

Three-Time 311

Chapter 311: 311. I'm having such a hard time

Qian Country, Imperial Palace.

Duanmu Yi received news from Jiaye City every day. Ever since he learned that Gu Ling and Su Liang had quickly repelled the army of Yin Country, not only putting an end to the war but also publicly executing Yin Country's commander Fan Tong in a show of strength, his worries were swept away. The emperor was overjoyed and did not hesitate to praise Gu Ling and Su Liang in court, bestowing gifts and sending them to Su Mansion.

On the day he received another report, Duanmu Chen was also present. Judging by the time, Nian Jincheng's army should be arriving at Jiaye City soon.

"It's a letter from Su Liang." Duanmu Yi opened it with a smile, "Surely, it's a request for approval to attack Yin Country."

Duanmu Chen agreed. With the current situation, Yin Country had already lost its initiative. However, he believed that launching an attack on Yin Country was not a wise move. Qian Country was not strong enough to withstand an attack from both Yin and Liang Countries, so they should not start a war recklessly.

Yet, Duanmu Yi's face changed immediately after reading the content of the note, his eyebrows furrowing.

"Father, is there a problem?" Duanmu Chen asked respectfully.

"Those two, they are really bold and reckless! They didn't put me in their eyes at all!" Duanmu Yi threw the note to Duanmu Chen.

Duanmu Chen took a look and furrowed his brows as well. Contrary to their expectations, Su Liang was not asking for permission to attack Yin Country but had secretly gone to Yin Country with Gu Ling to investigate the secret scroll of the Mu Family!

Of course, the latter was also significant, but the problem was that, as servants, their actions were against the rules.

Capable servants are indeed good, but when they become too powerful, what monarchs care more about is their loyalty. Adhering to the rules is essential.

As always, Duanmu Chen helped Su Liang explain, "The matter of the secret scroll cannot be delayed. If Yin Country really obtains the other half of the secret scroll, even if it's a day late, it could lead to both Yin and Liang Countries combining the scrolls, which would be extremely disadvantageous to us! Su Liang must have made the decision to go to Yin Country immediately because of this."

Duanmu Yi calmed down, knowing that Duanmu Chen's words were true, and snorted, "If she can really obtain the other half of the secret scroll, I will not hold it against her."

From this, Duanmu Chen knew that after this incident in Jiaye City, Duanmu Yi had genuinely agreed with his previous view that “obtaining Su Liang means obtaining the world; they have already obtained her.” However, the balance between monarch and servant was still a taut string.

Situ Jing, the grandson of King Yue of Liang Country who came to marry, arrived the day before yesterday. Xing Yuyan would be married off in three days, and the one who was assigned to send her off to Liang Country and bring Situ Yao back was Qin Yuheng, the crown prince from Duke Qin’s mansion.

“So, what about Yin Country?” Duanmu Chen asked.

Su Liang also enquired in the letter when to resume trade with Yin Country. Short-term trade disruption was not a problem as it only demonstrated their stance, but long-term disruption would harm others without benefiting themselves.

After pondering for a moment, Duanmu Yi said, “Let’s wait and see whether Su Liang and Gu Ling make any gains this time, and let’s discuss it when the people of Yin Country come.”

Trade could resume, but the royal family of Yin Country must have a clear stance for peace. The matter of the face was related to the dignity of the country and the cohesion of the people’s hearts, and it was by no means meaningless.

Su Mansion.

Gu Ling and Su Liang left on their wedding day, leaving only Qi Jun, Ren Dong, and the old man Bai in the mansion.

Old man Bai did not like to talk to anyone other than Su Liang. After he gradually recovered his health, he no longer needed Qi Jun and Ren Dong to serve him. He spent half a day sitting by the lake in the Garden Pavilion, lost in thought, and the other half of the day in Yuanming Pavilion on the first floor sorting out medicinal materials.

The medicinal materials that Su Liang had written down as old man Bai dictated were sent over by Song Qi. They were stored on the first floor of Yuanming Pavilion, which was almost filled up, but they were soon used up by the old man.

Qi Jun bought hundreds of big and small porcelain bottles as Bai requested.

Although old man Bai did not allow Qi Jun and Ren Dong to disturb him when making medicine, they would always check how many medicinal materials had been used and how many bottles had been used when he left Yuanming Pavilion each day, and they even kept records.

“These must be the gifts that Senior Bai wants to give to the Master,” Qi Jun said.

Ren Dong agreed, but she was worried about old man Bai’s zombie-like state, “Will Senior Bai leave when he finishes using the medicinal materials?”

Qi Jun didn’t think so, but just in case, he asked Song Qi to continue buying medicinal materials according to the list, with no limit, the more, the better.

Old man Bai seemed not to care that the speed of his consumption of medicinal materials was slower than the speed of the increase in the number of materials and did not say anything. Seeing this, Qi Jun and Ren Dong felt that they might be overthinking the situation.

As for old man Mu who left earlier, he had not yet returned.

When news of Su Liang and Gu Ling quelling the conflict reached the capital, Qi Jun told old man Bai, who simply nodded and said, "As long as she's fine."

Jiaye City.

Six days had passed since Gu Ling and Su Liang left.

Che Yun's injuries had healed well. Lian Shun's arm would take at least another six months to fully recover, according to Su Liang. The three of them, Che Yun, Lian Shun, and Nian Jincheng, got along well. They discussed and further improved Jiaye City's defenses together, and they did not slacken in their daily military training. Even if they knew that the possibility of fighting was low in the short term, they made full preparations.

Occasionally, Lian Shun would invite Che Yun and Nian Jincheng to drink together, sometimes Che Yun would bring Che Xiao, and Lian Shun would call his soon-to-be brother-in-law, Yuan Pei, whom he had grown up with since he was little.

Yuan Pei and Lian Shan, Lin Shun's younger sister, had a marriage arrangement set by their grandparents and were childhood sweethearts. Now that the Yuan family was left with only Yuan Pei, Lin's father and mother were very concerned about him, often inviting him to their home.

Everything was fine until this day when Lin Shun's younger brother, Lian Chen, said he wanted to talk to him.

"What's going on?" Lin Shun laughed and tousled Lian Chen's hair, "You're so young, and you always look serious. You look older than me!" Lian Chen frowned, "Big Brother, stop joking. I have something serious to say."

"Did you fall in love with someone?" Lin Shun chuckled.

Lian Chen's face turned dark, "Big Brother!"

"Alright, alright, go ahead, I'm listening." Lin Shun finally sat down seriously.

"Something's wrong with our sister." Lian Chen said with a serious expression.

Lin Shun was stunned for a moment, "Shan Shan? She's been looking better these days, and she's willing to go out, isn't that a good thing?"

Lian Chen shook his head, "That's not what I mean. I unintentionally saw Sister talking to Brother Shen in the garden. Although I didn't hear what they said, the look in Sister's eyes when she watched Brother Shen leave... anyway, I think something's wrong!"

Lin Shun was completely dumbfounded, "You mean... Shan Shan has fallen for Che Yun? That can't be! Haven't she and Apei always been close?"

"It might be because she lost her memory and forgot about her past with Yuan brother," Lian Chen sighed, "What if Sister really falls for Brother Shen? What will we do?"

In Qian Country, it is customary to mourn for parents for three years after their death. Yuan Pei and Lian Shan were originally set to get married this year, but Yuan Ye passed away, and Yuan Pei wanted to mourn his grandfather for a year. The wedding was postponed to next year, and the Lin family members had no objections.

Lin Shun furrowed his eyebrows, "I'll go ask Shan Shan. You didn't tell Mom and Dad, did you?"

Lian Chen shook his head, "Not yet. Big Brother, please persuade Sister not to like Brother Shen, or else Yuan brother will be so heartbroken!"

"What do you kids know? Go read your books." Lin Shun tousled Lian Chen's hair once more and strode out the door.

By the time Lin Shun found Lian Shan, she was daydreaming by the window.

"What are you thinking about?" Lin Shun extended his hand and waved it in front of her eyes.

"Big brother is here, I wasn't thinking about anything." Lian Shan shook her head and smiled.

Lin Shun seemingly casually said, "Apei has been having a hard time lately. You should keep him company more often. Didn't the two of you like going for boat rides on the lake before?"

Lian Shan furrowed her eyebrows upon hearing this, "Big brother, I..."

Seeing her reaction, Lin Shun had a bad premonition. Before he could ask, Lian Shan confessed she wanted to be with Che Yun, "Big brother, I know Yuan brother is very good, but my heart only belongs to Brother Shen now."

Lin Shun frowned, sat down next to Lian Shan, and looked her in the eyes, "Did you tell Che Yun how you feel?"

Lian Shan shook her head slightly, "No. I want to talk to Yuan brother clearly and break off the engagement as soon as possible. Big brother, you must help me."

Lin Shun massaged his forehead, "Apei has been having a hard time lately... Sigh, if you really don't like him, it wouldn't be good for both of you to be together. I'll ask Che Yun first."

Lian Shan's eyes lit up, "I understand. Thank you, big brother."

When Lin Shun found Che Yun, he had just returned from inspecting the south city gate.

Before coming, Lin Shun thought Che Yun would say he only regarded Lian Shan as a sister.

However, to Lin Shun's surprise, Che Yun remained silent when he heard the question.

"What do you mean? Just say it!" Lin Shun frowned.

Che Yun looked down, "I do like your sister, but because she has an engagement, I never revealed my feelings. I'm sorry, I never intended to hurt anyone."

Lin Shun felt a headache coming on, "You haven't done anything wrong, why apologize? It's just that I never expected you to... In fact, I've always thought you had a secret crush on Su Xiaoliang!"

Che Yun did not speak, and Lin Shun sighed repeatedly, "If it weren't for Apei, I would, of course, be happy to see you and my sister together. Now that things have come to this, all we can do is inform Apei as soon as possible and see what he has to say."

When Lin Shun found Yuan Pei, he was repairing the vase that Yuan Ye had loved the most. When the General Mansion was occupied by the Fan family father and son, Fan Gang had shattered many items in the mansion, but Yuan Pei kept them all, hoping to restore their original state.

After drinking a cup of tea, Lin Shun finally told Yuan Pei that Che Yun and Lian Shan were in love, "I found out just today. If Shan Shan hadn't been injured and forgotten you, this would never have happened."

Yuan Pei paused for a moment upon hearing this, put down the shards of the vase in his hand and quickly regained his composure, "Actually, I've known for a long time."

Lian Shun was shocked, "You knew?"

"Shanmei didn't lose her memory and forget about me before falling in love with Brother Shen." Yuan Pei shook his head, his eyes dim, "Before the incident in Jiaye City, I could see that Shanmei was interested in Brother Shen. She went out alone that day to look for Brother Shen and was captured. I saw it from afar. I thought that after such a catastrophe, she would forget everything, and perhaps we could start over. But I didn't expect that the person who was truly forgotten was me."

Lian Shun frowned, "Shanshan liked Che Yun before? How come I never noticed?"

Yuan Pei picked up the broken porcelain, looked at the half-repaired vase, and shook his head, "Maybe we were just fated but not destined to be together. It was just an arranged marriage by our elders. She probably treated me as an elder brother. Her real destiny is Brother Shen. He is outstanding, and they are a good match."

"Apei, you..." Lian Shun looked at Yuan Pei's appearance, his face full of worry.

"I'm fine." Yuan Pei forced a smile, "Let's dissolve the engagement. I will talk to my uncle and aunt. Even if my grandfather was alive, he wouldn't stop it because he always treated Shanmei like his own granddaughter."

Lian Shun wanted to say something to comfort Yuan Pei, but when he opened his mouth, he felt that everything was superfluous. He just patted Yuan Pei on the shoulder and left.

Two days later, Yuan Pei and Lian Shan formally dissolved their engagement, and Che Yun got engaged to Lian Shun, with their wedding set for mid-May.

On the night of the engagement, Che Xiao brought a late-night snack to Che Yun in the study.

"Mother made it. I can't finish it, so I'll share half with my big brother." Che Xiao smiled and put a bowl of Ginseng Chicken Soup in front of Che Yun.

Che Yun shook his head, "I'm not hungry."

Actually, father and mother just wanted to compensate me." Che Xiao looked serious.

Che Yun's face darkened, "Don't pretend in front of me."

Upon hearing this, Che Xiao's previously "well-behaved and sensible" face suddenly revealed a meaningful smile, "Big brother, what are you talking about? I don't understand.'

"I'm not your big brother." Che Yun said coldly.

"Then," Che Xiao laughed, "Do you want me to call you Master or Young Master? Either is fine."

"It was Situ Xie who brought you back. You were taken away by him back then." Che Yun looked coldly at Che Xiao.

"The Master is the Young Master's grandfather, and the Young Master should not call him directly by his name. The Master let me come back to assist the Young Master, and meeting Su Liang first was for security and to avoid arousing their suspicions. The Young Master getting injured and poisoned was for the same reason."

Che Xiao looked at Che Yun, his eyes deep, "Is the Young Master upset because he doesn't want to marry Lian Shan? But there's no way. She accidentally overheard your secret back then and should have died. If you insist on letting her live, you can only give her medicine to make her lose her memory and fake the appearance of being injured. If her memory recovers one day, it would be very unfavorable for you. If you don't want her to die, you have to make her fall in love with you, be devoted to you, and be with you. Only then will she not betray you. "

"It's all your design!" Che Yun's eyes were icy.

Che Xiao shrugged, "The Young Master needs to take the first step, or else how can the Master be at ease to entrust a major mission to you? You were already involved in the kidnapping of the Lin family members and indirectly caused Yuan Ye's death, so don't hold any thoughts for those so-called friends. If they knew what you had done, they would never forgive you."

Che Yun clenched his fists, "Besides asking you to spare Lian Shan, I have not participated in plotting anything!"

Che Xiao smiled, "From the beginning to the end, you knew who was behind it all, but you never told Lian Shun or Su Liang, and they wouldn't believe you. In Nanshan City, you also killed a servant who eavesdropped on your conversation with my parents and faked his accidental death without arousing suspicion. It's better for the Young Master to give up unnecessary illusions early so that he can achieve great things. The Master has great expectations for the Young Master, who is a prince of Liang Country, not a person of Qian Country. Remember this."

Che Yun's face looked extremely ugly, "Don't you hate Situ Xie?"

Che Xiao's smile deepened, "Young Master is joking. The Master took me away, raised me, taught me to read and practice martial arts, and let me come back to help the Young Master. He has regenerated my life; why should I hate him? What would be the future for me staying with my parents? Inheriting the family's small shop that wouldn't make even a few broken silver coins?" Upon hearing this, Che Yun clenched his fists again and said, "Get out!"

Che Xiao didn't get angry or upset, stood up, and looked at Che Yun, "The sooner the Young Master faces reality, the less pain he'll have."

As his words fell, Che Xiao turned and left. Che Yun waved his hand, knocking over the bowl of Ginseng Chicken Soup that was still steaming hot...

After Su Liang and Gu Ling left Jiaye City, Gu Ling was able to stay calm all the way, thanks to her disguise. Busyness temporarily reduced the heat of their love.

As it was Su Liang's first time in Yin Country, everything along the way felt novel to her, and her mood was pretty good. She agreed with Gu Ling that if nothing important happened on the way back, they would relax and have some fun.

Gu Ling was naturally very happy. He had long planned to consummate their marriage once their business was done, and then go on their honeymoon.

The two disguised themselves well and acted cautiously. They encountered no trouble on the way, and they even learned some news: the new Prime Minister of Yin Country was Mu Ya's uncle, Mu Chang, who had already rushed to the northern border to replace Fan Gang.

Mu Ya, who had tried to kill Su Liang and almost killed Gao Jiabao, was spared from assassination by Ren Dong because she was pregnant. Later, Su Liang was busy with other matters and did not pay attention to Mu Ya's condition. She accidentally overheard someone talking about it and found out that Mu Ya had given birth to a stillborn child, and many people called her an ill-omened person.

Su Liang felt that the rumors about the "ill-omened person" were probably nothing more than a means of power struggle and intrigue. Since she had come this far, after her business was done, she would surely meet with Mu Ya in person and settle the old scores.

Nangong Lin's home was located in Hefeng City, the closest city to Xiangyue City. The Nangong family was a famous big family in Hefeng City. Nangong Lin was the illegitimate brother of the Nangong family's chief and usually resided in a villa on the outskirts of the city, almost invisible. If you inquire about Nangong Lin in the city, many people haven't heard of this name.

Su Liang and Gu Ling arrived in Hefeng City on the evening of March 5 and went straight to the Nangong Family's Mid-hill Villa on the outskirts of the city.

The road leading to the villa was in a quiet, serene forest.

As the sky darkened, the evening breeze rustled the leaves. Both of them led their horses, and Gu Ling also held Su Liang's hand.

"Should we give the letter and hairpin we found in Liang Country to your master?" Su Liang suddenly thought of it and asked Gu Ling.

Gu Ling shook her head, "I didn't bring them, never mind."

Su Liang sighed lightly, "That's true. He already knows about those things."

When they arrived outside the villa gate, Su Liang knocked, and an old man with white hair and beard politely invited them in.

Halfway through, Nangong Lin came to meet them. He looked tired, with wet hair, explaining that he had just taken a bath.

“How is Nangong Sister?” asked Su Liang.

Nangong Lin shook his head, sighed deeply, “You two have come a long way, you should have rested first, but Qianqian is not doing well, Xiaoliang, you better go see her now.”

“Alright.” Su Liang nodded, “Master lead the way.”

When they saw Nangong Qian, she was leaning on a maid, coughing nonstop, while the maid held a handkerchief to catch her phlegm, but she ended up coughing blood.

Nangong Qian’s appearance and demeanor reminded Su Liang of Lin Daiyu in “A Dream of Red Mansions”. Born weak due to congenital deficiencies, she had depleted liver yin, depleted heart qi, and her face looked utterly pale.

As the daughter of Situ Han and Situ Xiang, Nangong Qian had delicate features and was a beauty, but unfortunately, her health was very poor. Seeing Nangong Lin, she called “Dad” and then fainted weakly.

Nangong Lin helped Nangong Qian lie down, sighed deeply, and waved for the maid to leave.

Su Liang walked to the bedside, Nangong Lin stepped back to let her take Nangong Qian’s pulse.

As expected, this kind of illness had no specific miracle cure and needed to be carefully nursed back to health.

“Master, let me see what kind of medicine Sister usually takes,” Su Liang released Nangong Qian and said.

Nangong Lin took out the prescription and the unfinished medicine, “At first it had some effect, but then it became useless.”

Gu Ling took them, while Su Liang gave Nangong Qian acupuncture, saying that a treatment plan needed further thought.

Nangong Lin asked a maid to take Su Liang and Gu Ling to rest, and he stayed to wait for Nangong Qian to wake up.

Su Liang removed her disguise, cleaned up, and had dinner with Gu Ling.

Gu Ling asked Su Liang, how long would the treatment for Nangong Qian take.

Su Liang shook her head, “I will check her condition tomorrow when she wakes up.”

“Tonight we can only sleep together.” Gu Ling glanced at the inner room, implying his intentions.

Su Liang was considering Nangong Qian’s illness, “What did you say earlier?” “Sleep together tonight.” Gu Ling repeated it.

This time Su Liang heard clearly but frowned slightly, “It might not work.”

Gu Ling was puzzled, “Why not? Why might it not work?”

"I think my period is about to come." Su Liang shrugged slightly.

Gu Ling shook his head, "It's not the time yet."

"It might be because my life has been irregular recently, causing it to come early again." Su Liang said. She always had a faint feeling in her lower abdomen before her period, so she was sure it was coming.

"Alright then." Gu Ling sighed lightly, "I will hold you tonight, just to warm you up."

Su Liang smiled, "I agree, as long as you don't feel uncomfortable."

Gu Ling held his forehead, "I'm so frustrated, I really want to kill Nian Jincheng.."

Chapter 312: 312. The Perfect Master

Gu Ling, who insisted on sleeping with Su Liang, had to leave in the middle of the night and find the lake they passed by when they arrived, soaking himself in it...

By the time he finally "calmed down" and came back from the lake, he ran into Nangong Lin.

"Ling'er, what happened to you..." Nangong Lin looked at the soaking wet Gu Ling with an indescribable expression on his face.

Gu Ling's face remained calm, "I have a sleepwalking condition, and only discovered myself in the lake when I awoke."

Nangong Lin frowned, "Sleepwalking? Can't Xiaoliang cure it?"

Gu Ling shook his head, "After getting married, it's been much better than before."

Nangong Lin nodded, "When you sleep at night, let Xiaoliang watch you, so there won't be any accidents."

