

Noble Ruler 841

Chapter 841: You Don't Know How Much She Suffered

“What did you say?” Lan Xiao’s voice was filled with shock. “How can she not be the Princess anymore?”

Rong Xiu’s expression didn’t change, and his voice was clear. “If you don’t believe me, you can personally ask her or anyone from the Tianling Dynasty.”

Hearing that Rong Xiu’s tone didn’t sound like he was joking, Lan Xiao also noticed that something was wrong. *There is no need to lie about such things, and it must be true since Rong Xiu said it! Previously, we were just excited for Girlie to be back and didn’t ask her much.*

“What exactly is going on? Could it be because she lost her Tianjing Yuan meridian?”

Back then, that was indeed why she became the Princess. But if they remove her status as the Princess because of that... It doesn’t seem very appropriate, right? They really accumulated luck for thousands of years to produce a talent like her in the Tianling Dynasty. If they have brains, they definitely won’t do such a thing!

Rong Xiu looked down and hid the murderous intent in his eyes. His thick brows cast a light shadow below his eyes, and it made his surrounding aura much colder. “That’s because her status as Shangguan Yue is already dead.”

...

“Big Baby! Big Baby!”

Dugu Mobao was watching Chu Liuyue fighting with that puppet when he heard Lan Xiao's hurried voice.

He knitted his brows. "What's the matter?"

Lan Xiao always cares about his appearance a lot, including his voice. If it weren't because something major happened, he definitely wouldn't use such a tone.

Nervousness and anger—this made Dugu Mobao's heart jump as well.

Lan Xiao quickly returned, and his facial expression was terrible. Even when Girlie didn't return for a few years, he didn't reveal such an expression.

Lan Xiao closed his eyes and forced himself to calm down. "Where's Diwu? Get him to come back quickly!"

Dugu Mobao didn't understand what was going on as he knitted his brows and asked, "What exactly is going on? What happened?"

Lan Xiao didn't directly answer as he continued saying, "Let him come back first. I have something to say."

Dugu Mobao could only call Diwu Zhangze back as well.

“What’s the matter? I was just teaching those few dolls just fine...” said Diwu Zhangze, but his voice trailed off when he saw that the duo’s expressions weren’t right. *W-what’s going on?*

The three of them had known each other for many years, and they understood each other very well. Such an atmosphere was indeed too rare.

Something definitely happened!

Especially Lan Xiao, whose face looked like it had a layer of ice. This expression was normal on Big Baby’s face, but it was too strange on him.

Dugu Mobao said, “Now that everyone is here, can you say what exactly is going on?”

Lan Xiao raised his chin and first said to Diwu Zhangze, “Look after Big Baby first.”

The two of them exchanged glances and were confused. “What exactly is—”

“Do you know why Yue’er Girlie changed her body?”

The two of them knitted their brows. They always thought that it was related to her loss of memory, so they had never asked.

Lan Xiao took a deep breath in and said every single word clearly. “It is because Girlie previously burned herself to death—those scum from the Tianling Dynasty coveted her throne and rebelled against her!

While Yue'er Girlie lost her memory, they pushed her to her death! And she really isn't Shangguan Yue now, but... Chu Liuyue!"

When she previously called herself Chu Liuyue, they didn't care much about it and thought that she didn't say her real name as she was being guarded. Who knew this had happened!?

This piece of news was indeed too shocking, causing Dugu Mobao and Diwu Zhangze not to react in a short time.

"W-what did you say?"

That Girlie is so smart and witty, and she's very strong. In the Tianling Dynasty, she's almost under one person but above millions. How can...

Even though the Dahuang Swamp they were in was also considered as the Tianling Dynasty's territory, the few of them didn't actually care about the Tianling Dynasty. This was also why they didn't really notice much of the situation there and were ignorant about all of this.

Besides, in their eyes, only Girlie could bully the others. Who could possibly set her up to her death?

Dugu Mobao suddenly asked, "Continue speaking. Who harmed her?"

He was expressionless, and his tone was very calm, but Diwu Zhangze and Lan Xiao's hearts went cold. *His behavior is too terrifying...*

"Big Baby... Calm down first..." advised Lan Xiao.

“I’m very calm.” Dugu Mobao interrupted him. “I’m asking you again: Who are they?”

...

Xi Ling.

There were only four days left until the wedding between the Third Princess—Shangguan Wan—and Jiang Yucheng.

On this day, Xiahou Yushu also went to the Jiang Residence to pass them the bridal gifts.

They originally didn’t plan on doing it so early. After all, nobody wanted it to coincide with Shangguan Wan and Jiang Yucheng’s big day. However, the Jiang family requested them to send the bridal gifts first and would settle the wedding between Xiahou Yushu and Jiang Yuzhi after the other two matters were done.

The Xiahou family then acted according to their wishes.

Xiahou Rong also followed him.

Logically speaking, he didn’t need to be around. But he knew that Jiang Yucheng wanted the Nine Clouds Yuan Recovery Pill, so he could only bring the item over personally.

Doing this was for safety and also to show that the Xiahou Residence thought highly of this marriage.

The carts of gifts were all sent to the Jiang Residence.

In the living room, the two families sat together, looking very happy and harmonious.

After talking for a while, Xiahou Rong said that he had some things to discuss with Jiang Yucheng in private.

The crowd thought that the two of them were going to discuss imperial court matters, so they let them go to the study.

After entering the study, Xiahou Rong took out the black wooden box and passed it over. "The item is inside. Eldest Young Master, I hope you will stand by our previous agreement."

Jiang Yucheng's lips curled up into a smile as he took the item. "Of course—"

Suddenly, his expression changed. "Someone touched this before?!"

Chapter 842: Search

Xiahou Rong was confused. "What?"

He hurriedly glanced at the dull wooden box, knitted his brows, and said very surely, "Impossible! I've been taking care of this very carefully. Nobody touched it!"

Jiang Yucheng's expression turned ice-cold, and his surrounding aura turned sinister. "The seal on this item has clearly been touched before. I personally passed it to you back then. Do you think I won't know what it looked like back then?"

Xiahou Rong was stumped.

"What about the key?" Jiang Yucheng stretched out his hand.

Xiahou Rong was very indignant and threw the key over, his expression rather ugly. "Eldest Young Master, I won't go back on my words since I agreed to return the item to you. If you want to look at it, just do it!"

Back then, Jiang Yucheng personally promised to hand him the Nine Clouds Yuan Recovery Pill as a reward. But now, the former wanted it back before he could even use it.

Xiahou Rong had words of displeasure about it and was very upset with Jiang Yucheng in his heart. Hence, he was talking very rudely as well.

Jiang Yucheng took the key and ignored him as he directly opened the black wooden box.

Ka.

The wooden box opened with the sound—it was empty!

Jiang Yucheng's face immediately darkened as he sneered and glanced at Xiahou Rong. "Officer Xiahou, what do you say about this?"

Xiahou Rong widened his eyes in shock as he stared at the empty wooden box with a deadly gaze. "How is this possible? How is this possible?! I clearly took great care of it! Why is it missing?"

Jiang Yucheng threw the black wooden box to Xiahou Rong, and it dropped to the ground and let out a low sound. "You can see for yourself if it's true or false."

Xiahou Rong didn't care too much as he directly picked up the black wooden box and took a closer look. When he flipped it around to check and confirmed that there was nothing inside, his face flushed white. Tiny beads of sweat immediately covered his forehead as his lips trembled slightly.

The black wooden box in his hands instantly became a hot potato!

Xiahou Rong couldn't hold it or throw it as his facial expression changed incredulously.

Jiang Yucheng stared at him coldly, and his eyes turned sinister.

The next moment, Xiahou Rong finally recovered his senses and hurriedly looked up. "I don't know! I really don't know!"

Ever since I received this item, I've been taking care of it meticulously. Why would it suddenly disappear?

Jiang Yucheng pulled at his lips without much smiling intent. “Then, do you mean that the item inside ran off?”

