

Three-Time 221

Chapter 221: 221. Return

“Someone from the palace has arrived, and Duanmu Yi orders Duanmu Chen to go to the palace.

It was still raining heavily outside, and Chang'an asked when he was helping

Duanmu Chen change his clothes, “Miss Su should be coming back soon, right?”

Duanmu Chen smiled, “Father Emperor mentioned the other day that if she doesn't return by the end of this month, he will send someone to hurry her.”

“His Majesty really appreciates Miss Su,” Chang'an sighed, “It was so right for Master to befriend Su Liang back in Bei'an County!”

Hearing this, Duanmu Chen's face showed a pleased expression, “This is indeed true. Although Duanmu Cheng still refuses to give up, he is no longer a threat. Although Su Liang did not act for my sake, everything she did was beneficial to me.”

After getting ready, Duanmu Chen set out from the mansion to the palace.

There were very few pedestrians on the road, and as Duanmu Chen's carriage passed by the Eldest Prince's mansion, he lifted the curtain and glanced at the tightly closed red-lacquered doors.

Lowering the curtain, a cold smile appeared on Duanmu Chen's lips. He thought that Su Liang would not be satisfied with Duanmu Cheng's current situation, after all, her entire family had been killed, and she was a person who believed in retaliation, “a life for a life.”

Duanmu Chen was looking forward to how Duanmu Cheng would die. As for the position of crown prince, it was now just within his reach.

“Something happened to Sheng last night!” Duanmu Yi said as soon as he saw Duanmu Chen, getting straight to the point.

Duanmu Chen's heart jumped and his expression darkened slightly, “Eldest Imperial Brother...”

“He's missing!” Duanmu Yi said coldly.

Duanmu Chen frowned. He had thought Duanmu Cheng was dead last night.

“Last night, two of the people who were discussing matters with Shengsheng had their necks twisted and were killed. Shengsheng must have been kidnapped and no trace was left behind.” Duanmu Yi's face was icy, “Who do you think is responsible?”

“Without evidence, this son does not dare to make any wild guesses.” Duanmu Chen carefully chose his words.

“You know that what happened to Ning Jing is related to Shengsheng,” Duanmu Yi said.

Duanmu Chen hesitated for a moment, “Is Father Emperor referring to Su...Su Liang?”

Duanmu Yi continued, “You should also be aware that the mastermind behind the extermination of the Su Family was Shengsheng.”

Duanmu Chen nodded, “Yes, this son is indeed aware of this. If we look at these two incidents, it is true that Su Liang has a motive to take revenge on Eldest Imperial Brother. However, precisely because the motive is too obvious, and based on what this son knows about Su Liang, she is a clever person and would not do such a thing.”

“You and her already knew each other in Bei’an County, right?” Duanmu Yi looked at Duanmu Chen, his eyes slightly narrowed.

Duanmu Chen’s heart skipped a beat, and he lowered his gaze, “Yes. At first, this son noticed Ning Jing, and then got to know her.”

Duanmu Chen knew that Duanmu Yi had already confirmed the existence of a secret collaboration between himself and Su Liang. This was not good news for him, but at this point, he was not too worried. After all, Su Liang had her own motives for everything she did, and it just so happened that she and Duanmu Chen had common enemies, rather than obeying Duanmu Chen.

This should be clear to Duanmu Yi.

“If it isn’t her, then who else could it be?” Duanmu Yi asked coldly.

Duanmu Chen pondered, “This son was just thinking, could it be an unknown master by Ning Jing’s side before her death?”

Duanmu Yi snorted coldly, “If such a person truly exists, how do you know that he is not colluding with Su Liang?”

Instead of defending Su Liang again, Duanmu Chen shook his head and said,

“This son does not know.”

“I had a nightmare last night.” Duanmu Yi looked out at the rain, “When I woke up early in the morning, I found out that Shengsheng had an accident. When I look back, I have lost two sons since Su Liang returned to the capital city. When the second one had an accident, it was the first one’s doing, and now the first one had an accident. In fact, I know that these two good-for-nothing things have done many outrageous things, and I have long decided not to give Qian Country to them. But they are my sons. If Su Liang really came for revenge, it shows that she has no respect for the Royal Family. Can such a person still be used?”

After a moment of contemplation, Duanmu Chen replied respectfully, “Your

Majesty, not to mention that we still don’t know who captured the Eldest Prince, this matter may not be related to Su Liang. Even if it is related to her, judging from her actions, it is obvious that she is righteous and always stands for justice, not for people. What I can be sure of is that if our country is invaded, Su Liang will definitely defend Qian Country with all her strength. If she needs to treat someone who has not harmed her, she will also do her best. Human hearts are unpredictable; some

people's loyalty lies on the surface, and it may be fake and changeable no matter how good it looks. While others' 'loyalty' is based on their trustworthiness. Su Liang is the latter."

Duanmu Yi gazed at Duanmu Chen, and the atmosphere became silent.

In fact, what Duanmu Chen said was very bold. Duanmu Yi was talking about the authority of the Royal Family and thought that Su Liang was unreliable. Duanmu Chen's words were tantamount to saying that even if Su Liang really killed Duanmu Sheng and Duanmu Ao, they deserved it; as long as Duanmu Yi did not embarrass Su Liang, she would be loyal in her actions.

After a long time, Duanmu Yi snorted coldly, "Do you think that she, a yellow-haired girl who is still wet behind the ears, is irreplaceable?"

Duanmu Chen sighed softly, "To be honest, I didn't think so before, but after she went to Xuanbei City, I came to believe that she is indeed irreplaceable. Perhaps there are people with higher martial arts skills and better medical skills than her, but her best quality is her temperament."

But Duanmu Yi suddenly frowned, "You do know her very well. If Shengsheng's matter can be cleared by her, I will continue to use her. If it is found to be related to her, she cannot be kept! So one day, will the right and wrong between you and me be judged and ruled by her? Will you be restrained by her? If you were to take my place, if you did something wrong that made her unhappy, would she push you down or even kill you?"

Duanmu Chen's face stiffened, "Your Majesty, I was foolish."

"Remember, imperial authority is the sky and does not allow anyone to challenge it! Otherwise, if she dares to kill Shengsheng today, she would dare to assassinate me tomorrow!" Duanmu Yi said coldly, "I have already sent someone to Xunyang City to summon her back to the capital! It was originally planned to confer you as the crown prince in three days, but let's wait until Shengsheng's matter has a result! You may leave now!"

As Duanmu Chen left, he happened to meet Empress Dowager Wan and Empress Xiao Wan, who came to see Duanmu Yi crying.

After Duanmu Chen paid his respects, he left the palace. It was not difficult to guess that both women must believed that Shengsheng's accident was caused by Su Liang.

With an umbrella in hand, Duanmu Chen walked out of the Imperial Palace alone. Chang'an was waiting outside and quickly came forward to serve him to get on the carriage.

The carriage moved slowly, and after a while, Duanmu Chen asked Chang'an,

"Do you think Su Liang and I will become enemies?"

Chang'an was startled and shook his head, "Master has not done anything harmful to Miss Su, so how could it become a conflict? Miss Su is the most reasonable person."

"What if I do something harmful to her in the future?" Duanmu Chen asked.

Chang'an couldn't understand, "As long as you don't want to have a conflict, why don't you just avoid doing certain things? My subordinate thinks that the master can completely treat Miss Su as a

friend, a true friend. As long as you treat her well, she will definitely repay you doubly! Miss Su doesn't have such a great ambition, she won't fight with the master over anything, and since you don't want to marry her, there is no conflict of interest!"

Duanmu Chen rubbed his forehead, "What you said does make sense, but I am afraid Father will not let her go easily this time."

Upon learning about Duanmu Sheng's situation, Chang'an's expression became serious, and he lowered his voice, "Should we send a message to Miss Su? In case she doesn't know anything, someone might be trying to harm her."

Duanmu Chen pondered for a moment and said, "Father is keeping an eye on me, so forget it. If Su Liang really isn't involved in this matter, you don't need to worry too much. With her abilities, she has a way to clear her name." Chang'an asked subconsciously, "What if Miss Su is related to this matter?"

Duanmu Chen snorted lightly, "If she dares to do it, I think she should know better how to clear herself. She has never discussed it with me, so she obviously doesn't want me to get involved. Let her handle it."

Duanmu Sheng's disappearance did not leak out. Duanmu Yi sent two teams of people to Xunyang City, one with a clear mission to summon Su Liang back to the capital city, and the other to secretly investigate her every move after arriving in Xunyang City.

Since there has been frequent rainfall in the middle part of Qian Country recently, the river has risen and few boats and fishermen have been out. Duanmu Yi and Duanmu Chen both thought that there was a high possibility that Duanmu Sheng was still alive, so naturally no one thought to search for the body along the river.

It was the third day after Su Liang's accident.

He woke up yesterday, only crying out in pain in front of his parents. When Su Liang came to see him, he even smiled at her.

When Su Liang asked Su Liang if his wound hurt, his face turned pale, but he insisted that it didn't hurt.

Su Liang just took it as the young man having a strong sense of pride and did not expose him.

That day, Su Liang came to change Su Liang's medicine. As he approached the door, he heard the old housekeeper's voice from inside.

"No way! You're injured like this, where do you want to go?"

"Grandpa clearly told me to perform well and follow Miss! I want to go to the capital city with Miss!"

"Don't be absurd! You can't do anything, Miss doesn't need you!"

"I can learn! Miss is the most amazing person I've ever met. I want to be her disciple. I'm a man, I want to learn martial arts and go to the battlefield!"

"Su Liang, you're still a child who has never left Xunyang City. You don't know what you're talking about. Don't make a fuss, or Miss will laugh at you when she hears."

“Grandpa, I want to go outside Xunyang City to see! I don’t want to stay here forever!”

The old housekeeper opened the door, saw Su Liang standing outside, hesitated for a moment, and quickly explained, “The stinky kid is just messing around, Miss, don’t bother about him.”

Su Liang nodded, “Well, I’m here to change Asi’s medicine.”

She entered the door, and the old housekeeper followed her in.

Asi knew that Su Liang had heard his argument with his grandfather earlier, and his face was a little embarrassed, but because of his dark complexion, it was not obvious.

“Is Miss leaving soon?” Asi asked Su Liang.

Su Liang nodded, “According to the plan, I should leave in two or three days.”

“Can Miss use Asi?” Asi looked at Su Liang with eager eyes. “I can drive, chop wood, catch fish, make fire, brew tea, and I’ve read books, I can calculate, and

I’m fierce when fighting with others!”

The old housekeeper held his forehead but didn’t interrupt Asi.

“Do you just want to see the scenery outside Xunyang City, or do you really want to learn martial arts and join the army?” Su Liang asked.

“I want to learn martial arts and become a powerful person!” Asi’s eyes were determined.

“But your family will be worried. Are you willing to leave them?” Su Liang asked again.

Asi frowned, “I’ll come back.”

Su Liang smiled, “You can learn martial arts here too. Should I find a master for you?”

The old housekeeper breathed a sigh of relief and quickly said, “That would be best! Asi, you can’t help Miss much right now, and you’ll only cause her trouble! Wait until you’ve learned martial arts and made some progress before you talk about it!”

Asi was stunned for a moment, “That’s right!”

Su Liang thought that the boy was quite cute, with a pure personality and naive ideals. In fact, Su Liang could take Asi to the capital city and arrange for him to enter the City Guard Army camp, where he could learn martial arts but not

have to go to the battlefield.

However, firstly, Su Liang knew that Asi’s family would definitely not want him to go out and take risks. Secondly, she also knew that although she seemed to have a bit of power, she had a lot of trouble. She couldn’t guarantee Asi’s safety unless she watched him all the time, otherwise, she couldn’t guarantee that there wouldn’t be any accidents. She couldn’t take on such a big responsibility, and she didn’t want to involve Asi in any trouble.

Asi wanted to learn martial arts, which wasn’t difficult. Su Liang could spend a lot of money to hire a master to teach him. If anything, money was the least of Su Liang’s concerns.

The old housekeeper sent Su Liang out, thanked her first, and then mentioned that Su Liang could hire a master as a bodyguard with money.

“The capital city is deep, and Miss and Young Master were able to keep each other company before. Now that Young Master is gone, I really can’t feel at ease with Miss alone. If Asi is a master, I won’t stop him from following Miss.” The old housekeeper spoke with great concern.

Su Liang nodded, “Alright, I’ll arrange it.”

Seeing that Su Liang had taken in his words, the old housekeeper breathed a sigh of relief, “That’s good, that’s good!”

In fact, Su Liang was thinking that she already had a powerful bodyguard, who could even help wash dishes without spending any money, and who was only absent for a few days. So, she didn’t count it as deceiving the old housekeeper.

As for finding a master for Asi, Su Liang let the old housekeeper handle it, as she was willing to pay no matter how much it cost since she had no connections.

In the evening, after Su Liang had applied another acupuncture session to Peng Qian, the servants brought dinner, and she served the food for Peng Qian and his son.

Peng Qian and Peng Fan had been in Xunyang City for half a month. Peng Qian’s health had improved significantly, and although still weak, as long as he was careful and took the medicine according to Su Liang’s prescription, recovery was only a matter of time. Therefore, they planned to set off early the next morning.

Peng Qian was gentle, sensible, and rational, which Su Liang admired. In comparison, Peng Wei had a hot temper, while Peng Fan still retained some innocence unmarred by the harshness of life.

Using tea instead of alcohol, Su Liang wished Peng Qian a speedy recovery and hope for their family’s safety.

Peng Qian’s eyes were warm. For their family, “safety” was precious. “I’ll never forget General Su’s kindness. I also hope that everything goes smoothly for General Su.”

Before leaving, Su Liang checked the prepared medicinal materials for Peng Qian and made sure there were no problems.

Peng Fan escorted her out, and at the courtyard gate, Su Liang asked him to stay.

About to part, Peng Fan couldn’t help but ask his burning question, “Was General Su’s purse embroidered by yourself?”

Su Liang didn’t think the question was offensive. She just hesitated for a moment, looked down, and the bright moonlight illuminated the little rabbit on the purse. She smiled, “No, it was given to me by a friend.”

For the first time, Peng Fan saw Su Liang smile. He was in a daze, and when Su Liang looked at him, he blurted out to cover his embarrassment, “Miss Su’s friend must be a gentle and kind-hearted lady.”

Su Liang blinked and nodded, “That’s right. And he’s as beautiful as a celestial being.”

As soon as she finished speaking, Su Liang turned and walked away, waving at

Peng Fan behind her, "I won't see you off tomorrow, take care!"

Peng Fan watched Su Liang's figure disappear into the moonlight before turning back.

Su Liang walked alone under the moon, returning to her courtyard. The lights in her room were on, but the study room was dark.

As soon as Su Liang entered the door, she began to undress because she suddenly felt like practicing swordplay. She planned to change into lighter clothing and go to the garden.

Just as she took off her outer clothes, she heard a familiar voice, "What are you doing?"

Su Liang's hand, which was untying her belt, paused, and she saw a figure appear by the screen and then disappear behind it.

'Great God, you're back? So soon?' Su Liang quickly put her clothes back on and hurried into the inner room, where she saw Gu Ling standing there.

According to her estimate, Gu Ling would return to Xunyang City at the earliest in two days.

"How is it? Did everything go smoothly?" Su Liang asked. Gu Ling wasn't wearing a mask, but still had his disguise on, and there was an unmistakable fatigue between his eyebrows.

Ignoring Su Liang's question, Gu Ling counter-questioned, "You weren't hurt, were you?"

Su Liang shook her head and sighed, "No, but it was so close that day. Asi took a knife for me and almost died."

Gu Ling's eyes turned cold, "I shouldn't have left.."

Chapter 222: 222. 1 1 m willing

Su Liang prepared a large bowl of vegetable and shredded pork noodles according to Gu Ling's taste, added some vinegar, as well as an egg pancake and a plate of mixed vegetables, and brought it all to the study.

The lamp was lit in the study, and just as Su Liang placed the tray, she heard a noise outside the window.

Gu Ling had already changed into clean clothes, wearing a mask, his half-dry hair hanging down, slightly messy.

"Did you take a bath in the garden, Great God?" Su Liang thought that Gu Ling must not have disguised himself at this moment.

The next moment, Gu Ling set down the clothes in his hand and removed the mask.

His face was as clear as moonlight, and it was dust-free, ice cold and flawless.

This was the second time Su Liang had seen Gu Ling's appearance, and she was still amazed by his beauty, jokingly saying, "In the future, be careful when you take a bath, Great God, so as not to catch the eye of a pervert."

Gu Ling's expression was faint, he wiped the water droplets from the ends of his hair with a handkerchief, sat down by the table, and picked up his chopsticks.

Su Liang sat opposite him, but she wasn't hungry and didn't prepare her own portion; she just stared at Gu Ling.

Gu Ling took a sip of the warm soup and ate a couple of bites of noodles. Seeing

Su Liang staring at him intently, he asked, "What are you looking at?"

"I'm looking to see if your face is symmetrical." Su Liang made a gesture in the air to emphasize her point and praised, "A beauty is indeed a beauty, your symmetry is perfection."

Gu Ling retorted, "Aren't you one too?"

Su Liang laughed, "I haven't looked closely, and besides, no one praises themselves. "

Gu Ling stared at Su Liang, "You are too."

Appreciating the compliments on her looks, Su Liang's smile deepened, "Thank you for the praise, Great God. But compared to you, I'm far behind."

Gu Ling hadn't eaten much for three days, so he ate a bit faster than usual this time, but his gracefulness was still evident.

Su Liang asked if he had seen Zhengzheng; Gu Ling shook his head, "Zhengzheng has not returned to the capital city yet."

"Is it enough?" Su Liang asked.

Gu Ling shook his head, "Not enough."

"I have some fresh mushrooms as well for the ingredients, which I didn't use. Should I make some fried fresh mushrooms for you?" Su Liang suggested.

Gu Ling nodded slightly, "Okay."

So, Su Liang got up and went to the kitchen again.

Although she didn't ask, Gu Ling hadn't mentioned it either, but she already guessed he had come back two days early, squeezing the time spent on the road and was exhausted, so Su Liang figured he hadn't eaten well.

Su Liang set up the frying pan, and in addition to frying fresh mushrooms, she also cut pumpkin, eggplant, and others to make a plate of vegetable tempura. She also prepared a dipping sauce.

When Su Liang carried the carefully prepared and plated fried foods into the study, Gu Ling had already finished the bowl of noodles and drank all the soup.

“I’ve never prepared this before, so you should try it while it’s hot.” Su Liang placed the dipping sauce in front of Gu Ling.

Gu Ling tasted a piece of fried fresh mushrooms and nodded slightly, “Very unique.”

After tasting a piece of pumpkin tempura, his nodding motion became a bit larger, “Not bad.”

“In the future, you can use fresh fish and shrimp in the same way,” Su Liang said, “Actually, it’s not suitable for dinner, but tonight you’re hungry, so it doesn’t matter as much.”

Su Liang made a large bowl using four types of dishes. It wasn’t too much, but after watching Gu Ling finish it, she remembered she had forgotten to have a taste herself.

Then Su Liang brought a beautiful glazed glass cup filled with freshly cut peaches that had just been delivered from Lingyin Temple yesterday, and there were also wooden forks on top.

The wooden forks were not made by Su Liang but were handcrafted by Gu Ling himself specifically for eating fruits.

The hot soup noodles warmed the stomach, and after eating the fried foods, it was finished off with a cup of fresh fruit. Su Liang had put in quite an effort to make sure Gu Ling had a satisfying meal.

“Thank you once again, Great God, for helping me get rid of my enemy.” Su Liang said earnestly.

Gu Ling put down his fork, wiped his hands, and asked, “Is this all a thank you gift?” Su Liang shook his head, “Not only that, there’s also the rabbit that Great God wants to eat, but it’ll have to wait for another day.”

