

My System 401

Chapter 401 - Jiang Luojing, Good, I'll Remember That

Early morning.

Cheng Guang slowly opened the door to his room.

In the early hours of March, winter had passed, and the autumn wind had not yet risen, the sound of the breeze grew fainter as the dawn's light lifted the night's thin veil, revealing the already peaking sun.

Cheng Guang yawned, yet his eyes and brows showed not the slightest hint of sleepiness.

Cheng Guang found his body to be rather peculiar, feeling extremely fatigued despite having done nothing much.

As always, he opened the courtyard door and sat down at the stone table.

Today, he planned to meet with that Commandery Princess of Prince Ning, to see if she truly was the remnant of Great Chu hinted at by the system quest.

Thus, instead of cultivating, he sat idly, gazing at the scene beyond the courtyard.

About the time it took to drink a cup of tea had passed when Qing Luan had risen. Seeing Cheng Guang seated at the stone table, she smiled tenderly, fetched hot water for him to wash up.

"Princely Heir, you have risen quite early today, is Miss Qin still sleeping?"

Cheng Guang carefully washed his face, and then smiled at Qing Luan, saying, "Indeed, don't you know your own Princely Heir's capabilities?"

Qing Luan's pretty face blushed, and she playfully cast Cheng Guang a reproachful glance.

After Cheng Guang finished washing up, he had a simple meal. Midway through, he seemed to recall something and said, "Qing Luan, bring Qin Beifeng here."

Qing Luan nodded slightly, quickly got up, and went to find Qin Beifeng.

Before long, Qin Beifeng arrived in the courtyard.

After Cheng Guang finished his meal and meticulously wiped the corners of his mouth with a brocade handkerchief, he greeted Qin Beifeng with a smile and then headed toward the tea house with him.

When Cheng Guang arrived at the tea house, he casually found a place to sit down.

Observing the streets outside the tea house, smoke from the cooking fires gradually rising, he couldn't help feeling that he had experienced all of this before for some reason.

The feeling was very vague and blurred.

Cheng Guang had often had such feelings about certain events in the past, as though he had experienced them before, but he had never dwelt on those thoughts.

Having drunk some tea at the tea house, Cheng Guang asked Zhang Rui about the location of the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning within the Imperial Capital, Skyfire City, of the Great Yan Dynasty, and then, together with Qin Beifeng, made his way toward Prince Ning Mansion.

Qian Siyuan and Li Zhengyang, Cheng Guang did not bring along; they stood with Zhang Rui in front of the tea house, watching Cheng Guang leave.

Cheng Guang walked towards Prince Ning Mansion at a leisurely pace, step by step.

Although it was still early, the streets were already bustling with pedestrians.

Cheng Guang tread on the streets of the Great Yan Dynasty, which were paved with large blocks of white stone, heading towards Prince Ning Mansion.

As he neared Prince Ning Mansion, the number of pedestrians visibly decreased; after all, the area near Prince Ning Mansion and the Imperial Palace was prime real estate, not accessible to ordinary people.

Common folks didn't even have the privilege to be near this place.

When Cheng Guang arrived at the entrance of Prince Ning Mansion, the guards there recognized him and hastily went inside to report.

Yet not long had passed since the guard entered to report.

The mansion gate swung open.

A young lady came out, walking at a leisurely pace.

Although the girl walked slowly and composedly, the fact she inadvertently quickened her breathing indicated that she had run here.

It was only upon reaching the gate that she slowed her pace to maintain her poise.

Cheng Guang noticed this detail and was slightly taken aback.

This Commandery Princess of Prince Ning, truly peculiar.

No sooner had he arrived than she hastened to greet him.

Even out of breath with haste.

Was she really that eager to see him?

Cheng Guang pondered, puzzled by the reason, then curved his lips in a smile, feeling his interest piqued as he looked up to take in the Commandery Princess before him.

Her attire was exceedingly lavish yet not ostentatious.

Clad in a purple dress that swept elegantly along her statuesque figure, the gown was adorned with exquisite embroidery that showcased matchless finesse and craftsmanship. A white fur stole wrapped around her shoulders added to her opulence, the embroidered hem fluttering gently as she moved.

Her hair, elegantly fastened back with ornate jade pins, was festooned with pearls that cascaded down her cheeks, adding a touch of coquettish charm.

Her slender waist was accentuated by a posture both elegant and dignified— sublime elegance, usurped only by her extraordinary nobility.

As Cheng Guang scrutinized the Commandery Princess, she too was observing Cheng Guang. At the sight of him, the Commandery Princess's starry eyes flickered undeniably, her dainty nose twitched, and she felt an inexplicable sense of acidity wash over her.

"Forgive me for not being able to welcome you from afar, now that the Princely Heir has graced us with his presence," she said, managing to temper the emotions in her heart as she curtsied gracefully to Cheng Guang.

Cheng Guang chuckled, eyeing the Commandery Princess with a meaningful tease, "Your Highness, there's no breach of etiquette here. I had just arrived when you already came out to receive me. Do you, perhaps, accord this courtesy to every visitor to your abode?"

At that moment, even Cheng Guang failed to notice that his tone carried a hint of a flirt.

When the Commandery Princess heard Cheng Guang's words, she visibly paused, her lips parting as she was about to respond—of course, she did not treat every visitor this way.

But only so with Cheng Guang.

Yet as the words approached her lips, she realized that if she spoke them, it would imply she had a particular interest in Cheng Guang, the Town-Nation Duke's Heir.

Given the absence of any special relationship between them,

such deliberate differentiation would only seem odd.

Contemplating this, a slight annoyance flickered across the Commandery Princess's beautiful eyes. She glanced at Cheng Guang, slightly turning her body to invite him into the mansion while smiling and asking,

"Princely Heir, what would you have me do? Treat only you in this manner?"

She thus deflected Cheng Guang's implied query.

Without agreeing or denying, she threw the question back to Cheng Guang.

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Cheng Guang couldn't help but laugh and shake his head when he heard the Commandery Princess's words, unexpectedly responding to him this way.

No matter what, Cheng Guang was relieved at this moment.

He could tell.

Though the Commandery Princess seemed a bit excessively enthusiastic, ultimately, there weren't any major issues.

Cheng Guang casually replied, "If it is only towards me alone, that is of course very good."

"But the Commandery Princess wouldn't treat me like this, I suppose."

Smiling, Cheng Guang set his steps with Qin Beifeng toward a small courtyard inside the mansion.

With Cheng Guang's words, the Commandery Princess's steps paused slightly, her red lips pursed before she pinched Cheng Guang somewhat irritably in secret, then smiled again and led Cheng Guang towards the small courtyard within the mansion.

After they sat down,

the servants served tea.

Cheng Guang picked up the tea, sipped it lightly, and then raised his eyes to look at the Commandery Princess.

He suddenly discovered that the Commandery Princess was also watching him.

Their eyes met.

Cheng Guang paused for a moment. After a brief exchange of looks, Cheng Guang couldn't bear it anymore.

He was the first to look away.

Cheng Guang couldn't help but wonder why the Commandery Princess was acting so strangely.

Had she never seen a man before?

Or had she never seen a man as handsome as himself?

