

## Three-Time 271

### Chapter 271: 271. Best Friends

Given the day off by Su Liang, Qi Jun had arrived at Xuanbei City earlier to visit his father, Qi Jiang. He gets along quite well with Lian Shun and Che Yun but didn't tell them about Su Liang being interested in Gu Ling.

As a result, Lian Shun found out from Gu Ling himself, and his feelings could only be described as quite odd.

That night, Lian Shun came over again to invite Gu Ling for a walk in the snow.

Gu Ling refused, saying it was too cold.

However, Lian Shun's enthusiasm couldn't be stopped by the snowstorm. With gentle persuasion and amusing cajoling, he insisted on staying until Gu Ling gave in.

"Lingling, Aling, Xiaoling, Little Lingling, Xiaogu..."

Listening to Lian Shun's affectionate calls through the door, Gu Ling slightly frowned. This person might have a quirky personality, but he seemed exceptionally enthusiastic about him.

Unable to focus with the noise outside, Gu Ling got up, opened the door, and Lian Shun, succumbing to inertia, fell into his arms. Then with a shove, Gu Ling sent him flying outside, landing in the snow...

"Xiaoling, you hit way too hard!" Lian Shun lay sprawled out in the snow, not getting up. "If you don't go out with me, I'll freeze to death right here."

Gu Ling thought of Yan Shiba, who would act coquettishly towards Su Liang. However, one had to admit, even though Yan Shiba was quite annoying, Lian Shun wasn't so bad.

Gu Ling returned to his room, and upon hearing the door close, Lian Shun looked up at the sky speechlessly as the wind blew snow onto his face. "He's still not moved? He's really like a big ice cube, how will Su Xiaoliang manage to win him over?"

If Su Liang was here, knowing that Lian Shun came to harass Gu Ling in the cold wind and snow just to help train him and make her pursuit easier, she would definitely be touched enough to throw a snowball at Lian Shun's face and call him a "psycho"...

However, when Lian Shun was about to give up and get up, he heard the sound of the door opening again and quickly pretended to be still lying down.

Gu Ling wrapped himself in a dark cloak, put on a hood, and walked over to kick Lian Shun lightly.

Lian Shun pretended that he was dead and didn't make a sound.

"If you like snow so much, how about I bury you in it?" Accompanying Gu Ling's icy voice, a refreshing snowball hit Lian Shun's face, and he yelled as he sprang up from the ground, only to see Gu Ling already gathering a second snowball...

Then Lian Shun laughed, "So Xiaoling, you want to have a snowball fight with me? Come on!"

Before he could finish speaking, Gu Ling's snowball hit Lian Shun's open mouth with precision. The feeling of the snow merging with his teeth was just too exciting...

It took several deep breaths for Lian Shun to recover. Wiping the melted snow from his face, he stomped his feet, shook off the snow on his body, walked over, and hugged Gu Ling's arm. "You put on the big cloak, so let's go for a walk together!"

Gu Ling agreed readily this time, making Lian Shun want to hit him even more.

Xing Ji wanted to talk to Gu Ling, so Qi Jun volunteered to come over. Seeing two people walking towards him, one was Gu Ling, and the other was Lian Shun, who was actually holding Gu Ling's arm?!

Qi Jun had a strange expression. Gu Ling didn't like being touched, and he even complained in front of the emperor when Su Liang touched him. So why was he so close with Lian Shun? Could it be that he didn't dislike Su Liang, but rather disliked women in general?

As they approached, Qi Jun was pondering this question. Gu Ling, noticing his expression, suddenly dashed Lian Shun away, causing him to fall back into the snow...

Seeing this, Qi Jun's mouth twitched, and he quickly went to help. "Master Lin, are you okay?"

"I'm fine, I felt a little dizzy from falling earlier, but now that I fell again, I feel better, haha!" Lian Shun brushed off the snow from his body, smiling brightly. He had also seen Qi Jun's strange expression and was afraid he'd say something to Su Liang.

"Hehe, that's good." Qi Jun nodded. "Are you two going out in such heavy snow?"

Lian Shun's eyes narrowed, and he hooked his arm around Qi Jun's neck. "Qi Xiaojun, I have to ask you something. Why didn't you tell me that Su Liang was interested in Gu Ling before you arrived? Are you afraid of hurting my pride?"

Qi Jun glanced at Gu Ling and shook his head seriously. "It's because Marquis Chang Xin rejected my master. I thought telling others about it would damage my master's self-esteem."

"You're just making excuses. Su Xiaoliang couldn't care less about that, and besides, am I just anyone? I'm her best friend!" Lian Shun snorted. "I was going to have a serious talk with Gu Xiaoling about how he actually doesn't like Su Xiaoliang, and have his eyes checked to see if there's a problem."

Qi Jun could not help but chuckle. "I'll be sure to write a letter to my master about this."

Hearing the words "writing a letter," Gu Ling's eyes flashed slightly.

Qi Jun almost forgot the important matter and remembered that Xing Ji was waiting at the military camp to meet Gu Ling, so he hurriedly spoke as Lian Shun was about to lead Gu Ling away.

"He doesn't know the way, I'll accompany him there." Lian Shun said, pulling

Gu Ling forward and turning back to Qi Jun, "I also want to write a letter to Su Xiaoliang, give it to you tomorrow morning! Send them back to the capital together! "

“Alright.” Qi Jun agreed.

Lian Shun accompanied Gu Ling to meet Xing Ji, and discovered that Xing Ji had also prepared some food and alcohol.

As Lian Shun was about to sit down, he heard Xing Ji say, “I want to speak with Marquis Chang Xin alone, you should leave first.”

Lian Shun was stunned for a moment, then smiled and patted Gu Ling on the shoulder, “Then I’ll wait in your room, and accompany you for the night!”

Gu Ling shook his head slightly, “No need.”

Lian Shun had already reached the door, “Don’t be nervous, I really don’t like men. There’s just something I need to talk to you about. You’re leaving early tomorrow morning.”

After Lian Shun left, Gu Ling took a seat. Xing Ji looked at him with a complex expression, “In the blink of an eye, you’ve grown up so much.”

Gu Ling’s expression was indifferent, “I don’t remember when I met Marquis Zhong Xin.”

Xing Ji shook his head and smiled, pouring wine for Gu Ling, “You haven’t seen me, but I’ve seen you. Back then, you were young and, by chance, saved Yu Sheng’s mother. When I heard about it, I wanted to see the most beautiful young master in the capital city that was rumored, so I found an opportunity and sneaked into the capital city to see you. It’s been ten years since then.”

Gu Ling did not follow up on Xing Ji’s reminiscing of the past, because he really didn’t know about the events Xing Ji mentioned. He asked bluntly, “What does Marquis Zhong Xin want from me?”

“I heard that there’s a girl in the capital city who pursued you?” Xing Ji asked with a smile. Qi Jun didn’t tell Lian Shun and Che Yun but told his father and Xing Ji about it.

Gu Ling nodded, “Su Liang.”

“You don’t like her?” Xing Ji asked.

Gu Ling’s expression was indifferent, “What does this have to do with Marquis Zhong Xin?”

Xing Ji laughed, “Actually, she is my adopted daughter, but outsiders don’t know it. I heard that she has feelings for you, so I wanted to ask what you think.”

“Miss Su is very talented, but I’m not interested in women.” Gu Ling said indifferently.

Xing Ji frowned, “You mean...”

“I’m not interested in men either. I’m used to being alone and don’t want to change.” Gu Ling said. Hearing this, Xing Ji sighed, “Habits can be changed.”

Gu Ling remained silent.

Xing Ji didn’t continue on the topic and instead talked about Gu Ling going to Liang Country.

Gu Ling returned to the General Mansion and went to find Lin Boyan first.

Lin Boyan had caught a cold and had taken medicine before going to sleep, so when Gu Ling woke him up, he looked very tired.

“Qi Jun is sending a letter to the capital city, you write to your family and give it to him.” Gu Ling said.

Upon hearing this, Lin Boyan got out of bed. Gu Ling then said, “I want to write a letter to Su Liang.”

Lin Boyan rubbed his forehead, “Alright, I’ll prepare an envelope for you. Bring it to me when you’re done writing.”

Gu Ling went to find Lin Bojun again, informing him that he could write a letter to Qin Yujin.

When Gu Ling returned to his own courtyard, Lian Shun was already asleep on his bed, and there was a letter he had written to Su Liang on the table, not yet sealed.

Gu Ling picked it up and opened it, seeing that Lian Shun wrote in the letter that they had known each other since they were young, and they were the best of friends. He asked Su Liang to rest assured that he would definitely train Gu Ling well...

Restoring the letter to its original state, Gu Ling went to the bedside and pulled Lian Shun up.

“You’re back.” Lian Shun rubbed his eyes, “What did Uncle Xing want from you?”

“It has nothing to do with you. Hurry up and say what you want to say, and leave when you’re done.” Gu Ling sat on the bed and pushed Lian Shun away as he leaned over.

“Tell me, how did Su Liang pursue you?” Lian Shun asked with great interest.

“I don’t want to say.” Gu Ling shook his head.

“Is it that you don’t like Su Liang or you just want to be alone?” Lian Shun asked.

Gu Ling didn’t answer.

Lian Shun’s expression was clear, “I see, it’s not that you don’t like her, it’s just that you’re used to being alone and don’t want to change, right?”

Gu Ling nodded slightly, “Yes.” There was no choice, according to Su Liang’s planned plot, he could only act it this way.

“Wrong! Totally wrong!” Lian Shun sat cross-legged, looking serious, “Gu Xiaoling, just because you’re used to being alone, it doesn’t mean it’s right and good!”

“I don’t need others to tell me what’s right and what’s good.” Gu Ling said.

“I’m not just anyone, I’m your friend you’ve known since you were little, you’ve eaten my oranges, and I’ve been beaten up for you!” Lian Shun snorted lightly.

Gu Ling: .

“To be serious. If you really don’t like Su Xiaoliang, let it be, although I think it’s impossible, but you are just too unsociable, this really isn’t good.” Lian Shun frowned, “In the past, your home was a mess, causing you not to interact with others, but that’s all gone by; now you’re alone without any meddling elders, how free you are! You can make any kind of friends you want, and if you want to abduct me back home as your brother, no one would hang you on a tree and beat you!”

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

Lian Shun laughed out loud, “You can think about it, I’m willing!”

Gu Ling was silent, and Lian Shun cleared his throat, “I was just making an analogy. You’re not used to interacting with people? I’ll change your habits!”

“No need.” Just as Gu Ling finished speaking, he picked Lian Shun up horizontally, threw him out the door, and then threw his shoes out too.

“Hey, my letter!” Lian Shun had just started speaking when the letter came out through the door gap.

Lian Shun put on his shoes, took the letter out and stuffed it into his bosom, knocked on the door again, “I’ll ask Uncle Xing for permission to go to Liang Country with you! Gu Xiaoling, see you tomorrow!”

Gu Ling finished his letter to Su Liang and handed it to Lin Boyan. By the time he returned to his room and lay down, it was almost midnight.

The wind howled outside the window, and Gu Ling took out the hand-string Su Liang had given him from his arms, put it on his wrist, played with the beads on it, closed his eyes and muttered to himself, “I’m not used to being alone anymore... Su Xiaoliang, you have to take responsibility for me...”

The next day, before Gu Ling and his party set off, Qi Jun received many letters. There were those written by the Lin Family Brothers to their family, one from Lin Boyan to Su Liang, and one from Lian Shun to Su Liang.

Qi Jun planned to stay in Xuanbei City for the New Year with his father, so he arranged for someone else to go back to the capital and deliver the letters.

Lian Shun indeed went to find Xing Ji, saying he wanted to go to Liang Country with Gu Ling, and his reason was that he was a southern kid and wanted to see the snow in Liang Country...

Xing Ji actually wanted to leave Lin Bojun behind and let Lian Shun go. He thought it was not quite prudent for the emperor to send both of Lin Shuzhi’s sons to Liang Country together.

Xing Ji didn’t think anything would go wrong on their journey, but one couldn’t help but worry about the unexpected.

However, Lin Bojun was sent to Liang Country by the Imperial Edict, and he was just passing through Xuanbei City. Xing Ji had no authority to keep him here, but he could send Lian Shun along with him.

In Xing Ji's view, Lin Boyan and Gu Ling were not sociable people. Although Lin Bojun was outgoing, he was too upright. Lian Shun, who was good at dealing with various situations and getting along with others, would provide a more stable travel companion.

So, when it was time to set off, Lian Shun carried his luggage and climbed into Gu Ling's carriage. With one hand lifting the carriage curtain and the other arm around Gu Ling, he said goodbye to Xing Ji.

Seeing this scene, Xing Ji thought it was a good arrangement. He hoped Lian Shun's enthusiasm would balance out Gu Ling's coldness.

"Don't worry, Marquis. King Yue of Liang Country is the grandfather of Marquis Chang Xin, and he won't make things difficult for them," Che Yun said, standing next to Xing Ji.

Xing Ji shook his head, "Perhaps that's where the trouble lies. When Situ Xie asked the emperor to pardon Gu Ling, he might not have cared about his grandson but had ulterior motives."

"Marquis Chang Xin wouldn't side with the Liang royal family, would he?" Che Yun frowned.

"Of course not," Xing Ji sighed slightly, "but I'm afraid some people will not leave him be. By the way, is there any news about your younger brother?"

Che Yun's eyes dimmed, "No. There's something I'd like to ask for your help with."

Xing Ji nodded, "Just speak your mind."

"My parents are in poor health. The harsh winters in the north are getting harder for them to bear as they age, and staying in this sad place never allows them to move forward. I won't give up looking for my brother, but I'm afraid it will take too long, and my parents may not hold on. Recently, I've been hearing Lian Shun talk about how warm and comfortable the winters are in the south, and I'd like to take my parents to the south for a change of environment. I can resign from my military duties to go home, but I fear they might not agree to move. If I were to receive an imperial order to relocate to a southern post in the army, perhaps I could persuade my parents to go with me."

Upon hearing this, Xing Ji patted Che Yun's shoulder, "You are very filial. Although I wanted to groom you as my successor, it's good for you to go to the south. With the alliance between Qian Liang and Liang Country, Yin Country might become restless again, and they need young and strong generals like you there. I will send a request to the emperor today, and I believe he will agree."

"Thank you, Marquis!" Che Yun bowed in gratitude, and Xing Ji helped him up.

When Su Liang received the letter from Xuanbei City, she was helping Yang Yu try on wedding dresses.

“Wow! So beautiful!” Lin Xueqing entered and exclaimed as she approached Yang Yu. She handed the letter to Su Liang, “Sister Su, my brother sent you a letter, and so did Master Lin!”

Su Liang took the letter and stood up to leave, but was stopped by Lin Xueqing, “Sister Su, read it here and let me see my brother’s letter later. I’m afraid he’s only going to tell good news and not bad. It’s so cold in the north, and I’m worried he’ll get sick!”

Su Liang thought there must be one letter written by Gu Ling in the two, probably Lin Boyan’s letter, and she couldn’t let Lin Xueqing see it.

“I’ll get scissors to open the letter.” After saying so, Su Liang went to her room, while Yang Yu and Lin Xueqing stayed in the study room.

After closing the door, Su Liang opened Lin Boyan’s letter, which contained two pieces of paper. One was filled with writing, and the other had only four characters on it.

Two different handwriting styles.

One was written by Lin Boyan, with four characters, “Be well, don’t worry.” It was perfect to show Lin Xueqing later.

The other letter, filled with words, was from Gu Ling, describing the scenery he saw on the way, what he usually ate, and how he confessed to the Lin family brothers when they found out. Lin Boyan came down with a cold, but it was nothing serious. Lian Shun claimed to be his best friend, but he was just being self-conceited.

Su Liang chuckled, “My best friend is you. ”

After hiding Gu Ling’s letter, Su Liang opened Lian Shun’s. It described how he met Gu Ling when they were young, including when his grandfather beat him.

“Su Xiaoliang, don’t worry! I’m going to Liang Country with Gu Xiaoling, and I’ll train him well! By the time he returns to the capital city, he won’t reject you anymore! Aren’t you moved? Who is your best friend, after all, if not me?” Su Liang couldn’t help but smile, “My best friend is Gu Xiaoling.”

Already in Liang Country and riding a horse in the cold wind after losing a chess game to Gu Ling, Lian Shun sneezed twice and muttered to himself, “Su Xiaoliang must have received the letter by now. She must be very touched and thinking of me..”

Chapter 272:272. Going to Liang Country

The day after receiving the letter from Gu Ling, Su Liang went to the Lin family again to check the pulse of her two elder sisters-in-law, and after that, Lin Shuzhi invited her to play a game of chess.

“Master, I’m not good at chess, but someone else is very good at it,” Su Liang said.

Lin Shuzhi sighed slightly while setting up the chess pieces Su Liang had sent him in the previous days, “I remember inviting that someone to play chess several times last year when I met him in the academy, but he always found excuses to refuse.”

Su Liang chuckled softly, "He was afraid that you would find out his chess skills were not right."

Upon starting the game, Su Liang lost quickly as expected.

Seeing that Su Liang didn't seem very interested, Lin Shuzhi shook his head and said, "Never mind, when he comes back, I must challenge him."

Su Liang nodded, "I bet you'll win, Master. They should be getting close to the capital of Liang Country."

"I've never been there; it is said that the imperial palace of Liang Country is built against the mountains, magnificent and grand. I must go and see for myself at some point," Lin Shuzhi said.

Just as Su Liang was about to say she wanted to see it too, the voice of Ren Dong came from outside the door, "Master, His Majesty orders you to enter the palace immediately."

Upon hearing this, Lin Shuzhi furrowed his brows. After previous events, even though he could see that Duanmu Yi treated Su Liang fairly leniently, he still didn't like to deal with the Royal Family deep down.

Su Liang got up, picked up the cloak nearby, "Master, don't worry, perhaps some high-ranking person is not well due to the recent cold weather. I have to go now."

Ren Dong said that the person who had delivered the oral decree had already returned to the palace without mentioning the reason.

Su Liang asked Ren Dong to return home, but she still insisted on accompanying Su Liang to the entrance of the palace and watched her enter alone.

When she met Duanmu Yi, two people looking travel-worn were also present. Both were exceedingly young with deeply chiseled features, a man and a woman, which made Su Liang think of the guards Situ Xie brought when he visited last time.

"These two are messengers sent by the King of Yue from Liang Country,"

Duanmu Yi said. "Emperor Liang has contracted a strange disease, and the Imperial Physicians are helpless. The King of Yue has sent people to ask you to go to Liang Country."

Su Liang hesitated for a moment and then respectfully said, "This humble servant is young and inexperienced, I'm afraid I cannot shoulder such an important responsibility."

In fact, Su Liang was somewhat suspicious at this moment. Was Situ Xie really asking her to go to Liang Country to treat the secret son of the emperor? Or were there other intentions behind it? Didn't these two people meet Gu Ling's group on the road?

The woman among the messengers opened her mouth, introducing herself as Gui Yue, "Doctor Su is too modest. His Highness the King of Yue said that as long as Doctor Su can cure the Emperor, you can name any condition."

Su Liang looked at Duanmu Yi, who sighed and said, "You have come a long way for the sake of Emperor Liang's health. If I don't let Doctor Su go, I would indeed be too unkind. Both of you can rest for a while, and I will talk to Doctor Su later."



After someone invited the Gui siblings out, only Duanmu Yi and Su Liang were left. Su Liang then asked, “Didn’t they meet with Marquis Chang Xin on the way?”

Duanmu Yi snorted lightly, “You really think about Gu Ling all the time.”

Su Liang smiled awkwardly. But she felt weird in her heart. Was Duanmu Yi really intending to let her go to Liang Country?

“They said they didn’t know about Marquis Chang Xin going to Liang Country, and they didn’t meet him, as they rushed day and night,” Duanmu Yi answered Su Liang’s question.

Su Liang nodded. It was indeed possible.

“Are you sure they were sent by King Yue?” Su Liang asked.

Duanmu Yi nodded, “They brought the King of Yue’s handwritten letter and token.”

“Then, Your Majesty’s intention is...” Su Liang felt if Duanmu Yi really let her go, there must be another purpose.

As expected, Duanmu Yi explained, “There was a master of machines named Mu in the past dynasty. It is said that before he died, he left a book of machine drawings, which contained war chariots and many large weapons using machine techniques. Over the years, the three countries have been searching for the descendants of the Mu family. Recently, I received news that the descendants of the Mu family have entered the service of the King of Liang.”

Su Liang subconsciously asked, “Is the news reliable?” Then quickly added,

“Your Majesty, I am not doubting your word, it was just a casual question.

Please forgive me.”

Duanmu Yi shook his head, “No offense taken. The news is trustworthy.”

With that, Su Liang suspected that there must be spies planted by Duanmu Yi around the royal family of Liang Country or Situ Xie. And this was quite normal.

At the same time, Su Liang guessed what Duanmu Yi wanted her to do in Liang Country.

“The journey is long and cold. I should have refused and not let you go to Liang

Country. But that Mechanism Map is extremely important. Even if Qian Country doesn’t get it, we absolutely cannot let Liang or Yin Country obtain and create it!” Duanmu Yi’s eyes narrowed slightly, “Do you understand my meaning?”

