

## Es. Benefits 161

Chapter 161: Shall I call you Nanyan from now on\_i

Lu Chen had been holding back all the way since he left the North Land. He also held back when he went to the Barbarian Tribe prisoner camp, but in the end, he couldn't hold back any longer.

It was like placing a candy in front of a child, allowing them to look but not to taste.

Who could endure that?

As soon as Lu Chen returned to the Prince's Mansion, the first thing he did was head straight for Yelv Nanyan's room.

When Yelv Nanyan saw Lu Chen enter her room, she was momentarily stunned. She was about to say something when she noticed Lu Chen closing the door behind him.

Yelv Nanyan immediately became nervous, what was this young man going to do, running into her room and locking the door?

At this time, Lu Chen gave a slight smile, "Queen Yelv need not be afraid, this Prince has come to ask you about some matters."

Hearing this, Yelv Nanyan thought to herself in confusion, asking about matters, what matters?

At that moment, Lu Chen sat down at the table inside the room.

Yelv Nanyan then asked, "May I know what the Prince wishes to inquire about?"

Lu Chen glanced at the dignified and graceful Yelv Nanyan, "Please have a seat first, Queen Yelv."

Yelv Nanyan had no choice but to sit down. Now there were only the two of them in the room, and Yelv Nanyan felt the atmosphere was a bit strange, especially with them sitting so close to each other.

However, Yelv Nanyan thought that although Lu Chen was very powerful, he was just a sixteen or seventeen-year-old boy. She was more than a decade his senior — what was there to fear?

Moreover, from Lu Chen's demeanor, it appeared he genuinely had something to discuss with her, and besides, it was still broad daylight. After all, he was a Prince, so it was unlikely he would do something untoward.

This thought quickly calmed Yelv Nanyan's heart.

“May I know what the Prince seeks from me?”

Lu Chen directly asked, “I noticed that Queen Yelv's appearance seems very similar to the women of Great Xia. Could it be that you are originally from Great Xia?”

Upon hearing this question, Yelv Nanyan was taken aback, and Lu Chen's query brought her mother to mind.

Yelv Nanyan fell into silence, not speaking for some time, while Lu Chen watched her eyes and asked, “What's wrong?”

Yelv Nanyan regained her senses and hastily said, “It's nothing, I was just caught off guard.”

“Indeed, my mother was from Great Xia. When the Barbarian Tribe came south, they captured her and took her to their tribe, where she gave birth to me. I resemble my mother, so it's not strange that the Prince finds similarities between me and the women of Great Xia.”

Lu Chen responded, “I see, I hadn't realized there was such a story behind it. I thought Queen Yelv bore a strong resemblance to Great Xia's women.”

Just as Lu Chen was about to say something further, Yelv Nanyan spoke up, “Prince, I have left the Sky Wolf King tribe and am no longer the Sky Wolf King's wife. You don't have to call me Queen Yelv anymore, just my name will do.”

They were now in the North Prince Mansion, where there could only be one official wife. If the North Prince continued to call her Queen, it could lead to unnecessary trouble.

Yelv Nanyan was clear-headed about such matters. If she wanted to survive in the North Prince Mansion, she couldn't afford to offend Mu Zixuan, the legitimate wife.

If Lu Chen kept addressing her as Queen, and Mu Zixuan, the legitimate wife, heard it, who knows what she might think. She would likely suspect Yelv Nanyan of trying to vie for favor.

That would not be good for her or for Xiao Wenyao.

Although Yelv Nanyan had never lived in Great Xia, influenced by her mother, she was very familiar with it.

Hearing Yelv Nanyan's words, Lu Chen said with a smile, "Alright, from now on I'll call you Nanyan."

Continuing, he asked, "Nanyan, after your mother gave birth to you in the Barbarian Tribe, life must have been very hard, right?"

After all, as a woman from Great Xia, being captured by the Barbarian Tribe, life must have been difficult.

Hearing Lu Chen's question, Yelv Nanyan again seemed to drift into her memories. After a little while, she finally answered, "Yes, my mother was treated as a slave by the tribe's Chief, made to serve him daily. She often suffered beatings from him, and ultimately, unable to bear the humiliation, she drowned herself when I was ten years old."

Speaking of this, Yelv Nanyan's expression turned forlorn, appearing immensely sad.

Seeing this, Lu Chen reached out and directly grasped Yelv Nanyan's hand, comforting her, "The dead cannot be brought back to life, mourn no more."

Yelv Nanyan's mature body involuntarily trembled when Lu Chen suddenly grabbed her hand, but Lu Chen made no further move, and she didn't take it to heart, assuming it was just an instinctive gesture from him.

Lu Chen continued, “Nanyan, actually, I am very similar to you in that I also lost my mother at a young age.”

As he said this, Lu Chen’s tone turned somewhat somber, sorrowful.

Upon hearing Lu Chen’s words, Yelv Nanyan was taken aback. She gazed at him, and for some reason, she began to feel an odd urge to comfort this young man, to tell him not to be so sad.

Perhaps because Lu Chen was more than a decade younger than her, and knowing how painful life without a mother could be, stirred this sentiment.

Thinking of Lu Chen as a Prince, Yelv Nanyan realized his days in the Imperial Palace after losing his mother must also have been difficult.

Yelv Nanyan then said, “Prince, don’t be too sorrowful. Your mother, knowing of the achievements you’ve made in North City, would surely be happy for you.”

Chapter 162 Shall I call you Nanyan from now on 2

Lu Chen sighed and said, “If only my mother really knew my situation now.”

As he spoke, Lu Chen gently touched Yelv Nanyan’s jade hand and continued “Although my life is better than yours on the grassland, and I don’t have to worry about food and clothing, I have been scorned by others since I was young because I had no mother. Even in the Imperial Palace, some maids and slaves dared to shout at me; my status was not even as good as that of some family bastards.”

Upon hearing Lu Chen’s words, Yelv Nanyan’s heart rose with a new wave of sympathy and tenderness. She could empathize with what he was describing. After she lost her mother, she, too, was humiliated by members of her own tribe.

If it weren't for the fact that she had secretly practiced martial arts behind others' backs, she might well have become a female slave, tormented by the barbarians day and night.

For some reason, Yelv Nanyan felt compelled to hold this young man in her arms at that moment, to offer him some comfort.

Lu Chen managed to go from being a notorious good-for-nothing to a martial arts prodigy at only sixteen or seventeen. The journey must have been incredibly difficult and arduous.

Looking back on her own life, Yelv Nanyan realized she and Lu Chen were indeed very similar.

She, too, lost her mother at an early age and lurked within the barbarian tribe for many years. Ultimately, after she married the Sky Wolf King, she gained power from his hands and turned her fate around to become a ruler in her own right.

Lu Chen was the same; after lurking in the Capital city for so many years, he arrived in North City and finally became a Seignior who commanded respect from all around, acquiring his current status and power.

However, the biggest difference between the two was that she had eventually lost to Lu Chen and became a captive of this young man.

At this moment, Yelv Nanyan was completely unaware that she had actually fallen into a trap set by Lu Chen.

Just then, Lu Chen let out a deep sigh and then said, “Nanyan, may I hold you? Seeing you, I’m reminded of my own past.”

Yelv Nanyan replied, “I am now the Prince’s captive; the Prince can do as he pleases.”

In the depths of her heart, Yelv Nanyan also wanted to comfort the young man in front of her, after all, he too was someone who shared the same afflictions. Then, without hesitation, Lu Chen embraced Yelv Nanyan into his arms. Her body was hot and soft, making it very comfortable to hold her.

However, sitting on the chair at that moment, the position was not very comfortable, putting some pressure on their legs.

When embraced by Lu Chen, Yelv Nanyan seemed to detect a uniquely masculine scent that was new to her, the first such aroma she had come across in many years and the closest she had ever been to a man.

Even with the former Sky Wolf King, she had never been in such close contact. When she married the Sky Wolf King, he was already seriously ill, merely a patient; she was at most his caretaker, never as intimately close to him as she was now.

Moreover, the scents she used to detect from men were at best those of death and sweat.

The scent from Lu Chen was unusual; it wasn’t a perfume scent.

During her time in the Prince’s Mansion, she had also used the perfume produced by the North Prince Mansion, so she could instantly tell whether or not it was perfume.

