

Three-Time 21

Chapter 21

[You took mine, now give it back] The mist was heavy, and the chill in the air was deep. Bai Peng drove an ox cart with Liu's sleepy Zhuzi on board. Ning Jing and Su Liang were also there. Su Liang disassembled the Plum Blossom Screen, carrying the two-sided embroidered plum blossom with her. When they passed the woods, Ning Jing asked Bai Peng to stop and found that the government officials were gone. By the time they arrived in Feiyan Town, the sun had just risen. Bao'an Hall had not yet opened, but there were already more than a dozen people waiting outside. Bai Peng sighed regretfully, saying they should have come earlier. After parking the ox cart, Bai Peng and his family of three joined the line. Zhuzi was weak and couldn't bear the cold wind. Seeing that the Tea House across the street was open, Su Liang bought the cheapest pot of tea and two plates of signature desserts, gave several copper coins to the waiter, and then asked Mrs. Liu and Zhuzi to sit in the Tea House. They would join Bai Peng when his turn was nearly up. "We'll drink a little hot tea and then head to the county town. Don't let the tea and the desserts go to waste," Su Liang said. Bai Peng and Mrs. Liu both knew that Su Liang was trying to help in a way they couldn't refuse, and they secretly appreciated her kindness. The waiter, after receiving the tip, warmed up and promised to provide hot water for free after they finished their tea. Leaving the Tea House, Su Liang asked Ning Jing, "Do you know where Qiuming Manor is?" Ning Jing pointed in one direction. "Who lives there, some nobleman? The famous doctor from Bao'an Hall was invited by them," Su Liang said. Ning Jing shook his head. He didn't know either. The two hired a carriage to go to the county town. As they passed Bao'an Hall again, Su Liang lifted the curtain and saw an old man with white hair and beard being ushered in. He was probably the renowned doctor from the capital city. ... "Father, what should we do?" Huang Wanwan hadn't slept well, and her complexion was poor. Huang Jin wore a gloomy face. "I never expected Ning Jing to be protected by a master, even in this state!" "Doesn't this mean that getting the Plum Blossom Screen is impossible?" Huang Wanwan's face turned pale. "The day after tomorrow is Lady Xing's birthday, and I've done so much for it..." "If we weren't pressed for time, I could send someone to inform the Ning Family, and someone would take care of Ning Jing!" Huang Jin snorted coldly. His thinking aligned with that of Yang Feng. Just as the father and daughter were at a loss, the maid reported from outside the door, "A person named Su Liang sent an invitation for the young lady to meet at Mingxiang Building." Huang Jin and Huang Wanwan's expressions changed at once! Isn't Su Liang the very person who troubles them? They would never have imagined her daring to take the initiative to seek them out. "It must be Ning Jing's idea! He must know your identity now!" Huang Jin's eyes flashed. "It seems he has a request, and his previous refusal was merely due to dissatisfaction with the price." "But if he raises the price to ten thousand taels of gold, who could afford it?" Huang Wanwan frowned. Huang Jin shook his head. "He won't. You go and meet him to see what he really wants. As long as his request isn't too outrageous, agree to it first and then talk about getting the Plum Blossom Screen." Huang Wanwan got up and walked to the door, then suddenly remembered something. "Father, while Ning Jing is away, why not send someone over to his home to search around?" Huang Jin nodded, "Good!" ... Bei'an County is located in the north of Qian Country. The county town is much busier than Feiyan Town. Mingxiang Building is the best-located and highest-class tea house in the city. Su Liang chose an elegant room on the second floor overlooking the street, ordered the most expensive tea, and two signature desserts. "As your family is the largest tea merchant in Qian Country, what do you think of this tea?" Su Liang suddenly remembered Ning

