

Three-Time 36

Chapter 36

[Liang Sister] “Liang Sister, let’s sleep together.” “Liang Sister, with such a serious injury, can you bear to see me lying on the cold ground?” “Liang Sister...” Su Liang sat up, looking impatient, “Shut up!” Instead of being annoyed by the words, Yan Shiba’s eyes sparkled with even more interest. “Liang Sister, your name is so beautiful. What’s wrong with calling it? Liang Sister, Little Liang’er, Liang Beauty...” With a blank expression, Su Liang got out of bed, found a piece of cloth, pinched Yan Shiba’s chin, stuffed it into her mouth, turned around, and lay down, all in one breath. Yan Shiba still wasn’t angry. If she could make a sound, it would be a hearty laugh. There was no bed, but the ground wasn’t cold. Su Liang had put the clean old bedding on for her with the new quilts and mattresses sent by Xing Yusheng. The next morning, Su Liang removed the cloth and the first thing Yan Shiba did was call out, “Liang Sister.” Su Liang threw the cloth on her face and walked out the door. Entering the kitchen, Ning Jing was boiling water. “Why not let her sleep in your room?” Su Liang suggested. Ning Jing replied with silence. “Then, let her sleep in the firewood room!” Su Liang said. Ning Jing nodded, “Very well.” So, after Su Liang fed Yan Shiba breakfast and heard her call “Liang Sister” a few more times, she put down her bowl and carried her horizontally with the bedding. Yan Shiba looked surprised and delighted, “Is Liang Sister going to carry big sister out to bask in the sun?” It was a cloudy day, and Yan Shiba didn’t see the sun. Su Liang put her in the firewood room. The bedding was laid on the wooden planks, and she was placed beside the pile of firewood. “Liang Sister, do you hate big sister so much? If you don’t like something about big sister, I’ll change it...” Yan Shiba pinched her throat and pretended to be heartbroken. Su Liang looked at the fearsome assassin, who was now being coquettish towards her, which was simply terrifying... “You can move too, so go to the toilet by yourself,” Su Liang said. Yan Shiba looked at her somberly, “Since Liang sister knew I could move, but still insisted on carrying me, then she must have wanted to hold me, right?” Su Liang touched her forehead, wondering why this person was so talkative. Was this in line with an assassin’s professional ethics? “I’m going to town. If someone comes, you don’t have to pay attention to them,” Su Liang said. “Is Ning Jing going with you? Then big sister wants to go too,” Yan Shiba said. Su Liang left her with her back, allowing her to understand on her own. This morning, Ning Jing had delivered lunch to Erniu’s house and brought some grain, then let Erniu cook it by himself. Su Dakuan looked a bit better than yesterday. Before they left the house, the family who had called Su Liang last night came to the door, saying the child’s fever had gone down. Ning Jing put on a straw hat and hurried the cart across the bridge. Su Liang sat in the cart, eating the wild fruits brought back by Ning Jing yesterday, asking him where he had picked them. “The mine,” Ning Jing said. Su Liang thought: ... He even picked fruits on the way to kill someone. He really has a taste for leisure. On the way, they met Su Xingzhe walking to town, who stepped aside to let them pass. Ning Jing didn’t show any intention of giving him a ride with the cart as he drove on. Su Xingzhe lowered his head to cover the gloom in his eyes, and when he raised his head again, he had resumed his gentle scholar demeanor. When they arrived at Feiyan Town, Ning Jing drove the carriage straight to the pharmacy. Working as a doctor in the village, Su Liang needed a medicine box and some basic medicinal materials, which they came to purchase today. They bought quite a few things, but there was no medicine box in the pharmacy. The manager said that it needed to be made by a carpenter. They had lunch at Feiyan Restaurant. As soon as Su Liang entered, the manager greeted her enthusiastically, disappointed to find out that she wasn’t there to sell vegetable recipes. The two

