

Finest 391

Chapter 391 Finding Your Sensitive Spot

With a sudden splashing noise, the soldiers who were busy setting up camp hastily dropped their tasks and assembled in formation.

Hu Bugui ran over, not caring about the mud splashing under his feet, panting as he said, "General Lin, the flare was sent up by our scouts. There must be something unusual ahead."

Xu Zhiqing looked into the distance with slightly furrowed brows, her face full of concern. "It's already dusk, and the mountains are dense with trees. We can only determine the general direction; the specific location is hard to discern. We must wait for the scouts ahead to return before we know what has happened."

This was a prudent and mature approach, and Hu Bugui nodded in agreement. Lin Wanrong sighed, "Miss Xu, your method is certainly safe, but have you considered whether the brothers who sent up the flare will be able to return alive? If they cannot return safely, even if we wait ten days and nights, we won't know what's happened ahead."

Xu Zhiqing was experienced in battle and deeply understood Lin San's point, but the current situation did not allow for the large army to advance into the mountains. After some thought, she said, "The situation in the mountains is perilous, so we cannot send a lone army in deep. In my opinion, General Hu can lead two thousand soldiers to search the mountains along the way, connecting closely from front to back. Do not rush to advance; keep contact with the main force, proceed steadily, and search for the scouts ahead."

This plan was sound, and with Hu Bugui's capability, nothing should go wrong. Lin Wanrong nodded, "Brother Hu, do as Miss Xu has said. Remember, safety first. Don't be impulsive, and stop advancing as soon as you find the scouts."

Hu Bugui accepted the command, assembled the troops, and slowly began to march up the mountain. Seeing Lin San silently staring ahead, Miss Xu glanced at him and huffed, "You can let go now, can't you?"

"Let go? Let go of what?" Lin Wanrong looked at her in surprise.

Miss Xu struggled a few times before finally freeing her small hand from his grip. Angrily, she looked at him but said nothing.

Master Lin was not embarrassed in the slightest and chuckled, "So easily freed, yet Miss Xu insisted on not moving. It must be that my palm is too warm. You don't have to thank me; I'm always eager to do good."

There was truly nothing more to say to this man. Miss Xu stood on the slope for a while, observing the terrain carefully, before turning to head down the mountain. The slope was steep, full of water, and muddy. She lifted her long skirt, tiptoeing cautiously.

Seeing her walk unevenly, with the potential to slip at any moment, Lin Wanrong rushed to her side, reaching out to assist her. Miss Xu stubbornly waved him away, "What are you doing? I don't need your help!" Distracted by speaking, she stepped into a puddle and screamed, "Ah!" One embroidered shoe sank deep into the mud. Lin Wanrong quickly grabbed her to steady her.

Miss Xu's face was pale, a cold sweat on her forehead, and one leg seemed unable to lift; it looked like she had twisted her ankle. Lin Wanrong shook his head and chuckled bitterly, 'Was there a need to avoid me like this? I'm not a flood or a wild beast. You've suffered for it now, haven't you?'

Seeing Lin San shaking his head and looking smug, Miss Xu Zhiqing's heart was filled with bitterness. She turned her head and snapped, "What are you looking at? Even if I broke my leg, I wouldn't need you to care!"

Spring rain pattered down, falling on her face, and one couldn't tell what was rain and what was tears. The temperament of this little girl was truly one of a kind. Lin Wanrong sighed helplessly, and just as he was about to assist her, Xu Zhiqing violently pushed him away. With a defiant stride, she attempted to move forward. As soon as her ankle felt pain, she could stand no longer and fell forward.

Lin Wanrong stepped up and spread his arms wide, catching her as she threw herself into his embrace. Miss Xu fell into his arms, her heart pounding, and she cried out, "Let go of me, let me go!"

"Let go of what? Haven't you caused enough fuss?" Lin Wanrong's face darkened, and he lightly patted her buttocks, "What? Are you not afraid that I will punish you with military law?"

It seemed like a revisit of old grounds, this girl's backside seemed to have grown a bit in a matter of days, its elasticity, its resilience, oh, such a flavor! It looked like "military law" would have to be applied a few more times!

Before Miss Xu could comprehend what had just happened, she realized she had been taken advantage of once again. Just as she was about to erupt in anger, she saw Lin San bend down and, with a cheerful grin, lift her legs. Xu Zhiqing's heart raced, and she shouted, "What are you doing? Put me down!"

"Military law!" Lord Lin hummed, raising his hand to slap her buttocks again, this time with added force. Upon contact, a soft, smooth, and fragrant sensation spread through his hand, but her surprising resilience pushed his wrist back slightly.

As he executed his "military law," she felt a tremor like an electric shock wherever he touched her body. Miss Xu's shame and anger mingled as tears involuntarily fell. "Shameless! Despicable! Shameless!" she struggled, shouting, her little fists raining down on his neck and shoulders.

The usually gentle and intelligent Miss Xu, when angered, was no different from any other woman, throwing punches and kicks. After a while, it seemed she had tired and her efforts began to wane.

"Go ahead, hit me; your little fists are no more forceful than a tickling itch," Lin Wanrong chuckled, carrying her body downhill. The undulating, full, and exquisite body pressed against him was as soft as fine silk, soft to the heart.

"Ah--" A sharp pain emanated from his shoulder. Lord Lin cried out in pain and turned to roar, "Are you a dog, biting me like that?"

Miss Xu's eyes were red as she looked at the clear and tidy bite mark on his neck. Her heart was bewildered, but she defiantly hummed, "You can bully me, but I can't bite you?"

'Carrying you down the mountain out of kindness, enduring your "poisonous mouth," and you still argue? There's no reasoning with women.' Lin Wanrong sneered, "If you dare to bite me, I dare to carry you. I don't believe I can't deal with you!" No sooner had he spoken, he hoisted her little behind onto his back, striding urgently down the mountain.

"If you dare to carry me, I dare to bite!" Miss Xu's temper was even more stubborn. Seeing him ignore her, she became angry, opened her small mouth, and bit down on his neck.

Both were stubborn individuals, and their back-and-bite struggle resembled a battle, with neither willing to admit defeat. Although Lord Lin occasionally felt pain in his neck, he was not one to be trifled with. During the lifting, his hands often crossed the line, pinching her raised buttocks a few times as compensation. Xu Zhiqing, being a woman, gradually weakened after bouncing on him for a while. At first, she could support herself without lying on him, but after walking a few steps and fighting for a while, she became exhausted and had to lean softly on him, panting.

Lin Wanrong only felt two soft, jade-like mounds pressing against his chest and back, indescribably smooth and tender. His heart swayed, and he deliberately lifted her body, allowing her soft breasts to rub against his back. This "chest push" was genuine, and Lord Lin sighed contentedly in his haste, thinking that even if this girl bit off his neck today, it would be worth it for her perfect figure.

Miss Xu felt his unusual movement and felt her tender breasts heat up, her body igniting with a wave of heat. In her embarrassment and anger, she opened her small mouth and bit his ear.

Lord Lin turned his head and chuckled, "Miss Xu has worked hard, biting for so long, and finally found one of my sensitive spots. Only a few of my wives know about this sensitive spot. Of course, there are more sensitive places on my body. Keep going!"

Miss Xu's face turned red at his words, and she wanted to hit him but didn't even have the strength to lift her hand. She sighed softly. It didn't matter; it wasn't the first or second time she had been bullied by him. She was getting used to it.

Her mind calmed, and she suddenly felt weak and tired. The battle with him seemed to have consumed her life's energy, and she just wanted to lie on his back quietly.

The spring rain kept falling, and the night grew darker. The soldiers' tents at the foot of the mountain were already set up, and the dim light from the ox-hide lanterns warmed the heart.

Miss Xu pressed her body close to his back, and her arms unconsciously wrapped around his neck. Seeing him wading through the mud with uneven steps, his neck full of "seeds" she had planted, and clear sweat beads in the rain, she stared blankly for a while. Her heart rose and fell like a small boat drifting on the waves, the ups and downs making her dizzy.

Why was this girl silent? Seeing the foot of the mountain in sight, Lin Wanrong sighed in relief. His clothes were soaked, and only the hot body on his back gave him some warmth. Taking advantage was good, but the damn rain kept falling, making him shiver uncontrollably.

In his busy moment, he turned his head and saw Miss Xu's bright eyes, gently staring at his face. They were close, and her fragrant breath sprayed on his face, warm and indescribably sweet. Looking at her small face, it was transparently red, and that heat wave attacked his back.

"Miss Xu, what's wrong? You're not feverish, are you?" Lin Wanrong was startled. The spring rain was chilling, and Miss Xu's body was thin. If she caught a cold from this journey, it would be terrible.

"I'm fine," Miss Xu's voice came smoothly, but with a subtle tremor that was almost undetectable. It seemed she was tired from arguing with him. She clenched her teeth and whispered, "Lin San, I want to ask you a question."

"Is it about where my next sensitive point is? Such a private question, how could I possibly answer it?" Lin Wanrong chuckled.

"You may talk nonsense all you like, I don't have the energy to bite you anymore." Looking at the rows of bite marks on his neck, Miss Xu's face became increasingly flushed. How could she explain this to Ning'er? She sighed softly and said gently, "Lin San, can you tell me, exactly how many intimate female friends do you have?"

That question was really difficult to answer, and Lord Lin lamented, "Miss Xu, that's a good question, and quite embarrassing to answer. In this world, the women I meet are either my wives or intimate friends, and I can never figure out why it's like this. Ah, having too much charm is indeed troublesome."

"Braggart." Miss Xu snorted, seemingly regaining some energy, "Don't think that all the women in the world are as easily fooled as Ning'er. Those with even a slight sense of caution won't fall for your tricks."

"That's true, that's true. A woman like Miss Xu will never fall for my tricks." Lin Wanrong laughed heartily, but then stepped into a puddle, almost causing both of them to fall.

"Be careful," Miss Xu admonished gently.

"Yes, yes, I'll be careful next time." Lord Lin was secretly annoyed, thinking: 'Just now, you were desperately refusing to let me carry you, but now you're telling me not to drop you. Damn it, touching you ten more times wouldn't make me feel better, I'll touch!'

Feeling Lin San's big hand moving again, that hot devilish palm holding her buttocks, gently kneading, Miss Xu's face flushed with embarrassment. She thought to herself that she'd get used to it, as it wasn't the first time. She pretended not to mind and said, "Lin San, I'll ask you another question, and you must answer me honestly. You have several wives, and several more intimate female friends. Do you like each of them the same way?"

How did this girl change the topic, shifting from scholarly matters to romance? Lord Lin answered seriously, "That question is really hard to answer. Since people are different, each of them gives me a different feeling. Qiaoqiao is gentle and kind, Ning'er is passionate and fiery, Eldest Miss is determined and strong, and Madam Xiao is mature—oh, I mean Second Miss. Second Miss is naïve and affectionate. I like all of them. It's like loving fish but not excluding meat. These girls all have different styles; abandoning any of them would be like cutting off my flesh. Let's all wash up together, without any complaints. Isn't that right?"

"Wash up together? Wash hands?" Miss Xu asked, puzzled. She remembered that Luo Ning had explained it to her that way.

Wash hands? Lin Wanrong was taken aback for a moment, then burst into loud laughter, "Yes, wash hands, let's all wash hands together. Unite our hearts and jointly build a beautiful big family. Alas, you must know, being a man and having to be responsible for every girl who likes me, it's such a difficult thing to do. Fortunately, I have an incredibly broad and loving heart, or I wouldn't have been able to persist until now. How much bitterness and tears have been behind this; who can I share it with?"

"What sorrows could you have?" Miss Xu scoffed lightly. "You've taken all the advantages in the world, and you're still not content? Qiaoqiao, Luo Ning, Miss Xiao from the Xiao family; any one of them is a rarity, not to mention the fortune you've gathered over several lifetimes."

Master Lin's eyes sparkled, and he grinned, panting and taking a few steps forward. Simultaneously, he moved her body up, performing a "chest push." "Miss Xu is too kind. They must have discerning eyes to recognize a hero, or why else would they all fancy me? Our love is true, even more genuine than gold and silver."

"True love?" Miss Xu sneered disdainfully. "A man with several wives, claiming to truly love each of them? How ludicrous! Stories of mutual affection between men and women in this world, aren't

they all about the devoted love between one man and one woman? Yet you alone have so many wives, still claiming true love. This is the biggest joke in the world. Can you really love them all? In my view, only a one-man, one-woman relationship, steadfast and unmoving even in the face of death, represents truly great love."

So this young lady was a supporter of monogamy, a strong advocate for women's rights. No wonder she was so confrontational. Master Lin, while caressing her raised hips, giggled, "I have a famous saying, 'Love even in death.' Whether I can love enough or not is not something you need to worry about, Miss Xu. If I can live happily with Ning'er, Qiaoqiao, and the others for a lifetime, then all is well. As for how many wives I have, hehe, a teapot paired with a dozen cups is quite natural. But a cup paired with a dozen teapots, now that would be an oddity! That's just the way it is!"

Seeing his paw brazenly touching her, Miss Xu's cheeks flushed with anger, further infuriated by his absurd analogy. She scratched his hand fiercely, "What nonsense are you talking? I can't be bothered to argue with you. I, Xu Zhiqing, will only ever love a man who is wholeheartedly devoted to me in this lifetime!"

