

## Finest 196

### Chapter 196 Who Looks Better?

"Why would they want the perfume formula? Young Prince Ning is of dragon lineage (Late Emperors grandson), basking in eternal wealth and prosperity. Why would he collude with the demonic people of the White Lotus cult?" The Eldest Miss was puzzled, and after a moment of contemplation, a hint of horror flickered in her eyes. "Could it be that they..."

The Eldest Miss's face turned pale. She bit her lower lip, unable to continue. No wonder they wanted the perfume formula and to seize the wealth of the Xiao family. When you boiled it down, it was all to amass wealth in preparation for their grand plan.

Lin Wanrong nodded, saying, "Eldest Miss, you are not mistaken. There is no other reason for their actions."

Upon hearing his words, Xiao Yuruo's brows furrowed even more, her face revealing deep worry. Seeing her concern, Lin Wanrong consoled her with a chuckle, "Eldest Miss, you should consider it this way: we're rather fortunate to have encountered such a once-in-a-lifetime event. Others would be envious."

The Eldest Miss gave him a reproachful look. "You! I'm on the brink of despair, and yet, you're making light of the situation. How can our Xiao family handle such a calamity?" With that, she sighed involuntarily.

Lin Wanrong replied with a laugh, "Eldest Miss, I'm not being insincere. The ancients have taught us that it's pointless to worry about something that's either a blessing or a disaster. Overthinking can disturb one's peace."

She glanced at him and quietly said, "Lin San, in that case, when you were captured by the White Lotus cult, it was my family's fault. If you hadn't been involved in the affairs of the Xiao family, you wouldn't have attracted their attention, much less been taken by them."

Lin Wanrong responded with a hearty laugh, "Eldest Miss, this has nothing to do with you. It's mainly because I am too outstanding. No matter where I hide, I can be easily identified. Like a vigorous tree standing tall amongst shrubs, I am always the focus. As a naturally outstanding person, being noticed and admired is inevitable, and I just have to get used to it."

With a "pfft", the Eldest Miss couldn't help but laugh, "You sure have a thick skin." Every conversation with him was both amusing and frustrating. Was this man naturally oblivious to worries?

"Eldest Miss, there's no need to panic. While the Xiao family is indeed embroiled in this situation, it's not as dire as you think. In my opinion, the Young Prince is not only after the Xiao family. The southern regions have always been wealthy with robust commerce in Jiangsu and Zhejiang. Powerful merchants in Jinling and Hangzhou are unlikely to be uninvolved. What he wants is the money and grain of the South. When the scope expands infinitely, there's nothing to fear. We're all in the same boat. As the saying goes, 'when a nest is overturned, no egg remains unbroken'. That's the principle." Lin Wanrong explained slowly.

The Eldest Miss pondered for a moment and nodded lightly, "Lin San, you're right. When disaster strikes, no one can resist, and worrying is useless." A hint of determination flashed in her eyes, "As my mother used to say, even though we, the Xiao family, are women, we will not be bullied. If the Xiao family is pushed into a corner, I'd rather shatter like a precious gem than remain intact like a common tile."

Xiao Yuruo spoke with a fierce determination that was so reminiscent of her mother that one could see they were undoubtedly two strong women cut from the same cloth. Lin Wanrong secretly admired her spirit. "Miss," he said after some thought, "When we were in Hangzhou, I heard Mr. Xu say that the Madam had many old friends in the capital. If something were to happen, they would surely not sit idly by."

Eldest Miss Xiao shook her head. "I asked my mother about this when we returned from Hangzhou. She said that she had only casual acquaintances in the capital and couldn't call them close friends. Besides, she's been away from the capital for many years and we have no idea where these old friends are now. We can't pin our hopes on others in times of calamity. Our Xiao family, though composed of women, has always conducted business with integrity. We do not fear retribution for we've done no wrong. Even in death, we would die with dignity, refusing to engage in any servile or flattering behavior."

Impressed by her steadfastness, Lin Wanrong chuckled. "Miss, I'm a bit of a coward, so don't scare me with talk of ghosts and death. You make it sound as grave as a parting of life and death."

A smile lit up Xiao Yuruo's face. "If I don't sound serious, how can I keep you in line? We, the Xiao family, do not engage in things against our conscience. As for you, I'm not so sure. I wouldn't be surprised if you've done many bad things."

Lin Wanrong laughed heartily. "You know me well, Miss. My intention in revealing today's behind-the-scenes manipulator is to warn you to be vigilant against falling into the traps of the wicked."

Miss Xiao laughed lightly. "I'm not afraid of anyone, only of falling into the trap of a scoundrel like you."

Lin Wanrong returned her smile. "Since Miss is so enlightened, I don't need to worry. On another note, offending this 'Prince' today might not be a bad thing. This incident is well-known in Jinling, and the Prince and his son are reputed to be virtuous and upright, unwilling to let others have any bad opinion about them. In my opinion, the Xiao family is safer now than before, when we were under their scrutinizing gaze." Lin Wanrong continued calmly, "If they really intend to rebel, that's beyond our control. What will come, will come. Worrying is useless. We should just carry on with our business and make money."

Eldest Miss Xiao nodded, her heart steadying and mood gradually improving after their conversation. She looked at him with a smile. "So, you had this devilish plan all along. No wonder you were so brazen."

"Brazen? Me?" Lin Wanrong protested, "Miss, as you can see, I've always been conservative, I don't usually strike unless provoked."

Eldest Miss Xiao fell silent, gazing at the gently rippling lake, she sighed lightly, "How wonderful it would be if there were no troubles in this world."

"People are born to endure hardships," Lin Wanrong responded with a philosophical smile. "The more you think, the more pain you feel. It's better to not think at all. Life is short, if everyone was like Miss, always furrowing their brows and preoccupied with work, life would be meaningless."

Suddenly, Eldest Miss Xiao's face brightened with a smile. "Lin San, do you think Miss Luo is beautiful?"

Exasperated, Lin Wanrong wondered how they had circled back to this topic. Seeing Eldest Miss Xiao's hopeful eyes, he didn't want to hide the truth from her and nodded, "Yes, she is beautiful. Extremely so."

Eldest Miss Xiao's eyelids lowered, two spots of pink rising on her cheeks as she softly asked, "Then, who is prettier, Miss Luo or me?"

This was a troublesome and unfruitful question, and Lin Wanrong found it difficult to answer. He laughed it off, "Both are beautiful, both indeed."

