

SOVEREIGN OF THE THREE REALMS

Chapter 18: Princess Gouyu's Internal Dilemma

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After a bout of depression, Jiang Chen finally asked apprehensively, "Your aunt isn't the type to carry a grudge is she?"

"Hehe, she dotes on me a lot. As for whether or not she carries a grudge, Zhiruo doesn't know! Brother Jiang Chen, don't be afraid. I'll speak to her on your behalf when I have time."

"Hmph. It doesn't matter who begs on your behalf, Jiang Chen! Heir to the Jiang Han duchy, ranked dead last in the pre exams, and yet to pass any of the three foundational exams"

By the artificial mountain, Princess Gouyu had reappeared unbeknownst to anyone, dressed in a downy yellow light robe.

There were some traces of a cold smile on her face, "Jiang Chen, you have some courage in walking in here."

Some said that a dead pig is not afraid of boiling water. Since matters stood the way they were, Jiang Chen could only see them through to the end.

"What, you want to get revenge on me?"

"Get revenge?" A hint of a cold smile tugged at Gouyu's lips. "The current you isn't even worth getting revenge on. Worry about that if you make it into the final examination."

True, as the main organizer, Princess Gouyu could not bear to demean herself and harass someone who couldn't even make it past a single one of the foundational exams.

Heh heh, idiotic woman. You think far too little of me. Jiang Chen knew that in Gouyu's heart, he was most likely equated with the words of "ignorant and incompetent".

He was about to say something when a loud pattering of footsteps sounded from the outside. The shipment of crouching yang stones had arrived.

Jiang Chen beckoned and said to Princess Gouyu, "What's your name, Gouyu is it? Princess Zhiruo says that you dote on her. I ask only this, do you have any authority in the imperial harem?"

"Why?" Gouyu asked coldly.

"If you have authority, then demolish all the buildings within a hundred feet of Princess Zhiruo's quarters. Demolish any mountain, fill in any water."

"Also, hire the best artisan to hew the largest piece of crouching yang stone into a stone bed. Let Princess Zhiruo sleep on it. It's best if she sleeps nude."

Jiang Chen did not care at all that a black line had slowly formed on Princess Gouyu's beautiful forehead, and continued speaking.

"Arrange the rest of the eight crouching yang stones according to the diagram on my paper. I'll come back with more tasks next time."

"And, little Zhiruo, I've commissioned these sachets for you. I've broken the Dragonbone Sun Grass into nine pieces and put them into nine sachets. Keep one on you at all times, and place the others in places you often visit. Although this Dragonbone Sun Grass is a slight bit of trash, it'll do for now. The yang qi that it produces will nourish your meridians."

"In addition, this is a hand sketch of the 'Sun God Spirit Diagram', along with an accompanying incantation. Meditate and contemplate with your heart. This will help your body produce yang qi."

“This is a temporary fix, we need to stabilize your condition first. Remember, do as I say. In particular, do not train anymore, or the circumstances will be bad beyond comprehension.”

Jiang Chen’s words of guidance had quite the air of a master. His demeanor and delivery stunned even Princess Gouyu silent for a moment.

He didn’t give Gouyu the chance to speak after he finished speaking. He dusted off his sleeves and started swaggering off.

Gouyu regained her senses just as Jiang Chen was about to leave. She snorted, “Jiang Chen, you’re a person who couldn’t even pass the three foundational exams. Why should we listen to you?”

Jiang Chen’s gaze was cold as his body halted, but he didn’t turn around. “If you truly love your niece, you will do as I say. If you want her to die earlier, then continue practicing with her like you were just doing.”

One had to say, Jiang Chen had the potential to be a master bluffer. His awe-inspiring words accompanied by a quietly dignified aura, were enough to cause the preeminent Princess Gouyu, the powerful figure in charge of the fates of all the dukedoms through the Hidden Dragon Trials, to be at a temporary loss for words.

It was only when his shadow had disappeared that Gouyu recovered, “That insolent upstart! He makes me so mad!”

Eastern Zhiruo laughed, “Auntie, brother Jiang Chen is actually quite kind. Listen, that day at the Heavenly Rites of Worship...”

When Eastern Zhiruo had finished conveying the happenings of the recent days, Princess Gouyu’s face underwent a variety of expressions.

“Who would’ve thought that so much would happen in the time capital during the time that I was gone? I left for not even a month!” Gouyu’s expression

became complicated upon hearing that Jiang Chen had risen from the dead after being caned to death, and actually gained divine patronage because of his misfortunes.

Princess Gouyu had been born into a royal family, and had one of the highest standards in the entire capital. Her ambitions and worldview had never stopped at a mere kingdom.

Thus, she committed herself to training and set herself the goal of exploring the wider, more exciting world, through the path of martial dao.

It was because she had her eyes set high, that she knew a bit more than the average person about divine patronage. If an ordinary person was wavering between skepticism and belief, then she believed about 70% after listening to Zhiruo.

“It’s impossible for a teenage youth to fabricate so much in the heat of the moment. Particularly that Zhiruo and her mother had been born under a solar eclipse. This kind of royal secret has never been disclosed. Yin constitution, yin humors?”

Princess Gouyu was feeling a mixture of feelings. Eastern Zhiruo was one of her most beloved nieces, and she had watched her grow up.

