

Nobel Ruler 171

Chapter 171: Intentional

After Zuo Rong and the others left, Chu Liuyue's actions became much faster. She extended her hand, and a red fire suddenly appeared on her white palm after some concentration.

The small fire energetically jumped around like an elf. Even though it was weak, it was filled with energy.

Chu Liuyue widened her eyes. This was the first time she summoned her force after officially becoming a stage-one warrior.

If it were an average stage-one warrior, it would be impossible for them to circulate their force outside their body. One could only do this when they became a stage-four warrior.

However, heavenly doctors were different. Heavenly doctors used their force to refine medicine.

Since Chu Liuyue was only a stage-one warrior now, she could only summon this small ball of force. Even though it was clearly insufficient for medicine refining, it was much better than the time she used a huge pot to make medicine.

Chu Liuyue found a square cauldron to refine her medicine. She then kept her hand hovered over the cauldron and injected the ball of fire inside.

Second Master Yan gave her this square cauldron to refine medicine back then; Chu Liuyue spotted it when she was checking the gifts. She then brought it to the academy because she lacked such a cauldron.

Hua!

When the small fire landed in the square cauldron, it suddenly burned brightly.

Chu Liuyue's eyes brightened up. *This square cauldron is great!*

Previously, Chu Liuyue already felt that this square cauldron was made of good materials. However, she did not expect it to give such surprising results.

By using this square cauldron to refine medicine, Chu Liuyue could save a bit of energy.

With this convenient item, Chu Liuyue heaved a sigh of relief and prepared to put the herbs into the cauldron in order.

When the second White Xiang Bei landed in the cauldron, the red fire immediately turned it over.

In the blink of an eye, the White Xiang Bei became white powder.

Chu Liuyue was in a rare trance. *When heavenly doctors use their force to refine medicine, the speed can't be compared to an average person. However, this... is way too fast. Does my force have such a strong effect on the herbs?*

Chu Liuyue suddenly noticed something and tightly pressed her lips against each other as she added in the second herb. It was a hundred-year-old castle ginseng, and it was as long as one's forearm. The numerous roots tightly intertwined with each other. The ginseng was hard and cool to the touch.

The most useful portion of the castle ginseng was the sudo in the middle. However, to maximize the ginseng's effectiveness, one had to use a lot of effort to juice the sudo.

Chu Liuyue carefully controlled the fire, and the flame's tip lightly licked the castle ginseng. The surrounding sudo rapidly withered, leaving a drop of orange herb juice in the square cauldron.

Chu Liuyue dazedly looked at it and could not believe it for a short period of time. *This... this medicine refining speed can be compared to a third-grade heavenly doctor!*

The stronger a heavenly doctor's abilities, the faster the medicine refining process. Chu Liuyue had originally prepared for a long battle, but she did not expect her refining speed to be so high.

The most important thing was that the herb juice produced was clear and clean, extremely pure. This had saved her a lot of effort, and the medicine would be even more effective.

Even after looking at it for quite a while, Chu Liuyue was still in disbelief. In her previous life, she had the rare Tianjing Yuan meridian. She also had advantages in warrior, Xuan Master, and heavenly doctor cultivation.

The force that the Tianjing Yuan meridian produced and the standard of the medicine were definitely not things an average person could compare to. However, she clearly only had a Dijing Yuan meridian. However, it seemed no different from her original Tianjing Yuan meridian.

There must be a problem here.

Chu Liuyue had seen heavenly doctors with a Dijing Yuan meridian. Even if they cultivated for many years, their force was naturally limited. They also could never catch up to people with the Tianjing Yuan meridian.

However...

Chu Liuyue wanted to check again if she really had a Dijing Yuan meridian.

Chu Liuyue took a deep breath to calm herself down. I definitely wouldn't remember this matter wrongly. After rebuilding my Yuan meridian, I definitely had a Dijing Yuan meridian. However... the force that this Yuan meridian produces is comparable to that of my previous life's Tianjing Yuan meridian.

Chu Liuyue's heart started beating wildly. Perhaps... this Yuan meridian of mine will become my greatest support.

Chu Liuyue closed her eyes and suppressed her overwhelming emotions. When she opened her eyes once again, the shock and suspicion in her eyes had disappeared; they were replaced by her usual calmness. However, nobody knew what kind of troubles the secret movements behind this calmness would bring.

Chu Liuyue started to add herbs to the cauldron in an orderly fashion.

Time trickled by, and darkness filled the sky. All the herbs that were originally piled up like a hill in Chu Liuyue's room had already been processed by her.

The fire burned on brightly in the square cauldron as the various herbs combined to form an emerald substance that quietly floated.

A strong medicinal fragrance permeated the air.

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“Liuyue, I’m back!” Mu Hongyu’s voice sounded from outside.

Chu Liuyue injected another ball of fire into the square cauldron before heading out.

“Liuyue, you’re really accurate with your guesses! That Ji Yurong is actually—hmm? What’s that fragrant smell?” Excitement filled Mu Hongyu’s face, but her attention was attracted by the herbal fragrance before she could even finish her sentence. She looked up and widened her eyes in shock when she saw the blazing fire in the square cauldron—which stood in the middle of the room.

“My god! Liuyue, you’re actually refining medicine?”

Chu Liuyue was caught between laughter and tears as she pulled Mu Hongyu into the house and locked the door. She then said, “Didn’t I tell you that I would be heading to Heavenly Pharmacy?”

“You didn’t say that you can refine medicine!” Mu Hongyu walked over, utterly surprised. “Such a strong fire... Didn’t you say that you’re only a stage-one warrior? Why do you have enough force to refine medicine?”

Even though Mu Hongyu was not a heavenly doctor, she knew that heavenly doctors had to turn their force into fire when refining medicine. Mu Hongyu knew that she did not have this ability, so she did not become a heavenly doctor.

However... How can Chu Liuyue produce fire as a stage-one warrior?

When Chu Liuyue saw Mu Hongyu's look, she was secretly thankful that Mu Hongyu came back a little late and did not see the pile of herbs in her room.

If not, Mu Hongyu would probably tear the roof off.

"Didn't you say that you discovered something? What's up with Ji Yurong?" Chu Liuyue silently changed the topic.

Mu Hongyu then recovered her senses and hurriedly said, "Oh right! Let me tell you that Ji Yurong indeed has a problem! I planned to follow him today and find out what he's up to. However, he is very careful and has been cultivating for the entire day. He looked perfectly normal. Thus, I talked to the people closest to him to find out more, and guess what? He likes Chu Xianmin!"

Chu Liuyue raised her brows when she heard the name.

"Even though he has never told anyone about this, I heard that he was completely drunk on the day that Chu Xianmin married the Crown Prince. This Ji Yurong has always been an honest and introverted person. He has always closely abided by the rules, so why would he do such a thing on that day?"

Chu Liuyue glanced at the medicine in the square cauldron and asked, "Are both of them on good terms?"

"This... I found this a little weird. The two of them don't seem to interact at all. You also know that I never liked Chu Xianmin, but I never heard Ji Yurong say anything in her favor. If it weren't because I heard that he was drunk, I wouldn't have known that he liked Chu Xianmin!"

Chapter 172: Rumors

Previously, Chu Xianmin was very beautiful; she also came from an established family and was talented. She was once the most famous distinguished woman in the entire Imperial City.

There was no surprise in Ji Yurong liking her. However, they needed to continue investigating to see if Chu Xianmin was involved in this incident.

"Let's not act rashly. Investigate Chu Xianmin secretly first."

Mu Hongyu flung herself onto a nearby chair and propped up her chin with a hand. "Sigh, this is a little hard. You also know that Chu Xianmin isn't staying in the academy. After she married the Crown Prince, she has gone back to Crown Prince Mansion every day. Due to this, it'll take a lot of effort to investigate her part in this incident."

Crown Prince Mansion was heavily guarded, and they could not barge in, even if they had the best abilities in the world.

Chu Liuyue thought for a while before saying, "We're not in a rush. Many people know that I went to Heavenly Pharmacy today. Plenty of people will also be talking about me since Zuo Rong and the other teachers visited me in the afternoon. The person who poisoned Zhongshu is definitely observing the happenings in the school closely. Hence, they will know about this."

