

Es. Benefits 211

Chapter 211: Speechless Lin Xiuming 1

Although Lin Xiuming was young, he had led troops in quite a few battles. He rarely waged war in winter, but he had some understanding of the battlefield conditions in rainy weather.

In front of him, the numerous wagon ruts and horse prints, albeit covered by heavy snow, allowed him to approximate the number of people based on the footprints.

Given the repeated trampling in the snow, it was clear that a large number of people had passed through here.

Most of the footprints in the middle were from humans, while those on the sides were from horse hooves, indicating a cavalry unit had been transporting something.

To be precise, it wasn't something being transported, but given the multitude of footprints, it seemed they were escorting people.

At that moment, a soldier beside Lin Xiuming said, "General, look at the black rock fragments in the snow. If I am not mistaken, this should be coal slag."

They had been stationed in Yan County for almost two months now and were aware of major events there, such as the stoves and coal introduced by the North Prince Mansion.

Their camp had relied on stoves from the North Prince Mansion to get through this winter. Without the coal and stoves from the North Prince Mansion, they didn't know how they would have survived the cold.

The soldiers were familiar with "coal," the material for the charcoal balls, and everyone knew the charcoal balls from the North Prince Mansion were made of coal.

Looking at the scatterings of coal slag in the snow, the soldiers immediately identified it as coal slag.

Hearing his subordinate's words, Lin Xiuming dismounted and squatted down, grabbing some of the black rock fragments from the ground and sniffing them.

"Hmm, indeed it's coal slag," he confirmed.

Lin Xiuming then tossed the coal slag from his hand to the ground, stood up, and glanced at the intermittent trail of coal slag in the snow.

The soldier beside Lin Xiuming continued, "These must be the North Prince Mansion's soldiers escorting the Barbarian Tribe slaves transporting coal ore."

Lin Xiuming did not respond and pondered over the coal slag on the ground.

Indeed, the scattered coal slag on the ground suggested the transport of coal by the North Prince Mansion's Barbarian Tribe slaves, however...

Lin Xiuming swept his gaze toward the direction in which the tracks extended, and from their alignment, it seemed that these people had come from the north.

Were there coal mines of the North Prince Mansion in the North Land?

Lin Xiuming was not familiar with the distribution of the North Prince Mansion's coal mines, and the first thing that came to his mind wasn't coal mines, but Tianguang City to the north.

From the horseshoe prints, the cavalry escorting these people was numerous. Lin Xiuming knew that the whole of North City had only those fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry.

Although North City did have light cavalry, their numbers were scant, probably not even reaching ten thousand men.

But judging from the horse prints in the snow, the cavalry that had come from the north was definitely more than ten thousand strong.

Wasn't it said that North City's Heavy Cavalry had suffered casualties of over forty thousand, nearly annihilated? How could the North Prince still have so many cavalry?

Seeing that Lin Xiuming kept staring at the horseshoe prints as if in a daze, the soldier beside him asked in confusion, “General, have you discovered something?”

Lin Xiuming returned to his senses and then replied, “Nothing, I was just thinking about something. Alright, let’s continue on our way. We can use these footprints to head north.”

These footprints had compressed the snow, making it thinner and in contact with the ground, easing their progression forward — a fortunate thing for Lin Xiuming and his troops on their march.

Afterward, Lin Xiuming led the court’s twenty thousand soldiers, following the footprints left by Xuanyuan Chen’s southward march to go northward.

Although the prints were quickly covered by the heavy snowfall, they still managed to use these footprints to travel a great distance, saving considerable time.

Without these footprints, they might indeed have needed a whole month to reach Tianguang City.

During the journey to Tianguang City, Lin Xiuming paid close attention to those footprints. He had the feeling that the situation in Tianguang City was not as he had heard, that the North Prince must have concealed the true state of the warfare.

They might not really be heading north to withstand the southward advance of the Barbarian Tribe; it was more likely just a pretense.

Seeing so many horseshoe prints, Lin Xiuming could only think of those fifty thousand Heavy Cavalry from North City.

Lin Xiuming had more or less guessed Lu Chen’s thoughts, but he didn’t intend to reveal them; he just pretended to be oblivious.

Since his father had already decided to support the North Prince, he certainly needed to incline towards the North Prince too, so playing along with the North Prince’s act would suffice.

Originally, Lin Xiuming had felt considerable pressure about heading north. Although the desire to achieve military exploits lingered in his heart, he had only twenty thousand court cavalry under his command. Considering that the Black Cavalry had been annihilated, he doubted whether his twenty thousand cavalry could withstand the grand army of the North Fre King.

But upon seeing the footprints on the ground, Lin Xiuming suddenly saw things clearly — it was probably not the Black Cavalry that got wiped out, but the North Fre King's grand army.

He thought, how could the North Prince possibly be defeated by the North Fre King? In his hands, the North Prince held weapons capable of blowing Barbarian soldiers to smithereens in an instant. Although he had never seen the North Prince's army use such weapons, his last visit to Yan County allowed him to surmise the might of those mysterious weapons from the craters left behind.

With such weapons, not just the Barbarian Tribe, even Great Wu would only face a sound defeat in North City.

After more than half a month's journey, Lin Xiuming and his men finally arrived at Tianguang City.

This year, the winter in North City was colder than usual, with heavier snowfall, reducing visibility to less than five meters even during the daytime.

Chapter 212: Speechless Lin Xiuming_2

When General Lin Xiuming led the Imperial Army of twenty thousand men to the south gate of Tianguang City, Li Leng rode out to greet them on horseback. Looking at General Lin Xiuming and the Imperial Army of twenty thousand, Li Feng pretended to be very excited and said, "General Lin, you have finally arrived. If you had been a few days later, I'm afraid we wouldn't have been able to hold on."

Seeing Li Feng's excited expression as if he was about to cry, a sneer crossed General Lin Xiuming's mind.

His performance was quite convincing.

General Lin Xiuming asked with concern, "General Li, I hope the Prince is alright?"

Li Feng sighed deeply, his expression one of sorrow, “The Prince is unharmed physically, but he’s been in low spirits these past few days due to the annihilation of the Black Cavalry, unable to eat or drink.”

“Enough of this, the snowstorm outside is severe, let’s hurry into the city.”

After that, Li Feng led General Lin Xiuming and the Imperial Army into Tianguang City.

Knowing that General Lin Xiuming and the Imperial Army would be coming, Mu Changtian and his two sons had all left Tianguang City, as in Great Sum they were already considered dead. It would be somewhat problematic if General Lin Xiuming saw them.