Xiahou Rong started recalling rapidly as countless scenes flashed across his mind. “N-no...”

I personally went to the study to retrieve this item, and there was nothing strange during the entire process. I didn't see any traces of someone touching it! This also means that the other party must've silently taken the item away! The one who can do this... Hang on!

Xiahou Rong's facial expression immediately changed. *There are only a few people who know about these things so clearly, especially the ones who know how to find it and take it away...*

“It seems like you already know who did it, Officer Xiahou?” Jiang Yucheng spoke lightly, and his gaze was filled with mockery.

Xiahou Rong's lips moved as he muttered in disbelief, “Impossible... That's impossible...”

“I've always trusted your character, Officer Xiahou. This time, I'll just take it as you failing to safeguard it. If you can find the person in one day and bring the Nine Clouds Yuan Recovery Pill back in one piece, I'll forget about this incident and treat it like it never happened. What do you think?”

Jiang Yucheng looked down and turned the ring in his hands as he slowly said, “As for the person who did this, I'll have to trouble you to deal with him, Officer Xiahou. After all, the fewer people who know about this, the better. I'm also doing this for your reputation. What do you think?”

He felt that he was already very kind by handling the matter in this way.

But to Xiahou Rong, this was undoubtedly an extremely difficult issue. This was because... The person who did it was most likely his second son, Xiahou Tingan!

Xiahou Rong kept quiet for quite some time before he swallowed his saliva with much difficulty and said, "Eldest Young Master, c-could you spare that person's life if we find them?"

Jiang Yucheng looked up and glanced at him nonchalantly. Seeing Xiahou Rong's nervous look, he suddenly laughed. "It seems like my guess was right—Xiahou Tingan did do it. I didn't expect his guts to grow so much and for him to do such a thing."

Xiahou Rong's hands trembled. "T-this hasn't been concluded yet. It might even be someone else... You also know that I just chased him out of the house a while back. I'm afraid he hasn't even recovered from his injuries yet. Why would he..."

His voice became increasingly quiet. Honestly, even he didn't believe his own words.

To be able to sneak into the Xiahou Residence successfully, silently enter the barrier outside the study, smoothly find the key to open the wooden box, and take the item away... Other than Xiahou Rong himself, only Xiahou Tingan could break these layers of defensive barriers.

Jiang Yucheng looked at Xiahou Rong as if he were looking at a joke. "It's a pity for all the parents in the world. Officer Xiahou, you're here begging for mercy for him and want to protect him no matter what, but it's a pity that he doesn't even care about you as a father. If he considered you or the entire Xiahou family, he definitely wouldn't do such a thing."

Jiang Yucheng's words were like knives that kept stabbing into Xiahou Rong's heart.

He closed his eyes, suppressed his emotions, and cupped his fists. “Eldest Young Master, don’t worry. I’ll definitely send the item back in perfect condition! If that rebel really did it... I hope you’ll let him off for my sake!”

Xiahou Rong had never used such a humble tone to beg someone before. Even to obtain the Nine Clouds Yuan Recovery Pill back then, he had a bidirectional discussion with Jiang Yucheng.

It was the first time he begged like this.

After pausing for a long time, Jiang Yucheng finally nodded. “Okay.”

...

After Xiahou Rong went out, he left with Xiahou Yushu and the rest very quickly.

Other than him and Jiang Yucheng, nobody else knew what the duo talked about in the study. Almost everyone thought that the marriage was settled easily and smoothly. After the wedding, the two aristocratic families could merge and join!

Back at the residence, Xiahou Rong ordered his subordinates to bring Xiahou Tingan back.

The entire Xiahou Residence was shocked. *He was just evicted. Why does Xiahou Rong want him back so quickly? However... Xiahou Tingan is his biological son after all, and he’s the one Xiahou Rong doted on the most for so many years. It’s normal for him to feel reluctant.*

Very quickly, news came back. It was said that Xiahou Tingan had been staying with that lady from Chun Feng Restaurant.

When Xiahou Rong heard this, he was enraged and immediately went forward personally.

Chapter 843: Know Too Much

When Xiahou Rong came to the door, it was evening. Xiahou Tingan was eating with Xiao Die.

Perhaps because she was from Chun Feng Restaurant, but Xiao Die wasn't good at cooking. The food she made was hard to swallow.

Xiahou Tingan was born with a silver spoon in his mouth and used and ate the best. How could he be used to all of this?

In the beginning, he could still bring Xiao Die to the restaurants outside. But after some time, he didn't have much money with him.

One had to know that when he left the Xiahou Residence, he left with dignity and didn't bring a single item with him.

And all the money inside the Cosmic Ring that he previously gave Xiao Die was used to redeem her from the brothel, so there wasn't much left.

They had already lived humbly for many days.

Xiahou Tingan was originally very uncomfortable in all sorts of areas. In addition to the Nine Clouds Yuan Recovery Pill being stolen, he had been very uneasy and anxious during this period.

He had no energy during the day and couldn't sleep at night. Even if he fell asleep occasionally, he would have constant nightmares.

After much struggle, he became much thinner.

Xiahou Tingan started to regret faintly. Even though this place was clean and tidy, it couldn't be compared to the Xiahou Residence. There was also nobody around to serve him.

He was used to the extravagant lifestyle, so it was even worse than killing him for him to experience the commoner's life.

Actually, Xiahou Tingan also thought of going back to admit his mistakes. But on the one hand, he couldn't bring himself to do so and was afraid that he would suffer all sorts of mockery when he went back. On the other hand, he was also afraid that the Nine Clouds Yuan Recovery Pill's disappearance would be exposed.

Rather than that, it would be better for him to just live like this.

However, this peace was quickly broken!

Boom!

After hearing the sound of the door being kicked open, Xiahou Tingan and Xiao Die were collectively stunned.

The duo exchanged glances and heard Xiahou Rong's enraged voice from outside. "Rascal! Come out now!"

Xiahou Tingan's heart skipped a beat. *The matter regarding the Nine Clouds Yuan Recovery Pill going missing must've been discovered!*

He immediately stood up in panic and wanted to escape instinctively.

Xiao Die looked at him in a daze. "Second Young Master, is the person outside... Officer Xiahou? He seems to be here to look for you..."

"Just say that I'm not here!" Xiahou Tingan hurriedly threw a sentence behind and was about to jump down from the window.

But a rope tangled around his waist before he could move, and Xiahou Rong pulled with all his might.

Xiahou Tingan instantly fell backward!

Boom!

He slammed harshly in front of Xiahou Rong.

“Second Young Master—” Seeing this scene, Xiao Die yelled out in panic as she clutched the door tightly and looked very worried.

Xiahou Rong glanced at her with an extremely cold gaze. *This lady looks like she’s around 15 or 16, and she has a natural look that is very charming and will look even more pitiable when she cries. She’s greatly different from Jiang Yuzhi’s arrogant manner. No wonder this rascal would do this!*

“Get lost!” hollered Xiahou Rong. “Don’t let me see you in Xi Ling ever again!”

Xiao Die shuddered, and tears fell like the rain as she glanced at Xiahou Tingan reluctantly. “I-I can leave, b-but... Please, don’t hurt Second Young Master. It’s all my fault...”

Xiahou Rong knitted his brows, and his surrounding aura became colder.

Horror flashed across Xiao Die’s face as she hurriedly bid farewell to Xiahou Tingan and ran away while crying.

This father-son duo was left alone in the yard.

Xiahou Rong directly dragged his son into the room and looked down at him from above solemnly.

“Father...” Xiahou Tingan was slightly more awakened. When he saw this setup, he vaguely guessed something in his heart and guiltily called out.

“Don’t call me!” Xiahou Rong interrupted him violently. “Answer me—where’s the Nine Clouds Yuan Recovery Pill?!”

Xiahou Tingan anxiously said, “Father, I don’t know! I really don’t know!”

Smack!

A resounding slap was heard.

Xiahou Tingan’s one slap directly caused Xiahou Tingan to hurl backward and collapse onto the floor.

“Answer me!”

