

Three-Time 451

Chapter 451: 451. You are him, aren't you?

Lian Mansion.

After Ying Ying returned from Su Mansion, she kept walking around the lake in the garden, never stopping, not talking, and not looking back.

Lian Shun silently followed behind her, ready to hold her hand and embrace her if she wanted to stop.

By this moment, Lian Shun still knew very little about Ying Ying's background, let alone the matter of transmigration. But whenever he thought of her questioning Yue Mei in the dungeon about her cruelty towards them, he felt heartbroken. This was because he knew what kind of life she had led since childhood, something that she only revealed to him after his persistent questioning.

Like Su Liang, Lian Shun had also thought before today that Yue Mei was not the real grandmother of Ying Ying and Ying Ye. In fact, he suspected that she could be their enemy, otherwise, she wouldn't treat them so badly.

When he learned today that Yue Mei was indeed their real grandmother, even Lian Shun, who had been traveling and seeing various kinds of people over the years, was still shocked. While he was merely a listener and observer in others' lives, Ying Ying was his wife.

They walked from broad daylight until dusk. Lian Shan and Lian's mother came to see them, as did Lian's father. But they kept their distance, only watching for a while before leaving.

Now, Lian's mother and Lian Shan came over again and saw that nothing had changed. Lian Shan frowned, "Mother, why don't we just tell my brother and sister-in-law to go back? It's so cold out here, and they can talk about whatever they need to."

Lian Shan mistakenly thought that Lian Shun had upset Ying Ying and that Ying Ying regretted marrying him, so she was very worried.

Lian's mother also looked a bit uneasy, but she didn't think there was a problem between Lian Shun and Ying Ying's relationship. If that were the case, Ying Ying wouldn't have come back here.

"Forget it, they're adults and know what to do. Leave them be." Lian's mother pulled Lian Shan and went back.

"What if sister-in-law gets so angry that she doesn't want to be with my brother anymore?" Lian Shan sighed.

Lian's mother shook her head, "That won't happen. Perhaps Little Ying has encountered something heartbreaking."

Lian Shan didn't understand, since she had a happy and complete family, with loving parents and siblings. She only knew that Ying Ying had a grandmother and a younger brother, and Lian Shun had even mentioned that the grandmother was not their real one.

It wasn't until the moon hung high in the sky that Ying Ying finally stopped. She heard Lian Shun call her from behind. Whenever she encountered something she couldn't understand, such as why her grandmother always beat and scolded her, or when she was sad and upset, she would always vent her anger through violent actions, as if doing so would let the pain be blown away by the wind. But in reality, most of her pain was still buried deep in her heart, hidden from view. As she grew older and became less vulnerable, she could use her reason to suppress everything.

However, today, with the mystery of her parents and the so-called grandmother's harm all revealed, her heart was once again corroded by the long-suppressed pain. Even if she had killed Yue Mei herself, it would still be difficult to quell the hatred in her heart.

Seeing Lian Shun's outstretched hands and his worried and concerned eyes, Ying Ying suddenly felt weak all over her body and fainted in his arms.

Lian Shun's expression tightened, "Ying Ying! Ying Ying!"

Seeing that she didn't respond, Lian Shun carried her and ran out, with only one thought in his head – to find Su Liang!

Father Lin and Mother Lin, Yuan Pei, and Lian Shan, who had just started eating dinner, learned from the servant that Lian Shun had carried Ying Ying out of the mansion. They all looked alarmed.

"I'll go and check." Yuan Pei put down his chopsticks and stood up.

However, he was stopped by Lian's father, "It's probably just that Little Ying's feeling unwell, so Shun took her to see Su Liang. Send someone to ask about it, and you don't need to go."

Since the previous incident, no one from the Lin family would go out at night easily, let alone go out alone.

When Lian Shun carried Ying Ying into the Yuanming Pavilion, the people of Su Mansion were also having their dinner.

Seeing this, Su Liang quickly got up and let Lian Shun place Ying Ying on the couch.

Yuan Ye threw down his chopsticks and rushed over, "Sister! What's wrong with sister? Is sister going to die?"

Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu hurriedly pulled Yuan Ye back, "No, Uncle Xiaoye, don't talk nonsense!"

Seeing Lian Shun's red eyes, whether it was from the cold wind or anxiety, Gu Ling hugged his shoulder and gently patted it.

Su Liang took Ying Ying's pulse and found that she was very cold. She hurriedly took the children's blanket and covered her.

Seeing Su Liang took a longer time to check her pulse, Lian Shun was extremely anxious, "What's going on? How could she suddenly faint when she was perfectly fine?" Although Lian Shun knew that it might be because Ying Ying was overwhelmed with grief and anger today, he was still afraid that there might be other issues. After all, Ying Ying's body was indeed very good, her martial arts were even higher than Lian Shun's. Even when they first met and he saw the heavily injured Ying Ying, he didn't feel as uneasy as he did now.

Su Liang stepped aside and let Weng Ming take Ying Ying's pulse.

Lian Shun's face turned even paler! Was Su Liang unable to determine what illness Ying Ying had? Or was it too serious for her to tell?

Yuan Ye cried anxiously, "Sister! Why does sister keep her eyes closed? Is she dead?" The child's mind couldn't comprehend death, which was the most terrifying thing. Growing up, Yuan Ye had been forced to see many dead people, which became his nightmare.

After Weng Ming took her pulse, he nodded at Su Liang, "It should be happening."

Having not heard the last two words clearly, Lian Shun asked urgently, "What's going on?"

"You're going to be a father." Gu Ling said beside him.

This time Lian Shun heard it clearly, but it felt like a dream. His first thought was: How could this be possible? They just got married yesterday! But then he remembered the scene when they first got married in Jiaye City... That night, it actually happened...

Lian Shun was surprised, delighted and afraid. He rushed over to kneel on the ground, holding Ying Ying's hands. He immediately turned to ask Su Liang, "Why did she faint then?"

Su Liang sighed softly, "She was too stressed today and hasn't rested enough."

Lian Shun slapped himself in the face, "It's all my fault!" Both he and Ying Ying were careless in nature; they never considered the possibility of getting pregnant the first time. In fact, Lian Shun's mother had subtly reminded them, but since it had only been about a month since their wedding in Jiaye City and Ying Ying showed no reaction, they thought she hadn't gotten pregnant. As for today, Lian's mother saw Ying Ying behaving unusually and thought it was due to some sad event, letting her vent her emotions without considering that her daughter-in-law might be pregnant.

One could only say that the timing was a coincidence. On the day Ying Ying finally understood her origins and where she came from, her child officially announced its arrival.

Qiuyue brought hot water, and Su Liang asked Lian Shun to wipe Ying Ying's face and hands. Lian Shun carefully massaged her arm, "Is everything really okay? I was so careless! After our wedding in Jiaye City, we immediately rushed back to the capital; she never got a chance to rest properly!"

Su Liang took her pulse again, which was now steadier, "It's fine, don't be too nervous. Let Ying Ying drink some hot soup when she wakes up. No need for medicine, it's not good for her."

"I'll listen to you!" Lian Shun immediately nodded.

When Yuan Ye learned that his favorite sister was pregnant, he was overjoyed, "I'm going to be an uncle!"

The tense atmosphere was over, and everyone happily continued eating.

The guards from Lian Mansion who arrived later asked if the young lady was okay, and upon being told that Ying Ying was pregnant and not in any danger, they happily went back to report the good news.

When Ying Ying woke up, she saw many familiar faces and the children's radiant smiles around her.

"Master! Aunt Ying is awake!" Ji Xiaoshu shouted.

Su Liang quickly came down from upstairs, took Ying Ying's pulse again, and said that she was fine. She just had to pay more attention to keeping warm and avoid strenuous exercise for the next three months.

Lian Shun helped Ying Ying sit up and leaned her against his chest.

Ying Ying was still somewhat confused, "What's wrong with me? Poisoned?"

Zhengzheng smiled brightly, "Aunt Ying is having a baby!"

Ying Ying looked at Lian Shun incredulously, only to see him with red eyes and smiling, "We're going to have a baby."

"Ah? Oh... When? Oh, I see." Ying Ying finally realized what was happening and added, "Is it that easy?"

Lian Shun cleared his throat, "Su Xiaoliang said it's because we're destined for each other." In front of the child, he could only put it in a more subtle way. Actually, Su Liang said that their bodies were particularly compatible...

Weng Ran brought a bowl of steaming soup, Lian Shun wanted to feed Ying Ying, but she felt uncomfortable and took it to drink by herself, without using a spoon.

After drinking the hot soup, she felt much better and wanted to get up.

Lian Shun was very nervous, "I'll carry you, where are you going?"

"I have legs. It's not like I'm disabled just because I'm pregnant." Ying Ying retorted.

Hearing Ying Ying mention poisoning and disabilities, Lian Shun hurriedly spat out three times and said she shouldn't speak any more inauspicious words.

Ying Ying, touched by the news that she was going to be a mother, paused for a moment and caressed her flat abdomen, not feeling anything. However, upon hearing Lian Shun's words, her eyes softened in an instant, "Fine, I'll be more cautious about what I say."

Lian Shun, who had always insisted that Su Liang couldn't steal his wife, now directly suggested that Ying Ying stay in Su Mansion, and he would stay here as well.

However, soon enough, the Lin family members, upon hearing the good news, all came over, intending to take Ying Ying home.

Listening to Su Liang's assurance that Ying Ying was fine, Lin's mother was ecstatic, but she disagreed with both Lian Shun and Ying Ying living in Su Mansion, saying that Su Liang was already very busy and they couldn't add any more trouble to her life. She'd had two children herself, so she surely had experience! She told Lian Shun to shut up and hurry to carry Ying Ying home.

Lian Shun thought about it and agreed, as Su Liang and Gu Ling had important things to do next, and they couldn't help them anyway. He just needed Su Liang to assure him that Ying Ying was fine.

After the Lin family left, the Yuanming Pavilion gradually quieted down and the children went to sleep.

Su Liang and Gu Ling put their daughter to sleep, then sat by the window chatting.

“Great God, when you first found out I was pregnant, you were even more clueless than Lian Ershan.” Su Liang laughed softly.

Gu Ling gently stroked Su Liang’s long hair, “Well, clueless it is.”

Su Liang nodded, “Very cute.”

After a while, Ying Ye and the children in the next room also quieted down, and Gu Ling left Yuanming Pavilion for the dungeon.

By the time Gu Ling brought Sheng Yue back, there were lanterns hanging from the pavilion on the other side of the lake, with Su Liang sitting inside.

As Sheng Yue walked into the pavilion, the chains tied to his feet made a crisp crashing sound. He greeted Su Liang, “We meet again.”

Su Liang cut to the chase, “Since you said that even if Mo Yan knew I was his granddaughter, nothing would change, then why did you deliberately conceal Mo Yan’s identity from me and He Wei back then outside Xuanbei City?”