Objectively speaking, Eldest Miss Xiao and Luo Ning were two completely different types of women. Both were extremely beautiful in their own rights. Luo Ning was charming and amiable with her outgoing nature, whereas Xiao Yuruo exhibited the air of a strong woman, proud, resilient, and hard to conquer.

Miss Xiao frowned slightly at his evasive response, discontented, "I spoke so kindly with you just now, and this is how you answer me? Are you trying to avoid offending me or her?"

Why would I need to mollify you when I am not your husband? Lin Wanrong thought.

"Um, Miss," he hesitated, "Do you really want me to tell the truth?"

"Of course," Xiao Yuruo replied shyly, "Who has time for your nonsense?"

"Well, to be honest, when Miss Luo smiles" Xiao Yuruo's heart skipped a beat before hearing him continue, "she looks just as beautiful as Miss Xiao."

A soft hum escaped Xiao Yuruo. A blush spread across her face, she bit her lower lip, and whispered, "You really know how to sweet talk." She hadn't realized he had merely rephrased the same compliment, and the effect was completely different. The mind of a woman was indeed unpredictable.

"However," Lin Wanrong added with a smile, "you look more beautiful when you cry."

Startled, Xiao Yuruo retorted, "Why are you saying this? I don't want to hear it when did you see her cry?"

"Exactly," Lin Wanrong laughed, "I've never seen Miss Luo cry, that's why I think you look prettier when you do."

Only then did Eldest Miss Xiao realize she had been fooled again. Hadn't she just cried in front of him for a long time? Had he taken her lightly because of that? Embarrassed and angry, she admonished, "You're not being serious after only a few words. As for today, we won't mention it again."

Eldest Miss Xiao's mood had become quite unpredictable, blushing after just a few words. She got into her sedan chair and returned to the Xiao household without speaking another word to Lin Wanrong. Recalling her tear-streaked face by the lake, and comparing it to her current stern expression, Lin Wanrong felt a strange sensation. Was she being played by two different people? Her mood swings were too quick.

However, Lin Wanrong didn't have time to ponder it further. He was exhausted from the day's events at Old Luo's house, full of matching couplet games and other activities. Just as he was about to rest, he heard the maid, Xiao Cui, calling from outside the door, "Brother San, Brother San"

As Lin Wanrong opened the door, Xiao Cui handed him a package, "Brother San, Eldest Miss sent me to deliver some clothes to you."

Taking the package, he found the dirty clothes that Eldest Miss Xiao had taken from him after their return from Hangzhou, now returned clean and fresh. The clothes carried a faint scent of soap.

Lin Wanrong accepted the clothes, expressed his thanks, and laughed, "Xiao Cui, which sister washed these for me? A good amount of laundry soap has been used, costing quite a few silver taels, I presume."

Xiao Cui shook her head, "I don't know, they were kept in Eldest Miss Xiao's room all this time."

Kept in Eldest Miss Xiao's room? Good heavens, could Miss Xiao have washed these herself? Had the girl changed her ways? Lin Wanrong found himself growing suspicious.

## Chapter 197 Undercurrent

In the following days, the Eldest Miss seemed to forget the incident by Xuanwu Lake and returned to her formidable self, spending her days discussing with the stewards about taking over the Tao family's storefronts. The worries brought by Young Prince Ning seemed to have completely vanished.

Lin Wanrong, who originally wanted to slack off, found that the Eldest Miss had her eyes set on him, involving him in every matter big or small. She thoroughly explained to him the business process, making it apparent that she was grooming him to be the pillar of the Xiao family.

Did she intend for me to be the third in command? Lin Wanrong chuckled inwardly. These fundamental business principles were more than familiar to him. The Eldest Miss should be learning from him, not the other way around. However, given her care for him, he decided to play along, putting on the face of a humble learner. It greatly satisfied the Eldest Miss's vanity.

The past few days had indeed been busy. The soap workshop had been in operation for several days, and Lin Wanrong finally had time to inspect it. Seeing that the entire production was in line with his ideas and plans, he felt a great relief. The process of making soap was far simpler than that of perfume, and it was much easier to mass-produce. In a few days, it would be massively released to the market.

Soap was indeed a wonder. As soon as it was launched, it was hotly pursued by the ladies. Drawing on her previous experience, the Eldest Miss priced it high, yet it still fell short of demand. Following the successful launches of lingerie, perfume, and soap, the Xiao family had made a huge splash in Jiangnan [Note: The region south of the lower and middle reaches of the Yangtze River; Both Jiangsu and Zhejiang Provinces are within this region]. When people spoke of the Xiao family, they thought of perfume and soap, overshadowing their main business of fabrics and silk. The Xiao family had subtly become synonymous with cosmetics and women's fashion.

The prestige of the Xiao family soared after their grand display of talent at Old Madam Luo's birthday celebration. It was well-known in Jinling, combined with the incident at Sunshine and Rain Restaurant in Hangzhou. No one in Jinling dared to underestimate the Xiao family, and the Eldest Miss's reputation significantly increased. This boosted the Eldest Miss's confidence, and she was considering converting the Tao family's shops into specialty stores for perfume, soap, and women's lingerie. For a time, the Xiao family's business was thriving, its momentum unparalleled.

Life seemed pleasant, but Lin Wanrong was well aware that the better the Xiao family's business performed, the closer the day of going to the capital was. There was less than a month left before the New Year. After the New Year, he would head north to the capital to find Qingxuan, and Yushuang would also go to the capital to study. The only one he was worried about was Qiaoqiao. This girl was sweet and likable, and he really didn't want to leave her behind. He couldn't be at ease. Although Qingshan and Luo Yuan would take care of her, Luo Min did not hold absolute power in Jiangsu, and Cheng De was still eyeing them. Qingshan and Luo Yuan's Hung Hing gang was in conflict with the Black Dragon Association backed by Cheng De. Although Luo Min had arranged for people to protect them secretly, how could they look after Qiaoqiao when even the old fox couldn't guarantee his own safety?

The more Lin Wanrong thought about it, the more worried he became. Qiaoqiao was his darling, and he would not allow anything to happen to her. The best thing would be to take down Cheng De, then nobody in Jinling would dare to mess with Qingshan, ensuring Qiaoqiao's safety, and allowing him to leave without worry. However, it wouldn't be easy to topple Cheng De; even Luo Min wasn't certain he could do it, let alone with Young Prince Ning backing Cheng De.

