

Three-Time 231

Chapter 231: 231. Impregnable

Returning Gu Ling's bedding to the room from the warehouse and spreading it out, Su Liang was about to go back to her room when she said, "Great God, go to bed early."

Gu Ling spoke, "Stop."

Su Liang, as bidden, turned around, "Does Great God have any more orders?"

"I'm owed a few days of stories," Gu Ling said. Su Liang slapped her forehead, "I completely forgot."

"Let's go," Gu Ling said.

"Where?" Su Liang asked.

"The garden," Gu Ling replied. His words barely left his lips before he walked to the door and said, "After the story, I'll come back to sleep."

With the bright moonlight pouring into the room, Su Liang didn't feel sleepy either and happily agreed.

The two strolled side by side under the moonlight, with Su Liang continuing the unfinished story to Gu Ling. When they reached an exciting part, she enthusiastically suggested they imitate the characters in the story and have a friendly duel.

So, they fought each other, mimicking the moves of the heroes in the story.

Afterward, Su Liang praised Gu Ling for their likeness, "We both could join an acting troupe as martial artists."

They walked around the lakeside and Su Liang talked about the part where Wusong meets the night-demon Sun Erniang.

Gu Ling inquired, "What does human flesh taste like?"

Su Liang laughed lightly, "Of course, it tastes like human flesh."

With a poker face, Gu Ling gave Su Liang a push. She nearly fell into the lake but was pulled back by Gu Ling just in time...

Su Liang: ...

"I've never eaten human flesh. How would I know what it tastes like? Great God, you wouldn't happen to be thinking..." Su Liang asked.

Gu Ling shook his head, "Never mind. Continue the story."

While telling the story and walking around the lake, Su Liang began to yawn after three laps.

After finishing another section, Gu Ling said, "Let's stop here for today."

Early the next morning, Su Liang got up to practice her martial arts. When she returned to the courtyard, Gu Ling had heated the water. He started the fire while she cooked breakfast, and everything felt back on track.

Originally, Lin Xueqing was planning to come over early to cook for Su Liang, but she got up late since she was too tired the night before. Xing Yusheng told her that Su Liang could take care of herself, and going over too often would make Su Liang feel uncomfortable.

“Qingqing, Su Liang won’t be shy with us. She’s not a child. If she wants to eat the food you make, she’ll come over. We’re so close now,” said Xing Yusheng.

Lin Xueqing thought about it and agreed, “Then I won’t go today. I’ll just wait and see if Sister Su comes to find me!”

However, on his way back to Marquis Zhong Xin’s mansion to fetch something, Qi Jun informed Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing that Su Liang had gone there to visit Old Marquise Xing and even returned with some fresh lotus root.

Lin Xueqing felt “heartbroken”, “Sister Su really doesn’t need me!”

Xing Yusheng quickly went to coax his little wife, but while coaxing her, he couldn’t help but laugh. He repeatedly said that he was the one who needed Lin Xueqing the most, and let Su Liang go enjoy herself. He wouldn’t care for her anymore, but in the end, Lin Xueqing pinched him quite a bit.

Snow Pear and Lotus Root Juice was not something Su Liang was very interested in, but since she mentioned it the night before, she naturally had to make it.

Following her own understanding, Su Liang found a small stone mill, placed cleaned Snow Pear chunks and lotus root chunks together, and ground them into a paste. The paste was then placed in a pot and cooked over low heat, constantly stirred.

Steam and heat filled the kitchen, the sweet aroma of the paste wafting into the air. Su Liang waved her hand to disperse the heat, and her blurred vision cleared to see the thick paste in the pot. She quickly added hot water to the paste, but the paste solidified into lumps, making it even worse.

After Su Liang washed the pot clean and turned around, she saw Gu Ling sitting next to the stone mill with freshly cut Snow Pear and lotus root chunks ready to go.

“What proportions of the two ingredients did your mother use when she made it?” Su Liang asked Gu Ling.

Gu Ling shook his head, “I don’t know.”

Su Liang complained, “All you know is eating.”

Gu Ling picked up a piece of Snow Pear with a fruit fork and put it into his mouth as if to prove: all he did was eat! So what?

Su Liang: ... Well, it looks like she’ll have to continue trying since she promised to make it.

“If this attempt fails again, it’ll be because Great God stole a piece of pear.” Su Liang said earnestly.

Gu Ling then ate another piece of raw lotus root, "Alright."

Su Liang: ... She was left speechless.

Su Liang had Gu Ling grind the paste with the stone mill, which he accepted gracefully and evenly.

"It seems Great God quite likes the stone mill. Next time, I'll teach you how to make soybean milk, and we can even make our own tofu and bean curd to eat," Su Liang said.

Knowing that last time's failure was due to not adding water, Su Liang mixed a moderate amount of water into the paste and stirred well before cooking it again.

The faint sweet aroma wafted through the air, and the dish was deemed successful.

Su Liang hadn't tasted it before, so she served two bowls: one for herself and one for Gu Ling.

Without adding sugar, the sweetness of the Snow Pear was just right.

"Does it taste like the one your mother made?" Su Liang asked Gu Ling.

Gu Ling shook his head slightly, "My mother's was very sweet."

"Do you want to add some sugar? Or maybe honey would taste good," Su Liang suggested as she put down her bowl and went to make a high-sweet version for Gu Ling.

But Gu Ling shook his head, "I liked sweet when I was a child, but this is just right now."

"Actually, for lotus root, I really like Sour and Spicy Lotus Root," Su Liang mentioned casually.

Gu Ling nodded, "Good, we'll have it tonight. Soy milk, tofu, bean curd, we'll eat them tomorrow. I can grind the soybeans."

Su Liang held her forehead, thinking she should be more careful when mentioning new dishes. As soon as she mentioned them, she had to make them for someone who ate as if he was owed.

In the afternoon, Su Liang visited the Gao Family with gifts, intending to see Gao Jiabao.

She didn't need to buy anything special, as the Su Mansion's warehouse contained many precious teas, high-quality fabrics, and various antiques and treasures. Some were gifts from the Ning Family, and some were from the Yang Family and Wan Family.

Su Liang took two types of tea, two pieces of brocade, a jade set of chess pieces since she heard Gao Jiabao's father liked playing chess, and picked out a knife specifically for Gao Jiabao.

Since Gao Jiabao was now safe, the Gao Family was delighted to see Su Liang. They felt she was being too polite bringing so many gifts for them.

Su Liang just laughed and said, "These are all things from my own house. I hope Uncle and Auntie will accept them with face. After all, I'm the head of one of the four major businesses in Qian Country. I'm not short of money."

Gao Jiabao's father and mother were both amused by Su Liang. After thanking her for the gifts, they eagerly invited her to see Gao Jiabao.

"If our Bao'er could marry such a wonderful wife, I would laugh in my dreams," Gao Jiabao's mother sighed.

Master Gao shook his head, "Bao is not worthy of her." In traditional beliefs, a suitable marriage required a strong man and a weak woman.

Mrs. Gao sighed, "I know. I wonder how excellent a man needs to be in order to be worthy of General Su."

"It's such a pity for Ning Jing, such a good man... Alas, the heavens envy talent!" Master Gao remarked.

Today, Gao Jiabao was able to get out of bed. In the warm afternoon, he lay in the garden, basking in the sun.

Hearing that Su Liang had arrived, he hadn't had time to get up before he heard her voice, "Your garden is quite nice."

Gao Jiabao forced a pale smile, not caring to be polite with Su Liang, and simply continued lying down, waiting for her to come over. A servant carried a chair over, Su Liang sat down beside him, and not far in front of them, the lake was filled with shimmering waves. Although the area was much smaller compared to the Su Mansion, it still possessed natural elegance.

"Are there fish in the lake?" Su Liang asked. Gao Jiabao nodded, "My grandfather raised them, they're quite plump." "Can they be eaten?" Su Liang asked.

Gao Jiabao couldn't help but grin, "You better not think about it, those fish are my grandfather's treasures."

"I was just asking. We have fish at home that can be eaten." Su Liang calmly said.

With sunlight shining on his face, Gao Jiabao squinted his eyes, the smile on the corner of his lips never leaving, "Actually, for me, this disaster is not entirely bad. At least it made me realize how naive I was before, and that being skilled in martial arts is not necessarily better than having medical skills."

"That is true. Martial arts can kill people but cannot save them. Killing is not considered an impressive feat, it can be done by anyone, but saving people is not something that everyone is capable of." Su Liang said.

Gao Jiabao nodded, "Yes. After wandering around Ghost Gate, I suddenly understood a truth, perhaps I have been wrong all along. I didn't want to learn medicine, but I always wanted to learn martial arts to prove I was a man and not inferior to those who mocked me. But as you said, respect doesn't need to be obtained through fists, but through more meaningful ways. Before, I always wanted to show off to others, but I fell into a misguided mindset. If Qian Country needs me, I will still be willing to take the lead and never shrink back in fear. But now, with no war, I should not be anticipating for war to happen, but instead, I need to do something genuinely meaningful."

Su Liang gave a thumbs up, "That's right. You already possess Martial Arts skills, and the Military Exam already proved that. If you learn medical skills as well, you can potentially become Qian Country's best military general in both martial arts and medicine."

Gao Jiabao spoke in a melancholy tone, "With you around, I can only be second best in both."

"I already resigned from my positions." Su Liang chuckled.

Gao Jiabao shook his head, "It was just a joke."

"So was I." Su Liang nodded.

Gao Jiabao asked about Qiu Ming's death and the mastermind behind it.

"You just need to know that I won't let the poisoner go." Su Liang did not reveal anything explicitly. Secrets are best kept unsaid to avoid any complications. Gao Jiabao had already been through enough trouble, letting him know too much would not benefit him.

Gao Jiabao guessed that the matter must be very difficult, and Su Liang didn't want to entangle him further. Considering his own family, he refrained from asking more.

The two chatted for a while, and Su Liang got up to leave. Gao Jiabao said that he might need advice on medical skills in the future and hoped that Su Liang would kindly instruct him. Su Liang gladly agreed.

Old Master Gao insisted on sending Su Liang out. Halfway there, he spoke with heartfelt sincerity, "Bao almost lost his life this time, but he has become much more cheerful now. It's a blessing in disguise. I must thank you. You may not know, but your influence on Bao is significant. Since he met you during the Military Exam, he has changed a lot. He was a prideful person, unwilling to confide in others about his problems, but now he's much better. He can also understand our concerns and no longer acts stubbornly."

"There's no need to thank me, Master Gao. It's because he has grown, and it's inseparable from your selfless care. I envy the harmonious atmosphere of your family." Su Liang's eyes were sincere.

Old Master Gao laughed heartily, "Then would you like to join our family?" Su Liang coughed lightly, "I'm quite comfortable being alone."

Old Master Gao smiled and changed the topic, talking about Wan Shan's condition.

Su Liang listened without saying much. She certainly wouldn't treat Wan Shan's illness, unless under the pretense of torturing him. However, it wasn't necessary now, and he wasn't worth Su Liang's wasted effort.

After leaving the Gao house, Su Liang rode home alone.

On the way back, she encountered people from the palace; Duanmu Yi wanted to meet her.

Su Liang immediately turned her horse around and headed to the Imperial

Palace.

After inquiring about the process of detoxifying Gao Jiabao, Duanmu Yi had no doubt that Su Liang had accidentally created the antidote as she claimed.

Su Liang did not want to give herself credit, but there were some secrets she could not reveal. If she were to mention to Duanmu Yi that she had a master by her side who knew a poison techniques master, it would only become more confusing.

Afterwards, Su Liang took the initiative to resign her position in the military, stating that she wanted to focus on her Medical Skills and didn't have enough energy for both.

"Have you thought about this carefully?" Duanmu Yi asked.

Su Liang respectfully replied, "Yes, I have thought about it. I am not worthy of Your Majesty's approval."

"That's fine. However, if you have any ideas about military training and strategy, you must share them with General Lin. I hear that the two of you are like siblings," Duanmu Yi said.

Su Liang nodded, "This servant obeys Your Majesty's command."

"What do you think of the crown prince? Don't worry about anything, tell me your true thoughts. No matter what you say, I won't blame you," Duanmu Yi smiled.

Su Liang paused for a moment, "Your Highness the Crown Prince... this servant believes that he is an extremely intelligent person, knowing what he wants and possessing both morality and ability."

The word "intelligent" was simple, but in reality, it was difficult to achieve. In Duanmu Yi's eyes, both Duanmu Cheng and Duanmu Ao were foolish, unable to control their desires and incapable of accomplishing great things.

Comparatively, Duanmu Chen resembled him the most.

Duanmu Yi chuckled, "I didn't expect you to have such a high evaluation of the crown prince. Since you admire him so much, why don't you become the crown princess of Qian Country? How about that?"

Su Liang felt a bit stunned, as she hadn't expected Duanmu Yi to suddenly come up with such an idea. Although it sounded like he was half-joking, as a subject, one could never treat any word from their ruler as a joke.

Su Liang lowered her eyes, "This servant comes from a humble background and is not worthy of the crown prince."

Duanmu Yi's eyes narrowed, "Is it that you are not worthy, or that you don't want to?"

In such a situation, Su Liang had thought about it before, but when it truly happened, it still irritated her. However, she dared not show it, and simply replied solemnly, "In response to Your Majesty, Ning Jing has not yet been laid to rest, and this servant does not wish to consider marriage at the moment." "Can't you forget Ning Jing?" Duanmu Yi frowned.

Su Liang sighed deeply, "Yes, this servant cannot deceive Your Majesty."

Duanmu Yi harrumphed, "Fine. Think about it again before you decide. If you are interested in the position of crown princess, I am still willing to give you an opportunity. You may leave now."

Su Liang thanked the emperor and withdrew. After leaving the Imperial Study, she silently kicked a stone...

That night, after a long time, Su Liang secretly met with Duanmu Chen again.

Duanmu Chen was somewhat surprised, "Why are you here? Is there something wrong?"

Su Liang's face was calm, "Don't you know?"

Duanmu Chen frowned, "What should I know?"

"Today, I went to the palace. His Majesty wants me to become the crown princess. What do you think?" Su Liang spoke with a deep tone.

Duanmu Chen was startled, then raised his right hand to swear, "I assure you, this is not my intention. My father never consulted with me about this. To be honest, I hope you can help me secure the crown prince's position, ascend the Imperial Throne, and even unite the world, instead of marrying me and bearing my children. There are plenty of women for me to choose from, but only you have the ability to do what I need. I'm not crazy."

Su Liang's eyes narrowed slightly, "Alright, I believe you. Time is running short, and there's no need for more irrelevant words. You know best if I have helped you or not. I don't want anyone to interfere with my marriage, especially Your Majesty... "

Duanmu Chen nodded, "I'll figure out a way. As long as you don't choose a traitor as your husband someday, I believe our partnership will be unbreakable.."

Chapter 232:232. The Stone of Huguo Temple (First Update)

Deep into the night, Su Liang returned home, and Gu Ling was still awake.

"Duanmu Chen said that as long as I don't marry a rebel in the future, our cooperation will be unbreakable," Su Liang laughed lightly. "But he doesn't know that the top rebel on Qian Country's wanted list is in my house right now.

I hope your identity will be cleared soon."

Gu Ling had a faint expression, "Am I that black now?"

Su Liang looked at Gu Ling's pale face and nodded, "Yes, quite black. It's the darkest under the lamp."

"Tell a story," Gu Ling said.

Su Liang continued with "Water Margin," and Gu Ling began to draw again.

She accidentally caught a glimpse of a painting beside her, which clearly showed a scene similar to the Mother Demon fighting with Wu Song. The face of Mother Demon was very familiar, wasn't it herself?

Su Liang was speechless, "Great God, if it's because of the fight we had last night, that Mother Demon is me, but why isn't Wu Song you?"

Gu Ling shook his head, "It's just a random hand. Do you mind?"

Su Liang snorted lightly, "Mother Demon is not as pretty as me."

Gu Ling nodded slightly, "Then it's really wronged you, sorry."

Su Liang: ...What the hell!

But such a small matter, of course, it's not worth getting angry about. Su Liang finished telling the two stories of the day and went back to her room to sleep.

After Su Liang left, Gu Ling picked up the painting she saw, and there was another painting underneath. The woman in the painting also had Su Liang's face, and the man chopping meat next to her had Gu Ling's face.

Gu Ling picked it up and murmured softly, "Wu Song and Sun Erniang are not a couple."

The next day, Gu Ling brought up soy milk, tofu, and bean curd, and Su Liang joined him in making them. In fact, she only roughly knew how to make them, but she had never tried them before, and they succeeded the first time.

The two had a tofu feast at noon, and the taste was quite good.

"How about you be in charge of grinding soy milk in the morning?" Su Liang negotiated with Gu Ling.

Gu Ling nodded, "Okay."

So it was settled. It wasn't every day, but occasionally it was quite nice.

Because Nian Jincheng knew that "Ning Jing" wasn't dead, he stopped Yang Yu from coming to the capital city to accompany Su Liang. This was because Su Liang didn't need it, and they would both get tired acting along with Yang Yu, so there was no need.

Moreover, Nian Jincheng knew his identity and dared not return to the capital city easily. If someone recognized him, it would affect the people he cared about the most.

Su Liang received another letter from Yang Yu, in which she expressed her concern and longing for Su Liang, and talked about her current situation, mainly about her marriage to Nian Jincheng.

The feelings between the two were natural and developed smoothly. Yang Yu cherished it and hoped to get Su Liang's blessing.

will get married next month, and it would be great if you could come."

Seeing the end, Su Liang handed the letter to Gu Ling, but he shook his head, not intending to read it.

"Let's attend Yang Yu and Xiao Nian's wedding. I have never been to Yang Family," Su Liang put away the letter, "What gift should we give them?" "Tea leaves," Gu Ling said.

Su Liang really wanted to roll her eyes, "Can you be a little more creative?" "You going there is good enough, the gift isn't important," Gu Ling said.

"Even so, it still has to be given," Su Liang thought for a moment and said, "Unfortunately, I'm not as skilled as you, otherwise I could carve something for them. Aren't you going to give your brother a gift?"

Gu Ling shook his head, "No, he doesn't lack anything, on the contrary, he should give me a gift."

Su Liang: ...Great God really is Great God, talking nonsense with such confidence.

While Su Liang hadn't thought of what wedding gift to prepare for Yang Yu, Wan Hui's family returned to the capital city.

Zhengzheng, who didn't know about "Ning Jing's" accident, arrived in the capital city and rushed to Su Mansion.

"Aunt! Ning Uncle! Zhengzheng is here!" Zhengzheng ran into the courtyard, his voice crisp and clear.

Standing at the entrance of the courtyard, Wan Hui and Lu Yu looked at each other and couldn't help but sigh. The child didn't understand the meaning of death, and they really didn't know how to tell Zhengzheng about this matter. Su Liang's voice came from the room, "Who is Zhengzheng?"

Zhengzheng happily replied, "Zhengzheng is Wan Zhengmin! It's me!"

Su Liang pushed open the window and waved at Zhengzheng. The child shouted "aunt" and rushed into the room.

Wan Hui saw that Su Liang looked well and let out a sigh of relief, "Seeing Su Mei is fine, I can rest assured now."

Zhengzheng plunged into Su Liang's arms, laughed and played for a while, then looked around for his Uncle Ning.

Being unable to find him, Zhengzheng asked Su Liang, "Where's Uncle Ning?" Su Liang picked up Zhengzheng and placed him on a chair beside her, "He went to a faraway place."

Zhengzheng's little face was puzzled, "Where is 'faraway'?"

"It's a place very, very far away," said Su Liang.

Zhengzheng was still confused, "When will Uncle Ning come back then? I miss him!"

"I don't know," Su Liang shook her head.

Zhengzheng pouted, "But what should I do if I miss Uncle Ning?"

Su Liang took out the peach crisps specially made in Xunyang City and gave them to Zhengzheng, "Are they yummy?"

"Delicious," Zhengzheng nodded his little head, "I want to eat them with Uncle Ning."

Gu Ling, who was reading a book in the next room, let out an almost inaudible sigh and ate a piece of peach crisp silently.

Su Liang didn't lecture Zhengzheng about life's principles. He was still too young to understand. When he grew older, some things would become clear naturally.

It was absolutely impossible for Gu Ling to appear now. This was to protect Zhengzheng and protect Wan's family. It hasn't been easy for "Ning Jing's" identity to disappear, and there must be no further complications.

The family of three brought a large suitcase filled with treasures that Zhengzheng had collected on his way home to the Wan House, all of which were meant for Su Liang and “Ning Jing”.

With a carpet laid on the floor, Su Liang and Zhengzheng sat amidst a pile of gifts. She smiled as she listened to Zhengzheng recount where each treasure came from, what they were for, and whether they were for her or Uncle Ning. The child, waving his arms and legs as he talked, was adorable.

“Aunt, how can we make sure Uncle Ning receives these gifts?” Zhengzheng asked Su Liang seriously.

