

Having children earns benefit, start competing for dominance in the world by marrying a wife

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Chapter 51: Lu Chen Has Another Special Identityi

Hearing Mu Zixuan's suggestion, Lu Chen's eyes lit up; he thought the method was feasible.

Originally, his focus was only on North City because his strength was not yet formidable, and he did not want to draw too much attention.

Moreover, at that time, he had just arrived in North City and was quite poor. Even if he had issued a notice for the selection of concubines, it was not certain that beautiful girls from other territories would come to North City.

Now, the North Prince Mansion's soap and perfume products had spread throughout the Great Xia Dynasty, and many people knew of the North Prince Mansion's wealth.

At this time, issuing another notice for the selection of concubines would definitely interest many influential families, prompting them to send the beautiful girls from their families to the North Prince Mansion.

Only with a sufficient number of participants would there be some who scored above ninety points.

After a moment of silence, Lu Chen said to Mu Zixuan, "Alright, let's do as the consort has suggested."

Seeing Lu Chen agree, Mu Zixuan immediately said, "Prince, may I take charge of the selection of concubines?"

Lu Chen, holding Mu Zixuan close and stroking her hair, said, "You've just given birth, you should properly rest and recuperate."

Even though Lu Chen was a scoundrel, he wasn't so beastly as to have his own wife, who had just delivered a child, run around busily, let alone involve her in the process of taking additional concubines. What would that look like?

Mu Zixuan said, "I wish to share the burden with the Prince. Please let me handle this matter."

At this, Mu Zixuan gazed intently into Lu Chen's eyes with her bright and charming eyes.

Moved by Mu Zixuan's look, Lu Chen found it hard to refuse, and so he could only say, "Well then, I'll trouble the consort with the matter of taking in concubines, but I will need to be present on the day of the selection."

Seeing Lu Chen consent to let her oversee the matter of taking in concubines, Mu Zixuan felt very happy inside and immediately said, "Rest assured, Prince, I will definitely have you personally choose during the selection."

A few days later.

The North Prince Mansion issued a notice for taking in concubines, open to the entire Great Xia Dynasty.

No sooner had the notice for concubines been issued than Lu Chen was verbally abused by the common people of the Great Xia Dynasty.

The people of North City, however, did not think much of it, since, after all, the North Prince had not done anything to trouble the commoners since his arrival.

Moreover, it seemed that the North Prince Mansion had recently developed a seed capable of yielding a thousand catties per mu, and it had already been trialed in various places of North City.

If this crop called "potato" were to be widely promoted, then North City would no longer suffer from a shortage of food; hence, the common people of North City were tolerant of Lu Chen's indulgences.

Most crucially, the common people in North City lived on Lu Chen's territory. As the king of North City, no one would dare to curse their own lord on his land, unless they no longer wished to live.

The rest of the territories were different. Many commoners of the Great Xia Dynasty considered the North Prince indulgent in debauchery and incompetent.

They had long heard that the North Prince kept many beauties in his mansion, indulging in pleasure-seeking day and night, in a debauched and dissipated lifestyle.

The North Prince already had so many beauties, yet he still wanted to take in concubines, and not just locally but from all over the Great Xia Dynasty.

Could it be that the North Prince had already gone through all the beautiful girls of North City, grown tired of them, and now sought to harm the daughters of other seigniors' territories?

Upon thinking of this, some of the upper-class scholars and poets grew very angry. If the North Prince took all the beautiful girls to the North Prince Mansion, what would be left for them to choose from for concubines?

Instantly, literati and scholars from various places started writing critiques against the North Prince.

At the same time, there were also talks of impeaching the North Prince on the Great Xia's royal court.

Of course, when the imperial censors impeached the North Prince, it was not out of concern that he would steal their women; issues that escalated to the royal court typically had political motives.

Those impeaching the North Prince were mostly officials from Prince Lu Shuyun's faction, and the main reason was to denigrate Lu Chen.

Although the Chu Family had basically ceased contact with the North Prince, as long as that blood relation existed, the officials aligned with Lu Shuyun would never pass up any opportunity to slander the North Prince.

They didn't think that by impeaching Lu Chen the Prince would be stripped of his title.

In the Great Xia Dynasty, the title of Seignior was not so easily stripped away, unless they were to rebel or engage in treason against the Great Xia Dynasty.

North Princes who did not act outrageously in their own territories but simply indulged in pleasure-seeking within the confines of their own Prince's Mansion, like the North Prince, were not a concern for the court; the Sum Emperor would actually prefer all the princes of the Great Xia Dynasty to be like Lu Chen.

If all the Seigniors of the Great Xia Dynasty were like Lu Chen, then the Sum Emperor could control the entire Great Xia more easily.

In the face of the censors' impeachment of Lu Chen, the Sum Emperor didn't take it seriously at all; the recent events in the Capital city were what mattered most. As for the North Prince, as long as he did not rebel, whatever he did in North City was of little concern to the court.

After the court assembly, the Sum Emperor went to the Royal Garden.

The Sum Emperor brushed aside the chaos of the court proceedings, for the time after the assembly was when real matters were handled.

At this moment, the State Preceptor Situ Ce was already waiting in the pavilion.

Unlike the other ministers of the court, the State Preceptor was not required to attend court assemblies; this was a privilege of a Grandmaster.

When the Sum Emperor appeared at the pavilion, a Shadow Guard clad in black armor came before him, "Your Majesty, I have ascertained that the remnants of Chen Nation did not enter the Imperial Palace to assassinate you but were looking for something."

Ever since the remnants of Chen Nation had entered the Imperial Palace, the Sum Emperor had sent people to investigate their purpose.

He did not believe the remnants of Chen Nation were so foolish as to dare enter the Imperial Palace to assassinate him, under the protection of only two Half-step Grandmasters which was no different from courting death.

On hearing the Shadow Guard's words, the Sum Emperor's eyes narrowed slightly; it was just as he had thought—the remnants of Chen Nation were not there to assassinate him, but had another purpose.

At that time, the Sum Emperor asked Situ Ce inside the pavilion, "State Preceptor, what do you think the remnants of Chen Nation entered the Imperial Palace to find?"

Situ Ce said, "The item that would prompt the remnants of Chen Nation to risk so much by entering the Imperial Palace can only be the Imperial Jade Seal of Chen Nation."

"It is said that Chen Nation's Imperial Jade Seal is the key to their treasury. After the Great Xia overcame Chen Nation, the location of Chen Nation's treasury was never found. However, I believe those royal remnants of Chen Nation surely know of it."

"If Chen Nation wishes to restore their rule, they will need funds to raise an army, so they would likely want to open the treasury and take the gold and treasures within."

After listening to Situ Ce, the Sum Emperor snorted coldly and said, "Even I don't know where the Chen Nation Jade Seal is located; the mere idea that they would come to the Imperial Palace to look for it is ludicrous!"

At this point, the Shadow Guard in front of the Sum Emperor continued, "Your Majesty, I have also discovered something else."

The Sum Emperor said indifferently, "Speak."

The lead Shadow Guard immediately said, "I have discovered that the remnants of Chen Nation seem to be connected with the Mysterious Moon Palace. After the remnants of Chen Nation disappeared, the last place they were seen was where a disciple of the Mysterious Moon Palace appeared."

Upon hearing the three words "Mysterious Moon Palace," the Sum Emperor's face instantly darkened. It was as if those words had touched upon some past events he would rather not recall.

The Sum Emperor then said, "I understand."

With that, the Sum Emperor immediately asked, "How are things on Prince Lu Chen's side?"

The lead Shadow Guard replied, "After Prince Lu Chen went to North City, he has spent his days seeking pleasure in the Prince's Mansion without any anomalies. Furthermore, a few days ago, Prince Lu Chen's wife gave birth to a Princely Heir."

After hearing the report from the lead Shadow Guard, the Sum Emperor said nonchalantly, "Very well, you may leave."

"Yes, Your Majesty, I shall take my leave."

After the lead Shadow Guard had left, the Sum Emperor, with his hands clasped behind his back, gazed at the fish swimming to and fro in the lotus pond and said, "State Preceptor, why do I have the feeling that the Grandmaster by Prince Lu Chen's side was not sent by Chu Xiong, but rather seems to have been planted by the Mysterious Moon Palace?"

Lu Chen's mother, who was Chu Yue, had once been a member of the Mysterious Moon Palace and even the Goddess thereof.

At first, the Sum Emperor had not thought of the Mysterious Moon Palace, but it was only after the lead Shadow Guard mentioned it just now that he realized Lu Chen had a special identity..

Chapter 52: Indeed, Someone Should Be Sent to Watch Over Him_I

According to the regulations of the Mysterious Moon Palace, the child born to the Goddess of the Mysterious Moon Palace is the God's Son, so Lu Chen is the God's Son of the Mysterious Moon Palace.

Thinking of this, the Sum Emperor's face showed an unsettled look.

Now, he somewhat regretted having sent Lu Chen to establish a feudal domain.

This was an extremely unstable factor, after all, it involved the sects within the territory of the Great Xia.

The Mysterious Moon Palace might well use the North Prince to deal with the Capital city.

Moreover, the Mysterious Moon Palace is now suspected of colluding with the remnants of Chen Nation; who knows what they are planning to do.

With this thought, the Sum Emperor let out a cold laugh and said, "The aristocratic families are not yet resolved, and the sects have jumped out. They truly never give me a day of peace."

