

Nobel Ruler 641

Chapter 641: Zi Yang Pill

Jian Shuye felt extreme regret.

On the other side, Chu Liuyue had no knowledge of this as she focused all her energy on the pill inside the cauldron in front of her.

She was currently a fourth-grade heavenly doctor, while Ning Zhiqing was a fifth-grade one. If she wanted to win this match, she had to produce a fifth-grade pill.

Luckily, she had already made her choice when she came to the competition venue. Moreover, she did have sufficient herbs inside her Cosmic Ring.

Hm, speaking of this, I still have to thank Rong Xiu. If he didn't give me this Cosmic Ring, I really might not be so willing to buy so many herbs in one go...

...

She placed the herbs inside in an orderly manner, separated the fire within the cauldron into a few portions, and refined them on their own.

Ning Zhiqing was also handling the herbs at this point as he made time to look up at her. When he saw Chu Liuyue split the cauldron into five areas, his heart turned slightly cold. *On average, only a fifth-grade heavenly doctor can do this... But it seems like Chu Liuyue is very familiar with it as if it doesn't use up any energy at all.*

A doubt flashed across Ning Zhiqing's heart. *Is she really just a fourth-grade heavenly doctor?*

...

"Cabinet Master, what pill is Little Junior Sister trying to make?" Lu Zhiyao watched for a while and only saw that Chu Liuyue kept throwing herbs into the cauldron. He couldn't tell what exactly she was doing.

Weichi Song stroked his beard and muttered, "She's determined to win..."

Lu Zhiyao was dazed.

Weichi Song glanced at Ye Ranran at the side. "Ranran, can you tell?"

Ye Ranran thought for a moment and said, "It seems like... She wants to produce the Zi Yang Pill—an inferior fifth-grade pill?"

Weichi Song nodded in satisfaction. "You're right."

Ye Ranran's talent as a heavenly doctor was indeed better than most people, so she could sensitively guess the results.

Lu Zhiyao was shocked. "Fifth-grade pill? Isn't Little Junior Sister a fourth-grade heavenly doctor?"

“If she produced a fourth-grade pill, she would basically have no chance of winning. Hence, she’s trying to produce a fifth-grade one...” Weichi Song sighed in his heart. *This is why I said that just now.*

“But... Can Little Junior Sister succeed?” Even though Little Junior Sister is outstanding in all aspects, producing pills as a heavenly doctor is different from the other two cultivation aspects. Perhaps one can use luck to make it through a Xuan Master competition, and perhaps one could use their force to give their all during a warrior competition. But heavenly doctors... can only count on their pure abilities.

This was because the process of producing pills was extremely difficult. The higher the grade of the pill, the more difficult it was to produce it.

Not only did one have to handle many herbs, but they also had to note many of the small details. If one was careless, everything could go to waste.

They couldn’t be distracted at all during the entire process. Extreme precision was required in both their fire control and their pill-refining methods.

Chu Liuyue was currently producing a fifth-grade pill forcefully... Could she really do it?

Ye Ranran seriously said, “Senior Brother Lu, I think Liuyue can do it. Judging by Liuyue’s movements, she seems more trained than me...”

This was also what Weichi Song was thinking. He looked at Chu Liuyue, and it clearly seemed like she had many years of experience producing pills.

It was as though she was very familiar with it, and this wasn't something that talent could explain.

Perhaps... The teacher she followed last time isn't an ordinary person?

...

Time gradually passed, and it was evening in the blink of an eye.

The orange-red sun was like a burning ball as it painted the clouds with a hint of warmth.

At this point, Chu Liuyue finally finished handling her hundreds of herbs. Now, she had to produce the pill.

Chu Liuyue gathered all her focus and licked her pale and cracked lips. According to my current abilities, it isn't that easy to produce a fifth-grade pill. Hence, I have to be more careful than ever. Furthermore, my current strength can only support me producing the pill once and definitely not a second time.

She meticulously merged all the herbs in the cauldron bit by bit.

On the opposite end, Ning Zhiqing noticed Chu Liuyue's movements, and he couldn't help but glance.

When he saw that the fire in Chu Liuyue's cauldron was already gathering everything together, he couldn't help furrowing his brows again. *Chu Liuyue actually started producing the pill earlier than me!*

He glanced at his own cauldron—there were still quite a few herbs that hadn't been handled.

This was like a loud slap had struck his face.

He tried very hard to control his emotions as he kept comforting himself in his heart. *Perhaps Chu Liuyue is too eager to be fast and missed out on a lot of things? The worst thing that can happen when producing pills is to be too anxious about making it work. At this point, it doesn't matter if I'm slightly slower. It's fine as long as I win in the end.*

Thinking of this, he gradually appeased his emotions and quickly handled the remaining herbs. Then, he finally started to produce the pill.

...

Chu Liuyue carefully merged the herbs. Even though she had produced Zi Yang Pills quite a few times before and had memorized the entire process, one could never be 100% confident when producing pills.

This was especially so when her grade wasn't high enough, so she had to pay more attention.

She stared at it closely as she added some green liquid.

Whoosh—

A piercing sound was heard.

That green liquid actually started to produce white smoke.

Oh no! These herbs are about to be ruined! The more important thing is that this is the key point to producing the pill! With this, it might even ruin the other herbs around it! Chu Liuyue immediately separated out an orange fire to try to separate the green liquid.

The moment it touched it, the liquid burned even more intensely.

A burnt smell could be smelled.

Chu Liuyue's heart sank.

Chapter 642: True Talent

"Oh no! Liuyue's Green Frost Berry is about to be ruined!" Ye Ranran whispered and covered her mouth as her eyes were filled with worry.

The surrounding senior brothers and senior sisters were mostly heavenly doctors as well. When they saw this scene, they naturally understood what it meant, so they all looked worried.

Lu Zhiyao couldn't help but say, "Is Little Junior Sister too anxious?"

If this herb was ruined, then the entire pill might fail to be produced!

Weichi Song knitted his brows tightly. He saw very clearly that Chu Liuyue made a mistake because she was careless for a moment.

Green Frost Berries were naturally cold, so one originally couldn't use a high temperature to refine it. It also had a lot of requirements for the fire. Sometimes, even a true fifth-grade heavenly doctor might not be able to do it perfectly.

At the start, Chu Liuyue was doing fine. But she previously didn't control it well for a moment, so it became like that.

In the previous two matches, she had indeed exhausted too much of her force and strength. She was already forcing herself to the extreme by trying to produce pills now.

However, she still wanted to produce a fifth-grade pill that was above her standards. It was already very hard for her to last until now.

I wonder if she can handle this crisis...

...

The burnt smell spread.

Ning Zhiqing's heart tingled as he looked up. *That smell came from Chu Liuyue's cauldron.*

He squinted his eyes. *It seems like the Green Frost Berry has some issues... Hah, she was thinking too highly of herself! A fourth-grade heavenly doctor trying to produce a fifth-grade pill, let alone the very complicated Zi Yang Pill?*

The Zi Yang Pill was a beginner fifth-grade pill, and amongst fifth-grade pills, it needed fewer herbs. The production time was also shorter. In other words, it would use less of her force.

The previous two matches had already exhausted quite a bit of Chu Liuyue's energy, so it was understandable that she would choose to refine the Zi Yang Pill.

But she might've forgotten one thing: Quite a few herbs needed for the Zi Yang Pill were extremely difficult to handle. If one wanted to produce the pill, one had to have sufficient understanding of these pills. They also had to be very precise and familiar with the production methods.

If not, everything would turn to dust in the end.

Ning Zhiqing's lips curved up in mockery. *With such a temperament, she won't last long as a heavenly doctor... Chu Liuyue's match might just end here!*

...

Chu Liuyue looked at the green liquid in her cauldron.

As the temperature was too high, the edges of the liquid had started to turn black. Even if she could continue producing the pill, the eventual effects would be very heavily affected.

Chu Liuyue looked calm as she lowered the temperature of the fire again while separating the green liquid from the other herbs simultaneously.

However, a portion of the Green Frost Berry liquid had already merged with the other herbs that were waiting to form the pill.

This burnt portion clearly couldn't be used anymore.