Sheng Yue’s expression remained calm, “Things would have been simpler if he didn’t know. By that time, he had already done many things that were detrimental to you. You knew what kind of person he was and there was no possibility of reconciliation. You wanted him to know because once he knew, things might develop in a direction that was in your favor, such as him voluntarily appearing to recognize you. But that wouldn’t have been a good thing for me.”

“So your original plan was to help Mo Yan capture Gu Ling and let him sink into the abyss to explore the path?” Su Liang asked coldly.

Sheng Yue did not deny it, “Yes. Maybe you think I’m inhumane, but this is a world where the strong prey on the weak. Whether I’m there or not, Mo Yan will do what he wants to do. You could say I’m helping him, but at the same time, I’m also using him.”

“Aren’t you afraid that we’d reveal your identity to Mo Yan, putting yourself in danger?” Su Liang asked.

Sheng Yue shook his head, “If that were the case, you wouldn’t have let my father go and have him send me a message. I believe that even without me, you could defeat Mo Yan, but please also trust me, it will not be easy. His foundation on Xingluo Island is not something that could be destroyed just by throwing some explosives. You care about many things while he only cares about Xingluo Island. You have pushed Mo Yan to the point where he must show his cards, and perhaps you’ll have to pay the price for it. It’s not something you’d want to see.”

Sheng Yue was referring to the lives of innocent people. And that was indeed Gu Ling and Su Liang’s concern.

“What is your exact plan?” Su Liang asked.

“Bring Gu Ling back to Xingluo Island, gain Mo Yan’s trust, and then kill him after entering the forbidden area.” Sheng Yue said expressionlessly, “As for that magic

treasure, if it could be owned by others, I won't compete for it. If Mo Yan disappears after entering the deep pool, I will follow him to fulfill my long-held wish. If I fail, death is no big deal."

After hearing this, Su Liang shook her head, "Impossible. I won't let Gu Ling be under your control."

"I know what you're worried about, but this is the simplest and most effective method." Sheng Yue said, staring deeply into Su Liang's eyes, "There is something I originally didn't want to say, but now it seems I should let you know my sincerity in cooperating."

"So your previous words meant that you had no sincerity." Su Liang snorted coldly.

Sheng Yue slightly shook his head, "Compared to you who don't want to share anything, I think my sincerity is not small."

"What do you want to say?" Su Liang asked.

Sheng Yue's gaze shifted from her face to Gu Ling's face, and he spoke softly, "I guess, Gu Ling is not the Transmigrator, it's you, Su Liang. Or perhaps, both of you are."

Upon hearing this, Su Liang and Gu Ling didn't show any surprise, they just exchanged glances. In fact, when they decided to mislead the enemy, they had thought that if the enemy was smart enough, they would notice a problem: Su Liang was the one who had undergone a world-shaking transformation in the eyes of the public and had even died once, which was more fitting for a Transmigrator's identity.

Gu Ling had always been mysterious since childhood, and people didn't understand him. Later, when they found out how powerful he was, most people just thought that he had once been very low-key and good at hiding his real strength. Gu Ling's Martial Arts was not mysterious in the eyes of those in the know; he had had a master since he was a child.

Sheng Yue was one of those who noticed this problem. The reason Mo Yan had been misled when Gu Ling and Su Liang intentionally deceived He Wei might not be that Mo Yan was not smart enough, but because they had guided him to focus his attention on Gu Ling who fulfilled all the conditions of a Transmigrator, making it subconscious for him to ignore Su Liang.

Since Sheng Yue was an onlooker, he had been paying attention to Su Liang from the very beginning. Besides, he remembered things when his mother died, so his understanding of Transmigrators was far beyond ordinary people. Although Gu Ling was low-key and hid his strength, if Su Liang also hid her strength like Gu Ling, she would not have just tried to save herself when Su Yuanzhou's family faced massacre since all the events later showed that she was a righteous and kind person. In Sheng Yue's view, the only reason was that Su Liang was the Transmigrator who came to this world after the fall of the Su family. Plus, Sheng Yue had investigated that Su Liang had been bullied by Su Daqiang's family after she returned home, so he had speculated about Su Liang's approximate time of transmigration.

Otherwise, why would Gu Ling, a perfect and powerful person, fall for Su Liang and be devoted to her? Moreover, Sheng Yue had long noticed that even though Gu Ling was the strongest in the

family, Su Liang was always the backbone. She spoke tonight while Gu Ling remained silent. Sheng Yue knew that Gu Ling didn't like talking to strangers, but at the same time, this meant that Su Liang could make all the decisions.

Now that Sheng Yue had brought up the subject, Su Liang was not surprised. She and Gu Ling had expected that someone would find out this problem, and Sheng Yue was considered the most intelligent among their enemies. However, Su Liang and Gu Ling would never bring up this topic to ask Sheng Yue, as that would be self-exposure.

The atmosphere remained silent. Su Liang knew denial was useless, but Sheng Yue had two guesses: either she was a Transmigrator and Gu Ling wasn't, or both of them were. Su Liang was thinking about how to answer Sheng Yue.

"I am, and he is not. Everything a Transmigrator knows, I taught him." Su Liang said. Since her identity had been exposed, it was better to keep Gu Ling out of it.

Sheng Yue nodded slightly, "That's what I thought too." If Su Liang had said that both of them were Transmigrators, Sheng Yue would still have doubted Gu Ling's identity as a Transmigrator, even though he seemed to have a gift of foresight.

With the matter now clear, Sheng Yue returned to the previous topic, "In that case, you should believe me that I won't harm Gu Ling when I take him to Xingluo Island and enter the forbidden area."

Su Liang shook her head, "We understand your intention, but we need more time to discuss. We will give you our answer tomorrow."

After sending Sheng Yue back to the dungeon, Gu Ling returned to Yuanming Pavilion where Su Liang was already sitting on the bed.

"Great God, I think we should let him take me to Xingluo Island. After all, Mo Yan may not know yet that I am a Transmigrator. In any case, when he meets his granddaughter, he will pretend to be affectionate at least, then I will seize the opportunity to kill him." Su Liang said.

Gu Ling shook his head, "No."

"You can't go either. As our strongest combatant, you must not be controlled by others. If I go, you just need to think of a way to wipe out Mo Yan and bring me back home." Su Liang sighed slightly, "After the previous attempt, we won't succeed if we try to bomb the island directly again. We may be intercepted and engaged in battle halfway. The fastest and most effective way is this."

Chapter 452: 452. Yan Shiba Returns

As for Su Liang's plan, Gu Ling didn't say yes, and in the end, he didn't say no either. He just said that he needed to think about it more, sleep on it, and discuss it the next day.

The next day, Gu Ling told Su Liang his decision: neither of them would go with Sheng Yue. He should go back to Starfall Island on his own to “report” and inform Mo Yan of Su Liang’s identity as his granddaughter, and arrange a meeting and negotiation with Mo Yan on the sea.

Su Liang frowned, “If we let Sheng Yue go like this, he will be out of our sight, and it’s possible that he’ll do something that will be detrimental to us.”

“Unless we kill him, there will always be such a risk. Besides, if he doesn’t come here, we can’t find him, and he will head back to Starfall Island anyway. It won’t be worse than before.” Gu Ling shook his head slightly, “You can’t rush to Starfall Island. Nuannuan is still young and can’t be apart from you, and so am I.”

Su Liang looked helpless, “You’re not that young anymore, Great God.”

Then Gu Ling said something very childish, “Anyway, I can’t let you go.”

“Alright, there’s no hurry in this matter. Let’s discuss the specific plans a little more.” Su Liang sighed lightly. Indeed, leaving her child would be a kind of torment for her. Although she was always busy with other things now and others helped to take care of Gu Xiaonuan, the child still slept beside their bed every night, and they could hear her voice all day long. Starfall Island was too far away from here. If she were to go, the child would stay at home, and it might take three to five months before they could see each other again. Moreover, Gu Ling would have to leave to help her, which would indeed be a problem for the child at home. If Gu Xiaonuan were the same age as Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu, it might be a little better, but she was still a baby who needed her parents around.

In the dungeon, the prisoner got two meals a day. Although Sheng Yue was in the dark, he knew from the number of times he was given food and water that Gu Ling and Su Liang had “failed to show up”, and they didn’t give him a reply that day. He didn’t do anything, just waited patiently.

After four more meals, Sheng Yue saw Gu Ling again. However, it was not Gu Ling who brought him out, but Gu Ling who came to the dungeon to talk to him.

“You go back to Starfall Island by yourself, and send a message to Mo Yan. Tell him that we’ll meet him on the first day of the third month, twenty miles east of Jiaye City on the sea, for a meeting and negotiations.” Gu Ling said.

Sheng Yue’s eyes narrowed slightly, “So you two want me to go back this time and tell Mo Yan that Su Liang is his granddaughter?”

Gu Ling nodded slightly.

However, Sheng Yue shook his head, “By then, He Wei’s deliberate concealment will be discovered, and he will definitely try to drag me down with him in order to protect himself. Your plan is unfeasible. And you know very well that I have no reason to harm you when you go to the island since you’re not a Transmigrator. Su Liang is Mo Yan’s granddaughter, so he will somewhat be lenient with her. It’s impossible for him to push her into danger unless there are no other choices. People who are brought into the forbidden area by Mo Yan must be conscious. If I deceive you,

you'll have the opportunity to speak up at that time, and naturally, you'll have the ability to expose my betrayal to Starfall Island and the fact that my mother is a Transmigrator. I thought that with all the experiences you two have had over the years, you wouldn't be so timid."

"Yes, I am very timid, and I don't want Su Liang to go." Gu Ling's expression was indifferent.

Sheng Yue was speechless.

"I believe that you have the ability to clear yourself of the previous concealment in front of Mo Yan. It shouldn't be difficult for you to eliminate He Wei if you want to." Gu Ling said.

Sheng Yue snorted coldly, "Should I be grateful that you both think highly of me? Can you predict whether my return to the island will bring fortune or misfortune?"

Gu Ling looked at Sheng Yue's forehead and calmly said four words, "It depends on yourself."

"But this will delay things for a long time." Sheng Yue said, "Aren't you afraid that by the time of the sea meeting next year, Mo Yan will have captured several more hostages, forcing you and Su Liang to submit willingly? That's no different from you two volunteering to step into danger."

"No," Gu Ling shook his head slightly. "We believe that with your abilities and intelligence, you can persuade Mo Yan not to use such methods anymore."

Finally, Sheng Yue's expression cracked a bit, "You two don't have any sincerity in cooperating at all! You've thrown all the trouble on me, and even if something happens to me, you won't save me."

"It's good that you are self-aware." Gu Ling didn't deny it at all, "This time, you voluntarily came to us. For you, the purpose is nothing more than to switch from using Mo Yan to using us, or to act as a double agent, using everyone that can be used. You can refuse and stay here to die; I won't hesitate to kill you. As you said, the survival rule of this world is the law of the jungle. Or you can leave and continue to help Mo Yan against us, as long as you think you still have a chance of winning by working with him. Just do as you please."

