

Little Girl 861

Chapter 861: Unknown Xuan Spirit Beast

At this time, it was not only the Huang family; the Imperial Kitchen within the palace was also shrouded in gloom.

"Useless, each and every one of you is useless. I don't care, by noon tomorrow, at the royal banquet, you must present a Spiritual Food. If you can't, all of you from the Imperial Kitchen and the Spiritual Cuisine Master Association will bring your heads to see the Emperor!"

The Third Prince, Long Qingchen, wore a livid face, pointing angrily at the silent imperial chefs and Spiritual Delicacy Masters.

Nearby, President Mu and Master Chen also remained silent.

After speaking, Long Qingchen swept his sleeves and left.

"Easier said than done, that peculiar thing, what exactly is it? Nobody knows, how can we prepare it?"

Master Chen spoke with a look of frustration.

Originally, he thought that crafting a mere five-star Spiritual Food for this banquet would suffice; he had even prepared the Nine-headed Abalone, ready to showcase his skills at the event.

Who could have known that a five-star Dark Spiritual Beast from Hai Zhang Country would suddenly appear?

That Dark Spiritual Beast looks so strange; he racked his brain but still couldn't discern its species.

Without knowing the species, how can one know how to prepare it?

No wonder each chef in the Imperial Kitchen was looking so troubled.

"President Mu, do you have any leads?"

Master Chen pinned his last hopes on President Mu.

President Mu gained fame early and has traveled extensively, having visited large countries like Hai Zhang; surely he should know something about Dark Spiritual Beasts.

"This type of Dark Spiritual Beast, I have not seen. Though I have visited Hai Zhang Country, I haven't seen a Dark Spiritual Beast like that there. I believe General Nalan was clearly making things difficult intentionally. Otherwise, who would directly use a Level 5 Dark Spiritual Beast to make five-star Spiritual Food?"

President Mu shook his head.

A Level 5 Dark Spiritual Beast is akin to a Martial Artist, far surpassing the Xuan Transformation Realm.

Yet as Spiritual Delicacy Masters, even a five-star spirit chef like him is merely at the Dark Transformation Realm Peak; with such cultivation, there's no way to subdue a Level 5 Dark Spiritual Beast, let alone prepare it.

Previously, didn't Dining Officer Huang hurt himself trying to kill that Fifth Grade Dark Spiritual Beast, ending up with thirty strokes as punishment?

Long Qingchen himself is the Third Prince, yet doesn't understand such a simple principle, blindly promising that General Nalan's request was a major mistake on his part.

But Long Qingchen is the Third Prince, and his words represent the Imperial Family.

The words have already been spoken, and how can they be taken back?

"What should be done then? Perhaps, tomorrow morning, we could use another five-star Spiritual Food to replace that unidentified Dark Spiritual Beast?"

Master Chen, racking his brains, could only think of this method.

"Do you think the other guests present are fools? Not to mention others, the guests from Hai Zhang Country will not agree. The urgent task is to find a way to bring some palace experts over to kill that Dark Spiritual Beast and then think about how to prepare it."

President Mu, after pondering, also only thought of this response method.

That night, countless people in the royal palace were sleepless.

As dawn slowly broke, the Empress Dowager finished her grooming early and saw Shi Pin bringing Xin Zhuo to pay respects.

"Haven't seen you in a few days, Shi Pin; you seem to look even better. Looking at you, who would know you've given birth to a child."

Today is Emperor Longteng's royal banquet, and the Empress Dowager was in a fine mood.

"Reporting to the Empress Dowager, you are the one who truly remains youthful; you look as young as the Emperor."

Shi Pin obediently replied.

"You, Shi Pin, your words are sweet like they're coated in honey."

The Empress Dowager laughed.

Chapter 862: A Skillful Recommendation

"Grand Empress Dowager, didn't my mother just enjoy some honey? She had sugar lotus root this morning. She even specially brought some for you to taste."

Little Xinzhuo seized the opportunity to speak.

Smiling, Shi Pin presented a small food box.

Inside the food box were a few small plates, each with neatly sliced sugar lotus root.

The Empress Dowager had lived a long life and had seen all kinds of delicacies and amusements.

But she had not quite seen such sugar lotus root before.

"Empress Dowager, you praised my good complexion lately. There isn't any secret, really; I've just been eating this specially-made sugar lotus root. The honey nourishes, the glutinous rice detoxifies, and the lotus root itself is nurturing. I've indulged and eaten quite a lot, even gained some weight, so the Emperor teased me about it."

Shi Pin laughed, covering her mouth.

