

Nobel Ruler 391

Chapter 391: It's Her!

Jian Fengchi didn't know why he had such a thought himself. He could confirm that he had never seen Rong Xiu's appearance before, but... The moment Rong Xiu spoke, his distinguished yet somewhat lazy appearance felt familiar to him.

Hence, that question escaped from his mouth.

A warm and distant smile appeared on Rong Xiu's face. "Why would you say that, Young Master Jian? I have always been recuperating at Mingyue Tianshan and only returned to the Imperial City in these few months. However, I rarely go out of my house. In my memory, I don't think I've seen you before, Young Master Jian."

Upon hearing this, Jian Fengchi felt quite hesitant. *Is it really just a wrong guess? However, I've never felt this way before.*

No matter who it was, Jian Fengchi could always remember that person without fail and clearly recall all the details about that person. No, there was also another person who previously made him feel a similar way—Chu Liuyue!

But at least Chu Liuyue's eyes look very similar to that person, so it's normal for me to find her familiar. Doesn't Mu Qinghe think the same way too? Even Hong Yao treats Chu Liuyue differently. However, Rong Xiu isn't. This face is clearly foreign, but the aura...

"Haha! It seems like I remembered it wrongly, but we do have some fate, right Prince Li?" said Jian Fengchi as he secretly felt emotional. *There's such a legendary character in the Imperial City, yet I completely didn't know about this before. It's obvious that not only me but even the people in Country*

Yao Chen still think that Rong Xiu is a frail person who can't even walk out of his residence. This Prince Li truly hid himself very well.

"I came here today, not for anything else. I just heard Mu Hongyu mention you unwittingly, so I got curious and came here to take a look. Also... I wanted to see what kind of person Chu Liuyue's fiancé was." Jian Fengchi's words were too frank, and they even sounded a little challenging. However, saying this didn't seem problematic with his status and identity.

After all, even Emperor Jiawen had to be polite to him.

When Rong Xiu heard him mention Chu Liuyue, his gaze faltered. "Yue'er went to Lieutenant Mu's today. If you want to see me, you can just let Yue'er know, and I'll invite you to come in as a guest. If you come here like this, I won't be able to treat you in a hospitable manner."

Jian Fengchi laughed. "I've never liked troubling people. I can do this small matter myself. Besides, she might not have the time today."

Rong Xiu's heart tingled. "Oh?"

Jian Fengchi suddenly realized something and looked at Rong Xiu with much focus. Then, he smiled with even deeper meaning and a little more sinisterly. "So this is what you wanted to hear from me."

Rong Xiu's expression didn't change.

Jian Fengchi was a smart person, and some superficial acting couldn't escape his eyes. Hence, there was no need to put up a pretense.

“Young Master Jian, may I know where Yue’er is now?”

...

Rong Jiu returned to the Imperial Study and passed the ink pearl to Emperor Jiawen.

Emperor Jiawen looked at the ink pearl for a while before furrowing his brows as he asked, “Do you know how to unlock this item?”

Rong Jiu paused for a while and said, “There’s generally two ways to unlock the ink pearl. However, I tried both of them earlier, and they didn’t work.”

One just had to think to know that the ink pearl contained the Empress’s shocking secret. Once they unlocked it, they could figure out what the Empress was planning to do.

However, Rong Jiu quickly discovered that this ink pearl was different from average ink pearls. Based on his own strength, it was impossible for him to unlock its contents. “There seems to be a special lock on this ink pearl. I’m useless, and I can’t recognize it.”

Emperor Jiawen stared closely at the ink pearl and fell into deep thought. “If even you don’t have a way... I’m afraid it will be rather troublesome...”

Not to mention others, but Rong Jiu had spent many years training in the military. Thus, he should be an expert in dealing with such things. However, even he couldn’t do anything about this, let alone others.

Looking at Emperor Jiawen's worried expression, Rong Jiu thought for a while and said, "Tian Lu Academy's Elder Ye is very experienced. Perhaps he can help?"

Emperor Jiawen paused for a while and shook his head. "This matter is of utmost importance, and we should treat it with much care. You must also be careful on your side and not let any news get out."

"...Yes!" Suspicion flashed across Rong Jiu's heart. *It isn't wrong for Father to be careful as this involves the Empress and the Crown Prince, but isn't he too careful? What kind of person is Elder Ye? How can Father not even tell him? It's as if... he's afraid of something.*

But Rong Jiu was a smart person. Since he could guess Emperor Jiawen's intentions, he would just go with the flow.

"You are dismissed." Emperor Jiawen kept the ink pearl, leaned against his chair, and waved his hand with exhaustion.

Rong Jiu had something to say but was hesitant. He wanted to bring the ink pearl back and investigate it, but he swallowed his words in the end. "I'll get going first."

...

After leaving the palace, Rong Jiu was still thinking about the ink pearl. *Father seems to think that the item is very important, but won't it be as useless if he can't solve it? Perhaps... Father has another way?*

The more Rong Jiu thought about it, the more uncomfortable he felt. *Starting from Heptagon Alley, Father's reactions have always been weird. He seems to know something, but he is very mysterious about it as he just keeps telling us to check on the Empress. With this ink pearl matter now exposed, it seems even more obvious.*

Rong Jiu continued walking and suddenly felt someone walking toward him, so he instinctively looked up.

The incoming person was a woman with a thin figure, but a large part of her face was hidden by a white veil.

Rong Jiu secretly knitted his brows. *It's Chu Xianmin? She came to look for me?*

As expected, Chu Xianmin stopped three steps away from him and bent her knees to greet him.
“Greetings, Third Prince.”

“Chu Xianmin? What are you doing here?” Even though Rong Jiu wasn't very familiar with Chu Xianmin, he had heard quite a bit of news about her when he came back to the Imperial City, especially because... she was still Rong Jin's concubine.

“I have some things I want to discuss with you, Third Prince.”

What can Chu Xianmin talk to me about? Could it be... Rong Jiu knitted his brows. “If you're here to put in a good word for the Crown Prince, you can go back now.”

Chu Xianmin gently shook her head. “Third Prince, you've misunderstood. Even though I'm the Crown Prince's person, I also know the severity of the matter. The reason why I came here today is that I want to tell you about something I've been conflicted about for quite some time. After much thinking, I still think it's better to tell you about it.”

Rong Jiu's instincts became stronger.

"But I have a request—I hope you won't tell anyone that I told you about this." Chu Xianmin clutched the handkerchief tightly in a very nervous and worried manner.

Rong Jiu said, "Okay! Just say whatever you want to say!"

Chu Xianmin hesitated for a while and lowered her voice to say, "Previously, I heard the Crown Prince and Eldest Princess Situ talking. He said he wanted her to help him think of a way to go to the palace and see Her Majesty... I think it should be these few days..."

Rong Jiu felt a pang in his heart as he suddenly recalled the strange sound in the Empress's bedroom.

Chapter 392: Activate

Golden Inheritance Peak.

Chu Liuyue followed Mu Qinghe all the way.

The luscious greenery perfectly covered the duo's figures. Other than the occasional sounds of the trees moving and the winds whistling, the surroundings were quiet.

Very quickly, a flight of stairs appeared in front of the duo.

Chu Liuyue followed it and looked up.

The layers of stairs on top of one another extended from the foot of the mountain to the top.

She looked up, and she almost couldn't see the end of it.

She heard that this flight of stairs had a total of 999 steps.

Golden Inheritance Peak was very dangerous. One just had to think to know how much effort and manpower was required to build such a flight of stairs.

At the top of the mountain was the place where Country Yao Chen's Emperor would pray to the ancestors every year.

Other than the Emperor, even the Empress had no right to go up to the top of the stairs. She could only stay below and wait quietly.