The aroma emanating from Lu Chen seemed to be his natural body scent. For some reason, upon smelling it, she felt her body heat up and become restless. At this moment, Lu Chen whispered into Yelv Nanyan's ear, "Nanyan, your body is really soft."

Upon hearing these words, Yelv Nanyan felt startled, and then heat blew against her ear, causing it to burn hotly.

A blush spread from her cheeks to her fair neck, making her look even more enchanting and attractive.

Lu Chen had not given Yelv Nanyan any Dragon and Phoenix Tea; this reaction was completely her own.

Feeling the change within herself, Yelv Nanyan quickly said, "Prince, shouldn't it be enough by now?"

Lu Chen said, "Let's hold on for a little longer. Your embrace is so warm; it reminds me of an elder of mine."

Hearing this from Lu Chen, Yelv Nanyan gave a start. She thought Lu Chen was talking about Chu Yue, not realizing that he was actually referring to Chu Yuqin.

Yelv Nanyan thought to herself that the North Prince was just a sixteen or seventeen-year-old child, and she shouldn't take it too seriously.

With this thought, Yelv Nanyan made no further move, allowing Lu Chen to hold her.

At this moment, Lu Chen, smelling the fragrance of Yelv Nanyan's body, felt himself at the edge of losing control. Though he was a Grandmaster possessing self-restraint, when faced with such a mature and elegant woman, Lu Chen still found it hard to suppress certain thoughts.

Lu Chen whispered into Yelv Nanyan's ear, "Nanyan, I heard that when you married the former Sky Wolf King, he was already bedridden, and you never consummated the marriage. Is that true?"

Hearing this question while feeling Lu Chen's breath, Yelv Nanyan became somewhat panicked, and her heart began to pound wildly.

However, Yelv Nanyan tried to keep herself calm and answered, "Yes, I am still untouched."

Lu Chen asked in a low, hoarse voice, "You haven't touched a man for decades. Don't you have any interest in men?"

Yelv Nanyan replied, "Prince, I have practiced martial arts, so I can control my desires. I have long lost interest in men."

Lu Chen asked by Yelv Nanyan's ear, "Is that so? Then why do I feel your body getting hotter and almost igniting me?"

Hearing Lu Chen's words, Yelv Nanyan was overwhelmed with shame; she didn't understand why this was happening.



Clearly, as a Ninth Grade Martial Artist, she had a strong control over lascivious desires, but in front of the North Prince, this young man, she couldn't keep herself calm at all.

Yelv Nanyan quickly adjusted her inner strength, trying again to calm herself down.

Yelv Nanyan hadn't drunk the Dragon and Phoenix Tea, so even within Lu Chen's embrace, she could still use her inner strength. However, after trying for a while, she found it to be useless; she continued to feel incredibly restless. Suddenly, Yelv Nanyan felt weak all over. Her beautiful eyes slightly opened, exuding a mesmerizing light.

Yelv Nanyan was no fool; by this point, how could she not understand why Lu Chen had come to find her today?

However, Yelv Nanyan didn't struggle, for she was now a captive of the North Prince and would eventually become his woman. The thought that she would become the woman of this young man, more than a decade her junior, filled Yelv Nanyan with immense shame.

At this moment, Lu Chen found their seating on the stool to be too restrictive for his movements, so he took the initiative to wrap his arms around Yelv Nanyan's slender waist and stood up.

Lu Chen's sudden action made Yelv Nanyan's delicate body tremble. She quickly steadied herself and stood up as well.

Lu Chen then gazed into Yelv Nanyan's eyes and discovered they seemed somewhat hazy, which greatly surprised him.

This was his first encounter with Yelv Nanyan, and since she hadn't drunk the Dragon and Phoenix Tea, for her to enter such a state so quickly was truly beyond his expectations.

As Lu Chen looked at her with his burning gaze, Yelv Nanyan's cheeks grew hotter. Now that they stood up and their bodies were tightly embracing, Yelv Nanyan could feel Lu Chen's ardor, and what he intended to do was now unmistakably clear.

The thought that it was still daytime and they might be discovered by people of the Prince's Mansion filled Yelv Nanyan with a sense of shame and indignation.

Lu Chen then softly asked, "Nanyan, are you willing to be my woman?"

Fixated under Lu Chen's direct gaze, suddenly Yelv Nanyan felt his voice had a special seductive power, making her head dizzy, almost to the point of instability, despite being a Ninth Grade Martial Artist.

With her face blushing, Yelv Nanyan said, "Prince, I am your captive now, you may do whatever you want with me."

Embracing Yelv Nanyan's soft and warm body, admiring her peerless beauty, and coupled with her enticing fair and flushed skin, Lu Chen felt he had completely run out of patience.

He leaned in, kissed Yelv Nanyan's lips, and then, holding her body, began walking towards the bed.

Xiao Wen Yao, after returning from the barbarian tribe's camp where she had been held captive, stayed in her room at the Prince's Mansion, lying listlessly on the bed without moving.

Her world now seemed entirely devoid of color, everything before her eyes was monochrome, and her mind was blank.

She could never have imagined that her father, for the sake of his ambition, would go so far as to poison even his own wife.

Her mother had grown up with him since childhood; if it were any ordinary woman, it would be one thing, but they grew up together and became husband and wife by mutual consent.

Logically, their affection should have been deep-seated, and she had believed so in the past.

However, all this was merely her wishful thinking.

At that moment, a faint voice reached Xiao Wen Yao's ears, growing louder, and she started to recover from her disoriented state.

Upon hearing the voice that drifted in through the window, Xiao Wen Yao was stunned.

What was that sound?

Before long, Xiao Wen Yao realized that she had heard such a sound more than once inside a certain tent.

Each time her father took a Great Sum woman to a certain tent, similar noises would emanate from inside; although she was still a virgin, she understood what caused such sounds.

Xiao Wen Yao perked up her ears and listened intently.

She quickly identified that it was Yelv Nanyan making the noises, and the sounds were coming from the room next door.

Xiao Wen Yao was immediately stunned; if the sounds were made by Yelv Nanyan, did it mean that Lu Chen was torturing Yelv Nanyan in the next room?

The thought made Xiao Wen Yao's face pale.

She hadn't experienced such things and was not familiar with them; she only knew that when women were tortured by men, they would produce such sounds.

After all, it wasn't the first or second time she had heard such sounds; this was her conclusion based on her observations.

But clearly, her understanding was insufficient; Xiao Wen Yao still thought that Yelv Nanyan made such sounds out of pain.

In Xiao Wen Yao's view, if a person was not injured, not in pain, why would they cry out? It was only likely that someone hurt, feeling pain, would make such miserable screams.

Thinking of the possibility that she too might be tortured by the North Prince like Yelv Nanyan, Xiao Wen Yao's delicate body shuddered involuntarily.

However, at that moment, Xiao Wen Yao glanced at the lavishly decorated room, realizing that after entering the North Prince Mansion, perhaps she would no longer have to live as she did before, nor worry about being caught by the filthy old North Pre King.

Though she might be tortured by the North Prince, it was still preferable to serving the North Fre King as a female slave in the North Pre tribe.

Furthermore, Xiao Wen Yao recalled seeing Wang Qingci, the North Prince's female slave, boldly sitting atop the courtyard wall and speaking with the North Prince; this showed that in the North Prince Mansion, even female slaves had certain freedoms, unlike the slaves in their barbarian tribe who had to keep their heads bowed even while speaking and walking.

With this thought, Xiao Wen Yao felt a bit better; if she was to be tortured by the North Prince, so be it, since women were always subject to torment by men, just as her mother had been in her father's tent.

At this moment, Xiao Wen Yao had already come to terms with her potential fate.

She continued to lie on her bed, staring blankly at the room's ceiling beams.

After an indefinite period, noises still emanated from the room next door, becoming more impassioned.

Xiao Wen Yao started to wonder why she felt that these sounds were not ones of pain?

If she had wounds, she might cry out in pain, but would never make such melodious cries; these sounds rather seemed like those of pleasure and happiness.

Xiao Wen Yao sat up from the bed, wanting to check the neighboring room to see what was actually happening, to see how the North Prince was torturing Yelv Nanyan.

Xiao Wen Yao held some resentment towards Yelv Nanyan in her heart; in her mind, had it not been for Yelv Nanyan, her father might not have killed her mother to marry her and would not have attacked North City.