Su Liang nodded, “Your servant understands.” The so-called cooperation between countries is only temporary and superficial, while the inherent hostility exists until the “life and death” situation is resolved.

“When you go to Liang Country, get rid of the descendant of Mu Family, and bring the Mechanism Map back.” Duanmu Yi’s eyes were deep, “For this matter, I can’t think of anyone more suitable than you! Don’t disappoint me! Bring Ren

Dong with you and if necessary, ask Marquis Chang Xin for help.”

Su Liang nodded, then frowned, “If anything goes wrong with such an important thing, King Yue will surely find out soon. I’m worried that it will be difficult to escape after getting hold of it.” She was thinking about the Lin Family Brothers. If it were just her and Gu Ling, it wouldn’t be difficult to leave after stealing the treasure, but quite a few people from Qian Country would be going openly.

“I believe you will find a way.” Duanmu Yi smiled.

Su Liang: ...should she be moved by Duanmu Yi’s trust in her?

For both personal and public reasons, Su Liang would not refuse this task. The ultimate unification of the world cannot be controlled by her. But she was from Qian Country and hoped that in the end, Qian Country would be the one to unify the world.

After taking on the secret mission, Su Liang took the opportunity to obtain some precious royal medicine from Duanmu Yi.

And the departure date was tomorrow.

Su Liang left the palace with Ren Dong and returned home.

Nian Jincheng and Yang Yu were waiting for Su Liang here to discuss the arrangements for inviting guests to the wedding.

“Did the emperor have any issues when he summoned you?” Nian Jincheng asked as soon as he saw Su Liang.

Su Liang removed her cloak, which Ren Dong took, and then sat down, nodding, “Yes, there was a matter.”

Yang Yu’s expression changed slightly, “What happened now?”

Su Liang smiled, “Don’t worry. It’s a good thing. My wish can be fulfilled now.”

Upon hearing this, Nian Jincheng’s face lit up with joy, “Has the emperor granted your marriage to Gu Ling? That’s great!”

“Is it true?” Yang Yu also became happy, “Why is it so sudden?”

Su Liang rubbed her forehead, “Stop it! You two are getting married, and don’t focus on me. I don’t want to get married, marrying Gu Ling is not my wish. Besides, why would the emperor grant our marriage for no reason?” Nian Jincheng frowned, “Then what is it?”

Su Liang’s lips curled up slightly, “I can go to Liang Country to see snow.” Both Nian Jincheng and Yang Yu were speechless.

When they learned that Emperor Liang had contracted a strange disease and King Yue had sent for Su Liang to treat it, Yang Yu couldn’t help but worry, “What if you can’t cure it? What if you go there and he dies? Will they blame you? Could it be that King Yue is trying to lure you there to kill you?”

“Not likely. At this time of year, Liang Country won’t do anything to provoke war.” Su Liang shook her head. The weather was too cold, and fighting in the north would be very disadvantageous to Liang Country.

“How could the emperor agree? Did Liang Country give any unbelievable benefits?” Yang Yu wondered.

Su Liang nodded, “Almost. However, it’s not that they offered benefits, but the emperor wants me to get them myself.”

About the descendants of the Mu Family and the Mechanism Map, Su Liang briefly told Nian Jincheng and Yang Yu, only to find out that the two of them already knew about the Mu Family, and only Su Liang had just heard about it today. Surprisingly, even Nian Jincheng knew that the Royal Family had been secretly searching for the descendants of the Mu Family.

“Such an important matter, and only you are going alone? It’s too dangerous.” Yang Yu became more worried when she learned the truth.

“Many people don’t necessarily facilitate things well, especially those that shouldn’t be known to others.” Su Liang said, “Besides, Gu Ling is there. I’ll travel faster than anyone else, and when I arrive, Gu Ling will certainly still be in Liang Country. The emperor knows his strength and wants us to work together.”

From this incident, it’s clear that Duanmu Yi didn’t prioritize the matter of “splitting up Su Liang and Gu Ling” before Qian Country’s interests. In other words, Duanmu Yi was very skeptical about the so-called omen of the heavens.

“The only problem is...” Su Liang sighed deeply.

Nian Jincheng and Yang Yu both looked at her, curious about the issue. Then they heard Su Liang say, “I won’t be able to drink at your wedding.”

Nian Jincheng sighed, “It’s a pity that you and Aling won’t be there, but the important matter must be addressed.”

Yang Yu spoke at the same time, “It’s simple, we’ll get married again next year!”

Nian Jincheng held his forehead, “Xiaoyu, don’t push it. We can still get married without them.”

Yang Yu countered, “Is Gu Ling not your best friend?”

Nian Jincheng shook his head, “He doesn’t have to be.”

Yang Yu smiled lightly, “But Su Liang is the most important person to me. How can we get married without her there?”

Nian Jincheng looked at Su Liang, waiting for her to say something.

Su Liang held Yang Yu’s hand, “Don’t delay the wedding anymore, lest things change. Don’t you want to live together openly? It’s so cold, it’s warmer to sleep together.”

Nian Jincheng coughed lightly, “That’s true. You and Aling can do the same in

Liang Country, where it's cold."

Su Liang snorted, "I'm helping you, think before you speak."

Nian Jincheng's expression became serious, "You're right about everything."

"Old Master Qin is the mediator for the wedding. At that time, please invite Qin Family, Lin Family, Xing Family, and Wan Family to the wedding. Xueqing will be with you." Su Liang said to Yang Yu, "You two should get married and live

together sooner so that I can rest assured when I am away."

"All right, then." Yang Yu sighed, "That's the only way."

Yang Yu prepared luggage for Su Liang, and in the end, they brought a large box filled with thick clothes and precious silver fox cloak.

Su Liang only picked out two, "This time I need to ride on horseback, and it will be inconvenient to carry too many things."

"It's too hard." Yang Yu was very concerned about Su Liang. Why was it so difficult for her to live a peaceful and leisurely life?

Nian Jincheng said this was called 'more work for the capable', and Yang Yu pinched him a few times, telling him to shut up.

In the afternoon, Su Liang went to say goodbye to Lin Shuzhi. Lin Shuzhi was also somewhat worried, but he figured as long as Su Liang could safely reach her destination and meet up with Gu Ling, everything would be fine.

"Master, don't worry. Aling and I will definitely bring both elder brothers back safely." Su Liang told Lin Shuzhi.

Lin Shuzhi shook his head, "All of you must come back safely. If you encounter any problems, communicate in time and cooperate."

As it happened, Lin Family members were sending letters to Xuanbei City, so Su Liang could help deliver them.

Su Liang went to Marquis Zhong Xin's mansion again, took the letters from Xing Family to Xing Ji, and also the letters from Qi Yan to his father and younger brother.

In the evening, Wan Hui brought Zhengzheng to see Su Liang off.

"This is a gift for Aunt and Uncle Ning." Zhengzheng held a delicate box up to Su Liang.

Su Liang opened it, and inside were a pair of ink jade pendants shaped like teardrops of water.

Wan Hui smiled, saying that the Wan Family had just obtained them recently.

"This one is for Aunt, and this one is for Uncle Ning!" Zhengzheng pointed with her little hand, "Is Aunt going to Liang Country? Is Uncle Ning in Liang Country?"

Wan Hui sighed lightly, but Su Liang nodded, "Perhaps he is. If I see him, I will give it to him."

Zhengzheng nodded happily, "Definitely!"

After Wan Hui and Zhengzheng left, Su Liang put the two jade pendants into the little rabbit purse, planning to give one to Gu Ling when she arrived in Liang Country.

No words were exchanged through the night.

Early the next morning, Su Liang got up and pushed open the window. A cold wind blew into her face, and the ground outside was white. At first, she thought frost had fallen, but later realized that it had snowed.

The first snow of the capital didn't fall heavily, with only a thin layer of snow on the ground and snowflakes swirling in the wind.

Situ Xie had sent a brother and sister, named Gui Yue and Gui Xiang, who were waiting for Su Liang outside the Su Mansion early in the morning.

After Su Liang and Ren Dong finished their breakfast, packed up and prepared to set out, Xing Yusheng and Lin Xueqing came to see them off.

As soon as Lin Xueqing learned that Su Liang was going away, she hurried to Huguo Temple to ask for a Safety Amulet for her.

Su Liang accepted it and put it in her purse, promising Lin Xueqing that she would not let the Safety Amulet leave her side.

Duanmu Chen sent Chang'an to give Su Liang a dagger, saying it was for self-defense.

Su Liang already had a dagger, but she suspected that Duanmu Chen had put a letter for her in the sheath, so she accepted it without opening it in front of others.

As the pedestrians on the street chattered, Su Liang and her party of four rode their horses and walked towards the City gate.

Sitting in the Tea House, Duanmu Chen, holding a cup of warm tea, looked back at Chang'an who entered the door, and then looked outside, no longer able to see Su Liang's figure.

"Master, Su Liang accepted the dagger," Chang'an said.

Duanmu Chen put down his teacup, "Hmm."

"It's freezing cold, and Su Liang is working so hard," Chang'an sighed.

"For her, it's nothing," Duanmu Chen shook his head. He hoped the Qian royal family would get the Mechanism Map, but he didn't want Su Liang to leave the capital for so long. Since his return to the capital from Bei'an County last year, Duanmu Chen had clearly understood that at least half of the credit for his current achievements should be attributed to Su Liang. He didn't want Su Liang to have an accident.

"I wonder if Su Liang can return before the New Year. Anyway, once she gets to Liang Country and sees Marquis Chang Xin, she should be very happy," said Chang'an.

Duanmu Chen snorted, "Of course. I've never seen her be so enthusiastic about anyone else."

“Maybe by the time they return from Liang Country, Marquis Chang Xin will have fallen in love with Su Liang!” Chang’an said.

Duanmu Chen’s tone was gloomy, “Let’s just hope they can all return safely first..”

Chapter 273: Come chase me.

Su Liang guessed correctly; Duanmu Chen had indeed placed a note inside the dagger sheath.

However, there was no specific information on the note, only two words: “Take care.”

For a time, Su Liang felt that Duanmu Chen seemed to treat her as a friend. Since it was not convenient for him to say goodbye in person, he used this way to remind her.

No matter how sincere he was, Su Liang appreciated it. Compared to the suspicious Duanmu Yi, her relationship with Duanmu Chen was quite friendly, and their cooperation had been relatively smooth all along.

When Su Liang was thinking about getting the Mechanism Map to help Qian Country unify the world, she had Duanmu Chen in mind for taking power.

Leaving the capital city, the snow had stopped not long after, but traveling against the wind was still cold.

Su Liang was well-prepared, having windproof and warm pads tied around her joints. This was made overnight by someone found by Yang Yu after she talked to him, and it included Ren Dong’s contribution.

Those trained in martial arts are not all the same, and Su Liang started practicing martial arts a bit late, unlike Gu Ling who had trained since childhood. Su Liang always paid great attention to her health, and after conditioning, her original cold-sensitive constitution had improved, but she still felt some discomfort during her monthly cycle occasionally.

Gui Yue and Gui Xiang, brother and sister, grew up in the ice and snow, so they were not afraid of the cold, and it was obvious when comparing the thickness of their clothes with Su Liang.

Gui Yue was very talkative, but Gui Xiang hardly spoke at all, only nodding, shaking his head, or staying silent when Su Liang talked to him.

The siblings’ father was the captain of the guards of the Yue Prince Mansion, so they grew up in the mansion and naturally became Situ Xie’s guards.

During a break, Gui Yue watched Su Liang taking off her warm pads and said with a smile, “I didn’t expect Su Divine Doctor, with such high martial arts skills, to be afraid of the cold. Actually, once you get used to it, it’s fine.”

Su Liang thought inwardly: once she got used to it, she could wait for old age rheumatism.

“I always hear you call me Su Divine Doctor which puts a lot of pressure on me, as I am not that divine,” Su Liang smiled.

Gui Yue laughed heartily, “Then I’ll call you Miss Su. But in my heart, Miss Su is the Divine Doctor. I heard that when General Peng Qian was seriously injured and on the verge of death, it was

Miss Su who saved him. General Peng Qian had been ill for many years, and after meeting Miss Su in Qian Country, he has been much better now.”

The matter of treating Peng Qian was not a secret, and Su Liang had reported it to Duanmu Yi early on. Hearing Gui Yue mention it, she took advantage of the situation to ask about Peng’s situation.

Ren Dong watched Su Liang and Gui Yue seemingly having a lively conversation, knowing that it was only superficial. Su Liang was not a naturally outgoing person and would not easily trust the Gui siblings. Ren Dong had been secretly observing their every action, and at the same time noticed that Gui Xiang had been silently watching them all along.

As for the matter of eating during the journey, the Gui siblings were very accommodating, but Su Liang could keep up with their pace, not wanting to eat cold and hard cakes every day. So she said that within Qian Country’s territory, she would be responsible for feeding the four of them.

At first, Gui Yue was worried about the delay, but later found that it didn’t make a big difference. In her eyes, although Su Liang was very afraid of the cold, she seemed to be good at everything, including cooking a pot of steaming, delicious soup in the harsh outdoor conditions.

It didn’t affect the traveling speed, and they could eat better. As Gui siblings considered Su Liang their important guest and person to invite to Liang Country, they naturally accepted her arrangement.

They got along peacefully along the way, even appearing harmonious on the surface. Because of their speed, they arrived in Xuanbei City in just a few days.

Su Liang told Gui Yue in advance that they would rest in Xuanbei City for a day.

When the Gui siblings passed through Xuanbei City on their way here, they had declared themselves as envoys sent by the King Yue to meet Xing Ji, but did not disclose that they had come to invite Su Liang. After seeing Situ Xie’s token, Xing Ji let them go.

After the heavy snow, the weather cleared up, and Xuanbei City was draped in a silvery white, a breathtaking sight.

As Su Liang rode into the city, someone went to report to Xing Ji.

Upon learning that Su Liang had arrived, Qi Jun was overjoyed and rushed out to greet her. Seeing her familiar figure on horseback from afar, he waved at her, “Master!”

As they got closer, Su Liang got off her horse, removed her hood, and walked over with a smile, “Your brother has written a letter for you.”

Before her words fell, Ren Dong had already picked out the letter from Qi Yan to Qi Jun from Su Liang’s medicine box and handed it over.

“Thank you.” Qi Jun took it and nodded to Ren Dong with a smile.

“Qi Jun, please attend to these two guests from Liang Country and prepare hot water, good food, and drinks,” Su Liang ordered.

Qi Jun saw Gui Yue and Gui Xiang appear together, guessing that Su Liang was probably going to Liang Country. When the two people came initially, he had seen them.

“Ren Dong, you follow Qi Jun and arrange for the two guests to rest. After they are settled, have him take you to the courtyard where I stayed in the General Mansion before, I will stay there again,” Su Liang said.

Qi Jun and Ren Dong responded simultaneously, then frowned slightly. Qi Jun walked to Su Liang’s side, lowered his voice, and said, “Master, that courtyard has been occupied by someone else.”

Su Liang was taken aback, “Who took it?”

Qi Jun spoke in a faint tone, “Marquis Chang Xin’s beautiful Gu. He liked the cedar in that courtyard and chose it as his residence, staying there for one night. When I found out, I didn’t feel it was appropriate to say anything.”

Su Liang’s lips curled slightly, “I really have a good fate with Miss Gu! What’s the big deal about this? If he ever lived there, I’m definitely staying there too!”

Qi Jun nodded silently, turned around, pointed Ren Dong in a direction, led Su Liang’s horse, and silently left with them...

“Xiaoliang!” Xing Ji strode over, “You’ve lost weight again!”

Su Liang chuckled lightly, “Uncle Xing, you’ve lost weight too.”

Xing Ji coughed lightly, “I told Marquis Chang Xin that you’re my adopted daughter. Are you willing to give me some face and acknowledge it?”

Recalling the past, Su Liang took a step back upon hearing this.

Xing Ji rubbed his forehead, “If you don’t want to, forget it. Pretend I never said it.”

But then, he saw Su Liang bow down, “Adoptive father.”

Xing Ji’s expression was delighted, “Good, good! I’ve prepared a meeting gift for you, and I’ve been waiting for you to call me adoptive father! Come inside with me, it’s so cold outside. Have you been freezing on your journey here? I’ll have someone make some ginger soup for you!”

“I’m fine.” Su Liang followed Xing Ji into the military camp. “It’s not as comfortable as being at home, but it’s still bearable.”

Xing Ji couldn’t help but complain about his pampered son.

Su Liang nodded, “I’ll pass the message on to the crown prince.”

“From now on, you’ll have to call him your adoptive brother, or simply big brother.” Xing Ji said with a smile.

“No way.” Su Liang refused, “I already have a big brother.”

Xing Ji knew Su Liang was talking about Lin Boyan, “All right, it’s indeed not suitable for you to call Yu Sheng big brother. I’ll ask him later if he’s willing to call you sister.”

Su Liang nodded solemnly, “I can do that.”

Xing Ji burst out laughing, feeling joyful and carefree.

Upon learning the reason why the Emperor sent Su Liang to Liang Country,



Xing Ji frowned, "He entrusted such an important task to you alone?" Su Liang shook her head, "There's also Miss Gu."

Xing Ji coughed lightly, "Are you really taking a fancy for that guy?"

Su Liang nodded, "For real."

"Good taste." Xing Ji approved, "Indeed, you can't find anyone better looking than Gu Ling. Do you know about his strength?"

"The emperor said that he repelled Yan Shiqi, the owner of Yanyun Building, with a single palm." Su Liang replied.

Xing Ji looked surprised, "So powerful? No wonder he can keep himself out of Gu Family's affairs."

"Do you think he's loyal to Qian Country, adoptive father?" Su Liang asked.

As soon as he heard the words "adoptive father," Xing Ji couldn't help but smile, "We'll have to observe this matter further." After all, he didn't know much about Gu Ling.

Xing Ji reminded Su Liang to be extremely cautious when dealing with Situ Xie in Liang Country, "He has a deep and cunning mind, not a good person. Don't believe what he says too easily."

Upon hearing this, Su Liang asked Xing Ji if he had ever dealt with Situ Xie. Xing Ji shook his head, "My father had dealings with him and left those words." "I'll be careful." Su Liang nodded.

"Don't risk your life for anything. If you can't find the Mechanism Map, the emperor won't blame you too much. He'll make other arrangements." Xing Ji said sternly to Su Liang, "Do your best under the premise of ensuring your own safety, understand?"

Su Liang obediently nodded, "All right."

After having dinner with Xing Ji, Su Liang left and returned to the General Mansion to rest.

On the way, Su Liang met Che Yun, who told her that Xing Ji had already submitted a memorial to the emperor, asking for a transfer to the south.

"That's great. My uncle and aunt will have better health in the south." Su Liang smiled, "If the emperor doesn't approve this time, I'll plead for your case when I return to the capital after finishing my business."

Che Yun cupped his hands in gratitude, "Thank you so much!"

"Since I'm here, I should visit my uncle and aunt to check on their health." Su Liang planned to go to the Che family for a follow-up consultation for Che father and Che mother.

Che Yun was very happy and took Su Liang to his home. But when it came to his parents' health, he couldn't help but sigh.

When Su Liang saw Che father and Che mother, she found that their health had worsened since their last meeting. Che father was about the same age as Xing Ji, with half of his hair already white. Che mother was a bit dazed, and her reaction to Su Liang's conversation was slow.

After taking their pulse, Su Liang prescribed some medicine and administered acupuncture to Che mother.

As Che Yun escorted Su Liang out, she advised him not to follow, and suggested, "If you have a girl you like, marry early. If there's a grandchild, your uncle and aunt might improve a lot."

Che Yun shook his head with a wry smile, "This place is not like the capital city, I don't have any girl that I like here."

It was not easy for Che Yun to find a suitable partner in Xuanbei City, which had few residents.

"I heard that you like Marquis Chang Xin?" Che Yun asked Su Liang.

Su Liang nodded, "Yes, I am pursuing him."

Che Yun smiled and nodded, "You are a good match, and when you go to Liang Country, you'll see him again."

"I am looking forward to it." Su Liang turned and waved her hand, "I'm leaving."

Che Yun watched Su Liang's figure disappear into the vast white world and his eyes turned cold the moment he entered the door, "Gu Ling..."

When Su Liang returned to the General's Mansion, Ren Dong had already prepared hot water. The letter for Xing Ji had also been sent.

Finally able to take a hot bath after days of traveling, Su Liang was so comfortable that she almost fell asleep.

At night, Qi Jun came over just as Ren Dong left Su Liang's room.

"Has the master gone to sleep?" Qi Jun asked softly.

Ren Dong shook his head, "What's the matter?"

"I want to go to Liang Country with the master, but the Marquis won't let me." Qi Jun sighed. He knew that his father would stop him, so he went directly to Xing Ji to follow Su Liang to Liang Country, but Xing Ji didn't agree either.

Qi Jun entered the room after hearing Su Liang's voice.

After listening, Su Liang smiled and said, "You stay here and accompany your father, how is his health? Should I check his pulse again?"

Qi Jun shook his head, "My father is fine now. Master should rest early."

Alone in the familiar room she knew, Su Liang recalled that Gu Ling had stayed there as well before, though the bedding had been changed since then.