Chu Liuyue couldn't help but glance at Mu Qinghe. *It can't be that he wants to go to the highest point, right...?*

Besides, when he previously said he wanted to enter the imperial mausoleum, Chu Liuyue suddenly thought of a question: *Where is the imperial mausoleum's entrance?*

Golden Inheritance Peak was heavily guarded in all directions, and there was only this one flight of stairs to go up the mountain.

The imperial mausoleum was buried below Golden Inheritance Peak!

After walking such a long distance, she didn't even find any suspicious place that could be the entrance.

Outside of the forest were just piles of rocks.

Mu Qinghe continued to move forward, so Chu Liuyue could only follow him.

The duo didn't travel slowly, and after some time, they reached the middle of the mountain.

When they reached here, Mu Qinghe finally turned around to look at Chu Liuyue. Other than her cheeks flushing red and the sweat droplets on her forehead, she didn't look tired at all.

This was definitely impossible for an average stage-two warrior. However, this didn't pose much difficulty to Chu Liuyue.

"Lieutenant Mu, what's the matter?" Chu Liuyue saw that he stopped and asked in curiosity.

Mu Qinghe said ambiguously, "Your physical strength is much greater than I had imagined."

Chu Liuyue coughed. Actually, she also discovered this point. Not only in comparison to other same-stage warriors, but even warriors with higher cultivation levels might not be stronger than her in this aspect.

This point wasn't something that could be explained by talent.

To attain an even stronger physical body, one has to train hard. Sometimes, one might even need some herbs to supplement their training. Mu Qinghe knows this very clearly, and perhaps he might've grown suspicious again... Just as Chu Liuyue was thinking of how to handle him, Mu Qinghe actually turned around and continued climbing upward without saying anything.

Chu Liuyue didn't speak another word and followed behind him normally.

She vaguely felt that Mu Qinghe seemed to be in a hurry. *Why is he so anxious?*

...

Time trickled past, and Chu Liuyue and Mu Qinghe finally finished climbing more than half of the stairs.

Chu Liuyue's heart skipped a beat when she saw the top of the mountain in front of her.

The peak of the mountain had a Xuan formation with great suppression.

Previously, she didn't notice it, but when it came to the last few steps, she could clearly feel the suppression getting stronger and stronger every time she took a step forward.

She vaguely felt uneasy. However, Mu Qinghe didn't hesitate at all as he climbed the last step and reached the top of the mountain.

Countless silver rays rose up the moment his foot landed, and they rolled toward Mu Qinghe.

A harsh glow flashed in Mu Qinghe's hands, and a longsword appeared.

He quickly raised his sword and slashed it down harshly.

Hong!

A deep sound suddenly exploded at the top of the mountain.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The countless silver rays—which went for his body—immediately disappeared, and they formed countless light rays.

He actually intended to break the Xuan formation forcefully!

The commotion at the top of the mountain immediately attracted the surrounding guards' attention.

“Someone is trespassing on Golden Inheritance Peak!”

“How can that be? There’s no commotion from the barrier outside Golden Inheritance Peak-”

“But the earlier motion did come from the mountain peak.”

While they were talking, a few figures suddenly rushed up to the sky.

At the same time, someone finally saw Mu Qinghe and Chu Liuyue’s figures.

“There are two people at the top of the mountain?” This made everyone widen their eyes in shock.

Golden Inheritance Peak was heavily guarded. Who exactly could silently barge in and even reach the top of the mountain?

An elder in black bellowed, “Everyone, listen! Immediately lock up Golden Inheritance Peak, and don’t let the two people escape!”

The low and thick voice resonated throughout the area.

“Yes!”

The elder in black knitted his brows and rushed forward to see who exactly the two people were. *There aren’t many people with such abilities in Country Yao Chen. I wonder who has such guts!*

It was a pity that the forest at the top of the mountain was blocking him, so he couldn't see the duo's appearances clearly. He could only vaguely recognize that it was a man and a woman.

Hong! Hong! Hong!

At this point, explosion sounds could suddenly be heard coming from the top of the mountain again.

The elder in black was shocked. *The Xuan formation at the top of the mountain has actually been forcefully broken open! That's the Xuan formation that has been passed down for thousands of years in Country Yao Chen! How can it be so easily broken? The other party's abilities must be much stronger than we imagined!*

Without hesitation, he took out a bamboo container, injected some force, and abruptly threw it into the sky.

Bang!

The bright and eye-catching fireworks exploded in the air and made a loud sound.

Chu Liuyue watched as Mu Qinghe raised his sword and forcefully slashed open a way forward.

The messy force dissipated in all directions, which suffocated her.

Mu Qinghe stood in the middle of the chaos, and his clothes flew everywhere.

At this point, Chu Liuyue heard the shocking sound, looked up, and saw the giant fireworks—*The other party has discovered us, and they've already called for backup to come over!*

Chu Liuyue clenched her teeth and finally took the final step to ascend to the mountain peak.

Just as she was about to follow Mu Qinghe, the transparent water droplet in her dantian started spinning suddenly.

An unknown calling was coming from below her legs.

Chu Liuyue was shocked and immediately looked down. *This force is... coming from below the mountain?*

Without waiting for her to realize what exactly was going on, the ground below her feet suddenly moved.

Chu Liuyue looked over and realized that she stepped on a giant, circular plate at some point.

This circular plate was engraved into the top of the mountain. If one didn't take a closer look, they wouldn't be able to tell the plate apart from the rest of the ground.

Until this point, it slowly started spinning; thus, it became extra obvious.

The next moment, Chu Liuyue's body dropped below.

Mu Qinghe felt the commotion behind him and finally turned around to see Chu Liuyue's figure disappearing below the circular plate.

A strange look flashed across his eyes as he jumped down without hesitation in the next moment.

When the elder in black approached them, he discovered that the giant, circular plate was slowly moving.

He was stunned. *The imperial mausoleum has been activated!*

Chapter 393: Stalemate

Chu Liuyue's body kept dropping, and her surroundings were pitch black. She couldn't see anything at all and could only hear the sounds of the wind howling beside her.

She tried to circulate her force, but she realized that her bodily strength seemed to be restrained by something, and it circulated very slowly.

The surrounding air became very sticky as if she had fallen into a sandpit. Her falling speed also decreased gradually.

After some time, she finally landed on a thick surface.

Chu Liuyue surveyed her surroundings and felt around to stand up.

The ground beneath her feet was icy cold, and it felt smooth to the touch as if it were made from marble.

She pressed her lips against each other tightly.

There was no light source here, so she completely didn't know what kind of situation she was in.

She had to figure out a way.

Her mind started churning, and she suddenly thought of something as she raised her hand. A bright-red flame suddenly appeared in her palm.

But before Chu Liuyue could even grin, the fire rapidly extinguished.

The surroundings plunged into darkness once again.

Chu Liuyue knitted her brows. She almost forgot that she couldn't circulate her force here, so she naturally couldn't summon her force and turn it into fire.

She stood rooted to the ground for a while without moving her feet and simply straightened her eyes to listen closely to the surrounding movement.

Patter.

Patter.

The sound of water landing could be heard.

Chu Liuyue instinctively looked in the direction of the sound. Even though she couldn't see anything, this water sound somehow made her feel more assured.

However, her heart suddenly hung high the next moment. *I've already dropped down for quite some time. Why haven't I seen Mu Qinghe? I remembered that Mu Qinghe was following closely behind me when I dropped down. But now... Where is he?*

Besides, the stranger thing is—below Golden Inheritance Peak is Country Yao Chen's imperial mausoleum. Why would there be water sounds in the imperial mausoleum?

Just as Chu Liuyue was deep in thought, she felt something heavy on her shoulders as Tuan Zi came over.

Unlike before, Tuan Zi seemed to be quite nervous as it cuddled her shoulders and didn't move at all.

