

The Doctor 771

Chapter 771: Yue'er Girlie

On the other side of the Mystic Forest, a few people silently entered.

"How long has it been? Why did the Mystic Forest become like this?"

"Someone came here... Hm, I think it's that fellow Mu Qinghe and a bunch of Black Guards. There are also a few dozen people that I haven't seen before."

"Heh, these few people are really super unlucky to come here now. They had to meet with such a situation... Hey, wait a minute! Why did the peacock disappear?"

"I seem to smell a red-tailed phoenix's aura... Did that peacock successfully break through?"

"How is that possible? That fellow is missing half a soul... Wait a minute. There seems to be a few more people in front?"

"Why are those two fools still here, and why are there more youngsters?"

"...That peacock really seems to have broken through... However, why do I feel that girlie is underground? Could it be that I'm older, so my ears and eyes aren't working?"

"...You're not imagining things. She is below. It seems like... she's together with that thing..." The one talking was that elder.

The moment he said this, the other two instantly fell silent.

The next moment, that baby-like voice sounded angrily. "I long told you to dig that thing out for her! You guys kept saying that the time wasn't right! See, she really went down herself! If anything happens to that girl, see whether I will beat you up!"

"It's not wrong for the child to want that thing, but it's extraordinary. If we really directly gave it to her back then, it might even cause some trouble." The melodious voice didn't sound frustrated, and it was neither slow nor fast. "I wonder who was the one who said they wanted to teach that girl a lesson just now, but she turned on us in the blink of an eye... Pfft. Big Baby, you are amazing."

"I dare you to call me Big Baby again?!"

"Little Baby?"

"Stupid pervert, you're courting death!"

"Can you two quarrel somewhere else? Don't interrupt me looking at girlie!"

"Get lost!"

"Get lost!"

...

These quarrels didn't attract Qin Yi and the rest's attention.

The night was as cold as water. Everything here was exactly the same as the day.

Ye Ranran and Mu Hongyu were already asleep, while Qiang Wanzhou sat beside them cross-legged with the Cloud-Sky Copper Sword placed on his knees.

As Lei Laosi and Qin Yi had strong cultivation bases, they didn't need to sleep and could rejuvenate themselves as long as they meditated. While the two of them guarded the Mu Hongyu trio, they watched the rolling leaf fir that had already completely wilted.

Suddenly, the winds blew even louder in the woods.

A branch from that mother tree broke, fell on the ground, and made a sound.

Lei Laosi suddenly jumped up. "Who's there?!"

He nervously surveyed his surroundings but didn't find anyone around.

Qin Yi rubbed his brows helplessly. "Only a branch broke; nothing major happened. Four, you're too tense."

Lei Laosi looked over and awkwardly scratched his head. "I see... I still thought—"

He sighed, and his face couldn't conceal his disappointment. *?I still thought Her Highness had come out just now.*

Qin Yi also knew that he was too worried about Chu Liuyue, so he gently said, "Rest a while first."

But Lei Laosi shook his head and refused.

Seeing his persistence, Qin Yi didn't convince him further.

The forest fell silent again.

...

"Old fool, did you not move for very long, so your hands and legs aren't nimble anymore? With that noise just now, do you want everyone in Dahuang Swamp to know that you're here?" Big Baby's voice was filled with disdain.

The elder coughed. "I was just careless! It's all because the two of you quarreled non-stop! It's more important to find the girl first!"

This was correct.

They could only come out once a month during the night of the red moon. During other times, they couldn't know anything that happened in the outside world. Also, they could freely walk around outside for a maximum of only four hours.

The chance was rare, so they had to hurry up.

The few of them didn't quarrel anymore as they rushed down together.

"It seems like that item's seal opened on its own. Look at this place—see how much has been destroyed?"

"It's been so many years, so that seal should've long rotted. It's already a miracle that it could last until now. But I'm curious—did the girl long calculate the time and specially pick this period to come over?"

"Maybe... but she's too gutsy. She actually dared to barge into this place! I think she broke through again already, right?"

"That's needless to say. Back then, she—Hm? The space below seems to be locked by that thing?"

"Girl! Girlie is really there! I'll go and check first—"

"Move aside!"

"What's there to fight? Do the two of you want to compete with me in terms of looks? Girlie always likes me the best. I'm not talking anymore; I'll go over."

"Stupid pervert, you're shameless!"

...

Chu Liuyue was currently gathering her focus and cultivating. After she broke through and became an intermediate stage-five warrior, she purposely slowed down her absorption speed of the force.

There was a gap between an intermediate warrior and a peak warrior, so she had to seriously fill in the gap to stabilize herself. Even though Chu Liuyue wanted to strengthen her skills quickly, she wouldn't blindly advance.

Suddenly, her ears turned slightly. *?Why does it sound like someone is talking...*

She opened her eyes and instinctively looked up.

The dark-green light seemed to block her vision completely, and the space above was dark. Thus, she couldn't see anything at all.

It didn't seem much different from before.

Upon seeing this, the ancestor asked curiously, "Liuyue, what's the matter with you?"

Chu Liuyue pointed above. "Ancestor, did you hear someone talking?"

"Nope." Shangguan Jing looked up strangely. *?How can someone possibly come here?*

"Did you hear wrongly?"

Chu Liuyue frowned. *?At this time, it isn't very possible that someone can come over. Perhaps I was really hallucinating.*

She retracted her vision and wanted to continue cultivating when she suddenly heard a call. "Yue'er girlie—"

Chapter 772: Betrayed

Chu Liuyue's heart seemed to be lightly touched by something, and she looked up once again. Even though she couldn't see anything, she still felt that someone was staring at her for some reason. *?That sound is definitely not a figment of my imagination!?*

That voice was calling her and sounded very intimate, but the voice's tone and pitch were very unfamiliar. She never seemed to have heard it before, but it vaguely felt a little familiar as well. *?Not many people can address me in such a manner, and even fewer people have the ability to reach this place. Who exactly... is it??*

...

The moment Chu Liuyue looked up, the trio that was originally filled with hope and happiness was stunned.

"Hm. A few years have passed, but why did the girl's face change so drastically? It also looks like... she's much younger?" As Lan Xiao—who was at the front—spoke dazedly, he crossed his arms, and one of his hands stroked his chin.

He only knew that when one's cultivation reached a certain level, one would never grow old. However, that was also dependent on one's age. If a twenty-year-old and an eighty-year-old passed that criteria at the same time, it would naturally be different from them.

Other than that, he had never heard of someone becoming younger than their actual age...

"Lan Xiao, your eyesight isn't as good as mine! That lady isn't girlie!" Diwu Zhangze stroked his white beard and chuckled. "You haven't seen that girl in a few years, and you actually forgot how she looked? When she finds out, you're going to have to explain yourself!"

If it were usual, Lan Xiao would definitely rebut him. But at this point, he didn't care anymore as his eyes were glued to the young woman below.

His brows were slightly furrowed. *?That's not right... I naturally remember very clearly what girlie looks like. Logically speaking, I definitely won't make a mistake. But this young girl...*

"That is girlie!" Dugu Mobao—who had been quiet the whole time—spoke. Even though his voice was cold, his tone was so similar to a baby's that it sounded very contradictory—like a child that was acting like a grown-up.

When he said this, Lan Xiao and Diwu Zhangze fell silent.

"Even though her looks have changed, this soul's aura is absolutely correct!" Even though Dugu Mobao had a hot temper, he was always very accurate in this aspect.

Since even he had said so, it should be true.

Diwu Zhangze widened his eyes in shock as he looked down and tried to take a closer look. However, that young woman had already retracted her gaze.

From their position, they could only see the top of her head.

"I think... From the first time I saw her, I instinctively felt that she was girlie. I didn't make a mistake." Lan Xiao heaved a sigh of relief and glanced at Diwu Zhangze. "I think you're the one that didn't recognize her, right?"

Diwu Zhangze's face flushed red, and he was embarrassed for once. "Y-you can't blame me for this... Who knew that girl totally changed her appearance? T-this... How did it suddenly become like this?"