Su Liang heard from Xing Ji that although Gu Ling and others were traveling slowly, they should have arrived in Liang Country's capital by now. It would take her another seven or eight days to get there if she traveled day and night from Xuanbei City.

Before going to sleep, Su Liang wondered whether that person would call Situ Xie his grandfather when he met him...

Early the next morning, Su Liang and the others left Xuanbei City and continued their journey.

Che Yun accompanied Xing Ji on the city wall, watching them leave in the distance. He mentioned Su Liang's visit to his family to treat his parents' illnesses and expressed his gratitude towards her.

"Xiaoliang has always been like that, treating the people she approves of very well," Xing Ji said with a smile. "Gu Ling is not indifferent to Xiaoliang, it's just his personality that he's not used to getting close to people. I hope that their relationship can improve when they return from Liang Country."

Che Yun's eyes narrowed, and he nodded, "That would be the best."

Meanwhile, Gu Ling's party, delayed by the snowstorm on the road, had just arrived in Liang Country's capital, Yao City.

Upon learning that King Yue's grandson and the world-famous beauty Gu Ling had arrived, the Yao City residents came out of their homes, curious to see what the half-Liang royal blood beauty Gu Ling looked like.

Gu Ling had been here when he was a child, and the people who had met him back then still marveled at the ethereal young master.

After the team entered the city, they stopped. Lin Bojun, sitting on his horse, looked at Situ Xie entering his line of sight. "Marauis Gu. King Yue is here."

Everyone knows Situ Xie's status in Liang Country. First, he went to Qian

Country in person and bowed publicly to beg Duanmu Yi for Gu Ling's pardon. Now he has come to the city gate to greet his grandson, which shows the importance he attaches to Gu Ling.

Under everyone's gaze, Situ Xie got off his horse and walked to Gu Ling's carriage, calling out, "Ling'er is here, it's your grandfather."

The curtain of the carriage swayed gently in the wind, and after a while, no one came out, making the atmosphere a bit awkward.

Lin Bojun gazed into the distance and saw the Liang Country's Imperial Palace built against the mountains. The terrain was very high, just as his father had described, magnificent and spectacular.

"Could it be that the beautiful Gu fell asleep?" The onlookers whispered to each other.

Situ Xie called out again, and suddenly the curtain was lifted, revealing a face.

"Is this the famous Gu beauty? She's not as beautiful as the rumors say!" someone muttered quietly.

Situ Xie was taken aback, "This is .

Lian Shun smiled at Situ Xie, "Your Highness King Yue, I am surnamed Lian, I am Gu Ling's best friend."

"The son of the Lin family from Jiaye City in Qian Country?" Situ Xie smiled, "Nice to meet you. Is Ling'er unwell?"

"Not really, it's just that he can't stand the cold in Liang Country, and he would get rashes when exposed to the wind. So it's not convenient for him to show his face outside." Lian Shun gave an impression of Gu Ling's "beauty too fragile for the wind" in a few words.

Situ Xie chuckled, "So that's how it is. Let's go to the post house first."

After saying that, Situ Xie greeted the Lin family brothers, and the team moved again, heading towards the post house.

The common people of Liang Country had not seen Gu Ling's true face, and many thought he was too arrogant and didn't know the manners. Even if he couldn't face the wind, he didn't say a word or call out 'grandfather' when the elder came in person.

In the post house, Situ Xie dismissed the servants and wanted to talk to Gu Ling alone.

With only the two of them left, Situ Xie looked at Gu Ling's frosty beautiful face, and his expression was melancholy, "You've grown up, looking a lot like your mother."

Gu Ling remained silent.

"When the Gu family met with disaster, I learned that you were still alive, so your grandfather has been looking for you in secret." Situ Xie sighed deeply, "I wanted to find you first and ask you if you wanted to stay in Liang Country, so I didn't go to Qian Country to ask Emperor Qian for your pardon." "Thank you." Gu Ling's expression was indifferent.

Situ Xie breathed a sigh of relief, "Why thank me? It's something your grandfather should do for you. Ling'er, if you have any dissatisfaction with your grandfather, you must speak up. Your grandfather doesn't want there to be any misunderstandings between us."

Gu Ling shook his head slightly, "There's no misunderstanding."

Situ Xie smiled, "Then what are your plans with Miss Su Liang? I heard she's pursuing you. When do you plan to marry her?"

"I have no plans." Gu Ling's face was calm.

"You young people want to play, just play well. But be careful, don't let

Emperor Qian know about those past things, otherwise, he won't spare you." Situ Xie's smile was gentle, "Whatever Emperor Qian asked you to do, let's talk about it later. Grandfather has good news to tell you."

Gu Ling picked up the teacup and took a sip, it was her mother's favorite tea, called Thousand Mountain Snow, one of the few famous teas in Liang Country. Situ Xie waited for Gu Ling to put down the teacup before speaking again, "Su

Liang will be coming soon too."

Gu Ling's expression remained unchanged, "What is she coming for?"

"The Emperor has come down with a strange illness that the Imperial Physicians can't cure, so your grandfather sent someone to invite Su Liang, and I presume Emperor Qian won't refuse." Situ Xie said.

Gu Ling spoke once more to dismiss the guest, "I'm tired."

Situ Xie stood up, "Then you should have a good rest first. Later, your grandfather will send someone to pick you up and take you to stay at the house in the courtyard that Ning'er used to live in before she got married. It has been kept all this time."

Gu Ling nodded, and Situ Xie left.

With the door closed and only Gu Ling left, his lips hooked up in a shallow curve, he whispered barely audible, "Come chase me...."

Chapter 274: 274. Capricious Miss Gu

The Lin Family Brothers and Lian Shun were happy after the initial surprise of hearing from Gu Ling that Su Liang was on her way to the capital city of Liang Country.

"Hold on!" Lian Shun suddenly frowned, "Is King Yue implying that he has already sent people to invite Su Liang, but the Emperor might not really let her come, right?"

Gu Ling's expression was indifferent, "He will."

Nian Jincheng seemed thoughtful, "As long as the 'reward' offered by King Yue is high enough."

"Since it's Emperor Liang's order, the reward will naturally not be low." Lian Shun happily clapped his hands upon hearing both Gu Ling and Nian Jincheng believe Su Liang would come, "Great! Once Su Xiaoliang arrives, I can finally witness how she pursues Gu Xiaoling! Hahaha!"

"Are you really going to live in Prince Masion?" Nian Jincheng asked Gu Ling.

Lian Shun hugged Gu Ling with one arm, "Of course, we're going together! I heard that Prince Masion is also called the Mansion of Beauties, where both the young and old are outstanding beauties! I want to see for myself!" "Yes, Lian Shun will go with me." Gu Ling nodded slightly.

He was not yet clear about Duanmu Yi's purpose for sending Su Liang, but it was definitely not to treat Emperor Liang's illness, nor was it a trivial matter, and it was most likely related to Situ Xie. This was the reason for Gu Ling to agree to live in Prince Masion. While at the prince's mansion, Su Liang could pursue him more easily, and it would make sense for her to move in if she wished to.

“Will Big Lin and Little Lin be safe at the inn?” Lian Shun asked. Over time, he had become close friends with the Lin Family Brothers.

Nian Jincheng shook his head slightly, “As long as you guys don’t cause any trouble in the Prince Masion, there’s no need to worry about our safety.”

Lian Shun chuckled, “I won’t, but I can’t say the same for Gu Xiaoling. By the way, has King Yue mentioned when he sent his people to invite Su Xiaoliang, and when is she expected to arrive? I’ll go outside the city to meet her!”

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

“I’ll ask King Yue when I see him again,” Lian Shun said.

When Situ Jing, the eldest grandson of Situ Xie and Situ Yao’s elder brother, came to the inn to pick up Gu Ling, snow started to fall in Yao City once again.

Lian Shun was talking with Gu Ling, and the door was open. Seeing the handsome young man approaching in the wind and snow, Lian Shun couldn’t help but exclaim, “Your cousin is really good-looking!”

The people from the Situ Family all had very fair skin, even more so for Gu Ling, whose skin was so flawless that women would be envious of him.

Situ Jing had a tall figure, deep and exquisite facial features, eyebrows and eyes quite similar to Situ Xie, and his demeanor was like a younger version of Situ Xie—gentle, polite, and versatile.

Watching Situ Jing exchange pleasantries with Gu Ling, Lian Shun felt that overall, this person was more perfect. Comparatively, many people would not like Gu Ling’s aloof and taciturn character.

“This must be General Lin? I’ve heard a lot about you.” Situ Jing’s smile was sincere.

Lian Shun smiled even more earnestly, “Mutually, mutually. I have a question for Master Situ.”

“Oh?” Situ Jing nodded, “Please feel free to ask, Master Lin.”

“Who is the most beautiful person in the Prince Masion?” Lian Shun asked seriously.

Situ Jing chuckled, “I haven’t thought about this before, but I can answer Master Lin now. Of course, the most beautiful person in the Prince Masion is my cousin Gu Ling.”

“Excluding him?” Lian Shun asked again.

Situ Jing looked at Gu Ling and sighed lightly, “Then it would be my aunt. But she has passed away.”

Situ Xie only had a daughter, Gu Ling’s mother Situ Ning.

Hearing Situ Jing mention ancestors, Lian Shun didn’t think it appropriate to inquire further or make jokes, so he dropped the topic.

Knowing that Gu Ling would bring Lian Shun along to live in the Prince Masion, Situ Jing expressed his warm welcome, and even invited the Lin Family Brothers to come along if they wished.

By the time they were ready to leave, Lian Shun and Situ Jing were already getting along well, chatting as they walked in front, while Gu Ling trailed behind by himself, looking like an outsider.

Situ Jing stopped and waited for Gu Ling, while Lian Shun casually draped his arm around Situ Jing's shoulder and continued walking. "You don't need to worry about Gu Xiaoling. He finds talking tiring, and if you insist on chatting with him, it would only be a burden for him."

Situ Jing smiled, "It is said that Gu Ling only has one friend, but now it seems that the rumor is untrue."

Lian Shun nodded, "I've known Gu Xiaoling since we were young, but it's just that no one knows about it. Young Master Situ, apart from Princess Yaoguang, do you have any other sisters?"

Situ Jing shook his head, "We have many men in our family, so I only have one sister. "

Lian Shun expressed his regret, giving people the feeling that he intended to become a son-in-law of the Situ family but had no opportunity. However, he was secretly thinking that it was great. Since Situ Yao was already engaged to Duanmu Chen, and there were no more young ladies in the Prince's Mansion, there was no need to worry about someone trying to take Gu Ling away from Su Liang! Even if there was, they wouldn't succeed!

Situ Jing smiled slightly, "I have several cousins."

Lian Shun immediately expressed his interest in meeting them.

The carriage stopped, and as Gu Ling got off, he saw many people standing outside the gate of Prince Mansion, including Situ Xie.

Lian Shun scanned the crowd and couldn't help but sigh, "This truly is a home of beauties!" To be fair, the people of Prince Mansion were all very good-looking, there was not a single ugly one, and even the average-looking were not present.

However, no one was more beautiful than Gu Ling... this was Lian Shun's

"Cousin!" Situ Yao stood next to Situ Xie, waving at Gu Ling with a sweet smile.

Situ Jing had two younger brothers who were twins and the same age as Gu Ling. They looked almost exactly alike.

As Lian Shun was trying to distinguish the twin brothers, he heard Situ Xie calling him.

"Master Lin, please." Situ Xie smiled.

"Prince Yue is too polite." Lian Shun walked to Situ Xie's side. "I heard that Su Liang is coming to treat Emperor Liang? Do you know when she will arrive approximately?"

"Are you familiar with Physician Su, Master Lin?" Situ Xie asked.

Lian Shun nodded, following him in, "Very familiar. She is my best friend. I pursued her back then but got rejected. I'm completely fine with her being interested in Gu Xiaoling. Everyone else wouldn't do."

Situ Xie couldn't help but grin and told Lian Shun when someone was sent to Qian Country. If things went quickly, it was estimated that Su Liang could arrive in Yao City in about eight or nine days.

Lian Shun's first impression left on the people of Prince Masion was that he was straightforward and talkative, saying whatever he thought.

Situ Xie personally led Gu Ling and Lian Shun to the courtyard where Situ Ning had lived before she got married, called Ningxiang Residence. The courtyard was quiet and elegant, with cold plum blossoms reflecting on the snow and giving off a cold fragrance.

Gu Ling had stayed here when he was young and visited Liang Country.

Situ Ning's room was still the same. On the table, there were a few jade carved dolls with cute expressions, which had been given to Gu Ling by Situ Xie many years ago when Gu Ling visited. However, Gu Ling did not like them and did not take them away when he left.

Lian Shun saw a painting hanging on the wall and went over to take a look. In the painting, a young girl stood under a plum tree, looking up slightly, smiling faintly amidst the falling petals, and looking incredibly beautiful.

It was Situ Ning, but Gu Ling had never seen this painting before. Looking at the date on the signature, it was painted this year by Situ Xie.

"Every year on Ning'er's birthday, I paint a portrait of her and hang it in this room until the next year." Situ Xie sighed, "Ling'er, do you want to stay in this room?"

Gu Ling nodded.

"You two can rest for a while. Due to the emperor's illness, it is not appropriate to have a big banquet. Tonight, I will host a banquet in the mansion to welcome Secretary Lin and General Lin and wash away their dust from the long journey." With that, Situ Xie left.

"Prince Yue has only one daughter, and since he loves her so much, how could he bear to marry her off to Qian Country?" Lian Shun was puzzled. "Now he wants to marry his only granddaughter there as well. Although it can't be said that marriages abroad are definitely bad, they are so far away, and there are no relatives from the bride's family to back them up if something happens. If I have a daughter in the future, she must not marry far away. She must stay under my watch, where no one can bully her!"

Lian Shun sighed at Situ Ning's painting and turned to find Gu Ling had disappeared.

Looking outside, Gu Ling was seen folding plum blossoms.

"Do you like plum blossoms?" Lian Shun walked over, "They're really beautiful, but too cold. I prefer brightly colored flowers."

Gu Ling folded three branches of plum blossoms and placed them in the white porcelain vase on the windowsill.

The servant appointed to Ning Xiang House by Situ Xie wasn't a maid, but a handsome young man named Gu Ming, who was the younger brother of Gu Yue and Gu Xiang, who had gone to Qian Country to invite Su Liang.



After tidying up a bit, Gu Ling and Lian Shun went to the garden of Prince Yue's Mansion.

"Walking in the snow, if I were Su Xiaoliang, we could be reciting poetry and talking about love in the snow." Lian Shun said earnestly, "If you were Su Xiaoliang, it would be nice too, we could have a fight in the snow."

Unfortunately, only Gu Ling and Lian Shun were present, making a poetry contest awkward. A fight was possible, but Lian Shun, who was sure he would lose, chose not to. Although he wasn't sure he could win against Su Liang either, the gap wouldn't be as big.

As they followed Gu Ling around the garden, Lian Shun noticed that he was paying close attention to the scenery and felt something was amiss.

"The trees are not bad." Gu Ling said.

Lian Shun was puzzled, "So what?"

"The Marquis Chang Xin's Mansion is too empty." Gu Ling said.

Lian Shun rubbed his forehead, "Don't tell me you plan to uproot all the trees in Prince Yue's garden and plant them in your house in the capital city of Qian Country?"

Gu Ling nodded, "That's exactly what I had in mind."

The two sat in a pavilion by the lake, which was covered with thick ice.

After ensuring that no one was around, Lian Shun leaned in closer to Gu Ling and whispered, "Are you trying to provoke your grandfather on purpose? Want to see how far he can tolerate you?"

Gu Ling shook his head, "You're overthinking it."

Lian Shun scoffed, "Even though I don't know why you don't like your grandfather, it's not excessive for you to want to take away the garden of Prince Yue's Mansion since he married your mother away back then."

"I want ten of your orange trees." Gu Ling said. Lian Shun shook his head immediately, "No way!"

Gu Ling nodded slightly, "End of friendship."

Lian Shun explained to Gu Ling that the orange trees wouldn't bear good fruit if taken to the capital city of Qian Country due to the change in climate.

"How about this, every year when the oranges turn red, I'll send you ten baskets of oranges via fast horses!" Lian Shun insisted he was not a stingy person.

"Deal." Gu Ling agreed.

"But you didn't give me anything, how can it be a deal?" Lian Shun suddenly felt like he was at a disadvantage.

"Then let's end our friendship." Gu Ling said.

Lian Shun: ...So he had to rush to send gifts just to be friends with him? But breaking off their friendship was out of the question. He was still waiting to have his son or daughter marry Gu Ling and Su Liang's daughter or son. A strong relationship must be established and their union ensured!

However, Lian Shun was correct on one thing. Gu Ling wanted to move Prince Yue's garden, not because of the deceased Situ Ning, but to see how long Situ Xie could pretend.

Personally going to the city gate to borrow Gu Ling, personally sending him to the inn, bringing the whole family to greet him at the door, painting portraits for Situ Ning every year... Since Situ Xie cared so much about his grandson, Gu Ling would be wilful and indifferent to the end, to see how long Situ Xie could bear it.

The banquet at Prince Yue's Mansion was grand, with almost all of the ministers of Liang Country present, including people from General Peng's Mansion. The royal family was represented by the crown prince and another prince.

Peng Wei had fully recovered from his severe injuries, but his hair had turned completely white, and he had lost a lot of weight. However, his spirit was still quite good.

Peng Qian's movements were no longer hindered, and he didn't need to sit in a wheelchair or be helped by others.

The protagonist of this banquet was Gu Ling, but not long after it started, he excused himself due to a headache and left. Lian Shun did not leave with Gu Ling but stayed behind to entertain the Lin Family Brothers.

It was obvious that Gu Ling didn't want to deal with the Liang Country's royal family and was quite solitary, not liking to interact with others.

Gu Ming followed Gu Ling back to Ningxiang Residence, and Gu Ling ordered him to prepare hot water.

Only after Gu Ling bathed and read a few pages of a book while lying on the bed did Lian Shun return.

"Gu Xiaoling, can you not use your good looks as an excuse to do whatever you want and disregard everyone? You just up and leave, and your Crown Prince cousin's face darkened at that moment!" Lian Shun complained, "Is it that uncomfortable? Can't you at least pretend a little?"

Gu Ling shook his head, "I'm not good at acting."

If Su Liang were here, she would definitely give Gu Ling a big eye-roll.

Lian Shun shrugged, "Fine, they're all your relatives anyway; let's see just how much your grandfather dotes on you! Concerning the matter the emperor entrusted to you, do you plan to discuss it with King Yue tomorrow, or wait until Su Xiaoliang arrives and treats Emperor Liang before discussing it with him?"

"Wait," Gu Ling said succinctly.

Although it was true that Situ Xie held substantial power in Liang Country, in name, it was Duanmu Yi who sent Gu Ling to discuss cooperation with the Liang Country's emperor, and to visit the elder Situ Xie on the side.

Gu Ling still didn't know what Duanmu Yi wanted Su Liang to do, so he intended to wait until Su Liang arrived, confirm her purpose, and then decide his next move. Before that, he would do nothing.

Lian Shun thought that was fine too. In case Su Liang arrived late, they would have no reason to stay once they finished their business.

The next day, when Gu Ling met Situ Xie again, he mentioned that he liked the Prince Mansion's garden, and the Marquis Chang Xin Mansion he was rewarded with in Qian Country was a burned ruin.

Situ Xie immediately stated that he would quickly send craftsmen to the capital city of Qian Country to repair Gu Ling's garden.

Lian Shun, who was standing nearby, felt something was off – wouldn't this be slapping Duanmu Yi in the face, letting everyone know how he mistreated Gu Ling?

However, Gu Ling said that there was no need for craftsmen; he only wanted the trees from the Prince Mansion's garden to be sent to Qian Country and handed over to Nian Jincheng.

Situ Xie agreed, saying that those trees had accompanied Situ Ning as she grew up, and he was willing to give them to Gu Ling if he wanted them.

So, that day, the Prince Mansion began to dig out the trees, many of which were valuable old trees requiring large carts for transport. Moreover, delivering them thousands of miles to Qian Country in the freezing cold would be very costly.

When the news spread, Gu Ling's reputation in Yao City plummeted, as everyone thought that though Situ Xie was extremely indulgent with him, he was just too willful and behaving absurdly.

"Since we're not discussing serious matters now, let's go out and have fun!" Lian Shun wanted to take Gu Ling out.

Gu Ling pushed Lian Shun away, "You go out with Boyan and Bojun. I'm not going."

"Why?" Lian Shun asked, puzzled.

"You tell others that I get rashes on my face when the wind blows." Gu Ling's expression was calm as he turned another page of the book. Lian Shun coughed lightly, "I forgot. But you can wear a mask."

Gu Ling shook his head, "It's too cold. I'm not going."

No matter how much Lian Shun cajoled him from every angle, it didn't work.

Suddenly, he chuckled, "It's settled then! Since this is Su Xiaoliang's first time

in Liang Country, she probably wants to sightsee here. You don't have to go now, wait until she comes! I'll scout around with Big Lin and Little Lin to see where the fun places and good food are. In a few days, let Su Xiaoliang take you out!"

Just like that, Lian Shun grabbed Gu Ling's cloak and left.

The window was open, and Gu Ling watched as Lian Shun disappeared from the entrance of the courtyard. He nodded slightly in response to his previous words, "I'll wait to play with her.."

