

Three-Time 191

Chapter 191: 191. Not Wen Liang

Lin Bojun was not alone in following Wan Cong to the General Mansion, as he also brought a team of elite soldiers from the capital city.

Seeing the team of soldiers following behind, Wan Cong's face grew even uglier, "General Lin, is this really necessary? If people didn't know better, they would think that my father committed a crime, and you are here to arrest him."

Lin Bojun spoke seriously, "Young Master Wan, please do not misunderstand.

The Marquis of Zhong Xin specially arranged for me to come here because General Wan is ill."

"That's unnecessary," Wan Cong shook his head, "Let them go back."

"The issuing of the Imperial Decree cannot be delayed. Since it is the Marquis' arrangement, we would have to ask for his permission again if we want them to go back, and I would be held responsible for the trouble this back and forth may cause," Lin Bojun said loudly, "Young Master Wan, let's hurry up!"

Wan Cong realized Lin Bojun was warning him. If he dared to hinder Wan Shan from coming, it would be considered obstructing the issuance of the Imperial Decree.

The distance between the General Mansion and the military camp was very short, leaving no time for Wan Cong to think of a solution for the current predicament.

In fact, even if he had been given more time, there was nothing he could do.

Wan Shan's paralysis could be described as pulling the rug out from under the Wan family.

Even if Wan Cong now had the qualifications to sit at the same table as Xing Ji, he still couldn't reverse the situation.

Upon entering the General Mansion, Wan Cong asked Lin Bojun, "How is the Eldest Prince?"

Lin Bojun told the truth, "Before I left the capital, the Eldest Prince was summoned into the palace."

Wan Cong heaved a deep sigh, "And how is the health of the Empress Dowager?"

Lin Bojun still told the truth, "Before I left the capital, the Emperor ordered Imperial Physician Su to treat Her Majesty the Empress Dowager daily."

Wan Cong knew about it, but hearing it from Lin Bojun still made his heart sink.

On the surface, each incident individually seemed inconsequential.

However, as things stood now, Wan Cong couldn't help but suspect that the Emperor was using Su Liang against the Wan family, including both the Empress Dowager and the Empress!

If Wan Cong still could not feel Duanmu Yi's determination to eradicate the Wan family and his two legitimate sons, then he would be a fool!

The clearer the situation became, the more his head ached.

When Wan Cong led Lin Bojun to the entrance of the main courtyard of the General Mansion, he stopped, 'General Lin, please wait here for a moment, I will go in and see if my father is awake.'

Lin Bojun shook his head, "Let's go in together. Whether General Wan is awake or asleep, we must ask him to come with us!"

Wan Cong couldn't refute. During the short walk from the courtyard gate to the room, he imagined countless times that upon opening the door, Wan Shan would be standing in front of him, safe and sound. If that were the case, there would still be a chance for things to change.

However, the moment the door opened, Wan Cong's fantasies shattered.

Wan Shan's concubine, who had been attending to him, did not know what happened. Seeing Wan Cong return, she said with a worried face, "The General is still the same. He is awake but can't speak or move. We should quickly summon an Imperial Physician from the capital!"

Wan Cong's face darkened even more upon hearing this.

Lin Bojun hurriedly said, "Is General Wan's condition so serious? This time, the Emperor has sent an Imperial Physician along, but he has not yet arrived in Xuanbei City."

Wan Cong of course knew who Lin Bojun was talking about. Even without hearing that name, he already gritted his teeth in hatred!

"Father, the Emperor has sent Marquis Zhong Xin with an Imperial Decree for you," Wan Cong braced himself and whispered into Wan Shan's ear, "My second brother hasn't returned yet, and I don't know what's going on."

Wan Shan stared with wide eyes, his lips trembling as he tried to speak, but no clear sound came out, only drool.

Lin Bojun was watching from not far away, with a concerned expression on his face, but in his heart, he marveled at how Su Liang's move completely destroyed any opportunity for the Wan family to cause trouble.

"Since General Wan is awake, let's go to the military camp as soon as possible! The Marquis and the other generals are waiting! The Imperial Decree cannot be delayed!" Lin Bojun urged.

Wan Cong wished that Wan Shan could give him some guidance.

Unfortunately, with his eyes wide open, Wan Cong could see his father's gaze but could not understand what he was trying to express.

Lin Bojun arranged for several soldiers to carry Wan Shan out.

Wan Shan's concubine looked uneasy, "What are you doing?"

Xing Ji was already acquainted with the several veteran generals sitting in the meeting hall, having interacted with them when they were younger.

Although he wasn't a military commander, he was well-known in the Qian Country, especially among the soldiers of Xuanbei City, for his remarkable wisdom and bravery.

Moreover, the Xing family was descended from the founding heroes of Qian Country, and they were the only descendants of the founding elders, apart from the Duanmu family, who did not betray the country and still exist today.

Many generals had already guessed the development of the situation and naturally did not dare to offend Xing Ji.

Especially the two veteran generals, Zhou Liu, who Wan Cong believed to be Wan Shan's most loyal supporters, subtly flattered Xing Ji, giving the younger generals an excellent lesson on the virtue of "honor and wisdom".

"Marquis, General Wan has arrived."

The voice of Lin Bojun came from the entrance of the meeting hall, and Xing Ji smiled and stood up to greet them.

Upon seeing the state of Wan Shan, not only Xing Ji but also the generals of Xuanbei City who had not seen him for quite some time changed their expressions.

Before this, most of the people present had believed that Wan Shan was merely suffering from a relapse of an old injury and didn't have a major problem. They wondered why he had refused to show his face today.

But now, it was clear that he was suffering from the symptoms of a stroke, and he was paralyzed!

In this era, this kind of illness was almost incurable. Once someone fell, it was difficult to stand up again.

That's why when Old Master Qin had a stroke and Su Liang cured him, her medical skills became famous overnight in the capital city.

Lin Bojun repeated the words of Wan Shan's concubine, "General Wan is awake, but he cannot speak or move."

Xing Ji heaved a deep sigh, "How could this happen? Has a doctor seen him? Is there no way to treat him?"

Forcing himself to speak, Wan Cong said, "My father just took a fall in the night. The doctor said he should be fine after a few days."

But no one believed that.

Xing Ji leaned forward and spoke to Wan Shan, “Brother Wan, the Emperor asked me to announce the Imperial Decree. Since you are awake, let’s do it this way.”

As Xing Ji picked up the Imperial Decree, all the generals knelt down. Wan

Cong also knelt beside Wan Shan, his head bowed, gripping his father’s hand.

Wan Shan lay on the ground, trying his best to turn his head and look at Xing Ji, but all he could see was Xing Ji’s hand and that glaringly yellow Imperial

Decree.

Xing Ji read the decree aloud.

Duanmu Yi naturally did not mention in the Imperial Decree that he was wary of the Wan family, and wanted Xing Ji to replace them. Instead, he first affirmed the credit of the Wan father and son for guarding the Northern Border in recent years, and praised them for having no choice but to separate from their relatives to defend Qian Country. He then stated that the intention was to show empathy for them, and had specially reassigned the Wan father and son back to the capital city to serve in the Ministry of War, while also fulfilling the wish of the Empress Dowager, the Empress, and the Wan family members in the capital to see each other.

As for the position of Xuanbei City Lord, it would now be filled by Marquis Zhong Xin Xing Ji, who would also enjoy the same military rank as Wan Shan.

After Xing Ji finished reading the Imperial Decree, he folded it up, bent down and placed it on Wan Shan’s body, patting his hand, “General Wan, please take

your sons back to the capital as soon as possible. The Empress Dowager misses you deeply. In the capital, there are Imperial Physicians and General Wan’s illness can receive better treatment.”

Wan Shan couldn’t speak, and Wan Cong had no right to say anything.

The right to speak was on Xing Ji’s side. It was not that the Royal Family wanted to depose the Wan family, but rather, they were showing sympathy to them. It was all an act of grace.

Wan Cong stubbornly bowed his head to express his gratitude.

No matter how hard he listened, there was always a hint of gnashing his teeth.

Who didn’t know the outcome of their return to the capital?

As for the so-called crown prince faction officers present, they could only try their best to distance themselves from the Wan family and avoid being implicated. It was not only because Wan Shan had fallen, but also because the crown prince had been deposed.

“His Majesty has sent Su Liang, the Martial Arts Champion of this year’s examination, to assist me. She is also an Imperial Physician with outstanding medical skills, but due to other matters, she has not yet arrived in Xuanbei City. Otherwise, she could treat General Wan,” Xing Ji explained.

Wan Cong’s face turned dark, and he had to speak up, “We do not dare to trouble Physician Su.”

“However, only Physician Su is most capable of treating this kind of illness in Qian Country at the moment,” Xing Ji said, relentlessly fanning the flames in Wan Cong’s heart.

Everyone else had stood up. Wan Cong did not continue to kneel, but crouched beside Wan Shan, lowering his head in silence.

As if suddenly remembering something, Xing Ji mentioned, “Last night, I passed by a valley not far from Xuanbei City and encountered a group of assassins in ambush, likely sent by Liang Country.”

Wan Cong’s heart skipped a beat!

As the other officers felt confused, they heard Xing Ji suddenly change the subject, asking Wan Cong, “Why is the second son of the Wan family absent? Is he not in the city?”

A few officers realized what was happening, and their expressions changed, naturally realizing that the assassins Xing Ji had encountered were probably Wan Lin!

Wan Cong abruptly stood up, his face anxious, “Marquis, my father received news the night before, suspecting that Liang Country soldiers had infiltrated the city. He sent my younger brother to patrol the southern part of the city with some men. The assassins Marquis mentioned might be a misunderstanding! ”

Xing Ji looked surprised, “Are you saying that those who wanted to kill me were your younger brother?”

Wan Cong immediately nodded, but then realized there was a trap in Xing Ji’s words, hastily shaking his head, “I’m not sure, but it’s possible. If it was my younger brother, it must be a misunderstanding! Perhaps they mistook Marquis for a person from Liang Country!”

“That’s unlikely,” Xing Ji frowned, “We were riding horses in the direction of Xuanbei City. How could we be mistaken for people from Liang Country? General Wan must have misunderstood, those people were definitely not your younger brother; they are from Liang Country. I’ve had my men search them, and they were not wearing Qian Country’s military uniforms nor carrying any identification tokens.”

‘Marquis didn’t kill them, did he?’ Wan Cong asked, his face looking unwell.

Xing Ji shook his head, “They’re still alive. I was in a hurry to issue the Imperial Decree and didn’t want to delay the important matter, so I haven’t interrogated them. I just sent someone to escort them back to the capital for the Ministry of Justice to handle. Perhaps they’re not from Liang Country’s army, but assassins hired by my enemy.”

Wan Cong knew that Xing Ji was acting and deliberately provoking him! That group of “assassins” must be Wan Lin’s men! At that time, for the sake of prudence, Wan Cong had instructed them to change clothes and not to carry any items with identification marks.

Although Xing Ji had met Wan Shan in his early years, he never knew his sons, and it was reasonable for him not to recognize Wan Lin, given that he met Wan Cong for the first time today.

However, Wan Cong knew that Xing Ji must be aware of Wan Lin’s identity, and had purposely escorted them back to the capital! In this way, Wan Cong wouldn’t dare to act rashly! His only

option was to take Wan Shan, accept the arrangements, and obediently return to the capital. Only then might they be able to save their lives under the protection of the Empress Dowager and the Empress! As for anything else, they shouldn't even think about it!

The rapidly changing situation had left the Wan father and son without any chances for a desperate struggle.

Wan Cong did not dare to argue with Xing Ji about the "assassin" matter any further. At this point, those who understood the situation had already grasped the whole picture, and Wan Cong would only make more mistakes if he continued to talk.

Xing Ji spoke with a gentle tone, "His Majesty is waiting for General Wan to report back to the capital, and I see that General Wan is in a poor physical condition that cannot be delayed. Eldest Master Wan should escort General Wan back to the capital today. Perhaps Second Master Wan has lost his way, and when he returns, I will inform him to catch up with you."

Wan Cong held the Imperial Decree in one hand and tightly gripped Wan Shan's hand with the other, speaking in a low voice, "Yes, General Xing."

As for the fully conscious Wan Shan, he was so angry that he spat out a mouthful of blood, closed his eyes, and fainted.

Out of kindness, Xing Ji sent someone to "escort" Wan Shan and his son back to the General Mansion, and had Lin Bojun go there once more to hand over the Seal, Token, and documents belonging to Wan Shan, taking everything away.

The study room in the general's mansion, which involved military secrets, was directly guarded by elite soldiers from the capital city, and Wan Cong was no longer allowed to step in.

The meeting hall in the military camp.

In fact, many generals had guessed that Wan Shan's illness was also orchestrated by Xing Ji, representing the will of the royal family.

The seemingly calm but secretly turbulent transition of military power allowed these people to witness Xing Ji's ruthless methods. They all believed that Xing Ji had secretly sent people to target Wan Shan first. The truth was not far from that.

General Zhou casually asked, "I don't know when General Su can arrive? I was injured years ago on my back, and every time when there's wind or rain, I feel a faint pain. It has never fully healed. When General Su arrives, I would like to ask her for help."

Xing Ji smiled, "Soon."

The news of the Wan family father and son leaving for the capital city under the imperial order spread quickly throughout Xuanbei City.

This was a major event.

However, Xing Ji controlled public opinion, and the common people thought that it was the royal family's sympathy for Wan Shan. At the same time, they learned that Wan Shan had suffered a stroke and was paralyzed, unable to even move. Naturally, they wouldn't think that Wan Shan should stay. From a practical point of view, Wan Shan was already a useless person, no longer suitable for the position of the city lord of Xuanbei and should go home to recuperate and rest.

As for Xing Ji, in the eyes of the older people in Xuanbei City, he has a very positive image because he had made great contributions here in the past.

If it were not for Xing Ji's efforts, Xuanbei City would have fallen back then.

In fact, Su Liang and Ning Jing, who secretly directed the course of events, had lunch at the tea house and continued to chat and drink tea without leaving.

When the people on the street began to talk about Wan Shan's return to the capital, Su Liang knew that this mission was almost over.

It wasn't until the afternoon that Che Yun returned to the city with his men.

As he rode his horse past the tea house, he looked up to see Su Liang and enthusiastically waved to her, "Xiaowen! Shall we have a drink together tonight?"

Su Liang thought that this man was still so happy without completing the task assigned by Wan Cong. He must be a skilled double agent or else Wan Cong would not have trusted him so much.

Su Liang smiled, "My brother is eager to return home. We will leave soon." Che Yun looked regretful, "What's the rush?"

As his subordinates urged him, Che Yun waved to Su Liang again and rode away with his men.

"Brother, shall we go?" Su Liang stood up.

"I thought you said you wouldn't call me brother." Ning Jing's expression was indifferent.

Su Liang calmly replied, "I am not Su Liang, I am Wen Liang."

Ning Jing shook his head, "Not exactly gentle."

Su Liang chuckled, "We'll leave the city first, and then I'll go back in alone to find Uncle Xing. To avoid being exposed by Uncle Qi as not his son, you can hide and be my secret guard.."

Chapter 192:192. What is a surprise?

As Su Liang and Ning Jing checked out, they overheard the frequent talks of many in the inn about the upcoming change of the Xuanbei City Lord.

Some voiced concern for Wan Shan's health.

Others eagerly anticipated Xing Ji's performance.

No one voiced suspicions that the Royal Family was responsible for Wan Shan's illness, expressing indignation for him. After all, he was alive and fell ill before Xing Ji arrived.

This made sense.

Over recent years, the Wan family had been exceptionally active in the northern border, performing many "outstanding deeds" during times of peace, endearing themselves to the people. However, the main issue was, although they were vassals, the military power in Wan Shan's hands did not belong to their family's surname, 'Wan.' The Royal Family could grant them power, but they could also revoke it at any time.

Even if Wan Shan wasn't ill now, he would have no valid reason to resist the imperial order; refusal would mean rebellion.

Duanmu Yi feared that Wan Shan would rebel, inciting chaos in Qian Country.

Wan Shan, in his arrogance, believed that he could lead a rebellion if he were pushed to that extreme.

But with Wan Shan's paralysis, all the potential trouble was conveniently resolved.

"General Wan is really loved by the people," Su Liang said.

The inn's manager sighed, "Yes indeed! General Wan is a good man. I hope heaven will bless him with a speedy recovery from his illness!"

Su Liang smiled. The public sentiment Wan Shan has earned turned out to be useful. Everyone was deeply concerned about his health, hoping he could return quickly to the capital city to receive treatment from the imperial doctor.

After leaving the inn, Su Liang and Ning Jing rode their horses away from the southern city gate.

An hour later, they reached the same valley where they had previously stayed.

Su Liang changed her clothes in a cave.

Ning Jing pushed on with two horses to the next city. After selling the horses and changing his disguise, he bought another horse and galloped back.

Having resumed her true appearance and changed into women's clothing, Su Liang rode the horse Ning Jing brought back and headed alone towards Xuanbei City.

She arranged with Ning Jing that he would secretly join her before midnight. Ning Jing specifically asked her to prepare some delicious food for him.

Just as Su Liang arrived at the south gate of Xuanbei City, she came across a group of riders exiting the city. It was Wan Cong leading the contingent of the Wan family returning to the capital.

Many noticed Su Liang, due to her beauty and heroic posture.

Although Xuanbei City had many visitors from the north and south, it was rare to see a foreign woman visiting the northern border city alone.

Seeing her beaming smile towards him.

After being momentarily dazzled, Wan Cong returned to his senses and guessed her identity!

"Who are you?" a city guard asked Su Liang loudly.

Her voice was cool and clear, "I am General Su Liang, a fourth rank military official assigned by the emperor to assist Marquis Zhong Xin in Xuanbei City." Her declaration caused a stir at the city gates. All eyes were on Su Liang.

Her name was known throughout Qian Country.

She was Qian Country's first female martial arts champion, who had also defeated female General Man Ya from Yin Country. Not only was she a martial arts expert, but she was also known as an

heir of a famed doctor with excellent medical skills—a military commander and an imperial physician combined.

“So the top scholar Su actually looks this beautiful!” someone couldn’t help but sigh.

Many voices joined in with compliments.

Hearing these compliments was, for Wan Cong, not only distasteful but felt like a knife to his heart.

He was convinced that Su Liang was behind Wan Shan’s collapse. The problem was, he had no evidence whatsoever!

The city guard respectfully stepped aside, allowing Su Liang to pass.

After exiting the city gate, Wan Cong couldn’t help but look back at Su Liang riding away. Suddenly his heart jumped, he turned his horse around and shouted, “General Su, wait!”

Su Liang wasn’t surprised. She reined her horse and stopped, “May I know who you are?”

Wan Cong moved over to her, and loudly said, ‘My father is Wan Shan. I am his elder son, with the single name of Cong. Marquis Zhong Xin and General Lin mentioned that General Su has superb medical skills. You once cured Duke Qin’s old father’s stroke. Could I possibly invite General Su to treat my father?’ “Did General Wan have a stroke?” Su Liang’s expression showed surprise.

Seeing her innocent expression, Wan Cong almost clenched his back teeth, but he still managed to maintain his composure, “My father fell when he was going to the toilet one night and hasn’t recovered since. Could you please help save him, General Su!”

“No problem,” Su Liang agreed straightforwardly. “I will do my best.”

Wan Cong was taken aback, not expecting Su Liang to agree, feeling something was suspicious.

But now, he had no choice but to turn back with Wan Shan and his party.

The news had quickly spread, the common people were rather glad, thinking that Su Liang, as a doctor, was kind-hearted, meaning there was hope for Wan Shan.

However, when Wan Cong and his party tried to return to the General Mansion,

they were blocked by the new guards, because Wan Shan was no longer the city lord of Xuanbei City, and didn’t have the right to stay here, even if Xing Ji wasn’t staying.

“You all wait here, I’ll go plead with Marquis, asking him for some leniency.” Su Liang suggested “kindly”.

Wan Cong felt even more suspicious about Su Liang’s intentions, but he still had to maintain a smile and thank her.

“General Xing!” Su Liang stepped lightly into the Meeting Hall.