What Diwu Zhangze asked was also what the other two people wanted to know.

Lan Xiao seriously thought for a while. "Could it be because girlie felt that she's not pretty enough? Thus, she changed into another face?"

Dugu Mobao looked at him like he was looking at an idiot. "Stupid pervert, do you think everyone is like you! You can change your face as you wish, but can she do it? Besides, with her previous face, who in the world would think that she's not pretty enough?"

Lan Xiao didn't mind the fact that he was called a 'stupid pervert,' and he strongly agreed with the latter sentence. "That's true."

If it weren't because I doted on girlie, I would've long taken her face. That's an extremely rare beauty in the world!?

He raised his brows slightly, and admiration filled his eyes. "But her current appearance has a tinge of youthfulness. When she grows older, she definitely won't lose to her past... Speaking of which, why is she working so hard?"

Dugu Mobao's face darkened. "She didn't only change her face. Her entire body... has been changed!"

This sentence changed the other two's expressions.

Changing appearances meant nothing to them, but changing bodies was different. One had to know that to cultivators, their physical body was very important!

Dantian!

Pearl of essence!

Yuan meridian!

Once a cultivator gave up on their physical body, they had to give up on all of this! Besides, that girl had a Tianjing Yuan meridian!

The trio fell into a temporary silence. They previously came here as they felt the girl's soul, but they never expected that everything had actually changed other than the girl's soul still being here!

What exactly happened?

"...You think—girlie didn't come back these few years... Did she forget, or... did something happen?" said Diwu Zhangze slowly.

They had never thought of this possibility before. The girl was very smart and cunning, and she was very strong in terms of her capabilities and talent. She could even handle a few blows from the few of them back then, so why would something happen to her?

They didn't want to believe this from the bottom of their hearts. But if this were true... What exactly happened that caused her to change her body and start all over again?

Diwu Zhangze said, "Let's wait first! It seems like she's going against the Heaven-Wrecking Holy Seed now. It's not too late to ask her when she comes out."

Dugu Mobao clenched his fists, and murderous intent burst out from his body.

Lan Xiao's brows jumped, and he was afraid that Dugu Mobao would cause a massacre, so he hurriedly said, "Hey, Big Baby! Calm down. Girlie hasn't come out yet! We can do something after we ask her clearly! What's the use of throwing a tantrum?"

Dugu Mobao clenched his teeth and said everything clearly: "Where the hell did that kid Rong Xiu go?!"

...

His Grace—who was reading and authorizing the scrolls in front of the study—suddenly sneezed. He put down the brush in his hands, rubbed his brows, and gently smiled. *?It seems like someone is missing me...?*

He paused for a moment, and after authorizing all the scrolls in front of him, he stood up and walked to the window.

A snow-white figure suddenly flew in from midair.

The soldiers guarding outside all looked up in unison and were shocked. *?How long has it been? Why did His Grace's fiend become even stronger??*

The space that Xue Xue went past had a layer of frost on it. Its figure long entered the palace and disappeared in front of the crowd.

This time, Xue Xue still chose to enter by breaking the window. Luckily, this palace was spacious enough, and all the materials were premium, so they wouldn't spoil.

Xue Xue jumped up and arrived at the room.

Rong Xiu looked at it, and his thin lips curled up. "You really know how to pick the right time."

Xue Xue had already guessed what its master wanted it to do, so it happily wagged its tail as its pair of ice-cold eyes stared at Rong Xiu.

After some time, Rong Xiu smiled with even deeper meaning and said, "You can go first."

I originally wanted to bring Xue Xue along with me later, but it seems like... It can't wait.?

Xue Xue was thrilled as it immediately rushed out.

Roar!

Its roars shook the world! It wasn't hard to tell how happy it was.

Watching its rapidly departing figure, Rong Xiu's brows rose slightly. *?Even I feel my head ache upon thinking of their anger.. Mm, I should let Xue Xue go first.*

Chapter 773: Gather

At this point, Xue Xue didn't know that its master had sold it out. It was elated as it directly tore through the space and went in head-first.

It went straight to Dahuang Swamp!

...

After a while, Rong Xiu retracted his gaze, thought for a moment, and pushed open the door to leave.

"Greetings, Your Grace!" Seeing him come out, the soldiers outside immediately greeted him respectfully!

"Get up." At this point, Rong Xiu's expression had already become calm, and nobody could tell his mood. "36 Respected Elder Ming hasn't returned yet?"

"Your Highness, he hasn't."

Rong Xiu squinted his eyes slightly. *?Considering the time, he has been gone for quite long. According to 36 Respected Elder Ming's temper, he shouldn't spend so much time with the people from the Ming Division. I originally didn't plan to intervene in this as the people from the Ming Division are really hard to deal with. But now, I have to rush to Dahuang Swamp as soon as possible. Hence, I need to find 36 Respected Elder Ming earlier to discuss this matter.?*

He thought for a moment and went forward.

...

In the dim space, the surroundings were deadly quiet.

However, Chu Liuyue kept feeling that there were people having hushed discussions. Even though she couldn't hear it properly, she still vaguely felt that it was there.

After a period of time passed like this, it then gradually quietened down.

She silently glanced at Shangguan Jing, but she didn't see anything wrong with his expression. *?It seems like Ancestor really didn't hear anything. That's weird...*

Chu Liuyue looked down and thought to herself, *?Did someone purposely let only me hear those voices? But the other party doesn't seem to have any evil intentions, and... Their voices even have a tinge of unconcealable happiness and love as if... they were once very close to me.?*

Chu Liuyue thought for some time, but it was in vain. In the end, she still closed her eyes, gathered her thoughts, and continued to absorb the force from the Heaven-Wrecking Holy Seed.

Bang!?

A tiny, crisp sound could be heard as another piece broke off from the Heaven-Wrecking Holy Seed's crystal. Then, it silently flew toward Chu Liuyue, merged with the water curtain, and became a water droplet that entered her body.

...

Seeing this, the trio was stunned.

Even Dugu Mobao—who was filled with anger earlier—was also dazed and stopped his scolding of Rong Xiu. “W-what is she doing? That layer of crystal was formed after the Heaven-Wrecking Holy Seed absorbed force for thousands of years, and it's specifically used to protect itself after it matures. She actually swallowed it like that?”

Lan Xiao grunted. “I didn't expect girlie to become younger and even more capable... See, didn't I already say that we can't directly give her the item back then? Now, girlie can even handle it herself!”

This type of premium existence usually had its own spiritual powers. It wasn't that one couldn't force it to concede, but with its indignation and anger, there were bound to be aftereffects.

One had to rely on themselves to completely restrict it and convince it before it could truly be their own! This way, they wouldn't have to worry when they used it in the future!

Even though girlie was biting piece by piece, she was already outstanding! With sufficient time, she could definitely settle the Heaven-Wrecking Holy Seed with her own abilities!

Diwu Zhangze secretly called it a miracle. “What's that water curtain? Can you tell? Girlie is only a stage-five warrior now, but with that water curtain, she can actually go against the Heaven-Wrecking Holy Seed. She's even winning!”

Lan Xiao looked over, shook his head, and sincerely said, “I can't tell.”

Dugu Mobao held it in for a while before indignantly saying, “I can't tell.”

The other two glanced at him in surprise. “Big Baby, you have dominated the mainland for many years and have seen way more treasures than the both of us combined... There are still things that you can't determine in this world?”

He was hot-tempered and arrogant. It wasn't easy for him to admit this.

Dugu Mobao waved his hand in frustration. “We're so far apart. With the Heaven-Wrecking Holy Seed's God Realm in my way as well, what can I see clearly? After the girl settles the Heaven-Wrecking Holy Seed, we can just get her to tell us, right?”

No matter what, it's not an ordinary item!?

...

Shangguan Wan and the rest went through a few transportation formations and finally returned to Xi Ling.

Ping Liang Square was as noisy as before.

Suddenly, the biggest transportation formation in the middle turned gradually!

The crowd looked over in unison and was shocked. "Look! That transportation formation actually moved!"

"Are the Third Princess and the rest coming back?"

