

Finest 216

Chapter 216 Encirclement

"Oh, a gust of wind blew through just now and extinguished the lamp. I was just about to light it again," Lin Wanrong said with a chuckle. Luo Ning, however, buried herself in the quilt, too embarrassed to speak.

Qiaoqiao placed the freshly-made lotus seed porridge on the table and laughed, "What an ill-timed wind, the lamp was extinguished as soon as I returned. Big brother, what were you and Sister Ning talking about?"

With a click, Lin Wanrong struck the flint, immediately illuminating the oil lamp. Luo Ning had already regained her composure, her hands gripping the edge of the quilt tightly, her face flushed like a radiant maple. She dared not look at Qiaoqiao, let alone Lin Wanrong. Naturally beautiful, her embarrassment combined with the pitiful fragility of illness made her endearing. Lin Wanrong felt his heart jump a few times. This girl, she was certainly enticing, clearly trying to seduce him.

"Sister Ning and I were just talking about some interesting things. Qiaoqiao, this porridge smells wonderful, Sister Ning should eat more," Lin Wanrong said, glancing at Luo Ning.

Qiaoqiao handed a bowl of lotus seed porridge to Luo Ning, helping her sit up. Seeing her face flushed with her eyes gently gleaming, she seemed to have recovered a great deal from her illness, prompting her to exclaim, "Sister Ning, are you feeling better?"

Luo Ning's face turned even redder, and she quietly responded, "After talking with Brother Lin for a while, I feel much better."

Luo Ning's illness was essentially psychosomatic. Once her worries were alleviated, her recovery was swift. Having regained some strength, she consumed a bowl of lotus seed porridge in one sitting. Seeing Lin Wanrong smiling at her, she couldn't help but blush again, shyly suggesting, "Brother Lin, the lotus seed porridge that Qiaoqiao made tastes incredibly good, you should try it as well."

Qiaoqiao chuckled, "If you look at her a bit longer, Big brother, I'm sure Sister Ning can eat two more bowls."

"You mischievous girl, what nonsense are you talking about?" Luo Ning, feeling somewhat guilty, couldn't help but lightly pat Qiaoqiao's arm at her words. Glancing at a rolled-up painting on the table, she asked in surprise, "Oh, where did this painting come from? Why haven't I seen it before?"

Suddenly realizing, Qiaoqiao recalled that the painting Lin Wanrong had been working on when she left was still on the table. What would happen if Luo Ning saw it? She quickly ran over, her face turning crimson, hiding the painting behind her and saying, "This is just a random sketch I made. It has nothing to do with Big brother."

Seeing this, Lin Wanrong couldn't help but chuckle inwardly. He couldn't pretend to be foolish with these two girls around. At this moment, the room was exceptionally peaceful, with two beautiful women, one his betrothed, and the other who had secretly developed feelings for him. Indeed, he was the master of this boudoir. Remembering his flirtation with Qiaoqiao in the outer chamber, he couldn't help but grin. If he had known this would happen, he would have been more upfront, instead of sneaking around.

How could Luo Ning not know what the painting was? She snuck a glance at Lin Wanrong and immediately bowed her head in extreme embarrassment.

Seeing Qiaoqiao, then Luo Ning, Lin Wanrong felt like bursting into laughter. Zhang San draws Li Si in his room, Li Si draws Wang Wu in his room, this was truly delightful.

Both girls were keeping secrets, too afraid to speak. Seeing their expressions, Lin Wanrong found it amusing, but he was also moved. Women of this era were so innocent and adorable.

After a long pause, Qiaoqiao finally lifted her head, her blush gradually fading. She was genuinely happy to see Luo Ning recovering so quickly, and she turned to Lin Wanrong, saying, "Big brother, you should visit Sister Ning more often. This way, she can recover faster."

"No, don't" Luo Ning suddenly cried out in alarm. Seeing both of them looking at her, a wave of sweetness and worry welled up inside her. She softly said, "Brother Lin is very busy, he can't spend all his time on a weak woman like me. Seeing him today is more than enough for me, I don't dare trouble him further."

Women's thoughts are hard to guess. One moment this girl was bold, and the next, she was shy. Lin Wanrong was quite confused about what she was thinking.

Luo Ning's condition had improved considerably. As the two girls chatted quietly, Lin Wanrong was left to the side. He didn't know whether he should stay or leave.

Luo Ning tightly grasped Qiaoqiao's hand and said, "Dear sister, I'm a bit scared being in this room alone. You should stay tonight, and we can have a heart-to-heart talk."

Qiaoqiao softly agreed, smiling, "Then I'll stay and accompany you, sister."

Lin Wanrong chuckled to himself. If Qiaoqiao was staying to keep Luo Ning company, should he stay to accompany Qiaoqiao? Seeing the two women with their delicate faces smiling, radiant as flowers, Lin Wanrong felt a stir in his heart. This Luo Ning, was he also supposed to 'consume' her? Damn, was he supposed to be a stallion? That would be a bit too exhausting.

Seeing it was getting late, Lin Wanrong had to bid farewell and head downstairs. Luo Ning watched him, unsure what to say. When Qiaoqiao escorted him downstairs, she suddenly giggled and said, "Big brother, I think Sister Ning is quite fond of you. You should remember to visit her often."

Seeing that there was no one around, Lin Wanrong pulled the young girl into his embrace and kissed her. He laughed, "Don't you want me to visit you often?"

"Yes!" Qiaoqiao murmured in his embrace, "Big brother, I think about you every day. If you go to the capital, I don't know how I'll go on."

Lin Wanrong sighed deeply. The ancients said that the grave of a hero lies in a woman's boudoir, and it wasn't wrong. Lin Wanrong, without great ambition and not much of a hero, found himself wanting nothing more than to hold Qiaoqiao, with no desire to go anywhere else. He patted Qiaoqiao's shoulder and said, "Darling, once I find your sister Qingxuan in the capital, we'll come back, and then I'll marry you."

Qiaoqiao softly agreed, burying her head even deeper into his chest. As he left Luo Ning's chamber, Lin Wanrong was still contemplating these matters. Suddenly, a figure rushed towards him, nearly colliding with him. Looking closely, he realized it was Luo Yuan.

"Big Brother, what are you doing here?" Upon seeing Lin Wanrong, Luo Yuan was also startled, asking hurriedly.

Lin Wanrong slapped him on the shoulder a couple of times, saying nothing. Little Brother, I have nothing to say. Your sister has charmed me, and I have failed your expectations. But you can't blame me for this. I'm quite innocent in all this.

Lin Wanrong flashed a peculiar smile, revealing his teeth. "I heard that Miss Luo is ill, so I came to visit her. Looking at your flustered manner, what's the matter that has you so worried?"

