

Nine Star 3961

Chapter 3961: The Nineteenth Prince Zhu Yifeng

Within the primal chaos space, Long Chen was studying star diagrams. The dragon expert had said that due to his path deviating from the original Nine Star Hegemon Body Art, his current Seven Star Battle Armor was a far cry from the true Seven Star Battle Armor.

However, Long Chen could still change the Seven Star Battle Armor, adjusting its circulation path and arrangement into a stronger form.

But while saying it was easy, actually doing it was a different matter. Right now, the seven stars and the star diagram complimented each other, thus, moving a single star would cause the entire thing to change, including the entire starry sea. If he were to try using it in a bad form, there would be a power backflow and he would simply instantly explode. Thus, Long Chen was still in the theory phase.

With the help of the Seven Treasure Colored Glass Tree, Long Chen had come up with dozens of possibilities. However, he knew that this wasn't enough. He had to keep going until he exhausted all possibilities. Then he would compare them, using all these different possibilities to dredge out and corroborate the path that was truly his.

It was at this time that certain runes in the training room lit up to indicate that someone outside wished to see him. Originally, Long Chen was planning on ignoring this person. However, the training room said that the person who wished to see him was Zhu Yifeng.

The Zhu surname was the surname of the Vermilion Bird Empire's royalty. Thinking of this, Long Chen was worried about the possibility that Yu Qingxuan had sent someone to him, so he left the primal chaos space to check it out.

"Brother Long, do you still remember this junior brother?" That person smiled when he saw Long Chen come out.

To his surprise, the person who came to find him was the youth who had shared a seat with him in front of the stage that day. His name was Zhu Yifeng.

"So it's brother Zhu. May I ask what you need from me?" asked Long Chen, getting right to the point.

"Ah, I feel great reverence for brother Long. That day, when you slapped Eunuch Wei, I almost cheered. That damn eunuch, you don't even know how hateful he is! My imperial father favors him, so he actually doesn't even care about a prince like myself! I've long since wanted to slap him, but never had a chance to. Of course, even if I had the chance, I wouldn't dare to do so. I wouldn't be able to beat him," chortled Zhu Yifeng.

Long Chen laughed. This Zhu Yifeng was quite interesting. At least, he was much better than those icy princes and princesses that Long Chen had encountered before.

"I heard that you came here to propose to Princess Qingxuan. That's amazing!" Zhu Yifeng gave Long Chen a thumbs-up. "Princess Qingxuan is my imperial father's most cherished daughter. Don't think that he wouldn't be strict and cold toward us just because we are his children. If we make mistakes, we are

always punished and even more heavily than others. Actually, I was originally the twentieth prince, but the nineteenth prince was killed by my imperial father, so I'm now the nineteenth."

"He killed your older brother? Why?" Long Chen jumped in shock. How could someone kill their own son?

"My brother had some dealings with the Violet Thunderclap Empire. I'm not sure about the details, but my imperial father was so furious that he directly cut off his head. No one was able to stop him. Ah, don't tell anyone that I told you this! If my imperial father hears of it, even if he doesn't kill me, I'll definitely lose a layer of skin!" Zhu Yifeng suddenly realized that he had exposed a major secret, a taboo subject in the royal family. Hence, he instantly turned pale and looked at Long Chen beggingly.

"Don't worry, I'm not a blabbermouth. Furthermore, your father is my future father-in-law. We're a family, so why would I harm you?" Long Chen patted Zhu Yifeng's shoulder. This child spoke directly from the heart, so Long Chen's wariness toward him instantly dropped a great deal. Getting along with such people was much easier.

Zhu Yifeng sighed with relief after hearing Long Chen's guarantee. All of a sudden, he excitedly asked, "That's right, brother Long, what were the results of your proposal? I only heard that you've started the trials. Are things progressing smoothly?"

"His Majesty treats me decently. He agreed that it would be alright as long as I passed the trials. The two empresses are also nice and even wanted to give me a golden status plate at the time, but I refused. I, Long Chen, am a man who raises the heavens from the earth. How could I rely on other people's help for such a thing?" Long Chen's face didn't even redden in the slightest as he spouted these lies.

Back then, he and the emperor had come so close to exchanging curses right at each other's faces. But somehow, Long Chen managed to say that their relationship was decent.

"Wow, brother Long, you're amazing! No, big brother, my real brother! You're going to be my brother-in-law soon. In the future, make sure to look after me!" Zhu Yifeng's nature was very simple. He believed whatever Long Chen said without the slightest suspicion. He was even grabbing Long Chen's hand like he had found his lucky star.

"Cough..." Seeing Zhu Yifeng believe him to this extent, Long Chen actually felt a bit bad and hastily said, "Ah, although becoming the imperial son-in-law is nothing difficult, I'll need to take it step by step. The goal is still a bit far."

"Just based on the fact that you dared to slap Eunuch Wei's head into that of a pig and still leave the palace safe and sound is enough to show me that big brother is definitely a major figure! Ah, don't misunderstand, it's not that I'm trying to drag you to my side. I'm different from the other princes and princesses. I have no desire to fight for the position of emperor. Well, the main thing is that I simply have no chance. Thus, I just want some support. I don't care who becomes the next emperor. As long as they ignore me, it's fine. I just want to live a simple life," said Zhu Yifeng.

"If you don't even want to become the emperor, why would others make things hard on you? Why would you need a backer?" asked Long Chen.

Zhu Yifeng had a crying expression as he said, “Big brother, you don’t understand. The imperial family doesn’t care about family love. As an imperial disciple, you have to be outstanding. You have to be learned and powerful. Since it’s only just us here, I’ll tell you the truth. If my imperial father were to hear me say something so unambitious, he would definitely cast me into the fire prison. Let alone my imperial father, even my mother would give me a beating. The princes and princesses are all competing against each other, both openly and in secret. As for me, I’m dumber than them, and I can’t beat them in martial power either. So, amongst my brothers and sisters, I only dare to fight with words, acting like I’m not afraid of them. In truth, I’m terrified inside, but I can’t show it.”

“Your talent is already so good, but you can’t beat a single prince or princess?” Long Chen eyed Zhu Yifeng. Although he wasn’t a Double Supreme, his flame energy was extremely pure. According to reason, he shouldn’t be weak.

“I can’t. I can’t beat a single one.” Zhu Yifeng almost wept. He suddenly thought of why he had come here in the first place and said, “Big brother, I came because I thought of something that can let you rise in martial artist rank very quickly. You won’t need to waste so much time.”

“Oh? Let me hear it.”

“During the next competition, I’ll make an agreement with the arena. Once you win, you will be directly promoted to my training partner. After all, every prince and princess has the authority to pick a training partner from the martial stage once a year. I still haven’t done so this year, and this can help you out a little bit. Hopefully, when you soar, you can look after me a bit.”

Long Chen directly agreed to such a good thing. This way, he could borrow Zhu Yifeng’s status and directly be promoted to higher-level fights. Hearing this, Zhu Yifeng was delighted and immediately said that he didn’t want to delay Long Chen’s cultivation. He then bid Long Chen farewell.

Three days later, it was Long Chen’s turn on the martial stage again, and Zhu Yifeng was already waiting for him. After the advocate took out a document and gave it to Long Chen, Long Chen directly signed his name there.

Just like before, as soon as Long Chen stepped onto the stage, the opponent directly cursed, admitted defeat, and left.

“Hahaha, big brother, now you’re my training partner! We’re comrades now!” Zhu Yifeng danced in excitement.

“You’re getting happy too early.”

Just then, an icy voice rang out, and Princess Yu Qianxue appeared with a dozen bodyguards around her. When Long Chen saw her pleased smile, he instantly had a bad feeling.

Chapter 3962: Selling Oneself

“What are you doing here?!” Zhu Yifeng’s expression instantly changed when he saw Yu Qianxue.

“Long Chen is not your training partner. He is mine,” said Yu Qianxue coldly.

"You want to fight over my big brother? Hmph, it's useless. I've already signed the contract. You're too late," snorted Zhu Yifeng. He then waved the document in front of her face.

"Why don't you look at that document again? Whose name is on there?" asked Yu Qianxue.

Zhu Yifeng was startled and hastily looked down at the contract. Long Chen did the same. Shockingly, it was Yu Qianxue's name there, not Zhu Yifeng's.

"What did you do?" Long Chen was dumbfounded as he looked at Zhu Yifeng. How could he possibly make a mistake?