Hearing these words, Situ Ce suggested, "Your Majesty, if you are worried about the North Prince colluding with the Mysterious Moon Palace, why not send a Shadow Guard to surveil him?" Updated from novelbIn.(c)om

Hearing Situ Ce's suggestion, the Sum Emperor pondered for a moment, "Indeed, someone should be sent to watch over him."

As he finished speaking, the Sum Emperor turned to someone behind him and said, "Commander Bai, this task will be yours. Go to North City yourself. I want to see which Grandmaster is so kind to Chen, always staying by his side to protect him."

At this moment, no one seemed to be behind the Sum Emperor, but as his words fell, the figure of a woman dressed in white clothing gradually appeared.

The woman had a graceful figure and a cool complexion, without a trace of expression on her face.

She said with a bow, "Yes, Your Majesty."

The Sum Emperor continued, "Alright, you may leave now."

"Your subordinate takes leave."

As her words fell, the woman's body disappeared once again, as if she had turned invisible.

Seeing the Sum Emperor dispatch the Deputy Commander of the Shadow Guards to North City in person, Situ Ce felt incredulous and then asked, "Your Majesty, isn't it a bit of an overreaction for Commander Bai to go to North City to investigate this matter?"

The Sum Emperor indifferently replied, "Anything concerning the Mysterious Moon Palace is no small matter."

Since the Sum Emperor had put it that way, Situ Ce said no more. He knew very well that the Sum Emperor was extremely wary of the Mysterious Moon Palace, and it had a lot to do with Chu Yue.

At this point, Situ Ce raised a question, "Your Majesty, Mu Changtian should be leaving the Capital city in these few days, right?"

Upon hearing Situ Ce's mention of Mu Changtian, the Sum Emperor's expression changed slightly, growing dark.

"What, does the State Preceptor mean to plead on behalf of Mu Changtian?"

Hearing the Sum Emperor's icy tone, Situ Ce knew that nothing he said would make a difference; the Sum Emperor was set on his course, determined to eradicate Mu Changtian and his family.

Since nothing would change the Sum Emperor's mind, Situ Ce decided not to waste more time and immediately said, "That's not the case, but I would like to advise Your Majesty that if you plan to take action against the aristocratic families of the South, it is essential to have several trusted people by your side."

Mu Changtian could have been a sword for the Sum Emperor to use against the Southern aristocratic families, but the Sum Emperor, wary of his military power, insisted on bringing him down.

Now, there were fewer and fewer people around the Sum Emperor who could be trusted, and in the future, he might indeed become a solitary figure.

However, Situ Ce had no intention of interfering excessively; as long as the Great Xia Dynasty bore the surname Lu, it had nothing to do with him as a Grandmaster.

In the face of Situ Ce's reminder, the Sum Emperor said dismissively, "The State Preceptor's advice will be remembered."

In the residence of Prince Lu Shuyun.

Lu Shuyun, looking at the intelligence gathered before him, sneered and said, "My ninth brother really has dumb luck, to think that the soap and perfume he created would make so much money!"

The rivalry among princes for the succession also requires silver to bribe and win over people's hearts, so Lu Shuyun always puts great emphasis on making money.

For instance, the experts employed at his residence were all recruited with silver. Without silver, he wouldn't be able to attract so many experts.

Seeing Lu Chen indulging in pleasure all day long at the Prince's Mansion, not having to do anything or care about anything, and entrusting all the mansion's business to a woman who could make hundreds of thousands of taels of silver, how could Lu Shuyun not feel jealous?

He had built up so many industries, yet could not earn hundreds of thousands of taels of silver in a month, but Lu Chen, that useless prince, could, which made Lu Shuyun feel extremely unbalanced inside.

Upon hearing Lu Shuyun's words, a retainer by his side whispered, "Your Highness, why don't we find a way to steal the methods for making soap and perfume from North Prince Mansion, and then we can sell soap and perfume ourselves?"

Lu Shuyun said indifferently, "No need. The Tower Master of Blood Moon Tower has personally gone to North City. It shouldn't be long before he can bring back the methods for making soap and perfume."

Upon hearing these words, the retainer's face changed greatly, and he quickly said, "Your Highness, at this time we absolutely must not touch Prince Lu Chen. If anything happens to Prince Lu Chen, many in the court will say it was you who sent someone to assassinate Prince Lu Chen, and this incident would be very detrimental to your fight for the succession."

"Now is a critical time, we can't afford any mistakes."

Facing the retainer's advice, Lu Shuyun did not care at all, "The situation in the Capital city is chaotic now, and not many people care about that useless prince up north."

"Moreover, the Barbarian Tribe will soon head south, and no one will know that this was done by Blood Moon Tower. The attention of the court ministers will only be focused on the Barbarian Tribe."

Upon hearing Lu Shuyun's words, the retainer's expression stiffened. Obviously, the amount of information in Lu Shuyun's words was too huge, leaving the retainer by Lu Shuyun's side momentarily unable to react.

A few days later.

At the gates of the Capital city.

A row of prison carts passed through the city gates, but the common people did not throw stones or rotten eggs at the prisoners inside as usual.

The common people all knew that today was the day that the Duke Mu Residence family was being exiled, and all the people inside these carts belonged to the Duke Mu family.

Who Duke Mu was, the common people still understood; he was one of the Great Sum Dynasty's Sky Kings who had supported the Sum Emperor's rise to the throne.

Although he had fallen to this state, the common people still held a sense of awe toward him.

At this very moment.

On the city wall.

A man dressed in silver armor looked at the slowly moving prison carts and asked the person next to him, "Is everything ready?"

The soldier beside him immediately said, "General, rest assured, it is guaranteed there will be no mistakes!"

The man nodded in satisfaction, his gaze fixed on Mu Changtian inside the prison cart, and then he muttered to himself, "Teacher, may you have a good journey!"

For the first two days, the convoy carrying the Duke Mu Residence did not encounter any danger, and the Duke Mu people even thought they might already be safe.

But Mu Changtian was not a fool. Over these two days, they thoroughly checked everything they ate and used. Although it was unlikely that the soldiers escorting them would take action against them, it was necessary to be cautious.

Moreover, he did not believe that the Sum Emperor would let their family off the hook.

He was, after all, one of the Great Sum's Sky Kings, and even though his martial arts had been crippled, in the eyes of the Sum Emperor, letting him go was still akin to freeing a tiger back to the mountain.

Two nights later, the Duke Mu Residence convoy arrived at an inn.

There were no villages in front nor shops behind the inn, and there were no people for a long distance around. Seeing that it was already so late, the officials escorting the Duke Mu family suggested to Mu Changtian, "Duke Mu, how about we rest here for the night?"

Although the Duke Mu Residence had been exiled, the officials escorting them still treated the family with great respect.

Mu Changtian's lips curved slightly upward before he said, "Fine, let's rest here for the night then.."

Chapter 53 - 53: 53: Come Out, Stop Hiding!

As Mu Changtian's voice fell, the bailiffs dispatched to escort them took out the keys to the prison carriage and opened its doors, releasing the people from Duke Mu Residence.

Since they were escorting the household of Duke Mu Residence, the bailiffs weren't very strict; generally, when they arrived at a resting place, they would open the carriage doors and let them out for a rest.

At this time, one bailiff entered the inn and said to the innkeeper, "Shopkeeper, we will be staying here tonight. How many rooms does your inn have?"

The shopkeeper said with a smile, "Officer, the inn is already fully booked. You'd better look elsewhere."

Upon hearing this, the bailiff said dissatisfied, "What do you mean, fully booked?"

"What kind of joke is this? There's no village ahead or shop behind; how can you have so many guests?"

The innkeeper replied, "It's precisely because there is no village ahead or shop behind that people passing this road have no choice but to stay at our inn."

Hearing this, the bailiff had no choice but to say, "Alright then, do you have any spacious open ground here where we can rest our feet tonight?"

The shopkeeper replied, "Our inn's backyard is quite spacious. Perhaps the officer would like to squeeze in there for the night?"

As the bailiff was about to say something, the innkeeper quickly continued, "If the officer decides to rest at our inn, all the food and drinks will be free tonight. What do you think?"

Hearing this, the bailiff immediately said, "Well then, find someone to help feed our horses."

The shopkeeper immediately responded, "Very well, I will arrange for someone to feed the horses right away."

The bailiff then turned and left the inn, approaching Mu Changtian, and said with slight apology, "Duke Mu, I am truly sorry, the inn is fully booked, and it seems you will have to endure resting in the open air tonight."

Mu Changtian indifferently replied, "No matter, go on with your tasks."

The bailiff immediately said, "Alright then, I'll have the shopkeeper send you some food later."

As the bailiff walked away, Mu Jingwu and Mu Xingping, the two brothers, gathered around.

Mu Xingping said, "Father, why hasn't there been any action against us after two days? Could it be that His Majesty has decided to let us go?"

Hearing this, Mu Changtian chuckled before replying, "What's the rush? Haven't they come already?"

Hearing this, Mu Xingping was startled, and then nervously looked around. "Where? Where are they? I don't see them."

Mu Changtian looked at the inn before him and said, "They are inside waiting for us."

Upon hearing this, both Mu Jingwu and Mu Xingping's eyes turned toward the inn, just in time to see a few people peeking out from halfway opened windows on the upper floor.

Noticing that the Mu family members had spotted them, those people immediately closed the windows.

Seeing this scene, both Mu Jingwu and Mu Xingping were startled.

