

## Es. Benefits 201

### Chapter 201: The Battlefield is Not a Place for Pleasurei

After hearing Wu Junwan's words, Chai Jiliang also felt there was some truth to them and immediately responded, "Princess Junwan's speculation is not without reason, however, the North Prince is the God's Son of the Mysterious Moon Palace. It's highly likely that the Palace Master of the Mysterious Moon Palace went to North City for this reason."

Wu Junwan walked to the center of the great hall and gazed at the light rain drifting outside the hall before saying, "Mr. Chai, do you really think the God's Son matters that much to the Mysterious Moon Palace? In my view, as long as Chu Yue, the Goddess, is alive, the North Prince can be considered the God's Son. If Chu Yue were to die, then to the Mysterious Moon Palace, the North Prince would just be an ordinary Prince."

"If the Mysterious Moon Palace still acknowledges the North Prince as the God's Son, then it can only mean that the North Prince possesses something the Mysterious Moon Palace wants to obtain."

"Something that a superpower nation and the Mysterious Moon Palace both want, Mr. Chai, aren't you curious as to what it could be?"

The superpower that Wu Junwan was referring to was evidently the mysterious nation that had provided the North City with fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry. A country that could produce fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry in a flash and was willing to back the North Prince with them must undoubtedly possess formidable strength.

They should know, even their martially esteemed Great Wu Dynasty didn't have fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry, so it was no exaggeration for that mysterious nation to be termed a superpower.

Upon hearing Wu Junwan's analysis, Chai Jiliang pondered deeply for a long time.

Wu Junwan continued, "I am now even more curious as to what value the North Prince holds. It seems I must arrange for some people to go to North City."

As she spoke, Wu Junwan glanced at Chai Jiliang and then asked, "Mr. Chai, do you have anything else?"

Upon hearing Wu Junwan's mature and gentle voice, Chai Jiliang instantly snapped back to reality and quickly replied, "This official has nothing further."

"This official will take his leave now."

Having said that, Chai Jiliang turned and left.

Watching Chai Jiliang's retreating figure, Wu Junwan seemed to be lost in thought.

After Chai Jiliang had left the great hall, a maid spoke up beside Wu Junwan, "Princess Junwan, this servant heard that Mr. Chai recently turned down another marriage proposal."

Wu Junwan said indifferently, "Too talkative."

Seeing that Wu Junwan seemed angry, the maid quickly shut her mouth.

At that moment, Wu Junwan murmured to herself, "I truly envy the Yue Emperor, I wonder when I will be able to be like her."

In the blink of an eye, a month had passed.

Lu Chen had been waiting in Tianguang City for a month and had lost more than ten pounds.

He had never had to wait this long for anyone before.

Though Lu Chen was a Prince, and his treatment was better than that of an ordinary soldier, the conditions in Tianguang City couldn't compare to Yan County. Furthermore, the road between Tianguang City and Yan County was difficult, and after the snowfall, transporting supplies became even more challenging.

The food, amenities, and lodging in Tianguang City couldn't compare to those in Yan County, but fortunately, Lu Chen was adept at adapting to his environment.

Moreover, he was, after all, a Prince who had led his troops on a mission; if he complained about the poor conditions, what battles would they fight in the future?

At this moment, Lu Chen was warming himself by a stove, examining this stove that had been sent from Yan County.

Mu Jingwu said, “Prince, this subordinate has heard that some common folks were picking up black rocks to burn instead of firewood, but the next day they were found poisoned to death at home. Are we really going to use these black stones as a substitute for firewood?”

What was burning inside the stove was treated coal that the craftsmen had processed. Although Lu Chen was no longer in Yan County, he had made arrangements for his work at the North Prince Mansion.

The making of stoves and the mining of coal were activities that commenced after Lu Chen left Yan County.

As for coal, people in this world didn’t understand it and still thought it was stone. Now, the citizens of Yan County referred to coal as black rock.

At first, the common people didn’t know that black rocks could be ignited.

Half a month ago, the Prince’s Mansion introduced a kind of fuel and stove called “coal,” which could burn all night once ignited.

Ever since these specially made stoves and coal became available, people hardly needed to get up at night to add wood to their braziers. The coal and stoves from the North Prince Mansion quickly became popular throughout North City, and then some common people discovered that the material used to make coal was black rock.

Thinking to save wherever possible, some commoners quietly started using black rocks as fuel, only to result in many of them being poisoned to death by the fumes produced by the burning rocks.

This also caused some common people to worry whether coal might also poison to death.

Although the North Prince Mansion had already posted notices explaining to the common people that coal had been treated with certain substances to remove the poisonous materials and also reminding everyone to maintain ventilation, there were still those who dared not use coal.

It wasn't just the common people—some officials in North City were also afraid to use coal, including Mu Jingwu standing before me.

After hearing what Mu Jingwu had said, Lu Chen responded, "Captain Mu, hasn't the Prince's Mansion already issued notifications detailing the precautions for using coal? Why do you still harbor a psychological aversion to coal?"

Mu Jingwu replied, "I just feel that the smoke from the burning coal is irritating to the nose and might be harmful to the body."

Lu Chen said indifferently, "That is normal. The coal briquettes we are using are very different from ordinary black rocks. The toxic gases released upon burning these briquettes have been greatly reduced. As long as ventilation is maintained, there won't be any problems."

"North City will rely on what you call black rocks to get through the winters from now on. You all need to get used to them quickly. If even you officials are afraid to use coal, how could the common people dare to use it?"

Mu Jingwu said sheepishly, "What the Prince says is true."

Just then, Xiao Pengthian entered the room, "Prince, Yan County has sent a few maidservants over, saying they have come to take care of you."

Lu Chen, being a Prince, held a prestigious status and was not like ordinary people. Some in the North Prince Mansion feared that Lu Chen might suffer hardships in Tianguang City, so they had specifically sent some maidservants to care for his daily needs.

Upon hearing this, Lu Chen's brows furrowed.

While their concern was certainly a good thing,

he was currently leading troops in battle—how could he indulge in such special treatment? He immediately said, “Send them back, tell them the Prince needs no one to look after him.”

This...

Mu Changtian interjected from the side, “Prince, after all, you are a Prince, and the conditions in Tianguang City are harsh. How could you be without someone to take care of you?”

Lu Chen said sternly, “This is a battlefield, not a place for pleasure-seeking. Nobody should seek special treatment, not even the Prince.”

Even though Bai Qingqing had been by Lu Chen’s side throughout the month, he had not once touched her.

If he had been in the rear, in Yan County, he could do as he pleased, but not on the battlefield. Lu Chen had plans to reform the military camps in the future, and if the Prince himself behaved inappropriately at the front line, other officers would follow suit.

If the officers followed his example, the soldiers might well be led astray, so no matter how much Lu Chen restrained himself, he would not touch Bai Qingqing.

Seeing Lu Chen’s serious expression, Mu Changtian couldn’t help but feel a certain admiration for him.

It was no small feat for someone as fond of pleasure as Lu Chen to have abstained from women for so long in Tianguang City.

Military discipline in the Great Sum army had always been rather poor, and it was much the same with the armies of other great dynasties.

After a moment of surprise, Xiao Pengthian immediately said, “I will send them back right away.”

Thereupon, Xiao Pengthian turned and left.

At that moment, Lu Chen addressed those in the room, “Remember my words, from today onward, there must be no women like military prostitutes in the camps at the front lines. After the war, when the soldiers return to the rear, they can do as they please. But at the front, everyone must behave themselves.”

## Chapter 202: North Fre King’s Army Advances Southwardl

At this moment, Lu Chen was actually somewhat angry.

Lu Chen was no fool, why had he been in Tianguang City for over a month and the North Prince Mansion hadn’t sent a maid to him, only to do so now?