Xiahou Tingan coughed and spat out a mouthful of blood.

Even two of his teeth had fallen out—this showed how much force Xiahou Rong had used!

“I-I really don’t know...” Xiahou Tingan also felt very aggrieved.

“Who else can silently steal the thing away other than you!?” Xiahou Rong clenched his teeth. “Did you find someone to help you!”

Thinking about it now, the item was most likely lost the night when someone overheard my conversation. The person who ran away might've even been used as a distraction to let this rascal steal the item more conveniently!

After knowing the incident was exposed, Xiahou Tingan couldn't deny it. *However... That item really isn't with me!*

"Father, please listen to me! I-I did intend to steal the Nine Clouds Yuan Recovery Pill that day, but the moment I opened the box, someone snatched it away from me. Even now, I still have no idea where it is!" Xiahou Tingan hurriedly explained the incident that day. "...If it's really with me, why haven't I used it yet? Father, I'm speaking the truth!"

Hearing Xiahou Tingan's explanation, Xiahou Rong's heart gradually turned cold. *If what he says is true, it means that someone purposely followed him when he barged into the study and took the chance to steal the item. The most terrifying thing is that Xiahou Tingan didn't see what the other party looked like, and there are no clues whatsoever! If we are to look for that person, would it not be akin to finding a needle in a haystack?! Jiang Yucheng wants the item sent back within a day in perfect condition!*

Xiahou Rong's vision turned black, and he almost collapsed to the floor.

"Father!" Seeing this, Xiahou Tingan hurriedly went to help him up but was pushed away.

"Rascal, do you know how much trouble you've caused!?"

If Jiang Yucheng knows that the Nine Clouds Yuan Recovery Pill has gone missing, our entire family won't be able to bear the consequences! I might not even be able to protect myself if word gets out, let alone protecting Xiahou Tingan! The Nine Clouds Yuan Recovery Pill is an heirloom of the Tianling royal family, and it would be a giant threat in whoever's hands it landed in. The other party had clearly caught onto us a long time ago, and they definitely wanted to use this Nine Clouds Yuan Recovery Pill—

Suddenly, a white light flashed across Xiahou Rong's mind. *In this world, who would be so stubborn about this item and even snatch it despite needing to use so much effort? One has to know that it was taken from the Princess two years ago!*

A ridiculous idea popped up in his mind, which made Xiahou Rong's body shake uncontrollably.

Xiahou Tingan saw his reaction from the side, and his heart hung high. *This seems... much more serious than I expected...*

But at this point, Xiahou Tingan still thought that his father was worried about Jiang Yucheng. An idea popped up in his mind as he leaned in nearer, lowered his voice, and said, "Father, aren't you just worried about Jiang Yucheng? Actually, you don't need to think so much. Jiang Yucheng also played a part in the Princess's incident back then, and he definitely can't escape it. With this trump card, he won't really dare to do anything to you!"

Xiahou Rong suddenly looked at his son and was shocked and enraged. "What else do you know?!"

Chapter 844: Celebration

Xiahou Tingan was taken aback by his reaction and instinctively moved backward, but his collar was pulled up.

"Speak! You heard everything that day, right?!" asked Xiahou Rong sharply.

"F-father... cough, cough!" Xiahou Tingan grabbed his hand and wanted to push it away as he coughed uncomfortably. "I-I just... heard a little... cough—"

But Xiahou Rong didn't believe his second son, and his face became super dark like it never had before.

Xiahou Tingan had never seen such an expression on his father, and he couldn't help but swallow his remaining words.

After some time, Xiahou Rong loosened his hands and stood up. "Follow me to the Jiang Residence. When we're there, you just need to tell Jiang Yucheng whatever you said before. You must never let him know what you eavesdropped, do you understand?"

Xiahou Tingan nodded in panic.

Xiahou Rong took a deep glance at him and sighed in his heart. *Very obviously, there are still people in Xi Ling City who want to investigate the truth behind the Princess's death. And these people could be in the imperial court, but they could also be amongst the commoners. There is also something else that I have to worry about... Those people might already be back!*

...

Red Moon Desert.

After countless tries, Chu Liuyue finally hit the puppet to the floor within 15 minutes!

Her entire body seemed to be covered in wounds, and there were still some bloodstains by the corner of her mouth, making her entire person look miserable.

She had been bitterly training for a month, and she felt like she had died quite a few times. Every time she thought that she couldn't continue, she relied on her stubbornness and barely made it past.

However, the effort she put in wasn't for naught! Other than her physical body becoming stronger and her attacks being improved, she surprisingly broke through and became an intermediate stage-six warrior when she fought with this puppet!

She had stayed in the Heaven-Wrecking Holy Seed's God Realm for a year and accumulated quite a bit of force. Adding on this period of time—where she crazily fought with these puppets and her combat power kept improving—it was very normal for her to ascend to the next grade.

"Big Baby, I won!" Chu Liuyue heavily sighed as she spoke elatedly.

Beside her, that peak stage-seven puppet had already been beaten up rotten.

But when she said this, nobody answered her.

The surroundings were silent.

Chu Liuyue was dazed for a moment and walked closer to the lake. "Big Baby?"

Then, Big Baby's voice sounded beside her ear. "We all saw it. You did very well."

After spending a long time here, Chu Liuyue became much more familiar with the few of them. *For some reason, Big Baby's tone sounds different at this moment...*

She blinked and tried to ask, "Big Baby, why do you seem unhappy?"

Actually, she shouldn't have said 'unhappy.' Instead, it seemed like he was suppressing some sort of anger.

Even though he talked very calmly, Chu Liuyue had this feeling for some reason. *Could it be... that someone offended him?*

"It's just some small matter. It's not important." Big Baby skipped past it and changed the topic. "You previously said that you wanted to make a trip back to Xi Ling after you won, right?"

Chu Liuyue nodded. *Counting the time, I should be able to make it if I go back now.*

"I'll send you guys back," said Big Baby calmly.

Chu Liuyue was first elated and then felt that something was wrong. She knitted her brows. "Big Baby, are you really okay?"

Big Baby didn't answer, and the yellow sand beneath Chu Liuyue's feet started moving suddenly!

The next moment, the scene in front of her changed!

She focused and surveyed her surroundings before realizing that Big Baby directly sent her back to the intersection between the three areas.

Then, she saw another figure coming over from the Red Moon Desert!

She said 'coming over,' but that figure was directly sent out.

"Aiyo, my waist—" Mu Hongyu held her waist and bared her teeth in pain. However, she only said half her sentence when she saw Chu Liuyue in front of her. "Liuyue?!"

She gasped in shock immediately! Then, she rushed toward her friend! "Ah!!! It's really you! That's great!"

She originally wanted to pounce directly over and hug her friend, but when she arrived right in front of Chu Liuyue, she then recalled that her face was covered in dust and stopped herself.

Chu Liuyue held her arm.

Mu Hongyu widened her eyes and saw that Chu Liuyue seemed to be injured. But the moment she was about to speak with heartache, she realized that the latter's bodily suppression seemed to be heavier than before! *She seems... much stronger!*

"Liuyue, did you break through to become an intermediate stage-six warrior?!" Mu Hongyu was thrilled.

After seeing Chu Liuyue smile and nod, she circled around her in shock a few times. “You’re amazing! How long has it been? Yet, you directly improved by two grades! Let me tell you—”

Boom!

A sound suddenly landed beside them—it was Ye Ranran.

“Aiyo—” She was still holding onto a cauldron tightly, afraid that it would break.

Chu Liuyue glanced at it from the corner of her eyes and actually saw a pile of pills in the cauldron. With a rough glance, there were all sorts of pills with varying standards.

Chu Liuyue’s eyelids twitched.

“Ranran!” Mu Hongyu hurriedly held her up.

Ye Ranran was still quite dazed. When she saw the duo’s faces, she looked surprised. Her chubby face seemed to become thinner as tears welled up in her eyes. “I-I finally found you!”

