

My System 541

Chapter 541 - Mr. Cheng, What Are Your Thoughts? _2

...

Bang!!

Just as Wu Mengde had managed to get halfway up, another bang sounded, and he heavily crashed onto the deck of the Flying Boat.

Wu Mengde's cultivation in Spirit Dao had reached the Eighth Rank Great World Realm, and for someone of his age, achieving such a Cultivation Realm was already quite impressive.

Wu Mengde himself believed that he was doing quite well compared to his peers.

But.

At this moment, when Wu Mengde compared himself to Cheng Guang, he found that there was absolutely no comparison.

Wu Mengde faced Cheng Guang's suppressing kick.

He felt as though the one stepping on his face wasn't Cheng Guang, the Town-Nation Duke's Heir.

It was like a giant elephant with infinite brute strength.

The giant elephant pinned Wu Mengde's body under its feet, leaving him utterly unable to move even the slightest bit.

Thinking of this, Wu Mengde felt his heart filled with humiliation.

"Damn it!! Damn it!!!"

Wu Mengde roared twice, mustering all the strength in his body, with the Power of the Primordial Spirit surging out like a tidal wave.

For Wu Mengde, although his reputation was not as important as his life,

if he did not know Cheng Guang's intentions, and Cheng Guang was still stepping on his face, Wu Mengde would lean towards the belief that Cheng Guang wanted to kill him.

After all, he was, at the very least, the Great Yuan Prince.

If Cheng Guang treated him this way, he would certainly run away later and would most definitely kill Wu Mengde, fearing his revenge, and thus end it all.

Thinking of this, Wu Mengde was filled with immense fear.

Aside from fear for his own future, he was more afraid of falling into the hands of Cheng Guang, the Town-Nation Duke's Heir.

Even if Cheng Guang, the Town-Nation Duke's Heir, wouldn't kill him in the short term,

in the future, who knows what fate he would face.

Therefore.

Wu Mengde started struggling desperately, while cursing loudly at the same time.

Seeing this, Cheng Guang couldn't help but shake his head with a sneer, but he didn't say much else, only pressing Wu Mengde's face down a bit more.

Wu Mengde's face was pressed deep into the deck, and his facial bones made creaking noises under the immense pressure.

"Either shut up or keep it down,"

Cheng Guang said coldly, his gaze fixed intently on Wu Mengde.

It seemed that if Wu Mengde made another peep, Cheng Guang would take action.

Wu Mengde looked at Cheng Guang's cold gaze and shivered involuntarily.

At the same time.

He also realized that the disparity in strength between him and Cheng Guang was simply too great. Even if he exerted all his strength, he might not even be able to make Cheng Guang budge in the slightest.

Even more so,

he did not have the strength to make Cheng Guang's breathing become even slightly more rapid.

This realization chilled Wu Mengde's heart more than the coldest snowfall in December.

Cheng Guang's gaze moved away from Wu Mengde's face and settled on a spot in the empty space beside them, waiting quietly.

Wu Mengde didn't know what Cheng Guang was waiting for.

But he knew.

At this moment, if he made another move and disturbed the Town-Nation Duke's Heir, he would undoubtedly die.

And right now,

the Town-Nation Duke's Heir had not yet killed him.

So even though Wu Mengde felt extremely aggrieved inside, he no longer had any thoughts of resistance.

Cheng Guang, on the side, didn't know what was going through Wu Mengde's mind, nor did he care.

What Cheng Guang cared about at this moment was whether his system task had been completed.

Stepping on Wu Mengde's face, he waited quietly for a moment.

After a moment,

Cheng Guang still hadn't heard any system notification that the task was complete.

This made Cheng Guang's eyebrows involuntarily furrow.

What was going on?

He was already stepping on Wu Mengde's face, and the system task wasn't complete?

Could it be that he needed to step for a longer time, or perhaps the system had gotten smarter, and merely stepping on him physically wasn't enough?

Cheng Guang's eyes flickered slightly, preparing to do something, when he heard the sound of something tearing through the air from beneath the Flying Boat.

Cheng Guang looked up.

And then, he saw Wu Ling's figure emerging below the Flying Boat.

Wrapped in the Power of the Primordial Spirit, she flew toward the Flying Boat.

In just a few breaths, she went from a small black dot in the distance to right in front of Cheng Guang.

Wu Ling landed lightly on the deck of the Flying Boat, her eyes slightly lifted as she looked towards Cheng Guang.

After glancing at Cheng Guang,

Wu Ling's gaze quickly shifted to Wu Mengde, who was under Cheng Guang's foot.

"The Great Yuan Prince?"

Wu Ling's eyes revealed surprise.

She hadn't realized that Wu Mengde was also on Cheng Guang's Flying Boat just now.

Once the Great Yuan army retreated, Wu Ling ordered the Great Zhou soldiers to reorganize Hundred Mile City before looking for Cheng Guang.

It was only after she boarded the Flying Boat that she discovered

Wu Mengde was also on Cheng Guang's Flying Boat. Stay connected with NovelBin.Com

And...

He was being stepped on by Cheng Guang at this very moment.

Wu Mengde heard Wu Ling's voice but did not respond in any way; he had neither the face nor the strength to respond.

Being stepped on by Cheng Guang in such a manner,

Wu Mengde only wished to delete this memory from his mind and return to Great Yuan as quickly as possible.

Although this defeat meant that the position of Emperor of Great Yuan might not fall to him in the future, as long as he could return, with his strength and influence he could still strive for the throne of Great Yuan—it wasn't impossible.

After all,

he hadn't made any big mistakes.

This defeat of Great Yuan wasn't his fault, but rather because Mr. Zhou was not strong enough.

...

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He was struck away by the very entity he had summoned.

He had no idea in which direction it had flown.

He had no idea whether it was alive or dead at this moment.

Thinking of this, Wu Mengde closed his eyes in anguish, too ashamed to say anything.

After staring at Wu Mengde in shock for a moment, Wu Ling's bright eyes once again fell upon Cheng Guang, the surprise and contemplation on her face uncontrollably emerging.

She hesitated for a moment.

Unable to restrain herself, Wu Ling asked, "Princely Heir, have you truly become a Sky-Man now?"

Wu Ling had just seen it.

During the battle between Zhou Qingxu and Deng, Cheng Guang had only made a slight move and managed to protect the entire Hundred Mile City in an instant.

Such ability was difficult to attribute to any powerhouse beneath a Sky-Man.

Cheng Guang, faced with Wu Ling's question, didn't explain much but merely shook his head before diverting the topic.

"Now, you could say that I have made a move, right?"

Upon hearing Cheng Guang's words, Wu Ling slightly froze, flashing eyes resting on Cheng Guang, her red lips slightly pursed.

Wu Ling knew that Cheng Guang was referencing her previous question about how he would make a move.

At that time, Wu Ling herself had no idea what level of cultivation Cheng Guang possessed, nor what capabilities he had.

She naturally didn't believe Cheng Guang would make a move.