After a moment of silence, Sheng Yue spoke again, "This is contrary to my original plan. I need to think carefully about whether it is feasible. Come back again tomorrow, and I will give you my answer."

With that, Gu Ling left.

As soon as Gu Ling left, Nangong Lin rushed to the iron railing, his eyes brightening up in a terrifying way, "Young Master Sheng, I can help you! Tell Gu Ling to take me with you! I will surely be able to help you!"

On the other side, Nian Ruxue also spoke anxiously, "Young Master, take me with you! I can help you! I have lived on Xingluo Island, and I can do anything for you!"

Sheng Yue ignored Nangong Lin and only looked coldly at Nian Ruxue, “You know, it’s impossible.”

Back then, it was Sheng Yue who had secretly arranged for Nian Ruxue to leave Xingluo Island. This led to an elder on the island losing his long-abducted daughter-in-law and a child losing his mother. Therefore, if he took Nian Ruxue back, he’d be confessing his guilt, which would bring him no benefit at all.

Nian Ruxue was not discouraged, “By that time, I’ll say I ran away on my own! Young Master can catch me and bring me back, and you will be credited for it!”

Sheng Yue shook his head, “You’re overthinking it. You’re not that important.”

After pleading for a long time and seeing that Sheng Yue did not budge at all, Nian Ruxue and Nangong Lin cursed him together, saying that he was stupid for falling into his enemies’ hands and that he would not have a good end being controlled by Gu Ling and Su Liang.

Sheng Yue closed his eyes, seemingly not hearing them at all.

The next day, another incident occurred before Gu Ling went to see Sheng Yue – Yan Shiba returned.

The carriage stopped outside the gate of Su Mansion, and two tall young men jumped down, with one of them stepping forward to knock on the door.

Upon learning that they were sent by Sheng Yue to escort Yan Shiba, Qi Yan did not let them in immediately, but closed the door to report to Su Liang and Gu Ling.

Not long after, the door opened again, and the carriage slowly entered the mansion and stopped inside.

Su Liang walked over and saw that Sheng Yue’s subordinates had stepped aside, and there was no movement in the carriage. She had imagined that once Yan Shiba saw her again, he would pounce on her and call her Liang Sister in that strange voice like before, but two years had passed. Sheng Yue had told her that Yan Shiba did not lose his memory, but his last injury had affected his lungs, and his health was not good after staying in the cold north.

Su Liang lifted the curtain of the carriage and saw a man wrapped in a blanket lying inside, his eyes tightly closed and his face thin and pale.

Su Liang checked Yan Shiba’s old wounds inside the carriage and found them to be the same as what she remembered. She felt his pulse and found out that he was asleep due to taking some sedative drugs. His pulse was indeed not good, and it was easy to see that the long and bumpy journey had worsened his condition.

Su Liang carried Yan Shiba out of the carriage and took him to the courtyard where Weng Ran lived.

“Is it the real Miss Yan?” Qi Yan asked Su Liang in a low voice. Given their previous experiences, it wasn’t impossible for Sheng Yue to send another imposter.

Su Liang nodded, “It should be.” By this point, Sheng Yue had no reason to pull such a stunt.

As for Sheng Yue's two subordinates, they were, of course, taken to the dungeon to accompany their master.

It was not until evening that Yan Shiba finally woke up.

Hearing the coughing sound, Weng Ran hurriedly informed Su Liang.

Su Liang pushed open the door and saw Yan Shiba struggling to sit up, constantly covering her chest and coughing.

Hearing footsteps, Yan Shiba turned her head and saw Su Liang. She was stunned for a moment, and then her eyes reddened, "Ungrateful girl! Why didn't you look for me sooner!"

Upon hearing this, Su Liang knew that this was the real Yan Shiba.

She sat down by the bed, held Yan Shiba's hand, and took her pulse again, "I looked for you, but I didn't know where you were. I thought you were gone."

Yan Shiba attempted to hit Su Liang but started coughing violently before she could touch her, "You better heal me quickly... I'm coughing so much that I want to die." Yan Shiba's voice was weak.

Coughing was indeed a torturous ailment. After taking Yan Shiba's pulse, Weng Ran brought in the prepared medicine.

"You'll feel better after drinking the medicine." Su Liang added a cough suppressant to the medicine.

As Yan Shiba reached for the bowl, her hand began shaking involuntarily. She suddenly felt disheartened, "My body is ruined, just feed me."

Su Liang propped a pillow behind Yan Shiba's waist to help her sit up straight, then took the medicine bowl. She asked Weng Ran to go eat first and began to spoon-feed Yan Shiba the medicine.

As they were drinking, Yan Shiba said, "Honestly, I wouldn't have made it if I hadn't been counting on you to save me."

In the past, even with severe injuries, Yan Shiba had never been afraid of death and always had a strong spirit. Yet after meeting Su Liang and experiencing so much, she had changed. The last time they saw each other before today, Su Liang had given her an "ultimatum": either renounce her evil ways or stop associating with her.

At that time, Yan Shiba didn't refuse outright; she wanted to think about it before giving Su Liang a response.

Two years had passed since then.

Yan Shiba was caught within Liang Country's borders. Sheng Yue had found Yan Shiba's whereabouts by taking in the crippled Yan Shiqi. Yan Shijiu, who had loved Yan Shiba but was always taken for granted, eventually betrayed her as well.

Sheng Yue's main objective was to acquire Yanyun Building, and he unexpectedly learned of Yan Shiba's deep connections with Su Liang and Gu Ling.

By the time Sheng Yue captured Yan Shiba, Yanyun Building had lost most of its assassins due to years of infighting.

Sheng Yue had already explained all this to Gu Ling and Su Liang after coming to Su Mansion. As for the remaining assassins at Yanyun Building, they had all chosen to be loyal to him and were now hiding in Nanshan City, waiting for orders. Sheng Yue said he had no intention of threatening Su Liang; it was simply more convenient since they had to pass through the city on their way back to Xingluo Island.

As for Yan Shiba, Sheng Yue didn't kill her nor did he purposely torture her. However, she had been seriously injured while resisting arrest, and Sheng Yue couldn't find a Divine Doctor like Su Liang to treat her properly. Although she received treatment, her condition didn't improve much.

Before being captured, Yan Shiba had decided that when she saw Su Liang again, she would tell her that she was tired of being an assassin and wanted to try living a normal life. Unfortunately, plans couldn't keep up with changing circumstances, and she was imprisoned in a sunless place, coughing day and night, suffering a fate worse than death.

Although Yan Shiba blamed Su Liang for not saving her sooner, she was well aware that if it weren't for their friendship, Sheng Yue would have killed her long ago, let alone send her back to Su Liang's side. This must have been the result of some negotiations between Su Liang and Sheng Yue.

Once the bowl of medicine was finished, Su Liang put it down and was embraced by Yan Shiba.

Patting her back gently, Su Liang whispered, "It's alright now, it's all over, I will heal you."

"I heard you and Xiaogu had a child? Where's my girl?" Yan Shiba seemed to think that crying didn't suit her demeanor, so she forcefully pushed back the tears that threatened to fall and asked about Gu Xiaonuan.

"That's my girl, not your girl," Su Liang replied.

"I don't care, your daughter is my daughter! Quick, let me have a look at her, and see if she looks like you!" Yan Shiba urged.

Su Liang picked up the medicine bowl and went out, "Wait."

Hearing the closing door, tears rolled down Yan Shiba's eyes, she immediately wiped them away, cursing herself, "Caring is really annoying..." After all, she was no longer the crazy Yan Shiba who used to play in the world. It's not accurate to say that her mentality changed at a certain point in time, but thinking back to the moments from when she met Su Liang until now, many pastimes she once considered as entertainment have influenced her. Right from the beginning, she was attracted to Su Liang, yearning for her life. It's just that she didn't realize it for a long time.

Su Liang returned to the Yuanming Pavilion, and Gu Ling asked her to finish eating before seeing Yan Shiba.

Su Liang sighed slightly, "Forget it, she's fragile both physically and mentally now, she can't stand any torment." At the very least, the last thing Yan Shiba did before getting arrested was for Gu Ling, and the last time she got injured was also for them. Su Liang couldn't just ignore her for these reasons alone.

Gu Ling held Gu Xiaonuan, while Su Liang carried the food to Yan Shiba. When they reached the door, Gu Ling didn't go in.

Su Liang brought the food in first, and Yan Shiba frowned, "Where's my precious daughter?"

Gu Ling's face darkened a little. Why were people lining up to take their child away?

Su Liang went out again and brought Gu Xiaonuan in.

Originally famished, Yan Shiba, who had just picked up a steamed bun, threw it back into the plate when she saw Gu Xiaonuan, raising her hands high, "My daughter is so beautiful! Let me hold her!"

Gu Xiaonuan didn't know Yan Shiba, so she looked at Su Liang and asked with her eyes how to address this strange aunt.

Su Liang sat down on the bedside with Gu Xiaonuan, put her next to Yan Shiba, and said, "This is Auntie Yan."

"Auntie Yan!" Gu Xiaonuan called out sweetly and even leaned in to give Yan Shiba a kiss.

Yan Shiba felt a sharp poke in the softest part of her heart, her eyes reddened again. She held Gu Xiaonuan's little hand, about to say something, but her emotions got the better of her, and she started coughing, quickly turning her body to the side.

However, after taking the medicine, she only coughed twice before stopping. Yan Shiba turned her head and saw Gu Xiaonuan gently patting her shoulder, seemingly comforting her. Her nose felt a little sour, and she hugged Gu Xiaonuan, sighing, "My baby is so good."

Su Liang wasn't used to Yan Shiba's current melancholic and sentimental state, but she could understand. Children always had a way of provoking tears, especially her little Gu Xiaonuan who, despite her young age, was the best at winning people's hearts.

The food was getting cold, Su Liang picked up Gu Xiaonuan and urged Yan Shiba to eat quickly. She didn't eat much, and her eyes started to look a little drowsy. The medicine she had drunk earlier contained a sedative, and her body needed proper rest.

"See you tomorrow, baby." Yan Shiba's eyes only had Gu Xiaonuan in them after meeting her, and before lying down, she tried to raise her heavy hand to wave at Gu Xiaonuan and even tugged at the corners of her mouth.

"Good night, Auntie Yan!" Gu Xiaonuan said cheerfully.

"Don't call me auntie... She's my daughter..." Yan Shiba muttered, then fell asleep with blurred consciousness.

Late at night, Gu Ling came to the dungeon again to ask about Sheng Yue's decision.

Sheng Yue's two subordinates sat quietly beside him. He sighed, "You didn't give me any room for choice. So be it, I'll listen to you guys. I can only do my best."

Chapter 453: 453. First Snow Day

Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu usually have the same daily routine, almost waking up at the same time.