Compared to Empress Feng, who had been overwhelmed sorting out the birthday banquet and likely stressing with more gray hair sprouting, Shi Pin's days were undeniably better.

Little Xinzhuo was excelling at Qingtian Academy, and Shi Pin visited the Empress Dowager daily for chats, occasionally gifting the other concubines some small trinkets and snacks made by Xin Lin, making life in the Imperial Palace increasingly pleasant.

Emperor Longteng appreciated Shi Pin's gentle grace. Coupled with Empress Dowager's frequent praises, Emperor Longteng grew more fond of Shi Pin, favoring her more than when she first entered the palace.

As they say, a joyous spirit thrives—after indulging in sugar lotus root several times, Shi Pin's complexion bloomed like that of a blossoming young maiden.

Upon hearing this, the Empress Dowager picked up a piece of sugar lotus root and took a bite.

The sweet and sticky texture, combined with the fragrant glutinous rice, immediately earned her praise.

"Which Imperial Chef created this dessert? It tastes splendid indeed. It's far better than the desserts served at the birthday banquet these days."

The Empress Dowager repeatedly commended.

The birthday banquet in the Imperial Palace was quite grand these days, with a plethora of dishes showcased.

The Empress Dowager, who preferred light flavors, however ended up with a lack of appetite after a few days.

"This wasn't made by the Imperial Chef but by a Spiritual Delicacy Master from the common people—the same little chef who made the vegetarian buns. Previously, I was worried you'd reprimand me for bringing civilian desserts into the palace, so I didn't mention it."

Shi Pin cautiously explained.

"A Spiritual Delicacy Master from beyond the palace! Honestly, the palace Imperial Chefs cycle the same dishes. In comparison, civilian snacks are much more interesting and flavorful. When I was your age, I'd sneak out of the palace and was admonished by the late Emperor several times."

The Empress Dowager reminisced, unknowingly helping herself to more sugar lotus root.

"By the way, today, the grand banquet for the birthday celebration is about to begin. The Imperial Kitchen's desserts have become too stale. Can that Little Spirit Chef come to the palace? If possible, take

my written permission and bring him in to prepare a few desserts and buns. I've been pondering on what birthday gift to give my son—perhaps have him make some birthday buns."

On this spontaneous decision, the Empress Dowager granted Shi Pin a written permission.

"I was thinking the same, only afraid the Empress might perceive me as overstepping."

Shi Pin, upon hearing this, felt secretly delighted.

This sugar lotus root trick was, of course, not Shi Pin's own idea but orchestrated by Xin Lin for entry into the palace.

After receiving the written permission, Shi Pin promptly sought out Little Xinzhuo and asked him to deliver it out of the palace.

Meanwhile, Xin Lin had just stepped out from the School Clinic. After leaving the Huang family last night, she had ghost soldiers communicate with Little Xinzhuo and sent some sugar lotus root into the palace.

For this birthday banquet, she had prepared a considerable amount of ingredients. As for whether she could save Huang Xuerou's father—it would all depend on luck.

Chapter 863: The Other Side of Gui Hu

Xin Lin arrived at the palace gate, where Little Xinzhuo was already waiting.

"Sister, it's good that you're here."

Little Xinzhuo presented the Empress Dowager's mandate and led Xin Lin into the palace.

Along the way, those guards were quite polite to Little Xinzhuo.

"Ah Zhuo, it seems like you've been doing well in the palace lately."

Xin Lin said with a smile.

"Thanks to your help, Sister. My mother has earned the Empress Dowager's favor. The people in the palace are very opportunistic, and now that they see we have support, they are eager to curry favor with us."

Little Xinzhuo had a look of helplessness on his face.

When he was Ah Piao, he thought being human was great.

Now it seems that being Ah Piao was much simpler and purer than being human, at least he didn't have to wear a mask to be human.

"Do you regret entering the palace?"

Xin Lin looked at Little Xinzhuo.

"I don't regret it. At least after entering the palace, I have my own family, I have you and mother, I can continue to grow stronger to protect you and mother, just like Brother Corpse King said."

Little Xinzhuo said earnestly.

Xin Lin was taken aback.

Little Xinzhuo then mentioned that for a while, he was bullied at Qingtian Academy, and during the time he was injured, he was very depressed.

He didn't want to worry Xin Lin and their mother, so he kept it to himself.

Fortunately, later Brother Corpse King encouraged him.

He told Little Xinzhuo that in his early years, he too was bullied, but he didn't give up, he kept cultivating, and finally one day, he defeated all those who bullied him.

"Big Brother said, as long as you work hard enough, there will come a day when you become a True Dragon among men."