Su Liang thought for a while and said, “I’ll find a way to send them to him.”

“Uncle Ning will definitely get them?” Zhengzheng asked expectantly.

Su Liang nodded, “Yes.”

Wan Hui’s family had a meal at Su Liang’s place and then went back home. Su Liang told them she would visit Zhengzheng the next day.

After they left, Su Liang sat on the carpet and sorted out the gifts from Zhengzheng.

The door opened, and Gu Ling walked in, took off his shoes, and sat down next to Su Liang.

Sensing that Gu Ling was not in a good mood, Su Liang knew it was because he couldn’t acknowledge his relationship with Zhengzheng, so she picked up his gifts and recounted Zhengzheng’s words one by one before passing them to him.

“This is a gem that Zhengzheng snatched from his uncle. If you look at it against the sun, you can see beautiful flowers!” Su Liang said, imitating Zhengzheng’s gesture, with her wrists together, hands cupping her face, and her head tilted slightly to one side, blinking and repeating, “There really are flowers!”

Feeling embarrassed, Su Liang quickly put the gem into Gu Ling’s hand, straightened up and coughed lightly, “You didn’t see anything just now, it was all an illusion.”

Gu Ling’s eyes flashed with a shallow smile, and he nodded, “Hmm, so silly.”

Su Liang pushed all the remaining gifts towards Gu Ling, ready to get up and leave, “They’re all here, you can look at them yourself.”

“Su Liang,” Gu Ling called her name, “I can’t meet Zhengzheng, and I really want to know what gifts he sent me. Please help me.”

Su Liang hummed, “I was being kind and considerate, but you laughed at me.”

Gu Ling nodded slightly, “It was my fault. ”

Instead of sitting back down, Su Liang turned to look at Gu Ling and said, ‘You just need to do that gesture I did when imitating Zhengzheng, that ‘flowers’ gesture, and I won’t hold it against you.’

Gu Ling frowned, “It doesn’t suit me.”

“Do you still think I’m silly?” Su Liang countered. Gu Ling shook his head, “Absolutely not.”

“Then you do it,” Su Liang insisted.

Gu Ling put down the stone in his hand, brought his wrists together, and placed them at his neck.

Su Liang immediately found it amusing, sat back in her original position, and instructed Gu Ling, “Bend your fingers a little more. That’s right. Tilt your head. ”

“Which way should I tilt it?” Gu Ling asked with a frown.

Su Liang laughed, “Either way would work.”

Gu Ling tilted his head slightly to the right, and Su Liang signaled for him to follow her hand gestures.

Then, in an instant, he looked adorable, with a cute, cold contrast, full of charm.

Su Liang coughed lightly, “Almost, but most importantly, you need to say

‘flower’ while blinking your eyes.”

Gu Ling maintained his position, closed and opened his eyes, emotionlessly uttered two words, “Flower.”

Su Liang shook her head, “No, you need to have confidence, the kind of confidence that says I am the most beautiful flower in this world! Once more!”

Gu Ling put down his hand, sat up straight, and looked at Su Liang, “You and Zhengzheng are the most beautiful flowers in the world, not me.”

Su Liang held her forehead, “Great God, are you intentionally flattering me so I’ll let you off the hook?”

Gu Ling nodded, “Yes.”

Su Liang suddenly thought of something, her eyes lighting up, “It’s not impossible. However, Great God, you must give me a flower coupon.”

Gu Ling furrowed his brows, “What’s that?”

“On a day I feel upset and want to watch the Great God perform the flower act, I can use that coupon, and you can’t refuse.” Su Liang thought she was very creative.

“No.” Gu Ling shook his head. Su Liang pretended to turn around, “So, should I leave?”

Gu Ling frowned, “Fine.”

Su Liang sat back down satisfied and picked up the next gift to talk to Gu Ling about.

That night, before going to bed, Su Liang told Gu Ling a story as usual. When she was about to return to her room, Gu Ling handed her a small wooden plaque engraved with a cute little flower, and in the lower right corner, there was a small signature – three droplet-shaped patterns.

Su Liang raised her eyebrows, “Your name has three water droplets, mine has two. This is good, we can use it as a secret code later on.”

She accepted the wooden plaque, planning to look for an opportunity to use it later.

“Great God, where’s the little yellow hairpin I gave you?” Su Liang suddenly remembered.

Gu Ling simply said, “I didn’t lose it.”

“Why don’t you wear it?” Su Liang asked.

Gu Ling’s expression remained calm, “I’m currently operating in the dark, so my clothing and accessories shouldn’t be too eye-catching.”

Su Liang understood and took the flower card back to her room.

Gu Ling lay alone on the bed, his hands cupping his face, his head tilting slightly to one side, silently mumbling “flower” before frowning and saying aloud, “So silly.”

The following day, Gu Ling made soy milk early in the morning, and Su Liang made two types of bean curd, one sweet and one salty. Gu Ling tasted them both and liked them.

After leaving enough for Gu Ling, Su Liang took the warm bean curd on horseback to Wan Family’s house for Zhengzheng to eat.

Zhengzheng liked the sweet one, and he enjoyed eating the soft and fragrant bean curd.

Wan Hui took Zhengzheng to visit Cheng Yun at Huguo Temple and asked if Su Liang would join them.

Su Liang thought she hadn’t seen the little monk Cheng Yun for a while, so she agreed and went to Huguo Temple with them.

Lu Yu drove the carriage with only Wan Hui inside.

Su Liang rode a horse with Zhengzheng, whose little face excitedly looked left and right, showing no fear at all.

When they arrived at Huguo Temple, they saw Cheng Yun in the distance. Wan Hui released Zhengzheng’s hand, and the boy ran towards Cheng Yun with his little short legs, shouting, “Little Uncle Yun! Little Uncle Yun!”

Cheng Yun smiled and picked up Zhengzheng, allowing the little one to touch his shaved head.

Approaching noon, Cheng Yun invited them to the Vegetarian Hall for a meal.

Suddenly, a group of soldiers from the Forbidden Army appeared nearby. Su

Liang was surprised. The leader of the group was none other than Lin Bojun.

It seemed he had some urgent business, so he just nodded at Su Liang and continued to hurriedly lead his men towards the back mountain of Huguo Temple.

Su Liang, who was talking to Cheng Yun and Zhengzheng, asked, “Did something happen inside the temple today?”

Cheng Yun nodded, “Yes, something strange happened. Last night, a huge rock appeared out of nowhere at the back mountain. It was discovered by a senior brother early this morning, and Senior Pu Hui reported it to the emperor.”

Su Liang's expression was hard to read. A rock falling from the sky? Was that so mysterious? Could it be some kind of divine message?

She wasn't at all surprised, however, that the royal family would attach importance to this kind of event.

She asked Cheng Yun what the rock looked like and whether there were any inscriptions on it, but Cheng Yun said he hadn't seen it.

This was just a minor incident to Su Liang who, besides her curiosity, had no other thoughts on the matter. After eating the vegetarian meal at Huguo

Temple, she said she would take a portion back with her to eat in the evening.

Wan Hui couldn't help but feel distressed, thinking that it was because "Ning Jing" was gone, so Su Liang had to make do living alone.

Su Liang said she just thought the vegetarian dishes at the temple were delicious and that was all, nothing else.

What's worth mentioning is that when they were going down the mountain, Zhengzheng, the lively child, noticed the little rabbit purse around Su Liang's waist.

The kid just laughed and said "Auntie has a little bunny," but Wan Hui looked surprised, thinking the purse didn't look bought, nor did it look like something Su Liang would make herself. None of Su Liang's friends seemed to would give her such a childish gift.

After descending the mountain, Su Liang bid Zhengzheng farewell and rode home alone.

The vegetarian dishes she brought back were for Gu Ling's lunch. When Su Liang mentioned the huge stone that had fallen from the sky at Huguo Temple, Gu Ling said indifferently, "Nothing good."

Su Liang agreed, "Nowadays it's not a chaotic era and the people are relatively stable, the celestial immortals shouldn't be so idle as to interfere with worldly matters. I think it might be that some people are deliberately creating a mysterious aura to achieve unspeakable goals."

With that, Su Liang put the matter aside and asked about the poison master Gu Ling knew, asking if he could introduce her.

"I have never properly studied poison techniques and have only read some books on my own and explored. When I really encounter a tricky poison, I don't have enough time to study and learn." Su Liang said seriously, "I need a proper master."

Gu Ling shook his head, "She won't do."

"Is it because of her skill or something else?" Su Liang asked.

"Neither will do." Gu Ling said.

Su Liang frowned, "At least she is better than me. She can cure the poison from before."

"For this matter, let's think of another way," Gu Ling said.

Su Liang nodded, "Alright." Since Gu Ling said it wouldn't work, it must really be impossible, no matter what the reason was.

Duanmu Chen went to the Imperial Palace today, intending to talk to Duanmu Yi about Su Liang and to persuade him to give up the idea of making Su Liang the crown princess.

However, just as he began speaking, the old eunuch reported from outside, saying that General Lin had returned from Huguo Temple, and Duanmu Yi immediately got up and walked out.

Duanmu Chen instinctively followed, but saw Duanmu Yi turn around and tell him to visit his mother, the Imperial Concubine, and discuss other matters later.

Duanmu Chen respectfully agreed, but found it strange, it seemed as if something big had happened, but he was completely ignorant of it.

Following Duanmu Yi's orders, Lin Bojun transported the large stone into the Imperial Palace, covered from head to toe with thick black cloth. When he saw it in Huguo Temple, it was like that, with four solemn-faced warrior monks guarding it from the side.

"Everyone, withdraw. Don't spread this news." Duanmu Yi waved his hand.

Lin Bojun left with the Forbidden Army.

The heavily guarded inner palace was empty, and Duanmu Yi stood alone in front of the huge stone, slowly untied the ropes and pulled away the black cloth, revealing its true appearance.

The giant stone was about the height of an adult, oval in shape, lying horizontally on the ground, with flowing curves and a faint, jade-colored glow.

Duanmu Yi leaned in, touched the stone gently, and examined it carefully. On each side were several faint patterns and characters, as if engraved on the inner layer of the stone.

What Duanmu Yi saw first were two water droplet shaped patterns...

Duanmu Chen accompanied his mother, Imperial Concubine Xiao, to drink tea and then strolled through the Imperial Garden. He heard that Duanmu Yi had gone to Yuchang Palace and had not come out yet.

This made Duanmu Chen feel more and more strange, because to his knowledge, that palace had been unoccupied for many years. What was Duanmu Yi doing there for so long? Was he having a secret meeting with someone?

Imperial Concubine Xiao talked about Duanmu Yi's recent fondness for a dish she made, but noticing her son's distraction, she allowed him to go about his business and not accompany her.

"Did Father stay with Mother last night?" Duanmu Chen asked.

Imperial Concubine Xiao smiled and nodded, "Yes, he spent the night on this side recently."

"Then, was there anything unusual when Father left this morning?" Duanmu Chen asked.

Imperial Concubine Xiao thought for a moment and said, "At that time, there was someone reporting something, I was far away and only vaguely heard that the eunuch who came to get your

father mentioned Huguo Temple.” Duanmu Chen froze, Huguo Temple? What on earth had happened?

At this moment, inside Yuchang Palace, Duanmu Yi was writing several large characters on a pillar, “Phoenix,” “River,” “Mountains,” and the last two were

“Sul’ and “Liang.”

Duanmu Yi tossed the brush down, letting ink splash onto his clothes, his gaze fixed on the two characters “Su Liang,” he murmured, “The Phoenix Star descends, whoever gets Su Liang, gets the world..”

Chapter 233: 233. My Family’s Young Master (Second Update)

When Duanmu Chen saw Duanmu Yi again, it was still in the Imperial Study. He felt that Duanmu Yi seemed to be in a good mood, yet feigned calmness.

This confirmed Duanmu Chen’s belief that something significant had happened.

However, Duanmu Chen did not ask about it, because he knew that if Duanmu Yi wanted to share, he would. Otherwise, asking would be in vain and might even upset Duanmu Yi.

“By the way, did you say you had something to tell me?” Duanmu Yi asked Duanmu Chen.

Duanmu Chen composed himself and said, “The Emperor previously suggested brides for me, but this was interrupted. I wonder if this will continue? My mother wishes to be a grandmother, and I also need a proper lady to manage my household. ”

“The matter of selecting a bride, huh?” Duanmu Yi chuckled, “If you hadn’t mentioned it, I would have found you. We need to arrange this as soon as possible. Today, I will have the Ministry of Rites handle it! If you fancy a certain lady, your mother can also have a say.”

Upon hearing this, Duanmu Chen dutifully expressed his gratitude, but something seemed amiss.

Just the day before, Duanmu Yi had sought Su Liang, expressing his desire to make her the crown princess. So, Su Liang had specifically sought Duanmu Chen last night to discuss this matter, asking him to handle it.

This was also the reason Duanmu Chen had come to the palace that day.

But before he could say anything, Duanmu Yi did not even mention Su Liang’s name when the matter of choosing the crown princess was brought up. If Duanmu Yi truly favored Su Liang as the crown princess, shouldn’t he tell him, the crown prince, about it?

Or, did Duanmu Yi only mention the crown princess matter to Su Liang as a way of testing her, not really intending to make her the crown princess? If so, it would make sense.

Duanmu Chen subdued his doubts and excused himself.

On his way back to the prince's mansion after leaving the palace, Chang'an couldn't help but ask, "Master, you were in the palace for so long, did everything go smoothly?"

Duanmu Chen looked somewhat inscrutable, "Smoothly, very smoothly." He didn't even have a chance to use the words he had prepared. But since Duanmu Yi was going to continue choosing his bride, he would naturally stop focusing on Su Liang. This was a good thing, and Duanmu Chen believed he had fulfilled his promise to Su Liang.

Upon returning to the prince's mansion, Duanmu Chen ordered Chang'an to find out if anything unusual had happened at Huguo Temple that day.

Chang'an reported back to Duanmu Chen, saying that Lin Bojun had transported something from Huguo Temple into the palace with his troops, but he couldn't find out what it was, and the monks at Huguo Temple couldn't clarify.

"Today Miss Su went to Huguo Temple with that child from the Wan family, and met a little monk called Cheng Yun." Chang'an said. Su Liang's visit was quite public and many people had seen her.

"Since she was at Huguo Temple and she is so close to Lin Bojun, she may know something. Once it gets dark, you can go to the Su Mansion and ask her, but avoid being noticed." Duanmu Chen instructed.

In the afternoon, Su Liang specifically requested the brothers Qi Yan and Qi Jun to help her turn the room that "Ning Jing" had been living in into her study. The bed that had seen a death was removed and replaced with a comfortable, spacious lounge.

This was primarily to address a problem; the room would attract suspicion if a light was lit in the night, but as Gu Ling lived here and often read during the night, it was necessary to have a light. If it was Su Liang's frequently used study, having a light wouldn't be strange.

Just as everything was set up, Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing came by, and persuaded Su Liang to simply move to the loft closer to the garden. The view was better, and it was also more spacious.

Though the couple were both earnest in their persuasion, they both felt that Su Liang most likely wouldn't heed their advice.

Unexpectedly, upon hearing their words, Su Liang readily agreed, "Yes, there's a loft over there. How could I have forgotten? I haven't had a detailed look at that place yet, might as well check it out tomorrow. If it's suitable, I'll clean it and move there."

Now, Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing could only conclude that they had overthought things. Su Liang continued to live here simply because she was not afraid of ghosts and gods, and was too lazy to move. But they still could not explain the appearance of a full set of bedding in the next room. Moving away was the best solution.

Su Liang knew about the loft in the garden. Although she often walked by the beautifully constructed building hidden by trees in the past, she didn't pay much attention, merely regarding it as a beautiful and elegant decorative building within the mansion.

Now, she felt it would be great to move there, because she and Gu Ling could live on the second floor, and the first floor could be used for guests. This would offer more privacy, as they wouldn't

have to worry about anyone seeing anything if they came. Gu Ling would also be more comfortable.

“Let’s go and have a look now!” Xing Yusheng was slightly doubtful that Su Liang was just humoring them, so he wanted to finalize this matter as soon as possible.

Having witnessed the ghastly death of “Ning Jing” with his own eyes, Xing Yusheng was deeply traumatized. Now, each time he entered this courtyard, he could not help but recall that horrifying scene.

Going over a few days ago to open the door of “Ning Jing’s” room out of nowhere, was Xing Yusheng trying to overcome his trauma.

Lin Xueqing quickly added, “Yes! It’s still early. The Qi brothers are here, and we can help too. Why not move over today, Miss Su? The garden is quite beautiful now, and whenever you get tired of reading, you can look out the window to appreciate the scenery.”

Su Liang knew why the couple were so eager to have her move, but she didn’t say anything. Although they had different motives, the end result was the same, so she agreed to their proposal.

At this moment, Gu Ling wasn’t around. Because of renovation planned next door, his stuff had been moved into the warehouse early on to avoid suspicion.

They all went to visit the attic. It was fully furnished with fairly valuable items. It was Duanmu Chen who had prepared everything last year as agreed for Su Liang’s mansion. Even the flower hall on the first floor was ready to use after a simple clean-up.

Outside, there was a rock with the word “Yuanming” carved into it. The attic was named Yuanming Pavilion.

“This place is really good. There are two rooms upstairs with great views. We can use one as Su’s bedroom and the other as a study room; it’s just perfect,” Lin Xueqing said as she opened the window. The beautiful lake view is reflected in her eyes, causing her to exclaim, “I want to move here and live with Su!”

Xing Yusheng quickly changed the subject: “Ajun, you guys should hurry and clean up this place so that Su Liang could move in before dark. Go home and call some people over.”

Qi Jun immediately went next door to the Xing Mansion and got a few servants to help. Su Liang and Lin Xueqing went back to the original courtyard to pack their things.

By sunset, Su Liang’s room on the second floor of the Yuanming Pavilion was all settled. Xing Yusheng brought up the vase that his grandmother had given to Su Liang, which still held fresh flowers.

Lin Xueqing shook Su Liang’s arm and asked, “Su, aren’t you scared to stay here alone at night?”

Xing Yusheng coughed lightly and said, “No way. The courtyard where Su Liang used to stay was way scarier.”

Su Liang shook her head and said seriously, “I’m not afraid of either. What scares me is sharing my bed.”

Lin Xueqing glared at Su Liang and said "Su, you're so mean. I'm ignoring you from now on!"

The only problem here is the lack of a kitchen. Su Liang chose a spot next door with the plan to build a kitchen the next day.

At nightfall, Su Liang had arranged the other room on the second floor and laid out a set of new bedding. There was an open space between the two rooms with a table and two chairs. There's a window that can be opened. Su Liang planned to use it as a dining room. She set up a screen around it and usually ate there

Qi Jun brought food from the restaurant because Su Liang said she was very hungry that day, so the meal was quite rich. He left right after putting the food down.

As usual, Su Liang set the food and Gu Ling appeared on time.

"Great God, did you come here following the smell?" Su Liang asked.

Gu Ling sat across from her and looked outside through the window, slightly nodding his head. He felt like Su Liang seemed to be scolding him, but he had no evidence.

Chang'an was ordered to find Su Liang. He arrived at the courtyard where she used to stay and found it empty. After wandering around the mansion, he finally saw light on the second floor of the Yuanming Pavilion.

"Miss Su?" Chang'an called from downstairs.

Gu Ling was eating quietly. Su Liang poked her head out the window, glanced at Chang'an, and said, "Wait a minute." Then she put down her chopsticks and went downstairs.

Seeing Su Liang, Chang'an said with a smile, "Last year, our master prepared this mansion and said that Miss Su would definitely like it."

Su Liang nodded, "Is the crown prince looking for me for something?"

"Miss Su, there's no need to come over. The master just has a question for you,"

Chang'an spoke courteously, "Today, General Lin moved something from the Huguo Temple into the palace. Do you know about this?"

Su Liang nodded, "I know."

Chang'an looked delighted, "Could Miss Su tell me, what is it?"

Su Liang said two words, "A rock."

Chang'an froze, listening to Su Liang explain that she had heard today at the Huguo Temple that a peculiar stone fell from the sky last night and then it was transported into the palace. She didn't see it with her own eyes, so she didn't know what was special about the stone.

"Shouldn't General Lin know?" Chang'an asked tentatively.

Su Liang shook her head, "If even His Highness the Crown Prince is not clear about it and needed to ask me, I reckon that Second Brother Lin only knows how heavy that stone is. He shouldn't know anything else."

Chang'an nodded seriously, "Indeed. I will report truthfully to the master. Sorry for the inconvenience, I will take my leave."

After Chang'an left, Su Liang stood looking at the peaceful garden under the night sky, deep in thought. Duanmu Yi had specifically ordered the Forbidden Army to transport that rock into the palace. Could there really be a divine message? Up to this point, Duanmu Yi had trusted Duanmu Chen enough to appoint him as crown prince but hadn't let Duanmu Chen see the rock himself?

