

Nobel Ruler 71

Chapter 71: I've Waited for You for a Long Time

"T-This is such a big issue. I'm afraid the Emperor doesn't know about it yet..." said Eunuch Min hesitantly as he looked at First Elder and the rest.

"Is this confirmed?"

"The contract is already written, and we have many witnesses, so it's confirmed. Don't worry, Eunuch Min. I'll explain this to the Emperor personally another day."

Seeing that none of the Chu family members were willing to explain this incident, Eunuch Min knew that there was no turning back on the matter and could not help but sigh secretly. He did not expect that the rumored cowardly and weak Chu family's good-for-nothing could actually be so bold and decisive.

Severing her ties with the Chu family was akin to gaining a huge enemy for herself. However, now that Chu Ning was the imperial guards' Commander in Chief and Chu Liuyue was a talent everyone admired, the Chu family would not dare to do anything to them openly.

Eunuch Min had always been a sensible person and quickly gathered his thoughts. As he bowed towards Chu Liuyue, he smiled and said, "Then, I'll congratulate Officer Chu and Ms. Liuyue on your honor. I still have other things to attend to, so I'll take my leave first."

Chu Liuyue knew that Eunuch Min did not want to interfere with their family's affairs and readily said, "Eunuch Min, please be careful on your way out."

Eunuch Min then bade farewell to First Elder and the rest before leaving quickly.

Chu Liuyue did not stay any longer and turned around to leave. When she took a step out, she suddenly remembered something and turned back to say, "Oh yes. I heard that many people in the Imperial City sent gifts to the residence. All of these should be for me, so may I trouble you to send them over with the other items?"

After she finished her sentence, she did not bother to look at those people's wretched expressions and left relaxingly.

First Elder glared at Chu Liuyue's back view with a deadly gaze, wanting to go up to her and teach her a lesson. However, he still held himself back and hollered, "Let's go back!"

Bang!

The Chu family residence's gate was shut tightly after the crowd went back in. However, the major news of what happened in the Chu family had immediately spread across the Imperial City.

...

"First Elder, this Chu Liuyue is such a bully! If we don't get back at her for what we suffered today, how can we hold ourselves up high in the Imperial City?"

After they returned to the residence, First Elder only asked the few people who had the most say in the Chu family to stay and discuss the issue.

Chu Yan was the first to speak, and he looked infuriated.

First Elder's face darkened, but he did not say a word.

"Yeah! Even if she has entered Tian Lu Academy, she's way too arrogant! If she dares to do this now, who knows what she'll do in the future?"

"If we don't do anything this time round and take it lying, the entire Imperial City will think that we're cowards. I won't let her go this easily."

"Hmph, does that Chu Liuyue think she can have a stable life after leaving the Chu family? We should let her see what we are capable of. If not, she really will think that we have nothing against her."

The few people broke into heated discussions as if they wanted to let Chu Liuyue know how formidable they were immediately.

Third Elder stood at the side and shook his head as he lightly said, "Don't forget that she still has Chu Ning."

The few people were instantly stumped.

Chu Ning was currently the imperial guards' Commander in Chief... It was indeed a tough situation.

“... So what? Can Chu Ning alone go against our entire Chu family?” Chu Yan laughed sinisterly, and cruelty flashed across his eyes. “The various powers are deeply connected to each other in the Imperial City. It may seem like Chu Ning and Chu Liuyue have turned the tables, but things aren’t so simple. Since they decided to sever ties with us, they need to have the courage to accept the consequences.”

This sentence enlightened First Elder as he paced back and forth before finally making a decision. “That’s right! Didn’t Chu Liuyue say that she wanted to hold a celebratory banquet? I would like to see how many people in the Imperial City will go!”

...

Chu Liuyue walked to her new mansion alone. She was in a good mood today after settling a few issues.

It was already evening, and a gentle breeze blew her loose strands of hair up in the air.

The setting sun cast a long shadow over her.

She walked step by step in rare relaxation and freedom.

During the entire month after her rebirth, she had nervously been planning everything. Now, she could finally relax a little.

The bustling noise in the surroundings gradually disappeared and quietened down.

Chu Liuyue looked up and could see the green roof of her new mansion. She used 100,000 of the 300,000 silver taels she earned from selling the hunting ground to buy this mansion.

The mansion was located in the Imperial City's western region. It was very isolated and quiet. Distinguished families would normally not like it here, but Chu Liuyue loved it at first sight.

She had had enough of the beautiful but cold palaces in her previous life. She no longer held any interest in them after she was reborn. She liked quiet places like this even more.

Her lips could not help but curve up into a smile when she thought of her and Chu Ning spending the rest of their lives away from the people in the Chu family.

Suddenly, something cold dropped on her face.

Chu Liuyue was taken aback and looked up.

Water droplets fell down rapidly, quickly forming a line.

It was raining!

Chu Liuyue hastened her steps. Her house was located at the end of the marble path around the corner in front. However, Chu Liuyue was stunned after she turned around the corner.

A person was standing in front of the mansion at the end of the simple marble path. He was tall and wore a snow-white robe with a black cloak.

The sky quickly changed to grayish-blue as the rain poured down, erecting an invisible rain scene between heaven and earth.

The rain landed and splashed on the marble path and formed a thin layer of white mist, causing the view in front to be blurred. However, she could still see the man's distinguished face clearly.

The white and black clothes complemented his cold and handsome appearance. He was like a flower at the top of the mountain that one could only look at.

It was actually...

Rong Xiu? The moment the name flashed across Chu Liuyue's heart, the man started walking towards her.

He looked like he was emerging from the darkness as the sky turned dark, and the rain poured down.

For some reason, Chu Liuyue felt that this Rong Xiu was different from before. She could not help but inch closer towards him.

Finally, Rong Xiu walked to Chu Liuyue and stood in front of her firmly.

"You..." Chu Liuyue spoke hesitantly.

Hua!

Rong Xiu suddenly raised his hand, and a black figure swept past. Suddenly, the rain above Chu Liuyue's head disappeared.

Rong Xiu held a black umbrella up for her.

Chu Liuyue looked up at him and met his gaze.

Rong Xiu's dark eyes were as bottomless as the night sky.

"Yue'er." His cold and misty voice contained a tinge of undetectable love. "I've been waiting for you for a long time."

