

My System 241

Chapter 241: The People of this World Won't Agree! _3

The Great Zhou Emperor, nearly concealed by the tiger's claw.

Empress Dowager Li spoke in a barely audible whisper.

So soft that Empress Wang and the multitude of Noble Consorts and others did not hear it.

Aside from the King of South Ming and the Queen of the South Ming, only Wu Yuemei, who was closest to Empress Dowager Li, and Wu Ling heard what she said.

Upon hearing Empress Dowager Li's words, the King of South Ming's eyes flashed with shock, and the Jade Bead he was fiddling with paused slightly, the tense expression on his face slowly relaxing.

Watching the Divine Palace,

the figure of the Great Zhou Emperor, enveloped in blood and growing less visible, the King of South Ming was startled to sense the Emperor's presence fading away.

How could it disappear?

Is he dead?

Thoughts churned in the King of South Ming's mind, and he almost laughed out loud.

He had not expected the White Tiger Devil Emperor to kill the Great Zhou Emperor in one fell swoop, his toils not in vain.

The King of South Ming sighed in relief, his expression growing relaxed and comfortable.

"You must be missing him,"

Empress Dowager Li exhaled slowly, turned her head, and gazed at the King of South Ming.

"I knew it. I couldn't hide it from Mother. All these years, I seldom came to the capital, even attending royal ceremonies without much interaction, leaving right after the ceremony, and rarely seeing Mother."

"All to avoid arousing Mother's suspicion."

"It seems my approach was correct."

As the King of South Ming spoke, the smile on his face thickened.

His voice carried without hindrance,

and Empress Wang and the array of Noble Consorts nearby, who hadn't heard Empress Dowager Li's question, along with the Court officials close by, all turned their gaze toward them.

Empress Dowager Li silently watched the South Ming King, a figure at once familiar and estranged, and fell silent.

Her gaze returned to the now still Divine Palace.

With a glance raised,

she saw no trace of the blood-soaked claws.

All had seemingly settled into dust.

As these words settled, the summit of Shenyue Mountain, already disturbed by the Devil Emperor's assassination of the Great Zhou Emperor, suddenly fell silent.

Empress Wang, who stood closest and had heard the exchange between Empress Dowager Li and the King of South Ming, showed shock on her delicate face, incredulously turning toward the King of South Ming, then back to Empress Dowager Li.

Overwhelmed, she didn't know what to say.

Although she had not clearly heard what Empress Dowager Li said at the start, from the subsequent words of Empress Dowager Li and what she heard from the King of South Ming,

she knew that the King of South Ming was indeed the crown prince.

And this most beloved and doted-on feudal king of Great Zhou, the King of South Ming, was actually the crown prince!

Who could have imagined that the King of South Ming was none other than the crown prince, missing for decades!

The man Emperor Zhou desperately sought for decades was hiding right under his nose!

In disbelief, Empress Wang clenched her fists, quickly shielding Wu Ming and the young Prince Wu Ji behind her and furiously rebuked the King of South Ming, "Crown prince, why would you collude with the Devil Clan to assassinate His Majesty!"

"Why indeed?" Upon hearing Empress Wang's angry shout, the King of South Ming pondered for a moment, then, smiling, said, "Well, it is quite worth it, Mother. I was supposed to be the Emperor from the beginning; the throne was rightfully mine."

"I was the crown prince for a full three hundred years!"

"Three hundred years, how many three hundred years does a person have in their life?"

"Father sought to pass the throne to me, but Mother, and the Duke of the State, and Wu Shang forcibly took the throne from my hands."

"I couldn't accept it."

"Mother, I couldn't accept it."

The King of South Ming said softly,

his voice calm.

But Empress Dowager Li, Empress Wang, Wu Yuemei, and Wu Ling standing next to the King of South Ming

could each feel the turmoil in his seemingly tranquil voice.

Empress Dowager Li slightly furrowed her brows and shielded the royal kin behind her, facing the King of South Ming alone with her somewhat stooped body.

"I've done nothing wrong. Wu Shang killed me; I will kill him."

"So what if I've allied with the Devil Clan?"

"To tell you the truth, Mother, it's not just the Devil Clan using me, the Demonic Race too,"

"They treat me as a pawn, a stepping stone to enter the Four Directions Mortal World, but so what? They need me."

"In the Four Directions Mortal World, I can still be an Emperor, and Great Zhou will not perish."

"So, Mother, you can still be the Empress Dowager. Under my leadership, Great Zhou will remain unchanged; there will be no difference."

"Wu Shang must have been killed by the White Tiger Devil Emperor by now. I can sense that he has no life left in him, and right now, I am the only one who can inherit the throne."

"To inherit the throne as King of South Ming will probably face less opposition throughout the land."

"After all, who can prove that I am the crown prince? No one can."

Laughing softly, the King of South Ming saluted Empress Dowager Li.

"Mother, I am not the crown prince but the King of South Ming. The Emperor has fallen to the crown prince, and by assuming the throne as King of South Ming, I don't think the people of the world will have anything to say about it."

Moments later, the blood-red pillar of light began to dissipate from the heaven above.

The sky gradually brightened.

Empress Dowager Li listened, her aged face as calm as still water, her eyes filled with noble cloudiness, staring intently at the King of South Ming for a long while before she slowly exhaled.

"I do not agree!"

"The people of the world do not agree!"

"Haven't you caused enough disaster already?"

The tension had just begun to subside.

Below Shenyue Mountain, officials, the Imperial Guard, and guards rushed anxiety, in a frenzy to arrive.

Some Court officials had just reached the vicinity of the Divine Palace, not yet able to investigate the fate of the Great Zhou Emperor, when they heard Empress Dowager Li speak.

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A group of old ministers paused slightly, their faces showing confusion.

Why was His Majesty attacked, yet the Empress Dowager was confronting the King of South Ming?

What did she not agree to?

What kind of disaster did they refer to from all those years ago?

What had the King of South Ming done recently that angered the Empress Dowager?

The Court officials were puzzled, and the Imperial Guards following close behind were equally baffled.

We were just about to search the Divine Palace.

To see what commotion was inside.

Just as the group was about to enter the Divine Palace in search of Emperor Zhou, they were stopped by the King of South Ming.

The King of South Ming stood in the path leading to the Divine Palace, his handsome face marked with a sorrowful expression.

His mournful voice, mixed with Qi, resonated powerfully into the ears of all the officials of the Great Zhou Court, the nobles, royal kin, and the crowd of Imperial Guards.

"Gentlemen, my royal brother has passed away. It's likely the crown prince was secretly plotting chaos, colluding with the Devil Clan to assassinate my brother," he said.

"I wish to ascend the throne and proclaim myself emperor today, but the Empress Dowager disagrees. A nation cannot be without a ruler for a single day, and today I must defy the Empress Dowager's word and succeed to the throne of Great Zhou."

As soon as he said this,

Shenyue Mountain, which was still somewhat chaotic, instantly fell silent.

The air seemed to freeze, plunging into the silence of death.

Many of the old Court officials were shocked, even more so than by the news of Emperor Zhou being attacked.

"How is this possible? Even if His Majesty were attacked, he might be injured, but he couldn't possibly die outright!"

