

## Three-Time 181

Chapter 181: 181. Give him a hand

The palace only let them go in the afternoon.

Su Liang and Ning Jing didn't return to Duke Qin's Mansion. They picked up Yang Yu at the Embroidery Workshop and went straight home.

Once they were home, Yang Yu asked what had happened.

Upon learning that Su Liang had been harassed by the Empress Dowager, Yang

Yu became worried again, "You've been targeted, and they won't let this go." Su Liang snorted, "Coincidentally, I don't plan on letting it go either."

Her primary goal in coming to the capital city was to investigate the truth and avenge the Su Family.

Now she knew that the main culprits were the brothers Duanmu Cheng and Duanmu Ao. The Su Family was entirely innocent.

At the moment, Duanmu Ao was in the Su Family cemetery on Wangxiang Mountain, more dead than alive.

However, Duanmu Cheng was only stripped of his title of crown prince, and he was still alive. Moreover, he would surely continue to wreak havoc.

That wasn't enough.

Su Liang wanted these evil and despicable brothers to pay with their lives for the Su Family's suffering.

Yang Yu sighed, "I'm always worried about you, afraid something will happen."

Su Liang embraced Yang Yu's slender shoulders, smiling as they entered the courtyard, "I'm just fine, don't think too much about it. Have you thought of a way to help Nian Jincheng leave his post?"

Yang Yu furrowed her brow, "Not yet, I don't understand what's going on now. You guys should have a plan for him, right?"

Su Liang looked at Yang Yu and smiled, "There is indeed a plan, and you'll know about it later."

"What about now? He's in danger." Yang Yu's expression was full of concern.

Ning Jing, who was just about to enter the room, suddenly called Su Liang,

"You come here."

Su Liang, not knowing what was going on, released Yang Yu and went to Ning Jing's room.

Yang Yu stood under the eaves, sighing. Thinking that Su Liang and Ning Jing hadn't eaten lunch yet, she went to the kitchen.

'What's the matter?' Su Liang asked.

Ning Jing put down Su Liang's medicine box, "Close the door."

Su Liang turned around and closed the door, walked over, and sat down across from Ning Jing, "What's wrong?"

"I saw someone with a dark forehead." Ning Jing said.

Su Liang pondered, "There are more than one person in the palace who wants to kill me. If you needed to interfere, you should have seen my forehead turn black first. Since it hasn't, doesn't it mean it has nothing to do with me? Could it be Duanmu Chen? Although a new crown prince hasn't been appointed yet, he is the only candidate, and the empress's faction certainly can't tolerate him."

However, Ning Jing shook his head slightly and said three words, "Nian Jincheng."

Su Liang's face turned serious, "Is someone trying to kill him?!"

There was no other possibility.

Nian Jincheng was impersonating Duanmu Ao according to Su Liang and Ning Jing's arrangement. He wouldn't act recklessly, and recently, there hadn't been any "opportunities" for him to kill anyone.

"You should go and watch him to make sure nothing happens," Su Liang said.

Although Su Liang often mentioned Nian Jincheng to Yang Yu in jest, neither she nor Ning Jing truly disregarded his well-being.

However, at the moment, there really wasn't a good opportunity for Nian Jincheng to return.

If "Duanmu Ao" suddenly disappeared, Duanmu Yi would be the first to suspect Su Liang.

This wasn't the kind of thing that Su Liang could brush off by saying, "I knew I would be suspected, so why would I do such a stupid thing."

Because it could be seen from the opposite angle: precisely because Su Liang was the most suspicious, she could make that argument, thereby taking a contrary approach.

"It's daytime, there's no problem," Ning Jing shook his head.

Su Liang frowned, "Who would want to kill 'Duanmu Ao' at this point? Could it be that he is about to be exposed soon? No, if he were exposed, he would be actually safer, because the empress's faction would seize the opportunity to discredit us by claiming that we are in cahoots with Nian Jincheng and Gu Ling. Although you genuinely are Gu Ling. Furthermore, the emperor would definitely use Nian Jincheng to get rid of you. So, for the time being, he is not in mortal danger."

With that, the situation became even stranger.

If he hadn't been exposed, there were people wanting to kill Duanmu Ao.

Yet, clearly, Su Liang was the one who most wished for Duanmu Ao to suffer a terrible fate.

Who else could it be?

Ning Jing spoke again, "I'm hungry."

Su Liang held her forehead, "I'll go make something to eat. After eating, you should go protect your brother."

Su Liang entered the kitchen and saw Yang Yu, lost in her thoughts while holding a kitchen knife. The water in the pot hadn't boiled, and the vegetables were only half-chopped.

"What are you thinking about?" Su Liang walked over.

Yang Yu turned around blankly, the knife facing Su Liang, "I've thought of something! "

Su Liang washed her hands, took the knife, pushed Yang Yu away, and continued cutting the vegetables, "What did you think of?"

"How to bring little Nian back!" Yang Yu had a serious expression, "That real one, he's still alive, right? Just change him back and have him hang himself!" Su Liang nodded, "'Hanging himself' is indeed the most suitable way for him to die."

That was how the Su Family had been harmed in the first place.

"Do you think it's feasible?" Yang Yu's eyes lit up.

However, Su Liang shook her head, "Not very likely. If that happened, the emperor would definitely think I was behind it."

Yang Yu rested her head on Su Liang's back and sighed, "Then what should we do? I always feel like something will happen to him."

Su Liang blurted out, 'Your feeling is right.'

Yang Yu stood up abruptly, her eyes wide, "What did you say?"

Su Liang looked down and continued cutting the vegetables, "Don't get excited. I mean, I have the same feeling. We're all trying to find a way. Let Ning Jing check on him tonight. He should have some gains to tell us these two days." "Or let Ning Jing take his place!" Yang Yu's eyes shone brightly.

Su Liang stopped momentarily and looked at Yang Yu, "Yang Xiaoyu, are you serious?"

Yang Yu quickly explained, "I just think that Ning Jing is more capable than little Nian, so it's safer for him to go."

Su Liang nodded, "Indeed. But he can't go either."

"Why? Because he has tea at the Ministry of Revenue tomorrow?" Yang Yu was confused.

Su Liang shook her head, "No, it's because he's too thin, and his face is too small. He's not suitable to impersonate Duanmu Ao."

To disguise oneself as another person and achieve a level of indistinguishability, it is not as simple as just changing one's facial features.

Height, weight, shoulder width, and arm length must be similar; otherwise, it's easy for people to see through the disguise.

If someone is too short, height-increasing shoes won't solve the problem. Being too thin is also hard to compensate for with clothing, as it won't significantly change body shape.

The reason Su Liang had asked Nian Jincheng to impersonate Duanmu Ao in the first place was that their body shapes were very similar.

Compared to them, Ning Jing had a similar height but was skinnier, with a smaller head circumference.

Yang Yu sighed deeply, "That's true. So what now?"

"Don't worry. He will be fine." Su Liang believed that Ning Jing wouldn't let anything happen to Nian Jincheng.

Seeing Yang Yu still pondering, Su Liang left her to her thoughts.

When Su Liang mentioned having plans for Nian Jincheng earlier, she was thinking about his lifelong affairs.

Having separated so soon after they met, even if Yang Yu's concern and care for Nian Jincheng were only due to friendship, when he returned, their relationship would surely progress further.

After their late lunch, Su Liang planned to head to Wangxiang Mountain outside the city to pay respects to the Su Family and check on Duanmu Ao's life or death.

Before they even left the house, Chang'an arrived.

"Miss Su, the master asked you to go to him tonight for a chat. Be cautious," Chang'an said.

Su Liang nodded, "Alright, I will be careful not to be noticed."

Ning Jing secretly left and was not at the mansion.

Yang Yu suggested that she accompany Su Liang, and considering that leaving her alone at home was not safe, Su Liang agreed.

The two rode together to buy some incense and paper money, then headed to Wangxiang Mountain.

The cemetery was at the mid-hill. After a short while of walking, Yang Yu couldn't keep up due to exhaustion.

Seeing Su Liang return, Yang Yu gasped and wiped the sweat from her forehead, "My body is too weak."

Su Liang passed the basket to Yang Yu, "You hold it."

Yang Yu subconsciously took it and saw Su Liang turn around, "Get on."

Yang Yu froze.

"I'll carry you. Get on," Su Liang said again.

Yang Yu quickly refused, "The path is already difficult; if I had known, I wouldn't have come. I'm just adding trouble for you."

"Don't waste time, hurry up!" Su Liang pulled Yang Yu.

Only then did Yang Yu climb onto Su Liang's back, wrapping her arms around her neck, weakly saying, "If you can't carry me, don't force yourself. I can walk, just slowly."

Su Liang strode forward steadily, "Do you think my title of Martial Arts Champion was bought?"

After walking a distance, Yang Yu touched Su Liang's forehead in surprise, finding her completely without sweat, and exclaimed, "You're so amazing!"

"In terms of strength, I'm definitely not as good as Xiao Nian," Su Liang said.

Yang Yu laughed, "Why compare yourself with him? What about Ning Jing?"

"I'll just compare with him," Su Liang said, lifting Yang Yu up a bit and quickening her pace.

Upon arriving at the cemetery, they burned paper money in front of Su Yuanzhou's grave.

Yang Yu bowed three times, "Grandfather Su, rest assured, Su Liang is very capable and living well. We will soon avenge your grievances."

After speaking, Yang Yu realized that Su Liang, who was standing beside her, had disappeared. After looking around, she walked to a corner.

"What are you doing here?" Yang Yu asked as she reached Su Liang, then remembered Duanmu Ao, and looked down following Su Liang's line of sight.

Through the gap between the two clumps of grass, she saw a pair of eyes filled with resentment.

Su Liang didn't say anything and pulled Yang Yu away. After paying respects at each of the Su family graves, they left the mountain.

When the two returned home, they found a carriage from Marquis Zhong Xin's Mansion stopped at their gate.

Qi Yan called out to Xing Yusheng, "Master, Miss Su is back."

Xing Yusheng lifted the curtain, saw Su Liang unscathed, and let out a sigh of relief. He followed them inside.

"Did the Empress Dowager make things difficult for you?" Xing Yusheng asked. Su Liang nodded, "Yes, but it's nothing serious."

Xing Yusheng sighed, "My grandfather is very worried about you. My dad said if there's really trouble, he will come forward to protect you."

Su Liang smiled, "Thank you, Old Master Qin, and your father. By the way, I wanted to ask if they have mentioned anything about the new crown prince?"

Xing Yusheng hesitated for a moment, "My dad said it should be the Fourth Prince, but the Empress Dowager and the Empress's side will not accept it easily."

Empress Dowager Wan and Empress Xiao Wan were aunt and niece.

Uncle Wan Shan was the first-rank general of Qian Country, now stationed at the northern border.

Because of this, even though Duanmu Cheng had mediocre qualifications, until today, everyone in the court believed that his position as crown prince could not be shaken.

Even as excellent as Duanmu Chen was, in terms of having someone to rely on, he was far inferior to Duanmu Cheng.

Although Duanmu Chen's mother had been favored in the past two years, Prime Minister Xiao was not well received by Duanmu Yi, even though Xiao had once been Duanmu Yi's teacher.

It could be said that the sudden removal of the crown prince today was both shocking and puzzling.

The fact that a new crown prince was not immediately appointed made it even more difficult to discern Duanmu Yi's intentions.

After Xing Yusheng finished speaking, Su Liang thought for a moment, "I see. You go back."

Xing Yusheng hesitated for a moment, "I've waited for you half a day, and you won't even offer me some tea?"

"I'm busy. Goodbye." Su Liang waved his hand.

Xing Yusheng: ..

Yang Yu asked as Xing Yusheng left, "Will he mind?"

Su Liang shook his head, "He likes it this way."

Not long after, Xing Yusheng went out, got on the carriage, ordered Qi Yan to set off, and went to the Lin Family first.

"Su Liang really doesn't treat me like an outsider. That's good. If we can get married tomorrow, the day after tomorrow Qingqing and I can move in next door and be neighbors with Su Liang." Xing Yusheng sighed in the carriage.

Qi Yan laughed and said, "Soon!"

Ning Jing was not at home.

Seeing that Su Liang was deep in thought, Yang Yu went back to her room. As the sun set, Yang Yu was preparing dinner, and Ning Jing returned.

"Come in." Su Liang opened the door and called Ning Jing.

Wearing an apron and hastily leaving the kitchen, Yang Yu, who wanted to ask

Ning Jing if he had seen Nian Jincheng, heard Su Liang's voice and saw Ning Jing going straight into Su Liang's room. She couldn't help but complain, "You two might as well live in the same room. You go in, he goes in..."

As Ning Jing closed the door, he heard Su Liang say, "I was thinking, the

Emperor's removal of the crown prince might not just be because Duanmu

Cheng was a useless person who committed an act against moral norms. Is the Emperor wary of the Wan family's growing power and has been wanting to make a move against them, but only now found the opportunity?"

Ning Jing nodded, "Wan Shan is a great general, but he is too far from the capital city to receive the news in time."

"But what if he receives the news and returns to the capital with his troops?" Su Liang asked.

"No." Ning Jing shook his head, "The new crown prince is Duanmu Ao." Su Liang looked at Ning Jing in disbelief, "When did this happen?"

"The Imperial Decree was issued half an hour ago." Ning Jing said.

Su Liang was very surprised, "The Emperor had sufficient reason to remove Duanmu Cheng, as giving one's own brother a green hat is indeed unacceptable. I did not expect the Emperor would actually let Duanmu Ao become the crown prince. Is it just for temporary stability during the transition? But in this case, wouldn't Duanmu Cheng and Duanmu Ao fight each other? Perhaps this is the Emperor's intention."

The real Duanmu Ao was at the Su Family cemetery.

Nian Jincheng, disguised as Duanmu Ao, would certainly not be content even if he did nothing while his position as the crown prince was snatched away by Duanmu Cheng.

Su Liang had a thought, "Could it be that the danger you foresaw for Nian Jincheng is that Duanmu Cheng wants to kill Duanmu Ao?"

"It should be." Ning Jing said.

If the new crown prince were Duanmu Chen, Duanmu Cheng could rely on his uncle Wan Shan to support him in regaining the position of crown prince, or even seizing the throne.

But with Duanmu Ao as the crown prince, the Wan family would naturally give up on Duanmu Cheng and switch their support to Duanmu Ao. Duanmu Cheng would only have the full support of the Wan family if he eliminated Duanmu Ao.

"It's a good time for him to kill Duanmu Ao and blame me for it, killing two birds with one stone." Su Liang snorted, "What kind of brothers are they? Back then, he dared to steal his sister-in-law, so when it comes to killing Duanmu Ao, he probably won't even blink."

Duanmu Cheng had little ability, but his identity gave him absolute confidence and he could never tolerate anyone challenging his authority as the crown prince. Back then, because of Nian Ruxue's affair, he couldn't hide his dissatisfaction with Duanmu Ao even in front of outsiders.

In Duanmu Cheng's eyes, Duanmu Ao was just his shadow, his stepping stone, existing only to highlight him, so how could he tolerate Duanmu Ao taking everything from him?

"The Emperor is ruthless enough to pit his own two sons against each other."

Su Liang's eyes narrowed slightly, "But it was bound to happen sooner or later. With their personalities, they either fight or die. Since Duanmu Cheng wants to kill Duanmu Ao, let's help him. Tonight, let Xiao Nian withdraw and send the real Duanmu Ao home, hanged.."

## Chapter 182: 182. Good “Tea”

During the day, Duanmu Chen sent someone from Chang'an to secretly invite Su Liang to visit him at night.

Su Liang agreed at the time.

However, because of what she learned later, Su Liang failed to show up on time.

As the hour approached midnight, and Duanmu Chen waited in the study, no one had yet arrived. He put down the book in his hand, which he had been holding for a long time, and his face darkened slightly.

“Master, Miss Su usually keeps her word, perhaps something held her up tonight. Shall I go and check on her?” Chang'an asked.

Duanmu Chen nodded, then shook his head a second later, “No need.”

Chang'an sighed deeply, “But now... I thought that since the emperor deposed the crown prince, that position would definitely belong to the master. Who knew it would fall on the second prince's head instead.”

Upon hearing this, Duanmu Chen's expression remained unchanged, “The more critical the situation, the more necessary it is to keep calm. Up until today, everyone thought Duanmu Cheng was securely seated as crown prince, but they still deposed him just like that. He might be the legitimate and eldest, with his maternal relatives holding military power, but so what? I want to see how long Duanmu Ao can hold onto this position.”

As the current situation changed rapidly, Chang'an listened to Duanmu Chen without panic, not daring to ask more, “Miss Su probably won't come tonight, Master should get some rest early.”

Duanmu Chen looked through the half-open window at the dark pine trees, “It's just as well she doesn't come. Some people are surely watching both me and her at the moment, and now isn't a suitable time to meet. No matter what she does next, it will be advantageous and harmless to me.”

Ever since Duanmu Chen confirmed that the Su Family was killed by the

Duanmu Cheng and Duanmu Ao brothers, although he didn't know what Su Liang would do, he didn't doubt for a moment that the two men were as good as dead.

All Duanmu Chen had to do now was to wait patiently as Su Liang cleared the obstacles for him and collect the long-coveted position of crown prince into his bag.

Getting carried away and creating more complications was absolutely unacceptable.

With that thought, Duanmu Chen went to bed.

Su Liang, who had planned to have Nian Jincheng withdraw tonight and hang Duanmu Ao, did not go out but stayed at home, not sleeping but copying medical books by the lamplight after drinking a cup of strong tea.

It wasn't until the third watch of the night that the window moved slightly, and Su Liang looked up to see Ning Jing appear in the room.



He was dressed in a nightwalking outfit, with a black headscarf covering his face, leaving only a pair of cold eyes visible.

Su Liang closed the book, "How did it go?"

Ning Jing raised his hand, took off the headscarf, and folded it up.

Su Liang's gaze was attracted by Ning Jing's slender fingers, thinking how good-looking this man was, even the action of folding a cloth appeared elegant.

"What do you want?" Ning Jing threw the neatly folded black cloth over. Su Liang caught it and folded it into a small mouse, placing it on the table.

Ning Jing raised his eyebrows, took it back, and said, "Mine."

Ning Jing held the small mouse folded from the black cloth flat in his palm, looking down at it slightly, apparently pondering Su Liang's folding steps while answering her question, "Duanmu Cheng plans to make his move tomorrow night. The arrangements have been made, and at that time, weapons similar to your Twin Blades will be used."

After deciding her plan, Su Liang was told by Ning Jing to wait and investigate Duanmu Cheng's plan for a better response.

As a result, Duanmu Ao did not leave Wangxiang Mountain tonight.

Nian Jincheng also stayed at the Second Prince's Mansion.

Su Liang didn't go out, Ning Jing avoided the master watching Su Mansion, didn't go to find Nian Jincheng, but sneaked into the Crown Prince's Mansion that had become the Eldest Prince's Mansion today. He waited for about four hours before overhearing Duanmu Cheng's plan.

"By the way, does Nian Jincheng know about your special ability?" Su Liang suddenly asked.

"Special ability?" Ning Jing repeated the words, "Is that what you call it in your world?"