As he walked, he missed Qiaoqiao more and more and couldn't stand being at the Xiao family's any longer, he hurriedly went towards the restaurant.

Upon reaching the entrance of the restaurant, he saw Qingshan rushing out. Seeing him, Dong Qingshan paused, "Big brother, why are you here?" Lin Wanrong had been busy spinning around at the Xiao family for the past few days and hadn't visited the restaurant. He wondered what Qingshan and Luo Yuan had been up to.

Seeing Qingshan's stern expression, Lin Wanrong joked, "Qingshan, what are you up to? Going to fight?"

Qingshan pulled him aside and said in a low voice, "Big brother, your timing is impeccable. Luo Yuan and I were just about to find you."

"What's wrong?" Lin Wanrong asked.

"Wu Zhenghu and his gang seem to be losing patience. They've been moving their pieces these past few days, looking like they're about to make a move on us," Qingshan said softly.

Lin Wanrong nodded. It was the end of the year, a time when the underworld was most rampant, gathering funds for the upcoming activities - a tradition from ancient times. He glanced at Qingshan, "So, what are you and Luo Yuan planning to do?"

Dong Qingshan fiercely tightened his wrist and said, "We're going to beat the hell out of them." Seeing Lin Wanrong's smile, Qingshan hurriedly added, "Big brother, we're not being reckless. This is a decision Luo Yuan and I made after careful consideration. Hung Hing has been growing fast recently. We have the strength to face Wu Zhenghu. Even if we can't win, we can make life difficult for him. Luo Yuan agrees with me."

One was an established gang, the other a rising power in the jianghu. A collision seemed inevitable, but Lin Wanrong was more concerned with what was hidden behind it all. Was Wu Zhenghu's rush to eliminate opposition instigated by Cheng De? If so, did it mean Cheng De was planning something big? Especially since Young Prince Ning coincidentally arrived in Jinling recently, what had they discussed?

Lin Wanrong had already left the affairs of Hung Hing to Luo Yuan and Qingshan. With the cunning Luo Yuan strategizing in the background, he had no worries. Lin Wanrong nodded, "Qingshan, proceed with your plan. You have my full support. But remember this, once you move forward, never regret your actions. Be ruthless, eradicate the problem from its root, show no mercy. Convey this message to Luo Yuan as well, and remember it well."

Qingshan chuckled, licking his lips, "Big brother, I understand. Don't worry, we won't show any mercy."

Lin Wanrong nodded. This kid Qingshan might not be good at anything else, but when it came to fighting, he was fierce and feared no one. One needed that kind of vigor in the underworld. Maybe letting Qingshan and his gang make a fuss would lead to unexpected gains. No matter what, before leaving Jinling for the capital, he had to find a way to solve these hidden dangers. Only then could he set off in search of Qingxuan with peace of mind.

"By the way, Qingshan, is your sister here?" Lin Wanrong finished giving his instructions and suddenly remembered the real reason for his visit.

"Big brother, my sister has been worried about the restaurant business these past few days," Qingshan said, furrowing his brows.

"What happened? Is there a problem?" Lin Wanrong asked anxiously.

"The restaurant by the Qinhuai River that my sister wanted to acquire has run into trouble. She's been fretting over it," Dong Qingshan explained.

"Oh, what kind of trouble?"

"We had already signed a contract with the restaurant. They initially agreed to hand it over to us for renovations within the next few days. However, when my sister went there the day before yesterday, their tune had changed. They now claim that the restaurant was sold too cheaply and they want my sister to pay more," Qingshan summarized the issue.



Upon hearing this, Lin Wanrong instantly understood. Clearly, the restaurant owner's greed had gotten the better of him, and he was trying to increase the price. With a smile, Lin Wanrong asked, "But the contract was already signed, wasn't it?"

Dong Qingshan nodded. "The same day I finished discussing it with you, my sister signed the contract with the owner overnight. But this man has a bit of a bad reputation in Jinling, and my sister didn't dare to push him too hard, afraid that he might seek revenge in the future."

Revenge? That seemed ridiculous. Their family was not involved in organized crime; why would they fear a thug? Poor Qiaoqiao, she was just too kind.

Lin Wanrong laughed. "A thug? Qingshan, is there anyone more villainous than you?"

Qingshan smirked. "Big brother, I understand now. Before, I was afraid of my sister scolding me, but with you backing me, I fear nothing. Tomorrow, I'll go and collect the protection money with the boys."

Good grief, that Qingshan, always sticking to his routine. Lin Wanrong laughed and tapped him on the head. "You fool, who collects protection money from themselves?"

"Big brother, I don't quite understand" Qingshan confessed.

Frustrated and amused, Lin Wanrong said, "Qiaoqiao has already signed the contract, so the restaurant belongs to us. Whose protection money are you trying to collect?"

Dong Qingshan slapped his forehead. "Oh, I didn't think of that. Big brother, I understand now. Tomorrow, I'll take a few of the boys over there, pull that bastard out, and see how he dares to act arrogant."

Lin Wanrong nodded in approval. "That's more like it. It's your home you're going back to tomorrow, what's there to be afraid of? Bring the contract. If he dares to resist, throw him out. Even if the authorities show up, you have nothing to fear. There's no law or justice if he thinks he can encroach on our territory."

Qingshan left in high spirits to carry out his orders. Lin Wanrong went upstairs to find Qiaoqiao sitting by the window, her beautiful eyebrows knitted in worry, a small brush in hand, jotting something down.

As Lin Wanrong approached, he noticed that she was keeping the books. Her penmanship was neat and elegant, pleasing to the eye. Seeing her troubled, he couldn't help but shake his head and smile. She was just too kind.

He leaned in and whispered into Qiaoqiao's ear, teasing her gently, "Little darling, are you thinking about your big brother?"

A warmth at her ear and a familiar voice from behind made Qiaoqiao's heart leap with joy. She quickly turned her head and said, "Big brother"

Lin Wanrong gave her a peck on her cheek, then with a gleeful grin, took her hand and said, "Silly girl, when you have problems, why don't you tell your big brother?"

Qiaoqiao felt a mix of joy and embarrassment. "Big brother, you're so naughty! You have so many things going on with the Xiao family, how could I add to your worries?"

Lin Wanrong chuckled heartily. "We, as husband and wife, are one entity. If you don't tell me, that's when I'll worry. Next time, if you have a problem and don't tell me, I'll spank you." As he spoke of them being 'one entity,' his devilish hand had already subtly traced the slender curve of Qiaoqiao's waist, gently caressing it.