Lin Wanrong replied with an unconvinced smile, "A beautiful wish indeed. Fortunately, I'm not in love with you, otherwise, my other wives would suffer! Ouch—" Before he could finish speaking, he felt a pain in his waist as Miss Xu's eyes filled with frost and a thin mist, her small foot kicking him in the ribs. With a light crash, Master Lin fell heavily to the ground, Miss Xu right on top of him. Mud splashed all over both their faces and arms, a most embarrassing situation.

'This girl's gone mad again!' Lin Wanrong thought to himself, lying in the puddle, sighing inwardly. Xu Zhiqing was on top of him, her chest heaving continuously, her eyes misty and enchanting like the drizzling spring rain, "Shameless wretch, I'll remember what you said today!"

"I've said a lot today; what exactly did you remember?" Master Lin asked with a wry smile.

"I'll beat you to death!" Miss Xu hammered her fists heavily into his chest, stood up, and raised her foot to kick him. Seeing Lin San lying there, lazily laughing, his body covered in mud that washed away with the rain, yet unable to conceal the clear bite mark on his neck, Miss Xu hesitated for a moment. Her small foot, heavy as a thousand pounds, couldn't come down. Raindrops adorned her face, highlighting her cheeks, crystal-clear like jade, warm and beautiful. Her shoulders trembled slightly, and she suddenly turned, stepping through the rain and dashing away. Her captivating figure swayed like willow branches on the water's edge.

Didn't this girl sprain her ankle? Watching Miss Xu's retreating figure, sprinting away like a gust of wind, Master Lin couldn't help but feel puzzled. Reflecting on her words today, he wondered which

were true and which were false. Like the blossoms brought forth by the spring rain all around him, they seemed ethereal and elusive, difficult to discern. How vexing, how very vexing!

Chapter 392 Discovery of the Fairy

When he returned to the tent, Luo Ning was tidying up and was greatly taken aback by his appearance. She hurriedly grabbed his sleeve, exclaiming, "Big brother, what happened to you?"

"Oh, I was walking too hastily and accidentally tripped, falling into a pit," Lord Lin said without batting an eye, grinning all the while. Yet in his heart, he was relishing the delightful sensation that Miss Xu's tender hips and chest had brought him.

"Fell into a pit?" Ning'er looked him up and down, obviously not quite believing it. "Big brother, you always walk with the stride of a dragon or a tiger; how could you be so careless today? Look at all this mud on you; take it off quickly so I can wash it for you."

Having a wife was indeed wonderful; there was no need to worry about anything. Lord Lin cheerfully took off his jacket, along with his underwear, throwing them away. Luo Ning's face turned red, and she scolded, "Big brother, you're so naughty! Who told you to take off so cleanly? No wonder Miss Xu said you have thick skin. Oh, what's this?"

Her gaze was drawn to Lord Lin's neck, where there was a red area, filled with neat and clean bite marks, and some faint lipstick, which could be clearly seen under the lamp.

"Oh, when I fell into the pit, a hedgehog bit me accidentally. It's no big deal; it will heal by tomorrow," Lin Wanrong hurriedly covered his neck, jokingly said.

"Oh—" Luo Ning seemed to understand, nodding her head, her delicate fingers lightly touched his forehead as she smiled and said, "So a hedgehog bit you. A hedgehog bite is indeed a rare occurrence; big brother's luck truly makes Ning'er envious. However, there's one thing that seems strange to me. When Miss Xu returned just now, she was also soaked and covered in mud. Big brother, did she fall into the water pit as well?"

This girl was clever and bright; it was impossible to deceive her. Lord Lin laughed heartily, shamelessly saying, "Perhaps, that water pit is quite big, so ten or eight people falling into it wouldn't be a problem. Ning'er, is there any hot water? It's been days since we had a mandarin duck bath; I miss it a lot. Why don't we share a bath tonight? And big brother can teach you something new, called 'oil massage'; it's very creative, I believe you'll like it."

Even though she knew he was using this as an excuse to change the subject, hearing her husband's teasing, Miss Luo could not dare to retort, even though her heart was burning. Her long, slender, white neck blushed slightly, and she scolded, "Don't talk nonsense; Miss Xu is next door, be careful she hears you and is embarrassed!"

‘Embarrassed? Embarrassed my foot! She just did a "chest push" for me, even more unrestrained than you,’ Lord Lin thought, smirking and saying no more.

He ordered a few soldiers to prepare the hot water and sent a few buckets to Miss Xu next door. Luo Ning then began to help her big brother bathe.

Spring rain on a spring night, deep within the woman's quarters with red makeup, waves of steam rising, reflecting Ning'er's jade-like cheeks, making them appear alluringly beautiful, as if adorned with the finest rouge. Lord Lin's heart felt restless, and from the bucket, he reached out to explore Miss Luo's body, finding soft, smooth touches everywhere, like caressing the finest silk.

‘My little Ning'er's skin is no worse than that of Seo Jang Geum,’ Master Lin mused, touching her with delight. His large hand moved forward, lightly pressing on her soft chest. Luo Ning let out a soft cry, her body going weak, and she shyly glanced at him. "Big brother, don't tease Ning'er like this. I can't bear it."

Seeing the seductive look in her eyes, Master Lin's heart burned with desire. He was about to pull her closer when Luo Ning dodged with a giggle. "Big brother, don't be naughty. Let's finish washing first."

The two of them played around, and although they were on the march, they found a unique joy in the moment. Luo Ning carefully washed his back and, upon seeing the deep bite marks on his neck, lovingly stroked the area and scolded, "Who did this? How could they be so cruel?"

Master Lin, relaxing in the tub, took a deep breath and playfully splashed water at Luo Ning, who squealed with delight. "Ning'er, don't you trust me? Do you think I'm the type to suffer a loss?" He wiped water droplets from his face, a mischievous smile appearing. "That hedgehog bit me, but I pulled out its spines. We're even; neither of us lost."

Luo Ning knew his character well. There was no one in the world who could get the better of him. But to leave him in such a state, that person was no simple individual.

The two were affectionate, touching and teasing each other, finally finishing the bath. Luo Ning then said sweetly, "Big brother, I'll go next door to check on Sister Zhiqing. She's frail and got caught in the rain. I hope she hasn't caught a cold."

Thinking of Xu Zhiqing's stubborn face, Lin Wanrong didn't know what to say. He thought it was a good idea to send Ning'er to check on her, lest she become upset. He nodded, then suddenly remembered something. He found a bottle of medicinal wine and handed it to Luo Ning. "Miss Xu twisted her foot. Go check on her and apply this medicine. I'll have someone make ginger soup for both of you to dispel the cold. This spring rain won't stop for days, so take care of yourselves."

Luo Ning gave him a sweet smile, hugged his neck, and kissed him on the cheek, saying shyly, "My love, you are so kind!"

Lin Wanrong chuckled, touching her soft cheek. "Of course I'm good, especially to my precious Ning'er. Tell your Sister Xu to learn from you—learn your gentleness, your passion—so she can find a good husband like me."

Luo Ning laughed coquettishly, shot him a glance, and went off, full of charm.

The situation was becoming dangerous ahead. Hu Bugui led his men forward, reporting back every half hour, but they found no sign of the enemy or the scout who had signaled with fireworks. Lin Wanrong felt uneasy, unable to sleep, as if a significant disaster awaited him.

Luo Ning had gone to Xu Zhiqing's tent, and it had been a while since she left. He strained his ears and heard the soft conversation and laughter of two women from the neighboring tent. He wondered what they were talking about, what made them so happy.

Lin Wanrong slept in a daze until midnight when he suddenly felt a soft little hand gently nudging him. A beautiful, delicate voice rang in his ear: "Wake up, wake up quickly!"

"Ning'er, you're back. Get under the covers quickly, and big brother will warm you up." Master Lin, still half-asleep, rolled over and pulled the woman into his arms. A delicate fragrance wafted into his nostrils, and her body felt soft and boneless, utterly comforting to touch.

"You're asking for death!" The woman angrily rebuked, a flash of silver light in her hand striking Lin Wanrong's buttocks.

"Ah—" Master Lin jumped out of bed as if his butt were on fire, bellowing, "Who poked my butt? Come, drag them out and beat them with a hundred heavy planks—"

The woman, dressed in white as pure as snow, glanced at him dismissively and stood silently in the tent, ignoring his threat as if she hadn't heard it at all.

"Is it you?" Recognizing the beautiful face of the woman, Master Lin's sleepiness vanished instantly. His eyes widened as he stared at her intently: "Fairy Sister, it's been a long time, and your little brother has missed you. Come, let's hug!"

Ning Yuxi lightly dodged his bear hug, her beautiful eyebrows slightly raised, casually saying, "Weren't you going to beat me with planks? What happened, changed your mind?"

"How could I?" Master Lin's face twisted into a lecherous smile: "Beating Fairy Sister with planks, how could I do such an outrageous thing? If there's beating to be done, I should do it myself. Wow, Fairy Sister, after a few days without seeing you, your white dress surpasses snow, your long hair floats, and you stand quietly in my tent. You're like a fairy come to this world, making my heart beat wildly. Truly, you are a person among immortals."

Ning Yuxi didn't know who this 'fairy' was, but from his tone, she understood that he was praising her. Accustomed to compliments, Ning the Fairy didn't take it to heart, smiling at him: "I am no immortal, but Master Lin, you're becoming more divine. With just your mouth, you can turn rivers and seas, forcing others to admit defeat."

"You flatter me," Master Lin beamed, "I'm just a common person, scraping by to feed my family. How could I compare to Fairy Sister, a person like an immortal, untouched by the mundane world? By the way, Fairy Sister, what brings you here? I left for Shandong in a hurry and thought you hadn't followed."

As he spoke, he eyed Ning Yuxi, regretting in his heart that if he had known it was her earlier, he could have pretended to be asleep and pushed her down, saving much trouble. Fairy Ning's figure was more appealing in certain areas than Miss Xu.

"I, of 'Jade Virtue Fairy Hall,' have a weighty word. Since I promised to protect you, I naturally wouldn't leave you unattended. I've followed you to Shandong, and you've been netting and collecting silver all the way, making quite a commotion," Ning Yuxi spoke slowly, seemingly unaffected by his gaze.

Seeing Ning Yuxi's calm and peaceful demeanor, Master Lin felt somewhat puzzled. What exactly was Fairy Ning? Beautiful, always dressed in white, that was all well enough, but why did she remain untouched by mud while others were soaked like drowned chickens in the rain? Not even a drop of rain seemed to have touched her. Strange!

"Turns out, Sister has been with me all along, vowing to live or die together, with a love stronger than gold, never leaving or forsaking me. Little brother is truly touched," Lin Wanrong said, tears of gratitude in his eyes, and tenderly offered, "It's cold outside; I fear it may chill you, Sister. Please come under the covers, and we can chat intimately."

Ning Yuxi's eyebrows flicked, and she snorted softly, "Stop with your smooth talk. If you don't want to die, follow me."

"Follow you? Where to?" Lin Wanrong was startled. "Yuxi, be clear with your words. I've recently been overly merry, and my mind is still foggy."

This man was shameless by nature. Ning Yuxi's eyebrows furrowed, and without another word, she grabbed his sleeve, marching him outside. It was the dead of night, and the rain was unrelenting. There was a faint light in Miss Xu's tent, suggesting that Ning'er was still talking to her.

As they exited the tent, the raindrops mixed with a biting chill hit their faces. Lin Wanrong couldn't help but shudder. Seeing Ning Yuxi walking briskly ahead without a word, he hurriedly stopped and said, "Yuxi, where are you taking me? It's all rain and mud outside, and I've just bathed and changed clothes!"

"Shut up! Don't call me Yuxi again!" Ning Yuxi's face showed faint anger, and with a flick of her slender hand, a silver needle hit his buttocks. Lin Wanrong yelped softly, thinking to himself, 'She always strikes my buttocks, it seems Fairy Sister also appreciates a beautiful backside, quite like me.'

Ning Yuxi took hold of his sleeve, her body as graceful as a swallow in the wind, gliding effortlessly, her feet untouched by the ground, moving swiftly atop the continuous line of tents in the rain.

Lin Wanrong suddenly realized a serious problem; if Ning Yuxi could enter his camp so easily, so could others. If an enemy with such martial prowess existed, he would be doomed. His protective forces were too weak, thank goodness Yuxi was on his side.

His face became solemn, "Fairy Sister Ning, tell me, in this world, how many people besides you could easily enter and leave my camp?"

Ning Yuxi smiled proudly, "In this vast world, only two or three people can treat a hundred thousand soldiers as if they were nothing. Besides me, perhaps my Junior Sister An can. Why, are you afraid someone will assassinate you?"

Hearing that only two or three people could break in, two of whom he was acquainted with, Lin Wanrong's mood lifted, and he chuckled, "I'm not afraid of being killed, I have Fairy Sister to protect me. Sister, I'm really fragile, so you must stay by my side at all times."

Ning Yuxi sighed softly and shook her head, "I really don't know why Qingxuan chose you? If she were to choose a husband, there are plenty of outstanding men in the world. Why did she pick you?"

Hearing her mention Qingxuan, Lin Wanrong was immediately filled with rage, and he sneered, "Fairy Sister, Qingxuan has much better taste than you. Among the countless men in this world, only I, Lin San, can be close to her heart. You float above the ground, high and mighty; how can you ever experience the most sincere emotions of this world?"