They had thought the Emperor had already decided to spare them, but it turned out that it was just not time yet, and probably, those people would make their move tonight.

Mu Jingwu then asked, "Father, what should we do now?"

Mu Changtian replied, "We'll talk about it tonight. I'm curious to see who will actually come."

Mu Changtian knew in his heart that the Emperor would definitely send a Grandmaster-level expert this time, but who it might be was uncertain.

There were many experts he could think of, and many with whom he had conflicts.

Soon, the sun in the sky gradually began to set.

Mu Changtian and his company were on full alert.

Just then, the sound of a whistle rang out in the courtyard.

With the sound of the whistle, a group of people dressed in black and wearing masks appeared in the courtyard.

Seeing this scene, the officials tasked with escorting to the Duke Mu Residence instantly understood what was happening and hurriedly got up to flee.

The masked assailants did not stop the officials from escaping, after all, their target was not the officials in the first place.

The men in black drew their bows and aimed in unison at the people of the Duke Mu Residence.

The men of the Duke Mu Residence immediately stood out, surrounding the children and shielding them inside, while the women of the Duke Mu Residence were trembling with fear, not daring to move.

At that moment, the crowd of masked assailants gradually dispersed, and a man walked out from among them, taking off his mask to reveal a face with a scar from a knife.

Upon seeing the man's real face, Mu Changtian sneered, "I considered every possible person who might come to deliver me, but you—you I had not considered at all!"

At these words, the man with the scarred face laughed too and said, "Teacher, how could His Majesty bear to hand over the newly formed Dragon Guard to me to command if it wasn't for my coming to personally deliver you?"

The scarred man was named Chen Pengyi, who had been brought up and promoted by Mu Changtian himself; Mu Changtian was also his benefactor.

On normal days, Chen Pengyi, out of gratitude to his mentor, treated the Duke Mu Residence very well.

Even a year ago, when the Duke Mu Residence was implicated due to the Zhou family's rebellion, it was he who personally pleaded with the Sum Emperor. In the end, the Sum Emperor used the Writ of Protection Against Execution to offset the charges and did not act against the Duke Mu Residence.

However, what Mu Changtian had not expected was that this very person was now after his life.

Mu Changtian sighed and said, "Truly, the human heart is inscrutable. It seems that when you pleaded with His Majesty back then, it was all to coerce the Mu Family into

surrendering the Writ of Protection Against Execution, wasn't it a task given to you by the Emperor?"

Chen Pengyi coolly said, "Teacher, now that things have come to this point, there's no use talking about those matters."

"Why not speak about any unfulfilled wishes you might have? Perhaps I, as your student, can fulfill them on your behalf."

Hearing this, Mu Changtian laughed loudly, "Hahaha, Chen Pengyi, oh Chen Pengyi, today, I have been abandoned by Lu Xingqiu, yet did you never wonder if one day you too would be discarded by Lu Xingqiu! When that time comes, I fear your end will be even more miserable than mine!"

Chen Pengyi, with an uncaring expression, retorted, "You needn't worry about me, Teacher. I definitely will not follow in your footsteps."

"Well then, since the teacher has no more words left to say, please have a good journey!"

With that, Chen Pengyi waved his hand, giving a cold command, "Fire the arrows!"

However, just at that moment, countless arrows suddenly shot down from the rooftop of the inn, and Chen Pengyi's men had not even time to react before they were struck.

At this sight, Chen Pengyi's expression darkened in an instant, "Who dares interfere with His Majesty's affairs!"

No sooner had Chen Pengyi finished speaking than a group of people dressed in red clothes leaped down from above; these individuals were all of fifth rank realm.

Seeing these people, Mu Changtian was slightly taken aback.

He had guessed that the Mysterious Prince who had given them the Great Returning Pill might send someone to rescue them, but he did not expect the prince to send people who were all above fifth rank martial artists.

It seemed that the prince took their Duke Mu Residence quite seriously.

At this time, Chen Pengyi said coldly, "Since you dare to meddle in His Majesty's affairs, you should be prepared to die."

Then, Chen Pengyi shouted loudly, "Come out, stop hiding!"

As soon as Chen Pengyi's words fell, two Grandmasters and several martial artists appeared behind him.

Seeing these individuals, Mu Changtian spoke with a smile, "His Majesty really values me highly.. To kill a cripple like me, he has actually sent three Grandmasters!"

Chapter 54 - 54: 54 How Could You Not Have Dispersed Your Skill

Seeing that all the martial artists had appeared behind him, Chen Pengyi looked at the distant Mu Changtian and said, "Teacher, it's really unexpected that, at this point, there is still someone willing to save you."

"It seems the teacher isn't as loyal and patriotic as he appears to be on the surface."

"If the teacher were truly loyal and patriotic, he should commit suicide right now."

As his words fell, Chen Pengyi kicked off the ground, and his body instantly charged towards Mu Changtian, reaching him in the blink of an eye.

Then he swung his sword.

A white light flashed in front of Mu Changtian.

Just when Chen Pengyi thought Mu Changtian was undoubtedly doomed, suddenly, a force burst forth from Mu Changtian's body, followed by a mass of gas that enveloped him.

The next moment, Mu Changtian raised his hand and caught Chen Pengyi's sword blade barehanded.

Witnessing this scene, Chen Pengyi was stunned, even the two grandmasters and the other martial artists who came to kill Mu Changtian were also shocked.

They had heard that the emperor had given Dissipate Power Pills to the males of Duke Mu Residence, and that the men of the Mu Family no longer had any skill in their bodies—now they were at most slightly more robust and a bit stronger than ordinary people.

But the aura emitted by Mu Changtian suggested anything but a lack of skill; he clearly was still a master.

There are differences between masters, and the Great Xia Dynasty had many, but why could Mu Changtian become the so-called Sky King?

It wasn't just because he had supported the Sum Emperor's rise to the throne that was so simple; within the Master Realm of the Great Xia Dynasty, there were few who could match Mu Changtian. That's why he had been able to become the Sky King.

Chen Pengyi, somewhat in disbelief, said, "You... how could you possibly not have dissipated your skill!"

Chen Pengyi's voice trembled a little. As Mu Changtian's disciple, he had followed Mu Changtian into many battles and was very clear about Mu Changtian's strength.

He had thought removing Mu Changtian this time would be a very easy task and would also make the Sum Emperor trust him more, but he had not expected that Mu Changtian had not dissipated his skill.

What a joke!

Mu Changtian was a god of war!

He was known as an invincible existence among masters of the same realm!

When they had arrested the entire Duke Mu family in the Capital City, even the Grandmaster State Preceptor Situ Ce had to take action himself, or else how could the Great Xia Dynasty have easily captured Mu Changtian.

But now they were telling him that Mu Changtian had not lost his skill? Wasn't this endangering his own life?

Panic appeared on Chen Pengyi's face, and he knew very well that he was no match for Mu Changtian. If Mu Changtian had not lost his skill, he had almost no chance of winning.

However, at that moment, one of the grandmasters behind Chen Pengyi spoke up, "No! Mu Changtian has not fully recovered his strength! His protective Gang Qi is unstable; at most, he can only exert the strength of a half-step grandmaster!"

After all, they were all masters, and they could tell at a glance whether Mu Changtian's strength had fully recovered.

And indeed, Mu Changtian had not fully recovered his strength. Although the Great Returning Pill could help Mu Changtian recover his skill, Mu Changtian only needed some time to adjust to return to his peak, but there simply hadn't been enough time.

Being able to display the strength of a half-step grandmaster was already quite impressive, given there wasn't enough time for Mu Changtian to recover.

Hearing the words from the grandmaster behind him, the panic on Chen Pengyi's face was swept away in an instant, replaced by a reckless smile.

"Teacher! You really gave your disciple a fright!"

"Just perfect, as the teacher hasn't lost his skill, let your disciple experience your strength!"

As he spoke, Chen Pengyi suddenly exerted force in his arms, directly pulling the sword from Mu Changtian's hand, then swung his blade at Mu Changtian again.

The sharp wind of the sword swept towards Mu Changtian in an instant, but this time Mu Changtian did not take it head-on and instead dodged it.

At the same time, the two Grandmasters behind Chen Pengyi also immediately joined the battle.

Although Mu Changtian was at the end of his strength, they wouldn't let their guard down until Mu Changtian was dead.

After all, Mu Changtian had been the Sky King of the Great Xia Dynasty. To kill Zhou Wangtian back then, the Great Xia Dynasty even mobilized a Grandmaster.

Now, although Mu Changtian's skill had declined, he was still not easy to deal with.

Seeing Mu Changtian being besieged by three Grandmasters, Mu Jingwu and Mu Xingping rushed over, intending to help Mu Changtian.

The two of them had at most the strength of Ninth Grade, naturally no match for Grandmasters, but they could relieve some of the pressure the other two Grandmasters put on Mu Changtian.

As Mu Xingping and Mu Jingwu joined the fight, the martial artists brought by Chen Pengyi also started to make their move.

Sounds of swords clashing and fierce combat continued to erupt from the inn's backyard.

Fortunately, the mysterious martial artists dressed in red protected the Mu Family relatives. Although Mu Changtian and the others were being suppressed by three Grandmasters, Chen Pengyi's people were completely unable to approach the relatives of the Mu Mansion.

However, after all, Chen Pengyi's side had three Grandmasters, and there were several Ninth Grade experts as well. Those in red were quickly outmatched.

At this moment, Mu Changtian, due to a moment of carelessness, was struck by one of the Grandmasters and stumbled back over a dozen steps until he hit the wall of the courtyard and stopped.