Chapter 275: 275. Reunion

Qian Country's Xuanbei City.

As the twelfth lunar month approached, the weather grew colder.

On this day, someone from the capital city arrived, bringing the transfer order for Che Yun.

After listening to Xing Ji's advice, Duanmu Yi transferred Che Yun to serve as a general in the south, and promoted him by one rank; just like Nian Jincheng before the incident, and now Lin Bojun, Che Yun became one of the highest-ranking young generals in Qian Country's military.

Xing Ji sent someone to summon Che Yun and read aloud the transfer order.

After sending away the person who had come from the capital city, Che Yun took a deep breath, bowed deeply with respect, and solemnly thanked Xing Ji for his guidance and care all along.

Xing Ji helped Che Yun up, pulled him to sit down, "There are no outsiders here, so there is no need to be so formal. Your ability and temperament are both excellent, and the achievements you have made today are all due to your own efforts. There's something I've been wanting to talk to you about."

Che Yun replied seriously, "Please speak, Marquis."

"Before Lian Shun came to Xuanbei City, I always thought you had a very cheerful personality. But after Lian Shun arrived, the contrast between the two of you made me realize that you seemed to have a heavy heart, but you just didn't want to show it." Xing Ji asked with concern, "Is it because of your brother's situation?"

Hearing these words, Che Yun closed his eyes and said heavily, "Back then, I was the one who took my little brother out to play and lost him. I can never forgive myself if I can't find him."

Xing Ji was taken aback. They all knew that Che Yun had a missing brother, but this was the first time they heard that Che Xiao was kidnapped while playing with Che Yun.

Xing Ji sighed, "You were young at the time, how could you have guarded against scheming kidnappers? Don't blame yourself too much. "

"Actually, I know my parents hate me." Che Yun said bitterly, "But they try their best to hide it, not wanting me to see it. Once I merely suggested that we should look forward and make the best of our lives for now, and the way my parents looked at me then is something I'll never forget. A few days ago, Su Liang came and said that if I got married and my parents embraced their grandchild, they might feel better, but I know that nothing will change. If I get married, my parents will only hate me more

because my brother's life and death are uncertain, and we don't even know where he is suffering. What right do I have to be happy?

Xing Ji frowned, "How can you think like that? Your parents are depressed and can't let go; you should comfort them properly. How can your family live happily like this?"

Che Yun took a deep breath, shook his head, and said, "Actually, my life now is not too bad. I have my Darents, food, and clothing, a few good friends, and I can even do what I like. Compared to my little brother, who is somewhere unknown, I am already very fortunate. Marquis, there's no need to persuade me; I know what I'm doing."

Xing Ji patted Che Yun's shoulder once again, "Fine, if you say so, I won't say more." From his own experience, he knew that outsiders could never truly understand family matters, and preaching great principles was often of no use. Affection could serve as support, but at times it could also become an inescapable bondage, or even an immovable boulder weighing down on one's heart.

The Imperial Edict had already been issued, and Che Yun had to set off for the south within three days.

"Go home and talk to your parents. They can accompany you to the south and continue looking for your brother. Su Liang is also helping you. Leave a servant here at home; if Che Xiao returns, let him come to me, and I'll inform you immediately."

Xing Ji said as he sent Che Yun to the door.

Che Yun nodded, "Thank you, Marquis." He took a deep breath and said, "I should go back and tell my parents about the trip to the south."

"Go ahead, talk to them properly; if it doesn't work out, let me know, and I'll talk to them." Xing Ji said.

When Che Yun returned to the Che family home, it was quiet, but he knew everyone was there.

He entered his father and mother's room, closed the door behind him, and went over to sit down. His mother handed him a cup of hot tea.

Che's father asked, "The transfer order has arrived, right? When do you set off?"

Che Yun said calmly, "The day after tomorrow. Tomorrow, I'll accompany mother to the Ping'an Temple to offer incense."

Che's father nodded, "All right."

Che's mother, with tearful eyes, grabbed Che Yun's arm, "This time when you go to the south, as long as you finish the tasks the master has given you, will he return our child to us?"

With one hand holding the teacup, Che Yun looked down at her slender, pale hand clasping his arm, his voice low, "Don't worry, I'll bring your child back." "What about... you?" Che's mother's voice choked.

Che's father frowned, "Why are you asking that? Young Master is the Lord's own grandson; the Lord will naturally make proper arrangements."

Hearing this, Che Yun placed the teacup down, gently removed his mother's hand, and when he looked up again, there was no warmth in his eyes. "Once the matter is settled, we'll have nothing more to do with each other." Having said that, he got up and left.

Che's father stared at Che Yun's retreating figure, his eyes lost in thought.

However, Che's mother covered her face and sobbed, "He's also a child we raised with our own hands..."

Yao City, Liang Country.

Gu Ling lived in King Yue's Mansion and hardly went out. Every day, he either read books in his room or took a walk in the garden.

The original garden of King Yue's Mansion was very beautiful, but now most of the trees had been removed. Although new ones were planted quickly, the view was not as good as before.

One sunny day, Lian Shun went out early in the morning and usually came back only after dark.

In the afternoon, Gu Ling sat alone in the lake pavilion of King Yue's Mansion garden. Thick wind curtains hung around the pavilion, and he lifted the one facing him, revealing the thickly iced lake and the Linglong Tower in one corner of the garden.

It was a three-story wooden tower. Gu Ling had once been inside with Situ Ning when he visited King Yue's Mansion as a child. The tower was filled with ancient books collected by Situ Xie.

"Cousin. "

Upon hearing this, Gu Ling looked away and turned to see the curtain behind him being lifted, and Situ Yao entered, carrying a tray.

"I just made some pastries. Please try them, cousin." Situ Yao uncovered the lid, and a sweet aroma wafted out.

The pastries in Yao City of Liang Country were generally sweeter than those in Qian Country, which Gu Ling didn't like. He didn't touch the pastries that had been sent to him before.

When Situ Yao learned this, she specifically made less sweet Red Date Cake for him, cut into small pieces and arranged in the shape of plum blossoms.

However, there was a misunderstanding. Gu Ling didn't have a particularly fondness for plum blossoms. It was simply his mother's favorite flower. Whenever he looked at flowers, he often wondered if Su Liang could make something delicious with them...

Gu Ling took a piece of Red Date Cake and tasted it. When Situ Yao asked how it was, he just nodded slightly without speaking.

Situ Yao smiled, "As long as my cousin is willing to eat it, I consider it a success."

Gu Ling finished a piece and wiped his hands, "Thank you."

"Why be so polite?" Situ Yao smiled brightly. "Next year, when I marry into Qian Country, you will be my only relative there, cousin. I'll have to rely on you."

"Alright." Gu Ling nodded.

"I heard that my idol, the divine doctor Su Liang, is pursuing you, cousin!" Situ Yao asked Gu Ling with a smile, "Don't you like her? She's so beautiful, skilled in Martial Arts, and has impressive Medical Skills." Gu Ling shook his head, "I don't like her."

"Then what kind of girl do you like?" Situ Yao asked.

Gu Ling shook his head again, "I don't like any."

Situ Yao looked surprised, "You and Master Lin seem quite close. Could it be that you two...?"

Gu Ling's expression was indifferent, "If I were to be alone, would that be a calamity?"

Situ Yao was taken aback, realizing what she had said, and quickly waved her hand, "I didn't mean anything else. I was just joking. Please don't be angry, cousin."

"I'm not angry. But you're blocking my view." Gu Ling faced Situ Yao, but his eyes were looking into the distance.

Situ Yao looked back at the view behind her and awkwardly stood up, "I'll leave first. If there's anything you want to eat, just tell Gu Ming to let me know."

Left alone, Gu Ling picked up another piece of date cake. He felt that it was much worse than Su Liang's, and the more he ate, the more he missed her. He thought to himself, he didn't want to be alone at all...

Lian Shun returned that evening with an ice sculpture as tall as a person.

As night fell, the lanterns under the porch cast a dim yellow light.

Lian Shun placed the ice sculpture under the eaves and called Gu Ling through the window, "Gu Xiaoling, come quick and see what this is!" Gu Ling walked to the window and took a look, answering, "Ice."

"Look closely, really closely. Who is this?" Lian Shun pretended to be mysterious.

Gu Ling said another word, "You?"

Lian Shun was speechless, "You really have a problem with your eyesight. This is clearly a woman! Su Liang! Su Xiaoliang! Can you see it now?"

Gu Ling shook his head, "It has nothing to do with her."

Lian Shun touched his forehead, "There's a shop on the street that sells ice sculptures. I bought a piece of ice at the post station, carved it for a day, and brought it back as a gift for you. Can't you give me some face?"

"Your carving skills..." Gu Ling's voice trailed off for a moment.

Lian Shun blinked, "Don't you think it's alright?"

"Just give up." Gu Ling turned away as he finished speaking.

Lian Shun looked intently at the ice sculpture from left to right, "I think it looks quite alike! Gu Xiaoling, are you deliberately saying it doesn't? Anyways, it won't melt just sitting here. When Su

Xiaoliang arrives, let her decide for herself if it looks like her! You're so nitpicky about my carving skills, as if you are any better!"

The next morning, Lian Shun opened his door and greeted the ice sculpture in the corridor with a smile, "Good morning, Su Xiaoliang!"

As soon as he finished speaking, Lian Shun rubbed his eyes, "Where's my huge Su Xiaoliang?"

"Look to the left." A cold voice came from Gu Ling's room.

Lian Shun turned left and saw a plum tree. He heard Gu Ling say "look down" and lowered his gaze to see an ice sculpture of a rabbit under the plum tree.

"Su Xiaoliang! Su Xiaoliang, what happened to you?" Lian Shun rushed forward with a "wail", "Su Xiaoliang, how did you become a spirit? Ah ah ah, I'm so sorry! Gu Xiaoling, you jerk! Jerk, how is your carving so great? This rabbit looks so pretty! And there's a stick, what's the stick for?"

Gu Ling pushed open the window, his tone faint, "That's a carrot."

"Does Su Xiaoliang like carrots? Haha! When she comes, I'll say this is the token of affection you gave her!" Lian Shun pinched the ice rabbit's crystal clear ear, and then carefully selected two plum blossoms to place on its ears, "It looks even more like Su Xiaoliang now."

"Lian Shun."

Upon hearing Gu Ling call his name, Lian Shun turned his head and was hit in the face by a snowball.

"Gu Xiaoling, what are you doing?" Lian Shun was quite speechless.

"I'm hungry." Gu Ling's expression was indifferent, "Go and buy that delicious breakfast you mentioned yesterday."

Lian Shun said angrily, "I'm not your servant!"

"Let's break off our friendship." Gu Ling closed the window as he spoke.

Lian Shun was livid, "Okay, I'll buy it! Just you wait!" And he rushed out.

Gu Ling opened the window again and saw the ice rabbit under the plum tree. His eyes softened momentarily. It was his, and he didn't want Lian Shun to mess with it.

After Lian Shun bought breakfast and they finished eating, he went to the post station alone.

The Lin Family Brothers were waiting for him; they had agreed yesterday to go mountain climbing together. Situ Jing was not available, so he arranged for the twin brothers to accompany them. They were all skilled in martial arts and quite strong.



“Da Lin, can you do it? Why don’t you go play chess with Gu Xiaoling?” Lian Shun doubted if Lin Boyan could make it up the mountain.

They were going to Wolong Snow Mountain, the most famous mountain in Yao City. It would be difficult to climb during this cold and slippery season. The twin brothers had specially prepared mountain climbing boots, windproof leather jackets, hats, gloves, walking sticks, and other items.

Lin Boyan really wanted to go, but considering his health and not wanting to trouble the others, he gave up, “You guys go ahead, be careful, and come back down the mountain early. I’ll go to the prince’s mansion later to play chess with Marquis Chang Xin.”

“In two more days, Su Xiaoliang will arrive.” Lian Shun said, “I’ll go scout the route with Xiao Lin first, and then have Su Xiaoliang accompany Gu Xiaoling later.”

Climbing Wolong Snow Mountain was a favorite challenge for the nobles of Liang Country who practiced martial arts in the winter. In previous years, there were even mountain climbing competitions organized by the royal family. As a result, the Situ family’s twin brothers were quite familiar with the area and had also brought a team of guards along.

After they set off, Lin Boyan took a carriage to the prince’s mansion.

When he walked into Ningxiang Residence and saw the ice rabbit under the plum tree, he asked Gu Ling, “Did you make this?”

Gu Ling nodded.

“If I remember correctly, the rabbit embroidered on the sachet that Su Xiaoliang always wears is a gift from you, right?” Lin Boyan asked.

Gu Ling nodded again.

“You like her.” Lin Boyan stated with certainty.

Gu Ling asked back, “Not allowed?”

Lin Boyan shook his head, “It’s none of my business. You guys have fun.”

Lin Boyan stayed in Prince Mansion for most of the day. When the sun was about to set, he planned to leave, but Gu Ming ran in, “His Highness asked me to inform the young master that Divine Doctor Su from Qian Country is arriving soon!”

Gu Ling immediately closed the book in his hands, stood up, and then sat down again. He said to Lin Boyan, “You go pick her up and tell her I’m here.”

As Lin Boyan reached the entrance of the Prince Mansion, he heard the sound of horse hooves.

Four people rode up on horses, and one of them was Su Liang. She arrived two days earlier than Situ Xie had expected.

Situ Xie quickly stepped forward to greet her, “Divine Doctor Su, you must have worked hard on your journey!”

Su Liang dismounted gracefully, took off her hood, and revealed her small face.

She bowed to Situ Xie and said, "Your Royal Highness, it's nice to see you again. I heard that Marquis Chang Xin is staying in the Prince Mansion, I wonder if I can stay here as well?"

Situ Xie said with a beaming smile, "Of course, I've already prepared a place for you. It's getting late today, why don't you rest for the night and accompany me to the palace to see His Majesty tomorrow morning?"

Su Liang nodded and looked at Lin Boyan. She called out to her big brother.

Lin Boyan smiled, "Bo Jun and Lian Shun have gone to climb the snow mountain. They should be on their way down by now."

Su Liang hesitated for a moment, "They haven't returned yet? Are you sure they're coming down?"

Lin Boyan frowned at her words, and Situ Xie's expression turned serious. He immediately sent someone to check.

Su Liang wanted to see Gu Ling first because she had something important to discuss. Situ Xie personally led her to Ning Xiang Residence.

Worried about Lin Bojun and Lian Shun, Lin Boyan didn't leave and decided to wait for news at the Prince Mansion.

"This courtyard is where Ling'er's mother used to live before she got married." Situ Xie led Su Liang into Ning Xiang residence, "Ling'er, Divine Doctor Su is here."

The door was tightly closed, but a cold voice came from inside, "I know, I'm not sick, so there's no need to waste her time."

Su Liang:...He's really good at acting. She understood completely but suddenly felt the urge to kick him.

"Divine Doctor Su has something important to talk to you about." Situ Xie knocked on the door.

Gu Ling opened the door, and Su Liang quickly slipped inside. She swiftly closed the door behind her, "I need to talk to Marquis Gu privately. Your Highness, big brother, please leave."

Lin Boyan shook his head with a helpless look, "What nonsense." Situ Xie smiled and said, "I actually think they're a perfect match."

In the room, Su Liang was already held by Gu Ling.

"Alright, alright, a handshake is proper when meeting." Su Liang pushed Gu Ling away.

"I remembered wrong." Gu Ling said, then held Su Liang's hand, "Why is it so cold?"

"I just came from the icy and snowy road, of course it's cold." Su Liang said.

Gu Ling nodded, "I'll give you... "

Before he could finish his words, a voice came from the courtyard, "Your Highness, something is wrong!"

Su Liang's expression changed, and she opened the door and went out, leaving Gu Ling's hand behind.

Gu Ling frowned slightly and followed her out to the eaves.

They heard someone kneeling in front of Situ Xie and reporting. The person said that today, the two young masters took Lin Bojun and Lian Shun to climb the mountain, but Lian Shun accidentally slipped and fell from the cliff. He had not been found yet.

"I'll immediately send soldiers to..." Situ Xie turned around while speaking, only to find that the door was open and Gu Ling and Su Liang had already disappeared..

Chapter 276: 276. The gift for you

Underneath Wolong Snow Mountain, there was a place specifically designed for those descending the mountain to rest. At this time, it was brightly lit. When Gu Ling and Su Liang arrived as fast as they could, Lin Bojun was preparing to lead his troops back up the mountain to find Lian Shun. At that moment, there was already a team in the mountain searching for him, but there was no news yet.

"Cousin?" One of the twins, Situ Zhang, saw Gu Ling.

As Lin Bojun turned his head in response to the call, he looked surprised, "Xiaoliang? You're here!"

"So this is Su Liang, the divine doctor Su?" The other twin, Situ Min, came forward to greet Su Liang, but Su Liang walked past him and stood next to Lin Bojun.

"What exactly happened to Lian Shun?" Su Liang asked Lin Bojun with a furrowed brow. She knew Lian Shun well. Although he had some quirks, he was surely not a troublemaker and would not arbitrarily run around somewhere as dangerous as a snow mountain.

Lin Bojun briefly recounted the incident. They were about to reach the peak of the mountain, the terrain was very dangerous, and they were guarded by the Prince Mansion's protectors both ahead and behind. One of the protectors at the rear of the team accidentally slid down an icy slope and fell. Hearing his cry, Lian Shun was the first to rush towards him to help. He managed to hold on to the fallen protector, but as a result, both of them tumbled down the cliff.

Everything happened too quickly.

In fact, if Lian Shun had not rushed over, the Prince Mansion's people would not have chosen to save the fallen protector, even if that means he would have died on the snow mountain. Because such incidents were not uncommon, attempting to save someone often results in accompanying them in death. As a protector, they should dedicate themselves to their masters, even if that means sacrificing themselves.

All the protectors knew that they were on their own should anything unfortunate happen.

But Lian Shun was unaware of these expectations. Had, he known, he probably wouldn't have chosen to bring these people to climb the mountain in the first place. Even if he had found out after arriving, he would not have stood by and watched someone die due to his nature.

While Lin Bojun was telling Su Liang the story, Situ Zhang had also explained the situation to Gu Ling with a look of guilt, "It was my fault. I did not make it clear to General Lian before the trip that all the protectors joining us had signed a death waiver."

Situ Zhang was lying. No one had signed any death waivers.

If they had to say there was a waiver, it was an invisible one. Once chosen as protectors, they had to accept their fate – if anything bad happened, it would be just their bad luck.

After Situ Zhang finished his speech, a female voice filled with anger came from the side, "If anything happens to Lian Shun, none of you can bear the consequences!"

Knowing that Su Liang was invited to save the Emperor, Situ Zhang didn't dare to offend her. Thus, he apologized again and promised to send all the available men to search for Lian Shun.

"Bojun, go back, let me do the search," said Su Liang to Lin Bojun.

Lin Bojun shook his head. Lian Shun had gone with him, and only he had returned. How could he rest peacefully?

"You're tired, go back and rest, I'll deal with this, there's no room for negotiation." Su Liang took the climbing stick from Lin Bojun's hand without any explanation.

There was no time to lose. Lin Bojun didn't want to argue with Su Liang. But he was indeed exhausted, so he complied with her demand. He found a fur coat for Su Liang to put on.

However, they had no suitable climbing boots for Su Liang because no woman has ever climbed the mountain in this season. Su Liang said it was fine, as she had already bought several pairs of heavy but extremely warm leather boots since she had arrived in Liang Country.

Ren Dong caught up, Su Liang ordered her to stay and protect Lin Bojun.

"Bojun, we can't let her go. If anything happens again, we can't bear the responsibility," Situ Min whispered to Situ Zhang.

Situ Zhang's face changed at these words, and the two brothers together tried to convince Su Liang not to go up the mountain.

Su Liang was cold. "Fine, I won't go, but how about you two?"

The two of them were taken aback and looked at each other. It was risky to venture into the mountains during the day, let alone at night, and they both valued their lives too much.

"Since the two of you, the Situ brothers, don't want to go, stop holding me back." Su Liang spoke coldly, "Lian Shun is my dear friend. I'll find him before I have a word with you two."

Seeing Su Liang was not in the mood for further discussion, Situ Zhang turned and saw Gu Ling on the side. He hurriedly spoke, "Cousin, you must convince Divine Doctor Su not to go. She cannot afford to get into any trouble!"

But surprisingly, Gu Ling shot back a more cutting query, "So Lian Shun being in danger is inconsequential to you both?"

How could Situ Zhang and Situ Min have any answer for that? The whole idea of climbing the snow mountain had been proposed by them both. Even Situ Jing had protested, fearing something bad would happen. Situ Zhang and Situ Min had both insistently claimed Lin Bojun and Lian Shun as martial artists who would be safe, falsely saying it was Lin Bojun and Lian Shun who were determined to go.

In truth, Lin Bojun and Lian Shun initially had no idea about climbing Wolong Snow Mountain in winter. Situ Min was the one who brought up the idea and made it sound easy.

Situ Min, a renowned playboy in Yao City, wanted to go because he had made a bet in order to win the affection of a certain girl. His own family, however, would not allow him to go. Therefore, he recruited Lin Bojun and Lian Shun as his cover.