She just kept staring at him.

But considering the Commandery Princess's exquisite beauty and regal demeanor, she didn't seem like the type of woman to be attracted to someone's looks.

Cheng Guang didn't understand.

At the same time,

he felt that his usual thick-skinned demeanor was not very effective in front of the Commandery Princess.

Face slightly red,

Cheng Guang coughed and took the initiative to begin the conversation, "Your Highness, my visit today is primarily concerning the Great Chu remnants."

"Does Your Highness know if there have been reports of Great Chu remnants within Great Yan's borders recently?"

With a smile gracing her beautiful face, the Commandery Princess said, "I am naturally aware of it, but why, Princely Heir, do you suspect that I might be one of those remnants?"

As she spoke, the Commandery Princess's eyes were filled with interest as she sized up Cheng Guang.

Observing the Commandery Princess's expression, Cheng Guang noted the absence of nervousness or anything unusual on her face, which puzzled him.

Cheng Guang shook his head slightly, laughing, "How could it be? I only intended to ask if Your Highness was aware of any news regarding the Great Chu remnants."

"If Your Highness were one of the remnants, to still be hiding within the capital of Great Yan would be simply foolish."

"The capital will soon be no longer peaceful, and in my opinion..."

Before Cheng Guang could finish, the Commandery Princess nodded earnestly and said,

"You are right."

Cheng Guang's words stalled, and after a pause, he scrutinized the Commandery Princess, "Also, I believe that if the Great Chu remnant is in the capital, it's very likely that they will be exposed soon..."

"All of Skyfire City will be thrown into chaos. It seems that the Great Chu remnant..."

The Commandery Princess nodded again, "You are right."

Cheng Guang: "..."

His words were interrupted again.

If the Commandery Princess did not trust him and had refuted him, it would have been less frustrating.

But the Commandery Princess, with her beautiful face turned towards him, sparkling with excitement as if she was looking at a superstar, resembled those starstruck fangirls from his previous life.

In this situation, Cheng Guang couldn't get upset at all.

He had originally thought that the Commandery Princess might very well be the Great Chu remnant mentioned in the system task, but with her silly and infatuated demeanor, if she really was the remnant, with such meager wit and cunning, she likely wouldn't have survived until now.

Moreover,

Cheng Guang also noticed that since he had entered the mansion, the Commandery Princess had kept her eyes on him constantly, without giving Qin Beifeng a second glance.

If the Commandery Princess really were the Great Chu remnant, why would her interest in him be greater than in Qin Beifeng, the Great Wind General of Great Chu?

Either she was pretending, forcibly holding back her gaze,

or she simply did not recognize Qin Beifeng.

Alternatively, it might be possible that the Commandery Princess recognized Qin Beifeng, but compared to him, she found Cheng Guang more important.

Out of these three possibilities, the first lacks evidence, the last is too preposterous,

only the middle option seems viable.

Cheng Guang's interest waned, as the slight clue he'd discovered was cut off again.

If the Commandery Princess was not the Great Chu remnant,

then the only other possibility remained.

That would be that the Crown Prince of Great Yan, Li Zhongxin, was the remnant.

If the Crown Prince was indeed the Great Chu remnant, how had Li Zhongxin become the Crown Prince?

His lineage, appearance, and his very identity, how had everything been kept a secret?

Cheng Guang's thoughts were in disarray, feeling that completing his system task was still fraught with difficulty.

He suddenly lost interest in staying with the Commandery Princess any longer.

Cheng Guang might consider himself amorous, but he wasn't the type to fall for just anyone he laid eyes on.

As Cheng Guang pondered, he picked up his tea cup, finished the tea within, and then stood up to bow to the Commandery Princess, "Your Highness, since you do not have news of the Great Chu remnant, I shall take my leave."

After saying this, Cheng Guang was ready to leave with Qin Beifeng.

Just as the Commandery Princess began to lift her tea cup intending to take a sip, she heard Cheng Guang's words, her lips curling into a smile as she put down the cup again and looked at him, saying, "When did I say I didn't know?"

"What? Princely Heir, aren't you interested in the news about the Great Chu remnant anymore?"

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Cheng Guang heard the words, paused briefly, and looked towards Prince Ning's Commandery Princess, "Your Highness, could you really be in the know?"

Cheng Guang's tone was one of astonishment, his face revealing amazement.

He truly had not considered that the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning would be aware of the remnants of Great Chu.

The Commandery Princess of Prince Ning nodded with a smile, her dimples blossoming like flowers, "I do, those remnants of Great Chu are far as the horizon yet right before your eyes."

Cheng Guang frowned slightly, "Far as the horizon, yet right before my eyes?"

He started to suspect that the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning was hinting at him; could she possibly know of his real identity?

That was impossible, wasn't it?

How could the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning have learned of his identity?

The Commandery Princess of Prince Ning did not offer much explanation, but gracefully stood up, her skirt trailing behind her, carrying a pleasant fragrance as she walked up to Cheng Guang.

Cheng Guang sensed the Commandery Princess bore him no ill will and thus remained still.

The Commandery Princess of Prince Ning leaned close to Cheng Guang, rising on her tiptoes, her red lips nearing his ear, bringing with them a slightly moist whisper.

"In this world, the so-called remnants of Great Chu are none other than you and me."

After the Commandery Princess had spoken,

Cheng Guang's eyes suddenly widened, staring at the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning in disbelief.

The remnants of Great Chu, other than you, are me...

The meaning of this statement was undeniably explosive.

The Commandery Princess of Prince Ning wasn't just jumping out of the woodwork; she was also peeling away her own guise.

How could this be??

How could she possibly know his identity??

Could the Restraint Pearl have lost its effectiveness???

Cheng Guang's heart was thunderstruck, his pupils contracted suddenly, and his forehead broke out in profuse sweat as his body tensed up sharply.

Qin Beifeng, who was very close to Cheng Guang, also overheard the openly spoken words of the Commandery Princess.

His body stiffened for a moment, staring intently at the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning.

As if seeing her for the first time.

His eyes trembled.

Qin Beifeng had not noticed before, but with the Commandery Princess's reminder, he suddenly felt she bore a striking resemblance to the Prince from years past.

All grown up.

More beautiful.

And her demeanor had matured.

Could the Commandery Princess indeed be their lord?

Then, did what she say mean that the Princely Heir is also from Great Chu??

Upon this thought, Qin Beifeng felt utterly astonished.

Don't be ridiculous.

The Princely Heir is a scion of Duke Zhen's Mansion.

How could he be a person of Great Chu?

That's illogical!

Qin Beifeng's heart shook violently, plunging into the greatest perplexity of his life.

Seeing Cheng Guang's shocked expression, the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning smiled and pulled out a fragrant Brocade Handkerchief, tenderly wiping Cheng Guang's forehead, saying with a smile, "You don't believe it, do you?"

"I didn't believe it at first, either."

Cheng Guang snapped back to his senses, staring blankly at the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning before composing himself, feigning ignorance of what she was talking about.

"The Commandery Princess must be jesting, such jokes are better left unmade."

Having said this, Cheng Guang then sought to leave immediately.