Returning to sit upstairs, Su Liang said, "Could it be that another prince's name is written on that stone? The emperor doesn't let the crown prince know because he has believed the divine message from the stone and harbored other intentions

Gu Ling's expression was indifferent, "Perhaps."

"But if there really is the name of another prince on the stone, shouldn't the Emperor be the first to suspect that the prince intentionally made it happen?" Su Liang felt that Duanmu Yi would not be so careless.

But just as she told Chang'an, if Duanmu Chen didn't know the inside story, even Lin Bojun, who had touched the stone, couldn't possibly know either. He was just following orders and had obviously been sworn to silence.

Gu Ling put down his chopsticks, picked up a spoon, and after sipping some soup, looked at Su Liang and said, "I'll go to the Imperial Palace tonight and see."

Su Liang picked up a small steamed bun for Gu Ling, "Great God, you're working hard."

The news that Chang'an brought back didn't relax Duanmu Chen but made him feel even more perplexed. When he calmed down, he also thought of the possibility that Su Liang mentioned: That Duanmu Yi was hiding something from him. What if the stone really had the name of another prince written on

"Yuchang Palace..." Duanmu Chen tapped his fingers on the table, thinking it was imprudent to send someone to infiltrate the Imperial Palace for information, especially since Duanmu Yi was valuing it highly and probably had it heavily guarded.

After thinking about it, Duanmu Chen decided to not do anything for now, and observe how things unfold. After all, with his current legitimate position, he needed to be careful and avoid any complications.

It was late at night

Su Liang was reading her book, waiting for Gu Ling to come back

After midnight, Gu Ling floated in through the open window. Su Liang put down her book and stood up, "So? Did you see the stone?"

Gu Ling nodded, "I saw it, shattered."

Su Liang frowned, "It was shattered?"

“By the time I got there, the Emperor was arranging for the Forbidden Army to smash the stone while being blindfolded,” Gu Ling said.

“He doesn’t want others to know what’s on the stone? Is it really a divine decree?” Su Liang became even more curious, “Could it be a guide for the Emperor to unite the world? Therefore, he can’t allow anyone else to see it because that would be a threat to him?”

“Stop thinking about it.” Gu Ling said.

Su Liang sighed lightly, “Thinking won’t help, the whole thing is mysterious from beginning to end. Except for the Emperor, only the martial monk who first discovered the stone, and Master Pu Hui know about it. But they probably won’t tell.”

“Stop thinking about it,” Gu Ling said again.

Su Liang nodded, “Alright, I’m going back to sleep. Good night, great god.”

This was Gu Ling’s room. While Su Liang was about to leave, before Gu Ling could even tell her, she remembered and turned back, realizing she had forgotten to tell the story.

However, when Gu Ling saw the tired look on her face, he said he was sleepy and didn’t want to hear a story tonight.

The next day, the servants of the Xing Mansion helped to build a kitchen next to the Yuanming Pavilion. Su Liang drew a sketch, and according to her design, it was even more spacious and convenient to use than the previous kitchen.

Afterwards, Su Liang visited the Gao family twice. Gao Jiabao’s health was recovering nicely and he was a lot cheerier, the only troubling thing was that his mother was introducing him to potential matches...

Duanmu Chen’s crown prince coronation ceremony took place as scheduled and without any mishaps. Duanmu Chen felt that Duanmu Yi’s attitude towards him had not changed noticeably for the worse, except that he had never mentioned the stone.

No matter how Duanmu Chen investigated, he could not find any useful information. He could only put the stone matter aside for now and be a good crown prince, assisting Duanmu Yi in managing state affairs. He was even more outstanding than the former crown prince, Duanmu Cheng.

After Duanmu Ao was murdered and Duanmu Cheng disappeared, Empress Dowager Wan and Little Empress Wan had made a bit of a fuss but then stayed quiet, spending their time in the Imperial Harem devoted to Buddha. They seldom even saw Duanmu Yi.

However, to Duanmu Yi’s eyes, they seemed to have learned that Duanmu Cheng was still alive and hiding somewhere, waiting to return and fight for the throne, and that was why they were being obedient for now. He just had someone keep an eye on them, no longer caring for them like before.

Although she was an imperial physician, Su Liang didn’t need to go to the Imperial Medical Bureau to work on a daily basis. Only occasionally, when some concubine in the palace fell ill, would she be asked to come and attend to her.

Eventually, Su Liang received a message on a day in late July, the King Yue Situ Xie from Liang Country would arrive in the capital of Qian country the next day. She had to assist crown prince Duanmu Chen in handling the reception.

This was agreed upon beforehand, so Su Liang was not surprised.

Xing Yusheng comes over to mention that a troop had been assigned to “protect” the Liang country’s envoy to Xuanbei City, and they were expected to arrive in the capital city the next day. However, Xing Ji had not been allowed to return to the capital.

“Grandmother is very disappointed,” Xing Yusheng sighed, “I got married without even my father present. It seems the Emperor intends to have him stationed in Xuanbei City for quite some time.”

Su Liang shook her head slightly, “Not necessarily. If a suitable candidate is found to replace your Uncle Xing, the Emperor might allow him to return.”

Xing Yusheng knew that Su Liang was trying to comfort him. But he was actually okay and did not need comfort. He thought it was not a bad thing for Xing Ji to pursue what he liked, instead of having to guard the house all the time. After all, the elderly Xing matriarch was getting on in years and always hoped for a family reunion. The border was not a place of peace and inevitable worry and concern prevailed.

While they were talking, Xing Yusheng mentioned Situ Xie, “Su Liang, do you know the Yue King from Liang country?”

Su Liang shook her head, “No. The first time I heard of his name was when the Emperor recently ordered me to help the Crown Prince receive the Liang country’s envoy.”

Xing Yusheng knew a bit, “Situ Xie is the uncle of the Emperor of Liang, his daughter Situ Ning married into Qian Country many years ago. She married the son of the general guarding Xuanbei City, Gu Yuan. Gu Yuan made meritorious service and returned to the capital to be named Marquis Chang Xin, from thence he resided long in the capital city. Situ Ning died due to sickness four years ago and Gu Yuan elevated his side consort, also his cousin, to wife status. Two years ago, the Gu family was annihilated for plotting rebellion, with only the Crown Prince Gu Ling was not in the capital city at the time and has since disappeared. Qian Country has been hunting for Gu Ling ever since, the most recent news of him was after the Nian family had their troubles and Nian Jincheng was rescued, it is said that Gu Ling did it.”

All these things, Gu Ling knew best, but he didn’t mention them and Su Liang did not ask. Hearing from Xing Yusheng, Su Liang still could not imagine what kind of people Gu Yuan and Situ Ning were, and what the rebellion was like.

But all that has passed, what concerns Su Liang now is whether Situ Xie’s arrival can remove the rebel label on Gu Ling’s head. This was the only thing relevant to her.

“By the way, there are rumors that the two countries are about to have a marriage alliance, it is spread that the Emperor is about to marry the Sixth princess off to the Liang country,” Xing Yusheng said.

Su Liang almost forgot about the princess Duanmu Qianqian. She remembered the first time she heard of the “Sixth princess” was when Xing Yusheng was suddenly taken to the capital city from Bei’an county. The claim was that the emperor was choosing a husband for his most beloved Sixth Princess.

Duanmu Qianqian left impressions on Su Liang in two incidents – first, her close relationship with Nian Ruxue, second, the gossip that the Emperor favored Lin Boyan as the Sixth Princess’s consort, but it fell through. Lin Boyan is now married, and his wife is already pregnant. Xing Yusheng is also married, leading a sweet life.

And the once lofty princess, after her elder brother’s misfortune, has fallen to the point of marrying a prince from another country.

The so-called “Emperor’s doting,” turns out to be but a joke.

That night, Gu Ling was nowhere to be seen after dinner, and Su Liang didn’t

know where he went.

Just as Su Liang was about to rest, an uninvited guest arrived.

“Miss Su, where’s my master?” The visitor began with a degree of interrogation. Who could it be Other than Uncle Liang?

Upon seeing Uncle Liang, Su Liang realized that Gu Ling disappeared tonight probably because he expected him to show up and didn’t wish to meet him.

“Uncle Liang, he left Xunyang City after seeing you, and I don’t know where he went,” Su Liang’s expression was calm.

Uncle Liang snorted, “You shouldn’t lie to me! You must know where the young master is!”

Su Liang really disliked this presumptuous old man, “When he left, he said he had to meet a friend. He explained that if Uncle Liang came again, I only need to tell you that once the matter he mentioned was settled, he would show up and meet you.”

Uncle Liang frowned, “You really don’t know?”

Su Liang nodded, “Yes.”

“What exactly is your relationship with my young master?” Uncle Liang asked Su Liang.

Faced with Uncle Liang’s unfriendly gaze, Su Liang snorted lightly, “He is madly in love with me and I can’t get rid of him. If he didn’t have important things to do, he wouldn’t leave. You’re not satisfied with me being with him? Think I’m unworthy of your young master? It’s simple, bring me a million taels of gold, and I’ll leave him immediately.”

Upon hearing this, Uncle Liang steamed, his beard bristling and eyes bulging, “I knew it! You, who hid so deeply before, are no good! My young master is infatuated with you? Stop daydreaming! I see that you are the one who is staying with my young master and refusing to leave!”

“Yes, yes, yes.” Su Liang nodded, “Everything you said is correct. Completely correct.”

Uncle Liang opened his mouth, but suddenly didn't know what to say. He gave Su Liang a harsh stare, "Stay away from my young master in the future!" With these words, he stormed off.

Su Liang chuckled lightly, "Your young master? Don't flatter yourself. Clearly, he's my young master."

Gu Ling suddenly appeared at the door, "You're correct.."

Chapter 234:234. Marquis Chang Xin (Midnight)

Su Liang lightly huffed, "May I ask where the young master went for a stroll?" "Everywhere." Gu Ling said.

Su Liang looked up at the sky speechlessly, thinking this guy is insane!

"Let's talk about serious matters," Su Liang said solemnly. "Earlier, when you disguised yourself as Ning Jing, Uncle Liang told your grandfather about it. Although that identity is over now, if someone brings it up again and with the royal family's suspicions, they might believe it. For safety's sake, you must hide well recently and not be discovered by anyone. Otherwise, it'll be troublesome."

"Mm." Gu Ling nodded.

"What if your grandfather troubles me?" Su Liang asked.

Gu Ling shook his head slightly, "Suit yourself."

Before going to bed, Gu Ling soaked some beans. The next day, before dawn, he ground the beans into soy milk using a small stone grinder, adding a few peanuts and red dates, then boiling it in a small pot.

By the time finished exercising, the soy milk was at the perfect temperature to drink. She also made two simple pancakes and a cold dish, which made their breakfast.

Now that they lived upstairs, one essential task for Gu Ling was to heat bathwater for Su Liang and to drain it, which was part of the housework he had always handled before.

After Su Liang had taken a bath and changed her clothes, the sun had just risen.

Today, she wore one of the new dresses that Yang Yu had given her, a light purple chiffon gown. As she walked, the skirt gently floated, looking soft and beautiful.

Seeing Gu Ling looking at her skirt, Su Liang asked, "How is it?"

Gu Ling nodded slightly, "Not bad."

"Does it look very gentle and well-behaved?" Su Liang asked, holding her face.

Gu Ling nodded again, "Not bad."

"That's good. I have to make a good impression when meeting strangers, so I shouldn't let them think I'm someone not to mess with," Su Liang explained,

clenching her fists, knuckles cracking, and humming, "If anyone wants to bully me, just wait and see!"

When Su Liang came downstairs, Chang'an appeared not far away.

Seeing Su Liang, his eyes sparkled in admiration, 'Miss Su, please go to the crown prince's mansion first.'

Su Liang nodded, "Let's go."

Gu Ling stood by the window, hidden by the tall, lush trees below, so nobody could see him. Yet he could see that touch of purple disappearing into the distance through the leaves.

After a while, Lin Xueqing came running, calling for Su Liang downstairs. After getting no response, she left.

When Su Liang arrived at the crown prince's mansion and saw Duanmu Chen, there were four servants helping him put on his coat.

As he turned his head to see Su Liang, Duanmu Chen waved his hand, ordering the servants to leave. He fastened his jade belt himself and invited Su Liang to take a seat.

"Everything has to be done according to the rules now that my identity has changed, which is quite annoying," Duanmu Chen complained to Su Liang.

Su Liang scoffed, "Your Highness, these words are somewhat... "

Before she could finish, Duanmu Chen began laughing, "You look stunning in your rare dress-up. I heard that among the envoys from Liang Country today, there's a famous beauty named Situ Yao, who is the granddaughter of King Yue from Liang."

Situ Xie's granddaughter... That's Gu Ling's cousin, Su Liang thought.

"The Situ family of Liang Country has always been known for their beauties, especially King Yue's family, all with extraordinary appearances," Duanmu Chen said.

With an air of casualness, Su Liang mentioned, "I just found out that Gu Ling, the former heir of Marquis Chang Xin, was the grandson of King Yue from

Liang."

Duanmu Chen's face changed slightly before he smiled slowly, "Indeed. This isn't a secret. Perhaps Gu Ling is under King Yue's protection now."

Feigning curiosity, Su Liang asked, "Will Qian Country demand King Yue to hand over Gu Ling?"

Duanmu Chen shook his head, "Of course, he won't admit to such a thing. It's only natural. In fact, I think Gu Ling had nothing to do with the rebellion in the

Gu family, but... "

Realizing he was talking too much, Duanmu Chen dropped the subject, bringing up Duanmu Qianqian instead, "I saw the Sixth Princess in the palace yesterday, and she has become much more composed."

Su Liang thought to herself, having lost her support, how can Duanmu Qianqian not be composed in order to survive?

Soon, Chang'an came to report that the envoys from Liang Country were not far from the capital city.

Duanmu Chen went out, followed by Su Liang. Both of them rode horses, leading people to the city gate.

Officials from the Ministry of Rites had been waiting here early, along with a band. It had nothing to do with which country was stronger; the royal family of Qian had always liked to make a good appearance on formal occasions.

Many commoners came out to watch the excitement. Su Liang heard people discussing the beauties of the Situ family and some whispering about Gu Ling, but the conversation was quickly interrupted. In Qian Country, his name was a taboo.

The imposing delegation appeared in their sight, and Su Liang was somewhat surprised to see the two young generals leading the way on their horses. Both of them were acquaintances, one was Che Yun and the other was Lian Shun.

Both of them had abilities and were appreciated by Xing Ji, so they took on the responsibility of leading the team to escort the envoy of Liang Country to the capital city.

They saw the purple silhouette beside Duanmu Chen from afar.

Gu Ling's eyes sparkled, "Su Xiaoliang has come to meet us too!"

Che Yun chuckled, "Don't flatter yourself. She must have been arranged by His Majesty to greet the envoy of Liang Country."

"Could it be that His Majesty wants her to be the crown princess?" Lian Shun muttered.

Che Yun's gaze fell on Duanmu Chen, his expression unchanged, "It's not impossible."

The two of them entered the city gate, dismounted together, and knelt down to pay respects to Duanmu Chen, the newly appointed crown prince.

Duanmu Chen smiled warmly, "No need for formalities, you two generals have worked hard."

It was his first time meeting Che Yun, but he was not unfamiliar with Lian Shun.

As the music started, the procession of Liang Country approached the city gate, including two luxurious carriages. The front one was darker, and the rear one was lighter in color.

Lian Shun quietly moved behind Su Liang and whispered to her, "In the front carriage is Situ Xie, and in the back is his granddaughter Situ Yao."

Su Liang tilted her head slightly and asked, "I heard that Situ Yao is a great beauty, have you seen her before?"

Lian Shun shook his head, "Whenever she appears, she always wears a veil and it's unclear. But she is definitely better looking than Man Ya from Yin Country!"

But still not as good as you.”

Hearing the last three words, Su Liang laughed softly, “Different flowers for different eyes.”

Lian Shun sighed faintly, “Anyway, I, this flower, can never enter your eyes.” Realizing that his words were too affectionate, he immediately changed the subject, “Marquis asked me to deliver a letter to his son.”

“You can go and find Xing Yusheng yourself.” Su Liang said.

Che Yun looked over, and Lian Shun gave him a smug expression. He had already confessed his feelings and accepted Su Liang’s rejection. Now, she was just a good friend that he liked very much. Naturally, he was happy to see her.

During their conversation, the procession of Liang Country had entered the city gate and the luxurious carriages stopped.

An old man with white hair and beard was helped out of the carriage. It was King Yue of Liang Country, Situ Xie.

At his age, Situ Xie’s body was still well maintained, with a straight back, and his dark brocade robe accentuated his extraordinary temperament. Judging by his face, he must have been a handsome man in his youth, and his current appearance still completely outshined his peers.

The music stopped, and Duanmu Chen started to make small talk with Situ Xie. was feeling bored and just wanted to see what Situ Yao, who was in the carriage behind, looked like. After all, she was Gu Ling’s cousin, perhaps their appearances would be somewhat similar?

While Su Liang was thinking this, she saw Situ Xie’s gaze fall on her, revealing a gentle smile in his eyes, “This must be the Martial Arts Champion of Qian Country, Miss Su Liang?

Duanmu Chen smiled and nodded, Su Liang saluted, “I am Su Liang, greetings to your Highness, King Yue.”

“The rumors say that Miss Su Liang has outstanding martial arts skills and medical expertise. I didn’t expect her to be such a beautiful person as well.” Situ Xie smiled and praised, “My granddaughter heard about Miss Su and insisted on meeting her. Yao’er, don’t you want to come over?”

A young girl in a yellow dress wearing a veil came out of the carriage behind and ran over, holding her skirt. Two maids followed her, urging her to slow down and not to trip.

The young girl ran to Situ Xie’s side and complained, “Grandfather, you’re talking about me again.” As she spoke, her eyes glanced at Su Liang. Her eyes were truly beautiful, bright and smart.

Just looking at her eyebrows and eyes, she didn’t look like Gu Ling. Su Liang thought.

“Princess Yaoguang.” Su Liang smiled and bowed.

Situ Yao’s melodious laughter sounded pleasant, “Whoever says I’m the number one beauty again, I won’t listen. Miss Su Liang is even more beautiful than me.”

As she spoke, Situ Yao raised her hand to take off the veil on her face, boldly revealing her true appearance.

There were exclamations and praises from the crowd, and even Duanmu Chen was taken aback for a moment.

She really doesn't look like Gu Ling... Su Liang thought. However, it might be because of the good genes of the Situ family. If there was any similarity between Situ Yao and Gu Ling, it would be their enviable skin, which was as white and flawless as jade.

Situ Yao was not a thin figure but rather plump and curvy. She had thick black hair, bright eyes, and lovely cheeks that dimpled when she smiled. Her lips were red, and her teeth were white, a well-proportioned beauty.

Just going by appearance, upon seeing Situ Xie and Situ Yao, Su Liang agreed with the saying "Situ Family produces beautiful people."

Duanmu Chen regained his composure, smiling and suggesting that Su Liang should accompany Situ Yao to have fun in the capital city.

As a matter of courtesy, Su Liang agreed naturally.

Situ Yao held onto Situ Xie's arm and smiled sweetly at Su Liang, but she didn't try to get too close to her.

Overall, Situ family's grandfather and granddaughter's first impression on Su Liang was not bad, just judging by their appearances.

The music started again, and Duanmu Chen led the procession of the envoy of Liang Country to the inn.

Upon arriving at the inn, everything had been arranged in advance. Duanmu Chen handed over the invitation for the palace banquet that night and then left with Su Liang.

Che Yun and Lian Shun were still waiting outside with their soldiers.

"Where are they staying?" Su Liang asked.

Duanmu Chen smiled, "In the Forbidden Army's military camp. General Lin can go to the residence of the fifth prince, and if General Che is willing, there's no problem."

Lian Shun didn't take offense, but he didn't want to bother with Duanmu Che right now. He just laughed and asked, "I heard the Su Mansion is quite big, can we stay at Miss Su's place for a few days?"

Su Liang nodded, "Of course, you can't."

Lian Shun pretended to sigh sadly, "Fine, fine, let's just stay in the military camp then. Wait, Your Highness. shouldn't it be fine if I buy a small house to stay in the capital city?"

Duanmu Chen had known Lian Shun since childhood and was well aware of his playful nature. He nodded calmly, "Of course, you can."

"It's fine to stay in the military camp, but I must treat Che Beibei to a few days of fun since it's a rare visit to the capital city!" As soon as he finished speaking, Lian Shun ordered his soldiers to go to the Forbidden Army's military camp, then walked down the street with Che Yun's arm around his shoulder.

‘Gentlemen, you still need to enter the palace to pay your respects.’ Duanmu Chen reminded them.

“Forgot!” Lian Shun slapped his forehead.

Che Yun, who seemed a bit restrained as a newcomer to the capital city from the border, said helplessly, “Enough with the jokes, this is not Jiaye City or Xuanbei City.”