Chu Liuyue could feel its emotions and found it weird. *Tuan Zi has always been courageous, and it didn't even cower when it faced a seventh-grade black flying python. It can even fight with a legendary fiend—the legendary three-eyed eagle. Tuan Zi has never feared anything before, so what's up with it now?*

Chu Liuyue patted its forehead to reassure it.

Tuan Zi clutched her clothes and leaned against her closely.

Suddenly, Chu Liuyue thought of a plan. Then, she gathered her thoughts, and something extra appeared in her palm—the Heavenly Square Cauldron.

This item was pretty tiny, so it fit her palm nicely.

A transparent karmic fire was burning within, and a black shadow was hidden in the centermost position. This was the legendary three-eyed eagle's soul.

The surroundings immediately became illuminated due to the fire.

Chu Liuyue's lips curved up slightly. "It really is useful!"

Since the Heavenly Square Cauldron could suppress a legendary fiend, it definitely had to be very formidable. Hence, Chu Liuyue thought that the karmic fire inside would be able to withstand the constraints here.

The results were as expected!

After a moment, the legendary three-eyed eagle's voice sounded in disbelief. "Y-you're actually using the Heavenly Square Cauldron to illuminate your path?"

As it was shocked, even its voice trembled. It never would've thought that this would be the situation when it officially left Chu Liuyue's dantian for the first time. *Does Chu Liuyue know what kind of thing the Heavenly Square Cauldron is?*

"Yes! I'm just making full use of it!" Chu Liuyue didn't mind at all and sounded nonchalant.

The legendary three-eyed eagle was speechless, but Chu Liuyue didn't care about it as she scanned her surroundings.

Her surroundings were completely empty, without anything around.

This ground... is actually made with white marble. Chu Liuyue was slightly shocked. White marble is very precious, yet it was actually used to tile the floor. Besides, it doesn't seem like it's just this small area. This alone would cost a fortune. Country Yao Chen actually used so much money to build the imperial mausoleum. They've truly outdone themselves. I wonder what it looks like inside...

Chu Liuyue carefully felt the strange calling before she finally chose a direction and walked forward.

Da.

Da.

Da.

In the quiet space, Chu Liuyue's footsteps became extra crisp.

Gradually, the water sounds became even louder.

Chu Liuyue held the Heavenly Square Cauldron tightly and continued to walk forward.

...

Bang!

Following the low impact sound, the elder in black's wolf-teethed pole finally couldn't take it anymore and snapped into two.

He threw away the broken wolf-teethed pole in panic and stared at the circular plate—which was still moving and didn't suffer any damage at all—in front of him in anxiety.

“Elder Zhong Qi, this circular plate is personally made by our ancestors, and ordinary objects can't open it at all.”

“Yeah, let's try another way!”

“If we really can't do it, we have to wait for His Majesty to come...”

The few people at the side finally couldn't hold themselves back and spoke up.

Zhong Qi yelled in frustration, "Of course, I know all of this!"

I've guarded this place for more than a decade. How can I not know this? But if we don't quickly find a way, how can we explain to His Majesty? With so many guards protecting the area, someone still dared to barge into Golden Inheritance Peak. They even ascended to the mountain peak and entered the imperial mausoleum. It isn't enough for all of us to die a hundred times.

"Wait! If His Majesty really comes, won't all of us be unable to bear the consequences?!" The few of them looked at each other and fell silent.

Zhong Qi stared at the circular plate with much hatred. "Did any of you see the duo's appearances just now?"

Nobody answered.

Zhong Qi closed his eyes. He was the fastest to rush over back then, yet he didn't see them, let alone the rest.

"All of you better guard this place with your lives! I don't believe they won't come out!"

...

The gigantic fireworks exploded in the sky above the Imperial City.

Rong Xiu focused on it, and very cold murderous intent flashed across his eyes. *Mu Qinghe actually brought Yue'er to the imperial mausoleum!*

He immediately said, "Young Master Jian, I still have some things to do. I'll excuse myself first." Then, he turned around to leave.

Jian Fengchi was dazed as he looked up at the sky. *What signal was that just now? Seeing how obvious it is, it doesn't seem to be a small matter...*

An idea popped up in his mind, and his lips curved up into an outrageous smile. "Prince Li, are you going to the place where the fireworks were shot from? Just nice, I'm very free and have nothing to do. Why don't I go with you?"

Rong Xiu abruptly turned back and silently glanced at Jian Fengchi.

Immediately, harsh and horrifying murderous intent went straight for Jian Fengchi.

Chapter 394: The Drowning Grave

Jian Fengchi instinctively tensed his body and gathered his force in his palm. But for some reason, the murderous intent disappeared in the next moment as if it had never appeared earlier.

Rong Xiu smiled nonchalantly. "Young Master Jian, please help yourself." Then, he turned around to leave without hesitation.

Jian Fengchi stood rooted to the spot and was dazed for some time. *What... just happened? At that moment, I felt strong murderous intent erupting from Rong Xiu's body, but it quickly disappeared to the extent I almost thought that I was hallucinating. However... Why would I make such a mistake?*

Looking at Rong Xiu's departing back view, Jian Fengchi knitted his brows. *This Prince Li... seems to be more capable than I thought...*

He turned back to take a look and saw that there was still the last speck of fireworks in the sky.

Everyone in the Imperial City could see it clearly.

Something major must've happened to the person who sent this signal. Jian Fengchi stroked his chin. Did that fella, Mu Qinghe, really cause this?

Thinking of this, he became rather interested.

He already felt weird when Mu Qinghe wanted to come to Country Yao Chen. According to Mu Qinghe's identity, he didn't need to do it personally even if his superiors commanded him to find talents with the Dijing Yuan meridian. He could just send someone to complete the task.

Yet, Mu Qinghe still came. Besides, Mu Qinghe kept leaving early and coming back late these few days as he was busy with something. Thinking of this, Jian Fengchi swiftly turned around to rush in that direction.

...

Chu Liuyue held the Heavenly Square Cauldron in her hands and slowly walked forward in the dark.

After walking for some time... a wall finally appeared in front of her eyes.

Chu Liuyue looked up to take a closer look and realized that it was a dead end in front.

The greenish-black stone wall completely blocked the path in front.

A frown appeared on Chu Liuyue's forehead. *Did I walk into a dead end?*

However, she quickly discovered that the water sounds were coming from on top of the stone wall.

She leaned in closer and realized that there was a tiny, semi-circular hole on top of the stone wall.

A golden cylinder was poking out in a slanted manner. Water was dripping out of it and landed, drop by drop.

Da!

Da!

In the quiet space, the water sounds were extra clear.

Chu Liuyue followed it and looked down to see a shallow drain at the bottom of the stone wall.

A water stream silently lay there.

Chu Liuyue looked at both sides and realized that the drain extended into the darkness and that she couldn't see its end.

She lifted the Heavenly Square Cauldron again. This time, she finally clearly saw that the golden cylinder's surroundings had some patterns to them.

Perhaps it had been too long, but the content couldn't be clearly seen already. Only a vague outline was left.

Chu Liuyue stared at it for a while, but she still couldn't confirm what it was. Hence, she had to put it aside.

The most important thing now was to find a way to leave this place.

Chu Liuyue knocked the stone wall and realized that it was indeed hollow. It was thicker than usual, and it wasn't something that she could forcefully break through alone.

Then, she carefully checked it again, but she didn't find any contraptions.

Do I need to go back the same way? Chu Liuyue knitted her brows tightly.

She could clearly feel that there was something behind the stone wall attracting her.

If she gave up now, she would be very indignant. Besides, how was she going to return to the mountain peak even if she went back?

Not to mention that she couldn't fly in the air now, but even if she could, the strange space's constraints would cause her to be unable to fly.

Da!

Da!

The water droplets dropped down at a very equal speed.