"Okay." Gu Ling asked Nangong Lin, "Has senior sister woken up yet?"

"She just woke up for a moment, and then fell asleep again." Nangong Lin deeply sighed, "I told Qianqian that you had arrived, and she said she was very sorry. She always feels like a burden and adds trouble for you."

Gu Ling didn't say anything polite. This time's matter was indeed somewhat troublesome, and his calling Nangong Qian a senior sister was just out of courtesy, nothing more.

"You better go back. If Xiaoliang wakes up and can't find you, she'll definitely be worried." Nangong Lin said to Gu Ling.

However, Gu Ling didn't leave, "Who taught Master his martial arts?"

Nangong Lin was stunned, "Why do you suddenly ask this?"

Gu Ling's expression was faint, "I just feel that I knew too little about Master before."

Nangong Lin sighed softly, “Yes, although we are master and disciple, we haven’t said more than a few words to each other over these years. My master was a down-and-out wandering swordsman. When we first met, I was only ten years old, and thought he was a beggar. I gave him some food, and he grabbed me, pinched my bones, and said he would give me a great gift. Later, he would often secretly find me and teach me martial arts, including the Cold Moon Sword Technique. But I didn’t have much desire for fame and fortune, and when I was young, I just wanted to do business properly, and then take good care of Qianqian.”

When Nangong Lin was young, even though he was born of a concubine, he was still a standard rich young master with handsome looks, gentle temperament, and a hidden top-level master, which indeed qualified him to get acquainted and become brothers with the Situ sisters, Situ Xiang and Situ Ning.

Gu Ling did not question Nangong Lin’s words, because that was his experience many years ago, and it was impossible to verify. He just wanted to ask clearly, “Does Master have any other disciples?”

Nangong Lin was taken aback for a moment and then laughed, “Yes, there’s

Qianqian, but she is physically weak and can’t practice martial arts. The other person who calls me master is Xiaoliang. When I have time, I can give her some guidance.”

“No need,” Gu Ling shook his head, “She has me.” Su Liang was menstruating and temporarily unable to do martial arts, so they wouldn’t stay here for too long.

Nangong Lin chuckled, “That’s true. You’ve surpassed your master in skill. Your current strength must be better than mine.”

After chatting for a while, Master and disciple separated. Gu Ling returned to their room, changed his clothes, carefully got into bed, laying down outside, and under the bright moonlight, quietly looked at Su Liang’s peaceful sleeping face.

“Great God, why don’t you hug me?” Su Liang didn’t open her eyes but suddenly spoke, her tone teasing.

“Did I wake you?” Gu Ling pinched Su Liang’s cheek.

Su Liang opened her eyes, looked at Gu Ling, “I woke up when you went out.”

Gu Ling sighed softly, “You couldn’t sleep well either, I should have slept on the soft couch.”

Su Liang leaned towards Gu Ling, hugged his arm, and closed her eyes again,

“Why did you take so long?”

Gu Ling thought Su Liang looked just like a lazy little kitten at this moment, adorable to death, wanting to kiss her, but considering his recent poor self-control, he restrained himself.

After listening to Gu Ling’s conversation with Nangong Lin, Su Liang nodded, “If you have other senior brothers or junior brothers, they might be your opponents.” But Nangong Lin’s meaning was that he didn’t teach any other disciples.

Having been fatigued from traveling, Su Liang fell asleep soon after chatting with Gu Ling for a while.

Gu Ling imagined the scene of beating up Nian Jincheng in their next meeting and finally fell asleep as well.

It was already broad daylight when Su Liang woke up since she fell asleep late last night. As she sat up, Gu Ling came in with warm water, "Do you feel uncomfortable?"

Su Liang shook her head, "I'm fine."

After getting up, tidying up, washing, and changing her clothes, Su Liang stood in the courtyard and looked at the lush mountains and forests behind the mid-hill villa. The thick greenery, moist, and fresh air made it an extremely comfortable place for health preservation.

Last night, when they arrived it was dark, and during the daytime, the exquisitely carved beams and rafters of the villa also contrasted with the natural landscape, as the builder had exceptional taste.

Breakfast included some exotic Yin Country delicacies Su Liang hadn't eaten before; overall, the taste was light and delicious.

"Master is a very considerate person." Su Liang said to Gu Ling.

Gu Ling nodded, "Too perfect, even a bit fake."

Su Liang raised an eyebrow, "I think the most perfect person in the world is you, but you're very real." At first acquaintance, Su Liang had been amazed by Gu Ling's beauty, but then she saw his cold demeanor and down-to-earth actions.

Gu Ling's eyes filled with laughter. He lowered his head and gently kissed the corner of Su Liang's lips, "I like it when you praise me."

"It's sincere." Su Liang smiled lightly. "To compare, Master represents another kind of perfection in character and behavior, showing no weakness in every word and action."

But this doesn't mean Nangong Lin is pretending. It is possible that he is genuinely such a considerate person, and it is natural for him to treat his beloved disciple and daughter-in-law well.

Gu Ling only talked about his feelings. He wasn't indifferent to human relationships. He could play chess and chat with Lianshun's father, and even if his own chess skills were poor, he didn't feel impatient, and listening to him talk and laugh felt very intimate. However, when facing Nangong Lin, he had never felt any desire to get close to him.

"A bit fake" doesn't mean that Gu Ling found anything wrong with Nangong Lin; it's just intuition.

After breakfast, Gu Ling and Su Liang went to see Nangong Qian again.

The weather was beautiful. Nangong Qian was carried by Nangong Lin to lie on a lounge chair under the trees in the courtyard. Her palm-sized little face was almost translucent in the sunlight, with delicate blue veins barely visible on her forehead.

"Qianqian, look who's here!" Nangong Lin said with a smile, getting up.

Upon hearing this, Nangong Qian slowly turned her head. Her gaze fell on Gu Ling's face, and she stared at him intently as if being transfixed.

"Qianqian, this is Gu Ling whom Dad told you about," Nangong Lin bent down and said to Nangong Qian.

"I thought I saw an immortal from the heavens..." Nangong Qian murmured, her eyes still fixed on Gu Ling.

Nangong Lin smiled at Gu Ling and Su Liang, "Qianqian hasn't met many people since she was a child, but she always heard me talk about Linger, and she thought I was exaggerating. She was quite surprised to meet you today.

Please don't mind."

Su Liang: ... It's fine, actually she was amazed when she first saw Gu Ling too.

"This is Ling'er's wife, Su Liang," Nangong Lin introduced her to Nangong Qian.

Only then did Nangong Qian notice Su Liang, speaking weakly, "I've heard Dad mention you... Thank you for coming..."

While Gu Ling was looking at the orchids in the courtyard, Su Liang sat down next to Nangong Qian, and observed, asked, and palpated her.

"Senior sister, don't worry too much," Su Liang said to Nangong Qian.

Nangong Qian stared blankly, "I know... it's not good for my body, but I can't control it..."

"It's due to physical reasons," Su Liang said, "But you can try to make some adjustments, and think more about happy things."

Nangong Qian let out a faint sigh, "I'm not as carefree and healthy as my sister, what happy things do I have to think about?"

Su Liang: ... well, this temperament is somewhat like Lin Girl, it's useless to say more.

Nangong Lin asked Su Liang if there was a way to treat Nangong Qian, and Su

Liang nodded, "I'll do my best."

Going through vast relief, Nangong Lin said, "Just let me know if you need anything. I can't speak for other things, but Nangong Family won't lack medicinal herbs."

"Alright, I'll write a prescription for Master and adjust Senior Sister's diet," Su Liang said.

Nangong Lin got the writing materials, and Su Liang quickly wrote a prescription for him.

Seeing Su Liang's handwriting, Nangong Lin was surprised, "This handwriting is just like Ling'er's."

Su Liang smiled, "His writing is attractive, so I specially learned it." After crossing into this world, she learned two types of handwriting, one from Ning Jing and the other from Gu Ling. Comparatively, she felt that Gu Ling's writing suited her more. It was previously inconvenient to

use, but now that Gu Ling had recovered his identity and married her, there were no more taboos. “Father, can I take a look too?” Nangong Qian reached out her hand.

Nangong Lin handed the prescription over to her.

“It’s so beautiful,” Nangong Qian praised, “The handwriting reflects the person.”

Su Liang knew that this must not be about her. The handwriting was Gu Ling’s, and she just imitated it.

After giving Nangong Qian another acupuncture treatment, it was still early,

GU Ling said he wanted to go for a walk. Man gong Lin wanted to arrange someone to show them around but was refused.

Su Liang and Gu Ling disguised themselves once more, left the villa, and headed to Hefeng City.

The sun shone brightly as Su Liang and Gu Ling strolled through the city, enjoying the rare leisure moments.

“How many days do you need?” Gu Ling asked again.

Su Liang thought and said, “Five to six days.” Once she confirmed that her medicine was effective for Nangong Qian, they could leave.

“Very well,” Gu Ling thought it was just right.

Su Liang knew what he was thinking and chuckled, “After we leave, we’ll visit the capital city of Yin Country.”

“Buy a mansion there,” Gu Ling said.

Su Liang coughed lightly, “Brother, although we’re not short of money, we may only stay for a day or two. Is it necessary?”

Gu Ling nodded, “It’s necessary. We can’t consummate our marriage in an inn. We can return and live there later – as a memento.”

Su Liang: ...Well, as long as he’s happy.

The two of them went sightseeing in Hefeng City and visited the temples in the city.

By the time they returned to Mid-hill Villa, Nangong Lin had already prepared the medicine according to Su Liang’s prescription.

Su Liang checked that there were no issues and that all the ingredients were top-notch.

“Xiaoliang, I know you won’t stay here long. Qianqian has never had friends since she was a child. Before you leave, could you please accompany her more?” Nangong Lin sighed, “She likes you both very much and is afraid of causing you trouble.”

“Alright,” Su Liang agreed promptly. As a doctor, providing psychological counseling to patients was also part of the treatment.

"I'm truly grateful. If Qianqian's health improves and she can go out, I'll definitely take her out to see the world and visit you in Qian Country," Nangong Lin said.

That night, Gu Ling slept on the soft couch and didn't "sleepwalk" to soak in the cold water anymore.

It was deep into the night, and Nangong Lin was still with Nangong Qian.

"I'm very worried about my brother..." Nangong Qian's face was full of concern, "What exactly does Situ Xie want him to do?"

Nangong Lin sighed and shook his head, "I don't know what Situ Xie intends to do, but he can't do more than attempt to seize worldly power by using Jingjing as his pawn. Jingjing is stuck in a quagmire now, and it is precisely because of his kind heart that he has been controlled by others. If only he were more heartless, things wouldn't have turned out this way."

Named by Situ Xiang at birth, the boy and girl twins were called Jing and Qian, symbolizing peace and stability.

Che Yun's real name was Situ Jing.

"Why doesn't Situ Xie use Gu Ling instead?" Nangong Qian could not understand.

Nangong Lin snorted, "Situ Xie initially chose Ah Ling's father, Gu Yuan, as the pawn against Qian Country. Unfortunately, he failed. Ah Ling is an apparent pawn and too conspicuous, so it's not easy to use him. Besides, he has been extremely intelligent since childhood, unwilling to be manipulated by others. Jingjing, on the other hand, is the hidden pawn Situ Xie has planted, never giving him a chance to refuse."

"My brother's life is so difficult..." Nangong Qian's eyes reddened, "Father, is there really no way to help him?"

Nangong Lin sighed deeply, "I've tried to help him get away several times, but he refused.

"If I recover, I'll go see my brother," Nangong Qian said.

Nangong Lin nodded, "It's good that you're thinking this way. He's not that he doesn't care about you; he just can't get away."

Nangong Qian appeared lost, "I really envy Su Liang."

Nangong Lin's eyebrows slightly creased, "Qianqian, could it be that... you like Ah Ling?"

A faint blush appeared on Nangong Qian's pale face as she lowered her eyes in silence.

Nangong Lin sighed continuously, "You and Jingjing are really..."

"What does it have to do with my brother?" Nangong Qian's voice was as soft as a mosquito's.

“Although he doesn’t admit it, I can see that he has feelings for Su Liang,” Nangong Lin said and then shook his head, “I shouldn’t have mentioned this to you; now you’ll overthink.”

Nangong Qian’s face was full of astonishment, “My brother likes Su Liang too? But Su Liang married Gu Ling... My brother must feel heartbroken watching them together...”

“Actually...” Nangong Lin hesitated to speak.

“What were you going to say, Father?” Nangong Qian frowned slightly.

“Back then, Xiangmei (Situ Xiang) and Aning were even closer than real sisters. I once heard them say that if they got married and had children, they would definitely become in-laws. Xiangmei even said that if she had a daughter, she wouldn’t feel at ease marrying her off to someone else. It would only be best if Aning was the mother-in-law of her daughter...” Nangong Lin looked somewhat melancholic, “At that time, there was no Gu Yuan, no Situ Han. We were all carefree and happy. How wonderful it was!”

Nangong Qian’s face was full of shock, “Father, are you saying... Gu Ling and I should have been...?”

Nangong Lin nodded, “Not should have been, but you two were engaged. It was delayed because of your weak physical condition and the incident in his family that caused him to lose contact. I should have told him earlier.”

Nangong Qian’s eyes dimmed, “Even if he had known earlier, he might not have liked me...”

Nangong Lin grasped Nangong Qian’s hand, looked into her eyes, and asked,

“Do you truly like Gu Ling and want to be with him? Tell Father the truth.”

Nangong Qian softly nodded, “From the moment I saw him, I’ve never been able to forget.”

“Alright, Father knows now,” Nangong Lin’s eyes flickered with a mysterious depth.

“Father... what are you going to do?” Nangong Qian widened her eyes.

“You don’t need to worry about it,” Nangong Lin stood up, “For you and Jingjing, Father will think of something.”

It was past midnight and the wind had picked up.

Nangong Lin returned to his study, opened a hidden compartment, and took out a painting scroll. Carefully, he unfolded it in front of him.

The woman in the painting was breathtakingly beautiful, her smile enchanting.

Nangong Lin gently touched the woman’s face in the painting, an inscrutable smile on his face, “Aning, I liked you so much back then, but you refused to accept me. Now I can’t tell whether I love you more or hate you more... But no matter what, I’ll never allow your son to reject my daughter again..”

Su Liang's days in the Mid-hill Villa were quiet and leisurely.

Besides giving Nangong Qian acupuncture and chatting about the outside world each day, Su Liang spent her time with Gu Ling. Whether they were climbing mountains to watch the sunrise and sunset or going into the city to watch plays and listen to music, she found happiness in these activities.

After expressing admiration and fascination for Gu Ling during their initial encounter, Nangong Qian had grown closer to Su Liang. Gu Ling seldom appeared before Nangong Qian, and she never actively asked about him.

At one point, Nangong Lin sparred with Gu Ling and acknowledged that Gu Ling's skills had vastly outgrown his own as a master.

In this manner, six days passed. Nangong Qian no longer coughed up blood, and her cough symptoms had noticeably eased. Her spirit was improved, and Su Liang raised the matter of her departure with Nangong Lin.

Nangong Lin was surprised, "Do you have to leave so soon?"

Su Liang smiled, "I have taught Dr. Liu the methods of acupuncture, so he can perform acupuncture on my senior. We will continue with the current prescription. I have written two new prescriptions specifying when to change the medicine and what kind of diet and exercise should be followed after my senior can get out of bed."

Nangong Lin nodded, "You've put in a lot of effort. That sounds reasonable."

"Since Gu Ling and I secretly came here, we need to return as soon as possible to avoid any trouble with the Emperor," Su Liang said to Nangong Lin. They also planned to visit Xiangyue City, but there was no need to disclose this at the time.

"That's for the best. I would feel guilty if I caused any inconvenience to you," said Nangong Lin with a warm smile, "I won't keep you any longer. Feel free to visit whenever you have time. If Qianqian's health improves, I'll surely bring her to see you."

While Gu Ling was packing, Su Liang went to say farewell to Nangong Qian.

"You're leaving so soon..." Nangong Qian's eyes reddened, and she clung onto

Su Liang's hand, "When you're gone, I won't have anyone to talk to."

Su Liang sighed lightly to comfort Nangong Qian, "When you're feeling better and can go outside, you can come to my house with your master."

Nangong Qian nodded gently, "I definitely will."

When Su Liang returned to her courtyard, she found Nangong Lin had come over again.

“When I urgently came to find you, I did not have time to prepare any gifts. I brought them now. There’s also a gift for your wedding, ” Nangong Lin said with a smile, handing over two boxes to Su Liang.

Su Liang opened the “first-meeting gift” to find a yellowing book.

“This is a medical book treasured by the Nangong Family. It contains many ancient prescriptions. I hope it will be useful for you,” said Nangong Lin. Su Liang nodded, “I love it, thank you, master.”

As for the wedding gift for Gu Ling and Su Liang, it was a box of valuable sandalwood. Nangong Lin knew that Gu Ling liked to carve.

Thus, before noon that day, Su Liang and Gu Ling bid farewell to Nangong Lin and left the Mid-hill Villa.

When they left Hefeng City, they both changed clothes and even the horses. After leaving the city, they headed towards Xiangyue City.

Traveling at a swift pace, they arrived in Xiangyue City before the city gates closed for the night.

Although there had been setbacks in the war in the northern parts of Yin Country, Xiangyue City remained largely unaffected. The brightly lit streets were bustling as usual.

It was impossible for them to find a house to buy at this hour, so they decided to stay at an inn. Conveniently, Gu Ling reckoned that the following day would be auspicious.

After settling their belongings, they went to a restaurant for dinner and chose a private room facing the street.

Su Liang sat by the window, looking at the night view outside, where she could see a brightly lit tower in the distance.

“Is that a temple or the palace over there?” Su Liang asked Gu Ling. Gu Ling glanced over, “The palace.”

“We have serious business to attend to tonight.” Said Su Liang. One of her reasons for coming to Xiangyue City was to pay a visit to Mu Ya, the Imperial Concubine of the crown prince, in his mansion. As for the secret scroll, she’ll casually inquire about it tomorrow. Even if the royal family of Yin Country possessed it, it would’ve been given by the royal family of Liang Country since the complete scroll is with Gu Ling.

Su Liang ordered a few dishes, all on the sweet side. She didn’t eat much before putting her chopsticks down.

Leaving the restaurant, they strolled around the street for a while before returning to the inn.

Su Liang lay down and slept for an hour, woken by Gu Ling when it was quiet outside.

She pushed open the window, a clean breeze swept across her face. The night sky was filled with stars, a sight hard to resist.

Gu Ling hugged Su Liang from behind, his head resting on her shoulder, faces touching sideways, "Tomorrow, hmm?"

Su Liang chuckled lightly, "God, what are you talking about? I don't understand."

Gu Ling tilted his head and stole a kiss from the corner of Su Liang's lips,

"Don't play dumb, otherwise..."

"Otherwise, you're going to keep kissing me until I understand? Too scary." Su Liang grinned, "Tomorrow, I'm going to sleep with you, satisfied?"

"You said so." Gu Ling seemed utterly pleased, finally, the time he had been waiting for arrived.

They put on their masks and quietly left the inn, heading for the crown prince's mansion in Yin Country.

Ever since Mu Ya miscarried, she was completely neglected by the crown prince. Since she was only an Imperial Concubine and the Empress above her had a niece as the crown princess, life was not easy for her.

Plus, because she didn't properly recover from her postpartum period, she suffered from persistent headaches and weakness.

Since the public challenge with Su Liang during the Military Exam selection in Qian Country, which she lost, everything seemed to go wrong for her. Her reputation and prestige in Yin Country took a major hit due to that defeat and she ended up as an Imperial Concubine instead of the likely crown princess.

Mu Ya, blaming all her sufferings on Su Liang, deliberately instructed her minion Qiu Jianren to insert his nephew Qiu Ming into Su Liang's side during

Qian Country's military conscription. Surprisingly, the plot was uncovered, Qiu Ming died, while Su Liang remained fine.

Mu Ya was unaware of the events that transpired after Qiu Ming went to Qian Country and didn't know her poisonous plot against Su Liang almost killed Su Liang's friend Gao Jiabao.

After meeting with Qiu Jianren, he was killed, leaving behind a beheaded corpse which Mu Ya saw in person. This spectacle gave her nightmares for three days, after which she forgot about Qiu Jianren.

But when she miscarried, Mu Ya felt it was all Su Liang's fault. She believed Su Liang cursed her, sent people to kill Qiu Jianren, which shocked her and affected her unborn child.

