

Immortal 811

Chapter 811: Vanished

"Vanished?" Bi Linglong was extremely shocked when she heard that word. "What do you mean by vanished?"

"They just vanished," Piao Duandiao replied. "They never came back after a long time, and we can't contact them. We didn't find their corpses either."

Bi Linglong and Zu An exchanged a look. They could see the seriousness in each others' eyes.

The group headed out to investigate, but they didn't find any useful clues. Finding the Jade Moon Serpent was the top priority, so they could only set aside the matter for now. However, there was now a shadow looming over their hearts.

Bi Linglong ordered everyone to move together from that point on to avoid any ambushes. Even so, scouts disappeared every day for the next few days. Sometimes it was two, and sometimes three.

The young masters of the different clans were all alarmed and panicked. A few days later, they finally couldn't take it any longer and got together to discuss the matter.

"We don't even know who the enemy is now!" Liu Xian felt as if he were about to go mad. He had pretty maids serving him every day in the capital, and he even frequently wandered the brothels to enjoy the singing and instruments of the courtesans. Why the hell had he listened to his clan's elders and come to this damn place for some bet or whatever?

This was a bet? He even had to call his cousin over when he needed to use the restroom! After all, between that Bi Chang who had been killed first and the other scouts who had disappeared, many of those people had cultivation ranks higher than his! That was why he was always extremely tense. He couldn't help but feel that he was next on the chopping board.

"Is it possible that it's a vicious beast?" Gao Ying mused as he analyzed the situation. "What happened recently is different from what happened to Bi Chang. Could it be that those scouts that went missing have been captured by a lurking vicious beast, and then eaten as food? Maybe that's why we can't find them?"

Liu Xian became more frightened when he heard Gao Ying's speculation. "I shiver all over whenever I think that those scouts were eaten by beasts and turned to sh*t."

The remaining scouts nearby all glared at him. Those scouts were their comrades, yet this person had actually described them like this.

Gao Ying was also speechless. His cousin really had crossed the line. He was a complete idiot, yet he loved to talk and shoot off that damn mouth of his. But because of his status, a relative of the Liu clan like him couldn't really say anything.

“There’s no chance of it being a beast.” Gu Heng voiced his analysis. “If it were a beast, then there should be traces of blood left behind, or the bones left behind after being devoured. There’s no way there wouldn’t be a single thing left behind.”

Pei You said coldly, “That’s why the attacker is definitely human, and furthermore definitely among us! We’re the only ones who entered this dungeon, so it’s an obvious conclusion. Even though no one is saying it, I’m sure all of you already have similar thoughts. We were worried about harming morale before, but there’s no choice now.”

Bi Linglong’s eyes narrowed as she replied, “Then does young master Pei have any ideas regarding who the perpetrator is?”

“It’s actually quite simple to find out who the murderer is.” Pei You paused deliberately. His eyes scanned over those present.

The others listened carefully when they heard Pei You speak, waiting for his next words.

Zhao Xi said impatiently, “Hurry up and speak if you have something to say! Why are you suddenly stopping in the middle of your sh*t halfway like Meng Pan?”

Meng Pan roared furiously, “What the hell are you trying to say?!”

Zhao Xi harrumphed. He turned around and ignored him.

Pei You also felt grossed out, and only after a while did he recover his composure. He gave Zhao Xi a look and said, “It’s simple enough. After something happened to Bi Chang, the crown princess asked all of us to move together. The crown princess’ intention was for all of us to watch out for each other, but that ended up producing another result, which was that none of us could secretly leave and kill on our own.

“Meanwhile, the only one who can move independently apart from the crown prince and princess is Sir Zu.”

He didn’t continue speaking afterward. All those present knew what he was implying. There was no way the crown prince and princess were the murderers, which meant that Zu An was the only one left.

Zu An chuckled when he saw the others look at him. “You’re suspecting me?”

Pei You said indifferently, “I merely made a rational statement.”

Bi Linglong’s expression changed several times. As she looked at Zu An, her eyes were full of worry, hesitation, fear, and all sorts of other emotions.

The others surreptitiously kept some distance between Zu An and themselves. Only Piao Duandiao, Jiao Sigun, and a few others continued to stand by his side.

Zu An shrugged. “There has to be a motive behind every action. As the crown prince’s chamberlain, I’m the embodiment of the crown princess’ trust. Why would I do something like this?”

Meng Pan chuckled and said, “That’s easy enough. You’re from the Chu clan, and everyone knows that the Chu clan is close to the Qin clan. The Chu clan’s heir even gifted you so many things before you

entered, and the Murong clan's young miss even gave you a storage pouch. How could something this precious be randomly given out like that? The Qin clan and Murong clan's relationship with King Qi is something I don't need to talk about, right?"

Zu An was stunned. "You think I'm working for King Qi?"

Jiao Sigun shouted angrily, "How is that possible!? Everyone knows that Sir Zu and King Qi don't get along. He's made King Qi's faction suffer severe losses ever since he came to the capital! The Security Officer and Left Guard General, even such important roles were lost because of Sir Zu. How could he possibly be working for King Qi?!"

Gu Xing stepped forward and said, "That's simple enough. Isn't it just injuring yourself to gain the enemy's confidence? Otherwise, everyone would suspect him."

Piao Duandiao harrumphed. "Even King Qi's heir's reputation hit rock bottom because of him. If that were the case, wouldn't the losses be a bit too severe?"

Gu Xing was left at a loss for words, but Gu Heng stepped forward and said, "If he were trying to fool ordinary people like us, dealing with Murong Tong and Cheng Xiong beforehand would already be enough. However, if he wanted to deceive such intelligent people as his majesty, the crown prince, and the crown princess, Murong Tong and Cheng Xiong alone would be far from enough. That's why they didn't hesitate to give up King Qi's heir to make him look better.

"All of you, think about it carefully. King Qi's heir has eight ranks of cultivation, while even Han Fengqiu, a ninth rank cultivator, was there to oversee the situation. How could they possibly lose to Zu An?"

"That's why there's a saying that goes 'too far is just as bad as not enough'. It can instead produce a hole in one's plan."

The others nodded in agreement, feeling that such an assessment was extremely reasonable. They had thought that King Qi's heir might have been defeated because of a mysterious water element expert, but even with their powerful intelligence networks, they hadn't managed to find out who that mysterious expert was.

But everything made sense if it was just an act King Qi's heir set up with Zu An. As such, when they looked at Zu An, their eyes became filled with hostility.

Zu An burst out laughing. "Why are you all looking at me like that? Not even his majesty saw anything; do you think you're more formidable than the emperor?"

Gu Heng's breathing stopped. "Of course I can't compare to his majesty. Perhaps his majesty has other plans by not exposing you, and deliberately used a long line to catch a bigger fish. It's just that no one expected for you to reveal a hole in your behavior ahead of time in this dungeon!"

Zhao Xi's personality was the most explosive. "You bastard, you've killed so many of our people! It's time for you to pay with your life!"

The young masters drew their weapons and surrounded Zu An when Zhao Xi finished speaking.

Piao Duandiao and Jiao Sigun were at their wits' end as they stood by Zu An's side. They both looked towards Bi Linglong to see what she would do.

Zu An also looked toward her, asking, "Crown princess, what do you think?"

Bi Linglong sighed and said, "You should just leave."

"What?" Zu An asked, confused.

Bi Linglong said indifferently, "Out of consideration for everything you've done, I won't trouble you. You can leave on your own. Your life and death will depend on yourself."

"Crown princess!" the young masters all cried out. "How can you let a murderer leave just like that?!"

"I've already made my decision; this matter is settled." Bi Linglong stormed off alone, her lonely figure receding into the distance.

"I've done so much for you and the crown prince, yet you still chose to trust them and not me?" Zu An shouted angrily.

Bi Linglong's figure paused for a moment, but she still didn't stop.

Gu Xing jumped in front of him and exclaimed, "You bastard, what are you yelling about? Why aren't you getting lost yet? If you continue to provoke the crown princess, you might not be able to leave even if you want to."

Zu An completely ignored his barking and instead said seriously, "Bi Linglong, you'll regret your decision soon. From here on out, all ties between us will be broken!"

"Brazen! You dare call the crown princess by her name?!" Gu Xing was incredibly annoyed when he saw Zu An completely ignore him. He immediately made a big fuss.

You have successfully trolled Gu Xing for +444 Rage points!

The others quickly surrounded Zu An. The atmosphere quickly became extremely tense.

"I already said to let him leave," Bi Linglong said in an ice-cold voice.

The others could only open up a path. Zu An swung his sleeves and left with an ashen expression.

"Big bro Zu!" Piao Duandiao and Jiao Sigun rushed over. As they looked at him, their eyes were full of worry. Zu An shook his head and didn't say anything to them. His lonesome figure headed into the forest depths alone.

"Hmph, letting him leave like this really is letting him off too easily," Meng Pan said through gritted teeth.

Zhao Xi chuckled. "If you're that upset, then why don't you secretly chase after him and kill him? We promise we won't report to the crown princess about this."

Meng Pan harrumphed. "Like hell I'll believe you." He returned to his tent after speaking.

The other young masters had conflicted expressions. They all returned to their own tents while deep in thought.

Chapter 812, Part 1: Who Will You Choose?

When Zu An left, the Gu clan brothers immediately ran over to Bi Linglong's side to be at her beck and call. Unfortunately, Bi Linglong's mood was clearly not great because of the matter of Zu An.

Gu Xing said, "Linglong, I know that you don't feel great right now because you trusted the wrong person, but things will now take a turn for the better! Now that we've gotten rid of the troublemaker, we'll have much more confidence in completing the crown prince's great exam."

Gu Heng nodded and also said, "Indeed. As long as the young masters unite together, with our strength, losing one Zu An won't matter at all. Furthermore, we brothers will always stand at the crown princess' side."

Bi Linglong forced a smile. "Thank you. I'll really have to depend on you guys from now on. The young masters of the different clans are all proud and arrogant. They might show respect for me on the surface, but I fear that in a moment of danger, they might not be so reliable in this dungeon. Now that Zu An has left, you two are the only ones I can trust."

The Gu clan brothers were overjoyed. "We are willing to go through anything for the crown princess without hesitation!"

Bi Linglong's mood finally improved a bit. Then, she spoke a few more words to them and gave them some encouragement.

The two brothers looked at the elegant and graceful crown princess in front of them as they chatted. This really was a blissful moment. They were quite close to each other, so they could smell her body's fragrance. They couldn't help but become worked up. Their eyes also began to wander towards her chest, waist, and other sensitive areas in a rather unrestrained manner. The desires within them began to brew as well.

I only thought that Linglong was beautiful and elegant before. I didn't expect her figure to be so amazing too...

She's slender, yet has amazing curves. What the hell did that damn pig of a crown prince do to be so blessed?

Hm... The crown princess didn't seem to mind that Zu An hugged her. Does the crown prince have this kind of fetish, or does he not know what that means? Regardless of which one it is, it seems we have a chance!

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In the following days, no scouts went missing anymore. The group sighed in relief.

Zhao Xi laughed heartily. "Looks like the murderer was indeed that Zu An! All of those annoyances seem to have disappeared once he left!"

Gu Xing said in agreement, "Indeed. He even made us take meaningless detours and kept saying confidently that it was for avoiding danger or something. In my opinion, he was acting on King Qi's orders and came to interfere with our plan. The detours instead made it easier for him to get rid of our people."

Gu Heng cupped his hands toward Pei You. "We have to thank young master Pei for this. If it wasn't for you uncovering his sinister plot, we might not have had any idea what to do as more and more people died."