She had always insisted that Eastern Zhiruo was weak and frail, and thus had insisted the latter to train and practice. Even if she didn’t achieve any accomplishments, strengthening her body was still a good thing, no?

But, Jiang Chen’s overwhelming and harsh lecture today had caused her convictions of many years to falter, just that little bit.

“Have I really been wrong? All that I’ve been doing for Zhiruo hasn’t helped her, but in fact harmed her?”

“Divine patronage? Should I believe in something like this?”

Princess Gouyu struggled with an internal dilemma. She naturally wanted Eastern Zhiruo to be well, but if she continued to insist that Jiang Chen was a charlatan, wouldn't that be harming Zhiruo?

At this moment, eunuch Xia Ting had led a crowd of people nearby.

"Princesses, do we demolish this area? Your servant begs royal guidance."

Princess Gouyu surveyed the surroundings, a few hints of apprehension in her exquisite eyes. She took another glance at Eastern Zhiruo and noted the eagerness in the girl's eyes. It was obvious that she was full of confidence in Jiang Chen.

"Demolish it!"

Gouyu herself found it hard to believe that she had said those words. Why demolish it? Why should she listen to that damned brat? Had she really fallen for his act?

No no, I'm thinking of Zhiruo. If it makes her happy, then we demolish this area! The proud Princess Gouyu quickly found a palatable excuse for herself.

When he left the imperial harem, Jiang Chen paid another visit to Eastern Lu. He was the king of a nation after all, the common courtesies had to be observed. Jiang Chen was a smart person and didn't want to supply any fodder for the gossip mill.

Eastern Lu was quite satisfied with Jiang Chen's report. "Jiang Chen, I can see that you are much better than all those royal physicians."

"Your Majesty, there is an overabundance of yin qi in the imperial harem. It is not a suitable place of residence for someone with the Princess' constitution. Your subject's actions are merely to counteract the yin qi. In order for the Princess to be just like an ordinary person, she needs to move out from the imperial harem and settle down in a place that gathers yang qi."

“Mm. Your suggestion has been noted. But this matter is of great importance and needs some deliberation.” This was an action that was at obvious odds with royal tradition. Even Eastern Lu could not easily agree to it.

“With that said, your subject requests his leave. I will enter the palace to renew my diagnosis each month and discern the Princess’ condition. If there are no accidents, her condition can be stabilized. As for whether it can be effective beyond expectation, that will depend on the Princess’ karma.”

There were many things that Jiang Chen did not need to explain in too much detail, such as that “Sun God Spirit Diagram”. That was actually quite a life changing stroke of luck for the Princess. It was something that the Celestial Emperor had prepared for Jiang Chen back in the day.

Jiang Chen naturally did not have the ability to replicate the Sun God Spirit Diagram, but had no issues in simulating a simplified version.

If Princess Zhiruo really did meditate upon it daily, over the course of time, the effect of this single diagram would be enough to allow her to live a normal life.

But Jiang Chen would never voice this. Playing this hand close to his heart would prevent Eastern Lu from burning bridges.

Discarding someone after they had outlived their usefulness; Jiang Chen had been born into a royal household in his past life, how could he not know of this?

When he left the palace, he didn’t go to his usual haunts to drink and whore, nor did he call upon his friends. Rather, he went straight back to the manor.

His best friends had all been grounded by their respective old men because of the furor they caused at the Jiang Han manor a few days ago, not to mention the fact that the month end exams were fast approaching.

A sense of urgency had filled the hearts of all the dukes. The second half of the year would herald the arrival of the final examinations of the Hidden Dragon Trials. Their sons' performance at this stage was the key to determining if they could keep their positions for the next twenty years.

Those who knew for certain that their positions would be kept still had to worry if their ranking would change.

All in all, the harsh competition of the Hidden Dragon Trial caused all the dukes to be on their guard.

On the contrary, the Jiang Han household actually had a more relaxed atmosphere.

Jiang Feng, the duke of Jiang Han, had no lofty expectations to begin with. He had already mentally prepared himself to hang up his armor and return to the fields.

As for the Jiang Chen of now, the mere dukedom of a kingdom did not even register on his radar.

He was participating because he didn't want the outside world to think that the Jiang family was full of cowards and didn't even have the courage to show up at the Trials.

The greater picture of fierce competition amongst the dukes had long since formed, and Jiang Chen had no choice but to go with the flow.

Otherwise, to avoid the first battle after his reincarnation would leave a shadow in his heart, undoubtedly affecting his path of training in the future.

The biggest piece of gossip these days in the Jiang Han household was none other than Jiang Chen. That was because the servants had made the startling discovery that the young duke had stayed home for a full five days.

This was a heaven defying piece of news. One had to know that the young duke was a restless master before. He had not even previously set a record of staying home for ten hours, not to mention five entire days.

Even Jiang Feng was astonished and he kept muttering, "What is this kid up to? This isn't his style?"

Jiang Feng's child rearing philosophy was encompassed by four words, "Do as he will".

As for the protagonist of the rumors, Jiang Chen made no response to the reactions of the outside world. He had not wasted a single moment in the past five days.

Training, strengthening his meridians, fortifying his body -- all final preparations for clearing the fifth acupoint.

Reading to understand and assimilate as much of this world as possible through perusing various volumes - these two items almost became Jiang Chen's entire life over the past few days.

When dawn broke on the sixth day, his four strands of true qi were as full of vitality as the dawn, and as full of vigor like the rising sun.