Upon hearing that Su Liang married Gu Ling, Mu Ya's jealousy toward her reached the pinnacle.

During the quiet hours of the night, Mu Ya in white clothes and disheveled hair, held a cloth doll with Su Liang's name written all over it, pierced by long needles. After placing the last needle, she took out all the others from the doll and inserted them back again while cursing, "Su Liang, you won't die a natural death..."

When Su Liang and Gu Ling approached Mu Ya's room, they leaned against the wall and listened to what Mu Ya was saying.

Gu Ling's eyes chilled, signaling Su Liang to wait outside while he went in to deal with it. This time, no hesitation was required.

Su Liang watched Gu Ling leave, slightly raising her head counting the stars, wondering at what count Gu Ling would return.

When Mu Ya noticed a person behind her, Gu Ling's long sword had already pierced her body.

The doll full of needles dropped from Mu Ya's hands to the ground. She incredulously turned her head, attempting to see who it was.

Then she heard an unfamiliar voice, "I'm Su Liang's husband."

Su Liang's husband... Gu Ling... The most beautiful man in the world... He came to kill her for Su Liang... Mu Ya's eyes were dull, and she murmured, "She harms me... The heavens are unjust..."

Su Liang heard it. In some way, it could be said that she harmed Mu Ya. If she hadn't traveled through time, Mu Ya's life might have been different. However, there are no ifs in this world, and Mu Ya's end was also the result of her own choices.

Just when Su Liang felt that Gu Ling was about to come out, and they could return to the inn to sleep, she suddenly felt a chill on her back!

With a sinking heart, Su Liang hadn't had time to do anything when she heard an aged voice by her ear, "Don't move."

She felt a cold sensation on her neck, as if something was wrapped around it, but she hadn't even noticed when this person had come close! Encountering a master like this at Mu Ya's place was something she hadn't anticipated. Had such a person been by Mu Ya's side, he would have been sent to kill Su Liang long ago!

Soon, Su Liang saw Gu Ling, and Gu Ling also saw her, including the figure in a black cloak behind her, almost blending into the night.

In an instant, it was as if all of Gu Ling's blood had frozen, "Let her go!"

"You killed my adopted daughter." The elder's deep voice revealed that he was one of Mu Ya's men.

It must have been that when this elder discovered Gu Ling, he had already stabbed his sword through Mu Ya's body. So the elder had chosen to capture Su Liang...

"What do you want?" Gu Ling saw the golden thread around Su Liang's neck and told himself to stay calm, don't panic, but his heart couldn't help plummeting. From the time he had met Su Liang till now, even throughout Gu Ling's life, he had never felt this panicked before.

"To pay with a life," the elder said in a cold voice, "Yours or hers."

“Mine,” said Gu Ling instantly, “Let her go.” If they were to use poison at this moment, neither he nor Su Liang had taken the antidote in advance, and it would only put them at a disadvantage.

“Drop your weapon,” the elder stared at Gu Ling.

Gu Ling put his long sword on the ground and took the dagger from his sleeve and threw it down.

“Your pouch,” the elder said.

Gu Ling unfastened his pouch and threw it aside.

“Take this medicine.” As soon as the elder finished speaking, a white porcelain bottle flew towards Gu Ling.

“Don’t!” Su Liang watched Gu Ling gripping that porcelain bottle, her heart suddenly tightening, “I instructed him to kill Mu Ya! If you want to do something, come at me!”

But the elder didn’t take any notice of Su Liang, “I’ll count to three, if you don’t take it, I’ll slit her throat.”

“Gu Ling, don’t take it, I beg you,” Su Liang didn’t have time to think about how all this happened. But at this moment, she only had one thought, that he shouldn’t take the medicine. He simply must not take it.

“Two,” the elder said, suddenly tightening the golden thread in his hand. Su Liang didn’t let herself cry out in pain, but Gu Ling saw a bloody mark appear on her neck.

Gu Ling poured a pill out of the bottle, holding it in his hand, looking steadily at Su Liang, and his eyes were full of guilt, “I’m sorry, you have to stay alive.”

“No!” Su Liang’s tears streamed down her face. She heard her elder chant “one” behind her, and Gu Ling put the medicine into his mouth.

The elder let go, and Su Liang, feeling as if all her strength had been drained, collapsed on the ground. She watched with wide eyes as Gu Ling spat out blood and collapsed, being dragged up by someone and taken away...

The last bit of sanity reminded Su Liang, along with Gu Ling’s warning, that she wasn’t to do anything, she absolutely couldn’t do anything. The elder’s power was beyond her imagination, and if she rashly took action, she would surely die.

In fact, everything happened very quickly, so quickly that one moment she was counting stars in her memory, waiting for Gu Ling to come out so they could go back and sleep together, and the next moment, she felt heartbroken...

A woman’s scream rang out, seeming far away, yet suddenly very close. Su

Liang came to her senses and realized that the scream was coming from Mu Ya’s room, just across the wall. A servant must have found Mu Ya dead, and soon, someone would discover her...

Su Liang got up and walked over, picked up the long sword, dagger, and pouch that Gu Ling had dropped, and practically stumbled away. When she climbed over the wall to leave, she fell on the ground. Her hand was scraped, but she felt nothing.

Dawn arrived.

Alone, Su Liang stood in the dense forest outside Xiangyue City. The rising sun dribbled gold through the gaps in the leaves. Yet, her heart felt icy cold.

She anticipated that with the murder of the crown prince's concubine, the city authorities would scrutinize all newcomers, inn guests being first on the list. So, she packed her belongings in the middle of the night and left the city, abandoning the horse behind.

They had only arrived the previous day, riding horses and laughing together. They strolled through the city at night, planned to consummate their marriage that night, and buy a house they liked during the day, so they would have a place to stay when they returned. Gu Ling wanted it as a memento.

Even now, Su Liang couldn't understand why.

They were always careful. Since Mu Ya was protected by such a powerful master, why did he show up after she died? Why overpowered her thoughts... Why did Gu Ling apologize to her? Was it because he could no longer stay by her side? No, she couldn't accept such an outcome. She refused to...

She sat down, leaning against a tree, eyes closed, tears streaking down her face, her mind blank. She wished it were all a dream, that they had never been to Xiangyue City, that she and Gu Ling were still in Qian Country, in Jiaye City, in their home in the capital city, in Su village...

The afternoon sun was harsh.

Donning a straw hat, Su Liang followed a caravan back to Xiangyue City.

She found a teahouse and quietly sat in a corner of the hall, drinking tea alone, while listening to the people around her discussing the grisly death of the crown prince's concubine.

Previously, despite being deemed unlucky for losing to Su Liang and giving birth to a stillborn baby, Mu Ya garnered sympathy. People had started remembering her as the heroic female general of Yin Country.

It seemed ridiculous to Su Liang, but she was too heartbroken to laugh. She didn't know why she had come back. She didn't even know whether Gu Ling was still alive... why did that man take revenge? It was to avenge Mu Ya, why didn't he kill him on the spot?

With her thoughts in a whirl, Su Liang left the teahouse and aimlessly wandered the city.

Without Gu Ling, she realized that she couldn't get used to the rules of this world on her own. If Gu Ling was dead, what was she to do next? She couldn't believe that Gu Ling was dead. But even if he was alive, she didn't know where to find him...

When Gu Ling opened his eyes again and saw the person before him, there was no surprise in his gaze.

Nangong Lin wiped away the filth on Gu Ling's face with a handkerchief. "You don't seem surprised, seems you guessed it has something to do with me last night."

With a frosty gaze, Gu Ling stared at Nangong Lin, ‘Who is that man?’

Nangong Lin chuckled, “My master, your master’s father, and Qianqian’s grandfather. The reason I met you and your wife years ago, was because I was helping my master search for his missing daughter all around the world. His daughter is Situ Xiang. You’re a genius, even my master would have a hard time fighting you. Unfortunately, Su Liang, your biggest weakness, was with you. My master was following you all along and waiting for the right chance to strike. I told him to be careful when taking you back. Fortunately, you didn’t tell Su Liang the truth last night. Otherwise, I would have had to take her out of the picture. ”

“Why?” Gu Ling asked coldly.

“You’ll know soon.” Nangong Lin stood up, cleaned the handkerchief in the basin, and wiped Gu Ling’s hands.

At that moment, Gu Ling was too weak to move. Thinking about Su Liang being alone and ignorant of the cause of everything made him feel crazy.

“You really are a sight to behold.” Nangong Lin looked at Gu Ling and nodded with an all-smiles face, “Your mother wasn’t happy when she married Gu Yuan. I wanted to take her away but she refused. This time, I won’t let history repeat itself. Don’t worry, you are the only child of the woman I loved the most, I will not harm you, nor kill you.”

As Nangong Lin finished speaking, he picked up the basin to leave. At the door, he stopped and turned back. His smile didn’t reach his eyes as he said, “Apologizing to Su Liang was the right thing to do. All this is because you married her. If not, things wouldn’t have turned out this way and she wouldn’t have come to Yin Country. I will rectify your mistake. Don’t worry, she will live well. From now on, she’ll have nothing to do with you..”

Chapter 314: 314. What a despicable father and daughter pair

In Yin Country, Xiangyue City.

The assassination and death of the crown prince’s concubine, Mu Ya, did not cause a real stir in the city. After every inn was investigated, two out-of-town men who arrived late at night the previous day were quickly identified as the suspects. However, no one knew who they were, and apart from the discarded horses, they left no trace.

The blood-drenched puppet doll, full of needles and bearing Su Liang’s name, found not far from Mu Ya’s body, was secretly sent to the palace of Yin Country.

After seeing it, the emperor of Yin Country asked, “Are we sure Su Liang and Gu Ling are not in Jiaye City?”

With confirmation, the emperor of Yin Country issued a secret order. Anyone in Xiangyue City and nearby cities resembling a man and a woman or two men should be closely monitored. If any clue hinting towards Su Liang and Gu Ling is found, it should be reported immediately

Yin Country had previously lost in battle, including the death of a leading general. The setback had impacted the morale of their troops. The emperor of Yin Country was preparing to send someone to negotiate with Qian Country. The sudden suspicion that Gu Ling and Su Liang have arrived in Xiangyue City stirred him into wanting to apprehend them while also being wary of assassination attempts by them.

Su Liang, unaware, found safety due to the absence of Gu Ling, as she alone was not the target of the investigation.

Upon entering the city again, Su Liang disguised herself as a middle-aged man. She wandered alone for a long time before selecting a mansion for sale. She purchased the mansion, located not far from the main street, but nestled quietly in the middle of the hustle and bustle. Although it was not cheap, the price was not a concern for her.

The pseudonym Su Liang used for the paperwork was Xiang Gu, synonym for “thinking of Gu”, as she was currently thinking of Gu Ling.

Behind the closed front door, Su Liang picked out a room in the courtyard and sat down facing a tall pine tree after arranging her luggage inside the room and opening the window.

She was surprisingly calm then, not feeling sad, as she was certain Gu Ling wasn’t dead. Her task was not to grieve and shed tears, but to think of ways to find him.

She wondered, during the incident last night, why was there such a highly skilled master by Mu Ya’s side? If there was, Su Liang would have been targeted much earlier instead of Qiu Ming being deployed as a spy to poison her. Moreover, why did the man only appear after Mu Ya was killed? If he was indeed avenging Mu Ya, why did he not kill Gu Ling on the spot? Why did he let Su Liang escape?

The more she thought about it, the more it seemed to Su Liang that too many incidents from last night didn’t make sense.

Gu Ling wouldn’t have been alive if that man did not intend to keep him alive.

The man claimed to be Mu Ya’s foster father, but he probably never looked at Mu Ya — his gaze was fixed on Gu Ling.

If he was lying and trying to mislead Su Liang to attribute everything to Mu Ya, who was already dead, Su Liang would be caught in a stalemate.

Su Liang believed that the array of events from last night might not be a coincidence after all. The man made his move only when Mu Ya was killed. Thus, he claimed to act in Mu Ya’s interests, though Su Liang could no longer ask Mu Ya for confirmation.

Everything was set up to deceive Su Liang. That man was most certainly aware of Su Liang and Gu Ling’s identities and had targeted them early on! Otherwise, why would he be so sure that capturing Su Liang as a hostage would make Gu Ling compromise? Su Liang was disguised as a man at that time. Although the man was incredibly powerful, he chose to poison Gu Ling to control him. It seemed he was well aware of Gu Ling’s strength. No one in the unknown could act in such a manner!

Su Liang stared at the magpies perched on the old pine tree, her gaze frosty.

Today was the auspicious day chosen by Gu Ling. They were supposed to consummate their marriage tonight.

“Nangong Lin...” Su Liang murmured the name in a frosty tone.

There was no trouble for her and Gu Ling while travelling from Jiaye City to Hefeng City. It would be impossible for someone to follow them for so long without making a move. They were targeted as soon as they left Hefeng City, and Gu Ling was kidnapped. It seemed intentional to mislead Su Liang’s focus.

Except for Nangong Lin, Su Liang could not think of any other suspicious people. The old man from last night was not Nangong Lin, but definitely had something to do with him! Only Nangong Lin knew that Su Liang and Gu Ling were in Yin Country. He was also well aware that Su Liang was Gu Ling’s most significant and only weakness. Without her by his side, even if Nangong Lin made a personal move, it would be hard for him to do anything to Gu Ling!

Why... Su Liang wondered. If Nangong Lin was behind this, why kidnap Gu Ling? Why let her go? Was there a grievance between him and his student? Why take action at this time instead of at the Mid-hill Villa?

With her eyes closed, Su Liang thought about the purpose of their trip to Yin Country, Nangong Qian. She recalled Nangong Qian’s obsession when she first saw Gu Ling, and had a bold conjecture: Nangong Qian liked Gu Ling, and Nangong Lin wanted to fulfill his daughter’s wishes!

After all, Su Liang was sure of one thing, Nangong Lin was infatuated with Gu Ling’s mother, Situ Ning, in his youth, but had his advances rejected. He might believe that having Gu Ling with his daughter might make up for his past regret. Otherwise, he would not have asked Gu Ling to teach him martial arts. He would not have avoided causing trouble for Gu Ling all these years. The sudden change after a recent meeting must have been triggered by something happening recently.

Though it seemed absurd, Su Liang knew that there were certain people who could achieve the unimaginable.

“Too perfect, somewhat false,” commented Gu Ling, who had known Nangong Lin since childhood, when asked for his opinion about his master.

At the time, Su Liang didn’t pay much attention to Gu Ling’s casual remark, because they hadn’t noticed any inconsistency in Nangong Lin’s words or actions.

Even in the events of the previous night, when Gu Ling was seized and Su Liang was led to believe that it had something to do with Mu Ya. Nangong Lin was skilled at deception; it had become his second nature.

Su Liang took a deep breath, turned around to open the bundle on the table, and saw the wedding gifts Nangong Lin had given to her and Gu Ling; an irony in the extreme.

After she sorted out her thoughts, she finally understood why, before Gu Ling was taken away, he had said “I’m sorry” to her. He wasn’t apologizing for his departure, but because everything had been orchestrated by his master!

If Gu Ling had confronted him at that time, the old man might not have let Su Liang off easily, knowing that he had managed to deceive her.

After packing lightly, she hid her luggage and left her home in Xiangyue City.

Su Liang was dressed inconspicuously, seamlessly blending in with the crowd. She walked from one end of a street in the capital city to the other and back, eventually finding what she had been looking for: the symbol of the Yanyun Building.

The Yanyun Building was a business, and naturally had to provide channels for its “guests” to contact them. Although most people were unaware of this, if one was willing to spend money and had the right connections, they could easily track them down.

The last time she had seen Yan Shiba was the previous year. After Su Liang had saved her from Yan Shiqi again, Yan Shiba had disappeared without a trace, claiming she had gone to reorganize the Yanyun Building.

At this moment, Su Liang stood at a deserted stall. The stall owner, a ragged old man, was dozing off below a tree. He raised his eyelids upon seeing someone approach but remained silent.

Su Liang bent down to pick up a crudely-made clay doll from the stall. While the doll was ugly, the strange pattern on its shoulder represented the symbol of the Yanyun Building.

The old man noticed the item she had picked and his eyes flickered. He slowly stood up and asked for ninety-nine taels.

“Alright, I’ll take it,” Su Liang readily paid and left with the clay doll.

Once she reached a quiet alley, Su Liang smashed the clay doll and pulled out a paper from inside with an address.

After her departure, the old man replaced the broken doll with another identical one and returned to his nap.

At dusk, Su Liang ventured into a forest on the outskirts of the city. She stood before a burnt, dead tree and waited.

After a while, a shadow darted past, and a tree nearby shook slightly. “Who are you? Whom do you want to kill? No lies.” A man’s voice echoed from the tree.

Su Liang remained calm, “I am looking for Yan Jiujiu.”

After a moment of silence, the man spoke again with utmost respect, “May I know where to meet the honorable guest?”

“I’ll wait here,” Su Liang breathed out softly.

The tree shook again and quickly returned to its usual stillness.

Yan Shiba had once mentioned that Su Liang was the only “honored guest” of the Yanyun Building. Wherever she was, if she could find someone from the Yanyun Building and used the code “I’m looking for Yan Jiujiu,” the person in charge would come to see her and take her orders.

Even though Su Liang had never used the “privilege” that Yan Shiba gave her, she had never forgotten about it.

And now, she needs help, which is what Yan Shiba owed her.

Dusk fell, the dense forest echoed with the cries of insects and birds, rustling sounds of crawling creatures, it was somewhat creepy.

Su Liang sat on the charred, dry wood, quietly waiting. She believed that Yan

Shiba would not give Yan Shiqi another opportunity to take advantage of them. The actions of the man just now led her to believe that Yan Shiba was in charge now.

The waiting time was longer than Su Liang had anticipated.

The sky was completely dark, and the moonlight trickled through the gaps in the leaves.

She felt that something was wrong, but she didn't want to leave. Her family, friends, and master were all thousands of miles away, and the enemy was not far away. They were all strong, and she couldn't act recklessly. Going home for backup would be too slow, her only option was to try and seek help from Yanyun Building.

She was a bit weary but later decided to continue waiting. If no one shows up by dawn, she would leave Xiangyue City and head to Hefeng City to think of another plan.

Su Liang suspected that Nangong Lin had taken Gu Ling for his daughter,

Nangong Qian. But she knew best the physical condition of Nangong Qian; even with her medicine and acupuncture skills, it would take at least three months for her to be self-reliant. It is unlikely that Nangong Lin would neglect Nangong Qian's health and force Gu Ling to do something with her.

But even so, Su Liang still didn't want Gu Ling to be held captive by those people, not even for an extra day or second.

Su Liang placed her dagger on the dry wood, its cold silver light flashed. She then climbed up the nearest tree to avoid bugs, snakes, rats, and ants.

After waiting for who knows how long, she looked up to see the moon was high up. She was about to close her eyes and doze off when she heard some noise.

Su Liang grasped her long sword and listened carefully. Someone was coming, and more than one.

"Where is she?"

A familiar woman's voice rang in her ears. Su Liang was stunned, it was surprisingly Yan Shiba! Was she actually in Xiangyue City?!

She then felt relieved and leapt down from the tree. "I'm here."

"Liang sister?!!!" Yan Shiba removed the ghost mask from her face and rushed over to hug Su Liang, "It really is you, haha! I thought it was your lover!"

Su Liang looked around and confirmed there were other people, but they all kept a safe distance and didn't approach.

Yan Shiba released Su Liang, saw her disguised appearance, and frowned, "That's ugly! Why did you make yourself look like this? If I hadn't heard your voice, I wouldn't have recognized you!"

"I came here secretly." Su Liang said.

Yan Shiba nodded, "I know! Rumor had it that you were in Jiaye City. I

Luckily, I had made it clear before, your appearance would be Yanyun Building's top priority!"

Even though she hadn't considered Yan Shiba to be a proper friend due to some of her unagreeable behaviors, at this moment, she was still somewhat moved by these words. "I need your help."

"What happened? Who bullied you?" Yan Shiba noticed her mood was off and frowned, "Tell me who to kill! Not a word more! By the way, where is your man? Why isn't he by your side? Did he betray you? I've told you before, men can't be relied on!"

Su Liang interrupted Yan Shiba's wandering thoughts, "He didn't betray me, he's in trouble."

Yan Shiba got even angrier when she heard this, "What kind of man did you pick? Not only does he not protect you, he even needs you to rescue him when something happens?"

"Shut up! Let me finish!" Su Liang stopped Yan Shiba's incessant chatter.