Chapter 72: A Peach Blossom Hairpin Gift

His deep voice sounded like an instrument's strings—which were played by the gentle wind, and every note rippled gently in the rain.

Chu Liuyue felt dazed momentarily.

It seemed like Rong Xiu really had been waiting for her for some time.

She finally recovered her senses when the cold rain droplets splashed on her face, and a chill ran down her spine.

“Why are you here?” She bought this mansion secretly, and nobody knew about it. How did Rong Xiu find out, even coming to this place to wait for her?

Rong Xiu’s gaze shifted and landed on the raindrops on her face. He immediately bent down a bit lower and raised his hand.

“Hey...”

“Don’t move.”

Chu Liuyue instinctively wanted to stop him, but she subconsciously retracted her hand when she heard his voice.

Rong Xiu’s fingers were long, white, and had distinct joints, but his skin felt incredibly soft as he gently wiped away the raindrops on her face. Rong Xiu was very close to Chu Liuyue, to the point that she could clearly feel his long black lashes trembling slightly.

He looked very serious as if this was an important task.

For some reason, Chu Liuyue held her breath.

This moment seemed to be much longer than usual.

After some time, Rong Xiu suddenly laughed before speaking in a low voice. "Breathe."

Chu Liuyue instinctively answered with an "Oh" and heaved a sigh of relief.

The warm breaths that landed on his face felt like landing meteorites, burning his face instantly. Rong Xiu paused in his actions, and his eyes darkened.

"Are you done?" asked Chu Liuyue. *Is there a need to wipe so long? I was only in the rain for a while.*

Rong Xiu silently retracted his hand, and his fingers curled up and brushed past her lips as if it were unintentional.

It happened in a flash, but Chu Liuyue's heart tingled, and she suddenly felt awkward.

She looked up at Rong Xiu but saw that he had already retracted his hands. He looked very calm as if he did not notice anything wrong.

It... shouldn't be on purpose... But why does he have to wipe my face every time we meet? Chu Liuyue muttered in her heart and suppressed the ripple she previously felt as she once again asked, "Why are you here?"

Rong Xiu smiled. He directly held Chu Liuyue's hand and walked back while slowly saying, "Let's talk when we go home."

Chu Liuyue lowered her head, and her lips twitched. *Go home? That's my home, not yours! What's with your righteous tone?*

"Prince Li, what are you doing?"

Even though no one is around, we shouldn't be doing this, right?

"I'm cold," said Rong Xiu lightly. His righteous attitude stumped Chu Liuyue; she could not think of how to retort him in such a short time.

Rong Xiu pulled her closer again.

Chu Liuyue raised her brows. "Your Highness, you won't feel warm this way."

Rong Xiu nodded. "Mm, but at least I won't get wet."

Chu Liuyue was dazed, and her gaze shifted.

The cloak on his body was truly slightly drenched.

She suddenly remembered that the umbrella was tilted towards her side when Rong Xiu held it up for her. After taking the umbrella incident into consideration, Chu Liuyue decided not to pursue the matter.

The two of them walked on without saying a word and reached the front door.

Chu Liuyue struggled a little, so Rong Xiu naturally let go of her hands.

Chu Liuyue then opened the door and walked in. After walking forward two steps, she turned around as she suddenly thought of something.

Rong Xiu was still standing outside the door, not looking like he intended to leave.

Chu Liuyue clenched her teeth in secret. “Your Highness, do you want to sit in my humble home for a while?”

Rong Xiu’s lips separated slightly. “Since you’re so hospitable, I won’t reject you,” said Rong Xiu as he walked in.

Chu Liuyue was speechless. *Why didn’t I see that Rong Xiu was so shameless before?*

...

Chu Liuyue only came to this mansion once—it was when she bought it—and it was still rather dirty then.

After the renovation, it looked much cleaner and more exquisite.

Chu Liuyue invited Rong Xiu to take a seat as she went to make some ginger tea.

“My house is rather simple, and I have nothing much to serve you.” Chu Liuyue no longer busied herself after she offered Rong Xiu some tea and sat opposite him.

“This ginger tea will suffice.” Rong Xiu seemed like he did not mind at all as he poured two cups of tea—one for Chu Liuyue and one for himself. He gently sipped his cup of tea.

The white steam rose up, causing his brows to relax.

His words and actions did not make him look like a prince, and he really seemed pretty satisfied...

Chu Liuyue was curious. *This ginger tea is a very common item, and the smell is a bit harsh to the nose. Aristocratic children will usually find faults with it, but he is still drinking it so leisurely. Did he live bitter and simple days at Mingyue Tianshan previously?*

“It seems like you didn’t have good days before,” said Chu Liuyue on purpose. “You’re used to drinking things like ginger tea.”

“I’m not”—Rong Xiu smiled—“but it’s rare for you to make it for me. Thus, I got used to it, even if I’m not.”

I got used to it, even if I'm not...

Rong Xiu's tone was as calm as before, but the sentence sounded very flirtatious.

Chu Liuyue did not know what to say and tightly pressed her lips against each other. She really would be stupid if she could not guess Rong Xiu's feelings towards her.

Helping her once was a coincidence, but what about the second time and the third time? However, she did not know what exactly Rong Xiu saw in her.

Her looks?

When they first met, her yellow skin looked like a vegetable; she was definitely ugly then.

Talent?

She only entered Tian Lu Academy academy today.

Identity?

An average person would run away from her—the ex-fiancée abandoned by the Crown Prince and a Big Missy detested by the Chu family—let alone Prince Li with a distinguished status.

“Your Highness, let’s be honest with each other. Just say your thoughts directly.” Chu Liuyue took a deep breath in, straightened her back, and looked at Rong Xiu seriously. “Why did you come here today? Or rather, what do you want from me? Even if I managed to turn the tables for myself today, I have very little power. I can’t help you much, so you’re just wasting your time and effort on me.”

Rong Xiu turned the teacup in his hands and looked down in silence. After a while, he looked up at her.

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

Rong Xiu’s eyes sparkled with countless stars, reflecting the young girl’s entire face. “I came here to celebrate your birthday.”

Chu Liuyue was taken aback.

Rong Xiu suddenly took out a wooden box, which exuded a light fragrance. It was a very intricate agarwood box. “This is a gift for you.”