But now,

Wu Ling felt as though Cheng Guang had just slapped her in the face.

"This..." Wu Ling's stunningly pale complexion flushed slightly, and then she gave a small nod in agreement.

"Indeed, you have made your move."

After Wu Ling spoke, she took a deep breath, looked at Cheng Guang with gratitude, bowed slightly and said, "I owe you my thanks for this time, Princely Heir."

"Had you not acted, relying solely on the methods of that Great Yuan Sky-Man, no one in Great Zhou besides Duke Zhen would have been able to handle him."

"Once Hundred Mile City had fallen into Great Yuan's hands, who knows what would have happened next. Our entire Great Zhou Dynasty might have been trampled under Great Yuan's iron hooves."

At this point in her speech,

in Wu Ling's eyes, a trace of fear flickered.

As Cheng Guang faced Wu Ling's gratitude, his expression remained unchanged, simply nodding calmly and looking down at Wu Mengde, he spoke slowly:

"Have you finished? If you're done, then go down."

"I'm about to return."

Cheng Guang began to dismiss her without a shred of mercy.

The smile on Wu Ling's face slightly stiffened; she was clueless as to how she had offended Cheng Guang, making him so unwilling to associate with her now.

Wu Ling's lips couldn't help but pout.

"All the soldiers in Hundred Mile City are grateful to you, Princely Heir. Won't you go and meet them?"

"Besides, this time, Princely Heir, you've done a great service. The Court will discuss merits and bestow rewards upon you. If you come down with me, the officials in charge of recording merits can certainly add this to your account..."

Hearing Wu Ling's words, Cheng Guang glanced at her but did not respond.

Seeing Cheng Guang's placid face, Wu Ling's voice grew lower and lower as she spoke,

her tone brimming with uncertainty.

Because Wu Ling realized,

for Cheng Guang, the Town-Nation Duke's Heir, the soldiers' gratitude might be somewhat important, but the Court's discussion of merits and rewards held no appeal for him whatsoever.

After all, what could the Court offer to Cheng Guang, the Duke of the State's Heir, that would be of value to him?

Essentially nothing.

When it came to the wealthy Duke Zhen's Mansion, there was nothing left for the Court to reward.

And it was in that moment,

Wu Ling finally understood why her father, the Emperor, had made a move against Cheng Guang, the Duke of the State's Heir.

Because as long as the Emperor was alive, he could suppress Cheng Guang, suppress Cheng Zihai, suppress Cheng Shiyuan, suppress Duke Zhen's Mansion.

But,

once Wu Shang, Emperor Zhou, her father, was no longer around,

there would be no one left within the borders of Great Zhou who could suppress Duke Zhen's Mansion.

Just like this time,

when Great Yuan attacked,

all of Great Zhou was hoping for Duke Zhen to take action.

Yet, Duke Zhen had not taken action.

Whether it was due to external circumstances holding him back, or perhaps he simply did not wish to intervene,

one thing could be proven.

That was, the current Great Zhou Dynasty, without Emperor Zhou,

was far too dependent on Duke Zhen.

Far too reliant on Duke Zhen's Mansion.

If Duke Zhen's Mansion were to lead an army in rebellion,

it was likely that seven to eight out of ten regions within Great Zhou would not wait to be attacked by Duke Zhen's forces; they would willingly throw themselves into the arms of Duke Zhen's Mansion.

This was what truly made Wu Ling's scalp tingle.

Thinking this far, Wu Ling took a deep breath and, struggling to contain the complex thoughts in her heart, she said to Cheng Guang:

"Princely Heir, no matter what you think, I must thank you."

"Without you, just by myself, or merely with the strong ones of Great Zhou that I led, we would not have been enough to deal with them."

Cheng Guang nodded slightly.

At this moment,

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he still hadn't received the system's task completion notification.

This caused a flicker of doubt in Cheng Guang's heart.

Could it be that the system had a bug?

Normally, the system would have already indicated that the task was complete by now.

But there was no such notification.

It was all very strange indeed.

Cheng Guang slowly ground his foot on Wu Mengde's cheek, his gaze coldly fixed on the man.

He thought to himself, why not just crush him to death?

For the present Cheng Guang, a task reward, while not utterly worthless, could certainly be considered nothing out of the ordinary.

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At that moment,

Wu Ling let out a sigh and said,

"After this incident, I may be able to gain the recognition of many ministers in the Court."

"In the future, I might even ascend to the throne and become the Empress of Great Zhou."

"When that time comes, I can promise that I won't be like my father. As long as the Great Zhou Dynasty exists, Duke Zhen's Mansion will remain. You need not worry about me, nor do you need to deliberately keep your distance from me."

"I'll be taking my leave first."

Wu Ling spoke softly, her tone devoid of much emotion, yet it sounded far from flat.

It seemed that Wu Ling had suppressed all her emotions in her heart.

and simply did not show them.

Wu Ling quickly departed.

Cheng Guang raised his eyes to watch Wu Ling leave, then turned his gaze to Wu Mengde.

His brows slightly furrowed.

Just as he was about to stomp Wu Mengde to death,

a flash of enlightenment crossed Cheng Guang's mind.

He suddenly realized,

"Could it be that the system has not yet determined that my mission is complete because it considers Wu Mengde a man bound to die?"

"How could a dead man possibly become a future Emperor of Great Yuan?"

"Is the system still expecting me to spare him??"

As Cheng Guang pondered this, he found the situation increasingly intriguing and decided to test it. He slightly lifted his foot,

releasing Wu Mengde.

Wu Mengde felt the enormous force that had been pressing on his face, as if deforming his skull, rapidly receding.

Instantly, Wu Mengde felt considerable relief in his face.

Before he could recover,

Wu Mengde heard an incredibly gentle voice beside his ear,

"You may go now."

Hearing these words, Wu Mengde felt a surge of strength fill his body and looked up incredulously at Cheng Guang.

"Princely Heir, are you serious?"

Cheng Guang simply furrowed his brows in response, "Are you going to leave or not?"

"If you don't, shall I take action?"

As he spoke,

Cheng Guang started to gather a white glow in his palm.

Seeing this, Wu Mengde was taken aback and, not daring to say more, hastily got up, rubbing his face, and ran awkwardly but quickly towards the distance.

Just as he was about to reach the ship's railing,

Wu Mengde's step halted, and he stomped hard on the deck, ready to transform into a streak of light and flee into the distance.

Suddenly,

an invisible, tremendous force swept towards him from all directions.

Wu Mengde panicked, trying instinctively to break free.

But what he did not expect was that the more he struggled, the tighter the invisible force around him bound him.

In just a moment,

Wu Mengde felt he could no longer breathe.

Wu Mengde hurriedly twisted his head to look around,

trying to identify who the assailant was.

But around the Flying Boat,

he did not see any figure other than Cheng Guang.

Then, Wu Mengde suddenly twisted around to face Cheng Guang, as though he knew who the perpetrator was.

"Princely Heir, do you not keep your word??"

Wu Mengde gazed at Cheng Guang with a bewildered expression,

completely baffled by Cheng Guang's intentions.