Pei You said indifferently, "I only gave the most reasonable deduction. I wasn't trying to target anyone." After saying so, he left bearing his sword in his arms in an aloof manner.

Bi Linglong had a pensive expression as she watched him leave.

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Their party's relaxed mood didn't continue for long, because they quickly encountered danger.

They unknowingly entered the territory of some Giant White Wolves and were completely surrounded. Fortunately, all of them had powerful skills and tools, which allowed them to barely escape from the wolves' territory.

But before they could even celebrate, they barged into the territory of some Demon-Faced Greenfire Spiders. Only now did they realize why the Giant White Wolves hadn't continued to chase after them.

Many of the warriors were wrapped in the spiderwebs, then instantly sucked dry by the Demon-Faced Greenfire Spiders. Some of them got some of the spiders' green flames on them, and their entire bodies instantly became surrounded by a green flame. They couldn't put out the fire no matter what they did and were burned to ashes in the span of a few seconds.

When they finally managed to get away somehow, they encountered the attacks of a Blacksteel Thundersnake. As the name implied, their bodies were as tough as steel, making the attacks of the various clans' warriors ineffective, and they could even use the power of electricity. Those who faced it experienced a taste of what it felt like to be struck by thunder.

Fortunately, Bi Linglong's commands were excellent, so their group was finally able to escape to a safer place.

But after suffering from three disasters in succession, only a third of their previously grand troop was left. The remaining party members were wounded and covered in grime. Even Bi Linglong's clothes were torn. The only one who was completely unharmed was the crown prince, as he was the top priority for protection. No one dared to let him suffer in the slightest.

It now seemed that there was no way for their group to continue their bold advance. When they were certain that there was no more danger around them, the survivors set up camp and began to treat their injuries.

However, after everything that had happened, the higher-ranking individuals had to hold a meeting. They reported on their casualties, and discussed among themselves what they should do from then on. Their fighting spirit had already dropped considerably compared to before. All of them sighed deeply.

The young masters who normally spoke with confidence all seemed to have been humbled. It was instead the habitually silent Gao Ying who spoke first. "Is there something wrong with this dungeon? Why are the beasts we've encountered all much more formidable than what our intelligence said?"

"Indeed, according to our intelligence, whether it's the Giant White Wolves or the Demon-Faced Greenfire Spiders, even though they're dangerous for us, we have the numbers advantage on our side, and our preparations were ample. There should have been no reason for us to suffer such severe losses," Meng Pan said.

Zhao Xi frowned. "Did the academy deliberately fool us and lie to us about their cultivation?"

"That's impossible!" Bi Linglong immediately refuted his suspicion. "The academy has always been neutral; they would never help King Qi ensnare us. Furthermore, the academy's people aren't the only ones who have entered this dungeon before; we've sent people in before as well. The intelligence they provided us with is identical to the academy's."

"Then why are these beasts so much stronger?" Meng Pan asked, his expression dark.

They couldn't figure the situation out no matter how they thought about it. Piao Duandiao suddenly said, "Looks like big bro Zu was making us take detours precisely to avoid these dangerous beasts. If he were still here, we wouldn't have suffered such serious losses."

Jiao Sigun added, "Exactly. Everyone thought that he was holding up our mission for no reason, but now, it looks as if we actually misunderstood him."

The others felt their faces heat up. They all felt embarrassed. After all, they all had a part in chasing Zu An away. Some of them really did feel regret. However, there were also people who disagreed.

"Zu An was still the most suspicious suspect after all. We might have been able to avoid these beasts by traveling with him, but if he killed some of our people every day, then our casualties would only become worse as time goes on." Pei You harrumphed. He was the one who had led the accusations against Zu An, so he had to stand his ground here.

Jiao Sigun asked, "Isn't this too groundless? Those people might not have been killed by Zu An."

"You're right, I feel it's quite strange as well." Gu Heng suddenly spoke up. Jiao Sigun and Piao Duandiao were stunned. This guy was one of the ones who hated Zu An the most; why had he suddenly spoken in Zu An's favor?

Gu Heng continued, "We were misled by that scoundrel and chased Sir Zu away. Unfortunately, it's now too late for regrets."

Pei You frowned. "What are you trying to say?"

Gu Heng said sternly, "Who was the one who chose the path this time?"

The others were shocked. They all looked at Pei You.

Pei You's expression changed. "I merely followed the trail left by the Jade Moon Serpent; how could I possibly know that there were so many beast nests here?"

"Did you really not know or are you just pretending?" Gu Xing asked. "Sir Zu changed your itinerary several times before to avoid those beasts, so your plan was ruined. That's why you tried to chase him away. Afterward, you were finally able to lead us into those traps."

Liu Xian wiped at the grime covering his face and cursed. "Hmph, I never liked how you talked all this time anyway, I knew there was something wrong with you. Who would've thought that you really were this evil!?"

Zhao Xi stood up just then as well, surrounding Pei You with the others. "Mister Pei, I trusted you back then, yet we only ended up misunderstanding Zu An. Speak, who sent you here?!"

Pei You held his sword close to him. "Absolute nonsense! What motive do I have for harming you all?!"

Meng Pan replied darkly, "How could you not have a motive? Your Pei clan has two branches, one of which firmly supports King Qi's faction. Your grandfather doesn't get along with Sir Bi either; it's just your father who gets along with Bi Ziang. It really is strange now that I think about it. It was probably the Pei clan who sent you to infiltrate the Bi clan. Now, their plan is finally working."

It was clear that Bi Linglong wasn't the only one who had suspected Pei You.

Pei You's expression changed several times. "It's normal for a clan to belong to several factions; even father and son can belong to different parties. It's a common occurrence in history. What's so strange about that?"

"It might not be strange if that were all, but if we think about how you chased Zu An away, and then deliberately led us into the beasts' territory, isn't that too much of a coincidence?" Gu Heng sneered.

Pei You laughed in distress when he saw the others' suspicious looks. "I didn't expect all of you to have harbored such ill feelings toward our Pei clan. It looks like my father's decision back then really was wrong, and moreover ridiculously wrong!" As soon as he finished speaking, he drew his sword. A gorgeous slash of sword brilliance struck out at the group.

"Protect the crown prince and princess!" The others immediately became alarmed. They felt that the sword strike was aimed at them, and became a hundred and twenty percent vigilant.

But in the end, Pei You's strike was just a feint. He didn't actually attack and used the chance to quickly run. He was fast, disappearing into the forest after just a few leaps.

Chapter 812, Part 2: Who Will You Choose?

"Motherfucker, that bastard was hiding his real strength! He had evil designs after all!" Zhao Xi tried to run after him, but he couldn't catch up. Spittle flew everywhere as he cursed out.

"Don't chase after him. The mountain depths are full of dangers. It'll be bad if he guides us into another beast's territory." Bi Linglong gave the order, "Lock up all the Pei clan's people first."

The Pei clan's warriors were alarmed. While facing the encirclement of the other clans, all of them looked as if they were going to fight to the death.

Fortunately, Bi Linglong said, "I believe that you didn't know about the matter of Pei You. As long as you lower your weapons, I guarantee your safety on my name. Once we leave this dungeon, you will be tried by the court."

The Pei clan's warriors looked at each other in dismay. In the end, they gave up their resistance out of respect for the crown princess' usual prestige. After all, now that the Pei clan's young master had fled,

they were without a leader. They would undoubtedly die if they really fought and would only be able to drag some people down with them at most. Since the crown princess had already given them this promise, they wanted to keep their lives as well.

After the Pei clan's people were locked up, the other young masters went to the crown prince's tent to discuss what to do.

"It's really just one disaster after another." Liu Xian fanned himself with his already somewhat tattered fan. He released a heavy sigh.

Gao Xing also said with a frown, "There's another matter that's more important. In our group, only Pei You alone had a way of tracking the Jade Moon Serpent. There's no way any of us could find it in such a huge mountain, so how can we even complete this mission?"

Gu Heng asked, "How about we find Sir Zu again? Since he could accurately avoid these beasts' nests, he's probably familiar with this mountain. He should have a way."

When they heard Gu Heng, the others looked at him with raised eyebrows. Even Bi Linglong gave him a few odd looks.

Gu Heng's face heated up. "I was indeed a bit dissatisfied with Sir Zu before, and jealous that he was able to obtain the crown princess' trust. But now that I know he really has the skill, and this trip is related to the crown prince's great exam, how can I let my own private grievances affect the greater situation?"

Bi Linglong couldn't help but say, "Big brother Gu, thank you!"

Gu Heng's entire body seemed to weaken when he heard her call him 'big brother Gu'. She had only called him that when they were still young. It had already been a long time since he had heard her call him that.

"We don't dare to receive gratitude for doing our job in helping the crown princess." Gu Xing quickly spoke up. He couldn't just let his big brother take all the spotlight.

The group discussed things a bit longer, and then decided to act when the sky brightened again. It was too dangerous to move at night in the mountains. They would send some people to look for Zu An during the day.

Then, they returned to their tents to rest. After multiple successive days of great battles, all of them were wounded. Loud snoring quickly echoed through the tents.

Even though Bi Linglong was tired, she was worried about the results of the mission, so she couldn't sleep at all.

Suddenly she heard footsteps outside her tent. She turned around and asked, "Who is it?"

"It's us." The Gu brothers both spoke simultaneously.

"Is there something you need?" Bi Linglong frowned.

"We have something to report to the crown princess," Gu Heng said.

Bi Linglong tightened her collar and said sternly, "It's already late. Let's talk about it tomorrow."

"This matter is related to everyone's safety. It'll be too late if we talk about it tomorrow," Gu Xing said.

After some hesitation, Bi Linglong picked up the cloak next to her, and then wrapped it around herself. "Come in then."

The Gu clan brothers quickly entered. When they went inside, they immediately looked around. They saw that Bi Linglong was the only one inside.

"The crown prince doesn't sleep here?" Gu Xing exclaimed, shocked.

After all, Bi Linglong and the crown prince sleeping separately was a secret that only a few in the Eastern Palace knew about. In order to prevent others from knowing their secret, she had always pretended to sleep in the same tent as the crown prince.

Bi Linglong's expression turned cold as she said, "That's not something you should be asking about."

"Of course, of course. I was too rude," Gu Xing said with a chuckle.

Bi Linglong didn't want to continue talking about that subject and instead asked, "What did you want to tell me?"

Gu Heng asked, "Does the crown princess feel that the main culprit this time really was Pei You?"

"Why would you suddenly say that now?" Bi Linglong's beautiful brows furrowed.

Gu Xing said, "Let me explain. When us brothers went back and discussed this matter, we felt that the situation was too strange. Zu An was chased away, and all of the proof pointed at him back then, yet we ended up wronging him. That means we might have made the same mistake with Pei You today. It looks like he's the mastermind, but it might very well be someone else."

He secretly sized up Bi Linglong while speaking. This was the first time he had seen her in her 'inner chambers'. Even though she had a cloak wrapped around her, he could still vaguely see her clothes underneath. It looked as if she didn't even have time to change. Her clothes had been damaged during the battles, so there were areas that exposed her fair skin.

Bi Linglong hesitated and said, "But Pei You has a motive, and there were suspicious actions. He even left with a guilty conscience..."

Gu Heng asked, "Wasn't Zu An the same before?"

Bi Linglong asked seriously, "Then who do you two think is the real perpetrator?"