Hearing Yelv Nanyan's cries, Xiao Wen Yao felt a strange sense of relief; she thought Yelv Nanyan deserved it, deserved the North Prince's torture. She wanted to see for herself what had become of Yelv Nanyan under the North Prince's hand, to appease the hatred in her heart.

With this in mind, Xiao Wen Yao quietly left her room and then went to the outside of the room next door.

At that moment, Xiao Wen Yao was shocked to find that the window of the neighboring room was wide open, not closed at all.

Seeing this as an opportunity, Xiao Wen Yao immediately crouched down and approached the window, stealthily peeking into the room.

Upon seeing the scene inside the room, Xiao Wen Yao was tremendously impacted.

For a time, Xiao Wen Yao's mind went blank; it was only after an unknown duration that she came back to her senses, fearing being discovered, she hurried back to her own room.

Xiao Wen Yao, back in her room, hadn't calmed down yet, her heart pounding wildly.

So that was the way the North Prince tortured Yelv Nanyan?

How terrifying!

The thought of facing such things herself made Xiao Wen Yao feel weak all over.

As time ticked by.

The sun in the sky gradually set, and stars appeared along with a faint moon.

Meanwhile, Chu Qingli was patrolling the inner courtyard; she had grown familiar with the patrol duties. After each patrol, she quickly located her sister, preventing her sister and Lu Chen from being alone together.

Chapter 164 That man is really too scary 2

In her view, the North Prince definitely harbored improper designs on her sister, which she could discern from the way he looked at her sister.

Therefore, it would be best for her to know where her sister was at all times, what she was doing, and whether she was alone with the North Prince.

After passing by Wang Qingci's courtyard, Chu Qingli couldn't help but glance at the Plum Blossom Courtyard full of flowers, and immediately thought of the commotion Lu Chen caused not long ago when doing bad things in Wang Qingci's room.

Chu Qingli's face was cold as she involuntarily cursed, "What a beast!"

As her words fell, Chu Qingli continued to walk toward the front courtyard to carry on with her patrol.

However, she had only taken a few steps when she heard a woman's voice from inside the courtyard.

Chu Qingli was taken aback.

Having been at the North Prince Mansion for so long, she could certainly guess what was happening.

Chu Qingli turned her head to glance at the courtyard and muttered to herself again, "Indeed a beast."

Chu Qingli knew that the North Prince had brought back two beauties from the Barbarian Tribe and they were confined in this courtyard. Her sister had also reminded her to be wary of the two Barbarian beauties, as both were Martial Artists with martial skills.

After hearing Yelv Nanyan's melodious and graceful voice, Chu Qingli thought to herself that her sister was clearly overthinking things. With the beast Lu Chen around, let alone Ninth Grade, even if Grandmaster-ranked women arrived at the Prince's Mansion, they would end up as his playthings. They wouldn't have the energy or opportunity to cause any trouble.

Subsequently, Chu Qingli stopped pondering over it and quickly left the outside of the courtyard to avoid hearing any more vulgar language.

At dusk.



The sun was gradually setting, stars appearing in the sky along with the faint outline of the moon. The crimson glow of the evening sky cast everyone's skin in a bronzed hue.

Chu Qingli patrolled once again to the courtyard where Yelv Nanyan and Xiao Wen Yao were staying.

The inner court of the Prince's Mansion was not very large, requiring Chu Qingli to patrol the same areas dozens of times a day.

Just passing the entrance of the courtyard, Chu Qingli heard Yelv Nanyan's voice again.

Chu Qingli was somewhat speechless. How many hours had it been? Why was that beast still here?

Without further thought, Chu Qingli once again moved away from the lovey-dovey courtyard.

When Chu Qingli arrived at the north courtyard, she ran into Mu Zixuan and the others. Mu Zixuan asked, "Qingli, have you seen the Prince?"

It was already dark, and Lu Chen would usually dine with them at this time. But as the sun was about to set, there was still no sign of him, and it was unknown where he had gone.

Chu Qingli replied, "Replying to the Princess, the Prince is currently in the rooms of those two Barbarian ladies. It's highly unlikely he will come over tonight."

Hearing Chu Qingli's words, Mu Zixuan, along with Dazhou and Xiaozhou, instantly understood what was happening.

Mu Zixuan said, "Since the Prince won't be coming, let's not wait any longer and start dinner."

Yelv Nanyan and Xiao Wen Yao had just been brought back by Lu Chen, and he was certainly going to spend time to cultivate a relationship with them. Given Lu Chen's capabilities, there was no doubt he wouldn't leave their side tonight. So, Mu Zixuan decided not to wait for Lu Chen to come over anymore.

Meanwhile.

Xiao Wen Yao lay on the bed, covering her ears with her hands in an attempt to block out the noises coming from outside the window.

She felt extremely fearful. In the past, when she saw her own father tormenting women from Great Sum, those women would emerge from the tent in less than half an hour at most.

But the North Prince had been in Yelv Nanyan's room for hours now, and he still hadn't come out.

It was terrifying!

The thought of soon having to endure the same fate made Xiao Wen Yao shudder.

But what puzzled Xiao Wen Yao was why she felt both scared and inexplicably restless inside. She suddenly had the desire to be tormented by the North Prince, just like he was tormenting Yelv Nanyan.

Xiao Wen Yao felt like she had already been enslaved by the North Prince without having met him, harboring thoughts of wanting him to torment her as he did Yelv Nanyan.

Xiao Wen Yao shook her head, trying to cast away these inappropriate thoughts from her mind.

The night was unusually long.

The moon in the sky became brighter and brighter, then was obscured by dark clouds, time passed, and the moon reappeared in the sky.

After several times of being hidden by the dark clouds, finally, a white light appeared on the horizon, the sun rose again, and the moon once again became faintly visible.

Dawn.

Xiao Wenyao lay sprawled on the bed, her eyes surrounded by thick dark circles, her hair a tangled mess, as if an animal had puffed up its fur.

Xiao Wenyao felt she was on the brink of collapse.

All night long!

She hadn't slept a wink all night!

Although it wasn't continuous, from time to time there would be sounds drifting in through the window, just as she was about to fall asleep, she'd be awakened again.

That person was really terrifying!

At this moment, Xiao Wenyao closed her eyes and gradually drifted off to sleep, with only one thought in her heart: she must serve the North Prince well in the future, she must not anger the North Prince; otherwise, she might also be tormented by him and not let off even for a night.

At this time, the warm sunlight outside the window spilled over the windowsill and shone onto the person inside the room.

Lu Chen, lying on the soft body pillow, checked his system notification.

[Congratulations, host, for acquiring a wife, rewarded with 100,000 catties of breeding sweet potatoes.]

[The host and Yelv Nanyan developed their relationship once, adding 500 experience points to Qi Refinement Mantra, 500 experience points to Rejuvenating Skill, and 0 experience points to Dragon-Phoenix Yin-Yang Spell; the host has triggered an Emotional Crit, thus gaining an additional 1500 experience points for both Qi Refinement Mantra and Rejuvenating Skill.]

Seeing the system notification before him, Lu Chen's lips couldn't help but curl up slightly.

At this moment, Lu Chen's chest was still pressed against Yelv Nanyan's jade back, and he had no intention of getting up at all.

Even with Wang Qingci, he had never indulged himself like this before.

Yelv Nanyan was already in her thirties this year, while Lu Chen was only in his teens.

The two met at the fiercest times of their lives, and what would happen next did not need elaboration.

Suddenly, Lu Chen felt Yelv Nanyan seem to move slightly, and something occurred to him, so he glanced at her Favorability score.

At that glance, Lu Chen was stunned.

Yelv Nanyan's Favorability towards him had reached 95!

It should be known that Yelv Nanyan hadn't drunk the Dragon and Phoenix Tea; just after one night, her Favorability towards him had soared to 95.

But on reflection, it made sense; he had used the Rejuvenating Skill many times, which could quickly repair the pain on someone's body.

This meant that Yelv Nanyan hadn't felt any discomfort at all, and under such circumstances, it was impossible for her Favorability towards him not to rise.

At this point, Yelv Nanyan already felt the person behind her had awakened, and she said with a hoarse voice, "Prince, aren't you afraid I'll carry your child?"

Lu Chen asked in her ear, "Why should I be afraid?"

Yelv Nanyan said, "I am a woman from the Barbarian Tribe; if I bear your child,

I'm afraid there will be a lot of gossip."