However, the three of them did not return to Yan County, as Lu Chen had arranged a rather special task for them.

After General Lin Xiuming entered Tianguang City, he surveyed everything inside. At this time, he noticed that the soldiers from North City seemed to have low morale.

Almost every soldier from North City he encountered was sighing and looked as if they had truly been defeated.

Seeing them like this, even General Lin Xiuming began to doubt whether his own guesses on the journey had been wrong.

The low spirits of these soldiers seemed truly genuine, not feigned at all.

General Lin Xiuming frowned slightly, then asked, “General Li, has the Black Cavalry really been completely wiped out?”

Li Feng sighed deeply, “They haven’t been completely annihilated, but only a few thousand are left, and all are injured. They likely won’t have much combat strength in the future.”

“This time we have suffered a great loss. No one expected the North Fre King’s forces to be so formidable; we underestimated the enemy.”

As he spoke, Li Feng sighed again. From the moment General Lin Xiuming had seen him, Li Feng kept sighing incessantly.

This left General Lin Xiuming utterly confused.

He couldn't help thinking that perhaps the Heavy Cavalry of North City truly had been wiped out.

General Lin Xiuming asked no further questions, quietly following Li Feng to the temporary residence of Lu Chen.

However, when they arrived at Lu Chen's command post, they didn't see Lu Chen, only Bai Qingqing.

Li Feng immediately asked, "Commander Bai, where has the Prince gone?"

Bai Qingqing replied expressionlessly, "He went to see the Black Cavalry."

As General Lin Xiuming was about to ask something, Li Feng turned to him and said, "Recently, the Prince often goes alone to the burial site of the Black Cavalry to be lost in thought. Let me take you there."

This...

General Lin Xiuming thereafter ordered the Imperial Army to rest within the city, then he alone followed Li Feng to the burial site of the Black Cavalry.

In a short while, they arrived at the foot of a small hill outside the city.

Amid the snowstorm, the silhouette of a young man appeared faintly visible.

The young man stood on the hill, gazing into the distance as if reminiscing about something.

By now, snow had piled upon the young man's head and shoulders, showing he had been standing there for a long time.

General Lin Xiuming was momentarily stunned.

If this were an act, it was too convincing.

Then Li Feng approached Lu Chen and said in a low voice, “Prince, General Lin has arrived with twenty thousand soldiers of the Imperial Army.”

Upon hearing Li Feng’s words, Lu Chen heaved a deep sigh and then turned to walk towards General Lin Xiuming.

General Lin Xiuming hurriedly greeted him, saying, “I pay my respects to the Prince!”

Lu Chen, looking at General Lin Xiuming with a solemn expression, said, “General Lin, I’ve finally waited for you. If you had arrived even a few days later, I fear Tianguang City would have fallen to the Barbarian Tribe.”

With a puzzled look, General Lin Xiuming asked, “Prince, has the Barbarian Army not retreated?”

Lu Chen replied, “No, they occasionally still send troops to attack Tianguang City.”

“See the hoofprints over there? They came this morning, but they didn’t launch an attack this time.”

Hearing Lu Chen’s words, General Lin Xiuming turned to look at the snowy ground in the distance; indeed, there were numerous hoofprints that looked like those of a Barbarian Tribe’s cavalry.

General Lin Xiuming gave another glance at the large mound of earth before him; he still harbored doubts and couldn’t believe that the Black Cavalry of North City was no more.

Lu Chen then said, “Now that General Lin has arrived, the defense of Tianguang City will be in the hands of the Imperial Army.”

Upon hearing this, General Lin Xiuming was taken aback.

In the hands of the Imperial Army?

Was the North Prince planning to return to Yan County?

Lu Chen continued, “Alright, the wind and snow here are harsh. Let’s talk about anything else back inside the city.”

Then the three of them went back into the city.

After returning to the city, Lu Chen gave General Lin Xiuming some instructions and then led the majority of the soldiers from North City back to Yan County without delay.

General Lin Xiuming did not inquire about the fate of the Black Cavalry from Lu Chen; regardless of whether the Black Cavalry was truly destroyed, it wouldn’t be proper for him to ask about the details of the battle if he was standing on Lu Chen’s side.

If the Black Cavalry had indeed perished, asking the North Prince about the details would be like rubbing salt into his wounds.

If the Black Cavalry had not perished, then there was even less reason for him to inquire about the details, since his father had already decided to side with the North Prince. If the North Prince claimed the Black Cavalry was annihilated, it was likely to conceal the military strength of North City and to avoid constant scrutiny by the Imperial Court..

Chapter 213: Speechless Lin Xiuming_3

After seeing Lu Chen off, Lin Xiuming returned to the city and, gazing at the heavy snowfall above, couldn’t help but wonder if the North Fre King’s army had really not retreated.

With such heavy snow, did the North Fre King still insist on attacking North City? Was there something wrong with his head?

Just then, Lin Xiuming’s confidant approached him and said, “General, we’ve found something.”

Upon hearing this, Lin Xiuming immediately responded, “Take me there to

see.”

Lin Xiuming then followed his confidant to the northern part of Tianguang City.

Many buildings in the North City had collapsed, and although the heavy snow had masked the traces of battle, a closer look still revealed the signs of a massive conflict in Tianguang City.

The large craters amidst the ruins immediately reminded Lin Xiuming of the ones he had seen in Wanning Valley.

Looking at the battered North City, Lin Xiuming chuckled to himself and muttered, “A convincing act, they almost had me fooled.

Just one glance at the battlefield was enough for Lin Xiuming to reconstruct what the scene of the conflict at Tianguang City’s North City must have been like.

Obviously, the North Prince had employed a strategy of luring the enemy in deep, first drawing the North Fre King’s army into Tianguang City, then bombarding them with North City’s mysterious weapons, and finally sending out troops to deal with the North Fre King’s forces.

At this moment, Lin Xiuming took another look at the North City gate and concluded from its intact state that the North Prince had intentionally let the North Fre King into Tianguang City.

The war that occurred in Tianguang City was nearly identical to the battle at Wanning Valley, where the enemy was lured into a narrow space, leaving the Barbarian Tribe’s cavalry with no escape, and then annihilating them.

Lin Xiuming thought back to the footprints they had seen on their way north and guessed whom those footprints belonged to.

in the battle at Wanning Valley last time, the North Prince had captured more than a hundred thousand Barbarian prisoners, and it was likely that a vast number of Barbarian soldiers were captured this time as well.