Chu Liuyue swiftly poured out that bit of black liquid and threw another Green Frost Berry inside.

Seeing her actions, the spectators were all stunned. "Is Chu Liuyue crazy? She actually wants to produce another Green Frost Berry liquid?"

"But she's already ruined the previous one, so it definitely can't be used..."

"But didn't a portion of the Green Frost Berry liquid already merge with the other herbs and start to produce the pill? Even if Chu Liuyue can refine another one now, can she ensure that it'll be exactly the same as before? One must know that Green Frost Berries are very delicate. If the temperature or the timing is off by even a little, the medicinal effects will differ greatly! Two Green Frost Berries... It's fine if they were refined together, but now she did it consecutively. I'm afraid that the produced pill won't have pure medicinal effects..."

Those who had at least a little understanding about medicine refining wouldn't agree with Chu Liuyue's move. To them, Chu Liuyue's half-made pill was already ruined, and there was no way of making up for it.

If she restarted now, she might be able to produce a perfect Zi Yang Pill. However, she obviously didn't have that strength.

"Liuyue is actually going to refine the Green Frost Berry again..." Ye Ranran watched the scene unfold in the arena closely, and her hands were crossed in front of her as if she was praying.

Suddenly, her gaze focused, and she widened her eyes in shock. "...No, no!"

Lu Zhiyao hurriedly asked, "What's the matter?"

Ye Ranran pointed at Chu Liuyue and stammered, "Liuyue... Liuyue is trying to remove the portion of Green Frost Berry liquid that's already merged with the other herbs!"

Lu Zhiyao was dazed. "What?"

Even though his talent as a heavenly doctor couldn't be compared to Ye Ranran, he still understood what she meant. He immediately stepped forward to take a closer look at Chu Liuyue's cauldron.

In that burning red fire, most of the herbs had already merged and formed a circular, fist-sized ball.

Upon closer look, a fire was separated, and it was circulating around that ball.

Everywhere the fire went past, bits of green liquid would flow out of the ball and instantly evaporate.

Lu Zhiyao was stunned. “T-that...”

That’s really the Green Frost Berry’s liquid! Chu Liuyue actually wants to separate it from the half-made pill forcefully?!

“Little Junior Sister—” *Is she crazy?!*

Lu Zhiyao swallowed his remaining words with much difficulty, but they were already written all over his face.

It was also the first time that Ye Ranran saw such a situation, and she couldn’t help but seek help from Weichi Song. “Cabinet Master, Liuyue...”

Before she could finish her sentence, she saw Weichi Song in a trance as if he was dazed. It’s an extremely difficult task to separate a herb from the half-made pill it has already merged with. This is at least ten times harder than handling the herb because a portion of the medicinal effects has already started to merge. If one wants to remove it completely, it would require extreme precision over the fire control and the temperature. This is to allow the herb to be completely removed and not affect the other herbs’ effects. This is like skinning something and removing the bones—there can’t be a single error.

Actually, even if most heavenly doctors had produced a pill hundreds of times or even thousands of times, they might not be able to do this.

Only a genuine top elite and those with natural talent and sensitivity toward herbs and pill refining could do this.

Chu Liuyue was currently a fourth-grade heavenly doctor producing a fifth-grade pill, and that in itself was already very difficult. She was actually so daring to do this directly!

Even Weichi Song felt that this was crazy. He was also a heavenly doctor and had cultivated for many years. He asked himself, and he knew that he definitely didn't have this courage at Chu Liuyue's age.

Even though the opposite Ning Zhiqing was of a higher level, he might not be able to do better than Chu Liuyue.

This was true talent! There might not even be one out of a thousand heavenly doctors.

He had seen many heavenly doctors in his entire life, but there were only two people who had such abilities. One was his Uncle-Master, and the other... was his half-disciple—Shangguan Yue...

Chapter 643: Judge

Chu Liuyue focused on two things simultaneously. While refining the new Green Frost Berry, she cleared the Green Frost Berry liquid in the half-made pill.

The first task was still manageable, but the latter required meticulous attention.

She stared at it closely without blinking. She was so highly focused that beads of sweat kept breaking out on her forehead.

Her back was already drenched by her cold sweat.

...

Ning Zhiqing wasn't paying attention at first, but he then noticed that something seemed amiss when he heard the bustling noises from the surroundings. He was distracted and listened to a few sentences, but they were all about Chu Liuyue.

Bam!

His palms slammed against the cauldron, and the strong force was once again inserted within as the fire rose.

A pill gradually formed and was taking shape.

He heaved a sigh of relief before looking up to glance at Chu Liuyue.

With this look, his eyes were straight. *Chu Liuyue... What is she doing?*

He was also a heavenly doctor with outstanding talent. So even when he took a hurried glance from a distance away, he still felt that something was amiss.

His hand holding the cauldron started trembling, and his heart was in great turmoil. *Chu Liuyue actually wants to remove the Green Frost Berry that has already merged with the half-made pill? How confident must she be to do that?*

Hong!

A fire suddenly lost control and spiraled out.

Ning Zhiqing was taken aback as he moved half a step back. He then realized that it was because he was distracted, so the fire within the cauldron burst.

He hurriedly recollected his thoughts and tried his best to control the fire. Luckily, he wasn't slow, so it didn't cause much damage.

The pill still stayed in the fire, and from its surface, it didn't look like it was affected.

However, Ning Zhiqing's heart sank. When producing pills, this was the worst thing that could happen.

That one moment of loss of control would definitely decrease this pill's medicinal effects.

Originally, everything was going well... Ning Zhiqing's expression became more serious. He knew that he couldn't be distracted again. If not, he might not even be able to produce the pill.

He took a deep breath in as he stared at the pill that kept shrinking in the fire while he adjusted it meticulously.

But not long later, the previous scene flashed across his mind again.

Chu Liuyue's face turned white, and her entire body was breaking out into a sweat. She was clearly exhausted, but her movements were very smooth and natural as if they weren't affected at all.

The key point was that she was still meticulously extracting the Green Frost Berry liquid from the half-made pill.

Even though he only took a glance previously, it was clear that the pill was shaped perfectly. Its color was also intense and pure.

Chu Liuyue was obviously going to succeed!

Whoosh!

Right at this moment, a sound could be heard from the opposite side.

Ning Zhiqing couldn't help it and still looked up. He saw Chu Liuyue burning away the last drop of the Green Frost Berry liquid and simultaneously guided the just-refined green liquid in.

The pill slowly turned and rapidly turned emerald green.

This time, the Green Frost Berry perfectly merged with it.

Chu Liuyue didn't dare to be relaxed as she controlled the strength of the fire and meticulously merged the herbs completely.

Then, an intense herbal fragrance permeated throughout the area.

Chu Liuyue was elated. *It succeeded!*

The fragrance rapidly spread all around, and an invisible ripple exploded from the cauldron at the same time.

Buzz!

The cauldron moved.

A clear, bright-purple pattern gradually appeared on the green pill.

...

“This sound... Is Chu Liuyue about to succeed?” Someone suddenly spoke amidst the quiet crowd.

“The pill is already formed... The herbal fragrance is so intense. It must’ve succeeded!”

“It really seems like it’s a fifth-grade pill! How exactly did she do it just now? Why have I never heard that one can still remove a portion of a merged herb?”

...

The crowd partook in heated discussions.

All of the words drifted into Ning Zhiqing's ears. It was as if a five-flavored bottle emptied in his heart as he felt very conflicted with a tinge of panic and fear.

As he was flustered, the fire in the cauldron rippled again. He hurriedly retracted his gaze and stabilized himself.

Suddenly, his gaze focused. A crack actually seemed to appear on the pill.

He stared at it again carefully to ensure that his eyes weren't blurred—the pill indeed had a crack.

Ning Zhiqing was instantly flustered, and his mind went completely blank.

The Zi Yang Pill that Chu Liuyue produced was a beginner fifth-grade pill, and the Rong Ling Pill he crafted was also a beginner fifth-grade pill.

Now that Chu Liuyue has already made it to the last step successfully, judging from the intensity of the fragrance, it must be perfect! Yet, my pill has a crack... In his panic, he immediately merged the remaining herbs. At the same time, he kept urging the fire to burn so as to fix the crack.