Gu Ling nodded gently, “Very good.”

“You should go to sleep now. We can talk about anything else tomorrow.” Su Liang picked up the glazed glass cup and left the room, closing the door behind her.

After tidying up the kitchen, Su Liang returned to her room to wash up and prepared to sleep. However, she heard Gu Ling knocking on the wall in the next room.

“What’s the matter?” Su Liang asked as she leaned against the wall.

She then heard Gu Ling’s faint voice, “Come over.”

Not knowing what the issue might be, Su Liang quickly got dressed and went to the study.

Walking around the screen, she saw Gu Ling lying in bed, covered with a blanket. Su Liang frowned and asked, “Great God, are you injured? Or are you too tired from traveling and caught a fever from taking a cold shower?”

Gu Ling originally wanted to say something but held it back after hearing Su Liang’s question. He just shook his head gently without speaking.

Seeing this, Su Liang thought that Gu Ling might be sick. She sat down by his bed and pressed her hand on his forehead, “No fever.” She then pulled one of his arms out from under the blanket and took his pulse, “Your pulse seems fine.

Maybe you're just too tired. A good night's sleep should fix it."

As she spoke, Su Liang tucked Gu Ling's arm back under the blanket, "Do you feel unwell anywhere?"

Gu Ling shook his head, and his ink-black hair scattered on the pillow moved gently, "No."

Su Liang paused for a moment, "If you don't feel unwell, then why did you call for me?"

Gu Ling's thin lips parted slightly, "Tell a story."

Su Liang held her forehead, "Aren't you tired? Aren't you sleepy? Can't we wait until tomorrow?"

"We agreed to tell two stories every day, and I've been away for seven days," Gu Ling said.

Su Liang shook her head, "That won't do. Telling so many stories at once would exhaust both of us, and you can't paint while lying down."

"Don't count the days I was away; just tell today's story," Gu Ling said.

Originally, she was supposed to tell stories for seven days, but now she only needed to tell one day's worth. Su Liang thought about it and decided that was acceptable. So, she continued narrating Water Margin from where she had left off last time.

After finishing one story, she noticed Gu Ling had closed his eyes. Su Liang called out to him softly, "Great God?"

"I'm not asleep," Gu Ling said with his eyes closed.

"Alright." Su Liang then mustered up her energy and told the second story. Once she had finished, she yawned, "I'm going back." Gu Ling didn't respond, so Su Liang called out to him again softly, "Great God?" This time he didn't speak, like he had fallen asleep.

As Su Liang looked at Gu Ling's beautiful sleeping face, she sighed in her heart, "What a seductive creature!"

She extinguished the lamp and left the room, treading lightly.

Hearing the door close, Gu Ling on the bed opened his eyes and let out an inaudible sigh, "Even though she complimented me so highly, she never even tried touching me once..."

As the sky was just beginning to lighten, the Peng father and son left as planned.

Peng Fan kept looking back but never saw Su Liang appear. Although she had said the night before that she wouldn't see them off, he still felt somewhat regretful.

Peng Qian noticed his son's thoughts. After leaving the Ning Family, he only said one thing to him, "The Royal Family of Qian Country won't allow her to marry into another country."

Peng Fan remained silent.

Su Liang slept soundly until daylight.

After washing and dressing, she went to the study room, and the bedding had been neatly folded with Gu Ling nowhere to be seen.

Su Liang wasn't surprised and went to check on Asi like she had done the past few days.

The old housekeeper mentioned that the father and son from the Peng family had left. The Ning family prepared some food for them, along with Su Liang's prescription, medicine ingredients, a small stove, and a clay pot for boiling medicine.

"Miss, will they cause any trouble?" The old housekeeper already knew that the two were from Liang Country.

Su Liang shook her head, "No problem. Qian Country and Liang Country are negotiating peace now. I agreed to cure the son of the old General Peng when we declared a truce. I'm just fulfilling my promise."

"I see. Nevertheless, we should still be careful and cautious. If outsiders find out, they might make a big fuss about it." The old housekeeper still worried a little.

Su Liang changed the topic and asked about the news of Song Qi.

"Unless something unexpected happened, the person we sent should have arrived by now. It's hard to say whether he will be willing to come back or not. After all these years, he must have already built his own family with a wife and children," the old housekeeper sighed slightly.

Su Liang nodded, "Then let's wait for more news. If he doesn't want to come back, we won't force him. We'll think of other solutions."

While talking, they entered Asi's room. He was drinking porridge, and when he saw Su Liang, his eyes immediately brightened up, "Miss!" "How are you? Does your wound still hurt?" Su Liang asked. Asi shook his head, "No pain!"

His mother glared at him from the side but didn't expose his lie.

After taking Asi's pulse and telling him to take medicine after eating, Su Liang left without lingering.

Su Liang returned to her own courtyard, where the early meal was served shortly after.

After dismissing the servants, Gu Ling appeared and the two ate breakfast together.

"Duanmu Cheng is dead. I will definitely be suspected. I fear that people from the capital city will come to summon me back soon," Su Liang said. "Since I was originally planning to return to the capital city in a few days, let's just wait for them to arrive. In the meantime, I'm not at ease about Asi's health."

Gu Ling nodded slightly, "There might be people coming to test if you have any masters around you."

“Don’t interfere when that happens,” Su Liang said. “Since they’re testing, they won’t harm me. Once I return to the capital city, I’ll tell Duanmu Yi that the master protecting me and Ning Jing has long parted ways.”

“Prepare some poison,” Gu Ling said indifferently.

Su Liang’s eyes sparkled, “That’s right! When someone comes to test me, treat them like assassins and poison my blade. They’ll collapse as soon as they’re cut!

After breakfast, Su Liang went to practice swordsmanship and asked Gu Ling if he still wanted to eat rabbit today. If so, she would catch one for him.

Gu Ling shook his head, “I don’t feel like eating it for now. You can owe it to me.”

Su Liang agreed readily, “Deal. I owe you one rabbit. Let me know when you want to eat it.”

Having spent two days at home without going out, Su Liang made sure those who asked for medical help had their identities confirmed by the old housekeeper before letting them in. This measure was taken to avoid the previous incident.

Originally, the old housekeeper advised Su Liang to refuse all visiting patients since she didn’t need to earn money or make a name for herself through treating them. Therefore, there was no need for her to exert her energy and take risks.

People in Xunyang City thought that after that day, even if they begged for treatment, Su Liang would refuse them.

However, Su Liang didn’t reject all her patients because of the scheming grandfather and grandson who tried to kill her. While it concerned her safety, it was not causally related. Those who wanted to kill her could always find ways to do it, but she wouldn’t give up her normal life and things she wanted to do because of that.

It is worth mentioning that the grandson who was seriously injured and used to assassinate Su Liang died on the first night in prison. The old assassin was still alive, and his execution was scheduled for today.

The governor of Xunyang City sent someone to inform Su Liang early in the morning that she could go and watch the execution if she wanted to. If Su Liang asked to decapitate the assassin herself, the governor would probably agree to it.

However, Su Liang didn’t go, as she didn’t want to be watched by the crowd.

After finishing her martial arts practice, Su Liang sat down in the courtyard to read a book Gu Ling brought her from the capital city. Just then, the old housekeeper hurried over, “Miss, it’s bad! Someone has stormed the execution ground and the assassin has been rescued!”

Upon hearing this, Su Liang remained calm, “Was it one person or a group of people who stormed the execution ground?”

“There were four masked men, all with good martial arts skills,” the old housekeeper said.

Su Liang nodded, “I see.”

The old housekeeper was surprised at Su Liang's composure. Seeing that she didn't want to talk about it anymore, he left with a worried face.

Su Liang ate a piece of peach fruit, turned a page in her book, and continued to read.

She was indeed not worried, nor even surprised. Considering the timing, people from the capital city should have arrived by now.

Duanmu Cheng had died, and the assassin had been locked up for several days with no one in charge. Su Liang guessed that the people who robbed the execution site today were not to save him, but to investigate the truth.

And this was just what Su Liang wanted. She hoped that the assassin would be taken to Duanmu Yi and tell him about the heinous means Duanmu Cheng used to kill her.

Soon, people from the Government Office came to inform the aggrieved Su Liang that the culprit had been taken away. The governor promised that they would make every effort to capture him.

In the afternoon, Su Liang took a rare nap.

When night fell, Su Liang, not feeling sleepy, sat under the lamp reading a book. She knew that Gu Ling was not next door, but should be in the mansion.

After reading until midnight, Su Liang put away the finished book, tidied up her notes, made her bed, lit the incense burner, and put in her secret recipe of incense.

Soon, a faint tea fragrance filled the room. Su Liang blew out the lamp, lay down, closed her eyes, and held a pill in her mouth.

About a quarter of an hour later, there was a slight sound from the rear window.

Quickly, two men in black sneaked into Su Liang's room and looked at the hanging bed curtains. One of them approached stealthily.

But before they could lift the bed curtain, both of them felt dizzy and unable to stand. Realizing something was wrong, they tried to leave but collapsed the next moment.

Half an hour later, in Su Liang's room with the window open, two heavily bound men regained consciousness and saw Su Liang sitting coldly by the table, looking at them, "Who sent you? If it's the Eldest Prince, there's no need to hide it. He has wanted to kill me for a long time, not just once or twice!"

The two men exchanged glances, and one of them, with sharp eyes, spoke up, "General Su, it's a misunderstanding! We were sent by the emperor's verbal order to ask General Su to return to the capital! We sincerely apologize for disturbing you late at night, but we dared not delay!"

Su Liang was stunned for a moment, "A verbal order? With no proof, do you think I'd believe it?"

"It's true! I have the Token of the Imperial Palace Forbidden Army on me!" said the other man hurriedly.

Su Liang then got up and searched both men, finding a token on each.

"Did the emperor send just the two of you?" Su Liang asked coldly.

The two men replied that it was just them.

“I was going to return to the capital in a few days anyway. Why did the emperor send you? Has something happened in the capital?” Su Liang asked with a frown.

The two men looked at each other and didn’t mention Duanmu Cheng, just saying they were not sure what it was about.

“You sneaked in so secretly that even with the token, I can’t fully believe you.” Su Liang snorted, “Recently, I have experienced several assassination attempts, so I had better be prepared.”

The two men swore and vowed that they were really from the Imperial Guard and not assassins.

Su Liang still did not believe them and suspected they were sent by Duanmu Cheng. She said she would deal with them.

In the end, the two had no choice but to admit that Duanmu Cheng was missing, and the emperor sent them to ask Su Liang to return to the capital and help with the investigation.

On the following day, Su Liang said goodbye to the old housekeeper and Asi, and left Xunyang City for the capital city.

Last night’s two men did not follow Su Liang but were sent separately to the capital by people tied up by Su Liang because she still “doubted” their identity.

Not long after leaving Xunyang City, Su Liang disguised herself and disappeared from the sight of certain people.

In the next city, Su Liang met with the also disguised Gu Ling and traveled together.

The face Su Liang disguised herself as was that of her previous life, and Gu Ling’s disguise looked somewhat similar to hers, making them look like siblings at first glance.

Passing by a market and spotting wild rabbits for sale, Su Liang asked Gu Ling,

“Brother, do you want to eat it? I’ll buy it and roast it.”

Gu Ling glanced at the wild rabbit in the wooden cage and then looked away indifferently, “I don’t want this one.”

“Why are you so picky, brother? That rabbit looks obviously plump and delicious,” Su Liang said seriously, “You used to eat fish by only eating the small squirrels, do you have your eye on a little rabbit, waiting for it to grow up and kill it for food? This behavior is rather beastly.”

Gu Ling tapped Su Liang’s head gently with his fan, “As I please..”

Chapter 223:223. Arrange it clearly and understandably

Late at night, Qian Country’s Imperial Palace, Imperial Study.

Duanmu Chen looked at the few Forbidden Army soldiers kneeling on the ground, and an elderly man in ragged prisoner clothes, his face indescribable.

Duanmu Yi's face was somber, "Those two, were killed by Su Liang?"

The leader of the Forbidden Army squad sent to Xunyang City said, his face looking awful, "If there was danger, they should have stated their purpose in time."

"A bunch of trash!" Duanmu Yi sneered, "Get out!"

"Your Majesty, this criminal..."

Duanmu Yi's gaze was icy as he looked at the trembling old man, "Send him on his

Soon, only Duanmu Yi and Duanmu Chen, father and son, were left in the Imperial Study.

Duanmu Chen sighed deeply, "I didn't expect that Eldest Brother would use such means to kill Su Liang, and he almost succeeded."

The old man was brought before Duanmu Yi, so he couldn't tell a single lie.

"If I had known earlier, I would have sent him to accompany Second Brother sooner!" Duanmu Yi said coldly.

Originally, with Duanmu Ao's contrast, although Duanmu Sheng didn't seem as outstanding as Duanmu Chen, he was still a qualified Crown Prince.

But up to now, Duanmu Yi was utterly disappointed in him.

When Duanmu Yi wanted to destroy the Wan family, one of his goals was to cut off Duanmu Sheng's thoughts and prevent his son from turning against him.

Duanmu Yi had thought that after so many things, Duanmu Sheng would have learned his lesson and would stop causing trouble. This was also the premise of Duanmu Yi shielding Duanmu Sheng.

However, it was clear that Duanmu Sheng and Su Liang had a fatal relationship. This was not something Su Liang decided on her own; Duanmu Sheng's intention to kill her was even stronger.

Hearing Duanmu Yi's words, Duanmu Chen didn't dare to interrupt and just said solemnly, "Father, judging from the time Eldest Brother arranged the assassins to kill Su Liang, his accident happened the day after Su Liang was attacked. With the distance between the capital city and Xunyang City, it couldn't have been Su Liang's retaliation after being attacked."

Duanmu Yi's eyes narrowed slightly, "But it cannot be ruled out that Sheng'er was involved in Su Liang's affairs."

"At least, it couldn't have been her personally," Duanmu Chen said. "If she had sent a master to the capital city to capture Eldest Brother, it would mean that she and Eldest Brother tried to kill each other at almost the same time."

Duanmu Chen believed that Duanmu Sheng's accident must have something to do with Su Liang, but he always subtly defended Su Liang, using a seemingly objective approach.

Duanmu Chen also wanted to know, if Duanmu Sheng and Su Liang intended to kill each other at the same time, would Duanmu Yi think that Su Liang should have endured it instead of taking action?

“If Su Liang knew that Sheng’er wanted to kill her...” Duanmu Yi frowned, only saying half of the sentence.

Duanmu Chen sighed, “In my opinion, this matter is quite obvious.”

Moreover, the fact was that if Su Liang had thought so, it would have been completely correct and reasonable, cautious.

“You think Su Liang hasn’t done anything wrong?” Duanmu Yi looked at Duanmu Chen, his gaze like a torch.

Duanmu Chen shook his head, “At present, it is only certain that Eldest Brother wanted to kill Su Liang, sending more than one group of assassins, and almost succeeded, seriously wounding a servant of the Ning Family. But whether Eldest Brother’s disappearance is due to Su Liang is still uncertain. If it is her, her abduction of Eldest Brother would naturally be an act of disrespect to the imperial authority. But what I want to say is that perhaps in Su Liang’s eyes, Eldest Brother cannot represent the Qian Country’s Royal Family. Please forgive my frankness, after so many things, I cannot recognize any imperial majesty that is worthy of the subjects’ awe in Eldest Brother’s actions.”

Having an affair with his sister, wantonly killing people, murdering his younger brother, plotting against important officials. These acts were not ordinary moral corruption. Even if the royal family always has its dark sides, Duanmu Sheng’s evil deeds had already come to light, not merely greedy, vicious, and shameless, but also very incompetent.

Duanmu Chen bravely advised Duanmu Yi, hoping that he would not protect Duanmu Sheng anymore and not alienate Su Liang, a valuable talent.

After all, Duanmu Chen hadn’t even sat on the position of Crown Prince yet. If the Qian Country Royal Family gave up on Su Liang, she might join another country. For Duanmu Chen, who had determined that the throne belonged to him in the future. this was unacceptable.

After a long silence, Duanmu Yi rubbed his weary brow, “Things have come to this point. As long as she can prove that Sheng’er’s disappearance has nothing to do with her, I will no longer hold a grudge.”

Duanmu Chen left the palace and arrived at the Fourth Prince’s Mansion’s entrance, where he saw a carriage parked.

Chang’an immediately asked, “Who is it?”

The middle-aged man standing beside the carriage quickly bowed and had two tied-up men dragged out from the carriage, “Fourth Prince, I am the steward of the Ning Family, surnamed Zhao. Our master caught two assassins in Xunyang City and ordered me to deliver them to you as soon as possible.” The night was dark and deep.

Duanmu Chen looked at the two “assassins” with their mouths gagged and felt a twitch in his forehead. Without even asking, he knew that these two were the Forbidden Army soldiers sent by Duanmu Yi to test Su Liang but had lost contact with them.

“Steward Zhao, you must be tired. When will your master return to the capital?” Duanmu Chen asked.

Steward Zhao respectfully said, "Our master is on the way back to the capital, but we don't know when he will arrive."

Duanmu Chen understood. The people who were watching Su Liang had left Xunyang City with her, but had lost track of her as soon as they left the city last night.

There was nothing much to say about this, as Su Liang didn't know who the spies were working for. It was normal for her to shake them off after noticing them. This could only prove that the ability of the people sent by Duanmu Yi was so limited.

Duanmu Chen felt that Su Liang should arrive in the capital soon, so he didn't ask further. He only asked Chang'an to give the men some rewards and let them leave.

"Master, how should we deal with this?" Chang'an asked.

Duanmu Chen also rubbed his brows, "Take them with us. I'll go to the palace again." In order to avoid suspicion, they couldn't stay with him for too long. If they needed to speak, they could go directly to Duanmu Yi.

Thus, Duanmu Chen returned to the imperial palace once more, bringing with him the two Forbidden Army soldiers that Duanmu Yi had "lost."

After they confessed their experiences in Xunyang City, Duanmu Yi scolded them, "Useless!"

Duanmu Chen sighed softly, "It's normal for Su Liang to be on guard since she's faced a series of assassination attempts lately and has almost harmed the people around her. She just used some sedatives because of her excellent medical skills."

Duanmu Yi thought about it and still couldn't find any suspicious points in Su Liang's actions. Thus, he let Duanmu Chen leave.

After returning to the capital from Xuanbei City, Wan Shan, who had a stroke, had been under the treatment of Imperial Physician Gao, and had recently shown significant improvement. Although his body was still weak and needed a wheelchair, he was no different from a normal person in other respects.

Wan Shan's younger son Wan Lin died mysteriously, and his elder son Wan Cong was publicly executed half a month ago for killing Ning Jing, an official of the court. With the death of the Second Prince, Duanmu Ao, the Wan Family still lived in the General Mansion, but they had lost their past glory.

The disappearance of Duanmu Cheng was even more heartbreaking for the Wan Family.

Duanmu Yi believed that Ning Jing was killed by Duanmu Cheng, and the Empress Dowager and the Empress agreed. Even though Duanmu Cheng defended himself, the two Empresses felt guilty about Wan Cong's death and felt sorry for the Wan Family.

But Wan Shan knew clearly that Ning Jing was killed by Wan Cong. Although he was heartbroken over his son's death, he didn't blame Duanmu Cheng. As his health gradually improved, he pinned all his hopes on Duanmu Cheng, hoping that he could regain the position of crown prince.

However, Duanmu Cheng disappeared!

Now, the person Wan Shan hated the most was Su Liang, without exception. He believed that the downfall of the Wan Family and his two nephews was all her fault!

One day, just after seeing off Imperial Physician Gao, Wan Shan began cursing Su Liang in foul language in the study.

A guard rushed in and said that someone had sent an urgent letter to Wan Shan, asking him to open it personally.'