Little Xinzhuo waved his fist.

The Pride Corpse had changed, or maybe he was harsh only to her but kind to others?

Xin Lin thought a bit sourly.

"True Dragon among men?"

Xin Lin's heart stirred.

How could she forget something so important?

"Ah Zhuo, where is the Longteng Stele?"

Xin Lin remembered the Dragon Vein that Gui Hu mentioned earlier.

She already had a small part of the Dragon Vein; if she could obtain more and refine it, she would most likely be able to absorb the Dragon Vein.

Gui Hu suspected that part of the Dragon Vein was within the Longteng Stele.

"Longteng Stele? I think it's on Qingque Platform, where father has been hosting guests these past few days. Speaking of which, I saw Uncle Beiqing there too. Sister, why did you suddenly ask about the Longteng Stele?"

Little Xinzhuo was puzzled.

Wasn't Sister here to make Spiritual Food?

"I have to find a way to see that Longteng Stele. Has anything unusual happened since my father entered the palace?"

Xin Lin asked.

To her knowledge, Young Master Tu was also present this time.

That fellow Yang Su was likely a minion of Young Master Tu, and Xin Lin worried that after Yang Su's incident, Young Master Tu might make other moves.

"Father has been having the eunuch chamberlain accompany Uncle Beiqing, so there should be no issues."

A few days ago, the banquet held at the Imperial Palace was not the main banquet; besides Empress Feng and a few members of the Imperial Family like the Third Prince, most Princes and the Empress Dowager did not attend directly.

Today is different; it's Emperor Longteng's birthday, the main banquet, with the most guests attending.

So, Little Xinzhuo and Chu Beiqing both had to attend.

After Little Xinzhuo took Xin Lin to the Imperial Kitchen, he had to get ready.

"Since that's the case, you should go back. Be careful during today's birthday banquet to avoid giving people something to talk about. I will find a way to locate the Longteng Stele myself."

Things must be prioritized, and Xin Lin knew that the most important thing for now was to reach the Imperial Kitchen and figure out the origin of that Xuan Spirit Beast.

Chapter 864: Encountering the Longteng Stele Again

Little Xinzhuo brought Xin Lin to the Imperial Kitchen, explained briefly that Xin Lin was a Spiritual Delicacy Master invited by the Empress Dowager, and then left the kitchen.

As soon as Little Xinzhuo left, the Imperial Chefs in the kitchen began to busy themselves.

The birthday banquet would start in the afternoon.

All the cold and hot dishes, along with the tea, water, and wine for the banquet, needed to be prepared in advance.

On the surface, the Imperial Kitchen was as busy as ever.

It seemed there was no abnormality; could it be that the earlier troubles had been resolved?

Xin Lin looked around, wanting to find someone to ask.

"You're new here, don't just stand there, take these fruit platters to the Qingque Platform for the palace maids."

Before Xin Lin could inquire, a chef with a face full of flesh stopped him.

He scrutinized Xin Lin with a critical gaze.

There was obviously no worker this young in the Imperial Kitchen.

These days, the kitchen was in turmoil, and Elder Huang was absent, with two Dian Shan officers imprisoned in the Heavenly Prison. The remaining staff were all working cautiously, fearing they'd be the next to make a mistake.

The young worker in front of them must have been hired temporarily.

Hearing this, Xin Lin recalled what Little Xinzhuo had said earlier; the Longteng Stele was indeed on the Qingque Platform. She quickly put on a docile expression, took the fruit platters, and walked through the corridors of the Imperial Palace to the Qingque Platform.

Xin Lin had never officially been to the Imperial Palace, which was not small at all. It took her an hour, remembering the route along the way, to reach the Qingque Platform. The Qingque Platform was a small palace, higher in elevation than most of the palaces in the Longteng Palace, offering excellent views.

The surroundings of the Qingque Platform were lush with flowers, as it was the season for chrysanthemums and osmanthus to bloom.

The air was filled with the fragrance of cinnamon blossoms, and the vibrant chrysanthemums were in full bloom.

Dozens of palace maids bustled around the Qingque Platform, and since guests had not yet arrived, Xin Lin observed her surroundings, noting that security was not particularly tight.

"Put everything down."

A Chief Palace Maid stepped forward, ordering Xin Lin and the others to leave first.

Xin Lin kept her head down and withdrew.

Once she left the Qingque Platform, she quietly sneaked back when no one was watching.

After a few palace maids placed the fruit platters and left, the Qingque Platform was empty and silent.