“I knew it!” Mu Hongyu clapped her hands and excitedly said, “I already heard a lot of people talking about you when I came back today. They even talked about Mr. Zuo Rong or something like that. It turns out you did it on purpose! Are you planning to lure the enemy out?”

A dark light flashed across Chu Liuyue’s eyes. “The enemy is in the dark, and we’re in the light. Therefore, it is already a bit hard for us to do anything. Since it’s so, we should just go on the offensive. When the other party knows about this, they will have to do something about it. Once they take action, we can then find out who they are.”

Mu Hongyu sized Chu Liuyue up in shock. “Pft! Liuyue, no wonder you can teach the Chu family a lesson! You’re so tricky, just like a wise, old man. Whoever goes against you is surely unlucky!”

Chu Liuyue’s eyes twitched. *Tricky like a wise, old man... Mu Hongyu, do you even know how to speak properly?*

“If others don’t offend me, I won’t offend them.”

I won’t take the initiative to offend anyone, but don’t blame me for being merciless if anyone wants to bully me.

Mu Hongyu rapidly nodded in agreement. Then, she pouted. “Hmph! Let me tell you that this Chu Xianmin is such a tough nut to crack! Even though you taught her a lesson previously, she started committing evil acts after such a short while.”

“Did you know? When everyone thought you were... Um, when they thought something happened to you, Chu Xianmin ran to the teachers at the first instance. She then said that she wanted to replace you as the warrior assessment’s top scholar to meet the Tianling Dynasty’s envoy!”

Mu Hongyu was previously too immersed in her pain and sorrow, so she did not know what happened in the academy. She only found out about this after asking around today.

However, not only was Chu Liuyue not angry when she heard this, but she even laughed instead.

Mu Hongyu asked in disbelief, "Are you not angry?"

"Her character has always been like this. I'd find it weird if she didn't do such things."

Chu Xianmin was currently in a very difficult position. Hence, she naturally wanted to find ways to be in the spotlight once again. If this road did not work, she would still try another.

Mu Hongyu suddenly thought of something and clasped her hands while looking at Chu Liuyue. "That's true... Liuyue, can you do me a favor when you meet the Tianling Dynasty's envoy?"

"What's the matter?"

Mu Hongyu's face had a tinge of sadness. "My father sent me a letter a few days ago, which talked about how my mother isn't doing well again. He heard that the Tianling Dynasty's envoy was going to come, so he wanted me to ask them if they had a way to cure my mother... But how will I have the chance to do so now? So, can you please—"

Chu Liuyue paused in her actions. "It seems like you really look up to the Tianling Dynasty. The other party is just an envoy, yet you're pinning all your hopes on them. Isn't this a bit too unreliable?"

Mu Hongyu's eyes widened. "Liuyue, the envoy is from the Tianling Dynasty! A rumored existence! If even they can't do anything about it, we definitely can't! Sigh, do you know about the Tianling Dynasty's previous Heavenly Princess?"

Chu Liuyue suddenly felt a little awkward.

When Mu Hongyu saw Chu Liuyue's face, she thought that Chu Liuyue had not heard of the princess before. Therefore, she kindly explained, "Sigh, it's normal if you don't know about her. Tianling Dynasty has always been very mysterious, and I only heard about her from my father. Rumors have it that their Heavenly Princess has a Tianjing Yuan meridian and that she was born to be an outstanding genius!"

"Also, she was already a fifth-grade heavenly doctor when she was ten! You also know that our Country Yao Chen barely has any heavenly doctors these few years. Those that are fifth-grade heavenly doctors are even rarer. Just think about how incredible she is!"

Chu Liuyue coughed and touched her nose.

"Sigh, we can't envy those people, and there's no need to anyway. Everything was good about that Heavenly Princess, but in the end, she went crazy from cultivating too much. She eventually died, and I think she wasn't even 20 then..." Mu Hongyu looked emotional.

However, Chu Liuyue was stunned. *Went... crazy?*

She tried to suppress the emotions in her heart and asked, "For a genius like her, her cultivation road should be very smooth. Why did she go crazy from cultivating?"

Mu Hongyu spread her hands. "Who knows? That's what the rumors say anyway. If not, why did she die so suddenly? I heard that her fiancé was devastated..."

Chu Liuyue's heart started beating rapidly. Her mind was blank, and her body was stiff as she asked, "He... Is that what the rumors say?"

"Yeah, but I don't know anything else. Who will know about things that happen thousands of miles away for certain? Hm? Liuyue, you don't seem very well. What's the matter?"

Chu Liuyue recovered her senses and shook her head. "Nothing much. I'm just a little tired from refining the medicine."

Mu Hongyu was slightly worried. "Can you continue? Let me stay here to accompany you."

Chu Liuyue shook her head. "It's okay. You should go back and rest today. You still need to investigate Ji Yurong tomorrow."

"Okay then..." Mu Hongyu was also exhausted from all the running around today. Thus, she stood up to leave after hearing Chu Liuyue's words.

After Mu Hongyu's figure disappeared outside the door, Chu Liuyue finally relaxed her hand.

As she used too much force, her palm was stained with blood. She almost could not control the anger burning in her heart!

I died from crazily cultivating? He's devastated about my death? These people can really fabricate anything! I must make them pay this debt back a hundred-fold!

Chapter 173: Just Like That

At night in Prince Li Mansion's study

Rong Xiu stood in front of the bookshelf with his hands behind his back, and he was carefully picking a book. "Move the top two rows over and the few series that I usually read to the bottom few rows."

As he carefully packed the books, Yu Mo answered, "Okay."

Yan Qing looked at his Master hesitantly. "Master, are you really going to stay at Tian Lu Academy?"

Rong Xiu glanced at him. "Why? Is there a problem?"

"No! It's just that... There are many people at Tian Lu Academy, and I'm afraid many things won't be as convenient as before."

Yan Qing did not expect his master to decide to go to Tian Lu Academy after making a trip to the palace. Yan Qing was overwhelmed.

Yu Mo silently glanced at him. *Are you stupid? Other people might not know why Master is going to Tian Lu Academy, but don't you know it clearly?*

Yan Qing had a severe headache. *Ever since Master came home from Wan Ling Mountain badly injured and quietly sat in the study for an entire night, I knew Master would make a move. However, I did not expect Master to take such drastic measures.*

Yu Mo shook his head. *How can we stop Master from doing what he wants?*

Yan Qing heavily sighed.

“Say whatever you want,” said Rong Xiu suddenly.

Yan Qing knew he could not hide his thoughts from his master, so he decisively said, “Master, if you’re worried about Ms. Liuyue, you can just send more people to protect her in secret. Why must you head there personally? It is currently a very risky period since the Crown Prince is under house arrest, and the Third Prince is stuck in the Imperial City—unable to return to the Northwest Army. It’s very risky for you to make such a big move so suddenly!”

Rong Xiu quietly stared at Yan Qing. “Anything else?”

Yan Qing paused for a while before shaking his head. He was mainly worried about his master’s safety. Even though he knew that his master was very formidable, it was not Rong Xiu’s style to put himself in such a perilous situation.

“Since you’re done talking, help Yu Mo pack my things.”

“Master—” Yan Qing wanted to continue, but he knew that there was no use in saying any more when he saw Rong Xiu’s expression. Hence, Yan Qing could only obey. “Yes.”

Rong Xiu knocked on the table. "Did she go to Heavenly Pharmacy today? Why didn't Yan Ge do anything?"

Yu Mo hurriedly said, "Master, Yan Ge said that he didn't receive any news from Ms. Liuyue. It seems like Ms. Liuyue specifically went to Heavenly Pharmacy."

Rong Xiu lightly replied with an "mm" before asking, "Do you know what she wants to do with all those herbs?"

Yu Mo and Yan Qing looked at each other. "I'm... not too sure."

Rong Xiu slightly raised his brows.

Numerous valuable herbs were part of the gifts Zhen Bao Pavilion gave her. It was impossible that Chu Liuyue did not know that going to Zhen Bao Pavilion would be more convenient for her if she wanted anything. However, she went to Heavenly Pharmacy. This was definitely on purpose.

"Are you sure you don't know?"