Xing Ji was looking at the map hanging on the wall. Hearing her voice, he turned around and smiled, “You are here!”

Several generals in the hall shifted their gaze to Su Liang.

Xing Ji introduced them, and Su Liang greeted each of them.

“What a hero of the younger generation!” General Zhou had nothing but praise.

Su Liang laughed and modestly responded, then she mentioned in public that she had bumped into Wan Shan and his party on the road, that Wan Cong had asked her to treat Wan Shan, and they had to return due to this.

“Now that Young Master Wan wants to bring his father back to the General Mansion for temporary residence, I wonder if it’s possible to make an exception?” Su Liang pleaded on behalf of Wan Shan.

This surprised others in the hall. No one knew if Su Liang was truly naive or had ulterior motives.

The handover of military power had been completed, how could Wan Shan be allowed to stay? And she even wanted to cure Wan Shan. If Wan Shan recovered and did something he shouldn’t, wouldn’t that be troublesome?

Xing Ji furrowed his brows, “This... Even though General Wan is ill, wanting to stay in the General Mansion is a trivial matter, I’m not planning to live in the mansion either. Yet, the Imperial Decree specifically states that General Wan must quickly return to the capital city with his son without any delay. How much time is Su General going to need to treat General Wan?”

Su Liang replied, “Just saw General Wan’s condition, it’s a bit more serious than when Old Master Qin had a stroke. I can only do my best. If everything goes smoothly, it would take him at least two or three months to recover.”

Xing Ji sighed, “I do hope that General Wan could get medical treatment as soon as possible, but the Emperor is waiting. I don’t dare to keep General Wan in Xuanbei City against the imperial order.”

Immediately, some generals concurred that Wan father and son mustn’t stay, they must set off for the capital city today.

Xing Ji looked helpless, “What if, Su General could prescribe some medication for general Wan to take along the journey?”

“It mainly depends on acupuncture.” Su Liang frowned, “But it’s hard to go against the imperial order, that’s all I can do. I’ll prescribe a recipe for General Wan to take along his journey.”

Her last words sounded a little ominous no matter how you heard it.

Yet all the generals present praised Su Liang for her kindness, and some asked her help to treat their old injuries when she had time.

No one dared to say that Wan Shan should stay, even though all had seen his severe condition, if he stayed in Xuanbei City, he could be cured by Su Liang soon.

Su Liang wrote a prescription right in the meeting hall, then left the military camp to hand it to Wan Cong.

“Master Wan, Marquis truly cares about your father’s health, but he can’t keep you in Xuanbei City because of the imperial order.” Su Liang seemed apologetic.

Wan Cong's face turned pale with anger! Only then did he realize, Su Liang was deliberately torturing them!

Su Liang took out the prescription and gave it to Wan Cong, "This is a prescription I've written for your father. He can take medicine on the way, and consult the Imperial Physician once you arrive at the capital city. Given the order, I can't return to the capital for the time being, but I believe your father will be under divine protection, he'll definitely get better."

This consolation was like a knife to Wan Cong's heart.

But as Su Liang kept referencing the imperial order, no matter how angry Wan Cong was, he dared not vent his spleen. He could only accept the prescription, gritting his teeth and thanking Su Liang.

"It's a pity that my grandfather is dead. If he were still alive, I'm sure your father would get better as soon as he returned to the capital city." Su Liang sighed regretfully.

Wan Cong's face turned rigid with anger. He realized that Su Liang wasn't pretending anymore, she revealed her cards – she was avenging her family, and the Wan family was tied with Duanmu Cheng and Duanmu Ao.

In fact, those who had murdered the Su family back then, were all minions cultivated by the Wan family for the Duanmu brothers.

The Wan family did not take action, but their support gave the Duanmu brothers the audacity to act as they wished. After knowing the truth, they thought there was nothing wrong with Duanmu Cheng's incestuous affair with his sister, and believed the only mistake the brothers made back then was not eliminating the Su family thoroughly, leaving Su Liang as a threat.

They didn't consider the innocent Su family as human beings, so they couldn't blame Su Liang for sending them to their early graves.

"Master Wan, it's getting late. You should start your journey. Please take care on the road." Su Liang's smile didn't reach her eyes.

Wan Cong and his party didn't even enter the General Mansion and left Xuanbei City in a dejected mood.

Su Liang had known early on that she would run into Wan Cong and his group, because she was waiting for Ning Jing to change horses in the valley, and had been observing the valley, not seeing the Wan family passing through.

It's not like she deliberately humiliated them, she just did what came naturally. After all, it was Wan Cong who took the initiative to return. If he hadn't opened his mouth, it would have passed.

Su Liang returned to the military camp. By the time she ran into Xing Ji, everyone else had left. He was discussing the following arrangements with Lin Bojun.

"Xiaoliang!" Upon seeing Su Liang, Lin Bojun beamed, "Have the Wan family departed?"

“Are they planning to stay for the New Year otherwise?” Su Liang chuckled lightly and sat down, “Where’s Wan Lin?”

“He’s been secretly transported back to the capital.” Lin Bojun said, “Thanks to you for clearing up the troubles. I had thought of many possible problems that we may encounter on the way here. I never expected it to go so smoothly.”

“It’s mainly because I ran faster.” Su Liang joked.

Xing Ji asked her, “Why isn’t Ajun here?”

“Oh, I asked him to help deal with some matters back home.” Su Liang explained.

Xing Ji was a bit surprised, “He went to Su village midway and didn’t come here with you? You handled everything yourself?”

Su Liang shook her head, “Not really. I only let him leave after the troubles here were resolved. He was quite helpful.”

Xing Ji nodded, “Ajun is always reliable when it comes to handling matters. Earlier, you suggested that Wan Shan should stay behind. I was wondering if you were planning to use this opportunity to return to the capital.”

“I do intend to return to the capital. I imagine Second Brother Lin is more anxious than me, right? But I definitely won’t travel with the Wan family. If I don’t cure Wan Shan, won’t that ruin my reputation? But I really don’t want to treat him.” Su Liang stated.

“Hmm, there are people from the Emperor in the convoy. If there’s any accident on their way, and they fail to reach the capital, it won’t be our concern.” Xing Ji noted.

In fact, he has the authority to command Lin Bojun and Su Liang to escort Wan

Shan back to the capital, but he didn’t wish to do so. If the Wan family encountered trouble, Lin Bojun and Su Liang would have to bear the responsibility.

Su Liang mentioned the conversation she overheard between Wan Shan and his son, Wan Cong.

“They mentioned that in the past two years, Liang Country has repeatedly sent people to seek peace, but they suppressed it each time and failed to report to the court.” Su Liang revealed.

The expressions of Xing Ji and Lin Bojun changed at this.

Su Liang continued, “Many of the accolades that the Wan brothers obtained were fraudulent. There were no invasions from Liang Country. They would take a tour outside the city and then come back saying they had repelled the invaders.”

“Despicable!” Lin Bojun couldn’t help but curse, “Such short-sighted worms! If they’re not eradicated soon, it will be unimaginable when the Liang Country’s real army invades.”

Xing Ji lost in thought, "Wan Shan is capable, and his two sons are not lackluster either. They are just overly eager for achievements and have ill intentions."

Su Liang scoffed, "In such a crucial position, although ability is important, if one harbors ulterior motives, the stronger the ability, the more trouble they can cause."

Xing Ji agreed completely, "True."

"What does Uncle Xing think? Does Liang Country genuinely want peace?" Su Liang asked.

Xing Ji thought for a moment before shaking his head, "In my opinion, it's half true, half false. The people of Liang Country will never give up their intentions of invading Qian Country, because everyone wishes to live a good life. Pretending to seek peace is likely just to recuperate. Otherwise, if they sincerely proposed peace talks in a grand manner, could Wan Shan have kept it a secret?"

Su Liang agreed, "Indeed. Wan Shan didn't report it because he feared that once they truly negotiated peace with Liang Country, his sons would lose opportunities for meritorious deeds."

"About the matter of the Wan brothers fabricating military merits..." Xing Ji asked.

Su Liang understood his implication, "There is a witness. A general named Che Yun, who works under Wan Cong, knows about it and is discontented. We can have him write a statement and submit it to the Emperor."

"Xiaoliang, you've only been here for three days, how do you know everything?" Lin Bojun admired her.

Su Liang chuckled, "I chanced upon that General Che in the pub, it's coincidence. But I concealed my identity then, please don't expose me."

"When I submit the report to the Emperor, do you have any letters to send back to the capital? We can have someone bring them on the way." Xing Ji asked. "Xiaoliang must certainly write a letter to Ajing." Lin Bojun smiled.

Su Liang was calm, "Of course I must."

Xing Ji offered Su Liang and Lin Bojun the opportunity to stay in the General Mansion. Lin Bojun refused, stating that he wanted to stay in the military camp like Xing Ji in order to become familiar with Xuanbei City's situation more quickly. Although he longed to return to the capital to get married, he believed he should handle his responsibilities since he was here.

Su Liang didn't refuse, mainly because it would be inconvenient for Ning Jing to enter the military camp.

Thus, Su Liang alone ended up residing within the mansion of the city lord of Xuanbei City. There was nothing untoward about it. When people asked, Xing Ji stated that Su Liang was his adopted daughter, although Su Liang had not agreed to acknowledge him as her foster father.

Su Liang indeed wrote a letter and handed it to Xing Ji to bring back to the capital for her, discussing the situation here briefly. She also told Qi Jun, who was pretending to be Ning Jing, that everything was going smoothly and asked him to wait patiently.

The capital city.

After several earnest pleas from Empress Wan, she was finally permitted to visit the Eldest Prince, Duanmu Cheng, who was under house arrest in the cold palace.

As she entered, she saw Duanmu Cheng sitting by the window, disheveled, holding a rag doll in his hand. He wielded a silver needle, repeatedly stabbing vindictively at the doll, his gaze full of resentment as he muttered, "Su Liang, go die, go die..."

Little Wan dismissed the servants and approached, "Shengsheng!"

Duanmu Cheng looked up, staring blankly. "Mother..."

"It is your mother. Your mother came to see you." Lady Wan, with her eyes red, held Duanmu Cheng's hands, took away the doll and needle, and put them on the table. "Don't scare your mother. What would your mother do if something happened to you again?"

"Mother, I didn't kill my second brother!" Duanmu Cheng paled, "It's all that bitch Su Liang's doing!"

Small Lady Wan nodded, "Your mother knows. How could you harm Ao'ao? You two are real brothers!"

"What about my uncle... is there any news from my uncle?" Duanmu Cheng asked anxiously.

Small Lady Wan shook her head. "There is still no news, but it should be soon. Your uncle has been in the Northern Border for so many years. How could he let Xing Ji snatch his power easily? He already knows what happened here, so he won't sit back and do nothing. Shengsheng, wait a little longer, don't panic!"

Seemingly gaining confidence, Duanmu Cheng gave a cold laugh. "Uncle is so powerful that even the emperor fears him. Xing Ji and Su Liang have gone to Xuanbei City, but don't expect to return alive! Mother, send a message to Uncle. When he catches Su Liang, don't let her die. I want to torture her myself, cutting her into pieces, and mashing her body!"

Small Lady Wan nodded, "Okay, your mother promises you. Don't be afraid, you just wait here. There will be good news from your uncle soon."

Xuanbei City.

Su Liang's dinner was prepared by the cook of the General Mansion. It tasted mediocre. She ate a bit and had the kitchen of her courtyard cleaned up. She asked for some ingredients, saying she wanted to make a late-night snack.

She ordered all the servants to leave. While thinking about what was to come, she started cooking Ning Jing's favorite dishes to thank him for his help this time.

When the dishes were almost ready, Su Liang looked back at the entrance of the kitchen, just to see a familiar figure stepping in.

It was Ning Jing with his face masked. He walked in holding a basket. After placing the basket on the ground, he added two pieces of wood to the stove. He acted skillfully.

“Where have you been?” Su Liang casually asked.

Ning Jing took something out of the basket and handed it to Su Liang.

She saw it was a package, wrapped in oil paper, something hard inside.

Su Liang opened the package and found a piece of smoked meat.

“This is the most delicious thing in South City.” Ning Jing said.

Su Liang hesitated for a moment, “Did you actually run to the border city of Liang Country to buy this piece of meat? But regarding the most delicious food, it’s very subjective. You only represent yourself.”

“I think this is the most delicious thing in South City. Is there a problem?” Ning Jing countered.

Su Liang softly coughed, “Not at all. You are the boss, so what you say goes. How would you like to eat this meat? I’ll cook it for you.” “I’ll let you surprise me.” Ning Jing replied indifferently.

I’ve never seen it. Unless you give a laugh, it won’t count as a surprise.”

Ning Jing got up, washed his hands, picked up a meat bun that Su Liang had carefully made and tasted it. He calmly said, “It’s delicious. I am very pleased.” Su Liang was speechless, “Does that count?”

“Anticipation for surprises is subjective, but I represent myself.” Ning Jing returned Su Liang’s words to her. “If I think it is, it is.”

Su Liang had no reply.

She sliced and fried the smoked meat into a dish, saving half of it for tomorrow’s meal.

The late-night snack was ready. The two sat opposite each other in the room. Su Liang tried a piece of smoked meat and nodded, “It has a unique flavor.”

Ning Jing took out a piece of paper from his chest and handed it to her, “The recipe for the smoked meat, make it when you go back.”

Su Liang: . She had never wanted to describe Ning Jing as a food lover because he was sometimes picky and sometimes casual about his meals. To be more precise, he knew how to enjoy food only when she cooked for him. Otherwise, he ate only to fill his stomach.

“Great God, I want to discuss something with you.” Su Liang looked serious, “Why don’t we quit cooking? You don’t need to light a fire or wash dishes, and we can eat at the restaurant every day. We are not short of money, so it would save a lot of trouble. What do you think?”

Ning Jing shook his head, “No way. Let’s talk about it when you can beat me.”

Su Liang frowned, “If I refuse, will you force me?”

Ning Jing replied indifferently, "This was agreed at the beginning. You want to change it, but I don't agree. As you said, I'm the boss."

Su Liang instantly gave up. Want to beat Ning Jing to become the boss? The hope was slim.

Ning Jing picked up a piece of smoked meat and put it in his mouth. He ate it slowly and nodded, "I am very pleased."

"If one day I really manage to defeat you, will you cook?" Su Liang still asked. People should have dreams. What if miracles happened? Ning Jing nodded, "I wish you success in your endeavors.."

Chapter 193:193. I mean your eyeballs

Su Liang specifically chose a secluded courtyard, the bedroom had a small study, and asked the servants to prepare a set of bedding for the couch in the study.

Ning Jing slept in the study at night.

Before dawn the next day, Su Liang got up.

The servants brought water for washing and breakfast. She tidied up, finished eating, and went to the military camp.

They agreed last night that she had important things to do, and during her stay in Xuanbei City, she would only be responsible for making late-night snacks for Ning Jing, who would take care of his other meals himself.

Ning Jing had no objections.

When Su Liang arrived at the camp, today's morning training was about to begin.

"Xiaoliang!" Lin Bojun waved with a smile.

The tall man standing beside him turned his head and looked over, his face covered in a stubbly beard. It was Che Yun.

"Second Brother Lin, are we going to participate in the training?" Su Liang, dressed in a neat and vigorous attire, her hair tied up high, beamed with a bright smile, making the soldiers' eyes fixate on her.

Lin Bojun laughed heartily, "I knew it, you must have wanted to participate in the training! "

"This is..." Su Liang saw Che Yun looking at her and asked.

"My surname is Che, with a single name Yun. You must be the famous Martial

Arts Champion, General Su, right? I've been looking forward to meeting you!" Che Yun cupped his hands in greeting, his eyes filled with undisguised admiration as he looked at Su Liang.

Su Liang nodded slightly and returned the gesture, "General Che, nice to meet you for the first time. Please give me your guidance in the future."

Xing Ji and several veteran generals appeared not far away, and the training was about to begin.

Seeing Lin Bojun and Su Liang joining the ordinary soldiers in the training,

Xing Ji smiled and said, "That's very good, go ahead."

Last night, Che Yun had already been separately called by Xing Ji to talk, not mentioning Su Liang, just because he had previously been close to Wan Cong.

As Su Liang said, Che Yun actively confessed the truth about the Wan father and son colluding to falsify and fabricate military achievements, and personally wrote a letter of testimony, signed his name, and before dawn, it had been sent back to the capital with Xing Ji's letter.

Che Yun said he had always wanted to expose the Wan father and son to the court, but because of the lack of actual evidence and his weakness, he was afraid of being retaliated against and causing trouble for his parents, so he had hesitated and not taken any action.

Xing Ji understood this.

With Su Liang's participation, the soldiers in today's training were giving extra effort.

Xing Ji, who was watching from the side, was quite pleased, because Lin Bojun and Su Liang performed extremely well, far better than the others in every aspect.

"Both of them are Martial Arts Champions indeed, very impressive!" General Liu praised.

General Zhou suggested, "Why not have a martial arts competition today, so everyone can see the skills of our two Martial Arts Champions for themselves!" A chorus of agreement followed.

Xing Ji smiled, "After the training is over, we will arrange the competition. Today, any soldier under thirty-five who can defeat General Lin or General Su will be handsomely rewarded!"

Upon hearing this, the eyes of several young generals, including Che Yun, lit up.

Whether there was a reward or not was not important. If they could defeat the Martial Arts Champion in public, it would greatly benefit their prestige in the army.

General Zhou informed Xing Ji that among the four-level martial artists under thirty-five, Che Yun was the best in martial arts.

That was also the reason why Wan Cong had tried to win Che Yun over to do his bidding.

When the training ended, Su Liang learned that she would be competing later and looked forward to it.

She had accomplished some great feats before, but she never had the chance to make a move herself. For the sake of safety, it was almost entirely Ning Jing's doing.

It had been a while since she last fought. Su Liang enjoyed actual combat, and she was extremely talented and good at learning from her opponents.

"I am Lin Bojun's junior, and anyone who wants to challenge him must first pass through my checkpoint!" Su Liang said.

This meant that she would participate in all the competitions, and as long as she did not lose, Lin Bojun wouldn't have to make a move.

Lin Bojun knew very well that his martial arts prowess was inferior to Su Liang's. Since Su Liang wanted to fight several rounds, he would let her have her way.

The news of the "Challenge the Martial Arts Champion" competition spread throughout the camp.

Although many people were eager to try, they were also afraid of losing face in public. So they elected the best martial artist among the younger generation of generals to represent them and challenge Su Liang first.

It was Che Yun. He had won the first place in last year's military martial arts tournament.

It is said that because he had to take care of his parents at home, he did not go to the capital to participate in the martial arts exams, but instead directly became a soldier in Xuanbei City.

There were rules for selection and promotion in the military, and he seized every opportunity, showing his talent and dedication. Two years after joining the army, he was promoted to rank four.

As a common soldier of civilian origin, it was quite impressive for him to achieve such success at a young age.

Everyone was looking forward to the outcome of this martial arts competition, to see who was stronger between the army's "Martial Arts Champion" and the national martial arts champion.

Su Liang had seen Che Yun's waist sword before, and she only had her usual twin blades with her this time.

When they arrived at the combat stage in the military camp, the surrounding area was already filled with soldiers who had been allowed to watch the competition.

Che Yun was at the side of the stage, wiping his long sword.

Xing Ji and several generals sat on the spectator seats with Lin Bojun standing beside them.

As the competition was about to begin, Su Liang stepped onto the combat stage amidst the watchful eyes of everyone.

Someone took the lead, and the cheers from the crowd sounded like thunder.

At first, they were cheering for Che Yun, but later on, the cheers for Su Liang grew louder as well.

Xing Ji looked distracted, thinking that being young was truly wonderful. Such enthusiasm was what he had longed for in his life. However, due to his background, he only managed to openly join the military when he was middle-aged.

He didn't feel guilty about his meteoric rise to the position of the commanding general, but he did have some regrets. He wished life could be lived again. Perhaps he could have chosen a different way of living—no longer missing his youthful dreams and no longer missing someone...

"General, you can start now," someone reminded him from the side.

Xing Ji snapped back to reality and announced the start of the competition.