Looking around, Xin Lin saw a stone stele near the east sunrise position of the Qingque Platform, close to Emperor Longteng's seat, with a dragon carved on it—it was the Longteng Stele that Xin Lin had encountered during the Zixiao Palace Exam.

At first glance, the Longteng Stele appeared to be just like any ordinary stone stele.

But Xin Lin knew well that it contained Dragon Breath.

"Longteng Stele."

Xin Lin looked around, lowered her voice, and called out to the Longteng Stele.

As she approached, the heavy Longteng Stele shivered.

"Little ancestor, why have you come again?"

The Longteng Stele was a bit intimidated upon seeing Xin Lin.

Last time, Xin Lin had taken away quite a bit of its True Qi.

"Let me ask you, is there a Dragon Vein hidden in the stele?"

Xin Lin scrutinized the Longteng Stele.

"No, no, what Dragon Vein, Little Worm has never heard of such a thing."

The Longteng Stele nearly shook its head.

"Really?"

Xin Lin surveyed the stele but saw nothing unusual; it didn't seem to have a Dragon Vein either.

"Little Worm is just a very ordinary stone stele."

The Longteng Stele insisted it had never seen any Dragon Vein.

"In that case, I'll have the Overlord Egg ask you."

Xin Lin said no more, pulling out the Sealing Spirit Talisman No.2 directly.

In the blink of an eye, a shiny-headed egg appeared.

Chapter 865: Another Part of the Dragon Vein

As soon as the Overlord Egg appeared, the Longteng Stele started to feel unsettled.

Because it realized that after some time apart, although its size seemed to have shrunk a whole circle, the aura emanating from the Overlord Egg had grown even stronger.

(Little Worm, we meet again.)

The Overlord Egg, upon seeing the Longteng Stele, bounced over as though it was greeting an old friend.

"So, have you remembered where the Dragon Vein is?"

Xin Lin patted the Longteng Stele, her expression friendly.

The Longteng Stele was nearly moved to tears.

"I really don't know any Dragon Vein, I only have a trace of Dragon Breath, but maybe there's someone who has the Dragon Vein."

The Longteng Stele hesitated, but confessed honestly.

"Who?"

Xin Lin inquired further.

If what Gui Hu said was true, then the Ice Horned Dragon in the Dragon Ancient Tomb had its Dragon Vein extracted by someone.

This person hid part of the Dragon Vein inside the Cloud Rain Ruler, but who this person was, was still unknown.

"Empress Feng."

The Longteng Stele confessed frankly.

How could it be her?

When Xin Lin heard this, she couldn't help but be shocked.

She had thought the Dragon Vein was with Emperor Longteng, but unexpectedly, it was with Empress Feng.

"I discovered it by chance, you know, I have Dragon Breath as well, so I have some connection to dragons and can sense their aura. Just a few days ago, when Empress Feng came to Qingque Platform for the birthday banquet preparations, I accidentally sensed the aura of the Dragon Vein on her."

Qingque Platform is the venue in Longteng Palace for hosting grand banquets and some sacrificial ceremonies.

The Longteng Stele, as the National Guardian Stele, is enshrined here all year round.

Xin Lin pondered for a moment and took out the small fragment of Dragon Vein from the Tuling hairpin.

"Look closely, is the Dragon Vein on Empress Feng the same origin as the one in my hand?"

"You, you, you! How do you have the Dragon Vein!"

Seeing that piece of Dragon Vein, the Longteng Stele nearly jumped up.

(Shut up, answer when mommy asks you, stop babbling nonsense.)

The Overlord Egg admonished.

The Longteng Stele immediately fell silent.

"Look carefully, is the aura on Empress Feng similar to this Dragon Vein?"

Xin Lin wanted to confirm the Dragon Vein's affiliation, so she could plan the next steps.

"Yes, that's it. However, the aura of the Dragon Vein on Empress Feng is stronger than the fragment in your hand, but she seems to have some other Spiritual Treasure to conceal the Dragon Vein's aura, causing it to fluctuate."

The Longteng Stele confirmed.

"Is everything inside settled?"

Just as Xin Lin was questioning the Longteng Stele, footsteps echoed from outside.

The sound was somewhat familiar.

Xin Lin immediately became alert.

The voice was clearly Empress Feng's.

Xin Lin dared not linger and disappeared in an instant.

Soon after, Empress Feng entered, followed by several palace maids.

"Leave us. I wish to pray to the Longteng Stele for the Emperor's prolonged life and that the upcoming banquet in Longteng goes smoothly."

After inspecting the banquet preparations, Empress Feng waved her hand to dismiss the palace maids.