## Chapter 198 Xu Wenchang's Arrival

Upon hearing his words of their marital unity, Qiaoqiao blushed deeply, warmth spread through her body, and she leaned limply against him, without an ounce of strength left in her.

Observing the girl's gentleness and her deep affection for him, Lin Wanrong sighed inwardly. If he left for the capital one day, wouldn't this girl lose her spirit? My poor darling, he thought. His concern for Qiaoqiao, along with his resolve to topple Cheng De, only grew stronger.

"Qiaoqiao," he turned her to face him, gently kissing her lips. "Your benevolence is a virtue, but if it exceeds moderation, it will lead to indulging villains. Especially now, as we're conducting business.

We won't partake in the unscrupulous activities of the business world, but we also won't allow ourselves to be bullied."

Qiaoqiao gave him a shy smile. "Big brother, I understand. It's not that I'm lenient towards the wicked, it's just that the owner of the tavern by the Qinhuai River is trying to extort more silver from us. He's somehow got connections with the son of the Commander-in-Chief, which is why he's acting so arrogantly. I'm just worried that it might cause trouble for you."

Holding her close, Lin Wanrong comforted her, "Little darling, don't worry. Big brother is afraid of many things, but not trouble. From now on, let me handle such complex matters. You just focus on running the restaurant."

Qiaoqiao nodded, her cheeks flushing as she nestled against his chest, whispering, "Big brother, you're so good to me."

Lin Wanrong felt a pang of guilt. Just a few sweet words and she was content. She was too easily pleased. Truth be told, since his arrival at the Xiao family, he hadn't spent much time with Qiaoqiao. She remained infatuated, yearning for him day and night, while he was preoccupied with Yushuang, Qingxuan, and Xian'er. Upon reflection, he felt a touch of shame.

Sigh, being a romantic does come with its troubles, he mused, smirking as he held Qiaoqiao even closer. The faces of Yushuang, Qingxuan, and Xian'er flashed before his eyes. If being a romantic was a mistake, then he was doomed to repeat it.

As they shared a tender moment, Qiaoqiao suddenly looked up and asked, "Big brother, did you give Sister Ning a diamond?"

Startled, he thought, Rumors really do spread like wildfire. It was clearly a gift for the old lady, yet it somehow turned into a gift for Luo Ning. Lin Wanrong quickly retorted, "No, absolutely not. It was a gift for Old Madam Luo's birthday, which she then gave to Luo Ning. I had nothing to do with it."

Suppressing a smile, Qiaoqiao said, "Big brother, why are you so flustered? I was just asking. Sister Ning came over a few days ago to discuss sponsoring the poetry gathering. I noticed a pendant around her neck with a diamond. I'm not sure who set it for her, but it looked splendid. I thought it was a gift from you."

A diamond necklace? Lin Wanrong was impressed. Luo Ning was quite clever to come up with such an idea. Regardless of the pendant style, a diamond added exceptional taste. Laughing, he said, "Her diamond is very small, not even a third of the one I gave you. Tomorrow, I'll ask her where she got it set. We'll get a pendant made for you too. Once you put it on, my darling Qiaoqiao will look like a fairy descended from the heavens, making everyone drool in envy."

Listening to his smooth talk, Qiaoqiao's face bloomed with a red hue. She replied softly, "Big brother, I'm not as beautiful as you say. Sister Ning, she is truly beautiful."

"In my heart, my Qiaoqiao is the most beautiful." He playfully responded without missing a beat, secretly appending 'one of them' to his sentence.

Even though she knew he was saying sweet words to please her, Qiaoqiao was thrilled, leaning into his arms and saying, "Big brother, I heard about what happened at the birthday celebration from Sister Ning."

"Oh? Little darling, do you remember what I told you last time? When others badmouth me, you should listen to them as if their words have been reduced a hundredfold, because nine times out of ten, they are false. If they praise me, you should amplify their words a thousand times, because ten times out of ten, they are true." Lin Wanrong gave a mischievous smile. "I wonder if Miss Luo's words are true or false?"

Qiaoqiao giggled, "Sister Ning is so good to you, how could she be lying?" Good to me? She took a thousand taels of silver from me to organize a poetry meeting, is that considered good? But since she is Qiaoqiao's close friend, I just let it slide. As long as the poetry contest ends up being just an announcement meeting, that will be fine.

"Sister Ning said that you fought alone against the best poet from the Seven Northern Provinces that day, earning glory for our southern scholars. Everyone admired you. She also said that you were brave and clever, exposing the deceptions of that arrogant Daoist, proving you to be a true scholar." Qiaoqiao gazed at him, her eyes filled with deep affection.

"Little darling Qiaoqiao, as you know, I'm a humble and low-profile person, extremely sincere in dealing with people and matters. The things your Sister Ning talked about might have been downplayed a bit, but they're still quite close to the truth," Lin Wanrong said with a sense of righteousness.

"Sister Ning also praised you for your unique insights into things, and although you seem mischievous when dealing with people, you're actually sincere. She said you are a true man of honor." Qiaoqiao laughed as she relayed this.

"Qiaoqiao, bring me the account book," Lin Wanrong suddenly said.

"Big brother, what do you want the account book for?" Qiaoqiao asked, puzzled.

"This girl flattered me in front of you with so many sweet words to make you happy. Let me see if she tricked you out of another thousand taels of silver," Lin Wanrong joked.

Qiaoqiao covered her mouth, giggling, "Big brother, it's not as bad as you're making it out to be. Sister Ning really meant the praise. She also said you have a keen sense of people's feelings and sincere affection. It's the first time I've ever seen her praise someone like this."

This was a bit too much. How could she describe me so well, especially in front of my wife? Isn't this clearly meant to stir up trouble in our relationship? But as soon as Lin Wanrong saw Qiaoqiao, all his troubles seemed to fade away. They chatted and played little games like 'whoever loses has to kiss the other', and seeing Qiaoqiao blushing and shyly squirming was more wonderful than words could express.

When Old Dong came upstairs and saw Lin Wanrong happily chatting with Qiaoqiao, he immediately greeted him with a beaming smile, "Son-in-law!"

A shiver ran down Lin Wanrong's spine. God, he thought, this appellation is truly uncomfortable. Old Dong took his hand and said, "My dear son-in-law, I hear you were invincible at the Governor's banquet. The neighbors are all envious. Now you're a celebrity in Jinling City, everyone saying you're a prodigy. This has truly brought honor to your father-in-law."