Luo Yuan anxiously replied, "Big Brother, do you know where my father is? Oh, I'm so anxious!"

Seeing the usually calm Luo Yuan in such a state, the matter couldn't be simple. Lin Wanrong asked, "What's the matter, Little Luo? Why are you looking for your father?"

Luo Yuan responded, "Big Brother, you don't know. Cheng De, covered in armor, suddenly came to visit, saying he has urgent military matters to report to my father. He also brought the soldiers from his infantry and cavalry regiments and has surrounded our residence."

"What?" Lin Wanrong was greatly surprised. Bringing troops to surround the governor's residence? Was Cheng De really planning a rebellion? Dammit, he'd only mentioned it in passing. Old Cheng, don't you rebel so prematurely.

He forced himself to calm down. Jiangsu, situated between Zhejiang, Shandong, and Anhui provinces, was not an easy place for a rebellion. Moreover, Cheng De's forces were not numerous; any rebellion would be a death wish. Could it be that Cheng De caught wind of something and knew Luo Min wasn't home, so he deliberately came to probe?

His mood settled, he patted Luo Yuan on the shoulder. "Little Luo, don't panic. Cheng De doesn't have many soldiers, he won't dare to act recklessly. Your father isn't at home today, and you are the man of the house. Go out boldly and meet him. Say what needs to be said. If you can't knock him down, at least scare him a bit."

Luo Yuan nodded. "What Big Brother says is true. I will go out and meet him. Big Brother, please hold the fort in the side hall for me."

The two men went outside. Upon reaching the front hall, they saw hundreds of soldiers standing at the entrance, torches ablaze, their armor gleaming, flags waving. Standing in front was Cheng De, a man they had met before. Clad in armor atop a horse, Cheng De's face was stern, his eyes flashing with a hint of menace.

Luo Yuan stepped forward and gave a bow. "Nephew Luo Yuan greets Uncle Cheng. I didn't know you would be visiting my humble abode, so I apologize for my lack of reception."

Cheng De replied, "There's no need for such formalities, Nephew Luo Yuan. I have urgent official business to report to Governor Luo. Is he at home?"

Luo Yuan answered, "Uncle Cheng, your timing is unfortunate. My father went out to visit a friend tonight, and I don't know when he will return. If you have military affairs to discuss, I suggest you report them at the yamen tomorrow."

Cheng De stated, "The military situation is urgent and cannot be delayed. Since Governor Luo is not here, I'll wait for him here." As soon as he finished speaking, he dismounted his horse, and his soldiers gathered behind him.

Lin Wanrong had a hunch. Although Cheng De brought his soldiers with great bravado, he seemed more bark than bite. He must have sensed something and intentionally came to test Luo Min.

Luo Yuan stepped forward. "If that's the case, Uncle Cheng, I invite you into the residence for some tea."

Cheng De waved his hand dismissively. "There's no need. I'm a soldier by profession, and I can certainly wait here for a while." As he spoke, soldiers had already brought forward a large chair. Cheng De settled himself in the chair and didn't move.

Dammit, this Cheng De was quite audacious. He certainly wouldn't dare to act this way without a master backing him. Cheng De's brazen probing indicated that both he and his master behind the scenes had sensed something. If old Luo didn't return today, it would likely make them even more suspicious.

Lin Wanrong pulled out his firearm from his robe, aimed at Cheng De, and was tempted to shoot him dead on the spot. But ultimately, he refrained. If he really killed Cheng De, Old Luo's mansion might turn into a river of blood tonight. Old Luo, when you were beating the dog, did you not think you might get bitten? As Lin Wanrong was contemplating this, suddenly a loud shout came from a distance: "Bold! Who dares to cause a commotion in front of the Governor's Mansion?"

From afar, a group of people approached. The one leading the group, dressed in a yellow robe and holding a shimmering steel blade, had an impressive air of authority. It was Gao Shou, the blade-wielding bodyguard. In the middle of the group, a man with a protruding belly walked. If it wasn't Luo Min, who else could it be?

Chapter 217 Probing

Old man Luo Min, you're finally back. Had you been any later, your residence might have been torn down. Lin Wanrong wiped a bead of sweat off his forehead and thought to himself, This old fox, always fond of mystery.

"Make way" Gao Shou, walking in front, shouted loudly, kicking aside a soldier who was obstructing him. He was an Imperial Guard, a man at the Emperor's side. His audacious attitude was well within his rights, and to stand in his way was to seek one's own death.

Though Cheng De had brought many soldiers, none dared to challenge this haughty Imperial Guard. At the sight of Gao Shou's status and demeanor, they felt a certain amount of trepidation.

Gao Shou's group, all palace guards, feared no one. With an air of forceful determination, they strode forth like dragons and tigers, quickly shielding Luo Min as they arrived at the front of the residence.

Luo Min, with his big belly, looked at Cheng De and said coldly, "Cheng De, you come armored and armed, leading troops and surrounding my residence. What do you intend?"

Seeing Luo Min had returned, Cheng De quickly rose from his chair, saluted with his fists and said, "Your Excellency, I had urgent business and was in a hurry. I forgot to remove my armor. I hope you will forgive me."

"Forgive?" Luo Min was furious and shouted, "I, the Governor of Jiangsu, was personally appointed by the Emperor and hold many responsibilities over military and political matters in Jiangsu. You, as the commander of Jiangsu, are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of War and are subject to my orders. Without permission, you cannot mobilize the troops. Now you, a subordinate, defy orders, leading troops and openly besieging my official residence. This is clear to the people and officials of Jiangsu. Can your hurriedness excuse this? Where do you place me, the officials of Jiangsu, and the Emperor?"

Luo Min's voice was loud and full of authority as he expressed his anger. As the chief official of a province, his aura was not faked. Cheng De's soldiers couldn't help but show a bit of fear in face of such grandeur.

Luo Min's words were stern and righteous, with profound implications. Lin Wanrong laughed heartily, You old fox, you really know how to play the game, pretending to be so angry to dispel Cheng De and his men's suspicions.

"Where is Gao Shou?" Luo Min shouted.

"Here!" Gao Shou stepped forward in response.

"I order you to lead my mansion's servants and confiscate all weapons from these soldiers, return the warhorses to the stables, and wait for my report to the Emperor for further action," Luo Min ordered loudly, apparently intending for Gao Shou to disarm these several hundred soldiers.

Seeing Luo Min's fiery temper, Cheng De felt somewhat reassured. He quickly saluted and said, "Please calm down, Your Excellency. I truly have urgent military matters. I ask for your understanding."

Luo Min huffed, "Rules are rules, regardless of your reasons, you cannot act so recklessly. If I do not take action today, how can I face the officials of Jiangsu? Where is my credibility? Gao Shou, why aren't you moving already?"