Chu Liuyue looked at the golden cylinder again. *The water flows out from it. Then... how does it look like inside?*

Suddenly, Tuan Zi jumped out and onto the golden cylinder.

"Tuan Zi, you can't bite this!" Chu Liuyue's eyelids twitched. *Who knows what kind of situation the imperial mausoleum is in? Once we damage this stone wall, it might invite trouble.*

Mausoleums usually had a lot of intricate designs, and imperial mausoleums had especially many contraptions.

Chu Liuyue didn't want to leave her life here.

Tuan Zi shook its head, and contempt flashed across its eyes. *I have my standards, okay? Why would I bite whatever I see?*

Then, Tuan Zi pointed at the golden cylinder beneath its feet and hugged it.

Chu Liuyue suddenly realized. "You want me to turn this?"

Tuan Zi immediately nodded in excitement.

Chu Liuyue was quite hesitant. "I don't think this thing can turn, right..."

Even though she said this, she still extended her hands.

The golden cylinder felt cold to the touch, and the coldness spread all the way to her heart.

Chu Liuyue breathed in and gathered her focus as she lightly turned it.

Kacha!

The golden cylinder actually moved!

Chu Liuyue suppressed her shock and slowly turned the cylinder with this amount of strength.

When the golden cylinder turned 180 degrees, Chu Liuyue finally heard a crisp sound—this was the sound of the inner compartments matching.

Chu Liuyue released her hands. The next moment, she saw many golden stars appearing above the stone wall.

All those stars were like the galaxy in the night sky—bright and eye-catching.

Chu Liuyue raised her hand to block her eyes, and she could see the golden stars forming a line from the corner of her eyes.

Then, it outlined a gigantic, strange pattern.

Chu Liuyue was shocked. *This is clearly the blurred pattern I saw earlier!*

At this point, the stars lit up, and the outline could gradually be seen.

Chu Liuyue's heart seemed to clench tightly, and she didn't even blink. *That's...*

Hong long!

Before she could even recognize what it was, the stone wall actually broke open with the golden cylinder as the center.

A piercing white light shot out from inside.

Everything turned white in front of Chu Liuyue's eyes.

Tuan Zi jumped onto her shoulders once again and clutched her clothes.

After some time, her surroundings gradually quietened down. Chu Liuyue slowly adjusted to the white light as she looked inside.

When she saw the scene inside, she couldn't help but gasp.

A wide river, sparkling with silver light, cut across the air in the middle. The stars within it were shining brightly, and it illuminated the entire space.

The bright light that Chu Liuyue previously experienced when she opened the stone wall came from here.

Chu Liuyue widened her eyes in shock.

That river light was floating in mid-air in a clear, clean, and eye-catching manner. One glance at it, and it looked like a silver river in the dark night—charming and mesmerizing.

Below the river was a wide square area.

A lone golden throne sat quietly in the middle, but this wasn't what stunned Chu Liuyue the most. This was because there was actually a man sitting on top of the golden throne!

Chapter 395: Whose Memory?

There's actually someone in the imperial mausoleum and has been locked up for years? Chu Liuyue was beyond shocked as she speedily sized that man up.

When she saw him clearly, she found something amiss. *This man doesn't seem to be alive!*

He had a big figure, and he was wearing a black robe with golden dragon embroidery on his chest and sleeves, looking very mighty and domineering.

One glance at him, and one could tell the man was around 40 years old. However, he was very charming and had an outstanding aura. One could still tell that he definitely had to be a rare kind of handsome when he was young.

But... his eyes were completely black.

Chu Liuyue couldn't help but stare at that pair of eyes.

It was two black holes—which looked calm on the surface—but in their depths, one could see the changes from life to death and the extinguishing of the galaxy.

“Who are you?” boomed the man slowly as he looked at Chu Liuyue.

Chu Liuyue's brain suddenly became dazed. She felt very lethargic, and she almost let loose all of her senses.

“Chu Liuyue,” she replied softly.

The empty space suddenly quietened down.

After a while, that man said, “No, you're not Chu Liuyue.”

His voice had some indescribable strength, and it sounded deep and soft to the ears as it traveled to her heart.

Chu Liuyue shook her head and said determinedly, “I am Chu Liuyue.”

With this body and appearance, who can I be if I'm not Chu Liuyue?

That man suddenly laughed as if he had heard a joke. "Look up and see."

Chu Liuyue looked up and saw the river slowly flowing in mid-air. Countless stars reflected in her eyes, dazzling beautifully.

Suddenly, the light disappeared.

The river surface moved, and a scene appeared in front of her eyes.

Chu Liuyue knitted her brows.

It was a cliff. An octagonal pavilion stood at the extension of the cliff.

The white mountain clouds flowed around, adding to the fairy-like nature of this perilous terrain.

In the octagonal pavilion, a man in black stood with his hands behind his back.

The mountain wind blew over and rolled up his sleeves. It was as though the man was about to ride along with the wind like a deity.

Chu Liuyue looked at his back view and found it familiar for some reason. *I seem to have... seen this person before...*

When she saw the cliff and the octagonal pavilion, she didn't find them unfamiliar. It was as if she had come here long ago.

Something tingled in her heart as if it was about to explode, but she couldn't point it out clearly. This made her feel numb and very restless.

Chu Liuyue opened her mouth as if she wanted to call the man in black's name, but she seemed to become a mute—she couldn't make any sound.

A fire seemed to be burning at the bottom of her heart, causing her to be very anxious.

"You..." Chu Liuyue anxiously wanted to speak and spat out a word with much difficulty when she saw the man in black suddenly turn around.

Chu Liuyue instantly paused, and her eyes were glued onto him. But just as she was about to see the man's appearance, an excruciating, sharp pain suddenly came from her hands.

She jolted awake and looked down to find that Tuan Zi had bitten her hand.

The bright-red blood gradually seeped out from her wound, causing her to wake up completely. *What happened to me just now? I actually entered the other party's perilous situation so easily!*

"Tuan Zi, thank you. I almost..." whispered Chu Liuyue, but she suddenly paused. *Almost... Almost what? Where did the gratitude in my heart come from?*

This type of feeling rarely appeared for her. Normally, she would only feel this way if she avoided committing a huge mistake.

However... even though her defensive walls had nearly collapsed in that previous scenario, it didn't seem to have much relation to her biggest secret.

Why do I feel like I just managed to survive a disaster? Chu Liuyue looked up once again.

The river light floating in mid-air had recovered its original structure, and the images on it had completely disappeared as if they had never appeared before—including the cliff, the octagonal pavilion, and... that man.

Chu Liuyue pursed her lips. *I actually anxiously wanted to see what that man looked like... Such a thing has never happened before!*

She suppressed her inner turmoil, clenched her fists, and looked at the man on the throne. "You think you can use such an illusion to trap me?"

A smile with deep meaning appeared on the man in black's face. "You think that that was an illusion?"

Chu Liuyue's heart sank.

"The scenes that appear in the drowning water come from your memory. It will naturally reflect whatever you're thinking of." His low and slow voice sounded, and every word was like lightning that struck beside her ears.

Chu Liuyue's entire body tensed up. *This means that whatever I saw just now was real? However, such a scene has never appeared in my two lives' worth of memories—be it this life or my previous life.*

"I don't even know your identity; how can I believe what you said?" Chu Liuyue sneered. "I can confirm that I've never seen that scene before. Your lying skills are too mediocre."

"Oh? Are you sure?" asked that man nonchalantly as if he was unaffected.

Chu Liuyue's heart skipped a beat, and she secretly clenched her teeth. *Logically speaking, I believe every single word that I said because I truly don't remember that scene. However, there's a vague uncertainty at the bottom of my heart. This is because I felt an indescribable familiarity when I saw that scene, especially the man with his hands behind his back.*

I just saw his back view, but I had the urge to call out his name. If I truly haven't seen him before, why would I behave in such a manner?

