

Nobel Ruler 561

Chapter 561: Welcome

As they continued their way up, dried bloodstains could be found everywhere. Even the steps and their surroundings were somewhat damaged too.

While Chu Liuyue's heart grew heavier as she took in the scene, Ye Ranran appeared to be immune and unconcerned. She couldn't resist asking, "Ranran, how long have you been in Chong Xu Cabinet?"

Ye Ranran gave the question a thought for a moment before saying, "More than two years, I guess? My master and I spent most of our time on outside training though, so we rarely came back. It was only after what happened to Chong Xu Cabinet that we stayed here."

"Your master is?"

"Ah, my master is Elder Xia Yi. He's one of the four elders in Chong Xu Cabinet, but the other three elders have... Anyway, my master is now responsible for many affairs here." A trace of sadness flashed across Ye Ranran's face when she talked about this.

The other elders are all good people. What a pity... Chu Liuyue pursed her lips. Out of the four elders, only Elder Xia Yi remains alive... It's no wonder that everyone has a pessimistic view of Chong Xu Cabinet. Without those elders holding down the fort, Chong Xu Cabinet is no longer as they were before.

Word has it Weichi Song has yet to recover from the grave injuries he suffered back then. Previously, I vaguely sensed that something was wrong with his body, but I didn't ask him about it. If the Cabinet Master and the four elders are all in such a state, then it must be worse off for the others...

“Ranran? Oh, you guys are here!” Halfway up the mountain, they saw a young man yelling at them.

Ye Ranran happily waved her hands in the air when she looked up and saw him. “What are you doing here, Senior Lu?”

A hint of amazement streaked across Lu Zhiyao’s eyes when he swept his gaze over to Chu Liuyue and Qiang Wanzhou. “The Cabinet Master told me to fetch you guys! These two must be the first and second place winners of the Wan Zheng Competition! Come on; everyone is waiting for the two of you!”

Chu Liuyue cocked an eyebrow in surprise at the extraordinarily enthusiastic Lu Zhiyao. *Even if they want to welcome us, fetching us from the middle of the mountain is a little overdoing it... Also, did he just say that the entire Chong Xu Cabinet is waiting for us? Do they have to welcome us... to such an extent?*

At this moment, she still had no idea that Chong Xu Cabinet hadn’t had any new disciples joining their sect ever since what happened a year ago. Now that they suddenly had two new disciples—particularly capable ones at that—it was only natural that everyone in the sect was excited about it. Even the simple task of picking them up was a hard-earned chance won by Lu Zhiyao.

“We’ve already prepared rooms for you to stay in when you’re on the mountain, juniors! Even though I’ve heard from the Cabinet Master that you’ve already found yourself a residence in Xi Ling City, you’re still welcome to stay over on the mountain! Our sect isn’t that rigid and is, in fact, pretty lax in this aspect! You can enter and leave the mountain at any time you want; just make sure to watch out for your safety!”

“Oh yeah, we’re growing some herbs on the mountain. You’re a heavenly doctor, right? Feel free to ask us for whatever herbs you need if you want to refine pills!” While rambling nonstop, Lu Zhiyao carefully read Chu Liuyue and Qiang Wanzhou’s expressions as if he feared that they might get upset.

Chu Liuyue couldn't help but be amused when she noticed this. She had met Lu Zhiyao—who was also Elder Xia Yi's disciple—twice in the past. Back then, she only thought that he was a talented young man who was restrained and polite. She never knew that he was quite the chatterbox.

Then again, now that even the Cabinet Master has to sell his things to raise money for Chong Xu Cabinet, the rest of the people in the sect... Lu Zhiyao must be really happy about our arrival if he can say that.

Ye Ranran didn't find Lu Zhiyao annoying as she listened from the side. On the contrary, she would chip into the conversation every now and then.

In summary, upon finding out that both Chu Liuyue and Qiang Wanzhou had chosen to join their sect, the entire Chong Xu Cabinet had been mobilized just to welcome them and make sure that they were satisfied.

Are they afraid that we'd leave the sect? wondered Chu Liuyue.

While Chu Liuyue would join the conversation as she followed them up the mountain, Qiang Wanzhou stayed silent the entire way.

Lu Zhiyao thought to himself, As Chu Liuyue is always smiling, she looks like a friendly and easy-going person. Although Qiang Wanzhou is a little aloof, it seems that he listens to Chu Liuyue's words. From what I see, he's not bad either!

Chu Liuyue found out about a lot of things from her conversation with Ye Ranran and Lu Zhiyao.

When they were about to reach the mountaintop, Lu Zhiyao suddenly shouted, "Our juniors are here!"

He shouted so loudly that his voice reverberated throughout the mountain.

The corners of Chu Liuyue's lips twitched as she felt a sense of foreboding. As expected, a group of people suddenly appeared in front of her the next second. At a glance, there seemed to be a few dozen people here.

"You're finally here, juniors! We've been waiting all morning!"

"Yeah! Hey, move it. I can't see them!"

"Well, I got here first!"

"Calm down! Don't scare the juniors!" Lu Zhiyao raised his voice again.

Meanwhile, Chu Liuyue and Qiang Wanzhou were speechless. Chu Liuyue couldn't resist taking a look at the sky to check the current time. *We left home early in the morning. Technically speaking, it's still morning now, so how can they possibly have been waiting all morning? Besides, we aren't some kind of exotic species. Why did so many people come to welcome us? I thought we were just here to pay our respects to our masters. I wasn't expecting this at all.*

"Come on. The Cabinet Master is waiting for you!" urged Lu Zhiyao excitedly.

Qiang Wanzhou finally couldn't help but whisper, "You didn't choose Chong Xu Cabinet because of this, did you?"

Upon receiving a murderous glare from Chu Liuyue, he immediately zipped his mouth.

After a warm introduction from Lu Zhiyao and Ye Ranran, Chu Liuyue and Qiang Wanzhou greeted their seniors. By the time they managed to escape the crowd, Chu Liuyue's forehead was already densely dotted with sweat.

"It's a good thing that the others didn't come... Otherwise, just greeting the seniors along would take us all day," muttered Chu Liuyue under her breath.

Lu Zhiyao—who was leading the way—suddenly stopped in his tracks and turned to look at her with a complicated expression. "That... was actually almost all of the disciples we have left."

"W-what?!" She looked at him in disbelief and shock. *There used to be 600 to 700 disciples in Chong Xu Cabinet! How come only so few are left?*

Upon seeing her expression of shock, Lu Zhiyao hurriedly said, "A few others aren't back yet, so I'll introduce them to you later."

"If I may ask, Senior Brother... How many disciples are left in Chong Xu Cabinet?"

He sighed and then said, "About a hundred or so."

She sucked in a cold breath of air at that. "Chong Xu Cabinet suffered such heavy casualties from back then?!"

Chapter 562: Medicinal Garden

Lu Zhiyao hurriedly waved his hands. “That’s not the main reason, actually. Even though we did suffer heavy casualties, it wasn’t so serious... Because the sect was on the decline, the Cabinet Master felt that their futures would be affected if he forced them to stay. Thus, he issued a dismissal order. Those who no longer wanted to stay in the sect could receive a sum of money from him to leave. Although some of them did leave at that time, most of the others only left during the past year or so.”

While it was too dogmatic to say that those disciples had no feelings for Chong Xu Cabinet, it was true that the sect was no longer how it used to be.