Here he was, at last finding some leisure time to share sweet whispers with Qiaoqiao, only to be interrupted by his doting father-in-law. Lin Wanrong, in his haste, pulled Qiaoqiao to descend the stairs. But as he glanced upwards, he spotted a slender figure standing by the window on the third floor, gazing out at the Xuanwu landscape, the person's silhouette vaguely familiar. The figure's clear and melodious voice arose, reciting: "I envy you, drifting on a void vessel, a ten-day tour in Qinhuai is but a spell. Waters wash Zen heart to eye's delight, mountains offer verses, yet eyebrows tight. Amidst snow, finding joy in the now, at spring's end, homeward thoughts won't allow. When, oh when, will I follow Fan Li's feat, in Five Lakes, plant myriad fish, and harvest oranges sweet?"

Whose scholarly playboy was this, flaunting such poetic flair? Lin Wanrong, preoccupied with his romantic conversation, had no mind to spare for the poet. He was about to lead his beloved further down the stairs when he saw a man standing before him, grinning, "Young Master Lin"

Lin Wanrong looked up to see Gao Qiu, a first-grade guard with a sword. He hadn't seen him for a few days since he had driven Tao Yu away. Wasn't he supposed to have returned to Xu Wei by now? Lin Wanrong greeted him with a laugh, "Brother Gao, what brings you here? Haven't you returned to Hangzhou?"

Gao Qiu chuckled, "I've been staying here in Jinling. I witnessed your grandeur at the old lady's banquet."

Lin Wanrong laughed in embarrassment, "I'm not as formidable as you think. Brother Gao, are you here for a drink? Wonderful, this round is on me."

Gao Qiu had seen him handle Tao Dongcheng and knew this man couldn't be judged by normal standards. He laughed and said, "Thank you, Young Master Lin, but I didn't come here to drink. Someone wants to meet you."

Recalling the familiar figure from before, Lin Wanrong slapped his forehead. Ah, of course! It was the Great Mr. Xu Wei. He quickly turned to see the figure at the window turning and giving a smirk. If it wasn't Xu Wei, who else could it be? Xu Wei looked at him, stroking his beard and smiling, "Little brother Lin, how have you been lately?"

The Young Prince Ning had just left, and now here came old Xu. Lin Wanrong chuckled and stepped forward to pay his respects, "Mr. Xu, I've been well these days. And how have you been? How's your wife?"

Xu Wei knew he was referring to Su Qinglian. At his age, being teased by this young man caused him to blush. He quickly responded, "We're both well, thanks to your blessing, Little brother Lin."

Lin Wanrong was thrilled. With the arrival of Xu Wei, who was a world-renowned scholar and the emperor's first favored, loyal, and heavy minister, dealing with Cheng De would not be a difficult task. This old Xu was indeed a savior. He couldn't let him slip away.

Regardless of Xu Wei's purpose for being there, Lin Wanrong knew he could be of use. He quickly took Qiaoqiao's hand, "Qiaoqiao, come quickly and greet Mr. Xu Wenchang."

"Mr. Wenchang?" Qiaoqiao was taken aback. As a well-read woman, how could she not recognize the renowned name of Wenchang? Seeing the amiable demeanor and smile on the face of the elderly man before her, she quickly bowed and said, "This humble girl, Dong Qiaoqiao, pays her respects to Mr. Wenchang."

With a grin, Lin Wanrong introduced, "Mr. Xu, this is Qiaoqiao, my wife."

Xu Wenchang drew out a long "Oh," winked at him, and said with a smile, "Miss Qiaoqiao indeed possesses a beauty as fine as jade and as charming as a flower. She pairs well with Little brother Lin."

On hearing her Big brother address her as his wife in front of others, Qiaoqiao's heart fluttered with a mixture of shyness and joy. She quickly and obediently stood by her Big brother's side.

Lin Wanrong invited Xu Wei to take a seat, then asked, "Mr. Xu, what brings you to Jinling? Have matters in Hangzhou been settled?"

"Half of them have been settled." Xu Wei looked at him, his smile carrying profound meaning.

## Chapter 199 The Drama Unfolds

Xu Wenchang's words were heavy with implications. However, Lin Wanrong acted as though he hadn't heard, chuckling as he said, "Since Mr. Xu has come to Jinling, perhaps you will stay a while longer and witness the beauty of Xuanwu and Qinhuai. I believe it will be a worthwhile trip. Ahem, the scenery of the Qinhuai River is quite enchanting, Mr. Xu, as a man of taste, I believe you won't miss it."

Xu Wenchang gave a dry laugh, replying, "This old man is pressed for time on his visit to the south. Although the sights of Qinhuai are splendid, I'm afraid I lack the leisure to enjoy them." He paused for a moment, surveying the surroundings before whispering, "To be honest with you, during my handling of the White Lotus case in Hangzhou, I found new clues related to Jinling. Thus, I hurriedly made my way here."

Lin Wanrong let out a hearty laugh, "Mr. Xu, as a pillar of the state and deeply trusted by the Emperor, it is inevitable that you are always on the move. By the way, Mr. Xu, how did you know I

was here?" He beat around the bush, tactfully avoiding any mention of the White Lotus, displaying great finesse.

Xu Wei laughed, "The reputation of 'Food for Immortals' is well-known throughout Jiangsu and Zhejiang, how could I not know? This restaurant not only has a flourishing business but also has four extraordinary couplets hanging. I have some interest in business and couplets, so how could I not pay a visit when in Jinling? As they say, seeing is believing, and today, I've seen its unique and ingenious arrangement. Here, I also happened to meet you. It seems I have some destiny with 'Food for Immortals'."

Xu Wei had traveled the world, seen many things, and the praise he gave to 'Food for Immortals' indeed lived up to its reputation. However, when he mentioned this coincidence, Lin Wanrong didn't believe it. Gao Qiu's brother, Gao Shou, served under Luo Min and shared some responsibility in protecting the restaurant. Xu Wei and Luo Min were good friends, so figuring out the real relationship between himself and 'Food for Immortals' wouldn't be hard for him. His so-called coincidence was clearly a planned rendezvous.

"Especially these four world-class couplets, even I, Wenchang, find myself incapable of matching them, it's embarrassing." Xu Wenchang looked at the four couplets regretfully, apparently genuinely helpless. Lin Wanrong was somewhat smug, probably the first person in the world to stump Xu Wenchang.

