

Immortal 971

Chapter 971: Too Arrogant

Zu An looked at the jade token in his hands. It was probably equivalent to the place's highest VIP status. Reaching such a level was obviously not easy. Meanwhile, his number was 333, meaning that there weren't many others of similar status.

Furthermore, when he heard that from that manager's tone and how there were other Hub of Freedom locations, he had just been about to sigh in admiration toward their influence and size when he heard the mocking voice ridiculing him.

When Zu An turned around, he saw a group of people standing on the stairs. The one in the lead was a young man with a sneer on his face. It was such a cold day, yet he had a fan in his hands. This man was definitely a culture snob.

The worst part was that he didn't even look all that suave and confident. Even though he had a mask on, Zu An could still see that he had dead fish eyes. They didn't look all that intelligent, and he was leaning on the railing in a sloppy manner, making his character seem even more wretched.

Zu An sensed his aura roughly with ki. The other individual's cultivation was only around the fifth rank. As such, he didn't pay the snob any more attention after a single glance, and instead looked at the elder behind him. The elder's presence was steady, and the ki fluctuations he radiated were around the seventh rank. He could barely be considered a powerful cultivator.

As for the followers behind him, they were only around the third or fourth rank, with even some non-cultivators among them. They were clearly servants. These people wouldn't be anything special in a place like the capital, but they were already quite the force in these local areas. They would be enough to even wipe out some smaller scale sects.

When he heard the remark, the manager said politely, "The esteemed guests of the Hub of Freedom are all of an appraised standard. This young master has satisfied the conditions, so he naturally deserves a jade token."

The dead fish-eyed man snorted coldly. He was about to say something, but the elder whispered something behind him. Then, perhaps out of fear of the Hub of Freedom's influence, he didn't say anything else. He turned around and saw Zu An. As if sensing the contempt in Zu An's eyes, he felt incredibly annoyed. His dead fish eyes widened and he exclaimed, "What are you looking at?"

Zu An laughed inwardly. He hadn't expected someone else to use his own skill against him! As such, he gave the appropriate response without any hesitation. "I'm staring at you, shithead!"

The dead fish-eyed man's chest rose and fell rapidly; he was clearly furious. "Very good... It's already been a long time since anyone dared to speak to this young master like that."

You have successfully trolled Sun Ji for +222 +222 +222...

Sun Ji? Zu An racked his brain, because the name seemed a bit familiar. He said, "Hah, I almost thought you were King Yan's heir or something from how arrogantly you were acting. I wonder where a random beggar like you came from."

The heir of King Yan would obviously be surnamed Zhao. There was no chance of it being the man in front of him. He had just reflected on his laziness in acquiring Rage points recently. Now was such a good chance, so he obviously had to do some proper farming.

Sure enough, the dead fish-eyed man immediately erupted with rage. "You've successfully angered this young master! You'll soon pay the price."

You have successfully trolled Sun Ji for +444 +444 +444...

The manager had a surprised look on his face. He gave Zu An another look. How does this person know the young master isn't King Yan's heir? Everyone is wearing masks! Could it be that he's close to King Yan's heir?

But that's not right... If he really is close to King Yan, there's no way he wouldn't recognize the young master!

Zu An gave the other party a mocking look. "Did you make it this far in life just by relying on that mouth of yours?"

"You!" The dead fish-eyed man pointed at Zu An. The skin around his neck was turning red from anger.

You have successfully trolled Sun Ji for +682 +682 +682...

The elder stepped forward just then as well. He remarked sternly, "Youngster, did your parents not teach you that a loose tongue may cause trouble?"

Zu An said indifferently, "Old man, if you're old, you should stay home and raise your grandson properly. If you hop around blindly outside, any legacy you've built up might just get washed away."

The elder narrowed his eyes. "Reaching six ranks of cultivation at your age is quite excellent, and so you must have lived your life quite arrogantly. Unfortunately, this experienced one will offer you some advice. There will always be someone better than you, so it would be best to not behave too pridefully outside. Ever since ancient times, there has been no lack of geniuses who came to a premature end."

You have successfully trolled Yang Long for +280 +280 +280...

He had clearly observed Zu An's cultivation beforehand in secret. When he sensed that Zu An's cultivation was only at the sixth rank, he immediately relaxed. The threatening implication behind his words was clear.

However, even though he was trying to intimidate Zu An, this youngster had been able to reach the sixth rank at such a young age, so he might have some kind of family background. That was why he held back for the time being, settling for warning him to back out of the awkward situation.

Zu An picked his ear a bit, then flicked the earwax away. "As expected, if the owner is like this, the dog won't be much different. You're all too scared to fight and only know how to bark."

The manager watching from off to the side was speechless. This person looked rather refined and cultured just now; why does he now seem as if he's really good at starting trouble? The other side is probably about to explode from anger, right?

The elder named Yang Long turned away, as if to avoid the intangible verbal attack. His complexion was completely ashen.

Mister dead fish eyes turned around to look at the Hub of Freedom's manager, asking, "By what qualification was he able to obtain your business' jade token?"

The manager took out a pigeon-sized sapphire. "This chrysanthemum sapphire is just too rare and precious..."

He was cut off by the dead fish-eyed man before he even finished his sentence. "Hah, and here I thought it was someone crazy influential! So it was just an upstart who relied on a shoddy gemstone. Elder Yang, out of respect for the Hub of Freedom, spare his life. It'll be enough as long as you cut off his tongue."

Those who were watching from the surroundings shivered. Having one's tongue cut off might even be worse than death... The worst part was that the man made it sound as if he were being merciful. Even though that youngster's words were harsh, there was no need for such harsh treatment, right?

Of course, they all only cursed a bit silently. No one would step out in the name of justice in this kind of situation.

Zu An was instead a bit surprised. Looks like this dead fish-eyed guy isn't just a completely ignorant spoiled brat after all! At the very least, he asked the manager about my background first.

As for the other party's threat, he didn't care in the slightest. What kind of crazy schemes and drama hadn't he experienced before? Small fry like this couldn't even produce the slightest ripple in his emotions. If it weren't because he needed to earn Rage points, he wouldn't have even bothered to say another sentence to them.

The elder named Yang Long nodded. He took a step forward, and all of his ki fluctuations erupted, locking onto Zu An. "Youngster, if you speak randomly outside your clan, you have to pay the price for it."

The pressure immediately made many people whose cultivations were lower find it hard to breathe. They were all horrified. This was actually a seventh rank expert! It seemed this youngster was done for.

Zu An's eyes narrowed. Just then, however, the Hub of Freedom manager stepped forward and stood between the two of them, saying, "Young master Sun, please cease fighting here."

The observers began to whisper among themselves.

"Young master Sun? Which young master Sun?"

"How many young master Suns can there even be in Yi Commandery?"

"So it was Sun Xiang's young master. This youngster's future might really be finished."

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Even though their whispers were soft, Zu An's cultivation was already extremely high and he heard everything clearly. He immediately realized who it was.

The Sun Xiang they spoke of wasn't actually named Sun Xiang; rather, they were referring to the 'Xiang Minister', Sun Xun, who worked under King Yan. These local kings had their own small official courts, and they had all kinds of officials working in them. Of course, they were much smaller than the central court.

The position of 'Xiang Minister' was that of second-in-command under King Yan. Sang Hong had already introduced the important officials underneath King Yan on the ship before they arrived, and this Minister Sun Xun was the one of highest importance. He was King Yan's greatest trusted aide and possessed tremendous status and authority in the area. No wonder his son was so arrogant.

Mister dead fish eyes spoke up. "What, are you trying to help him right now?"

The manager shook his head. "I am not helping anyone. I do not care what you do outside, but our Hub of Freedom has its own rules. Private conflicts are strictly forbidden here, let alone between fellow jade token-holding guests. If something ended up happening to him inside of our building, our reputation would be completely ruined."

The dead fish-eyed man was about to say something else, but elder Yang Long had already withdrawn. He whispered quietly, "Young master, the Hub of Freedom's background is deep and immeasurable. There is no need whatsoever to publicly engage in conflict with him here. Furthermore, the manager is implying that they will not care what we do once we leave. Why don't we..."

Mister dead fish eyes nodded. "Fine, then we'll show the Hub of Freedom some respect today." Then, he turned around to give Zu An a sneer. "We'll let you live a bit longer then."

However, once they were outside, it wasn't just going to be a tongue. Even though an ordinary person wouldn't be able to find out the identity of another masked guest, it was a completely different story with his influence.

Zu An replied indifferently, "You should be the one thankful that you got to keep your life." He walked straight in afterward. He didn't feel like paying them any more attention.

Mister dead fish eyes and the elder were both speechless.

You have successfully trolled Sun Ji for +666 +666 +666...

You have successfully trolled Yang Long for +666 +666 +666...

Forget about them, even those in the surroundings began to whisper among themselves.

The Hub of Freedom manager also frowned. He's way too arrogant... Is this youngster already tired of living? He was fortunate enough to keep his life here. Shouldn't he try to be a bit more low-profile?

Chapter 972: I Wanted to Hear a Certain Sound

"I want to kill him!" The dead fish-eyed Sun Ji gave the elder a look.

Elder Yang Long sent a voice transmission. "Don't worry. Our people will naturally find him once we leave the Hub of Freedom."

Only then did Sun Ji calm down a bit. He led his men inside as well.

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When both sides entered, the Hub of Freedom's guards gathered at the manager's side. One asked, "Elder Wei, didn't you give out that jade token a bit too easily? Even though that piece of chrysanthemum sapphire is precious, I don't believe it's enough for the Hub of Freedom to treat him that well." They clearly found it a bit hard to understand. They had ended up offending someone important from Yi Commandery all because of an arrogant youngster.

The manager replied, "Just a chrysanthemum sapphire alone would naturally not be enough, but such gemstones only exist in the mysterious islands of the southern seas. That is the territory of the ocean races, a place ordinary people cannot possibly reach. I suspected that he might have an ocean race background, which was why I decided to make an exception and grant him a jade token in the hopes of starting a good relationship with the ocean races."

The guard sighed and remarked, "So what if he's from the ocean races? They might be superior in the sea, but they don't have much influence on the continents. Now that he's offended young master Sun, I fear that he might not be able to leave Yi Commandery alive."

The manager recalled how arrogant Zu An's words had been previously. He couldn't help but frown as well. "We have already done what we can. As for what will happen to him afterward, that is none of our Hub of Freedom's business."

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Meanwhile, Zu An entered the gathering place. Attendants quickly moved to receive him. Their expressions immediately became more respectful when they saw his jade token, and they led him into a private room. One said, "Honored guest, when the auction starts later, please raise your jade token if you ever see anything of interest. Our men will be able to see it."

Zu An gave the place a look. The layout was similar to that of a theater from his past world. The center of the place below was where everyone would gather. The staff members were busily moving around, preparing the things that were going to be auctioned off.