Yan Shiba grumbled a bit, "Long time no see, and you've become more hot-tempered? You even yelled at me for your smelly man... Okay okay, tell me, I'm listening! What kind of trouble did he get himself into?"

"He was kidnapped." Su Liang said, "I have a suspect in mind, and I know where they are, but I'm unsure if I can handle it alone."

"Is that all? Sister will accompany you! After all, I had promised to give him to you, but I didn't expect you two bastards to team up and deceive me, secretly being together, leaving me no chance to fulfill my commitment! Now what? This is clearly Heaven's way of not tolerating your conniving behaviour, giving me another chance! Haha!" Yan Shiba laughed as she spoke.

Su Liang... she hasn't changed, her words still make me want to smack her!

"How many people do you have?" Su Liang asked.

Yan Shiba shook her head, "No need. Just me accompanying you will suffice!"

"No!" Su Liang shook her head, "The other side has at least two masters, each of them stronger than your master."

Yan Shiba was stunned for a moment, then she went serious, "Which old monster has appeared? I hate those old undying beings the most! They all have severe issues! Most of them are here for their damned descendants! All of them, without exception, are unreasonable!"

Although Su Liang felt Yan Shiba's words had some merit, she reminded her to focus on the matter at hand.

Yan Shiba looked around, "I have... eight little brothers here now! I came to Yin Country to deal with the bastard who messed with me last time, it wasn't easy, so it took quite a lot of effort, and I haven't sought you out till now. Now it's all done, I was actually... forget it, you're not interested, you're only concerned about your man, hmph! Speak up, what's your plan?"

Su Liang looked towards the direction of Hefeng City, "I need to think it over, we'll discuss it when we get there."

"Whatever you say!" Yan Shiba called a subordinate and ordered them to wait at Hefeng City.

Soon, everyone else had left, leaving only the two of them.

"Look at how tired you are. Come on, let sister carry you!" Yan Shiba put on her mask, turned her back to Su Liang, and gestured for her to climb on. Su Liang shook her head, "No need."

"Hurry up! Really! No point in disliking me now, your man isn't here!" Yan Shiba couldn't help but mock Gu Ling's preference.

Su Liang, indeed, was truly tired, both physically and mentally. Knowing Yan Shiba's obstinacy, she conceded.

"Haha, aren't you afraid that I'll take you away and hide you, forcing you to only be with me from now on?" Yan Shiba sprung up, with Su Liang on her back, and leapt towards the forest outside.

"Why would you hide me?" Su Liang closed her eyes and asked.

Yan Shiba chuckled, "Of course, because sister likes you!"

"Oh, I don't like you." Su Liang bluntly replied.

Yan Shiba scoffed, "You imp, after we rescue Gu, I will duel with him. Whoever wins will decide who you will follow! Dare or not?"

"You can't beat him." Su Liang replied.

Yan Shiba snorted lightly, "Even so, aren't you still begging me to rescue him now?"

"Two different things." Su Liang shook her head. Gu Ling being in trouble this time was entirely because he was set up. The opponent was strong, and their plan was devious and unexpected. Yan Shiba seemed to have forgotten that she had been rescued by Su Liang and Gu Ling a few times, otherwise, she would have died more than once already.

"If he's that powerful, how did he get caught? Right, you still haven't told me, what do those kidnappers want with him?" Yan Shiba asked.

Su Liang spoke in a gloomy voice, "Seems like the mastermind's daughter has taken a liking to Gu Ling, kidnapped him to be her husband. That's my guess."

Yan Shiba cursed angrily after hearing this, "What a pair of cheap father and daughter! They even dare snatch my sister's man! They're courting death!"

Chapter 315: 315. Can only give oneself wholeheartedly

The drugged Gu Ling felt groggy and unable to move, unable to do anything.

A day had passed, and Gu Ling didn't know whether Su Liang was still in Xiangyue City, or if she could figure out that it was Nangong Lin's doing.

At one moment, Gu Ling hoped that Su Liang could think of coming to save him, and at another, he worried that she would be in danger if she did come.

Nangong Lin had painstakingly schemed to deceive Su Liang, which Gu Ling couldn't understand.

To capture his so-called apprentice, the son of the person he pretended to love the most, showed that Nangong Lin was not a good person. But why did he expend effort to deceive Su Liang and let her go? Could it be that Nangong Lin had other plans for Su Liang? Was he afraid that Nangong Qian's condition might worsen and that in case of emergencies, Su Liang could continue to treat Nangong Qian?

Gu Ling had guessed why Nangong Lin captured him, the reason must have surfaced recently. Otherwise, he wouldn't have made a move at this time. That left only one possibility: Nangong Qian.

This made Gu Ling feel disgusted.

The day he and Su Liang had planned to consummate their marriage had passed, but that was not important now. He was very worried about Su Liang's safety and at the same time thinking about how to save himself.

Nangong Lin appeared again, holding a bottle of medicine and sitting by Gu Ling's bed, looking melancholy at his features, "How good it would be if your mother were still alive!"

"You were the mysterious master whom Gu Yuan introduced as his confidant." Gu Ling looked at Nangong Lin, his expression cold.

When Nangong Lin tore off a corner of his mask, Gu Ling thought of the things from his childhood. Gu Yuan was ambitious but was initially a cautious person, treating Situ Ning exceptionally well. But at some point, he changed, his ambition grew, he became ruthless, and for the so-called cause, he even sold himself, turning into a madman that made Gu Ling feel sick at the sight.

He was young back then, but looking back now, some of the vague memories grew clearer. He once accidentally overheard Gu Yuan talking to someone in a triumphant tone, saying, "With the help of a master like you, how can my great cause not succeed?" But that person was mysterious, and Gu Ling wanted to know who he was, but never saw a shadow.

A supreme master can give people a sense of security and also make them feel that they can do whatever they want.

At this point, looking at Nangong Lin's hypocritical mask, Gu Ling suspected that the latter had played no small part in Gu Yuan's demise.

Although Gu Ling thought that Gu Yuan's rebellion would fail anyway, the sudden and thorough defeat at that time seemed to have been due to someone betraying him, leaking the news to Duanmu Yi in advance.

The road to the Gu Family's destruction had begun long before, something that a young Gu Ling could not see through or prevent.

At this moment, Gu Ling felt that perhaps everything was somehow related to Nangong Lin.

Nangong Lin, who was reminiscing about Situ Ning, was taken aback by Gu Ling's words, then slowly laughed, "How did you think of Gu Yuan? I didn't expose any flaws at that time."

These words were a clear admission and very proud.

"Gu Yuan was talented and had unparalleled beauty that made your mother fall in love." Nangong Lin sneered, "I could have easily killed him, but then your mother would have hated me for a lifetime. I chose to destroy him bit by bit, destroying the happiness your mother wanted. It was not difficult; if Gu Yuan had no ambition, if he was really a righteous person, how could he have treated me as a confidant and become someone you detest? I just helped him realize his wishes, and then, at the moment of success, let his life collapse and turn to ashes... it was very interesting, don't you think?"

Gu Ling's eyes were icy, "You thought that if my mother was disappointed with Gu Yuan, she would fall in love with you? Unfortunately, that was your dream."

Gu Ling's straightforward words hit Nangong Lin's sore spot, causing his expression to twist for a moment, but he quickly recovered, looking at Gu Ling with a smirk, "Your mother, of course, didn't know about my dealings with your father behind her back. To ask me to teach you martial arts, she dedicated herself to me. I didn't want to tell you, but now that you're talking to me like this, I have no choice but to let you know the truth."

Gu Ling's expression didn't change, "My mother didn't do such a thing. You took the initiative to teach me martial arts in an attempt to please my mother and make her fall in love with you, to leave Gu Yuan and be with you after she was disappointed in him. But you failed."

Nangong Lin's suddenly gloomy expression proved that what Gu Ling said was the truth.

Situ Ning had no idea who had destroyed her once happy family, and even felt grateful for Nangong Lin's guidance and care for Gu Ling. She once told Gu Ling that Nangong Lin was her best friend and brother, and the person she trusted the most, which was one of the reasons why Gu Ling had not suspected Nangong Lin before.

But this was only because Nangong Lin was extremely scheming and his disguise was perfect; Situ Ning didn't know his true face. She never fell in love with Nangong Lin, and precisely because she knew what he wanted, she always refused him, and never thought of going away with him.

"It was a mistake to have paid so much for you and your mother." Nangong Lin sighed, "But there is one thing I must tell you. Your mother was very close to Situ Xiang and said that if she had a child, they would definitely have a marriage. I should have told you earlier, but it's not too late. You must be with

Qianqian, it's not only your mother's last wish but also mine. I kindly spared Su Liang, you'd better not be ungrateful."

“I don’t believe you. If you say one more word, I’ll vomit.” Gu Ling said coldly. The so-called marriage was just something Nangong Lin fabricated to achieve his goal, disguising his twisted control instinct.

Nangong Lin held up the medicine bottle he had been holding all along, “No matter. In order to alleviate your pain and discomfort, I found something good for you to make your life easier and happier. If you take it, you will forget your mother, forget Su Liang, forget all the unpleasantness in the past.”

Gu Ling’s heart sank when he didn’t expect Nangong Lin to be so ruthless as to want to erase his memory!

“Why didn’t you use such methods on my mother back then?” Gu Ling asked, trying to buy time.

Nangong Lin paused while opening the medicine bottle, “Yeah, I could have done that back then, but... I wanted your mother’s heart, not her body. I thought that after going through all that, she would have definitely chosen me.” With that, Nangong Lin changed the topic, “But there isn’t any past between you and Qianqian, so it’s better for both of you to have a clean memory.”

As he said this, Nangong Lin poured out a light red pill from the bottle and looked at Gu Ling, saying, “You have more talent than me. At such a young age, your strength is already equal to mine. If it weren’t for Su Liang as your weakness, it would be really difficult to control you. This is fate, you must accept it.”

As the words fell, Nangong Lin grabbed Gu Ling’s chin with one hand, forcing him to open his mouth.

Gu Ling knew he couldn’t escape, he never thought of himself as invincible. Since he left Su Family Village, his life had never really been peaceful. At this moment, he wasn’t panicked, as that would only make Nangong Lin more proud.

Even if she lost her memory, as long as she was alive, Su Liang would definitely find him... Gu Ling firmly believed in this.

The sudden knock on the door disrupted the tense atmosphere in the room.

Nangong Lin let go of Gu Ling and frowned, asking, “What is it?”

“Master, Miss Su is here.”

The voice from outside the door made Nangong Lin’s face change immediately, and he instinctively looked at Gu Ling.

However, he always found it difficult to read Gu Ling’s emotions unless he was with Su Liang.

The same was true at this moment. Gu Ling was very calm, as if he had anticipated Su Liang would come, and as if he didn’t care either way. Nangong Lin’s eyes narrowed slightly, “Did you do something to lead her here?”

Gu Ling closed his eyes and didn’t answer Nangong Lin’s question. He was very excited in his heart. Su Liang really came. Had she guessed that he was here? She must have, she was so smart.

Nangong Lin looked at the pill in his hand, hesitated for a moment, and then put it back into the bottle and tucked it in his bosom. The drug took effect very quickly, so he had to guard Gu Ling and immediately imbue him with new memories after he woke up. This would take some time. But now he had to go and see Su Liang immediately, or he would arouse suspicion.

Nangong Lin snorted coldly, knocked out Gu Ling with a palm strike and strode out.

This wasn't a normal room, it was a cave behind the villa, hidden by lush bushes. From the outside, it was impossible to tell that there was another world inside the cave.

Su Liang was sitting in the room she and Gu Ling had stayed in at the Mid-hill Villa. Everything was still as they had left it.

The housekeeper said Nangong Lin was with Nangong Qian and had gone to call him.

But Su Liang suspected that he might be somewhere else, such as... with Gu Ling.

The window was open, and as soon as Su Liang saw Nangong Lin walk into the courtyard, she got up and rushed out, "Master!", her eyes reddening as she spoke.

Nangong Lin was slightly taken aback, "Xiaoliang, what's wrong? What happened to Ling'er?"

Su Liang, her eyes red and her face still disguised as a middle-aged man, had dust on her trouser legs, several red marks on her hands, and faint bloodstains beneath her collar.

She lowered her head and said with a heavy voice, "Gu Ling is in trouble, it's all my fault..."

"Quickly tell me, what exactly happened?" Nangong Lin's eyes flickered, his voice eager.

Su Liang then told him that she had made an enemy of Mu Ya two years ago, and last year Mu Ya sent people to kill her, almost killing her friend in the process. This time she came to Yin Country, and Hefeng City was so close to Xiangyue City. After leaving the villa she had impulsively decided to settle accounts with Mu Ya, but she didn't expect that Mu Ya's powerful adoptive father would suddenly appear, capture her, and take Gu Ling away.

"I don't know if he's dead or alive..." Su Liang said somberly, "I searched for him in Xiangyue City for a day and a night, but couldn't find any information about Mu Ya's adoptive father, so I had no choice but to come and find you."

Nangong Lin frowned, "How could this happen? Don't panic. Since that person took Ling'er away instead of killing him directly, Ling'er must still be alive!"

"But I don't know how to find him..." Su Liang's face was grim, "If it wasn't for my insistence on going to Xiangyue City to kill Mu Ya, this wouldn't have happened. I've hurt him."

"Don't worry, I'll send someone to investigate immediately!" Nangong Lin said seriously, "You rest here."

Su Liang shook her head, "I don't want to rest, I want to find him. I'll go with you, Master!"

Nangong Lin sighed, "You look like you haven't slept in two days and you're injured too. Make sure you don't collapse before finding Ling'er. Wait for me at home. I'm very familiar with Xiangyue City and will let you know as soon as there's news!"

Su Liang frowned, "Then let me pack up first and then we can go."

"I'll go and investigate personally first, don't panic. Wait for my return." Nangong Lin gently patted Su Liang's shoulder.

"Mm." Su Liang finally nodded, sobbing and saying, "Thank you, Master. As long as you can help me find Gu Ling, I won't do anything. I will serve Senior Sister here until she fully recovers!"

"Silly girl." Nangong Lin shook his head, "Don't think too much. I'll go to Xiangyue City right now."

"Alright." Su Liang's eyes filled with tears, "I'll be waiting for news from Master."

Nangong Lin turned around, his eyes slightly narrowed, and walked away quickly.

As Su Liang watched his figure disappear from her sight, servants soon brought hot water for washing, food, and clean clothes – pink ones, obviously belonging to Nangong Qian.

Su Liang closed the door, and her eyes suddenly grew cold.

Yan Shiba intended to kill, but Su Liang felt that it was not the right way to save people. Her husband was captured, and the closest person to her was Nangong Lin in Hefeng City. It was reasonable to come to him for help. She made herself appear very embarrassed, coming here with Gu Ling's long sword in hand.

She was good at acting. Since Nangong Lin wanted to deceive her, she pretended to be panic-stricken, heartbroken, unable to think rationally, and not suspecting Nangong Lin at all. After all, even Gu Ling had never doubted this master, so why would Su Liang suspect him?

After washing up, Su Liang put on Nangong Qian's clothes, made sure the food was not poisoned, ate a little, and then went outside. She sat in the courtyard for a while before returning to her room, opening the back window, and sneaking out quietly.

Previously, Su Liang had stayed here for six days and had given Nangong Qian acupuncture treatment daily, so she was not unfamiliar with the place. She quickly approached Nangong Qian's courtyard.

There were two maids guarding outside the courtyard. Su Liang avoided their gazes and entered. The door was slightly ajar. She gently pushed it open, slipped in quickly, and closed it again.

Nangong Qian was leaning on the bed with a book by her pillow, but she didn't actually read it.

"Didn't I say for all of you to leave?" Nangong Qian spoke, her tone displeased.

Su Liang walked to the bedside and held Nangong Qian's thin hand, "Senior Sister, it's me."

Nangong Qian was obviously startled, her expression slightly flustered,

“You...what are you doing here?”

Su Liang frowned, “Doesn’t Senior Sister want to see me?”

“No, that’s not it...” Nangong Qian hurriedly shook her head to explain, “I thought you left, and you suddenly came back, giving me a shock...”

Su Liang checked Nangong Qian’s pulse, “It’s my fault. How have you been feeling these past couple of days, Senior Sister?”

“I’ve been taking the medicine and feeling better.” Nangong Qian replied, “Did you come back alone? Where is Gu Ling?”

Su Liang’s eyes dimmed, “He’s in trouble.”

Nangong Qian’s surprised and poor acting was nothing compared to Nangong Lin’s, “He...what happened to him?”

“Master is helping me find him.” Su Liang shook her head, indicating she didn’t want to talk about it, then suddenly reached out, one hand covering Nangong Qian’s eyes and the other over her mouth, before quickly letting go.

Nangong Qian felt something entering her mouth, sliding down her throat, and her eyes widened in horror. She looked palely at Su Liang, “What...what did you give me?”

“It’s a gift for Senior Sister.” Su Liang answered emotionlessly.

After seeing Nangong Lin’s reaction, Su Liang knew she hadn’t guessed wrongly, Gu Ling’s capture had something to do with this father-daughter duo. Anyone who was an outsider would think something was amiss after hearing Su Liang’s words.

“What do you want to do?” Nangong Qian opened her mouth to yell, but Su Liang quickly covered her mouth again.

Su Liang leaned closer, her eyes locked onto Nangong Qian’s, and said coldly, “I know you like Gu Ling, but he’s my man, and we’re married. You should know that I am a Divine Doctor, and my poison techniques are also very powerful. The Bone-Melting Pill I just fed you will gradually dissolve your bones into blood, which will flow out through your nose, ears, and eyes until only a layer of skin remains. If you scream, I’ll give you another. Tell me, what has your father done?”

Upon hearing Su Liang’s words, Nangong Qian trembled with fear, her face as white as paper.

After Su Liang let go, Nangong Qian spoke in a terrified tone, ‘My mother and Gu Ling’s mother arranged our marriage long ago...we’re supposed to be engaged...whatever my father did, it was to fulfill the dying wishes of our mothers. We would never hurt Gu Ling!’

Hearing the words, Su Liang was furious, “You believe your father’s words about the wishes of the deceased? What do you mean, ‘not hurt Gu Ling’? We’re already married! I even saved you! Your actions are shameful and disgraceful!”

“You! Don’t slander me!” Nangong Qian became so angry that her face flushed abnormally red, “He was supposed to marry me! Marrying you was a mistake! He

respects his mother greatly, and if he had known about me earlier, he would never have been with you!”

Su Liang didn’t bother to argue with Nangong Qian’s nonsense. She just needed to confirm that it was indeed this father and daughter who had acted. She had indeed drugged Nangong Qian, but it wasn’t the described Bone-Melting Pill there was no such thing – nor was it a deadly poison, because a hostage is only valuable when alive. This woman was too weak to withstand any roughness, and if she died, it would be troublesome.

“Where is Gu Ling?” Su Liang grabbed Nangong Qian’s delicate neck.

“I don’t know!” Nangong Qian looked at Su Liang with undisguised jealousy and disgust in her eyes. It seemed that she firmly believed Su Liang had stolen her fiancé. Compared to that, Su Liang’s act of saving her became insignificant.

“Help... Help me...” Nangong Qian weakly cried out.

As Su Liang dragged Nangong Qian out of the courtyard, an angry shout sounded, “Stop!”

It was Nangong Lin’s voice.

Su Liang was not surprised; his visit to Xiangyue City would have been a wild goose chase.

Seeing Nangong Lin appear, Su Liang sneered, “Master, weren’t you going to help me find Gu Ling? Why are you still here at home?”

Nangong Lin, who once had a gentle appearance, glared at Su Liang, “You knew it had something to do with me, that’s why you came here!”

“Did Master realize it only after hearing your daughter’s screams? I was overestimating you then.” Su Liang scoffed, “But then again, someone like you who’s been deceiving people all his life and always getting away with it must be quite conceited. Otherwise, you wouldn’t have taken Gu Ling away with such a crude move, thinking it would deceive me. It seems your years of not cheating have rusted your skills quite a bit. Hand Gu Ling over to me!”

Nangong Lin laughed in a low voice, “Little girl, don’t tell me you think you can come into my domain alone and escape unscathed?”

Su Liang looked around and said, “You bastard, don’t tell me you think your home in the mountains is invincible?”

As her words fell, four figures appeared behind Su Liang, descending from the sky. They were dressed in black, exuding a murderous aura, but none of them was Yan Shiba. Su Liang had sent him to find someone, and it wasn’t wise to reveal all her cards at once.

Nangong Lin’s eyes narrowed slightly, “I underestimated you.”

Nangong Lin’s master was still working for him, which was unknown to Su Liang and Gu Ling, so they had gotten into trouble.