medicinal diet recipes she had provided had brought a lot of business to the restaurant. While eating, Su Liang heard someone say that Magistrate Huang was leaving office and being transferred on the first day of the month, and a new magistrate would be taking office in the next few days. Also, on the day when Magistrate Huang was transferred, a gang of robbers had entered the Yuanwai Family's home in Feiyan Town and stolen quite a few items. "Serves him right! Who made Yuanwai Huang do so many evil things these years by relying on the magistrate's power?" Su Liang listened and saw a familiar face entering the restaurant. It was Hu Er. "Mr. Ning, Mrs. Ning!" Hu Er saw them and quickly approached, bowing his hands in salute. The other guests in the restaurant were surprised, not knowing the identity of Ning Jing and Su Liang, which made Hu Er, the local bully, so respectful. "We're just here for a meal, and we'll be going back soon," Su Liang said with a smile. "Please let me treat you!" Hu Er hastily said and motioned for the waiter to add dishes. "No need," Su Liang shook her head. Hu Er chuckled and said to the waiter who ran over, "Tell your manager, these two are my friends, from now on whenever they eat at Feiyan Restaurant, put it on my tab!" The waiter was quite surprised and quickly agreed before looking for the manager. Hu Er then invited Su Liang and Ning Jing to his house as guests, but Su Liang declined, saying she had things to do today. ... At this moment, the sick Yan Shiba, who had been left alone at home, was drinking cold white porridge and peering through the crack in the firewood room door, squinting at the lush greenery of the pines outside and muttering, "Sooner or later, I'll slaughter Ning Jing and kidnap that girl!" ... Bei'an County. In the County School, the candidates who were about to take the Court Examination sat with serious expressions, listening to the precautions. There were two distinct groups, which could be seen from their clothing and appearance. On one side, they wore the uniform of the County School, blue shirts and white linings, and blue square hats. On the other side, they wore coarse clothes, some even patched. The former were all attending the County School with the Masters, who could afford the expensive fees. The latter couldn't afford the fees, so they had to study at home and only set foot in the County School at this time. Su Xingzhe was one of the latter. He had studied at the town school and only attended the County School for half a year, as he could no longer afford the tuition and had returned home. The main examiner was an elderly scholar with gray hair. After he finished speaking, he let everyone disperse. As Su Xingzhe was about to leave, he heard someone call his name. It was the old master who had been sitting next to the main examiner. The others' gazes at Su Xingzhe suddenly changed. Feeling apprehensive, Su Xingzhe followed the old master in the direction where the main examiner had left. "What's his background?" "He's from Su Family Village, such a poor wretch!" "Why does the chief examiner want to see him?" "Who knows!" Other students discussed and lingered nearby, waiting to see when Su Xingzhe would come out. ... Su Xingzhe entered and bowed humbly, only to hear the chief examiner ask, "Do you live in Su Family Village?" "Yes, I live in Su Family Village." Su Xingzhe thought of the essays that all the examinees had submitted half a month ago. Could it be that his essay had caught the chief examiner's eye? With this thought, he couldn't help but feel excited. But the chief examiner's tone changed, "In Su Family Village, there's someone named Ning Jing. Do you recognize him?" Su Xingzhe paused and saw the chief examiner's displeased look. He hurriedly lowered his head and said, "Yes, I know Young Master Ning Jing." "Do you know his background?" asked the chief examiner. Su Xingzhe shook his head, "There are some rumors, but they're unconfirmed, so I don't dare to speak recklessly." "What rumors?" the chief examiner asked. "Some people say he's a disgraced young master from a noble family, hiding out in the village." Su Xingzhe's voice lowered a bit. "Haha," the chief examiner suddenly laughed twice, "The first half is not wrong, but the second half is pure nonsense. Since you two live in the same village, do you know he's also taking the Court Examination?" Su Xingzhe shook his head, "I

