

Three-Time 171

Chapter 171: 171. Everyone knows how to play dirty tricks.

In the middle of the night, the main gate of the Su Mansion was heavily knocked.

Ning Jing went to open the door and saw Huang Bo standing outside with an anxious expression, “His Majesty ordered Miss Su to enter the palace immediately! ”

Ning Jing didn’t say a word, nodded, and went back to call Su Liang.

Su Liang was actually not asleep, but she took her time to come out, changed into new clothes, and purposely didn’t bring her medicine box.

Huang Bo stomped his foot in impatience, “Miss Su, it’s my Master who is sick. His Majesty ordered you to treat him!”

Su Liang paused, “So that’s how it is. In that case, please wait a moment.”

When Su Liang got her medicine box, got on her horse, and followed Huang Bo in the direction of the Imperial Palace, she asked about Duanmu Che’s condition, “I heard from the senior Imperial Physician that the Fifth Prince has been improving recently. What happened tonight?”

Huang Bo sighed deeply, “I don’t know why, but Master suddenly became delirious and started acting as if he were mad.”

Su Liang frowned, “Did you change the medicine?”

Huang Bo shook his head, “No! The medicine has always been used according to Miss Su’s prescription!”

“Could it be that the Fifth Prince originally had epilepsy? There was an epileptic patient in my hometown, who convulsed and foamed at the mouth during an attack. Is the Fifth Prince like that?” Su Liang asked.

“No, there’s no convulsion or foaming at the mouth, it’s just like...” Huang Bo hesitated, not wanting to say that Duanmu Che was acting like a madman. Su Liang sighed softly, “Strange. Let me go to the palace and have a look. If I cannot determine the cause, I can’t be sure of a cure.”

As they approached the Imperial Palace, Huang Bo suddenly brought up the events of the past two days, “Thankfully, Miss Su came through unscathed. My Master was very worried and had said that if Miss Su couldn’t resolve her troubles, he would ask His Majesty for mercy and make sure to protect you!”

“His Highness the Fifth Prince is very kind,” Su Liang said absentmindedly. She was not sure whether Huang Bo knew and participated in Duanmu Che’s actions.

The person who was arranged to assassinate Ning Jing but got injured in the face was not Huang Bo.

Huang Bo sighed deeply, "Miss Su, don't take the past events to heart. My Master has been in poor health since childhood and has no friends. He was initially prejudiced against you, but now he genuinely likes you and has no ill intentions. As for matters of love, even if he wants to understand, it takes time."

"I know," Su Liang nodded, "After all, the Fifth Prince saved my life. Compared to that, other things are not worth mentioning. I don't want to have any more contact with the Fifth Prince because I hope he can let go of his obsession sooner. It's not that I hate him."

Huang Bo breathed a sigh of relief, "That's great!"

Su Liang asked Huang Bo, "You must know about the Su Family's past, right? Can you tell me? This is very important to me."

Huang Bo hesitated for a moment, "This..."

"Are you afraid that the Fifth Prince will blame you when he finds out? But I think, the Fifth Prince also wants me to avenge my family sooner rather than later, doesn't he?" Su Liang countered.

Huang Bo nodded, "Of course. Your grandfather treated my Master with utmost dedication. When the Su Family encountered trouble, my Master was also very sad. Unfortunately, it happened so suddenly that he was only able to save you."

"Can Huang Bo tell me everything you know? Don't worry, I will do my best to treat the Fifth Prince," Su Liang said solemnly.

Huang Bo sighed again, "Alright. I think my Master would have told you sooner if he hadn't been distracted by his feelings. We all thought you should have stayed in the countryside and lived a peaceful life. Coming back to the capital city was like courting death. But you are different now, and what was once impossible may now be possible."

"However," Huang Bo continued, "we don't know much about the inside story of that incident. You were silenced because you accidentally witnessed a secret that a noble person could not let others know. We don't know the specifics."

Su Liang's heart sank. "Silenced"? Indeed, it was a conspiracy, and not only was Su Yuanzhou killed, but the entire Su Family was ruthlessly exterminated!

The so-called secret must be something hidden from others.

Su Liang thought that in addition to the Su Family, there was another person who died in that incident, Xiao Mulian, the second Prince's Concubine. She was the eldest granddaughter of the Xiao Prime Minister, Xiao Muyun's half-sister, and Duanmu Chen's cousin.

This was no coincidence.

Su Liang couldn't help but suspect that the "noble person's secret" Su Yuanzhou had stumbled upon was directly related to Xiao Mulian.

Secrets that could not be revealed were bound to be related to men and women, and they must be illicit affairs.

The noble person Huang Bo mentioned was most likely a member of the royal family.

Based on Huang Bo's words, Su Liang guessed that it might be because Xiao Mulian had an affair with another man behind Duanmu Ao's back, and when it was discovered to avoid shame for the Royal Family, her sudden illness and death was staged. Su Yuanzhou, who inadvertently caught a glimpse of the secret affairs of the royal family, along with his entire family, became the scapegoats to protect the honor of the royal family.

Although this was only Su Liang's temporary guess, the thought of such possibility filled her with sadness and anger.

Are the lives of the nobles precious while those of the common people are worthless?

She despised this law of survival, but had to admit that this was the rule of this world. The so-called laws only worked when the interests of the ruling class were not affected.

Without the rule of law, there is only the rule of man.

"Miss Su, you must never let your emotions affect the situation." Huang Bo urged her earnestly, "Nothing can be traced back now, even if you could trace it, some people are beyond your reach."

Su Liang's face regained calm, "I know, thank you for the reminder. Is there nothing else?"

Huang Bo shook his head, "Actually, I only knew about it from you back then. When Master and I received the news, all of the Su family was already dead. I rushed over and only managed to save you without knowing the cause. It was you who told me that your grandfather had known something he shouldn't have."

Su Liang was stunned. The original master said that? If she heard it herself, it should be true.

The palace gate was already in sight. Su Liang temporarily suppressed her thoughts and followed Huang Bo into the palace.

Duanmu Che had a separate palace. Just as Su Liang stepped in, she heard his loud laughter.

With a gloomy face, Huang Bo hurried in, "Your Majesty, Miss Su is here!"

Before Su Liang could greet him, she heard Duanmu Yi order, "Think of a way quickly!"

Imperial Physician Gao and three other imperial physicians were waiting by the side. Duanmu Che held a teacup in his hand and threw it at anyone who approached him. There were already many broken porcelain pieces on the ground.

Duanmu Che, who had been sitting in a wheelchair before, could now stand up after Su Liang's prescriptions and acupuncture treatments.

The night Yan Shiba caught him, he had only sustained numerous scars on his face that had not yet healed, but otherwise, he was fine.

At this moment, Duanmu Che was disheveled, his clothes hanging in tatters, his face full of crisscrossing scars, holding a teacup high up, laughing manically. He looked like a madman.

Su Liang put her medicine box on the table and quickly approached Duanmu Che, grabbing the teacup from him and throwing it firmly onto the table. She then grabbed both of Duanmu Che's arms, pulled him up, and pressed him in the corner of the wheelchair. "Bring the rope!"

Huang Bo hesitated and looked at Duanmu Yi.

Duanmu Yi furrowed his brow, "What are you waiting for?"

Someone immediately fetched the rope and handed it to Su Liang.

Su Liang asked Huang Bo to hold down Duanmu Che, tied him securely to the wheelchair with the rope so he couldn't move.

Duanmu Che was still laughing crazily, so Su Liang took a cloth from the table and stuffed it into his mouth.

Finally, there was silence.

"Your Majesty, this is to prevent the Fifth Prince from biting his tongue or hurting himself." Su Liang explained.

Duanmu Yi's face was as cold as ice, "Hmm. Check Che'er quickly and see what's wrong with him."

Duanmu Yi didn't suspect Su Liang's involvement in this incident, because he didn't know that Duanmu Che was the mastermind behind all the troubles Su Liang had encountered recently.

Duanmu Yi knew someone was behind Xiao Muyun but suspected the crown prince or the second prince.

Plus, it had been days since Su Liang had directly treated Duanmu Che, and her prescriptions and acupuncture techniques had always been effective.

All the food and medicine that Duanmu Che had consumed in the palace had been tested for poison first.

Therefore, Duanmu Yi now wondered if Duanmu Che had become obsessed with Su Liang, and not being able to have her or even see her was what drove him to such a state?

Su Liang took Duanmu Che's pulse and frowned, calling Imperial Physician Gao and the others to come and examine him as well.

After examining him, Physician Gao shook his head, "The pulse is chaotic, but I can't determine the cause."

The other imperial physicians said the same.

"Can't you figure it out either, Su Liang?" Duanmu Yi asked coldly.

Su Liang sighed softly, "I think the Fifth Prince seems to have been mentally stimulated, that's why he's like this."

Duanmu Yi frowned, "Is this temporary, or..."

Su Liang shook her head, "It's impossible to determine for now. He may recover when dawn comes, or he may not."

“Is there nothing you can do?” Duanmu Yi asked.

Su Liang thought for a moment and said, “I can try, but my chances of success are not that great.”

Duanmu Yi nodded, “As long as you don’t endanger Che’er’s life, just try!”

Su Liang didn’t administer the needles to Duanmu Che personally but taught the technique to the senior Imperial Physician Gao, and let him do it. “Don’t worry, it’s just that I’m not convenient. If something goes wrong, it’s my responsibility.” Su Liang said.

Imperial Physician Gao shook his head, “There’s no need to say that. Since it’s like this, I’ll give it a try.”

Duanmu Yi watched as Imperial Physician Gao administered the needles to Duanmu Che.

The process took about a quarter of an hour.

It could be seen that Duanmu Che’s eyes were somewhat clearer, although not fully awake yet, it was much better compared to before Su Liang’s arrival.

Duanmu Yi sighed in relief, “Su Liang, your medical skills are indeed remarkable! Were they all taught by your grandfather?”

Su Liang shook her head, “Most of them were taught by my grandfather. When I returned to my hometown, I also paid respects to a great Master and learned quite a lot.”

This was consistent with what Lady Xing had said, which made Su Liang’s talents seem reasonable.

“Please stay here and watch over Che’er tonight, and I won’t feel at ease if we leave him in the care of others. When he gets better, I will reward you handsomely.”

Duanmu Yi sighed.

Su Liang nodded, “Yes.”

She prescribed another sedative, and Imperial Physician Gao had his disciple to concoct the medicine and administered it to Duanmu Che, who then fell into a deep sleep.

Su Liang and the other Imperial Physicians waited in the outer hall, while eunuch Huang Bo stayed in the room to observe, in case anything unusual happened, they would be summoned.

Duanmu Yi ordered the Imperial Cuisine Room to prepare a late-night snack and send it over.

Imperial Physician Gao knew that this treatment was specifically for Su Liang. They often entered the palace to serve the dignitaries, but no one had ever cared if they were hungry or thirsty.

“I heard from Physician Gao that Miss Su had quite some insights into many difficult cases. I have some questions and would like to ask for Miss Suls guidance.” An Imperial Physician surnamed Jia spoke very politely. The other two Imperial Physicians also expressed their desire to consult Su

Liang.

Su Liang agreed readily, “We can exchange our knowledge.”

As a result, the five of them discussed medical skills while eating the late-night snack.

Although it was called a discussion, it was actually the four of them asking questions, and Su Liang providing the answers.

In this world, Medical Skills were a special talent. Most skilled doctors would only teach their own disciples, keeping their unique skills hidden to elevate their own value.

It was only when Imperial Physician Gao casually mentioned that Su Liang was very generous and not at all secretive, that the other Imperial Physicians began to ask questions.

At first, they were somewhat skeptical, but as they talked, they realized that Imperial Physician Gao's praise of Su Liang was not exaggerated at all.

In fact, among them, Imperial Physician Gao had the best medical skills and stubborn temperament. If even he was convinced by Su Liang, it was needless in the case of the following few doctors.

Duanmu Yi had not slept yet and had the senior eunuch bring them a pot of good tea.

Hearing the eunuch's report of Su Liang and the Imperial Physicians discussing medical skills, she was the absolute center of attention despite their age difference.

"She is indeed a rare talent." Duanmu Yi sighed, "I need to think carefully about whether to let her go to war or become an Imperial Physician."

Unknowingly, dawn had arrived.

Several Imperial Physicians felt like they hadn't talked enough with Su Liang and greatly benefited from their conversation.

Huang Bo announced that Duanmu Che was awake, and they all entered the inner hall.

Duanmu Che looked sluggish, supported by Huang Bo, and had no idea what had happened last night.

After listening to Huang Bo, he looked at him in disbelief, "How could this happen?"

Huang Bo sighed, "Perhaps it was caused by the grievances the master has been harboring recently. Thanks to Miss Su Liang's brilliant medical skills, she hurried to treat the master overnight."

Only then did Duanmu Che notice Su Liang standing by his side. His eyes darkened, and his thin lips pressed together. He remained silent for a moment before speaking, "Thank you."

"Your Highness, the Fifth Prince, is too polite. From now on, you need to relax and go out more," Su Liang said.

Huang Bo saw that Duanmu Che was silent and quickly replied for him, "I will keep that in mind."

On the other side, Duanmu Yi received the news that Duanmu Che was alright and let Su Liang leave the palace.

The Imperial Physicians who were on duty last night had left, and two new ones came to serve.

Huang Bo helped Duanmu Che take his medicine and saw his face gloomy, not knowing what he was thinking.

“Master and Miss Su were not meant to be. A forced relationship won’t be sweet,” Huang Bo said earnestly, “Master, first take care of your health. Miss Su said last night that she won’t take those things to heart. As long as the master has a friendly attitude, she will definitely be willing to be friends with you.” “It’s impossible now.” Duanmu Che’s eyes were dark and chilling.

Huang Bo was stunned for a moment, thinking Duanmu Che was unwilling, and sighed deeply, “Master, why are you doing this to yourself? There is no deep hatred between you two, so why make it so ugly? Miss Su has always wanted to befriend the master.”

“I suspect that my sudden madness was caused by poison from Su Liang,” Duanmu Che said astonishingly.

Not only was Huang Bo dumbfounded, but Duanmu Yi, who was just about to enter the door, also frowned.

Huang Bo came to his senses and shook his head repeatedly, “That’s impossible, absolutely impossible! The method to treat the master was given by Miss Su. Why would she poison the master for no reason? It doesn’t benefit her at all! She’s not that kind of person!”

Duanmu Che remained silent. Huang Bo didn’t know about Duanmu Che’s conspiracy to frame Su Liang with Xiao Muyun.

But the coincidental timing made Duanmu Che suspect that his sudden madness was Su Liang’s revenge against him for suspecting her involvement in the plot!

“Che’er.” Duanmu Yi entered the room.

Huang Bo bowed and then left.

“Why do you suspect Su Liang of poisoning you?” Duanmu Yi asked directly.

Duanmu Che closed his eyes, “Because I harassed her, and I think she would retaliate against me.”

“She couldn’t wait to get rid of her connection with you, so why would she do such a thing?” Duanmu Yi shook his head, “You’re being paranoid, thinking that everything is related to Su Liang and that you were possessed last night. I’ve already sent someone to invite the abbot of Huguo Temple to chant the

Clear Heart Sutra for you. Don’t think about Su Liang anymore, she will marry Ning Jing, and I will select a well-bred lady for you.”

“I don’t want that!” Duanmu Che blurted out.

Duanmu Yi’s face darkened, “Nonsense! How old are you to be so willful? You’ve truly disappointed me! If you don’t want to choose a consort and get married, I won’t interfere with any of your matters in the future!”

Duanmu Che’s face turned ugly, “Father, I was wrong. I just can’t accept not getting the woman I like.”

“It’s really because of her!” Duanmu Yi snorted coldly, “If it were someone else, I would definitely let you have her. But Qian Country has internal and external troubles, and it’s time to utilize talent. Su Liang is a rare talent, and she’s not a submissive lady from a prominent family. Even if I forced her to marry you, she wouldn’t truly be with you!”

“I understand.” Duanmu Che said softly, but his hand under his sleeve clenched tightly.

He became more and more suspicious that Su Liang had poisoned him, but he couldn’t reveal it because he was the one who had done something unspeakable first...

When Su Liang returned home, she simply told Ning Jing about last night’s situation.

“Even if Duanmu Che suspects that I knew about his collusion with Xiao Muyun and poisoned him in retaliation, he wouldn’t dare tell the emperor,” Su Liang sneered, “Who can’t play dirty tricks? He started the war, so he shouldn’t blame us for not being polite. Let’s continue tonight..”

Chapter 172:172. The truth unfolds

During the day, Duanmu Chen sent Chang’an secretly to inquire about Duanmu Che’s condition.

Su Liang did not mention that Xiao Muyun’s affairs had anything to do with Duanmu Che but only said that Duanmu Che had inexplicably gotten a mental illness, which didn’t last long before it was cured.

Cooperation with Duanmu Chen has been pleasant so far, but Su Liang always remembers that there is only an exchange of interests between her and Duanmu Chen. They cannot be friends.

Some things must not be known to Duanmu Chen; otherwise, there is no guarantee that they will not be used against Su Liang by Duanmu Chen in the future.

That night, Ning Jing sneaked into the Imperial Palace again and successfully poisoned Duanmu Che.

No matter how many skilled defenders or poison testing rules in the palace, they couldn’t stop him.

As a result, Su Liang was woken up in the middle of the night, brought a medicine box into the palace, and saw Duanmu Che acting crazy like the night before.

She asked the Imperial Physician to give Duanmu Che acupuncture and had him take calming medicine before he finally settled down.

Huang Bols face was extremely ugly, “The Master drank calming medicine before going to bed, yet surprisingly, he had another episode.” Obviously, the calming medicine couldn’t counteract the effects of the

Leisurely Pill.

Su Liang sighed, “In my opinion, the Fifth Prince has a heart disease.”

The term “heart disease” sounds simple, but it’s much more troublesome than physical problems.

In most people’s understanding, heart disease is incurable. If the symptoms of madness become severe, the person becomes insane.

Duanmu Yi suspected last night that Duanmu Che went mad because he couldn’t get Su Liang, and when Duanmu Che woke up, he suspected that Su Liang had poisoned him. The situation made Duanmu Yi think that there was a significant mental problem.

Seeing Duanmu Che’s relapse, Duanmu Yi agreed with Su Liang’s view.

However, at this point, it’s not possible to force Su Liang to marry Duanmu Che.

Duanmu Yi felt that he had to quickly choose a consort for Duanmu Che. After marriage, with someone to take care of him intimately, perhaps there would be no issues.

About Duanmu Che’s issue of madness, Duanmu Yi had ordered a gag order.

Although Duanmu Chen knew about it from Su Liang, he didn’t make a fuss about it.

However, the news spread throughout the capital city that day.

It was said that the Fifth Prince Duanmu Che liked Su Liang, the Martial Arts Champion, and when his unrequited love turned into obsession, he developed an intermittent mental illness.

Rumors spread quickly, and there was obviously someone pushing behind the scenes.

Su Liang believed that Duanmu Chen wouldn’t do such foolish things, as it would not only destroy the reputation of Duanmu Yi’s favorite son, but also severely damage the royal family’s reputation.

Su Liang suspected that the crown prince’s party did it.

Although Duanmu Cheng had a convincing claim to his position, Duanmu Yi loved and valued his youngest son, Duanmu Che, and his fourth son, Duanmu Chen, which were constant thorns in Duanmu Cheng’s side and posed threats to him.

Given a chance to ruin Duanmu Che, they naturally wouldn’t let it go.

Su Liang didn’t care about the undercurrents within the Royal Family. When no one came looking for her, she closed the door and busied herself with her own affairs.

Ning Jing continued to poison Duanmu Che every night. Su Liang went to the palace for two consecutive nights. The third time Duanmu Che had an episode, the Imperial Physician handled it directly, and Duanmu Yi didn’t invite Su Liang again.

That day, friends visited once more, bringing the news that the royal family had begun selecting consorts for Duanmu Chen and Duanmu Che.