Speaking of Qingxuan had touched Lin San's sore spot, his face turned as black as coal, and he even lost the mood to tease Ning Yuxi.

The world had finally become quiet, and he fell silent. Fairy Ning gave a faint smile, finding it both mentally and physically taxing to match wits and strength with this fellow. But once Qingxuan was brought into play, everything was settled. Perhaps there was truth to the idea that everything in the world could counteract one another.

Fairy Ning, dressed in white as pure as snow, moved like lightning, pulling him along at a brisk pace, heading up the mountain. With this highly skilled woman at his side, he no longer had to worry about falling into the mud. It felt safer than climbing the mountain with Xu Zhiqing, but it lacked the warmth.

'If Miss Xu learns that I'm missing in the middle of the night, I wonder what she will feel. She'll probably be cheering,' Lin Wanrong shook his head and smiled. He glanced sideways at Ning Yuxi to find Fairy Ning's long hair fluttering, her delicate face shimmering with a faint glow, reflecting her cheeks in a way that was both beautiful and captivating, stirring his heart. After being quiet for a moment, he began to feel restless and sneakily reached out his hand, sliding it along her sleeve toward Ning Yuxi's pale wrist. Just as he was about to touch her, he heard a faint hum, and a flash of silver light from Fairy Ning's hand, as a silver needle swiftly flew out. Lord Lin's quick reflexes

allowed him to hastily withdraw his hand, feeling a chill as the needle returned to Fairy Ning's hand.

Lord Lin gave a sly grin, "I was just testing you, Fairy Sister. Don't mind it. With this touch, I've confirmed that Fairy Sister has incredibly quick reactions, and great martial arts skills. I feel very safe following you."

"Hush—" Speaking, Fairy Ning stopped, her delicate and fair little finger raised to her lips as she hummed softly, "Don't talk."

They stood atop the mountain, surrounded by jagged and towering rocks, the scenery both magnificent and majestic. The mountaintop was a cliff, split into two parts in the middle, with each side extending out several dozen feet. The smooth and steep cliffs on both sides were difficult to climb. Below the cliff was a bottomless abyss, and the cold wind howled, terrifying and chilling to the bone.

Lord Lin stood at the edge of the cliff, peering down. Before his sight could reach far, he felt a sensation of dizziness. He felt a chill all over, clenching his teeth, his face showing a rigid smile: "Fairy Sister, what a mood you're in, bringing me up the mountain in the dead of night. Do you want to stargaze with me?"

Fairy Ning looked at him, lightly stroking her hair and said softly, "Are you afraid?"

"Standing on the edge of a bottomless cliff, if I'm not afraid, then I'm not human, I must be a ghost," Lin Wanrong frankly admitted. "But Fairy Sister, bringing me here in the middle of the night, I'm afraid I'll be scared to death by you before being killed by the enemy."

"You're honest for once," Fairy Ning nodded and smiled. "Scared to death? Is your courage so small? When bullying Miss Xu, I saw you had courage bigger than the sky."

Fairy Ning's martial arts were exceptional, elusive like a mythical dragon. Naturally, it would be challenging to keep anything from her. Lord Lin's heart suddenly stirred with a wild thought. Since Fairy Sister knew everything, had she been secretly watching and learning when he was with Ning'er in the "rear-entry" position?

With this thought, it felt as if hundreds of ants were crawling over his heart, causing unbearable itchiness. Just as he was about to speak, he suddenly heard Fairy Ning say, "Look, what is that?"

Where Ning Yuxi pointed, was precisely the steep cliff of the opposite precipice, at a distance of several dozen feet from the top of the cliff, and a winding official road was passing not far below.

"What is it? I don't see anything!" Lin San's eyes darted around, and the distant scene was rather vague, making it difficult to discern clearly. Concentrating for a moment, he saw the smooth, steep cliff across the way, almost impossible to climb. At the place Ning Yuxi pointed to, faint glimmers of light seemed to be seeping out. The glow was extremely weak, and if not for his excellent vision and Ning Yuxi's guidance, he certainly would not have detected anything unusual there.

"A cave?" This time he saw it clearly; the place where the light shone through was indeed a small cave. The entrance was small, and the terrain was concealed, situated on the steep cliff's mid-slope, almost impossible for anyone to discover.

"The scouts you sent out; several teams, I fear, will not be found," Ning Yuxi said, her voice calm as she stood gracefully upon the rocky cliff. The gentle breeze caressed her long hair, making her seem ethereal and enchanting, like a fairy gracing the world.

"How do you know?" Lin Wanrong was astonished. "Have you seen them?"

Ning Yuxi did not answer his question but sighed lightly, "Whether I've seen them or not is not important. What's important is that they set off fireworks, alerting those behind, and completed the scout's task. They can die without regret now."

She took a small paper bag from her sleeve and tossed it to him. "Look at this, what is it?"

Unfolding the paper bag, a pungent smell hit his face. The bag contained a fine gray powder, and he didn't know what it was. Lin Wanrong grabbed a handful, feeling it carefully, and his face changed dramatically, "Gunpowder! This is gunpowder! Damn it, this is gunpowder!"

Hearing his coarse words, Ning Yuxi frowned and nodded at him, "At least you have some insight; this is indeed gunpowder. Ordinary people would not recognize it."

"Fairy Sister, where did you get this gunpowder?" Lin Wanrong's expression was solemn, his brow furrowed, and a heavy stone seemed to weigh on his heart.

Seeing his worried face, Ning Yuxi didn't answer his question but smiled, "Do you remember what I said earlier? Follow me if you don't want to die. Did I deceive you?"

"Alright, Yuxi, you were right." Lin Wanrong chuckled, "Please tell me, where did you get this gunpowder?"

Ning Yuxi snorted in annoyance and turned to leave. At such a crucial moment, that fellow would surely try to stop her, she thought. After walking a few steps without hearing anyone following, she stole a glance back, only to see Lin San standing still, smiling at her.

"Fairy Sister, you have the right to leave. However, if something happens to me, my dozens of wives and brothers will go around proclaiming that 'Jade Virtue Fairy Hall' deceives the world and breaks promises. Ah, this really isn't the result I want." Lin Wanrong said, winking.

"An insignificant person taking advantage!" Ning Yuxi secretly huffed, her expression returning to normal, calmly saying, "I arrived here only a few moments earlier than you. I found this gunpowder on the opposite cliff. It seems to be some residue, but I don't know what they want to do with the gunpowder. The bandits in the cave on the other side are very vigilant. I couldn't get close, and fearing a change, I went down the mountain to find you."

Damn it, he really owed Ning Yuxi for this. The enemy was hiding in such a concealed place that it would be difficult for ordinary people to find. The scouts sent ahead must have been silenced because they had accidentally discovered this cave.

But what were these bandits planning to do with the gunpowder? What could be done with such a small amount? Could it be for cooking wild chickens over a fire?

His gaze fell on the dimly glowing cave, and after a moment of thought, he asked, "Fairy Sister, how do you think the bandits got down into this cave?"

"What's so hard about that?" Ning Yuxi smiled faintly. "They could tie a large basket at the top of the mountain and lower it down slowly. Not only a few bandits, but even a thousand-pound boulder could be lowered that way."

Basket, cave, gunpowder. His eyes slowly moved downward, looking at the winding official road on the mountain's slope, and a light flashed in his mind, exclaiming, "Oh no, they want to blow up this cliff!"

Chapter 393 "Madam Lin"

Blast the mountain? Fairy Sister looked towards the cave in the mountainside, her eyebrows slightly furrowed: "No wonder they've hidden so well. So this is their wicked scheme. All they need to do is bury the gunpowder in the belly of the mountain, and ignite the fuse when the silver cart happens to pass by on the official road. Then there will be a landslide and the sky will change color. Let alone the silver, not many people would survive. This is indeed a brilliant move. I wonder how much gunpowder they have?"

"I'm afraid it's not a small amount!" Lin Wanrong sighed, with a bitter smile: "I made such a big noise in Jining to get the silver, yet these thieves made no sound. I've felt something was strange for a while, but I never expected that they would come up with such a wicked plan. No wonder they can keep their composure. With these few days' effort, they can get as much gunpowder as they want. What's blowing up a mountain cliff to them?"

Ning Yuxi knew that bandits were hiding on the other side, but she never thought they would be so malicious. If they hadn't discovered it in time, tens of thousands of government troops and more than three hundred thousand taels of silver would have been destroyed at once. The thought alone made her somewhat fearful.

"Fairy Sister, do you know how many people are hiding in that cave?" Lin Wanrong asked softly, looking at the cave entrance.

"They are highly vigilant, and the cave has only one entrance, so I can't investigate. But judging by the size of the entrance, if they have indeed hidden gunpowder inside, it can't conceal many people, no more than twenty or so," Ning Yuxi said calmly, her face full of confidence.

Lin Wanrong looked intently for a while; the cliff walls were steep, hard to climb. The cave was on the cliff, a natural barrier, easy to defend and hard to attack, giving off a "one man holds the pass, ten thousand are unable to advance" stance! If the government troops were to attack, success would be unlikely, and it might force the bandits into desperate actions, igniting the fuse. Even if no one was hurt, if the mountain was blown up, it would block the way forward, greatly delaying the progress of the march, something no one wanted to see.

Seeing Master Lin looking around suspiciously, Ning Yuxi gave him a puzzled glance and asked, "What are you looking for?"

"People!" Lin Wanrong said seriously: "Since they are ready and waiting for us to arrive, there should be spies nearby. Fairy Sister, have you seen any?"

Ning Yuxi laughed, "Look at you, usually so clever, how can you be so confused now? Before the government troops arrived, they naturally sent out spies to gather information. But now that tens of thousands of your soldiers have arrived at the mountain, everything is clear. All sides are surrounded by your scouts, carefully searching. Why would they come out now? Besides, it's stormy out there; hiding in the cave is both safe and comfortable. When the day breaks and your scouts retreat, they can come out to observe the situation then."

Lin Wanrong lightly clapped his hands, chuckling: "Sister Ning, your analysis is utterly thorough. If it weren't for you saving my life tonight, I would definitely think you were on the bandits' side."

"What nonsense are you talking about? Who has colluded with them?" Ning Yuxi's eyebrows raised, and a touch of pride appeared on her face. "Twenty years ago, I assisted the Emperor in defeating Prince Cheng. Is there anything in this world that my 'Jade Virtue Fairy Hall' cannot do?"

'If the Emperor doesn't put an end to your Hall with such arrogant attitudes, that would be strange indeed.' Seeing Ning Yuxi brimming with confidence, Lin Wanrong laughed and said, "Of course you're not with the bandits. You and I are a family."

Knowing Lin San's character, that he was a relentless, indestructible charlatan, Ning Yuxi chose not to argue with him. Pretending not to hear his words, she snorted and said, "The dawn is only two hours away, and the army will have to take this official road. You seem so relaxed now. Have you come up with a plan to defeat the enemy?"

Lin Wanrong chuckled, "I haven't thought of anything yet, but being able to detect the enemy's plot in advance is a reason to be happy. The rest, we'll talk about it when we get back."

Hearing his tone, as if he was about to descend the mountain, Ning Yuxi glanced once more at the opposite cave, flicked her long sleeves, and turned to leave. Lin Wanrong grabbed her sleeve, "Hey, Fairy Sister, it's dark and blind out here, aren't you leaving me alone here? To play and then cast aside, you are too heartless!"

Ning Yuxi's expression turned angry, and she snapped, "What are you talking nonsense about? What 'play and cast aside'?"

"Is it 'play and not cast aside' then?" Gripping her sleeve tightly and refusing to let go, Lin San grinned mischievously and drew out a long "oh": "Sister, you are indeed sentimental and righteous."

Your little brother is so grateful, I'm almost bursting with it. Since we went up the mountain together, naturally we should come down together!"

How could anyone be so shameless? Was this even a human being? Ning Yuxi sighed helplessly, pointed to the distant lights, and calmly said, "It's not that I won't escort you down the mountain, but that your troops are coming for you."

Following her direction, Lin Wanrong saw the distant torches, numerous in number, and heard the clashing of armor and swords. His spirits lifted, "It's Hu Bugui's two thousand soldiers. Old Hu is really slow; I'm already at the top of the mountain, and he's still on the mountainside!"

He already got the information, so he didn't understand the lack of it in others. With Hu Bugui's pace, to search through the hills in the wind and rain, arriving here at this late hour was already incredibly fast. If it weren't for Ning Yuxi's assistance, Lin San might not have reached the summit until the next evening.

Seeing Lin Wanrong striding down the mountain, Hu Bugui was momentarily stunned. He hurried to greet him, his face full of admiration, "The General is indeed extraordinary, able to arrive first even when starting late. I admire you greatly. Oh, who is this?" Looking at Ning Yuxi, standing beside General Lin without speaking or smiling, Hu Bugui's eyes widened in astonishment. Was there really such a beautiful woman in the world? Old Hu felt he had wasted his life.

Lin Wanrong, smiling, put his arm around Hu Bugui's shoulder and whispered, "Who is she? Ah, I can't go into too much detail. Anyway, Brother Hu, you know in your heart. I'm really not that romantic."