But Cheng Guang did not direct his gaze at Wu Mengde.

Instead, he was focusing on something else,

because he had realized

that just as he prepared to let Wu Mengde go, the system's mission had suddenly been completed.

It seemed to him,

in the eyes of the system, as long as he let Wu Mengde return,

there was still a chance for Wu Mengde to inherit the throne of Great Yuan.

Therefore,

not to make good use of Wu Mengde, a potential future Emperor of Great Yuan, would indeed be a pity.

Thinking this, Cheng Guang extended his hand with a wave, instantly pulling the distant Wu Mengde to his side.

"This Princely Heir always keeps his promises. I just have a gift for you before you go."

Wu Mengde, rendered powerless before Cheng Guang, was like a chick with no ability to resist, completely at Cheng Guang's mercy.

"What gift?"

Wu Mengde asked subconsciously.

But then, he immediately wanted to smack his own mouth hard.

Damn it, what am I rambling about!!

Why would I ask the Princely Heir about a gift now? Isn't that just giving him an opening to continue this conversation?

Regretting his words, Wu Mengde hurried to say:

"Princely Heir, I don't want any gifts!!"

"I don't want any gifts at all!!"

Cheng Guang's expression darkened slightly, "You say you don't want it and that's it?"

Having said that,

Cheng Guang did not wait for Wu Mengde to react and pointed his fingers in the space at Wu Mengde's eyes.

At the same time,

Cheng Guang's own eyes began to emit a slightly devilish purple glow.

Charm Eyes!

Wu Mengde was originally shouting, but when his eyes met Cheng Guang's Charm Eyes, he instantly fell into a state of bewilderment.

Compared to ordinary people, Wu Mengde's cultivation and strength were quite formidable.

But compared to Cheng Guang,

they were insignificant.

Cheng Guang's current level of cultivation could be compared to that of a Sky-Man.

Even for a short time, the burst of power and strength he could unleash was even greater than that of an ordinary Sky-Man.

The power of the Charm Eyes, like an unreasonable torrent, took hold of Wu Mengde's entire mind regardless of what he was thinking internally.

With Cheng Guang's current usage of the Charm Eyes,

although he was still temporarily unable to control a Sky-Man, he could basically control anyone below that level accurately.

Moreover,

the Divine Power Marks left in the victim's Primordial Spirit by the Charm Eyes were now even more concealed.

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Unless a Sky-Man powerhouse personally entered Wu Mengde's mind to observe his Primordial Spirit,

it would be impossible to notice if there was anything unusual within Wu Mengde's Primordial Spirit.

The moment Cheng Guang thought of this, a slight smile inevitably appeared in his eyes.

If the future Emperor of Great Yuan was someone he controlled,

then wouldn't that mean,

he would indirectly control the entire Great Yuan in the future?

Could this method be applied to other dynasties?

There was no need to consider Great Zhou for now, since Wu Ling's entire heart was devoted to him, and Great Zhou was essentially the foundation of Duke Zhen's Mansion.

If there was a need later on,

Cheng Guang considered, controlling Wu Ling with Charm Eyes was not out of the question.

The key targets were Great Wei and Great Yan.

The Empress Wei of Great Wei and the Emperor of Great Yan.

Both were tough nuts to crack.

Empress Wei was especially difficult to handle.

Young, extraordinarily talented, her cultivation and strength were somewhat higher than that of an average Sky-Man.

Even as Cheng Guang's cultivation improved,

he was absolutely unable to control Empress Wei.

As for the Emperor of Great Yan,

there might still be a chance to try.

But it was unnecessary.

The Emperor of Great Yan was old and frail, his body weakening more each year; he was on the verge of passing away.

When that time comes,

who will take the throne of Great Yan is uncertain.

Will it be Jiang Luojing, or the Crown Prince of Great Yan?

After Jiang Luojing's identity is exposed, the throne will probably end up with the Crown Prince of Great Yan.

As Cheng Guang arrived at this conclusion, noticing that Wu Mengde began to stir, he let go of him.

With a thump, Wu Mengde's body collapsed on the ground as if it were limp, and after a while, he slowly opened his eyes.

He began with a cautious jump to his feet, surveying his surroundings vigilantly.

But when Wu Mengde's gaze fell upon Cheng Guang, the hostility in his eyes and on his face instantly turned into utmost humility and respect.

"Master."

Wu Mengde respectfully lowered his head.

Cheng Guang observed Wu Mengde's current appearance and nodded slightly, without any intention to engage in much conversation with him.

"You head back to Great Yuan first. From now on, act on your own and decide to become the Emperor of Great Yuan as soon as possible. If needed, I'll contact you again."

Wu Mengde, upon hearing Cheng Guang's words and seeing that he was being dismissed, unexpectedly flashed a hint of reluctance in his eyes, but left swiftly and resolutely.

It felt somewhat like a farewell.

Cheng Guang, seeing such a big and tall man like Wu Mengde showing the gestures of a little girl, almost couldn't help kicking Wu Mengde, nearly suffocating him with revulsion.

Luckily, Wu Mengde left quickly.

Otherwise, no matter what, Cheng Guang would have to give him a good beating before he left.

After Wu Mengde had left,

many soldiers in Hundred Mile City who were preparing for battle soon noticed Wu Mengde's figure.

With an angry shout,

they picked up their swords and chased after him to attack.

Cheng Guang didn't intervene.

He let the soldiers of Great Yuan pursue him.

With Wu Mengde's strength, as long as he wasn't trapped, escaping should not be a problem.

Being pursued,

Wu Mengde would have an excuse when returning to Great Yuan.

Otherwise, if he were to return unscathed, his head would probably be hung on the walls of Great Yuan the next day.

Even if he were the Prince Wu Ming, it wouldn't make any difference.

Cheng Guang's gaze shifted back from the distance and he walked back to the Flying Boat at a leisurely pace.

He no longer concerned himself with the subsequent affairs between Hundred Mile City, Great Yuan, and Great Zhou, immediately preparing to return.

Back to the Capital city.

Cheng Guang controlled the Flying Boat, flying towards the direction of the Capital city.

At the same time,

he also walked into a bedroom within the Flying Boat, ready to claim his reward for completing the mission.

Stepping on the face of Wu Mengde, the future Emperor of Great Yuan, yielded a reward far stranger than the previous mission rewards.

It was called the Emperor's Face Token.

And it was a one-time use item.

The name sounded peculiar, but seeing that the Emperor's Face Token was one-time use, Cheng Guang realized it was probably no simple item.

Cheng Guang sat at the desk, speaking softly to the system in his mind,

"System, claim the reward!"

As Cheng Guang's words fell in his heart,

bright golden light flowed before him like water.

An immense authority spread out in all directions.

Fortunately, Cheng Guang's Flying Boat was high in the sky.

Otherwise, the activity of claiming the reward alone could attract the attention of many powerhouses within Hundred Mile City. Explore stories at NovelBin.Côm

At this moment,

the golden light gradually converged into the shape of a talisman before Cheng Guang's eyes.

