

## Immortal 611

### Chapter 611: Protector's Silhouette

Zu An was speechless. At least the crown princess is a beautiful woman. She feels tender and smells nice, so I can just about tolerate holding her.

But you're a damned pig, bro! I can still see grease stains and leftover crumbs on your shirt! Who the hell wants to hug you? Do you really have no self-awareness?

He calmly wrapped his arm around the crown princess' waist, sidestepping the crown prince and gently pushing him away. Of course, he chose his words carefully. "Your Highness, I still need to fight. If I carry you as well, both my hands will be tied up, and I won't be able to fight off these assassins."

The crown prince pouted and pointed at the crown princess in his arms. "Then can't you just drop her and carry me?"

His statement boggled Zu An's mind.

This kid really is a master of logic! I can't fault him at all...

Shouldn't your main focus be on preventing me from holding your wife, though? Why aren't you jealous at all?

An angry huff came from nearby. Qiu Honglei had rushed towards them, sword in hand. She didn't attack Zu An, but targeted the crown princess in his arms.

Zu An fended her off while secretly sending her a voice transmission. "Honglei, what's wrong?"

"Nothing. I'm going for that vixen. How could she fall over even on level ground? Does she take us all for fools?" Qiu Honglei's annoyance was growing by the second. She had seen her fair share of her seniors seducing men. This was but one of their techniques.

She had looked upon them with contempt, but she never expected a woman to use it on her... Ahem. On her friend.

Zu An chuckled. "She's a glorious crown princess. Why would she seduce me? She's clearly exhausted from all this constant fighting."

"Hmph, these vixens' methods are incredible at misleading stupid men like you. It takes one woman to understand another," Qiu Honglei said with a snort, all the while increasing the ferocity of her attacks.

Zu An was left speechless.

He couldn't deal with her directly. He had to make sure Qiu Honglei didn't hurt the crown princess, yet he couldn't hurt Qiu Honglei either. It really was an awkward situation.

The other assassins reacted quickly, coming to the defense of their Lady Saint.

Qiu Honglei was now conflicted. She was worried that Zu An might be accidentally injured, yet she couldn't overtly let their enemies go free. This was quite the predicament.

It didn't take long for the crown princess to recover her strength after her momentary weakness. When she snapped out of her daze and discovered that she was in the golden-token envoy's arms, she immediately grew ashamed.

She was from a distinguished clan, and had never been held like this by another man before. She had never even held hands with a man before, let alone been embraced by one.

Even after marrying the crown prince, she had never felt comfortable around him. Furthermore, the crown prince was a fool, so she never let him touch her. How could she end up letting this mere guard take advantage of her like this?

In her eyes, the Embroidered Envoy were nothing but palace guards. He was merely a high-ranking one.

She wanted to struggle free, because being seen like that in public was truly damaging for her reputation. However, she could read the situation as well. This golden-token envoy was under attack on multiple fronts. If she made any sudden movements, she could create an opening for one of his opponents to exploit.

She resisted the urge to shove him away and silently observed the assassins' attacks. She felt a sense of alarm growing within her.

She could feel that the arm around her waist was extremely strong, and heat from it was passing through her thin clothes and into her body. It was as if an invisible force was spreading through her, gradually tugging at her heartstrings.

His gaze was focused as he faced his opponents, and the moves he used to neutralize their attacks were so suave...

Which young lady didn't yearn for love?

Not so long ago, she had been one who enjoyed romance novels. She used to smile stupidly, curled up under the covers and reading these novels. Ever since she became the crown princess, though, her childhood fantasies were slowly extinguished, one after the other, and she never read those books again.

Wasn't this the exact scene she had always dreamed of? That her man would protect her like this, even if the entire world was against him?

If only the crown prince was like this, how great would that be...

She subconsciously looked at the crown prince. When she saw his chubby face and those beady eyes, almost invisible under the layers of fat, she sighed.

What was even more infuriating was that the crown prince wasn't mad that she was in the arms of another man. On the contrary, he was clapping his hands and cheering the embroidered envoy on!

Even though he was praising his strength, the crown princess still felt her heart grow cold. How could the crown prince be that simple-minded?

She did not hold any extravagant hopes that her husband would be some great hero, but he could at least be a normal person. Comparatively speaking, this embroidered envoy holding her gave her a much greater sense of security.

She wasn't usually this weak, but too much had happened in such a short span of time, and the constant fighting had brought her face to face with the specter of death for the first time in her life. When placed in extreme danger, it was natural that one's heart would beat much more quickly. Together with a spike in adrenaline, they would experience a quick burst of power.

Once this effect wore off, they would be left drained and weary. The crown princess was currently in this weakened state.

"You know no shame!" cried an angry voice. She noticed an assassin glaring at her, flames burning within her eyes.

The crown princess felt blood rush to her face. What an embarrassment! If even an assassin was ashamed by such a sight, how was she ever supposed to face anyone else in the imperial palace again?

All other considerations went out of her mind. When the man holding her forced back another group of assassins, she quickly squirmed out of his embrace and rushed to her husband's side. Her heart was pounding.

"Linglong, why is your face so red?" the crown prince asked curiously. "Are you sick? Do you want me to ask the doctor to bring you some medicine?"

"Shut up!" The crown princess yelled in irritation.

"Oh..." The crown prince felt incredibly wronged, but his fear of his wife kept him from retorting.

Qiu Honglei's attacks grew more and more ferocious. Her anger was evident through the ki transmission. "No wonder you stopped me. It's because of this woman! I knew it, you only smile for a new lover, but never bother about the tears of the one left behind. Hmph!"

Just the thought of the crown princess pressed up against his chest was enough to drive her to the brink of madness.

You have successfully trolled Qiu Honglei for 233... 233... 233...

Zu An's head was about to explode. "I'm being wronged! You know that I was just about to flee, thanks to your amazing master's appearance. How was I supposed to know that the crown princess would run to me?"

Also, when have you ever been one of my old lovers?

Qiu Honglei pouted. "You could have just ignored her."

Zu An was despondent. "I'm known as one of the palace personnel right now. If I don't step in, I'll be dead for sure..."

Qiu Honglei knew that he was telling the truth, but it did little to cheer her up. "Those are all excuses. The truth is that you found the crown princess beautiful. If she looked like the crown prince, would you have protected her?"

Zu An opened his mouth, but no words came out.

He really had nothing to say. If the crown princess looked like a pig, it was true that he might not have been so enthusiastic.

Qiu Honglei sneered. "Hmph, men!"

Zu An was just about to say something when Shi Miao let out a pathetic scream. He crashed into a nearby hut, blood spurting out of his mouth. The woman attacking him did not let up, but dashed right after him.

Zu An's expression changed immediately. Even though her movements looked graceful and otherworldly, he knew that her strikes were extremely terrifying. He had no confidence that he could bear the full brunt of her attacks while protecting the crown prince and princess. Just holding onto his own life would be difficult.

Just as he was hesitating, wondering if it was time for him to bail, a strong vibration ran through his token. A thought came to him, and he stuck out his chest and pushed Bi Linglong behind him. "Crown princess, please be careful. Hold onto the crown prince and get behind me. I will protect you!"

The sect master of the Devil Sect was already in front of him. The terrifying pressure she exerted made it hard for him to even breathe.

Right then, a cold voice split the air. "Which scoundrel dares to cause trouble in the imperial palace?!"

## **Chapter 612: Two-Faced Woman**

The crown princess stared at Zu An's broad back, in a slight daze.

She had always been the one protecting the crown prince, but as a woman herself, she subconsciously needed a strong man to protect her as well. Unfortunately, because of her current status, she was forced to hide this side of her deep within herself.

Now, she was being protected from a powerful assassin by this man.

She knew that this was a master rank assassin. Not even Minister of War Shi Miao was her match. How could this golden-token envoy possibly stop her?

Despite this, he continued to stand in front of her, putting his life on the line.

The crown princess remembered something she had read in her romance novels: No woman could resist a man who was willing to sacrifice his life for her. Back then, she had scoffed at that quote, believing it to be the author's personal wish alone. Now that she had experienced it herself, this statement resonated deeply within her.

She didn't know what drove this individual to protect her. Was it his duty, or was it something else? She wasn't sure, and she didn't want to be, either. She only knew that she would never forget this man's tall, upright figure.

Suddenly, a terrifying voice filled the air. "Which scoundrel dares to cause trouble in the imperial palace?!"

She saw a figure dressed in dark red swiftly approaching. The morbidly pale skin and ice-cold eyes... Zhuxie Chixin!

The crown princess sighed in relief. The man who was protecting her did not need to die.

Zu An also sighed in relief. Bro, what took you so long? If you didn't show your face, I would have been left wondering who my enemies really were.

He had only put on this valiant act because he had received news of Zhuxie Chixin's arrival.

Won't this grant me a promotion?

Of course, he never expected his actions to unintentionally bring about a different effect.

Zhuxie Chixin moved extremely quickly, immediately exchanging a blow with the long-haired woman. Both of them were shaken by the force. The long-haired woman flew backwards, while Zhuxie Chixin staggered.

"Huh?" Zhuxie Chixin was surprised. Her cultivation was not the same as a normal master rank cultivator!

Despite this, he wasn't worried. After all, he was the terrifying leader of the Embroidered Envoy. Not only was he a loyal subject of the emperor, he possessed tremendous strength as well.

He was at the peak of the master rank, and had even gained some new insights recently, which elevated him just outside the grandmaster rank.

The emperor and King Qi aside, not many dared claim to be more powerful than him.

"Seeing someone at your age with such high cultivation leaves me beyond surprised. You had great prospects ahead of you, but you're now going to lose your life because you invaded the imperial palace." Zhuxie Chixin sighed, as though he felt sincere pity.