"His Majesty is a Sky-Man! How could this happen!"

"It's impossible, absolutely impossible!"

Some of the old ministers, in their shock, turned their gaze to the King of South Ming and accused him:

"King of South Ming, even if His Majesty has passed on, you seek to ascend the throne on the day he died, isn't this too hasty?"

"Such wild ambition! Now I highly suspect whether you are related to the assassination attempt on His Majesty!"

The King of South Ming, hearing these old ministers' words, looked at their faces and sighed.

He remembered each of their faces; when he was about to take the throne previously, many officials had abruptly pledged allegiance to Wu Shang, including these old ministers.

He just shook his head: "How could I, who am so concerned about my royal brother, conspire with the Devil Clan to assassinate him?"

"Now, in the entire dynasty, I am the only one qualified to inherit the throne."

The King of South Ming's hand slowly twisted the jade disc in his hand, his voice calm and unhurried, as he spoke.

As the King of South Ming spoke, his eyes briefly glanced at Wu Ling to the side.

"That girl, the new Crown Prince, is only at the fourth or fifth rank of cultivation. She truly is not fit to be an emperor."

When the King of South Ming said this, the group of old court officials in front of him became confused.

Because they realized that if Emperor Zhou really had been assassinated in a surprise attack by the Devil Emperor and lost his life, then, at the moment, the only one who could inherit the throne of Great Zhou might be the King of South Ming alone.

But this...

But this...

Though the group of old ministers was somewhat unwilling to accept this, it seemed they had no other choice under the current circumstances. Read the latest fiction on M-VL-em|p,yr

If it were the crown prince staging this scenario, they would have reason to organize the officials to resist, for even when he was Crown Prince, he became dissolute, and the people despised him deeply.

But now, facing the King of South Ming, they had no grounds for objection.

Allowing the King of South Ming to succeed to the throne might present minor issues, but after all, these were internal issues of the royal family, and they, as ministers from outside, had no place to comment.

Compared to Wu Ling, whose cultivation and strength were not very formidable, the people might more readily accept the King of South Ming, who was older and of higher cultivation, as the new emperor.

For a moment, a host of old officials were in turmoil.

It was then that a young official from among the Court officials who had arrived later disregarded the solemn atmosphere and immediately knelt down.

"A nation cannot be without a ruler for even a day. Now that Emperor Yongtai has ascended to heaven, I respectfully request that the King of South Ming ascend to the throne!"

"And promptly lead an army to the Devil Region to avenge Emperor Yongtai!"

The many Court officials silently watched the young official at their feet.

"The son of the Assistant Minister of Rites?"

"Does this also represent the Assistant Minister of Rites' intentions?"

"The Assistant Minister of Rites is showing his loyalty quite early, isn't he a bit too eager?"

Their minds churned as they looked toward the Assistant Minister of Rites, Zhou Lei.

Zhou Lei, facing the crowd's gaze, smiled awkwardly, "I apologize, my son was a bit overeager."

"That's not how it ought to be."

"I, as his father, should be the one to do this first."

Saying this, he suddenly knelt before the King of South Ming.

"A nation cannot be without a ruler for even a day. I respectfully request that the King of South Ming ascend to the throne!"

The host of old Court officials, upon witnessing this scene, couldn't help but twitch their lips and their expressions shifted uncertainly, turning their attention to the King of South Ming standing in front of the Divine Palace.

Before they could react, a group of officials, Court ministers, stepped out of the ranks and knelt before the King of South Ming.

"A nation cannot be without a ruler for even a day. I respectfully request that the King of South Ming ascend to the throne!"

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These Court officials were not of low rank; those of lower position could not have been present at this royal ceremony.

At the very least, they were third-rank ministers.

Among them was also the Minister of Rites, a high-ranking official in the Court.

The Minister of Rites, Wen Shouren, with his bewildered son Wen Qinghe, knelt down.

A host of officials declared their loyalty with loud voices.

The King of South Ming, seeing this unfold, a faint smile grew in his eyes, but his face was still marked with grief and responsibility.

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"My lords, I have already understood all your hearts; thus, if that is the case, I shall ascend to the throne."

The tone still carried a whiff of reluctance.

It was as though the regional officials were pressuring him to take the throne.

As the situation progressed to this moment, even the most reactionary of the court elders could see clearly.

The attack on Emperor Zhou of Great Zhou today might be related to the Crown Prince, but it definitely couldn't be separate from the King of South Ming!

However...

They had no evidence!

If it were about the Crown Prince, they might still be able to argue.

But this King of South Ming!

He had no reason to attack Emperor Zhou!

Even if they were to speak out, how could the people of the world believe it?

For a time, court elders who wanted to refute had nothing to say.

Under these circumstances, they could only turn their gaze to Empress Dowager Li who stood beside them, trembling with anger, her elderly face slightly pale.

"Empress Dowager, this..."

"This is..."

Under the watchful eyes of the court elders and numerous nobles, Empress Dowager Li, despite her age, her voice rang out strong and forceful.

She angrily tapped her Purple Dragon Cane on the ground, producing a crisp sound.

"It was not King of South Ming, it was the Crown Prince!"

"All of this, it was his doing!"

"Conspiring with the Devil Clan, assassinating the Emperor!"

"Such a crime deserves death!"

Empress Dowager Li's angry voice spread out.

The air once again fell silent.

King of South Ming is the Crown Prince?

Everyone looked dumbfounded for a moment at the King of South Ming, and then turned their eyes to Empress Dowager Li.

Looking into her eyes, they were full of bewilderment.

No matter how intently they stared, they couldn't see any resemblance between King of South Ming and the Crown Prince of yesteryears.

How could the Empress Dowager say such things?

Could it be that the Crown Prince had used some Different Treasure to change his appearance to that of the King of South Ming?

But such a treasure, that could change a person completely, inside and out, was rare to come by!

In the entire history of the dynasty, not one had appeared!

Therefore.

Everyone was puzzled.

With a trace of sorrow on his face, King of South Ming said, "My lords, the Empress Dowager is distressed, her mind is a bit muddled."

"Among those present, is there anyone who opposes my becoming Emperor?"

King of South Ming stood on the high platform, his gaze sweeping over everyone.

Even some of the courtiers and the Imperial Guard could see that Emperor Zhou's death was very likely related to the King of South Ming, but they were unable to say anything.

As King of South Ming said, if Emperor Zhou truly had passed away, it seemed that he truly was the only one suitable to succeed the throne.

If someone made a move now and King of South Ming really succeeded to the throne later, their future would be difficult.

But, was it really a good choice to follow a man who was suspected of conspiring with the Devil Clan and assassinating Emperor Zhou?

For a moment, everyone fell silent.

Human nature is not immune to trials; even the court officials loyal to Emperor Zhou could not help but fall silent at this time.

There was no opposition, nor was there agreement.

In this silence.

Footsteps sounded slowly.

Step, step, step.

Empress Dowager Li walked out slowly.

Her aged face unchanged, her gaze fixed firmly on the King of South Ming.

"I've said it, I, this old woman, do not agree!"

"The people of the world, do not agree!"