"Understood, understood." Hu Bugui couldn't help but chuckle, giving Lin Wanrong a thumbs up. General Lin was too extraordinary; every woman by his side was incredibly beautiful, each one more attractive than the next, making others green with envy.

"Brother Hu, have you found those brothers responsible for setting off the fireworks?" Lin Wanrong laughed for a while, then remembered what had been on his mind and asked.

Hu Bugui shook his head: "Of the more than ten scout teams we sent out, except for two that have not reported back, all the others have returned. Along the way, we discovered some traces they left behind. But those marks were faint and intermittent, as if someone had deliberately erased them. We looked for a long time, but lost their trail here."

Ning Yuxi nodded, her expression indifferent: "That must be it. Those two scout teams must have searched up to this point and been silenced, their bodies probably nowhere to be found."

"Madam, is this really true?" Hu Bugui's face showed horror. "Does that mean the bandits are nearby?"

"What did you say? What 'Madam'?" Ning Yuxi's soft and beautiful face suddenly turned ice-cold, like a gorgeous peony covered in a blizzard, sending chills down one's spine.

"You're General Lin's wife, aren't you?" Hu Bugui, a straightforward man, said carelessly: "Every woman with General Lin ends up as Madam Lin, don't they?"

"Damn!" Ning Yuxi lightly scolded, a flash of cold light in her hand, a small sword sliding out of her sleeve, swiftly aiming for Hu Bugui's neck.

Although Hu Bugui was a brave general on the battlefield, compared to Ning, he was far outmatched. Seeing this "Madam Lin" unsheathing her sword without a word, he had not even finished blinking when the sharp blade was already in front of him, as fast as lightning.

Lin Wanrong was prepared and quickly stepped in front of Hu Bugui, embracing his shoulder and laughing: "Misunderstanding, misunderstanding. Fairy Sister and I are just ordinary friends, nothing more than sharing meals and stargazing, really very pure. Brother Hu, don't overthink it."

Seeing Lin San block Hu Bugui, Ning Yuxi had no choice but to divert her sword's edge. The long sword brushed past his ear with a whoosh, and she snorted in annoyance, falling silent.

Hu Bugui nodded, thinking that this Madam Lin had quite a fiery temper. He wondered how General Lin managed to tolerate it, suggesting that he should find a gentle wife like Miss Luo.

Lin Wanrong explained to Hu Bugui what he had seen earlier. Hu Bugui was startled and exclaimed: "Blowing up the mountain? Damn, have these bastards gone mad? General, I volunteer to take three hundred suicide troops to seize that cave."

Lin Wanrong shook his head, pacing back and forth: "Brother Hu, we must not act rashly. The terrain there is treacherous. If they hold the cave's entrance, an attack by even tens of thousands would be ineffective. Moreover, the cave is filled with a massive amount of gunpowder. A slight

mishap could lead to utter ruin. We must discuss this carefully; it requires a strategy, not brute force."

These words were true. If the cave were really filled with gunpowder, not just ten thousand, but a hundred thousand soldiers would be finished. Hu Bugui reluctantly said: "If we don't attack, do we just let them light the gunpowder and blow up the mountain? In that case, wouldn't all the silver be stuck here, unable to move? The imperial court's two hundred thousand troops fighting against the northern nomads are all waiting for this silver."

Pressure, that's what it was! Lin Wanrong's brows were tightly furrowed as he slowly treaded the mountainside, fine rain soaking his clothes. He was so preoccupied that he didn't even notice his feet stepping into the muddy water.

Hu Bugui, who had followed Lin Wanrong for quite some time, knew that he was thinking of a plan, so he could only anxiously watch him, not daring to make a sound. Ning Yuxi looked as usual, her eyes slightly moving, and her gaze fell on Lin Wanrong as well.

After a long consideration, Lin Wanrong suddenly let out a long sigh and then burst into hearty laughter. "Brother Hu, do you think I'm a hero?"

Where did that come from? Old Hu was momentarily stunned before quickly reacting, loudly responding, "If General Lin is not a hero, who in the world could deserve such a title?"

Lin Wanrong chuckled and slowly shook his head, "Brother Hu, I'm not as noble as you think. I'm just an ordinary person, equally afraid of death, but I've been just a bit luckier."

Hu Bugui stared at him blankly, not understanding the meaning of General Lin's words. Lin Wanrong sighed heavily, helplessly saying, "But this time, I'm afraid I really have to play the hero!" He glanced at Ning Yuxi, who hummed softly, "Don't look to me for help; I've already said that my duty is only to protect your safety. I won't be involved in anything else."

"As long as you promise that, it will be enough," Lin Wanrong nodded, whispering a few instructions into Hu Bugui's ear. Hu Bugui turned pale with shock: "How can this be possible? General, let me go instead!"

Lin Wanrong's face revealed a bitter smile as he patted Hu Bugui's shoulder, "Brother Hu, do you think I want to play this damned hero? Nonsense! I have more than a dozen beautiful and spirited

wives waiting for me at home. Who would want to lose their life here? But if I don't go, who will? Brother Hu, are you sure you can quickly and safely deal with those bandits in the cave?"

Hu Bugui hesitated for a moment, then shook his head reluctantly, "I'm not sure, but do you?"

"I certainly don't," General Lin said with a mysterious smile, his eyes glancing at Ning Yuxi. He lowered his voice, "But someone can. If I go, she has to go. Sigh, being a pair of fated lovers with this sister, I'll just have to endure it."

Hu Bugui seemed to understand but not quite, and Lin Wanrong didn't explain further. He ordered, "Brother Hu, later you'll take the men to the cliff top and make some noise to scare those bandits. Come back down at the fourth watch. Then hide in secret, monitoring the situation in that cave. If they send out scouts to the cliff, report to me immediately. There can be no mistakes."

Hu Bugui still wanted to say something, but Lin Wanrong coldly humphed, his face darkening, "Brother Hu, this is not the time for sentimentality. If you really care for me, take a few blows for me on the battlefield next time. Now, you must follow the military order."

Helplessly, Hu Bugui accepted the command and left. Lin Wanrong stood quietly, silent, lost in thought.

Ning Yuxi walked to his side, glanced at him, and said reflectively, "Sometimes I think you're very clever, but at other times, you seem both foolish and dull."

"Do I have a choice?" Lin Wanrong looked at her with a bitter smile, "If I send someone else, Fairy Sister, would you be willing to take this risk?"

Ning Yuxi firmly shook her head, "I have principles. What I promise, I will do. But I can't expand them indefinitely. The safety of your subordinates is not within my responsibility."

"That settles it then," Lin Wanrong helplessly spread his hands. "After all is said and done, I still have to go myself, right? Fairy Sister, you wouldn't really abandon me, would you? If that's the case, I definitely won't go. Damn it, my life is precious. I have to make money, chase women, and teach Ning'er how to play with flowers. There are so many meaningful things I haven't done yet, how can I waste my life here?"

His words were full of passion, but suddenly he realized that everything around him had fallen silent. Turning his head, he saw Fairy Ning standing quietly, her eyes flickering, as if thinking about something.

Master Lin was momentarily stunned, and a sudden anxiety welled up in his heart. His eyes widened as he asked, "Fairy Sister, you're not serious, are you? You've made a promise! Isn't your Hall known for its integrity and keeping its word?"

Ning Yuxi closed her eyes in contemplation, seemingly ignoring his words. After waiting a while with no response, Master Lin became furious. "Damn it, playing with me? Women can be relied upon as much as pigs can climb trees! Sending me to die, do you think I'm a fool?" He shouted, "Cancel the order! Old Hu, prepare the fastest horse for me. I have to leave! You're in charge here!"

Ning Yuxi let out a chuckle, covering her lips, "How can you be so shameless to speak such words?"

Her laughter transformed her demeanor from cold to warm, like a hundred flowers blooming in winter. Master Lin sighed in relief and said gratefully, "I knew you wouldn't abandon me. Fairy Sister, you are too kind. I can't repay you, so how about ten hugs? I promise I won't take advantage of you!"

Fairy Ning suppressed her laughter and glared at him, "It serves you right to be frightened! Otherwise, next time you'll be assigning me to pluck stars and gather the moon!"

"That would require your ability, Sister," Master Lin said, a flattering smile on his face, "Honestly, sending you to deal with these little thieves makes me feel guilty. Once this is settled, I'll treat you to something good, like a hundred strings of candied hawthorns at three pennies a string."

This man's change of face was faster than a child's. Ning Fairy was at a loss and could only shake her head and smile, "Save your candied hawthorns, do you take me for a three-year-old? Let me make it clear, I don't know the situation inside the cave. Whether it can be resolved smoothly, I can't say now. I can only do my best. You wait here for my news!"

"Okay, okay," Master Lin nodded eagerly like a pecking chicken, then suddenly widened his eyes, his face full of disbelief, "What did you say? Wait here for you? Fairy Sister, you don't want me to go?"

"What would you do there?" The fairy spoke indifferently, "You'd be in the way, less useful than a monkey's help."

Moved, Master Lin tightly grasped Fairy Ning's sleeve, wishing he could pledge himself to her. "Sister, you've worked hard. I'll make you some excellent crucian carp soup. When you return triumphantly, I'll feed it to you myself. But you must be careful; there are guards at the cave entrance, surely armed with crossbows. It would be best to find someone to distract them first. However, with Fairy Sister's superb skills, this small matter will surely not trouble you, and you will undoubtedly succeed with ease. I will wait here for your good news."

"Is that so?" Fairy Ning's eyes twinkled, "Now that you mention it, I do recall that cooperation is indeed needed. It seems that only you—"

"Old Hu, prepare the fastest horse for me. I have to leave—"

"They're coming out, they're coming out." Old Hu came running, panting, and cried out, "General Lin, the bandits' scout is coming out." No sooner had the words fallen than two figures flashed before his eyes, and "Madam Lin" and General Lin vanished like the wind, disappearing from sight.

Chapter 394 Can Even a Fairy Die?

The horizon was tinged with the pale white of a fish's belly, indicating that it was nearly the fifth watch of the night. The wind and rain had gradually lessened, leaving the surroundings open and eerily quiet. The two reached the peak and hid behind a rock, peering across.

A dark shadow emerged from the cave opposite, occasionally poking its head out to look around, appearing and disappearing as if observing the situation outside. The surrounding soldiers had already received the order from their leader and loudly made disturbances, pretending to see nothing, cursing and retreating, leaving behind a few capable scouts hiding in the shadows, carefully watching every move across.

The person on the other side looked around for a while, seeing that there was no one guarding nearby, waited a bit longer, then suddenly threw a rock. It smashed into the cliff on their side with a dull thud, followed by echoes that resounded through the empty valley, lingering for a long time.

"Cunning creature!" Lin Wanrong muttered under his breath, turning away and stretching his back, catching a glimpse of the Fairy Ning beside him, hiding behind the rock, her eyes fixed on the front.

She leaned against the rock, her body slightly tilted forward, buttocks slightly raised, her full and voluptuous body forming a wonderful curve that looked quite tempting.

Lin Wanrong laughed softly, lowering his voice, "Sister, can you let me go? I really have urgent matters to attend to, my wives at home are waiting for me to warm the bed!"

Ning Yuxi tightened her hand, locking his wrist pulse, and smiled at him, "It was you who said you would assist me, I never threatened you. Besides, this is to help you. If you're not here, who knows if something might happen while I'm distracted? Don't blame me for not warning you in advance."

Having been with him for so long, even the Fairy has become so cunning, learning to threaten him. Lin Wanrong was secretly annoyed. He had finally gotten Fairy Ning to take action, but this Fairy was no easy target; she had seen through his tricks and was pulling him in to take the fall. Unlucky, truly unlucky.

His anger inside was hard to quell, and he was stuck by the Fairy's hold on his pulse, so he twisted his hand and moved it towards Ning Yuxi's soft, slender hand holding his wrist. "Ouch!" Lin Wanrong yelped, his wrist stopped in mid-air, unable to move. Ning Yuxi's lips curled in amusement, adding strength to her hold, and no matter how he struggled, he couldn't break free.

'Damn, met my nemesis,' Lin Wanrong sighed, "It's not fair, so unfair. Why is it that you can touch my hand, but I'm not allowed to touch yours? Is there no justice in this world?"

'Speak to me of justice? With a face as thick-skinned as yours, I've never seen anyone talk about justice,' the Fairy smiled lightly, turning her face away and ignoring him.

Across, the spy deliberately made a noise and waited a long time without any response, thinking that the government troops had indeed retreated. He finally relaxed, slowly sticking his head out from the hidden cave. The man was not tall, his face waxen yellow, thin, and his eyes rolled around nimbly; clearly, he wasn't an honest person.

"Fairy Sister, what do you see?" Lin Wanrong moved closer to her, gazing at her white and tender earlobes. Feeling a tickle in his heart, he couldn't help but blow a breath of fairy energy at her crystalline ear, asking with a teasing smile.

Ning Yuxi's body trembled, and a few strands of red cloud appeared on her cheeks. She turned her head and glared at him angrily, "What are you doing? Stay away from me!"

"Fairy Sister, it's not that I want to stay away from you, but you are too enthusiastic, making it impossible for me to leave you," Lin Wanrong wagged his wrist, which she had tightly gripped, and his face habitually broke into a sly smile. This Fairy Ning might be high and lofty, but her body's sensitive spots were no different from ordinary women, and Master Lin had a sure touch.