Right then, Lin Xiuming's confidant asked, "General, how should we report the demise of the Black Cavalry to the court? We weren't present during the war and have no idea what actually happened.

Lin Xiuming indifferently said, "Just report the truth, whatever the North

Prince says, we report that."

This time was different from before; this time they had headed north with only twenty thousand men and hadn't brought a Military Supervisor, so it was just Lin Xiuming writing the battle report. He could write it however he liked, as long as it wasn't too outlandish.

Just then, the sound of urgent drumming suddenly filled the air from the city walls, causing Lin Xiuming's heart to skip a beat.

At that moment, Li Feng came running in a frenzy and exclaimed, "General Lin, something terrible has happened- the Barbarian cavalry has returned!" Lin Xiuming's eyebrows furrowed as he quickly ordered his soldiers, "Assemble the troops, prepare for battle!"

Afterward, Lin Xiuming joined Li Feng on the city tower of Tianguang City.

The snowstorm was intensifying, and all they could see was a dark mass in the distance.

It was some time before Lin Xiuming could make out the details of the shadows; judging by the furry clothes they wore, they were indeed Barbarian cavalry.

Lin Xiuming frowned could it be that the North Prince had spoken the truth?

The Barbarians hadn't retreated?

How could that be possible?

He had just seen the traces of war in the North City and thought that the North Fre King's army had been annihilated by the North Prince, yet no sooner had the North Prince left North City than the Barbarian army appeared again.

Narrowing his eyes, Lin Xiuming estimated the size of the Barbarian cavalry outside.

Their numbers weren't overwhelming-about five thousand-but that was still not enough to capture Tianguang City, especially since he had just led an imperial army of twenty thousand to Tianguang City.

Just as Lin Xiuming was about to command his soldiers to shoot arrows, one panicked soldier came up to him and said, "General, disaster has struck— Tianguang City has run out of arrows and we have only trebuchets left, with no rocks to throw. Each of our soldiers has only a few arrows; they're completely unprepared to resist the Barbarians laying siege!

They had been in a hurry when heading north. Moreover, the supplies they'd transported to North City had already been turned over. Apart from some hand-to-hand combat weapons, they hardly had any arrows left.

If they were to defend the city, then they could only rely on Tianguang City's own weapons for defense, but upon arriving, the soldiers discovered a complete lack of long-range weaponry, which terrified them.

Upon hearing the soldier's words, Lin Xiuming was stunned- how could Tianguang City have no arrows or rocks?

How was this possible?

How were they supposed to defend without long-range weapons?

Lin Xiuming turned to Li Feng and queried, "General Li, how could Tianguang City be out of arrows? Even after a major battle, a fair number of usable arrows can be salvaged from the battlefield, right?"

With a cough, Li Feng replied, "Well, perhaps the Prince took them when he left. We have to defend not only Tianguang City but also several other cities to the west. The Prince probably assumed that

with General Lin's well-equipped army, which carries its own weaponry, there was no need for Tianguang City's arsenal, so he took it all, planning to send it to the other cities."

"You know, General, North City is rather poor and short on resources, especially military supplies, so we have to shift them around as needed." Hearing this farfetched explanation, Lin Xiuming was so furious he felt like cursing.

The military supplies they had initially brought from the Capital had long been handed over to North City; where else would they have obtained any weapons or equipment?

This was the first time he'd heard of a relief force arriving at the front line only to take all the weapons away.

It wasn't just arrows that were gone; even the stones meant for hurling had been removed.

What kind of joke was this?

Chapter 214: Finally Back 1

Seeing Lin Xiuming almost driven mad with frustration, Li Feng hastily said, "General Lin, don't be anxious, there's no need for us to be too tense."

"There are at most five thousand Barbarian soldiers in the distance, and even if they attack the city, they won't be able to breach it."

"Moreover, it's very likely they're not here to attack the city."

Seeing Li Feng acting so nonchalant, Lin Xiuming asked with suspicion, "General Li, how can you be so sure they're not here to attack the city?"

Li Feng answered, "After the North Fre King's army was repelled by us, they've occasionally sent a few thousand men to harass us, but they usually just shout provocations and don't actually attack the city, probably hoping to wage psychological warfare."

“I guess they’re at least going to wait until next spring before the North Fre King’s army makes another move south to attack Tianguang City.”

Hearing Li Feng’s answer, Lin Xiuming looked at him with a face full of skepticism.

At this time, Li Feng said to Lin Xiuming’s soldiers, “Don’t attack yet, we’re currently short on bows and arrows, so let’s conserve them for when the Barbarians do attack the city.”

No sooner had Li Feng finished speaking than a Barbarian soldier rode up to the city and shouted in the Great Sum language with a Barbarian accent, “Our king has spoken, he demands the North Prince immediately hand over his queen and compensate us with ten million tales of silver, otherwise, next spring, the North Fre King tribe will assemble an army of one million to move south.”

“By then, wherever the Barbarian warriors go, not a blade of grass will be left standing, and rivers of blood will flow.”

No sooner had the Barbarian soldier shouted than the thousands of Barbarian Cavalry in the distance stood and chanted, “Not a blade of grass will be left standing, rivers of blood will flow!”

“Not a blade of grass will be left standing, rivers of blood will flow!!!”

Afterward, the Barbarian soldier uttered some very unpleasant words, insulting the people of Great Sum as sheep on two legs, with small courage, who dare not come out, and only dare to stay in their pens.

The imperial soldiers brought by Lin Xiuming, upon hearing those words, all wished they could shoot that Barbarian soldier dead with a single arrow, but they did not act rashly. After all, the General had not given the order, and attacking on their own would likely result in military law punishment.

At this moment, Lin Xiuming noticed a strange phenomenon.

Li Feng had been in a fluster when looking for him earlier, as if the Barbarian Army was about to breakthrough, but now he was standing on the city wall as if nothing was the matter.

Not only was he like this, but so were the soldiers left behind in North City.

Only the soldiers he brought felt like they were facing a formidable enemy.

It made it seem as though the Barbarian assault had nothing to do with the soldiers from North City.

Weird, too weird...

Lin Xiuming simply gave up trying to figure it out and directly handed over battlefield command to Li Feng, letting Li Feng decide whether to attack or not.

Li Feng just stood there on the city wall until the Barbarian soldier finished shouting and left.

For a long time afterward, the Barbarian Cavalry would come to Tianguang City every now and then, but they just shouted provocations and never attacked.