Wan Shan quickly received the crumpled letter, dismissed the servant, opened it, and saw the familiar handwriting. He sat up straight, his eyes wide, and read it incredulously from beginning to end. He read it again, then stared blankly for a while before his eyes suddenly brightened, and he laughed wildly, "Excellent! Excellent!"

The people of the Wan Family were puzzled by Wan Shan's sudden good mood, but he didn't explain anything. He just said that he had had a nice dream, and then asked about the recent situations of the Fourth Prince Duanmu Chen and the Sixth Prince Duanmu Che out of nowhere.

That night, Duanmu Chen received another summons from the palace, feeling that something significant had happened. He ordered his subordinates to keep an eye on Su Liang, but she had not returned to the capital today.

When Duanmu Chen saw Duanmu Yi in the palace, he saw that his face was full of anger.

Duanmu Chen cautiously asked if anything had happened.

Duanmu Yi threw a crumpled piece of paper at Duanmu Chen, "Look at the good deed this evildoer has done!"

The paper fell to the ground, and Duanmu Chen picked it up, slowly unfolding it. The handwriting was also familiar to him, but it shocked him to the core. It was actually written by Duanmu Cheng! He had thought Duanmu Cheng was dead!

After reading the contents of the letter, Duanmu Chen was also dumbfounded, "How could this be...?"

In his letter, Duanmu Cheng wrote that his disappearance was part of his plan. The Wan family was in decline, and he did not have the upper hand in competing with Duanmu Chen. With Duanmu Yi's scrutiny, he could not do anything, even having to wait until Su Liang was in Xunyang City to make an attempt on her life. The letter also detailed his plan to assassinate Su Liang, and he was quite proud of using the poison ploy from the grandfather-grandson duo, claiming it was a brilliant idea that came to him suddenly.

Duanmu Cheng stated that in order to gain the throne, he had to find another way. He did not consult with Wan Shan or the Empress Dowager and Empress beforehand, simply for the sake of caution. He killed two of his trusted followers who knew a lot of his secrets, creating the illusion that he had been abducted and went to a secret hideout.

Next, Duanmu Cheng hoped that Wan Shan, the Empress Dowager, and

Empress would take advantage of the fact that Duanmu Yi, Duanmu Chen, and Duanmu Che were no longer on guard against them, and find a way to eliminate them all!

His plan was simple: once everyone in the Duanmu royal family qualified to take the throne was gone, as the eldest prince who had disappeared, he could make a strong comeback. Who else would the throne belong to?

Duanmu Cheng also suggested to Wan Shan that he should try to sow discord between Duanmu Yi and Duanmu Chen, as it would yield double results with half the effort.

Duanmu Yi had previously placed spies to keep an eye on the Wan family and had not withdrawn them. This letter was today's harvest, successfully making Duanmu Yi's anger reach its peak.

"No wonder he's neither alive nor dead!" Duanmu Yi gritted his teeth, "Chen'er, you were right. I made a huge mistake by still protecting him after all the outrageous things he has done!"

Duanmu Chen looked again at the letter and sighed deeply, "I was wondering earlier, if it was Su Liang's doing, given her feud with my eldest brother, he should have been killed instead of disappearing. Disappearing means he can always come back."

Duanmu Chen spoke very slowly in the last sentence, with a meaningful tone.

This letter also made him doubt that Duanmu Cheng's matter might really have nothing to do with Su Liang. The reason for doubt is that such a clever means,

Duanmu Chen felt Duanmu Cheng seemed not to have such a brain...

But obviously, Duanmu Yi had already been convinced.

At this moment, Duanmu Chen was thinking, what if everything was designed by Su Liang? Intentionally abducting Duanmu Cheng, not leaving a body behind, and then sending this letter...

Duanmu Chen felt that this was indeed a brilliant plan, and something Su Liang could come up with.

But perhaps he was overthinking, the truth might be just what they saw Duanmu Cheng had been cunning and playing shady tricks, now hiding somewhere, waiting for them to die before coming back.

Duanmu Yi took a deep breath and said with a dark face, "The Wan Family cannot be spared!"

Duanmu Chen said seriously, "Father Emperor, eldest brother may still be in contact with Wan Shan. Why not wait a little longer, and follow the trail to find his hiding place."

Duanmu Yi nodded, "That makes sense. I will have someone keep an eye on the Wan family. Has Su Liang returned yet?"

As soon as the words fell, the eunuch outside reported, "Your Majesty, Su Liang and General Su are requesting an audience outside the palace gate."

The timing matched up with when she had left Xunyang City, assuming normal rest during the journey at night.

"Summon her!" Duanmu Yi said coldly.

Duanmu Chen returned the crumpled letter to Duanmu Yi, "Should I leave,

Father?"

"No need," Duanmu Yi said, "I will have the Imperial Astronomical Observatory choose another auspicious day to hold the Crown Prince Enthronement Ceremony."

Duanmu Chen's face lit up with joy, and he quickly knelt down to offer his thanks, "Long live Father Emperor, long live, long live forever!"

As he stood up, Duanmu Chen thought to himself, Su Liang was truly a lucky star sent down by heaven to help him! Everything was unbelievably smooth!

Su Liang entered the Imperial Study, carrying a bundle in her hand. After offering her greetings and being told to rise, she did not get up, "Please, Your Majesty, do justice for your humble servant!"

Duanmu Yi narrowed his eyes, "What matter do you require justice for?"

"I was attacked in Xunyang City, and the assassin confessed to being ordered by the Eldest Prince. If it wasn't for the loyal servant sacrificing himself, I would likely be dead!" Su Liang said with her head down.

Originally, Duanmu Yi was going to wait for Su Liang to return to the capital to question her about whether she had captured Duanmu Cheng, but the situation had suddenly reversed.

"Where is the assassin then?" Duanmu Yi knowingly asked.

"He was sentenced to death at the Xunyang City Government Office, but was rescued on the day of his execution!" Su Liang said, "It must be his accomplice."

Duanmu Yi looked at Su Liang and asked, "Do you know that the Eldest Prince has gone missing?"

Su Liang frowned, "Two suspicious assassins claimed to be carrying the emperor's orders, saying that the Eldest Prince is missing. I cannot confirm their identity, so I ordered them to be sent back to the capital and handed over to the Fourth Prince."

Duanmu Chen did not speak.

Duanmu Yi sneered, "Those were the people I sent to find you. You've been on leave for a long time, and it's time for you to return." Su Liang respectfully replied, "Yes. Has the Eldest Prince been found yet?" "What will you do if he is found?" Duanmu Yi countered.

Su Liang bowed his head, "I dare not do anything to the Eldest Prince. I can only ask the Emperor to administer justice!"

Duanmu Chen saw a hint of embarrassment on Duanmu Yi's face. He would not tell Su Liang about certain "family matters."

"I understand. Let's wait until the Eldest Prince is found," Duanmu Yi said, "You have just returned to the capital. Take a rest today and go to the Military Camp to train soldiers tomorrow! I heard from Marquis Zhong Xin that your new training methods have been very effective in Xuanbei City. I have high hopes for you, and I will inspect your work in a few days. Don't disappoint me!" "I will do my best to serve Your Majesty," Su Liang nodded.

As she got up to leave, Duanmu Yi stopped her and casually asked, “Ning Jing used to have a master by her side. Is that person with you now?”

Su Liang hesitated for a moment, nodded, and shook her head again. “Yes, there was a senior who was indebted to the Ning Family. After Ning Jing was expelled from her family, he found her, helped her take revenge, cleaned up her house, and protected her for several months. He once offered his help to improve my martial arts skills. But...” Su Liang took a deep breath, grief on her face, and her eyes dropped, “Previously, when I went to Xuanbei City, Ning Jing insisted on having that senior protect me, but she ended up in trouble herself. That senior felt very guilty and blamed me because it was I who insisted on staying after Ning Jing took her office. He sacrificed everything for me, but in the end, he harmed her...”

Duanmu Yi frowned, “Where is that person now?”

“He left,” Su Liang said, “Our mood was terrible back then, and we had terrible quarrels. She left in a rage and probably won’t care about me anymore.” “What is that person’s surname and name?” Duanmu Yi asked.

Su Liang hesitated for a moment, “Can I not say? He was originally a recluse. At this point, I don’t want him to be involved in any of my affairs. We originally had no relationship.”

“Never mind,” Duanmu Yi waved his hand, “You can go.”

“Yes, this humble official takes her leave,” Su Liang said, and turned to leave the Imperial Study.

On the way home alone, many people who saw Su Liang recognized her. Soon, word spread throughout the capital that she had returned.

Upon returning home, Su Liang closed the front door and headed to the main courtyard.

Everything was very familiar, as if she had never left.

Entering the courtyard, Su Liang carried her pack and went straight into the room where “Ning Jing” used to live, closing the door behind her.

Gu Ling emerged from the inner room, “How did it go?”

Su Liang’s lip curled slightly, “My plan worked. The emperor saw and believed the letter I sent to Wan Shan. Great God, did you deliberately throw Duanmu Cheng out of the city and into the river just so you could have a way out?”

Gu Ling shook her head slightly, “No. At that time, I just wanted him to die without a place to be buried.”

If Duanmu Cheng’s body had been left in the Eldest Prince’s Mansion, he would have been buried with great honor in the imperial tomb. But if he was thrown into the river, his corpse would soon be unrecognizable. Even if someone fished it out, no one would ever know it was the Eldest Prince, because Gu Ling had destroyed his clothes and belongings. The final outcome of Duanmu Cheng was predictable.

The letter Su Liang sent to Wan Shan imitating Duanmu Cheng’s handwriting was an idea that came to her on the way back to the capital. It wasn’t Gu Ling’s initial plan.

“Then it’s just our perfect collaboration!” Su Liang happily said, “But Great God, you have to be careful in the future and not let anyone find out that someone is with me. I don’t know how Uncle Liang and your grandfather are doing at this point. If your identity is restored, you can return to Qian Country’s capital city.

I will fall in love at first sight with you in the street, but you will refuse me. Then, no matter who wants to arrange my marriage, I will say that I have someone in my heart. After seeing the beauty Gu, I can’t look at anyone else. Our collaboration will continue, and everything will be perfect!”

When Gu Ling heard “falling in love at first sight on the street, ” his eyes flickered. When he heard the last part, he silently turned around.

“Great God, where are you going?” Su Liang asked.

Gu Ling’s back faced Su Liang as he entered the inner room. His voice was calm, “Your arrangements are very good. I am looking forward to how you will fall in love at first sight with me on the street..”

Chapter 224: 224. Female General and New Recruit

On the first night back in the capital city, Su Liang slept fairly well.

It rained in the latter half of the night, stopping by morning. Due to the damp ground, Su Liang, who usually got up early for morning practice, decided to give up after taking a glance outside and went back to bed for a nap.

Gu Ling was staying next door, in Ning Jing’s original room, although someone had died there last month.

When Su Liang woke up again, she heard Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing talking in the courtyard.

“Now that Little Sister Su is back, let’s move in today. It will be easier for us to take care of her.”

“Okay. As you wish.”

“Will grandmother be unhappy?”

“No, she won’t. I already told her before getting married, and she knows.”

“Why don’t we talk to Little Sister Su about moving into her house? This place is large, and she’s all alone. Sigh.”

“But Su Liang doesn’t seem to like getting too close to anyone besides Ning

Jing... I shouldn’t have mentioned it. Xueqing, don’t cry. When Su Liang sees you, she will feel sad too.”

“I’m fine. It’s just that when I think of Elder Brother Ning, my heart aches. If he were still here, he and Little Sister Su would be married now, and we wouldn’t have to worry about them. But that would have been better...”

Su Liang listened to their conversation outside, which eventually became quieter and quieter before falling silent. Then she got up and made some noise. Soon, Lin Xueqing knocked on the door, “Little Sister Su, are you awake?” “Yes, just give me a moment.” Su Liang responded.

After Su Liang had tidied up and opened the door, she was hugged by Lin Xueqing. “Little Sister Su, you’re finally back! I was really afraid that you were hiding somewhere and would never see us again!”

Lin Xueqing’s voice was muffled, so Su Liang patted her back gently. “How could that be? I said I was coming back, and I won’t break my promise.”

Lin Xueqing let go of Su Liang, looked at her solemnly, and said, “Then promise me that from now on, even without Elder Brother Ning, you’ll live a good life. ”

Su Liang nodded, “Of course. I want to live a happy life and infuriate those despicable beings who can’t stand the light of day.”

Upon hearing this, Xing Yusheng blurted out. “He’s gone missing!”

He assumed that the “despicable beings” in Su Liang’s words referred to the Eldest Prince, Duanmu Cheng.

And he believed that Duanmu Cheng was the mastermind behind Ning Jing’s murder.

Su Liang held Lin Xueqing’s hand, let go, and walked outside. “I know. The Emperor sent someone to find me and bring me back.”

Xing Yusheng’s expression changed slightly, “No wonder you went to the palace after returning to the capital. Does the Emperor suspect that you have something to do with Duanmu Cheng’s disappearance?”

As soon as he said this, Xing Yusheng thought that perhaps Su Liang really was involved in this matter. It would be even better if she was the one who captured Duanmu Cheng, making him unable to live or die.

Su Liang nodded, “Correct.”

Lin Xueqing frowned, “Little Sister Su was in Xunyang City at the time, how could she be related to that matter?”

Su Liang snorted lightly, “Indeed, I am.”

Her words immediately made Xing Yusheng look around, fearing that the walls might have ears.

Then he heard Su Liang continue, “I cursed him every day for something bad to happen, and it eventually did. It can only be said that justice is served, and retribution is inevitable.”

Xing Yusheng held his forehead, “He only disappeared, maybe he’ll come back someday. ”

Su Liang’s expression was indifferent, “That’s not too bad either.”

Hearing Su Liang’s hidden meaning, Xing Yusheng sighed, “Let’s not talk about those unfortunate people anymore. Xueqing, you made breakfast for Su Liang.

It’s still warm, let her eat first.”

“Oh right, I almost forgot!” Lin Xueqing hurriedly led Su Liang to the kitchen, “You can go fishing in the garden, dear. I’ll just keep company with Sister Su!” Xing Yusheng: ... He knew this would happen.

“Aren’t you moving in? I’ll take Ajun next door to tidy up,” said Xing Yusheng.

Lin Xueqing still asked Su Liang, “Sister Su, how about I move in with you and we live together? I can cook anything you want! It’s not like I have anything important to do.”

Xing Yusheng: ... Isn’t it important to keep him company?

As Xing Yusheng expected, Su Liang gracefully declined, “No, I don’t want to watch you two show off your love every day. It would be a huge blow to me.”

Lin Xueqing suddenly became somewhat melancholic, “Sister Su, you must like Brother Ning after all. I knew it.”

Su Liang: ... She’s just joking to lighten the mood, but “Ning Jing” is dead, so there’s no need to deny it.

Su Liang changed the subject by saying she was hungry.

Lin Xueqing gave up the idea of moving in with Su Liang and quickly served her porridge.

After scooping out a bowl, Lin Xueqing looked at the leftovers in the pot and sighed softly, “When I cooked this, I didn’t think of anything. I just made it for you and Brother Ning, but he can never eat this again...”

Su Liang thought, very good, someone will enjoy his breakfast now.

After washing and brushing up, Su Liang told Lin Xueqing, “Why don’t you go and move in with your husband? The sooner you move in, the better, otherwise

I won’t have a place to eat.”

In fact, Su Liang just wanted to distract Lin Xueqing and avoid wasting the extra breakfast she had made.

Upon hearing this, Lin Xueqing naturally agreed immediately, lifting her skirt and running off to catch up with Xing Yusheng.

Su Liang served two portions of breakfast and brought them back to the room, then knocked on the wall next door, “Great God, are you there?”

A moment later, Gu Ling, who had tidied himself up and changed his appearance, appeared in Su Liang’s room.

“Xueqing made this,” said Su Liang. “But there’s a problem. If they really move in, I won’t be able to bring you with me when I go and freeload food. It’s a waste of effort on single portions. I have to leave very early for military training tomorrow, and I’ll have to eat lunch at the camp. It would be better to stay in the military camp to avoid running back and forth every day.”

Gu Ling didn't say anything; he finished an egg pancake and took away another one meant for Su Liang.

Su Liang's outstretched chopsticks caught nothing, and she was somewhat speechless, "If you're unhappy, just say it, don't steal my pancake."

Gu Ling ate gracefully without speaking.

The two had known each other for nearly a year and had a well-established pattern of daily life. Su Liang was responsible for cooking and Gu Ling for preparing and assisting with tasks such as chopping vegetables and kneading dough, especially dumpling making.

However, with Su Liang no longer cooking, their routine would be disrupted. Gu Ling's inability to openly appear would also have a significant impact.

For breakfast, Su Liang only got a bowl of porridge and a couple of bites of side dishes. The rest was taken by Gu Ling.

Just as Su Liang was about to argue with him, Gu Ling said, "Someone will surely invite you to lunch."

Su Liang froze for a moment. That's true. She had just returned to the capital and had only met Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing so far. However, Gu Ling couldn't find food if he didn't go out.

"Alright," Su Liang nodded. "Actually, you can go to the restaurant."

Gu Ling shook his head slightly, "I'm not used to it."

Su Liang rolled her eyes at him, "Just say you want me to cook for you."

Gu Ling nodded gently, saying, "I do."

Su Liang stood up, shaking her head, "I was just thinking about whether you would go hungry without food. I apologize. I shouldn't have assumed that Great God, you were a big baby and couldn't survive without me. I thought too much."

Gu Ling wiped her mouth with a handkerchief, "I can't move around outside." "I believe nothing can stop you," Su Liang said.

Before the dishes were cleaned up, they heard footsteps outside. Su Liang's expression turned serious, and Gu Ling had already entered the inner room.

She had just hidden Gu Ling's dishes when Lin Bojun's voice came from outside, "Xiaoliang, are you in?"

Su Liang opened the door and went out. "Second Brother Lin, didn't you go to the military camp today?"

Lin Bojun looked more mature after getting married. His clothes were more exquisite, and his handsome appearance was even more remarkable.

"Today is my day off. I accompanied Yu Jin to her parents' house, and Grandfather asked me to invite you over." He looked at Su Liang, "Seeing your complexion is okay, I'm relieved."

Old Master Qin's invitation did not surprise Su Liang. "Is Grandfather Qin in good health?"

Lin Bojun nodded, "He's doing great. There's an exam at the Imperial College today, so my father couldn't make it. Otherwise, he would have come to see you."

All three children of the Lin family had married, and Lin Shuzhi was now teaching at the Imperial College, living a fulfilling life.

Su Liang was originally thinking that it was Lin Family who would call her, but it ended up being the Qin Family, which was not much different. She assumed that Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing would also go over there.

"Second Brother Lin, go back first. I'll go over later." Su Liang said, "I returned late last night, and there's still some cleaning up to do at home."

Lin Bojun frowned, hesitated for a moment, and still asked, "Could I talk to you?"

Su Liang nodded and invited Lin Bojun to sit down in the courtyard. "Second Brother Lin, just speak up. There's no one else here."

Lin Bojun sighed deeply, "I just want to ask you if Ajing really died?"

Su Liang was not too surprised, because Lin Bojun knew that "Ning Jing" was not a weak scholar and that "Ning Jing" had followed Su Liang to Xuanbei City. So, he couldn't believe that "Ning Jing" died so suddenly.

He hadn't asked earlier because there were too many people around, and as soon as Su Liang returned to the capital, she quickly sent Ning Jing's body to Xunyang City and couldn't find an opportunity.

Su Liang nodded, "Ning Jing really died."

Lin Bojun's eyes dimmed, and he bitterly smiled, "I shouldn't have asked, but it's better to know, so I won't have unrealistic thoughts anymore."

As soon as he finished speaking, Lin Bojun stood up, "I'll go first. You don't have to hurry, just come over before noon."

Seeing Su Liang nod, Lin Bojun left with big strides.