Yu Mo coughed and secretly thought to himself, *As expected, I can't hide it from Master, but...*

He clenched his teeth and bravely said, "I heard that Ms. Liuyue went to Heavenly Pharmacy to take herbs to help a classmate with their injury."

Rong Xiu leaned against the chair with his ten fingers intertwined. His posture looked lazy, but it gave off an indescribable suppression. "Hm? What kind of classmate?"

Yu Mo closed his eyes as if he viewed death as going home. "He's... Liao Zhongshu!"

The entire room fell into dead silence when Yu Mo finished speaking.

Rong Xiu's lips strangely curved up. "So... it's a male classmate..."

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The next morning, Chu Liuyue finally finished refining the bowl of medicine. She planned to deliver it to Liao Zhongshu after placing the medicine in a sealed jade box.

Once she walked to the door, she saw Mu Hongyu running over with an excited face. "Liuyue, Liuyue! Big news!"

Chu Liuyue could not help but laugh. "What kind of news can make you so agitated? Did you find any evidence?"

Mu Hongyu's face immediately darkened. "Not really, but it isn't that easy!" However, she quickly cheered up once again, and her eyes shone brightly. "Did you know? Prince Li came to Tian Lu Academy today!"

Chu Liuyue's heart skipped a beat. "Why is he here? Did he enroll in the academy too?"

Mu Hongyu did not notice that Chu Liuyue sounded very familiar with him, when Chu Liuyue talked about Prince Li. Mu Hongyu had even thought that Chu Liuyue was confused. Hence, she giggled.

“How is that possible? Prince Li has always been weak and sickly, so how can he enter our academy? I heard he came here to pay respects to his mother. Back then, Consort Wan was a teacher here at Tian Lu Academy for a period of time. She was not buried in the imperial mausoleum afterward, so Prince Li came here.”

Chu Liuyue found it a little weird. “Is that... appropriate?”

“What’s inappropriate about this? Both the academy’s director and the Emperor agreed to this, so Prince Li can obviously come. Did you know? Back then, Consort Wan was the only consort His Majesty doted on in the entire palace! Now that Prince Li wants to pay his respects to her, the Emperor will definitely agree!”

“Besides, the academy’s director also seems to have some relations with Consort Wan back then! Elder Sun is already bringing Prince Li into the academy. If it isn’t because everyone didn’t dare to join in the commotion of watching Prince Li, I’d be there right now!”

Chu Liuyue’s brows slightly moved. “What’s there to see?”

“What’s there not to see? Rumors have it that this prince has an outstanding appearance. Many women pray for him to look at them. Hm? Liuyue, I remember that you and Prince Li both went to the Crown Prince’s banquet previously, so you should’ve seen him, right? Quickly, tell me if he’s as handsome as jade and extremely unique, just like what the rumors claim.”

Chu Liuyue suddenly had the urge to slap her own forehead. However, a person's demonic appearance appeared in her mind.

She coughed. "... He's just like that."

Mu Hongyu was unsatisfied with this answer and continued questioning Chu Liuyue. "I heard that Prince Li stood up for you when the Fourth Princess put you in a difficult spot. Were you... not touched at all?"

Chu Liuyue immediately said, "How can that be possible? He—"

Before she could finish her sentence, a familiar tall figure entered her view. Her words suddenly got stuck in her throat.

Mu Hongyu weirdly asked, "Really?"

"Of course, it's real." A low and cold voice suddenly sounded from behind in a gentle yet lazy tone as if the wind blew across the surface of a lake. "After all, I'm 'just like that' in Ms. Liuyue's eyes. Am I right, Ms. Liuyue?"

Chapter 174: Are You Two Close?

The man in front of the duo wore a white robe and looked pure and clean. His appearance and five features looked as if they had been carefully carved by the heavens. His eyes, which were as quiet as the night sky, were especially attractive. They were clean and pure yet mysterious.

His thin lips curved up slightly, and his originally handsome and calm appearance looked slightly coy. The man's gaze landed on Chu Liuyue, and his lips curved up into a distracted smile.

Mu Hongyu was dazed for quite a while. When she finally recovered her senses, she widened her eyes. "Prince Li?"

Rong Xiu slightly nodded. "Princess Yong Ping."

Ever since Mu Hongyu came to the Imperial City and entered Tian Lu Academy, she had always been low-key and rarely talked about her identity. She had not heard 'Princess Yong Ping' in a long while.

When she heard Rong Xiu say her title, she could not help but become dazed again. "You know me?"

Rong Xiu lightly smiled. "I've heard Ms. Liuyue talk about you before. Now that we've met, Princess, you're indeed straightforward and generous as described. You really do take after Prince Ping Jiang."

Rong Xiu's praises immediately put Mu Hongyu in a good mood. She admired her father the most, and she was even happier to hear other people compliment him than when they complimented her.

She curiously asked, "Prince Li, have you seen my father?"

"Even though I haven't met him before, I've long heard of his name."

Mu Hongyu thought for a while and agreed. Prince Li had a frail body since he was young and was sent to Mingyue Tianshan to recuperate. He didn't even return to the Imperial City much, let alone go to a faraway place to see her father. However, he still had good taste!

Mu Hongyu happily pulled Chu Liuyue's sleeves and softly said, "Liuyue, your expectations are too high. I think Prince Li is not bad!"

Chu Liuyue speechlessly looked at her. I really don't know when Mu Hongyu's brainless nature will change. She was bribed with just one compliment. Perhaps she will be sold by someone in the future, and she might even help the person count the money!

"Hey, he said that you talked about me in front of him. Are you very close to him?" Mu Hongyu suddenly thought of something and looked at Chu Liuyue with a weird gaze. "You were still saying—"

"His Highness has helped me a few times before, and he casually asked me a few questions about the academy when I went to thank him, so I talked about you," said Chu Liuyue without a stir in emotions.

Who doesn't know how to lie? Since he purposely exposed me, don't blame me for doing so!

Mu Hongyu understood what she said. "No wonder... I think he probably wanted to come to the academy then, so he asked you about this, right?"

Chu Liuyue's eyelids slightly twitched.

Rong Xiu silently looked at the jade box in Chu Liuyue's hands. "It seems like you're busy. I won't disturb you further."

Chu Liuyue bent her knees and bowed. "Goodbye, Your Highness."

Rong Xiu silently looked at her before turning around to leave with Elder Sun.

Mu Hongyu could not help but rub her arms. "Liuyue, why do I suddenly feel cold?"

Chu Liuyue coughed. "Let's go! If we're too slow, this medicine will cool down."

...

The two of them quickly reached Liao Zhongshu's lodgings.

Mu Hongyu went up and was about to knock on the door when it suddenly opened.

Ji Yurong was standing inside. He still had his usual gentle and harmless smile adorned. "Zhongshu said that you'd come today, so I've been waiting for you here. Quickly, come in!"

Chu Liuyue sized him up. Compared to the previous day, he looked much more natural, as if nothing was wrong. However, this precisely proved that he had a problem.

When Mu Hongyu secretly investigated him yesterday, she did not completely block out the news. Hence, Ji Yurong would find out about it if he asked around. However, he did not seem any different today, which clearly indicated that he was hiding something.

In a seemingly smiling manner, Mu Hongyu said, "Oh, how embarrassing! You must have been tired from taking care of him for the past few days, right? We're just here to see him, so you can carry on with your own tasks."

Ji Yurong's facial expression was slightly stiff, but he quickly recovered from it. "We're all friends, and we live together. This is something I should do. Then... you guys can go up first. I'll make some tea for you later. I couldn't entertain you properly when you came here yesterday."

"Are you very free today?" Mu Hongyu crossed her arms. "I remember that you have a class today."

Anxiety flashed across Ji Yurong's eyes. "Ah? Oh, I took leave today. I finished using my cultivation time at Jiuyou Tower, so I was planning to do some assignments today."

Mu Hongyu did not doubt him. "This is pretty urgent, so we shan't bother you anymore." She was clearly asking him to leave.

Ji Yurong was slightly hesitant. "A-actually, it isn't that urgent... I'm afraid Zhongshu will..."

"The two of us are here. Are you worried that we can't look after him?"