"We suspect Meng Pan. That fella has always been targeting Zu An, and he took part in chasing away Pei You too. It's hard to not suspect his motives."

"Meng Pan?" Bi Linglong began to think to herself.

Gu Heng used this chance to examine her up close. Her slightly furrowed brows really tugged at his heart. Sigh, that fat pig of a crown prince is really neglecting a woman as stunning as her? The desire in his eyes burned stronger and stronger.

Bi Linglong seemed to have sensed something. Her bright red lips opened and she said, "I understand. You two can go back first. I'll think this matter over."

The Gu clan brothers exchanged a look, and then they quickly asked, "How about we call over Gao Ying and King Liang's people to detain Meng Pan first?"

Bi Linglong calmly replied, "I still need to think over this matter. The two of you should go back for now. It's already quite late."

The Gu clan brothers exclaimed, "But the situation is pressing. We should act now!"

Bi Linglong's voice grew cold. "Are you two trying to teach me how to make decisions? Truth be told, even though Meng Pan is suspicious, the two of you aren't completely free from suspicion either. The two of you took part in chasing away Zu An, as well as Pei You."

Gu Heng's expression changed. "The crown princess actually suspects us?"

Bi Linglong said, "I obviously don't suspect you; it's just that it is already late. It's not proper for the two of you to be here. If there's anything else, we should talk about it tomorrow."

A conflicted expression flickered across Gu Heng's face. He was clearly hesitating over something.

Gu Xing snickered and asked, "Big bro, aren't you a bit too indecisive? You want to taste flesh, yet you still want to seem honorable doing it? Once we go back, I guarantee that she'll immediately order the others to arrest us."

Gu Heng sighed. "If not because there was no other choice, I wouldn't want it to be like this either."

Bi Linglong was alarmed. "What are you two saying?"

Gu Xing chuckled. "Linglong, you've always been rather smart ever since you were little. We know that as well. That's why there's no need for you to pretend in front of us."

Bi Linglong finally dropped the pretense and quickly shouted, "Guards! Hurry and come in!" Unfortunately, not a single one of the guards that should have been standing outside heeded her call.

Chapter 813: How About Doing It Together?

Bi Linglong was so angry her entire body was shaking. "Absolutely outrageous! You two dare to have such thoughts about me?"

Gu Xing rolled his eyes. "Linglong, soon you won't be the crown princess anymore. What's the point in trying to intimidate us at this point? Honestly speaking, don't tell me that being with us really would be worse than being with that idiotic crown prince? That guy is completely mentally retarded. I reckon he never even let you feel a woman's true happiness yet."

Bi Linglong's expression was dismal. "It looks like you're already certain, or else you wouldn't dare to say these things to me!"

Gu Heng gave his younger brother a look. "Brother, Linglong is a sister we grew up with after all. Be more courteous with your speech."

Gu Xing sneered, "Bro, what's the point in trying to act like a gentleman now? Judging from what we've seen so far, it's obvious that Linglong likes that Zu An a lot. That fella is a ruffian from the streets. There isn't a trace of a gentleman in his bones.

"Doesn't this mean that Linglong likes those ruffians more? To be honest, my personality is a bit closer to Zu An's. Big bro, looks like you're out of luck."

Gu Heng immediately began to panic. "Nonsense; Linglong likes an upright and modest nobleman. After growing up together, that's something I know well. How can she possibly like a ruffian like him?"

Bi Linglong harrumphed. "Gu Xing, you dare compare yourself to Zu An? Even someone like you?"

She was actually quite confused herself. It really was as Gu Heng said; she would prefer the dignified and steadfast young master of a distinguished clan. She had used to hate the hoodlum type like Zu An, yet why did she view him so much more favorably?

Gu Xing's face turned cold when he heard her ridicule. "Zu An is nothing. His cultivation is beneath mine, his background is beneath mine, and even his looks aren't as good as mine. It should be him who has no right to be compared to me."

Bi Linglong laughed mockingly. "I never realized this before. You're clearly ordinary, yet you seem to have so much confidence for no reason."

Gu Xing was furious. Gu Heng quickly advised him to stop, and then looked at Bi Linglong. "No matter how great Zu An is, you chased him away. It's meaningless to talk about these things now. I advise you to instead hurry and pick one of us."

He was more and more certain that his younger brother had already lost all favor in Bi Linglong's eyes. That was why he had the advantage right now.

"Fine, I choose Gu Xing," Bi Linglong said.

"What?" Gu Heng exclaimed. Even though her voice wasn't loud, it was like thunder to his ears.

Gu Xing instead went wild with joy. "Haha, Linglong, I knew you loved me!"

He rushed over to hug her as soon as he finished speaking. However, Gu Heng stopped him. Gu Xing frowned and said, "Big bro, we already agreed on this. What are you trying to do?"

Gu Heng said, "Don't you feel that she's choosing a bit too quickly? Judging from what happened so far and the words she just said to you, do you really think she likes you?"

"What does it matter if she really likes me or not? Her body is already enough for me." Gu Xing looked unfazed.

Bi Linglong and Gu Heng were both speechless.

Gu Xing chuckled sinisterly and continued, "Furthermore, who knows? She might just end up liking me if we do it a few times. Girls always cherish their first man a lot. According to the rumors we got from the palace, Linglong should still be a virgin."

Bi Linglong looked away. She was blushing a bit, as if she were embarrassed. She clearly didn't want to reply to such a personal question.

Gu Heng was instead about to go crazy from jealousy. It was fine when the two of them had just been secretly in love, since neither of them could obtain her. They could even console each other. Now, his little brother was about to take his goddess to bed, yet he couldn't do a thing about it.

The worst part was that he had thought that everything was already within his grasp, yet the next second, she had chosen his younger brother. The feeling of dropping straight from cloud nine into dirt was so horrible it made him want to vomit blood.

"Big bro, move aside." Gu Xing was getting impatient.

However, Gu Heng still didn't budge an inch. "I finally understand what's happening. Linglong chose you on purpose precisely to start an internal conflict between us, or even for us to kill each other. Only then would she even have a chance of making it out of this situation."

Bi Linglong said indifferently, "You were the one who told me to choose, yet you're saying all of this now after I chose someone. Then do I have to choose you in order for you two to not start a fight?"

She was indeed using this as a chance to get the two brothers to fight against each other. If it were anyone else, they would most likely choose Gu Heng, feeling as if Gu Xing would be more rash, thus causing friction.

But Bi Linglong knew that if she chose Gu Heng, Gu Xing was much slower than his brother and wouldn't be able to win in an argument. Furthermore, his cultivation was also a bit weaker, so he'd easily get done in.

However, if she chose Gu Xing, Gu Heng could use all sorts of excuses to his advantage. He could find all types of high-sounding reasons to stop his younger brother. Furthermore, after pretending to be a nobleman for so many years, once his repressed true nature finally erupted, it would be even harder to control.

Reality showed that her choice was correct. Sparks of conflict flew out as they stared daggers at each other.

Gu Xing also said in agreement, "Exactly! Does she have to choose you then? Hurry and get out of the way. Big bro, helps us keep watch outside the tent, yeah?"

When Gu Heng heard that he was to stand outside and just listen to another man pound away at the woman of his dreams, he finally exploded. "You idiot, you can't even see through such a simple attempt to divide us!"

"Like I care if she wants to drive a wedge or whatever. She chose me, so get out of the way!" Gu Xing was getting impatient as well. He drew his blade.

It was like a fire that lit a fuse. Gu Heng roared out, and then charged with his blade. The two immediately exchanged several dozen blows. Even though his cultivation was a bit higher than his younger brother's, there was no way he would win without delivering another two hundred to three hundred blows.

Bi Linglong also became nervous. She obviously wasn't worried about the pair's safety, but was rather searching for a chance to kill them both.

Suddenly, the two exchanged a palm, and then separated. Gu Heng quickly said, "Hmph, fighting like this isn't a solution either. We'll definitely both be weakened, and Linglong is also at the sixth rank. We might not be able to restrain her if only one of us is left."

Gu Xing wasn't a complete fool either. Furthermore, he knew that if they really fought, he wouldn't even be able to win against his brother. He asked, "Then what should we do?"

Gu Heng gave Bi Linglong a look. He quickly came up with an idea. "We're brothers born from the same mother, and we've shared many things. That's why women are naturally no exception."

Gu Xing's expression changed several times. After a moment of silence, he nodded. "Fine!"

Bi Linglong was speechless. She had never expected that there were such shameless people in this world, and two of them no less!

Gu Heng walked forward and said, "In that case, since I'm the big brother, I'll go first."

"No way, she chose me just now, so she's supposed to be mine. Sharing her with you is already a huge compromise. I have to be the first to break her in." Gu Xing didn't step aside at all.

Gu Heng remained silent. Seeing that they were going to fight again, he suggested, "Then, how about doing it together?"

Gu Xing was convinced. "Fine!"

"Utterly disgraceful!" Bi Linglong finally couldn't hold herself back anymore. She drew her sword and thrust it at the two of them.

However, her attack was easily blocked by them. Gu Heng no longer hid the desire in his eyes. He laughed loudly and said, "Linglong, didn't you just break through into the sixth rank? We've already been at the sixth rank for many years, so how can you be our match? Just obediently serve us. We will treasure you properly."

Hatred filled Bi Linglong's eyes. "Disgusting!" She didn't say anything else and focused on facing the pair. Unfortunately, her cultivation was beneath theirs to begin with, and it was two against one. Her sword was quickly knocked away.

Gu Xing excitedly pounced on her to try to grab her. That way, she wouldn't be able to resist anymore.

Right at that moment, a streak of sword light shot in from outside the tent. Gu Heng quickly pulled his younger brother back. Even so, a corner of his clothes was cut off.

Both of them turned around with serious expressions as a lone figure slowly walked in.

"Why are you here?" The Gu clan brothers cried out in alarm when they saw who it was.

Chapter 814: Filthy Souls

The one who entered was cold and gloomy. It was Pei You, who had been chased away earlier. Even Bi Linglong was surprised. She hadn't expected it to be him.

"Didn't you run away? You dare to come back?!" The Gu clan brothers were shocked and furious.

Pei You harrumphed. "Why wouldn't I dare to come back? Even though all of you turned against me with all of your false accusations, I know I'm innocent. Furthermore, when I realized that Zu An was chased away as well, I knew someone in this party might be targeting us. I knew that in that situation, it didn't matter what I said, so I decided that I might as well leave and watch from afar. I knew that since the mastermind wanted to chase us away, that meant they would definitely eventually make a move. And sure enough, I noticed that the two of you secretly sprayed drugs into the bonfire."

Bi Linglong asked unhappily, "In that case, why didn't you expose them on the spot?"

Pei You said indifferently, "Would you all believe me if I said anything? The others might instead turn around and take a bite out of me instead. I wouldn't be able to justify myself even if I had all the mouths in the world, so it would be better to wait until they revealed their evil schemes."

Gu Xing roared with laughter. "Pei You, Pei You, I didn't expect you to be such a shrewd fella. However, you're alone, and Linglong is injured. Even if she weren't injured, the two of you aren't our match."

The Gu clan brothers were born from the same mother. Even though they often disapproved of each other, they still understood each other. When they worked together, they became much stronger than simply adding them together.

Just then, another voice spoke up. "Then what if I'm included as well?"

The Gu clan brothers trembled. They turned around in disbelief, exclaiming, "Why are you here too?!"

This person was serious, his gaze resolute. His hair was combed meticulously. Who else could it be but the Liu clan's Gao Ying?