Many of the seats below had probably been prepared for ordinary guests. The highest level was made up of a row of private rooms, each containing a table and chairs made from precious wood. Soft sheep wool and cotton padding covered the chairs.

Sandalwood incense burned in the corner. The cups and other chinaware were all on par with those of the imperial palace. Zu An felt more and more surprised by the depth of the business' background.

A servant asked with a smile, "Does the honored guest wish to drink tea or alcohol? We have all of the most popular beverages here."

"I'll take a pot of Sparrowtongue then." Zu An recalled the secret signal Gao Ying had used before and randomly placed an order.

The servant nodded, then handed over another booklet. "Did the honored guest see any girls you liked on the second floor? If you have any needs, you can call them up to service you. Sir is a most distinguished jade token guest, so you can summon any of the second floor courtesans as you wish."

Zu An took the booklet with a curious expression. He discovered that every single page was filled with pictures of stunning beauties. There were fresh and pure girls, and also lovely and charming girls. There were all sorts of beautiful women.

The artists of this world were different from Ancient China's artists, who emphasized bold strokes rather than accurate details. The images of the girls were vivid and lifelike, almost like photos. No, compared to photos, they actually looked even more realistic.

Not only were the girls' portraits present, it even included more detailed introductions and lists of their unique strengths; for example, if they were good at the Xiao or other musical instruments.

Zu An sighed in amazement. This place really did go the extra mile! The soapy massage places of his previous world would ask if one had a preferred masseur, but how the heck would one even know without even getting to see their face beforehand?

"There's no need." Zu An closed the booklet and returned it to the servant. He wasn't too interested in prostitutes. Also, what if a girl was serving Pei You, but he accidentally called her up? That friendship would immediately be done for!

"If honored guest needs anything, please do not hesitate to contact me." The servant didn't say anything else. He took the booklet and slowly withdrew.

Zu An walked over to the window side. He discovered that the design of the place was quite well thought out. He could see everything clearly, but it was really hard for anyone outside to see inside the room. It provided a different kind of private place within a public venue.

His expression became somewhat strange. No wonder the servant had said he could call over any courtesan queen from the second floor. There were probably some people who liked this kind of public stimulation.

He couldn't see the situation inside the box clearly. He scanned through the entire place and noticed that there were quite a few crouching tigers and hidden dragons present. There were many whose cultivation ranks were really high.

His gaze landed on a skinny man whose entire body was wrapped in black robes. That person seemed to have deliberately hidden his ki fluctuations, but with Zu An's current cultivation, he could still detect some of it. That person was eighth ranked at the very least.

Apart from that, he even sensed a ninth ranked cultivator, but he couldn't figure out where that person was. It seems to be coming from behind me, so it's probably a staff member of the Hub of Freedom. No wonder they're able to control this type of place where crooks are mixed with honest folk.

Even though Zu An had met his fair share of master rank cultivators, that had been in a turbulent yet flourishing place like the capital. Where would anyone find master rank cultivators normally? The ninth rank was already the ceiling in the provincial regions. They could do whatever they wanted, wherever they went.

Soon afterward, a beautiful hostess walked to the center of the auction hall. She was dressed in a tight-fitting dress similar to a cheongsam, and the way she walked was graceful and elegant. Even though

there were many guests who had seen many beauties before, they still couldn't help but give her a few more looks.

"This Hub of Freedom really knows what they're doing..." Zu An chuckled. Even though he didn't care too much about such girls, a beautiful girl was still something to be admired.

The beauty introduced some of the auction's rules and the auction process with a sweet smile. A voice amplification system had probably been set up beforehand, because her normal speaking voice reached every corner of the room.

The first item's auction quickly began. The hostess picked up an embroidered plate. She undid the silk cloth over it, revealing a beautiful sapphire. She introduced the item. "This top quality item comes from the mysterious islands of the southern seas..."

After hearing her flowery description, even the original owner Zu An was a bit hesitant to sell it. He muttered, "This woman would be a crazy TV saleswoman in my previous world!"

Zu An hadn't expected the first item to be sold to be his own. It seemed the Hub of Freedom valued the gemstone quite highly.

The starting bid was a hundred thousand taels of silver. Each bid had to be in increments of at least five thousand. Many offers were quickly made. Even though the gemstone wasn't all that useful to cultivation, its lady-killing prowess was lethal. It would be extremely useful for courting girls.

But once the price reached a hundred and fifty thousand, the bids slowed down, eventually becoming a bidding war between just two or three people. After all, such a thing was useless for cultivation, and everyone had their own price estimates in mind.

Just then, a snide voice called out, "Two hundred thousand!"

Zu An frowned, because he could tell it was the voice of that dead fish-eyed man.

The entire place fell silent after that voice spoke up. This gemstone was precious, but two hundred thousand was clearly too high a price. Furthermore, there were quite a few people who knew the identity of the one who had made the bid, so they obviously didn't dare to compete against him.

"Which lady is young master Sun buying this to pursue?"

"I heard young master Sun was pursuing an exceptional beauty surnamed Qiu. I wonder if he's buying this for her..."

"It might not be; maybe he's just doing this to vent his anger. Just now, by the entrance..."

Whispers quickly filled the air. What happened outside previously quickly spread through the crowd. So this was a battle between two jade token holders! Those present chewed on melon seeds with excited expressions as they watched the drama play out.

Sun Ji was already standing by the window, enjoying the admiration and shocked expressions of those present. He loved the limelight the most, which was why he didn't mind revealing his identity even in a place like this, where everyone wore masks to maintain privacy.

Zu An thought to himself, Is this guy actually stupid? This guy doesn't get along with me, but he's giving me free money?

A servant quickly brought the sapphire to Sun Ji's private room. Sun Ji fiddled around with the gemstone, then suddenly slammed it against the railing, instantly smashing it to pieces.

Those present cried out in alarm. Those from the Hub of Freedom also panicked and exclaimed, "Young master, what are you doing?"

Sun Ji replied, "It's nothing; I bought it just to hear this sound. I'll still pay the money I need to pay."

Only when they heard that he was going to pay up did those from the Hub of Freedom sigh in relief. However, the onlookers were shocked. You spent two hundred thousand silver taels just to hear this sound? That's a bit too much, no?

Those who didn't know who Sun Ji was quickly began to ask around.

Even Elder Long frowned. He moved closer to Sun Ji and whispered quietly, "Young master, this might be too much of a waste. The master might be upset if he hears about this."

"It's fine; we'll just get the money back from him once we leave the Hub of Freedom. I won't lose anything, and I'll be right in the limelight instead. Besides, that fellow definitely has a better one if he's selling this one. He's clearly a fat sheep waiting to be slaughtered, so I'll just grab an even better one to give to Lady Qiu." Sun Ji was honestly surprised at his own intelligence in this matter.

Yang Long had a surprised expression. He thought to himself that he had underestimated the young master. Even though the young master was normally arrogant and bossy, he knew who he could and couldn't offend well.

For example, this youngster was clearly not someone well known in Yi Commandery. Judging from the gemstone he had brought out, he was most likely from the southern seas. Even if he was a serpent from the ocean races, he would still have to kneel in Yi Commandery.

Yi Commandery's people were tough. It had the Devil Sect and bandits everywhere, so stories of rich merchants being plundered were commonplace. That was something most of its inhabitants were aware of, but would never talk about. After all, living this kind of extravagant life wasn't possible with just the court's salary alone.

As such, Yang Long didn't think too much about it and merely treated Zu An as a dead person.

Sun Ji was becoming more and more excited. He shot a provocative look in Zu An's direction. "Someone seems to think a shoddy rock is enough to be on the same level as this young master. What a pity; your pride isn't even worth mentioning to me."

The onlookers had already realized that Sun Ji was purely acting out personal grudge. All of them were waiting to see how the guest in the other private room would respond. However, when they thought about the Sun clan's authority, they all believed that person could only submit to the humiliation. It would already be quite good if he could leave the place peacefully.

But no one could have expected that the moment Sun Ji finished his sentence, a streak of dark light flew out, instantly smacking him in the face.

A loud and clear 'Pah!' filled the air. Then, Sun Ji screamed miserably and fell on his back. By the time he finally managed to crawl to his feet again with great difficulty, his entire mouth was bloody and quite a few of his teeth had fallen out.

Zu An reappeared at the entrance. He said with a smile, "Sorry, I wanted to hear a certain sound too."

Chapter 973: Will It Respond If I Call Out to It?

The onlookers were stupefied when they saw that scene. Just how many years had it been since direct conflict had happened in the Hub of Freedom? Furthermore, on one side was Minister Sun's son! Which outsider dared to face someone like that head on?

Many people began to feel pity. He had offended Sun Ji in Yi Commandery. Unless one were the heir of King Yan himself, it was the same as lighting a lantern in a bathroom... He was just tired of living.

Some elders who were older immediately took the chance to warn their juniors. "A bit of endurance and everything becomes tranquil; take a step back and the heavens are clear. That youngster's actions might seem refreshing on the surface, but he will have to pay the price of his life. All of you should learn from his bad example."

Sun Ji's head was ringing as he heard people's discussions. He didn't realize what had happened even after some time passed. Only when he saw that there was something wrong with his mouth did he subconsciously spit some things out. Then, he saw some teeth had fallen out, and his hand was covered in blood.

His first reaction was, "I was hit?" He almost didn't dare to believe it. "I was fucking hit?!"

He finally realized what had happened. He erupted with fury. "Motherf*cker, you're courting death!"

You have successfully trolled Sun Ji for +799 +799 +799...

He drew the blade at his waist and flung it at Zu An with all of his strength. His attack was meant to kill, to end Zu An's life right there.

Unfortunately, perhaps his cultivation wasn't high enough, or there was some invisible ki wall present; when that blade approached Zu An's private room, it suddenly fell down. The people below quickly cried out and tried to move out of the way.

Is that it? There were many guests who had been watching the drama with great interest, waiting to see some big sparks. And yet in the end, they hadn't expected Sun Ji to be so disappointing.

If he hadn't managed to get his current cultivation because of his dad, he would've died a long time ago already, many of the onlookers thought.

Sun Ji didn't know what was going on either. Did I end up getting weaker because of my injuries?

He was ashamed and furious. He knew that the other party was at the sixth rank, so he didn't dare to charge over by himself. He gave Yang Long a furious glare. "What are you staring like an idiot for? I was already hit, but you're not going to do anything?"

Yang Long was staring at the teacup on the ground in a stupor. He actually hadn't seen how the teacup had flown over. Don't tell me this youngster isn't only at the sixth rank? A bit of confusion appeared within him.

But he quickly refuted that idea. That youngster is too young; how can anyone at that age have such a level of cultivation? It's probably because the young master was standing too close to the entrance, and I wasn't ready for his sudden attack. That's why the surprise strike worked.

When he heard Sun Ji's roar, he finally snapped out of his daze. His foot tapped against the ground, and he shot out toward Zu An's private room like a great Peng.[1]

Zu An's eyes narrowed. These local tyrants really were ignorant and narrow-minded. They thought they were omnipotent just because they had a bit of cultivation. Forget about the Sun clan's young master, even if his father or King Yan came, they would still have to treat him with respect. No matter how great they were, they weren't greater than King Qi, right?