Su Liang nodded, "Yes. It's simply called special ability."

Ning Jing shook his head, "He doesn't know."

"I thought he knew since you two used to be each other's most trusted friends," Su Liang was a little surprised.

She said "used to be" because Su Liang believed that Ning Jing's current most trusted friend should be her.

After learning that Nian Jincheng didn't know about Ning Jing's special ability, Su Liang confirmed this even more.

"It's not that I don't trust his character, but I don't trust his mind," Ning Jing said.

He believed that Nian Jincheng would not deliberately betray him.

However, in some cases, if Nian Jincheng were duped, he might accidentally reveal his secret.

And Ning Jing believed that Su Liang could never be deceived by someone else, as she could only deceive other people.

“That makes sense,” Su Liang said. “You just need to tell him that Duanmu Cheng might want to kill him, and if he trusts you, that’s enough. What are the reactions of the Empress Dowager and Empress to Duanmu Ao becoming the crown prince?”

“As you expected,” Ning Jing said.

Upon learning that the new crown prince was Duanmu Ao, Su Liang had mentioned that the Empress Dowager and the Empress would soon accept the outcome since there’s no difference between Duanmu Cheng and Duanmu Ao regarding their influence on them and the Wan family.

But Duanmu Cheng could never accept it.

“Aren’t you going to watch over Nian Jincheng? What if there are other dangers?” Su Liang asked.

Ning Jing stood up, “I’m tired.”

Seeing Ning Jing walk away with the “little mouse” and hearing the sound of doors opening and closing next door, Su Liang yawned and went to bed.

The next morning, as Su Liang prepared to go to the military camp, the old eunuch who had visited yesterday came again.

Su Liang put on her medicine box and, following the emperor’s decree, entered the palace to administer acupuncture to the Empress Dowager.

The old eunuch specifically asked her to go alone.

Ning Jing went to work at the Ministry of Revenue on time and even brought some fine tea leaves for the new colleagues he had met there.

After their departure, Yang Yu went to his own shop to check the ledger, and also made an appointment with Wan Hui to have lunch together at the Wan Family Restaurant at noon.

The news that the new crown prince was Duanmu Ao was already spreading throughout the capital city.

This made those who thought Duanmu Chen would become the crown prince quite surprised, including Old Master Qin and Xing Ji.

Looking at their abilities and reputations, Duanmu Ao was even inferior to Duanmu Cheng.

The reason for disposing of Duanmu Cheng was unknown, and Duanmu Ao becoming crown prince seemed the most reasonable choice apart from

Duanmu Cheng, it still left people wondering what was in Duanmu Yi’s mind.

Today, the trees that had fallen in Changchun Garden had been replanted, restoring its original appearance.

After performing a birthday celebration opera in Duke Qin’s Mansion yesterday, Changchun Garden reopened to welcome guests today without much impact.

Moreover, the housekeeper of the present crown prince's mansion, which used to be the Second Prince's Mansion, went to Changchun Garden early in the morning to order a play, setting the time, and announcing that Crown Prince Duanmu Ao would be coming.

The news spread quickly, and everyone who heard it could feel Duanmu Ao's triumphant mood. The play he ordered was his favorite, and the girl who played the female lead had both good looks and dancing skills.

Some people even began to speculate that Duanmu Ao would bring another beauty home from Changchun Garden today.

He had done this before.

When the news reached Duanmu Cheng, he was practically fuming, gritting his teeth and saying, "I knew it, he's been coveting my position all along! Now he's finally stepped on me to get there!"

But when he calmed down, Duanmu Cheng realized that if he didn't want to be forever suppressed by Duanmu Ao and live in his shadow without a chance to make a breakthrough, he had only one way to go: get rid of Duanmu Ao!

As long as Duanmu Ao was alive, the Empress Dowager, the Empress, and the Wan family wouldn't care about Duanmu Cheng's future anymore.

Once Duanmu Ao was dead, they would have no choice but to help Duanmu Cheng with his strategies. Even if they knew Duanmu Ao was killed by Duanmu Cheng, the outcome would still be the same.

"Prepare the carriage, this palace is going to Changchun Garden to watch the opera and personally congratulate Second Brother!" Duanmu Cheng's eyes were full of murderous intent.

Su Liang went to Ci'an Palace and saw Empress Dowager Wan again. She was very different from yesterday, quietly allowing Su Liang to take her pulse and treat her.

When Su Liang was about to leave, Wan Shi ordered her nanny, "Fetch the prepared gift for Doctor Su."

The nanny left with two palace maids, leaving Wan Shi and Su Liang alone.

Su Liang closed her eyes, remaining silent.

Wan Shi stared at her for a moment before finally speaking, "I know, you were behind the Crown Prince's affair."

Su Liang respectfully asked, "Is Your Majesty referring to the deposed Crown Prince or the new Crown Prince?"

Wan Shi's face tightened at the mention, almost breaking her long fingernails. She gritted her teeth and said, "You really have the guts to eat the heart of a bear and leopard, completely disregarding me!"

Su Liang became even more respectful and said two words, "Dare not."

Wan Shi scoffed, "Don't play innocent, you and the Fourth Prince are in the same gang, aren't you? He's the one orchestrating all this, attempting to usurp the position of Crown Prince. Am I right?"

Su Liang shook her head slightly, ‘Wrong.’

Wan Shi’s eyes flashed with anger, “Is it because all the Su Family members are dead that you can fabricate stories to slander the Crown Prince? Do you really think anyone would believe you?”

Su Liang nodded, “Yes, the Emperor believes.”

Wan Shi gasped for breath, causing Su Liang to stand up and help her. Wan Shi pointed her sharp fingernail towards Su Liang’s hand, who narrowly avoided it and sat back down.

“Did I tell you to sit down?” Wan Shi asked coldly.

Su Liang nodded slightly, “Yes. Your Majesty granted a seat and did not allow me to get up, so I sat back down.”

“You!” Wan Shi’s face turned green with anger, “You’re scheming and calculating, but what’s the use? Fourth Prince is illegitimate, no matter how much he pleases the emperor, it’s useless! Even if Cheng’er is deposed, it’s not his turn!”

Su Liang agreed wholeheartedly, “Congratulations to the Second Prince for becoming the Crown Prince.”

Wan Shi was speechless, unable to utter a word as Su Liang choked her every time.

“Your Majesty, please take care of your health.” Su Liang’s expression was filled with concern.

“Get out! Get out of here!” Wan Shi grabbed the teacup by her side and threw it at Su Liang.

Su Liang stood up and neatly dodged it, respectfully saying her goodbye, “This humble official will come again tomorrow to treat Your Majesty, take my leave.”

As Su Liang left Cilan Palace with her medicine box, she met the nanny holding a gift box at the entrance.

“This is the reward from Her Majesty for Doctor Su.” The old nanny wanted to hand the gift box directly to Su Liang.

But Su Liang didn’t accept it. She sighed and said, “Her Majesty is angry at me again, surely there won’t be any more rewards.” Without waiting for the nanny to say anything more, Su Liang had already walked five feet away.

Reward? Su Liang didn’t need to look to know there must be something off about it. The more she wanted to give it, the more something was wrong.

Su Liang didn’t go home immediately after leaving the Palace, but went to the Ministry of Revenue to find her “fiancé”.

The officials at the Ministry of Revenue had tasted the tea sent by Ning Jing and found him very likable.

Su Liang, an outsider, entered which was against the rules, but no one stopped her. After all, she was now a popular person in front of the emperor, and it was not wise to offend her.

Ning Jing had a separate room, though small, with good sunlight. On the windowsill was an orchid, a gift from a colleague, that was about to bloom.

“Mr. Ning, General Su is here to see you.”

Hearing the voice, Ning Jing, who was slacking off and copying books during “work time,” put down his pen and looked up.

Su Liang waved to Ning Jing from outside the window, then quickly disappeared and entered through the door with light steps.

The Ministry of Revenue official who had led the way couldn’t help but sigh,

“They have a really good relationship.”

“Keeping you people fed with official salaries is a waste, all you do is drink tea or do private errands,” Su Liang grumbled.

“I have official duties, just not many,” Ning Jing said.

Su Liang mentioned the issue of treating the Empress Dowager, “She did want to make things difficult for me, but it’s different than yesterday. She’s no longer seeking revenge for her eldest grandson. Her second grandson being the crown prince is also good for her.”

“The crown prince has gone to Changchun Garden to watch a play,” Ning Jing said, “I heard that the play is pretty good, want to go?” Here, the crown prince refers to Nian Jincheng.

Su Liang raised an eyebrow, “You can go?”

Ning Jing nodded, “I’m free today, I’ll let them know.”

When Ning Jing returned, Su Liang had already put the book he was copying into her medicine box, “Let’s go.”

By the time the two of them arrived at Changchun Garden on horseback, the play that “Duanmu Ao” had ordered was about to begin.

There were quite a few noble sons who had come to join in the fun. Changchun Garden was open for business, and anyone with money could enter.

As soon as Su Liang got off her horse, she felt someone watching her. Turning her head, she met Duanmu Cheng’s cold gaze.

Su Liang gave a slight nod to Duanmu Cheng, who had just gotten off his carriage, and let a cold smile flash across her lips, which Duanmu Cheng saw clearly.

Su Liang did it on purpose, of course.

Duanmu Cheng watched Su Liang and Ning Jing enter Changchun Garden before finally looking away and walking forward. Along the way, everyone who saw Duanmu Cheng greeted him, and half of them instinctively called him

“crown prince” before correcting themselves and calling him “eldest prince.”

No one did it on purpose. It was just that the change of crown prince was too sudden, and many people's mouths moved faster than their brains.

But in Duanmu Cheng's ears, the title "eldest prince" was like needles, stabbing at his insides, angering him so much that everything around him seemed annoying, as if he was about to explode.

When Duanmu Cheng heard the music and saw "Duanmu Ao" sitting under the stage like the center of attention, he couldn't help but feel bitter, even though he had prepared himself to show a harmonious relationship with his brother in public today. He just couldn't hide his unhappy expression.

Nian Jincheng was reminded by a servant and looked back at Duanmu Cheng, calling out, "Crown Prince, my brother!"

The opening drumbeat of the play resounded on the stage, but no one dared to speak, feeling as if the drumbeat was pounding on their hearts. The awkward atmosphere was on par with Duanmu Cheng's expression, which looked as if he had been slapped hard across the face.

"Look at my silly brain!" Nian Jincheng slapped his forehead, "How could I forget that big brother is no longer the crown prince? Please don't blame me, big brother. It was unintentional."

The words were full of sarcasm and a sense of superiority.

Nian Jincheng personally escorted Duanmu Cheng to sit next to him.

Su Liang and Ning Jing, who were seated in the back row, watched the whole thing unfold.

Su Liang's lips curved up slightly, and she said in a low voice, "What a show of brotherly love. Someone has made great progress."

Before her voice fell, there was a commotion in front.

They saw Duanmu Cheng stand up with an ugly expression and yelled at Nian Jincheng furiously, "What are you doing?"

Nian Jincheng hurriedly used a handkerchief to wipe the tea on Duanmu Cheng's wet clothes while apologizing, "I'm sorry, I thought big brother could catch the tea I passed to him. It's all my fault!"

Su Liang coughed lightly, "Nice 'tea'!"

Ning Jing caught Su Liang's emphasis and asked her, "What's the deeper meaning?"

Su Liang chuckled and explained, "In our place, we use the word 'tea' to describe people who seem innocent on the surface, but are actually calculating and manipulative."

Ning Jing nodded slightly, "Indeed, nice 'tea'.."

Chapter 183: 183. Good Days

The sky was clear and blue, with a warm breeze blowing.

After Duanmu Cheng sat back down, suppressing his anger, the show began.

Duanmu Ao had had his eyes on the female lead from the moment she appeared on stage, and Nian Jincheng applauded enthusiastically.

This made the onlookers even more certain that a new member would be joining the Crown Prince's backyard today.

Duanmu Cheng gave a faint smile, leaned over and whispered, "Now that you're the Crown Prince, how can you be without beauties by your side?"

Nian Jincheng nodded with a smile, and said loudly, "Big brother, do you have your eye on that female lead and want to take her back with you? Don't worry, I won't fight with you for her! But in matters like this, it's always best if both parties are willing. After the play is over, we'll call her over and ask!"

Duanmu Cheng was thinking about persuading "Duanmu Ao" to bring back an actress without letting others know, so his words were only heard by Nian Jincheng.

But he never would have expected that Nian Jincheng would turn around and put a cap of lasciviousness on his head!

Duanmu Cheng didn't react immediately, and after Nian Jincheng finished speaking, Duanmu Cheng's face darkened and he nearly flipped the table!

"Big brother, are you angry? It's my fault, I misunderstood what you meant. Do you want to take that actress back quietly, without making a fuss? There's no need! You're not the Crown Prince now, and you don't need to put up a facade. Do as you please!" Nian Jincheng said, patting Duanmu Cheng's shoulder, "Not like me, I have to follow Father Emperor's teachings and be cautious in my words and actions."

Duanmu Cheng was twice thwarted and nearly vomited blood from anger.

Unfortunately, there was no third person present to hear the truth and there was no way to refute these allegations.

"I never said anything about that, don't slander me!" was too weak a protest and nobody would believe it.

Anyone with discerning eyes could see that Duanmu Cheng and "Duanmu Ao" did not get along on the surface, let alone in their hearts.

"Duanmu Ao" seemed to be simple-minded, straightforward, and had a slightly low emotional intelligence; but he spoke his mind and didn't hide anything.

Duanmu Cheng practically had the bitterness and resentment of losing the Crown Prince's position etched on his forehead. Though he tried hard to conceal it, he couldn't.

As Su Liang admired Nian Jincheng's performance and watched the play on stage, she felt that life was like a play, and a play like life. Underneath the word "splendid" lurked turbulent undercurrents.

Ning Jing suddenly raised her hand and placed something before Su Liang's eyes, asking, "How is it?"

Startled, Su Liang found herself at a loss for words when she regained her senses.

Ning Jing had folded his handkerchief into a cute little mouse and placed it in his palm, presenting it as a treasure for Su Liang to see.

“Don’t disturb me while I’m watching the play,” Su Liang said, thinking that this man’s interests were very unique. It couldn’t be simply described as immature – beneath his aloof and dust-free appearance, there was a romantic heart full of curiosity and passion for life.

Ning Jing took back his little mouse, restored the handkerchief to its original state, folded it up, and stuffed it into his sleeve.

There were no further disturbances from Duanmu Cheng and Nian Jincheng in the front row.

Nian Jincheng focused on me may, and Duanmu Cheng stayed quiet.

When the play ended, the troupe leader brought the female lead, still in her stage makeup, to Duanmu Cheng and Nian Jincheng.

“Little brother, what if I redeem this beauty for you and present her to you as a congratulatory gift for becoming the Crown Prince?” Duanmu Cheng smiled, “Don’t refuse. Everyone loves beauty, and Father Emperor knows your temperament and won’t blame you for such a small matter.”

Nian Jincheng shook his head, “Big brother, you really need to change this insincere attitude of yours. Why does this have anything to do with me when it’s clearly what you want?”

Seeing that Nian Jincheng still wouldn’t bite, Duanmu Cheng, afraid that continuing the argument would not only fail to embarrass Nian Jincheng but would also stain himself, stood up and said, “Forget it. Everyone, step back. My second brother is just joking.”

“Big brother, are you sure you don’t want her?” Nian Jincheng also stood up, smiling as he asked.

Duanmu Cheng shook his head, “I’m feeling a bit unwell and need to go back.”

“Weren’t you just promising me that we would go to the palace together to visit the Empress Dowager? Have you forgotten so quickly?” Nian Jincheng frowned.

Another cap of unfilial piety was thrown down, and Duanmu Cheng almost gritted his teeth to pieces!

“Big brother, the matter of the Crown Prince’s position, the Empress Dowager has already pleaded for you to Father Emperor, but the mistakes you made were too serious. The Empress Dowager was so worried that she fell ill and Father Emperor did not change his mind,” Nian Jincheng said, his words giving rise to endless thoughts.

From yesterday till now, everyone in the capital city was guessing why Duanmu Cheng was suddenly abolished.

Nian Jincheng opened his mouth and made a definitive judgment, “Duanmu Cheng committed an unforgivable mistake, and even the Empress Dowager’s pleading was useless.”



And the cause of all this was Duanmu Cheng's affair with Xiao Mulian. At this moment, when Nian Jincheng said such words that simply and rudely poured dirty water on Duanmu Cheng, Duanmu Cheng's face changed from dark green to pale, but he couldn't refute a single word because he was dirtier than the dirty water...

Duanmu Cheng was afraid that if he dared to defend himself, it would anger "Duanmu Ao", and if "Duanmu Ao" really exposed the scandal, he would be done.

Seeing that "Duanmu Ao" said such words in public and Duanmu Cheng did not say a word to admit, the onlookers naturally believed that what "Duanmu Ao" said was true, and they began to speculate on what Duanmu Cheng had done wrong.

Duanmu Cheng stood stiffly, and Nian Jincheng suddenly reached out to embrace his shoulder, "Great Imperial Brother, let's go and see the imperial grandmother, she misses you very much."

Duanmu Cheng unconsciously pushed Nian Jincheng hard.

Su Liang watched as Nian Jincheng was forcibly pushed down in a very contrived manner and sat on the ground, simply unbearable to look at...

There was no way, verbal "taunts" worked with the brain.

For physical ones, letting Nian Jincheng, a strong and robust military commander, perform a weak push was really hard on him.

But this "performance desire," Su Liang felt was worth affirming.

Whether it is "taunting" or not, this is called means, and effectiveness is what matters.

What everyone saw was that "Duanmu Ao" urged Duanmu Cheng to enter the palace to see the Empress Dowager, but Duanmu Cheng suddenly became angry and even assaulted "Duanmu Ao" in public.

"Crown Prince!"

Duanmu Ao's subordinate hurriedly came to help Nian Jincheng up.

Nian Jincheng got up and sighed, "I have not fully recovered from my injuries before. If you are not in a good mood, Great Imperial Brother, and don't want to enter the palace, just say it. Why do you have to do this?"

"You!" Duanmu Cheng angrily pointed at Nian Jincheng, finally unable to suppress the raging anger in his chest, "Duanmu Ao, you have already taken my position as crown prince, what more do you want? Do you have to publicly humiliate me?"

Nian Jincheng frowned, "Great Imperial Brother, I don't understand what you are talking about. First of all, the position of crown prince is not snatched by me, it is decided by the emperor, and no one can snatch it. You know best what you have done, and I didn't say it to save your face. Is it humiliating for me to invite you to visit the imperial grandmother together? Did the imperial grandmother do anything wrong to you?"

Duanmu Cheng gritted his teeth, but could not speak anymore.

His subordinates hurriedly came to persuade him to calm down and go into the palace with “Duanmu Ao”.

“Imperial Physician Su?” Nian Jincheng seemed to see Su Liang for the first time and hurriedly stopped her, “You went into the palace to treat the imperial grandmother this morning, has her body improved?”

Su Liang stood up and saluted, “Greet the Crown Prince. Empress Dowager’s body is better than yesterday.”