Even so, things weren’t so bad that Chong Xu Cabinet had to dismiss their disciples. Chu Liuyue fell silent for a moment. “That’s not the only reason, right?”

Lu Zhiyao felt conflicted and hesitant as to whether to explain things to her. *She’s a smart girl. It doesn’t seem appropriate to hide things from her, but if I tell her everything... What are we going to do if she wants to leave too?*

Ye Ranran—who could no longer keep silent—whispered, “You have no idea, Liuyue. The Cabinet Master did this for their own good... For the past year or so, our disciples have been getting ostracized and targeted by people... They couldn’t properly cultivate at all...”

Chu Liuyue understood what she meant at once. “Someone is out to get Chong Xu Cabinet?”

Ye Ranran and Lu Zhiyao exchanged looks with one another before nodding their heads.

Who has such a great influence in Xi Ling? wondered Chu Liuyue with knitted brows. *No matter how I think about it, it still comes down to those same few people...* “Is it the Third—”

“Liuyue, Wanzhou, you’re here.” Before she could finish her question, Weichi Song and Elder Xia Yi had come out of the hall.

Upon seeing the two of them, the latter’s eyes lit up as he immediately strode over while carefully sizing them up. “Tsk, tsk! You’ve really brought back two good and rare seedlings this time, Cabinet Master!” *I didn’t quite believe him previously, but now that I’ve seen them myself, I can finally put my mind at ease. For the past year or so, not even the average cultivators are willing to join our sect, much less the talented ones. It’s truly a miracle that we have two young talents with Dijing Yuan meridians joining the sect at the same time!*

Wrinkles formed on Weichi Song’s aged face as he laughed. “I told you that you’d definitely like them after seeing them. These two had the best performance at this year’s Wan Zheng Competition!”

Both Chu Liuyue and Qiang Wanzhou paid their respects to them. “Greetings, Cabinet Master, Elder Xia Yi.”

Elder Xia Yi chuckled and couldn’t resist asking, “Is it true that both of you chose Chong Xu Cabinet of your own accord?”

Chu Liuyue resisted the urge to laugh as she replied, “Of course, it is.”

Even after hearing that answer, Elder Xia Yi still found it somewhat incredulous as he stroked his beard.

“You can have a tour of the place first. After you gain a certain understanding of our sect, you can then decide who you want as your master,” said Weichi Song as he walked over to them. After a pause, he

told them with feigned nonchalance, “There were several elders to choose from in the past, but now... There’s only Xia Yi and me left!”

Chu Liuyue nodded her head with slight regret. “Thank you, Cabinet Master, Elder Xia Yi.”

Thereafter, Lu Zhiyao and Ye Ranran showed her and Qiang Wanzhou around the place.

Chu Liuyue had been here many times in the past, but now that she was here again, things had become very different. Battle traces could be seen everywhere, and a lot of things had been destroyed. Although a year had passed, she could still tell how tragic that battle was.

She felt uncomfortable as if she had something weighing on her heart as she toured around the place.

Almost all of the tens of thousands of books in Chong Xu Cabinet’s library were taken away, all of which were extremely precious prescriptions and martial art skills. Even their treasured herbs had been looted, and none was left behind.

All they had now was a medicinal garden that they had just started growing recently. Even though they had planted a number of herbs, many of them took a hundred years to grow. The herbs in their garden had only been planted for a year, so it would be a long wait before they could get their hands on those herbs.

Looking at the medicinal garden, Chu Liuyue hesitantly asked, “Senior Lu, when you previously said that I could ask for any herbs that I need... Were you referring to these herbs?”

Lu Zhiyao scratched his head in embarrassment. “U-uh... Even though these herbs can’t be used for the time being since they’ve only been planted recently, you can still state your requests. We’ll do our best to fulfill your needs!”

“D-do you mean to say that you’ll buy them from the market?” Chu Liuyue fell into deep thought. She had this suspicion that these people might not even be able to afford the herbs for their own refinement. “Most of the people in Chong Xu Cabinet are heavenly doctors, so there should be a place here dedicated for herb-growing. How come this medicinal garden is new?” *I’ve taken plenty of herbs from Chong Xu Cabinet in the past, but why aren’t they mentioning that garden?*

Lu Zhiyao sighed. “You’re right, Liuyue. We used to have a large medicinal garden in Chong Xu Cabinet, but after what happened... The medicinal garden was destroyed. Not only were the herbs damaged, but even the land itself became damaged and barren. The current medicinal garden is one of the few clean places we have on Qing Yuan Mountain now.”

“How did that happen?” Chu Liuyue frowned. *Just who was so ruthless toward Chong Xu Cabinet? It’s no wonder Weichi Song was driven to that state! It’s no wonder so many disciples left! Who would continue staying here when things have become like this?*

The mention of this matter dampened Lu Zhiyao and Ye Ranran’s spirits considerably, and everyone fell silent.

After a brief silence, Chu Liuyue asked, “I’d like to take a look at the old medicinal garden, Senior Lu.”

Lu Zhiyao was taken aback by her request. “Why would you want to go there? There’s nothing to see when it’s just a piece of barren land now. Besides, the Cabinet Master has ordered us not to go there without permission.”

A hint of disappointment surfaced on Chu Liuyue’s face.

Blinking, Ye Ranran whispered, "Senior Lu, let's just take her there since she wants to see the garden! It's no big deal since she'll just be taking a look." *Given how much the Cabinet Master adores Chu Liuyue and Qiang Wanzhou, I'm sure he won't punish them if he finds out about this.*

After much hesitation, Lu Zhiyao finally nodded in agreement. "Alright! But you mustn't act on your own when we're there. We'll come back right after taking a look."

Chu Liuyue nodded at once. "We'll do as you say."

The four of them thus went on another path and headed for the old medicinal garden.

...

Since there were very few people left in Chong Xu Cabinet, they didn't meet anyone on their way there, which was to Lu Zhiyao and Ye Ranran's relief. In fact, the further they went, the more desolated the place was.

Ten minutes later, they finally arrived at the old medicinal garden.

"There it is," said Lu Zhiyao as he pointed to the barren land in front of them.

Chapter 563: Messed Yuan Gravel

The medicinal garden that was previously filled with lush greenery had now become an actual place that couldn't grow a single thing. One glance at it, and one could see that the ochre cracked ground wasn't only left with dried herbs.

A faint bitter smell permeated throughout the air.

Chu Liuyue stared at the medicinal garden closely. "How... did it become like this..."

When she heard Lu Zhiyao said that this place was also affected, she didn't pay much attention to it. But now that she saw it personally, she knew how serious it was!

The medicinal garden that Chong Xu Cabinet had meticulously nurtured was ruined overnight!

Lu Zhiyao lightly sighed. "When the incident happened, I was coincidentally outside with Master. Hence, I'm not sure what exactly happened. When we came back, we realized that the medicinal garden had already been ruined... Actually, there were always people specifically taking care of the medicinal garden, but that day, too many from the other party came. They had also clearly planned it in advance as they directly killed the people taking care of the medicinal garden and ruined it..."

This was undoubtedly a lethal blow to Chong Xu Cabinet.

Chu Liuyue thought for a while. "This medicinal garden is huge. Being able to ruin it overnight... They must've used some special method, right?"

"We're very confused about this too, but even until now, we still can't find out what exactly happened. We only know that this land can't grow anything anymore, and it has thoroughly become barren..."

Chu Liuyue walked forward.

