician suddenly said, “Ask them to hurry up! Why isn’t the medicine prepared yet?”

Immediately, a young assistant took off towards a small lodge, which was emitting a strong medicinal smell. It was clearly the place within the hospital where the medicine was being prepared.

A thought came to Zu An, and he followed quietly.

There were many people inside the medicine preparation room, and each one of them was focused on the medicine furnace in front of them. There were many imperial concubines in the imperial palace, and each one of them had their own special tasks.

Of course, the most important one right now was the one with Shi Kun’s medicine. Several medical assistants stood around watching, whispering amongst one another.

Zu An was speechless. How am I supposed to do anything with so many eyes looking on?

“Hurry up! Isn’t it done yet?” A voice demanded urgently.

“It’s done, it’s done.” The assistant who was watching the furnace scooped out the medicine inside into a bowl.

Zu An secretly used his fire element to make the fire in the furnace burn more fiercely.

Startled, the assistant looked at the furnace in shock. “Huh? Why did the fire suddenly become bigger?”

After all, the intensity of the fire was extremely important in the preparation of medicine. A single mistake could lead to a drastic difference in medicinal effects, and might even completely ruin the precious ingredients.

In the ensuing chaos, Zu An flicked his finger lightly, sending a small drop of liquid into the bowl of medicine.

The assistant holding the bowl of medicine was distracted, so no one noticed this drop of liquid.

Not losing sight of his own responsibilities, the assistant quickly carried the medicine back to the operating room.

Positioning himself nearby, Zu An watched everything closely. Quickly, cries of alarm filled the room.

“Huh? Why is blood suddenly gushing out?”

“Bring me the hemostatic now!”

“We can’t stop the bleeding! Young master Shi is about to stop breathing!”

“Bring me a Life Return Pill, let’s see if it can help him to hang on.”

“It won’t work, he’s bleeding too much.”

...

An unnerving silence fell across the room. It was several heartbeats before someone spoke.

“I’ve heard that young master Shi was a romantic young master, but I didn’t expect him to still have such thoughts even in such a state... Trouble truly follows those who invite it.”

“Indeed. Doctors cannot save those who wish to die. It is not that our skills were insufficient. Rather, the young master is too... sigh.”

“It is natural for something to go wrong, given this degree of injury. None of us are really to blame for this.”

...

Zu An almost burst out laughing when he heard the discussion. These physicians looked honest, but they were quite good at deflecting blame.

Of course, Zu An had no idea that these physicians had already mastered the art of looking after their own hide after their long years of service in the imperial palace. Saving others was already a secondary concern to them—remaining free of blame was the most important thing. There were so many important individuals in the palace. If any of them took their anger out on these physicians, they would have long since been executed.

Zu An had been slightly worried about the fallout from this situation, but these physicians had unexpectedly resolved the issue for him on their own. As such, he returned to the eastern palace.

The liquid that he’d added into the bowl hadn’t been poisonous. If he added poison, it would have been too easy for the physicians to notice that something was wrong.

It was 'Bull's Cream'. He had held onto it ever since Brightmoon City, but never expected that it would come in handy here.

This drug wasn't toxic. Instead, it was one of the world's most famous aphrodisiacs. It wouldn't have done much if Shi Kun had ingested it normally, since he could have found some women to satisfy his desires.

However, his organ had been chopped off, and had just been miraculously reconnected by the physician, so it was still extremely fragile.

It shot straight up under the effects of 'Bull's Cream'. How could that fragile thing resist such a violent movement? It snapped right off!

What followed was an inevitable stream of blood. These doctors fed him a Life Return Pill, which was a powerful medicine in its own right. Coupled with the 'Bull's Cream' already circulating through him, he was beyond saving.

Each year, no matter how much the castration process within the palace was perfected, many eunuchs still died from blood loss. That was why the physicians were not too perturbed by the result.