For some reason, someone kept pressing me to refine pills, and they had all sorts of rare ingredients. I was too exhausted, but I couldn’t bear to stop! In the end, I became this exhausted.

Then, Qiang Wanzhou, Qin Yi, and Lei Laosi all appeared gradually.

Chu Liuyue sensitively discovered that although they all looked tortured, everyone was much stronger than before.

Perhaps... Big Baby and the rest helped them too? Chu Liuyue felt a slight warmth in her heart. "We can talk when we go back. Let's go back to Xi Ling first!"

The few of them had no objections.

Qin Yi said, "Coincidentally, we're going back to Xi Ling too. Let's go together."

Chu Liuyue glanced at him and lightly nodded. "Okay."

Therefore, the few of them decided to go back together.

Mu Hongyu said, "I remember that we still have to go through a few transportation formations to go back..."

Before she could finish her sentence, a blue barrier enveloped the few of them.

An idea popped up in Chu Liuyue's mind. *This should be done by Big Baby...*

At this moment, Big Baby's voice sounded beside her ears. "Go back and do what you want."

Even though it was a very childish voice, it sounded stable and secure to Chu Liuyue. It was filled with comforting strength.

Chu Liuyue seemed to be more confident. She bowed toward Red Moon Desert and seriously said, "Thank you, Seniors."

Then, the blue barrier glistened.

The few people's figures immediately disappeared from the spot.

...

On the streets of Xi Ling, there were decorations everywhere, and it was very crowded. This was because the Third Princess's wedding would be held in three days, which was also her coronation ceremony. Hence, the entire Xi Ling was celebrating for ten days—from three days before the wedding to seven days after.

In the Jiang Residence, the lights shone brightly.

Hearing the commotion outside, an idea popped up in Jiang Yucheng's mind. "Let's go out and walk."

Chapter 845: Ah Yue

The entire Jiang Residence was decorated and was filled with a celebratory mood.

Jiang Yucheng walked to the door and stood with his hands behind his back. Even though he didn't look forward to this wedding much, he still felt something tingle in his heart when he saw this scene.

The same scene also appeared here two years ago.

At one moment, he almost thought that he had returned to that time.

"Eldest Young Master." Sun Qi walked forward and looked at him solemnly. "Do you have any instructions for me?"

Jiang Yucheng recovered his senses and shook his head. "I'm just going to take a casual walk. You don't have to follow me."

"Yes." Sun Qi hurriedly acknowledged the words.

Jiang Yucheng raised his legs and walked forward, but the moment he took two steps, he heard hushed whispers from the side.

"Hey, how much do you think the Eldest Young Master will reward us this time? Will it be as much as before? At that time, even the lowliest subordinate in our residence was given 100 white crystals. The superior ones even had red packets worth thousands of white crystals!"

"I don't think it's possible... After all, it was the wedding with the Princess back then. Even though the Third Princess's identity is also distinguished, she's still a little weaker compared to the Princess... I think that it'll be good if we even have two-thirds!"

“Hah, you’re really positive. I don’t think it’ll be that good. Can’t you tell that our Eldest Young Master’s reaction this time is different from before? The wedding is in three days, but I haven’t even seen Eldest Young Master smile during this period. I’m afraid we won’t even get half of what we did!”

“Touch wood! Don’t say such negative words! The wedding between Eldest Young Master and the Third Princess is a happy event! You don’t even see Eldest Young Master once in a few days, so how would you know if he didn’t smile?”

“Hmph, you don’t know about this, right? When Officer Yuwen from the Ceremonial Department brought people over that day to discuss with Eldest Young Master about the wedding affairs, Eldest Young Master directly let Officer Yuwen take charge himself... I remember that Eldest Young Master had even picked the cutlery and tea sets on his own for the previous wedding...”

Though the few of them were speaking softly, strong warriors like Jiang Yucheng could hear them crystal clear.

Sun Qi heard it too, and he secretly cursed in his heart as he hurriedly went forward. “Eldest Young Master, do you want me to teach them a lesson—”

“No need.” Jiang Yucheng knitted his brows as if he were thinking about something and said after a moment, “Just reward them with half of what we gave the last time.”

Sun Qi hurriedly bowed. “Yes!”

Jiang Yucheng didn’t stop. After he said this, he walked outside.

Sun Qi was dazed as he looked at Jiang Yucheng's back view, not understanding what was going on. *According to Eldest Young Master's temper, he definitely wouldn't let them off when he heard these words, especially since it even implicated the Princess...*

Even Sun Qi didn't dare to casually mention this in front of Jiang Yucheng.

After thinking for a while, he couldn't figure out why, so he just gave up.

He called his subordinates over and passed on Jiang Yucheng's order before bringing people to follow him in secret.

After Jiang Yucheng left, he casually found an isolated corner and changed into a mask. When he walked out, he became an ordinary-looking young master.

...

The streets were bustling. Even though quite a few clans were still scarred by the missing disciples, this didn't have much to do with the majority of the people in Xi Ling City.

The Third Princess's wedding gave out quite a few benefits. They didn't even have enough time to be happy, so why would they care about anything else?

Jiang Yucheng walked alone on the streets.

At this point, nobody recognized him, and all treated him like a commoner. They wouldn't even give him an extra gaze.

Jiang Yucheng walked on aimlessly.

The scene in front of him was very similar to two years ago, but his feelings were completely different.

Recalling the servants' earlier discussion, he smiled at himself mockingly. *It's indeed different. At that time, I spent all my effort preparing everything, wanting everything to be perfect. Now, I don't have this energy and will be tired if I hear more than two sentences. If it weren't for those people's reminders, I would even forget about giving out monetary rewards.*

But actually, he only willingly did this because he was happy back then. If it weren't because he was worried that Shangguan Wan would feel embarrassed, he would be too lazy to do it again.

Everyone around was elated and immersed in the commotion.

He was the only one who seemed like a stranger that couldn't fit in. Even if he was the one getting married, he didn't feel much about it until now.

Jiang Yucheng walked into a restaurant and went up to the second floor to get some alcohol for himself.

The smell of the alcohol was fresh, and it burned his throat when it entered.

Everything related to that person was stuck in his memory.

Jiang Yucheng was quite frustrated, and he wanted to throw all of these memories away as he kept downing cup after cup.

But the more he drank, the hotter he felt, and the clearer he was.

Every single scene played in his mind in a more lively manner.

Her laughter, her cries, her happiness, and her sorrow.

He thought that as long as he did what he should do and became the top amongst these people, he would become her best choice. However, he didn't expect that everything was just his own wishful thinking.

He only found out at the end that the person he thought would always be high and mighty and always be a person that everyone could only look up to would one day have her eyes filled with stars because of one person.

After that, everything about her was unrelated to him. Even the wedding he spent so much effort preparing for was just a dream.

When she smiled, her eyes were clean and pure. But she was very quickly swallowed by a ball of fire, leaving behind that harsh gaze!

Jiang Yucheng suddenly woke up and stood up. Due to his sudden movements, the chair fell backward and let out a sound.

He harshly shook his head and realized that he seemed to have drunk too much as he settled the bill and went out.

It was time to go back.

The light wind blew over, and it woke Jiang Yucheng up quite a bit. The many emotions in his eyes gradually faded away like waves subsiding.

But just as he was about to turn and walk away, he saw a familiar figure far away. Then, he was suddenly dazed.

It was a woman in a red dress, and one could vaguely see her curves. Her hair was lush, adorned with only one extremely simple peach blossom hairpin.

She stood there quietly with her head slightly tilted, revealing her thin, white neck and her beautiful side view.

The surrounding lights shone brightly. When they shone on her face, it was like the snow in the night sky—pure and clean, with a tinge of cold elegance.

Jiang Yucheng's heart suddenly started beating wildly! *It's her!*

Almost uncontrollably, he quickly went forward and walked past the crowd with his eyes and heart filled with that one person.

The closer Jiang Yucheng got, the faster his heartbeat!

He stretched out to hold that woman's hands. "Ah Yue—"

Chapter 846: I'm Still Alive

That woman seemed to notice something as she turned around, and her breathtaking face entered his view.