He was just about to attack when a figure shot out from the backstage area, exchanging a blow with Yang Long. Then, that figure's palm pushed forward, and Yang Long was forced to return to Sun Ji's side. Another figure was already standing steadily near Zu An's private room.

Only then did those present see that the figure was an elder who wore a smiling buddha mask. His clothes had the Hub of Freedom's symbol embroidered on them. This was clearly a staff member of the Hub of Freedom.

"Ninth rank!"

There were quite a few individuals present with powerful cultivations. The eyes of the black-robed man in particular immediately narrowed. He had already sensed the other person's cultivation from that brief exchange.

Yang Long was left in great shock. However, he knew that the other party had already been lenient. Otherwise, he would die on the spot if he exchanged a blow against a ninth ranked expert head on.

"¥%*@#..." Sun Ji pointed at Zu An and screamed as if he were denouncing him. Unfortunately, he had lost so many teeth that his words weren't being enunciated properly. Those present couldn't really understand what he was saying.

Yang Long coughed and translated for him. "Could it be that your Hub of Freedom intends on defending him?"

Even though the other party was at the ninth rank, Sun Ji had the Sun clan and even King Yan behind him. He obviously wouldn't back down here.

The elder cupped his hands and said, "The Hub of Freedom strictly prohibits private conflicts. I ask that young master Sun and Sir Yang forgive me."

He always had a smile on his face as he spoke. His smile was extremely kind. Together with the fact that he was a ninth ranked expert, but was still acting so politely, Sun Ji's side couldn't really complain.

Sun Ji finally calmed down as well. He pointed at his bloody mouth and asked with a muffled voice, "But why didn't you do anything when he attacked earlier?"

The elder's smile froze. He had been caught off guard there. Furthermore, Zu An's attack had been exceptionally fast, to the point where even he couldn't react in time. Faced with the Sun clan's criticism, he obviously had to show consideration for that. He looked toward Zu An and asked, "Our honored guest here, why did you hurt someone in our Hub of Freedom?"

Zu An shrugged and said, "You're blaming me unfairly. When did I attack? Maybe some big shot here couldn't stand that Sun guy's arrogance, and so secretly attacked to discipline him?"

Sun Ji almost fainted from anger when he heard that. He had always been the one twisting logic and leaving the other party furious, yet helpless. He had never thought that there would be a day when he'd experience such a shameless person!

You have successfully trolled Sun Ji for +613 +613 +613...

"Absolutely... Absolutely nonsense!" Sun Ji was still leaking air through the gaps in his teeth. He pointed at Zu An and roared, "The teacup was clearly thrown from that direction!"

Zu An spread out his arms and replied nonchalantly, "All things need proof, right? Otherwise, I'm going to accuse you of slandering me. If you don't trust me, go and ask them. Who saw me throw that cup just now?"

The guests all shook their heads. None of them wanted to join the battlefield between two jade token holders. After all, anyone who could become a jade token holder had already proven their status. No one was willing to provoke them. Furthermore, that Sun Ji really was too arrogant. All of them were actually secretly delighted to see him suffer for once.

That short and stout elder had seen the cup come from Zu An's room, but his status made it so he couldn't act as a witness. Otherwise, he wouldn't be impartial at all if he helped one jade token holder deal with another one. Wouldn't the other guests start fearing for their own safety at that point?

Yang Long said coldly, "This old one saw it myself!"

Zu An clicked his tongue. "You're just the Sun clan's hired thug, so of course you'd speak up for your owner. Not even the government office would believe any testimony you spoke."

"I..." Yang Long's chest rose and fell rapidly. He was a glorious seventh ranked expert, and even Minister Sun treated him with respect. And yet, this youngster was treating him like some door-watching dog!

You have successfully trolled Yang Long for +666 +666 +666...

Sun Ji pushed him away and glared furiously at Zu An. "You bastard! You clearly did it, and yet you dare speak nonsense here?"

You have successfully trolled Sun Ji for +459 +459 +459...

Zu An felt refreshed when he saw Sun Ji's furious yet helpless appearance. He was just in need of Rage points! If I don't make you mald from anger, I'll be letting your current level of anger down.[2]

"Does that teacup have my name on it? How do you know it was mine? I'll call out to it; do you think it'll reply to me?" He called out to the teacup a few times, but it clearly didn't react at all.

Sun Ji, Yang Long, and all of the other guests were speechless.

They all wondered where this ridiculous person had come from. This level of shamelessness was even higher than Sun Ji's! As expected, there were devils above demons.

But some more intelligent people began to think about some things. This person had offended the Sun clan without any mercy... Assuming he wasn't stupid, he had someone backing him. But he didn't seem to be a match for the Sun clan's bodyguard...

Sun Ji was about to explode from anger. He was just about to release a barrage of curses when Yang Long stopped him. Being a bit older, Yang Long was more cool headed. He gave the short and stout elder a look, asking, "Senior, what will happen if we can prove that he was the one who did this?"

The short and stout elder hesitated for a moment. In the end, he still said, "The Hub of Freedom prohibits private battles. All those who oppose this rule will be asked to leave." For the sake of maintaining order, that was the Hub of Freedom's ironclad rule. He couldn't be biased toward any side under so many prying eyes.

Yang Long nodded in satisfaction. "Alright then. Senior, please examine his room. Every room has a set number of teacups, and the teacups of the Hub of Freedom are specially made and impossible to mimic by outsiders. As long as there is a cup missing from his room, that will prove he was the one who threw it."

Chapter 974: Immortal Beheading Reunion

The others present were surprised by the Sun clan's wit. They had actually found an area of weakness so quickly.

This jade token 333 was in trouble now. There was soon going to have ironclad proof against him. Once he was chased out of the Hub of Freedom, there was no way the Sun clan would let him go.

However, most of them were just there to watch the drama. They felt that jade token 333 had it coming for what he had said and done.

"This kind of thing..." The Hub of Freedom's short and stout elder was also hesitant. He really didn't want to get involved in this kind of thing. After all, Zu An was also a jade token guest. If something serious really did end up happening, it would affect the Hub of Freedom's prestige.

But no one could have expected that just then, Zu An would say, "You can check if you want, but what if you don't find anything? Shouldn't the two of you give me a proper apology if you don't find anything?"

The short and stout elder had a strange expression. He knew that the teacup had come from jade token 333's room, so he really couldn't understand why he would say that. Just where did he get his confidence from?

Yang Long and Sun Ji were naturally even more full of confidence. "Hah, how could we possibly not find anything?!"

Zu An said indifferently, "There has never been anything absolute in this world. If you two aren't willing to apologize if you can't find anything, I'll refuse your search. Otherwise, this won't be fair."

The short and stout elder had a smile on his face. That person was quite smart; so that had been his plan all along.

Sun Ji was also quite surprised. He pulled Yang Long's sleeve and asked, "Why is he so calm? Does he actually have some kind of hidden plan?" Even though he was arrogant, he wasn't stupid. He immediately realized that something was off.

Yang Long shook his head and said, "I am certain that the teacup came from his room."

"Alright." Sun Ji was confident in Elder Long's seven ranks of cultivation. He said to Zu An with a malicious smile, "If we can't find anything, we'll apologize. If we find something, you'll have to get lost from the Hub of Freedom!"

He obviously wouldn't say anything more than that in front of everyone else. However, once Zu An was kicked out, he would immediately send people to chase the other man down. He was going to make Zu An understand what it meant to wish he were dead instead.

"I must ask everyone present to serve as witnesses." Zu An cupped his hands toward everyone present. Then, he asked the short and stout elder, "What should I call this sir over here?"

The short and stout elder was a bit unhappy, as the youngster hadn't even called him senior. Whether it's age or cultivation, shouldn't you be showing me more respect? But out of respect for his jade token status, he didn't show it on the outside. "Those from the Hub of Freedom all call me Chubby Senior."

Zu An gave his spherical build a look and thought to himself, As expected, there are only wrong given names, no wrong nicknames. "Then I'll have Chubby Senior examine my room to see if any cups are missing."

Chubby Senior was a bit confused. Where does this youngster get his confidence from? Don't tell me he plans to bribe me when I go inside the room? Heh, you're looking down on me too much.

"Fine." He agreed indifferently. Then, with a tap of his toes, he rushed into the private room. He had already planned to deal with the matter impartially. It was this kid's fault for being so rash.

But his expression immediately stiffened, because there wasn't a single teacup missing. He was worried that he had been mistaken, and checked them one by one. They were indeed all the Hub of Freedom's teacups, as they couldn't be imitated.

"Huh?" Don't tell me I saw things incorrectly just now? But I'm a ninth ranked cultivator; how could I possibly have seen incorrectly?

Zu An suddenly asked, "Chubby Senior, have you finished checking the cups yet?"

The other party obviously had no idea that Zu An had used the 'Keyboard, Come' skill to create a cup out of nothing. After all, even something as complex as the Embroidered Envoy's uniform had been reproduced. Not even the half-grandmaster rank Zhuxie Chixin could find anything wrong with that, let alone a trifling ninth ranked cultivator.

He already had a bit of experience with the skill after using it a few times. When creating something out of thin air, there was no need to make it exist forever. As long as it existed long enough to complete the inspection, the rebound later would be much lower.

Furthermore, he had been training his soul bit by bit through the incantation Mi Li had passed onto him. That was why Keyboard Come was now a skill that he could use freely within certain limits.

"I have." Chubby Senior declared the result hesitantly. Then, a huge uproar broke out.

"How can that be?!" Sun Ji was the first to shout, "Chubby Senior, are you deliberately helping him?"

Chubby Senior glowered. "Are you questioning my impartiality?"

Sun Ji was about to say something else, but Yang Long stopped him. A ninth ranked expert wasn't someone they could offend at the moment. The Sun clan's men wouldn't be able to arrive in time if some kind of conflict really broke out on the spot.

He quickly explained, "It isn't that I don't trust in senior's fairness, but rather that the other party is way too cunning. He might have used some kind of trick to fool all of us. It's entirely possible that someone upright like senior didn't see through his trick. As such, may I suggest that I take a look myself?"

Chubby Senior felt much better when he heard all the praise in Sun Ji's words. At the same time, he didn't want to offend the Sun clan's people too much either. As such, he nodded and agreed.

Yang Long was happy to hear that. He quickly brought Sun Ji with him to Zu An's room. He gave Zu An an unkind glare, then barged in to check the inside of the room. Unfortunately, the two of them couldn't find any issues with those teacups even after spending a long time inside.

Zu An remarked, with a smile, "What's wrong? Did the two of you personally come to apologize?"

"Apologize your mother!" Sun Ji cursed. For some reason, the sarcasm in the other party's voice made him feel as if he were being treated like an ant. But he screamed miserably as soon as these words came out of his mouth. He had already been sent flying by a kick.

