

## Three-Time 28

### Chapter 28

Su Liang was a woman of action. Yesterday, she said that she wanted to practice martial arts more intensively. By daybreak today, she was already running laps in the courtyard. In the morning, she found some tools and set up makeshift equipment like parallel bars and sandbags in the yard. Ning Jing was originally reading a book in his room, but later he moved a chair to the courtyard. Su Liang was busy with her work and didn't even ask him for help. If outsiders were present, they would see a petite girl wielding a heavy hammer to nail wood planks while a certain man stood idly by. By the time Xing Yusheng arrived, Su Liang had already finished setting up and even tried out the equipment. "These are..." Xing Yusheng was very curious about the new additions in the yard. Su Liang didn't want to explain too much, so she took the book from Ning Jing's hands, pulled him up from his chair, and smiled, "These are his toys." Xing Yusheng was taken aback, "Master Ning, could you show me what these are used for?" "Won't show you," Ning Jing reclaimed his book and turned away, leaving Xing Yusheng with a cold back view. "Master Xing, don't feel offended. He is just like that," Su Liang said with no guilt in 'throwing Ning Jing under the bus'. She showed familiarity with Ning Jing to prevent Xing Yusheng from having any romantic ideas about her. It would be troublesome. Xing Yusheng smiled, "Master Ning is quite mysterious." Today, he brought gifts again. Two sets of new bedding, two fat wild chickens, and a basket full of bright red hawthorns. "Qi Jun caught the wild chickens yesterday. The red fruits are from the manor," Xing Yusheng said. "Thank you," Su Liang accepted the gifts and proceeded to perform acupuncture on Xing Yusheng. Ning Jing came over to watch. Xing Yusheng asked if he was learning medical skills from Su Liang. Ning Jing shook his head, "I just want to see someone get pricked by needles." Xing Yusheng: ... He had no grudge with Ning Jing... Crawling into all sorts of weird hobbies... Su Liang felt instead that Ning Jing's nonsense, just like hers, was aimed at keeping Xing Yusheng from prying into their lives. After the acupuncture, Xing Yusheng proposed playing chess with Ning Jing, but was also rejected. Finally realising his unwelcome presence, Xing Yusheng abandoned his thought of befriending the couple and left with his entourage. In the carriage, Qi Yan showed a resentful face, "Master, they don't appreciate your kindness!" Xing Yusheng sighed lightly, "Don't take it to heart. Su Liang accepted my gifts and was willing to treat me. How is that not appreciating? It's my one-sided intention to become closer that was subtly rejected." "A destitute merchant's son is acting all high and mighty!" Qi Yan huffed. "Don't underestimate him," Xing Yusheng shook his head, "He is not an ordinary person. His current circumstances are only temporary." "How so? Other than his good looks, what skills does he have? It's clearly Miss Su who is capable!" Qi Yan argued. "Then why do you think Su Liang is willing to be with Ning Jing?" Xing Yusheng countered. Qi Jun laughed, "Perhaps, it's simply because Ning Qi is handsome." Xing Yusheng paused, "That... Although I don't think Su Liang is a superficial person, it's not impossible." As they were leaving the Su village, Xing Yusheng suddenly asked, "Comparing looks, do I fall short of Ning Jing by a lot?" Qi Yan shook his head, "Master, you are much more handsome than him!" Meanwhile, Qi Jun spoke the truth, "You're not that far off." Qi Yan knocked Qi Jun, "Anyway, in subordinate's opinion, none of the young men in Qian Country can match master, except for the famous beauty, the son of Marquise Chang Xin, Gu Ling!" "When did you see that Master Gu?" Qi Jun asked. "When the Princess was around, she once sent me to the capital city to deliver a gift to Master Gu, haven't I told you this?" Qi Yan scratched his head. The curtain of the carriage lifted, revealing Xing Yusheng's puzzled face, "What happened?" Qi Yan told

