

Immortal 651

Chapter 651: The Chicken has Flown the Coop, the Eggs are Broken

Zu An was disappointed. "I saved you and your sect master, yet your sect's people want me to agree to something else? Isn't that going a bit too far?"

Qiu Honglei was extremely apologetic. "This isn't what I want either, but I do not dare tell anyone that you saved the sect master. Once someone knows, then this secret has a high chance of leaking out. I'm worried about your safety in the palace."

Zu An knew that he had misunderstood her. "You've thought things out in more detail than me."

The less people who knew about a secret, the better. Furthermore, there were many factions in the Devil Sect, so who knows if they would sell themselves out or not. That was why remaining hidden was a wise choice.

Qiu Honglei continued, "I don't know if master told you yet, but she rose up to her position by purging many factions. Now that she is seriously injured and missing, many people have begun to stir restlessly in the sect. That is why even if she gave the orders, these people still might not listen."

Zu An snorted. "Your sect's people sure are loyal."

Qiu Honglei sighed when she heard the sarcasm in his voice. "Loyalty isn't our creed. In the end, what everyone trusts is the law of the jungle. Whoever has more strength has the last say. There is still some reason behind why the outside world calls us the Devil Sect."

Zu An said, "Then what kind of justification does your sect need to work with me?"

Qiu Honglei explained, "There were members from all different factions that were captured. If you can rescue them, then they will definitely agree to help."

Zu An frowned. Why aren't those guys dead yet?

Any assassinations attempted against the empress or crown prince was an offense punishable by nine generations of executions. There were so many people watching these prisoners right now. How could he possibly save them?

Qiu Honglei continued, "I know that this is extremely difficult as well, so if you really cannot save them, it's enough if you can give them an easy death and prevent them from suffering any more."

Even though they couldn't see what was happening, they could imagine just what kind of suffering those people went through inside the imperial prison.

"Fine, that's something I can try to do." Zu An agreed. Yun Jianyue gave him a similar request before. Since he could gain the favor of two people at once, then that was more than he could ask for.

"Okay, I'll discuss things with our sect now. You should rest for a bit here." Qiu Honglei quickly left.

Since the Devil Sect's center of operations was in this government brothel, many of the sect's higher level figures were here.

Zu An nodded. It didn't make sense for him to show up in this type of situation, so he just stayed here by the window out of boredom. Suddenly, he was shocked to see that something unexpected happened below.

Chu Youzhao's cheeks were completely red, her eyes blurred. She was already drunk.

Look at this silly girl. Do you have no idea how much alcohol you can tolerate? You came to a brothel and got this wasted?

Qin Guangyuan frowned. "Youzhao is still too young. He couldn't drink much, as expected."

Cheng Gang laughed and immediately said, "Lady Shuangyue, young master Chu is drunk, so please take him inside for some rest. You better take care of him well!"

Lady Shuangyue blushed. She said timidly, "Being able to serve young master Chu is my fortune."

Her eyes glanced towards Chu Youzhao from time to time, perfectly displaying her feminine charm.

"Don't... don't touch me." Chu Youzhao subconsciously pushed her away. However, her entire body was weak from drinking, so she didn't have the strength to push her away at all.

"Young master, I will bring you inside for some rest." Shuangyue said with a gentle voice.

"Mm... mm..." Chu Youzhao replied hazily.

Cheng Gang was stunned by these two's beauty when they were next to each other. He even felt like the delicate and pretty Chu Youzhao was a bit more alluring than Shuangyue. He felt a wave of heat surge within his belly. Should I sneak into the room later on and join in on the action?

He was already a regular customer of Shuangyue's, so she shouldn't refuse, right? But this young master Chu's status is a bit special... If news of this got out, then it would become extremely troublesome.

What the fuck? Why the hell am I going after a man?!

It's all this kid's fault for being too good-looking!

Qin Yongde who was busy playing with the girl in his embrace snapped out of his daze. He said with a smile, "Shuangyue, this little brother of mine is still quite immature. You need to be more gentle with him later."

"No... don't..." Chu Youzhao mumbled, refusing subconsciously. However, her weak voice was completely ignored.

Shuangyue responded with a lovable smile. "I'm always gentle, okay? How about I give young master Chu a little bonus later?"

Speaking in this type of manner in a government brothel was completely acceptable.

Sure enough, the others were amused as expected. They all roared in laughter. Shuangyue carried Chu Youzhao inside.

Cheng Gang's eyes moved around. He picked up his girl and walked towards the entrance as well. "Young masters, please carry on. I'm going to have some fun first, hahaha."

Vulgar... Qin Guangyuan and Qin Yongde both said at the same time. But they both suddenly found the girls in their arms much more enchanting.

Qin Yongde couldn't hold himself back any longer either. He got up with his hands around two girls' waists. "Bro, I'm heading inside too, haha."

Qin Guangyuan's face darkened. This fella has no willpower at all! With their status, what kind of beauties hadn't they met before? Was there a need to be in such a rush?

"Young master Qin truly is a steady minded gentleman..." The girl next to him reached out her hand and moved her finger around his chest.

Qin Guangyuan's entire body stiffened up. Ahem... these girls from the government brothel are quite different. Loosening up once in a while isn't so bad either.

Then, he was brought into a small, secluded room by this girl. Sounds of the bed shaking quickly ensued.

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Zu An, who was quietly watching all of this, was stunned. These Devil Sect's girls are really good at what they do! Even these experienced young masters ended up unknowingly falling into their trap.

Light and gentle footsteps sounded at this time. Shuangyue arrived behind him. "Young master, I've already put young master Chu to sleep. Should I arrange for someone to service him?"

Chu Youzhao was Zu An's younger brother-in-law, so she wanted to ask him to make sure. Of course, there was no way she would do it herself. She had more than enough girls under her to finish the deed.

"There's no need. I'll pay him a visit myself." Service her with another girl? Won't her crossdressing matter be completely exposed then? He couldn't help but ask, "Did you notice anything... peculiar about his body?"

He wondered if anything happened when Shuangyue carried her inside. After all, it was because he accidentally touched her that he found out something was off.

"Peculiar?" Shuangyue was confused. "What is the young master talking about?"

Zu An sighed in relief when he saw that she didn't notice anything. "It's nothing. You should do what you need to do. I'll take care of him."

"Okay." Shuangyue had a weird look on her face. This man came all the way to a brothel, yet he didn't care about the beauties at all and instead went to visit his little brother-in-law. Don't tell me that he likes men?

But young master Chu was indeed handsome. I might have been moved too if I was a man.

She brought Zu An down the stairs. Suddenly, he noticed a dark figure rush into Chu Youzhao's room. Zu An's expression changed and he quickly rushed over.

Cheng Gang had just sneaked into this room. "Huh? Why is Shuangyue not here?"

His attention immediately shifted to Chu Youzhao. His face was prettier than even this place's courtesan queens. His small mouth was opened slightly, his red lips making his heart pound.

"Screw it, I'll just have a taste of what another man feels like then!" Cheng Gang had a feeling that something wasn't quite right. He seemed to be much more stimulated than normal. Normally speaking, he would definitely feel reservations towards his status, yet the alcohol made him throw all of that away.

Young master Chu was drunk anyway, and he'll just feel a bit of pain in the bottom tomorrow. He won't suspect me at all.

He gulped. He took off his clothes, and then he pounced onto the bed.

Then, his figure suddenly froze. He felt a hand grip his neck. A biting cold voice sounded. "You're courting death!"

Cheng Gang was horrified. He quickly swung his arm backwards. However, his neck was in pain as soon as he swung it halfway. Then, he blacked out.

Zu An tossed the limp Cheng Gang onto the ground. He felt disgusted when he saw how high his crotch was. He stomped his foot down on it.

"Ugh..." Even while unconscious, Cheng Gang still curled up in pain like a shrimp.

Shuangyue gulped. This man really was decisive! How were they going to deal with the consequences of this afterwards?

Chapter 652: Confrontation

Zu An quickly arrived by the bed. "Youzhao? Youzhao?"

He sighed in relief when he saw that her clothes were still on.

Only now did he have a chance to carefully look at her. Her skin was fair with a light blush, her eyelashes long and curled. She looked just like a fine doll. This was especially true with her moist red lips that were slightly opened. As she breathed in and out, they seemed to be silently tempting him.

He couldn't really blame that Cheng Gang for going crazy. What kind of man was this ridiculously handsome?

While Zu An thought these things with ridicule, Chu Youzhao finally hazily opened her eyes. She was confused when she saw that it was Zu An. Her voice was extremely lovable and delicate. "Brother-in-law?"

Shuangyue felt goosebumps all over her body. This man's words sounded even sweeter than their government brothel's courtesan queens! What the hell!

Zu An smelled a sweet scent from her mouth. He frowned and gave Shuangyue a look. "What kind of wine did you guys serve?"

Shuangyue explained, "There is a bit of special medicine mixed into the alcohol that has aphrodisiac properties. However, the amount is extremely small and won't affect one's rationality. I didn't expect Cheng Gang to become so daring today, doing this towards a man..."

She stopped midway through her sentence when she saw Chu Youzhao's charming appearance. What the heck is this? Even a woman would be stirred from looking at him, let alone a man.

Zu An suddenly realized that this was the medicine Qiu Honglei was talking about before, the one that made the men feel like Shuangyue slept with them.

Shuangyue had a worried look on her face. "Young master, Cheng Gang's status is important. How are you going to deal with this situation?"

Zu An said with an overcast voice, "You don't need to worry, I'll take care of this. You just need to let Honglei know."

"Okay." This was what Shuangyue planned to do anyway. She quickly left after hearing him say this.

"Brother... in-law, why are you here? Am I dreaming?" Chu Youzhao was still in a half-drunk state.

"Dreaming, dreaming, you were almost done in by someone else and you had no idea." Zu An was a bit dispirited. He tried to support her up.

But her entire body was limp. She fell straight into his arms as soon as he supported her up.

"Brother-in-law, how can you... do this to me? I'm... I'm going to tell big sis... don't..." Chu Youzhao laid in his arms, her eyes swirling about. Her cheeks seemed to be burning up.

Zu An: "???"

He was confused. Was she still dreaming?

