

Noble Ruler 951

Chapter 951: Opening of the Ancient Phoenix Mountain!

Chu Liuyue shook her head. "All the dynasties' emperors will be waiting outside, and I won't be an exception."

Only five people could go in, and she brought five with her from the start, so it was just right.

"With Jian Fengchi and Little Zhou around, there shouldn't be much of a problem. I'll just wait for you guys outside."

Seeing that Chu Liuyue seemed to have decided, Mu Hongyu knew that there was no use in convincing her, but she still felt regretful. "But this is a rare chance..."

If she misses it just like this, won't it be a pity?

Chu Liuyue's eyes curved up. "Don't worry. I have my own plans."

Hearing her say this, Mu Hongyu could only nod.

...

"Elders, please go ahead."

With the command of an elder, the strong warriors from the few dynasties started to take action and stood still according to the agreed plan.

In front of this gigantic rainbow barrier, the strong warriors each took a corner and formed a huge pentagon.

At the pentagon's five corners, the five warriors from the dynasties formed a small pentagon on their own. Out of all of them, the weakest one was still a stage-eight warrior! The strongest was the elder that spoke earlier, the Beiming Dynasty's oldest elder—Hua Qian, a stage-nine warrior!

Rumors had it that he was only a step away from a stronger realm, and he was undoubtedly a strong warrior! Many people secretly guessed if he would be the second warrior to reach Apotheosis in the Beiming Dynasty!

Hence, he was naturally the one leading the opening of Ancient Phoenix Mountain!

“Rise!” With Hua Qian's command, everyone took action.

Chu! Chu! Chu!

At that moment, different-colored forces flew out and intersected in midair, forming a ball in the middle of the pentagon.

As time passed, the ball of light gradually expanded.

Below, the young talents from all the dynasties were already positioned properly and prepared to enter in sequence.

The group at the front was naturally the Beiming Dynasty, who planned to go in first.

Jun Jiuqing was right in front, and standing beside him were three young men and a woman.

The few of them looked like they were younger than twenty, but their surrounding auras couldn't be underestimated. At this point, the few of them gathered together and seemed to be discussing some arrangements for post-entry.

Jun Jiuqing lazily listened on as if he was nonchalant. But after doing so for a while, he found it boring and turned his gaze to look at the Tianling Dynasty's group. Then, he raised his brows slightly.

...

"This is a golden bell. Every single bell can detect each other. After going in, you can use this to contact each other." Chu Liuyue took out a gold bracelet from her Cosmic Ring and used some strength to separate the pearls on it before passing them to Jian Fengchi and the rest respectively. She left the biggest one for herself, which was engraved with a pattern. "If you meet with danger, you can squeeze it. It contains an eighth-grade Xuan formation, and it can help you block one attack."

Hearing this, the few of them looked shocked as they didn't expect that a round and smooth golden pearl like this would be so formidable.

Jian Fengchi sized it up and glanced at Chu Liuyue. "If I didn't recall wrongly, this golden bracelet was broken back then, right?"

Chu Liuyue shrugged and said nonchalantly, "Yeah, so I fixed it."

Jian Fengchi was speechless. Forget that I even asked! Why did I forget that this person is a pervert? Even if she has restarted and no longer has a Tianjing Yuan meridian, her talent is still outstanding. I originally thought I could win one round using this chance, but it looks pretty difficult. It's infuriating to compare with people!

"Once the eighth-grade Xuan formation within it is used, its suppression will disappear. If you meet with danger again, the only way is to rapidly break it to alert the rest. Once this golden bell breaks, the other people with golden bells will immediately receive the news, including me! After it breaks, it will also release a special scent that will stay on the person's body for three days. This way, the others can quickly find the person who needs help. Of course, the condition is that the person in need must ensure their safety during this period."

Wu Ming glanced at the rainbow barrier and softly said, "Your Majesty, with Ancient Phoenix Mountain's opening, the most important thing is the Three Yuan Convention. Everyone should be focused on it. Even if there is competition with the rest, they won't be overboard, right? After all... The emperors from all the dynasties will be waiting outside."

If they really came out severely injured or dead, how could they explain it when they came out?

"Stupid!" Yuwen Jinghong poked him with his elbow and raised his chin. "Wu Ming, you're so devoted to cultivation that your brain isn't working! Do you really think these people are so kind as to let us snatch all the benefits? It's precisely because the Three Yuan Convention is too powerful and the temptation is too great that it's the most dangerous! Look, who present doesn't have equipment with them and appears very ready? If we don't prepare ourselves more, we won't even know how we will die later!"

Wu Ming followed his gaze and found that it was indeed so.

The young talents from the other dynasties seemed to be gathered together and discussing something with a solemn expression. The atmosphere was tense with a slight hint of danger to it.

“This means that I’ve been thinking too simply...” Wu Ming felt awkward, but he still clenched his fists. “Your Highness, don’t worry. I’ll definitely do my best!”

No matter what, I can’t embarrass Her Highness!

Chu Liuyue smiled slightly and didn’t really care about this as she looked at the few of them and said seriously, “All of this is secondary. Safety is your utmost priority.”

“Yes!”

...

“It’s a pity that Shangguan Yue doesn’t plan on entering...” Dantai Ruoli had been observing the Tianling Dynasty’s situation from afar and couldn’t help being disappointed when she saw that Chu Liuyue was patiently instructing the other five people. *I originally wanted to take this chance to teach her a harsh lesson! Outside, she can use her status as an emperor to flaunt her authority, but after entering Ancient Phoenix Mountain, it will be the true battle between each other’s capabilities!*

“She probably knows that she can’t beat us, so she purposely hid from it,” Yu Zefeng said in contempt. “But Ruoli, you don’t have to worry. Though we can’t teach her a lesson, we’ll still be able to get back some interest if we make the remaining of them suffer.”

Dantai Ruoli lightly grunted. "Of course!"

The group from the Tianling Dynasty was the weakest out of all the people from the dynasties. They could easily teach them a lesson.

"The most powerful of them seems to be that Jian Fengchi only, but I heard that he's a heavenly doctor, so his combat skills should be ordinary. There's no need to mention the rest." Yu Zefeng looked at Dantai Ruoli eagerly. "Ruoli, I'll vent your anger for you at that time!"

Dantai Ruoli nodded. "We have to let that Shangguan Yue know who she can offend and who she can't!"

...

When the crowd was adequately prepared, the last hint of red in the sun was drowned out by the black mountains.

Elder Hua Qian commanded, "Open Ancient Phoenix Mountain!"

Chapter 952: Alert!

Accompanying a deafening rumbling sound, the ball of light that gathered the various elders' forces finally exploded, and the rainbow barrier slowly opened from the middle to form a pentagonal entrance.

"Please enter!" bellowed Elder Hua Qian.

Of course, he was saying this to the Beiming Dynasty people, who would be the first ones to enter the mountain.

Jun Jiuqing didn't move though. He stood in his position and looked toward Chu Liuyue pensively. *Given my understanding of her, she definitely won't want to miss such a good opportunity. So why isn't she going in?*

"Your Highness, it's time for us to enter."

It was only after receiving a reminder from the youth standing next to him that Jun Jiuqing retracted his gaze and moved to enter the mountain.

The four other members quickly followed him in.

Just like that, the five people from the Beiming Dynasty disappeared in front of the rest of the people as the faint layer of rainbow light slowly spread and covered the entrance once more.

Upon seeing this scene, everyone finally understood why four hours of waiting time were required in between each entry. Even though the barrier was currently at its weakest, it was still so powerful that the elders could only open it for a short while despite having joined forces. Hence, the next group of people had to patiently wait for the elders to open the barrier again.