Buzz!

An even louder shaking noise could be heard from Chu Liuyue's pill.

Ning Zhiqing clenched his teeth and crazily inserted his force inside again.

That crack finally patched up slowly. Then, a herbal fragrance exuded from his Rong Ling Pill.

"Ning Zhiqing's pill is also produced!"

"What kind of pill is it? Why does the smell seem to be a little weaker than Chu Liuyue's..."

"It should be because he just made the pill, right? He's a genuine fifth-grade heavenly doctor! How can the pill he produced be worse than that of Chu Liuyue, a fourth-grade heavenly doctor?"

Something seemed to be stuck in Ning Zhiqing's heart, and he felt very suppressed and uncomfortable.

Then, as if venting his anger, force flowed out from his palm and hit the cauldron.

Buzz!

An even bigger ripple spread in all directions.

“Look, this commotion is clearly bigger than Chu Liuyue’s! I think Ning Zhiqing is definitely winning this time!”

“I don’t think so. Chu Liuyue’s previous move is really...”

...

Bam!

Chu Liuyue’s palm slapped lightly, and the Zi Yang Pill flew into the jade box that she had already prepared at the side.

Kacha!

The jade box closed, but the air was still filled with the herbal fragrance! It didn’t go away for a very long time.

Almost at the same time, Ning Zhiqing also concluded his refining as he sent the pill into his own jade box.

Chu Liuyue’s vision turned into patches of black. She could only hold the cauldron with one hand and heavily let out a breath before she closed her eyes to rest for a while.

To produce this one pill, she really exhausted all her effort. Thus, she didn’t have any energy left now.

On the other hand, even though Ning Zhiqing's expression was ugly, he still looked much better than Chu Liuyue as a whole.

Zhang Hua closed his eyes, and his uneasy heart finally relaxed as he couldn't help but reveal a delighted smile. *Even though Chu Liuyue has also produced a fifth-grade pill, such a big mistake happened in the middle. Thus, the product definitely isn't very good. Ning Zhiqing's pill is definitely stronger than hers! This time... he's bound to win!*

"Since the two of them have already produced their pills, let the judge decide who won immediately! Chu Liuyue produced hers first, so let's start with her!" He couldn't wait to see the disappointed look of Chong Xu Cabinet's people.

Chu Liuyue glanced at him in a seemingly smiling manner. "Sure."

Chapter 644: Who's the Guilty One

The judge walked to the center of the competition venue.

Chu Liuyue went forward and passed her jade box over.

The judge opened the box, and a strong and fresh medicinal fragrance hit his nose.

His eyes brightened up, and he picked up the pill.

The five horizontal purple lines were very clear and bright on the smooth, green pill. The color of the fifth line was much lighter than the first four lines, but the line was smooth, clean, and pure—it also looked good.

“This is indeed a fifth-grade pill!” stated the judge with certainty as the gaze he directed at Chu Liuyue was filled with admiration. “Even though it’s inferior-grade, the fragrance is clean, and the color is pure. It’s good, very good!”

He said ‘good’ and ‘very good,’ which showed his recognition of Chu Liuyue’s abilities.

The smile on Zhang Hua’s face gradually stiffened. *What does that mean? Chu Liuyue’s pill... seems decent? The trouble that occurred in between actually didn’t affect this pill at all?*

Chu Liuyue thanked the judge respectfully.

The judge glanced at Weichi Song, smiled, and said, “Old Song, you’re really lucky to be able to have such an outstanding disciple!”

He was also a heavenly doctor, so he naturally understood how rare the talent and sensibility that Chu Liuyue displayed earlier were. *I heard that Chu Liuyue chose Chong Xu Cabinet herself at the start... A good talent that others beg for but can’t have was easily accepted by him. How infuriating to compare!*

Weichi Song smiled and cupped his fists together as he heaved a sigh of relief in his heart. When Chu Liuyue produced the Zi Yang Pill earlier, he was shocked and surprised as he didn’t feel too sure in his heart.

Now looking at this, the struggle in between was just a shock. It didn't pose any real danger, and everything progressed very successfully. *Chu Liuyue—she indeed successfully produced a Zi Yang Pill, and it looks very perfect!*

The judge then looked at Ning Zhiqing.

Ning Zhiqing stood rooted to the ground, motionless, as he held the jade box tightly. His gaze was blank, but nobody knew what he was thinking.

“Ning Zhiqing?” yelled the judge.

Ning Zhiqing then recovered his senses. He nervously held his breath in as he walked forward with heavy steps.

Those who could be the judges at the clan competition were all top elites in the Tianling Dynasty. This person was no exception.

I wonder if he can tell... This was also the first time Ning Zhiqing did such a thing, so he couldn't help but feel guilty. After walking a few steps, his forehead was covered in sweat, and his face turned pale.

After handing the jade box over, his fingers were trembling slightly. “This is the Rong Ling Pill I produced. Please check it.”

The judge glanced at him. “Are you okay?”

Ning Zhiqing shook his head and forced a smile. “I'm fine.”

Chu Liuyue stood at the side. *Even though Ning Zhiqing claims that he's okay, his eyes are still glued to the jade box. It's as if... He's worried about something.*

Chu Liuyue followed his vision and fell into deep thought.

The judge had already opened the box and picked up the Rong Ling Pill inside—this was a blue pill with five red lines on it.

Like Chu Liuyue's, the fifth line on this pill was clearly lighter than the previous few lines.

The judge checked closely again.

Ning Zhiqing's entire body tensed up, and he felt extremely tortured.

"This Rong Ling Pill is also an inferior fifth-grade pill!" The judge looked hesitant, but in the end, he could only smile helplessly. "These two pills are very similar in terms of grade, and both productions are very successful. It's hard to decide who's better, so this round... is a tie!"

Ning Zhiqing's heart relaxed as his back was instantly drenched by his cold sweat as if he had come back alive. *Tie... A tie is also good! It's better than losing! I don't want to face the same consequence as Xie Lingyang!*

The spectators were all stunned. *How can it be a tie?! The two parties fought so intensely for so long, yet it ended up in a tie?! What kind of result is this? It can't be that Chong Xu Cabinet and Jiu Xing Alliance will be part of the top four clans together, right?*

“That’s impossible!” A furious voice was heard.

Chu Liuyue turned around.

Zhang Hua was walking over agitatedly. “This is impossible! Chu Liuyue is a fourth-grade heavenly doctor, and Ning Zhiqing is a fifth-grade one! He’s one whole grade higher than her! How can the two of them produce pills of the same standard?!”

The judge’s expression turned cold. “Are you doubting my judgment?”

Zhang Hua was stumped. No matter how unreasonable he was, he would never refute the judge in public. But... he definitely couldn’t accept this tie!

“Chu Liuyue’s pill definitely has a problem!” He pointed his arrow toward Chu Liuyue. “When she was producing the pill, she had wasted some of her herbs. Everyone present saw it clearly! Under such circumstances, it would normally be impossible for one to even produce the pill, let alone produce a high-grade one.”

Hearing this, the judge felt that it was a joke. *Zhang Hua isn’t a heavenly doctor, so he said such ignorant words.*

“You thought wrongly. It’s precisely because Chu Liuyue struggled in between but still managed to produce the pill successfully that proves her talent and abilities!”

If one gave her more time, she could definitely win against Ning Zhiqing completely.

However, Zhang Hua was still in disbelief. He didn't dare to refute the judge head-on, so he looked at Chu Liuyue and coldly questioned, "Chu Liuyue, if your conscience is really clear, do you dare to take out your pill and let it be closely checked again?"

"Zhang Hua, don't think of smearing and framing her!" Weichi Song also walked over, and he looked enraged. "The results are already out. Who are you questioning?"

Zhang Hua sneered. "If she has no problems, what's there to be scared of? If she doesn't dare to do it, it proves that she's guilty! She's not worthy of this tie!"

"Who says that I don't dare?" Chu Liuyue stepped forward and gave Weichi Song a reassuring gaze as she smiled and looked at Ning Zhiqing. "But if my pill needs to be re-checked, the same also has to be done for Ning Zhiqing's pill to ensure fairness!"