Once the palace maids left, Empress Feng did not approach the Longteng Stele.

In her eyes, the so-called National Guardian Stele of Longteng was nothing more than a mere stone.

"Since you're here, why hide?"

Empress Feng's voice was cold as she addressed a corner of Qingque Platform.

A light chuckle was heard, and suddenly a figure appeared.

"Empress Feng, long time no see. My master sends his regards to you."

Young Master Tu strolled out leisurely, approaching Empress Feng, and saluted her.

Chapter 866: The Lost-and-Found Casket

Xin Lin fled from Qingque Platform.

But when she looked back, she realized she was lost.

Longteng Palace was vast, and her Ghost Escape Technique was unpredictable. Right now, she was amid a lush landscape, seemingly a part of the palace.

Xin Lin circled around but couldn't find the path she came from.

Unknowingly, she saw a palace wall up ahead, the paint long stripped away, overgrown with dried vines. The leaves on the vines had fallen, and there was bird droppings nearby.

"This seems to be an abandoned part of the palace."

Xin Lin looked around, took a few steps, and suddenly kicked something beneath her foot.

A dust-covered box rolled out.

Xin Lin was taken aback when she saw the box.

She faintly felt that the box looked familiar.

"It's that!"

Xin Lin remembered where she had seen the box before.

Previously, Shi Pin was pursued by Empress Feng, because Empress Feng wanted to seize the box left by General Shi.

That box looked exactly like the one in front of her now.

Later, Shi Pin was forced to leave the palace, and before leaving, she hid the box in an abandoned section of the palace.

But she left in a hurry, thinking she had hidden it in the palace where she once lived. However, when she returned to the palace, she couldn't find the box.

She just assumed she had remembered incorrectly.

"Could it be such a coincidence that I've found it by accident?"

Xin Lin was very surprised.

She picked up the box, its surface full of dust, indicating it had been there for a long time.

The area was very desolate, clearly not visited by many people.

Xin Lin rubbed the box and weighed it.

The box wasn't light, nor was it heavy, but when she shook it, there was no sound from inside.

The surface of the box had no seams.

She searched all over but couldn't find a lock or opening.

"Strange, it's a lock without a solution."

Xin Lin examined the box over and over.

She checked the hour; it was almost noon, and there was little time before the birthday banquet started. She had to hurry back to the Imperial Kitchen, otherwise, Huang Xuerou's father would be in danger.

Thinking it over, Xin Lin decided to keep the box. Since she had it now, she could take her time later to figure out a way to open it.

As Xin Lin left, not far away, a figure flashed by. The person's appearance couldn't be seen clearly, only a flash of bright yellow was visible.

On her way, Xin Lin encountered a few palace maids, and after inquiring, she managed to return to the Imperial Kitchen.

"Useless, every single one of you! By noon, you must make a Spiritual Food dish, or else, the whole Imperial Kitchen will be beheaded."

As soon as Xin Lin walked into the Imperial Kitchen, she heard the angry voice of Long Qingchen.

The Third Prince, Long Qingchen, was furious, pointing at the Imperial Chefs and cursing.

It had been several days already.

Yet they still couldn't make a single Spiritual Food dish.

With the birthday banquet approaching, earlier on the road, he had encountered General Nalan, who had mocked him.

Long Qingchen, being a person who valued face, couldn't swallow this insult.

"Third Prince, we truly don't know what kind of Dark Spirit Beast it was. Several of us tried to catch it and were all frostbitten. Even if you take our heads, we still can't make it."

The fat Imperial Chef, who had previously scolded Xin Lin, was wiping sweat from his brow, looking distressed.

"Then start by beheading a couple of chefs, I don't believe that even then no one will be able to make it in the Imperial Kitchen."

Long Qingchen waved his hand, about to order an execution.

Chapter 867: Imperial Kitchen Turmoil

"Third Prince, you have quite the authority. I wonder if the Emperor knows that so many people have to die for his birthday banquet?"

A cold chuckle sounded from behind.

Long Qingchen's face changed as he turned to see Xin Lin standing not far behind with a sarcastic expression.

"Xin Lin! How are you here? You have quite the nerve, who permitted you to enter the palace?"

Long Qingchen was already agitated, and seeing Xin Lin only made him more furious.

Today's banquet was a grand affair, attended by important guests from different countries, high-ranking officials of third-rank and above, and even within the Imperial Family, only the favored princes of concubines could attend.

Xin Lin was merely the daughter of a former Imperial Physician, naturally unqualified to attend.

Her unauthorized entry into the Imperial Palace was a serious crime!

"I came by the Empress Dowager's order to make pastries."