With a resounding voice, Che Yun said, "Today, I shall experience Su Liang's extraordinary skills!" As soon as he finished speaking, he drew his sharp sword and attacked Su Liang!

Su Liang was unfamiliar with Che Yun's strength and did not dare to be careless. She still chose to adopt her usual tactic of defensive probing first, followed by offense.

Not long after the fight started, Su Liang realized that she had met a formidable opponent.

Chen Yun was a powerful martial artist. His moves seemed slow, but his attacks were fierce and his reactions agile. Although he seemed carefree, he was actually calm and logical. Like Su Liang, he began the fight conservatively, trying to probe her moves first.

Xing Ji was fully focused on the competition, believing it to be better than any match in the recent martial arts competition.

Su Liang and Chen Yun were evenly matched and both were intelligent, putting up a brilliant fight. Spectators among the soldiers occasionally cheered for the incredible moves of the two.

The generals beside Xing Ji couldn't help but praise Su Liang. She was a young girl, even six years younger than Chen Yun, and it was no wonder that she was called a genius after winning the title of Martial Arts Champion.

After half an hour, the fight was still a tie.

Even Xing Ji couldn't predict who would eventually win.

As for Lin Bojun, if Su Liang hadn't blocked him earlier and accepted Chen Yun's challenge, he would surely have lost.

After another quarter of an hour, it seemed that Chen Yun and Su Liang had reached an unspoken agreement and stopped fighting simultaneously.

In the end, the match ended in a draw.

For Su Liang, the battle demonstrated her true strength to the soldiers, and she was deserving of her title as Martial Arts Champion.

At the same time, Chen Yun also proved that his title of "Martial Arts Champion of the Army" was not false at all.

It could be said that it was a win-win situation.

Xing Ji was satisfied with the outcome, feeling that Chen Yun was someone worth cultivating. After all, Lin Bojun and Su Liang were both planning to return to the capital city, so they couldn't be relied upon for now.

Since Chen Yun couldn't defeat Su Liang, no one else challenged her.

Xing Ji rewarded Chen Yun with 500 silver taels, a generous prize in the army.

After thanking Xing Ji, Chen Yun came to find Su Liang again.

"I've heard that General Su is skilled in medical treatments, and now also serving as Imperial Physician. I wonder if you could spare some time to treat my father? He has been suffering from a persistent cough for years, taking many medicines without a cure," Chen Yun sighed as he spoke.

Su Liang readily agreed, "Where does your family live? I'll find time to go there this afternoon."

Greatly delighted, Chen Yun bowed his thanks, “Thank you so much, General Su! I’ll be staying in the military camp today; whenever you have time, just let me know and I’ll take you there!”

“Okay,” Su Liang nodded. She recalled that Ning Jing had investigated Chen Yun’s family before, learning that he had a younger brother who had gone missing since childhood.

Su Liang went to find Xing Ji, offering some suggestions for improving the training in the army. As a transmigrator and a military woman in her previous life, she had a better understanding of theory and practical experience.

Xing Ji listened and thought it made sense, asking Su Liang to organize and write down the details so that he could communicate with the generals responsible for training the soldiers about how to improve.

In the end, Xing Ji sighed, “If you were my child, I’d be laughing in my sleep from joy. ”

Su Liang replied solemnly, “When I return to the capital city, I will definitely tell Crown Prince Xing that Uncle Xing dislikes him.”

Xing Ji couldn’t help but laugh, “Compared to you, he dislikes himself. Why don’t you reconsider accepting me as your godfather? By the time you marry Ning Jing, you’ll have a family, and I’ll give you a dowry!”

Su Liang coughed lightly, “That would be a form of harm to Ning Jing, for he is also alone. I can’t make him feel like Uncle Xing and his family are bullying him.”

Xing Ji nodded, “You have a point.” They really were shamelessly talking nonsense...

Su Liang knew Xing Ji was very fond of her. If Ning Jing was not Gu Ling, perhaps she would have agreed to acknowledge Xing Ji as her godfather.

However, to be on the safe side, she tried to avoid having an undeniable relationship with others. They could be friends, but she would avoid anything related to kinship.

“By the way, Qi Jiang asked me to ask you if Ajun is going back to Xuanbei City?” Xing Ji changed the subject.

Su Liang shook her head, “No. I have sent him to Su Family Village to check on the situation there, and then settle down there for a while. When I pass by on my way back to the capital, I will call for him.”

Xing Ji nodded, “I see. Yu Sheng mentioned that you and Ning Jing have a good reputation in the village.”

“That’s mainly because of me,” Su Liang joked.

After chatting, Su Liang seriously sorted out her suggestions on how to improve the army’s training methods, listing them clearly. These were not just ideas, but also included explanations on why improvement was needed, how to improve, and what benefits would be gained.

It wasn't just due to the recent thoughts she had had. When she was training in the guard camp outside the capital city, she had also had many ideas, but hadn't had time to bring them up before she had to go to Xuanbei City.

By the time she handed the written materials to Xing Ji, he had carefully read them twice and praised, "You were born to be a general."

Su Liang smiled, "Suddenly, I feel like eating the pickles made by Aunt Bai, our neighbor in Su Family Village."

General, pickles... Xing Ji paused for a moment before realizing Su Liang was playing with a pun. He smiled, "You have a way with words. You're really amusing. "

"For now, these are the only suggestions I have. You can discuss with other seniors if they are feasible," Su Liang said.

"I think all of your suggestions are feasible," Xing Ji said. "How about having a few drinks together at noon?"

"I don't like drinking. I met Second Brother Lin just now, and he was waiting for me. He said he wanted to try the army's big pot meal with me," Su Liang said.

Xing Ji nodded, "Alright, you two go ahead."

When Su Liang reached the entrance, Xing Ji spoke again, "My wife and Yu Sheng both said that your cooking skills are excellent. You might want to see if there's any room for improvement in the army's meals."

"Huh?" Su Liang was stunned, "Is Uncle Xing trying to make a show of his new authority? Alright, I'll have a look."

Xing Ji intended to explain that he had once spent several days in Xuanbei City, and the army's meals there were simply unbearable. He had suddenly thought of this and mentioned it to Su Liang, not meaning to win over people's support through such measures.

But before he could say anything, Su Liang quickly walked away.

Xing Ji shook his head with a smile, knowing that Su Liang was just joking, and let it go.

When Su Liang saw Lin Bojun again, he was chatting and laughing happily with Chen Yun.

"General Su is here," Chen Yun greeted Su Liang with courtesy and enthusiasm.

Su Liang nodded slightly, not too enthusiastically, "Second Brother Lin, let's go."

Chen Yun laughed, "Why don't I invite both of you to the restaurant for a meal?

I'm afraid you won't be used to the big pot meal here."

"We actually want to go and see for ourselves," Su Liang declined.

"Alright, let's go together," Chen Yun said.

The three of them arrived at the food distribution area and saw that the soldiers were eating with bowls. They could smell the aroma of meat, but the color of the food was hard to describe, making it unappetizing.

Su Liang wasn't surprised. It was impossible to cook fine meals for so many people.

"Do you still want to try, General Su?" Che Yun asked with a smile.

Lin Bojun, who came from a prestigious family, was a hardworking martial artist but had never experienced any hardships in his life. Seeing the food, he was a bit hesitant to eat it.

The food in the military camp outside the capital city was much better. It's not that he thought he was superior, but it was difficult for him to completely overcome his dietary habits. Moreover, he had been a picky eater since childhood and was afraid that he would not be able to eat the food in front of everyone, which would give a bad impression.

"Forget it, you guys go to the restaurant. I still have things to do." Su Liang said and walked in the direction of the kitchen.

Che Yun didn't understand what she wanted to do.

Lin Bojun explained, "She has good cooking skills. General Xing probably wants her to see if there is any room for improvement in the food."

Che Yun was surprised, "General Su can cook? Her medical skills are so amazing, she really is a talented person!"

Lin Bojun nodded with a smile, "You're absolutely right!"

Both of them had bold personalities and got along well. Lin Bojun didn't insist on eating the communal meal for the sake of face, and went with Che Yun as they headed out together.

"Why does General Su call Brother Lin 'Second Brother'?" Che Yun curiously asked.

Lin Bojun laughed, "Ning Jing is my father's disciple."

Che Yun paused, "Ning Jing..."

"Su Liang's fiancé, the current top scholar, the head of the Ning Family of

Xunyang tea merchants, and now working in the Ministry of Revenue." Lin

Bojun said, "She calls me Second Brother because of Ning Jing."

"I see." Che Yun nodded, "I heard that General Su is just of marriageable age, I almost forgot that she is already engaged."

Su Liang arrived at the military camp's kitchen and was greeted by a wave of heat.

An old cook saw a young girl entering the kitchen and scolded her to leave immediately.

The kitchen in the military camp was not a place where everyone could enter, as they had to be cautious about any strangers putting poison into the food.

Su Liang explained that she was a general who had just arrived from the capital city and was here to inspect the kitchen.

“You guys continue your work, I’ll just have a look around.” Su Liang said.

The kitchen steward, who was an old soldier, couldn’t figure out what Su Liang wanted to do. He thought that if this delicate female general started making frivolous complaints, they wouldn’t be able to change anything due to their limited resources.

Su Liang waited until the end of lunch, when the large stoves were almost extinguished. She saw an old cook preparing the kitchen staff’s “working meal” with leftover scraps, and she walked over and said, “Let me do it.” The exhausted cooks were all dumbfounded.

No one dared to stop Su Liang, and they watched in amazement as the beautiful female general expertly prepared the food.

Su Liang didn’t cut the vegetables too finely, and her speed was even faster than the experienced old cooks. The ingredients were plain, but when the aroma wafted out, it felt different.

She added pork fat, not too much, but when the dish came out of the pot, it was not only fragrant but also appetizing.

Someone brought a large basin, and Su Liang scooped out a full basin of food. She then sat in the courtyard with the cooks, each with a bowl of food and a piece of bread, which quickly bridged the gap between them.

Su Liang’s cooking skills also impressed these cooks who cooked every day. Using the same ingredients, their stewed mixed vegetables had a much different taste.

“General Su, it’s not easy to cook for so many people, and there’s no way to make the food taste better.” The old steward pre-emptively said.

Su Liang nodded, “I understand. Do you think the way I cooked was troublesome? More time-consuming and tiring?”

The two stewards looked at each other and shook their heads in unison.

“That’s that. I hope to make your work easier while improving the taste of the food. It would be best if we could achieve both.” Su Liang said.

The steward blurted out, “Is there such a good thing?” He then looked a little frightened, afraid that Su Liang might get angry.

Su Liang smiled, “Some things can be done more efficiently and better with a little more thought.”

Then, Su Liang squatted down with them, drew a flow chart with a tree branch in the dirt and explained how to make the division of labor clearer. She pointed out that the current disorganized situation where one person had to handle many tasks was not only unsanitary but also inefficient.

“This way, it would save energy.” An old steward saw the point.

Su Liang asked what ingredients they usually had and if there were any set menus. The answer was that they ate whatever they had, and it was mostly stewed in one pot.

After asking for details about the common vegetable and meat categories, Su Liang left.

In the afternoon, Xing Ji saw Su Liang's suggestions for improvements to the kitchen. At the end of the document, there was a menu. It was unique because every dish's required amount was based on a single large pot.

"Our Qian Country is rich in resources, and there is an abundance of military rations and good ingredients. However, the kitchen staff are exhausted and the food is not tasty. I believe that by standardizing and improving efficiency, the situation will improve." Su Liang said seriously.

Xing Ji nodded, "Although I don't know much about cooking, you have written everything very clearly and I believe it will be much better. If you have time, go to the kitchen again and explain the changes to them."

"Alright." Su Liang, with Xing Ji's approval, took the written suggestions and went back to the kitchen. She found the stewards and spoke with them for a while.

They were used to their ways and thought that the many rules would be troublesome.

Su Liang said that it was General Xing's order and that it must be followed. If they couldn't do it, they would be replaced by someone who could.

The stewards had no choice but to comply.

After taking care of the kitchen matters, Su Liang remembered that she promised Che Yun that she would treat his father's illness. She went to find him, and coincidentally, Lin Bojun was also there, saying that he had some free time and would go with her.

While Che Yun was greeting others, Su Liang softly asked Lin Bojun, "Second Brother Lin, aren't you very busy?"

Lin Bojun nodded, "Yes, but I have to help Ah Jing keep an eye on you."

Su Liang: ... Ning Jing was in Xuanbei City, but she couldn't reveal that.

After leaving the military camp, they headed to the Che Family.

Originally, the Che Family was also engaged in business and was quite well-off. However, both Che Yun's father and mother were in poor health. "Father, this is the General Su I mentioned last night, who came from the capital city! He is also a highly skilled imperial physician! He has come specially to treat you!" Che Yun supported a thin middle-aged man into the small hall, followed by a worried-looking woman.

Seeing Lin Bojun and Su Liang, Che's father and mother were both nervous and respectful, treating them as distinguished guests from the capital.

After exchanging greetings, Su Liang took Che's father's pulse.

"How is it?" Che Yun asked anxiously when Su Liang finished.

After pondering for a moment, Su Liang said, "Medicine should be supplemented with acupuncture, we'll need to adjust slowly over a period of time then see."

"I knew General Su would have a solution!" Che Yun's eyes relaxed, "I'm so grateful!"

Su Liang wrote a prescription, told Che Yun what precautions to take, and then performed acupuncture on Che's father.

When it was over, Che Yun asked Su Liang to also check his mother's pulse.

Che's mother repeatedly declined, saying she was fine and didn't want to trouble Su Liang.

But Che Yun was insistent.

Su Liang said that Che's mother's illness was caused by worry, so she needed to relax, go out in the sun, and move around more. He only prescribed a formula for calming the nerves and replenishing qi.

Che Yun escorted Su Liang and Lin Bojun out of the house, saying he would treat them to a meal another day to express his gratitude.

As they rode away, Lin Bojun asked quizzically, "Considering their family of three isn't short of money and Che Yun is so accomplished, why do the elderly couple seem so heavy-hearted?"

"I heard that General Che originally had a younger brother who was lost as a child, and he would be around my age now if he were alive." Su Liang said.

Stunned, Lin Bojun sighed deeply, "No wonder."

In the evening, Su Liang returned to the general's mansion alone.

As she opened the door to her room, she heard movement by the back window.

Ning Jing also returned at this time, still holding a basket in her hand.

"Don't tell me you went to Liang Country's Nanfeng City to buy meat again," Su Liang said.

Ning Jing nodded, "Alright, I won't tell you."

Su Liang: ...

Before she could see what ingredients Ning Jing had brought back, the sound of a horn sounding a rally came from the direction of the camp, and her expression became serious.

Ning Jing said, "Wei Yao, the lord of Nanfeng City in Liang Country, is the sworn enemy of Uncle Xing. He captured Wei Teng's eldest son years ago."

Su Liang's mouth twitched slightly, "Stomach pain? Stomach medicine? Quite accurate. Are they going to fight now?"

Ning Jing shook her head, "He's coming with his troops to negotiate a truce tonight."

Su Liang's expression was indescribable, "Sworn enemy? A truce? Coming late at night? How did you know?"

"I heard about it while walking around Nanfeng City during the day." Ning Jing said.

Su Liang didn't believe he was just strolling around.

However, Liang Country's intentions were unclear at the moment, so they couldn't let their guard down.

“I’m hungry,” Ning Jing said.

Su Liang said seriously, “I need to check on it.”

“Liang Country suffered a severe drought last year and is currently running short on food and fodder, so they can’t afford a fight,” Ning Jing said.

“Then, is it a good time for us to attack?” Su Liang asked.

“What do you think?” Ning Jing countered.

Su Liang pondered, “It’s hard to say since I don’t know much about Liang

Country’s situation. But with Yin Country eagerly watching from the south, Qian Country stands between them. Although our country is strong, it’s not wise to start a war with one side rashly.”

“Hmm, let’s cook,” said Ning Jing, handing the basket to Su Liang.

Liang Country’s specialty mushrooms and wild chicken were caught in the mountains along the border between the two countries.

Combined with Su Liang’s specially prepared spices.

The enticing aroma filled the small kitchen under the night sky.

Su Liang diced the remaining half piece of bacon from last night, mixed it with the wild vegetables Ning Jing brought back, and made a filling for a few meat buns.

Just when the late-night snack was ready, and the two were about to start, they heard hurried footsteps approaching.

Ning Jing picked up the chicken soup in one hand and the meat buns in the other, and walked into the unlit study.

Su Liang stretched out her chopsticks to take a meat bun but hesitated in mid-air. She silently drew back, picked up a bowl and took a few sips of soup, and then heard Che Yun’s voice from outside, “Has General Su gone to bed?” Su Liang replied, “What’s the matter?”

“General Wei from Liang Country has arrived at the city with his troops tonight to negotiate a truce. He specifically requested that his son compete with

General Su in a martial arts match and set up a bet! If General Su wins, Liang Country will give Qian Country a city! If General Su loses, Qian Country will provide Liang Country with 100,000 stones of grain!” said Che Yun rapidly. “The general has asked you to go over immediately!”

When Su Liang heard “a city,” she knew she had no choice. As Qian Country’s top martial arts champion, she was highly regarded by the army in Xuanbei City. This kind of matter, which concerned the Qian Country’s reputation, could not be compromised.

“Alright, I’ll be right there.” Su Liang put down her chopsticks, went to the study, took a meat bun from Ning Jing’s plate with one hand, and took the long sword handed over by Ning Jing in the other hand.

It was the Luoying Sword that Xing Ji had given to Su Liang, and Ning Jing had been carrying it for her before.

Su Liang turned to leave, then turned back, leaned in close to Ning Jing, and whispered, "Is it looking ominous?"

There was just enough light from the neighbor's window to see inside the study.

Su Liang was asking Ning Jing if her glabella was darkened. Since Liang Country came well-prepared, there might be trouble tonight.

Seeing her reflection in Su Liang's clear eyes, Ning Jing nodded, "Very dark."

Su Liang frowned and heard Ning Jing say softly, "I meant to say, your eyeballs."

Su Liang was speechless, raising the sword hilt to knock Ning Jing's head, snorted softly, then turned and walked quickly out of the door..

Chapter 194: 194. Fight back!

The door opened, and Su Liang walked out, Che Yun smelled a tempting fragrance.

He didn't see clearly what Su Liang was holding in her hand, "Is General Su having a late-night snack?"

Su Liang walked quickly out, "Mm."

"I heard from General Lin that General Su's cooking skills are excellent." Che

Yun caught up with her.

Continuing the conversation, Su Liang sneaked meat Dun in hand, wiped her hands with a handkerchief, and asked Che Yun, "Do you know the strength of Wei Yao's son?"

Che Yun nodded, "Liang Country started to imitate the Imperial examination of Qian Country to select talents a few years ago. They also hold it every three years, and the most powerful martial artist selected is not called the Top Scholar but the First Warrior. Wei Hao, Wei Yao's eldest son, was the First Warrior selected by Liang Country last year, and his strength is said to be powerful."

Su Liang thought to herself, the names of the three generations were stomach ache, stomach medicine, and stomach well? Very logical.

They left the General Mansion and each rode their horses towards the North City Gate.

After Ning Jing finished her late-night snack, she sent dishes and bowls to the kitchen, cleaned them by the unextinguished fire in the hearth, and then boiled a large pot of hot water like she used to do at home.

Ning Jing then returned to Su Liang's room, changed her clothes, and left quietly.

After three years, the army of Liang Country was once again at the gates of the city.

Just after they left Nancheng, Xing Ji received the news from the scout, and the army in the city was ready for battle.

However, because Su Liang wasn't in the military camp and had no soldiers under her command, no one was specifically in charge of her. Xing Ji was busy deploying, Lin Bojun was assigned an important task, and no one had time to send someone to call Su Liang.

By the time Su Liang heard the horn, Xing Ji was already standing on the city building.

The horn was not to assemble the army but mainly to remind the common people that there might be a battle, to be safe, and not leave the house.

Wei Yao brought 20,000 elite soldiers, and the army of Xuanbei City, including Xing Ji, thought that a battle was about to start tonight.