"I should be unconscious, right?" Gao Ying sneered. "I didn't feel that anything was strange when Zu An was chased out, but when Pei You was chased out, I felt something was fishy. Unfortunately, at the time, I was suspicious of everyone, so I didn't say anything and just watched carefully. I've finally caught the two of you in the act, but I didn't dare to warn the others, or else it wouldn't just be me alone here."

Gu Heng's conflicted expression changed several times. The two of them had been blinded by lust. They should have dealt with the other young masters first, yet in the end, they were so infatuated they couldn't hold themselves back. They should have anticipated that someone as meticulous and earnest as Gao Ying would carry some suspicion.

Gu Xing harrumphed. "Aren't you a bit too confident? If the other young masters were here, we might be completely helpless, but unfortunately, you were too careful. You're alone, and even if you have Pei You to help you, we brothers are still not afraid of you."

"I alone am enough!" As soon as Gao Ying finished speaking, the powerful cry of a sword being drawn rang out. His figure vanished from his original location.

The Gu clan brothers were shocked and instinctively protected themselves with their weapons. Sparks flew from the friction between their blades. Both of them staggered, but they still blocked the attack.

Gao Ying was surprised. "I didn't expect the two of you to actually be hiding your cultivation."

Gu Heng said coldly, "Do you think that only your first rate clans' disciples work hard? We second-rate clans can only work even harder from birth to have a chance of defeating you all who had a head start."

Bi Linglong said coldly, "Don't insult the words 'work hard'. Shameless and despicable people like you two can only be more dangerous to society the harder you try."

Gu Heng's usual character had completely shattered now after being criticized so harshly by the one he loved. "Who decides what's just and what's evil? Why is our effort harmful to society? In my opinion, it's merely the victor who decides the rules. Once we help King Qi rise to the throne, we'll become the subjects of the rightful ruler, and everything we've done will be viewed as righteous by the government..."

"Noisy!" Gao Ying didn't have the patience to listen to his speech. A flash of cold light shot straight at Gu Heng's tongue.

Gu Heng was already prepared. When he saw the attack, he raised his blade to block it. Gu Xing also surreptitiously counterattacked from the side.

Pei You also made his move. Even though Gao Ying sounded confident, there was no way he would really let the other party face these two alone. If any mishap happened, they would be throwing away such a favorable advantage.

The four of them began to fight. Gao Ying's cultivation was higher than that of the two brothers, but he couldn't make much progress against their excellent teamwork.

However, a while later, Pei You snorted coldly. He clearly didn't want to hold back anymore either. His sword erupted with brilliance. Many wounds appeared on the Gu clan brothers' bodies in almost an instant. Even though they weren't serious, their defeat was already decided.

"Run!" Gu Heng quickly exclaimed. At the same time, he tried to rush out. They had some trusted aides among their subordinates, and the warriors loyal to the crown princess were already unconscious. If they could get those warriors to join them, they could reverse the situation.

Gao Ying clearly saw through their thoughts. "You want to run?!" He immediately cut them off. The sword in his hands appeared in their path, as if it were waiting for them to run into it.

But just then, something suddenly happened. A palm suddenly reached in from outside and silently pressed against Gao Ying's back. A mouthful of blood gushed out from Gao Ying's mouth. His face turned incredibly pale and his body crashed into the ground like a broken sack. He tried to stand up, but he couldn't, even after trying several times.

Pei You became more vigilant at once. He quickly backed up, but he was too late. That dark figure rushed out like lightning, their speed several times greater than his. A palm slammed straight into his chest. Pei You immediately used his most powerful sword technique to protect himself, his defenses seamless. As long as he was given even a moment of a breather, he would have a chance to increase the distance between them. Then, he could slowly whittle down their enemy with the crown princess.

Unfortunately, his enemy's palm easily tore through his defenses. A brittle noise sounded, and then Pei You's precious sword snapped into several pieces. That palm gently pressed against his chest. Pei You's chest clearly caved in by several inches. Blood poured out of his mouth as he lay on the ground. He could only exhale, and he couldn't breathe at all. It was hard to say if he would even survive.

The crown princess' side had originally had the advantage, but the situation had suddenly reversed.

Only now did Bi Linglong see who it was clearly. This person's appearance was completely ordinary. He was dressed in the most ordinary uniform of a Bi clan warrior. But she didn't dare to look down on him. Both the powerful aura rippling out from his body and his intimidating presence clearly declared that this was an expert that was far stronger than the others.

"Peak of the eighth rank!" Gao Ying exclaimed, instantly feeling despair.

"Who are you really?" Bi Linglong's expression was overcast as she stared straight at him. This person was definitely not a warrior of the Bi clan.

Gao Ying and Pei You stared at him as well. Even if they were going to die, they wanted to understand why.

That person chuckled and removed his mask. "As expected of the crown princess. You can remain calm even in this kind of situation."

"Shi Tong!" The others already recognized who this person was. This was the one with the highest cultivation among the Shi clan's younger generation. He had previously assumed the post of Fire Cry Officer. However, he had been stripped of his post after the matter of the Shi clan framing Zu An and the crown princess was exposed.

"Why are you here!?" Bi Linglong cried out in alarm. After all, this person should have been in the imperial prison right now!

"It's all thanks to King Qi who gave me another chance. Otherwise, how would I be able to get revenge for the Shi clan?" Shi Tong's face warped as he spoke. "You whore, our Shi clan was originally a brilliant and glorious clan, a first-rate clan in the capital. It was all because of you that my sixth brother was mistakenly killed, so we had no choice but to carry this death grudge against the Eastern Palace. We suffered failure again and again, and now, even though his majesty hasn't completely dealt with our Shi clan, that's only because of our death pardoning token. However, all of us understand that his majesty definitely won't spare the Shi clan. All of this was because of you!"

Bi Linglong exclaimed coldly, "What a bogus accusation! It was your Shi clan who tried to frame me with your crafty plots, and it's now my fault? You're all only suffering the consequences of your own actions."

"Hah, look at how clever this little mouth is. I'm going to strip you clean and jam this thing in. Let's see if you can still act all haughty then." Shi Tong's voice was incredibly cold.

The Gu clan brothers immediately panicked. "General Shi, King Qi already agreed that Linglong would be ours!"

Shi Tong snorted. "It's your fault for not being able to deal with her on your own. Don't worry, once I'm done venting out my frustrations on her, I'll return her to you two."

"You...!" The Gu clan brothers were shocked and furious. However, when Shi Tong glared at them, they immediately felt a chill run down their backs. They didn't dare say another thing out of fear of the other party's cultivation.

"Despicable!" Bi Linglong blushed. These young masters were normally all clean and noble, yet under that mask, they were all such vile and filthy souls.

Shi Tong's eyes narrowed. "It really is strange. I haven't sensed any fear from you all this time. Just where do you get your confidence from?"

Bi Linglong took a deep breath and exclaimed, "Mister Zu, how much longer are you just going to sit and watch this drama for?!"

Chapter 815: Where Do You Get Your Confidence From?

The others were shocked when they heard the crown princess' words. Gao Ying and Pei You's eyes lit up. If Zu An came, everyone would have a chance of surviving.

However, their expressions quickly darkened again. After all, in their opinion, even though Zu An might have been hiding his strength somewhat, it would only be around their level at most. It wouldn't make any difference against someone like Shi Tong who was at the peak of the eighth rank. There was still no chance of victory. He could crush Zu An with a single hand.

A clear and bright voice rang out. "What can I say? I didn't expect this drama to be so interesting! Of course I should take the time to watch it properly."

"Zu An!" Shi Tong turned around with gritted teeth when he heard this voice. Flames were almost erupting from his eyes.

You have successfully trolled Shi Tong for +444 +444 +444...

It was precisely this person who had caused their Shi clan to be destitute and ruined. How could he not hate him?

Zu An chuckled. "Oh? I didn't expect to receive such a warm welcome here. The women are calling out to me, and the men are calling out to me too."

Shi Tong and Bi Linglong were speechless. Why did this brat always sound as if he really deserved a good beating?

Zu An used this chance to arrive at Bi Linglong's side and help her up into a seated position. "How are your injuries?"

"It's not too bad." Bi Linglong felt warm inside.

Gao Ying and Pei You felt resentful. The crown princess' injuries are obviously the lightest! Can't you tell that we're on the verge of dying here?

But at this point, it didn't matter. Before someone at the peak of the eighth rank, it was only a matter of dying a bit sooner rather than later.

When they saw how close Zu An was with Bi Linglong, the Gu clan brothers went mad with jealousy. "You bastard, let Linglong go!"

You have successfully trolled Gu Heng for +233 +233 +233...

You have successfully trolled Gu Xing for +233 +233 +233...

Zu An chuckled. "Weren't the two of you both yes-men when Shi Tong was bullying her? Look at how aggressive you two are acting against me now. Honestly, if the two of you had made a stand against Shi Tong earlier, maybe my opinion of you two might've improved a bit."

The two of them immediately felt tremendous shame when they heard those words. They were indeed terrified under Shi Tong's pressure.

Gu Heng found it harder and harder to accept when he saw the disdain in Bi Linglong's eyes. "Who do you think you are? You dare compare yourself to General Shi? Furthermore, why do we brothers need your commentary when we do things?!"

You have successfully trolled Gu Heng for +582 +582 +582...

Zu An laughed in ridicule. He didn't feel like wasting his breath on Gu Heng and turned to look at Shi Tong, asking, "How did you even get inside? Didn't they test everyone's cultivation before we entered this dungeon?"

Shi Tong said coldly, "King Qi has an aura concealing artifact, so it wasn't hard to get in. As for the mask, we just needed to kill that Bi clan warrior and peel off his skin."

Bi Linglong glared at the Gu clan brothers when she heard those words. "The two of you actually colluded with outsiders to harm our Bi clan's warriors!"

The brothers were a bit embarrassed, but Gu Xing reacted quickly and said, "You make it sound as if you treated us as your own in the first place."

"Indeed, it looks like you already made arrangements with Zu An ahead of time. Chasing him away before was just an act to fool us," Gu Heng said hatefully. "The one you trusted the most was this lowly person after all."

Bi Linglong said coldly, "Thank goodness the one I trusted was him and not you two, or else I would've already met a tragic end."

When the scouts had mysteriously disappeared a few days before, she had discussed it with Zu An in private. They were certain that the perpetrator was in their group.

Unfortunately, the enemy was too crafty and didn't show any openings. As such, they decided to bait the enemy in. Sure enough, the true masterminds began to show themselves bit by bit.

"Look at how cocky all of you are getting." Shi Tong snickered. "But in my opinion, nothing has changed at all! I was going to hunt Zu An down after I dealt with you all, but now, he's decided to waddle right back, saving me some time. I can just get rid of all of you together."

Bi Linglong immediately felt her spirits dampen. Even though Zu An had told her to trust him before, Shi Tong was at the peak of the eighth rank! Furthermore, he was a general of one of the empire's six great armies. This was absolutely not filth raised purely through the abuse of resources. His real fighting strength was definitely top notch as well. It seemed as if everything was now pointing at disaster.

She said in an overcast voice, "Ah Zu, I'll stall him, so you should get away from here. If you can, please bring the crown prince with you. If you really can't, then just run away yourself. Once you get out of the dungeon, report everything that happened to his majesty."

Zu An shook his head. "How can I leave you behind in a moment of danger and run off alone by myself?"

Bi Linglong's reason told her that if they both stayed here, then they would all die. But when she heard that Zu An was willing to stay here with her, she instead felt incredibly moved.