If Lian Shun had not rushed to save someone, nothing would have happened.

Seeing Su Liang was ready to set off, Gu Ling followed her. Situ Zhang quickly grabbed him, "Cousin, where are you going?"

Gu Ling shook off Situ Zhang, "Lian Shun is my friend. I am going to find him.

You two can discuss amongst yourselves, in case anything happens to Lian

Shun, who would accompany him to the grave."

Situ Zhang and Situ Min turned pale at Gu Ling's words, and had no choice but to watch as Su Liang and Gu Ling led a group into the mountain.

By the time Situ Xie and Lin Boyan arrived, two quarter-hours had passed since Su Liang and Gu Ling had left.

Situ Xie slapped both Situ Zhang and Situ Min, scolding them to take the Lin brothers back to the inn to rest. He decided to lead the search personally.

Right after Lin Boyan had confirmed Lin Bojun was okay, he felt a cool sensation on his face. It had started to snow again.

"We will wait here." Lin Boyan spoke up without trying to stop Situ Xie.

"Good." Situ Xie nodded, obtained the information regarding Lian Shun's perilous situation, and quickly arranged for a rescue mission. He, himself, led the soldiers out.

Not long after, Peng Wei and his grandson Peng Fan arrived. They did not know Lian Shun or Gu Ling; they had come for Su Liang.

Upon learning that Su Liang had gone into the mountain to search for the lost ones, Peng Wei was furious, "Why did no one stop her?"

"Grandfather, let me lead the search for her," Peng Fan volunteered.

Peng Wei kicked him, "You've never been to Wolong Snow Mountain, what can you find there?"

Peng Fan was Peng Wei's only beloved grandson. Peng Wei had never allowed him to participate in any mountain races, even when Peng Fan had repeatedly expressed his interest.

Peng Wei ordered Peng Fan to go home immediately and to bring the old housekeeper of the Peng Mansion. The housekeeper was one of Peng Wei's trusted subordinates, very familiar with Wolong Mountain, from their shared youthful adventures. If not for Peng Wei's poor health, he would have been directly involved.

Consequently, not too long after, the housekeeper of the Peng Mansion led a team which was very familiar with Wolong Snow Mountain and was fully equipped, setting out for a search. Peng Wei's orders were clear: to find Su Liang and ensure her safe return.

By this time Su Liang had been walking in the mountains for an hour. When night fell, the exceedingly low temperatures and heavy snow made her feel as if her face was freezing solid. She had to constantly rub it with her hands for warmth.

Time couldn't be turned back, but even if it could, Su Liang would still choose to go into the mountains to look for Lian Shun. If the situation were reversed, Lian Shun would definitely do the same for her.

Gu Ling walked beside Su Liang, but because others were around, they did not have much communication.

Su Liang suddenly remembered the jade pendant Zhengzheng had given her. She took one from her pouch, pretending to slip and grabbed Gu Ling's hand in the process.

Gu Ling felt a piece of jade placed in his hand. Although he didn't understand why Su Liang had given it to him, he instinctively gripped Su Liang's hand in return. "Be careful, Miss Su," he said.

When Gu Ling released her hand, the cold jade was already warmed by their touch. He held it in his hand and continued following the guide forward while paying close attention to Su Liang, fearing she might fall.

This night was doomed to be restless.

Situ Jing heard the whole story from Situ Min, who was on his knees in front of him. He kicked Situ Min down angrily. "If grandfather hears about it, he will definitely kill you!" he growled.

"Big brother, what do we do? If Lian does die, I'm done for!" Situ Min looked terrified.

Situ Jing stared at him, "Make sure anyone who knows about the bet disappears. I am pretending to not know about it, none of you shall speak about it again!"

Situ Min's face turned pale while Situ Zhang spoke up, "I will handle it. You, calm down. Don't let anyone see your panic. Even if Lian dies, we can't take all the blame."

"Gu Ling even dared to say we should compensate for Lian's life. Who does he think he is? I really can't understand why grandpa always favors him so." Situ Min stood up, his tone full of resentment.

Before he could finish his sentence, Situ Jing slapped him hard, "Shut up! Gu Ling is the Marquis of Chang Xin of Qian Country, not a person from the Situ family. Remember that!"

Situ Zhang hurriedly intervened, “Min, keep your mouth shut. Brother, don’t be angry, he knows his mistake.”

In the middle of the night, Situ Yao brought hot soup and desserts. Situ Jing instructed her to serve them to the Lin Family Brothers instead. He also invited a few imperial physicians from Liang Country to wait and had hot ginger soup prepared.

At the largest brothel in Yao City, the most famous courtesan and her maids mysteriously disappeared that night. In order to avoid hurting business, the madam lied that the courtesan had fallen ill and was sent away for treatment.

Dawn was breaking.

The first to return was Situ Xie. He looked exhausted, and upon hearing that Su Liang and Gu Ling had not returned, his face darkened considerably.

By the time it was broad daylight, news had already spread throughout Yao City.

The crown prince of Liang Country also arrived, he exchanged a few formal words with Lin Boyan and Lin Bojun and then left.

It wasn’t until approaching noon that good news finally came: Gu Ling and Su Liang had found Lian Shun and were on their way back!

Lin Boyan let out a huge sigh of relief. As long as they were alive, that was all that mattered.

The one who brought the news was sent by Su Liang. Another hour passed before they safely returned. Lian Shun and the guard he had rescued were both injured and had to be carried back.

The snow was still falling. The Lin Family Brothers had just seen Su Liang appear in their sight, when they heard Lian Shun’s teasing voice, “Su Xiaoliang, Gu Xiaoling has prepared a gift for you at Ning Xiang Residence. You will definitely like it!”

“Marquis Chang Xin, really?” Su Liang asked. Gu Ling shook his head, “No.”

Lin Boyan and Lin Bojun breathed a sigh of relief.

Ren Dong ran over and saw that Su Liang’s face was frozen red, but she hadn’t been injured, which made her relief.

Gu Ling’s face looked colder in the snow, ignoring the wet corners of his clothes, as if he was a celestial being walking out from the snow mountain.

Lian Shun’s right arm was fractured, and the guard had broken a leg. Other than a few scrapes and bruises, they were fine. Fortunately, the two had slid down from the mountain. Lian Shun was holding onto the guard the whole time and did everything possible to decrease their speed; otherwise, they might not have survived.

Lian Shun found a narrow crevice nearby where they landed and dragged the guard into it to shelter from the wind, otherwise they would have frozen to death.

Knowing that someone would come looking for them, Lian Shun and the guard took turns, shouting three times every fifteen minutes. This way, they could conserve their strength while also sending out a distress signal.

When Lian Shun heard Su Liang calling his name, he was ready to cry.

However, when Su Liang finally saw Lian Shun, he was sitting cross-legged in the crevice, his uninjured hand raised in front of him. He recited, "Amitabha," then said with a full smile, "I prayed to Buddha to send Su Xiaoliang to save me, and she really came. I must have been a fairy in Buddha's camp in my past life!"

Gu Ling stepped forward to pull up Lian Shun, who hugged her tightly, "Gu

Xiaoling, I thought I would never see you again, were you scared?" After Su Liang quickly treated Lian Shun and the guard that he had rescued, she led them away.

On their way back, due to the heavy snow, Su Liang and her group almost lost their way. Luckily, they bumped into a team sent by Peng Wei and were able to leave the Snow Mountain safely.

In the inn.

Su Liang was treating Lian Shun's injury and giving him medicine while Gu Ling watched.

"I originally wanted to scout the path for you all so we could go mountain climbing together, I didn't expect it to be so nerve-racking." Lian Shun chuckled, "Gu Xiaoling, after last night, don't you find Su Xiaoliang adorable?" Gu Ling shook her head, "No."

"Su Xiaoliang, he's an insincere guy. You don't have to be polite. Do whatever you want to him. If he doesn't comply, come find me." Lian Shun seriously told Su Liang.

Su Liang snorted lightly, "Find you? What can you do?"

Lian Shun also snorted, "I'll cry in front of him!"

Su Liang: ...That's unnecessary.

"Stop being ridiculous, eat something, and get some sleep." After fixing Lian Shun's arm, Su Liang warned him not to move recklessly.

"I can't hold the spoon with my left hand, Su Xiaoliang, you feed me." Lian Shun said.

"We're just ordinary friends, don't say things that might get misunderstood by Marquis Chang Xin. The only one I like is him." Su Liang walked away as soon as she finished her sentence.

"Gu Xiaoling, did you hear that? Su Xiaoliang was confessing her feelings to you! Are you emotionless? Are you an ice cube from Wolong Snow Mountain? Can nothing move you?" Lian Shun was speechless.

Gu Ling responded calmly, "When you cry in front of me, I will consider."

Lian Shun tried to blink hard, only to find it was incredibly difficult to shed tears, he had no idea how to do it...

Gu Ling held a bowl, allowing Lian Shun to use his left hand to hold the spoon, and drink a bowl of chicken soup.



“Don’t worry, his arm is okay, it can recover.” Su Liang said, then asked Lin

Bojun “Second brother, why did you decide to climb the snow mountain?”

Lin Bojun sighed, “Lian Shun heard the third son of King Yue’s Mansion mention how beautiful the snow mountain is, and about the climbing competition in the past. So, we decided to go and see, unaware of the dangers.”

“Did you know about the guards who signed the death waivers?” Su Liang asked again.

Lin Bojun was stunned, “A death waiver? I’ve never heard of it.”

Su Liang brought up the real reason why Duanmu Yi sent her here, which made the Lin Family brothers frown.

“I’ll discuss with someone before making a decision, you should pretend you don’t know.” Su Liang said.

Gu Ling walked in, exchanged a glance with Su Liang and averted his gaze, “I’ll go back to the King Yue’s Mansion first.”

“I’ll also go!” Su Liang stood up, “My luggage is still there.”

Ken Dong drove the carriage, taking Gu Ling and Su Liang to the King Yue’s Mansion.

“What’s this?” Gu Ling opened his hand, in which lay an teardrop-shaped Ink Jade Pendant.

Su Liang took out her piece, “Zhengzheng gave it to us.”

Gu Ling knew that Su Liang wouldn’t give him a gift for no reason, but he wasn’t disappointed and put it in his bag.

Su Liang whispered to him about the purpose of her coming, and Gu Ling, having heard about the Divine Craftsman Mu family, advised Su Liang not to act rashly, to inform him before doing anything and to plan together.

The carriage stopped outside the gate of King Yue’s Mansion, Su Liang got off first and extended her hand to help Gu Ling, but he avoided her and walked straight through the gates.

Su Liang chased after him, and met Situ Xie and his grandson Situ Jing halfway.

“Dr. Su, how is General Lin doing?” Situ Jing asked with concern.

“He won’t die.” Su Liang spoke with an indifferent expression.

“The incident yesterday was due to our poor planning. This Prince has already punished Zhangzhang and Minmin, I was just about to visit General Lin.” Situ Xie sighed.

“From what I heard from your two sons, those guards who followed up the mountain all signed death waivers. I’d like to see them.” Su Liang said coldly.

Situ Xie nodded upon hearing this, “Very well. Ling’er, take Divine Doctor Su to Xiangxiang Residence for rest first. Jing’er, go and get them for Divine Doctor Su to peruse.”

“Yes, Grandfather.” Situ Jing answered.

“I’m not tired, let’s go together.” Su Liang insisted on not budging an inch.

Situ Jing tried to persuade her again, “Divine Doctor Su, you’ve had a long journey and haven’t rested, why not head over to cousin Ling’s place to sit for a while first. ”

“I’m really not tired. If you don’t believe me, shall we compete?” Su Liang persisted.

A quarter of an hour later, the mystery was “solved”: the guards going mountaineering this season carried risks, the death waivers were appointed by Situ Jing. If a guard died, their family would receive a large sum of compensation. Situ Zhang let Situ Min handle the matter, but Situ Min forgot about it. Before departure when Situ Zhang asked about it, Situ Min falsely claimed everything was signed and mentioned it to Lian Shun and Lin Bojun.

So, Situ Zhang was not lying, the mistake lies solely with Situ Min.

Su Liang knew that there was no such death waiver at all, if she didn’t press on about it, the incident would have faded away. But she kept pushing for it, so the Situ family had no choice but to push Situ Min out to take responsibility.

While Su Liang was pressing hard, the reality was that if Lin Bojun and Lian Shun had known how dangerous it was to climb Wolong Snow Mountain to the point where guards had to sign death waivers, they definitely wouldn’t have gone.

In the end, Su Liang watched Situ Min get caned fifty times, till his skin was cracked and bleeding, unconscious.

“Since Prince Yue is handling things impartially and has given justice to Lian Shun, let’s leave this matter at this. I’m going off to Marquis Chang Xin for a cup of tea now, send someone to call me at Xiangxiang Residence when it’s time to treat Emperor Liang.” Su Liang finished speaking, and left with Ren Dong.

Situ Jing ordered someone to take Situ Min for treatment, he walked to Situ

Xie’s side, and whispered, “Grandfather, Su Liang, a mere divine doctor from

Qian Country, has been so domineering from the start, is this her true nature? Is she acting without fear of the consequences for Lian Shun, or does she have other intentions?”

“Is Minter being beaten unjustly?” Situ Xie stared at Situ Jing, eyes ablaze.

Situ Jing answered seriously, “In this matter, third brother was truly in the wrong, the beating was well-deserved.”

“Don’t underestimate Su Liang, she’s not just a Divine Doctor.” Situ Xie left Situ Jing with these meaningful words before he left to visit the injured Lian Shun at the inn.

Xiangxiang Residence.

Su Liang stared at the painting of Situ Ning on the wall, "Your mother is truly beautiful!"

Gu Ling opened the medicine box that Su Liang had left on the desk the day before, found several medicine bottles he didn't recognize inside, and took one out to inspect.

Su Liang turned her head and saw, quickly rushed over, "Don't touch!"

Gu Ling pulled the stopper from the bottle and replaced it immediately, "What kind of poison is it?"

Su Liang took back the medicine bottle and said two words, "Love Potion." Gu Ling furrowed his brows slightly, "What are you using this for?"

Su Liang moved the medicine bottle to the bottom of the box and took out another one to hand to Gu Ling, "This is a gift for you. It can neutralize any aphrodisiac that I currently know of."

Gu Ling took it, sniffed it and heard Su Liang say, "I went through a lot to make this. Remember to carry it with you, so that you won't be drugged by any bewitching women!"

Gu Ling gripped the medicine bottle in his hand, his eyes suddenly softened,

"You made this specifically for me?"

Su Liang, who was in the middle of taking things out of her bag, shook her head, "Not exactly, I made it for my own protection, but decided to give you one too. Oh right, Lian Ershan mentioned that there's a gift you prepared for me at Xiangxiang Residence, what is it?" Gu Ling's expression was faint, "It's me." Su Liang paused, "What?"

Gu Ling said, "What he spoke of, was me."

Su Liang laughed lightly, "Oh, I see. If it weren't for his fall yesterday, would Lian Ershan have packaged you up and presented you to me after I arrived? He'd have to put a big, big butterfly bow on the Great God, otherwise, the gift would lack soul."

Gu Ling: .

"But the two of you together are quite endearing." Su Liang said with a smile.

Gu Ling furrowed his brows, "Stop."

Su Liang shook her head, "I meant as friends. What are you thinking, Great God?"

"You," Gu Ling's voice faltered a moment, "Are you hungry?"

Chapter 277: I'm pregnant with his child.

Su Liang was not only tired and hungry but also in great need of a hot bath to relieve his fatigue.

The guesthouse Situ Xie arranged for Su Liang was the Han Xiangyuan, the courtyard closest to Ningxiang Residence, separated only by a small plum grove.

Gu Ling had heard from Situ Ning that Situ Xie once adopted an orphan girl named Situ Xiang, who grew up as Situ Nings elder sister. She ran away from home for a man before Situ Ning's wedding, and there has been no news of her ever since.

Han Xiangyuan was the place where Situ Xiang had lived. It had been vacant for many years and was recently refurbished and cleaned.

There was an artificial mountain in the courtyard. Su Liang walked closer and saw the two characters “NING” and “XIANG” written together, showing that the sisters had a good relationship.

The room was very clean. Although Su Liang was expected to arrive in two days, the thoughtful Situ Xie had already ordered people to burn high-quality silver charcoal in the room three days in advance, making the room comfortable and warm with a faint fragrance of cold plum, not stuffy at all. Even the room for Ren Dong was prepared to impeccable standards.

Su Liang could only say that Situ Xie’s level was really high.

However, ever since learning that the current Emperor Liang, who was nominally Situ Xie’s nephew, was in fact his unknown biological son, Su Liang couldn’t possibly have a positive moral evaluation of Situ Xie.

The servants of Prince Yue Masion

brought food and left it at the door for Ren Dong, then left with proper manners.

Su Liang called Ren Dong to join him, and after they had eaten, hot water was also brought over.

Since leaving Xuanbei City, they had been in a hurry to get to their destination, so Su Liang was finally able to take a hot bath; he felt all the pores in his body open up and sighed comfortably.

“Master, Princess Yaoguang has sent you some new clothes,” Ren Dong said from behind the screen.

“Hmm,” Su Liang closed his eyes and replied languidly, “Take them. I need clothes.”

Ren Dong added hot water twice more before Su Liang felt refreshed. He chose and wore a set of clothes sent by Situ Yao. They seemed to be specially prepared for Su Liang, made of the best Liang Country fabric, thick but not heavy, and designed in Qian Country’s popular style.

Ren Dong also received two sets of new clothes, one in women’s style and one in men’s, both of which fit her well and were appropriate for her servant’s status.

“Everyone in Prince Yue’s Masion is very thoughtful,” Ren Dong said.

“Except that third young master,” Su Liang remembered Situ Min’s bright eyes and how eagerly he approached her last night at the Wolong Snow Mountain and snorted softly. They had already become enemies, but perhaps Situ Min could be the breakthrough for the next thing that needs to be done. At least for now, he seemed to be the least thoughtful person.

When Su Liang woke up from her sleep, it was already dark outside, and she heard Ren Dong speaking with someone who seemed to be Gui Yue.

As Su Liang put on her clothes and got out of bed, she walked to the outer room, where Ren Dong entered, “Has the master woken up?” Without waiting for an answer, she turned and left, then quickly came back and explained, “I told Gui Yue to serve dinner now.”

Su Liang yawned, rubbed her face, and felt much more energetic. She walked over, opened the window, and saw the dim yellow light of the lanterns in the corridor. The snow that had stopped before noon began to fall again, and the artificial mountain in the courtyard had turned into a miniature snow mountain.

A cold wind brushed past her face, and Ren Dong brought something over, "This is a fragrant cream sent by Princess Yaoguang for you, master. Would you like to use it?"

Su Liang took it, opened it, and smelled the refreshing scent. Her face had been severely frostbitten when she entered the snow mountain last night and was now slightly red. She had run out of her own frostbite ointment, so she used some of Situ Yao's.

After Su Liang had dinner, Gui Yue appeared again to take her to see Situ Xie.

"Is Gu Ling in the mansion?" Su Liang asked.

Gui Yue shook her head, "The young master hasn't returned yet from visiting General Lin at the post station."

When Su Liang met with Situ Xie in the front hall, Situ Jing was also present.

Seeing Ren Dong carrying a medicine box, Situ Xie smiled and got up, "It seems that Divine Doctor Su is ready to enter the palace to treat the emperor."

Su Liang nodded, "That is precisely the purpose for which my emperor sent me here. It has already been delayed for a day and night."

With a serious expression, Situ Xie said, "It's all because of Min's mischief. After the emperor wakes up, I will explain the whole story to him."

"Prince Yue is truly selfless." Su Liang smiled lightly.

Situ Xie and Su Liang left Prince Yue Mansion, each taking a carriage towards the Imperial Palace of Liang Country.

At the post station,

Lian Shun thought Gu Ling had come to accompany him to avoid Su Liang since he hadn't left even when it was dark. He suggested going back to Prince Yue's Mansion together.

"You can stay on this side." Gu Ling said.

"Why?" Lian Shun was puzzled, "If I go to Prince Mansion, it would be more convenient for Su Xiaoliang to treat me."

Lin Boyan spoke up, "Just listen to Marquis Gu." Lian Shun's injury at the post house gives Su Liang a legitimate reason to shuttle between the post house and Prince Mansion. The same goes for Gu Ling. At Prince Mansion, every move is being watched, which makes it convenient for the two of them to meet at the post house.

"Fine." Lian Shun agreed since Lin Boyan also said so.

“Xiaoliang should be back treating Emperor Liang today, right?” Lin Bojun asked, “I wonder how it’s going, if she has a way. If Xiaoliang is confident, the things we have to do next will be much smoother.”

“Su Xiaoliang can, of course, do it, there’s nothing she can’t do!” Lian Shun had great confidence in Su Liang.

At this moment in Liang Country’s Imperial Palace, Su Liang realized why she had been specifically asked to come as soon as she saw Emperor Situ Han.

The twisted mouth and askew eye, commonly known as facial paralysis, is a symptom of stroke in this world.

And Su Liang’s medical skills were first known widely because she cured Old Master Qin of his stroke.

At the same time, Su Liang understood why Emperor Situ Han had not shown his face these days. As an emperor of a country, he could not let people see him in this state.

