

Nobel Ruler 651

Chapter 651: Bear To

Zuo Mingxi shook his head. “No.”

Shangguan Wan sighed regretfully. *As expected...*

“Haven’t you been giving Father medicine all along? Why hasn’t he shown any signs after so long?”
Shangguan Wan knitted her sharp brows and really couldn’t understand it. *Back then, we secretly used poison in order to create the fake news of Father being severely ill and thus unconscious in bed.*

Back then, we planned to conveniently settle Father as well after setting Shangguan Yue up. To the outside world, we could just say that he was devastated over Shangguan Yue’s death and had passed on. Some things changed later on, so we had to wait for Father to wake up. Due to this, we stopped giving him poison and kept treating him, hoping he could wake up soon. However, this wait has lasted for more than a year. Until now, there are still no movements at all.

Zuo Mingxi looked guilty. “I am useless.”

Shangguan Wan’s expression was still ugly. *If not because this incident is too secretive and that I can only trust these few heavenly doctors, I would’ve long—*

Zuo Mingxi kept quiet for a while and said hesitantly, “Your Highness, actually... A while back, His Majesty’s health seemed to be slightly better. Back then, both his breathing and his pulse were obviously stronger than before. Logically speaking, His Majesty should’ve woken up by now if that progress continued... But for some reason, His Majesty’s condition started worsening afterward. Ever since then, his condition has been fluctuating, which led to him still being unconscious at this point.”

Shangguan Wan's face was dark. "So? What exactly do you want to say?"

Zuo Mingxi looked conflicted as he cupped his fists and bowed before speaking carefully. "Your Highness, I have a guess in my heart, but I don't know if I should say it."

"What guess? Just say it!"

"It's... Perhaps someone did something to cause His Majesty's current condition?"

Shangguan Wan suddenly looked at him. "What do you mean?"

Zuo Mingxi said, "Ever since I noticed that His Majesty's body seemed to be improving, I roughly understood how to wake him up. Hence, I kept using the same method to treat him. It was effective for the first few days, but afterward, his condition fluctuated for some reason. I confirmed that my prescription had no problems, so this shouldn't have happened. Therefore... I'm suspecting that there must be something fishy."

"How can this be? I've always sent people to guard Qingfeng Palace strictly, and even a bird can't fly in. Besides, the three of you have been taking turns to take care of Father's health. He hasn't been touched by any other heavenly doctors..." *Those who can enter and leave Qingfeng Palace are all the ones that I respect. Why would this problem arise?*

"This is also my guess, so it might not be true." Zuo Mingxi immediately said, "After all... With that medicine... it is already very rare for His Majesty to survive until now."

Shangguan Wan's face was as dark as water, and she didn't say a word. *When I poisoned him back then, I only thought of killing him. Who would've thought of reviving him? I originally didn't realize, but after hearing what Zuo Mingxi said, I can't help but be suspicious. Upon deeper thought, this might indeed be possible...*

"Who kept going in and out of Qingfeng Palace these two months?"

Zuo Mingxi thought for a moment and said, "Other than the three of us, it should be you and Prince Consort, right?"

If outsiders wanted to go, they still had to seek Shangguan Wan's approval. This really wasn't that easy.

Doubts flashed across Shangguan Wan's eyes. *If someone really did it, who could it be?*

...

Chu Liuyue followed Chan Yi to Huayang Palace's back garden. This place had clearly been renovated as every inch was as intricate as ever with a touch of golden elegance.

There were quite a few flowers and plants in the garden. It was currently winter, but most of the flowers were still blooming with bright purple and red. Together with the flawlessly white snow, it was very good-looking.

Chu Liuyue strangely asked, "The weather is so cold. These flowers are—"

“Third Princess ordered people to dig a drain below and let the spring water in. Even in late winter, the ground is still very warm. Hence, these flowers can still bloom in winter as if they were in spring,” explained Chan Yi nonchalantly.

“I see...” Chu Liuyue nodded thoughtfully. *Upon closer inspection, there really isn't any accumulated snow in the back garden.*

After the snowflakes landed on the floor, they would rapidly melt and seep into the ground.

She walked slowly as if she was attracted by all the flora. But in her heart, she was thinking of another question. *Shangguan Wan isn't someone who likes flowers and plants. Why would she suddenly spend so much effort to dig a drain below Huayang Palace's back garden and even let the spring water in?*

This project sounds simple, but in reality, it uses up a lot of resources. Even if Shangguan Wan really had too much money to spare, it doesn't seem like she would spend her efforts on such useless leisure activities. Unless...

Unless there's a problem with the drain below.

...

Jiang Residence.

Jiang Yucheng sat on the helm and looked at Mu Qinghe, who was standing with his hands down. “So that means her identity has no problems at all?”

Mu Qinghe nodded. "I've already sent someone to check on her previously, and there really isn't anything wrong. From birth, Chu Liuyue grew up in Country Yao Chen's Imperial City. As she was born with a lacking Yuan meridian, she was seen as a good-for-nothing and was always bullied. The day before her 14th birthday, she was saved by someone and healed her Yuan meridian. Then, she started to cultivate officially. When I reached Country Yao Chen, she had just entered the academy to cultivate not long ago. Other than Jian Fengchi and me, she shouldn't know any other people from the Tianling Dynasty."

Jiang Yucheng leaned against the chair, and his hand knocked against the table lightly. "That's weird... Why does Hundred Herbs Building think so highly of her? At first, I thought they did it because of you. But I realized that... it didn't seem to be the case... After she came to Xi Ling with Jian Fengchi, who else did she see?"

Mu Qinghe kept quiet for a moment and said, "After she came to Xi Ling, she had been staying in the Mu Residence all along. At that time, Duan Ziyu accompanied her every day, so I can confirm that she didn't see anyone suspicious. But... She had already moved out of the Mu Residence a month ago, and I heard that she's staying in Master Weichi's previous residence. I don't really know about the incidents afterward."

Jiang Yucheng rubbed his glabella and fell into deep thought. "Weichi Song is her mentor, so it's normal for her to do this... But didn't Weichi Song sell most of his items? Where is Chu Liuyue living?"

Mu Qinghe hesitated for a moment. "The one at Six Clouds Street. That... It's one of the last two mansions that Master Weichi owns in Xi Ling City."

Jiang Yucheng froze. "So it's that one..."

Shangguan Yue loved to go to that mansion in the past. When Weichi Song was previously tight on money, he had sold many things. However, he didn't touch these two mansions.

One was for Shangguan Yue. The other was for his only son, Weichi Lang.

He suddenly chuckled and said with deep meaning, "It seems like he really likes this Chu Liuyue. He's so generous with her."

Knock knock...

"Eldest Young Master, Chong Xu Cabinet's Cabinet Master Weichi is here!"

Chapter 652: Go Head-On!

Speak of the devil. Jiang Yucheng knitted his brows. *Why did Weichi Song come again? The previous time we bid farewell at Thousand View Garden, I felt that it was amiss. But after waiting for a month, Weichi Song didn't do anything. Hence, I gradually set this incident aside. I didn't expect him to suddenly come at this time.*

Jiang Yucheng stood up and walked outside. When he passed by Mu Qinghe, he paused. "Go back first. When you have the time later, go and ask Chu Liuyue some things."

Mu Qinghe bowed and said, "Yes."

Jiang Yucheng nodded gently and left.

When his figure completely disappeared, Mu Qinghe then looked up in the direction that Jiang Yucheng had left with a cold and stern expression. *That's weird... Jiang Yucheng seems to care especially much about Chu Liuyue's incidents... Not only did he specifically ask me to come here to question me, but he*

even told me to investigate personally... He could've just given this incident to the subordinates. Jiang Yucheng has now told me to do it, which shows just how much he cares about this incident.

He brushed his considerations away and walked out.

...

When Jiang Yucheng arrived at the hall, Weichi Song was already waiting there.

A polite smile immediately surfaced on his face. "Cabinet Master Weichi, what brings you here today?"