"By the way, Little brother Lin, this match for the first half of the couplet 'Smoke Trails Along The Vibrant Eaves, Mirrored In The Eyes Of Swallow. Fog Veils The Darkened House, Wherein The Objects Fade' - who came up with it? It's quite well done. The world is indeed full of talented people," said Xu Wenchang, referring to the second half of the couplet that Luo Ning had brought that day. It had already been mounted together with the first half, eliminating one of the four unmatched couplets in the world.

"Oh, that," Lin Wanrong chuckled, "It was matched by a good friend of Miss Luo Ning, the daughter of Governor Luo Min, during her time in the capital." He continued, "I heard she's no ordinary lady, a teacher at the Jinghua Academy in the capital, and also the youngest ceremonial officer at the Imperial Academy. Quite a big title."

"A friend of Miss Luo?" Xu Wei gave a long "Oh," and with a mysterious smile, said, "So it's her, that explains it."

Upon Xu Wei's arrival, Lin Wanrong, the wily merchant, wouldn't let such a golden opportunity slip by. He chuckled to Qiaoqiao and said, "Qiaoqiao, Master Xu is a highly esteemed figure that can't



be invited even with a lantern. Go and prepare the ink, brush, and paper. We must have him write a few words for our 'Food for Immortals.'"

Xu Wei's calligraphy was renowned and worth its weight in gold. Qiaoqiao needed no explanation from her big brother and excitedly went to prepare the stationery.

Xu Wei and Lin Wanrong's relationship was quite harmonious, as Lin Wanrong had acted as the matchmaker for him and Su Qinglian. Writing a few words naturally was not an issue. He laughed and said, "My young friend, are you trying to embarrass me? With your four masterful couplets ahead, how could this old man dare to perform?"

But Lin Wanrong didn't mind, he wasn't the type to let an opportunity to make money pass by.

Xu Wei hesitated for a moment, seeing that the ink and paper had been fully prepared. He reluctantly shook his head, picked up the brush, pondered for a moment, and wrote with a smile, "This place sings and dances with wine in spring, and the capital's celebrations are not yet over. The banquet is served with jade soup, and the flying cups shatter the moon, gathering in the literary tower."

Damn, this Old Xu really had talent. He could whip up a poem in the blink of an eye. Especially the last two lines, they not only praised the food but also highlighted the prosperity of the local literary scene. The lines were a stroke of genius. Others might find these lines pointless, but who was Xu Wenchang? He was the number one scholar in the world. With this poem as a topic, wouldn't the money roll in from all over the world?

"Qiaoqiao, hurry and frame this poem well, hang it in the most conspicuous position in the hall, this is our treasure, to be shared with the scholars of the world," Lin Wanrong enthusiastically called out.

Xu Wei bowed repeatedly, "I am flattered, flattered, Little brother Lin, you are overpraising."

Having successfully extorted a poem from Xu Wei, Lin Wanrong then sat down, leisurely drinking tea with him.

Xu Wei glanced at him and smiled, "Little brother Lin, a few days ago in Hangzhou, I was already convinced of your extraordinary talent. Sure enough, upon returning to Jinling, you've made a name for yourself."

"Oh? What are you referring to, Mr. Xu?" Lin Wanrong asked curiously.

Xu Wei declared, "Little brother Lin, do not be modest. A few days ago at Old Lady Luo's banquet, you single-handedly defeated Shen Banshan, the king of couplets. Each of your couplets is a classic, much talked about by the scholars in Jiangsu and Zhejiang. Didn't you know?"

"Oh, that...I've never paid much attention to the rumors about me." Lin Wanrong shyly said.

Xu Wei burst into laughter, "Little brother Lin, you really are no ordinary person, I admire you. However..."

His voice lightened, "Little brother Lin, although your reputation precedes you, you have inadvertently offended some people. Like the other day, when Young Prince Ning personally attended the birthday celebration, you contradicted him. Aren't you afraid of offending him?"

"Mr. Xu, you aren't trying to scare me, are you? Think about it, I, Lin San, am just a small servant, without power or influence, at most, I just do some small business. Who is the Young Prince? The son of a Prince, a royal relative, his vision is so far-reaching, his mind so broad, I only exchanged a few skills with his doorman, to mutually promote each other, how could he bother with me?" Lin Wanrong replied with a guffaw.

"Little brother Lin, you indeed have a broad mind. I admire you to no end," Xu Wei said, smiling at him. "However, there is one thing, have you carefully considered it?"

Seeing that Lin Wanrong was all ears, Xu Wei continued, "Little brother Lin, you have a feud with the White Lotus cult, and you detest them deeply. The Imperial Court has tried to suppress them several times, with great determination. Yet there are many twists and turns, and after several attempts, they've always returned empty-handed. Why is this? The White Lotus cult originated in Shandong, so why are they so rampant here in Jiangsu? Are there other reasons behind this? The White Lotus case in Hangzhou, although it involves a wide range, is still within a controllable scope. But why has Jiangsu lost control?"

Xu Wei seemed to be talking to himself, but he was intentionally speaking for Lin Wanrong to hear. Lin Wanrong chuckled, thinking, 'Old Xu, you're so cunning, deliberately enticing me to speak. If I don't give you something, wouldn't I be letting your goodwill go to waste?'

He frowned, and said, "When Mr. Xu puts it this way, I do find it odd. Why is there such rampant banditry in Jiangsu?"

He recounted some of the important events of that day, then continued, "On that day when Miss Xiao and I were captured by the White Lotus bandits, there were many dubious points. First, how could Young Master Tao find the White Lotus bandits so easily when the authorities had been unable to detect their tracks for many days? Second, how was he able to borrow troops from the Mounted Infantry Battalion, and why did he attack just as the bandits were retreating? Third, with so many soldiers from the Mounted Infantry Battalion surrounding them, why did the White Lotus bandits manage to disappear without a trace? These three points of suspicion have been lingering in my mind, and I still don't have a solution. Besides, when I was among the bandits, I had contact with three of their leaders. One of them was Lu Zhongping, who was arrested by Mr. Xu. The other two were of similar age to him, and one of them was their master. From the way he spoke, he must have been of extraordinary origin. There are indeed many mysteries in this, and I can't figure it out."