"I don't think so? Didn't they just leave not long ago? Also, considering the time spent on traveling... Did they come right back after they just arrived at Dahuang Swamp?"

"But that transportation formation is specifically used by them... Ever since they left, the transportation formation hasn't moved. Did someone move the transportation formation on their own? Is that person tired of living?"

Just when the crowd partook in heated discussions, the Black Guards in the surroundings had already reacted.

The people in Ping Liang Square were chased away as the Black Guards gathered in the surroundings with the transportation formation in the middle.

The solemn and cold Black Guards went into formation, sternly welcoming the important characters!

Seeing this scene, what else did the crowd not understand?*With the Black Guards behaving in this manner, the Third Princess and the rest must have returned!?*

Facing this solemn atmosphere, quite a few people kept quiet silently. However, their eyes were still glued to the middle tightly.

Obviously, everyone really wanted to see the results of the Third Princess going to Dahuang Swamp to retrieve herbs for His Majesty!

Very quickly, a few figures appeared in the transportation formation.

Other than the Third Princess Shangguan Wan, who else could be in front? Standing beside her was Jiang Yucheng!

The surrounding Black Guards immediately kneeled down and greeted, "Welcome back, Third Princess!"

The spectators naturally had to bow as well. In no time, everyone around kneeled down loudly.

"Stand at ease," said Shangguan Wan.

The crowd then gradually stood up. When they took a clear look at Shangguan Wan's appearance, quite a few of them felt it strange.*There's actually a mask over Shangguan Wan's face? She's even wearing a cape with a hat on top, which almost covers half her face.?*

With such an outfit, the crowd could only see her eyes. The rest was covered tightly.

Even though it was currently winter, it wasn't that cold anymore as spring was approaching. It was strange for Shangguan Wan to dress like this, but average people had no right to ask these questions.

A youngster came forward as if he were the leader of the Black Guards. "Greetings, Third Princess, Eldest Young Master, Lieutenant! I am Lu Shan!"

Shangguan Wan didn't want to stay here for long, so she directly said, "All the Black Guards and disciples had a very tiring journey this time, so all of you can go back to rest and recover. In addition, I have some important things to discuss with the officers. Send my word—get all the clan masters and the aristocratic family masters to go to the palace immediately!"

Even though Lu Shan was dazed, he still immediately said, "Yes!"

Chapter 774: Guilty About?

Nobody expected them to come back so suddenly and so... nonchalantly. One had to know that back then, the Third Princess led 1,000 Black Guards and countless disciples from the various clans to go to Dahuang Swamp.

The formation was huge, and the aura was magnificent! But now... This was really too surprising.

Lu Shan and the rest also didn't understand. *According to the plan, the Third Princess and the rest should only return after a month or so. But how long has it been? Besides, they should logically inform us first before coming back. However, we didn't receive any news at all. If we didn't see the transportation formation moving, we wouldn't even know that they had come back!*

Shangguan Wan's face was covered in scars, and she couldn't even completely cover them with a face mask. Helpless, she could only cover her head with a hood. *Even though I look strange by doing this, at least I've completely covered myself. In the dark and open, countless pairs of eyes in Xi Ling are staring at me! Once someone sees my disfigured look, it will definitely cause an uproar! Hence, I still insist on doing this even if this look will garner guesses and discussions.*

She originally wanted to take a horse carriage back to the palace, but as they came back too suddenly, it was definitely too late.

After instructing them, Shangguan Wan directly lifted her legs and went forward. Jiang Yucheng was half a step behind her and walked with her.

After a momentary silence, the remaining Black Guards and disciples all parted ways.

The scene was actually very awkward.

The spectators exchanged glances. "What's going on? They just... separated?"

"Previously, I thought they'd come back in glory... This isn't what I expected!"

"Can't you tell that quite a few Black Guards are missing? The number of disciples also seems to have decreased..."

"I think so too! At first glance, there seem to be about 300 to 400 Black Guards that didn't come back..."

"Si.... The casualty rate for this Dahuang Swamp journey is actually so bad?!"

"That place was originally very dangerous, so this outcome is normal, right? When Lieutenant Mu brought those troops, I think more than half of them died before..."

“But that was when Dahuang Swamp was filled with rebels. Now that Dahuang Swamp is already peaceful, won’t it be weird if this happens again? The Third Princess also looks a little strange... But since so many of them died, they should’ve retrieved quite a few herbs that His Majesty needs. This is why this happened, right?”

The crowd debated softly.

All sorts of voices kept entering Shangguan Wan’s ears. Her chest heaved up and down furiously, and all the blood in her body rushed to her head. The face underneath the mask started to hurt due to the tearing from it being contorted. This made her even more enraged.

Those words were like invisible slaps, harshly striking her face. Hence, she quickened her steps.

Behind, Mu Qinghe didn’t leave with the rest. Instead, he stayed behind and took care of the Black Guard.

After Lu Shan sent Shangguan Wan and the rest off, he looked at Mu Qinghe in confusion. “Lieutenant, why didn’t you tell me in advance before you came back? This welcome is too rushed...”

Mu Qinghe shook his head. “This was urgent, so we didn’t have enough time to tell you. It’s fine. Immediately send people to bring those injured Black Guards back to recuperate. Also, Tian Zhuangzhuang and the rest will contact you about the casualty rates this time. You need to be in charge of what comes next.”

Lu Shan heard this, and his heart sank. “I understand!”

Lu Shan then looked up and rapidly surveyed his surroundings. He realized that the casualty rate was even more serious than he had thought.

He became even more solemn. *“Dahuang Swamp is dangerous, but it has become much better ever since Mu Qinghe brought troops to settle the rebels. Logically speaking, such a situation shouldn’t happen.”*

However, he didn’t dare to ask further as he acted according to Mu Qinghe’s instructions.

The other disciples also weren’t in any better condition even though they were different from the Black Guards.

The Black Guards were an army, so their job was to obey their superiors. However, the clans didn’t completely listen to the Tianling royal family.

They respected the Tianling royal family, and at the same time, the Tianling royal family also gave them the same respect.

Without a doubt, all those that could enter these clans were all talents. Besides, those who were selected to go to Dahuang Swamp were picked out of hundreds of people, and they were extremely outstanding.

Now, some of them were injured, and others were dead. To the respective clans, this was a huge loss.

“Why are there only three people left from the Purple Xiao Sword Sect? Wasn’t there ten of them when they went? They suffered the most, right?”

"All the other clans have their own deaths and injuries, but none are like them..."

"I think... Wait, where are the people from Chong Xu Cabinet? Why didn't they appear?" Once this was said, the crowd fell silent.

Countless eyes scanned across the scene, but they didn't see a single shadow of anyone from Chong Xu Cabinet.

Only three people from Chong Xu Cabinet went, and with Chu Liuyue and Qiang Wanzhou's recent fame, they attracted even more attention. But now, none of them appeared.

"Did everyone from Chong Xu Cabinet..." Among the crowd, someone said that softly.

This person didn't finish their sentence, but everyone knew what it meant.

The crowd's expressions became complicated and strange, and their gazes were different. *Chong Xu Cabinet finally recruited two top elites with much difficulty. Did they really just die like that? Chong Xu Cabinet without Chu Liuyue and Qiang Wanzhou will definitely be in an even more perilous situation than before!*

...

Chun Feng Restaurant.

Inside the private room, Shui Liu'er and Jian Fengchi were sitting opposite each other by the window.

Shui Liu'er held the pipa but didn't play it as she looked at Jian Fengchi and asked, "So this means everything happened smoothly?"

"With me personally taking action, it naturally won't be a problem." Jian Fengchi lay against the back of the chair lazily, and his brows were slightly raised with unconcealable delight and arrogance.

Shui Liu'er chuckled. "Without the two of them in Xi Ling, it's naturally much more convenient for you to take action."

Jian Fengchi didn't deny it. His father pressed him to go to Dahuang Swamp back then, but he refused no matter what. He wanted to stay in Xi Ling just for this.