the story. Years ago, the mother of Xing Yusheng passed away after going to the capital city to visit relatives. Not long after she left the city, she encountered the young crown prince of Marquise Chang Xin, Gu Ling. Gu Ling was all alone, insistent on having the then Princess Qin personally escort him home, and would not accept anyone else to do it. Though they originally thought Gu Ling was unreasonable, due to his young age, the kind-hearted Princess Qin decided to comply and returned to the capital. That same day, they heard that a severe landslide had happened on the road Princess Qin was originally planned to take. If anyone had passed through, they would surely be buried. "Someone plotted to assassinate the Princess at that time. As to why it didn't succeed, no one knows. The Princess thought that it was Master Gu who saved her, but she never made it public. She would just secretly send my father to send Master Gu a birthday gift every year. That year, after my father injured his leg, she sent me. Since Qi Jun was travelling with you at that time and wasn't home, he didn't know about it," Qi Yan explained. "Why didn't Mother ever mention this to me?" Xing Yusheng was perplexed. Qi Jun sighed lightly, "Marquis Chang Xin and my father have had longstanding grudges, and my mother, who was simply thankful for Master Gu's unintended rescue, could not afford to have more involvement with him." Xing Yusheng remembered that after Gu's incident, his stepmother wanted his brother to marry Gu Ling's fiancée, Nian Ruxue. His grandmother thought that it was better if Nian Ruxue married him, and suddenly felt some discomfort. "Have you heard anything about Gu Ling, who escaped from the capital, being caught?" Qi Yan shook his head, "I haven't heard about him being caught. In the middle of last month, General Nian Jincheng, who was ordered by the emperor to capture Master Gu, visited here!" "Nian Jincheng?" Xing Yusheng's eyes narrowed. "Yes, him. The only friend in the rumour of Master Gu, who is cold and arrogant, is General Nian. It was said that two years before the Gu Family's incident, Master Gu mostly stayed at Huguo Temple, and no one could see him except for Nian Jincheng," sneered Qi Yan, "As you can see, that Nian Jincheng is nothing but a capricious person!" Qi Jun frowned, "The imperial edict is difficult to disobey. If he didn't do that, the Nian Family wouldn't have been able to clear their involvement with the case of Gu Family's rebellion." Qi Yan snorted, "If he actually catches him next time and uses Master Gu's life as a merit to flatter himself, do you still think he has any misgivings?" "This matter has nothing to do with us. Stop talking about it. Watch your words to prevent trouble," Xing Yusheng finished, dropping the curtain. His heart, however, felt heavy. Knowing the relationship between his mother and Gu Ling, Xing Yusheng was certain that he would not agree to Grandmother Xing's arrangement and have any involvement with Nian Ruxue. After a long time, a sigh came from the carriage, "I hope Gu Ling is living a peaceful and quiet life somewhere unknown." Qi Jun asked Qi Yan, "How beautiful is Crown Prince Gu?" After a moment of thought, Qi Yan replied, "It's hard to describe. There's a saying in the capital that Gu the beautiful person's smile could captivate the entire city, but no one can get his smile. After I heard it, I went back and told the princess about it. She laughed as she had seen Gu, the crown prince, when he was little and said that Gu was a hundred times cuter than our crown prince." Xing Yusheng: ...As if he were adopted... ... After lunch, Ning Jing washed a plate of hawthorn, took one, took a bite, frowned, and put it down. "Su Liang." Su Liang, who was reading a book in the next room, responded. "Can't I eat the red fruit raw?" Asked Ning Jing. "Of course you can. There's an old saying that boys love sour, girls love spicy. Unfortunately, pregnant women can't eat red fruits." Su Liang replied seriously. Ning Jing: ... Aunt Bai brought some more wild vegetables, sharing with Su Liang the latest gossip about the old cow's family. "I heard they came to claim your house last night? How shameless!" "And you have no idea what happened next!" "The rich man in the village, Ma Erhui, has a few vacant rooms, he warmly invited them to live there, providing food and drinks. They aren't even related, and that family is just about taking