Weichi Song had long noticed his footsteps, but he only spoke after the other reached him. "I came here today because I had a few questions for you, Eldest Young Master Jiang."

His expression looked calm, and one couldn't tell what he was feeling.

Jiang Yucheng's heart tingled for a moment as he didn't know why Weichi Song came this time. "Haha! I have already heard about the clan competition. I haven't had the chance to congratulate you yet!"

A smile appeared on Weichi Song's face, but his gaze was cold. "Eldest Young Master Jiang, you're too kind."

Seeing his rather cold attitude, Jiang Yucheng's smile gradually faded. He walked to the opposite end and sat down. "Cabinet Master Weichi, what do you want to ask? Just ask. I'll definitely tell you everything that I know about it."

Weichi Song kept quiet for a moment. He then stared into the other's eyes and asked, "Eldest Young Master Jiang, may I know if you have heard about Messed Yuan Gravel?"

...

The room went silent temporarily.

Jiang Yucheng slowly said, "I've heard of it before. Master Weichi, why are you asking about this?"

"It's a long story. More than a year ago, my Chong Xu Cabinet was ambushed, and many of my clan members were injured or dead. Until now, I still haven't found the culprit. After that night, countless herbs on Qing Yuan Mountain started wilting. Ever since then, I also couldn't plant any more herbs."

"For a long time, I have tried to discover the truth, but I just couldn't understand it at all. It was only until a while ago I found my answer. When Wanzhou arrived, he told me that Qing Yuan Mountain had Messed Yuan Gravel. According to what he said, this Messed Yuan Gravel only belongs to Nan Jiang. I thought for a while and felt that this incident was really strange. Nan Jiang is deserted, and nobody goes there. Who would specifically go there and get Messed Yuan Gravel to harm my Chong Xu Cabinet? My conscience is clear, and I have lived my life honestly. I am not guilty of anything. I don't even know when I offended such a person and attracted such trouble."

He paused for a moment, looked at Jiang Yucheng's eyes, and said carefully, "If I didn't remember wrongly, Eldest Young Master Jiang, you have gone to Nan Jiang before, right?"

The air gradually froze.

Jiang Yucheng's expression was normal, and his lips even curved up into a smile. "Master Weichi, are you suspecting that I am one of those culprits that harmed Chong Xu Cabinet?"

Weichi Song gradually shook his head. "Eldest Young Master Jiang, why would you think that way? Wanzhou said that the person who put the Messed Yuan Gravel would suffer from its backlash after it is cleared away. Even if they don't die, they would've been handicapped. But Eldest Young Master Jiang, aren't you doing well? Even though I am anxious about this, I won't randomly suspect people."

Jiang Yucheng furrowed his brows undetectably. *Weichi Song's manner really doesn't look like he came to demand an explanation. Then, why exactly did he come here and talk about it so specifically?*

He reacted for a moment and looked relieved. "Hearing this, I'm relieved. I have always respected and admired you, so why would I do such a thing? Then, you came here today..."

"I came here to ask for your help, Eldest Young Master Jiang. Can you help me find out who the culprit is? I remember that you brought along quite a few people when you went to Nan Jiang, right? Could it be one of them?"

Jiang Yucheng heaved a sigh of relief in his heart. "I see... No problem. Since you have already found certain clues, I'll help you investigate it. If it's really related to one of my subordinates... I will really feel very bad."

If I'm really the one in charge of investigating this, I'll naturally have the results I want.

Weichi Song smiled. "Since this is so, thank you."

Jiang Yucheng cupped his hands. "Master Weichi, you don't have to be this polite. If you need help in any other way, just let me know."

"It's not really anything major, but a little... I have been minding it in my heart." Weichi Song showed hesitation.

Jiang Yucheng said, "Just say whatever you want."

Weichi Song paused for a while and slowly asked, "I heard that you were looking for a medicine to revive the Princess when you went to Nan Jiang back then? I wonder... What kind of medicine is it?"

Jiang Yucheng's smile froze. He forced himself to stay calm and asked, "You... It's a matter of the past. Why would you suddenly talk about this?"

Weichi Song looked at the other, and his eyes were so sharp that it seemed like he could see through the latter. His every word and sentence was like thunder. "Honestly speaking, I have been thinking about the past recently. The more I think about it, the weirder I feel. Princess's death... There are many doubtful points about it. Eldest Young Master Jiang, I wonder if you have ever suspected... Princess, did she really cultivate crazily until she died?"

Chapter 653: My Master Invites You

Jiang Yucheng slowly straightened his body, and his skin was extremely tense, which made his expression look weird. "Cabinet Master Weichi, why would you say this? When that incident happened to the Princess, it caused a very big commotion, and quite a few people in the palace can vouch for it. If you say this... Did you discover something?"

Weichi Song paused for a moment. "It's not that I discovered something, but it's just that I suddenly recalled many things recently and felt that something was amiss. Like... Princess always cultivates in her

own specific room. Why would she suddenly try to break through at the royal family's ancestral hall and even go crazy from it, causing her to commit suicide by burning herself? That's where we pay respects to the ancestors of the Tianling Dynasty's royal family. Why would Princess suddenly go there out of nowhere?"

Jiang Yucheng looked down, and his voice was extremely light. "This... Honestly speaking, I had my doubts all along. But... According to what Third Princess said, Princess had mentioned it to her before she went to the ancestral hall. This shows that she was long prepared. Back then, Third Princess had also asked her, but Princess didn't say anything. I didn't expect that in the end... Until now, I'm afraid only the Princess knows the reason why."

Weichi Song continued asking, "You're saying that Princess had long prepared to go to the ancestral hall back then?"

Jiang Yucheng nodded and looked upset. "If I knew this would happen earlier... I really should've stopped her then."

Something flashed across Weichi Song's eyes. "...This means I really thought too much."

Jiang Yucheng glanced at him. "Cabinet Master Weichi, I know that you were very close to Princess and that her departure must've had a huge impact on you. But she's already gone, and you should accept it. If you are troubled over this every day and become depressed, Princess will be hurt too if her spirit knows about it."

Weichi Song rubbed his glabella tiredly. "That's weird... If Princess really had something urgent to do, she normally wouldn't be this unprepared and not tell a single person... I thought she was forcefully brought to the ancestral hall!"

Jiang Yucheng's heart beat wildly, and he forced a smile. "Cabinet Master Weichi, you're really thinking too much. With Princess's distinguished status, everybody respects her. Who would have such guts?"

“Yeah! She’s very kind-hearted, so why would someone have such guts and be so heartless...” muttered Weichi Song softly. It sounded like he was talking to himself and also as if he was questioning somebody.

Jiang Yucheng’s heart beat even faster as all his blood seemed to have frozen, and his limbs turned cold. He then looked down.

“It seems like I’ve really misunderstood.” Weichi Song stood up and sighed deeply.

“Since this incident is clear, I shan’t delay you any longer, Eldest Young Master Jiang. I’ll leave now.”

Jiang Yucheng looked up. “You’re leaving now?”

“Yeah. The clan competition just ended, and there are many things I need to deal with in Chong Xu Cabinet. Eldest Young Master Jiang, I also need to trouble you with the Messed Yuan Gravel incident.”

Jiang Yucheng braved himself and said, “Don’t worry. I’ll immediately investigate this when I go back. I’ll interrogate every single person that followed me to Nan Jiang. I will definitely give you a satisfactory answer.”

Weichi Song then relaxed and nodded before bidding him farewell.

Jiang Yucheng symbolically tried to let him stay with a few words before personally standing him out.

When Weichi Song's figure totally disappeared from outside the Jiang Residence, Jiang Yucheng then retracted his gaze and quickly walked to the study expressionlessly.

Sun Qi saw that he looked amiss and was quite nervous. "Eldest Young Master—"

Jiang Yucheng's voice was as cold as ice. "Immediately gather all those who went to Nan Jiang. I want to interrogate them one by one."

Confusion flashed across Sun Qi's eyes, but he immediately replied when he saw Jiang Yucheng's expression. "Yes! I'll do it right now!"