Gao Ying and Pei You had strange looks on their faces. Are we seeing things? Why do the two of them seem like lovers?

The Gu clan brothers were already seething with rage. "Bastard, you say some pretty words. But with General Shi here, what difference can you make by staying here?"

You have successfully trolled Gu Heng for +788 +788 +788 Rage points...

You have successfully trolled Gu Xing for +788 +788 +788 Rage points...

Shi Tong was quite satisfied with their tactfulness. He smiled and said, "Indeed. You can all end your delusional thoughts. None of you will get away today." He took a step forward after speaking. His aura at the peak of the eighth rank erupted forth. The faces of those nearby turned pale, and even breathing became a bit difficult.

Bi Linglong grabbed Zu An's sleeves tightly. She had already prepared herself for death. She was going to go all out together with Zu An, and as soon as the situation looked impossible, she would immediately end her own life to avoid being defiled by these filthy men.

Zu An patted her shoulder, telling her to calm down. Then, he looked at Shi Tong. "Do your Shi clan's people all have such blind confidence? Just who gave you so much confidence that you think everything is already decided?"

Shi Tong was unfazed. "I have to admit that you have some skill. Back then, even sixth brother lost to you. Honestly, sixth brother has had it a bit too easy growing up, so that was why he was so disappointing. However, before absolute strength, it's meaningless no matter how many tricks you have."

Zu An sighed. "Are fights won through words nowadays? I actually don't mind fighting with my lips with a pretty girl, but come on, you're a grown man. I have to politely decline."

Bi Linglong scoffed inwardly. Just what kind of situation was this? Yet this fellow was still so indecent.

"Are you trying to taunt me to find an opening?" Shi Tong remained unconcerned. "Unfortunately, you have no idea what kind of concept the eighth rank is. We can borrow the power of heaven and earth. All tricks are meaningless. Make your move, or else you won't have another chance." He stood there with his arms behind his back.

Together with the pressure Shi Tong was releasing, the Gu clan brothers behind him were both fully convinced of his strength. They thought to themselves, How amazing would it be if we could reach this level one day!?

“Then don’t regret it afterward!” Zu An laughed. His smile was extremely dazzling.

Shi Tong gave him a faint look. “Stop speaking nonsense and treasure this chance I’m giving you...”

Zu An had already moved halfway through Shi Tong’s sentence, closing the gap almost instantly.

How is he so fast?! Shi Tong felt a chill and quickly thought of raising his hands to stop the other party. Unfortunately, he was a step too late. Zu An’s fist had already slammed straight into his face. In that instant, the flesh on his face felt mushy and his entire face warped. As his body flew through the air, he screamed miserably. A line of blood decorated the sky, as well as some broken teeth.

Zu An pulled back his fist, wiping away the blood on it disdainfully. “Keep bragging, let’s see what that gets you.”

The others were stupefied. What the hell was going on? Shi Tong was blasted flying? They had expected Zu An to try all sorts of tricks, while Shi Tong would remain completely unfazed. That was the most reasonable result!

Even Bi Linglong, who trusted Zu An the most, was shocked. Even though she had known that Zu An was hiding his real strength, she had only expected Zu An to have some chance against Shi Tong. However, the scene she had just seen completely shattered her entire worldview.

The Gu clan brothers were so shocked their jaws almost dropped to the floor. They quickly ran out to help Shi Tong, asking, “General Shi, what are you going to do now?”

“Get lost!” Shi Tong flung the two of them away in annoyance. Then, he quickly stood back up and glared at Zu An.

But his nose was now a bit crooked, and his face was covered in blood. Because of the loss of a few teeth, his mouth also looked a bit sunken. His current appearance was as comical as it could get.

Chapter 816: How Can It Be So Great?

“You’re at the eighth rank?” Shi Tong was a bit apprehensive as he looked at Zu An. If Zu An had been beneath the eighth rank, then Zu An wouldn’t be able to do a thing to him even if he were standing still. Yet that tremendous force had almost blasted his brain out of his head. It should have been impossible to possess such tremendous strength unless one could borrow the power of the world.

As for Zu An being at the ninth rank, that was something he absolutely wouldn’t believe. Zu An was so young, and the intelligence had stated that he was just a commoner from the streets who didn’t have an ounce of cultivation a year or two before. If he hadn’t experienced it himself, he wouldn’t dare to believe that the other party was already at the eighth rank, let alone at the ninth rank that even he couldn’t reach.

Zu An chuckled. “What do you think?”

Shi Tong harrumphed. "What happened just now was only because I was careless. Seeing how smug you're getting, sure enough, you're just a nobody who's happy with your petty accomplishments."

He wasn't worried at all, since it was mainly because he had been careless earlier, and Zu An had moved too quickly. He probably had some type of special movement skill. However, as an eighth ranked expert, he knew that this type of movement skill couldn't be used endlessly. It would be fine as long as he was more careful.

Zu An sighed. "You should just admit your defeat if you lose. Only the weak use all sorts of excuses."

Shi Tong roared in rage, "Then I'll make you understand just how strong I am!"

You have successfully trolled Shi Tong for +444 +444 +444...

As soon as he finished speaking, he rushed at Zu An like an artillery shell.

The Gu clan brothers sighed in relief when they felt the attack's powerful pressure. General Shi was finally becoming serious. He had already remained at the peak of the eighth rank for a long time; he was definitely much stronger than someone like Zu An who had only recently reached the eighth rank. Even so, they felt conflicted inwardly. How could this Zu An that they had looked down on all this time be at the eighth rank?

We need to get him to confess his cultivation secrets after Shi Tong apprehends him. If we can also reach the eighth rank... Their eyes burned with desire. They began to cheer on Shi Tong from the bottom of their heart.

Of course, if the two of them could take each other out, that would be the best result. They didn't forget how Shi Tong had wanted to toy with Bi Linglong first. They liked her so much, so of course they didn't want to see that happen.

While their minds were wandering, Zu An and Shi Tong had already collided once more. It was a simple back and forth with punches and kicks. There were no techniques or tricks involved.

Gao Ying and Pei You's eyes widened in shock. Zu An wasn't at a disadvantage at all even when he fought against Shi Tong head-on! The two of them finally understood that Zu An had defeated King Qi's heir fair and square. There was no mysterious expert at all!

At first, the two of them could still keep up with the combatants' movements, but as the fight went on, their attacks grew faster and faster, completely exceeding the limits of the onlookers' sight. They could only vaguely see two figures darting back and forth, as well as the blast waves of blows being exchanged.

Bi Linglong's bright red lips also hung wide open. She had thought that she was already giving him too much credit, but she hadn't expected to have still underestimated Zu An in the end.

He was at the eighth rank at such a young age. This was something that was completely unheard of! Furthermore, he hadn't even been cultivating for that long...

For some reason, Bi Linglong began to gradually blush a bit.

"Is that all?!" Shi Tong suddenly laughed in contempt. He hadn't dared to act arrogantly at first, but after going at it for a round, he discovered that even though his opponent was strong, it was still within his expectations. Furthermore, it didn't seem as if his skills were that proficient. "I'm not going to play around with you anymore. Just die!"

Bi Linglong's face turned deathly pale when she heard those words. Was Zu An going to lose?

Suddenly, a huge noise resounded. A body flew outward and slammed into the ground.

"Ah Zu..." Bi Linglong was in utter panic. She was about to rush over, but she froze after taking a single step. The one who had crashed into the ground wasn't Zu An, but rather Shi Tong.

What was going on?

Forget about her, even the Gu clan brothers who had been about to cheer out were stupefied. Even Shi Tong was in disbelief as he exclaimed, "How can this be?!"

Zu An slowly walked out from the smoke and dust. "I didn't even go all out and you're already down on the ground. Just who was playing around with whom?"

He was already at the ninth rank. Furthermore, he had all sorts of powerful skills, so his real strength was far greater than others of the same rank, let alone someone at the peak of the eighth rank.

The reason why their battle had previously seemed even was because Zu An had jumped two cultivation ranks in succession. He felt that his foundation was a bit unsteady, so he'd wanted to use this chance to solidify it. After all, it wasn't easy to find a sparring partner at the peak of the eighth rank. How could he not make use of one if he came knocking on his own?

His understanding toward the power of the world and his higher cultivation rank improved greatly from their clash of strength. Now that Shi Tong's job as a sparring partner was complete, there was no need to keep up the act.

But who could have thought that Shi Tong would take things so seriously? He had actually said all that conceited nonsense. In that case, Zu An decided to let him have a taste of why roses were so red.

"You bastard, why is your cultivation so high?!" Shi Tong slowly crawled up from the ground. It had to be said that the body of someone at the peak of the eighth rank was quite extraordinary.

The same question was on the minds of all the onlookers. Zu An had such powerful cultivation at such a young age. Furthermore, the ki density surrounding him seemed to even be above that of Shi Tong, who was at the peak of the eighth rank.

"Why don't you beg me if you want to know?" Zu An replied with a smile.

Shi Tong and the others were left speechless. Why was this guy so despicable?

You have trolled everyone for +666 +666 +666...

Shi Tong finally responded with a sneer, "Hmph, so what if you're strong? I'll teach you what it means to be an eighth ranked cultivator!"

After suffering a crushing defeat just now, he had already decided that he wouldn't fight in close combat with Zu An anymore. He changed his tactics to elemental skills. The other party might have been able to reach the eighth rank, but there was no way his control over elemental skills could compare. A wind blade condensed in front of him. It was extremely fast and arrived in front of Zu An almost instantly.

But for Zu An's current self...

He just took a step to the side, effortlessly avoiding the attack.

Shi Tong coldly remarked, "You can avoid one, but can you avoid thousands upon thousands of them?"

Innumerable wind blades hacked out at Zu An, cutting off all avenues of evasion. Shi Tong smirked. These were wind blades formed by borrowing the power of the world, so it didn't exhaust too much ki. On the contrary, if his opponent wanted to block these wind blades, he would have to use up a lot of ki. As time went on, this attack would completely wear him down.

Zu An didn't dodge when he saw the endless wind blades. Instead, he reached out his hand and drew a circle. It was as if a black hole had appeared in his palm. The endless wind blades were all sucked into the black hole, and then ultimately vanished into his palm.

He sucked away the ki attached to the wind blades with his Heaven Devouring Sutra. Then, with his understanding of the power of the world, he turned those wind blades back into the natural wind element. If the other party continued to fire attacks, it would only be giving him ki.

"What kind of skill is that?" Shi Tong's jaw dropped.

"Why don't you beg me if you want to know?" Zu An repeated the same sentence he had uttered earlier.

"Screw you!" Shi Tong roared. His body began to rotate rapidly, forming a spiral vortex, and then he charged at Zu An.

In response, Zu An reached out in front of him with a hand.

Boom!

Zu An was blown back several steps. He frowned as he realized that applying rotational force made the wind element several times more powerful. He had to admit that the way someone at the peak of the eighth rank used his abilities was worth learning from.

When Shi Tong charged at him again, he tapped his feet against the ground and used the Sunflower Phantasm, easily avoiding it.

"I want to see just how long you can keep dodging for!" Shi Tong's body spun rapidly, quickly forming a small-scale tornado. The powerful wind tore the entire tent to pieces.

Bi Linglong quickly quickly grabbed Gao Ying and Pei You's clothes and brought them to a safer place. The Gu clan brothers hurriedly ran as well.

Zu An actually wanted to use this chance to experience his opponent's ultimate move himself, but there were too many people in this camp who were unconscious. If the terrifying tornado really formed completely, many of them would lose their lives.