Lin Boyan was the Vice Minister of Rites; Lin Xueqing said the Ministry of Rites had prepared a list and portraits of the ladies to be sent to the palace.

Xing Yu Sheng snorted, “Three days ago, my father arranged a marriage for my sister who is of marriageable age, just to avoid this selection. Someone has been throwing tantrums at home.”

This “someone” referred to Xing Yu Sheng’s stepmother, Miao Shi. Su Liang smiled, “Your father is really bold.”

Being so obvious, she is not afraid of any dissatisfaction from Duanmu Yi.

“Love for his daughter is too strong.” Xing Yu Sheng said indifferently, “Unfortunately, someone can’t understand him.”

Su Liang felt that Xing Ji was a very smart, responsible, and good man. Even though he didn’t like Miao Shi, he didn’t take any concubines for so many years. However, two people with a significant gap in their spiritual worlds might not truly connect for a lifetime.

Qin Yujin asked Su Liang whether she knew about the Fifth Prince’s madness.

Su Liang shook her head, “It’s not appropriate to discuss the matters of the Royal Family.”

Qin Yujin blinked, “Sister Liang is right.”

Qin Yujin sighed, mentioning that two of her close friends were on the list of candidates for the selection, still uncertain of their fate.

“Their families all hope to be chosen to enter the Fourth Prince’s Mansion,” Qin Yujin said. What she didn’t say was that they were all afraid of being chosen for the Fifth Prince’s Mansion.

Although the Royal Family has refuted the rumors, saying that Duanmu Che is not mad and that his health has recovered, there are still some underlying issues.

Even if Duanmu Che is not mad and is the most favored prince, people with discerning eyes know that his life is going nowhere. His birth mother died early, and his external family, the Lin Family, although a famous general family, has declined and has no one to support him.

At least compared to Duanmu Chen, no one would bet on Duanmu Che.

“Sister Su, I have some good news for you!” Lin Xueqing said excitedly, “My older brother got engaged!”

Su Liang was surprised, “Which young lady?”

Qin Yujin laughed, “It’s Min Jingwen, the granddaughter of Old Minister Min from the Ministry of Industry, whom you met at my house. Her brother and Lin Boyan are colleagues.”

“Is it one of those twin sisters? The older or younger one?” Su Liang recalled.

Qin Yujin replied with a smile, “The younger one. The older sister is named Min Jingya and she is also engaged. Can you guess to whom?”

“Seeing you so happy, is she going to marry into your family?” Su Liang asked.

Qin Yujin nodded, “My older brother. Our two families live close, and they actually liked each other early on. But because of some misunderstandings, the two families hadn’t communicated for many

years. After my grandfather became ill, Old Master Min took the initiative to visit and resolve the misunderstanding. ”

In the past, Old Minister Min had proposed marriage for his youngest son who was in love with Qin Xiang, but Old Duke Qin felt that the young man from the Min Family was not good enough for his precious daughter and rejected the proposal.

The Min Family not only lost face but also had their only son run away from home after Qin Xiang was married to Bei Jingwang, Xing Ji. As a result, there had been enmity between the families. Though they were neighbors, they hadn't had any contact for 20 years.

But in the end, no one was wrong.

Qin Xiang didn't like the young man from Min Family back then, and if time were reversed, the result would still be the same.

Now, for the sake of his granddaughter's marriage, Old Minister Min was willing to make amends, and Old Master Qin naturally had no objections.

As for Lin Boyan and Min Jingwen's marriage, it was arranged by Qin Yujin's mother.

“That's great. Congratulations.” Su Liang sincerely congratulated him.

Not long ago, Duanmu Chen had told Su Liang that the emperor wanted to choose a son-in-law for Sixth Princess Duanmu Qianqian, and he seemed to favor Lin Boyan. Su Liang was worried that the Lin Family would be forced to marry the princess and would no longer have peaceful days.

One night, Su Liang took the initiative to find Duanmu Chen.

“It's just right that you're here. I entered the palace today, and the emperor asked me whether you would like to go to the military for training and lead troops in the future, or become an Imperial Physician. What would you like?”

Duanmu Chen asked.

Su Liang thought for a moment and said, “Become an Imperial Physician. I don't want to leave the capital for now.”

Duanmu Chen smiled, “I knew you would choose that.

“How can I hold both positions?” Su Liang asked.

Duanmu Chen looked serious, “I suggested to the emperor that you first serve as a small deputy general under Lin Bojun to learn military tactics, while also holding a position in the Imperial Medical Bureau. You don't need to go there every day; when someone in the palace needs you, they will call you over.” Su Liang's voice was faint, “Fourth Prince is truly considerate for my future.”

Duanmu Chen pretended not to hear Su Liang's hidden message and deepened his smile, “You're welcome.”

Su Liang knew that Duanmu Chen was not doing this for her benefit but because it would provide him with the greatest help.

Duanmu Chen didn't try to hide his motives, either.

“In that case, I’ll wait for the emperor’s command.” Su Liang didn’t feel strongly about it, as long as she didn’t leave the capital, she didn’t mind being busier and learning more. She had a more important matter to discuss today, “Huang Bo, from Fifth Prince’s side, told me that my grandfather was exterminated back then because he accidentally learned some noble secrets.” Duanmu Chen’s eyes narrowed, “Do you believe him?”

“He has no reason to lie to me,” Su Liang said. “Furthermore, he only knows this much and doesn’t know the specifics. I guess it has something to do with your cousin, who was once the Second Prince’s concubine. Do you know anything about it?”

Duanmu Chen remained silent, then poured Su Liang a cup of tea and handed it to her.

The tea was warm, and Su Liang held it without taking a sip. Seeing Duanmu Chen’s face, she thought he might know something.

Su Liang didn’t push him, and it wasn’t until the tea in her hand had lost its warmth that Duanmu Chen spoke again, “Now that you mention it, I remember an old story.”

Su Liang nodded, “I’d like to hear the details.”

Duanmu Chen’s eyes narrowed slightly, “I once thought that my cousin would marry the crown prince.”

Su Liang was taken aback; this statement carried a lot of information...

“You must be very curious why my maternal grandfather Prime Minister Xiao would have his granddaughter marry another prince, right?” Duanmu Che sneered.

“Indeed,” Su Liang said. “I thought Miss Xiao would marry you.”

Even though Xiao Mulian was older than Duanmu Chen, for the sake of their interests, she should have married someone from Duanmu Chen’s faction.

Xiao Mulian became the Second Prince’s concubine, which made Su Liang suspect that Xiao Family didn’t have much faith in Duanmu Chen initially, so they took advantage of the marriage to have an additional option.

Duanmu Chen looked at Su Liang and showed a mocking smile, “You didn’t guess wrong. My maternal grandfather is very shrewd, maybe even too shrewd. It’s only after my cousin died and the emperor began to favor me these past two years that Xiao Family gave up their other plans.”

Su Liang sighed softly, “It hasn’t been easy for Fourth Prince to get to where he is today.”

It seemed that his powerful maternal relatives weren’t completely loyal to him. Only when he demonstrated his abilities did he manage to control the Xiao Family.

Duanmu Chen shook his head, “It’s all thanks to them that I realized early on that if I am useless, no one would value me, even those so-called relatives.”

“You said that you once thought your cousin would marry the crown prince, what was that all about?” Su Liang asked.

Duanmu Chen seemed thoughtful, "A few years ago, I accidentally saw my cousin with Duanmu Cheng alone, but later she married Duanmu Ao."

"Your cousin is very beautiful, right?" Su Liang asked.

Duanmu Chen nodded, "She was once the most beautiful woman, with fair skin and delicate features, unparalleled in the capital city."

Su Liang frowned, "Could it be that what my grandfather inadvertently discovered was your cousin and the crown prince's... "

A glint flashed in Duanmu Chen's eyes, "It's very likely. Xiao Mulian died suddenly back then. My maternal grandfather said it was because Duanmu Ao was eager to marry a Mei Family girl. Now that I think about it, there must have been some unspeakable secrets. The Xiao Family knew about it, but they kept it from me."

Su Liang suddenly remembered something, "Back then, Xiao Muyun also said that he knew that his sister's death had nothing to do with my grandfather."

Duanmu Chen's expression darkened, "But after so long, if I continue to ask, the people of the Xiao Family will definitely not admit to it."

"Of course they won't admit it. If a woman from the Xiao Family really did something disgraceful and died because of it, how could they let people know about it?" Su Liang's gaze turned cold.

"The Su Family was wiped out, and other people who knew about it have long since died." Duanmu Chen said, "And even if I force the Xiao Family to say something, neither Duanmu Cheng nor Duanmu Ao will admit to it. Since it's a scandal involving the royal family, I can't get involved. If it gets out and my father the emperor finds out, I will be the first to suffer."

"I understand what the Fourth Prince means." Su Liang said coldly, "I just want to confirm whether what happened back then was as I suspected."

"And after confirming?" Duanmu Chen asked.

"Revenge for those who have wronged me. I won't drag the Fourth Prince into this." Su Liang said, "If something happens to both the crown prince and the second prince, the emperor may suspect the fourth prince of trying to eliminate rivals. I won't be able to help you then."

Duanmu Chen shook his head, "As long as I haven't done anything, I'm not afraid of my father's suspicions. You can do whatever you want, there's no need to discuss it with me."

Because this was originally why Duanmu Chen sought out Su Liang in the first place. He always believed that the extermination of the Su Family was related to the crown prince's faction, which was his biggest obstacle to his ascension to power.

At first, he only wanted to use Su Liang as a pawn, but he didn't expect her to have such great abilities, and their relationship evolved into a partnership.

Now, some of the fog had dissipated, and the truth was beginning to emerge.

Duanmu Chen couldn't wait for Su Liang to eliminate both Duanmu Cheng and

Duanmu Ao.

"I will find a way to make the Xiao Family confess what exactly Xiao Mulian did back then." Duanmu Chen said, "After I confirm it, I'll let you know."

Su Liang stood up, bowed, "Thank you, Your Highness, the Fourth Prince. I will return home and await the news."

"Wait a moment." Duanmu Chen called Su Liang back, "Did you have anything to do with Duanmu Che's madness?"

Su Liang's expression remained calm, "Your Highness, the Fourth Prince, it's better if you don't ask."

Duanmu Chen's eyes flickered slightly, "Alright, you can go."

Not long after Su Liang left the Fourth Prince's Mansion, she noticed that she was being followed, so she headed in the opposite direction of the Su Mansion.

After circling around the capital, she still couldn't shake off the tail. Su Liang was considering whether to return to the Fourth Prince's Mansion when the person following her showed themselves.

Seeing the familiar figure gracefully land in front of her, Su Liang held her forehead and said, "Great God, why are you scaring me in the middle of the night instead of sleeping?"

"Your vigilance is insufficient; if you discover you're being followed, you should immediately return to the Fourth Prince's Mansion. If it wasn't me tonight but someone stronger and with the intent to kill you, what would you do?" Ning Jing's eyes were tinged with a hint of coldness due to the night.

Su Liang nodded, "Yes, yes, my strength is too weak, and I don't have the ability to protect myself. So, Great God, you came out to watch over me? Just tell me, and I'll be grateful. Let's go home and practice."

On the way back, Su Liang told Ning Jing that she had obtained crucial information from Duanmu Chen that night. Before Xiao Mulian married Duanmu Ao, she had some ambiguous relationship with Duanmu Cheng.

"If it really was Duanmu Cheng and Duanmu Ao who killed the Su Family to cover up their scandal, even if they are princes, I will make them pay for their blood debts!" Su Liang's eyes were resolute..

Chapter 173: 173. Me too

The court has released the appointments for the new scholars.

Su Liang and Ning Jing received their notices and went together to the palace to pick theirs up and express their thanks.

There was a cushy position in the Ministry of Revenue that many were eyeballing, but ultimately it went to Ning Jing, the top scholar.

As Duanmu Chen had said, Su Liang joined not only the Ministry of War but also served under Lin Bojun, and held a dual role as an Imperial Physician, enjoying the salaries of two positions.

This was unprecedented in Qian Country's history.

Despite being injured, Gao Jiabao was also placed in the Ministry of War, albeit in an idle desk job that fell short of his expectations. But for now, he could only heal before making other plans.

Hidden among them was Luo Rong, who had been saved by Ning Jing and Su

Liang, but was unaware of their help. His luck held out in the military exam, placing him high in the rankings and securing him a military position as he wished.

Upon leaving the palace, Gao Jiabao invited Su Liang and Ning Jing to his home as guests.

With plans for the day already, Su Liang proposed a future visit and departed with Ning Jing for the Lin family.

Having been in the capital city for several months, Lin Shuzhi had successfully arranged the marriages for his two sons and daughter. Looking cheerful and rejuvenated, he seemed even younger than before.

Among his children, Lin Boyan's marriage was the last to be settled. After discussing it with his future in-laws, it was decided that because Lin Boyan was the eldest, he would be the first to get married, with the wedding set for next month.

The Min family was thoroughly pleased with Lin Boyan as their son-in-law and raised no objections.

Lin Shuzhi was currently busy preparing the betrothal gifts for Lin Boyan.

The mansion in the capital city that originally belonged to the Lin family was bought to house the two brothers, Lin Boyan and Lin Bojun. But with both of them soon to marry noblewomen, they would certainly bring along a considerable number of maids as dowry, leaving the house unable to accommodate everyone.

Upon learning that Lin Shuzhi was searching for a new mansion, Su Liang suggested that Wan Hui could help keep an eye out. The Wan family was well connected in business and always had the latest news.

Lin Shuzhi laughed as he said, "I've already asked Zhengzheng's parents to help look."

Previously, Lin Shuzhi proposed to teach Zhengzheng, and after the tea ritual denoting her as his student, Wan Hui became heavily invested in the affairs of the Lin family. Even before Lin Shuzhi asked, she had already thought of sending two mansions to the Lin brothers, but Lin Shuzhi firmly refused the offer, only asking her for assistance in finding suitable housing.

“Congratulations to Master. After Big Brother, Second Brother and Xueqing are married, will Master live with Big Brother?” Su Liang asked.

Lin Shuzhi had previously mentioned that once his sons were married, he planned to separate from them and let them live their own lives.

“I’m not going to live with anyone,” Lin Shuzhi said with a smile. “The Imperial College has invited me three times to teach there. I didn’t agree at first, but now that they all have their marriages arranged, once that’s taken care of, I’ll start teaching there. When all of you have children, I’ll then help look after them and teach them.”

Su Liang and Ning Jing exchanged glances, and she coughed gently before saying, “Here’s to hoping you’ll have grandchildren soon.” One couldn’t possibly expect her and Ning Jing to provide grandchildren in this situation.

Within a few months, all of their friends had settled their lifelong affairs.

Everyone else was genuine in their arrangements, while she and Ning Jing were just pretending.

Only after Su Liang and Ning Jing had a meal at the Lin’s did they leave. Lin Xueqing invited Su Liang to visit the Huguo Temple with her the next day, along with Qin Yujin and the two ladies from the Min family.

As Su Liang and Ning Jing wouldn’t start their official duties for three more days, they agreed.

On their horse ride home from the Lin Mansion, they noticed a carriage parked outside their gate when they entered the alley.

As they neared on their horses, Su Liang felt she recognized the person sitting in the coachman’s seat.

The carriage curtain was lifted, and a teenage girl, about sixteen or seventeen, looked towards Su Liang.

Her skin was fair and delicate, possessing attractive features and a distinctive mole on the right end of her brow.

Su Liang knew Yang Yu was coming, but due to some delay, her arrival kept getting postponed. Seeing her now still brought a sense of surprise. As soon as Su Liang dismounted, Yang Yu quickly rushed over and hugged her tightly,

“I’ve missed you so much!”

Su Liang patted Yang Yu’s back, her voice filled with a smile, “Me too.”

This was the young lady who had once suffered a calamity, who Ning Jing and Su Liang helped, and aside from Ning Jing, the first friend Su Liang had made in this world.

Even though it had only been about half a year since they first met, they felt no awkwardness upon the reunion.

Zhou Yuan, the steward who used to deliver letters to the Su family’s village for Yang Yu, was the coachman. A burly figure on the outside with a well-groomed beard, Zhou Yuan merely nodded at Ning Jing when he saw him looking over.

After Su Liang let go of Yang Yu, she studied her. She had lost some weight, but still appeared to be in good spirit. Her naive innocence had vanished, replaced by a sense of maturity and serenity.

“Let’s go inside and talk.” Su Liang handed the reins to Ning Jing and walked in with Yang Yu.

Yang Yu instructed Zhou Yuan to unload the bags and let him leave in the carriage.

Yang Yu greeted Ning Jing briefly before entering Su Liang’s room, where the two enclosed themselves for a private conversation.

Ning Jing returned to his quarters where he found Nian Jincheng, who was busy eating biscuits...

Because the decision for Su Liang and Ning Jing to dine at the Lin family was made on a whim, they once again forgot about Nian Jincheng.

“Do we have guests?” Nian Jincheng asked.

Ning Jing nodded, walked over to take away the biscuits, not allowing him to eat anymore.

Nian Jincheng: ...Life is too tough...

“Nian Ruxue is still missing, and the entire Nian family has been sentenced to exile. They will leave the capital city in three days.” said Ning Jing.

Upon hearing the recent events of the Nian family again, Nian Jincheng remained calm, “It has nothing to do with me.”

Not to mention that he is currently in hot water, even if he wasn’t, he wouldn’t want to involve himself with that family again.

“You’re almost fully recovered.” Ning Jing stated.

Nian Jincheng was taken aback, “Are you chasing me away?”

Thanks to Su Liang’s treatment, his body had indeed greatly improved, he didn’t need to keep resting in bed, he was originally reading a book. Ning Jing nodded, “Your presence in the capital city is too conspicuous.” “Aren’t you too...” Nian Jincheng muttered quietly.

But he knew he couldn’t compare himself to Ning Jing. Even if he were to change his identity and disguise himself, it would be very hard for him to maintain a perfect facade.

“Yang Yu is here.” Ning Jing mentioned.

Nian Jincheng froze, ‘Who?’

Upon asking, he recalled, this is a name that Ning Jing mentioned before. Apparently, she was Su Liang’s good friend and the head of the silk merchant, the Yang family.

“Are you seriously considering entrusting me to the head of the Yang family?” Nian Jincheng asked with a frown.

Ning Jing nodded.

"I am a huge trouble. What if I bring disaster upon them?" Nian Jincheng felt uncertain.

Ning Jing retorted, "If you can't even avoid this, you might as well not live."

Nian Jincheng: ...

"I really don't know how to do business." Nian Jincheng sighed.

"You can learn. We don't need you to be a secret guard, you can be Yang Yu's guard, she has money, she can support you." Ning Jing suggested.

Nian Jincheng sighed, "Is this temporary or long-term?"

He planned to follow Ning Jing and Su Liang's arrangements, but honestly, he didn't quite like this arrangement. Serving as a guard to an unfamiliar lady seemed rather awkward, no matter how he thought about it. Ning Jing shook his head, "We'll see."

It meant that the decision would be based on the situation.

Nian Jincheng sighed, "Well, I don't have any other desires at the moment, let's take it one step at a time. If you insist, I accept."

In the next room, Yang Yu shared her experiences from the past few months with Su Liang, focusing on the good parts.

But Su Liang knew, there must be many difficulties that she hadn't mentioned.

"I was surprised to learn that your marriage was false. But thinking about it, the two of you didn't really seem like a married couple." Yang Yu laughed, "However, I always thought you two were a perfect match, so I assume you're getting seriously engaged now?"

With a calm demeanor, Su Liang replied, "Depends on the mood."

Yang Yu was taken aback for a moment, then laughed again, "I see."

She had heard that the fifth prince wanted to marry Su Liang, and even went mad because of it, so she suspected that this engagement between Su Liang and Ning Jing might be to ward off suitors.

Yang Yu primarily came to the capital city to see Su Liang, and to tend to some business matters on the side, so she wouldn't be leaving anytime soon.

She brought many gifts with her, each of them of high value. Most of them were for Su Liang with a few for Ning Jing.

"With you around, I have beautiful clothes to wear every day." Su Liang joked, "I truly am the envy of others."