The long-haired woman chuckled. "I've heard that Chief Commander Zhuxie Chixin's strength leaves the entire imperial court in awe. Now that we've met, I can tell that you are as formidable as the rumors say, though you are, unfortunately, a little too arrogant. Do you truly believe you can defeat me?"

Zhuxie Chixin remained unfazed. "The time for words is over."

After saying this, he shot forward like a streak of lightning. It seemed even faster than Zu An's instantaneous movement skill.

His entire body erupted with scarlet flames, as though he had become a phoenix.

Zu An clicked his tongue. He had always assumed Zhuxie Chixin was an ice element cultivator, given his cold exterior. He actually wields the fire element?

More than that, it now looked as though he was the one who cultivated the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra! He truly looked like a reincarnated phoenix.

Zu An found himself feeling slightly jealous. Even though his own Phoenix Nirvana Sutra was rather amazing, it didn't look that badass in a fight!

The crown princess's gentle voice sounded. "Kind sir, are you wounded?"

Zu An was stunned. The few times he'd met her, the crown princess had always been distant, acting and speaking fiercely. He had never seen her speak to anyone in such a gentle voice.

He clasped his fist towards her. "Thank you, crown princess, for your concern. I have only suffered a few minor injuries."

Zu An actually wasn't injured at all, but if he admitted it, he would never receive the recognition that he deserved.

The crown princess' red lips parted slightly as she looked at this tall, burly figure in front of her. This is a true man among men, who sheds no tears! He's nothing like that stupid crown prince who cries if he accidentally bumps into a desk corner.

To Zu An, things only seemed to be getting stranger. Why was this crown princess staring at him dumbly without saying anything?

He coughed lightly. "Crown princess, are you injured?" he asked quickly in return.

The crown princess blushed and shook her head. "I'm fine."

She was wounded, but how could she let this man know?

"I'm injured, I'm injured!" cried the crown prince. "I got a huge bump on my head when I hit that pillar! It's swelling badly!"

The crown princess resisted the urge to hit him.

She was utterly furious. Look at this man, and now look at my own husband!

She was exhausted.

Zu An smiled and said, "Crown prince, you need not worry. This minor injury will heal once the imperial physician applies some medicine."

"But it hurts really bad," said the crown prince, pouting. He looked over at the crown princess. "Mom always blows on my injuries when I get hurt. Linglong, can you blow on it for me? It might get better faster."

The crown princess was about to explode. Bloody hell! Am I your wife or your mom?

"Blow on it yourself!" she yelled with an angry huff.

“Oh...” Her constant abuse left the crown prince cowering in fear. He dared not say anything else, and tried his best to blow air across the bump on his head.

This exchange left Zu An speechless.

I was definitely seeing things earlier. The crown princess is definitely very fierce.

The crown princess moved over to his side, her voice suddenly gentle again. “What should I call you, kind sir? Have we met before?”

The golden-token envoys were mysterious, and rarely appeared in public. However, she was the crown princess, so she had met a few of them. Even though all of them wore masks as well, she knew that the one in front of her wasn’t one she had come across before.

Zu An picked up his command token and flipped it around, showing her the number. “I am Eleven.”

Golden-token envoys did not give out their true names, but referred to themselves by their numbers. There was no need to hide this.

Besides, he wanted to be rewarded after this, so he had to make sure that the crown princess knew who had saved her and the crown prince.

It was the crown princess’ turn to grow shocked. “Eleven? Weren’t there only ten golden-token envoys?”

“Ah, I was recently promoted.” Her reminder left Zu An slightly deflated. From what he knew, every single golden-token envoy had many silver-token envoys beneath them, and countless bronze-token envoys below these. He was the only one with merely a command token.

Of course, he knew what the emperor was up to. He had only been granted this token so that it would be easier for him to conduct certain affairs, and for him to trick King Qi. He wasn’t planning to give Zu An any real authority.

“You were recently promoted?” The crown princess blinked. “You are truly a promising young man.”

“The crown princess is too generous with your praise.” Zu An was used to seeing her haughty and arrogant appearance, and found it hard to adjust to this gentle side of her.

The crown princess smiled when she heard what he said. She had mentioned this as a test. For some reason, she was secretly hoping that this embroidered envoy was not a middle-aged man, or even an elder.

Zu An was stunned. The crown princess possessed great beauty, but the fierce expression she often wore spoiled her image. She really was much more charming when she smiled.

“Linglong, your smile is so pretty. Why haven’t I ever seen you smile before?” The crown prince stopped blowing on his wound, his eyes wide. Even though he was stupid, every human being was naturally drawn towards beauty.

The crown princess glared at him in annoyance. Do you really have no idea why I never smile around you?

Qiu Honglei's sword suddenly thrust out. She loathed this scene. Was this crown princess working in a brothel? Now that she felt slightly safer, she was already back to seducing other men, even with her own husband beside her!

The other assassins rushed in as well, determined to take down the crown prince. Any losses were acceptable, as long as they accomplished their goal.

### **Chapter 613: Grandmaster**

Zu An felt a headache. How could he let them assassinate the crown prince when everyone was looking? If that happened, it would be more strange if the emperor didn't execute him!

That was why he could only stop Qiu Honglei and the others. Meanwhile, he sent a voice transmission. "Honglei, you should get out of here. Even Zhuxie Chixin has returned, you all don't have a chance anymore."

"It won't be too late after killing the crown prince and this woman first. You can just leave with us afterwards." Qiu Honglei replied indifferently when she saw him protecting the crown princess the entire time.

You have successfully trolled Qiu Honglei for +555 +555 +555...

Zu An could understand why Qiu Honglei was so angry too. If it wasn't because he popped up out of nowhere and ruined their mission, they would've already succeeded. That was why there was no way they wouldn't be angry.

But from his perspective, there was no way he could just watch without doing anything! This was the problem with being on opposing sides, there will always be situations where he couldn't satisfy both sides.

During this time, new Embroidered Envoy and guards rushed over. The Devil Sect gradually entered a disadvantaged position.

Zu An began to panic. "Honglei, it'll be too late if you don't leave now!"

He was worried that they might hurt the crown prince and princess at first, but now, he began to worry about Qiu Honglei.

Qiu Honglei bit her lip. She was also hesitant.

The long-haired woman's cold and clear voice sounded from the other side. "The noble treat others with respect and self-restraint, those with humility will be blessed by heavenly law."

The assassins who heard this were all stunned. Then, they began to attack the palace even more viciously.

"Everyone, be on guard! Protect the crown prince and princess!" Another guard immediately fought with everything he had.

Zu An was puzzled. The Devil Sect was clearly at a great disadvantage. Why did they still launch this mad assault? Could it be that the Devil Sect really didn't care about the lives of their subordinates? But her disciples were among them!

He quickly warned Qiu Honglei, "Why are you still risking your life for your master if she doesn't care about you guys? You need to hurry and find a way to leave, I'll help cover you!"

Qiu Honglei felt her heart soften when she heard his words of concern. Her expression also eased considerably. "You've misunderstood. This is a secret signal of retreat that we set up ahead of time. Everyone is looking for a chance to withdraw."

Zu An finally realized what was happening. If they straight up said that they were pulling out, then the guards would immediately have a huge boost of morale. They might instead fail to escape under the guards' pursuit.

By putting on this bluff of fighting to the death, the guards would instead become confused and wouldn't adopt any extreme plans. Their first priority would be to ensure the safety of the most important people, allowing them to escape first.

Sure enough, those black clad assassins looked for chances to escape one after another, with a group of people led by Qiu Honglei staying behind to hold up the rear. They clearly already went through strict training.

Zhuxie Chixin was furious when he saw this. "You all wish to leave? All of you can just stay behind!"

He waved his hand towards the side. A giant flame hand descended from the skies and smashed down on them. The giant flame hand's pressure wasn't something those below could resist at all. They were instantly crushed to ashes.

But those black clad assassins didn't panic at all. They continued to withdraw in an orderly manner.

The long-haired woman's voice sounded again. "Your opponent is me!"

A vicious streak of light shot over from the eastern palace's walls. Zu An's eyes were sharp, immediately recognizing it to be the flying sword that almost took his life.

The sword was flowing with radiance. It was a bit shorter than a normal sword. It seemed even smaller in front of that massive, blazing palm.

But it was precisely this small sword that stabbed straight through that massive flame palm. There was a huge hole created in that palm, and then that hole grew larger and larger. It was almost as if it was being destroyed by a type of natural law. The flame palm completely vanished.

Zhuxie Chixin: "???"

Zu An now felt so much better. He was almost done in by this sword and thought that it was because he sucked. He didn't expect Zhuxie Chixin to experience the same thing!

Zhuxie Chixin looked at that long haired woman with a frown. "Are you really only a master?"

The long-haired woman said indifferently, "Won't you find out if you continue fighting? Rambling on and on doesn't seem like the style of the terror-inducing Embroidered Envoy chief commander."

Zhuxie Chixin's eyes narrowed. Killing intent surged within him. His sleeves swung out, and then a pitch-black chain wrapped around the other party.

Zu An was alarmed. "Soul Reaping Chains!"

He saw Huang Huihong's subordinates use these Soul Reaping Chains. Back then, they were able to multiply their strength by working together. Furthermore, the Soul Reaping Chains were able to cut off a part of a cultivator's ki flow. It was quite an incredible weapon.

Now, it looked like the reason the Soul Reaping Chains became the standard weapon for most of the Embroidered Envoy seemed to be related to Zhuxie Chixin. He created suitable weapons for lower level cultivators using his own weapon. He was a powerful master rank cultivator after all!

He quickly noticed that the Soul Reaping Chains in Zhuxie Chixin's hands were a bit different from the ones he saw before. There was a pitch-black sickle at the end, with only the blade revealing a white color. It seemed like the weapon of the god of death!