The last shade of blood color in Ning Zhiqing's face instantly disappeared!

Chapter 645: Why are You Anxious?

"No..." said Ning Zhiqing and wanted to reject it.

But Zhang Hua had already agreed. "Let's do it together then! If they check and determine that your pill is flawed, then they should judge this match as your loss!"

Chu Liuyue glanced at Ning Zhiqing with deep meaning as she smiled and nodded. "Sure. Then... What if they determine that Ning Zhiqing's pill is faulty? Shouldn't they judge that you've lost too?"

Zhang Hua coldly chuckled. "There's definitely nothing wrong with his pill!"

Ning Zhiqing was a publicly recognized talent as a heavenly doctor, and he had joined Jiu Xing Alliance for three years. The crowd also knew his abilities very clearly.

If Zhang Hua wasn't sufficiently confident in him, he wouldn't let him go up last.

Upon hearing this, Ning Zhiqing's face turned even paler as his body suddenly wavered. He almost fell to the ground.

The judge asked, "Ning Zhiqing, what's the matter? If you're not feeling well, you can go down and rest first."

Chu Liuyue smiled brightly. "Yeah! This pill needs to be checked again anyway, and we don't have to worry about this process."

Ning Zhiqing shook his head and braved himself with much difficulty as he whispered toward Zhang Hua, "Master, I think Chu Liuyue's pill should be okay. W-why don't... we let this go..."

"What are you saying?" Zhang Hua glanced at him in extreme disapproval. "You're actually speaking for Chu Liuyue? Do you still remember that you're a Jiu Xing Alliance disciple? We must check this time! A tie is impossible! Besides, if it weren't because you're too useless, why would there be so much trouble?"

After being lectured, Ning Zhiqing's face flashed white and red. He was as anxious as ants on a hot plate. *If they really check thoroughly... I don't know whether Chu Liuyue's pill has problems or not, but my messy doings would definitely be discovered!*

"Master, w-why don't we hold another match if it's a tie? I don't think we should check this. I believe in the senior's judgment..." He tried to pull out the judge to convince Zhang Hua.

But Zhang Hua had already made up his mind. *Why would he listen to him?*

On the other hand, Ning Zhiqing's repeated disturbance made him suspect him.

Under Zhang Hua's stern stare, Ning Zhiqing's heart gradually sank to the bottom as he lowered his head. At the same time, the hands in his sleeves clenched into fists. *Now, I can only hope that my pill won't be detected to have any problems...*

Weichi Song looked at Chu Liuyue with heartache. "Liuyue, you must be tired, right? Why don't you go to the side and rest first?"

Chu Liuyue raised her brows and smiled. "Thanks, Mentor, but this check won't take too long. I want to watch it personally."

...

The judge placed the two pills in his hands. His left hand had Chu Liuyue's Zi Yang Pill, while his right hand had Ning Zhiqing's Rong Ling Pill.

He first took Chu Liuyue's pill out and examined it carefully before leaning in to smell it.

Da!

He snapped his fingers, and an orange fire immediately appeared between them.

The fire rapidly spread and quickly enveloped his entire palm. It even swallowed that Zi Yang Pill within.

The next moment, the five lines suddenly moved on the Zi Yang Pill. It was like a ripple on a calm lake—tidy and with rhythm.

He retracted the fire, and the lines on the Zi Yang Pill wavered slightly before settling down.

“This Zi Yang Pill has no issues at all,” said the judge with certainty.

Zhang Hua opened his mouth, but his eyes still had a tinge of suspicion and disbelief. He had also watched clearly when the judge was doing his checks previously.

Even though he wasn't a heavenly doctor, he knew that the purer the pill's effects, the better the medicinal effect. The lines on the pill would also move in a tidier manner when it was burned with fire.

This definitely couldn't be faked, so this also proved that Chu Liuyue's pill was a genuine fifth-grade one.

Zhang Hua knitted his brows and glanced at Chu Liuyue. *Could she be hiding her skills?*

Weichi Song stepped forward, and his gaze was like daggers as he stared at Zhang Hua. “What else do you have to say now? As Jiu Xing Alliance’s master, you smeared my Chong Xu Cabinet’s disciple like that. Zhang Hua, shouldn’t you apologize?”

Zhang Hua felt very awkward. *Me apologize to Chu Liuyue? Dream on!*

“I just brought out a logical suspicion; I didn’t really do anything. Besides, isn’t everything clearly proved now? Old Song, you’re Chong Xu Cabinet’s Cabinet Master, and you’re considered to be a well-respected elder. Why must you freak out over nothing and be so relentless on the issue?”

Weichi Song was so furious that he laughed. “I’m relentless? Didn’t you bring this matter up? The crowd can tell what’s the truth and what’s a lie. Besides, Liuyue is my disciple, yet you dare to bully her like this right in front of me. If I just let this off, everyone would think that my Chong Xu Cabinet is easily bullied and that anybody can trample all over us!”

Ever since Chong Xu Cabinet had experienced the accident more than a year ago, he had tolerated everything and rarely had such an outburst in front of the crowd.

His attitude was so strong today—it seemed like he was serious.

Zhang Hua was stared at by Weichi Song’s cold gaze, and his aura was comparatively weaker. He coughed and said, “Just take it that I misunderstood. Is that okay?”

Without waiting for Weichi Song to speak, he continued, “But the more important problem now is that this match is a tie, which means that our two clans are tied. I think we should add another match!”

Today's competition involved the positions of the top four clans. How could they just end it with a tie?

Zhang Hua was very confident. *Anyway, Jiu Xing Alliance still has our trump card, while Chong Xu Cabinet... Both Qiang Wanzhou and Chu Liuyue have already competed, especially Chu Liuyue, who can't participate in any other aspect. Chong Xu Cabinet doesn't have any disciples they can bring out! If we add one more match, no matter if it were warrior, Xuan Master, or heavenly doctor, our Jiu Xing Alliance will definitely win!*

"Hold on!" Chu Liuyue suddenly spoke as she smiled slightly and lifted her chin. "Ning Zhiqing's pill hasn't been checked yet. Master Zhang, you don't have to be too anxious. It's not too late to talk about this until his results are out."

Zhang Hua coldly chuckled. "His pill definitely has no problems! There's not much meaning if you continue to delay it!"

Chu Liuyue smiled and didn't say another word as she looked at the judge.

Ning Zhiqing didn't say anything as he froze there, and his gaze was dodgy.

The judge returned the Zi Yang Pill to Chu Liuyue as he started checking Ning Zhiqing's Rong Ling Pill. After looking at it for one round and smelling it, it was the same as before and had no issues.

He then summoned the orange-red fire in his palm again.

The fire immediately wrapped around the Rong Ling Pill.

Very quickly, the lines on it started moving. The first few lines were very normal, but the fifth line was slightly slower.

Even though it was only a momentary distance, it was very clear that the few lines started moving in different directions.

Zhang Hua's expression suddenly froze.

The judge suddenly furrowed. *If this is the situation...*

His fingertips moved, and the fire suddenly burned even more intensely than before.

The fifth line on top started wavering even more.

Then...

Ka!

The Rong Ling Pill suddenly exploded!

Chapter 646: Many Highlights to Watch

This commotion immediately attracted the crowd's attention.

Everyone in the surroundings seemed to have looked over. Those who stood a bit further away would even stand on their toes and stick their heads in to take a closer look.

“What's the matter? What's the matter? What's with the sound just now?”

“I think Ning Zhiqing's pill exploded...”

“Exploded?! What does that mean?”

“What else can it mean? His pill has problems! Something must've happened when he was producing it, which affected this pill's medicinal effects. Hence, it would explode under such a circumstance. Did you see it? There's a large crack on the pill!”

“Haha! I didn't expect the one to have problems not to be Chu Liuyue but Ning Zhiqing! This time, Jiu Xing Alliance has really shot themselves in the foot! They originally could've tied, but this happened in the end... Aren't they bound to lose?!”

The bustling noises came from all directions.

Everyone in Jiu Xing Alliance was stunned.