"No matter what, the situation is finally progressing steadily. Next, we—"

Bustling noises were suddenly heard from the streets outside the window.

Jian Fengchi immediately kept quiet.

Shui Liu'er opened the windows and looked down. Shock then flashed across her face. "Black Guards?"

Jian Fengchi felt that something was amiss and looked down as well. He immediately knitted his brows. "Why... Shangguan Wan is actually back?!"

On that wide street, Black Guards lined the sides as a few figures walked in the middle.

Even though the one at the front was wearing a hood and covered her face with a mask, Jian Fengchi still recognized that it was Shangguan Wan at first glance!

Standing beside her was Jiang Yucheng.

A few other people who served them were walking behind, and they left an adequate distance between.

“Shouldn’t they only come back after a month or so? Why did they—” said Shui Liu’er in confusion.

Jian Fengchi squinted his eyes. “After coming back from finding herbs for His Majesty, she should come back in honor and celebrate grandly. Why is she behaving so discreetly?”

Then, he flicked his fingers. “I want to see what exactly she is hiding behind that tight coverage!”

Chapter 775: Where’s Your Master?

“Hold on!” The moment Jian Fengchi moved, Shui Liu’er immediately grabbed his wrist before his force could even fly out.

With such a distraction, Jian Fengchi didn’t send out his move, and he shot her a begrudging look. “Little Liu’er, why are you stopping me? Perhaps a shocking secret lies underneath the mask!”

He understood Shangguan Wan too well.

Shangguan Wan always emphasized her looks, and she liked to dress herself in a very perfect manner for the world to see and to garner praises. At all times, she had very high expectations for her makeup and accessories, not allowing any room for errors.

Now, she actually wore a face mask for the first time and even a hoodie, covering herself up tightly. If nothing was wrong with her, that would be weird!

It was obvious that she suddenly made the decision to come back since she hurriedly rushed home without informing them in advance.

In such a situation, her actions were even more interesting.

Shui Liu’er glared at him and flung his wrist away. “If I don’t stop you, do you really plan on taking action and making it difficult for her openly? Do you think those Black Guards get paid for doing nothing? The moment you do something, they will come and look for you immediately!”

Jian Fengchi coughed, retreated, and kindly smiled. “I was just joking. Little Liu’er, don’t be angry. It’s not worth getting angry over someone like her, right?”

Shui Liu’er also knew that Jian Fengchi understood what to do at the right time, so she didn’t speak further. Turning around to take a look, Shangguan Wan and the rest had quickly left.

She was quite confused. “They seem like they’re in a hurry... Are they in a rush to return to the palace?”

Jian Fengchi touched his chin. “I said there’s a secret that can’t be known under her mask. The palace is her territory, so she’s naturally in a rush to go back. Heh, luckily I’ve already done what I need to do.”

If Shangguan Wan came back earlier, I might be in trouble.

Thinking of this, Shui Liu’er heaved a sigh of relief. “You did do this swiftly.”

Jian Fengchi smiled flirtishly. “Little Liu’er, you always can’t bear to praise me. This is a rare chance.”

Shui Liu'er couldn't be bothered with him as she changed the topic. "Oh, yes. Since they're back, the main team should've returned too."

Jian Fengchi's eyes changed. *?This means that Mu Hongyu, Chu Liuyue, and the rest should be at the back.*

He looked outside again, but not many people followed after Shangguan Wan and the rest left.

Just as the two of them were confused, a voice came from the windows. "Haven't you heard? The few disciples from Chong Xu Cabinet all died in Dahuang Swamp!"

...

Inside the dark space, time trickled past bit by bit.

Chu Liuyue sat cross-legged and completely focused on her cultivation, her aura continuously strengthening.

The three people that were still waiting outside became anxious gradually.

"Time is about to be up. We need to hurry back!" said Diwu Zhangze finally. "Nobody knows how much longer the girl will take!"

Lan Xiao and Dugu Mobao actually noticed this.

Lan Xiao was a little upset. "But if we don't see the girl today, we have to wait another month."

The night of the red moon was only once a month.

Dugu Mobao turned around to leave. "If it's one month, then so be it. We've already waited for a few years. Are you still scared of one month?"

The other two saw his decisive manner and glanced at each other, seeing the shock in each other's eyes. *?He was always the one that stuck closest to girlie, yet he's willing to leave first?*

Diwu Zhangze followed him and asked, "Do you really not want to wait for any longer?"

Dugu Mobao coldly said, "If we wait some more, can she see us?"

Diwu Zhangze immediately lost his voice. *?Girlie is stuck inside, and she naturally can't see us.*

"She's currently cultivating, so we should let her do it in peace... As for meeting... She's already here, so what's the difference if we see her earlier or later?"

According to her current abilities, she definitely needs another month to take down the Heaven-Wrecking Holy Seed completely. What's the rush?

"Big Baby makes sense." Lan Xiao nodded in agreement and followed him. "Aiya, staying up late isn't good for the skin. I need to rush back and catch up on my beauty sleep."

The remaining two fell silent together.

The next moment.

“Why would a half-dead person need to catch up on sleep?!”

“Lan Xiao, let me ask you again seriously: Do you have a problem?”

Lan Xiao wallowed in his own self-pity and grumbled silently, thinking that these two people didn’t know how to appreciate his beauty. “What do you know? Girlie likes pretty things! Sigh, I can actually understand it too. The two of you—one of you is old, and the other is young. No matter how hard you work, you can’t be my match. Hence, what’s there to fight?”

Diwu Zhangze objectively reminded, “Did you forget about Rong Xiu? You changed so many faces, but none of them can be compared to his.”

Lan Xiao’s beautiful imaginations were instantly shattered as he clenched his teeth and scolded, “Damn it!”

“Speak of the devil!” Dugu Mobao suddenly sneered. *?Just as we were thinking about him, he came!*

His figure flashed across, and he rapidly rushed up.

At this point, it was the last moment before the skies turned bright. The entire forest was in darkness.

The light breeze passed through and quickly disappeared.

...

Not long later, Red Moon Desert.

In the empty air, a black crack suddenly appeared. Then, a snow-white figure jumped out from within.

Xue Xue shook its body, and some snowflakes dropped down. Under the reflection of the red moonlight, it shot out faint light.

Xue Xue surveyed its surroundings, wiggled its nose, and started to find Chu Liuyue’s traces. *?I think she’s—*

Sha sha!

At this point, a strange sound was suddenly heard from below.

Xue Xue looked down. It saw that something seemed to be moving under the sand balls that kept rising.

It blinked, and as if it suddenly thought of something, it looked up!

A red moon hung high in the black sky.

Horror flashed across Xue Xue’s eyes, and it turned around to run without hesitation! *?It’s too much of a coincidence!*

But before it could run out, a gentle voice sounded by its ear. “Little Xue Hua, long time no see. Where are you running to?”

Xue Xue didn’t even turn around and moved its paws even quicker. However, not only did it not proceed forward, but its body also kept moving backward and toward the ground.

Just as it was pressed onto the cold sand ground, Xue Xue finally realized that it was too naive. It swiftly and decisively lay down obediently. It also wagged its tail to show its happiness.

"We haven't seen you in a few years, Little Xue Hua. You've really become increasingly smart..." That voice sounded even closer as if it was right beside its ear.

Xue Xue stiffened its body and didn't dare to move as it let out a low whimper. Its ice-blue eyes were watery, and it looked very adorable and obedient.

He who understands the times is a wise man!

The next moment, a baby-like voice coldly sounded. "Where's your master?"

...

Chapter 776: Scapegoat

"Where's your master?"

Once this question was asked, Xue Xue was dazed for a moment and then quickly reacted. In its mind, the master's calm and nonchalant gaze immediately appeared.

Xue Xue slowly widened its eyes. No wonder! No wonder Master suddenly allowed me to come when he previously refused all the while! I really naively thought that it was because I've been working hard on my cultivation and strengthened my capabilities! I didn't expect—

I was sold out by Master! Master must've long known that it's the night of the red moon, so he purposely allowed me to come! It also clearly looks like these few people aren't in a good mood. This is the reason why Master let me come first?!