Ye Ranran pulled her back. “Liuyue! What are you doing?! The medicinal garden is locked now, and nobody can enter! Even if the Cabinet Master doesn’t pursue this, what if there’s still some danger lurking inside?”

Chu Liuyue patted her shoulders. “Don’t worry; I know what I’m doing. I just want to go closer.”

“What’s there to look at?” Ye Ranran advised kindly. “Cabinet Master and Mentor have already checked several times but to no avail. What can you do even if you go there? We should go back earlier.”

Lu Zhiyao had a look of disapproval. “We previously said that we’d only come in to look at it. Junior Sister, you can’t go back on your words.”

Chu Liuyue frowned. *I just felt that the medicinal garden was strange, so I wanted to go closer. But I really can’t go over with the duo stopping me.*

But at this moment, Qiang Wanzhou—who kept quiet by the side all this while—suddenly walked over.

“Hey... Wanzhou!” Ye Ranran and Lu Zhiyao were frightened.

They only cared about stopping Chu Liuyue, but they forgot that there was still another person! By the time they discovered it, Qiang Wanzhou had already walked to the front of the medicinal garden.

A rusty metal lock was hanging on the damaged metal fence, and one could still see the faint bloodstains.

One could just imagine how horrific the massacre here was back then.

This medicinal garden was previously surrounded by a barrier as well, but now it had completely disappeared. Only this broken door was left, but actually, it couldn't stop anyone either.

Qiang Wanzhou jumped up and directly went in.

Lu Zhiyao and Ye Ranran's expressions froze. *Qiang Wanzhou actually went in! How should we explain to Cabinet Master?*

Just as the two of them were in a daze, Chu Liuyue moved her feet and instantly broke through the duo's encirclement and rushed to the metal gate.

"Liuyue! Don't—" Before Ye Ranran could even finish her words of advice, she saw Chu Liuyue's body leap into the air, and she also jumped in.

Oh no! The both of them actually went in!

Ye Ranran's circular face flushed red. "W-what should we do?"

"Wait here. I'll follow them in!" Lu Zhiyao clenched his teeth. *Since the two of them have already entered, it's useless to say anything more. The most important thing now is to protect the duo's safety.*

Ye Ranran nervously nodded.

At this point, they could only do this.

Lu Zhiyao rapidly followed them and clenched his teeth before the entrance.

Just as he was about to enter, Chu Liuyue suddenly turned around and said, "Senior Brother Lu, don't enter!"

Lu Zhiyao's one leg had already crossed over, and he stiffly retracted it when he heard her words. He almost couldn't stand stably. "W-what's wrong?"

Chu Liuyue looked solemn. "There's poison in the ground."

"What?" Once Lu Zhiyao heard this, he was even more worried. "Why aren't you guys getting out of there then?!"

Chu Liuyue shook her head. "Senior Brother Lu, don't worry. This bit of poison doesn't count for much to Little Zhou and me. You should just wait outside for us."

Lu Zhiyao was confused. *What does she mean by... doesn't count for much? Didn't she say that there's poison?*

His heart was filled with worry, and he still decided to go in after much thinking. “No, I can’t watch as you guys risk—”

“Senior Brother Lu, it really will be dangerous if you come in,” said Chu Liuyue calmly as she raised her brows.

Looking at her calm and composed manner, Lu Zhiyao was gradually starting to calm down. After much thinking, he finally said, “I’ll wait here first then. If there’s anything wrong, call for me immediately!”

Chu Liuyue nodded and walked inside. *The faint bitter smell that I had smelled earlier indeed came from here. Besides, it has poison as I expected. However, it’s very hard to detect it due to the thin air. Once one enters here, they can feel it more clearly. The nearer one is to the ground, the stronger the poison.*

Qiang Wanzhou’s body had the harsh air that had accumulated over many years, so average poisons had no effect on him.

As for Chu Liuyue, she had used the opportunity of recovering her Yuan meridian when she was reborn to strengthen her physical body. Perhaps it was also due to the water droplet’s strength, so the effects were much better than she imagined. Even though she couldn’t be considered to be invulnerable to poison, it was more than enough to deal with such a situation.

But it was a pity that she still couldn’t identify the poison.

Chu Liuyue walked inward as she carefully searched the ground, wanting to find some clues. At some point, she suddenly paused in her tracks and leaned down.

A dehydrated Manling Ginseng was by her feet. The wilted and curled-up leaves at its roots were faintly red.

She used her force to wrap her palm and formed a defensive barrier to slowly pluck out the Manling Ginseng before checking it seriously.

As expected, there was a red string as thin as hair at the roots area, and it extended upward along the leaves.

If one didn't look closely, they wouldn't be able to tell at all.

"What is this..." muttered Chu Liuyue softly with furrowed brows. *Is this red string the reason why the Manling Ginseng wilted?*

She walked further in and plucked out a snow cloud vine. There was the same red string in its roots.

"There's Messed Yuan Gravel here," said Qiang Wanzhou suddenly.

Chu Liuyue looked up and strangely asked, "What did you say?"

Qiang Wanzhou pointed at the item in her hands. "That red string is nurtured by Messed Yuan Gravel."

Chapter 564: I Have a Way

“What’s Messed Yuan Gravel?” Chu Liuyue was even more confused. *Why have I never heard of this before?*

Qiang Wanzhou took the Manling Ginseng in her hands.

“Be careful of the poison—” Chu Liuyue was just about to warn him to be safe when she saw a silver needle in Qiang Wanzhou’s hands.

Then, he gently pricked it into the Manling Ginseng’s roots.

Red sand slowly flowed out like water. But before it could drop down, it quickly evaporated and became a faint red mist that disappeared in midair.

Chu Liuyue’s gaze focused. *So this is the source of the bitter smell in the air!*

“Messed Yuan Gravel is very poisonous. Even though it looks like gravel, it’s like water and can seep through to any place. The reason why the herbs were destroyed so rapidly was that they absorbed this Messed Yuan Gravel.” Qiang Wanzhou picked up the snow cloud vine and gently pricked its roots.

The same scene happened again.

After losing the Messed Yuan Gravel, the two herbs quickly shriveled and curled into a ball.

Qiang Wanzhou gently pinched the balls, and they instantly became dust.

Chu Liuyue watched on with her eyes wide open and mouth agape. "You're saying that... the herbs in the medicinal garden... are like this all because of Messed Yuan Gravel..."

Qiang Wanzhou nodded. "Messed Yuan Gravel can travel for miles. Just a bit of it can easily destroy anything within miles; this medicinal garden is naturally the same. But this Messed Yuan Gravel isn't as poisonous to humans. As long as one doesn't touch it directly, it normally won't have much of an impact."

Chu Liuyue looked at him with a complicated gaze. "Why are you so familiar with this?"

"This thing is very common in Nan Jiang," said Qiang Wanzhou nonchalantly as he patted his hands and dusted away the powder.

Chu Liuyue nodded in understanding. *No wonder... When I was once the princess and went around Tianling, out of the four domains, I only didn't go to Nan Jiang. That was because the environment there was harsh and filled with danger. It now seems like Qiang Wanzhou really is extraordinarily amazing to be able to come out on his own...*

"If we don't quickly dig out all of the Messed Yuan Gravel, the entire mountain will collapse in less than three years," said Qiang Wanzhou lightly.

Qiang Wanzhou definitely isn't exaggerating! Chu Liuyue was stunned. "Do you have any solution then?"

It's fine if I didn't know, but now that I do, I definitely can't watch as Qing Yuan Mountain falls into ruins.