"No wonder nobody has entered Ancient Phoenix Mountain all these years... Only someone as powerful as the barrier would be able to open it by force," mumbled Yuwen Jinghong in awe. *We wouldn't have gotten this chance to enter Ancient Phoenix Mountain if it weren't for the weakening of the barrier due to the gradual spreading of the mountain's powers that happened over a long passage of time.*

...

Time always seemed to be especially grueling when one was waiting anxiously.

Night had completely fallen, and the land had descended into darkness. Not a single star or the moon could be seen with all the dark clouds hanging overhead. The only things illuminating this part of the mountain were the luminous pearls held in the hands of the soldiers around them.

It seemed that everyone had gotten strung up from the moment the first group of people entered the mountain.

“I wonder what’s going on inside...” said Jun Qizhi worriedly with a frown. He put a hand behind his back as he stared at the barrier that was still glowing with colors.

“Don’t worry, Your Majesty. His Highness is strong and capable. Besides, Ancient Phoenix Mountain was left behind by the Ancestor, so everything will definitely proceed smoothly,” whispered the servant next to him.

While it was understandable that other people had their own worries, there was really no need for them to worry about Jun Jiuqing since he had the blood of the Beiqing Royalty flowing within him. Logically speaking, not only would he not be in any danger, but he might even get lucky in Ancient Phoenix Mountain.

“His Highness has been stuck at his current cultivation level for a long time, but who knows? He might be able to break through this time... That would be something to celebrate!”

“I hope so...” Jun Qizhi nodded as he turned to look at Chu Liuyue. Like most people, he had also thought that she would be entering the mountain, but his assumption turned out to be wrong.

Chu Liuyue appeared serene under the night sky. Unlike the others who were equally as nervous and anxious as him, she looked like a complete outsider who had nothing to do with this situation.

Jun Qizhi was surprised to see this. *Not everyone can be so calm and patient...*

Just then, Elder Hua Qian shouted, "Open!"

Rumble!

A pentagonal hole appeared in the rainbow barrier once more.

"Let's go!" With eyes gleaming with determination, Jian Fengchi moved forward at once.

While Mu Hongyu and the others followed closely behind Jian Fengchi, Qiang Wanzhou turned back and took a look at Chu Liuyue. Although his pretty and youthful face was looking indifferent as usual, his eyes revealed a ripple of emotions.

Chu Liuyue gave an imperceptible nod in his direction, to which he pursed his lips tightly and left with the others straight after.

Their figures soon disappeared behind the barrier.

...

Chu Liuyue slowly exhaled as she watched Qiang Wanzhou and the others enter the mountain. Thereafter, she sat down on the chair that had been set up for her as if she had made up her mind to wait in peace.

“What a shame,” said Gongsun Xiao when he saw this scene. “This is such a good cultivation opportunity, yet you gave it up just like that. Nobody said that you couldn’t enter the mountain just because you’re an empress. I find it truly a shame since I heard that you’re extremely talented.”

Chu Liuyue smiled. “Thank you for your concern. It’s true that this is a hard-to-come-by opportunity—that’s why I’m glad to even have the chance to bring my people here. I wouldn’t dare to dream of anything else.”

Her reply made Gongsun Xiao even more baffled. Is she saying that she had no intention of entering the mountain in the first place? The reason that the rest of us didn’t enter was that our age doesn’t meet the requirements, not to mention that it’s embarrassing for us to vie with the youngsters. But she... Isn’t she only in her teens? Even if we base it on her previous age, she was only in her early twenties. Don’t tell me that she has no ambitions now that she no longer has a Tianjing Yuan meridian?

Not bothered by the speculations the others made, Chu Liuyue remained sitting in her seat as she quietly waited. It was only when people stopped asking her such questions that she finally had some peace and quiet to herself.

She initially planned to make use of this time to cultivate, but she ultimately decided against it as she still needed to keep an eye on the goings-on in Ancient Phoenix Mountain and the surrounding area. Hence, she instead opted to reconstruct the ninth-grade Xuan formation in her mind.

It hadn’t been easy for her to connect the lines together, so she wanted to strengthen the Xuan formation, as well as take the chance to examine it closely. Knowing how to see the Xuan formation was one thing, while reconstructing it was another. As for comprehending it, that was something that required even more effort and energy.

The good thing was that she had studied ninth-grade Xuan formations a bit in the past, so it didn't go as difficult as she thought it would.

As time passed, the Xuan formation in her mind became clearer bit by bit.

...

"The third group of people, please enter!"

The five people from the Dongning Dynasty finally entered as well.

...

"The fourth group of people, please enter!"

This time, it was the Xiyan Dynasty's turn.

...

Dawn was currently breaking.

The only group of people still waiting for their turn was the Taiyu Dynasty, and many of them looked quite haggard after staying up all night.

Dantai Ruoli rubbed her bloodshot eyes.

Her companions weren't looking much better either. Although nobody was stopping them from resting and sleeping, who could actually fall asleep in this place and time?

From the corners of her eyes, Dantai Ruoli noticed that Chu Liuyue was still sitting in her original position and looking quite spirited. She couldn't understand why the difference between them was so huge when the latter had clearly stayed up all night too.

However, what she didn't know was that Chu Liuyue had been repeatedly constructing the ninth-grade Xuan formations in her mind throughout the night. Having received comfort and nourishment from the advanced Xuan formations, she naturally felt quite relaxed.

"The fifth group of people, please enter!"

Hearing that, Dantai Ruoli and the others snapped to attention right away and excitedly moved toward the entrance one after another without further ado.

The rainbow barrier then closed once more.

Just then, the golden bell on Chu Liuyue's wrist jingled. She looked down and realized that Wu Ming's golden bell had been crushed.

Chapter 953: Probe

Thinking about it, it has only been 12 hours since they entered Ancient Phoenix Mountain. The fact that Wu Ming crushed his bell means that he had no choice but to activate the eighth-grade Xuan formation in it. What has he encountered in such a short frame of time? Where are the others? Chu Liuyue was deep in thought as she silently retracted her gaze and tilted her wrist to hide the bell under her sleeve.

It was a good thing that nobody was paying attention to her since she had been waiting silently at the side, so they didn't notice the subtle change in her expression.

It was all quiet again.

Based on what was estimated previously, Ancient Phoenix Mountain would be open for about 15 days. After that, the three elements would gather at the top, causing the force accumulated within the mountain over thousands of years to erupt. Once everything was back to normal, Ancient Phoenix Mountain would then enter the next cycle.

In other words, they had to wait outside for about half a month. Of course, this didn't include the people who had to come out early due to reasons like injuries and inability to withstand the pressure. Everything was dependent on their own ability.

Chu Liuyue took a look at the rainbow barrier that was all sealed up again. *It looks like I have to act fast.*

...

Meanwhile, everything was as usual at Lin Zhou Imperial Palace. As Jun Qizhi, Jun Jiuqing, and a few others had gone to Ancient Phoenix Mountain, the palace was cold and empty now, especially since it was just the beginning of dawn.

At the Eastern Palace.

A team of soldiers on patrol had just changed shifts with another team.

“Although His Highness won’t be in the palace for the next few days, we mustn’t let our guard down. We still have to strictly guard the palace and stop random people from coming in. Do you hear me?!” bellowed the man standing at the front.

“Yes! Don’t worry; we all know that. We will naturally pay our utmost attention during work.” The soldiers who were here to take up the next shift seemed to be somewhat afraid of this man, and they all echoed their agreement.

“Glad you know it.” Seeing how obedient they were, the man nodded in satisfaction before lifting his chin toward the soldiers behind him. “Let’s go!”

With that, the group quickly strode off.

Only when they had disappeared into the distance did the rest of the men heave a sigh of relief in unison.

“Brother Qian, that man seems to hold a lot of power. Why does it seem that he’s above everyone else when we’re all on patrol duty?” asked the skinny youth.