"No, no! T-then, I'll take my leave. You guys can go ahead." Ji Yurong knew that he would make matters worse if he continued talking, so he could only leave indignantly.

When his figure disappeared, Mu Hongyu then pouted. "Can't he think of another way to watch us in secret?"

Chu Liuyue did not say anything and went up the stairs.

...

Liao Zhongshu looked even worse than the day before, and he was even more lethargic.

Mu Hongyu was stunned. "Did he poison you again?"

Liao Zhongshu shook his head with much difficulty. "After you told me about him yesterday, I didn't touch any of the things he gave me."

Chu Liuyue checked his bowl and saw that it was still clean. "The Red Blood Gu's poison is very strong. Even if he doesn't poison you again, the toxins will just get worse. In the later stages, you'll just collapse like a mountain," said Chu Liuyue as she took out the bowl of medicine from the box.

An intense herbal fragrance permeated through the air.

Mu Hongyu took a deep breath in and instantly felt comfortable.

Chu Liuyue passed the medicine to Liao Zhongshu. "This medicine can only stop the poison temporarily. I'll think of another way to get the antidote."

Liao Zhongshu did not say anything else and finished the medicine in one go.

“You trust us quite a lot,” said Chu Liuyue.

Liao Zhongshu’s pale face revealed a helpless yet genuine smile. “In my current state, who else can I believe if not you?”

They had once been through life and death together. Besides, this was the only path he could choose now.

“Rest well first. Hongyu and I will continue investigating.”

Liao Zhongshu nodded. “Sorry for the trouble. I really don’t know how to repay this favor...”

“Liuyue! Hongyu! We’re back!” Before Liao Zhongshu could finish his sentence, Cen Hu’s voice sounded from downstairs.

Chu Liuyue let Liao Zhongshu rest on his own, and she walked out with Mu Hongyu.

When they reached the first floor, they saw that Cen Hu and Gu Mingfeng had come back. Gu Mingfeng’s face was injured, and it seemed like he had been through a lot these past two days.

Mu Hongyu was shocked, and she hurriedly walked forward. “Mingfeng, what happened to you?”

Gu Mingfeng looked down slightly. “Just some minor injuries.”

“How are these minor injuries?”

Gu Mingfeng clearly looked like he was brutally beaten up. However, Gu Mingfeng did not say anything else, and it was clear that he did not want to talk about it. Originally, he did not want to see Chu Liuyue and Mu Hongyu with his injured face, but Cen Hu forcefully dragged him over.

Chu Liuyue glanced at him and retracted her gaze. She asked in understanding, “The Gu family’s members did it?”

Chapter 175: On Purpose

Gu Mingfeng did not say anything, but his silence meant an affirmative.

“How can the Gu family be so harsh on you?” Mu Hongyu was shocked. *No matter what, Gu Mingfeng still was part of the Gu family’s bloodline! How could they do such a thing?*

Even though she knew that Gu Mingfeng was never liked in the Gu family and was treated very differently from Gu Mingzhu, they had gone overboard by treating him in this manner after he was chased out of the family.

She really did not understand why Gu Yunfei hated Gu Mingfeng this much, even though both of them were his biological children.

Gu Mingfeng calmly said, “They just don’t like me. I’m already used to it.”

Chu Liuyue stared at him for quite a while. After making sure that there was no sadness in his eyes, she could not help but laugh. "Leaving is better than staying in such a family. It's a good thing you could stop the damage in time! When Liao Zhongshu gets better, we can all go to Phoenix Restaurant to celebrate."

Gu Mingfeng did not expect Chu Liuyue to be so straightforward, but he saw that her eyes were genuine. *That's true; she left her family earlier than me. Even though Chu Liuyue willingly severed ties with them while I was forced out of the family, the outcome is still similar.*

The stone in Gu Mingfeng's heart was finally put down, and he felt a lot more relaxed for some reason. He exhaled. "Mm."

Cen Hu asked, "Oh yeah, what did you say about Zhongshu earlier?" He had been outside for an entire day and night, so he did not know what happened in the academy.

Chu Liuyue silently surveyed the surroundings. "I can't explain it clearly in a sentence or two, so I'll tell you in detail when we have the time later on. Cen Hu, you and Gu Mingfeng should go back and rest first. If there's any news, Hongyu and I will tell you immediately."

Cen Hu did not suspect anything else and readily agreed.

Gu Mingfeng knitted his brows, but he did not say anything.

...

"Look, that's the place your mother lived in back then." Elder Sun walked alongside Rong Xiu and introduced the academy to him.

Rong Xiu followed his gaze and looked over. There was a small stream that shone brightly under the light, and a quiet house below the mountain stood near the end of the stream.

“The Xuan Master students lived at the side of her lodging. She loved the serenity, and the students respected her very much. Hence, they rarely disturbed her, even though they lived nearby,” said Elder Sun as he recalled the gentle and magnanimous woman.

“Oh, yes. You should know that your mother was a Xuan Master and that she taught here before, right?”

Rong Xiu nodded. “I heard Father mention it before.”

Elder Sun shook his head and sighed. “Your mother was very talented as a Xuan Master. If she had a few more years, it was highly possible she could become an outstanding Xuan Master. But...”

Her life was unfortunately short, and she passed on after staying here for two years.

Even Rong Xiu—who had been sent to Mingyue Tianshan shortly after he was born—had not seen her more than a few times.

While they talked, the two of them arrived in front of the yard. A peach wood plaque was hung on the door, and it was engraved with a few words: Yi Feng Courtyard.

“Back then, she carved this on the wood plaque herself.” Elder Sun looked at Rong Xiu. “Nobody has come here in many years. When I heard that you were coming, I wanted to send a few people to clean the place up. However, I felt that everything here was her old belongings, so I decided to leave them here for you.”

“Thank you for your consideration, Elder Sun.”

“It’s just a small matter. There’s no need to thank me. Then... I’ll take my leave first.”

“Goodbye, Elder Sun.”

When Elder Sun left, Rong Xiu pushed open the door and walked in.

Yi Feng Courtyard was not very big, but every inch of it was simple and elegant, proving the owner’s taste. The courtyard had a tall, lush peach tree, unlike the usual flowers and grass an average person would plant.

Under the peach tree was a rattan chair. Beside the rattan chair was a marble table, where some tea equipment laid on top.

Rong Xiu waved his robe, lightly swept away the dust on the rattan chair, and lay on it.

The chair creaked as it had not been sat on for a while.

Rong Xiu closed his eyes.

The light wind blew over and swept past his snow-white clothes. A few emerald leaves dropped down and landed on his face and body.

An extremely small and thin leaf coincidentally landed between his lips. The two contrasting colors painted a very beautiful picture.

This was the scene that Chu Liuyue saw when she walked over from Shuang Qing Lake's bridge.

She and Mu Hongyu took action separately, so she wanted to go back to take some items. Before she even reached her lodging, her eyes were attracted by the scenery in front of her.

Yi Feng Courtyard and the bridge were very near each other, so Chu Liuyue could very clearly see the scene.

She blinked.

She had noticed the courtyard before. It was very quiet and tranquil as nobody had gone there before.

Is that the place where Rong Xiu's mother stayed when she was alive? Her gaze swept across Rong Xiu's face.

Under the sunlight, his skin was like jade and even a little translucent; his eyes were like a painting. His nose was also high, and his cheeks were properly defined. Every inch of him was perfect.

This kind of person had literally received extra blessings from the heavens, which allowed them to have such an outstanding appearance and demeanor.

Chu Liuyue suddenly recalled her comment about his appearance: 'Just like that.'

She suddenly felt a little guilty. If this did not count for anything, nobody in the world had the right to say that they were good-looking.

As if he had noticed her gaze, Rong Xiu's lashes fluttered, and he suddenly opened his eyes to look over.

The two of them stared straight into each other's eyes.

Rong Xiu seemed to have rested for quite a while under the tree as his eyes looked lazy and dazed. It was as though he had not woken up yet, but his eyes were still as clear and pure as ever.

Chu Liuyue instinctively looked away as if she was caught red-handed for doing something against her conscience. However, she regretted it once she turned her head.