Eventually, Lin Xiuming, upon hearing reports of Barbarian attacks, couldn't be bothered to pay attention anymore.

Lin Xiuming was no fool; he too had realized that those Barbarians had no real intention of attacking Tianguang City, and it wasn't even certain if they were actually Barbarians.

However, as the general dispatched by the Great Sum imperial court to provide support, Lin Xiuming still documented everything he witnessed in battle reports and sent them to the Capital City.

Of course, he did not include some of the more trivial details in the reports.

Half a month later.

Tianguang City.

Li Feng was organizing things in his room when a soldier from North City entered, speaking softly, "General, the Prince truly has divine foresight, there really are people digging up graves."

Hearing this, Li Feng was taken aback, then after scanning the doorway to ensure only North City soldiers were present, he asked, “How much soil was overturned?”

The soldier replied, “I took a look, sir, and there seem to be more than twenty spots; each covers an area of about one square meter.”

Hearing the soldier’s answer, Li Feng said, “The imperial court really doesn’t trust North City, but this likely isn’t General Lin’s doing. It’s probably the work of spies the court has planted within our army.”

The reason Lu Chen had all the clothes on the bodies of the Barbarian corpses switched to those worn by Great Sum people was mainly to prevent people from digging up the graves to verify the identities of the dead.

Frankly, Lu Chen didn’t believe the army brought by Lin Xiuming would do such a thing, nor did he think Lin Xiuming would desecrate graves to verify the identities of the bodies.

No matter whether the mounds contained North City soldiers or not, at least nominally they were the Black Cavalry of North City, and nominally, they had died for North City, for Great Sum.

If it became known that their graves had been dug up, it would certainly be a bad look.

Lu Chen had bodies dressed in new clothes purely to anticipate the worst in the soldiers of Lin Xiuming’s forces; in his view, even if Lin Xiuming did not intend to verify the bodies as Black Cavalry, it was very possible that someone among his men would.

As a result, not half a month since Lu Chen had left Tianguang City, and even before he had returned to Yan County, the graves had indeed been tampered with; but now, verifying whether those buried were Great Sum people might not be so easy.

Although bodies don’t decompose easily in winter, being buried in the ground still brought some changes, and even ice-frozen corpses, once coated with soil, would not easily reveal whether the soldiers were Barbarians or Great Sum people.

At this juncture, the soldier asked, “General, is there anything we need to do?”

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Li Feng said indifferently, “There’s nothing to be done; just let our people watch their own mouths. Don’t talk recklessly. If anyone slips up, they know the consequences.”

The soldiers from North City who were still in Tianguang City had been handpicked by Lu Chen himself. These soldiers were highly loyal and would not easily betray North City.

On the surface, they were assisting Lin Xiuming in defending Tianguang City, but in reality, their role was to surveil the imperial army of twenty thousand troops.

Of course, their most important function was to coordinate with those soldiers from North City who were impersonating the Barbarian Tribe.

The soldiers who came to the outskirts of Tianguang City daily to curse were actually troops from Great Sum. Since the war had ended and there was nothing to do in the winter, Lu Chen arranged for Mu Changtian, his son, and Xiao Pengthian to occasionally harass the imperial army in Tianguang City, creating the illusion that the North Fre King was not yet dead.

Meanwhile.

Yan County.

Riding on horseback and looking at the north gate of Yan County, Lu Chen sighed to himself, “I am finally back.”

The heavy snow had blocked the roads, and what should have been a journey of just a few days took Lu Chen and the North City soldiers half a month to complete.

Lu Chen no longer felt like cursing the North Fre King, who was already dead by then.

At that moment, Lu Chen couldn’t help but think that if all the Barbarian Tribes were as foolish as the North Fre King, controlling the tribes in the North Land in the future would be much easier.

Just as Lu Chen was lost in thought, Qin Yushan and Li Rui led the officials of Yan County to the city gate to welcome him.

“Welcomeback, Prince, in triumph!”

Although they told the outside world that the Heavy Cavalry of North City had been destroyed, most of Lu Chen’s people knew that the Black Cavalry had encountered no harm; they had achieved a great victory in North City without any casualties.

Coming back to his senses, Lu Chen rode swiftly to the city gate, and while riding, he asked Qin Yushan beside him, “Commander Qin, has anything significant happened in Yan County these past few days?”

Qin Yushan followed beside Lu Chen’s horse and reported on the status of Yan County.

“Nothing significant has happened in Yan County recently, Prince,” replied Qin Yushan.

“However, there is some information that I didn’t send to Tianguang City in time. I’ll report it to you first.”

“Recently, a number of merchants from Great Wu have appeared in Yan County, and there has also been a notable increase in the disciples from the Mysterious Moon Palace.”

Because the heavy snow had blocked the roads, it took time for the reports from the Brocade Guard to reach Tianguang City, so Lu Chen was unaware if anything had transpired in Yan County in the last few days.

Riding slowly forward, he listened to Qin Yushan’s briefing.

By the time Lu Chen reached the entrance of the Prince’s Mansion, Qin Yushan had nearly finished reporting his information. Lu Chen glanced at his wives waiting at the mansion’s entrance and slightly turned his head to Qin Yushan, saying, “Commander Qin, go attend to your duties.”

“Yes, Prince, I shall take my leave,” responded Qin Yushan.

Once Qin Yushan had left, Lu Chen immediately dismounted and walked towards the entrance of the mansion.

Mu Zixuan immediately led Lu Chen's women forward, with herself, Xiaozhou, and Dazhou throwing themselves into Lu Chen's arms.

"Prince, you're finally back. We've been very worried about you ever since we heard about the demise of the Black Cavalry," said Mu Zixuan.

Feeling the gentle jade fragrance of the women in his embrace, Lu Chen smiled slightly, soothingly patting the backs of the three beauties as he spoke, "My ladies, rest assured, I am fine."

At that moment, Lu Chen's gaze fell on Lin Wanyun, who was standing at a distance. Although her eyes were fixed on him, as if scheming something, she appeared hesitant to approach.

After hearing Qin Yushan's report, Lu Chen had guessed what the Mysterious Moon Palace was planning next.

The Mysterious Moon Palace saw the annihilation of the Black Cavalry as an opportunity, a chance to get closer to the North Prince Mansion. It seemed it wouldn't be long before they would seek to negotiate a partnership with him.