"Back then, the Devil Clan invaded the Capital city! Our land was entirely lost! Yet, you still dreamt of ascending to the throne, countless people died or were injured, yet, you still dreamt of ascending to the throne!"

"And now, you are no different!"

Empress Dowager Li took a deep breath and heavily slammed her Purple Dragon Cane on the ground, "On behalf of the ancestors and forefathers of Great Zhou, I do not agree either!"

The words fell, and the scene went silent for a time.

The King of South Ming's expression darkened slightly, and the Jade Bead he had been twirling in his hand also stopped.

Empress Dowager Li's words were as good as openly accusing King of South Ming of being the Crown Prince.

Many officials present began to harbor doubts in their hearts—could King of South Ming really be the Crown Prince?

But they couldn't see it!

The people pondered.

Despite their doubts, feeling the emotion in Empress Dowager Li's voice and the words she spoke, they still believed her.

King of South Ming might truly be the Crown Prince.

But in this situation.

Does it matter?

It no longer mattered.

There was no evidence.

The people of the dynasty would not recognize the Crown Prince, but they would recognize King of South Ming.

They could hardly make an impact across the world with just their words.

A short while later.

Wu Yuemei also stepped forward slowly, positioning herself in front of Empress Dowager Li, "I do not agree either."

The gentleness that Wu Yuemei once possessed had disappeared, replaced by the capricious demeanor she had as a princess of the royal family.

"Even if you're not the Crown Prince, but King of South Ming, to wish to ascend the throne under these circumstances, what a wild ambition you have!"

Wu Ling slowly stepped forward, her lovely face expressionless, her bright eyes looking at King of South Ming without much fear, her brow filled with a coldness.

"I do not agree either."

Emperor Zhou was her father, and although he was not a good father, Wu Ling had to admit that Emperor Zhou had treated her extremely well.

With Emperor Zhou having been attacked, and his fate uncertain at this moment, even if King of South Ming was not the culprit behind the assassination, he was certainly not a noble character.

Soon, Empress Wang, several Noble Consorts, and the Princes and Princesses also stood up one after another.

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Within the royal family and its kin, only the King of South Ming stood in opposition, seemingly having become completely isolated.

At the same time, as if a chain reaction was set off, like dominoes falling, many court officials could no longer sit idly by and finally stood up, voicing their objections with indignation.

"We do not agree!"

"We do not agree!"

Beneath the chorus of voices, the expression of grief on the King of South Ming's face slowly receded, as if with a hint of regret, he started toying with the Jade Bead in his hand again.

Looking up somewhat regretfully, he gazed at the blood-stained heavens.

"I originally thought I could go the orthodox way, pressuring with power to have you support me ascending the throne as emperor."

"It seems that's not going to work."

"I can't be blamed for being too hasty. After all, with Empress Dowager Li and the Duke of the State present, the longer it drags on, the less likely it becomes for me to legally succeed to the throne."

"I gave you a chance, and you didn't take it."

"If the Bureau of the Lamp hadn't eradicated those Devil Clan infiltrators earlier, you wouldn't have had the chance to speak up."

"In the end, it seems it will take some time."

The King of South Ming muttered to himself.

His voice was not loud, yet everyone could hear him clearly.

The King of South Ming sighed.

"Begin."

As his words fell,

everyone's face changed slightly. Before they could react, the very court officials who had just been kneeling at the King of South Ming's feet, pleading for him to ascend the throne, turned like unleashed tigers on the old court officials who had just spoken against him, rushing to slaughter them.

On Shenyue Mountain, intense Qi fluctuations erupted all at once.

At the same time.

Behind the King of South Ming, high in the sky, the Inferno Hell opened, and a deity slowly emerged, as if under the True Solar Fire, the deity invoked changes and flew towards the royal kin, slashing horizontally at them.

Ordinary people would not dare to kill those with royal blood.

Even those loyal to the King of South Ming would not dare to show the slightest disrespect to Empress Dowager Li and the others.

The King of South Ming would not allow them to act either.

Killing the royal family could only be done by his own hands.

The dreadful might of the King of South Ming's solar power was terrifying. Among the royal kin, Empress Dowager Li, Wu Yuemei, and even Empress Wang, under such an attack, had little power to resist.

Empress Dowager Li sighed weakly, her aged face appearing slightly withered. Using her frail body, she protected Wu Yuemei and those around her behind herself.

"It is I, the old woman, who has let everyone down."

At this moment, Empress Dowager Li believed she had dragged everyone down with her.

If she had not vehemently opposed the King of South Ming, perhaps he would not have been able to bring himself to kill.

She had not anticipated that the King of South Ming would truly wish to eradicate the entire royal clan.

Although there were many Imperial Guards in Shenyue Mountain, with Emperor Zhou dead and the new emperor yet to be established, they were mostly bewildered and lost in the face of this sudden shift in the situation.

Rushing to counter the attack of the rebelling officials was already extremely difficult.

They had neither the opportunity nor the strength to oppose the King of South Ming, whose cultivation realm was infinitely close to the Heavenly Human Realm.

The King of South Ming had cultivated for several hundred years, but his strength had not yet reached the Heavenly Human Realm, even after undergoing numerous Blood Pool purifications.

One could imagine how lacking his original talents must have been.

Now, with the royal blood in his body drawn out by the Queen of the South Ming, his strength had already reached its limit—he might never attain the Heavenly Human Realm in this life.

But this was not important.

He had the Devil Emperor and the Demon Emperor behind him. In the King of South Ming's eyes, even the Duke of the State could do nothing to him.

Just as the King of South Ming's attack was about to hit the royal kin, two figures suddenly appeared.

Raising their Qi in both hands and wielding Divine Power, they blocked the King of South Ming's attack.

It was Qian Siyuan and Li Zhengyang.

"Oh? The people from the Bureau of the Lamp, it seems I did not notice your presence just now."

When the King of South Ming saw Qian Siyuan and Li Zhengyang, he was slightly startled, as if struck by a thought.

Suddenly, he seemed to sense something, noticing that the noise around his ears was getting quieter.

The previously inconspicuous Silver Lantern Catchers of the Bureau of the Lamp appeared from nowhere, in the trees, inside the halls, everywhere filled with black-clad constables.

Wearing various lamp badges on their chests, they looked solemn as they surged from all directions.

Apparently prepared, without a hint of panic, they silently drew their knives and charged at the renegade officials.

The rules of the royal ceremony were the same as those in the court.

All officials, even guards, were not permitted to carry weapons or Different Treasures.

Yet judging by the state of these Bureau of the Lamp members, they were fully armed to the teeth.

The corner of the King of South Ming's mouth twitched slightly, as he had never expected the Bureau of the Lamp, which always acted by the book, to one day break its own rules.

When one side was armed and the other was not, even those whose Cultivation Realm differed by a great margin could engage in a struggle.

Based on the number and quality of officials he had bought over and won over in recent years, even without his intervention, he would have been able to crush everyone present.

Yet he had not anticipated that the Bureau of the Lamp would disregard martial ethics and bring weapons.

In just a moment, the previously tumultuous Shenyue Mountain quieted down.