Jing's identity. However, she had always suspected that "Ning Jing" was a fake identity and that he was actually a descendant of the rebellious Gu Family. But since Ning Jing had never mentioned it and Su Liang hadn't asked, it wasn't important for the time being. Ning Jing took a sip and shook his head slightly. "It's not as good as plain water." In her previous life, Su Liang had been born into a family of traditional Chinese medicine practitioners. Her elders were somewhat elegant and required the younger generation to learn music, chess, calligraphy, and painting. Unfortunately, she didn't find calligraphy interesting when she was young, or else she wouldn't have to practice writing late into the night now. But she had earnestly studied chess and tea ceremony. The tea at Mingxiang Building just wasn't up to par. However, the osmanthus cake tasted quite good. Seeing Su Liang finish a piece, Ning Jing also picked one up and tasted it. The sound of the door opening from the neighboring room could be heard. "Young master, please wait here. The osmanthus cake is being made and will be ready soon!" Su Liang planned to buy another box of the fresh osmanthus cake to take away. ... Huang Wanwan entered the room with Liuliu, and hesitated for a moment. She didn't really believe Liuliu when she mentioned numerous times that Ning Jing was "extremely good-looking." However, upon seeing him today, she realized that Liuliu hadn't exaggerated at all. This man indeed had a face like jade and an extraordinary temperament. When Huang Wanwan regained her composure and looked at Su Liang, she felt even more astonished and bewildered. Her small face, without makeup, had a translucent, porcelain-white complexion, exquisite and delicate facial features. Her hairstyle was casual, and her clothes were ordinary, but her clear and composed temperament made the elaborately dressed Huang Wanwan look vulgar in comparison. Before going out, Huang Wanwan had learned from Huang Jin that Su Liang was the granddaughter of the famous doctor from the capital city, Su Yuanzhou. She had grown up in the capital city, and only came to Bei'an County last year. This was information Huang Jin had just discovered, as they hadn't taken Su Liang seriously before. "Miss Huang?" Su Liang looked at Huang Wanwan. In the next room, a tall and sturdy man heard the sound and frowned. He stood up and moved to the wall, listening attentively. Huang Wanwan took a seat and pulled out a handkerchief, asking, "Why has Lady Ning invited me here today?" "If Miss Huang truly didn't know why we were here, you wouldn't have come." Su Liang said as she poured a cup of tea for Huang Wanwan. Huang Wanwan took it and signaled Liuliu to stand outside. "I sincerely want to buy the things you two have in your possession. Name your price, and as long as it's not too outrageous, we can negotiate." Huang Wanwan's smile was somewhat unnatural. Ning Jing didn't speak, not even giving her a glance. Although Su Liang appeared easy to talk to, it made Huang Wanwan feel that she had been seen through, producing an inexplicable disquiet within her. "Miss Huang is straightforward," Su Liang nodded and smiled lightly. "Previously, I was held captive by my malicious relatives and forced to embroider day and night. So, these works should all be in your possession, right? Now that I've jumped out of the fire pit and gotten married, I've decided not to do any more embroidery. As such, I wanted to keep the Plum Blossom Screen as a memento. However, if Miss Huang sincerely wants to buy it, the fixed price is five thousand taels." Huang Wanwan was choked by her tea upon hearing this. And the man in the next room's expression darkened drastically! "Miss Huang, drink slowly." Su Liang patted Huang Wanwan on the back. "You should know our original identity, right? If that double-sided embroidered Plum Blossom Screen were taken to the capital city, it could truly sell for five thousand taels. As a virtuous official, Official Huang can't take out such a large sum of money for Miss Huang to buy a mere decorative item. We understand that. In fact, we came here today to take back the embroidered works you bought from my dark-hearted relatives at a low price." Huang Wanwan never expected that Su Liang not only wanted to retrieve the Plum Blossom Screen, but also intended to take back all of her previous works?! "What kind of rationale is there

for taking back something that's been paid for in full?" Huang Wanwan's forehead was covered in cold sweat as she felt increasingly uneasy. She was even more worried that Su Liang and Ning Jing would escalate the matter, making it impossible to settle. "I'm only living at Su Xu's house, but my household registration isn't there. I'm not part of their family, and our property shouldn't be mixed. Although I embroidered the items, I didn't voluntarily give them to Su Xu's family for sale. They took them by force, and they didn't even give me the money. According to Qian Country's criminal law, Su Xu's family has committed the crime of encroaching upon my property. And Miss Huang, by purchasing these stolen goods, you should return them to me, their original master. Miss Huang, you're not at fault as you didn't know. I'll compensate you for the money you spent and then take it up with Su Xu's family." Su Liang's expression was calm. Huang Wanwan's face became pale and contorted with anger. "According to your logic, you should go after your aunt to get your belongings back, not me!" Su Liang smiled lightly, "Miss Huang doesn't understand the law, so you can go home and ask your father about it. If we really arrest Su Xu's family, the result would be the same. The items belonged to me, but were stolen and ended up in your hands. It's only fair that you return them to me. It's a simple matter." As she spoke, Su Liang's gaze fell on the handkerchief in Huang Wanwan's hand. "The handkerchief you're using is also one I embroidered. Of course, you can deny that you bought these items and claim that they were embroidered by either you or your maid. We can all go to the county government and ask your father to preside over the case. I have witnesses and evidence, but if Miss Huang or your maid can publicly embroider an identical item, I'll drop the matter. What do you say?" "You!" Huang Wanwan's face froze. "Those items were all burned by accident and are gone now!" Su Liang sighed lightly, "I must get my belongings back. It seems that Miss Huang doesn't truly want to negotiate. Let's go to the county government and argue their case then!" Seeing Su Liang and Ning Jing about to leave, Huang Wanwan became completely disoriented, stood up, and knocked over the stool. "Stop! What do you want in order to leave me be?" "We are short of money, but there's no negotiating on this matter." Su Liang's eyes were slightly cold. Did Huang Wanwan deserve sympathy? She took advantage of the original master's embroidered works, pretending they were her own for personal gain, let alone setting Su Liang and Ning Jing up on a murder charge just for a Plum Blossom Screen, pushing them to the brink of death—she was downright malicious! Though they said they wanted to "hit her hard," Su Liang wasn't here for the money. As an unmarried lady, Huang Wanwan's most important asset was her reputation. Su Liang was here to sue her and just wanted to give her a heads up first...