“Moreover, if our child is born, they might also face all kinds of disdain. Does the Prince really want to see his own child looked down upon, just like the Prince in his childhood?”

Lu Chen said indifferently, “You can be assured, apart from imperial power, I treat all my children equally. Even if it’s a child you give birth to, they will have a happy childhood, not like mine when I was younger.”

Hearing this, Yelv Nanyan asked in disbelief, “Is what you say true, Prince?”

Lu Chen gave her buttocks a pat and said, “What do you think I brought you back for? Could it be that you really thought I just regarded you as a Female Slave?”

“With a body as good as yours, it would be a pity not to bear a few children for me.”

Hearing Lu Chen’s words, Yelv Nanyan’s face flushed slightly; she finally understood why Lu Chen was so uninhibited with her last night, and even up to now, he hadn’t left her side, continuously embracing her.

## Chapter 165 The Aristocratic Family Visitor\_\_i

Yesterday, during the day, Yelv Nanyan was still feeling somewhat sad, believing that she was now to be a female slave to the North Prince, and she felt incredibly pessimistic about her future.

But after what happened last night, Yelv Nanyan’s pessimism completely dissipated, and at this moment, she only felt an intense shame.

She had trained in martial arts for several decades, yet she was defeated by a boy barely into his teens.

However, if being a so-called female slave only meant being treated this way, then maybe becoming Lu Chen’s female slave wasn’t such a bad thing after all.

But then again, Lu Chen the Grandmaster was definitely not an ordinary Grandmaster.

Although it was Yelv Nanyan's first time experiencing those things, she was after all the Queen of Sky Wolf King, and was also in her thirties by now, so naturally, she understood what she was supposed to understand.

Even if Lu Chen had the constitution of a Grandmaster, it still seemed impossible for him to be so fierce.

At this moment, Yelv Nanyan tried to move, but was completely devoid of strength, her entire being had turned soft; it was unimaginable that a Ninth Grade martial artist could be so thoroughly ravaged by a Grandmaster.

It could be said that her defeat was absolute.

She lost in the war between the Sky Wolf King tribe and North City, and she lost again in her personal battle with the North Prince.

She was not only defeated in battle, but her heart was also completely conquered by Lu Chen, and Yelv Nanyan was very clear that she might never be able to leave the North Prince from now on.

Human desire is like a boulder rolling down a mountain—once it starts, it's very hard to stop.

If it had been before, if she hadn't encountered Lu Chen, she might have always remained disinterested in men.

But Lu Chen had opened the door to a new world for her, and it would be very difficult for her to control herself now, especially whenever she thought of the North Prince, she likely wouldn't be able to stop thinking about the events of last night.

Thinking this, Yelv Nanyan sighed softly and then asked, "Prince, it's already daylight, aren't you going to get up?"

Maintaining this state made Yelv Nanyan feel odd, almost like an animal.

Lu Chen grinned slightly and then said, "I was busy all of last night and didn't really rest, you can't possibly be thinking of sending me away now, can you?"

Yelv Nanyan did not say more; fine, let the young man do as he wishes then.

Afterward, Lu Chen held Yelv Nanyan, his big body pillow, and closed his eyes, quickly falling into sleep.

Chu Yuqin was on patrol in the inner courtyard early in the morning, and upon not seeing Lu Chen, she went to the outer courtyard of Yelv Nanyan and Xiao Wen Yao's residence and looked inside.

At this time, Chu Qingli also arrived there.

Seeing Chu Yuqin peering inside continuously, Chu Qingli immediately asked, "Sister, what are you looking at?"

After hearing Chu Qingli's words, Chu Yuqin coughed and then said, "Hasn't Chen'er gotten up yet?"

Chu Yuqin didn't patrol much yesterday; it was mainly Chu Qingli who did the patrolling, however, Chu Yuqin knew that Lu Chen had come to this courtyard. After hearing Chu Yuqin's words, Chu Qingli chuckled and said, "After tossing and turning all night without sleep, how could he be up so early? What do you need him for?"

Last night, Chu Qingli passed by this courtyard several times, and every time, she would hear sounds coming from inside; anyway, Lu Chen had firmly established the reputation of a beast in her heart.

After hearing Chu Qingli's words, Chu Yuqin said, "I see. Well, let him sleep a while longer then."

Chu Yuqin did have a matter to discuss with Lu Chen, but it was not a big deal, and Lu Chen's health was the most important; better let him rest well first.

After looking at the courtyard once more, Chu Yuqin turned around and left.

Chu Qingli also hurried to follow her, leaving behind this courtyard filled with sinful traces.

It was nearly noon by the time Lu Chen left from Yelv Nanyan's room. As soon as Lu Chen got up, Yelv Nanyan suddenly felt an emptiness in her body, and her heart began to feel an unexpected reluctance.

However, thinking of what transpired yesterday, Yelv Nanyan's delicate body involuntarily started trembling, and she quickly circulated her inner strength, swiftly calming herself down.

After Lu Chen left, Mu Zixuan had someone send over many nourishing gifts. Yelv Nanyan sat at the table, looking at the full table of nourishing items and felt an indescribable emotion.

She had never heard that women needed such nourishment after engaging in that kind of activity.

But she had to admit, the Queen was indeed treating her very well.

It seemed that the North Prince Mansion wasn't the dangerous place she had imagined it to be, but she didn't know whether the North Prince and his Queen would still be so good to her when she got old and lost her beauty.

At the same time.

Lu Chen was in his study, sipping the replenishing porridge personally made by Mu Zixuan, while flipping through the intelligence reports delivered by the Brocade Guard from yesterday.

At that moment, a knocking sound came from outside the door.

Lu Chen took a sip of the porridge, then said, "The door is unlocked, come in."

The next moment, Chu Yuqin, dressed in a long purple dress, pushed open the door and entered the study.

Lu Chen looked up at the stunning beauty of Chu Yuqin and surprisingly, his heart didn't stir at all.

This wasn't surprising; having not slept all night, his energy had been completely drained by Yelv Nanyan.



“Madam Chu, do you need me for something?” he asked.

Chu Yuqin spoke, “Chen’er, the Chu Family sent someone yesterday to look for me.”

Upon hearing this, Lu Chen paused for a moment.

Ever since he arrived in North City, aside from Chu Qingli, the Chu Family had never sent anyone to him.

And as for Chu Qingli, she wasn’t particularly essential to his safety; if it weren’t for his system, he would have died on his way to North City long ago.

## Chapter 166 The Aristocratic Family Visitor\_2

The Chu Family has sent someone now?

What for?

Could it be that the Chu Family plans to continue supporting me in the succession struggle?

Lu Chen held no great resentment towards his maternal grandfather; after all, Chu Xiong had his own difficulties, and Chu Xiong allowing Chu Yuqin to stay by Lu Chen’s side was a significant favor to him.

What Lu Chen found intolerable were the other members of the Chu Family. He had recently learned through the Brocade Guard’s intelligence of the internal division within the Chu Family. There were now two factions: one led by his maternal grandfather, the North Prince Faction, and the other was the Eighth Prince Faction.

The Eighth Prince Faction currently held the upper hand within the entire Chu Family. If it weren’t for Lu Chen’s rise to power and his defeat of the Barbarian Tribe’s army of three hundred thousand, no one from Chu Xiong’s camp would have been sent to North City so easily.

Chu Xiong’s position in the Chu Family now was essentially equivalent to being a figurehead; his presence or absence as Family Head made little difference to the family.

Lu Chen then asked, "What's the purpose of the Chu Family's visit this time?"

Chu Yuqin replied, "It's not just the Chu Family that's come, but also people from the Wang Family. They hope that you can reconcile with Prince Lu Shuyun."

"The Wang Family says that both of you represent the interests of the aristocratic families in the South, and there's no reason for you two to fight to the death. Moreover, if Prince Lu Shuyun succeeds in the succession, it will be more beneficial for you. The Wang Family even hinted that Prince Lu Shuyun might eventually give you all of Qi Prince's territory, letting you establish your own nation."

...?!?

Lu Chen was stunned for a moment, then couldn't help but laugh in exasperation.

He had thought that the Chu Family had sent someone to continue supporting the succession struggle, yet it turned out to be people from the Eighth Prince Faction of the Chu Family.

"Ha... haha, the Eighth Prince first sends assassins to kill me, and now he says there's no need for us to fight to the death?"

"What on earth is going on in the minds of these Wang Family people?"