It was quite obvious that someone had tipped them off, saying he was having a hard time in Tianguang City, which was why the North Prince Mansion had someone send a maid to take care of him.

Did the people who leaked the information really do it because he was the Prince and they were afraid he would suffer in Tianguang City?

One could only say perhaps not.

These past days, Lu Chen had also heard some rumors, some of the soldiers from North City were talking about how he had transferred Bai Qingqing to another camp and did not keep any women around him.

Not even the Prince kept women by his side, which made these soldiers hesitant to even touch the women who came to the camp to sell themselves.

This made Lu Chen suspect, could it be that someone wanted him to set a precedent, so they could follow suit, thus freeing themselves from any pressure.

Seeing Lu Chen get angry, Mu Changtian immediately realized his mistake and promptly knelt halfway and said, “Prince, it was I who sent word to the Princess, telling her about your life in the camp, I am at fault, please punish me, Prince!”

Hearing Mu Changtian's words, Lu Chen scoffed in his heart, he knew there had to be someone tipping them off.

Lu Chen then said, "General Mu, I will let it pass this time, but do not let it happen again."

"Rise."

Mu Changtian then responded, "Thankyou, Prince, for your forgiveness."

As his voice fell, Mu Changtian stood up, and after Mu Changtian had risen, Lu Chen continued, "Recently, I have noticed that quite a number of women have come to Tianguang City, I wonder if you are aware of this."

Hearing Lu Chen's words, Mu Changtian immediately understood Lu Chen's intention; Lu Chen had already made it clear that no women like army prostitutes were to appear in the camp in the future.

Although the women who ran to Tianguang City weren't army prostitutes, their purpose in coming to Tianguang City was to sell their bodies. As long as the soldiers gave them money, they would spend the night with them, so there was no real difference between them and army prostitutes.

Mu Changtian immediately said, "Prince, I will have those women driven out of Tianguang City at once!"

Lu Chen continued, "Now is a good opportunity to be clear about some things. When you go back, relay my words to the soldiers as well. My army must maintain strict military discipline, and on the battlefield, all efforts must be directed towards the war effort, instead of being consumed with indulgence."

"Of course, this is not directed only at the soldiers, but also at you."

At this time, Mu Changtian said, "Prince, I understand your intentions, but given the mix of good and bad in the ranks, it will not be easy to get them to fully comply with the orders and refrain from seeking out women."

Hearing Mu Changtian's words, Lu Chen was not surprised at all; what Mu Changtian said was correct, the makeup of the current army in North City was completely different from the one Lu Chen had envisioned.

Then, Lu Chen looked at Mu Changtian and asked, "General Mu, how do you find my Black Cavalry?"

Mu Changtian said, "They obey orders and maintain strict military discipline."

Lu Chen spoke with a smile, "If the Black Cavalry can achieve this, can't the North City army achieve it too?"

This...

After thinking for a moment, Mu Changtian came to the realization that it made sense, but this would require reorganizing the army, and likely many soldiers would have to be discharged.

Lu Chen then said, "I intend to establish a new army with strict military discipline after this war. Soldiers with criminal records, those who have transgressed, or vagrants, will all be barred from joining my new army."

No sooner had Lu Chen finished speaking than Li Feng reminded him, "Prince, with many vagrants in North City, if we do not recruit vagrants into the army, and they have nowhere else to go, gathering together, they are probably prone to causing trouble."

Historically, many criminals and vagrants had been in the army, seen by the Emperor as cannon fodder, expendable in war, so they were deemed most suitable for the battlefield.

If North City did not recruit vagrants into the army, and their numbers surged, this would have a considerable impact on the public order in North City.

Lu Chen spoke indifferently, "General Li's concern has its merits; however, I have already found places for those vagrants."

Upon hearing this, everyone exchanged glances, no longer saying anything.



They probably had guessed what kind of place Lu Chen was referring to for the vagrants.

Construction had begun on the roads of North City, and coal mines were being extensively exploited; both required labor, and the number of vagrants in North City was negligible compared to the shortage of labor.

At this time, Lu Chen continued, “The military’s mindset must change; we cannot accept just anyone. If the army is filled with ruffians and hoodlums, how could the common people ever trust my troops?”

“If the people can’t even trust the army under my command, how could they trust me? The army of North City is tethered to me; we share in both disgrace and honor.”

“If the mentality within the army remains restless, if soldiers join only with thoughts of promotion and wealth rather than to protect and defend the nation, then such an army might fare well in victory, but upon facing the slightest adversity, the soldiers will prioritize their interests first, and the entire force could quickly lose its fighting spirit. I do not wish to see, in my lifetime, an army under my command crumble upon the enemy’s first assault.”

## Chapter 203: The North Fre King’s Army Marches South\_2

At this moment, Mu Changtian and the others were quietly listening to Lu Chen’s speech, and they all felt a bit surprised that the Prince, who spent most of his days in the Prince’s Mansion, had such insights on the construction of the army.

Lu Chen continued, “General Mu, from now on, you will be in charge of the construction of the new forces in North City. Remember my words, the soldiers recruited for the new forces must all be the best, and the construction of the new forces should measure up to the Black Cavalry. None of those crooked and evil practices previously found in the barracks are allowed to appear again.”

Mu Changtian immediately replied, “Yes, my Prince!”

At this time, Lu Chen rose from his seat, “That will be all for today. I’ll go up to the city walls to get some air. Think over what I just said and ponder the upcoming construction of the new forces in North City.”

As his voice fell, Lu Chen left the room, and everyone said in unison, “We bid farewell to the Prince!”

After Lu Chen left, the generals in the room looked at each other, and after a long pause, Mu Jingwu finally spoke, “Father, the Prince just said that the new forces should recruit only the best. Isn’t war just a consumption? If all the talented people are lost in battle, won’t North City be left with nothing but ruffians and thugs in the future?”

Lu Chen’s concept was slightly ahead of its time in this era. Although the armies of Great Sum also stressed strict military discipline, no matter how much it was emphasized verbally, it was hard for the armies of Great Sum to be as obedient and prohibitive as the Black Cavalry.

It could be said that the Black Cavalry was the most loyal and disciplined force Mu Changtian had ever seen, and the regular armed forces of North City were no match for the Black Cavalry.

And Mu Jingwu was not wrong. In the eyes of the rulers and high-ranking officials in the court, war was meant to cause deaths, so they preferred to send criminals and vagrants to fight. That way, they would not feel distressed if those criminals died.

But Lu Chen had said that he wanted the best people to join the army.

Mu Changtian thought for a moment and then said, “I think I understand what the Prince means.”

Upon hearing Mu Changtian’s words, everyone turned to look at him, hoping he could clear up their confusion. Few of those present understood Lu Chen’s thinking, and they were now curious as to why the Prince had such thoughts.

Mu Changtian stroked his beard and then said, “The Prince’s reformation of the army is probably in preparation for that position.”

Upon hearing this, everyone’s hearts skipped a beat.

That position?

Although Mu Changtian did not specify, they could guess what Mu Changtian meant by ‘that position’—it was obviously the throne.

Mu Changtian continued his analysis, “The armies of the Seigniors have poor discipline and have committed their fair share of burning, killing, and plundering, which has led the common folk to distrust the Seignior’s armies, seeing those soldiers as no different from bandits.”

“The Prince also said that he and the army of North City are tied together; whatever the army does will ultimately affect his reputation.”

“Thus, the Prince wants to reform the barracks so that North City’s army will not be associated with thugs and ruffians anymore, earning the common people’s trust in his forces.”

“Think about it—if there comes a day when the disciplined and non-looting army of the North Prince attacks a foreign country, and the common people of that enemy nation hear about the discipline and non-plundering nature of the North Prince’s army, what do you think those common people will choose?”

Mu Changtian’s words were like an awakening for those in a dream; everyone in the room began to understand Lu Chen’s intentions.