advantage of others, they have no shame!” “Guess what? Ma Erhui’s daughter, you don’t know her, her name is Xiufang, she is quite a handful usually, she and Su Xingzhe spent the night in the same bed!” “Ma Erhui’s daughter-in-law is insisting that it’s Su Xingzhe who took advantage of her daughter, causing a ruckus in the village. Old cow is claiming that the Ma’s family drugged Su Xingzhe, and Xiufang is shamelessly seducing her son. The two families are fighting terribly, Su Xingzhe’s face even got scratched and bloodied.” Aunt Bai spoke with her spit flying, and Su Liang was dumbfounded. In the beginning, she and Ning Jing just wanted to help Liu Huilan survive, but they didn’t expect such a dramatic turn of events. “When I went to pick some wild vegetables, I saw the old cow sitting on the ground crying, and she started cursing you! She blamed everything on you, saying it’s all because you are ruthless, otherwise they wouldn’t have moved to the Ma’s place and this wouldn’t have happened!” Aunt Bai said angrily. Su Liang remarked, it’s normal for bad things to happen to bad people. If the old cow dare to fight with her, she would welcome it... However, as the only educated person in the Su family village, Su Liang didn’t think this incident would cause too much trouble. The Ma family must have been scheming, otherwise they wouldn’t have been so eager to help. Su Xingzhe fell into their trap, but he wasn’t entirely innocent. Later, Su Liang heard that it was Su Xingzhe who agreed to marry Ma Xiufang as his concubine after passing the public servant examination and getting married. ... Ning Jing brought the hawthorn out. “If you are free, could you go to the town and buy a couple pairs of shoes for me?” Su Liang said. They forgot to buy shoes when they bought clothes last time. The original owner only had two pairs of shoes. Embroidered shoes were not suitable for exercising, and she had been active these days. She broke a pair of shoes during her morning run, and another pair broke just now, so she couldn’t go out. Su Liang had already paid Aunt Bai to help make shoes, not caring whether they looked nice, but whether they were suitably comfortable and durable. However, they wouldn’t be ready for a while. Ning Jing held up the hawthorn. Su Liang instantly caught on, “Buy some more sugar and I’ll make it for you.” After getting the money, Ning Jing went out on his own, taking the shortcut to the town. Halfway there, he noticed someone nearby, yet he didn’t turn back. ... As soon as he entered the clothing store, Ning Jing took out the paper with the shoe size cut by Su Liang, asking to buy shoes of that size. The shopkeeper lady praised Ning Jing for being a good husband and showed him a pile of embroidered shoes to pick from. Ning Jing chose the two most expensive pairs, and bought another two pairs for himself. “Young man, how about some hair accessories? These are the latest styles from the county town. Buy some for your lady back home, she will definitely be pleased!” The shopkeeper lady took out a box of colorful hairpins to promote. However, Ning Jing glanced at the deserted wood hairpins next to them. The carvings were rough. He asked for the price and picked four. After buying all the sugar, Ning Jing saw someone selling mushrooms on his way out of the town. He bought the mushrooms along with the basket, and headed back to the village with his purchases. He didn’t meet anyone on the way. When he got home, he found an uninvited guest standing at the door. “Master!” A middle-aged man with red eyes fell to his knees as soon as he saw Ning Jing. “Master, please go home! If you don’t go back, the elder master will be killed by your elder brother!” Ning Jing seemed not to have heard him. He walked around him, entered the house, and handed the purchases to Su Liang. Su Liang checked the shoes and affirmed that Ning Jing’s taste was trustworthy. The shoes looked great. “That man, what’s his story?” Su Liang asked. Not long after Ning Jing left, someone came knocking at the door, claiming to be from Ning’s family in Xunyang City. Su Liang simply said that Ning Jing was not at home and asked him to wait outside. “His forehead is darkened.” Ning Jing said without emotion. Su Liang raised her eyebrows, “Is he dying or...” Ning Jing shook his head, “He’s come to kill me.”