Under Chu Liuyue's expectant gaze, Qiang Wanzhou nodded. "There is a way, but it's more troublesome. The Messed Yuan Gravel seems to have been buried here for more than a year, and it

most likely has already infiltrated into every part of the mountain. Thus, it requires quite a bit of effort to remove it completely.”

As long as there's still a way! Chu Liuyue heaved a slight sigh of relief. “What should we do?”

Qiang Wanzhou paused. “Firstly, we need to pluck out all of the herbs in this medicinal garden and use my previous method to clean it one by one.”

Chu Liuyue's gaze focused. *This is... There are at least millions of wilted herbs in this medicinal garden! If we really do it one by one, god knows how long we'll take!*

“Other than this, all the other plants and trees on the mountain have most likely absorbed it. Thus, it'll be even more troublesome to handle those.”

Chu Liuyue's hair stood on end. *Instead of this, why don't we directly give up Qing Yuan Mountain?!*

“Is there really no other way?” Chu Liuyue held her head in pain.

Qiang Wanzhou pressed his lips against each other tightly. “There is.”

Chapter 565: Very Important to Me

As Chu Liuyue stared unblinkingly at Qiang Wanzhou, he said with much hesitation, “Messed Yuan Gravel is very sensitive to human blood, so it'll gather very quickly if you use fresh blood as bait. When it condenses to form a block, it means that there's no more Messed Yuan Gravel within a 30-mile radius. This is how you can completely get rid of it in one go.”

Chu Liuyue froze for a moment. "Fresh blood? H-how much blood would be needed for such a huge mountain?"

"You don't need a lot. It's just that... it must be fresh blood," Qiang Wanzhou emphasized. "Blood in one's body."

Chu Liuyue's eyes narrowed when she finally understood what he was saying. "So you're saying that... We have to use a living person as bait, is that right?"

Qiang Wanzhou nodded. "Only then can we attract all the Messed Yuan Gravel over and find the most accurate time to counterattack. Any earlier or later will just be a waste of effort."

"Since this method is so convenient, why didn't you tell me about it right from the start?" asked Chu Liuyue all of a sudden.

Qiang Wanzhou fell silent.

"Is it because nobody can withstand the Messed Yuan Gravel?" Chu Liuyue asked gently. "Were you lying to me when you said that it's not poisonous to people?"

"It wasn't a lie," interrupted Qiang Wanzhou irritably. "It's true that the poison won't pose much of a problem to humans, b-but... The point is that it'll sap one's force when it gathers in the human body. It's fine if you have enough force, but if your force completely depletes before it condenses... It'll start eroding the human flesh, just like what it did to the herbs."

"I see." Chu Liuyue sighed in relief. *That's not a problem at all.*

Qiang Wanzhou took a step forward, his eyes trained on her. "You intend to be the bait yourself, am I right?"

Chu Liuyue blinked her eyes and wanted to deny it right away. But when she met his crystal-clear eyes, she nodded in the end.

"You can't do that!" objected Qiang Wanzhou vehemently.

"Why not?" The corners of Chu Liuyue's lips rose.

"No means no! Why do you have to be the bait when there are so many people in Chong Xu Cabinet?" Qiang Wanzhou's pretty face appeared sullen. *I knew it! I knew she'd definitely try and find some way to help out once she learned of this solution!*

"Little Zhou, you've met the people in our sect earlier. Do you think any of them is a much more suitable candidate than I am?" asked Chu Liuyue with a sigh. *Let's not even mention those who are weaker than me. The ones who are stronger... probably can't withstand the poison.*

I, however, can do it because I have a mysterious water droplet in my body. Although I've never told Qiang Wanzhou about it, given how smart he is, he has probably figured out that I have a powerful trick up my sleeve after living with me for so many days. Besides, he saw me draw out the Long Yuan Sword that day with his two eyes. There's no way an ordinary stage-four warrior could possibly accomplish such a feat.

"The Cabinet Master and Elder Xia Yi are around too," argued Qiang Wanzhou defiantly.

"I don't believe that you can't tell that the Cabinet Master is injured. As for Elder Xia Yi... Although he's in good health, he's currently Chong Xu Cabinet's second-in-command. There are many things that he has to handle in person." Chu Liuyue rubbed Qiang Wanzhou on the head, chuckling. *There's a certain amount of risk involved in this matter. Should anything go wrong... Chong Xu Cabinet will be in upheaval again.*

Qiang Wanzhou slapped her hand away in annoyance. "Do you have to do it yourself?! You might be capable, but you're not invincible!"

His sudden outburst surprised Chu Liuyue, for this was the first time he had ever flared up at her and smacked her hand away. He had never done this to her back when they weren't as close as now.

A hint of regret surfaced on his face when he noticed Chu Liuyue's stunned expression and realized that he had lost control of himself. His lips parted for a moment, but nothing came out of his mouth.

"...What's wrong, Little Zhou?" asked Chu Liuyue gently. "Are you... worried about me?"

Things became tense between them for a moment when Qiang Wanzhou turned away from her. He wanted to push her hands when he felt them on his arm at first, but in the process of doing so, he saw her face appear in his peripheral vision. He didn't do anything about it in the end.

As Chu Liuyue held his arm, she walked to the front to face him and said ever so seriously, "Little Zhou, I don't do things that I'm not confident of."

Qiang Wanzhou's gaze flickered, and he couldn't resist asking, "Why do you have to help them to this extent though?" *It's only our first day at Chong Xu Cabinet, and we've only met the Cabinet Master a couple of times. Although I didn't ask her anything, I found it strange when she picked Chong Xu Cabinet*

out of the many sects. Now, she even wants to risk her life to help them. I really can't understand what's on her mind.

He's asking why I have to help them to this extent? As Chu Liuyue looked at the young man—whose good-looking face looked youthful, stubborn, and naive—in front of her, her emotions rippled slightly. “Little Zhou, why did you come all the way to Xi Ling to look for that person?”

Even though he was surprised by that sudden question, he firmly answered, “Because she's very important to me.”

“My answer is the same as yours,” said Chu Liuyue with a nod. Even though I was under Weichi Song's tutelage for a long time in my past life learning how to refine pills, I never officially became his disciple despite my wish to do so. According to Weichi Song, there were a lot of implications behind my Crown Princess status, and if he were to accept me as his disciple, the entire Chong Xu Cabinet might become my burden.

There's an unwritten rule in the Tianling Dynasty: No princes and princesses are to get too close to any of the sects in Xi Ling City. It's to avoid suspicion of a power struggle. To be honest, I didn't consider it a problem since I practically had all the power in the Tianling Dynasty as the Crown Princess. However, Weichi Song was very insistent on it. I've always been grateful toward him, so if there's something that I can do for him and the entire Chong Xu Cabinet, I naturally want to do it.

This answer left Qiang Wanzhou speechless. He didn't understand how Chong Xu Cabinet was important to her, but since she said so...

“You're sure you can do it, right?” he asked stubbornly.

Chu Liuyue nodded. She had noticed that Qiang Wanzhou seemed to be afraid of something, but this wasn't the best time to ask questions about it.

Qiang Wanzhou eventually gave his consent. "I'll help to protect you."

Chu Liuyue heaved a sigh of relief.

"Juniors, quickly come out if you're done! We'll be in trouble if someone discovers us here!" urged Lu Zhiyao from outside.

After exchanging looks with each other, Chu Liuyue and Qiang Wanzhou turned around and exited the garden, much to Lu Zhiyao's relief.