Although Mu Changtian hypothesized about attacking a foreign country, everyone knew that it would not be easy for the North Prince to capture the throne, and a civil war within Great Sum might one day erupt.

If the disciplined and non-looting army of the North Prince appeared on the lands of other Seigniors, the common people of other districts would surely welcome their arrival.

Not every commoner would have the chance to meet the North Prince, nor would they necessarily understand what kind of person the real North Prince was.

However, they would definitely come into contact with the North Prince’s army, and the common people could then roughly judge what kind of monarch the North Prince is, based on his army’s conduct.

If a civil war truly broke out in Great Sum, whether a region's common people would welcome a disciplined and non-looting army or the bandit soldiers of other Seigniors seemed to require little thought.

Mu Changtian went on to say, "Actually, the Prince's approach has another advantage. Without rogues and ruffians in the army, it will be much easier to enforce discipline. Most of the trouble in the barracks now is caused by those who have committed crimes or come from the dregs of society."

"The court's army has always emphasized strict discipline, but since His Majesty ascended the throne, no matter how much he tries to reform the barracks, the results have been minimal, mainly due to the problematic backgrounds of the soldiers composing the army."

"If an army has only a couple of thugs, those few black sheep won't be able to cause much of a stir in the face of strict discipline. But if an army is filled with a group of ruffians, no amount of emphasis on discipline from the higher-ups will be effective, which is akin to the way aristocratic families cover for each other in the imperial court."

At this point, Mu Changtian couldn't help but exclaim, "Prince, this method is truly brilliant! Why didn't I think of selecting soldiers based on their background from the very beginning?"

"I can't wait to see the combat prowess of the new army."

Hearing Mu Changtian's analysis, the other generals in the room all looked forward to the performance of the new army, and they had even greater admiration for Lu Chen, amazed that he had pinpointed the crux of the Great Xia army's problems—an issue they had never considered before.

After all, the North Prince was only sixteen or seventeen years old this year, and he seldom led troops in battle, having spent just the last month within the military camp.

These old hands who had spent years in the military had not thought of a good way to rectify military discipline, yet the North Prince figured it out after just one month.

Truly, he is a Son of Destiny with a divine fate!

Meanwhile.

On the city walls.

Lu Chen stood amid the wind and snow, gazing into the distance.

Just then, he suddenly sensed a faint trembling of the earth, and shadowy figures seemed to appear through the blizzard.

As a Grandmaster, Lu Chen's perception had greatly improved, so he detected the approach of the North Fre King's army before anyone else on the wall.

Observing the vague shadows in the distance, the corners of Lu Chen's mouth curved slightly upwards,

Having waited for a full month, they had finally arrived.

He had never waited this long for anyone before.

At the same time, Xiao Pengthian, also a Grandmaster, perceived the approach of the North Fre King's army and immediately shouted, "The enemy is here! All troops, prepare for battle!"

Upon hearing Xiao Pengthian's words, the Messenger Soldier instantly beat the drums.

The next moment, the sound of drums echoed over Tianguang City, awakening Mu Changtian and the others from their reverie under Lu Chen's wise influence. They hurried out of the room and onto the city tower.

At this point, all the soldiers in Tianguang City were in combat mode; those on the city walls began to move the Thunderous and catapults into position, quickly deploying them for use.

Everyone was ready for the impending battle.

As the sound of horse hooves drew closer, the figures in the distance became clearer.

Seeing the vast army of the North Fre King, Li Feng couldn't help but remark, "I didn't expect the North Fre King to really come."

Although they had long heard that the North Fre King planned to move south in winter, everyone had wondered if the North Fre King would ultimately decide against the invasion.

The weather was getting colder, with snow already falling in North City. The steppes must be even colder, and under such conditions, it was indeed possible that the North Fre King might abandon the journey south.

But the North Fre King had come nonetheless.

At this time, Lu Chen, with a smile on his face, looked at the distant Barbarian Army and said, "If he hadn't come, I would have had nowhere to send all these gifts I've prepared. I was actually afraid he wouldn't show up."

Then, Mu Changtian asked, "Prince, Tianguang City's terrain is rather open. If we use the Thunderous at the start, we might frighten away the Barbarian Army immediately. If they decide to flee, I'm afraid it will be difficult to keep them here."

The reason they managed to annihilate the Sky Wolf King's army of three hundred thousand was entirely due to the landscape of Wanning Valley. Once the army of the Sky Wolf King entered Wanning Valley, the Black Cavalry blocked the valley entrance, and with mountains on both sides, the Barbarian Cavalry had nowhere to run.

But Tianguang City is different. The area around Tianguang City is mostly grasslands. Once the North Fre King's army collapses, relying solely on fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry and the several tens of thousands of regular infantry from North City, it will be very difficult to capture them.

#### Chapter 204: North Prince Disregards Martial Morality\_1

Hearing Mu Changtian's reminder, Lu Chen glanced over the endless grassland in the distance.

What Mu Changtian said was true, it wouldn't be easy to keep all of North Pre King's hundred thousand plus men.

Once the Barbarian Army was defeated, they could escape in any direction, and since the Barbarians were light cavalry, the Black Cavalry, being heavy cavalry, didn't have much advantage in pursuing the enemy and would most likely fail to catch up with the soldiers of North Pre King.

At this moment, Lu Chen looked at the walls of Tianguang City and had an idea.

If the army of North Pre King could be lured entirely into Tianguang City, then he could block the gates and catch them all in a trap, leaving the soldiers no means of escape.

However, North Pre King had well over a hundred thousand men; luring them in would not be easy, and they might not fall for it.

North Pre King wasn't a fool; he wouldn't just march into the city because the gates were open...

At that thought, Lu Chen hesitated.

Would a man who dared to lead his troops south to attack North City in winter be afraid of a little Tianguang City?

If it were North Pre King, he might indeed be tempted into the city.

Lu Chen immediately said, "Open the gates, everyone hide immediately!"

Hearing this, Mu Changtian instantly understood Lu Chen's intention. Lu Chen was planning to lure the king into the pot and then close the gates to trap him inside.

But it was unknown whether North Pre King would take the bait.

Lu Chen continued, "Send out a cavalry unit right away, pretend to retreat."

Mu Changtian replied, "Yes, Prince."

Consequently, the soldiers on the city walls all hid themselves, with only lookouts keeping watch outside the city.

Mu Changtian also deliberately arranged for some cavalry to wait at the eastern gate, ready to feign a panicked retreat as soon as North Pre King's army approached.

Before long, North Pre King, leading the ten thousand plus Barbarian Cavalry, appeared not far outside Tianguang City.

Seeing that the city walls were empty except for catapults and that the gates were wide open, North Pre King laughed, "It seems that the defenders of Tianguang City heard of our arrival and simply decided to retreat."

Just then, a trusted general of North Pre King said, "Great King, I've heard that when Sky Wolf King marched south to attack North City, North City also didn't defend Tianguang City, and North Prince withdrew all his troops to Yan County."

"As a result, Sky Wolf King was ambushed in Wanning Valley, leading to the annihilation of his three hundred thousand men."

Right then, a scout soldier of the Barbarian Tribe returned and reported, "Great King, a unit of Great Sum cavalry was spotted at the eastern gate, they're fleeing straight south!"

Hearing this, one of the trusted generals of North Pre King immediately said, "Great King, I'll take our men and pursue those Great Sum cavalry right away! I'll make sure none of them escape!"

North Pre King raised his hand to stop him and said, "No need, let them run, they're just small fry."

"That youngster from Yan County probably wants to use the same tactics against us as he did against Sky Wolf King, but he underestimates me far too much."

"We'll rest in Tianguang City for a few days, then find a way to attack Yan County."

North Pre King glanced at Tianguang City, noting that even the flag of North Prince Mansion was absent from the city walls.

North Pre King then ordered, "Enter the city!"