These were the true Soul Reaping Chains!

Zhuxie Chixin's complexion was extremely grim. It had already been many years since he used his true weapon. However, this long-haired woman was too strange, so he didn't dare show the slightest bit of carelessness. He wouldn't be able to shoulder the guilt if these assassins were allowed to escape.

The long-haired woman didn't wish to face these chains head on. She backed up several zhang of distance with a tap of her feet.

With a flick of Zhuxie Chixin's wrist, the Soul Reaping Chains extended several zhang, perfectly wrapping around this long-haired woman's waist.

He grinned. This woman was too careless! She didn't predict that his Soul Reaping Chains could lengthen! Hmph, once you are wrapped up by the Soul Reaping Chains, your ki will be restrained. You won't be able to struggle further then!

At the same time, that cold and sinister giant sickle hacked towards her waist. The long-haired woman's slender waist and the massive sickle blade formed a stark contrast.

Zhuxie Chixin licked his lips, a mad look flashing past his eyes. He couldn't be bothered to keep her alive for interrogation anymore. Killing a top level expert like this would be extremely beneficial towards his cultivation. He could already picture the wonderful scene of this woman being cleaved in two by his sickle, how her blood would splatter all over her long-hair. At that point, he would fully consolidate his cultivation at the grandmaster rank.

Zu An was alarmed. Even though he was almost killed by her flying sword, he still found it hard to watch this long-haired beauty be killed like this. He hoped that she could escape alive.

A white clothed angel appeared on his shoulder. "She is Honglei's master. Honglei will definitely be sad if she dies."

A red clothed devil appeared on his other shoulder. "Don't waste your breath. You only think she looks pretty and lust after her body. You're despicable!"

The white clothed angel retorted, "Nonsense! Her face is covered, how can I even tell if she is pretty or not?"

The red clothed devil said with mockery, "Look at her figure and beautiful eyes. Do you really need to see her eyes to know that she's a beauty?"

The white clothed angel: "....."

While Zu An was experiencing great internal conflict, there was suddenly a change that happened on the battlefield. Zhuxie Chixin's expression changed, because he realized that something wasn't right.

The long-haired woman was cut in half by the spinning sickle. However, the scene of blood eruption didn't happen. Instead, the woman's figure gradually disappeared, and what was wrapped by the chains was a snapped pillar.

"Substitution technique?" Zhuxie Chixin was shocked. He quickly evaded to the side.

A long haired beauty appeared behind him at the same time. A sword thrust at him.

Fortunately, Zhuxie Chixin evaded fast enough. But even so, there was a long, bloody wound hacked open across his ribs.

His eyes narrowed. He didn't give his wound a single look and instead stared at that long-haired woman. "You aren't a master, but a grandmaster! Who exactly are you!"

#### **Chapter 614: An Astonishing Attack**

Zu An was worried that Qiu Honglei's master would be cut in half, but she had somehow managed to flip the entire situation around. Despite that, Zhuxie Chixin's wound didn't look too serious, and he was clearly still able to carry on.

What Zhuxie Chixin had said concerned him the most, though. Grandmaster rank!

This woman is a grandmaster?

Couldn't he now boast that he had survived an attack from a grandmaster?

The long-haired woman didn't reply, but casually waved her hand. Qiu Honglei and the others who were holding up the rear were gently pushed out of the eastern palace by an unseen force.

Zhuxie Chixin quickly gave out orders. "Guo Zhi, have some of your men escort the crown prince to safety. Zhao Yuan, lead some of the troops and go after the assassins. Golden Token Eleven, disperse the members of the Embroidered Envoy who are present to the various palace gates and inform the garrison generals about the situation. We cannot let a single assassin escape. All those who go against my orders are to be killed. There will be no exceptions!"

The Imperial Guard within the imperial palace were split into four main troops: The left troop, the right troop, the guerilla warfare troop, and the brave riders.

Guo Zhi was the Right Guard General. Zhao Yuan was the Guerilla Warfare General, and was part of the royal family, although his bloodline was only distantly related to the current emperor's bloodline.

So much had happened within the imperial palace so far this day, and the entire Imperial Guard was in chaos. No one knew if the Right Guard General and Brave Rider General were by the empress' side, or somewhere else. Either way, they hadn't shown up here.

Guo Zhi and Zhao Yuan had only just arrived with their men.

These four great generals were all eighth rank experts. As long as Zhuxie Chixin could stall this long-haired woman, who had the highest cultivation, they would be more than enough to deal with the remaining assassins.

"Understood!" answered both generals. Even though Zhuxie Chixin wasn't of a higher military rank than them, he was the emperor's most trusted aide, which granted him the authority to command them.

The two of them also looked at Zu An in surprise. Weren't there only ten golden-token embroidered envoys? When did they promote another one?

Zu An was secretly grumbling. I didn't want to do anything! Why the hell are you pushing sh\*t onto me?

However, he figured that this would at least allow him to see if Qiu Honglei made it out safely, so he gladly accepted the orders.

When he passed by the crown princess, she suddenly said, "Lord Eleven, please be careful!"

Zu An was stunned. However, he still clasped his fist and said, "Thank you, crown princess."

He quickly took his leave. Just before he left, he gave the long-haired woman who was hovering in the air one last look. Her clothes were fluttering about, her figure as dazzling as the moon, and as fleeting as the clouds.

He sighed. When will I become that awesome?

Despite being in the air, she didn't seem to be at that great an altitude. He suddenly remembered that there was a formation covering the capital that restricted cultivators from flying. He pushed these thoughts aside and ordered all the bronze-token envoys under his charge to disperse to the respective palace gates and inform the guards of the news.

The envoys were stunned. "My lord, don't you need anyone at your side?"

Zu An waved his hand. "The leader of the scoundrels is being held up by Lord Zhuxie, and none of the remaining assassins are a match for me. You all need to stay together so that you can watch each other's backs."

He had to find a way to get Qiu Honglei out, he obviously didn't want anyone at his side to hold him back.

Of course, none of the other embroidered envoys knew that. Instead, they were full of admiration. Golden-token envoys truly had profound cultivations. Quite a few of them had witnessed his battle in the eastern palace, so none of them doubted what he said.

“Thank you, Lord Eleven, for your concern!”

After the embroidered envoys thanked him, they dispersed quickly towards the palace gates to which they had been assigned.

Their grateful expressions almost made Zu An burst out laughing. It felt truly amazing to scam others and still be thanked for it.

He quickly buried his mirth and began his search for Qiu Honglei.

He remembered that the long-haired woman had sent Qiu Honglei east, so he subconsciously took off in that direction. He didn’t know if he would run into Qiu Honglei. For all he knew, she might have already left the imperial palace... He could only leave it to fate.

It didn’t take long for him to hear sounds of slaughter coming from nearby, and he quickly rushed towards the source.

He found himself in a rock garden and noticed a group of guards surrounding several black-clad individuals, who were struggling to protect one of their comrades.

“Qiu Honglei!” Zu An immediately recognized her. The two of them had crossed blows recently, so he quickly recognized her despite the veil covering her face.

He assessed the guards, and his heart sank immediately. These weren’t ordinary guards, but well-trained subordinates led by a man in golden armor. Their leader’s helmet was similar to that of Right Guard General Guo Zhi and Guerilla Warfare General Zhao Yuan, which marked him as someone of the same rank.

It’s probably Left Guard General Cheng Xiong. Zu An deduced quickly. He was an eighth rank expert.

The assassins were heavily outnumbered to begin with, and they had to contend with Cheng Xiong, an eighth-ranked expert. Qiu Honglei’s group was about to fall apart. If not for the presence of the expert who had faced off against the crown prince’s lesser tutor, they would have been finished off a long time ago.

Unfortunately, this particular Devil Sect expert had clearly been greatly injured in the battle in the eastern palace. He was no match for Cheng Xiong, who was in peak condition.

His other companions had mostly been either killed or captured. The remaining Devil Sect expert quickly grabbed Qiu Honglei and shoved her away. “Get out of here!”

Qiu Honglei’s eyes were filled with tears, but she knew that now wasn’t the time to act emotionally. She clenched her teeth and fled frantically. She did not want her comrades’ sacrifices to be in vain. However, Cheng Xiong’s sinister laughter followed after her. “Where do you think you’re going?”

His palm smashed into the last Devil Sect expert's chest. The Devil Sect expert froze for a moment, then collapsed. Before he could crawl back up, the blades of the guards around him were already pressed against his neck.

Cheng Xiong didn't stop, but took off after Qiu Honglei. He was certain he could catch up to her within three breaths. After all, this assassin was merely at the sixth rank. The difference between them was too great.

Qiu Honglei knew that the enemy was rapidly approaching from behind her, and despair overcame her immediately.

A slight bitterness bubbled up within her heart. "That idiot risked his life to protect the crown princess, yet now that something's happened to me, I don't see him anywhere."

Of course, she knew that such a complaint was unreasonable. After all, her sect members had fled in all directions, so that they wouldn't be completely surrounded after leaving the eastern palace. Their group had been unlucky, and just happened to run into the incoming Left Guard General.

Even she couldn't have predicted her own poor luck, so how could Zu An have? Given the size of the palace, it would be impossible for him to find her even if he wanted to rescue her.

She touched the dagger at her waist, and a look of determination spread across her face. Everyone on this mission had agreed to pretend to be King Qi's men if they were captured, because all those who had been chosen for this mission were elites who didn't fear death.

Even so, she knew that she couldn't be captured, even if everyone else was. Firstly, she held a special place within the sect, and secondly, she was a woman, and beautiful one as well. Once captured, she would suffer unbearable humiliation.

She had already resolved to die during this mission. The men of the sect had all sacrificed themselves for their grand ideal. How could she be any different?

Her one regret was that she wouldn't be able to see that fellow again before she died...