He impatiently slammed his palm down on her bottom. "Brat, what the heck are you learning? What kind of dream are you dreaming?!"

He thought that she would wake up from this slap, but she instead smiled stupidly and said, "Brother-in-law, why are you hitting me? Is this how you play with sister-in-law too?"

Zu An was really speechless now. This girl still thought that she was dreaming?

Out of helplessness, he could only pick up the cup of tea next to him. He wanted to splash this over her to wake her up, but when he saw her perfect face, he couldn't set the resolution.

As such, he helped her drink some tea first, and then he dipped his finger into the tea before flicking it on her face.

"Huh... huh?" Chu Youzhao finally seemed to have woken up. "Brother-in-law, it really is you?"

"You should be thankful it's me, or else you would be so devastated you won't even be able to shed any tears." Zu An harrumphed in annoyance.

"Why are you here?" Chu Youzhao didn't see Cheng Gang. She suddenly realized that her arms were around her brother-in-law's neck and jumped in fright. She quickly pushed him away. "Pervert! Let go of me!"

Zu An: "???"

He almost laughed out of anger. He was just about to teach this brat a lesson when the window was smashed open. A streak of sword energy shot inside. The temperature of this room dropped a few degrees at once.

He shivered. He turned around and quickly used Shining Finger, clasp the other party's longsword.

He saw who it was as soon as he was about to retaliate. Her clothes were purer than snow, her long hair fluttered about behind her. She looked just like a heavenly goddess.

"It's you?"

"It's you!"

The two both said at the same time.

"Big sis!" Chu Youzhao quickly ran over to her side and hid behind her. She looked at Zu An vigilantly. "Big sis this... this pervert was bullying me."

She was about to call him brother-in-law again, but she suddenly realized that he had just taken advantage of her, so why would she call him that?

"What is going on?" Chu Chuyan gave Zu An a puzzled look. Even though she was still upset over the morning's matters, she refused to believe that Zu An would do something like this.

Seeing that she didn't blame him immediately, Zu An felt his heart soften. My wife still cares about me.

He rolled his eyes and impatiently pointed at Cheng Gang next to him. "A crossdresser came to a brothel and drunk herself to the point where she was lying on the bed like a dead pig. But no matter how good her getup was, even if she did dress up as a man, she still ended up turning on this pervert. He sneaked over while she was unconscious to make his move, but I stopped him. This brat has no sense of shame and slanders her benefactor."

"Cheng... Cheng Gang?" At this time, Chu Youzhao saw the one on the floor. Her expression changed.

Chu Chuyan noticed the blood by his crotch. She had a rough idea of what happened. She turned around to criticize her sister. "What is wrong with you? Is a place like the government brothel a place you should be at?"

Chu Youzhao's face went deathly pale. She realized how terrifying of a situation she just evaded. Under her sister's criticism, she mumbled, "Eldest brother and second brother called me over. They were saying how us high status men had to come to the government brothel. I was worried that they might be suspicious, so I followed along...I followed along to gain some experience. That way, once other guys mentioned the government brothel, I would have something to add too."

Zu An looked out the window. Why didn't the Qin brothers react after all the noise here?

Chu Chuyan laughed out of anger. "Even if you were worried about being exposed, you shouldn't have come to a government brothel! Do you not know what kind of place this is? I heard that you followed your cousins here and rushed over, yet I was still a step too late. Thank goodness your brother-in-law was here, or else..."

She suddenly gave Zu An a suspicious look. "Right, why are you here?"

Zu An laughed in embarrassment, "I was investigating a case, so I followed Cheng Gang here. Why would an upright and outstanding man like me go to a place like the government brothel?"

Chu Chuyan smiled when she heard that he wasn't here to play around. However, she still said with a snort, "Hmph, who was it that went to play around in Immortal Abode back then, and then ended up with all that courtesan queen Qiu Honglei trouble?"

Zu An: "....."

Judging from the bitterness in her voice when she spoke about Qiu Honglei, he knew that she was still upset about this morning. He sensibly shut his mouth.

Chu Youzhao walked over with a red face. "Thank you, brother-in-law."

Zu An chuckled and said, "I do not dare to receive that. In a certain person's eyes, I am but a no good pervert."

Chu Youzhao grabbed his arms and began to sway them. "Sorry, I misunderstood you brother-in-law. Brother-in-law is the best in the world..."

A bunch of flattery came out of her mouth. She knew that she was trying to get herself out of this sticky situation, but for some reason, she liked the things she was saying.

Zu An: "....."

This kid has some skills! She has a natural ability that makes it hard for others to be angry at her!

Compared to the cold Chu Chuyan or the tomboy Chu Huanzhao, why was this third sister so good at currying favor?

But you're still crossdressing right now! A man acting like this is a bit...

Chu Chuyan frowned. "Enough, enough already! How old are you already? Stop pulling on your brother-in-law's arms. Aren't you embarrassed?"

A charming laughter suddenly sounded. "Oh? Chu First Miss is quite the jealous woman. You're even jealous of your own younger brother."

Zu An's fine hairs stood on end. Even though he was glad that he had so many close female friends, this kind of battlefield was just too scary.

Chu Chuyan suddenly turned around. "Why are you here?"

The dots connected in her head. Could it be that she was secretly meeting with Ah Zu here?

Her face immediately turned extremely cold.

You have successfully trolled Chu Chuyan for +404 +404 +404...

"Ah Zu arranged a meeting with me here, of course." Qiu Honglei said with a smile. She leaned sweetly against his shoulder.

Chu Chuyan's expression became colder and colder. She was like a volcano that was about to erupt at any moment.

Chapter 653: An Uproar in the Capital

Zu An felt his scalp begin to tingle, and he quickly pushed Qiu Honglei away. "Honglei, why do you have to joke around like that? The most important thing right now is to figure out how to get out of this."

The Left Guard General's only son had been crippled. Such a thing would undoubtedly cause a huge uproar.

Qiu Honglei knew that this matter would be nothing but trouble, so she didn't continue to mess around. "I've already made sure that the young masters of the Qin clan are both asleep. They won't awaken for quite some time."

No wonder neither of them rushed over, despite all the noise. He initially thought that they had been too busy with their own girls to worry about other things.

Chu Chuyan frowned. She was clearly puzzled as to how this woman could make her cousins fall asleep. After all, they were also outstanding among their peers.

However, none of that was important right now. She looked at Cheng Gang. "Just say that I was the one who did it," she said. "No matter how formidable the Left Guard General is, he can't do anything to our Chu clan."

The Chu clan was a dukedom that had been passed down for generations. They were a great power in Brightmoon city, and had their own army. They had no need to fear the Left Guard General.

Zu An was still weighing the pros and cons of this when Qiu Honglei said with a sneer, "There have always been rumors that Chu First Miss was exceptionally intelligent, but that doesn't seem to be the case to me."

Chu Chuyan's expression chilled a few degrees. "Speak properly if you have something to say. Stop talking in circles."

"Has Chu First Miss forgotten what sort of place this is?" said Qiu Honglei. "This is the government brothel! If news that Cheng Gang was crippled by you in the government brothel got out, wouldn't your reputation be ruined?"

Chu Chuyan's face paled. It dawned on her that, if they made such a thing public, all sorts of rumors would begin to fly about. Anyone who didn't know better would subconsciously believe that she had been humiliated by Cheng Gang in a government brothel, and that she had lashed out in anger.

"Thank you for the reminder," she said grudgingly. Despite their differences, she was still grateful for Qiu Honglei for pointing this out.

Qiu Honglei laughed delicately. "There's no need to thank me. I just didn't want Ah Zu to be left broken-hearted."

Chu Chuyan ground her teeth in irritation. Her opinion of this woman had changed slightly, but she did not expect this vixen to still be so annoying.

Zu An pondered over the matter for a while. "Let's just say that it was Youzhao who did this. He is a 'man' after all, so we don't need to fear any wild rumors. Besides, given his status in the Qin clan, they will surely shield him from any repercussions, so Cheng Xiong won't be able to exact revenge."

There was one other reason why he suggested this. This would create a rift between Cheng Xiong and the Qin clan, or at the very least, put some distance between them. That way, once something happened to Cheng Xiong, the Qin clan would be less anxious to help out.

Chu Chuyan was slightly uncertain, but she knew just how serious this matter was, and she wasn't about to let Zu An provoke the Cheng clan on his own and make an enemy out of such a massive clan. Especially since he'd helped her little sister in the first place. She nodded. "Okay."

Having found out the truth, Chu Youzhao hated Cheng Gang bitterly, and naturally had no objections to this.

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They ironed out some of the details, and only went their separate ways late into the night. They each had their own tasks to take care of.

Zu An noticed that Chu Chuyan had wanted to bring up something else several times, but hesitated each time. He mopped away the cold sweat on his brow. Thank goodness the issue of Cheng Gang had diverted their attention. If not, the two women would have brought about Armageddon.

He had to be more careful from now on. Having a girl hanging off each arm did feel amazing, but he absolutely could not let them bump into each other!

Once he returned to the imperial palace, he summoned the silver-token and bronze-token envoys that Zhuxie Chixin had temporarily assigned him, and gave them various orders.

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The next morning, the same piece of news was being discussed all over the capital city. If there had been Twitter in this world, this news would have been the number-one trending issue.

The previous night, the Left Guard General's only son, Cheng Gang, had been crippled in the government brothel!

The Left Guard General was a high-ranking general. Not only was he in charge of the imperial guards within the palace, his position was also a vital one. Cheng Gang was one of the most outstanding men of his generation within the capital. When someone like that was crippled, how could it not cause an uproar?

Everyone assumed that the Left Guard General would erupt in fury and viciously cut down the one responsible. After all, Cheng Gang was his only son, and he usually doted on him. Whoever cut short his bloodline in such a manner was sure to incur his full wrath.

Surprisingly, though, Cheng Xiong maintained his silence, and did not go on a rampage.

The officials within the imperial court sensed that something was amiss, and they all began to look into this matter privately.

Within this world, no walls were soundproof. Soon enough, they discovered that Cheng Gang hadn't gone to the government brothel alone. He had gone with the young masters of the Qin clan.

"Could the young masters of the Qin clan have done this?"