Doesn't this show that I'm clearly hiding something? Previously, I didn't feel much when I saw him all day and night. However, why does this one glance make me feel so uncomfortable? If I walk away now, Rong Xiu will probably mock me and say that I ran away in embarrassment.

Thinking of this, Chu Liuyue clenched her teeth and looked over again, wanting to use her killer gaze to shock him.

Look! So what if I'm looking? He is just lying there, and everybody who walks past can see him! There's nothing wrong with me taking a look at him.

A few girls' voices sounded behind her.

"Wait, that's... Prince Li?"

"I think so! He really is exactly like what the rumors said—he has a unique and outstanding presence!"

"It seems like he's staying there? That's quite near to us!"

"Shh, keep quiet! Aren't you afraid someone will hear you? You need to be more pristine."

Without turning around to see who they were, it was not hard to imagine their excitement and admiration.

Chu Liuyue suddenly felt a little irritated. *Did that fellow lie there on purpose? How can the honorable Prince Li not care about so many people passing by and judging him?*

When she thought of this, her eyes suddenly looked more annoyed.

Rong Xiu looked at her and suddenly opened his mouth slightly, holding the leaf in his mouth.

Chapter 176: Qing Jiao Competition

From Chu Liuyue's angle, she could clearly see him stick out his tongue and curl the leaf into his mouth.

His move was very flirtish, but his eyes looked pure and clean. It was as though he did not realize his previous action was so—

L-U-S-T-F-U-L!

Chu Liuyue's face immediately burned up. He's too overboard! It's fine that he secretly crawls into my bed at night, yet he actually dares to seduce me openly now! It doesn't matter if he seduces me, but there are still people around!

Chu Liuyue subconsciously turned around and realized that the few women who spoke previously could not see what Rong Xiu was doing. Maybe it was because they were positioned very far to the side.

For some reason, Chu Liuyue heaved a sigh of relief in her heart. However, something seemed to be stuck in her chest.

She pressed her lips against each other tightly, decisively retracted her gaze, and walked towards her lodging.

Bang!

She slammed the door tightly shut.

Rong Xiu looked at the scene, and his eyes suddenly gained a hint of a smile. *Is she... angry?*

...

Chu Liuyue returned to the room to find her things, but the earlier scene kept replaying in her head. Her heart was irritated for some reason, but she could not pinpoint why. She decisively went up to the second floor and tried to calm down.

However, she saw Rong Xiu when she pushed open the window.

Rong Xiu's place and hers were not too far away, so she could directly see him from the second floor.

Chu Liuyue was even more annoyed, so she closed the window.

Rong Xiu's arrival at Tian Lu Academy was too sudden and accidental. He had always claimed that he was sick and stayed in Prince Li Mansion, not even heading out. He even curtly rejected everybody's invitations.

Everyone in the Imperial City knew how weak Prince Li was and that he could not withstand strong winds, let alone meet many people.

He clearly had his own reasons for acting like he previously did. But why did he come to the academy?

Isn't this moving himself from a secret place and into the open? A guess appeared in Chu Liuyue's mind, but she did not quite believe it. Did Rong Xiu do this because...

Her shoulder sank when a furry thing jumped on her.

Chu Liuyue glanced at it. "You're awake?"

The little thing stretched his body and nodded in satisfaction.

Chu Liuyue smiled and pinched its ear. "You really can sleep for a long time."

The blood ferret fell into a deep sleep for two days and two nights after coming back from Wan Ling Mountain.

Chu Liuyue picked it up and checked its body in detail. She was a little surprised. "You've recovered from your injuries?"

Even though the blood ferret wasn't severely injured before, it did have a few wounds. However, those wounds completely disappeared in a mere two days.

Not only did the injuries not form scabs, but they had completely healed. It was as if the blood ferret had never gotten injured!

When one looked at the little fellow's body now, nobody would believe that it had been attacked by a black flying python before.

The little fellow blinked.

“I remember that blood ferrets don’t have such strong recovery power...” Chu Liuyue muttered to herself.

In her previous life, she had seen some aristocratic daughters raise blood ferrets. But they only treated them as pets. This was because blood ferrets had weak combat skills and often had to be meticulously protected.

However, this one...

“Since you’ve followed me, I’ll have to give you a name. How about... Xiao Qiang[1]?”

The little fellow’s fur stood on end, and it bared its teeth as its tail crazily moved around. *No! I still want to survive in society!*

Chu Liuyue looked at it and seriously added, “Look! You’re so strong, so this name is the most appropriate one for you, right?”

No! The little fellow rolled its eyes up and directly pretended that it was dead.

Chu Liuyue shook it. “Since you don’t like it, I’ll change to another one. What about... Tuan Zi?”

The little fellow’s legs became even straighter as it directly closed its eyes. It refused to wake up and face this terrible world.

“Since you’ve silently agreed, then we’ll stick with this one!”

The little fellow immediately opened its eyes.

Chu Liuyue held its head. “It’s too late.”

Tuan Zi kept its mouth shut, filled with grievances. *Forget it! What else can I ask for after following such an owner?*

Chu Liuyue looked at it, and vague doubts emerged in her heart. *Blood ferrets are just third-grade fiends. Logically speaking, their intelligence should be around the same as a one or two year-old’s. However, this one is clearly much smarter. It really has so many mysteries...*

Knock, knock...

Knocking sounds could be heard from downstairs.

Chu Liuyue curiously went down to open the door and saw Si Yang—whom she had not seen in a long time. “Si Yang? Why are you here?”

When Si Yang saw her, he immediately went forward and scrutinized her. “Liuyue, you’re really okay! You’re so strong.”

Previously, he did not dare believe the news he heard. However, he was even more shocked when he personally saw her today.

Everybody clearly knew how dangerous Wan Ling Mountain was back then, yet Chu Liuyue had managed to survive on her own!

“Actually, I wanted to come over yesterday. However, something happened in my family, so I’m late.”

Chu Liuyue did not mind that and smiled. “I’m doing well.”

Si Yang saw Tuan Zi on her shoulders and was slightly shocked. “Isn’t this a blood ferret? Since when did you obtain it?”

“I... I coincidentally met it at Wan Ling Mountain. I thought that we were pretty fated, so I brought it back with me.”

“What? You kept it? Liuyue, even though this blood ferret is cute, its combat skills are very weak. It’s pretty troublesome for you to bring it along!”

Tuan Zi’s eyes widened halfway through Si Yang’s words.

Chu Liuyue originally thought that it would get angry, but Tuan Zi just coldly glared at Si Yang. Then, Tuan Zi closed its eyes and swept its tail as if it did not care about Si Yang at all.

Si Yang’s lips twitched. “W-was it despising me?”

Chu Liuyue nodded in acknowledgment. “Obviously.”

Si Yang immediately doubted how life worked. *How dare a mere third-grade blood ferret look down on me?*

“Do you have another reason for finding me today?” asked Chu Liuyue.

Si Yang angrily glanced at Tuan Zi before saying, “Yeah! You missed lessons two days ago, so Mr. Dongfang asked me to come and ask you if you’re participating in the Qing Jiao Competition half a month later.”

“Qing Jiao Competition?”

“Don’t you know? It’s an annual Xuan Master competition! During the competition, the neighboring Country Xing Luo and Country Huai Cang will send their youngest talents to compete with us. The Qing Jiao Competition is very grand, and they give out great rewards each year. Do you want to join the Xuan Master competition?”

[1] ‘Xiao Qiang’ in Chinese is another way of calling a cockroach, and ‘Qiang’ also means strong.

Chapter 177: I Have Someone that I Like

Chu Liuyue was not very interested in it and wanted to reject him. However, an idea popped up in her head, and she asked, “What rewards are there?”

Si Yang chuckled. "Many! The Qing Jiao Competition is organized by each countries' top academy. Other than Tian Lu Academy, there's still Country Huai Cang's Nan Feng Academy and Country Xing Luo's Tai Yan Academy. This year, it's our turn to be the host."

"According to the rules, other than the common rewards, the most important thing is that the top Xuan Master can choose whichever academy they want to borrow Xuan formation drawings from for a month! Think about how much that's worth!"

These three academies were the elites in their respective countries. All of them had formidable libraries. It would be the greatest reward for any Xuan Master to enter any of the academies to borrow and read their Xuan formation drawings for a month.

