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Chapter 4.1

Isolated And Without Help (Part 1)

Very late at night, not a sound could be heard with only the moonlight shining through the tree that swayed about in the cold winter wind. The official residence of the Ministry of Appointment should be undisturbed, but two middle-aged men were out following an elderly man who guided them while holding a red candle lantern as they walked along the pathways. After walking past the winding pathways, they finally entered the rear court of a small building.

The Imperial Censor, Huang Qi, and Ministry Justice Official, Gao Hai Ming, both hurriedly rushed over into the study room where they found Official Li, who was always steady, clenching both of his hands. He was pacing back and forth in front of the desk and his face appeared anxious.

Huang Qi and Gao Hai Ming had been government officials for many, many years and they knew that since Official Li invited them out in the middle of the night, there must be an emergency. He had cautiously picked this hidden rear court to hold the meeting, so there certainly had to be an important matter today. Therefore, Huang Qi did not exchange conventional greetings and got straight to the point to ask: "Official Li, what is the reason that you invited us here?"

Li Ling greeted them and after he cupped his hands towards them he did not say anything at first before he softly said to the elderly man, "Guard the courtyard gate; nobody can approach."

"Yes." The elderly man carried the lantern and properly closed the door carefully.

He waited until the sound of the elderly man's footsteps faded away before Li Ling went towards the two men and with a grave complexion said, "About today's matter, this official braves death to invite these two officials to come and have a discussion."

Huang Qi and Gao Hai Ming looked at each other in dismay and feeling perplexed they asked, "Official Li, what is going on after all?" Official Li was a senior figure from three dynasties and could currently be regarded as an important person. If he said it like this today, it made the two people concerned and their palms could not help but become a little sweaty.

Li Ling did not waste any more words when he walked beside the desk and opened the curtain that separated the inner room. Two people then came out of the inner room.

"Who are they?"

The thin woman who was wearing plain clothing had a beautiful face that made people unable to look away; unfortunately, she had on an expressionless face. She hardly concealed her cold personality and it was such that it made those who saw her unable to stop their hearts from trembling. She pulled along a ten year old young girl and although the girl's eyes contained tears, her expression was also cold.

Seeing the young girl's face who wore white prisoner clothing with bloodstains, Huang Qi breathed a mouthful of cold air, "General Wu's family?!" He did not recognize the woman with the plain clothing, but he had seen this young girl and she was General Wu's beloved daughter, Wu Ruo Xiao!

Gao Hao Ming who also recognized Wu Ruo Xiao then surprisingly asked, "Official Li, this ..."

Previously, they had heard the Wu family's young girl had been rescued; so she was

actually at Official Li's residence. They knew about Official Li's and Wu's family friendship, so they could understand if he rescued the Wu family's heir but since she was already rescued, why did he call them here now?

As she brought her young sister to sit properly on the chair, Wu Ruo Jun looked as usual, stepped forward one step and then coldly said, "All of the Officials, Ruo Jun knows the two of you are Cang Yue's faithful officials. I asked the two officials to come today, not because I want to appeal to the two officials to clear my father's injustice, but because I have one matter that I must make known to the Imperial Court."

Wu Ruo Jun originally wanted to enter the palace and assassinate Long Qu Mu; with her martial arts she should be able to succeed, but if there was any accident, her younger sister would not have anyone to take care of her. Mother went all out to pass on this secret and her death was without justice. Her thoughts then went to Official Li who was her dad's long time friend. If she could combine forces with the cabinet ministers of the Imperial Court to capture Long Qu Mu, her parents injustice could also be cleared!

"This is a blood written letter that my mother left behind before she died."

Taking the silk, she handed it over to them and after they looked at it, they were alarmed and could not help but to shiver afterwards.

Earlier when the Emperor succeeded the throne he was not able to produce the jade ruler's seal so there were rumors that he seized the throne. Fortunately, a posthumous edict allowed him to succeed and ascend the throne, but it had been so many years. The whereabouts of Cang Yue country's jade ruler seal was still unknown, but today actually brought a clue?

Huang Qi excitedly asked, "Did you find the posthumous edict and the country's jade ruler seal?" If General Wu's family really had these two distinct things it would not be surprising that all their families would be brought into calamity and killed!

Wu Ruo Jun lightly shook her head, "I do not know where the coffin at Feng Huang Valley is or what the so-called rare stone is." She had thought about finding it, but she really did not know anything about the two distinct things her mother had mentioned.

Gao Hai Ming and Huang Qi immediately looked towards Li Ling; he was currently the most senior official from when the late Emperor was alive and very relied upon. If he did not know this, then nobody would know it.

Li Ling breathed out a sigh. After contemplating for a moment, he finally said, "When the late Emperor was alive, he was in contact with an elderly strategist. Under the influence of alcohol, the late Emperor once told me the strategist had a mysterious rock that could seek a soul from the earth. When it gathered the heaven and earth spiritual influences, it would be integrated as a whole and thus, it would be a world phenomenon. Afterwards, I never heard the late Emperor mention it again and even many years after the late Emperor's death, I still did not know whether it was true if the coffin at Feng Huang Valley was really the world phenomenon the late Emperor spoke of."

These past twenty years he was always doubtful about Prince Yong's succession to the throne. When the late Emperor died that year, the whole palace was controlled by Prince Yong so no one could see the late Emperor. Prince Yong also took out the posthumous edict very naturally so no one dared to fight the Imperial decree.

Tonight Ruo Jun went to find him so he could look at this silk; and without the slightest hesitation he believed her. After this he urgently called for these two trusted colleagues to meet.

Wu Ruo Jun pushed to ask, "Who is the strategist?" As long as she found the strategist, she would have a chance to get the jade ruler's seal.

Li Ling shook his head, sighed and said, "After the late Emperor's death, he lost any trace of it. It has been over twenty years since the late Emperor's death, so the strategist would have lived to be more than one hundred years. I am afraid he may be as thick as a dusty cave now."

With great difficulty, she had held some hope but now her hope was gone, so Wu Ruo Jun's face became colder and colder.

Huang Qi handed the silk back to Wu Ruo Jun and asked, "Do you have any other evidence in your hand?"

Wu Ruo Jun shook her head. The general's residence had been sealed and when she had gone back there, the house was ruined beyond recognition. Clearly, someone had beaten her at trying to find something and as a result, she believed in the blood written letter her mother left behind even more.

Sian's notes:

In the past translations, I kept some of the title in pinyin as I wasn't able to find the words in English. In this translation, I'll try to keep the pinyin words as little as I can so for example, I will translate Daren as Official, instead of keeping it as Daren. The self appellation such as Li mou will be translated as this official if the person who refers himself is an official. Or this person if the person who refers himself is a rich person or a young master.

But I will keep the name of places, organization, etc in pinyin. That's why I use Feng Huang Valley instead of translating it to Phoenix Valley. Or Lin Feng Guan border, etc.