"I..." Zhu Yifeng was too shocked to answer. He refused to believe that this was the document, but Yu Qianxue's name was clearly stated there.

"Long Chen, you are now my training partner. I'll probably accompany you." Yu Qianxue walked over to Long Chen and looked into his eyes profoundly.

Long Chen then looked at the advocate. The moment he did, the advocate turned his face away. That one movement caused Long Chen to instantly understand.

It was highly likely that this advocate had been bribed by Yu Qianxue to replace Zhu Yifeng's original document. Moreover, since Zhu Yifeng was present during that time, Long Chen had assumed that everything was already taken care of, leading him to sign the document without bothering to read it.

Long Chen was speechless. He hadn't expected that after being smart for a lifetime, he would end up selling himself in a moment of carelessness. Furthermore, each contract lasted three years.

Long Chen then grabbed the document and looked at it more closely. It was a very clear contract between two people. Yu Qianxue's name was written right where it should be, and she hadn't hidden her name at all. Thus, Long Chen could only blame himself for not paying attention.

"Of course, you can tear up the contract, but that would mean that your word isn't worth anything. I trust that you won't do something like that, am I right?" Yu Qianxue smiled at Long Chen.

Long Chen looked back at her and also smiled. "I, Long Chen, naturally disdain doing such a thing. Don't worry."

After saying that, Long Chen handed the document to Yu Qianxue. Yu Qianxue then received it and put it away. She looked at Long Chen without saying anything.

"Big brother, I'm sorry!" Zhu Yifeng had been schemed against and he was ashamed. He had the urge to slap himself.

"It's alright. It was my fault as well. Since that's the case, there's no need to grumble," said Long Chen indifferently. He truly couldn't blame Zhu Yifeng for this.

Out of nowhere, a streak of light shot toward Long Chen. Reacting swiftly, Long Chen extended his hand and managed to catch it mid-air. To his surprise, it turned out to be a status plate.

"Starting today, you are one of my people, so my princess mansion is your home. Come report to me within three days."

After saying that, Yu Qianxue left with her bodyguards. She acted cleanly and efficiently, striking like lightning and moving like the wind.

Long Chen knew that Yu Qianxue did not actually want him as a training partner. What she wanted was to gradually draw him under her command.

This woman knew that Long Chen had come for Qingxuan. So, for her to dare to do such a thing, Long Chen didn't know what she was thinking. Was she trying to humiliate Yu Qingxuan?

"Big brother..." Zhu Yifeng looked at Long Chen with a clear shame on his face.

Long Chen patted his shoulder comfortingly. "It's a minor matter. Even with this contract, it doesn't mean that I've sold my body to her. She's nothing to be afraid of."

"Long Chen!"

Suddenly, a friendly shout rang out. Long Chen then saw Yu Qingxuan walking over with a sweet smile.

"Qingxuan, you've also come." Long Chen was delighted to see her.

"Yifeng greets big sister Qingxuan." Zhu Yifeng hastily bowed to her.

"Yifeng, why are you here?" Yu Qingxuan was surprised to see him.

"Ah, it's a long story. I'll take my leave first." Zhu Yifeng was at least not that dense, so he found an excuse to leave the two of them alone.

"Qingxuan? How are you here? And you're alone!" Long Chen was exceptionally happy that she had come without those dislikable eunuchs.

"Hehe, the palace has many rules and I have many lessons. But I also have some free time. Today, I can do whatever I want to do," said Yu Qingxuan with a smile. She was as happy as a child at this moment.

"Haha, good! This is the Vermilion Bird City! Imperial princess, show me the local culture of the Vermilion Bird Empire!"

"Yes, I know the most famous restaurants in the empire and the best views." Yu Qingxuan laughed and pulled Long Chen over to a transportation formation.

Yu Qingxuan was now dressed like a regular commoner, without the ornaments to show off her status. That meant that she would no longer have any imperial privilege and that the imperial rules would not bind her.

She then acted as a tour guide, introducing Long Chen to the culture inside the city. There were ancient cultural relics and all kinds of delicacies to enjoy. It went without saying that the Vermilion Bird Empire did possess an ancient history. Here, there were many places with historical stories and special origins. Long Chen was sighing endlessly over all of it.

"Long Chen, you're a good haggler, right? I want to buy a hairpin. Can you help me get one?" When they passed by an ornament store, Yu Qingxuan stealthily pointed at the small hairpin collection inside.

Long Chen knew that Yu Qingxuan wasn't worried about money. Even if the store demanded an outrageous price, she could still buy it. She simply felt that it would be fun to see Long Chen bargain for stuff, just like when they were in the Violet Flame Heaven Capital.

"Boss, how much for one of these hair ornaments?" asked Long Chen directly.

"Wow, young master's vision is amazing! This is my priceless treasure-"

"Alright, alright, why don't you just tell me your price?"

"I see that you're a good man. Are you buying it for your wife? I won't play any games with you then. I'll offer it to you at the lowest price, three thousand, not one copper less," said the shopkeeper solemnly.

"Eighty."

"What? Are you joking? That is impossible!" The old man's expression grew a bit unsightly.

Long Chen didn't reply. He simply grabbed Yu Qingxuan's hand and walked away.

The shopkeeper hastily cried out, "Fine, fine, count it as me being afraid of you! Take it!"

Yu Qingxuan almost laughed. This haggling technique was truly shocking, but the shopkeeper actually accepted this price.

"Here. Give me my change." Yu Qingxuan picked out one of the hairpins from the selection, and Long Chen tossed out a single hundred silver coin.

The shopkeeper took it and suddenly said, "This is too much money. I don't have enough change for you. Young man, why don't you take another hairpin before going?"

Pfft!

Long Chen almost coughed up blood.

Chapter 3963: Losing Money, Winning a Beauty's Laughter

After spending a lifetime haggling, he had finally miscalculated. Just what was going on today? Was his horoscope bad for today? Not only did he sell himself to someone else, but his haggling skill had also regressed.

"Alright, shopkeeper, count yourself vicious."

Long Chen directly admitted defeat. Having managed to haggle three thousand down to eighty, he had thought that this was the limit, and anything further would cause the shopkeeper to turn hostile. Unexpectedly, he had severely underestimated this fellow.

Two hairpins for one hundred silver? Most likely, the shopkeeper still made a large profit, probably over seventy silver from this transaction.

"He did that on purpose. Definitely on purpose." Long Chen walked out of the shop with his teeth clenched furiously. Meanwhile, Yu Qingxuan was holding his arm, laughing.

Most likely, it was Long Chen's pleased expression after haggling that made the shopkeeper irritated, so he gave Long Chen a little lesson, letting him take another hairpin to tell him that he was still too young.

However, seeing Yu Qingxuan laughing delightedly, Long Chen felt that this loss was worth it. If the hair ornaments made her smile, then this money was well-spent.

"Junior brother, I see that you are blessed with fortune and vision. Why don't you come and take a look at my humble shop? These are historical objects from the ancient era. Why not gain some experience here?" An elder warmly called out to them from an antique shop.

Long Chen took a look inside and then turned to the elder irritably. "The oldest thing in this shop is you."

Hearing this answer, Yu Qingxuan burst into laughter. She could also tell that the antiques here were mostly fakes. But Long Chen's phrasing was too funny. She always felt particularly happy with Long Chen.

"There are people on Scholar Road looking for a husband! Let's go take a look!" Suddenly, they heard an exclamation on the street, and countless people were running in one direction.

"Let's go take a look too!" Yu Qingxuan started running while dragging Long Chen along.

"You foolish girl, what are we looking for? Are you trying to get a wife for me?" Long Chen bitterly smiled.

"We're just taking a look! It's not that important." Yu Qingxuan didn't get angry and just giggled as she dragged him along.

They quickly joined a large crowd around a stage. Standing prominently on the stage were two exquisite-looking maidens in their early twenties.

"Hehe, this is a groom search, but it's also a scholar competition. It's like a martial arts competition to look for a wife. Look, their origins shouldn't be ordinary. Do you see that couplet in their hands?" Yu Qingxuan pointed.

Only then did Long Chen notice the couplet held between their hands. There was a banner saying, "One Da Jiao, two Xiao Jiao, three golden lotus feet, four-inch waist, five six seven makeups, eight nine dresses, ten out of ten looks."

These two were sisters, one named Da Jiao and the other named Xiao Jiao. They were appraising the crowd, and when they saw a few Hanlin scholars in the crowd, their eyes immediately lit up.