Strangeness flashed across her eyes as her red lips curled up into a slight smile. "You are..."

Jiang Yucheng abruptly stopped his actions. Even though the woman in front looks extremely like her, it isn't her! Those eyes look like hers, but they're quite different. That person's eyes always had a tinge of gentleness and cunningness, but the person in front has clear, black gem-like eyes with a tinge of coldness. It's not her... It's not her!

Chu Liuyue looked down at his hand hovering in mid-air and raised her brows slightly. Even though he was wearing a mask, she still directly recognized Jiang Yucheng through his face shape, steps, and voice. *Those words... Did Jiang Yucheng take me as Shangguan Yue? I really haven't heard him call me this in such a long while. Pfft, how disgusting.*

"...Why is it you?" Jiang Yucheng stiffly retracted his hand and curled his fingers. Something seemed to be stuck in his throat as he dryly asked this with much difficulty.

Seeing Jiang Yucheng's shocked and disappointed gaze, Chu Liuyue blinked and smiled with even deeper meaning. *Hearing that voice seems to be filled with longing and elation... Those who didn't know would*

really think that he was devoted to her. And he still questioned me in such a manner? What a joke. Does Jiang Yucheng still wish to see Shangguan Yue again? Isn't he the one who pushed her to her death? What right does he have to talk to her like that?!

An idea popped up in Chu Liuyue's mind, but she didn't show it on her face as she smiled slightly and said, "Young Master, I think you recognized the wrong person. I came here with my friend, and they went in to buy some things, so I'm waiting for them here."

In actual fact, they only reached Xi Ling an hour ago.

She originally wanted to go straight back to Chong Xu Cabinet, but Mu Hongyu said that they were in a sorry state and that if they went back like this, they would definitely make people very worried. No matter what, they had to tidy themselves up first.

Actually, it wasn't only Mu Hongyu. The others, including Chu Liuyue, also looked terrible.

They had stayed in the Red Moon Desert for such a long time after all. With yellow sand filling the place and with the hot sun shining brightly, the few of them stank.

Chu Liuyue also didn't want to go back in such a sorry state, so they thought of a plan and went to a guest inn to tidy themselves up.

As there was still a small bruise on Chu Liuyue's head, Ye Ranran decided to directly apply a layer of thin powder for her and tidy herself up.

Chu Liuyue rarely dolled herself up, but seeing that Ye Ranran insisted, she let her be. In between, she recalled that Rong Xiu had given her a peach blossom hairpin, but she didn't wear it properly. Hence, she took it out to use.

Originally, she wanted to tidy herself up properly to go back, but she didn't expect to meet Jiang Yucheng while Mu Hongyu and the rest were buying items.

How unlucky. Chu Liuyue quietly sighed in her heart, and her good mood suddenly became non-existent.

At this point, Jiang Yucheng gradually recovered his senses. Chu Liuyue... Chu Liuyue! Didn't she already—

He suddenly widened his eyes and stared at Chu Liuyue in disbelief. "Y-you're still alive?"

Chu Liuyue squinted her eyes, slightly raised her chin, stared into Jiang Yucheng's eyes, and laughed lightly. "Young Master, you must be joking. I'm standing here in one piece. Of course, I'm still alive."

Jiang Yucheng was dazed for a moment. *This expression and this gaze—it really is like that person talking.*

His alcohol kicked in, and his brain expanded as he looked at the woman in front and muttered, "...Good that you're alive... Good... I-I really..."

Firstly, he acted as if a huge burden was relieved. Then, he suddenly thought of something, and his expression changed greatly. "N-no..."

The thick alcohol smell came over.

Chu Liuyue silently took a step back, but her eyes were still tightly glued to him. *Jiang Yucheng's reaction is indeed weird.*

"Liuyue!" At this point, Mu Hongyu's clear voice sounded from the side.

Chu Liuyue turned around and saw Mu Hongyu and Ye Ranran rushing over.

The two of them were originally elated; then, they saw the unfamiliar young man standing beside her. *The way he's looking at Chu Liuyue is indeed weird.*

Mu Hongyu knitted her brows and immediately went forward to pull Chu Liuyue over. She silently stood in front and blocked Jiang Yucheng's vision.

"Liuyue, who is this?" asked Mu Hongyu alertly. *He's filled with a drunken odor. Did he come here to hit Liuyue up because she's pretty? He's clearly not a good person!*

Chu Liuyue lightly laughed. "I don't know him. I think he recognized the wrong person."

This finally woke Jiang Yucheng up. He closed his eyes and recalled that he was using someone else's face, so it was natural for them to be this alert.

But it's good that this is the case. If not... He glanced at Chu Liuyue calmly before turning around to leave.

“Hey... What’s wrong with this person?” Mu Hongyu knitted her brows even more tightly. “Does he not know how to even apologize?”

He doesn't seem like an ordinary person, but why was he not brought up well?

Chu Liuyue held her wrist and shook her head slightly. “Forget it. What’s the point of calculating it against such a person? Where’s Little Zhou and the rest?”

Ye Ranran softly said, “Big Brother Qin said that they wanted to tidy him up, so they should be out soon, right?”

Chu Liuyue held her head. *The few big men actually took a longer time than us. I really admire them.*

Thinking of Little Zhou’s ice-cold face, Chu Liuyue felt her head ache. *I think only Qin Yi and the rest can control him...*

Ye Ranran looked at her surroundings and sighed. “Xi Ling hasn’t been this crowded in two years. Last time...”

When she spoke of this, her gaze darkened.

Mu Hongyu was about to ask why when she suddenly recalled something and fell silent. *It should be related to that Princess...*

“What a pity...” muttered Mu Hongyu.

Originally, she still admired that Princess very much. But now that she finally arrived at Xi Ling with much difficulty, that person was no longer around.

Chu Liuyue smiled slightly and said with deep meaning, “What’s there to feel pity about? We managed to rush here in time for the Third Princess and Eldest Young Master Jiang’s wedding. I believe it’ll be very crowded by then.”

Chapter 847: Drunk

The moment she said it, they heard a few familiar footsteps from behind.

Chu Liuyue turned around and saw Qin Yi and Lei Laosi walking at the front.

“We’re back!” Lei Laosi yelled to the few of them excitedly.

Qiang Wanzhou was following behind the two of them.

Chu Liuyue’s eyes lit up, and her lips curled up into a smile.

Qiang Wanzhou had changed into a moon-white robe with a white jade belt around his waist, which easily outlined his young and handsome stature. His soft golden hair exuded a faint light under the

candle fire, and a few strands of hair dropped down, covering his sharp eyes. This caused his surrounding aura to be much gentler.

His nose was straight, and his lips were as red as a rose. His intricately carved chin was a little round, but he still looked very youthful.

In the past, Qiang Wanzhou always wore his torn and tattered clothes, and his skinny body swung around emptily within. He looked very wild, like a lone wolf moving around. Even after he entered Chong Xu Cabinet and followed Chu Liuyue, he was still like a gray shadow.

This was the first time Chu Liuyue saw him like this, and she couldn't help but exclaim. *Indeed, a good-looking person will definitely look amazing as long as you tidy them up. At first glance, I would really think that he's a distinguished young master from some aristocratic family.*

Mu Hongyu and Ye Ranran also sized Qiang Wanzhou up in shock and surprise as if they had never seen him before.

As if noticing their gazes, Qiang Wanzhou's entire body stiffened. He didn't know where to place his hands and legs as he quickly glanced at Chu Liuyue and became even more nervous when he saw her smiling happily at him.

After momentary embarrassment, he turned around and planned to go back. "Let me go back and change."

I really feel extremely uncomfortable in this!

“Hey—” Chu Liuyue pulled him back and couldn’t help but laugh in her heart when she saw his face of rejection and embarrassment.

But since he was already this awkward, she naturally couldn’t add oil to the fire. Hence, she lightly patted his shoulders and seriously said, “Little Zhou, you look good like this.”