Chu Liuyue took it hesitantly, and the box opened with a slight move of her fingers.

A peach blossom hairpin quietly laid inside.

Chapter 73: Shining Peach Blossom

That hairpin was delicately carved from black wood; there were a few lively peach blossoms on top of it, and even the petal details were intricate.

The crystal snowflakes on the peach blossoms were the most attractive part. It was currently summer, so there would not be snow.

Chu Liuyue took a closer look at it and shockingly discovered that the snowflakes were carved from a very valuable moonstone. Moonstones were a type of rare gem, which sparkled under the sunlight and gently glowed like the moonlight when in the dark.

Chu Liuyue was very shocked.

Even though Rong Xiu was Country Yao Chen's Seventh Prince, Country Yao Chen did not amount to much in the entire Mainland Xuan Wu.

If it were her in her previous life, it would not be difficult for her to obtain this moonstone as the Tianling Dynasty's princess. However, this was definitely a rare treasure for the people in Country Yao Chen.

Why does Rong Xiu have such a thing? Also, why did he give me such a valuable gift?

Chu Liuyue closed the box and passed it back to him. "Prince Li, this gift is too valuable. I can't accept it."

Rong Xiu looked straight into her eyes. "Today is the day where you become of marriageable age. According to the rules, your family elder should hold a ceremony for you and give you a hairpin."

Chu Liuyue kept quiet.

Rong Xiu was right. The day when one reached marriageable age was very important to the women in Mainland Xuan Wu. This was because it meant that a woman had become an adult and could marry now.

Even if one were from an average family, their family would specifically hire someone to give a hairpin to the girl.

This was an even more formal ceremony for girls from aristocratic families.

Many neighboring countries had specifically come forth to deliver gifts to her when she became of marriageable age in her previous life. The celebratory banquet lasted for a total of three days and three nights.

It was a really important event back then.

After being reborn, she had always been planning how to escape from her perilous situation and take revenge. She did not even care about such things.

Today was the day she became of marriageable age, but she had severed ties with the Chu family. Her only family member, Chu Ning, was still in the palace and had not returned yet.

If Rong Xiu did not come, she would just spend her day like any other. However, he did come. He had even brought an extravagant gift.

“I accept your kind intentions, Your Highness, but I really can’t accept—”

“If you don’t accept it today, I’ll come again and give it to you tomorrow.” Rong Xiu ignored her rejection, and his lips curved up slightly. “If you don’t accept it, I’ll just come another day. I’ll continue coming every day until you accept it.”

Chu Liuyue was speechless. Upon seeing Rong Xiu’s nonchalant and calm expression, Chu Liuyue confirmed that he could deliver on what he said.

She ground her teeth. “Your Highness, has anyone ever told you that you’re very thick-skinned?”

Rong Xiu leaned against the chair and laughed lightly. “I just returned to the Imperial City and have been resting in my residence. I haven’t heard anyone say this to me yet.”

“…”

Ka!

Chu Liuyue opened the box again, pointed at the peach blossom hairpin, and asked, “Your Highness, peach blossoms bloom in spring. Why does your hairpin have snowflakes on it?”

“Peach blossoms can bloom in winter too.”

“How can it be? Have you seen it before?” Chu Liuyue chuckled in her heart.

Rong Xiu really could not say anything to retort. However, Rong Xiu suddenly looked up and stared at her deeply.

This look reminded Chu Liuyue of the first time she saw him standing in the rain. He had also directed such a gaze at her back then.

She could not guess what he was thinking and even felt that Rong Xiu saw another person through her.

“I’ve seen it before.” He closed his eyes and hid the ripples in them. He sighed lightly and said in a low voice, “I’ve seen peach blossoms brightly shining as snow danced around them.”

Chapter 74: In Time

Chu Liuyue did not know how to describe Rong Xiu then. He seemed to be missing the scenery he was describing, but he seemed like he was missing someone even more.

Where can one see blooming peach blossoms in winter? Also, who is that person he can't forget? No matter what, they clearly are extremely important to him.

Chu Liuyue hesitated before she decided to keep the peach blossom hairpin. “Thank you, Your Highness.”

Rong Xiu rested his hand on his cheek as he spaced out. The warm candlelight on his face accentuated his outstanding features.

Chu Liuyue looked outside. The rain was getting heavier, with no sign of stopping soon. She then asked, “Your Highness, do the people from your residence know that you’re here? They should be coming to pick you up since it’s raining so heavily, right?”

Even though he had an umbrella, it was a little much to make Prince Li brave the rain on his return journey, especially since he had just given her a big gift.

Rong Xiu glanced at her with a half-smile. “Do you not want to see me? You’re in such a hurry for me to leave.”

“How can that be? It’s our honor to have you visit! However, our place is a little shabby and cannot be compared to Prince Li Mansion,” said Chu Liuyue seriously.

“I think this place isn’t bad.” Rong Xiu knocked on the table. “Besides, my body has been weak recently, so I can’t stand the cold. If the rain continues, I might have to impose on you for the night.”

Chu Liuyue—who had picked up a teacup for tea—almost flung the cup out as her eyes widened in shock. “You want to stay here?! How can that be?!”

This was her first day in this place! Rong Xiu was not related to her in any way, so how could he just sleep here?

“Your residence is rather big. It should at least have a guest room, right?” Rong Xiu looked a little surprised too.

“...” Chu Liuyue was at a loss for words.

There were a number of rooms in the mansion, but she bought it for its tranquility in the first place. Therefore, she only prepared two bedrooms—one for Chu Ning and one for herself.

There was no space for him!

Chu Liuyue immediately relayed the situation to Rong Xiu. “... Your Highness, I’m not chasing you away, but there’s really no room for you here. My father will be back later tonight...”

“Didn’t your father go into the palace to meet Father? I heard that Father is really happy and intends to talk with Officer Chu through the night.”

Chu Liuyue glanced at Rong Xiu warily.

It was not strange for him to know that. Eunuch Min had said this at the door earlier, so anyone who wanted to know could find out easily.

Besides, as a prince, Rong Xiu had the clearest grasp on the workings of the palace. Prince Li was not as harmless and gentle as he looked.

“Father will return when they are done talking. As a daughter, I cannot not leave a room for my father.”