“That’s good.” Nian Jincheng nodded, “You have worked hard.”

“It is the duty of the minister.” Su Liang said respectfully.

Once friends, Duanmu Cheng and Duanmu Ao became rivals over the position of crown prince.

But the formerly hostile Duanmu Ao and Su Liang suddenly seemed to have put aside their grudges. The twists and turns within were intriguing.

In the end, Duanmu Cheng did not enter the palace with Nian Jincheng and left Changchun Garden with a gloomy face.

Nian Jincheng had done his homework, and brought two of Empress Dowager Wan’s favorite performers with him to the palace, saying that they would sing a few tunes for the Empress Dowager to relieve her boredom.

The formerly prodigal second prince suddenly became serious after becoming the crown prince.

After the initial surprise of the onlookers and listeners, they thought it was normal. Presumably, Duanmu Cheng lost the position of the crown prince and showed his true nature, while Duanmu Ao began to pay attention to his image after he got the position of crown prince.

The show is over.

Su Liang and Ning Jing did not leave Changchun Garden immediately, but instead strolled around the various places inside.

This was an elegant garden, with some exclusive courtyards for the nobles to rest while listening to an opera.

Su Liang thought one of them must have witnessed Duanmu Cheng and Xiao Mulian’s affair.

After touring the garden, the two left and arrived at Wan Family Restaurant at noon. Wan Hui was hosting a feast for Yang Yu and just as they were talking about Su Liang not yet leaving the palace, they arrived together.

“Uncle Ning! Auntie!” Zhengzheng sat in Yang Yu’s arms, excitedly waving his little hand.

“You’re both alright?” Yang Yu was quite surprised.

Ning Jing picked up Zhengzheng.

Su Liang took a seat, "After I went to the palace to give the Empress Dowager an acupuncture treatment, I came out and went to Changchun Garden with

Ning Jing to watch a fantastic play."

"You don't have to go to the military camp today?" Wan Hui asked.

"I'll go in the afternoon." Su Liang said, "I have to eat enough first so I have energy to train later. The two of us came here to mooch off some food." Wan Hui couldn't help but laugh, "What nonsense are you talking about? This restaurant is both mine and yours. If you want something, order more dishes." "Enough, don't waste it." Su Liang said, picking up chopsticks to eat.

"I heard the new crown prince went to Changchun Garden to watch a play."

Yang Yu asked, "Was there any trouble?"

Su Liang shook her head, "Everything was fine."

With Wan Hui present, there were many things she didn't know, so Yang Yu didn't openly discuss them and changed the topic.

After eating, Su Liang put down her chopsticks and left, "I'm going to the military camp, you guys can continue eating and chatting."

"Auntie, I'll go too!" Zhengzheng raised his little hand high.

Su Liang shook her head, "Not today." She wasn't going there for fun.

Ning Jing put down his chopsticks, grabbed Zhengzheng's little arm, and raised his little hand again, "I'll go too."

Su Liang: ...

Wan Hui thought Ning Jing was doing it for Zhengzheng's sake and hurriedly coaxed her son, "Don't make a fuss, Zhengzheng. That's not a place for playing. "

Su Liang saw Ning Jing looking at her and knew he was serious.

Today, Su Liang only visited Ning Jing's "workplace" as a family member.

Ning Jing was requesting equal treatment so soon...

"The scenery near the military camp is nice, you can take Zhengzheng to have some fun." Su Liang said.

Zhengzheng was overjoyed, he could ride a horse again.

Wan Hui laughed and cried, "Don't spoil him too much. He's still young and doesn't understand things."

Ning Jing stood up holding Zhengzheng, "There's a lot I don't understand either."

Su Liang certainly understood that Ning Jing was seriously stating a fact. Everyone has many things they don't understand; nobody is omniscient.

But saying it at this time sounded like Ning Jing was comparing himself to Zhengzheng.

Wan Hui was speechless.

Yang Yu blurted out, "Brother Ning, you're spoiled by Su Liang."

Anyway, from what Yang Yu saw, no matter what Ning Jing said, wanted to do, or wanted to eat, Su Liang almost never opposed. Some things Yang Yu didn't understand, but it seemed Su Liang completely knew what he was thinking.

"Auntie spoils uncle, uncle spoils me!" Zhengzheng happily summarized, looking proudly.

"Zhengzheng is the cutest." Su Liang casually ended the topic, "We're short on time, let's hurry along."

As Su Liang went out, Ning Jing held Zhengzheng in one arm and her medicine box in the other.

Wan Hui and Yang Yu looked at each other.

"Liangmeimei likes Ning Jing, right?" Wan Hui asked.

Yang Yu nodded, "I think so. Look at the two of them, like an old married couple, but they won't admit they like each other. I lived under the same roof with them, and I can say that neither of them could stand being with someone else. No girl can understand Ning Jing except Su Liang. No man can make Su Liang so amiable except Ning Jing."

Wan Hui agreed, "Indeed."

"Just say Nian..." Yang Yu almost blurted out Nian Jincheng's name and quickly changed his words when he realized his mistake, "Before the New Year, when I first met them in Su Family Village, I thought they had known each other for a long time and understood each other very well. But they had only just met less than a month earlier. Isn't that strange, Sister Wan?"

Wan Hui smiled and shook her head, "It's not strange, it's called fate, and it can't be explained."

"But they don't seem to be planning to get married formally," Yang Yu frowned.

"I think so too," Wan Hui said. "We don't have to worry, it's a matter of time. They're both forthright people, and they have their own plans."

Yang Yu sighed, "I don't plan to get married, so I'm eagerly waiting for Ning Jing and Su Liang to get married and have a child, so I can help them take care of it."

Wan Hui laughed and shook her head, "You're still young, it's just that your fate hasn't arrived yet, so don't say things so definitively."

The military camp is off-limits to outsiders.

Su Liang and Ning Jing brought Zhengzheng to the vicinity of the military camp on horseback. Su Liang went in and let Ning Jing and Zhengzheng play outside.

Seeing Su Liang, Lin Bo Jun was a little surprised, "I thought you weren't coming today."

"I was at the palace in the morning, but I'm free in the afternoon." Su Liang said.

"Then you can go to Luo Rong's team. They're training on the west side of the school field." Lin Bo Jun said, "The Emperor sent someone to call me to the palace. When you finish training, go home early and be careful on the road."

Su Liang nodded, "Ning Jing is outside. If Second Brother Lin sees him, have him play enough and then go back first without waiting for me."

Lin Bo Jun was startled for a moment but didn't make an exception to let Ning Jing into the military camp.

When he went out to see Ning Jing, he was taking Zhengzheng, one big and one small, to pick flowers in the forest.

Su Liang asked Lin Bo Jun to tell Ning Jing to leave first after playing enough, but Lin Bo Jun said, "Xiaoliang wants you to wait and escort her home."

"Okay, okay!" Zhengzheng answered for Ning Jing.

Lin Bo Jun smiled and rode away.

Ning Jing glanced in the direction of the military camp, knowing that Lin Bo Jun was definitely lying.

But when the sun set, Su Liang came out leading a horse and saw Ning Jing and Zhengzheng waiting for her not far away.

Su Liang went over to them and noticed that Zhengzheng was wearing a cute little flower wreath. He tugged at Ning Jing's sleeve, and Ning Jing revealed the hand he had hidden behind his back, handing over a larger flower wreath, "Zhengzheng's gift for you."

Su Liang smiled, "I'll give it to you. Put it on so I can see how it looks."

"I refuse." As soon as Ning Jing finished speaking, the flower wreath flew out of his hand, a fragrant breeze caressed them, and it landed firmly on Su Liang's head.

"Auntie looks so beautiful!" Zhengzheng clapped his little hands in praise.

Su Liang accepted Ning Jing's hand-made gift on Zhengzheng's behalf. The two enjoyed the sunset while slowly riding their horses back to the city.

"Tonight..." Su Liang said only two words.

Ning Jing nodded slightly, "A good day to give someone a farewell send-off.."

Chapter 184: Tonight the moon is dark and the wind is high

By the time they returned home, it was already nightfall.

Yang Yu had prepared dinner and was waiting for them.

Seeing the flower wreath on Su Liang's head, he couldn't help but exclaim, "It's so beautiful! It must have been a gift from big brother Ning!"

Su Liang shook her head, "It's from little cutie Zhengzheng."

Yang Yu grinned in silence. Though Zhengzheng was a clever child, he was too young to create such delicate handiwork.

In this household, the most skilled and dexterous person was Ning Jing, according to Su Liang.

Yang Yu didn't expose the truth, guessing that Ning Jing had made it himself and had given it to Su Liang under the guise of being from Zhengzheng. How awkward.

Zhengzheng had already been sent home by the two of them.

At dinner, Yang Yu asked about their visit to Changchun Garden during the day. In the afternoon, he had heard some of the feud between the two princes.

"Someone used to be quite stubborn, but now he's much better." Su Liang gave high praise for Nian Jincheng's progress.

Hearing the details, Yang Yu couldn't help but laugh, "I never would have guessed that he could be quite so cunning."

Su Liang laughed and said, "Ning Jing told him that even off the battlefield, military strategies can still be applied."

Yang Yu's eyes lit up, "Right, he was originally a General, so he must be well-versed in military tactics."

Ning Jing's lips barely parted, "What would you call today's act?" He was asking Su Liang.

After thinking about it, Su Liang replied, "This performance should be called

'Hidden Dagger Behind a Smile.'"

Yang Yu clapped and praised, "Exactly!"

"Have him teach you some later. It could be useful for business." Su Liang said.

Yang Yu nodded, "I should definitely learn from him. But when will he be able to free himself? I'm always worried that someone will discover his flaw."

Su Liang put down her chopsticks, "It's a dark and windy moonless night tonight."

Ning Jing put down his spoon, "I've had enough." Once he spoke, he got up and left.

Technically, Yang Yu was a guest, but the central tenant of Ning Jing and Su Liang's hospitality was "not treating you as an outsider." As a result, Yang Yu had taken on most of the responsibility of cooking and washing dishes since moving in, which she was quite happy to do.

As she cleaned up the dishes, she asked Su Liang, "Have you two decided when you will bring back Xiaonian?"

"We'll talk after tonight. Finish cleaning up and go to bed early with your door locked." Su Liang left after saying this.

Yang Yu felt that there was something off but couldn't quite put her finger on it.

While washing the dishes, Su Liang's words "It's a dark and windy moonless night tonight" resurfaced in Yang Yu's mind. She quickly glanced outside, the wind had picked up, and dark clouds covered the moon.

Yang Yu then glanced at Ning Jing and Su Liang's room. In the past, the pair would usually read or copy books late into the night, but it seemed odd that they had blown out the lights so early tonight.

Yang Yu had a feeling that they might have some kind of operation planned for tonight.

As Su Liang instructed, she cleaned up, returned to her room, locked the door, and went to bed. By now, she had developed the habit of hiding a dagger under her pillow.

At Wangxiang Mountain.

Ning Jing dragged Duanmu Ao out of the deep pit. He was motionless with his eyes closed, appearing as if he were already dead.

Su Liang bent down to check his breathing. Although it was weak, he was still alive.

He was severely hungry and mentally and physically weak.

Su Liang didn't plan to say anything else to Duanmu Ao. She filled the pit back in with Ning Jing and restored it to its original state.

Ning Jing stuffed Duanmu Ao into a sack, slung it over his shoulder, and the two of them descended the mountain together.

"He's too dirty. Last time we met, I saw a pond nearby. Let's throw him in to wash up," Su Liang said.

After all, Duanmu Ao needed to regain his identity before he died.

After waiting for about a quarter of an hour, Ning Jing returned. Duanmu Ao had almost drowned and almost frozen to death.

Ning Jing had already learned about the security situation of the Second Prince's mansion from Nian Jincheng and had chosen the best route.

Using the excuse that he was in a bad mood, Nian Jincheng had all of his servants stay far away from him. He was alone in his room, without lighting a lamp, lying on the bed with a dagger clenched in his hand under the covers, his eyes wide open, waiting for Ning Jing to arrive.

The dagger was for the assassin. In case Ning Jing came late, Nian Jincheng needed to deal with the situation himself. Ning Jing had explained that if something went wrong, he should use the Poison Smoke Pills given to him by Su Liang. It was better to leave than to worry about the aftermath.

Only a quarter of an hour was left until midnight.

A few noises came from the rear window, and Nian Jincheng immediately sat up, got out from under the covers, and stepped out of bed, fully dressed with shoes and socks still on.

Just as he was putting away the dagger, Ning Jing and Su Liang entered. Nian Jincheng let out a sigh of relief and took the sack from Ning Jing's hands.

“Turn around.” Ning Jing told Su Liang.

Su Liang hesitated for a moment but turned her back quickly.

Nian Jincheng opened the sack and saw Duanmu Ao inside, naked. The corner of his mouth twitched, and on Ning Jing’s order, he dressed Duanmu Ao in clothes.

While Ning Jing had been “washing” Duanmu Ao, he had removed and burned all of his dirty clothes. To avoid getting dirt on Duanmu Ao, he had even washed the sack clean. As a result, Ning Jing’s shoulder was damp from the water.

At this time, it was nighttime, and all Nian Jincheng needed to do was put Duanmu Ao in his underclothes, skip the socks and shoes, and lay him on the bed cover.

“We need to hurry up,” Nian Jincheng whispered.

Ning Jing patted Su Liang’s shoulder. When she turned around and walked by the bed, she bent down and pulled her trusty Twin Blades from her lower leg.

After being tormented in succession, Duanmu Ao was now awake and conscious.

Seeing Su Liang, his eyes filled with icy coldness. Duanmu Ao’s eyes widened, and he uttered a word, “You...”

A flash of two cold glints, and Su Liang’s Twin Blades both pierced through the covers and penetrated Duanmu Ao’s body!

Duanmu Ao coughed up blood continuously, his awareness scattered, and he heard Su Liang’s chilling voice, “An eye for an eye, a life for a life. It’s only fair.” Su Liang pulled out her blades, the covers were stained with fresh blood.

Su Liang then slashed several cuts on Duanmu Ao’s neck to cover up the marks left by the whip she had used to torture him during their previous interrogation.

Ning Jing took a rope they had brought with them and tied it to the beam above.

Nian Jincheng threw the blood-stained covers on the ground, dragged the dying Duanmu Ao from the bed, pulled him over, raised him up, and slipped the noose around his neck.

From start to finish, all three of them were careful to avoid getting blood on their shoes and not leave any footprints.

“You take him away.” Ning Jing said to Su Liang.

After Su Liang and Nian Jincheng left through the rear window, Ning Jing looked at Duanmu Ao, who had already stopped breathing. He threw a colorless, odorless Incense Ball into the incense burner and disappeared from the room.

Midnight arrived.

A dark figure dodged the guards of the Second Prince’s mansion and approached Duanmu Ao’s room in silence.

Upon entering, they were greeted by the strong smell of blood.



By the moonlight shining through the window, the assassin saw the person hanging from the beam. Knowing that something was amiss, they were about to leave when they heard someone outside shouting, "There's a fire! Hurry up and put it out!"

The assassin tried to leave along the same route, only to find a crowd gathering around him. He wanted to find a place to hide for a while, but suddenly felt weak and dizzy. He did not manage to walk far before collapsing on the ground.

Someone appeared beside him and stuffed a medicine bottle and a blood-stained cloth into his clothes. After putting another medicine bottle in his hand, they left.

After leaving the Second Prince's residence, Su Liang and Nian Jincheng went straight home.

Once home, Nian Jincheng finally spoke up, "Will Aling be alright?"

Su Liang shook his head, "Before he recovers his identity, don't call him by that name."

In fact, Su Liang was worried that Yan Shiba might overhear this since she was powerful. If she happened to be hiding nearby, they might not notice. It was not unusual for Yan Shiba to suddenly appear in Su Liang's house.

"Alright." Nian Jincheng nodded, "Will he be alright?"

Su Liang calmly replied, "We'll know when he returns."

Nian Jincheng: ...This definitely sounded like something someone else would say.

"Is Yang Yu still at home?" Nian Jincheng asked.

"Yes," Su Liang replied, "Go wake her up and let her know you're alright. She's been worried about you."

Nian Jincheng nodded, hesitating, "Shouldn't we wait until tomorrow?"

"Go now," Su Liang insisted. A pleasant surprise is best experienced as soon as possible.

"Alright," Nian Jincheng had already grown accustomed to Su Liang and Ning Jing'an making arrangements for him.

Ning Jing had not yet returned home, but Su Liang was genuinely not worried. Having been kept informed and meticulously prepared, there was little chance of anything going wrong tonight.

For example, Ning Jing had burned Duanmu Ao's dirty clothes, and the rope he used to hang Duanmu Ao had been stolen from Duanmu Cheng's residence. The sedatives and antidote that he placed on the assassin's body were not made by Su Liang but had been bought from the black market.

Su Liang had disposed of the original medicines and had specifically made more potent sedatives and inferior antidotes for Duanmu Ao, then placed them back into the original bottles.

Ning Jing took a handkerchief of Duanmu Ao's, stained it with blood, and put it on the assassin's body, creating the false impression that the assassin had wiped his bloodied knife with the cloth.

The fire at the Second Prince's residence had been started by Ning Jing sneaking into the servants' quarters and knocking over an oil lamp. This would not leave any traces and would confirm that the servants had fled the room.

There were many people putting out the fire, and their messy footprints would help cover up their own footprints coming and going.

With Duanmu Ao's death, the only clue left behind would be that of the

“assassin who bought inferior sedatives and passed out after killing Duanmu Ao, failing to escape.”

Nian Jincheng knocked on Yang Yu's door. When she woke up and heard his voice, she released the dagger in her hand and got out of bed without taking off her clothes, fearing danger.

“You're back?” Yang Yu was genuinely surprised, “Are you alright?”

While waiting outside, Nian Jincheng had already washed off his disguise with the medicine Su Liang had given him.

Seeing Yang Yu's eyes sparkling at him, Nian Jincheng's heart softened. He nodded and said, “I'm fine.”

“Are Su Liang and Ning Jing alright?” Yang Yu stepped out and saw the light in Su Liang's room. She breathed a sigh of relief, “They didn't tell me they were going to rescue you tonight.”

“Ning Jing hasn't returned yet, but he should be alright,” Nian Jincheng said.

As soon as his words fell, Yang Yu saw Ning Jing walking through the courtyard gate. He was wearing a night-walk outfit, holding a small mouse folded from a black cloth used for masking faces. His face was cold, as if he had just returned from a night out.

Nian Jincheng didn't ask any more questions and saw Ning Jing heading towards the kitchen.

“What exactly happened?” Yang Yu was very curious.

Nian Jincheng then recounted the events to her.

Yang Yu marveled at their prowess, “You guys are amazing! That shameless and wicked Second Prince deserved to die! The Eldest Prince was going to kill him anyway, so it's not unjust for him to take the blame!”

Nian Jincheng was somewhat embarrassed by the praise, “I just followed their arrangements.”

“Today, Su Liang praised you, saying that you used to be single-minded, but now you can ‘hide a knife in a smile.’” Yang Yu said with a smile.

Nian Jincheng knew that Yang Yu was sincerely praising him, but he felt like he was being scolded.