"It's a brothel we're talking about. They probably got into a fight over a girl."

"No wonder Cheng Xiong doesn't dare exact revenge. The Qin clan is far stronger than the Cheng clan. In the past, Cheng Xiong was even Elder Qin's subordinate."

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These officials believed that they had found out the truth, but soon afterwards, explosive news came out. It turned out that Cheng Gang had been driven sex-crazy, and had actually gone after the young master of the Chu clan! In the end, it was this young master Chu that crippled him.

"Cheng Gang actually likes men?"

"Didn't I mention before that Cheng Xiong kept staring at my butt? It seems their entire family is like this."

"Tsk, why don't you take a look in the mirror once in a while? The Chu young master is extremely good-looking! No wonder Cheng Gang couldn't control himself."

"Heh, Chu First Miss is a publicly-acknowledged goddess, and her younger brother is also so 'outstanding'. If someone could snag both of these siblings, wouldn't they be living in heaven everyday?"

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Chu Youzhao never expected that she would become famous in this way. In the past, only the young masters within the capital knew of her natural attractiveness. Now, everyone in the capital was curious as to what she looked like. They were curious as to who could make Cheng Gang lose his senses and go after a man.

To a certain degree, her 'attractiveness', as mentioned in the rumors about her, even surpassed that of her big sister.

"It's all that stupid brother-in-law's fault! How am I supposed to even go out from now on?!" Chu Youzhao said, stamping her feet in annoyance. She was so embarrassed by these rumors that the house was about to fall to ruin from all her stomping.

Chu Chuyan resisted her urge to laugh and said, "It's your fault for going to that sort of place. It's not somewhere you should be. If your brother-in-law hadn't saved you, you'd be in a far more terrible situation right now."

Chu Youzhao's face turned red. "You're right, but... How am I supposed to meet anyone in the future..."

She had really suffered a social death!

Even Murong Qinghe had looked at her strangely. She couldn't hold it in anymore. "Ah!!! This is so annoying!"

She jumped into bed and pulled the covers over herself, as though hiding in there was the only way to avoid her embarrassment.

Chu Chuyan couldn't help but laugh when she saw her rolled up in her bed. She looked out of the window, curious as to what Zu An was going to do from now on.

It didn't take long for her to find out.

Once the imperial court learned of this matter, they dispatched the city lord to oversee the case. After all, given the special status of the victim, the matter demanded a proper explanation.

The city lord was put in a really tough spot. On one side was the only son of the Left Guard General, while on the other was the heir of three state dukes. What was he supposed to do? He was also extremely helpless.

However, he was someone who had survived in a place like the capital, which was filled with powerful players, by being flexible. He quickly thought of something.

If he couldn't afford to offend either the Qin clan or the Chu clan, then could he do something about the government brothel?

As such, he ordered his constables to capture the courtesan queen and all the other girls involved, intending to pin the blame on them. That way, he could bring some closure to this case, and leave a way out for both sides.

As for the girls from the government brothel, their innocence or guilt did not matter to these higher officials.

Having to serve in the government brothel was already pitiful enough. It might even be doing them a favor by sending them on their way earlier, so that they could reincarnate and live properly in their next lives.

Unfortunately, even though this plan seemed sound, there was an unexpected development.

When the constables arrived, the courtesan queen Leng Shuangyue was nowhere to be found. Even the girls who had served in that residence were gone.

Even more strange was the fact that many items within the residence had been deliberately destroyed, as though they were trying to hide some secrets.

The constables immediately put their full focus on the case, and eventually found a lead in the form of a half-burnt letter. Presumably, the ones who fled had been in too much of a hurry, and did not have time to verify that everything had been destroyed.

When they examined the contents, they discovered that these people seemed to be related to the assassins who had attacked the palace a few days ago. They quickly reported this to the city lord.

The city lord immediately realized that he had a huge case on his hands, and quickly reported his findings to the imperial court.

The entire court was riled up when they learned of this. The emperor was furious, and ordered the Embroidered Envoy to investigate this matter fully.

Chapter 654: Willing to Even Sell Out Your Own

The Embroidered Envoy were quite annoyed to begin with after being targeted by Cheng Xiong. How could they let this chance go?

Soon afterwards, the Embroidered Envoy arrested Cheng Gang. At first, Cheng Gang insisted that he knew nothing, but everyone knew that he was close to that courtesan queen Shuangyue, staying at her side almost every night. Who would believe him if he said that they didn't have anything to do with each other?

The Embroidered Envoy thus carried out torture, their specialty, to teach Cheng Gang a lesson.

Then, 'confessions' were obtained from Cheng Gang under torture. He admitted to leaking out news to the assassin, and that was why the assassins were able to invade so easily.

Zhuxie Chixin didn't let them go yet. He continued his investigation. Soon afterwards, he 'found out' that Cheng Xiong was the one who incited all of this, that he was already bought out by the assassins.

Zu An clicked his tongue in wonder when he heard of all of this. This fella is quite vicious! Cheng Xiong targeted the Embroidered Envoy, and now, he got revenge ten times over.

Having an ally like this gave him a strange sense of peace.

Of course, having this type of person as an enemy would be a huge headache.

Cheng Xing was shocked and furious, yet he couldn't interfere with the Embroidered Envoy's investigation at all. As such, he immediately began to contact all of his connections.

After all, he was one of King Qi's important personnel. Even though the Qin clan's brothers were quite upset at what happened in the government brothel, they couldn't let Zhuxie Chixin harm King Qi.

As such, King Qi's faction rose up as well. Many people brought up the grudge between Cheng Xiong and the Embroidered Envoy, saying that letting them investigate this matter will disturb public justice.

In the court, King Qi's faction and the crown prince's side were all reciting quotes from the classics one after another. They were clearly on the verge of cursing each other to hell, yet they still didn't speak any obscenities. It really was quite impressive.

Later on, even the emperor was hard-pressed under all the noise. As such, he ordered for the Commandant of Justice and Security Officer to investigate this case alongside the Embroidered Envoy, thus having three departments involved.

The Commandant of Justice was one of the nine ministers in charge of punishment and the prison, the highest judicial structure of the central authorities. This was similar to the later world's supreme court.

The Security Officer was in charge of the capital's public security, so they overlooked the capital city and its surrounding area's officials. This was equivalent to the later world's Ministry of Public Security, prosecutor's office, discipline inspection commission, and other similar organizations.

Meanwhile, the Embroidered Envoy was the royal family's covert organization, equivalent to ancient china's infamous Embroidered Uniform Guard and Eastern Bureau.

These three groups were now working together. This was something never before seen.

The Commandant of Justice quickly took Cheng Gang. They were not like the Embroidered Envoy with their interrogation by torture, but rather amiable. Not only did they get Cheng Gang treated, they even brought him food and drink.

Ignoring everything else, Commandant of Justice Jiang Boyang was under King Qi's faction.

Soon afterwards, the Commandant of Justice overthrew the Embroidered Envoy's judgment. Furthermore, they criticized the Embroidered Envoy for extorting confessions for their personal grudges.

Zhuxie Chixin obviously claimed that this was slander. At the same time, he bit back, claiming that they were ganging up for personal interest, because Cheng Xiong would often bend the law in their favor.

These two factions started another huge clash in the court. What followed was the investigation of the Security Officer.

Everything was transferred from the Commandant of Justice to the Security Officer. Cheng Gang fell from heaven down to hell again.

After staying with the Commandant of Justice for a few days and being treated with all types of medicines, his injuries from the Embroidered Envoy already pretty much healed. Yet when he arrived at the Security Officer's place, he was immediately beaten as soon as he arrived.

The wounds that had scabbed opened up again. He screamed for mercy.

After his hell-like experience with the Embroidered Envoy, he knew that gritting his teeth and bearing the pain was completely useless. He still had to speak in the end.

The only difference was whether he was going to confess after he couldn't take it anymore, or save himself the pain.

As such, the Security Officer quickly obtained his oral confession that he was colluding with the assassins, and he was acting under his father's prompting.

King Qi's faction was shocked and furious. After all, the Security Officer used to be one of their men, but the assassination attempt on Zu An when he first entered the palace stripped him of this role. The previous Security Officer was transferred away to the position of supervisor of attendants.

The newly appointed Security Officer was Cao Xing, the crown prince lesser tutor's father, so he was definitely on the crown prince's side. Now that he was given this opportunity, he was definitely going to make full use of it.

However, there were still quite a few of Murong Tong, the past Security Officer's past subordinates there. Soon afterwards, there were people who denounced Cao Xing's investigation as a confession obtained from torture. The court thus entered another uproar.

...

After listening to Zu An's explanation of what happened during this period, the long haired Yun Jianyue walked over to the window and gazed towards the distant throne room. There was a sneer on her face. "Those court officials all speak of compassion, duty, propriety, and integrity, yet they're all acting under selfish interests. Such chaos will one day lead to a calamity."

Zu An said, "With the most powerful emperor overseeing them, what kind of calamity could happen even if these people argue?"

Yun Jianyue said with a profound voice, "But the emperor will still perish one day."

Zu An was startled. He asked, "How are you so certain?"

Yun Jianyue replied, "There has always been a rumor that the emperor was seriously wounded from his battle against the Fiend Emperor, to the extent where it lowered his lifespan. However, no one knows if this is real or not. When I fought him, I became certain that he was indeed injured."

"But that was what, just a split second?" Zu An couldn't help but say in mockery.

You have successfully trolled Yun Jianyue for +444 +444 +444...

Yun Jianyue gave him an annoyed look. Why was this guy so annoying sometimes?

A while later, she said in annoyance, "With the emperor's cultivation, I wouldn't have been able to get away if he wasn't injured."

Zu An was shocked. "You're already a grandmaster, but even you can't even get away? Is the difference that great?"

"Why do they call him an Earth Immortal? To a certain degree, he is already a half immortal. For the rest of us, even the very best are still mortals. There's obviously a huge difference." Yun Jianyue's tone carried a bit of helplessness. At the same time, her eyes were full of longing towards that cultivation realm.

She snapped out of her daze a while later and gave Zu An a meaningful look. "Thankfully, your Phoenix Nirvana Sutra cannot grant him true immortality, or else if the emperor doesn't die, then people like us will never have a chance to rise up."