After Su Liang had taken Situ Han’s pulse, Situ Xie hurriedly asked, “How about it? Does Divine Doctor Su have confidence?”

Su Liang nodded, “Sixty percent confidence, I will give it a try.”

Situ Xie’s face was filled with joy, as the awake Situ Han couldn’t help but open his mouth to say something, but drooled out.

Situ Xie wiped Situ Han’s mouth with a handkerchief and gently patted his shoulder, “Your Majesty, don’t worry, with Divine Doctor Su here, you’ll definitely be cured.”

Su Liang wrote a prescription for Situ Han to take orally and then administered acupuncture for the first time. She also explained some precautions that needed attention, which Situ Xie asked his people to carefully note down.

Just as Su Liang was about to leave, the Empress Dowager of Liang Country came and thanked Su Liang gratefully.

Su Liang dealt with it and secretly observed the interactions between Situ Xie and Empress Dowager Min. She didn’t see anything unusual because Situ Xie turned his back to give orders to chambermaids and eunuchs to take care of Emperor Situ Han after bowing to Min’s mother.

When leaving the palace, Situ Xie said to Su Liang, “We’ll host a banquet for Divine Doctor Su when the Emperor’s health recovers.”

“I’ll do my best.” Su Liang said.

“How long do you think it will take, Divine Doctor Su?” Situ Xie asked.

“At least a month.” Su Liang said, “I have a request. I hope King Yue can help me.”

Situ Xie nodded, “Whatever Divine Doctor Su needs, just say it.”

“Let Gu Ling stay with me.” Su Liang said.

Situ Xie was stunned for a moment but then laughed deeper, "Prince is very pleased that Divine Doctor Su is so fond of his grandson. I'll talk to him about this, and I'll also send someone to inform Emperor Qian."

It was already December, and Su Liang had an eighty percent chance to heal Emperor Situ Han, but she only mentioned sixty percent. She would have to stay for a month, which meant spending New Year in Yao City. She planned, however, to send the Lin Family Brothers home first, as both their wives were pregnant and they were supposed to be back by the New Year as agreed.

Situ Xie knew about Gu Ling's previous disguise as Ning Jing, but he didn't know the specifics of Gu Ling and Su Liang's relationship.

On the surface, Su Liang was pursuing Gu Ling, and Gu Ling was avoiding her.

So it was normal for Su Liang to want to stay in Yao City treating Emperor Liang and asking Gu Ling to stay as well.

Situ Xie would send someone to inform Duanmu Yi, who would have no objection because he had ulterior motives and wanted Su Liang to cooperate with Gu Ling in obtaining what he wanted.

Su Liang returned to Prince Masion and ran into Gu Ling, who had just returned from the post house. She chased after him to Ningxiangju.

Knowing Emperor Situ Han's condition, Gu Ling agreed to Su Liang's plan to let Lin Boyan and Lin Bojun go home first. He and Su Liang would stay, openly treating Emperor Liang while secretly searching for the descendants of the Mu Family and the Mechanism Map.

"What about Lian Shun?" Gu Ling asked Su Liang.

Su Liang hesitated for a moment, "I forgot about him. Let him go, too. After all, he's injured, and staying would hold us back."

If Lian Shun were here, he would be "heartbroken". But Su Liang was talking about a very realistic issue. What she needed to do was risky, and she had to be prepared to be hunted when she left. It would be dangerous for the injured Lian

Shun to stay.

"I'll relay your words to him." Gu Ling said.

"The things that the emperor has asked you to do, discuss with Situ Xie tomorrow, I think he won't refuse. Then let the two Lin brothers take Lian Shun back with them. Take everyone you can." Su Liang said.

The next day, when Su Liang went to the post house to change Lian Shun's medicine, he had already been informed by Gu Ling that he was to leave. "Su Xiaoliang, am I really your best friend?" Lian Shun asked with a look of resentment.

Su Liang nodded, "Yes, I am your best friend."

Lian Shun: ... Actually, he understood that it was for his own good to let him go first, but he really didn't want to leave.

“Will my injury heal in a month?” Lian Shun asked, “If I can recover before you leave, why can’t I stay?”

Su Liang shook his head, “Haven’t you heard of the saying ‘injured muscles and bones take a hundred days? It’s impossible to fully recover in a month. If you get injured again, it’ll be even more troublesome.’”

“Although I know you’re doing this for my own good, I still want to hit you.” Lian Shun said gloomily.

Su Liang nodded, “When your arm is healed, come and hit me, and I guarantee I won’t kill you.”

“Ah! You bastard! Can’t you be a little gentler to me?” Lian Shun was so angry.

Su Liang shook his head, “Nope. My gentleness is reserved for Gu beauty.”

Lian Shun snorted, “Don’t you know I want to stay and help you pursue Gu Xiaoling? You heartless guy!”

“No need, I run fast, I’ll chase her myself, you’d just be in the way.” Su Liang said.

Lian Shun rolled his eyes, “You and Gu Xiaoling are really a match made in heaven when it comes to annoying me!”

“By the way, when I passed by Xuanbei City, Che Yun had already received the order to move south. Do you want to go with him? After all, your home is there.” Su Liang asked.

“Moving south?” Lian Shun was stunned, “Going to Jiaye City? How come I didn’t hear anything about it?”

“I thought you knew since you two are so close. It seems that he must have asked my foster father to issue the order after you came to Liang Country.” Su Liang said.

“Foster father?” Lian Shun was taken aback again.

Upon learning that Su Liang recognized Xing Ji as his foster father, Lian Shun grinned, “When I go back, I’ll also recognize Marquis as my foster father. He will definitely agree, and then I will be your brother, hahaha!”

“That’s not necessary.” Su Liang shook his head.

“I think it’s very necessary.” Lian Shun said seriously, “It’s too late for me to rush back to Jiaye City for the New Year now, so I’ll have to see when I get to Xuanbei City.”

In the negotiation with Situ Xie, Lin Boyan mainly spoke while Gu Ling sat and sipped tea, as if it had nothing to do with her.

For Qian Country’s somewhat aggressive demands, Situ Xie agreed to most of them after some bargaining. He stated that it was firstly for his granddaughter Gu Ling, and secondly to thank Su Liang for traveling thousands of miles to Yao City to treat Emperor Liang’s illness.



With the deal settled, the Lin Brothers would set off for their return journey three days later. Gu Ling, as per Su Liang's request to Situ Xie, was left behind.

For the next three days, Su Liang went to the Imperial Palace at a fixed time every day in the carriage sent by the palace, treated Situ Han, and then returned to the Prince's Mansion. She spent half a day at the post house treating Lian Shun.

As for Gu Ling, she stayed in the post house during the day, so when Su Liang came, the two were able to meet. There was very little time for them to be alone together. When discussing matters, Lin Boyan was present, and at other times, Lian Shun was there for the most part.

Lian Shun listed all the places he had played and the delicious food he had eaten in the days before Su Liang's arrival, urging Su Liang to take Gu Ling to try them.

"Marquis Gu might not be willing to go with me." Su Liang smiled.

Lian Shun's expression turned serious, "Gu Xiaoling, you must say you're willing now in front of me, or we'll break off our friendship."

Gu Ling nodded, "Fine, we're no longer friends."

The Lin Brothers both lowered their heads and sipped tea, hiding their laughter. Only Lian Shun in the room was kept in the dark, not knowing that Gu Ling and Su Liang were putting on a show, and he was wholeheartedly trying to bring them together. No matter how you looked at it, it seemed like Su Liang and Gu Ling were teaming up to tease Lian Shun.

"Gu Xiaoling, if you don't change your mind, I'll start pursuing Su Xiaoliang again." Lian Shun snorted.

Gu Ling nodded slightly, "Alright."

Su Liang spoke at the same time, "Alright, you've been rejected by me again."

Lian Shun: ... That's probably what being friends with the wrong person is like...

The day before the Lin Family Brothers left, Su Liang took Ren Dong to stroll around Yao City and bought some interesting local specialties as gifts for his family and friends, asking them to take them back home.

Situ Xie gave Su Liang a box of tea, the famous Thousand Mountain Snow exclusively for the Liang Country royal family. Su Liang also gave it to Lin Boyan to bring back and split it between Old Master Qin and Lin Shuzhi.

Su Liang saw a beautiful little pony, bought it for a hefty price, and wanted to give it to Zhengzheng.

That night, Situ Xie held another banquet to see off the Lin Family Brothers and Lian Shun.

Early the next morning, Su Liang escorted the Lin Family Brothers and Lian Shun's group to the city gate.

"Gu Xiaoling is really insincere, not even coming to see me off!" Lian Shun complained. "Su Xiaoliang, you must discipline him well, bring him under control, and then you both can call me brother together."

Su Liang nodded, "Sleep on it, dreams have everything you want."

When Su Liang returned to the Prince's Mansion, he went straight to Ningxiang Residence.

Upon entering, he saw Gu Ling with a book in front of him and a piece of paper in his hand.

"What is that?" Su Liang asked.

"It's a book I borrowed from Linglong Pavilion. There's a letter inside." Gu Ling said and handed the yellowed paper to Su Liang.

The paper had crisscrossed fold marks, was already torn, and the writing was not clear. But it was still legible, obviously having been stuffed in the book many years ago.

There was no salutation, but there was a signature, the character "Xiang", which should be written by Situ Xiang, the original owner of Han Xiangyuan, Situ Xie's adopted daughter.

"I'm pregnant with his child."

"I don't ask for you to be with me, but please, take me away, no matter where." "I really want to tell everything to Ning'er, but I'm afraid she'll hate me." "I'm suffocating, where the hell are you, save me."

After reading the letter, Su Liang's expression was indescribable, "Wasn't it said that Situ Xiang eloped with someone? But according to this letter, she has someone she likes, but she's pregnant with someone else's child and can't get away."

This book was read by Situ Xiang, who hid the letter in it. The book was returned to Linglong Pavilion by someone else, but nobody opened it before today.

Su Liang wondered if the person Situ Xiang wrote the letter to had finally taken her away, or if there was another story.

Su Liang looked at the line "I'm carrying his child" again and frowned, "Without mentioning a name, the other person would know who it is. It should be a man from the Prince's Mansion, right? Could it be Situ Xie? He and his adopted daughter..."

Su Liang shook his head, "Too terrifying. I can't make such assumptions without evidence. It could also be one of your uncles. The only thing that can be confirmed is that, from Situ Xiang's side, you may have an unknown cousin or cousin sister, if the child mentioned in Situ Xiang's letter was born and still alive."

Gu Ling was not interested in this topic, "Have you had enough rest?"

Su Liang nodded, "Not bad. What's up?"

"I want to eat dumplings." Gu Ling said.

Su Liang nodded, "In order to pursue you, I came to Liang Country and even cooked for you personally. I'm really the number one lovesick fool."

Gu Ling's face was calm, "You're not." With such good looks, Su Liang's heart didn't waver at all, making him the number one blockhead.

“It’s okay, being lovesick for you is nothing to be ashamed of.” Su Liang said casually, “I want to eat dumplings too.”

When leaving Ningxiang Residence, Su Liang finally discovered the ice-sculpted rabbit under the plum tree, praised it as “so beautiful” and decisively took it with her.

Gu Ling watched this scene from the window, and turning around, his eyes were filled with a shallow smile, all because of her....

#### Chapter 278: Selling Fan Scheme

Upon learning that Su Liang was going to cook personally, Situ Yao hurried to HanXiangyuan.

“Dr Su, is it because the food here doesn’t suit your taste?” Situ Yao asked upon seeing Su Liang.

Preparing lavish meals as hospitality, if the guest wants to cook for themselves, could be seen as an insult to the host’s family.

Su Liang smiled and explained, “Princess misunderstood. The food in King Yue’s residence is excellent, and I have no issues with it. I just wanted to make something by hand that Marquis Changxin loves.”

Situ Yao stared for a moment, then laughed. “I see, Dr Su is truly kind to my cousin. What does he like to eat? He wouldn’t tell me before.”

Su Liang shook her head, “This is a secret that I got from General Nian and my close friends. I can’t share.”

Situ Yao could not help but smile. “In that case, I won’t ask. If Dr Su needs anything, just ask Gui Yue. Grandfather said to have her at your disposal.”

“Thank you for the clothes and perfume you sent, Princess, ” Su Liang said.

“You’re too polite, Dr Su.” As soon as Situ Yao finished speaking, she left without asking to watch Su Liang cook or taste her skills.

Having not met many times but Situ Yao’s impression on Su Liang is very “King Yue”-style perfection, with impeccable manners and conduct. Situ Xie’s eldest grandson, Situ Jing, is the same.

Being of royal blood, whether or not wearing a mask to maintain such an image is proof enough to be smart.

In comparison, Situ Min seemed somewhat “inadequate” in power.

Waiting for Gui Yue to deliver the ingredients Su Liang needed, the servants of King Yue’s residence had already tidied up the kitchen for use.

Su Liang casually asked, “Is the Third Young Master alright?”

Gui Yue shook her head, “I’m not sure. I’ll go and ask.”

Su Liang didn't stop her either. It was her "fault" that Situ Min got beaten up, so she should show some "concern."

When Su Liang started kneading the dough, Gui Yue returned and reported Situ Min's situation in detail. He could only lay down, unable to get out of bed, with an Imperial Physician coming to change his medicine every day. He had a fever last night, but it had subsided now.

Su Liang sighed softly, "If you need me to treat the Third Young Master, just let me know."

Gui Yue nodded, "Thank you, Dr Su. I will report to the prince."

Situ Xie's response was that Situ Min was not in any serious danger, and it would be inconvenient for Su Liang to treat him. He thanked her for her kind intentions.

Su Liang was not surprised by this result and didn't really want to treat Situ Min. However, this back-and-forth should make Situ Min feel the smugness and ridicule from her, the "instigator", upon learning about it.

Su Liang did it on purpose. If everyone in King Yue's residence was like Situ Xie, it would be too peaceful, making it difficult to find a breakthrough.

Indeed, when Su Liang brought in the cooked dumplings to Ning Xiang's residence, Situ Min was informed that Su Liang had inquired about his situation and offered to treat him, he immediately became angry and knocked over the medicine brought by the servant.

"Marquis Gu, I made you something to eat. Can I come in?" Su Liang knocked on the door.

"No need," came Gu Ling's cold voice from inside.

Gu Ming stood at the entrance of the courtyard, with eyes fixed on his nose and his nose fixed on his heart.

Su Liang knocked on the door again, "Marquis Gu, the Emperor has a verbal message for you that I forgot to pass on earlier. Please open the door."

The door opened, Su Liang entered and closed it from the inside, blocking the view from outside.

Placing the dumplings on the table and the special dipping sauce for Gu Ling in front of him, Su Liang couldn't help but sigh, "Had I known pursuing you would be so exhausting, I should have let you pursue me. That way I could eat dumplings made by you."

Gu Ling silently looked at Su Liang for a moment and picked up his chopsticks.

"I was thinking, when you firmly reject me, and I give up heartbroken, followed by your regret and realizing you've fallen for me, then you would start to pursue me, but I wouldn't agree. Haha!" Su Liang found it more interesting as she spoke, "If only we could go back to my original world, we could self-direct and perform a TV series."

Seeing Su Liang enjoying herself, Gu Ling slightly nodded, "Whatever you say."

“Just kidding. We’ll see, let’s discuss it if needed. We’re not putting on a show for the sake of it.” Su Liang shook her head, noticing that Gu Ling had already eaten four dumplings, and quickly used her chopsticks to split the dumplings in half.

This was just a snack, as the main meal was prepared by King Yue’s Mansion. So Su Liang didn’t make too many dumplings. She wanted to split them evenly based on the initial number of dumplings, but Gu Ling insisted on dividing them based on the current number.

In the end, of course, Su Liang was defeated. It had always been like this.

After finishing the dumplings, Su Liang brought up the real issue, “I can also apply to Situ Xie to borrow books from the Linglong Pavilion. But I don’t think the Mechanism Map is in there.” Since the ladies and gentlemen of King Yue’s Mansion could go in and borrow books and even Gu Ling could go.

Gu Ling had been staying in King Yue’s Mansion for some time and hadn’t found anyone suspicious like descendants of the Mu Family.

When Su Liang returned to Han Xiangyuan, the ice sculpture rabbit carved by Gu Ling was placed on the windowsill outside her room, illuminated by the lanterns, crystal clear, like a crystal.

Su Liang sighed that the Great God was truly skillful, and when she saw the hidden weapon fan she had put on the table, which Gu Ling had given her, she suddenly had an idea.

So, Su Liang went to Ning Xiangju again under the pretext of looking for a lost jade pendant.

“Great God, I have an idea.” Su Liang said in a low voice, “No one besides Ren Dong has seen the hidden weapon fan you gave me. Why don’t I disguise myself and sell it, claiming to be a descendant of the Mu Family, to see if it attracts anyone?”

Gu Ling shook his head, “No.”

Su Liang frowned, “What’s wrong?”

“Your martial arts are too weak, save it for self-defense.” Gu Ling’s face was calm. He couldn’t sell the gift he had personally made and given to Su Liang.

Su Liang, helpless, asked, “Then what do you suggest?”

Gu Ling took out his own fan, “Use mine.”

Su Liang held her forehead, “Great God, can you finish your sentences all at once? I thought my plan was unfeasible.”

“I’ll do it,” Gu Ling said. Su Liang’s figure was not easy to disguise, making it easy for people to see that she was a woman and arousing suspicion.

“Alright.” Su Liang turned and left, “Sorry for the disturbance. Tomorrow, if Marquis Gu has time, we can go out together?” Gu Ling’s indifferent voice came from the room, “I won’t have time.” Su Liang left with a “regretful” expression on her face.

The next day, when Su Liang went to the imperial palace, Gu Ling asked Gu Ming if there were any temples in the city.

Gu Ling actually knew there were some, having secretly visited one when he had come to Yao City a few years earlier.

“Qingjing Temple is quite popular, would Young Master like to go?” Gu Ming asked.

Gu Ling nodded, “Prepare a carriage.”

Gu Ming quickly prepared a carriage and reported to Situ Xie.

When it was time to set off, Situ Jing appeared and offered to accompany Gu Ling. Gu Ling didn’t refuse.

“Is cousin going to Qingjing Temple to offer incense?” Situ Jing asked with a smile.

Gu Ling shook his head, “No.”

“Then to see the scenery? The scenery at Qingjing Temple is also a unique feature of Yao City,” Situ Jing said. Gu Ling shook his head again, “No.”

“Then...,” Situ Jing expressed curiosity.

“Find someone to play chess with.” Gu Ling’s expression was indifferent.

Situ Jing was slightly surprised, “Are there acquaintances of my cousin at Qingjing Temple?”

Gu Ling shook his head, “No. But the old monks generally have very formidable chess skills.”

Situ Jing grinned, “I see. I heard that my cousin once lived in Huguo Temple of

Qian Country for quite a while. Were you there to play chess with the Abbot Master?”

Gu Ling nodded lightly, “Yes.”

“I was joking, but it turns out to be true.” Situ Jing exclaimed, “My cousin’s chess skills must be exceptional indeed. Although I’m not very proficient in chess, I would like to learn from you when the opportunity arises. My grandfather also loves chess; I’m sure he would be delighted to play with my cousin.”

“Okay.” Gu Ling agreed.

Yao City is surrounded by mountains, and even the Imperial Palace was built on the slopes. However, Qingjing Temple is not located on a mountain. The architectural style is different from Qian Country’s temples. The temple’s golden brilliance is very eye-catching, and there is even a nine-story high tower.

The carriage stopped at Qingjing Temple, and Situ Jing accompanied Gu Ling inside, going straight to find Master Xuanqing.

When Master Xuanqing learned Gu Ling’s intention, he gladly agreed.

Situ Jing sat beside them, watching Gu Ling and Master Xuanqing’s chess game. They played two games, each winning one.

As Master Xuanqing found a worthy opponent and Gu Ling showed no intention of leaving, Situ Jing accompanied them for an hour before finally getting restless. He said he had other matters to attend to and left first.

After giving acupuncture to Situ Han this time, Su Liang requested to visit the Liang Country's Imperial Palace and was granted permission, with Situ Xie even accompanying him personally.

The Liang Country's Imperial Palace is a vast complex, built according to the terrain, and has many peculiar and beautiful sights. As Su Liang listened to Situ Xie's introduction, he looked on very seriously, occasionally praising the scenery.

The Imperial Garden of the Liang Country's Imperial Palace is built in a terraced style, with rare plum blossoms in full bloom. And there is even a greenhouse with many precious orchids planted inside.

"Ling'er's mother loved playing here when she was little," said Situ Xie, suddenly bringing up Situ Ning.

Su Liang looked very interested, "Why did the daughter of King Yue marry Gu Ling's father?"

Situ Xie sighed deeply, "It's a long story. Didn't Ling'er tell you?" Su Liang shook his head, "He's not very talkative, even to me."

"That child has been wise since he was young. He sees through the world very clearly. It's not that he doesn't know how to interact with others; he simply doesn't want to." Situ Xie's assessment of Gu Ling was so accurate that it surprised Su Liang.

After another sigh, Situ Xie talked about the story of Situ Ning marrying Gu Yuan, and even mentioned Situ Xiang.

After Situ Xiang's disappearance, Situ Ning had gone everywhere in search of her.