Saying this, Xin Lin showed the Empress Dowager's Token.

"Even if it was Grand Empress who let you in, what of it? Since you're here to make pastries, do your work and stay out of other matters, or don't blame me for not sparing face for Grand Empress."

Long Qingchen saw the Empress Dowager's order and knew that this must be the work of Shi Pin and her son.

Those damned mother and son, let's see how much longer they can be pleased with themselves.

Once the banquet ended, he would find methods to have his mother deal with them.

"I heard the Third Prince is planning to behead several Imperial Chefs, I wonder what crimes those chefs committed?"

"They defied the emperor's orders and couldn't create the Spiritual Food, thus they must be beheaded."

Long Qingchen snorted coldly.

"May I ask what kind of Spiritual Food is it that they couldn't make?"

Xin Lin asked again.

"How would I know what kind of Spiritual Food it is? They, being members of the Imperial Kitchen, must know how to make it. Otherwise, if they shame Longteng, they should be beheaded."

Long Qingchen was taken aback by the question but replied confidently.

"So their lives are worth less than a single dish of Spiritual Food?"

Xin Lin stared at Long Qingchen.

"Of course. This Spiritual Food concerns the entire dignity of Longteng."

Long Qingchen had an air of superiority.

"Dare I ask, Third Prince, is it the dignity of Longteng, or your own, that concerns you?"

Xin Lin mocked.

To her knowledge, Emperor Longteng was not even aware of this matter regarding the Spiritual Food.

The Imperial Chefs and Assistant Chefs kneeling on the ground all had somber expressions.

"Third Prince, we may be servants, but we are human too. How can our dozens of lives be worth less than a dish of Spiritual Food? If that's the case, we refuse to do the work, we're dead either way."

The Imperial Chefs were flushed with anger.

Even though they were just cooks, they were all Spiritual Delicacy Masters, and revered among the common people. But in the palace, they were treated worse than pigs and dogs.

The long-serving old food officer was beaten just like that.

Now lying sick at home, and the Imperial Kitchen was closed down so abruptly; it was truly disrespectful.

"You insolent servants! Are you rebelling?"

Long Qingchen was livid.

The Imperial Chefs had truly made up their minds this time. Anyway, facing the Xuan Spirit Beast would lead to death, beheading would lead to death too, and they were people with dignity.

Now, everyone in the Imperial Kitchen was refusing to work.

"Third Prince, the banquet is about to begin, if they stop working, it will be troublesome."

The guard beside Long Qingchen advised.

Outside, over a hundred guests were still waiting for their meals.

"Lock up these insolent servants. Without them, this prince refuses to believe we can't find other Spiritual Delicacy Masters."

Long Qingchen, in his anger, ordered someone to arrest Xin Lin and the Imperial Kitchen's Imperial Chefs.

Chapter 868: The Framed Foolish Father

In a fit of rage, Long Qingchen was about to throw Xin Lin and the others into the Heavenly Prison.

"Third Prince, there's trouble, the Dark Spirit Beast has broken loose."

Before Long Qingchen could explode, there was commotion outside.

A few eunuchs, heads bleeding, stumbled in.

"You useless fools, didn't I order you to guard it securely? How did it escape?"

Long Qingchen fumed with anger.

Each one of them was making him uneasy.

At this moment, Xin Lin and the furious General Nalan were in his thoughts.

If it weren't for that fellow, such a big issue wouldn't have arisen.

"Third Prince, it wasn't us, it was... it was Young Master Jin and the others..."

The eunuchs exchanged nervous glances.

"Jin Chen? Weren't they at the banquet?"

Upon hearing this, Long Qingchen felt a foreboding.

"Young Master Jin and the others were on their way to the Qingque Platform, but on the way, they encountered Chu... Chu Beiqing. They then..."

The eunuch dared not continue.

"What did they do to my father?"

Upon hearing this, Xin Lin rushed forward, grabbing the eunuch by the collar.

She was small-bodied, but her strength was astonishing. In her fury, the eunuch was terrified.

"They mocked Chu Beiqing and led him to where the Dark Spirit Beast was imprisoned. Who knew, that monster suddenly went berserk and attacked Young Master Jin and the others."

The eunuch stuttered.

Jin Chen and his group had always held a grudge against Xin Lin.

Today at the imperial banquet, Chu Beiqing was invited into the palace. However, with the hustle, somehow he wandered off alone.

Seeing Chu Beiqing, Jin Chen and his group intended to teach him a lesson. Knowing the Dark Spirit Beast brought by Hai Zhang Country was powerful, they planned to use it to scare him.