Zu An knew that she was still trying to get information out of him. As such, he replied, "Relax, he can't gain immortality through my Phoenix Nirvana Sutra."

Of course, whether or not he could get it himself was a different story.

Yun Jianyue sighed in relief when she obtained his confirmation again.

Zu An suddenly realized something. Whether or not the emperor was going to die wasn't something he should be concerned about. What he had to focus on was Cheng Gang's case. "By the way, even though Cheng Gang's father has been pronounced guilty by both the Embroidered Envoy and Security Officer, the Commandant of Justice will insist that there is no crime. Even though Cheng Xiong has already been taken into custody, with this stalemate, aren't we still missing the important, decisive evidence?"

Frankly speaking, his retaliation against Cheng Xiong was already done extremely successfully. He almost instantly brought down a glorious Left Guard General and threw him into prison. However, King Qi's faction had substantial power, so he didn't know whether or not Cheng Xiong really will be found guilty in the end.

A mysterious smile appeared in Yun Jianyue's eyes. "I don't think that's anything difficult at all."

Zu An was listening with his ears pricked. He became impatient when he saw how she deliberately kept him in suspense. "Big sis sect master, please tell me! I'm dying from the suspense!"

When she saw how nervous he was, Yun Jianyue felt a bit more at ease. She suffered way too much during these days with him, tossed and turned until even her way of thinking changed greatly.

"Did you forget about the people of the Holy Sect that were captured?" Yun Jianyue said. "The proof has always been there. We'll just have to see whether or not you'll make use of it."

Zu An felt as if a streak of electricity ran through his head. He was just about to grasp it, yet it seemed to slip past. Thus, he could only ask Yun Jianyue. "I hope big sis sect master can grant me your teachings."

Yun Jianyue seemed satisfied with his attitude. She then said, "Find a way to contact them. As long as they admit to colluding with Cheng Xiong, then Cheng Xiong will undoubtedly die."

Zu An gave Yun Jianyue a complicated look. This woman was so vicious she would even sell out her own people! Those captives were already doomed, yet she still wanted to make the most out of them even before they died.

Chapter 655: Male Honey Trap

But even though he thought this, Zu An still said, "But why would those people listen to me? I cannot just tell them about the relationship between us."

After being targeted by Cheng Xiong, he understood that there were too many smart people in the capital. A slight moment of weakness would easily result in his doom.

Zhuxie Chixin was currently looking for Yun Jianyue, and the emperor also cared a lot about this. He didn't want to bring disaster onto himself.

Furthermore, he couldn't visit the Devil Sect's captives with his status as an Embroidered Envoy. The only ones who knew about this identity were Yun Jianyue and Qiu Honglei. He could trust them, but he didn't dare take this risk with others in the Devil Sect.

"You don't need to expose our relationship." Yun Jianyue remained silent for a moment before saying, "You can just meet them with your real identity. Say that Honglei entrusted you with the task of saving them. They will trust you."

"Why?" Zu An was shocked.

Yun Jianyue said, "There are some among the captives who will recognize you, for example, Solitary Fire. He even captured you before on your way to the capital."

"So it's that guy." Zu An had an impression of him. Back then, those Solitary Eight were quite powerful when they came to capture him. Unfortunately, later on, Solitary Ice was killed by Mosquito Daoist, and now Solitary Fire also became a prisoner. He didn't know how the others were doing now.

Yun Jianyue continued, "There is one other person who you might have met before in Brightmoon City. Honglei's senior brother Gu Yueyi, he seems to have been captured as well."

"Ah, that dude. I remember him." Zu An remembered that he even tried to pretend to be Chen Xuan. In the end, the fake met the real deal. He was beaten pretty badly back then.

"He is your disciple too? It seems like you aren't very good at picking disciples." For some reason, Zu An felt rather annoyed. Why would such a great beauty take in a male disciple?

"I have quite a few disciples like him." Yun Jianyue rolled her eyes. "The Holy Sect is rooted in many different places, so it's only natural that I foster my own strength to strengthen my position. Taking in disciples is one of the easiest ways to get others under my wing, so why not?"

Zu An sighed and said, "Being a disciple of yours is truly pitiful. They all exist to be used. I really pity my Honglei."

Yun Jianyue said calmly, "The fact they became my disciple means that they obtained far more resources than before. What is pitiful about doing what they ought to do? Furthermore, Honglei is different from others, she is my core disciple. Only she alone cultivates my true cultivation secrets."

Zu An rolled his eyes. "It would've been better if you didn't pass on your stupid unmarried woman technique."

He suddenly thought of something. Yun Jianyue cultivated the Heavenly Devil Temptation. This skill name seems similar to one of Daji's skills. Did they have some type of connection?

They're both charming techniques. Probably similar.

"What. Did. You. Say?!" When she heard the words stupid unmarried woman, Yun Jianyue's eyelids jumped.

You have successfully trolled Yun Jianyue for +999 +999 +999...

It was clear that these words possessed tremendous destructive power against her.

Zu An hurriedly changed the topic. "By the way, when I saved Honglei, I saw that one of your sect's experts was captured by Cheng Xiong. He seems to be the one who was fighting against the crown prince's lesser tutor by the eastern palace back then."

Yun Jianyue couldn't remain angry when she heard that he was talking about something important. She replied, "He is our sect's elder Sun Luzhen. He is an upstanding person who is also loyal and devoted to me."

A bit of melancholy appeared between her brows when she spoke of him. She suffered disastrous losses this time during this imperial palace assassination.

"I can tell." Zu An remembered how Sun Luzhen had a chance to escape, yet he let himself get captured for Qiu Honglei's safety.

He couldn't help but say, "According to what I know, your Devil Sect has many powerful individuals. Why did only this amount of people join this operation?"

He remembered Qiu Honglei mentioning that there was a vice sect leader, left and right emissaries, kings, elders, and the Solitary Eight. He didn't see any of these kings or emissaries during this attack.

Yun Jianyue sighed. "I told you before that our sect has many factions. Even though I am the sect leader, I cannot decide that many things with my word alone. The assassination on the imperial palace was something many people didn't agree with. Even though I put this plan into motion by using my authority as the sect master, the other factions weren't too enthusiastic about the matter. I could only make them hold up the enemy's reinforcements. Me and my personal men were the only ones to carry out the main operation."

Zu An snorted. "I didn't expect that even a grandmaster like you would still have to live such a stifled life."

Yun Jianyue said with annoyance, "The emperor is number one in the world, yet there are still so many things he is helpless before. How can anyone living in this world have everything go as they please."

Zu An gave her a worried look. "Then according to what you are saying, you've lost a lot of your personal men during this attack. You're seriously injured now as well. How are you still going to remain as the sect master?"

Yun Jianyue said proudly, "As long as I do not die, the rest of the sect has no chance of climbing over me."

Zu An thought to himself, why are you setting up a flag for yourself?! What if the entire sect goes against you when you go back and you get reduced to nothing? I don't really want to see that happen.

But after thinking about it, he realized that her cultivation was still high. He was indeed feeling groundless fears.

His attention shifted to the case. "There is something else annoying to worry about. The captured assassins are all in Right Guard General Guo Zhi's hands. I might not be able to even meet with them."

Yun Jianyue snorted. "Isn't your relationship with the crown princess pretty good? Just seduce her and start from that side. Cheng Xiong is under King Qi's faction, so you aren't the only one who wants to get rid of him."

Zu An was surprised. He chuckled and said, "Big sis sect master, with how intelligent and wise you are, I don't think any man who marries you would dare go after another girl."

"Beat it! I'm going to treat my injuries." Yun Jianyue chased him away with an annoyed expression. If it was anyone else who said this to her, they would already be dead.

Unfortunately, after staying around this brat these days, she was already gradually getting used to his constantly joking manner.

She still had her pride as a senior, so she couldn't kill him. As such, she could only chase him away.

Zu An left the courtyard with a smile. He didn't seek out the crown princess with his identity as Golden Token Eleven like she suggested, but rather changed into his crown prince's secretary outfit.

He arrived at the eastern palace. The crown prince's lesser tutor was still wounded and couldn't hold classes. The big fatty crown prince was happily playing around with the lesser eunuchs.

After giving them a look, he decided to seek out the crown princess.

He declared who he was and walked in. He saw that the crown princess was propping her face up with her hand and currently staring blankly out of the window. As the cool breeze blew in from the window, he seemed to be able to vaguely make out her fine eyelashes.

Zu An sighed. It was probably exhausting for her to have that type of a husband.

He released a light cough to announce his arrival. The crown princess snapped out of her daze. Her arms crossed in front of her and she straightened her back. She recovered her usual dignified appearance. "What is it?"

Zu An gave the surrounding maids and eunuchs a troubled look. "I have something important to discuss with the crown princess alone."

The crown princess frowned. However, the door was still opened. There was no way the crown princess could speak with another man alone with the palace rules.

"I really do have something important to say to the crown princess..." Zu An took a few steps closer, because this matter really couldn't be heard by others.

The crown princess became a bit unhappy. "What are you doing? Stay there and speak."

This woman is quite guarded against others.

Zu An thus said, "Does the crown princess know about the recent uproar over Cheng Xiong's case?"

Chapter 656: Confession

The crown princess gave him a look. "If even you are saying it's an uproar, how can I not know?"

Zu An used this chance to ask, "Then does the crown princess feel that Cheng Xiong can be punished?"

The crown princess was always paying attention to this matter. After all, to a certain degree, this affected the battle between the crown prince and King Qi. She remained silent for a moment, but she still lightly shook her head in the end. "Even though the Embroidered Envoy and the Security Officer have deemed him guilty, the Commandant of Justice firmly believes that he was a framed victim. There isn't enough proof either. They can only pronounce Cheng Gang guilty at most and cannot bring down Cheng Xiong."

King Qi's faction was extremely powerful. They had the Qin clan as the head of the military, Imperial Secretariat's Left Confidential Assistant Yu Xuanchong, Secretariat Director Lian Yu, Chief Attendant Pei Zheng, and many more big shots who presided over their respective important roles. They even had older supporters with outstanding moral standing and reputation from the imperial clan who supported them. How could they just let their Cheng Xiong be wrongly accused?