Zhang Hua was also dazed.

Ning Zhiqing's face turned as white as a sheet, and he closed his eyes in despair. *As expected... I couldn't avoid it...*

"There's something wrong with this pill." The judge retracted his fire.

The Rong Ling Pill lay quietly in his palm. A clear crack could be seen on it, and above that, the edges also seemed to be burned.

This pill couldn't tolerate the impact, so it directly became like this and couldn't withstand his checks for long.

"Your pill should've had issues long ago. You forcefully merged the last few herbs inside and hoped that you could hide your mistakes, right?" asked the judge solemnly and sternly.

Ning Zhiqing's lips trembled. He didn't dare to deny or acknowledge it.

Seeing this, what else did the crowd not understand? He was long guilty! It's no wonder he kept stopping Zhang Hua earlier on. It was to prevent himself from being exposed! It's a pity that Zhang Hua was bent on trampling Chong Xu Cabinet and insisted on his way. He couldn't even listen to anything. After everything that's happened, they pushed themselves down the water!

Seeing the damaged pill in his hands, the judge was also scarred. If it really was because of my mistake that ruined this competition's results, I would definitely be very guilty. I wouldn't be able to face the crowd. I couldn't check the first time because firstly, I wasn't meticulous enough. Secondly, Ning Zhiqing disguised himself too well. Thinking about it now, it was very close.

Thinking of this, he said words filled with apology to Weichi Song and Chu Liuyue. "I'm really sorry. I almost made the wrong judgment, and you almost lost your victory."

Chu Liuyue smiled slightly. "You're too kind. Without you, we wouldn't have known that this was the result. We still have to thank you."

The judge looked at Zhang Hua and said ambiguously, "If you want to thank someone, you should thank Master Zhang! If he didn't insist on a re-check, I wouldn't have discovered these problems! I almost got cheated!"

This sentence was akin to a rod that harshly hit Zhang Hua's head. His vision turned black, and his body wavered.

He almost couldn't stand still. He had seen the previous scene very clearly, and he had completely understood the words they said.

At this very moment, a thought filled his entire brain and kept resounding within: *Ning Zhiqing's pill has problems! Ning Zhiqing lost! Jiu Xing Alliance lost!*

The position as one of the top four clans still belongs to Chong Xu Cabinet! All our efforts have been totally wasted! He suddenly turned around and kicked Ning Zhiqing! "This is the good thing you did!"

Following a crisp bone-breaking sound, Ning Zhiqing fell to the ground harshly and spat out blood. "...Master... I... I know I'm wrong..."

Zhang Hua couldn't release his hatred as he hurriedly went forward and directly lifted Ning Zhiqing by his collar. "What's the use of knowing you're wrong?! Ning Zhiqing, I think you're really tired of living!"

Snap!

Ning Zhiqing was thrown to the floor, and his entire body was in so much pain that he couldn't stand up.

The judge finally said nonchalantly, "Master Zhang, what are you doing? He's indeed in the wrong for hiding the fact that his pill had problems and that he tried to push his pill across, but he's still your Jiu Xing Alliance's disciple after all. It seems... rather inappropriate for you to be so harsh, right?"

Zhang Hua's chest kept heaving up and down. *Inappropriate? I can even kill Ning Zhiqing now!*

He took a deep breath in and suppressed his exploding anger with much difficulty. "Quickly, bring him down! What an eyesore!"

Two people immediately rushed forward and carried Ning Zhiqing down.

The spectators exchanged glances. *Even though Ning Zhiqing was in the wrong, Zhang Hua's actions are too heartless. No matter what, he's one of the top few disciples in Jiu Xing Alliance. He's only lost to Chu Liuyue by accident, yet he's treated like this now... It could be seen how ruthless and selfish Zhang Hua is as a person. If such a clan really became one of the top four clans, it would only spell trouble.*

The judge surveyed the surroundings and boomed, "Chu Liuyue won the ninth heavenly doctor match! At the same time, Chong Xu Cabinet has eventually won after tallying all 27 matches' points! Jiu Xing Alliance's challenge failed, and Chong Xu Cabinet will continue to be one of the top four clans!"

He cupped his fists toward Weichi Song and smiled. "Old Song, congratulations!"

Weichi Song returned the action, but he was still in a daze. *We won... just like that? We saved... our position?*

“This is great!” Lu Zhiyao and the rest reacted for a moment and immediately yelled out in excitement and elation.

“Little Junior Sister, you’re amazing!” The crowd ran over and surrounded Chu Liuyue and Weichi Song. All of them had big smiles plastered on their faces.

“Little Junior Sister won! We won!”

“Hahaha! Someone previously said that our Chong Xu Cabinet wasn’t going to make it and that they wanted to replace us. What happened in the end? They still couldn’t win against us!”

“That’s right! If you don’t have the ability, don’t think too much! If not, you’ll just be a laughingstock!”

“Pfft. If I were part of the Jiu Xing Alliance, I really wouldn’t have the cheek to continue staying here! My face... hurts!”

This side was very lively, while Jiu Xing Alliance’s side was miserable. They looked completely different from their arrogant selves when they first came.

Who would’ve thought things would end up like this? Everything was clearly going well beforehand...

In the end, Chong Xu Cabinet won all four of the last matches, and they forcefully turned their loss into victory!

Three of those matches were even won by Chu Liuyue herself! How perverted!

...

The commotion on this end had attracted the other clans' attention.

When the crowd found out that Chong Xu Cabinet had saved their position with the help of Qiang Wanzhou and Chu Liuyue, they all had different reactions.

"It seems like Chu Liuyue didn't count on luck to take first place in the Wan Zheng Competition..."

"I really don't know what kind of luck Chong Xu Cabinet has to be able to revive under such circumstances..."

"Jiu Xing Alliance really wasted their efforts. With two such disciples, Chong Xu Cabinet will definitely be one to watch in the future!"

Chapter 647: Invite Her Over

Translator: Atlas Studios **Editor:** Atlas Studios

“...Master, what should we do now?” The atmosphere on Jiu Xing Alliance’s side was very stiff, and nobody dared to speak. Only an elder braved himself, stepped forward, and spoke carefully.

Zhang Hua clenched hard on his molars. *We’ve already lost, so what else can we do? If I knew earlier, I wouldn’t have made this extra move back then. I would’ve directly added an extra match. However, there isn’t any medicine for regret in this world.*

“Let’s go!” He flung his sleeves harshly and turned around to leave quickly.

The Jiu Xing Alliance crowd also hurriedly followed as they ran off under countless pairs of stares.

After walking out of the crowd, Zhang Hua turned around to look.

Chu Liuyue seemed to have noticed it as she looked up and raised her brows slightly.

Zhang Hua said with hatred, “Chu Liuyue, just you wait! You won’t be this delighted all the time!”

Chu Liuyue smiled slightly, and her eyes curved up. “It’s good if I can be more delighted. It’s better than being disappointed all the time!”

Zhang Hua was stumped, and he almost puked blood as his blood boiled with anger. He quickly disappeared from the crowd’s gazes.

In no time, everyone from Jiu Xing Alliance had left Square Gully. Only the crowd's endless whispers were left.

The other three groups' matches had also ended respectively. Without any surprise, the victorious ones were still those few clans.

After one big round, the positions of the top four clans still belonged to the same four. However, Sheng Yan Harem and the other clans that had lost the competition weren't as frustrated as Jiu Xing Alliance.

They long knew that with their clan's abilities and skills, it was impossible for them to be compared to Dragon Teeth Mountain and the rest. Hence, it was normal for them to lose.

Moreover, Chong Xu Cabinet—which they previously thought was bound to lose—actually flipped the tables at the last minute and stabilized their position.

This made them feel very surprised. At the same time, they also felt lucky. *Even Jiu Xing Alliance lost, let alone us. Luckily, we weren't the ones who competed with Chong Xu Cabinet today. If not, we would end up as humiliated as Jiu Xing Alliance.*

But this also gave them a warning. The current Chong Xu Cabinet might look like an empty shell, but it shouldn't be underestimated.

A starving camel was still bigger than a horse.

With Jiu Xing Alliance's painful lesson in front, it was better for them to be more obedient.