On this day, the two woke up and felt that it was particularly bright outside. They looked at each other, and Zhengzheng hurriedly put on his clothes, "I actually got up late today!"

Ji Xiaoshu jumped out of bed, stood on a chair, and opened the window.

Just sitting up, the sleepy Ying Ye looked bewildered at the white outside the window, "Am I still dreaming..."

Ji Xiaoshu paused for a moment, then his eyes lit up, "It's snowing! It's snowing!"

Zhengzheng blinked and stopped dressing halfway, running over to look out the window. He hugged Ji Xiaoshu and cheered, then was hugged by Ying Ye, jumping around excitedly.

The first snow of this winter in the capital city came a little late, and the children had been complaining about it a few days ago. Especially Ji Xiaoshu, who had grown up in the south, had a special love for snow.

Ying Ye exclaimed, "I've never seen snow before! It's so beautiful! Let's go out and play!"

Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu each grabbed Ying Ye, who wanted to jump out of the second-floor window in his underwear, and quickly got ready. Then, they all jumped out of the window together...

The snow was still falling thickly, and the air was filled with the children's happy laughter.

Su Liang opened her eyes and heard the commotion outside. When she got up, she saw Gu Ling carrying Gu Xiaonuan, pacing in the room.

"Brother... brother!" Gu Xiaonuan pointed at the window with her little hand, wanting to go out and find her brother.

Gu Ling tried to distract his daughter with something else. The weather was cold, and Su Liang hadn't gotten up yet, so he didn't want to open the window.

"Is it snowing?" Su Liang said with a smile, "You take the child downstairs to see the snow first, and I'll be there in a moment."

Gu Ling carried Gu Xiaonuan downstairs, along with her little red hat, gloves, and blanket.

Cen Man, Lao Bai, and Weng Ming were chatting and admiring the snow near the first-floor window while waiting for breakfast. When they saw Gu Xiaonuan coming downstairs, the three of them immediately stood up to greet her.

In the end, it was Lao Bai who grabbed Gu Xiaonuan first, while Cen Man wanted to close the window, saying it was too cold outside.

"No need to close it," Gu Ling said. "Let her look. We'll go out when the snow stops." Yuanming Pavilion had a coal stove that kept it warm, and it wasn't cold with the window open for ventilation.

Lao Bai held Gu Xiaonuan while Cen Man and Weng Ming wrapped the little girl in her blanket and put her hat and gloves on. Only after she was fully protected did they let her go to the window to watch the boys running around in the snow.

“Master, come out! Let’s see who is better!” Ji Xiaoshu held a snowball in his hand and challenged Gu Ling through the window.

Gu Ling shook his head slightly, “Childish.” Then he went upstairs to find Su Liang.

“Why don’t you go out and play with them?” Su Liang stood by the window and laughed, asking Gu Ling who had just entered the room.

Gu Ling hugged Su Liang from behind, “They are no match for me.”

Su Liang nodded, “That’s true. But if you want to play, you can let Sheng Yue out of the dungeon to join in the snowball fight, which should be interesting.”

“Tie him up and let the children hit him,” Gu Ling said, accepting only this condition.

Su Liang coughed gently, “Although I don’t trust him, that’s too much. I think it would be more interesting to tie you up and let you lie in the snow, seeing how long it takes for you to break free and counterattack after the children besiege you. What do you think?”

Gu Ling frowned, “Can you bear to see me being bullied by them?”

Su Liang smiled, “Ji Xiaoshu would surely like my suggestion.”

Gu Ling nodded, “Actually, I like it too.”

The excited children were dragged back to Yuanming Pavilion to wash their faces and hands before breakfast.

“Madam, let’s go out and play later without Master!” Ji Xiaoshu enthusiastically suggested, his face still flushed from the cold wind.

Su Liang rubbed Ji Xiaoshu’s face and said, “You should take your master with you. He actually wants to play but is too shy to say it.”

Ji Xiaoshu looked at Gu Ling with a proud face, “Master, is it true?”

Gu Ling looked into Su Liang’s interested eyes and nodded slightly, “Yes.”

“Why didn’t you say that? How could we know? Right, big brother?” Ji Xiaoshu was instantly excited.

Zhengzheng nodded, “Right!”

“Master, just say it, and we’ll take you with us to play!” Ji Xiaoshu felt that he could do it again.

Then, Gu Ling got up, picked up Ji Xiaoshu, turned him upside down, and threatened, “Just say it once, and it’ll be done.”

Su Liang chuckled, so the Great God was only allowed to use single words? How adorable.

The elders at the dinner table were speechless, thinking Gu Ling was too childish. Gu Xiaonuan clapped her hands happily, "Second Brother is fly-fly!"

But Gu Ling wasn't playing "fly-fly" with Ji Xiaoshu, who quickly begged for mercy, saying all right, all right, anything will do.

However, soon after dinner, Ji Xiaoshu took Zhengzheng and Yuanye with him upstairs to change clothes, claiming the need to change clothes.

"My clothes don't need to be changed, they're not wet, and my shoes aren't wet either," Zhengzheng said. They were all wearing boots made specifically for snow, a gift from Aunt Yang Yu every year.

Ji Xiaoshu mysteriously said, "Let's come up with a plan to defeat our master!"

"Why?" Yuanye asked, puzzled.

Ji Xiaoshu immediately turned on his praise mode, "Uncle Xiaoye, as the strongest main force in our team, you have to perform well. If we defeat our master, our mistress will definitely reward us! Because she wants our master to lose!"

Zhengzheng was dumbfounded, "That's definitely not the case."

"No, that's exactly it," Ji Xiaoshu shook his clever little head. "Think about it, our master is good at everything, so powerful. That's so boring! Losing would be more interesting!"

Zhengzheng blinked his eyes; though it was bad reasoning, he still supported Ji Xiaoshu's idea.

Hence, the three of them conspired for a while upstairs, and to disguise their activities, they changed clothes before coming back downstairs. They saw Gu Ling sitting next to Su Liang, who was tying his hands with a rope.

"What are you doing, Mistress?" Ji Xiaoshu ran over.

"Your master has said that to make it fair, he will play with you with his hands and feet tied. But be careful not to let him break free. Whoever begs for mercy first loses," Su Liang explained.

The upcoming game suddenly became even more interesting.

Su Liang tightened the knots and then gently kissed Gu Ling's forehead, "All right, let's head out!"

Gu Ling stood up and looked down at his bound feet, "How am I supposed to go out?"

"I believe the Great God will have a cool way to show up," said Su Liang, with a slight smile at the corner of her lips. "I will bring Nuannuan to cheer you on."

Gu Ling nodded, "Then I'll try the zombie walk from the legends." With that, he turned around and hopped towards the door. Although it felt strange, it was quite fun.

Gu Xiaonuan's eyes widened, not understanding what was happening to her beautiful father.

Old White mocked, "Your dad's gone crazy."

But Gu Xiaonuan had her response to that comment, giggling and parroting, “Your dad’s gone crazy!”

Old White’s mouth twitched, and moments later, he couldn’t help but laugh, “Nuannuan, you’re so smart! You don’t let anyone take advantage of you! That’s wonderful!”

The children who’d chosen their battlefield outside laughed heartily when they saw Gu Ling’s hopping appearance, with Yuanye falling straight into the snow.

Ji Xiaoshu cleared his throat, “Master, I have to say that your entrance has already won. However, since we’re fighting, it’s all about strength. Mistress, give the command!”

Su Liang held up Gu Xiaonuan’s red hat and moved it to the window, “Get ready! Begin!”

With the order given, the children started throwing the prepped snowballs at Gu Ling, moving closer as they attacked, surrounding him in the middle. But as agreed upon, snowball attacks only, no body contact, otherwise, they would be penalized.

Everyone in the mansion gathered at the Yuanming Pavilion to watch the battle. There were even some who were standing outside, asking if they could join in the fight. Su Liang said they couldn’t and to wait for the next round.

Initially, Gu Ling, who had his hands and feet bound, seemed passive. But as he expertly dodged the incoming snowballs, he also untied the ropes on his hands and feet. He remained standing and appeared composed.

In a three-on-one battle, and with the children’s attacks unpredictable, Gu Ling couldn’t dodge them all. However, as Ji Xiaoshu said, Yuanye was the main attacker, and Gu Ling only needed to dodge his attacks. The two children’s attacks were weak, so when they hit him, it didn’t hurt or itch.

Knowing full well that once Gu Ling untied his hands, they’d have no chance of winning, Ji Xiaoshu changed his strategy, “Quick! Bury Master’s feet!”

Yuanye and Zhengzheng immediately gave up throwing snowballs at Gu Ling and began joining Ji Xiaoshu, shoveling the surrounding snow over Gu Ling’s feet, stomping it down as they went, trying to trap him.

“Dad! Keep it up!” Gu Xiaonuan cheered from the window.

Gu Ling didn’t struggle, focusing on untying the rope on his hands. It wasn’t easy, as Su Liang didn’t give them a break. The children had examined the knot, but none of them knew how to untie it.

Weng Ming laughed, “This is really lively. Let Ranran and the others go out to play later and make a snowman for Nuannuan.”

Nangong Qian expressed her interest and was already eager to join the fun.

Before long, when the children had buried snow up to Gu Ling’s knees and stomped it down, Gu Ling finally untied the rope on his hands.

“Run!” Ji Xiaoshu reacted quickly.

Following the rules, Gu Ling didn’t try to grab them. Instead, he effortlessly dug through the children’s compacted snow pile and freed his own feet.

At that moment, Ji Xiaoshu, Zhengzheng, and Ying Ye had hidden behind their “fortress”, ready to defend themselves.

“This won’t work, Xiaoshu. We have to move!” Zhengzheng said, noticing Gu Ling approaching and realizing their strategy was flawed.

Ji Xiaoshu immediately nodded, “You’re right, senior brother! Uncle Xiaoye, run! Don’t let Master catch you!”

So they ran off in different directions, starting a chase scene with Ji Xiaoshu heading straight into the woods.

Gu Ling captured Zhengzheng first and rubbed his small hands, “You’re a prisoner now. Off to the prisoner camp.”

Zhengzheng obediently ran into Yuanming Pavilion.

Next was Ying Ye. He ran fast, but not faster than Gu Ling.

“Xiaoshu, I’ve been caught!” Ying Ye shouted.

“Go find Nuannuan,” Gu Ling patted him on the head.

Ying Ye happily rushed back to Yuanming Pavilion and yelled, “Xiaoshu, it’s all up to you now!”

Meanwhile, Ji Xiaoshu, who had climbed up a tree to hide, was considering whether surrendering voluntarily would save face. Otherwise, he was sure Master would carry him back upside down... What if Master stopped looking for him? It was so cold, and he couldn’t move. He was becoming a snowman.

While pondering this, Ji Xiaoshu didn’t hear any footsteps. When he looked down, he saw Gu Ling standing at the foot of the tree, reaching a hand up to him, “Come down.”