"This couplet was written by our father, and the two of us are willing to serve any nobleman who can come up with a matching couplet," said one of them. It was undeniable that both of them possessed not only breathtaking beauty but also voices that resonated like enchanting melodies.

The Hanlin scholars were interested and walked over to the stage. They then examined the couplet, trying to think of a matching verse.

"Difficult, very difficult. For the first half to count up one two three four five six seven eight nine ten, the lower half must be the opposite. That just makes it even more difficult," said one Hanlin scholar, sighing.

In truth, it wasn't impossible to match the couplet, but a good verse required delicate work. It needed to rhyme, as well as to match the syllables and timing.

As Hanlin scholars, they refused to simply give a second-rate answer. If anyone were to pick out their flaws, that would cause them to lose face. Hence, it would be better to simply say that they could not come up with anything that could match it.

"Is this hard? All these people can't do it?" Long Chen couldn't help looking at Yu Qingxuan in surprise.

These words were only for Yu Qingxuan, but before she could answer, someone around them sneered, "Big words. Not even great Hanlin scholars can come up with anything, so how could it not be difficult? If it's not difficult, why don't you try it?"

This person was also a scholar, and seeing Long Chen carrying a giant saber on his back, he knew that Long Chen was a martial cultivator. After hearing Long Chen question their ability so arrogantly, this person naturally retorted.

He intentionally spoke loudly so that the surrounding people heard. As a result, everyone in the surroundings looked at Long Chen.

The reason their gazes were focused on Long Chen was because Yu Qingxuan had used a magical art so that only Long Chen could see her face clearly. Others would only see an ordinary woman when they looked at her.

"It's you? You were the one who was rude to the Philosopher and then argued on the zither fairies' stage!" Someone quickly recognized him.

As a large number of the people here were scholars, they all glared at him hostilely.

"Hehe, Long Chen, give a matching verse for this couplet. Put them in their place," said Yu Qingxuan.

With her saying this, Long Chen looked at the surroundings. There were seven Hanlin scholars around them, six glaring at him and one pondering, seemingly still wondering about how to match this couplet.

This was a main street. As it was nighttime, the lanterns on the street had been lit, and the moon was hanging in the sky. Somehow, Long Chen and Yu Qingxuan had been out for a long time, not realizing that the day was coming soon.

Eyeing his surroundings, Long Chen indifferently said, "The tenth day of the ninth month, eight-tenths of the full moon shine. Seven Hanlin scholars, six arrogant. Fifth hour, fourth strike, third light, two Jiaos follow one person away."

Hearing this, the people in the crowd stood there like wooden chickens. This complete couplet was put together perfectly, and there were almost no flaws.

By the time they reacted, Long Chen had already left with Yu Qingxuan, leaving behind the dumbstruck crowd.

"Hehe, if you were to give up martial cultivation and focus on literature, in ten years, no, seven years, you will be comparable to a Philosopher," said Yu Qingxuan proudly.

“That’s right, Qingxuan, what exactly is this Philosopher rank?” asked Long Chen.

“Ah, the Philosopher is a rank for the highest level of learning in the Vermilion Bird Empire. We only have three. Two of them stay in the Philosopher Institute and rarely come out, and only Philosopher Sun likes to go around. He teaches and accepts disciples, even holding classes for us in the palace. To tell the truth, I’m not very fond of him. He’s rather decrepit. But in theory, his position is equivalent to that of the emperor, so we still have to greet him as disciples when we see him.”

Yu Qingxuan was rather sullen. For someone as kind as Yu Qingxuan to give such an evaluation of someone, it was clear that this Philosopher was no good.

“What Philosopher? To dare make my Qingxuan feel aggrieved, just wait until I beat him up,” raged Long Chen.

Yu Qingxuan once more laughed. But in a bit, the sun began to rise. Having no choice but to return to the palace, Yu Qingxuan then bid farewell reluctantly.

As the sound of her laughter faded away, Long Chen felt a sense of loneliness well up within him.

“This is no good. I have to proceed faster.”

Long Chen went to Yu Qianxue’s mansion. At the gate, he revealed his status plate, and the guard immediately let him in.

After passing two gates, Long Chen arrived in a spacious courtyard, but he frowned. There was an expert with a spear blocking his way.

He was a red-haired man with astonishing Blood Qi. When they saw each other, he pointed his spear at Long Chen and disdainfully said, “How could seeing the princess be so simple? I’ll give you two choices: beat me and I’ll let you through, or you can crawl between my pants.

“I feel like there’s a third choice. I’ll walk over your corpse.” Long Chen’s killing intent was instantly triggered by this man’s arrogant conduct.

Chapter 3964: An Ant Calling Itself an Elephant

“Walk over my corpse? Hahaha! That’s the funniest joke I’ve ever heard! You really think that you can do that?” The red-haired man laughed, his voice full of disdain. “You don’t even have a Supreme aura, so what could you possibly do? Hmph, I’ll see if you have the ability to receive the princess’s favor.”

“Some people are so foolish because they don’t know just how much power they have. How can an ant appraise the power of a dragon? Should a greenhouse flower that hasn’t even set foot on a true battlefield be so arrogant? If you were just arrogant, then I wouldn’t care. But why must you try to humiliate me? You have no respect in your heart. Is it because I’ve been too nice lately? Remember my words: it is better to bully arrogant people than to offend nice people, because once nice people are angered, they won’t even give you a chance to kneel and beg for mercy,” said Long Chen.

Long Chen had slaughtered too many lifeforms in the three thousand worlds, so he knew that his dark energy was starting to get riled up again. It was growing even faster than he had expected.

As this dark energy severely affected his emotions, he wanted to retain his rationality and calm at all times, not letting that tyrannical qi affect him. Otherwise, his temper would get more violent, and he would be easier to anger. Also, the more he got angry, the more it nourished his dark energy. Sooner or later, he would be consumed by his other self.

Thus, Long Chen had been planning on peacefully accompanying Yu Qingxuan in the Vermilion Bird Empire this time. He wanted to distance himself from killing and fighting, letting his heart settle down for a bit.

However, when he arrived in the Vermilion Bird Empire, he faced all kinds of provocation that he was fed up with. This person even went further, instantly causing Long Chen's killing intent to explode.

"A dragon? Hahaha! What ignorant arrogance! Just try to receive this attack!"

With a hearty laughter, the red-haired man's manifestation burst into existence, radiating an untamed aura that surged with unparalleled power. In an instant, the might of a Supreme Bone and Supreme Blood exuded from him.

His aura was instantly unleashed to his peak, causing a powerful pressure to crash down upon Long Chen. When this happened, the surrounding buildings unleashed a light barrier around this place. Clearly, this place was set up for fights.

"You have Supreme Blood and a Supreme Bone, but there are no signs of them merging. Your confidence is misguided." Long Chen instantly saw through this person's power.

This person's aura was ancient, so he was most likely a sealed expert. But curiously, the aura of his Supreme Bone and Supreme Blood was stiff, which meant that either he had been sealed for too long, or there was a problem with his seal. Although he had gone through the nourishment of primal chaos qi, he still couldn't merge them.

In other words, he would be stuck like this for the rest of his life, as he had lost any chance of merging his Supremes.

"Bullshit!" After the red-haired man roared, two streams of energy poured into his spear. Before this, he had been holding back a bit, but now he fully unleashed his power as he had already decided to kill Long Chen.

"Don't!"

Over ten experts appeared in the surroundings at once. They had just been in hiding to watch the fun, but seeing the red-haired man actually intending on killing Long Chen, they were shocked out of hiding.

They were all Yu Qianxue's guards, powerful experts in their own rights. As experts, they had their own pride.

Hence, when they learned that Yu Qianxue had actually wagered herself against Long Chen and been rejected, they were all shocked. At the same time, they were also envious.

Moreover, Yu Qianxue had even used a scheme to con Long Chen into becoming her subordinate, so these guards were immediately interested and wanted to embarrass him to prove that he was nothing special.

Also, they had discussed the plan already. They were only going to show Long Chen that he was nothing special, not actually harm his life. Otherwise, the princess would punish them severely.

However, the red-haired man was too jealous and was rather eccentric. Also, due to losing his chance to merge his two Supremes, his temper had not been good lately. Thus, when Long Chen's words antagonized him, he just wanted Long Chen dead. Sensing the serious exchange, those people immediately came out. None of them would be able to escape responsibility if Long Chen was really slain.

However, it was too late. The red-haired man's spear had reached Long Chen.

Just as everyone thought that Long Chen would be severely injured, Long Chen's hand lightly wrapped around the spear, catching it just like that.