Chu Liuyue then said, "I'm going to see the Cabinet Master."

Chapter 566: I Won't Allow It!

Lu Zhiyao thought Chu Liuyue had decided who she wanted as her master, so he excitedly said, "Alright, I'll go with you guys!"

When Ye Ranran came walking over, she nervously scanned Chu Liuyue and Qiang Wanzhou's bodies before patting her chest in relief. "You nearly scared me to death! You two are too bold! It's lucky that nothing happened to both of you. Don't ever go in there without permission again!"

Chu Liuyue's eyebrows rose slightly at that. *I won't go in there without permission again. The next time I'm here, I'll probably settle the problem once and for all.*

After making sure that both Chu Liuyue and Qiang Wanzhou were fine, the four of them thus left together.

...

When they arrived at Zhengfeng Hall—where Weichi Song was currently at—Chu Liuyue led Qiang Wanzhou inside. Elder Xia Yi seemed to have already left as he was busy with other affairs, so only Weichi Song was there at Zhengfeng Hall.

Upon seeing the two of them, Weichi Song smiled. “How was the tour? Have you decided who you want as your master?”

Chu Liuyue nodded. “Both Little Zhou and I wish to be your disciples.”

Weichi Song was delighted and surprised to hear that. Both were outstanding disciples that he liked and thought very highly of, so he was naturally happy that they were willing to become his disciples. However, he had his concerns too.

“Are you sure about that? To be honest... Elder Xia Yi’s cultivation has surpassed mine,” said Weichi Song frankly.

Chu Liuyue looked determined as she told him, “Yes. Otherwise, we wouldn’t have chosen Chong Xu Cabinet.”

A myriad of emotions welled up in Weichi Song. “A-alright! Since you have decided to acknowledge me as your master, I’ll gladly teach everything I know! Later, I’ll tell Xia Yi to go prepare the ceremony—”

“There’s no need to go through so much trouble,” interrupted Chu Liuyue. “Cabinet Master, all those rituals are just pure formalities for outsiders to see, and they aren’t important at all. What’s important is that Little Zhou and I-I... have decided to acknowledge you as our master.”

She then took a step back, went on her knees, and solemnly paid him a kowtow.

Shocked, Weichi Song hurriedly went to help her up. “What are you doing—”

“Cabinet Master, if you don’t mind, I’ll be your disciple from today onward.”

Weichi Song’s hands froze in midair at the sight of the young girl kneeling in front of him. She looked utterly serious as a faint light reflected from her dark, glassy eyes.

He felt a pang in his heart, and his eyes turned moist.

A small smile formed on Chu Liuyue’s face as she earnestly kowtowed two more times to him.

“Get up! Get up!” Weichi Song suppressed the excitement in his heart.

Only then did Chu Liuyue rise to her feet. “Your disciple—Chu Liuyue—pays her respect to you, Master.”

Weichi Song was at a loss for words. Ever since Chong Xu Cabinet was attacked and his only son, Weichi Lang, passed away in an accident, he had fallen into a depressed state. Had it not been for fear of

destroying Chong Xu Cabinet with his two hands and the disciples getting bullied as a result, he probably would've collapsed a long time ago.

Qiang Wanzhou did the same as Chu Liuyue, kowtowing and paying his respects to Weichi Song.

“What good kids you two are... Chong Xu Cabinet is no longer as it was before, so I don't have much to give you except for these...” As Weichi Song spoke in a trembling voice, he slowly and carefully took out two golden whistles from his Cosmic Ring and passed one to each of them.

Longing and pain were apparent in his eyes. “These whistles contain my force. If you blow it, I'll come to you right away, no matter where you are! These whistles... were made by me. I intended to give them to Langlang and... Little Crescent, but they're no longer around. You can have them instead!”

A lot of force and effort are needed to make this thing. One might not be able to recover their force for a long time, yet he made two of them! Earlier, he said that he made one for his son and another for... Chu Liuyue's heart thumped hard as she whispered lightly, “Who did you say this whistle was for, Master?”

Weichi Song let out a bitter laugh at that. “I'm so used to calling her Little Crescent that I forgot you might not know who I'm talking about. It's actually... the late Crown Princess of the Tianling Dynasty. She's no longer around, so it's only normal that you haven't heard of her.”

He stroked the whistles in his hand. “Speaking of which, she can be considered my disciple too. I wanted to give this to her on her big day, but unfortunately... That day never came, so I never got the chance to do so...”

Chu Liuyue's mind went blank as she stiffly reached for the whistle. Upon touching some sort of an engraving on the other side of it, she flipped it over and saw the word 'Yue' engraved on it in fine print.

When Qiang Wanzhou took his whistle, he noticed that something seemed amiss with Chu Liuyue's reaction. Hence, he took a look at her whistle, and he was surprised to see the word on it. "Her name is also Yue?"

Weichi Song nodded. "Yes, that's Little Crescent's name. Coincidentally, Liuyue also has a 'Yue' in her name. This must be... fate. Will you mind it, Liuyue?"

Chu Liuyue inhaled deeply before looking up to give him a big smile. "Of course not. This is a gift from you, so I'll naturally treasure it. If she knows that you treated her so well, she'd definitely be very happy too."

"I hope so!" Weichi Song couldn't help but let out a heavy sigh at that.

Chu Liuyue suppressed the emotions welling up within her as she carefully put the whistle away.

Next to her, Qiang Wanzhou appeared dazed as he looked at Weichi Song and asked, "...Master, has that girl—Little Crescent—ever been to Nan Jiang?"

Weichi Song gave the question a thought before he shook his head. "Nan Jiang is a dangerous place, so it's unlikely that she's ever been there."

This kid is on a wild goose chase. Chu Liuyue sighed inwardly when she saw the hint of disappointment in Qiang Wanzhou's face. After putting her thoughts together, she said, "Master, we have something we'd like to discuss with you. It's regarding Chong Xu Cabinet's old medicinal garden... The soil there is poisonous. I'm sure you're aware of that too, right?"

Weichi Song's expression changed. "You've been there?"

Chu Liuyue hurriedly said, "Don't get angry, nor do you need to worry. Listen to me first. Little Zhou and I noticed that there's something wrong with the garden, so we went to check it out—"

"You've even entered the garden?" Weichi Song totally lost his cool. *How bold of them!*

Chu Liuyue coughed. "Aren't we alright? Besides, we found something in the ground. Have you heard of this thing called Messed Yuan Gravel?"

Weichi Song knitted his brows. "Messed Yuan Gravel? What's that?"

Chu Liuyue thus explained it to him briefly.

Right after she proposed to use herself as bait, Weichi Song finally couldn't hold himself back as he stood up and bellowed, "I won't allow it!"

Chapter 567: I Can Do It

How can I possibly allow her to do such a risky thing? As Chong Xu Cabinet's Cabinet Master, I should be the one doing this. "How can I let you take such a huge risk when you're just a stage-four warrior? If anyone needs to be the bait, it's me!"

Chu Liuyue shook her head. "You know your own condition best, Master."

“Even so, that person definitely can’t be you! We’ll think of another way if we can’t find a suitable person! In any case, I won’t agree to this!” *How can I let my new disciple do such a thing?!*

Chu Liuyue had expected this reaction from him. She didn’t actually intend to tell him this, but this was Chong Xu Cabinet after all—nothing could escape Weichi Song’s eyes. Rather than having things turn chaotic, she decided that she might as well make things clear to him now.