The talisman floated within the golden light, undulating as if submerged in water, seeming both illusory and real.

Cheng Guang reached out with one hand,

and lightly touched the talisman.

The moment Cheng Guang's hand touched the talisman, the Emperor's Face Token became tangible,

and fell steadily into Cheng Guang's hand.

Upon receiving it,

Cheng Guang felt a sensation of warmth, followed by a surge of heat.

At the same time,

information about the Emperor's Face Token also streamed into Cheng Guang's mind.

[Emperor's Face Token: This is the face of an Emperor. Under all heavens, all lands belong to the king, and all who reside within its borders are his subjects. Using this token, you can order anyone in the world to do anything for you. Of course, whether the one you order is willing to comply with you will depend on whether your order matches your authority and prestige.]

After reviewing the information that appeared in his mind, Cheng Guang wore an extremely peculiar expression on his face.

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The Emperor's Face Token can command any person under heaven at will.

This ability can be said to be very powerful.

Yet, it has some limitations.

The order given to the other party should not be too outrageous; otherwise, even the emperor's prestige may be rejected.

But generally speaking,

There should be no problem.

If the Emperor's Face Token is used well, at an unexpected moment, it should be able to play a significant role.

Cheng Guang thought this way.

He stored away the Emperor's Face Token and then looked at the sky outside.

He only knew that there was still some time before evening.

The release of the next task was still a while away, so he simply stopped paying attention to it.

Sitting cross-legged in the bedroom, he began to cultivate.

...

As Cheng Guang began his cultivation,

The Great Yuan army retreated.

The news that Cheng Guang, the Town-Nation Duke's Heir, had, with his own strength, repelled a Heavenly Human from Great Yuan causing their army to retreat, spread like a storm.

It swept through the entire Capital City.

Within the Capital City,

Great Zhou Imperial Palace.

Inside the Council Hall,

The many officials' faces were filled with shock, and they were all discussing fervently with their colleagues.

"Hiss, the Town-Nation Duke's Heir actually repelled a Heavenly Human from Great Yuan?? Does this not mean that the Town-Nation Duke's Heir also possesses the strength of the Heavenly Human Realm?"

"Two Heavenly Humans from a single family!? This is simply..."

"I originally thought that Cheng Zhihai was the one who had hopes of challenging the Heavenly Human Realm, and if the Duke Zhen's Mansion were to have a Heavenly Human, the next one could only be Cheng Zhihai. I never expected it to be Cheng Guang..."

"..."

Amidst the clamor of the officials,

Cheng Zhihai, one of the subjects of the discussion, showed no fluctuations in emotion, but deep in his eyes, there was intense joy hidden.

At the same time,

Standing among the many officials, Cheng Zihai,

Upon hearing the news from the warfront, did not show as much shock as the other officials.

The Bureau of the Lamp's intelligence was faster than the army's messenger officers.

Before the many officials knew the news, Cheng Zihai had already learned of the details and the outcome of the event.

When he first heard the news, Cheng Zihai was incredibly shocked.

He knew that his son Guanger was not ordinary.

But still,

Cheng Zihai had never expected that Guanger had become so extraordinary to the extent he now had.

Just think, not long ago,

He was still reflecting on how his son possessed the qualities of a Heavenly Human.

Now, it turned out,

Guanger had indeed become a Heavenly Human!!

If Guanger was not a Heavenly Human, how could he have repelled the Black-faced Vajra Buddha?

How could he have repelled the Heavenly Human of Great Yuan??

As soon as Cheng Zhihai thought of this, the smile in his heart could no longer be concealed, yet his face remained as calm as still water.

His stern countenance showed little change.

But if one looked closely,

One could see Cheng Zhihai's mouth corners occasionally curling up, twitching from time to time.

It was harder to suppress than a cocked gun.

And at this moment,

Sitting in the highest seat, Empress Wang, acting as the regent, had her beautiful face filled with worries.

Unlike Cheng Zhihai's happy and relaxed mood, or perhaps exactly the opposite,

Empress Wang didn't really care whether Cheng Guang, the Town-Nation Duke's Heir, had truly advanced to the Heavenly Human Realm.

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She also didn't care about the retreat of the Great Yuan army.

Of course, it's not to say she didn't care at all.

It's just that if Cheng Guang truly advanced to the Heavenly Human Realm and repelled the Heavenly Human from Great Yuan, the joy it brought her was far less than the concerns caused by Cheng Guang's victory.

Because, with Cheng Guang's intervention,

Wu Ling, whom she had sent to the frontlines to represent the emperor in the personal command of the military, originally only to boost morale, the mascot-like Wu Ling,

At this moment,

he had become the next most important person in the eyes of countless soldiers after Cheng Guang.

Once Wu Ling received the support of so many soldiers and so many military generals, even if he could not immediately ascend to the throne to become Emperor,

he would also gain the qualifications to compete for the imperial power with other Princes.

Thinking of this,

Empress Wang's heart began to feel somewhat uneasy.

Because from the very beginning, deep down, Empress Wang had looked down on Wu Ling, the Princess who was suddenly brought back by the Emperor Zhou from the outside.

Whether she was truly of Emperor Zhou's bloodline or not was still a matter of debate,

mainly because soon after Wu Ling returned, she stole the position of Crown Prince from her son Wu Ming, causing much resentment in Empress Wang's heart.

She did not dare to say anything to Emperor Zhou,

so she could only vent her grudges and dissatisfaction on Wu Ling.

Of course,

Empress Wang was not a petty person; her venting was limited to silently being angry and simply not wanting Wu Ling to become Emperor,

without creating any obstacles.

It was precisely because Empress Wang's actions were almost negligible,

that the relationship between her and Wu Ling was able to maintain a superficial balance.

Empress Wang gently massaged her forehead, trying to persuade herself to let go, and then her gaze fell on the surrounding court officials.

After contemplating for a moment,

Empress Wang slowly spoke up.

The moment she opened her mouth, the originally buzzing and extremely noisy hall,

immediately quieted down.

"Now that Great Yuan has already retreated its forces, do we need to negotiate reparations with them, or discuss compensation matters?"

"Or should we counterattack?"

When Empress Wang's words came out,

the already quiet Council Hall became even more silent at this time.

All the court ministers, upon hearing Empress Wang's words, looked at each other, not daring to say more.

For the many court ministers,

even if Great Zhou was invaded by Great Yuan and had been slapped by Great Yuan, it didn't have the capability to strike back.

Being able to withstand Great Yuan's invasion was already considered good enough.

Where would they dare to talk about rebellion?

Don't they know

that in Great Yuan, there is more than one Sky-Man?

If they were to send someone to attack Great Yuan...

Then who should be sent?

Ordinary military generals simply wouldn't suffice.

Only Duke Zhen could be sent...

Thinking of Duke Zhen, many court ministers couldn't help but lower their heads,

After Great Zhou lost its ground,

nobody knew what stance Duke Zhen would take.