Then, Sun Qi immediately exited the study. Before he left, he didn't forget to close the door to the study carefully.

When the room was only left with him, Jiang Yucheng finally couldn't contain the rage in his heart as he swept everything on the table to the floor.

The people outside seemed to have received Sun Qi's reminder as they all waited quietly, and nobody answered.

Jiang Yucheng's chest heaved violently, and his face flushed red as his veins popped out. Only his lips were as pale as ever, which looked very strange. *Weichi Song came here today and wanted me to investigate the Messed Yuan Gravel matter on the surface, but he actually came with another purpose. He purposely brought Shangguan Yue up and said so many things.*

What exactly does he want? If Weichi Song really suspected me briefly, he wouldn't have come to the Jiang Residence and directly told me all of these things. What exactly does he know? Did he come here to test me or threaten me? Jiang Yucheng's heart was in a mess, and his mind was in turmoil.

After a long time, he finally calmed down. He stood there and thought for a while with mixed emotions before he rolled up his sleeves.

A red and ugly scar, which had already formed a scab, appeared.

He took a deep breath in, picked up a box of lotion from the cabinet, and gradually smeared it on.

The more Weichi Song suspected him, the more calm and careful he had to be. But for some reason, the hand that was smearing the lotion was trembling.

...

After Mu Qinghe left the Jiang Residence, he wanted to go back to the Mu Residence first. But when he heard what Jiang Yucheng said before he left, he changed his mind and turned to walk toward Six Clouds Street.

The main streets in Xi Ling were always bustling with people going back and forth. It was very lively.

He passed through the squeeze crowd and walked past the noisy streets. After turning a few bends, the people surrounding him gradually became fewer in number, and it was quieter as well.

The sky started to snow at some time.

As the geese-like snowflakes fluttered down and landed on his head, a layer of snow gradually accumulated on his clothes. It was chilling to the bones.

He walked forward quietly and finally stopped in front of a mansion.

The ever-clean and tidy marble path had a layer of snow.

Behind him was a series of clear footprints.

He looked up and glanced at the familiar entrance. He had been to this place many times, but he hadn't come here in the past year or so. He thought that he would never come here again, but he didn't expect...

A plaque was hanging at the entrance—Chu Residence.

The handwriting was dragon-like, and it was clearly Weichi Song's handwriting.

Mu Qinghe furrowed his brows undetectably. *It seems like Weichi Song dotes on Chu Liuyue more than I had expected... I thought that he definitely wouldn't give this place to anyone else to stay... It has been only more than a year, but everything has changed.*

Mu Qinghe stared at the door for a while and turned around to leave. But once he took a step out, he heard footsteps coming from inside.

He was dazed. *Qiang Wanzhou and Chu Liuyue shouldn't be living here now. Why would there be someone inside?*

Just as he was thinking, the door creaked and was opened from inside.

A rather familiar face appeared in front of him. "Lieutenant Mu, my Master invites you—"

Chapter 654: Made a Cuckold

Yan Qing? Isn't he Rong Xiu's subordinate? The 'master' he's referring to must be Rong Xiu then. Since when did he arrive in Xi Ling though? Despite the questions in his head, Mu Qinghe calmly nodded and entered the mansion.

The mansion wasn't big. After walking past the courtyard and through a corridor, they arrived at a room.

Yan Qing pushed the door open and invited Mu Qinghe inside. "Please enter, Lieutenant Mu."

Mu Qinghe thus entered the room.

A faint herbal fragrance lingered in the air of the warm room, and Rong Xiu was seated next to a bronze gilded furnace. He was dressed in a robe as white as the snow outside.

"Master, Lieutenant Mu is here," announced Yan Qing respectfully.

Rong Xiu looked over.

It had been a while since they last met, but Rong Xiu appeared even more distinguished and alluring than before. Even Mu Qinghe couldn't help but admit in his heart that the other man's good looks were one of a kind.

A small smile formed on Rong Xiu's lips. "Welcome to my humble abode, Lieutenant Mu. I apologize for the shabby welcome."

He makes it sound like this mansion belongs to him. Wasn't it a gift from Weichi Song to Chu Liuyue? Mu Qinghe raised his eyebrows slightly. "I hope you're doing well, Prince Li. There's no need for you to be so polite to me."

As he spoke, he walked over and sat at one side, silently observing his surroundings. *This place looks pretty much the same as before. It looks like they didn't do any extensive renovation. There are just a few additional items... which obviously belong to Rong Xiu. Clearly, he's indeed staying here.*

"Weren't you in Country Yao Chen? When did you arrive in Xi Ling?" asked Mu Qinghe, cutting to the chase. "If my memory serves me right, this mansion... was a gift from Chong Xu Cabinet's Cabinet Master to Chu Liuyue. May I know why you're staying here?"

Rong Xiu smiled. "I happened to be passing by Xi Ling while on business, so I thought I should pay Yue'er a visit since she's here. She's not staying in the city at the moment, so she lent this mansion to me for the time being."

Since they're engaged, there's nothing wrong with him staying here. Mu Qinghe nodded. "I see."

“I wonder what sort of business requires you to pass by Xi Ling, which is tens of thousands miles away from Country Yao Chen.” He nonchalantly posed this question to Rong Xiu. *The distance is nothing compared to how he managed to enter Heaven’s Canopy. It must’ve taken him some effort.*

“To tell you the truth, I’m here because of this body of mine. An elder from Mingyue Tianshan has found a heavenly doctor who may be able to cure my illness completely. It just so happens that I suffered another relapse while I was passing by Xi Ling. Since I was also missing Yue’er, I decided to stay here and recuperate for the time being.” Rong Xiu put a fist to my mouth and coughed a couple of times. From his pale face and all, it seemed that he was telling the truth.

Mu Qinghe mulled over Rong Xiu’s words for a while but couldn’t detect anything amiss. *There are many talents within Heaven’s Canopy, so the heavenly doctors here are naturally more skillful as well. It makes sense that Rong Xiu would come here to seek treatment.*

“Chu Liuyue has been doing well in Xi Ling City lately. I’m sure you’ve heard a thing or two about her reputation, right?” *Practically everyone here knows her name by now.*

“She’s always been the best.” The smile on Rong Xiu’s face deepened, and his eyebrows relaxed as a hint of warmth appeared in his eyes. His voice was light and filled with undisguised pride and indulgence when he answered in a matter-of-factly manner. *The woman I like is naturally the best. No matter what she does, she does it to perfection. Didn’t her performance at the Wan Zheng Competition and the clan competition say it all?*

“There’s something I’d like to ask you, Prince Li,” said Mu Qinghe hesitantly.

“Please speak your mind, Lieutenant Mu.”

“Does Chu Liuyue... know anyone in Xi Ling? From what I heard, General Manager Yue of Hundred Herbs Building is very attentive toward her.”

Yan Qing—who was standing by the side—lowered his head. *Very attentive toward her? Of course, Yue Ling has to be attentive to our madam. Never mind that he didn't know her identity at the start, but now that our master has made it clear to us, Yue Ling naturally became eager to serve her. Didn't Jiang Yuzhi suffer a beating because she couldn't control that mouth of hers?*

“I never heard her mention that, but this is her first time in Xi Ling. Therefore, how could she possibly know anyone from here? As for that Hundred Herbs Building's manager... I heard a thing or two about him, and I think it's because she spent quite a bit of money there.” Rong Xiu lifted a corner of his mouth and said in a seemingly nonchalant manner, “Speaking of which, I heard that it was Lieutenant Mu who helped back Yue'er up on her visit to Hundred Herbs Building.”

For some reason, that smile didn't reach his eyes and seemed rather cold instead.

When Mu Qinghe sensed the room's drop in temperature, he moved his body slightly to shake off that cold feeling. “It's what I should do since I brought her here to take part in the Wan Zheng Competition. But she moved out of my residence to this mansion not long after that, so there's little interaction between us. I heard some things though... Jian Fengchi won a lot of money from betting on Chu Liuyue, so he shared a portion of his winnings with her. I think it was quite a tidy sum.”