Many officials were continuously being slain by the Bureau of the Lamp constables.

The King of South Ming could even see several Silver Lantern Catchers specifically capturing officials loyal to him and, as if cleaning them up, presenting them to the Town-Nation Duke's Heir for execution.

Seeing this scene, the King of South Ming felt as if he had been insulted.

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"How dare they?"

If Emperor Zhou of the Great Zhou discovered this scene, even if Cheng Zihai wasn't headed for certain death, he'd probably at least lose a layer of skin, right?

Could it be that Cheng Zihai, out of desperation to find my whereabouts, is thinking of rebelling?

One absurd thought after another rose in the heart of the King of South Ming.

A moment later, he shook his head and chuckled, "It can't possibly be that they've realized my plans in advance, can it?"

"After all, Emperor Zhou is already dead."

Thinking this, the King of South Ming didn't really care.

Even if his own officials weren't very useful, it didn't matter.

After all, with his strength alone, he could suppress the whole scene.

Only the Prime Minister and the ministers whose cultivation had reached the Ninth Grade were capable of causing him a headache.

However, these were clever people, and with Emperor Zhou now dead, these cunning old foxes, even if they might not agree to his ascension to the throne, once he really declared himself emperor, they would surely bow their heads to him obediently for the sake of their own family interests.

As the King of South Ming thought this, his gaze swept over a few court ministers who were meditating amidst the chaos.

He looked toward the Queen of South Ming beside him, "Your Highness can also take action."

"Awaken the consciousness of my true self, and you should be able to resolve the commotion here. With Emperor Zhou dead, the Great Zhou has already fallen to half its strength. If these court officials also die, the Great Zhou will be nearly finished."

"I will go now to kill those royal kinsmen."

Hearing the words of the King of South Ming, the Queen of South Ming, with her cold and noble visage, gave him a glance but did not respond, simply shifting her gaze away in silence.

The King of South Ming felt a strange sensation, but he didn't think too much about it. As for this incarnation of the Demon Emperor, he didn't dare to have too many thoughts about her, not even daring to look at her too much on a regular basis.

He slowly raised his hand, and the Power of the Primordial Spirit surged within him, preparing to exhibit the Divine Power of the Spirit Dao, to summon the divine likeness and wipe out the royal relatives who isolated him on the spot.

It was at this moment.

All of a sudden, he felt a sharp pain, a cold sensation at his waist.

His body halted, and he dumbly turned his head to look at the Queen of South Ming.

He glanced at the Queen of South Ming's cold face.

Then he looked down at her jade hand stabbing into his flank.

The sharp blade pierced into his flesh, and even for the King of South Ming, the pain furrowed his brows slightly at this moment.

More than pain, what he felt was incomprehension.

"What are you doing?"

The Queen of South Ming did not speak, but silently stabbed him again.

"Wait a minute."

"What?" The King of South Ming ultimately didn't dare to lose his temper at this prestigious Demon Emperor.

The Demon Emperor had an unpredictable nature, and a stab in the side was still considered mild-

the King of South Ming really feared that the Demon Emperor might, on a whim, decapitate him.

Although he didn't quite understand the Queen's thoughts at the moment, the King of South Ming still patiently asked again, "Wait for what?"

"We've already won the situation here."

"The White Tiger Devil Emperor has already killed Emperor Zhou."

"The Great Zhou is now in our hands."

The Queen of South Ming's expression remained unchanged, her beautiful visage still cold, but from the slight lift of her lips, it seemed her frigid demeanor was about to falter.

The Queen of South Ming sighed inwardly, blaming a certain nemesis in her heart again.

What Queen's stockings.

So bizarre.

Even though I'm just an incarnation of the Demon Emperor, I'm still technically one-thousandth of the Demon Emperor, right? To change my demeanor like this, I will probably never have the chance to merge back into the main body.

The Queen of South Ming inwardly jabbed needles into an effigy of the Town-Nation Duke's Heir, yet her expression remained as cold as ever, glancing toward the location of the Divine Palace, and said:

"Don't rush, Emperor Zhou isn't dead yet."

"But, someone... well... a devil is about to die."

"Huh?"

The King of South Ming frowned slightly, not quite understanding the meaning of the Queen of South Ming.

What does she mean by Emperor Zhou is not dead yet?

He could clearly sense that Emperor Zhou's presence had utterly vanished.

And what does it mean that a devil is about to die?

Could it be that the White Tiger Devil Emperor is about to die? Or what?

The King of South Ming only felt that the Queen of South Ming was somewhat nonsensical at this moment.

Just then, suddenly, a dazzling brilliance burst forth from within the Divine Palace.

Blue, yellow, red, white, and black lights were separated in the void, forming fan-like wheels, sweeping across the sky as if creating a space out of this world.

In that space, a most exquisite display of the five elements' cycle of generation and destruction unfolded, an unstoppable force in this world, and mournful howls spread from within.

It was as if some great devil was being tormented within it.

All at once, the sounds abruptly stopped.

The sky, which had still held a tinge of blood, suddenly changed color.

The invisible spatial barrier shattered with a loud boom.

In the world between heaven and earth, a white tiger wept blood, and a thousand thunderous flames surged forth with a deep, rumbling roar, pouring down. Yet both the bloodied white tiger and its roar were filled with anguish.

An omen of heaven and earth, the Devil Emperor had fallen.

A Devil Emperor had died!

All who witnessed this scene felt a slight shock in their hearts.

The White Tiger Devil Emperor that had just launched a sneak attack on Emperor Zhou had died!

How did he die!?

Who killed him!?

Emperor Zhou!!??

Shock rippled through everyone's hearts.

There was silence between heaven and earth, the air seemed to have frozen.

As the omen of the Devil Emperor's fall appeared, a profound chill had already spread to every corner of King of South Ming's body.

Under his gaze, two figures emerged slowly in the void.

One of them.

Was Cheng Zihai.

The other one.

Was Emperor Zhou...

Wu Shang.

Looking at the pair, their robes stained with blood, they bore smiles on their faces.

And that blood on their robes...

Still carried the faint scent of the White Tiger Devil Emperor...

It was...

Blood of the White Tiger Devil Emperor...

Was the White Tiger Devil Emperor killed by these two men?

How could this be?

King of South Ming felt as if he were stricken by thunder, momentarily unable to comprehend the situation before him.

First, there was the unusual action of the Bureau of the Lamp, as if they had anticipated this and had prepared in advance.

Then there was the abnormality of the Queen of South Ming quietly stabbing him twice.

After that, came the current scene.

Emperor Zhou had not died.

Instead, the White Tiger Devil Emperor was dead.

Who was behind this?

Who betrayed me!?

King of South Ming felt as if all sounds had vanished from around him at that moment.

He only felt as if his body had lost its gravity, falling bit by bit into an abyss.

When he turned his head to look at the Queen of South Ming again.

He saw that the cold and dignified expression on the Queen of South Ming's face, upon seeing the figure behind him, couldn't be maintained any longer.

A slight pout of a spoiled young lady, full of grievances, appeared on her face.

"You don't know how tiring it is to act."

King of South Ming's worldview was almost shattered!

This damn!

You're a Demon Emperor, not an Oiran!!