"You don't know my identity, but I know who you are." The man in black looked up, and his deadly gaze was glued to Chu Liuyue, coupled with confident laughing intent.

It was as if everything was under his control.

"Who exactly are you?!" hollered Chu Liuyue!

"You will naturally find out when you find me," said that man as he suddenly stood up. "I'll wait for you."

Then, before Chu Liuyue could even react, his figure suddenly transformed into countless rays of silver light and flew to the middle of the river.

He disappeared without a trace!

Chu Liuyue took a long while to recover her senses. *That man in black... left just like that? He told me to find him... but where do I find him? I can't enter the river, right?*

On the one hand, it was impossible for her to go up. On the other hand, who knew what would happen if she entered that space?

Chu Liuyue thought for a while and finally decided to continue walking forward as she headed toward the throne in the middle.

There was nothing else here other than that throne. If she couldn't find any clues from the throne, her head would ache.

Chu Liuyue walked forward step by step and finally stopped in front of the throne.

Suddenly, her gaze focused, and she carefully stared at the throne's backrest.

A line of words was written in the middle: "East of the drowning water, gold also!"

Chapter 396: Only Him

In the palace.

Rong Jiu quickly walked to the Imperial Study with big strides.

The palace maids he met on the way all greeted him respectfully.

Now that the Crown Prince and the Empress were grounded, His Majesty handed over many things to the Third Prince. Everybody could tell that the Imperial City's sky was about to change. However, the palace maids didn't dare to say much since Rong Jiu looked tense as if something urgent had happened.

Rong Jiu left in a hurry, and his heart was filled with regret.

He had calculated everything, but he actually didn't realize that Situ Xingchen was also in the Empress's residence. If he had paid more attention then, he definitely would've noticed something was wrong. If he had taken another step forward and pulled open the screen, he would've discovered Situ Xingchen!

But... he did not!

Things had recently been progressing too smoothly, so he was actually careless and forgot about that person's existence.

At first, he still didn't notice, but upon thinking back about it now, he felt that there were many dubious points everywhere. *Situ Xingchen and Rong Jin have a marriage agreement, but even after Rong Jin got into trouble, she never requested to dissolve the marriage agreement. What else could it be if she didn't have any motives? Situ Xingchen must've known something, and that's why she's willing to help the Empress and Rong Jin! However, I never thought of investigating Situ Xingchen!*

Before he reached the Imperial Study, Rong Jiu heard hurried footsteps coming from in front. He looked up and saw Emperor Jiawen—who was at the frontmost—in one glance.

Emperor Jiawen wore a never-before-seen sinister and harsh expression with an intense murderous aura.

Rong Jiu was shocked. *What happened again?!*

“Greetings, Father!” Rong Jiu hurriedly went forward and bowed to greet him.

When Emperor Jiawen saw Rong Jiu, he furrowed his brows tightly. “Why are you still in the palace?”

At this time, Rong Jiu should’ve long left the palace.

Rong Jiu immediately said, “Father, I have an urgent matter to report to you immediately, so I came back after I left.”

Emperor Jiawen didn’t stop in his tracks and continued walking forward. “Tell me when I come back.”

While talking, he had already gone past Rong Jiu.

W-what’s going on?! Rong Jiu was dazed. “Father, I really have something urgent—”

“Aiyo! Third Highness, you should just wait first!” advised Eunuch Min kindly as he waved his hands. “Didn’t you see how anxious His Majesty is? Anyway, His Majesty definitely has no mood to listen to what you have to say. You should just wait patiently first!”

Rong Jiu asked curiously, “Eunuch Min, please advise me. This... Where is Father going so anxiously?”

“You still don’t know?!” Eunuch Min shockingly spat these words out before he hurriedly looked at his surroundings and pointed at the sky. He then lowered his voice and said, “Did you not see what happened just now?”

Rong Jiu was dazed and then understood what had happened. “That signal is...”

“That signal came from the imperial mausoleum! How can His Majesty not be anxious?” Eunuch Min slapped his thighs. “I have to go first. Third Prince, you should decide what to do now yourself!”

Then, Eunuch Min immediately chased after Emperor Jiawen.

Rong Jiu stood rooted to the ground, and his heart was in turmoil.

After talking to Chu Xianmin earlier, he was filled with shock and regret, so he came back to the palace without much thinking.

On the way over, he also noticed the gigantic fireworks.

Of course, he knew that it was used to send news, but as all his focus was on Situ Xingchen, he didn't realize that it was a signal sent from the imperial mausoleum's direction.

This meant that something happened to the imperial mausoleum!

Even though Rong Jiu wasn't in the Imperial City for most years, he also knew that the Imperial City's Golden Inheritance Peak was heavily guarded.

Now that they suddenly sent this signal, they must've met with a lot of trouble. It would be weird if Emperor Jiawen wasn't anxious.

Just as Rong Jiu was thinking if he should go back to the Empress's residence and confirm if Situ Xingchen had gone there before, Emperor Jiawen—who had just left not long ago—was intercepted again.

This time, the incoming person was a guard in armor. He hurried over in a panic, and he actually directly lunged forward and knelt down in front of Emperor Jiawen as he miserably yelled, "His Majesty! Not good!"

Emperor Jiawen felt that his head was hit by a heavy hammer, and his brain hurt. *Not good?! Something has happened to the imperial mausoleum. What could be even worse than that?*

Emperor Jiawen was forced to stand on the spot, and he hollered, "Speak!"

The guard knelt on the ground as his entire body trembled. "Your Majesty, the Empress... Her Majesty has passed away!"

The surroundings fell into dead silence.

Emperor Jiawen's expression tensed up.

Upon hearing this, Rong Jiu looked up and saw that the guard was indeed the one in charge of the Empress's residence.

Did he say... that the Empress passed away?! A bad feeling arose in Rong Jiu's heart. He rushed over to the guard. "What did you say just now?! Say it again!"

The guard was frightened by the sudden interrogation, and he said with a shaky voice, "H-her Majesty... committed suicide!"

"Useless!" Emperor Jiawen finally reacted and kicked the guard's heart harshly. "Didn't I say that you must watch over the Empress no matter what?"

Even if the Empress died a thousand times to repay her sins, it wouldn't suffice. Also, he still had many matters he had yet to clear up. If she just died so suddenly, what should they do next?!

"You! How do you do your job?"

That guard tolerated his pain and said gingerly, "Your Majesty, I've always been watching her from outside, and I would go in to check on her every hour. However, Her Majesty actually slammed herself against the wall... When we heard the commotion, Her Majesty was already—"

Actually, they were very wronged too!

The Empress had maintained the same status for the past few days. Even if she experienced excruciating torture, she still pushed through it forcefully.

Who would've expected her to commit suicide suddenly?

Si Huijing was very determined. She slammed herself very harshly, and her head was filled with blood while her skull almost broke apart.

How could they predict that?

Originally, Emperor Jiawen was already very anxious because of the imperial mausoleum's incident. When he heard this now, he felt that the blood in his chest had turned upside down and—

Wah!

Emperor Jiawen spat out blood!

“Your Majesty!”

“Father!”

Eunuch Min and Rong Jiu immediately gasped.

Eunuch Min was standing beside Emperor Jiawen, and he hurriedly supported the Emperor's falling body. "Your Majesty, you must take care of your precious body!"

With the comparison of his bloodstained lips, Emperor Jiawen's face looked even paler.

He shot a deadly stare at that guard and said every word precisely. "Who went to see the Empress today?"

He was certain that the Empress didn't suddenly commit suicide. There had to be a more profound reason for this incident!

An idea popped up in Rong Jiu's mind. *Could it be... Situ Xingchen—*

That guard's voice trembled. "Your Majesty, only the Third Prince went to the Empress's side today."

Rong Jiu was stunned as he instantly looked at that guard.