Yang Long was horrified when he saw that. He quickly went over to check what was happening. He saw that Sun Ji's face was purple and blood was leaking from his mouth. His injuries were already quite serious. He couldn't help but erupt with fury. "Scoundrel, you dare?!"

You have successfully trolled Sun Ji for +555 +555 +555...

You have successfully trolled Yang Long for +598 +598 +598...

But out of reservations toward Chubby Senior's strength, he looked at the other party and exclaimed, "I hope Chubby Senior can uphold justice!"

Chubby Senior felt a huge headache. He could only look at Zu An and say, "Sir has used violence while I'm here. Aren't you treating our Hub of Freedom too disrespectfully?"

Zu An replied indifferently, "This dynasty is founded on filial piety. My parents were shamed, and so revenge could be taken even under national law. If I didn't do anything, I would instead be disloyal to those who raised me. Could it be that the Hub of Freedom's rules are above the national law?"

Chubby Senior took in a breath of cold air. Where did this fellow come from? He even dared to say something like that?

The Hub of Freedom was clearly engaging in underground trade, and yet he was bringing out national law! It really was laughable. And yet, the worst part was, he didn't dare to retort publicly, or else the consequences would be unimaginable. As such, he decided to just watch for the time being. These two could settle their own matters themselves.

However, Zu An didn't let the matter go and pressed on. "Chubby Senior, according to our agreement earlier, it's their turn to apologize to me."

Sun Ji finally snapped out of his daze. When he heard that, he almost fainted out of anger. I was freaking hit and I still have to apologize to him?!

You have successfully trolled Sun Ji for +888 +888 +888...

He subconsciously wanted to curse again, but when he recalled what had just happened, he immediately swallowed those words back down.

Zu An gave Chubby Senior another look and said, "Chubby Senior, you were a witness to our earlier agreement."

Chubby Senior felt that the matter was a huge pain. He could only look at Sun Ji and Elder Long with an overcast expression and say, "If you are willing to bet, you must accept a loss. It is indeed time for the two of you to apologize!"

"What?!" Sun Ji immediately jumped out. "Do you not know who my father is? I..."

He was stopped by Yang Long before he could say anything else. Yang Long said, "I will apologize in the young master's place." He was scared that the young master might say something to offend this ninth ranked expert. They would really be done for then.

Zu An remarked indifferently, "Why are you in such a rush? You can come one at a time. We already agreed before that both of you need to apologize."

Sun Ji really was about to go mad from anger. Yang Long held him back again and said through ki transmission, "Young master, do not act rashly! A wise man knows better than to fight when the odds are against you! We can get our revenge on him properly once we leave the Hub of Freedom."

Chubby Senior began to release his ninth ranked aura. Having his prestige challenged again and again was clearly already testing the limits of his patience.

Sun Ji gave Zu An a resentful look. He was even starting to feel hatred for Chubby Senior. However, he listened to Yang Long's advice and cupped his hands carefully toward Zu An. His voice was as soft as a mosquito as he said, "Sorry."

You have successfully trolled Sun Ji for +912 +912 +912...

Zu An picked at his ear and said, "What did you say? I couldn't hear you."

"Are you messing with me right now?!" Sun Ji's eyes were about to pop out from anger.

"You were the one talking so quietly; how am I supposed to hear what you were saying?" Zu An replied, indifferently.

Yang Long secretly tugged at Sun Ji's sleeves. Sun Ji took a deep breath and said expressionlessly, "Sorry!" But he was about to explode inwardly. When had he ever suffered such humiliation before? He was going to repay this a hundredfold later!

You have successfully trolled Sun Ji for +999 +999 +999...

Yang Long also submitted to humiliation and apologized. He felt so wronged that he was about to explode himself. He was a glorious seventh ranked cultivator, and yet he had to apologize to a young junior. He had already decided that he was going to properly teach this youngster a lesson.

Zu An then smiled and remarked, "How obedient! You two should try to be more low-profile when you go out in the future, or else you might end up offending people you shouldn't have offended."

Those words made Chubby Senior raise his eyebrows, and the onlookers had strange expressions on their faces. They felt those words would make more sense if they were spoken to Zu An instead!

Sun Ji and Yang Long didn't stay and make fools of themselves any longer. They returned to their own private rooms with a sweep of their sleeves.

Seeing that the matter was already settled, Chubby Senior sighed in relief. Then, he said clearly, "There was a small disturbance just now, but fortunately, it is over. We will continue with the auctioning of the next item: An Immortal Beheading Knife!"

Chapter 975: You Shouldn't Repeat the Same Mistake More than Three Times

Sun Ji and Yang Long, who were in a terrible mood from what had just happened, had been planning to leave before setting up a trap for Zu An outside to get revenge. But when they heard that, they both stopped.

"What's wrong, Elder Yang?" Sun Ji asked out of curiosity when he saw how Yang Long was acting.

"A legendary Immortal Beheading Knife..." Yang Long was stirred up. He didn't bother replying to Sun Ji and instead stared at the case in the gorgeous hostess' hands.

Zu An was stunned. Immortal Beheading Knife? Shi Kun had wanted to use them to turn him into a cripple back then in the Eastern Palace, but he had ended up taking them for himself. He hadn't expected to run into them again here! If I'm not mistaken, I got four from Shi Kun, right?

Chubby Senior had already leapt to the center stage. The Immortal Beheading Knives were extremely precious, and after what had just happened, he needed to remain present to prevent any further disorder from happening.

But there was no lack of individuals with extensive knowledge among the audience. "The legendary knives that can cut down even immortals? How can something like that exist in the world? Even if such things did exist, how could your Hub of Freedom be willing to sell them in this auction?"

The gorgeous hostess snapped out of her daze and explained with a smile, "What this guest says is correct. The Immortal Beheading Knives have always been legends, rumored to be able to even kill immortals. However, our Hub of Freedom managed to procure one of them through a trustworthy source. As for everyone's confusion, I can explain. A complete set of Immortal Beheading Knives consists

of nine blades, and only when all nine come together can their legendary power be revealed. Today, only one of the nine is being auctioned.”

She took out a delicate sandalwood case from the hands of a servant. She gently opened the case with her slender and fine fingers, revealing a small and exquisite throwing knife inside. It didn’t look too different from an ordinary throwing knife. Even the blade didn’t seem too deadly and threatening, almost as if it hadn’t been sharpened.

“It doesn’t look all that special,” someone said mockingly. Many others immediately parroted what he said. They were clearly rather suspicious of the thing as well.

The gorgeous hostess explained, “Even though this dagger isn’t complete and can’t display its full power, it still has special properties. It can inflict tremendous harm to the target. Without having any rare medicines to treat those wounds, one might just never recover for the rest of one’s life.”

The mysterious man in the black robes Zu An had noticed before harrumphed. “An ordinary person wouldn’t be able to hurt a master rank even if they had this thing. As for someone at the master rank, they naturally have their own ways to attack the enemy’s soul. This thing isn’t all that useful at all.”

Those who had been getting excited began to nod inwardly when they heard that reminder. It indeed made sense... Even though this thing seemed great, it wasn’t necessarily all that useful. As for collecting nine of them, that was just a pipe dream. When had anyone ever managed to do something like that in previous centuries and millennia? Just a single one was already rare enough, let alone collecting nine of them.

Seeing that the auction was proceeding in an unfavorable direction, the gorgeous hostess was starting to panic as well. However, the fact that she had been chosen for her position meant that she was extremely skilled in her own right. She quickly said, “This knife is still useful in dealing with cultivators beneath the master rank. Even though ordinary cultivators cannot condense a soul, the soul will always be closely related to cultivation. If one is hurt by this dagger, one’s cultivation path might be eternally cut short. One will be unable to make any progress for the rest of one’s life.”

Zu An was amazed by the woman’s extensive knowledge. However, it was also quite cruel. Wasn’t she implying to everyone present that this was a weapon that could completely cripple a cultivator, to prevent one from ever making any more progress?

Sure enough, the onlookers started breathing heavily.

“I’ll pay two hundred thousand taels of silver. I want this dagger.” Someone spoke up first and raised his sign.

Zu An saw that the sign was made of iron. The person was probably just an ordinary participant of the auction. He hadn’t expected even the most ordinary member of the auction to be able to so easily declare a price of two hundred thousand! It was easy to see just how deep the Hub of Freedom’s influence ran from that.

The gorgeous hostess smiled and said, “I apologize, but this dagger’s starting price is five hundred thousand taels of silver. The bid increments will have to be ten thousand at the very least.”

Those present roared with laughter when they heard that. The one who had called out that price sat back down in embarrassment.

Zu An frowned. He had four Immortal Beheading Knives on him at present, so for him, this knife's significance was much greater than it was for the others. But even the starting price was already five hundred thousand, so who knew how expensive it would be in the end!?

He had won several million silvers from Silverhook Casino in the past, but that was just a number; he couldn't collect that debt at all. In the end, he had given the debt note to Brightmoon Academy to be managed by Jiang Luofu. Tsk tsk, that Jiang Luofu got so many benefits from me. I'm going to make sure she gets it if she ever marries someone else!

He had won around a million silvers from the Zheng clan's casino as well. They still owed him a few hundred thousand too! Forget it; Dandan has already compensated me with her body, so I won't bicker over something like that.

That was why he'd only had six hundred and fifty thousand taels of silver from Brightmoon City. But after purchasing all sorts of pills and ingredients, he had used up a lot of that. There was also that skill 'Befriend a Rich Man'; that skill was just too much of a scam! It had never done much for him whenever he used it, so he had decided he would never use that stupid skill again. Hmph!

But he had actually obtained quite a few rewards through his service and nobility in the capital. Adding all of that together, he would likely have around four hundred thousand on hand.

It's still my honey Linglong who knows how to treasure me the most. She always remembers to reward me with the palace's wealth whenever she can.

Oh yeah, I should pay the empress a few more visits. Leaving such a huge sugar mommy alone would really be too much of a waste. I worked so hard before; I can't just let her get away without any proper compensation.

Together with the two hundred thousand he had just received from selling that chrysanthemum sapphire, he had a total of six hundred thousand at the moment. Of course, he had the red dragon's treasury from before too. Those items were all worth around two hundred thousand a pop. If he needed them, he could take some out to auction off too.

But of course, he only had six hundred thousand in cash at the moment. Zu An felt a bit of a headache. He had thought that he actually had some money before, and yet after coming here, he discovered that just that bit of money wasn't enough at all!

Someone quickly placed another bid.

"Five hundred and ten thousand!"

"Five hundred and twenty thousand!"

...

"This guest has bid five hundred and fifty thousand; are there any more bids? Five hundred and fifty going once, going twice..." The gorgeous host was getting a bit nervous. After all, she was caught quite off guard by the low bids.

Unfortunately, no one responded. The bids on the starting items were rather reserved. After all, even though the knife was somewhat useful, it wasn't anything groundbreaking. A couple hundred thousand was no small number, so they had to consider things carefully before spending a ton of money.