Meanwhile, Su Liang was a “privileged guest” of Yanyun Building, which Nangong Lin had no way of knowing either. Thus, he had believed her entry was not a threat, as she was seemingly alone.

“Hand Gu Ling over!” Su Liang demanded coldly.

Nangong Lin’s gaze was deep, “Originally, our relationship could have improved, but now it has only worsened. This is the choice you’ve made, don’t regret it.”

As his words fell, Gu Ling was brought to Nangong Lin’s side, his captor yet to reveal himself.

“Father, she poisoned me... antidote... find the antidote!” Nangong Qian spoke incoherently.

“First, let Gu Ling wake up and detoxify him,” said Su Liang. Though she firmly believed that Gu Ling was alive, she only breathed a small sigh of relief when she saw him with her own eyes. However, she remained on high alert, not allowing herself to relax.

“Fine. Since things have come to this point, let’s settle our accounts,” said Nangong Lin. He then pinched Gu Ling’s Renzhong acupoint.

Gu Ling slowly regained consciousness and opened his eyes.

Nangong Lin didn’t give them a chance to speak, saying coldly, “You can use

Qian’er to exchange for Gu Ling. I won’t trouble you until you leave Mid-hill Villa. But before that, Gu Ling must repay what he owes me!” As he spoke, he raised his hand to strike Gu Ling’s dantian.

“Stop!” Su Liang’s expression tensed, and she gripped Nangong Qian’s neck again, demanding coldly, “She owes me a life too, should she pay it back first?!”

Nangong Lin furrowed his brows and withdrew his hand, “Little girl, being with him will bring endless trouble. You better think it through!”

“Before this bastard heir of yours showed up, our lives were beyond carefree. Are you reminding me to hurry up and wipe out your whole family? Thanks, I’ll remember that and make sure it happens!” Su Liang said coldly.

Nangong Lin laughed in anger, “Fine, very well. It seems I was indeed mistaken about you. Since that’s the case, let’s make the exchange. You hand over the antidote and let Qian’er go. and I’ll release Gil Ling.”

Su Liang nodded, “Deal.”

Approaching noon, Su Liang brought Gu Ling away from Hefeng City and stopped to rest by a river. Yan Shiba and his men entangled the formidable elder, allowing them to make their escape.

Su Liang had been running all the way, and now she placed Gu Ling on the riverbank to examine him, “Soft muscle dispersal. You’ll recover later. Great God, how come you’re not talking? What’s bothering you?”

Gu Ling reached out to embrace Su Liang and sighed softly, “You’ve been through a lot. I can’t repay you for saving my life, so all I can do is offer myself to you..”

Chapter 316: I just want to be the groom now.

Su Liang was certain that it was Gu Ling she took away from Mid-hill Villa. Nobody could impersonate him and deceive her.

Nevertheless, Su Liang didn’t fully relax until she heard Gu Ling speak, “I was just wondering if you had been drugged to erase your memory and didn’t recognize me.”

“Almost.” Gu Ling admitted that Nangong Lin indeed planned to do that, but luckily Su Liang arrived in time.

Su Liang snorted, “Nangong Lin is just a thorough psychopath! But don’t worry, even if you really lost your memory, I would definitely find you and make you remember me. The most important thing is to stay alive.”

Gu Ling nodded slightly, “If I did lose my memory, I would fall in love with you at first sight the moment I saw you again.”

Su Liang couldn’t help laughing, “Don’t be so cheesy.”

“I’m just...” Gu Ling sighed softly, “I miss you.”

Su Liang rubbed Gu Ling’s head, feeling that he was a bit vulnerable at this moment, “I miss you too.”

Gu Ling revealed some of the truth about the past that he learned after the incident this time.

Su Liang was surprised, ‘Your father’s rebellion was instigated by Nangong Lin, who then set him up and killed him? It’s too sick! He didn’t force himself on your mother or use poison because he was too arrogant, thinking his plan was perfect, and she would definitely fall in love with him and voluntarily embrace him.’

She had seen such people in her previous life. They had good conditions and power, a performative personality, and all their controlling desires were hidden behind a hypocritical facade. They could not tolerate obstacles or rejection and would resort to any means to achieve their goals and carry grudges.

Nangong Lin spent years patiently destroying Gu Yuan’s life, seemingly just to win Situ Ning’s heart, but also seeking revenge for Situ Ning’s rejection and Gu Yuan’s “stealing” of Situ Ning’s affections, and satisfying his sick control desires. He must have been delighted at Gu Family’s decline.

Now with Nangong Qian, Nangong Lin is playing the role of a loving father, although his means are somewhat crude compared to back then, his arrogance and psychopathic nature remain unchanged.

The drug Gu Ling was given was too strong to recover from quickly, his mind still slightly murky. He leaned on Su Liang, looking at the sparkling river, and thought about the whole thing, and found another doubt, “Is Nangong Qian truly the daughter of Situ Han and Situ Xiang?”

Upon hearing this, Su Liang pondered, "Now that you mention it, it is suspicious. Someone like Nangong Lin, who is extremely selfish and puts himself at the center of everything, why would he care so much about a sickly adopted daughter with no blood ties? If the old man who kidnapped you is really Situ Xiang's father, Nangong Lin might be trying to use Nangong Qian to control the old man for his own use, although it's a bit far-fetched. However, Nangong Qian doesn't look like she is only a year older than you, and it seems that Nangong Lin has no need to control that old man without any other ulterior motives."

They didn't suspect this before because Nangong Qian was inherently weak, very thin, and had been bedridden. Anyone who met her for the first time and was informed that she was between fifteen and twenty years old would find it difficult to be suspicious.

Though Su Liang had evidence suggesting that Situ Xiang might have some entanglement with Situ Han, it was "confirmed" from Nangong Lin's mouth that Situ Xiang had been pregnant with Situ Han's child back then.

Knowing Nangong Lin's true nature, Su Liang believed that everything he said could be a lie, and they shouldn't be easily trusted.

If they think about it carefully, even if Situ Han really did rape Situ Xiang, it doesn't mean she would definitely get pregnant. Even if she did get pregnant, it might not necessarily be Situ Han's child. Even if it was Situ Han's child, it might not be the Nangong Qian they see now.

The only thing that could be confirmed was that Situ Xiang disappeared while she was pregnant, and she might even still be alive.

At this thought, Su Liang had an idea, "Looking at how anxious Nangong Lin is, maybe Nangong Qian is really his biological daughter. Situ Xiang didn't die back then, and she seemed to like Nangong Lin. It's not impossible that she had a child with him after disappearing."

Thinking further, Nangong Lin said that Situ Xiang was the daughter his master had been searching for many years, and he didn't dare to openly defy the old man with such a powerful and bizarre ability.

As such, the fact that Nangong Lin didn't forcibly take Situ Ning back then and control her could have been driven by his fear of that old man.

While discussing Nangong Lin's psychopathic actions and speculating on unknown matters based on what they know, the two waited for Yan Shiba to break free and join them. Su Liang left special marks along the way.

They waited and waited, but Gu Ling's spirit recovered quite a bit and still Yan Shiba didn't arrive.

"I hope nothing happened." Su Liang looked in the direction of the Mid-hill Villa, feeling uneasy. She didn't confront the old man that day. She managed to take Gu Ling away primarily because Yan Shiba's group stalled Nangong Lin and his master, which bought her time.

Gu Ling let go of Su Liang and slowly stood up, stretching his limbs, "Wait another quarter of an hour, and I'll go back to have a look."

Su Liang frowned, "How do you feel?"

“Almost there,” said Gu Ling.

“Very well, a quarter of an hour.” Su Liang knew that going back was dangerous, but she couldn’t abandon Yan Shiba.

The quarter of an hour passed quickly, and Gu Ling’s face was much better than when he left the Mid-hill Villa, but there was still no sign of Yan Shiba.

“You wait here.” Gu Ling hugged Su Liang close and patted her back gently, “I’m going to check.”

It was Su Liang and Yan Shiba’s plan to evacuate Gu Ling first. She knew that the enemies were tricky, so they needed to save Gu Ling and have him recover his strength to stand a better chance.

“Be careful,” Su Liang handed a longsword to Gu Ling and watched him disappear from her sight. He was not as fast as before; he had not fully recovered. However, he was not reckless, and by the time he reached the Mid-hill Villa, he should be almost there.

Su Liang put her hands together, praying not to kill their opponents this time but for their own people to escape safely.

Mid-hill Villa.

Gu Ling took a detour and arrived at the back first. Near the cave where he had been hidden earlier, he found some scattered bloodstains on the ground.

Following the bloodstains, he sneaked back to the villa, not encountering anyone along the way. He then approached Nangong Qian’s courtyard, where they had had the previous standoff.

The courtyard was quiet, and there was no sound to be heard. Gu Ling waited a little longer and went in to find that it was empty.

He went on to look for Nangong Lin’s courtyard, but there was no one there either.

After searching the entire villa, Gu Ling finally realized that everyone had left, including all the servants.

He had noticed earlier that all the servants, from housekeepers to maids, were trained in martial arts. It seemed that Nangong Lin had abandoned this place, taking everyone away with him.

In light of this, Gu Ling felt that the possibility of Yan Shiba’s capture was not high.

He went back the way he came, checked the cave for any signs of people, and found new bloodstains in the direction of the mountain. Following the bloodstains, he came across the seriously injured and unconscious Yan Shiba beneath a protruding rock close to the mountaintop.

Gu Ling checked for vital signs and finally let out a small sigh of relief when he determined that Yan Shiba was still alive.

Only she was there, and there were no signs of the other seven assassins, nor were their bodies in the villa.

The wind picked up, and Su Liang sat in a tall tree, gazing at the direction of the Mid-hill Villa through the gaps between the leaves, unable to see anything despite the distance.

Her heart hung in the balance. She knew that Gu Ling was not likely to run into trouble when he was fully alert, but she was worried that Yan Shiba might be caught or killed.

Although Yan Shiba was not a good person, she was genuinely kind to Su

Liang, and this time, it was all about her helping her friends. In the past, Gu Ling and Su Liang had saved Yan Shiba more than once, and even if Yan Shiba owed them, Su Liang didn't want her to die for it.

After an unknown amount of time, she finally sensed someone approaching.

Su Liang looked alert, and when she confirmed it was Gu Ling, she breathed a huge sigh of relief and climbed down from the tree.

"Yan Shiba?" Seeing the bloody person put down by Gu Ling, Su Liang's heart tightened, "She..."

"She's not dead." Gu Ling said.

Su Liang breathed a sigh of relief, checking Yan Shiba's injuries. The most severe was a sword wound on her back, which looked like a Luoying Swordsmanship attack, but it was unclear who had inflicted it with Gu Ling's master and master's master present. The attack was extremely fierce, and if it was slightly off, Yan Shiba would have lost her life.

Su Liang didn't bring a medical kit when she went to the villa, because she needed to make Nangong Lin believe she was panicked, but she hid many potentially useful medicines on her person.

Without time to find another place, Su Liang focused on healing Yan Shiba's injuries.

After finally treating Yan Shiba's wounds, Su Liang breathed a sigh of relief, collapsed to the ground, and was caught by Gu Ling, who held her in his embrace.

"She won't die. If you didn't see the corpse, the others must have escaped." Su Liang took a deep breath.

It had been agreed in advance that they would not engage in desperate fights or risk their lives. The goal was not to kill, but to tie up Nangong Lin and the old man for a moment, so that Su Liang could escape with Gu Ling from the villa.

Su Liang knew how powerful Nangong Lin and the old man were, and that the Yanyun Building assassins would not be able to kill them. If a group of assassins worked together just to stall them, they could still succeed.

However, only Yan Shiba knew the contact method, and the other seven assassins would not come looking for Su Liang if they weren't with her.

After Su Liang and Gu Ling disguised themselves, they brought the severely injured Yan Shiba to an inconspicuous inn and reserved a courtyard to stay in.

Meanwhile, Gu Ling secretly infiltrated the Nangong Family mansion in the city, but did not find any trace of Nangong Lin, so he left.

Yan Shiba was still in danger and Su Liang stayed with her, waiting for her to wake up before they could be sure of what had happened.

At midnight, Gu Ling went alone to check on the situation at the Mid-hill Villa.

There was still no one there. He found a hidden compartment in Nangong Lin's study and took a painting of Situ Ning from it. The prescription and medicine that Su Liang had given to Nangong Qian were also missing, undoubtedly taken away by someone.

In the end, Gu Ling returned to the cave where Nangong Lin had hidden him, verified that it was indeed the residence of his master, and found some of the master's clothes in the closet.

He still did not find anything useful, so Gu Ling left the villa and went back to the inn.

It was dawn.

Su Liang sat on a chair by the bed, not knowing when she had fallen asleep, and when she felt someone push her, she immediately straightened up and quickly checked Yan Shiba's condition.

"She's waking up." Gu Ling noticed Yan Shiba's fingers move, and he woke Su Liang up.

Su Liang checked Yan Shiba's pulse, which was more stable than last night. Since her most severe injury was on her back, she was lying on her back with her face turned to the side.

A moment later, Yan Shiba's eyelashes trembled, and she slowly opened her eyes, looking at Su Liang with a pale face and a hint of a smile in her eyes, "I knew my sister would find me..."

Su Liang lifted the covers and checked Yan Shiba's wounds, "It wasn't me. It was your brother-in-law."

Yan Shiba's gaze shifted towards Gu Ling, and she snorted softly, "If you get into trouble again... I'll steal Liang away from you..."

Gu Ling's expression was indifferent, "Thanks this time, but she's mine."

Before Yan Shiba had time to argue, he heard Su Liang ask, "What exactly happened? Where are the others?"

Yan Shiba blinked and recalled for a moment before saying, "They ran away first."

Su Liang frowned, "They are your subordinates, they wouldn't leave you behind and run away. What did you do again?"

"You're yelling at me..." Yan Shiba pouted.

"Stop pretending to be innocent." Su Liang could tell at a glance that Yan Shiba must have done something unplanned, otherwise, he wouldn't have almost lost his life.

"It's all for you..." Yan Shiba hummed softly, "As soon as you left, Nangong Lin handed his despicable daughter over to an old man. It wasn't easy to entangle Nangong Lin, so I had all seven of them take action. I was watching the old man myself, but he just

guarded Nangong Qian and didn't intend to fight. When the time was almost up, they withdrew. I thought that since I had already come, and the despicable woman was right in front of me, it wouldn't make sense not to fight her..."

Su Liang held her forehead. That old man was obviously extremely concerned about Nangong Qian, so he guarded her every inch of the way to prevent her from getting hurt again. He probably noticed someone was nearby watching them and didn't leave Nangong Qian to deal with it. As long as Yan Shiba didn't take action, it would be easy to leave. But she couldn't help herself...

"I've already told you that the old man is very powerful, but you still insisted on looking for a fight." Su Liang sighed.

Yan Shiba weakly said, "I didn't want to fight him, I wanted to fight the despicable woman who stole my brother-in-law. As long as the old man was momentarily distracted, I had a chance to pinch her to death."

"It's your good luck that you survived. The old man was only focused on protecting Nangong Qian and didn't pursue you." Su Liang said, then felt something was off, "Why didn't Nangong Lin pursue you either?" At that time, the seven assassins had already withdrawn.

Yan Shiba grinned, "I almost got chopped to death, and I only managed to escape because that despicable woman suddenly started vomiting blood profusely. She might be dead already, haha!"

Su Liang had given Nangong Qian a non-fatal poison, along with the antidote. Because of Nangong Qian's frail health, Su Liang had to be very cautious and ensure that she would be alive before Gu Ling was rescued. Besides, Nangong Qian posed no threat to them. Killing her would only make Nangong Lin and the old man more determined to take revenge, which wasn't a good thing.

Seeing Nangong Qian vomit blood, Su Liang thought it might be due to panic. Her health had always been poor and she was far from recovering.

According to Gu Ling who investigated the situation in the Mid-hill Villa later, Nangong Lin left quickly but not in a panic. Nangong Qian must have been alive, but in bad condition, so they abandoned the villa and took her elsewhere for safety.

"Stop laughing, your wound is going to split open." Su Liang told Yan Shiba to calm down a bit.

"You guys..." Yan Shiba looked at Su Liang and then at Gu Ling, "Did you sleep last night?"

Su Liang was speechless, "You were almost dead, how could we be in the mood?" She regretted telling Yan Shiba about her and Gu Ling not having consummated their marriage during their journey to Hefeng City.

"Don't worry about me, both of you are unharmed, so just find a place to sleep now. When you have a baby, acknowledge me as the godmother, and I'll pass on Yanyun Building to them, haha!" Yan Shiba laughed as she spoke.

Su Liang: ... One, two, three, four, they're all thinking about her and Gu Ling's child, it's simply ridiculous. There are those who want to arrange a marriage for the child, those who want to be godfathers, and now there's an assassin leader who wants to be their godmother, dream on! It would never happen!

After changing Yan Shiba's medicine, giving her some water, and feeding her half a bowl of porridge, Su Liang came out of her room to see Gu Ling standing outside.

Su Liang walked over, wrapped her arm around Gu Ling's, leaned her head on his shoulder, and gazed at the blue sky and the white clouds together.

"Great God, do you want to be a father?" Su Liang chuckled softly. No matter what, they were all okay. They could figure out how to deal with hidden dangers later; she was enjoying the tranquility at that moment.

Gu Ling tilted his head and placed a gentle kiss on Su Liang's smooth forehead, "Right now, I just want to be the groom.."

Chapter 317: 317. The bridal chamber with lit candles

Gu Ling went to the place Yan Shiba mentioned and found the seven assassins who had helped yesterday. They were all injured to varying degrees, but fortunately, their lives were not in danger.

"You guys don't worry about me, go to sleep first." Yan Shiba was obsessed with this matter.

When they first met, she said she would capture the most beautiful Gu Ling for Su Liang to warm her bed.

After a year and a half, Yan Shiba thought she would never have the chance to fulfill her promise. Who would have thought that Su Liang and Gu Ling had not consummated their marriage after more than a month when trouble found her.

"It's all fate!" Yan Shiba sighed again, "Leave the medicine and go! I won't die!"

"What's the rush?" Su Liang couldn't help but complain as she fed Yan Shiba the medicine.

Yan Shiba chuckled, "I'm looking forward to you two having a baby for me!" Su Liang: ... What does it mean to have a baby for her?

"You can have your own." Su Liang added, "But you can't force Cheng Yun. He's my friend. If you bully him, I will turn against you."

Yan Shiba snorted lightly, "Abandoning one's benefactor, killing the donkey after it's done milling, such a ruthless heart!"

"One thing at a time." Su Liang shook her head, indicating that she would deal with the matter at hand.

“What’s the point of forcing someone into that kind of thing?” Yan Shiba’s eyes were deep, “I want that little monk to fall in love with me, return to secular life, and grow his hair again! It sounds so interesting!”

Su Liang paused with the spoon in her hand, suddenly thinking of the perverted Nangong Lin, and said seriously, “Have you ever considered giving up Yanyun Building and living a normal life?”

Having Yanyun Building as protection was naturally a good thing for Su Liang. But at this moment, she was talking about the future with Yan Shiba as a friend. The business of killing people was licking blood off knives. Yan Shiba’s mentality had already been distorted by Yanyun Building’s environment. If she didn’t withdraw in time, she would only become crazier.

Even though it was a profession, some good people would inevitably be killed in the process of getting paid to solve other people’s problems. Just like when Ning Yao once hired Yanyun Building to kill Ning Jing. Who was good and who was evil was clear, but assassins only care about money and nothing else.

Perhaps if Yan Shiba and Yanyun Building didn’t do such things, there would always be others who would.

Su Liang couldn’t control unrelated people, but after this, she really wanted to persuade Yan Shiba to change her ways.

“For little brother Cheng Yun? If I wash my hands off the business, will he not care about the sins I committed in the past?” Yan Shiba snorted lightly.

Su Liang was a bit speechless, “Aren’t you very awake? Knowing who you are and who Cheng Yun is, you should know that you are not suitable for each other, so why keep entangling?”

Yan Shiba fell silent, finished drinking the medicine, and then spoke again, “Do you think becoming an assassin was my choice?”

Su Liang knew that Yan Shiba’s father was the previous leader of assassins from Yanyun Building. She was born and raised in Yanyun Building, and even her father never thought about giving her a normal life.

Su Liang sighed lightly, “You had no choice in the past, but now you do.”

“Since you think I don’t fit with Cheng Yun and it’s impossible for us to be together, then why should I wash my hands of my past?” Yan Shiba sneered, her eyes filled with mockery as she looked at Su Liang.