His words were half-hidden, half-revealed. Xu Wei laughed and said, "Little Brother Lin is an extremely clever person. How could you not understand the ins and outs of this? You just don't want to explain it. Well then, I'll be straightforward. My trip to the south this time, attending the annual meetings in Jiangsu and Zhejiang, is only surface work. The real pressing matter is..." He raised his hand, grinned slightly, then made a sharp chopping motion, saying, "to wipe out this White Lotus."

"Good, good," Lin Wanrong clapped his hands and laughed. "Mr. Xu, you think for the people. I truly admire you to the utmost."

Xu Wei spoke with stern seriousness, "In the case of Hangzhou, you've seen it yourself, Little brother Lin. This White Lotus cult is nothing more than a disorderly mob. Aside from their ability to deceive the common people with their mystical pretenses, their other skills are quite ordinary. It shouldn't be difficult to exterminate them."

"Then why is it that every year there are attempts to eradicate them, yet they always fail?" Lin Wanrong asked, his voice full of implication.

Xu Wei nodded, "That's precisely the heart of the matter you've been questioning. Our Great Hua Dynasty has countless loyal ministers and competent generals, but there are also treacherous, cunning individuals. This White Lotus menace thrives due to the covert collusion and support from these individuals with ulterior motives. Currently, we are dealing with formidable enemies invading from the north, while the White Lotus cult creates internal chaos. This is a time of internal strife and foreign threats for our dynasty. In the coming spring, the North will wage war, and if the White Lotus menace remains, it will be like a seeping sore on the body of the state, causing pain throughout. I have come to the South firstly to eradicate the White Lotus cult and secondly to sever

the claws of the dark forces that support them from behind, thereby restoring peace to our Great Hua. Together with all our citizens, we will drive away the invaders, jointly resist the barbarians, and rebuild the golden age of our heavenly empire."

His words were fervently impassioned, revealing his extraordinary oratory skills.

The national enmity and familial hardship were not yet Lin Wanrong's concern. He only wished for tranquility in Jinling, and most importantly, to keep Qiaoqiao safe from any danger.

However, the situation was becoming more intriguing. The Young Prince hadn't left, Xu Wei had arrived, and there was the old fox Luo Min too. He chuckled to himself, anticipating the drama that was about to unfold.

## Chapter 200 Cunning Defense

After a brief conversation with Xu Wei, Lin Wanrong felt at ease, understanding that this old man Xu was here specifically to eliminate the menace of the White Lotus rebels. From his words, he gathered that Xu Wei intended to eradicate not just the rebels, but also corrupt officials, the implications of which were evident.

Before leaving, Xu Wei said solemnly, "Little brother Lin, I speak today with sincerity and hold nothing back. In this region of Jiangsu, there are only a few individuals I trust, and you are one of them. If I ever face challenges in the future, I hope that you can lend me your support."

This, Lin Wanrong figured, was Xu Wei's purpose for seeking him out. As Xu Wei himself stated, the influence of the White Lotus cult in Jiangsu was rampant, and the only people he could trust were Luo Min and Lin Wanrong.

Appreciating Xu Wei's candor, Lin Wanrong stopped beating around the bush. "Mr. Xu," he said, "I have no expertise in military affairs and dare not speak freely about them. However, since you are aware of the individuals supporting these rebels, I assume you know to keep this information confidential. Furthermore, I suspect you can no longer rely on the soldiers from Jiangsu. You should think this through carefully."

Xu Wei's eyes flashed as he responded, "You are indeed astute, Little brother. As you've mentioned, for this suppression, I hold the imperial order and will mobilize the foot soldiers from Zhejiang and Shandong. Not a single soldier from Jiangsu will be moved. I am curious to see who exactly is interfering behind the scenes, colluding with the White Lotus."

Rolling his eyes at Xu Wei's feigned ignorance, Lin Wanrong scorned the old man inwardly. Everyone knew what was going on; only Xu Wei was playing the fool.

Chuckling, Xu Wei said, "I presume you understand what's going on. However, we must talk about evidence. If there's no proof of guilt, even if I hold the imperial edict, it would still be difficult to act."

These words, half spoken to himself and half as a reminder to Lin Wanrong, caused a sudden realization. Proof of guilt! That was what Xu Wei had been hinting at all along. Trust a government official to be crafty, Lin Wanrong thought, it's just as the old saying goes: women are part wolf, officials are entirely foxes. No wonder Xu Wei was so audacious, armed with the imperial edict and backed by troops from Hangzhou and Shandong. He was simply waiting for proof of someone's guilt to make his move.

As Lin Wanrong pondered, he knew that Luo Min and Cheng De were mortal enemies. Luo Min must have some evidence against Cheng De. When the time came, Lin Wanrong would employ some petty tactics and let Xu Wei storm in with his men to capture them red-handed. Let's see how they'll cunningly defend themselves then. Thinking this, Lin Wanrong was filled with satisfaction. Xu Wei seemed to see through his thoughts. As they caught each other's gaze, they both burst into laughter.

Qiaoqiao glanced at Mr. Xu, then at her big brother. She couldn't help but feel that their laughter was remarkably sly.

Following Lin Wanrong's suggestion, since Master Xu rarely came to Qinhuai, it was only right that he, as the little brother, hosted him at Miaoyu Pavilion to enjoy some music and merriment.

Lin Wanrong enjoyed a good relationship with old Xu, considering him not as a high-ranking official, but more like a bosom friend. Of course, he would never stoop to traditional rites like kowtowing and swearing brotherhood only the most tasteless would perform such rituals. Could cutting a chicken's head and drinking blood wine assure their living and dying together? Nonsense, he thought. Blind loyalty could lead to death.

True ironclad friendships were those that had been through gunfire together, that had been sent to rural areas together, that had shared the company of courtesans together. These were the bonds that couldn't be broken, much more effective than any oath of brotherhood sealed with the beheading of a chicken and drinking of blood wine. So, one might say, indulging in the delights of the Qinhuai River was the true way to form such bonds.

Upon hearing this, Xu Wei was bathed in cold sweat. He hurriedly explained he had important matters to attend to, and that they would enjoy another gathering in the future. With Gao Qiu, he quickly departed.

When Lin Wanrong emerged from the restaurant, it was already dusk. A figure rushed towards him, yelling, "Brother San, Brother San, hurry home. The Eldest Miss is looking everywhere for you."

Lin Wanrong focused his gaze on the approaching person. It was Si De. Lin Wanrong grabbed him, laughing, "What does the Eldest Miss want me for? Has the shop acquisition been completed? Are they gathering for a meal?"