And now acting!

So that high and cold demeanor of yours just now wasn't real!?

The royal etiquette that King of South Ming always held could no longer be maintained, and he silently turned to the person beside him.

He found that the Town-Nation Duke's Heir, as mentioned in legends, was watching him with a smile.

"Old Man, did you enjoy stabbing me?" the Town-Nation Duke's Heir said with a laugh.

"Today, let me give you a taste of being stabbed in the back."

As soon as the words were spoken.

Just as the King of South Ming was about to say something, a sudden icy sting came from his waist.

The words he was about to say choked in his throat.

He silently looked at the Town-Nation Duke's Heir before him.

And fell silent.

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The King of South Ming watched silently at the nearby Town-Nation Duke's Heir, unparalleled in handsomeness, and graceful in demeanor.

His composed face twitched slightly as the Jade Bead in his hand slowly began to spin.

Then, the King of South Ming's gaze moved to the exceptionally beautiful Queen of the South Ming, who, despite her noble demeanor, carried the seductive charm of an Oiran. Her regal aura melded perfectly with her coquettish appearance.

Very beautiful.

But the King of South Ming felt that he couldn't quite appreciate her.

His lips moved a few times, wanting to say something, yet in the end, he didn't utter a word.

Silently, he stepped aside, retreating a few steps.

And withdrew the dagger from his waist that the Queen of the South Ming had plunged into him.

In the end, he didn't dare to do anything to the capricious avatar of the Demon Emperor that was the Queen of the South Ming.

At most, he could only rage impotently, like a master of desk cleaning.

The King of South Ming took a deep breath, still not quite daring to believe that the avatar of the Demon Emperor would abandon him; they were supposed to stand together, the Demon Emperor wouldn't go to such lengths.

But the situation before him, as well as the capricious nature of the Demon Emperor's avatar, forced the King of South Ming to reassess the strange circumstances before him.

His gaze swept across Emperor Zhou and Cheng Zihai in the sky above and then returned to focus on the Town-Nation Duke's Heir.

Seeing the brilliant smile on the Town-Nation Duke's Heir, the King of South Ming couldn't help but feel annoyed.

He considered the recent exposure of the Devil Clan's smuggling port, which was the doing of this Town-Nation Duke's Heir right before him. Could this scene at the royal ceremony also be his handiwork?

The King of South Ming pondered to himself, but he didn't understand how the Town-Nation Duke's Heir had discovered his plan.

Was it disclosed by the King of South Ming?

That shouldn't be the case.

If the betrayal was by the Queen of the South Ming, then so be it.

But the last time, when the Town-Nation Duke's Heir discovered the smuggling port of the Devil Clan, the Queen of South Ming had not been in contact with him yet – at least not openly and under his watch.

Thinking back to the Great Zhou-Great Wei martial arts tournament, it was also disrupted by this Town-Nation Duke's Heir.

He had exposed Qiu Zhiman, the long-concealed, Ninth-Grade Head of the Martial Academy of Great Zhou, whose purpose was to kill the students during the competition and stir up relations between Great Wei and Great Zhou, leading to enmity and ideally, war.

But what was the outcome?

Qiu Zhiman was brutally killed.

His plan was disastrously miscarried.

And recalling the previous failure of Bai Shuxuan to bewitch Cheng Guang and the assassination attempt that not only failed but resulted in the loss of many subordinates including those strong enough to be in the Eighth-Rank King Realm.

It could certainly be considered a colossal loss.

The King of South Ming for some reason had the unnerving feeling that all his moves were being anticipated by the Town-Nation Duke's Heir, thwarting his plans every step of the way.

The King of South Ming slowly spun the Jade Bead in his hand, looking at the Town-Nation Duke's Heir not far away. He patiently controlled his emotions and asked:

"Was today's drama directed by you?"

Cheng Guang spread his hands, "It wasn't me, but does that matter?"

The King of South Ming scoffed sarcastically, "Indeed it doesn't matter."

At that moment, Emperor Zhou and Cheng Zihai, who had been standing in the sky, slowly descended from above and landed not far from the King of South Ming.

The previously somewhat chaotic Shenyue Mountain fell deathly silent the moment Emperor Zhou appeared, instantly tranquilizing the turmoil.

Some rebellious officials who were still struggling, but upon seeing the figure of Emperor Zhou, immediately became ashen-faced, pale with defeat, giving up any resistance.

With Emperor Zhou present, Great Zhou could not possibly be in chaos.

Even the crown prince could not stir up any trouble under such circumstances.

At the same time, the Court's Prime Minister who had just been meditating, along with the other five ministers except the Minister of Rites, were also no longer playing dead at this time.

They felt fortunate in their hearts that they had not impulsively supported the King of South Ming's ascension to the throne; otherwise, they really did not know what their fate would have been.

"Your Majesty, are you okay?"

"Your Majesty, when the Devil Emperor suddenly attacked, we were also caught off guard."

"Luckily, Your Majesty is unharmed. Otherwise, I would definitely have fought the Devil Emperor to the death."

"Now that the White Tiger Devil Emperor has died a miserable death, it's truly gratifying. Daring to lay a hand on Your Majesty – he deserved this fate!"

The court officials gathered around, bowing respectfully and expressing concern for Emperor Zhou, showing their loyalty.

Emperor Zhou's stern and majestic face remained unchanged after listening to the ministers, merely glancing at the appearance of the court officials before his gaze fell on the group of rebellious officers.

Leading them was the Minister of Rites, Wen Shouren, whose cultivation was extremely high. Prior to this, even the constables and Gold Lantern Catchers couldn't subdue him effectively.

But the moment Emperor Zhou appeared, the Minister of Rites, Wen Shouren, immediately knelt down willingly, pulling his somewhat confused son Wen Qinghe to kneel beside him.

Wen Qinghe felt as if he was dreaming – first hearing that Emperor Zhou was dead, his father decisively shifted allegiance to the King of South Ming, supporting his emperorship for a grand reward. And now, His Majesty was alive again.

He couldn't make sense of the current situation.

So, he simply lay down flat like a salted fish.

Daring not to resist in the slightest.

When the Minister of Rites, Wen Shouren, noticed Emperor Zhou's gaze on him, tears streamed down his wrinkled old face, and his lips quivered as he began to sob loudly.

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"Your Majesty, this old servant is truly happy to see that Your Majesty is unharmed,"

Emperor Zhou of Great Zhou responded indifferently. "Happy?"

"Not disappointed?"

Wen Shouren quickly wailed, "How dare this old servant feel disappointed? Everything was driven by circumstances. When this old servant saw the Devil Emperor suddenly attack Your Majesty, my heart, it shattered in that moment, Your Majesty, you have no idea..."

Wen Shouren meant to continue with his sob story, but Emperor Zhou had lost interest in listening to his nonsense. He frowned slightly and turned his head to look at Cheng Zihai beside him.

"He's involved with the crown prince, isn't he?"

Cheng Zihai nodded subtly in response to Emperor Zhou's words.

Emperor Zhou nodded indifferently and looked at the kneeling officials who had betrayed him. Among them were many familiar faces. After a moment of silence, he said,

"Then execute them. Execute all of these people."