"Even now, the Wang Family actually thinks of helping the Eighth Prince to win me over. Don't they know that my relationship with the Eighth Prince has reached a point where we're irreconcilable?"

Lu Chen did not believe for a second that the Wang Family was unaware of the attempt on his life by assassins sent by the Eighth Prince. The Eighth Prince always had the protection of a Grandmaster from the Wang Family by his side, so whatever he did, the Wang Family was sure to know about it.

To send assassins after him several times and then have the audacity to come and suggest reconciliation was nothing short of delusional.

Seeing Lu Chen's reaction, Chu Yuqin realized that he had no intention of making peace with the Eighth Prince. After all, who would want to be on good terms with someone who had repeatedly sent assassins after them, pretending nothing had happened?

Chu Yuqin continued, "Chen'er, I fear your maternal grandfather has completely lost control over the Chu Family. The people they've sent this time not only fail to speak up for you, but their stance actually supports the Eighth Prince in the succession dispute, and they seem to be more interested in persuading you to reconcile with him."

"If your maternal grandfather still had control over the Chu Family, he certainly wouldn't hesitate to support you as Crown Prince at this crucial time."

After all, Chu Xiong is Lu Chen's maternal grandfather, and considering Lu Chen's recent military accomplishments in North City, numerous commoners have no idea how much they wish for Lu Chen to be Crown Prince. Chu Xiong would definitely stand up and side with Lu Chen now.

Yet, the people sent by the Chu Family belong to the Eighth Prince faction, which indicates that Chu Xiong has completely lost control over the Chu Family, and now the entire Chu Family is probably dominated by people from the Eighth Prince faction.

Hearing Chu Yuqin's words, Lu Chen pondered for a moment before saying, "Even if he has lost control over the Chu Family, it has little effect on me, as I had no intention of relying on the Chu Family. Nevertheless, the Wang Family's rush to have me reconcile with the Eighth Prince probably stems from their fear that their dirty dealings might be exposed."

The Wang Family and the Eighth Prince had maintained a close cooperation with the Sky Wolf King tribe even before the thirty thousand strong Barbarian Army marched south. The southward advance of the Barbarian Army led by the Sky Wolf King could not be separated from their collaboration.

The Wang Family wanted to take advantage of the Barbarian Army's push south to force the Sum Emperor to refrain from taking action against the aristocratic families.

The Sum Emperor was no fool; he certainly knew that if turmoil broke out within, the Barbarian Army was very likely to push directly southward, placing the entire Great Sum in jeopardy.

Thus, the Sum Emperor would have to bow his head in the end.

But what nobody expected was that, instead of merely holding North City, the North Prince completely annihilated the Barbarian Army of three hundred thousand.

Now the external pressure on Great Sum had vanished in an instant, and the Sum Emperor, who had sharpened his blade for so long, might soon let it fall.

Once the evidence of the Barbarian Tribe colluding with the Wang Family was transmitted to the Capital City, the Sum Emperor would definitely take action against the Wang Family first. At this time, the Wang Family could only send someone to seek peace with the North Prince.

Thinking of this, Lu Chen's lips curled slightly upwards. He then said, "It seems the Wang Family does not want me to hand over the evidence of their collusion with the Barbarian Tribe to my father the emperor. That's why they're sending envoys to seek peace. However, they're seriously lacking sincerity. Even at this point, they're still thinking of supporting Prince Lu Shuyun in the struggle for succession, while offering me pie in the sky, expecting me to establish a nation in the desolate North City?"

"They must take me for a fool."

At this moment, Chu Yuqin asked, "Chen'er, they are still at the Mysterious Moon Tavern established in Mysterious Moon Palace. Do you want to meet them? If not, I'll send them away."

Lu Chen replied, "There's no need to meet them. I don't want them to spoil my mood."

Lu Chen actually couldn't wait for his father the emperor to make his move, to exterminate the Aristocratic Families within Great Sum, so as to not leave behind a mess for himself in the future.

If the Aristocratic Families were not extinguished, it would be hard to consolidate imperial power, and that would not bode well for Lu Chen who was about to implement reforms.

However, at present, Lu Chen implementing reforms in North City wouldn't face too much obstruction; fortunately, there were no major Aristocratic Families in North City.

At this point, Chu Yuqin said, "Alright then, I'll have them leave Yan County now."

After saying this, Chu Yuqin turned and left.

Watching the charming silhouette of Chu Yuqin as she departed, Lu Chen rubbed his temples, his mind preoccupied with the thought that his father the emperor was about to take action. His opportunity was coming, and perhaps it was time to hasten the reforms in North City.

Shortly after.

In a private room in the Mysterious Moon Tavern,

As soon as Chu Yuqin entered the room, a man dressed in blue immediately came forward and asked, “Madam Chu, may I know if the Prince has agreed to see us?”

Chu Yuqin replied indifferently, “You may all leave. The Prince does not plan to meet with the Wang Family members for the time being.”

Hearing this, Wang Yong was taken aback.

Their main purpose for coming here was to reconcile the North Prince with Prince Lu Shuyun. If they couldn’t even meet with him, how could they help mend their relationship?

This was troublesome.

Wang Yong then said, “Madam Chu, did you not convey our words to the North Prince?”

Chu Yuqin replied indifferently, “I did convey them. The Prince thinks the Wang Family lacks sincerity, therefore he does not wish to see you.”

This...

Wang Yong instantly understood the implication of Chu Yuqin’s words.

They had offered to support Prince Lu Shuyun in the struggle for succession, promising to give the North Prince some territory and let him build his own nation once Prince Lu Shuyun ascended the throne.

If the North Prince thought that even this offer lacked sincerity, it only proved one thing: the North Prince's ambitions were grand, and he had his sights set on all of Great Sum. Thus, he had no interest in the land they promised.

As a result, there was no room left for reconciliation between the North Prince and Prince Lu Shuyun.

The Wang Family had sent envoys to North City because they believed that the fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry there certainly weren't the North Prince's men, but rather they were a secret reserve force prepared by the Sum Emperor, with the North Prince being just a pawn.

The Wang Family believed that nobody would be content with being a pawn, so they thought of using land as bait to win over the North Prince, thereby making him their man. This way, they could not only keep an eye on the fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry in North City, but also gain a powerful political ally.

However, it seemed the North Prince had not recognized his position as a pawn, or could it be that the North Prince truly believed that these fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry were his?

Upon this thought, those from the Chu Family and the Wang Family present found the idea somewhat laughable, thinking the North Prince did not know what was good for him.

## Chapter 167 The Confused Chu Yuqin, Chu Family Changes Hands 1

Upon hearing Chu Yuqin's response, Wang Yong chuckled lightly, then asked "Madam Chu, could it be that the Prince thinks those fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry truly belong to him?"

Hearing this, Chu Yuqin indifferently said, "Whether those fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry belong to the Prince or not seems to have little to do with your Wang Family, doesn't it? You'd better hurry and leave Yan County, lest you provoke the Prince's anger."

Wang Yong snorted coldly and said, “Madam Chu, oh no, I should address you as Lady Wang. You have already married into the Wang Family, you are a daughter-in-law of the Wang Family, and yet you actually speak in favor of the North Prince!”

“Could it really be just like the rumors out there, that the North Prince and you have some land of unspeakable relationship?”

Upon hearing this, Chu Yuqin’s expression turned icy in an instant “I am merely conveying the North Prince’s message. If you want to leave, then leave- if you don’t wish to go and something happens later on, it has nothing to do with me.”

“As for whether I have a special relationship with the North Prince, the innocent are blameless, and it’s none of your business either.”

Wang Yong said, “How is it none of our business? You are our Wang Family’s daughter-in-law. Instead of properly staying at the Wang Family, you are by the side of another man every day. How do you think that makes outsiders view our Wang Family?”

“Lady Wang, as a daughter-in-law of our Wang Family, shouldn’t you also return to the Prince’s Mansion?”

Hearing Wang Yong’s aggressive words, Chu Yuqin replied indifferently, “Since your Wang Family feels that I am a disgrace to you, then simply issue a letter of divorce and rid yourself of me from now on, I will have nothing to do with the Wang Family.”

Wang Yong laughed sarcastically, thinking how nice Chu Yuqin had it all worked out. If they really divorced Chu Yuqin, how then could they use her to control the North Prince?