Xue Xue's heart ached, and it regretted it more than ever as it secretly thought to itself, I was really stupid back then to make an agreement with him. So what if I'm a legendary fiend? Wasn't I betrayed all the same?

Xue Xue lowered its head in defeat and looked like it had nothing to live for.

Seeing its expression, what else did Dugu Mobao not understand? He couldn't help but sneer. "He's so decisive to send you over and let you get punished for him?"

Lan Xiao touched his face, and his voice became increasingly gentle. "What's the use of looking too good? His heart is too black. The girl is blind to like him."

Dugu Mobao kept quiet for a moment, and his voice became colder. "Who are you cursing to be blind?"

Lan Xiao: "...What did I say? I didn't say anything. Diwu, Little Xue Hua is quite pitiful, and it has become his scapegoat several times. You should go easier on it this time."

Diwu Zhangze softly said, "Do you think it's up to me?"

Who can stop Dugu Mobao from doing what he wants?

Hearing Lan Xiao putting in a word for it, Xue Xue initially thought that it had a chance of survival. However, Diwu Zhangze's words completely caused it to be void of hope.

The fiend pitifully lowered its head, and its large head stuck to its paws in a very uneasy manner.

After a moment, Dugu Mobao said, "Come over."

...

Mystic Forest.

A long night had passed.

A bright layer of light gradually shone in the skies, and there was a hint of gold in the clouds. This made the originally cold and miserable Mystic Forest much warmer.

However, the moods of the people in the forest didn't improve as a result. This was because the mother tree in front of them still didn't move.

Also, Chu Liuyue couldn't be seen anywhere, not even giving a hint of coming out.

Even Qin Yi didn't know how long they had to wait.

At this moment, they still had no idea about what was happening at Mirror Lake and Red Moon Desert.

...

Xi Ling.

After the Black Guards sent Shangguan Wan, Jiang Yucheng, and the rest back, somebody said that sentence—which immediately caused a commotion in the entire street.

"Is that true? Only three disciples from Chong Xu Cabinet went, and among them were Chu Liuyue and Qiang Wanzhou. Logically speaking, they should have no problems with protecting themselves. Why did they all die? Where did your news come from?"

"Of course, it's true! When the Third Princess and the rest came back, I was at Ping Liang Square! The Black Guards and the disciples all came back, but nobody from Chong Xu Cabinet appeared. If they're not dead, then what are they?"

"I saw it too! They really didn't come back!"

"T-this is impossible! So many people weaker than them came back alive, but they..."

"Who can predict these things accurately? Three to four hundred of the Black Guards even died! Those three disciples from Chong Xu Cabinet must've traveled together, so they all went down on the same boat... This time, Chong Xu Cabinet has really suffered a great loss!"

"That's right! They just got a little better... And Chu Liuyue and Qiang Wanzhou—what a pity!"

Just as the crowd partook in heated discussions, a figure suddenly jumped down from above and directly went to the few people talking in front. He grabbed the very first man who spoke by the collar. "What did you say just now?"

The man talking didn't pay attention and was suddenly grabbed by someone. His collar was held up tightly, and he couldn't even breathe. "Who are—"

The man's blood boiled, and he was about to scold instinctively. But upon taking a closer look, he was taken aback. "Young Master Jian?!"

Quite a few people in Xi Ling City still recognized Jian Fengchi's face.

"Y-Young Master Jian, let's talk without using our hands!"

Jian Fengchi stared at him closely and said his words properly: "I'm asking you—who did you just say died?!"

That man panicked and was terrified that Jian Fengchi would use his force to break his neck, so he hurriedly said, "T-the few people from Chong Xu Cabinet... I'm not too sure either, Young Master Jian. Please spare me! Everyone from the clans has returned now. I-if you want to know, you can go and ask them..."

Jian Fengchi pushed him away, went on his toes, and rapidly went in the direction of Ping Liang Square.

Judging from the time, there should be quite a few people who hadn't walked far away from Ping Liang Square.

The man who was pushed away got up with much difficulty, and he looked in the direction Jian Fengchi left with lingering fears.

The crowd at the side became much quieter because of this.

Someone couldn't help but mutter, "Something happened to Chong Xu Cabinet, but why does Dragon Teeth Mountain's young master care so much about it?"

"I heard that Dragon Teeth Mountain and Chong Xu Cabinet are on quite good terms... I wonder what the reaction will be like if the people from Chong Xu Cabinet hear of this..."

Upstairs, Shui Liu'er looked out from her window.

Jian Fengchi's figure quickly disappeared from sight.

She slightly knitted her sharp brows. *?I'm afraid... This is going to be a big commotion...*

...

Jian Fengchi acted very quickly and bumped into Zhu Hong and the rest, who were returning in no time.

At first glance, the few of them were injured, and their auras were weak.

Jian Fengchi's heart tightened. "Zhu Hong!"

Zhu Hong looked up. "Young Master?!"

Jian Fengchi quickly reached the few of them and hurriedly asked, "What happened to Chong Xu Cabinet?!"

Chapter 777: Injury Scars

Seeing his anxious look, Zhu Hong hurriedly said, "Young Master, calm down first. Regarding Chong Xu Cabinet... It's a long story."

Seeing Zhu Hong's reaction, Jian Fengchi felt slightly more at ease. *Perhaps things are different from what the rumors say.*

Zhu Hong took a deep breath in. "Young Master, let's go back first before we talk. It's not convenient here."

If they talked on the streets, anything they said could be distorted by someone with an ulterior motive.

Even though Jian Fengchi was anxious, he could only calm himself down. His gaze then swept past the few of them, and he slightly knitted his brows. "Where's Hongyu?"

Zhu Hong pressed his lips against each other. "She's with the few people from Chong Xu Cabinet."

Jian Fengchi's heart harshly sank!

Seeing his amiss expression, Zhu Hong hurriedly added, "Young Master, don't worry first. They're still doing well."

Jian Fengchi became increasingly confused. *Chu Liuyue, Mu Hongyu, and the rest didn't return with the main team, but Zhu Hong said that they're doing fine. What exactly happened in between?*

Countless questions surfaced in his heart, but Jian Fengchi still pressed them down and scrutinized his fellow disciples. *The few of them are injured to varying extents. Zhu Hong is still fine, but the others look like they can't stand straight.*

"Go back to Dragon Teeth Mountain."

...

Dragon Teeth Mountain.

When the few injured people came back, they were immediately sent for treatment.

Only Zhu Hong was left as his body was pretty fine, and he was also the leader. Thus, he naturally had to stay.

After they returned to the mountain, Jian Shuye also immediately rushed over when he heard the news.

Zhu Hong explained the entire incident to Jian Shuye and Jian Fengchi in detail. "...This time, it's all thanks to Ms. Chu and the others' help that we can come back in one piece. If not... the consequences are unimaginable!"

Then, the room fell into silence.

The father-son duo looked extra grave.

After a while, Jian Shuye said, "So Chu Liuyue currently can't be found, and the remaining few people are still in the Mystic Forest searching for her whereabouts?"

Zhu Hong nodded. "We originally wanted to stay behind and help as well, but considering that we're all injured, we probably won't be able to help if we stayed. We might even become their burden. Hence, we still decided to come back with the main team in the end."

Jian Shuye sighed deeply. "That's right. You should do that."

Unless the person was an elite, anyone would possibly be someone else's trouble in a place like Dahuang Swamp, let alone the few of them that were injured.

Jian Fengchi suddenly said, "You're saying that from the beginning, Hongyu already went with Chu Liuyue and the rest?"

"Yes. Back then, the few of them first went into the forest depths and coincidentally avoided that accident. This was also why the few of them weren't injured when we saw them again."

Jian Fengchi felt very conflicted. *“Mu Hongyu and Chu Liuyue are on good terms, and it's natural that they'd journey together. But I wonder how...”*

"Master, Young Master, don't worry. With Qin Yi and Lei Laosi around, nothing much should happen to Hongyu and the rest." Zhu Hong was actually worried too, but he could only place his hopes with Qin Yi and the rest now.