Who knew whether Duke Zhen would listen to the Court,

and who knew whether Duke Zhen would rebel.

Now, let alone ordering Duke Zhen to counterattack Great Yuan, even if Duke Zhen were obedient, would they abandon the Border Area battlefield and disregard Demon Beasts?

All these issues,

weighed heavily on the hearts of the numerous court ministers.

Making them unable to speak up.

Therefore,

after Empress Wang spoke,

the entire Council Hall was silent.

It was so quiet that you could hear a pin drop.

After a good while,

seeing that really no one answered her, Empress Wang rubbed her brow again and, after pondering for a moment, turned her gaze to Cheng Zihai.

"Mr. Cheng, what are your thoughts?"

Empress Wang threw the question to Cheng Zihai.

Chapter 546 - Hey, What a Coincidence, Right!?

After Empress Wang spoke out,

Empress Wang, as well as the other court officials in the Council Hall, all turned their gaze towards Cheng Zihai.

At that moment, Cheng Zihai was still standing amongst the ranks of officials with an air of detached composure, his official robe neat and spotless, hands clasped together and tucked into his sleeves, in a state of seeming indifference.

However,

Cheng Zihai had never expected that Empress Wang would shift the burden of the conversation onto him.

Was she planning to use his words as a probe to test the intentions of Duke Zhen's Mansion?

Cheng Zihai's brows furrowed involuntarily, and at the same time, he noticed that when Empress Wang turned the topic over to him, the gazes some of the ministers directed at him were particularly tense,

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as if they were worried he would say something untoward.

Silence.

Under the watchful eyes of the officials, Cheng Zihai remained silent for a while, then raised his gaze to Empress Wang.

"Your Majesty, to counterattack Great Yuan at this time would indeed be too forced,"

Cheng Zihai gave his opinion.

After Cheng Zihai spoke, the atmosphere in the entire hall seemed to suddenly thaw, many ministers let out a sigh of relief.

At the same time,

there was a sense of inexplicable disappointment in their hearts.

Cheng Zihai spoke of it being too forced; although Great Zhou had been attacked by Great Yuan and had lost face, luckily, they did not need to initiate warfare and could maintain stability for a while.

During the absence of Emperor Zhou,

stability was the most important thing for the Great Zhou Dynasty at this moment.

What disappointed them was that they had lost face this time and yet couldn't retaliate. Great Yuan had their Sky-Men, and so did Great Zhou, but the only openly acknowledged Sky-Man who would heed the court's orders was Duke of the State.

Cheng Zihai spoke of it being too forced.

That meant it was almost certain that Duke of the State would not lead Great Zhou's troops to campaign against Great Yuan.

No matter whether external or internal reasons were to blame, it indicated one thing: at this moment, the Great Zhou Dynasty could not count on the Duke of the State.

One of the four great dynasties, the Great Zhou Dynasty, now found itself without a Sky-Man to call upon.

Many court ministers and officials felt unsettled and anxious in their hearts.

Especially some of the nobles from aristocratic families, who at this time even had a fine sweat on their foreheads, their expressions turning unnatural.

They had already begun to consider finding an opportunity to escape from Great Zhou.

Great Zhou had fended off the attack from Great Yuan, but what about next time?

Great Yuan had their Sky-Men,

likely far outnumbering Great Zhou.

If Great Yuan decided to continue invading Great Zhou, it was uncertain how many times the vast Great Zhou Dynasty could withstand the attacks from Great Yuan.

Upon hearing these words, Empress Wang's brows slightly furrowed as she stared at Cheng Zihai for a few moments, then she sighed lightly and said with a slight chuckle, "If Mr. Cheng believes it's too strained, then this palace will no longer entertain the thought. The matter of counterattacking Great Yuan, let's put it aside for now,"

"Speaking of which, the most crucial matter at hand is to decide on the new ruler for Great Zhou's future,"

"At the moment, the candidates for the new ruler are just a few, at most... we could add Wu Ling to the list,"

"Everyone, if you have any good suggestions, feel free to choose a suitable candidate to inherit the throne from among these few. Please, speak up."

Upon hearing this topic, the officials no longer feigned death as before, but came alive, their eyes sparkling as they eagerly stepped forward to speak.

"Your Majesty, since His Majesty had not established a successor before his disappearance, we should follow the ancient practice, to appoint the elder rather than the younger. Allowing Prince Wu Ming to inherit the throne would be the most prudent course of action,"

The official who spoke was clearly one of Empress Wang's people.

Empress Wang slightly nodded in approval at the official's words, albeit imperceptibly.

At the same time,

Cheng Zihai suddenly noticed.

After this official voiced out, the other officials unexpectedly had no objections to raise.

Even several Noble Consorts, who usually didn't get along with Empress Wang, were now frowning, as if pondering something, their lips moving slightly,

seeming as if they wanted to say something,

but for some reason, they didn't speak up.

Could it be that Empress Wang had used means to buy over these Noble Consorts?

Cheng Zihai couldn't help but think of this possibility. His Bureau of the Lamp hadn't managed to infiltrate the Imperial Palace with its informants, so he was momentarily unaware of the events unfolding within the palace.

For now, he could only judge through the expressions, words, and demeanors of Empress Wang and the few Noble Consorts.

Empress Wang, with a slight smile on her lips, watched the audience below, seemingly not expecting anyone to contradict her,

pressuring the majority of the officials to reach a verbal consensus, which became the dominant opinion.

As long as the general climate was supportive of Wu Ming, even if there were a few obstinate old-fashioned officials among them, they wouldn't dare to come forward and oppose her under these circumstances.

Just as the situation had yet to settle for a few seconds, before she had even a few seconds to delight in the consensus, someone quickly objected.

"Who says His Majesty didn't establish a successor? Isn't Wu Ling the one?"

A robust voice, somewhat abrupt, rose from among the officials.

Upon hearing these words, Empress Wang's brows slowly tightened as she lifted her gaze towards the speaker.

Empress Wang knew,

there might be someone who would disagree,

but she couldn't understand which official would dare to openly object at such a time.

Once she saw the face of the official,

Empress Wang looked slightly taken aback, "Qiu Hao?"

The one who spoke

was none other than Qiu Hao.

The same one who had earlier listened to Wu Ling's suggestions was Qiu Hao.

Chapter 547 - Hey, What a Coincidence, Right!? _2

Sir Qiu mobilized all the military forces along the border of Great Zhou, heading to the frontline to confront Great Yuan.

As the border army had just been deployed and had not yet achieved much, it was rendered meaningless by the intervention of the Town-Nation Duke's Heir, who repelled the Sky-Man of Great Yuan.

In this way, Sir Qiu's actions seemed to be of no significance.

Empress Wang understood that if the Town-Nation Duke's Heir had not taken action, if the Sky-Man of Great Yuan had not been repelled by him, Great Yuan would not have retreated.

At that time,

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the border army that had just been redirected might indeed have become Great Zhou's last straw of survival.