After that, the ground quivered slightly and a qi wave blasted out in every direction. Long Chen's hand was wrapped around the spear head, and he wasn't moved in the slightest. In fact, it didn't seem that a single hair on his head was moved out of place.

"What?!"

Seeing this scene, all the experts present were stunned. Although this red-haired man wasn't the strongest out of all of them, he was definitely not bad. How could his full-power attack be caught so easily? Barehanded? They couldn't believe this.

Just like them, the red-haired man was also shocked. His aura then raged as he tried to pull back his spear. But no matter what he did, he was unable to move his spear. It was like it had stuck to Long Chen's hand.

"Have you considered my words?"

Long Chen looked at the red-haired man emotionlessly, akin to a god looking at an ant with clear disdain.

Upon being underestimated like this, the red-haired man's face twisted with fury. The next moment, his body suddenly lit up as flames burst out of him.

"Hu Ming, have you gone crazy?!" Those guards all cried out in shock.

To their surprise, Hu Ming was igniting his Supreme Blood and Supreme Bone to increase his power.

This had been nothing more than a test to put Long Chen in his place. How had it become like this? Now, everything was out of control.

However, no matter how the red-haired man's power rose, he was still unable to pull his spear out of Long Chen's hold.

Suddenly, the spear moved, but it wasn't because the red-haired man had succeeded in pulling it out. It was Long Chen shoving it forward.

As a result, the base of the spear pierced the red-haired man's chest, causing his aura to plummet. The sharp pain woke him up, and now, there was no longer any fury in his eyes, only fear.

"I admit defeat..." said the red-haired man.

"I told you not to provoke nice people, or they wouldn't even give you a chance to kneel and beg for mercy."

Long Chen raised the spear, lifting the red-haired man's body into the air. His voice was icy without the slightest emotion.

"You've already won! Stop!"

The guards immediately rushed over to stop him, with some attacking him while some moving to pull the red-haired man away.

"Scram!"

With a roar, a vague dragon cry reverberated throughout the world, accompanied by the eruption of a sacred energy. They all saw a soundwave spread.

After that, all of them felt like a hammer had struck them. Blood sprayed out of their mouths, and even the formation shielding this area shattered, transforming into millions of runes that dissipated back into heaven and earth.

Chapter 3965: Princess Detention

Those guards hacked up blood, tumbling back like tumbleweeds. Their souls were almost torn apart by this one roar from Long Chen.

When the formation was broken, an even larger barrier appeared over the entire princess mansion.

However, even that formation rumbled. The immense impact caused countless cracks to appear on it. Then, in front of their stunned gazes, this second formation also shattered.

In terror, the guards stared at Long Chen, who was still holding up that red-haired man.

That red-haired man's body was now covered in cracks, and blood poured out of his seven orifices. He was almost blown apart by that roar.

"Long Chen, what are you doing?!"

Just then, Yu Qianxue's furious voice rang out.

"Princess, save me! This Long Chen is treacherous and violent! I only wanted to exchange pointers with him, but he wants to kill me!" The red-haired man shouted fearlessly once he saw Yu Qianxue.

"Long Chen, put him down. We can talk about this nicely." Yu Qianxue's expression was dark. She didn't know what had happened, but she could guess it.

"We can talk nicely? The main thing is, if you talk nicely, will people listen?" Long Chen shook his head. He then looked at the red-haired man. "I told you not to provoke nice people. Just because they're nice, doesn't mean that they don't have a temper. Also, nice people have no mercy once you anger them. Let

alone Princess Qianxue, even if the emperor of the Vermilion Bird Empire were to personally come, he wouldn't be able to protect your life. Go in peace!"

"Long Chen!" Yu Qianxue was shocked.

"No!"

With a quiver of the spear, the red-haired man exploded, turning into a bloody mist that rained upon the area. This attack didn't just destroy his physical body but also his Yuan Spirit.

The guards stared at Long Chen in horror, looking at him like he was a blood-crazed fiend.

On the other hand, Long Chen's expression was calm without the slightest ripple. It was as if he had done nothing at all, exuding exceptionally terrifying calmness.

"I don't have time to play such senseless games with you. Don't waste my precious time. Unless you're prepared to die, it would be best if you didn't try to enrage me." Long Chen's gaze swept over the guards.

Long Chen had long since noticed that these guards only had high cultivation bases and talent, but their actual killing power was trash.

To put it frankly, they possessed immense power but had never set foot on a battlefield. Having not gone through the baptism of blood and fire or experienced walking the line between life and death, against true experts, they were unable to unleash even a fraction of their power before dying.

Ignoring anything else, any Dragonblood warrior from the three thousand worlds could kill them without any suspense despite not possessing that much power.

"A group of greenhouse flowers lauding each other and amusing themselves into thinking that they are important... I've seen plenty of people like you. You and I do not live in the same world. Your games are things that I stopped playing as a child. If you don't want to die, stay away from me," said Long Chen coldly.

Long Chen didn't want to kill people, but if he didn't, there would be no way to scare off these idiotic children. Then all kinds of challenges and roadblocks would appear in his way.

There was no way to peacefully cultivate like that. Moreover, he needed time to develop the Seven Star Battle Armor. If these people stalled him, when the real powerful enemies came, he and the people by him would definitely die miserably.

These people were now so terrified that they were like wooden chickens. As for Yu Qianxue, she was ashen with rage. Just as she was about to speak, the void quivered and a dozen Divine Venerates appeared.

Long Chen's heart shook. These Divine Venerates were all Double Supremes and were wearing identical robes with a sword hanging on their waists. It seemed that the Vermilion Bird Empire's foundation was truly shocking.

Their leader frowned. "Princess, how could you make such a mistake? Let's go!"

Yu Qianxue's countenance darkened. Filled with indignant rage, she clenched her teeth furiously. "Long Chen, just wait! Once I get back, I'll teach you how to behave. And you lot as well!"

Yu Qianxue also pointed at her guards, causing their expressions to grow ugly. They didn't dare to look at her.

Yu Qianxue then snorted and left with those Divine Venerates, leaving Long Chen startled. Just what was going on?

"Why is she being brought away?" asked Long Chen.

The guards simply glanced at each other, and not one person spoke.

"Are you mute? If you want to be mute, I can help you out," threatened Long Chen.

Hearing this threat, they cleared their throats. One of them hastily said, "Reporting to senior, according to the empire's laws, it is forbidden for a person's mansion to cause a disturbance that affects others. When you attacked just now, the mansion's grand formation wasn't fully activated. Thus, the sound was too loud, causing chaos and drawing over the palace's patrol. Therefore, the princess must be brought away... She will probably be punished with three days of detention."

"Three days of detention?"

Long Chen was stunned. It was just a loud noise, but the punishment was three days of detention? Did the princesses of the empire not get to keep their dignity?

"Yes. The empire holds the overseer responsible, so the mistakes that the subordinates make will cause their superiors to also be punished. Perhaps others in the empire have it a bit better, but the empire's laws are especially strict toward the imperial princes and princesses. Their punishments also far exceed that given to commoners," explained that person.

"No wonder Yu Qianxue was so furious." Long Chen had never dreamed that Yu Qianxue would be the one punished after he killed someone. That was a bit funny.

He wondered how many times he could send her there before she dismissed him. Long Chen suddenly had an evil thought.

Just as he did, another group of experts came. They were stronger than the current guards here.

Amongst them were several familiar faces. They were those that Long Chen had seen following Yu Qianxue, so they were most likely her trusted aides.

These experts had ugly expressions and glared at Long Chen silently. Now that their boss was brought away, they had no leader.

Just like that, Long Chen waited in the princess mansion for three days. As expected, after three days, Yu Qianxue came back, and her expression was rather frightening. It was like she was going to eat someone.

However, when she arrived, she saw that Long Chen was in the residence she had arranged for him, enjoying a luxurious breakfast. He was actually eating with gusto. When Yu Qianxue and her guards arrived, he didn't even look at them, instead focusing on his food.

"Long Chen, don't you need to give me an explanation?!"

After a moment, Yu Qianxue couldn't hold back anymore and shouted, her voice full of fury. That ominous gaze in her eyes was like she was going to start her breakfast by eating Long Chen.

Chapter 3966: Making the Princess Faint From Rage

"What explanation do you want from me?" asked Long Chen after gulping down his food and wiping his mouth.

"You have just arrived in my mansion, and you already caused me to spend three days in solitary confinement. Why don't you tell me what explanation I'm asking for?" raged Yu Qianxue.