“Hmph. Xiao Song, you’re here as Four’s replacement today, so you’re not aware of this since this is your first time here. That man is called Shang Binghe, and he’s not someone we can afford to offend. It’s not just us; most of the people who work in the Eastern Palace are at his mercy!”

“Oh? He has so much authority?” Xiao Song widened his eyes in surprise. “Does he have some sort of background?”

“No. His arrogance stems from him being the Crown Prince’s trusted aide. His Highness brought this man back when he returned from his training two years ago. His Highness trusts him a lot and gives him a lot of important things to do. He even let him take charge of the security in the Eastern Palace.”

“Hey, how could his ego not inflate when he has His Highness backing him up?” someone interjected from the side.

Xiao Song nodded in understanding while murmuring, “I see... In that case, I have to be more careful when I see him in the future...”

“Haha, you don’t have to go to that extent! You’re just here to replace Four for a few days. Once Four is all recovered, you won’t have to report here anymore. Therefore, there’s no need for you to be so worried!” The man known as Brother Qian patted Xiao Song’s shoulder.

Xiao Song couldn’t resist grimacing. “Brother Qian, you’ve also worked here for many years and are much more experienced than he is. By right, your position ought to be higher than his, but now...”

As soon as these words came out, Qian Dehou’s face darkened, and the others fell silent.

It was only then that Xiao Song seemingly realized his mistake, and he hurriedly said, "I'm sorry! That was my bad. Please don't take it to heart, Brother Qian! It just so happens that I have a flask of good wine here. Why don't you help me taste it?"

The people close to Qian Dehou all knew that the latter had no other hobbies except for drinking. And sure enough, Qian Dehou's expression eased up when he heard what Xiao Song was offering. Still, he frowned and said sternly in his deep voice, "What are you saying?! How can I drink on duty?!"

"Don't be mistaken, Brother Qian. I'm not asking you to drink it now. I'm saying that you should bring the wine back home to sample it. After all, you're quite the wine connoisseur. Help me see what this wine tastes like. I'm not much of a drinker, so it's a waste for me to keep it!" With a cheeky smile, Xiao Song took out a flask of wine from his Cosmic Ring.

But some of the wine accidentally spilled out as he did so, and its fragrance immediately permeated the air.

This is a good quality wine! Qian Dehou's eyes lit up, and his feelings wavered. Under Xiao Song's insistence, he half-reluctantly accepted that flask of wine.

"Alright, alright! Let's get to work!" shouted Qian Dehou. "We have to be even more diligent since His Highness isn't around. Understand?!"

"Yes!"

...

An hour later, Xiao Song found Qian Dehou all wasted and reeking of alcohol at a corner. A grin appeared on his face, making his youthful appearance look a little cunning.

“Heh. Not even a real immortal can withstand the Drunken Immortal, especially after I added some special ingredients to it!” He then moved forward and dragged Qian Dehou to an even more secluded area. “Since you drank my wine, lend me your clothes for a bit.”

...

Not long after, Qian Dehou appeared at the entrance of the Eastern Palace’s inner courtyard, where he flashed his token. “His Highness has ordered me to collect something from the study.”

What’s Qian Dehou doing here? The guards found it strange to see him here since the guards responsible for guarding the outer courtyard hardly ever came to the inner courtyard. The two guards exchanged baffled looks with each other. “Captain Qian, did you just say that His Highness ordered you to collect something from the study? But His Highness must’ve entered Ancient Phoenix Mountain by now.”

Qian Dehou looked up. “This was what he ordered me to do before he left. What, are you guys doubting me or questioning His Highness’s order?”

“We wouldn’t dare!”

Qian Dehou was considered a veteran in the Eastern Palace, so they had to show him some face no matter what. Besides, Jun Jiuqing had a habit of acting arbitrarily too.

“Please enter. Do you need us to get someone to go with you?”

Qian Dehou gave them a withering look. “This is a secret order, so it’s better that fewer people know about it. Understand?”

Not daring to ask any more questions, the two guards could only answer, “Yes!”

Qian Dehou then adjusted his collar before he made his way further inside..

Chapter 954: Looking for Someone

Time flew by, and it was evening again in the blink of an eye. The crowd was still quietly waiting at the foot of Ancient Phoenix Mountain.

What made Chu Liuyue feel slightly at ease was that Wu Ming was the only person who had crushed his bell—it meant that the same thing didn’t happen to the others.

“We’ve been guarding here for an entire day. Why don’t we go back and get some rest before we come back again tomorrow?” Jun Qizhi suggested.

Although pulling several all-nighters in a row wasn’t too big a problem for cultivators, there were 14 more days to go. Moreover, the various rulers waiting here were all busy people—even Jun Qizhi himself had to go back and settle some matters.

Gongsun Xiao and the others were surprised to hear that. *Isn’t it... a tad too early to leave now? Besides, it’s worrying since our people are still inside.*

“Thank you for your understanding, Your Majesty. In that case, I’ll head back first.” Chu Liuyue was the first person to stand up amidst the silence.

Everyone was taken aback by her response. *Is Shangguan Yue serious? She wants to leave first? Isn't she worried about her people? Being the weakest among the lot, they must be having a hard time in there...*

Jun Qizhi was equally surprised, but there was nothing he could say since Chu Liuyue had already expressed her intention. Hence, he nodded. "I'll get someone to take you back."

"Thank you, Your Majesty!" Chu Liuyue flashed him a smile before turning to speak to Elder Chen Ke and the others. "I'm going back to rest for a while. I'll have to trouble you all to guard here while I'm away."

Following that, she moved to leave without the slightest hesitation.

"She's ultimately still too young. Her patience ran out so fast!" Gongsun Xiao laughed it off.

"There's nothing to worry about since we have elders watching over the place," said Jun Qizhi as he stood up. "I have some matters to attend to, so I won't stay any longer. Feel free to make yourselves comfortable. If there are any problems, General Qi and the elders here will naturally help to resolve them."

As this was his own territory to begin with, he had nothing to worry about. They also weren't able to see what was going on inside, so it was pointless to keep waiting outside.

Seeing that Jun Qizhi and Chu Liuyue had left one after another, Gongsun Xiao began to waver. He took a look at Ning Yuan. "Brother Ning, what's your plan? Are you going to continue waiting here?"

"It makes no difference to me since I can cultivate here as well," answered Ning Yuan calmly.

So he's going to camp out here until the end? Gongsun Xiao was appalled to hear that. "That makes sense."

He thus dismissed the idea of leaving and chose to stay as well. He initially wanted to cultivate while waiting too, but he unfortunately just couldn't concentrate and hence simply gave up on the idea. *Fine, it's just waiting! Since Ning Yuan wants to wait here, I naturally have to follow suit. I can't admit defeat! The Tianling Dynasty people are probably just here for fun, while the Taiyu Dynasty people aren't capable enough to pose a threat. The ones that truly pose a threat to us are the people from the Beiming Dynasty and the Dongning Dynasty! But then again, it's normal for the Beiming Dynasty to have an advantage since this is their territory and all. We weren't planning to fight with them anyway. I just hope that we can win against the Dongning Dynasty!*

Upon seeing that the other two had no intention of leaving, Dantai Chen could only stay and continue to wait in silence.

...

Meanwhile, Chu Liuyue soon arrived back at her villa in Lin Zhou City.

Almost everyone had remained at Ancient Phoenix Mountain, so the villa seemed particularly cold and empty at the moment. The only people present were the servants who were sent to wait on Chu Liuyue and the others.

They were all astonished to see her return, but none of them dared to ask her about it. Having heard the rumors that Chu Liuyue might be on good terms with Jun Jiuqing, they were all eager to fawn over her, so who would dare to offend her?

After telling the servants that she didn't want to be disturbed during her rest, Chu Liuyue dismissed them and entered her room. She then locked her room as if she really had the intention of getting some rest.