As for Chu Liuyue... He didn't dare to mention her again. The chances of her surviving were actually very, very low.

Jian Shuye suddenly asked, "The Qin Yi and Lei Laosi you mentioned... Who exactly are they? They really stayed in the Mystic Forest the whole while and guarded that legendary fiend?"

Zhu Hong explained, "The both of them are actually very strong. Even in the entire Tianling Dynasty, they can definitely be considered as top elites. However, none of us recognize them. But they did look like they had stayed in the Mystic Forest for an extended period of time. As for the one they were guarding... To be accurate, it was a... Nine-Colored Heavenly Pheasant. Later, it successfully broke through and finally became a red-tailed phoenix."

"Nine-Colored Heavenly Pheasant?" uttered the father-son duo in shock at the same time. *“Isn't it the same as the fiend that Princess had once made an agreement with? If it were any other ninth-grade fiends, we definitely wouldn't have such a big reaction. However, it was actually a Nine-Colored Heavenly Pheasant!”*

For a moment, the few of them didn't speak.

After a while, Jian Fengchi softly muttered, "What a coincidence... Liuyue actually made an agreement with that Nine-Colored Heavenly Pheasant... Oh, no—red-tailed phoenix."

Chu Liuyue originally looked like the Princess. Now that she's made an agreement with this fiend, it makes one's imagination run wild. It's a pity that she's missing now, and nobody knows if they can find her. If she really comes back in the end, she will definitely be put in a difficult spot by Shangguan Wan. Thinking of Shangguan Wan, Jian Fengchi suddenly perked up. "Oh, right, what happened to Shang... Third Princess?"

Zhu Hong was dazed for a moment as if he wasn't very sure about what Jian Fengchi was asking.

Jian Fengchi changed his way of asking. "Is there something wrong with her body or her face?"

Zhu Hong shook his head. "I don't know about this."

Back then, Jiang Yucheng, Mu Qinghe, and the rest were the closest to Shangguan Wan. Additionally, she quickly covered herself tightly afterward, so even fewer people saw the wounds on her face.

Zhu Hong and the rest were focused on Mu Hongyu, Chu Liuyue, and the rest, so they naturally knew nothing about this.

Knock, knock...

A knocking sound was heard. "Master, the Third Princess summons the people from all the clans and aristocratic families to enter the palace and discuss important matters. The people from the palace are already waiting outside."

Jian Shuye stood up. "Zhu Hong, you should go back and rest first too. As for Hongyu and the rest, don't be overly worried about it. She's my disciple. If anything happens to her, there's still me as her mentor!"

Hearing him say this, Zhu Hong instantly heaved a sigh of relief. *It seems like Master has his own plans.*

"I'll enter the palace to see what's going on first. Fengchi, make a trip to Chong Xu Cabinet and tell them not to worry first. At this point, I wonder how the rumors have spread outside."

Actually, Jian Fengchi wanted to enter the palace, but he changed his mind after hearing this. "I know. Don't worry."

Jian Shuye turned around to leave.

Not long later, Jian Fengchi went to Chong Xu Cabinet.

...

Just like Jian Shuye had said, all sorts of news had spread all across Xi Ling City in a short period of time.

The sudden return of Shangguan Wan and the rest had already stunned the crowd. Additionally, the series of actions after they came back was all very weird, so it attracted even more guesses.

The news of nobody from Chong Xu Cabinet returning seemed to have grown a pair of wings as countless people heard about it.

In the open and in the dark, everyone's reactions were different.

When Jian Fengchi rushed to Chong Xu Cabinet, Weichi Song had already entered the palace with the staff.

...

Tianling Imperial Palace.

Shangguan Wan returned to Huayang Palace and chased everyone out. She took off her hood, sat in front of the copper mirror, and carefully removed her mask.

A face that was badly mangled and filled with injuries appeared in the mirror.

Shangguan Wan stared at the face in the mirror, and her blood boiled.

Recalling that she still had to meet those people later, she suppressed her rage and took out a box of cream from her drawer. She then meticulously applied it to her face.

The moment the cream touched her face, she felt a wave of scorching pain!

She couldn't help but yell out in pain. "Ah!!!"

Chapter 778: You Want to Cry at the Grave?

Hearing her screams, Chan Yi—who was waiting outside—was taken aback and immediately asked, "Your Highness, what's the matter?"

"Don't come in!" yelled Shangguan Wan immediately.

"...Yes!" Chan Yi hurriedly agreed and slightly knitted her brows. When Her Highness came back, she hid herself very tightly. I had already guessed something in my heart then, and now, it seems like it should be true... Why did she suddenly become like this after one trip to Dahuang Swamp??

Chan Yi looked up and had a cold and stern gaze as she turned to the palace maids standing in the courtyard.

When the crowd heard Shangguan Wan's scream, they knew that it wasn't good. Noticing Chan Yi's dangerous gaze, all of them looked down and didn't even dare to breathe loudly.

"You all are dismissed."

"Yes!" Hearing this, the crowd hurriedly left as if they had been saved.

After they all left, Chan Yi looked at the tightly shut door once again.

...

The excruciating burn made Shangguan Wan's mind blank out. She hurriedly glanced at the copper mirror and saw that her face—which she had just applied cream to—had some tinge of black to it.

It looked like it was burned by something!

The skin that turned over seemed to be burned by fire as it curled up slightly and was even a little black. Even though there was only that one piece, it was already very obvious!

It turned out that the pain I felt just now was really because I was burned!? Shangguan Wan was stunned. Wh-what exactly is going on?! The cream is clearly a premium item that can heal scars and wounds. Why did it become like this??

She hurriedly looked at the jar in her hands. *It's right! It's this cream!?*

It's not that she didn't use it before. Sometimes, she would always quickly recover when she used this after falling or hitting something and a scar was left behind.

However....

Shangguan Wan threw the cream aside and brought the copper mirror closer to check on her wounds, her heart filled with worry.

In order to retrieve the Dancing Lotus quickly, she immediately gathered everyone from the clans and aristocratic families once she came back. She originally wanted to use the cream to let her wound recover slightly so that she could meet other people. However, she didn't expect that not only did she not recover, but she even ended up in this state!

Shangguan Wan was terrified as her body trembled slightly, and her lips paled. *?If I really can't recover my looks... I don't dare to use the cream anymore, but what else can I do??*

In this way, Shangguan Wan sat in front of the mirror in conflict and pain for a very long time—

Until Chan Yi knocked on the door again. "Your Highness, the clan heads and masters are reaching Minghua Palace soon. Do you... want me to help you get ready?"

Shangguan Wan suddenly recovered her senses and realized that she didn't do anything during this long period of time. *?If other people see my current defeated state, nobody knows how they will mock me.?*

She gritted her teeth. "No, I will go to the spa."

There was hot spring water that was specifically brought over into Huayang Palace.

"Yes." Chan Yi didn't dare to ask further as she respectfully agreed.

Shangguan Wan walked to the back, opened the side gate, and entered the place used for hot water baths.

...

Jiang Yucheng followed Shangguan Wan into the palace, but he also knew that the latter didn't want to see anyone with that face. Hence, he left Huayang Palace after giving instructions on a few things.

After that, he directly went to Qingfeng Palace.

After leaving for so long, he cared most about His Majesty's current condition.

Arriving at Qingfeng Palace, the security was very tight.

Seeing him arrive, the palace servants bowed in unison. "Greetings, Prince Consort."

Since Jiang Yucheng and Shangguan Wan had already settled on their wedding date, this was how the crowd addressed them.

Jiang Yucheng nodded. He asked as he walked in, "During this period of time, did His Majesty show any signs of waking up?"

The palace servants shook their heads together.

This was originally within Jiang Yucheng's expectations, but he was still quite disappointed when he heard this. *?Everything was clearly done meticulously. Even if we poisoned him too much back then, he should've woken up after such a long time of recuperating. However, His Majesty still doesn't show any changes.?*

This made him even more frustrated.

When Jiang Yucheng wanted to go in to take a closer look, the palace servants outside reported that the crowd was already gradually arriving, and they invited him to go over.