Su Liang frowned, “I hope you can change your ways. This has nothing to do with Cheng Yun. Whether you can be together or not is not up to me, and I can’t guarantee anything.”

“Then what do you want to get?” Yan Shiba narrowed her eyes.

Su Liang’s expression was calm, “I want to have a friend. I don’t want to deceive you. If you continue to live as you did before, without distinguishing right from wrong, I won’t be able to truly regard you as a friend.”

"I thought after all this, you would understand that if you're weak, you'll be beaten and die. You were so eager for my help when you needed us, but now that you've used us, you're suddenly all righteous and trying to persuade me to change my ways." Yan Shiba's tone was unkind, and her eyes lost their warmth, "I thought you weren't such a hypocrite. It seems I was wrong."

Su Liang put down the bowl of medicine and looked at Yan Shiba steadily, "First, your help this time at most evens out the favor of Gu Ling and me saving you before. Second, this time I asked for your help not to kill innocent people, but because I was very sure the enemy was not a good person. Also, for your safety, I never asked you to kill Nangong Lin or Nangong Qian. Your injuries were self-inflicted. Third, if I were really hypocritical, I would never persuade you to leave Yanyun Building and live like a normal person. I would tell you I need a sister like you very much and ask you to grow Yanyun Building even bigger. Wouldn't it be better to have more advantages when I need your help next time?"

Yan Shiba's face stiffened as Su Liang continued, "I know being an assassin is not just for the money. So, what do you really want? In the past, you had to stand out or be eliminated, but now do you purely enjoy the thrill of killing people? Do you want us to become like you, or do you, deep down, long for something within us and want to become like us, but can't admit it?"

No matter what Yan Shiba chooses, after this, Su Liang has decided to call it even between them. Having Yanyun Building as a backing is a good thing, but pushing it away is not because Su Liang is stupid. One aspect of being good to Yan Shiba, and another aspect is that she is very clear that everything has a price. Next time she asks for Yan Shiba's help, the favor owed will be repaid.

The so-called sisters might just be some genuine pleasure mixed into Yan Shiba's crazy life.

Pleasure is just pleasure. Genuine pleasure is even more fun for Yan Shiba, but Su Liang doesn't want to continue playing along.

Just like this time, despite Su Liang's repeated warnings about caution, Yan

Shiba still did as she pleased. She claimed to be injured for the sake of saving Gu Ling and helping Su Liang beat Nangong Qian, but that was not what Su Liang wanted.

Seeing Yan Shiba close his eyes, Su Liang picked up the bowl and left, "You rest.

If there are no issues, Gu Ling and I will leave tomorrow."

After leaving the room, Su Liang saw Gu Ling still standing in the courtyard. Given his excellent hearing, he must have heard her conversation with Yan Shiba just now.

"What do you think?" Su Liang asked, holding the bowl in one hand and wrapping her other arm around Gu Ling's arm. She loved this position, as it allowed her to lean her head against Gu Ling's shoulder comfortably due to their height difference.

Gu Ling answered very simply and directly, "You're right."

Su Liang smiled, "Tonight won't work. If she's fine tomorrow, we'll go to Xiangyue City."

“Alright.” Gu Ling agreed, then pulled Su Liang into their room, closed the door, and placed the medicine bowl on the table.

“What can’t you say outside?” Su Liang’s words were cut off by Gu Ling’s kiss. Much later, Gu Ling finally answered Su Liang’s question, “I just wanted to kiss you.”

After nightfall, Gu Ling took another trip to Mid-hill Villa, but no one was there. He also secretly went to the Nangong Family.. All seemed normal.

It would be difficult to find Nangong Lin and Nangong Qian, who were hiding. But now that their faces had been torn apart and their enmities settled, they would meet again sooner or later.

When Gu Ling returned, Su Liang finally relaxed and went to give Yan Shiba her medicine.

“I like your eyes, and Little Monk’s too.” Yan Shiba answered Su Liang’s previous question.

“Are you thinking of digging them out to play with?” Su Liang snorted.

Yan Shiba coughed lightly, “To be honest, I did think about it once. If we ever had a falling out, I’d dig out your eyes and take them with me. It was when we first met.”

Su Liang was speechless; should she thank her for her honesty?

Yan Shiba sighed softly, “I think your and Little Monk’s eyes are beautiful. They both possess a kind of pureness that feels compassionate to others. Anyway, it’s not the same as anyone else’s.”

Su Liang: ...What kind of description is this?

“Doesn’t Gu Ling have it?” Su Liang asked. When she first met Gu Ling, she had a similar feeling as Yan Shiba.

Yan Shiba shook her head, “He has a sense of indifference that comes from seeing through the world. But now, his mind is all about pursuing you quickly, fearing that you might fly away.”

Su Liang fed Yan Shiba her medicine and didn’t ask about her decision.

As the medicine bowl neared empty, Yan Shiba seemed a bit annoyed, “Do you think I won’t choose to wash my hands of this life?” Su Liang shook her head, “I don’t think that way.” “Then why don’t you ask me?” Yan Shiba said irritably.

“Oh, will you?” Su Liang asked.

“No!” Yan Shiba glared at Su Liang.

Su Liang really wanted to smash the medicine bowl on her face...

“I need to think about this important matter some more.” Yan Shiba huffed lightly, “I’ll give you an answer before my wound heals. If I don’t choose what you want, will you ignore me?”

“It depends on how you define ‘ignoring you.’” Su Liang said.

"If I make the right choice, will you help me matchmake with Little Monk?" Yan Shiba's eyes lit up.

Without hesitation, Su Liang shook her head, "No."

"You just dislike me!" Yan Shiba complained indignantly.

Su Liang was also angry, "Can't you be more sober? Cheng Yun is a monk! Do you understand what a monk is? A person with a pure mind, devoted to Buddhism! Even if you were never an assassin, he would not like you."

Yan Shiba smirked, "Wrong! Monks are not eunuchs. They have not lost their vital parts, only their hair. The hair can grow back."

Su Liang shrugged, "If you really can make him like you, then that's your skill. Feel free. Anyway, I won't help you two."

"Bastard..." Yan Shiba grumbled, "Forget it, I don't need your help."

"Then take your time to think. There is someone here to look after you. Tomorrow, I'll leave with Gu Ling for Xiangyue City. Tonight, I'll prepare the medicine for you," Su Liang said.

"Then, can you stay with me tonight...?" Yan Shiba looked at Su Liang expectantly.

Su Liang decisively refused and left after turning off the lights. Yan Shiba could already get up and move, though his back and arm were injured.

Su Liang let Gu Ling sleep first, while she busied herself preparing the medicine for Yan Shiba's continued use, not knowing when they would meet again. "Su Liang." "Hmm?"

"Su Xiaoliang."

"Yes."

"My wife. "

"Huh?"

"I can't sleep."

"Oh, count sheep. Don't bother me, I'm busy," Su Liang said without lifting her head.

Gu Ling spoke in a melancholic tone, "Then, I shall count Su Xiaoliang."

Su Liang couldn't help but grin; she put down the things in her hand, walked over, bent down and gave Gu Ling a sweet kiss, before returning to her work.

Gu Ling lay on the bed, holding Su Liang's pillow, his eyes full of laughter, "You really like me."

"Yes, I like you the most, so go to sleep quickly," Su Liang said, feeling like she was coaxing a child. But to be fair, it was Gu Ling who started being cute with her first, which she found adorable.

By the time Su Liang finished her work, it was long past midnight. She quickly washed up and, yawning, walked to the bedside. As she sat down, Gu Ling's long arm encircled her waist.

"Great God, why aren't you asleep yet?" Su Liang tried to pull away Gu Ling's hand to remove her outerwear.

"I'm sleepwalking; don't wake me up," Gu Ling said, pressing Su Liang down.

Su Liang raised her hand to block Gu Ling's approaching face, "I'm so tired. Tomorrow, I'll be full of energy to play with you."

Gu Ling opened his eyes, a gentle smile on his lips. He kissed the corner of Su Liang's lips, then lay on the outer side of the bed.

Su Liang got up again, removed her outerwear, covered herself with a blanket, and breathed a sigh of relief, "Sleep well, Great God. Good night."

"Why don't you call me 'husband'?" Gu Ling asked.

Without opening her eyes, Su Liang patted Gu Ling's hand under the covers, "Don't tease. 'Great God' is my special term of affection for you. Calling you 'husband' is so boring."

After a while, Su Liang felt Gu Ling tickling her palm. With a resigned look, she opened her eyes to see him, "If you really can't sleep, why not go out and run three laps?"

"I have something to ask you." Gu Ling moved closer, their faces nearly touching, their breaths intertwined.

Su Liang couldn't help but become lost in Gu Ling's beauty, marveling at how perfect his skin was and how he looked great from any angle.

"Tomorrow night, if I don't know what to do, you'll teach me," Gu Ling whispered.

Su Liang stared at Gu Ling's long eyelashes, feeling as if a gentle feather brushed across her heart, her heartbeat quickening, even wanting to pounce on him...

"I have a rough idea, but I'm inexperienced too. Let's learn together," Su Liang said while distancing herself from Gu Ling. She was really tired and sleepy, wanting to get a good night's rest.

"If I always think about such things, will you feel troubled?" Gu Ling moved a bit closer to Su Liang.

Su Liang reached out, smacking his face, and pushed his head to face the other side. "I really like you; I like you the most. You are the most beautiful, the best, and irreplaceable in my heart. I want to hold you, to kiss you, and do that kind of thing with you too. Are you satisfied now? Hurry up and sleep! Perform well tomorrow! "

"Oh," Gu Ling turned his head back and closed his eyes, a slight smile on his lips. Su Liang knew him too well; that was exactly what he wanted to hear.

The next day, when Su Liang went to bid farewell to Yan Shiba, she reverted to her old carefree self. There was no decision made about yesterday's matter.

Su Liang didn't ask, but only instructed Yan Shiba to take care of his injuries, take his medicine on time, and be careful of his safety. While she and Gu Ling left Yin Country, they wouldn't look for Yan Shiba anymore.

Yan Shiba asked Su Liang and Gu Ling to "sleep well" together and strive to have a successful baby soon...

Before noon, Su Liang and Gu Ling covertly left Hefeng City, heading towards Xiangyue City.

Knowing that the royal family of Yin Country suspected them and had people searching for them, the two avoided trouble by staying off the main roads, acting in secret. In the early afternoon, they arrived at the mansion Su Liang had bought beforehand.

"What do you think?" Su Liang asked Gu Ling.

"It's good." Gu Ling's taste had always been in line with Su Liang's.

Together, they cleaned the rooms, rearranged the furniture, and tidied up the new room. However, there were no festive decorations.

Afterward, Gu Ling went out to buy some food and Su Liang stayed at home to catch up on some sleep. She had slept too late the previous night and was feeling exhausted; she needed to recharge for the "big event".

Gu Ling only left after watching Su Liang fall asleep. He had become more cautious after their recent encounters, making sure that no one was following them.

When Su Liang woke up, it was already dusk.

Sitting up and rubbing her eyes, she saw a pair of dragon and phoenix candles lit on the table. In an instant, she felt as if she were back in the decorated new room at Su Mansion in Qian Country's capital, experiencing the sensation of a true wedding night.

Though Su Liang never cared for ceremonies, seeing the careful preparations Gu Ling had made for her in an unfamiliar place in such a short time filled her with joy and sweetness.

After putting on the duck-and-drake pillowcases from the small table beside the bed, Su Liang laughed softly and saw Gu Ling enter the room with a tray.

"Great God, you even made a meal?" Su Liang said in surprise, "I'm very hungry."

Three dishes and one soup, light and palatable, were the type of food the two of them usually enjoyed.

After the meal, the two took separate baths, changed clothes, and prepared for the "big event."

As the moon rose above the willow tips...

Wearing a red skirt especially bought by Gu Ling, and covered with a red veil, Su Liang sat silently at the edge of the bed, listening to the approaching footsteps.

Gu Ling used a pole to lift the veil, and Su Liang's face lifted up to look at him, smiling brightly, "Great God, it's a shame I didn't have time to make a cheongsam to wear for you."

Gu Ling shook his head, "Clothes aren't important." After all, they would be taken off...

Su Liang didn't like to drink alcohol, but tonight was special. They needed to make up for the wedding wine called He-cup wine, so she and Gu Ling drank a cup together.

After putting down the wine cup, Gu Ling embraced Su Liang and fell onto the bed.

"Great God, cheongsams really look great, are you sure you don't want to see

"There will be plenty of chances in the future. You can wear all the clothes I've never seen before."

"Do you want to play role-playing games? Hmm..."

Chapter 318: 318. Tomorrow and again tomorrow

The second day.

"Great God, good morning. Shall we head back today?" "Hmm... let's talk about it tomorrow, you need to rest."

The third day.

"Great God, shouldn't we be leaving?"

"Hmm... there's no rush, let's talk about it tomorrow."

After spending three days and nights with Gu Ling, Su Liang felt they couldn't go on like this.

"Let's end it tonight, sleep well, and set off tomorrow." Su Liang said as she placed a pillow between her and Gu Ling.

Gu Ling's hand stretched out from under the pillow and touched Su Liang before she grabbed it and threw it back, "Move again, and we'll sleep in separate beds."

This threat immediately took effect, and Gu Ling sighed softly, "Am I doing something that upsets you?"

Su Liang closed her eyes, telling herself not to look at him, lest she be seduced by his looks, "Great God, this kind of thing, too much of it is not good for the body."

"It's only been three days..." Gu Ling argued that he had only just begun and was already being stopped. Was this fair? Did it conform to human nature? His body was doing great!

"It's not like we can't do it tomorrow." Su Liang blurted out.

Upon hearing this, Gu Ling's deep laughter filled the room, "Oh, you said it, tomorrow."

Sleepiness overtook Su Liang, and she fell into slumber quickly.

Woken up again by Gu Ling in the middle of the night, Su Liang was so exasperated she could hardly contain herself. Gu Ling whispered in her ear, "It's a new day after midnight."

Perhaps those in the throes of passion always loved to stick together. Su Liang felt it was okay, but Gu Ling seemed to hate not being by her side every moment since their wedding night, in various ways.

Su Liang had always called Gu Ling “Great God” not because of his cold demeanor, but because he was a versatile genius. He wouldn’t do anything unless he could do it exceptionally well, including being a man...

Although Su Liang’s body was in good shape and she was open-minded about such matters, she could still barely keep up with Gu Ling’s energetic youth.

Moreover, this place was not their home. And now, they didn’t have complete “freedom.” They had to return as soon as possible.

“How about we leave tomorrow?” Gu Ling looked at the fatigue between Su Liang’s brows and regretted bothering her last night.

Su Liang stared at him with a stern face, “You dare say ‘tomorrow’ again? Gu Ling clasped his hands together, bowing deeply, “My wife, please calm down.”

“What’s there to be angry about?” Su Liang thought to herself, as if he wouldn’t dare do it again!

“Think about how to deal with your perverted master.” Su Liang shook her head, “That man has a terrible character and a strong thirst for revenge. He might go after our friends.”

Gu Ling’s expression turned serious, “Ask Situ Xie to testify about Nangong Qian’s situation.”

Su Liang raised an eyebrow, “That’s an idea.”

Back in Liang Country, Situ Xie hadn’t said much about Situ Xiang.

Even if she went to ask him, the answer might not be the truth.

Now, things were different. Since they knew Nangong Lin and his daughter were no good, Su Liang and Gu Ling could use news about them as a bargaining chip to speak with Situ Xie again.

But first, they’d have to return to Jiaye City.

“By the way,” Su Liang suddenly remembered something, “I’m really curious about who in Yin Country suggested capturing Lian Shun’s entire family as hostages.”

The incident had passed, and aside from Lian Shan getting injured and losing her memory, and Lian Shun’s arm being broken by Fan Gang, the Lians were unharmed. Fan Tong had paid for his crimes in blood.

But Su Liang’s suspicions at that time had never been forgotten.

Perhaps it was after Fan Tong investigated the military commanders in Jiaye City that he devised such a plan. However, she wanted to confirm it.

The reason was still the one that first aroused her suspicion: The main general of Jiaye City at the time was Yuan Ye, and from what happened later, the arrest of Lian Shun’s entire family was to get

rid of Yuan Ye, which was feasible. But Yuan Ye had a close grandson; wouldn't it be more direct to arrest Yuan Pei? Moreover, it would be much easier and better to control if they captured him alone instead of Lian Shan's entire family.

The person who came up with the hostage plan must be very smart. They shouldn't have chosen Lian Shan's entire family over Yuan Pei, unless there were other reasons involved.

"Lian Shan's amnesia may not be an accident," Gu Ling said.

Lian Shan only knew some basic martial arts, and there were more than just Lian Shan who had better martial arts skills in the Lin family, including their uncles and cousins. In that case, why was Lian Shan the only one injured? According to the situation, the people sent by Yin Country to arrest the Lin family members must have been very strong and carefully planned. They must have used sedatives and the like, giving them no chance to resist. If Lian Shan was accidentally injured while fleeing from the danger, it would be unreasonable. If she was injured in the head after being captured, it would be even stranger.

Su Liang was stunned for a moment, "You mean... she was made to lose her memory because she knew something?"

"There is medicine that can do that." Gu Ling said that he had recently experienced a near-loss of memory, and it was Nangong Lin's actions that inspired him. When Su Liang brought up the Lin family members again, he thought of the amnesiac Lian Shan.

Su Liang's expression was inexplicable, "Wouldn't it be simpler to kill Lian Shan? After all, there were more than one hostage, and her death would not have affected the situation at the time. The Fan father and son had set up a trap to kill General Yuan Ye, so why did they spare Lian Shan? They are not the kind of people who are forced to act and don't want to kill the innocent."

"It shows that the proposal to capture the Lin family was not made by the Fan father and son." Gu Ling's eyes narrowed slightly, "Perhaps, there is a traitor in Jiaye City."

Su Liang's expression changed, "What kind of traitor would not care if Yuan Ye died but doesn't want Lian Shan to die?"

Her first thought was Yuan Pei, the grandson of Yuan Ye, because he was Lian Shan's fiancé. Could there be unknown conflicts between the two generations?

But Su Liang thought of Yuan Pei in mourning clothes walking up to the Nancheng Building in Jiaye City, and stabbing Fan Tong with a sword. She also thought of him holding a bowl of clear water to collect Fan Tong's blood to be offered in front of Yuan Ye's spirit tablet... Su Liang shook her head, "I don't think it's Yuan Pei unless his disguise skills are better than Nangong Lin's. But we should go back as soon as possible, and not let any more chaos happen."

Not being able to explain to Duanmu Yi was secondary. The Lin family still lived in Jiaye City, and Nian Jincheng was there too. Su Liang didn't want anything to happen to them.

"Alright," Gu Ling agreed.

Su Liang packed her things, waiting for Gu Ling, who had gone out to buy dried food, to come back so they could leave. After returning to Xiangyue City this time, she hadn't even left her house for several days.

Although they had mentioned the matter of having a child, the two had never seriously discussed it. And before their wedding night, Gu Ling specifically asked Su Liang how to avoid pregnancy, because she was only sixteen. For now, the consensus between them was that Su Liang would not have a child until she was eighteen, and they would discuss whether to have one later.

Su Liang tried to sort out the people and events in Jiaye City in her mind but still couldn't figure it out. In addition to Yuan Pei, she thought it was also possible that there was a traitor within the Lin family.

At the moment, Su Liang didn't suspect Che Yun. If she hadn't taken out the antidote given by Lao Bai, Che Yun might have died. Gu Ling had seen the black mist appearing on his brow.

Footsteps sounded outside the door, Su Liang collected her thoughts, got up and saw Gu Ling enter.

"Fan Gang is on his way back to Xiangyue City," Gu Ling had sneaked into General Fan's mansion for information. After Fan Tong's death, the Emperor of Yin Country sent Mu Ya's uncle to take charge and summoned Fan Gang back to the capital.

Su Liang nodded, "Perfect. We'll meet him and ask him clearly."

Before leaving, Gu Ling held Su Liang for a while. Realizing that there might be a traitor in Jiaye City, they decided to return as soon as possible, and they could no longer delay time for the sake of pleasure.

Su Liang comforted Gu Ling by patting him, "We'll have fun when we get back home."

"Yes, I want to see the qipao you mentioned," Gu Ling was still thinking about it.

Su Liang pushed him away, "You said clothes don't matter."

Gu Ling chuckled, "I also said you should wear all the clothes I've never seen before."

Su Liang blurted out, "I thought you preferred me without clothes... ahem, let's go."