Right at that moment, a blade of flame several meters in length came crashing down, and her face turned pale. The imperial palace was truly filled with an endless number of experts. She might not even be able to get the easy death she wished for.

Surprisingly, the incoming flame blade did not strike her. Instead, it crashed down beside her and onto the pursuing Cheng Xiong.

Alarmed by this sudden development, Cheng Xiong crossed his arms in front of himself. The steel rings around his arms spun quickly, sending out an ear-piercing sound. He uncrossed his arms and leapt into the air like a massive tiger, roaring as he charged towards the source of the flame blade.

\*Boom!\*

A tremendous noise erupted, and the rock garden he landed in was crushed into powder. With a wave of his hand, he swept away the incoming smoke and dust. The assassin was already nowhere to be seen.

A terrifying pressure suddenly spread outward from the direction of the eastern palace. It was hard for him to remain standing, even with his cultivation. He turned towards the eastern palace with a look of shock. "Even His Majesty has gotten involved. Who is worthy of his personal interference?"

## **Chapter 615: Wheel of the Crescent Moon**

In the eastern palace, Zhuxie Chixin tried his best to stop the assassins that had been ushered out, but was unfortunately stopped by the long-haired woman.

With a cold expression, he sent his Soul-reaping Chains flying about the battlefield, hacking and slashing unpredictably. It truly seemed like a sickle from hell.

Unfortunately, all of his attacks were easily blocked by the small, exquisite sword.

His opponent did not wield the sword in her hand. Instead, it seemed to possess a sentience of its own. It flew around the long-haired woman freely, blocking his sickle perfectly each time.

Zhuxie Chixin's brow furrowed. He tried to think of a woman who used a short sword like this, who was also at the grandmaster rank. Unfortunately, he wasn't able to come up with anyone. There were a few potential candidates, but none of them were a perfect match for the woman facing him.

After another dozen or so strikes, the long-haired woman smiled and said, "I won't play with you anymore."

She sensed that the others had already made it out, but something seemed to have happened in the vicinity of her disciple. She had to head over and help her out.

As soon as she moved, however, Zhuxie Chixin dashed to block her path.

The long-haired woman frowned. "Why do you have to go this far? You know you can't stop me. If we keep fighting, even your foundation might be damaged. It will take several decades for you to recover from something like that."

Zhuxie Chixin's expression was downcast. "There is no denying that your cultivation is extremely high, and I have rarely seen anyone on your level. Unfortunately, even if I cannot stop you, do not forget that this is the imperial palace. Do you believe that His Majesty himself will be unable to stop you?"

The woman chuckled. "There's no need to frighten me. I know that His Majesty is currently... unable to make an appearance."

"Is that so?" A bright yellow decree suddenly appeared in Zhuxie Chixin's hands. He quickly unfolded it and began to chant. "The decree of the emperor who has accepted the mandate of heaven states..."

The woman grew alert. She knew that the Embroidered Envoy could act in the emperor's stead, but this was a rare occurrence. Why did Zhuxie Chixin just happen to have an imperial edict on him?

She didn't dare hesitate. Her short sword flew out in an arc and shot towards Zhuxie Chixin. She clearly hoped to silence him before he could complete the chant.

Unfortunately for her, Zhuxie Chixin had one foot through the door leading to grandmaster rank. There was no way silencing him would be that easy.

When the flying sword reached him, a massive golden palm leapt out of the decree to meet him.

The flying sword had been able to penetrate Zhuxie Chixin's blazing palm earlier on, but was immediately stopped when it struck the golden palm. It began to vibrate wildly.

The golden palm made contact with the tip of the sword and continued forward without stopping. The nigh-invincible flying sword was slowly broken apart, inch by inch. The golden palm continued to shoot forward, almost reaching the long-haired woman.

Zhuxie Chixin continued to stare at her. The destruction of her flying sword should have resulted in serious injuries for her, and perhaps should have even stripped her of all power to resist. Why did this woman look as though she was still in perfect condition?

Could it be that the flying sword wasn't her real weapon?

The long-haired woman wasn't feeling fine at all. Her heart was pounding fiercely, and her expression was deadly serious. She spread her arms and slowly rose into the air. Her long hair fluttered about, and a crescent moon rose behind her.

"Huh? Why is there another moon?" Many in the eastern palace rubbed their eyes. They thought that they were seeing things.

That curved moon scattered out a clear and cool radiance. The long-haired woman looked beautiful and elegant. Now that there was this sparkling and translucent moonlight behind her, even though she was dressed in all black, she still looked extraordinary like a lunar goddess.

Bathed in the beautiful moonlight, these same people were suddenly shocked to discover that they couldn't move. No—they could move, but their movements were extremely slow, even slower than a snail's.

Zhuxie Chixin was astounded. He knew exactly what was going on. She was a light element cultivator who could freeze time!

Of course, this wasn't a true freezing of time. Instead, she was greatly slowing the movements of all her enemies within a certain range, which made it feel as though time had been frozen.

There were few light element cultivators to begin with, and those who had reached her level were even rarer. One person suddenly leaped out in his mind.

Even though she always used a flying sword as her weapon, she was now forced to use her Wheel of the Crescent Moon. He should've guessed her identity a long time ago!

This was the Devil Sect's Sect Master, Yun Jianyue!

The golden palm also seemed to be affected by the quiet moonlight, and it gradually slowed.

Unfortunately, the long-haired woman had no time to rejoice. Even though the massive palm was slowed, it was still approaching her.

The palm was almost on her, and would hit her in moments, even if it were slowed to a snail's pace.

She clenched her teeth. With a wave of her hands, she launched the bright, curved moon at the palm, intercepting it and creating a huge explosion.

Many in the eastern palace were deafened by the sound of it, and it took a long while for them to recover their hearing. Even so, their heads were still ringing, and blood was flowing out of most of their ears.

The formation that protected the eastern palace was instantly flattened by the shockwave.

The eastern palace had yet to experience any damage, despite the pitched battles that had preceded this one. It went to show just how strong the defenses were.

No matter how formidable these defenses were, however, there was still a limit to how much punishment they could take. How could they withstand the powerful shockwave released by the collision of two attacks, one of them beyond the grandmaster level?

Zhuxie Chixin vomited a mouthful of blood. He had shielded the others in the eastern palace, preventing them from dying from the shockwaves, but suffered massive injuries as a result.

By the time the golden palm gradually dissipated, the long-haired woman had already vanished without a trace.

The emperor's face gradually took form in the sky above the eastern palace. The massive figure spoke slowly. "She was seriously injured, and couldn't have gone far. Zhuxie Chixin, you must capture her!"

Zhuxie Chixin knelt down straight away. "I will follow your orders! Long live the emperor!" he said with great respect.

The others in the eastern palace knelt down as well, their expressions full of awe. Everyone said that His Majesty was the number one expert, but few had ever witnessed him personally take part in a fight.

The long-haired woman had been terribly formidable, yet she still wasn't a match for His Majesty's attack.

All who remained in the eastern palace were awash with pride, reveling in the glory that was the emperor's appearance. Many cultivators among them, whose cultivations had plateaued for many years, had been granted insights because of this.

Zhuxie Chixin had reaped incredible benefits as well. However, he did not have the time to digest these insights right now. He escorted the Right Guard General and the crown prince's lesser tutor to a safe location, then led his subordinates in search of that long-haired woman.

Even though he had been injured while protecting everyone else in the eastern palace from harm, his injuries were nothing compared to those suffered by the long-haired woman. That woman would certainly die if they crossed paths.

He even suspected that she might not be able to escape if she ran into some ordinary guardsmen.

...

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the imperial palace, Qiu Honglei had just seen a giant sword of flames brush past her. Before she could even react, someone grabbed her and pulled her to the side.

Alarmed, she was just about to retaliate when she heard a familiar voice beside her ear. "It's me."

Qiu Honglei's hands stopped halfway. "Ah Zu!" she cried out in joy.

I guess this guy has a conscience after all! She thought that he only cared about the crown princess. Apparently, it seemed he cared about her as well.

"Shush!" Zu An gestured for her to be quiet. After all, the eighth-ranked Cheng Xiong was still pursuing them.

He had deliberately used the flame blade, a technique he had never used so far, to hide his identity.

This was the benefit of knowing many different techniques!

I really need to write down everything I know and note down when I used it, though. It'll be trouble if I get caught using a technique reserved for a different identity.

Zu An led Qiu Honglei along a convoluted route, but he wasn't confident that he could throw off Cheng Xiong. The Left Guard General was surely much more familiar with the imperial palace than him.

He even considered baiting their pursuer to a secluded place to get rid of him if they really couldn't shake him off.

He was only at the eighth rank, after all. Even though he was a full rank behind, he still stood a chance. With Qiu Honglei's help, the odds were better than even.

However, an eighth rank expert surely had his own trump cards. It would be terrible if Zu An let him get away.

While he was hesitating, a terrifying explosion came from the direction of the eastern palace. The entire imperial palace—no, everyone in the capital—trembled at this eruption of power.

"We're leaving!" Zu An might have gone ahead with his plan to confront Cheng Xiong, but he had already witnessed the emperor's power once in Brightmoon City, and met him face-to-face in his study not too long ago. He was already used to his power. He would use this opportunity while Cheng Xiong was overwhelmed by this domineering power to elude him.

Qiu Honglei was trembling. "Was that the emperor?" She suspected as much, but was still unwilling to believe it.

Before Zu An had a chance to reply, the emperor's order that Zhuxie Chixin capture the long-haired woman had already echoed throughout the entire imperial palace.

"My master is in trouble!" exclaimed Qiu Honglei, alarmed. She turned back immediately. "I need to save my master!"

## **Chapter 616: Come and Go as We Please**

Zu An panicked. He pulled her to the side. "They were caught unprepared by you guys earlier, but the guards have already reacted to the situation. The defense systems have been fully activated. Aren't you just throwing your life away by running in now?"