Word of her spending tens of thousands of white crystals at Hundred Herbs Building spread like wildfire back then. It must be because of this sum of money that she could afford to spend so lavishly.

“Is that so?” Rong Xiu drew out the question as he raised his eyebrows and smiled.

The room instantly became even colder, which made Yan Qing close his eyes in despair. *Mu Qinghe sure knows how to touch a sore spot. Strictly speaking though, it was Ms. Liuyue who extorted money from Mu Qinghe. There's also nothing wrong with Jian Fengchi splitting his winnings with her since he won it*

with her help. Besides, all the money she's spending now belongs to my master... But nobody else knows about it! In that case, how will outsiders view my master?

Mu Qinghe finally sensed something amiss. He managed to guess what was wrong when he saw Rong Xiu's sullen expression. *Rong Xiu was born noble as a member of Country Yao Chen's royalty, but his royal status is nothing at all here in Xi Ling. He probably finds it very hard to support Chu Liuyue's living expenses... Otherwise, he would've found himself somewhere else to stay instead of staying here.*

The current situation made him look like... he's living off her... To think Chu Liuyue was deemed unworthy of Rong Xiu just two months ago. Who could've imagined things to turn out this way? The world sure is unpredictable. There was a subtle change in Mu Qinghe's expression when he realized this. On top of that, Chu Liuyue is bound to have a promising future based on the talent and potential she's showing now. Rong Xiu, on the other hand, is still carrying a sickly body...

Based on what happened so far, Chu Liuyue obviously knows someone important from Hundred Herbs Building. Otherwise, there's no reason for them to protect her to this extent. But from the look of things... it seems that she didn't tell Rong Xiu about it. This made Mu Qinghe look at Rong Xiu with a trace of sympathy.

Chapter 655: Tailing

Translator: Atlas Studios **Editor:** Atlas Studios

Rong Xiu's eyelids twitched when he saw Mu Qinghe regarding him strangely. It took him some time before he commented, "It looks like Lieutenant Mu is quite concerned about Yue'er."

"Well, it's only right that I show some concern about her affairs since I brought her here." Mu Qinghe felt that the conversation couldn't go on anymore. *Since Rong Xiu doesn't know anything, it's pointless for me to ask more. I might as well go investigate it on my own.*

Hence, he stood up. "It's getting late. I shan't trouble you any longer."

But just when he was about to take his leave, Rong Xiu suddenly said, "Just a second, Lieutenant Mu."

Mu Qinghe stopped in his tracks and turned to give Rong Xiu a quizzical look, only to see the other smiling.

The latter's face seemed to have regained its usual color. "I'd like to ask Lieutenant Mu for a favor."

...

Imperial Palace, Huayang Palace.

As Chan Yi watched Chu Liuyue stroll along the lake from the side, she couldn't help but find it puzzling why the other woman seemed to be particularly fond of the trees and flowers there. Chu Liuyue stared at the flowers for so long that a thin layer of snow had formed on her, yet she seemed unaware of it. In fact, it looked as if she had completely forgotten about everything else.

Are these flowers and trees... really that beautiful? wondered Chan Yi curiously. However, she could only put her suspicion away since that was all Chu Liuyue did.

A flurry of approaching footsteps was heard just then.

Chan Yi looked back and bowed immediately. "Third Princess."

Shangguan Wan was walking over toward them with a maid holding an umbrella for her from behind. Her gaze fell on Chu Liuyue.

Amid the falling snow and blooming flowers was a slender woman in red, who was like a bright ball of fire. Despite wearing no makeup, her face was clear, stunning, and alluring, which seemed to blend in with this picturesque scene.

Shangguan Wan couldn't help but clench her fists under her sleeves.

In this world, there was a type of person who would become the most beautiful scenery wherever they stood. All the lights and colors would seemingly gather around that person. Their appearance and presence were rare, otherworldly, and indescribable.

Although Shangguan Wan was considered a beauty herself, something seemed lacking in her. In her mind, the one person who possessed such a presence was Shangguan Yue. But despite Chu Liuyue's humble background, she carried hints of such nobility as well.

That made Shangguan Wan even more uncomfortable.

Upon hearing the voices, Chu Liuyue turned and paid her respects to Shangguan Wan, who then laughingly asked, "Why are you viewing the flowers outside when it's currently snowing, Ms. Chu?"

"I've never seen flowers blooming at this time of the year, so I'm quite intrigued by them. I believe such beautiful scenery can only be seen here," answered Chu Liuyue, who looked somewhat envious.

Shangguan Wan thought nothing about her reply and revealed an apologetic look on her face. “Physician Zuo said that my father’s health has improved a little lately, so I’m going to pay him a visit now. I’m afraid that I can’t keep you here longer today.”

Chu Liuyue said understandingly, “It’s fine. You’re a busy person after all. I won’t impose on you any longer.”

Shangguang Wan nodded and lifted a hand. “I recently acquired several rare herbs, but I have no use for them since I’m not a heavenly doctor. I’d like to give them to you instead.”

A maid came forward and presented Chu Liuyue with three boxes.

Chu Liuyue hesitated for a moment before accepting the boxes. “Thank you, Third Princess.”

After chatting for a little longer, Shangguan Wan left, leaving Chan Yi behind to escort Chu Liuyue out of the palace.

...

After leaving the palace grounds, Chu Liuyue walked on the streets alone.

Earlier at Huayang Palace’s back garden, she was actually trying to figure out the drain’s location on the pretext of appreciating the flowers in the garden. It was very close to the ground surface, and one could actually hear the flowing water and figure out its course if they paid enough attention while standing there.

A mental image of the drainage system had already formed in her mind.

If I'm correct, the water came from Jade Spring Mountain and is flowing to... She stopped in her tracks all of a sudden as a streak of surprise surfaced on her face. It's flowing to the palace's ancestral hall?!

It should be known that the ancestral hall was the imperial palace's most sacred and important place. Aside from the guards responsible for manning the ancestral hall, intricate Xuan formations were set up both inside and outside the hall.

That place was built when the ancestor was still alive. Every brick, stone, grass, and tree was specifically placed and mustn't be destroyed, but Shangguan Wan actually dug a drain and led it to the ancestral hall? A frown settled on Chu Liuyue's forehead. What on earth does she want to do?

All of a sudden, she heard urgent footsteps behind her, which pulled her out of her thoughts.

"Quick! Hurry up! We have to respond to the Eldest Young Master's summon as fast as we can!"

She looked back and saw an anxious-looking man and four other men behind him. They looked like they were in their twenties, but all of them had haggard appearances.

One of the men at the back couldn't resist saying, "We want to be fast too, but the Eldest Young Master summoned us so urgently that we didn't even have the time—"

"Exactly! He hasn't summoned us for over a year, so who would've thought that he'd summon us now? It's too sudden!"

“Heh. Given our current conditions... we can't move any faster either! We still have to take Xiao Si with us...”

Chu Liuyue scanned these men quickly, her eyes narrowing slightly when she noticed they all had some sort of disabilities.

Two of them only had one arm, while another only had a leg. The man named 'Xiao Si' seemed to be blind as both of his eyelids were deeply sunken. Even the man at the front was disfigured. He had two gruesome scars—marks left behind by knives—on his face.

The scar-faced man knitted his eyebrows together even tighter, making him look even fiercer. “If you guys don't want to live anymore, you can continue dilly-dallying all you want!”

The rest of them quieted down and tried their best to speed up.

Chu Liuyue took a few steps back to make way for them as they hurried past her.

It was currently snowing, so there weren't many people out on the streets. The distance between the group of men and Chu Liuyue gradually grew as they continued walking straight ahead.

She was just about to leave when she heard one of them saying, “...We're no different from being dead. If I'd known that place was so dangerous, I wouldn't have followed the Eldest Young Master there a year ago... I can no longer cultivate now that I've lost my arm... I'm just a cripple now!”

Although he said this softly, Chu Liuyue could still hear it clearly. The other men fell silent when they heard that as well.