Rong Xiu nodded in agreement. “That’s true. As a junior, we should not impose on the elders.” But before Chu Liuyue could relax, he continued, “Since that’s the case, then... I’m afraid I’ll have to put Yue’er in a spot.”

Chu Liuyue was about to slam the table in protest, but she saw Rong Xiu begin coughing as if he would pass out if he caught a cold.

This fellow is hell-bent on staying here! Chu Liuyue clenched her fists then released them before she got up. "Our place is shabby and dilapidated. I ask for Your Highness's understanding should you catch a cold."

Rong Xiu's coughing finally stopped. "Thank you, Yue'er."

...

His skin is as thick as the city walls! What poised gentleman? That's all a farce! He is clearly a shameless lecher! Chu Liuyue thought to herself as she laid the bed.

Hua!

She flung the blankets hard.

Bang!

She slammed the windows shut.

Bang bang bang!

She threw the pillow down harshly.

“Yue’er, even though the pillow is made of wood, I don’t think they can take that much force...” Rong Xiu reminded. He felt his eyelids twitch as he watched her.

Chu Liuyue broke into a smile. “Don’t worry! It’s quite solid! Aren’t I just afraid that you won’t sleep well?”

Rong Xiu kept his mouth shut. As he looked at her angry expression, he curled his lips into a smile.

“Okay! Everything is tidied up! You can rest here now!” Chu Liuyue was prepared to leave after she was done.

Rong Xiu took a step forward and blocked her. “Where are you going?”

Chu Liuyue looked at him strangely. “I gave up this place to you, so I naturally have to go somewhere else.”

Rong Xiu shook his head. “I get sleep paralysis easily, so I can’t be left alone.”

Chu Liuyue widened her eyes slowly.

“So, you...”

Plop!

A white figure broke in through the window, landing on the floor!

The pair looked over.

Chu Liuyue was pleasantly surprised! “Xue Xue, why are you here?”

Xue Xue laid on the ground, its fluffy fur wet because of the rain, making him look much slimmer. It wanted to turn and get up when it heard Chu Liuyue’s voice, but... a cold glare pinned it to the ground. It dared not move, pretending that it had accidentally fallen into the room.

Chu Liuyue turned to look at Rong Xiu with a smug smile. “Xue Xue is here, so it can accompany you. Xue Xue is smart, so it will take good care of you, right?”

Rong Xiu looked at Xue Xue. “En,” he said coldly.

Xue Xue shuddered. The next instant, it shook off the rainwater as a blue flame enveloped its body, evaporating the rest of the rainwater. After that, it had returned to its usual clean look.

It then ran over to Rong Xiu, giving him an obedient look.

Chu Liuyue’s gloominess was swept away, and she left with light footsteps.

In the room, awkward silence enveloped the man and beast.

“You came in at just the right moment this time, en?”

Chapter 75: Choices

Chu Liuyue wasn't really upset that she had to give her room up to Rong Xiu. He had helped her out a few times, so she owed him. It was nothing to let him stay for a night.

Upon walking out of the bedroom, she pondered for a moment before heading to the study room.

There was a bed in the study room as well, but Chu Liuyue did not intend to sleep. She wanted to make a breakthrough and finally become a true warrior today!

Chu Liuyue closed the windows and doors before she sat on the bed with folded legs and slowly closed her eyes.

This body had the Dijing Yuan meridian, so she cultivated much faster than other cultivators. Therefore, even though her Yuan meridian had only been restored recently, there was an ample amount of Heaven and Earth Force in Chu Liuyue's body.

Since she had gotten into Tian Lu Academy, she no longer needed to hide the fact that her Yuan meridian had been restored.

The room was rather quiet.

Soon, the Heaven and Earth Force began converging towards Chu Liuyue's body.

Tonight, I shall make a breakthrough to become a warrior!

...

The rainy night was destined to be eventful.

The Lu family.

"Yan'er, did Chu Liuyue really beat Minmin in the assessment?"

After the assessment, the school had a three-day break. The moment Lu Feiyan arrived home, she was pulled into the study room and interrogated over what happened in the academy.

Lu Feiyan pouted. "It's true."

The members of the Lu family looked at one another.

"This... Did Chu Liuyue really go from zero to hero?" They did not believe it when they first heard the news.

How could Chu Liuyue—who had a lacking Yuan meridian that even heavenly doctors could not fix—recover?

However, they now had no choice but to believe it!

“Hmph, I think it’s strange. That Chu Liuyue must have resorted to some tactics to defeat Minmin! She’s vicious. Not only did she defeat Minmin, but she disfigured her too! Minmin hates her guts now!”

The adults were stunned and shook their heads when they heard what had happened.

“This Chu Liuyue has really offended the Chu family now! She is different than before, and Chu Ning has become the Commander in Chief of the imperial guards, so they are arrogant! But I think it’ll be difficult for them to survive in the Imperial City...”

“The Chu family has sent word, Second Elder...”

“Even though we don’t really get along with the Chu family, Minmin does carry Lu family blood in her. Besides, a starving camel is still bigger than a horse. There’s no need to offend the Chu family now.”

“Yes!”

...

Gu family.

Even though it was vacation time, Gu Mingfeng did not return home, as usual.

The members of the Gu family were not bothered by it. Instead, they were discussing what attitude they should have towards the Chu family.

“Chu Ning’s status is different now. If we don’t show him some respect, won’t it be the same as disrespecting His Majesty? The Chu family is on the decline, so there’s no need to be so wary of them...”

“Even if that’s the case, the Chu family still has some formidable characters! No matter how excellent Chu Ning is, he’s still alone. I don’t think he’ll prevail over the people from the Chu Family!”

“If that’s the case, we...”

“Support the Chu family!”

...

Si family.

No long after Si Ting and Si Yang returned home, the head of the household, Si Ye, called them in for questioning.

There was only the trio in the room.

“What do you all think of Chu Liuyue?” Si Ye asked directly.

“Sir, that Chu Liuyue is rather formidable! She’s only slightly weaker than Big Brother! The Chu Family has really been blind all these years!” Si Yang said excitedly.

Si Ye put his hands behind his back. “Chu Liuyue broke off her relations with the Chu family today.”

“What?” Si Yang cried out loud. However, he did not see anything wrong with her actions when he thought of the way the Chu family treated her. “... It’s understandable she did this after the way they treated her... She’s bold!”