Seeing Mu Changtian injured, Chen Pengyi said with a mocking laugh, "Old man, it seems you've really gotten old!"

Hearing this, Mu Changtian snorted and then said, "Chen Pengyi, even if I die today, I'll make sure to take you down with me!"

As he spoke, Mu Changtian's aura suddenly surged.

Chen Pengyi's face changed, and he immediately said, "No good, he's going to use the Blood Ignition Skill!!!"

"Quick, stop him..."

"All... pfft..."

Just as Chen Pengyi wanted his two Grandmasters to stop Mu Changtian from using the Blood Ignition Skill, a sword instantly pierced Chen Pengyi's body before he could even release his Protective Gang Qi.

Chen Pengyi struggled to turn back, wanting to see who had stabbed him, but before he could, the person who assassinated him stabbed him again from behind.

Everyone present was stunned by this scene.

One of the Grandmasters on Chen Pengyi's side immediately cursed, "Wei Chao! What are you doing!"

At this moment, Mu Changtian was also dumbfounded; he had been ready to use the Blood Ignition Skill and fight to the death with Chen Pengyi and his men, but suddenly a Ninth Grade martial artist emerged from the crowd and stabbed Chen Pengyi in the back.

What was going on?

How come he couldn't understand?

Then, one of the Grandmasters on Chen Pengyi's side immediately thrust his sword at Wei Chao, who had stabbed Chen Pengyi.

Wei Chao's Qinggong was extremely impressive; in an instant, he used that Grandmaster's sword to leap onto his shoulder and then again onto the roof.

Grinning at Mu Changtian, Wei Chao said, “Duke Mu, the Blood Ignition Skill shouldn’t be used carelessly! If the Prince sees you’ve been seriously injured, I’m afraid we’ll be punished by the Prince.”

Hearing Wei Chao’s words, Mu Changtian instantly realized that this Ninth Grade martial artist was also one of the Mysterious Prince’s men.

Who exactly was this Mysterious Prince, able to place such an important figure next to Chen Pengyi?

The appearance of Wei Chao deepened Mu Changtian’s curiosity about the Mysterious Prince..

Chapter 55: The Farce Should Come to an End

After the Hu Ben Army was dismantled, the Sum Emperor established the Dragon Guard, which was personally led by the Sum Emperor himself, with Chen Pengyi merely serving as a General managing it on his behalf.

Logically speaking, the Dragon Guard should be an army with extremely strict selection criteria, and it would be difficult for other forces to plant their spies within this troop.

But not long after its establishment, a Ninth Grade secret agent appeared by Chen Pengyi’s side.

Moreover, this Ninth Grade secret agent was a man of the Mysterious Prince.

This made Mu Changtian quite curious about the extent of control that the Mysterious Prince actually had over the Great Xia Dynasty.

After Chen Pengyi fell to the ground, his eyes were fixedly staring at Wei Chao on the ceiling, unable to believe that Wei Chao was the very person who stabbed him in the back.

Chen Pengyi’s eyes were wide open, the eyeballs filled with red blood vessels, and he used all his strength to cry out resentfully, “Wei... Chao!!!”

As his voice faded, Chen Pengyi took his last breath and was gone.

At that moment, one of the Grandmasters on Chen Pengyi’s side looked at Wei Chao and said, “Wei Chao, do you know what you’re doing?! You’ve disrupted His Majesty’s plan, you and all your family will pay the price for this!”

Wei Chao just smiled and said nothing.

At that time, the air seemed to have suddenly solidified, and everything around became instantly quiet.

The sounds of swords clashing in the yard also diminished, not because all of Chen Pengyi's men were dead, but rather, for some unknown reason, people suddenly felt an overwhelming sense of oppression.

At this moment, everyone heard a man's voice coming from the entrance of the courtyard.

"The Shadow Guard is almost here, it's time to end this farce!"

Sensing something amiss, a Grandmaster immediately called out in the direction of the voice, "Who's there?"

The Grandmaster had barely finished speaking when a flash of cold light struck, and before he could defend himself, his head was sent flying into the air.

At that moment, another Grandmaster reacted. He immediately attacked the figure.

However, in the next instant, another streak of cold light flashed by, and his head too took flight.

To kill a Grandmaster with a single strike!

Seeing this scene, everyone present was stunned in their tracks.

As the bodies of the two Grandmasters brought by Chen Pengyi slowly fell to the ground, Mu Changtian finally got a clear view of the newcomer.

The newcomer was dressed in red, holding a long saber in his hand, and after killing two men, there was not even a speck of blood on his blade; he directly sheathed his saber.

Mu Xingping couldn't help exclaiming at that moment, "A... Grandmaster?"

Mu Jingwu interjected from the side, "Not... not a Grandmaster. A Grandmaster's aura would be even stronger, but his strength must be approaching that of a Grandmaster!"

No sooner had Mu Jingwu finished than the man spoke to the air behind him, "Gentlemen, it's time to clean up!"

As his voice fell, several Ninth Grade Martial Artists appeared behind him, but the strength of these Martial Artists was very formidable, and in no time at all, they had slain all of the fighters brought by Chen Pengyi.

Mu Changtian stood still, not moving a muscle, feeling utterly bewildered.

Because he recognized the person who had come!

The man turned out to be the owner of Joy Tavern in the Capital city!

Mu Changtian was fond of the food at Joy Tavern; before his daughter married Prince Lu Chen, he frequently went there to drink, so he was fairly familiar with the owner of Joy Tavern.

He had always thought that Joy Tavern was an establishment belonging to Prince Lu Shuyun; therefore, after his daughter Mu Zixuan married Prince Lu Chen, he stopped visiting Joy Tavern for drinks.

And now, the person who came to their rescue turned out to be the owner of Joy Tavern?

And he had never known that the owner of Joy Tavern was a formidable character capable of instantly killing two Grandmasters!

Even at the peak of his power, let alone now when he has yet to recover his full strength, Mu Changtian could not have killed two Grandmasters in an instant.

This just goes to show how formidable the Joy Tavern's owner's knife skills are!

No, it's not just his knife skills that are simple!

His knife isn't simple either!

After the killing, not a single drop of blood stained the weapon, something Mu Changtian had never heard a knife could achieve!

Regaining his composure, Mu Changtian said with a smile, "I never imagined that one of Prince Lu Shuyun's subordinates could be such a formidable figure, Boss Liang, you really keep a low profile."

"It seems that the Prince you mentioned must be Prince Lu Shuyun?"

Although it seemed unbelievable, since Liang Zong was already here, and indeed he was the owner of a tavern under Prince Lu Shuyun, it made sense that he was one of Prince Lu Shuyun's men.

But what Mu Changtian couldn't understand was why Prince Lu Shuyun would send someone to save him.

After all, Prince Lu Shuyun was in the Capital city, taking such a great risk to save him; even if he did manage to save him, what use would it be, since Prince Lu Shuyun seemed to have no military power, right?

Prince Lu Shuyun, a prince without a fief, had at most a thousand trusted aide positions in the Capital city.

Mu Changtian initially thought that the Mysterious Prince wanted to start a rebellion, hence he wanted to keep him alive so as to involve him in the insurrection, but it turned out to be the Sum Emperor's son.

Honestly, this made Mu Changtian feel somewhat uncomfortable, especially since the individual was Prince Lu Shuyun, who shared a blood relation with the Sum Emperor.

Having been deceived by his father once, how could he easily trust his son?

Hearing Mu Changtian's words, Liang Zong responded with a smile, "Prince Lu Shuyun? No, no, no, Prince Lu Shuyun doesn't have the clout to have me serve him."

Hm?

Mu Changtian was taken aback by Liang Zong's words.

Not Prince Lu Shuyun?

Liang Zong, the owner of a tavern under Prince Lu Shuyun, is not one of his men?

Curious, Mu Changtian then asked, "So who is this Prince you speak of? We have come this far; surely you can tell me now?"

Liang Zong answered, "Don't be in a hurry, Duke Mu. You will meet him very soon."

With a smile, Mu Changtian said, "This Prince of yours is indeed very secretive."

Although he knew Liang Zong had not reached the Grandmaster realm, his strength was undeniably close, and that Mysterious Prince could actually afford to have such a formidable man undercover, a sign that he must have many more skilled subordinates.

Mu Changtian now desperately wanted to pry open Liang Zong's head and see which Prince had so many able men and planned so many things.

At this point, Liang Zong said, "Duke Mu, from today onward, the Mu Mansion will cease to exist."

Saying this, Liang Zong turned to the Brocade Guards behind him and instructed:

“Duke Mu was assassinated by bandits on the way to his exile, and in a crucial moment, he used the Blood Ignition Skill to perish alongside three Grandmasters!”

Then, turning to Mu Changtian, Liang Zong asked, “Duke Mu, how do you feel about this arrangement?”

Mu Changtian, of course, knew the intention behind Liang Zong’s plan—to allow them to change their identities and live under new ones, thus avoiding the Sum Emperor’s detection.

Mu Changtian said, “Then I’ll trouble you, Boss Liang.”

Liang Zong replied, “You are too polite, Duke Mu. It is my duty to do this.”

Following that, the Brocade Guards sprang into action, swiftly reconstructing the crime scene.

By the time the Shadow Guards arrived at the inn, it had been consumed by a great fire, leaving only a few of Chen Pengyi’s severely injured soldiers sprawled outside the blaze.