However, she went around the folding screen instead of heading toward the bed.

A young man—who had been waiting there at some point in time—stood up unhurriedly and paid a bow in her direction when he heard her footsteps. “Greetings, Your Majesty!”

Chu Liuyue looked at the man in front of her.

He appeared to be in his mid-twenties. On top of having a tall and slender frame, he also had a delicate and pretty face. However, a crafty glint could occasionally be seen in his brown eyes, which suggested that he wasn't as harmless as he appeared.

The tip of Chu Liuyue's nose twitched. “Have you been drinking again?”

The man's expression crumbled. “Your Majesty, we haven't seen each other for two years. Why are you talking about this as soon as we meet?”

Chu Liuyue walked to the side and sat down with a smile. “Wu Yao, it's been two years, yet you haven't kicked your drinking habit?”

Wu Yao rubbed his nose and flashed a smug smile at her. “Heh, you got it wrong, Your Majesty. I haven't touched a single drop of alcohol in two years!”

“For real? Then, where is this alcohol scent coming from?” asked Chu Liuyue with raised eyebrows.

As Wu Yao leaned in closer toward her, the smile on his face became more and more wicked. “I might’ve quit drinking, but my wine-making skills haven’t gone to waste! I managed to enter Jun Jiuqing’s study with just a flask of wine!”

Chu Liuyue sat up straighter in her seat. “Did you find out anything?”

Wu Yao narrowed his eyes. “There’s a secret passage underneath Jun Jiuqing’s study. Most importantly, there’s a transportation formation hidden inside the tunnel!”

“Did you manage to find out where it leads to?”

“Unfortunately not. However... I did find out that the person you wanted me to look for has seemingly appeared in the study before!”

Chapter 955: Heaven Is on My Side

“Really?” Chu Liuyue’s gaze focused. She didn’t actually harbor much hope when she approached Wu Yao for help. After all, she wasn’t familiar with places and people in the Beiming Dynasty, so her search for Chu Ning would be like looking for a needle in a haystack.

Wu Yao was the only person among the Thirteen Yue Guards who had ever been to the Beiming Dynasty, and he was quite familiar with the place.

Actually, the Thirteen Yue Guards were rushing back to Xi Ling one after another upon receiving news of Chu Liuyue, but considering that Chu Ning was very likely trapped in Lin Zhou, she decided to make Wu Yao turn around and come straight here instead.

Though, she didn't expect that he would really manage to find a clue.

Wu Yao nodded as he curiously studied the look on Chu Liuyue's face. "Your Majesty, how is that person... related to you? Why are you so concerned about him?" *She's not the type of person to wear her emotions on her sleeves, and there aren't many people in this world who can make her so worried.*

Previously, Wu Yao had only received orders to look for someone, but he didn't know who that person was.

Chu Liuyue explained, "That's my father, Chu Ning."

Wu Yao immediately understood what she meant after his shock wore off. *Her father Chu Ning? I guess that's the father of the original Chu Liuyue. That explains why she's so worried about him. It looks like she's very close with him.*

"I see..." After figuring out Chu Ning's identity, Wu Yao managed to string a lot of things together and form his own understanding.

"You said that you found traces of my father in the study of the Beiming Dynasty's Crown Prince?" Chu Liuyue asked.

"That's right." Wu Yao became much more serious. "Didn't you send me a belonging of his that has his scent on it? I carefully searched every corner of the study, and I dare say that he appeared there before."

Wu Yao liked making wine and had a very sensitive sense of smell. On top of that, it just so happened that he owned a Wind-Smelling Beast, which made it all the more convenient when looking for someone.

“Based on my estimations, he was here one and a half months ago.”

That must be when Father was first brought to Lin Zhou. Not long after that, Jun Jiuqing sent me a note telling me that we would meet a month later. I wonder how Father spent his time here and where he is now? Chu Liuyue was deep in thought. “Is it possible to find my father with this clue?”

Wu Yao knitted his eyebrows slightly. “I’m afraid that it’ll take some time. After all, too much time has passed. His scent must be pretty gone by now. It had taken me a lot of effort to ascertain that he had been to the study before. What’s more...”

He paused and looked up. “The fact that Chu Ning was able to enter Jun Jiuqing’s study proves that the latter is behind the former’s captivity. The entire Lin Zhou is Jun Jiuqing’s territory, so he can easily wipe out any traces if he wants. If he has the intention of hiding your father, I’m afraid that the search for your father will only become more difficult.”

“Two may keep counsel, putting one away. If he’s done it, he’ll definitely leave clues behind.” Chu Liuyue pondered for a second before adding, “Since Jun Jiuqing has entered Ancient Phoenix Mountain, he won’t be out for the time being. Everyone else’s attention will also be diverted to this matter. As long as we continue looking into it, we’ll surely be able to find some clues.” *These two weeks are the best chance we’ve got!*

So Her Majesty didn’t enter Ancient Phoenix Mountain because of this... It looks like she really has a tight-knit relationship with Chu Ning for her to willingly give up such a great opportunity and do her best to find him... This matter rose to the top of Wu Yao’s priority list when he realized this. Upon seeing the

frown on Chu Liuyue's face, he smiled and confidently declared, "Don't worry, Your Majesty. Even if I do lose my sense of smell, I'll make sure that your father is found!"

Chu Liuyue broke into laughter. "How is the credit yours when it's the Wind-Smelling Beast who'll be doing all the work?"

"Heh, it's my fiend, so its credit is naturally mine as well."

Chu Liuyue shook her head in amusement and didn't bother to give a retort. Although Wu Yao was carefree in nature, he was a bold and meticulous person who had proven to be very reliable. Hence, she had never needed to worry when she tasked him with something.

"Actually, I think that your father might still be trapped in the palace." Wu Yao became serious once more.

Chu Liuyue paused. "Why do you think so?"

"The Beiming Dynasty's Crown Prince has always lived in the Eastern Palace. Even though he has come of age, it doesn't seem like he has any intention of moving out. Besides, the Eastern Palace's security is far stricter than that of any other palace. I wanted to go check out the other places at the same time, but I wasn't able to do that. Just getting into the study alone had taken me a lot of effort."

Every room of the Eastern Palace's inner courtyard was guarded by someone. Apart from Jun Jiuqing, nobody was allowed to enter the rooms, which was strange in itself.

Having spent some time in the Beiming Dynasty before, Wu Yao had heard a lot about Jun Jiuqing. But even so, it wasn't until today that he knew that the Eastern Palace was so heavily guarded. It was clear

that something fishy was going on in there, but Jun Qizhi didn't say anything about it, which was probably because Jun Jiuqing had always been acting in such a willful and presumptuous manner.

Chu Liuyue tapped her finger against the table as she fell deep in thought and only raised her head again a moment later. "If we want to know the answer, we'll just have to find it out ourselves. I'm going to the Eastern Palace tonight!"

"You can't do that, Your Majesty! That place is heavily guarded and protected by several barriers! You might end up being discovered if you go now!" Shocked, Wu Yao rushed to dissuade her. *Even I had to spend several days making plans before I snuck in with a new identity. It'd be dangerous if she breaks in by force. It'll be like entering a lion's den!*

Chu Liuyue, however, smiled. "Is it because of my current cultivation level that you think that I'll be discovered and won't be able to get away?"

"N-not exactly... I-I'm just... worried about you..." whispered Wu Yao in a fluster. He could tell that Chu Liuyue's cultivation was currently only at the peak of the sixth stage. While it was considered pretty good when compared to ordinary people, he reckoned that there was no way she could sneak inside the Eastern Palace alone with her current abilities. "I know that you're not weak and that you have a legendary fiend, but there are countless experts within the Beiming Dynasty's imperial palace! Even if you can escape those people's notice, you won't be able to open the barriers that are made of ninth-grade Xuan formations surrounding the palace!"