Xi Ji in particular guessed that it might be because he had become the Chief General that the Wei family in Liang Country couldn't help but seek revenge.

However, the result was unexpected.

Because the Qian Country was sandwiched between the Liang Country and the Yin Country, its strategy had always been "if the enemy doesn't move, I don't move", and it generally did not initiate wars.

When Xing Ji heard Wei Yao's request, he neither refused nor agreed on the spot, but sent Che Yun to invite Su Liang.

As for the duel with Wei Hao, the First Warrior of Liang Country, the bet was a city and 100,000 stones of grain. If it was Xing Ji in his younger days, he would have accepted the challenge without hesitation.

But now, Su Liang was the one involved in this gambling game. Xing Ji planned to listen to her opinion.

Although Su Liang was the Martial Arts Champion of the current university examination, this was under the condition that she was the strongest among those who participated in the Military Exam under the age of 35.

During the day, Su Liang had only fought to a draw with Che Yun, who didn't participate in the Military Exam.

Whether she could defeat Wei Hao, Xing Ji was unsure.

The key was that if they were to fight and lost, not only would they lose 100,000 stones of grain, but also the face of Qian Country, which would be a great responsibility.

"Chief General Xing, is your Su Scholar of Qian Country scared and not daring to come?" Wei Yao shouted from the high horseback.

Laughter spread among the Liang Country army.

Wei Hao shouted loudly, "If the little lady who becomes the Martial Arts

Champion in your country does not dare to come forward, it doesn't matter.

Although Wei Yao came with the appearance of negotiating, his words were all provocative.

Liang Country was in short supply of food, and tonight they came to “rob”. The gambling game they proposed was just to achieve their purpose in a less strenuous way. If Qian Country wanted to fight, they could openly rob.

Living in the harsh cold of the north, Liang Country worshipped martial strength for generations. Men were strong, and in terms of individual soldier’s average combat power, they were stronger than Qian Country and Yin Country.

For war, no matter which side starts first, they always find a justifiable reason for themselves. It’s best to force the other side to strike first, and then counterattack, which inherently becomes more reasonable.

People long for peace and tranquility.

But spectators often do not condemn the provoker, even if they are forced to fight. As long as they strike first, they are in the wrong.

Xing Ji was very clear about the intentions of the Wei father and son, and he didn’t respond.

“General Su is here!”

Xing Ji turned around and saw Su Liang on the city building, followed closely by Che Yun.

“You came.” Xing Ji turned and walked over, not letting Su Liang go to the front to be seen by the Wei father and son.

“Do we fight?” Su Liang asked.

Xing Ji sighed softly, “It’s up to you. If you don’t want to fight, just tell them to leave.”

Su Liang knew that Xing Ji was sincere. If she said she wouldn’t go, she really wouldn’t have to go, and he would take care of all the troubles for her.

But, if that were the case, she wouldn’t have come at all.

“Since the Chief General doesn’t object, let’s fight!” Su Liang said very straightforwardly, “How old is Wei Hao?” Xing Ji hesitated for a moment.

Che Yun hurriedly spoke, “Twenty-six.”

Su Liang said calmly, “He’s a 26-year-old robust man; losing to a 16-year-old girl like me would be shameful. And if he wins me, there’s nothing to be proud of.”

Xing Ji was a bit puzzled. Su Liang had always been unwilling to be treated differently because she was a girl and of younger age, but it was rare to hear her say so.

“I heard someone shouting that I was the little lady who became the Martial Arts Champion.” Su Liang said.

Xing Ji nodded, “It was Wei Hao.”

“There you have it. He said those words himself, and it’s a fact. Anyway, be it win or lose, I won’t let Qian Country lose face.” Su Liang said seriously.

Xing Ji’s face looked relieved, “I believe you.”

Che Yun said, "Or let me go first? Just say that Wei Hao is not qualified to fight our Qian Country's Martial Arts Champion, and he has to pass my test first. Even if I lose, General Su will have the chance to see his skills and have more confidence. "

"No need." Su Liang refused without hesitation, "They won't agree."

As soon as she said that, Su Liang walked to the side of the crenel, looked at the dense Liang Country army below, and said loudly, "Who wants to fight with Xing Ji suddenly wanted to laugh.

The Qian Country army, which had been angered by Liang Country's provocation, suddenly felt much better when they heard Su Liang's bold and confident shout.

Wei Yao, Wei Hao, and the soldiers of Liang Country raised their heads and looked at Su Liang.

Wei Yao spoke loudly, "Is it Su, the Top Scholar?"

Su Liang responded, "My surname is Su, and my given name is a single character, Liang, which is the same as Liang Country. If I were born in Liang Country, would my name be a great taboo?"

Both sides were startled, not expecting Su Liang to break the norm and take the initiative to talk with Wei Yao, with a very unique opening topic...

Wei Yao laughed heartily, "Indeed, it would be a great taboo. But since General Su was born in Qian Country and has this name, perhaps it is destined in your fate that one day, you will become one of our people in Liang Country!" Xing Ji snorted coldly, dreaming.

Su Liang also laughed, "However, if I stepped onto Liang Country, my name would be taboo and I would be executed. As it's impossible for me to change my name, I can only go on a life and death struggle with Liang Country. My name is bound to have a fate with Liang Country, opposing each other with equal force, is this great fate too, General Wei?"

Hearing the phrase "life and death," Xing Ji's mouth twitched, thinking that Su Liang was quite the conversationalist.

The soldiers of Liang Country thought Su Liang was too arrogant!

The army of Qian Country felt that every word Su Liang said made so much sense and sounded so pleasing!

Wei Hao was clearly angered, "A little girl dares to be on the same level as my great Liang Country, such ignorance! If you're so confident, come down and let's have a sparring session!"

"What kind of courage are you talking about? Do you have any?" Su Liang retorted.

There was a burst of laughter from the Qian Country side.

Su Liang continued, "General Wei is challenging me, a little girl, in front of the whole Liang Country army, really giving me face. But for the sake of fairness, Liang Country must send a girl of the same age as me to fight. Otherwise, if General Wei, who is ten years older than me, wins, it won't be a glorious victory!"

With a mixture of confidence, dominance, and innocence in Su Liang's voice, the faces of Wei family father and son changed.

“You are the Martial Arts Champion of Qian Country, and I am the number one warrior of Liang Country. Are you afraid to compete with me?” Wei Hao asked coldly.

“There’s nothing to fear, I just worry that General Wei might lose and be too ashamed to show his face,” Su Liang said with a light laugh.

Before the start of the battle, it was unclear who would win or lose, but Su Liang’s verbal skills had completely overwhelmed the Wei family father and son.

“Enough talk! If you want to fight, come down!” Wei Hao raised his long knife and pointed at Su Liang, “You talk so much, I think you’re scared!”

“I’ll be right there,” Su Liang’s voice was calm, “However, since both Generals Wei can use a city of Liang Country as a bet in this duel, it shows their high position in Liang Country. I appreciate that, but I’m just a low-ranking Junior Officer and lack the ability to gamble with the entire Qian Country army’s food supply.”

Wei Yao’s face darkened, as Su Liang’s words were full of hidden barbs. However, the Wei family father and son weren’t acting on their own, so they weren’t particularly shameful. “General Xing can make the call. In the end, General Su still doesn’t dare to fight!”

“Oh, that’s true. But our general’s initial intention was to let you all retreat to where you came from. If you want to fight, let’s fight; if you want to negotiate, let’s negotiate properly. He doesn’t like deceitful games. I insisted on fighting and should bear responsibility for my actions. You just want food, right? Simple, if I lose, I’ll personally give you 100,000 stones of grain.” Su Liang said loudly.

Wei Hao blurted out, “What a big boast!”

Su Liang smiled, “I can’t help it, you don’t know me. My future husband’s family is filthy rich, and they’re going to give me all their money. I can’t even spend it all, it’s so annoying, I can afford to give you some.”

These words sounded like she was brushing off a beggar...

Che Yun held his forehead, “General Su is really...” unable to find the right description.

Nevertheless, Liang Country provoked, and Su Liang responded. The initiative was once in the hands of the Wei family father and son, but now the situation had turned quite strange.

“Fine, let’s do it your way!” Wei Yao shouted. He realized that dragging this on would be even more disadvantageous for them, and since they had come all this way, he was reluctant to give up on their original plan.

The Wei family father and son were confident in their martial skills, and they didn’t intend to play any tricks. As Xing Ji had said, the Liang Country army retreated while the Qian Country army advanced by 20000, and the two sides confronted each other. The open space between them became the battlefield.

“General, I request to go protect General Su!” Che Yun said to Xing Ji.

Xing Ji nodded, "Keep an eye on them and be alert for any trickery." He had already instructed the archers to be ready in case there was any unusual movement from Liang Country's side and to take immediate action.

Su Liang and Wei Hao walked out from the two countries' armies.

Although Su Liang was not considered short among women, she looked particularly slender and delicate compared to the sturdy physique of Wei Hao.

Wei Hao used a long blade, while Su Liang brought her Luoying Sword. She had learned swordsmanship from Ning Jing and had barely used it outside before, because Ning Jing had said that her skills were still lacking. Previously, when the two practiced martial arts at home, Su Liang would always practice this set of swordsmanship, with Ning Jing accompanying her as her training partner, putting pressure on her.

Today was an important duel. It wasn't that Su Liang couldn't afford the one hundred thousand stones of grain, but she didn't want to lose.

Without anyone giving an order, the two revealed their weapons and began to fight.

Soon, both armies started cheering for their respective parties.

The clamor surged like waves.

Su Liang ignored all that and focused solely on the sword in her hand and her opponent's blade.

As the blades of the swords and knives collided, cold lights flickered, and two dark shadows swiftly moved and dodged under the moonlight.

The title of Liang Country's top brave warrior indeed was not empty talk. Wei Hao was powerful, and his strength was simply overwhelming for Su Liang.

After several attempts at testing her opponent, Su Liang began avoiding his attacks with faster speed and more agile and varied swordsmanship to deal with Wei Hao.

Watching the fight from atop the high city walls, Xing Ji thought that Su Liang was a martial artist who grew stronger when facing strong opponents, with enormous potential that, once unleashed, could lead her to immeasurable heights.

Che Yun, who was also watching the fight, shared the same sentiment, and told Lin Bojun, who had come to his side, "If I were to spar with General Su again tomorrow, I'm afraid I would lose."

Che Yun had heard that Su Liang was proficient in multiple weapons, but it was only tonight that he had witnessed it for himself. Compared to the pair of Twin Blades she had used to fight him to a draw during the day, he felt that the swordsmanship Su Liang employed tonight was even more intricate and formidable.

Lin Bojun remained silent, watching intently. At this point, he wasn't concerned about winning or losing, but worried that Su Liang might get injured. Blades had no eyes, and if Wei Hao's blade struck her, it would result in either death or serious injury.

Wei Yao's expression was not good, because both the previous fight and the current ongoing one were worse than what they had planned.

Wei Hao had no match among the young generation in Liang Country. Before their arrival, they had looked into Su Liang's performance in the Military Exam and concluded that her victory as Martial Arts Champion was because there were no particularly strong competitors in Qian Country that year, and her defeat of Man Ya was due to Man Ya's overrated reputation.

In fact, the Exam had not been particularly spectacular by the end, and Su Liang hadn't really displayed her full strength.

However, tonight, Wei Yao realized that the young lady they had chosen as their stepping stone was far too difficult to deal with!

Half an hour passed, and the outcome remained uncertain.

From the beginning, Su Liang had spent more time on defense than on offense, with Wei Hao unable to land a hit on her while also having to be on guard against her sudden and tricky attacks.

As time went on, Wei Hao's physical strength was depleted much more than Su Liang's, and gradually his moves were not as powerful as they had been at the beginning.

When Wei Yao discovered Su Liang's intentions, he couldn't help but remind Wei Hao to end the fight quickly!

As a result, Wei Hao became impatient while Su Liang maintained her composure, and after a few fierce moves with the enchanting sword, she forced Wei Hao to retreat three steps amidst the dazzling display.

"General Su, hit him!" A soldier couldn't help but shout.

In the midst of the cheering, Su Liang went from defense to offense, her sword light raging and cold aura overwhelming, as she pressed Wei Hao step by step!

Before long, Wei Hao lost his footing and fell to the ground.. Su Liang seized the opportunity to press her sword against his neck!

Chapter 195: Cannot sleep

Su Liang sheathed her sword, and Lin Bojun and Che Yun had already come close, protecting her as they quickly retreated back to the protection of Qian Country's army.

Wei Yao's face turned ashen, and he grabbed Wei Hao, who had just risen to his feet and was about to charge towards Su Liang again.

"Miscalculation, let's end it tonight!" Wei Yao whispered harshly to his son, "Let's go!"

The father and son originally wanted to defeat Su Liang in public, trampling the Martial Arts Champion of Qian Country, boosting Wei Hao's reputation in Liang Country and even the world, while at the same time uplifting the morale of Liang Country's army, and getting a large amount of food to relieve their army's food shortage.

The ideal was full.

Reality was a slap in the face.

Wei Hao was unconvinced, his neck stiff as he stared at Su Liang, “She cheated! She used tricks, deliberately wearing me out!”

Wei Yao’s face darkened, “You’ve lost enough face already, don’t make a fool of yourself! It’s just as well this time, to let you see that beyond Liang Country, there is a bigger world and more powerful enemies! Your skills aren’t enough!”

Wei Hao’s face looked even uglier, but he did not act impulsively again, clenching his teeth and saying, “Sooner or later, I will make that girl kneel down and beg me for mercy!”

Wei Yao comforted his son, looked around, and noticed that the morale of Liang Country’s army had already been worn down due to Su Liang’s speech before the battle and Wei Hao’s loss in the contest.

Even though he had originally planned to take advantage of Qian Country’s recent change of commander to fight a battle, by now, Wei Yao felt that their chances of winning were slim.

The twenty thousand Qian Country soldiers who had left the city did not return, and both sides remained in a standoff.

Che Yun and Lin Bojun escorted Su Liang back to the city building.

Xing Ji gave a thumbs up, “You performed well tonight. I will send a letter to the capital city tonight, asking the emperor to reward you.”

Su Liang raised the Luoying Sword in her hand, “It’s the powerful sword that Uncle Xing gave me.”

Xing Ji smiled, “As long as you can handle it well.”

“What about that city?” Su Liang brought up the main issue, “Will they really give it up?”

Xing Ji shook his head, “It’s hard to say.”

“They’ve already said it, if they can’t bear to lose and renege on the agreement, won’t they lose face?” Su Liang thought that Liang Country might still fulfill their promise, “Which city did they agree to give?”

Lin Bojun interrupted, “They initially said it would be Nanfeng City.”

Upon hearing Nanfeng City, Su Liang thought of the smoked meat Ning Jing had specifically bought. Speaking of which, she hadn’t really eaten the late-night snack she had prepared. She didn’t know if Ning Jing could save her a piece of meat bun.

“From a geographic point of view, Nanfeng City is easy to attack but difficult to defend, and not a very good place.” Xing Ji said.

“There’s no advantage in taking it?” Su Liang was startled.

Xing Ji shook his head, “No, if we have to go to war with Liang Country, it’s better to take Nanfeng City early. Even if we don’t garrison troops there, leveling the city would still be advantageous.”

“That makes sense.” Su Liang nodded.

Xing Ji shouted at Wei Yao below, "When will General Wei withdraw from Nanfeng City? I will send someone to take over!"

Wei Yao snorted coldly, "On this matter, I will send an envoy to Xuanbei City within three days to discuss in detail with Qian Country! Take my leave!"

The horn of the Liang Country army sounded desolate and cold in the night.

Standing high above, Su Liang watched the Liang Country army retreat like a tide, "Uncle Xing, what do you think of Wei Yao?"

After contemplating for a moment, Xing Ji said, "The reason why I was able to break into the Liang Country's army and capture Wei Teng successfully was that Wei Teng was impulsive and reckless in his actions. Tonight, it seems that Wei Hao has inherited his grandfather's temperament, while Wei Yao is very rational."

Su Liang nodded, "If they readily give us Nanfeng City, we should be careful of their tricks."

"We'll decide how to proceed when the Liang Country envoy arrives." Xing Ji said.

"I have nothing to do tonight, right? Then I'll go back first?" Su Liang yawned as she spoke.

Xing Ji looked at Su Liang with a fatherly gaze, "You go back and sleep now. Sleep in tomorrow, don't get up too early."

"I'll see General Su off!" Che Yun said.

Lin Bojun reached out and took Su Liang's sword, "I'll do it!"

Xing Ji nodded, "Alright, Bojun, you escort Su Liang back to the General's Mansion. Che Yun, you lead people to keep watch and ensure that there is no trouble in the city tonight."

Che Yun responded, and when he turned his head, Lin Bojun and Su Liang had already left the city building.

"Xiaoliang, you're really amazing! Ajing is truly blessed!" Lin Bojun firmly believed that Su Liang and Ning Jing were a couple, seizing every opportunity to mention Ning Jing.

Su Liang chuckled lightly, "Someone doesn't think so."

Lin Bojun shook his head, "I really don't understand what you two are doing, just get married sooner!"

"Second Brother Lin, you shouldn't worry about us. If Liang Country is really sincere in discussing peace this time, even if it's for food, and we can have two or three years of peace, it would save us trouble, and we can find an opportunity to return to the capital city and get married," Su Liang said.

When it came to this, Lin Bojun's eyes also brightened, "That would be great!" Although his dream was to be a general, he didn't like fighting.

As they spoke, they reached the entrance of the General's Mansion. Lin Bojun watched Su Liang enter, then turned his horse around and left.

Su Liang entered the courtyard, which was quiet and deserted as she had instructed the servants not to come in.

As she passed the kitchen, there was still a red glow of fire in the stove.

Su Liang pushed open the door of her room, the candle she had lit before was nearly burnt out, and the wax had dripped down onto the candle holder, forming a red flower.

The bowl and chopsticks she had used for the chicken soup had been taken away, and everything else was as it was when she left.

Su Liang placed the Luoying Sword on the table and went into the small study next door.

The bedding on the soft couch was still neatly stacked, and Ning Jing had gone out.

Su Liang thought she didn't need to worry about Ning Jing's safety at all. The Great God was just playing around, unlike her, so it was best to let him do as he pleased.

Having fought one battle during the day and another at night, Su Liang decided to take a bath before going to sleep.

Ning Jing had heated up some water before he left, and Su Liang scooped it out, carried it into her room and poured it into the bath.

The room filled with mist, and Su Liang soaked in the warm water, feeling every pore in her body open up, it was unbelievably comfortable.

Already a bit tired, Su Liang intended to soak for a while before going to sleep, but she dozed off and eventually fell asleep in the bathtub.

The slight sound at the window in the small study didn't wake Su Liang up.

Ning Jing returned from outside, having changed his clothes, his black hair draped behind him, with some slight dampness remaining.

He placed the clothes he was going to wash on a stool, looked at the beam of light coming from the next room and listened for a moment, but heard no movement. He thought Su Liang was reading.

Ning Jing walked to the door and didn't see Su Liang sitting at the table. He glanced over to the other side of the screen and saw a white and delicate arm draped over the edge of the bathtub.

Ning Jing's first reaction was to freeze, then he immediately turned and went back to the small study.

However, because there was no door in the small study, the light from the next room was not blocked out.

Ning Jing spread out his own bedding, lay down, and closed his eyes.

After a while, hearing no movement from the next room, he got up and walked over to the wall that separated them, raised his hand and knocked, "Su Liang?" Su Liang didn't react.

After thinking for a moment, Ning Jing picked up the hairpin he placed on the table, looked at it, and put it back. He picked up a book, put it back as well, and finally took the jade pendant he carried with him, placed it in his hand, and weighed it lightly.

He took a step forward, half of his body outside, and looked towards the screen. He saw Su Liang's arm again, raised his hand, closed his eyes, and the jade pendant drew a smooth parabola in the air, flying behind the screen.

Ning Jing stood sideways in the entrance of the small study room, and soon heard the sound of the jade pendant falling into the water.

As the sound of water rose again, Ning Jing called out to Su Liang.

