

Three-Time 37

Chapter 37

[Sworn Siblings] At first, when Lei Zheng notified every household to seek medical treatment from Su Liang, everyone was skeptical about her medical skills. But after she successively treated the elderly and children, word of mouth spread, and the villagers who greeted her on the street increased. It helped that Original Master's grandfather, Su Yuanzhou, was a famous doctor in the capital city. Su Liang's medical skills did not arouse suspicion. Erniu was asked by several people whether Su Liang charged money for treating his grandfather. Erniu told the truth, she didn't charge, but there was an IOU, which had to be repaid later. Some people muttered behind their backs, "Su Liang and Ning Jing are so rich, but they even charge money for treating these poor people. It's really unkind." Bai Dame came to find Su Liang, "Your money didn't come from the wind either. Why should you provide free treatment? They should know where they stand. They are all lazy and taking advantage. Don't take it to heart! If they really dare to default, just go to Lei Zheng!" Su Bai was fair and warm-hearted and had some prestige in the village. Su Liang insisted on charging consultation fees, knowing this situation would happen, and didn't care about it. Bai Dame mentioned Bai He's marriage again, with a hard-to-conceal joy. This time the girl was an niece from her mother's side. She was beautiful and curvaceous, and she looked like someone who could bear sons. This time, they wouldn't let Bai He have his way. Su Liang just smiled and said a few kind words, not knowing how Liu Huilan was doing after returning to her parents' house. Presumably, she would be married off soon. These days, Su Liang added a sedative ingredient to the medicine she boiled for Yan Shiba. After drinking it, she felt extremely sleepy and deeply suspected that Su Liang deliberately drugged her to avoid being called "Sister Liang." However, Su Liang justified saying that resting more is vital for recovery and asked her not to be suspicious. Ning Jing went to deliver food to Erniu's house every day. Sometimes, he stayed there for half a day. Su Liang thought he went out for a stroll, so she busied herself with her own affairs. On the 7th of August, Ning Jing once again returned from Erniu's house with a medicine box. It was made from a Huanghua pear five-drawer cabinet that was dismantled from Qiuming Manor. Su Liang didn't even know when Ning Jing had moved the cabinet away. The medicine box was not big, with a plain and generous appearance. The handle was smooth, and it was equipped with a strap, which could be carried or carried on the back. Inside, it was divided into three different-sized spaces, delicate and practical. Su Liang tried it and found it lighter than she had imagined. "Thank you. Today, I'll let you order the dishes," Su Liang said with a smile. "Sister Liang, I want to order too! Whatever he sends you, I'll send ten!" Yan Shiba, who was awake, immediately tried to make her presence felt. "Alright, today you can both order whatever you want." Su Liang was in a good mood, even towards Yan Shiba, she became gentle. As a result, Ning Jing said, "I don't want to eat what she wants." Yan Shiba got angry, "I won't eat what he wants either, and Sister Liang, you're not allowed to cook it!" Su Liang took the medicine box back to her room, "Don't order anymore, eat it or not." "I love whatever Sister Liang cooks, unlike someone, always picky." Yan Shiba gloated. Ning Jing didn't bother with her. Yan Shiba, who had been eating with Su Liang and Ning Jing since yesterday, clung to Su Liang all the time, giving Ning Jing a bad face. She was a head taller than Su Liang, and her round face and apricot eyes made her look completely unrelated to being an assassin. "The exam will be held the day after tomorrow. Do we need to stay in the county town beforehand?" Su Liang asked. "What exam?" Yan Shiba looked puzzled. When Yan Shiba learned that Ning Jing was going to participate in the imperial examination, she sneered, "I always knew he had great