The hand of the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning stopped mid-air; she wasn't angry nor did she stop him, instead watching Cheng Guang with a pleasant smile as he left.

Cheng Guang had just stepped out of the gate when he suddenly froze.

At this moment, he suddenly heard a voice in his ear, familiar and cold, devoid of any emotion.

[Mission completed.]

[Would you like to claim the reward?]

This isn't right.

How could the mission be completed?

Cheng Guang was first dumbfounded, then grasped something, and abruptly turned his head to look at the Commandery Princess in the courtyard proudly observing him with a warm smile.

The Commandery Princess of Prince Ning waved at Cheng Guang as if saying goodbye, her brow and eyes smiling.

"It is normal for the Princely Heir not to believe at this time," she said.

"That being said, the yellow flower that the Princely Heir gave me back then was indeed beautiful."

"You might as well return to Great Zhou soon, Great Yan may truly become as chaotic as you said."

After the Commandery Princess had spoken,

Cheng Guang remained silent for a moment, then promptly opened his storage ring, only to see that the dazzling yellow flower inside had vanished.

He suddenly made a connection, his brow relaxed, and he shook his head with a self-deprecatory laugh.

Looking at the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning, Cheng Guang asked with a smile, "You're not leaving?"

The Commandery Princess of Prince Ning shook her head slightly, her starry eyes twinkling, as she raised her gaze to the sky, "I'm not leaving."

"There's too much for me to do here."

Cheng Guang's brow furrowed slightly, teasingly saying, "What can you do? Is it even possible for you to preserve your own life?"

The Commandery Princess of Prince Ning glanced at Cheng Guang, wrinkling her nose. Among her dignity and grace, she carried a playful spirit, saying,

"I'm much fiercer than you think."

"You'd better worry about saving your own life. The exposure of your identity will have far more serious consequences for you than for me."

After the Commandery Princess had spoken, she looked towards Qin Beifeng.

Seeing Qin Beifeng's eyes brimming with tears, the Commandery Princess felt a surge of guilt.

She sighed deeply.

"General Qin, you have suffered much during this time," she said.

General Qin immediately knelt on one knee, bowing to the Commandery Princess, his tears flowing freely.

"Your Highness! Your servant..."

The Commandery Princess of Prince Ning shook her head, cutting off General Qin's words, "General Qin, from now on, please follow the Princely Heir instead."

"You don't need to follow me anymore."

General Qin's lips parted slightly, looking at the Commandery Princess, then at the nearby Cheng Guang, somewhat puzzled by the meaning of the Commandery Princess's recent words.

"Your Highness, you just said the Princely Heir is also a person of Great Chu...?" General Qin asked tentatively.

The Commandery Princess of Prince Ning nodded slightly, her starry eyes watching Cheng Guang, and nodded with a smile, "Of course, he is."

"The Crown Prince of Great Chu, after all, holds much higher status than this princess of Great Chu from who knows how many years ago."

Chapter 404 - Jiang Luoqing, Good, I'll Remember That _4

When Prince Ning's Commandery Princess uttered "Crown Prince of Great Chu," Qin Beifeng was struck as if by lightning, standing frozen in place for a long while before he could regain his composure.

Cheng Guang looked at the Commandery Princess, and seeing her behave this way, couldn't help but laugh and shake his head, patting Qin Beifeng's shoulder.

"We're leaving."

With that, Cheng Guang walked slowly towards the courtyard exit.

Qin Beifeng paused, glancing at the Commandery Princess and then turning to look at Cheng Guang, the Princely Heir.

He bit his lip, gave the Commandery Princess a deep bow, and after paying his respects once again, he turned and followed Cheng Guang's steps.

The Commandery Princess's starry eyes followed Cheng Guang's retreating figure, suddenly calling out, "Aren't you curious about what the future holds?"

Without turning back, Cheng Guang responded with a carefree laugh, "There's no need to know, my sixth sense tells me it's probably nothing good."

"Otherwise, it wouldn't come to 'Tomorrow's Yellow Flower' extent."

"When you and I can meet again in the future, you might as well tell me then."

The Commandery Princess slightly tilted her head, her smile blossoming beautifully as she gently nodded.

"Very well, we have a deal," she agreed.

Cheng Guang, with his back to the Commandery Princess, waved his hand and said, "We're off."

Cheng Guang left the small courtyard with Qin Beifeng.

Their figures gradually disappeared under the watchful gaze of the Commandery Princess.

Only when she could no longer see Cheng Guang did the Commandery Princess raise her gaze once more to the heavens above.

Through the clouds veiling the sky, the Commandery Princess seemed to see, beyond the dense mists, a figure in white robes, taking a leisurely nap upon the clouds.

With a light tap of her foot, the Commandery Princess took measured steps into the firmament.

Her exquisite visage slowly shifted, becoming cold, noble, and indifferent—a stark contrast to her demeanor when facing Cheng Guang.

With every ascent, the aura about the Commandery Princess rose steadily.

The winds changed, and the clouds swirled.

This sight drew the attention of everyone in the Great Yan imperial capital.

Deep within the Imperial Palace of Great Yan, in the Temple of Heavenly Heart.

The Emperor of Great Yan was playing chess with Li Longhu when he seemed to sense something. His aged eyes moved from the chessboard to the distant direction of Prince Ning's estate.

He saw the Commandery Princess in her purple robes, ascending step by step to the heavens, her majestic presence growing stronger.

The Emperor's pupils involuntarily shrank at the sight.

"What's going on with this girl?" he wondered.

"Why has her aura changed so much in such a short time?"

"Is she approaching the Heavenly Human Realm?"

Li Longhu, clothed in a black robe with hands clasped inside his sleeves, his profound eyes surveying the Commandery Princess in mid-air, pondered the Emperor's words thoughtfully.

His deep gaze flickered with surprise and uncertainty.

Even for Li Longhu, Great Yan's National Preceptor and a powerhouse of the Heavenly Human Realm, the shift in the Commandery Princess's aura was somewhat incomprehensible.

"Why has the Commandery Princess's aura risen so much in such a short time?" he muttered to himself.

He was equally puzzled.

At the same time.

At the location of Great Yan's Eastern Palace.

Li Zhongxin, pale as always, sat in his wheelchair, gently holding a jade hairpin and occasionally coughing, his expression inexplicably somber.

Suddenly, as if sensing something, he abruptly looked up in the direction of Prince Ning's estate.

Through the thick and lofty palace walls, he could faintly discern a graceful and noble figure rising step by step toward the heavens.

Nearing the clouds.

"What is this?"

"Commandery Princess...?"

"Why has her aura risen so much all of a sudden?"

"What is she planning to do?"

Li Zhongxin watched the Commandery Princess above the vault of heaven and was dumbstruck.

He felt that her presence was one he could not match, not even tenfold.

Merely the pressure emanating from the Commandery Princess's aura at the moment seemed to suggest that she could suppress him with a flick of her finger.

"Hiss... She couldn't have been hiding her true strength all along, now revealing it just before the event of the Four Great Tests to assert dominance?"

Li Zhongxin's eyes flickered with this thought, and then he felt a twinge of a headache.