"But my elderly master has taken good care of me all this time. How can I just do nothing?" Qiu Honglei was panicking.

"Elderly?" Zu An had a strange look on his face. The long-haired woman didn't look that old! Fuck! The world of cultivation is just that unreliable! They look like a freaking loli on the outside, but their real age might be older than your grandma!

But those female immortals in the books he read were all in the thousands as well. All those stories about Chang'e, that lady in the moon, those seven female immortals... did those lurkers on the female streamers' channels ever care about any of that?

Forget about those female immortals, if there was a wealthy girl who was even a bit attractive, many guys would start saying 'auntie, I don't want to work hard anymore'...

He coughed and put away these random thoughts. He quickly said to Qiu Honglei, "But you can't throw away your own life while trying to save someone else! I could tell that you were about to end your own life from that dagger you pulled out. What if you get captured on your way back inside the palace?"

Qiu Honglei pursed her lips. "I'll just fight to the death with my master if I have to! My master definitely needs help right now. If I abandon her now, then I'll regret it for the rest of my life. My path of dao will also be disturbed and I won't be able to make any more progress."

Zu An knew that she wasn't lying. Many cultivators of this world paid careful attention to their own mental states. If something happened to their conviction, then forget about not being able to advance, it might be hard for them to even maintain their current cultivation.

He could only say, "Let me bring you out of the palace first. Then, I'll look for your master."

"Really?" Qiu Honglei was overjoyed. She jumped into his arms and gave him a peck on the cheeks.

Qiu Honglei blushed when she saw his surprised expression. "What are you looking at? It's not like I didn't kiss you before. Didn't I suck out the poison from your back before?"

Zu An laughed. "Even that's considered kissing?"

"Of course!" Qiu Honglei harrumphed. Worry returns to her face. "I'll go with you. We'll be able to watch out for each other."

Zu An shook his head. "No, I have the identity of an Embroidered Envoy right now which makes things much easier. It'll instead become more inconvenient if you come with me."

Qiu Honglei nodded. She wasn't the type of woman who would pester endlessly. She was able to understand what was most important right now. "Then I'll have to trouble you. You have to help me save my master."

"Okay, I'll do my best. You don't need to be too worried. Your master is a glorious grandmaster rank cultivator after all. It's not that easy to finish her off." Zu An held her hand and said in consolation.

Qiu Honglei was still worried. "I wouldn't be that worried if it was anyone else, but she faced the emperor!"

"Don't worry. Even if it is just for your sake, I will do everything I can to save her." Zu An said.

Qiu Honglei's teary eyes looked at him with a gentle gaze. She was incredibly moved. "Ah Zu, you're the best."

She already completely forgave him for protecting the crown princes and fighting on the other side.

Zu An said with a smile, "In that case, how about you give me another kiss?"

Qiu Honglei's face turned red. She got on her tiptoes to give him another kiss on the cheeks. However, the other party suddenly turned his head and met her lips with his.

Caught unprepared, the two of them kissed each other on the lips. She was extremely embarrassed and backed up. Her face was entirely red. "You... you're shameless!"

Zu An laughed. "I'm much more motivated to save our master now, after getting a kiss from Honglei."

Qiu Honglei rolled her eyes when she heard him call her master 'our' master. This fella really was as shameless as before. But... I don't hate that.

She felt her cheeks heat up and quickly said, "But my master has a mask covering her face. How are you going to know whether or not it is her later?"

Zu An had a strange look on his face. He recalled the woman from the eastern palace. "With hair that long, it'll be hard to not recognize her, right?"

"I guess you're right." Qiu Honglei chuckled. She had always been envious of her beautiful long hair.

"I'll bring you out of the palace first." Zu An gave the nearby city gate a look. "I'll draw the guards' attention. Use that chance to climb over the wall."

He chose this place because the palace walls were a bit lower.

"Alright!" Qiu Honglei gave the walls a look. As long as no one was watching up there, then with her cultivation, she should be able to scale this wall.

Then, Zu An strut towards the nearby city gates.

"Halt! Name yourself!" The city gate's guards immediately noticed him.

He didn't reply and instead slowly walked over. His Embroidered Envoy outfit made those guards' eyes narrow.

"May I ask what sir is doing here?" A lesser officer asked. His eyes continuously drifted towards Zu An's waist token. He was incredibly shocked! It was a golden token envoy!

"I wish to leave the gates." Zu An said with a low and muffled voice.

Those guards looked troubled. "Sir, there were assassins that just entered the palace, so the palace gates are shut. That is why no one is allowed out."

Zu An picked up the Embroidered Envoy golden token and held it in front of them. He deliberately roared out in anger, “I carry the emperor’s mission. You all dare to stop me? Can you all bear the consequences of delaying his majesty’s orders?”

Those guards all looked at each other in dismay. They wanted to dissuade Zu An, but Zu An maintained an unquestionable attitude. They were starting to get angry as well.

This golden token envoy really is something!

Uh... wait. He really isn’t someone incredible...

But they didn’t dare let anyone out after the assassins that stormed in today. They had the confidence in standing against him.

The atmosphere was growing more and more tense, the guards around the city wall also gradually approached. If there really was some conflict, these guards were definitely going to suffer against this golden token envoy.

Qiu Honglei smiled when she saw Zu An discipline those guards like they were his grandsons. This fella really was a top class bully.

She didn’t waste this chance he gave her. She used this gap in the guards’ defenses to silently scale the wall.

Zu An sighed in relief when he saw her leave safely. When he saw more and more guards move over, all of them holding blades with unkind expressions, he coughed lightly and said, “All of you are excellent men, you have carried out your orders loyally. I was only coming here to test out your reactions. I am satisfied with the result. Remember that you have to be like this. No matter who comes, unless they come with the emperor’s decree, no one is allowed to leave! Do you understand?!”

“We understand!”

Zu An raised his voice at the end, and these guards were scared to the point where they subconsciously replied.

“All of you have worked hard. I am heading to the other gates to inform them.” Zu An looked unfazed on the surface, but his heart was pounding. He quickly turned around to leave.

All of the guards here. “.....”

Is he crazy?!

What kind of situation were they now in? Yet he is here to test us out like this?

We had to listen to your scolding too! Are you using us for your own amusement?

But when they recalled his golden token envoy status, all of them could only hold back their anger.

You have successfully trolled the palace gate guards for +666 +666 +666...

Zu An felt incredibly refreshed when he saw the incoming Rage points. As expected, Rage points were easier to earn when there were more people to taunt! He had to pay the city outskirts camps a visit some time. He'll definitely make a killing in Rage points there!

But he quickly remembered his task of saving Qiu Honglei's master. The imperial palace was so large, finding her was going to be quite troublesome.

He returned to the eastern palace and was about to ask around about the situation. However, when he saw the palace razed to the ground, he was completely confused.

The emperor fought against a grandmaster... aren't the results a bit too ridiculous?

He was just about to question someone when a bronze token envoy rushed over. "Sir, I've been looking for you for a while."

Zu An was stunned. "Why were you looking for me?"

There was one thing that was bad about Embroidered Envoys, which was that everyone wore masks and uniforms. It was really hard to tell who was who.

That person said respectfully, "His majesty has summoned you. We haven't been able to find you after all this time."

Zu An was startled. "I will head over immediately."

He followed this person to the imperial study. Even before he even entered through the gates, he could already hear the emperor's furious voice. "Do you think the imperial palace is a food market? Are those assassins allowed to go wherever they please? Do you still want to keep your heads or not?!"

### **Chapter 617: Am I Really Going to Lose an Arm?**

Not only was Zu An not frightened by the emperor's outburst, he almost burst out laughing instead. He'd had almost the exact same thoughts in mind, although he wasn't thinking about a market, but a public restroom.

Honestly, though, it wasn't fair for the emperor to berate them like this. Even though the guards had been rather ineffective, it was because their enemies had the upper hand from the start. The most notable group of assassins—the Shadow Group—and the elites of the Devil Sect had both shown up. Even a grandmaster had appeared, and yet the emperor, the most powerful cultivator, had failed to show. What were these guards supposed to do?

What the hell is this emperor doing anyway?

Zu An wondered if he should announce his arrival. He wasn't so keen on being caught in the crossfire.

The eunuch outside spoke. "My Lord Eleven, His Majesty has asked that you enter as soon as you arrive."

Zu An was overcome with blessed relief. "Thank you."

He entered carefully, and was shocked to discover that the emperor wasn't inside. Instead, a massive mirror stood in the middle of the room, with an image of the emperor on its reflective surface. It was similar to the recording mirror that he'd used to converse with Chu Chuyan, but this one was much larger.

What's going on? He looked around and saw that no one else present seemed the least bit surprised. They seemed to accept that this was how things worked.

He quietly took a look around. By now, Zhuxie Chixin was considered an old acquaintance. He had always seemed bossy and domineering, with his nose pointed into the sky. Right now, however, he was standing obediently off to the side like a little quail, his attitude incredibly respectful.

The one who was being pointed at and scolded was another old acquaintance, Guard General Liu Yao.

He was bowing very low, and continuously begging for forgiveness. The arrogance he had shown in Brightmoon City was nowhere to be seen.

Even though he was the empress' uncle, which made him the emperor's senior, he did not dare bring that up before the emperor himself.

He was feeling rather despondent as well. Even though the Guard General, in theory, was the highest-ranking commander of the imperial palace, he usually lived in his own estate. The defenses of the imperial palace were overseen by the Left, Right, Guerilla Warfare, and Brave Rider Generals, as well as Zhuxie Chixin's Embroidered Envoy and the few imperial bodyguards under the charge of the Supervisor of Attendants.