Chu Liuyue thought to herself as she said, "The rewards are pretty worth it... Help me tell Mr. Dongfang that I'll participate in the Qing Jiao Competition."

"That's right! Even though there are seniors above us, and it's not very likely for us to come in first, you're one of the top students in our Xuan Master cohort. Hence, you should come and hold the frontline for us," said Si Yang.

He suddenly thought of something, so he curiously asked, "Oh, yeah. Since you're participating in the Xuan Master competition, then... are you still going for the warrior one?"

Looking at his nosy appearance, Chu Liuyue could not help but laugh. "Does it matter if I go or not?"

"Of course, it does!" Si Yang raised his voice. "If you don't go, won't Chu Xianmin begin stirring up trouble for you? I've seen her diligently cultivating, and she looks like she really wants to make a comeback."

Chu Liuyue suddenly remembered that Mu Hongyu had previously mentioned Chu Xianmin thought she was dead. Mu Hongyu also mentioned that Chu Xianmin even wanted to replace her as the warrior assessment's top scholar.

"Can one person only join one event?"

"Of course not! If you want, you can join two or even three events!"

Chu Liuyue nodded in understanding. "Then, I'll think about it."

"Aiya, what's there to consider? Are you still thinking about your sisterhood in the Chu family? She has already married the Crown Prince, and she's in his family now."

Chu Liuyue's heart tingled as she calmly looked at him. "What has this got to do with her marrying the Crown Prince?"

"T-this... I was just randomly saying something! Ahem!" Si Yang felt that he had accidentally said the wrong thing and immediately avoided Chu Liuyue's inspecting gaze guiltily.

Chu Liuyue inwardly thought, *Everyone knows that I've already severed ties with the Chu family. I have even exposed Lu Yao in public not long ago. Any human being can tell that I have fallen out with the Chu family, so why would I still care about our so-called sisterhood?*

Chu Liuyue curled her lips into a half-smile. "Si Yang, you don't actually want to ask about the sisterhood between Chu Xianmin and me, but my current attitude towards the Crown Prince, right?"

Si Yang immediately denied it. "D-did I?"

Si Yang did not expect Chu Liuyue to catch onto his single question. However, his voice was trembling, and his gaze was shaky. Anyone could tell that Chu Liuyue was right.

Chu Liuyue was not angry but found it strange. "I haven't had anything to do with the Crown Prince for a long time. Why are you so curious about this?"

Si Yang coughed to hide his thoughts. "I-I was just casually asking about it... Didn't you really like the Crown Prince previously?"

The last sentence was as soft as a mosquito's buzz, but Chu Liuyue still heard it clearly.

Looking at Si Yang, she suddenly realized something. "I don't think me liking the Crown Prince or not has anything to do with you, right?"

"However, my Big Brother..." Si Yang spoke halfway and suddenly realized what he said. He hurriedly covered his mouth.

Chu Liuyue's gaze became fainter. "I already told Si Ting earlier on that we're just classmates and that I don't want to be anything more. It seems like he didn't understand my words."

"No! I wanted to ask you myself," said Si Yang. Suddenly, he was taken aback. "Wait. Y-you mean you've already talked about this?"

The main point was that Big Brother was already rejected! No wonder! It was no wonder Big Brother seemed very cold when I told him that Chu Liuyue was back and asked him to visit her. It turns out...

Chu Liuyue squinted her eyes. *It seemed like Si Yang did come on his own accord.*

“I’ll let this matter slide, but you can’t mention it again.” Then, Chu Liuyue tried to leave.

Si Yang hurriedly stopped her and awkwardly asked, “Why? Big Brother... He’s genuine to you. Why won’t you consider him?”

Si Ting was handsome, came from a distinguished family, and was very talented. Many young women in the Imperial City wanted to attract him. However, Si Ting was never interested in anyone.

It was extremely hard for him to like someone, yet he was rejected so decisively and straightforwardly.

Si Yang did not get it. “How does my Big Brother not deserve you?”

Chu Liuyue was calm. “It’s not whether he deserves me or not; it’s about whether I want to consider him.”

Si Ting was great, but she did not like him. Thus, she decisively cut him off from the start. “Besides, Si Ting and I have already reached an agreement. This is already in the past, so you don’t have to—”

Si Yang finally could not take it any longer and exclaimed, “What do you mean in the past? If it’s in the past, why would he risk his life to save you at Wan Ling Mountain that day?”

The surroundings suddenly fell into silence.

Si Ting also went there to save me? Chu Liuyue raised her brows. "I didn't know about this."

Si Yang looked away. "He went with Elder Sun that day, but they met Mu Hongyu and the rest at the foot of the mountain first. Thus, Elder Sun told him to stay with them. I know that he might not have helped you, b-but..."

Since Si Ting was willing to make such a choice, it means that he was willing to risk his life for her.

Chu Liuyue instantly felt that the situation was getting difficult. She never liked owing people favors, especially this kind. However, she could not say anything about it because Si Ting had wanted to save her.

"I know now. I'll thank him when I have the chance later on, but there's really nothing else."

When Si Yang heard this, he instantly felt uncomfortable. He determinedly said, "If you don't accept him now, you might regret it in the future!"

"I won't regret it."

"How do you know? Feelings—"

Chu Liuyue was quite frustrated and decisively said, "Because I already have someone that I like!"

Chapter 178: Request for Tea

Si Yang was stunned. "W-what did you say?"

Chu Liuyue also did not know why she suddenly said that herself. But when she saw Si Yang's expression, she decided to continue with the conversation. "I made myself very clear. Do you need me to repeat it again?"

"No, no... Who do you like?" asked Si Yang instinctively. *Who can be more outstanding than Si Ting in the Imperial City? Didn't Chu Liuyue previously say that she still liked the Crown Prince? Why has her crush turned into someone else in such a short time?*

"Are you lying to me? Who is he?"

"Whoever he is has nothing to do with you. That's my own business. Si Yang, I treat you two as my friends. Both in the past and in the future." *However, my relationship with both of you will only go this far.*

Si Yang understood the meaning behind Chu Liuyue's words, but he refused to believe it in his heart. However, Chu Liuyue didn't seem to be lying, considering her calm expression and clear eyes.

After being conflicted for half a day, Si Yang frustratedly rubbed his face. "Okay! I promise that I'll never bother you about this ever again! We'll still be friends in the future!"

Chu Liuyue's lips curved up into a slight smile. "Okay."

Si Yang still felt a little defeated. "I'll take my leave then. I'll tell Mr. Dongfang about you participating in the Qing Jiao Competition."

After saying that, he turned around to leave. If he stayed any longer, he would really annoy Chu Liuyue.

Chu Liuyue raised her voice and said, "Thank you so much!"

Si Yang did not turn back. Instead, he waved his hands and quickly left.

Chu Liuyue stood rooted to the ground for quite a while. Suddenly, she thought of something and turned around.

Far away, Rong Xiu was lying on the rattan chair. His eyes were also shut as if he had fallen asleep again.

Considering the distance, he probably didn't hear me. Right...? Chu Liuyue started to become anxious. She hurriedly retracted her gaze and left.

The surroundings became quiet once again.

The light breeze blew gently, and a leaf landed on Rong Xiu's face. He turned his head slightly and opened his eyes.

His pair of clear eyes seemed much deeper now as if he suffered inner turmoil that confused people for no reason.

How was he asleep? He had obviously been awake all this while.

Rong Xiu's lips slowly curved up into a smile, which extended to his eyes. Then, he took the leaf out of his mouth and folded it.

A clear and relaxing whistle reverberated throughout the air.

Chu Liuyue—who had already walked quite the distance—heard the sound coming from behind her and suddenly froze.

...

When Yan Qing brought the items over, he felt that his master seemed to be in an especially good mood. As he swept the yard, he kept looking up to glance at Master.

When Rong Xiu plucked another leaf and placed it by his lips, Yan Qing could not help but ask, "Master, do you like blowing peach leaves this much?"

Rong Xiu raised his brows. "Do I?"

Yan Qing was speechless.