Gazing into the depths of the heavens, at the figure of the Commandery Princess, he clenched his teeth in the dark, while at the same time, he silently balled his hand into a fist.

For a moment, he felt that the throne was possibly slipping beyond his reach.

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Just after leaving Prince Ning's estate.

Cheng Guang was walking along the street toward the teahouse when he sensed the aura emanating from the Commandery Princess behind him, pausing for a moment to look back at her.

Aware of the aura radiating from the Commandery Princess, and the mounting might that grew as she ascended step by step into the heavens, he was first startled, then shook his head with a wry laugh.

"I had meant to get you out of here early."

"And yet now, it's you who's made me leave."

"No wonder you were not worried about your own safety at all."

While Cheng Guang did not know why the Commandery Princess's cultivation strength had surged so much, it didn't concern him. He chuckled, shook his head again, and continued on to the teahouse.

Once at the teahouse, Cheng Guang summoned Qing Luan and instructed her to have people pack their luggage, as they would be heading back to Great Zhou soon.

Qing Luan, puzzled, voiced her confusion, "Princely Heir, are we returning now?"

"Isn't it too soon?"

"We've only just arrived at Great Yan."

Cheng Guang shook his head, softly patted Qing Luan's head, and said with a smile, "It's not too early. Once a matter is settled, it's time to go back."

Half understanding, Qing Luan nodded her head. Without any thought of defiance, she promptly began making arrangements after acknowledging Cheng Guang's command.

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Cheng Guang sat in the courtyard, looking up at the sky.

In the sky, the figure of Commandery Princess of Prince Ning gradually merged into the clouds, no longer clearly visible.

Not until the figure of the Commandery Princess was out of sight did Cheng Guang slowly retract his gaze.

Sitting next to the stone table, he waited for the people from the teahouse to pack up the luggage.

Once the luggage was packed, they could use the Flying Boat to return to Great Zhou.

The current task was complete, and the reward for this task, known as "Princess's Tomb," was something Cheng Guang was still unclear about.

At this moment, with so many powerful figures gathered in Skyfire City, it wasn't the right time to receive the system reward.

Cheng Guang planned to claim the system task reward while on the way back to Great Zhou.

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High above the clouds.

The Commandery Princess's gaze fell on the white-robed figure taking a break not far away.

From a distance, the figure in white had not noticed her, but as the Commandery Princess drew closer, he gradually became aware and suddenly opened his eyes, staring blankly at the Commandery Princess standing not far away.

His gaze lingered on the magnificent features of the Commandery Princess.

He was instantly stunned, as if dumbstruck.

With an expression of surprise and confusion, he furrowed his brows and calculated with his fingers before, seemingly in disbelief, he spoke to the Commandery Princess:

"Empress?"

"Have you awakened?"

The Commandery Princess didn't respond to the white-robed figure, simply lifting her hand slightly.

Between her jade fingers, a terrifying aura brewed.

The Heavenly Machine Elder's face suddenly changed, and he hurriedly raised his hand, attempting to dissuade her, "What is this, Your Majesty? The old daoist bears no malice towards the Empress."

The Commandery Princess gave no response to the Heavenly Machine Elder, her finger plucked, as if plucking a string in the heavens and earth.

Hum!

After a trembling sound.

Boom!!!

A terrifying and vast power swept toward the Heavenly Machine Elder.

The face of the Heavenly Machine Elder showed horror; his normally calm and old face suddenly pale, he quickly raised both hands in front of him to block.

Moments later, the clouds dissipated.

The Heavenly Machine Elder disappeared from the spot.

Only a few traces of blood remained, staining a whole expanse of the sky crimson.

Below the clouds.

From within Skyfire City, one could see the originally white clouds being stained red.

Although the colors of the heavens and earth were visible to all.

No one could sense the commotion of the Commandery Princess's actions above the clouds.

Cheng Guang had been gazing at the sky all along, so he saw it.

Above the heavens, the originally thick clouds suddenly stirred, as if disturbed by an invisible hand.

Through the disrupted clouds, one could sense the terrifying power concealed behind them.

Cheng Guang stared intently at the sky above, completely unaware of why the Commandery Princess had ascended to the clouds.

And as for the Heavenly Machine Elder.

After being struck by the Commandery Princess's move, he didn't know how long he had been flying before he returned, his white robe now disheveled, his face pale, and the corner of his mouth stained with blood.

That strike from the Commandery Princess didn't seem easy for the Heavenly Machine Elder to bear.

The Heavenly Machine Elder landed in front of the Commandery Princess, his face slightly angry, yet as if respecting the Commandery Princess, he asked sternly:

"Why did Your Majesty suddenly strike me?"

The Commandery Princess glanced at the Heavenly Machine Elder, and once again she lifted her hand ever so slightly, "Being a busybody, you care too much."

The Heavenly Machine Elder's face changed slightly, then he looked at the Commandery Princess, stunned.

He had not expected to be attacked by the Commandery Princess for such a reason.

He had intended to help the Commandery Princess awaken early out of good intentions as fellow practitioners, and his methods were quite standard.

How could he have angered the Commandery Princess so?

Besides, he had only just revealed that the Commandery Princess's identity could likely be the remnant of Great Chu.

He had a series of actions that he had yet to take.

Why then had the Commandery Princess awakened early?

The Heavenly Machine Elder suddenly found himself at a loss, his old face shifted slightly, no longer looking at the Commandery Princess, he lowered his eyebrows to calculate.

Upon closer calculation.

Suddenly.

The Heavenly Machine Elder spat out a mouthful of blood, his expression shaking violently as if struck by lightning, he looked at the Commandery Princess.

"This is... this is..."

The Commandery Princess looked indifferently at the Heavenly Machine Elder, "So, you understand now?"

The Heavenly Machine Elder, who was always the picture of serenity even if Mount Tai collapsed before him, seemed unable to maintain his composure looking at the Commandery Princess, he exclaimed in shock.

"How is this possible; what method did you use to travel from the future to the present? And retain your memories?"

Although the Heavenly Machine Elder could see that the Commandery Princess bore traces of traversing the river of time, he did not understand how, with the Commandery Princess' power, she managed to achieve this.

Not to mention with the Commandery Princess' newly awakened power, even he might not be able to accomplish this feat.

The Heavenly Machine Elder was in the dark once more.

The Commandery Princess didn't explain any further, her gorgeous face still cold and detached, "Heh, if you can't figure it out, roll away far and think."

The Commandery Princess drew her hand back once more.

The terrifying aura surged toward the Heavenly Machine Elder.

The Heavenly Machine Elder, still in shock, failed to react in time, and when he did, the dreadful aura was already too close. He muttered "not good" to himself and swiftly moved to defend once again.

The power that the Commandery Princess unleashed caused his expression to change.

This time, the Heavenly Machine Elder used some genuine effort, managing to stabilize his form against the fierce assault of the Commandery Princess.

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"Your Majesty the Empress, you have just awakened and your merit cannot withstand such a waste, especially not on an old Taoist like me. It would be too regrettable,"

"If the old Taoist has done something wrong, how about I apologize to you later?"

The Heavenly Machine Elder spoke.

The Commandery Princess of Prince Ning shook her head, her resplendent face unchanged.