He sighed and said, "Let's end this."

Shi Tong sneered. Whether or not things will end isn't for you to decide. Once my tornado forms, not a single blade of grass will remain within a range of a dozen li.

However, his expression suddenly froze, because he discovered that he seemed to have lost his connection with the wind element. Furthermore, he felt extremely cold.

Why are there snowflakes? Shi Tong was stunned when he saw snowflakes fall. Why would it snow in the dungeon during this season?

But his expression changed the next second. He quickly reacted, exclaiming, "Snowflake Sword!"

Unfortunately, it was already too late. The small-scale tornado seemed to have been frozen still by the cold. There was a layer of frost that covered his body as well.

Then, a flash of cold light flickered. He heard a crack, as if something had shattered. Then, he saw a headless body standing nearby like a sculpture. Huh? Why do those clothes look a bit familiar?

Soon afterward, he realized what had happened. Then, darkness filled his consciousness. The last thought in his mind was, How can the Snowflake Sword's power be so great...?

Chapter 817: Death

Bi Linglong realized what had just happened as well.

The beautiful sword skill that filled the sky with snowflakes was Chu First Miss' extreme art, the Snowflake Sword. If Chu Chuyan had even taught him her clan guarding skill, then it was obvious that their relationship was not just one of nominal husband and wife as everyone had thought.

For some reason, she just didn't feel great when she saw Zu An use another woman's skill. But that feeling was soon replaced with shock, because she saw that Shi Tong's ultimate skill was completely frozen. Then, a sad and beautiful slash flickered out, and Shi Tong's head tumbled away.

At that moment, her thoughts were the same as Shi Tong's. How could Chu Chuyan's Snowflake Sword be this powerful? Even though she had never faced Chu Chuyan before, she had seen her before. She had also heard some things about the other woman's cultivation. Even though the Snowflake Sword was miraculous, it shouldn't be this powerful, right?

Only Zu An knew that he wasn't only using the Snowflake Sword, but also his Snow Phoenix. The two skills complemented each other, and that was why the power they displayed was far greater than what Chu Chuyan could normally use.

However, Bi Linglong quickly became vigilant. She wanted to dodge sideways, but her entire body went limp. The major acupoint on her back was sealed.

"It's you two!" When she saw the Gu clan brothers she had grown up with, Bi Linglong had never felt such loathing and revulsion in her life.

The Gu clan brothers couldn't be bothered to reply to her and instead stared at the distant Zu An in alarm. Their voices were even shaking a bit as they exclaimed "Zu bastard, freeze!"

They had already been frightened when they saw Shi Tong and Zu An fighting on equal footing, so they planned to seize Bi Linglong and use her as a hostage. They hadn't expected Shi Tong to lose so quickly, and were actually proud of their preparations.

Because of Bi Linglong's excessive shock, she couldn't guard against their approach. By the time they rushed over, it was already too late.

Zu An turned around and saw that Bi Linglong had been captured by the pair. He couldn't help but frown. "The two of you really perfectly define what it means to be shameless and contemptible."

"I don't want to hear any nonsense!" Gu Heng felt a bit ashamed. "If you don't want anything to happen to her, then cut off your right arm!"

Zu An harrumphed. "The two of you still have the nerve to say you love her? Look at you now, using her safety to threaten someone else. What kind of love is that?"

Gu Xing harrumphed and said, "Stop trying to lecture us. When you can't win against someone, you obviously need to do anything you can to outwit them. Otherwise, you'll be nothing more than a useless brute."

"Contemptible scum shouldn't try to make themselves sound honorable," Bi Linglong said coldly.

"Shut up!" Gu Heng's face was entirely red. The blade in his hand pressed tighter against her neck. "Bastard, stop saying useless things! If you don't cut off your right hand, I'm going to kill her."

"Don't worry about me, just kill these two disgusting filth!" Bi Linglong quickly explained.

Zu An gave the two of them a look. "You two won't be able to live even if you kill her."

Gu Xing laughed. "How can we worry about that much at this point? Furthermore, having Linglong accompany us to the grave is something we can already be satisfied with."

"Shameless!" Bi Linglong was so angry her entire body was shaking.

Gu Heng looked at Zu An. "Bastard Zu, there is a limit to our patience. You can either cut off your own right arm, or you can watch as we brothers end our lives with Linglong. If you choose the latter, living this life of ours would still be worth it."

He knew fully well that it was extremely easy for Zu An to end them even if he did cut off one of his arms. However, asking him to cut off both of his arms wasn't too realistic. That is why they had to go through this roundabout method to slowly drag him down bit by bit.

If he chopped off one of his arms, they would then immediately demand for him to chop off his other arm. If he had already paid a huge price, the chances of him agreeing would increase. Once he really cut

off both of his arms, the two brothers would either fight or run. They would be the ones who had the advantage then.

Zu An shrugged. "She's not even my wife; aren't you threatening the wrong person with her? I'm just a part-timer here to earn a bit of money. Why would I go so far as to throw away my life and prospects for her sake?"

Gu Heng sneered. "Do you think his majesty would let you go once you left this dungeon if something happened to her?"

"I have no idea if he'll let me go, but he definitely won't let your Gu clan go." Zu An looked completely unconcerned.

Gu Heng's expression sank. He had originally thought that after this dungeon, he would rise up to become a dragon among men. He had never expected things to fail at the very last step, and they had even ended up dragging down the entire clan.

It was instead Gu Xing who was comparatively calmer. "Do you really think we don't know your relationship? Linglong trusts you so much, which means you're definitely not just a normal subordinate. I really can't believe that there's nothing going on between the two of you."

He looked at Bi Linglong after saying that, continuing, "Linglong, oh Linglong. You've trusted him so much and showed him so much sincerity, but what did you obtain in the end? For the sake of saving you, forget about giving up his life, he's not even willing to give up an arm."

Gao Ying and Pei You, who were watching this drama play out, looked away as if they hadn't heard anything.

Bi Linglong sneered. "Are you taking me for an idiot or do you take him for an idiot? Who would agree to such an idiotic condition? Mister Zu, if you really agreed, I would've really questioned your intelligence."

Even though she said those words, she still felt sad inwardly. Rationality was one thing, while her emotions were something else. She had actually been hoping to see just how far the other party was willing to go for her, to see just how much she meant to him.

However, she quickly realized something. At the same time, she sneered inwardly. What kind of situation were they in now? Yet she was actually acting like those foolish young women.

When he saw that Zu An still hadn't replied, Gu Xing became impatient. "I'll count to three. If you still don't cut off your arm, I'll cut her face. If you don't cut off your arm by the time I reach ten, I'll kill her. We'll all just die here! One..."

Bi Linglong finally began to panic when she heard that he was going to cut her face. She actually didn't fear death. However, which girl didn't care about their appearance? She didn't want her face to be damaged. As the numbers counted down, her heart seemed to be shoved up all the way to her throat. What she wanted to know right now was how Zu An was going to deal with this situation.

Zu An sighed and began, "I have a friend..."

The others were confused. Why the hell are you suddenly talking about your friend?

They only heard him continue, "He's always kept his promises. As long as he agrees to something, he won't go back on his word. That's why as long as you all let Linglong go, my friend can let bygones be bygones and let you two leave safely."

Gao Ying and Pei You exchanged a look. They didn't understand why Zu An was saying this, and even Linglong was confused. She thought to herself, If these two believed you after just listening to this, then wouldn't they be way too stupid?

But something completely shocking happened. After listening to those words, the Gu clan brothers let go of the blade pressed against her neck and began to step backward. "You said it; we are letting her go right now."

Gao Ying, Pei You, and Bi Linglong were all speechless.

Zu An rushed over to Bi Linglong's side and wrapped his arm around her waist, protecting her. At the same time, he raised his finger. Two blasts of wind fired out.

How could the Gu clan brothers avoid the attacks of someone at the ninth rank? Blood erupted from their chest as they fell to the ground. They were shocked and furious, saying, "You just promised us that you would let us go!"

You have successfully trolled Gu Heng for +555 +555 +555...

You have successfully trolled Gu Xing for +555 +555 +555...

Zu An sighed. "Not only are you two bad people, you're also extremely stupid. All I said was that I had a friend who kept his word and would let you go; when did I ever agree that I would let you two go?"

"You're despicable!" The Gu clan brothers almost fainted on the spot. Only now did they realize that he seemed to be talking about his friend. Why did we suddenly believe him for some reason?

You have successfully trolled the Gu clan brothers for +888 +888 +888...

Zu An had used the ability 'I Have a Friend'. It would make the target subconsciously think that the friend he was talking about was himself. How could the Gu clan brothers know about that? They were easily affected.

"In terms of being despicable, is there anyone worse than the two of you? You colluded with outsiders and sold out your master," Zu An sneered. "Linglong, I'll leave the two of them to you to deal with."

Only now did Bi Linglong realize that she was still in his embrace. She quickly pushed him away, blushing red. This guy actually dares to call me by my name! There are still people watching...

In order to hide her embarrassment, she picked up her sword and walked over to the Gu clan brothers, saying, "The two of you were so proud of yourselves earlier. You didn't expect your fate to change so quickly, right?"

When he sensed the killing intent in her eyes, Gu Heng felt as if his soul had left his body. He laughed and said, "Hahaha, we brothers know that we're undoubtedly dead, but you all shouldn't be happy so early. Do you think you can win? We're only heading into the afterlife ahead of you all. We'll meet again soon."

The two of them slit their own throats as soon as Gu Heng finished speaking. The reason they were so decisive was because they knew that they would undoubtedly be dead. As such, rather than being tortured and interrogated, they would rather have an easier death.

Chapter 818: Do You Have Any Shame at All?

Bi Linglong was stunned. She hadn't expected the two of them to be so decisive. She sighed. They had grown up together after all. Even if there was no love, there was still some basic affection. This was a result that no one could have seen coming.

However, she quickly snapped out of her daze and looked at Zu An. "What did they mean with their final words?" Zu An began to think to himself.

Gao Ying said, "It might be just a curse out of resentment. There were only so many people who came with us this time. Shi Tong and the others have already exposed themselves; King Qi shouldn't have been able to send in another expert, right? Otherwise, the rest of us might as well just slit our own throats and just end it all."

Bi Linglong nodded. "Indeed. Everyone involved in this trip was selected carefully, and all of them have undergone strict background checks. The fact that Shi Tong was able to get in was already something extremely unlikely; it should have been impossible for anyone else to sneak in. After all, something that can deceive the cultivation measuring device isn't that easy to find."

Zu An nodded and said, "I hope it's as you all say."

What they said made sense. The emperor and the other experts of the crown prince's faction weren't idiots. How could they possibly leave such a huge gap to exploit in their plans?

Gao Ying revealed a rare smile. "Also, even if there's a problem, with Sir Zu here, it'll be easily solved."

Even Shi Tong, who was at the peak of the eighth rank, had easily been killed by Zu An. Gao Ying really couldn't imagine what kind of danger he couldn't deal with.

Bi Linglong shared similar thoughts. She looked at Zu An and said, "Thank you."

Zu An chuckled, "Now you know that you didn't trust the wrong person, right?"

Bi Linglong blushed. This was a secret only the two of them shared. Back then, she had asked him if she could trust him, and he had said that she could. However, she had never felt too much confidence back then, and she had been sure that he could sense as much too.

The two of them looked at each other just like that. The mood gradually became a bit strange.

"Ahem..." Gao Ying coughed lightly. "Brother Pei might not be able to hold on much longer."