Ning Yuxi hummed in disdain and turned her eyes to the cliff opposite. The man there put his finger in his mouth and blew a whistle. In no time, a few more heads appeared behind him, holding strong crossbows, laden with short arrows and flashing a pale blue glint, signaling that they were poisoned.

"These thieves are as cunning and malicious as you," Fairy Ning's eyebrows furrowed slightly, as if recalling something.

Lin Wanrong chuckled, knowing she was referring to the time when they first met in the forest, and he had shot a poison needle at her. It was indeed treacherous, but it was a matter of life and death, and she couldn't blame him. With an innocent expression, he said, "You flatter me, I merely did what I had to. Compared to you, Fairy Sister, I am far from a match."

The several men on the other side surveyed the surroundings, chattering and then forming a line, holding their poisoned crossbows and standing guard at the mouth of the cave, looking around vigilantly. The thin man who came out earlier tested the rock a few times, nodded to the others, and then with a forceful leap, like a frog diving into the water, clung to the precipice.

Lin Wanrong's eyes widened, "Is this guy trying to die, jumping like that?" But the world is full of strange things. Rather than falling as Lin Wanrong had expected, the man's hands and feet clung to the vertical steep rock like suction cups, unmoving. From a distance, he looked like a gray gecko. After a brief pause, he raised both hands, kicked his legs, and clung to the protruding crevices of the rock, climbing straight up. His movements were nimble and agile, like a flexible monkey.

"What kind of skill is this?" Master Lin was dumbfounded, thinking that with such ability, this person would undoubtedly be invincible at a rock-climbing competition.

Ning Yuxi, having seen much of the world, wasn't particularly surprised. Seeing Master Lin's astonishment, she smiled and said, "The world is vast and full of wonders. There are scholars and beauties, and also people who are cunning thieves or masters of special skills. There's no need to be surprised."

"Not surprised, not surprised! Whether it's a gecko or a spider, one shot, and they're all done for. I wonder how many of these 'geckos' they have?" Lin Wanrong rubbed his cheek, wiped the cold sweat from his forehead, and said, still in shock.

Ning Yuxi, with a smile at the corner of her mouth, shook her head and said, "Don't worry, this skill is very difficult to master. Having one such person is already rare in the world. Not everyone can be proficient in it. He is probably going up to set a forward position, then lowering a rope basket to assist his accomplices below."

As they were speaking, the "gecko" had already climbed to the top of the cliff, turned over with a roll, and quickly got up.

Lin Wanrong finally saw clearly that the man had a rope tied around his waist, presumably as a safety belt. If he lost his footing and fell, he could still be pulled back. Lin Wanrong was dumbfounded to think that bungee jumping existed in this era and no longer revered the mysterious wall-climbing technique as he once had.

After reaching the top of the cliff, the man searched around and found nothing unusual. He slowly untied the rope from his waist and secured one end tightly to a large tree. Standing on the edge of the cliff, he mimicked three bird calls. A large basket was handed up from the cave below, with a thick rope tied to it and a person crouching inside.

As Fairy Ning had predicted, only one of the bandits was skilled in the wall-climbing technique; the others all relied on him to pull them up. Just as Lin Wanrong was about to praise Fairy Ning, he heard her shout softly, "Go—"

As her voice fell, he felt a gentle, jade-like hand take his, and Fairy Ning pulled Lin Wanrong up. They leaped into the air, soaring like graceful swallows, shooting straight forward.

Between the two cliffs was a complete void, several yards apart, with the wind howling and causing their clothes to flap loudly. Fairy Ning's feet did not touch the ground as she seemed to fly, covering the distance to the edge of the cliff in just two steps.

Master Lin looked down and was instantly terrified, seeing only emptiness beneath his feet, and below that, a bottomless abyss. Wisps of smoke slowly rose, and he was walking on air, as if he had become an immortal riding clouds and mists.

"Ah—" Master Lin was about to cry out, but a gentle hand covered his mouth, and Fairy Ning's voice whispered in his ear, "Do not make a sound, lest we alert the bandits."

Looking to his side, Fairy Ning was gliding, her white robe floating, her feet above the clouds, leaping across several yards to reach the opposite cliff top.

‘By heaven, I’m flying, I’m flying.’ Even after setting foot on solid ground, Lin Wanrong was still shaken, repeatedly patting his chest, ‘Even this is possible? A fairy truly is a fairy!’

With movements as swift and gentle as a breeze, Fairy Ning passed by without anyone noticing. The thin "wall-climbing" man, facing away from them and about to talk to his accomplice below, suddenly felt a slight wind and found himself unable to move or speak, as if turned to stone.

‘What is happening?’ He thought in horror, only to hear a voice near him laughing, "Brother, your pose is quite unique, full of power and beauty!"

A healthy-looking young man was grinning in front of him, beside a breathtakingly beautiful woman, elegant and pure, like a celestial fairy who had descended to earth, captivating the eye.

Seeing the man's gaze fixed on Fairy Ning, unmoving as if entranced, Lin Wanrong grew angry, and with a fierce kick to his behind, the man toppled over like a stone.

"Fairy Sister, are you alright?" Master Lin asked with concern. Fairy Ning frowned, not understanding the meaning of his words. Lin Wanrong chuckled, "I saw this fellow staring at you, and I was worried he might harm you."

Fairy Ning snorted. ‘This man looked at me only once, and you were worried he would harm me. But you stare at me so shamelessly every day, is that supposed to be to my benefit?’

"Time is of the essence; we must not arouse the suspicions of the thieves below. Hurry and question him," Ning Yuxi said, smiling helplessly.

The bandit on the ground didn't have time to speak before Lin Wanrong kicked him, saying, "Boy, I warn you, only I'm allowed to peek at this Fairy Sister, not you. If you dare to look again, I'll gouge out your eyes, cut off your little thing, and throw you into the Yangtze River to feed the turtles."

Ning Yuxi's face turned red with embarrassment and anger, and she wished she could kick Lin San off the cliff. What was he thinking at a time like this?

The man on the ground groaned in pain, unable to speak. Ning Yuxi twisted her delicate hands in the air and swiftly swept them across the man's neck. A bright silver needle appeared in her palm.

"You... who are you?" The man on the ground finally managed to speak, though his voice was hoarse and weak, his face contorted with pain. If it were not for Lin Wanrong's keen hearing, he might not have understood what was said.

Lin Wanrong looked at the Fairy Sister in confusion, and Ning Yuxi said indifferently, "I have severed his tendons and veins with this needle. If he screams, it will cause excruciating pain. I don't think he's brave enough to try that. Go ahead and question him."

The man had not expected such a beautiful and ethereal woman to have such skills. His face turned pale, and large beads of sweat rolled down his face.

'The Fairy Sister has this trick? It's terrifying! I've been pricked by her countless times. If she's in a bad mood one day, won't I die without realizing it?' Lin Wanrong felt his courage falter and his body go numb. He stopped looking at the fairy's beautiful face and smiled at the man on the ground, kindly saying, "You will find out who I am soon enough. But don't be afraid, this Fairy Sister is just trying to scare you. This needle won't tear your heart or lungs; it will only cause bleeding from your orifices. It's not serious; you'll recover after lying down for seventy or eighty years."

The man was rendered speechless. Lin Wanrong laughed heartily and said kindly, "Heaven rewards the kind-hearted. Just answer my questions honestly, and I won't trouble you. I'm always very kind; you can see that, can't you?"

The man quickly nodded, flattering, "I can see, I can see. You have a full forehead and kind eyes, surely a future filled with many wives and children, and great wealth and honor." His voice was soft, clearly fearful of Ning Yuxi's needle.

Lin Wanrong chuckled and pointed at the man's head, "You are quite clever to figure out my identity so quickly. Indeed, I am Lin San. The government troops below the mountain are under my command. What's your name?"

"So you are the renowned Master Lin, known as 'the fish leaping through the dragon's gate.' I am Pan Shao, and I have long admired your name." The man was astonished at hearing Lin's name.

"Young Master Pan?" Lin Wanrong's face darkened, and he angrily said, "In front of me, Brother San, you dare to call yourself Young Master Pa? Fairy Sister, give him another needle. Paralyze him for life, so he's impotent and crippled!"

Pan Shao shuddered and quickly waved his hands, saying, "Please forgive me, Master Lin. I didn't mean to take advantage of you. My surname is Pan, and I come from the capital. I've been the youngest one wandering around for many years, so my parents named me 'Shao,' hence the name Pan Shao!"

That name seemed to match up well with some of the important figures in the area. Lin Wanrong nodded and said, "Tell me, Pan Shao, since you were born in the capital, why did you run up to these mountains instead of staying in the city?"

"Hunting, I came here for hunting!" Pan Shao quickly answered, his eyes shifting.

"Fairy Sister, give him an injection!" Master Lin commanded without blinking.

Ning Yuxi raised her slender hand, and dozens of silver needles appeared, poised to strike. The sight even caused Lin Wanrong to break into a cold sweat. Pan Shao hastily cried out, "Spare me, my lord, spare me. I'll tell you everything. We came here to wait for your lordship's army to arrive."

"Wait for my army to arrive for what? Are you planning to enlist?" Lin Wanrong said, his smile not reaching his eyes.

"No, no," Pan Shao hesitated for a moment, but seeing Master Lin's expression change, he hurriedly continued, "Someone instructed us to obstruct you here, to prevent you from advancing."

"Obstruct us? Who sent you?" Master Lin raised an eyebrow and snorted.

Pan Shao quickly answered, "I don't know exactly. I was chosen because of my climbing skills, brought here, and promised a substantial reward to work for them."

"Really?" Master Lin smirked coldly, "Hasn't the master of your royal mansion taught you how to lie?"

Hearing this, Pan Shao's face changed dramatically, and cold sweat dripped down his forehead. "Don't talk nonsense; I have nothing to do with Prince Cheng—"

Lin Wanrong burst into laughter, "The Prince truly has great vision, with thousands of followers and countless extraordinary talents, even finding someone like you who's proficient in gecko skill. I can't help but admire him. Tell me, Pan Shao, how much gunpowder have you buried down there?"

"How... how do you know?" Pan Shao exclaimed, feeling a sharp pain in his internal organs as he raised his voice. Remembering the fairy's words, he quickly lowered it.

"What can't I do when I can accomplish feats like fish leaping over a dragon's gate?" Lin Wanrong boastfully bragged, his face full of confidence as if everything was under his control. "Pan Shao, you're not being honest. It seems I'll have to give you an injection."

Fearing Master Lin's mythical abilities, Pan Shao didn't dare say more and kowtowed on the ground, "No! Please give me one more chance, my lord. I'll report everything truthfully and will no longer hide anything!"

Lin Wanrong snorted, "Then tell me, how much gunpowder is buried in the belly of this mountain?"

Pan Shao, sweating profusely, whispered, "The whole cave below is filled with gunpowder. I didn't calculate it in detail. But they said it's enough to flatten two large mountains."

Flatten two large mountains? Lin Wanrong inhaled sharply. 'Damn it, these bastards are really going all out. How many people are in that cave? Who's in charge?' he demanded coldly.

Pan Shao answered obediently, "The cave is packed with gunpowder, guarded by over twenty people. There are also four or five Dongyin people, led by someone called Tsugumi—"

"Tsugumi?" Lin Wanrong was taken aback, "A Dongyin person? Tsugumi from the Imperial Palace?"

Seeing Lord Lin's face filled with anger, Pan Shao nodded cautiously, "He's a man from the Dongyin, fierce and arrogant. The idea to rob the silver in Shandong was theirs. After you retrieved the silver, Tsugumi Takeshita took the initiative to bury explosives here to annihilate you, Lord Lin. That's all I know. They commanded me to come up and observe the situation."

‘This Tsugumi Takeshita must have harbored resentment against me since I beat him up last time in court. He was so determined to get rid of me. Damn it, on my Great Hua's land, there's no room for you Dongyin to run rampant.’ Lin Wanrong's anger was ablaze as he said fiercely, "Do you have a way to call them all up here?"

Pan Shao quickly shook his head, "My Lord, they only kept me around because I can climb cliffs, and I'm of some use. That Dongyin person, Tsugumi, is extremely cunning, hiding in the cave, never to leave until the last moment."

"Pan Shao, what are you doing? Why haven't you pulled the rope?" An impatient voice came from below the cliff. These bandits had sent scouts in pairs, and Pan Shao, having a unique skill, naturally had to lead.

Lin Wanrong snorted and nodded at Pan Shao, who slowly pulled the rope. After a while, a cursing voice came up, and as soon as a head appeared, it was brushed away by Fairy Ning. The man softly hummed and then fell silent. Pan Shao watched, secretly terrified, deeply grateful he had not struggled earlier.

"What do we do now?" Ning Yuxi looked at Lin Wanrong and asked softly.

Lin Wanrong was silent for a moment, then suddenly grabbed her hand, "Fairy Sister, are you really sure?"

Ning Yuxi shook her head faintly, "There's no certainty, only doing our best."

"Good, I'll be waiting for the good news of your victory." Lin Wanrong said with great righteousness, about to turn and leave, but was stopped by Fairy Ning, who snorted, "Are you thinking of running away? Have you forgotten what I said earlier?"

"Run away? No!" Lord Lin laughed, "I'm just going to prepare a victory banquet for you. I'm a very passionate person, as you well know."