Otherwise, even if Great Zhou survived under the Iron Cavalry of Great Yuan, the dynasty would still be greatly weakened.

Thinking of this, Empress Wang slowly took a breath and a slight smile appeared on her lips.

"Sir Qiu, you speak amiss," she said.

"His Majesty has established the Crown Prince, not the future emperor. If the Crown Prince is capable of bearing the burden, then he can naturally succeed the throne normally."

"However, as for Wu Ling, her qualifications, knowledge, and cultivation are all insufficient to become the emperor of our Great Zhou Dynasty."

Before Empress Wang finished speaking,

numerous ministers echoed in agreement.

Sir Qiu slightly furrowed his brow and then spoke again, "Empress Mother, Wu Ling's qualifications might have been deemed insufficient, but this time, representing His Majesty on the campaign, she went to the frontline and repelled Great Yuan; how can we not say she has performed a great service?"

Empress Wang glanced at Sir Qiu and then asked:

"Who deserves the merit, is there any doubt between you and me?"

Upon hearing this, Sir Qiu frowned as if in pain, his brow deeply creased, at a loss for words.

Because Sir Qiu knew.

This time Great Yuan has retreated.

Although Wu Ling had considerable wit herself, who would expect the Town-Nation Duke's Heir to suddenly step in?

Had the Town-Nation Duke's Heir not emerged, allowing Wu Ling to personally lead Great Zhou's armies in a fight to the death against Great Yuan, it might have greatly enhanced Wu Ling's prestige.

In that case, the only downside would have been that many people in Great Zhou would have died, and they might have lost.

But the path to the throne for Wu Ling, becoming the emperor of Great Zhou, was almost certain.

Now with the current situation,

it's hard to say whether it is good or bad.

Sir Qiu himself was not sure.

As he pondered in his heart, he stopped speaking further.

He stood down and maintained silence.

After Sir Qiu ceased to speak, the air briefly returned to a quiet state.

However, thanks to Sir Qiu's interruption, those ministers and senior officials who previously had reservations about Empress Wang's semi-coercive ways of buying off Court officials to support Prince Wu Ming's ascension were no longer able to sit still.

They spoke up one after another,

saying that choosing a sovereign should be based first on propriety, second on virtue, and third on conduct.

To rashly establish Wu Ming as sovereign, especially when there was a Crown Prince, was obviously improper.

Seeing this, Empress Wang did not have an extreme reaction as she had anticipated this.

To establish Wu Ming as emperor was not such an easy affair.

Empress Wang sighed inwardly, realizing that even if she hastily clarified the opinions of the other consort ladies and princes, wanting to ignore Wu Ling and make Wu Ming emperor was not something that could be achieved in one fell swoop.

At this moment, Empress Wang also lost the desire to continue with the council, and shifting the topic, she gave a few instructions on some trivial matters before waving for everyone to leave.

The numerous officials could tell that Empress Wang was not in a particularly good mood at this time.

Not daring to speak further, after bowing in leave-taking, they slowly exited the Council Hall.

The various Noble Consorts by Empress Wang's side also rose to their feet.

"This time sister has given a lot, but the objective has not been met; who knew Wu Ling would suddenly encounter such an accident."

"However, considering that child Wu Ling is not able to turn the tide, the throne will ultimately still fall into the hands of Wu Ming."

"When Wu Ming eventually becomes emperor, I hope sister will remember the promises made to us," they said, one after the other.

Several Noble Consorts conversed with Empress Wang without waiting for her response,

and then they successively left the hall.

Mr. Cheng, standing on the side, upon seeing this, didn't need to think to know that Empress Wang must have used some means or interest exchange to secure the support of the other consort ladies and their backing powers for Wu Ming's ascension.

If it were not for Great Yuan's retreat,

Wu Ling's reputation would be quite favorable.

Perhaps Empress Wang's goal would have been achieved.

Even though there was opposition in the Court, Empress Wang would still press on with Wu Ming, lifting him, the Prince Wu Ming, to the throne.

Mr. Cheng's eyes lowered as he understood it all; just as he was about to turn and leave, he suddenly heard a voice behind him call out,

Stopping him.

It was Empress Wang's voice.

"Mr. Cheng, please wait," she said.

Upon hearing the call from Empress Wang, Mr. Cheng paused in his steps, then turned to look at Empress Wang, with a timely look of puzzlement on his face.

"Empress Mother, what is it?" he asked.

Empress Wang stood up from her seat and walked slowly up to Mr. Cheng.

As Empress Wang approached Mr. Cheng, she also brought along a pleasant fragrance.

That pleasant aroma filled Mr. Cheng's nostrils—pleasant but not overpowering.

Mr. Cheng subtly stepped back without a trace, his face showing no change in emotion, as he respectfully bowed to Empress Wang.

Chapter 548 - Hey, What a Coincidence, Right!? _3

Cheng Zihai was just such a man.

Well-mannered, content with his lot, and treating the laws of Great Zhou as his own commandments.

It was precisely because of Cheng Zihai's old-fashioned nature and meticulousness in everything he did that he had been appointed by Emperor Zhou as the Director of the Bureau of the Lamp.

Upon seeing Cheng Zihai's guarded demeanor, Empress Wang's beautiful face betrayed a hint of surprise.

She hadn't expected that, before she'd even had a chance to speak to Cheng Zihai, he would already exhibit such a wary attitude.

Empress Wang chuckled lightly, halted her steps, and did not approach Cheng Zihai further, maintaining a distance of about ten feet.

"Mr. Cheng, I wish to ask you a few questions,"

"Would it be convenient for Mr. Cheng to answer?"

Upon hearing the words of Empress Wang, Cheng Zihai hesitated for a moment.

After pondering for a while, he slowly nodded.

Empress Wang's lips slightly parted in a faint smile, then she sidestepped, gesturing an invitation to Cheng Zihai.

"Please, Mr. Cheng, come to my palace for a cup of refreshing tea."

Having said this, Empress Wang did not give Cheng Zihai the opportunity to react, perhaps even to refuse, but instead headed straight for the side palace.

Cheng Zhihai watched Empress Wang's graceful figure and couldn't quite understand what Empress Wang intended to do.

Suddenly she said she wanted to ask him some questions.

But.

At this point, Cheng Zhihai couldn't quite figure out exactly what kind of question Empress Wang would ask him.

Just as Cheng Zhihai decided to leave,

Empress Wang, who had just reached the entrance of the side palace, spoke softly once more.
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"What's the matter?"

"Would Mr. Cheng, with his Sky-Man realm strength that only deigns to match with Sky-Men, be afraid of me, a woman of no significant powers?"

After pointing this out, Empress Wang's silhouette gradually slid into the side palace.

Hearing these words from Empress Wang, Cheng Zihai finally ceased his hesitation, slowly stepped forward, and followed Empress Wang's footsteps towards the back of the Imperial Palace.

The residence of Empress Wang was called Guanghua Palace.

As the Empress's palace, the opulence of Guanghua Palace needs no further mention, not to say its breathtaking scenery and perfectly appointed gardens.