So many peach leaves—which you have blown—are on the floor. Do you think I’m blind? You’ve been whistling for more than an hour! Even if you’re not tired, my ears are about to burst. Yan Qing yelled in his heart, but he definitely did not dare to say his thoughts aloud.

“Is it awful?”

Yan Qing suddenly raised his thumbs. “Melodic.”

Rong Xiu nodded in satisfaction. Actually, it didn’t matter if the whistles were pleasing to the ears. It was more important for someone to hear it.

“Your Highness, I’ve already unpacked the items you’ve brought from the mansion. Do you want to check if you’re still lacking in anything?”

Rong Xiu thought for a while. “I’m missing some tea.”

“I’ll make some tea for you right away,” said Yan Qing. *How can you not be thirsty after blowing for so long?*

“It’s okay; I’ll go request for some tea later.”

Yan Qing obediently answered him as he looked at the faraway yard and silently prayed for his master. *Ms. Liuyue, you must come back early!*

...

Chu Xianmin did not have a good time for the past two days. She originally thought that Chu Liuyue was dead and that she could replace Chu Liuyue as the warrior assessment's top scholar. Thereby elevating her status in Crown Prince Mansion and the Chu family.

However, Chu Liuyue actually managed to come back alive, and she looked fine!

Chu Xianmin's plan was ruined, and she had to rethink everything. The current situation was even worse than before.

Chu Xianmin was overwrought as she stared at the letter her father, Chu Yan, sent her. Mother actually instigated Madam Gu to cause a scene in front of the academy? What was she thinking? It's fine if she wants to cause trouble for Chu Liuyue, but why did she have to drag herself into the mess?

If she wrote an anonymous letter, nobody would find out about her actions. The trouble today also wouldn't exist! The Gu family now has blackmail over her, and they definitely won't let this matter slide.

Madam Gu humiliated herself and tarnished the entire Gu family's reputation. They would definitely push this blame to Lu Yao. Lu Yao already had a hard time at the Chu family, and this was just adding oil to the fire.

Chu Xianmin looked at the letter in her hands. The words were very messy, which clearly looked like they were written in a hurry.

Chu Yan was currently injured, so how could he save Lu Yao? He could only pin all his hopes on Chu Xianmin.

However, when the Crown Prince found out that Chu Liuyue was alive, he harshly chided Chu Xianmin. Right now, she could not even save herself, let alone have so much energy to do something else.

She frustratedly tore the letter into shreds and walked out.

Since she had entered the academy with good grades, she lived in a house alone.

She walked to the courtyard's left wall and felt around the gap in the bricks for a while. Then, she took out something and quickly returned to the house.

This object was a golden cylinder even smaller than a pinkie.

She lightly twisted and opened the cylinder to take out the note.

She opened the note and tapped her brush in water before brushing it against the note.

A line of words gradually appeared. "The matter might fail. You must be careful!"

Chu Xianmin was stunned, and the note dropped onto the floor.

...

It was already late at night when Chu Liuyue returned.

The round, bright moon hung high up in the sky.

Chu Liuyue, almost instinctively, shot a glance at the side and discovered that Rong Xiu was not at the faraway courtyard. Then, she could not help but heave a sigh of relief.

“I’m here.” A low voice sounded.

Chu Liuyue’s heart skipped a beat, and she looked up to see Rong Xiu standing beside the window on the second floor.

“Why are you here?” Words rushed out of Chu Liuyue’s mouth.

Rong Xiu looked into the distance, and his facial expression seemed a little strange. “I’m thirsty, so I came here to ask for tea.”

Chu Liuyue sneered. “Your Highness, you are of formidable status, and you’re very intelligent. Do you really need a cup of tea from me?”

Rong Xiu finally looked at her with his charming and mesmerizing eyes. “Yeah. Peach leaves are bitter, and only your tea can resolve this bitterness.”

Chapter 179: Torturing People

Chu Liuyue silently called him shameless in her heart, but her ears became warm.

It was lucky that the sky was pretty dark, so Rong Xiu probably could not see her clearly.

She took a deep breath and calmed herself down. She then went up the stairs and pretended as if nothing had happened. “Your Highness, you already have your own place in the academy. Why must you come to my place every day?”

Rong Xiu did not answer her, but he had a half-smile on his face. “Your place is great, and you can clearly see whatever I’m doing from here. However, instead of that, isn’t it better if I come here personally?”

Chu Liuyue paused. “Your Highness, I chose this place first.”

If she knew that Rong Xiu would come and coincidentally stay at that place, she wouldn’t have chosen this house, no matter what.

She walked to the cupboard and took out a fragrant ginger slice before scattering it over the teapot.

As the hot water brewed the tea, a bitter and spicy fragrance permeated the room.

She purposely poured a cup of tea and passed it to him. “Your Highness, have some tea.”

Rong Xiu looked at her and laughed. “Why is it always this ginger tea whenever I come here?”

Chu Liuyue seriously said, "I don't have any good tea here. If you're so picky and unwilling to drink it, you don't have to force yourself."

Rong Xiu smiled with deep meaning as he directly took the teacup from her hands.

Both of their hands touched for a brief moment.

The point of contact was slightly cold as Rong Xiu's white long fingers casually slid across the back of her hand, causing a ticklish sensation.

Chu Liuyue looked up at Rong Xiu but noticed that he looked as calm as usual. It was as if he did not notice anything wrong.

His skin is still as thick as usual! Chu Liuyue silently cursed to herself.

"You smell like herbs. Have you been refining medicine the entire night?" Rong Xiu sipped on his tea when his gaze landed on her face, and his smile faded slightly.

Chu Liuyue widened her eyes. "Your Highness, how did you know that?"

Did he come over yesterday? No, I don't remember that he did.

Rong Xiu raised his chin.

Chu Liuyue extended her hands and touched her face. “Is there something on my face?”

Rong Xiu sighed helplessly and chuckled. *Someone who has always been smart is somehow always confused at times like this.*

He walked a few steps closer and stood in front of Chu Liuyue.

Rong Xiu’s tall body—which increasingly got closer—instantly made Chu Liuyue feel an unknown suppression.

He extended his hand the next moment.

Chu Liuyue wanted to move backward, but her gaze met with his eyes.

Rong Xiu’s calm and deep eyes seemed to have silent ripples and some undetectable faint signs of love.

Chu Liuyue’s body seemed to have completely frozen, and she could not move at all.

Rong Xiu’s warm fingertips landed beneath her eyes. Under the candlelight, he could clearly see the faint black areas under her eyes. *If she did not stay up for an entire night, she would not look like this.*

“He’s just a classmate. Is it worth it for you to do so much?” His voice was clear and low, but Chu Liuyue could not see through his eyes.

Chu Liuyue's lips curved up slightly. She did not mind Rong Xiu knowing that she was helping Liao Zhongshu. After all, she intended to spread the news and lure the enemy. "He has once experienced life and death with me, so I can't just leave him to die."

Rong Xiu squinted his eyes. *She is not wrong, but I'm not in a good mood. If I find out that she has any other intentions...*

"Never again." His tone was calm and composed, but he did not allow for any rejection.

Chu Liuyue raised her brows. "Your Highness, this is my business. I don't think you have the right to control me."

Rong Xiu's thin lips curled up. "Oh? What if I say that I have the right?"

Chu Liuyue snickered. "Your Highness, you're indeed of distinguished status, but why must I listen to you?"

Rong Xiu's fingers slid down Chu Liuyue's cheeks, and he held her face. He suddenly leaned in closer.

As she stared at the demonic-like appearance in front of her that rapidly closed in, Chu Liuyue's heart suddenly skipped a beat. She wanted to move backward, but her hands in the sleeves clenched tightly before unclenching. She still did not move in the end.

She was not sure when, but she seemed to have gotten used to Rong Xiu's intimate actions. It seemed like... everything was natural.

He looked at her with a profound gaze as if an unknown force was going to swallow everything. Then, he tilted his head, went to her ear, and laughed in a low voice. "Because... I am very familiar with the person you like."

His lips gently touched her thin ear, and it felt like a comet was burning them. However, the words he uttered were like terrifying lightning that struck Chu Liuyue's heart.

He really did hear it! He definitely heard it very clearly!