“No!” Ji Xiaoshu shook his head without thinking.

“Oh, alright then.” Gu Ling turned and walked away.

Ji Xiaoshu: ...

“Master, come back!”

Gu Ling stopped in his tracks.

Ji Xiaoshu coughed lightly, “Return to your original position and catch me.”

“No.” Gu Ling refused more casually.

So, Ji Xiaoshu assessed the distance, then stood up on the tree, leaped with a push, and aimed for Gu Ling...

However, instead of landing in Master’s warm embrace as expected, Ji Xiaoshu watched wide-eyed as Gu Ling stepped back...

Just as Ji Xiaoshu thought his face was about to make intimate contact with the snowy ground, he was hooked by Gu Ling’s foot and lifted up to cling to Gu Ling’s neck. He then heard Gu Ling’s cool voice, “Your hand touched me first, you lost.”

Ji Xiaoshu's face was lost for words as he clung to Gu Ling, "Master, keep denying it. You just love me the most!"

Gu Ling shook his head, "Impossible, I love your mistress the most."

Ji Xiaoshu snickered, "Ah, what a coincidence, I also love my mistress the most."

Everyone laughed as they watched Gu Ling carry Ji Xiaoshu back, creating a harmonious picture. As soon as the master and apprentice entered the room, they quickly separated, and Ji Xiaoshu cleared his throat to say, "I declare, the winner of this round is... my mistress!"

Zhengzheng gave Ji Xiaoshu a thumbs up: ... Refusing to admit defeat while avoiding being beaten – brilliant!

Soon, the young ladies joined the kids in building snowmen again, saying they'd make a Snow House for Nuannuan. Before long, the elderly joined in too.

"Great God, aren't you going?" Su Liang asked Gu Ling.

Gu Ling shook his head, "I have to release Sheng Yue." He wanted to join, but there were more pressing matters. He'd play later.

"I think I forgot about Yan Shiba," Su Liang coughed.

Gu Xiaonuan had been bundled up and taken to play, so the couple went to handle their own affairs.

When Su Liang entered Weng Ran's courtyard, she heard Yan Shiba's weak howl from inside the room, "Is anyone there...? You cruel girl... evil girl... I knew you didn't care about me..."

Feeling a little guilty, Su Liang pushed the door open and immediately apologized.

Yan Shiba had a wronged expression on her face, "I dreamed I had an invincibly adorable baby girl. Tell me it wasn't a dream."

Su Liang shook her head, "It was a dream. I have her, but you don't."

Yan Shiba picked up a pillow to throw at Su Liang, but the pillow fell to the ground as she ended up coughing again.

Su Liang bundled up Yan Shiba warmly and pushed a wheelchair prepared the night before. She helped her sit down, tucking her in with a blanket.

"It's snowing." Su Liang pushed Yan Shiba out the door.

Yan Shiba closed her eyes, "I hate snow." She had been trapped on Wolong Snow Mountain before, and those days were unbearable to remember.

"The snow at home is different, don't be afraid," Su Liang said.

Stubbornly, Yan Shiba opened her eyes, "Who said I'm afraid? I just find it glaring!"

As they neared Yuanming Pavilion, and saw the people playing in the snow, Yan Shiba hesitated slightly, "These...are your family?"

Su Liang corrected, "Our family."

Yan Shiba smiled, "I see my daughter. She's adorable." Gu Xiaonuan looked like a little sprite enveloped by the white snow.

Su Liang pushed Yan Shiba into the Yuanming Pavilion and brought her breakfast. Weng Ran had also prepared a medicinal decoction for her on the stove.

"I want to recover soon, I don't want to be like a cripple." Yan Shiba looked out of the window, her eyes full of longing. If she were energetic now, she could definitely have fun with Xiaonuan. Snow was common, but childhood was rare, and she had never experienced such simple happiness in her life...

Gu Ling unlocked the shackles on Sheng Yue's feet, and released his two subordinates, asking them to wait outside the mansion.

Gu Ling brought Sheng Yue close to Yuanming Pavilion, and Sheng Yue looked at the warm and lively scene, his eyes resting on Gu Xiaonuan, "Your daughter is very cute."

Gu Ling ignored him, and Sheng Yue asked again, "Where is Cheng Yun?"

"Are you trying to use him?" Gu Ling countered.

Sheng Yue shook his head, "Though I said I have no responsibility towards Cheng Yun, I'm not that cold-blooded. After all, he is my brother."

"Hypocrite," Gu Ling said.

"Believe it or not," Sheng Yue said.

As the two entered Yuanming Pavilion, Yan Shiba was having breakfast. When she saw Sheng Yue, she threw the steamed bun she was holding at his face.

Sheng Yue caught it and took a bite, "Thanks."

Yan Shiba yelled angrily, "Sister Liang, kill this bastard quickly!"

Su Liang handed another steamed bun to Yan Shiba, "Calm down."

Yan Shiba bit into the bun viciously, as if it were Sheng Yue's head.

With a calm expression, Sheng Yue finished the steamed bun and looked at Su Liang, "Is there anything else you want to tell me?"

Su Liang's expression was faint, "Not an order. You said you needed time to think, and we gave you time to give us an answer. We are leaving today, so before we go, please tell us your plan. Maybe we can give you some advice."

Sheng Yue squinted his eyes slightly, "What if I say, I'll just go with the flow?"

Su Liang shook her head, "That's not your style."

"Of course you don't trust me," Sheng Yue's eyes were deep, "You want to know how I will tell Mo Yan that you are his granddaughter without being suspected of deliberately concealing it before, and how I will persuade Mo Yan not to arrest

innocent people anymore, and even if Mo Yan captures the hostages, how I will try to save them under Mo Yan's watch?"

Su Liang nodded, "Yes. I don't trust you, but I trust your brain. Now you can tell us your plan."

Sheng Yue snorted, "Has anyone ever told you that your mind is frighteningly meticulous?"

Su Liang shook her head, "Not as good as my husband."

Sheng Yue was a bit speechless, "There is no need to show off your intimacy in front of me."

Su Liang's eyes grew cold, "If you waste any more words, I'll take it as you're making up a story to deceive me."

"To make up a story that can deceive you in such a short time, you think too highly of me," Sheng Yue said, looking at the soup bowl on the table, "I want to drink some soup."

Yan Shiba immediately scolded him, "Drink your head!" Then she turned to Gu Ling, "By the way, where is Cheng Yun? This bastard said he's Cheng Yun's brother, I don't believe it!"

Su Liang nodded, "Sort of." She then pushed the soup bowl directly in front of Sheng Yue.

"Where is my little brother Yun?" Yan Shiba asked again.

Sheng Yue picked up the soup bowl, drank it, and put it down. He looked at Yan Shiba and said, "Cheng Yun won't like someone like you with a bad reputation, just like he won't recognize me as his brother."

Yan Shiba, who was sitting not far from Sheng Yue, picked up a bowl and smashed it on his head, "Shut up, you bastard!"

Sheng Yue wiped his face with a calm expression and looked at Su Liang, "Thank you for the soup. I can tell you my plan, and if you can give me some advice, that would be great."

Chapter 454: 454. It's too scary.

Heavy snow was falling, and two men in black stood still outside the main entrance of Su Mansion, looking like guards from a distance.

These two were Sheng Yue's subordinates who had been released from the dungeon. They waited outside for Sheng Yue but dared not go in to ask when he failed to show up.

At this time, Sheng Yue had finished eating the steamed bun thrown at him by Yan Shiba, as well as the soup Su Liang had given him, and began to talk about his initial plan for returning to Xingluo Island.

"When I return, I'll tell Mo Yan about your origins and my previous deception," Sheng Yue said. "I'll say that He Wei was trying to kill me to hide this secret back then, and it would have been detrimental to both Xingluo Island and Mo Yan no matter who ended up killing the other. Of course, I won't mention the fact that you're a

Transmigrator. As for your plan to mislead him, as long as Mo Yan doesn't realize it, I'll continue to mislead him."

Su Liang's expression was indifferent. "You need a more convincing reason."

Sheng Yue nodded slightly, "Firstly, I'm afraid that Mo Yan would have a hard time deciding what to do if he knew about your identity, given his lifelong ambitions. Secondly, you deliberately sent Min Rou to reveal your identity, but your intention was not pure. If I had chosen to side with you back then, I would've fallen into your trap."

"Exactly." Su Liang sneered. "Though it might not be a strong reason in terms of deception, I believe you have the ability to persuade Mo Yan. Otherwise, you wouldn't be his top subordinate."

"He Wei is the one," Sheng Yue said. "He's been loyal to Mo Yan all his life, and Mo Yan is well aware of his selfishness, which was actually promised to him by Mo Yan."

"What did he promise? To help He Wei rule the world before he leaves?" Su Liang asked.

Sheng Yue nodded, "It's pretty much like that. If it weren't for you and Gu Ling, Mo Yan's promise to the He Family wouldn't be an empty one. With his abilities and influence, he could control the former royal family of Liang Country and do whatever he wanted. To me, you were Mo Yan's destined nemesis. Bloodline-wise, you are his granddaughter, but in your heart, you are a visitor from another world."

Obviously, Sheng Yue understood the difference between soul transmigration and body transmigration and wasn't hiding that he knew Su Liang was a soul transmigrator.

"In your opinion, does Mo Yan still want to help He Wei rule the world now?" Su Liang asked.

Sheng Yue shook his head, "To him, it was originally something easy, but things have changed now. His main concern is whether or not he can return to his old world, and everything else is secondary. He Wei is not a fool, but even though the He Family has a deep foundation on Xingluo Island, the people there are loyal not to him, but to Mo Yan. Without Mo Yan, the island's people are no different from ordinary gangs, just highly skilled in martial arts. So even if He Wei knows Mo Yan will betray him, he can only continue to be Mo Yan's dog rather than giving up waiting for so many years."

"How do you plan to explain to Mo Yan about your decision to carry my message back?" Su Liang asked.

With a calm expression, Sheng Yue said, "I'll just say that I failed several times trying to kidnap Gu Ling but was never caught by you guys. The last time, you called out to me to meet with Mo Yan. I thought it was time to go back and report, so I temporarily gave up my plan. As for my prior disappearance for so long, I was healing my injuries." He lifted his right arm, which was missing a hand.

Su Liang and Gu Ling looked at each other and asked him, "What do you think?"

“Say less, make fewer mistakes. This is good enough.” Gu Ling said.

If they let Sheng Yue make up a complicated story, it wouldn't be difficult, and Su Liang and Gu Ling could do it too. However, Mo Yan knew that as well. A seemingly simple and not so tight story is easier to believe.

“If you don't trust me and don't want to go with me to Xingluo Island, you can send someone with me instead, disguised as one of my subordinates,” Sheng Yue suggested. Unless they captured Gu Ling or Su Liang, they couldn't openly bring anyone related to them back to the island, as they couldn't explain why they had hostages but gave up on the mission and returned to the island instead.