Chapter 397: Trap

That guard didn't dare to look up at Rong Jiu and could only hurriedly say, "When the Third Prince entered the palace, he seemed to have fought with the Empress. However, we didn't dare to barge in, so we just waited outside. Not long after the Third Prince left, Her Majesty..."

Emperor Jiawen shot Rong Jiu an icy look. *Rong Jiu had gone to see the Empress today and found the ink pearl. It's normal for him to have a conflict with the Empress, but... Why did the Empress suddenly seek death? Could it really have something to do with Rong Jiu...?*

Rong Jiu's heart sank. *Emperor Jiawen really started to suspect me! The guard's previous words were too misleading! He's doing it on purpose!*

Rong Jiu yelled, "Father, I can swear that this has nothing to do with me! Other than me, another person has also gone to the Empress's place!"

Emperor Jiawen immediately asked, "Who?!"

Rong Jiu took a deep breath in. "Situ Xingchen!"

Emperor Jiawen looked very surprised. *Situ Xingchen? Why would she go there?*

Emperor Jiawen immediately looked at that guard. "Did Situ Xingchen go to the Empress's residence today?"

The guard shook his head. "No." His expression looked genuine, and it didn't seem like he was lying.

Rong Jiu suddenly felt very uneasy. He raised his voice and hollered to the guard in a much sterner way, "Do you know that lying to His Majesty is an offense punishable by death?!"

That guard seemed to be taken aback as he moved backward and shuddered. "I don't dare to lie to His Majesty! Whatever I previously said is true!"

Rong Jiu was very indignant.

When he entered the residence, he didn't ask if anyone else had come. When he looked around in the residence, he also didn't find Situ Xingchen in time.

Now that the Empress was dead, it was obvious that Situ Xingchen had left!

If this guard insists—No, if that group of guards all match their testimonies and insist on it, then I definitely can't produce any evidence to prove that Situ Xingchen has appeared there before! Suddenly, Rong Jiu thought of something. "Father, can you send someone to check who came into the palace? Situ Xingchen must've come into the palace today!"

Emperor Jiawen looked at Eunuch Min. "Immediately send someone to check on it."

"Yes, sir!"

Then, Emperor Jiawen took a deep breath. "Immediately lock up the Empress's bedroom. Other than me, nobody else can get near! Also, do not spread the news. If word gets out..."

He didn't finish his sentence, but the threat in his gaze was obvious.

After that, Emperor Jiawen turned around and planned to head to the imperial mausoleum.

After he walked two steps, his figure suddenly wobbled, and he almost collapsed.

Eunuch Min agilely held him up and couldn't help but say, "Your Majesty, why don't you rest in the palace first? Your body—"

Emperor Jiawen shook his head, clenched his teeth, and continued walking forward. *What kind of place is the Imperial mausoleum? That's where Country Yao Chen's ancestors are buried! If some irreversible trouble really occurs there, I will be a sinner for centuries to come!*

All these years, nothing strange had ever happened in the imperial mausoleum. So when the warning fireworks appeared, he was extra worried and fearful.

It was serious that the Empress committed suicide, and it was even more so when so many mysteries hadn't been solved yet. However, those weren't matters that could be compared to the imperial mausoleum's incident.

Rong Jiu walked forward and asked, "Father, can I follow you there?"

Emperor Jiawen rejected it without even turning back. "No need! Go back and stay in your house! Don't do whatever I assigned you to do first. I'll deal with it myself when I come back!"

"Father..." Rong Jiu still wanted to defend himself, but it was clear that Emperor Jiawen didn't want to listen.

Eunuch Min shot Rong Jiu a look to tell him not to offend His Majesty at this timing.

Helpless, Rong Jiu could only stop in his tracks and watched on as Emperor Jiawen's figure disappeared in front of him.

He could still vaguely hear the conversation between Emperor Jiawen and Eunuch Min.

"Did you inform Elder Ye?"

"Don't worry, Your Majesty. Elder Ye has already received the news, and I believe he's on his way to the imperial mausoleum. With Elder Ye around, you don't have to be overly worried..."

The voices grew softer and softer until Rong Jiu couldn't hear them anymore.

Rong Jiu tightly clenched his fists in his sleeves as he turned to look at that guard.

An intense murderous aura enveloped that guard.

"T-third Prince, calm down!" It was very clear that the guard had sensed danger as he immediately knelt down and begged for mercy.

"Calm down?" Rong Jiu's lips curved up into a mocking smile. "You caused me to be in this state, yet you have the guts to tell me to calm down? Who told you to say that?"

The guard didn't want to admit it. "Third Highness, I wasn't lying, and I didn't set you up! You must have misunderstood!"

"Misunderstood? Then, it's also a misunderstanding that Situ Xingchen went to the Empress's place today?"

Noticing Rong Jiu's surrounding aura becoming increasingly scary, that guard averted his gaze guiltily and said extremely softly, "Third Prince, I've already said it many times. Other than you, nobody else has entered the Empress's place today. Why don't you believe me? His Majesty has already commanded for a thorough investigation of this matter. If you don't believe me, you can personally ask around to see if anyone has seen Eldest Princess Situ enter the palace today. Won't everything be clear by then?"

Hearing this, Rong Jiu suddenly reacted. *That's not right! Since he dares to deny this in public and even willingly asked someone to investigate the matter, he must've done sufficient preparation! That or the other party has dug a hole for me to jump into!*

Deep-seated hatred and pain rose in Rong Jiu's heart. *I didn't expect Situ Xingchen to be so ruthless! Perhaps... Even the Empress's death has something to do with her!*

Rong Jiu originally wanted to see the situation in the Empress's place, but Emperor Jiawen had commanded him to go back. Thus, he naturally couldn't do anything.

Rong Jiu lowered his body and held the guard up by his collar. He then said clearly, "I'll remember what happened today!"

...

Prince Li Mansion.

After Rong Xiu got rid of Jian Fengchi, he planned to rush to the imperial mausoleum at top speed.

Yu Mo followed him closely. Seeing that Rong Jin was about to go out like that, Yu Mo couldn't help but ask, "Master, are... you just going like that?"

Rong Xiu paused.

Something happened in the imperial mausoleum, so a lot of people would definitely be heading over, especially Emperor Jiawen.

If they saw Prince Li—who was supposed to be recuperating in his residence—appearing in the imperial mausoleum, nobody knew how they would react.

Rong Xiu closed his eyes. *I was too anxious and actually forgot such a simple thing.*

When he thought of Yue'er in the imperial mausoleum, his heart hung in his throat. He was filled with anxiety and worry, and he wanted to rush over instantly.

He turned back to look at Yu Mo. "Inform Yan Ge. He naturally knows what to do."

"Yes! But Master... your side—"

“I have my own plans.”

“...I understand!”

Chapter 398: Search

When Emperor Jiawen rushed to the imperial mausoleum in a hurry, Rong Jin finally waited for Situ Xingchen to come back to Crown Prince Mansion.

Once Rong Jin saw her, he immediately asked nervously, “How’s the progress of the matter? Is it successful?”

Situ Xingchen pressed her lips against each other and smiled. “I didn’t disappoint you after all.”

Rong Jin was elated, and his uneasy heart finally calmed down. “That’s great; that’s great...”

Previously, he was still worried that his mother wouldn’t trust Situ Xingchen much. But now, it seemed like everything was going according to plan.

He almost couldn’t wait and pulled Situ Xingchen into the house as he meticulously checked the surroundings and called for people to guard outside the yard.

After confirming that nobody could hear their conversation, he looked at Situ Xingchen. “What did Mother say?”

Situ Xingchen looked down at her wrist that was touched by Rong Jin and felt disgusted. But upon thinking that she didn't busy herself for nothing during this period, she didn't mind it that much.