Chapter 56: Mu Changtian’s Speculation !

At dawn, a caravan made its way along the pitted road.

It was remarkably quiet, with almost only the sounds of horse hooves and wheels to be heard.

After a night of continuous travel, the people from the Mu Mansion were all exhausted. At this moment, most of the female members of the Mu household had closed their eyes and entered the realm of dreams.

But at this time, the men from the Mu Mansion were still unable to fall asleep.

Especially Mu Changtian and his two sons.

They sat in the carriage, looking at the distant mountains, their minds preoccupied with who knows what.

It was then that Mu Changtian suddenly spoke up, “This is the road to North City.”

Upon hearing this, Mu Jingwu and Mu Xingping, who had been somewhat weary, instantly perked up.

Mu Xingping immediately asked, "Father, are you sure you're not mistaken?"

Mu Changtian, gazing at the distant green mountains, replied, "Having headed to North City several times to fend off the invasions of the Barbarian Tribe, how could I possibly mistake it? This is indeed the road to North City."

Upon saying this, Mu Changtian furrowed his brows.

Last night, Liang Zong did not reveal their destination to them. Once they boarded the carriage, Liang Zong's men immediately led the way.

Due to the darkness at the time, Mu Changtian had not clearly seen which direction they had taken.

Only when daylight broke did Mu Changtian finally see clearly. He recognized many landmark mountains, peaks he had seen before while leading his troops to North City to repel the Barbarian Tribe.

He was very familiar with North City, some of its roads firmly ingrained in his memory.

After hearing what Mu Changtian said, Mu Xingping guessed, "Father, could it be that Prince they're talking about is Prince Lu Chen?"

Mu Jingwu spoke with a trembling voice, clearly unable to believe his own words.

Who Prince Lu Chen was—they were all too aware.

Even though Prince Lu Chen was already Mu Zixuan's darling, everyone in Duke Mu Residence still considered Prince Lu Chen to be nothing more than a nepotic prince, indolent and fond of luxury.

Just as Mu Xingping finished speaking, Mu Jingwu piped up, "Xingping, what are you thinking? How could it possibly be Prince Lu Chen? Surely you know what kind of person he is?"

"This..." After a brief silence, Mu Xingping said, "That's true, but then why would they take us to North City?"

"North City is Prince Lu Chen's fief. That means the Prince of North City can only be Prince Lu Chen, right?"

Hearing Mu Xingping's words, Mu Jingwu did not respond and only turned his head to look at his father, hoping he might know something.

At this moment, Mu Changtian's brows were tightly knit, and his expression became more solemn. He pondered at length before speaking again, "It certainly can't be Prince

Lu Chen, but I suspect that Prince has gone to North City, likely wishing to discuss some matters with me there.”

“Of course, there is another possibility...”

Stopping there, Mu Changtian paused in his speech, not continuing. His expression turned even more grave.

Seeing such a somber look on his face, Mu Jingwu immediately asked, “Father, what other possibility could there be?”

Mu Changtian pondered for a moment before speaking, “It’s possible that our rescuers are not a prince of the Great Sum, but the Barbarian Tribe!”

At those words from Mu Changtian, Mu Jingwu and Mu Xingping were both momentarily stunned.

Mu Changtian continued, “The Barbarian Tribe is to the north, and to reach their territory, they naturally have to pass through North City.”

“And they have reasons to do this. I am well aware of the Great Sum. Befriending me would make it more convenient for them to attack the Great Sum in the future.”

After hearing Mu Changtian’s words, Mu Jingwu hurriedly said, “Father, if it really is the Barbarian Tribe, then if we align ourselves with them, won’t we truly become traitors to the nation?”

Mu Jingwu had a clear sense of right and wrong. Betraying the Sum Emperor was no issue for him, after all, the emperor had abandoned them and even sought their lives.

But if they were to betray the entire Great Sum, betray the people of the Great Sum, and then become a slaughtering tool in the hands of the Barbarian Tribe, turning against and killing the people of the Great Sum—that, Mu Jingwu could not do.

He certainly did not want to become the sinner of his people.

After hearing his son’s words, Mu Changtian fell into silence and did not speak for a long time.

In his heart, he actually shared the same thoughts as Mu Jingwu. If he were only to pledge allegiance to a certain Prince of Great Sum, he would do so without hesitation.

But if he were to pledge allegiance to the Barbarian Tribe, his heart was utterly unwilling.

Years ago, when the Barbarian Tribe invaded Great Sum, they killed so many of the common people, and many of his soldiers died at their hands. To pledge allegiance to the Barbarian Tribe at this time, becoming a lackey of theirs, would be worse than death for him.

After pondering for a while, Mu Changtian said, "All right, there's no use thinking about it now. Once we reach North City, we will find out who this Mysterious Prince they speak of is."

"You haven't slept all night. Close your eyes and sleep for a while; we still have many days until we reach North City."

In the Capital City of Great Sum,
within the Royal Garden of the Imperial Palace.

Hearing the report from the leader of the Shadow Guard, the Sum Emperor always felt his intelligence reports were filled with oddities.

His complexion was very unsightly, and at this moment the Royal Garden was incredibly silent, one could only hear the sound of carp flipping out of the water in the lotus pond.

After a while, the Sum Emperor finally spoke, "Three Grandmasters facing a man whose skill had dissipated, only to be dragged down to mutual destruction in the end, heh."

The voice of the Sum Emperor was cold, silently exerting a tremendous pressure on the people in the Royal Garden.

Clearly, the Sum Emperor was in a very bad mood.

Although Great Sum had many Grandmasters, they were not so easily developed. Losing three Grandmasters to take down a man on the brink of death, how could the Sum Emperor be pleased?

At that moment, the Sum Emperor asked, "I am curious, why was Mu Changtian still able to use the Blood Ignition Skill at the end? Wasn't his skill supposed to have dissipated?"

As he spoke, the Sum Emperor turned his head to look at Situ Ce, the State Preceptor, inside the pavilion.

"State Preceptor, are you certain that you sensed Mu Changtian's skill had dissipated within him?"

Hearing the Sum Emperor's words, Situ Ce knew that the Emperor was doubting him, and he asked, "Your Majesty, do you suspect that your servant did not administer the Dissipate Power Pill to him?"

The Sum Emperor said indifferently, "I just want to know why the Dissipate Power Pill had no effect on him."

The Sum Emperor was quite paranoid, and since he knew that Situ Ce himself wanted to protect Mu Changtian, he could not help but suspect that Situ Ce had played some tricks.

Situ Ce then said, "I did indeed sense that all of Mu Changtian's skill had dissipated. As for why he could still use the Blood Ignition Skill, perhaps someone in the prison gave him Small Replenishing Pills, allowing him to recover part of his skill."

Hearing this from Situ Ce, the Sum Emperor started to remember. In this world, although there were not many pills capable of restoring skill, they did exist.

Especially within those Sects, which had considerable research on pills that could restore skill.

At that moment, the Sum Emperor immediately said to the leader of the Shadow Guard, "Investigate! Do it now. I want to see who has the gall to go against me!"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"This servant takes his leave."

The leader of the Shadow Guard then turned and left.

Watching the back of the departing Shadow Guard, the Sum Emperor said to himself, "Mu Changtian has indeed been a good servant to me, solving a problem for me before his death."

The trouble referred to by the Sum Emperor was clearly Chen Pengyi, Mu Changtian's student.

Initially, the Sum Emperor had placed great trust in Chen Pengyi, mainly to deal with Mu Changtian. Now that Mu Changtian had been dealt with, Chen Pengyi had also become useless. The Emperor had planned to find an excuse to get rid of him once he returned.

But now, Mu Changtian and Chen Pengyi had perished together.

This meant that the military power of Great Sum was firmly in his hands. With the military power secured, it was time for him to do what he wanted..

Chapter 57 - 57: The Chu Family's Internal Troubles and External Threats_1

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Mu Changtian was assassinated on his way to exile, and before his death, he used the Blood Ignition Skill and took three Grandmasters down with him—an incident that quickly spread throughout Great Sum.

With Mu Changtian's death, the Sum Emperor completely seized control of the military power in Great Sum, now commanding millions of soldiers.

Moreover, all these military leaders were personally promoted by the Sum Emperor, and the vast majority of them were absolutely loyal to him.

Holding so many soldiers in his hand, what did the Sum Emperor want to do? What would he do? The Aristocratic Families within Great Sum were not fools.

Shortly, the number of merchant caravans within Great Sum surged, particularly in the territories of the Seigniors, where the numbers doubled.

Of course, except in North City.

The merchant caravans were just a cover for the Aristocratic Families, who used them to travel around and collude with various powers.

The Sum Emperor had already sharpened his knife; there was no way the Aristocratic Families wouldn't react at all.

The thoughts of the Aristocratic Families were unanimous—if the Sum Emperor wasn't compliant and obedient, then it was time for a new Emperor.

It wasn't unprecedented for Emperors throughout history to try to eliminate the Aristocratic Families.

Some Emperors weakened the foundation of Aristocratic Families through civil service exams, some restricted them through land reforms, and yet others suppressed them through commercial means.

Yet the effects of these methods were limited.

The Sum Emperor, having eliminated two Sky Kings and thoroughly controlling the military power of Great Sum, was clearly losing patience with the Aristocratic Families and aimed to physically annihilate the existing major families.

The actions of the Sum Emperor were too swift and purpose-driven, quickly catching the attention of the major Aristocratic Families, especially those in the South.