In North Fre King's view, the soldiers of Great Sum were scared of him, hence they had all fled south, and he didn't want to waste time sending scouts into the city to gather information. It was better to just go directly inside.

Having traversed the grassland, his soldiers were incredibly exhausted and urgently needed rest.

Camping and resting outside of Tianguang City was not as good as taking over and using the city to light fires and cook food. When it came to warding off the cold, their tents couldn't compete with the earthen houses of Great Sum people.

For North Fre King's army at this moment, Tianguang City was highly tempting.

At this time, through his lookouts, Lu Chen observed that North Fre King was indeed leading his army straight into the city, and he was momentarily taken aback.

Without sending even a scout, they marched right into the city, displaying complete disregard for North City.

North Fre King's arrogance knew no bounds.

No wonder he dared to lead an offensive south against North City in the dead of winter—it aligned perfectly with his audacious character.

Lu Chen then said to those around him, "Prepare for battle."

He had been worried that North Fre King wouldn't fall for the trap, but to his surprise, the latter didn't harbor a shred of suspicion and confidently strode into the city.

Now that their guest had arrived, it was time to present the gift they had prepared.

Meanwhile, North Fre King was wholly unaware of the impending danger. As he passed through the gates of Tianguang City and looked at the deserted buildings within, he said, "Great Sum really does breed cowards, for they were scared off before we even blew our horns."

“Sky Wolf King lost to such an enemy; he truly was incompetent!”

“Had I commanded those three hundred thousand troops, I might have already reached the Royal Capital of Great Sum by now!”

The more North Fre King spoke, the angrier he became. He had lent several thousand soldiers to Sky Wolf King and got nothing in return, while the woman he had his eyes on was taken by that youngster from North City—how could this sit well with him.

At that moment, a trusted general of North Fre King said, “Great King, after we conquer North City, shall we establish our own nation there?”

North Fre King scoffed and replied, “Found a nation? What nation to found? I’m not like the foolish Sky Wolf King, always indulging in daydreams..”

## Chapter 205: North Prince Disregards Martial Morality!

“If I truly conquer North City, then Great Sum will inevitably use its national strength to attack me. My coming to North City was merely to take back what the Sky Wolf King promised me.”

Unknown years have passed since the Sky Wolf King’s tribe migrated to the North Land, and every year they would plunder the south, yet they never conquered North City.

The North Fre King also knew that Great Sum valued land tremendously, so he didn’t believe he could occupy the lands of North City forever. Once the Great Sum court reacted, a great army would undoubtedly be dispatched to the north.

Thus, the North Ere King’s purpose for this expedition was very simple: to seize women, grain, and supplies.

As long as he achieved his goals, he would retreat immediately, without staying in North City for too long.

Once back in the North Land, the Great Sum troops would be powerless against them.

At this moment, a vanguard Barbarian Tribe soldier approached the North Pre King, “Great King, we discovered horses within Tianguang City, they didn’t even take the horses with them!”

Hearing this, the North Pre King laughed loudly, “Hahaha, the people of Great Sum are truly a bunch of rubbish.”

“It seems they fled so hastily that they left all the resources of Tianguang City behind, which will serve as our supplies just fine.”

“Come, take me to their barracks and let’s see what good things they’ve left for me.”

No sooner had the North Pre King led his great army toward Tianguang City’s inner city when suddenly the grand gates of Tianguang City closed.

The Barbarian Tribe soldiers quickly spotted the North City soldiers at the gates, and sensing something was amiss, they immediately sounded the war horns.

Upon hearing the war horn blasts from behind, the North Pre King paused for a moment, then turning his horse around, he asked, “What’s happening?” Before anyone could answer the North Pre King’s question, iron balls started dropping from above.

The Barbarian Tribe soldiers quickly realized what was happening.

“Enemy attack!!!”

“We’ve been tricked; the Great Sum soldiers haven’t run away!!!”

“Watch your heads!!!”

In an instant, the North Pre King’s several hundred thousand army was thrown into chaos.

By this point, the North Pre King had come to his senses, and realizing not only had the Great Sum army not fled but had encircled them, he sneered, “Cowards are cowards, do they think such deceitful tricks can defeat my great army?” Suddenly, the North Pre King bellowed, “All troops on guard, follow me and charge!!!”

As his voice fell, the Messenger Soldier beside the North Pre King took out a war horn and started blowing it.

Wooo—

Wooo—

The sound of the horns echoed through the skies above Tianguang City. Soon after that, the soldiers of North Pre stabilized, but before they could locate the enemy, those iron balls dropping among them exploded with a thunderous roar.

Countless iron fragments from the Thunderous blasts pierced through the Barbarian Tribe soldiers' furs and clothes. With each explosion, a large swath of Barbarian Tribe soldiers fell.

Seeing this spectacle, the North Pre King was struck dumb, and once again, his great army plunged into utter chaos.

“Heavens! What kind of weapon is this!”

“Heavenly Thunder, it's Heavenly Thunder, North City has an Immortal!!!”

“Run for your lives!”

“I don't want to die!!!”

Watching the disarray of his troops and the flying limbs, the North Pre King's mind went blank.

What exactly was this iron ball weapon, and why was its power so immense!

Realizing the dire situation, the North Pre King quickly commanded, “Break out with me!”

Immediately after, the North Pre King's army turned direction and charged towards the city gates, intending to break out of Tianguang City.

Even if the North Fre King was slow to grasp the situation, by now he must have realized why the Sky Wolf King's army of three hundred thousand fell at North City, at the hands of the North Prince.

Such terrifying weapons simply could not be defeated by manpower!

The North Prince has no martial honor!

At this moment, the sounds of horns still lingered above Tianguang City, mixed with the earth-shaking drumbeats and the explosive noises of the Thunderous, making the Barbarian Tribe soldiers feel as if they had gone deaf.

They only heard a buzzing in their ears and couldn't hear any other sounds.

Scared witless, the Barbarian Tribe soldiers madly collided with the North City soldiers at the gateway. Unfortunately, the highest concentration of Thunderous blasts was at the gateway, not to mention the grenade launchers that Lu Chen hadn't used up last time.

The power of the 122mm grenade launcher was much greater than that of the Thunderous. Regardless of how many Barbarian Tribe soldiers charged, they would fall en masse, and soon their corpses piled up into a small hill.

Due to the explosion sounds of the Thunderous, the horses of the Barbarian Tribe soldiers were so frightened that they were no longer under control, quickly disrupting their cavalry formation. A large-scale stampede erupted within Tianguang City, similar to the one that happened during the Sky Wolf King's assault on North City.

Many Barbarian Tribe soldiers were thrown to the ground by their mounts, only to be directly trampled by other soldiers' warhorses, leaving countless Barbarian Tribe soldiers disfigured beyond recognition by their own mounts.

Seeing limbs flying in all directions, the North Fre King's entire mind was in a state of shock, unable to comprehend why Great Sum had such terrifying weapons.

He had never heard of Great Sum possessing such devastating war machines.

Meanwhile, atop the city walls, Lu Chen looked indifferently at all that was unfolding before him.

By Lu Chen's side, Xiao Pengthian stared intently at the battlefield before him, but his mind was continuously replaying the memories of the Sky Wolf King's three hundred thousand strong army attacking Yan County..

### Chapter 206: North Prince Disregards Martial Morality\_3

That evening, the barbarian soldiers were also blasted to pieces. Just thinking of that scene, those memories, Xiao Pengthian's robust body couldn't help but tremble, with cold sweat continuously breaking out on his forehead.

Why on earth did they provoke the North Prince?

Was this really war?

This could no longer be considered a war!

At the very least, it wasn't the war he had in mind!

This was a one-sided massacre!

The Barbarian Army, bombarded by Thunderous, had no strength to fight back at all; they could only flee in terror like humans slaughtering chickens and ducks.