“Let me make you some hot water, are you hungry? What do you want to eat? I'll make it for you!” Yang Yu said.

“No need, it’s too late. I don’t want to bother you anymore. You should go and rest,” Nian Jincheng waved his hand.

“Don’t be polite, we’re not outsiders,” Yang Yu smiled and said, “I’m awake now, and I can’t sleep anyway. I’ll go ask Su Liang and Ning Jing if they want a late-night snack. You’ve all worked hard.”

Nian Jincheng saw Yang Yu walking out, and he originally wanted to go back to his room to change his clothes, but he followed her, “Then I’ll go make a fire for you.” In usual days, when Su Liang cooked, it was Ning Jing who made the fire.

“Great!” Yang Yu nodded.

Ning Jing went back to his room after washing his hands in the kitchen, but he hadn’t slept yet.

Yang Yu asked them what they wanted to eat, but Su Liang and Ning Jing both said they weren’t hungry.

“Maybe we should forget about it,” Nian Jincheng said.

“I’m hungry,” Yang Yu smiled, “Go ahead and make a fire. I want to hear more about your experiences these past couple of days.”

Nian Jincheng sat down on a small stool, put firewood in the stove, and watched the flames ignite. As he talked about his experiences with Yang Yu over the past few days, his heart gradually warmed.

In the end, Yang Yu made two bowls of noodles and she and Nian Jincheng ate in the kitchen.

“When the incident is exposed tomorrow, the Eldest Prince will definitely accuse Su Liang of killing the Second Prince and slander him,” Yang Yu said.

Nian Jincheng hummed softly, “This frame-up is carefully prepared by Su Liang, he’ll bear it for sure!”

Early the next morning, the news that the new Crown Prince Duanmu Ao was assassinated last night shocked the entire capital city!

Duanmu Chen got up early and was about to enter the palace to pay respects to the Empress Dowager Wan and perform filial piety; he was stunned when he heard that Duanmu Ao had died so tragically.

He had an intuition that it was Su Liang who had done it, and thought that the girl really dared to act when she found out the truth and didn’t dawdle at all.

Soon after, someone from the palace came, and Duanmu Yi ordered Duanmu Chen to enter the palace immediately.

On the way to the palace, Duanmu Chen wondered how he should deal with it if any evidence pointed to Su Liang. In any case, he had to guide the suspicion towards Duanmu Cheng, but he couldn’t make it too obvious. Even now, some people still suspected that Su Liang was on his side.

When Duanmu Chen saw Duanmu Yi, he was in Cil an Palace, where the Empress Dowager Wan and Empress Wan were weeping inconsolably.

Duanmu Chen found it strange – since Duanmu Ao’s body hadn’t been brought into the palace yet, shouldn’t they cry beside the coffin instead?

As it turned out, Duanmu Chen soon found out the real reason Wan and Empress Wan cried so bitterly in the palace: not only because of Duanmu Ao’s tragic death but also because the murderer was Duanmu Cheng! Duanmu Yi wanted to execute Duanmu Cheng!

Duanmu Chen was dumbfounded, though it didn’t show on his face.

He had thought that Su Liang would take action, and that no matter whether Duanmu Cheng or Duanmu Ao died first, she would be suspected and it would be difficult for her to take action against the other one.

Duanmu Chen had also thought that if Duanmu Ao or Duanmu Cheng died, Su Liang would lead the suspicion to the one who was still alive.

But he never thought that it would be decided so quickly!

Duanmu Yi’s face was pale, “The assassin who killed the Second Prince was one of the Eldest Prince’s men. Their aphrodisiac incense and antidote had problems, causing them to become intoxicated and unable to escape.”

Duanmu Chen believed that if Duanmu Yi said this, he must have investigated it thoroughly. Although there were Death Soldiers, sometimes even if they didn’t speak, it was not impossible to find out the identity of their master.

At this moment, Duanmu Chen felt that it was indeed Duanmu Cheng who had sent the assassin to kill Duanmu Ao, hoping to pin the blame on Su Liang.

The assassin being intoxicated by their own aphrodisiac incense... no matter how Duanmu Chen thought about it, it seemed strange. It wasn’t impossible, but he had an intuition that Su Liang must have participated in it somehow!

“Bring Su Liang to come and treat my mother,” Duanmu Yi ordered. He no longer paid attention to Wan and Empress Wan’s pleading and left Cilan Palace with Duanmu Chen..

Chapter 185: 185. New Task

In the Imperial Study, Duanmu Chen took his seat and heard Duanmu Yi ask coldly, “Fourth brother, what do you think?”

After pondering for a moment, Duanmu Chen spoke, “Your son heard yesterday that the eldest prince and the second prince were somewhat unhappy in Changchun Garden.”

At the time, Duanmu Chen was not present. He believed that the information he received was also known to Duanmu Yi.

Two days ago, deposed Duanmu Cheng's crown prince status and appointed Duanmu Ao as crown prince, and yesterday's quarrel between the brothers in the garden could completely become Duanmu Cheng's motive to kill Duanmu Ao, and it seemed very reasonable no matter how you looked at it.

Furthermore, Duanmu Yi and Duanmu Chen both knew that if Duanmu Cheng got rid of Duanmu Ao, the Wan family would fully support him to take the throne, and they might even rebel.

It was only by getting rid of Duanmu Ao that Duanmu Cheng would have the chance to rise again.

This was an undeniable fact.

Duanmu Yi had already said that it was Duanmu Cheng who sent people to kill Duanmu Ao, and then asked Duanmu Chen what he thought, which made him uncertain about what Duanmu Yi wanted to hear.

After a pause, Duanmu Chen spoke again, "Your son is not clear about the circumstances of the second prince's death, but thinks that perhaps someone took advantage of this opportunity to kill the second prince and frame the eldest prince."

When entering the palace, Duanmu Chen thought that if the evidence pointed to Su Liang, he would have to find a way to lead it to Duanmu Cheng.

But he didn't expect that there wouldn't be much dispute over the matter.

However, since Duanmu Yi asked him, Duanmu Chen still had to say a few polite words.

His meaning was that Duanmu Cheng indeed had a clear motive to get rid of Duanmu Ao, and this point could be used by someone with ulterior motives to kill Duanmu Ao and frame Duanmu Cheng.

Duanmu Yi frowned, "The captured assassin is the eldest brother's man. Are you saying that the person framing him has control over his mind?"

Hearing this, Duanmu Chen actually wanted to laugh a little in his heart, but he naturally needed to control himself and show a look of surprise and a touch of sadness on the surface.

At this point, Duanmu Chen still believed that Su Liang must have done something crucial in the middle, perhaps buying the inferior antidote from him? It was too far-fetched for him to believe that it was all fate.

"The weapon of the assassin is similar to Su Liang's," said Duanmu Yi with a cold face. "The death of the Su family is related to the eldest and second brothers, and it is also the direct reason why I deposed the crown prince's position."

Duanmu Chen had known this long ago, but still showed the perfect amount of astonishment, "This..."

So the fact that Duanmu Yi determined was that Duanmu Cheng killed Duanmu Ao and tried to frame Su Liang?

Duanmu Chen could only describe the death of Duanmu Ao with two words:

Perfect.

Su Liang not only had no suspicion but was also as innocent as possible and almost wronged.

“I want to call Wan Shan back to the capital. Who do you think is the most suitable person to take his place?” Duanmu Yi asked Duanmu Chen.

Duanmu Chen’s heart skipped a beat, and then he became overjoyed.

The biggest backing behind the brothers Duanmu Cheng and Duanmu Ao was their uncle, the Grand Marshal of Qian Country, Wan Shan, who was now stationed at the northern border.

This was also the biggest obstacle for Duanmu Chen to ascend to power.

He needed the support of military commanders.

At this moment, Duanmu Chen heard the meaning of Duanmu Yi’s intention to completely abandon the Wan family and immediately understood why Duanmu Yi chose to depose the crown prince when the Su family died.

It was not really because of the death of the Su family, but because Duanmu Yi had long been jealous of the powerful Wan family.

Duanmu Chen even suspected that the opportunities he had received in the past two years were Duanmu Yi’s deliberate cultivation, for today.

After careful consideration, Duanmu Chen answered Duanmu Yi’s question, “The current generals with military achievements are either too old and not suitable for important positions or they have various ties with the Wan family.” This was quite a straightforward statement, but it was true.

For military commanders to emerge was not easy. The strongest military families in Qian Country, excluding Duanmu Chen’s maternal grandfather’s Lian family, had been infiltrated and controlled by the Wan family. Intricate marital ties, sometimes very secretive, could not be controlled.

By the time Duanmu Yi discovered the problem, it had reached the point where pulling one hair affected the whole body, and in order to maintain stability in Qian Country, he could not act rashly.

As for the Lian family, they had completely declined to the point of Lian Shun, leaving only the prestige of their ancestors.

This was also one of the reasons why Duanmu Yi had previously intentionally promoted young military officers and attached importance to the Military Exam.

Unfortunately, the young officer Nian Jincheng he had once wanted to cultivate was dismissed in a word.

Lin Bojun, as well as Su Liang, who was just selected this year, have never been on a battlefield.

Duanmu Chen would not recommend someone as young and inexperienced as Lin Bojun or Su Liang to replace Wan Shan. It would be too risky, and they would not be able to command respect from others.

But at this critical moment, someone has to seize Wan Shan’s military power and prevent Qian Country from falling into chaos.

Duanmu Yi has been planning to make a move against the Wan family for a long time, and this time finally found an opportunity to take action against his two useless sons, but the Wan family is still a big problem.

Originally, Duanmu Yi wanted to appoint Duanmu Ao as the crown prince, in order to make a smooth transition and gradually weaken the Wan family.

Who knew that one day later, Duanmu Cheng would kill Duanmu Ao, causing the conflict to intensify completely.

Duanmu Yi cannot possibly give the position of crown prince to Duanmu Cheng again, so he has to guard against the Wan family's rebellion.

At the moment, Duanmu Chen was thinking about the nobles related to Su Liang in the capital city, but unfortunately there were no military commanders among them.

But suddenly, a thought occurred to him, and he blurted out, "Marquis Zhong Xin!"

Duanmu Yi looked at him intently, "Xing Ji?"

"Yes, Your Majesty." Duanmu Chen said seriously, "After the previous events, I believe his loyalty is beyond doubt. He is a man who values love and loyalty. As long as his entire family is in the capital city, there is no need to worry about him doing anything detrimental to Qian Country. Although his identity does not classify him as a military commander, he fought bravely on the battlefield in his youth and even captured enemy generals. His courage is evident." Duanmu Yi pondered with a frown.

Duanmu Chen continued, "Marquis Zhong Xin is in his prime, with status, prestige, military achievements, and a marriage alliance with the Lin Family. Why not let him go north with Lin Bojun? Su Liang can also go with them. She is very shrewd. At this time, it is not a matter of fighting a war, but of winning the hearts of the people on the surface and being tough behind the scenes." The internal situation must remain stable; otherwise, it will provide an opportunity for the enemy to take advantage of.

"What do you think I should do about the eldest son?" Duanmu Yi brought up Duanmu Cheng again.

Duanmu Chen, of course, dared not speak at will, "It is up to Your Majesty to decide; this humble official does not dare to be arbitrary."

In fact, he could say that for the sake of the Empress Dowager and the Empress, at least let Duanmu Cheng live.

But Duanmu Chen didn't want to say that.

"You may leave. Summon Marquis Zhong Xin, Lin Bojun, and Su Liang to the palace immediately!" Duanmu Yi had a dark expression on his face.

Duanmu Chen respectfully replied, "Yes, Your Majesty."

Upon stepping out of the Imperial Study, Duanmu Chen looked at the gloomy sky and felt that his future was bright.

Just as Duanmu Chen left, Huang Bo brought Duanmu Che in his wheelchair to seek an audience with Duanmu Yi.

Ning Jing had been too busy to poison Duanmu Che in the past few days, so he hadn't had any more of his intermittent fits, but his complexion was still poor. "Didn't you walk before?" Duanmu Yi asked.

Duanmu Che shook his head, "This humble son feels weak and powerless today."

"What's the matter?" Duanmu Yi's attitude was not as caring as before.

Duanmu Che felt it and frowned, "Father Emperor, I heard that eldest imperial brother killed second imperial brother?"

"You don't have to worry about these things; just focus on recovering your health first." Duanmu Yi had no intention of discussing serious matters with Duanmu Che.

But Duanmu Che sneered, "Father Emperor, I believe Su Liang must be the one scheming behind the scenes! Killing second imperial brother and slandering eldest imperial brother, I think it's all her doing! Father Emperor, please don't be deceived by her!"

Duanmu Yi's face darkened instantly upon hearing this, "Che'er, Su Liang simply refused you, and since you couldn't get her, you had to destroy her? How could your mind be so narrow? It is very disappointing! Someone, escort the fifth prince out of the palace back to his mansion!"

Duanmu Che didn't expect Duanmu Yi would so quickly determine that the murderer was Duanmu Cheng, without any suspicion of Su Liang, and instead got annoyed with him and didn't even allow him to stay in the palace any longer.

Duanmu Che still wanted to say something, but Huang Bo had already entered the room.

Duanmu Yi went straight to the side palace without wanting to hear another word from Duanmu Che.

Huang Bo pushed Duanmu Che's wheelchair out of the Imperial Study and sighed deeply, "Master, there's nothing impossible about the Eldest Prince killing the Second Prince. Why do you insist on involving Miss Su? Even if the deaths of the Su family members were related to those two princes, it doesn't mean Miss Su did such a thing just because she wanted to kill Second Prince." "How do you know it wasn't her doing?" Duanmu Che retorted coldly.

Huang Bo bitter smiled, "How do you know it wasn't the eldest prince? If His Majesty thinks it was him, there must be solid evidence. In my opinion, both the eldest prince and Miss Su wanted to kill the second prince, but the eldest prince made the first move, and Miss Su did nothing, so she has nothing to do with it."

"But I have a strong feeling that she did it!" Duanmu Che's face was gloomy.

Huang Bo shook his head, "Master, please focus on recovering your health first.

The other matters are not related to us, so let's not get involved."

When Duanmu Chen went to the Marquis Zhong Xin Mansion to notify Xing Ji, he was looking at the dowry prepared by Miao Family for their daughter.



After Old Master Qin's deliberate reminder, Xing Ji realized that he was being too harsh on the Miao Family and their children. He softened his attitude in the past two days, and besides Xing Yusheng, the family was quite harmonious.

The betrothal gift from Xing Yusheng to Lin Xueqing was prepared by Madam Xing, and Miao Family was not allowed to interfere.

Seeing Duanmu Chen come to visit, Xing Ji was very surprised, and quickly bowed, "This humble servant pays his respects to the Fourth Prince."

The capital city was experiencing turbulent times, but Xing Ji felt it had nothing to do with them.

Until he heard Duanmu Chen say that the emperor wanted him to enter the palace immediately for an important discussion.

Mrs. Miao was quite happy, "Hurry and go, husband!"

Duanmu Chen didn't even sit down and left directly with Xing Ji.

When Xing Ji asked, Duanmu Chen didn't keep him guessing and directly told him about Duanmu Yi's plan.

"It was I who recommended Marquis Zhong Xin," Duanmu Chen spoke plainly. Whether Xing Ji was willing or not, it would not be a bad thing for Xing Family.

Xing Ji didn't say anything and parted ways with Duanmu Chen, then went to find Lin Bojun himself.

As for Su Liang, she was already in the palace and didn't know that she was arranged by Duanmu Chen.

When Wan Family saw Su Liang again, they directly cursed her out, accusing her of scheming in the dark, killing Duanmu Ao, framing Duanmu Cheng, and ordering her arrest.

However, Duanmu Yi had already changed the servants in Ci'an Palace, so no one listened to Wan Family's orders.

Su Liang was in a good mood.

She had laid out all her plans meticulously, all in anticipation of today.

She wasn't afraid of being suspected.

But not only did all the evidence point to Duanmu Cheng, but Duanmu Cheng also actually wanted to kill Duanmu Ao last night.

Perhaps even Duanmu Cheng himself felt that it was his arranged assassin who bought inferior drugs, causing the plan to fail at the last moment.

"Empress Dowager, you must mourn properly and take care of your health," Su Liang's smile didn't reach her eyes.

Is it painful? It should be.

Back then, these high-ranking and powerful people trampled on the lives of others. Now, they will lose everything.

The wheel of karma turns, and those who commit wrongdoings will be punished in the end.

Wan Family gritted their teeth in rage, “Wretched woman! We will tear you into pieces sooner or later!”

Su Liang’s face remained calm, “I’m so scared.”

Since they were already at odds, they didn’t need to be hypocritical.

Wan Family was so furious that they almost coughed blood, “Your Majesty! Listen to this wretched woman! She’s disrespectful to her superiors; she doesn’t take us seriously at all!”

As Su Liang put away the last gold needle, a eunuch’s voice came from outside the palace, “The emperor orders Su Liang to go to the Imperial Study immediately after treating the Empress Dowager’s illness. ”

“Alright,” Su Liang replied, looking at the distorted face of Wan Family, smiling faintly, “The emperor has summoned me to the Imperial Study. It must be an important matter to discuss. I will inform the emperor that the Empress Dowager wants to see him, whether he comes or not, I don’t know.”

With her medicine box on her back, Su Liang walked out of Ci’an Palace calmly, looked up at the sky and saw rain clouds gathering.

Su Liang didn’t know whether the emperor wanted to see her because he suspected her involvement or for other reasons, but she had made full preparations in advance and was not worried about any situation.

Entering the door, Su Liang saw Duanmu Chen, Xing Ji, and Lin Bojun, and was a bit surprised.

After paying her respects, Duanmu Yi asked about the Empress Dowager’s health.

Su Liang told the truth, “Empress Dowager is suffering from heartache and needs careful recuperation.”

However, with one grandson dead and another crippled or possibly facing execution, the Empress Dowager would not be able to recuperate well.

Although Duanmu Chen and Duanmu Che were also Wan Family’s grandsons, she had always preferred those with Wan Family bloodline. Empress Dowager wants to see the emperor,” Su Liang said.

Duanmu Yi’s face darkened, “Sit down.”

Su Liang sat down where Lin Bojun had prepared the seat, still not knowing Duanmu Yi’s intentions.

But since Xing Ji and Lin Bojun were present, Su Liang thought it wouldn’t be discussing matters like how Duanmu Ao died.

Duanmu Yi didn’t beat around the bush, and directly told them of his arrangements, asking Xing Ji to lead Lin Bojun and Su Liang to the Northern Border to take over the military power held by the Wan Family and their two sons, ordering them to return to the capital.

The most surprised person was Xing Ji.

He hadn't expected to be trusted again, let alone at this critical juncture and for such a significant matter to be entrusted to him.

"Marquis Zhong Xin, do you understand what I said?" Duanmu Yi asked Xing Ji.

Xing Ji respectfully replied, "This humble servant understands and will not let Your Majesty's trust down."

Upon hearing this, Duanmu Chen felt that it was the North Jingwang who dared to break into the enemy camp back then.