"What's the issue? What's mine is yours, it doesn't matter if you wear one and throw one away." Yang Yu looked serious.

Su Liang indicated that waste is wrong, and the two exchanged smiles.

Yang Yu mentioned the Li family, explaining that with the Wan, Ning, and Yang families combined forces, the Li family, which already had numerous internal issues, was in trouble and their family business was difficult to maintain.

Previously, Li San hired people to assassinate Lu Yu, kidnap Zhengzheng, and even plotted to blackmail Su Liang, but failed.

Su Liang invited Yang Yu for a meal and noticed her frown, so she asked if she was busy with something.

“Can I only stay for one meal? I’ve told Uncle Zhou to leave. I plan to stay here.”

Yang Yu sighed, “If you’re not welcoming, nevermind.”

Su Liang blinked, “Oh, you can leave now then.”

Yang Yu hugged Su Liang tightly, “I’m not leaving! It’s been so long since we’ve seen each other. I want to stay and sleep with you! And I want to chat with you all night!”

Su Liang shook her head, “Why can’t we talk during the day? Staying up late will make you look ugly.”

“Ugly is fine, I didn’t plan on getting married anyway.” Yang Yu laughed and let go of Su Liang.

Su Liang thought of someone, “What about your sworn brother, Yang Wen? I thought the two of you...”

Yang Yu looked surprised, then quickly shook her head, “We’re only siblings. Wen has had a girl he liked for a long time, they’re going to get married in two months.”

Yang Wen could also be a possibility.

“Xiaoyue is very smart and learns quickly. I originally wanted to take her to the capital city, but she wanted to stay at home. She asked me to tell you, she will definitely repay your kindness in the future.” Yang Yu said.

Su Liang nodded, “As long as she is well, that’s the best repayment for me. The same goes for you.”

Yang Yu rested her head on Su Liang’s shoulder, “I originally thought of getting the Yang family’s business in order and giving it to you, but now it seems that you probably aren’t interested and don’t have time to worry about it. I also won’t mention anything about repayment. From now on, we’ll be sisters for life, even if you refuse.”

“Who said I was going to refuse?” Su Liang’s lips curled slightly, “For the sake of new clothes, I’m very willing.”

Yang Yu knew Su Liang was joking, and couldn’t help but laugh, “Rest assured, sister will provide you with new clothes for a lifetime.”

Su Liang and Yang Yu cooked a few dishes together for dinner.

It wasn’t until mealtime that Yang Yu realized there were other people in the home besides Su Liang and Ning Jing.

“Who is this...” Yang Yu didn’t recognize Nian Jincheng.

“A fugitive on the run, Nian Jincheng.” Su Liang spoke straightforwardly. Yang Yu’s eyes widened in surprise, “How is he here...”

She had heard the name Nian Jincheng, but she never expected the most wanted man across the country was hiding in the capital, let alone in Su Liang’s home.

“He is my friend.” Su Liang said.

Yang Yu calmed down, “I see.”

“Head of the Yang family.” Nian Jincheng greeted with a salute. Yang Yu nodded, “Mr. Nian... Just call me by my name.”

“You can call me by my name, too.” Nian Jincheng said. “Alright. Nice to meet you.” Yang Yu was very polite.

Nian Jincheng nodded, “Nice to meet you.”

Ning Jing and Su Liang, who had already sat down and taken up their chopsticks, chorused, “Let’s eat.”

Nian Jincheng and Yang Yu sat down, both a little rigid. To each other, they were just strangers they had only just met.

“Yang Yu, has anyone been giving you trouble?” Su Liang asked.

Yang Yu chuckled, “No problem, I’ll be careful.”

Of course there were, quite a few in fact. After all, she was a woman managing such a huge family business. Relatives and acquaintances all wanted a piece of the pie, some even wanted to snatch it directly. Among them were those who were courteous to her, wanted to marry her, or even wanted to marry into her family. However, she had never considered these things.

“Do you need a guard?” Su Liang asked.

The hand Nian Jincheng was using to hold his chopsticks paused. He felt like he was being sold...

Yang Yu laughed and asked, “Do you know a master looking for a job that you want to introduce to me? That would be great. I will be completely assured with the person you find. The commission is guaranteed to be substantial.” Su Liang glanced at Nian Jincheng, “What do you think of him?”

Yang Yu looked at Nian Jincheng and blurted out, “Ah? You mean, let him, be my...”

Nian Jincheng kept his head down, eating in silence, with no chance to speak his mind.

“I will disguise him well, so no one will discover his true identity,” Su Liang said, “He can’t stay in the capital, and I can’t trust others with him.”

Upon hearing this, Yang Yu straightened up, “It’s not that I refuse, but I just feel, compared to his original status as a general, letting him be my guard would be beneath him. If you are just looking for a place for him, leave it to me, I assure his safety.”

Su Liang shook her head, "He wants to find something to do. He is young and unwilling to live in seclusion."

Nian Jincheng was not the kind of hermit that Ning Jing was. He was someone who yearned for friends, yearned for a home.

"In that case, then let's follow your plan," Yang Yu said, suggesting that she was comfortable with whatever Su Liang decided.

"Then let's decide it this way for now," Su Liang smiled, "Little Nian, what do you think?"

Nian Jincheng, who was several years older than Su Liang, inexplicably felt at that moment like Su Liang was his mother, Ning Jing his father, and they were discussing entrusting their mischievous and unfilial son to a reliable relative...

"I have no objections," Nian Jincheng said.

Of course, he believed that any arrangements made by Ning Jing and Su Liang were for his best interests.

Although he would jokingly complain about these two abandoning him, they were just jokes.

The key to the problem was that Nian Jincheng himself had no concrete ideas.

The only one he came up with was to be a secret guard for Ning Jing and Su Liang, but they really didn't need one, so he didn't have other thoughts about his future.

Now, he thought it was good that someone was willing to make plans for him and arrange his future clearly.

After dinner, Ning Jing cleaned up the dishes and went to the kitchen. Su Liang followed him out, saying, 'You two chat. You're both my friends, so that makes you friends too. Get to know each other.'

When she heard the closing of the door, Yang Yu felt weird, but she couldn't put her finger on it.

Nian Jincheng had the same feeling.

The two looked at each other, and Nian Jincheng said, "I don't know if you've heard of me. Although I come from a prestigious family, I'm currently a fugitive. My whole family was exiled, and I have nothing."

Yang Yu asked the question that had been troubling her, "Haven't you thought about saving your family?"

Nian Jincheng shook his head, "I was just born into the Nian family, but nobody cares about me. I consider them all as dead, and I've no connections to them anymore. What about you?"

Yang Yu sighed softly, "I used to have a brother, but he's dead now. I'd rather not talk about it. The only family I have now is Su Liang."

Nian Jincheng meant to say that the only family he had was Ning Jing and Su Liang, but he didn't want to reveal Ning Jing's identity, so he ended up saying, "Same for me."

“How did you meet Su Liang?” Yang Yu curiously asked.

Nian Jincheng replied, “She saved my life. ”

Yang Yu laughed, “Me too.”

Nian Jincheng bowed, “I hope for your kind guidance in the future.”

Yang Yu said seriously, “The feeling is mutual.”

In the kitchen, Su Liang asked Ning Jing, “Great God, are you trying to match your brother with Yang Yu?”

Ning Jing nodded slightly, directly admitting it.

On the surface, Nian Jincheng seemed highly capable, but commendably, he was so dedicated to friendship and family that he was easily fooled due to his poor judge of character and lack of decisiveness.

Yang Yu, on the other hand, seemed to be just a weak woman, but when faced with calamity, she could expend all her energy to seize opportunities for rescue, supporting a family with her strong independence, discerning right from wrong, and decisive in crises.

One was tough outside but gentle inside, and the other was soft outside but tough inside.

Ning Jing thought that they were both lonely souls, and it might be a good idea to bring them together.

After listening to Ning Jing’s opinion, Su Liang agreed, “But for such matters, it’s best to let nature run its course. If they’re destined to be together, they will naturally come together. If they’re not, forcing a pairing would be useless. We merely introduced them, and they’re both adults, so they can handle what comes next themselves. Though I never expected you to go into matchmaking.” Ning Jing replied indifferently, “I need to marry him off somehow.”

Unable to contain her laughter, Su Liang replied, “In that case, when the right lady comes along, I will also get you married off. That’s what good siblings should do.”

Ning Jing’s gaze was frosty, “Take care of yourself..”

Chapter 174: 174. I want to know the truth.

It was getting late in the night.

Yang Yu leaned against Su Liang’s arm, resting her head on her shoulder, and let out a long sigh, “I really wish I could be with you forever.”

Su Liang feigned surprise, “You... can’t be falling for me, are you?” Yang Yu laughed, “Yes! If you were a man, I would definitely marry you!”

“The last girl who said that is getting married soon. I’ll introduce you to her tomorrow.” Su Liang chuckled. “Is it Miss Lin?” Yang Yu asked.

Su Liang nodded.

Actually, Yang Yu's original personality was very similar to Lin Xueqing's. Growing up without a care in the world, they were both innocent, gentle, and sensible.

However, after experiencing hardships, Yang Yu lost her loved ones, and became independent and mature.

Nowadays, she could only be so relaxed in front of Su Liang.

Lin Xueqing's life, on the other hand, was much smoother than Yang Yu's. With the care of her father and brothers, friends, and a loving lover, she would not be forced to grow up overnight nor face the harsh realities of life alone.

Speaking of Lin Xueqing, Su Liang recalled an important matter to tend to, "Since you're here, stay with me before you leave the capital, and I'll teach you some self-defense techniques when I have time."

Yang Yu gratefully rubbed against Su Liang's arm, "You're so good to me. My body is weak, so I might not learn well, but I'll try my best."

Su Liang said seriously, "Yes, I'll have Nian Jincheng supervise you. One of his main tasks in the future is to teach you martial arts. As long as you're willing to learn, it's never too late to start. Even if you don't learn well, it's better than knowing nothing at all."

Yang Yu nodded, "I will do my best."

The next day, Su Liang called Yang Yu and Nian Jincheng together, intending to teach them disguise techniques first. She could provide the disguise medicine, but they had to master the techniques themselves.

Yang Yu and Nian Jincheng were sitting side by side across from Su Liang when Ning Jing, who was reading by the window, was called to help demonstrate.

Ning Jing raised his head, "Use them."

"Alright," Su Liang looked at Nian Jincheng and Yang Yu, "Which of you is willing to volunteer your face?"

Both of them said in unison, "I'll do it."

"Let Nian go first." Su Liang made the decision.

But just as Su Liang was about to start changing Nian Jincheng's face, guests arrived at the door.

Su Liang slapped her forehead, "I forgot. I told Xueqing yesterday that we'd go to Huguo Temple together today."

"Let's wait till you get back," Nian Jincheng got up to hide.

"Ning Jing, if you're not going, can you teach Nian how to disguise? I'll teach Yang Yu later," Su Liang asked.

Ning Jing closed his book and stood up, "I'm going."

“What are you doing with a group of girls?” Su Liang scoffed, and before she could finish her sentence, she heard Xing Yusheng’s voice from outside. Yang Yu followed Su Liang out, and Lin Xueqing hesitated, “Who is this?”

Su Liang briefly introduced them. Although they met for the first time, they had all heard Su Liang mention the other party, so they did not feel like complete strangers.

Yang Yu saw her past self in Lin Xueqing, while Lin Xueqing greatly admired Yang Yu for single-handedly managing Yang Family’s huge business, thinking it was an incredible feat.

The two chatted for a while and quickly clicked.

“Yang Yu, you and Xueqing ride in the carriage together, while we ride horses,” Su Liang made the arrangements.

After they set off, Xing Yusheng said that the Lin Family brothers had each gone to pick up their respective fiancées, and several Qin Family brothers would also join them today.

Su Liang joked, “Why isn’t anyone organizing poetry or flower gatherings? You guys are going on dates in such a peaceful Buddhist place, is that really suitable?”

Xing Yusheng coughed lightly, “Huguo Temple has beautiful scenery. In three days, my grandfather will have his birthday celebration. Today, you should have received the invitation brought by your cousin.”

“I have to think carefully about what birthday gift to prepare for the old master.” Su Liang said.

Xing Yusheng smiled, “As long as you attend, my grandfather will be very happy. Uncle Lin taught the Tai Chi techniques you taught him to my uncle. My grandfather said it was very ingenious, and he has improved a lot, so he wants to practice as well. He also wants to prepare a thank-you gift for you.”

“The old master is too polite.” Su Liang’s lips curled slightly, “But I’m looking forward to it.”

Xing Yusheng liked Su Liang’s straightforwardness.

At the foot of the mountain, bumping into Second Prince Duanmu Ao was something Su Liang didn’t expect.

She was very calm.

But Duanmu Ao was a bit resentful when meeting his enemy.

Especially since, during that incident at Huguo Temple, Su Liang had injured Duanmu Ao, causing him to suffer from a secret illness that he had been unable to cure despite trying many methods. Meanwhile, Su Liang seemed to grow more and more successful.

“When are the two top scholars going to get married? This prince will definitely prepare a generous gift! I’m sure the Second Young Master Xiao, if his spirit is in heaven, will be happy for you too! ”

Hearing Duanmu Ao's sarcastic words, Su Liang remained calm, "I'm sure the spirit of the Second Prince's concubine, if in heaven, will bless Second Prince." Duanmu Ao's expression stiffened, "What did you say?"

Su Liang smiled, "I'm sorry, is this something that can't be mentioned?"

Duanmu Ao's expression turned furious, "Your grandfather caused the death of my first wife, and you dare mock me with these words? You're courting death!"

Su Liang looked innocent, "Mock? Second Prince, you must have misunderstood, I have no such intention. I just heard you mention Second Young Master Xiao, so I thought you were missing the Second Prince's concubine."

"Su, Liang!" Duanmu Ao's eyes were cold and sharp, "Don't think that just because my father favors you, I can't do anything to you!"

Hearing this, Su Liang laughed, "Under the bright sun, in the wide-open world, is Second Prince threatening me? I'm so scared!"

Her words were full of provocative intent.

Xing Yusheng furrowed his brow. Su Liang was not an impulsive person, but today she seemed to be deliberately trying to antagonize Duanmu Ao. He wondered what her purpose was.

Many people around them saw that Duanmu Ao and Su Liang had gotten into a dispute and were not having a good time.

But in public, Duanmu Ao could only suppress his anger, toss a "We'll see" at Su Liang, and go up the mountain ahead of them.

After Duanmu Ao left, Lin Xueqing and Yan Yu got out of the carriage, Su Liang got off her horse, and they all started walking up the mountain.

"If you make things so obvious and something happens to Second Prince afterward, you will be the first one suspected." Xing Yusheng whispered to Su Liang.

Su Liang calmly retorted, "If something happens to me, the Second Prince will also be the first one suspected, won't he?"

Xing Yusheng was stunned for a moment, "That's natural. What are you trying to do?"

Su Liang shook her head, "Have you set your wedding date with Xueqing?"

When Xing Yusheng heard this, he knew Su Liang didn't plan to tell him, so he didn't ask any further.

"It's set. My eldest brother is getting married in March, my second brother at the end of April, and our wedding date is set for June 15th." Xing Yusheng said, "My grandmother thinks it's a bit late, but we consulted someone for matching our birth horoscopes, and it's the best auspicious day in the first half of the year."

"That's good." Su Liang nodded.

“What about you guys?” asked Xing Yusheng. Whether a real or fake marriage, since they had already announced it, they should go through with it.

Su Liang looked at Ning Jing, “Shall you choose a good day?”

Xing Yusheng coughed, “Can you not be so casual? My father intends to adopt you as a sworn daughter. He asked me to ask for your opinion. If you agree, the Xing family will be your maternal family.”

Su Liang was surprised, “Uncle Xing is too kind, please thank him for me, but let’s forget it.”

Having a maternal family to rely on is certainly a good thing for women. Since Xing Ji had mentioned it, he meant it seriously. If Su Liang agreed, they would go through the proper procedures for adoption, and from then on, Su Liang would be a member of the Xing family.

Su Liang believed that Xing Ji didn’t appreciate her excellence and want to use her for something, but just wanted to support her.

Though she appreciated his kindness, she couldn’t accept his offer.

In fact, Su Liang quite liked Xing Ji and his mother, the problem was herself. Both she and Ning Jing had “thunder” on them, and although they wouldn’t cut ties with their friends, they still needed to maintain some distance.

Xing Yusheng smiled, “That’s fine, too. Although I want to hear you call me brother, I feel it’s inappropriate when I think about you having to call someone your godmother if you acknowledge my dad as your godfather.”

Xing Yusheng never hid his dislike for Miao Family’s lady.

Su Lianz didn’t sav anvthing either. Since she wasn’t Xing Yushenq’s real mother, there was nothing wrong with him not liking her. It was good to maintain a distance and not hurt each other.

When they arrived at Huguo Temple, they waited for a while before the Qin siblings, Lin Family brothers, and Min Family sisters arrived.

Su Liang introduced Yang Yu, whom she brought along, to everyone.

Qin Yujin was surprised, “I didn’t expect the master of the rumors in the Yang Family to be so young and beautiful. You are really amazing. I also want to thank you. The skirt I am wearing today is a gift from Sister Liang. I think it was thanks to your good fortune.”

Yang Yu smiled and said, “Miss Qin, you are being too polite. It’s my honor.”

Su Liang met the Min Family sisters again. They were both beautiful and elegant, with refined manners and speech.

When everyone went to play in the back mountain of Huguo Temple, Su Liang thought of Cheng Yun, whom Yan Shiba had asked her to take care of, and decided to go and see him.

Ning Jing, who had always been low-key in the crowd, also followed Su Liang and left the back mountain.

“It’s like a big group date.” Su Liang complained softly, “If I had known, I wouldn’t have come.”

Even though they were engaged, unmarried men and women would still be gossiped about if they went out alone. So even though Xing Yusheng went to see Lin Xueqing every day, he always brought Qin Yujin along as a companion.

Su Liang thought their sweet interactions were cute and well-matched, but she felt calm and even a little bored.

The hustle and bustle and sweetness belonged to others, while what she most wanted to do was to hang Duanmu Ao up and beat him...

When the two arrived at the Scripture Pavilion, they were informed that Cheng Yun was no longer there and had gone to the abbot's house.

Huguo Temple's abbot was called Master Pu Hui, whom Su Liang had heard of.

"You must be very familiar with the abbot, right? Why don't you just not go?" Su Liang whispered. Ning Jing had once stayed at Huguo Temple for a long time and didn't want to be recognized by the high monks.

"Alright." Ning Jing agreed, changed direction, and quickly disappeared from Su Liang's sight without saying where he was going.

Su Liang thought he might be going to see the place where he once lived, so she didn't bother. After asking for directions, she went to find the Abbot's courtyard.

Cheng Yun was sweeping the courtyard when he heard someone calling his name. He looked up and saw it was Su Liang, so he placed the broom against the wall corner and walked over.

"Amitabha, does benefactor Su need something from this humble monk?" asked Cheng Yun.

Su Liang nodded, "Please come with me."

Cheng Yun followed Su Liang to a large tree. After confirming that there was no one around, Su Liang asked Cheng Yun, "Has Yan Jiujiu not come to see you recently?"

Upon hearing this, Cheng Yun sighed and shook his head, "Benefactor Yan came a few days ago. Benefactor Su, can you..."

"Yes, I'll persuade her to stay away from you," Su Liang smiled. "There's nothing else. I came to Huguo Temple with some friends today and just wanted to see how you're doing."

Cheng Yun nodded, "Thank you for your concern, Benefactor Su. This humble monk is doing well."

"Does the Scripture Pavilion at Huguo Temple have any medical books?" Su Liang asked.

Cheng Yun was slightly taken aback and then nodded, "There are some medical manuscripts."

He had previously been assigned to sort out the ancient books in the Scripture Pavilion, so he knew about it.

Su Liang then asked, "Is the Abbot here? I would like to borrow a book."