"No need." The fairy smiled, "This is for you, so you can't escape. The bandits in the cave are very cunning and alert. If I go down alone, it'll be hard to make a move with all eyes on me. Someone must distract them."

"Let me distract them? Sister, are you joking? I'm only good at attracting young girls." Lord Lin took a few steps back, ready to flee at any sign of trouble.

Ning Yuxi found it amusing and ignored him, turning to Pan Shao with a cold look, "Tell them below that nothing unusual has been found and prepare to return immediately!"

After Pan Shao passed the message, Ning Yuxi waved her delicate hand, knocking him unconscious, then said to Lin Wanrong, "Quickly, put on his clothes."

Realizing her plan, Lin Wanrong understood. It seemed that Sister Ning had figured it all out. Seeing Ning Yuxi standing motionless, Lord Lin couldn't help but curiously ask, "Sister, why aren't you changing into their clothes?"

Ning Yuxi snorted, "How can I wear such filthy garments? You the spitting image of them, so it's just right for you to wear them."

'A spitting image? Praising me? Go on and praise me!' Official Lin chuckled dryly, noticing Pan Shao's clothes were in a terrible mess. He quickly stripped off another person's grey long robe and put it on himself, randomly fastening a few buttons. Just as Fairy Ning had said, with his temperament, he looked more like a bandit than the bandits themselves. When playing the part of a bandit, he didn't need any makeup at all.

Ning Yuxi looked him up and down, suddenly covered her lips with a laugh, and softly scolded, "A base bandit indeed!"

With her laugh, like a hundred flowers blooming in the cold winter, the world itself seemed to lose its color. Lin Wanrong's heart pounded, he muttered, "A bandit is a bandit, one who robs both wealth and beauty."

"What are you standing there for?" Ning Yuxi snapped at him, annoyance in her eyes, as she rummaged around in the carrying basket, "Hurry up and get in!"

Official Lin's heart raced, his legs trembled. Damn it, this was no game. Who knew how much dynamite was hidden below?

"Sister, can you hug me a hundred times? I'm a little scared, I need your encouragement!" Official Lin's voice quivered.

"What are you scared of?! I'm with you!" Ning Yuxi raised an eyebrow, standing straight up. Her white shirt and skirt danced with the brisk mountain wind, making her look like a celestial being.

Driven by lust, Official Lin climbed into the basket, but as soon as he was inside, he realized something was wrong. Ouch, he was deceived! This was a bewitching art, even more potent than Sister An!

"Get out, I want to get out! I have acrophobia!" Lin Wanrong cried out urgently, but it was already too late. With a graceful movement, Fairy Ning let out the rope, and the basket fell halfway. Official Lin's flailing magical claws touched Fairy Sister's hand for a moment before dropping down.

He'd lost, he'd lost, despair filled Master Lin. All day long, flirting with young girls, but today he was played by a young girl. He hadn't even touched her hand and now was sent down to risk his life. He'd failed Qingxuan, Ning'er, Eldest Miss, and Madam Xiao!

The rope rustled as it was slowly let down. Below him was a bottomless abyss; the shaking of the basket made him dizzy and frantic. Chilled by the piercing wind, his body felt cold as if he could hear the call of Death.

The rope was released a bit, and the cave was in sight. Heads peered out looking upward from time to time. Lin Wanrong quickly pulled his collar up, covering half his face.

"Zhang Laosi, why are you covering your face?" A bandit below shouted.

Startled, Lin Wanrong quickly feigned a voice, "None of your damn business! Damn it, I'm up here in this heavy wind and rain, freezing, while you're down there cozying up with a woman—"

A burst of strange laughter from the men reached him, and the few hidden sentries by the cave dispersed. Master Lin collapsed in the basket, wiping the cold sweat from his brow. Looking up, the first thing he saw was a pair of exquisitely embroidered shoes. Fairy Ning, dressed in white, as light as a swallow, one hand pulling the rope, one foot on the rope, was descending with Lin Wanrong.

A human flying through the air! Lin Wanrong stared blankly, entranced. Ning Yuxi smiled faintly, suddenly waving her hand at him and pointing downwards. Lin Wanrong turned his head to see that the basket had already touched the cave wall. A head poked out from the cave and demanded, "Password?!"

Lin Wanrong chuckled, whispering, "The white day's clothes are exhausted, and the Yellow Dragon returns to the stream. Do you understand, you?"

Before the sentinel could even speak, his eyes bulged, and he froze on the spot. Lin Wanrong flipped out of the basket, carefully catching his breath. "Granny, that scared me to death." A faint fragrance wafted by, and Fairy Ning, graceful as a falling leaf, landed beside him, humming lightly, "What did you just recite?"

"A great poem. If you like it, I have even more spectacular ones!" Lin Wanrong whispered in her ear, smiling. The two were standing side by side at the cave entrance, and Master Lin, though among bandits, was not afraid of her raging.

Knowing how low and despicable he was, Fairy Ning ignored him and took a silver needle from the sentry's body, looking inward. Although the cave entrance was small, facing it was a stone chamber, several yards wide, with four or five bandits drinking and feasting, seemingly very merry. Looking further into the quiet and eerie depths, Master Lin wondered how deep the cave was, but burying tens of thousands of pounds of explosives was certainly no problem. He also wondered how the bandits had found this place.

"Fairy Sister, I've done my part. Now it's up to you; I'll just wait here for you," Lin Wanrong whispered in her ear.

Fairy Ning glanced at him, softly chuckling, "It's fine if you stay here, but I fear the bandits will come charging out—"

"Oh, it's warmer inside. I'll just stick close to Sister. We'll be inseparable in life and death, unwaveringly faithful," Master Lin hastily corrected himself.

Fairy Ning smiled and nodded, "Then follow me, and remember, don't try to play the hero!"

'You wish! At a time like this, it's good enough if I don't play the fool.' Lin Wanrong nodded solemnly and followed Fairy Ning, sneaking in behind her.

Inside the stone chamber, four or five bandits were drinking merrily when one with a keener sense of alertness suddenly exclaimed, "Eh, where are Li Dakui and Zhang Lao San? They haven't come in yet."

"Who cares? Let them drink the northwest wind," another bandit replied, laughing as he bit into a chicken leg.

With a flick of her wrist, Fairy Ning sent several silver needles flying like they had eyes, swiftly and silently striking their targets. The room suddenly fell silent, creating a stark contrast with the earlier commotion. This unexpected stillness made Fairy Ning frown, apparently taken aback by the situation.

Lin Wanrong was secretly terrified by the sudden change. If the people inside were alerted, and thousands of pounds of explosives went off together, he and Fairy Sister would be going to the underworld together. His face turned pale, and he quickly held his breath. Fairy Ning also stood still, the silence in the room becoming so profound that both could hear their own heartbeats.

After a moment of silence with no signs of movement, Lin Wanrong finally exhaled, glancing at Fairy Ning beside him. Her eyes were calm, her face showing no tension, but her small hand was tightly gripping several silver needles.

"Don't be afraid, I'm here!" Lin Wanrong reassured her, patting her fragrant shoulder with a righteous look.

'Could you say something like that?' Fairy Ning suppressed a laugh and glanced at him. The two carefully crept forward, and as they passed through the stone chamber, they reached a corner. The sounds of conversation drifted from within, and the two lightly stepped and hid behind the rock, staring inside. Both were momentarily dumbstruck.

The cave ahead unexpectedly branched into two paths, and from the entrance of each branch, bags were piled up tightly, stacked five or six people high, reaching the top of the cave and extending inwards. It was impossible to see how far it went, and there were several guards on each branch path. The bags were dyed black, with powder seeping out, and the entire cave was filled with a pungent odor.

Lin Wanrong turned his back, his heart pounding violently, and he couldn't help but take a deep breath. Gunpowder, all this was gunpowder. If ignited, it would be more than enough to level the entire mountain in the relatively confined space of the cave, let alone the tens of thousands of troops and horses. It was too damn terrifying!

Though Fairy Ning was worldly and remained calm in chaos, seeing this mountain of gunpowder, she couldn't help but be greatly alarmed. Her voice slightly trembling, she grabbed Lin San's sleeve and asked, "What shall we do now?"

"Don't be afraid, I'm here!" Lin Wanrong gritted his teeth.

This time, Fairy Ning was extremely calm. In this intense fear, only Lin San's seemingly joking words could give her some strength.

"What's that?" Fairy Ning suddenly grabbed him, pointing to something standing at the fork in the road.

It looked like a thick lever, supported in the middle by a wooden frame, of equal length on both sides. On the right was fixed a small iron bucket filled with tung oil, with a thick wick coming out of it. On the left was a lead block tied to a small oil lamp, not yet lit. Below on the ground was a paper box, filled with gunpowder, connected to the pile of gunpowder. There was also a large hole at the bottom of the box, leading straight to the ground, with gunpowder flowing in, as if it connected to the outside.

"It's a timer," Lin Wanrong glanced and quickly understood the principle, "When they retreat, they just need to fill the iron bucket on the right with tung oil, light the wick, and then light the oil lamp on the left. When the tung oil on the right burns out, the balance tilts to the left, and the fire from the oil lamp falls into the pile of gunpowder, igniting it."

Listening to his explanation, Fairy Ning understood. To create such a sophisticated timer, these bandits must have been preparing for a long time. Lin Wanrong frowned and said, "But what does the large hole under the powder box lead to? Could there be another detonation device outside?"

It was already too late to go outside and examine it further. Fairy Ning's brow furrowed slightly, and she gently shushed, "Don't talk, someone is coming!"

On both sides of the mountain-like piles of gunpowder, small paths just big enough for one person to pass through had been cleared. The sound of footsteps rustled from within. The guards on both sides immediately perked up, gathering their strength.

"Baka!" Several shouts in the Dongyin language came, and a few men dressed in samurai attire, with samurai swords at their waists, came out from the cave. They pointed at the Great Hua guards at the entrance and roared furiously.

Lin Wanrong furrowed his brow as he failed to find the figure of Tsugumi Takeshita. Turning to Fairy Ning beside him, he asked, "What did they say?"

Ning Yuxi, fluent in the Dongyin language, gritted her teeth and hummed, "The Dongyin people are too bullying, daring to insult our Great Hua compatriots like this!"

Since those words could make the usually gentle Fairy Ning so angry, it was enough to guess what the Dongyin people had said. Lin Wanrong's fingers crackled with anger. "These servile and kneeling people dare to call themselves citizens of Great Hua?! Sister Ning, let's first kill these Dongyin people, and then deal with these traitors!"

This idea was in perfect agreement with Fairy Ning. Seizing the opportunity, Ning Yuxi's fingers slightly spread as she sent several silver needles whistling away, while simultaneously leaping forward, brandishing her long sword, and charging towards the several men in front. Lin Wanrong also did not show weakness, picking up a plain blade he found outside and chopping it down on the neck of a Dongyin soldier in front of him. The Dongyin soldier didn't even have time to cry out before his hot blood splashed up, staining half of the wall red.

With Fairy Ning's skill, several silver needles were deadly. The Dongyin people had roused her killing intent, and she showed no mercy. Several Dongyin people who were in the front were killed in the blink of an eye. The two of them working together, in one concerted effort, swiftly eliminated more than ten men in the passageway, cleanly and quietly, without making a sound.

After all the enemies had fallen, Fairy Ning looked at the two branching paths ahead and whispered, "Which way shall we go?"

"Let's split up." Lin Wanrong held the plain blade, blood dripping down its tip, his body exuding an air of murder.

Ning Yuxi shook her head firmly, "No! We must stay together!"

"So, Sister cares for me so deeply; I am truly grateful!" Lin Wanrong said, grinning.

Ning Yuxi ignored his teasing, speaking seriously, "I think you understand my point. If we split up, I will not be able to protect you fully. My duty is to ensure your safety, and I will not accept any other decision. If necessary, I will forcibly take you away from here. Choose for yourself!"

At this critical moment, Fairy Sister had indeed become stubborn. Lin Wanrong looked left and right, only to nod in agreement. All in all, they had already eliminated seventeen or eighteen bandits along the way. The remaining three, including Tsugumi Takeshita, must be hiding in one of these two paths.

The two of them ventured deeper into the left tunnel, and after a moment, they saw a dimly lit stone chamber ahead. Ning Yuxi nodded to him, and they looked inside. On the table inside the room lay a samurai sword, and beside it, two warriors were sound asleep.

Lin Wanrong felt relieved, and Ning Yuxi quickly moved forward, dealing with the two Japanese warriors in the blink of an eye. Lin Wanrong turned their bodies to look at their faces but found no sign of Tsugumi Takeshita. Counting the numbers, he was the only one missing.

"Tsugumi is on the other side!" Lin Wanrong grunted, and Fairy Ning, without uttering a word, grabbed him and ran quickly outside. Just as they reached the fork in the road, a loud shout came, "Baka, enemies have broken in, they're dead!"

"Not good!" Lin Wanrong was alarmed, leaping out. He recognized that voice; it was Tsugumi Takeshita.

Fairy Ning's movements were faster than his. In an instant, she moved, flitting past him like a wisp of light smoke, her traces almost invisible to the eye. As they reached the fork in the road, they encountered a Dongyin Samurai with a fierce and hideous face, looking at the body of his comrade, his eyes blood-red: "For the honor of Dongyin Samurais, for the great His Majesty the Emperor, I will die with you. Lin San, you are as good as dead!"