"What does your being in solitary confinement have to do with me? It was your unruly subordinate that wanted to take my life. Am I not allowed to fight back? It's all your responsibility and has nothing to do with me. Also, since we've signed a contract, you need to give me a martial master status plate. Since you have time today, get it done quickly," said Long Chen.

To become a prince or princess's training partner was a recognition of one's power. Otherwise, the prince or princess wouldn't sacrifice one of these precious spots.

As a result, the person chosen would immediately be promoted from an ordinary martial artist into a martial master, directly skipping the martial fighter rank.

A martial master already possessed a certain level of status. With it, you could directly join the army and become a squad captain rather than starting as a regular soldier.

Also, it was easier for squad captains to accumulate merit on the battlefield. They would be able to advance through the ranks much faster.

"You have the gall to ask me to issue you a martial master tablet?!" Yu Qianxue frowned deeply. Just looking at his confident and bold appearance enraged her. She couldn't believe her eyes.

"That's what's written on the contract," said Long Chen lightly.

"Alright, then today you are my formal training partner. We'll fight in a bit." Yu Qianxue snorted and fished out a new status plate for him. On one side were the words Martial Master, while the other side had the mark of the princess mansion on it, as well as her name.

In other words, this martial master status plate was issued based on Yu Qianxue's approval. If there were any problems, she would also have responsibility for it.

Long Chen received it with a smile. "Many thanks."

“Don’t thank me too soon. Now that you’re my formal training partner, I have the authority to request a fight with you. Activate the mansion’s eighteen grand formations!” shouted Yu Qianxue while looking at Long Chen like she was going to give him a vicious lesson.

“You shouldn’t. Your Yang Qi is deficient, your Yin Qi is soaring, your aura is turbulent, and your mind is in a severely weary state. You can’t fight properly today. Pick another time,” said Long Chen indifferently.

Long Chen didn’t know what the solitary confinement involved, but Yu Qianxue was clearly weary that even her mind was not in a good condition. For an expert like her to be weakened to this extent, it was as if she had been tortured.

“According to the contract, you have no authority to decline! Even if I’m not in my peak condition, I can still beat you!” said Yu Qianxue coldly.

“According to the contract, there are conditions under which I can decline. For example... my body doesn’t feel comfortable right now,” said Long Chen.

“Why would you be uncomfortable?!” raged Yu Qianxue.

“Physiologically, you know, men always feel uncomfortable a few days a month.” Long Chen shrugged helplessly.

“You... you have no shame!”

Yu Qianxue’s hair stood on end from how angry she was, and her guards looked at Long Chen dumbfoundedly. How could he even say such a reason?

“Alright, since you’re not comfortable, I order you to watch the main gate!” Yu Qianxue’s voice was almost a howl.

...

According to the contract, after becoming the training partner of a prince or princess, the prince or princess was obligated to provide the training partner with a good cultivation environment, a guarantee of safety, and a generous wage.

However, not everyone got the same treatment. Some of them were not even important subordinates but simply employees with better talents. Thus, as long as they weren’t humiliated by the orders, they simply had to do their job well and they were set for life.

Outside the capital was a giant park with towering trees and dense vegetation. There were all kinds of precious medicinal plants here.

This was essentially a giant medicinal field, one of the imperial family’s businesses, and it was currently under Yu Qianxue’s administration. Within the Vermilion Bird Empire, all the princes and princesses had their own businesses. Otherwise, if they just relied on the stipend given to them as members of the royal family, they wouldn’t even be able to fully feed themselves, let alone their individual forces.

Hence, the imperial family left a portion of its businesses to the princes and princesses to manage. In other words, they could gain greater authority through proper management, and the profit from these

businesses all went into their own pocket after deducting the taxes. But if they were to make any business mistakes, the royal family would take everything back at any moment.

Since Long Chen refused to fight with Yu Qianxue, Yu Qianxue directly ordered him to guard the medicinal farm.

This was rather humiliating work, but Long Chen was happy to do it. He had heard that there was a kind of spiritual creature called the Lightning Flash Sable here. It was covered in purple fur and possessed a trace of thunderforce. It wasn't particularly powerful, but it was incredibly fast, so it was very difficult to catch.

It didn't injure people, but it would often sneak its way into the medicinal field to steal the fruit. Furthermore, it also had the special ability to pass through barrier formations.

Perhaps if the grand formation was activated, it would be unable to pierce through. But keeping the formation activated at all times was untenable. The profits from the medicinal field would all be wasted on keeping up the formation.

Thus, to save money, it was people who patrolled the fields and made sure to drive off the Lightning Flash Sables and other pests. But when Long Chen arrived, he saw a few medicinal plants that he didn't have in the primal chaos space, so he decided to directly become an embezzler.

However, while this medicinal field had millions of plants, not many were particularly precious. Long Chen only found a few hundred that he didn't have.

After that, he went to the gate. He was preparing to keep studying the Seven Star Battle Armor when a Lightning Flash Sable ran up to him. It actually wasn't the slightest bit afraid of Long Chen and just chattered to him.

"So this medicinal field was your home?"

To his surprise, he was actually able to roughly understand the Lightning Flash Sable's spiritual fluctuations.

Before the medicinal field appeared, this area was the home of the Lightning Flash Sables. But after the medicinal field was built, these Lightning Flash Sables were driven away.

They had no choice but to find lightning attribute plants for food, but it was even harder to find them in other places. It was much harsher for them. Hence, it was asking Long Chen to be flexible and gather some for them.

This Lightning Flash Sable mentioned that Long Chen had the blessing of the rainbow crane on him, so he was definitely a good person that would help it.

Long Chen dug out a rock from the ground, raising the fence and barrier. "Gather your family and get as much as you can. In any case, it's not mine."

Long Chen directly sat and closed his eyes in meditation. As a result, less than half a day later, Yu Qingxuan came running over frantically. When she saw thousands and thousands of Lightning Flash Sables stealing from the medicinal field, she was ashen with rage.

“Long Chen, what are you doing?!”

“Watching over the gate, no?” said Long Chen lazily.

“If you’re watching the gate, why didn’t you bother with all the Lightning Flash Sabres stealing the plants?!” Yu Qianxue pointed at the Lightning Flash Sabres that now fled hastily.

“You told me to watch the gate and not anything else. Tell me, did I lose the gate? Did it break under my watch?” asked Long Chen.

“You...!”

Yu Qianxue felt her blood rushing up to her head. At this moment, she felt the world spinning around her and she collapsed.

Chapter 3967: Little Black Room

Seeing this, Long Chen jumped in shock and hastily caught her. The other guards were also stunned. Considering how powerful Yu Qianxue was, how could she faint from anger?

Unlike Long Chen, they didn’t have the guts to touch her. They didn’t even dare to get close to her.

It had to be known that Yu Qianxue was a germaphobe that didn’t like to touch anyone. In fact, people that tried to even get close to her drew her ire.

After Long Chen pressed a finger on Yu Qianxue’s forehead, he frowned. “Her willpower is severely taxed. She’s almost out of mental energy. What happened in solitary confinement?”

“It’s the most terrifying mental torture. Within the little black room, you are cut off from the outside world. Without light and sound, it feels like time stops there. Within that darkness, everything seems to be nothing, almost like dying. Also, within that darkness, your negative emotions grew. I was once punished with it for a day, but that single day felt as long as ten thousand years. When I came out, I was almost crazy. It took a long time for me to recover. As Princess Qianxue was locked inside for three days, for her mind to still be clear after coming out shows that she is indescribably powerful,” said one of the guards with a fearful expression, as if he didn’t even like to recall this torture.

“That’s right, that little black room is so terrifying that you can only understand once you’re locked inside. It feels like a monster inside of you is going to be unleashed and devour your soul. There’s no way to describe that feeling of isolation, terror, and helplessness. In that room, you face all your weaknesses. No matter how strong a person is, their willpower will crumble there,” said another guard with the same terror in his eyes.

Long Chen took out a medicinal pill and fed it to Yu Qianxue. After that, his Spiritual Strength flowed into her, nourishing and stabilizing her soul.

“It’s nothing major. She was just too emotional just now. Have her sleep a bit and she’ll be fine. Bring her back to the princess mansion,” said Long Chen.

The guards just stared at him. No one stepped forward, and they actually stepped back.

Long Chen was confused and somehow had a bad feeling. Upon looking down, he saw Yu Qianxue's eyes flutter; she was waking up. Realizing something, Long Chen hastily shoved her away.