Another hand reached out.

In the heavens and the earth, the sound of the piano strings swelled.

Fierce rays of light transformed into sword beams, streaking towards the Heavenly Machine Elder.

This time, the Heavenly Machine Elder could no longer sit still. His face changed drastically, and he hurriedly ran towards the back.

But even as fast as he moved, the attack issued by the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning clung onto him like a bone-gnawing poison, biting tightly at his heels.

The next moment.

With a 'boom,' the heavens and earth sang in unison, and a vast wave of Qi turned into an invisible shockwave that spread outward in all directions.

The figure of the Heavenly Machine Elder disappeared from the spot in an instant.

Nowhere to be found.

After erasing the silhouette of the Heavenly Machine Elder and ensuring he was seriously injured and wouldn't recover soon, the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning gave a slight nod as her aura gradually weakened.

Her body calmly descended from the high sky.

As the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning's body descended from above the clouds and landed gently, in Skyfire City, the gazes of many keen observers fell upon her the instant she touched the ground.

Among these gazes were shock, confusion, and bewilderment.

They did not know.

Why the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning could suddenly unleash such formidable power and even cause a disturbance above the clouds.

The clouds were too high for ordinary cultivators to see what the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning was doing above them.

They could only speculate curiously.

Many people immediately took action, wanting to visit the mansion of the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning.

At the same time.

Inside the Imperial Palace of Great Yan, the Emperor of Great Yan could no longer sit idle and quickly sent people to inquire about the specifics from the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning.

The Commandery Princess of Prince Ning retracted her aura and closed her doors to visitors.

She announced she would not see anyone.

It was fine for other people to be rejected. Although their faces took on a poor expression, they could not say much.

They just found the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning to be quite lacking in manners.

After that.

They heard.

That even the envoys sent by the Emperor of Great Yan were turned away at her door.

She gave no face to the Emperor of Great Yan at all.

For a moment, everyone felt that the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning was far too bold.

Cheng Guang learned of the princess's actions and couldn't help but shake his head in amusement.

He did not know what the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning had done above the clouds.

But it seemed.

That the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning, drawing the gaze of all in Skyfire City, had her reasons for ascending to the clouds.

Cheng Guang watched as the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning returned to Prince Ning Mansion, thinking that she probably wouldn't plan on leaving the Great Yan Imperial Capital, Skyfire City, anytime soon.

This meant she wasn't worried at all about her identity being exposed.

However, on the other hand.

Considering the power the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning had just revealed, even if her identity were exposed, it wouldn't be much of an issue.

Was the Commandery Princess of Prince Ning staying in the Great Yan Imperial Capital, Skyfire City, to take part in the Four Great Trials and succeed the throne of Great Yan?

Cheng Guang pondered in his heart.

At that moment, Qing Luan had already returned. Seeing Cheng Guang still seated at the ancient table, focusing on the distant clouds, she smiled gently and said to him:

"Princely Heir, all the luggage has been packed. We can set out now,"

Cheng Guang nodded and followed Qing Luan out the door.

Qian Siyuan and Li Zhengyang, among others, stood outside.

All of the constables from the Bureau of the Lamp, not one less, were standing outside the tea house waiting for Cheng Guang.

Although they did not know why the Princely Heir of Duke of the State, Cheng Guang, soon after arriving at Skyfire City, had suddenly decided to return to his mansion, they never harbored the slightest disobedience or doubt towards Cheng Guang's commands and instructions.

Everyone simply listened and complied quietly.

Cheng Guang glanced at the crowd, a smile curling at the corner of his mouth, and pulled out the Flying Boat. Once he offered the Flying Boat, it suddenly grew larger in midair.

Cheng Guang was the first to board the Flying Boat, followed closely by Qing Luan, Qin Yanqiu, and the others.

After everyone was aboard the Flying Boat.

Just as Cheng Guang was about to control the Flying Boat to depart, a distant neighing of horses suddenly reached his ears.

Cheng Guang looked down and saw a gallant horse carrying a girl with a gorgeous face and a noble demeanor.

The Commandery Princess of Prince Ning waved at Cheng Guang.

Cheng Guang laughed, "In Skyfire City, so many dignitaries are visiting your residence. Why have you suddenly come to me?"

The corners of the Commandery Princess's lips curled slightly, a smile gracing her red lips, "The others don't matter."

"They're merely curious about the events surrounding me," she said.

Cheng Guang asked, "Would you care to explain the events surrounding you?"

The Commandery Princess nodded, her gorgeous face usually unchanging, but when she looked at Cheng Guang, there was more girlish naivety in her gaze.

"Any excuse will suffice to fool them. With so many Different Treasures and mysteries in the world, they can't possibly know them all."

Cheng Guang nodded.

"Shall we go then?"

The Commandery Princess nodded slightly, her hands gripping the reins, her fingers exerting a slight pressure, and then she asked, "Do you know my name?"

Cheng Guang shook his head.

The Commandery Princess smiled, "I thought as much. You don't know, and you haven't asked me."

Hesitating, she raised her starry eyes to Cheng Guang.

"Jiang Luojing."

"That's my name."

Cheng Guang nodded slightly, "Jiang Luojing, good, I'll remember that."

Having said this, Cheng Guang looked up at the sky again.

"Then I'll be going."

At the end of his words, Cheng Guang controlled the Flying Boat and departed.

Jiang Luoqing watched Cheng Guang's departing figure, her starry eyes flickering slightly, one hand clenching tightly in front of her chest.

She whispered in a hushed tone.

"Whether in a past life or this one."

"I have always borne this name..."

As she spoke, Jiang Luoqing raised her eyes slightly and watched the Flying Boat gradually disappearing into the distance.

"I wonder if it's just my imagination, or maybe I'm thinking too much..."

"Why do you carry the aura..."

"Of that person?"

Jiang Luoqing murmured to herself, standing there dazed for a long time.

Not until the crowd around her grew, and more and more people were looking at her, did she turn to leave.

She rode her horse step by step toward the Prince Ning Mansion.

Upon reaching the front of the mansion, Jiang Luoqing stopped.

Her eyes, as radiant as the stars, turned towards the direction of the Imperial Palace of Great Yan, and she took a deep breath.

"The karma of this life must be concluded."

"Although I have little desire for the throne of Great Yan, I must eventually reveal my identity. Otherwise, I cannot conclude what the Heavenly Machine Elder has foretold."

"The Heavenly Machine will have to employ his tactics once more."

Jiang Luoqing arrived at the Prince Ning Mansion and handed her horse over to a servant, entering the mansion alone.

Chapter 407 - Zhao Jin, You Come Back to Us

After leaving Great Yan, Cheng Guang steered the Flying Boat towards the Great Zhou Capital.

Standing at the deck of the Flying Boat, Cheng Guang noticed that the evening sky seemed clearer, not gloomy but instead a pure shade of blue.

In the glow of the setting sun, the mountains outside Skyfire City were tinged with a layer of faint light, which Cheng Guang watched before returning to his cabin on the Flying Boat.

To say the least, Cheng Guang found himself quite intrigued by Princess Ning, or rather, by Jiang Luoqing.