Chu Liuyue raised her eyebrows slightly. "Did you just say that... the barriers surrounding the palace are ninth-grade Xuan formations? Are they the same as the ones at the border?"

"I-I think so... W-what's wrong?"

"Nothing." Chu Liuyue's eyes glinted as she smirked. "It's just that even heaven is on my side!"

Chapter 956: What a Shame

Wu Yao drew a map of the imperial palace and carefully marked out the Eastern Palace's location, which Chu Liuyue memorized by heart after looking at it for a while. Following this, she immediately planned out her route.

He had wanted to accompany her inside, but she objected to it and insisted that he should just stay outside the palace. She said that she was better off acting alone since their chances of getting discovered would be higher if they moved together. So despite his worries, he could only go along with her plan.

By the time they were done with their discussion, night had fallen.

Chu Liuyue looked at the sky outside, which had completely darkened.

After changing into a black robe and hiding their faces under a hood, the two headed straight for the Eastern Palace.

...

It was quiet in Lin Zhou City, with only soft rustling sounds in the background.

Chu Liuyue and Wu Yao moved stealthily and arrived outside the palace unhindered. Since they couldn't walk in from the main gates, they decided that Chu Liuyue would enter by scaling the wall that was closest to the Eastern Palace.

“Stay here as backup,” Chu Liuyue whispered.

Wu Yao nodded his head seriously. “Be careful, Your Majesty!”

Chu Liuyue then turned around and looked up at the tall palace wall.

The Beiming Imperial Palace was massive, and its wall was incredibly long. A lot of manpower and resources would be needed if a soldier was sent to guard an area of the wall. Hence, the Beiming Dynasty didn’t do that—all they did was dispatch a few squads to do their rounds.

While it seemed like this would result in the security becoming lax, the truth was that they had their own reason for doing this—above the palace wall was a barrier layer powerful enough to block out most cultivators.

It should be known that the barrier was constructed from a ninth-grade Xuan formation. If the intruders were so powerful that even the barrier wasn’t enough to stop them, then all the less the guards on patrol duty were a match for them. Therefore, the Beiming Imperial Palace’s security was mostly dependent on this barrier.

Even though it seemed like there was nothing other than the palace wall, Chu Liuyue knew that the barrier was right in front of her. Breath abated, she slowly lifted a fair and slender finger, and a strand of force flew out from its tip.

The silver force quickly split into countless strands and intertwined with each other to form a strange palm-sized pattern.

Wu Yao looked closely at the pattern, finding it oddly familiar.

With a slight movement of Chu Liuyue's finger, a second pattern appeared, which she then linked with the first one.

It was only at that moment that Wu Yao suddenly recalled where he had seen that pattern. Shock flashed across his eyes. *Isn't this—*

As if to confirm his guess, the void in front of them rippled slightly as a transparent barrier slowly appeared. It looked like a spider web with faint flickering silver light from afar, but one would realize that it was actually a complicated Xuan formation once they took a closer look at it.

The barrier rippled as silver lights continued to intertwine with each other.

Slowly, a circular Xuan formation was formed in front of Chu Liuyue.

Wu Yao could see that the Xuan formation was almost identical to the first pattern Chu Liuyue constructed moments ago. Although the one Chu Liuyue constructed was much smaller and weaker in comparison, the patterns matched the other perfectly.

Soon, a second Xuan formation appeared next to it and connected with the first one, which was exactly what Chu Liuyue had done earlier.

If it hadn't been for the size difference, Wu Yao almost thought that it was just a reflection from a mirror that had been placed in the middle. His jaw slackened out of surprise. *Wasn't Her Majesty's original body destroyed? Didn't she begin her cultivation all over again? Isn't she not as talented as before? Then, what's going on now?! T-that's a ninth-grade Xuan formation!*

Wu Yao stiffly turned his head and looked at Chu Liuyue in confusion and disbelief. The latter appeared calm and indifferent as if what she was currently doing was just something trivial. It took Wu Yao a long time before he managed to bring himself to ask, “Y-Your Majesty... D-did you just... replicate... those two ninth-grade Xuan formations?”

“Yes, it’s a shame that only these two patterns are the same though. Thus, I can only work on this area.” Chu Liuyue nodded without looking at him. *The barrier isn’t completely the same as the one at the border. It’s fortunate that the same ninth-grade Xuan masters were tasked to construct this barrier, which was why I managed to find two similar patterns. This makes things easier for me.*

It’s a shame... that only these two patterns... are the same? What does that even mean?! The corners of Wu Yao’s lips twitched hard as he gulped. “Uh... Your Majesty, are you saying that you have more ninth-grade Xuan formations as backups?”

“No.”

Wu Yao exhaled in relief.

“I just memorized a couple of them when I was at the border, though I didn’t expect to use them right now. I guess I got lucky!” said Chu Liuyue indifferently as she gathered force in her palm and injected it into the Xuan formation once more.

A strong force suddenly shot out from the two palm-sized silver patterns and flew toward the barrier in front of it.

Bam!

A soft collision was heard, and a glowing bridge was formed between the two Xuan formations.

Under Wu Yao's shocked and watchful gaze, Chu Liuyue calmly moved her hand.

The two palm-sized Xuan formations suddenly split right in the middle, and a crack arose from it and grew bigger at a rapid speed.

Crack!

Affected by this force, the two Xuan formations on the barrier split in the middle, forming a narrow but perfect entrance.

Chu Liuyue quickly checked the other areas of the barrier and only exhaled in relief when she noticed that the rest of the barrier wasn't affected by this crack.

The barrier was made up of many ninth-grade Xuan formations, so the rest of them might be affected as well if one wasn't careful enough. It was a good thing that Chu Liuyue had specifically picked these two links and carefully split them up. This was why the rest of the barrier remained unaffected and why she could hence go unnoticed.

Meanwhile, Wu Yao was completely dumbfounded, his mind blank. He knew that Chu Liuyue used to be extremely talented in the Xuan Master path, which was what allowed her to become an eighth-grade Xuan Master at a young age. Putting aside the fact that she had to restart her cultivation journey and hadn't reached her former cultivation level, even if she still were an eighth-grade Xuan Master, it was incredible that she could open the barrier made up of ninth-grade Xuan formations.

Not wasting any time on this matter, Chu Liuyue quickly went through the barrier.

Chapter 957: The Second Piece!

Chu Liuyue's figure rapidly disappeared, and the crack in the barrier quickly fixed itself.

In the blink of an eye, the two Xuan formations that were forced apart connected once again.

The silver light flashed and later dimmed. The barrier regained its peace and looked transparent again. It was as if... everything hadn't happened.

Wu Yao closed his eyes and looked dazed. Then, he couldn't help but pinch his face.

"Si—" The sharp pain jolted him awake, and he hurriedly stopped himself. But at the same time, it made him realize ever so clearly that everything which happened previously was real! *Her Highness actually opened the Beiming Imperial Palace's barrier!*

"Damn..." muttered Wu Yao. "Did Her Highness just find a place to cultivate during these two years?"

If not, how did she do it just now?

But after some careful thinking, it didn't seem to be the case.

Big Brother previously sent news saying that Her Highness had indeed changed her physical body and used her identity as Chu Liuyue to return to Xi Ling from Country Yao Chen step by step. It seems like the physical body used to lack a Yuan meridian... However.... It's no wonder Her Highness could calmly say that she wanted to sneak in. Perhaps she has other trump cards? Wu Yao rubbed his temples and felt his head ache. With such an outstanding Master, it's very hard on us as subordinates, okay?!

...

Chu Liuyue's figure perfectly merged with the night sky.