"No, no..." Si De panted, "The Eldest Miss told me to tell you to be careful, something has happened."

"Something has happened? What could possibly have happened?" Lin Wanrong asked, puzzled. He wasn't the violent type nor did he peep at young ladies bathing, what could he possibly have done?

Si De fumbled out a letter from his bosom, "The Eldest Miss insisted I find you quickly and give you this letter. She said to be very careful and return home as soon as possible."

Lin Wanrong pulled out the letter, seeing four beautifully written yet hasty characters: "Wanying is here--"

Lin Wanrong was stunned for a moment, then remembered. With all the recent events, he had almost forgotten about Tao Wanying and her brother. What could that girl do to him? He hadn't done anything wrong, he was always justified wherever he went, never guilty, why would he fear a ghost knocking at his door?

Lin Wanrong folded the letter, smiling, "Go tell the Eldest Miss, I understand. Once I'm done with my tasks, I'll return home immediately."

Si De nodded, "Brother San, the Eldest Miss insists you must be careful." Lin Wanrong nodded his head and sent Si De on his way.

By now, the twilight had turned into darkness. Lin Wanrong thought of going to see Luo Min to discuss finding evidence. As he was making his way towards the Governor's Mansion, he recognized a small alley. He vaguely remembered it was the same place where Tao Dongcheng had brought a few people to attack him. He snickered, it had been a while and Gao Qiu's tactics must have taken effect by now. Little Tao was probably sitting at home, thinking about how he could enhance his size.

His smug thoughts made him burst into laughter. As he was about to walk away, a low growl rang out, "Lewd thief, prepare to meet your maker." A bright sword light, like a venomous snake spitting out its core, darted towards his chest.

Lin Wanrong sighed helplessly. Why did every female assassin have to shout something like that before attempting to kill their target?

Dodging the sword, Lin Wanrong quickly closed the distance to the assassin. His hands moved with lightning speed to grab her wrists. Laughing, he said, "Oh, isn't this Miss Tao? What happened? In a few days' time, you've turned from a heroine to an assassin?"

Tao Wanying was dressed in all black, her complexion pale and thin, her face as white as a sheet. Anger flashed in her eyes as she strained to thrust her sword forward. But Lin Wanrong's strength was far too great; he held her so firmly she couldn't move an inch.

"Lewd thief, just kill me!" Tao Wanying cried, tears glistening in her eyes.

Damn, she wanted him to kill her? That wasn't going to happen. Such a headstrong woman, why didn't she kill herself?

Pretending to be confused, Lin Wanrong asked, "Lewd thief? Miss Tao, where do these accusations come from?"

"You, you--" Tao Wanying's teeth nearly crushed in her anger. She stared at this shameless man and spat, "You lecher, you defiled me. Today I will kill you, then die to atone for the world."

A soft sound echoed as Lin Wanrong's palm shattered her sword. Tao Wanying let out a scream, only to hear Lin Wanrong bellow, "Enough!"

His voice, full of strength and fearlessness, startled Tao Wanying, who had been prepared to die. Lin Wanrong snorted, "Miss Tao, you keep calling me a lewd thief, can you explain how I have been lewd?"

How could a woman voice such a thing? Tao Wanying's eyes were bloodshot, pointing at him she accused, "You, you scoundrel, that day you knocked me unconscious, what... what did you do? Today, I will fight you to the end--"

With a look of righteous indignation, Lin Wanrong insisted, "Miss Tao, please clarify, what exactly did I do?"

"You, you violated me, you deserve a thousand cuts, I will kill you, I will kill you--" Tao Wanying began to sob, wishing she could devour his flesh and blood to feel satisfaction.

"Violated?" Lin Wanrong opened his eyes wide in innocence, "Where did this come from? Miss Tao, you must have misunderstood. That day, I knocked you unconscious and left your brother on the roadside, all with peaceful intentions for your sake. I know you and your brother hold a grudge against us due to the events at the Hangzhou Sunshine and Rain Restaurant. But how generous is the heart of our Eldest Miss? She would never stoop to your petty level, she simply wanted to let bygones be bygones. Otherwise, given your attempted robbery that day, even if I killed you on the spot, you wouldn't have any grounds to argue."

Lin Wanrong was eloquent, painting black as white, sounding very sure of himself without revealing a single flaw.

Seeing his innocent expression, as if he was not lying, Tao Wanying felt a sudden thump in her chest, a more ominous feeling rose within her. She shouted, "You're lying--"

Lin Wanrong chuckled, "I'm lying? Miss Tao, I, Lin San, swear to the heaven, if I did defile Miss Tao's purity that day, may my future son have two penises."

Outraged and embarrassed, Tao Wanying retorted, "You are shameless--"

Lin Wanrong was utterly unperturbed. He laughed heartily and said, "Miss Tao, on the day we returned from Hangzhou, there were many of us in the group, and I was always with the Eldest Miss. We were rushing on our journey. Where would I have had the leisure or inclination to violate you? Is our Eldest Miss the sort of villain who would allow such behavior? In the wild, even if you were fond of wilderness battles, I would still fear snakes, insects, rats, and ants. Besides, while I



may not have noble tastes, I'm definitely not without standards. I don't entertain just any goods. Your groundless accusation against me is a great insult to my reputation. If you do not apologize, I will go to the magistrate's office tomorrow, beat the gong to air my grievances, and sue Miss Tao Wanying, the female constable of Jinling, for defaming my innocence. I demand justice from the Magistrate."

When it came to verbal duels, no one in the world could match Lin Wanrong. Tao Wanying did not believe him, but she absolutely trusted Xiao Yuruo. Miss Xiao was not the kind of person who would tolerate servants committing atrocities.

Could it really not be him? Was it someone else after she fainted? The thought was terrifying, so much so that she couldn't hear anything else. She pointed at Lin Wanrong and stammered, "You...is what you're saying true--"

Damn, this girl was too easy to deceive. Lin Wanrong was delighted, but maintained a serious face. "Miss Tao," he said earnestly, "you see, you can't beat me in a verbal fight, let alone a physical one. Do I have any need to lie to you? Moreover, I'm someone who is naturally incapable of lying."

"You...you really didn't do it--" Tao Wanying's voice trembled as she looked at him with extreme tension. If it really wasn't him, as Lin Wanrong claimed, then the reality was even more horrifying. If she had known this, she would have preferred to let Lin Wanrong off easy. Her face drained of color, and she began to tremble slightly...