Si Ting, who had been silent, looked towards Si Ye. “Master, your choice?”

Such wit and wisdom make a person made for big things. Si Ye looked at him approvingly. “Chu family. In fact, it won’t be just me. Everyone in the Imperial City will probably make the same choice. The Chu Family... I’m afraid they won’t give her the chance or time to grow.”

However, Si Ting shook his head. “I would like to ask you to choose Chu Liuyue.”

Si Ye was stunned. “Why?”

Si Ting was silent for an instant. “Her abilities are way above mine. Besides, it’s her that will not give the Chu family any chances.”

Chapter 76: The torn book page

It was still raining.

In the study room, Chu Liuyue concentrated her energy and breaths as she rapidly absorbed the Heaven and Earth Force from around her.

Time passed.

However, Chu Liuyue found that something was not right. The Heaven and Earth Force was drawn into her body and flowed towards her dantian via her Yuan meridian. However, they did not form a pearl of essence. Instead, the force was absorbed into the small lake.

In order to become a true warrior, one had to form a pearl of essence.

In Chu Liuyue's case, she had ample amounts of force in her body, so forming a pearl of essence could not be any simpler. However, she still couldn't pool the Heaven and Earth Force together after so long!

Instead, it kept on flowing into the lake. The energy disappeared without a trace as if it had been consumed. The lake didn't even ripple once.

Chu Liuyue slowly realized the severity of the situation. *If this goes on, does that mean that I can't form a pearl of essence and become a warrior?!*

A pearl of essence meant a lot to warriors!

Especially after the fourth stage, the pearl of essence was of utmost importance to cultivators!

If she did not have a pearl of essence, she could not be considered a true warrior, and her ability would be greatly restricted.

Chu Liuyue tried to retain the force and pool it together, but she could not do it.

Chu Liuyue opened her eyes and muttered, "The force of the lake is covering mine..."

Based solely on her current ability, she had no way to fight off the lake's influence over her body.

This is pressing! What on earth is this lake? Chu Liuyue was sure that the lake was not deadly to her. It would even protect and save her in times of danger. However, would she be stuck at this stage forever if she did not figure this out?

Chu Liuyue looked towards her hand. She clearly remembered that a strange pattern had appeared on her palm when she first regained consciousness after her rebirth.

The pattern disappeared later, and a transparent but torn book page appeared in her dantian. The book page became the floating lake in the end.

The last time the lake reacted was when she restored her Yuan meridian.

Chu Liuyue initially did not pay much attention to it, but she did not expect it to get in her way of forming a pearl of essence!

Chu Liuyue tried a few more times after this, but it all ended in failure.

The incessant sound of the rain outside the window frustrated her.

“What lousy thing is this?!” Right after she spoke, Chu Liuyue immediately felt a tremble in her dantian!

A scary force burst out from the lake!

Chu Liuyue’s body shook suddenly, and energy rose in her chest!

She stabilized herself and quickly observed her dantian! She was stunned by what she saw.

The floating lake was rapidly transforming into a transparent book page! It was the book page that she had seen previously, but a red light was rapidly gathering on the page this time!

Chu Liuyue’s heart was in her heart. *What does the sudden change mean?*

The red light on the page was gradually coming together to form a...

Word?!

Chu Liuyue concentrated her energy and scrutinized it carefully.

At this time, a second word appeared!

Chu Liuyue finally saw the words on the page clearly—"Dumb, dumb!"

Chu Liuyue was speechless. She did not expect the first words this transparent book page formed to be...

"You're insulting me?" Chu Liuyue asked in disbelief.

The book page trembled, and the words swiftly disappeared. However, Chu Liuyue's shock did not dissipate.

After what happened last time, she had speculated that the book page was a broken treasure, but she was not sure what it was exactly.

It now seemed that the book page had its own consciousness!

Chu Liuyue suppressed her surprise and coldly asked, "What exactly are you?!" She felt a little unsettled about having something like this in her dantian.

A new line of text soon appeared on the book page: "The pearl of essence concentrates the Heaven and Earth powers. One scoop will overflow."

Chu Liuyue froze. Does that mean my pearl of essence does not have enough Heaven and Earth Force? However, isn't that normal?

Countless cultivators exist. If one's pearl of essence held an unlimited amount of concentrated Heaven and Earth Force, won't things be in chaos? Besides, one's pearl of essence will get stronger as the cultivator levels up. It will carry more energy then! It is not a one-off thing!

As if reading her mind, the line of text disappeared, which was replaced by a new one: "Dumb beyond repair!"

Chu Liuyue was speechless. Even in both her past and present lives, this was the first time she had been insulted like this.

Before she could say anything, the line of text had disappeared. Even the book page had transformed back into the floating lake. It seemed like the other party was ignoring her...

Chu Liuyue stared at the floating lake as she fell into deep thought. What does that line mean? One scoop of the pearl of essence will overflow... Could it be that it is saying that my pearl of essence can contain more Heaven and Earth Force?

At this thought, Chu Liuyue had an idea. She began to feel the force contained in the lake.

Vast and ethereal!

Chu Liuyue held her breath and carefully tried to guide the energy, and a ripple cut through the surface of the lake.

Hong!

In an instant, a scary burst of energy flew out from the lake and traveled towards Chu Liuyue's limbs!

Chu Liuyue suddenly opened her eyes and pointed one finger straight ahead!

Bang!

The door broke into pieces!

Chapter 77: Breakthrough

Chu Liuyue stared at the broken door dumbfoundedly. *Just now... All I did was create a small ripple in the lake. Where did the explosive power come from?!*

At this moment, a figure dashed in from outside. "Yue'er!"

Chu Liuyue instinctively followed the voice. It was Rong Xiu.

He had clearly rushed over when he heard the door breaking.

A thought flashed across her mind. *My room is quite a distance from here; how did he rush over so quickly?*

Rong Xiu glanced at the door before he hurried in. "Are you okay? What happened?" He realized that Chu Liuyue was okay the instant he stepped in. He was relieved, but he could not put his mind at ease.

Chu Liuyue paused. His usually lazy voice had hints of anxiety.

Upon closer inspection, one could see an indiscernible look of worry between his eyes. This was rare for Rong Xiu, who usually kept a poker face.