At that time, Qian and Liang countries had been fighting for a long time. The situation initially favored Liang Country, but Qian Country's Bei Jingwang, Xing Ji, managed to capture the general, Wei Teng, and the outcome of the war changed dramatically.

When the news reached Yao City, Situ Xie was ordered to supervise the battle.

Situ Ning took advantage of Situ Xie's absence and sneak out of the house, intending to search for Situ Xiang dressed as a man.

When Situ Xie saw his beloved daughter again, she was in Qian Country's army, saved from danger by the young General Gu Yuan of Qian Country.

Continuing the fight would be unfavorable for Liang Country. When the two sides negotiated peace, they mentioned a marriage alliance. Liang Country had no princesses of suitable age, only one princess – Situ Ning.

"I was foolish back then. For the sake of the big picture, I agreed to let Ning'er get married. She said she admired Gu Yuan, so I personally facilitated their marriage. Qian Country's Former Emperor also agreed. I thought it would be better than

marrying into the Royal Family since she and Gu Yuan shared mutual feelings. Who knew that Gu Yuan was ambitious, causing Ning'er to die of illness and even plotting a rebellion, nearly preventing me from even catching a glimpse of my only grandson?" Situ Xie mentioned Gu Yuan with resentment in his voice.

For the first time, Su Liang heard the story involving Xing Ji. But the incident of Xing Ji had no direct connection with Gu Yuan and Situ Ning's marriage.

By looking at Gu Ling's appearance, it was evident that Gu Yuan must have been a handsome man, or he would not have caught Situ Ning's eye.

But as for the story Situ Xie told, Su Liang was somewhat skeptical. Especially in regard to Gu Yuan's rebellion, there might be some influence from Situ Xie, but it can no longer be verified.

"I heard that Han Xiangyuan, where I'm staying, was once the residence of King Yue's adopted daughter, Situ Xiang. After so many years, there is still no news about her?" Su Liang asked.

Situ Xie shook his head, "I have searched all the places I could, but there is still no trace. I just hope she lives well and I ask for nothing more."

"There is something I don't understand. Since Gu Ling's mother's marriage turned out like this, why did King Yue send his only granddaughter to marry into the royal family of Qian Country?" Su Liang asked Situ Xie.

Situ Xie gave a bitter smile upon hearing this, "It's hard to defy an imperial edict."

Su Liang: ...I don't believe you...

"I also nope that Qian country and Llang country can maintain peace for a long time." Situ Xie sighed, "After this year, Yaoyao will marry into Qian Country. I hope Master Su will take care of her more."

Su Liang said solemnly, "King Yue, don't worry. His Highness the Crown Prince is a person of noble character, and he will not let Princess Yaoguang be wronged. "

After visiting Liang Country's Imperial Palace, Su Liang returned to King Yue's Mansion, and as soon as he entered, he asked where Gu Ling was.

Upon learning that Gu Ling had gone to Qingjing Temple and had not yet returned, Su Liang turned around and went there too.

It wasn't until the evening that Gu Ling returned from Qingjing Temple, with Su Liang following behind.

The next day, Peng Fan came to invite Su Liang to be a guest at Peng Mansion tomorrow, and Su Liang happily accepted.

Meanwhile, Gu Ling went to Qingjing Temple again to play chess with Master Xuanqing for the whole day, this time without Situ Jing following her.



On the third day, after Su Liang administered acupuncture to Situ Han in the palace, he went to Peng Mansion.

Gu Ling, like the previous two days, went to Qingjing Temple.

That day, a piece of news quickly spread in Yao City. A mysterious young man, who claimed to be a descendant of the divine craftsman of the former dynasty, the Mu Family, sold a hidden weapon folding fan to the Treasure Pavilion at a high price of 5,000 silver taels!

When Su Liang received the news, she was chatting with Peng Wei.

“Really?” Peng Wei stood up in surprise after hearing what Peng Fan said, “I have to see for myself!” He realized that Su Liang was still there, and hurriedly called her, ‘Girl, hurry up, come with me to take a look!’

As Su Liang followed him out, she asked, “What did the Divine Craftsman Mu Family do?”

“You don’t even know this, you are too young. In the former dynasty, the Mu Family was very powerful!” Peng Wei told Su Liang about the incredible things the Mu Family had done, but unfortunately, they are all lost now.

“Grandfather, what if that person lied about being a descendant of the Mu Family in order to sell for a high price?” Peng Fan raised a doubt.

Peng Wei nodded, “Of course there is such a possibility, but if it is really a descendant of the Mu Family, it would be amazing!”

“The Treasure Pavilion couldn’t keep him, so he must be a master.” Peng Fan said.

Su Liang jokingly said, “Master Peng, didn’t you say that you could never repay my great kindness? How about buying that precious fan and giving it to me? I really want it. ”

Peng Wei’s face changed, “Deal! Hurry! If we go later, it might be taken by someone else!”

The Treasure Pavilion in Yao City was surrounded by a crowd.

Peng Wei dragged Su Liang, squeezing through the crowd to enter, and saw that Situ Xie had already arrived, holding an exquisite folding fan in his hand, not yet unfolded.

After Peng Wei saluted Situ Xie, he looked at the manager of the Treasure Pavilion, “Did King Yue buy it already?”

The manager subconsciously shook his head, and Peng Wei clapped his hands, “That’s great! I’ll take it! The 5,000 silver banknotes will be sent right over! King Yue, please feel free to appreciate it! I bought this to give to my life-saving benefactor, Master Su!”

Situ Xie’s hand paused, Su Liang smiled, “Thank you, Master Peng, then I’ll gladly accept. I want to give it to Marquis Chang Xin, I hope he will like it.”

The manager of the Treasure Pavilion was sweating. He originally thought it was a treasure, even if it wasn’t made by a descendant of the Mu Family, dismantling it and copying a batch of it would still make a lot of money, but now it has attracted so many wealthy and powerful people.

With everyone watching, Peng Wei handed the silver banknotes to the manager, and Situ Xie had no choice but to give the fan to Su Liang.

Among the crowd, there was an old man with a hunched back. His gaze fixed on Su Liang for a moment, then he turned around and walked away with faltering steps....

Chapter 279: 279. Feign weakness to capture the enemy

A folding fan attracted the attention of many in Yao City.

If it hadn't been intercepted by Peng Wei, it would have fallen into the hands of King Yue. Other than the always honest and impulsive General Peng, no one dared to openly compete with Situ Xie for it.

Not only was Su Liang a great benefactor of the Peng family, but he was also treating Emperor Liang's Situ Han. This was one of the reasons Situ Xie did not publicly humiliate Peng Wei.

As Su Liang was holding the fan and about to leave with the Peng family, Situ Jing laughed and asked, "Dr. Su, could you show everyone how powerful the hidden weapons made by the descendant of the Mu family are?" As soon as this was said, it immediately drew a chorus of agreement.

"I don't know how to use it, and I'm afraid I might accidentally hurt myself or others." Su Liang politely refused.

Situ Xie spoke up, "I just had a look and let me give it a try?"

Su Liang raised his eyebrows, "Of course. Please, King Yue." He handed the folding fan to Situ Xie smoothly.

Outside the Treasure Pavilion, a large space was cleared, and onlookers craned their necks, afraid of missing any exciting moments.

Situ Xie stood in the middle, carefully examining the fan again before suddenly opening it and aiming at a pine tree near the entrance of the Treasure Pavilion.

Several silver flashes went by, and the silver needles pierced the hard tree bark and stuck firmly to the tree, with only a tiny tail exposed.

If they had hit a person, one could imagine the consequences.

Hidden weapons, like martial arts, are a means of attack, with speed being the most important factor—only the fastest prevails.

Such a small fan, with a close range and a speed too fast to see clearly, had a considerable force behind it. If poison was applied to the silver needles, the lethality would be doubled.

Su Liang bowed, walking towards Situ Xie, "King Yue knows how to use it at a glance, admirable."

Situ Xie smiled, returned the folding fan to Su Liang, and shared his thoughts.

Peaceful harmony prevailed.

"This isn't an antique. Perhaps the master who made this fan is the mysterious

Mr. Mu. I'd like to make his acquaintance. " Su Liang sighed with regret, "Wouldn't King Yue send people to look for Mr. Mu in the city? If they find him, could you introduce me?"

Situ Xie's expression did not change at all, nodding with a smile, "Sure."

Peng Wei, standing nearby, knew this was nonsense. If they could really find a descendant of the Mu family, how could Situ Xie let Su Liang know? This was not a trivial matter but a matter of state.

Su Liang's words, however, gave people the impression that she did not fully understand the importance of the descendant of the Mu family.

Under everyone's watchful eyes, Su Liang took the precious folding fan back to King Yue's Mansion and once again inquired about Gu Ling upon entering the mansion. Learning that he had gone to Qingjing Temple and had not yet returned, she went to find him.

By evening, Gu Ling and Su Liang returned to King Yue's Mansion one after the other. Situ Jing soon received news from Gu Ming: Gu Ling had refused Su Liang's gift of the folding fan.

"My cousin Ling really has no desires." Situ Jing sighed, "The one claiming to be a descendant of the Mu family seems to have vanished into thin air and left no trace. Why did he sell the folding fan? Just for five thousand silver?" Situ Xie put down his teacup, "Have Yaoyao interact more with Su Liang."

Situ Jing nodded, "Alright, I will remind my sister again."

After Situ Jing left, only Situ Xie was left in the study. The bookshelf slowly spun, revealing a hidden door from which a man emerged. Situ Xie gestured to the man, who sat down in the shadowy corner.

Situ Xie described the fan that had appeared in the Treasure Pavilion today and asked the man, "Could it be your master's work?"

The man who spoke had a very young voice, "Such exquisite hidden weapons are not something an ordinary person can make. It must have been my master who came to look for me and wanted to let us know he was here with this move. If he finds me, he will definitely kill me."

"Mu Yu, I need the half of the secret mechanism manual in your master's hands." Situ Xie said coldly, "Otherwise, the half you gave me is worthless."

Duanmu Yi's information was not wrong. Indeed, a descendant of the Mu family had joined Situ Xie, and he had brought with him the secret mechanism manual that the royal families of the three countries had been secretly searching for. This man, named Mu Yu, resided in Situ Xie's study.

Unfortunately, Mu Yu brought only half of the manual. Each page of the horizontally split half was incomplete, without a single complete diagram, rendering it useless.

"I didn't expect Master to split the manual in half. He must have been guarding against me!" Mu Yu's tone was a bit resentful, "If I had known, I would have..."

"I don't want to hear nonsense." Situ Xie said coldly, "The place you mentioned is already empty. The house has been burned to the ground, and nothing has been left."

If today's fan was indeed made by your master, he must be in Yao City. Tell me, how do we find him?"

Mu Yu shook his head, "No, Master has been in hiding for many years. There has been no one else beside me. But how did a young man sell the folding fan to the Treasure Pavilion today?"

"How old are you? Do you really think your master has no children or other disciples?" Situ Xie sneered.

"This..." After a moment of silence, Mu Yu spoke up again, "King Yue is right. Master must have kept something from me. His appearance is already known to you. Just now, I remembered something. Master has made many hidden weapons, but they all ended up destroyed. He said that our ancestors left an injunction that descendants of the Mu family should not let any weapons fall into the hands of others, as it would cause bloodshed."

"He is skilled in this aspect, but can only hide his identity and bow to the so-called inheritance. It's not the weapon's fault, it's the fault of the world being divided into three parts." Situ Xie said coldly, "As long as I can see your master, I can try to persuade him."

"Your Highness, what I just mentioned is a way to find my master!" Mu Yu said excitedly, "If that fan is my master's, he would definitely take it back, no matter whose hands it is in!"

Situ Xie's eyes narrowed, "That fan is in the Prince's Mansion of Yue, this prince will keep an eye on it. You can go back."

With the end of the conversation, Mu Yu returned to the secret chamber behind the bookshelf, and Situ Xie pushed open the window and leaped out.

It was a silent night.

The next day when Su Liang met Situ Xie in the hall, she found bloodshot in his eyes, indicating that he did not sleep well last night.

Situ Xie's gaze fell on the folding fan in Su Liang's hand, he smiled and said,

"Su Divine Doctor, you cannot bring this item into the palace. It's not that I don't trust you, it's just the rules."

Su Liang laughed lightly, "I understand." It was indeed inappropriate for a person from Qian Country to take a hidden weapon to meet the Emperor of Liang Country.

Su Liang handed the fan to Ren Dong, "I will take it back after I leave the palace. It's not just because of the hidden weapon. I really like this fan, and I think it's a great match for Gu Ling, but he doesn't want it."

Hearing this, Situ Xie chuckled, "It's getting late, let's go."

Situ Xie always accompanied Su Liang on her daily visits to the palace to treat Situ Han with acupuncture.

Su Liang thought that this was probably not just because Situ Han was the Emperor of Liang Country, but also because he was Situ Xie's son. While she was giving the treatment, Situ Xie would always be nearby, showing a protective attitude.

After leaving the palace, Su Liang took back the folding fan and told Situ Xie that she wanted to go to Qingjing Temple, "Gu Ling is definitely still playing chess with Master Xuanqing, I'll go find him."

"I haven't seen Master Xuanqing for a while, it would be nice to see their chess skills together. Let's go together." Situ Xie said with a warm smile.

Su Liang agreed cheerfully, "Sounds great. When we're there, can the Prince of Yue play a few games of chess with Master Xuanqing while your grandson shows me around Qingjing Temple?"

Situ Xie nodded happily, "This prince would be delighted."

So they went together to Qingjing Temple, where they found Gu Ling had just finished a game of chess with Master Xuanqing.

Situ Xie proposed playing chess with Master Xuanqing. Gu Ling then got up and walked out.

Situ Xie quickly asked, "Ling'er, are you going back now?"

Gu Ling didn't look back, "I'm going to the Pagoda Forest."

Su Liang beamed, "Me too! Marquis Gu, wait for me!"

Situ Xie smiled, "Master, what do you think of my grandson?"

After some contemplation, Master Xuanqing commented on Gu Ling, "This child has extraordinary intelligence, but he has a gentle temperament and quite a Buddhist heart."

Situ Xie shook his head with a smile, "I only have this one grandson, Master, please don't lead him into Buddhism."

Master Xuanqing waved his hand with a smile, "Not everyone who enters Buddhism has a heart for it, and those who have a heart for it do not need to enter. The young friend who came just now, is she the Su Benefactor who is treating the emperor now?"

Situ Xie confirmed, and Master Xuanqing lamented, "Su Benefactor has clear and transparent eyes, an open and honest heart, and is undoubtedly a kind and compassionate person, with quite a Buddhist heart too!"

Situ Xie just smiled without a word.

At this moment, Su Liang had already chased Gu Ling into the Pagoda Forest of Qingjing Temple.

There were many stone pagodas of different heights in the dark green Pine Forest, which enshrined the relics of the deceased High Monks.

This place was not open to the public under normal circumstances, but Master Xuanqing allowed Gu Ling to visit and walk around various places in the temple. The monks guarding the temple thought Su Liang was with Gu Ling, so they didn't stop her.

The Pagoda Forest was tranquil and quiet, with no place to hide, making it a convenient place to talk.

“The bait has been set, but there has been no movement yet.” Su Liang sighed softly.

Yesterday was the fifteenth, and there were activities in the temple. Master Xuanqing did not have much free time, so Gu Ling said they could wait for him to finish before continuing their game. Taking advantage of the break, Gu Ling sold the fan.

Situ Xie was watching Su Liang, and Su Liang was also observing Situ Xie, but he led a very regular life and there were no abnormalities.

“Someone was near Han Xiangyuan last night.” Gu Ling said. But he didn’t know who it was.

Su Liang frowned, “Is it the person arranged by Situ Xie to watch me? Or maybe, it’s him himself? He seemed not to sleep last night.”

Su Liang had been living in Prince Mansion for several days, and suddenly someone started to watch her last night. She wanted to visit the Qingjing Temple, and Situ Xie followed her, which made her think, “He cannot know that you made the fan. I’m wondering if he’s not watching me, but rather the fan. In that case, does he think that someone will be attracted by this fan?” Gu Ling nodded, agreeing with Su Liang’s opinion.

However, whether there were descendants of the Mu Family by Situ Xie’s side, and why he thought a hidden weapon fan would attract someone, Su Liang and Gu Ling didn’t know.

“In that case, there are some clues. Let’s see who the fan will attract next.” Su Liang had another fan with her, which Gu Ling had given to her, and she carried it with her all the time.

Suddenly, they heard footsteps. Su Liang’s expression tightened, and she turned to see a gray-clothed old man with a hunched back carrying a large bamboo basket, picking up dead branches on the ground.

The old man looked up, his messy beard like dried grass, his eyebrows long and his aged eyes dull. He spoke slowly, “This is not a place for secret meetings. Leave quickly.”

Su Liang smiled, “Master Xuanqing allowed us to visit here.”

Upon hearing this, the old man continued to pick up dead branches and suddenly fell to the ground as he stood up.

Su Liang’s expression changed and she hurried to help him, but Gu Ling was faster and reached the old man first, bending down to assist him.

As soon as Gu Ling’s hand touched the old man’s arm, the old man suddenly made a move, reaching for Gu Ling’s waist! The dull and aged eyes had become sharp!

Unfortunately, the old man assumed that Su Liang, the doctor, would be the first to reach him, but he didn’t expect it to be Gu Ling.

Su Liang now held the fan that was originally hanging at her waist. It was obvious that the old man was after the fan, perhaps he wasn't even from Qingjing Temple but had followed her here instead.

At this point, Gu Ling had already started fighting with the old man. The hunched-backed old man straightened his back, his figure tall and large, obviously an act. Su Liang had nearly been fooled too.

Su Liang wondered if this person was related to the Mu Family, or just wanted to steal the fan for his own use. If it were the latter, it wouldn't count as much of a gain. If it were the former, their plan would be mostly successful.

After several moves, the old man suddenly spoke up, "I just wanted to borrow the fan to take a look!"

Su Liang replied coldly, "If it weren't for the master by my side, you would have snatched the fan and left already."

The old man's mouth twitched slightly, "Anyway, I won't fight anymore!"

Su Liang knew the old man stopped fighting because he realized that it would be difficult to suppress Gu Ling. However, this wasn't the main point now, "Why did you want to borrow the fan?"

Gu Ling returned to Su Liang's side, and the old man stared at Su Liang from two meters away, "You name the price."

Su Liang laughed lightly, "If you know me, then you should know that the last thing I lack is money."

The old man glanced at Gu Ling and said coldly, "I want to know if this fan was made by a descendant of the Mu Family."

A thought crossed Su Liang's mind. Only the Mu family members could distinguish whether the fan was made by their family! They had caught a real fish!

"Old man, aren't you afraid that we won't let you go after hearing what you said?" Su Liang asked with a smile.

The old man snorted, "It's not easy for me to defeat that kid, but you two are dreaming if you want to keep me!"

Su Liang smiled, "Alright. Since you are an expert, there's no harm in taking a look. I want to know if this precious fan is a genuine Mu Family product."

As she spoke, Su Liang handed the fan to Gu Ling, "Please help me give the fan to the old man, let him have a look, and then bring it back to me."

Gu Ling took the fan and walked towards the old man, handing it to him directly.

The old man was visibly startled, "Young miss, aren't you afraid that I will run away when I get the fan? You two can't stop me!"

"Though your entrance was not very friendly, I would still like to make a friend with you, so why not gamble?" Su Liang smiled.

“Forget about making friends, I don’t need it.” The old man snorted lightly, took the fan and opened it to examine it closely.

Su Liang walked to Gu Ling, “How about it? Is it the work of the Mu Family?”

The old man shook his head, “It’s not. The descendant of the Mu Family that I know cannot make such a fine hidden weapon.”

“Oh? So this fan is a fake Mu Family hidden weapon, but it’s even better than a genuine Mu Family work?” Su Liang looked surprised.

“Not all descendants of the Mu Family are skilled craftsmen.” As the old man spoke, he continued to examine the fan’s handle, “Young miss, may I take this fan apart?”

“If I agree, will you promise me one thing in return?” Su Liang had barely finished speaking when she heard a tearing sound – the fan had already been torn apart by the old man.

Su Liang also saw the mechanism inside the fan for the first time, and once again marveled at Gu Ling’s ingenious hands.

“Not too complicated, but so delicate, it must not be the work of that scum...” The old man’s mutterings reached Gu Ling and Su Liang’s ears.

The two exchanged glances and gained new information. Su Liang even thought at this moment that the scum mentioned by the old man might be the descendant of the Mu Family loyal to Situ Xie, as Duanmu Yi had said.

After all, so many years had passed, and the Mu Family had made no move, nor had the secret scroll appeared in the world. It seemed that their descendants did not want to get involved in the world’s disputes or pursue fame and fortune.

If someone suddenly joined Situ Xie’s camp without being the only heir, could it be that they were most likely a traitor?

Su Liang felt that if her guess was correct, the situation wasn’t bad for them, as long as they got along well with the old man.

“Old man, your last name is Mu, right?” Su Liang smiled sweetly.

The old man glanced at Su Liang and snorted lightly, “Don’t try to take advantage of me! I know you were sent by the Qian Country Royal Family!”