Qiang Wanzhou was dazed for a moment and looked at her doubtfully. “Really?”

Chu Liuyue’s eyes and brows all seemed to have smiles. “Really.”

In the past, he was always alone. In order to survive, he fought with groups after groups of beasts for resources and had a wild nature. However, it was different now.

He had her and so many others. He would no longer have no place to stay in the future and would no longer be lonely without any dependence.

Looking into that pair of black, gem-like eyes, Qiang Wanzhou’s uneasy heart gradually calmed down.

“Hehe, I knew this will definitely incur her—their pleasure!” Lei Laosi smiled delightfully at the side. At the start, this kid refused to cooperate no matter what, and I spent a long time convincing him. In the end, I had to bring up Her Highness to finally make him do it. Look! This is what a normal youngster should look like!

He long wanted to say that Qiang Wanzhou’s usually dirty and dusty appearance wasn’t enough.

Upon hearing this, Qiang Wanzhou's face—which was very white to the extent where it was almost transparent—started burning. He awkwardly turned around, but his ears were as red as a tomato.

Chu Liuyue secretly laughed in her heart. *This kid is like a porcupine. He looks like he's filled with thorns and is hard to approach, but in actual fact, his heart is very soft. His skin is also extremely thin. He will easily blush after being teased for a few sentences. But...*

She raised her brows slightly and glanced at Lei Laosi. *Does this person want Qiang Wanzhou to replace him temporarily because he can no longer see people with his real appearance? After all, he was indeed a young and fine gentleman back then. Yet, he needs to act like this burly character now...*

Seeing that Qiang Wanzhou was about to become cooked, Chu Liuyue finally spoke kindly. "Since we're all here, let's get on our way then! Mentor and the rest must be anxious from waiting!"

Chu Liuyue spoke as she looked at the Qin Yi duo. "Then... We'll bid farewell here."

Qin Yi lightly nodded. "Since we're already at Xi Ling, we won't send you any further. Four and I will stay at that inn. If there's anything you need help with, feel free to look for us."

Chu Liuyue calmly said, "Okay!"

...

After seeing Chu Liuyue and the rest off until they couldn't see their figures, the smile on Lei Laosi's face then gradually faded as he looked in a direction alertly. "Big Brother, that man just now..."

Qin Yi smiled. "It's him."

Fire burned in Lei Laosi's eyes. "Pfft! How shameless!"

They were previously a distance away, so they couldn't see the situation here clearly. They only vaguely saw a man speaking to Her Highness for a while before leaving. However, they were extremely familiar with that person's aura. Even if he turned into dust, they could still clearly recognize him!

God knows what he said to Her Highness!

"Then, should we follow them and take a look?" asked Lei Laosi softly.

Qin Yi paused for a moment and shook his head. "No need."

"Why?" Lei Laosi found it weird.

Qin Yi's eyes sparkled. "It's naturally because... someone is already doing it."

"What?" Lei Laosi was a little confused, and he suddenly thought of something the next moment. "Could it be Seven?"

Previously, Her Highness had mentioned that Qi Han came back with her.

The two of us used a special Yuan instrument to hide our auras, and Qi Han seems to have used Xiao Ba's medicine...

“Even though Seven is good at this, someone seems to have superseded his master.” Qin Yi revealed a meaningful smile. “I didn’t expect him to change so much in just two years...”

Lei Laosi was still confused. *Does Big Brother mean that... someone else is secretly following Jiang Yucheng? But who else could it be other than Seven—*

“Let’s go. I think Seven still doesn’t know that we’re back,” said Qin Yi as he moved forward.

Lei Laosi hurriedly followed. As he walked, he thought to himself, *Could it be that other than Qi Han and us, the other Thirteen Yue Guards have already come back to Xi Ling?*

...

Jiang Yucheng walked on the streets, and his mind was in a mess. The previous scene seemed to keep replaying in his head. *She's not her...*

He rubbed his glabella and wanted to throw away everything in his mind. But for some reason, the more he thought, the clearer it got.

The people were bustling on the streets.

That red woman stood there quietly and smiled when she turned around. That was—Chu Liuyue’s face!

For some reason, Jiang Yucheng felt faintly anxious. He stumbled forward and almost collapsed onto the ground.

“Eldest Young Master!” Sun Qi—who was following him in the dark—hurriedly went forward but was pushed aside by Jiang Yucheng.

“Eldest Young Master, you—” said Sun Qi rather worriedly. *I can count the number of times Eldest Young Master has gotten drunk with my hands, and the day hasn’t even come yet. So why—*

Jiang Yucheng closed his eyes. “Let’s go back!”

Chapter 848: Lively

Translator: Atlas Studios Editor: Atlas Studios

Chong Xu Cabinet.

Weichi Song took Qi Dahe’s pulse once more. Although the latter’s injuries hadn’t fully healed, his condition had more or less stabilized. The only thing was that his brain still wasn’t working well, so he spent most of the time living in a muddled state. Besides, he was now a mute, so he couldn’t talk at all.

Everyone at Chong Xu Cabinet couldn’t understand why Weichi Song insisted on putting Qi Dahe up, but they asked no questions and merely did as told dutifully.

Weichi Song took out a pill and fed it to Qi Dahe, feeling slightly relieved when he saw the latter whimper in bed as a hint of struggle showed in his eyes. The fact that he's having such a reaction proves that his condition is improving. If he fully recovers...

All of a sudden, he turned to look outside the door upon sensing something. That aura...

"What's wrong, Cabinet Master?" asked the two disciples next to him in confusion. Weichi Song, however, quickly stood up and left after telling them to take care of Qi Dahe.

It was evening right now, so most of the disciples in Chong Xu Cabinet had already gone back to rest. It was quiet as Weichi Song quickly headed forward.

It just so happened that Lu Zhiyao came out of the medicinal garden right then and ran into Weichi Song. Upon seeing how hurried the latter appeared, the former paid a bow and asked curiously, "Are you leaving the mountain, Cabinet Master?"

He found it strange that Weichi Song would leave the mountain at this hour.

Weichi Song didn't stop to chat with Lu Zhiyao, but he couldn't contain the glee and excitement within himself. "No, I'm going to fetch Liuyue and the others! They're back!"

"Who are they that require you to fetch them in person—" Lu Zhiyao's voice trailed off as his eyes suddenly widened. He then asked in surprise, "Are you saying that my juniors are back?!"

A wide smile appeared on Weichi Song's face. "That's right. It's them!"

The affirmative answer made Lu Zhiyao let out a howl of excitement, and he immediately followed Weichi Song. "I want to go too!"

He then ran forward, heading straight toward the mountain entrance. In just the blink of an eye, he had overtaken Weichi Song.

Weichi Song couldn't help but shake his head and laugh aloud when he saw Lu Zhiyao in front of him.

...

There weren't many people in Chong Xu Cabinet to begin with. For the sake of safety and convenience, everyone lived close together. Thus, Lu Zhiyao's shout drew the attention of many people.

One by one, people came out with bewildered faces, wondering what Weichi Song and Lu Zhiyao were doing in the middle of the night. One of the disciples stepped forward and asked curiously, "Cabinet Master, what are—"

"Liuyue! Wanzhou! Ranran! You guys are really back!" Lu Zhiyao shouted so loudly that it was hard for anyone to miss it.

After a brief shock, the crowd started to stir in excitement. "Come again?! What did Lu Zhiyao just say?"

"Did he just call our juniors' names? I didn't hear it wrongly, did I?"

"I heard the same too! That's exactly what he shouted! Are they really back?!"

“Look!” someone suddenly shouted.

Everyone turned their heads in unison to see a few figures coming up the steps. The person in the lead was Lu Zhiyao—who had a foolish grin on his face—while at the back were Chu Liuyue, Qiang Wanzhou, and Ye Ranran.

Everyone was shocked. Even though Weichi Song had repeatedly assured them that their juniors would return safely, they still couldn’t help but worry about their juniors’ safety as Dahuang Swamp was full of dangers. They waited day and night anxiously, but they didn’t expect their juniors to return so suddenly.