After thinking for a while, Su Liang found that none of the young people around her, except for the old and the children, had families, except for Qiao Jing. However, Qiao Jing was a recognizable enemy to the Xingluo Island and could be easily exposed. Moreover, Qiao Jing had already started writing letters to Min Rou, engaging in a long-distance relationship. She also thought about Cheng Yun, but the risk of dropping his wig and exposing his identity made him unsuitable.

“There's no need. We believe in you.” Su Liang smiled.

“Then, can you provide me with some poison to help me in my mission?” Sheng Yue asked.

Gu Ling refused, “No.” Sheng Yue was immune to all poisons, so he wasn't afraid of them, but his abilities didn't require the use of poison either.

Neither Gu Ling nor Su Liang could accept handing over their poison to someone they didn't trust, as there was no guarantee he wouldn't use it to harm someone else.

Sheng Yue shook his head, “Alright, is it okay if I leave now?” Saying that, he reached for the last steamed bun on the table that Yan Shiba had left behind.

Yan Shiba was by the window watching Gu Xiaonuan and avoided looking at Sheng Yue, or he would have definitely cursed “Scum!” at him again.

But Gu Ling and Su Liang didn't care much about this trivial matter, letting Sheng Yue take the bun if he wanted to.

“I'll take my leave.” Sheng Yue put the bun in his pocket and turned to leave.

As soon as he stepped out of the door, three snowballs came flying at him from different directions.

Yan Shiba's cough-ridden laughter followed, “Hahahaha! Good job, kids! Cough, cough!”

“Bad Uncle, are you leaving?” Zhengzheng peeked out from behind a nearby tree, a snowball in his hand.

Sheng Yue's mouth twitched slightly when he heard “Bad Uncle”, “Yes, I have to go.” He knew Zhengzheng was the young master of the Wan Family.

Ji Xiaoshu had already started his fierce close-range snowball attack on Sheng Yue, as well as Ying Ye.

Sheng Yue didn't dodge, letting the snowballs hit him on the body and head.

"Scoundrel, why don't you dodge?" Ji Xiaoshu asked angrily, "Do you think you can settle our grievances like this? You've captured Sister Zhen'er before and also captured my Apprentice Brother Jingyun! Today I want to take revenge for them!"

Sheng Yue looked back, only to see that Gu Ling and Su Liang had already disappeared from the first floor of Yuanming Pavilion, leaving only the interweaving laughter and coughs of Yan Shiba.

"What do you want?" Sheng Yue also knew that the cunning-looking little boy in front of him was the young crown prince of Yuanyan Country, who now, like Zhengzheng, was the disciple of Gu Ling and Su Liang, living in Su Mansion.

"Let us beat you up!" Ji Xiaoshu said.

Zhengzheng whispered to Ji Xiaoshu, "Be careful of trickery, in case he catches us and runs away, that would be bad." Zhengzheng had been a hostage before when Yue Mei captured him.

"Anyway, I have to beat him!" Ji Xiaoshu said, running over in a flash, stomping hard on Sheng Yue twice, and then quickly running away.

Ying Ye followed suit and stomped twice more.

Sheng Yue looked at the footprints on his shoes and continued to walk, "If there's nothing else, I'll say goodbye."

Yan Shiba yelled from behind, "Kids, kick him in the crotch! Make him a eunuch!"

Sheng Yue hesitated for a moment, seeing Zhengzheng holding back Ji Xiaoshu who was about to run over, "Xiaoshu, don't make trouble."

When in doubt, ask the master... Ji Xiaoshu then yelled out to Gu Ling, "Master, can I kick this scoundrel into a eunuch? It won't affect his ability to help Master and Mistress, right?"

From the second floor of Yuanming Pavilion, Gu Ling's cold voice came, "Wait until you can beat him yourself."

Ji Xiaoshu looked at the height difference between him and Sheng Yue and sighed, "Forget it, you scoundrel, if you dare, wait another ten years for me!"

Zhengzheng smiled, "Xiaoshu, we're still young, but maybe Bad Uncle won't live that long, so don't get your hopes up."

Sheng Yue, who had just softened his gaze toward Zhengzheng:...

Yan Shiba burst into laughter, as long as she wasn't coughing to death, she would laugh to death. She really loved these clever and mischievous kids in the house!

The other people, who were focused on building snow houses, just glanced this way and continued to be busy.

Before leaving Su Mansion, Sheng Yue unexpectedly encountered Min Rou, who was visiting. Min Rou was also surprised.

“Sister Rou’er,” Sheng Yue called Min Rou as before.

Min Rou’s face turned cold, “I’m not your sister!”

Sheng Yue nodded slightly, “Min Rou, I’m going back to the island. Do you have any messages or items you need me to take back for someone?”

“I don’t have any lingering affection for that ghost place!” Min Rou held an umbrella to block the snow, her fingers clenched tightly.

Sheng Yue didn’t say anything else and was about to leave when Min Rou spoke again, “When you see Mo Yan, tell him: those who persist in evil will die by their own hands!”

“Alright, I will find a suitable time to pass on the message,” Sheng Yue replied and left the mansion.

When Min Rou looked back, Sheng Yue and the two black-clothed men had already disappeared outside the gate, leaving only an endless expanse.

Min Rou had known early on that Sheng Yue had willingly come for cooperation, being held in Su Mansion’s dungeon all the time. Su Liang didn’t hide it from her since she was a regular visitor here, even telling her that if she wanted to see Sheng Yue, she could just go.

But Min Rou had no interest in dealing with Sheng Yue again, and they hadn’t contacted each other during that time. This was their second meeting since parting on Xingluo Island; the first had been in the dense forest outside Xuanbei City at midnight when the two, who once called each other brother and sister, officially broke apart.

When Min Rou arrived outside the Yuanming Pavilion, the snow house had already been built taller than Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu.

Nangong Qian ran over to talk to Min Rou for a moment, telling her to go in and find Su Liang before returning to building the snow house.

“Did you come today to deliver another letter to Mister Qiu?” Su Liang came downstairs with a teasing tone.

Min Rou took off her cloak and hung it on the rack by the door, turning to Su Liang with a gentle smile, “Not this time, at least we have to wait for him to reply to the last letter first.”

Su Liang raised her eyebrows, “It seems you’re making good progress. Does your grandfather know?”

Min Rou nodded, “He does. If I didn’t tell him, he’d be arranging a marriage for me.”

Qiu Jing was not only handsome, tall, with great martial arts skills, but also a reserved and quiet type, which Min Rou happened to like. They had spent some time together before, though they had hardly talked one-on-one. Qiu Cong had been secretly trying to bring them together, and Min Rou could feel it even back then, but she thought Qiu Jing didn’t like her. Receiving Qiu Jing’s confession letter was a surprise, a thrill, and an excitement that led her to reply quickly, for fear that a misunderstanding might arise in the meantime.

Min Rou sat down, gazing at the beautiful view outside the window, and couldn't help but sigh, "I grew up on Xingluo Island, and today is the first time I've ever seen snow in my life. I want to have a good time playing, but I'm not sure how to do it. I can't play with my grandfather, uncle or aunt since my cousin has married and I'm the youngest at home. I thought your place would be lively, so I came."

"Is that all?" Su Liang was skeptical. If she was just here to have some fun, why would she come specifically looking for her? She wasn't an outsider.

Min Rou coughed lightly, touched the teapot, then stood up again, "I wanted to have a cup of hot tea before going to play, but there's none, so I won't drink it."

Su Liang seemed to understand, "Qiu Mu's reply hasn't arrived yet. When it does, I'll send it over to you straight away."

Min Rou pursed her lips and smiled, then ran out.

Su Liang imagined Qiu Jing and Min Rou standing together, and couldn't help but nod: they made a perfect match, so harmonious that Qiu Cong must have been the first to notice.

Late, Su Liang and Gu Ling joined the snow house building team outside the Yuanming Pavilion. They were busy until noon, finally completing the snow house.

Gu Ling designed the originally planned snow house into a snow castle, even taller than the first floor of the Yuanming Pavilion, and very beautiful.

Only Yan Shiba, who was physically weak and couldn't stand the cold wind, was left out of the fun. He sat by the Yuanming Pavilion and watched helplessly.

As the snow gradually weakened, the children ran wildly, chasing and playing around the castle. They refused to go back and drink hot soup even after being called several times. In the end, Gu Ling had to carry them back one by one. The gluttonous Ying Ye had already run back to drink a bowl of soup before coming out again when Su Liang called him the first time.

The children played so crazily in the morning that they all fell asleep in the afternoon.

Min Rou was about to leave, and Weng Ran went to see her off. Since Su Liang was busy, Weng Ran said she could teach Min Rou some basic medical skills first, and they needed to arrange a time for their next meeting.

As they walked out together, they saw Qi Yan bringing someone into the mansion. The newcomer was covered in snow, and his clothes were too thin for this kind of weather, leaving his face pale from the cold.

"This is the courier from Jiaye City," Qi Yan said.

Min Rou's eyes sparkled, and Weng Ran immediately turned her around, "It's still early; let's go to my place and read some medical books."

"Alright," Min Rou agreed without hesitation.

Qi Yan had intended to ask the courier if he had a letter for Min Rou, but seeing him shivering with cold, he didn't ask and led them all back to the Yuanming Pavilion.

“We’ve received a letter from Jiaye City,” Weng Ran announced with a smile as soon as she entered the door.

Yawning and waiting for someone to send her back to bed, Yan Shiba immediately perked up, “Xiaoyun, did he write me a letter?”

Weng Ran was taken aback for a moment. Little cloud brother? Was she talking about Cheng Yun? Why would Cheng Yun write a letter to Miss Yan? Could it be that they... No, he was a monk not long ago.

Su Liang and Gu Xiaonuan were already taking a nap together. Gu Ling heard the noise from downstairs and came up, telling the courier not to bother too much, then took the package handed to him, and let Qi Yan take the courier to have a meal.

Gu Ling opened the tightly wrapped cloth and took out the first letter, handing it to Min Rou, “Yours.”

Min Rou accepted it, and exchanged smiles with Weng Ran.

Gu Ling handed the second letter to Weng Ran, “Help me give this to Nangong Qian.” It was from Qiu Cong to his granddaughter.

Also, both Qiao Cong and Old Mu wrote letters to Su Liang. Qiao Jing had a letter for Gu Ling and Su Liang as well. The last letter was indeed from Cheng Yun, but it was for Su Liang too.

“Let me see Cheng Yun’s letter,” Yan Shiba reached out.

Gu Ling’s face was expressionless, “It’s not for you.” He went upstairs after saying this.

Yan Shiba waved her fist at Gu Ling’s retreating back.

Weng Ran didn’t keep Min Rou either. She let her take the letters back, then sent Yan Shiba back first, before giving the letters to Nangong Qian.