"Very good!" Duanmu Yi was very satisfied with Xing Ji's answer, "If anyone dares to defy the decree, they will be executed on the spot! General Lin and General Su will assist Marquis Zhong Xin, and they must complete what I have entrusted to them without causing any trouble!"

Lin Bojun and Su Liang didn't even get a chance to express their intentions, so they could only accept the order and thank him for his grace. Today, they will set out with the Imperial Decree and Imperial Sword,"

Duanmu Yi said.

Xing Ji took the Imperial Decree and the sword, then left with Lin Bojun and Su Liang.

Upon leaving the Imperial Study, Su Liang sighed, "Second Brother Lin, your wedding will have to be postponed."

Xing Ji said, "Yu Sheng and Xueqing's wedding cannot be postponed."

Lin Bojun: ...So not only can't he marry his bride on time, he also can't send his beloved sister off for her wedding? Does it have to be this miserable?

"If I go back and ask for the emperor's permission to take Ning Jing with me, would I be allowed?" Su Liang asked.

She was serious because she felt Ning Jing probably wouldn't want to go to the Ministry of Revenue for tea every day. Going out and playing would be more fun.

Xing Ji and Lin Bojun both looked at Su Liang.

Xing Ji said, "No."

Ning Jing was a civil official, and the emperor wouldn't allow it since this matter was of great importance.

Moreover, the other members of Xing Family and Lin Family were in the capital city, which was a premise for the emperor to trust them with this important task.

This was an unwritten rule.

They each returned home to pack their bags and agreed to meet at the military camp outside the city in an hour.

Carrying her medicine box, Su Liang walked into the courtyard and saw Ning Jing sitting by the window, copying books, looking calm and beautiful from the side.

When Ning Jing heard the sound, he looked up, “Yang Yu is practicing martial arts in the backyard.”

When Nian Jincheng returned last night, Su Liang informed him this morning that they should start training Yang Yu.

Su Liang walked over, “The emperor ordered Marquis Zhong Xin, Second Brother Lin, and me to go to the Northern Border to take over the military power from Wan Family. We will leave today.”

Ning Jing heard and put down his pen, “I want to go, too.”

Su Liang shook her head, “Unless you let the emperor know that you’re hiding your talents, he definitely won’t let you go.”

After a moment of silence, Ning Jing said, “Never mind..”

Chapter 186: 186. In your dreams

Mrs. Miao happily packed up Xing Ji’s luggage. “My husband has won the favor of his Majesty so soon. It is by divine arrangement. Take Yuyang with you and let him gain some experience and help you out as well.”

Seeing Mrs. Miao’s earnest gaze, Xing Ji sighed softly, “His Majesty has ordered me to take Lin Bojun and Su Liang with me. His intent is to promote them.”

Mrs. Miao frowned, “Aren’t you supposed to be bringing some soldiers? Why can’t you take Yuyang? It’s such a good opportunity, but it’s only for outsiders.

You don’t even think about your own child.”

Xing Ji shook his head, “Do you think I don’t want my son to experience the world? But the task at hand is extremely dangerous. I don’t even know if I’ll be able to come back.”

Mrs. Miao’s face changed, “You’re carrying an Imperial Decree and the Imperial Sword. How dare Wan Shan rebel?”

“It’s hard to say,” Xing Ji said. “Once this matter is settled, if the boy wishes to venture out, I won’t stop him.”

Mrs. Miao nodded and suddenly her eyes reddened, “You must not get into any trouble, otherwise, I won’t be able to live on...”

Xing Ji didn’t like Mrs. Miao’s tendency to worry so much, but he didn’t show it. He changed the subject and instructed her to take good care of Old Lady Xing and the children, particularly Xing Yuyang, and make sure he didn’t get into any trouble.

Upon hearing this, Mrs. Miao grew a bit resentful. “Yu Sheng has a powerful family supporting him, so he can run around all day without any problems. Yet you worry that Yuyang will get into trouble every time he steps out the door, as if I haven’t taught the child well.”

Xing Ji frowned, "That's not what I meant."

Seeing Mrs. Miao turning her back to wipe away her tears, Xing Ji gave a deep sigh, "Things are urgent. I won't say goodbye to the children. Please pass on my message. Everyone, take care. I'll go see my mother and then leave."

As soon as Xing Ji finished speaking, he stepped out of the door. Mrs. Miao rushed out behind him, only to see a piece of his robe disappearing from her view.

Old Lady Xing and Xing Yusheng were enjoying some desserts made by Lin Xueqing, having a wonderful time together.

When they saw Xing Ji walk in with a bundle, they were taken aback.

"Dad, is this another gift for Su Liang?" Xing Yusheng asked.

Xing Ji shook his head, "No."

Upon hearing the real reason from Xing Ji, Old Lady Xing's face filled with worry. "Why would his Majesty send you? This trip up north will surely be perilous."

Xing Yusheng pondered, "Of the military commanders in your generation in the Qian Country, there's hardly anyone left who can handle this. Perhaps his Majesty suddenly remembered your feats from your younger days."

Old Lady Xing sighed repeatedly, "You're taking Bo Jun from the Lin Family and Liang with you? That's slightly better. They're both trustworthy and competent. Especially Liang, she's quite resourceful. Listen to their advice, don't be obstinate."

Xing Yusheng nodded in agreement, "With Su Liang there, grandma doesn't need to worry. Even if dad is gravely injured and only has a breath left, she'll still be able to save him!"

Old Lady Xing, who was always indulgent of Xing Yusheng, couldn't help but flick him on the back of his head, "What nonsense are you talking about?"

Xing Ji's face darkened slightly, but he nodded, "What Yusheng said is true." Such a filial son...

Xing Yusheng coughed lightly, "Has his Majesty mentioned how to handle the military authority transfer and what to do afterward?"

Old Lady Xing hurriedly asked, "Yes, you're right! They can't just leave you to guard the northern border year after year, right?"

Xing Ji cracked a smile, "Who knows?"

Xing Yusheng said, "See, grandma, dad is actually eager to guard the northern border. He doesn't want to stay at home at all."

Old Lady Xing glared at Xing Yusheng, then she turned to Xing Ji who was still laughing and glared at him too, "What's so funny? You're just as unscrupulous as you were when you were young, making trouble all the time! When Yusheng gets married, if his Majesty doesn't allow you to return, I will go and kneel in front of the Imperial Palace."

Xing Yusheng said solemnly, "Actually, it's fine if dad doesn't come back. But Su Liang must return before Xueqing and I get married. I'm afraid that she won't marry me if she's missing a cup of wedding wine."

The lofty words from Xing Yusheng earned him another smack on the back of his head from Old Lady Xing.

However, Xing Ji laughed out loud, "To make sure Xueqing happily marries you, I will ensure Su Liang is safe and make sure she returns early."

Old Lady Xing sighed deeply, "All of you are so careless."

Xing Ji knelt down and kowtowed to Old Lady Xing, "I have to go now, mother. Please take good care of yourself."

As soon as Xing Ji finished speaking, he picked up his belongings and left. The only assistants he took with him were Qi Yan and Qi Jun's father, Qi Jiang.

The two of them arrived at the gate and found that Mrs. Miao and her children were all waiting there.

After giving each of them some instructions, Xing Ji got on his horse to leave, but someone suddenly called out, "Dad" and came chasing after him.

It was not Xing Yusheng.

Instead, it was Qi Jiang's son, Qi Jun.

"The crown prince orders me to follow the Marquis," Qi Jun said respectfully. Xing Ji shook his head, "No need, go back and serve Yusheng."

Immediately Qi Jun corrected himself, "Oh, I mean, I want to go and serve my dad."

Qi Jiang scolded him, "What nonsense are you talking about? Go back immediately!"

Qi Jun smiled, "Dad doesn't need me? That's perfect, in fact, the crown prince wants me to serve Miss Su. He's afraid she won't have anyone to serve her on this long journey."

Before Qi Jiang could say anything, Xing Ji nodded, "Then you go. See if there's anything you can help Su Liang with."

At this point, Su Liang had just finished packing.

Yang Yu and Nian Jincheng were already aware of her departure and had gathered in her room.

As Ning Jing entered the room and sat in his usual spot, he began carving a piece of wood in his hand.

"Su Liang, it's going to be very dangerous this time, isn't it? Isn't big brother Ning going with you?" Yang Yu asked.

"He probably wants to go but can't," Nian Jincheng analyzed. Ning Jing looked up at Nian Jincheng, "It's all because you're too fat."

Nian Jincheng felt baffled, how does this relate to him?

Su Liang laughed lightly, "Someone probably thought of having you disguise as him and stay in the capital, but unfortunately you're bigger than him, with a face that's a circle larger. Even a disguise wouldn't work."

Too fat, a big face... Nian Jincheng felt like he was under attack by these two.

Yang Yu was amused by this, and among the laughter, he looked at Nian

Jincheng, then at Ning Jing, and nodded, "True, it wouldn't work."

If someone is too skinny, wearing a lot of clothes would look fake. If one is fat, there's genuinely nothing that can be done.

The truth is, Ning Jing is too thin.

Nian Jincheng has a standard build, muscular, and stalwart.

"How about if I starve for a few days?" Nian Jincheng weakly proposed.

"Your face is too large. It's impossible." Ning Jing landed another hit on Nian Jincheng.

Nian Jincheng frowned, "Then what should we do? You have to go and look after Su Liang, in case she gets bullied."

"Exactly, we need to think of a solution. You two can't be separated," Yang Yu furrowed his brow in thought.

Su Liang countered, "Why can't we be separated?"

Nian Jincheng and Yang Yu stared blankly. They had always assumed that Su Liang and Ning Jing had to be together, but as for why...

"There's not always a why," Yang Yu shook his head, "Don't you want him to come along?"

Su Liang thought for a moment and said, "Either way is fine."

She hadn't left Ning Jing since they crossed dimensions. It might be good to separate for a while; she should experience the world on her own. Otherwise, she would instinctively rely on Ning Jing in any situation, which wouldn't be right.

"Ning Jing, don't you want to go together?" Nian Jincheng asked. Ning Jing didn't even lift his head, "Either way is fine."

"Such a turnoff." Yang Yu complained.

"I have to leave now. There's no time to say goodbye to Miss Wan and Zhengzheng, please pass the message for me." Su Liang said.

As soon as she stood up after speaking, Yang Yu hugged her, "You must take care and come back soon."

"Aren't you leaving the capital to go home soon?" Su Liang asked.

“Originally, yes. But I’m not at ease if you don’t come back, so I won’t leave for now.” Yang Yu said, “I have to cook when you’re not here.” Ning Jing shook his head, “no need. I’ll eat at the restaurant.”

Su Liang chuckled, “He just doesn’t want to wash dishes.”

Nian Jincheng blurted out, “If Yang Yu cooks, I’ll wash the dishes.”

“Very well.” Su Liang nodded, “Do as you like. Yang Yu, you don’t have to stay in the capital waiting for me. Your work is more important. When you leave, remember to take little Nian with you, I gift him to you. Don’t worry about a certain person, he won’t die alone.”

Nian Jincheng: ...

Yang Yu sighed softly, “Stop taking care of me. I’ll see how it goes.”

Su Liang picked up her bundle and medicine box and walked out, followed by Yang Yu.

“If things go smoothly, the emperor won’t let you stay in the Northern Border, right?” Yang Yu suddenly asked.

Su Liang shook her head, “Marquis Zhong Xin might. My and Second Brother Lin’s weddings are near, that’s a reason to come back.”

Yang Yu paused for a moment, “But your wedding date is not set yet.”

Su Liang smiled, “Old Master Qin said he’s going to pick an auspicious day for Ning Jing and me a few days ago, don’t worry, he will definitely choose a very suitable day.”

“Since you’re thinking about coming back to marry him, shouldn’t you two say goodbye properly? Little Nian and I can step aside.” Yang Yu smirked.

“No need.” Su Liang shook her head, “At most, he’ll just tell me to stay alive.”

She thinks Ning Jing can’t die alone, and Ning Jing thinks she can survive alone when she goes out? What an overtly straightforward relationship!

Yang Yu held her forehead, speechless about them.

Just then a shout came from a distance, “Miss Su!”

A familiar voice, it was Qi Jun.

The Su Mansion was always closed on normal days, but some people could bypass the usual path and come in, such as the Qi brothers, who were followers of Xing Yusheng, and Chang’an, the follower of Duanmu Chen.

Qi Jun ran over, bowed, and saluted, “Miss Su, you are about to depart?”

“Hmm, does your master have anything to say to me? Is it to take care of his father?” Su Liang asked with a smile.



Qi Jun cleared his throat, "My master says if Miss Su encounters any trouble, just hide behind the Marquis. His father is Miss Su's father, feel free to use, don't be polite."

Before, Xing Ji had mentioned that he wanted to adopt Su Liang as his goddaughter, but she politely declined.

"Okay, I understand, I will definitely do it." Su Liang joked.

"Actually, Master wanted me to follow the Marquis to the north. If Miss Su needs me, I am at your service, Miss Su. If the Marquis doesn't want to take me, and my father won't take me either, I'm coming to rely on Miss Su." Qi Jun said with a smile, "Miss Su doesn't have anyone useful by her side, I wonder if I have this honor?"

Su Liang raised her eyebrow, "Are you coming to be my little brother?"

The word "little brother" sounded comfortable to Qi Jun. Knowing Su Liang for so long, she always respected their brothers. He sincerely felt it an honor to serve Su Liang and that he would certainly be given an excellent opportunity to grow. His elder brother also thought the same way, so they had a fight for it at that time.

In the end, because Qi Jun was a steady worker, Xing Yusheng finally chose him and let Qi Yan stay in the family.

Seeing Qi Jun nod his head, Su Liang smiled and said, "Thank you for the kindness of Xing's Crown Prince, but it's unnecessary, you should stay in the capital and protect him. I don't need much."

Having someone to order around is definitely good, but Su Liang is not used to it. She prefers to handle the things she can do on her own. Her previous life with Ning Jing was completely based on shared responsibilities and coordinated work.

Qi Jun thought he might be refused, but planned to make another attempt. However, before he could speak, a familiar voice came from behind Su Liang, "I think it's fine."

Qi Jun's eyes sparkled, "If Master Ning says it's alright, Miss Su, please agree!"

Su Liang was quite surprised, turning her head and seeing Ning Jing walking over.

Without waiting for Su Liang to ask why Ning Jing wanted her to bring Qi Jun along, Ning Jing spoke again, "You come with me."

Qi Jun was stunned for a moment, seeing Ning Jing walk towards the room, he quickly followed and didn't forget to say to Su Liang, "Master Ning has some instructions for me, Miss Su, please wait a moment!"

Su Liang watched Ning Jing lead Qi Jun into the room, closed the door, and already knew what he planned to do.

Yang Yu felt strange, "Is Ning big brother trying to tell Qi guard to take good care of you? Why can't he say it in front of us?"

Su Liang smiled without a word.

About a quarter of an hour later, "Ning Jing" and "Qi Jun" appeared again.

“Ning Jing” frowned, “Master Ning, this ... isn’t it good? If I am found out, I can’t bear such a big responsibility.”

It was clearly Qi Jun’s voice.

Yang Yu suddenly realized, “So, Ning big brother has found a replacement! Really suitable! This is destiny!”

Xing Yusheng sending Qi Jun here definitely didn’t inform Ning Jing, because today’s incident happened suddenly. He truly wanted to arrange someone for Su Liang, certainly he didn’t expect it would be re-arranged by Ning Jing.

Nian Jincheng’s appearance made it impossible for him to pretend to be Ning Jing, but Qi Jun’s body shape and face were similar to Ning Jing. At this moment, he had already disguised himself as Ning Jing and the two of them exchanged clothes.

Ning Jing’s gait even changed, and as soon as he opened his mouth, it was Qi Jun’s voice, “I believe you won’t reveal any flaws.”

If it was Qi Yan, it would not work. He is more robust than Qi Jun, his personality is a bit reckless, and he is not cautious enough in handling things. However, Qi Jun is a quite astute and smooth person, his handling of things has always been very proper.

Su Liang had no choice but to sigh, “It’s destined to be so. Qi Jun, I’m sorry to trouble you. I suggest you not to tell your master and see if he can find out. After this, Ning Jing will definitely thank you greatly, and I assure you won’t regret.”

Qi Jun was in a dilemma, “Miss Su, Master Ning, I can only say I’ll try my best, to not make any trouble for you.” He started to imitate Ning Jing’s voice, Ning Jing had just given him some guidance in the room, and he already knew some of it.

As for the disguise technique, Ning Jing said that Qi Jun could learn from Yang Yu later.

Su Liang had enough disguise medicine at home, originally left for Nian Jincheng, but it can now be used by Qi Jun.

Nian Jincheng is now not in his true appearance, but still hid when Qi Jun appeared to avoid being discovered.

As for how Nian Jincheng would hide himself after Qi Jun pretends to be Ning Jing and stays, Ning Jing just didn’t care. If he couldn’t even handle such a small matter, it was better for him to die. Even if Qi Jun found out that he was Nian Jincheng, there would be no serious consequences. He absolutely won’t and dare not speak out, he would only help cover it up.

Watching Su Liang and Ning Jing walk out together, Yang Yu sighed with relief,

“That’s great!”

Ning Jing took the medicine box from Su Liang’s hand, “Miss Su, please take care of me along the way.”

Su Liang laughed lightly, “Xiao Qi, you should say, listen to my orders.”

Ning Jing shook his head, “In your dreams..”

## Chapter 187:187. Heading north on the journey

Fourth Prince's Mansion.

Chang'an looked at Duanmu Chen, who had been sitting in deep thought for a long time, and said to break the silence, "Is the Master all right?"

Duanmu Chen shook his head, "He's fine." He looked out through the window at the gloomy sky that had been darkening since morning, as if it was going to rain, but it didn't.

The air was a bit stuffy, Duanmu Chen stood up, took a long breath, walked to the window, and turned his back to Chang'an. "Is there any movement in the palace?"

Chang'an shook his head, "Imperial Concubine has not sent out any messages. The eldest prince entered the palace and has not been heard from since. The second prince's mansion is preparing for a funeral."

"By now, Su Liang and Xing Ji should have set out. I knew she wouldn't come to say goodbye to me," Duanmu Chen huffed.

Chang'an was slightly taken aback, "It's urgent, and it's not convenient for Miss Su to come here during the day."

"I know," Duanmu Chen nodded. "Even if she could come, she wouldn't. It doesn't matter. When I first met her in Bei'an County, I didn't expect the events that followed to turn out like this."

As Chang'an was trying to figure out Duanmu Chen's intentions, Duanmu Chen's lips curved up into a smile. "Everything has gone so smoothly that it's unbelievable!"

Chang'an also smiled, "Yes! Maybe in a couple of days, the Emperor will issue an edict to confer the Master as the Crown Prince."

Duanmu Chen smiled without speaking, obviously confident in this outcome.

Two legitimate princes had been disposed of at once, and now it should be his turn.

"Marquis Zhong Xin and General Lin's journey to the north with Miss Su will not be smooth. By now, even if they act in secret, they won't escape the Wan family's watch," Chang'an sighed softly.