He realized that the Tomorrow's Yellow Flower, once in his storage ring, had vanished without a trace, while Jiang Luoqing had mentioned that the yellow flower he gave her was rather nice.

Cheng Guang knew that he had given Tomorrow's Yellow Flower to Jiang Luoqing within the next day.

Even without knowing what would happen the following day, he could roughly surmise that it was definitely related to Jiang Luoqing's identity and himself.

This time, Jiang Luoqing continued to stay in the Capital of Great Yan, yet her intentions and whether her identity would be revealed remained unclear.

Cheng Guang, however, wasn't concerned about these matters.

His mission was already completed.

Cheng Guang glanced at the faint lights atop the mountains outside the Flying Boat and then turned to go back into the cabin.

"Claim reward."

Once he entered the bedroom, Cheng Guang closed the doors and windows and addressed the system in his mind.

As he spoke, golden glimmers started to bloom before his eyes.

The golden light flowed out from the void like water, gathering before Cheng Guang's eyes and slowly coalescing into a square stone slab with the appearance of a tombstone, covered in complex and ancient characters. Even upon close inspection, the text, tiny as mosquito script, remained undecipherable.

Cheng Guang gave it a cursory glance without much scrutiny before reaching out.

The moment his fingertip touched the Princess's Tombstone, it solidified instantly and heavily fell into Cheng Guang's hand.

The Princess's Tombstone was small, fitting comfortably in one hand, cool to the touch as if it could serve as a personal air conditioner on a hot summer day.

At the same time Cheng Guang touched the Princess's Tombstone, a piece of information also surged into his mind.

[Princess's Tombstone: From death comes life, reversing heaven and earth, inverting yin and yang, obscuring fate. It seems to be the gravestone of some ancient figure, awaiting restoration.]

Cheng Guang examined the Princess's Tombstone in his hand, momentarily puzzled by the information it conveyed.

The tombstone of a Princess, belonging to an ancient figure, awaiting restoration?

Which Princess could it be?

Cheng Guang felt perplexed, finding the recently acquired Princess's Tombstone of little use to him.

Firstly, he didn't know the specific location of the Princess's Tomb; even with the tombstone in hand, he couldn't restore it to its rightful place.

Secondly, even if he knew the exact location of the Princess's Tomb and could restore the tombstone,

but considering the description of the Princess's Tombstone, it seemed that something would occur upon its restoration, with words like "from death comes life" in the description.

It likely meant that the ancient figure buried under the Princess's Tombstone could be awakened.

Cheng Guang didn't know whether the figure buried there was benevolent or malevolent; he couldn't control the consequences of awakening them rashly.

He would wait until he was stronger before making plans.

For now, the Princess's Tombstone remained an untouchable entity to him.

Cheng Guang stored the Princess's Tombstone away and looked out at the evening sky, knowing that the time for the system to issue a new mission was almost upon him.

He decided not to leave the room, instructed Qing Luan and the others not to disturb him, and sat down to cultivate for a while.

As the hour approached midnight, Cheng Guang opened his eyes.

Right on time, the cold, emotionless voice of the system sounded in his ears.

[On September 20th of the 34th year of Zhensheng, the 80th day of your entry into the Heavenly Human Realm, you have found the remnant of Great Chu who was besieged in Skyfire City years ago.]

[Truly, she never died from the beginning. You realize that the identity of this Great Chu remnant seems rather complex, possibly being an ancient Empress. Reflecting on the chaos that once engulfed the world, you recall West Liang Women's Country, which was established amidst the strife. It seems to be her doing.]

[This newly established West Liang Women's Country appears to have a significant connection to her ancient identity. There was indeed a West Liang Women's Country in ancient times. Realizing this, you suddenly understand that this Great Chu remnant might indeed be the reincarnation of that ancient West Liang Women's Country's Empress.]

[She reestablished the West Liang Women's Country amid the world's chaos, but for some unknown reason, after not too long, the newly established country was completely disbanded.]

[Confused, you recall the past chaos and can't help but feel a sense of loss.]

[The decline of Duke Zhen's Mansion, aside from the turmoil caused by the remnants of Great Chu and the machinations of the Devil Clan from that era, was mainly due to the chaos.]

Having lost the Bureau of the Lamp and the Northern Expedition Army, Duke Zhen's Mansion had little value and utility during the widespread disaster, and was subsequently abandoned by the Great Zhou Imperial Family, plummeting in status.]

[The origin of that calamity was the emergence of a Secret Realm within the territory of Great Zhou. When the Secret Realm appeared, it attracted the converging of top powers from all over the world. However, all who entered that realm vanished without trace.]

[The loss of top Sky-Men from various dynasties devastated half their strength, and the balance of power that barely held for a century was instantly shattered. Incessant conflicts arose between dynasties and Martial World factions.]

Chapter 408 - Zhao Jin, You Come Back to Us _2

[You recall the scenes of that year, and a sigh of regret inevitably rises in your heart. If only you had seized the opportunity back then, to ascend to Sky-Man amidst the great chaos, perhaps now you would have a place among the many forces in the world.]

[But the past is unbearable to revisit, and it's just a fleeting thought. What's most important for you right now is to see if you can find that Secret Realm from back then.]

[Soon after the Secret Realm emerged that year, countless strong practitioners went to explore it. Quickly, a set of patterns was discerned, such as the Monkey Devil within the realm wouldn't attack you unless you actively broke the wine jar, and if you smeared your body with Tri-color Grass as soon as you entered, those strange bugs couldn't get close to you.

By following these two steps, not only could you roam the Secret Realm freely, but you could also emerge unscathed.]

[You're confident that if that Secret Realm, which caused such great chaos, were to appear again, with your current Sky-Man cultivation, you'd surely gain many benefits from it.]

[Four-Star Task: Re-explore Five Daos Mountain.]

[Task Reward: Heavenly Dao Pill.]

The system's voice, cold and devoid of emotion, dropped by Cheng Guang's ear.

After hearing the new task released by the system, Cheng Guang's eyes narrowed slightly, his heart filled with shock.

In the future world, the four great dynasties were no longer in existence, or to put it another way, even if they still existed, they were fragmented, no longer like the current situation where the four great dynasties balanced each other, with the smaller dynasties relying on them.

And the source of the future world's chaos, the force that shattered the power structure, was merely a Secret Realm.

What kind of Secret Realm could it be, to draw the attention of the world's strong practitioners?

The fact that even the top Sky-Men disappeared without a trace, resulting in a gap in the Four Directions Mortal World's top combat power.

Such a Secret Realm must be extraordinary.

If it happened again, even he would not be able to stop the future's great momentum. As long as the Secret Realm reappeared, it was very likely that chaos would ensue once more.

Even without King of South Ming, Great Zhou's current status might not be preserved.

Thinking this, Cheng Guang couldn't help but click his tongue in wonder.

Cheng Guang pondered for a moment, his gaze dropping to the system's task reminder, specifically on the four words, "West Liang Women's Country".

Upon seeing the words "West Liang Women's Country", Cheng Guang's pupils contracted slightly.

To him, the West Liang Women's Country was all too familiar.