Lian Shun smiled mysteriously, “Don’t be so serious all the time. In the capital city, what kind of people haven’t we seen?”

“Lian Shun.”

Suddenly hearing Su Liang calling him, Lian Shun immediately pushed Che Yun away and ran over, “What can I do for you?”

“I just remembered something and need to let you know. Our Ning Family used to have a reliable steward named Song Qi. He left the Ning Family years ago and went to the south. I heard he’s helping you grow oranges? I want to ask him to come back and help sell our tea.”

Duanmu Chen’s mouth twitched slightly. Che Yun tried to hold back his laughter.

Upon hearing this, Lian Shun immediately nodded, “Of course... not! Uncle Song is our family’s most reliable steward. Without him, what would happen to our oranges?”

“I’m just informing you, not seeking your approval. He isn’t a slave, and I’ve already sent someone to invite him. If he wants to return to the Ning Family, you can’t stop him.” Su Liang said.

Lian Shun sighed, “If my family’s orange harvest is bad this year, it’s all your fault!”

Su Liang sported lightly, “Our tea will definitely sell well.” She then prepared to

Duanmu Chen spoke again, “Su Liang, you also need to follow me into the palace to report back.”

When they left the palace, it was approaching noon. Lian Shun really did take Che Yun house hunting, while Su Liang didn’t bother with them.

She rode her horse alone past the Wan Family Restaurant, and when she heard Zhengzheng calling her, she dismounted and entered.

Half an hour later, Su Liang left the restaurant with a food box in her hand and got back on her horse to head home.

Before she could see Gu Ling, she saw Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing rowing a boat on the lake.

“You really consider yourselves as part of the family.” Su Liang joked.

Xing Yusheng replied calmly, “My house is small and has no lake. When Xueqing wants to row a boat, she comes here. What outsiders? Where are the outsiders? Would you give the key to your house to an outsider?”

Su Liang glanced at the second floor of Yuanming Pavilion but couldn't see from her angle whether there was someone by the window. She instinctively thought Gu Ling was inside.

"Sister Su, come quickly!" Lin Xueqing waved at Su Liang.

"Wait a moment, I'll put some things down." Su Liang went back into the Yuanming Pavilion, went upstairs, and saw Gu Ling sitting in her room, reading a book.

She took out the lunch she had brought for him and said, "I saw your grandfather and cousin today. They both look very good."

Gu Ling didn't respond.

Su Liang was a bit curious, "Do you know your little cousin?"

Gu Ling looked indifferent, "I saw her once when I was young, but I don't know her."

"I wonder if they're talking about you now." Su Liang sighed softly.

Hearing Lin Xueqing calling her outside to play, Su Liang opened the window and said, "I'm tired. I'll sleep for a while." She then closed the window again.

Remembering something else, Su Liang opened the window again and called out to the lakeside, "Xing Yusheng, your father wrote you a letter, and it's with Lian Ershan."

Xing Yusheng, who was rowing the boat, paused for a moment, then heard Lin

Xueqing urging, "Let's go back quickly, get the letter, and see grandmother!"

"Oh." Xing Yusheng nodded, rowed the boat to the shore, got off with Lin Xueqing, and they both went home.

That night, a banquet was held in the palace to entertain Liang Nation's King Yue, Situ Xie.

Su Liang was among the invited guests. She didn't wear makeup and just changed into another plain-looking dress. She waited for Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing to call her, and they set off together.

"Is your grandmother not going?" Su Liang asked Xing Yusheng.

Xing Yusheng shook his head, "My grandmother is not feeling well, and they are not going." By 'they', he meant Miao's family and her children.

"Sister Su, I heard that Princess Yaoguang is very beautiful. You saw her today, what do you think?" Lin Xueqing asked curiously.

After thinking for a moment, Su Liang said, "She's probably eighteen times as beautiful as Mu Ya!"

Lin Xueqing couldn't help laughing, "Why eighteen times?"

"No reason, I just say so," Su Liang pinched Lin Xueqing's face.

"How many times more beautiful is Princess Yaoguang compared to me?" Lin Xueqing asked with a smile.

“You should ask your husband about that,” Su Liang replied.

Finally, Xing Yusheng, who was following behind, found a chance to speak, “Qingqing is the most beautiful! She’s eighteen times more beautiful than Su Liang, I say!”

Lin Xueqing leaned against Su Liang and laughed, “Sister Su, if you want to hit him, just do it, but don’t hit me. I didn’t say it.”

Xing Yusheng: ...This is his own dear wife.

When they entered the palace, the royal banquet naturally presented a scene of splendor and wealth.

Su Liang, now just an Imperial Physician, had originally intended to sit with Lin Xueqing. However, she unexpectedly had a special seat near the front, right next to Sixth Princess Duanmu Qianqian.

As Duanmu Chen had said, Duanmu Qianqian did indeed seem more mature and stable than a few months ago. Sitting quietly there, her eyes met Su Liang’s gaze and then calmly moved away.

Su Liang had thought that the Liang country’s marriage alliance would need further discussion, but not long after the banquet began, Situ Xie publicly asked for the Sixth Princess Duanmu Qianqian, who was born of legitimate lineage, on behalf of the crown prince of the Liang country, who was also his nephew, Situ Kun.

Without any hesitation, Duanmu Yi agreed and even promised to use Nancheng as a dowry for Duanmu Qianqian.

Lian Shun, sitting far back, silently rolled his eyes.

Su Liang was naturally familiar with Nancheng, the Liang country’s city that she had previously won in a martial arts competition with Wei Hao. Now Duanmu Yi was going to give it back.

Of course, there was nothing to be angry about. The competition between the two countries was not as simple as it appeared. The city was a trading tool for both Liang and Qian countries. The fact that it could be given away meant that greater benefits were forthcoming.

Thus, Duanmu Qianqian’s lifelong affair was settled in the laughter and conversation between Duanmu Yi and Situ Xie. From beginning to end, she was like a decorative vase, and no one even thought to ask if she was willing. She probably knew nothing about her fiancé except for his name.

Su Liang didn’t pity Duanmu Qianqian. Everyone has their own fate, and she was born with the glory of a princess. And throughout history, foreign marriage has always been the destiny of princesses.

However, the more she dealt with the royal family, the more she felt the desire to stay away. Life was already difficult enough, and she hoped that her own life would have less intrigue and that her feelings would be purer.

After three rounds of drinking, Su Liang focused on peeling grapes and eating them. Then, without warning, she heard Gu Ling’s name.

Su Liang was looking down, so she didn’t show any reaction. She continued to peel a grape, put the translucent flesh into her mouth, and the juice flowed between her teeth and cheeks. It was sweet.

The atmosphere at the banquet quickly quieted after Situ Xie mentioned that name. Even Duanmu Chen picked up his wine glass and closed his eyes.

The smile on Duanmu Yi's face faded, "King Yue, Gu Ling is a Qian countryman and has committed the heinous crime of treason. He is unforgivable."

Situ Xie sighed, stood up, faced Duanmu Yi, and bowed deeply. "He is my own grandson, and I have neglected him due to the distance. I have no objection to the verdict on Gu Yuan's rebellion. He committed heinous acts and paid the price. However, Gu Ling has been aloof and fond of solitude since he was a child. He has had very little contact with people, and his relationship with Gu Yuan has been distant, like strangers. Gu Ling was not involved in the rebellion at all. I beg Emperor Qian to give my grandson a second chance at life. I can assure you that he will not cause any harm to Qian country in the future."

Duanmu Yi's eyes narrowed slightly as he looked at the old man who was still bowing, "Are you suggesting that you know where Gu Ling is?"

Without straightening up, Situ Xie sighed deeply, "I don't know, and I've been looking for him. If Emperor Qian can be merciful and revoke the arrest warrant for him, I think he would be willing to come out and live a normal life."

"And if I don't?" Duanmu Yi snorted coldly.

Situ Xie said in a deep voice, "If Emperor Qian has any conditions, please do not hesitate to mention them. As long as I can achieve them, I will do my best."

Duanmu Yi fell silent, and the whole palace was quiet enough to hear a pin drop.

Situ Xie maintained his ninety-degree bowing posture, standing there. He could have talked to Duanmu Yi about this one-on-one, or even kneel in front of him behind closed doors, which would have been less humiliating than pleading in public.

Su Liang thought that this was actually necessary. The arrest warrant against Gu Ling was part of Qian Country's "internal affairs," and Situ Xie's actions were interference in Qian Country's internal affairs. Even though Gu Ling was his grandson, the word "external" meant that they were separate families.

Even if Duanmu Yi really wanted to let Gu Ling go, he had to do so openly so everybody would know that he was granting mercy to Situ Xie, thus appearing benevolent, but not fearing Liang Country or Situ Xie.

The oppressive silence was suddenly broken by laughter, startling everyone.

"Why haven't you helped King Yue up yet?" Duanmu Yi seemed to have been lost in thought, "Of course, I must give King Yue face for his request. Looking back now, Gu Ling is a child I have watched grow up. He has always been different from others and not close to his family in Gu. He has lived in Huguo Temple for many years, and Master Pu Hui once said that he has a strong affinity for Buddhism. As of today, the arrest warrant for Gu Ling will be revoked."

Situ Xie, who was supported by Situ Yao, almost lost his balance as he bowed again to thank Duanmu Yi.

Duanmu Yi laughed heartily, “However, I can let Gu Ling go, but he is still a citizen of Qian Country. I will give him the title of Marquis Chang Xin, and he can wait for my return!”

Su Liang knew that Duanmu Yi meant that Gu Ling’s identity could be restored, but he could not openly go to Liang Country to serve Situ Xie and become a Liang Country citizen. He gave the cursed title to Gu Ling so that Gu Ling would still be under the control of the Qian royal family as soon as he appeared.

From the perspective of a monarch, it was necessary to execute the nine families for the crime of rebellion, so Duanmu Yi’s decree could be considered “grace.” It was also understandable that he did not want Gu Ling to become a

citizen of Liang Country. After all, if a pardoned rebel were to help a rival country fight against him in the future, where would his face be?

Su Liang breathed a small sigh of relief. Regardless of the undercurrents beneath the surface, after tonight, the name Gu Ling would no longer be taboo. As the new Marquis Chang Xin, he could rightfully appear in the capital city of

Qian Country..

Chapter 235: 235. I have a cleanliness obsession (Fourth Update)

Situ Xie, whether satisfied or not with the outcome, could only thank Duanmu Yi for his grace and could not raise further requests on this matter, at least not tonight.

Two important matters were settled at the night banquet.

Duanmu Qianqian would marry into Liang Country and become the crown princess of Liang Country.

Gu Ling, once the most wanted fugitive in Qian Country, transformed into the new Marquis Chang Xin, with a noble title. The former Marquis Chang Xin’s mansion had now become Marquis Zhong Xin’s mansion, Duanmu Yi even gifted Gu Ling a new mansion.

Many things, even if the inside story was complicated, could be handled as long as there was some public explanation.

Su Liang was satisfied with the outcome.

After leaving the palace, Su Liang still went back with Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing, riding in their carriage.

Qi Yan drove the carriage, slowly leaving the square in front of the Imperial palace.

After some distance, Xing Yusheng took a long breath, “Gu Ling is finally safe.”

Su Liang knew that when Gu Ling was a child, he had saved Xing Yusheng’s mother Qin Yuan. Xing Yusheng wanted to find Gu Ling, naturally with good intentions, but in order to avoid causing more issues and because there were no clues to be found, he had to give up in the end.

Now, Xing Yusheng’s exclamation was indeed heartfelt happiness for Gu Ling.

Lin Xueqing had also heard about Xing Yusheng's connection to Gu Ling. She smiled and said, "I wonder if Lord Gu, now Marquis Gu, will return when he gets the news?"

Xing Yusheng shook his head, "It's hard to say. I haven't actually met him. I've only heard that he is a very beautiful man like an immortal, and a very Buddhist in character, not caring about wealth and glory. Otherwise, he wouldn't have stayed in the Huguo Temple for so long. And," Xing Yusheng lowered his voice, "Who knows if the emperor really wants to let him go? If he's living well elsewhere, it's better not to come back."

"My husband, do you really want to meet Gu Ling?" Lin Xueqing asked.

Xing Yusheng nodded, "Of course, I want to know him and be friends with him. In any case, tonight's events turned out to be good news. At least he now has the chance to choose, and if he wants to return, he can. As long as the relationship with Liang Country is still acceptable, the emperor will have to keep his word for the sake of face and not make things too difficult for him." Su Liang also thought so.

The carriage stopped first at the entrance of Su Mansion, where Su Liang got off, bidding farewell to Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing.

As the carriage curtain was put down, it was lifted by Lin Xueqing. She smiled at Su Liang, "The Princess Yaoguang of Liang Country is indeed very beautiful, but in my heart, Sister Su is the most beautiful!"

As the carriage slowly left for the entrance of the Xing Mansion, Su Liang could hear Xing Yusheng's voice from inside, "I don't care, my wife is the most beautiful."

"I don't care, Sister Su is the most beautiful!"

"My wife is the most beautiful!"

"Sister Su is the most beautiful! I heard that Gu Ling is also very beautiful! I really want to know what he looks like."

"Am I not the most beautiful in Qingqing's heart?"

Su Liang could not help but laugh and shook her head. She turned around, leaped over the courtyard wall and entered the door. She just couldn't be bothered to unlock the door – this saved time.

Anyway, Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing had the keys to the main door of Su Mansion, and they could come and go freely.

Su Liang was thinking of telling Gu Ling the good news. As soon as she entered the garden, she hadn't approached the Yuanming Pavilion yet when a black shadow fell from the sky, blocking her way.

It was the lean old man again, Uncle Liang.

"What's the matter?" Su Liang didn't bother to be polite to him, as the old man had never been polite to her from the beginning.

"Tonight, you should have seen in the palace that Prince Yue was willing to do a lot for the young master, even willing to give up his dignity and beg Emperor Qian

publicly. If you know where the young master is, let him come out. Everything is fine now!" Uncle Liang said coldly.

Su Liang shook her head, "I'll say it again, I don't know."

"You!" Uncle Liang sneered, "You were with him all the time. How could you not know where he is?"

Su Liang was speechless. "You did what he asked you to do, and of course, he would know about it afterward. If he wants to come out, he will come out by himself. If he doesn't want to come out, it means he doesn't want to see you and Prince Situ anymore. Is it so hard to understand? This is my family's Su Mansion, please leave immediately. If I ever see you trespassing again, I won't be so polite!"

Uncle Liang looked scornfully at Su Liang, "Just because of you? Do you think you're invincible just because you are the Martial Arts Champion? Don't forget, who saved you back in Su Village!"

"Of course I haven't forgotten who saved me. But I also remember that you hated me very much and wished you could throw me away to fend for myself. Do you really think you are my savior? At your age, your skin shouldn't be so thick." Su Liang said coldly.

Uncle Liang was furious, with his mustache and eyes widened. Su Liang walked straight past him and headed toward the Yuanming Pavilion, "Go find someone else!"

Su Liang walked into the Yuanming Pavilion. The first floor was lit by candles, so it wasn't dark.

She walked upstairs, and as she turned the corner, there was a light in her room on the second floor.

Su Liang laughed softly, went upstairs, and entered the room, "It feels like a voice-activated light has been installed. Semi-automatic, Great God brand."

By now, Gu Ling was almost able to understand Su Liang's "nonsense." He was weaving a Chinese knot by the window under the moonlight, and it was almost finished.

Su Liang put one hand behind her back, "Great God, I brought you something delicious. Guess what it is."

Gu Ling shook his head, "No guessing."

Su Liang was speechless, placing a bunch of grapes wrapped in a cloth on a plate on the table, "Then don't eat it."

In former Marquis Chang Xin Mansion, now Marquis Zhong Xin Mansion, there was a grape garden with ripe fruits. Old Lady Xing would always have servants send some grapes to Su Liang every time.

But the grapes at the palace banquet were different from those in Marquis Zhong Xin's mansion, and the taste was also different.

Su Liang thought they were delicious, so she took a bunch back for Gu Ling on her way out.

Seeing Gu Ling clean his hands and start eating grapes, Su Liang didn't bring up the palace banquet immediately. Instead, she thought of a tongue twister and said it out loud, "Green grapes, purple grapes, green grapes aren't as purple as purple grapes, eat grapes without spitting grape skins, don't eat grapes but spit grape skins, if you want not to eat grapes and not spit skins, first eat grapes without spitting skins."

Su Liang recited the whole phrase without any mistakes, feeling proud of herself. But then she saw Gu Ling frowning at her, his thin lips parted slightly, "Are you crazy?"

Su Liang kicked Gu Ling under the table, "You're the crazy one. It's called a tongue twister, used to practice eloquence. Can you repeat it without making any mistakes?"

Gu Ling nodded, "Yes, but I don't want to."

Su Liang rubbed her forehead, "Great God, don't you think you've become increasingly annoying?"

Gu Ling shook his head, "I don't find myself annoying. I don't think so." Su Liang: ...Makes sense...

After drinking a glass of water, Su Liang finally told Gu Ling about the palace banquet.

"From what I can see now, your grandfather seems genuinely trying to help you, but whether he has ulterior motives remains unknown," Su Liang said. "You're now the Marquis Chang Xin of Qian Country. How does it feel?" Gu Ling counter-questioned, "Is there a salary?"

Su Liang chuckled, "Great God, tomorrow morning when it's time for the court session, you can go to the entrance of the Imperial Palace and ask for an audience with the emperor. When you see him, ask him in front of all the civil and military officials how much salary he will give you each year. If he doesn't give you enough money, refuse to be this damn Marquis."

"If there's no salary, will you support me?" Gu Ling asked Su Liang.

Su Liang shook her head, "No, I can't do that. I'm not short of money, but if your identity is restored and you appear to be rich, people will suspect where your money comes from, given that the Gu Family was confiscated long ago, and you don't seem to be the type who can make money. It's widely known that you only have one friend, and he's currently on the run."

"I can make money." Gu Ling finished his grapes, wiped his hands clean, and picked up the almost finished Chinese knot.

Su Liang couldn't help but praise, "It's really beautiful, just like this." She just described the knot to Gu Ling, not expecting him to weave one himself. Su Liang didn't even know how to do it.

"Do you want it? One hundred thousand silver taels." Gu Ling said.

Su Liang answered in a faint tone, "Why not just rob someone?"

"I can steal your money, and you can't stop me. But I chose not to and do business with you instead," Gu Ling said.

Su Liang bowed with a faint smile, "Then I must thank you for showing mercy."

After that, Su Liang felt that they were increasingly talking nonsense and irrelevant topics.

“Let’s talk about serious matters.” Su Liang said seriously, “When are you planning to make your appearance?”

“We’ll see,” Gu Ling shook his head.

“Right, if you show up tomorrow, it would seem as if you’ve planned it with Situ Xie and came together,” Su Liang said, “You should wait at least three to five days. Besides, I don’t know where the emperor has granted your Marquis Mansion. Once you openly appear in the capital city, you’ll have to move to your own mansion.”

“There’s no rush.” As Gu Ling spoke, he finished the last bit of the Chinese knot and handed it to Su Liang.

“I can’t afford 100,000 silver taels,” Su Liang shook her head. Though she really wanted it. She liked this kind of red, festive decoration. No other reason, just because it looked pretty.

“Give me the Flower Card, then,” Gu Ling proposed.

Su Liang laughed, “You wish! That’s mine!”

“Alright.” Gu Ling nodded and still handed her the Chinese knot, “You can owe me 100,000 silver taels.”

“Fine.” Since Su Liang really liked it, she took it, thinking that it’s no big deal to owe each other debts, and everything would be settled naturally.

However, when it was time for Su Liang to go to bed, Gu Ling sent her a wooden plaque engraved with 100,000 silver taels and the signature of two water droplets—the agreed-upon code.

Su Liang took it and handed it back to Gu Ling, completing the “debt note ceremony.”

“Great God, how many of these little wooden plaques did you make expecting to scam me?” Su Liang asked.

Gu Ling walked out, “A lot, guess.”

Su Liang thought about it, she owed Gu Ling a “favor on demand” and 100,000 silver taels, and Gu Ling only owed her a Flower performance for amusement.

After hanging the Chinese knot on the head of her bed, Su Liang thought: Whatever, even if she couldn’t repay it in the end, Great God Gu couldn’t do anything to her.

The next day, the news about Gu Ling’s royal pardon and becoming Marquis Chang Xin spread throughout the capital city.

Once a taboo name, it was now being talked about again. People discussed whether Gu Ling would return to the capital city to be the Marquis Chang Xin.

Many believed he would come back, while others doubted.

Su Liang didn't go out today, because early in the morning Wan Hui had sent Zhengzheng over. She and her husband needed to leave the city to do some errands. Since Zhengzheng was eager to see Su Liang, they entrusted her to take care of him for the day.

The weather was fine, so Su Liang took Zhengzheng boating on the lake.