Helpless, Jiang Yucheng could only retract the hand that was about to open the door as he instructed the crowd to take good care of His Majesty. He then turned around to leave.

Peace resumed in Qingfeng Palace once again.

Within the room, Shangguan You—who had been unconscious for a long time—moved his fingers slightly.

...

Minghua Palace.

The leaders of all the clans were once again gathered here. Other than them, the family heads of the aristocratic families in Xi Ling City had also arrived.

The crowd sat at both sides respectively as they asked about each other, but they all had their own thoughts.

This kind of formation was considered big.

Shangguan Wan and Jiang Yucheng didn't appear for the entire while, and discussions gradually sounded within the hall.

"The Third Princess suddenly brought people back from Dahuang Swamp and even gathered so many people here. Something must've happened..."

"I heard that during this Dahuang Swamp journey, we lost a lot of men! Close to 400 Black Guards alone lost their lives!"

"That's not the only thing! Many of the clan disciples were injured too! Did you see how terrible Purple Xiao Sword Sect's Song Luan looked? They went with ten people, but only three came back alive... They should be the most miserable one, right?"

Even though everyone talked with hushed voices, everyone present was basically an elite, so they could still hear it.

Song Luan had indeed heard of the news earlier, and he still hadn't recovered until now. He sat on his seat, and his face turned green as he clenched his hands tightly, with the veins popping out.

However, he still endured it. *Those who can come here have pretty high statuses. If I have a choice, I'm not willing to offend anyone.*

At this point, the announcement sounded again. "Chong Xu Cabinet's Cabinet Master Weichi is here—"

The hall instantly quietened down as everyone looked over with various gazes. They knew all about the news in Xi Ling City the best, so they naturally heard that none of the three Chong Xu Cabinet disciples had returned.

This basically meant that they all died in Dahuang Swamp.

Not long before, Chong Xu Cabinet was still in the limelight and saved their position as the four biggest clans.

The crowd all thought that Chong Xu Cabinet's situation would turn for the better with Chu Liuyue and Qiang Wanzhou. They didn't expect that with a mere Dahuang Swamp trip, they were all gone.

This undoubtedly had a great impact on Chong Xu Cabinet!

But out of everyone's expectations, Weichi Song looked very calm as if he wasn't in pain from losing his disciple.

Welcoming the crowd's gazes, Weichi Song walked in directly and briefly greeted the crowd before sitting down on his seat.

Seeing his nonchalant manner, the crowd didn't know how to react. *?Could it be... that he still doesn't know something has happened??*

Song Luan was in a bad mood, so he couldn't help but speak weirdly. "Cabinet Master Weichi, I heard that none of the three disciples you sent to Dahuang Swamp came back? My condolences!"

Then, the air around seemed to freeze!

Weichi Song looked up and calmly and coldly glanced at Song Luan. "Why? Do you want to cry at the grave?"

Chapter 779: Change

This sentence stumped Song Luan! His face flashed white, green, and then red, and his change of expression was amazing!

He suddenly stood up and angrily said, "What did you say?"

He was originally already very frustrated. Hearing this, how could he hold himself back? He was instantly ignited, and he exploded!

However, Weichi Song still had a calm expression. "Everyone present should've heard what I said clearly. Why are you the only one who didn't hear it? Could it be that your ears aren't working anymore?"

"You—"

"It seems like your ears are the same as your mouth—they're just for decoration. It's fine if you just throw them away." Weichi Song's simple words scolded Song Luan to no end.

The audience was dumbfounded. *?Weichi Song has always been a respected character and did everything in a very discreet manner. This was even more so after Chong Xu Cabinet was continuously impacted more than a year ago. The entire Chong Xu Cabinet became transparent, and this was also the reason why many people gradually disregarded Chong Xu Cabinet.*

They originally thought that the Chu Liuyue trio's deaths would have a grave impact on Weichi Song and the rest. Some even suspected that he wouldn't come to the palace.

However, they didn't expect that not only did he come, but he was also very authoritative! How many people in the entire Xi Ling City dared to talk to Song Luan in this manner?

Quite a few people exchanged glances, and they saw the shock in the other party's eyes. *Could it be that... he suffered too heavy a blow?*

Weichi Song sat on his seat and allowed the countless gazes to scrutinize him as he stayed motionless like a mountain. *Why wouldn't I know about the life or death of my own disciples? Those three kids just didn't come back with Shangguan Wan and the rest, and I know very clearly that they're still fine. However, I have no plans to spread this news.*

Coming here, he knew that someone would definitely bring this up and cause trouble for Chong Xu Cabinet. If they said something else, he would turn a blind eye to it and would be too lazy to calculate it against them.

However, Song Luan had to say that about those three kids and even cursed that they were dead. How could he take this lying down?

Song Luan was mocked until he was confused. In his memory, Weichi Song had never been this rude to anyone.

He was so angry that he laughed and coldly mocked, "Hah! Cabinet Master Weichi, we're all the four biggest clans, and I was just being concerned about you. Isn't it beneath you to talk in this manner?"

Weichi Song glanced at him as if he were looking at a joke. "I heard that seven outstanding disciples from Purple Xiao Sword Sect have died. I didn't expect that you, Master Song, still have the leisure to care about our Chong Xu Cabinet?"

Song Luan was stumped, and he couldn't say anything.

They did have seven disciples that died. Other than his own son—Song Qingnian, whose condition was still decent—the remaining two out of the surviving three suffered from severe injuries. This would very likely affect their future cultivation.

One could almost say that their entire team went down!

One had to know that those who went to Dahuang Swamp this time were all the most outstanding disciples from the Purple Xiao Sword Sect. Now, they had to spend another two to three years recovering from this loss!

At this point, Jian Shuye suddenly spoke from the side. "I heard that Chu Liuyue helped quite a few people in the Mystic Forest. Not only my Dragon Teeth Mountain disciples, but the other clans also received her help more or less, right?"

He spoke as he glanced at Song Luan and purposely asked, "Song Luan, it seems like your precious son was also saved by them, right?"

Song Luan immediately retorted, "Impossible! That didn't happen!"

Jian Shuye looked shocked as he turned to the people beside him. "Oh? May I know if anyone present heard about this?"

The entire hall fell into an eerie silence.

Everyone had a different expression.

Song Luan sneered continuously. "I know Chu Liuyue is capable, but it's hard to even protect herself with her bit of skills, let alone help other people. And even so many? Jian Shuye, you're being ridiculous!"

Then, someone suddenly spoke. "Dragon Teeth Mountain Master is right. My disciples were indeed saved by Chu Liuyue and the rest."

Song Luan immediately knitted his brows and looked over, realizing that the one who spoke was Sheng Yan Harem's master.

He chuckled and was about to mock them when someone beside him said, "My Tian Ji Residence's disciples did bring this up when they came back."

Song Luan's expression froze. *?It's fine if Jian Shuye said it on his own, but the crowd is admitting to it gradually?*

All the other clans kept quiet, and they clearly didn't intend to retaliate.

This stunned the family heads sitting opposite them. As they weren't very involved in this matter, they didn't know much.

They previously knew that many had died during the Dahuang Swamp journey, but they didn't expect that this had happened.

Jian Shuye stroked his chin and broke the peace. "Song Luan, it seems like your precious son didn't tell you on purpose, right? Then, he also wouldn't have said that the Yang Qin'er from your clan chose to self-destruct because she was detected to have problems, right? I heard she almost harmed quite a few people back then."

Song Luan suddenly looked up and was shocked. *?I really didn't know!*

After Song Qingnian and the other two disciples returned, he immediately rushed over to look at them. Those two severely injured ones were quickly sent for treatment, and Song Qingnian didn't say much. He only said that he was very tired and wanted to rest.

Song Luan couldn't even dote on him in time, and he was only glad that his son was still alive. What other things could he care about?

He quickly reacted, and his voice was stern. "Dragon Teeth Mountain Master, you can't say these kinds of things freely!"

At this moment, a voice was suddenly heard from far away. "Whatever he said is true."