As Emperor Zhou finished speaking, the treacherous officials kneeling on the ground felt a chilling coldness throughout their bodies.

They had not anticipated that Emperor Zhou would actually have the heart to order the execution of all these officials, who represented a significant part of the court's power and were backed by numerous prestigious families.

Several officials trembled as they tried to plead for mercy, but the constables of the Bureau of the Lamp gave them no chance to beg.

If it weren't for Emperor Zhou's sudden appearance, they would have been prostrate on the ground, fearing that they would have already turned into fresh corpses by now.

The executioner's blade fell swiftly, and a swath of heads hit the ground.

Blood soaked into the earth, and the chill cut like a blade.

As numerous officials were executed around him, Wen Shouren let out an ironic laugh. His once erect stature hunched over a bit, and he pleaded,

"Your Majesty, I am prepared to die, but my son, my son knows nothing."

"May I ask Your Majesty to spare my young son's life?"

Emperor Zhou did not respond.

Wen Shouren understood Emperor Zhou's intention. He laughed bitterly, looking at his son beside him, still naive, full of regret, and self-blame.

In a flash, Wen Shouren, who once stood at the pinnacle of royal power as one of the six ministers, the Minister of Rites, fell into a pool of blood.

Wen Qinghe stood dumbfounded as if he had not come to grasp what had happened, but the next moment, he too felt a jolt of pain, eyes widening as he fell beside Wen Shouren.

"Dad, what in the world are you doing?"

The rebel officials were executed on the spot, and the sacred Shenyue Mountain had turned into an execution ground.

Even the officials who had not rebelled felt a heavy chill and shivered, instinctively turning into shrinking turtles in this atmosphere.

They dared not make a sound.

Emperor Zhou turned his gaze to King of South Ming beside him.

King of South Ming timely showed an expression of anxiety and concern, "It's good that Your Majesty is unharmed. Just now, I thought that Your Majesty had... so I..."

"It seems it was my fault after all."

Emperor Zhou listened indifferently to King of South Ming's words, his imperious gaze sweeping over King of South Ming, "All these years, I have been kept in the dark by your good tactics, brother. You truly have good methods."

King of South Ming slowly twirled the Jade Bead in his hand, the speed of the bead subtly increasing. The anxiety and concern on his face faded, replaced by a trace of bewilderment.

"What do you mean by this, Your Majesty?"

By now, King of South Ming had run out of options.

He could only gamble that the Queen of the South Ming, this Demon Emperor, would not betray him, and he was also betting that Emperor Zhou would still retain some fraternal feelings for him as King of South Ming.

Whether he was King of South Ming or the crown prince, Emperor Zhou's only brother now was none but him alone.

In King of South Ming's view, given Emperor Zhou's character that highly valued familial bonds, even if he realized who he truly was, as long as he wore the identity of King of South Ming, Emperor Zhou would not bear to lay a hand on him.

Emperor Zhou looked impassively at King of South Ming.

As the court officials heard Emperor Zhou's words, they could not help but cast their gaze on King of South Ming, their expressions filled with shock and uncertainty.

"From His Majesty's tone, it seems that King of South Ming is truly the crown prince."

"No one knows how the crown prince changed his appearance to look like King of South Ming."

"But then, if the true identity of King of South Ming is the crown prince, where is the real King of South Ming..."

As the court officials murmured among themselves, they realized that King of South Ming might have already been dead.

As the court officials discussed, Emperor Zhou evidently had already grasped this fact. His stern and cold visage lingered on King of South Ming, a tinge of sorrow flickering in his eyes before he concealed it again.

Emperor Zhou's eyes turned to Cheng Zihai, "Can you change his appearance back?"

Cheng Zhai nodded and replied, "Yes."

Having said this, Cheng Zihai looked towards Cheng Guang, pride and arrogance surfacing on his face, giving him a knowing look.

"Guanger."

Emperor Zhou noticed Cheng Zihai's action and was slightly taken aback, not understanding why Cheng Zihai had suddenly called for Cheng Guang, the Town-Nation Duke's Heir.

The rest of the officials also did not understand and felt a little lost.

Upon hearing Cheng Zihai invoking Cheng Guang's name, King of South Ming's complexion darkened slightly, as he clenched the Jade Bead in his hand tighter and glanced at Cheng Guang, the Town-Nation Duke's Heir, then turned to look at the Queen of the South Ming beside him.

He had a bad premonition.

Taking into account the Queen of the South Ming's recent behavior towards Cheng Guang, combined with the current actions of Cheng Zihai calling out to Cheng Guang.

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Even he, as foolish as he might have been, had realized that the situation before him vastly differed from what he had anticipated.

Indeed, in the next moment, under the watchful eyes of Emperor Zhou and the Court officials, the Town-Nation Duke's Heir approached the Queen of South Ming beside him and removed the jade pendant from around her neck.

Conflicted emotions might have crossed the Queen's face, but she did not resist in the slightest, merely sighing helplessly towards the King of South Ming.

Although she was a split-off of the Demon Emperor, she possessed a certain degree of autonomy in consciousness. Given her current predicament, not to mention a change in personality, even if she had been tainted with the slightest filth, the Demon Emperor would never allow her to merge back into the original entity.

The consciousness of the original entity had yet to descend.

She could live a little longer.

If the consciousness of the original entity were to descend, her chances of escaping death were slim.

There was hardly any difference now whether she helped the King of South Ming or not.

On the contrary, if she helped the Town-Nation Duke's Heir, she might survive a little longer before the consciousness of the original entity descended. If she did not help the Town-Nation Duke's Heir, she feared she would already be gone.

This was a calculation the Queen of South Ming understood well.

After Cheng Guang removed the jade pendant from the delicate body of the Queen of South Ming, in that instant,

the pendant which had, at first, seemed ordinary with only a hint of craftsmanship, suddenly emitted a faint glow.

This glow, though not dazzling, gave off a deeply eerie feeling.

Simultaneously, the King of South Ming felt as if his body were shedding a layer of skin, or as if countless invisible hands were kneading his body.

His skin, originally smooth and fair like jade, began to lose moisture, becoming dry and wrinkled. His majestic and noble eyes also turned cloudy and blurred.

The King of South Ming, aware of his transformation, was not surprised.

Gathering up his black hair, what was once jet-black began to change to salt-and-pepper, like snow slowly losing its color in the bitter winter.

His frame shriveled, his bones became more pronounced, his muscles atrophied, and his features grew gaunt, with sunken eyes and hollowed cheeks.

He had become like an old man, one foot already in the coffin.

The Court officials, witnessing this almost eerie transformation, couldn't help but inhale sharply, their expressions filled with shock.

Empress Dowager Li's aged features transformed, her eyes narrowed slightly. Her bony, prominently jointed fingers clenched tightly around the cane, then slowly released.

As she exhaled a breath of relief, her previously upright posture slowly became hunched.

Emperor Zhou looked on dispassionately and with dignity at the King of South Ming as he gradually changed into the visage of the crown prince. Even though he had mentally prepared himself,

when the moment came, Emperor Zhou's hand still trembled slightly, and he tightened it gradually.