He actually wanted to say that he himself might not be able to hold on much longer. The two of you are looking at each other so passionately; do we not exist anymore to you two?

Bi Linglong immediately snapped out of her daze. She rushed over to check on Pei You, her face red.

Zu An also followed her. Pei You had suffered Shi Tong's blow just now, and even his chest had caved in; he had clearly suffered a serious injury. The fact that he could hold on until now was a reflection of his powerful will.

Bi Linglong quickly took out a few pills and fed them to Pei You. His complexion became a bit better, but his injury still didn't show any signs of recovering.

"His injuries are too serious; I fear..." Bi Linglong couldn't help but become sad. This person was in this state because he had tried to save her, and she had even doubted his loyalty earlier.

Unfortunately, he hadn't reached the seventh rank yet. Otherwise, seventh rank cultivators would at least be able to survive with their regenerative ability.

Zu An knelt down by Pei You's side and suddenly asked, "You're from the Pei clan. Do you know Pei Mianman?"

Pei You was stunned, but he weakly replied, "I do... sShe is... my younger cousin. When we were little... I even taught her a few skills..."

He didn't know why Zu An would suddenly ask him that. If it weren't because the other party had heroically defeated Shi Tong, he wouldn't even bother replying to this weird question as he lay dying.

Zu An nodded. He then took out a pill from his inner pocket and said, "Give this pill a try."

Bi Linglong couldn't help but say, "I already gave him the imperial hospital's best medicine..."

Her implications were clear. As the crown princess, she obviously had the royal family's best medicines. If not even her medicines would work, there was even less of a chance that someone else's medicine would do anything.

Zu An chuckled and said, "Just give it a try."

He fed Pei You the pill, and then infused his ki into the other party's body to help him absorb the medicine's effects, and also to treat his wounded internal organs, bones, and other parts.

Pei You circulated the remaining ki in his body together with Zu An. A while later, his eyes widened in shock. "I think it's working. Sir Zu, isn't your medicine a bit too incredible?"

Bi Linglong was shocked. She quickly checked Pei You's pulse and sensed that his injuries had actually stabilized. Furthermore, judging from his recovery speed, as long as this treatment continued, his life was practically guaranteed.

"It's good that it worked." Zu An sighed in relief. This was the Soul Return Pill he had gotten from Ji Dengtu back then. It was known to be able to bring even the dead back to life. He had tried it himself a few times. He felt it was second only to the Faith in Brother Spring he could get from the keyboard system.

He had gotten twelve of these miraculous pills from Ji Dengtu back then. He only had six left now, so he obviously couldn't use them randomly. That was why he had asked about Pei You's relationship with Pei Mianman. If the two had a bad relationship, then he could only apologize.

He actually had one more Faith in Brother Spring. As long as the patient had even a single breath left in them, it could bring them back no matter how severe their injuries. However, he wasn't willing to use that on someone he didn't share much friendship with.

Then, he arrived at Gao Xing's side. Comparatively speaking, his injuries were a bit lighter. As such, Zu An brought out some medicine Chu Youzhao had given him earlier and had Gao Ying take it.

"Thanks." Gao Ying quickly sat down to meditate. His aura gradually stabilized as well.

Bi Linglong arrived in front of Zu An. She gave him a curious look and asked, "Where did you get your medicine from? It seems to be even better than the imperial hospital's."

"From a perverted middle-aged doctor." Zu An was actually quite shocked as well. He had thought that Ji Dengtu was only a divine physician in Brightmoon City. He hadn't expected that fellow to be better than even the imperial palace's doctors. That meant his background was worth pondering over.

"Huh?" Bi Linglong had a strange look on her face. Birds of a feather really fly together. When she heard that it was a perverted middle-aged doctor, she quickly lost interest.

Then, she rushed over to wake everyone up. These people had been knocked unconscious because of the Gu clan brothers' drug, so they wouldn't wake up from a normal call. However, she was quite prepared for this trip and had all sorts of antidotes. She woke up the Eastern Palace's guards first, and then had them wake up everyone else.

Soon afterward, Zhao Xi, Meng Pan, Liu Xian, and the others woke up. They were shocked when they saw Pei You. All of them prepared to battle. However, they were stopped by someone. Pei You was seriously injured and had no chance of stopping their attacks.

"Zu An?" They became more shocked when they saw who it was.

Bi Linglong promptly appeared and stopped the group's attacks. She gave them a recount of everything that had happened.

"I was just saying that the Gu clan brothers were shifty-eyed. I knew they were nothing good," Zhao Xi mumbled.

Meng Pan sneered. "When did you ever say that? Did you forget that you doubted Sir Zu?"

Zhao Xi became annoyed. "Weren't you the leader in chasing Sir Zu out?"

Seeing that the two were about to fight, Bi Linglong harrumphed. "Do you two not see what kind of situation we are in right now? Despite that, you're still trying to start internal strife? If Sir Zu hadn't promptly arrived, we would've all been killed by the Gu clan brothers and Shi Tong."

"Shi Tong? He's here?" The others were shocked. They immediately looked around as if they were facing a great enemy. Who in the capital didn't know that Shi Tong was an expert at the peak of the eighth rank? That wasn't someone they could face.

Piao Duandiao carried Shi Tong's corpse over and asked, "Crown princess, what do we do with Shi Tong's corpse?"

“Toss it into the wilderness to feed the wild dogs,” Bi Linglong said coldly. It was clear that what had happened left her feeling extremely disgusted.

The others were petrified when they saw Shi Tong’s corpse. They asked with trembling voices, “Who killed Shi Tong?”

Bi Linglong looked at Zu An. Her expression was extremely gentle.

Gao Ying’s injuries had improved considerably. He opened his eyes and said, “Sir Zu, of course...”

Then, he gave a rough recount of Zu An’s great victory over Shi Tong. He, who was usually quite stingy with words, managed to make the story vivid and realistic, to the extent where he made Zu An seem even more formidable than he really was back then.

“Really?” The others’ jaws dropped to the ground. They were even more shocked after hearing how formidable Zu An was than when they heard that Shi Tong had been killed. Shi Tong had already remained at the peak of the eighth rank for many years. Then what rank was Zu An at?

It was Liu Xian whose attitude changed the fastest. He immediately said, “From the first time I saw Sir Zu, I immediately felt that he was incredibly suave and majestic, extraordinary and mighty. Now, it seems you are unfathomable after all! My respect for Sir Zu gushes forth like the relentless tides of the river!”

Zhao Xi and Meng Pan were speechless. Motherfucker, do you even have any sense of shame at all?!

Chapter 819: Jade Moon Serpent

Weren’t you one of the first ones out to criticize Zu An just a few days ago? Yet now, you’re changing so quickly?

Zhao Xi’s personality was the most direct. He first apologized to Zu An. “Sir Zu, I’m a crude person who believes there’s rain when I hear wind. I’ve offended you considerably in the past few days, so I solemnly apologize. I hope that your distinguished self won’t remember the offenses of someone so petty like me.”

Meng Pan continued to curse inwardly. What do you mean, ‘believes there’s rain when you hear wind’? Who’s the wind and who’s the rain? Aren’t you throwing shade at me right now?!

He quickly said, “This one is also blind despite having eyes. I was misled by the Gu clan brothers, and that was why I doubted Sir Zu. This humble one was only doing everything for the sake of public good and not to target Sir Zu, so I offer my apologies. The only reason the rest of us were able to survive is because of your distinguished self’s grace. Please receive three kowtows from this humble Meng.”

Zhao Xi’s face twitched. In terms of shamelessness, it seemed he couldn’t win against this bastard Meng.

Then, all of the other young masters apologized one after another. The group of people offered the precious gifts they had on them to Zu An to express their apology.

There was no other choice. When they learned that Zu An had just killed an expert at the peak of the eighth rank, the six ranks of cultivation that they had originally been immensely proud of seemed

completely worthless. When they remembered how badly they had all offended him earlier, they could only give him gifts to feel a bit more at ease.

Zu An was going to refuse, but Bi Linglong secretly warned him that he should take the gifts to appease them, or else something bad might happen later.

Zu An had to admit that Bi Linglong was naturally suited to be someone of high status. She indeed understood human nature better than him. However, he wasn't too fond of these two-faced people who changed so quickly, so he told Piao Duandiao and Jiao Sigun to help him receive the gifts.

When they saw that the crown princess didn't mind Zu An using public servants to complete these personal acts, they were even more convinced, and their attitudes toward Zu An became even more respectful. Furthermore, with how these two guards had spoken up for Zu An earlier, they knew that the guards' relationship with him was extremely good, and thus didn't dare to look down on them either.

Piao Duandiao and Jiao Sigun both stuck out their chests. They had been mocked by everyone earlier when they spoke up for Zu An, but now these arrogant young masters were trying to curry favor with them with smiles. Such a feeling was incredibly refreshing.

"You guys are so noisy it woke me up." The crown prince yawned as he came out of his tent lazily, completely aware that his life had almost ended just now.

Bi Linglong had to show him respect in front of so many people. She walked up and reported everything that had happened to him.

The crown prince continuously sighed when he heard the report. "The two of them died? Sigh, I don't have anyone to catch rabbits with me in the future."

For the sake of getting closer to Bi Linglong, the two brothers had spent quite the time buttering up the crown prince. They had done all sorts of fun things with him. When had the crown prince, who was usually locked up in the palace, ever seen these new and exciting things? He had quickly befriended them.

That was also one of the reasons why Bi Linglong hadn't suspected the Gu clan brothers before. If they really had traitorous thoughts, why would they exert themselves so much to serve the crown prince?

All of the clans' young masters felt incredibly conflicted when they heard what the crown prince said. This kind of simple-minded crown prince really was...

Unfortunately, their fates were already tied together. They could only brace themselves and walk this path down to its end.

After a night of rest, Gao Ying and Pei You's conditions gradually improved. The next day, their group continued their advance into the mountain.

Pei You told everyone how to track the Jade Moon Serpent's aura. Someone from the Meng clan had entered the dungeon before and ended up obtaining one of the Jade Moon Serpent's scales. Then, they had a rune master turn it into a magic artifact. The scale could be used to track down the original owner.

With this magic artifact in hand, the group slowly advanced toward the mountain depths. There were many dangerous beast nests along the way, but because of Zu An's warnings, they avoided practically all of them.

No one voiced any objections this time. On the contrary, all of them praised him in a cringeworthy manner.

Zu An sighed. The same words had been met with mockery and ridicule, yet now, these same people who had previously mocked him were eager to lick his boots. This society really was something.

The group continued advancing for three days in a row. Pei You's expression became grave as he said, "We're almost there!"

Zu An had already sensed a strong water elemental power even before Pei You said anything.

The group walked out of the jungle. An open and clear view suddenly stretched before their eyes. A large waterfall flowed into a massive pool, causing water to splash everywhere. As rays of sunlight scattered down, even faint rainbows that could be seen.

Zhao Xi said with a smile, "This serpent really knows how to enjoy itself; no wonder it changed homes. This place's scenery is far better than that Cold Jade Pond."

Gao Ying said with a frown, "Something's not right. There are formidable beasts everywhere in this mountain, and they're quite protective of their own territories. This place might be better than that Cold Jade Pond, but the Jade Moon Serpent is a seventh ranked beast. Does it have the qualifications to occupy a territory like this?"

Zu An nodded in agreement. The Gu clan's rebellion had been seen through by Gao Ying. Even though this person was habitually silent, he was meticulous in thought and quite the talent. No wonder the Liu clan was willing to send their second son here. It was because he had enough to make up for his shortcomings.