"At your command!" Gao Shou shouted loudly, leading his several dozen brothers into action. They were all born palace guards. As men who had served by the Emperor's side, they were truly like a group of tigers and wolves, fearing no one. Seeing their ferocious approach, Cheng De's infantry and cavalry readied their weapons for confrontation. Gao Shou and his men didn't care; they kicked those soldiers, who wailed in pain. With a signal from Cheng De, no one dared to resist any further.

The sound of weapons hitting the ground resonated. Luo Min's expression remained as dark as before, seeming truly irritated. His residence had been surrounded by his own subordinates in a chaos never before seen in any province. If this news reached his colleagues in other provinces, it would be truly embarrassing.

Cheng De covertly watched Luo Min's expression. Seeing his clenched fists and ashen face, he realized the governor was genuinely enraged this time.

Seeing Luo Min so concerned about the immediate losses, Cheng De felt somewhat relieved. Seeing his troops had dropped their weapons, he saluted Luo Min again, "My sincerest apologies, Your Excellency, the military situation today was truly urgent, which caused my lapse in judgment."

Luo Min grunted, "Cheng De, today's matter will be reported truthfully to the Ministry of War and the Emperor for their judgment. Now, what's your urgent military matter? Speak up quickly."

Clearly irritated, Luo Min didn't even invite Cheng De inside the residence and asked him to report right there. Cheng De, who had been contesting with Luo Min for years, was not bothered by this old trick. He saluted and reported, "I received information that the White Lotus followers, entrenched in Jining, will soon move, likely entering Jiangsu. The previous White Lotus disturbance greatly affected our people in Jiangsu, causing widespread discontent. As soon as I received this information, I didn't dare delay and rushed here overnight to discuss countermeasures with Your Excellency."

Luo Min's expression improved slightly, he frowned, "The White Lotus is stirring again? That's strange. It's nearly winter, every year at this time the White Lotus cultists would usually retreat and rest in their dens. Why are they venturing out this year? Cheng De, are you sure about your information?"

Cheng De nodded, "Absolutely certain, it's intelligence I gathered personally. From my estimate, they are short of food and supplies, unable to sustain through the harsh winter. That's why they plan to enter Jiangsu again, to plunder wealth and food."

Luo Min hummed in response, "In your opinion, how should we guard against this?"

Cheng De was prepared with an answer, "In my view, why don't we both report this to the court, inform them of the situation here, and request for a directive from the Ministry of War? I will then move the majority of the infantry and cavalry to the border between Shandong and Jiangsu to guard strictly, preventing the White Lotus bandits from entering Jiangsu."

Upon hearing Cheng De's suggestion, Lin Wanrong understood that it was another test. Moving Jiangsu's troops to the border of Shandong ostensibly appeared as a preventative measure against the White Lotus sect infiltrating Jiangsu, but in reality, it was a deliberate blockage of the route to eliminate the sect. If Luo Min disagreed with Cheng De's move, it would only arouse the heightened vigilance of the White Lotus sect and their hidden master, complicating the extermination effort. If Luo Min agreed, Cheng De would conveniently use this as leverage, stationing troops at the border, allowing White Lotus bandits disguised as official army to hide

amongst Cheng De's troops undetected. This was indeed a well-devised scheme, presumably Cheng De had smelled something and was continuously probing Luo Min.

Luo Min pondered for a while and said, "Your point does make some sense. Therefore, tomorrow I will submit a memorial to the court along with your report to the Ministry of War and the Emperor. We can wait for the command from the court before mobilizing troops."

Luo Min's swift agreement surprisingly stunned Cheng De. He was a man who seldom showed his emotions. He respectfully responded, "I appreciate Your Excellency's understanding. It is getting late. I will take my leave now and bring the troop deployment memorial to your mansion tomorrow."

Cheng De was quite straightforward. He came when he said he would and left just as swiftly. Leaving behind the weapons and horses scattered on the ground, he led his bare-handed troops back to their camp.

Luo Yuan approached and said, "Father, you're finally back. If you were a bit later, our home would have been torn apart by Commander Cheng."

Luo Min patted Luo Yuan's shoulder and nodded, "Little Yuan, your earlier responses to Cheng De were well thought out. I'm very pleased." Luo Yuan laughed and said, "That's all thanks to Brother Lin. He told me to say what needed to be said and to at least intimidate Commander Cheng if we couldn't beat him."

Luo Min laughed heartily, "Young Master Lin is quite right. Little Yuan, you've chosen the right person to follow."

Lin Wanrong stepped out from the courtyard and modestly saluted, "Your compliment is too generous, Governor. It was merely a minor effort on my part."

Seeing Lin Wanrong, Luo Min was taken aback and then bowed deeply, "So Young Master Lin is here. I must thank you for your excellent advice."

Damn it, you old Luo, why are you offering such a deep bow? Are you trying to shorten my life? Lin Wanrong quickly helped Luo Min up and said with a smile, "Governor Luo, what is this? Weren't you fine at noon?"

Luo Min sighed, "As a father, I have terribly neglected my duty. My daughter Ning fell so ill, and I was entirely unaware. If it weren't for your message through Gao Shou, I would still be in the dark."

"Did you come back just to see Miss Luo?" Lin Wanrong was somewhat surprised. According to Gao Shou's judgement, this old Luo was not one to abandon national affairs for family matters. What caused his change in character?

"I'm ashamed to admit," Luo Min spoke softly, "I received a letter from Mr. Wenchang, who said there was unusual movement in Cheng De's troops, which is why I rushed back overnight. I did not expect to run into him bringing troops to surround my mansion. This Cheng De is becoming more and more presumptuous."

Lin Wanrong nodded, thinking, 'So, you did not come just for your daughter, it's still all about official business. Poor Luo Ning, it seems like it's up to me, her big brother, to care for her.'

"Rest assured, Governor. I just visited Miss Luo. Her fever has subsided, and she is gradually recovering. She even ate some lotus seed porridge. Judging by her spirits, I suspect she will improve in the next couple of days," Lin Wanrong comforted the elder Luo.

Luo Min's expression dimmed as he murmured to himself, "Ning has always been strong since childhood. I have always been busy with official duties and haven't properly taken care of her these years." He sighed softly, "I'm afraid I'm going to let her down again this time."

Lin Wanrong was puzzled by his words. Luo Min offered a bitter smile and shook his head. Apologizing, he hurriedly left to visit Luo Ning.

Thinking of Luo Ning, Lin Wanrong also sighed inwardly. He already had several wives, including Qiaoqiao, Yushuang, Qingxuan, and a prospective one, Qin Xian'er. This Luo Ning, a talented woman from a prestigious family, was a well-known social activist. She had ideals and aspirations, was enthusiastic about charity work, and was not easy to please. If he were to marry her, just supporting this talented girl's endeavor would cost a significant amount of money. However, her figure was indeed superb, a match for Qingxuan. Touching her was a delight. Although she had a somewhat proud temperament, couldn't he conquer her with a man's charm? Lin Wanrong chuckled to himself. Taming Luo Ning would indeed be a challenging task.