Duanmu Chen shook his head, "I trust Su Liang. Xing Ji is not to be underestimated. It's not just me who's taking a gamble; my father is also gambling. Disposing of the Wan family is just a matter of time. The longer it takes, the harder it will be, and it can't be delayed any further."

"I also think that Miss Su can get things done once she goes," Chang'an said.

"But will the eldest prince really be executed by the Emperor?"

Duanmu Chen scoffed, "How could it be possible? The eldest prince is, after all, the Emperor's own flesh and blood, so he cannot kill him himself. He'll have to consider the Empress Dowager and the

Empress's side. If Duanmu Cheng really dies now, the Wan family may become even more desperate. As long as the Emperor takes military power away from the hands of the Wan family, Duanmu Cheng will be completely ruined, and even if he's alive, he won't be able to cause any waves."

"By the way, the fifth prince went back to his mansion from the palace today," Chang'an suddenly mentioned.

Duanmu Chen let out three cold laughs after a brief shock, "Speaking of his relationship with Su Liang, Duanmu Che should have been closer to Liang than I. At first, I was worried that Su Liang would be drawn to him. As long as he was willing to get along with Su Liang, she would definitely side with him out of gratitude for saving her life. I didn't expect Duanmu Che to be so foolish that he would turn Su Liang into his enemy."

"I don't understand what the Fifth Prince is thinking," Chang'an said.

Duanmu Chen snorted coldly, "He's just arrogant because of the Emperor's favor. Ever since he was a child, the Emperor has always satisfied his desires. It was never obvious before, given his health issues, which stopped him from throwing tantrums. Now that Su Liang has cured his body, he's become restless."

Chang'an clasped his hands and prayed fervently, "I hope everything goes smoothly and our Master can ascend to the position of Crown Prince as soon as possible. "

Su Liang and her group had just set off.

Qi Jiang had gone ahead to arrange their accommodations, and had not yet met Ning Jing, who was disguised as Qi Jun. Xing Ji had only glanced at her without paying much attention.

"Did Second Brother Lin go to say goodbye to Yu Jin?" Su Liang asked.

Lin Bojun nodded, "He did," and sighed heavily after speaking.

Both the Lin and Qin families were very worried about Lin Bojun's journey, but he had no choice but to go as it was the Emperor's will.

Qin Yujin had given her jade pendant, which she wore close to her body, to Lin Bojun, making him promise that he would return safely.

Thinking of this, Lin Bojun felt a warm sensation in his chest where the jade pendant touched, but his heart was filled with sour feelings.

Looking back at the gloomy capital city, Lin Bojun withdrew his gaze and looked to the north, "I will definitely come back early to marry her!" Su Liang urged her horse to catch up with Xing Ji, "Uncle Xing, I have an idea." Xing Ji nodded, "Tell me!"

"Our journey to the north will undoubtedly be reported to General Wan Shan in the northern border by the Wan family as quickly as possible. As we travel together, we will inevitably encounter obstacles. We don't want any accidents to happen before we even reach our destination, " Su Liang said seriously.

"What are your thoughts?" Xing Ji asked.

Su Liang spoke straightforwardly, "Why not divide our forces into two groups? One group will act secretly, going ahead to stabilize the situation in the north." "I'll go!" Lin Bojun immediately said.

Xing Ji frowned, pulled the horse's reins, and slowed down, looking at Su Liang and asking, "Do you plan to go first?"

Su Liang nodded, "Yes. Since we've undertaken such an important task, we must find a way to complete it. If we fail, it won't just be a matter of merit or sin; I'm afraid it will cause chaos."

She spoke very bluntly, but it was all the truth.

Xing Ji thought for a moment, "I've also considered this, but there isn't a suitable person to do it. In that case, I'll go first, and you and Bojun can follow.

How about that?"

"I know that Uncle Xing would definitely be able to handle it, but still, leave it to me," Su Liang insisted.

Lin Bojun sighed, "I promised my father and little sister to take good care of Xiaoliang, so why do you have to be in the front again?"

Su Liang snorted softly, "If you don't agree, I can't help but suspect that you are discriminating against me because I am a woman."

Xing Ji and Lin Bojun couldn't help but laugh and cry. They certainly believed in Su Liang's strength and wisdom, but they never thought of letting her take the lead.

"You, yourself..." Xing Ji's attitude softened, but he was still hesitating. From behind Su Liang came Qi Jun's voice, "I am also a person."

"Xiaoqi will go with me," Su Liang smiled, "We've known each other for a long time, and it's good to have someone to rely on along the way. When we get back, I'll have to treat Prince Xing to a drink, to thank him for considering everything so thoroughly and sending me a helper."

Since Su Liang said this, Xing Ji agreed, "In that case, let's do as you said. Bring the Imperial Decree and the Imperial Sword with you. If they are needed, use them."

Xing Ji: ...Is this a strange enough reason?

"I'm going alone. If nothing happens, there's no need to show my face. Even if something does happen, I can't do anything openly without leaving any trace. You just need to be safe and catch up as soon as possible. At that time, you can exert pressure openly, and I will assist secretly," Su Liang said.

Xing Ji didn't insist anymore.

Since they had decided, they were going to part ways at the next intersection.

"Ajun, you must take good care of Su Liang!" Xing Ji said seriously.

Ning Jing nodded, "Marquis, rest assured, I will definitely protect Miss Su with my life!"

These were the words that the real Qi Jun would say. Su Liang felt strange hearing them. It's not that she thought Ning Jing wouldn't protect her wholeheartedly, but she simply felt that someone as strong as Ning Jing shouldn't need to put their life on the line.

"Don't be reckless. Neither of you can have any accidents," Xing Ji admonished "Qi Jun".

Lin Bojun repeatedly reminded Su Liang not to push herself too hard, and to prioritize her own safety in case of any trouble.

"Actually, you are the ones in danger," Su Liang was calm, "I'll hide, and they won't even find me, so what's there to be afraid of? Goodbye for now, see you in Xuanbei City!"

As soon as she finished speaking, Su Liang, accompanied by "Qi Jun", turned into a secluded side road, and their figures disappeared in the blink of an eye.

Xing Ji, Lin Bojun, and the others continued their journey quickly.

When they saw Qi Jiang again, he was surprised not to see his son there. Upon hearing Xing Ji explain the reasons, he sighed, "That's fine too." There was inevitably some worry about his son in his words, but he didn't say anything more.

Su Liang's proposal to act alone was an agreement she and Ning Jing reached shortly after leaving home.

It was the safest choice from both public and private perspectives.

If they really went with Xing Ji and Qi Jiang all the way, it would be hard to guarantee that Qi Jiang wouldn't notice Ning Jing's flaws. After all, he was Qi Jun's biological father, and Ning Jing's understanding of Qi Jun was limited. Perhaps it was some of Qi Jun's habits or actions that they hadn't seen that would expose him.

However, it isn't much of a big deal to reveal the disguise and identity change.

But if they run into trouble, and Ning Jing exposes her powerful martial arts skills, people will inevitably suspect her identity and the purpose of hiding her strength.

Lin Bojun knows. If the extremely smart Xing Ji discovers that Ning Jing is hiding her abilities and guesses that she is a fake Ning Jing, he might be able to link her with Gu Ling.

That wouldn't be ideal, and there's no need for it.

Ning Jing also doesn't want to constantly disguise herself as someone else and not be able to have regular conversations with Su Liang.

The breeze brushed their faces as Su Liang rode the horse swiftly, laughing and saying, "I spent several months in the capital city, and now that I've come out, I suddenly feel a sense of freedom regained."

"Then don't go back," Ning Jing said.

"I can't do that. There are a few cups of wedding wine that I must drink. As long as Duanmu Cheng is still alive, it's not over," Su Liang replied.

Destroying the Wan family is also a necessary step in completely breaking down Duanmu Cheng's power.

The weather had turned warmer, and Ning Jing, who had been to Xuanbei City, said that they would have to change horses midway and travel day and night, arriving at the fastest in days.

"You guide the way and move at the fastest speed. Find time to rest during the day and replenish dried food," Su Liang said.

Resting at night requires finding a place that is sheltered from the wind and warm, which is not very convenient.

Ning Jing had no objections.

Their characters were the type that either didn't do something or did it thoroughly and to the best of their ability.

By working hard initially and arriving at Xuanbei City earlier, they could more easily control the situation afterwards.

Hence, there will be no time for them to read books or learn anything in the future.

Su Mansion in the capital city.

Qi Jun was pretending to be Ning Jing, and Nian Jincheng didn't plan to show his face, fearing he would be discovered.

Qi Jun also felt a bit awkward. He thought that only Yang Yu will be in the mansion, and he would have to ask her to cook for him, which felt uncomfortable from all angles.

Yang Yu had noticed it too, and during dinner, she told Qi Jun that she would be leaving the next day.

Qi Jun breathed a sigh of relief, "Miss Yang is going back home?"

Yang Yu nodded, "It's time to go back. That was the original plan, but I didn't expect Su Liang to leave the capital first."

"Do you need someone to escort you?" Qi Jun asked seriously.

Yang Yu shook her head with a smile, "No need, someone will protect me." "That's good," Qi Jun nodded.

"I went to say goodbye to Sister Wan today, and told her that when you are alone at home, a waiter from the restaurant will deliver meals three times a day. Just leave the dishes after eating, and the waiter will take them away when they deliver the next meal," Yang Yu said.

Qi Jun quickly said that it was not necessary, and that he would find a solution himself.

Yang Yu then said that this was Ning Jing's choice when she was at home.

Qi Jun hesitated for a moment, then accepted it and thanked Yang Yu.

“There’s no need. When it comes to spending money, don’t be shy. What we don’t lack is money,” Yang Yu said with a serious expression.

Qi Jun touched his forehead, that’s true. The heads of the Ning family, Yang family, and Miss Wan...

Yang Yu taught Qi Jun the Disguise Technique, and Qi Jun, being quick-witted, learned it in no time. He removed the disguise from his face and redid it in front of Yang Yu to show it to her.

“There’s no problem,” Yang Yu said, “Anyway, Brother Ning doesn’t like to go out or talk much. You can just stay at home and do whatever you want.”

Qi Jun thought about it, indeed. Although Su Liang didn’t socialize much, she often interacted with her friends. Ning Jing was like her shadow. In normal circumstances, if Su Liang wasn’t at home, Ning Jing wouldn’t go out if she could help it.

Having minimal contact with people, they wouldn’t have to worry too much about revealing any flaws.

After explaining all the matters she could think of, Yang Yu went back to her room to rest.

The next morning, Zhou Yuan drove a carriage to pick up Yang Yu, and she left Su Mansion.

Qi Jun, disguised as Ning Jing, went to the Ministry of Revenue for work. Ning Jing’s position didn’t involve much work, and her colleagues were very polite. Qi Jun was initially quite nervous, but he relaxed later on.

As the day was about to end, Qi Jun felt that this experience was quite enjoyable and quite magical. When he later told his master and brother about it, they would surely envy him.

Qi Jun even pre-emptively considered how to act when encountering Xing Yusheng and Qi Yan.

Thinking of how Ning Jing had always been unkind to Xing Yusheng in their conversations, Qi Jun began rehearsing how to coldly ridicule his own master in Ning Jing’s room...

A major incident had occurred in the capital city, but no chaos had resulted.

Duanmu Cheng was placed under house arrest in the Imperial Palace. The news of him hiring assassins to kill Duanmu Ao had spread far and wide.

Duanmu Yi openly demanded Duanmu Cheng’s execution in the court but was persuaded by a group of court officials not to do so.

For a time, dark undercurrents surged in the court.

As for Duanmu Yi’s arrangement for Xing Ji, Lin Bojun, and Su Liang to go north, many people actually knew about it, but Duanmu Yi never mentioned it publicly, so naturally, he didn’t say how to deal with the Wan family.

Many people thought that with Duanmu Cheng having crippled Duanmu Ao and killed him, Duanmu Chen would soon ascend to the position of crown prince.

However, five days had passed since Duanmu Ao’s death and Duanmu Yi still had not announced the appointment of a new crown prince.



Duanmu Chen was not in a hurry, knowing that Duanmu Yi was maintaining stability and letting some people in the Wan family believe that Duanmu Cheng still had a chance to prevent them from taking any desperate actions.

Duanmu Chen didn't want to be a target at this time but also knew that even if he didn't have the position of crown prince in hand, the Wan family would definitely spare no effort to eliminate him, so he was always cautious and extremely careful.

After traveling day and night for five days, Su Liang and Ning Jing arrived in Pingbei City they had once lived in for a while without stopping to rest.

The two of them seldom spoke, and even when they did, outsiders standing nearby with their ears pricked up wouldn't understand because Ning Jing was practicing the English that Su Liang had taught her earlier.

In fact, Su Liang thought that learning this wouldn't be of much use to Ning Jing, but Ning Jing was very interested in the new language and writing system, saying that if it wasn't convenient to speak, it could be used as a secret code between the two of them.

Of course, Su Liang didn't care. As long as Ning Jing was willing to put in the effort to learn, Su Liang would teach her.

In the evening, the two returned to their "hometown," Bei'an County.

Looking at the familiar buildings and the hurried passersby in the evening, Su Liang was filled with emotion for a moment, "I really want to go home and see if Little Tiger and Zhuzi have forgotten about me."

"They won't," Ning Jing said.

"Forget it, let's get things done quickly. When we return to the capital city, we can pass by here again and stay at home for a few days," Su Liang said.

When they arrived at Feiyan Town, Su Liang saw their old friend Hu Er from a distance. He looked healthy and, now doing legitimate business, his entire temperament had changed.

Su Liang was dressed as a man and had disguised herself and Ning Jing. Their looks were very ordinary and didn't attract attention.

The two rode their horses past quickly, and Hu Er looked up at the sound of the hooves, seeing the familiar figures and his face lighting up with joy. Before he could even speak, they had already ridden away in the distance.

Xiaoliu asked Hu Er, "What is Second Master looking at?" Hu Er smiled happily, "A pair of loving birds just flew by.."

Chapter 188: 188. Get rid of that woman as soon as possible.

In March, the capital city was already in full bloom, but the northern border was still cold in the early spring.

While riding on horseback through the wilderness, the wind whispered as they looked at the distant mountains, still covered with white, frozen snow.

This was the first time Su Liang had traveled such a long distance after crossing through dimensions, seeing the changing natural scenery from the middle to the northern part of Qian Country.

“Let’s rest here. Tomorrow we’ll reach Xuanbei City.” Ning Jing spoke, leading Su Liang into a valley.

After finding a sheltered spot, they tied their horses to a tree and Ning Jing headed up the mountain.

Su Liang followed with a bag, “Have you been here before?”

“Yes.” Ning Jing’s voice came from ahead.

After walking for a while, Ning Jing turned back and saw Su Liang crouching on the ground, digging for something.

He returned to her side.

“Good medicine.” Su Liang happily raised a dried-up herb.

Ning Jing accurately named the herb. He had read all the medical books she had.

While he had no practical experience in Medical Skills, he had learned a lot in theory.

Su Liang put away the herbs, and the two reached mid-hill. Ning Jing went to a place overgrown with weeds, moved two large stones, and revealed the entrance to a cave.

Su Liang was surprised, “Have you lived here before?”

Ning Jing nodded and motioned Su Liang to stay outside while he crouched to enter.

Looking around, Su found that from her position, she could already see the gate of Xuanbei City.

She had gathered a pile of firewood by the time Ning Jing’s voice came from inside the cave.

The cave was too low for Su Liang to enter without crouching, but she found it quite spacious once inside.

The sun had not yet set, and with the light coming through the entrance, Su

Liang noticed that the stone walls had been artificially smoothed, quite even.

There was a clean straw mat on the ground, probably left by Ning Jing when he had stayed here before, and it was covered with a piece of cloth.

The fireplace was a recessed circle, charred black from use.

Su Liang brought her luggage in, followed by the firewood.

The temperature in the mountains dropped once the sky darkened.

She lit a bonfire and skewered the dried flatbread with a clean piece of wood to roast over the flames.

They had bought a small iron pot along the way; Ning Jing had returned with water, which was already heating up.

He moved a wooden stump inside, placing a plate and two bowls on top.

Su Liang put a roasted cake on the plate.

After all the bread was roasted, Ning Jing had been gone for quite some time, so Su Liang was about to go out and look for him when she saw him come in.

She smelled raw meat – Ning Jing had brought back a cleaned wild chicken.

What surprised her was, “I didn’t think you knew how to kill a chicken.” Usually, at home, she was the one who did such tasks.

“I can occasionally.” Ning Jing replied as he took out a knife and cut the chicken into pieces.

Su Liang opened her bag and took out the spices. She had prepared them herself, and Ning Jing had especially brought them from the capital city; they had not used them yet on the way.

Both of them drank some water and ate half a plate of roasted cakes.

When the chicken soup emanated a delicious fragrance, Su Liang sighed,

“Finally, I can have a hot meal.”

Under the clear moonlight in the mountains, Su Liang and Ning Jing sat on the stone by the cave entrance, each holding a bowl of chicken soup.

It had only been six and a half days since they set out from the capital city, faster than their planned journey.

They were truly exhausted since they had limited time to rest each day, and they didn’t eat or sleep well.

“I thought you were always in the capital city and staying at Huguo Temple before the Gu Family incident. After that, you went to Su Family Village.” Su Liang spoke, “Were you sneaking out to play during your years at the temple since you were rarely seen?”

“Sometimes.” Ning Jing replied.

They each ate a chicken leg.

Having not eaten meat for several days, they both finished their meal and drank the soup.

Su Liang felt much less fatigued. Eating meat was the best remedy.

“We don’t know what tomorrow will be like, so let’s have a good night’s sleep and keep up our strength.” Su Liang yawned, “Who sleeps first?”

Ning Jing shook his head, “Together.”

Su Liang paused. She hadn’t thought much about it, believing it was for safety reasons that they should take turns keeping watch during the first and second half of the night.

Ning Jing didn’t misunderstand, “No need.”

Upon extinguishing the fire, Ning Jing let Su Liang lie on the mat with dry straw underneath. It wasn't hard, and she could use her luggage as a pillow and clothing as a blanket.

Ning Jing sat down by the entrance of the cave and closed his eyes.

"We'll switch at the third watch. Call me when you wake up." Su Liang said, yawned again, closed her eyes, and soon fell asleep as drowsiness overcame her.

Ning Jing remained motionless, eyes still closed, like a stone statue.

Su Liang opened her eyes, and it was already broad daylight.

She sat up, looked instinctively at the place where Ning Jing had sat the night before, and found it empty. Frowning slightly, she quickly got up.

Leaving the cave, she saw a slender figure bathed in the morning light coming up from the foot of the mountain. The ordinary appearance created by disguise couldn't hide his cold and dustless temperament.

"I went to feed the horses." Ning Jing said, "Pack up and let's go."

Without relighting the fire, they drank some cooled water from the previous night, restored the cave entrance, and then descended the mountain. They rode their horses through the valley, and Xuanbei City appeared in the distance.

Liang Country, located in the northern part of Qian Country, had always been at odds with Qian. The most recent major conflict had taken place three years ago, with heavy casualties on both sides; a stalemate had led to a ceasefire agreement.

However, Liang Country's cold climate, barren land, and poor resources resulted in constant attempts to invade Qian. The northern border had been

uneasy in the past year.