Meng Pan asked, "Could it be that there are no other water element beasts here, so it just happened to have found its niche?"

Gao Ying hesitated. "That's not entirely impossible."

Bi Linglong remained quiet for a bit, and then said, "Since we're here and still can't figure those things out, let's prepare for battle."

The young masters moved in a methodical and thorough manner. After all, these were the clans' elites. Even though they had almost been killed by the Gu clan brothers before, they were prepared this time. They all displayed high levels of skill.

Bi Linglong kept the crown prince at the very back. No one dared to let him run around at the front, because if something happened to him, no one would be able to shoulder the responsibility.

Gao Ying and Pei You had been wounded. Even though they had managed to recover a bit, they were still in no shape to engage in intensive combat. That was why they were kept by the crown prince's side.

For added security, Bi Linglong had Piao Duandiao and Jiao Sigun bring the Eastern Palace's guards over as well. She remained with Zu An and led the young masters as they began to encircle the waterfall.

"Linglong, good luck!" the crown prince exclaimed as he sat on a large rock. He ate the fruits the guards prepared for him while cheering happily. For him, this was nothing more than a sightseeing journey. He had no idea what kind of dangers they were going to face and merely treated it as a performance.

Bi Linglong sighed inwardly. She quickly focused and brought their group to the pond beneath the waterfall. The pond was full of mist. Together with the rippling surface of the water, she couldn't see inside at all.

Soon afterward, someone tossed bait that had been previously prepared into the pond. The water gradually turned red, and then a voice roared furiously. "Who dares to contaminate my dwelling?!"

The pond water instantly surged. Then, a towering figure several dozen zhang tall rushed out, floating in the air. Its shining eyes stared at everyone furiously. Its brown vertical pupils were intimidating, making all who saw them shiver.

"You're all sure that this thing is at the seventh rank?" Liu Xian's voice shook when he saw this massive creature.

Zhao Xi gulped. "Why is it so big? According to the intelligence we had, it shouldn't have been that big."

Meng Pan couldn't help but take a step back too. "Its pressure is also a lot greater than what the information stated."

Bi Linglong's voice turned cold. "Wait, it can speak. This is the sign of a creature at the eighth ranked at the very least..."

Zu An corrected her. "It's not at the eighth rank, but rather the ninth rank."

Bi Linglong's expression changed. She quickly ordered, "Retreat!"

Everyone knew that a beast was much stronger than a human at the same level. Zu An might be able to defeat a person at the peak of the eighth rank, but there was almost no chance of success against a beast at the ninth rank.

They quickly retreated. Bi Linglong was incredibly confused as she wondered, "Why is it so much stronger than what the information said?"

Her first reaction was that King Qi had colluded with the libationer. However, she recalled that the beasts they ran into along the way had all been stronger than what their information stated. This dungeon wasn't exclusive to the academy; there were others who visited it before. Their clans had also entered it three years ago, so they had an idea regarding these beasts' strength. There was no way King Qi had the ability to make so many powerful beasts become stronger.

"You want to escape? Do you think it'll be that easy?!" the serpent roared. Waves of water rushed out, forming a transparent curtain that blocked off their path of retreat.

Chapter 820: Does It Like to Eat Skinny or Fat People?

The crown prince was munching on a melon. When he saw what was happening, his eyes widened, and he didn't even notice when his melon dropped to the ground. He exclaimed in bewilderment, "We can't even see anything from here! Should we get closer?"

Gao Ying and Pei You quickly tried to stop him. "Your highness, you absolutely mustn't! That place is extremely dangerous, you can't go closer!"

Both of them had witnessed the Jade Moon Serpent's size and power just now. They were both quite experienced and knowledgeable, reacting to the situation even faster than Zhao Xi and the others. What were they still doing here when their target had changed from the seventh to ninth rank?

Pei You quickly said, "Hurry and bring the crown prince out of here, or else he might be in danger." He knew fully well that with the appearance of this ninth ranked beast, the mission was destined to fail. Everything pointed at disaster for the people inside. Staying here would only result in death.

Piao Duandiao and the others panicked. He said, "The crown princess, Sir Zu, and the others are still inside. How can we just abandon them?"

Gao Ying sighed. "Everyone, please don't let your emotions affect your decisions. This serpent is now a ninth ranked beast. Even if we joined in, we would only be throwing our lives away. The top priority right now is to ensure the crown prince's safety. Once we leave the dungeon and report on the situation inside, it might not count as the crown prince's failure. If they can last long enough, we can ask the people outside to send us some reinforcements."

Jiao Sigun said unhappily, "Sir Zu even saved your lives, and the crown princess has treated your two clans extremely well. Aren't your actions here a bit too cold?"

Gao Ying's face turned red. "Do you think we want to be so weak and useless? My uncle's beloved son Liu Xian is still inside. I haven't even managed to protect him, so there won't be a good ending waiting for me back at the Liu clan. However, I know fully well that heading over will just be throwing my life away. If we ask for reinforcements, there might instead be a chance at survival."

Despite those words, he knew just how formidable a ninth rank beast was. No matter how formidable Zu An was, he would only be able to barely hold on with everyone else for a day or two at best. But they had taken more than a week to get here from the dungeon entrance. There was no way they would last until reinforcements arrived.

Even so, he was a rational person. He knew what the most sensible choice he could make in this type of situation was.

Piao Duandiao and Jiao Sigun could only look pleadingly at the crown prince. "Should we save the crown princess? Your majesty the crown prince, please give us instructions."

They played a trick and didn't say they were going to save Zu An, but rather used Bi Linglong's title. After all, the crown prince had been under the crown princess' care all these years, and he liked her a lot normally too.

The fat crown prince remained quiet for a moment, and then asked, "Does that serpent eat people?"

Piao Duandiao and Jiao Sigun had never expected him to ask them this question, but they didn't dare to hide it from him. "It does."

"Then does it like to eat skinny people or fat people?" the crown prince asked.

Piao Duandiao and Jiao Sigun were bewildered. How the hell would we know what it likes?

Gao Ying immediately understood his intentions. He quickly answered, "Beasts all love to eat things with more fat, as that has more energy content. That's why the Jade Moon Serpent will most likely like eating fatter people more."

The crown prince's face trembled. He backed up in a panic. "I'm not watching anymore! Hurry and bring me back to the palace, hurry up!" Then, he began to run in the opposite direction. The other Eastern Palace guards quickly followed him.

Piao Duandiao and Jiao Sigun's expressions changed several times. In the end, they didn't dare to go against orders and could only follow him.

Pei You said to the two of them, "Sir Zu is formidable, so who knows? There might be a miracle. The two of you don't need to feel complete despair."

"You're only offering insincere consolation!" Piao Duandiao sneered and didn't accept his comfort.

Jiao Sigun also exclaimed, "Fake!"

Pei You's expression was gloomy. He gripped his sword, and then turned around to walk towards the pond's direction.

Gao Ying was shocked. "What are you going to do?"

"I owe Sir Zu a life. Of course I need to return it," Pei You said calmly.

Gao Ying's expression changed several times. However, he still grabbed Pei You. "I also owe Sir Zu a life, but now isn't the time to be brave. There are too many dangers along the way. They alone won't necessarily be able to ensure the crown prince's safety. That's why we have the responsibility to safely escort the crown prince back." When he saw that Pei You was still completely unconvinced, he could only add, "If something happens to the crown prince, our clans will be destroyed."

If something happened to the crown prince, King Qi would rise to the throne. It was easy to imagine what consequences that would have for the clans that supported the crown prince.

Pei You's expression finally changed. He could give up his life for Zu An, but he couldn't gamble with his entire clan's life. He gave the pond a look, and then he turned around to protect the crown prince.

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Meanwhile, by the pond, those present were fleeing in panic. However, even though the water barrier looked fragile, when Zhao Xi, who ran the fastest, smashed into it, he bounced right off.

"Ow!" Zhao Xi cried out in alarm. His ki and blood were all over the place from the impact, and he almost threw up a mouthful of blood. He wasn't convinced and concentrated all of the ki in his body into

his weapon, bringing it hacking down on the barrier. Unfortunately, his strength seemed to sink into a layer of cotton. A strange force neutralized his attack.

The others also began to attack the barrier as well. Unfortunately, light flickered across its surface, and their attacks were completely disregarded.

“We’re done for!” Meng Pan’s face was even paler than normal as he cried out in despair.

Being trapped here by a beast of the ninth rank meant that there was no hope of a single one of them surviving this place.

He wasn’t the only one left in despair. The others’ faces were pale from fright. They had still been in high spirits a second before, yet now, they had all changed from the hunters to the prey.

“Hahaha! Puny and cowardly humans, you all just love to bully the weak and fear the strong. I really enjoyed watching your shameful performance.” The Jade Moon Serpent in the sky wasn’t in a rush to attack and instead looked at all of them with an expression of ridicule. The more terrified they were, the more it enjoyed itself.

Zu An laughed in ridicule. Had this Jade Moon Serpent been bullied by humans before or something? Otherwise, why would it carry such strong resentment against them?

That seemed more and more likely. After all, this dungeon was the academy’s property, and students were often sent in for training. If the Jade Moon Serpent had been at the seventh rank, that was a level that wasn’t too high or too low. It was perfect for many people to train with.

It was the first creature that had been suggested when the contents of the crown prince exam’s were discussed. This was clearly because they were most familiar with it. They knew it wasn’t a target that was too dangerous for this mission.

Tsk tsk tsk, seems like it really was tormented badly over the years in this dungeon.

If the royal family had claimed that this beast was at the seventh rank, there shouldn’t have been a mistake. Why had its cultivation realm increased so much in such a short amount of time?

Bi Linglong exclaimed loudly, “Everyone, don’t panic! We’ve made ample preparations for this mission. Since things have already turned out this way, then prepare for battle! There might still be a chance at victory!”

Zu An felt admiration inwardly. There were so many men here, yet the one who remained the most calm was instead this woman.

Zhao Xi and the others grumbled. They had prepared a lot for this mission, but they had prepared for a seventh ranked Jade Moon Serpent, not this ninth ranked one in front of them! However, they were elites selected from various distinguished clans. They knew that in such a situation, they could only stake it all.

They quickly gathered at Bi Linglong’s side and entered a battle formation. Then they fired many crossbow bolts at the serpent in the sky. These weren’t ordinary crossbow bolts, but rather armor penetrating bolts reinforced through formations. They were enough to blast through the defenses of a seventh ranked beast.

Unfortunately, this was now a ninth ranked beast they were facing. When they made contact with its body, the crossbow bolts only released clanking noises, merely leaving behind faint white marks at most. They couldn't wound it at all.

However, the Jade Moon Serpent was angered. "You ants dare to offend this king?!" it roared furiously, launching four orbs of water from its mouth.

The flickering water spheres smashed into the ground. Then, the group saw that every single sphere seemed to have beasts wrapped inside it. However, these beasts' expressions were filled with pain and resentment.

"Golden War Ox, Giant Frost Bear, Hard Bristle Black Boar, Lightning Devouring Tiger!" Bi Linglong's expression changed. "They're all seventh ranked beasts that it's devoured in the past, and now, their souls have been refined into its own water puppets! These puppets retain a large portion of their strength from when they were still alive. Everyone, be careful!"

She had studied a lot about the Jade Moon Serpent's characteristics precisely for this mission. She had originally expected it to use some sixth rank puppets, but now, they were actually all at the seventh rank! The difficulty was exponentially harder.