She quietly stood in place and listened to Weichi Song before slowly explaining, “Master, this is the only viable method. If we don’t solve this issue as soon as possible, the entire Qing Yuan Mountain will be destroyed. Can you bear to let that happen?”

Chong Xu Cabinet has a history of hundreds of years and has been right here on Qing Yuan Mountain ever since it was established. Giving up this mountain will indubitably be a huge blow to everyone in Chong Xu Cabinet. “It wasn’t easy for you to preserve Chong Xu Cabinet. Can you really bear to watch that happen?”

Weichi Song closed his eyes in agony. “Of course, I’m reluctant for that to happen. As long as I can preserve Chong Xu Cabinet, I won’t hesitate to risk my life! But that person can’t be you, Liuyue... It mustn’t be you...”

“Master, I have absolute confidence that I can succeed. Otherwise, I wouldn’t have come here to discuss this matter with you,” enunciated Chu Liuyue.

Weichi Song looked at Chu Liuyue with a frown.

The young adolescent in front of him appeared so confident and sure of herself that anyone would be convinced by her when they saw the calm look in her onyx eyes.

Closing his eyes, Weichi Song took a deep breath before finally meeting Chu Liuyue's gaze with utter seriousness. "I'm grateful that you're willing to do this, Liuyue, but I won't agree to it if your life is at stake. Not unless... You can prove you're capable of the task."

Although I know that she's much more capable than she lets on—which was proven when she emerged as the Wan Zheng Competition's winner—I have to know her true capabilities. Otherwise, I won't dare to gamble on her life when there's so much risk involved in this matter.

"Alright." Chu Liuyue blinked her eyes and smiled before gently closing her eyes.

It was quiet in the room when a concentrated force suddenly shot out from her body, and a strong suppression started spreading out.

She's just a beginner stage-four warrior! Weichi Song stared closely at Chu Liuyue, trying to see where she got her confidence from. Does she have some sort of impressive martial art skill, Yuan instrument, or something else?

But he soon realized that her aura was rapidly changing and had reached the intermediate fourth stage within seconds. His eyes widened at that. *Was she hiding her true abilities before this when she had actually surpassed the beginner stage—no, that's not right! Her aura is still getting stronger! It's at the advanced stage now!*

His lips twitched. "W-which cultivation stage is she exactly at?"

This question seemed to be directed at Qiang Wanzhou, who stood next to him.

"I have no idea either," replied Qiang Wanzhou frankly. *I really don't know. All I know is that she's definitely stronger than me.*

Amidst Weichi Song's astonishment, Chu Liuyue's aura had surpassed that of a stage-five warrior. What made him feel even more incredulous was that she showed no sign of stopping at all.

Following this, her aura continued becoming stronger, reaching the intermediate fifth stage, advanced fifth stage, and then the sixth stage.

Weichi Song sucked in a cold breath of air in surprise as he watched her aura continue to get stronger, reaching the intermediate sixth stage and eventually the advanced sixth stage.

It was then that it suddenly hit him that he should cast a barrier around the room, and he did just that. *There's no telling how big of a commotion this will cause if others were to find out about her capabilities...*

Chu Liuyue knitted her brows slightly as another surge of force shot out from the water droplet in her.

Bam!

She had reached the seventh stage, and it was only then that her aura stopped intensifying.

For some reason, Weichi Song heaved a sigh of relief when he saw her opening her eyes. Despite having encountered many things in his life, this particular scene left him shocked and speechless for a long time.

With a smile, Chu Liuyue asked, "Do you want me to continue, Master?"

His mind—which had just been put at ease—became tense once more. “C-continue?!”

Chu Liuyue nodded her head in all seriousness. “Yeah! If you think that this isn’t enough to prove my capabilities, then—”

“It’s enough! It’s enough!” His eyelids twitched hard. Although his doubts about her capabilities had been dispelled, he became increasingly curious about it. *How did she... manage to do that?!*

“Y-you kept your true capabilities hidden...” said Weichi Song with much difficulty. *How could she already be a stage-seven warrior when she’s barely 15?*

“Don’t be mistaken; I’m not a stage-seven warrior. I... merely possess force of that stage.” Chu Liuyue opted for a more euphemistic explanation.

Weichi Song fell silent for a moment as he looked at Chu Liuyue with mixed emotions. Eventually, he said, “You have my consent.”

Chu Liuyue was delighted to hear that, and it was only then that she retracted her aura.

The intense force flooded back into the water droplet that was quietly suspended in her dantian, but it failed to cause a single ripple in the water droplet. Like rainwater falling into the sea, it disappeared quietly without a trace.

Once all the force returned to her body, Chu Liuyue heaved a sigh of relief. *To be honest, this is the force that’s stored in the water droplet, and it doesn’t belong to me. It’s a good thing that my control over the*

water droplet has gradually begun to increase as my cultivation improves. That's how I managed to use some of the water droplet's force earlier to prove my capabilities.

After staring at her with a grave expression for a while, Weichi Song finally seemed to understand something. "Does that mean... Y-you can draw the force of another person?"

Draw the force of another person? Does he think that the force I have belongs to another person? The question left Chu Liuyue confused. She wanted to explain to him, but on second thought, his explanation seemed to sound a bit more logical. Thus, she nodded her head after some contemplation. "Yes."

I see. Perhaps she won the competition with this mysterious and powerful force back when she was in the Tianling God Realm. Weichi Song looked enlightened, as well as much more relieved than before. "That's good... That's good..."

Chu Liuyue's eyes curved, knowing that he was agreeing to her suggestion.

All of a sudden, she heard a teasing voice inside her mind. "Lass, I can lend you my powers."

Chapter 568: Money

"Ancestor?" Chu Liuyue couldn't help but feel somewhat amused. *Why is he trying to get involved in this matter?*

"I'm not joking," said Shangguan Jing seriously. "I'm serious here. Although I'm just a bit of consciousness, I'm still capable enough to help you."

“Thank you!” Chu Liuyue’s heart tingled. *Even though I might not get the chance to use his powers, I appreciate his goodwill.*

“It’s nothing to be thankful about. I’ve long grown sick and tired of the Tianling God Realm after staying there for thousands of years. If I didn’t meet you, I wouldn’t have the chance to come out again. Besides... For some reason, my powers seem to have grown stronger lately...” said Shangguan Jing.

The last bit of information surprised Chu Liuyue. “Aren’t you just a bit of consciousness? How come you’re getting stronger?”

“I have no idea either.” Shangguan Jing was also very confused, but upon thinking that this was a good thing, he wasn’t too bothered about it. *Following this lass around doesn’t seem to be a bad idea.*

Chu Liuyue was caught between laughter and tears. After thinking for a while, she decided to leave this matter aside and start discussing how to solve the problem of Messed Yuan Gravel with Weichi Song and Qiang Wanzhou instead.

...

Peerless Palace.

There was a bloodbath inside and outside the majestic palace, with corpses lying strewn across the ground. The pungent stench of blood was suffocating.

The main hall was surrounded by many soldiers in heavy armor, and standing in the middle of it all was Zhang Youfang—Peerless Palace’s owner.

Behind him stood about 100 people—who appeared to be in miserable states with injuries all over them. At this moment, their eyes were all trained on the man in black in front of them.

He appeared stern and majestic as his cloak fluttered in the bitter wind. His deep eyes were like ice that had been frosted for thousands of years, and an intimidating sense of malice exuded from him. “Rong Xiu, what have my people done wrong that you have to go to the extent of eradicating them?!”