Everyone cried out in shock. Yu Qianxue was actually pushed onto the ground by Long Chen, but they just watched as she fell, not daring to catch her. That proved Long Chen's guess.

Long Chen didn't push light enough, so Yu Qianxue left a human-shaped indent in the ground. Furthermore, just then, she woke up and crawled up. When she looked around, those guards retreated in terror.

"It wasn't us!"

Yu Qianxue's gaze turned to Long Chen. In an instant, the fury in her eyes erupted.

Long Chen hastily said, "I gave you a medicinal pill to regather your will that was on the verge of collapsing! Otherwise, there was a danger of your Yuan Spirit dispersing. I heard that you don't like touching anyone, so to express my innocence, after saving you, I put you down. It's an expression of my respect for you."

"Respect? Then you must respect me very much. Were you planning on planting me here? Or were you just going to bury me and leave it at that?" Yu Qianxue pointed at the hole in the ground.

"Isn't that because I was afraid of a misunderstanding? In my hurry, I might have been a bit too heavy-handed. I apologize. But no matter how you put it, I took the risk of being cursed by you in order to save you. That's better than just watching and not saving you, right? You can't just curse me alone, alright?" Long Chen pointed at those guards, causing their expressions to change.

Yu Qianxue instantly whirled upon those guards, a layer of frost covering her face. The fury in her eyes almost made them ignite.

"All of you, scram!"

Those guards hastily fled, but their terrified expressions gradually turned into one of relief once they were far away. Now, Princess Qingxue's fury would be cast only on one person.

Once they were gone, Yu Qianxue took out her sword and pointed it at Long Chen. "I've had enough of you. If this keeps going, I'll die of rage because of you! We are going to fight, and if I win, everything you have will be mine, including you. If I lose, everything I have will be yours, including myself. Do you accept it or not?!"

Long Chen stared at her, feeling dumbfounded. This temper was a bit too much like her father's, wasn't it? This was too decisive.

"Why are you acting like this? Didn't you just lose some stuff? If you want, I'll accompany you. Don't get so angry," advised Long Chen.

"Do you think I care about this money?! You just pissed me off! How are you going to make up for that?!" raged Yu Qianxue.

"I don't have any solution for that. Hm, how about you just swallow it?" suggested Long Chen helplessly

"Are you telling me to choke on my anger?! You want me to die?!" Yu Qianxue was further incensed that flames sprouted above her head.

"That's not what I meant. In life, how can everything simply go as you please? Things are usually only fifty percent satisfactory. Sometimes, we simply have to learn to be happy with what we have. Tell me, don't you think that this principle is correct?" Long Chen smiled.

"Your smile is very loathsome," said Yu Qianxue coldly.

"Your smile is very beautiful. So we're good, right?" Long Chen was speechless. Had this child's head grown muddled from being burned?

"You really refuse to fight me?" demanded Yu Qianxue.

"Give it up. Girl, to tell the truth, you people are children in front of me. Let alone in your current weakened state, even in your peak condition, you wouldn't be able to receive three moves from me. Don't be stubborn and refuse to accept reality. Let me put it to you this way: I've killed more people than you have ever seen in your entire life, so I've long since grown tired of fighting for fame or power. I can instantly see through your power, and you are unable to threaten me. What is the point of competing? Other than that, I never treat such competitions as games. I only train killing moves. When I attack, it is to kill. Either you die or I die. The two of us have no enmity that requires one of us to die. In fact, you are my future sister-in-law. Why would I fight to the death with you?" said Long Chen kindly.

Long Chen could already see that Yu Qianxue might not be a kind person, but she wasn't an evil person either. After all, they would be family in the future. There was no need to be so stubborn. Long Chen was even planning on using her platform to get closer to Yu Qingxuan.

"Without an honorable fight, how can you tell who is stronger and who is weaker? You're my training partner, so you have a responsibility to accompany me in battle. I refuse to believe that I can't beat you. If you refuse, I'll think of anything I can to torment you until you accept. There's no need for you to watch this gate. Go raise my fish," ordered Yu Qianxue coldly.

As a result, Long Chen was moved from the medicinal pill and sent to the royal family's fishing ground. After placing him there, Yu Qianxue returned to her own residence. She refused to believe that Long Chen wouldn't submit. Just as she started to recuperate and entered a meditative state, someone came running over in a panic, practically wailing.

"Princess, not good! Something terrible has happened! Long Chen, he... he cooked his majesty's most beloved Seven Color Dragon Fish!"

"What?!"

Yu Qianxue's soul almost fled in terror. That was one of the emperor's treasures.

Chapter 3968: Escaping the Sea of Bitterness

"Brother Yifeng, you have a knack for arriving at the right time. I just finished cooking this fish. Come, let's have a feast."

A three-foot-long fish that looked a bit like a swamp eel was being grilled at the moment. The oil was running down its body, and its fragrant smell made people drool.

Long Chen took out two elegant wine bowls and poured out some wine.

“Wow, big brother, you know how to live! When I heard that Princess Qianxue sent you to raise fish, I thought that you would be depressed. But your attitude is good. Let me raise you a toast as an apology for my mistake.” Zhu Yifeng had originally come to comfort Long Chen. After all, his current position was caused by him. Even if he was cursed by Long Chen, he had to accept it.

Unexpectedly, Long Chen was doing very well and was actually cooking fish here. The fishing ground here was the royal family’s, so they only raised precious species of fish.

Hence, the meat of these fish was exceptionally delicious and also had a nourishing effect. It could be directly turned into a medicinal pill. As they were top grade fish with shocking value, ordinary people couldn’t afford to eat them.

“Haha, that’s nothing. But I’ll drink to it.” Long Chen laughed. It was only once he arrived that he found that this was actually a good place.

How could he not? There was many precious fish here, and Long Chen didn’t plan to just watch them. He had been looking for a good fish to eat when he noticed a golden dragon fish baring its fangs at him. Long Chen naturally decided to pick it up and tossed it onto the grill.

“Wow, this wine is amazing!” Zhu Yifeng exclaimed. It was his first time drinking such fine wine. “Wait, is this from the...”

“Of course. Other than the Wine God Palace, who can produce such divine wine? Drink as much as you want!” Long Chen had almost no friends in the Vermilion Bird Empire. Hence, when a friend had come to drink with him, he was happy and directly filled his bowl again.

Zhu Yifeng drank three bowls, overjoyed with this feeling. So this world actually possessed such beautiful wine? In comparison, the other fine wines that he had drunk were water.

“Don’t just drink the wine. Let’s eat the fish too. I have a feeling that this is no ordinary fish. Its meat will definitely be delicious.” Long Chen used chopsticks to send a mouthful of the fish into Zhu Yifeng’s mouth. It instantly melted, its juices filling his mouth. It was fatty but not greasy; it was exceptionally delicious.

“Wow, what fish is this? It’s so delicious! I’ve never tasted it before!” Zhu Yifeng tasted the fish, and his eyes lit up. This fish was better than all the other fish he had ever tasted as a prince of the empire.

“Hehe, I don’t know the name of the fish, but if you like it, I’ll fish up a few more for you. In any case, I’m in charge here. Furthermore, Princess Qianxue isn’t bad. She sent me medicinal plants and fish. I might have misjudged her. Let’s raise another toast!” With the fish’s meat in his mouth, Long Chen raised his wine bowl again.

Zhu Yifeng sighed with satisfaction. He felt like he had reached the peak of his life.

“Big brother, I can say that Princess Qianxue might have a bad temper, but she actually isn’t much of a schemer. She is the one who poses the least threat to me amongst the princes and princesses. That’s the

only reason I dared to come here. If it was someone else, I wouldn't dare to come. I'd be afraid that they would do something to me," sighed Zhu Yifeng.

"Exactly. This isn't a bad place. Once I marry Qingxuan, I'll make sure that she lives a carefree life, away from this scheming place. Let's make sure that the wine doesn't stop!" Long Chen raised his wine bowl again.

The two of them chatted as they drank and ate. Zhu Yifeng seemed to have found a confidante and began to spout all his complaints. For example, his mother was too harsh, his father was too cold, and his brothers and sisters were fighting each other. It was like he was lost in the sea of bitterness.

"I don't know when I'll be able to escape the sea of bitterness," sighed Zhu Yifeng.

"You'll be able to escape the sea of bitterness very soon."

Just then, an icy voice rang out. It was Yu Qianxue's. At this moment, icy killing intent radiated out of her, and she glared at Long Chen like she was going to eat him alive.