"Sit down first. I'll slowly explain everything to you." As Situ Xingchen talked, she found a place to sit down.

Rong Jin sat down beside her and looked at her with much excitement and hope.

Situ Xingchen's lips curved up. "Your Highness, do you know that you're the legendary 'Heaven's Chosen Son?'"

Rong Jin was dazed, and he looked emotional. *Mother actually told Situ Xingchen this. This means that she really trusts Xingchen and has agreed to let her help.*

He lightly nodded and leaned against his chair as his face looked somewhat arrogant. "Of course, I know about this."

Situ Xingchen asked again, "Then, do you know what this 'Heaven's Chosen Son' means?"

Rong Jin was dazed for a while and said without hesitation, "Of course, it means the world! On the day I was born, the heavens showed an auspicious sign. Mother had once gone to find a master and asked him for my fortune. The other party said that I was Heaven's Chosen Son and that I'm destined to take over the throne."

Thus, he had always viewed the throne as something of his own all these years.

Situ Xingchen never expected Rong Jin to give such an answer, so she couldn't help but be stunned.

Rong Jin waved his hands in front of her face. "Xingchen, what's the matter?"

"...Ah? Nothing—nothing much..." Situ Xingchen answered him superficially, but she despised him in her heart. *It seems like the Empress doesn't simply care for this son of hers. She's over-protecting him! This caused Rong Jin not to have a clue about this until now.*

She suppressed the mockery in her heart and explained, "Your Highness, according to what Her Majesty said, that's not the meaning of 'Heaven's Chosen Son.'"

Rong Jin knitted his brows in surprise. "It doesn't mean that? What exactly does it mean then?"

Situ Xingchen didn't directly answer his question. Instead, she suddenly asked in return, "Your Highness, did you notice the fireworks in Imperial City's sky?"

"Of course, I saw it." Thinking of this, Rong Jin sighed deeply. "I think something happened in the imperial mausoleum."

Originally, as the Crown Prince, he should also rush over immediately if such a thing happened. However, he was now grounded in Crown Prince Mansion and couldn't even leave the door, let alone others.

Situ Xingchen slowly said, "Your 'Heaven's Chosen Son' has something to do with the imperial mausoleum!"

...

“East of the drowning water, gold also...”

In the quiet room, Chu Liuyue stood in front of the throne and hugged her arms with one hand while the other gently stroked her chin as she tried to understand what the sentence meant. *According to what the man previously said, the star river glowing above my head is the drowning water. However, what does this engraved sentence mean?*

Chu Liuyue kept quiet for a while and suddenly thought of something. *Isn't the cylinder—which was used to drip water on the stone wall—gold? Could it be related to that?*

Thinking of this, Chu Liuyue hurriedly turned around and walked toward that area.

The drowning water flowed quietly, and Chu Liuyue couldn't see its origin or destination. However, she could vaguely see that the drowning water would frequently drop a pool of starlight.

When these items gathered together, they would float around the stone wall.

She quickly discovered a pattern. *The light actually follows the time flow and gradually enters the golden cylinder tidily before dripping into the drain outside. It turns out that it wasn't ordinary water!*

Chu Liuyue hesitated for quite some time before she finally sat on the throne.

Hong long!

Chapter 399: Key

Accompanying this loud sound, the ground surrounding the throne actually started to crack!

With the throne as the center, the cracks expanded in all directions. Then, something seemed to be flowing out of the cracks.

Chu Liuyue focused on it and realized that it was actually... golden sand!

Countless particles of sparkling gold sand kept flowing out like fountain water, but the sand didn't flow outward in all directions. Instead, the sand gradually accumulated upward!

Chu Liuyue then realized that it wasn't actual sand but crushed crystal pieces!

Those tiny crushed crystals gradually gathered together and presented a strange, heptagon-shaped, and thin, nail-sized crystal.

Those thin heptagonal crystals connected to each other and formed layers in an upward manner.

The thin crystals on top weren't all tightly connected. On the other hand, most of them had gaps in between, like they were arranged together by some sort of magical mechanism.

Very quickly, a crystal wall—shaped like a golden fence—appeared in front of Chu Liuyue.

Not only one! The same thing was happening for the surrounding cracks.

Chu Liuyue knew that she couldn't just sit and watch. If she did so, it would be impossible for her to get out once the walls of golden crystals were built.

She immediately stood up and planned to leave the throne, but the moment she stood up, everything suddenly stopped.

It was as if someone pressed the 'pause' button and stopped everything here.

Chu Liuyue paused, and she looked serious. Then, she carefully took one step forward.

Buzz!

A soft buzzing noise was heard.

Ripples suddenly swirled in the empty space in front of her.

The golden lines gently expanded like water embroidery before disappearing into thin air.

But Chu Liuyue was stunned. *There's actually an extra barrier here?! Moreover, with my previous attempt, this barrier is definitely not something I can currently solve!*

She looked at the side and tried twice.

As expected, the entire throne was covered by a locked barrier.

Chu Liuyue sat back down on the throne.

Everything in her surroundings immediately returned to normal.

The soft moving noise could be heard, and the bright, golden lights illuminated the entire space. However, Chu Liuyue's heart gradually sank to the bottom.

The walls made from golden crystals were the height of a person. Looking at it as a whole, it almost turned into a contorted maze!

And Chu Liuyue was stuck right in the middle of the maze!

Bang!

Tuan Zi suddenly jumped out and rushed straight for the barrier.

Following a low sound, Tuan Zi bounced back.

Chu Liuyue agilely caught it.

Tuan Zi rubbed its head. *It hurts!*

“Tuan Zi, are you okay?” Chu Liuyue asked worriedly.

Tuan Zi stood up. It refused to give up and flew toward the barrier again. At the same time, it opened its mouth and bit down harshly.

Golou!

Chu Liuyue’s eyelids twitched. *Why... does this sound amiss?*

Seeing that Tuan Zi seemed to be glued to the barrier motionless, Chu Liuyue couldn’t help but yell, “Tuan Zi?”

Tuan Zi didn’t react much, but Chu Liuyue saw that its tail had moved slightly.

She became increasingly worried as she directly reached out and grabbed Tuan Zi.

Tuan Zi immediately used its claws to cover its face.

Chu Liuyue pried its claws apart.

“What happened to...” Her voice trailed off.

The human and the fiend stared at each other.

To alleviate the awkwardness, Tuan Zi bared its teeth.

Chu Liuyue momentarily stayed silent when she saw Tuan Zi’s white teeth that were stained red. “You cracked your teeth?”

Tuan Zi hurriedly covered its mouth and shook its head with all its might. *No! No! I just bit with too much strength, and my teeth are slightly loose, so it started bleeding.*

Chu Liuyue was speechless. She sighed helplessly and lightly patted Tuan Zi’s forehead before looking at the glowing barrier.

She knew how incredible Tuan Zi’s teeth were, but even Tuan Zi couldn’t do anything about the barrier...

With my current abilities, how am I supposed to go out? Chu Liuyue knitted her brows and thought for quite some time as she subconsciously leaned backward.

There was something poking her from behind.

Oh, yes. I almost forgot about the words on the back—Hang on! Chu Liuyue's eyes brightened up. What did it write?

“East of the drowning water, gold also.”

Gold... When heaven and earth mixed, they gave birth to the five elements—gold, wood, water, fire, and earth! Could this 'gold' be referring to the five elements?

The five elements counteracted each other. Amongst them, fire could counteract gold!

Chu Liuyue placed Tuan Zi on her shoulders before she took out the Heavenly Square Cauldron again.

The transparent karmic fire burnt silently within.

After taking it out, Chu Liuyue gathered all her focus and injected all her strength into the Heavenly Square Cauldron.

The fire moved according to what her heart desired.

Hong!

The transparent karmic fire immediately rose up and lunged for the barrier!

Huala!

The two met with each other and let out a screeching sound.