...

With that, the clan competition swiftly ended.

The news quickly spread around Xi Ling City. Amongst which, the happenings between Jiu Xing Alliance and Chong Xu Cabinet amazed people.

Especially when Qiang Wanzhou won against the other party with two sword moves and how Chu Liuyue consecutively won three matches alone as they forcefully turned the tides. This news spread even further.

The people who thought Chu Liuyue only took first place in the Wan Zheng Competition due to her luck had started to change their views of her.

Chu Liuyue was originally quite famous in Xi Ling. Now, her name was even more well-known.

In no time, she was in the limelight.

...

In the palace, Huayang Palace.

Two palace maids were softly talking under an osmanthus tree. "Hey, do you think that Chu Liuyue is really that capable?"

“If she’s not capable, how can she win three matches consecutively? To a great extent, it was all because of her that Chong Xu Cabinet could save its spot as one of the top four clans.”

“Didn’t they say that she came from an ordinary background and that her cultivation level isn’t high?”

“Who knows if she hid her cultivation level? Even if she didn’t, she’s really capable! When she first came, she won against a stage-five warrior more than one time as a stage-three warrior! Besides, how long has she been in Xi Ling? Less than two months, right? She has already broken through to become a peak stage-four warrior from a stage-three warrior! Her speed is super enviable!”

“That’s true... Not mentioning how she cultivates in all three aspects, but she’s even very outstanding in all of them. There aren’t many such talents in Xi Ling! When thinking back, Princess was also like this...”

“Shh! Are you courting death? How dare you bring up that person? Be careful in case Third Princess hears it—” One of the palace maids hurriedly slapped the other lady’s elbow and spoke anxiously.

The lady who was hit held her elbow in pain and said nonchalantly, “Third Princess went to Qingfeng Palace today, and she won’t be coming back within two hours—”

“What are you talking about?” A light but cold voice suddenly sounded from behind the duo.

The two ladies hurriedly turned around. Once they saw the incoming person, they immediately kneeled down in horror. “Third Princess, may you live for a thousand years!”

Shangguan Wan was decked in a luxurious palace outfit, and her hair was tied up nicely. Her makeup was exquisite, and she looked very elegant.

Chan Yi was supporting her from the side.

“Just now, I seem to have heard you talking about my elder sister?” Shangguan Wan’s gaze swept across the duo’s faces as she asked lightly.

“I know I’m wrong! Third Princess, please forgive us this time!” The two palace maids kept kowtowing and acknowledging their mistakes. With their foreheads harshly smashing against the stone ground, blood quickly appeared.

Shangguan Wan looked down. Seeing her nails that had just been manicured, there was no expression on her face. “It’s originally a severe crime for one to privately talk about their masters. Besides, you were still talking about my elder sister. Your crime is even worse. Chan Yi—”

“I’m here.”

“Chase them out of the palace. They aren’t allowed to enter for the rest of their lives.”

“Yes!”

Upon hearing this, the two palace maids were shocked as they cried and begged. “Third Princess, we really know that we’re wrong! Please don’t chase us out!”

They had been serving in Huayang Palace for quite some time and had heard quite a few rumors. For example, the palace people who were chased out because they offended the Third Princess actually didn't even get to step out of the palace before they silently disappeared.

It was unknown what was waiting for them. This resulted in the duo crazily begging for mercy.

Chan Yi gave a look to the two eunuchs standing nearby, and very quickly, a few people rushed up to cover the two palace maids' mouths as they were dragged away.

Their cries gradually disappeared.

Chan Yi said, "Third Princess, don't worry. They won't appear in front of you again."

A tinge of cold frustration then appeared on Shangguan Wan's face. "Tell them to clean up properly."

"Don't worry."

Shangguan Wan then walked toward her sleeping area. After taking a few steps, she couldn't help but ask, "What's with the clan competition?"

Chan Yi briefly told her about the incident.

The palace never participated in this incident, but all of them knew what they should.

As she listened on, Shangguan Wan's expression gradually turned cold.

"...This is basically what happened. Now, everyone in Xi Ling City is talking about her," said Chan Yi.

Shangguan Wan suddenly sneered. "She's really becoming very incredible. She's only come to Xi Ling for more than a month, but she has been in the limelight quite often."

Chan Yi lowered her head and didn't say a word.

"I didn't know this before, but she actually cultivates in all three aspects... What a coincidence. Are all of the people with a 'Yue' in their names like this?"

She is indeed pretty similar to my elder sister with a short life. No matter if it's her talent, name, or... looks! This caused Shangguan Wan to feel as if her heart was being pricked every time she thought of it. "Speaking of this, she's an outstanding talent that even I can't compare with!"

Chan Yi said, "She's just a lowly commoner. How can she be worthy of comparison to you, Third Princess?"

Shangguan Wan walked to the door of her bedroom. She placed one foot in and suddenly stopped. "Invite her into the palace. Say that I... admire her very much and that I want to invite her to come to the palace."

Chapter 648: Her Palace!

"Third Princess invites me to the palace?" Chu Liuyue raised her brows strangely and was dazed.

“Yes. Third Princess heard of your excellent performance during the clan competition, and she strongly admires your outstanding performance, so she wants to invite you to the palace,” said Chan Yi clearly with her hands on top of each other on her stomach.

Even if this was Chong Xu Cabinet, she was still as respectful, serious, and well-mannered as she was in the palace.

Many thoughts flashed across Chu Liuyue’s mind. *I’m still thinking of how to get close to those people, but Shangguan Wan has now taken the initiative to invite me into the palace. It’s clear that she didn’t suddenly do this out of so-called ‘admiration’ but because she has other motives.*

Actually, Chu Liuyue had purposely aroused Shangguan Wan’s suspicions at Thousand View Garden last time by intentionally smiling and moving like she used to. This wasn’t just to make Shangguan Wan uneasy but also to plant a suspicion in her heart.

She didn’t expect that only a month had passed before Shangguan Wan started to become restless.

The clan competition just ended the day before, and today morning, Shangguan Wan has already sent Chan Yi over. Her patience doesn’t seem to be as good as last time...

“It’s my honor to receive the Third Princess’s sincere invitation.” Chu Liuyue smiled slightly, and her face had a tinge of curiosity and excitement. It looked as though she was very surprised, but she still tried hard to control herself. “I wonder what date the Third Princess set the—”

“Ms. Chu, please follow me back to the palace today if it’s convenient for you.”

“Today?” Chu Liuyue seemed hesitant. “Yes, I have nothing much to do today, but isn’t it inappropriate for me not to prepare anything and go into the palace like this?”

Chan Yi’s eyes swept across Chu Liuyue’s face rapidly, and contempt surfaced in her heart. However, she didn’t show it on her face at all as she was still very polite on the surface. “Ms. Chu, you don’t have to worry about that. The Third Princess likes you very much, and she won’t calculate this against you.”

The worry on Chu Liuyue’s face disappeared as she revealed an assured and elated smile. “If this is so, then I feel better. Then... sorry for the trouble.”

“Ms. Chu, please—”

The moment Chu Liuyue followed Chan Yi and stepped out of the main hall door, Qiang Wanzhou and Ye Ranran—who were waiting outside nervously—both looked over.

Actually, the door wasn’t closed, so Chu Liuyue’s conversation with her inside could be heard by them outside very clearly.

Ye Ranran walked forward and asked very hesitantly, “Liuyue, do you really want to go to the palace?”

Chu Liuyue smiled and said, “Yes. Third Princess personally sent someone over to invite me, which shows her sincerity. I’ll be back very soon—you don’t have to worry.”

Shangguan Wan did this so openly. Even if she really wants to do something, she won’t pick this time to do it. Shangguan Wan still has this bit of a brain.

Ye Ranran rapidly glanced at Chan Yi. For some reason, she felt that this palace maid was amiss. Even though the latter looked like she had no problems on the surface, she had a displeasing and uneasy aura around her.

“Okay then... Come back soon.”

“I know!” Chu Liuyue smiled and pinched her chubby face. *This girl thinks that she’s hidden it very well, but actually, her thoughts are written all over her face.*

She looked at Qiang Wanzhou.