Sunlight warmed their bodies as Zhengzheng leaned over the side of the boat, stretching out his little hand to touch the water. Whenever he did, he would burst into happy laughter.

After a while, the little boy lost interest in the water game, wobbled over to Su Liang, and sat down beside her. "Auntie, do you miss Uncle Ning?" he asked.

Su Liang nodded, "Yes."

"I miss Uncle Ning too!" Zhengzheng said, cupping his little face, "When will he come back? Will he be back for the New Year?"

Su Liang shook her head, "I don't know."

After a while, Zhengzheng fell asleep with his head on Su Liang's lap. Su Liang let go of the oar and let the boat drift gently on the lake.

Meanwhile, on the other side, as soon as Situ Xie arrived for his visit, he saw a big lock hanging on the gate of Su Mansion.

Thinking that Su Liang had gone out, Situ Xie was about to leave when Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing came over from next door.

When they learned that he was looking for Su Liang, Xing Yusheng said he would notify her for him.

Then, Situ Xie watched as Xing Yusheng took out a key to unlock the main door of Su Mansion and led Lin Xueqing inside.

When Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing found Su Liang, she was resting with Zhengzheng in her arms on the boat, leisurely and carefree.

Hearing them talking softly, Su Liang woke up. Being careful not to wake Zhengzheng, she sat up and paddled the boat to the shore.

Xing Yusheng took Zhengzheng from her, and Lin Xueqing helped Su Liang up before telling her that Situ Xie was waiting outside the door.

"We didn't know if you wanted to see him, so we didn't let him in. It may be a bit rude, but he came without announcing himself, so he was being rude first," Xing Yusheng said.

"Since he's already here, I might as well see what he wants," Su Liang decided to meet with Situ Xie.

Qi Jun helped to invite Situ Xie to the front hall, and Su Liang went to the Yuanming Pavilion to change her clothes before heading over.

Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing had originally come to invite Su Liang to visit Duke Qin's Mansion. Since Su Liang had a guest, they simply took the sleeping Zhengzheng away with them.

When Su Liang saw Situ Xie, he was sitting in the front hall of Su Mansion, drinking tea.

"I apologize for the intrusion, Miss Su. Please don't take offense," Situ Xie stood up and greeted her with a bow.

Su Liang nodded, "It is I who must apologize for not being a good host. Please have a seat, King Yue."

Once they were both seated, a servant brought a gift box and placed it in front of Su Liang.

"What is this...?" Su Liang felt bewildered.

Situ Xie smiled and explained, "This is a gift from General Peng Wei, as a token of gratitude for saving his life on the border. On behalf of Liang Country, I'd also like to thank Miss Su for not letting us lose a great general."

"Your Highness is too kind. Since it was given by General Peng, I'll accept it," Su Liang said indifferently.

Situ Xie waved his hand to dismiss the servant and looked at Su Liang, "I also want to thank you for looking after Ling'er over the past year."

Upon hearing his words, Su Liang's face remained impassive, "I'm afraid I don't understand what you're talking about, Your Highness."

Situ Xie paused for a moment, "It was my lack of consideration. We won't bring up the past. I came here today just to ask you to tell him that if he ever faces any trouble, he should remember that he has me, his grandfather, to rely on. In the past, I wanted to take care of him, but I couldn't because of various reasons and the great distance between us. Now, all I want is to know if he's safe and sound. As long as he's well, I can rest assured."

Su Liang smiled, "I saw Your Highness's affection for his grandson last night, and I was deeply touched. Thank you for bringing General Peng's gift. Is there anything else?"

Finding that Su Liang wouldn't engage in conversation, Situ Xie sighed deeply, then stood up to leave, "This is the first time Yaoyao travels far from home. I wonder if Miss Su might be free to accompany her? She really likes you."

Su Liang kept her smile, "Princess Yaoguang can ask Sixth Princess to accompany her. In the future, when the Sixth Princess marries into Liang Country, they can take care of each other."

Situ Xie looked deeply into Su Liang's eyes and nodded, "That makes sense. I'll mention this to Emperor Qian. Farewell."

"Farewell, Your Highness," Su Liang stood in the doorway of the front hall, watching Situ Xie's retreating figure. If it weren't for his graying hair, he would look like a middle-aged man.

Su Liang returned to the Yuanming Pavilion with the gift from Peng Wei. It was very quiet since Zhengzheng had been taken out to Dlav.

Going upstairs, she saw Gu Ling sitting by the window reading a book. The swaying shadows of the trees, dancing gently with the breeze, made his profile serene and beautiful, like a painting.

“Great God, your grandfather came and had some words for me to pass on to you,” Su Liang said.

With slender fingers, Gu Ling turned a page, his thin lips parting as he spoke in a cold, clear voice, “I fell asleep.”

Su Liang put the gift box on the table, puzzled, ‘Why do you resist him so much?’ She wasn’t trying to advocate for Situ Xie or mediate between them. She only knew that Gu Ling was a good person but didn’t know much about Situ Xie or what had happened between them. However, she was curious about why Gu Ling refused to accept him.

A leaf spun into the room like a butterfly and landed on Gu Ling’s hair. He picked it off, placed it in the book, and spoke again, his tone steady, “The Emperor of Liang Country is his son. I have an aversion to dirt and don’t like dealing with dirty people..”

Chapter 236: 236. Fried Lotus Root

The Crown Prince of Liang Country is actually the son of the previous emperor and his sister-in-law, rather than his nephew?

Upon hearing this news from Gu Ling, Su Liang is astonished. A vision of Situ Xie appears in her mind, and she sighs deeply, “He really wears a mask of virtue.”

Since Gu Ling has said so, it must be something that he is absolutely certain of. However, this is obviously a big secret, so much so that even the emperor of Liang Country might not know about it.

Such illicit relationships and producing a child are acts that cannot be justified by any means.

What kind of character Situ Xie, who could do such a thing, has is self-evident.

Thinking deeper about this matter, it might be the direct reason why Situ Xie holds great power and has numerous descendants in Liang Country, but has never tried to seize the throne.

The throne is occupied by his own son, and the crown prince is his grandson; there is no need to fight for it. Although he has never held that position, in reality, he is no different from the Grand Emperor.

The so-called rumor that “the Crown Prince of Liang Country has no ambition” is nothing but a joke.

Gu Ling’s words “dirty person” sharply and accurately describe his impression of Situ Xie.

“How did you find out about this?” Su Liang asks curiously. This secret is definitely something Situ Xie wants to guard closely, and Gu Ling doesn’t seem to have much contact with his maternal grandfather’s family in Liang Country.

“When I was four years old, I went to Liang Country once,” Gu Ling said calmly. “At that time, the former emperor of Liang Country was still alive and seriously ill. I saw that his forehead was dark, and I said he was going to die. My mother covered my

mouth and took me away. After my mother's death, I secretly visited Liang Country and heard Situ Xie having a secret meeting with the Empress Dowager."

Su Liang nods, "That's how it is."

Gu Ling's words imply that he suspects the death of the former emperor of Liang Country is related to Situ Xie. However, this matter is uncertain.

No one has heard rumors about Situ Xie having an affair with the emperor's wife. There are no rumors about the emperor's background either, which shows that Situ Xie has disguised everything very well and covered his tracks.

Situ Xie certainly doesn't know why Gu Ling despises him. He still hopes to mend his relationship with his grandson, no matter the purpose.

"Then you should wait until Situ Xie leaves the capital city of Qian Country before you go out to avoid meeting him," Su Liang suggests.

Gu Ling is not a killing maniac; he won't kill Situ Xie just because he has a moral stain.

In any era, there are countless scoundrels. But even in Su Liang's previous life, a legally governed society, those called "scoundrels" might not have violated any laws because laws set the lowest moral standards for people. Even if they break the law, it will not warrant the death penalty in most cases.

Gu Ling and Su Liang's principles are: if others don't offend me, I don't offend others.

"We'll see." Gu Ling shakes his head. Although he has been pardoned, which is what he wanted, he doesn't plan to appear in public just yet.

Freedom is largely a matter of personal perception.

Perhaps in the eyes of outsiders, the wanted Gu Ling had no freedom in the past and had to hide from place to place. Now he's free.

But once Gu Ling shows up and becomes Marquis Chang Xin, his actions and behavior will be monitored, which won't be any more comfortable than now.

However, as Xing Yusheng said, being pardoned is ultimately a good thing. It's not that Gu Ling must walk around Qian Country openly, but he now has the choice.

Seeing Gu Ling's attitude, Su Liang can guess his thoughts, and nods, "We'll see then."

"Are you in such a hurry for me to show up and fall in love with you on the street?" Gu Ling looks at Su Liang and asks.

Su Liang bursts into laughter, "Great God, I've forgotten about that. It's not important. I believe Duanmu Chen will solve the 'crown princess' issue, and then no one will meddle with my marriage. That would be nice."

As she speaks, Su Liang remembers another thing, "I won't pretend to be engaged with you again; otherwise, the poison master who is infatuated with you will challenge me. If I lose, there's no harm done. But Great God, as you promised, you'll have to marry them. I can't ruin your innocence for my own sake."

As Su Liang speaks, Gu Ling turns to look out the window.

When she finishes, Gu Ling doesn't turn back, and calmly says, "You're right.

Thank you for considering me. I want to eat Sour and Spicy Lotus Root."

Su Liang puts her hand on her forehead, "Great God, you don't want to become

Marquis Chang Xin just for Sour and Spicy Lotus Root, do you?"

If he becomes Marquis Chang Xin, it will be inconvenient for the two of them to share their lives together.

Gu Ling nods, "Yes."

Su Liang gets up, "The lotus roots from Xing Yusheng's house are indeed delicious. I'd like to eat them too. But today, I don't want to cook Sour and Spicy Lotus Root. I want to cook Fried Lotus Root!"

Upon hearing this, Gu Ling replies, "Even better."

Su Liang: ... She lost again ...

There were no lotus roots at home, and since Su Liang had nothing to do, she simply rode out to Marquis Zhong Xin's mansion to fetch some lotus roots.

Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing had moved out to live separately, but they often came back to visit the Old Madam Xing. Today, however, they had gone to the Qin Mansion and were not around.

Seeing Su Liang suddenly visiting, Old Madam Xing was delighted. When she learned of her purpose, she couldn't stop laughing. "Xueqing said that you really like our lotus roots. Since you're here, have a meal with us. Tell me what you'd like to eat, and I'll have the servants prepare it."

Su Liang smiled, "I can't today. Zhengzheng's parents are out of town, and I'm supposed to look after him for the day. He was taken to the Qin Mansion by Xueqing, but he might return to my place at any time. I want to make him some Fried Lotus Root."

"Fried Lotus Root?" Old Madam Xing had never heard of it before.

Su Liang promised to send her some once it was made.

"Then I'll wait for it." Old Madam Xing didn't hold her back any longer.

While the Xing Mansion's servants were digging up the lotus roots, Su Liang took a basket and went to the Xing Mansion's vineyard to pick a basketful of grapes herself.

After bidding farewell to Old Madam Xing, she rode home. The basket of lotus roots was too bulky for her to carry, so the Xing Mansion's servant followed behind her, carting it back to her house.

As they passed the bustling main street, Su Liang walked slowly to avoid her horse kicking anyone.

Suddenly, she heard someone calling her name. She looked up and saw Lian

Shun leaning halfway out of a private room on the second floor of the Wan Family Restaurant, waving enthusiastically at her and shouting, "Su Xiaoliang," attracting a lot of attention.

Su Liang also saw Che Yun standing behind Lian Shun, trying to pull him back.

According to what Xing Yusheng had told her, Lian Shun hadn't ended up buying a house and had instead moved into the Huguo Temple with Che Yun. The reason was that Che Yun's mother had instructed him to visit the Huguo Temple when he came to the capital city to burn incense and pray for the safety of his younger brother, Che Xiao.

Lian Shun had enjoyed the vegetarian dishes at the Huguo Temple and decided to stay there. At night, he would eat vegetarian food with the monks and sleep at the temple, while during the day, he would come down the mountain to drink alcohol and eat meat. He called it a "balanced diet."

Su Liang nodded slightly, greeting them before continuing on her way, not planning to join them for a meal. It was already noon, and someone was waiting for her at home.

Seeing that Su Liang didn't dismount, Lian Shun ran down from the second floor.

When Su Liang heard his voice again, she saw Lian Shun and Che Yun catching up with her on horseback.

"Su Xiaoliang, let's go to your house. Che Yun has never been there!" Lian Shun said with a beaming smile, not considering himself an outsider at all. Che Yun laughed, "Would it be convenient for you, Su Liang? If not, I can visit another day."

"Why wouldn't it be convenient? She's alone at home," Lian Shun insisted on going to Su Liang's house.

Su Liang shook her head, "It's not convenient today. I got some delicious lotus roots from the Marquis Zhong Xin's Mansion, but there's none for you guys. It might be a bit awkward if you come just to watch me eat."

Both Lian Shun and Che Yun were speechless...

However, with Lian Shun's personality, hearing such words from Su Liang would only make him less likely to give up.

Su Liang knew this too, and was only joking. It wouldn't hurt to entertain friends from afar.

So, Lian Shun and Che Yun followed Su Liang home.

Upon seeing the muddy lotus roots being carried out of the cart, Lian Shun deeply doubted Su Liang's "delicious" claim. "This thing is everywhere in my home region; it's tasteless and not delicious at all!"

"Then don't eat it." Su Liang directed the Xing Mansion's servant to place the lotus roots by the lake.

Lian Shun took an interest in the grapes Su Liang had brought home, but she blocked him, "You guys go wash the lotus roots."

"Is this your way of treating guests?" Lian Shun was speechless.

Su Liang nodded, "Don't like it? The door is over there."

Lian Shun looked up at the sky in disbelief, "As the head of the Ning Family, Martial Arts Champion, and Imperial Physician, you don't even have a single servant at home to boss around?"

Slightly smirking, Su Liang replied, "There's no need. I have guests."

Che Yun burst out laughing, pulling Lian Shun towards the lake, "Su Liang doesn't consider us outsiders!"

Su Liang washed the grapes in the kitchen and carried them upstairs, where she saw Gu Ling working on a new Chinese knot. The shape was different from the previous one.

"If this one is also worth 100,000 taels, you'd better keep it for yourself!" Su Liang said as she placed the grapes on the table. Gu Ling shook his head, "This one is for free." Su Liang asked, "What do you want then?"

"I'm still thinking about it," Gu Ling said.

Su Liang snorted lightly, "In short, you want to sell it to me, right? Fine, Great God, take your time."

Gu Ling didn't say anything about Su Liang bringing guests home, and Su Liang didn't ask him to leave. She just said that the second floor was her bedroom and that she would entertain on the first floor. She only reminded Gu Ling not to make any noise that could be heard downstairs.

"You go ahead and eat grapes first. When I finish frying the lotus roots, I'll bring some up to you," Su Liang said.

At Su Liang's instructions, Lian Shun and Che Yun cleaned half a basket of lotus roots. The other half, which wouldn't be eaten today, were left unwashed for now.

Then Su Liang had them peel the lotus root skins and wash them once more, cutting them into evenly-thick slices.

They also had to mince meat, start a fire, and do all sorts of things they had never done before.

"Su Xiaoliang, if we hadn't come, would you have done all this yourself?" Lian Shun, holding a kitchen knife in each hand, had now mastered the pose of mincing meat.

Su Liang, who was preparing other ingredients, responded in agreement.

Lian Shun was a bit surprised, "Do you really like cooking that much? I thought you were busy. All this would take quite a bit of effort!"

"It's okay," Su Liang said, "If you hadn't come, I would only have to make a little."

Lian Shun snorted lightly, "Right, right, it's all our fault for forcing ourselves to come and work at your place!"

The fragrance of the fried lotus roots wafted out, and both Lian Shun and Che Yun gathered around.

"Is it cooked? Is it cooked?" Lian Shun stood nearby with a plate, eager to taste, "We don't make lotus roots like this at our place. Su Xiaoliang, who did you learn this from?"

Su Liang didn't respond to Lian Shun. She was holding a specially-made, extra-long pair of chopsticks, a gift from Gu Ling. She also had a bamboo basket specifically for draining oil, also made by Gu Ling.

When the fried lotus root came out of the pot, she placed it in the bamboo basket. Lian Shun tried to grab some, but Su Liang swatted his hand away, "This portion is for the old lady of Marquis Zhong Xin's Mansion. I promised her."

"Let us try it first!" Lian Shun instantly snatched the small basket, and he and Che Yun went to the side to taste it together, each taking one piece, blowing on it to cool it down, and eating it.

"So good..." Lian Shun nodded as he ate.

Gu Ling upstairs let out a light snort, continuing to peel grape skins. The white jade cup beside him was already almost filled with crystal-clear grape pulp.

After Lian Shun and Che Yun had eaten a few pieces, they took the plate of fried lotus root that Su Liang had prepared and ran to deliver it to Old Lady Xing. The reason both of them went was that neither wanted to go, but somebody had to...

After they left, Su Liang fried another plate and carried it upstairs to Gu Ling.

"These just came out of the pot, eat them while they're hot." Su Liang placed the fried lotus root on the table and reached for the peeled grapes, "These are for me."

Gu Ling wiped his hands with a cloth, "They were meant for you."

Su Liang was somewhat surprised. While eating the grapes with a fruit fork, she asked, "Why are you being so agreeable today, Great God?"

Gu Ling's expression was indifferent, "When am I not agreeable?"

"Then how about giving me the second Chinese knot after it's done?" Su Liang asked.

Gu Ling shook his head, "No."

Su Liang immediately turned around, took the white jade cup, and went downstairs.

By the time Lian Shun and Che Yun returned, the first floor of Yuanming Pavilion was set with a feast to entertain them, and fried lotus root was just one dish—Su Liang had made other dishes as well.

"Wow, did you make all of these?" Lian Shun instantly felt that Su Liang was very considerate, "Su Xiaoliang, you're quite impressive!" "Su Liang's cooking is really good!" Che Yun praised.

"I don't have any alcohol here, only tea." Su Liang raised her cup.

The three of them clinked their cups, and Lian Shun took a sniff, "This smells wonderful, what kind of tea is this?"

Su Liang smiled, "Da Hong Pao."

Lian Shun almost choked, “Su Xiaoliang, you’re not going to ask us to do something dangerous like climbing mountains and diving into fires after this meal, are you?”

Che Yun was also pleasantly surprised, “Su Liang, you’re really too polite!”

Su Liang chuckled, “Just remember, you guys owe me a favor that involves climbing mountains and diving into fires. ”

Lian Shun and Che Yun: ...We knew it would be like this!

After Lian Shun and Che Yun had a wonderful meal, Su Liang yawned, indicating it was time for them to leave.

“You’re going to the flower appreciation banquet at the Crown Prince’s Mansion tomorrow for Princess Yaoguang, right?” Lian Shun asked.

Su Liang shook her head, “I didn’t receive an invitation.”

As soon as she finished speaking, Chang’an’s voice came from outside, “Is Miss Su here?”

Soon, Su Liang received an invitation to the flower appreciation banquet at the Crown Prince’s Mansion tomorrow.

As Lian Shun and Che Yun were leaving, Chang’an saw them and heard them talking about the delicious food at Su Liang’s place, as well as the top-quality Da Hong Pao tea. After returning to the mansion, he reported everything to Duanmu Chen.

Duanmu Chen was so mad! When he was in Bei’an County, he had to pay 5,000 taels for a meal at Su Liang’s house, and a single steamed bun cost 500 taels, yet Su Liang didn’t treat other guests like this!

“If the Master goes to Miss Su’s house as a guest now, she probably won’t charge money anymore, right?” Chang’an said. He felt that after such a long period of cooperation, the relationship between Duanmu Chen and Su Liang had greatly improved.

Duanmu Chen snorted, “With our current status, how can I visit her alone?”

People would definitely gossip about it, and the last time Su Liang met with

Duanmu Chen alone, her purpose was to ask Duanmu Chen to find a way to get

rid of Duanmu Yi’s idea of arranging their marriage. Therefore, it is time for them to interact normally, but it is not appropriate for them to have private interactions that could lead to speculation. Even if Duanmu Chen didn’t mind, he knew that Su Liang would definitely not want to get involved in unnecessary relationships.

“How about I go to Miss Su’s place and bring some delicious food back for the Master?” Chang’an asked.

Duanmu Chen shook his head, “Do you believe she would still charge money?”

Chang’an coughed lightly, “That’s also possible. I’ll ask her next time I go to pass a message.”

After sending her guests away, Su Liang went to sleep for a while, and Zhengzheng came back.

The lotus root dish didn't taste good after it cooled down, so Su Liang specially prepared some and fried them freshly for Zhengzheng, Xing Yusheng, and Lin Xueqing to eat.

They also mentioned the flower appreciation banquet at the Crown Prince's Mansion tomorrow, and Lin Xueqing said, "I heard that the Princess Yaoguang from Liang Country might be marrying here to become the crown princess!" Su Liang was startled, "Really?"