Lu Zhiyao couldn’t resist whistling and laughed aloud in glee. “Hahaha! Why are you guys standing there? Hurry up and welcome our juniors home!”

Only then did the crowd come back to their senses. Their shock gradually dissipated, and all that was left were joy and gratefulness. “Ranran! Liuyue! Wanzhou!”

Chu Liuyue and the others—who just came up—were immediately surrounded by their seniors before they could even greet them.

“Ranran, are you guys okay? Why are you only back now?”

“Did you get hurt?”

“Quick, tell us what happened at Dahuang Swamp.”

Chu Liuyue felt a little troubled. Their friendliness is a tad overwhelming...

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Ye Ranran, being the shy introvert that she was, blushed furiously and couldn't utter a single word when she found herself receiving such a huge welcome.

Needless to say, Qiang Wanzhou exuded a cold aura that was seemingly capable of freezing people to death. However, the crowd was so excited by their return that they failed to notice this, which couldn't be helped at all. On top of that, a few seniors couldn't resist complimenting him for his attire. "Wanzhou looks good in these clothes!"

Qiang Wanzhou's face darkened even more, although his ears reddened again. He gripped his sword tightly in his hand but just couldn't bear to walk away from the seniors at the thought that they were truly happy about their safe return.

That left Chu Liuyue as the only one who could control the situation, although just barely. "Uh... It's a long story, Seniors. Shall we go in and talk?"

As soon as the words left her mouth, Lu Zhiyao waved his arm in the air and shouted, "Liuyue says we should go in and talk!"

Everyone heard this loud and clear. After a moment of silence, the seniors became even more excited as they ushered Chu Liuyue, Qiang Wanzhou, Mu Hongyu, and Ye Ranran inside. "Quick, bring them in to sit!"

“Someone, pour the tea! I’ll serve them!”

“Hey, have you guys eaten? Should I get you some snacks first?”

“Ay, stop crowding around them! Make space for them!”

It wasn’t that Chu Liuyue hadn’t considered the possibility that they would be welcomed home, but she hadn’t expected it to be on such a grand scale. While being ushered forward, she suddenly felt small and helpless in front of these seniors. She glanced at Weichi Song—who was standing at the side—with a pleading look. Save me, Master!

However, the crowd had pushed them even further in front before Weichi Song could say anything. Weichi Song’s eyes turned slightly moist as he laughed and felt emotional looking at this scene.

“Chong Xu Cabinet hasn’t been this lively in a long time!” Elder Xia Yi—who came rushing over upon hearing the commotion—chuckled when he saw this rowdy scene. So many people have died, gotten injured, or left Chong Xu cabinet over the past two years. Even we found things slightly desolate here, so I didn’t expect to see such a day again.

“Yeah.” Weichi Song put his hands behind his back and sighed. And this is all because Liuyue and Wanzhou joined Chong Xu Cabinet...

Elder Xia Yi patted Weichi Song on the shoulder. “Come on. We should also go and celebrate their safe return!”

Weichi Song smiled. “Let’s go!”

Chapter 849: What Are You Hiding?

For once, it was really lively at Chong Xu Cabinet that night. Everyone excitedly crowded around Chu Liuyue and her gang and looked at them expectantly, waiting to hear their story.

Thus, Chu Liuyue recounted the events that took place at Dahuang Swamp. Of course, much of the details were glossed over.

Mu Hongyu and Ye Ranran, on the other hand, shared the things that had happened outside while Chu Liuyue was trapped underground.

Everyone felt rueful upon hearing the recount. Lu Zhiyao couldn't resist saying, "No wonder you guys took so long to come back. You encountered so many things... What happened at the Red Moon Desert though? You guys must've suffered a lot."

Naturally, Chu Liuyue didn't reveal the presence of Big Baby and the others. All she said was that she had no idea what was going on either.

"Actually, we didn't really suffer much... In fact, we've gotten much stronger," rebutted Ye Ranran softly. *Now that I think about it, we benefited the most from this trip to Dahuang Swamp, although it was quite a tiring experience. We were indeed quite lucky.*

"Although the Dahuang Swamp is quite unpredictable and dangerous, it's also true that one can get lucky there. You all have gained a lot from this trip, so your efforts aren't wasted!" said Elder Xia Yi joyfully. *It's already very fortunate that they returned safe and sound, but the improvement of their cultivation bases is a complete surprise! Liuyue, in particular, is now a stage-six warrior! Her cultivation speed is incredibly fast! Everyone else came back with nothing but injuries, so people assumed that our disciples would surely die in Dahuang Swamp. Who would've thought that we're the ones who gained the most?! We will be the center of envy once news of their return spreads!*

The sharing session lasted for a long time as the seniors kept throwing questions at them. It was only when Chu Liuyue and the others felt so overwhelmed that Weichi Song finally stepped in to save them. "Alright, that's enough. It's already very late. They just came back, so they need some rest. We can always talk later."

Since Weichi Song had given the word, the seniors had no choice but to stand up and leave despite their reluctance. That said, given how excited they were, it was unlikely that they could fall asleep even if they retired for the night.

Mu Hongyu, Qiang Wanzhou, and Ye Ranran left as well, leaving behind Chu Liuyue and Weichi Song in the room alone.

Chu Liuyue knew that Weichi Song had questions for her.

Sure enough, after everyone left, Weichi Song looked at her and asked, "Earlier, you said that you picked a Dancing Lotus?"

Chu Liuyue nodded.

Weichi Song knitted his brows slightly as a trace of doubt flashed in his eyes. "Did you meet a tall man in black?"

Is he talking about... the owner of Hundred Herbs Building? wondered Chu Liuyue.

Weichi Song knew what her answer was, for her reaction had said it all. *It looks like she must've met him too. But the thing is, he said that the Dancing Lotus belongs to his wife... So why did he allow Liuyue to pick it?*

“He... didn't stop you from picking the Dancing Lotus?”

“Why would he?” asked Chu Liuyue as she blinked her eyes curiously. *He even urged me to pick it!*

The look of shock on Weichi Song's face made Chu Liuyue fall deep in thought for a moment. “Actually... We sort of know each other.”

“You know each other?” This news surprised Weichi Song even more. *Liuyue knows someone so formidable?*

Chu Liuyue nodded. “I received quite a lot of help from him, so—”

“Then, do you know who he is?” asked Weichi Song. *I don't think anyone like him exists in the Tianling Dynasty...*

“His background is unknown. I don't know anything else about him,” answered Chu Liuyue with a shake of her head.

Weichi Song was a little disappointed to hear that, but he knew that there was no point in asking more questions since Chu Liuyue looked like she really didn't know anything else about the man in black. A thought suddenly struck his mind, and he said, “By the way, the news of your return with the Dancing Lotus will soon spread... The Third Princess—”

“Master, are you worried that Her Highness will look for me to ask for the Dancing Lotus?” Chu Liuyue’s lips curled up slightly. *That’s just putting it nicely. Given Shangguan Wan’s character, the odds are that she will snatch it from my hands, and nothing will seem wrong about that as the esteemed Third Princess has been going around looking for a cure for the Emperor.*

Weichi Song hesitantly nodded, and he felt sorry for his disciple. *The Dancing Lotus is such a precious herb, and it doesn’t even exist in the Tianling Dynasty. One would surely treasure it dearly if they managed to get their hands on one. They would surely be reluctant to give it up to someone else... Besides, Liuyue went through so much at Dahuang Swamp...*

Liuyue, however, didn’t seem the slightest bit worried. Her eyes twinkled a little when she smiled. “If she wants it, she can just come and get it from me.”

...

While things were lively at Chong Xu Cabinet, this wasn’t the case for someone in Xi Ling City.

As Jiang Yucheng made his way back, the cool night breeze gently blew at his clothes’ hem. He initially thought that the walk and the wind would help sober him up, but he soon realized that it didn’t work, for his mind kept replaying the earlier scene of the beautiful lady in red with lush black hair and a pure and captivating smile. She was all he could see on the bustling street.