Recalling how, over the years, all the kindness he showed to the King of South Ming had in fact gone to the crown prince,

Beyond the sorrow within his heart, there was a greater sense of humiliation.

The humiliation of being treated like a clown by the crown prince, deceived for so many years!

At that moment, the King of South Ming, or rather, the crown prince, even though his face and body had aged, still stood tall and calm, without much panic.

He looked at his pale white hair, then his gaze shifted to the Town-Nation Duke's Heir, and to the one who, for some unknown reason, had abandoned the Demon Emperor within himself. Then he chuckled and shook his head.

"I've lost again this time," he murmured.

Emperor Zhou, suppressing his emotions, responded indifferently, "Brother, you've never won."

"You escaped once, but today, you cannot escape."

As Emperor Zhou spoke, he raised a finger and a point of brilliant golden light blossomed from his fingertip.

A vast aura of the Primordial Spirit, like an incoming tide, surged from his being and permeated the surroundings.

Emperor Zhou had no wish to converse extensively with the crown prince as he was now.

If the crown prince had maintained the appearance of the King of South Ming, he would have been reluctant to act, but facing the crown prince as he was now, he had no such qualms.

The crown prince should have died years ago.

The crown prince's slightly aged eyes stared at Emperor Zhou, observing the confident demeanor of the current Emperor Zhou, and he laughed again.

"Escape?"

"Why would I need to escape?"

"I care not for reputation, nor how the world perceives me—but you do."

"Wu Shang, in the end, you are still destined to spill royal blood and bear the infamy. You took my throne, and I am not content; even if it means slaying these princes and princesses of yours, the Empress Dowager, and every royal supporter, I am not wrong."

"But if you kill me, how will you face the ancestors when you return to hell?"

Emperor Zhou remained impassive. The crown prince was correct; he was the legitimate heir.

Even though he had the support of the Empress Dowager, the Duke of the State, and the citizens of Great Zhou, he wasn't in accordance with ancient customs.

But what of it?

He would prove himself to be a worthy Emperor of Great Zhou. Even if not the eldest legitimate son, he would be a competent Emperor.

"Brother, go on your way. There's no need for you to worry about my affairs," said Emperor Zhou, waving his hand. As he did so, the tremendous Primordial Spirit in the void outlined divine figures. The Divine Secret Skill unfolded, divine bodies scattered with golden light, which turned into fierce sword rays shooting towards the crown prince.

The crown prince, facing the attack of Emperor Zhou, ceased fiddling with the Jade Bead in his hand and then threw his palm forward, releasing a surge of the Power of the Primordial Spirit. In the next moment, it was as if countless tongues of fire erupted from the palm of his hand.

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Countless beams of True Solar Fire-like power of the Primordial Spirit sketched out a divine being bathing in a sea of fire, with innumerable tongues of flame erupting from every part of its body.

Boom!!!

The two forces met.

They erupted into an intensely dazzling brightness, and many could no longer see the scenery around them.

Cheng Zihai timely wielded his Qi to protect Cheng Guang and the rest of the imperial family behind him.

Cheng Guang looked toward the battle between Emperor Zhou and the crown prince.

He only felt intermittent roars ringing in his ears.

A white glare filled his vision.

The battle between Emperor Zhou and the crown prince was indistinct to him.

As time passed under this white glare, it seemed as though time itself had lost all meaning.

No one knew how much time had passed.

Then color gradually returned to the world.

Emperor Zhou stood alone in the void, looking lost and disconsolate.

In front of him, the crown prince's chest was stained with blood, his hair disheveled. Although his robe was still intact, the life in him was rapidly fading away.

He lay on the ground, powerless, spitting out a mouthful of fresh blood, looking up at the sky.

"I'm not reconciled,"

"I am the true Emperor of Great Zhou, I really can't accept this,"

he murmured, and the hand clenched around the Jade Bead loosened.

His head drooped weakly, his graying hair falling beside his face, adding an extra measure of desolation.

A column of light rose from the body of the crown prince, a natural marvel, shifting colors as if heaven and earth were weeping blood.

Emperor Zhou remained silent and indifferent.

The court officials didn't dare to speak more, kneeling respectfully on the ground in total silence.

The crown prince, who had hidden and escaped for decades, saw all his plans come to nothing in a single day.

And now at last, he was truly dead.

The future of Great Zhou might be able to find complete peace at last.

With a sweep of his hand, Emperor Zhou caused the body of the crown prince and the remnants of his Primordial Spirit to shatter like crystal, turning into points of light and disappearing completely.

The crown prince was now thoroughly dead.

Emperor Zhou wouldn't make the same mistake twice after the crown prince had managed to escape once. He wouldn't leave any troubles for the future.

After dispersing the body of the crown prince, Emperor Zhou silently looked up at the grand and majestic Divine Palace behind him and then strode toward the Imperial Palace.

Emperor Zhou moved off first, and Empress Dowager Li, Wu Yuemei, Empress Wang, and a host of Noble Consorts, princes, and princesses also quietly got up and walked down the mountain.

A grand imperial ceremony had turned into such a spectacle, having lost the initial excitement and interest.

As Wu Yuemei passed by Cheng Guang, she looked at him worriedly, checking his body.

"Guanger, were you hurt just now?"

Cheng Guang shook his head, smiling, "I'm fine."

Wu Yuemei, upon hearing Cheng Guang say this, finally breathed a sigh of relief and with a resigned sigh, lightly tapped Cheng Guang's forehead.

"Silly boy, I'm glad you're alright..."

As she said this, Wu Yuemei suddenly noticed the Queen of the South Ming next to Cheng Guang, and her expression became complicated.

She hadn't truly expected the King of South Ming to be the crown prince.

If the King of South Ming was indeed the crown prince, then the identity of this Queen of the South Ming, her nominal younger sister-in-law, was yet to be determined.

And it seemed that she had a particularly close relationship with her own Guanger.

Wu Yuemei's brows furrowed slightly, but she didn't say much more, merely instructing Cheng Guang to go home first while she would go to the Imperial Palace to accompany Empress Dowager Li.

Empress Dowager Li had suffered a great deal of shock today; it was best for Wu Yuemei to be by her side.

Cheng Guang nodded in agreement, and Cheng Zihai, standing beside him, walked over, glancing at the Queen of the South Ming. He knew her identity – a member of the Demonic Race.

Cheng Guang had told him previously.

While this individual from the Demonic Race currently harbored no ill will, what she might become in the future was uncertain.

After he returned, he would have to think about how to deal with this demonic person.

According to him, the best course of action after concluding this affair would be to execute the Queen of the South Ming immediately. Although it might seem ungrateful, he felt that no excessive sympathy was required when dealing with the Demonic Race.

But Cheng Guang had asked him not to lay a hand on her.

He did not know the reason, but out of respect for Cheng Guang's wishes, he had no choice but to relent.

"Guanger, I'm going to the Imperial Palace later to ask for recognition of your merits. You go home and rest," said Cheng Zihai as he slowly walked away.

With both Cheng Zihai and Wu Yuemei heading to the Imperial Palace, Cheng Guang took the Queen of the South Ming to return home first.