With bloodshot eyes, Zhang Youfang glared at Rong Xiu—the person who had mercilessly destroyed the entire Peerless Palace.

“Others may not know, but don’t tell me that you have no idea either, Zhang Youfang. Do you really think that you can kill me outside Heaven’s Canopy?” asked Rong Xiu lightly with a calm and aloof expression. His thin lips curled upward as he shot the other man and his subordinates a cold, disdainful look as if he were looking at ants.

He spoke calmly. “Aren’t you people... Overestimating your capabilities a little too much?”

He has no regard for me at all! Zhang Youfang hated Rong Xiu even more when he felt that the latter viewed him as a clown. If possible, he desperately wanted to charge up to the latter and kill him once and for all. However, he couldn’t.

While they might stand some chance if Rong Xiu was alone with his powers suppressed outside Heaven’s Canopy, it was impossible now. The ones who would end up dead would be them.

If I had sent more manpower back then, Rong Xiu might’ve already been dead now, and I wouldn’t have brought such misfortune onto myself. Zhang Youfang regretted his past decision very much. Taking a deep breath, he said, “Rong Xiu, aren’t you afraid of others crusading against you for your ruthlessness and cruelty?!”

It's because I knew that he had such concerns that I dared to test the limits of his patience time and time again. He bore with it even when his life was threatened on several occasions, so what's wrong with him this time?!

Despite the smile on Rong Xiu's face, it didn't reach his eyes. "I've given you enough chances. Besides... It just so happens that I lack an opportunity to establish new rules while I was away. You've solved my problem by offering yourselves at my doorstep."

He hadn't taken any actions so far because he was still in the middle of preparations and wanted to lure out the people hiding in the dark. Now that he was fully prepared, he naturally had no more concerns. Thus, he decided to strike hard this time.

We've become sacrificial lambs! It suddenly dawned on Zhang Youfang that Rong Xiu wanted to make an example of them and issue a warning to the others at the same time. *He isn't worried about criticisms or even impeachment at all! He's been waiting for this moment all this while! Recuperation? Compliance? It was a setup all along!*

Rong Xiu raised his sword...

When the sword landed, Zhang Youfang was overwhelmed with deep despair.

The soldiers—who had been waiting around for a long time—charged forward at once, and the situation quickly became a one-sided massacre.

Rong Xiu watched this scene with utter calmness and indifference as screams and battle sounds gradually died down.

Right at that moment, a clear chirp was heard.

A bird then landed on Yan Qing's arm when he lifted it. From a close distance, one could see that this wasn't a real fiend but an intricately made sparrow. However, it was so vivid and lifelike that it looked no different from an ordinary sparrow.

When Yan Qing tapped the sparrow on the head, it opened its mouth and spat out a small ball. Having been told to pass all messages from Xi Ling to Rong Xiu's hands directly, he did as told—although this message came somewhat abruptly—and presented it to Rong Xiu. "It's a message from Xi Ling, Your Highness."

With a lift of Rong Xiu's hand, the small ball flew to his palm. His long, slender fingers gently crushed it into powder, which quickly coalesced in the air to form a few lines of words.

His eyebrows rose slightly as his gaze swept across the words.

Standing aside, Yan Qing and Yu Mo suddenly sensed cold air emanating from Rong Xiu, which made them exchange glances right away.

Since it's a message from Xi Ling, it must be concerning that person. Shouldn't His Highness be happy about it? But why— Yu Mo quickly scanned the few lines of words in the air. *W-what? Whose money?*

The words then disappeared with a light wave of Rong Xiu's hand.

Upon receiving a side-glance from him, Yu Mo hurriedly lowered his head in trepidation. *Those were the only words I saw, I swear! Why is His Highness exuding such a thick murderous aura? It's even scarier than when he ordered the deaths of the people working for Peerless Palace. W-what exactly is going on?*

"Yu Mo," called Rong Xiu.

"Yes, Your Highness?" Yu Mo hurriedly responded.

"I'll leave you to deal with Zhang Youfang."

Yu Mo was shocked to hear that. *As Peerless Palace's master, Zhang Youfang is extraordinarily strong. I can barely hold a fight with him, yet His Highness... wants me to deal with him... It's a tall order for me!*

"Your Highness..." He was just about to beg for mercy, but he immediately zipped his mouth upon receiving a cool look from Rong Xiu.

Meanwhile, Yan Qing was looking at Yu Mo with schadenfreude. *Hah, he deserves it. Why would he go and dig his own grave when he knew that it was a message from Xi Ling? Of course, His Highness would punish him. Then again... What was that message about that caused His Highness to be so upset?*

Chapter 569: He Has Been There Before

"Yan Qing."

"Yes, Your Highness?"

“Make a trip to Xi Ling and pass this to her.” As Rong Xiu spoke, he took out a silver Cosmic Ring and handed it to Yan Qing.

Yan Qing received it with both hands before asking hesitantly, “...Do you mean... Right away?”

“Yes,” replied Rong Xiu coolly, his answer short and sweet.

Right at that moment, a chilly wind blew over.

“Yes, Your Highness.” Yan Qing hurriedly bowed his head respectfully before turning around to leave.

Yu Mo was dumbfounded. *H-he’s leaving just like that? What urgent matter could it be that he has to leave so hurriedly? What am I going to do now?!*

“Yu Mo.” Rong Xiu turned his gaze to him.

Feeling tense, Yu Mo responded, “Yes, Your Highness?”

“You can only return once you’re done dealing with Zhang Youfang.”

Yu Mo felt his vision turning black as he made his last attempt of struggle. “Your Highness...”

“Hm?” questioned Rong Xiu nonchalantly.

“I’m on it!” Mustering up his courage, Yu Mo charged straight toward the chaotic battlefield. *Things shouldn’t be too difficult since Zhang Youfang is already injured. Besides, there are so many soldiers around—*

“Everyone, step back and make way for your Lord Yu,” said Rong Xiu indifferently.

“Yes, Your Highness!” Upon receiving the order, the well-trained soldiers retreated and cleared a path for Yu Mo.

Yu Mo’s eyes twitched hard, and he regretted his actions when a bloodthirsty Zhang Youfang instantly appeared before him. *I shouldn’t have read that message! Just what sort of terrible thing has happened in Xi Ling?!*

...

Chong Xu Cabinet.

It was a bright and sunny day, without a single cloud in the sky.

Chu Liuyue—along with Qiang Wanzhou and Weichi Song—came to the old medicinal garden once more. “...Does that mean you have no idea who broke into Chong Xu Cabinet that day?”

While making their way over, she had pried out a lot of information from Weichi Song. Although she had heard some things from Lu Zhiyao, he was ultimately not at Chong Xu Cabinet that day. Plus, it was more convenient and accurate to get the news straight from the horse's mouth.

Sure enough, after a brief chat, she found out a lot of details that Lu Zhiyao hadn't mentioned before.

"Those people were very powerful. They came at night while wearing masks and black robes, so we couldn't see their features clearly..." Even though that incident had happened more than a year ago, the memory of it was still fresh and deeply engraved in his mind. It had become a sore memory that he couldn't forget at all.

"The other party came prepared and took us by surprise. We couldn't even protect the elders' and disciples' lives, so how could we possibly care about the medicinal garden? By the time we came over when everything was over, the people in charge of guarding the garden had all died as well." Despite Weichi Song's seemingly calm exterior, he was actually trembling slightly as he recalled the past.