Despite several tests from Liang Country, the two sides had not had an open conflict. Officially, it was still a peaceful period between the two countries.

As Xuanbei City was a necessary stop on the way from Qian to Liang, there were many merchants transporting goods between the two countries.

Su Liang and Ning Jing disguised themselves as brothers who were going to Liang Country to buy fur. They showed the silver notes they had brought with them, and "shared" some with the city guards before easily entering the city. They found an inconspicuous inn and booked a small courtyard.

After placing their luggage, they went out to eat.

Having been here before, Ning Jing led Su Liang into a small, unassuming restaurant. It appeared rather shabby from the outside but was bustling inside.

The men drinking and boasting inside paid little attention to the newcomers. People from all over came through here, and Su Liang and Ning Jing didn't stand out.

Ning Jing ordered food and drinks.

While waiting for the dishes to be served, Su Liang overheard people at the neighboring table saying that the second son of General Wan of the military mansion had taken in another concubine a few days ago.

A man, unable to hide his frustration, lowered his voice and said, "All the good-looking girls in the city are being taken by that Second Son Wan!"

Upon hearing this, Su Liang was filled with anger, instantly reminded of Gai Huai'an who once caused trouble to many young girls in Bei'an County.

These children of the elite, relying on the far distance from the emperor, treated themselves as local tyrants, doing whatever they wanted.

"Be careful not to let others hear you. If the word reaches the Second Son Wan's ears, your life will be in danger!" An elderly man lightly snorted.

"I saw the two sons of the Wan family leading soldiers out of the north city gate early in the morning. I wonder if those barbarians from the north came to make trouble again!" A middle-aged man said.

"Drive them back if they come!" A man slapped the table, "I heard those barbarians are so hungry they can't even eat rice properly. Look at them, coming to beg with their bowls in their hands, yet still thinking about fighting with us!"

Laughter filled the restaurant.

Indeed, that was the truth. Liang Country suffered from a constant shortage of food, with common people often starving or freezing to death, and it was far worse in terms of natural conditions than Qian Country.

And this was the main reason why Liang Country would not give up invading Qian Country.

Upon hearing this, the useful information Su Liang received was that Father and Son Wan in Xuanbei City still didn't know about the major changes in the capital city. Otherwise, Second Son Wan wouldn't have the leisure to take in a concubine, and it seemed like today was just an ordinary day.

The food and drinks were served.

The portions were generous, the cooking was a bit rough, but it had a unique taste.

Ning Jing only poured Su Liang half a cup of alcohol. She took a sip, found it spicy, and set it down.

Ning Jing calmly drank two cups and didn't drink any more.

After leaving the restaurant, the two walked around Xuanbei City but didn't go near the military camp before returning to the inn.

"Judging by the timing, even if Wan Shan is not aware of the situation now, he will soon receive the news from the capital," analyzed Su Liang. "We must act tonight."

"Yes, let's go to bed." Ning Jing said, standing up, "Go to your own room." Su Liang: ...

After catching up on some sleep, when Su Liang woke up again, she felt refreshed, and the fatigue of the past few days was gone.

As night fell, the two changed to another big restaurant for dinner, learning that the two Wan brothers who had led the soldiers out of the city in the morning had returned by evening.

“The barbarians from Liang Country came again, and General Wan received the news early on. He sent two sons to lead the soldiers out of the city, and they drove them far away!” A man said loudly.

Praises for the Wan family’s father and sons filled the restaurant, showing their high reputation in Xuanbei City.

“I heard that General Wan’s old injury has relapsed. I sincerely hope that there is a divine doctor who can cure him. Our Qian Country still needs him to guard our borders!” Someone sincerely said.

Although Su Liang was a doctor, she couldn’t just visit Wan Shan to treat him. Given his status, he would certainly be very cautious about newcomers appearing around him.

After dinner, the two returned to the inn. Before long, they put out the lamp, put on their nightclothes, covered their faces with black cloths, and quietly left the inn to head towards the General Mansion in Xuanbei City.

Both day and night, the General Mansion was heavily guarded. The two kept their distance and observed for a while. They sneaked into the General Mansion when the soldiers changed their shifts.

The mansion covered a large area, but there were only three adjoining courtyards with lights on. Deducing, these should be the residences of the Wan family’s three fathers and sons.

Wan Shan’s wife was in the capital city, the daughters-in-law, who were originally in Xuanbei City, were sent back to the capital city when they became pregnant. It was Duanmu Yi’s idea.

However, the three men weren’t short of female company. Wan Shan and his eldest son, Wan Cong, each had a concubine by their side, while the second son, Wan Lin, had eight. Once they got pregnant, they would be sent to the capital city. After giving birth, they were not brought back. Currently, he had three by his side, including the newly taken one.

After exchanging looks, Su Liang and Ning Jing chose a courtyard that didn’t seem to belong to Wan Shan.

Ning Jing went first and confirmed no one would discover them. Su Liang approached him.

Su Liang hid behind a large tree, keeping an eye on Ning Jing, who leaned against the back wall, waiting for him to signal.

To Su Liang’s surprise, Ning Jing returned to her side after just a short while.

“No one there?” Su Liang found it strange. She thought they should have listened longer to make sure no one was in the room.

“It’s Wan Lin.” Ning Jing said.

Su Liang frowned, "We could still listen to what he's up to."

"And his concubine." Ning Jing's expression remained calm.

Su Liang immediately understood, "Oh, let's try another one." Certain adult matters were better left unheard, lest they dirty their ears.

They moved on and entered another courtyard.

Ning Jing went to eavesdrop first again, but this time he listened for quite a while without gesturing to Su Liang. Su Liang patiently waited in a corner.

Ning Jing finally returned, saying, "There's no one."

Su Liang: ...Alright. What a waste to leave the light on when no one's there.

Thus, the two arrived at their third target courtyard.

At first glance, it was clear this was the main courtyard. Unsurprisingly, it was Wan Shan's residence.

It didn't take long for Ning Jing to make a silent gesture to Su Liang after approaching the house.

Su Liang slowly got closer, her ears perked up listening to the voices coming from inside.

First, a young man spoke, "I never expected the emperor to depose the crown prince! Does he really want Duanmu Chen to be the new crown prince?"

A moment later, a middle-aged man replied, "Duanmu Chen? He's just a bit clever. If the new crown prince is him, I'll send him to meet the Yama King sooner rather than later!"

"Ah, if only we'd known it would come to this, we should've gotten rid of Duanmu Chen sooner. Father, I think after deposing the crown prince, the emperor's next step will be to make us hand over our military power!"

"Hmph! The Wan family has made great contributions to Qian Country. If the emperor is unkind, he cannot blame us for being unrighteous!"

"Father, we didn't report Liang Country's several attempts for a truce to the court. What if that backfires?"

"What is there to be afraid of? Who in Qian Country would believe that those barbarians from Liang Country don't want war? If we make peace with them, where will our opportunity to earn merits come from?"

"Haha, today my second brother and I led troops out of the city for a ride. The report we submitted to the court will earn us another merit! By then, even the common people won't support the emperor if he tries to move against the Wan family!"

"Why hasn't your second brother arrived yet?"

"Forget about him. He just got a beautiful woman and is enjoying himself. The matter of the deposed crown prince requires our attention!"

“The crown prince really messed things up. With his status, he can have any woman, but he had to get involved with Xiao Mulian! Making such a mess and not even cleaning up properly afterward, leaving a loose end!”

“With the crown prince’s identity, what kind of woman wouldn’t he have access to? Even his own sisters would be at his disposal. However, that Martial Arts Champion Su Liang was certainly unexpected. In just over a year, how did she become so capable? Hasn’t the emperor ever suspected her of being a spy?”

“With something so obvious, the emperor must have investigated her thoroughly before entrusting her with an important position. Right now, the emperor has deposed the Eldest Prince but his attitude towards the Second Prince is unclear. Let’s wait for more news; we should know the candidate for the new crown prince soon.”

“The Second Prince? I don’t think the emperor will make him the crown prince.

He will surely take the opportunity to elevate Duanmu Chen!”

As soon as Wan Cong finished speaking, new news from the capital city arrived. Contrary to his expectation, the news confirmed that the new crown prince was indeed Duanmu Ao!

After dismissing the messenger, Wan Cong sneered, “It seems the emperor is still wary of our Wan family! Even after deposing the Eldest Prince, the position of crown prince still can’t be separated from the Wan family!”

Wan Shan’s voice, however, grew somber, “I still feel like the emperor is trying to deceive us.”

“What should we do now?” Wan Cong asked.

Wan Shan coldly snorted, “The problem lies with that Su Liang! Send a message back to the capital, urging the Empress Dowager and the Empress to get rid of that woman as soon as possible!”

Chapter 189: 189. Take the first move to gain the upper hand

The night wind was bleak, clouds covering the moon.

“Father, what if the emperor is only making the second prince the crown prince as a ruse to confuse us, to take away our military power and then appoint

Duanmu Chen as the crown prince. what should we do?” Wan Cong asked solemnly.

Wan Shan snorted coldly, “If it really comes to that, the emperor is pushing us! If both the eldest and second prince suffer misfortune, the Qian Country won’t belong to the Duanmu Clan anymore!”

“You mean...” Wan Cong’s voice was filled with excitement.

“We don’t have a way out, to endure is to march to death!” Wan Shan uttered coldly.



“Since father said this, I’ve gotten the idea,” Wan Cong replied.

“Let’s look at the current situation in the capital city. While the second prince still holds the position of the crown prince, let him get rid of nuisances like Duanmu Chen and Su Liang!” Wan Shan sneered coldly, “They really create more problems than they solve. If his brothers were more prudent and with our support, how could Duanmu Chen have gained an advantage?”

“Father, cool down. They are, after all, born into royalty. I will go ahead and send our message to the capital city,” Wan Cong said and got up to leave. Suddenly, he turned back and sat down, “Father, what if the emperor has already sent someone here, asking us to hand over power and return to the capital..

Wan Shan’s expression changed, “It’s possible! If someone is coming, they probably would be here in the next few days!”

“We’d better not do anything in public that would attract criticism, otherwise, it will be harder to win people over,” said Wan Cong. They had racked their brains, creating achievements out of thea trics, all to win over the hearts of the army and people.

The matter of Duanmu Yi being deposed as the crown prince was an internal affair of the royal family, and they could not have any objection about it. If the imperial envoy openly enters Xuanbei City and something happens in the city, Wan Shan would be held responsible.

Upon contemplation, Wan Shan’s expression became solemn, “Immediately arrange for spies to go south for investigation, and promptly report if anyone from the capital city is found!”

“We have to stop them!” said Wan Cong dauntingly.

“Exactly, we can’t let them strut into the city to see me and announce the Imperial Decree. If it comes to that, we will be stuck! Choose a place for an ambush, no matter who comes, we have to assassinate them before they enter Xuanbei City! Even if the emperor gets wind that we did it, without any evidence, he can’t do anything.” Wan Shan ordered coldly, “Get my second son to get his act together and handle the situation!”

“I’ll go find my brother right away. He’s skilled in martial arts, so I’ll let him lead the team to assassinate the imperial envoy!” With these words, Wan Cong hurriedly left.

The room fell silent.

Hidden beneath the back window, Su Liang and Ning Jing heard the conversation between the father and son of the Wan family. The information they provided was quite substantial.

Wan Shan’s latest information was that Duanmu Ao had become the crown prince, but he had not made a significant move yet.

Assuming nothing unexpected occurs, news of Duanmu Ao’s death should reach Xuanbei City in one more day.

At that time, the father and son of the Wan family definitely won't be as calm as they are tonight.

As for getting rid of Duanmu Chen and Su Liang, and assassinating the imperial envoy, these were things that Su Liang had anticipated before her arrival. There is not much unexpected about it.

She had also thought that if the father and son of the Wan family were truly loyal subjects, and simply had blood relations with Duanmu Cheng and Duanmu Ao without any intention of rebellion, then they should naturally be a little more courteous.

But now, the facts are right in front of her.

All three members of the family are up to no good. They might indeed be skilled, but their ambitions are unjust. When dealing with major issues like the peace talks with Liang Country, they should report to the royal family for decision-making, regardless of their true or false intentions. However, they continuously create the illusion of brave resistance against the invasion of Liang Country to gain merit and fame.

Even in their conversations, their aspiration for power and usurpation is revealed.

In this case, Su Liang felt that there is no time to delay and she had to act now.

Initially, she intended to watch the situation before deciding what to do. But since last evening, she already had a new plan.

Su Liang tugged at Ning Jing's sleeve. He understood, and the two of them silently left the room.

But they only went to the deserted back garden of the General's Mansion, and didn't leave the mansion.

It's more convenient to talk here.

Su Liang briefly shared her idea with Ning Jing. Ning Jing remained silent but nodded in agreement.

"Did you bring it?" Su Liang asked softly.

Ning Jing nodded again, "Wait here." With these words, he disappeared.

Su Liang climbed a tall tree. From there, she could see the lights in the front yard from afar but couldn't see anyone.

Wan Cong dragged Wan Lin in front of Wan Shan. After Wan Shan scolded them a few times, the brothers left to attend to their respective tasks.

Setup time is approaching.

A concubine sent him a bowl of chicken soup, but he impatiently drove her away.

Another hour passed before Wan Shan blew out the lamp and went to bed.

A faint fragrance filled the room, and Wan Shan's snoring was soon silenced.

Ning Jing approached the bed, lifted the bed curtain, pulled Wan Shan up from the bed, but he did not respond.

A silver needle shimmering in the dimly lit room was plunged into a certain point on Wan Shan's body.

After a moment, Ning Jing let go of Wan Shan, who lay back flat on the bed. Then, Ning Jing pulled his arm from the inside and pulled it outward. As soon as he let go, Wan Shan rolled off the bed, his head facing down and hitting the ground!

Ning Jing opened a half window. The chilly night wind blew in, and the room was once again quiet.

Su Liang leaned against the tree and feigned slumber. After an unknown amount of time passed, she felt the tree shake. She looked down and leaped off the tree, touched the black cloth on her face to make sure it was secure.

“Is everything settled?” Su Liang asked.

“Yes, let’s go.” Ning Jing led Su Liang away along the same path they had come.

Out of caution, the two of them waited for a long time, and it was only during the next changing of the guards that they left the General’s Mansion and went straight back to the inn.

By the time they sat down to drink a glass of water, it was already dawn.

They had a nap the night before, stayed up all night but Su Liang didn’t feel tired at all. She sat in Ning Jing’s room brainstorming about the next move.

“Wan Shan asked Wan Lin to lead the team to intercept the Imperial Envoy. It seems that womanizer possesses some skills. Should we go back and help?” Su Liang asked, “If nothing happens to Uncle Xing and Second Brother Lin on the way, they should arrive soon.”

Wan Shan and his son plan to meet the envoy appointed by Duanmu Yi before they can enter Xuanbei City and send them to meet the Yama King. They will pretend that the Imperial Decree never reached them.

The idea that Su Liang came up with last night is to strike first.

She arranged for Ning Jing to acupuncture Wan Shan, which would lead to symptoms of stroke. He would be conscious but unable to speak or move.

No imperial envoy has arrived yet, and the royal family has not done anything openly, so it is “Wan Shan had a stroke and became paralyzed when he got up in the middle of the night”. When Xing Ji arrives, all he needs to do is express remorse and concern.

Anyhow, they plan on taking a covert approach, and Su Liang painstakingly rushed to seize the initiative.

With Wan Shan gone, his two sons, due to lack of promotion by Duanmu Yi to a higher position, do not hold much sway within the Xuanbei City military compared to Wan Shan, and won’t stir much chaos.

Therefore, now Su Liang has to guarantee that Xing Ji and Lin Bojun arrive safely in Xuanbei City.

Ning Jing nodded, “I’ll go, you stay.”

Su Liang smiled slightly, “That’s exactly what I had in mind. You’re more skilled, so it will be safer. I still need to watch this place to prevent any mishaps. It’s best not to let Uncle Xing and Uncle Qi see you. Just take care of the problem secretly and come back.”

“I’m hungry,” Ning Jing said.

Su Liang cleared her throat slightly, “There’s no way to cook here, let’s go out to eat. After eating, you go on with your business, I’ll roam around the city.”

After washing up and changing their clothes, they left the inn and chose a roadside breakfast stall to eat.

The surface of Xuanbei City seemed no different from usual, but Su Liang noticed two guards from the City Lord’s Mansion dragging a white-bearded old man with a medicine box away in a hurry.

Wan Shan suddenly fell ill, Wan Cong should have suppressed the news.

This was normal, even if they didn’t harbor malicious intentions, news of Wan Shan’s condition couldn’t be disclosed to Liang Country, or else it might trigger a war.

These were things Su Liang had considered in advance.

Xing Ji, maybe arriving in a day or two, should have no problem stabilizing the situation with his capabilities.

After having breakfast, they returned to the inn, where Ning Jing secretly left alone, exiting the city then returning on the road to meet Xing Ji and Lin Bojun.

Su Liang went to the pub again after a while.

There weren’t many people at this time, so Su Liang asked the pub waiter about doing business in Liang Country.

Before she could finish, a man drinking at a nearby table with a wine pot in hand approached.

“Young fellow, you’re alone and want to do business in Liang Country? I advise you to go home as soon as possible!” The man had a beard but appeared to be in his twenties and acted extravagantly.

Su Liang kept a straight face, shook her head and said, “It’s not just me, my brother is with me too. I heard that fur in Liang Country is very cheap, if we bring it back and sell it, we can make a fortune.”

At these words, the bearded man burst out laughing, “Sure, the fur business can make money, who doesn’t know? But if it were so easy to make big money, all businessmen would be rich! And that’s not to mention the terrible climate in Liang Country. You, with your frail figure, might not even be able to endure the hardship. As for doing business, there’s no easy way in and out. Once you’re there, people may loot everything you have. Then, you’ll have nowhere to cry!”

“Is it really that dangerous?” Su Liang frowned, “But we’ve made it to Xuanbei City. We can’t go home empty-handed...”

“Are you afraid of losing face? It’s always better than losing one’s life! Listen to your elder brother, you better go home to your mother!” With that, the bearded man raised his wine pot, clinked glasses with Su Liang and gulped down several mouthfuls of wine.

Su Liang sighed deeply, "I'll go back and discuss it with my brother. If it doesn't work out, we'll go home. Where are you from, elder brother?"

"Me? I'm a local of Xuanbei City!" The bearded man showed a big grin, revealing a row of neat white teeth. "Where are you from, young fellow?" "Pingbei City," Su Liang casually said.

The bearded man shook his head, "It's so comfortable there, why come here?" "I wanted to try my luck," Su Liang said.

The bearded man laughed again, "Young fellow, I admire your courage, but don't come again next time! This is not a good place. It might look peaceful now, but who knows when a war will break out!"

"Really?" Su Liang was surprised, "I just arrived yesterday and heard that the two sons of the Wan Family are very brave. Every time the soldiers from Liang Country approached, they were driven back to their base."

The bearded man scoffed, and in a low voice said, "The soldiers from Liang Country never even came, it's been three months! The two sons of the Wan Family have supposedly repelled them more than a dozen times in these three months. What a joke!"