His gaze swept past Lin Wanyun and then settled on Chu Yuqin. Chu Yuqin looked at him worryingly; clearly, she wanted to come closer and inquire about his well-being, but with Chu Qingli standing near her sister, Chu Yuqin didn't dare to come too close to avoid her sister's misgivings.

Seeing the women gathered in front of him, Chu Yuqin felt a hollow sensation inside.

In her mind, memories of the times they had spent together in the Capital City resurfaced. Back then in the Capital City, there weren't so many women around Lu Chen.

Every time Lu Chen returned from outside, it was she alone who would warmly greet and care for him.

Times had changed. Now, Lu Chen had grown up, made a family, surrounded by many wives and concubines, and she, who had always been by his side, had become an outsider, unable to approach him.

As she thought of this, Chu Yuqin felt overwhelmed with melancholy.

Then, Lu Chen's gaze moved from Chu Yuqin back to Yelv Nanyan and Xiao Wen Yao.

While Yelv Nanyan and Xiao Wen Yao had also come forward, they seemed somewhat hesitant and just stood beside Mu Zixuan and the others, not as bold as Mu Zixuan, Xiaozhou, and Dazhou who had thrown themselves directly into Lu Chen's embrace.

Having recently married into the Prince's Mansion, although their affection for Lu Chen was already profound, they refrained from rushing forward out of respect for Mu Zixuan and the others, to avoid any impression of competing for favor. Aware of their own status, they restrained their inner impulses.

Gazing at Lu Chen's handsome face, Yelv Nanyan smiled slightly. Upon hearing of the destruction of the Black Cavalry, she had feared for the safety of North City. But in the end, nothing came to pass.

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To be honest, she didn't believe the North Fre King had the strength to defeat the Black Cavalry of North City, even the Sky Wolf King's three hundred thousand troops were no match for North City and those Black Cavalry, how could the North Fre King possibly be North City's opponent? She still had some understanding of the strength of the North Fre King's tribe.

At a glance, one could tell that this little man was plotting some sort of scheme.

And judging by his manner, he didn't look like someone who had suffered defeat.

Now that Yelv Nanyan had fully integrated into the North Prince Mansion, if Lu Chen really had been defeated, she would have felt the opposite of happy, after all, this little man was already her darling.

Moreover, the life in the North Prince's Mansion had always been what she longed for, and she did not want to see her beautiful life destroyed.

At that moment, Lu Chen said with a smile, "My wives, I have returned from the war, you won't keep me out of the Prince's Mansion, will you?"

Mu Zixuan and the other important women of the Prince's Mansion had all arrived at the entrance, and the maids and servants of the Prince's Mansion were also standing at the entrance. This made the entire Prince's Mansion entrance crowded with people, leaving Lu Chen no way to get in.

Hearing Lu Chen's words, Mu Zixuan, who was in his arms, suddenly came to her senses and quickly told the servants and maids at the entrance of the Prince's Mansion, "Disperse, go about your own business."

"Prince, let's go back to the main hall first," she said, "the renovation of the Prince's Mansion is now complete."

Lu Chen asked curiously, "The renovation is complete? Does that mean we now have heated rooms?"

Before heading north, Lu Chen had told Mo Fei and others about his plan to renovate the Prince's Mansion, intending to have them help oversee the renovation of the heated rooms in the mansion.

Counting the time, it had been over two months since they went north, so the renovation of the heated rooms should also be completed.

Mu Zixuan replied, "Yes, most of the rooms in the Prince's Mansion are no longer cold, especially the main hall, which is very warm."

Lu Chen said with a smile, "Let's go. I want to see if the renovation of the heated rooms has met my expectations."

Then Lu Chen led his wives and concubines to the main hall. As soon as he entered the hall, he felt a warm current, and the cold feeling instantly dissipated, making the entire hall very warm.

The reason why the main hall was so warm was that there was a smoke passage underneath and a coal-burning room outside, similar to the principle of a heated bed, only the main hall was much larger, consuming more coal each day.

Lu Chen turned to Xiaozhou and asked, “Youyou, is your room also renovated?”

The main hall was where Lu Chen and Mu Zixuan lived. If only this place was renovated, his other women wouldn’t be able to enjoy it.

Zhou Youyou answered, “Prince, most of the residential rooms in the Prince’s Mansion have been turned into heated rooms, including the northern courtyard.”

Hearing this, Lu Chen said, “Then I am relieved.”

Upon entering the main hall, Mu Zixuan and the others knelt on the ground and sat around Lu Chen. He huddled with them and chatted about some affairs of Tianguang City.

At this time, Chu Yuqin stood outside the courtyard of the main hall, looking at the warm scene inside, she couldn’t help but sigh involuntarily.

Chu Qingli looked at Chu Yuqin with a puzzled face and asked, “Sister, what are you sighing about?”

Chu Yuqin snapped back to reality and quickly said, “It’s nothing, just thinking about some things from the past.”

“All right, there’s nothing to do now, you can go on patrol too.”

Chu Qingli eyed Chu Yuqin suspiciously, but didn’t think too much about it.

Although Lu Chen, that lecherous man, had returned, there were so many women around him, so her sister couldn’t have a moment alone with Lu Chen, thus Chu Qingli was temporarily relieved about Chu Yuqin.

After chatting with his wives and concubines for a while, Lu Chen went to his study.

The study had accumulated a lot of intelligence reports, though most were from the Rain-listening Pavilion, unlike the Brocade Guard whose reports were usually delivered immediately into Lu Chen's hands, but most of the Rain-listening Pavilion's intelligence ended up in Lu Chen's study.

Lu Chen was eager to know the current movements of the major dynasties, especially what the Da Yue Dynasty was up to recently.

Just as Lu Chen approached the entrance of the study, he saw a figure with an impressive bearing.

Her face showed a touch of worry, a hint of anticipation, and a sense of bewilderment.

She hovered at the entrance of the study as if she was on patrol, but she seemed more like she was waiting for someone to arrive.

Chapter 217: Auntie will help you to regulatei

Chu Yuqin's hair was elegantly swept up into a cloud-like bun, and her blue Cloud Attire wrapped around her voluptuous and graceful figure, making her appear dignified, mature, and exuding the charm that comes with being a wife and mother.

Although she was yet to be with any man and still chaste, her age was now apparent, and with her constant care for Lu Chen, her temperament was similar to that of many beautiful married women.

As a Half-step Grandmaster, Chu Yuqin was far more resistant to the cold than most people, hence she didn't need to wear the thick cotton-padded clothes like Mu Zixuan and the others. As such, her stunning figure was fully accentuated.