Their Wang Family had long been aware of the unusual relationship between the North Prince and Chu Yuqin, which is why they had never allowed her to return, so as to use her in the future.

Now was the time.

Wang Yong then said, “Lady Wang, since you have married into our Wang Family, you belong to the Wang Family, whether you live or die. You don’t think that by not returning to the Prince’s Mansion, you can escape your identity, do you?”

“If you insist on staying by the North Prince’s side, I’m afraid it won’t be long before there are rumors that the North Prince has forcibly taken a civilian girl. At that point, the reputation the North Prince has just managed to regain will be tarnished again, and I wonder what choice you will make then.”

Chu Yuqin sneered, “Are you threatening me?”

Indeed, if such a matter were widely disseminated among the public, Lu Chen’s reputation would probably be negatively affected. After all, Chu Yuqin was a widow, and the spread of rumors about snatching a widow would definitely be unsavory.

The most crucial point was that the man Chu Yuqin initially married had died after contracting a strange poison while fending off an invasion from the Barbarian Tribe.

If word got out that the wife of a hero who defended against the Barbarian Tribe’s invasion had been taken over by the North Prince after her husband’s death, the North Prince would surely be despised by many, which would greatly affect his reputation.

Seeing that Chu Yuqin seemed angered, Wang Yong said with a smile, “How dare I threaten Lady Wang? After all, Lady Wang is now the most important woman to the North Prince.”

At this point, Wang Yong added, “Lady Wang, when you return to the Prince’s Mansion, you should still advise the North Prince that wanting everything might lead to losing everything in the end.”

“If he wants to shake off the status of a pawn, then cooperating with the Aristocratic Family is his best option.”

Having said this, Wang Yong had no intention of further wasting words with Chu Yuqin. He then turned to the people behind him and said, “Let’s go. Since the North Prince does not welcome us, we will not continue to stay in North City to bother him.”



As their words fell, the people from the Wang Family and the Chu Family left together. The people dispatched by the Chu Family didn't engage in much conversation with Chu Yuqin, since she had already married into the Wang Family and was now their daughter-in-law.

After Wang Yong and the others had left, Chu Yuqin's eyebrows knit slightly, and her expression showed a touch of melancholy.

If she continued to stay at the North Prince Mansion, by Lu Chen's side, it would undoubtedly affect his reputation significantly.

Judging from Lu Chen's recent actions, he was bound to contend for the throne in the Capital City in the future. Such a stain could pose a major threat to his ambitions.

For a moment, Chu Yuqin felt lost.

She questioned whether her continued presence at the North Prince Mansion was too selfish.

If it had been before, she would still have needed to protect Lu Chen, but now Lu Chen had several Grandmasters by his side and no longer needed her protection.

She had lost her original purpose at the North Prince Mansion.

If she claimed now that staying at the North Prince Mansion was to protect Lu Chen, that would be purely an excuse.

At that moment, something else occurred to Chu Yuqin.

Although she had lost her initial purpose in the North Prince Mansion, there was still a role that she could play that no one else in the mansion, not even the Grandmasters, could replace – she was able to help Lu Chen with his health.

According to what Lu Chen had said, only a woman whose heart resonated with his would be able to help him with his health, and among all the women in the North Prince Mansion at present, they were either commoners or those without feelings for him.

Only she had deep affection for Lu Chen, and as a Half, step Grandmaster, she was the only one capable of aiding with Lu Chen's health.

With this thought, Chu Yuqin felt much more at ease.

As long as she was still useful to Lu Chen, she could not possibly leave the

North Prince Mansion, nor could she leave Lu Chen..

Chapter 168 The Confused Chu Yuqin, Chu Family Changes Hands\_2

Meanwhile,

at Sufeng City, Chu Family.

The Chu Family Council.

Today, all the important members of the Chu Family had gathered, seemingly to discuss some crucial matter.

At this moment, Chu Xiong was sitting at the highest seat in the hall, his face as dark as thunder, looking quite displeased.

Just then, Chu Liang spoke up, "According to the decision of the Family Head and the Elders, effective today, Chu Xiong will no longer hold the position of Family Head."

Upon hearing these words, Chu Xiong snorted coldly and addressed Chu Liang and Chu Song, "Second brother, third brother, do you realize what you are doing?"

Chu Liang said with a smile, "Big brother, you can't still be planning to support that useless North Prince, can you?"

Chu Xiong replied, “Now that the North Prince has achieved illustrious military exploits in North City, you still regard him as useless, and you even collude with outsiders to strip me of my position as Family Head. You are leading the Chu Family into a bottomless abyss of calamity!”

Chu Liang then said, “Big brother, ask yourself, do you really believe that the North Prince could have raised fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry in such a short time?”

“Are you truly clueless, or just pretending to be? The North Prince is clearly the Sum Emperor’s pawn; that fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry is the Sum Emperor’s secret trump card, and yet you still have expectations for a mere pawn? Who exactly is bringing the Chu Family into a bottomless abyss of calamity?”

When the members of the Chu Family first heard that the North Prince led his army to defeat the three hundred thousand-strong Barbarian Tribe, they truly believed that the North Prince had been feigning incompetence all along, and some members who favored Prince Lu Shuyun even considered replying their loyalty to him.

But soon they recognized the problem. How long had the North Prince been in North City, and given its poverty, how could it possibly have raised fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry?

If they believed the fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry belonged to the North Prince, then they’d be complete fools.

The North Prince was enfeoffed to North City by the Sum Emperor, and now that a sizeable Heavy Cavalry force suddenly appeared in North City, combined with the fact that in the entire Great Sum only one entity had the ability to raise such a force, there was no doubt, the fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry were indeed the Sum Emperor’s secret weapon!

Not only the Chu Family, but all the Aristocratic Families had come to a sudden realization, as if they had seen the light.

They finally understood why the Sum Emperor dared to take action against them at this time; he had fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry at his disposal, so why fear these Aristocratic Families?

Therefore, for the members of the Chu Family, the rise of the North Prince in North City was not a blessing, but rather a curse.

It proved that the North Prince had become the Sum Emperor's pawn; the North Prince and the Sum Emperor were aligned.

In order to decisively distance themselves from the North Prince, Chu Liang and Chu Song seized this opportunity to join forces with the Family Head and the Elders. They unanimously decided to strip Chu Xiong of his position as Family Head.

After all, Chu Xiong was the North Prince's maternal grandfather, and by deposing him as Family Head, they were, to some extent, declaring their loyalty to Prince Lu Shuyun, indicating that from now on, the Chu Family was completely shifting its allegiance toward Prince Lu Shuyun.

Upon hearing Chu Liang's words, frankly, Chu Xiong too was conflicted inside. He also found it hard to believe that the North Prince truly had fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry, as it simply defied all reason.

But to lean entirely towards Prince Lu Shuyun meant that the Chu Family, along with the Wang Family, was preparing for a rebellion. What did that imply? It meant that the Sum Emperor's blade would soon fall upon their heads.

Although the Sum Emperor had long planned to move against the Aristocratic Families, he had not yet found the opportunity. But should you initiate a rebellion, it would be different. The Sum Emperor was waiting for the Aristocratic Families to rebel so he wouldn't need another excuse to strike.

At that moment, Chu Song laughed and said, "Big brother, calm down. You've reached such an age; starting from today, you should just rest at home and not worry about the family affairs anymore. This might turn out to be a good thing for you."

Upon hearing this, Chu Xiong snorted coldly and then said, "If you insist on rebelling with the Wang Family, then I shall have no choice but to lead my branch of the Chu Family and break away from the main family."

No sooner had Chu Xiong finished his words than his son, Chu Hongfei, spoke up, "Father, why are you so stubborn? You should listen to Uncle Two and Uncle Three. As for me, I won't follow you in leaving the Chu Family; if you want to leave, you can do so on your own. I will stay."

Hearing his son's words, Chu Xiong nearly choked with frustration.

He had only this one son. If he were to leave the Chu Family, he would be left alone, and what could he do all by himself?

Chu Xiong had not expected his son to speak out at this juncture.

Hearing Chu Hongfei's statement, Chu Liang's lips curled into a slight smile. He then said, "Big brother, you see, even Hongfei disapproves of your actions. Perhaps you are not aware, but the Wang Family has already agreed to let Chu Yuqin return soon, to marry Hongfei."