"The emperor has been looking for a suitable wife for the crown prince but hasn't found one yet. After meeting Princess Yaoguang this time, he mentioned it to King Yue of Liang Country," Xing Yusheng had heard this from his aunt. Since Lady Qin's niece was originally on the list of potential brides for the crown prince at the Ministry of Rites, she had been paying close attention to the situation.

"Did King Yue agree?" Su Liang asked curiously.

When Duanmu Chen first met Situ Yao that day, he was clearly amazed. However, Su Liang knew very well that Duanmu Chen would never take the initiative to marry a foreign princess as his main wife just because of her beauty.

Xing Yusheng nodded, "Although there is no concrete information, it should be likely unless Princess Yaoguang already has a marriage contract. The emperor is willing to marry his favorite princess to Liang Country, so King Yue can't say he's not willing to let his granddaughter marry into Qian Country. Maybe King Yue has brought his granddaughter here with this intention."

Su Liang thought about it and felt that Xing Yusheng's words made sense. Princesses and noble girls were not ordinary young ladies, and even ordinary families wouldn't easily let their unmarried daughters show their faces.

As for Situ Xie saying that Situ Yao had come to see Su Liang because she admired her, Su Liang didn't believe a word of it.

After sending away Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing and putting sleeping Zhengzheng to bed, Su Liang carried him upstairs.

Gu Ling put down what he was holding, got up, and carefully took Zhengzheng from her.

Zhengzheng rubbed his little head against Gu Ling's chest, not waking up, with a sweet smile on his little face.

Gu Ling looked down at the little guy, his eyes softening.

Watching this scene, Su Liang murmured, "The Great God is sure to be a good father in the future.."

Chapter 237: 237. Forgive you

By evening, Lu Yu and Wan Hui came to pick up Zhengzheng and tasted the fresh-fried lotus root that Su Liang had prepared. They also received the recipes for the fried lotus root and sour and spicy lotus root. Wan Family Restaurant would have a new dish to add to the menu.

Leaning on Lu Yu's shoulder, Zhengzheng waved her little hand to bid goodbye to Su Liang.

It wasn't until Su Liang was out of sight that Zhengzheng turned her head back.

With a serious expression on her small face, she said to Wan Hui and Lu Yu, “Daddy, Mommy, I dreamt of Uncle Ning! Uncle Ning was hugging me in my sleep!”

They happened to pass the courtyard where “Ning Jing” and Su Liang used to live. It was completely dark in there. Wan Hui glanced at it and responded to Zhengzheng’s words, “Your Uncle Ning must miss you too.”

Zhengzheng lifted her chin slightly, and with a proud expression on her face, she said, “Of course! Uncle Ning likes me the most!”

In the Yuanming Pavilion, Gu Ling affixed a newly made Chinese knot directly to a fixed window in Su Liang’s room. It was a different style from the previous one, but both were very exquisite and beautiful.

While grinding medicinal herbs, Su Liang looked up and said, “It looks really nice. But, Great God, you need to quote a price first. If I can’t afford it, you should take it back.”

“Hang it up first, and I’ll think about it,” said Gu Ling. He then took out another delicate mini Chinese knot for Su Liang, “A gift.”

Su Liang put down the things in her hands, received the small Chinese knot, hung it together with the rabbit purse around her waist, and nodded, “Not bad. Great God’s products are always of high quality. It’s even better that they’re free.”

While busy making medicine and talking with Gu Ling about the possible marriage between Situ Yao and Duanmu Chen, Su Liang started the conversation.

“I heard about it,” Gu Ling said. He was upstairs when Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing brought it up.

“What do you think?” Su Liang asked.

Gu Ling shook his head slightly, “I don’t want to comment.”

Su Liang laughed lightly, “How individualistic. Indeed, such matters have nothing to do with us, it’s okay not to care. I’m going to a feast at the prince’s mansion tomorrow, so you’ll have to fend for yourself for meals.”

In the middle of the night, a pang of lower abdominal pain woke Su Liang up, realizing that her period had arrived early.

She got up, lit a lamp, cleaned up, and felt cold. It was even more uncomfortable lying down, so she wrapped herself in a blanket and sat on a chair, waiting for the discomfort to pass before going to sleep.

At times like this, Su Liang always felt it was tough being a woman. If men too could bear children and only those who planned to have children would have periods, it would make life much easier.

A slightly groggy Su Liang did not hear the knocking on her door, and Gu Ling, unsure of what was going on, forcefully pushed the door open.

The candlelight was dim.

Su Liang had disheveled hair, she was wrapped in a blanket with only her small face peeking out, pale and looking desolate.

Seeing Gu Ling enter, she mumbled, "I'm fine. Did I disturb you?"

Gu Ling furrowed his brows, "Your time isn't due yet."

Su Liang:... She wasn't surprised that Gu Ling remembered her menstrual cycle, it's just a date after all. However, she felt irritable at the moment and didn't want to talk.

Seeing that Gu Ling turned around to leave and closed the door, Su Liang closed her eyes and disengaged herself from the world. She vaguely heard someone go downstairs but didn't pay any attention.

After what seemed like a while, the door was opened again. Gu Ling came in carrying a basin of steaming hot water and placed it next to Su Liang.

Su Liang opened her eyes in a daze and said, "Oh, I'll soak my feet then. Thank you, Great God."

Once she immersed her feet in the hot water, Su Liang sighed in relief, looked up and found Gu Ling had already left.

After a while, Gu Ling returned carrying a soup bowl.

"Great God, did you make me Red Dates Ginger Sugar Tea again?" Without looking, Su Liang knew what it was.

The reason she said 'again' was because there was a time last year when Gu Ling made it. She still remembered that Gu Ling had put in a lot of brown sugar, making it extremely sweet.

"Hmm," Gu Ling put the soup bowl on the table, removed the lid, and a sweet aroma filled the air.

Su Liang took a spoonful and tasted it. She nodded repeatedly, "Nice, the sugar is just right this time. Actually, Great God, you have a knack for cooking."

"No, I don't," Gu Ling shook his head, took a seat next to her. His gaze fell on Su Liang's small white feet in the basin, then quickly averted and asked if she needed a charcoal basin.

"No, that's not necessary." Su Liang shook her head, "It would be suffocating.

It's not cold, and I should feel better after a while."

Sweat soaked her forehead, Su Liang loosened the blanket, and Gu Ling picked it up and placed it back on the bed.

After drinking more than half a bowl of Red Dates Ginger Sugar Tea, she felt the pain in her stomach finally eased off. She set down the spoon and thanked Gu Ling once again.

"Are you going out tomorrow?" Gu Ling asked.

Su Liang lay down on the bed and shook her head, "I won't, I'm unwell."

She slept well in the latter half of the night. When Su Liang got up, the next day was already sunlit.

During this special period, she didn't have to jog or practice martial arts; she still felt a little heavy after getting up and tidying up and did not want to cook.

When she returned upstairs, Gu Ling, who had gone out and returned sometime, had already set out food he had bought from the outside, still steaming.

"I will have to rely on the Great God for all three meals today then." Su Liang said as she sat down.

"Is there no medication to relieve it?" Gu Ling asked.

Su Liang nodded, "There is. But every medicine is three parts poison, my condition is not severe period pain, just bear with it and it will pass. It is said that it will be much better after giving birth."

Gu Ling puzzled, "Why?"

Su Liang held her chopsticks and paused, feeling a little embarrassed, "Actually, it's fine if you don't know this."

"But I want to know." Gu Ling said.

Su Liang thought that since she had already told Gu Ling about child birth, she didn't mind sharing the additional information, "I'll tell you after we eat." Gu Ling nodded, and the conversation shifted for the time being.

After dining, Gu Ling cleaned up, and Su Liang returned to her room, stood in front of the bookshelf, intending to pick a couple of books to read over the next few days.

But as she searched, she realized that she had already read all the books on her shelf.

When Gu Ling entered, Su Liang complained, "Books are also scarce resources here, which is truly not conducive to societal progress."

Gu Ling glanced at Su Liang's bookshelf, paused, and then said, "The Imperial Palace has a Library Pavilion."

Su Liang's eyes lit up. "There must be many books in there, right?"

Gu Ling shook his head, "I've never been inside."

"That's not a place one can easily waltz into." Su Liang sighed, "But I can try to ask the Emperor for permission to borrow books from the Library Pavilion."

Even if he doesn't let me borrow, being allowed to read there should be fine, I can say that my medical skills need advancement, which is good for the royal family."

"I will go and have a look tonight." Gu Ling said.

"That's a bit risky." Su Liang said. The Imperial Palace itself was heavily guarded, and the Library Pavilion must certainly have individuals standing guard day and night.

Gu Ling was calm, "I also ran out of books to read."

“Alright then, Great God be careful, if it’s not possible, just give up, I can ask the Emperor another day.” Su Liang said.

Gu Ling nodded, and without warning, changed the topic, “Why does giving birth to a child reduce the pain?”

Su Liang almost choked on the warm water she was drinking, coughed lightly, put down the teacup, and negotiated with Gu Ling, “Great God, could you provide some context before you ask a question next time? For instance, you could say that, ‘I have a question to ask you’.” Gu Ling nodded slightly and said, “Okay, I have a question to ask you.”

Su Liang : ... is he doing this on purpose?

“Great God, you are really humorous. Hahaha.” Su Liang adjusted herself, tried not to feel awkward, and explained him the topic while considering herself a biology teacher and Gu Ling her student.

Gu Ling listened without changing his expression, nodded and said, “I understand.” With Su Liang’s previous knowledge on physical health, he did not find it difficult to understand this.

After the conversation, Gu Ling went to his room and came back with something for Su Liang.

Su Liang was staring at the small wooden token in her hand, speechless. There were three words carved on it, “Forgive You”, with a signature of three droplet-shaped patterns.

Without asking, it was obviously the price that Gu Ling thought of for the second Chinese knot which she had produced and sold to Su Liang.

Su Liang handed the token to Gu Ling, “I don’t want it anymore, you take it back.”

Gu Ling took it, “Alright, deal. If I anger you in the future, I will show this token and you have to forgive me unconditionally once.”

Su Liang hummed lightly, “I’m annoyed now, so you can use it.”

Gu Ling stood up and walked out, “You’re not feeling well, so don’t get angry.” He disappeared from sight as soon as he finished.

Su Liang: ...This person is really outrageous!

Suddenly, she heard Lin Xueqing calling her from downstairs. Su Liang opened the window and saw Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing dressed up neatly, standing downstairs.

“Sister Su, you haven’t forgotten about the flower-viewing banquet at the Crown Prince’s Mansion, have you? It’s time to go.” Lin Xueqing urged.

Su Liang waved at them from upstairs, “I don’t feel well today so I won’t be going. If you see the crown prince, please let him know.”

Lin Xueqing frowned, “Sister Su, you’re not feeling well? What’s wrong?” She was about to go upstairs to check on Su Liang.

Su Liang quickly stopped her, “I’m fine, I’ll be alright after a few days of rest.”

As a woman herself, Lin Xueqing suddenly realized what Su Liang was hinting. She went back to Xing Yusheng's side, "Then sister Su, you rest well. We'll let my husband speak to the crown prince on your behalf. We're leaving now! We'll have Ajun bring you some food and dishes at noon!"

Su Liang responded without decline as Lin Xueqing pulled Xing Yusheng away. Xing Yusheng was confused, "Su Liang is a divine doctor, how can she get

Lin Xueqing shook her head, "Every living being can get sick. What's so strange about that? Stop asking, let's hurry up!"

By the time Xing Yusheng arrived at the Crown Prince's Mansion and saw Duanmu Chen, he informed him that Su Liang was unwell and couldn't attend the banquet today.

Duanmu Chen asked instinctively, "She's so skilled in medical treatment, how could she get sick? Does she just not want to come?"

Xing Yusheng responded seriously, "Your Highness, Su Liang is human too, it's not weird for her to get sick. As for the specifics, I'm not sure, but I don't think it's anything serious."

"Let her rest then." Duanmu Chen didn't have any special feelings for Su Liang and assumed she just wanted to be alone. Since she didn't want to come today, then it didn't matter.

Upon hearing a servant report that Princess Yaoguang from Liang Nation had arrived, Duanmu Chen asked a servant to guide Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing to the garden while he went to greet Situ Yao.

Like Xing Yusheng, Duanmu Chen had heard of the news. He was initially surprised when Duanmu Yi planned to have him marry Situ Yao as his crown princess.

But he chose to accept Duanmu Yi's arrangement.

First, he could not refuse what Duanmu Yi had decided; second, there was no need to refuse as there were no other women he was particularly interested in, he didn't need to marry anyone specific; and third, Duanmu Chen believed that unless a woman had some special abilities like Su Liang, her main task was to continue the family line, even if she was the crown princess. As long as she was noble, pretty, good-mannered, healthy and obedient, it was enough for him.

Both Situ Yao's character and appearance were flawless, if Situ Xie agreed to the marriage, it meant there was nothing wrong with Situ Yao's health.

The only concern was the "obedience" part, Duanmu Chen did not know Situ Yao's temper but he believed that it might take time to get used to each other. Besides, a princess who had a far-off political marriage wouldn't dare to go against her husband, her only support. Even if she had other intentions, what could one woman do against watchful eyes?

The marriage negotiation was nearly settled. When Duanmu Chen met Situ Yao again that day, outsiders thought they matched very well, there was a sense of intimacy in the air.

When Situ Yao asked if Su Liang came, Duanmu Chen mentioned that Su Liang was unwell and could not come. Situ Yao looked disappointed, "That's a real shame. "

Qi Jun bought the lunch from the Wan Family Restaurant. The meal was lavish yet mild, prepared with both meat and vegetables as well as warm soup, it was enough for Su Liang and Gu Ling.

In the afternoon, Su Liang took a nap. When she woke up, she pushed open the window, glimpsed through the gaps between leaves and saw Gu Ling fishing by the lake.

“He really has nothing to do.” Su Liang commented and realized she had nothing to do and no books to read.

Later in the afternoon, Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing returned from the banquet and visited Su Liang at her mansion, but Gu Ling had already left with the fat fish he caught.

Xing Yusheng sat downstairs while Lin Xueqing went upstairs to see Su Liang. Seeing the study room door closed, she didn’t think too much of it.

“Su, are you feeling better?” Lin Xueqing asked with concern.

Su Liang smiled, “Much better.”

“I thought you martial arts practitioners wouldn’t feel pain during your periods.” Lin Xueqing joked.

Su Liang replied seriously, “Regular physical exercise does help but it also depends on individual constitution.”

“Yes, yes, yes, I have been exercising as you recommended, even my husband can’t beat me now!” Lin Xueqing playfully flexed her fist.

Spotting two red Chinese knots hanging in Su Liang’s room, Lin Xueqing immediately got up to have a closer look. “They’re so pretty! Su, did you make these? They’re really beautiful!”

Su Liang thought to herself: They were not made by her. She bought them, at an exorbitant price, but this was something she couldn’t reveal.

So, Su Liang had no choice but to falsely claim she made them. If she admitted to buying them, she would have to reveal where she bought them from.

“I really like it, can you give me one?” Lin Xueqing asked enthusiastically.

Su Liang shook her head, “Not these two.” Mainly out of fear that someone would be unhappy if she gave it to Lin Xueqing, since he was the one who made them.

However, Su Liang had a solution for her best friend’s request. “It’s actually quite simple. I can write down the steps for you, you’ll understand once you look at it.”

Lin Xueqing was a little surprised that Su Liang wouldn’t give her one. Not that she insisted on it, she just thought Su Liang wasn’t usually this stingy. Especially if it was something she made herself...

Nevertheless, after hearing that Su Liang was willing to teach her, Lin Xueqing no longer persisted, “That’s great! No need to write it down. I’ll bring thread over tomorrow and you can show me how to make it!”

Su Liang laughed, "Actually, I was planning to write it down for Yang Yu. If she's interested, she can get the embroiderers at home to make them for sale. I can give you a copy as well."

"That works." Lin Xueqing nodded, "Shall I come by to pick it up tomorrow?" Su Liang agreed.

The dinner was still bought by Qi Jun. After everyone left, Gu Ling appeared carrying a pot of creamy fish soup, a fragrant scent wafted from it. Naturally, the fish was one he had caught in the afternoon.

Also, Gu Ling handed Su Liang a piece of paper.

Upon seeing it, there were instructions on how to make a Chinese knot. Illustrations and text were clear and precise.

"This doesn't cost anything, does it?" Su Liang habitually asked.

Gu Ling shook his head, "No."

"That's more like it." Su Liang put away the paper, planning to give it to Lin Xueqing tomorrow. She'll talk about Yang Yu's side when she attends the wedding.

That night, Gu Ling sneaked into the Imperial Palace but failed to steal books from the Library Pavilion. The Pavilion had only one door which was heavily guarded. All windows were nailed tight from both inside and outside, not easily opened.

The next day, Su Liang requested an audience with Duanmu Yi. After she stated her purpose in the palace, to her surprise, Duanmu Yi was very agreeable. He easily permitted her to borrow books from the Library Pavilion at certain times during the day, as long as she promptly returned them undamaged.

When Su Liang left the palace, she was carrying a box full of books. It was pretty heavy, but she was absolutely delighted.

When she got home, she shared the books she borrowed with Gu Ling. They each took half, promising to exchange once they were done.

Two days later, Situ Yao's marriage alliance with the Qian Kingdom was settled.

With two marriage alliances, it seemed like the Qian and Liang kingdoms were truly becoming allies.

Su Liang believed that the Yin Kingdom wouldn't keep quiet. If Yin Kingdom decided to initiate a war and Man Ya was among the commanders, Su Liang would love to return to her position as a general and meet her on the southern battlefield.

The next time she met Xing Yusheng, he brought news: Nian Jincheng had been pardoned as well.

"When Nian Jincheng got into trouble, the charge was conspiring with the rebel Gu Ling. Now that Gu Ling is free, Nian Jincheng is naturally absolved." Xing Yusheng said with a smile, "The Emperor intends to reinstate him as long as he returns, he will still be highly valued!"

Su Liang spoke calmly, "After that incident, he might be disappointed in the royal family."

Xing Yusheng nodded, "Not impossible.. However, I've heard from reliable sources that the Emperor has found Nian Jincheng's location and sent people to summon him!"

Chapter 238: 238. The first day Gu Ling left

"The Emperor has released a statement, saying he has found Nian Jincheng's whereabouts. It's a ruse, isn't it?" Su Liang pondered.

It can't be such a coincidence that Nian Jincheng was found just a few days after Gu Ling was pardoned.

Su Liang was more inclined to believe that Duanmu Yi was using this move to force Gu Ling and Nian Jincheng to show themselves.

As for his purpose... whether they are "rebels" or servants, they are always more reassuring under his watchful eye.

Gu Ling nodded, agreeing with Su Liang's viewpoint and not believing Nian Jincheng had been exposed.

"So what do we do now? The Emperor suddenly remembered Nian Jincheng, and if you show up later, you'll have to explain where he is. If Nian and Yang Yu's relationship hadn't developed to this point, things would be simpler. Once he gets married and regains his identity, people would suspect from Yang Yu that we are colluding with each other, or even more, some people might even suspect that you are the deceased Ning Jing." Su Liang sighed lightly.

When Nian Jincheng was arrested in the past, Su Liang had asked Yan Shiba to save him. But in the eyes of others, regardless of who made the move, it was decided that Gu Ling had saved him.

If he comes back, this matter of being with Yang Yu would inevitably bring great trouble to Su Liang, who is well-known as Yang Yu's good friend. Especially when Nian Jincheng was abducted, Yang Yu just happened to be in the capital, and she was staying with Su Liang.

Even if Duanmu Yi truly pardoned Gu Ling and Nian Jincheng, he certainly could not forgive Su Liang's previous secret collusion with them, a deception of the monarch. Moreover, Yan Shiba who saved Nian Jincheng last time, had tortured Duanmu Che terribly.

By then, Duanmu Yi might even think that the woman who captured Duanmu Che and saved Nian Jincheng was Su Liang herself.

The reason why Su Liang doesn't believe Nian Jincheng has been exposed is that if that were the case, Duanmu Yi would find trouble with her by now.

After a moment of silence, Gu Ling spoke again, "There was no choice at that time, but living uprightly today is also a good thing for him. After having a child, he cannot continue to live with two faces."

“Well, should we ask Nian’s opinion? It might be a good opportunity to reclaim his identity, but there is always risk in doing so now. But if he wants to come back, he’ll have to temporarily sever ties with Yang Yu. In her previous letter, Yang Yu mentioned that she hasn’t publicised her wedding in fear of attracting attention to her husband’s identity. It’s not too late to intervene now.” Su Liang looked helpless.

But there’s only a little over half a month left. If anything needs to be done, it must be done quickly.

“You...” Gu Ling looked at Su Liang, slightly frowning.