Seeing the mature and enchanting Chu Yuqin at the door of the study, Lu Chen immediately harbored improper thoughts.

During his trip to the north, even though Bai Qingqing was by his side, he hadn't done anything with her, so he had been restraining himself.

For someone used to a rich diet to suddenly switch to nothing but vegetables for over two months was too much for him to bear.

Earlier, since his women were around, the thoughts in his heart hadn't been stirred, but now the study was only occupied by him and Chu Yuqin.

With fewer people around, one's desires could magnify in an instant.

At the sight of Chu Yuqin's stunning beauty and her alluring body, Lu Chen was instantly enticed.

After lingering for a while in Lu Chen's study, Chu Yuqin was about to leave when she turned around and saw Lu Chen.

Lu Chen asked with a smile, "Madam Chu, did you know I was coming to the study and decided to wait here for me?"

Surprised by Lu Chen's actual presence in the study, Chu Yuqin was momentarily taken aback and suddenly felt guilty, though she quickly regained her composure.

She looked into Lu Chen's eyes and said softly, "What are you thinking? I'm just patrolling the study, after all, there are many important items here that need to be watched over."

As Lu Chen slowly approached, Chu Yuqin's anxiety heightened, and the Inner Strength within her became increasingly chaotic.

Not understanding why she felt this way, Chu Yuqin quickly tried to regulate her breathing to calm the abnormal reaction in her body.

She hurriedly changed the subject, "Chen'er, you've just returned. Wiry aren't you with Mu Zixuan and the others?"

"You've come from afar, and must be tired from the journey. You should rest well today."

Lu Chen gazed into Chu Yuqin's beautiful eyes and said, "Madam Chu, I came expressly to find you."

“During the more than two months in Tianguang City, I’ve been practicing martial arts. Maybe I was too eager, which caused a problem with my Dantian. Although I’ve broken through to the Master Realm, I still can’t clear the blockage of energy in my Dantian. I have no choice but to come and ask for your help.”

Hearing Lu Chen’s words, a blush spread across Chu Yuqin’s face.

Her unexpected arrival at the door of the study was indeed inspired by her thoughts that Lu Chen had not seen her for more than two months and might have encountered some issues with his martial arts practice.

Since she had helped him with his body conditioning in the study before, she subconsciously came to the study door, which also explained why she felt guilty when she saw Lu Chen.

Learning that Lu Chen needed her assistance, Chu Yuqin’s initial confusion and desolation dissipated in an instant. As long as Lu Chen still needed her, she would not leave the North Prince Mansion.

Blushing, Chu Yuqin then said, “Let’s go into the study first. I’ll help you adjust your condition.”

Chu Yuqin took the initiative to turn around, opened the door to the study, and walked in.

Chu Yuqin had just entered the study when Lu Chen followed, quickly closed the door behind them, and even locked it.

Startled by the sound of the door closing, Chu Yuqin turned around to say something, but Lu Chen was already right beside her.

Chu Yuqin instinctively stepped back, “Chen’er, you can’t mess around this time. If you do, I won’t condition your body for you anymore.”

Seeing the embarrassed expression on the beautiful woman before him, something seemed to switch on inside Lu Chen, and he became extremely eager.

Without another word, Lu Chen took Chu Yuqin's jade hand, pulled her into his embrace, and said, "Madam Chu, don't worry, I know my limits. Hurry and help me with my condition. I feel my Dantian is getting more and more congested."

Suddenly enveloped in Lu Chen's embrace, Chu Yuqin's body trembled lightly. She inhaled his masculine scent, which caused her body to heat up intensely.

Chu Yuqin wanted to escape from Lu Chen's arms, but remembering that his cultivation was suffering, she refrained from moving, letting him hold her tender frame.

Perhaps because he hadn't been close to a woman for over two months, embracing Chu Yuqin, a stunning beauty, made Lu Chen all the more restless.

The faint scent of Chu Yuqin's body continuously assailed Lu Chen's nostrils. Her body was also incredibly soft, akin to cotton.

Plus, due to the winter season, her body radiated an even greater warmth, making Lu Chen feel as if he were holding a fluffy comforter.

Merely holding her made Lu Chen feel incredibly comfortable. Suddenly, his hands moved to Chu Yuqin's round hips. Feeling him act inappropriately, Chu Yuqin said in a fluster, "Chen'er, don't forget what I just told you!"

Chapter 218: Auntie will help you to regulate_2

Lu Chen whispered in Chu Yuqin's ear, "Don't worry, I definitely won't do anything rash."

Lu Chen's voice was low and magnetic, and its proximity to her ear made Chu Yuqin feel as if his voice was directly entering her brain, causing a tingling sensation to spread throughout her body from her mind.

Chu Yuqin struggled against the strangeness in her body, not forgetting her intention to help Lu Chen adjust his body. At this moment, she attempted to channel her Inner Strength into Lu Chen's body to check the condition of his Dantian.

However, she quickly realized that not only was she feeling weak all over, but the skill in her body had also disappeared, just like when she had been with Lu Chen before.

Chu Yuqin sighed inwardly. Sure enough, as before, whenever this little rascal held her, her skill would vanish. It seemed highly likely it had something to do with the Immortal Law he practiced.

Unless they engaged in closer contact, allowing Lu Chen to transfer some of his skill to her, only then would she be able to use her Inner Strength to check Lu Chen's Dantian.

But the mere thought of Lu Chen taking liberties with her in the study, kissing her red lips, left Chu Yuqin's mind in turmoil.

Just as Chu Yuqin was about to ask Lu Chen to let go of her so she could check his Dantian, Lu Chen sighed and said, "Madam Chu, it seems this method of adjusting the body isn't working anymore. If it's just holding each other, I don't feel anything, and the mass of energy in my Dantian is still blocked up, with no signs of dissipating."

Upon hearing this, Chu Yuqin's mind froze for a moment before she hurriedly asked, "Then what should we do?"

Lu Chen said, "Madam Chu, do you remember what we did in the study last time? It seems only by closer contact, allowing the skill in our bodies to form a cycle, can we clear the energy blockage in my Dantian."

As soon as Lu Chen finished speaking, the image of Lu Chen's forceful kiss flooded Chu Yuqin's mind, and she immediately said, "No! We mustn't make the same mistake again!"

Upon hearing Chu Yuqin's response, Lu Chen unhesitatingly released her delicate body.

Chu Yuqin was momentarily stunned.