Chu Xiong was momentarily stunned; he realized why his son had so swiftly sided with the Wang Family—it was all part of his calculated plan.

Chu Xiong immediately rose from his seat, then declared, "Since you insist on courting death, go ahead and do as you please. From now on, I wash my hands of the Chu Family's affairs."

As soon as the words fell, Chu Xiong left the council hall directly.

Chu Xiong's withdrawal signified that the Aristocratic Families of the South had completely united their front, all turning to support Prince Lu Shuyun. From now on, in the South, there would only be Prince Lu Shuyun's faction.

A few days later.

In the North Land.

Xiao Pengthian looked back at the endless line of livestock and couldn't help but sigh.

By the time they reached North City, the Sky Wolf King Tribe would be no more.

At that moment, not only he, but the entire Sky Wolf King Tribe was dispirited and looked immeasurably sad.

Especially the women of the Barbarian Tribe, when they learned that the Barbarian Tribe's army of three hundred thousand had been defeated by North City, with two hundred thousand dead, many of the women collapsed to the ground outright.

In the Barbarian Tribe, the labor of an adult man was of utmost importance; without men, it was very difficult for their women to survive on the boundless vast steppes.

Although later they learned that they were being relocated to North City, and their days might be somewhat better than on the steppes, the entire tribe's mood was still very depressed.

At this very moment, the migrating army of the Sky Wolf King Tribe was silently moving southward, with virtually no one speaking along the way.

Then, a soldier on horseback came to Xiao Pengthian and said, "Your Majesty, they have all left."

Hearing this, Xiao Pengthian sighed and then ordered, "Convey my instructions to hasten the migration. We have now entered North City. Let's all put in more effort."

The "they" the soldier referred to were those of the Barbarian Tribe unwilling to join North City.

Although most of the Barbarian Tribe longed for a better life, some felt that joining North City was tantamount to living under someone else's roof and that they would become slaves to the people of Great Sum in the future. Therefore, these individuals were reluctant to go south with them.

Xiao Pengthian did not make it difficult for them, as he had anticipated such resistance; therefore, he left considerable supplies for those who were reluctant to join North City.

Of course, before their departure, to prevent these people from running off to the North Fre King's Tribe to snitch, Xiao Pengthian also left some to keep watch over them.

Now that they had reached North City, and those from the Sky Wolf King Tribe who had stayed behind were just leaving. Even if they went to the North Fre King Tribe to snitch, it was too late. This posed no great threat to those in the midst of migration.

Just then, a soldier rushed to Xiao Pengthian in a fluster and exclaimed, "Your Majesty, disaster!"

Seeing the soldier's panicked state, Xiao Pengthian immediately asked, "What has happened?"

The soldier replied, "Your Majesty, the High Priest... The High Priest has just drowned himself in the river!!!"

Upon hearing this, Xiao Pengthian was dumbstruck on the spot.

Once he regained his wits, he quickly said, "Where is he now? Take me there!"

Following the soldier's lead, Xiao Pengthian soon arrived where the High Priest's body lay.

The High Priest was lying there soaked, his face pale, clearly having died.

The Elders of the tribe all stood around the High Priest in silence.

The High Priest should have been the most conservative member of the tribe, likely to be firmly opposed to relocating to North City. He had, however, voted to join North City when the vote was taken. Now, as they were on the verge of entering North City, he chose to jump into the river and take his own life.

The northerly wind howled against the faces of the people, who at that moment spoke no word, seemingly in mourning.

After an indeterminate time, Xiao Pengthian had the High Priest's body buried on the steppes, and then they continued onwards, without further delay.

## Chapter 169 Sending Wives to the Men of North City i

The Barbarian Tribe's migration into North City, if they were directly moved to places where the common folk of Great Sum congregate, could easily lead to conflicts between the Barbarian Tribe and the people of Great Sum.

But if there is no interaction between the two groups at all, it would be unlikely for the Barbarian Tribe to fully assimilate into Great Sum culture.

Therefore, Lu Chen offered a compromise by setting up counties specifically for the Barbarian Tribe to reside in North City. Of course, each household had to be registered and strictly controlled; however, as long as they were granted permission, they could also enter cities inhabited by the Great Sum people.

The most important point was that the relatives of the captured Barbarian Tribe members could directly visit them. This made the recently migrated Barbarian women in North City very happy.

However, where there is joy, there also exists sorrow. The Barbarian women whose men had died, even if they arrived at the camps of the Barbarian captives, would no longer see their men.

And there were many such women. The Barbarians practiced polygamy, not monogamy. Suddenly, two hundred thousand men perished, including some from the North Fre King's tribe, but there were also over a hundred thousand men who were no more, leaving one to imagine how many widows the Sky Wolf King's tribe had left behind.

The sudden increase of so many Barbarian widows in North City was not a good thing for the region.

At dawn, after Lu Chen got up and quickly ate something, he headed to his study.

In the past few days, he almost visited Yelv Nanyan every day. Although he was happy, Lu Chen didn't spend all his time indulging in Yelv Nanyan's tender land of warmth. Being a Seignior, he carried out his duties every day.

The study in the outer court had now become his workplace. Basically, after getting up in the morning, he would go to the study to handle all kinds of political affairs.

When Lu Chen first arrived in North City, he didn't feel busy. However, suddenly the affairs in North City became numerous, and Lu Chen spent almost every day in the study from morning to night, often taking his meals there as well.

This made Lu Chen realize something—he simply had too few people working for him, or to be precise, too few Civil Officials.



Although North City had its own administrative foundation, previously it did not require any reforms, with a governance of non-action most of the time. The officials of North City essentially did nothing and just waited for the court to distribute the provisions and salaries.

Now that he intended to reform the entire North City, he first faced the issue of insufficient officials, followed by the problem that most of the officials lacked motivation to work, making it difficult to complete many tasks in a timely manner.

At this moment, as Lu Chen looked at the information about the officials on his desk, he furrowed his brows.

Corruption was commonplace; North City might have been poor, but those officials still found ways to line their pockets.

Not only were they corrupt, but they were also idle – these officials were no different from the good-for-nothing layabouts.

A clean-up was necessary.

Just then, a maid's voice came from outside the study.

“Prince, Lord Li and Lord Mo have arrived,” she said.

Lu Chen calmly responded, “Let them all come in.”

As the words of Lu Chen fell, the door to the study opened slowly, and Li Rui, along with over twenty other people, entered the study.

The study now seemed a bit crowded.

Usually, a Seignior would have his own place for discussing affairs, but after Lu Chen came to North City, he initially hardly dealt with political matters and always stayed in the North Prince Mansion, so the Meeting Hall had not been built.

Li Rui initially thought that since the North Prince did not handle affairs, constructing a Meeting Hall for him would cost a substantial amount of Silver. Therefore, embracing a frugal mindset, he simply didn't bother to build the Meeting Hall for the North Prince.

However, the Li Rui of today realized that the North Prince was not uninvolved in affairs; it was just not the time yet. Soon, the North Prince would certainly take significant actions. Li Rui could no longer afford his previous perfunctory attitude, or else, sooner or later, the North Prince would remove him from his position as Prefecture Governor.

After entering the study, everyone promptly greeted Lu Chen, saying, "We greet the Prince, may the Prince live for ten thousand years, ten thousand years, ten thousand ten thousand years!"

Lu Chen nodded slightly, then said, "Speak one at a time if you have something to say."

Unlike the court in the Capital city, Lu Chen's "Small court" was still fairly orderly at present: speak about matters when required, without the buzzing commotion of flies from the start.

At this time, Li Rui stepped forward and said, "Prince, as affairs in North City are gradually increasing, the study of the North Prince Mansion is no longer suitable as a place for discussing political matters, and it is time to build the Hall of Political Affairs."

In Great Sum, the Seigniors who are granted feudal statuses wield great power. Apart from their lands being nominally part of Great Sum, they possess almost any authority.

The areas governed by the Seigniors are also called feudal states, and each Seignior has their own administrative staff and Hall of Political Affairs.

Previously, it didn't matter whether Lu Chen managed affairs or not, but now things were different.

With the increasing number of their administrative staff and the growing volume of affairs, it wouldn't be appropriate to discuss political matters crammed into such a small study in the future.

The study was already struggling to accommodate over twenty people; if the North Prince's Staff or subordinate officials continued to grow in number, then discussing political affairs might have to move outside into the courtyard.

This was clearly unacceptable.