The snow had stopped, and Weng Ran pushed Yan Shiba’s wheelchair, the wheels making a creaking sound as they rolled on the ground.

“Sister Ran, have you ever seen Cheng Yun?” Yan Shiba asked Weng Ran.

“I have. He was still around when I arrived.” Weng Ran answered.

“Don’t you think he’s the most good-looking monk in the world?” Yan Shiba asked.

Weng Ran smiled lightly, “Maybe before, but now Cheng Yun has returned to secular life.”

Yan Shiba froze, “Secularized? When? Why didn’t anyone tell me about such an important matter?”

“It only happened recently. You just came back yesterday, so you didn’t know,” Weng Ran explained.

“That’s great! I’ve turned over a new leaf, and Little Yun Brother has returned to secular life. Now he can’t reject me anymore, haha!” Yan Shiba was overjoyed.

Weng Ran had a weird expression on her face. She had heard of Yan Shiba's reputation before, and she was surprised that a once-notorious female devil would have a crush on a former little monk, and was still thinking about him now. It was amazing.

"Sister Ran, I'm sure our Liang Mei Mei will find a way to deal with the birthmark on your face!" Yan Shiba quite liked the cheerful and straightforward Weng Ran.

Weng Ran pushed Yan Shiba into the courtyard, "I was born with it. I don't think it's ugly, nor do I feel uncomfortable. Nuannuan said it's like a flower on my face."

Yan Shiba turned her head to look at Weng Ran's smiling face and nodded, "It's beautiful. When your sister recovers, I'll look after you in the future!"

Weng Ran smiled lightly, "Thank you, Sister Yan Shiba. At that time, I'll need to learn a few stunts from you."

"No problem, no problem." Yan Shiba nodded and was carried by Weng Ran into her room.

When Weng Ran finished tucking Yan Shiba in, she saw Yan Shiba smiling with her eyes closed, holding Weng Ran's neck, "I haven't seen Little Yun Brother in such a long time!"

Weng Ran, not used to the sudden intimacy, coughed lightly and removed Yan Shiba's hand from her neck to put it under the blanket.

Weng Ran left to deliver the letter to Nangong Qian, telling Yan Shiba she would be back soon, and if Yan Shiba needed anything, she could call for her, as she was in the next room.

Yuanming Pavilion.

Gu Ling returned to his room, took off his coat, went to the bedside, and saw that Su Liang had woken up.

After reading Old Mu and Qiao Cong's letters, everything was fine in Jiaye City. They mainly expressed their longing for the children and wished they could return immediately. Qiao Jing's letter was about recent arrangements.

Cheng Yun's letter was a straightforward account of his experiences during this journey, intended to share with Su Liang.

After reading the letter, Su Liang and Gu Ling decided to take a nap together. The weather was perfect for sleeping.

After lying down, Gu Ling asked Su Liang, "Yan Shiba has always been thinking about Cheng Yun. Do you think it's possible for them?"

Su Liang shook her head slightly, "If you ask me, no. It's not because of their dark past or anything, especially since Cheng Yun has returned to secular life now. But from the beginning, I just felt that they weren't compatible at all, and it was solely Yan Shiba's wishful thinking."

Gu Ling nodded, "I feel the same. Do something about Yan Shiba, so she won't act like she's going to devour Cheng Yun all the time and corrupt the kids. Also, keep her away from Nuannuan. I strongly disapprove of Nuannuan having her as a godmother. It's too frightening."

The children got up from their nap, tidied up, and were sent to Lin Mansion by Gu Ling to attend their lessons. Ying Ye also went along with them. He had the mentality of a child and although he loved to play, he was also very serious about studying and writing.

During the break, Gu Ling played with the two children from the Lin Family, who were also his disciples. Although he didn't smile much, the children all liked him very much.

After the lesson, the children ran into the courtyard like little birds let out of their cage and began to play.

Lin Shuzhi looked on with a smile, "Having children in the house makes it lively. Next time, bring Nuannuan over."

Gu Ling's expression remained indifferent, "If I bring her, Master will have no heart to teach."

Lin Shuzhi cleared his throat, "That wouldn't happen." But actually, last time Gu Ling brought Gu Xiaonuan to Lin's house, Lin Shuzhi held her for a long time. He studied, and Gu Xiaonuan also learned along with him. It was indeed lively, but Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu couldn't concentrate, and both of them made two mistakes during the dictation test after class.

"Then next time, I'll come over instead." Lin Shuzhi chuckled.

Gu Ling picked up Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu's hats from the table and went out to call them over.

"Master, let's go climb the mountain! Will the snow on the mountain be even more beautiful?" Ji Xiaoshu ran over, his little face flushed.

"Go find your dad." Gu Ling put a hat on him, pulled it down, and covered his eyes.

Ji Xiaoshu didn't bother adjusting the hat and waved his little hands around, pretending to be blind. "Oh my, I can't see! What should I do? Senior brother, Uncle Xiaoye, where are you?"

Lin Shuzhi couldn't help but laugh. This child really didn't seem like someone born in the Royal Family. He was naughty but very likable.

Gu Ling helped Zhengzheng put on his hat, then led him away without caring about the drama-loving Ji Xiaoshu.

Ying Ye laughed and carried Ji Xiaoshu on his back, "Let's go, let's go! Goodbye, Uncle Lin!"

Lin Shuzhi waved to Ying Ye with a smile.

Ji Xiaoshu adjusted his hat and lay on Ying Ye's back, occasionally reaching out to grab the branches of the trees they passed. Some of the lower branches were caught by Ji Xiaoshu and then let go, causing the branch to spring back and scatter the accumulated snow on it.

Seeing that Gu Ling was about to walk under a tree, Ji Xiaoshu whispered in Ying Ye's ear, "Uncle Xiaoye, when we get closer, quickly run over there, kick that tree, and then run away immediately!"

Ying Ye understood the intent and smirked before rushing forward with Ji Xiaoshu in his arms.

At this moment, Gu Ling and Zhengzheng had already reached the tree and were about to get close to the trunk.

Hearing the footsteps behind him, Gu Ling didn't look back. Instead, he pushed the tree and then picked up Zhengzheng, running out of the tree's range.

The prankster Ji Xiaoshu, who originally intended to play a trick on Gu Ling and Zhengzheng, didn't expect that Gu Ling would beat him to it. By the time he realized something was wrong and reminded Ying Ye to run quickly, it was too late for Ying Ye to stop. He lifted his leg and kicked the tree trunk.

As a result, Ji Xiaoshu and Ying Ye were both hit by a double attack of falling snow from the tree.

Ying Ye was overjoyed, while Ji Xiaoshu was dumbfounded... When they caught up with Gu Ling and Zhengzheng, they heard Zhengzheng saying, "Xiaoshu, Master said you love snow so much that you must want to experience the feeling of snow falling on you from a tree. He was indeed right."

Since the prank didn't succeed, Ji Xiaoshu couldn't reveal that he'd originally intended to play a trick on Gu Ling and Zhengzheng. But Ying Ye "betrayed" him.

Gu Ling was not surprised, and Zhengzheng burst into laughter.

"Let's ask my dad to take us mountain climbing tomorrow!" Ji Xiaoshu still wanted to go mountain climbing.

Zhengzheng nodded, "My dad will go too!"

"My dad..." Ying Ye scratched his head, "I don't have a dad, but Xiaoliang will go with me!"

"Master said he won't go, so we won't bring him!" Ji Xiaoshu said, "I'll go ask my mom. She'll definitely want to go!"

At this moment, Su Liang was feeding Yan Shiba medicine.

"You little devil, why didn't you tell me that little brother Yun renounced the monkhood?" Yan Shiba complained lightly.

Su Liang replied calmly, "You only arrived yesterday. I didn't have a chance to mention it."

"So, tell me now, what exactly happened?" Yan Shiba said.

Su Liang briefly described the incident.

"That Pu Cheng is really a bigger scumbag than Sheng Yue!" Yan Shiba cursed angrily, "Poor little Yun has such a terrible father. Luckily, he has nothing to do with those scumbags now!" He laughed, "From now on, little Yun is mine! Haha!"

Su Liang shook her head slightly, "Please don't celebrate too soon."

"What, do you still oppose us being together even now?" Yan Shiba pinched Su Liang's face.

Su Liang snorted softly, "Don't look at me as if I'm the elder trying to break you two up. If you both like each other, of course I won't oppose it, but so far, it's just unrequited love on your part. I see Cheng Yun as a younger brother, but he insists on being my older brother since he's older than me, and now he's my daughter's uncle. I'm just stating that if you want me to help you two get together, it's impossible. If you try to force Cheng Yun, I'll definitely stand on his side."

Yan Shiba rolled his eyes, "What if Cheng Yun likes me?"

"You said 'what if,' but the possibility is too small, small enough to be negligible." Su Liang said, "Also, don't go around saying that Cheng Yun is your man. This is tarnishing Cheng Yun's reputation. If he has other marriage prospects, don't ruin it for him."

Yan Shiba looked speechless, "Which side are you on, brat?"

"The side of reason." Su Liang said, "If you recover from your injury, or if you want to find Cheng Yun even when you're injured, I won't stop you. But since he's not home now, just calm down."

"If I get better, I'll definitely go find him!" Yan Shiba said, followed by a coughing fit.

After he had taken the medicine, Su Liang stood up, "Since you're not asking to go right now, it seems you still value your life. Focus on healing and stop thinking so much."

As Su Liang was about to leave, Yan Shiba stopped her and asked, "Tell me the truth, do you still think Cheng Yun and I are not suitable even now?"

Su Liang nodded, "He deserves better."

Yan Shiba didn't get angry. Instead, he held his chest and spoke softly, "I actually thought you were the most important and only family I had in this world..."

"Oh, so my daughter is not important to you then." Su Liang chuckled, "In any case, my husband has asked you to stay away from my daughter."

Yan Shiba got furious, "No! Way!"

Su Liang smiled and left the room. She would never admit to being cold-hearted towards Yan Shiba; just now she had personally fed him medicine. But some things needed to be made clear. Yan Shiba needed to know the rules of this family and stop carrying on his bad habits from the past; it was essential.

When the room quieted down, Yan Shiba sighed heavily, "What if he might... like me..."

Ji Xiaoshu returned home and asked Su Liang if she wanted to go mountain climbing with him the next day.

Su Liang said that it was a bit dangerous to climb at this time, but Ji Xiaoshu replied that both his father and Zhengzheng's father were going.

"Oh, then you guys go ahead and be careful." Su Liang said it was okay.

"Are you really not going, Mom?" Ji Xiaoshu shook Su Liang's hand.

Su Liang smiled, "I have something to do tomorrow, I won't go." It was obvious that Gu Ling had refused, otherwise Ji Xiaoshu wouldn't have come to find Ji Yuebai to accompany him.

"What are you doing tomorrow, Mom?" Ji Xiaoshu asked.

Su Liang glanced at Gu Ling not far away, "Accompanying your master."