Lu Chen then said with a worried face, "Since you are unwilling, Madam Chu, let's forget it. I'll find another way to deal with the blockage in my Dantian. Who asked me to practice the Immortals' cultivation technique beyond my limits? Whatever the consequences, I should bear them alone. Indeed, this has nothing to do with you, Madam Chu. I can't ruin your purity."

Hearing this, Chu Yuqin's tender heart was instantly touched.

But the thought of engaging in such intimate acts with Lu Chen caused great resistance within her.

After all, she was Lu Chen's aunt!

Though not by blood.

Nevertheless, she was still the sworn sister of Lu Chen's mother, Jin Lan.

How could they indulge in such intimate acts?

If word got out, it would surely affect Lu Chen's reputation.

Lu Chen was someone who aspired to contend for the throne; his reputation couldn't be tarnished because of her.

The Wang Family and others with ulterior motives were already planning to use her to trouble Lu Chen. If she were to engage in intimate acts with Lu Chen, the people would certainly see him as a wolf in sheep's clothing.

At that moment, Chu Yuqin said, "Chen'er, it's not that your aunt isn't helping you, it's just..."

Chu Yuqin trailed off.

Lu Chen said, "Madam Chu, don't say anymore. I understand. Even though you and the man you married have not consummated your marriage, you are technically married to him. Public opinion is dreadful, and you fear that your reputation will be ruined by me... I..."

Lu Chen hadn't finished speaking when Chu Yuqin interrupted him, "Chen'er, it's not like that, your aunt doesn't think that way."

"I'm afraid that people will use me to ruin your reputation. After all, I am a widow. If the public finds out about what happened between you and me, how will they view you?"

Hearing this, Lu Chen turned to look into Chu Yuqin's eyes, which showed a hint of panic, clearly afraid of being misunderstood as a selfish person.

Then, with a smile on his face, Lu Chen said, "Madam Chu, let's not talk about these disheartening things. You go about your business, and I'll endure this on my own. This is the consequence I ought to bear."

IIJ II

Seeing Lu Chen's bitter smile, Chu Yuqin felt as if her heart was being twisted by a knife.

At this point, Chu Yuqin thought to herself that her purpose in staying by Lu Chen's side was to be of use to him, and now she was the only one who could help adjust his body, yet she was reluctant to do so.

If she was unwilling, who else could adjust Lu Chen's body? If he truly suffered problems from his cultivation, she couldn't explain herself to her dear sister Chu Yue, even in death.

Moreover, it was just a kiss, not the consummation of a marriage. Even if kissed, that shouldn't count as losing her purity, especially since they had already kissed once before.

Having thought it through, Chu Yuqin finally made up her mind and promptly said, "Chen'er, don't speak so despondently. Your aunt promised your mother to guard you for life and to protect your safety."

"If that kind of action is necessary to help adjust your Dantian, then your aunt will surely agree to it. However, I'm afraid you won't be able to control yourself and all of a sudden might start thinking..."

Chapter 219: Auntie will help you to regulate_3

Chu Yuqin didn't continue speaking. Her face became hotter and hotter, increasingly flushed with embarrassment.

Seeing that Chu Yuqin was willing, Lu Chen immediately said, "Madam Chu, don't worry. Although I am fond of beauty, I still have a certain level of self-control. I absolutely won't do anything reckless."

"If I dare to overstep, just slap me twice to bring me to my senses."

Chu Yuqin sighed softly and then said, "Alright, then come here."

Upon hearing this, Lu Chen didn't hesitate to pull Chu Yuqin back into his embrace.

Chu Yuqin's heart began to beat frenziedly. Last time in the study, it was Lu Chen who had forcibly kissed her, but this time it was her own consent.

Although it was willingly, Chu Yuqin still felt uneasy, fearing that Lu Chen couldn't control himself—after all, he was a man, and she a woman.

A man and a woman alone in a room, engaging in such intimate acts—if sparks were to fly, what would they do if something actually happened?

After pulling Chu Yuqin into his arms, Lu Chen kissed her directly. Chu Yuqin could only let out muffled sounds, soon finding herself breathless from the kissing, completely limp in Lu Chen's embrace. If he hadn't been holding her up, she might have collapsed onto the floor.

Gradually, Chu Yuqin felt her body heating up more and more, her consciousness increasingly muddled. She tried hard to steady her restless emotions, only to find that no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't control herself.

Lu Chen had always wanted to conquer Chu Yuqin, but because she was already someone's widow, she held very traditional views on morality and had been avoiding him.

Especially after Chu Qingli came to North City, Chu Yuqin, fearing that Chu Qingli might suspect something, tried even harder to avoid him.

The more Chu Yuqin avoided him, the more Lu Chen's thoughts about her grew.

The emotions that had built up over time erupted at this moment. The study, already converted into a warm room, grew even hotter. The firewood burned fiercely, threatening to rage out of control.

Just then, Chu Yuqin suddenly regained clarity. She realized with a shock that Lu Chen was intending to...

Chu Yuqin quickly twisted her waist, trying to break free from Lu Chen, in an attempt to bring him back to his senses too.

As they struggled, they accidentally bumped into a bookshelf, sending books tumbling down with a clatter.

Lin Wanyun, who was patrolling outside at that moment, immediately approached the study upon hearing the noise.

The study was where the North Prince dealt with official affairs. Although it was not part of the inner court, this was also a place where not just anyone could enter, and the study was guarded by the inner court security.

Hearing activity in the study, Lin Wanyun thought someone had sneaked in, perhaps to steal something.

But just as Lin Wanyun arrived at the doorway, she halted.

She was from the Mysterious Moon Palace, and although she was now the Guard Commander of the Prince's Mansion, this didn't mean that the North Prince trusted her completely. If she were to rashly enter the study,

she might be misunderstood by the North Prince, suspecting that she had some ulterior motive for being there. Therefore, it was inconvenient for her to enter.

Lin Wanyun then called out towards the study, "Who's in there?"

Upon hearing the voice from outside the study, Lu Chen, who was overtaken by desire, gradually came to his senses a bit. Looking at the beautiful woman in his arms, Lu Chen felt somewhat helpless.

At this moment, Chu Yuqin had affectionate eyes, a flushed face, and a weak, yielding body. If things continued, there was no telling whether he might indeed make Chu Yuqin his woman.

Unfortunately, the opportunity was missed again, as Chu Yuqin had already come back to her senses, making it inappropriate to continue.

And this was the study, a place too small and crowded for his liking; he felt rather constrained.