Lu Chen then turned to look at Xiao Pengthian beside him and noticed that Xiao Pengthian's Loyalty had shot up to 95.

Seeing Xiao Pengthian's pale face staring at the distant battlefield, Lu Chen asked, "General Xiao, are you feeling cold? Why is your body constantly shaking?"

Upon hearing Lu Chen's words, Xiao Pengthian came back to his senses and immediately responded, "Your Highness, I am not cold."

Lu Chen said indifferently, “Indeed, your forehead is sweating; you shouldn’t be cold. After all, as a Grandmaster, even in the coldest of weather, you can use Protective Gang Qi to fend off the chill.”

Xiao Pengthian swallowed and said, “The Prince speaks the truth.”

All of a sudden, Xiao Pengthian thought of something and immediately knelt on one knee, saying, “Your Highness, I humbly request to join the battle. I will take the North Fre King’s head and present it to you!”

Ever since the Sky Wolf King tribes joined North City, Xiao Pengthian had been looking for ways to prove his loyalty. He certainly did not want to be bombed with weapons like the Thunderous again.

Previously, there was no war, and nothing significant happening in North City, so he couldn’t find the opportunity to show his loyalty. Now the opportunity had arrived, and by killing the North Fre King, he could show his loyalty to the North Prince.

Hearing Xiao Pengthian’s words, the corners of Lu Chen’s mouth lifted slightly, and then he said, “General Xiao’s kind offer is appreciated by this Prince, but there’s no need for such trouble.”

Having said that, Lu Chen immediately turned his head to Mu Jingwu, who was busy fiddling with a grenade cannon nearby, and said, “Captain Mu, take aim at the North Fre King for this Prince, fire!”

Mu Jingwu immediately shouted, “Received!!!”

Right after, Mu Jingwu had his soldiers load the cannon, adjusting the grenade launcher towards the North Fre King’s position.

Meanwhile, Lu Chen conjured up a Barrett out of thin air, pointing it straight at the North Fre King.

Seeing Lu Chen conjure something out of nowhere, Xiao Pengthian froze again, and for some reason, upon seeing the black stick-like object in Lu Chen’s hand, he felt his soul shiver.

Clearly, this was a weapon as terrifying as the grenade cannon; he just did not know what kind of weapon it was.

At that moment, Mu Jingwu took aim at the North Fre King's location and pulled the firing pin. The next second, a grenade landed right on the North Fre King's head.

Despite being a Grandmaster, the North Fre King sensed the impending danger instantly. Seeing the cylindrical metal object approaching closer above his head, he immediately thought of the exploding metal balls from before.

He hurriedly shielded his body with Protective Gang Qi, then leaped up from his horse, vaulting backwards.

Just when he thought he had dodged the attack, a gunshot rang out with a thunderous "Bang," and he suddenly felt an icy cold sensation in his chest.

The North Fre King, in disbelief, looked down at his chest to find a huge bloody hole had appeared.

Before the North Fre King could comprehend what had happened, he fell from the sky to the ground, dead with his eyes wide open.

## Chapter 207: Zero Casualties War 1

Seeing the North Fre King slain by a single spear thrust from Lu Chen, Xiao Pengthian suddenly felt a chill down his spine.

Indeed, it was just as he had thought...

The strange weapon in the North Prince's hands was as terrifying as the Thunderous Heavenly Thunder.

Although the North Fre King was quite old, he was still a Grandmaster!

A Grandmaster had been killed from such a distance without even seeing the face of his enemy.



How terrible!

Too terrible!!!

At this moment, Xiao Pengthian felt somewhat relieved, grateful that he had already submitted to the North Prince. Had he harbored any wayward thoughts when leaving North City to return to the Sky Wolf King Tribe, such as declaring himself king within the tribe and making a run for it without coming to North City,

he might have one day encountered the North Prince's army on the battlefield. Perhaps the North Prince would have then given him a spear just like that.

Just thinking of the huge bloody hole in the chest of the North Fre King caused Xiao Pengthian to feel a sharp pain in his own chest.

He certainly didn't want to be bombarded by those terrifying weapons of North City again.

At that moment, Lu Chen turned his head to Xiao Pengthian and said, "General Xiao, I'll trouble you to take care of the aftermath."

Upon hearing Lu Chen's voice, Xiao Pengthian finally snapped out of his shock. He hastily knelt halfway and said, "Your servant obeys!"

After joining North City, Lu Chen had recruited some warriors from the Barbarian Tribe of the Sky Wolf King, not many, but still about seven or eight thousand.

Among these seven or eight thousand, many were Scouts, mainly to help Lu Chen monitor every move in the vast grasslands of the North Land, but there were also five thousand light cavalry.

Xiao Pengthian had already submitted to him after all; Lu Chen couldn't leave him without any soldiers and let him be a commander without troops. How would he then prove his loyalty? Thus, Lu Chen assigned the five thousand Barbarian light cavalry to Xiao Pengthian's command.

Lu Chen had also noticed that Xiao Pengthian and the five thousand Barbarian soldiers were looking for an opportunity, a chance to prove their loyalty.

Originally, Lu Chen could have simply ordered the Black Cavalry to charge in and end the battle, but he ultimately decided to give Xiao Pengthian and his men a chance.

Only with blood of the Barbarian Tribe on their hands could they feel at peace and allow the people of North City to feel the same, easing the integration of these Barbarian light cavalry into the army of North City.

After receiving orders from Lu Chen, Xiao Pengthian leapt up and jumped straight down from the city wall, leading his five thousand light cavalry straight towards the Barbarian Army of the North Fre King.

By this time, the soldiers on the city wall had stopped tossing the Thunderous Heavenly Thunders, and the infantry phalanx of North City began to close in, while Wenren Lie and Xuanyuan Chen led the Black Cavalry but did not enter the battlefield.

The Black Cavalry they commanded simply stood guard at the city gate, coldly observing everything unfolding before them.

The soldiers of the North Fre King, seeing their king dead and themselves encircled by the soldiers of North City, turned pale with fear, uncertain of what to do.

At this moment, when they saw a troop of light cavalry charging out from a distance, the Barbarian soldiers of the North Fre King knew they had no escape.

Just as the five thousand Barbarian light cavalry led by Xiao Pengthian were about to make contact with the Barbarian Army of the North Fre King, one of the Barbarian Generals of the North Fre King suddenly shouted, “We surrender!!! Don’t kill us!!!”

Hearing these words, Xiao Pengthian almost couldn’t stop his horse. He was about to draw his sword when the other side surrendered???

Upon hearing the Barbarian General’s words, the other Barbarian soldiers quickly realized what was happening. They hurriedly threw down their weapons and dismounted, kneeling on the ground.

This!!!

Xiao Pengthian was immediately filled with rage.

Logically, the surrender of the Barbarian Tribe should be great news for North City, as it meant they could reduce casualties and avoid further deaths.

After all, it's war, and no matter how great the advantage on the battlefield, close combat inevitably leads to deaths. In the battle at Wanning Valley, North City still suffered the loss of tens of thousands despite their large advantage.

If the North Fre King's army hadn't surrendered, let alone tens of thousands, deaths of a few thousand were certain.

Such a dramatic reduction in casualties was certainly good news for Lu Chen as a ruler, but Xiao Pengthian and his five thousand light cavalry didn't look pleased.

Damn it, they were about to kill Barbarians to show their loyalty to the North Prince, but this bunch just surrendered.

If they surrendered, how could they get their hands stained with Barbarian blood to show their loyalty to the North Prince?

With a darkened face, Xiao Pengthian looked at the Barbarian General in front of him. Although unhappy, he still said, "You have made the right choice!"

Having said that, Xiao Pengthian snorted coldly, then addressed the soldiers behind him, "Clean up the battlefield!"

Seeing the Barbarian soldiers laying down their weapons, Mu Changtian and the others on the city tower couldn't help but sigh.