didn't know about this." "He's not registered in Bei'an County, but has been recommended by Crown Prince Bei Jingwang to take the exam here. Today, the people at the County School were careless and forgot to inform Young Master Ning about something he needs to pay attention to. You should go and tell him when you return." The chief examiner said. As soon as Su Xingzhe heard the words "Crown Prince Bei Jingwang," his heart pounded. He remembered that a few days ago, a carriage had been going to Ning Jing's house. He could tell at a glance that the carriage was extraordinary, but he had never seen the people in the carriage. Could it be the Prince's Mansion's crown prince? Seeing Su Xingzhe in a daze, the chief examiner's face became unhappy, "Su Xingzhe, did you not hear what I said, or are you unwilling to comply?" Su Xingzhe looked scared, "I will definitely pass on the message!" "And this." The chief examiner took out something wrapped in cloth, "Give this to Young Master Ning. Don't say anything more and don't open it to look." Su Xingzhe hurriedly took it and put it in his book box. ... When Su Xingzhe, lost in thought, walked out of the County School, someone pulled him into a nearby alley. A group of students wearing County School uniforms surrounded him, led by the richest young master from the Wang Family. "What did the chief examiner want with you? Tell us everything, or else..." the young master of the Wang Family sneered. Someone tried to grab Su Xingzhe's book box, but he quickly protected it. However, being outnumbered, he was quickly knocked to the ground, and the book box fell into the hands of the young master of the Wang Family. "All these broken books, such a poor scholar!" The young master of the Wang Family let go of the book box, and it fell to the ground, scattering its contents. Su Xingzhe told them about Crown Prince Bei Jingwang recommending Ning Jing to take the exam in Bei'an County, but insisted that the chief examiner didn't give him anything. The cloth-wrapped item had been tied to his leg when he had the chance to go to the toilet. "I didn't expect our small place to have a noble." The students were only surprised and didn't have much reaction after hearing about it. After all, Ning Jing, as a special examinee, wouldn't take away their opportunities. After everyone left, Su Xingzhe got up from the ground, picked up his books, and walked slowly out of the alley. He hired a carriage to take him to Feiyan Town, entered a tea house, and spent the remaining money on his body to rent a private room. ... Su Liang and Ning Jing returned home in the afternoon, and a carriage was parked outside the door. It was the housekeeper from Qiuming Manor. He said that Madam Xing had ordered them to sort out the remaining good ingredients in the manor and send them over, a whole cartload of dry goods that could be stored. Su Liang accepted them. As soon as she entered the door, she heard Yan Shiba calling "Liang Mei Mei" non-stop. After the people from Qiuming Manor left, Su Liang opened the firewood room. Yan Shiba said she was starving to death and wanted to eat meat. She wanted Liang Mei Mei to hold her and let her get some fresh air. Su Liang gagged her mouth again, and the whole world seemed to quiet down. Madam Bai made Su Liang a pair of shoes and sent them for her to try on. The shoes fit perfectly. Su Liang thanked Madam Bai, who had already received the money. She gave her a piece of the meat they had cut that day. Madam Bai at first refused but took it after Su Liang said that Ning Jing's friend had sent them too much, and they couldn't eat it all before it went bad. She then had Bai Xiaohu deliver some wild vegetables. Bai Xiaohu was about to leave with the snacks Su Liang had given him when he heard Ning Jing call him. "Brother Ning, what's the matter?" Bai Xiaohu asked. "Who in the village knows how to do woodworking?" Ning Jing asked. Bai Xiaohu thought for a moment and said, "The best craftsman in our village is Erniu's grandfather! But he's sick now, and he's sold all of his tools, so he can't do it anymore! The next best is Su Erhui's father!" ... Su Liang made lean meat porridge and Ning Jing sent two bowls to Erniu's house. Su Dakuan was grateful and didn't know what to say. When he heard Ning Jing wanted to learn woodworking from him, he agreed repeatedly. For dinner, Su Liang

put the food next to Yan Shiba and walked away, ignoring her feeding requests. At night, Su Liang put down her book, ready to go to bed, and heard a knock on the door. As soon as she heard the door opening, Yan Shiba in the firewood room began to call her, "Liang Mei Mei, I'm thirsty." Su Liang asked Ning Jing to see who was coming, and she went to get Yan Shiba some water. When she opened the door, Su Xingzhe, with a bruised face and disheveled appearance, was standing outside. With an indifferent expression, Ning Jing asked, "What's the matter?" Su Xingzhe relayed what the chief examiner had said today and presented the cloth parcel, "This is what the chief examiner told me to bring back to you. I was watched and beaten, and I couldn't find a carriage, so I came back late." Ning Jing didn't take it, but said two words instead, "Wait a moment." Then, he turned around and went back inside. After a while, Su Xingzhe saw Ning Jing coming out with a burning stick of firewood. In his daze, the cloth parcel was ignited. Su Xingzhe quickly let go and stepped back. In the blink of an eye, the cloth parcel turned into a ball of fire. "You... do you know what was inside?" Su Xingzhe's face looked bad. Without a word, Ning Jing closed the door. Recalling how he had frantically flipped through the scrolls inside the cloth parcel in the tea house during the day, and how he had deliberately injured himself to justify his late return, Su Xingzhe realized that what he had cared about was worthless in Ning Jing's eyes... It wasn't the exam papers for this Court Examination, but the mock test papers issued by the chief examiner. It wasn't considered cheating, but obtaining it would be of great help. The excitement of an unexpected gain was shattered by the closed door and the cold wind blowing in his face. All that was left for Su Xingzhe was deep inferiority and embarrassment. As he turned to leave, he clenched his fist and told himself that he must make a name for himself... Su Liang saw Ning Jing returning and asked him what happened. After Ning Jing briefly explained, Su Liang pondered, "Did he sneak a look at what was inside?" "Shortcuts don't necessarily lead to success." Ning Jing walked back into the room. From the firewood room, Yan Shiba's exaggerated voice came, "Liang Mei Mei, Sister is cold. I want to sleep with you." Su Liang closed the door to her room, thinking that she would let Yan Shiba leave as soon as she recovered. Having such a noisy person for protection was more than she could bear...