Lost in his thoughts, he returned to the Xiao residence, only to find Xiao Feng anxiously pacing at the entrance. Upon seeing him return, Xiao Feng's face lit up. He rushed forward and cried out, "Brother Lin, something terrible has happened. They started fighting, they're fighting"

Chapter 218 The Mobilization of All Servants

"What's going on? Where did it happen? Brother Xiao, you need to stay calm, learn from me. If the sky falls, the madam and the Eldest Miss will hold it up. There's no need for us to panic," Lin Wanrong consoled Xiao Feng.

Swallowing hard, Xiao Feng said, "There was trouble at our perfume workshop. Si De led our brothers to fight back. The Eldest Miss and the Madam rushed there, leaving me to wait for you, Brother Lin."

"Trouble at the perfume workshop?" Lin Wanrong exclaimed. "Good heavens, I was only away for a day, and all this has happened? The perfume workshop has been running smoothly until now. What happened today? The perfume business is the lifeblood of the Xiao family, who dares to mess with us? I am a godfather in the underworld."

"Which gang was it? How many of them were there? What weapons did they have? Did you alert the authorities?" Lin Wanrong asked anxiously. "The Eldest Miss and the Madam are ladies. What could they possibly do there? Isn't that just adding chaos?"

He paced in agitation while Xiao Feng struggled to understand his questions. "Brother Lin, what does 'gang' mean?"

Lin Wanrong grabbed his arm and said, "Come, let's walk and talk. 'Gang' is a slang term we use on the streets to refer to which group they belong to."

Xiao Feng responded, "The Eldest Miss has already reported to the authorities. We still don't know which group they are. There are dozens of them, armed with iron rods, some even with knives..."

"Dozens of them?" Lin Wanrong paused. "This is a large scale conflict. Go quickly and gather all the male servants in the mansion. Regardless of their age, rank, or what they are doing, even if they are in their wedding chamber, get them all. Tell them that I, Brother San, have given the order to assemble within the time it takes to burn half an incense stick. Whoever doesn't make it can go straight to the accounting room to collect their wages and leave."

"Understood." Xiao Feng, unusually resolute, was about to run off when Lin Wanrong called out again, "Come back."

Xiao Feng turned back, looking at him puzzled. Lin Wanrong said, "Make sure everyone comes armed, with whatever they can find. Swords, spears, clubs, axes, halberds, anything that can be used to fight. We are not going there to play; we're going to fight. Let everyone remember, to defend the Xiao family is every man's duty."

"To defend the Xiao family is every man's duty," Xiao Feng shouted the rallying cry, then dashed off towards the inner courtyard.

Brother San's status in the Xiao family was no small matter. He was the banner of the Xiao family, somewhat like a patriarch, and a point of pride in the world of Jinling's domestic servants.

At his command, the Xiao mansion sprang into action. In less than half the time it takes to burn an incense stick, all the servants had assembled, amounting to a force over a hundred strong.

Lin Wanrong had never counted the number of servants in the Xiao family. Seeing so many now, he was indeed taken aback. Good heavens, what a bloated organization, he thought.

Most of the assembled servants were hastily dressed, obviously having been roused from their beds. They held a variety of weapons, from clubs to brooms. The household items used for heating were all present, from iron pots to cleavers and ladles, all brought without omission.

Xiao Feng, however, held a chamber pot in his hand. Lin Wanrong shivered at the sight, then gave a thumbs-up, "Brother Xiao Feng, you're truly talented."

Xiao Feng sheepishly said, "I was so focused on gathering everyone that I forgot to grab a weapon. This was all that was left." The servants erupted in laughter.

Lin Wanrong too chuckled briefly. As his gaze swept over them, silence fell. As the saying goes, 'Man is known by reputation, trees by their shadow.' Brother San's reputation in the Xiao family and among Jinling's servants was unsurpassed. His deeds had been turned into stories and circulated everywhere by storytellers. Tales of his adventures - his confrontation with the cunning Tao Dongcheng in the Sunshine and Rain Restaurant, his encounter with the illustrious Master Wenchang on the banks of Qiantang River, his couplets battle at the noble banquet, and his discourse on the passing years at the Jinling Literature Association - were all celebrated.

In the past, the Xiao family was ruled by women, and the servants couldn't even lift their heads in public for fear of ridicule. But since the arrival of Brother San, the tables had turned completely, and the servants now strutted down the street with their heads held high. Moreover, Brother San's fame was derived entirely from his external battles against the likes of the Tao family and Young Prince Ning, and his association with Xu Wei, a grand scholar renowned throughout the land. He wasn't one to curry favor with the master and mistress for his status. He was genuinely strong and amiable, a role model for the Xiao family's servants.

Now, at Brother San's call, everyone was quick to respond.

Lin Wanrong let out a hearty laugh, "I suppose everyone knows by now. Someone's causing trouble at our perfume workshop. Perfume is the foundation of our Xiao family. With perfume, the Xiao family thrives and everyone has money to spend and food to eat. Without it, we're nothing, and everyone is left destitute. So those who make trouble for the Xiao family are essentially making trouble for us all, challenging our livelihood. If someone tries to ruin our livelihood, what do we do?"

"Beat them!" came the resounding response, accompanied by the clatter of various household items. Lin Wanrong waved his hand and everyone fell silent. He shouted, "Alright, enough talk. Everyone, follow my lead. When I say fight, we all fight. We'll beat those scoundrels to a pulp. No one better hold back. I, Lin San, assure you that I won't let my brothers suffer. Anyone who dares to stab us in the back or hold us back, don't say I didn't warn you. Remember, to defend the Xiao family is every man's duty."

"To defend the Xiao family is every man's duty," over a hundred voices echoed in unison.

With a wave of his hand, Lin Wanrong, along with Xiao Feng, led the group of more than a hundred servants. Armed with a wide variety of weapons, they headed straight for the perfume workshop. Passersby on the road were startled to see the force of over a hundred servants in their green clothing and small hats marching past them. Times had indeed changed when even servants could parade on the streets.

The site of the perfume factory was personally selected by Lin Wanrong, an old residence of the Xiao family in the city, just a few lanes away, not too far from the Xiao residence. The perfume and soap factories were located in the same courtyard. When he first established the soap factory, Lin Wanrong had considered security and had even asked Si De to select about ten sturdy men from the Xiao family's servants to live in the perfume factory as a security team, in case of trouble.