Ever since Chu Yue's inexplicable death, Chu Xiong had kept a vigilant watch over the Capital city for years, sending numerous spies to the Capital—any slight whisper or rustle there and he'd know about it.

Upon learning that Mu Changtian had died and military power had fallen into the hands of the Sum Emperor, Chu Xiong had been losing sleep, sensing that a great disaster was looming over the Chu Family.

Chu Family, in the courtyard.

Chu Xiong sat in the pavilion, looking at the intelligence from the Capital city with a troubled expression on his face.

At that moment, two white-haired elders arrived at the pavilion, one of them said, "Big brother, you've seen the Sum Emperor's actions, should our Chu Family also start making preparations?"

Hearing his second brother Chu Liang's words, Chu Xiong fell silent for a moment, then said, "I have already sent someone to contact Qi Prince, and I believe we will have results soon."

At these words, Chu Liang expressed his dissatisfaction, "Big brother, what use is Qi Prince? He's nothing but a wine-soaked good-for-nothing. Are you really counting on him to raise an army and rebel?"

Chu Xiong's idea was to use the Seigniors to limit the Sum Emperor, forcing him to give up any thoughts of moving against the Aristocratic Families, or to incite the Seigniors to rebel, keeping the Sum Emperor so preoccupied that he wouldn't have the energy to deal with the Aristocratic Families. Of course, if a Seignior could defeat the Sum Emperor, that would be even better.

Qi Prince was the one most dissatisfied with the Sum Emperor; ever since the Sum Emperor's ascension, he had targeted Qi Prince multiple times, which is why Chu Xiong chose him as the first candidate to instigate a rebellion.

However, it was clear that his second brother Chu Liang had his own ideas. Chu Liang then said, "If you ask me, we should just directly arrange for someone to assassinate the Sum Emperor. Once he's dead, all our problems will be solved."

At this point, their younger brother Chu Song asked, "If the Sum Emperor were to die, whom should we support to take the throne?"

Chu Liang said matter-of-factly, "Isn't that obvious? Of course, we support Prince Lu Shuyun! If not him, do you really want to back that useless drunkard from North City?"

"Besides, Prince Lu Shuyun's mother is from the Wang Family of the Southern Aristocratic Families. He surely can't follow in his father's delusional footsteps and think about moving against us. And it happens that our Chu Family has a good relationship with the Wang Family."

...

"Once Prince Lu Shuyun ascends the throne, we can send some of our family's maidens to his side. If Chu Family's girls can quickly bear Prince Lu Shuyun's offspring, competing for the position of Empress is not an impossibility."

After listening to Chu Liang's words, Chu Song said, "Second Brother, why do I feel that Prince Lu Chen is a better choice? If he indulges in the pleasures of the Imperial Palace, wouldn't it be easier for us to control him? And whoever we want him to establish as Empress, he will."

Chu Liang snorted coldly and said, "Do you think I haven't considered that? He is just a good-for-nothing who can't get his act together. If we really choose him, do you think he would be able to balance the interests of the major Aristocratic Families? There would be even greater resistance in the court; those ministers would never agree. Among the several Princes, anyone is qualified, except for him."

"Don't forget, he is Chu Yue's child and his relationship with the Mysterious Moon Palace is out of the ordinary. If he really rises to power, would it still be our turn to control him?"

Chu Song then said, "Second Brother, you make some sense."

At that moment, with a darkened face, Chu Xiong said, "Second Brother, that's going too far. No matter what, Chu Yue is also my daughter. No matter how you rank the relationships, she is my daughter first, and then the Goddess of the Mysterious Moon Palace. How could her son be unqualified for that position?"

"Moreover, do you really think the Sum Emperor is so easy to assassinate? Discussing who should ascend to the throne now, isn't that a bit premature?"

"The Sum Emperor has a Grandmaster by his side, and besides Situ Ce, we don't know if there are other Grandmasters secretly protecting him. To assassinate him successfully, I fear, would be harder than ascending to heaven."

Chu Liang mocked, "Big Brother, I think you've grown old and your mind is no longer agile."

"Why do you think I said we should support Prince Lu Shuyun earlier? Prince Lu Shuyun is now in the Capital city; he can fully assist us in our plan to assassinate the Sum Emperor."

Chu Xiong, frowning deeply, immediately said, "No, we absolutely cannot assassinate the Sum Emperor now. If the assassination fails, the Sum Emperor will surely take this opportunity to immediately act against the Aristocratic Families."

"Our preparations are not yet sufficient; we cannot take this risk."

By now, everyone in the court knew that the Sum Emperor was going to take action against the Aristocratic Families, and the Aristocratic Families knew that the Sum Emperor would act against them, but even if the Sum Emperor were to eradicate the Aristocratic Families, he would still need a seemingly righteous reason.

The Sum Emperor had not yet found a suitable excuse, and if the Aristocratic Families sent someone to assassinate the Sum Emperor at this time, wouldn't that be giving the Sum Emperor the perfect reason?

Seeing Chu Xiong afraid of this and that, Chu Liang snorted coldly and said, "Big Brother, your courage is getting smaller and smaller. The Sum Emperor's executioner's sword is about to fall, and you're still worrying."

"I think you won't be happy until the Sum Emperor's army of a million reaches Sufeng City."

Having said this, Chu Liang turned and walked away.

Seeing Chu Liang leave, Chu Song hurriedly followed, "Second Brother, Second Brother, let's talk it out, Big Brother is also thinking of the family, don't be angry."

Watching the two of them echo each other, Chu Xiong's face looked very displeased.

He was no fool, how could he not know what Chu Liang and Chu Song were thinking.

Chu Song had ostensibly been advocating for Prince Lu Chen just now, but in reality, he was facilitating a conversation for Chu Liang.

Chu Song's sons had married women from the Wang Family, and even the concubines he had taken were from the Wang Family; his position needed no further speculation.

And Chu Liang, even less so, his coveting of the Family Head's position was not a matter of a day or two.

The Chu Family had already fallen into both internal and external troubles. When Chu Xiong thought of his own son, who was so disappointing and obsessed with women every day, he felt even more exhausted.

Chu Xiong rubbed his forehead and then said to the woman behind him, who had always been invisible, "Qing Li, your sister is in North City. You should go to North City

as well. If the Chu Family really faces a catastrophe one day, you don't need to come back."

On hearing this, the woman behind him, dressed in a green long dress, said, "Yes, Family Head."

The woman's voice was cold and emotionless, without a hint of sentiment, as if she were a perfectly emotionless killing tool.

58 Chapter 58 North... North Prince???_1

As they drew closer to North City, every member of the Duke Mu Residence became increasingly tense.

The women of the Duke Mu Residence were thinking about finally being able to see Mu Zixuan, especially Mrs. Mu, who had always wanted to know how her daughter was faring in the North Prince Mansion.

The men of the Duke Mu Residence, however, were anxious about whether they would merely pass through North City and then continue northward.

If they were merely passing through North City, they would be headed into the territory of the Barbarian Tribe, where betraying Great Xia would definitely be impossible for them.

Soon, Mu Changtian and the others discovered that upon reaching North City, the caravan did not stop; they were still traveling further north.

This made Mu Changtian's heart jump to his throat.

Could these people truly be spies for the Barbarian Tribe?

Immediately, Mu Changtian popped his head out of the carriage and asked the Brocade Guard riding outside, "Little brother, where are we heading to?"

The Jinyiwei Guard promptly replied, "Duke Mu, our destination is Yan County. It will take a few more days to reach."

Upon hearing the Jinyiwei Guard mention a specific destination, Mu Changtian breathed a slight sigh of relief; they were going to Yan County.

Then Mu Changtian pulled his head back into the carriage, and at that moment, Mu Xingping asked, "Father, I remember the North Prince is in Yan County? Could it be that the Mysterious Prince they spoke of is truly the North Prince?"

Mu Changtian shook his head and then said, "It can't be him. Yan County is the most prosperous city in North City; it's not strange that the Mysterious Prince would meet us in Yan County."

Mu Changtian never thought that Lu Chen would be such a powerful figure, after all, everyone knows what kind of prince he is.

A few days later.

North City, Yan County.

The Mu Mansion caravan, disguised as a merchant convoy, slowly entered Yan County. Upon arrival, the people inside the carriages opened their window curtains to observe everything outside.

At that moment, Mu Changtian was resting with his eyes closed, when Mu Jingwu reminded him, "Father, we have arrived at Yan County!"

After hearing Mu Jingwu's reminder, Mu Changtian opened his eyes and looked out through the window.

Although Yan County was the most flourishing city in North City, at one glance, one could see the difference between Yan County and other cities in Great Xia.

The common folk on the streets were mostly dressed in patched clothing, and not just a few patches, but many. Moreover, many of the commoners were barefoot, walking without shoes.

If one had to find something to commend about North City, it would be that the people's eyes shone brightly, looking spirited as if filled with hope for the future.

At this time, Mu Xingping said, "I didn't expect the most prosperous Yan County in North City to be this poor. It seems it won't be easy for North City to develop. I also wonder how my sister is doing in the North Prince Mansion."

Mu Jingwu spoke up, "Don't worry, although North City is poor, the North Prince Mansion is definitely not. I heard that the North Prince Mansion earns hundreds of thousands of silvers a month just from selling perfumes and soaps."

At this moment, Mu Changtian's thoughts weren't inside the carriage. He was eager to meet the Mysterious Prince.