ambitions. When he passes the examination and becomes an official, he'll definitely marry a lady from a wealthy family and kick you aside! You should come with me today!" "I'll go by myself tomorrow." Ning Jing answered Su Liang's question. "I'd like to see it, too." Su Liang was slightly curious, as Qian Country's imperial examination system was similar but not identical to the historical imperial examination she knew. "Let's go together then." Yan Shiba followed up. "You stay at home." Su Liang said. Yan Shiba's eyes flickered, and she agreed, not knowing what had come to her mind. Su Xingzhe didn't spread the news that Ning Jing would also participate in the imperial examination, and even his family didn't know. When he came back injured that day, he just said he had a fall on the way. The next day in the afternoon, Ning Jing rushed to take Su Liang away from Su Family Village and headed for the county town. Su Xingzhe had left early in the morning, and many people saw him off at the village entrance. Niu Dame cried so much that her nose and tears mixed together. If you didn't know, you would think her son was never coming back. On the way, Su Liang suggested that she drive the car, and Ning Jing exchanged seats with her. "You can read for a while." Su Liang said. However, Ning Jing took out the wooden hairpin he had bought from the clothing store previously and carefully carved it. When they arrived in the county town, both inns were fully booked. Su Liang simply drove the cart in a big circle, saw a rental flag hanging, and directly asked if they would rent or sell. After some haggling, she spent 300 taels to buy a small mansion not far from the County School. The mansion was very clean, with a well, a millstone, and an old pomegranate tree with twisted branches. Near Mid-Autumn Festival, the bright red pomegranates weighed down the branches. Su Liang asked Ning Jing to clean up while she went out to buy two sets of beddings, cookware, and some ingredients. As the sky darkened, the smoke from the kitchen in the small courtyard wafted, and the smell of meat attracted curious neighbors. "I'll wash the dishes, you go read a book." Su Liang suddenly felt like a worried mother preparing her child for the high school exam. Seeing Su Liang suddenly smiling, Ning Jing asked, "Why are you laughing?" Su Liang curved her eyebrows and eyes, "For a moment, I felt like you were my son." Ning Jing expressionlessly got up and returned to his room. Su Liang cleaned up the dishes and found a delicate wooden hairpin at the place where Ning Jing had just sat. The wood material was very ordinary, but the carved pear blossom on the hairpin was lifelike. Su Liang knocked on the door, "You forgot your hairpin." "It's for you." Ning Jing's cold voice came out. Su Liang was stunned. What did she mean? "I bought it when I bought shoes. I wanted to practice carving." Ning Jing explained. Su Liang praised, "Your carving skills are pretty good, thank you." The two lived together, and this wasn't a big deal. Before, Ning Jing said he was interested in woodworking and learned it. The wooden hairpin was bought for practicing carving because he was interested. In short, Ning Jing had always been interested in all the things he had never done before, but he had no interest in women. Early the next day, Su Liang made breakfast for Ning Jing and cooked a few meat buns for him to eat for lunch. The exam lasted one day, and there was a break at noon, but no food was provided. It was to avoid someone tampering with the food, so everyone had to bring their own. "If you end up as the top scorer, I'll cook ribs for you." Su Liang stood at the door and handed a basket loaded with dried food and stationery to Ning Jing. Ning Jing's favorite dish was the braised ribs with green beans that Su Liang had made once before. As he was about to turn around and leave, he heard Su Liang sigh, "I really feel like I'm sending my son off to take the exam." Ning Jing's beautiful eyebrows slightly furrowed, looking at Su Liang again, he saw her black hair adorned with pear blossoms, making her unpowdered clear face look lovely. When she smiled, the foggy morning seemed to brighten up a few degrees. Before he could say anything, Su Liang went to pick pomegranates, saying she wanted to take them back to the village. Ning Jing silently carried the basket and walked into the hazy morning fog. Before entering the examination

room, Ning Jing ran into Su Xingzhe, who wore a brand-new outfit and greeted Ning Jing across the crowd. Su Liang picked a basket of pomegranates, fed the horses, cleaned up the courtyard, and then left. Many people were waiting outside the County School, looking either anxious or expectant. Su Liang went to a pharmacy in the county town to buy some medicinal materials. She passed by a clothing store while shopping, bought two sets of clothes and two pairs of shoes for Yan Shiba, and two sets of men's clothing for herself. At the entrance of the blacksmith shop, she entered out of curiosity and bought two daggers, one knife, and two long swords. Both daggers were for self-defense, one hidden in her sleeve and the other on her calf. She intended to give one long sword to Ning Jing and keep one for herself, as she wanted to learn swordsmanship. The knife was for Yan Shiba; she had left her original weapons behind in order to get rid of the pursuers. After delivering the items home, Su Liang went to a restaurant for dinner, where she overheard people discussing the current Court Examination and the talented scholars of Bei'an County. "Have you heard? The examiner's sample test paper was stolen by someone yesterday!" "Isn't that thief guaranteed to be a scholar then?" "Haha, if he gets caught, he's dead!" ... Su Liang suddenly remembered the item the examiner had Su Xingzhe give to Ning Jing, which Ning Jing burned without even looking at it. She had a strange feeling that these two events might be connected. Feeling someone watching her, Su Liang turned her head and saw a young nobleman with a handsome face and elegant manner, raising his cup and smiling at her. Su Liang nodded slightly and left shortly after paying the bill. Not long after, the young nobleman also left the restaurant and headed towards the county government office. "Master, do you know that young lady?" The attendant asked. The man shook his head, "I just think she's very special." "If the person who stole the sample test paper can't be found and this becomes known to our superiors, I'm afraid Master will be punished for negligence." The attendant frowned. The man's expression was calm, "I have a plan in mind." ... When Ning Jing came out of the examination room, he met Su Xingzhe again. He looked relaxed and seemed to have performed well. They would have to wait five days for the results, and Ning Jing and Su Liang left the county town that day after staying in the house they bought for just one night. "How did you do?" Su Liang asked. "I'm not sure." Ning Jing replied. Su Liang: ...Fine. We'll see when the results come out. ... By the time they returned to the village, it was already pitch dark. They ran into Lei Zheng, Su Bai, who waved to Ning Jing to stop the carriage. "Ning Gongzi, Liang girl, everyone knows about your situation now." Su Bai sighed. Su Liang was confused. Their situation? She heard Su Bai say earnestly, "You two are not a real married couple. You didn't even have the marriage ceremony. Now Su Daqiang's family is gone, and Ning Gongzi doesn't plan to take you back with him. You should part ways. Afterwards, you can each marry someone else, so no one can gossip." "Uncle Bai, about this..." Su Liang guessed what had happened. Su Bai sighed deeply, "It was your sister who told us. Ning Gongzi has a promising future, and if he can't give Liang girl a proper status, then let her be. She's not like you, if her reputation is ruined, how will she marry in the future?" As expected, Yan Shiba stirred up trouble while Su Liang and Ning Jing were away, revealing their fake marriage and saying they hadn't even held the wedding ceremony, let alone consummated their union. It was just an excuse for Su Liang to get out of the Su Daqiang's family. Since there was no blessing from their parents, they couldn't even be considered living together in secret. Ning Jing glanced at Su Liang and said calmly, "It's my negligence. We are not husband and wife, we are sworn brother and sister. I will trouble Uncle Bai to help clarify the misunderstanding."