But who would have thought the Dark Spirit Beast would go berserk and break free, already injuring many, and now heading towards the Qingque Platform.

A group of guards went to stop it, but none could hold it back.

"If anything happens to my father, Long Qingchen, you and Jin Chen will pay with your lives."

Xin Lin flung the eunuch aside and sprinted towards the Qingque Platform.

"How dare you! Xin Lin, you dare threaten me? You, a mere commoner, dare threaten me?"

Long Qingchen fumed with anger.

But then, he came to his senses.

"What? You said that creature is heading towards the Qingque Platform?"

Long Qingchen felt as if the sky was about to fall.

At this hour, Father, Mother, and several esteemed guests were heading towards the Qingque Platform.

If that monster collides with them, the banquet would be ruined!

Long Qingchen no longer cared to blame the Imperial Kitchen staff and rushed towards the Qingque Platform with his men.

Father, please be safe.

Xin Lin executed several Ghost Escape Techniques without stopping, depleting all her Spiritual Energy unknowingly.

She regretted leaving her father alone in the Imperial Palace.

"Jin Chen, where's my father?"

Xin Lin reached the area where the Dark Spirit Beast was confined and saw Jin Chen, who was still wailing on the ground.

Jin Chen's half-body was frozen stiff, his face covered in blood. Seeing his pitiful state, Xin Lin's heart ached.

"Towards... towards the Qingque Platform..."

It took Jin Chen a while to catch his breath.

"I'll deal with you later."

Xin Lin flung him aside.

"Deal with? Deal with what?"

Jin Chen looked bewildered.

He thought himself the unluckiest. He merely wanted to teach that fool a lesson, but who knew the monster in the pool would attack him and his companions instead, ignoring Chu Beiqing entirely!

Chapter 869: Birthday Banquet Farce (Part 1)

At Qingque Platform, Emperor Longteng and Empress Feng had just arrived.

Most of the guests were already present.

"Why do I not see Bei Qing?"

Emperor Longteng looked around, but Chu Beiqing was nowhere to be seen.

Earlier, he had received a secret message and went to the Imperial Study Room. When he turned back, Chu Beiqing had disappeared.

"There are eunuchs and palace maids watching over him. I suppose nothing will happen; he must have gone to play nearby. I will send someone to find him later,"

Empress Feng said with a smile, but a hint of scheming flashed in her eyes.

The scene of her earlier meeting with Young Prince Tu seemed to play before her.

"Young Prince, back then your master promised me to eliminate Chu Beiqing. Why is he still alive and well after all these years?"

A shadow crossed Empress Feng's beautiful face.

"Empress Feng, my master did not expect that Chu Beiqing's life force would be so tenacious. Given the circumstances back then, it is indeed a miracle that he survived. But rest assured, the Three Corpse Poison within him has lain dormant for a long time. Over the years, it must have penetrated his vital organs. Once it activates, death is certain,"

Young Prince Tu said earnestly.

"Then when will the poison activate? If this drags on, I will die before he does,"

Empress Feng gritted her teeth.

Even though Chu Beiqing was now a fool, he was still an eyesore.

Clearly, she was the one Emperor Longteng loved the most, yet he still occasionally reminisced about Chu Beiqing. This left Empress Feng far from satisfied.

Furthermore, only Chu Beiqing knew about the matter from back then.

Even though he had become a fool, as long as he lived, there was the risk he might suddenly regain his senses one day.

Should that happen, her position as Empress would not be secure.

Thus, she was determined to see Chu Beiqing dead.

For this reason, she had proactively suggested that Emperor Longteng invite Chu Beiqing to the birthday feast.

"Don't worry, as long as he comes into contact with the Ice-cold Beast, the poison will trigger. The Three Corpse Poison is a cold poison. Once it encounters cold energy, it will erupt. As far as I know, General Nalan of Hai Zhang Country presented an Xuan Spirit Beast to His Majesty, and that creature is the Ice-cold Beast. As soon as Chu Beiqing faces that Xuan Spirit Beast..."

Young Prince Tu did not continue.

Empress Feng, being a wise person, immediately grasped the implication.

"Thank you, Young Prince, for the reminder. I now know what to do,"

Empress Feng withdrew her thoughts.

Today, with the palace filled with guests, she could easily find someone to lead Chu Beiqing to the Ice-cold Beast, making it a done deal.

By now, Chu Beiqing should have already succumbed to the poison.

From this day forth, no one in Longteng Country would know her true identity and origins.

A faint trace of joy surfaced on Empress Feng's face.