In his heart, he was already planning how he should react if the other party turned out to be from the Barbarian Tribe.

Meanwhile.

North Prince Mansion.

Lu Chen had just finished exercising with Wang Qingci, and now they were picking out portraits of women to participate in the selection for the Prince's Mansion concubines.

Although Mu Zixuan had already made a choice once, since Lu Chen was taking concubines, he certainly had to have a look himself.

However, Lu Chen wasn't particularly concerned about portraits.

Portraits were even more misleading than modern photo frauds. Photo frauds are at least photo-edited based on the original, while portraits are purely subjective depictions by the artist.

Still, Lu Chen reluctantly selected some portraits of women that appeared quite beautiful. After all, this was only the initial selection; the actual choosing of concubines still required him to see them in person.

Without seeing them in person, he wouldn't know how many points each woman truly deserved.

Just then, a Jinyiwei Guard entered the courtyard and announced, "Prince, the family of Duke Mu has arrived!"

Hearing this, Lu Chen immediately rose from the stone bench.

They had finally arrived, which was a surprise for Mu Zixuan indeed.

Immediately, Lu Chen said, "Arrange a meeting for us at once."

"Yes, Prince."

Having reported the situation, the Brocade Guard turned and left.

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The carriages of the Mu Mansion finally stopped at the Joy Tavern in Yan County.

After entering the tavern, a middle-aged man of immense strength and towering height approached Mu Changtian.

Seeing the man before him, Mu Changtian felt a shock in his heart.

Another Grandmaster!

How terrifying the forces under the Mysterious Prince must be – it wasn't long since they had encountered two Grandmasters!

Qin Yushan then spoke up, "Duke Mu, you three please come with me."

Qin Yushan was naturally referring to Mu Changtian and his two sons.

Hearing what the man before them said, Mu Changtian and his sons understood that they were likely going to meet the Mysterious Prince.

At that thought, all three were filled with immense excitement.

So, Mu Changtian and his sons separated from the women of the Mu family, who went to the back yard of the tavern, while they followed Qin Yushan to the second floor.

However, when they reached the private room on the second floor, the Mysterious Prince was nowhere to be seen.

Qin Yushan said at that time, "Duke Mu, please wait a moment longer, our Prince will be here shortly."

Mu Changtian didn't think too much about it; they just needed to wait.

As time ticked by, after approximately a quarter of an hour, the door to the room was opened.

Upon hearing the noise from the door, Mu Changtian and his two sons immediately stood up from their chairs, their eyes fixed on the doorway, eager to see who would appear!

However, when the door slowly opened, a familiar face appeared before the three men.

Seeing the arrival, Mu Changtian was dumbfounded.

He mumbled to himself, "North... North Prince???"

Not just Mu Changtian was dumbfounded, his two sons were also frozen in place.

They knew who the North Prince was.

Mu Changtian still remembered the time when the North Prince had left the Capital city, he had seen the prince once, and at that time, the North Prince's mind was still very naive, unaware of even the political taboos.

How could such an ignorant person, utterly witless in politics, have such an immense force at his command?

Mu Changtian couldn't help but think, could it be that the North Prince had always been hiding his talents, pretending to be useless, making others truly believe he knew nothing?

If that were the case, the North Prince's scheming was too deep!

The North Prince had fooled not only them but all the common people of the Great Xia Dynasty.

The three of them did not believe the North Prince was the Mysterious Prince until they entered North City, and now, the person they were seeing turned out to be the North Prince himself.

With such deep cunning and the immense force he commanded, there was no need to guess what he intended to do.

Seeing the disbelief on the faces of Mu Changtian and his sons, Lu Chen smiled and asked, "Father-in-law, you seem very surprised to see me?"

Hearing Lu Chen's words, Mu Changtian and his sons finally snapped back to reality and hurriedly paid their respects, saying, "We pay homage to the North Prince!"

Chapter 59 - 59: 59: A Tree That Stands Out in the Forest Will Be Blown Down by the Wind i

After completing the formalities, Mu Changtian said with a hint of embarrassment, "Prince, I never expected that the person who would save the Mu Mansion would be you."

On their way to North City, Mu Changtian and his companions had considered the possibility that the mysterious Prince mentioned by Liang Zong was indeed the North Prince, since North City was the North Prince's fiefdom.

But the thought that "the mysterious Prince is the North Prince" only flickered through their minds briefly, as they quickly dismissed it.

Yet, the person standing before them now was the North Prince himself.

This left them extremely shocked.

They simply could not believe that the North Prince, who was rumored to be unlearned and utterly dissolute, could hide so deeply!

From the fact that the North Prince was able to produce a Great Returning Pill, and the massive forces at his command, it was clear that even Prince Lu Yi would be no match for him in a struggle for succession.

At that moment, a question simultaneously arose in the hearts of Mu Changtian and his two sons: why would the North Prince, with such extensive power, still choose to hide his capabilities?

If he were to participate in the struggle for succession, with the forces at his command, coupled with the support from the aristocratic families of the South, then the throne in the Capital City might very well become his.

But now, having been sent to North City, if he still aspired to the throne, in the end, he would have to resort to raising an army.

!!..

However, Mu Changtian and his companions had also seen the conditions of North City; raising an army there would make it difficult to win against the elite soldiers of the Great Sum.

Even if they won, Great Sum would be plunged into misery and suffering, leaving the North Prince with nothing but a mess to inherit.

Lu Chen then said, "Please take your seats, don't stand on formality."

Having said this, Lu Chen entered the private room, and the Brocade Guards at the door closed it behind him.

After Lu Chen entered the room, Mu Changtian directly asked, "Prince, with such a massive force at your command, why did you choose to conceal your talents in the Capital City?"

Lu Chen answered indifferently, "When the tree stands out in the forest, the wind will destroy it."

"My father, the Emperor, is still in the prime of life. If he knew I had such a powerful force in my hands, what do you think he would do, father-in-law?" Upon hearing this, the three members of the Mu family came to an immediate realization.

As a Prince, possessing such formidable power and having insiders within the military, the Sum Emperor would undoubtedly become suspicious upon learning of it.

You, a Prince, amassing your own forces and winning over the soldiers of the military while your father, the Emperor, is still in his prime—what are you planning?

However, Mu Changtian still found it somewhat incomprehensible—there was no need for the North Prince to pretend to be a wastrel even if he possessed great power; he simply had to avoid exposing his trump card.

Although confused, Mu Changtian decided not to pursue his questions any further.

Having realized that the North Prince was a man of deep schemes, Mu Changtian no longer saw him as a political novice. He now believed that the North Prince's actions were the result of careful deliberation.

The North Prince surely had even greater plans!

Although the North Prince was also a blood relation of the Sum Emperor, because he had reached out to save the Mu Mansion, and because Mu Zixuan was the Prince's wife, Mu Changtian had no misgivings toward Lu Chen.

Mu Changtian then said, "The North Prince saved our Mu Mansion. If you ever have need of me in the future, I, Mu Changtian, will give my utmost devotion!" With these words, Mu Changtian was openly declaring his loyalty to Lu Chen. Upon hearing Mu Changtian speak thus, Mu Xingping and Mu Jingwu hurriedly followed suit, saying, "We also vow to follow the North Prince to the death!"

Lu Chen responded with a smile, "We are all family; no need for such talk."

At this point, Lu Chen looked at Mu Changtian and asked, "Father-in-law, there's actually a question that has been puzzling me, but I haven't found the right person to ask. Now that you are here, I'd like to seek your advice."

When speaking with his own people, Lu Chen would not use "this Prince" to refer to himself, but "I," as a way to narrow the distance between them.

However, Mu Changtian was rather traditional. Although Lu Chen was his son-in-law, he was also a Prince, and in Mu Changtian's eyes, the identity of Lu Chen as a Prince was greater than that of a son-in-law. Still with utmost respect, Mu Changtian replied, "Prince, please speak."

Lu Chen immediately asked, "Logically speaking, if my imperial father were to eliminate the Aristocratic Families, he would definitely need a sharp sword, and without a doubt, you, my father-in-law, would be the most suitable. But why..."

Lu Chen did not continue, as this was touching upon the sore point of Mu Changtian.

Mu Changtian instantly understood what Lu Chen wanted to ask. He sighed softly and replied, "Prince, His Majesty has actually never trusted me, or perhaps, in his eyes, I am not that sharp sword. Even if I were, I could only be the Aristocratic Family's sword."

Mu Changtian originally intended to call the Sum Emperor by name, but considering that the North Prince was the Sum Emperor's son, it was not appropriate to speak his name directly in front of him, so in the end, he still addressed him as "His Majesty."

At that moment, Mu Changtian thought of something and continued, "Moreover, I suspect that His Majesty already has a sharper sword in his hands."

Hearing Mu Changtian's words, Lu Chen fell into deep thought.

After a while, Lu Chen said, "The Mu Mansion is gone, I have prepared a new residence for you, only you will probably have to change your surname from now on."

Mu Changtian immediately replied, "Thank you, North Prince."

Being able to survive was good enough, as for changing the surname, Mu Changtian was not so concerned about that. After the Sum Emperor's death, their surname could be changed back just the same.

At this moment, Mu Changtian tentatively asked, "Prince, what are your plans after arriving in North City?"

In Mu Changtian's view, with such a powerful force at his disposal, the North Prince could not possibly be content with being an idle prince in North City. Mu Changtian wanted to seize this opportunity.

As long as the North Prince ascended the throne in the future, becoming the new Sum Emperor, then the Mu Mansion could restore its former glory.