Gu Ling tilted his head and kissed Su Liang, "I like taking your clothes off."

Su Liang's face turned red, "Let's go quickly!"

The two of them disguised themselves and left Xiangyue City.

As for Mu Ya's death, Gu Ling didn't hear anyone talking about it in the city.

Whether the royal family of Yin Country would blame her for the doll with Su Liang's name on it didn't matter.

As they passed through Hefeng City again, they didn't go to see Yan Shiba or visit Nangong Family's Mid-hill Villa. Instead, they left directly.

Jiaye City.

Lian Shun anxiously awaited the return of Su Liang and Gu Ling, but they were nowhere to be seen.

After Yuan Pei dissolved his engagement with Lian Shan, he seldom visited the Lin family. However, Lian Shun went to see him almost every day and refrained from gathering everyone for drinks, fearing awkwardness if Yuan Pei and Che Yun met.

Apart from missing his wife, Nian Jincheng was doing well. Lian Shun took good care of him, and he got along well with Che Yun in official matters.

Che Xiao was outgoing and always stuck with Che Yun, seemingly having a great brotherly relationship.

However, this was only what outsiders saw.

Behind closed doors, communication between Che Yun and the family of three became less and less frequent, as he always avoided Che's parents.

But every night, Che Xiao would visit Che Yun alone, claiming it was for the two brothers to play chess, yet they never played a single game.

One day, when Che Xiao arrived, Che Yun was drinking alone.

Che Xiao opened the door, calling "Brother", but after closing the door, he called "Master".

Che Yun didn't even spare him a glance, "Get out."

"There is an important matter today." Che Xiao sat down, "Master is troubled because of Lian Shan, right? Marrying a woman you don't like is indeed unpleasant."

"Get out!" Che Yun stared coldly at Che Xiao.

However, Che Xiao smiled slightly, "Master, I have thought of a way that can help you solve the problem."

"Don't touch her." Che Yun said coldly.

Che Xiao shook his head, "Master is overthinking. My master didn't kill Lian Shan back then, so how can he harm her now? Since Master doesn't want to marry her, why not let her marry me instead?"

Che Yun frowned, "What are you saying?"

"I know she likes Master. But women can change. Once, she even had a fiancé who later fell in love with someone else. I may not have the ability to snatch her heart away from Master, but there's another way." Che Xiao lowered his voice, "Hire some thugs to kidnap her, drug her, and I'll 'accidentally' find her and save her. In order to detoxify her, I'd have no choice but to do 'that'. Once she becomes my woman, she can only marry me. As long as we plan carefully and leave no traces, no one will suspect."

As soon as Che Xiao finished speaking, Che Yun slapped him hard, "Shut up!"

Without being angry or annoyed, Che Xiao rubbed his face and sighed, "Never mind if Master doesn't like my idea. But why get so angry? I was only trying to help relieve Master's burden."

“Where is your master?” Che Yun asked coldly.

“Master is looking for him? I’ll go get him right away.” Che Xiao stood up.

Che Yun sneered, “No need. Next time you see him, tell him to inform me first about whatever he wants to do! He’s not allowed to act on his own!”

Che Xiao nodded, “Alright, I’ll pass the message to my master.”

Just as he finished speaking, a voice came from outside the window, “Master, may I come in?”

Che Yun’s face darkened, “Come in!”

Soon, a shrewd and thin middle-aged man appeared in the room, none other than the military strategist Fan Tong had previously recruited.

“Master.” Che Xiao bowed respectfully.

The middle-aged man nodded slightly and bowed to Che Yun, “Master.”

“Haven’t I already said, do not come to find me unless it’s necessary?” Che Yun said coldly.

The middle-aged man replied, “The Master has a message for you.”

Che Yun’s eyes narrowed as the middle-aged man handed him a letter from his pocket.

Che Yun took the letter, unfolded it, and found a blank sheet. However, this was not the first time he had received such a letter. He held it over the flame of the candle, and soon the dark text appeared.

This was a letter from Situ Xie. After reading it, Che Yun burned it.

“Did the Master have any instructions?” the middle-aged man asked.

Che Yun said coldly, “He wants me to find a way to get rid of Gu Ling and Su Liang as soon as possible.”

Che Xiao looked surprised, “It seems that after this incident, the Master thinks that those two are the biggest obstacles. If it weren’t for their intervention, Yin

Country and Qian Country would have already been at war.”

Due to geographical reasons, it was difficult for Liang Country and Yin Country to go to war, and once they did, Qian Country couldn’t avoid getting involved.

But whether it was the royal family of Liang Country or the royal family of Yin Country, they both understood the principle of allying with distant powers to attack nearby ones, and their greatest wish was for the other two countries to

fight each other, the merrier the better.

This time, Yin Country’s aggression was actually provoked by a spy placed by Situ Xie next to Fan Tong. Unfortunately, Gu Ling and Su Liang stopped the plot in its tracks.

“What does the young master plan to do?” The middle-aged man asked Che

Yun, "If the Master only wants to deal with them, and if you don't want to kill Su Liang, I have a drug here. As long as you can control her and make her take it, she will forget her past and stay by your side."

Che Yun's eyes were freezing, and he blurted out, "You might as well give me the drug instead!"

The middle-aged man sighed deeply, "Then, Young Master, think it over carefully, and let me know your decision later. After all, those two haven't returned to Jiaye City yet, so there's no hurry." With that, he left with Che Xiao.

Che Yun watched the ash from the burned letter fall on the table, his eyes quickly calming down.

Five days after leaving Xiangyue City, Su Liang and Gu Ling "bumped into" Fan Gang's delegation, who were returning to the capital by imperial decree.

After following them for half a day, the two sneaked into the inn where Fan Gang was staying in the middle of the night, used sedatives, and kidnapped him without anyone noticing.

The chaotic graveyard in the wilderness was chilling at night.

Fan Gang woke up groggily, feeling a headache and a sore neck. Seeing the dark shadow in front of him, he screamed, thinking he had seen a ghost.

"We meet again." Gu Ling spoke, imitating Lian Shun's voice.

Fan Gang couldn't believe his eyes, "Lian... Lian Shun?!" Of course, he wouldn't forget the incident where he shattered Lian Shun's arm bones bit by bit.

"Your father died to pay for Yuan's life. But capturing my whole family and hurting me and my sister— I came specifically to settle this score with you," Gu Ling said coldly.

"No... you can't kill me..." If Fan Gang wasn't afraid of death, he would have saved his father in the first place. At his words, his face turned pale, "It wasn't my idea! I didn't do it!"

"If it wasn't you, it was your father. He died, and it's only fair that the son pays for the father's debt." Gu Ling drew his sword and pointed it towards Fan Gang's right arm, "You shattered my bones, and I will peel your flesh bit by bit until only bones are left."

Fan Gang was so scared that his body stiffened and he blurted out, "It wasn't me! It wasn't my father! It was the military adviser! It was the military adviser who suggested capturing your whole family!"

Gu Ling's eyes narrowed slightly, and Su Liang, who was hiding behind a nearby tree, was slightly taken aback. Military adviser?

"It was all that man's idea! His name is Si Yun, he's cunning and has many schemes. He was the one who personally captured the Lin Family members!" Fan Gang said fearfully.

Sure enough, when Gu Ling pressured Fan Gang about Si Yun's background, he said that Si Yun was the brother of a concubine his father took in two years ago. Originally a businessman due to his extremely sharp mind, he was trusted by Fan Tong.

"Where is he now?" Gu Ling asked coldly.

"After my father died, he disappeared, probably afraid that I would want to settle scores with him! If it weren't for my father listening to him, how could anything have gone wrong?" Fan Gang looked at the shining sword and trembled all over, "It has nothing to do with me... Si Yun was the one who suggested it, and my father agreed. I didn't have the right to oppose! Your arm was injured by me, you can injure me the same way, but don't kill me! Your sister... your sister's injury was done by Si Yun, she was brought back like that!"

Su Liang suspected that Si Yun was a spy. The spy who instigated the leading Yin Country military commander to attack Qian Country's master must be easy to guess.

For many years, Liang Country has been trying to join forces with Yin Country to attack Qian Country, and they have tried several times. If it weren't for Yin Country's constant wavering—agreeing to the plan only to refuse to send troops, hoping to see Liang Country and Qian Country suffer mutual losses—the situation in the world would have long been different.

After suffering losses several times, the royal family of Liang Country planted spies among the military commanders of Yin Country, instigating the Yin Country army to attack Qian Country, and actively provided an excellent opportunity to launch an attack. Once they started fighting, Liang Country would be the most benefited party.

The position of military adviser was extremely important, and Fan Tong would not trust someone of unknown origin whom he had only known for a short time. The spies of Liang Country had been deployed for many years and were very meticulous.

"My sister lost her memory when she was caught?" Gu Ling asked coldly.

Fan Gang shook his head, "I don't know... I only saw that she was injured, I didn't know about her memory loss! My father said he wanted to kill her, but...

but I didn't let him! I saved your sister!"

This statement was obviously false. Fan Tong may have indeed said that he wanted to kill Lian Shan, but Si Yun must have been the one to stop him. Otherwise, he wouldn't have taken the injured Lian Shan back and found someone to treat her.

After asking for a description of Si Yun's appearance, Gu Ling killed Fan Gang with a sword. Fan Gang also had a hand in killing Yuan Ye, and if Gu Ling let him go, he might seek revenge on the Lin Family members and leave trouble behind.

After that, the two set off again in the direction of Jiaye City..

Chapter 319: 319. Exposure

When Su Liang and Gu Ling arrived at Xiaoyue City, the northernmost part of Yin Country, they secretly inspected the city's defense deployment.

Then, they rushed back to Jiaye City on a clear morning at the end of March.

However, they didn't return to the Lin's family. Instead, they disguised themselves as travelling merchants from the northern part of Qian Country, purchased a small house, aiming to secretly investigate the previous incident of Lin family members being arrested and to confirm whether there were any traitors amongst them.

If there truly were any traitors, they would go deeper into hiding once Su Liang and Gu Ling exposed themselves.

As for the funds, Su Liang had a Jade Token that could be used to withdraw silver notes from any money house in the large cities. To avoid her identity as the Ning Family's head being discovered, she used the card belonging to Li's Family, the largest pottery merchant in Qian Country, and the money belonged to Li's family as well.

In fact, Li's family had already fallen under the control of three families, led by Wan Ning, in the past two years. The original head of the family, Zhengzheng's biological father Li San, had died in a drunken fall. Although the current head of the Li family still had the surname Li, he was Wan's secretly adopted son.

From the beginning, the head of the Wan family had said that their revenge against the Li family was to release Wan Hui's anger, and to ensure Zhengzheng would stop being bothered, but the Li family's property which they acquired in retribution was given to Su Liang, as a gesture of gratitude for saving Zhengzheng and for preventing the Li family members from snatching the child away during the confrontation.

However, Su Liang never concerned herself with how the Wan Family dealt with the Li Family, nor did she have the energy to handle business matters. She merely accepted the Jade Token given by Wan Hui for convenience in her operations.

The amount of money that she and Gu Ling actually spent from the Ning or Li Family was merely a fraction. Besides their fondness for purchasing houses, hoping to have a private, undisturbed space outside, they didn't have any other extravagant habits.

They cleaned up the purchased small house together. The courtyard contained a well, a grinding stone, a lush tangerine tree, and a vibrant kapok flower.

"Great God, do you know what the flower language of the kapok is?" Su Liang asked smilingly.

Gu Ling, who was fetching water, shook his head, indicating that he didn't know.

"It's 'cherishing the person in front of you'," Su Liang said, breaking off a branch and carrying it to Gu Ling.

Gu Ling put down the water bucket, stood on the stone platform of the well, leaned over to kiss Su Liang and said, "A person is more tender than a flower." Su Liang:...Great God's mouth is getting sweeter.

The two of them cooked lunch together. After lunch, Gu Ling took Su Liang to sleep, and naturally, couldn't spare themselves a little fun and pleasure.

After all, they had been traveling day and night without proper rest. It is not appropriate to stalk and spy on others in broad daylight. Su Liang said she was tired, and Gu Ling said that exercise aided in sleep and exhaustion...

By the time Su Liang woke from her sleep, it was already dark.

Just when most of the people in Jiaye City were about to fall asleep, Su Liang and Gu Ling got up, took a bath, tidied up and ate, getting ready to start their work.

The first suspect was Lian san's fiancé and Yuan Ye's grandson, Yuan Pei.

At this point, Su Liang and Gu Ling still didn't know that Lian San and Yuan Pei had already called off their engagement shortly after they left last time.

In the quiet of the night, Gu Ling and Su Liang set out, secretly heading towards the General's Mansion in Jiaye City.

This was previously inhabited by the Lin family. After the death of Lian Shun's grandfather, the Lin family moved out. The Yuan family had been living there for many years. Now only Yuan Pei remained. He was not a military commander and wished to move out after Yuan Ye's burial, but he was stopped by Lian Shun. Lian Shun told him not to rush to move out as the emperor had not yet decided who would succeed Yuan Ye as the general in the south.

There was light in Yuan Ye's study. The silhouette of a man was reflected on the window. It was Yuan Pei.

Gu Ling and Su Liang waited for a quarter of an hour. The door of the room opened, and Yuan Pei took a pot of alcohol and two cups, and went to the garden.

He sat alone in the pavilion and filled both cups with alcohol, one for himself and one for the one across from him.

"Grandfather, don't worry about me. Lian Shun is always afraid that I'm not happy, but in fact, I'm doing alright. I've made a new friend named Nian Jincheng. He invited me to the capital city. I do want to go there and see the world outside," said Yuan Pei as he raised his cup and toasted with the one in front, then drained his cup.

After only one drink, he didn't drink anymore, and no one else appeared. Yuan Pei sat alone late into the night, poured out the alcohol that was meant for Yuan Ye on the ground, then returned home.

"It doesn't seem to be him," Su Liang said. Yuan Pei's sorrow over Yuan Ye's death was genuine. If it was a pretence, he might have escaped detection by performing an excessive display of sorrow.

Moreover, Yuan Pei is a scholar, not a military man. His selection as a spy by the Liang royal family wouldn't make much sense.

Therefore, when leaving the General Mansion, Su Liang didn't think it was likely to be someone from the Lin family involved.

“Lian Shun only joined the military in these past couple of years, and he was previously stationed in the northern regions. He could not have possibly been a spy, and the rest of Lin family members are even less likely to be,” said Su Liang, “I think we should directly investigate the current military commanders in Jiaye City.”

Gu Ling nodded, “Che Yun, who voluntarily requested to be transferred here at the end of last year, is the most suspicious.”

Su Liang was taken aback, “Che Yun? Could it really be him?”

The two of them could be considered friends, Su Liang still remembered the first time she met Che Yun in Xuanbei City. Moreover, Che Yun was a native of Xuanbei City, filial to his parents, family-oriented, and had been searching for his missing younger brother for many years.

“Don’t jump to conclusions,” Gu Ling didn’t consider Che Yun as a friend as they were not close, which allowed him to view Che Yun more objectively at this moment.

“He was seriously injured,” Su Liang frowned.

Gu Ling’s expression was plain, “A painful act, wanting to cover up makes it more noticeable.”

“He and Lian Shun are the best of friends,” said Su Liang.

“Which is why all the Lin Family members returned alive, and Lian Shan was only injured, not killed,” Gu Ling said.

“You saw the black mist on his brow, indicating that if I didn’t save him, he really would die.” Su Liang had no doubt about this due to Gu Ling’s special ability. If Che Yun had an antidote, he wouldn’t see the black mist even if Su Liang didn’t save him.

Gu Ling shook his head, “Perhaps it represents that he had to kill someone, it just happened to coincide with his injury.”

“Coincidence? But indeed, there is such a possibility,” Su Liang frowned, “He always looks as if he’s carrying a great grudge, many of his actions show that he’s a good person, but on the other hand, being a good person and being a spy is not mutually exclusive. What if, he’s being controlled by someone because he has something they can hold over him...”

“His younger brother,” Gu Ling interjected.

Su Liang’s eyes hardened. They were merely discussing the possibility of Che Yun being a spy, not affirming that he was one. But as it stood, they couldn’t completely rule out his involvement.

In fact, Su Liang’s friendship with Che Yun was far removed compared to her close relationship with Lian Shun. She understood Lian Shun’s character, but could hardly claim to understand Che Yun. At first, she thought he was outgoing, but later discovered he carried many burdens.

As such, after leaving the General Mansion, the two of them secretly went to the Che family residence.

But everyone in the Che Mansion was asleep, and there was no light coming from Che Yun's room. Su Liang and Gu Ling waited for fifteen minutes before departing.

The next day, they woke up around midday.

In the afternoon, they went out together for a walk. Su Liang disguised herself as a man while Gu Ling pretended to be her attendant.

After strolling around the streets, they entered a tea house and chose a private room facing the street. As they sipped their tea, they watched the pedestrians passing by below.

"If Liang Country had deployed spies long ago, it's more likely that the original military commanders of Jiaye City are the ones spying. The notion of capturing and secretly grooming Che Yun's brother years ago costs a lot and it's hard to guarantee that he would definitely rise through the ranks based on his abilities," Su Liang analysed.

Gu Ling shook his head, "There might be more than one."

"You mean, Che Yun is a spy and there's another spy among the original Jiaye City military commanders?" Su Liang rubbed her forehead, "All possibilities. Can we really exclude Lian Shan too? In case..."

Gu Ling suddenly tugged at Su Liang's sleeve, signaling for her to look down.

Following Gu Ling's gaze, Su Liang was taken aback, "Che Yun and Lian Shan?"

Did Lian Shan just tug at Che Yun's arm?"

"You did not see wrong," Gu Ling confirmed.

"What's going on?" a puzzled Su Liang asked, "Isn't Lian Shan engaged to Yuan Pei from their childhood? Why would she be out on a stroll alone with Che Yun, and there's physical contact, they seem quite intimate."

"I'll step out for a moment." Gu Ling said as he got up and walked out.

Su Liang watched as Che Yun and Lin Shan walked past downstairs. Shortly after, Gu Ling returned with news: Lin Shan had broken off her engagement with Yuan Pei and was now engaged with Che Yun.

"I can understand breaking off a child marriage, you can't force people to be together if they don't like each other, but... Given Che Yun's personality, he should have kept his distance from Lin Shan since she was engaged when they met. It's unlikely that he would have developed feelings for Lin Shan." Su Liang said, her eyes narrowing, "Something is off."

The two of them watched the direction Che Yun and Lin Shan left in, paid the bill, and followed from a distance.

During the day, they discovered nothing. Che Yun took Lin Shan for a lakeside walk, walked her home, and then headed to the military camp.

It wasn't until nightfall that Che Yun left the camp to go home.

Meanwhile, Gu Ling and Su Liang, not even eating dinner, meticulously shadowed him, observing every move he made. They haven't found anything unusual yet, but what truly raised Su Liang's suspicion was him stealing Yuan Pei's fiancée.

Given Che Yun's consistent portrayal of himself as filial, decent, upright, and respectful, the occurrences should not have happened to him.

Granted, matters of the heart are complicated, but as a grown, mature man, it's fundamental decency to maintain distance from a girl who is engaged to his good friend's family.

It was late into the night.

When Che Yun returned home, everyone else had already had dinner. After eating his meal in solitude, he went into his study room, not even catching a glance of his parents all day.

The superficial harmony between Che Yun and his parents, which was already hard to maintain before Che Xiao returned, ceased to exist after his return.

Su Liang and Gu Ling stood against the wall behind Che Yun's study, their breathing barely audible as they patiently waited.

After waiting for half an hour, Su Liang began to feel numb in her legs, but she didn't move an inch.

Finally, there was a stir.

They heard Che Xiao address Che Yun as "brother", they heard the sound of a door opening and closing, and then they heard someone say, "young master".

Su Liang and Gu Ling exchanged glances. Che Xiao addressing Che Yun as "young master" spoke volumes. Che Yun was indeed up to something, and Che Xiao was in on it!

Inside the room, Che Xiao sat across from Che Yun as usual. "I know you've been tired of me, so I haven't bothered you for several days. Tonight, Master asked me to inquire about the status of your plans to eliminate Gu Ling and Su Liang. This matter isn't easy. We need to prepare in advance, for instance, by first dealing with Nian Jincheng, Gu Ling's best friend. What do you think, young master?"

On hearing this, Gu Ling and Su Liang's eyes had a cold glint.