Even though her father contacted the Liu clan, Meng clan, King Liang, and many others in the court, their men fighting back fiercely, they still couldn't convict Cheng Xiong.

Murong Tong was transferred away from his vital position as the Security Officer, which already made King Qi's faction suffer a fierce blow. How could they just watch their Left Guard General be transferred away too?

That was why only Cheng Gang would be convicted. This was already the consensus the crown prince's faction reached.

She became annoyed when she thought of this. She said in annoyance, "Why are you asking about these things?"

Zu An smiled and said, "Does the crown princess want Cheng Xiong to be guilty, or do you want him to be innocent?"

The crown princess' expression sank. "What are you beating around the bush for? Whether an important minister like General Cheng is guilty or not will be decided by the court. What does it have to do with me?"

Zu An sighed. "Whatever, I thought that the crown princess wanted to punish Cheng Xiong for his crimes, so I had a good way. Now, it seems like I was overthinking it."

He walked out after saying this.

The crown princess' expression changed when she looked at his rear figure. In the end, she said, "Wait, do you really have a way?"

Zu An paused. He turned around to look at her. "Does the crown princess feel that I would waste my time here and joke around about this type of matter?"

The crown princess frowned. Even though she found this guy annoying, he was definitely not a fool like the crown prince. It was indeed not likely for him to do something so meaningless.

However, she still had her misgivings. "Why would you help me?"

Zu An said with a chuckle, "What if I said it was because the crown princess was pretty?"

The crown princess' expression immediately changed. "Do you know that you've already committed a great crime of disrespect?!"

You have successfully trolled Bi Linglong for +700 Rage points!

Zu An saw that even though she was angry, she didn't call for the imperial bodyguards. Thank goodness this is a woman who knows how to weigh her pros and cons... "Crown princess, please do not get angry. Actually, my reason for helping you is very simple. Has the crown princess already forgotten what my current identity is?"

"Your identity?" The crown princess was stunned. Then, she remembered that he was the crown prince's secretary. He should already be part of the crown prince's faction. He should obviously help the crown prince for the sake of his own future.

She thus felt relieved. "Even though I trust your motives, I doubt your competence."

Zu An lowered his voice. "All I need is the crown princess to help me arrange a meeting with the captured assassins."

Apart from preventing his status as Sir Eleven from being exposed, the other reason why he met the crown princess with this identity was because he wanted to improve his status within the eastern palace. He didn't want to be a stupid fatty's study companion forever. Only by letting the crown princess and the powers behind her know of his worth, would more plans go into motion.

"Meet those assassins?" The crown princess was confused.

Zu An said, "The crown princess should have a way of convincing Right Guard General Guo Zhi, right? Those assassins are all under his management right now. Normal people cannot meet with them."

The Left Guard General was already someone under King Qi's faction. Unless the emperor suddenly lost his mind, there was no way he would let the Right Guard General be on King Qi's faction too.

The crown princess frowned. "What do you want to do with them?"

Zu An shook his head. "I cannot tell you right now, because if I tell you, then it won't work. The crown princess will understand everything later."

The crown princess gave him a look. She began to think to herself. A while later, her red lips opened again. "Fine, I can arrange a meeting. However, if you lied to me, I will report your rudeness to the emperor. Not even an immortal would be able to save you then."

Zu An smiled. "I will not disappoint the crown princess."

The crown princess then arranged for the guards to lead Zu An to the prison. When he saw that the guard leading the way had dark circles around his eyes, Zu An was overjoyed. "Oh? Isn't this imperial guard Piao and guard Jiao?"

The two lesser imperial guards were precisely Jiao Sigun and Piao Duandiao.

Piao Duandiao couldn't hold back his smile as well. "So it was Sir Zu! It's an honor to finally meet you."

Next to him, Jiao Sigun couldn't help but say, "You never even heard his name before, what do you mean it's an honor."

Piao Duandian's face darkened. "Didn't we meet a few days ago? Stop bickering with me."

Jiao Sigun harrumphed. "I'm not bickering. I just don't want to see you being fake."

Piao Duandiao didn't want to pay him any more attention. He said to Zu An with a smile, "Sir Zu really is enviable. You've only been in the eastern palace for a few days, but you already obtained the crown princess' trust. We brothers have never been assigned to be the guards of an important minister yet."

He noticed that Jiao Sigun was about to say something again and immediately gave him a look. "Shut up! Or else I'm not bringing you with me to the government brothel again."

Jiao Sigun said, "Now that something so big happened at the government brothel, who would dare to go there? Are you stupid?"

Piao Duandiao: "....."

Zu An couldn't help but smile when he saw these two clowns. He didn't know how the crown princess put up with them all these years.

He coughed lightly and said, "Brother Piao is being too formal. It's merely to get some information for the crown princess. The palace hasn't been too peaceful recently, so I must trouble you two this time."

"You're too kind, you're too kind." Piao Duandiao's chest stuck out a bit further when he heard what Zu An said.

When they arrived at the imperial prison, the Right Guard General Guo Zhi already received the news and was waiting here. He cupped his hands when he saw Zu An. "Sir Zu."

Zu An returned the greeting with surprise. "General Guo is troubling me with your courtesy! Huh? General, why do you look like this?"

After all, this was a glorious Right Guard General. His status and authority were much higher than the crown prince's secretary.

It had only been a few days since their last meeting, yet this fella's dark circles looked like Piao Duandiao's. His hair was messy and greasy as well, it had clearly been a while since he washed it. His beard was also scraggly. He looked like he seemed to have aged a decade.

Guo Zhi brought him to the side. He sighed and said with a low voice, "His majesty ordered me to investigate the eastern palace's attack, but I haven't found any clues. Those assassins insist that they were acting under King Qi, yet when they are asked how King Qi prompted them, they always replied that they don't know. This type of confession is clearly framing King Qi, so how can I report that upwards?"

There were no stupid people in the imperial palace, so he knew that the assassins were framing King Qi. If he dared to bring out these oral confessions, then King Qi's faction would immediately fire back. However, he also understood what the emperor wanted, so he couldn't say that King Qi was completely innocent. That was why he was stuck in a dilemma.

"I heard the crown princess say that you had a way to open these assassins' mouths?" He asked excitedly.

Zu An had a rough idea of what he was thinking. No wonder this man looked like he finally met his savior. "I can give it a try."

Guo Zhi was overjoyed. "Sir Zu, please hurry on in."

When they saw how enthusiastically Guo Zhi brought Zu An in, Piao Duandiao and Jiao Sigun outside the imperial prison looked at each other in dismay. They said quietly, "Why does the Right Guard General treat him so well? We might have to cling tightly to this patron in the future."

"Seconded." Jiao Sigun surprisingly didn't argue about this.

Zu An followed Guo Zhi down. When he entered the imperial prison, he cupped his hands and said, "General Guo, I wish to talk with these assassins in private."

Guo Zhi nodded and said, "That's fine. The crown princess has already told me. However, Sir Zu, you must be careful. Those assassins are all vicious people."

Zu An voiced his response. Guo Zhi was about to leave, but a terrified and panicked voice sounded from nearby. "Don't hit me anymore! I'll confess everything! I want to meet Sir Guo!"

Chapter 657: Interrogation

Zu An looked around the imperial prison as he followed Guo Zhi in.

This wasn't a standard prison, but rather a place where the palace temporarily kept criminals. There was one level above ground, and many levels below ground.

As they gradually followed the stairs down, sunlight faded. They could feel the cold and damp feeling of a prison.

The surrounding walls were all built from massive chunks of rock. He could vaguely make out some formations from their surface.

Not only did they prevent outsiders from digging in, it also prevented earth element cultivators from escaping.

He saw dark red stains on the torture instruments along the way, clearly the blood of the criminals, giving this place a type of stifling feeling.

Guo Zhi brought Zu An down. Screams of someone about to confess sounded at this time.

Guo Zhi revealed frantic joy. He quickly rushed over and didn't pay Zu An any more attention.

Zu An frowned and quickly followed.

The curses of others could vaguely be heard.

"Fucking pussy!"

“Do you know how many of our dead brothers you are letting down?”

“Your master has shown you so much care all these years. Is this how you’ll repay her?”

...

There were all types of obscene curses mixed in. Every single person related to this individual was cursed many times over.

Guo Zhi harrumphed. He seized a whip from the side and sent it thrashing out. “All of you better shut your mouth!”

Sure enough, those voices became quiet. They already didn’t have much strength left after being tortured day after day. They were only berating out of anger just now. Now that they vented that anger, they couldn’t even muster the strength to do that.

Guo Zhi brought one of them to an isolated room. Zu An followed out of curiosity.

Guo Zhi gave him a look, but he didn’t say anything. This was someone the crown princess introduced, so since she trusted him, that meant he was one of them.

Zu An sized up this youngster who was covered in blood. His expression immediately became strange. So it was someone he knew!

This was Qiu Honglei’s senior, that Gu Yueyi he met before in Brightmoon City.

Gu Yueyi also saw him. His expression immediately changed tremendously.

Guo Zhi said with a heavy snort, “You said that you were ready to confess. You can speak now.”

Gu Yueyi’s eyes moved around. He immediately pointed at Zu An. “He...”

“What about me?” Zu An walked over with a smile. He sorted out his clothes, as if he was brushing off the dust.

Gu Yueyi saw the jade pendant at his waist. His expression was mixed with shock, alarm, and pleasant surprise. If one didn’t see it for themselves, then it was hard to imagine that one person could show so many expressions.

“What about him?” Guo Zhi was confused.

Gu Yueyi snapped out of his daze. “Who is he? Why is he here?”

Guo Zhi sighed in relief and said, “That’s none of your business. Either way, he is someone trustworthy. Just hurry and tell me what you have to confess.”

Gu Yueyi replied, “Oh. I wanted to say that you really shouldn’t keep hitting us. We already said everything we should be saying. The one who prompted us really is King Qi.”

Guo Zhi was so angry he instead laughed. “You wanted to play a joke on me?”

He never thought that this was the reason this kid specially called him out. He was so angry his whip thrashed down viciously on the other party.

“We really already told everything! Sir Guo, why don’t you believe me?”