"Huh? Is that you? What's going on?" Su Liang was sleeping soundly when the jade pendant suddenly fell into the bathtub, startling her awake. She thought someone was trying to kill her, but then she heard Ning Jing's voice.

"You fell asleep while bathing. I came in and you didn't even notice. You're too careless." Ning Jing's voice was cold.

Su Liang didn't hear him clearly because she was searching for Ning Jing's jade pendant in the bathtub.

"Found it." Su Liang took out the jade pendant. "What did you say just now? Are you afraid my water is getting cold? Indeed, it's a bit cold, thanks!"

Ning Jing furrowed his brows, stood still, heard the sound of Su Liang getting out of the water, didn't say anything else, went back to the small study room, lay down on the couch, covered himself with the quilt, and closed his eyes.

After tidying up, Su Liang specially cleaned and dried Ning Jing's jade pendant, took it to the entrance of the small study room, and called out softly, "Great God?"

No response.

"Great God, are you asleep?" Su Liang muttered to herself, "You shouldn't be.

Even if you were, you should've been awakened by me."

Without getting up, Ning Jing spoke in a faint tone, "Yes, I was asleep."

Su Liang leaned against the doorframe and talked to Ning Jing. "Sorry for waking you up. Since you're awake, let me tell you about what happened tonight. Did you go to watch my martial arts competition?"

"What do you think?" Ning Jing asked in return. Su Liang laughed softly, "I think you did."

"Why?" Ning Jing asked.

"If something happened to me, who would make your late-night snack?" Su Liang said quite seriously.

"That's right." Ning Jing replied.

"How do you think I did tonight?" Su Liang asked.

"Average. Your swordsmanship needs more practice; it's far from enough." Ning Jing answered.

Su Liang sighed slightly, "I think so too. Neither Che Yun nor Wei Hao can compare to you. There's nothing to be proud of defeating them, let alone the fact that I didn't even manage to beat Che Yun."

Though Su Liang heard praises daily since arriving in Xuanbei City, she was very self-aware, especially when it came to martial arts, as Ning Jing was by her side.

While she was indeed a strong young warrior, Su Liang aimed higher. If a real enemy wanted to kill her, there would be no fair competition or concerns on age and gender. If a powerful old man appeared, she would be in trouble.

Based on her experience over the past six months, Su Liang felt that both she and Ning Jing had somewhat troublesome traits and couldn't afford to be careless.

"Is there anything else?" Ning Jing asked.

Su Liang nodded, "Did you finish your late-night snack?"

"Yes. It's not tasty when it's cold. If you want to eat, you can make it again." Ning Jing said.

Su Liang sighed slightly, "Even if I make it again, it won't be this meal's meat buns."

"What do you want?" Ning Jing asked.

"Go to sleep." Su Liang said and left the small study room. She returned to the inner room, sat down by the bed, and realized she was still holding Ning Jing's jade pendant, forgetting to return it to him earlier.

She originally planned to go back, but decided to leave it until tomorrow.

Su Liang casually stuffed Ning Jing's jade pendant under the pillow, blew out the candle, and went to bed.

There was only dim light in the small study room, and it suddenly disappeared.

Ning Jing opened his eyes, touched his chest, and felt a bit uncomfortable without the jade pendant he'd worn for many years...

The next day, Su Liang indeed woke up late, and no one came to summon her.

While Su Liang was still asleep, the news of her fighting Liang Country's top warrior, winning the victory, and gaining a city for Qian Country had spread throughout Xuanbei City.

The name Su Liang was on everyone's lips. This was different from when she became the Martial Arts Champion.

Back then, outsiders only praised her.

But now, she had won a crucial competition, brought tangible benefits to Qian Country, and quickly established a high reputation, winning the love of many people.

It was a sunny day, and at the northernmost part of Qian Country, Xuanbei City finally felt a hint of spring warmth.

When Su Liang woke up, the sun had already risen high.

She stretched, put on her clothes, went to the window, pushed it open, saw the bright sunshine outside, and decided to take a day off! Although she was only a fourth-tier junior officer, her commander wanted to be her adoptive father so she had some freedom.

There was no one in the small study room next door. The bedding was neatly folded as if it had never been used.

Su Liang didn't know where Ning Jing had gone, and wanted to ask him if there was anywhere interesting nearby.

When Su Liang finished washing up and was about to leave, she heard a noise coming from the small study room. She looked in and saw Ning Jing returning with a basket in his hand.

"Did you go to pick wild vegetables?" Su Liang asked, mainly because, back in the village, they often followed Mrs. Bai in the early morning to pick wild vegetables on the mountain.

"Breakfast." Ning Jing came forward and handed it to Su Liang. He was now in a new disguise, looking very ordinary.

"For me? Thanks." Su Liang took it back to her room, placed it on the table, still warm.

As she ate breakfast, Su Liang talked to Ning Jing next door, "I don't want to go to the military camp today. Is there any interesting place nearby?"

"There's an ancient temple called Ping'an Temple, located between Nanfeng City and Xuanbei City," Ning Jing said.

Su Liang found it amazing, "Does it belong to Qian Country or Liang Country?"

"Neither," Ning Jing replied, "Cheng Yun was originally a monk at Ping'an Temple. "

"Will we meet Cheng Yun's master if we go?" Su Liang became interested.

"Perhaps," Ning Jing said.

"Then let's go," Su Liang decided quickly, "You're free, right? Otherwise, I'll ask Second Brother Lin to go with me!"

"If you grill me a pheasant today, I'll go with you," Ning Jing set a condition.

Su Liang coughed, "We're talking about going to the temple, and all you think about is eating meat. Is that appropriate?"

"If you add a grilled wild rabbit, it's even more appropriate," Ning Jing said.

Su Liang: ...

Su Liang brought spices with her, so they could barbecue in the mountains later.

Just as she was about to leave, Ning Jing stopped her, "Where's my jade pendant?"

"Oh, I forgot about it if you didn't mention it." Su Liang went back into her room, reached under her pillow, and took out Ning Jing's jade pendant. It had no words on it, only complex patterns.

They were separated by the small study room's door as Su Liang handed over the jade pendant.

As her sleeve fell, it revealed her wrist, as white and smooth as jade.

Ning Jing's gaze lingered on it for a moment before he withdrew it, took the jade pendant from Su Liang, and said, "Don't fall asleep while bathing in the future.."

Chapter 196: 196. Unexpected Encounter

Su Liang left the General Mansion, quickly mounted her horse, and was about to set off when she suddenly remembered Ning Jing's words before leaving.

"Don't fall asleep while bathing."

Su Liang's expression was baffling, feeling that something was not quite right...

Last night, she did indeed fall asleep while bathing. How did Ning Jing know about it? Because she didn't respond when he called her? Then how did he manage to throw the jade pendant accurately into the bath without hitting her?

Although Ning Jing's temper was a bit strange, in Su Liang's eyes, he was definitely a gentleman.

Su Liang felt that Ning Jing would not take advantage of her sleep to peek at anything, but perhaps, he accidentally saw something?

While riding her horse towards the direction of the city gate, Su Liang was seriously recalling the scene when she was woken up by the jade pendant last night.

She was behind the screen, Ning Jing was in the next room, but the jade pendant couldn't pass through the wall, so he threw it from the doorway of the study, and he must have known the exact location.

Su Liang thought that the screen was not enough to completely cover the inner room. From the perspective of the doorway of the study, it seemed that one could see the side of the bathtub, and at most, her arm. Originally, except for her arm, everything below her shoulders was soaked in the bathtub.

Upon thinking about this, Su Liang didn't feel that Ning Jing had done anything wrong.

Even if she made sure no one was around, even if she was in her room, she really shouldn't have fallen asleep while bathing. If an assassin broke in, her reaction would not be in time and the consequences would be unimaginable.

Therefore, Su Liang's final conclusion was: unless Ning Jing was in the next room, she didn't need to worry about safety issues, otherwise she must never relax enough to fall asleep while bathing.

Having finished thinking about it, Su Liang had arrived at the main street of Xuanbei City.

Snapping back to reality, she noticed that the common people were looking at her, their eyes full of goodwill. When she looked over, they would smile and nod their heads, and some even clasped their hands together to salute her.

"General Sul" and "Su, the Top Scholar" appeared very frequently among the passers-by. Su Liang heard all the good things about her, and she had become the most famous person in Xuanbei City, her reputation temporarily surpassing the chief General Xing Ji.

Su Liang did not let this go to her head, in fact, she felt somewhat disturbed by it.

Last night's incident was something she had been unwittingly involved in. As a person from Qian Country and a military commander currently stationed in Xuanbei City, she had done her best to fulfill her duties, and the result was that she had not disappointed anyone.

This great fame was not something Su Liang sought after.

The more famous she became, the more attention her every move would receive, and even a small issue could be magnified. The higher the expectations of others, the harder she would fall if she ever failed.

"Walk your own path and let others talk."

Su Liang thought about this old saying, shook her head, and felt that she was overthinking it. She couldn't control what others thought of her, as long as she had a clear conscience.

General Xing Ji specifically told Su Liang to rest for the day, so she didn't go to the military camp and nobody came looking for her.

She rode her horse to the city gate, and the city guards saluted her with great respect.

"General Su!"

Hearing someone call her, Su Liang looked up and saw Che Yun waving to her from the top of the city wall.

Before she could react, Che Yun had already taken three steps and two leaps down.

Su Liang had not forgotten about the acupuncture session for Che Yun's father, but she would do it every other day, so she would go tomorrow.

"General Su, are you going out of the city?" Che Yun had already come up close.

Out of politeness, Su Liang got off her horse to avoid Che Yun having to look up at her.

“I heard there is a Ping’an Temple outside the city, and I want to go and pray.”
Su Liang’s expression was indifferent.

Che Yun paused for a moment, then smiled, “The scenery there is quite good, and it’s a non-war zone agreed upon by Liang Country. People from the city often go there to burn incense. I accompany my mother on the first and fifteenth days of each month. If General Su doesn’t mind, shall I show you the way?”

Su Liang saw that Che Yun’s face was sincere, and politely declined, “Che Yun is busy with official duties, I won’t waste your time. I heard that two women who just left the city were going to Ping’an Temple, I’ll follow them.”

“But General Su, being alone, what if the Liang Country side...?” Che Yun frowned.

The non-war zone agreement was only valid during periods of peace between the two countries. Neither side would harm each other’s common people to avoid igniting war.

However, if peace is broken, it will be another story.

Therefore, going to the Ping’an Temple to burn incense is risky. Although it cannot stop the devout commoners from going, Su Liang is no ordinary person, especially after defeating Wei Hao last night.

Che Yun’s point was that Liang Country might not necessarily refrain from attacking Su Liang.

“It’s alright. In broad daylight, if someone comes to bother me, I won’t be polite. Let’s go.” Su Liang finished speaking, flipped onto her horse, and quickly left the city.

Che Yun sent someone to the military camp to inform Xing Ji before he climbed the city building himself. All he saw was a departing figure in the distance that soon disappeared from sight.

“General Che likes General Su, doesn’t he?” Che Yun’s closest deputy general asked with a smile.

Che Yun paused for a moment and punched the deputy, “What nonsense! General Su is already engaged!”

The deputy wore an understanding expression, “After all, they are not yet married. If General Che is interested, why not pursue General Su? That Ning Family’s tea merchant from Xunyang is just a wealthy businessman. He is not worthy of such a talented person as General Su.”

Che Yun’s expression became serious, “Don’t talk nonsense. Su’s fiancé is the top scholar in today’s civil exam, a great talent.”

“He still doesn’t suit General Su. He is just a weak scholar. If they encounter a robbery in the future, he will have to hide behind her. This is not appropriate!”
The deputy continued to encourage Che Yun to pursue Su Liang.

Che Yun snorted, "My martial arts are not as good as General Su's either. In case of trouble, I will also have to hide behind her. Do you think it is suitable then?"

The deputy was stunned, and Che Yun went down the city building once again.

Upon learning that Su Liang had left the city, Xing Ji was also worried about her safety and sent Lin Bojun with a team of men to deliver food to Ping'an Temple while ensuring Su Liang's safety.

After accepting the mission and leaving, Qi Jiang said, "Marquis need not worry too much. General Su is not reckless; she will be cautious."

"I know that." Xing Ji nodded, "But in such matters, it's better to be cautious than to be unprepared."

Qi Jiang laughed, "Is Marquis cherishing General Su like a daughter?"

Xing Ji sighed softly, "I do wish I had such a treasured daughter, but unfortunately, she doesn't treat me as an outsider and is unwilling to give me a

'title'."

Qi Jiang had followed Xing Ji for many years and had never seen him like this before, even hearing a hint of grievance.

Su Liang did not follow the two old ladies. After some distance from the city gate, she turned into a small path through a grove of trees.

Before long, she "encountered" Ning Jing, who was picking mushrooms in the forest.

He was genuinely picking mushrooms.

Ning Jing had a delicate basket in his hand, with a layer of fresh mushrooms already laid at the bottom.

"Big Brother, which direction is Ping'an Temple?" Su Liang asked.

Ning Jing picked another mushroom, straightened up with the basket in hand and pointed, "Over there."

"Would you mind selling me the mushrooms?" Su Liang asked again.

Ning Jing shook his head, "I'm taking them to Master Pu Qing of Ping'an Temple. "

"You're also going to Ping'an Temple? What a coincidence! Let's go together!" Su Liang smiled.

Actually, there was no one around, but the two of them were very much in character, as if they had just met and were going in the same direction.

Exiting the grove, the two rode their horses towards the direction of Ping'an Temple.

Halfway there, Su Liang couldn't help but ask, "Did you see me taking a bath last night?"

After a moment of silence, Ning Jing admitted, "I saw a little bit."

“My arm?” Su Liang asked.

Ning Jing nodded.

Su Liang thought to herself that it was indeed the case, then naturally changed the subject, “Who gave you your jade pendant?”

“My mother,” Ning Jing said.

Su Liang went on to ask the question she had been ignoring before, “What about your maternal grandparents’ family after something happened to the Gu family? Are there any relatives left?”

Ning Jing nodded, “Yes, in the Liang Country.”

Su Liang was surprised, “Liang Country? Your mother is from Liang Country?”

“Yes, my mother was originally the princess of Liang Country, and Gu Yuan, who was Xuanbei City Lord for a few years. But no one dares to mention it now,” Ning Jing said indifferently.

Gu Yuan was Gu Ling’s father, Marquis Chang Xin, whose entire family was wiped out due to his rebellion.

Perhaps it was because Ning Jing was around. He didn’t mention it, and Su Liang was even more likely to ignore matters related to the Gu Family.

Ning Jing was even unwilling to call Gu Yuan “father,” which showed that there was only a bond of blood between the father and son, and no affection.

“So, your maternal grandfather is...the prince of Liang Country?” Su Liang expressed surprise.

With a thin lip, Ning Jing said, “Prince He Liancheng, the uncle of the Emperor of Liang Country.”

“So the Emperor of Liang Country is your...cousin?” Su Liang asked.

Ning Jing shook her head, “That’s not important.”

“So, is it because the Duanmu royal family wants to get rid of you that they are afraid of you joining the Liang royal family?” Su Liang asked, “Have you never thought about going there?”

“My mother is dead, and I have no relationship with them,” Ning Jing said calmly.

Su Liang sighed and didn’t ask anything more.

When they reached the foot of Ping’an Temple, Su Liang found that some of the pilgrims going up the mountain were from Xuanbei City in Qian Country and some were from the South Feng City in Liang Country, with more people from the former.

When the common people of the two countries met, there was no hostile atmosphere at all; in fact, they were very harmonious, and some even had relatives who had made special arrangements to meet at Ping’an Temple that night.

It was already early summer in the capital city of Qian Country, but the peach blossoms had just begun to bloom in the mountains here.

Su Liang and Ning Jing stepped up, with a gentle breeze blowing in their faces, and the air was filled with the scent of flowers and grass, the sound of insects and birds, and a thriving scene.

Ping'an Temple is a very ancient temple, and it is said that the Bodhisattvas in the temple are very efficacious. As long as your heart is sincere, your prayers will be answered.

As soon as the two entered the temple, Su Liang asked the first monk she met if there was a Master Pu Qing.

The monk nodded, "He is the abbot of this temple, and he has said that he will not see any visitors today."

Master Pu Qing is Master Cheng Yun's master. Cheng Yun went to the capital city of Qian Country to deliver scriptures to his master uncle at Huguo Temple but was left there and never returned.

Since they said they weren't seeing visitors, Su Liang didn't force it and decided to take a look around.

"It's just as well; you saved your mushrooms. Let's eat them," Su Liang said. Roasted mushrooms are also delicious.

However, Ning Jing replied, "I never intended to give them away."

Su Liang put her hands together, muttered "Amitabha" to the Bodhisattva in the main hall ahead, and thought that if the Buddha blamed Ning Jing, he shouldn't take it out on her. She sincerely wanted to give Master Pu Qing a few mushrooms...

Su Liang took a tour of Ping'an Temple and found the scenery and architecture of this ancient temple to be very special. Compared with the well-maintained Huguo Temple, which underwent repairs all year round, it had a much richer taste of the accumulation of time.

When they prepared to leave, Su Liang asked another monk if he knew Cheng Yun.

The monk was surprised at Su Liang, who was obviously a young girl, despite wearing men's clothing, and asked, "Does this female benefactor know Master

Cheng Yun?"

Cheng Yun was a disciple of Master Pu Qing. Despite his young age, he had a high status in both Ping'an Temple and Huguo Temple.

Su Liang nodded with a smile, "Master Cheng Yun once helped me."

"Master Cheng Yun has gone to the capital of Qian Country and is not in the temple right now," the monk said.

"Will he come back?" Su Liang asked.

The monk shook his head, "I'm not sure."

Su Liang thanked him and left the Huguo Temple with Ning Jing.

By the time they had gone down the mountains and to another mountain, Lin Bojun, leading a group of people and horses, arrived at Ping'an Temple to deliver food.

Upon inquiring that Su Liang had already left Ping'an Temple in the company of a young man, Lin Bojun was taken by surprise.

After delivering the grain to the temple, he also left without making any special effort to find Su Liang.

The weather was fine, and Su Liang felt as if she had returned to Su's Village when she climbed high and looked far away.

She lit a fire and waited for a while. Ning Jing came back from halfway up the mountain with a well-cleaned, slaughtered wild chicken and washed mushrooms.

"What about the hare?" Su Liang asked.

"Next time," Ning Jing said. The wild chicken they caught today was quite big, so a rabbit would be too much.

The two of them sat around the fire and roasted wild chicken and mushrooms, soon filling the air with tantalising aromas.

When the food was ready, the two shared it, relishing the unique combination of wild chicken and mushrooms.

After finishing their meal and extinguishing the fire, Su Liang lay down on the soft grass, propped up her arm as a pillow, looked at the birds flying across the sky, and sighed, "There's no hope of flying again in this life."

Ning Jing lay down not far away, "Haven't you ever thought of building airplanes?"

Su Liang chuckled, "I can't, and there are no conditions here."

"Will you ever go back to where you came from?" Ning Jing asked.

Su Liang's lips curled slightly, "That would be nice. If I go back, I'll write a novel with you as the male lead."

"Who's the female lead?" Ning Jing asked.

"Of course, it's me. I'll write about how I met you, a great god, after traveling through time and space, and we became brothers and went on adventures together," Su Liang said enthusiastically. "It's bound to be exciting!"

"Didn't you say that people there like to read love stories?" Ning Jing asked.

Su Liang shook her head, "As long as it's a good story, it doesn't matter if there's love or not."

"I want to go too," Ning Jing said.

"Where do you want to go?" Su Liang was taken aback.

"Go and see your side," Ning Jing said, "Ride an airplane to fly in the sky."

Su Liang nodded, "It's worth a try. Unfortunately, I probably won't be able to go back, and you won't be able to go either.."

Chapter 197: 197. Strange and cute at the same time

After closing the door, Su Liang entered the adjoining study room and saw Ning Jing sitting at the desk, holding a piece of stone she had picked up from the mountain today, carefully carving it.