Su Liang understood, “Great God, don’t worry about me. I’m staying at home reading books, what could go wrong? You need to go find your brother. Only you can do this.”

It’s a matter of paramount importance, and cannot be communicated via a messenger. Su Liang cannot disappear from the capital suddenly either. “Tell Xing Yusheng to borrow Qi Yan or Qi Jun to help.” Gu Ling said. Su Liang agreed, “Their brothers should be very willing.”

“Alright, I’ll leave tonight.” Gu Ling stood up to pack his belongings after finishing his words.

Su Liang asked him what he wanted to eat, and Gu Ling said dumplings.

“Starting a journey with dumplings and ending it with noodles? Alright.” Su Liang chuckled. This was a “hometown” custom she had told Gu Ling about before.

Although it was said that Su Liang would make the dumplings, the tasks of chopping the filling, kneading the dough, and wrapping the dumplings all fell on Gu Ling. Su Liang was only responsible for preparing vegetables, seasoning the filling, and cooking the dumplings.

There were two types of fillings, both meat and vegetarian. Su Liang specifically made a bowl of sour soup dumplings for Gu Ling, who loved sour foods.

In the afternoon, Su Liang went next door to the Xing Mansion and saw Lin Xueqing carefully making a Chinese knot. She was almost done with one.

“I told you, once you see it, you’ll get it.” Su Liang smiled as she entered the room.

Lin Xueqing’s eyes lit up, she put down what she was doing and came over, “That’s because the step-by-step diagram you gave me was so helpful! This one is almost done, I want to give it to my grandmother. I’ll make another one to hang in my father’s study! Then one for my eldest brother and sister-in-law, another for my second brother and sister-in-law, and one for us!”

“Don’t I get one?” Su Liang joked.

Lin Xueqing huffed, “No! You won’t give me the ones you made, so I won’t give you one either!”

“Where’s your husband?” asked Su Liang.

Lin Xueqing led Su Liang to take a seat and laughed, saying that Xing Yusheng was in the study writing a letter, “The envoy from Liang Country will be going back soon. By the time General Lin

and General Chen have to return to Xuanbei City, my husband wants to have the letter ready to hand to General Lin in case he runs out of time.”

“It seems they are getting along well now?” Su Liang commented.

Lin Xueqing nodded, “My grandmother says they are much better than before. I haven’t formally served tea to my father-in-law yet, but hearing about the past from my husband, I feel that my father-in-law has had a hard time. I hope they won’t quarrel anymore. I just don’t know when he will be back. My grandmother misses him very much.”

While they were talking, Xing Yusheng came over. Seeing Su Liang, who rarely visits his house, he immediately asked, “Is there something you need?”

“Can’t Miss Su visit me even if there’s nothing to do?” Lin Xueqing chided Xing Yusheng with a glance.

Xing Yusheng quickly laughed apologetically, but heard Su Liang say,

“Actually, there is something.”

Lin Xueqing pouted, “Miss Su, you really are hard to please!”

Su Liang smiled, “The emperor has allowed me to borrow books from the Imperial Palace library, and I will be very busy reading them. I don’t want to cook and clean by myself. Can I borrow someone from you?”

Upon hearing this, Xing Yusheng laughed, “We offered to help before, but you refused!”

With a serious look, Lin Xueqing said, “Miss Su, you could just come and eat with us. We live so close. Or we could come to eat with you.”

“No need. You two are so in love, I don’t want to be a third wheel. Right, Crown Prince Xing?” Su Liang said half-smiling.

Xing Yusheng coughed lightly, “Xueqing, since Su Liang is so busy, we shouldn’t disturb her. Let’s send Ajun over to prepare her daily meals and be at her service. ”

“Then it’s settled.” Su Liang stood up, “Starting tomorrow. I’ll pay Ajun’s wages.”

After that, Su Liang returned home.

Chang’an, who had been waiting by the lake, saw Su Liang and quickly paid his respects.

Su Liang approached him, “You sure know your way around.”

Chang’an smiled slightly, “I have no choice. Miss Su doesn’t have any servants at home and nobody to guard the gate.”

“How about you become my gatekeeper?” Su Liang suggested.

Chang’an paused for a moment, “Is Miss Su joking?”

“Of course, I’m joking. You are the crown prince’s confidant, it would be a waste for you to be my guard.” Su Liang said abruptly.

Chang'an was somewhat embarrassed by the sudden compliment but heard Su Liang ask, "What does the crown prince want?"

Chang'an looked serious and took out an invitation, "King Yue of Liang Country and Princess Yaoguang will be departing for home in three days. Tomorrow, the crown prince has invited Princess Yaoguang to a hunting expedition outside the city, many young lords and ladies will be there. Miss Su, please make sure to attend this time."

"I'd rather not, I don't want to steal the spotlight from the future crown princess." Su Liang joked.

Despite Chang'an attempting to convince her again, Su Liang said, "Tell the crown prince that I really can't make it and I hope he and Princess Yaoguang have a good time."

As Su Liang headed towards the Yuanming Pavilion, Chang'an followed her and said, "Does Miss Su have any delicacies prepared? I want to take some back for the crown prince. He said it's been a long time since he had your food."

Su Liang shook her head, "No." She entered the Yuanming Pavilion as soon as she finished speaking.

Chang'an sighed repeatedly. Without delivering the invitation, he had no choice but to return and report back.

Upon hearing from Chang'an that Su Liang had declined to attend the event,

Duanmu Chen sneered, "As expected."

"I don't know what Miss Su is busy with. I didn't dare to ask too much." Chang'an said weakly.

Duanmu Chen sounded gloomy, "What else could it be? She even thought of borrowing books from the Imperial Palace library, so naturally, she must be busy reading. I remember, back at the Wu family in Bei'an County, when we were attacked by assassins, she even valued her book more than me."

Upon hearing his master's sarcastic comments, Chang'an wanted to laugh but didn't dare to. He cleared his throat and asked, "So we're just going to let it go?"

Duanmu Chen grunted, "What else? Others will gather for a mundane hunting trip, it's not even interesting. If she doesn't want to attend, should I force her?"

"That's true. As long as Princess Yaoguang attends, it's all good." Chang'an replied.

Duanmu Chen thought of Situ Yao's beautiful face and smiled faintly, "Go get my bow and arrow. I want to do some practice."

As Chang'an was about to leave, he turned around and said, "Sir, I asked Miss Su if she had any delicacies prepared. She said she didn't."

Duanmu Chen touched his forehead, "She doesn't even give you a chance to pay a bill."

For dinner, Su Liang made crispy pan-fried dumplings as the main dish and also specially prepared two dishes that Gu Ling loved, for him to enjoy.

After dinner, Su Liang handed a letter to Gu Ling, "Take this to Yang Yu, she'll understand once she reads it."

Gu Ling couldn't appear directly in front of Yang Yu, so she would assume it was Su Liang who sent the message.

The letter explained the situation, with Su Liang suggesting that Nian Jincheng return to the capital and reclaim his identity. Despite the risks, they were challenges that could be resolved openly. This was an opportunity. However, it might inconvenience Yang Yu by temporarily postponing the wedding, making "Ya Yan" disappear from her side. When she comes to the capital again, Su Liang would figure out a way for her to legitimately marry Nian Jincheng.

This time, Su Liang took the initiative to hug Gu Ling goodbye, "Great God, go quickly and come back quickly, be safe." "Mm." Gu Ling's gaze settled on Su Liang's forehead, "Be careful."

Su Liang obediently nodded, "I will, please go."

Watching Gu Ling escape out the window, disappearing into the vast night, Su Liang sighed softly, hoping his journey would be smooth.

After reading for a while, when Su Liang was about to go to sleep, she thought of something and went to Gu Ling's room.

To be safe, she planned to consolidate all of Gu Ling's belongings and store them in a place where they wouldn't be found, especially his clothes. If anyone discovered that she had men's clothes in her study at the Yuanming Pavilion, she wouldn't be able to rationalize it.

But after Su Liang lit a candle and looked around, she discovered that Gu Ling had already tidied up. There were no traces of his clothes in the room, nor any indications that a man had lived there.

After once again appreciating Gu Ling's cautious reliability, she comfortably went to sleep.

The next day, Qi Jun arrived, delivering breakfast made by the Xing Family's cook to Su Liang.

"Have you eaten?" Su Liang asked.

Qi Jun hastily nodded, "I have eaten!"

"Right, are your master and mistress going hunting today?" Su Liang suddenly recalled.

"Yes." Qi Jun replied, "The crown prince's mansion had an invitation sent over.

The master and the mistress both want to participate. Miss Su, are you going?"

"I understand now. I'm not going." Su Liang shook her head, "They should not have set off yet, you go as well."

Qi Jun was puzzled for a moment, "The master has instructed me from today onwards..."

"Come back after their hunting trip." Su Liang interrupted Qi Jun, "They both lack martial arts skills, you brothers should accompany them for protection."

Qi Jun looked solemn, "Miss Su speaks wisely. I will return then."

When Qi Jun returned to the Xing mansion, and Xing Yusheng learnt about the situation, he laughed, "Su Liang must be worried about Xueqing."

Lin Xueqing admitted, of course she was.

The Marquis' son of the magnificent Zhong Xin mansion naturally had more than two guards. However, Qi Yan and Qi Jun were different from ordinary guards, they were superior in martial arts and grew up alongside Xing Yusheng, they shared irreplaceable trust and understanding.

The window was open, Su Liang brewed a pot of tea and sat by the window reading.

The weather was clear, sunshine filtering through gaps in the leaves illuminated the brighter Chinese knot hanging by the window. Looking out, Su Liang could see the clear waters of Bi Lake and the rich green trees.

Just when she thought she would spend the day pleasantly, she suddenly heard footsteps and someone calling her "Doctor Su".

An old duck-like voice, she seemed to have heard it somewhere... Su Liang frowned, quickly put down her book, closed the window, rushed downstairs, locked Zhengyang Pavilion's door from the outside, then jumped back from a window left open, closing it securely from the inside.

Not long after, she heard the voices of the old and young eunuchs outside the door.

"Doctor Su didn't leave the city, yet she's not at home?"

"Seems like she's not."

"Oh dear, what shall we do? The Empress Dowager is unwell and specifically requested Doctor Su to come! We do not know where she's gone."

"What can we do?"

"We should go back and inform the Empress Dowager that we could not find Doctor Su."

"Should we go seek the assistance of the senior Imperial Physician?"

"What do you know? His Majesty has also departed the city to hunt and ordered the senior Imperial Physician to accompany him. Move along now, don't be too smart for your own good."

Hearing the footsteps retreat, Su Liang narrowed her eyes.

Duanmu Yi also went hunting? The Dowager Empress from the Wan family suddenly fell ill at this time and specifically requested for her to treat her at the palace, certainly not with good intentions.

However, to avoid being held to account later, Su Liang simply changed into men's attire, donned a latania hat, carried her medical case on her back, inside of which were the books she wanted to read. She mounted her horse, left the mansion from the back gate, and took the backstreets out of the city.

With no other place to go, Su Liang went to the Su family's graveyard at Wangxiang Mountain. She first cleaned the grave markers, then found a shady spot, spread out her own mat, and continued to read her books leaning against a tree.

What Su Liang did not know was that not long after she left home, others came to seek her. It was someone sent by Duanmu Yi, and they just missed her.

It was initially an event organized by Duanmu Chen. Duanmu Yi did not express any intention to participate but decided to join at the last minute this morning. When he went to Ye Garden and discovered that Su Liang was not there, he inquired about her. Duanmu Chen told him the truth, Su Liang had something else to do and had informed him.

But using the excuse that Princess Yaoguang and the other young ladies might have minor accidents and injuries during the hunting and only a female doctor like Su Liang can put their minds at ease, Duanmu Yi sent someone back to the city to summon her.

But it turned out no one was present at the Su Mansion, and nobody knew where Su Liang was. The messenger could only report back with no results.

Because Duanmu Yi and Situ Xie also attended, the hunting event was just as Duanmu Chen had said, it was more of a social gathering rather than an actual hunt. The young girls present hardly had any horse riding skills, let alone archery skills.

Situ Yao grew up in Liang Country and her horsemanship was quite good. But her archery skills were not so great. Despite that, she was the most eye-catching among the women present.

Su Liang had taught Lin Xueqing how to ride a horse. But she didn't know how to shoot arrow. She enjoyed the beautiful scenery with Xing Yusheng, which was also very enjoyable.

During that time, Su Liang picked some wild fruits from the graveside and continue reading until the sky turned dark. Only then did she realized the setting of the sun.

Standing in front of Su Yuanzhou's tomb, she thought of the relocation Su Bai had once mentioned, she decided to plan it out and get started upon her return.

When Su Liang descended the mountain and rode back to the mansion, she found a troop of soldiers outside the main gate, "inviting" her to the palace.

Su Liang thought that Dowager Empress Wan had lodged a false complaint against her. She didn't care and made her way directly towards the palace without entering her residence.

It was only after meeting with Duanmu Yi that Su Liang learnt about the events following her departure.

"Your Majesty, this humble servant had gone to pay homage to my ancestors at the family tombs," Su Liang responded respectfully.

Duanmu Yi was taken aback, "Why did you have to go today of all days?"

"Yesterday a servant sent by the Crown Prince presented a note, but I did not receive it. I had planned to stay at home to read today. My lack of anticipation was my own oversight and I forgot about the obligations of a physician. I made a spur-of-the-moment decision to pay a visit to the family tombs because I had a dream last night

where my grandfather expressed his desire to return home. In my initial puzzlement, I didn't understand what he meant. But once I spent the day talking to my relatives and was ready to leave, I realized that my grandfather's dream was indicating his wish to return to his roots. As such, I beg your Majesty to grant me permission to transport the remains of my relative to our ancestral burial grounds in Bei'an County."

Hearing this, Duanmu Yi frowned halfway through her explanation, looking at Su Liang. His eyes were deep and after a long silence, he finally said, "If I don't agree to this, it would appear as if I lack human feelings. But, it's better to wait a few days until the weather gets cooler before you go."

"Thank you, Your Majesty." After expressing her gratitude to Duanmu Yi, he let her return home, completely oblivious to the fact the Empress Dowager Wan needed her medical attention.

Upon exiting the palace, Su Liang finally relaxed. She hadn't planned to relocate the family graves so soon since it's not suitable for her to go out without Gu Ling. It actually worked out perfectly a few days later.

Su Liang felt that Duanmu Yi was quite reasonable. Even until now, he had not mentioned Nian Jincheng in her presence, further convincing Su Liang that the Royal Family had not discovered Nian Jincheng's whereabouts.

The night had completely set in.

Su Liang rode home alone, owing to the fact that Gu Ling had only left the night before, she did not anticipate any major incident for at least three days.

However, halfway home, as she passed through a deserted alley, a man dressed in black and with a masked face descended from the sky. Without saying a word, he attacked her, weapons drawn!

Su Liang's eyes narrowed, she remained seated on the horseback, not even reaching for her weapon.

The masked man's blade was nearly upon Su Liang, but he stopped upon seeing her immobility before retracting his weapon.

Su Liang snorted coldly, "Uncle Liang, how many times do I have to deliver the same message to you? The only reason your young master has not appeared before you is because he doesn't wish to pay you any heed.. You wish to use me to force him to show himself? You must be out of your mind!"

Chapter 239: 239. No hurry

"The assassin" tore off the black cloth covering their face, revealing an old, thin face. It was Uncle Liang, who glared at Su Liang.

"You must know where the young master is!" Uncle Liang's eyes were filled with determination.

Su Liang stared at him, and after a moment of silence, she spoke again, “Since you came to find me tonight, there are some things I want to talk to you about. It’s not convenient here, come to my house later.”

Uncle Liang froze, then grew wary.

At a glance, Su Liang could tell what he was thinking. She rode past him and said, “Didn’t you say that I, as the Martial Arts Champion, am conceited? Are you afraid that I’ll harm you?”

Uncle Liang frowned, and when he turned around, Su Liang had already vanished at the corner of the alley.

Uncle Liang snorted coldly and soon disappeared as well.

When Su Liang reached the entrance to her mansion, she was about to dismount and open the door, but someone jumped down from the wall. “Miss Su is back!”

It was Qi Jun. He didn’t know where Su Liang had gone, so he had waited here.

“Thank you for your hard work. You can go back and rest now. Come over again tomorrow.” As soon as Su Liang finished speaking, Qi Jun had already opened the main door. She rode her horse straight into the mansion.

Qi Jun closed the door from inside and said to Su Liang, “I have moved all my bedding here and will be staying in the courtyard closest to the Yuanming Pavilion. Is that alright?”

From a distance, Su Liang replied, “As you wish.”

When Qi Jun led Su Liang’s horse away to feed it, Uncle Liang arrived.

Su Liang didn’t invite him into the Yuanming Pavilion, but instead, sat in the pavilion across the lake, with an unobstructed view ensuring no one could eavesdrop on their conversation.

When Qi Jun returned from feeding the horse, he saw from a distance that Su Liang was sitting in the pavilion with someone. He immediately turned around, pretending not to have seen anything, and went to the kitchen next to the Yuanming Pavilion to boil some water.

It was rumored that the late “Ning Jing” had a master protecting him, and that it was due to his concern for Su Liang; he had sent a master to protect her during her time in Xuanbei City, which ultimately led to his own demise.

Xing Yusheng believed such rumors to be unreliable, and so did Qi Jun. However, the matter of Su Liang having mysterious friends did not surprise Qi Jun.

The night breeze was cool.

An embroidery chessboard was carved on the stone table, an idle creation of Gu Ling, but the inscription was illegible.

Uncle Liang glanced at it before quickly turning his attention back to Su Liang, starting off with an unfriendly tone, “What do you want to say? There’s no need to beat around the bush! ”

Su Liang countered, “What do you really want?”

“I just want to make sure the young master is fine! Otherwise, I can’t be at ease!”
Uncle Liang huffed lightly.

Su Liang nodded, “Alright, I believe you genuinely care about him. As you think you know him better than I do, you should be very clear about his abilities. Do you think anything can happen to him?”

Uncle Liang’s face stiffened, “Then why hasn’t he shown himself yet?” “Maybe he went to the south for a vacation,” Su Liang said.

“Don’t talk nonsense! The matter of clearing his name was at the young master’s request. How could he ignore it?” Uncle Liang said coldly.

“What’s the difference between him appearing tonight and a year later?” Su Liang asked.

Uncle Liang frowned and said nothing.

“The alliance between Qian and Liang countries will make Princess Yaoguang the crown princess of Qian Country. Do you think the emperor will revoke the pardon he granted to King Yue’s grandson, Gu Ling, without any reason?” Su Liang asked coldly.

Without hesitation, Uncle Liang blurted out, “Of course not!”

“That is to say, whether Gu Ling appears tonight or a year later makes no difference to him. If he appears a year later, he will have an extra year of freedom to go wherever he pleases. However, getting King Yue to plead on his behalf is not an opportunity that comes by easily. It requires the right timing, and the strongest relationship between Qian and Liang countries in many years. What I’m talking about is now.” Su Liang scoffed. In a way, she played a part in ensuring peace in Liang Country instead of reigniting the war.

Uncle Liang’s expression finally changed, “You mean, Young Master asked me to deal with King Yue’s matter, but he didn’t plan to reveal his identity after it’s settled?”

Su Liang held her forehead, “Is that so hard to understand? Didn’t you say you know him better than me? Do you think he really wants to come back to the capital city and live alone in the Marquis Chang Xin Mansion, under the watchful eye of the royal family? How is that good for him?”

Uncle Liang frowned deeply, “Then why did the young master let me...”

Su Liang took a deep breath, holding back the desire to scold Uncle Liang, “There’s a difference between not wanting to come back and not being able to come back! Now it’s all fine, isn’t it? He can enjoy himself as long as he wants, and whenever he wants to come back, he can!”

“But why would the young master want to come back here?” Uncle Liang was still dwelling on the issue.

Su Liang said impatiently, “What if he wants to get married and have a child, and live a normal life without hiding?”

Uncle Liang froze for a moment before his eyes lit up, "I see! Maybe he fell in love with a girl and plans to settle their marriage before coming back?"

Su Liang nodded, "Your thinking is not wrong. However, before his last departure, what you mentioned hadn't happened."

Uncle Liang suddenly fell silent, staring straight at Su Liang.

Su Liang felt a bit uneasy under his gaze, "Uncle Liang, why are you staring at

Uncle Liang said in a ghostly voice, "Could it be that the girl Young Master has fallen for is you?"

Su Liang chuckled, "We're just good friends; you're overthinking it." As for Gu Ling, if he really fancied anyone, he would have confessed without hesitation within a minute.

About her relationship with Gu Ling, Su Liang had seriously thought it through. It was not that she was slow to react and couldn't feel anything. Although they really had a good relationship, in Su Liang's view, it was just because their way of getting along had always been about blending habits from two completely different worlds. From the perspective of the people here, their relationship might be considered close, but from the perspective of Su Liang's previous life, they were like siblings and close friends. Because they lived together, there were many instances where they took care of each other in their daily lives. Gu Ling had always been earnestly learning things from Su Liang's previous life, including her thoughts. The way he interacted with Su Liang completely favored her perspective.