Watching his figure disappear, Su Liang sighed softly. The truth was that the real Ning Jing had died long ago, without avenging his family and without regaining the Ning Family. He didn't even have a chance to see his beloved girl again, dying with hatred...

Nowadays, some secrets can't be spoken or shouldn't be spoken.

Su Liang sat quietly for a while, then got up and went back to her room. Seeing that Gu Ling was not there, she ignored him, washed the dishes, changed her clothes, and checked the neighboring room. Gu Ling was still not there, so she left alone and went to Xing Mansion next to the Su Mansion.

Qi Jun was watering the flowers. Seeing Su Liang, he immediately called Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing, "Master, Madam, Miss Su is here!"

Su Liang looked at the cozy little home that Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing had carefully created.

Lin Xueqing ran over and took Su Liang's arm, "Second Brother was just here. He asked us to go to Grandfather's house later!"

The "grandfather" Lin Xueqing mentioned was the same as the "grandfather" mentioned by Lin Bojun: Old Master Qin.

"I'll go too," Su Liang said. "I just came to see you first."

Lin Xueqing then showed Su Liang around the house, happily accepting the praise.

Su Liang casually asked about how Xing Yusheng's siblings were doing and if they had been bullying Lin Xueqing.

Lin Xueqing shook her head, "They don't dare to bully me. I'm not someone to be taken lightly!"

Upon hearing this, Su Liang knew something was wrong, or else there would be no need to say the latter part.

Seeing Su Liang frown, Lin Xueqing quickly explained, "Really, no one is bullying me. It's just that I don't like talking to some of them. Their words are full of twists and turns, and I can't understand them."

Su Liang guessed that Lin Xueqing might have been talking about Miao Family.

But with Xing's Old Madame and Xing Yusheng around, and considering Lin Xueqing's gentle but firm character, there shouldn't be much to worry about. Besides, the couple would soon move out and live on their own.

Before noon, Su Liang went with Lin Xueqing and Xing Yusheng to Duke Qin's Mansion, where she met Qin Yujin and was greeted warmly.

Old Master Qin was in good spirits. Seeing Su Liang, he brought out the gift he had won for her in a fishing bet with another nobleman in the capital city, a medical book that Su Liang loved very much.

Su Liang gladly accepted and thanked Old Master Qin.

In the afternoon, Su Liang bid farewell and left the Qin Mansion alone to go home.

On horseback, she was quickly recognized by people. The news of Su Liang's return to the capital had spread throughout the city that day. Then rumors began to spread, saying that Su Liang's appearance had deteriorated due to her fiancé's death, and she was lonely and desolate. It seemed that this kind of parting-and-death drama was more satisfying to the audience.

Ignoring the gossip, Su Liang practiced swordsmanship alone after she returned home. In the evening, Qi Jun personally sent dinner and said that Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing would move in tomorrow. Also, Old Madame Xing missed Su Liang and invited her to visit when she had time.

Su Liang said that she would go to the military camp to train troops tomorrow and would visit the Old Madame when she had a day off. Then she let Qi Jun leave.

Although the dinner was for Su Liang alone, there were several dishes and more than one type of main course. It was too much for her to eat alone, but just right for two people.

It wasn't until Su Liang had set up the meal that Gu Ling finally reappeared.

"Where have you been?" Su Liang asked.

Gu Ling was rarely mysterious, "I had something to do."

"Can't you let me know?" Su Liang asked curiously.

Gu Ling nodded, "No."

Su Liang: .

After dinner, Su Liang discussed with Gu Ling, "I'll stay at the military camp tomorrow. You can go do whatever you want, just don't let me know."

Gu Ling nodded slightly, "Okay."

Su Liang hesitated for a moment, feeling that something was wrong. "Great God, the basis of our cooperation is honesty. If you are like this, we can't continue."

After a moment of silence, Gu Ling said, "I'll tell you tomorrow."

"Alright," Su Liang didn't ask further. "Since you promised, then I'll move to the military camp tomorrow."

Before going to bed that night, Su Liang told Gu Ling two stories as usual.

Early the next morning, Su Liang got up, made some simple food, packed her luggage, and rode out of the city towards the military camp.

Lin Bojun knew that Su Liang was coming to manage the training and had arranged a place for her to rest, but he didn't expect that she would stay overnight.

As Su Liang put down her luggage and followed Lin Bojun to watch the soldiers' training, she saw a group of new recruits passing by in the distance and stopped to salute them. Among them was a man with an outstanding appearance...

Su Liang's eyes narrowed, and the man was also looking at her.

"Xiaoliang, these new recruits are under your command," Lin Bojun said.

Su Liang nodded, "That's great, I'll train them well.."

Chapter 225: 225. Firefly

Su Liang hadn't expected that Gu Ling had actually enlisted as a new soldier in the City Guard Army yesterday, and now he was under her command.

Considering Gu Ling's consistent high desire to try things he had never done before, Su Liang figured that he was looking to experience a different life with a different identity.

Lin Bojun was beside her, so Su Liang couldn't show any special regard for Gu Ling to avoid arousing suspicion.

Looking at the hundreds of new soldiers in front of her, either excited, nervous or curious, only a few were calm, and most of those were physically strong.

But Su Liang knew that Gu Ling was truly calm, treating it as if he were just playing around.

Without saying much, Su Liang wanted to see the physical fitness of these new soldiers first, so she led the team to follow Lin Bojun to a designated training area on the drill ground.

“You can use any other place that no one is currently training at,” Lin Bojun instructed.

At this moment, a junior officer, leading an elite squad of City Guards, had just finished training and passed by not far away. They all stopped to look, having heard that they would compete against Su Liang’s new soldiers in a month. They all felt assured of victory.

“General Lin, please feel free to go about your business,” Su Liang said.

Lin Bojun glanced at the soldiers watching nearby and left without saying anything. He was not worried at all about Su Liang or the soldiers under her leadership. For her, nothing was impossible.

The sky was clear and blue.

More and more curious veterans gathered, making many new soldiers feel even more uneasy. Some were so nervous that they couldn’t stand still, their faces flushed. Being stared at was like an excruciating torture for many, not painful, but utterly uncomfortable.

Ignoring the people around, Su Liang began to warm up the new soldiers and commanded them to imitate her movements.

Soon, a stifled laugh came from not far away, followed by laughter from many other veterans.

Since the warm-up movements were small and of low intensity, to those who didn’t understand, it looked like playing around.

Su Liang did not care about the opinions of others. However, some of the more thin-skinned new soldiers were affected by the gazes and laughter around them, failing to perform the warm-up movements properly.

Su Liang didn’t reprimand anyone. After completing the warm-up, she explained, “Most of you just enlisted, and regardless of your previous status, you did not have any high-intensity training in your daily lives. If you start training too hard from the beginning, you will risk injury. Therefore, it is essential to perform a proper warm-up and activate your body joints before each training session.”

The laughter around them grew smaller, gradually stopping altogether.

“Now, run around the drill grounds and stop when you can’t run anymore, then come and report to me.” Just as Su Liang finished speaking, someone squeezed past the crowd and ran over, “General Su! Count me in!”

Compared to the strong and tall soldiers, the newcomer appeared more like a delicate young man.

This was Gao Jiabao, who participated in the Military Exam with Su Liang back then. He had become the second-place scholar but had suffered severe injuries. He had worked in a civil position in the Ministry of War and was just transferred to the Forbidden Army camp a few days ago. Although his rank was one level below Su Liang, he was not an ordinary soldier.

Su Liang hadn’t expected to see Gao Jiabao here again, but this was not the time for small talk.

Gao Jiabao took the initiative to explain, "I've only been here a few days as well, and I'm a new soldier too. I haven't participated in any training yet. It's perfect timing with General Su's arrival, so please take me in as a soldier under your command!"

Su Liang asked, "Is this something I can decide?" Gao Jiabao nodded, "I've asked General Lin, and he agreed."

"Alright." Su Liang nodded, "I won't be polite."

Gao Jiabao smiled and bowed, "Please, General Su, do not treat me as anything special, just like any other soldier."

Su Liang acknowledged and let the new soldiers line up and get ready to run.

Although Gu Ling's disguised appearance was also outstanding, he was not particularly noticeable because all the new soldiers wore the same uniform, and he was quiet.

Su Liang thought that the feeling of Gu Ling standing out in the crowd was just her own perception since he was the only person she knew and was extremely familiar with. No matter when, her first glance would always fall on Gu Ling as a subconscious reaction.

Seeing that Gao Jiabao did not go over, Su Liang frowned and heard him say, "I didn't participate in the warm-up just now, so I have to trouble General Su to teach me again."

Su Liang nodded, ordered the others to start running, and taught Gao Jiabao individually.

Joining the army had always been Gao Jiabao's dream, but after entering the military camp for a few days, despite his decent martial arts skills, his delicate appearance and seemingly frail body still made many soldiers openly and secretly mock him, just like his experiences since childhood.

When he learned that Su Liang was coming, Gao Jiabao was determined to follow her, not only because he admired her strength, but also because dealing with Su Liang made him feel respected, without any discrimination or hypocrisy.

After seriously warming up, Gao Jiabao joined the ranks of the new recruits running.

Su Liang went to check on the new recruits and soon saw Gu Ling. Knowing him for almost a year, Su Liang seldom saw the calm and composed Gu Ling running, but today, she could only say that the Great God was indeed the Great God, who always treated the tasks he needed to do with utmost seriousness and focus, despite the burden of being an idol.

Gu Ling didn't run at the front, nor did he fall behind. His speed was uniform, his breath steady, and his footsteps firm.

In contrast, the last to join, Gao Jiabao, treated this like a contest, becoming a little anxious, constantly trying to surpass those in front of him.

After two laps like this, those new recruits who had been competing at the beginning, including Gao Jiabao, had all slowed down.

Gu Ling, however, still maintained a steady pace, his expression unchanged.

The drill ground was quite large, and by the third lap, some people couldn't keep up.

Su Liang received the list of new recruits that Lin Bojun had sent, with the basic information of each newcomer such as name, age, birthplace, whether they knew martial arts, and what weapons they were good at, briefly recorded.

Flipping to the last page, the last line, although the handwriting was unfamiliar, the name was recognizable to Su Liang. Han Su, inverted, is Su Han. Su is a homophone of Su, and Han is close to Liang.

However, conscription did not accept people with unknown backgrounds. Han Su wrote down a place of origin that Su Liang had never heard of, but it must certainly exist.

“General...” The first person came up, clutching his chest, his face flushed and panting heavily.

After asking his name, Su Liang wrote a serial number on the roster and let him rest.

One after another, those who could not run came up to register, and then they could end this half-day training.

Gao Jiabao couldn't run anymore either, but he continued to force himself because he didn't want to be embarrassed and ridiculed.

Su Liang didn't bother him.

When there were six people left, Gu Ling stopped in front of Su Liang and did not continue to run.

“What's your name?” Su Liang looked at the thin sweat on Gu Ling's forehead, thinking that he looked more down-to-earth now than before.

Gu Ling's thin lips opened slightly, “Han Su.”

“You seem to still have some energy. Why not continue?” Su Liang asked.

“May I ask General, is there any reward for getting first place?” Gu Ling asked.

Su Liang shook her head, “No.”

“I can't run anymore. I'm thirsty.” Gu Ling finished speaking and walked towards the resting and drinking new recruits under the trees not far away.

Su Liang watched his retreating figure, thinking that he must be doing so to maintain a low profile, not because he was really thirsty or tired.

If a new recruit stands out too much on the first day of training, he will surely attract attention.

When there were only four people left, Gao Jiabao dragged his shaky legs to Su Liang, his normally pale face now red, and said with some shame, “I can't do it anymore.”

Su Liang added Gao Jiabao's name to the roster and wrote a number, “This is training, not competition. You are too anxious. You don't need to care about others' opinions so much. When someone looks down on you, the best counterattack is not your process of doing things, but the result. Because those who belittle you, no matter what you do, will always find something to ridicule.

Only a definite result can slap them in the face.”

Gao Jiabao was stunned, and after a moment, sighed, "My grandfather always said you were insightful and asked me to learn from you."

Su Liang smiled, "Your strength is not a problem, but you need to face and accept that you're different from others. No two people are exactly the same. You're good looking and beating those who mock you does not require you to be like them, tall and strong."

"Do you think I'm good looking?" Gao Jiabao asked Su Liang seriously.

Su Liang nodded, "Yes. But don't misunderstand. I'm just giving you advice as a friend."

Gao Jiabao nodded, "I understand, I won't misunderstand, I just want to thank you."

Another person came over, and Gao Jiabao went to rest under a nearby tree.

Someone yielded their position, and Gao Jiabao stood leaning against the tree, inexplicably asking a new recruit that he didn't know, "What do you think of my appearance?"

The new recruit turned his head, and Gao Jiabao was stunned, "No need to answer, your appearance is much better than mine. What's your name?" The new recruit calmly replied, "My surname is Han, my name is Su."

"How did you think of joining the army?" Gao Jiabao couldn't help but ask since he didn't see any uncomfortable reaction from Gu Ling. Such beautiful men were rare in the camp.

Gu Ling closed his eyes, "It was my father's dying wish."

"I see." Gao Jiabao understood.

After training, Su Liang gathered the new recruits, pointed out their problems, and how to improve.

"Today's training was just a warm-up, I'll develop a detailed training plan as soon as possible." Su Liang dismissed them after she finished speaking.

Gao Jiabao stayed until the end and went with Su Liang to find Lin Bojun.

"Have you noticed, General Su, that there is a handsome man in our new recruit camp?" Gao Jiabao asked.

Su Liang nodded as usual, "Yes, I saw him, the one whose last name is Han."

"He said he joined the army to fulfill his father's dying wish." Gao Jiabao casually shared the information he had learned.

Su Liang: ...I don't buy it.

Lin Bojun had gone out with a team of soldiers on an errand, so Su Liang returned to her residence in the Forbidden Army camp, an independent small courtyard not far from the new recruit camp, with an ancient cypress tree in the courtyard.

The conditions were ordinary, but Su Liang didn't mind. She was planning to fetch water when she saw two new recruits bringing water. One of them was her acquaintance.

The other was a quick-witted young man, “My name is Qiu Ming! General Lin asked us to choose two diligent people to serve General Su by drawing lots. Everyone competed to come, and in the end, Brother Han and I had good luck and got the spots!”

Su Liang thought, this kid is lucky, but Mr. Gu must have done something tricks to get the spot.

Then, Su Liang simply arranged for the cleaning. The diligent Qiu Ming went to sweep the floor, Gu Ling held a wooden basin and a rag, and they both went into the room together.

“Your face is too eye-catching,” Su Liang said softly.

Gu Ling shook his head slightly, “Actually, it’s your face.”

Su Liang: ...Indeed, Gu Ling’s current disguise was modeled on her appearance in the previous world, a customized version of her nonexistent real brother’s appearance in the previous world...

“Can you get used to living with so many people?” Su Liang asked.

Gu Ling nodded, “It’s nothing.”

Su Liang gave a thumbs-up.

“You think Gao Jiabao is very good-looking?” Gu Ling asked.

Su Liang was stunned for a moment, “You can read lips?”

She had said it, but Gu Ling’s position at that time made it impossible for him to hear.

Gu Ling shook his head, “I can’t, but I could tell some of it.”

“He is good-looking, but he is always bullied and somewhat self-conscious. I was just comforting him,” Su Liang explained.

“Be careful not to attract unwanted attention,” Gu Ling said.

Su Liang snorted, “Why do you care?”

Gu Ling paused while wiping the table and looked at Su Liang, “You said it yourself.”

Su Liang rubbed her forehead, “Yes, yes, I did say that after you recover your identity, I will use you as a cover to avoid arranged marriages. Gao Jiabao has no such intention, neither do I, so you don’t have to worry. Wearing that face, do you really think of yourself as my real brother?”

Gu Ling frowned slightly, “When you see me, do you think I look like your real brother?”

Su Liang shook her head, “No, I don’t have a real brother, it’s like looking at myself. ”

Qiu Ming asked from outside if the ancient cypress tree’s branches and leaves needed to be trimmed.

“No need,” Su Liang went out, “I’ll clean up the rest. You guys go back.”

As Gu Ling and Su Liang brushed past each other, he whispered, “I’ll come to listen to the story tonight.”

When Su Liang stayed in Xuanbei City, she lived in the General Mansion. This was her first time living in the camp, and it felt very special.

As the only female, she was also the most unique existence in the eyes of others in the army.

Dinner was brought by Gu Ling because he was the chosen attendant of Su Liang.

“After I finish eating, you can take the dishes back,” Su Liang said.

Gu Ling waited outside the door. Su Liang ate inside and asked, “It’s not convenient for you to come over at night, right? Would you like me to tell you a story now?”

“Alright,” Gu Ling nodded slightly.

It was late summer and early autumn, and the night breeze was cool.

The lantern under the eaves illuminated half of Gu Ling’s elegant and dust-free face, while Su Liang’s soft voice from inside the room told the story, and green fireflies rose in the corners of the courtyard, peaceful and tranquil.

After finishing two stories, Su Liang had also finished her meal. She tidied up the dishes and handed them to Gu Ling, “Can you get used to the canteen food?”

Gu Ling took out a cloth bag from his bosom and opened it. There were still two pieces of peach slices he had brought from home. He took half and gave the other half to Su Liang.

“It’s delicious,” Su Liang felt like she was sneaking a snack.

Gu Ling left with the food tray and Su Liang went back to her room without closing the door.

As soon as she sat down, Gu Ling reappeared at the door, “General Su, it seems like I left my jade pendant here.”

Su Liang raised her eyebrows, “Oh? Then come in and look for it?”

Gu Ling entered, and blew out the lamp in Su Liang’s room.

Su Liang frowned, ‘What are you doing? People might suspect that we have an inappropriate relationship.’

The next moment, Gu Ling’s clasped hands slowly opened, and the green fireflies fluttered in front of Su Liang, the laughter in her eyes rippling....

Chapter 226: 226. Poisoning

The moon outside the window was bright and spotless, the room only illuminated by the soft glow of fireflies.

Su Liang and Gu Ling sat very close to each other, their breaths detectable.

Su Liang stared at the fireflies, while Gu Ling stared at her eyes brimming with laughter.

“Hey, Great God.” Su Liang started, her voice instinctively lowered.

Gu Ling responded, “Hmm?”

“Do you know why fireflies glow?” Su Liang asked.

Gu Ling shook his head, “I would like to hear more.”

“Fireflies emit light from their light organs. It begins with the nerve impulse transmitted to the light-emitting cells, which releases the originally suppressed luciferin. There is a phosphorous chemical in the cells of fireflies called luciferin, which, under its own catalyst, oxidizes and the resulting energy is released in the form of light,” Su Liang recalled the explanation she saw online in her previous life.

Gu Ling frowned slightly, “Do you think I understand?”

“Actually, I don’t quite understand either,” Su Liang shook her head.

Gu Ling asked, “Nerve impulse? Why the impulse?”

Su Liang chuckled lightly, “It’s usually for mating. Male fireflies emit light to attract female fireflies, similar to a peacock’s display.”

Gu Ling was taken aback for a moment, but Su Liang didn’t look at his expression and didn’t notice.

Fireflies fluttered out through the open window. Su Liang lit a lamp and seriously said, “Luckily your jade pendant glows at night. I found it this time, but keep it safe. Don’t lose it again.”

Gu Ling left, “Yes, thank you, General Su.” He picked up a food box at the door and walked away quickly.

Su Liang went to the window, looked up at the moon for a while, and thought about the training plan she had made for the new recruits. The physical constitution of these new recruits was far worse than those she trained in Xuanbei City, so she needed to make progress gradually.

As for the competition between the new recruits and the elite squad in a month, Su Liang was not very worried.