After the incident had concluded, news spread.

The Capital city was abuzz.

Everywhere erupted with a considerable uproar.

They first heard that Emperor Zhou of Great Zhou had been assassinated by the Devil Emperor and was already deceased, then they heard that the King of South Ming planned to claim the throne upon Emperor Zhou's demise. Afterward, they were told that Emperor Zhou and Cheng Zihai killed the Devil Emperor and returned to power.

Lastly, to their amazement, they discovered that the King of South Ming was actually the crown prince who had disappeared for many years.

Always conspiring to rebel.

The previous assassination attempt on Town-Nation Duke's Heir, the martial arts competition between Great Zhou and Great Wei, and the prior incident of the Devil Clan's stealthy crossing – all orchestrated by the King of South Ming. Read new adventures at m_v-l'e-NovelBin

And now people were startled to find out.

All these events, apart from being heavily tied to the King of South Ming, also involved the Town-Nation Duke's Heir.

All the events were related to the Town-Nation Duke's Heir, or he had participated in them.

Whether it was the martial arts competition between Great Zhou and Great Wei or the previous Devil Clan's stealthy crossing, it seemed the Town-Nation Duke's Heir also played a significant part.

At the same time, some with sensitive information astonishingly discovered that in today's imperial ceremony, the revelation of the King of South Ming's identity as the crown prince seemed to have been personally exposed by the Town-Nation Duke's Heir himself.

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The entire Bureau of the Lamp was already on alert for today's events.

Doesn't this mean that the crown prince's scheming had actually been seen through by the Town-Nation Duke's Heir from the start?

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Even though the commotion caused by the crown prince was substantial, no casualties resulted.

At most, it was just considered a disturbance.

Throughout the Capital city, discussions about the mysterious and unpredictable Town-Nation Duke's Heir were endless.

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In the Great Zhou Imperial Palace, Taihe Hall.

Within the majestic and solemn Taihe Hall.

Emperor Zhou sat on the Dragon Chair, indifferently watching the officials below.

After a royal ritual ceremony, the number of officials had directly reduced by one-tenth.

Those who were originally loyal to the crown prince, plus those he had secretly bribed over the years, had imperceptibly occupied so many vital positions within the Court.

It was not difficult to imagine that if he had truly fallen victim to the Devil Emperor's sneak attack today, the crown prince's plans could indeed have succeeded.

Emperor Zhou pondered, tapping lightly on the armrest of the Dragon Chair with his fingers, his authoritative gaze falling upon Cheng Zhihai's face.

"Zhihai, we owe you a great debt this time."

When he was ambushed by the White Tiger Devil Emperor, his counterattack was nullified by the Devil Emperor's own hand, leaving him with little ability to retaliate. But at that critical moment, Cheng Zhihai suddenly used the Forbidden Imprisonment Cage, utilizing Different Treasures to isolate heaven and earth, dragging the White Tiger Devil Emperor into the cage.

Not only was Emperor Zhou unhurt, but he also got a chance to catch his breath.

Together, they managed to slay the White Tiger Devil Emperor.

Even setting aside the crown prince's incident, killing a Devil Emperor was also considered a great merit.

So when Emperor Zhou looked at Cheng Zhihai, his stern expression softened slightly.

"The Bureau of the Lamp also did well this time, preparing in advance. I promised you before, if you found the crown prince before the royal ritual ceremony, I wouldn't touch your Bureau of the Lamp.

Now, I will fulfill my promise, as long as no major issues arise, the Bureau of the Lamp will remain in your hands."

Emperor Zhou was well versed in the ways of an emperor.

He did not blame Cheng Zihai for not informing him in advance.

Even though the Bureau of the Lamp had already found the crown prince's whereabouts, it was one thing to keep it from the other officials, but to hide it from him as well.

Emperor Zhou could guess some of the reasons.

But he still felt a touch of helplessness about Cheng Zihai knowing and not reporting, choosing to act only during the royal ritual ceremony.

It seems he really sees me as a man of indecision.

Emperor Zhou's words entered Cheng Zihai's ears, and he respectfully performed a bow in response:

"Your Majesty, discovering the crown prince this time was entirely reliant on Guanger. Without him, even I would not have been able to find the crown prince's whereabouts for quite some time."

"Oh?" Hearing Cheng Zihai's words, Emperor Zhou's eyebrows raised slightly with a hint of surprise and interest in his heart.

"Was it Guanger who discovered it again?"

"Recently, after entering the Bureau of the Lamp, he has made remarkable achievements."

"First was the matter of the Devil Clan, and then today's incident."

"Indeed, not bad."

As Emperor Zhou's voice fell, the officials in the Court couldn't help but feel emotional; they hadn't expected the crown prince to be exposed by the Town-Nation Duke's Heir.

This great merit, if bestowed upon an ordinary person, would be enough to change their entire life's destiny.

Even if it fell into the hands of some high-ranking ministers, it would be an enormous boon of wealth and honor.

Many officials were somewhat envious of this credit.

At the same time, many officials and ministers also knew that, although the credit was immense, it seemed rather unremarkable for the Town-Nation Duke's Heir.

Even if the Town-Nation Duke's Heir did nothing in the future, he would still be among the top elite of Great Zhou, lacking neither resources nor influence.

Emperor Zhou had yet to begin bestowing rewards upon Cheng Guang, and it seemed there was already nothing left to bestow.

For a moment, many officials felt sour.

Compared to envying the Town-Nation Duke's Heir for the credit he gained this time, and the rewards Emperor Zhou was about to bestow, they were even more envious of the Town-Nation Duke's Heir's excellent "birth lottery."

Emperor Zhou, supporting his chin with one hand, watched the officials, his eyes reflecting contemplation, "Hmm, let me think, what should I bestow upon Guanger, that boy."

Even though Emperor Zhou knew that for someone of Cheng Guang's status, whatever reward he gave would be inconsequential.

Therefore, he didn't intend to insist on gifting Cheng Guang something that would make him incredibly happy.

"Zihai, do you have any good suggestions?" Emperor Zhou pondered before turning his gaze to Cheng Zihai.

Cheng Zihai wouldn't claim credit for Cheng Guang without wanting something in return.

Emperor Zhou was actually curious to hear what Cheng Zihai would ask to be granted to Cheng Guang.

Upon hearing this, Cheng Zihai said with a smile, "Your Majesty, to be honest, if it were up to me, I would like to request a reward on behalf of Guanger."

"Speak," said Emperor Zhou.

Cheng Zihai answered, "Your Majesty should know, my son is soon to be wed. Would Your Majesty care to attend the wedding?"

At those words, Emperor Zhou chuckled and shook his head, "Guanger's wedding, even if you didn't mention it, I would have attended anyway. Is that all?"

Cheng Zihai quickly nodded, then added, "Having Your Majesty attend Guanger's wedding is already the best reward. There's no need to bestow anything else."

Cheng Zihai made his point.

Yet the smile on the corners of Emperor Zhou's mouth slowly solidified.

Something was off.

The situation wasn't right.

Guanger, that impudent nephew of mine, is getting married. For me, his uncle, whether I give a wedding gift is no big deal; a simple token would suffice.