The crowd turned around and saw Jiang Yucheng arrive. Nobody announced his arrival, and they didn't know how much he heard outside.

Jiang Yucheng walked into the hall, and everyone gradually kept quiet.

Song Luan became nervous. *Jiang Yucheng was present then, and his identity is special. Since he already said this...*

He hurriedly retracted his gaze. "After Qingnian came back, he looked dispirited. Hence, I told him to rest and didn't understand the situation further..."

Jiang Yucheng lightly shook his head. He actually didn't care much about these things; his attention was mostly on Weichi Song.

Before he came, he coincidentally saw Weichi Song stepping in, and he heard Song Luan's mockeries. He decisively wanted to listen for a while.

What made him feel strange was that Weichi Song looked like he knew that Chu Liuyue and the rest hadn't come back, but he didn't look too sorrowful.

It's fine for Qiang Wanzhou and the rest. Perhaps Weichi Song knows that they're just searching for someone in the Mystic Forest. But Chu Liuyue... She's dead. Weichi Song shouldn't have this reaction...

"Prince Consort!" This anxious shout attracted the crowd's attention.

The crowd looked up together.

A figure was seen quickly entering from outside the hall.

Jiang Yucheng furrowed his brows.

The person who came was Chan Yi.

Why isn't Shangguan Wan here?

He walked over, and before he could say anything, Chan Yi said, "Prince Consort, something happened to the Third Princess suddenly. May I trouble you to make a trip to Huayang Palace?"

Chapter 780: You Want this Too

Once she said this, the crowd was stunned.

Everyone present was invited by Shangguan Wan. *Now that everyone is here, she didn't come and called Jiang Yucheng over instead. What exactly is going on??*

Something cropped up. What could crop up that can make her give up on everyone here and invite Jiang Yucheng alone away? Even if he is the Prince Consort and has an extraordinary status, this still seems rather inappropriate, right? The people present are all reputable in the Tianling Dynasty.?

The crowd exchanged glances and didn't look too good.

Jiang Yucheng also felt it was very strange and secretly knitted his brows. *No matter how unreasonable Shangguan Wan is, she wouldn't dare to mess around at this time. Any single person here isn't someone she can easily offend. Even His Majesty has to be extra courteous to the people here, let alone Shangguan Wan. If she didn't become crazy, something must've really happened.?*

He glanced at Chan Yi and discovered that even though the latter was looking down, her face was tense. She also looked anxious.

His heart sank, and he turned around to look at the crowd. "Everyone, sorry to trouble you, but please wait for a moment. We'll be right back."

Even though the crowd was upset, they wouldn't directly show it and very kindly let him go.

Jiang Yucheng knew that they had offended the crowd this time, but the situation was urgent. He didn't have much of a choice.

He turned toward the direction of Huayang Palace, and Chan Yi quickly followed him.

After the duo left, the hall fell silent again.

The crowd didn't really talk, but many of them were upset. *Shangguan Wan hasn't even officially ascended the throne, yet she's so daring to let so many people wait for her alone. The time has reached, yet she doesn't want to appear and even called Jiang Yucheng away, leaving everyone here. In the past, no matter if it were His Majesty or the Princess, they would never do such rude things.*

The people from aristocratic families were still okay with it, but the few clans' masters were especially unhappy. During the Dahuang Swamp journey, their clans had lost a severe portion of their disciples. They originally wanted to ask Shangguan Wan for an explanation, but who knew she wouldn't even be willing to show herself.

The low and solemn atmosphere spread around the hall.

...

Jiang Yucheng and Chan Yi walked quickly. When they reached Huayang Palace, the former discovered that this place was heavily guarded.

Jiang Yucheng became increasingly uneasy and walked toward the main hall.

Reaching the entrance, Chan Yi stopped. "Prince Consort, the Third Princess said that she'd only allow you to enter."

Jiang Yucheng nodded in frustration and pushed open the door to enter.

The moment he walked in, Chan Yi closed the door.

Jiang Yucheng froze. *What exactly happened that caused the security in Huayang Palace to be so tight?*

"Wan'er?" he called, but nobody answered.

He then surveyed his surroundings but didn't see Shangguan Wan anywhere. However, he saw a broken box of cream by the copper mirror.

He paused for a moment and continued to walk in. *If she isn't here, then she should be in the spa area.*

The moment he reached the door and was hesitating whether he should enter to find her, he heard a painful moan from inside. It was weak and suppressed, with a tinge of deep horror—it was Shangguan Wan!

Jiang Yucheng didn't pause any longer and directly pushed open the door to enter.

...

The moment he walked in, the hot and humid air swarmed toward him.

This was a gigantic spa, and the mist surrounded everywhere, so he couldn't see anyone clearly. However, Jiang Yucheng came here before and knew where everything was.

Through the thick mist, he vaguely saw a figure by the side of the water. "Wan'er, what's the matter?"

He walked toward that person, but he smelled an intense bloody scent the moment he got close. The more important thing was that there was a slight rotting smell amidst the bloody scent.

Jiang Yucheng was more familiar with this smell than ever. *?Isn't this the strange scent from the Mystic Forest??*

This smell was nauseating, but Jiang Yucheng suppressed his disgust and continued forward.

Shangguan Wan was wearing two layers of thin clothes as she laid by the side of the water, her hands tightly holding the floor. Hearing Jiang Yucheng's voice, she moved with much difficulty and said, "Yucheng..."

Her voice was hoarse and weak.

Jiang Yucheng went forward and carefully held her shoulders. "Wan'er, why are you lying here? Everyone is waiting for you..."

His voice suddenly stopped! That was because a pool of blood was near the water!

"Pui—" Shangguan Wan's body shook, and she vomited blood again!

This didn't shock Jiang Yucheng the most. He scanned the surroundings and stunningly discovered that Shangguan Wan's exposed arm became much thinner than before. *?I didn't see her for half a day, yet her arms became thin to the bones! There's clearly something wrong!?*

He was extremely shocked and was about to ask when he saw a faint green light flowing from the bottom of her skin, looking very strange. *?That light... Isn't that light exactly the same as the one I saw in the Mystic Forest?!?*

"Wan'er, what exactly is happening to your body?!" asked Jiang Yucheng anxiously. *?No wonder Shangguan Wan called me over so anxiously! This situation is indeed too strange!?*

Shangguan Wan clutched the other's hands and hopelessly cried. "I-I don't know..."

She just wanted to wash up in the beginning, but she discovered something wrong with her body not long later. The dark-green light surged throughout her body, and it started thinning at an observable speed. It was like her muscles and bones were being absorbed by this thing!

Shangguan Wan had never seen such a scene and was scared to death. Seeing that things were getting out of hand, she could only get Chan Yi to call Jiang Yucheng over.

“Yucheng, you must help me. You must help me!” Shangguan Wan hugged his arm and cried in pain and horror as she begged him continuously.

Jiang Yucheng’s eyes widened. *“The face of the current Shangguan Wan is completely ruined, and her body has thinned to an unpresentable state. Even hugging her feels extremely strange, and her entire person looks neither like a person or a ghost. If it weren’t for my strong heart, I really would’ve flung her away at the first instant.”*

It felt like measles had grown at the place where Shangguan Wan clutched him tightly; it was very itchy and uncomfortable.

He closed his eyes, took a deep breath, and asked, “Did you use that mother tree in the Mystic Forest?”

...

Mystic Forest.

The dark space was silent.

Force surrounded Chu Liuyue, and she was clearly stronger than before.

After digesting the absorbed force once again, Chu Liuyue gradually opened her eyes. Her gaze became much brighter and clearer, and her body was much lighter. Her entire body seemed to be filled with rich energy!

Shangguan Jing couldn’t help but praise her. “Liuyue, if you hang on for a while longer, you should be able to successfully break through to become an advanced stage-five warrior.”

Chu Liuyue smiled delightfully before turning around and squinting her eyes.

A dark-green light appeared from nowhere and went toward the Heaven-Wrecking Holy Seed.

Chu Liuyue teased, “Where did you get such mottled energy? You want that too?”