Uncle Liang still looked somewhat doubtful, "Are you really telling the truth? Don't deceive me! My young master is so good to you. I can believe that he's just pitying you and doesn't love you, but you didn't fall for my young master either? I can't believe it!"

Su Liang: ...As the saying goes, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. No, loyal servants see perfection? That's not quite right either. Anyway, Uncle Liang just believes that Gu Ling is unparalleled and unmatched...

Regarding this, Su Liang agreed, "Actually, that's true. In the beginning, I wanted to be with him, but he rejected me."

Uncle Liang snorted lightly, "I thought so!"

Su Liang: ...Tonight, she wanted to "settle" this little trouble called Uncle Liang.

As long as he was happy, that was enough. After all, Su Liang had told Duanmu

Chen, Xing Yusheng, and the Lin family of her experience of chasing after

someone and getting rejected; she wasn't embarrassed and could speak about it openly.

Su Liang took a deep breath and looked at Uncle Liang solemnly, "It seems our misunderstanding has been cleared up. Now it's time for me to talk about the real matter. Since Gu Ling was willing to bring you along with him, I think he trusts your loyalty. I can see that you truly wish him well. But you need to understand one thing: what he wants to do, and what he doesn't want to do, cannot coincide with your intentions. Your loyalty and goodwill are more than just doing what he hopes you'll do; what's more important is not to do anything he dislikes! He can live well without you. Don't force your ideas onto him."

Upon hearing this, Uncle Liang's face darkened, "A yellow-haired girl actually dares to teach me a lesson? Who do you think you are?"

Su Liang shrugged, "I'm just me."

Uncle Liang glared at her and said fiercely, "Since you claim to be friends with the young master, help me explain to him that I was wrong and shouldn't have talked to King Yue about his business without his consent!"

Su Liang held her forehead, "Can you not ask me for things with an attitude that says you will rip me apart if I don't agree?"

"Will you help or not, one word!" Uncle Liang coldly snorted.

Su Liang nodded, "I'll help. But I don't know when he'll appear. Uncle Liang is straightforward, so don't get involved with King Yue anymore; Gu Ling will only dislike you more. For Uncle Liang, I have only one piece of advice, which is what Gu Ling told you when he asked you to leave Su Village last year. Don't bother with him anymore; you have your children and grandchildren, so go back to your home and enjoy your twilight years."

Uncle Liang's face fell at her words, and he looked a little disheartened, "But Young Master is all alone, lonely..."

Su Liang said seriously, "That's not true. Don't forget, he has his only friend in the eyes of the world, Nian Jincheng. They should be together now." Uncle Liang froze, "Nian Jincheng... I really forgot about him."

"If you have any more questions, just ask, and I'll listen," Su Liang said.

"From whom did you learn your martial arts?" Uncle Liang looked at Su Liang and asked.

Su Liang scoffed, "Can you guess?"

Uncle Liang suddenly realized, "My young master taught you?! Turning you into a Martial Arts Champion in half a year? That's amazing! So aren't you my young master's disciple? Don't be ungrateful!"

Su Liang nodded, "Yes, yes, it's just as you said."

"Ah, it's all my fault in the end, making the young master angry and not wanting to meet again." Uncle Liang sighed, "You have a clear head, you're right, the young master is so capable, he doesn't need me, I've only caused him trouble. I'll listen to him and leave for Liang Country tonight."

"You're not going to report our conversation to King Yue, are you?" Su Liang asked.

Uncle Liang shook his head, "I really didn't know the young master hated King Yue so much before, or else I wouldn't have done that kind of thing. Now that I know, why would I go to him? I didn't come with King Yue this time! I don't have to explain anything to him!"

"That's good. Slow down, Uncle. I won't see you off." Su Liang nodded.

Uncle Liang got up, and then his figure disappeared.

But when Su Liang was about to return, he came running back, looking at her and saying, "Now you are quite a respected person, if my family's young master really comes back here someday and runs into any trouble, you have to help him!"

Su Liang solemnly promised, "I will."

Uncle Liang finally left for good.

Su Liang shook her head, walked around the lake, and returned to Yuanming Pavilion. Her actions tonight were not intended to repair Uncle Liang's relationship with Gu Ling; they should have parted ways long ago, and there was no need for them to continue together. But it's better to resolve enmities than to create them; Uncle Liang is not very smart but has no ill intentions towards Gu Ling, and he's easily manipulated into making irrational decisions.

For Su Liang, talking openly with Uncle Liang was also a way to solve problems. After all, there's no irreconcilable conflict between them.

Qi Jun is a very reliable subordinate, so Su Liang doesn't have to worry about anything in the following days. She spends most of her time reading and doesn't go out unless necessary.

During this time, Lian Shun and Che Yun paid her another visit, but this time Su Liang didn't personally cook for them; instead, Qi Jun bought food and drinks from the restaurant.

At the table, Lian Shun mentioned Gu Ling, "I hope the beauty Gu can return soon. "

Che Yun then asked, "Why? Do you know Marquis Chang Xin?"

"What Marquis Chang Kin?" Lian Shun spoke casually in Su Liang's presence, "The former Marquis Chang Xin was executed, which is very unlucky! He should have been called Beauty Gu! He's the only man beautiful enough to make me submit!"

Su Liang smiled faintly, "Lian Ershan, are you saying that Beauty Gu is the most beautiful in the world and you're second?"

Lian Shun made a face, winking at Su Liang, "Am I not beautiful?"

This gesture reminded Su Liang of Gu Ling's "flower", and she couldn't help but laugh, "Beautiful, extremely beautiful!"

"Tsk!" Lian Shun rolled his eyes at Su Liang, "I'm the second most beautiful in the world, and you don't even like me, so only Beauty Gu is good enough for you!"

Su Liang was still laughing, but Lian Shun said earnestly, "Actually, the two of you do seem quite compatible. It's not easy finding a man who surpasses you in strength and wisdom. At least Beauty Gu is more beautiful than you."

"Makes sense." Su Liang nodded with a smile.

"Really!" Lian Shun said seriously, "I'm not joking with you. If he really comes back to the capital, it's hard to say you won't be captivated by him. If you fall for someone else, as a friend, I have to be a little picky, but if it's Beauty Gu, I approve!"

“It’s not your place to approve or disapprove, is it?” Su Liang snorted.

Lian Shun chuckled, “I can be your brother! Just call me brother, and I’ll always treat you like a real sister!”

Su Liang shook her head, “You have a real sister. I don’t need to, thank you.”

Lian Shun shook his head along, “No need to thank me. My offer is always valid. Give it some thought, Su Xiaoliang.”

On the night before Situ Xie’s departure, a banquet was held in the palace, which Su Liang attended along with Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing.

At the banquet, Situ Yao showcased her superb skills on the guqin. Su Liang noticed Duanmu Chen listening with great enjoyment. It was indeed beautiful, and she too liked watching beautiful people play the guqin, pleasing both the eyes and the ears. She thought she should get a good guqin for her home so that Gu Ling could play it; he must be very proficient.

Situ Xie didn’t ask Su Liang about Gu Ling again, which surprised her. She couldn’t figure out if he really had no ulterior motives towards Gu Ling or if he was just hiding them too well. She tends to think it’s the latter.

After the banquet was over and Su Liang left the palace, she returned home under Qi Jun’s escort. Meanwhile, on the other side, Gu Ling met with Nian Jincheng.

Nian Jincheng totally didn’t expect Gu Ling would come to see him all of a sudden. He had just received the news of Gu Ling’s pardon yesterday, and he didn’t know about his own pardon yet.

“How come you are here? Where’s Su Liang?” Nian Jincheng looked over Gu Ling’s shoulder as soon as he saw him.

Gu Ling shook his head, “She is in the capital.”

“She couldn’t come to the wedding, so she sent you to bring a gift?” Nian Jincheng sighed, “Xiaoyu really wants to see Su Liang. We didn’t invite anyone else to our wedding, only hoping she could come.”

Gu Ling didn’t say anything and took out the letter Su Liang had given him for Yang Yu, handing it to Nian Jincheng.

Nian Jincheng’s expression was unfathomable as he took it, and he frowned as he read, “What is this...”

Without Gu Ling saying much, Nian Jincheng knew exactly what was going on after reading the letter addressed to Yang Yu.

“What do you think?” Gu Ling asked.

Nian Jincheng smiled bitterly, “I just want to get married to Xiaoyu on time.” Gu Ling nodded, “If you give her the letter, she will refuse you.”

Nian Jincheng: This brother of his, always good at stabbing him in the heart

However, Nian Jincheng merely expressed regret at the delay of the wedding and didn't disagree with Gu Ling and Su Liang's opinions. Especially considering what Su Liang wrote in her letter, "When you have children in the future, you can't let your child grow up watching their father with two faces."

"You can rest here while I go find Xiaoyu." Nian Jincheng put the letter back into the envelope and tucked it into his sleeve.

"I'm hungry," Gu Ling said.

Nian Jincheng walked out, "I'm not Su Liang, I won't take care of your meals."

Although they had already decided on their marriage for life, it was still the first time Nian Jincheng had come to Yang Yu's place late at night.

Yang Yu only thought it was a bit unexpected and assumed there must be something important.

Upon hearing that Nian Jincheng had received a letter from someone sent by Su Liang and that he had already read it, Yang Yu's expression brightened, and she hurriedly took it and opened the letter.

Soon, Yang Yu's eyebrows furrowed, and her gaze grew serious.

After Yang Yu finished reading the letter, Nian Jincheng cautiously asked her, "If you don't want to postpone the wedding, we can figure out another way ..."

But Yang Yu suddenly laughed, "Of course we should postpone it! Su Liang is right. Let's just do what she says!"

Nian Jincheng sighed deeply, "Xiaoyu, are you not the least bit regretful about postponing the wedding?"

Seeing Nian Jincheng's slightly hurt expression, Yang Yu smiled and held his arm, "I'm waiting to be the wife of a General, with a rich dowry."

Nian Jincheng's expression became serious, "Good, I want you to have a grand wedding with me too."

When Nian Jincheng returned to his residence, he found Gu Ling eating dessert that Yang Yu had personally made for him.

Nian Jincheng said to Gu Ling, "I want to be with Xiaoyu for a few more days. There are some things here I need to arrange. Just stroll around nearby, and we can leave together later."

Gu Ling finished the last piece of dessert, wiped his hands with a handkerchief, put on a mask, and stood up, "No rush. Goodbye."

By the time Nian Jincheng reacted, Gu Ling had already disappeared from the room.

Nian Jincheng rubbed his forehead, "Not in a hurry? You're clearly in a hurry.."

Chapter 240: 240. Struggling at Death's Door (First Update)

On the day Situ Xie and Situ Yao left, Su Liang was ordered to see them off.

It was a grand event, but she treated it as a boring task. After seeing them off outside the city, she returned home. Situ Xie didn't bother her after seeing her attitude that day.

Just as she sat down at home and hadn't finished a cup of tea, she heard Qi Jun report that someone was looking for her.

It was Song Qi, the steward whom the former housekeeper of Ning Mansion had sent someone to search for in Jiaye City. He had first arrived at Xunyang City and had specifically come to visit Su Liang, the head of the household.

Indeed, as the old housekeeper had said, Song Qi's appearance was ordinary and seemed older than Su Liang had imagined, with frosty hair at his temples but not ugly. Just by looking at Ning Jing and Ning Xinxin's faces, one could tell that Ning Feng belonged to the category of handsome men, and Ning Qingqing, Ning Jing's mother, was somewhat a fan of good looks.

"Have you seen Lian Shun?" Su Liang asked Song Qi.

Song Qi, who looked travel-worn but had very sharp eyes, nodded and said, "I saw General Lin, who escorted the envoy from Liang Country out of the capital city, outside the city. General Lin also saw me but it wasn't convenient to talk at that time."

"I have informed Lian Shun about your return to the Ning family," Su Liang said, "Since you have come to see me, it means you are willing to return to the Ning family to help."

"Yes," Song Qi nodded, "I had to leave back then out of no choice. I prefer the Tea Garden to the Orange Garden."

Su Liang smiled, "That's good. But you've been away for many years and as soon as you return, I'm assigning you a heavy responsibility. I'm afraid people might not accept it. Since you've come to the capital city, stay here for now, manage the tea house here, get used to it, and let me see what you're capable of. How does that sound?"

Song Qi nodded hastily, "Thank you, Head of the family!"

"Did your family come with you?" Su Liang asked. She had previously forgotten to ask Lian Shun about Song Qi's family situation.

Upon hearing this, Song Qi's expression turned somewhat desolate as he bitterly smiled and said, "After leaving the Ning family, I settled down and got married in Jiaye City, but my wife died of a difficult childbirth, leaving me a son. My son was weak and sickly, and despite seeking medical treatment, his condition didn't improve. In just a few years, he followed his mother."

Hearing Song Qi's words, Su Liang sighed. This meant that he never married again afterward. No wonder he looked older than his peers. Perhaps it was because of the misfortunes he had encountered that had hit him hard.

In this era of scarce medical resources, maternal complications during childbirth and early child death were common.

"My family is gone, and I'm used to living alone without anyone to look after me. Now that I'm older, I don't think about those things anymore." Song Qi sighed slightly.

Remembering something, Su Liang changed the topic, “You’ve been living in Jiaye City for many years, do you know of a family with the surname Qiu? They run an Escort Agency.”

Song Qi was startled for a moment, then nodded, ‘Yes, Qiu family’s Zhenwei Escort Agency is quite famous in that area.’

“There’s a young master in the Qiu family , named Qiu Ming. He has an uncle named Qiu Jianren. Do you know them?” Su Liang asked.

Song Qi shook his head, “I know of Qiu Ming and have seen him before, but I haven’t dealt with him and can’t say that I know him. I’ve only heard of Qiu Jianren and haven’t seen him. It’s said that he left home for a woman many years ago. When I left Jiaye City this time, I heard that Qiu Ming had joined the army in the capital city.”

Su Liang calculated the timing, Qiu Ming’s incident happened when Song Qi was no longer in Jiaye City, and if he had been on the road all this time, he shouldn’t know what happened later.

Since Qiu Ming was identified as a spy, Duanmu Yi had already sent people south to capture Qiu family’s members and also sent people to investigate “Han Su” in the north.

However, up until now, there was no news. Su Liang suspected that Qiu family’s members had been dealt with by Qiu Jianren. As for “Han Su”, naturally, they couldn’t find much information.

Su Liang casually asked about Lin’s family.

“Lin’s family is doing well, but the mistress worries a lot about the eldest young master. However, she never stops him from venturing outside. As for the eldest young master joining the army, the master is supportive.” said Song Qi, “When they heard that I was leaving this time, they didn’t stop me, even specially prepared a banquet to see me off.”

Su Liang nodded, “That’s good.” Considering Lian Shun’s personality, his family must be harmonious.

She asked Qi Jun to call the main steward of Ning family in the capital city and instructed him to arrange for Song Qi to work as the manager of the Tea House in the capital. In half a month, he would visit her again.

With that, Song Qi left with the main steward.

After sending Song Qi away, Su Liang went up to the second floor of Yuanming Pavilion and picked up a book. Before she could even open it, she heard Qi Jun’s voice from downstairs, ‘Who are you?’

Su Liang frowned, opened the window and looked out, only to see a man in gray standing downstairs, confronted by Qi Jun. Because he had his back to her, Su Liang couldn’t see his face clearly.

“I have been ordered to deliver a letter to Miss Su Liang!” The man in gray spoke, revealing himself to be an elderly man.

“State clearly whose order you’re carrying out!” Qi Jun’s eyes were alert as he drew the long sword from his waist.

However, the man in gray didn’t say anything more, simply threw a letter down and turned away. With a few leaps, there was no trace of him.

Qi Jun chased after him for a few steps, heard Su Liang call him and turned back, picking up the letter from the ground, and handed it to Su Liang in Yuanming Pavilion.

Su Liang put on cloth gloves, opened the letter, and smelled a peculiar fragrance. It seemed to be a floral scent, but she had never encountered it before.

A thin sheet of paper, Su Liang unfolded it to see neatly written words, just one line, “I know your secret.”

The most common envelope and paper, without any signature.

Su Liang’s eyes narrowed! Her secret? Did they know she was a transmigrator? Or did they know that the “Ning Jing” around her before was impersonated by Gu Ling?

These two things were the biggest secrets about her. She had told the former only to Gu Ling, while the latter was known to Uncle Liang, Situ Xie, and Nian Jincheng.

However, with “Ning Jing”’s death, even if the latter was exposed again, Su Liang had room to deny it.

Compared to that, if someone knew she was a transmigrator and greeted her in this way, the problem was even bigger.

Su Liang wondered, could there be other transmigrators as well? However, her life had always been low-key; the things related to her previous life had only been revealed in front of Gu Ling. What seemed mysterious to outsiders was her strong return after more than a year away from the capital city. And this indeed could be seen as one of the characteristics of a transmigrator...

Seeing Su Liang’s unusual expression, Qi Jun hastily asked, “Miss Su Liang, is everything alright?”

“What did the person who delivered the letter look like?” Su Liang’s expression returned to normal as she put away the letter.

Qi Jun thought for a moment and said, “He is probably in his fifties or sixties, with a plain appearance, small eyes, a flat nose, and thick lips. No distinctive features.”

Su Liang didn’t ask Qi Jun to chase after the man because she was worried about an accident.

As to who sent her this mysterious letter and what their intentions were, Su Liang had no clue. So she decided to keep it for now and wait until Gu Ling returned to discuss it.

By her calculations, he should have already met Nian Jincheng.

On the following day, Su Liang entered the palace to return some books she had finished reading, and borrowed another batch of new books from the Imperial Palace Library.

With the token given to her by Duanmu Yi, she could move around unimpeded, not needing to meet him in person.

As the library was located at the deepest part of the Imperial Garden, Su Liang walked through the garden with a box of books on her back, admiring the ancient trees, unique flowers, and peculiar grasses along the way. Whenever she saw something she liked, she would think about telling Gu Ling so they could plant it in their own garden.

While walking, she heard footsteps approaching, and coming face-to-face with the Sixth Princess Duanmu Qianqian.

The two had never directly interacted before. After Su Liang had paid her respect, she stepped aside to let Duanmu Qianqian pass first.

However, Duanmu Qianqian waved her hand and dismissed her servants, then approached Su Liang and stared at her intently.

Knowing that Duanmu Qianqian wanted to cause trouble, Su Liang calmly asked, "I'm not sure what the Sixth Princess has in mind?"

With a smile on her face, Duanmu Qianqian's voice was soft and gentle. "My eldest brother and second brother were both harmed by you, weren't they?"

Su Liang shook her head, "I'm sorry, I don't understand what the Sixth Princess is talking about."

Leaning closer to Su Liang's ear, Duanmu Qianqian whispered, "You've known my fourth brother for a long time, haven't you? You're his woman, right? Everything you do is to help him secure the crown prince's position. Am I right?"

Su Liang's expression remained unchanged, "The weather is very nice today."

"Stop pretending to be ignorant, Su Liang. You've tricked my father into going round in circles. You must be very proud of yourself, right? Don't think I know nothing!" Duanmu Qianqian sneered.

Su Liang nodded, "The Sixth Princess's breath seems a little foul today."

Duanmu Qianqian's face stiffened, she snorted coldly before suddenly bending down to pull out the dagger hidden in Su Liang's left calf.

However, Su Liang hadn't brought a dagger into the palace. This was a requirement Duanmu Yi had given her when he gave her the token, not to bring any weapons into the palace.

Duanmu Qianqian's expression changed, and she pulled a dagger from her sleeve.

There was no need for Su Liang to dodge, as Duanmu Qianqian stabbed the dagger into her own abdomen, then released it. She screamed in pain, fell to the ground, and shouted, "Help... Please, help!"

As for Su Liang, who was supposed to go along with Duanmu Qianqian's act...

she looked expressionlessly at the clear blue sky, the cloudless weather. Apparently, today really was a nice day. But why were there always so many annoying people around trying to make one feel sick? They were so annoying. It could be seen that Empress Wan's genes were pretty bad. Her children, one after another, were either foolish or evil.

If this was how Empress Dowager, Empress Wan, and the Wan family intended to deal with her, Su Liang could only admire Duanmu Qianqian's courage to hurt herself so badly. Presumably, during

the hunting trip, the Empress Dowager suddenly excused herself, claiming to be unwell, and sent someone to summon Su Liang to the palace for a similar purpose.

Up to now, the behavior of these people could only be described in one phrase:

struggling desperately...

If Duanmu Yi chose to believe Duanmu Qianqian, Su Liang wouldn't be afraid either. Even if she were thrown into the Heavenly Prison, the prison-breaking Gu Ling would rescue her anyway. They could just run away together....