When he arrived at the perfume factory with his men, he found the factory door tightly closed. Around forty or fifty men dressed in black surrounded the entrance, shouting loudly at the door and a few even tried to break in using a large piece of tree trunk.

"Damn, it's like a damn siege," Lin Wanrong thought angrily. "The gangsters are pushing me too far. Do they really think they can rob me?"

These men in black were armed with iron bars and wooden sticks, their attire unified, clearly prepared for this. The factory's main gate remained tightly closed. Lin Wanrong's heart filled with anxiety. Where were the Eldest Miss and the Madam?

"Brother San, I fear the Eldest Miss and the Madam are trapped inside. We reported this to the authorities already, but no one has shown up yet," Xiao Feng said nervously to Lin Wanrong. As a decent young man, he had some sense of justice, but it was still unnerving to face a professional team of about fifty henchmen.

Reported it to the authorities? Trusting in the police is like expecting pigs to climb trees, Lin Wanrong thought, scoffing. He turned to his men and said, "Don't be afraid. We outnumber them two to one. Two against one, they can't beat us. Tonight, anyone who performs well, I will recommend to the Eldest Miss for promotion and a raise. To defend the Xiao family is every man's duty."

"To defend the Xiao family is every man's duty!" the crowd echoed in unison.

With a wave of his hand, Lin Wanrong charged into the crowd. His skill and strength were far beyond that of these gangsters. A few punches and kicks took down several men. With their larger numbers and diverse arsenal, the Xiao family's servants followed him, their momentum intimidating. They broke the line of the men in black, who were too shocked to react. In an instant, over a hundred Xiao family servants were standing in front of the door.

This was the effect Lin Wanrong wanted. Once they took back the main gate, they stood on invincible ground. What was left was just mopping up these mongrels.

"Who are you?" a man in black shouted angrily.

"Who am I? Who the hell are you?" Lin Wanrong retorted, kicking a stone at the front door. A man in black shrieked and fell to the ground.

"Lin... Lin San... Is that you?" came the anxious voice of the Eldest Miss from inside.

"It's me," Lin Wanrong shouted back, "Are you alright, Miss? Is the Madam with you? Are you both safe?"

"We're both fine," the Eldest Miss's voice was a mix of anxiety and excitement. "But Si De was beaten by them"

"Brother San, avenge me," came Si De's painful cry from inside.

With a creak, the factory door opened, and the Eldest Miss stepped out. The Xiao family's servants let out a cheer of relief, shouting, "Miss"

Xiao Yurao gave a slight nod, saying, "Thank you all" She moved next to Lin Wanrong and whispered, "Don't go too hard on them and don't take any lives. If you get arrested, who's going to bring you food?"

Lin Wanrong chuckled, "With so many people in the Xiao family, it shouldn't be hard to find someone to bring me food. But what about you and the Madam? You risked your lives to rush into such a dangerous situation. Are you courting death?"

The Eldest Miss sighed, "At that moment, there was no time to think about all that. This factory is our lifeblood, even if it costs us our lives, we need to protect it. Otherwise, we can't face our Xiao family ancestors, and I couldn't face you. I've already reported to the authorities, but no one has shown up. Thankfully, you came back early. If you'd been any later, who knows what might have happened."

Lin Wanrong felt a pang of guilt. He had lingered a bit with Luo Ning. If not for that, he would have returned earlier and the Eldest Miss and the Madam wouldn't have had to worry.

Lin Wanrong nodded, "I'm here now, you should go inside. The situation may get violent later, it's best if you don't watch."

Xiao Yuruo gave him a reproachful look, saying softly, "Now that we've been pushed this far, it would be overly sentimental of me to stop you. Just be careful, don't act tough, and be wary of the wicked."

Seeing the Eldest Miss return to the house, Lin Wanrong let out a sigh of relief. Xiao Feng and Si De were good friends. Hearing Si De's pained scream, he gritted his teeth and said, "Brother Lin, what should we do?"

Without answering, Lin Wanrong stepped forward and sneered at the black-clad leader, "Did you do this?"

Lin Wanrong, known as the godfather of the Hung Hing gang in Jinling City, had connections with both high officials and commoners. He spoke with a smirk, exuding an impressive aura. The leader of the men in black retreated a few steps, saying, "What if I did? You dare to oppose my Black Dragon Society?"

The Black Dragon Society? Lin Wanrong's eyebrows raised slightly. Very well, very well, I hadn't even targeted you, yet you came knocking. Earlier today, your boss, Cheng De, targeted Luo Min, and now you target the Xiao family. It's obvious who's pulling the strings.

"The Black Dragon Society, eh? Is Wu Zhenghu your boss?" Lin Wanrong's smile carried a trace of darkness.

"What if he is? Who are you? Do you dare to oppose my Black Dragon Society?" The man in black, taken aback by Lin Wanrong's imposing manner, unconsciously softened his tone.

"My name is Lin San, didn't your boss tell you?" Lin Wanrong gave a chilling grin.

"Lin San, you are Lin San?" The man in black gasped in surprise.

Lin Wanrong delivered a hard slap to his face, "Is Lin San a name you can call?"

The Black Dragon Society's men collectively gasped, closing in, while the Xiao family's servants also pushed forward. The two factions faced off, neither daring to make the first move.

The man in black was stunned. This Lin San was even more arrogant than the rumors suggested.

Lin Wanrong seemed oblivious to the tense standoff between the two sides. With a smack, he delivered another slap, "Those who were beating my Xiao family brothers just now, step forward."

The man in black, having failed to dodge two slaps in a row, quickly realized that his skills were leagues behind Lin Wanrong's.

"You, you, Lin San, if you oppose our Black Dragon Society, we won't let"

"Smack" Lin Wanrong interrupted with another slap, "I'll ask again, who was bullying my Xiao family brothers?"

The Black Dragon Society members were dumbfounded. Despite being the underworld, how was this Lin San more ruthless than they were?

Si De, inside the workshop, hearing Brother Lin standing up for him, was moved to tears, "Brother Lin, it's this bastard who brought people to beat me"

"You, you the incident today wasn't initiated by us, but by your men" the man in black hurriedly said.

"Oh, tell me about it," Lin Wanrong said with a sardonic smile.

The leader of the Black Dragon Society hurriedly said, "Today, one of our brothers went missing nearby, and we were ordered to conduct a search. When we arrived here, your people wouldn't let us in, which led to a conflict. Our intention was only to conduct a search"

To enter to search? Hearing this phrase, Lin Wanrong felt a surge of anger. Dammit, of all the things to imitate, why mimic the little devils? [A derogatory term for Japanese soldiers during the Sino-Japanese War and World War II] Unable to contain his fury any longer, he picked up a stone and hurled it at the man's face.