The golden barrier actually started to burn!

...

Just when Chu Liuyue was facing all sorts of situations in the imperial mausoleum, it was perfectly quiet outside Golden Inheritance Peak.

Zhong Qi and the rest stood at the mountain peak, and they stared at the slowly moving circular plate with grave faces.

Ever since the duo disappeared, there were no more sounds.

They couldn't enter the imperial mausoleum through this circular plate, so they could only watch it move from the side. They couldn't do anything else.

Nobody knew what the imperial mausoleum was like now.

The calmer it was, the more uneasy they became.

Suddenly, a sound broke through the air.

Zhong Qi immediately looked up and enthusiastically went forward when he saw the incoming person.
“Elder Ye.”

The incoming person was Ye Zhiting. He was originally repairing Jiuyou Tower in the academy when he suddenly saw the warning fireworks. He then knew that the imperial mausoleum was in trouble, so he rushed over.

Ye Zhiting was about to speak when he saw the circular plate slowly moving at the mountain peak. He couldn't help but be shocked. “The imperial mausoleum has been activated?”

Zhong Qi's lips moved, and he hung his head low. “Elder Ye, forgive us for our incompetence, which allowed the two of them to take advantage of us!”

Ye Zhiting's expression was solemn. “Two of them? Did you confirm their identities?”

Zhong Qi looked ashamed. “...We couldn't; they were too fast. When we discovered them, they had already reached the mountain peak. They then directly activated the imperial mausoleum, so we couldn't...”

Ye Zhiting was increasingly confused. “How can that be? One can't open Golden Inheritance Peak's barrier without the key, so how did they go in silently?”

Zhong Qi and the rest became silent.

Ye Zhiting suddenly paused. *Could it be that... those two people had the key to Golden Inheritance Peak's barrier? But there is only one such key, and it's with His Majesty!*

"Someone stole His Majesty's key!"

Chapter 400: Exclusive

The sounds of cranes could be heard from afar.

Elder Ye and the others turned around to see a black-necked crane with a red crown flying toward them.

It was a fifth-grade fiend—a Black-necked Crane. These cranes were fiends kept by Country Yao Chen's royal family.

Emperor Jiawen was sitting on the back of one.

Under normal circumstances, members of the royal family rarely summoned the fiend, but something had happened to the imperial mausoleum. Thus, the emperor couldn't care less.

This also enabled his swift arrival. He was just a few seconds later than Elder Ye and the others.

Emperor Jiawen came up with several possibilities on his way here, but when he saw the crowd gathering at the top of Golden Inheritance Peak, his heart sank. *Nobody except me can set foot on the peak. The situation is worse than I thought.*

“Your Majesty!” Elder Zhong Qi and the others bowed, perturbed.

Elder Ye was a man of high status; there was no need for him to execute this formality.

When the Black-necked Crane landed, the elder wasted no time. “Your Majesty, did someone steal the key to Golden Inheritance Peak’s barrier?”

Emperor Jiawen descended from the fiend, dumbfounded. “No! It’s safe with me; I have it here.”

Elder Ye and the others exchanged a look among themselves.

“Your Majesty, are you certain?” the elder asked again.

The emperor showed them his palm, and a strange pattern appeared in the middle of his hand.

He really had the key!

“What is happening? Elder Ye, why did you ask?” The emperor was confused.

Elder Ye replied, "Two people opened the barrier to Golden Inheritance Peak in secret and entered the imperial mausoleum. The whole process was extremely stealthy. Zhong Qi and the others only realized something was wrong when the intruders were at the top. We suspected they had stolen Your Majesty's key, but that isn't the case."

His words contained so much information that the emperor froze in shock.

"W-What? Intruders in the imperial mausoleum?" Emperor Jiawen glanced around and saw the disc rotating slowly not far away.

He was in such a rush earlier that he missed it.

Emperor Jiawen felt a lump in his throat suffocating him. *Country Yao Chen's imperial mausoleum has existed for a thousand years. It was built when the successive emperors died, yet it has been opened.*

"W-who did it?" His face was pale from anger.

The elders could see his vein throbbing.

Elder Zhong Qi and the others fell to their knees immediately. "Your Majesty, please calm down. We... We didn't see the intruders. Please punish us for our incompetence."

Emperor Jiawen took a deep breath, and he finally suppressed his rage. *There's no use crying over spilled milk.*

"Find them! You must find the intruders no matter what!"

Elder Zhong Qi and the others were covered in cold sweat.

Elder Ye sighed and explained hurriedly, "Your Majesty, no ordinary man can open the mausoleum. I'm afraid you will have to take action before we can enter."

The emperor massaged his temples. "I had forgotten about this. Wait a minute... In that case, how did the intruders get in?"

Silence fell.

The intruders could open the mountain peak's barrier, so what else can they not do? Obviously, they came prepared. At this thought, the emperor couldn't help himself from feeling frustrated.

Golden Inheritance Peak was heavily guarded by troops. Nobody could penetrate the area easily.

This was like a vicious slap to his face.

Frowning, Emperor Jiawen walked to the rotating disc.

Except for the time when the late emperor was buried, he had never seen the disc rotate again.

I never thought this would happen. The emperor took a deep breath and raised his hand slowly.

The strange pattern appeared again.

Suddenly, the disc glowed with a silver ray of light. Very quickly, it disappeared.

Emperor Jiawen's expression changed drastically. *I can't open the mausoleum!*

...

People were rustling in the forest outside Golden Inheritance Peak—it was Rong Jin and Situ Xingchen.

Panting, the former looked up as he said, "Golden Inheritance Peak is right ahead."

Situ Xingchen followed his line of sight.

In the midst of the mountain range, Golden Inheritance Peak was the most conspicuous one. It was steep yet magnificent.

Even though they were still a distance away, they could feel its immense pressure.

Situ Xingchen tightly clenched her hands in her sleeves. *The barrier to Golden Inheritance Peak is too powerful. I'm afraid this is going to be a problem.*

Just as she was about to advance, Rong Jin stopped her. “Xingchen, wait.”

She looked back at Rong Jin, who was staring at the peak solemnly.

“The barrier to the peak is right there. This is where you stop.”

Confusion appeared in Situ Xingchen’s eyes.

Rong Jin explained, “There are many guards. Now that something has happened to the mausoleum, more troops will be deployed to stand guard. My father should be there by now. If you go further, they’ll see you. For your safety, wait for me here.”

Situ Xingchen was stunned by his words. I’ve tried everything to help him escape from Crown Prince Mansion and even covered his tracks to come here. Now, he’s asking me to wait for him here? That’s ridiculous!

She forced a smile. “Your Highness, don’t worry. I won’t cause you any trouble. You are venturing into an unknown situation. I’ll feel better if you let me go with you.”

Rong Jin looked hesitant.

Situ Xingchen teased softly, “Your Highness, are you worried that I will go against you?”

“Of course not!” Rong Jin retorted immediately, but his eyes wavered with guilt. “I-I’m worried our presence will cause unnecessary trouble. I’m still the Crown Prince, so it’s normal for me to come when

something happens at the imperial mausoleum. Xingchen, we... We're not married yet. If anyone sees you here, it might be an issue."

Situ Xingchen sneered inwardly. *Rong Jin's words are grand. He has forgotten that he's supposed to be under house arrest at Crown Prince Mansion. If anyone sees him here, he might not be any better off than me. He just wants to go alone.*

Rong Jin felt Situ Xingchen's eyes on him. It felt as though she had seen right through him.

Nevertheless, the latter said, "I will wait here for Your Highness then."

He looked at her smiling face as if he thought nothing was wrong. Then, he grinned with relief. "I'll be back soon."

With that, he strode away with purpose.

Situ Xingchen watched his silhouette and snickered. *You want to cast me aside now that I've served my purpose? Fat chance!*