“That’s not important.” Su Liang shook her head, “If I guess correctly, the old man must be the true heir of the Mu Family’s Divine Craftsman. If you only have one disciple and have fallen out with him, why not take on another one?” The old man frowned at Su Liang, “You want to be my disciple?”

As soon as Su Liang heard this, she was almost certain that she had guessed correctly, so she quickly shook her head, “I am not good with my hands. I have a friend who is the most dexterous person I’ve ever met.”



The old man shook his head, "Tell your friend to focus on embroidery."

Su Liang coughed lightly, "He's a man."

"He still can embroider." The old man snorted.

Su Liang's expression turned serious, "What if it were the maker of the fan in your hands, old man? Would he catch your eye?"

The old man's expression changed slightly, "You know the person who made this fan? Then why did you let someone else buy it... You cunning girl, this fan is yours, isn't it?!"

Su Liang maintained her smile, took out another smaller fan she had been carrying with her, and admitted the old man's guess, "Don't be upset, old man. Just like you pretended to be sick to trick me today, I played a little trick with my friend yesterday. We're both cunning, aren't we?"

"Friend..." The old man's gaze fell on Gu Ling, "This kid here?"

Su Liang nodded, "Yes, him. He's my most dexterous friend. He made these two fans when he had nothing else to do, and no one taught him anything. Isn't he a genius?"

"Really? You came up with this on your own?" The old man's eyes brightened.

"I'm not interested in becoming a disciple. Goodbye." Gu Ling turned and walked away.

"Wait!" The old man grabbed Gu Ling, "If everything you've said is true, then you're the disciple I've been looking for! I can teach you everything I know!" "Sorry, I don't need it." Gu Ling refused again, his face cold.

The old man looked at Su Liang, "Little girl, you clearly want him to be my disciple. Why don't you persuade him?"

Su Liang coughed lightly, "Brother, just agree. There's no harm in it. Don't you want to see the exquisite mechanisms crafted by the Mu Family's Divine Craftsman? You won't have this chance again!"

Gu Ling frowned slightly and said to the old man, "Fine, but you can't force me to do anything."

"As long as you abide by the ancestral teachings, everything else is up to you!" The old man's expression changed, "Someone is coming. I'll find you again!" After he spoke, he grabbed the bamboo basket on the ground and disappeared into the depths of the Pagoda Forest with a few leaps.

When Situ Xie walked into the Pagoda Forest and saw Su Liang and Gu Ling, Gu Ling was taking the folding fan from Su Liang's hand and putting it into his pocket.

In fact, the fan Su Liang gave to Gu Ling was a different one. This way, Situ Xie would not notice that the fan he had been watching had disappeared.

"It seems that Divine Doctor Su has finally given out her gift." Situ Xie walked over with a smile.

Su Liang looked pleased, “Marquis Gu just wanted to see the hidden weapon. He said he would return it after looking at it. It doesn’t matter if he doesn’t.”

“I am very happy that Ling’er has a friend like Divine Doctor Su.” Situ Xie’s smile was meaningful, “It’s getting late, and I need to return to the mansion. Are you coming back?”

“Yes.” Gu Ling replied.

Upon returning to Prince Yue’s Mansion and parting ways between Ning Xiang Residence and Han Xiangyuan, Su Liang gently bumped Gu Ling’s shoulder and whispered, “You played it well today with the feigned retreat trick.”

It was not a masterstroke of Su Liang’s own. Gu Ling was genuinely interested in mechanical things, and the old man was an opportunity not to be missed.

Gu Ling shook his head, “I’m not good at it.” At Qingjing Temple, he deliberately pretended not to be interested in becoming a disciple. However, his feigned retreat had absolutely no effect on Su Liang. The problem was with him, and he retreated so well that Su Liang couldn’t even notice his intention to “capture.” But the current situation was also good, and deep down, what he really looked forward to was Su Liang falling in love with him without knowing that he loved her....

Chapter 280: 280. You will hurt me

In the following two days, Gu Ling still went to Qingjing Temple every day, and Su Liang’s life was very regular. After going to the palace to administer acupuncture to Situ Han, he went to Qingjing Temple to find Gu Ling. Situ Han’s facial paralysis symptoms had improved.

There were people watching Han Xiangyuan and Ning Xiangju at night, but there was nothing unusual.

Su Liang was also worried that Gu Ling’s newly- acknowledged makeshift master would sneak into Yue Wangfu at night, which would be troublesome, but it didn’t happen.

Seeing the old Mu again, three days had passed since the hasty apprenticeship.

It was still the same place, deep in the pagoda forest of Qingjing Temple.

This time, Mu Lao didn’t disguise himself as a miscellaneous worker picking up dead branches. His clothes were neat and clean, his back was straight, and his face was not dirty, but his beard was too messy to see his facial features clearly.

“You’re Gu Ling, Situ Xie’s grandson, Marquis Chang Xin of Qian Country.

You’re Su Liang, Martial Arts Champion of Qian Country, now serving as the Imperial Physician, coming to Liang Country to treat Emperor Liang’s illness. You’re pursuing him.” Old Mu had obviously inquired about Gu Ling and Su Liang.

Su Liang nodded, “Yes. May I ask your name, sir?”

“Just call me Old Mu!” Old Mu’s gaze shifted from Su Liang to Gu Ling, “You call me Master!”

As for the name, it was not mentioned.

Gu Ling did not speak, and Su Liang did not ask further, “Alright. Old Mu, three days have passed, and you have not changed your mind about taking an apprentice, have you?”

Old Mu snorted lightly, “What if I do?”

Su Liang sighed softly, “That can only mean that you really have no fate with Gu Ling as a master and apprentice. Because Gu Ling just wants to see the skills of the Mu Family’s Divine Craftsman, he doesn’t really want to be an apprentice.”

When old Mu heard this, he got angry and glared at Su Liang, “He’s not even happy to join my sect?”

“He’s right here, Old Mu. If you want to get angry with him, don’t blame me.” Su Liang pulled Gu Ling in front of him, “Since you’ve inquired about it, you should know his temperament. I’m so good-looking and talented, but he’s only willing to be an ordinary friend with me. Who should I talk to?”

Old Mu twitched at the corner of his mouth, “You shameless girl!”

Su Liang smiled, “I’m a loner, and no one cares about me, so I just want to make myself happy.”

Old Mu was stunned for a moment after hearing this.

“Old Mu, are you alright?” Su Liang asked.

After taking a deep look at Su Liang, Old Mu shook his head, “I’m fine. Regarding the apprenticeship, I need to tell you about the ancestral teachings of the Mu Family. If you can swear to follow them, then I will accept you. If not, just pretend you never met me!”

Upon hearing this, Su Liang realized that the ancestral teachings of the Mu Family must be very important, and that Old Mu was even willing to give up on such a talented apprentice.

Gu Ling’s expression was indifferent, “You may speak.”

“As a disciple of the Mu family, you cannot teach the Mu family’s skills to outsiders, nor can you provide weapons made by the Mu family to outsiders. Otherwise, all the sins you commit will be attributed to yourself, and you will not die well!” Old Mu’s tone was very heavy, his gaze locked on Gu Ling’s eyes, but he saw that Gu Ling’s gaze was as deep as a still pond, with no ripples at all.

Then, Su Liang asked, “It only says that you can’t give it to outsiders, but you can use it yourself, right?”

Old Mu was slightly taken aback, as if he had never thought about this. Frowning, he said, “There’s no harm in using it for self-defense. Now, in front of me, swear to it, kneel down and become my apprentice, and you’ll be the inheritor of the Mu Family. If not, just forget about it!”

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

The anger instantly appeared on Old Mu's face, "You are a strange boy. I've checked everything; your martial arts are so high, and even after your father started a rebellion and your whole family was executed, you don't care. You clearly have no ambition. Now, are you planning to serve the Qian Country's royal family or your maternal grandfather?"

Hearing this, Su Liang knew that Old Mu would appear again today, not only because of Gu Ling's talent but also because he had investigated Gu Ling's character and found it to be in line with the requirements of the Mu family's apprenticeship.

The so-called not providing weapons to outsiders in the ancestral teachings is tantamount to not being involved in power struggles.

And the sinful disciple mentioned by Old Mu three days ago had violated the ancestral teachings of the Mu family.

"It's none of your business." Gu Ling remained indifferent.

Old man Mu looked at Su Liang, "Little girl, is he really not interested in becoming my disciple, or is he just playing hard to get? Tell me the truth, and no matter what, I won't make things difficult for you!"

Su Liang sighed softly, "To be honest, he has no desires or cravings. Except for not shaving his head and enjoying eating meat, he has no essential difference with the monks in this temple."

Gu Ling gave Su Liang a cold glance but didn't interrupt her speech.

Su Liang continued, "He wants to take a master only for one reason: he wants to see the craftsmanship of the Mu family's Divine Craftsman because he is genuinely interested in this path. But Old Mu, did you forget to ask why we lied about being descendants of the Mu family and sold that fan in Yao City?"

Old man Mu's eyes suddenly narrowed, "You came here to look for the descendants of the Mu family? Why?"

Su Liang shrugged slightly, "What do you think? Why else would our emperor kindly send me to treat Emperor Liang's illness?"

Old man Mu sneered, "Since you are here for me, why not just swear to deceive me and achieve your goal?"

Su Liang shook her head, "We didn't come together. I came for the descendants of the Mu family, he didn't. Our emperor sent him to find the Liang Country's King Yue for the purpose of stealing valuables."

Old man Mu looked at Su Liang with a speechless expression, "So what exactly do you want?"

Su Liang then told Old Man Mu about how when Liang Country sent someone to invite her, Duanmu Yi happened to find out that a descendant of the Mu family had brought the mechanism secret scroll to join Situ Xie, and took the opportunity to send her. On the surface, she was to cure Emperor Liang's illness, and secretly investigate the matter of the Mu family's descendant and the secret scroll.

“That’s how it is. That’s my mission, but the emperor has verbally ordered him to assist.” Su Liang looked serious, “For this reason, he even let the others return to the country first, fearing that in case anything happens, it would be easier for the two of us to escape.”

Old man Mu frowned, “Fine, I believe you. Since you’re so frank, I’ll be straightforward too. That descendant of the Mu family that you found is my only disciple, his name is Mu Yu, he’s an abandoned child I picked up and raised. Although his talent is average, I never treated him badly. Three months ago, he stole the secret scroll of the mechanism and disappeared. It took me a great deal of effort to track him down to Yao City. I observed Situ Xie for several days yet never saw my evil disciple around him.”

From a timeline perspective, it matched up with the information Duanmu Yi had acquired.

“Could it be that after Situ Xie got the secret scroll, he killed the person?” Su Liang frowned.

Old man Mu snorted, “No, the secret scroll is only half-complete.”

“Even half can be used.” Su Liang said.

Old man Mu sneered, “I’ve always been afraid that the scroll would fall into the hands of evil people. The half scroll is cut horizontally, so there isn’t a single complete diagram.”

Upon hearing this, Su Liang raised her thumb, “This move is really brilliant! In this case, your evil disciple should still be alive. Maybe Situ Xie thought the fan was made by you, and has been watching us these days.”

“That’s right. I destroyed all the hidden weapons I made in the past. That evil disciple knew that if it were a weapon made by me, it wouldn’t be given to outsiders.” Old man Mu said.

“I see.” Su Liang nodded.

“Alright, let’s clarify the situation. The reason why he refuses to take me as his master is that you both are loyal to Qian Country’s emperor and will not abide by the last wish of the Mu family’s ancestors?” Old man Mu clearly didn’t want to give up on having Gu Ling as a disciple. However, he gave up on talking directly to Gu Ling, fearing that he would be infuriated, and chose to discuss it with Su Liang.

“Well...” Su Liang glanced at Gu Ling, who seemed to be uninterested in the matter and was studying the patterns on the stone pagoda next to them, and then shook her head, “Not really.”

“Then why?” Old man Mu became even more annoyed, “If you don’t tell me, this matter is not over!”

“Old Mu, calm down. In fact, we don’t quite understand the last will of the Mu family’s ancestors.” Su Liang sighed softly, “Weapons only function when used by people. Let’s not talk about small hidden weapons, just the mechanism secret scroll handed down by the Mu family: all three royal families are searching for it. It is said that it contains the blueprint for large-scale weapons to be used in war. Otherwise, our emperor and Liang Country’s King Yue would not be so eager to obtain it. The purpose of the last will is clear, weapons should not be made on a large scale and used in the battlefield, and we both understand this. If so, why hand down the secret scroll? Wouldn’t it be safer to destroy it? Perhaps the Mu family ancestor who left the last will had a significant conflict with the then ruler, and the last will was specifically directed against the ruler of his time. The situation has long been different when the dynasty has changed. Rules made by people can be changed by people.”

Old man Mu’s face stiffened, having been bound by the last wish since he was young, he lived most of his life constrained by it. His father kept reminding him of it, and the last wish had been carved into his bones, which made him never even think about whether it’s right or wrong.

One thing that Old man Mu was aware of, though, was that he didn’t have a happy life. In fact, he was an outstanding descendant of the Mu family, highly skilled, and deeply passionate about what he was doing. However, he could only enjoy the exquisite treasures he made by himself and never dared to reveal his surname Mu to anyone. Countless nights, looking at the secret scroll until dawn, he desperately wanted to create any of the items within it but couldn’t, fearing the consequences of violating the ancestor’s last wish.

He had been suppressed for a lifetime, so when he heard Su Liang’s words “I only seek my happiness in everything,” he was stunned.

This was also the direct reason why Old man Mu didn’t get married and didn’t have children. He didn’t want his own flesh and blood to repeat his oppressed life bound by the Mu family’s last wish.

“He’s not afraid of not dying well after breaking his vow, he just doesn’t want to deceive you.” Su Liang looked at Old man Mu and said, “Neither do I. Although it’s only our second meeting, you clearly take the Mu family’s last wish very seriously. If he becomes your disciple, he may become an evil disciple in your eyes and turn against you in the future. With that being the case, it’s better to give up. We can use tactics against Situ Xie because we know he’s not a good person, but you’re different.”

Old man Mu looked at her eyes clear and without a trace of evasion.

Old Master Mu knew that Su Liang’s words came from the heart, because he could just turn around and leave now, rendering Su Liang and Gu Ling unable to find him, and there would be no loss.

He suddenly looked at Gu Ling, “Kid, is what she said also your idea?” “Mhm.” Gu Ling responded.

Then, Old Master Mu said irritably, “You two are truly in sync. There’s no way you could ever find a better girl than this, so are you really planning on becoming a monk?”

Su Liang chuckled, "Yes, he wants to become a monk. Old Mu, please think about taking him as a disciple again. Even if we fail in our mission, our lives will not be endangered. He is willing to be your disciple, but he won't take an oath. "

Old Master Mu looked at Su Liang and then at Gu Ling before suddenly turning around, "Fine, let me think about it. Let's meet again in three days!" He disappeared as his words fell.

Su Liang took a breath, "I think there's still hope. What do you say?" Gu Ling answered unexpectedly, "I don't want to become a monk."

"I was just joking, don't take it seriously. Meat is so delicious, why would you want to leave it behind?" Su Liang laughed, "Half of the secret scroll is in Situ Xie's hands. Whether you join his tutelage or not, we still need to snatch it back. Any ideas?"

Gu Ling nodded slightly, "I'm thinking..." "Thinking about what?" Su Liang asked.

"Did you suddenly become stupid?" Gu Ling countered.

Su Liang frowned, "You're stupid. Your entire family is stupid." "Yep, my entire family consists of you and me." Gu Ling expressed his agreement.

Su Liang was speechless, frowning and pondering. Since Gu Ling wouldn't unintentionally judge her without reason. So...

"Ah, I was indeed being stupid." Su Liang suddenly saw the light and gave herself a smack on the forehead.

It's been confirmed that the half of the secret scroll Situ Xie obtained does not have a single complete blueprint of the mechanism. If he can't get the other half, it's just a bunch of waste paper. Now that they've established a relationship with Old Master Mu, he himself holds the "key" to the secret scroll. As long as they ensure that Situ Xie doesn't get the other half, they'll be fine.

If in three days, Old Master Mu comes to a decision and decides to no longer care about the ancestral teachings, he could accept Gu Ling as his disciple. He could draw a complete secret scroll in minutes. Since he's seen it countless times, it must be deeply ingrained in his mind.

As the two walked out of the pagoda forest, Su Liang couldn't help but complain, "You really saved your energy, making me speak for you." "You were happy to do it," Gu Ling said casually.

Su Liang shook her head, "When did I say I was happy to do it?"

Gu Ling's thin lips parted slightly, "You said, do everything for the sake of happiness. Aren't you happy?"

Su Liang silently kicked Gu Ling, expressing her happy emotions...

When Situ Xie entered Ning Xiang Residence again, he casually asked whether Gu Ling had returned the folding fan to Su Liang.

Gu Ling said he had.

Situ Xie sat for a while, seeing that Gu Ling was still indifferent, he got up and went to Han Xiangyuan to find Su Liang.

“Divine Doctor Su, this prince has an unreasonable request.” Situ Xie smiled. Su Liang looked approachable, “Please speak, King Yue.”

“I wonder if I could borrow that hidden weapon fan for three days?” Situ Xie asked.

Su Liang looked puzzled, “Why borrow it for three days?”

Situ Xie said solemnly, “Actually, ever since I saw that fan in the Treasure Pavilion, I wanted to buy it for Yaoyao as a self-defense tool. Although she knows martial arts, she’s far inferior to Divine Doctor Su. If it weren’t for General Peng buying it to give to Divine Doctor Su, I would not have let it go.”

Su Liang nodded, “Thank you, King Yue, but I still don’t understand the purpose of borrowing the fan for three days.”

“I want to find a craftsman to see if I can replicate one, and give it to Yaoyao.” Situ Xie said.

The light in Su Liang’s eyes brightened, “So that’s it. I originally wanted to give this fan to Marquis Gu, but he didn’t want it, so I thought that if I could replicate a few, it would be great to give them to my friends for self-defense.

However, I don’t know any highly skilled craftsmen.”

Situ Xie’s smile deepened, “Looks like we have similar ideas.”

“If King Yue is sincere in his love for his granddaughter, I can’t refuse,” Su Liang readily agreed, “When you find the right craftsman, bring him to see me!”

Situ Xie was startled, “Bringing the craftsman to see Divine Doctor Su is...”

Su Liang laughed and explained, “I’ve been dying to take this fan apart to see exactly what kind of ingenious mechanisms are inside, but I don’t know how, and I’m afraid I might break it. It would be great if we could find a professional who could help me see the inner structure of the fan. King Yue and your family members are all welcome to come and see.”

Situ Xie nodded slightly, “Divine Doctor Su is indeed very thoughtful. Since you are so generous, I will immediately send someone to find a craftsman skilled in hidden weapons, hoping to find someone suitable before you leave.” When the conversation ended, Situ Xie excused himself.

After leaving Han Xiangyuan, the smile on his face disappeared, and his expression suddenly darkened for a moment before returning to normal.

Ren Dong saw Su Liang casually clearing away the ice on the fake mountain in the courtyard and asked her why she was in such a good mood today.

Su Liang smiled, “King Yue must think that I am very easy-going and accommodating, at least to the point of being all things to all people.”

Ren Dong: ...I don’t know if that’s the case, but it does seem a bit unusual...

“By the way, ask Marquis Chang Xin what he wants for a late-night snack tonight,” Su Liang instructed Ren Dong.



Ren Dong took the order and returned quickly, “Marquis Chang Xin wants to eat fried fish nuggets.”

Su Liang was speechless, “Yao City is full of ice and snow, where can we find fish? It’s better to just become a monk.”

Ren Dong was puzzled, “What did the master just say?”

Su Liang said seriously, “It’s nothing. Tell Gui Yue that his cousin wants fish, so they should figure it out.”

They managed to find fish in Yao City, so that night, Gu Ling enjoyed Su Liang’s hand-made fried fish nuggets. They were just out of the pan, steaming hot and smelling delicious.

“Great God, once I catch up with you, I’ll make you eat vegetarian every day.” Su Liang complained.

Gu Ling’s hand, which was holding the chopsticks, paused, “We’ll discuss it later.”

Su Liang blinked and suddenly laughed, “Hey, what if I really want to pursue you one day? Would you find it strange?”

Gu Ling elegantly ate the fish nugget he had picked up before replying, “How can I know something that hasn’t happened yet?”

Su Liang stared at Gu Ling, “You’re probably going to ruin me.”

Gu Ling asked, “Why do you say that?”

“Looking at your face every day and being tormented by your various abilities, I’m afraid I won’t be able to find a man I like. I’ll definitely think they’re all either too ugly or too weak,” Su Liang sighed.

“So?” Gu Ling picked up a piece of fish, concealing his slightly curled lip due to his good mood.

Su Liang stood up, “So, if by the time we’re thirty we still haven’t found someone to marry, I’ll really try pursuing you and see how you feel then.” and waved her hand as she left, “You can eat slowly, I have a book to finish, so I’ll go back first.”

The door closed, and Gu Ling’s face darkened. Although he knew that the so-called “thirty years old” remark was a playful joke from Su Liang’s past life perspective, she had said that getting married at thirty in her past life was very normal. However, he would wait, at most, until Su Liang turned eighteen, not one day more. After all, she just said she couldn’t stand anyone else, so who else would she be with....