When Jiang Yucheng arrived back at the Jiang Residence, he stopped for a moment in the courtyard before heading to the study alone. He then closed the doors and windows and went to sit in front of his desk.

Following that, he took out a rectangular sandalwood box from under the table and opened it. Inside lay a painting scroll.

He hesitated for a bit but eventually took the scroll out and slowly unrolled it to reveal a painting of a lady. She was standing by a lake, and she looked dignified while dressed in luxurious court attire with gold hairpins in her hair. In the painting, she turned her head back while smiling radiantly as if she had heard something. Unlike her usual gentle and polite smile, that smile was mischievous and soulful, and it reached her sparkling eyes.

The lady in the painting was none other than Shangguan Yue. From her youthful appearance, it seemed like she was only in her teens, but she had already begun to show hints of her stunning beauty.

This was a scene from many years ago, and not even Shangguan Yue herself knew the existence of this painting. Jiang Yucheng had wanted to show it to her back then, but...

All of a sudden, familiar footsteps could be heard coming from outside, which made Jiang Yucheng frown. *What on earth is Shangguan Wan doing here at this late hour?!*

Without further ado, he rolled the painting up and put it back into the box. Just as he did so, someone pushed the door open and entered without any notice.

"Yucheng..." Shangguan Wan noticed that Jiang Yucheng seemed a little flustered as he hurriedly hid something under the table. She knitted her eyebrows. "What are you hiding?"

Chapter 850: You're Inferior to Her

"Nothing." Jiang Yucheng calmly looked up. "What are you doing here at this hour?"

It seems to be a painting... What painting would make him so flustered though? I've never seen him trying to hide something so hurriedly before. I thought there were no secrets between us. Shangguan Wan eyed him suspiciously as she took a step forward and probed, "It must be a masterpiece if you're admiring it even at night. Why don't you take it out and let me have a look as well?"

However, Jiang Yucheng blandly replied, "It's just something I found by accident. It's nothing precious, nor is it worth seeing."

The smile on Shangguan Wan's face stiffened as she glanced at the table where Jiang Yucheng had kept the box containing the scroll. *The fact that he's refusing to show it to me proves that something is wrong!*

Jiang Yucheng frowned.

Upon realizing that Jiang Yucheng was seemingly in a bad mood, Shangguan Wan quickly retracted her gaze. Her expression lightened up at the thought of the purpose of her visit. She wasn't here to pick a fight with him. "I came here secretly this time. Don't worry. Nobody will know about it."

The servants in this courtyard were all Jiang Yucheng's trusted aides, so she wasn't afraid that they might leak the news of her visit.

She took a few steps forward. "Actually, I—Have you been drinking?"

I didn't notice it earlier, but now that I'm standing closer to him, I can smell that he reeks of alcohol. Upon a closer look, his eyes are bloodshot and blurry. He seems a little tipsy too. That's strange, given that he's usually a very restrained person and won't overindulge himself in alcohol, much less allow himself to get drunk. What happened to him? Shangguan Wan frowned slightly in concern and moved to reach out to him. "What's wrong, Yucheng?"

Jiang Yucheng, however, avoided her touch. "I'm fine. Just say what you have to say."

Feeling a little down that she wasn't able to hold his hand, Shangguan Wan bit her lower lip. To be honest, she had recently realized that Jiang Yucheng was getting more and more impatient and perfunctory with her. Although he was acting a little estranged, he still dutifully and flawlessly did everything he needed to do as her fiancé. This made her feel increasingly aggrieved as she couldn't even vent her anger at him.

"I..." She clenched her teeth and suppressed the dissatisfaction and resentment within her. "I'm here to get the Nine Clouds Yuan Recovery Pill back from you."

Jiang Yucheng frowned. "Pardon?"

Shangguan Wan felt embarrassed saying this. "I know I shouldn't be doing this, b-but I'm just one step away from healing my Yuan meridian. With only three days left before the wedding, there's nothing much I can do about it. Even if I did, my Yuan meridian would only be a Dijing Yuan meridian at most..."

"So you want to use the Nine Clouds Yuan Recovery Pill to raise the grade of your Yuan meridian?" Jiang Yucheng interrupted.

Shangguan Wan nodded.

She hadn't thought about this at first. It was only after 'that person' reminded her that she belatedly realized that it would be very hard for her to lift the Tianling Power Staff even if she managed to heal her Dijing Yuan meridian. Thus, the easiest method was to use the Nine Clouds Yuan Recovery Pill. "I know that you've given it to Xiahou Rong and that he definitely won't be willing to give it back to us, but... I can use other things to exchange for it! As long as—"

“It’s gone,” said Jiang Yucheng coldly.

Shangguan Wan froze. “W-what is gone?”

“The Nine Clouds Yuan Recovery Pill has been stolen.”

Shangguan Wan naturally didn’t believe this, but she could tell that Jiang Yucheng didn’t seem to be lying. Resentment filled her heart. “When can we get it back then?”

Jiang Yucheng lowered his eyelids. “I don’t know.”

“What am I going to do then?” Shangguan Wan ran out of patience to continue putting up an act. “If I can’t lift the Tianling Power Staff on that day—”

“That’s your business. You’re the one with the Tianling royal family’s bloodline, so that’s something you should solve on your own.” Because his mind was a little fuzzy from the alcohol, the way he spoke was a little more curt than usual. “A’Yue wouldn’t be troubled by this sort of thing.”

Dead silence instantly descended on them.

Thunderstruck, Shangguan Wan stared at Jiang Yucheng in wide-eyed disbelief. “W-what did you just say?”

Realizing that he had misspoken, Jiang Yucheng spoke a little gentler this time. "It was just a casual remark. You don't have to take it to heart."

"You still have feelings for her, right?" Shangguan Wan's eyes shone with resentment and jealousy as she grabbed his wrist and questioned him. "You think that I'm inferior to her, don't you?!"

Jiang Yucheng tried his best to be patient. "You're overthinking it... If things are really as you say, I wouldn't have done all those things in the first place."

The thought of the fire back then made Shangguan Wan clench her teeth and release Jiang Yucheng's wrist. "You better remember what you promised me, Jiang Yucheng!"

She then angrily turned around to leave.

Jiang Yucheng stopped her. "Wait. Did you go to visit His Majesty? How's his condition?"

Shangguan Wan didn't answer him, for she hadn't taken this matter to heart at all. She had only gone there twice and had only stayed for a short while each time.

Jiang Yucheng warned, "Don't you know how important His Majesty regaining his consciousness is for us—"

"Enough—I get it! I know what to do!" Irritated, Shangguan Wan sidestepped him and quickly left the room.

All that fuss had made Jiang Yucheng sober up. He walked back to the table, took out that wooden box once more, and stared at it for a good while. *Actually, there's no point in me keeping this thing...*

He tried to burn the box with the painting but ultimately couldn't bear to do it after a few failed attempts. Thus, he put it back in its original position.

Someone knocked on the door just then. "Eldest Young Master, Lord Xiahou is here!"

Xiahou Rong? Jiang Yucheng sat down in his chair before saying, "Let him in."

Xiahou Rong entered the study moments later. He was wearing a black outfit that completely hid his figure; one wouldn't be able to recognize him in the dark if they didn't look at him closely.

Someone else—looking equally concealed—was behind him, and that person was none other than Xiahou Tingan.

Jiang Yucheng leaned back in his chair as he regarded the father-son duo coldly. "It looks like you're here to return me something?"

An awkward expression appeared on Xiahou Rong's face as he gulped his saliva down with much difficulty. Then, he turned to his son and scolded, "Hurry up and apologize to Eldest Young Master Jiang!"

An injured-looking Xiahou Tingan went down on his knees. "E-Eldest Young Master Jiang—"

“Save the talk.” Jiang Yucheng had no patience for him and just wanted to get straight to the point.
“Return it to me first, and we can talk about the other things afterward.”

Xiahou Rong’s countenance grew pale. “I-it’s missing!”