Eldest Young Master... A year ago... Dangerous place... Chu Liuyue knitted her brows slightly. Could they be talking about Jiang Yucheng? Are they heading to the Jiang Residence now?

She quickly decided to follow them quietly.

Chapter 656: Interrogation

Translator: Atlas Studios **Editor:** Atlas Studios

There were few people on the streets since it was snowing heavily.

While tailing the group of men, Chu Liuyue realized that they were indeed heading to the Jiang Residence. However, they had arrived at the back door instead.

From afar, she could see Sun Qi standing at the doorway, seemingly waiting for these men. Once the men arrived, they nodded at Sun Qi and only entered the Jiang Residence after getting checked by him. Other than the ones she met earlier, a few others also arrived one after another.

Did Jiang Yucheng summon all the people who went to Nan Jiang with him? Chu Liuyue frowned. From what I gleaned from those men's conversation earlier, they seem to have undergone a lot of suffering at Nan Jiang. He hasn't summoned them in the past year, but he's suddenly gathering all of them now.

A thought hit her mind just then. *That's right! Weichi Song said that he'd be visiting the Jiang Residence when he came down the mountain with us this morning. Could it be... because of this?*

“I wonder why the Eldest Young Master summoned us...”

Chu Liuyue heard a lazy voice coming from around the street corner. She whipped her head in the voice’s direction and saw two men heading toward the Jiang Residence.

The one speaking was a burly man, who looked dirty all over. His left ear had been sliced off, along with some of his scalp, leaving behind a terrifying, bowl-sized, and dark-red scar.

Behind him was a petite and skinny man in tattered black clothes. Although he had an iron mask covering half of his face, there was a scar on the other half of his face that looked like a burn mark. He had probably put on a mask because his entire face had been ruined. He looked listless with his head drooping low.

The man in front of him suddenly turned back and laughed at himself. “It’s pointless for me to ask you these questions since you’ve lost your voice because of poison! Disabled people like us... have lost their worth! We can only live at the mercy of others!”

Chu Liuyue quickly hid herself.

“Look, Sun Qi is standing right there! Even the others are here... Nothing good can come out—”

Whoosh!

A blurry red figure suddenly zipped past and left a bloody scratch on the burly man’s arm.

“What’s this?!” He waved his hand, only to see the red figure quickly running off to the other side.
“D*mn it! Just you wait!”

Even a beast dares to bully me now! Furious, the man quickly chased after it.

The skinny man looked up and was just about to follow him when he suddenly felt something strong dragging him backward. He struggled out of shock, but he felt something cold touching his neck, and warm blood started gushing out from him the next moment.

His eyes widened as he tried to look behind, but the person’s grip on him was too strong. It didn’t take long before his legs went limp, and he fell silent.

...

“D*mn it! That little thing sure runs fast!” Not long after, the burly man came back looking angry. He had wanted to catch and kill the beast, but he didn’t expect it to be so agile. Despite chasing after it for some distance and expending a lot of his energy, he failed to catch it.

The beast even jumped and vanished before his eyes. It was only when he recalled that he had matters to attend to that he returned with gritted teeth.

“If not for what happened a year ago... I wouldn’t be reduced to the point of being bullied by a beast!” He cursed and irritatedly waved to the man who was still standing in the same position as before with his head hanging low. “Come on! We’ll be punished if we’re late!”

The skinny man thus followed him to the Jiang Residence’s back door.

...

“Lord Sun Qi.” By the time they arrived in front of Sun Qi, the burly man’s anger had dissipated. He was also wearing a flattering smile on his face instead. “We rushed over as soon as we heard the news. We aren’t late, are we?”

Expressionless, Sun Qi swept his eyes across the two of them. “Qi Dahe and Xia Mu?”

“Yes, yes,” answered Qi Dahe before pushing the skinny man forward. “What are you doing, Xia Mu? Hurry up and pay your respects!”

The skinny man remained stuck to the spot, much to Qi Dahe’s surprise. *Xia Mu has a frail body, but I failed to push him just now...*

Just as he was feeling puzzled, Xia Mu bobbed his head in Sun Qi’s direction.

Sun Qi knew that Xia Mu was dumb, so he wasn’t bothered about this. Instead, he frowned slightly when he noticed the scratch mark on Qi Dahe’s arm. “What happened to you?”

Qi Dahe hurriedly answered, “I got scratched by a beast on the way—”

“Alright, alright. Just go in!” interrupted Sun Qi irritably.

Qi Dahe dared not say anything else. Thus, he nodded and quickly led Xia Mu inside.

...

After entering, someone led them to a quiet and remote courtyard that seemed to have been uninhabited for a long time and had just been cleaned up that day.

When they arrived at the courtyard, they saw many people—even the scar-faced man and his group—standing there. All of them looked pretty much in the same condition as them.

Most of them knew each other, but they very rarely contacted one another ever since they returned from that place a year ago. They hadn't met anyone else other than the ones closer to them.

The air was somewhat stifling with everyone gathered here. Other than the occasional whispers, the entire courtyard was very quiet, and the atmosphere was heavy and solemn.

Standing in the corner with Xia Mu, Qi Dahe dared not say anything in this situation. All he did was hurriedly bandage the wound on his arm. *Eldest Young Master has always been averse to blood... If he sees this, I'll surely be scolded.*

More people came in after them. Including the newcomers, there were fifty-odd people in total.

Fifteen minutes later, Sun Qi finally walked over and headed toward the innermost room, which got the rest of the people looking over nervously. He knocked on the door. "Eldest Young Master, they're all here."

The door creaked open, revealing a tall figure in green robes.

This person was none other than Jiang Yucheng. He walked out and stood atop the steps as he looked down at the people below with authority.

Everyone hurriedly paid their respects to him. "Greetings, Eldest Young Master!"

Jiang Yucheng lifted his hand, asking, "How many of them are here?"

"57, Eldest Young Master," answered Sun Qi respectfully.

This was originally a group of seventy-odd people, but a number of them had passed away in the past year or so. The ones who were still barely hanging on were these 57 men.

Jiang Yucheng nodded and swept his gaze across them. "Do you know why you have been summoned?"

There was no answer from them.

As he put a hand behind his back, he gave them a hard look and said sternly, "Everyone present here followed me to Nan Jiang back then. What I want to know is: Did any of you return with the Messed Yuan Gravel?"

Chapter 657: Remove Your Mask

The question was met with silence as the group of men exchanged looks with one another. *Messed Yuan Gravel... We did pass by an area that had Messed Yuan Gravel while we were at Nan Jiang, but we didn't stop there. Therefore, how could we possibly bring it back? Besides, that stuff is highly poisonous and hard to handle. Why would we go and touch it when it could threaten our lives?*

When Jiang Yucheng received no response, he slowly said, "I recently heard that it appeared in Xi Ling City, but that stuff... only exists in Nan Jiang. If this were someone else's doing, I can't be bothered to care. However, all of you here followed me to Nan Jiang back then. If this is any of your doing, you'd better confess now. Otherwise, once I find out who the culprit is... I won't let you off the hook so easily!"

Still, nobody answered him, for they couldn't confess to something they didn't do.

"It looks like I have to interrogate you people one by one," said Jiang Yucheng solemnly. After a short and futile wait, he pointed to the man standing right in front of him. "Let's start with you!"

It was none other than the scar-faced man from earlier. He was bewildered and slightly stricken to be called out. *W-what does the Eldest Young Master want?*

In his daze, Jiang Yucheng had already turned around and entered the room.

Sun Qi lifted his chin at him. "What are you still standing there for? Get moving!"

Only then did the scar-faced man snap to his senses and hurriedly follow Jiang Yucheng into the room.

Sun Qi closed the door before turning around to look at the others. "Someone among you has caused our Eldest Young Master a lot of trouble. You know who you are. Now that the Eldest Young Master is looking into this matter, you'd better confess now, or you won't have a chance to do so later!"

He then stood by the doorway and respectfully waited there.