This was the change brought about by gunpowder warfare.

If it were the old days, even if the army of ten tens of thousands from the North Fre King was surrounded, they would certainly struggle to the death, trying to break out of the encirclement.

But now things were different. After being bombarded by the Thunderous Heavens, they only had fear in their hearts, with no will to fight left.

Such a grand battle ended with zero casualties for North City.

Such a result, if reported, the imperial court probably wouldn't believe it.

It wasn't just the imperial court that would be in disbelief, even the soldiers of North City standing on the city tower felt as if they were dreaming.

## Chapter 208: Zero Casualties War\_2

This is a horde of more than a hundred thousand soldiers from the Barbarian Tribe!

And not a single one of them died! Such a thing has never happened in history.

At this time, Mu Changtian came before Lu Chen and then asked, "Prince, how should this war report be written?"

If news of zero casualties were to reach the imperial court, the officials there would certainly not believe it, there's no need to think twice about that.

Whether they believe it or not is beside the point, if the imperial court really finds out about their zero casualties, they will surely try every means to find out how North City managed to face an army of more than a hundred thousand from the Barbarian Tribe and still have no casualties—this is not good for North City.

So writing this war report is not going to be easy.

Hearing Mu Changtian's question, Lu Chen pondered for a moment, then said, "Strip those Barbarian soldiers of their clothing and dress them all in the uniform of North City soldiers."

Having said this, Lu Chen turned his head and said to a Brocade Guard Commander standing beside, "Go to Yan County and have Lin Xiuming bring twenty thousand cavalry from the imperial

court to Tianguang City half a month later. Tell them the war was extremely brutal and that they are needed for assistance.”

“Yes, Prince.”

As the words fell, the Brocade Guard Commander left the city wall.

Upon hearing Lu Chen’s words, Mu Changtian and the others were somewhat perplexed. What was the Prince planning to do?

Just then, Wenren Lie and Xuanyuan Chen leaped directly from the horses outside the city and onto the city wall.

At this point, Lu Chen then said to Xuanyuan Chen and Wenren Lie, “General Xuanyuan, General Wenren, you are to directly escort these Barbarian prisoners back to the Yan County garrison with forty thousand Heavy Cavalry.” Xuanyuan Chen and Wenren Lie immediately responded, “Yes, Prince!”

Lu Chen continued, “North Pre King led an army of two hundred thousand south, I led fifty thousand Black Cavalry to fight bitterly against the Barbarian Army, with over forty thousand of the Black Cavalry wounded or killed, and countless normal soldiers injured or dead. In the end, I managed to hold North City with difficulty, and North Fre King retreated with his surviving troops back to the grasslands.”

Hearing what Lu Chen said, everyone instantly understood his intention; Lu Chen was planning to conceal the military situation!

They looked at me and I looked at them.

When others conceal military information, they wish they could report their military exploits as magnificently as possible, claiming to have killed hundreds of thousands of Barbarian soldiers.

But they were concealing military information by fabricating massive casualties of their own soldiers.

At that moment, Lu Chen sighed and said, “If the North Land doesn’t have some enemies, my days ahead will not be easy.”

With that said, Lu Chen glanced at the prisoners from North Fre King’s Barbarian Tribe in the distance.

The Sky Wolf King tribe of the North Land was gone, and now the army of North Fre King has also been defeated. There are no longer any significant enemies in North City.

If North City no longer has any enemies, does it still need an army of a hundred and fifty thousand?

Once they report that North Fre King has been defeated by them, the next thing the imperial court will definitely do is find a way to reduce the number of soldiers in North City.

Therefore, they definitely cannot report this military achievement truthfully.

Hearing Lu Chen’s words, Mu Changtian and the others also realized what he meant.

Indeed, if North City no longer had North Fre King as an enemy, without the threat of the Barbarian Tribe, the size of North City’s army of a hundred and fifty thousand would become a thorn in the side of the imperial court, and the court would find ways to reduce the number of troops in North City.

Of course, they could choose to hide their army and underreport its numbers, but Lu Chen was not planning to let it be so troublesome—even if they hid the numbers, as long as North City had no enemies, the imperial court’s attention would be on them.

When others are focusing on you, no matter how much you conceal the strength of your army, it is futile. The best solution is to keep those idle officials at the imperial court from constantly watching the troop count of North City.

Now, by reporting that North City lost forty thousand Heavy Cavalry, the imperial authorities will certainly not be thinking about North City still having tens of thousands of Heavy Cavalry anymore.

Even if their heavy armors remain, training Heavy Cavalry also requires a lot of time; it’s not as if simply donning heavy armor will enable one to exert the combat power of Heavy Cavalry.

Furthermore, with the Barbarian Tribes still present in the North Land, the imperial court naturally won't pay much attention to North City any longer, and soon people will shift their focus elsewhere.

At this time, Mu Changtian said, "Prince, Lin Xiuming may well be able to tell that those dressed in Great Sum's uniform are Barbarians."

Mu Changtian still thought that Lu Chen had switched the dead Barbarian soldiers' clothing with their own, and then was sending Lin Xiuming with an army of twenty thousand to clean up the battlefield and dispose of the bodies.

If that's the case, wouldn't Lu Chen's plan be exposed?

Although the Barbarian Tribe and the people of Great Sum look similar, there are slight differences. People like them, who have fought against the Barbarian Tribe, can tell at a glance whether someone is a Barbarian soldier.

Lin Xiuming, despite his youth, had fought several battles against the Barbarians of the North Land, so even if he stripped a Barbarian of their clothes, he could still identify whether the person was from the Barbarian Tribe.

If Lin Xiuming realized this, and later wrote a battle report to send up the chain, wouldn't Lu Chen's plan be ruined?

Upon hearing Mu Changtian's words, Lu Chen said with a smile, "General Mu, you surely don't think I asked Lin Xiuming and the Imperial Army of twenty thousand to come just to collect the corpses, do you?"

Mu Changtian was taken aback.

Wasn't it so?

If General Lin Xiuming, dispatched by the court, didn't personally inspect the dead, who would believe their battle report?

Mu Changtian had thought that Lu Chen was deliberately having Lin Xiuming and the Imperial Army clean up the battlefield, just to let them know that many of their soldiers had died.

Lu Chen said indifferently, “There’s no need for that trouble, just bury all these bodies.”

“I asked Lin Xiuming to come over only to let the court know that the situation in North City is not optimistic.”

“The snow is falling heavier, piling up everywhere. For Lin Xiuming to lead the Imperial Army of twenty thousand to Tianguang City, it would be impossible without ten days to half a month. Plus, I already asked Lin Xiuming to come to Tianguang City half a month later, so it will take a month before he can reach Tianguang City.”

“By the time they get to Tianguang City, these Barbarian soldiers’ bodies will have already frozen into ice lumps. How could I let them come to clean up the battlefield? If they want to verify the battle report from North City as true or false, let them dig graves. I don’t believe they can still tell that the buried bodies for a month are the corpses of Barbarian soldiers.”

Even though winter has come and the rate of decay for bodies becomes extremely slow, there will be changes to bodies buried in the ground, after all.

By the time Lin Xiuming and his men really run to dig graves, and if they dig up the bodies of the Barbarian Tribe, the surface of the bodies will have been destroyed, or contaminated with soil. Since the difference between the people of the Barbarian Tribe and those of Great Sum is already slight, if they really dig up the bodies of the Barbarian Tribe, would Lin Xiuming dare to claim they are the bodies of the Barbarian Tribe?

Moreover, respecting the dead is paramount, not to mention these soldiers are nominally from North City and died for Great Sum. How could Lin Xiuming dare to dig their graves?

At this point, Lu Chen turned to Wenren Lie and Xuanyuan Chen and said, “Both Generals, when escorting the Barbarian prisoners back to Yan County, try to march at night as much as possible so that the ordinary people in Yan County won’t notice your movements.”