This was not the right place.

Then, Lu Chen coughed and said, “Madam Lin, it’s me.”

Hearing Lu Chen’s voice coming from inside, Lin Wanyun was taken aback for a moment, and she felt somewhat relieved. It was good that she didn’t barge in, or else it would have been hard to explain.

After Lin Wanyun said, “Oh, it’s Chen’er inside. I thought a thief had entered the study. Since there’s nothing amiss, I won’t disturb you.”

Although calling Lu Chen “Chen’er” still felt a bit awkward to Lin Wanyun, Lu Chen had already discussed the matter of addressing him, and now she could only call him that.

If she called Lu Chen by his title, the North Prince, he would probably say that she was intentionally keeping her distance from him.

For her, calling Lu Chen by his childhood name was not bad, as it could bring her closer to him, facilitating further cooperation with the Mysterious Moon Palace when the time came.

After Lin Wanyun left the doorway of the study,

Lu Chen's gaze returned to Chu Yuqin in his arms, their eyes meeting with neither uttering a word for a long while.

Feeling that Lin Wanyun had moved away, Chu Yuqin finally spoke, "Chen'er, you should feel much better now, can you let go of Auntie?"

Chu Yuqin felt that Lu Chen was close to losing control. If she didn't quickly distance herself from him, they might make a mistake soon.

Lu Chen said, "Some of the stagnant qi in my Dantian has dissipated, but I am still feeling uncomfortable in some places."

Hearing Lu Chen's words, Chu Yuqin rolled her eyes at him disapprovingly and said, "Don't think I don't know what you're talking about, go find Zixuan or the others, let me go right now."

Chapter 220: Madam Chu, what do you mean by "serving"?_1

How could Chu Yuqin not know Lu Chen's thoughts? This little rascal just wanted her body. Thankfully, she regained her consciousness at the crucial moment or they might have been involved in some scandalous affair right there in the study.

Seeing Chu Yuqin's look of bashful anger, Lu Chen couldn't help but laugh and say, "Madam Chu, I haven't even mentioned where I'm uncomfortable yet. How do you know I was going to say it's there?"

Chu Yuqin ignored Lu Chen's words, her face flushing as she said, "Anyway, I've already helped you regulate your condition. Come back to me when there are issues with your cultivation."

"I'll be leaving today."

As she spoke, Chu Yuqin tried to free herself from Lu Chen's embrace and leave.

However, she had no skill in her body at the moment, and combined with how Lu Chen had left her feeling weak all over, it wasn't easy for her to break away from his arms.

Chu Yuqin twisted her waist, but she was still held tightly in Lu Chen's arms. She was forced to look up into Lu Chen's eyes and then said, "Chen'er, you're fine now, please let your aunt go. If Qing Li comes on patrol, there's a chance she'll discover us."

With a nonchalant expression, Lu Chen said, "So what if she discovers us? We haven't done anything indecent. You were just helping me with my body, what can she say?"

Hearing Lu Chen's words, Chu Yuqin pouted.

Why did it feel like they were doing something indecent right now?

She, a widow, in Lu Chen's study, hugging and embracing him—wasn't this something that couldn't be seen?

Lu Chen said, "Madam Chu, I think you care too much about what others think. Are their opinions really that important? To me, it doesn't matter if we're hugging and embracing, or even if we've consummated our relationship; no one has a right to say anything. After all, your husband has already passed away."

Lu Chen decided to continue instilling some foundational thoughts into Chu Yuqin, wanting her to accept him sooner. It was time to say things he hadn't been able to say before.

Otherwise, if he continued dragging this out, who knows when he'd finally win Chu Yuqin over.

Chu Yuqin was stunned upon hearing these words.

She hadn't expected Lu Chen to be so bold today, to actually voice such thoughts. It would have been one thing if he had just played some minor tricks or taken advantage at most, but if these words were overheard, they could directly affect him.

Chu Yuqin hurriedly said sternly, "Chen'er, I forbid you to talk like this. I'm your aunt. How can you have such thoughts?"

Lu Chen, looking unconcerned, said, "It doesn't matter; we're not related by blood. You and my mother have no familial ties."

Chu Yuqin continued, “Even if we’re not related by blood, you can’t have those thoughts. I’m a widow. How can you harbor thoughts about a widow? You’re going to be the Emperor, you can’t have any blemishes on your reputation.”

“Chen’er, you can’t ruin your own reputation because of your aunt.”

Listening to Chu Yuqin, Lu Chen gazed at her beautiful face and asked with a smile, “Madam Chu, I’ve noticed that each time you avoid me, you’re always looking out for me, seeming very afraid that I’ll tarnish my reputation because of you.”

“What if I didn’t care about my reputation, could I then do those things to you?”

Lu Chen’s words made Chu Yuqin’s heart skip a beat; she suddenly became flustered. Indeed, she had never considered rejecting Lu Chen from her own perspective.

Each time, she would tell Lu Chen about the consequences his actions might have for him, without considering the consequences for herself.

From Lu Chen’s perspective, he was someone who paid no mind to his reputation. If Lu Chen himself didn’t care about it, then neither of them cared about the reputation.

If both of them cared for no reputation, then what couldn’t be done?

Just as Chu Yuqin was about to speak, Lu Chen continued, “Madam Chu, I’ve never believed that marrying a widow is a blemish. Moreover, historically, emperors were rarely paragons of private virtue. Some emperors even coveted their brothers’ or sons’ wives, and that was when their husbands were still alive.”

“Madam Chu, your husband has been dead for so long, isn’t it completely normal to find another man? There are many cases of widows remarrying in the common folk, and the people don’t make much fuss about it. Are you planning to remain a widow your whole life for a husband you never met?”

“Besides, even if the people did say something, at most, they would think I lack private virtue, but that doesn’t really concern them.”

“The people of Great Xia already know that I’m a lecherous person. If I took your body, in the eyes of the common folk, it would be considered nothing extraordinary.”

“Since the common people can accept it, Madam Chu, what do you have to worry about?”

With that said, Lu Chen raised his hand and gently swept the hair away from Chu Yuqin’s cheek.

Hearing Lu Chen’s words left Chu Yuqin utterly flustered. She found that he actually made a lot of sense. Initially, Lu Chen’s reputation was not very good to begin with, and the battle at Wanning Valley only just barely improved his reputation a bit.

But many people still saw Lu Chen as a lecher, though to them, that wasn’t such a big deal—lechery wasn’t considered a stain.

Which man wasn’t lecherous?