"Why is the Third Prince not present? Did he not go to the Imperial Kitchen early on to make arrangements?"

Emperor Longteng did not see Long Qingchen. Observing the simple fruit platters on the table with no pastries or snacks, he frowned slightly.

This time, the palace banquet was entirely arranged by the Imperial Kitchen.

A few days ago, the Third Prince Long Qingchen suddenly claimed he wanted to help, so Emperor Longteng entrusted some of the matters to him.

"I suppose he went to make arrangements. I've heard that the Third Prince has prepared a special Spiritual Food for this birthday feast, a dish never before seen in Longteng Country,"

Empress Feng said with a smile.

Long Qingchen had earlier mentioned that at this banquet, there would be at least one Five-star Spiritual Food.

Even at royal banquets, such high-level Five-star Spiritual Food is rare, especially one that has never appeared before.

Chapter 870: Birthday Banquet Farce (Part 2)

Upon hearing Empress Feng speak, Emperor Longteng also grew more interested.

"Oh? Is that really the case? Then I must see what fine dishes the Third Prince presents this time."

The Emperor and Empress exchanged smiles and sat down together.

The other guests also took their seats.

"Young Prince Tu from Tuyuan Country has arrived."

"General Nalan from Hai Zhang Country has arrived."

"Imperial Censor Li from Changchun Country has arrived."

"..."

The guests gradually gathered.

As soon as General Nalan from Hai Zhang Country took his seat, his eyes scanned the table and he let out a cold snort.

"A grand feast of Longteng Country, yet not even a decent dish is present. These shabby items are fit for nothing but feeding pigs."

Having said that, General Nalan swept his ape-like arm, knocking the fruit plate and snacks from the table onto the ground.

A crashing sound was heard as the plates shattered on the ground.

Emperor Longteng and Empress Feng's expressions changed.

The guests present all looked over with expressions as if watching a show.

Young Prince Tu sipped his wine, with a cryptic smile, watching the enraged General Nalan.

General Zuo, sitting at the left central seat, slammed the table and stood up.

"Nolan Bo Bo, you have incredible audacity!"

"General Zuo."

Emperor Longteng cast a glance, causing General Zuo to blush with restraint, but he still suppressed his anger and sat down.

"General Nalan, for my birthday feast, Hai Zhang Country sending someone here, I am extremely grateful. If General Nalan has any dissatisfaction, you may state it. If Longteng has been negligent, I shall not shirk from responsibility."

"Emperor Longteng, Nalan is a straightforward man, accustomed to speaking candidly and disliking roundabout words. A few days ago, Nalan especially sent a grand gift for the Emperor's birthday—a Five-star Dark Spiritual Beast to your country. That Dark Spiritual Beast has a unique taste, it's a rare Spiritual Food even in ours. Out of respect for the Emperor, it was chosen to be gifted at this birthday feast. Yet, the Emperor clearly disregards my Hai Zhang Country. How can my country endure such humiliation?"

General Nalan spoke angrily.

Rare Spiritual Food?

Five-star Dark Spiritual Beast?

Emperor Longteng and Empress Feng both showed puzzled expressions.

The other ministers also exchanged bewildered looks, evidently unaware of the matter.

"General Nalan must have misunderstood; currently I am unaware of it. May I ask where that Five-star Dark Spiritual Beast is now?"

Emperor Longteng asked again.

"I need to ask your country's Third Prince, for at that time I entrusted the Five-star Dark Spiritual Beast to him. Young Prince Tu from Tuyuan Country was present, and he can testify for me."

After speaking, General Nalan glanced at Young Prince Tu.

"This is true. However..."

Young Prince Tu purposely left everyone hanging.

"Young Prince, please speak frankly."

Emperor Longteng was somewhat irate.

The Third Prince was indeed bold, hiding such an important affair.

No wonder General Nalan was angry.

"But that Dark Spiritual Beast is very unique. Neither the Young Prince nor the Third Prince recognized it. Even those in the Imperial Kitchen did not recognize it, so this rare Spiritual Food might be beyond everyone's enjoyment."

Young Prince Tu said with a wry smile.

Upon hearing this, Emperor Longteng's face became even gloomier.

General Nalan displayed complete disdain.

"So, the grand Longteng Country cannot even recognize rare Spiritual Food? Longteng's incompetence, as rumored, is indeed true."

The guests from other countries also began to discuss widely.

To their surprise, the gift sent by a foreign country was not even recognized by Longteng Country.

The foreign guests openly mocked Longteng at the national feast, creating a huge laughing stock.

For a moment, everyone in Longteng was deeply embarrassed.