Xuanyuan Chen said, “Your Highness can rest assured. At that time, I will disguise these Barbarian prisoners as if they were Barbarian captives who were already in Yan County, making them look as though they are being sent to the mines.”



Reassured by Xuanyuan Chen's words, Lu Chen continued, "Right, remember to take off your heavy armor when you return, so as not to be recognized."

"Yes, Your Highness," replied Xuanyuan Chen.

Lu Chen then said, "Good, that's it then. Everyone return to your duties."

As Lu Chen finished speaking, Mu Changtian and the other commanders returned to their respective soldiers to direct the cleanup of the battlefield.

Half a month later.

In a tavern in Mysterious Moon Palace.

Lin Xiuming sat in a private room of the tavern, drinking by himself and watching the heavy snow outside the window.

As a general assigned to support North City against the southward invasion of the Barbarian Tribe, he was completely unaware of the current situation in Tianguang City. He felt like he was on a taxpayer-funded vacation to admire the snow scenery of North City.

Lin Xiuming sighed. If he had led his troops to fight against Great Wu, he would have already established numerous military achievements by now.

It was a waste of his talents to be sent to North City.

With the Heavy Cavalry of the North Prince in North City, there was no need for him.

As Lin Xiuming sighed, a mature woman's voice sounded from behind him.

"So you feel wronged being sent to North City and end up drinking in the tavern every day?"

Upon hearing this, Lin Xiuming turned his head and saw that it was Lin Wanyun.

Curiously, Lin Xiuming asked, “Yun, why are you still in North City? Didn’t the Palace Master of Mysterious Moon Palace already return?”

## Chapter 209: Guilty Lin Wanyun 1

Hearing Lin Xiuming’s question, Lin Wanyun spoke softly, “What does it matter to me if the Palace Master returns? I’m not the master of the Mysterious Moon Palace.”

At this point, Lin Wanyun glanced at Lin Xiuming and then continued, “Doesn’t the North Prince treat you well in Yan County, running to the tavern in Mysterious Moon Palace every day to drown your sorrows in wine?”

Lin Xiuming laughed and said, “Yun, you are a woman, you don’t understand a man’s thoughts. If I could, I wouldn’t want to come to North City.”

“Let’s not talk about me anymore. I have something else I need to discuss with you.”

Lin Wanyun asked with curiosity, “What is it?”

Lin Xiuming asked with a smile, “You are still at the North Prince Mansion, right?”

Although Lin Wanyun was only a foster daughter adopted by Lin Gaoyuan, the relationship between Lin Xiuming and Lin Wanyun was relatively harmonious; Lin Wanyun had even taught Lin Xiuming martial arts in the past.

Even though Lin Wanyun had left the Lin Mansion and joined the Mysterious Moon Palace, when the two met, they could speak openly and frankly without feeling distant from each other.

Lin Wanyun answered, “I am now the Deputy Guard Commander in the inner courtyard of the North Prince Mansion.”

Hearing this, Lin Xiuming was somewhat surprised; he did not expect Lin Wanyun, who was from the Mysterious Moon Palace, to become the Deputy Guard Commander in the inner courtyard of the North Prince Mansion.

Although she was only a deputy commander, this was enough to prove how much trust the North Prince placed in Lin Wanyun, in the Mysterious Moon Palace, as Lin Wanyun was a protector of the Palace, representing its interests.

Lin Xiuming said, “I didn’t expect the North Prince to trust the Mysterious Moon Palace so much, there must be some kind of cooperation between the North Prince and the Mysterious Moon Palace, right?”

Immediately alert, Lin Wanyun quickly asked, “Xiuming, you’re not asking these questions because my foster father sent you to probe for information, are you?”

Lin Gaoyuan was now the Left Minister of the court, a member of the Great Sum Dynasty, and with Lin Xiuming being his son, Lin Xiuming’s sudden inquiries about the Mysterious Moon Palace couldn’t help but make Lin Wanyun suspect whether her foster father wanted to find out something.

Or was it the Sum Emperor who wanted to know something and sent Lin Xiuming to test her?

Lin Xiuming immediately said, “That’s not it; I was just curious and asking casually.”

“Right, Dad told me to tell you that you’re already in your thirties, it’s time to marry, and he thinks the North Prince is a good match.”

“It’s perfect since you’re the Guard Commander in the inner courtyard; you could use the opportunity to connect and develop a rapport with the North Prince.”

Hearing this, Lin Wanyun’s beautiful eyes lifted, her brows slightly furrowed, and she said with a feeling of speechlessness, “Does my foster father really think this?”

“The North Prince is only seventeen years old, and I’m already in my thirties this year; how could I possibly marry the North Prince? The mother of the North Prince and I are sworn sisters, and if I married him, wouldn’t our generational rankings be a mess?”

“What is my foster father thinking, how could he have such a preposterous idea?”

Seeing such a strong reaction from Lin Wanyun, Lin Xiuming laughed and said, “Yun, the Sky Wolf King’s consort is also much older, isn’t she? And yet she married the North Prince.”

“What’s the big deal about being in your thirties? Dad said the North Prince has been deprived of love since he was young, and he likes mature women who are older. Look at Chu Yuqin; she’s quite advanced in age too and stays at the North Prince Mansion all the same.”

Lin Wanyun immediately said, “Whatever my foster father thinks, go back and tell him to drop this ridiculous idea as soon as possible.”

“Now that I’ve chosen to join the Mysterious Moon Palace, I have no plans to marry in this lifetime, let alone to a man more than ten years my junior like the North Prince.”

Lin Xiuming shrugged his shoulders and then said, “Alright then, I’ll tell Dad when I get back that you don’t wish to marry the North Prince.”

At this point, Lin Xiuming reminded her, “Yun, even though you are now with the Mysterious Moon Palace, I still want to warn you: Dad is planning to support the North Prince, so if the Mysterious Moon Palace intends to harm the North Prince, you should decide for yourself.”

Hearing this, Lin Wanyun was momentarily stunned and asked in confusion, “I remember my foster father never gets involved in matters related to the succession struggle, so why would he support the North Prince?”

Lin Xiuming spoke indifferently, “I don’t know about that. Perhaps he sees greater potential in the North Prince compared to the others, which is also one of the reasons he wants you to marry the North Prince.”

“Of course, now that you have left the Lin Family, who you marry is not for Dad to decide. At most, the Lin Family can be regarded as your maternal home when you get married.”

Lin Wanyun, as Lin Gaoyuan’s adopted daughter and having left the Lin Mansion, had full power to decide her own life’s major events. Lin Gaoyuan’s wish for her to marry Lu Chen was merely his personal desire.

Whether Lin Wanyun was willing was entirely up to her.

However, if Lin Wanyun truly agreed to marry Lu Chen, she would surely marry off from Lin Gaoyuan's household as his daughter, which would turn into a political marriage for the Lin Family.

Hearing Lin Xiuming's words, Lin Wanyun felt fortunate that she had already left the Lin Mansion and become a protector of the Mysterious Moon Palace. If she were still in the Lin Mansion, her marital life might not be hers to decide.

Just as Lin Wanyun was about to say more, a soldier knocked on the door and said, "General, someone from the Prince's Mansion is looking for you!"

Hearing this, Lin Xiuming paused; he had been in North City for so long, and the North Prince had never sent someone to seek him out before.

Could it be that the war in the north had ended, and the North Prince wanted him to return?

## Chapter 210: Guilty Lin Wanyun\_2

With these thoughts, Lin Xiuming immediately said, "Let him in."

As Lin Wanyun was about to leave, Qin Yushan pushed the door open and entered. He glanced at Lin Wanyun, obviously not taking her into consideration, and then turned his head to address Lin Xiuming, "General Lin, the situation in Tianguang City is not optimistic. The Prince has ordered you to lead twenty thousand imperial troops north immediately to defend against the Barbarian Tribe."