The two of them stared straight into each other’s eyes.

Chu Liuyue undetectably shook her head. She knew that Qiang Wanzhou wanted to follow her, but this was clearly inappropriate. “Little Zhou, remember to eat the pill I gave you earlier. I’ll take your pulse when I come back.”

Qiang Wanzhou pressed his lips against each other and finally nodded.

At this point, Weichi Song suddenly walked over.

“Greetings, Master Weichi.” Chan Yi bowed respectfully.

Weichi Song smiled. "Liuyue, I'll accompany you down the hill."

Chu Liuyue asked in confusion, "You want to go to the palace too?"

Weichi Song shook his head. "No, I'm going to the Jiang Residence."

Chan Yi's expression changed slightly.

Chu Liuyue immediately understood it in her heart. *Weichi Song plans to continue investigating Jiang Yucheng. No matter if it's because of the Messed Yuan Gravel or the zither room, he has almost confirmed whatever Jiang Yucheng did and plans to bite him to death. Jiang Yucheng won't have easy days in the future.*

She smiled and looked at Chan Yi. "Ms. Chan Yi, is it okay if my mentor follows us down the hill?"

Chan Yi said, "Of course not. Master Weichi, Ms. Chu, please—"

...

After the trio left Qing Yuan Mountain, they walked together for a distance before finally separating.

Chu Liuyue and Chan Yi walked toward the palace, while Weichi Song turned to go to the Jiang Residence.

Walking on the broad and clean street before the palace, one just had to look up to see the magnificent palace.

The solemn halls stood right in front. As the sun shone on the bright-yellow roofs, they looked like they were dazzling.

Meticulous carvings of nine fiends were on the corners—distinguished, solemn, and holy.

Chu Liuyue looked calm on the surface, but her heart was in turmoil. *This is the place I am the most familiar with. I was born here, and I died here. I was once basked in glory and very distinguished. I had also suffered all kinds of torture and bled everywhere. My entire life's worth of glory and heart-wrenching pain is buried here. Today... I'm finally back! I've finally stepped through this gate again!*

Chan Yi took a few steps forward and realized that Chu Liuyue didn't follow up. She turned around and saw the latter looking at the palace entrance and the halls in front of her dazedly.

Chan Yi knitted her brows slightly as frustration quickly flashed across her eyes. "Ms. Chu? We should go in."

Chu Liuyue retracted her gaze, and her gem-like eyes were deep but dazzled like the stars. She then slightly nodded, lifted her legs, and walked forward.

Chapter 649: Yuan Meridian

Chu Liuyue followed Chan Yi and entered through the side gate, going straight toward Huayang Palace.

It was currently late winter, and the winds were harshly cold. When they blew on one's face, it felt like a knife was cutting it.

Suddenly, Chu Liuyue felt something cold on her glabella, and she looked up.

Pure, white snowflakes floated down.

It actually snowed.

The two of them walked forward. When they reached Huayang Palace, a thin layer of snow had already accumulated on the smooth and tidy marble floor.

Seeing Chan Yi come back, the palace people all bowed toward her. Quite a few people's gazes landed on Chu Liuyue.

Previously, they had already received news that the Third Princess would invite Chu Liuyue over. *This... must be it.*

Before this, they only heard about her in rumors. Now that they finally saw the real her, they felt that the rumors were actually quite believable. At the very least, this outstanding appearance and elegant demeanor were genuine.

Chan Yi walked forward. "Third Princess, Ms. Chu is here."

A gentle voice came from inside. "Hurry up and bring her in."

Chan Yi bowed toward Chu Liuyue. “Ms. Chu, please.”

Chu Liuyue slightly nodded and followed her in.

...

Since a very long time ago, Huayang Palace had been Shangguan Wan’s bedroom. Amongst the many halls in the palace, Huayang Palace was very unassuming. No matter if it were its size, position, or construction, it was only average at best.

Shangguan Wan’s birth mother had a lowly status, so she wasn’t very well-liked either and had been bullied countless times when she was young.

Later on, Chu Liuyue felt that she was miserable and took pity on her, so she always put in a word for her in front of her father. Shangguan Wan’s situation improved since then, and she even moved to Huayang Palace.

Even though Huayang Palace couldn’t be compared to Chu Liuyue’s palace, it was already a huge improvement to the Shangguan Wan back then.

Chu Liuyue originally thought that Shangguan Wan would change her place of residence after she came into power. However, she didn’t expect the latter to still be here.

But Huayang Palace has been renovated. Judging from the surrounding views and its design, she must’ve spent quite a fortune.

Behind the screen, a graceful figure walked out. Her looks were pretty, and she had a smile on her lips with a tinge of spring-like nature. At the same time, her eyes were filled with the distance and elegance of being superior.

It was Shangguan Wan!

Chu Liuyue glanced at her and bent her knees to bow. "Greetings, Third Princess."

Shangguan Wan went up and gestured for her to get up as she smiled and said, "Quickly, get up. I invited you over today because I have a few things I wanted to seek advice from you. You don't have to be this courteous."

Even though she said this, her back was very straight, and she was three steps away from Chu Liuyue. This showed that she didn't have any intentions of letting Chu Liuyue ease herself.

Chu Liuyue had seen too many of such methods back then, so she completely didn't care. After she bowed, she stood up and slightly smiled at Shangguan Wan. "Thank you, Third Princess."

Shangguan Wan was dazed for a moment, and she hesitated in her actions. *We were a distance away the previous time we met, so I couldn't see her very clearly. Now that she's standing so close, I can see her face very clearly. This face... When she smiles, it's really like...*

A tinge of hatred surfaced in Shangguan Wan's heart, but she didn't show it at all as she smiled and sat down at the host seat. "Ms. Chu, you don't have to be courteous. Sit."

Chan Yi walked to Shangguan Wan and served her.

Chu Liuyue wasn't courteous at all as she swiftly sat down at the side after thanking her. Others might be wary of Shangguan Wan's identity, but not her.

Shangguan Wan saw her carefree manner and was speechless for a moment. After a momentary pause, she found a topic to start off with. "Ms. Chu, I've already heard about what happened at the clan competition. Your talent is really enviable."

Chu Liuyue smiled. "Compared to you, Third Princess, my talent is nothing. I heard that you had already become a stage-seven warrior two years ago. How can I compare to you?"

Shangguan Wan felt something stuck in her heart.

She was indeed a stage-seven warrior two years ago, but her Yuan meridian was ruined after that incident. Nothing she did could recover it—she had long become akin to a useless person.

Chu Liuyue's words were undoubtedly pricking her heart.

She forced a smile, picked up her teacup, and sipped it, hiding the cold expression on her face. From the corner of her eye, she saw that Chu Liuyue smiled slightly with a sincere expression. *That's true. There are only three people who know about my condition, including myself. How would Chu Liuyue know about it?*

"My elder sister left me more than a year ago, and I have been devastated over it for a long time. I fell gravely sick, and even now, I frequently can't sleep. Thus, it's inevitable that I neglected my cultivation. Sorry for letting you see this joke."

Chu Liuyue's eyebrows rose slightly. "Third Princess's elder sister should be the late Princess, right? It looks like both of you were on really good terms. Every time you bring her up, you look very upset."

"Of course. I grew up with my elder sister from a young age, and our relationship can't be compared to others." Shangguan Wan placed her teacup down—which made quite a sound—before she looked at Chu Liuyue. "Ms. Chu, don't mind me, but you really look quite similar to my elder sister. So every time I look at you, I'll think about her. But speaking of which, Ms. Chu, you seem to have heard rumors about my elder sister?"

Chu Liuyue's expression didn't change. "Actually, I just heard Young Master Jian mention her a few times."

Shangguan Wan's heart tingled. "Oh? Jian Fengchi? What did he tell you?"

Chu Liuyue smiled nonchalantly. "When Young Master Jian first met me, he said that I looked like someone from his past, and he mentioned a few small incidents between them. I only found out that he was talking about the Princess after I came to Xi Ling."