Furthermore, they had all received rumors that something extremely good was going to appear in the auction that day. If they used up all their money already, things would get troublesome later.

Zu An was surprised to see that scene. After thinking about it for a bit, he decided to just outright place a six hundred thousand bid. Otherwise, the price might climb even higher, so he thought it might be better to place a high bid to scare off competitors.

Sure enough, when the others heard his price, they all hesitated. They didn't decide to place another bid. The knife was indeed just an interesting toy. Furthermore, that 333 was quite a vicious person. They had personally seen how miserable he had made Sun Ji. There was no need to offend him for no reason.

The gorgeous hostess' eyes lit up. Her eyes were shining as she looked toward Zu An and said, "Guest number 333 has placed a bid of six hundred thousand. Does anyone wish to bid higher?"

She thought to herself, Even though this young man is masked, his stature is tall and upright. His entire body gives off a carefree and confident feeling. Compared to these other big-bellied jade token guests, he's much more charming.

Faced with the tender-hearted smile of the gorgeous hostess, Zu An smiled in return, but he didn't think too much about it. He knew fully well that these kinds of women were just too good at acting. He wasn't some naive little boy, so there was no way he would let himself be swept away by something like that.

"Six hundred thousand going once, going twice, going three times..." The gorgeous hostess was all smiles as she looked at Zu An. Suddenly, a voice interrupted her.

"Six hundred and fifty thousand!"

Those present followed the source of the sound. They saw Sun Ji standing by the window. They immediately knew what was going on. Sun Ji had been humiliated earlier, so he wanted to use this chance to redeem himself.

Zu An frowned. He said calmly, "Six hundred and sixty thousand."

"Seven hundred thousand!" Sun Ji felt amazing when he saw Zu An's quiet appearance. You shouldn't have provoked this young master!

"Seven hundred and ten thousand," Zu An said expressionlessly.

"Seven hundred and fifty thousand!" Sun Ji thought that Zu An must really want the throwing knife! I'll be doing my hatred for you an injustice if I don't raise the price a bit!

He had already made his decision. He was going to give up after the other party raised the price once more. After all, it already wasn't a small price to pay. He felt amazing just thinking about how frustrated the other party would be that he had to pay an extra two hundred thousand silvers.

But Zu An instead said with a smile, "Since young master Sun is so fond of this toy, then I'll be the mature one and yield to young master Sun."

Sun Ji was speechless.

Isn't the proverb that you shouldn't repeat the same mistake more than three times? You haven't done it a third time yet!

Chapter 976: I Will Bid!

Those present roared with laughter. They clearly noticed that Sun Ji had been played by guest 333 again.

When he heard the onlookers' mocking laughter and saw their looks of pity, Sun Ji's face heated up. Anger raged within him. He gave Zu An a hateful look and exclaimed, "You little bastard, you dare to play me?"

You have successfully trolled Sun Ji for +444 +444 +444...

Zu An put away his smile when he heard that and replied, "I did play you. What are you going to do about it?"

Sun Ji almost fainted on the spot when he heard that. Had the other party grabbed the wrong script or something? He was always the one who said those kinds of things to other people, so why were the roles reversed today?

From the center of the auction hall, Chubby Senior gave Zu An another look. He thought to himself, Where in the world does this crazy man come from? He actually seems even more rude and unreasonable in comparison.

The beautiful hostess' eyes glittered as she looked at Zu An. She became more and more interested in this arrogant and domineering man. Unlike Sun Ji, who relied on his own clan's background and strength, this newcomer had completely relied on his own ability to humiliate Sun Ji.

Chubby Elder took a step forward and said with a light cough, "Ahem, order needs to be maintained here!" His voice was amplified by ki, and those present felt their ears ring with noise. They were all shaken up. Nine ranks of cultivation were terrifying after all!

Chubby Senior nodded in satisfaction when he saw the reactions of the onlookers. He obviously didn't want to see a repeat of the previous farce, which would further affect the auction. He gestured for the hostess to continue.

The beautiful hostess reacted. She continued in her sweet voice, "Seven hundred and fifty thousand going once... Seven hundred and fifty thousand going twice... Seven hundred and fifty thousand going three times... Sold! Congratulations, young master Sun!"

Sun Ji's eyelids twitched, but he could only swallow this resentment. He forced a smile and nodded, saying, "This isn't much money at all. It's worth it if it's spent on this toy." The onlookers sneered when they saw him try to redeem himself. They didn't feel like exposing him, though.

Yang Long walked over to his side and said worriedly, "Young master, money borrowed from the Hub of Freedom has to be repaid. Things will be troublesome later if you keep purchasing things like this..."

Sun Ji was bleeding internally, but he said, "It's fine. We have enough money with us this time."

You have successfully trolled Sun Ji for +555 +555 +555...

“But the master might criticize you for spending so much money on this item...” Yang Long was quite upset. Even though he wasn’t the one who had spent the money, he would take on a share of the blame as Sun Ji’s guardian as well.

Sun Ji’s eyes narrowed as he looked in Zu An’s direction. “That fella was willing to pay six hundred thousand to buy this knife, which means he has more than six hundred thousand on him. We can just seize the money back from him later.”

Yang Long nodded. That was the only choice left. Furthermore, that little bastard was utterly hateful. He surged with killing intent when he recalled how he’d had to endure humiliation and apologize.

You have successfully trolled Yang Long for +444 +444 +444...

The auction continued. All kinds of weapons, rare treasures, and even fiend race slaves were brought out one after another.

Zu An frowned when he saw the participants bid against each other so eagerly over the slaves. He really wasn’t too used to such a thing. However, the fiend races had been defeated back then, and the wealthy clans of the Zhou Dynasty loved to keep fiend race slaves. It was already something commonplace that a single person like him couldn’t do much about.

“If Kong Nanwu were here, she might just decide to go on a murderous rampage.” Zu An sighed. However, he wouldn’t go so far as to try and be some holy mother. After all, if the humans were captured by the fiend races, the result could only be even more cruel.

Meanwhile, his only role was to annoy Sun Ji. Whenever Sun Ji wanted to buy something, he would raise the price a bit. It made Sun Ji’s teeth ache, but there wasn’t anything he could do about it.

Unfortunately, Sun Ji had suffered pretty badly over that Immortal Beheading Knife, so he didn’t fancy too many items. After Zu An harvested a few more rounds of Rage points, the other party no longer raised his sign.

He even deliberately showed interest in some items along the way and bid a few times. Unfortunately, Sun Ji had already been scared badly and didn’t try to fight over things with him anymore. Helpless to do anything else, he could only try to raise the prices for some others. At the same time, he collected a large amount of Rage points from those present.

The others all glared hatefully at Zu An. They had all been chewing on their seeds as they watched him torment Sun Ji. How could they have expected that this person would direct his schemes toward them? This guy is a freaking sack of shit!

It was instead Sun Ji who had a smile on his face. He instead found Zu An a bit more pleasant than before. After all, he wasn’t the only one who was suffering anymore.

Even as everyone directed their hatred toward him, Zu An didn’t care at all. Either way, he had a mask on, so they had no idea who he was. Earning Rage points was what was most important after all. Just a bit of work had earned him more than a hundred thousand Rage points. Pissing off a group of people was much more effective than targeting a single person after all!

Of course, he didn't only do it for Rage points. He had another objective. As expected, the next item the gorgeous hostess announced was "Gray Wolf King Fangs."

"These ten fangs are all the sharpest canines of mature Gray Wolf Kings. Arrows made with these materials can penetrate the ki barriers of cultivators. Of course, they can also be used as medicine... The starting price is fifty thousand silvers, with the bids in increments of a thousand." The beautiful hostess introduced the item rather casually.

The fangs' use was more niche than most other items. Even though they had medicinal value, it wasn't too high. Their best uses were being made into Demonslaying Arrows. However, archery wasn't too popular in this world, and these guests were mostly incredibly rich people. It wasn't going to be a popular item.

Sure enough, there were only a few bids here and there.

Zu An said lazily, "Fifty-five thousand."

He had a small booklet in his room. Apart from the one most mysterious item, there were some descriptions about everything else that was being auctioned off. It was just like an advertising pamphlet.

Zu An hadn't noticed it at first, but he had eventually remembered the fangs were one of the materials Daji needed for breakthroughs. That was why he paid close attention to them.

For fear that Sun Ji or any others might fight him over them and make him pay even more, he had deliberately bid on some things without buying them. It was precisely because he hadn't wanted people to know about his true objective.

The gorgeous hostess' eyes immediately began to glow. She had almost fallen in love with him! It was precisely because he had kept making bids that every single item in the auction had ended up being sold at least twenty to thirty percent above their normal prices. That naturally increased her own cut by quite a bit.

She was smiling so widely her eyes had almost become slits. She thought to herself that she had to properly thank him later. When she thought about how young and healthy his body was, her own body couldn't help but become a bit sensitive.

The others present had completely different thoughts. That guy is freaking bidding again...

They weren't all that interested in the wolf fangs anyway. They were worried about him bidding too, so no one said anything. The wolf fangs ended up being sold for fifty-five thousand silvers.

"Huh?" When he heard that he won the bid, Zu An even showed a bit of annoyance and surprise.

Everyone else immediately felt much better when they saw that. Keep bidding! You've fallen for your own trap this time, huh?

Sun Ji felt even better. It's just a pity that he didn't end up suffering more than this.

But his opinion quickly changed. That guy's money will soon become mine anyway. That's why the less money he ends up spending, the better!

He felt a bit annoyed when he thought of that. Damn you, why are you spending my money on some stupid useless wolf fangs?!

You have successfully trolled Sun Ji for +257 +257 +257...

He placed a few more bids afterward. Zu An continued to put pressure on the prices like before, but he was clearly more careful than before.

The others sneered. That guy must be still thinking about that mistake!

The next item quickly came out. The beautiful hostess took out an embroidered case for everyone to see. It was multi-colored and extremely beautiful. She said sweetly, "These are Nine-Headed Pheasant Feathers. They have been collected by hunters from many different lands with great difficulty. There are fifty in total. They are the best items for making arrows, capable of making them fly more steadily. Of course, they can also be made into clothes and hats. Not only are they beautiful, they can provide a certain amount of defensive power... The bidding will start at fifty thousand taels of silver, with bids in increments of one thousand."

These items were clearly more popular than the wolf fangs. Such pretty feathers could be bought to gain the favor of girls. The price quickly reached seventy thousand.

Zu An spoke again, as expected. "Seventy-five thousand."

That bastard is trying to raise the prices again! The same thought appeared in the others' minds.

Then, the enthusiastic bidding suddenly fell silent. No one kept him company in inflating the price. They even wondered if this guy had been sent by the Hub of Freedom to mess with them.

However, Chubby Senior felt a huge headache. The other party had helped the Hub of Freedom make quite a bit of profits, but whenever he placed a bid, everyone else stopped bidding. It was one thing for these smaller items, but it would be troublesome if this continued for that item they were going to bring out later. At that point, the gains wouldn't make up for the losses!