Su Liang looked shocked, "This..."

A soldier from outside shouted to the bearded man, "Boss, the Eldest Prince wants to see you!"

The bearded man lifted his head and emptied the wine pot, leaving not a single drop. He placed a chunk of broken silver on the table, "I have also paid for the young fellow's drink! Let's drink together next time!"

Upon saying this, he picked up the waist sword from the table next to him and walked out briskly.

At the doorway, the bearded man turned back and asked Su Liang, "What's your name, young fellow?"

"Wen Liang," Su Liang casually replied. Her real name was too cold, she chose a warmer alias.

The bearded man laughed as he exited, "You do look quite kind and gentle!"

When Su Liang saw the waiter come over to collect the money, she asked him, "Is that big brother from the military camp?"

The waiter nodded and seemed to recognize him, "That's General Shen, one of the Eldest Prince's subordinates in the Wan Family. He comes to drink whenever he has time!"

Su Liang was truly surprised this time. He wasn't just a man from the military, but also Wan Cong's subordinate. He was clearly aware of the shady dealings of the Wan brothers, but why would he tell all this to Su Liang, a stranger he had just met? Or maybe he disapproved of their actions, deliberately spreading the news, and just happened to run into Su Liang today?

No matter the reason, Su Liang felt that this General Shen could serve as a witness later, accusing Wan Shan and his sons of false reporting and fraudulent practices.

Moreover, it could be seen that the bearded man was not really loyal to Wan Cong.

This was good news for Su Liang.

With a plate of peanuts, Su Liang ate them one by one, until the pub started to get crowded as noon approached.

Then she heard that all the doctors in the city had been taken to the City Lord Mansion that day, and none of them had emerged even after half a day.

However, no one knew the truth yet; they all thought that Wan Shan had a relapse of his old illness.

Su Liang didn't leave the pub until the afternoon. She strolled around the city, covertly observing Qian Country's northern border city.

From her perspective, it seemed that some of the defenses were not well placed. Later, if Xing Ji took charge of Xuanbei City, Su Liang could offer him some suggestions on improvements.

She didn't return to the inn until evening, carrying some food she had bought.

That night, Su Liang did not make another attempt to infiltrate the City Lord's mansion. She read some books she had bought from a roadside stall during the day before falling asleep.

Wan Lin had set off with his party in the middle of the night.

Ning Jing only started to chase them in the morning, and by evening she had found them, setting up an ambush in a mountain valley on the inevitable route to Xuanbei City.

It wasn't the valley where Ning Jing and Su Liang had temporarily stayed, but one further away from Xuanbei City.

As the sky began to darken...

Ning Jing hid at a safe distance, listening to Wan Lin complaining and scolding his subordinates with obvious irritation; he obviously didn't like this assignment.

The scout, whom they had sent, returned with news that a group of people from the capital city was on the way, led by Xing Ji, the former Bei Jingwang, now the Marquis Zhong Xin.

"That Xing was actually commissioned to come here? He's courting death!" Wan Lin, who had brought trusted men from the Wan Family, had no inhibitions in his speech.

The scout reported that Xing Ji's party was expected to pass through their location before dawn.

"Everyone, perk up! If anything goes wrong, none of you will survive!" Wan Lin coldly commanded, then scolded his subordinates, "Where's the water?"

A subordinate went to fetch water from a nearby spring and ran back, handing a delicate water sac to Wan Lin.

Ning Jing quietly watched as Wan Lin took a few sips of water, and not long later, fell flat on the ground.

Others who had also drunk water from the nearby spring also fell unconscious. Only three men remained awake, looking panicked and ready to take Wan Lin and hide away.

But not long after, all three felt a shadow flash before their eyes. They couldn't make out who it was before they were knocked unconscious..

Chapter 190:190. That woman

The sky had just lightened, and the sounds of military training could be heard from the northern part of Xuanbei City.

Day after day it went like this, the nearby common people had long become accustomed to it.

Su Liang woke up, hearing a commotion next door, not knowing when Ning Jing returned.

Since she came back so quickly, and did not wake her up, presumably, the problem was resolved smoothly.

Su Liang got ready and went out. She arrived at Ning Jing's door and was about to knock, but the door opened from the inside.

Ning Jing still wore the plain disguise from before. Seeing Su Liang, she spoke indifferently, "They will arrive today." Su Liang stepped inside, "Where's Wan Lin?"

"He's been knocked unconscious." Ning Jing said.

"As long as he's not dead, he's still useful." Su Liang breathed a sigh of relief,

"From now on, it's up to Uncle Xing. Although I was also sent by the emperor, I'll wait until the situation is stable before revealing myself."

In order to be prepared for any eventuality, she and Ning Jing decided to temporarily keep their identities hidden and work in secret for a more secure approach.

The two, like yesterday, went together to have breakfast.

They heard people discussing the matter of Wan Shan's old illness coming back.

Outsiders did not know that Wan Shan was paralyzed, and only thought that he had not recovered from an old injury caused by fighting in the military years ago. Their remarks were full of concern and respect for him.

There were indeed different opinions, but not challenging Wan Shan. Instead, they speculated that Wan Shan was feigning illness to deceive the Liang Country's army and lure the enemy in.

If Su Liang had not known the truth, she too would have suspected such things.

But she did know, and she could not help but wonder how much water was in the "glorious achievements" that the Wan brothers had established in the Northern Border over the past few years.

When Xing Ji arrived, Wan Shan's true face would soon be exposed. Su Liang was looking forward to it.

"Little Wen!"

A loud shout came, and Su Liang, who was looking at the clay figurines being sold on the roadside, had no reaction.

“Wen Liang!” Another shout came.

Ning Jing looked at the general leading a group of soldiers coming their way and tugged Su Liang’s sleeve, “Is he calling you?”

Only then did Su Liang snap back to reality and remember that she had casually chosen the pseudonym Wen Liang the day before.

“General Che.” Su Liang saluted.

“Haha, you found out my surname, didn’t you?” The bearded man laughed as he approached them. His eyes fell on Ning Jing as he reached out and patted his shoulder.

Ning Jing dodged the gesture.

The bearded man’s hand missed, and he paused awkwardly before rubbing his hands, “Little Wen, is this your brother? Why are your builds so thin?”

Su Liang smiled, “This is my brother, Wen Gu.” Another name she had just made up on the spot.

“This name is a bit strange.” The bearded man laughed.

“Not strange.” Su Liang shook her head. “Originally, I should have been named Wen Zhixin. Wen Gu and Zhixin.”

Ning Jing turned to buy the little clay figurine Su Liang had been looking at earlier, not wanting to listen to her nonsense.

The bearded man laughed heartily, “So why didn’t you go by Wen Zhixin instead?”

“I don’t like writing. My father changed it to a simpler name.” Su Liang said without changing her expression, “I still don’t know General Chels full name?”

“My apologies, I love writing too, so my name is quite complex. It’s just a single character – Yun.” Che Yun said with a smile, “Are you and your brother still going to Liang Country for business?”

Su Liang shook her head, “No, we’re just going to stay in Xuanbei City for a few days before going home.”

“That’s more like it!” Che Yun nodded in agreement, then wiggled his fingers and tried to tousle Su Liang’s hair.

Ning Jing grabbed Su Liang’s arm and pulled her behind him, his expression bland, ‘General Che is very busy, we won’t disturb him any longer.’

Che Yun rubbed his hands awkwardly once more and chuckled, “I had a younger brother who got lost when he was little. If he were alive, he would be as big as Little Wen. So when I saw Little Wen yesterday, I felt an instant affection.”



He wanted to say more, but his subordinate hurried over, "General, we need to get going. We haven't taken care of the matters the Young Master asked for."

"General Che, you should get going." Su Liang urged quickly.

"Which inn are you staying at? I'll come to find you for a drink when I'm free!" Che Yun asked.

Ning Jing shook his head, "My younger brother doesn't drink."

Su Liang smiled, "It's not that I can't drink, it's that my brother won't let me."

As soon as she said this, Ning Jing pulled Su Liang away from Che Yun, creating some distance.

Watching Che Yun and his soldiers walk away, Su Liang whispered to Ning Jing, "He knows the shameful dealings of the Wan brothers and can testify later. "

"Uncle Xing will find out when he arrives." Ning Jing handed the clay figurine she had bought to Su Liang.

It was a cute, chubby little clay doll. Su Liang laughed and asked, "Doesn't it look like Zhengzheng?"

Ning Jing took another look, "No, it doesn't."

Su Liang hummed softly, "Since you bought it, you must have a reason. If it doesn't look like Zhengzheng, then it must look like you." As she spoke, Su Liang poked the clay doll's nose, "It's better looking than you. General Che already said you're too thin; it's only festive to be plump."

"You..." Ning Jing's voice paused, "You like that kind of look?"

"What kind?" Su Liang followed Ning Jing's gaze and saw a plump, obese man swaying past.

Su Liang's mouth twitched slightly, "Are you being polite?"

Ning Jing didn't answer and walked towards a direction.

Su Liang followed with her clay doll, only to realize when Ning Jing paused that they had arrived at a tea house run by the Ning Family. She hadn't even noticed it yesterday.

Although Xuanbei City was not as bustling and elegant as other major cities in Qian Country, there were still many merchants passing through. The tea house had a second floor, which was a good place for merchants to rest and discuss business. The first floor sold various kinds of tea, and the business had always been good.

Ning Jing had kept their identities hidden, so the two sat at the window on the second floor, watching people come and go down below. "Xiaoqi shouldn't be discovered at home, right?" Su Liang suddenly remembered.

But Ning Jing retorted, "Xiaonian, Xiaoqi — do you feel very old?"

Su Liang raised her eyebrows, "If I really counted my age, I would be older than all of you." Psychological age.

“You’re not even fifteen years old yet. What’s the big deal?” Ning Jing shook his head.

“Does it sound strange to you? Well, you can bear with it.” Su Liang said she would not change her tune.

“Whatever.” Ning Jing replied.

With that, Su Liang completely forgot what she was going to say.

When they were almost finished with their cup of tea, Su Liang had a thought,

“Could it be that Wan Cong never received a message from Wan Lin and sent Che Yun to patrol on the surface but actually to assist Wan Lin?”

Ning Jing frowned slightly, “Possibly.”

“During the day, there should be no problem. Che Yun seemed to be dissatisfied with the Wan Brothers and didn’t seem in a hurry today.” Su Liang said, “Let’s just wait here for Uncle Xing. If we don’t see him by noon, we’ll go looking.” Ning Jing suddenly got up, “I’m going to buy something.”

Without waiting for Su Liang to ask questions, he had already gone out and closed the door from the outside.

Su Liang looked down from above and saw Ning Jing leave the tea house and turn into an alley, disappearing from sight.

Su Liang thought Ning Jing was secretly meeting up with Xing Ji, and feeling reassured, he sat down to drink tea and watch the street below.

Approaching noon, Ning Jing returned.

As soon as he sat down, he began to speak, “In Xuanbei City, there is a family with the surname Che. They have two sons. The eldest is twenty-two years old, and the younger one went missing when he was four. If he is still alive, he would be sixteen this year.”

Su Liang was taken aback, “You went to investigate Che Yun? It seems there are no issues then. What do you think is wrong?”

“Nothing, just idle curiosity,” Ning Jing said.

“I thought you went to meet up with Uncle Xing,” Su Liang said, looking outside again, only to see a commotion occurring in the direction of the city gate.

They didn’t go down, watching as Xing Ji led the way, followed by Lin Bojun and a team of elite soldiers, entering Xuanbei City.

There was no sign of Che Yun and his soldiers, nor was Wan Lin present.

As they passed, the common people made way for them.

News quickly spread that the Emperor had sent a special envoy, the former Bei Jingwang, now Marquis Zhong Xin, Xing Ji.

As the capital city's controversy over the crown prince had not yet reached Xuanbei City, only a few people speculated that Xing Ji had come to replace Wan Shan.

Xing Ji's entourage passed beneath the tea house, and as if sensing something, he looked up, meeting Su Liang's gaze. He calmly withdrew his eyes and continued on with his people.

Wan Cong, who was in the General Mansion, had not received any news from Wan Lin. He sent his most competent subordinate Che Yun, who was ostensibly patrolling the outskirts of Xuanbei City, to search for him. He instructed that if anyone claiming to be from the capital city was encountered, they should be captured without asking questions and secretly brought back.

But before Che Yun could return, Wan Cong received a report from his subordinates, "Marquis Zhong Xin has arrived!"

In fact, Wan Cong had known since midnight, when the latest news was delivered to the Wan family from the capital: Duanmu Cheng killed Duanmu Ao, the Emperor nearly executed Duanmu Cheng, and sent Xing Ji, Lin Bojun, and Su Liang to Xuanbei City. The situation was not good!

On one side, Wan Shan had suddenly collapsed; on the other, it was uncertain whether Wan Lin would succeed. As time passed, Wan Cong was becoming increasingly anxious.

He prayed that either Wan Lin or Che Yun would secretly intercept Xing Ji outside Xuanbei City, in which case the Wan family would not be so passive.

But, in the end, things did not go as he wished.

"Eldest Prince, it's said that Marquis Zhong Xin is the envoy sent by the Emperor. Hurry and greet him!" His subordinate urged.

The reason they all addressed Wan Cong as the Eldest Prince, rather than General, is not because they wanted to distinguish him from Wan Shan.

It was because both Wan Cong and Wan Lin's status in the military was entirely dependent on Wan Shan, and they had no legitimate military titles of their own.

Qian Country's military promotions required the Emperor's approval. Wan Shan had submitted several petitions, requesting "titles" for his two sons, but Duanmu Yi had never approved them.

As long as Wan Shan was alright, everything could be worked out, as he was the most powerful figure in Xuanbei City.

Thinking of this, Wan Cong's expression darkened, but at such a crucial time, he had to face Xing Ji personally, or he would only be more disadvantaged.

"Invite them to the General Mansion!" Wan Cong said with a solemn face. Once the subordinate left, Wan Cong changed his clothes, planning to wait at the entrance.

However, the subordinate soon returned, saying that Marquis Zhong Xin and his entourage had already gone to the main military camp, ordering all military commanders above the fourth rank in Xuanbei City, except those on patrol, to gather there immediately.

Wan Cong's heart sank! He, of course, knew Xing Ji's intentions, but even though he and his brother had been all-powerful in Xuanbei City for years, now that Wan Shan had collapsed, their positions in the military had become quite awkward.

He wasn't even a military commander ranked fourth or above!

"Eldest Prince, go on behalf of General!"

Someone reminded Wan Cong, whose expression became taut. He ordered that Wan Shan be well guarded and not allowed to be approached by anyone. Then, he left the General Mansion with two trusted attendants and headed towards the main camp.

Except for the Wan family father and son, the guard generals of Xuanbei City didn't know about the changes in the capital city, even though most of them belonged to Wan Shan's faction.

Before Wan Shan collapsed, the received information was that Duanmu Ao was still the crown prince, and it was not yet the time for him to "take action."

When the news of Duanmu Ao's death came, Wan Cong only hoped to kill Xing Ji urgently and hadn't had time to do anything else.

As Wan Cong entered the military camp's Meeting Hall, he saw unfamiliar soldiers guarding outside, sensing something was wrong in his heart.

As he approached, he was stopped, "Who are you?"

Wan Cong said with a solemn face, "My father is Wan Shan."

"Are you a military commander of the fourth rank or above? If not, you're not qualified to go in!" The soldier said with a stern face.

Wan Cong's anger rose, but before he could vent it, he heard a voice from inside, "Let Young Master Wan come in."

Upon entering, Wan Cong saw everyone who should have come, all with various expressions.

In the position where Wan Shan used to sit, there was a handsome middle-aged man with an impressive appearance, and in front of him, on a silver plate, lay a yellow scroll.

"Young Master Wan, I heard your father is sick? Is he unable to move around?" Xing Ji asked.

Wan Cong shook his head subconsciously, "No serious issue, he just took some medicine and is in a deep sleep. It's hard to wake him up for a while. If the Marquis has anything to command, I can pass it on to my father."

"I am acting under orders. The emperor's decree is for General Wan Shan, and he needs to be here for it to be announced. Since there is no serious issue and he is just resting, please join us and wait for him to wake up. As soon as he wakes up, I will announce the decree so as not to delay the important matters." Xing Ji's expression was gentle, "Come here, accompany Young Master Wan to the General Mansion and carry General Wan here."

Wan Cong's face stiffened, "Your Lordship, is this appropriate?"

"Well, I'll personally carry General Wan here. Young Master Wan shouldn't feel disrespectful to your father, right?" Xing Ji smiled.

Wan Cong lowered his head, hiding the panic in his eyes.

Ever since Wan Shan collapsed, the situation had become increasingly out of control. And as soon as Xing Ji arrived, he took control of the military's higher-ups. Without a clear understanding of the situation, no one would dare to oppose the court. Even if Wan Cong had the opportunity to reveal the situation to them individually and ask them to join forces to kill Xing Ji, it would be impossible. If Wan Shan was okay and came forward, there was hope. But with Wan Shan down, even those who were originally loyal to him would lose confidence in the Wan family.

"Young Master Wan? Have you made up your mind? Either send your father here or let me invite him." Xing Ji asked.

"I'd like to ask General Zhou and General Liu to accompany me to bring my father here." Wan Cong said with a stiff face.

Zhou Liu was the most loyal to Wan Shan, and his subordinates had many soldiers. Wan Cong could only take the risk and find an opportunity to conspire with them

"Ai! The crown prince was killed, the eldest prince committed a big mistake and was placed under house arrest. I assume General Wan received the news and was heartbroken?" Xing Ji opened his mouth, throwing a bombshell.

The generals in Xuanbei City were all stunned.

"Generals Zhou and Liu, Young Master Wan wants you to invite General Wan. Are you willing?" Xing Ji looked at the two veterans with a smile, but the smile didn't reach his eyes.

Everyone in the room wasn't a fool, and by now they could naturally guess Xing Ji's intentions.

If Wan Shan were here at this moment, the situation might be very different. But unfortunately, he wasn't.

After looking at each other, one of the two generals Zhou Liu spoke. He said he was old and not as strong as the young, and he offered two of his best soldiers to carry Wan Shan. The other one offered two soldiers as well.

Wan Cong's face was extremely ugly, his fists clenched, his teeth bitten, but he had no solution.

"Bo Jun, you go." Xing Ji looked at Lin Bojun, "Please bring General Wan here, the matter of announcing the decree cannot be delayed."

Lin Bojun stood up, "Yes. Young Master Wan, please lead the way."

As Wan Cong left with Lin Bojun, he heard General Zhou's laughter from the Meeting Hall, "Old man still remembers the bravery of Marquis Zhong Xin when he was young, entering and exiting the enemy's army three times in

Liang Country! In the blink of an eye, so many years have passed!"

"I'll be counting on your care in the future." Xing Ji's laughter was hearty.

Wan Cong was about to vomit blood, and as he walked, his steps suddenly stopped, and a thunderbolt flashed in his mind: his father suddenly became paralyzed, probably because someone intentionally did it! Su Liang! The news from the Wan family, she had clearly been sent as well, but she hadn't shown up yet! It must be that woman!