"Benefactor Su, please wait here. This humble monk will go and ask the Abbot," Cheng Yun replied and then entered the courtyard again.

Su Liang stood under the tree and waited. About a quarter of an hour later, Cheng Yun came out and invited her in.

Master Pu Hui looked compassionate and kindly, smiling at Su Liang when he saw her, "I heard from Cheng Yun that you are a highly skilled doctor, Miss Su, and you would like to borrow the medical books from Huguo Temple?"

Su Liang nodded, "Yes."

"Very well. Cheng Yun, go to the Scripture Pavilion and bring the medical books for Miss Su," Master Pu Hui ordered.

"Thank you, master." Su Liang expressed her gratitude.

"Please return the books promptly once you are done, Miss Su," Master Pu Hui smiled.

Su Liang followed Cheng Yun to the Scripture Pavilion. She waited outside while Cheng Yun went in and came out with several books wrapped in a coarse cloth, "A total of five."

"Thank you." Su Liang had made the request on a whim after seeing Cheng Yun and hadn't expected to actually get the books. It was an unexpected delight. She planned to take them home and copy them.

When Su Liang took the books to the back mountain, she had just seen a figure when a masked man in black appeared, brandishing a sword and attacking her!

Today the weather was clear and bright, and there were many young masters and ladies on the back mountain of Huguo Temple. It wasn't long before someone noticed Su Liang fighting with someone.

As the news spread, Xing Yusheng and the others hurried over.

Lin Bojun stepped in to help but was no match for the assassin.

It was only after Xing Yusheng brought Qi Yan and Qi Jun over that the assassin gave up and left.

"Are you alright, Su Liang?" Yang Yu was visibly tense.

Lin Xueqing and Qin Yujin also ran over, looking Su Liang up and down in concern, fearing she might be injured.

Su Liang breathed a sigh of relief, "I'm fine. But that assassin was really skilled. If it hadn't been for Second Brother Lin's help, I might not have been his match."

Xing Yusheng wanted Qi Yan and Qi Jun to chase the assassin but was stopped by Su Liang, "Don't bother chasing him. I don't want anyone to get hurt because of me."

Thus, the news of the assassination attempt on the Martial Arts Champion Su Liang quickly spread within Huguo Temple.

Someone mentioned that before going up the mountain, Su Liang had had a conflict with the Second Prince, Duanmu Ao.

When the two incidents were put together, it was easy for people to suspect that the person who tried to assassinate Su Liang was connected to Duanmu

The group ate vegetarian dishes at Huguo Temple and went down the mountain. Yang Yu, thinking of Nian Jincheng who was alone at home, brought a portion of the temple's vegetarian dishes for him.

When they returned home, seeing Ning Jing entering Su Liang's room, Yang Yu knew they had important matters to discuss and went to see Nian Jincheng instead.

"I wonder if Duanmu Chen has gotten any information from the Xiao Family." Su Liang said.

Today at Huguo Temple, the person who tried to assassinate her was actually Ning Jing in disguise.

This was called striking first to gain the advantage. Everyone knew that she and Duanmu Ao had a deep conflict, so to avoid Duanmu Ao playing the victim and framing her, they decided to act first and pin the blame on Duanmu Ao.

After all, Ning Jing had nothing better to do.

At this moment, in the Prime Minister's Mansion.

Duanmu Chen sat in Prime Minister Xiao Qi's study, both the young and the old silent.

As the tea grew cold, Duanmu Chen spoke again, "Grandfather, I originally didn't want to interfere with Cousin's affairs. But I didn't expect Su Yuanzhou's granddaughter to be alive and return to the capital city, and she clearly has ill intentions. I admit I tried to win her over, but it's not easy. Recently, I found out she's investigating the extermination of the Su Family. This is why I came here today specifically to ask my grandfather about the cause of my cousin's death."

Xiao Qi sighed, "A little girl who hasn't grown up yet, even if she can do martial arts, isn't worth your concern."

Duanmu Chen snorted, "Grandfather, don't underestimate Su Liang. The death of the Su Family is directly related to my cousin. I need to confirm that my cousin was harmed by someone and that the Xiao Family and my cousin did not make mistakes in that matter. Otherwise, if I should win Su Liang over, only to be stabbed by her from behind, it would ruin everything."

"The Xiao Family is certainly not at fault!" Xiao Qi said with a solemn face.

Duanmu Chen's eyes narrowed slightly, "Grandfather, I will ask one last time, what exactly happened back then and why did my cousin die? I want to know the truth!"

Xiao Qi's face turned even uglier, and after another moment of silence, he finally said, "It was all because of the crown prince that Mulian died! I don't know who killed the Su Family, but it must have been the doing of the crown prince and the Second Prince!"

Chapter 175: 175. It's time

Duanmu Chen took a sip of cold tea, and the teacup was placed on the table, making a dull collision sound. His eyes glinted coldly, "Tell me everything you know, grandfather. I can let go of the Xiao family's past concealments from me."

Xiao Qi's face looked terrible, "You have misunderstood, it's not that we wanted to hide it from you, it's because..."

Duanmu Chen said coldly, "Grandfather, at this point, I just want to hear something useful. "

Two years ago, Duanmu Chen respected Xiao Qi, hoping that the Xiao family would fully support him.

But times had changed.

Xiao Mulian was dead, Duanmu Chen's influence grew, and the Xiao family could only serve him.

This was also the main reason why Xiao Qi no longer dared to conceal the truth from Duanmu Chen in their current situation.

It should be noted that this was not the first time Duanmu Chen had asked Xiao Qi about this matter, but he had always been met with evasion.

Xiao Qi sighed deeply, "I have only you as a grandson. If you were a few years older, I would have arranged for you and Mulian to marry early. As long as the emperor does not object, it is best for the family to have a closer relationship with the royal family."

Duanmu Chen remained silent, just listening to his words.

After all, he was the legitimate grandson of Xiao Qi, and his greatest support was the Xiao family.

Furthermore, the Xiao family had built ties with the crown prince's faction through marriage in addition to supporting him.

Duanmu Chen was not foolish enough to think that this was because Xiao

Mulian was older than him and that it was inappropriate for her to marry him. After all, Xiao Mulian could marry someone else, not necessarily a royal family member.

In plain terms, Xiao Qi was cunning and wanted to keep all his options open.

"The crown prince was the first to take an interest in Mulian. We originally thought that he would ask for an imperial decree to grant the marriage, leaving the Xiao family with no choice but to accept. Who would have known that when the imperial matrimonial decree finally came, but it wasn't for the crown prince, it was for the second prince."

"Why?" Duanmu Chen asked. At that time, he was in a period of hiding his strength and biding his time, and he did not have much presence in the royal family in order to protect himself. Therefore, he knew what had happened, but he didn't know the reasons behind it and did not dare to interfere, lest it lead to more problems and harm himself.

Xiao Qi sighed again, ‘Mulian accidentally met the second prince in Changchun Garden. The second prince coveted her beauty and asked the Empress Dowager and the Empress to beg for permission to marry her.’”

Xiao Qi shook his head, “Once the imperial matrimonial decree was issued, what could the crown prince do? He couldn’t let the emperor and the people see two brothers fighting over a woman.”

“I remember that after my cousin married Duanmu Ao, she seemed to have been living well,” Duanmu Chen said.

Xiao Qi gave a bitter smile, ‘Mulian actually liked the crown prince in her heart. The second prince’s mansion was full of women, and Mulian’s life wasn’t good, but she just put on a brave face in front of others.’”

“What did my cousin do with the crown prince behind Duanmu Ao’s back?”

Duanmu Chen asked.

Xiao Qi’s face looked terrible, “It’s the fault of the Xiao family for not teaching our daughters well. Mulian suffered at Duanmu Ao’s place, and the crown prince went to provoke her, so...sigh! Before Mulian’s marriage, she often went to Changchun Garden to watch performances, and the crown prince arranged to meet her there secretly several times.”

“How did you find out about this, grandfather?” Duanmu Chen found a problem. Xiao Mulian would not have let anyone know about her doing such disgraceful things, including her own family.

Duanmu Cheng used to be a frequent visitor to the Changchun Garden, but he hadn’t been there for the past two years.

He and Xiao Mulian daring to meet secretly in Changchun Garden and commit such an adulterous act sounded unbelievable. However, Duanmu Chen knew that there were many such dirty affairs within the royal family and nobility, all hidden from the light. To satisfy their private desires, some people would resort to any means and completely disregard morality and decency.

“One day, Mulian suddenly returned to her mother’s family, looking very pale. She told her mother she might be pregnant. This should have been a good thing, but Mulian was very scared and wanted to have an abortion behind the second prince’s back. She was afraid of being discovered in the second prince’s mansion, so she had to return to her mother’s family.” Xiao Qi said with a cold face, “Under pressure, she finally admitted that the timing would suggest that the child should be the crown prince’s. If the second prince found out, she would be dead.”

“And so you helped her get rid of the child?” Duanmu Chen asked.

However, Xiao Qi shook his head, “We hadn’t had a chance yet, when the second prince came to take her back home.”

“What happened afterward?” Duanmu Chen asked. He had never known about Xiao Mulian’s previous pregnancy, which had been a secret until now.

Xiao Qi sighed deeply, "We received the news of Mulian's death the next time we heard from the second prince's mansion. They said she had contracted a sudden illness, and she was gone. It all happened in the course of just three days. We don't know what happened during those three days. Because Mulian had wronged the second prince in the first place, the Xiao family felt guilty and didn't dare to make a scene. We simply accepted it."

"What about Su Yuanzhou?" Duanmu Chen asked the crucial question.

Xiao Qi frowned and shook his head, saying, "I don't know why Su Yuanzhou was implicated and lost his entire family. I guess it's because Mulian had an affair with the crown prince, which was discovered by the second prince. He couldn't tolerate her but couldn't let her die in his mansion either, so he made Su Yuanzhou the scapegoat. In such a situation, naturally, the Imperial Physician couldn't be called. Su Yuanzhou's medical skills were good and he was well-known, but he was just a commoner, which made it easier to eliminate him."

Duanmu Chen knew that it was not the case. He learned from Huang Bo that Su Yuanzhou was exterminated because he knew the secret of the nobles.

If Xiao Qi's words were true, then Su Yuanzhou probably had the misfortune to witness Duanmu Cheng and Xiao Mulian's secret rendezvous, or even accidentally found out that Xiao Mulian was pregnant with Duanmu Cheng's child.

As for this, Duanmu Chen had no intention of sharing it with Xiao Qi, "Is there anything else you want to tell me?"

Xiao Qi sighed deeply, "As for Mulian's affair, that's all I know. Regarding the others, I don't know and don't dare to ask the crown prince and the second prince. I didn't tell you the truth back then, not because I didn't trust you, but because, one, it's a scandal that we don't want to be brought up again. And two, it's for your protection. At that time, your mother was being marginalized by the Empress Dowager and the Empress in the palace, and the Emperor didn't esteem you. Even if you knew about those things, what could you do? If you impulsively did something, the crown prince and the second prince wouldn't let you live."

"I understand your painstaking efforts, Grandfather." Duanmu Chen said this, but in his heart, he knew that Xiao Qi was just comforting him.

To Duanmu Chen, the Xiao family was nothing more than a pawn and deserved to be a pawn. There was no real sincerity between them.

Xiao Qi asked solemnly, "Do you really want to win over Su Liang? What do you plan to do?"

"I need to think about it." Duanmu Chen said, "Regarding Cousin's pregnancy, who else knows besides you and my uncle and aunt?"

Xiao Qi shook his head, "No one else. All the maids and old women who served Mulian were gone after her death. I guess they were dealt with by the second prince. At first, we were worried that he would target our family, but he didn't do anything. However, we wouldn't dare to let such a scandal spread either."

After leaving the prime minister's mansion, Duanmu Chen returned to the fourth prince's residence and asked Chang'an to find out where Su Liang was.

At this time, Su Liang and Ning Jing were together, flipping through the medical books they borrowed from Huguo Temple. They skimmed the contents first to decide if the books were worth copying.

They found five in total – Su Liang examined three, while Ning Jing looked at two.

Both of them felt that these books were treasures and had to be copied so they could study them slowly.

“Let’s each choose one to copy first.” Su Liang said, ‘We’ll decide on the rest later. ’

Ning Jing nodded in agreement.

They each chose one book they thought was most useful at the moment, and set aside the other three for now.

In the next room, Nian Jincheng was eating the vegetarian dishes brought back by Yang Yu from Huguo Temple.

Nian Jincheng knew that it wasn’t Su Liang and Ning Jing who thought of him but must have been Yang Yu’s doing, so he thanked her.

“There’s no need to be polite. We’re friends, aren’t we?” Yang Yu smiled.

Nian Jincheng nodded earnestly, “Yes.”

“Once I learn the disguise technique, you can go out freely. Su Liang said he would teach me self-defense techniques, so I’ll have to trouble you to teach me martial arts later. I may not be able to master them, but I’ll do my best.” Yang Yu said.

“I’ll do my best as well.” Nian Jincheng said with a half-smile.

As Nian Jincheng ate his meal, Yang Yu was trying to think of something to talk about to break the silence, so she mentioned the new friends they met today and praised the two young masters of the Lin family for their outstanding appearances.

“Miss Qin and Second Master Lin are truly a match made in heaven.” Yang Yu sighed sincerely.

Nian Jincheng agreed, “Indeed.”

In reality, Yang Yu couldn’t hide her envy for Lin Xueqing and Qin Yujin. If she had a choice, she wouldn’t want to be a lonely person, fighting with her relatives, stewards, and those with ill intentions. She always had to be on guard against people trying to deceive or harm her.

Yang Yu felt that Qin Yujin and Lin Xueqing were the ones really enjoying life, while she just wanted to live life as best as she could.

But envy aside, Yang Yu also knew that everyone has their own fate. The person she truly admired was Su Liang, her role model.

Hearing Su Liang calling them, Yang Yu and Nian Jincheng went over.

Ning Jing went to the study to copy the book, and Su Liang taught Yang Yu and Nian Jincheng the disguise technique, first demonstrating it on Nian Jincheng’s face.

Originally, Nian Jincheng had a handsome and rugged appearance, but after Su Liang's disguise, he became plain and ordinary.

Yang Yu took a look and offered an opinion, "I think it's a bit strange. His appearance doesn't quite match his temperament."

Su Liang nodded, "Indeed. You try."

Yang Yu was stunned, "I don't know how to do it yet."

"I mean, you do it." Su Liang encouraged Yang Yu to take the initiative, "Don't be polite, his face is thick-skinned, it won't be ruined."

Nian Jincheng: ...Is Su Liang sure she's not insulting me?

So, Su Liang told Yang Yu how to do it, and Yang Yu learned Su Liang's techniques to disguise Nian Jincheng. In the process, there were a few mishaps, which made Nian Jincheng's face asymmetrical and looked funny. She and Su Liang laughed, while Nian Jincheng silently sat, treating himself as a sculpture...

Finally, after Yang Yu finished, she was very satisfied, and Su Liang also thought it was not bad.

She brought a bronze mirror for Nian Jincheng to look at himself, "What do you think?"

Nian Jincheng looked at the unfamiliar face in the mirror, a handsome man with a refreshing temperament, very different from his original appearance, but somewhat familiar.

"Doesn't this face seem familiar?" Su Liang asked with a smile.

Nian Jincheng nodded, "It seems familiar, but I can't remember."

Su Liang pulled Yang Yu over and stood side by side with the mirror, "Do you see it? Isn't it similar?"

Yang Yu and Nian Jincheng looked at each other and were both stunned.

"Is it like me?" Yang Yu was also surprised, "I didn't deliberately imitate my own face."

"People tend to like faces similar to their own." Su Liang chuckled, "It's normal, this is the most familiar and comfortable face for you. I think it's good-looking, Xiaonian, you can use this face temporarily."

Yang Yu also laughed, "It's really unintentional. If you don't like it, you can disguise yourself."

Nian Jincheng looked at the face in the bronze mirror again and shook his head, "There's nothing I don't like, just like this."

"Then can I tell others that he is my long-lost half-brother from the same father? Give him a new identity?" Yang Yu asked.

Su Liang thought it was okay.

Who knew Nian Jincheng would oppose, "I don't want to be anyone's brother anymore."

His two sisters had left him with a deep psychological shadow.

Knowing this, Yang Yu just said she was joking.

“In that case, you and I, like Ning Jing, will be sworn siblings.” Su Liang suggested.

Yang Yu blinked, “But he doesn’t want to be a brother, so, sworn sisters and brothers? I’m willing to be a sister.”

Nian Jincheng looked somewhat embarrassed, “You’re both younger than me.”

“That’s not important.” Su Liang shook her head, “If you don’t object, let’s decide on that.”

Yang Yu smiled, “To be honest, I don’t want to have a brother anymore either.” Her own brother Yang Feng was a bad person, and her half-brother from a different mother _

Yang Yu’s relatives of trying to seize the Yang Family’s property. After helping Yang Yu get the Yang Family business back on track, he no longer interfered with the Yang Family’s affairs and went to live his own life. “Xiaonian, call me sister.” Su Liang joked half-heartedly.

Nian Jincheng shook his head, “I can’t say it.”

“It doesn’t matter. You can think of a pseudonym for yourself.” Yang Yu said. Nian Jincheng frowned, “I can’t think of anything suitable for now.”

“Then let’s call you Ya Yan.” Su Liang said. It’s just the reverse pronunciation of Yang Yu’s name, so it’s more convenient.

Su Liang taught the two disguise techniques and let them practice using each other’s faces.

Yang Yu was very generous, while Nian Jincheng felt a little embarrassed, and didn’t dare to get started at first. It took Yang Yu to urge him, saying it’s alright, they’re friends, and not to think too much about it for the sake of the task at hand.

Su Liang was just about to prepare more disguise medicine when she heard Chang’an’s voice outside.

Nian Jincheng immediately got up and hid behind the screen.

Su Liang went out and saw Chang’an standing in the courtyard, “Miss Su is at home, that’s great. My master would like to invite Miss Su to our mansion for a chat.”

Su Liang had a thought, “Has the Fourth Prince visited Prime Minister Xiao’s home today?”

Chang’an nodded, “Yes, he has been to the Xiao family.”

“Alright. I’ll go there tonight.” Su Liang thought that matter must have made some progress.

When it was quiet late at night, Su Liang entered the Fourth Prince’s mansion as though she knew the way well.

She knew that Ning Jing was secretly following, but did not show up.

When she met with Duanmu Chen, there was a pot and two cups in front of him.

“Your Highness the Fourth Prince, it seems that there is progress in the matter?” Su Liang went straight to the point.

Duanmu Chen poured two glasses of wine and handed one to her.

Su Liang took it and put it down again, “I don’t like to drink.”

Duanmu Chen smiled, “Are you afraid I’ll poison you?”

Su Liang shook her head, “I just don’t like it, it doesn’t taste good.”

“Then forget it.” Duanmu Chen remembered that he had known Su Liang for so long, she seldom drank wine. After drinking a glass, he spoke again, telling Su Liang the information he had obtained from Xiao Qi today.

The two had been working together for a long time and communication was essentially free of nonsense.

In the end, Su Liang’s face darkened, “The royal family has committed unsightly misdeeds, and to cover up, innocent people must be buried with them?”

Duanmu Chen sighed, “At this point, my grandfather should no longer dare to deceive me. Although I still don’t know how your grandfather got involved, I sympathize with him and your other wrongly killed family members. What do you plan to do?”

Su Liang’s eyes were icy, “How does Your Highness the Fourth Prince hope I will act?”

Duanmu Chen focused on the pouring wine, “What I want, you naturally understand without me saying it. But how you do it, I don’t care, just don’t involve me.”

After leaving the Fourth Prince’s mansion, Su Liang returned home, entered from the back door, stopped in the garden, and called for Ning Jing.

Ning Jing appeared behind her.

Su Liang turned and looked at him, “Do I have a dark cloud on my brow?”

Ning Jing shook his head, “Do you want to kill?”

Su Liang nodded, “It seems that heaven does not want you to stop, that’s great. I want to see what Duanmu Ao has to say, it’s about time..”