The gorgeous hostess called out three more times, but no one responded. In the end, Zu An bought the Nine-Headed Pheasant Feathers at the price of seventy-five thousand silvers. He had a smile on his face. He had ended up buying what he needed for much cheaper than what he had planned to spend. He had already completed his goals, so how could he not be happy?

Those present gradually realized what had happened. Don't tell me he actually did want to buy these feathers? The feeling of being played made all of them donate another round of Rage points.

Zu An almost burst out laughing. His trip today to the Hub of Freedom really was too timely!

The gorgeous hostess spoke sweetly once again. "The next item is what everyone has been waiting for this evening..."

Chapter 977: A Cherished Item Will Bring Trouble

The others couldn't be bothered with Zu An anymore when they heard that. They all turned to look at the center of the stage. They had received rumors that this time, a rare treasure was going to be auctioned. Unfortunately, the booklet didn't say anything about what the precious item was. It was

precisely that feeling of mystery that drew their interest. They all wanted to see just what kind of treasure the Hub of Freedom was going to take out this time.

The staff brought out an embroidered case. The gorgeous hostess opened the case, upon which the onlookers subconsciously stood up. They all craned their necks one after another.

The private rooms were above everyone else's, so Zu An could just calmly glance over. He saw a strangely shaped jade pendant. It was different from a normal jade pendant that prioritized aesthetics and color. It had many patterns on it, but they didn't have a shred of artistic intent.

"This pendant's material doesn't seem like anything special..." There were quite a few people present who were experienced and knowledgeable. Someone immediately voiced their doubts.

The gorgeous hostess explained with a smile, "This pendant looks ordinary, but it contains a tremendous secret. Inscribed on it are the clues to the legendary Milk of Purple Frost."

Zu An had just been planning to watch the rest of the auction from the sidelines, but when he heard that, his entire body trembled. He had just been searching so bitterly for that mysterious Milk of Purple Frost, and yet he ended up stumbling upon some clues so soon afterward?!

He had to get it for his big sis empress no matter what. However, he quickly frowned. He had only had around six hundred thousand silvers on him, and after buying the wolf fangs and pheasant feathers, he only had four hundred and seventy thousand left. That was probably not enough to buy the most important item in the Hub of Freedom's auction.

The gorgeous hostess already began her introduction. "The Milk of Purple Frost is a legendary medicine. No matter how heavily injured the soul is, as long as it has not fully scattered, it can be restored to its former state. In the past, even his majesty, with his cultivation, suffered severe damage to his soul in his battle against the Fiend Emperor. This was the medicine he used to recover.

"Of course, apart from treating wounds, it also has tremendous effects in nurturing and condensing the soul. If an ordinary cultivator ingests this medicine, it will grant them the qualification to advance into the master rank. If one at the master rank ingests it, it will become much easier for them to break through into the grandmaster rank. As for someone beyond the grandmaster rank, it has been rumored that it was because his majesty ingested this that he broke through into the earth immortal rank..."

Those who were originally not all that interested in the item immediately widened their eyes when they heard that. They immediately wanted to take the item for themselves.

After all, the path of cultivation became much more difficult after the fifth rank. However, even the difficulty of the fifth to ninth rank added together couldn't be compared to the bottleneck of the master rank. Many people struggled their entire lives without any hope of crossing that boundary.

As for going from the master rank to the grandmaster rank, it was even more difficult. The world was large and outstanding talents had appeared in abundance, so there were still a good amount of people at the master rank, but there were only a trifling few at the grandmaster rank. There was even less of a need to talk about the even greater earth immortals.

But those who were more meticulous in thought quickly voiced their misgivings. “Why would something so precious be auctioned? Are you not scared that news might leak out, and the masters and grandmasters would come to wipe you out?”

Even though the Hub of Freedom was powerful, the item was something that would tempt even grandmasters. How could people like them be able to possess something like that? Sure enough, the others quickly realized that problem as well. They gave the hostess skeptical looks.

The gorgeous hostess seemed to have already predicted the question. A sweet smile appeared on her face as she explained, “The Hub of Freedom naturally understands that possessing a cherished item may bring trouble, and that is why we have decided to auction it away. Furthermore, we do not have the true Milk of Purple Frost, and these are merely some clues related to it. I believe that those grandmasters and masters will not trouble our Hub of Freedom over something like this.”

The participants nodded inwardly when they heard that. These were just some clues. Even if they obtained them, they still might not be able to find the actual Milk of Purple Frost. Furthermore, the Hub of Freedom had some influence as well. That was why there was indeed no reason for those powerful cultivators to fight over the item.

Someone else asked, “But this item had already been in your possession for so long, so the clues must have already been fully researched. Even if we purchase it at a great price, you all already know the information stored inside. What if while we’re fighting over this thing, you’ve already secretly begun to look for this Milk of Purple Frost? Then wouldn’t we just become your scapegoats?”

Zu An nodded inwardly. The people present weren’t stupid after all. Even someone like Sun Ji wasn’t completely stupid, let alone everyone else.

The gorgeous hostess replied with a smile, “Everyone need not worry. The clues on this jade pendant are extremely mysterious and profound. We at the Hub of Freedom have already researched it for a long time, yet we have made no progress. We would not even know where to start even if we wanted to get a head start.”

“If not even you were able to find out anything, what will we be able to do with it?” the black robed man Zu An had been paying attention to before said in a low, muffled voice.

The hostess showed him a professional smile. “The treasures of the world are not necessarily things that can be found through effort. Many times, they belong to those they are destined to be with. If our Hub of Freedom was not able to make any progress, that means we share no karma with this item. However, that does not mean that no one else will be able to find out anything.”

Zu An thought to himself that this woman really was great at appealing to human nature. There were many intelligent people in the world, and they would all feel they were smarter than others, that they were luckier. They would definitely try to obtain the jade pendant.

Sure enough, there were already some people beginning to urge the bidding on. “Alright already, can we just get on with it and start the bidding?”

The beautiful hostess had a satisfied smile on her face. She slowly said, “This item’s starting price will be one million taels of silver, and will increase in increments of ten thousand.”

The room fell silent immediately. A million wasn't a small number, after all! It was easy to imagine that the final price was going to be far greater than one million.

But when the first person placed the bid, those present quickly became worked up. They all raised their signs one after another, and the price climbed higher and higher. The price soon reached one million, five hundred thousand silvers.

Zu An had a huge headache. The starting price was far greater than the cash he had on hand. But for the sake of Mi Li, he had to brace himself and go for it.

"Two million!" Zu An decided to just raise the price much higher, hoping that he could use the earlier prestige he had accumulated to scare everyone else off.

Sure enough, the place immediately fell silent when they heard the price. Motherf*cking... That person is trying to raise the price again! They all cursed inwardly and contributed a huge wave of Rage points.

More Rage points poured in, but Zu An didn't feel happy about it yet. He knew it might not be so easy to purchase the item this time.

Sure enough, a low voice spoke from another private room. "Two million and ten thousand."

Zu An's expression sank. The other jade token guests hadn't participated in his bickering with Sun Ji, but the fact that they were in private rooms clearly proved their strength. "Two million and twenty thousand." He continued to push the price higher with an overcast expression.

Increasing the bids by ten thousand was pretty much meaningless at this point, however. He began to sort through the treasures he had. Even though he didn't have enough silvers on hand, he could probably piece together two million and seven hundred thousand with the treasures he had gotten from the red dragon. For Mi Li, he had to buy the item even if he had to spend everything he had.

The person in the other private room fell silent when he heard Zu An raise the price again. He was clearly reconsidering his decision.

The gorgeous hostess below was looking at Zu An with sparkling eyes. This person was not only tall and strong, he was even wealthy at such a young age! He was simply the perfect man! If I can build a relationship with him, I might not have to spend the rest of my life in a place like this...

Just then, Sun Ji spoke up lazily. "Two million and thirty thousand taels!"

Yang Long was surprised, exclaiming, "Young master, you cannot let your emotions affect your decision!"

"Fool, do you think I'm only doing this to fight against that guy? Use your brain; I'm going to buy this thing to offer it to King Yan. Just how many benefits will father and I obtain then?" Sun Ji sneered.

Yang Long was stunned. Indeed, King Qi is his majesty's uncle. He has already been stuck at the grandmaster rank for a long time already. If he can obtain the Milk of Purple Frost, a breakthrough is all but guaranteed!

The young master does act rather spoiled, but he has clarity and insight when it counts!

Chapter 978: Tang Tian'er

When he looked at the jade pendant in the hostess' hands, Yang Long couldn't help but feel a bit envious. If he could use the Milk of Purple Frost himself, he might even be able to break through into the master rank within three years! Unfortunately, he had to offer it up to King Yan, which meant that he was doomed to never be able to use it.

His expression changed several times. In that instant, his eyes even flickered with something else; he thought he should use the chance to actually take it for himself, then secretly look for the Milk of Purple Frost's whereabouts.

But in the end, he helplessly threw the idea away. With how powerful King Yan and Sun Xiang were, he still wouldn't be a match for them even if he became a master rank cultivator.

Meanwhile, Zu An didn't get upset and was instead happy to see that. He had been worried that he wouldn't have enough money to buy the thing, and yet who could have thought that this spendthrift would step in? This kid was giving him everything!

Zu An looked at Sun Ji fondly, which made Sun Ji shiver. Why is that guy looking at me so weirdly?

"Two million, three hundred and fifty thousand!" A bid was placed from another private room. This amount was no small number. Everyone was becoming more and more cautious with their bidding.

But the only reason the price still remained at that level was because the pendant merely gave some clues about where the Milk of Purple Frost really was, and thus it didn't guarantee the actual item even if one possessed it. Otherwise, the price would definitely be far greater.

Zu An thought for a bit, then also placed another bid. "Two million and four hundred thousand!" He gave Sun Ji a provocative look after saying that. He was actually quite worried that the other party wouldn't keep up with him. If that happened, how was he supposed to buy something so precious?

Sure enough, anger surged inside of Sun Ji when he saw Zu An's provocative gaze. "Two million and five hundred thousand!"

You have successfully trolled Sun Ji for +222 +222 +222...

He could already tell that Zu An actually wanted the item, so there was no way he could let the other party buy it. Even if he had to lose to someone, he couldn't lose to that bastard! Let alone the fact that he had been going to buy it for King Yan to begin with. He had to obtain it no matter the price.

Zu An smiled when he saw that Sun Ji had taken the bait. He didn't pay him any more attention and instead watched how the rest of the auction played out. There was no lack of big shots among the private rooms. The price quickly reached three million. Zu An sighed. This price was already really outside of what he could afford.

Sun Ji's eyes twitched as well. After all, three million wasn't a small amount even for the Sun clan. If not for his father's influence in collecting all sorts of wealth and the plundering of some caravans, how could they possibly gather this much silver?