Meanwhile, many of the men were exchanging covert glances of varying expressions with each other.

“I didn’t expect it to be this matter...” Qi Dahe whispered softly to Xia Mu such that only the latter could hear him clearly. “It looks pretty serious, or else the Eldest Young Master wouldn’t have summoned us over... It’s strange though. We didn’t stay at the place for long. With most of us injured, nobody could possibly take the Messed Yuan Gravel with us. On top of that, that stuff is useless to our cultivation. We can only use it as poison at most... But why would we use that out of all the poisons available in this world? If we aren’t careful, we might even lose our lives while handling it. The cons far outweigh the pros.”

When he received no response from Xia Mu, he nudged the other man with his elbow. “Don’t you agree with me?”

Xia Mu nodded.

“It’s useless talking to you about this!” grumbled Qi Dahe.

Ever since Xia Mu lost his ability to talk, he had become rather dazed. However, this wasn’t his fault. He used to be pretty talented and capable and had even saved Qi Dahe’s life back in Nan Jiang. It was unfortunate that he ended up like this, but it was also because of this that Qi Dahe helped take care of him over the past year.

“Forget it; we didn’t do it anyway. The Eldest Young Master can interrogate us all he wants!”

Xia Mu, however, only looked at the tightly shut door, his eyes moving slightly under the iron mask.

...

The scar-faced man soon exited the room, and it got everyone's attention. They quickly looked over and subconsciously breathed a sigh of relief when they saw that he looked the same as usual.

Jiang Yucheng was a resolute and scheming person. Those who fell into his hands tended to meet a bad end.

Sun Qi lifted his hand. "Go wait over there."

The scar-faced man walked over to the other side as told.

"You're next." Sun Qi pointed to another man, who then quickly entered the room.

The remaining men looked between the second man and the scar-faced man. Unfortunately, the latter showed no emotions on his face and only stood straight at the side. Unable to detect anything from his expression, they could only continue waiting anxiously.

Time seemed to pass extraordinarily slowly, and the snow was getting heavier. Although a lot of snow had accumulated on them, nobody dared to move and shake it off. All of them just stood in their positions and silently waited for their turns.

It didn't take long before the second person emerged from the room. He, too, followed Sun Qi's instruction and went to stand next to the scar-faced man.

Then, it was the next person's turn.

...

Before long, more than half of the group of men had been interrogated.

Qi Dahe couldn't help but feel nervous when the person in front of him was called out. *It will either be Xia Mu's or my turn next. Although we haven't done anything, the thought of facing Jiang Yucheng still strikes fear in me.*

He subconsciously glanced at Xia Mu, only to see the latter standing motionlessly. His friend didn't seem nervous at all.

The next person soon came out of the room. So far, nothing seemed unusual about the 30 men that had been interrogated.

"Next, Qi Dahe!" shouted Sun Qi.

Qi Dahe inhaled deeply before making his way over.

After a while, someone murmured, "Nothing seems wrong at all."

But as soon as that person said this, Qi Dahe exited the room looking ashen with beads of sweat all over his forehead as if he had suffered a huge blow.

Everyone was surprised to see him in this state.

Jiang Yucheng's cold voice floated out of the room. "That person will be tried later!"

"Yes!" answered Sun Qi immediately before ordering Qi Dahe to stand alone at one side and dispatching two guards to watch over him.

Qi Dahe is the culprit? Everyone else was baffled and nervous to see this situation, especially when they saw Qi Dahe standing at the side and trembling while repeatedly muttering, "It wasn't me... It really wasn't me..."

I did no such thing at all, but why did the Eldest Young Master find me suspicious? He looked at his wounded arm, which had stopped bleeding. From the look of it, it wouldn't take long to recover. *Why did he suddenly flare up when he saw my arm? What's going on?*

Whispers broke out among the crowd.

The people standing next to Xia Mu turned to look at him in unison, whispering, "Xia Mu, is Qi Dahe really involved in this matter?"

"You know him best. Surely you know whether he did it or not?"

"I think he's doomed this time. You're on such close terms with him. Be careful lest you get implicated!"

With a grave expression, Sun Qi continued calling out names. "Next, Xia Mu!"

Xia Mu nodded to the men around him before walking toward the innermost room. When he was about to reach the doorway, Qi Dahe suddenly shouted, “Xia Mu! Xia Mu, you have to help me prove my innocence!”

Sun Qi immediately shot a warning glare in Qi Dahe’s direction, which made the latter flinch and shut up.

Xia Mu paused slightly before entering the room.

When Jiang Yucheng—who was seated at the end—saw Xia Mu entering, he said, “Remove your mask.”

Chapter 658: Suspicion

In another courtyard of the Jiang Residence, Jiang Yuzhi was currently applying medicine on her face out of boredom. She sat in front of her room’s bronze mirror, carefully examining her face.

Thanks to the cold skin cream her brother had given her, the scars on her face had pretty much completely faded over time, which was a relief to her. Her mood thus became much better than before.

“Where’s my brother?” she asked while picking an exquisite accessory from her jewelry box.

Her handmaiden immediately replied, “The Eldest Young Master has something important to attend to today. He ordered people to seal off Wutong Garden early this morning.”

“Wutong Garden? Isn’t it inhabited and remote? What’s he doing there?”

“I-I have no idea either.”

Jiang Yuzhi nodded in satisfaction at her reflection before standing up and walking toward the door. “I’m going to see my brother.”

Her servant was shocked to hear that. “Right now, Fourth Missy?”

“Yes, I’ve been grounded long enough! I didn’t even get to see the clan competition! It’s about time my brother returns my freedom to me!”

She was bored to tears staying at home all day long. On top of that, despite her brother’s promise to investigate Chu Liuyue’s relationship with Hundred Herbs Building, there had been little progress thus far. Hence, she wanted to enter the palace to have a little chat with the Third Princess.

She ignored her servant’s dissuasion and left the room, leaving the latter with no choice but to follow her.

The servant wanted to stop her, but upon recalling that Jiang Yuzhi’s temper was getting increasingly foul and that the latter had punished a number of servants, she decided to keep quiet instead.

After walking some distance, Jiang Yuzhi saw a pageboy running over in a hurry.

The pageboy hurriedly greeted her when he saw her. “Greetings, Fourth Missy!”

She was unhappy to see him in such a flustered manner. "What's going on? Why are you so flustered?"

"The Third Princess is here, Fourth Missy!"

Jiang Yuzhi was surprised to hear that. "For real?"

"I wouldn't dare to lie about this. The Third Princess is currently in the guest hall, but both the master and madam aren't at home today. Plus, the Third Princess is specifically here to see the Eldest Young Master. That's why I'm in a rush to get the Eldest Young Master."

What a coincidence. I was just about to enter the palace to look for the Third Princess, but she came instead. "Run along then. I'll go accompany the Third Princess in the meantime."

The pageboy knew that the two ladies had always been on good terms, so he thought there was nothing wrong with her order. He said in delight, "I'll have to trouble you then, Fourth Missy! I'll go fetch the Eldest Young Master now!"

The pageboy ran off after saying that, while Jiang Yuzhi headed for the guest hall.

...

Jiang Residence, guest hall.

Jiang Yuzhi spotted Shangguan Wan sitting in the guest hall right away, and a bright smile bloomed on her face as she walked up to the other. “Why didn’t you inform us before coming, Third Princess?”

A hint of disappointment showed in Shangguan Wan’s eyes when she realized that it was Jiang Yuzhi and not Jiang Yucheng. It disappeared very quickly though as she smiled. “I decided to come on a moment’s notice.”

“Just as well. I have something to discuss with you!” Jiang Yuzhi took a seat next to Shangguan Wan.

“Oh? What is it regarding?”

Jiang Yuzhi carefully looked around her surroundings—her action made Shangguan Wan focus on her a little more. After making sure that nobody was eavesdropping on their conversation, she whispered, “Have you met Chu Liuyue, Third Princess?”

“Of course.” Shangguan Wan nodded. *I even met her today.*

Clutching her sleeves, Jiang Yuzhi continued throwing questions at the other. “Don’t you think that... Chu Liuyue resembles someone a lot?”