Chapter 176:176. The Cost of Lying

“Have you seen Xiao Mulian before? Do you know what she looks like?” Su Liang asked Ning Jing.

Ning Jing nodded, “I met her once.”

“Alright,” Su Liang pondered, “I have a plan, let me know if it’s feasible.”

Residence of the Second Prince.

Early in the morning, Duanmu Ao threw a tantrum, smashing two precious porcelain vases. The servants were frightened into silence.

The women in the backyard hadn't slept together with Duanmu Ao for more than a month because he was still recovering from his injury. The Imperial Physician advised that he should abstain from sex for now.

The Second Prince's wife, Lady Mei of the Mei Family, came over and asked if Duanmu Ao had a nightmare.

Upon hearing this, Duanmu Ao's anger intensified, "Get out! All of you, leave!"

After Lady Mei and the servants left, Duanmu Ao sat there with a dark expression, clenching his fists, his veins bulging.

Last night, he saw the already deceased Xiao Mulian standing by the bedside. At that moment, he was scared out of his wits, but when he blinked, she was gone. It wasn't just a nightmare, it seemed like Xiao Mulian's ghost really came to find him...

By the time Lady Mei returned, Duanmu Ao had calmed down a bit. She mentioned that Changchun Garden was hosting a new play, and asked if he wanted to go watch it together.

Duanmu Ao did not like watching plays, but he enjoyed the flexible female performers.

In the backyard of the Second Prince's residence, there was a maid who used to play a young female lead in the Changchun Garden.

But when he heard about Changchun Garden, Duanmu Ao's face darkened, "I won't go!"

Lady Mei went with some other servants.

But not long after, a maid brought tea and mentioned that Lady Mei had returned from Changchun Garden.

"They said all the trees in Changchun Garden mysteriously fell down last night. It's so strange that some people think it's haunted, and the garden is now closed." The maid said.

Duanmu Ao's face stiffened, "How can there be ghosts during the day?" The maid shrank her neck and said, "This servant deserves death."

But soon after, Duanmu Ao sent his aide to Changchun Garden to investigate.

The aide returned and reported, "There are no signs of anyone trespassing. We didn't even find any footprints. Those trees didn't show any evidence of being cut down either. Dozens of trees, all fell in a single night, and all of them fell in the same direction. It's really bizarre."

The owner of Changchun Garden wanted to keep this incident a secret, but it was impossible to cover it up.

Duanmu Ao's face grew increasingly ugly, "Which direction did the trees fall toward?"

The aide respectfully replied, "This subordinate went in and saw that all the trees were pointing in the southwest direction."

Duanmu Ao's eyes narrowed. The Crown Prince's mansion and the Second Prince's mansion were adjacent, just southwest of Changchun Garden...

"Someone must be playing tricks!" Duanmu Ao snorted coldly. But his clenched fists never loosened, indicating that he was not at all calm.

In the afternoon, Crown Prince Duanmu Cheng came to the Second Prince's residence.

When the two brothers met, they both had bruises under their eyes.

After dismissing the servants, they sat facing each other, their expressions somber.

"What does the Crown Prince want from me?" Duanmu Ao asked.

Duanmu Cheng sighed deeply, "How's your health?"

Duanmu Ao was immediately annoyed, "There's no need for you to worry! I'm in great health!"

Duanmu Cheng gave a bitter smile, "Are you still blaming me?"

Duanmu Ao snorted, "What do I have to blame you for?"

Duanmu Cheng shook his head, wanting to say something but hesitating. In the end, he never brought up that unspeakable incident again.

The two eventually parted ways unhappily, as if they hadn't said much of anything.

Su Mansion.

Nian Jincheng, facing a mirror, disguised himself and then turned to ask Yang

Yu, "Do I look like him?"

Yang Yu was confused, "Like who?"

"The Second Prince." Nian Jincheng looked back at the mirror, "I forgot you haven't seen him."

"Does the Second Prince really look like this? It's so ugly." Yang Yu snorted lightly. She didn't know Duanmu Ao, but she knew that Su Liang's family tragedy was related to the Second Prince. After Su Liang came to the capital, Duanmu Ao had caused her trouble several times, even sending an assassin to kill her, but had failed.

Nian Jincheng nodded, "Indeed, very ugly."

"Are you done?" Su Liang entered and sized up Nian Jincheng's face. She thought the disguise was still lacking and asked him to make some adjustments.

Seeing Su Liang so serious, Yang Yu realized that Nian Jincheng wasn't just practicing disguise using any random person's face. So she asked, "Are you planning to have him pose as the Second Prince?"

"Yang Xiaoyu, you're really smart." Su Liang confirmed Yang Yu's guess. Yang Yu frowned, "This...isn't it very dangerous?"

Nian Jincheng hesitated for a moment, looked at Yang Yu, and saw genuine concern in her eyes. He felt warmth in his heart and explained, "It's alright. I will be careful."

"You need to be careful, and you need to learn the Second Prince's mannerisms well. Don't mess up Su Liang's plans." Yang Yu said seriously, even though she wasn't aware of the plan.

Nian Jincheng: ... Although it made sense, he thought Yang Yu was just worried about his safety... Su Liang revealed a meaningful smile, "Don't be nervous, just relax."

That night, Duanmu Ao drank strong tea and lay awake. He arranged for a martial arts master to protect him in stealth.

He stayed awake until dawn without seeing Xiao Mulian again.

With bloodshot eyes, he breathed a sigh of relief, dismissed everyone, and immediately fell asleep.

When Duanmu Ao woke up, he was met with a blood-red scene. He was so scared that he rolled out of his bed!

His bed canopy and sheets were all covered in blood, sending shivers down his spine!

The servants rushed in and were also frightened half to death.

After verifying that Duanmu Ao was unharmed, they discovered that no one had entered the room.

It was like seeing a ghost in broad daylight!

In the afternoon, the Crown Prince came again.

"I suspect someone is playing tricks," said Duanmu Cheng with red eyes. "Last night, someone broke into my room and spilled a lot of blood on my bed."

Duanmu Ao frowned, "The same happened to me!"

Duanmu Cheng's expression was shocked, "I saw Xiao Mulian standing by the bed the night before! She disappeared in the blink of an eye!" Duanmu Ao's face went pale, his voice low, "I saw her too."

"And the trees in Changchun Garden..." Duanmu Cheng couldn't finish his sentence, as they both already understood each other's thoughts.

"There's no such thing as a ghost. If there really was one, why would it appear now instead of earlier?" Duanmu Ao said sternly.

Duanmu Cheng sighed deeply, "That's what I thought too. I'm always suspicious that someone is scheming in secret, but there's no evidence."

Duanmu Ao's eyes narrowed, "It's Su Liang! It has to be her! I said a long time ago that she should be killed as soon as possible, but you insisted that I act cautiously! She's now the Martial Arts Champion, favored by our father. Taking action against her won't be easy!"

Duanmu Cheng's face darkened, "I spent a lot of money hiring an assassin from Yanyun Building to kill Su Liang. But for some reason, there's been no news. Maybe her strength is even greater than

what we've seen. Or maybe there's a master protecting her, someone even Yanyun Building can't harm."

"Damn it!" Duanmu Ao smashed his fist on the table, "She's back for revenge!

The strange things that happened these past two days must be her doing!"

"But as long as we can't catch her, there's nothing we can do." Duanmu Cheng said grimly, "The incident with Xiao Mulian must not be revealed."

Duanmu Ao sneered, "I said it long ago, her amnesia is fake. She knows everything. If she were to spread that incident..."

Duanmu Cheng's face stiffened, "It's impossible! Xiao Mulian is dead. Without any evidence, no one will believe her! If she dares to spread rumours, she can just wait for her execution! Father would never tolerate such slander against the Royal Family!"

Duanmu Ao glared at Duanmu Cheng coldly, "Slander? If you hadn't cuckolded me, how could this happen? If it weren't for our brotherly ties, I would not have tolerated this!"

Duanmu Cheng had long expected that dredging up the past would provoke Duanmu Ao. He was prepared for this but still looked embarrassed, "I've said it many times, it was Xiao Mulian who seduced me. I'm a normal man who couldn't resist. I'm sorry."

"Forget it, it's just a lowly woman." Duanmu Ao snorted, "At this point, we need to figure out how to deal with Su Liang. The longer this drags on, the more uncertain things will become. Who knows what she'll do!"

Duanmu Cheng's eyes were deep, "I have a plan. Why not use our fifth brother?

He's gone mad for Su Liang and would do anything for her."

Su Liang arranged freshly baked cookies on a plate and saw Ning Jing enter.

"How is it?" Su Liang asked.

Ning Jing washed her hands, picked up a warm cookie, tasted it, and nodded,

"Delicious."

Su Liang tapped her forehead, "I was asking about your surveillance of Duanmu

Ao. Did you gain any information?"

Ning Jing finished the cookie and told Su Liang about Duanmu Cheng and Duanmu Ao's plan to use Duanmu Che to kill her.

"They guessed that I was the one pulling the strings? Not surprising." Su Liang sneered, "Duanmu Cheng does have some brains. His plan is not bad, and it's exactly what I want. It also gives your brothers a chance to unleash their true selves."

At the quietest time of the night, Nian Jincheng pulled at his clothes and whispered to Ning Jing, "Are you sure you want to do this? I'm not worried about getting into trouble myself, but I'm afraid it will ruin the plan."

Ning Jing's expression was indifferent, "If you can't even handle this, what use are you?"

Nian Jincheng took a deep breath. He really wasn't good at this kind of scheming, but he had no choice but to go along with it.

Two people sneaked into the second prince's mansion. Half an hour later, Ning Jing left carrying a sack.

The guard who finally drove away the powerful assassin realized that he might have fallen for a decoy strategy. He asked around outside the door and heard "Duanmu Ao's" voice, confirming that he was fine and relaxed.

Nian Jincheng, disguised as Duanmu Ao, sat at the bedside, took a long breath, and mentally practiced Duanmu Ao's usual expressions and mannerisms.

Su Mansion.

A lamp was lit in an empty courtyard that was usually vacant.

Duanmu Ao woke up from a stupor, feeling a severe pain in the back of his neck; his last memory was of a black shadow flashing by, and then he fell into unconsciousness without seeing anything clearly.

As Duanmu Ao propped himself up with both hands and slowly raised his head, he saw a familiar face and cried out in horror, "You... You have no fear of death! Don't you know this could kill you?"

Su Liang held a long whip, sitting on a chair with a half-smile, gazing at Duanmu Ao. "You and your brother have been working hard to kill me, but you've both failed. Can you guess why I've brought you here? There's a reward if you get it right."

Duanmu Ao's face darkened considerably, "Su Liang, if you don't want to die, let me go now! Everyone in the capital knows that there is enmity between us, and even my father is aware of it! If I go missing, you'll be the first one to be suspected!"

Su Liang nodded, "Indeed. That's why I didn't dare to act rashly. It wasn't easy for me to become the Martial Arts Champion, and I don't want to cause trouble for my friends because of my own actions."

"Then you dare to touch me? You must have a death wish!" Duanmu Ao snapped.

Su Liang smiled, "Your disappearance would indeed be very troublesome, but who would know about it?"

Duanmu Ao widened his eyes, "What...what do you mean?"

"Without you, Qian Country still has a second prince." Su Liang sneered, "No one even knows you're missing, so how could I be suspected?"

"You...you found someone to replace me?! " Duanmu Ao turned pale.

"Hehe, your hidden ailment hasn't healed yet, has it? How many days have you been unable to let any woman near you? This works out perfectly for me, so I don't have to worry about my brother who's replacing you being tainted by your woman." Su Liang

chuckled, "At that time, I hadn't thought that far ahead, it's just a coincidence. Quite clever, don't you think?"

Duanmu Ao panicked completely, "The people who serve me, and my father and mother will definitely recognize it!"

"Are you so confident?" Su Liang scoffed, "But that's not important now, and it's not what you should be worried about. Tell me, how did Xiao Mulian die?"

Who killed the members of my family?"

Duanmu Ao's face turned from green to white, "Xiao Mulian was killed by your grandfather! Your entire family committed suicide out of guilt!"

Su Liang gently shook his head, stood up, and wrapped the whip around Duanmu Ao's neck, tightening it with each coil. As Duanmu Ao's expression became one of terror and he struggled to breathe, Su Liang looked calm, "Do you remember how many people in my family were hanged? How does this feeling feel? I have plenty of time to play this game with you, letting you fully experience what my family members felt just before they died. Not one can be missed. "

Just as Duanmu Ao was about to be strangled to death, Su Liang suddenly loosened his grip.

He collapsed on the ground, clutching his throat and coughing incessantly.

Su Liang stood not far away, watching him coldly, "When you and Duanmu Cheng were discussing things in the middle of the night with Xiao Mulian, I was the one disguised as her. I also splashed blood on your bed. I heard everything you and your brother discussed today."

Looking at Su Liang's eyes, Duanmu Ao felt as if he had seen a ghost,

"How...how high is your martial arts?!"

There were masters protecting both him and Duanmu Cheng, but they could do nothing to stop Su Liang!

Su Liang sneered, "Why don't you guess?"

In fact, it was not her but Ning Jing who was responsible. However, Duanmu Ao didn't need to know that.

"You heard everything..." Duanmu Ao's face turned extremely ugly.

"I brought you here because I wanted to hear something you haven't told me yet." Su Liang picked up the whip and sat back down, "How did you find out about Xiao Mulian's affair with Duanmu Cheng in Changchun Garden, and that she was pregnant with his child?"

Duanmu Ao remained silent.

Su Liang picked up the whip and stood up, "Then let's go again."

Duanmu Ao shuddered, "The nanny in the mansion noticed that Xiao Mulian's monthly period was delayed, and she informed me that I might become a father. But I hadn't touched her during that time! She kept making excuses that she was uncomfortable and told me to go find other women!"

Su Liang's expression was emotionless, "Go on."

"I brought Xiao Mulian back, and at first, she denied it. Later, she admitted that the child in her womb belonged to Duanmu Cheng!" Duanmu Ao gritted his teeth, "I confronted Duanmu Cheng, and he had no choice but to admit it. He said that Xiao Mulian seduced him! That vile woman did such a thing, so she didn't deserve to live! It was Duanmu Cheng who suggested getting rid of her and pretending nothing happened! It was also his idea to ask your grandfather to come and treat Xiao Mulian, saying that she had met with him in Changchun Garden the day before and told him about the child. I killed Xiao Mulian with my own hands. But everything else was Duanmu Cheng's doing! He shamelessly covered up his wrongdoings! If you want revenge, you should find him! Why are you after me?"

"From what I hear, you sound quite innocent." Su Liang said coldly, "But if I remember correctly, during your private conversation with Duanmu Cheng earlier today, he did mention that it was your negligence that caused you to fail in killing me. It appears that the death of my family members was your doing."

Duanmu Ao's face froze, "It wasn't me who did it! I was aware of it, but I didn't stop it. Even if I had tried to stop it, it would have been useless! You misunderstood; it was Duanmu Cheng's negligence, not mine!"

"My hearing is fine." Su Liang said, as the whip flew up and wrapped around Duanmu Ao's neck again, tightening fiercely, with icy eyes, "Don't think you can clear yourself by shoving everything on Duanmu Cheng. When I captured you, I never intended to let you leave alive. If you have the guts, you can bite your tongue and kill yourself. If you want to live a moment longer, just confess honestly.. If you lie, the price you'll pay is that you'll be worse than dead!"

Chapter 177: 177. Counteract the plot with a plot

Duanmu Ao was nearly choked unconscious several times, but until dawn, he refused to change his statement. He insisted that everything was orchestrated by Duanmu Cheng, and he was simply aware, but he was not the one who harmed the Su family.

Su Liang made Duanmu Ao swallow a numbing agent, gagged him and locked him in a room, "I will come back. Take your time."

Duanmu Ao's face was blue and collapsed on the ground, his gaze towards Su Liang seemed to want to tear her apart violently.

Today was the day when Su Liang and Ning Jing formally took office.

Ning Jing reported to the Ministry of Revenue early in the morning.

Su Liang went to the Lin Family, followed Lin Bojun to the Ministry of War, and then went to the military camp outside the city.

Yang Yu left Su Mansion in the middle of the day to take care of business.

Approaching noon, Yang Yu was in his shop in the capital looking at account books, he heard guests in the shop talking about the second prince, Duanmu Ao.

Hearing what they were discussing, Yang Yu frowned and sighed, a trace of worry passing in his eyes.

It was Su Liang's first time seeing the armies in this world. Compared to those in her previous life, they were primitive, but there were many similarities, such as the intense daily training the soldiers underwent.

Lin Bojun led Su Liang to the watchtower. They watched the impressive spectacle of the soldiers training below.

"Xiaoliang, you are courageous and strategically minded, qualities that make a good General. The Emperor also values you highly. Your primary task is to familiarize yourself with the art of war. Since you never slack off in training, you don't have to participate in these drills." Lin Bojun said, smiling.

According to the rules, upon first entering the military camp, even deputy generals have to participate in ordinary daily training routines for three months, not only to adapt to the military camp, but also to temper their character, preventing arrogance or impatience.

Originally, Nian Jincheng and Lin Bojun went through the same process, as would Luo Rong, who is becoming a military official.

However, Lin Bojun had already sought Duanmu Yi's permission for Su Liang to be exempted from boot camp.

It was not because of other reasons, but because Lin Bojun understood Su Liang and knew her daily training regimen was no less intense than that in the military camp. He felt that the basic training in the military camp might be a waste of time for Su Liang as she has a better training plan of her own.

However, Su Liang shook her head, "Let's follow the rules. There should be no special treatment in the military camp, otherwise, we cannot win over the people."

She was the only woman in the camp, making her a unique presence.

As for whether she will lead an army into battle in the future, Su Liang did not have much thought about it for now.

But no matter what, her attitude has always been: either don't do it, or do it well.

Only in this way, when the time comes, will she have the strength to perform.

Lin Bojun paused, then laughed, "It seems I was overthinking. I thought you would not be interested in such simple training. If you are willing to participate, then it's even better."

"I saw Luo Rong, I'll just go with him." Su Liang said, "Second Brother Lin, do you have any military books I can borrow? I'll take them back so I can read them at night."

Lin Bojun nodded, "All right! Off you go!"

Su Liang was dressed in simple martial attire. After leaving the watchtower, she joined Luo Rong's squad in their jog.

Luo Rong was surprised to see Su Liang beside him, "I thought General Su wouldn't have to participate in boot camp."

Su Liang smiled slightly, "Just the same, only I came later. Shall we see who's faster?" With that, she sprpassed 1.110 Rong and ran ahead-

After one lap, all the men in the squad had fallen behind Su Liang.

One by one, they gathered their strength and began to chase after her.

The training mission was ten laps. When Su Liang joined, more than half had already completed two laps. In the end, Su Liang was the first to finish.

Lin Bojun had been watching from the watchtower and was not surprised by the result. Perhaps those men thought Su Liang had been practicing high -level martial arts, but in fact, she would go for a jog every morning. Both her speed and endurance were extraordinary.

Comparatively, Luo Rong was a strong martial artist, but honestly, he had never really jogged like this and was a little overwhelmed.

By noon, the phrase "The Martial Arts Champion, Su Liang, is a born soldier" had spread throughout the military camp.

Because she could quickly master each training, she performed so perfectly in all of them that others couldn't help but acknowledge her.

At first, when some people saw that Su Liang did not join Luo Rong in boot camp, they grumbled that she depended on her status as a woman to receive special treatment, assuming she believed that merely having good martial arts would be enough on the battlefield.

But Su Liang's performance once again left these men with a new respect for her.

Su Liang was training in the military camp, while Ning Jing was drinking tea in the Ministry of Revenue.

Just before noon, a shocking news spread across the capital city: Following the fifth prince, Duanmu Che, the second prince, Duanmu Ao, also exhibited signs of sudden madness!

Initially, everyone said that Duanmu Che had a mental breakdown due to his unrequited love for Su Liang.