“You’re still messing around?!”

“Ah... ah...”

As he watched Gu Yueyi scream continuously, his expression darting towards him from time to time, Zu An knew that it was about time. He coughed lightly and said, “General Guo, how about you let me give these miserable wretches a try?”

“You?” Guo Zhi was skeptical. He already interrogated these people for several days without obtaining any meaningful information. Just now, he was even messed with. He really didn’t dare to believe that Zu An had any solutions.

“It won’t hurt to give it a try.” Zu An had a sincere expression on his face.

Guo Zhi thought to himself that this was the reason why the crown princess sent him to begin with. He handed him the whip in his hands. “Sure, hit them as much as you want and di... discipline them. It’s fine even if you do hurt them.”

Zu An’s eyelids jumped. Can this guy not pause at such weird moments?[1]

When Guo Zhi left, Zu An brought the completely limp Gu Yueyi back into his cell. There were many people bound to wooden racks and currently experiencing the torment of the jailers.

One of them was skinny and tall, his hair a bit red. He was precisely the Solitary Fire he met before on his way to the capital.

There was another person who had long sideburns. Even though he was behind bars, there was still a bold and powerful aura coming from his expression. This was most likely the Elder Sun Luzhen Yun Jianyue spoke of from the sect.

There were some others who were scattered about in another cell. They were covered in blood, unknown if they were still alive or dead.

Zu An felt admiration for them. Even though he mocked the Devil Sect for being selfish mercenaries, these people already experienced so much torture, yet they still didn’t sell out Yun Jianyue. It seems like they still had their own convictions.

“You traitor, you dare to come back? This old one won’t let you go even if you become a ghost!” Sun Luzhen was so furious when he saw Gu Yueyi that he wanted to throw himself over. The chains on his body clanked with noise, as if he might break free at any time.

“You’re still acting up?” A jailer’s whip thrashed over. Sun Luzhen screamed miserably and didn’t dare to struggle anymore. He only stared viciously at Gu Yueyi.

Gu Yueyi was about to say something, but he hesitated. He gave Zu An and the nearby jailer a look. In the end, he didn’t say anything.

Zu An gave the whip in the jailer's hands a curious look. There were some formations covering it. It seemed similar to Huanzhao's whip and could magnify pain. No wonder even a tough fella like Sun Luzhen couldn't hold on.

Solitary Fire also slowly opened his eyes. When he saw Zu An, his eyes were filled with shock. "You... you..."

"What are you looking at me for? Have you never seen someone so handsome before?" Zu An immediately brandished the whip Guo Zhi gave him, making him swallow his words right back down.

Then, he said to the jailer next to him. "You all should head out. I'm going to talk to them in private."

"Understood!" Those jailers already received their orders. They passed down the orders and quickly withdrew.

When those jailers left, Solitary Fire spat out a mouthful of bloody spit. "Pah! Dammit all! I didn't expect fortunes to rise and fall like this, that I'll end up dying under your hands. If you want to kill or torture me, then do what you will!"

You have successfully trolled Solitary Fire for +999 Rage points!

It was obvious that he thought that Zu An was now getting revenge for what happened on the way to the capital.

Gu Yueyi quickly said, "Sir Fire has misunderstood! He is not an enemy, but rather someone sent by the saintess!"

He immediately recognized that the jade pendant Zu An carried belonged to Qiu Honglei. That was why he changed his mind on the spot.

"The saintess?" Solitary Fire was stunned. He recalled that the saintess was indeed friendly with this man. He became momentarily confused.

Sun Luzhen, who was bound to the wooden stake, glared at Gu Yueyi in fury. "Stupid brat, what kind of nonsense are you spouting? What saintess? I've never heard of her."

Zu An couldn't help but chuckle. "Elder Sun is a fierce character after all. You aren't willing to let anything go even in this type of situation."

Sun Luzhen's breathing stopped when he heard his name called. He looked at Zu An. "Who are you exactly?"

Solitary Fire said, "Zu An, that kid with the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra."

Sun Luzhen suddenly understood. He had heard a bit about this matter.

Zu An leisurely sat down on a nearby stool. "It was indeed Honglei who begged me to come. Since we're friends, I came to bring some of her words."

Gu Yueyi felt a bit of jealousy when he heard how intimate Zu An referred to Qiu Honglei. After all, this was a junior he admired for a long time, yet she always treated him coldly. Now, she even gave her jade pendant to this person.

But when he thought about how he had to depend on this person in the future, he suppressed his unhappy thoughts.

“What did she want to tell us?” Sun Luzhen asked out of curiosity.

Zu An said, “Do you all know why you have to insist that it was King Qi who incited you, yet these people refuse to believe it? It is because you all only know how to attack King Qi, yet you didn’t talk about any of the details. How could these people dare to report something unreliable like this upwards? I came to teach you how to properly take care of this matter...”

“So this was it!” Sun Luzhen sighed. “No wonder they didn’t believe us no matter what we said and continued to beat us day after day. No matter how tough my bones are, I am about to break down too.”

Solitary Fire gave him a curious look. “Then what are these details? What should we say?”

Zu An thus explained to them how Cheng Xiong used his son Cheng Gang, sending him to the government brothel to contact Shuangyue. He explained everything to them carefully in detail.

The others nodded inwardly. Gu Yueyi alone asked a vital question. “Young master Zu, we can say these things, but once we say them, we’ll be worthless. The palace might just execute us. Do you have any way of saving us?”

His eyes burned fiercely as he looked at Zu An.

Chapter 658: Storm Clouds Approach

Zu An smiled and said, “Of course there is a way to save you all. Actually, your lives are important if you say they are, and they are unimportant if you say they aren’t. For the aristocrats of the court, what they care more about is their struggle with King Qi’s faction, they don’t care about your lives. That is why this is where your opportunity to live lies.”

After seeing how Gu Yueyi almost sold out his own people, he didn’t dare say that there was no way to save them. Otherwise, there was no way this kid would cooperate. He might even sell him out instead.

That was why he could only use this reason to convince him first. However, he was letting down Sun Luzhen and Solitary Fire, giving them fake happiness.

Gu Yueyi obtained hope for survival when he heard this. He immediately became overjoyed. “Young master Zu really is our lucky star! We knew that you were someone extraordinary the moment we first set eyes on you back then in Brightmoon City! Hahaha, this is great!”

He was so excited it was hard for him to even speak.

Zu An rolled his eyes. He definitely didn’t remember this guy being all that friendly with him back in Brightmoon City. This kid was about to kill him.

Sun Luzhen said, “Thank you young master Zu for remaining loyal and helping us. I do not know how to repay this kindness.”

Solitary Fire said, "I have offended you before on the way to the capital. Young master Zu, please do not mind the offenses of a petty person like me. This one will be eternally grateful!"

The desire for survival was instinctive. If they didn't have to die, then that was obviously the best solution.

"Sirs are too polite. Forgive me for not being able to treat your injuries, or else they will become suspicious." Zu An was apologetic. He would feel bad if he couldn't save them, yet he was completely powerless to save them.

"These small injuries are nothing." They all laughed. What man feared the most was the lack of hope. Now that they knew that there was a chance of being saved, they didn't care much no matter how injured they were.

After discussing the details with them, Zu An left them to inform Guo Zhi.

Guo Zhi was shocked when he obtained their confession. He merely allowed Zu An to give it a try. He didn't expect this fella to actually open up their mouths!

What was even harder to believe was that they actually confessed their relationship with Cheng Xiong.

His expression became extremely complicated. "Sir Zu, is this really what they said"

Zu An smiled. "Is that important?"

Guo Zhi quickly realized something. Right, this isn't important at all!

The crown prince's faction was trying to find a way to deal with King Qi. He also roughly guessed at his majesty's intentions. Cheng Xiong was supposed to be dealt with to begin with. Now, another one of his headaches were dealt with. This was great news!

He immediately became inspired when he thought of this. "Thank you, Sir Zu! Sir Zu will definitely become a first rate subject after this matter passes."

"All of this was investigated by Sir Guo. It has nothing to do with me." Zu An said with a meaningful smile.

Guo Zhi was stunned, but he quickly realized what was happening. The other party didn't want to reveal his talents! He instead gave me all of the contributions?

But when he thought about it, this made sense as well. Zu An's background was still shallow, so offending King Qi's faction so badly wasn't necessarily a good thing.

However, this was completely different for him. With his status, he could perfectly digest all of these contributions. He didn't have to worry about King Qi's retaliation at all.

He was overjoyed at the turn of events. "Brother Zu brought me such a great gift! If there is anything I can do to help this brother out, then just tell me!"

Of course, he still had to interrogate them himself once more to make sure. However, his words right now were still sincere.

Zu An sneered inside. You were saying sir this sir that a moment ago, and now we're suddenly brothers.

"Brother Guo speaks too seriously. I'll need Sir Guo to take care of me in the palace in the future." He went along with this, calling him brother as well.

Even though these fair-weather friends weren't reliable in a moment of crisis, they could still help out on some small matters when interests aligned. For him, this was already enough.

The two of them chatted happily on the way out. Piao Duandiao and Jiao Sigun were completely stupefied when they saw how close the two were.

On the way back, Piao Duandiao couldn't help but ask, "Sir Zu, were you already acquainted with Sir Guo?"

Zu An shook his head. "Not at all."

"Then why did he sound so enthusiastic while talking to you?" Jiao Sigun asked with curiosity.

Zu An laughed and said, "What can I say, I'm a naturally friendly guy. Didn't you two feel close to me when you first met me too?"

"Of course, of course." Piao Duandiao laughed apologetically. Only an idiot would refute in this type of situation.

Jiao Sigun also voiced his agreement. He wasn't doing this falsely, but because he really did feel mysteriously close to this fella. It really was strange. They shouldn't have met before, so why did they feel so close?

The two of them thought to themselves, even the crown princess attached such importance to him so quickly, so it's completely natural for us to feel close to him.

They returned to the eastern palace, and then Zu An reported the results to the crown princess. The crown princess was immediately stunned. She quickly called her trusted aides to set up their following plans.

Meanwhile, Zu An leisurely waited for a nice drama to unfold. He returned to let Yun Jianyue know about the current situation first.