Not because she thought she could win, but because she didn’t care. Duanmu Yi wanted to test her skills and consider whether to promote her through this, but she didn’t care about promotions. She had thought that if Duanmu Cheng disappeared and she aroused Duanmu Yi’s suspicion and was no longer valued, it would not be a bad thing. Now, she just let things take their natural course and do her job well.

As for her training of new recruits, it was to improve their physical fitness in the right way, to teach them to be qualified soldiers, rather than growing them prematurely to defeat the elite squad in a month.

Nevertheless, Su Liang still planned to assess the strength of the elite squad the next day. Even if it wasn’t for the competition, she wanted to see what the level of the strongest soldiers in the Forbidden Army was.

By the time Su Liang read through the training plan she had written in the afternoon again, it was already late at night.

After a brief wash, Su Liang went to bed.

On the other hand, in the new recruit camp where Gu Ling stayed, the conditions were very rudimentary. Gu Ling chose to sleep in a position close to the wall where it still wasn’t possible to avoid having someone on one side, close but not adjacent.

It was Qiu Ming, the new recruit who was selected with Gu Ling to follow Su Liang. He was talkative, and had already shared where his home was, how many people were in his family, why he joined the army, when he arrived in the capital city, how many clothes he brought, and how much silver he had left.

Out of politeness, Gu Ling also shared his situation. His whole family was gone, his father's dying wish and the like.

"Hey, Han Su, are you asleep?" Qiu Ming turned over and called Gu Ling in a whisper.

Gu Ling was turned towards the wall, heard him but did not respond, so Qiu Ming stopped talking.

Now that Lin Bojun had his own family, he no longer lived in the military camp. Unless there was something important, he always tried to get back home for dinner.

When he arrived early at the camp the next day, he went to watch Su Liang training the new recruits.

The morning mist had just receded. The cold, serious female voice on the training ground gave commands, sounding exceptionally melodious.

Lin Bojun waited for Su Liang's team to run past him and waved at her.

"Qiu Ming, come forward and continue!" Su Liang had chosen Qiu Ming, who had carried on running until the end the previous day and was very popular, to be the team leader.

Qiu Ming led his team to continue running, and Su Liang walked over to Lin Bojun.

"I didn't stop Gao Jiabao when he insisted on following you," Lin Bojun said with a smile, "but you didn't even make him your assistant?"

Su Liang shook her head, "He requested for fairness."

"That's good. You should understand him better than me since you both came out of the same Military Exam," Lin Bojun stated and then looked towards the new recruits in the distance, "I heard there's a boy in there who's very handsome?"

Su Liang casually remarked, "The overall attractiveness of our new recruit camp is not low. If we're talking about the best looking one, it's a kid with the last name Han, with Gao Jiabao being the second. But in comparison to Second Brother Lin..."

"And?" Lin Bojun instinctively asked.

"Second Brother Lin would rank third," Su Liang joked.

Lin Bojun scoffed, "Yu Jin said that I'm the most handsome."

Su Liang nodded, "Of course. What does Second Brother Lin have there?" Lin Bojun quickly handed over the food box in his hand to Su Liang upon

hearing her remark, "I got too caught up with chatting and almost forgot the main point. This is the breakfast Yu Jin prepared for you, and there are some desserts she made with my sister-in-law. Little

sister and Yu Sheng visited last night, and she even wanted to deliver meals to you every day until my father persuaded her. ”

Su Liang accepted it, “Thank you to sister-in-law and Yu Jin. Has Xueqing moved next door to my house?”

Lin Bojun nodded, “She moved there yesterday. You weren’t home, which disappointed my little sister.”

“She’s married, why is she still clinging to me?” Su Liang shook her head, “I think your brother-in-law wouldn’t be disappointed.”

“That’s true.” As soon as Lin Bojun finished speaking, someone called him from afar, and he walked away.

Su Liang waited for the team to run in front of her again, instructed Qiu Ming to run two more rounds before eating breakfast.

Su Liang’s gaze met with Gu Ling’s once again. She thought about asking Gu Ling to carry the food box and join her for breakfast, but quickly dismissed the idea. If she showed special treatment to a new soldier and people suspected that she was attracted to Gu Ling, that’s okay, but it could arouse suspicion of those who know some inside information and are suspicious by nature that Ning Jing might not be dead.

For instance, Lin Bojun who knows “Ning Jing” is a martial arts expert, or Duke Duanmu Yi and his son Duanmu Chen from the royal family, or Lian Shun who taught her the Disguise Technique.

Therefore, Su Liang went off alone with the food box that Lin Bojun had given her. Gu Ling casually withdrew his gaze and continued training with others, and after the training, they went to have breakfast together.

There were no tables in the military camp for meals, some people stood, others squatted or sat on the ground.

Gu Ling had just sat down under a tree with his breakfast when Qiu Ming and Gao Jiabao came over.

“Are you close with General Gao, General Su?” Qiu Ming asked.

Gao Jiabao shook his head, “We are friends, but not close. She keeps a proper distance from everyone.”

Qiu Ming looked wholly understanding after a moment, “Right, Su Liang had a fiancé before, it’s a pity he was so young.”

Gu Ling didn’t say much, instead he listened to Qiu Ming and Gao Jiabao talk about the contest that would take place in a month. They both placed great importance on it and hoped to win, believing that losing would disappoint Su Liang.

“You know how to do martial arts, right, Han Su?” Qiu Ming asked.

Gu Ling nodded, “Mhm.”

“I do too, my dad’s an Escort Master, I grew up in the Escort Agency, and I learned some martial arts from my uncles. But I think being an Escort Master is uninteresting. I originally wanted to join the military in Xuanbei City, but I happened to come across the Forbidden Army recruiting in the capital city while passing by. It’s a rare opportunity!” Qiu Ming said with a smile, “My family doesn’t even know I’m in the capital city. When we get a chance to leave the camp, I want to write a letter to them to let them know I’m safe.”

Gao Jiabao then said, “I’m going home tomorrow. You can give the letter to me, and I’ll help you send it.”

Qiu Ming’s face lit up, “That’s great! Thank you, General Gao!”

“I’m like you guys, just call me by my name.” Gao Jiabao quite liked Qiu Ming.

Gu Ling’s gaze swept over Qiu Ming’s forehead and he ate a bite of his steamed bun with an unchanged expression.

The breakfast Qin Yujin prepared for Su Liang was abundant, she couldn’t finish it and left two steamed buns in her room. The other delicate and delicious desserts were untouched.

That morning, Su Liang gave the new soldiers a brief overview of the upcoming training plan and then started their first official day of training.

Many new soldiers couldn’t hold on for long, but Su Liang was far stricter than the day before. Without harming their bodies, she required them to persevere.

Approaching noon, half of the day’s training was over. Su Liang had worked up a sweat and was ready to wash up.

She hadn’t been back at her home for long when Qiu Ming and Gu Ling came to bring her food and water.

The small courtyard where Su Liang lived originally had a stove, but it had not been used for a long time. Lin Bojun had people clean and repair it in the morning, and they also prepared dry firewood and a new tub, specially for Su Liang’s use.

Gu Ling was heating the bathwater for Su Liang when she asked them if they had eaten yet.

After hearing from Qiu Ming that they had not, Su Liang said, “Then you go eat first, and take his portion while you’re at it. So you won’t go too late and miss out.”

Qiu Ming then hurriedly ran off.

Su Liang gave the steamed bun she saved from the morning to Gu Ling, “Yu Jin made it. If you think it’s too cold, toast it over the fire.”

While talking, Su Liang felt that Gu Ling’s standard of meals had precipitously decreased since joining the army.

Gu Ling wiped his hands, took it, and started eating without reheating it.

“In my opinion, you might as well find an excuse to withdraw. You’ve already experienced it, and it’s only going to get harder from here.” Su Liang suggested. Mainly because she felt that Gu Ling had not improved his skills or mentality by leaving his comfortable life to come here to experience hardship. It was unnecessary.

Gu Ling shook his head, “No.”

Su Liang shrugged, “As long as you’re happy. If the food here doesn’t fit your taste, I have desserts in my room. I’ll save them for you. You can take them whenever you want, just make sure no one sees you.”

“Ok.” Gu Ling nodded, and suddenly asked Su Liang, “Have you ever seen a peacock displaying its feathers?”

“I have, in the zoo, they’re very beautiful.” Su Liang replied, “Aren’t there peacocks here?”

Gu Ling said that there were in Yin Country, but he had only heard of them and had never seen them himself.

Thus Su Liang casually said, “Maybe one day, when I have a chance, I’d like to visit Yin Country.”

Qiu Ming came to deliver her dinner that day. Gu Ling did not appear, so Su Liang had no chance to tell him stories during the dinner.

Because Gu Ling was living with others, him disappearing in the middle of the night would easily arouse suspicion.

Therefore, when Su Liang didn’t see Gu Ling appear before preparing to sleep, she thought it was normal.

But when she prepared to leave the following morning, she noticed that the desserts she had left on the table specifically for Gu Ling, two pieces from the top plate, had disappeared without a trace...

It can’t be anyone else, Su Liang didn’t know when Gu Ling came last night.

In the afternoon, Su Liang saw the elite team of the Forbidden Army’s training for the first time. This team was carefully selected, all tall and strong, decent at martial arts, some having been on the battlefield, their skills far surpassing those of the new soldiers.

“I do not know how the Emperor will test you, but I have faith in you,” Lin Bojun said to Su Liang.

Su Liang shook her head, “I will gradually increase the intensity of the new soldiers’ training, but it doesn’t matter if we win or lose.”

That night, Qiu Ming again came to deliver dinner to Su Liang.

Su Liang was not very hungry and instructed him to leave after setting the food down.

“Yes, General Su.” Qiu Ming respectfully excused himself.

But just as he was leaving, he saw Gao Jiabao arrive. Although he had voluntarily joined the new recruits for training, he was still technically a junior officer and could move freely within the military camp.

“Your letter has been sent by someone!” Gao Jiabao had just returned home in the afternoon and just got back to camp, bringing something in his hand that Old Physician Gao had given him to bring to Su Liang.

Hearing this, Qiu Ming hastily expressed his thanks to Gao Jiabao.

“I have brought something delicious for you and Han Su.” Gao Jiabao took out an oil paper package from the basket he held and handed it to Qiu Ming: “Sauce Pork Knuckle, a signature dish from Wan Family’s Restaurant in the capital city.”

Qiu Ming was elated and happily accepted it.

Gao Jiabao, carrying the basket, headed toward Su Liang’s room.

The moment Qiu Ming turned around, his eyes cooled....

“I don’t know what your tastes are. This is made by my mom.” Gao Jiabao took out a box of osmanthus cakes along with a miscellaneous book borrowed from Old Physician Gao. The book contained some medical knowledge.

Su Liang gratefully tasted a piece of the osmanthus cake and nodded her head: “Delicious.” Having not finished her sentence, she picked up the book.

Gao Jiabao wasn’t surprised. Seeing that Su Liang hadn’t touched her dinner, she told him, “If you haven’t eaten, you can eat it here. I’ll have the osmanthus cake when I get hungry.”

To avoid getting back home too late, Gao Jiabao indeed did not eat dinner at home. Thinking that he still had something to ask Su Liang, he accepted her offer without further ado.

Since Su Liang was reading, Gao Jiabao quietly ate his meal, intending to ask his question after he finished.

The room’s door and windows were open. The wind rose outside, rustling the leaves of trees.

Gao Jiabao put down his chopsticks while Su Liang was still concentrating on her book.

“I have something to ask you...” Gao Jiabao had just begun to speak when he suddenly spat out a mouthful of blood, his eyes turned red.

Su Liang closed her book and looked over, “What is it?”

Upon seeing the change in Gao Jiabao, her expression changed. She tossed the book aside and tried to check his pulse.

But before her hand could touch Gao Jiabao’s arm, he abruptly stood up, drew his waist sword, and lunged it at Su Liang!

“Gao Jiabao!” Su Liang quickly dodged.

But Gao Jiabao seemed to not hear her, attacking Su Liang as if he were in a frenzy.

Su Liang's heart sunk deep! There was a problem with the dinner tonight! He must have been poisoned! And the poison was originally aimed at her. If she had eaten it and uncontrollably turned into a maniac killer, the consequences would be unimaginable!

Su Liang stabilized her mind, dodging Gao Jiabao's attacks while looking for an opportunity to control him.

At the same time, Qiu Ming, carrying the sauce pork knuckle Gao Jiabao had given him, found Gu Ling, saying he wanted to share.

"It looks delicious! You didn't eat much for dinner, come and try some!" Qiu Ming said with a smile.

Gu Ling's expression was indifferent: "It's too greasy, I won't eat it."

Hearing this, Qiu Ming put the pork knuckle he was about to pass over back, but he didn't eat it. Instead, he was going to put it back in the oil-paper bag: "Then we'll eat it tomorrow. It's too late today."

Gu Ling's gaze once again fell on Qiu Ming's forehead, then quickly shifted to the sauce pork knuckle he had put away, his eyes focusing!

When Qiu Ming looked up once again, Gu Ling was already no longer in sight..

Chapter 227: Behind-the-scenes Mastermind

A shadow flitted under the moonlight, and Gu Ling rushed into Su Liang's room.

At first sight of Su Liang, Gu Ling slightly breathed a sigh of relief, only then noticing Gao Jiabao, who was wrapped and tied up by the bed curtains next to her, still struggling, and the room in disarray.

Most of the bowls and dishes on the table had shattered on the floor, but there was still a box of intact desserts, Osmanthus Cakes made by the mother of Gao Jiabao, which he had brought for Su Liang to eat.

"What happened?" Gu Ling asked.

Su Liang looked at him with a sickly face, "Someone poisoned my food. I didn't eat it, but Gao Jiabao did, and he went mad, trying to kill. I don't know what poison it is and how to cure it."

"It's Qiu Ming." Gu Ling's voice turned cold.

"Did you see his brow..." Su Liang frowned. If it were Qiu Ming, Gu Ling should not have seen the black mist on his brow afterwards, right?

Gu Ling shook his head, "No. It seems that the purpose of this poison is not to kill. "

Gu Ling was suspicious because of the Sauce Pork Knuckle that Qiu Ming had let him eat, but he hadn't found any black mist on Qiu Ming's brow. However, the food was given by Qiu Ming to Su Liang, making him the prime suspect.

However, Gu Ling's ability to see the black mist indicated that someone would be killed in three days or would be killed without deserving to die within that period, and if he didn't stop them, the person would die.

Obviously, the aim of this poison plot against Su Liang was not to kill her, but to ruin her...

Living alone, if she went mad after taking the poison, it was unthinkable how many people would be killed by her as the Martial Arts Champion in a situation where she lost her sanity.

The man behind the scenes had a similar mentality to Duanmu Cheng who had previously sent a grandfather-granddaughter pair to assassinate Su Liang in Xunyang City: It was precisely because Su Liang was a righteous and kind person that their sinister plot could succeed.

Hearing the hurried footsteps outside, Su Liang told Gu Ling to leave, "Don't let Qiu Ming escape."

Gu Ling glanced at the red-eyed Gao Jiabao staring at Su Liang, said nothing, and disappeared from the room.

Before Gu Ling's arrival, Su Liang had called for help loudly, and a soldier had responded to her. She told them to find someone immediately.

Lin Bojun went home every day, so he wasn't in the military camp at this time. Just as Gu Ling left, several generals from the Forbidden Army arrived one after another.

Su Liang briefly explained the situation, "This matter must be reported to His Majesty immediately and arrange for the Imperial Physician to come! Qiu Ming is highly suspicious, don't let him escape!"

As soon as her words fell, Su Liang pierced a specific acupoint on Gao Jiabao with a needle. but it was of no use. as Gao Tiabao didn't fall unconscious.

A poisoning incident in the military camp was extremely serious, indicating the presence of a spy. Knowing the gravity of the situation, the generals split into two groups, one rushing to the Imperial Palace to report, and the other going to apprehend Qiu Ming.

After being rejected by Gu Ling when offering him Sauce Pork Knuckle and discovering that Gu Ling had disappeared, Qiu Ming soon vanished from the new recruits' camp as well.

However, both Gu Ling and Qiu Ming were assigned to serve as running errands for Su Liang and could enter and exit the new recruits' camp freely. Therefore, when the two were not present, the other new recruits simply thought they had gone to Su Liang and didn't notice anything unusual.

The general leading the soldiers to arrest the culprit found that Qiu Ming had disappeared and immediately ordered a thorough search of the entire military camp!

The security of the Forbidden Army was very tight, making it difficult to break in or escape.

Just as a new recruit whispered a comment, "Han Su is missing too," Han Su walked in carrying a wooden basin for washing, his forehead still slightly damp.

After everyone left, the new recruits' camp was noisy with everyone speculating about what Qiu Ming had done.

Gu Ling sat on the bed, holding a half-carved little firefly puppet in his hand, frowning in silence.

Su Liang had tried many ways, but none had been able to calm Gao Jiabao down. The poison was too tricky. In the end, she chose to knock him out, which took three attempts to succeed.

The small courtyard was heavily guarded but the room was quiet.

Su Liang had been squatting on the ground for too long. When she suddenly stood up, she felt a bit dizzy, and beads of sweat formed on her forehead, dripping onto the ground.

She moved Gao Jiabao to the bed and went out to ask for a rope to bind him since she didn't know when he would wake up and the bed curtains were torn apart.

Forcing herself to calm down, Su Liang also figured out the goal of the person behind the scenes. To make her go mad and kill, even if she recovered afterward, she would be filled with regret for the rest of her life...

Such means were nothing short of ruthlessly vicious.

Taking a deep breath, Su Liang's gaze fell on Gao Jiabao again, she needed to put aside her distracting thoughts, and the first priority was to detoxify him.

In the Imperial Palace, Duanmu Yi learnt that a spy had infiltrated the

Forbidden Army and poisoned Su Liang's food. His face changed drastically.

Upon hearing the report that Su Liang was unharmed and the food was eaten by Gao Jiabao, Duanmu Yi breathed a sigh of relief and then asked about Gao Jiabao's condition.

Upon learning that Gao Jiabao was already under Su Liang's control, she ordered the Imperial Physician to be summoned. Duanmu Yi ordered the senior Imperial Physician to choose someone to escort him.

Before the person left, someone arrived to report on the arrest of the spy.

It really was Qiu Ming, whose original plan was to escape when Su Liang went mad and killed people, creating chaos in the army. However, things changed, and before he could escape, someone suddenly grabbed the back of his neck and slammed him hard into a tree, causing him to faint, and he was quickly found.

Therefore, the report Duanmu Yi received was, "The spy fled in panic and, due to the dark night and limited visibility, knocked himself out by colliding with a tree."

From beginning to end, no one discovered any connection between the incident and Gu Ling.

Duanmu Yi ordered Qiu Ming to be taken to the Heavenly Prison for interrogation by the Ministry of Justice overnight to pry open his mouth and find out the mastermind behind the plot.

The senior Imperial Physician, who was already asleep, suddenly received the news that his precious grandson had been poisoned in the military camp. He immediately felt the world spin around him.

By the time the five Imperial Physicians, including the senior one, rushed to the Forbidden Army camp, it was already late at night.

Su Liang had someone tidy up the room, but traces of the fight were still visible.

Gao Jiabao hadn't awakened yet. There were stationery and a pile of medicinal herbs on the table, and Su Liang was deep in thought about how to detoxify him.

The senior Imperial Physician was devastated upon seeing his grandson's condition.

Su Liang helped him sit down and described Gao Jiabao's symptoms to everyone, asking if they had ever heard or seen such poison.

However, the Imperial Physicians' knowledge of poison techniques was even less than Su Liang's, and they all said that they had never heard of it.

"Could it be that he will recover by tomorrow once he wakes up?" a physician furrowed his brow and said, "I recalled that the Fifth Prince had once gone mad for no reason and returned to normal the next day, but I'm not sure if it's a similar poison."