However, it is well-known that Duanmu Ao and Su Liang were at odds. Not long ago, they had a public dispute at the foot of the Huguo Temple mountain, and it was reported that Su Liang had been assassinated that day!

Duanmu Ao would not go insane because of love like Duanmu Che did, yet he got exactly the same illness, which was very strange.

Therefore, a rumor started spreading: both Duanmu Che and Duanmu Ao had incurred the wrath of Su Liang and were poisoned by her! She used this method to avenge the two princes, while taking advantage of the opportunity to treat them to gain merit in front of the Emperor!

Having been the center of attention in the capital city for the past month, Su Liang's reputation wavered. Even though what was proven were all positives, the negative rumors were like a flood that burst through its banks, once given an opening they surged and spread rapidly.

Not to mention, there were people inciting things behind the scenes.

Duanmu Che had been getting sick for several days in a row. He always acted crazy during the night and recovered during the day.

Duanmu Yi originally thought that Duanmu Che had psychological problems related to Su Liang, but it was not her fault.

But today Duanmu Ao also suddenly went "mad". The Imperial Physician said that it was impossible to get close to him, no one could control him, and he could only be temporarily locked in his room. It was best to ask Su Liang for help.

Duanmu Yi couldn't help but remember...after the first time Duanmu Che went mad, he claimed that Su Liang had poisoned him...

Duanmu Yi didn't think that Su Liang could poison Duanmu Che at that time.

But now, Duanmu Yi couldn't rule out the possibility that Su Liang would poison Duanmu Ao.

After all, even though Duanmu Yi didn't care about the Su Family's affairs, as Su Liang returned alive to the capital city, it would be normal for her to be motivated to investigate the truth and seek revenge.

Duanmu Yi sent someone to the military camp to invite Su Liang, and ordered the Crown Prince Duanmu Cheng and the Fourth Prince Duanmu Chen to come to the palace.

Duanmu Cheng and Duanmu Chen were the first to arrive.

"Father Emperor, I just saw the second royal brother, he doesn't recognize anyone now, and behaves like he is mad." Duanmu Cheng looked upset, "the Imperial Physician said that it's the same as when our fifth brother was ill."

Duanmu Chen frowned, "When I entered the palace, I heard a rumor that Su Liang poisoned the second royal brother and the fifth royal brother out of revenge, and is using this opportunity to gain merit."

Duanmu Yi looked grave, "Do you think Su Liang would poison them?"

Duanmu Cheng said sternly, "I believe that she is very suspicious. She and the second royal brother have always been on bad terms."

However, Duanmu Chen shook his head, "I don't think Su Liang would do such a thing. This kind of method works best only once. Using it twice would raise suspicion. She wouldn't be so foolish."

"Who do you think could have done this, Fourth Brother?" Duanmu Cheng asked coldly.

Duanmu Chen sighed, "If Su Liang is suspect, I believe it is more likely that someone is deliberately scheming against the heirs of Qian Country. They started by targeting the physically weakest Fifth Royal Brother, and knowing that Su Liang had a disagreement with the Second Royal

Brother, they poisoned him as well, and cast the blame on Su Liang to eliminate the most outstanding talent of Qian Country.”

“Are you trying to make excuses for Su Liang, Fourth Brother?” Duanmu Cheng scoffed.

Duanmu Chen remained calm, “Crown Prince Brother, I have such assumptions because as soon as the Second Brother had his incident, the defamatory rumors about Su Liang spread throughout the city. But in principle, nobody would know about the Second Brother’s illness, let alone such a bizarre one. And yet, they were so quick to heap all the blame on Su Liang. I believe that the incident with the Second Brother indicates that someone really did poison him and the Fifth Brother, and the rumors were a plot by the poisoner to frame Su Liang.”

Duanmu Cheng’s face stiffened, “What you said makes some sense.”

Duanmu Chen turned to Duanmu Yi and respectfully said, “Father Emperor, the rumor that Su Liang poisoned the two princes to gain merit through treatment is utterly baseless. Her medical skills don’t need such an elaborate scheme to prove.”

Duanmu Yi’s face darkened, “But who is plotting in the shadows?”

Duanmu Chen pondered, “If I had to guess, the one that came from Yin Country is quite suspicious. It’s said that the Southern Barbarians have many bizarre poisons. And she harbors a great animosity towards our Martial Arts Champion, Su Liang.”

Duanmu Cheng furrowed his brows, “Man Ya? Didn’t she get sick because of the change in water and soil, and hasn’t gone out from the inn for a few days?”

“Don’t you find it strange, Crown Prince Brother? She was fine for the first two days after she arrived, but then suddenly fell ill,” Duanmu Chen said.

Duanmu Cheng’s eyes flickered but he didn’t respond further. Duanmu Yi’s face was frosty, “You may all leave now and be careful.”

Duanmu Chen rose, “I will go see the second royal brother.”

Duanmu Cheng was about to leave when Duanmu Yi stopped him, “Crown Prince, stay.”

Without looking back, Duanmu Chen walked away and left the palace, directing his carriage straight to the Second Royal Brother’s mansion.

“Master, it wasn’t Miss Su who poisoned the second prince, was it?” Chang’an asked.

Duanmu Chen’s eyes were deep, but he didn’t answer.

He defended Su Liang with sound reasoning in front of Duanmu Yi, but in reality, he thought Su Liang was the culprit.

But at the same time, Duanmu Chen felt something was amiss; he had anticipated Su Liang would target Duanmu Ao, but he didn’t expect her to use the same method as she did with Duanmu Che.

What was odd was that if Su Liang had indeed done it, it would be unthinkable for her to spread rumors and falsely accuse herself, wouldn’t it?

It can be denied indeed, but it would be easily muddled and mismanaged. This muddy method didn't seem like Su Liang's style.

Duanmu Chen, full of doubts, arrived at the mansion of the second prince but he didn't see Duanmu Ao. He only heard shouting and the sound of objects breaking from inside his room, and no one dared to enter.

Duanmu Chen decided to wait at the mansion of the second prince for Su Liang's arrival.

While waiting, Duanmu Chen thought of Duanmu Cheng, who had been left in the imperial palace, and suddenly had a revelation!

Duanmu Cheng had attempted to shift all the blame onto Su Liang today. It was evident that his efforts were thwarted one by one by Duanmu Chen. But, if Duanmu Chen had not been there and Duanmu Yi had been slightly suspicious of Su Liang already, with Duanmu Cheng adding fuel to the fire, things would have gone awry.

It wasn't strange that Duanmu Yi harbored suspicions, because Su Liang indeed was somewhat mysterious. And this kind of mystery wasn't favored by those in power.

Duanmu Chen defended Su Liang as one of his own, so even if he suspected that she was the perpetrator, he would do his best to clear her name.

But at this moment, as Duanmu Chen listened to Duanmu Ao's furious shouts, he suddenly had another potential theory: it couldn't be that Duanmu Ao was staging a madness act and falsely accusing Su Liang, could it? Duanmu Cheng knew, and was possibly even a co-conspirator, and the rumors were spread by them!

Duanmu Chen now knew the truth that Duanmu Cheng's affair with Xiao Mulian led to the annihilation of the Su family. Su Liang was also aware.

Of this, Duanmu Cheng and Duanmu Ao were the clearest. As Su Liang was growing in power, they would certainly be apprehensive, fearing Su Liang's retaliation, so they wanted to eliminate Su Liang first.

This explanation made everything clear!

Man Ya came to negotiate and she was just a pawn of the royal family of Yin Country. Being a wise person, she wouldn't stir up trouble inviting disaster.

Duanmu Chen, on the other hand, thought Su Liang's typical strategy would be to directly chop off Duanmu Ao.

Unfortunately, Duanmu Cheng and Duanmu Ao's plans were far from clever. Even if Duanmu Chen hadn't defended Su Liang, she would surely be able to prove her innocence.

A cold smirk flashed across Duanmu Chen's lips. Duanmu Cheng and Duanmu Ao panicked, but this unwieldy alliance between brothers whose bond was already unstable against Su Liang was bound to fail.

"Miss Su is coming!" Someone shouted.

Duanmu Chen steadied himself and stood up.

Watching Su Liang's arrival from a distance, Mei, the second prince's wife, said coldly, "She is the one who harmed the second prince! Get her out of here!"

Duanmu Chen sighed softly, "Second sister-in-law, I just came from the palace where I saw the emperor. The emperor instructed no one to hinder Doctor Su's treatment of the second prince."

With these words, it was evident that Duanmu Yi had faith in Su Liang.

The Imperial Physician, Gao, stepped forward and gave Su Liang a simple briefing on the situation.

Su Liang came over and paid her respects to Duanmu Chen. Duanmu Chen waved her off, "You don't need to be so formal, rush to treat the second prince."

Su Liang nodded, "Yes."

As the crowd watched, she opened the door, slipped into the room, and closed the door behind her.

Clutching a handkerchief, Mei asked, "Could she... could she harm the prince?"

Duanmu Chen sat back down, "Second sister-in-law, don't worry. We're all here, and she wouldn't dare do anything to harm the second prince."

Yet, in his mind, Duanmu Chen thought Su Liang would definitely take this chance to torment Duanmu Ao, and he was looking forward to it.

However, even though Duanmu Chen had guessed the truth about Duanmu

Ao's madness and that Duanmu Cheng and Duanmu Ao conspired to frame Su Liang, he could not possibly guess that the "Duanmu Ao" who was currently at the mansion was an imposter.

The real Duanmu Ao, not yet chopped by Su Liang, was her prisoner now, in a state worse than death.

And Duanmu Cheng, of course, was oblivious.

Nian Jincheng, impersonating Duanmu Ao, was disheveled, having smashed up everything in the room, making it look like chaos.

Seeing Su Liang coming in, he breathed a sigh of relief but dared not speak casually, afraid of being overheard.

Su Liang made a gesture, Nian Jincheng hesitated, then, caught on, and kicked over the stool, falling onto the ground.

The people outside heard everything becoming quiet in the room.

Duanmu Chen raised his voice asking, "Doctor Su, how is the second prince

Su Liang's voice echoed from inside, "I have restrained the second prince."

Duanmu Chen breathed a sigh of relief, "That is good."

Su Liang squatted next to Nian Jincheng, whispering in a voice only they could hear, "Well acted. Keep it up and make it more natural."

Nian Jincheng whispered back, "When you leave, would my disguise be discovered if anyone comes close to me?" "Yes." Su Liang nodded.

Nian Jincheng's forehead twitched.

Su Liang said, "You are pretending to be insane, not for real. I would expose you. Just prevent anyone from getting close."

Nian Jincheng blinked, "What then..."

"Then, you betray Duanmu Cheng." Su Liang whispered, "The emperor will ask you why you insisted on killing me and what has been done to the Su Family back then."

Nian Jincheng's eyes sparkled, "An opportunity to tell the truth!"

"Be careful not to be discovered and don't get too nervous. If your cover is blown, follow the back-up plan, as long as you don't die, we will save you." Su Liang told Nian Jincheng the information she had gotten from interrogating Duanmu Ao the previous night.

"Are you ready? The next part of the act will be more intense." Su Liang gave Nian Jincheng's shoulder a pat.

"Has anyone been assigned to protect Yang Yu? She is close to you and can hardly avoid being noticed." Nian Jincheng suddenly said.

Su Liang gave him an eye-roll, "Be serious. Once this matter is resolved, I will help you get a wife."

As Nian Jincheng was lost in thought, Su Liang lunged at him with a golden needle.

Nian Jincheng's pupils shrank, and he bellowed according to their plan,

"Damned woman, what are you doing?"

Everyone outside heard "Duanmu Ao"'s roar which made the Imperial Physician wrinkle his brows, "The second prince woke up so quickly?"

The next moment, Su Liang opened the door and bolted out while "Duanmu Ao" pursued her with a knife.

Su Liang took cover behind Duanmu Chen and coldly said, "Fourth Prince, the condition of the second prince is radically different from the fifth. He's not sick; he's categorically trying to kill me!"

"You definitely wanted to kill me!" Nian Jincheng widened his furious eyes: his hair covered most of his face. He sounded very much like Duanmu Ao, having been trained by Ning Jing.

Duanmu Chen looked shocked, "Quickly stop the second prince!"

Chang'an immediately charged forward.

Relieved, Su Liang said with a frown, "As a doctor, I can confidently affirm that the body of the second prince has no issues. I just cannot comprehend why he would do this."

Duanmu Chen sighed, "In that case, return for now, I will inform Father

Emperor right away.”

Su Liang packed up her medicine box and looked at Nian Jincheng one more time. He had already been forced back into his room by Chang'an, and he slammed the door shouting, “Get out! All of you get out!”

Duanmu Chen looked worried, “Second prince, please calm down.” After finishing his sentence, he left with Chang'an.

Upon exiting the second prince's mansion and getting into the carriage, a confused Chang'an was just about to ask Duanmu Chen what had happened when he heard a soft chuckle from inside the carriage.

“Why is the master laughing?” Chang'an asked.

Duanmu Chen replied cheerfully, “What a beautiful day.”

Chang'an looked at the cloudy sky of the afternoon and felt very perplexed.

In the Imperial Palace.

Duanmu Cheng was kneeling on the ground, soaked in sweat. “Father Emperor, I really don't know how my younger brother died. I am also not clear about what happened to the Su Family.”

Duanmu Yi's face was grim, “In that case, let's ask the second son and see what he has to say..”

Chapter 178:178. Confrontation

It's about to rain.

After leaving the residence of the second prince, Su Liang rode home alone.

Passersby on the road looked at her with strange eyes, whispering behind her back.

As she passed by the Embroidery Workshop, she heard Yang Yu's voice and dismounted to enter.

“Are you okay?” Yang Yu held Su Liang, looking her up and down.

Su Liang nodded, “I have something to do. I want to take a bath.”

She had been training in the military camp for half a day before suddenly receiving orders to return to the city. She hadn't even washed her face nor changed her clothes.

Yang Yu let Su Liang sit down and poured her a cup of hot tea. “Go home and take a bath later. When I saw you riding a horse to the second prince's mansion, I was worried. Did everything go well?”

Su Liang held the teacup with a smile, “Are you worried about me or about someone else?”

Yang Yu seriously said, “Both.”

“I'm fine, and he's safe for now.” Su Liang said.

With a sigh of relief, Yang Yu said, “Knowing what you're doing, I suddenly feel that my struggle with the Yang family is not worth mentioning. You're too bold.”

Su Liang took a sip of tea and smiled without speaking.

But Yang Yu sighed, "Of course, I support you. I'm just afraid something will happen to you."

Su Liang changed the subject, "Have you seen Ning Jing?"

Yang Yu nodded, "He went home an hour ago. I didn't call him."

"It seems that job in the Ministry of Revenue is really quite leisurely." Su Liang finished the tea. "Are you busy? If not, go home with me. Someone told me to take good care of you, afraid that you might get dragged into trouble."

Yang Yu chuckled, "He should take care of himself first. Let's go home."

Due to her uneasiness, Yang Yu had hardly checked her account books. She packed them up to take home to review later.

Su Liang rode with Yang Yu, sharing one horse, attracting a lot of attention.

However, Yang Yu was a new face in the capital city. Everyone knew that the current head of the Yang family was a young lady, but they didn't know it was her.

When they arrived home, they found Wan Hui and Lu Yu had come with their child.

Wan Hui had known Yang Yu since they were children, and the last time they saw each other was several years ago. They had recently re-established contact through letters because of Su Liang.

Today's reunion was quite emotional for both of them.

Yang Yu had prepared a gift for Zhengzheng, who happily took it and went to find his Uncle Ning.

Wan Hui and Yang Yu chatted as Lu Yu went out to the restaurant to get wine and food.

After bathing and changing her clothes, Su Liang tidied up, and Lu Yu returned.

The rain outside grew heavier, but the room was warm and cozy.

Wan Hui brought up the rumors that circulated in the capital today, her expression worried. After all, it involved two princes, and if Su Liang were to be saddled with the blame, the consequences would be very serious.

"Don't worry. Nothing will happen." Su Liang remained calm.

Wan Hui sighed, "I trust you. You're very capable, but when dealing with the royal family, you still have to be extra careful."

Xing Yusheng sent Qi Jun to inquire about Su Liang. Receiving the reply "it's okay," he returned to inform Xing Yusheng, who went on to inform the Lin Mansion and Duke Qin's Mansion.

After dinner, Lu Yu and Wan Hui left first, leaving Zhengzheng to sleep in Ning Jing's bed. Ning Jing said he would take him home later.

Yang Yu went to check the account books, while Su Liang and Ning Jing copied medical books they had borrowed from Huguo Temple. As for interrogating Duanmu Ao, Su Liang decided to wait until night to do so.

Everything seemed peaceful and calm in Su Mansion.

In the Imperial Palace.

Duanmu Chen went to the palace after leaving the second prince's mansion. Duanmu Yi asked with a serious face, "How is the second brother?"

Duanmu Chen replied respectfully, "Imperial Physician Su came from the military camp outside the city to treat the second prince, but... Imperial Physician Su said the second prince was not ill and wanted to kill her. The second prince said that it was Su Liang who wanted to kill him."

Duanmu Yi's face darkened, "What exactly happened?"

Sitting next to him, Duanmu Cheng's back was soaked with sweat as he spoke, "Father, how could the second brother be alright? In my opinion, Su Liang poisoned him and then cured him, taking the opportunity to assassinate the second brother and lying that he tried to kill her first!"

Duanmu Chen sighed, "I don't know what happened, so I let Su Liang go home first, and the second prince is still at home."

"Fourth brother, you go back first." Duanmu Yi looked at Duanmu Chen.

Duanmu Chen saluted and withdrew.

Upon turning around, he saw a large bead of sweat slipping down Duanmu Cheng's forehead.

Duanmu Chen sneered in his heart, a good show was about to begin, but unfortunately, he could not watch it.

With things turning out like this, Duanmu Yi would have to investigate the truth behind Xiao Mulian's death if he had any intention of using Su Liang.

As Duanmu Chen left the palace, a drizzle began to fall.

The carriage passed by Changchun Garden, shrouded in green trees, its red-lacquered main gate still tightly closed.

Chang'an glanced at it, his expression inexplicable, "I don't know what's going on with the trees in Changchun Garden, rumors outside say there are ghosts in the garden."

Duanmu Chen said in a melancholy tone, "Some people have ghosts in their hearts, which makes the ghosts come out."

Chang'an didn't understand but felt that his master's mood was exceptionally good today. Even when speaking sarcastically, the ending tone of his voice was rising.

Nian Jincheng knelt before Duanmu Yi with his head down, saying solemnly, "I didn't fake my illness! I have no idea why I lost my senses. Su Liang put a pill in my mouth and suddenly it got better! She had a golden needle and was about to stab me in the center of my eyebrows! Even if she didn't dare to kill me, she wanted me to lose my temper, force me to kill her so she could pretend to be innocent and clear herself!"

Duanmu Cheng's face darkened, "Father, the second brother was framed by Su Liang!"

"And at Huguo Temple, I didn't send anyone to assassinate her, but she accused me and I could not defend myself!" Nian Jincheng said coldly, "Father, I am telling the truth!"

“Father, I think Su Liang must be a spy sent by someone, intent on causing chaos in Qian Country!” Duanmu Cheng’s expression was full of urgency, “The incident with the fifth brother must have been her doing!”

Duanmu Yi’s face was as dark as ink, “If it was Su Liang’s doing, how did the rumors spread?”

Duanmu Cheng was stunned for a moment, then pondered, “I think this is also one of Su Liang’s cunning schemes, to clear herself in this way!”

“That’s right!” Nian Jincheng coldly said, “Her tricks these past days were to scare me and the crown prince! There could be no one else but her!” Duanmu Cheng nodded subconsciously but suddenly realized that something was wrong!

As expected, Duanmu Yi asked coldly the next moment, “What tricks? Scaring you both? Explain!”

Nian Jincheng’s face stiffened, “No... nothing...”

Duanmu Yi looked at Duanmu Cheng, “Crown Prince, you tell me!”