Zu An's expression was cold. This Shi Kun had targeted him continuously back in Brightmoon City. He would have let things slide if he had just behaved himself after returning to the capital. Under the Shi clan's protection, there was little that Zu An could have done to him. However, he just had to court death.

...

He returned to the eastern palace. As he was about to go in, a woman walked out.

They were about to run into each other, so Zu An quickly took a few steps back. He had already recognized the crown princess. He wasn't an idiot. Publicly making contact with a crown princess was a huge offense.

The capital was full of watching eyes, and he didn't want there to be any trouble.

The crown princess backpedaled as well. She seemed unsteady and about to fall, but Zu An looked down respectfully, not planning to help her at all.

The maid behind the crown princess reached out a hand to steady her, then glared at Zu An. "You're rather bold! You almost rammed into the crown princess!"

Is that what you call ramming? You guys clearly don't know what ramming really means.

Zu An cut short his random thoughts and looked at the maid. He remembered her as the same maid he'd met beside the pond. Her name was Rong Mo...? He didn't expect her to be a powerful cultivator as well.

The crown princess frowned. "Where did you go? I was looking everywhere for you."

Zu An replied. "I went to the hospital to check on Shi Kun's injuries. That act can be considered an expression of the eastern palace's consideration."



Even though he hadn't touched her, he could still smell her scent from this distance. He had to admit that this crown princess was a great beauty. Unfortunately, she was just a tad too fierce and arrogant. You're not even the empress. Who the heck are you putting on that insufferable act for?

The crown princess sneered back at him. You? Concern for Shi Kun?

She had already determined the details of what had happened from the eunuchs and guards, and also learned about the grudge between the two of them that had developed in Brightmoon City.

Even though she knew these things, she still had to make a show of being courteous. "Good. We should have sent someone. Servants, have some gifts sent to young master Shi."

Zu An had a strange look on his face. "There's no need."

"Did you already bring him some gifts?" The crown princess was shocked. A hint of viciousness appeared in her eyes. She had to admit that his actions marked him as a rather intelligent fellow. However, it wasn't always a good thing for servants to be too smart.

"That is not the case." Zu An paused for a moment, and then said, "When I arrived at the hospital, I heard the people inside say that the young master's wound suddenly opened up again, and there was no way for them to stop the bleeding. He has already passed on."

"Passed on?" The crown princess trembled, her complexion turning pale again. After all, she had been the one who pushed in that blade!

Even though there was no chance of the Shi clan condemning her, the Shi clan was still a great clan. Trouble would surely follow hot on the heels of such an incident.

She took a deep breath. "Summon everyone who was involved in the matter just now. Let's make sure we are all clear on what just happened."

She was rather decisive. Everyone had to be singing from the same hymn sheet if she was going to absolve herself and the crown prince of any responsibility.

The crown princess thought about shifting all of the blame onto Zu An, but she considered that he might retaliate by revealing that she was the one who slammed the door open to cause Shi Kun's injury, and gave up on the idea.

One after another, the crown princess summoned everyone connected to the affair. This continued for many hours. Zu An even had to admit that this crown princess was much more intelligent than her stupid husband. In her version, the people in the eastern palace were much less culpable for what happened, and the enmity of the Shi clan was redirected to the physicians instead.

Unfortunately, she had no idea that those physicians were also wily old foxes, and had already come up with a plan to shift the blame.

Who knew how things would develop later on?

Just as Zu An was about to leave the palace after his shift, a lesser eunuch stopped him. "The empress invites you for an audience."

Zu An was taken aback. He did not know why the empress would summon him. They didn't know each other at all! The only connection between them was that he had met her uncle before, Guard General Liu Yao.

## **Chapter 600: Insider Details**

Although Zu An found this rather strange, it was still a summons from the empress, so there wasn't anything he could do about it.

He followed the two lesser eunuchs to the emperor's Palace of Peace. He wanted to get a bit of information from these eunuchs. "Greetings, eunuchs. What shall I call the two of you?"