Previously, Chu Liuyue could still pretend that she did not know that he heard her words. But she could not continue with her act now. Her heart started beating rapidly as if a fire had descended from her ear and ignited her entire body.

She hurriedly extended her hands and pushed him away. "Your Highness, I think you heard me wrongly. I didn't say that the person is you."

"Did I say that the person was me?"

Rong Xiu's simple retort stumped Chu Liuyue.

Her hands were on his wide and hard chest, and she did not know what to do for a moment. *I revealed exactly what I wanted to hide!*

Rong Xiu looked down and satisfyingly admired the young woman's shy appearance. He felt very comfortable.

Suddenly, he hugged her waist and carried her princess style.

“Your Highness?”

“Shh. You didn’t sleep well last night. Let me accompany you today.” Rong Xiu carried her to the bed and gently put her down. Then, he sat down beside her.

Chu Liuyue was surprised and blinked. “... Oh. Your Highness, are you not sleeping?”

Rong Xiu leaned down and lowered his voice. “I can’t sleep when I’m so close to you. You can just sleep; don’t mind anything else.”

Chu Liuyue swallowed her remaining words and closed her eyes after some slight hesitation.

Chu Liuyue was probably too exhausted for the past two days, which was why she quickly fell into a deep sleep.

Rong Xiu held her wrist with one hand, and a faint silver light silently entered Chu Liuyue’s palm.

Chu Liuyue’s breathing started to slow down. Perhaps she had a nightmare, but she furrowed her brows tightly, looking like she was in extreme pain.

Rong Xiu looked at her and extended his hand to relax her brows. He leaned close to her ears and whispered, “Yue’er, don’t be afraid. I’m here...”

His voice was very light. It was as though it could disappear into the wind at any moment.

However, the pain on Chu Liuyue's face seemed to subside, and she looked calm again.

She instinctively leaned in closer to the warm place until her entire body was in Rong Xiu's arms. It was only then that she finally quietened down.

Rong Xiu closed his eyes and suppressed the unknown restlessness within his body. *She really knows how to torture me...*

Chapter 180: Break

When Chu Liuyue woke up the next morning, Rong Xiu had already left.

She extended her hand and touched her side. It was still slightly warm, and it showed that he had not left for long.

The sky was starting to brighten up, and it would be quite inappropriate if anyone saw him here.

Chu Liuyue stood up, and she could smell a faint tinge of the cold fragrance that lingered on her body.

This was Rong Xiu's smell.

Chu Liuyue unknowingly heaved a sigh of relief since the previous night's situation had truly put her in a tough spot. Now that she could not see Rong Xiu, Chu Liuyue did not need to think so much.

Tuan Zi crawled out of the blanket and rubbed its eyes, looking as if it had not woken up completely.

While tidying up, Chu Liuyue asked, "You seem really tired. Did you not rest well?"

Tuan Zi let out a huge yawn, and its eyes were filled with deep anger. *What do you mean 'not rest well'? I didn't even sleep the entire night.*

Tuan Zi originally wanted to sleep together with Chu Liuyue, but it was chased away every time it jumped onto the bed. Hence, Tuan Zi could only wrongfully sleep in a corner the entire night. It only returned to the soft bed after that certain someone left.

I only slept for a while before you woke up. How can I not be tired?

"Then, you can stay here first. I'll be back at night," said Chu Liuyue as she prepared to leave the house.

Once Tuan Zi heard that, it was reluctant to stay. Hence, it immediately jumped onto Chu Liuyue's shoulders before using its furry tail to wrap itself into a ball.

Chu Liuyue patted its head and placed it on the bed again. "You can't go to the place I'm going today, so you can just rest here and wait for me to come back."

Tuan Zi could only shake its tail in agreement.

...

Chu Liuyue went to Jiuyou Tower again.

Unlike the previous times she came, Jiuyou Tower was especially quiet today. Chu Liuyue did not really meet anyone on the way there. It was probably because quite a few people were injured at Wan Ling Mountain, so most of the students were still recuperating and recovering from their injuries.

When Chu Liuyue walked to Jiuyou Tower, she suddenly heard a commotion.

She looked in the direction of the sounds and discovered Lu Feiyan and a few others surrounding someone and talking to that person in a slightly isolated corner.

The person in the middle was Chu Xianmin.

“Minmin, I remember that you have quite a long cultivation time quota in Jiuyou Tower, right? I finished my cultivation time a few days ago, so can you lend me six hours?” Lu Feiyan seemed like she was asking for a favor, but she had a very righteous attitude as if she were asking for something that originally belonged to her.

“Also, the few of them don’t have the time to complete any tasks. They don’t have high expectations, so they just need two hours each.”

Chu Xianmin looked at the few people in front of her and suppressed the anger in her heart. She said, “I don’t have much cultivation time left either. I really can’t produce so many hours in such a short time...”

“Are you reluctant?” Lu Feiyan looked at Chu Xianmin from the corner of her eyes and mocked, “Minmin, we’re good sisters. How can you not even be willing to give me this small thing?”

Chu Xianmin tightly clenched her teeth. *What good sisters? You’re just a bunch of idiots who are attacking an abandoned dog.*

At the side, one girl purposely said, “Yeah! Minmin, I heard that many things have happened to your maiden family, so you wouldn’t have time to come cultivate at Jiuyou Tower, right? Why don’t you lend me some hours?”

The girls looked at each other and couldn’t help but burst into laughter.

Who didn’t know that Chu Yan was severely beaten up by Chu Ning and that Lu Yao offended the Gu family? The couple couldn’t even protect themselves now, let alone care about Chu Xianmin.

As for the Crown Prince’s side... If Chu Xianmin was liked by the Crown Prince, why didn’t he solve her family issues?

This sentence touched Chu Xianmin’s Achilles heel, and her face immediately distorted. “I said I don’t have any hours left.”

Lu Feiyan raised her hand in anger. “You—”

“Hold up!” An anxious young man’s voice sounded.

Chu Liuyue looked over and smiled.

The person who spoke was actually Ji Yurong.

Chu Liuyue watched him walk towards them quickly and hand his nameplate over.

“I still have six hours; you can use them first. We’re all classmates, so is there a need to make things so ugly?”

Lu Feiyan and the rest looked at him in a teasing manner.

“Oh, Ji Yurong? Are you standing up for her? Did you forget how she rejected you in the past? Don’t you think you’re too spineless?”

Ji Yurong was a little awkward. “I-I’m not thinking of anything. We’re all classmates, and there really isn’t a need for us to quarrel over such a small matter. Besides, we’re near Jiuyou Tower, so it won’t be good if the teachers find out.”

This sentence successfully made Lu Feiyan and the rest calm down.

Lu Feiyan took Ji Yurong’s nameplate swiftly and drew a line on her own nameplate.

A faint light glowed.

She then threw the darkened nameplate back. "I'll let you off today!"

After that, she left with the others.

After making sure that they were not coming back, Ji Yurong carefully inspected Chu Xianmin. "Are you okay—"

Pak!

"How many times have I told you not to appear in front of me in public?"

Ji Yurong felt very awkward. "Don't be angry, don't be angry. I just saw them bullying you, so I—"

"Get lost!"

Ji Yurong could not say anything more, so he backed away, feeling conflict and heartache.

Chu Xianmin closed her eyes and hated Ji Yurong more than ever. Everyone was currently treating her like a laughingstock, yet Ji Yurong only knew how to cause trouble for her.

"How many times have I told you that we need to act like we're strangers in front of others? Do you not understand human language? Do you know how terrible my days will be if word goes out?"

If it weren't for the fact the Crown Prince has been busy with his own matters lately... He will definitely teach me a lesson if he finds out. Let alone—

Ji Yurong hurriedly said, "Don't worry. I'll get Lu Feiyan and the rest to shut up. Nobody will find out about—"

"So what if they find out?"

A clear voice sounded, shocking Chu Xianmin and Ji Yurong.

Both hurriedly looked back. *Someone is still eavesdropping on us?*

Chu Liuyue crossed her arms and leaned against a wall as she stared at the amusing expressions of the two people in front of her with much interest.

"What a devoted young lad. Chu Xianmin, he's so nice to you, yet you treat him like this. Aren't you too much?"