The smile on Shangguan Wan’s face faded. “What are you trying to say, Yuzhi?”

...

Inside Wutong Garden’s room.

Xia Mu hesitated for a moment but didn't move.

Jiang Yucheng glanced at the skinny man standing in front of him with a frown. The look in his eyes carried authority and a hint of warning that showed he wouldn't spare anyone who didn't do as told.

Thus, Xia Mu slowly removed the iron mask and revealed his severely burned face to Jiang Yucheng. The scars spanning across his face made it look contorted and horrendous.

I recall it now—he was burned before... With looks like that, it's no wonder he has to wear a mask. Jiang Yucheng's frown deepened as he waved his hand in disgust. "Put it back on!"

Xia Mu—who seemingly couldn't see the disgust on Jiang Yucheng's face—obediently put his mask back on. His action was slow and stiff, and he exuded a depressing aura. The only thing that seemed alive about him was his sparkling black eyes.

"I heard from Qi Dahe that the injury on his arm was caused by a beast while coming over earlier. Is that true?"

Xia Mu nodded.

Jiang Yucheng glanced at him and asked, "Is it also true that you lost the ability to speak because you were poisoned?"

Xia Mu nodded once more. His head was hanging low slightly, so Jiang Yucheng couldn't see his expression clearly.

“...I don’t remember it clearly. How did you get poisoned in the first place?” His voice became harsher. “Was it caused by Messed Yuan Gravel?”

Xia Mu appeared somewhat shocked as he shook his head and waved his hands frantically, indicating that it wasn’t caused by Messed Yuan Gravel.

“Why are you so nervous? It’s just a casual question.” He knew very well that Messed Yuan Gravel didn’t cause people to become dumb, but that wasn’t what he was looking for in the first place.

He asked a few more questions—which Xia Mu answered with a nod or a shake of his head—and found it meaningless to continue interrogating Xia Mu. He lazily leaned back against the chair’s backrest. “You may leave.”

Xia Mu bowed to him before turning around to leave the room.

But just as he reached the door, Jiang Yucheng suddenly remembered something and said, “Wait!”

Xia Mu stood still and looked back at him.

Jiang Yucheng’s eyes were fixed on Xia Mu as he enunciated, “I remember that you were a beginner stage-six warrior a year ago. Why did your cultivation... drop to advanced stage-four?!”

The air in the room seemed to have frozen.

Chapter 659: Some Waited

Knock knock...

Knocks on the door were suddenly heard, and it broke the room's silence.

"Eldest Young Master, the Third Princess is here!" said Sun Qi respectfully.

Jiang Yucheng furrowed his brows even more tightly. *Shangguan Wan? Why did she suddenly come to my residence?*

He stood up, and his cold, harsh gaze swept across Xia Mu. "Wait here first!"

Xia Mu bent his body, lowered his head, and looked extremely nervous.

Jiang Yucheng opened the door and looked at Sun Qi. "Did the Third Princess come here alone? Where is she now?"

Sun Qi hurriedly said, "Eldest Young Master, Third Princess came in a horse carriage with Chan Yi. They're currently sitting in the guest hall. Old Master and Madam aren't around, so now... Fourth Missy is entertaining her. The pageboy is outside the yard, and he's waiting for you now."

Jiang Yuzhi? Didn't I tell her to stay in her house? Why did she suddenly go to the guest hall? Jiang Yucheng instantly recalled what his sister said previously and started to become uneasy. I don't know if Jiang Yuzhi has matured during this period. If she still has the same mindset as before, then... It won't be good!

He thought for a moment and immediately decided to go over personally. *I really can't let my guard down around Jiang Yuzhi now. Besides, Third Princess's sudden arrival might mean that she has something urgent to do.*

"I'll go over right now," said Jiang Yucheng as he pointed at the people who stood together with scarred faces. "You can go back now. Remember, you aren't allowed to tell anyone else about this today! If I discover that there are such rumors outside... You know the consequences!"

"Yes!" The people with scarred faces answered in unison as they felt very lucky and left gradually.

The remaining people that hadn't been investigated would undoubtedly have to wait in this residence for a while. They couldn't help but look at the scarred-face people enviously.

Jiang Yucheng glanced at Qi Dahe and said coldly to Sun Qi, "He and the one inside the room—send people to take extra care of them."

Didn't he already choose Qi Dahe... Sun Qi was slightly shocked. "Yes!"

Seeing Jiang Yucheng's stern expression, he immediately answered and sent two guards in to watch Xia Mu closely.

After giving instructions, Jiang Yucheng then left.

After he left, most of the people in the yard secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

However, Qi Dahe was even more nervous. *Why did he leave Xia Mu around too? Judging from Eldest Young Master's attitude and how he treated Xia Mu, he also seems to... Did Xia Mu really do it? N-no! When we were in Nan Jiang, there were many dangers, and we were all separated. Even Eldest Young Master had lost contact with us for one whole day, but I had been with Xia Mu the entire time! No matter if it's Xia Mu or me, we can prove each other's innocence. But why does Eldest Young Master seem to be sure that we did it?*

Even... Previously, Eldest Young Master just asked me a few questions, and his expression suddenly changed. He then even confirmed that I did it. I didn't even have the chance to explain before I was chased out to be watched by these people. Without even thinking, one would know what's waiting for me later! Did Xia Mu face the same situation?

Qi Dahe anxiously looked into the room.

It was a pity that he was in the room. Other than the two guards in charge of guarding him, he couldn't see Xia Mu's figure at all.

"Be honest!" The guard at the side harshly kicked his knees, almost kicking him until he kneeled on the floor.

Qi Dahe was terrified, and he didn't dare to look around. He could only retract his gaze, and his heart was in a mess. *Am I really going to die here this time...*

...

On this side, Qi Dahe was worrying for Xia Mu with all his heart and being uneasy.

However, the Xia Mu in this room seemed much calmer.

After Jiang Yucheng left, two guards walked in and stood beside him with a murderous aura. It seemed like he would immediately be executed on the spot once he moved.

But half of the face under Xia Mu's mask still looked very nonchalant as if he didn't notice how much danger he was in.

He stood for a while and walked to the side.

Shing!

"What are you doing?!" The two guards drew their swords at the same time.

Xia Mu seemed to ignore them as he continued walking forward and headed to a superior wooden chair at the side.

He sat down.

The two guards were dazed. *I-is he too tired, so he went to sit down?!*

“Get up! What status do you have? How dare you casually sit around here?!” One of the guards brandished his sword as if he would cut off Xia Mu’s neck in the next second.

Xia Mu only looked up and stared at the two people quietly. His pair of eyes were as calm as water, without any ripples at all.

But when he looked over calmly, his gaze was substantial with a tinge of invisible suppression.

That guard waved his sword and was stumped for quite some time.

“Forget it. Why do you want to be so calculative toward a mute? When Eldest Young Master comes back, he’ll get it from him!” The other guard didn’t want to cause trouble and advised his colleague. *When Eldest Young Master left, he instructed us to watch over this person properly. This is someone that Eldest Young Master wants. How could we really dare to kill Xia Mu? Even if we only injure him, it won’t be good. Anyway, Eldest Young Master will come back in a while. As long as this Xia Mu doesn’t wreak havoc, we don’t have to watch him too closely.*

“Let’s see how long you can be arrogant!” The guard holding the sword understood the advantages and disadvantages in his heart as he went along with the situation.

Xia Mu looked at the duo calmly and leaned against the chair with a stiff expression on the revealed half of his face as if he was unaffected.

Hence...

Xia Mu sat down, and the duo stood up.

Xia Mu was relaxed, while the other two were on their toes.

Xia Mu was clearly the one that was being guarded and facing danger, but he was even more nonchalant and carefree than the two guards watching him. It was as if... he had nothing to do with this incident at all.

Xia Mu leaned against his chair and thought lazily, *Shangguan Wan is here. That Jiang Yucheng will take a long time before he comes back, so I must sit and rest properly.*

...