"We wanted to go and take a look at the herbs when we realized that a number of them were damaged. However, the casualties took priority... Unfortunately, before we knew it, the rest of the herbs withered by the next day. The garden was already a wasteland when we sent people to plant new herbs a month later, and it was only then that we discovered that the land could no longer be used to grow herbs. But it was too late by then."

While carefully listening to Weichi Song, Chu Liuyue quietly pondered the problem. "Since Messed Yuan Gravel is from Nan Jiang, then only those who have been there would possess this thing. Master, do you know anyone in the Tianling Dynasty who has been to Nan Jiang in recent years?"

Weichi Song searched his memory for a while before finally saying, "Jiang Yucheng has been there before."

Chapter 570: Mastermind!

“He went there before?” Chu Liuyue was also shocked. “When?”

Weichi Song squinted and recalled for a while before saying, “It should’ve been after Little Crescent was gone... Back then, everyone said that Little Crescent went crazy... He heard that Nan Jiang had medicine that could bring the dead back to life, so he brought people over... But in the end, he didn’t find it, and most of the people he brought there came back injured. After that time, Jiang Yucheng recuperated for a long time and didn’t even go to Little Crescent’s funeral.”

“Funeral?” Chu Liuyue widened her eyes. *How can this be? When I committed suicide by burning my Tianjing Yuan meridian, my entire physical body was damaged and completely ruined. How could I—*

“Yeah! Originally, according to Little Crescent’s identity, she could’ve been buried and sent off properly. But as it didn’t sound good that she went crazy due to cultivation, they... just executed it according to an average princess’s funeral.”

Chu Liuyue heard it and found it ridiculous. *Laughable! Those people tried all sorts of ways to push me to my death, yet they didn’t forget to plan my funeral? Right—of course, they need to do so! Only by doing this could they wash away their suspicion! And the so-called risking his life to save me by going to Nan Jiang... Jiang Yucheng actually acted everything out so fully! He clearly went to Nan Jiang for another purpose, so he just used me as a shield! However, the crowd most probably thought that he was as devoted as ever.*

The heart-wrenching hatred overwhelmed her heart, and it almost made her chest explode.

The fists in her sleeves had long been clenched tightly, and she almost crushed her bones. *Jiang Yucheng, you really outdid yourself!*

Seeing that Chu Liuyue lowered her head, became motionless, and seemed amiss, Weichi Song asked in concern, "Liuyue! Are you okay?"

Chu Liuyue closed her eyes.

When she raised her head again, her emotions had already been appeased. She smiled slightly and said, "Nothing much. I was just wondering... What kind of treasure is so magical that it can attract... Eldest Young Master Jiang to risk his life and go over."

As she spoke, she looked at Qiang Wanzhou. "Little Zhou, you've grown up in Nan Jiang from a young age. Have you ever heard of such a thing?"

Qiang Wanzhou shook his head. "Nope."

Weichi Song paused for a while and said, "Actually, I have always doubted this, but I didn't have much evidence... It now seems very likely that he didn't go to Nan Jiang for Little Crescent but for something else... If he really was the one who brought back the Messed Yuan Gravel..."

Weichi Song suddenly thought of something, knitted his brows, and stopped.

Chu Liuyue stepped forward. "Mentor, I came to Xi Ling not long ago, but I heard quite a bit of news about Chong Xu Cabinet. I wanted to ask you a question: Is there someone targeting Chong Xu Cabinet in the dark?"

Weichi Song's face instantly looked like it aged by a few decades. He slowly sighed and laughed bitterly. "You're so smart, and it's natural for you to guess this. That's right. Ever since that incident happened more than a year ago, there was indeed someone who targeted our Chong Xu Cabinet and made life difficult for us secretly and openly."

“Is that why a lot of disciples left? Because of this?”

Weichi Song nodded stiffly, and bitterness flashed across his face. Before this, he had never thought that he would be driven to this state.

Chu Liuyue paused and softly asked, “That person... Is it the Third Princess, Shangguan Wan?”

Weichi Song suddenly looked at Chu Liuyue and asked in shock, “How did you... No, not her...”

Weichi Song started to deny it, but his previous reaction had already confirmed Chu Liuyue’s suspicions.

“Why must she do this?” Chu Liuyue frowned. Could it purely be because Weichi Song was half my mentor and was close to me? If that really is the case, Shangguan Wan would have to deal with too many people! If Shangguan Wan deals with them one by one, she would be exhausted to death! Besides, Chong Xu Cabinet was in the spotlight back then. It also wasn’t easy to defeat them as it exhausted a great amount of manpower and resources! Thinking about it, it’s an uphill task! Shangguan Wan’s brain must be damaged to do this!

But Weichi Song refused to answer Chu Liuyue’s question. “Liuyue, this has nothing to do with you. Don’t guess anymore, and don’t interfere with this matter!”

“I am already Chong Xu Cabinet’s disciple today. How is this not related to me? She doesn’t want to harm only you, but she also wants to harm the entire Chong Xu Cabinet!”

“Liuyue, just take it as if I’m begging you!” boomed Weichi Song as pain and struggle flashed across his eyes.

Chu Liuyue suddenly paused.

After a while, she finally nodded. “Okay.”

Weichi Song sighed deeply. *I naturally know that Chu Liuyue is doing this for the entire Chong Xu Cabinet and me, but this matter implicates too many people and is very dangerous. I really don’t want to drag these two kids down.*

The room fell into temporary silence.

Qiang Wanzhou suddenly spoke. “People who have used Messed Yuan Gravel before would have marks left on their bodies.”

Chu Liuyue and Weichi Song looked over in unison. “What did you say?”

Qiang Wanzhou raised his hand. “If one wants to use Messed Yuan Gravel, they would have to use their fresh blood as bait. The person who is the bait would have a very faint red line left behind from his palm to his wrist area.”

Chu Liuyue’s eyes brightened up. “This means that we can confirm if Jiang Yucheng did it or not if we find a way to see his hand?”

“Mm.”

Weichi Song was first elated before he frowned and said, "This method sounds simple, yet it is also difficult. Jiang Yucheng is high in power now and always has a guard with him, so it's not easy to get close to him. Besides... Even if he was the true mastermind, he might not do it himself."

This Messed Yuan Gravel needed one to use fresh blood as bait, and it would also absorb one's force. It was too strange and scary.

Jiang Yucheng could randomly send a subordinate to do it. Why would he have to do it himself?

But Qiang Wanzhou said, "If this matter implicates him, then he must've done it personally."

Chu Liuyue immediately asked, "Why?"

"Because only by doing it this way would he completely control the Messed Yuan Gravel's situation. Besides, the more important thing is... Some of the force that the Messed Yuan Gravel absorbs will enter his body and aid his cultivation."

Chu Liuyue's eyes shrunk. *It turned out that Messed Yuan Gravel had such a use... This kind of behavior is indeed despicable, but it's indeed something Jiang Yucheng would do.*

Chu Liuyue knew him too well. *In the past, he wasn't as talented as me. Even though he didn't say it on the surface, he minded this very much in his heart. Even though he was already considered a top talent when compared to the majority of people, he was still dissatisfied. He had always been very hardworking in his cultivation, and he could be considered crazy in regards to strengthening his capabilities. If he had such a method... He might even try it!*

Chu Liuyue calmly said, "No matter what, he has been to Nan Jiang before. Hence, there is this possibility. We can just investigate and find out if he did it or not!"