When she heard that Sun Luzhen and the others were already tortured to the point where they almost didn't look human anymore, Yun Jianyue took a deep breath. "I was the one who harmed them."

She even had the urge to rush to the prison to bail them out. However, she quickly rejected this thought.

The emperor already returned to the palace, and she hadn't fully recovered yet. Charging into the imperial prison was completely meaningless.

Zu An continued, "That disciple of yours was about to spill everything."

He then told her about how he just happened to see Gu Yueyi almost betray her.

Then, he said, "Even though I tricked him by saying that they can be saved, he won't be fooled for that long. He'll be a problem sooner or later."

Yun Jianyue's expression grew cold. "Then just kill him so he can never speak."

Zu An was stunned. This is your own freaking disciple! You're going to kill him just like that?

He looked at this long haired woman. He then realized that this was the legendary Devil Sect Master, a cold-blooded killer.

...

During the next day's morning court session, the crown prince's officials quickly brought up Cheng Gang's case. This naturally involved Cheng Xiong. King Qi's men insisted on defending Cheng Xiong, to the extent where they were willing to abandon Cheng Gang.

Originally, both sides would argue meaninglessly for a while, and then they would just leave it at that.

However, the crown prince's faction suddenly brought out fatal proof, the confessions of the captured assassins. They explained how they used the government brothel, as well as Cheng Xiong's father and son relationship. All of the details were extremely clear.

King Qi's faction refuted one after another at first, but they only became more and more powerless as time went on.

It was because all of them knew fully well that those assassins were caught first, and then Cheng Gang's matter happened afterwards. Unless the Right Guard General Guo Zhi leaked them information, there was no way those assassins' confessions would match up that well.

Everyone knew that Guo Zhi was someone directly under the emperor. If they suspected him, then weren't they suspecting that his majesty framed Cheng Xiong?

Who would do something that foolish?

This was let alone the fact that those assassins were going to die to begin with. So why would they listen to Guo Zhi's words?

That was why King Qi's faction backed down in the end. Several big shots exchanged a few looks. Since Cheng Xiong couldn't be saved, then they would settle for the next best thing, to cut off his relationship with King Qi so that he didn't drag him down further.

It was clear that the emperor didn't plan to use this as a chance to attack King Qi directly. The court quickly reached a decision.

Cheng Xiong and his son colluded with the assassins in their attack on the empress and crown prince. They are to be punished with nine generations of executions.

Fortunately, the father and son were mutually dependant and didn't have many people in their clan.

As for those who were related, those who were to be executed were executed, those that were sent to the border to fight were sent out.

...

Zu An and Yun Jianyue chatted over tea. Yun Jianyue gave him a look and said indifferently, "What, you can't bear to see this result?"

"I do feel a bit uncomfortable." Zu An became quiet. As someone from a civilized world, killing off an entire family so easily was still hard to accept.

Yun Jianyue poured a cup of tea for him. "That's how the world is. If you don't kill me, then I'll kill you. If Cheng Xiong succeeded in framing you earlier, then the one whose clan would be eradicated would be you."

Zu An said with a bitter smile, "But to a certain degree, he wasn't really framing me. I was 'colluding' with you guys."

"Your way of thinking really is weird." Yun Jianyue gave him a look of surprise. "Cheng Xiong didn't attack you because he really knew about your connection to us. His motives were merely because he needed a scapegoat. Even if you were innocent, he would've still chosen you. In the end, both of you were just chess pieces in the battle between the emperor and King Qi, whether you live or die is not a choice you can make yourself. You should figure out how to live on this chessboard longer, not worry about the deaths of other chess pieces."

Zu An's expression changed. "I've benefited from your advice!"

Yun Jianyue smiled. "Heh, you only show me some respect in these types of times."

Zu An was about to say something with a chuckle, but he suddenly heard Eunuch Wen's voice.

"Sir Eleven, his majesty has summoned you to the imperial study."

Zu An and Yun Jianyue exchanged a look. Then, he arrived at the entrance.

Along the way, he asked, "Eunuch Wen, why did his majesty suddenly ask for me?"

Eunuch Wen's expression remained unchanged. "This humble one does not know."

Zu An was upset when he saw how this eunuch pretended to not know him. This guy took bribes quite fast, yet he immediately became hostile once something happened.

But he realized something as well. Wasn't the other party's attitude a type of warning in itself?

Sure enough, Eunuch Wen walked in front, his lips moving slightly. "His majesty's mood seems to be quite bad today. Sir Eleven, you should be more careful."

Chapter 659: Hanging On By a Thread

Zu An felt his head go blank. The emperor seeking him out at this type of time was definitely not anything good!

He didn't ask Eunuch Wen further about what the emperor wanted. He was already grateful that he told him these things, so he shouldn't trouble this man any more.

Furthermore, he probably didn't know what the emperor was really thinking either.

The two of them arrived at the imperial study. Eunuch Wen went ahead to report his arrival first. He quickly came back out and told Zu An, "His majesty invites Sir Zu inside."

After saying this, he gave him a 'best of luck' look. Zu An released a bitter chuckle. Now that things were like this, he could only brace himself and go in.

When he arrived inside the Imperial Study, he saw that it was no longer the bronze mirror, but rather the emperor himself reading over a report.

When Zu An entered, the emperor didn't react at all, as if he was just empty air.

Zu An stood to the side and bowed. "This subject pays his respects to your majesty."

The emperor still didn't respond. Zu An gulped. I'm finished. The reason this guy is unhappy is probably because of me!

He stared straight down and didn't say anything, remaining silent to prevent this situation from getting any worse.

A while later, the emperor raised his head to give him a look. When he saw how he was acting, he laughed out of anger. "Normally, those court officials are all shaking in fear and reverence, yet you're standing there like nobody's business."

Zu An replied, "I was scared that I would disturb your majesty from reading your report."

"You're just as slick as always." The emperor harrumphed. "How is the investigation I assigned you going?"

Zu An thought over his words, and then slowly said, "I already found some clues. The Left Guard General Cheng Xiong colluded with the assassins through his son Cheng Gang. He exchanged information with the government brothel..."

The emperor declined to express anything after hearing his explanation. "Then what about the motive?"

Zu An replied, "Cheng Xiong is an important member of King Qi's faction. I believe he wanted to use the assassination to get rid of the crown prince so King Qi can succeed to the throne."

The emperor gave him a cold look. "Are you accusing my own younger brother, a respected and wise king! How brazen?!"

You have successfully trolled Zhao Han for +444 Rage points.

Zu An snorted inside. Is this emperor really going to put on this type of appearance even in this situation? Everyone in this world knows that you and King Qi are already like water and fire, that you're itching to get rid of him. Who are you putting on this performance for?

Of course, mockery was mockery. He'd be courting death if he said any of this out loud. He could only continue based on the situation and say, "This subject does not dare vainly guess whether or not King Qi is really the one behind it all, but this is the most suitable deduction."

His majesty tossed the report in his hands onto the table. "You've found an excellent reason, and you've even told me a reasonable motive. If it was anyone else, they might believe what you are saying. Unfortunately, I know that King Qi would never do something so stupid."

Zu An was stunned. Wouldn't King Qi receive the most benefits if the crown prince dies?

The emperor seemed to have guessed at his thoughts and said, "I have many sons, and there is no lack of sharp and powerful ones among them. Why then, did I choose the crown prince?"

Zu An's head began to move quickly. He quickly recalled what he discussed with Chu Chuyan on the way to the capital.

Because of who the late emperor was, King Qi indeed had right to succession. The only thing the emperor could fight back with was his oldest son's right to succession. The crown prince is the emperor's oldest son, which is why he is the heir apparent to the throne. He has the law on his side as well, so King Qi's faction has no choice but to acknowledge this fact as well.

But if the emperor didn't go this path and instead chose to have his sons compete in brilliance and wisdom, who could compare to King Qi?

The emperor said coldly, "You are a smart person, so I believe you understand. That is why if something happened to the current crown prince, then I have a justifiable reason to switch to a more intelligent genius to serve as the new crown prince, because he is the next in line. Do you think King Qi would do something so foolish?"

Zu An immediately broke out into cold sweat, because he also understood what was going on now. King Qi likely doesn't wish for the current crown prince to die either.

It was precisely because of this stupid crown prince that the so many knowledgeable and experienced members of the court were worried about their future. This was the foundation for why they chose to side with King Qi.

If the crown prince became someone intelligent... No, even if he was only an ordinary person, as long as he had the ability to preserve the work of his predecessors, then why would so many of the court's subjects brace themselves to clash against the most powerful emperor? Why would they side with King Qi?

It now seems like Yun Jianyue miscalculated as well. Regardless of how she tried to frame King Qi, the emperor knew that it was definitely not done by King Qi.

Zu An quickly said. "His majesty is wise and brilliant. This subject will continue searching for the culprit."

"Heh, you are going to continue searching?" The emperor put away his smile. "You've colluded with the Devil Sect to take down the Left Guard General, who are you planning to frame with the Devil Sect next?"

Zu An's heart stopped. Cold sweat soaked through his clothes.

The emperor knows everything!

Wait, calm down first. Maybe he is just testing me?

As such, he pretended to be completely innocent. "What does your majesty mean? This subject is slow-witted and does not understand."

The emperor instead nodded in praise. "Your temperament is not bad. Your mind has not collapsed even at this point."

Zu An sighed in relief, but the emperor's expression became completely cold. "Unfortunately, the proof is undeniable. All excuses will only seem even more laughable."

He tossed the accounts book he was reading over. "Take a look for yourself."

Zu An gulped. He opened the document in front of him. This was clearly a confidential document, yet when he saw the contents on the surface, an explosion went off in his head. Every single cell in his body was quivering.

His dealings with Qiu Honglei in Brightmoon City were written in detail. There was even the matters of how Qiu Honglei took the initiative to marry herself to him.

Later on, on their way to the capital, the Devil Sect's experts tried to seize Zu An. The one in the lead was precisely Qiu Honglei.

According to various sources, Qiu Honglei was the saintess of the Devil Sect.

Furthermore, the long haired female grandmaster was the Devil Sect Master Yun Jianyue, and Qiu Honglei was her direct disciple.