Chapter 219 Chaos

In his blazing anger, he lashed out with a random strike that smashed into the face of the man in black. Blood spattered in all directions as the leader of the black-clad men fell to the ground, rolling in agony and crying out in pain.

Upon seeing Lin Wanrong starting the fight, Xiao Feng immediately shouted, "Brothers, strike these dogs"

Seeing their Brother San bravely initiate the fight and take down the enemy's leader with a single punch, the Xiao household servants surged with fervor. "Strike them!" Hundreds of them yelled in unison, holding various weapons and charging at the members of the Black Dragon Society.

It had been a long time since Lin Wanrong had enjoyed such a brawl. He bellowed, "Brothers, if any of these bastards dare fight back, beat them to a pulp. Make sure they remember, the Xiao family is not to be trifled with. We have our Eldest Miss and Madam supporting us. Charge, everyone!"

His words were extremely provocative, and the servants of the Xiao family were stirred to a boiling passion. As servants, they spent their days serving others and rarely had an opportunity to explode like this. This battle was bright and just, motivating everyone. Under the warm gaze of the Madam and the Eldest Miss, and under the direct leadership of Brother San, fighting such a battle would surely make them famous. They would show Jinling who dared to bully the Xiao family.

Naturally, Lin Wanrong was at the forefront. While the brothers of the Xiao family were fervent and united, their combat experience was extremely lacking. They needed Lin Wanrong to clear the path and instill confidence in them. Therefore, he targeted the ringleaders of the Black Dragon Society, picking the toughest bones to crack.

His heart was aflame with anger, showing no mercy in his blows. In a couple of moves, his opponents would either have broken hands or legs. The servants following him picked up the ready-made victories, beating the fallen enemies with delight.

In a single breath, Lin Wanrong took down a dozen tough characters from the Black Dragon Society, making him an unstoppable force. The Xiao family's momentum was even greater. Xiao Feng smashed a chamber pot over a thug's body and yelled, "Brothers, don't let these scumbags escape."

With Brother San single-handedly taking out half of the Black Dragon Society, the other rogues had no courage to stay. They turned to run.

The Xiao family servants were many and powerful. Four or five of them could take on one opponent. There was no chance for their enemies to escape. For a moment, the field was filled with howls and cries, the servants' faces glowing red with excitement as they brandished their kitchen utensils. Following Brother San even made a fight this thrilling.

Having vented his anger, Lin Wanrong saw a group of men rushing towards them from a distance. There must have been one or two hundred of them, all in black, led by none other than Wu Zhenghu of the Black Dragon Society.

"Who dares to oppose my Black Dragon Society?" Wu Zhenghu shouted loudly. His two hundred men joined him in a threatening chorus.

Damn it, even the underworld was this rampant. The city of Jinling was indeed in chaos. Despite the fight going on for so long, no one from the city government showed up, surely it was Cheng De's doing again.

With a wave of his hand, Lin Wanrong ordered the Xiao family's servants to retreat back to the courtyard. Just then, a tumultuous uproar came from behind Wu Zhenghu. A robust voice shouted loudly, "Defeat the Black Dragon Society, chop off Wu Zhenghu, brothers, charge"

Damn, this Qingshan has quite the knack for timing, Lin Wanrong thought to himself, his heart swelling with joy. Let chaos reign. If I get the chance to take down Wu Zhenghu today, it's as good as cutting off one of Cheng De's arms.

Dong Qingshan and Li Beidou were at the front, leading a group of two to three hundred brothers from Hung Hing. The two factions clashed in the alley. This was a real gang fight, a scene straight out of a movie that Lin Wanrong had always imagined. It was even more intense than he had anticipated.

Hung Hing was at the height of its power, and today they had come specifically for Wu Zhenghu. Whether it was in terms of numbers or morale, they had the upper hand. Lin Wanrong felt a thrill of satisfaction. After eliminating Wu Zhenghu, then Cheng De, who would dare to bully Qiaoqiao and Old Dong in Jinling city?

The servants of the Xiao family had already retreated back into the perfume workshop. The Eldest Miss held on to Lin Wanrong, quickly glanced at him, and whispered, "Are you alright? Are you hurt?"

Lin Wanrong chuckled, "Back when I was trapped in the midst of the White Lotus cult, killing the enemy was like picking something out of a pocket. These small-time thugs are no match for me."

The Eldest Miss giggled at him, and with a mock scold said, "You're always bragging. They may be small-time thugs, but you're a big-time thug, leading our Xiao family's servants into a fight. Wait till I see how I'll punish you."

"Hey, miss, I'm fighting for the Xiao family," Lin Wanrong laughed. "Not only that, but through handling this sudden incident, the unity of our Xiao family has also been elevated a notch. Even if I don't deserve any merit, I should at least get some recognition for my hard work."

"Brother San, Brother San!" Si De limped over, his head wrapped up like a panda, "Luckily you came just in time, or else our perfume workshop might have been destroyed by these men."

Lin Wanrong patted him on the shoulder, "Si De, you've done well, making your Brother San proud. The Eldest Miss said, when we get back, everyone's efforts will be rewarded. We won't let our brothers down."

"Thanks, Eldest Miss," the members of the Xiao family who had worked through the night were waiting for this very sentence.

Since the moment Lin San entered, Madame Xiao had been fretting, a trace of worry on her beautiful face. The Eldest Miss tugged at Lin Wanrong's sleeve, "Mother is terribly worried about the events of today. She suspects that someone's behind this. Do you have any solution?"

A solution? Wasn't I just thinking about that? Lin Wanrong approached Madame Xiao and smiled, "Madam, are you worried about tonight's incident?"

Madame Xiao glanced at him and sighed, "Lin San, thank you. If you hadn't arrived in time today, I fear our Xiao family would have been finished."

"Madam, you're being too formal. All I did was my duty," Lin Wanrong chuckled, "Yushuang is my wife, you are my mother-in-law. If someone bullies you, as a dutiful son-in-law, I should certainly step up. Besides, I own half of this workshop, so both in terms of public duty and private interest, I have no reason to evade."

"Lin San, what do you think about these people? Who are they? They are so audacious, brazenly burglarizing homes in front of everyone in Jinling city. Don't they fear the authorities?" The Madam spat out, "It's completely lawless."

Lin Wanrong spoke solemnly, "Madam, there's an old saying that it is better to struggle against a gentleman than to fight with a petty man. From my point of view, the events of today were deliberately incited by such petty men, seeking to ruin the foundation of our Xiao family."

Madam Xiao glanced at him and sighed, "How could I not know that? Recently, our Xiao family has encountered a streak of misfortunes. First, our business management faltered and we were almost taken advantage of by the Tao family. Then, Yushuang was kidnapped, and it was only after several hardships that she safely returned. Then came our trip to Hangzhou, where we faced further tribulations. Despite these adversities, we've managed to turn danger into safety each time, and even managed to rise to a higher level. Now, the reputation of our Xiao family in Jinling is at its peak, almost equivalent to the old master's time. Lin San, your contribution is paramount."