Inside and outside the palace complex, numerous palace maids and eunuchs bustled about, busying themselves in service to Empress Wang, the empress consort.

Cheng Zihai followed Empress Wang to a pavilion in Guanghua Palace and sat down. As soon as he was seated, a palace maid promptly brought tea to the table and skillfully began to prepare it.

The air around them was tinged with the crisp scent of brewing tea.

Cheng Zihai wasn't much in the mood for tea; his gaze settled on Empress Wang as he pondered the real purpose for which she had called him there.

Empress Wang herself didn't mind the steady gaze of Cheng Zihai and casually picked up the tea that the palace maid had prepared, sipped it, and smilingly said, "Mrs. Xue's tea is quite good today."

"Mr. Cheng, you should try some too."

Invited by Empress Wang, Cheng Zihai, as a courtier, naturally could not refuse, so he picked up a tea cup and took a sip.

They sat in silence for a while longer.

Empress Wang could afford to be patient.

But Cheng Zihai was growing impatient.

Just sitting here drinking tea with Empress Wang didn't seem like much of an issue.

Cheng Zihai set down the tea cup, his gaze intently fixed on Empress Wang, and asked, "May I ask the Empress, why have you summoned this subject here?"

"If the Empress has any questions, just ask."

"Well, it's not a big matter," Empress Wang said, pausing slightly in her hand movement to lift the tea cup, her expression unchanged, not even looking at Cheng Zihai but focusing on the clear water rippling in her cup.

"I mainly want to inquire about the Princely Heir's activities today. It is said that the Princely Heir has been promoted to Sky-Man status; is this true or false?"

"Additionally, this Palace also wishes to know the identity of that person beside the Princely Heir. This Palace only knows that he is a Sky-Man, but does not know his name or background."

When Cheng Zihai heard Empress Wang put forth these questions, he instantly understood that on the surface, Empress Wang was concerned about Cheng Guang's cultivation and the identity of the Sky-Man beside him.

In reality, she was assessing the strength of Duke Zhen's Mansion.

Previously, when Empress Wang had not yet taken over the reins of power on behalf of Emperor Zhou, she had mostly shown a kindly and gentle face towards Duke Zhen's Mansion and Cheng Guang.

She hadn't been much affected by Emperor Zhou.

But.

After Empress Wang took over the power in place of Emperor Zhou, she felt, or rather saw, that she herself, or indeed the whole of Great Zhou, was too constrained by Duke Zhen's Mansion.

The current struggle for the throne, the struggle for imperial power.

The reason it was still fiercely contested was, although largely because Emperor Zhou had suddenly disappeared without leaving any word,

Another more important reason was that Duke Zhen's Mansion had not yet taken a stance.

If Duke Zhen's Mansion were to take a stance, then there would basically be no need for Empress Wang and others to contest it themselves.

The stance of Duke Zhen's Mansion would largely determine who would inherit the throne.

At this moment, Empress Wang's heart was conflicted about touching upon Duke Zhen's Mansion, yet feared that Duke Zhen's Mansion would suddenly publicly voice support for one of the princes.

Thus, whichever prince Duke Zhen's Mansion supported, the newly enthroned prince would necessarily adopt an unprecedented stance towards Duke Zhen's Mansion.

Originally, Empress Wang had no intention of contacting Duke Zhen's Mansion, and it wasn't only her who thought this way; other court officials and Noble Consorts felt the same.

Once they made contact with Duke Zhen's Mansion, even if their own prince became Emperor, their future could be constrained by Duke Zhen's Mansion.

Chapter 549: Hey, What a Coincidence, Right!? _4

So for the time being, no one has broached the topic.

At this moment,

Empress Wang could not restrain herself any longer. She planned to find Cheng Zihai and inquire about the Princely Heir's condition.

If the Princely Heir had indeed ascended to become a Sky-Man,

Then even if she did not beseech Duke Zhen's Mansion for support in Wu Ming's ascension to the throne, Duke Zhen's Mansion would still continue to overshadow the Great Zhou Imperial Family.

Upon hearing Empress Wang's question, Cheng Zihai was momentarily stunned, then he shook his head lightly.

"I do not know that."

"As for Guanger's strength, I also do not know to what realm he belongs, whether he was just employing some means to be able to battle against that Great Yuan Sky-Man and protect the entirety of Hundred Mile City with his own power."

“All these are uncertain.”

Cheng Zihai spoke frankly.

He truly did not know the situation regarding Cheng Guang.

Hearing Cheng Zihai utter these words, Empress Wang’s face showed a trace of confusion, but she did not dwell on it, and instead began to ponder with furrowed brows.

A moment later,

Empress Wang added, “Mr. Cheng, you should be aware of my intentions. Duke Zhen’s Mansion holds a unique position in Great Zhou. With the current emperor’s whereabouts and condition unknown, the matter of the new sovereign commands the attention of countless individuals within the court.”

“At present in the court, there is considerable disunity regarding the selection of the new sovereign. I have already persuaded several Noble Consorts within the palace who have promised not to hinder me, and likewise, I will not hinder them.”

“At this time, if Duke Zhen’s Mansion is willing to openly declare its support for Wu Ming to become the emperor of Great Zhou,”

“Then this matter can essentially be settled.”

As she spoke, Empress Wang’s tone became gentler, and lowering her head slowly, she said, “So I ask you, Mr. Cheng, to please consider this matter.”

Cheng Zihai, upon hearing Empress Wang say this, showed a look of surprise and appraised her, and then shook his head again.

“Empress, the royal family’s affairs are not something our Duke Zhen’s Mansion should interfere with; even the succession to the throne must be decided by you and the court officials together.”

“Duke Zhen’s Mansion shall not partake in this.”

Cheng Zihai knew well that the power of Duke Zhen’s Mansion had already reached its peak.

If Duke Zhen’s Mansion were to publicly take a stance now, insisting on Wu Ming’s ascension to the throne, then in the eyes of many, Duke Zhen’s Mansion might as well be the unrecognized emperor of Great Zhou.

In such a case,

It would inevitably become the target of public scrutiny and criticism.

If Duke Zhen's Mansion could continue to remain powerful, it would be fine, but if there came a day when it could no longer retain such power, and the Great Zhou Imperial Family were to rise again,

Then Duke Zhen's Mansion could very likely end up in a state of irreparable ruin.

At the same time,

Cheng Zihai also knew there were not many opportunities for Duke Zhen's Mansion to rebel.

Without any royal lineage, if Duke Zhen's Mansion were to rebel against Great Zhou and even establish its own monarchy, it would likely become the target of all World Royal Families.

All the royal families in the world would not allow someone without royal blood to establish and control a monarchy.

The world would not permit this either.

Since ancient times, countless powerful Martial Artists, endowed with exceptional Martial Cultivation, have tried to establish monarchies without royal blood.

But,

Such realms rarely lasted even a century.

Most of them perished within decades due to various coincidental occurrences.

This may initially be seen as a coincidence, but as such events become more frequent,

It is hard to still deem it coincidental.