She was agile and moved very quickly. Additionally, her entire journey was smooth as she had previously carved the palace's entire map into her memory clearly. This was the case as she sprinted all the way to the Eastern Palace.

She met a few patrolling palace maids on the way, but she had already hidden her aura, so they didn't discover her.

In this manner, she finally reached the Eastern Palace's exterior about 15 minutes later.

Perhaps as the Crown Prince wasn't around and it was currently nighttime, the guarding of the Eastern Palace wasn't very strict.

It was probably because nobody thought that someone would be so daring as to sneak in here at night. They wouldn't even expect that this formidable barrier couldn't stop some people.

Chu Liuyue silently slipped into the yard.

Once she stepped through the yard's barrier, Chu Liuyue immediately felt that the inside was obviously different from the exterior!

In many corners of the dark hid strong and concealed auras! Other than the ones guarding on the surface, there were quite a few strong warriors guarding in the dark.

Luckily, Chu Liuyue was already adequately prepared. As long as she didn't meet them head-on, these people couldn't discover her so easily.

Chu Liuyue hid in the dark, closed her eyes, and held in her breath to focus, trying to find Chu Ning's aura.

Back when she was at Country Yao Chen's Imperial City, Chu Ning always worried about her as she frequently got into trouble. Due to this, she later specifically hid something with Chu Ning so that they could detect each other's presence within a certain distance.

Now, she didn't know if she could use this to find him.

The surroundings were deadly quiet as Chu Liuyue waited calmly.

After some time, a weak ripple came over.

Chu Liuyue suddenly opened her eyes and looked in a certain direction! *He seems to be in the study!*

...

Chu Liuyue knitted her brows slightly. *Wu Yao previously said that Father entered this study one and a half months ago, but the aura within is already very faint as if he has left for quite some time. However, this ripple indeed came from the inside! Perhaps he is hidden in a secret place beneath the study or some unknown location...? No matter what, I have to go in to take a look.*

But it was a pity that there were many people guarding outside the study, so it was difficult to enter silently.

Just as Chu Liuyue was in deep thought, she heard footsteps coming from not far away.

She quickly looked back and saw a man walking from the outside yard. Following this, she immediately hid her entire figure!

The footsteps sounded nearer and nearer, and that man's figure and face gradually became clear.

As the night was dark, only the stars were shining slightly.

Chu Liuyue could only see the rough outline of that person, but for some reason, she actually felt that this person looked quite familiar.

Very quickly, she discovered that this man seemed to be heading toward the study!

Walking to the door of the study, the soldiers in charge immediately greeted this man respectfully,

“Greetings, Officer Shang!”

Shang Binghe nodded. “Is there anything amiss with the inside?”

“No.” The guards shook their heads in unison.

“Mm, that’s good.” Shang Binghe nodded with one hand behind his back and looked oppressive. “The Crown Prince isn’t around, but we mustn’t let our guard down!”

“Yes!”

One of the guards hesitated for a moment and couldn’t help asking, “Officer Shang, didn’t you already come once in the day? Why did you come so late again?”

Shang Binghe glanced at the tightly shut door. *For some reason, I’ve felt very uneasy the last two days.*

He originally planned to rest, but his heart kept beating wildly. He also couldn’t calm down, so he decisively came to take a look.

“Nothing much. The Crown Prince isn’t around, so I wanted to take an extra look to ensure that everything is safe.”

The two guards nodded in understanding.

Shang Binghe had always been very meticulous and strict with his work, so it wasn't strange that he would do this. The rare thing was that the Crown Prince seemed to trust him a lot and gave him great authority, so he could walk around this yard.

He was thought highly of, so the people below definitely treated him with extreme respect and polite manners.

After confirming that there was nothing wrong, Shang Binghe planned to turn around to leave. But the moment his feet turned around, he suddenly stopped in his tracks and stared closely at the lock at the entrance.

Detecting the change in his aura, the two soldiers were rather dazed and nervous. "Officer Shang, why—"

"Did anyone enter the study during the day?" interrogated Shang Binghe coldly.

"Y-yes, Qian Dehou came before... He said he came on the Crown Prince's orders..."

Piak!

Piak!

Before they could finish their sentences, the two of them were slapped by Shang Binghe respectively and flew backward!

Bang!

The two of them fell onto the floor harshly and spat out blood!

“Stupid!” Shang Binghe’s face was green. “What kind of person is that Qian Dehou?! How would the Crown Prince possibly give him instructions alone?! Do you have brains?”

The two soldiers were hit until they couldn’t speak. They were paralyzed on the floor and kept vomiting blood, gasping for air.

Shang Binghe was very strong, and he didn’t hold himself back when he was angry, so how could these people be his opponents?

He walked toward the study with big steps and directly unlocked it to enter.

Chu Liuyue stared at the open door, and her gaze flashed slightly.

At this point, a commotion was heard from the golden bell!

She looked down and was slightly shocked. *Yuwen Jinghong’s golden bell was also crushed!*

She clenched her teeth and circulated her force!

The peach blossom engraving on her wrist suddenly lit up. The next moment, her figure silently disappeared from the ground!

Chapter 958: Found Him!

After Shang Binghe entered the study, he immediately conducted a thorough check. But after surveying the surroundings, he didn't find any traces of anything being flipped over, not even a sign of anyone entering.

However, this made Shang Binghe even more uneasy. *This means that the other party didn't come in for the items but for something else! Who knows what intentions they had when they purposely entered the place and were so meticulous not to leave anything behind?!*

In the end, Shang Binghe walked to the bookshelf and felt around for a while.

Then, a secret compartment jumped out behind the bookshelf.

He took out something from the compartment. After looking at it for a while, he seemed to heave a sigh of relief and put it back again. "Luckily..."

His voice was very low, but one could still hear the thankfulness and fear in his voice.

After standing rooted to the ground for a while, he pushed the secret compartment back and did some actions to the rack as if restoring the mechanism on it.

A while later, he then turned around to walk out when he confirmed that everything was fine and locked the door again.

Shang Binghe stood before the steps and said coldly and harshly, "Go and find Qian Dehou immediately!"

Realizing that something was amiss, the soldiers in charge respectively recovered their senses and hurriedly answered, "Y-yes!"

Following that, they hurried on their way.

The soldiers previously beaten by Shang Binghe lay on the floor with their faces and bodies badly mangled, but they didn't even dare to beg for mercy as they shuddered in fear. They knew very clearly that they would be the first to die if something happened!

Shang Binghe glanced at the two of them coldly. "Someone, tie the two of them up! They will confront each other when Qian Dehou comes!"

"Yes!"

...

Outside the study, the bloody aura permeated everywhere, and the sinister and cold atmosphere was suffocating.

And inside the study, Chu Liuyue could finally breathe as she moved her wrist and neck, feeling the sourness.

When Shang Binghe came in earlier, she took the chance to follow and teleport in as well.

In the end, Shang Binghe searched around this place for a while, causing her to crouch in this extremely narrow space until her entire body was stiff. Luckily, he finally left and closed the door again.

This undoubtedly benefited Chu Liuyue greatly, and even she couldn't help but admit that her luck was heaven-defying tonight!

After confirming that the people outside were still waiting to capture Qian Dehou, Chu Liuyue felt slightly relaxed as she silently went to the study.

Previously, she only vaguely saw Shang Binghe touching around the area before opening the secret compartment. She didn't clearly see how he did it, so she had to quickly find a way to solve it now.

At first glance, this bookshelf didn't look any different from a normal one. There were no barriers and no Xuan formations, not even a special pattern—it was normal and ordinary.

Chu Liuyue stared at it for a while before taking action hesitantly. She had once learned about mechanisms and compartments from Cen Yi for a while, so she could forcefully recognize that this seemed to be some sort of a mechanism.

However, even she couldn't confirm whether she could open it successfully.