Good grief, Lin Wanrong thought, She is elevating my status without reason. Is she planning to play hard-to-get tricks again? He sneaked a glance at Madam Xiao. Her delicate brows relaxed, her face as white as jade tinged with a soft pink. When she smiled, two small dimples appeared. Her cherry lips opened and closed as she spoke, her chest gently rising and falling, exuding an indescribable charm. The mature elegance and noble grace she possessed were something a naive young girl couldn't match.

Madam is truly beautiful, Lin Wanrong was stunned for a moment. The Eldest Miss hurriedly tugged his sleeve and said, "Lin San, what's the matter? Mother is speaking to you."

"Oh, oh." Lin Wanrong regained his senses and quickly asked, "What did the Madam say?"

The Eldest Miss gave him a glance, "You, mother is speaking to you and you are not listening properly. I wonder what you are thinking."

Lin Wanrong laughed bitterly, "Miss, you can't blame me for that. When the Madam stands next to you, she looks as beautiful as your older sister. Anyone who sees you two would be stunned."

"Lin San, what are you blabbering about?" The Madam's face flushed slightly as she said with a helpless laugh, "Your eloquence has been well-noted by our staff, but you're not allowed to flatter us in the future."

Madam Xiao was educated and refined, gentle and generous. Despite being a widow for many years, she had a spotless reputation and lived a life of utmost integrity. Though she didn't interact much with Lin Wanrong, she knew of his temperament and dismissed his jests without taking them seriously.

Xiao Yuruo laughed and said, "Mother is naturally youthful and beautiful, well-known near and far. She doesn't need your flattery. I think you are afraid of her punishment and deliberately saying nice things to make amends."

Lin Wanrong laughed heartily and said, "The one who knows me best is Eldest Miss. Could Madam repeat what she said earlier?"

Madam Xiao responded with a stern expression, "Today's trouble, although caused by petty men, should also serve as a wake-up call for us. Our Xiao family has recently been too prominent, easily inviting envy. Lin San, Yuruo, you must be cautious in your actions in the future, and not give people any handles to grab."

Lin Wanrong thought to himself, If others are targeting the Xiao family, you can't avoid it by being careful. Madam Xiao sighed, "This time, thankfully Lin San arrived in time, preventing a major disaster. But I'm worried if this continues. Especially after you two go to the capital, if there are any changes in Jinling City, where will I find someone to discuss matters with?"

This was also a concern of Lin Wanrong's, and his expression became somber. Madam Xiao sighed helplessly, her voice low as she said, "Our Xiao family... we're still lacking a man who can take on responsibilities."

Madam Xiao's gaze fell on Lin Wanrong, intentionally or unintentionally. Lin Wanrong's heart skipped a beat. What did Madam mean by this? Is she considering betrothing the second miss to me? If she has something to say, why not just say it straight? What is the point of being so secretive? She should know that I'm quite sought after. If she doesn't act, I might be snatched up by someone else.

While he was immersed in these thoughts, a sound of hurried horse hooves approached from outside, stopping at the workshop door. A frantic female voice rang out from outside, "Sister Yuruo, are you inside?"

The voice seemed vaguely familiar to Lin Wanrong, who was in the throes of puzzlement, when the Eldest Miss frowned and said, "Doesn't it sound like Wanying's voice? Why is she here?"

No wonder the voice seemed familiar. Was it not the voice of Tao Wanying, the little girl? Had her emotional wounds healed? Why would she come here at this time?

Outside, two major factions were engaged in a fierce firefight. The Eldest Miss dared not carelessly open the door and instead called out gently, "Which Eldest Miss is outside?"

"Miss Yuruo, it's me, Wanying!" Tao Wanying's voice came back, filled with anxiety, "There was a delay on the way, I arrived a bit late, Miss Yuruo, please forgive me."

"It's Wanying with the people from the Yamen," the Eldest Miss declared excitedly.

Lin Wanrong merely grunted in acknowledgment. This girl surnamed Tao recovered pretty fast, already back to work at the Yamen. However, their efficiency as constables was far too low. He had already solved the problem, what did he need them for now?

The Eldest Miss ordered the door to be opened and there stood Tao Wanying, dressed in a bright red official uniform, who darted in as soon as the door was ajar.

Xiao Yuruo, seeing her all alone, queried, "Miss Wanying, why have you come alone?"

Tao Wanying gasped a few times before speaking, "Miss Yuruo, as soon as we received your message, we wanted to rush over immediately. But as we were leaving the Yamen, we received news that the Commander's troops were conducting drills up ahead, and all the intersections were blocked. We couldn't get through no matter how we tried. Thankfully, my family has a longstanding relationship with Official Cheng. He kindly allowed me to pass, but the others are still waiting in place."

Cheng De was indeed behind this, Lin Wanrong sneered in his heart. Tonight was filled with continuous disturbances. First, Cheng De surrounded the governor's mansion with troops, and then the Black Dragon Society harassed the Xiao family. This was all part of their step-by-step probing.

Though the situation seemed calm now, the bloodshed between the two factions outside was still undecided. The Eldest Miss saw that Tao Wanying had risked her own safety to come to their aid, and felt grateful. She had already forgotten the mean prank Tao Wanying and her brother Tao

Dongcheng had played on her. She took her hand and said, "Little sister Wanying, my family and I are deeply grateful for your disregard for personal safety and your help."

Tao Wanying shook her head and said, "Sister Yuruo, don't say that, I'm extremely ashamed. After the way my brother and I treated you that day, you won't hold it against me, will you?"

The Eldest Miss knew she was referring to the incident of the staged highway robbery and smiled gently, shaking her head. "It's been so long since that happened, why bring it up again? Besides, you didn't intend to hurt me then. How could I hold it against you?"

Tao Wanying's eyes reddened as she said, "Sister Yuruo, the more I think about it, the more I feel I was terribly wrong that day. I don't know what came over me to do such an evil thing. It seems like retribution is happening. After you released my brother and me that day, my older brother's behavior has been getting stranger and stranger. He's always angry at home, throwing things around. He hits and yells at the servants, and is nasty to me as well. It's like he's become a different person, and even my father can't control him. As for me, I thought I had been defiled that day"

Tears streamed down her face, and she could not continue speaking. Upon hearing these few sentences, Lin Wanrong couldn't help but grin broadly. Well, according to Tao Wanying's account, that Tao Dongcheng must certainly be impotent. Perhaps he is secretly preparing an embroidery needle, emulating the notorious Invincible East. This is precisely what should happen to evildoers. Brother Gao's move was indeed ruthless, and I truly am a genius.