Perhaps it is inherently against the natural laws of the world for one without royal blood to establish a kingdom and become a monarch.

Cheng Zihai did not know much about this, nor was he clear about the reasons behind it.

For now, Cheng Zihai only knew that Cheng Guang did possess royal lineage.

If there was an opportunity in the future, it might be feasible for Cheng Guang to attempt establishing a kingdom.

Thinking this, a slight smile formed on the corners of Cheng Zihai's mouth.

Empress Wang, who had been calmly sipping her tea with poised red lips, suddenly set down her teacup upon hearing Cheng Zihai's words and stared directly at him with her raised eyes.

"So, Mr. Cheng, are you unwilling to voice support for me?"

"Is it that you do not wish to support me, or that you will not support anyone at all?"

Cheng Zihai shook his head, "If you had asked me this before, I would have said that I support no one."

"But now, with Great Zhou in such peril, Duke Zhen's Mansion cannot extract itself from the situation and is also entangled in these worldly whirlwinds."

"If there is a suitable candidate in the future, it may be possible to declare support, or it may not."

Cheng Zihai's words were ambiguous.

Empress Wang, looking at Cheng Zihai, could not help but show a trace of irritation in her beautiful eyes.

She had not expected

That even after she, the reigning Empress, had gone to such lengths to plead with Cheng Zihai, he could still speak to her with such composure,

And even disregard her request entirely.

The wind stirred the teacup, rippling the curling mist around it. The vapor within the mist rose from around the cup, dispersing into the surroundings.

Though Cheng Zihai was stern and meticulous, known for his impartiality, he was not a fool. Seeing the expressions on Empress Wang's face, he could naturally guess what she was thinking.

After some thought, he turned his head and said earnestly, "In the past, although Duke Zhen's Mansion held a high position, the higher the status, the more one felt like treading on thin ice."

Chapter 550: Hey, What a Coincidence, Right!? _5

"Naturally, I wouldn't speak without thinking,"

"Right now, Emperor Zhou of Great Zhou has disappeared, and the future of the Great Zhou Dynasty is uncertain. At this time, Duke Zhen's Mansion doesn't make promises recklessly, not because we're treading on thin ice, but because I can't see through the future."

“I dare not take risks.”

“After Guanger comes back, I’ll ask him for his opinion.”

“Ultimately, the future master of Duke Zhen’s Mansion will be Guanger, and I’m just here to offer him advice.”

At this point,

Cheng Zihai smiled, bowed, and said, “I am just a father seeking to secure a sliver of well-being for his children and grandchildren. I won’t chat with the Empress any longer. Your servant will take his leave.”

Having said this,

Cheng Zihai turned and left.

His departure was without a hint of hesitation, as he decisively exited Guanghua Palace.

Empress Wang watched Cheng Zihai’s retreating back, silent.

She did not speak until Cheng Zhihai's figure vanished from her sight.

Only then did Empress Wang, feeling quite a headache, rub her brows. Looking at the tea on the table in front of her, she no longer felt inclined to drink it.

She casually waved her hand,

Signaling Mrs. Xue to clear away the teacups on the table.

Then, her gaze drifted toward the distant horizon.

Sorrow welled up in her beautiful eyes.

Cheng Zhihai had said,

He was just a father seeking to secure a sliver of well-being for his children and grandchildren.

And what about her?

Wasn't she also a mother seeking to secure a sliver of well-being for her children and grandchildren?

If the Prince did not ascend to the throne,

Wu Ming's fate wouldn't be too pleasant.

Neither would hers, as the Empress.

After all, everyone is looking out for themselves; no one can blame another.

.....

Summer winds pass and autumn's chill congeals, greenery yields as dew turns to frost!

Cheng Guang, aboard the Flying Boat, was on his return journey.

The sky gradually darkened, and night stealthily fell.

In the sky, the stars began to twinkle like countless brilliant diamonds set against the deep expanse of the night.

Midnight was approaching.

Cheng Guang stopped cultivating and gazed out of the round window at the vault of heaven.

Above the clouds on the Flying Boat, the view of the heavens was unlike any scene when looking up from the ground.

Cheng Guang stared at the myriad stars suspended in the profound canopy of the sky.

Suddenly, it occurred to him,

Could this world, like his previous life, consist of planets too? Beyond these planets, perhaps there are countless more, forming a universe.

Cheng Guang only pondered for a moment before he felt a shiver run down his spine.

It seemed utterly absurd.

If this world, like the starry sky of his previous life, was just one planet among many, that would truly be terrifying.

Cheng Guang didn't dwell on it further and simply enjoyed the beautiful scenery of the sky above.

After a while,

Cheng Guang distinctly heard a clear, emotionless voice by his ear.

"On the fourth year of Zhensheng, the eighth day of the eleventh month, 128 days after becoming a Heavenly Human, you successfully crushed Emperor Wu Mengde of Great Yuan beneath your feet, avenging the past."

"After having a deep conversation with Wu Mengde, to your surprise, you discovered that he possessed abilities similar to those Zhou Qingxu had back then."

"The current Zhou Qingxu is even more powerful and mysterious than he was when he organized Great Yuan's invasion into Great Zhou. It seems he is now part of a secret organization, one of the Twelve Sect Leaders."

"This organization, shrouded in more mystery than ordinary Sects, is inaccessible even to Emperor Wu Mengde of Great Yuan—he knows only that those who join it are secretly scheming for a campaign called 'Fight for Heaven'."

"You do not know what this organization that Zhou Qingxu has joined is, nor do you understand what the 'Fight for Heaven' campaign entails."

“However, you suddenly recall that when the world plunged into great disorder, as the empires began to restructure, the four great dynasties were shattered, and two new dynasties were erected upon their ruins.”

“One was named Heavenly Court, and the other, Great Tang.”

“Heavenly Court rose above all, sweeping across the world upon its emergence. Its mighty ones, origins unknown, seemed to materialize out of thin air, leaving all the dynasties in the Four Directions Mortal World powerless to fight back.”

“The power of Great Tang, freshly formed, didn’t last long before being extinguished by Heavenly Court.”

“That battle left a profound impression on you. Although you did not participate at the time, as the Town-Nation Duke’s Heir you had access to information beyond the reach of commoners.”

“The mighty ones of Heavenly Court were stronger than the ordinary Sky-Men, their every move akin to Immortals descending, Great Tang’s forces, though not insignificant with a gathering of powerful elders—many of whom had not been seen for years—still stood no chance against Heavenly Court.”

“Thinking this, it suddenly occurs to you that Zhou Qingxu, having disappeared after aiding Great Yuan in bringing down Great Zhou, reemerged shortly after the establishment of Great Tang.”

“Could it be that the Great Tang Zhou Qingxu participated in was the same one that was freshly established and soon crushed by Heavenly Court?”

“The thought alone makes your breath hitch, for you can hardly imagine a being like Zhou Qingxu, who alone could trample the borders of Great Zhou, bring down the empire, and play with two great dynasties like pawns.”