Chu Liuyue pushed the blame to Jian Fengchi without hesitation. *Shangguan Wan will definitely suspect Jian Fengchi, but it's impossible for her to start a conflict with him over this. In the past, Jian Fengchi was on quite good terms with Shangguan Wan, but now...*

Chu Liuyue also didn't know what happened between them, but it was clear that the two of them weren't as close as before.

Jian Fengchi had always been carefree. If he hated a person, he definitely wouldn't let that person have a good time. This was the case for the late Shangguan Yue and naturally even more so toward Shangguan Wan.

"I see... It's not strange that he'd tell you about this because he always had a good relationship with my elder sister. After she passed on, he was sad for quite some time," said Shangguan Wan slowly as she looked down.

Chu Liuyue was dazed. *Jian Fengchi... was sad for me? How could that be? Back then, both of us hated each other when we saw each other. Whenever Jian Fengchi had the chance, he would go against me and cause trouble for me. I didn't expect...*

"Forget it; let's not talk about that. I heard that you came from Country Yao Chen outside Heaven's Canopy, right?"

Chu Liuyue nodded.

Shangguan Wan looked at her and slightly smiled as she seemingly asked unintentionally, "I heard that you were born with a lacking Yuan meridian and only officially started cultivating more than a year ago. I'm quite curious. How did you... heal your Yuan meridian?"

Chapter 650: Wake Up

Translator: Atlas Studios **Editor:** Atlas Studios

So it's because of this. Chu Liuyue laughed inwardly. That's true. Back then, I burned my Yuan meridian and conveniently burned Shangguan Wan's Yuan meridian completely. Until now, she hasn't recovered. How can she not be anxious?

The strength that came from a Tianjing Yuan meridian burning itself was extremely terrifying, and its effects were long-lasting. Not to mention that Shangguan Wan had no way, but even Shangguan Yue might not be able to heal it at her peak.

Shangguan Wan didn't dare to publicize this issue, but she must have her trusted heavenly doctors in the dark. More than a year has passed, but she hasn't improved a single bit. This shows that she has used all her methods. If she wasn't driven to a corner, Shangguan Wan wouldn't have anxiously summoned me to the palace.

“Oh, so you wanted to ask about this. Actually, it's a long story...” Chu Liuyue squinted her eyes as if she was recalling something and said slowly, “I did have a lacking Yuan meridian since birth. I have seen many heavenly doctors, but it was to no avail. Until one day, I accidentally met a mysterious person when I was kidnapped to a forest outside the Imperial City...”

“I don't know who that person is, and I didn't see the other party's face. The other party only gave me a pill and a prescription. After eating the pill, I took herbs according to the prescription and ate the medicine in a timely manner. Not long later, my Yuan meridian recovered to normal. Afterward, I wanted to find that mysterious person and thank him, but I couldn't find him at all. Slowly, this matter was set aside.”

After hearing this, Shangguan Wan's first reaction was disbelief. “Just... like this?”

Chu Liuyue smiled slightly and nodded. “Just like that.”

Shangguan Wan's eyes turned slightly cold. *Can there be such a coincidence? When Chu Liuyue was set up, she was saved by a strong warrior. The other party barely knew her, but he took the initiative to help her heal her Yuan meridian? And afterward, that person just disappeared into thin air? Then, what does that person actually want?*

Shangguan Wan didn't believe that something would just fall into one's lap. She didn't believe a single word of whatever Chu Liuyue said.

But other than the person involved, nobody would know about this sort of thing. If Chu Liuyue was reluctant to say it, she had no other way.

"...Such a fateful encounter is rare... Ms. Chu, you've really met your benefactor." Shangguan Wan sized Chu Liuyue up and said ambiguously, "Not only did you heal your Yuan meridian, but he even directly upgraded your Yuan meridian to a Dijing one... If news of this gets out, many people would be envious of you."

Chu Liuyue smiled. "Many people in Country Yao Chen have asked me about my experience. I didn't expect Third Princess to be interested in this as well."

"I have seen some people recover from physical damage to their Yuan meridian, but I have never seen someone with a lacking Yuan meridian since birth being able to cultivate. Hence, I couldn't help but be curious and asked more," said Shangguan Wan as she sighed. "The one who is able to do this must be formidable. If there's a chance, I really want to meet that person..."

Chu Liuyue smiled genuinely. "Honestly speaking, I want to meet that person more than anyone else and thank that person on purpose. It's a pity... That person disappeared without a trace, and I can't look for him at all."

Shangguan Wan was frustrated. *Only Chu Liuyue herself knows what happened. If she doesn't want to say it, who can force her? She's currently in the limelight in Xi Ling, and her every move is being watched. Therefore, I can't easily touch her.*

At this moment, an announcement was heard. "Third Princess, Physician Zuo Mingxi is here."

Shangguan Wan felt strange. “Why did Physician Zuo come at this time?”

Chan Yi softly reminded, “Your Highness, you forgot. It’s Physician Zuo’s turn to take His Majesty’s pulse today. You previously said that after Physician Zuo takes his pulse, he must come over and report His Majesty’s condition to you.”

Chu Liuyue’s hand on the armrest curved slightly.

“Oh, I did forget about it. Ask him to wait at the side hall for a moment. I’ll be there soon,” said Shangguan Wan as she looked at Chu Liuyue. “I still have some things to handle. May I trouble Ms. Chu to wait here for a moment? If you’re bored, you can ask Chan Yi to bring you around Huayang Palace.”

Chu Liuyue immediately said, “Third Princess, please—”

Shangguan Wan stood up, left, and quickly arrived outside the hall.

Chu Liuyue looked over and saw Zuo Mingxi’s figure standing outside.

“Physician Zuo, why did you come so early today?” That was Shangguan Wan’s voice.

Zuo Mingxi bowed and said, “My jade token is done, so I came earlier to collect it.”

Light flashed across Chu Liuyue’s mind. *Jade token? The jade token he’s referring to. Could it be—*

“That’s good. This jade token is a symbol of your identity. Physician Zuo, you must be careful next time and don’t lose it.”

“I’ll remember your teachings, Third Princess.”

“Follow me...”

...

The duo walked to the side hall, and their voices completely disappeared.

However, Chu Liuyue’s heart was shocked. *So the jade token that Jian Fengchi accidentally dropped that day is Zuo Mingxi’s?! Zuo Mingxi said he lost it. Then, did Jian Fengchi unintentionally pick it up after he lost it, or did Jian Fengchi purposely take it away from him?*

After thinking about the faint Long Xian Fragrance on Jian Fengchi that day... He clearly came to the palace before! Also, it’s very possible that he entered Father’s bedroom! But why is he doing this?

There seemed to be mist in front of Chu Liuyue, and she couldn’t see clearly.

She stood up.

Chan Yi immediately asked, “Ms. Chu, do you want to look around?”

Chu Liuyue turned around and smiled. "Would it be too much trouble?"

Chan Yi respectfully said, "Ms. Chu, you're too polite. Since Third Princess has already spoken, you don't have to care so much. Why don't I bring you to the garden behind?"

Chu Liuyue nodded. "Thank you."

The duo then walked out of the main hall.

After leaving, Chu Liuyue seemed to unintentionally look in the direction of the side hall and softly whisper, "So that person is Physician Zuo Mingxi. I heard that he's a very capable heavenly doctor."

Chan Yi seemed to 'accidentally' block Chu Liuyue's vision with her body as her facial expression was polite and distant. "Physician Zuo is an imperial physician, so his medical skills are naturally outstanding. Why? Ms. Chu, are you interested in this?"

Chu Liuyue seemed to have not heard the warning in the other's voice as she smiled and said, "Not really. I just heard my mentor say that there are quite a few capable imperial physicians in the palace, so I admire them in my heart. I didn't expect to be lucky enough to see one today."

Chan Yi glanced at her, and her suspicions gradually dispelled. She had heard that Chu Liuyue was also a heavenly doctor, so her words sounded quite normal.

"The back garden is here. Ms. Chu, please follow me." Then, Chan Yi led the way in front.

Chu Liuyue followed her.

...

On the other end, after Shangguan Wan and Zuo Mingxi entered the side hall, she asked frankly, "Physician Zuo, how is my father's condition? Did he show any signs of waking up?"