Considering the Red Robe Daoist he encountered in the Secret Realm last time, as well as the Douluo Palace, this West Liang Women's Country seemed to also exist in his memory.

Beyond the West Liang Women's Country, what shocked him even more was that Jiang Luoqing might very well be the reincarnation of the Empress of West Liang Women's Country.

It seemed that Jiang Luoqing's background was not small at all.

All were characters from ancient times.

However, why had these figures from the ancient era all faded into obscurity?

Even the locations from that period, some palaces, had shattered and turned into Secret Realms that drifted outside the world, only to reappear in the mortal realm under very special, very rare circumstances.

Cheng Guang's brows furrowed slightly.

The sudden disappearance of these figures and the distinctive bloodlines of the World Royal Family...

There were too many unknowns in this world.

All manner of doubts led him to wonder if the World Royal Family's emergence had something to do with these ancient beings.

From whom did his own ancient Great Xia God Emperor bloodline originate?

And who was this Great Xia God Emperor?

The more Cheng Guang thought about it, the more his head ached. He rubbed his temples wearily. Unable to find the answers, he stopped pondering, as everything he had come into contact with already exceeded his understanding.

Not to mention him, perhaps even some of the royal families in the world and many old-timers who had lived for hundreds of years, might not know the secrets of the ancient era at this time.

Cheng Guang pondered for a moment, turning his attention to the task reward offered by the system this time.

Heavenly Dao Pill.

Just from the name, one could tell it was some form of pill.

However, its exact effects were unknown.

He would have to wait until the system task was completed to find out.

Cheng Guang composed his mind and resumed his cultivation in earnest.

...

Time flew by.

Cheng Guang rode the Flying Boat back to Duke Zhen's Mansion with the sunlight.

Today, Duke Zhen's Mansion was different from the usual.

On a normal day, there would only be two guards at the gate, but today there were two more.

It was clear that these two were not guards from Duke Zhen's Mansion. Although they were in plain clothes, the aura they exuded was not something ordinary people possessed.

"These are the guards from influential families, with notable martial cultivation."

Cheng Guang knew that these guards had significant backgrounds, probably indicating visitors had arrived.

Cheng Guang glanced at the new guards without asking much, his Flying Boat hanging above Duke Zhen's Mansion, and he disembarked directly from the boat.

Qian Siyuan and Li Zhengyang followed Cheng Guang down from the Flying Boat and landed beside him.

At this moment, Qian Siyuan was slightly frowning, his features still revealing a bit of worry.

"Princely Heir, we haven't completed the task ordered by Your Majesty and returned directly. If Your Majesty blames us later, it will be difficult to explain," he said.

Cheng Guang, more relaxed than Qian Siyuan, smiled and replied, "Qian, let's leave the matter as it is for now. That survivor from Great Chu is either undetectable by anyone, or if found, is too powerful to confront."

Chapter 409 - Zhao Jin, You Come Back to Us _3

"If His Majesty asks later, just let him find me," Cheng Guang soothed Qian Siyuan before heading towards the mansion gate with Qing Luan and Qin Yanqiu.

Qin Beifeng stood outside the gate, hesitated for a moment, and then maintained a distance that was neither too far nor too close behind Cheng Guang.

Meanwhile, Qian Siyuan and Li Zhengyang watched Cheng Guang's departing figure and exchanged a glance, both spotting the confusion in each other's eyes.

Li Zhengyang scratched his head and said, "Since the Princely Heir has instructed us so, let's not overthink it and just proceed as he said."

Qian Siyuan nodded in agreement.

And they turned around with the staff of the Bureau of the Lamp to leave.

As Cheng Guang approached the mansion gate, the old guard naturally didn't need to say much, greeting him with utmost reverence at the earliest opportunity.

Two new guards, upon seeing Cheng Guang, had a brief moment of surprise, then seemed to recognize him and made way for him as well.

Cheng Guang returned to the Million Specie Garden where Qing Luan tidied up the luggage they had brought and fetched some hot water for him to wash his hands.

Cheng Guang then said with a smile, "There's no need for fuss, after the long journey, both you and Qin Yanqiu should rest more."

Qing Luan shook her head and smilingly said, "Princely Heir, I'm not tired. You should be more worried about yourself and Miss Qin..."

Qin Yanqiu sat beside a stone table, resting her chin on her hand out of boredom, seemingly lost in thought, her cool beautiful eyes showing a trace of fatigue.

Seeing Qin Yanqiu looking this way, Cheng Guang couldn't help but chuckle.

Throughout this journey, they had hardly done any serious business, with most of the time spent on the back-and-forth travel.

Traveling by Flying Boat was boring, offering little in the way of entertainment, and they were left to amuse themselves.

It could be said that Qin Yanqiu had a rough time on this trip.

Cheng Guang himself was not having an easy time either.

Thinking this, Cheng Guang subconsciously rubbed his waist and grimaced, saying, "Qing Luan, prepare some nourishing food tonight, I might be tired these past few days, and not in the best condition."

Qing Luan nodded in a somewhat bemused fashion and agreed.

Upon hearing Cheng Guang's excuse, Qin Yanqiu's cool expression barely changed. She didn't really mind these matters, instead lightly touching her abdomen and pondering when she might become pregnant.

Calculating the time, from getting pregnant to the child's birth, she didn't know how much longer it would take.

If she stayed away from the battlefield for a long time, her cultivation realm might be fine and would not decline, but her martial arts skills were very likely to deteriorate.

A long period without fighting enemies would inevitably lead to her combat skills becoming rusty.

Qin Yanqiu clenched her hand and stared at her palm for a moment, lost in thought.

After a while, Qing Luan brought several prepared dishes to the table, along with numerous pastries.

While eating, Qing Luan seemed to remember something and said, "Princely Heir, today there seems to have been an important visitor at the mansion. With such a big commotion upon our return, the Family Head and madam must have noticed."

"Perhaps they were disturbed by the visitor, which is why they did not have time to come find us."

"After dinner, do you want to go over and see?"

Cheng Guang casually replied, "We'll talk about it later; they're probably discussing matters. If they want me to meet the visitor, I expect they'll send for me."

Cheng Guang guessed that the visitor to the mansion this time must have held a high status; otherwise, his parents Cheng Zhihai and Wu Yuemei would not have extended such a warm welcome.

They didn't even come to see him upon his return; he wondered what was so important.

As Cheng Guang pondered, he suddenly recalled that, before he left the capital city for the Great Yan's imperial city of Skyfire City, Cheng Zhihai and Wu Yuemei had mentioned finding another marriage prospect for him.

Could it be because of that?

Cheng Guang felt quite troubled by the thought.

To him, he really didn't lack for women at the moment.

Cheng Zhihai and Wu Yuemei were concerned about his marriage because he had not yet established his principal wife, and already in his twenties, even in a world where one could cultivate, he was considered to be of a marriageable age.

Cheng Guang sighed. If it weren't for the drama Qin Beifeng had caused back then, his principal wife would now be Qin Yanqiu, a perfectly good arrangement; why stir up more complications?

If Cheng Zhihai and Wu Yuemei were indeed arranging another marriage for him now, he really would have no way to refuse.