Although the decline of the Mu Mansion was due to the Sum Emperor, Mu Changtian did not harbor much hatred towards Lu Chen, who was a son of the Sum Emperor, because it was a political struggle, and the interests of a son were different from those of the father.

Throughout history, it has often happened that old emperors would exile their old officials, and then new emperors would reuse these exiled officials. This was an opportunity for the new emperors to show favor. The exiled officials who returned to court would often not hold animosity against the new emperor but would be grateful instead.

Hearing Mu Changtian's question, the corners of Lu Chen's mouth rose slightly, revealing a hint of a smile.

"I have no plans at the moment."

This...

Mu Changtian was taken aback.

He did not believe Lu Chen's words.

The North Prince had concealed his talents in the Capital City for so many years and had accumulated such a powerful force. If it were said that the North Prince had no plans at all, probably nobody would believe it.

Lu Chen knew Mu Changtian did not believe him, so he continued, "The time has not come yet, any hustle would be in vain."

Mu Changtian immediately realized that the North Prince was waiting for the right opportunity!

He knew it! How could such a scheming person like the North Prince settle for obscurity!

Mu Changtian immediately said, "Prince, if you need my assistance in the future, I, Mu Changtian, will not hesitate to give my life!"

Lu Chen replied, "Let's not talk about the future. I need my father-in-law's help right now."

Mu Changtian immediately responded, "Please tell me, Prince."

Lu Chen said, "I plan to train a Cavalry in North City, but I do not have a suitable general. I wonder if you, my father-in-law, are interested?"

Hearing what Lu Chen said, Mu Changtian felt excited. He had not expected to be of use so soon after arriving in North City. He quickly stood up, bowed to Lu Chen, and said, "I will train this Cavalry as soon as possible, and I will not disappoint your expectations, Prince!"

Lu Chen nodded and then stood up, saying, "Well then, let us end here for today. Later, I will have the Princess consort visit your new home to see you all."

With that, Lu Chen walked towards the door.

Mu Changtian and his two sons once again bowed and said, "We respectfully send off the Prince!"

Chapter 60 - 60: 60 Is This the True Face of the North Prince?!

After Lu Chen left, Mu Changtian and the other two heaved a sigh of relief as if a great burden had been lifted from their shoulders.

Even now, they found it incredible.

That was the North Prince!

The ignorant and debauched North Prince!

He was actually the Mysterious Prince who saved the Mu Mansion!

At this moment, Mu Changtian mocked himself, "Haha, I never thought I'd misjudge someone like this!"

Mu Jingwu said from the side, "Father, I still don't understand why the North Prince concealed his talents in the Capital City. Given his power and with the support of the Chu Family, the position of Crown Prince was most likely his."

The North Prince had only said "When a tree stands out in the forest, the wind will destroy it," but this didn't fully explain his reasons for hiding his abilities.

Hearing his son's question, Mu Changtian reflected for a moment, then stroked his beard and said, "The thoughts of the North Prince, how could we possibly fathom them entirely?"

"However, from all that the North Prince has done, it seems he has never intended to rely on the power of the Aristocratic Families. Otherwise, his first order of business upon arriving in North City would have been to send someone to the Chu Family for help in governing North City. But as far as I know, the Chu Family and the North Prince Mansion have not had dealings for quite some time."

!!..

"So, I suspect that the North Prince's attitude towards the Aristocratic Families is actually the same as that of the Sum Emperor."

At these words, Mu Jingwu and Mu Xingping were taken aback.

After a moment, Mu Xingping, as if he had realized something, immediately said, "Could it be that the North Prince deliberately wanted to withdraw from the Capital City, with the goal of using the Emperor to eliminate the Aristocratic Families, and only after the powers in the Capital City were sufficiently weakened by the struggle for succession, he would return to inherit the throne legitimately?"

Mu Changtian said, "That's the most probable reason. The turmoil caused by Aristocratic Families has a long history, and as a prince so capable of enduring, his ambitions must certainly be great; his sights couldn't have been set merely on the Crown Prince position."

"I suspect he has already been looking further into the future, to the things he will need to deal with after his ascension to the throne."

"If the Sum Emperor can deal with all the Aristocratic Families, then once the North Prince ascends the throne, the entire Great Sum will be ruled solely by him!"

"This approach holds another major advantage for him, if in the future people say the Imperial Family is too ruthless, they'll only be referring to the present Sum Emperor, and it won't have too much to do with the North Prince."

Hearing Mu Changtian's analysis, the two Mu brothers were stunned.

They hadn't expected the North Prince, once called a waste by people, to have such grand ambition and strategic foresight.

Should the North Prince ascend to the throne and become the new Emperor of Great Sum in the future, his ambitions are unlikely to stop at mere control over Great Sum.

According to the North Prince's current plan, by the time he ascends the throne, most likely the Aristocratic Families within the territory of Great Sum will have been nearly eradicated by the Sum Emperor, and then Great Sum will be his to command.

For a person of great ambition and strategy like the North Prince, to not do something big after gaining control of the entire Great Sum would be a disservice to his long-term scheming.

The Mu brothers no longer dared to contemplate in which direction the North Prince would steer the ship of Great Sum after his ascension.

They couldn't help but think, could it be that the North Prince's true intention was to eliminate all dynasties and dominate the world?

Was what the North Prince had planned so far just the beginning?

At this thought, the Mu brothers involuntarily drew a cool breath.

So this is the real intention of the North Prince!

Is this the true face of the North Prince?

Lu Chen, on his way back to the North Prince Mansion, couldn't stop sneezing, wondering if he had caught a cold.

After all, he was a Ninth Grade Martial Artist; he shouldn't catch a cold so easily, right?

Soon, Lu Chen returned to the Prince's Mansion.

Upon entering the Prince's Mansion for the first time, Lu Chen went to find Mu Zixuan.

Mu Zixuan was in the room taking care of the child. When she saw Lu Chen arrive, she quickly put down Lu Changfeng.

"Greetings, Prince."

Lu Chen came to Mu Zixuan's side, wrapped his arm around her slender waist, lifted his hand to caress her delicate nose, and then said, "My consort, I have told you many times, you are my wife, there's no need to greet me formally every day."

Mu Zixuan said with a smile, "The Prince is still the Prince, it's only proper for me to pay my respects."

Seeing that Mu Zixuan still said this, Lu Chen didn't continue the topic further. He directly said, "My consort, I've just prepared a surprise for you. Are you interested?"

Hearing this, Mu Zixuan asked in confusion, "A surprise? What surprise?"

Lu Chen said with a smile, "If I tell you what the surprise is, how can it still be a surprise? I will have someone take you to a place, and then you will see."

Mu Zixuan quickly said, "Prince, Feng'er has not yet gone to sleep."

Lu Chen glanced at Lu Changfeng on the bed, then said, "Let Xiao Rou and the wet nurse watch over him for now. You go to that place first."

Hearing Lu Chen's words, Mu Zixuan became even more curious. What kind of surprise could it be?

Having been married into the Prince's Mansion for such a long time, the North Prince hadn't prepared any so-called surprise for her, but then again, the North Prince himself was a surprise to her.

Originally, when she had married into the North Prince Mansion, she thought her life would be very miserable, but unexpectedly, aside from being lustful, the North Prince had almost no other faults.

Moreover, the North Prince had always been very good to her, his consort, cherishing and trusting her greatly, even leaving the management of the Prince's Mansion's assets in her hands.

For a woman from a family of convicted criminals like her, it was already quite difficult to marry such a good man. How could Mu Zixuan dare to expect any surprises?

Mu Zixuan then said, "Then all right, I will go and see the surprise the Prince has prepared for me."

Seeing that Mu Zixuan agreed, Lu Chen immediately took her and left the room.

Afterward, Lu Chen arranged for a member of the Brocade Guard to take Mu Zixuan to the manor he had prepared for the Mu Mansion.

On the way to the new Mu Mansion, Mu Zixuan couldn't help but give in to her curiosity. She opened the curtain and asked the Brocade Guard escorting her, "What surprise has the Prince prepared for me? Do you know?"

Hearing Mu Zixuan's question, the Brocade Guard swiftly replied, "Consort, the Prince instructed us that we must not tell you in advance. You will know once you arrive."

Upon the Brocade Guard's response, Mu Zixuan pursed her lips, wondering in her heart just what kind of surprise could be so mysterious?

It wasn't long before Mu Zixuan arrived at the entrance of the Mu Mansion.

Because of the sensitivity surrounding the Mu family name, there was no family name plaque hanging above the entrance of the Mu Mansion, just a large gate.

At this moment, a Brocade Guard said to Mu Zixuan inside the carriage, "Consort, we've arrived."

Upon hearing this, Mu Zixuan immediately got off the carriage and, seeing the large gates before her, became even more puzzled. What did the Prince want her to do in this place?

At that time, one of the Brocade Guards walked to the gate and told the gatekeeper, "Go inform your master that the consort has arrived."

After hearing this, the gatekeeper hurriedly ran into the estate.

Mu Zixuan was now at the entryway of the Mu Mansion, and upon seeing her, the servants of the Mu Mansion immediately paid their respects, saying, "Greetings, Consort."

Mu Zixuan said indifferently, "Rise."

She was a bit distracted now, only wanting to know what the surprise Lu Chen had prepared for her was.

Just then, from not too far away, a familiar woman's voice was heard.

“Zixuan.... Zixuan!!!”