He had already discharged his duties for the day and left the palace in high spirits, before the chaos arose at night. He had been at home, enjoying a drink. How could he have reacted to the situation in a timely manner?

Zu An's eyes moved across the room. It was filled with powerful players from the imperial court. He recognized Right General Guo Zhi and Guerrilla Warfare General Zhao Yuan, whom he'd met in the eastern palace earlier.

He's seen one of the others not too long ago as well. This man had been pursuing Qiu Honglei, but had been stopped by his own flame blade. This was none other than Left Guard General Cheng Xiong.

Zu An did not see the Brave Rider General here. He wondered where this man was.

Another lean-looking, elderly man was present. His bronze skin gave his slim body a mysterious sense of explosive strength.

While at the academy, Shang Liuyu had given him a pictorial book that introduced the uniforms of important officials in the court. This uniform resembled the drawing of the clothing worn by the Supervisor of Attendants.

Was this the new Supervisor of Attendants, Murong Tong, the grandfather of Murong Qinghe?

No wonder that little girl had tanned skin. Was this a hereditary trait?

His back was much straighter than those of the other yes-men in the room. He was in charge of the emperor's ceremonial bodyguards. The emperor's cultivation was unmatched, so the bodyguards were mostly there for show. Besides, he had been transferred to this post because of other reasons, not because of the most recent assassination attempt.

Hmph, it's all because of that brat, Zu An! He's the reason I have to accompany these fellows and suffer through this!

You have successfully trolled Murong Tong for 723 Rage points!

The sudden influx of Rage points gave Zu An a fright. His first instinct was that Murong Tong had somehow recognized him, but after giving it some thought, he changed his mind. This old man was probably still upset about being transferred.

After going at them for a while, the emperor finally calmed down. He then said, "All the officials present will be demoted by one rank, and you will forfeit your salary for the next three years. You will all remain in your positions for now, and continue to discharge your regular duties until you make up for your failures with future contributions."

"Thank you, Your Majesty!" All of them bowed low and expressed their thanks. For individuals with their status, things like their salary were seen as dispensable. Such a punishment was nothing more than a slap on the wrist.

Zu An was the only one who was upset. Bro, I haven't even gotten a single paycheck yet, and you're already going to withhold three years' worth?

Unlike these other fellows, I don't have any other sources of income. Not only do I have to risk my life to help the emperor complete his stupid mission, I now have to work as a slave for three years?

Not even a sweatshop is this abusive!

Unfortunately, he had just witnessed the emperor's power. Even though he was cursing in his heart, he did not dare voice his complaints.

The emperor nodded, satisfied by their reactions. "Cheng Xiong, you will be in charge of investigating the attempted assassination of the empress, and finding out who they are!

"Guo Zhi, you are in charge of the assassination attempt in the eastern palace. Eliminate all of the escaping assassins.

"Liu Yao, Zhao Yuan, you're both in charge of locking down the capital city. You are permitted to arrest all suspicious individuals. All those who resist are to be executed!"

"Understood!" They acknowledged in unison.

Zu An was glad that Qiao Xueying had managed to flee earlier in the day. If she had been half a day late, her clansmen might not have made it out. She had patiently suffered in the capital for such a long time, finally managing to rescue her clansmen. It would have been far too tragic if it had all crumbled at the last minute.

He was much more worried about Qiu Honglei. It was already dark, and the security around the city walls was tight. She had no way of leaving the capital city. He wondered if she would manage to evade capture by Liu Yao and Zhao Yuan.

The others left after receiving their orders, leaving Zu An and Zhuxie Chixin behind.

The emperor looked at Zhuxie Chixin. "Did you capture that woman?"

Zu An's heart skipped a beat. He knew that the emperor was talking about Qiu Honglei's master, and his ears pricked up.

Zhuxie Chixin shook his head.

"This humble one is incompetent. We searched for her for a long time, but we were unable to discover her whereabouts. We don't even know if she's left the palace."

The emperor seemed surprisingly sanguine. "The woman is a grandmaster. Even though she's seriously injured, it won't be easy to capture her. However, the city gates are sealed shut. I'm sure she hasn't left the capital city yet. You are still in charge of finding her."

"Understood." Zhuxie Chixin bowed respectfully.

The emperor then said, "You're a very knowledgeable man. Were you able to determine who she was in your brief battle?"

Zhuxie Chixin said, "That woman used a short sword at first and fought with the strength of a master cultivator, probably because she did not want to reveal her identity. But when faced with your attack, Your Majesty, she was forced to use her true weapon, which gave me some idea of who she was.

"The weapon she wields is the Wheel of the Crescent Moon, and she is a light element cultivator who is able to slow time. These mark her as the Devil Sect's sect master, Yun Jianyue."

Zu An's heart began to pound. Holy crap, she's exposed! The ploy hatched by Qiu Honglei and the others to frame King Qi for this is probably done for. Not only that, the imperial court is probably going to go all out against the Devil Sect... Things don't look good for them.

Qiu Honglei's master seemed to have a name befitting her bearing, though. She had indeed looked just like a beautiful moon hiding among the clouds. [1]

The emperor remained silent for a while. "Did you mention this to anyone else?" he finally asked.

"This subject knows the importance of this information. I have not spoken about it to anyone else," replied Zhuxie Chixin hurriedly.

The emperor nodded. "Good. This matter must be kept secret. You are not permitted to bring it up again."

Even though Zhuxie Chixin was slightly confused, he did not probe any further, but acknowledged the emperor's order. "Understood!"

Zu An was stunned. What the hell is going on? Could Qiu Honglei's master be the emperor's old flame or something? That doesn't seem right, though. If she was a former lover of his, he should have realized who she was immediately after that exchange of blows.

"Withdraw. Zu An, stay behind." The emperor's indifferent voice came from the mirror.

"Yes, Your Majesty." Zhuxie Chixin shot Zu An a surprised look before taking his leave, but said nothing else. He withdrew quickly and closed the door behind him.

The emperor stared daggers at Zu An. "I heard that you carried the crown princess today?"

Even though he was only facing a mirror, the pressure exerted on Zu An soaked his clothes in cold sweat. "Your Majesty, we were in a critical situation. I did that to save the crown princess..."

The emperor's gaze turned ice-cold. He did not let him finish speaking. "Which arm did you use to hold her? Cut it off yourself."

## **Chapter 618: Scammer**

Zu An almost fell over in shock.

He thought that the emperor had made him stay because he wanted to grant him some rewards in private. He'd been happily awaiting the emperor to bestow on him his well-deserved rewards for saving so many people today, only for the emperor to hit him with this line.

Bro, what the hell?

His hairs were all standing on end, and he instinctively wanted to flee, but he forced himself to calm down. Even though the emperor was speaking through the mirror, killing him would be easy enough, given the emperor's cultivation. After all, just a single appearance by him had been enough to decide matters in Brightmoon City.

Furthermore, he had just faced off against Qiu Honglei's master, and had been able to easily defeat her despite not being in the palace at all.

If even a glorious grandmaster wasn't a match for him, his own cultivation was worthless.

Zu An took a deep breath. He braced himself and said, "Your Majesty is not being fair. I cannot accept this!"

"I am the emperor. Do I need you to approve of what I wish to be done?" replied the emperor haughtily.

Zu An was momentarily speechless.

Do you think you're fucking Chen Beixuan or something?[1]

However, he reacted quickly. "Your Majesty wants to achieve immortality throughout the ages, in an indirect manner. I don't believe that you want history to remember you as an unjust man, or that you are a foolish ruler who acts on a whim."

Hmph. You can say that you don't care about what I think, or what everyone else here thinks, but there's no way you wouldn't care about what the later generation thinks of you.

The emperor's eyes narrowed. "It's been many years since someone has spoken to me like that."

Zu An's tone immediately became extremely respectful. "I am not trying to offend Your Majesty. I only wish to state a few things. There was an assassination attempt in the imperial palace today. First, I saved the empress' life in the Palace of Peace, then I rushed over to the eastern palace and saved both the crown prince and princess. Of all the contributions made by anyone today, mine must rank among the top three most worthy, even if they aren't considered the most worthy of all. If Your Majesty does not wish to reward me, that is your prerogative, but you've even ordered me to cut off a limb. That caused me to blurt out several delirious things in a moment of alarm. I must ask for Your Majesty's forgiveness."

The emperor snorted. "You're rather crafty, aren't you? Whatever, I'll give you a chance to make up for your crimes, so that you won't go to your death without knowing why."

"Make up for my crimes?" Zu An was confused. He cursed inwardly. Weren't you saying just a second ago that you didn't need my approval to do anything? Yet now you're concerned about this stuff.

"Help me take care of two matters," continued the emperor. "Once completed, not only will I pardon your licentious acts towards the crown princess, I will also reward you greatly. If you fail, I believe you already know the consequences."

"What are these matters?" Zu An quickly asked. Just carrying the crown princess is considered a licentious act? Then what about what I did to the empress? I absolutely cannot let him know about that. Otherwise, I'll be tortured to death.

The emperor was not privy to his thoughts. "The first matter is to investigate how the assassins were able to get into the palace through the layers of guards," he said.

Zu An was surprised. "Your Majesty, why aren't you assigning this task to the Left and Right Guard Generals?"

The emperor glared at him. "They have their own investigations, and you have yours. Is there a problem?"

Zu An shivered. "Not at all." It sounded as though the emperor didn't fully trust the Left and Right Generals.

The emperor continued. "Secondly, you are to find out who leaked out the information that I wasn't in the palace. The assassins found the perfect moment to strike, and I refuse to believe that it was all just a coincidence."

Zu An forced a smile. "Your Majesty, you know that it's only been a few days since I arrived at the capital. I am of lowly status, and I'm not well acquainted with many people. How am I supposed to investigate such a thing? Why not let Commander Zhuxie lead a team to investigate this instead? They are much more skilled at this."