There seemed to be a girl who looked like Qiu Honglei coming in and out of Zu An's baron residence during these past few days. Later on, Zu An headed into the government brothel and Cheng Gang was crippled. The case of Cheng Gang colluding with the government brothel followed right after...

One could make reasonable deductions from all of this information even without seeing it for themselves. Furthermore, the deductions were practically the same as reality.

He could tell from a single glance that this was Zhuxie Chixin's handwriting. Motherfucker, that guy called me a brother to my face but stabbed me right in the back.

But he knew that blaming Zhuxie Chixin was meaningless. It was probably the emperor who had him investigate him. Damn it, they're all ruthless old foxes.

"Looks like Cheng Xiong wasn't wrong previously. It was you who sent out an assassin after all." The emperor's cold eyes surrounded him, as if he was looking at a dead person.

In this instant, his aura erupted. Zu An felt as if the air around him became incredibly viscous, and he couldn't even move a finger. It was as if he would be blown to ashes with a single thought from the emperor.

Zu An's brain moved quickly, trying to find a way to deal with this. His first reaction was to deny it to the very end, because there was no conclusive proof recorded.

But he immediately rejected this idea. Investigation and proof were only used to convince the common people. For the emperor, as long as he believed something happened, would he let you go just because there wasn't any proof?

Wait, I didn't seem to have received much Rage points from the emperor in the backend?

Furthermore, why is he telling me all of this? If he really wanted me dead, he could have just killed me. Is there a need to talk so much?

When he thought of the mission he was given, he suddenly thought of something and immediately said, "This subject has committed a mortal crime! But I didn't collude with the Devil Sect, it was all because I just happened to run into Qiu Honglei! She saved my life before, so I couldn't just watch her die without doing anything. That was why I let her live!"

He spoke half truths. Of course, he couldn't talk about how he saved Yun Jianyue. The emperor would never permit a grandmaster to slip through his grasp.

The emperor gave him an expressionless look. "Oh? So you were just repaying a past gratitude. Then should this emperor reward you for that?"

Zu An quickly said, "This subject doesn't dare! I should die by a thousand cuts. I'll let your majesty decide how this situation should be dealt with."

Chapter 660: One Day, I Will Rise

He emperor nodded when he saw Zu An trembling in fear, as if he was extremely satisfied with this attitude.

As the emperor, he absolutely loved the feeling of seeing his subjects trembling in fear, their lives decided by a mere thought of his.

He returned to the present and said with a loud voice, "Not bad, you didn't quibble with me, or else you would already be a corpse. Fine, since you still have some loyalty, then this emperor will grant you a chance to redeem yourself."

Loyal to you my ass!

He knew that this was just a political trick the emperor was used to using. He cursed this emperor to hell inside. However, there was only sincerity on the surface. "If your majesty has an order, then I will tread through water or flames to achieve it."

At the same time, he sighed inside. Looks like keeping his life wasn't an issue.

The emperor looked more and more satisfied at his attitude. He was thinking that if this kid didn't act tactfully, then he would use this chance to give him a good beating. But since he knew how to behave, then he'll skip the beating. "Since you and the Devil Sect's saintess have some connection, then use this chance to infiltrate the Devil Sect. You are to first find out where the Devil Sect's Yun Jianyue is hiding, and then second figure out what kind of relationship the Devil Sect and King Qi has exactly.

Furthermore, if you can gain a steady footing in the Devil Sect, then you might be of use to me that way too.”

Zu An sighed in relief. At least he doesn’t know where Yun Jianyue is. Yeah, I cannot let him know, or else I’m dead for sure.

He put on a troubled look and said, “The Devil Sect Master is a grandmaster! A nobody like me won’t be able to do anything!”

The emperor said calmly, “I only need you to find out some information, I’m not telling you to fight her. I’ll intervene personally when it comes to face her, so you don’t need to worry.”

Zu An looked like he was relieved. Immediately afterwards, he said in confusion, “Didn’t your majesty say that the assassination on the crown prince can’t possibly have been directed by King Qi? Why are you still investigating their relationship?”

The emperor said unhappily, “Just investigate it if I tell you to, don’t ask so many questions.”

But a while later, he was worried that Zu An might not put too much detail in this matter, so he said, “Even though the chances of King Qi colluding with the Devil Sect isn’t high, what I fear is that he might actually make use of the fact that I think this. That is why I want you to look into it.”

Zu An was stunned. Is this dude a psycho? He says that it has nothing to do with King Qi, yet now he’s saying that it might. Tsk, it’s really hard to please such a paranoid ruler.

I have to be more careful in the future. I absolutely cannot think that I’ve ever truly earned this guy’s trust.

He coughed lightly and said with a troubled voice, “But I only have some personal friendship with Qiu Honglei, this has nothing to do with the Devil Sect as a whole. There are many people from their group who wants me dead, so it’ll be hard for me to join them. My life is insignificant, but it’ll be bad if I end up ruining your majesty’s plans.”

Zu An already expressed what he needed to express. He has nothing to do with the Devil Sect, and he definitely didn’t recognize no Yun Jianyue.

The emperor’s brows eased. Even though he knew that this kid was flattering him, he still liked what he was hearing. “That’s an easy matter. Aren’t there still a few Devil Sect assassins locked up? Figure out a way to save them. The Devil Sect will naturally appreciate this. Furthermore, with your connection to Qiu Honglei, you can easily join them.”

Zu An was stupefied. Well, would you look at that.

Regardless of whether it was Qiu Honglei or Yun Jianyue, they were all begging him to save those prisoners. It was to the point where they were okay with him just ending their lives painlessly if he couldn’t save them.

But the emperor gave him the green light in saving them! What did he have to worry about?

The emperor frowned when he saw that he was standing there all stunned. “What, can’t do it?”

"I'll do my best." Zu An looked like he was troubled. However, he almost burst out laughing inside.

The emperor said, "You shouldn't think that this is an easy task. There is no lack of smart people in the Devil Sect. That Yun Jianyue was able to cultivate to a grandmaster level, and she managed to think up this entire plot, so her intellect is definitely top notch. What you should consider first and foremost is how to prevent them from suspecting you. Furthermore, I will inform Guo Zhi to cooperate with you. Rescue them once you are confident in doing so."

"Thank you your majesty for your guidance." Meanwhile, inside, Zu An sneered. You're praising Yun Jianyue so greatly, yet you saw through her plans so easily. Aren't you actually tooting your own horn here?

"Enough, you can leave." The emperor waved his hand, clearly about to return to his cultivation.

Zu An gritted his teeth. "Your majesty, if this subject may make a presumptuous request."

"What?" The emperor opened his eyes with surprise.

Zu An said, "I am willing to infiltrate the Devil Sect for your majesty's sake, but Qiu Honglei has saved my life several times, so I want to return her kindness. Your majesty, can you spare her life after you destroy the Devil Sect?"

He did his best to play the role he should be playing. He absolutely cannot let the emperor notice how happy he was right now.

The emperor sneered. "Is that called returning kindness? Aren't you just lusting after her?"

Zu An chuckled in embarrassment and looked like he was hard-pressed.

The emperor thus said, "Whatever. As long as you can help me successfully wipe out the Devil Sect, then I can give you a trifling woman. Of course, this is the premise that she completely gives up her rebellious status. Otherwise, do not blame me for being ruthless."

"Of course, of course." Zu An said hurriedly.

"Get out." The emperor said emotionlessly.

Zu An left the imperial study. Even though nothing odd could be seen from the surface, his inside was extremely grave.

In the emperor's eyes, he was an ant that might die at any time. He didn't care about Zu An at all.

He could survive once or twice, but if he survived through the skin of his teeth every time, then he refused to believe that he would be this lucky every time.

Hmph, you shouldn't look down on me. Tides might just turn in the future!

He said this inside, but he had no choice but to turn back to reality right now.

Cheng Xiong targeted him again and again, and he was able to launch a successful counterattack. However, it was now the emperor. Did he really have the ability to defeat him?

But this was the freaking number one expert in the world!

Unless...

His eyes flickered about. The first stages of a plan seemed to have formed within him.

He returned to his courtyard. Yun Jianyue pretended to be speaking without thinking. "Hm, you seem fine? I thought that the emperor was about to get rid of you."

With her cultivation, Eunuch Wen's words didn't escape her ears.

Zu An's mood immediately improved considerably when he saw the long-haired beauty before him. "If the emperor really wanted me dead, would you sacrifice yourself for me out of love?"

He obviously didn't tell her about what happened inside. He just returned from the gates of hell. He would be wasting such a huge stroke of fortune if he didn't fully make use of it to gain their favor.

Yun Jianyue's expression grew cold. "Damn brat, don't think that I won't kill you just because you saved me."

Zu An had some confidence when he saw that there were no Rage points that came in. "Sigh, there are too many people who want me dead. You're not the only one."

Yun Jianyue frowned. However, she didn't ask anything else when she sensed the bleakness in his voice.

A while later, she suddenly said, "I might leave soon."

Zu An immediately panicked. "No! What if I don't tease you so often anymore? You know that I wasn't being disrespectful on purpose! I just felt like a glorious sect master getting angry was pretty interesting."

Yun Jianyue shot him an annoyed look. "I really might not be able to hold myself back from killing you one day."

She already had a rough idea of this man's nature after being around him during this period. She knew that he was different from most people in this world. He didn't have too many social restrictions or taboos holding him back. Even though some of the things he said really were annoying, it was precisely because of this that she felt that this was a different experience.

There was no one who dared to talk so casually and joke around with her after she achieved her high cultivation after all.

"Big sis, you're such a typical tsundere." Then, Zu An put away his smile. "But your injuries haven't recovered yet. Isn't it too dangerous for you to leave?"

Yun Jianyue shook her head. "The emperor has now returned. We're both in the palace right now. As my condition improves, it will be hard to hide my aura from him. It'll be dangerous if I stay here further, and it will harm you as well."

Zu An naturally wouldn't persuade her to stay when he heard this reason. "Alright. I'll try to find a way to bring you out of the palace."

This was definitely going to be a dangerous operation. They couldn't startle the emperor, or else there was no way she would be able to elave.

He suddenly thought of an idea.