With this thought, Cheng Guang's gaze fell upon Qin Beifeng nearby, filled with a tinge of resentment.

Qin Beifeng noticed Cheng Guang's gaze, showed a trace of astonishment, and couldn't help but lower his head.

Ever since Qin Beifeng became aware of Cheng Guang's possible identity as the Crown Prince of Great Chu, his attitude towards Cheng Guang, although not much different from before, had changed somewhat in motivation, becoming distinctly more respectful.

At the same time, Qin Beifeng grew more cautious.

In the entire Duke Zhen's Mansion, aside from the Princely Heir himself, he was the only one who knew Cheng Guang's true identity.

He had to be ready for any contingency; should Cheng Guang's identity be exposed, he would need to know how to escort Cheng Guang to safety.

Cheng Guang didn't dwell on Qin Beifeng for too long; after just a glance at Qin Beifeng, he turned his gaze away.

It was already night.

The Ever-bright Lamps hanging in the courtyard provided a bright yellow glow, adding a bit of warmth to the slightly cold evening.

After dinner, Cheng Guang brought out several lounge chairs into the courtyard where he and Qin Yanqiu lay down together, with Qing Luan standing behind them attending to them, gazing at the sky.

The pitch-black canopy was sprinkled with twinkling stars; on cloudless nights near the summer, the stars were always visible.

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These stars seem to flow in delicate torrent, creating a splendid milky way that slanted toward the starry sky.

It's extremely beautiful.

...

At this moment, in the spacious guest hall of Duke Zhen's Mansion, many people had already taken their seats.

"Elder Ning, is our matter then settled like this?"

Cheng Zhihai and Wu Yuemei sat at the head, smiling.

This time, it was Cheng Zhihai who spoke, his tone quite relaxed.

Beneath Cheng Zhihai and Wu Yuemei, an elegantly dressed elderly woman nodded slightly.

"Being able to form a marriage alliance with Duke Zhen's Mansion is a fortunate matter for our Taihao Sword Sect."

Cheng Zhihai said with a smile, "In that case, let's hold the marriage ceremony soon."

The woman known as Elder Ning nodded her head, then raised her eyes to look at Cheng Zhihai and said, "Mr. Cheng, it is of course excellent for our Taihao Sword Sect to form a marriage alliance with Duke Zhen's Mansion. However, any children born must inherit the position of Master of the Taihao Sword Sect in the future, and this must be agreed upon beforehand."

"If the Court, because of this matter, causes any issues with the succession of the Duke's position within Duke Zhen's Mansion, I shall not be responsible."

The underlying meaning of Elder Ning's words was clear. By forming a marriage alliance with them, the Taihao Sword Sect expected any future children to inherit the position of Master of the sect. If, in the future, the Court interfered and Cheng Guang couldn't inherit the Duke's position because of this, then it would not be their concern.

After all, the relationship between the Court and the Sects of the Martial World was not very good.

Court officials and Sects of the Martial World always remained clearly distinct from each other.

Now, the marriage alliance between Duke Zhen's Mansion and their Taihao Sword Sect could be seen as setting a precedent to some extent.

Upon hearing this, Cheng Zhihai chuckled and said, "Elder Ning need not worry about this."

Cheng Zhihai knew very well that he was taking a risk by rejecting many noble daughters from Court families and choosing to marry the current divine maiden of the Taihao Sword Sect.

However, he had his reasons for doing so.

The greater the power of Duke Zhen's Mansion grew, the more he could feel the pressure from the Emperor.

Although he had an extremely good relationship with the Emperor.

Even the entire Duke Zhen's Mansion had an excellent relationship with the Emperor.

But who could say what might happen in the future?

Just looking at the current situation, even though he had an excellent relationship with Emperor Zhou, Emperor Zhou could find any excuse to curb the power of Duke Zhen's Mansion.

If their relationship worsened in the future, or if something else happened, it was quite possible that Duke Zhen's Mansion might be completely eradicated.

As long as the Sky-Man, the Duke of the State, was present, all was well.

But once the Sky-Man, the Duke of the State, was gone, the fate of Duke Zhen's Mansion would be entirely in the hands of Emperor Zhou.

Cheng Zhihai knew he had to prepare for the worst. Making a marriage alliance with a humble Sect of the Martial World was a test move for now, in case he ever needed to break away from the Court and seek stability.

In the past, the work of his Bureau of the Lamp had wiped out many sects in the Martial World, and the sects of the entire Great Zhou bore deep hatred for Duke Zhen's Mansion and the Bureau of the Lamp.

But the Taihao Sword Sect was different. It was one of The Four Great Sword Sects and, unlike Spirit Dao or Martial Cultivation, followed the path of the Sword Cultivator, often choosing to remain hidden from worldly conflicts and seldom appearing.

The location of the Taihao Sword Sect did not belong to Great Zhou, or even any other dynasty for that matter; it was independent and isolated.

The Taihao Sword Sect would have become a nation within a nation if it had a dynasty's name.

By forming an alliance with the Taihao Sword Sect, Cheng Zhihai provided a safeguard for his own Duke Zhen's Mansion.

Elder Ning nodded and replied, "If that is so, then I shall say no more. Tomorrow, have the Princely Heir come to our sect to pick up the person."

As she said this and stood up, preparing to leave.

Suddenly, a light twinkled from far within the Imperial Palace, followed by the resounding toll of a grand bell emanating from the depths of the Imperial City.

Hearing this sound, Cheng Zhihai's expression changed slightly and he stood up immediately, looking toward the Imperial Palace.

"This is His Majesty summoning the officials for an urgent meeting. Why would it sound at this time? Could it be that something significant has happened?"

Cheng Zhihai muttered to himself, first turned to Wu Yuemei and said, "Yuemei, I've just been informed that Guanger has returned; go check on him and then get some rest early. I'll go to the Imperial Palace to see what's happening."

After saying this, Cheng Zhihai excused himself with an apology to Elder Ning, stepped on Qi, and flew in the direction of the Imperial Palace.

After Cheng Zhihai left, Elder Ning, who had also intended to leave, did not linger in Duke Zhen's Mansion either. She got to her feet along with other elders and disciples from the Taihao Sword Sect and walked out of Duke Zhen's Mansion.

Once they were some distance away from Duke Zhen's Mansion, Elder Ning, leaning on a walking stick, looked toward the distant location, her brows knitted slightly.

"What has happened? Why would Emperor Zhou suddenly convene all the officials for a meeting at this hour?"

Elder Ning murmured to herself.

Behind her, a female disciple emerged, clad in a white dress with a veil over her face, appearing to be around twenty years of age, but with a lithe and graceful posture. Light blue lotuses were embroidered on her sleeves, while silver threads on her long dress outlined wisps of clouds.

This young woman, with her slender waist, her skin like creamy snow, and the outlines of her shapely figure visible beneath her layers of robes, said,

"Grandmother, why did you agree to this marriage alliance with Duke Zhen's Mansion for me?"

She clung to Elder Ning's arm with a hint of reproach in her voice.

At first sight, she seemed to have a lofty and unapproachable disposition, but the moment she spoke, her voice was filled with soft complaints, so gentle that it made anyone who heard it feel their bones go soft.