"If I tell you to do it, then you do it. What's with all of this nonsense?" The emperor's face was as dark as a thunderhead. Ordinarily, his subjects would not even dare to breathe too loudly in front of him. And yet, this fellow not only talked back to him, he was even haggling with him!

Zu An laughed awkwardly. "Please, Your Majesty, I'm only trying to help you come up with the fastest and most effective way to investigate these matters."

The emperor hesitated a moment, then decided that, since he was going to assign Zu An to this case, there were some matters that he needed to be informed about. As such, he said, "The reason I picked you for this is precisely because you haven't been here for long. With fewer ties in the capital, there's less for me to worry about."

Zu An was surprised. "Does Your Majesty suspect Lord Zhuxie and the others?"

The emperor eyed him coldly, but did not offer an answer. Instead, he continued, "Only a handful knew that I was taking a trip out of the palace, yet this information managed to be leaked. That's why I need you to look into it."

Zu An was alarmed. The emperor really wasn't in the palace! "Where did you go, Your Majesty?"

The emperor narrowed his eyes. "Don't ask about things that you shouldn't be asking about."

Zu An was at a loss for words.

To save himself from the awkward silence, he changed the topic. "Your Majesty, at least let me know who knew about your departure. Was it the empress, the senior concubine, or was it someone else?"

The emperor replied lightly, "The empress and the other concubines do not know. The only ones who knew were the ones in the room with you just now, as well as several eunuchs who help me through my daily activities. I'll leave it to you to investigate."

The pieces finally fell into place for Zu An.

No wonder he called me here to take part in the meeting. He wanted me to know who the suspects were.

Although Zhuxie Chixin is his trusted aide, he still isn't free of suspicion... The paranoia of the one who rules is truly terrifying.

Stranger than that, though, was that not even his wives knew about his whereabouts, despite confiding in several others. Tsk tsk, his concubines really are pitiful. Rumor has it that the emperor hasn't even visited his concubines in many years due to his decreasing lifespan...

What a pity. All this excellent farmland is being neglected! These concubines probably find it pointless to vie for his affections.

"You hold the golden token of the Embroidered Envoy, which should be enough for you to do whatever you need to do. There's no need to fret over your official rank. However, let me remind you that you absolutely must not expose your true identity during your search, because it will affect your other mission concerning King Qi. You know the consequences if that happens."

“Understood!” Zu An did not need the emperor to point this out to him. It was much more interesting to play around with multiple identities. It wasn’t fun at all if he laid all his cards on the table.

“You may leave.” The emperor closed his eyes.

Zu An let out the breath he had been holding. He left the study and closed the door.

The eunuch escorted him out with a smile. “Lord Eleven truly has boundless prospects! Rarely does His Majesty ever meet with an embroidered envoy alone, Zhuxie Chixin aside.”

This news stunned Zu An. It seemed he had to find a chance to have a talk with Zhuxie Chixin, to mend fences and the like. It would be terrible if that man turned against him.

After all, Zhuxie Chixin had one foot through the door to the rank of grandmaster, and he wielded tremendous authority as well. Having someone like that as an antagonist would be truly awful.

“How do I address you?” Zu An asked the eunuch. The emperor mentioned that some eunuchs attended him on his daily activities. This was probably one of them. Was this guy currying favor with him out of guilt?

“This humble one’s surname is Wen,” The eunuch said with a smile. He wore a warm and affable expression on his chubby face.

“I am still a newcomer here, Eunuch Wen. It would be good if you look out for me in the future.” Zu An’s tone was polite, but he had something totally different in mind. Why are all eunuchs usually so fat? I’ve heard that pig farmers always said that castrated pigs grew the fattest. Is the same principle at work here...?

“You’re too kind, My Lord.” Eunuch Wen was all smiles. This new golden-token envoy was rather insightful and interesting, not like the others who were all dark and gloomy, looking around as if everyone owed them money.

The two of them chatted for a while, and separated amicably.

After walking for a while, Zu An suddenly smacked his head with a free hand. “Ah! I was scammed!”

It had suddenly dawned on him that the emperor had never intended to blame him for anything. He had deliberately scared him so that he would focus on this new task, while feeling grateful for the opportunity.

Dammit! Not only did I not get anything for saving your damned wife and children, but you’re pulling this sort of stunt on me as well. Are all emperors scammers?

He was boiling with rage inside, but he had to keep this thought bottled up inside. He didn’t dare blurt any of it out loud.

Lost in his own thoughts, he wandered past a rock garden, when a hand suddenly reached out and pulled him in.

## **Chapter 619: Embrace of Death, Part Two**

Zu An was stunned at first, but snapped to alertness when the hand touched his shoulder.

One hand was on his shoulder, pulling him into the garden, while the other hand wrapped around his neck. If this person wanted him dead, he would be dead for sure.

Ordinarily, a cultivator would not be able to put up a fight if their shoulder pressure point was restrained. However, how could a cheat like him be compared to an ordinary cultivator?

He immediately used his Heaven-Devouring Sutra. A powerful suction force appeared around his shoulder, neutralizing the ki around that hand restraining him.

"Hm?" a female voice exclaimed in surprise. Whoever it was, she hadn't expected this strange suction force to appear.

With his life in imminent danger, Zu An could hardly be bothered by the gender of his attacker.

He twisted his shoulder, immediately employing the Entangling Feathersilk Art that Pei Mianman had taught him. He slid from her grasp like a loach, then followed up by sliding up her arm to grab her neck.

With an angry huff and a wave of her hand, the woman slapped away his encroaching arm, and then struck at his forehead with her fingers.

You want to play around with finger techniques? I'm good at that too! Zu An immediately struck back with his Shining Finger.

Anger flashed within the woman's eyes when she saw that her fingers had been stopped by a man. With a snap of her flexible wrist, she retaliated, sending a force shooting through her own fingers.

Zu An felt his own fingers go numb, and he lost his grip. Before he could process what had happened, the other party had already attacked.

The two of them exchanged several dozen blows within the confines of the rock garden, each strike containing a vicious amount of force.

Zu An was overcome with shock. After absorbing Mosquito Daoist's cultivation, he was considered a powerful cultivator, and had been easily able to dispatch the elite assassins from the Shadow Group.

He didn't know what it was with this woman. Her aura was rather unstable, and, judging by her current strength, she was around the sixth or seventh rank at most. She even seemed to be injured. Why wasn't he able to deal with her?

The woman was equally astonished. After all, she rarely met someone who was a match for her, yet now, despite her opponent clearly having much less experience than her, she was still unable to subdue him.

Even though she was seriously injured, she still retained her sight, her experiences, and her extensive techniques. She would have had no problem going up against anyone beneath the eighth rank.

Not only that, but she had caught him unprepared!

She cursed inwardly. She had been gunning for his Embroidered Envoy uniform, because it would make moving around much easier, but she never expected him to be such a tough nut to crack.

The rock garden was exceedingly cramped, and they were employing both their arms and legs to fight, resulting in their bodies tangling around each other quite often. At first, she hadn't minded it that much, since she fully expected him to soon be dead. As the fight went on, however, she felt more and more as though she was being taken advantage of.

She wanted desperately to leave the confined space, but she was dragged back in as soon as she tried to get out.

She couldn't help but grind her teeth. Was this fellow really planning to take advantage of her?

Someone possessing her cultivation realm and temperament wasn't so easily fazed, however, and she quickly calmed down. She reasoned that her opponent was only confining their battle to this narrow space not so that he could make advances on her, but because he was afraid that their fight would become more unpredictable in a more spacious area.

As she was reasoning this out, a vicious expression flashed across Zu An's eyes. His fine hairs were standing on end, and his mind was tight with concentration. He knew that his life could be extinguished if he made even the slightest misstep.

His attention was focused on a razor's edge. He didn't even notice the Rage points he was receiving.

He wasn't about to hold back anything. "Whatcha starin' at?"

"I'm staring at you, sh\*thead!" the woman replied subconsciously.

A bewildered expression immediately appeared on her face.

While she was still in shock, Zu An wrapped her in his arms and activated the Heaven-Devouring Sutra, madly trying to absorb her cultivation.

This was how he killed Mosquito Daoist! He called it—the Embrace of Death!

The two of them were pressed tightly against each other, leaving the woman both shocked and furious. She abandoned all reservations. She raised her hand, and a streak of vicious light appeared.

As soon as it appeared, however, it vanished without a trace.

Again, the woman was left bewildered.

However, it took her mere moments to realize that her opponent was using a strange technique to siphon away her cultivation. Some of the ki flowing along the surface of her body had already been absorbed.

Now was not the time for embarrassment. She quickly focused her mind, solidifying her ki reserves to counter her opponent's powerful siphoning attack.

All was going smoothly for Zu An at first, but a frown quickly appeared on his face. He wasn't able to siphon off any more of her ki!

The other party's ki foundation was incredibly firm. It seemed like a massive mountain that just refused to be absorbed. He could siphon away some loose silt, but that did little to affect the solidity of the mountain.

Of course, if he continued this for a few decades, he might just be able to siphon all of it away, but such a scenario was hardly realistic.

On the flip side, the woman was equally shaken. She had dominated the world for such a long time. Was she really going to be done in by an unnamed embroidered envoy?

With her body so tightly restrained, and the powerful suction force tearing away at her, she couldn't muster any strength to retaliate, and could only continue to defend her foundation to prevent him from siphoning it all away.

Thankfully, her cultivation was much higher than his, so her cultivation remained and she kept her foundation. If not, she might have been cleaned out.

How could there be such a terrifying, demonic technique in this world? Huh, could this be Mosquito Daoist? Wait, no... Mosquito Daoist is a woman. Is this her protégé? Or perhaps someone else from the blood race? Why would the emperor make someone of the blood race an Embroidered Envoy...? Her mind soon clouded over with these random, disturbing thoughts.