"Meeting like this today will make people suspect that I'm a spy, leaving the city to meet with you," Su Liang sat down opposite her.

Without lifting her head, Ning Jing said, "You asked me to come."

Choking slightly, Su Liang hummed, "I'm not blaming you. I just wanted to tell you why Uncle Xing is looking for me. I told him that you're the secret guard I hired to protect me."

Ning Jing's hand paused for a moment, and she glanced at Su Liang, "I can be the secret guard you hired to protect you."

Su Liang laughed, "Great God, are you just playing word games? It's all the same."

Seeing that Ning Jing was focused on the stone in her hand, showing no interest in chatting with her, Su Liang got up and left, "I'll go check out the military camp to see if there are any improvements in the meals. If someone finds out about you, just say you're the secret guard I hired for my protection," she repeated Ning Jing's words.

"What's the name?" Ning Jing asked.

Su Liang was stunned for a moment, then looked back at her and thought for a moment, "Just call him Shi Er."

An idiot who likes playing with stones... she wouldn't tell him that.

"Who's Shi Da?" Ning Jing asked back.

"It's your brother, me." Su Liang laughed at her own joke.

Ning Jing looked at Su Liang, "You're so cheerful?"

Su Liang's lips curved slightly, "Great God, even if it's fake, if you call me brother, I'd be thrilled."

Ning Jing closed her eyes, the sharp carving knife continued to carve the stone,

"For your safety, it's not possible."

Su Liang laughed and walked out the door, "Just call him Shi Er."

It was just in case. If Ning Jing were found out and Su Liang were questioned, at least she wouldn't get his name wrong.

But Su Liang thought she wouldn't need it.

She went out, rode her horse to the military camp, and the soldiers she met all looked at her with admiration.

Even though this was a world where men were superior to women, in the military camp, strength determined everything.

By now, the sun was almost setting, and the magnificent sunset had painted half of the sky red.

Xing Ji was discussing the takeover of Nan Feng city with the generals of Xuanbei City.

No one from Liang Country had come to negotiate yet, but if nothing went wrong, someone would come tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow at the latest.

Wei Yao's promise made in front of the two armies last night—if he broke his word, Qian Country would definitely not act as if nothing had happened. This concerned the dignity of the country.

Su Liang arrived outside the meeting hall and ran into Qi Jiang.

“Uncle Qi,” Su Liang bowed in greeting.

Oi Tiang was a man of few words and seldom smiled. Seeing Su Liang, his eyes softened a few degrees and his mouth twitched. “General Su is here, please come in.”

Whether it was Su Liang saving Xing Yusheng, taking care of the Qi Yan and Qi Jun brothers, treating Qi Jiang's old wounds, helping the Xing Family repeatedly, or simply because Su Liang treated Qi Jiang as an elder and sincerely respected him, Qi Jiang remembered it all.

“General Xing, this is Su Liang, may I come in?” Su Liang stood outside and asked.

“Enter.”

Hearing Xing Ji's voice, Su Liang entered and apologized, “I'm late.”

Veteran General Zhou immediately waved his hand, “General Su is a great contributor. You were tired last night, so it's okay to rest today.”

There was an empty seat next to Che Yun, so Su Liang went and sat down.

Xing Ji was not discussing the matter of Nan Feng City just now, but rather new training regulations for the army.

Most of them were proposed by Su Liang, and Xing Ji had already discussed with the two generals responsible for training the soldiers in detail, and they all thought it was feasible.

Although Qian Country has a better climate and more abundant resources than Liang Country, and its army is well-equipped, the average physical fitness of its soldiers is not as good as that of Liang Country.

The main purpose of Su Liang's proposal is to improve the physical fitness of soldiers.

Before she came, Xing Ji had already talked about most of it.

After finishing, Xing Ji put down the thick stack of papers in his hand, looked around, “Is there anything unclear? If you all understand, let's hear your opinions. Let's start with General Zhou. Whether it is an opinion or a suggestion, just speak up.”

For a moment, Su Liang felt like she had returned to the past, the scenes of taking turns to speak at meetings, which was really headache-inducing.

However, whether in terms of seating arrangement or in terms of rank, Su Liang was last.

She was a little regretful about coming, and it would have been better to go directly to the kitchen to see the cooking. But since she had come, it would not be appropriate to leave halfway through.

Su Liang listened to the opinions of the generals who were called upon, and overall, they were supportive of the reform that Xing Ji wanted to carry out.

When it was Lin Bojun's turn, he naturally supported it unconditionally.

Next was Che Yun, who suggested that half of the soldiers in the camp should be trained according to the new rules while the others remain the same.

"In half a month, the better and the worse will reveal themselves." Che Yun said seriously, "It's just a humble opinion of mine."

Xing Ji appreciated Che Yun's opinion, "That's even better. What do you think, General Su?"

Su Liang nodded, "I agree."

The meeting ended smoothly.

As soon as Su Liang left the Meeting Hall, Lin Bojun caught up with her,

"Xiaoliang, are you going back to the General Mansion?"

Su Liang shook her head, "I want to go to the kitchen to have a look."

"Today's food is better than yesterday's." Lin Bojun laughed and then asked about Su Liang's visit to Ping'an Temple today, "I heard that you were with the secret guard hired by Ajing to protect you"

Su Liang nodded.

"The master who likes picking mushrooms?" Lin Bojun lowered his voice, "Could it be Ajing?"

Su Liang blinked and whispered, "He likes picking mushrooms?"

Lin Bojun shook his head, "Not really, I just feel that your meeting with that person outside the city is not an ordinary secret guard. Your actions with him made me suspect that he is Ajing."

Su Liang laughed lightly, "Why is that?"

Lin Bojun said seriously, "Only when you two are together, you do some weird and cute things."

Su Liang coughed lightly, "Why does Second Brother Lin think that picking mushrooms is cute?"

Lin Bojun shook his head, "It's the fact that you go outside the city to meet a man picking mushrooms that is strange and cute. You didn't deny it, so it seems I guessed correctly?"

Having said so much, Su Liang admitted, "Yes."

Lin Bojun paused, "Is it really him? You two... why didn't you just get married earlier? He always pretended not to like you, but as soon as you left the capital, he chased after you. What did I say? He likes you, but he's so stubbornly refusing to admit it!"

Su Liang looked around to make sure no one was nearby, and then tugged at Lin Bojun's sleeve to stop him from continuing to complain, "Second Brother Lin, you misunderstood. He didn't come here chasing after me."

"Could it be that he came chasing after me instead? Why didn't he rendezvous with me outside the city to pick mushrooms?" Lin Bojun couldn't help but ridicule when he found out that the man who had met Su Liang outside the city today was indeed Ning Jing.

Su Liang couldn't help but laugh, "Second Brother Lin, have you ever thought about how he could leave the capital?"

Lin Bojun hesitated for a moment, "He's in the Ministry of Revenue, and at this time, the emperor should not allow him to leave the capital. Moreover, his martial arts skills are not known by others except for you and our family."

"Second Brother Lin, want to guess again?" Su Liang was keeping up the suspense.

Lin Bojun thought hard, feeling that something was wrong, and after a long time, he suddenly slapped his forehead, "Qi Jun?!"

He had previously heard from Lin Xueqing that Su Liang had learned the Disguise Technique and was very good at it.

Finally realizing what was wrong. There should have been someone by Su Liang's side originally, Qi Jun, who was arranged by Xing Yusheng to follow and protect her.

But "Qi Jun" only showed up once behind Su Liang when they left the capital, and then disappeared after arriving in Xuanbei City.

Qi Jiang hadn't seen his son, who he thought would accompany them, since leaving home.

If Ning Jing and Qi Jun exchanged identities and Qi Jun stayed in the capital pretending to be him, everything would make sense!

Seeing Su Liang's smile but not speaking, Lin Bojun was simply drunk, "You two are really audacious!"

"I didn't plan to tell you originally, but Second Brother Lin was too smart and guessed it. Just pretend you don't know." Su Liang said, "If something happens, it has nothing to do with us. Let some people bear the consequences on their own."

Lin Bojun held his forehead, "Didn't he come with you because you two couldn't bear to be apart?"

Su Liang said solemnly, "Absolutely not. He just found the capital city boring and wanted to go out and play. That day, Qi Jun came to the door, and he took advantage of it."

Lin Bojun's mouth twitched, "Took advantage?" His eyes looked at Su Liang and said, "You think I believe that?"

“In fact, it was largely thanks to him that we resolved the issue with the Wan family father and son so smoothly,” Su Liang said. “If I acted alone, it would have been much more difficult.”

“I see.” Lin Bojun nodded, “I hope Qi Jun won’t be found in the capital, and then everything will be fine.”

“I believe in his ability,” Su Liang said.

“So you two have been together from the beginning? Then why meet outside the city during the day? What kind of unique preference is that?” Lin Bojun continued to gripe after talking about the matter, unable to stop.

Su Liang calmly countered, “Second Brother Lin, don’t you want to pick mushrooms with Yu Jin?”

Lin Bojun immediately turned his head and looked in the direction of the capital city, sighing deeply, “I wish I could grow wings and fly back to see her. But which normal person would meet to pick mushrooms and talk about love?”

Su Liang nodded, “We are normal people. We really picked mushrooms, so we didn’t talk about love. We just like picking mushrooms because they taste good.

It’s that simple.”

Lin Bojun: ...reasonable and well-founded, unable to refute...

The kitchen was in full swing preparing dinner.

Seeing Su Liang coming in, a steward who had communicated with her yesterday quickly greeted her, “General Su is here!”

This enthusiasm was mainly due to Su Liang defeating Wei Hao last night and winning a city for Qian Country.

The kitchen steward was a retired wounded soldier with pride. He wasn’t very convinced of Su Liang yesterday, as they didn’t know the departure of the Wan father and son was so quick, and the fact that it didn’t cause any unrest was because Su Liang had done a lot of things secretly.

“You guys are busy. I’m just here to take a look. If there are any questions, you can solve them right away.” Su Liang smiled.

The steward chuckled, “According to General Su’s instructions, we changed a lot of things overnight. Today, it’s faster, better, and saves labor! It’s also cleaner than before! And the recipes General Su gave are great, the dishes are much more delicious!”

Su Liang looked around and, if there were any issues, she asked the steward to write them down.

Then she and Lin Bojun sat near the kitchen and each had a bowl of freshly cooked stew.

“Not bad,” Lin Bojun said.

Su Liang felt that the taste was mediocre, but it could fill the stomach. At least it looked better than yesterday’s, and she knew what she was eating, with sufficient oil and water.

Su Liang wanted to return to the General Mansion, and Lin Bojun offered to accompany her.

Su Liang didn't refuse, knowing that Lin Bojun must want to see Ning Jing.

The two met Che Yun at the entrance of the military camp, who was about to return home.

"Are you two going for a drink? Let me treat you, and we'll have a few cups!" Che Yun laughed.

Lin Bojun shook his head, "Xiaoliang doesn't like to drink. I'm taking her back."

Che Yun paused for a moment, seeing Lin Bojun and Su Liang already on horseback and leaving. He stared at the back of Su Liang, feeling like he had seen her somewhere before...

Lin Bojun followed Su Liang into the room, and it was already pitch black outside.

Su Liang lit a lamp and pointed to the study room door for Lin Bojun to enter. He went in.

Su Liang was not sure if Ning Jing was in the room or not. Seeing that Lin Bojun didn't come out after entering, she assumed Ning was there. She went to close the door and went to the kitchen to make a late-night snack for Ning Jing.

Since Lin Bojun was here, she decided to prepare some extra food for him as well.

Not long after, Su Liang was cutting vegetables when Ning Jing entered the kitchen.

"Did Second Brother Lin leave?" Su Liang asked.

Ning Jing shook his head, "No, he's here."

"Why don't you keep him company?" Su Liang continued to cut vegetables.

Ning Jing sat down and added more wood to the fire, "I told him I was coming to light the fire, and he urged me to hurry."

Although they didn't catch any wild rabbits during the day, Ning Jing caught one while Su Liang was at the military camp, and it was already processed.

Su Liang cooked a pot of spicy rabbit meat, stir-fried a vegetable dish, and made mushroom soup noodles.

As the late-night snack was served, Lin Bojun looked eager, "I haven't had anything good to eat since I left home. You two enjoy this every day without inviting me, how could you!"

As he spoke, Lin Bojun took a piece of rabbit meat. It was so spicy that he breathed heavily, and so delicious that he almost bit his tongue.

"Are you guys drinking? I'll go buy some," Su Liang said. They didn't have any alcohol here, as she didn't drink, and Ning Jing rarely drank voluntarily.

"No need," Ning Jing replied.

"If I knew earlier, I would've asked for the wine that General Zhou gave to Uncle Xing." Lin Bojun ate the meat, really wanting to have a few drinks.

Ning Jing put down his chopsticks and went out.

Before long, he came back with a jar of wine.

“There’s a wine cellar in the mansion. It’s the wine collection of the Wan father and son,” Ning Jing explained.

Su Liang said she had been living here but had no idea about the wine cellar, praising Ning for his keen eyes.

Lin Bojun was delighted. He opened the seal of the wine and took a deep breath, ‘Great wine! Ajing, let’s have a few drinks together!’

So Ning Jing drank with Lin Bojun.

Lin Bojun’s alcohol tolerance was average. After a few drinks, he became slightly tipsy. He fought with Ning Jing for rabbit meat while talking about his beloved fiancée.

The plate of spicy rabbit meat was almost empty, and the vegetable dish was finished.

Lin Bojun ate a large bowl of mushroom soup noodles and exclaimed in satisfaction.

“Ning Jing picked the mushrooms, aren’t they delicious?” Su Liang asked. Indeed, Ning Jing had picked them and saved some to make a late-night snack.

With rosininess on his cheeks, Lin Bojun chuckled, “Delicious! Once we return to the capital city, I’ll take Yu Jin to pick mushrooms too!”

As he spoke, Lin Bojun looked at Su Liang and then at Ning Jing. He slapped Ning Jing on the shoulder and said, “Ajing, you’re so clingy, running after Xiaoliang all day. Are you saying you don’t like her? Are you even a man? If you are, just admit it!”

Before Ning Jing could react, Lin Bojun had already collapsed onto the table, unable to get up.

Ning Jing stood up to clear the dishes when Lin Bojun suddenly raised his arm high and drunkenly said, “You two...you should consummate your marriage tonight! If not, Ajing, you’re not a man! Xiaoliang...you’re not...a woman!” Su Liang and Ning Jing exchanged glances.

With a light expression, Ning Jing said, “He’s the one who wants to consummate.”

Su Liang rolled up her sleeves, “I’ll go back to the capital and kidnap Yu Jin right now!”

If Lin Bojun were sober at this moment, seeing their strange reactions, he would have definitely said: You two are crazy!

Chapter 198: 198. Break even

The next day, Lin Bojun woke up from a hangover when the sun was already high.

When he saw Su Liang again, she had already finished her demonstration and guidance for the soldiers who would be following the new training rules from today.

Lin Bojun pulled Su Liang aside, “Xiaoliang, did I say anything nonsense last night when I was drunk?”

Su Liang nodded, “No, you just cried and said you missed Yu Jin. I’ll let her know when we return to the capital city.”

Lin Bojun was stunned, "Me? Crying? Impossible!"

Su Liang said solemnly, "Second Brother Lin, can you not remember anything at all? If I say so, it happened."

With that, Su Liang walked away briskly.

Lin Bojun frowned as he stood in place, then shook his head after a while,

"Impossible, Xiaoliang must be talking nonsense."

Su Liang went to report the training situation to Xing Ji.

In fact, Xing Ji had been watching almost the entire process, so he already had a general understanding.

"Looking at what you wrote, it seems like the training has just changed some methods, with similar intensity. Today, I saw that many soldiers couldn't hold on," Xing Ji sighed slightly, "There's indeed a big deficiency, and we need to strengthen the training."

Su Liang's attitude towards this was optimistic, "It's just the beginning, they're not used to it yet, but they'll get better soon."

Xing Ji laughed and said that everyone in the army had been very happy with the improved meals these past two days, and they all credited Su Liang for it.

Su Liang smiled, "It's just a small matter. I wonder if there will be someone from Liang Country coming today?"

As soon as her words fell, a report came from outside the door, "General, a scout reports that a team from Feng City left half an hour ago and is heading this way."

Xing Ji's expression turned serious, "Send out more scouts!"

Soon, the generals of Xuanbei City all received the news and gathered in the Meeting Hall.

"Genius Master, Pingbei City is easy to attack but hard to defend. We can't move all our soldiers there!" a veteran said.

Xing Ji nodded, "Indeed. But we can push our defensive line forward. The night before last, I had already sent a letter to the capital city, waiting for Emperor

Qian's instructions."

With that, there was nothing more to discuss on this matter.

"I want to remind you all that although it seems that Liang Country is short of food and doesn't want to fight, nothing is absolute. As the defenders of Xuanbei City, we need to be ready for war at any time!" Xing Ji's expression was serious, "I haven't been here for long, but I have already found many problems in the army. From today on, we must enforce military discipline! I will not call out names today. I will give you

three days to review and rectify yourselves. After three days, any violations of military regulations will be severely punished!"

At these words, more than a dozen generals in the Meeting Hall silently straightened their backs.

Before today, Xing Ji had given people a somewhat gentle impression. After arriving, he had focused on military training and meals, and had spoken privately with each of the generals, showing humble and polite attitudes.

But they didn't expect Xing Ji to have done a lot of investigations behind their backs.

At this time, there were already two generals who had broken into a cold sweat.

Previously, no one in the room had colluded with the rebellion under the rule of the Wan father and son. None of them had had the chance to rebel before the Wan father and son lost power.

However, some of them were not entirely clean and had some problems.

"You can leave," Xing Ji swept a glance over the generals, "General Lin, General Che, and General Su stay."

Once the Meeting Hall was left with only Xing Ji and three young generals, his tone softened, "Once the people from Liang Country arrive, you three will be in charge of reception."

Che Yun immediately nodded, "Yes." As he spoke, he looked at Su Liang and smiled, "The city was conquered by General Su herself, so I will follow her instructions."

Xing Ji smiled, "What do you think, Su Liang?"

Su Liang asked, "I wonder what our goal is? To get the Liang Country's army and common people to leave Pingbei City?"

Moving a city's population was no small matter.

Xing Ji shook his head, "If there are people in Pingbei City who don't want to leave, they can stay, or move to Xuanbei City to live, becoming part of Qian Country."

Su Liang nodded, "Alright. What if the envoy from Liang Country proposes to trade grain with Qian Country?"

"First, let's see what price they offer, then we'll discuss it," Xing Ji said.

"Understood. I guarantee the task will be completed," Su Liang said seriously.

Xing Ji did not appear in person at the beginning of the negotiations because if the person coming from Liang Country was not their main general, Wei Yao, they would not be qualified to directly negotiate with him.

Arranging someone to negotiate specifically can provide greater room for easing and bargaining negotiations.

Su Liang saw that Xing Ji valued Che Yun very much. He was indeed outstanding, both in martial arts and in his intelligence.

Today, Xing Ji's talk about enforcing military discipline was actually arranged by Che Yun to investigate in secret, and he had done an excellent job.

“When do you expect the people from Liang Country to arrive?” Su Liang asked.

Che Yun, who was more familiar with Xuanbei City and Pingbei City, answered, “Within one hour.”

“Then let’s go to your house first,” Su Liang said, standing up.

Che Yun was puzzled, “My house?”

“Today is the day to give your father acupuncture,” Su Liang hadn’t forgotten.

Che Yun slapped his forehead, “When I saw General Su earlier, I was thinking about asking you when you were going to do it after talking about official business, but I forgot it for a moment.”

Lin Bojun was about to follow suit, but Xing Ji stopped him.

Seeing Su Liang and Che Yun leaving one after the other, Xing Ji asked Lin

Bojun, “Why do you always follow Su Liang?”

Lin Bojun said solemnly, “I have to help my family’s Ajing watch her, in case someone abducts her.”

Xing Ji held his forehead, “That makes sense, but it’s not necessary. Su Liang has a clear mind about this kind of thing and will handle it well.”