She tried a few methods afterward, but this item still didn't move.

"Officer Shang, Qian Dehou is here!" A piercing announcement was suddenly heard from outside.

Chu Liuyue was stunned. *I don't have much time left! I must open this compartment as soon as possible!*

In her hurry, she tried again!

And this time, the bookshelf finally had a change!

The originally smooth surface suddenly split into a few parts; some were high, and others were low as they intersected. It was a pity that the secret compartment didn't jump out.

"Qian Dehou, do you know why you're asked to be here?" This was Shang Binghe's voice.

Tiny beads of sweat broke out on Chu Liuyue's forehead as she was very nervous and tried again!

"I-I don't know..." Qian Dehou's voice was dazed with a hint of horror. *I was originally sleeping soundly when someone suddenly dragged me out of bed and directly brought me to the palace! And this is even the Crown Prince's study yard!*

Seeing Shang Binghe's expression, he knew that something bad had happened. However, he didn't even know what exactly happened!

“They said that you entered the Crown Prince’s study today?” said Shang Binghe coldly and then immediately hollered, “How impudent!”

Piak!

A resounding slap was heard.

Chu Liuyue’s heart seemed to be gripped by something tight as she immediately tried again.

The compartments changed, but the secret compartment area still remained motionless.

“I-I didn’t!”

“Say it! What exactly is going on?”

Qian Dehou’s argument sounded very weak and useless at this point.

“Could it be that the people in the yard worked together to target you?! Do you want me to bring you in now and jolt your memory?!”

Following this, a commotion could be heard from the yard. Amidst this commotion, footsteps were approaching! It seemed like they really wanted to come in and take a look!

Chu Liuyue's back was almost drenched by the sweat!

Crack!

That was the unlocking sound!

Chu Liuyue clenched her teeth, and her hands quickly felt around the bookshelf as she tried for the last time. *If I really cannot do it this time, I have to give up no matter what.*

Da.

She heard an extremely soft sound, and the secret compartment finally sprung out again!

Chu Liuyue immediately went forward and retrieved the item within—it was cold to touch and rather heavy.

When Chu Liuyue saw what was in her hands, shock flashed across her face.

It was actually a copper mirror! But different from average copper mirrors, this mirror's surface didn't reflect the mirror-holder's face and was instead covered by intense blood!

At first glance, the blood filled the area, looking stunning!

The sinister and horrifying aura that spread from within was suffocating!

An indescribable harsh feeling rose from the bottom of her feet, and Chu Liuyue shuddered. For some reason, she could feel an extremely terrifying and sinister murderous intent just by taking one glance!

She tried her best to control her urge to throw this mirror away as she stared at it for quite some time.

Gradually, the blood on the mirror dissipated bit by bit, revealing a blurred scene. It seemed to be a cage, and the surroundings were pitch black.

She couldn't see anything at all.

There was only a blurred figure within that metal cage. He kneeled on the floor, and there was a chain around his neck as his head was lowered. His body was covered by bloodstains, and he was motionless.

Chu Liuyue's heart harshly skipped a beat! The moment she saw this figure, she knew that it was Chu Ning!

She bit her lips to restrain herself from shouting.

After not seeing him for so long, he seemed to have become thin as his clothes looked empty. She could even see his wrists hanging out of his sleeves—they were so thin that she could see his bones.

Endless fire burned in Chu Liuyue's chest as it almost exploded!

Bang!

Coincidentally, the door was opened at this point!

Chapter 959: What Do You Think

"Who's there?" The moment Shang Binghe dragged Qian Dehou into the room, he felt that something was amiss. He harshly hurled the latter to the floor and quickly searched around the study!

There was nobody, but Shang Binghe confirmed that someone had been here previously! His heart then tingled, and he looked toward the study!

There were signs of someone touching it, and it seemed like the search was done in a hurry to forcefully open something.

His heart immediately sank, and he immediately rushed to the secret compartment!

Everything was normal.

He rapidly restored the mechanism's original appearance and opened the secret compartment.

That item was still lying inside properly.

Shang Binghe then sighed deeply. *Good that it's not lost, good that it's not lost... If this thing went missing, all of us wouldn't be able to bear the consequences! Judging from the situation, someone should've wanted to trigger the mechanism and take away the item in the secret compartment. But before they could do so, they were interrupted and escaped in a hurry.*

After Shang Binghe repeatedly confirmed that the item was fine, he then put the secret compartment back into its original position. However, his facial expression was very ugly. *No matter what, someone barged into this study and almost stole that item! When His Highness comes back, he won't let this go easily!*

Shang Binghe's face darkened, and he walked to Qian Dehou.

Sensing the other man's dangerous aura, Qian Dehou unwittingly shuddered. "O-Officer Shang... I'm innocent. I was framed! I didn't do anything!"

Whoosh!

Shang Binghe drew out his sword and pressed it against Qian Dehou's neck as he squinted his eyes. "Tell me what exactly happened today!"

He knew that Qian Dehou didn't have this much courage, but something must've happened in between.

As expected, Qian Dehou was dazed for a moment when he heard this. Then, he suddenly thought of something and hurriedly said, "I-it's Xiao Song! It must be him!"

Following this, he narrated the entire incident once.

After Shang Binghe heard the narration, he was so furious that he laughed. “So because of this pot of alcohol, someone took advantage of you?! Qian Dehou, how many lives do you have for you to be so daring to drink when you’re patrolling in the Eastern Palace?!”

This was severe misconduct, and the consequences this brought were so severe that it was beyond one’s imagination!

“Do you know that you dying a hundred times isn’t even enough to make up for the mistake you caused because of your drinking?!”

Qian Dehou had difficulties that he couldn’t voice out as he could only crazily kowtow and beg for mercy.

Actually, he didn’t plan to drink the alcohol in the beginning, but for some reason, he thought that Shang Binghe was suppressing him and felt very upset. Thus, he couldn’t hold himself back and drank it.

Originally, he only wanted to sip a few mouthfuls of alcohol to relieve himself of his agony, but he directly lost his consciousness. When he woke up again, he realized that he had slept in a corner for a very long time.

As he knew that he had made a mistake and that he was very guilty, he pretended that nothing had happened and went back directly. Who knew that such a serious thing would happen here?

Shang Binghe clenched his fists tightly. “Go! Bring that person over too!”

However, he actually knew that there was a high chance that they couldn't find the other party since they were prepared.

As expected, after searching for a while, his subordinates reported that the person had disappeared.

When Qian Dehou heard this, he immediately collapsed onto the floor and looked defeated. He knew that it was completely over for him this time...

Shang Binghe had already predicted this, but he was still enraged and needed to suppress the news first. "Immediately suppress the news and don't let it go out of the Eastern Palace! If the news gets out, you will be held responsible! Also, lock Qian Dehou up and wait until His Highness returns before we make a decision!"

"Yes!"

Shang Binghe knitted his brows and thought for a moment before walking out. "Send my command out—say that a high-level fiend escaped from the hunting ground. Immediately send people to search the palace as well! At the same time, tighten the palace's security. We mustn't let that fiend escape just like that!"

"Yes!"

...

Outside the palace walls, Wu Yao waited anxiously. *Her Highness has gone in for a long time without coming out, and there is no news at all. Who knows what is going on... It is about to be daylight soon. If Her Highness doesn't come out in time, it will be problematic!*

Just as Wu Yao was filled with worry, the transparent barrier in front of him suddenly moved!

He looked up in surprise and saw a tiny crack appearing in that barrier. A familiar figure then leaped out of it the next moment.

It was Chu Liuyue.

“Your Highness!” Wu Yao welcomed her happily. “You’re finally out!”

But when he walked in closer, he realized that Chu Liuyue’s expression was amiss.