Fortunately, after the price was raised to that point, the other private rooms momentarily fell silent. They were clearly considering whether spending three million on some clues that might very well be useless was worth it.

Sun Ji shot Zu An a hateful look. If that bastard dares to put another bid, I'll just let him have it! Not only would he completely redeem all of the dignity he had lost before, he could even steal it from the other man once he left. He wouldn't even have to spend a cent himself! He felt a bit regretful when he thought of that. If he had realized that sooner, he wouldn't have been in such a rush to bid early.

Zu An naturally guessed what Sun Ji was thinking. He wouldn't give him the chance at all and just gave up on bidding. But just because he gave up didn't mean that the other local tyrants were willing to. Sure enough, the price quickly climbed higher and higher.

Sun Ji's expression became ashen, but he continued to bid no matter how high the price reached. In the end, the price ultimately broke past four million.

The other big shots in the private rooms couldn't take it anymore either. Yi Commandery was the Sun clan's domain after all, so they couldn't really compare in terms of wealth. Furthermore, the information on the jade pendant might not even be useful. Eventually, those in the other private rooms gave up one after another, and Sun Ji bought the pendant at the price of four million.

Sun Ji felt as if his heart were bleeding. However, it would still be worth it if he offered the item up to King Yan.

Chubby Senior personally delivered the pendant to Sun Ji's private room afterward. He was delivering the item, but also coming to collect the money.

Sun Ji took out close to three million in silver notes, then said, "I didn't bring enough money with me today, I'll send the rest over to you guys once I return. You can also send people to follow me back to get it." That damn guest 333 had scammed him out of a few hundred thousand silvers, so he really couldn't take out that much money at the moment.

Chubby Senior's face darkened. He said, "Young master Sun, this is not in accordance with the rules."

Sun Ji said, "Chubby Senior, I'm sure you know my identity. The Sun clan can assume this debt, and we have no reason to not pay you back. Furthermore, we didn't know this item was going to be auctioned, so I didn't bring enough money. Our Sun clan has many businesses in the Yi Commandery; our stores are everywhere. Don't tell me we don't have this bit of credibility?"

When he heard the threatening tone in Sun Ji's voice, Chubby Senior felt quite troubled as well. There was indeed no reason to offend the Sun clan, because they had King Yan backing them. If they decided to get revenge out of anger, the Hub of Freedom would be the one with nowhere to run. He finally said, "In that case, then, I will make an exception for the young master. However, the Hub of Freedom has to take on unnecessary risk for this matter, so we will collect a hundred thousand as a service charge. I hope the young master can accept this."

Sun Ji's eyes narrowed, but he still agreed. "That's fine."

Both sides chatted for a bit, then Sun Ji wrote down a loan agreement and placed his seal on it. He also left behind his folding fan to use as collateral. When Chubby Senior confirmed everything, he handed the jade pendant over.

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After Chubby Senior left, Sun Ji stored the case away, then he got up to leave.

Yang Long was surprised, asking, "The young master is going to leave now? How about we contact our people from the manor to receive us tomorrow morning?"

Sun Ji nodded and said, "The longer we stay here, the more trouble will arise. It's best if we deliver this jade pendant to father and King Yan earlier, as I'll feel more at ease then. As for the issue of safety, with you and the guards escorting me, apart from Chubby Senior, who else can stop us?"

Yang Long nodded. The Hub of Freedom was in Yi Commandery, so they wouldn't dare to do anything. Apart from that, the Hub of Freedom's unique way of coming and going prevented any of the other guests from tracking their whereabouts either. That was why it would instead be safer if they left as early as possible. If they dragged things out longer, there might be those with evil designs waiting to ambush them. They might even be able to track them down.

Sun Ji assigned a few guards to continue guarding his room's entrance in the Hub of Freedom, making it look as if he were pleasure-seeking inside. Apart from that, he also sent one of his subordinates to tail guest 333 outside of his room.

"Hmph, I'll let him live for another night. Once I finish what I need to do and return with my men, he'll wish he were dead!" Sun Ji definitely wouldn't let this man who had humiliated him several times live. However, he was the son of an influential clan, so he was still able to discern what was more important at the moment.

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Meanwhile on his end, Zu An was concentrating on their conversation. Suddenly, there was a knock on his private room's door. He asked, "Who is it?"

"Young master, it's me," said a sweet voice.

"Is there something you need?" Zu An frowned. It was that hostess from before. What had she come over for?

The gorgeous hostess' smile froze on her face. She hadn't expected such a reaction at all! Judging from the man's tone, it didn't seem as if he had any intention of opening the door. This really is an unromantic and insensitive man!

But she reacted quickly and said, "I came to deliver the Gray Wolf King Fangs and Nine-Headed Pheasant feathers." There's no way you'll refuse now, right? Sure enough, the room door opened.

Zu An sized up the woman in front of him. He had to admit that she was a first grade beauty. Now that she was up close, he could sense just how fine and impressive her figure was underneath her cheongsam. Together with her bright and seductive red lips, her sweet smile, and her intelligent eyes, it would be hard for anyone to develop a negative impression of her.

He gave her a look and said, "Judging from how the lady is dressed, I do not believe there are any areas where those things can be stored." She was only here with that flimsy dress of hers. She hadn't even brought a bag.

"Aren't you being a bit too distant by calling me 'lady'? My name is Tang Tian'er; the young master can call me Tian'er," the beautiful hostess said with a big smile. "Is the young master not going to invite me inside for a chat? It would be a bit embarrassing if the other guests see me standing by the door like this..."

"Your surname is excellent, and your name is pleasant-sounding. The lady is as sweet as candy after all," Zu An said. But inside, he was thinking something completely different. This woman was following the script of a high-end green tea bitch perfectly.[1]

"The young master's words are also extremely sweet. I wonder what I should call the young master?" Seeing that the other party had turned to the side to make way, Tang Tian'er took the chance to walk in. She closed the door behind herself.

Chapter 979: Sea Empress

Tian'er couldn't help but feel proud of herself when she saw that the other party had let her in after all. I can even make a stiff block of wood start burning.

"I am surnamed An." Zu An obviously wouldn't tell her his real name. He gave her an ambiguous smile and said, "These private rooms have quite good sound isolation. Is the lady not scared that I will do something rude to you if you close the door?"

This was a jade token guest's room. As long as the windows were closed, almost all noise would be blocked out. The place had clearly been meticulously designed.

Tang Tian'er showed him a sweet smile and replied, "How can a noble guest like the young master be that sort of unromantic brute? Of course I have no need to be scared of anything like that."

Zu An calmly said, "Could it be that you do not know that the more distinguished the guest is, the more strange their preferences and fetishes are?"

Tang Tian'er was speechless. She really didn't know how to respond after hearing something like that. Wouldn't someone normally exchange a few flirtatious sentences at that point to make the atmosphere more intense?

Zu An's attention was still on Sun Ji and he didn't have much interest in feigning civility with her. He asked, "Didn't you say you came with the goods? Where are they?"

Tang Tian'er's smile couldn't help but freeze. However, she still took out a pouch from her ring, saying, "The items are inside. Young master An, please look through them."

Zu An gave her ring a look. He had already been in this world for so long, he immediately recognized that it was a spatial artifact. However, most spatial artifacts were in the shape of pouches. Storage systems that could be as small as a ring were all extremely precious. Was this really just an ordinary hostess?

He had his misgivings, but he didn't show it on the surface. He took the pouch from her and checked the contents. These things were related to Daji's breakthrough, so he treated them carefully.

After confirming the contents, he took out a stack of silver notes. "Miss Tang, check the amount, please."

After receiving the money, Tang Tian'er placed it into her ring. "The young master is someone I trust; there is no need to count the money." That made Zu An's earlier actions seem a bit selfish.

This woman really is quite petty; she even has to get me back on something small like this, Zu An thought with a bit of ridicule.

Tang Tian'er said with a curious expression, "The young master is gentle and kind like jade; you are almost an entirely different person from the side you showed everyone outside!"

Zu An thought to himself, Just when did I act gentle and kind like jade? But he still enjoyed the praise all the same. "This only means that the lady does not know enough about me yet."

Tang Tian'er smiled. She subtly got a bit closer to the other party and replied, "Then will the young master give me a chance to get to know you properly?"

She controlled the space between the two of them extremely well. If she were even a bit closer, she would seem too frivolous; and yet if she went a bit farther, there wouldn't be that ambiguous mood.

When he smelled the delicate fragrance she was giving off, Zu An was surprised. Isn't this woman seducing me? Don't tell me my charm is already so great that women will throw themselves at me even with a mask on?

He chuckled and said, "I think it would be better if the lady gave me a chance to understand you."

"What does the young master wish to know?" Tang Tian'er thought to herself, You really are a block of wood. But since they were now interacting at last, she felt that everything was now within her grasp.

"Of course I want to know you deep inside," Zu An replied.

"The young master is so bad!" Tang Tian'er worked in the Hub of Freedom, so she naturally understood the implicit meaning. She hit Zu An's shoulder with her small fists.

As an expert socialite, she naturally knew what an appropriate level of body contact was and how to quickly close the distance between them, how to subconsciously make a man think that one thought well of him.

Despite that, Zu An obviously also knew the game she was playing. But if they were both going to act to the end, who was scared of whom here? He took the chance to wrap his arms around her waist. He had suddenly realized that he might need her as a witness later.

But who would have thought that Tang Tian'er would twist her waist away as if she had seen it coming ahead of time, avoiding his arm? The smile on her face was replaced with worry as she said, "Young master, apart from coming here to give you these items, I also came to warn you about something. Young master might have just arrived in Yi Commandery recently, so you might not know the background of the one you offended. His father is Sun Xun, the right hand man of King Yan, and within this region of a thousand li, everyone else is beneath him. He dotes on young master Sun a lot too, which is why no one dares to provoke him no matter how arrogantly he acts in Yi Commandery.

“You offended him in front of so many people, so with his nature, he will definitely want to get revenge. That is why I advise the young master to be more careful. It might be better if you call over your clan’s experts to escort you back. You absolutely must not treat this matter carelessly.”

A relationship with a man was just like fishing; one had to both push and pull. She used her charm to draw him in and ignite his passion, but if she continued to treat him sweetly and made it too easy for him, she would instead lose a lot of her charm. On the contrary, withholding it from him like this would gradually drive a man crazy.

Zu An replied, seemingly stunned, “The two of us are merely strangers who have met today by chance; why is the lady treating me so well? If Sun Ji learned of this, it would clearly offend the Sun clan.”

He only expressed his gratitude on the surface, but on the inside, he sneered instead. What she said was something he had already discerned seventy to eighty percent of from the auction hall’s discussions. Clearly, she hadn’t actually really given him any important information, and was instead secretly prying at his background.

If it were any other naive kid, they really might have been moved to bitter tears. Unfortunately, she had ended up encountering someone like him. Sigh, a sea empress like you might like raising all sorts of different fish, but are you not scared that one day you might encounter a shark?