Lin Bojun laughed, “That’s true.” Ning Jing was in Xuanbei City keeping an eye on Su Liang, so he didn’t need to worry.

“The emperor intends to cultivate you, so put more effort into military training,” Xing Ji instructed.

He had already arranged for Lin Bojun to be in charge of military training.

On the way, Su Liang asked, “I heard that General Che originally had a younger brother?”

Che Yun was not surprised that Su Liang knew about this and sighed, “Yes, he went missing when he was young. If he is still alive, he would be about the same age as General Su. My parents have never been able to let go of the loss of my younger brother over the years, and their health has deteriorated as a result.”

“What’s your brother’s name? Are there any distinctive features? My fiancé has businesses in various places and might be able to help look for him, ” Su Liang said.

Che Yun was stunned for a moment, and then his expression brightened,

“Really? General Su, you’re so kind-hearted!”

Su Liang sighed softly, “I can only say we’ll try.”

“That alone is a great help!” Che Yun said emotionally, “Finding my younger brother and bringing him home is my greatest wish in this life. My parents are here, and their health is not good. I can’t leave this place, otherwise, I would search the ends of the earth and the corners of the seas for him!”

“What’s your brother’s name?” Su Liang asked again.

Che Yun hurriedly said, "Oh, right, I was too excited and forgot to say! My brother's name is Che Xiao, like the Xiao in Yuxiao! Appearance wise... my mother said he looked a lot like me,"

Su Liang looked at Che Yun's face with a big beard, "Actually, I'm not quite sure what General Che looks like."

Che Yun tugged at his own beard, "Actually, I grew it on purpose because people always laughed at me when I was younger for looking like a girl."

Su Liang was truly surprised and curious now, because Che Yun's current image was very masculine.

But to tell the truth, Che Yun's eyebrows and eyes were indeed very delicate.

However, after growing his beard, anyone who saw him would pay attention to his beard.

"When my younger brother was born, I already had memories, and I think he didn't look like me at all, even better looking than me!" Che Yun laughed, "He has a fist-sized red birthmark on the left side of his neck!"

Su Liang looked at the fist that Che Yun raised, and the birthmark should be quite obvious.

"Okay, I'll keep an eye out. If there's any news, I will let General Che know." Su Liang said.

"Don't be so polite, just call me by my name." Che Yun smiled and said, "I know that General Su has a heart full of roses and absolutely no improper thoughts. I simply admire General Su! I am also grateful for your medical treatment for my parents!"

Su Liang liked straightforward people, so she changed her address to call Che Yun by his name.

When they were about to arrive at Che's house, Che Yun started, "Before General Su came, I met a little brother in Xuanbei City who reminded me of my little brother as soon as I saw him. His name is Wen Liang, and he is from Pingbei City to do business. He definitely comes from a big family. Have you heard of him, General Su?"

Su Liang listened and realized that Che Yun had found out that she was Wen Liang.

Before she could speak, Che Yun laughed, "I don't know why, but I feel that

General Su and little brother Wen Liang give me a similar feeling."

Su Liang nodded, directly admitting, "It's me."

Che Yun paused in surprise, then broke into hearty laughter, "General Su is really a straightforward person! I guess General Su first went to Xuanbei City secretly to deal with the Wan Shan father and son, right? Otherwise, the change of the generals wouldn't have gone so smoothly."

"Since you guessed it." Su Liang said that there was nothing that couldn't be mentioned now.

"Stop praising me. My ears are getting calloused." Su Liang said as she dismounted at the door of Che's house.

When she met Mr. and Mrs. Che again, their complexions hadn't improved much.

Mrs. Che was preparing incense and candles. The fifteenth day was tomorrow, and she was going to burn incense and pray to Buddha at Ping'an Temple.

Che Yun didn't mention Su Liang's offer to help find Che Xiao.

Su Liang administered acupuncture to Mr. Che and took Mrs. Che's pulse, reminding her to drink her medicine. After everything was done, she and Che Yun left the Che residence and returned to the military camp together.

On the way, Che Yun asked Su Liang who "Wen Gu" was, the person who had been with her at that time.

Su Liang said he was the master hired by Ning Jing to protect her and also her friend.

"Young Master Ning and General Su are truly a match made in heaven." Che Yun exclaimed.

Su Liang had a good impression of Che Yun. She had just thought of asking him about his younger brother at that time, and since she had said it, she really intended to help him find Che Xiao.

The Liang Country envoy entered the city and was invited to the General's Mansion where Su Liang stayed.

The leader was an old general from Liang Country named Peng Wei, who was Wei Yao's father-in-law.

When Wei Teng was captured alive by Xing Ji, leading to heavy losses in that battle for Liang Country, he returned home and Peng Wei took over.

After Peng Wei's son was injured and disabled, Wei Yao, his son-in-law, naturally took over as the main general when he became older.

Although they were in the weaker position, Peng Wei had a violent temper and didn't show much politeness. After taking a seat, he saw three young people sitting opposite him and snorted, "Where's Xing Ji? Is he looking down on me?"

Su Liang smiled, "Why didn't General Wei come? Is he looking down on Qian Country?"

Peng Wei was choked for a moment, squinting at Su Liang, "So it's you, the one who defeated my grandson?"

Su Liang nodded.

"I didn't expect such a yellow-haired girl to be so powerful. At first, when I heard that Qian Country chose a young girl as the Martial Arts Champion, I thought it was the Emperor Qian's little princess who had fallen into exile!" Peng Wei said as he laughed at himself, "You really have skills, and I respect you for it!"

Su Liang was very calm, "Let's start the negotiation."

"Do you want Nanfeng City or not?" Peng Wei immediately got to the point. Su Liang nodded, "Of course we want it."

"Deal! Our soldiers can withdraw, but if the common people leave Nanfeng City, they will become homeless. What are your plans for that?" Peng Wei asked.

Su Liang replied as Xing Ji had instructed her.

"That's good!" Peng Wei nodded, "Many people in Nanfeng City cannot afford food. You have to take care of them!"

Su Liang maintained her smile, "That's not for General Peng to worry about."

"Give us three more days, and then you can go to Nanfeng City!" Peng Wei said.

Su Liang agreed, "No problem."

"I heard that your husband is the largest tea merchant in Qian Country? Is his money yours?" Peng Wei looked at Su Liang and asked.

A corner of Lin Bojun's mouth twitched slightly.

Che Yun coughed lightly, "General Peng, General Su has not yet married. That Ning gentleman is her fiancé."

"I'm talking to her, why are you interrupting? It's all the same!" Peng Wei said to Che Yun displeasedly.

"Yes, General Peng. What do you want to teach me?" Su Liang asked.

"Business with you!" Peng Wei said, "One hundred thousand stones of grain, name your price!"

Su Liang had indeed said that night that if she lost, she would pay one hundred thousand stones of grain to Liang Country.

"I heard that the horses in Liang Country are not bad." Su Liang smiled, "How about exchanging horses for grain?"

Peng Wei frowned, "No other options?"

Su Liang shook her head, "No." Although Xing Ji had also mentioned ore, Qian Country didn't lack ore for the time being; what they needed were good warhorses.

"I can't make this decision. I'll go back and discuss it with my people and send you a message later." Peng Wei stood up, "The negotiation is over, let's go! No need to send me off!"

Su Liang was actually surprised that the negotiation went so smoothly, and Peng Wei didn't even drink a sip of water.

However, even if they were in an adversarial relationship, Su Liang still admired Peng Wei's straightforward temperament.

“By the way!” When Peng Wei reached the doorway, he suddenly turned back and asked Su Liang, “Who gave you your sword?”

Su Liang’s Luoying Sword was on the table, but she didn’t expect Peng Wei to notice it. She simply said, “An elder.”

Peng Wei furrowed his brow but didn’t inquire further. With a group of people, he strode away like the wind.

“Che Yun, go and see them off and make sure they leave the city.” Su Liang said.

Che Yun nodded and followed.

“You’re already calling each other by your names? It seems you get along well.” Lin Bojun said.

“He’s an alright person.” Su Liang casually responded, “Let’s go to the military camp and report to Uncle Xing.”

However, before she could leave the courtyard, a small stone hit her back.

Lin Bojun didn’t notice it, and Su Liang glanced back at the fallen stone, then told Lin Bojun, “I’d like to change my clothes before going. Second Brother Lin, you go ahead.”

Lin Bojun didn’t suspect anything, so he left.

Su Liang picked up the small stone that had hit her and returned to her residence in the General’s Mansion. She went straight into her room, closed the door, turned into the small study, and saw Ning Jing standing there. She threw the stone at him.

Ning Jing could have caught it, but he let the stone hit his chest. His thin lips opened slightly and he said, “We’re even now.”

“What do you want?” Su Liang asked.

Ning Jing’s expression was indifferent, “That Peng Wei, his hall of fame turns black. He might die soon..”

Chapter 199:199. She won I t come back tonight

Su Liang changed her disguise back to “Wen Liang.”

To prevent Xing Ti or Lin Bojun from worrying about her unexplained

disappearance, she left a note on the table stating that she had gone to run some errands and asked them not to worry.

Of course, the specifics had to remain unsaid.

“Let’s go,” Su Liang called to Ning Jing.

During her time at the General Mansion, Ning Jing always avoided the usual routes, allowing her to easily bypass the guards with Su Liang and enter a small alley.

When they reached the main street of Xuanbei City, Su Liang had a basket in her hand, filled with items needed to offer incense.

Ning Jing also bought two temporary horses.

At the North City Gate, Su Liang told the guards that they were from out of town, coming specifically to visit Ping'an Temple to pray for their family elders, so they could smoothly pass through.

At this moment, Che Yun, who had escorted Peng Wei's group out of the city, was still standing on the city building.

He could no longer see the Liang Country's convoy in his line of sight. Che Yun was preparing to return to the military camp when he suddenly saw two people riding out of the city. He squinted his eyes, recognizing them as familiar figures.

He shifted his gaze, left the city gate, and returned to the military camp.

Seeing only Lin Bojun with Xing Ji, Che Yun asked about Su Liang.

"Xiaoliang said that she wanted to change her clothes and that we didn't need to worry about her. Everything is handled, and it doesn't matter if she doesn't come," Lin Bojun chuckled.

Xing Ji nodded, "You guys did a great job."

There was something else, a story that Xing Ji only remembered upon seeing

Peng Wei. His father, Old Bei Jingwang, had some "friendship" with Peng Wei. However, because of conflicting political stances, the friendship had remained unknown, and it wasn't related to the two countries' interests.

The Xing Family's ancestors were founders of the nation, and the Bei Jingwang Mansion treasured numerous valuable items, including the collection of medical books sent to Su Liang as a gift.

Years ago, Peng Wei's son was critically wounded in an assassination attempt and poisoned. His life was hanging by a thread. They found a divine doctor, who said it was possible to save the boy but needed a rare, essential medicinal ingredient.

The divine doctor knew Old Bei Jingwang and had long coveted the wonderful medicines in the Bei Jingwang Mansion. He informed Peng Wei that, as far as he knew, only Qian Country's Bei Jingwang Mansion had the life-saving medicine.

This was a fact.

For the sake of his son's life, Peng Wei disguised himself, came to Qian Country personally, pleaded with Bei Jingwang Mansion, and exchanged a valuable item for the medicine, thus saving his son's life.

The valuable item eventually became the Luoying Sword that Xing Ji later gave to Su Liang.

Old Bei Jingwang once mentioned Peng Wei, saying, "He is a bold man. It's a pity he's not from Qian Country and there's no chance to drink together."

Xing Ji planned to tell Su Liang about this incident the next time they met, although it wouldn't impact anything.

Che Yun did not mention that he saw suspected Su Liang leaving the city. Su Liang's relationship with Xing Ji and Lin Bojun was very close, so maybe they already knew.

Su Liang and Ning Jing didn't waste much time before catching up with Peng Wei's group. Their speed was slightly faster, and when they approached the foot of the mountain near Ping'an Temple, they spotted Peng Wei and the others.

The two slowed down because Peng Wei had stopped.

"Could that old man be planning to climb the mountain to worship the Buddha?" Su Liang wondered.

As her words fell, she saw Peng Wei lead two attendants up the mountain.

Su Liang and Ning Jing rode over.

The rest of the Liang Country's convoy were resting nearby and took notice of them.

One of the junior officers shouted, "What are you guys doing?"

"Offering incense," Su Liang got off her horse and tilted the basket to show them.

Ning Jing and Su Liang climbed the mountain, hurried along, and spotted Peng Wei in the distance. They kept a safe distance and followed behind.

"He doesn't look like he's going to kill anyone, so who's going to kill him?" Su Liang whispered.

Ning Jing shook his head, uncertain.

The day was the 15th, so there weren't many people visiting the temple. Moreover, it was getting late.

The mountain path was eerily silent, with only "brother" Ning Jing and Su Liang accompanying Peng Wei and his two attendants.

The newly-bloomed peach blossoms in the mountain forest swayed in the wind, emanating a faint fragrance.

However, Su Liang had no interest in appreciating the scenery, as her gaze never left Peng Wei.

Both she and Ning Jing tacitly slowed down, and the attendant who looked back twice didn't notice anyone behind them.

When the attendant turned to look for the third time, Su Liang felt something was wrong...

The next moment, she saw a glint of a blade flash in front of her. Without any warning, the attendant attacked Peng Wei's back with his knife!

Su Liang cursed and dropped her basket, rushing forward with Ning Jing!

Naturally, the one that Peng Wei brought with him was someone he trusted, and he had no defenses. At this moment, he had already been slashed once and had fallen to the ground.

When the second slash from the attendant was about to land on Peng Wei's body, Ning Jing struck them on the back with his palm, knocking them to the ground.

Another attendant, who had been standing on the side without taking action or stopping the others, now drew his sword and charged toward Ning Jing!

It was clear that both of Peng Wei's subordinates were accomplices, both intent on killing him!

Ning Jing chose a tricky angle to dodge the sword thrust at him, seizing the assailant's wrist and giving it a vicious twist!

A blood-curdling scream filled the air, scaring away countless birds.

Su Liang didn't bother with the people trying to kill Ning Jing but hurried to check on Peng Wei's injuries instead.

The knife wound was deep and bleeding continuously, and Peng Wei's consciousness was already becoming scattered.

Having come in disguise, Su Liang hadn't brought a medical kit, but she had brought an emergency kit since her mission today was to save someone's life.

She pried open Peng Wei's mouth and stuffed in two pills, then quickly stopped his bleeding and bandaged him.

Although the two men who wanted to kill Peng Wei had decent martial arts skills, they were no match for Ning Jing.

Ning Jing didn't kill them, but rendered them disabled, then used their clothes to tear into strips and tie them up.

After making sure that both of their faces were free from disguise, he confirmed that they were indeed Peng Wei's subordinates.

"Is he still alive?" Ning Jing asked Su Liang.

"Yes," Su Liang replied, wiping the sweat from her forehead before taking Peng Wei's pulse again.

Fortunately, the rescue was timely, and if all went well, his life should be preserved.

"Who are you?" one of the attackers asked with a face ashen as death, his teeth clenched.

"We're just good samaritans," Ning Jing replied indifferently.

"It's none of your business. It's best not to interfere, or else..." Before one of them could finish, Su Liang strode over and kicked him in the face. Su Liang coldly asked, "Why do you want to harm General Peng Wei?"

The two men remained silent.

Su Liang glanced at Peng Wei, who was lying on the ground, and found herself in a difficult position.

Taking Peng Wei back to Xuanbei City would not be appropriate and risked sparking a conflict between the two countries.

Although the incident had occurred in a “non-war zone,” people in Liang Country would probably suspect Qian Country first.

However, there was still a team waiting at the foot of the mountain for Peng Wei to descend and return to South Wind City. If too much time passed without him appearing, they would start looking for him.

The key issue was that Peng Wei’s trusted aides had betrayed him; even with a life-threatening injury, they had taken him away and left him with the people of Liang Country, which would likely lead to more harm than good.

If Ning Jing had discovered the black fog, it meant that they were destined to save his life, and they must do it all the way.

Just as Su Liang was considering her options, Ning Jing said, “He’s awake.” Su Liang went to Peng Wei’s side and saw him looking pale as he opened his eyes.

She propped up Peng Wei’s head and softly spoke in her original voice, “I am Su Liang. We met just a short while ago.”

Peng Wei looked at the young man in disbelief.

“I disguised myself,” Su Liang explained. “I was worried you would have trouble before returning to South Wind City, and it would be pinned on our Qian Country. I came here to ‘see you off.’ I didn’t expect a disaster to happen. I am a doctor; you should have heard of me before, right?”

Peng Wei nodded weakly, saying, “Thank you...”

“Do you know who wants to kill you?” Su Liang asked.

Peng Wei frowned and did not speak.

“Please tell me first how we should handle this mess. It’s not fair to blame our Qian Country for an assassination attempt. I think you should be a principled person,” Su Liang said bluntly.

Indeed, she had no idea how to deal with the situation. If someone in Liang Country wanted Peng Wei dead, why would they attack him at Ping’an Temple? It was hard not to suspect that those behind the scenes intended to frame Qian Country.

Peng Wei looked at his two attendants, and his face grew even uglier.

“You two... disguise yourselves,” Peng Wei said in a low voice. “Go down the mountain... say that I twisted my ankle... and I need to stay at Ping’an Temple for a night... let them go... I will return... tomorrow... ”

Su Liang thought about it and concluded that this was the only way.

One of Peng Wei’s attendants was relatively thin and approximately the same height as Ning Jing.

Ning Jing had disguise medicine on him, so he knocked out the two attendants, dragged them by their arms, and led them deeper into the dense forest.

When Ning Jing reappeared, he had already disguised.

He hadn't disguised himself as the one who slashed Peng Wei, since there were no noticeable bloodstains on his outer clothing.

Ning Jing picked up Peng Wei again and carried him to a flat, wind-sheltered spot in the forest.

"Wait here." Ning Jing said and then left. She covered the traces of blood on the mountain path with soil before going down the mountain.

Peng Wei lay on the ground, cushioned by a follower's coat.

Su Liang sat on a rock beside him and asked, "Old man, do you believe that I won't harm you?"

Peng Wei revealed a pale, bitter smile, "Had it not been for you, I would have met Yama King by now... They all want to kill me; who else can I trust?"

"What about tomorrow?" Su Liang asked.

"I'll return tomorrow." Peng Wei's eyes turned cold. "Old General, do you know who poisoned you?" Su Liang asked.

Peng Wei remained silent.

Su Liang seemed to be lost in thought, "I heard that you have only one son and one daughter. Your son was seriously injured and disabled by someone, and your son-in-law is Wei, the lord of South Wind City. Could it be Wei Yao who did it?"

Peng Wei's face stiffened, "Why do you think that way?"

"I mean, your son's injury may have been caused by Wei Yao. If your son was fine, perhaps today's main general in South Wind City would have the surname Peng instead of Wei, right?" Su Liang asked.

Peng Wei's face darkened severely!

"Of course, this is just a guess without any evidence. Perhaps you, old sir, think that your son-in-law is wonderful in every way. You treat him like your own son and show great love for your grandson. However, in light of today's events, I think you should reconsider whether you have been deceived?" Su Liang sighed softly.

Peng Wei fell into a long silence.

Su Liang didn't press him further, "Close your eyes if you want to think. Rest." Peng Wei glanced at her again and closed his eyes.

Su Liang didn't interrogate the two traitors either, waiting for Ning Jing's return.

Those from Liang Country who were waiting at the foot of the mountain saw Peng Wei's follower come down the mountain alone and found it strange.

Ning Jing didn't approach them, but imitated the man's voice, "The old general accidentally twisted his ankle. He'll stay at the Ping'an Temple tonight and return to the city tomorrow!"

The junior officer in charge frowned, "Isn't this improper?"

Ning Jing snorted, "The old general always sticks to his words. You can go back and tell the general that everything has been arranged!"

With that, Ning Jing turned and left.

The junior officer hesitated for a moment but didn't follow up the mountain to confirm with Peng Wei. He continued on his way, leading the people back to South Wind City.

Seeing Ning Jing return, Su Liang knew that everything went smoothly.

"What now? Do we take General Peng back to Xuanbei City for treatment?" Su Liang asked.