Yu Qianxue had hundreds of guards with her, many of which Long Chen had not seen before. All of them were powerful experts, and some of them did not possess weaker auras than Yu Qianxue herself.

"Oh, there are so many of you! Sorry, but I only cooked one fish. It's not enough for all of you. If you had told me you were coming, I would have cooked a few more," said Long Chen.

"Princess Qianxue, sit. Let's eat together! This fish is too delicious! And there's wine too!" Zhu Yifeng pulled out a seat for Yu Qianxue.

"You can eat it yourself. This might just be your final meal. Make sure to eat more so that you don't lose out," said Yu Qianxue frostily.

"Princess Qianxue, what are you saying? Isn't it just a fish? You wouldn't kill the two of us for that, right?" Zhu Yifeng laughed awkwardly.

"I won't kill you, but someone else will. You two fools have also implicated me. Long Chen, you ill omen, are you trying to get me killed?!" raged Yu Qianxue, her patience gone.

Zhu Yifeng's expression changed and he suddenly had a bad feeling. As he looked back at the grilled fish, his heart thudded. With a quivering voice, he asked, "Big brother, did this fish have seven colors?"

"Nope!" Long Chen shook his head.

"Oh, thank goodness. I almost pissed myself. As long as it's not seven colors, it's fine." Zhu Yifeng sighed with relief.

"Why don't you tell me how many colors its scales had?" asked Yu Qianxue.

"Five," said Long Chen directly. He remembered this.

"Then adding on the lips and whiskers?" said Yu Qianxue coldly.

"I wasn't paying attention. Now that you mention it though, it seems that they were different colors..." Long Chen nodded.

Crash.

"Brother Zhu, what's wrong? Why do you look like that?" Long Chen saw Zhu Yifeng sitting on the ground, his face pale and his entire body limp.

"Big brother, we're dead. We're definitely dead. You cooked my imperial father's most-beloved Seven Color Dragon Fish!" Zhu Yifeng wept, scared out of his wits.

"No wonder it was so delicious! So it's what the emperor eats!" exclaimed Long Chen.

"You don't know anything. That was the Seven Color Dragon Fish my imperial father was raising as a tonic. Its gallbladder is used to refine the Three Flower Heaven Ascension Pill. Do you know what the Three Flower Heaven Ascension Pill is?" Yu Qianxue had the urge to kill Long Chen. He still hadn't realized just how grave of a mistake this was. He thought it was as simple as just eating a fish.

"I know. It's used by an Earth Venerate to become a Heaven Venerate. The Seven Color Dragon Fish's gallbladder is one of the main ingredients," said Long Chen lightly.

"You know?! The Vermilion Bird Empire only has a single Seven Color Dragon Fish! And you... you... you still cooked it?!" Yu Qianxue lacked the words to express her rage. She then grabbed Long Chen's collar, almost spraying saliva into his face as she no longer cared about royal etiquette.

"His Majesty has arrived!"

Just then, a eunuch's voice rang out. After that, Long Chen felt a flaming aura approaching. Those flames were flames of fury.

Chapter 3969: Let's Call it Even

The Vermilion Bird Empire's emperor Yu Xiaoyun walked over with his hands clasped behind his back. He was accompanied by several eunuchs and a group of guards.

At this moment, seeing his gloomy face, Yu Qianxue and Zhu Yifeng hastily knelt.

"Greetings, imperial father!"

Yu Qianxue's guards also knelt and directly kowtowed, not daring to make a sound.

However, Yu Xiaoyun didn't even look at Yu Qianxue and Zhu Yifeng. He coldly gazed at Long Chen.

"Brat, your guts are big."

"Many thanks for your praise. I have no other strong points, but at least my guts are a bit big." Long Chen looked right back at Yu Xiaoyun. At first, he wasn't sure what to do, but as soon as Yu Xiaoyun spoke, he was confident.

"Do you know what kind of fish you just ate?" shouted Yu Xiaoyun.

"I didn't know before this, but I learned later. However, it was too late. Once a tree is turned into a boat, it cannot be turned back into a tree. Why doesn't Your Majesty calm your anger and take a few bites? I have wine too," chortled Long Chen.

Yu Qianxue and Zhu Yifeng almost collapsed when they heard this. This fellow's guts were too big, weren't they? He even dared to say such a thing, as if he was the one treating the emperor to his priceless Seven Color Dragon Fish.

"Will you believe me if I say that I will kill you with a single slap?" Yu Xiaoyun almost exploded due to rage.

"I don't believe it. Isn't my sin just eating a single fish? I'm your future son-in-law. My life is more precious than a fish. You won't kill me for a fish," deduced Long Chen confidently.

Yu Xiaoyun raged. "What nonsense are you spouting about?! There isn't even a sign of success yet, but you dare to say that you're my son-in-law?! You are nothing more than a commoner!"

"No, I'm a noble martial master, thank you!" Long Chen revealed his status plate confidently. The status of a martial master was much higher than an ordinary commoner.

Seeing this, Yu Qianxue quivered furiously. This Long Chen really was out to get her. For him to show off the martial master tablet that she had given him, he was clearly trying to get her killed. If the emperor wasn't here, she would definitely beat him up for this. Even if he wanted to con her, he didn't need to go this far, right?

"Let alone a martial master, even if you were my son-in-law, having committed this sin, I still have the right to execute you," said Yu Xiaoyun frostily.

"What sin did I make?" Long Chen acted stupid.

"You killed the Seven Color Dragon Fish that I was raising for centuries. Is that not a sin?" shouted Yu Xiaoyun.

"And then? How are you going to punish me? Killing me as revenge for your fish? That's absurd, isn't it?" Long Chen shrugged indifferently.

"You...!"

Although eating his dragon fish was hateful, the emperor knew that using this reason to kill Long Chen was impossible. There was no such law. Furthermore, Long Chen was not a prince or princess. The emperor couldn't treat him as his own family. Using the laws, the most he could do was force Long Chen to pay compensation for the fish and then be imprisoned for a month.

"I won't kill you, but I can banish you from the empire. You will never set foot in the Vermilion Bird Empire again," threatened Yu Xiaoyun.

"No, you won't do that either."

"And why not?!" demanded Yu Xiaoyun.

"A person who eats someone else's food is biased toward them. I ate your fish, so I won't quibble with you about that. But using this excuse to banish me is impossible for you," said Long Chen.

"Hahaha, you think you're clever?! I don't like you anyway, so why can't I banish you?!" sneered Yu Xiaoyun.

“Precisely because a person who eats someone else’s food is biased toward them. I ate your fish, but you also drank my wine. We’re even. I don’t believe that you will do this, or your reputation will be ruined. I think that you should consider this, Your Majesty.” Long Chen smiled.

“Nonsense! When did I ever... You... you...” Yu Xiaoyun suddenly thought of something and grew bewildered.

“That’s right, the Vermilion Bird Pear Flower Wine!” Long Chen chortled. He didn’t keep going.

“You...!”

Yu Xiaoyun quivered with rage. He now understood that the Vermilion Bird Pear Flower Wine that he had drunk was not from Jiang Huixin’s family’s elders. It was from Long Chen.

Now that Long Chen brought it up, although he hadn’t known the truth, it didn’t change reality. With this, there was no way that he could use Long Chen eating his Seven Treasure Dragon Fish to banish him.

After a long moment of Yu Xiaoyun not knowing what to say, he barked, “Fine, brat, count yourself ruthless. But while banishment can be avoided, punishment cannot. Of the three of you, one failed to control your subordinate, one made friends recklessly, and one ate my Seven Color Dragon Fish. All of you are going into the little black room for three days!”

Hearing that, Yu Qianxue’s expression changed. She had just come out of it after being imprisoned for three days. If she were to go through it again in her current state, her mind would crumble and she would go crazy.

As for Zhu Yifeng, he directly fell limply. His willpower was too weak. At most, he could last within the little black room for a single day. Three days was deadly to him.

However, neither of them dared to argue. The emperor was enraged right now, so any arguments would only cause the punishment to worsen.

“This matter has nothing to do with them, so I will bear responsibility for everything. You can add their days to mine. Three threes is nine, so let’s just be straightforward and add another day for a perfect ten. How’s that? You’re not losing out, right?” said Long Chen indifferently.

“You’re crazy. No one has survived more than seven days in the little black room!” Yu Qianxue was so shocked that she even forgot about the emperor’s rage.

“Do you think that I’m bargaining with you? What right do you have to bargain?!” raged Yu Xiaoyun.