He laughed wildly towards the sky and ignited the oil lamp in his hand, ready to throw it at the box of gunpowder.

Ning Yuxi was still several steps away and it was too late to intervene. At the critical moment, Fairy Ning let out a delicate shout and a short sword flew from her sleeve with the speed of lightning, striking the Samurai's chest like a bolt of thunder. The force of the blow was extraordinary, and the short sword penetrated his chest without losing momentum, carrying his body several feet before finally stopping at the mouth of the cave. The Samurai, Tsugumi Takeshita, spat out a mouthful of blood, half of his body hanging out of the cave, motionless.

With the strike of the sword, the oil lamp fell from Tsugumi Takeshita's hand, but Fairy Ning was as quick as lightning. Before the lamp could hit the ground, her delicate hand reached out and caught the ignited lamp, mere feet from the pile of gunpowder on the ground. The entire process was extraordinarily perilous; had Fairy Ning not been highly skilled, the mountains would have become their grave that day.

Lin Wanrong arrived in haste, just in time to see Ning Yuxi catch the oil lamp, the flames almost touching the gunpowder. He collapsed to the ground, gasping for breath, and it was a long while before he opened his eyes. Fairy Ning held the oil lamp and gently extinguished the flame. She smiled at him and handed the lamp to him.

At that moment, the two were close. Fairy Ning's crystalline nose was tinged with sweat, and a faint fragrance lingered. Considering her skills, she was normally unaffected by heat or cold, yet now she had perspired. Her duty as a guard was indeed performed to perfection.

Master Lin stood up, seeming to regain some strength and cheerfulness. He laughed, "Thank you, Sister, for saving my life. Shall we hug? Don't worry; this time, it's entirely pure, truly pure!"

Ning Yuxi chuckled, "You're the type who forgets the pain once the wound has healed, acting like this again."

A faint blush spread across her incomparably beautiful face as sweat beaded her small, exquisite nose. This was an unprecedented sight in Ning Yuxi, making her appear less unapproachable and more like an ordinary woman, giving an incredibly genuine and intimate feeling.

Lin Wanrong sighed, "Fairy Sister, I like you best at times like this, close to people's hearts, warm to the touch."

Ning Yuxi's face changed instantly, her eyes briefly closing. When they reopened, her calm, rippleless demeanor was restored.

She has turned back into a fairy! Lin Wanrong saw this with some disappointment, shaking his head with a bitter smile. Recalling Tsugumi Takeshita's treachery, he glanced around, only to find that the body at the cave's entrance had vanished without a trace.

"Tsugumi is gone!" Lin Wanrong shouted, and Fairy Ning was equally startled. The two rushed to the cave's mouth, finding only a thick trail of blood, flowing down the cliff.

Could he have fallen down? The two exchanged glances, finding this possibility unlikely.

"Look quickly!" With a glance down the cliff, he saw the trail of blood slowly oozing. Several yards below the cave opening, Tsugumi Takeshita's blood-drenched body was clinging to a steep cliff, barely alive, his hand-held fire starter gleaming brightly. Not far from him was a small stone cave, from which a fuse the length of an arm was extending.

A flash of understanding went through Lin Wanrong's mind, and the image of the stone cave with a timer beneath appeared before his eyes. "No good, this is the second detonation point!" Lin Wanrong exclaimed.

Tsugumi Takeshita's face was covered in fresh blood, and with a ferocious smile, he ignited the fuse with his fire starter, shouting, "His Majesty the Emperor Banzai!" Having already expended all his strength, he collapsed after uttering these words, and his corpse fell straight down the mountain.

The fuse was only as long as an arm, sizzling and burning, and would soon reach the cave filled with gunpowder.

"Get back!" Ning Yuxi's foot landed on Lin Wanrong, kicking him far away. Her eyes flashed with determination, and she softly said to Lin Wanrong, "Lin San, remember, my 'Jade Virtue Fairy Hall' never breaks a promise to anyone!"

With these words, a charming smile appeared on her face, and she shook her long sword, gathering all her life's strength. Like a bolt of lightning, she shot straight toward the abyss.

"Fairy Sister—" Lin Wanrong cried out miserably, his eyes blood-red, frantically rushing towards the cave opening.

The fuse had already reached the gunpowder, and Fairy Ning plummeted straight down, her sword flashing, and the burning sound was instantly silenced. This sword, concentrating all of Sister Ning's lifelong power, made her graceful figure look like a dazzling meteor, plunging straight toward the bottomless abyss.

"No—" Watching Sister Ning's rapidly vanishing figure, Lin Wanrong grabbed the rock with both hands, traces of blood splitting from his fingertips, issuing a heart-wrenching scream that echoed through the mountain range.

Ning Yuxi's figure had already vanished without a trace, and Lin Wanrong sat dully on the ground, seemingly soulless. Since he had met Ning Yuxi, there were many times when they joked and few when they were serious. Even this time, when he ventured deep into the mountain to search for explosives, he had used tricks to deceive Fairy Ning into helping him, yet he never expected such an ending. It was an indescribable feeling when a fairy-like woman lost her life to save him, and her vow in his mind seemed like a joke, yet he never thought she would be willing to carry it out with her life.

"Big brother—"

"Lin San—"

"General Lin—"

A chorus of shouts came from all directions. Lin Wanrong looked up to see Luo Ning, tears streaming down her face, rushing forward, with Miss Xu following her, and Hu Bugui leading countless soldiers surging like a tide.

Lin Wanrong suddenly jumped up, his eyes bloodshot, roaring, "Hu Bugui, I order you to lead all the troops to the bottom of the cliff to find Fairy Sister! If she's alive, I want to see her; if she's dead—ah, pah, that doesn't count, alive or dead, I want her alive! If you don't find her, bring me your head!"

Hu Bugui was stunned by the order, but seeing Master Lin's disheveled hair and blood-red eyes, looking as if he wanted to eat someone, he quickly agreed and arranged for his soldiers to search the bottom of the cliff.

Upon bringing Master Lin out of the stone cave, Ning'er immediately threw herself into his arms, crying loudly, "Big brother, how can you be so foolish? You scared me to death!"

Miss Xu's eyes were aflame, tears rolling, as she angrily exclaimed, "As the Commander of the armies, risking your life so recklessly, you, you, are simply too foolish!"

"Foolish, then foolish be it!" he embraced Luo Ning tightly, "As long as Fairy Sister can survive, I am willing to be as foolish as a pig!"

"Big brother, who is this Fairy Sister you speak of? Is she very capable?" Luo Ning asked, wiping her tears.

"Fairy Sister, ah, is a beautiful bodyguard, her abilities reach the heavens! If not for her today, big brother would not have seen you again. When there's a chance, big brother will introduce you to her!" Lin Wanrong gave a bitter smile, not knowing whether he was comforting Luo Ning or himself.

"If she's so capable, then big brother doesn't need to worry." Luo Ning smiled charmingly, "I've never heard of a fairy dying, have you?"

"Ning'er, what did you say?" Master Lin looked puzzled.

Luo Ning playfully tapped his forehead and softly said, "Silly big brother, Ning'er said, 'I've never heard of a fairy dying!'"

"Right!" Master Lin clapped his hands, his face breaking into a smile, and he hugged the woman beside him, planting two quick kisses, "My little darling is absolutely right, I've never heard of a fairy dying. Darn it, I was scared silly."

The woman, both surprised and angry, rained down punches on him, "Whether she'll die or not, I don't know, but today you're going to die a miserable death!"

Seeing big brother being beaten by Sister Xu and fleeing with his hands covering his head, Luo Ning was momentarily stunned, then she covered her mouth, laughing with a giggle, her eyes filled with a rich tenderness...

Chapter 395 Through Thousands of Years, Unifying the Xiao Family!

At the cliff's base, the water flowed turbulently, without cessation. Hu Bugui led tens of thousands of soldiers to search for several hours, but other than a few cloth strips hanging from the trees, they found nothing.

Lin Wanrong was relieved. Not finding the Fairy Ning was good news. Considering Ning Yuxi's abilities, she wouldn't perish so easily. Perhaps one day, she would suddenly appear before him and scare him.

They dispatched soldiers to carefully remove the gunpowder from the mountain cave, taking half a day to clear it all. Staring at the mountainous pile of gunpowder, Hu Bugui was sweating profusely. If not for General Lin's heroic courage to break into the enemy's lair, those tens of thousands of brothers might have died without even knowing how.

Xu Zhiqing was initially furious at Lin San for abandoning his post, but upon seeing the small mountain-like boxes of gunpowder, she was terrified and didn't scold him anymore.

With the last obstacle gone, a wide open road led straight to the capital, and the more than tens of thousands of troops marched day and night, arriving in the capital region in just over two days, right within the Emperor's seven-day deadline, an astonishing speed indeed.

Xu Wei received the news and waited outside the city early. Seeing the approaching army from afar, a young general in a white robe, wearing silver armor and a golden helmet, riding a steed, was lazily looking around, looking very majestic.

"Little, little brother Lin!" Xu Wei exclaimed in joy, urging his carriage to rush over, calling out from afar.

"How dare I trouble Mr. Xu to greet me personally? I am unworthy," Lord Lin pretended to bow on horseback, his face serious.

Miss Xu lowered the carriage curtain, humming to Luo Ning beside her: "Ning'er, your husband should perform in a theater. He's been so joyful and laughing all the way here. But now that my father is coming out to greet him, he puts on an act. Pretending to be serious, he's indeed a fine actor."

Miss Luo giggled: "Sister, you know how big brother is. He's naturally like this. If he ever becomes serious, you might complain again."

Miss Xu stared at Luo Ning for a while and suddenly sighed: "Ning'er, the way you talk now, you really seem carved from the same mold as your Lin San. Is it true that one becomes red when near cinnabar and black when near ink?"

"Really?" Luo Ning unconsciously touched her pink face and peeked out of the curtain, shyly saying, "'Husband sings, wife follows,' it should be like this. Sister, I think you understand big brother even more deeply than I do."

"Is that so?" Through the window, seeing Lin San chatting happily with Xu Wei, Xu Zhiqing's cheeks flushed, and she waved her hand annoyedly: "Don't talk to me about that despicable fellow; I'm annoyed when I see him."

"Do little brother and this old man still need to be so formal?" Xu Wei chuckled, stroking his beard: "You are now a hero of our Great Hua. It would only be right for all the civil and military officials to greet you."

Master Lin, knowing he had inadvertently been too familiar with Mr. Xu's daughter, felt a pang of guilt. With an embarrassed smile and a humble expression, he said: "Mr. Xu, you overpraise me. I am unlearned and have much to learn from you. I hope you will continue to guide me in the future."

Has the sun risen from the west? How had this youngster changed so drastically, becoming so humble all of a sudden? Xu Wei looked at him, puzzled, only to see Master Lin's face filled with ingratiating smiles, his expression quite odd, but he couldn't discern anything amiss. Strange!

Xu Wei snorted and turned his head, looking at the dozens of heavily guarded silver carts, then at the brand-new fire-sealed labels on the silver boxes. His heart thrilled with excitement, and he hurriedly walked over to the carts, slowly stroking the cold silver boxes, murmuring to himself, "Found it, finally found it, Heaven bless Great Hua, Heaven bless our Great Hua! Little brother, tell me in detail about the process of finding this silver."

Telling stories was indeed one of Master Lin's specialties, and this was a miracle he had created with his own hands. When it came to boasting, he naturally took the lead. Right then, he elaborated on their overnight journey to Shandong, searching for clues, determining the location of the silver, netting fish, and raising silver from wooden ships. His livelihood depended on his ability to talk big, and he knew how to praise himself; how he was so wise and held all the aces, how he went against all odds to fish with a net, and how they used wooden boats to sift the sand and retrieve the silver. For a moment, words were flying everywhere, the world seemed to change color, and even he felt that Lin San was a rare genius, unparalleled in both Heaven and Earth.

Xu Wei listened with great interest, occasionally questioning, sometimes sighing. When the story was over, he breathed a sigh of relief and said, "The process of finding this silver has already spread in the capital, but it's all hearsay. Today, after hearing your account, I realized that it's even more thrilling and splendid than the rumors. It seems I missed a great show! Little brother Lin, do you know that now in the capital, it's widely said that you are truly the number one scholar in the world."

‘My goodness, isn't this stirring up conflict between me and old Xu? Everyone knows he's the number one.’ Master Lin shook his head solemnly, "Who's spreading these rumors? Mr. Xu, you must not believe them. I'm young and ignorant, how can I compare to your youthful accomplishments, your elegant scholarship, your support for the Emperor, and your respect throughout the land? At most, I could claim to be second in the world."

Xu Wei laughed heartily, patting him on the shoulder, "Little brother Lin, don't be too modest. The people have seen what you've done. When Princess Nishang chose a husband, you fought the Turks, winning every battle, already beyond everyone's expectations. In the arena, you defeated many with few, and the strong with the weak, which was extraordinary. This time in Shandong, you created the spectacle of fish leaping through the dragon's gate, worthy of being called a world-class genius. Moreover, your stories in Jinling have already spread to the capital. In taverns and tea houses, the most popular story is 'Lin San's Furious Battle with the Couplet King, Brave Houseboy Winning Back the Beauty.' It's about you and Miss Luo. Your couplet verses have even been transcribed, framed, and sold, and they're not cheap. Even your newly renovated mansion, though still uninhabited, has many people waiting day and night, hoping to receive a calligraphy piece from you."