Su Liang had already thought of it. The Fifth Prince, Duanmu Che's abnormal behavior back then, was caused by her and Gu Ling using a poison called Leisurely Pill.

However, the poison Gao Jiabao suffered from was different. The Leisurely Pill only made people behave like lunatics, and the desire to attack others wasn't as strong. After being poisoned, Gao Jiabao seemed to have become a murderous maniac, and if it weren't for Su Liang's presence, the soldiers wouldn't have survived approaching him with his Martial Arts skills.

"I'm not sure," Su Liang shook her head.

The only thing that reassured Su Liang was that Gu Ling had not spotted the dark cloud on Qiu Ming's forehead or Gao Jiabao's, confirming that at least for the next three days, Gao Jiabao wouldn't die.

Before the Imperial Physicians arrived, Su Liang had researched the detoxification method based on the Leisurely Pill.

Daylight arrived.

Gu Ling, carrying a bucket of water, entered Su Liang's courtyard.

The door was open, and she could see Su Liang talking to the senior Imperial Physician with a weary expression.

Retracting her gaze, Gu Ling brought the water to the kitchen and poured it into the tank, then began to heat the water. From her position, she could vaguely hear the voices in the room.

As usual, Lin Bojun had his breakfast and brought Su Liang's breakfast to the military camp, only to discover the trouble from last night, and immediately rushed over.

"I'm fine. The seniors have been up all night, so please ask Second Brother Lin to send someone to take them home," Su Liang rubbed her temples and said, "Gao Jiabao hasn't woken up yet, but it looks like there's no immediate danger to his life. I won't do anything else until I detoxify him. I'll take him back to the city with me later. Second Brother Lin, please handle the arrangements for the new recruits' training. If the Emperor asks, I'll explain."

Lin Bojun heaved a deep sigh, "Alright. The spy was taken to the Heavenly Prison for interrogation last night. If I have any news, I'll let you know."

Lin Bojun arranged for people to escort the other Imperial Physicians back to the city, excluding the senior one. Su Liang quickly packed up and prepared to leave with Gao Jiabao and his grandfather.

"General Su, have some hot water," Gu Ling appeared at the door, holding a teapot in her hand.

Only then did Su Liang remember that she had forgotten about Gu Ling. Whether Gu Ling would stay after she left and whether she would return after curing Gao Jiabao, she didn't know.

"Thank you." Su Liang took the teapot and asked again, "Has there been anything unusual about Qiu Ming before?"

Gu Ling shook his head, "Nothing was found."

Su Liang sighed softly, "Alright, you can go. I need to return to the capital city, and you don't have to come here to help after that."

"Yes." Gu Ling responded and turned to leave.

Su Liang poured two cups of water and gave one to Elder Gao, the Imperial Physician. She tried to feed Gao Jiabao, but most of it was spilled.

Su Liang took a sip. It was not hot and just the temperature she usually drank water at, which warmed her body somewhat.

When Su Liang was gone, no one was in charge of the new army recruits. When Lin Bojun became available, he remembered to assign a trainer to the new recruits but received news that one of them had gone missing.

Given what happened to Qiu Ming, Lin Bojun took it seriously and immediately investigated.

He found that the missing recruit's name was Han Su, and he was very close to Qiu Ming.

Therefore, Han Su was suspected to be Qiu Ming's accomplice. Unfortunately, since he had disappeared, they could only pry the truth from Qiu Ming's mouth to confirm the matter.

By this time, Su Liang had returned to her mansion in the capital city, unaware that Gu Ling had left the military camp.

She brought Gao Jiabao home with her, while the elderly Gao Physician did not object, hoping that Su Liang could save him.

When they first arrived home, Gao Jiabao woke up once. Su Liang tied him up and administered acupuncture, which worked, and he fell into a deep slumber. But this was just a temporary solution.

Now living next door, Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing stayed with Su Liang to ensure her food and drink were safe.

Until that evening, Su Liang still had no clue about the antidote when Lin Bojun visited, informing her that Han Su was nowhere to be found.

Su Liang was surprised, "Just disappeared? Without doing anything?"

Lin Bojun sighed, "Yes, he didn't do anything, but he is very likely Qiu Ming's accomplice and fled to avoid being exposed. Now that I think about it, it must have been them who arranged to be assigned to help you. Otherwise, it couldn't have been such a coincidence!"

Su Liang nodded, "That should be the case."

"There has been no progress at the Ministry of Justice, and Qiu Ming still refuses to open his mouth," Lin Bojun said. "We didn't find any poison in his belongings, and it seems like he used it all up. There is no antidote either."

"He couldn't possibly have an antidote, since he's just a puppet of the mastermind behind this." Su Liang shook her head.

Lin Bojun checked on Gao Jiabao and, finding out Su Liang had not yet discovered a detoxification method, he said with a frown, "I believe in you. Get some rest; your body can't take this."

"Yes!" Lin Xueqing entered with dinner, "Su, have something hot to eat and then go to sleep for a while. Maybe you'll have an idea when you wake up!" "Alright." Su Liang nodded. She indeed needed sleep.

After Lin Bojun left, Su Liang ate her dinner alone, thinking about Gu Ling and wondering where he might be. Perhaps he was at home, but it wasn't convenient for him to show himself.

Lin Xueqing wanted to stay with Su Liang, but she was persuaded to leave by Xing Yusheng. He thought Su Liang needed her own space to think calmly.

However, Xing Yusheng left Qi Jun to help Su Liang. Su Liang did not refuse and asked Qi Jun to take care of Gao Jiabao and to call her if anything unusual happened.

Elder Gao, who was of advanced age, couldn't endure staying up all night and was persuaded by Su Liang to go home and come back the next day.

After washing up, Su Liang planned to sleep for a while and then see how things went.

She left a lamp lit in the outer room, and soon fell asleep after lying down.

Gu Ling slipped through the window as easily as ever. In the dim light coming from the outer room, he stood by the bed, gazing at Su Liang's peaceful face. He reached out and seemed to touch her cheek for a moment but withdrew his hand, sighing almost inaudibly before leaving as silently as he had arrived.

Deep in the Heavenly Prison.

The sound of whips striking flesh echoed in the hearts of every prisoner, making them shudder with fear.

This was the most brutal interrogation chamber in the Heavenly Prison, and its screams were for the other prisoners to hear.

Qiu Ming was tied to the Zhuzi, his body bloody and mangled, with not a single spot of good skin left, but he clenched his teeth and refused to confess anything.

"Get the pliers!" said the cold-voiced interrogation official from the Ministry of Justice.

Duanmu Yi had given a deadly order: if they couldn't get a confession, the Ministry of Justice would be considered incompetent.

The rusted iron pliers still had dried blood on them. One man grabbed Qiu Ming's hair and made him lift his head, while another pried open his mouth.

His eyes widened in terror as the pliers approached, then entered his mouth. The cold touch made him shiver all over, and in the next instant, a chilling scream echoed as his front tooth was brutally pulled out!

"Tell me, who sent you?"

Blood and saliva flowed out of Qiu Ming's trembling teeth, but he remained silent.

The interrogating officer snorted coldly and the pliers moved in once more.

Footsteps approached in the distance, and a prison officer brought food and alcohol. "Officer Fan, why not take a break before continuing the interrogation

The aroma of food and alcohol filled the air, and the interrogator tossed the pliers aside, ordered the lock opened, and let the prison officer enter.

About fifteen minutes later, everyone in the interrogation room who had eaten and drunk was passed out on the floor, and the waiting prison officer entered once more.

Qiu Ming stared in disbelief at the person approaching him.

Soon, Qiu Ming was untied, and the prison officer wrapped Officer Fan's clothes around him, tidied his hair, held his head, and supported him as they walked out.

The passageway in the Heavenly Prison was dark, and the prison officer whispered, "Officer Fan is drunk, I'll escort him back." They moved smoothly through the prison without obstruction.

Once someone noticed something was off, the two of them were about to leave the Heavenly Prison.

After a fight, several people were injured, no one was killed, and the prison officer successfully escaped with Qiu Ming.

Upon hearing the news, Duanmu Yi was furious at the incompetence of the Ministry of Justice. He ordered them to capture the spy and his accomplices at all costs!

Wangxiang Mountain outside the city.

Qiu Ming was thrown to the ground, shaking in pain. As blood dripped from his mouth, he asked, "Who... are you...?"

"It's me." The man who had impersonated the prison officer removed his outer clothes.

Upon hearing "Han Su's" voice, Qiu Ming's eyes widened. "You... who... are you?!"

"I'm from the north." Gu Ling said.

Qiu Ming blurted out, "The north... Liang Country? You're a spy sent by Liang Country?"

Gu Ling nodded slightly. "And you? From the south?"

Qiu Ming stared at him without refuting, but questioned, "It was you who knocked me out last night, wasn't it? Why did you rescue me tonight?"

Gu Ling didn't deny it. "Yes. If you escaped, I would be suspected. I saved you today because you were caught and I was still suspected. My identity can't withstand scrutiny, so I have no choice but to abandon my mission and slip away."

"What's your mission? Why did you save me?" Qiu Ming asked coldly.

"My mission is to infiltrate the Imperial Palace and assassinate the one on the Dragon Throne." Gu Ling said, "I saved you just because it was convenient. After all, we are the same. My family has been captured, and if I don't obey, they will die."

Qiu Ming's expression visibly stirred at his words, "Indeed, we are the same."

Gu Ling knew he had guessed correctly. Qiu Ming had always mentioned his family, and people like him would become spies because they were controlled, and the methods could easily be guessed.

"Yin Country's Royal Family?" Gu Ling asked.

Qiu Ming shook his head, "Sort of, not exactly..."

"You can tell me, and I can help you. I also need your help." Gu Ling's voice carried a convincing power.

After a moment of silence, Qiu Ming uttered two words, "Mu, Ya.."

Chapter 228: 228. You take care

Qiu Ming's family lives in Jiaye City, the southernmost city of Qian Country. They own a wealthy escort agency.

As the eldest son of the escort agency, Qiu Ming had led a carefree life, never worrying about food and clothing. If everything went as planned, this year he would have married his betrothed, and in a few years, he would have taken over the escort agency from his father.

Until his long-lost uncle reappeared, everything changed.

"My uncle was bewitched by a woman years ago and left home to go to Yin Country. He sneaked back home for that woman's daughter!" Qiu Ming said bitterly, "But she wasn't even his daughter!"

In short, Qiu Ming's uncle, Qiu Jianren, was a sycophant to Mu Ya's mother, and after she died, he became Mu Ya's servant, serving her willingly.

"I was living a good life, not wanting to join the army..." Qiu Ming, with red eyes, began to spill his guts, "I hate my despicable uncle for forcing me for Mu Ya's sake! He took my whole family's lives as leverage! I didn't dare to confess, hoping that he

would fulfill his promise that as long as I successfully poisoned someone, he would take my family to safety in Yin Country! I don't want to die because I want to know if they are still alive..."

Gu Ling shook his head indifferently, "Your uncle won't keep his promise. Everything he does is to win Mu Ya's favor. The lives of his relatives are not important to him."

Upon hearing this, Qiu Ming trembled with anger and screamed in pain.

"You failed." Gu Ling added another stab to Qiu Ming's heart.

Qiu Ming looked at him in disbelief, "Impossible! If I had failed and Su Liang hadn't eaten the poisoned food, why was I caught?"

"Su Liang didn't eat it; Gao Jiabao did," Gu Ling replied.

Qiu Ming's face turned cold, and he suddenly grabbed Gu Ling's collar forcefully. "Brother Han Su, help me...please help me! We are the same kind, as you said! You came here for your family, too, didn't you? You must understand me! You can save me from the Heavenly Prison. You can certainly help me avenge Su Liang! As long as she dies, Mu Ya and Qiu Jianren will protect my family! Please pity me!"

Gu Ling looked at Qiu Ming and asked, "Why does Mu Ya want to harm Su Liang?"

Qiu Ming shook his head, "I don't know... It's just because she came to Qian Country and lost face for Yin Country when she lost to Su Liang. She was originally going to be the crown princess, but in the end, she became just an imperial concubine. As long as Su Liang is alive, Mu Ya will always be humiliated in Yin Country! I overheard Qiu Jianren saying this! It has nothing to do with us! You took the risk to save me tonight and you will definitely help me, right? When I recover, I swear I will die to help you!"

Gu Ling asked instead, "Do you know what poison Gao Jiabao was given? Is there an antidote?"

Qiu Ming frowned at Gu Ling. "I don't know! That was the poison Mu Ya gave to harm Su Liang, what does it have to do with me? How could she possibly give me the antidote? My family is in imminent danger, why are you still asking about these irrelevant matters? Think about your family, what if you were in my position? What would you do?"

Gu Ling pulled Qiu Ming's hand away, calmly saying, "I am here indeed for my family. My only family member's name is Su Liang."

Qiu Ming's eyes widened in disbelief as he stared at Gu Ling. "You...you're not Han Su! No...you are...you're not... who are you?"

Gu Ling ignored Qiu Ming's question, instead asking, "What did Su Liang do to wrong you?"

Qiu Ming's eyes were filled with horror, he shrank back and tried to crawl away. "You were sent by Su Liang...you lied to me! Why do you all want to hurt me...what did I do wrong...I was forced... what was my mistake..."

Gu Ling watched Qiu Ming stand up and fall to the ground again, crawling away with all his limbs, but he didn't stop him.

The night was deep and the cool wind blew through the mountains.

Crawling a certain distance away, Qiu Ming couldn't help but look back. Gu

Ling was still standing there, with cold eyes that sent chills down his spine.

Qiu Ming's heart clenched, and he gathered all his strength to crawl forward!

A shrill scream rang out, quickly disappearing below the cliff.

Gu Ling walked to the edge of the cliff and looked down into the dark abyss below. Expressionless, he turned and left.

Startled awake by a nightmare in the middle of the night, Su Liang sat up, covered in cold sweat.

Turning her head, she saw a shadow flicker by. Startled, she drew the dagger from under her pillow and held it to her chest!

"It's me." A familiar voice sounded, and Gu Ling approached, grabbing Su Liang's wrist and taking away the dagger.

Su Liang breathed a sigh of relief, "That scared me!"

For the first time, Gu Ling saw Su Liang's pale face and the sweat-drenched hair on her forehead and frowned, "Did you have a nightmare?"

Su Liang nodded, grabbed her coat, and sat up against the pillow. "I dreamt that Gao Jiabao had gone crazy, and I couldn't cure him for the rest of my life."

Gu Ling knew that Su Liang was not a coward. As long as her problems didn't involve others, she would never be this scared.

This time, although Liang had done nothing wrong, the innocent victim Gao Jiabao had become a heavy burden on her heart.

Gu Ling went to the outer room, poured a glass of water, brought it back and sat by the bed.

Su Liang thought it was for her and instinctively reached for it, but Gu Ling dodged away.

Su Liang was speechless, "Fine, you drink it."

Gu Ling didn't drink either. He held the glass in both hands and talked to Su Liang, "I took Qiu Ming out of the Heavenly Prison."

Su Liang was shaken, "Why?"

"The Ministry of Justice wouldn't be able to get anything out of him. In the end, they would only have a corpse," Gu Ling replied.

Su Liang knitted her brows. "Where is he? Did you find anything?" "He fell off the cliff and died." Gu Ling said. "The mastermind behind this is Mu

Su Liang was stunned, "Mu Ya? The female general from Yin Country?"

Gu Ling nodded and told Su Liang everything he had learned from Qiu Ming.

After listening, Su Liang's face darkened, "I thought I had offended someone who would resort to such a vicious method against me, but it turns out it was that woman! Even if she was humiliated because she lost to me and was ridiculed when she returned to her country, it was her own fault! She insisted on competing with me in the first place!"

The cause of everything was Mu Ya's attempt to publicly humiliate Su Liang, stepping on the new Martial Arts Champion of Qian Country to make herself look better, but unfortunately, she failed and was the one humiliated instead.

As for Qiu Jianren, his name truly suited him.

Even if Qiu Ming was genuinely being forced, he himself was a selfish and immoral person who was indifferent to right and wrong. His suffering was not an excuse to hurt Su Liang.

"In the end, Great God, you didn't see any black mist in Qiu Ming's brow, which proved that it was his fate to die and didn't need you to save him," Su Liang said coldly.

Being taken advantage of repeatedly as a 'good person' and using her own morals to hurt her, Su Liang had already reached her breaking point. Especially thinking about Gao Jiabao, who hadn't been cured of the poison yet, she couldn't wait to chop Qiu Ming into pieces!

As for Qiu Ming's family, that had absolutely nothing to do with Su Liang. She is not the savior of the suffering, and now she can't even help herself. The only thing she wants to do is to help Gao Jiabao recover his health.

Gu Ling handed the cup of tea to Su Liang.

Su Liang was startled for a moment, "Are you sure you're giving it to me?" Gu Ling nodded.

Su Liang took it, took a sip, and the warm water was not cold. She drank up the whole cup of water and felt much more comfortable.

"Do you want me to go to Man Ya for the antidote, or stay and protect you?" Gu Ling took the empty teacup and asked Su Liang.

"Ah?" Su Liang was dumbfounded, "I... I haven't thought about it. I didn't know Man Ya was behind all this. Thank you so much for your kindness. But if we're going to Yin Country, it'll take at least half a month for the round trip. Gao Jiabao may not be able to wait that long. If I can't detoxify him, I can only hope that I can get the antidote from Man Ya, so it's better to go there early..."

Su Liang looked troubled, "Protecting me is secondary, but would you really be willing to go out of your way to get the antidote?"

Gu Ling saw Su Liang's earnest gaze at him, and slightly nodded, "I can." What a great brother!" Su Liang punched Gu Ling on the shoulder.

Gu Ling lowered his head and looked at his punched shoulder, his expression indifferent, "I'm hungry."

Gu Ling's eyes fell on Liang's white feet and immediately turned away, "No need, I'll find a way myself. You go back to sleep."

Su Liang had not put on her shoes and socks, and Gu Ling disappeared from the room.

"Gu Ling is a good person, knowing that time is of the essence." Su Liang muttered to herself, "I'll make him something delicious when he gets back."

Since she was awake, Su Liang didn't go back to sleep and decided to continue studying the detoxification method to be prepared.

As soon as she had dressed and walked into the outer room, she saw Gu Ling standing there, with a baffled look on her face, "Gu Ling, you haven't left yet?" "I haven't said goodbye yet, as I'm going a long way." Gu Ling said.

Su Liang reacted and took the initiative to approach Gu Ling, hugged him, and patted him on the back, "Gu Ling, be careful out there, take care of yourself, and come back soon."

"Mhm." Gu Ling replied with a hum, and Su Liang had already let him go.

"You..." Gu Ling looked at Su Liang, started to speak but stopped abruptly. Su Liang also looked at Gu Ling, waiting for him to speak with an obedient face.

"Take care." Gu Ling looked up, gently patted Su Liang's head, and turned to leave.

It was morning.

Qi Jun came and saw Su Liang's room door open. She was dressed neatly, sitting at the table, focusing on making medicine. So he assumed she hadn't slept all night.

"Miss Su, Young Master Gao hasn't woken up yet, and there's no abnormality. My brother is here to relieve me. If there's nothing else, I'll go back first and come back later." Qi Jun said respectfully.

Su Liang looked up, "You've worked hard. I'm fine here. You can go back and rest."

When Qi Jun turned around, his eyes lingered on the door of the neighboring room for a moment, and he sighed deeply. He had lived here for a while, disguised as Ning Jing. It didn't seem like it had been a long time ago, but many things had changed. Every time he came to this courtyard, he felt a sense of inexplicable sadness.

Later, the Imperial Physician from Gao's came, Lin Shuzhi and their wives came, and Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing also came.

Su Liang told the Imperial Physician that there was no definite lead on the antidote yet, but she had already sent someone to inquire about this poison and hoped for some news.