Chu Liuyue shook her head. "I'm fine. I just had a mishap while trying to form a pearl of essence. I didn't control the force well."

"Really?" Rong Xiu looked at her suspiciously. *How did forming a pearl of essence create such a big commotion?*

Chu Liuyue knew that her explanation was a little preposterous. Not even a stage-three warrior could wield the amount of strength from just now!

But that was the truth...

Chu Liuyue rubbed her glabella helplessly. "I'm really fine. Please don't worry, Your Highness."

Xue Xue rushed in from outside at this point and leaped over to Chu Liuyue's side. It sniffed around as if afraid that something was wrong with Chu Liuyue.

Chu Liuyue was tickled by the fur at the top of its head, and she laughed. "Okay, okay! Xue Xue, I'm fine! I'm not hurt!"

Xue Xue blinked. When it saw that Chu Liuyue was really okay, it rubbed against her neck as if asking for attention.

Rong Xiu glanced at Xue Xue.

Xue Xue stiffened immediately. It roared deeply and obediently stepped aside, lying on the floor.

Chu Liuyue rubbed its head and looked at Rong Xiu. "Your Highness, how did you get here so quickly?" she asked strangely.

Xue Xue was a high-level fiend, and it was from the lion family, so it traveled fast. It must have started to make its way here when it heard the commotion, but it still lagged behind Rong Xiu.

"... Could it be that you were nearby?"

Rong Xiu could not help but laugh when he saw the girl's gaze turn suspicious towards him. He pinched her face. "Don't go imagining things. I was just taking a stroll since I couldn't sleep. I headed over when I heard the commotion."

Chu Liuyue pulled his hand away, but she did not believe it.

Such a coincidence? Besides, even if you were taking a walk nearby, I still remember how fast you moved when you came over. This sickly Prince Li is masterful at hiding things...

Chu Liuyue did not continue asking and instead said, "Your Highness, it was a false alarm. Please, go back and rest."

Rong Xiu looked at the broken door pointedly. "You sure you won't tear the place down if I leave?"

Chu Liuyue was speechless. *There really is no way to explain this, is there?*

"Just continue to form your pearl of essence. I'll just be here, and I won't get in your way." With that said, Rong Xiu sat down on a chair in the corner of the room. He picked up a book to read as if he did not intend to leave.

Chu Liuyue was speechless. *One clearly can't win if they fight this guy over the thickness of their skin?*

Whatever! The lake is in my dantian. There is no way outsiders will know about it. The most they will feel is the explosive power contained within it. All that can be explained with a pearl of essence as well.

Hang on! A thought suddenly surged into Chu Liuyue's mind, and she finally understood what the book page's sentence meant. *It was telling me to use it as the pearl of essence?!*

Chapter 78: My Lord

Having connected the dots, Chu Liuyue found everything much clearer now!

The blast from earlier had proven that she could in fact employ the force within the lake and that its powers were the same as that of a pearl of essence! She also learned that the lake carried energy several times stronger than that of the pearl of essence!

Just a ripple was enough to trigger an explosive force. If she put in all her force, she could trigger an even mightier attack!

Forming a pearl of essence was not necessary as long as this thing remained in her dantian.

The only solution was to treat the lake as her pearl of essence!

However, there was one problem—this thing had a consciousness of its own. It clearly didn't listen to her orders completely. If she was not careful with it, it could create a lot of problems!

At this time, Chu Liuyue suddenly felt an anomaly in her body. She concentrated and looked towards her dantian.

The lake was gradually transforming into a giant water droplet that had a strange pattern on it!

It was the pattern that had initially appeared on Chu Liuyue's palm!

In that instant, Chu Liuyue felt a strange connection between herself and the droplet! It was as if the droplet had become a part of her body!

Chu Liuyue used her mind to try and deploy some of the droplet's strength.

A ripple—much weaker than the one before—appeared, and force traveled through her body.

Chu Liuyue could clearly sense that she had much better control over the force this time because of her connection with the droplet.

It was like it was a part of her!

She experimented a few more times and finally confirmed that she had formed some kind of relationship with the water droplet!

A vast but ethereal voice echoed in her head as if it were a voice from ancient times! "Three thousand worlds, chaotic heavens. My lord will prevail!"

...

After hearing this voice, Chu Liuyue could not regain her senses for a while.

The words were arrogant beyond belief!

She had seen many strong warriors in her past life, but none of them dared say anything like this!

Mainland Xuan Wu was boundless and had countless tribes. Who could emerge at the top!

Besides, it said 'my lord!'

Was that not referring to her?

This was a little preposterous...

As the voice faded, only the giant water droplet remained suspended in her dantian as if everything that had just happened was an illusion.

Chu Liuyue wanted to overlook that statement but found that the voice was imprinted in her head.

She waited for a while, then decided not to think about it.

Since this thing decided to recognize me as its master, it won't harm me. If that is the case, I will use it as a pearl of essence for now! It took the shape of a lake earlier, and it probably became a water droplet because it formally recognized me as its master.

Chu Liuyue still remembered the tiny drop of water from the lake that sent an enormous amount of energy across her body when she was repairing her Yuan meridian.

Her ownership of the Dijing Yuan meridian seemed to be the result of that drop of water.

However, that drop of water was not even one-thousandth of the water droplet in her dantian!

At this point, red ripples suddenly appeared on the water droplet!

The water droplet seemed to be wrapped in a clear membrane, on which the red ripples were inscribed. The water droplet was flowing, but the membrane remained still.

In this state, the water droplet resembled a pearl of essence.

For regular cultivators, their pearl of essence would change as they advanced to the next stages.

For stage-one warriors, one single line would be present on their pearl of essence.

For stage-two warriors, two lines would be present., and so on and so forth.

Chu Liuyue solemnly thought as she stared at the water droplet. *Other than the fact that its form is slightly different, this thing resembles a pearl of essence. Oh right, it has a consciousness of its own.*

However, that is much more convenient for me anyway.

But... Why is there only one line present?

*No matter what, I have a 'pearl of essence' now! Given my ability, I should be a stage-three warrior!
However, why is there only one line?!*

Indignant, Chu Liuyue tried to add another line to it, but the water droplet did not even react.