“I don’t like hearing you talk this way. To put it frankly, you are only punishing them not because they did anything wrong, but because you are venting your anger on them. If you were simply educating your children, using your own methods to make them mature, I naturally wouldn’t express any opinion. But you are clearly using them to vent. Don’t you think that will damage your image as ruler of a nation? A nobleman, the King Dao, they all require restraint. The more noble a person, the more restrained they will be. But I can’t see a single bit of it on you. If you are still set on punishing the two of them, then perhaps I have to go to the appeals hall to make a report. I’ll tell them that you abused your position to punish them without any respect for the laws, fairness, or justice, just because of your bias against me. Those seniors will judge that matter,” said Long Chen, neither tyrannical nor subserviently.

Yu Qianxue and Zhu Yifeng were startled. In all their years, this was their first time seeing someone who dared to speak like this to the emperor. Long Chen was actually threatening him.

“Good, good! Brat, you have guts! Then we’ll do as you say! Don’t blame me for not warning you! The record for lasting in the little black room is six days! I don’t even know how many people have died inside. Do you really want to take their punishment and go inside for ten days?”

“Although I have no noble status or position, I know that a man’s word is worth its weight in gold. I will not take back what I said.”

“Good! I want to see whether your mouth is tougher than your will!”

Yu Xiaoyun turned and walked away. But he suddenly paused and looked at the grilled dragon fish and wine.

“Guards, grab all the evidence of the crime for me!”

Long Chen, Yu Qianxue, Zhu Yifeng: “...”

Chapter 3970: The Aura of Hell

“Your Majesty, you cannot send Long Chen into the little black room! He has such a strong heart-devil! Don’t tell me that you can’t see it! This is no joke!”

Within a pavilion by the lake inside the royal garden, Yu Xiaoyun was seated in front of a grill, eating fish and drinking wine. Jiang Huixin and Xu Lanxin came running over.

Xu Lanxin directly scolded the emperor, feeling a bit angry. With their cultivation bases being at their current realm, they could easily sense the state of a person’s heart just by looking into their eyes.

Also, Long Chen had not set up any defenses against them, so they could all see the powerful heart-devil within him.

The little black room was something that tempered a person’s will, and it drew out a person’s negative emotions to test them. Although it was called a punishment for princes and princesses, in truth, it was just a kind of trial and training.

However, for those with heart-devils, the little black room was a death sentence. Furthermore, it was the cruelest, most painful kind of death sentence as a person would die while tormented by their heart-devil. Once the heart-devil took control over the soul, the person inside would die without a doubt. There was no cure, no saving them.

“You can’t put it that way. That brat wanted to go in himself, don’t forget that. I didn’t force him. Furthermore, I even warned him, so you can’t blame me. Hmph, I still haven’t settled things with you two either! You caused me to lose face. Well, I suppose I’ve gotten a bit of compensation.” Yu Xiaoyun looked at them unhappily. It was because of them covering up the origin of the Vermilion Bird Pear Flower Wine that he had left himself open to Long Chen’s words. Thus, he was still a bit angry.

“Your Majesty...!” Xu Lanxin frowned and wanted to continue arguing, but Jiang Huixin grabbed her arm and smiled.

“Your Majesty is a wise and noble man, and everything is under your control. Let’s not worry ourselves. Anyway, this is a rare chance for us to accompany His Majesty to eat and drink. This is your Seven Color Dragon Fish, is it not? It looks very delicious.”

“Hmph, it’s a good thing I got there early enough. Most of it was still left. Otherwise, those two bastards would have eaten it all. But... that brat’s cooking skill really isn’t bad. He didn’t ruin its flavor. Let’s eat together. Come, there are no outsiders here,” gestured Yu Xiaoyun.

The great emperor of a powerful empire was actually eating other people’s leftovers. If that were to spread, it would definitely cause everyone to laugh at him. Thus, Yu Xiaoyun had ordered everyone to leave and activated a formation to prevent them from learning about it.

In truth, Long Chen and Zhu Yifeng had not eaten that much. It was so delicious that they were eating it slowly to truly savor the flavor.

Long Chen had also taken out a jug of wine packed with no less than two hundred liters of wine. He had been planning on drinking to his heart’s content with Zhu Yifeng, but now, it was all Yu Xiaoyun’s. It was only after confiscating this booty that Yu Xiaoyun felt a bit better inside.

With just a few mouthfuls of the fish, they were sprouting endless praise. One reason was that the Seven Color Dragon Fish’s meat was just that delicious, while another reason was that Long Chen’s cooking skills were unmatched. As an alchemist, he knew how to best draw out the taste of the meat, and the seasonings he used only added to its flavor. It could only be called perfect.

The meat was good meat, and the wine was good wine. Jiang Huixin suddenly said, “The two of us sisters really have to thank that child Long Chen. If it weren’t for him, His Majesty would never be willing to cook this fish for us to eat.”

Xu Lanxin also smiled. This Seven Color Dragon Fish was exceptionally precious. If Long Chen hadn’t come, they would really never know just how it tasted.

“What are you saying? Am I such a stingy man? If you want fish, you just have to ask!” declared Yu Xiaoyun awkwardly.

Of course, the fish was already dead, which was the only reason he said such a thing. If it was still alive, there was no way that he would be willing to eat it.

“Long Chen, will he...” asked Xu Lanxin.

“Empress, don’t worry about it. I’ve already ordered someone to install a formation inside. Everything will be under my control. I just want that arrogant brat to pay for his actions,” said Yu Xiaoyun.

Hearing that, Jiang Huixin and Xu Lanxin were relieved. As long as Yu Xiaoyun allowed Long Chen to back out before it was too late, it was fine.

...

“Long Chen, are you really going in? I’m telling you, no one has survived even seven days of the little black room. You’re being brash.” Once Yu Xiaoyun left, Yu Qianxue turned to Long Chen with a complicated expression.

She hadn't expected Long Chen to be so righteous and actually took full responsibility for this matter. Of course, all of it was really caused by him.

Zhu Yifeng clenched his teeth. "Big brother, we should just admit that we were wrong to His Majesty. Beg him to go back to three days for each of us."

Long Chen looked at Zhu Yifeng. This little fellow was loyal and willing to sacrifice. Long Chen smiled. "Your will is so weak. There's no need." He then turned to Yu Qianxue. "In truth, I'm a very good person. I also look very good."

Yu Qianxue furiously cursed, "What's the point of saying such nonsense? Can it solve your current predicament?!"

Long Chen continued to smile. "I'm always assured of what I do. I won't use my life as a joke, so I have my own reason for entering the little black room, don't worry!"

After saying that, Long Chen was brought away by the imperial guards. The moment they tried to put chains on him, Long Chen turned hostile.

"Don't provoke me, or I'll slap you!"

Long Chen was not a prince or princess, so he didn't need to abide by the royal family's rules. But upon hearing this, those guards' expressions sank. Just as they were about to get angry, their elderly leader said, "It's fine."

This elder could count as tactful, knowing how to judge a situation before acting. Long Chen didn't even give face to the emperor, let alone to the likes of them.

Right now, they still didn't understand Long Chen. Perhaps if they were to treat him the same way as a prince or princess, they would be the ones to suffer.

After that, Long Chen was brought to a square-shaped palace. It was perfectly square, and its whole body was pitch-black, the kind of black that seemed to devour the light. Just getting close to it made the sun's rays feel darker.

At the same time, a particular aura washed over them, causing Long Chen to be startled.

"The aura of hell?"

This aura was familiar. It was very similar to the aura of hell, which could draw out a person's most primal fears. Even the guards were practically shivering as they looked at the black palace.

The stone gate slowly rose. Once inside, they saw an even larger palace. In truth, this was a visual misperception. The space inside just looked bigger than the palace outside.

These guards didn't move once they reached the gate. Long Chen then pressed on and passed through eighteen palaces, and they only grew larger and larger, blacker and blacker. As he proceeded, the path behind him grew further and further away. It was like he was walking into the abyss of death.

Once he entered the eighteenth gate, the stone gate slammed down one by one. After that, the world fell silent. There was no light; there was no sound. He was within endless darkness, endless shadow,

endless terror, and endless loneliness. At the same time, waves of negative emotions washed over Long Chen.

If an ordinary person came here, their will would instantly crumble. Even cultivators were unable to endure this terrifying darkness.

However, Long Chen simply smiled and sat on the ground. He closed his eyes and patiently sensed the darkness.

“Come out. Let’s have a chat.”