Duanmu Cheng’s biggest fear was that Duanmu Ao would blurt out the truth about Xiao Mulian’s death. However, what he feared the most had come.

At the moment, under Duanmu Yi’s cold gaze, Duanmu Cheng had no choice but to state, “Back then, Su Yuanzhou treated the second brother’s sister but ended up killing her instead. Knowing the gravity of his mistake, he committed suicide with his entire family. Su Liang must have blamed the second brother and thought that the Su family’s demise was the second brother’s fault. These past days, she has been scaring the second brother with her tricks. I only knew about it when I went to find the second brother.”

Upon hearing this, Duanmu Yi grabbed the inkstone and smashed it heavily on the desk, “Why did the second brother say that Su Liang scared both of you?

What does it have to do with you? What tricks did she play?”

“The second brother misspoke.” Duanmu Cheng said with an ugly expression.

Nian Jincheng glanced at Duanmu Cheng, his eyes flickering and lowered his head again, “Yes, I misspoke, it has nothing to do with the Crown Prince.”

“Then you tell me, why did Su Liang want to harm my second son?” Duanmu Yi said coldly, “Is it just because her family died, and she took her anger out on him? That’s all?”

Nian Jincheng immediately nodded, “Yes, that’s it! When Su Yuanzhou killed Mulian, I didn’t hold Su Liang accountable, but she was unrelenting!”

“Fine.” The chill in Duanmu Yi’s eyes intensified. “Then you tell me, when your wife was seriously ill, why did you choose to invite Su Yuanzhou to treat her instead of so many other imperial physicians?”

Any normal person would know that there was something amiss in certain matters.

Although Su Yuanzhou was a good doctor, he was just an ordinary citizen. His family's death wouldn't have caught the emperor's attention.

With the death of the Su family, the incident was also resolved.

It was only because Su Liang was outstanding enough to attract Duanmu Yi's attention, that he would now question his two sons about the death of some commoners.

This was the reason Su Liang chose to progress through the Military Exam.

She needed to have value in order to seek justice for her family; otherwise, no one would care.

Duanmu Chen cooperated with Su Liang and secretly helped her precisely because her value to him was getting higher and higher. He was protecting his own self-interest.

Su Liang could have chosen to assassinate Duanmu Cheng and Duanmu Ao in secret. With Ning Jing's help, it wouldn't have been impossible.

But using such a simple and crude method would make it difficult to reveal the truth about the incident.

Su Liang didn't want her family to die in vain.

She wanted the masterminds behind the crimes to know that they were paying the price for their evil deeds and that it was because of them that they would lose everything and not die well!

At this moment, Nian Jincheng lowered his head in the face of Duanmu Yi's questioning, unable to speak.

He was not a good actor. Before the incident, many people perceived him as being stiff and upright.

However, after Su Liang had a plan, she went over with Ning Jing all the possible scenarios that might happen, one by one.

It was as if they had rehearsed the current situation in advance.

Nian Jincheng was inexperienced, but he was smart and brave. His nervousness earlier was more due to not wanting to ruin Su Liang's plan.

Now, he hadn't been discovered to be fake; he was already "getting into the swing of things."

Just now, Duanmu Cheng thought that "Duanmu Ao" had impulsively brought up Su Liang's trickery.

However, it was actually intentional on Nian Jincheng's part.

Seeing that Nian Jincheng didn't speak, Duanmu Yi turned his eyes to Duanmu

Cheng, "Is the Crown Prince aware of this?"

Duanmu Cheng lowered his eyes, covering his panic, shook his head, and replied, "I am not aware of this matter. Perhaps Su Yuanzhou had once treated my younger siblings, so they asked for him to come."

Hearing Duanmu Cheng's "hint," Nian Jincheng immediately nodded, "Yes! It was Xiao Mulian who asked for Su Yuanzhou. I don't know why she insisted on asking him!"

From beginning to end, the brothers' panic and cooperation were evident to

Duanmu Yi.

“Since you both say it was a misunderstanding, why not let Su Liang come to explain?” Duanmu Yi said coldly, ordering Su Liang to be summoned to the palace.

Duanmu Cheng originally wanted to say that the matter had nothing to do with him and asked to withdraw first. But he was afraid that if he left, “Duanmu Ao” would say something he shouldn’t, causing the situation to spiral out of control. Therefore, he stayed seated, feeling like he was sitting on pins and needles.

“Second son, get up,” Duanmu Yi’s voice didn’t reveal any emotion.

Nian Jincheng thanked him and got up, sitting across from Duanmu Cheng. He was unsure of Duanmu Yi’s thoughts. Despite all the suspicious things they’d said, Duanmu Yi hadn’t pursued further questions.

However, he was hoping for Su Liang to arrive. With her there, he would feel more at ease.

The Empress Dowager and the Empress both sent people to inquire about the situation. Duanmu Yi said he was discussing matters with his two sons and had no time, and even sent for a meal. It appeared as if he believed their words and was trying to mediate the conflict between them and Su Liang.

Since Nian Jincheng didn’t know what Duanmu Ao was allergic to, he barely touched the chopsticks, saying that he was feeling very stuffy and couldn’t eat. So he just drank some tea.

When the palace attendants arrived at Su Mansion, Su Liang was diligently copying a medical book. It not only helped her practice calligraphy but also allowed her to thoroughly read the medical book.

After learning that Duanmu Yi had summoned her to the Imperial Palace, Su Liang changed her outer clothes, habitually carried her medicine box, opened her umbrella, and went out.

Ning Jing sat by the window and watched Su Liang’s figure disappear in the rain before turning her gaze back to continue copying the books.

“Uncle Ning...” Zhengzheng woke up and walked out of the inner room with her bare feet.

Ning Jing put down his pen, stood up, and picked up Zhengzheng.

“Where’s Auntie?” Zhengzheng lay on Ning Jing’s shoulder, looking at the rain outside.

“She went to the palace.” Ning Jing replied.

Zhengzheng then asked, “Is the palace fun?”

Ning Jing shook his head, “Not fun.”

Zhengzheng asked with a grin, “When will Uncle Ning and Auntie give me a little sister?”

After thinking for a while, Ning Jing said, “Wait for your aunt to come back and ask her.”

After paying her respects, Su Liang was granted a seat, right next to Nian Jincheng.

Nian Jincheng kept his head down and didn't look at Su Liang.

Duanmu Yi spoke up, "Second brother, explain the situation to Su Liang."

Su Liang listened calmly as Nian Jincheng recounted the events of the past. He said that asking Su Yuanzhou to come was Xiao Mulian's idea and that the deaths of Su Family had nothing to do with him.

After Su Liang listened, her beautiful eyebrows slightly furrowed.

Duanmu Yi's command was filled with dignity, "Today, I summoned all of you to clear up the misunderstandings and to prevent any more incidents in the future. Su Liang, do you have anything to say?"

With reverence, Su Liang replied, "Your Majesty, my grandfather has always taught me to examine myself first in any situation and never to speak recklessly without evidence."

From the moment Duanmu Cheng saw Su Liang, he had a bad premonition and felt even stranger after hearing her words.

Duanmu Yi nodded, "Your grandfather is right."

Su Liang continued, "As for the death of my family, I do suspect that they were

Duanmu Cheng blurted out, "Didn't you say that you shouldn't speak recklessly without evidence? What evidence do you have?"

With a calm expression, Su Liang replied, "Your Highness, the crown prince, I lost my memory after being injured before, but I have recently regained some of it and remembered what my grandfather said before he died."

Duanmu Cheng's face visibly stiffened as he heard Su Liang continue, "Your Majesty, the culprit behind my family's deaths should not be the second prince, but someone else."

Even Duanmu Yi was visibly stunned.

Nian Jincheng's face lit up, "Father, it's all a misunderstanding! The death of the Su Family has nothing to do with me!"

Su Liang sighed deeply, "Your Majesty, my grandfather was summoned by the second prince's residence to treat the former second prince's consort. Because something happened to the consort, he returned home in a panic and mentioned that she was pregnant. It was one life taking two, and he didn't even know what had happened!"

Upon hearing the phrase "one life taking two," Duanmu Cheng accidentally knocked over a teacup on the table, and Duanmu Yi frowned intensely, "What did you say?"

With her eyes downcast, Su Liang replied reverently, "The former second prince's consort was pregnant when she died, and my grandfather could not have been mistaken. This is also the reason why I think there's something fishy about the whole affair. Your Majesty doesn't seem to know about this, and the second prince didn't mention it earlier. It's even stranger if he didn't know either. My grandfather was puzzled as to why the consort would be in trouble. I still don't understand why something so good as her being with child could lead to her death. Moreover, there were so many imperial physicians available, but they insisted on inviting my grandfather."

Duanmu Yi's face darkened significantly, "Second brother, what's going on? You didn't even know that your wife was pregnant?"

Nian Jincheng's expression was panicked, "I knew... I don't... I don't know what happened..." He spoke incoherently and subconsciously glanced at Duanmu Cheng.

"I think the second prince may also be kept in the dark," Su Liang continued solemnly, "Perhaps someone who didn't want the former second prince's consort to live resorted to unspeakable means and killed my entire family. I beseech Your Majesty to grant me permission to investigate this matter. This isn't just for my family, but also for the former second prince's consort!"

"Nonsense!" Duanmu Cheng's face was filled with anger, "Father, don't believe her! This is just her side of the story! How could the second brother not know if his wife was pregnant?"

Su Liang frowned, "If the second prince knew, it's only human nature for him to blame me, given the gravity of one life taking two."

Nian Jincheng's face changed constantly, "Father, I... I don't know!"

Chapter 179: 179. Live Burial, Deposed Crown Prince

Su Liang returned home as it was getting dark, and Yang Yu was preparing dinner.

"You're back?" Yang Yu put down the spoon and turned around to greet him, "Are you all right?"

"I'm fine," said Su Liang with a smile. "For now, someone is safe. But the next part of the show is more critical. I hope he can hold on."

Su Liang washed his hands and cooked with Yang Yu, telling him what happened after she went to the palace.

Yang Yu marveled at Su Liang's intelligence. "You're amazing! You managed to kill without a trace!"

By now, Duanmu Cheng must be in quite a panic.

"Xiao Nian did a good job assisting," said Su Liang.

"But..." Yang Yu looked worried, "Even if the emperor learns that the crown prince had an affair with the second prince's wife, no matter who killed your family – the crown prince or the second prince – the emperor won't let his son pay with his life, right?"

Yang Yu felt that Su Liang was exceptional, but how could the emperor let his son die for the grievances of commoners?

Su Liang remained calm, "Indeed."

Yang Yu stopped cutting vegetables for a moment, “Then what should we do?”

You know you’re openly hostile to both the crown prince and the second prince. If the emperor tries to protect his sons, he might...”

“Kill me,” Su Liang smiled faintly.

Yang Yu sighed repeatedly, “You know that? And still, you smile? Having made such a big fuss, how will you end it? What if the emperor really wants to get rid of you?”

Su Liang was unfazed. “My relationship with Duanmu Cheng and Duanmu Ao is doomed to be mutually mortal. If the emperor wants to get rid of me, I’ll run away and secretly kill both of his sons.”

Listening to Su Liang’s nonchalant words, Yang Yu felt chills. “You say it so easily; it’s very dangerous!”

“Dangerous...” Su Liang chuckled lightly, “I trust my intuition. If I’m in danger, I’ll be careful.”

It wasn’t her intuition she believed in, but Ning Jing’s special ability. If her life was in danger, Ning Jing would foresee it.

Su Liang believed she was innocent, and following the “rules,” she hardly expected a situation where someone tried to kill her, she couldn’t escape, and Ning Jing failed to see it coming.

Yang Yu looked helpless, “I trust you, of course, but I still think this is too risky. Why don’t you hide yourselves before anything happens? That way, you’ll have more control over what you do next.”

Su Liang shook her head, “We can’t hide forever. Let’s see what the emperor will do.”

Seeing that he couldn’t persuade Su Liang, Yang Yu gave up but still felt uneasy.

After dinner, Ning Jing went to send Zhengzheng home, and Su Liang went to see Duanmu Ao again.

Duanmu Ao was slumped on the ground, his mouth gagged, his eyes filled with resentment as he stared at Su Liang.

Su Liang removed the cloth gagging Duanmu Ao’s mouth, and he started to cough heavily.

Su Liang sat down not far away, looking at him indifferently. “No water to drink and no food to eat; It seems pretty good to starve you to death. How do you feel?”

“You bitch! You must have eaten the heart of a ferocious beast! If I die, you’ll be buried with me!” Duanmu Ao gritted his teeth.

Su Liang scoffed, “You have quite a spirit. It seems I’ve been too lenient with you.”

As Su Liang brought out the whip she had used the night before, Duanmu Ao trembled, clearly reminded of the terror he had experienced under the whip’s control.

Su Liang tightened the whip around Duanmu Ao’s neck again, making it difficult for him to breathe but not suffocating him, as she watched him struggle in pain.

“Today, I went to the palace. You must be eager to know what happened,” Su Liang smiled and recounted the events in the palace to Duanmu Ao.

“I think your dear brother, who put a green hat on you, must regret not killing me sooner, and he must also regret not getting rid of you earlier.” Su Liang looked at Duanmu Ao and said, “But in fact, I think, back then, the one you should have killed the most was your royal brother, the crown prince. He did such a thing, and you actually put up with it, I really admire it.”

As he finished speaking, Su Liang’s whip in his hand loosened a bit.

After a cough, Duanmu Ao suddenly burst into laughter, “Don’t be smug! Do you really think that our father, the emperor, will learn that it was Duanmu Cheng and Xiao Mulian who had affair, and that the people of the Su Family were killed by us, and that he would care about a group of ants like your Su Family and punish me and Duanmu Cheng?”

Su Liang’s expression darkened.

Seeing this, Duanmu Ao sneered, “Don’t be naive! So what if you are the Martial Arts Champion? Even if you have achieved great military merits, what about it? A lowly commoner is still a lowly commoner; don’t tell me that just because you have great abilities, you think your life can be compared with ours? No matter how much our father values you, he only treats you as a dog that loyally serves the Qian Country’s royal family! You even considered yourself as a person! Hahaha!”

Su Liang’s eyes were icy cold, and he remained silent.

Duanmu Ao laughed coldly in succession, “Do you think your plan is clever? Letting our father know about the shameful deeds Duanmu Cheng had done back then, and he will seek justice for you? Ridiculous! For the sake of the royal family’s face, our father will choose to kill you instead of doing anything to me and Duanmu Cheng!”

Su Liang suddenly stood up, approached Duanmu Ao, and fiercely squeezed his neck, “Have you forgotten where you are?”

However, Duanmu Ao seemed to have suddenly gained confidence, stared at Su Liang with wide eyes, and said intermittently, “You dare... kill me... you won’t...

live either... keeping me... is your only chance... to survive...” Su Liang loosened the whip, and Duanmu Ao couldn’t stop coughing.

“It’s a pity that you consider yourself smart, but unfortunately, you can’t recognize your own status. Hahaha!” Duanmu Ao looked at Su Liang’s ugly face and burst into laughter again.

Su Liang sat down with a cold face and said, “I originally thought the Emperor would be a wise ruler, but you should know him better than I do.”

Duanmu Ao snorted, “So you know it!”

"If I want to leave now, I'm afraid it's already too late." Su Liang's face was gloomy, "If you don't want me to chop off your arms and legs when I take you hostage, tell me, why did you invite my grandfather to treat Xiao Mulian back then?"

Duanmu Ao sneered, "Now that things have come to this, there's no harm in telling you. I knew Xiao Mulian was pregnant with a bastard that day, and since she didn't admit it, I sent someone to invite your grandfather to take her pulse. I didn't think much at the time; it's not like I could ask the Imperial Physician, as that would have exposed the matter. This incident is all that cheap slut Xiao Mulian's fault. If it wasn't for her shameless actions, your grandfather wouldn't have been involved!"

"And then?" Su Liang asked coldly.

According to Prime Minister Xiao Qi, three days had passed between the time Duanmu Ao caught Xiao Mulian cheating and when she suddenly died.

"When I finally pried open Xiao Mulian's mouth and found out who her lover was, and confronted Duanmu Cheng, I said that Xiao Mulian must die. Duanmu Cheng didn't object at all, and even promised to give me his favorite concubine for a few months as compensation. Hahaha!" Duanmu Ao laughed wickedly, "In order to let Xiao Mulian die, we needed an excuse, and your poor grandfather just happened to be the unlucky one who knew something he shouldn't have known! Who could have expected that he was just a commoner? An insignificant ant that no one cared about; if he died, he died! Unfortunately, the person sent by Duanmu Cheng back then didn't kill you completely!"

Su Liang's heart sank heavily, "My grandfather did not witness Duanmu Cheng and Xiao Mulian's affair at Changchun Garden, you invited my grandfather to take her pulse because you wanted to confirm Xiao Mulian's pregnancy. He

knew she was pregnant, but he didn't know about Duanmu Cheng and Xiao Mulian's affair, why were you so cruel to him?"

Looking at the anger in Su Liang's eyes, Duanmu Ao sneered, "No reason, it was Duanmu Cheng who said that Xiao Mulian had to die, and that the matter couldn't be made public, so we needed a scapegoat. He chose your grandfather and said that your whole family had to be silenced!"

"Who were the ones who did it?" Su Liang asked coldly.

"Everyone involved, except me and Duanmu Cheng, has been silenced. It's a pity that you slipped through the net!" Duanmu Ao said coldly, "I dare to tell you these things because I want to let you know that even if you know the truth, it's useless! With your little skills, you're deluded if you think you can fight against the royal family. What fairness and justice? Simply laughable! To be honest, every time I think about Xiao Mulian's affairs in the past two years, I wish I could kill Duanmu Cheng, but I don't have a chance! The mistake back then was all on that pair of adulterers. I just stood by, but I didn't have a choice! Let's cooperate, and I'll be your hostage to escape. As

long as you don't hurt me, I'll get rid of Duanmu Cheng sooner or later so that you can avenge your family! "

Su Liang remained silent, staring steadily at Duanmu Ao.

As Duanmu Ao calmed down a little, facing Su Liang's gaze, he suddenly felt a chill in his heart...

"I discovered that I underestimated you," Su Liang said coldly, "You do have some brains."

Duanmu Ao's face stiffened, "What do you mean? Everything I just said is true!" Su Liang shook his head, "Is it? I don't believe it."

"You better believe it, don't be naive and think our father will stand on your side!" Duanmu Ao snorted. At this moment, Ning Jing walked in.

"Help me with something," Su Liang said.

Ning Jing nodded slightly.

"Take him to the Su Family's tomb, dig a hole, and bury him alive." Su Liang said expressionlessly.

Duanmu Ao stared in disbelief, "You...dare?!"

Su Liang grabbed a stool and smashed it on Duanmu Ao's head repeatedly, causing him to bleed profusely. 'You think you're noble, huh? My family are just ants? Let's see how many lives your nobility has!"

The stool was broken, and Ning Jing frowned, "We need to fix that. Use a rock next time."

Duanmu Ao's face was bruised and bloody, and he was no longer arrogant, shivering and saying repeatedly, "I'm useful to you, you can't kill me..."

"Your greatest use to me is allowing you to die horribly to avenge my family's souls!" Su Liang said coldly.

During the quiet of the night.

Ning Jing carried a sack, silently leaving the city, climbing Wangxiang Mountain, and stopped at the Su Family's tomb.

He picked a vacant spot between several graves, dropped the sack, and began to dig a hole.

After digging a deep hole, Ning Jing untied the sack and kicked Duanmu Ao, who was bound hand and foot with a gag in his mouth, down into it.

Duanmu Ao struggled at the bottom of the hole but couldn't make any sound or get up. His terrified eyes glowed in the darkness.

Instead of burying the dirt back, Ning Jing cut some branches and made a cage-like cover, covering it with grass and leaves, and then scattering the dug-out soil over the nearby graves.

After doing all this, Ning Jing returned to the side of the hole, adjusted the position of two tufts of grass, and ensured that Duanmu Ao below could see a glimmer of light.