Upon hearing this, both Lin Wanyun and Lin Xiuming were stunned.

The situation wasn't optimistic?

How could that be possible?

Last time, the North Prince led fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry and annihilated the Sky Wolf King's three hundred thousand army. How could it be that they couldn't deal with the North Fre King's two hundred thousand army?

Was this true?

Immediately, Lin Xiuming asked, “Senior Qin, what exactly is the situation in Tianguang City right now?”

Qin Yushan directly stated, “The Prince’s Black Cavalry suffered over forty thousand casualties. They only managed to repel the North Fre King’s army, but the enemy’s forces still launch occasional attacks from the south, harrying Tianguang City.”

“The city’s garrison is exhausted and in dire need of replacement troops.”

This...

Lin Xiuming felt bewildered after hearing Qin Yushan’s words.

The North Prince’s Heavy Cavalry had been annihilated?

What a joke!

Though Heavy Cavalry didn’t have much of an advantage over light cavalry on the plains, they surely wouldn’t be at a significant disadvantage. It was nearly impossible for the North Fre King’s army to defeat a fifty thousand strong Heavy Cavalry force.

How could there be over forty thousand casualties?

Over forty thousand casualties meant that this Black Cavalry had been effectively wiped out.

Could that be possible?

Qin Yushan’s words were filled with eeriness, but Lin Xiuming couldn’t be sure they were false. Although the Heavy Cavalry was indeed formidable, anything could happen in war. The situation could change in the blink of an eye. For instance, they had never expected the North Prince to defeat the thirty thousand strong Barbarian Tribe army.

Therefore, to ascertain the truth of this news, they would have to go to Tianguang City. Since the North Prince had already ordered them northward, they would soon find out whether the news was true or false.

Lin Xiuming immediately stood up and said, "I will lead the troops north at once."

Having said this, Lin Xiuming took out some silver and placed it on the table, then promptly returned with his men to their temporary encampment.

After Lin Xiuming left, Lin Wanyun hurriedly sent this critical piece of news to the Mysterious Moon Palace.

Fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry were gone just like that.

North City had just started to gain power again and now was back to its former state so quickly.

This could be a major blow to North City, but for the Mysterious Moon Palace, for Chen Wanrong and the others, it was an incredible piece of good news.

It was finally an opportunity for the Mysterious Moon Palace to assist the North Prince.

Previously, the North Prince ignored the Mysterious Moon Palace because North City already had fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry, and a robust military strength, so there was no need to rely on the Mysterious Moon Palace.

Lu Chen had the power to participate in the struggle for succession on his own.

But now, things were different. The North Prince had lost his Heavy Cavalry. While the armor for the Heavy Cavalry might still be there, training a powerful new Heavy Cavalry would take a considerable amount of time, not just a month or two or even a year or two.

During the time when the Black Cavalry is being rebuilt, North City would be relatively vulnerable. The Great Sum court, as well as other Seigniors, would definitely not allow the North Prince to rebuild his Black Cavalry.

Under pressure, the North Prince would likely choose to collaborate with the Mysterious Moon Palace. That way, Chen Wanrong would get the chance to get close to Lu Chen and administer the Love Worm to him.

However, for some reason, after sending out the message, Lin Wanyun's heart did not feel elated as she expected.

At that moment, Lin Wanyun looked out at the falling snow through the window, her mind replaying memories of Lu Chen. Recently, she had been pondering one question: Did she really want to help Chen Wanrong restore her country and, in the process, harm the biological son of her dear sister?

Even though Lu Chen was not as important to her as Chen Wanrong, if something were to happen to Lu Chen, could she face Chu Yue after her death?

Years ago, had it not been for Chu Yue, she might have died long ago; she would not have become the adopted daughter of Lin Gaoyuan.

Her background was very similar to Bai Qingqing's. Both were picked up by Chu Yue from the streets—more accurately, Bai Qingqing's situation resembled hers, as she encountered Chu Yue earlier than Bai Qingqing did.

The only difference between her and Bai Qingqing was that she was sent to Lin Mansion, becoming Lin Gaoyuan's adopted daughter, while Bai Qingqing was taken to the Imperial Palace to serve as a maid to Lu Chen.

Although she and Bai Qingqing went to different places, Chu Yue's treatment of her was not much different from that of Bai Qingqing. During her days in Lin Mansion, Chu Yue often visited her, and their relationship was extremely close.

Chu Yue saved her life and treated her as her own younger sister, but now she found herself in a position to harm her biological son. Just thinking about it filled Lin Wanyun with a profound sense of guilt.

At this moment, amidst the swirling snow, Lin Wanyun thought she saw the figure of Chu Yue, who seemed to be saying something to her.



Lin Wanyun stood still, trying to make out what Chu Yue was saying to her.

In her dazed state, she thought she really heard Chu Yue's voice.

“Wanyun... help me... take good care... of Chen'er...”

Lin Wanyun's heart skipped a beat.

She suddenly snapped back to reality.

The snow still fell thickly outside the window, but the figure of Chu Yue was no longer there. Lin Wanyun sighed softly and rubbed her temples.

The stress had been too great recently, causing her to experience hallucinations and even auditory hallucinations.

After returning to the military camp, Lin Xiuming immediately summoned the soldiers. After a roll call, they set out northward through the night.

He didn't know the exact situation in Tianguang City, but since the North Prince had ordered him to head north, it likely indicated that the situation there was indeed dire.

He was a man of the court, representing the court. With so many secrets in North City, his moving north could expose them to him and the Imperial forces.

That's why the North Prince initially had them remain in Yan County. If it wasn't for a particularly urgent situation, the North Prince would definitely not risk exposing the secrets of North City by ordering him to move north.

At this moment, Lin Xiuming seriously suspected whether the North Prince's fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry had truly been wiped out.

If they had, he had to hurry northward immediately; this was an excellent opportunity for him to earn military distinction.

Last time he went to North City to retrieve corpses for the North Prince, upon his return to the Capital City, he was ridiculed by many friends, who called him a ‘corpse hauler’.

This time, on his visit to North City, he had to earn some military honors to bring back. If he returned to the Capital City empty-handed again, wouldn’t he be mocked as a ‘transport worker’?

As for whether Tianguang City was in danger, that was no longer Lin Xiuming’s concern.

There was no such thing as a war without danger.

How could a true man be afraid of going to battle because of a little danger?

Just as Lin Xiuming was full of fervor, eager to head north to earn military honors, he discovered that the roads north had been covered by heavy snowfall.

Although they were Cavalry, it was still difficult for them to advance.

Looking at the army’s snail-pace progress, Lin Xiuming was dumbfounded.

It made him want to curse. How much shit was in the brain of the North Fre King for him to think of moving south to attack North City in the middle of winter?

With this heavy snow, could the North Fre King’s forces even move?

At this moment, one of Lin Xiuming’s trusted soldiers approached and said, “General, at our current pace, it will be tough to reach Tianguang City in less than a month. Is the situation in Tianguang City truly urgent?”

Lin Xiuming, frowning, replied, “We must accelerate our pace. Advance as quickly as possible; it’s highly likely that Tianguang City is really in trouble.”

There was no choice; under these circumstances, they could only try their best to reach Tianguang City.

Just then, a Scout Soldier came to Lin Xiuming and announced, “General, there is a situation up ahead!”

Upon hearing this, Lin Xiuming immediately demanded, “Take me there!”

The Scout Soldier quickly led Lin Xiuming to the place where the anomaly was reported.

The ‘anomaly’ the Scout referred to was the footprints and wagon tracks in the snow. Although the heavy snow had covered those marks, they were still faintly discernible, and it was highly likely that they had been made in the past two days.

Looking at the endless snow-covered horse tracks before him, Lin Xiuming’s expression kept changing.