A sudden surge swept through her blood essence and her ki. Her previous injuries flared, causing her to cough out blood, which coated the inner surface of her mask.

Zu An was overjoyed to sense his opponent's once-solid defenses crumbling, and immediately pressed his attack.

A flash of resolve crossed the woman's eyes when she sensed her foundation flowing out of her. In that case, she would just take this man down with her!

Zu An could feel that victory was in sight. However, as soon as he relaxed slightly, he suddenly noticed that the woman in his arms had extremely long hair.

He would have facepalmed if he could.

What a pain in the ass! I didn't even recognize her!

The rock garden was dim and cramped, and he hadn't really gotten a good look at her. He'd been on the brink of death since he was dragged in as well, and hadn't been focused on anything else but surviving.

He stopped siphoning her foundation at once. "Are you Yun Jianyue?" he asked.

The woman's resolve hardened even further when she heard him speak her name. With her pride at stake, how could she possibly allow herself to become a prisoner?

Zu An suddenly sensed her internal ki surge, as though a terrifying force was about to erupt. Frightened and anxious, he immediately said, "I'm Qiu Honglei's friend!"

"Honglei?" The woman was stunned. She wasn't expecting this person to bring up her disciple.

Zu An was relieved when he sensed the terrifying power subside slightly. "Yes, I just rescued her and escorted her out of the palace. She asked me to find you and rescue you."

"When did Honglei become friends with an Embroidered Envoy?" A thought suddenly struck Yun Jianyue. "You're the Embroidered Envoy who survived my sword?"

Given her status and cultivation, she couldn't care less if he was a golden-, silver- or bronze-token envoy, all embroidered envoys were the same, and not worth remembering.

Zu An laughed awkwardly. "Your memory is excellent, senior."

Yun Jianyue was now ninety percent convinced. "Hmph, I should've just killed you back then. If I did, I wouldn't be in this miserable state."

She felt rather despondent. She could have killed him with a single blow before, yet the situation had changed so quickly. She was now his captive.

Zu An was surprised, reading between the lines. "You showed mercy back then?"

Yun Jianyue sneered. "If I hadn't noticed that you used Mirror Mirage, do you think you would still be alive?"

Mirror Mirage was one of her secret skills, and she had only passed it down to her disciple, Qiu Honglei. That was why she was shocked when she saw him use it, and directed her flying sword a few inches wide.

Fear still lingered as Zu An recalled the incident. "My luck really is pretty good."

Yun Jianyue was just about to say something when a guard's voice rang out. "Who's there?"

## **Chapter 620: Stunning Beauty**

Yun Jianyue's entire body stiffened, and her injuries, which she had barely stabilized, flared up again. In her current state, she was equivalent to a low-level cultivator. If these guards accosted her, it would be hard for her to escape, even with her experience and her sight.

This could even trigger other guards to rush to the scene. At that point, the entire palace would be after her, and she would be dead for sure.

She didn't want to admit it, but she had no choice but to rely on this man right now.

Yun Jianyue immediately panicked when she heard the guards' approaching footsteps.

This fear was foreign to her, something she had not felt ever since her cultivations had scaled such great heights.

Two cats suddenly jumped out, hissing at the guards.

The female cat was especially fierce.

The guards chuckled. "It's just a female cat in heat. She was with her partner just now."

"You scared her! Watch out, she might come after you at night!"

"Tsk, I would've loved if it was some cute catgirl."

...

They walked away, chatting amongst themselves, clearly attributing the noises they had heard to these cats. They continued their patrol elsewhere.

Yun Jianyue's expression was ashen, because she was in the embrace of a man right now. It almost seemed as though those guards had been talking about her.

"Did you cause the cats to act that way?" she asked curiously as they left the garden.

"Yeah." Zu An looked at the jade badge in his hands. Even though the trinket wasn't a deadly weapon, it truly had its own uses. Controlling two cats to divert the guards' attention had been a piece of cake.

"Why did you choose a female and a male cat?" Yun Jianyue asked, frowning.

"Um, these two just happened to be nearby. The guards might not have believed that a single one could make that much noise." Zu An was taken aback. This woman focuses on some very strange details... Shouldn't she be asking why I can control the cats? But now, it seemed as though he didn't have to make up an excuse for that.

He suddenly froze. His mind had been so tense earlier on, but now that the danger was past, he realized that there was something soft pressed against his chest.

As expected of a master... This woman's body is mature yet tender, just like ripe honey peaches.

He could smell a faint scent as well. There was no way she would use any perfume while conducting an assassination. This was probably her natural scent.

It was not the smell of cosmetics, but a natural, delicate fragrance.

This was a world of cultivation. Once one cultivated oneself to a certain degree, any impurities within the body would have been refined away, and one would never accumulate dirt or grime. A cultivator could remain perfectly clean even if they did not shower for a month.

Of course, most cultivators weren't born with high cultivation. They lived like ordinary humans for a good part of their lives, so bathing and changing into fresh clothes was a natural habit. Even after their cultivation increased, they would instinctively retain these habits.

"Have you held me for long enough?" Yun Jianyue said coldly.

Zu An laughed in embarrassment and quickly let go of her. "I didn't recognize you earlier on. Please forgive me for that, big sis."

"Big sis?" Yun Jianyue had a strange look on her face. "Honglei calls me master, and you are her friend. That makes me your senior as well. You should call me that instead."

Zu An chuckled. "Honglei calls you master, and I will call you big sis. There's nothing wrong with that. To each their own."

Yun Jianyue stared at him expressionlessly.

She didn't feel like arguing with him over this, and walked away slowly. Having a man this close to her was slightly discomforting.

Unfortunately, she had still underestimated her own injuries. He had given her some support while he was holding her, but when she tried to move on her own, she felt dizzy the moment she took a single step. Her legs buckled, and she couldn't help but fall to the side.

"Be careful!" Zu An cried, quickly moving to support her.

"Thanks." Yun Jianyue was surprisingly unbothered by this. She wasn't embarrassed or annoyed just because he had touched her while helping her.

"Are your wounds that serious?" Zu An asked, concerned.

Yun Jianyue leaned against a rock, her complexion a bit pale. "They were okay earlier on, but my condition worsened when I fought with you just now, and they seem to have flared up again."

She removed the veil covering her face, as the blood on it was extremely uncomfortable.

Zu An's eyes immediately widened. Even though he had seen her graceful bearing and assumed that she was pretty, he hadn't expected her to be so beautiful.

She did not look at all like a young maiden yet to reach full bloom, but gave off the grace of a mature woman instead. This was when a woman was most enchanting.

He had expected that she would be full of viciousness, since she was the sect master of the Devil Sect, and that she might even have a trace of masculine valor.

But this was not the case at all. On the contrary, her grace and beauty were exceptional, her lips red and moist, and her cheeks fair and white. Her ample bosom moved as she breathed. She was a truly wonderful sight to behold, one that would tug at the hearts of all men.

He could sense how slim her waist was, even through her black clothes. Her bottom was incredibly well-sculpted and offered the greatest temptation.

She was truly an extraordinary beauty!

This thought filled Zu An's mind. She was just too stunning, as glamorous as a peony in full bloom.

Her eyes however, seemed distant, seemingly set apart from the mortal world. They had a deep profoundness to them, as though they were two bright moons set against the stars above. Even though they were beautiful, she seemed to be looking down from high above the world, giving her a distant, mysterious look.

These two sides of her seemed contradictory, yet they meshed together perfectly. Without her cold, distant eyes, she might seem like an extraordinary beauty who would enjoy a night in bed, which seemed to tarnish her style slightly.

However, without the mature and sensual side to her, she would seem too distant, too emotionless.

"If you weren't a friend of Honglei, I would have already gouged out your eyeballs." Yun Jianyue seemed to be speaking about something completely insignificant, but she was giving off a terrifying aura.

"It's not like you can defeat me right now, anyway," Zu An grumbled under his breath.

“What did you say?” Yun Jianyue’s eyebrows were raised, and there was a dangerous glint to her eyes.

Zu An immediately changed his tone. “I’m just crying out in injustice for those fellas who had their eyes gouged out. Just because they were staring at you doesn’t mean that they harbored wicked thoughts. You’re just too beautiful. Not even someone like me, who has seen his fair share of beautiful women, could avert my gaze, let alone the other guys without such luck. They were admiring and praising a work of art that would be glimpsed only once in a lifetime, and yet they had their eyes gouged out. Isn’t that too pitiful a fate?”

“Are you trying to tell me how I should act?” Yun Jianyue’s face remained expressionless.

“Um...” Zu An at a loss for words. He found keeping up with her slightly difficult. “Couldn’t you tell that I was praising your beauty in a roundabout way?”

“Since you said that they were admiring a work of art that they would only see once in a lifetime, then it should be worth it. Why retain their sight, only to continue looking at ugliness?” Yun Jianyue said indifferently.

Zu An was stupefied. “Wow, you’re making so much sense, even I can’t rebut that.”

“This is the first time I’ve met an embroidered envoy with such a slick tongue.” Yun Jianyue paused for a moment, then suddenly asked, “Is this how you deceived Honglei?”

Zu An sighed. “Big sis, do you have such little confidence in your disciple? Is Honglei really someone that is so easily fooled?”

Yun Jianyue stared at him. “I’m only putting up with you because I know she isn’t that sort of person.”

Zu An was dumbfounded.

Sis, if you keep this up, you won’t have any friends, you know?

As such, he decided to just stop talking.

The two of them stared at each other for a moment, and Yun Jianyue finally couldn’t help but frown. “Do you plan to just stand around with me like this? If I’m right, more guards are on their way.”

Zu An chuckled. “So? It’s not as though they’re after me,” he replied.