But because of the location Ning Jing chose, it was practically impossible for anyone to come, even if someone passed by or walked over the hole, it would be difficult to notice that there was someone below.

"You," Ning Jing said to Duanmu Ao at the bottom of the hole, "enjoy yourself slowly."

As he spoke, he cleared the traces around him and left down the mountain.

When he returned home, Su Liang hadn't slept yet and was copying books under the lamp.

"Do you think the emperor will choose to get rid of me in order to protect his two sons?" Su Liang asked.

Ning Jing shook his head, "No."

"Do you think he is a wise monarch?" Su Liang asked.

Ning Jing shook his head again, "He's not foolish."

"That's good. Otherwise, I'd have to start planning an escape route." Su Liang yawned and said, "Let's sleep, good night."

The next day was Old Master Qin's birthday.

Three days ago, Qin Yujin had sent Su Liang an invitation at Huguo Temple.

But with so many things happening in the past two days, Su Liang had forgotten, and it was only thanks to Ning Jing's reminder that he remembered they hadn't prepared a birthday gift for Old Master Qin yet.

Su Liang told Ning Jing to bring out a box of tea leaves that couldn't be bought from his place, as a gift from both of them.

After all, outsiders now considered them as a couple.

Yang Yu didn't go, instead going to the shop to check the account books.

Before Su Liang and Ning Jing could leave, Xing Yusheng arrived and immediately asked, "Have you heard?"

Su Liang answered with a question, "What?"

"You don't know?" Xing Yusheng sat down, his shock not yet gone, "The emperor suddenly deposed the crown prince! The court is in chaos! No one knows what exactly happened! Ning Jing, didn't you attend the morning court session today?"

Ning Jing shook his head, "I'm too low-ranked and don't have the qualifications."

"My father went!" Xing Yusheng looked at Ning Jing and Su Liang, lowering his voice, "Is the crown prince's deposition...due to something you've done behind the scenes?"

Su Liang scoffed, “Xing, what do you mean? We only started our official positions yesterday, and I’m just a humble deputy general. Ning Jing isn’t even qualified to attend the morning court session, what nonsense are you talking about?”

Xing Yusheng coughed lightly, “I didn’t mean anything else. When I heard about the crown prince’s deposition, I had an intuition that it might be related to you... oh no, it might be connected to you.”

“Why don’t you suspect it’s related to your father?” Su Liang retorted. Xing Yusheng shook his head, ‘My father’s courage is no match for yours.’”

Although Su Liang denied it, Xing Yusheng still felt that there must be some unknown reason for Duanmu Cheng’s sudden dismissal. Even if Su Liang and Ning Jing didn’t do anything behind the scenes, they must know something.

Xing Yusheng was curious but didn’t ask further. There are some things that are safer not to know.

Today, my grandfather is having his birthday. You’re all going, right?” Xing Yusheng asked.

“Did you come to pick us up to go together?” Su Liang asked back.

Xing Yusheng smiled and got up, “I just happened to pass by your house, so I came in to take a look. I have to go pick up Qingqing now.”

After Xing Yusheng left, Yang Yu closed the door, took a deep breath, and said,

“The emperor deposed the crown prince, it seems he wants to stand up for the Su Family.”

However, Su Liang shook his head, “The root of Duanmu Cheng’s dismissal lies not in his messing with male-female relations but in him being a waste.”

Yang Yu was stunned.

Su Liang remained calm, “The emperor has been giving Duanmu Chen opportunities to showcase his talents, and he has seized them. I thought Duanmu Chen’s ascent to power wouldn’t be easy, given the influence of the Empress and the crown prince. But when the emperor let all the adult princes participate in the Civil Examinations, I felt he genuinely wanted to choose the most outstanding son as his successor. The matter of the crown prince carrying on an affair with his sister is a big deal, and in the emperor’s eyes, it is the perfect opportunity to replace the crown prince. With this issue, the Empress and crown prince faction have no grounds to make a fuss.”

Yang Yu furrowed his brows, “I thought the emperor was an enlightened individual.”

Su Liang’s smile didn’t reach his eyes, “Duanmu Ao said I was too naive, but where do I dare to belittle him? Duanmu Chen is very capable, and the emperor is even smarter. Never believe that members of the royal family will abide by principles of justice, they will only make choices that benefit themselves.” This was a warning Ning Jing had given Su Liang long ago.

Regardless, the outcome wasn’t terrible. Yang Yu sighed, “The emperor has deposed the crown prince, but will you let him go?”

Su Liang shook his head, “No, but from now on, no matter what happens to the Eldest Prince, the emperor will suspect me first.”

“What do we do then?” Yang Yu felt the situation was getting too complicated and people’s hearts were too hard to fathom.

Su Liang picked up the box of tea leaves and walked out, smiling, “It’s up to you to figure out how to save him. If you can’t think of a way, then forget it.”

“Aye! How come you guys....” Yang Yu watched Ning Jing and Su Liang walk away, feeling both amused and exasperated, “He’s clearly your friend, why does it seem like I’m supposed to be responsible for him?”

Chapter 180: 180. Singing Opera

Ning Jing and Su Liang rode to Duke Qin’s Mansion.

Halfway there, Su Liang suddenly remembered, “Did Xing Yusheng only mention the dethroning of the crown prince? Did he say who would be the new crown prince?”

Ning Jing shook her head, “No.”

Su Liang casually said, “Besides a certain someone, there shouldn’t be any other choice.”

Duanmu Cheng was dethroned. His younger brother, Duanmu Ao, was even more of a loser than him.

The youngest brother, Duanmu Che, was not only sickly but also a “madman” with a bad reputation.

Considering all aspects, Duanmu Chen was the best choice.

Su Liang believed that appointing Duanmu Chen as the crown prince was only a matter of time and wouldn’t take long.

When they arrived at Duke Qin’s Mansion, Ning Jing was taken by the heir of Qin to meet Old Master Qin, while Qin Yujin took Su Liang to the garden.

“Have you heard?” Qin Yujin asked quietly.

Su Liang nodded, “About the dethroning of the crown prince? Your cousin came to tell us purposely.”

“I don’t know what exactly happened, it’s so sudden.” Qin Yujin didn’t think that Su Liang was secretly involved, but she was just too surprised and couldn’t help bringing it up when she saw her best friend.

Su Liang smiled, “The Emperor must have his reasons for doing so.”

Qin Yujin chuckled, “You’re right.”

Ning Jing saw Old Master Qin, who was radiant and full of spirit, his health completely recovered.

In front of all the male guests, Old Master Qin cheerfully asked Ning Jing,

“Have you set a wedding date yet?”

Ning Jing shook her head slightly, "Not yet."

"Would you like me to choose a good date for you?" Old Master Qin was quite enthusiastic about this.

Ning Jing nodded gently, "Thank you."

Old Master Qin laughed, "Wait for me to check the calendar thoroughly and choose the best date for you."

Everyone knew that Old Master Qin had previously suffered a stroke and it was Su Liang who had cured him. It was normal for him to care so much about Su Liang and Ning Jing.

Lin Shuzhi, accompanied by his two sons and Xing Yusheng, arrived at the mansion.

He first picked up Lin Xueqing from Lin Mansion and came together, only separating after entering the mansion.

As they sat down, Xing Ji arrived alone, without bringing his current wife, Miao's family, and other children.

Actually, even if Xing Ji had brought his wife and Xing Yusheng's half-siblings, the Duke Mansion would have treated them well according to etiquette.

Yesterday, Miao's family had also mentioned it, asking Xing Ji to bring her and their children along. But Xing Ji still refused.

"Wishing my father-in-law as much happiness as the East Sea and a life as long as Mount Nan." Xing Ji greeted him.

Old Master Qin smiled warmly, "Please sit down, no need for more formalities.

Next time, bring your wife and children along. I haven't met them yet."

Xing Ji hesitated for a moment, "Yes."

A theater stage had been set up in the garden, and Lady Qin had invited the troupe from Changchun Garden to perform a few plays celebrating the birthday.

When most of the guests arrived and the play was about to start, Qin Kang invited the male guests to the garden.

Xing Yusheng accompanied Old Master Qin to change clothes.

"Grandfather, why do you want my father to bring that woman and their children to our house? Are you really serious or just saying it out of politeness?" Xing Yusheng asked directly.

Old Master Qin sighed softly, "It's polite talk, but also true."

Xing Yusheng was puzzled.

Old Master Qin spoke earnestly, "Although your father is my son-in-law, to tell the truth, I didn't really get to know him until he arrived in the capital city."

Xing Yusheng frowned, "What does grandfather want to say?"

Old Master Qin patted Xing Yusheng's hand and said, 'Your father isn't a bad person. He and your mother's fate were a cruel joke; your mother was just unlucky. I used to blame your father, but in my heart, I actually blame myself for not protecting my daughter and letting her marry far away from home.'

As he spoke, Old Master Qin's eyes reddened, and Xing Yusheng hurriedly comforted him.

"It's alright." Old Master Qin waved his hand and took a deep breath. "It's all in the past. If your mother has a spirit in heaven, seeing you live well and soon getting married, she must be happy too. You should stop quarreling with your father. He's not easy either, and he has not just you as his son, but other children as well. He's not my son, so he's a guest when he comes here, and it's different for you. If he never lets the other children in his family go out and meet people, what does that mean? In time, even if they were originally good, they might start to cause problems. You can move out after marriage and live far away, but can your grandmother not care? Can you not care about your grandmother?"

Xing Yusheng remained silent.

"You're straightforward, with clear love and hatred, which is not a bad thing." Old Master Qin looked at Xing Yusheng and said, "But ask yourself, do you really want your father to abandon the woman who has accompanied him for many years and his other children? Would that make you happy?" Xing Yusheng shook his head, "I haven't thought that way."

"Grandfather knows." Old Master Qin said, "I just want you to stop being stubborn and let go. Your father has been like this just because he's considering your feelings, but there's really no need for that, and it's not good for you or them to keep being stiff like this."

Xing Yusheng's face darkened slightly, "Is grandfather asking me to make nice with that woman?"

Old Master Qin shook his head, 'Grandfather is saying so much just to make one point: you should have a good talk with your father and clarify everything. The others are his responsibility, and you don't have to worry about them. The Xing family should be harmonious and not create trouble, so you and your grandmother can live peacefully!'

Xing Yusheng understood in his heart that Old Master Qin was saying all this for his benefit.

"I will find a chance to talk with him." Xing Yusheng nodded.

As the grandfather and grandson went to the garden, Old Master Qin began to gossip, "What's going on between Ning Jing and Su Liang? Their marriage seems to be just talk, like they're joking around."

Xing Yusheng cleared his throat, "Grandfather, don't think too much about it. They've always been like that."

Old Master Qin asked quietly, "So who likes whom more? I really can't tell!"

After carefully considering Xing Yusheng's answer to Old Master Qin, "Su Liang said herself that she likes Ning Jing, but Ning Jing doesn't like her."

Old Master Qin was displeased when he heard this, "Impossible! Ning Jing's eyes aren't blind. If he doesn't like Su Liang, what kind of girl does he want?" "Exactly!" Xing Yusheng completely agreed.

Although Su Liang had asked Ning Jing to bring Nian Jincheng along to strip all the trees in Changchun Garden, this was the first time she had watched the garden's opera troupe perform, and she was quite interested.

Qin Yujin laughed and said, "I thought you wouldn't like this."

Su Liang said that she liked it very much. In her previous life, her grandmother was a fan of opera, loved listening to it, and even sang a few classic pieces herself.

"Brother, sit here!" Seeing Ning Jing coming over, Lin Xueqing hurriedly gave up the seat next to Su Liang for him.

Ning Jing didn't stand on ceremony and directly sat down.

Qin Yujin turned her head and saw Lin Bojun smiling at her, showing a row of big white teeth, brighter than sunshine.

She smiled faintly, took back her gaze, and stood up. "You guys watch, I'll go greet the guests."

Others were socializing, and there were several couples in love. Su Liang and Ning Jing sat in the front row, eagerly waiting for the show to start.

"Have you seen it before?" Su Liang asked.

Ning Jing shook his head, "I've seen it before." He had come across opera performances in the past, but had never really watched them closely. The first act was an auspicious birthday performance, which many people in the audience had seen before, so it wasn't very novel.

But Su Liang found it quite exciting and applauded several times.

But before the first act had finished, someone from the palace arrived. The Empress Dowager was unwell, and the Emperor ordered Imperial Physician Su Liang to enter the palace immediately.

Su Liang usually carried a medicine box with her, but today she came to celebrate a birthday, and it was considered inauspicious to bring a medicine box to the door, so she didn't bring it.

She said she had to go back to the mansion to get the medicine box first, and the old eunuch who came urged her to hurry up.

Seeing Su Liang looking at him, Old Master Qin quickly said, "Go ahead."

But not only Old Master Qin, many people in the scene had doubts in their hearts, feeling that the Empress Dowager suddenly falling ill might be related to the crown prince being abolished.

Everyone else thought that Su Liang was summoned because of her medical skills.

But Xing Yusheng still felt that things were not simple. If the abolition of the crown prince was really related to Su Liang, her going to treat the Empress Dowager might lead to trouble.

Xing Yusheng looked at Ning Jing, but in a moment of distraction, he had disappeared.

“Where is Ning Jing?” Xing Yusheng asked Lin Xueqing.

Lin Xueqing pointed in the direction where Su Liang left, “Elder brother Ning went with sister Su. Sister Su said riding a horse is faster and asked elder brother Ning to accompany her back to get the medicine box.”

“That’s good.” Xing Yusheng inexplicably let out a sigh of relief.

Su Liang and Ning Jing did not travel with the old eunuch from the palace.

Su Liang said that after she rode back to the mansion to get the medicine box, she would enter the palace immediately and it would be faster.

After the two of them rode through the main street of the capital city, Yang Yu spotted them from his shop and quickly dropped everything to chase after them, but they were already out of sight.

Once inside the house, Su Liang quickly said while walking, “In case the Empress Dowager wants to torture me, the Emperor won’t stand up for me. He probably wants to take this opportunity to undercut my power.”

“Mm.” Ning Jing shared the same feeling.

“I can only play it by ear,” Su Liang said. “Think about how to get Nian Jincheng to withdraw.”

Su Liang took the medicine box and left. After walking a few steps, she noticed that Ning Jing was following her.

“Are you still going to the Qin family to listen to the opera?” Su Liang frowned. Ning Jing shook his head, “I’m going to the palace. To be your assistant.”

Su Liang was stunned, “Alright. Since the Empress Dowager is ill, I’ll say I need your help, and no one should stop you. Let’s go.”

When the two of them arrived at the palace gate by horse, the old eunuch who went to Duke Qin’s mansion to invite Su Liang had not yet returned to the palace.

When it was heard that Su Liang was summoned by imperial edict to treat the Empress Dowager, no one dared to stop her, and she and Ning Jing entered the palace smoothly. They were led to the Ci’an Palace, where the Empress Dowager was staying.

When they arrived, they found that Duanmu Yi, the Empress, and almost all the adult princes and princesses were present.

The recently abolished Duanmu Cheng sat in the corner with his head down, beside him was Nian Jincheng disguised as Duanmu Ao.

Duanmu Chen glanced at Su Liang and Ning Jing, and quickly looked away.

“No need for formalities, hurry up and treat the Empress Dowager!” Duanmu Yi’s expression was heavy, and his gaze fell on Ning Jing, but he did not say anything.

“Yes, Your Majesty.” Su Liang responded, and with Ning Jing holding her medicine box, they walked inside.

“You go in alone!” Duanmu Yi said coldly.

Su Liang took the medicine box from Ning Jing and went in alone, while Ning Jing stood outside waiting.

The atmosphere was oppressive, and no one dared to speak recklessly. As soon as Su Liang entered, she saw several imperial physicians kneeling not far away.

The ailing Empress Dowager lay on the bed, surrounded by a group of palace maids and nannies, silent as cicadas in the cold.

She walked over in the eerie silence and began to speak, “Your Majesty summoned this humble servant to come and treat the Empress Dowager.” “Come here.” A low and hoarse female voice replied.

Su Liang approached the edge of the bed, holding her medicine box, and as expected, the next moment she heard a voice commanding her to “kneel down”.

Su Liang didn’t kneel but held the Empress Dowager’s wrist, taking her pulse.

“How dare you defy me? Guards, drag her out and execute her with a beating!” The Empress Dowager cried sternly.

Everyone outside heard it loud and clear.

Duanmu Chen was not surprised at all. Although he didn’t know the details,

Duanmu Cheng’s sudden removal was directly caused by Su Liang. The Empress Dowager did not want to accept this result, so she resorted to using this method to manipulate Duanmu Yi, who was always very filial.

Duanmu Chen felt that today, when the Empress Dowager claimed to be sick and asked for Su Liang, she might really want to vent her anger by killing Su Liang.

“Mother, please calm down, your health is important,” said Duanmu Yi solemnly.

“My words don’t matter anymore, I’ve been bullied by a lowly girl, and no one cares. What’s the point of living?” The Empress Dowager started to cry, “Just go! All of you go! I don’t need you to care about my life or death!” Duanmu Yi frowned, “Su Liang, you must not disobey the mother’s wishes!”

The young Empress sighed, “Your Majesty, just now, the Empress Dowager asked Su Liang only to kneel and kowtow, and she refused.” Duanmu Yi gave the young Empress a cold glance.

The young Empress dared not speak anymore.

Su Liang, hearing Duanmu Yi’s words, continued to take the Empress Dowager’s pulse, undeterred.

The Empress Dowager struggled, but Su Liang held her down firmly, not allowing her to move. Su Liang looked serious as she said, “Your Majesty, please forgive me. Your illness is severe, and for the sake of your health, I must act against your wishes.”

As she finished speaking, Su Liang pulled out a golden needle and struck the Empress Dowager. The Empress Dowager widened her eyes, cursing angrily, "You... are you trying to murder me? Guards! Come quickly!"

Su Liang raised her voice, "Your Majesty, don't worry. I am treating the Empress Dowager. If anything goes wrong, I accept any punishment."

After just a few needles, the Empress Dowager calmed down, unable to move as she lay there, her eyes seeming to want to tear Su Liang apart.

"Her Majesty's liver is overheated, which causes irritability. I will apply needles for forty-nine days, and I guarantee that she will feel better and more at ease," Su Liang said earnestly.

"Your Majesty..." Before the Empress Dowager could say anything more, Su Liang held her down again.

"Your Majesty, be careful, moving too much might hurt you," Su Liang said gently.

By the time the treatment was finished, the Empress Dowager had noticeably calmed down.

Duanmu Yi sighed deeply, "Mother, don't get so upset in the future. As for the Crown Prince's affair, I have my own plans."

"You are bewitched by this wretched woman!" The Empress Dowager was angry again. "She framed Chengsheng, why don't you believe in your son and instead trust this suspicious woman? In my eyes, she is a spy! To ruin the Qian Country's order!"

Su Liang calmly stood to the side, listening, as if the accusations weren't about her.

"Mother, I have already looked into this matter. She has nothing suspicious about her," said Duanmu Yi.

"In my eyes, she's a disaster! Sent to punish me! If you want me to get better, you must behead her!" The Empress Dowager said coldly.

Su Liang sighed, "Your Majesty, since the Empress Dowager suspects that I am a spy, I hereby request to resign from my position and leave the capital to return to Xunyang City to sell tea with my fiancé. Please grant my request."

Ning Jing's voice came from outside the door, "I also request Your Majesty to allow me to resign and leave the capital."

Duanmu Yi frowned, "Stop this chaos, both of you! Leave now!"

Su Liang's gaze passed Duanmu Yi, giving a provocative look to the Empress Dowager: I want to leave, but your son won't let me, he wants me to hold my official position, so there's really nothing I can do.

As Su Liang turned to leave, the Empress Dowager started to cause drama again.

When Su Liang left the palace with Ning Jing, she said, “Why don’t we really go back and sell tea leaves?”

Ning Jing looked at Su Liang, “I think you’re more suited to be a performer.”

“What talents do I have?” Su Liang wondered aloud. Ning Jing spoke mysteriously, “Sing opera..”