The two lesser eunuchs immediately smiled. "Greetings, Lord Zu."

Since the bodies of eunuchs were lacking, they were always subconsciously treated as people of lower status. Only the eunuchs of the highest status were grudgingly shown some respect by most officials, who were full of contempt towards lesser eunuchs. It was almost as if even speaking a single sentence to them was beneath them, and the disgust in their eyes could be seen from a mile away. It was rare for them to encounter someone who treated them well, so they appreciated it.

"I'm little Zhuo," said the slightly chubbier one.

"I'm little Gui," the skinnier one replied.

Little Gui?

Stunned, Zu An examined the fellow's aura. He was indeed a genuine eunuch, and not a fake like Wei Xiaobao.[1]

Regardless, he was still happy to hear a familiar name. "An excellent name. The two of you have made me remember things about my homeland, and I feel a greater kinship towards you. Here's a small gift. Please do not refuse them."

He gave each of them a pearl. There had been a ton of this stuff in the red dragon's cave outside of Brightmoon City, so he gave them one each.

As someone who had extensive knowledge from his past world, he understood how terrifying of an existence eunuchs were. It was never wrong to get on good terms with them.

The two lesser eunuchs' eyes grew wide when they saw the massive pearls, and quickly looked around. When they saw that no one had noticed, they slipped them into their sleeves and said, "Lord Zu is forthright after all!"

"Your future prospects are surely boundless!"

"I'm not worthy of such praise, really," said Zu An with a laugh. Their conversation went extremely well after that.

When he figured it was about time, he said casually, "I wonder why the empress sought me out this time."

“How can servants like us fathom the thoughts of our master?” The two lesser eunuchs clearly felt slightly embarrassed to say this after receiving such great gifts. As such, they added, “However, the empress has always treated people well. Lord Zu need not worry too much.”

“Oh, the empress’ mood seems to be rather good today.”

“That’s good then, that’s good.” Zu An sighed in relief.

Little Gui continued quietly, “The empress is kind, but you absolutely must not offend Eunuch Lu! He is extremely fierce.”

“Eunuch Lu?” Zu An was perplexed, but their subsequent explanations helped him clarify matters.

This Eunuch Lu was someone from the empress’ hometown, and they had entered the palace at the same time. The empress trusted him greatly, and because of his ability, he quickly became the manager of the Palace of Peace. Most of the affairs in this palace, large or small, were under his management.

“Eunuch Lu’s cultivation is extremely high. He is the publicly acknowledged number two among eunuchs in terms of cultivation. He is second only to Eunuch Wei.”

“Wait, I think he’s in the top three. There was a Eunuch Mi as well, I recall.”

“That man has already been missing for a few decades. You can’t include him anymore.”

...

Zu An had a weird look on his face as he watched their conversation. They were probably talking about Wei Dan and Old Mi! It was easy to imagine how high Eunuch Lu’s cultivation was, if he was considered on the same level as those two.

Furthermore, this Eunuch Lu actually came from the empress’ hometown and joined the palace at the same time. Could they have been a pair of sweethearts who were forced to separate because the woman was taken in as a concubine? Was the man unwilling to abandon her, joining the palace as a eunuch as well?

Damn. Just what kind of character do you have to have to do something like that...?

The more he pondered over it, the more likely it seemed. Chu Chuyan had told him that the current empress wasn’t the crown prince’s mother, but that woman’s younger sister. Just before the former empress died of illness, for the sake of her clan’s glory, she had suggested that her younger sister take her place.

There was a high chance that she already had a lover before she joined the palace. However, because of her clan, she had no choice but to accept this fate...

Chu Chuyan or Sang Hong would not have any inkling of these insider stories. Buying off these two eunuchs with two pearls was definitely worth it.

He had to find a chance to get to know little Xu and little He in the eastern palace as well...