Anger welled up in Su Liang's heart. She had considered Che Yun as a real friend and had earnestly used Ning family's resources to help him find his lost brother. Even Hu Er from Su's village had put in a lot of effort for this. When Gu Ling suggested that the spy among the military commanders in Jiaye City could be Che Yun, Su Liang instinctively defended him. At the end of it all, Che Yun's long search for his brother was completely bogus!

And now, Che Yun and his newly found brother were planning to eliminate Su Liang and Gu Ling.

Su Liang thought Che Yun's acting skills were on par with Nangong Lin's madness!

Soon after, Che Yun's voice spoke up from inside the room, "I don't have any plans."

“Does the young master not want to do it? Or are you simply reluctant to lose Su Liang? Master has said that we do not need to kill Su Liang. We could capture her and erase her memory, then you can have her. Isn’t that the best of both worlds?” Che Xiao’s voice carried a hint of mirth.

Su Liang: ...This tactic is eerily similar to the one Nangong Lin used on Gu Ling!

From Gu Ling’s perspective, the two men discussing inside were already as good as dead ...

Su Liang heard Che Yun say “Get out”, and in the next moment, just as Gu Ling took a step, a dark figure appeared not far away, wielding a sword and aiming for Su Liang like a ghost out of the night!

In an instant, Su Liang was reminded of the night in Xiangyue City where she was held hostage – a striking resemblance. The sword that the arrival used was not unfamiliar to Su Liang, it was Nangong Lin’s master!

Without wasting a moment on why he would appear in Che Yun’s house, Gu Ling grabbed Su Liang and shot off. He couldn’t let Su Liang leave alone, and it was dangerous to stay if Nangong Lin was nearby.

Inside the room, Che Yun and Che Xiao heard noise from behind. Their expressions changed instantly. Before they had time to stand up and go out, they saw a man standing in the courtyard.

“Master?” Che Yun furrowed his brow.

Che Xiao was taken aback, “The Master of the young master...”

Nangong Lin cast a cold glance at Che Xiao, making him shudder under his gaze that reminded him of a poisonous snake.

“Gu Ling and Su Liang heard everything you two just said,” Nangong Lin said, staring at Che Yun, “If you stay here, they will kill you. Come with me!” Che Yun couldn’t believe Nangong Lin, “Su Liang... she’s back?”

“Enough chatter, let’s go!” Nangong Lin said coldly.

Che Xiao instinctively grabbed Che Yun, “Where are you taking him? What should we do?”

Nangong Lin took a step forward, slapped Che Xiao away, grabbed Che Yun’s hand, “I’ve told you not to meddle with this family! It’s out of your hands now!”

The moment he finished, Nangong Lin disappeared with Che Yun after a few jumps.

Watching the direction they left in, Che Xiao, who had fallen and thrown up blood, pounded the ground with his palm and rushed out to look for Si Yun to discuss a plan.

After circling around in the city, Gu Ling and Su Liang finally lost that shadow-like old man. However, they didn’t return to their small house but headed to the Lin’s family house, waking up Nian Jincheng and Lian Shun.

“Gu Xiaoling? You’re back?” Lian Shun rubbed his eyes, overjoyed.

“Che Yun is likely to be a spy from Liang Country. We discovered it tonight, and he has an extremely powerful master by his side. Gather your family immediately to avoid any accidents,” Su Liang said quickly.

Lian Shun doubted his ears, “Who? Che Yun? A spy? Impossible! How could he be...

Gu Ling pulled Lian Shun up from the bed, slapped his face, “Wake up! Do you trust me or him?

Lian Shun wore an odd expression as he put on his shoes and outerwear. He rubbed Gu Ling’s face with his uninjured hand to make sure it was really him, then rushed out of the room.

In the middle of the night, Yuan Pei was woken up by Nian Jincheng and arrived at Lin’s house, completely unaware of what had happened.

In the meantime, Su Liang and Gu Ling thought of their suspicion in Yin Country that Nangong Qian was Nangong Lin’s biological daughter instead of the child Situ Xiang conceived when she disappeared years ago.

The sudden appearance of Situ Xiang’s father tonight was not to track Su Liang and Gu Ling. Instead, he stepped in to protect Che Yun, just as he had captured Gu Ling to keep Nangong Qian safe.

Furthermore, the fact that Che Xiao called Che Yun “young master” behind everyone’s back suggests that Che Yun is not the son of the Che family. Coupled with his insistence on keeping his beard at such a young age, Su Liang had a bold guess: Che Yun might be the child Situ Xiang was pregnant with years ago. If so, he would be the grandson of that old man and the biological grandson of Situ Xie, serving as a Liang spy while not being an ordinary one, and under the protection of Nangong Lin’s people at the same time!

While the people of Lin knew something had happened, they were clueless about the situation. Lian Shan, in particular, even asked Lian Shun if anyone had notified the Che family.

Lian Shun, looking grim, fobbed Lian Shan off and then pulled Guling aside to talk privately.

“What exactly happened? Are you sure Che Yun is a spy?” Lian Shun, who had been friends with Che Yun for some time, couldn’t comprehend the current situation.

Gu Ling nodded, “Yes. Su Lang and I overheard their plot to kill us.”

Lian Shun stiffened, “What... is going on?”

Gu Ling looked towards the north, “There’s a chance, he might be the prince of Liang Country..”

Chapter 320: 320. Who is the Chess Piece

Dawn had broken.

Che Yun and Che Xiao had both disappeared, but their parents were still here.

“Miss Su, we really don’t know anything!” Che’s mother said through her tears, “We’ve just found Xiaoxiao. We thought we could finally live a peaceful life.

Days passed, and then this happens... what did we do to anger the heavens?"

Su Liang kept a calm expression, "Che Yun is not your son. You surely can tell your own son from someone else's."

Che's father's face stiffened noticeably, and he looked down, speechless.

Che's mother paused in her crying, only to start again.

"I know you must have been coerced. You should be clear now that Che Yun may not be in danger, but he may not care whether Che Xiao lives or dies. Can Che Xiao be blamed for anything?" Su Ling looked at both parents, letting out a sigh.

Both nodded in agreement, Che's mother looked at Su Liang through her teary eyes, "Xiaoxiao is still a child. We lost him for so many years, and he just returned less than a month ago. What can he do?"

The typical "he's still a child" line. Su Liang hadn't forgotten the tone Che Xiao had used when he told Che Yun to capture Nian Jincheng last night.

"I want to help you." Su Liang's expression couldn't have been more sincere, "At this point, if you still won't confess everything, eventually you will only harm your innocent son."

Che's father looked up, pulling himself together. Che's mother even stopped crying. They exchanged a glance, looking somewhat hesitant.

"Che Yun might not be your blood son, but you should have two sons originally. If I'm not mistaken, your elder son is still being controlled and unable to return home?" , Su Liang asked tentatively.

As soon as her words died out, Che's mother burst into sobs again.

Apparently, Su Liang was right.

"Che Yun's disguise has been exposed, he's no longer of any use to you both or your home, including your two sons, to him and those who work behind his back." Su Liang sneered coldly, "If you think I'm just trying to scare you, then I have nothing more to say."

Che's mother grabbed Che's father's arm in a panic, her face filled with disarray, "What... What should we do?"

Che's father's hands clenched and then relaxed. After a moment of silence, he stared at Su Liang, "First and foremost, you swear that you will do everything you can to save both our sons! And that you will not hurt them!"

Su Liang's expression remained casual, "I'm not here to seek your permission. If you want to save your sons, cooperating with me is the only way out. At this point, you're in no position to make terms with me."

Che Xiao was no saint, the true eldest son of Che's family, Su Liang had no idea whether he was dead or alive, or what kind of person he was.

About Che Yun's background, Su Liang and Gu Ling had speculated a bit, only wanting confirmation from Che's parents.

"You are a good person. Even if our children have done something wrong, they were forced against their will. We believe you will not make things more difficult for them!" Che's father said, looking intently at Su Liang.

Su Liang's expression was indifferent, "I will judge that for myself."

"Yun... that child, he's the grandson of King Yue of Liang Nation." Che's father spoke in a strained voice, revealing the family's biggest secret.

Su Liang narrowed her eyes, they had guessed it right.

"He was sent here when he was very young, while our eldest son was taken away by King Yue." Che's father said somberly, "We have no idea where he is now."

"Later, King Yue also took away our younger son..." Che's mother said through her tears, "He just got back and now there's been an accident."

Su Liang was confused, "Why would Situ Xie choose your family?" She believed there must be an underlying reason.

Che's father hesitated a while, then sighed deeply and said, "Our ancestors were originally from Liang Country, and my deceased father had once worked for King Yue."

Upon hearing this, Su Liang understood. The entire Che family had been spies for Liang Nation for generations. This was why Situ Xie gave Che Yun to them.

"We...haven't done anything wrong...you know, we originally conducted some small business in Xuanbei City, we're not really capable of much." Che's father tried to explain, but his evasive eyes betrayed his guilt. "What is Che Yun's real name?" Su Liang asked.

"His name is Situ Jing." Che's mother replied.

Su Liang frowned. Jing? She was quite familiar with this character.

"Did he always know that he wasn't your son?" Su Liang asked.

Che's mother shook her head and then nodded, "He came to our house and only found out a few years later."

Su Liang understood. Situ Xieding must have wanted Che Yun to bond with Che's father and mother to better control him.

"Last year, when he was transferred to Jiaye City, was it Situ Xieding's idea?" Su Liang asked.

Che's mother subconsciously nodded, 'Yes...the master said to let him go south on some business, and that he would return Xiao back to us when the matter was resolved.'

Su Liang had known last night that her encounter with Che Xiao on the way was not accidental, but a coincidental meeting deliberately arranged by someone who knew the whereabouts of herself and Gu Ling.

This made it even harder for her to doubt Che Yun's story about his brother's disappearance

After all, if Che Yun, who had been busy with official duties and had no time to find his brother, suddenly located Che Xiao, it would seem very odd.

"Was it Che Yun's idea to seize Lian Shun's whole family as hostages?" Su Liang asked again.

Che's father looked uncomfortable, "He didn't want this either...it was when Miss Lin came to see him and overheard some secrets by accident that the master sent someone to kill Miss Lin and keep everything under wraps. Yun...the young master then suggested taking the Lin family as hostages."

Indeed, the problem was with Lian Shan — accurately predicted by Gu Ling. Her amnesia wasn't accidental, it was deliberate.

"Does Che Yun truly love Lian Shan? Or did he marry her to keep her under control for fear of her regaining her memories?" Su Liang asked coldly. Che's father and mother did not answer, but from their expressions, Su Liang already knew the answer.

"My son and us both do not want to harm anyone, it's all the master's coercion!" Che's mother said, her eyes reddening. "It's tough for my son. If it weren't for the master's promise to release our son, he wouldn't be manipulated by him... I do blame him for bringing trouble to our family, but after all, he is the child we raised. How can we not have affection for him? The matter with the Lin family, the young master was wrong. But he did it in order to save them, or else the master's people would have killed Miss Lin a long time ago!"

Su Liang was thinking that Situ Xieding's man might be Si Yun, the military adviser who infiltrated Fan Tong's side. Chances are, he was the 'master' Che Xiao mentioned.

"Who taught Che Yun's martial arts?" Su Liang asked.

"It was someone arranged by the master," Che's father replied.

But Su Liang suspected that Nangong Lin had connections with Che Yun early on, otherwise the old man would not have appeared last night.

Che Yun must indeed be Situ Han and Situ Xiang's son. And his swordsmanship was very impressive, possibly taught by Nangong Lin.

In other words, not only was he Gu Ling's cousin, but he might also be his martial brother.

As for Nangong Qian, Su Liang presently suspected that she was the daughter Situ Xiang bore to Nangong Lin later, Che Yun's half-sister with the same mother.

“Ms. Su, the person Yun truly loves in his heart is you!” Che’s mother, who obviously had some sincere feelings for Che Yun, couldn’t help but say more than Su Liang had asked.

Meanwhile, Che’s father kept a solemn face and remained silent.

Su Liang frowned, “How can you be so sure? Did he say that himself?”

“I raised this child, how could I not know what he’s thinking?” Che’s mother sighed. “You certainly have a place in his heart. His wish to marry Miss Lin is not out of malice, it’s a necessity. Otherwise, the master’s people would not forgive Miss Lin either. After the betrothal, I noticed that he became quieter and no longer had a smile on his face.”

Su Liang was not surprised at this moment, because she did not care about whether Che Yun liked her. However, Che’s mother’s revelation had cleared up another doubt she had before: why did Nangong Lin capture Gu Ling to fulfill Nangong Qian’s infatuation, but “kindly” let her go?

One should know, that night in the Prince’s Mansion of Xiangyue City, the old man had every opportunity to kill Su Liang while capturing Gu Ling, but not only did he not do so, Nangong Lin even deliberately staged a play, deceiving Su Liang, trying to trick her into believing that everything was because of Mu

Ya.

Previously, Su Liang thought that Nangong Lin was considering Nangong Qian’s physical condition, thinking that he might need her in the future.

But now, Su Liang had to suspect, perhaps it had something to do with Che

Yun.

“Who did Che Yun kill a few days after I went to Nanshan City last month?” Su Liang coldly asked.

Che’s father and mother both widened their eyes, looking at Su Liang in shock, it was obviously unexpected that she would ask this.

“No...None...” Che’s mother shook her head in denial, but her voice was not convincing.

“I’ve already found out, that’s why I’m asking you. If you deny it again, I’ll have to assume you’re in on it too.” Su Liang said coldly.

Then Che’s father immediately nodded, “He did kill a servant, that servant overheard our conversation, we had to silence him.”

“He really had no choice, he never wanted to harm anyone ...” Che’s mother still insisted that “no matter what my child did, he was forced.”

Compared to that, Che’s father was much colder towards Che Yun.

“For the sake of your safety, do not leave home from now on, I’ll arrange for someone to protect you.” Su Liang stood up as she spoke.

Che’s father dragged Che’s mother to kneel down to Su Liang and kowtow,

“Please, Miss Su, save our child!”

Su Liang did not pay them any heed, she walked out, closed the door from outside, and went towards Gu Ling.

They came together because Gu Ling was not comfortable with Su Liang going alone. But for interviewing Chels father and mother, Su Liang went in alone, after all, they had known each other for a long time, and she had even treated them before, which eased their guard.

“Did you hear all that?” Su Liang linked her arm with Gu Ling’s.

Gu Ling nodded. With the exposure of Che Yun’s identity, the doubts about the incidents during this period were all cleared up.

“Situ Xie was so ‘kind’ to you before only because you did not pose a threat to him then, he still wanted to win you over, to be a spare piece.” Su Liang said coldly, “Now, we have spoiled his plans, he has realized that you are the biggest obstacle in his path to achieving great things, and he wants to kill you.”

If the two of them openly returned to Jiaye City and Che Yun wanted to carry out Situ Xie’s order, while Nangong Lin and his master were around, things would be very tricky.

“Let’s go back first.” Gu Ling hugged Su Liang and walked out. It was approaching noon, and the two had not eaten or slept for a day and a night.

The Lian Mansion was just next door, as soon as they entered, they saw Lian Shun walking towards them.

“How... how did it go? Did you find out anything?” Lian Shun looked exhausted.

Su Liang nodded, “Let’s walk and talk.”

When he heard the beginning of the story, learning that Che Yun was Situ Xie’s grandson, who had been sent to Xuanbei City since a young age, and that the entire Che family were spies of Liang Country, Lian Shun’s face turned extremely unpleasant, “Did he always know his true identity?”

Su Liang sighed faintly, “He knew since he was a child.”

Lian Shun recalled how he met Che Yun, he could not believe that Che Yun had deliberately approached him, but now that things had come to this, it didn’t matter. They were fundamentally opposed, impossible to be friends.

When Lian Shun heard about how Lian Shan was injured, lost her memory, and how the whole family was captured, and the ringleader of this, he completely blew up, “It was him?! It was all his idea?!”

Su Liang patted Lian Shun on the shoulder, "I know it's hard for you to accept, but he did it. The Che family elders mentioned that Che Yun did it to save Lian Shan and asked for a guarantee of safety for your entire family from those who captured you."

Lian Shun gnashed his teeth, "We fell into the hands of Yin Country, how does that guarantee safety? Am I supposed to thank him for that?"

Su Liang nodded, "It's good if you think so. What I want to tell you is that his helplessness is no excuse for betraying and endangering your family- Although your family members survived, he indirectly caused the death of old General Yuan and murdered a servant to silence him."

If it wasn't for the black fog that Gu Ling saw that day, they wouldn't have known about Che Yun's murder. This was the key for Su Liang to see Che Yun's true colors. Wanton killing of innocents is not justified under any circumstances.

It seemed that Che Yun cared about Lian Shun and his family, but this only further revealed his selfish nature. The lives of those he cared for mattered and the rest were insignificant. Was he really left with no choice but to be forced? If he had been honest with Su Liang earlier, she would definitely have helped him.

As Lian Shun was about to leave and explain the situation to his family, he turned around after a few steps and asked Gu Ling with a frown, "If he's Situ Xie's grandson, why did you say he was the prince of Liang Country?"

Gu Ling replied indifferently, "Situ Han is Situ Xie's son." He led Gu Ling into the courtyard where they were previously lodging in the Lin's home. The luggage in the small house had been brought over.

Lian Shun stood in a daze for a moment. After sorting out the relationship between Situ Xie and Situ Han, he cursed, "They're all despicable!"

The deeper the feelings he once had, the more Lian Shun now hated Che Yun. Thinking about the aggrieved Yuan Ye, the emotionally deceived Lian Shan, their family's experience of being captured, and thinking that if Che Yun succeeded, Liang Country would surely join forces with Yin Country to doom Qian Country, Lian Shun couldn't wait to kill Che Yun himself!

Lian Shun calmed his mind, first telling the truth to his parents, Yuan Pei, and Nian Jincheng.

Both Father Lin and Mother Lin were stunned and felt a bout of fear afterward. They got so close to the Che family, and if they weren't careful, they could've faced total annihilation!

Seeing Yuan Pei silently, Lian Shun felt guilty, "It's all my fault, inviting the wolf into the house..."

Yuan Pei shook his head, his eyes icy, "My grandfather's death was the result of the collaboration between Yin Country and Liang Country, it has nothing to do with you. But Che Yun, he must die!"

If it weren't for Lian Shan's inadvertent discovery of the secret, perhaps the original hostage captured would have been Yuan Pei. The other party had been plotting for a long time, and in any case, Yuan Ye could hardly escape death.

At Nanshan City, separated from Jiaye City by a river.

Nangong Lin looked at the untouched food in front of Che Yun and sighed, "That is your grandfather. He hated what your biological father did to your mother and therefore didn't like you either. Hence, he had never visited you before. But you are his grandchild, and blood is thicker than water, he still cares about you deep down."

"How did you know something was going to happen to me?" Che Yun asked coldly.

Nangong Lin said, "Actually, it's just a coincidence. I didn't expect Gu Ling and Su Liang to suspect you. There's something I lied to you about before, but now I must tell you the truth. You and Qianqian are not boy-girl twins, she is your half-sister from the same mother, the biological daughter of your mother and me. Your mother did not die after giving birth to you, but was taken away by Situ Xie. I didn't tell you all this before because I didn't want you to blame your mother for not protecting you well. She loves you a lot, but how could she possibly resist Situ Xie?"

However, Che Yun did not continue about Situ Xiang as expected by Nangong Lin, but asked about Nangong Qian, "How is my sister's health now?"

Nangong Lin sighed deeply, "Not too good. After Su Liang treated her, some things happened and she got scared."

"What happened?" Che Yun furrowed his brows.

Nangong Lin then told Che Yun about Nangong Qian's affection for Gu Ling and what he had done to help the siblings.

Che Yun frowned at Nangong Lin, "You actually did that to them? And I thought you really cared about Gu Ling."

Nangong Lin shook his head, "It was impulsive. Just happened that you both had feelings for them. As your master, I feel sorry for Qianqian, and also for you."

"What does master plan to do now? To leave with you, change our names and live in anonymity?" Che Yun said coldly.

Nangong Lin looked at Che Yun, his eyes deep, "Would you like to?"

Che Yun was silent for a moment, then shook his head, "I don't want to. I still have things to do."

"To save the real Che Yun from Situ Xie's hands?" Nangong Lin suddenly sneered, "Jingjing, is this your real intention? Or perhaps, you want to reclaim what should have belonged to you, hence you've been pretending to be reluctant, pretending to care about the people of the Che family, pretending to care about the people of the Lin family, and allowing Situ Xie to think that you're kind-hearted and easy to control? He thinks you are a pawn, but in fact, you're playing along, aren't you using Situ Xie?"