Upon seeing her tears, Miss Xiao knew that Tao Wanying was lamenting her own experience. Her heart softened, and she gently said, "Little sister Wanying, don't worry. There's nothing wrong; it's all just someone's trick"

"Cough, cough" Lin Wanrong hastily coughed twice, preventing Eldest Miss Xiao from potentially spilling the beans. Suppressing a laugh, Eldest Miss Xiao shot him a playful glance. You villain, you've frightened an innocent girl into this state, aren't you proud?

Seeing the teasing in Eldest Miss Xiao's eyes, Lin Wanrong sighed inwardly, You little imp, the moment your wound healed, you've forgotten the pain. After the girl apologized twice, you're ready to sell me out. Your kindness is rather excessive.

Tao Wanying whispered to Miss Xiao, "Sister Yuruo, I had the maids and old women at home check me, and I hadn't been violated. It seems that when you left me in the roadside grove that day, I must have sustained some scratches, leading to the discomfort. Sister Yuruo, I cannot express my gratitude enough."

Lin Wanrong, blessed with excellent hearing, had already caught every word. A thrill of joy ran through him; deceiving the young girl was such a delightful task.

Eldest Miss Xiao laughed, "There's nothing to thank us for. It was all Lin San's idea. He said that 'A grievance should be addressed, not deepened.' We had no profound hatred with you, so why create a life-and-death situation? Thus, we let you go and returned straight to Jinling."

On seeing Lin San, Tao Wanying's face flushed, full of embarrassment. That day on the street, she had nearly forced Lin San to admit the crime of defilement. Now, thinking back, she felt quite uneasy. But as a woman, how could she easily admit to such a crime? Her lips moved silently for a moment before she lowered her head and murmured, "Are you... well?"

Lin Wanrong laughed heartily, responding with a significant air, "Thanks to Miss Tao, I have been quite well lately. I wonder if Miss Tao has been well these past few days?"

Biting her lip, Tao Wanying replied, "I've been well these past few days. Thank you for what happened that day, otherwise I" Her eyes reddened, and she couldn't continue.

He thought, 'I merely staged a scene, and she was scared into this state. Will she develop a fear of bridal chambers in the future? Alas, that's quite unfortunate for her future husband.'

"There's no need for formalities, Miss Tao," Lin Wanrong laughed, "Helping others is my one weakness. As long as misunderstandings are resolved, and everyone is safe, there's no need for thanks."

Tao Wanying didn't dare to continue the conversation with him. She turned to Xiao Yuruo, "Sister Yuruo, with the fight going on outside, it's better to wait a while before leaving. I'm here today, they wouldn't dare harm you."

'As if the underworld fears the police? This girl is too naive,' he thought. But Tao Yu and Cheng De were in the same faction, so Wu Zhenghu should not dare touch Tao Wanying. Eldest Miss Xiao turned to Lin Wanrong, "Lin San, what should we do about the current situation?"

Lin Wanrong saw that the forces led by Dong Qingshan and Li Beidou had engaged in a melee with the Black Dragon Society. Although the Hung Hing seemed to have the upper hand, it looked like it

wouldn't be over anytime soon. Tao Wanying brought important news: Cheng De's troops were nearby, so it would be wise to resolve the situation here quickly.

With that in mind, Lin Wanrong turned to Tao Wanying seriously, "Miss Tao, your arrival is timely. Those in black who came to cause trouble at my home today are part of the so-called Black Dragon Society. You'll be a witness for us, won't you?"

Tao Wanying nodded, "Black Dragon Society, Wu Zhenghu, I'm aware."

"Good, you know," Lin Wanrong gave a sly smile. "Eldest Miss, those who are obstructing the Black Dragon Society outside, I'm not sure which group of righteous men they are, but we must express our gratitude later."

"They are not any righteous men," Tao Wanying corrected, "They're another gang in town, Hung Hing. They are no better than the Black Dragon Society."

"Hung Hing on the same level as the Black Dragon Society? Impossible," Lin Wanrong gave her a sharp look. "Miss Tao, don't make reckless comments. Those righteous men are all brave and impressive. How could the Black Dragon Society compare? They helped us in our time of need. We must reciprocate."

The Eldest Miss glanced at him meaningfully, "So, what do you suggest we do?"

Lin Wanrong said, "The Black Dragon Society is already at a disadvantage. We have about a hundred brothers in the house, why not we rush out and assist those righteous men?"

"No--" Tao Wanying exclaimed in shock, "These two gangs are the scourge of Jinling City. If we rashly rush out and assist Hung Hing, and they harbor ill intentions, won't that be inviting the wolf into the sheep's pen?"

Inviting the wolf in? The biggest wolf was standing right in front of her, what else did she need to worry about? Lin Wanrong laughed, "Miss Tao, we can't afford to delay. If the Black Dragon Society wins, we'll be in even more danger."

Tao Wanying saw his eyes filled with amusement as he looked at her. She remembered the day she forced him to admit he had sullied her. Embarrassed, she lowered her gaze and dared not speak anymore.

The Eldest Miss frowned, "Our men are not suited for a fight. What if someone gets hurt? It'll be a huge mistake."

Lin Wanrong shook his head, "Eldest Miss, don't worry. The Black Dragon Society is already at the end of its rope, how could they dare to entangle with us? If we rush out, just to show our force and without any intent to fight, they'll surely run."

The Eldest Miss considered this. Gritting her teeth, she said, "If that's the case, Lin San, let's do as you suggest. None from the Black Dragon Society are good people. We can trust Hung Hing."

Lin Wanrong was somewhat surprised by her decisiveness. What made her so certain? Had she been involved in the underworld too?

The Eldest Miss looked at him, her cheeks reddening in shyness, "Why are you standing there dumbfounded? The leader of Hung Hing is Qiaoqiao's brother, do you think I don't know? These men must be the ones you called, hmph! You've been keeping so much from me. I'll need to interrogate you thoroughly when this is over."

This Eldest Miss wasn't foolish, Lin Wanrong realized, breaking out in a cold sweat. Hastily, he called over Xiao Feng, "Tell the brothers to get ready. We'll all rush out together and give those dogs from the Black Dragon Society a thrashing."

The men of the Xiao family had tasted the thrill of battle just moments ago, and the prospect of beating an enemy when they were down stirred their blood once again. Instantly, they all became excited.

Just as Lin Wanrong was about to lead the charge by opening the door, Tao Wanying caught hold of his sleeve.

"Miss Tao, what do you mean by this?" Lin Wanrong asked in surprise.

"In gratitude for your honesty, I ought to repay it with my humble efforts," Tao Wanying murmured. Then, with a swift movement, she darted ahead of Lin Wanrong, charging toward the outside.