Peng Wei opened his eyes, "I have some connections with Master Pu Qing of Ping'an Temple..."

"Oh? Then let's take you to Ping'an Temple!" Su Liang said cheerfully, "Perfect timing, my brother hasn't changed his clothes yet."

She looked at Ning Jing, "You carry General Peng to Ping'an Temple and send him to Master Pu Qing. Then come back, and we'll take the two traitors there as well."

Peng Wei was carried by Ning Jing, while Su Liang took off her coat and covered Peng Wei's back, hiding the wound.

Whenever she dressed like a man, she wore extra layers of clothes, which still looked thin.

"You two..." Peng Wei frowned at Su Liang, "All this just to save me?"

"I'm a doctor, it's not like I could stand by and do nothing. Plus, your misfortune here doesn't bode well for Qian Country," Su Liang replied.

If the mastermind behind the scenes truly wanted to frame Qian Country, Peng Wei's survival was even more crucial.

Su Liang didn't want the two countries to go to war, as it would only bring suffering to the common people.

Peng Wei gave Su Liang a deep look and was carried away by Ning Jing.

Upon arrival at Ping'an Temple, they directly announced that the Old General Peng from South Wind City had come to see Master Pu Qing but had twisted his ankle on the mountain path and couldn't walk, so he needed to stay the night.

A little monk went to inform Master Pu Qing, and soon someone came to escort them.

Ning Jing carried Peng Wei to see Master Pu Qing. After speaking with the master for a few moments, Peng Wei was arranged to be in a courtyard next door.

Ning Jing put Peng Wei on the bed, and he asked Ning Jing, "Are you that girl's brother?"

"Bodyguard," Ning Jing replied,

“You two posing as siblings.” Peng Wei nodded, “You go find her.”

Ning Jing and Su Liang circled around and brought the two traitors into Ping’an Temple through the back mountain.

Master Pu Qing had sent away the monk who was guarding the place beforehand.

Finally being able to sit down, Su Liang saw some warm water on the table and poured herself a cup to drink, letting out a sigh of relief.

“Elder Peng, someone might attempt to assassinate you tonight. Do you need our help?” Su Liang asked.

On the way up the mountain, Ning Jing mentioned that the dark mist around Peng Wei had not dissipated yet, and the danger had not been eliminated. Clearly, someone didn’t want him to return alive to Liang Country.

“I didn’t expect that I would need the protection of someone from Qian Country to preserve my life at the end...” Peng Wei’s face showed a mocking expression, but it was not directed at Su Liang.

“Then let’s assume you’ve agreed.” Su Liang turned to Ning Jing, “You go back to the city and tell Second Brother Lin that I won’t be returning tonight and will be staying at Ping’an Temple.”

Ning Jing nodded and left.

The two traitors who had been knocked out were locked up in the next room, leaving only Su Liang and Peng Wei in this room.

“You didn’t bring the Luoying Sword...” Peng Wei said.

Su Liang paused for a moment, “I didn’t.” When they were in Xuanbei City, Peng Wei had asked Su Liang who had given her the sword, and she replied it was from an elder.

“Was it Xing Ji who gave it to you?” Peng Wei told Su Liang about his experience using the Luoying Sword to exchange for medicinal materials to save his son many years ago.

Su Liang suddenly realized, “So that’s how it is.”

“You... are you really Su Yuanzhou’s granddaughter?” Peng Wei furrowed his brows, looking at Su Liang.

Su Liang raised her eyebrows, “You even know my grandfather?”

“Although my son is alive, he has been ill all these years. I’ve visited famous doctors all over the world and have also sought your grandfather.” Peng Wei said, and then coughed twice.

Su Liang poured a cup of warm water and handed it over, feeding him the drink.

Peng Wei let out a sigh, "Your grandfather... died too unjustly. Before meeting you, I thought, how could Su Yuanzhou's granddaughter be so capable?" "What about after meeting me?" Su Liang asked with a smile.

Peng Wei sighed, "I think even more so that you don't seem like a girl raised in the Su Family."

"Then whose family do I seem like I belong to?" Su Liang casually asked.

Peng Wei thought for a moment and said, "You seem like you're from my family."

Su Liang: ...

"Unfortunately, I don't have a granddaughter." Peng Wei sighed deeply. Su Liang asked, "Do you have a grandson?"

Peng Wei nodded, and then said, "Do you want to marry my grandson? He's very good-looking."

Su Liang coughed lightly, "I have a fiancé."

"That Ning guy? What's so good about him?" Peng Wei asked.

Su Liang didn't mind Peng Wei's words, actually quite liking his straightforward attitude.

She thought for a moment and said, "He's good-looking and wealthy." "My family is also wealthy." Peng Wei said.

Su Liang stood up, "You should think about whether you can survive to see your children and grandchildren before worrying about your grandson's marriage."

Peng Wei's face darkened, and he stopped talking.

"Rest well. It'll help your wounds heal faster. I'll go find us some food." Su Liang left as soon as she finished speaking.

Xuanbei City.

Lin Bojun had already seen the note Su Liang left in the room. Although he didn't know what she was up to, he wasn't worried as Ning Jing was with her. Xing Ji didn't ask, so he didn't mention it either.

When Ning Jing appeared in front of Lin Bojun, he was writing a letter to Qin Yujin.

"Ah...Jun?" As the word "Jing" reached his lips, he changed it. Lin Bojun quickly put the letter away, "What brings you here?" This was a military camp, and Lin Bojun didn't know how Ning Jing had entered. Su Liang was not with him, so something must have happened.

"We have something to do, and she won't be back tonight." Ning Jing left after saying that.

Lin Bojun was stunned, as Ning Jing disappeared before he had a chance to ask more questions.

He furrowed his brows in thought, "Could they have switched to an undisturbed place to have their wedding night? They're being so secretive.."

Chapter 200: Aren 't you afraid that he'll elope with her?

After leaving the military camp, Ning Jing secretly returned to the General Mansion in Xuanbei City, bringing back two sets of clothes for Su Liang and herself, along with Su Liang's medical kit.

When Lin Bojun met Xing Ji again, he mentioned that Su Liang had something to do and didn't know where she was going, not returning Tonight.

Xing Ji frowned immediately, "Did she tell you this herself? Why didn't you ask for details?"

Lin Bojun shook his head, "She left a note. We shouldn't worry, Xiaoliang has always been very sensible in doing things."

Xing Ji sighed slightly, "I know that, but she's alone... no, she has someone with her, the master who was picking mushrooms outside the city that day. Why is she always so mysterious? It's not that I don't trust her, but she clearly treats us like outsiders."

Lin Bojun heard Xing Ji's dissatisfaction and couldn't help but smile, "That's not the case. Xiaoliang has always been the type to deal with problems on her own, and if we were in trouble, she wouldn't hesitate to help. We'll know what's going on when she comes back tomorrow."

Xing Ji nodded, "If that's the case, let it be. If anyone asks, just say that I sent her to do some important work and that it must be kept secret. Don't let anyone suspect her."

Actually, Su Liang's behavior of disguising herself and suddenly disappearing from the city could easily be used against her.

The reason she wasn't worried was precisely that she trusted Xing Ji and didn't consider him an outsider.

Dusk fell.

After three bell rings in Ping'an Temple, Su Liang returned to the courtyard where Peng Wei was staying from the back mountain.

The two traitors who were knocked unconscious by Ning Jing were still not awake, and Peng Wei was also sleeping heavily.

As Su Liang stood in the courtyard, thinking about how to settle dinner, she heard an old and deep voice behind her, "Little benefactor, how is Mr. Peng?"

Su Liang turned her head and saw an old monk with white eyebrows walking into the courtyard, his bearing extraordinary.

She immediately guessed his identity, "Master Pu Qing?"

"Does this little benefactor recognize me?" The old monk smiled warmly.

Su Liang shook her head, "This is our first meeting. My name is Wen Liang. I know a young master with the dharma name Cheng Yun, who saved a friend of mine and became acquainted with me."

"Oh?" The old monk was somewhat surprised, "Cheng Yun is my disciple, he has gone to Huguo Temple in Qian Country to practice."

“Yes, I heard Cheng Yun mention that his master was in Ping’an Temple. When I was traveling here, I came to visit Master yesterday, but you were not seeing guests. I came again today and met General Peng.” Su Liang smiled.

Master Pu Qing nodded slightly, “So that’s how it is. You must be the medical expert Mr. Peng mentioned.”

“I am not very talented, but that’s me.” Su Liang was very polite.

After their conversation, they both went to check on Peng Wei together.

Su Liang stated that she wanted to stay in the temple tonight to take care of Peng Wei but due to her identity as a Qian Country citizen, she didn’t want to be known.

Master Pu Qing expressed his understanding and, after confirming that there was no longer a threat to Peng Wei’s life, he left.

Su Liang hadn’t had time to ask about dinner, so she could only wait for Ning Jing to return.

Not long after, Master Pu Qing personally sent over a set of clean bedding for Su Liang.

Su Liang thanked him, and asked about the dining issue.

Master Pu Qing said that he had already instructed the temple’s meal hall to prepare, and when it was ready, he would personally bring it over.

This way, Su Liang could avoid being seen by others.

“Thank you so much.” Su Liang felt that this old monk was very nice, even more flexible than Cheng Yun.

After Master Pu Qing left again, Su Liang laid the bedding in the small room next door.

Just as she finished, Ning Jing returned.

“I brought clothes.” Ning Jing placed the bundle and medical kit on the table, and glanced at the only small bed in the room, “You stay up all night, and I’ll sleep here.”

Su Liang: .

“How are we going to eat?” Ning Jing asked.

Su Liang replied, “Master Pu Qing will send us vegetarian dishes later.”

Ning Jing opened the medical kit, and an enticing aroma of meat spread throughout the room, “I brought a roasted chicken.”

Su Liang’s stomach growled, and since she hadn’t eaten much today, she asked in a low voice, “Is it all for you and not for me to eat?”

“I thought you would say that it’s not appropriate to eat meat in a place of Buddhist tranquility.” Ning Jing’s expression was indifferent, “Since you didn’t say it, then let’s share it.”

Su Liang: ... If she had said that, she would have to eat vegetarian only? Speechless, but reasonable...

When Su Liang was about to wash her hands to eat the roast chicken, she heard footsteps in the courtyard. She opened the door and went out, then closed the door again.

"I'm really troubling Master." Su Liang took the food box from Master Pu Qing.

Master Pu Qing shook his head, "You have a kind heart for saving others, and you are also a friend of my disciple. There's no need to be so polite. If you need anything else, just come find me."

After Master Pu Qing left, Su Liang didn't bother with the resting Peng Wei and brought the food box to her own room. She opened it, and the steam wafted out.

Although it was just plain porridge and vegetarian dishes, the taste was still good.

Both Su Liang and Ning Jing were hungry, so they didn't care where they were. They arranged the vegetarian dishes from Ping'an Temple and the roasted chicken from Xuanbei City together and started eating.

After eating a chicken leg and taking a sip of porridge, Su Liang sighed comfortably, "I want to go home."

She was referring to her hometown.

After leaving, Su Liang often missed the simple, quiet, and fulfilling times there.

"I can go back anytime to see you." Ning Jing's expression was calm.

Su Liang sighed softly, "Let's wait until we deal with Duanmu Cheng and the Wan family, then we'll see how we can leave. I didn't think that much back then, but now I want to go back to the village to live, I'm afraid it's not going to be easy."

Initially, she left to take revenge for the family of the Original Master, and now it's almost done.

"By the way, did you tell Second Brother Lin what happened?" Su Liang changed the topic.

Ning Jing shook his head, "I just told him that you had something to do and wouldn't return tonight."

"Just watch, next time we see him, he's going to tease us." Su Liang smiled then suddenly changed the topic again, "I have a hunch that something happened to Old Peng today, and it might be related to his son-in-law, Wei Yao." "Hmm." Ning Jing nodded succinctly, "I feel the same way."

In fact, knowing that Wei and Peng's families exchanged the position of the main generals in Liang Country made Su Liang suspect that Peng Wei's son's accident was caused by the Wei Family.

Besides, the ones who tried to assassinate Peng Wei today were not real assassins but his confidants.

Two people from Liang Country were probably bought by someone from their country because the interests they pursued were there.

"What would Wei Yao's intention be if he did this?" Su Liang thoughtfully

asked.

Ning Jing's thin lips opened slightly, "Starting a war."

Su Liang was stunned for a moment, "But isn't Liang Country lacking food?"

"Who told you that Liang Country has a food shortage?" Ning Jing countered.

Su Liang blurted out, "Wei Yao."

Two nights ago, Wei Yao suddenly led his troops to the foot of Xuanbei City, allowing his son Wei Hao to challenge Su Liang. If Wei Hao won, Qian Country would have to give 100,000 stones of grain.

An idea struck Su Liang, and her expression grew serious. "Could it be possible that Wei Yao did this deliberately, creating an illusion that Liang Country lacks food, making us believe that they can't afford to fight, and thus causing us to lower our guard?"

"When Peng Wei was the general of Liang Country, he always advocated for an alliance with Qian Country." Ning Jing said.

Su Liang's expression was inexplicable, "Although Peng Wei has given up his position to Wei Yao now, he must still have a high prestige in the army. Is it possible that there is a disagreement between the father and son-in-law? Is that why Wei Yao wants to get rid of Peng Wei? If so, who gave Wei Yao the courage to go to war with Qian Country?"

"What do you think?" Ning Jing asked again.

Su Liang pondered for a moment, "Yin Country?!"

Attack when the enemy is near, and make friends when they are far away.

Therefore, it is a more reasonable strategy for Liang and Yin countries to join forces against Qian Country according to the art of war.

But Su Liang had heard from Lin Bojun that throughout history, Liang and Yin countries had tried several times to join forces to fight against Qian Country. In the end, all those attempts started with great fanfare, only to end in disappointment. Not only did they fail to prevail, but Qian Country became more and more powerful, eventually becoming the strongest among the three countries.

The alliance between Liang and Yin countries, which should have been in the best interests of both sides, never worked out. The reason for this was that the Yin Royal Family didn't provide enough support, or rather, Yin people were too cunning.

Time and again, they instigated Liang Country to start a war, promising a grand alliance, pledging to fight together, only to renege on their promise, always wanting to preserve their own strength. They hoped to reap the rewards when Liang and Qian countries exhausted each other.

It is not an exaggeration to say that it was not Qian Country that brought disaster to Liang Country, because of Qian Country's geographical location, they always adhered to the principle of not offending others unless they are offended first.

It was Yin Country to the south that was restless, instigating wars every few years. In the end, Yin Country didn't suffer much loss, but it led to Liang Country's decline.

Therefore, the so-called “attack near and befriend far” strategy can only work effectively among wise rulers.

Liang Country is reckless, and Yin Country is cunning, so their alliances have never had a good outcome.

No wonder Peng Wei advocated peace, because Yin Country had broken their promises too many times, and Liang Country couldn't afford to lose anymore.

At this point, Su Liang scoffed, “I'm afraid Wei Yao is really behind this, with people from Yin Country egging him on, perhaps Yin Country has promised to provide Liang Country with sufficient food and provisions if they go to war. In this way, it all makes sense.”

Although it was just a guess, Su Liang believed it was very likely.

Maybe after today's incidents, Peng Wei himself understood this...

There was a noise coming from the next room, and Su Liang put down her chopsticks. “I'll go check on the old man.”

When Su Liang entered the room, the wind blew, causing the flame on the oil lamp to flicker violently.

She closed the door behind her, went to the bedside, and saw Peng Wei staring at the ceiling, as if he was looking at nothing.

“Old Peng?” Su Liang opened her mouth, “How are you feeling? Where does it hurt?”

Peng Wei's gaze shifted to Su Liang's face, his voice weak, “Do you think my wound hurts?”

Su Liang couldn't help but laugh, “If it hurts, that's good. Next time, make sure to be more careful and don't be deceived by those around you.” Peng Wei's face stiffened, “Little girl, do you know something?”

“I don't know, I just guessed.” Su Liang sat by the bed and took Peng Wei's pulse, “This morning during the negotiation, I could feel that Elder Peng hopes for Liang Country to coexist peacefully with Qian Country. As it is, why not continue discussing certain matters?”

Peng Wei's eyes were deep as he looked at Su Liang, “What do you want to talk about?”

“Talk about your good son-in-law, who wants to earn merits by plunging the people of Liang Country into the depths of suffering again?” Su Liang said half-jokingly.

But Peng Wei fell silent.

“The situation is not very good. The bandaging was done rather hastily at the time. My brother brought my medicine box. I'll go call him to help you change your dressing.” Su Liang got up.

Peng Wei spoke again, “It was Wei Yao who did it.”

Su Liang sat back down, “If Elder Peng is willing to tell the whole story, I'll be all ears.”

“A few days ago, Wei Yao mentioned to me that he wanted to form an alliance with Yin Country.” Peng Wei said gravely.

Su Liang frowned, “Isn’t it up to the royal family to decide on such matters?”

“From top to bottom, there has been endless debate in Liang Country over whether to cooperate with Yin Country. I’m determined not to trust the treacherous and shameless Yin Country people again, but Wei Yao has been bewitched by someone and thinks that now is a good opportunity to form an alliance with Yin Country and launch an attack on Qian Country, since Qian Country’s royal family is in turmoil, and Xuanbei City Lord will be replaced.”

Peng Wei gasped for breath and continued, “I scolded him harshly and told him to give up the idea of cooperating with Yin Country as soon as possible. Now it seems that not only did he not listen to me, but he also intends to get rid of me, the obstacle. Although he is the commander in name, many generals in Nanfeng City still prefer to listen to me. If something happens to me, he can fabricate that it was Qian Country people who killed me and thus have a reason to start a war.”

“So, Wei Yao’s transaction with Yin Country people did not go through the

Royal Family, but was privately reached? He has quite the nerve. The Yin Country, which openly betrayed alliances with two countries, is even more untrustworthy in a secret alliance.” Su Liang felt that Wei Yao had lost his sanity.

“He had that seductive woman by his side, who came from the South. He was enchanted by her. I told him to drive her away, and he did. Now that I think about it, he must have been pretending to comply. That woman is likely a spy sent by Yin Country.” Peng Wei bitterly smiled, “I even cultivated Wei Yao like my own son, and in the end, this is what I got.”

“If what you say is true, chances are that Yin Country’s royal family has promised Wei Yao some enticing benefits through the spy. If I were to make a bold guess, it could even be—after joining hands to destroy Qian Country, supporting him to become the emperor of Liang Country?” Su Liang said.

Peng Wei’s hand at his side trembled. He felt that Su Liang was exaggerating, but the more he thought about it, the more possible it seemed.

“As long as Wei Yao sends someone to kill you tonight and blames Qian

Country, perhaps the war would break out tomorrow.” Su Liang stood up again,

“I’ll have my brother come and change your dressing.”

Watching Su Liang leave, Peng Wei’s eyes were tired, and his face bitter.

Su Liang returned to the neighboring room and saw that Ning Jing had finished eating his half-roasted chicken, with the chicken bones neatly arranged on the plate.

Su Liang quickly relayed the information she had learned from Peng Wei to Ning Jing.

Their guess was actually almost in line with the truth. As of now, with Peng

Wei's confidant betraying him, the mastermind behind the scenes had started to show their flaws. If no one saw it, it would be fine, but it was unfortunately seen by Su Liang and Ning Jing.

If it weren't for Ning Jing's special ability, they wouldn't be able to prevent today's tragedy, let alone the possibly resuming war in the future.

Su Liang took out what she needed from the medicine box, "You go change Elder Peng's dressing, and then feed him the remaining porridge."

"Okay." Ning Jing scooped a bowl of warm porridge and took the items passed by Su Liang, then went to the next room.

"What's the relationship between you and that girl?" Peng Wei asked as he looked at Ning Jing.

Ning Jing's expression was indifferent, "I am a good friend of Ning Jing, taking care of Su Liang for him."

Peng Wei snorted, "That young man named Ning knows how to worry about this girl, but isn't he afraid you'll abduct her?"

Ning Jing finished wrapping Peng Wei's wound and said calmly, "She's not easy to abduct.."