While staring at the line, Chu Liuyue finally realized something. *Does the water droplet think I'm not capable enough for a second line?*

"Are you looking down on me?" asked Chu Liuyue in disbelief. "I should have two lines at least, right?!"

Why am I stuck with just one line? After all that fuss, I'm just a stage-one warrior?

The water droplet did not react, but Chu Liuyue felt despised.

She glared at the water droplet for a while. In the end, she could only open her eyes in exasperation!

"En? You're done forming the pearl of essence?" Rong Xiu noticed her movements and looked over immediately. With one look, he could sense the aura emanating from Chu Liuyue. *She's... a stage-one warrior?!*

Rong Xiu's expression was a little stiff, and he eyed Chu Liuyue for a while before asking with uncertainty, "You... Are you sure you're not going to continue breaking through?"

Given her ability, she should definitely be above stage one.

Chu Liuyue gritted her teeth. How could she admit that she could not add a second line to her 'pearl of essence?'

"Being a stage-one warrior is pretty good! It helps me keep a low profile!"

Rong Xiu had a wry smile. "You wreaked havoc in Tian Lu Academy and the Imperial City. However, you're now thinking of keeping a low profile? Didn't you say that you wanted to hold a banquet to celebrate?"

Chu Liuyue huffed. "That goes without saying!"

Not only did she want to break off her relations with the Chu family, but she was also going to make them pay for all their insults and mockery!

Rong Xiu could not help but laugh when he saw her pouting. "It seems like Yue'er is going to treat me to a good show."

Chapter 79: Movement in the Jiuyou Tower

She finally became a true warrior after all those struggles.

Chu Liuyue heaved a sigh of relief.

It was already the middle of the night, and the rain outside had gradually stopped.

While looking at the door she had accidentally crushed, Chu Liuyue started wondering if there was a necessity for Rong Xiu to sleep here.

Suddenly, Rong Xiu's expression changed, and he looked outside.

The sky was gloomy, hiding everything with its darkness.

After a while, he said, "Since the rain has stopped, I'll take my leave."

Chu Liuyue was very surprised. "Didn't you say that you wanted to stay for the night? Even though the rain has stopped, you'll easily get sick if you go out now, right?"

Rong Xiu could not help but smile slightly when he heard her tease him. "This study is no longer suitable for accommodation. Unless, you want to sleep in the same room as me?"

Chu Liuyue grunted. She completely turned a deaf ear to Rong Xiu's teasing. "You're free to go whenever you want, Your Highness. Suit yourself."

“I’ll come and visit you another day,” said Rong Xiu as he turned to leave.

Xue Xue looked at Chu Liuyue before reluctantly following after Rong Xiu hurriedly.

“Your Highness, there are puddles outside. You—” Chu Liuyue was just about to remind him when her eyes suddenly widened.

Rong Xiu stepped on the water surface like a light feather falling down without getting his foot dirty at all.

Upon closer inspection, she could see that there was a narrow gap between the bottom of his foot and the water surface.

He is walking on air! Only a stage-five warrior and stronger can do this! Chu Liuyue was stunned when she saw this scene.

Rong Xiu was only around 16 or 17 this year, but his capabilities had already reached such a shocking level.

Weaking? Everyone has underestimated this mysterious Prince Li. Chu Liuyue had never underestimated Rong Xiu, but she did not expect him to be a stage-five warrior at least.

His talent was considered outstanding, even in Tianling Dynasty.

Just when Chu Liuyue was shocked speechless, the man and the fiend had already disappeared into the night sky.

...

Chu Liuyue returned to her own bedroom in the latter half of the night.

When Chu Liuyue saw the black cloak by the bed, she suddenly realized that Rong Xiu had forgotten to take it away.

Chu Liuyue frowned in contempt but still kept the cloak in the end. She even planned on finding some time to return it to him.

She quickly fell into a deep slumber after she lay down, largely because of the many happenings in the day.

...

After Rong Xiu left the mansion, he walked on the marble path and turned around the corner.

Right after, someone hurriedly went forward and said, "Greetings, Master!"

It was Yan Qing.

"What happened?" asked Rong Xiu lightly.

“Master, Chuan Qiong just sent us some news saying that Jiuyou Tower has strange movements,” said Yan Qing while panting and wiping off the beads of sweat on his forehead.

If it were not something urgent, Yan Qing wouldn’t have dared to contact his master at this time. However, this matter could not be delayed.

Chuan Qiong was a teacher at Tian Lu Academy. Even though he was very experienced, he usually kept a low profile. Nobody knew he worked for Rong Xiu.

Tian Lu Academy had an extraordinary status. Even the royal family did not dare to mess with them. Nobody would expect that Rong Xiu—who had been out of the city for many years—had actually planted a spy in Tian Lu Academy a long time ago.

Chuan Qiong had been in the academy for many years and never contacted them before. This was the first time.

Thus, how would Yan Qing dare to take it slow? He hurriedly rushed over anxiously. Now, he could only secretly hope that he had not disturbed his master.

“Mm,” said Rong Xiu coldly and nodded; he did not look surprised. “Let him continue observing it.”

Yan Qing was shocked. “Master, y-you already guessed this would happen?”

Jiuyou Tower is an important place in Tian Lu Academy. How did Master predict that it would have some strange movements today? Actually, how did he even arrange for Chuan Qiong to be there much earlier on...?

Xue Xue yawned at the side as if it was frustrated.

Rong Xiu took a look at Xue Xue and suddenly asked, "What has the Fourth Princess been up to lately?"

Yan Qing said hurriedly, "Fourth Princess has been making a fuss lately about going to the hunting ground. She is even willing to pay an extravagant amount to do so. I heard that she asked several aristocratic children to come along to hunt for high-level fiends. They're going there tomorrow."

Rong Xiu replied with an "Mm" and glanced at Xue Xue. "You must let Fourth Princess have a good time."

Xue Xue licked its paws, and its icy blue eyes sparkled coldly.

"Master, your cloak..." Master always wears a cloak when he goes out. Why is it missing?

Rong Xiu turned around, and the dark night sky blurred the outlines of the dark-green house. "I'll come back and take it tomorrow."

Chapter 80: Wait

The next morning.

After Chu Liuyue woke up, she realized that Chu Ning had returned home and even prepared breakfast as he waited for her to join him in the living room.