As for Man Ya, since Qiu Ming was already dead, if Su Liang were to reveal it, it would be like admitting that the person who had rescued Qiu Ming was related to her.

Moreover, at this point, Su Liang didn't want to use the Qian Country royal family to deal with Man Ya, as it would involve a lot of external factors, making it harder to take action. Since Man Ya played dirty, Su Liang would deal with it in the same way.

Su Liang believed that as long as Gu Ling went there, Man Ya would not have an easy time.

Seeing Lin Shuzhi, he only comforted Su Liang not to be under too much pressure.

When Lin Bojun came, he informed Su Liang that last night, Qiu Ming was rescued by Han Su.

Although the person who broke into Heavenly Prison last night to rescue Qiu Ming did not leave any clues, Han Su's disappearance from the military camp and his previous closeness to Qiu Ming led everyone to believe that the two were accomplices and that Han Su was responsible for the breakout.

This was good news for Su Liang, as she didn't have to worry about anyone connecting "Han Su" with Gu Ling or Ning Jing. Gu Ling's fake identity was over.

When Liang was having breakfast, Xing Yusheng brought new information: Qiu Ming's body was found at the bottom of the cliff on Wangxiang Mountain, and a prison officer's outerwear was found at the top, thrown down by the person who had rescued Qiu Ming.

"It turns out that the accomplice rescued the spy not to take him away but to silence him!" Xing Yusheng's face was grave, "Now all the clues are completely cut off!"

"What about Young Master Gao?" Lin Xueqing was worried, "Howcome people are always trying to harm little sister Su?"

We are not good people. "" Xing Yusheng replied..

Lin Xueqing nodded, "Exactly, but it's been so hard for Su not to get any peace, even Ning Senior Brother... Never mind, let's not talk about it. Sister Su, after curing Young Master Gao, I think it would be better for you to resign from your position in the army. It's too exhausting and dangerous!"

Su Liang nodded slightly, "I intend to do so."

Knowing that Su Liang was busy, Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing left after accompanying her for breakfast, telling her that Qi Yan and Qi Jun would be temporarily at her command, and the two brothers' main task now was to take turns taking care of Gao Jiabao.

Half a day later, someone from the palace came. As Su Liang prepared to enter the palace, she heard from Qi Yan that Gao Jiabao had woken up. She hurried over and gave him another acupuncture needle, causing him to fall back into a deep sleep. But this was not a long-term solution.

Seeing Gao Jiabao's crazed appearance again, Su Liang went to the palace to perform the ceremony with a terrible mood.

Duanmu Yi asked about Gao Jiabao's condition, and when he learned that Su Liang had no solution, he simply said he believed she would find a way and changed the subject, asking about Su Liang's matters in Xunyang City.

Su Liang brought up the matter of Peng Qian and his son who had gone to Xunyang City to seek medical treatment from her, saying that it was one of the conditions she had agreed to during the negotiations with Peng Wei in Xuanbei

City.

Seeing Su Liang being honest, Duanmu Yi dismissed his suspicions and brought up another matter, "This morning, I received news from Liang

Country that Emperor Liang's uncle, King Yue Situ Xie, will represent the Liang Country royal family and visit Qian Country as a guest to discuss the marriage alliance between the two countries. When they arrive, you will assist the crown prince in receiving them."

Su Liang was slightly taken aback. Situ Xie? It was her first time hearing this name, but she knew of the King Yue of Liang Country, Gu Ling's maternal grandfather.

Could Situ Xie's visit to Qian Country have anything to do with Gu Ling's request for assistance from Liang Uncle? Su Liang wasn't sure, but it was possible.

As for the crown prince... Su Liang knew that the position already belonged to

Duanmu Chen. The imperial edict had been issued yesterday, and Xing

Yusheng had mentioned the date of the crown prince's enthronement, but Su Liang didn't pay much attention to it at the time. The enthronement was scheduled to take place soon.

Su Liang had initially decided, whatever Duanmu Yi asked her to do, she would try to refuse if possible.

But considering that Situ Xie's arrival might have something to do with Gu Ling, Su Liang obediently complied, "Yes, I obey.."

Chapter 229: 229. Don't touch randomly

Su Liang walked out of the Imperial Palace alone, only to see Duanmu Chen being helped by Chang'an, coming down from a luxurious carriage.

As the crown prince, his attire had changed from before, making him look more prestigious and valuable, quite literally.

Seeing Su Liang, Duanmu Chen approached her with a smile on his lips,

"General Su, no need for formalities."

Su Liang clasped her hands, "Congratulations, Your Highness."

Ever since he received the Imperial Decree yesterday, everyone he saw treated him with the utmost respect. But it was only when Su Liang called him "Crown Prince" that he felt particularly pleased.

Actually, the two of them hadn't had any real communication or cooperation for quite a long time. However, in terms of the final outcome, Duanmu Chen's position as the crown prince owed half of its achievement to Su Liang.

They both knew that it was not good to bring up the details, so they just tacitly understood each other.

Duanmu Chen asked about Gao Jiabao's condition again.

Su Liang shook her head, "I haven't found a way to detoxify him yet."

Duanmu Chen sighed, "It's a pity that the spy managed to enter the Heavenly Prison last night without any hindrance, and there's no way to find out who was behind it. The attack was clearly aimed at you. Can you think of anyone you might have offended?"

Su Liang frowned, "I have offended quite a few people. Before this, I encountered a somewhat similar assassination attempt in Xunyang City..."

Duanmu Chen's eyes flickered, immediately understanding what Su Liang was hinting at.

The two exchanged a glance, Su Liang excused herself, and Duanmu Chen went into the palace.

When Duanmu Chen saw Duanmu Yi, he casually mentioned that after receiving a letter from the Wan Family, there had been no further movement. Moreover, they couldn't find out where Duanmu Cheng was hiding.

As soon as Duanmu Yi heard Duanmu Cheng's name, his face darkened, "Keep looking! "

Duanmu Chen respectfully said, "Yes. This son is now worried that some people from Liang or Yin Country might be taking advantage of Great Brother. If so, the consequences would be unimaginable."

Duanmu Yi's eyes narrowed, as he naturally knew that what Duanmu Chen said was not impossible.

"Just now, this son met General Su at the palace gate. She asked about Gao Family's son and said that the poison is very difficult to deal with. She is very enthusiastic about military affairs, but she was caught in this unwarranted disaster. The methods of the spy are extremely vicious. Fortunately, General Su was not injured, and she happened to be with Gao Jiabao at the time, so she managed to restrain him. Otherwise, many innocent people might have been killed." Duanmu Chen said solemnly, "In the son's opinion, perhaps the mastermind behind this is someone with a personal grudge against General Su, and they may not be targeting Qian Country directly."

When talking about spies, especially those infiltrating the military, the default assumption is that they were sent by the enemy.

But in this case, the spy did not poison the water or the food in the military camp, but targeted Su Liang alone. Furthermore, the poison itself was specifically aimed at Su Liang personally.

So Duanmu Chen's speculation is quite reasonable.

Upon hearing this, Duanmu Yi immediately thought of one person, the missing Duanmu Cheng. His deep personal grudge with Su Liang and his previous multiple attempts to assassinate her, as well as his last vicious plot that took advantage of Su Liang's kindness, all matched the characteristics of the mastermind behind the poisoning. At the very least, he was among the most suspicious individuals.

Moreover, just now, Duanmu Chen had mentioned Duanmu Cheng, and Duanmu Yi's anger towards his son had not yet dissipated. He naturally connected the two incidents and the more he thought about it, the more plausible it was that Duanmu Cheng was behind it. He might even be secretly cooperating with some people from Liang or Yin Country, with the purpose being to overthrow the

Qian Country's imperial power and support his own claim to the throne. But if that is true, Duanmu Cheng is nothing more than a foolish pawn!

Seeing Duanmu Yi's gloomy face, Duanmu Chen knew that his goal had been achieved. He didn't press the subject and moved on to other topics.

In fact, Duanmu Chen was not certain whether Duanmu Cheng was still alive. However, it didn't matter; whether he was alive or dead, he no longer posed a threat. Duanmu Chen's purpose in doing this was to overshadow Duanmu Cheng and gain more trust from Duanmu Yi. After all, he was only a crown prince with grown-up or soon-to-be-grown-up brothers.

When Su Liang returned home, she went to see Gao Jiabao first. He was still in a coma, his hands and feet tied to the bedposts to prevent him from hurting others if he woke up in a frenzy.

Gao Jiabao's parents had also come.

With swollen eyes, Gao's mother was wiping her son's hands with a wet cloth. Su Liang greeted her, but she seemed absent-minded.

Su Liang felt frustrated and was about to go back to researching the antidote, but Gao's father followed her out.

"General Su, tell me the truth. Can our Bao'er survive?" Gao Jiabao's father had initially appeared calm, but halfway through the conversation, his eyes filled with tears.

Su Liang felt a bit heavy-hearted, "Uncle Gao, there's no immediate threat to Jiabao's life for now, and I will do my best to save him. I've also asked a friend to help find the antidote."

Upon hearing this, Gao's father let out a long sigh, "I understand, thank you. You must save him, otherwise, our entire family will..."

He didn't finish his sentence, but Su Liang understood. Gao Jiabao was the only heir to the Gao family through three generations. He had been weak and sickly since childhood, and the hardships of raising him to this age were beyond the understanding of outsiders.

As for Gao Jiabao, being the grandson of an Imperial Physician, he learned martial arts since childhood. His grandparents and parents paid a hefty price for a master so that he could become stronger.

Initially, when Gao Jiabao wanted to take the Military Exam, his family was against it but relented in the end. Because he was injured, the elders in his household had made up their minds not to agree to his joining the army. But they eventually gave in to his insistence and let him join the military camp under the condition that he won't be allowed on the battlefield. However, they never expected such an incident to occur even if they were far away from the border in the Forbidden Army camp...

From start to finish, no one in the Gao family blamed Su Liang, but this made her feel even more guilty and uneasy.

When Su Liang returned to her courtyard, she immediately smelled a pleasant aroma.

Xing Yusheng came out of the kitchen with some charcoal dust on his face, glanced at Su Liang, and went right back in, "Qingqing, your sister Su has returned. "

"Sister Su, I made some Lotus Root and Pork Rib Soup for you, wash your hands and eat while it's still warm before you get busy!" Lin Xueqing ran out, with an apron tied around her waist.

"Alright," Su Liang didn't have much of an appetite but didn't want to refuse their kindness, "I'll eat a little, and any extra, please send it to Uncle and Auntie Gao."

"Don't worry, there's enough for everyone!" As soon as Lin Xueqing finished speaking, she went back into the kitchen.

Soon, Su Liang was served delicious Lotus Root and Pork Rib Soup. Lin Xueqing mentioned it was her mother's secret recipe.

"I would like the recipe," said Su Liang.

Lin Xueqing blurted out, "Who are you going to make it for, Sister Su?" Then she thought of Ning Jing, and her expression became gloomy. Sighing, she said, "I'll write the recipe down for you later, Sister Su. I only figured it out recently, and I always seemed to make it wrong before. The lotus root was dug out from the Marquis Mansion's Lotus Pond this morning."

After Lin Xueqing left, Su Liang muttered to herself, "Of course, I'll make it for him. I hope he comes back soon."

During the assassination attempt in Xunyang City, Su Liang realized that she relied too heavily on Gu Ling, which was not good.

Now, with the ongoing situation, she completely discarded those unrealistic thoughts. She was very grateful to have Gu Ling by her side; otherwise, she really didn't know what to do.

After eating the Lotus Root and Pork Rib Soup, Su Liang opened the "Medical Poison Manual" once more. This book was given to her by Xing Yusheng from Old Master Qin and was her primer for poison techniques. The Leisurely Pill she had previously made herself was from this book.

With no clues, Su Liang decided to study the Leisurely Pill more carefully, as it must share some similarities with the poison that Gao Jiabao was exposed to.

There was no antidote for the Leisurely Pill in the "Medical Poison Manual". It was because the effect of this poison wasn't long-lasting. After 24 hours, the poisoned person would recover as if nothing had happened, with no serious damage to their body.

Currently, Su Liang's plan was to create an antidote for the Leisurely Pill first. Even if it couldn't remove the poison from Gao Jiabao's body, as long as it could relieve the onset of poisoning, there was still a chance to buy time and wait for Gu Ling to come back with the antidote.

For four consecutive days, Su Liang did not step out of the courtyard except to give Gao Jiabao acupuncture treatments.

Xing Yusheng had sent the medicinal herbs from the Xing family and Duke Qin's mansion to Su Liang. Both Old Madam Xing and Old Master Qin were very supportive of this. No matter how good the medicinal materials were, they didn't understand medical skills. If they were to get sick or injured, they would still rely on Su Liang for treatment. Therefore, the higher Su Liang's medical and poison techniques were, the better it was for them.

Finally, on the fifth day, Su Liang managed to create an antidote for the Leisurely Pill.

However, since it had never been used before, she couldn't be sure of its effectiveness and dared not let Gao Jiabao, who was already poisoned, try it easily.

Someone needed to test the medicine. Su Liang herself was willing, but if something went wrong, she couldn't save herself and no one else could help her. So she had to find someone else.

Considering that the toxicity of the Leisurely Pill only lasted for 24 hours, even if they didn't take the antidote, they would recover when the time was up, so there was no life-threatening danger.

Su Liang sought out the Qi Jun brothers and explained the situation to them, promising to reward them handsomely after the matter was done. She also said that they could refuse, and she would find another way without mentioning it to Xing Yusheng.

As a result, the Qi brothers almost fought over who should help Su Liang test the medicine...

"There's no risk of death, and with Miss Su here, there's nothing to be afraid of. I'm the eldest brother, so I should do it!" Qi Yan insisted, and without waiting for Qi Jun to say anything, he continued, "It was you who helped Miss Su last time, so this time it has to be my turn. Otherwise, it would be difficult for me to ask Miss Su for help in the future!"

Hearing this, Qi Jun no longer argued with Qi Yan, and the matter was settled.

Except for Su Liang and the Qi brothers, only Xing Yusheng knew about this. They all thought of the earlier incidents when the second prince Duanmu Ao and the fifth prince Duanmu Che had exhibited symptoms similar to the Leisurely Pill's effect. They guessed some things, but none of them mentioned it explicitly.

Su Liang wasn't afraid of them knowing either, as they were all trustworthy people close to her. Moreover, those things had long passed, and there was no evidence left.

In the room next door, where Ning Jing originally stayed, Qi Yan was tightly tied to a chair by Qi Jun. He grinned at Su Liang, "Miss Su, I'm ready, don't be polite!"

Su Liang nodded, "Don't worry, there will be no problem." She was absolutely confident in the Leisurely Pill.

Qi Jun took the black pill handed over by Su Liang and let Qi Yan take it.

After a while, Qi Yan developed a state of delirium and began to babble and struggle on the chair.

Qi Jun frowned, "Miss Su, give my brother the antidote quickly!"

Su Liang handed over another black pill, and Qi Jun fed it to Qi Yan. Qi Yan spit it out, so Qi Jun hurriedly picked it up from the ground, wiped it with his sleeve, pinched Qi Yan's chin, and forced him to swallow it.

Qi Yan gradually calmed down, and after about a quarter of an hour, his eyes regained clarity.

Qi Jun's expression brightened, "The antidote works! Great!"

Qi Yan glanced at his red wrist from being tied up, "How long has it been?"

"Only a quarter of an hour. Do you feel any discomfort anywhere?" Qi Jun said while untying the rope for Qi Yan.

Qi Yan moved his limbs, stood up, and rubbed his temples, "I have a slight headache."

Su Liang took Qi Yan's pulse, "You'll be fine after a rest."

She knew that the antidote was not particularly perfect, but from a practical point of view, it had achieved its purpose.

Su Liang thanked the Qi brothers again and promised that if they needed anything in the future, they could just ask her.

After Qi Jun and Qi Yan left, Su Liang planned to adjust the formula of the antidote and then use it on Gao Jiabao. It was still early, so she worked on it.

Unconsciously, she worked until late at night.

As Su Liang was hesitating whether to wait a bit longer or let Gao Jiabao try the antidote to the Leisurely Pill, Qi Jun came running to say that Gao Jiabao had woken up again. The effect of Su Liang's acupuncture control was getting worse, and the interval between his poison outbreaks was getting shorter.

"Miss Su, Young Master Gao vomited black blood." Qi Jun's face was full of anxiety. This was not a good sign.

Su Liang's heart tightened, and she grabbed the freshly prepared Leisurely Pill antidote and rushed out.

As soon as she entered the room, Su Liang heard Gao Jiabao's painful howls. He was already skinny, and the ropes that bound his limbs seemed to be cutting into his bones, making people's hearts ache.

Fortunately, the old Gao family's doctor had been persuaded to take a rest and was not there. Gao Jiabao's mother had fallen ill in the past few days, and only his father was present. He held Gao Jiabao's arm and called his name, but it was useless.

Seeing Gao Jiabao vomiting blood again, Su Liang could only grit her teeth and force the antidote down his throat.

Then Su Liang stared at Gao Jiabao's face, holding his pulse, her heart racing for fear of any accidents.

Gao Jiabao's frenzied and murderous eyes gradually faded, and his pulse stabilized. Su Liang's heart sank a little.

Qi Jun heaved a sigh of relief, "It seems that the antidote is working!" Some color finally returned to Gao Jiabao's father's face, as he repeated, "Thank heavens, thank heavens!"

But who would have known, just as Su Liang released Gao Jiabao's arm and was about to stand up, his body suddenly shook. A mouthful of black blood spewed out, and his body began to convulse non-stop!

Gao Jiabao's father was frightened, his whole body stiff and shouting, "Bao'er!"

Qi Jun's body also tensed up, unable to help, he clasped his hands and recited prayers.

Alarmed, Su Liang hurriedly checked Gao Jiabao's condition, but found that his pulse, which had just stabilized, was deteriorating rapidly. He had fallen into a coma, with blood gushing from his mouth and black blood streaming from his nostrils.

At this moment, Su Liang felt as if a black veil was in front of her eyes, and the entire room was shrouded in a deep sense of powerlessness. She forced herself to calm down, took out her needle bag, took a deep breath, and started performing acupuncture on Gao Jiabao, her hands trembling uncontrollably.

There was no improvement in Gao Jiabao's condition, and Su Liang felt like she was trapped in an icy cave.

Just then, a dark shadow floated in, and Su Liang's cold hand was suddenly held by someone, with an object placed in her palm. By the time she reacted and looked back, she saw Qi Jun staring at her in astonishment, asking blankly, "It seemed like someone just came in..."

Su Liang saw the medicine bottle in her hand and suddenly felt hopeful. It must be Gu Ling who came back!

Without thinking, she opened the bottle and poured out a light blue pill. She pinched Gao Jiabao's jaw and placed the pill in his mouth.

"Water!" Su Liang said one word.

Qi Jun quickly brought a cup of warm water, and Su Liang fed it to Gao Jiabao.

Gao's father sat by the bed, still clutching Gao Jiabao's hand tightly, his face full of panic.

Su Liang held her breath as she saw Gao Jiabao stop vomiting blood. She took his pulse and found that it had improved, but she still couldn't relax. She just stared at him intently, even trying to breathe quietly.

The room was so quiet that one could hear a pin drop.

After a quarter of an hour, Gao's father climbed up from the ground, trembling hands checking Gao Jiabao's breath, then let out a sigh of relief and sat back down, "He's alive... he's alive..."

Su Liang had calmed down. Although she hadn't seen Gu Ling, she was sure he had returned, and he must have brought back the real antidote.

Another quarter of an hour passed, Gao Jiabao still didn't wake up. His pulse was weak, but the greenish-black forehead had returned to its normal pale color. This was a sign of the poison being neutralized.

"Is Bao'er going to be alright?" Gao's father asked Su Liang with an anxious look.