Tang Tian’er said gently, “As an honored guest of the Hub of Freedom, we obviously do not wish to see anything bad happen to the young master. But out of selfish intentions...” She paused there and looked at him with a shy expression. Then, she said finely, “When I saw how heroic the young master was, this humble girl began to admire you greatly. I do not want to see anything bad happen to the young master.”

Zu An clicked his tongue. This woman really might win an Oscar if she had been in his previous world’s entertainment industry! Her acting really was on an entirely different level!

“Don’t worry. Forget about the Sun clan, not even King Yan himself could do anything to me if he personally came.” Zu An pretended to be a young master that had been completely smitten by her. He patted his chest as if to provide a guarantee.

A hint of surprise appeared in Tang Tian’er’s eyes when she heard what he said. This man’s background was extraordinary, as expected! But she pretended to look extremely worried and exclaimed, “Young master, you cannot be careless! King Yan is a grandmaster, and Minister Sun is also rumored to possess grandmaster level strength. Even if your clan has some influence, I fear...” Even though she didn’t finish her sentence, her implications were clear.

Zu An said indifferently, “It does not matter. King Yan might not necessarily join in my conflict with the Sun clan.”

Tang Tian’er thought to herself, As expected, the other party still has some reservations toward the grandmaster level! But he isn’t as scared of a master rank cultivator.

“But this is the Sun clan’s domain. If the Sun clan really wishes to scheme against you and the young master is alone, your seniors might not be able to come in time to save you!” Tang Tian’er continued to make indirect inquiries.

"It's fine. Yi Commandery is near the Suidan River. Wherever there is water, there is no way they can harm me," Zu An replied proudly.

Tang Tian'er was alarmed. He's from the ocean races, as expected! As such, she said, "Then I feel much more relieved. I have to say, Yi Commandery is a great place, but it is just a bit too cold. I like warmer places like the south. I heard that the southern beaches are still warm like summer right now. Just the thought of the sunlight and sand makes me excited, but I just do not know if that really is true..."

"Of course it is." Zu An had guessed her true intentions, so he created an ocean race identity for himself. He used some of the documentaries he watched from his past world to create the image of a mysterious sea. Together with the mermaid princess he had met before in the dungeon, his description only seemed even more realistic.

Tang Tian'er was now more and more certain that he was definitely from the ocean races. Otherwise, how could he know all of that so clearly? She had just been making some discreet inquiries at first, but she was completely sucked in by Zu An's description. Her eyes continued to sparkle as she listened.

The mood became more and more familiar and fervent. However, Zu An noticed that Sun Ji was already about to leave. He began to feel a bit impatient, so he reached out his arm to hug the woman next to him.

Tang Tian'er fell into his arms with a lovable smile. Then, she raised her head and slowly moved up to kiss him. Just as their lips were about to touch, a bit of pink mist gently emerged from her bright red lips. Zu An's entire body trembled, and then he fell weakly to the side.

Tang Tian'er sat up from his embrace. Her previously flirtatious nature was already nowhere to be seen as she exclaimed, "Hmph, you want to take advantage of me? Keep dreaming!"

Chapter 980: Seven Li Soulchaser Scent

Even after Zu An collapsed, Tang Tian'er still didn't feel at ease. She reached out and struck several of his acupoints, then sighed in relief. Then, she sat down next to Zu An. Her small hands reached into his clothes, but after she groped around for a bit, she muttered to herself in annoyance, "Huh? Where did those things go?"

You have successfully trolled Tang Tian'er for +88 +88 +88...

She wanted to see if Zu An had any precious treasures or identifying things. However, she didn't find anything apart from some silvers.

"Where is the pouch I gave him just now?" Tang Tian'er didn't find anything even after a long time. However, she realized he probably had some kind of spatial storage item. Unfortunately, she still didn't find anything even after looking some more.

"He is from the ocean race after all; his body is full of mysteries..." Tang Tian'er stared at his mask, then suddenly thought of something. "I wonder what he looks like?"

She reached out and undid his mask. She was completely stunned by what she saw. After staring for a while, she suddenly blushed and remarked, "You're more handsome than I expected. If I knew that earlier, I wouldn't have moved out of the way, hehe."

Someone knocked from outside. Tang Tian'er frowned and said, "Stop rushing me, I'll be out soon." She gently blew a breath of warm air against Zu An's ear, then quietly whispered, "Sweet dreams. I hope we're having a wonderful time in your dreams." She turned around and walked away while giggling.

Chubby Senior was waiting outside when Tang Tian'er opened the door. He looked inside through the door crack. When he saw that Zu An was already asleep, he sighed in relief before asking, "So? Did you find out anything?"

"He really is from the ocean races, and his status is probably quite high," Tang Tian'er closed the door while replying. Someone who didn't even care that much about King Yan and Sun Xun definitely had a powerful background.

Chubby Senior nodded and said, "As expected. The Hub of Freedom has never been able to establish a relationship with the ocean races. Looks like we'll have to invest in him."

Tang Tian'er was about to say something when her expression changed a bit. She and Chubby Senior both hid in a nearby corner. The moment their figures disappeared, a shifty-eyed individual appeared nearby. Even though he was trying to hide it, he still looked toward Zu An's room from time to time, giving away his real objective.

"Sun Ji's spy." Tang Tian'er's pretty brow furrowed.

"Indeed. Sun Ji has just left in a hurry, most likely to return that jade pendant to his clan, but he doesn't plan on letting guest 333 go. That's why he assigned someone here to keep an eye on him," Chubby Senior explained.

Tang Tian'er was a bit worried. "Is the Hub of Freedom really not going to do anything about it? Even though young master An is from the ocean races, we're far from the seas right now. He might end up in big trouble."

Even though Zu An had had a lot of confidence earlier, she just treated it as a man's boasting when trying to impress a girl and didn't take his words seriously.

Chubby Senior frowned, saying, "The Hub of Freedom has never gotten involved in the private matters of guests..."

Tang Tian'er grabbed his sleeve before he even finished what he was saying, exclaiming, "Chubby uncle, young master An isn't like other people! We've finally established a connection with the ocean races, so we can't miss this chance. I'm thinking for our establishment's interests here!"

Chubby Senior rolled his eyes. "Isn't this because you've taken a liking to that kid? Hmph, I guess it's fine. The Hub of Freedom will ensure his safety, but we can't interfere too early. We'll let him suffer a bit under Sun Ji's men, then help him afterward. He'll feel more grateful then."

Tang Tian'er giggled and had a huge smile on her face as she replied, "Chubby uncle is the wisest after all. I really, really admire you."

"Stop with the flattery already." Chubby Senior harrumphed. "I'm warning you ahead of time. You can play around with him, but don't end up throwing yourself away in the process."

Tang Tian'er snorted. "Do I seem like that type of person?"

"I guess you're right." Chubby Senior couldn't help but smile. This little girl had toyed with so many young masters over the years, and yet she had never gotten into any real trouble over it.

...

Zu An opened his eyes when the two of them left. He had played nice with Tang Tian'er not because he really was charmed by her beauty, but rather because he was going to use her as a witness. After the matter, she would prove his innocence. After all, this was King Yan and Sun Xun's territory, so it could get pretty annoying if things got too out of hand.

But he had previously been annoyed thinking about how he was going to get Tang Tian'er to play along. It would have been easy enough to knock her out, but she would definitely know what happened once she woke up. His intention for her to become his alibi would then be ruined.

If Tang Tian'er had been a man, he could use Daji to charm her. Tampering with her memory wouldn't have been too difficult either. But she was a woman, so Daji's charms wouldn't work. He had thought about using Keyboard Come, but he never tried memory alternation yet and didn't know what would happen or how strong the rebound would be.

Zu An hadn't expected her to knock him out first! He had almost burst out laughing with joy when he saw the mist that sprayed out of her lips.

He had always been careful, so he hadn't breathed in the smoke at all. Even though he was already impervious to most poisons, who knew what kind of stuff that mist was made of? What if it hadn't been a poison, but rather an aphrodisiac? Then things would really be troublesome.

When he heard Chubby Elder and the others leave, he called out Daji. He covered her in his own clothes and made her wear his mask. Then, he put her back where he had been to pretend that he was asleep.

He left after completing all of his preparations. He quickly sealed the acupoints of the spy Sun Ji had left behind and had Daji use her 'Fox Charm' on him. That meant even Sun Ji's own subordinates could be used as witnesses. No one would suspect them then.

He didn't contact Gao Ying and Pei You beforehand, and secretly snuck out of the Hub of Freedom. The Hub of Freedom was mainly on guard against outsiders coming in. The inspection for leaving wasn't nearly as strict. He was able to accurately pinpoint where Sun Ji's group was using the jade badge and the surrounding animals.

An hour later, he finally caught up to Sun Ji's carriage. He made his way ahead of them and looked for a good chance to strike. After all, this was Yi Commandery, so he had to act quickly, or else it would be troublesome if some new variable popped up.

He might have ignored Sun Ji if it were just because of their personal grudge. However, he couldn't be bothered to weigh the consequences because he had to save Mi Li.

Just then, he had even learned from Sun Ji's subordinate that Sun Ji had planned to bring back people to kill him right after he delivered that jade pendant. Zu An was no saint, so he obviously naturally wanted a tooth for a tooth.

When he saw the carriage quickly arrive, he prepared to strike, but suddenly noticed something odd. He looked in a different direction.

Several dozen pieces of bamboo flew over, tearing through the air with a scream. Close to half of Sun Ji's subordinates were instantly wiped out.

A figure shot out from the carriage. It was Sun Ji's guardian Yang Long. His palms moved together, and a blast of energy instantly crushed the incoming bamboo strips into small pieces. He exclaimed, "Which scoundrel dares to attack the Sun clan's carriage?!"

Sun Ji quickly came out from the carriage as well. His guards immediately surrounded him to protect him.

"You really are quick to bring out the Sun clan. What I absolutely loathe the most are idiots like you who rely on your family background to step on ordinary people," said a sinister voice. Then, a black-robed figure slowly walked out from the bamboo forest.

"It's you!" Yang Long immediately recognized that the figure was the one who had appeared in the auction hall previously. He even vaguely sensed that the other person's ki fluctuations were stronger than his own. However, he had a numbers advantage, so no one knew who would come out on top in the end.

"Leave your belongings behind, and I can consider sparing your lives." The black-robed individual's voice didn't carry a shred of emotion.

"How did you find us?" Yang Long's expression was ugly. After all, the identities of every single guest from the Hub of Freedom were a secret. Even though his clan's young master had still clearly expressed his identity, their departure from the Hub of Freedom had been in secret, and only those from the Hub of Freedom had known that they left. There should have been no way any other guest could track them down. Don't tell me the Hub of Freedom was scheming something?

"I planted a Seven Li Soulchaser Scent on you. I can find you all even if my eyes are closed," the black robed man said proudly.

"Seven Li Soulchaser Scent? It's you!" Yang Long's expression immediately changed greatly.