Chu Ning knew about this place since Chu Liuyue had already told him about moving to a new residence earlier on.

“Father, why are you back so early? Didn’t the Emperor say that he wanted to talk to you throughout the night? Did you come right back home after it ended?”

Chu Ning looked at her dotingly. “Hurry up, come here and eat. I actually came back at midnight. However, I saw you asleep, so I didn’t wake you up.”

Chu Liuyue sat down beside him and could not help but tease when she saw the piping hot breakfast. “Dad, you’re already the imperial guards’ Commander in Chief. This meal is so precious!”

Chu Ning raised his hand, seeming like he wanted to pat her head. However, he paused in his actions, retracted his hand, and sighed. “You’re the most precious person to me. Yesterday was the day you reached marriageable age, so I intended to come home right away after talking to the Emperor. However, I didn’t expect to talk to him for so long, and it even rained. That’s why I came home so late.”

Chu Liuyue’s heart felt warm. “Father, you already made longevity noodles for me yesterday. That was enough.”

Chu Ning shook his head, looking regretful and apologetic. "It's a pity I can't hold a grand banquet for you."

"Father, you becoming the imperial guards' Commander in Chief is already the best gift to me. Besides, I'm more than happy because you allowed me to sever ties with the Chu family."

Chu Ning was different from her as he had feelings for the Chu family. However, when he heard her say that, he agreed after keeping silent for a while.

"In the past, we were in a very difficult position. Leaving the Chu family would only make it worse, but everything is different now. We don't need to stay there anymore." Chu Ning smiled, and his face filled with pride. "However, I didn't realize that your Yuan meridian had recovered and that you also had so much Xuan Master talent. Don't worry. I've already asked my subordinates to send out the invitation cards. We'll hold a banquet at Ying Bin Restaurant this afternoon to celebrate."

It was more than simple for him to do such things. After all, his current identity was different; he had also recovered his previous connections and resources.

"Yue'er, how many tables do you think we should have? I told Zhao Ming to book ten tables. Will that be enough?"

Chu Liuyue held up a bowl of porridge. "You can decide."

"Then, we'll have ten tables first. We can add more if they aren't enough."

At this moment, a man wearing imperial guard armor walked in through the door. "Greetings, Commander."

“Zhao Ming, have you settled the matter with Ying Bin Restaurant?” asked Chu Ning while smiling.

Zhao Ming seemed hesitant. “Commander, Ying Bin Restaurant said that they are fully booked today and can’t hold another banquet...”

Chu Ning’s smile faded. “We can just change to another restaurant then. Chun Xing Restaurant is not bad.”

Zhao Ming’s head hung even lower. “Commander, I have already asked Chun Xing Restaurant, and they said that they are also fully booked today. All the famous restaurants in the Imperial City said they are fully booked...”

Chu Ning already realized something. “So, all of them are not willing to let us hold a banquet?”

Zhao Ming did not dare to speak. It wasn’t only these famous restaurants; he had even gone to ask the average ones as well.

Initially, they were all very polite when they heard that Zhao Ming wanted to hold a banquet. However, once they heard that the hosts were Chu Ning and Chu Liuyue, they rejected him and avoided him like he was a scorpion.

Everybody’s reactions were very similar, as if they had discussed it in advance.

Chu Ning’s face turned cold, and he gradually clenched his fists. *The Chu family is obviously stirring up trouble. They are purposely humiliating us.*

...

The Chu family estate.

“My pitiful Minmin! Chu Liuyue is too cruel to hurt you to this state.” Lu Yao almost fainted when she saw Chu Xianmin’s appearance when Chu Xianmin returned home the previous day.

Even after a night, she still trembled in anger when she talked about this.

Chu Xianmin lay on the bed hopelessly, her face as white as a sheet. Her entire person looked much frailer than before.

Shattered glass pieces from a mirror were scattered beside her bed.

Her eyes did not focus as she kept muttering, “My face... My face...”

She started crying again when she talked about it. “Mother, my face is ruined! The Crown Prince won’t want me anymore! It’s all Chu Liuyue’s fault! That b*tch deserves to die!”

Lu Yao went forward and hugged Chu Xianmin dotingly as she ground her teeth. “Minmin, your face will get better. I’ll definitely help you. I won’t let Chu Liuyue off the hook.”

Chu Yan—who had a darkened face since the start—finally shouted in frustration. “That’s enough. What’s the point of crying? Your face doesn’t amount to anything. The point is that she crushed your talent.”

Chu Xianmin trembled, and her tears dropped even quicker.

Chu Xianmin was still his daughter in the end, so Chu Yan held himself back and suppressed the anger in his heart. He then said, “Don’t worry, I’ll take revenge for you. Neither Chu Liuyue nor Chu Ning can play any tricks this time round. Weren’t they very happy yesterday and even said they wanted to hold a banquet to celebrate? I want to see which restaurant will dare to go against the Chu family and allow them to host a banquet. With no backing, it won’t be easy for them to make a name out of themselves in the Imperial City.”

Chu Xianmin clutched the corner of her sleeves in indignance. “However, Chu Ning is already the imperial guards’ Commander in Chief, and Chu Liuyue became a genius. Even if they can’t hold this banquet, next time—”

Lu Yao sneered. “They might not even have a next time.”

...

“Father, don’t bother asking. All these restaurants in the Imperial City have clearly received some ‘hints.’ Even if they didn’t, a sensible person wouldn’t go against the Chu family.” Chu Liuyue finished her porridge calmly and wiped the corner of her mouth.

Chu Ning’s brows knitted tightly. He said that he wanted to hold a celebration for her, but he could not do it.

If word got out, he would become the Imperial City's laughingstock.

"Then, what should we do now?" Chu Ning was not willing to let his daughter suffer any more grievances. "If it really can't work, I'll go personally—" *I'm still the imperial guards' Commander in Chief. They can't possibly not give me any face.*

Chu Liuyue pressed his shoulders and shook her head. "Father, you don't need to show yourself. Everyone is watching us now. If you do this, everyone will think that we've lost at the start."

"Should we just let it go, then?"

"No, we need to wait."

"Wait?"

"The banquet isn't important. The important thing is the people attending it." Chu Liuyue looked up at the sky. "There are still three hours left to the stated time. Let's see if anyone will come."