Sigh, it’s not my fault I have so much money that I can do whatever I want.

They soon arrived outside the Palace of Peace. “Empress, we have arrived with Lord Zu,” the two lesser Eunuchs announced respectfully.

“Come in,” replied a gentle voice, which also carried a hint of prestige. This air of majesty had probably developed naturally, after being the mother of an empire for some time. Despite this, her voice still sounded extremely gentle.

Zu An couldn’t help but bring the crown princess to mind. Her voice was also rather pleasant to listen to, but she was just too fierce. You should learn from the empress.

The two lesser eunuchs pushed open the doors and led Zu An inside.

Zu An didn’t have many reservations. He had been given a secret mission by the emperor, so it was unlikely that the empress would set a trap for him here.

The interior was filled with a sandalwood and rouge scent that immediately calmed the mind of all who entered.

A lingering wisp of killing intent had still been lurking within his mind after dealing with Shi Kun, but it all disappeared now.

He looked inside. A pearl curtain separated the room into two, behind which was seated a phoenix-robed woman on a tall seat. The smoke from the burning sandalwood incense beside her made her seem hazy.

Even given Zu An’s current cultivation, he could just barely make out a middle-aged beauty. Her skin was bright, and her features were dignified. It wasn’t fair to call her middle-aged, as the women of the world of cultivation retained their beauty well. Once a cultivator reached a certain level, they could ensure that their appearance did not age too quickly.

In a world of immortal cultivators, a lady who looked eighteen, could actually be eighty, or even eight thousand years old.

This was a slight exaggeration, of course—time would still leave its marks eventually. However, compared to his past world, the effects were already considered very minimal.

Even though the phoenix robes she wore were loose, they still couldn’t fully hide her voluptuous and elegant figure. The most eye-catching part was her ridiculously mature lower body.

Her ass is huge! James Harden would be a fan for sure.

Zu An quickly greeted her while admiring her body. “Your Highness, I offer my greetings.”

One thing good about this world was that officials only needed to offer a normal greeting—they didn’t have to kowtow. The forms of address weren’t as strict as the past dynasties of his world either.

They were all cultivators after all, so they were all proud. Kneeling was just a little too shameful, and it could easily ruin one’s confidence in cultivation. Having considered all this, the emperor chose not to force the issue.

“You’re rather daring. You actually stared at me for that long,” said the empress. Her voice was cold and indifferent.

The other visitors to the Palace of Peace were all extremely respectful, and none of them dared to look directly at her. Yet this man had stared at her, and with such a fierce gaze as well! He even looked her up and down! What kind of place does this man think he is in? Does he think I'm a girl from a whorehouse?!

You have successfully trolled Liu Ning for 344 Rage points!

Following her rage, a middle-aged eunuch suddenly walked out, looking at Zu An coldly. A powerful wave of pressure spread outwards from him.

This was most likely Eunuch Lu, whom the two lesser eunuchs had spoken of. Zu An hadn’t noticed him standing in the shadows. He seemed to be at the ninth rank, at least.

Zu An began to sweat buckets. He hadn’t actually stared at her that long, but this woman was just too sensitive. He immediately explained himself. “I was expecting your highness to be a dignified and imposing woman, but I was not expecting you to be so gentle and beautiful. That was why I couldn’t help but let my gaze linger. I must ask the empress for forgiveness.”

“Gentle and beautiful?” The empress was taken aback, falling into a slight daze. It had been so long since someone complimented her beauty. The emperor was busy with his work and rarely visited the Palace of Peace, while no one else dared to say such things to her. Who was left for her to impress with her beauty?

Eunuch Lu? Hmph!

She wasn’t willing to show her vulnerable side right now, though, so she smiled and said, “Your mouth is rather slick. I now understand how Chu First Miss was duped.”

Even though she called him slick, she still had a big smile on her face. She wasn’t a fierce or violent person to begin with, so her anger quickly dissipated as well.