Su Liang nodded, "He should be fine, just a bit weak. Once he wakes up and recuperates, he'll recover."

Gao's father wept with joy. He had been staring at Gao Jiabao the whole time and hadn't even noticed the dark figure who came in and left. He thought it was the second antidote Su Liang had prepared that had worked. "Qi Jun, go bring some hot water," Su Liang commanded.

Qi Jun complied and left.

Su Liang couldn't help but break out in a cold sweat, but as she watched Gao Jiabao regain his life, her body gradually regained its warmth, and her hanging heart slowly settled down.

Su Liang tried to persuade Gao's father to rest for a while, promising to watch over Gao Jiabao, but he refused to leave, so she didn't insist.

Qi Jun brought hot water, and Su Liang fed Gao Jiabao some more, letting Gao's father drink two cups, and she drank some herself. There was also water for washing, and Gao's father wiped Gao Jiabao's face and hands.

Seeing Gao's father completely exhausted, Su Liang suggested he lie down with Gao Jiabao while she moved a chair beside the bed to stand guard.

Qi Jun didn't leave either, sitting outside the door, wondering who the mysterious figure was that swooped in at the critical moment.

Could it be that Ning Jing hadn't died after all... The thought flashed through Qi

Jun's mind, but he quickly dismissed it, because he couldn't find any reason for Ning Jing to fake his death, and he had seen the corpse back then, the face couldn't have been faked.

It wasn't until dawn that Qi Yan came to relieve Qi Jun, and Su Liang finally left the room.

Gao's father had fallen asleep in the middle of the night, and Gao Jiabao's pulse was stable. He should wake up soon, and there was no more danger to his life.

"Miss Su, you should go back and rest. I'll watch over things here," Qi Yan said.

Su Liang nodded, "Alright, thank you. If anything seems off, come get me right away."

Su Liang returned to her courtyard, which was still quiet since Lin Xueqing, who had prepared her breakfast every day, hadn't arrived yet.

Pushing the door open and entering, Su Liang closed it behind her and leaned against it, feeling her legs go weak. She was a doctor who had seen many life and death situations, but she nearly collapsed this time because the person who almost died was her friend, someone related to her.

After a while, Su Liang managed to take a step towards the inner room. She felt so tired and wanted to sleep for a bit.

Walking around the screen, she saw that the bed curtain was draped down, and Su Liang hesitated for a moment, thinking she hadn't drawn up the bed curtain herself last time.

As she walked over and lifted the bed curtain, she let her weary body fall down at the same time.

The sensation beneath her felt strange, and Su Liang's mind was muddled. She instinctively reached out, and then a familiar voice sounded in her ear, "Su Xiaoliang, don't touch me randomly.."

Su Liang's body flipped, rolling off the bed with the momentum, but before she could make intimate contact with the floor, someone grabbed her clothes and threw her back on the bed.

Of course, she did not fall.

While lying on the bed, Su Liang's head was still in a daze, staring blankly at Gu Ling, who had changed positions with her and was now standing beside the bed. At this moment, his true face showed, and because he had just woken up, there was a faint blush on his cool face, stunningly beautiful.

Su Liang lowered her head and saw Gu Ling's feet.

Gu Ling's gaze moved away from Su Liang's round eyes and his thin lips opened slightly. "After returning last night, I took a bath."

Su Liang blinked. "Oh, I'm not saying you're dirty... No, whether you're dirty or not, you shouldn't sleep on my bed!"

Gu Ling's expression was calm. "Where's my bedding?"

Su Liang hesitated for a moment before she realized. The things originally in the next room belonged to "Ning Jing" and had always been kept as they were. She had been too busy these days, and Lin Xueqing and Xing Yusheng, out of kindness, had packed up and put away the bedding and other items in the neighboring room, hoping that Su Liang could move on...

This was not solely their decision, as they had asked Su Liang beforehand if it was okay.

At that time, Su Liang was busy researching antidotes and didn't take it to heart, so she perfunctorily nodded her head, and they went ahead with it.

Now Su Liang could recall the scene of Xing Yusheng directing Qi Yan and Qi Jun to carry the boxes out. Still, she had no time to worry about it and was wholeheartedly trying to detoxify Gao Jiabao.

As a result, Gu Ling went through the trouble of finding the antidote, only to find his bed reduced to a bare plank when he returned... Nothing was left.

Su Liang coughed awkwardly. "Xing Yusheng and Xueqing were afraid I'd be constantly reminded, so they moved them to the warehouse."

It wasn't that the couple were meddling in her affairs.

Normally, after someone died in the room next door, it would be considered a house with a bad omen. Anyone else would not continue to live in Su Liang's courtyard; they would definitely choose to move to a different place.

Not only did Su Liang stay, but it was also as if nothing had happened. To Lin Xueqing, it appeared Su Liang seemed unwilling to accept that Ning Jing was gone...

The direct reason for Lin Xueqing's suggestion to clean up the room was that Xing Yusheng opened the door to the neighboring room and wanted to see what it was like, only to find a neatly laid out set of bedding on the bed!

For them, this was a little shocking. Because no one was living there, after the body had been removed, the bed's surface had been soaked in blood, and they had only just cleaned it. When Su Liang first returned, there would have been no bedding on it. That meant she had arranged it specifically.

As a result, they both thought that Su Liang only appeared calm on the surface, but her heart was actually immersed in pain, unable to break free. She was still waiting for "Ning Jing" to return, which was not a good sign.

So, this situation occurred now.

"I was too tired last night and had no place to go," Gu Ling explained why he slept in Su Liang's bed.

Su Liang quickly nodded. "Don't stand on ceremony. I was too busy in the past few days and didn't pay attention to them fussing about. If you hadn't come back with the antidote in time last night, Great God, I really don't know what to do. It's just sleeping in my bed, you can ask anything of me now, and I definitely won't have any hesitation!"

Seeing Su Liang's earnest expression, Gu Ling fell silent for a moment before speaking. "Alright, give me a voucher that says you'll fulfill any request, I might need it one day."

Su Liang touched her forehead. The reason Gu Ling could say such a "forward" phrase was, of course, because she had mentioned something similar in the past.

"Okay, I'll give it to you today," Su Liang said solemnly. This time, Gu Ling truly solved her critical problem and saved her once again.

As she finished speaking, Su Liang suddenly realized something was wrong. "Great God, have you grown wings?"

Otherwise, it would be impossible to travel from Qian Country to Yin Country in just six days!

Gu Ling bent down, picked up his shoes and socks from beside the bed, walked to a table not far away, and sat down to put them on. He answered Su Liang's question, "I didn't go to Yin Country."

Su Liang sat up and frowned. "Then where did the antidote come from? Did you happen to meet Man Ya here in Qian Country?"

Gu Ling shook his head slightly. "Not Man Ya. I know someone who is a Poison Master. I was afraid that going to Yin Country would take too long, so I went to find that person first. Since I didn't know if I would find him or if I could get the antidote, I didn't say anything in advance."

Su Liang suddenly realized, "That makes sense. I was wondering if you, Great God, could have flown to Yin Country. How come you've never mentioned that you have such an incredible friend?"

Gu Ling shook his head again. "I know him, but we are not friends."

Su Liang's expression became serious. "What were his conditions for giving you the antidote?"

Gu Ling looked up at Su Liang, "Me."

Su Liang's expression was astonished, "A homosexual? Have you taken a fancy to Great God?"

Gu Ling's brows furrowed, "Woman."

“Ah?” Su Liang was stunned for a moment, ‘Your friend... oh, no, the poison master you know, is a woman? That was my misunderstanding. If it’s a woman and she takes a fancy to Great God, it’s reasonable. Did you get the antidote by agreeing to marry her?”

Gu Ling looked at Su Liang, who was asking seriously, and stood up, walking to the bedside.

Su Liang instinctively lay down and pulled the quilt over herself, “Great God, I am just curious, you don’t have to hit me, do you?”

Gu Ling stood by the bed, looking down at Su Liang, “Do you think I would sell myself to save Gao Jiabao?”

Su Liang immediately shook her head, “That’s impossible! To save anyone, Great God would never do such a thing! So how did you get the antidote? Did you beat up the woman? Did you snatch it?”

“No,” Gu Ling shook his head, “I just said that she’s not good enough for me, and told her not to indulge in wishful thinking.”

Su Liang stretched out a hand from under the quilt, thumbs up, ‘Great God, you truly are divine! But hearing those words, the poison master should be grateful she didn’t kill you with poison, and she still gave you the antidote.

How?”

“Reverse psychology,” Gu Ling said indifferently, “When she heard my words, she laid a bet with me. If one day I get married, she’ll come to snatch the bride, compete with her, and if she wins, I’ll marry her. If she loses, we shall owe each other nothing.”

Su Liang thought for a moment, “Such a bet is not unfair, after all, you provoked her first, and she’s being reasonable. But whoever marries you in the future will be miserable, won’t they? There’s a risk of being replaced on the wedding day.”

“Is it my fault?” Gu Ling asked.

Su Liang looked serious, “No, it’s all my fault. The fact that Great God has gotten into this situation is because he’s trying to help me. If trouble comes because of this, I will do my duty to help you solve it!”

“Bear in mind your_words.” Gu Ling turned around and said, “Sleep now.”

In the blink of an eye, Gu Ling’s figure had disappeared.

She heaved a long sigh of relief, both mind and body relaxed. Suddenly realizing that Gu Ling had slept on this bed last night, but it wasn’t the first time they shared a bed. They had before at the Ping’an Temple outside Xuanbei City.

Since they were close friends and buddies, it didn’t matter. Su Liang thought about it, sleepiness overcame her, she closed her eyes and quickly fell asleep.

When Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing came again today and heard from Qi Jun about the dangerous events last night, they both sighed with relief upon learning that Gao Jiabao had been detoxified.

“Was the antidote made by Sister Su?” Lin Xueqing asked.

Qi Jun shook his head, “It seems to be brought by Miss Su’s friend. She said that she had asked a friend to find the antidote, but I did not see it clearly.”

Xing Yusheng hesitated for a moment, “Su Liang’s friend?” To outsiders, Su Liang was very mysterious. But Xing Yusheng met Su Liang in Bei’an County, knowing that her social circle was rather narrow and her life was simple. He knew most of Su Liang’s friends.

“Maybe it’s Sister Su’s master, a reclusive master who secretly protects Sister Su,” Lin Xueqing began to fantasize. She always believed that Su Liang had a profound and unfathomable master.

Xing Yusheng thought for a while and instructed Qi Jun not to spread the news about the incident. If anyone asked, he should just say that Su Liang saved Gao Jiabao.

He knew that the royal family didn’t like their subjects having secrets, and the mysterious person around Su Liang might also want to stay hidden. So it’s safer this way.

“Yes, master. I won’t tell anyone about this matter. Gao Jiabao’s father was there at the time, but he didn’t see it,” Qi Jun said.

When they learned that Su Liang had only gone to rest in the early morning, they didn’t disturb her. Lin Xueqing went to prepare something for Su Liang to eat, and Xing Yusheng checked on Gao Jiabao.

Su Liang slept very deeply this time. When she woke up, it was already approaching noon.

She changed clothes and went out, only to see Qin Yujin and Lin Xueqing sitting by the stone table under the tree arranging flowers. The beautiful flowers of various colors were arranged on the table, and the valuable antique vases that Su Liang had never seen before were there as well.

“Sister Liang,” Qin Yujin greeted with a gentle smile.

Lin Xueqing immediately dropped the flowers in her hands, got up, ran over, and hugged Su Liang’s arm, “Sister Su, are you awake? Did you sleep well? Are you hungry? Thirsty? I made lotus root and pork rib soup for you again.”

Su Liang smiled, “That’s great, I’m starving.”

After washing up, she asked if Gao Jiabao was awake yet.

“Not yet! Master just went to check on him again. The old physician from the Gao Family took his pulse and said he’s fine, just weak and still asleep.” Lin Xueqing said.

Su Liang breathed a sigh of relief, “That’s good to hear.”

As she enjoyed the delicious Lotus Root and Pork Rib Soup, Su Liang wondered where Gu Ling was at the moment, having no home, no bedding, and unable to eat three meals a day.

Lin Xueqing noticed Su Liang was lost in thought, “Sister Su, what are you thinking about?”

Su Liang lightly laughed, “I was just thinking, this lotus root is so delicious, is there any more?”

Lin Xueqing laughed too, "Of course! We didn't use all the ingredients we brought today. What would you like me to cook for you, Sister Su?"

Su Liang shook her head, "You all have taken good care of me these past few days, fortunately, there were no serious issues. Now that I'm fine, Xueqing and Yu Jin should look after your husbands more, otherwise, they'll hate me." "They wouldn't!" Qin Yujin and Lin Xueqing said in unison.

Lin Xueqing couldn't help but giggle, "Actually, my husband did get jealous, saying that in my heart, you are much more important than him." "What did you say to him?" Su Liang asked.

Lin Xueqing slightly raised her chin, "I told him that without Sister Su, I wouldn't have met him and married him in the first place!"

Su Liang chuckled, although not entirely true, she didn't need to quibble about the couple's sweet nothings.

Qin Yujin joked, "Since our cousin got married, he's been living the good life, I can tell he's even gained weight."

Lin Xueqing couldn't help but smile, "Actually, it's because I love cooking, and he always finishes what I make. So, he's been eating more than he used to. Doesn't Second Brother do the same? He loves whatever his second sister-in-law cooks too."

Su Liang: ...Why do they have to feed her dog food when she's enjoying the delicious Pork Rib Soup? And it's even double-served with extra sugar.

After Su Liang finished her bowl of soup, Qin Yujin and Lin Xueqing's flower arrangement was done.

Lin Xueqing explained to Su Liang, "These flowers are from the Zhong Xin

Marquis Mansion's garden, and the vase was a gift from grandmother to you. She specially asked us to cut the best ones for Sister Su after learning Gao

Jiabao is alright, just to console you and cheer you up."

Su Liang admired the vibrant bouquet and nodded, "They are beautiful, I like them. Thank you to Granny Xing, I'll visit her in a few days."

Afterward, when Su Liang wanted to go see Gao Jiabao, Qin Yujin and Lin Xueqing left her side. Lin Xueqing invited Su Liang to have dinner at her house before leaving, but Su Liang politely declined, saying she would go another day.

When Su Liang saw Gao Jiabao, his mother was feeding him congee.

He was originally pale and thin, and now even thinner after being poisoned. His skin was almost translucent, and he looked very weak.

But when Su Liang entered the room, Gao Jiabao still managed a smile.

"How are you feeling?" Su Liang went to Gao Jiabao's bedside and took his pulse.

"Not bad, just a little tired..." Gao Jiabao's voice was hoarse and low.

"Nothing serious, just rest well and you'll recover," Su Liang said.

Gao Jiabao's mother looked at Su Liang with gratitude, "Thank you so much, General Su."

Su Liang quickly waved her hand, "No need to, Gao Jiabao got involved because of me."

"No, it's not your fault," Gao Jiabao shook his head. "Someone wanted to harm you, and you didn't do anything wrong."

Su Liang sighed slightly, "Let's not talk about this anymore. As long as everyone's okay, that's all that matters. Don't worry, I'll make those who work against us pay double."

Though Gao Jiabao still didn't know who was behind it all, he had a feeling that Su Liang knew.

But to avoid making his mother worry, Gao Jiabao didn't ask and tried to act relaxed, "After coming back from the Ghost Gate, I've realized that peace is the most important thing. I should spend more time with my family, and put off military matters until I've recovered."

Gao Jiabao's mother was overjoyed to hear this. She was most afraid that after Gao Jiabao's recovery, he would be determined to join the army and go to war, and they could not bear the fear of losing him again.

"That's best," Su Liang nodded.

Gao Jiabao insisted on returning to his own home today, and his parents shared the same idea.

Su Liang did not force them to stay, but instead wrote a prescription for nourishing medicine for Dr. Gao and gave them some good medicine for physical recovery, saying that she would visit the Gao family tomorrow.

After seeing off Gao's family, Su Liang allowed Qi Jun and Qi Yan to go back and rest as well. They had been a great help in the past few days.

"Master, shall I ask if Miss Su would like me to stay here and follow her from now on?" Qi Jun asked Su Liang.

Upon hearing this, Su Liang chuckled lightly and said, "Having someone as talented as you by my side would be great. However, Xueqing and the others have just moved out to live on their own, and it's the time when they need your protection the most. Now that we're so close, I won't hesitate to ask for your help if I need anything."

Qi Jun had expected to be rejected, but Su Liang's words always made him feel comfortable, so he didn't say anything else and left with Qi Yan.

At night, Lin Xueqing had Qi Jun send dinner to Su Liang, still steaming hot.

When Qi Jun returned to the neighboring Xing Mansion, he told Lin Xueqing that when he went there, Su Liang was making Lotus Root and Pork Rib Soup.

Lin Xueqing was a bit surprised, "Didn't I just make Lotus Root and Pork Rib Soup for Su Liang at lunch today? She likes it so much! I'll make it for her again tomorrow."

At this moment, Su Liang had just scooped out the freshly cooked soup, along with two dishes she made herself, a small pot of sour soup noodles, and the dishes Xueqing sent over. She brought them all into the room.

Gu Ling, who had disappeared somewhere earlier, was already sitting at the table with a different face after his disguise. However, Su Liang was very familiar with this face too.

“Today’s freshly-dug lotus roots from the Lotus Pond in Marquis Zhong Xin’s Mansion, a secret recipe passed down in Xueqing’s family. How about giving it a try, Great God?” Su Liang handed over the spoon.

Gu Ling first took a sip of the soup, then ate a piece of rib, followed by a piece of tender and glutinous lotus root, and slightly nodded, “Not bad.”

“Have you eaten lotus roots from that Lotus Pond before?” Su Liang asked. She suddenly remembered that the current Marquis Zhong Xin’s Mansion was originally the Gu Family’s mansion, Marquis Chang Xin’s Mansion, so Gu Ling should be very familiar with it.

Gu Ling nodded slightly, “I’ve eaten Snow Pear and Lotus Root Juice made by my mother. ”

“Snow Pear and Lotus Root Juice? This is my first time hearing about it, and I don’t know how to make it,” Su Liang shook her head, “By the way, I went to the palace a few days ago and heard from the emperor that your maternal grandfather is coming as a representative of Liang Country to discuss a marriage alliance with Qian Country. Is he coming for you?”

Gu Ling’s expression was indifferent, “No.”

“It seems like you really don’t like him,” Su Liang said, “For now, I don’t want to go back to the army. I’ll teach Mu Ya a lesson the next time we meet. I want to rest at home for a while, and when King Yue of Liang Country arrives, see if your identity can be smoothly restored.”

“What about the thing you owe me?” Gu Ling asked. Su Liang was stunned, then stood up, “I’ll write it now.”

“No need,” Gu Ling said and threw something over.

Su Liang caught it by instinct and found that it was a delicate wooden token with four words carved on it, “Request Granted Unconditionally.”

Su Liang sat back down and laughed, “Did the Great God give this to me? You’re too polite. Then I’ll respectfully...”

Gu Ling’s eyes looked over coldly.

Su Liang became serious, holding the wooden token with both hands and raising it over her head, “Request Granted Unconditionally Token, please accept it, Great God. Whenever and wherever, just show this token, make any request to me, and I’ll fulfill it without hesitation. One chance, use it and it’s vow.

Gu Ling took it, “Good.”

Su Liang complained inwardly, thinking that someone must have too much free time, even carving a token himself, as if afraid that she would renege on the deal. It was a very ceremonious atmosphere, but was it necessary...

“What are you thinking about?” Gu Ling asked in a mysterious tone.

Su Liang immediately smiled and picked up her chopsticks to serve Gu Ling some food, “I was thinking about how to make Snow Pear and Lotus Root Juice.”

Gu Ling paused for a moment, then nodded and said, “It shouldn’t be difficult.

You can try it tomorrow..”