“...Your Highness, are you alright?” Wu Yao asked rather worriedly. He then thought of something and glanced behind Chu Liuyue.

It was empty.

Did she... not find Lord Chu Ning?

Chu Liuyue shook her head. “It’s fine. I at least know Father’s whereabouts now, but it’s a pity that I couldn’t bring him out together with me.”

On the one hand, she hadn't confirmed her father's whereabouts. On the other hand, the Eastern Palace's security was tight. She could come in and out alone, but it would undoubtedly be much more difficult if she brought her father along.

Besides, judging from the previous situation, her father might be immediately discovered once he was free of that cage.

Without adequate preparations, she wouldn't be able to do it.

Wu Yao nodded. Actually, it's also good that Her Highness could confirm his location. After all, the person that brought Chu Ning away was the infamously harsh Beiming Crown Prince! It's already very difficult for Her Highness to sneak into the Eastern Palace and find out about these things! But considering Her Highness's behavior, Lord Chu Ning doesn't seem to be doing well.

At this point, noises were heard from within the palace walls.

Chu Liuyue turned and glanced.

Light from fires could be seen everywhere inside the high walls, and it was very bright. It seemed like they were searching for someone.

She coldly stared at this.

Suddenly, the golden bells on her wrist rang again!

Her heart tingled.

After Wu Ming and Yuwen Jinghong continuously crushed the golden bell, her heart would harshly shudder every time she felt something from the golden bells.

Uneasiness surged into her heart.

She flipped over her wrist and took a look.

As expected—this time, Mu Hongyu crushed her golden bell!

Calculating the time, they've only gone into Ancient Phoenix Mountain for around two or three days. However, three out of five of them have already decided to crush their golden bells! Something must've happened! Chu Liuyue suppressed her tumbling emotions. "Let's go!"

...

On this night, Beiming Imperial Palace's troops were in a mess. However, Chu Liuyue returned to her residence overnight as if nothing had happened.

It was only when the next morning arrived that she woke up, tidied herself, and went to Ancient Phoenix Mountain again.

When she reached the place, Chu Liuyue still greeted Ning Yuan and the rest before sitting down at her seat.

Dantai Chen stared at her for quite some time and asked with unknown intentions, "I heard that something happened in the palace yesterday. I wonder what you think about it, Shangguan Yue?"

Chapter 960: Perilous Situation!

Chu Liuyue leaned against the chair lazily, and her lips curled up. "Senior Dantai, your words are pretty interesting. This is the Beiming royal family's business, and my view doesn't seem to be important. I'm afraid you've asked the wrong person."

As she spoke, she surveyed the surroundings.

Jun Qizhi hadn't come yet; he seemed to be delayed by this incident. However, Chu Liuyue didn't feel that Shang Binghe would tell the full story to Jun Qizhi.

Dantai Chen lightly grunted. "The rest of us have been here for the past two days, and we haven't gone back since, except for you who went back to the city yesterday. Yet, such a thing happened... Do you think it's a coincidence?"

Chu Liuyue straightened her body and looked at Dantai Chen calmly in a seemingly smiling manner. "If you put it this way, Senior Dantai, do you think this is related to me?"

"I didn't say that."

"But don't you mean it? You've already put it in that way, and everyone heard it. The few of us present aren't fools... Or do you expect me to help investigate this matter?" Chu Liuyue seemed to be joking, but her words were very direct.

Dantai Chen didn't expect her to be so ruthless and felt awkward for a moment. *This Chu Liuyue is banking on the backing that she has and is becoming increasingly rude! She was still quite polite previously, but she doesn't even care for my face now!*

However, Dantai Chen didn't think that even a normal person couldn't continue tolerating their repeated bullying.

Besides, Chu Liuyue was never a master that liked to be disadvantaged. If other people owed her something, she had to get it back! Thus, she had no intentions of being superficial with him now.

"I was just asking casually. Why do you need to be so agitated?" Dantai Chen's tone became cold.

Chu Liuyue smiled brightly. "If I question the Taiyu Dynasty in such a manner, I wonder if you can still smile at me?"

"You!"

The atmosphere immediately became tense and cold.

Without Jun Qizhi around, there was nobody to control the crowd.

Gongsun Xiao took two glances but didn't say a word.

As for Ning Yuan, he didn't seem to care about these arguments from the start as he kept looking at the rainbow barrier and waited patiently.

Dantai Chen couldn't win against Chu Liuyue, and he could not speak further in front of so many people.

Even if he won the argument, it would be happiness at that moment. In the blink of an eye, others might secretly say that he was bullying a younger person. If he lost the argument, he would be even more humiliated.

He decisively shut his mouth and didn't glance at Chu Liuyue again. *If Ruoli and the rest can win against the Tianling Dynasty in Ancient Phoenix Mountain, nothing else matters!*

...

After finally having peace, Chu Liuyue rubbed her temples.

In actual fact, she was far from being as leisurely and relaxed as she looked on the surface. On the one hand, she was worried about her father's situation. On the other hand, the situation of Jian Fengchi and the rest in Ancient Phoenix Mountain didn't seem to be good.

She only gave these golden bells to the few of them out of precaution. After all, nobody knew what kind of situation Ancient Phoenix Mountain would be in since it hadn't opened in thousands of years. Nobody knew what dangers one would meet either.

She didn't expect that three of them would get into trouble after entering for such a short period of time.

It was a pity that this barrier was blocking her, so she couldn't find out what exactly happened inside.

If everyone met with the same danger, it was reasonable. But if it were only them... it would be perilous.

...

Time slowly trickled past.

When it was evening again, Jun Qizhi still didn't appear. Perhaps he was busy with imperial court matters or the incident at the Eastern Palace.

Without thinking, Chu Liuyue also knew that Lin Zhou City had to be bustling with chaos in secret at this point. However, she was unaffected since she was staying at the foot of Ancient Phoenix Mountain.

From another perspective, this was also a good way to hide her identity.

As she was in a hurry back then, she didn't restore the bookshelf to its initial state. Thus, it would definitely cause many strict checks.

Of course, she didn't bring back that weird mirror.

That mirror had an obvious and special aura to it. If I had brought it with me, the other party would've found me easily. I still have to make another trip to that study, but it clearly can't be done in these two days. While Chu Liuyue waited, she breathed in, focused, and started to cultivate.

Even though this place was outside the barrier, the intensity of the force was still quite high as it was at Ancient Phoenix Mountain's edge.

Actually, after she broke through to become a peak stage-six warrior, she could clearly feel that the force in her body hadn't been used up and that she had much of it left.

In other words, she had faintly touched the barrier of a stage-seven warrior when she broke through to become a peak stage-six warrior.

Perhaps because she had dueled with Rong Xiu for quite some time, so she knew her strengths and weaknesses better. Thus, she could naturally find her breakthrough point.

As the force in her body kept accumulating, the distance between her and that barrier was reduced.

Just like this, two days passed.

Jun Qizhi had come once in between before leaving in a hurry again.

As Chu Liuyue was cultivating, she didn't go back again.

Most of the people didn't care about Chu Liuyue cultivating. In their eyes, no matter how hard Chu Liuyue cultivated, it wasn't worth a mention compared to entering Ancient Phoenix Mountain.

Since she willingly gave up on this chance, she couldn't blame anyone else.

With nobody disturbing her, Chu Liuyue cultivated in peace and tried to reach a higher level bit by bit.

It was now the sixth morning.

Chu Liuyue finished the last Heavenly Cycle and finally opened her eyes before gradually breathing out. Her eyes seemed to be brighter than before, and her aura had obviously strengthened.

Then, she looked up at the rainbow barrier.

Suddenly, the golden bells on her wrist vibrated twice.

Chu Liuyue was stunned and suddenly stood up!

It was actually Jian Fengchi and Qiang Wanzhou crushing their own golden bells one after another!