Guest hall.

“...Anyway, I just feel that Chu Liuyue is very annoying... She only came to Xi Ling for a few days, yet she’s this arrogant? Who knows how prideful she’ll be in the future?!” said Jiang Yuzhi as her face looked enraged. “She even dares to bully me—the Jiang family’s Fourth Missy—now. Who knows if she’ll be disrespectful to you in the future, Third Princess?”

Shangguan Wan heard it and spoke calmly. “I know that she looks similar to Elder Sister, but there are people who look alike in this world. One’s appearance is given to them by their parents, so who can we blame? Besides, from what I see, this Chu Liuyue is still decent... Yuzhi, do you hate her this much because you feel that she snatched your things?”

Saying so much, Jiang Yuzhi only had one meaning: She wanted to use Shangguan Wan’s hand to teach Chu Liuyue a lesson.

Even though she really disliked Chu Liuyue, she didn’t like being manipulated even more.

Jiang Yuzhi hesitated for a while in her heart. "Of course not! She... Actually, there's something that I haven't told you, Your Highness."

She lowered her voice. "In my brother's study, there's actually..."

A voice suddenly sounded and interrupted Jiang Yuzhi's words. "Wan'er!"

Chapter 660: Wedding Day

The duo looked up in unison and saw that it was Jiang Yucheng.

The latter walked over with a slight smile on his face. "Wan'er, I was just about to go into the palace to see you and discuss our wedding affairs when you came."

Hearing this, Shangguan Wan felt that he was sweet and that he looked much better.

As Jiang Yucheng sat down beside the duo, he seemingly said nonchalantly, "Why didn't you tell me earlier? You came here, but there was actually nobody in the mansion who went to serve you. We really didn't treat you well."

"It's fine. I just suddenly felt like coming, so I brought Chan Yi along. Besides, isn't Yuzhi accompanying me?" said Shangguan Wan with a smile.

"Oh?" Jiang Yucheng glanced at Jiang Yuzhi. "What were you guys talking about just now?"

His gaze slowly swept across Jiang Yuzhi, which instantly made her feel guilty. She lowered her head and muttered, “N-nothing much...”

“She said that she hasn’t been out of the residence during this period of time and doesn’t know what interesting things have been going on outside. Hence, she wanted me to tell her about this.” Shangguan Wan silently continued and glared at Jiang Yucheng in seeming anger. “She’s your sister after all. How can you just lock her inside the mansion? Look at how wronged she is! Why don’t you let her off this time?”

Jiang Yuzhi secretly gave her a thankful glance.

“This...” Jiang Yucheng glanced at the duo and laughed. “Wan’er, since you personally put in a word for her, there’s no reason why I would decline. Yuzhi, I won’t ground you any longer from now onward.”

Jiang Yuzhi looked up in surprise.

“But you must remember whatever I instructed you earlier. If you don’t do it... Nobody can help you.”

“I know! Thank you, Brother! Thank you, Third Princess!” Jiang Yuzhi had long been spoiled rotten, and she came out today just to request this from her brother. She didn’t expect the deal to be sealed before she even spoke.

How could she not be happy? At that moment, she directly treated Shangguan Wan as her benefactor.

Jiang Yucheng smiled and handed his Cosmic Ring over. "I know that you wanted to go out long ago. Take this, and you can buy whatever you want today. However, you must bring Uncle Fu with you."

Uncle Fu was an experienced one in the Jiang Residence, and he was also an advanced stage-seven warrior. With him around, he could protect Jiang Yuzhi.

Jiang Yuzhi squealed excitedly as she hurriedly snatched the Cosmic Ring over. It was as though she was afraid that Jiang Yucheng would change his mind.

She quickly said, "I know! Thanks, Brother!"

Before she could even finish her sentence, she had already run out. "Uncle Fu! Uncle Fu, let's go!"

When Jiang Yuzhi disappeared from his field of vision, Jiang Yucheng heaved a sigh of relief. He then looked toward Shangguan Wan. "Wan'er, you came here today—"

He didn't believe that Shangguan Wan really came here on impulse.

Shangguan Wan stared at him for quite a while before picking a few parts of whatever Zuo Mingxi said today and told him about it.

The more she said, the colder Jiang Yucheng's face got.

"...It was roughly like this, but Physician Zuo is only slightly suspicious now. However, he doesn't have much evidence. I thought about it for some time and felt that I needed to discuss this with you," said

Shangguan Wan as she judged Jiang Yucheng's expression. *It seems like... He has nothing to do with this...*

In her heart, she was also reluctant to suspect Jiang Yucheng. But she had no choice, so she could only test him out. *Now, it seems like I was overthinking. But if this has nothing to do with him, who could it be?*

Jiang Yucheng furrowed his brows tightly. "Only the same few people keep going in and out of Qingfeng Palace. Could it really be that one of them did something which made His Majesty..."

He stood up in frustration and kept pacing back and forth as he kept thinking about who could possibly have the chance to attack.

Actually, he had long felt that something was amiss, but he just didn't know where the problem lay. *According to what Zuo Mingxi said, perhaps... I should really start to investigate now!*

"What about the other two heavenly doctors? What did they say?"

Shangguan Wan helplessly said, "I haven't asked them yet. It's Physician Zuo's shift today, so the other two haven't entered the palace yet."

Jiang Yucheng boomed, "Since Physician Zuo could detect the issue, the other two should be able to as well. However, they haven't made a move so far or stated their stance..."

"You're saying that the two of them might've done it?" Shangguan Wan was dazed for a while and immediately rejected the thought. "Impossible. I meticulously picked those two people out, and they have followed me for many years. It's impossible that they will betray—"

“When has betrayal never existed in this world?” said Jiang Yucheng lightly with a dark expression.

Shangguan Wan seemed to be attacked by something, and her expression changed slightly.

The atmosphere between the duo froze for a moment before Shangguan Wan said, “Then... We have to check on this later.”

Jiang Yucheng nodded. “This matter is serious. You must be careful.”

Shangguan Wan seemed to have thought of something and didn't continue.

Jiang Yucheng calculated the time in his heart. *I still have to deal with the remaining half...*

“Wan'er...”

“Yucheng, quite a few ministers have been rushing us to settle the wedding date in court. What do you think?” Shangguan Wan recovered her senses, and her first sentence stunned Jiang Yucheng.

“What? Why did they suddenly start to rush us? Didn't we agree that it would be in these few months?”

“They're rushing us to settle the specific date. Even though we already have a marriage agreement, we haven't settled the wedding date yet. They're naturally anxious about it. Also, they didn't suddenly rush us. It has already been a while, but... You just didn't care about it.” Shangguan Wan's voice had a touch

of dissatisfaction. *Every time I bring up the issue of settling the wedding date, Jiang Yucheng always delays it and asks me to wait and wait again. At first, he said it was because Shangguan Yue just died and that we couldn't get together too quickly. But she's almost been dead for two years now, and it's almost the time taken to observe one's filial piety. I'm the one in control of the Tianling Dynasty now. Do I really need to consider a dead person before I get married or not?*

Besides, it has already been more than half a year since Jiang Yucheng and I had our marriage agreement, but we haven't even settled our wedding date. Every time I think about it, I feel very uncomfortable.

Jiang Yucheng immediately went forward, pulled her hands, and patiently advised, "Wan'er, it's not that I don't care. It's clear that I care too much, and that's why I'm so careful! We've just stabilized our foundation... The most important thing is that... His Majesty hasn't woken up yet..."

"If Father doesn't wake up for the rest of his life, are we not going to marry then?" said Shangguan Wan angrily.

Jiang Yucheng was stumped.

"According to the Tianling Dynasty's rules, only someone who is married can officially ascend the throne. Our wedding day is also the day I'll ascend the throne. Even though I am in power now, I'm still a Third Princess after all. As long as we don't get married, I won't be legitimate!" Shangguan Wan stared at Jiang Yucheng and said every word clearly: "I don't plan to wait any longer!"