"No way!!!" Master Lin was taken aback, people asking him for calligraphy? Playing with a brush, he couldn't even create a simple "chick-pecking-at-rice" picture. But if people were willing to pay, why not learn to use a brush for a few years?

“Brother Xu, all these honors are bestowed by the fellow villagers and elders; they mustn't be taken seriously,” Master Lin said, his face alight with laughter after Xu Wei's compliment. “You know me, Brother Xu, I always live simply and humbly, with indifference to fame and wealth. All these titles like being the first or second in the world are mere vanities; they matter not to me!”

‘How shameless this boy must be to speak without any regard for propriety,’ Xu Wei thought, laughing out loud before nodding, “Understood, understood, your integrity and virtue are known to all. But our Great Hua has not seen such outstanding talent for hundreds of years. With a foreign invasion looming and internal strife at hand, our nation faces a great crisis. Great Hua needs a hero, a symbol admired by the people, to unite hearts and share in the country's difficulties. Among all the learned men in the world, little brother Lin, you are accomplished in both literary and military fields, your experiences are legendary, and your origins as a commoner give you an unparalleled lofty status among the people. Who else could bear the mantle of this symbolic hero but you?”

‘From this perspective, it really seems like I am the only choice,’ Master Lin thought, chuckling, “Brother Xu, did someone tell you to say all this to me? I was wondering why you would personally come out of the city to meet me, so this is the reason.”

Xu Wei coughed awkwardly a few times, laughing, "This, this is truly from my heart, little brother. Please do not misunderstand."

The Emperor's campaign to deify Master Lin was indeed grand, quietly forcing Master Lin into a corner without any escape. Xu Wei, being such a clever man, must have sensed something, to speak so fervently on the Emperor's behalf.

"Let's talk about this later," Master Lin laughed. "For now, we should focus on delivering this silver to the national treasury. Brother Xu, you are the Minister of Revenue, so please count these 350,000 taels of silver, and I will have fulfilled my duty. Then I can go home and sleep beside my wife."

The officials who had come with Xu Wei had already opened the silver chests and counted them under the supervision of soldiers. They reported the final amount to Xu Wei, who stamped the receipt document, smiling, "Little brother Lin, how could I not trust your work? All 350,000 taels are here, not a bit more or less."

'Xu Wei is indeed a master at lying without batting an eye,' Master Lin thought. The scribes had counted the silver several times, and only after confirming the accuracy did Xu Wei stamp the document, yet he spoke as if he had complete trust in him.

Xu Wei glanced around and saw Xu Zhiqing and Luo Ning jumping down from the carriage, walking towards them. He stealthily pulled Master Lin aside, whispering, "Little brother Lin, did my daughter Zhiqing cause you any trouble on this journey?"

Master Lin responded with a lewd smile, his face displaying a lascivious expression, "No trouble, no trouble at all, only that my hand grew a bit tired."

Master Lin's words were profound and elusive. Despite Xu Wei's vast knowledge, he couldn't comprehend the meaning hidden within them and could only nod in agreement, saying, "Indeed, it must have been tough for you on this journey. Our Xu family's Zhiqing is delicate in body and innocent in mind. I would be worried if she were with anyone else, fearing that she might be mistreated. But with you, little brother Lin, I have a hundred percent trust. With you by her side, nothing can go wrong with her!"

Master Lin couldn't help but grit his teeth and grimace at hearing this. Delicate? Was Xu Wei really willing to say such words? Along the way, he didn't know how many times he had been beaten up by her. But her innocence? Well, that was indeed as pure as his own, truly very pure!

"Niece Luo Ning pays her respects to noble Uncle Xu. For your great kindness in assisting my father this time, along with sister Zhiqing, I am eternally grateful," Luo Ning said, coming forward with Xu Zhiqing and bowing to Xu Wei.

Xu Wei hurriedly helped her up, laughing, "These were just my duties, noble niece. Please, no more formalities. Do rise."

Luo Ning smiled slightly, respectfully completing her courtesy, and stood beside her big brother. Xu Wei nodded to Xu Zhiqing, "Zhiqing, you should thank little brother Lin for taking care of you on this journey."

"No need, no need," Master Lin modestly waved his hands, "Miss Xu and I helped each other; there's no need to thank."

Xu Zhiqing recalled the bullying she had endured on the way, snorted, and ignored him. Xu Wei, looking somewhat embarrassed, said, "Ah, Zhiqing is still young, and lacks manners. I hope you can forgive her, little brother Lin."

Young? Master Lin was taken aback. Luo Ning chuckled; Uncle Xu's skin was not much thicker than her big brother's.

After some pleasantries and settling necessary matters, Xu Wei climbed into his carriage, preparing to depart. Suddenly, he turned around, glancing at Lin Wanrong, and asked, "Little brother Lin, there is one more thing. I'm not sure if I should speak about it or not."

"What's there to question? Mr. Xu, why the need for formality between us?" Lin Wanrong replied with a magnanimous smile.

Xu Wei nodded and sighed, "In less than half a month, General Li Tai's army will be setting out. I hope you'll consider his proposal and not act rashly. The army is in dire need of talented leaders. A real man should be on the battlefield, making a name for himself. With your abilities, it would be a great waste if you couldn't serve the country. I urge you to give it serious consideration."

From inside the carriage, Xu Zhiqing lifted the curtain, giving Lin San an annoyed look, and snorted, "Father, this man is selfish and short-sighted, concerned only with his own pleasures. What's the use of speaking to him? Let other men stain the battlefield with their blood while he remains trapped in his world of beauties."

Hearing that Uncle Xu wanted her big brother to go to battle, Luo Ning's grip on her big brother's hand tightened, and she looked at him anxiously.

It was the same old issue raised again, and Lin Wanrong couldn't remember how many times he had been advised. Even he was puzzled. He had never studied military strategies or formations, so why did Xu Wei, Li Tai, and this defiant Xu Zhiqing value him so much? Just because he had won a battle in Shandong? That seemed far too careless.

Lin Wanrong smiled with a fist salute and said, "I thank Mr. Xu for his kind intentions. Achieving great deeds and success is of no concern to me; what truly matters is bringing those brothers who charged onto the battlefield back alive. To be honest, on the way to Shandong, I've been constantly pondering this matter. It's not that I'm afraid to go, but the responsibility is too great, like a massive burden weighing on me, making it hard to breathe."

"What are you afraid of if you have the ability to bear the responsibility? I'm not afraid, why should you be?" Xu Zhiqing glanced at him, her face softening, her voice gentler.

"Exactly, exactly." Seeing Master Lin's attitude seeming to waver, Xu Wei became energized and hastily persuaded, "Only the sage and virtuous are brave enough to bear responsibility. I have seen little brother Lin's talent in commanding troops with my own eyes. Just the love and admiration of tens of thousands of soldiers alone is something that others cannot achieve. Moreover, you are clever and resourceful, wise beyond measure, and the soldiers under your command are disciplined and fierce. You are highly regarded in the army. With these two points, you can surely fight the northern nomads."

'This old man sure knows how to sweet-talk,' Lin Wanrong laughed and said, "Thank you, Miss Xu, for your advice, and thank you, Brother Xu, for the encouragement. Hearing you speak, even I start to think of myself as a military genius. If not for my mind being elsewhere, I would surely have been persuaded by you."

"Mind elsewhere?" Xu Wei heard a glimmer of hope and hurriedly said, "If there's anything troubling you, little brother Lin, anything that I can help with, I'll certainly spare no effort."

"You know of this matter too, Mr. Xu," Lin Wanrong sighed, taking Luo Ning's small hand and smiling affectionately, "When I was in Jinling, I encountered a close female friend named Xiao Qingxuan. Later, we were separated, but we promised to meet at the Jade Buddha Temple in the capital on the seventh day of the seventh month this year."

'So he went to the Jade Buddha Temple to find Miss Xiao. How many close female friends does this guy have?' Xu Zhiqing thought of her first meeting with Lin San at the Jade Buddha Temple and felt a pang in her heart. She looked at him and lowered her head, silent.

"I won't hide it from you all," Lin Wanrong continued, "the reason I left Jinling for the capital was to keep this promise. Qingxuan's place in my heart is like Luo Ning's; I can't bear to leave either of them."

Luo Ning lowered her head in joyful shyness at his words, while Miss Xu shook her head repeatedly. This girl had really turned foolish since marrying her husband, not even recognizing Lin San's deliberate flattery.

"The seventh day of the seventh month?" Xu Wei furrowed his brow, "That's more than five months away. Little brother Lin, do you have any clues about this Miss Xiao? If you have any leads, I'll risk my life to help you find her."

"I can't say I have no clues," Lin Wanrong said, full of emotion, "I must admit, Mr. Xu, just before leaving for Shandong, I happened to see Qingxuan's portrait in the palace."

"In the palace?" Xu Wei exclaimed, looking at Lin Wanrong, "I understand, little brother Lin. After all that beating around the bush, you want me to inquire about this young lady with the Emperor. But there's one thing I don't understand. With your current standing near the Emperor, why don't you speak to him yourself?"

The old man was indeed shrewd. Lin Wanrong shook his head with a bitter smile and said, "My dear brother Xu, if the Emperor were willing to tell me, would I bother you? That old man is now avoiding me, and I don't know what he's thinking."

Since the Emperor was unwilling to tell Lin San, there must be something unspeakable. Xu Wei thought for a long time. Lin San cared so much for Miss Xiao, so if he could persuade her to speak and ask him to lead the troops into battle, wouldn't that be wonderful? Miss Xiao should be easier to talk to than Lin San.

A glimmer of light appeared in Xu Wei's eyes as if he had found a bright path. He laughed a few times, his chest thumping with assurance, "Little brother Lin, rest assured, even if it costs me my life, I will find the Emperor and inquire about Miss Xiao's whereabouts, and help you and your wife reunite. Everyone knows that I, Xu Wei, love to play matchmaker."

Ignoring the latter part of the statement, Lin Wanrong nodded, "Brother Xu is eager to help others, and I am eternally grateful. In that case, I await your good news."

With everything said, Xu Wei felt assured, urging the carriage to move on.

"Father, are you really going to look for Miss Xiao for Lin San?" Xu Zhiqing bit her lip, asking softly.

"Of course. Lin San is loyal and affectionate. As long as I find Miss Xiao, and she speaks, Lin San will obediently lead the troops into battle," Xu Wei stroked his beard, smiling triumphantly.

"Loyal and affectionate? Bah!" Miss Xu felt a strange bitterness in her heart, quickly turning her head away.

"Zhiqing, my dear," Xu Wei sighed softly, full of meaning, "Life is short; you must seize it in time. Don't play dumb and miss your chance."

"Father, you're the one who plays dumb the most!" Miss Xu's face flushed as she chided softly. Xu Wei was momentarily startled, then burst into laughter, "Right, right, Father plays dumb the most, but Zhiqing doesn't!"

With Xu Wei's help, there seemed to be hope. Having handed over the military token and seal, Master Lin lay comfortably in the carriage on the way back, stretching lazily and tenderly touching Luo Ning's waist, his hand gradually moving towards her chest.

"Big brother!" Ning'er's face turned rosy, as she snuggled into his arms, softly asking, "Where will we rest tonight?"

Master Lin was taken aback. That was a good question. Luo Ning and Qiaoqiao were in the capital, and if they continued to stay at the Xiao residence, although he didn't mind, the two girls might be uncomfortable. Luo Ning, being passionate, would probably be too embarrassed to express herself, hindering his grand plans. But if they moved to a new house, what about Eldest Miss? What would she think? Theoretically, he still belonged to the Xiao family; would he be directly fired by Eldest Miss?

He thought back and forth but found no good solution, inwardly regretting that he hadn't turned the Xiao family into his harem earlier, combining Ning'er, Eldest Miss, and the others in one swoop, solving all his troubles.

"Big brother, what are you thinking about?" Ning'er's seductive voice rang in his ear.

"Through thousands of years, unifying the Xiao Family," Master Lin uttered through gritted teeth.

Luo Ning chuckled, punched him playfully in the chest, and said with a hint of sarcasm, "The poor Xiao family, with their widowed women, chose you out of thousands, only to have you, a wicked man, bewitch the souls of both Eldest Miss and Second Miss. The Xiao family doesn't need to be unified; it's already yours."

"Is that so?" Lin Wanrong teased, "I never realized Ning'er had planned so meticulously. I really didn't see that you have some potential as a little housewife!"

Luo Ning wrinkled her little nose and huffed, "Of course. Big brother, earning money isn't easy, and Ning'er can spend, but she can also save. Big brother, in the future, when Ning'er uses the money you've earned to do good deeds, you can just take the opportunity to advertise; two birds with one stone."

Intimacy really did make a difference. As Master Lin marveled at this, he heard the Talented Lady Luo lean into his ear and whisper with fragrant breath, "Big brother, don't we have a mansion in the capital? Uncle Xu said that the renovation is complete, so why don't we stay there tonight—"

"This..." Master Lin was hesitating when Talented Lady Luo blew a breath into his ear, her eyes sparkling with wild flames, her face so hot and flushed it seemed it could drip water, "—and Qiaoqiao will be there too, just the three of us! Ah, big brother, what will you do to satisfy me?!"