Hearing Li Rui's words, Lu Chen calmly said, "Alright, Lord Li will take care of this matter."

Li Rui bowed and responded, "As you command, Prince."

## Chapter 170 Sending Wives to the Men of North City\_2

Afterward, Li Rui returned to his place.

Lu Chen then continued, "By the way, let the Hall of Political Affairs be built next to North Prince Mansion. Don't allow it to be too far away."

Li Rui responded, "Prince, rest assured. When North Prince Mansion was constructed, we had already reserved a space next to it for the Hall of Political Affairs."

Hearing this, Lu Chen did not press Li Rui on why the Hall of Political Affairs hadn't been built initially; it was highly likely that officials like Li Rui from North City had assumed Lu Chen would have no use for the Hall, and thus simply did not bother to provide him with a venue for discussing political affairs.

Lu Chen did not intend to dwell on these issues and continued, "Does anyone else have a matter to report?"

Mu Changtian stepped forward at this moment and said, "Prince, the quantity of howitzer cannons is not abundant anymore. The soldiers in the Artillery camp mostly have nothing to do, and they cannot even proceed with training. I believe the Artillery camp should be dissolved and in the future, we should distribute the howitzer cannons among the regular troops."

There were only a thousand rounds for the howitzers, and after the battle against the Barbarian Tribe in Wanning Valley, the ammunition had almost entirely been used up.

Being responsible for the Artillery camp, Mu Jingwu was unsure if Lu Chen still had any shells. They didn't even dare to use live ammunition for training now, fearing that if they used it all up, they'd be completely out.

Mu Jingwu thought that if they were indeed out of shells, maintaining an Artillery camp with ten thousand men seemed somewhat wasteful. It might be better to distribute these soldiers to other camps. That's why he had Mu Changtian bring up the Artillery camp to Lu Chen, to see what he thought about it.

After hearing Mu Changtian's words, Lu Chen pondered for a moment.

This was indeed a problem.

They did not have the capability to manufacture howitzer cannons. Although the system rewards with howitzer cannons had helped him through the crisis in North City, after using up the shells and if the system did not provide additional ammunition rewards, these howitzer cannons would just sit there collecting dust.

At this thought, Lu Chen's brow furrowed slightly.

It was only now that he remembered his women had not conceived for him for a long time.

His system was the System of Lots of Sons and Lots of Blessings. Only through their pregnancies or childbirth could he receive more substantial rewards.

Indeed, he hadn't been idle lately, almost every night involved a bout of hard work.

Of course, the reason Mu Zixuan and the women from Great Yu and Dazhou weren't quickly pregnant was mainly that they had just given birth, so Lu Chen controlled the situation, intentionally preventing these three from conceiving, fearing harm to their health.

Although his Rejuvenating Skill could help them recover from injuries, when it came to childbirth, who can foretell if there might be losses that couldn't be restored? So in this regard, Lu Chen exercised some restraint.

However, for Wang Qingci, Bai Qingqing, and the recently arrived Yelv Nanyan, things were different; he took exceptionally good care of these three women. For instance, ever since Yelv Nanyan arrived at the Prince's Mansion, Lu Chen even spent several hours on her every day.

Lu Chen's expression changed continuously as he pondered for a long time, feeling that this could not go on. Wang Qingci, Bai Qingqing, and Yelv Nanyan were Martial Artists, and first and foremost, it wasn't easy for Martial Artists to conceive. Another issue was that Martial Artists could circulate their skill to expel the impurities in their bodies.

In other words, if these three did not wish to carry his child, he had no way to force them to conceive.

So, did that mean he had to shift his focus back to his wife and the women from Great Yu and Dazhou?

Seeing that Lu Chen remained silent, Mu Changtian continued, "Prince, if you still have ammunition for the howitzer cannons, the Artillery camp doesn't need to be dismantled. However, I believe we cannot allow them to remain idle everyday."

Mu Changtian thought to himself that likely, North Prince intentionally withheld the howitzer shells because, after all, these terrifying weapons of mass destruction had an enormous destructive capacity. If one were to fire at North Prince Mansion, the outcome would be self-evident.

This type of weapon of mass destruction must definitely remain in the hands of North Prince.

Lu Chen said, "General Mu, set aside the Artillery camp matter for now. Does anyone else have any other matters?"

Since Lu Chen had said as much, Mu Changtian said no more.

"Yes, Prince."

As he finished speaking, Mu Changtian returned to his seat.

At this moment, Qin Yushan stood up and said, "Prince, the Barbarian Tribe of the Sky Wolf King has already entered North City, and according to your plan, General Xiao has arranged them across the six counties of North City. However, General Xiao posed a question to his subordinates to relay to you."

“With the sudden death of over a hundred thousand Barbarian men, there are now quite a few widows within the Sky Wolf King Tribe. If we were to build a house for each widow, that would require constructing twice as many homes as originally estimated.”

“Furthermore, after these Barbarian women have entered North City, they are not very familiar with life in Great Sum nor do they know how to farm, which makes it difficult for them to survive.”

“General Xiao hopes the Prince could think of a solution to deal with these Barbarian widows’ issue.”

Hearing this, Lu Chen said at once, “I have also been considering how to solve this issue lately. Since you all are here today, why don’t you discuss it and see if you can come up with a good solution.”

As Lu Chen’s words fell, the old fox Li Rui immediately responded, “Prince, the common folk of North City are poor, and some single men have been unable to find wives. Barbarian women are hardworking and enduring, I believe those single men will surely be very fond of them.”

” Why don’t we distribute these Barbarian widows to the single men of Great Sum? In doing so, we not only address the issue of the poor populace of North City being unable to find wives, but we also tackle the problem of the Barbarian widows’ inability to survive.”

No sooner had Li Rui finished speaking than Mu Xingping commented from the side, “Lord Li, your idea is indeed good, but the common folk of Great Sum have long harboured hatred towards the Barbary Tribes. Would the common folk of Great Sum truly be willing to marry those widows from the Barbarian Tribes?”

Hearing this, Li Rui chuckled and said, “Captain Mo, are you a well-fed man who does not know the plight of the hungry? Those bachelors who have been single for a long time find even a cow to possess graceful features, much less caring whether their wives are Barbarian women.”

“Moreover, from their appearance, Barbarian women are no different from the women of Great Sum. Why wouldn’t they marry them?”

Unsure of how to counter Li Rui’s argument, Mu Xingping simply chose to remain silent.

At this time, Lu Chen spoke up, “Lord Li’s method is good, and I have been considering the same. Does anyone else have any other suggestions?”

With that, Lu Chen scanned the others in the study, but not a single person spoke up.

Lu Chen was somewhat speechless.

There were over twenty people in the study, and only Li Rui and two of his subordinates could be considered Civil Officials; the rest were all Military Generals.

He surely couldn’t use Military Generals to govern North City!

Lu Chen then said, “Since no one has any other opinions, let’s settle on this.”

“By the way, to motivate the common folk of North City to marry the Barbarian widows, I have decided to take Yelv Nanyan and Xiao Wenyao as side consorts in a few days.”

At these words, Mu Changtian expressed his concern, “Prince, if you take Barbarian women as side consorts, it is very likely to cause dissatisfaction in the court.”

Having served in the Capital city for many years, Mu Changtian was very familiar with the court’s situation. If Lu Chen were to do so, there would certainly be numerous ministers impeaching him.

The ministers in the Capital city would undoubtedly argue that the North Prince, being a prince, should not disgrace the royal family by taking a woman from the Barbarian Tribes as a consort, and moreover, one being a widow.

Hearing Mu Changtian’s words, Lu Chen gave a faint smile, then responded, “The court will definitely be discontent with what I’m doing in North City, but for the next few months, they will be too preoccupied to care about what I am doing in North City.”

Mu Changtian immediately realized that the Sum Emperor was preparing to take action against the Aristocratic Families. The ministers of the court were, more or less, connected to the Aristocratic Families. As chaos approached Great Sum, the officials in the Capital city would certainly not overly concern themselves with what the North Prince was doing in North City.

Lu Chen said, “Alright, let’s settle this and move on to the next matter.”

As he spoke, Lu Chen once again surveyed the room, his gaze finally resting on Wenren Lie and Xuanyuan Chen.

“General Xuanyuan, I wonder if you have relayed the discussion we had last time to Great Yu City. Are the common folk of Great Yu City willing to relocate to North City?”