Ji Xiaoshu complained again, "Just spoil him already!" And then he ran out to check the snow house.

Ji Yuebai and Lu Yu gladly agreed to take the children mountain climbing the next day and settled on a time. Since Gu Ling would not go, Qi Yan was arranged to accompany Ying Ye to prevent any accidents.

That night, before going to bed, Su Liang and Gu Ling mentioned Sheng Yue again.

"As I looked at Yan Shiba today, I thought of Nian Ruxue. Sheng Yue is capable of changing people's looks to the point of them being indistinguishable from the real ones, could he possibly make two people impersonate us?" Su Liang said.

Gu Ling nodded slightly, "It's possible." But for now, they hadn't found any indication that Sheng Yue had the need to do so. Although he could alter their looks, he couldn't change their behavior and mannerisms.

"After the New Year, we'll have to go south and get ready to meet Mo Yan." Su Liang sighed lightly, "I'm a little curious how he would react if he finds out I'm his granddaughter."

"We'll talk about it then." Gu Ling leaned down and gently kissed Su Liang, "Today is the first snow, worth celebrating." The hint was quite strong.

Su Liang laughed, "In the snow?"

"Then you have to hold me tight, or you'll be cold." Gu Ling whispered in Su Liang's ear, seeing her ears turn red.

The weather cleared up, and the snow castle by the lake in Su Mansion sparkled with a crystal-clear glow in the sunlight.

Zhengzheng, Ji Xiaoshu, and Ying Ye all went climbing, and the mansion was much quieter today.

The messenger from Jiaye City who arrived yesterday set off early this morning. Min Rou's reply letter for Qiao Jing was delivered before dark yesterday, and Su Liang also wrote back to their masters, Qiao Jing and Cheng Yun, telling them about the situation at home and their plans with Sheng Yue.

In the letter to Cheng Yun, Su Liang mentioned Yan Shiba's return.

By the time Yan Shiba remembered to write a letter to Cheng Yun, the courier had already been gone for an hour.

In the afternoon, Su Liang and Gu Ling took Gu Xiaonuan to the Imperial Palace to see Duanmu Chen's two children.

Duanmu Chen was very happy to see them, and he had been paying close attention to the matter of Sheng Yue. Except for the matter related to the crossing, he knew almost everything.

“So you guys are going to go south after the New Year and fight Mo Yan?” Duanmu Chen held Gu Xiaonuan, gently swinging her little hand. There were also a pile of precious toys on the table next to them, all prepared for Gu Xiaonuan.

“Whether we’ll fight or not depends on the situation.” Su Liang held Duanmu Chen and Xing Yuyan’s son in her arms, the little guy looked very delicate and was babbling unintelligibly.

“I hope it will end soon.” Duanmu Chen sighed, “When you guys leave the capital together, you can let Nuannuan stay in the palace with Zhen’er by my queen mother’s side. My queen mother really likes Nuannuan.”

“No need, if we are going together, we will take the child with us.” Su Liang said, “If we leave her here, someone will definitely keep an eye on her.”

Gu Ling and Duanmu Zhen were staring at each other with big and small eyes. Duanmu Chen laughed when he saw it, “I’ve noticed recently that Zhen’er really looks a bit like Gu Ling in her eyebrows and eyes.” She was Situ Yao’s child, and Situ Yao was Gu Ling’s cousin.

After leaving the palace, the family of three went to Marquis Zhong Xin’s mansion to visit Old Lady Xing and Xing Ji.

Old Lady Xing now spent her days playing with her grandson, and with Su Liang’s adjustments, she looked much younger than before. As soon as she saw Gu Xiaonuan, she called out affectionately, even Xing Ji couldn’t snatch her.

After leaving Xing Mansion in the afternoon, they went to Lian Mansion.

Ying Ying is now Lin’s family’s treasure, and Lin’s mother spends all day circling around her. Ying Ying was not used to it at first but quickly accepted it. The maternal love she had never experienced was fulfilled in Lin’s mother, and the two got along as if they were a real mother and daughter.

This directly led to Lian Shun’s loss of favor on both sides. When he went to his mother alone, he asked her to take care of Ying Ying and leave everything to him, but he was beaten by Lian’s mother, “Xiaoying is pregnant and you still want to mess around? Go play chess with your dad!”

Ying Ying was very happy to see Su Liang come to see her.

Su Liang took Ying Ying’s pulse and said the baby was doing well, so she should relax, eat well, and rest well.

Ying Ying asked about Ying Ye, and Su Liang said he went climbing, “As for the medicine, let’s improve it a bit after the New Year. Now he wants to have fun, so let him have fun, if he gets cured after the New Year, he’ll suddenly become an adult.”

Ying Ying nodded repeatedly, “That’s the best.”

“Ying Xiaoying, whatever you want to play, we’ll play with the child after it is born.” Lian Shun said. He knew that Ying Ying hadn’t had a normal childhood either.

“I want to hit you.” Ying Ying said casually.

Lian Shun raised his hand and slapped himself, “I’ll do it for you.” Then he changed to the other side and hit again, “This is for the baby.”

Gu Ling looked at Lian Shun as if he was an idiot, but Lian Shun was very calm, “You don’t understand, hitting is showing affection while scolding is caring. Su Xiaoliang has never hit you, has she?”

Gu Ling didn’t respond, but said to Ying Ying, “You should let your child be my apprentice as well.”

Ying Ying’s eyes lit up, “Of course, I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

“I’m afraid the child will become stupid following Lian Ershan.” Gu Ling relentlessly teased.

Lian Shun’s smile froze, and he rolled up his sleeves, “Gu Xiaoling, come on, let’s go outside and fight!”

Gu Xiaonuan clapped her little hands, “Fight!”

So, Su Liang with Ying Ying and Lian Shan holding Gu Xiaonuan, they all went to the garden to watch Lian Shun and Gu Ling... have a running race. Because Lian Shun definitely couldn’t win a fight.

It was agreed that they couldn’t use lightness skills, they would start from the same place, run a lap around the lake, and whoever came back first would win.

“What will happen if you win?” Lian Shan asked.

Su Liang smiled, “Nothing. Just to satisfy the childish competitiveness of men.”

Lian Shun couldn’t help but laugh, “Is Nuannuan’s father also childish?”

Su Liang replied, “Number one in the world.”

Soon, they started running. Not far into the race, Lian Shun threw snowballs at Gu Ling, who counterattacked while continuing to run.

Seeing this, Lian Shan nodded slightly, “Indeed childish, Brother Pei is not like that.”

At this time, Yuan Pei came over, smiled at Gu Xiaonuan, and looked at the two people who had already run to the other side of the lake, “I thought it was going to be a martial arts competition. If I had known it was just a running race, I could have participated too.”

Lian Shan: ...

In the end, Gu Ling won of course. The two ran and fought a snowball battle, Lian Shun losing very thoroughly.

Su Liang wiped the snow from Gu Ling’s face, and Lian Shun immediately put his face in front of Ying Ying, “I want it too.”

Ying Ying slapped him aside, “What do you want for losing?”

Declining the offer to have dinner at the Lian Mansion, Gu Ling and Su Liang took their children back home when the sky was getting dark.

Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu both returned to their own homes, not staying at Su Mansion tonight, and Ying Ye also went to King Yin's Mansion.

A few days later, it snowed again, and the footsteps of the New Year were getting closer.

On that day, Su Liang specifically went to visit the elderly, children, and Ying Ying, and then "closed the door" with her two masters, Weng Ming and Qi Bai. Of course, everyone saw her every day, but she was always busy except for eating and sleeping. Ji Xiaoshu endured not looking for Su Liang.

Because the three masters and disciples – to be precise, four people, including Gu Ling, who mainly assisted in making medicine – were researching a new drug at a crucial time.

The cause was that Su Liang had always wanted to make a drug similar to the truth serum of her previous life after capturing enemies. Interrogating anyone would be much more convenient, and there would be no need to guess anymore.

Old Bai knew about this matter, and Weng Ming also thought it was worth a try. After two high-level experts in medicine, a pharmacist and a poisoner, met, they had actually been secretly competing. In Su Liang's words, men's competitiveness, plus the "I am Su Liang's master" competitiveness unique to Su Mansion.

So after basically deciding how to treat Ying Ye, they mainly researched the truth-telling drug that Su Liang mentioned. The two experienced, knowledgeable masters really came up with many good ideas.

Finally, one day after being busy all night, Su Liang and her two masters came out of the underground secret room. Weng Ming yawned, Old Bai rarely showed excitement, and Su Liang walked behind them with a medicine bottle in her hand.

"Master, you should rest soon." Su Liang said.

Old Bai said he was hungry, and Weng Ming's stomach also growled because they hadn't eaten dinner.

Gu Ling, who had stayed upstairs to take care of the children, heard the noise and came downstairs, saying that there were late-night snacks on the stove and asking them to wait for a moment.

Soon, Gu Ling brought the late-night snacks, and the two old men ate quickly. Su Liang was not very hungry and showed Gu Ling the medicine.

"Have you tried it yet?" Gu Ling asked.

Su Liang shook her head, "Not yet, planning to let Nangong Lin try tomorrow." She said regretfully, "It's a pity. If it had been made earlier, we could have given it to Sheng Yue first. I believe he still has secrets."

Chapter 456: 456. New Year's Eve

Early in the morning, Gu Ling brought the truth-telling drug he had made last night to the dungeon.

Nangong Lin and Nian Ruxue were still asleep, and the dungeon was very quiet.

Gu Ling walked to Nangong Lin's side, kicked him, and he woke up abruptly. The chains on his body made a crisp collision sound. Looking up, he stared at Gu Ling with wide eyes, "What... what are you doing here?"

Gu Ling bent down and pinched Nangong Lin's chin, "Got some good medicine for Master to try."

Nangong Lin's face stiffened, and the medicine had already entered his mouth. He tried hard to spit it out, but Gu Ling forcibly closed his mouth. The pill quickly melted in his mouth.

Previously, Su Liang and Gu Ling tested the medicines in the Thousand-Poison Formula on Nangong Lin, including some torturous poisons. Although there were matching antidotes, the process was painful enough.

However, this time, Nangong Lin was very resistant, but he didn't feel much pain.

"How does it feel?" Gu Ling asked.

Nangong Lin snorted coldly without speaking. He only felt a bit of a stabbing pain in his head, but it was still within the bearable range.

After a while, Nangong Lin felt a little dizzy, and his eyes became blurred. He thought he had been fed something similar to sedatives, and as long as it didn't hurt, it was fine...

When Nangong Lin's gaze fell on Gu Ling again, he muttered, "Ling'er..."

Gu Ling felt that the drug was taking effect, so he asked Nangong Lin, "How did my father die?"

Nangong Lin muttered, "It was me... I instigated him to rebel... and then informed Emperor Qian..."

"Do you love my mother?" Gu Ling asked.

Nangong Lin shook his head slightly, "I hate her... I hate that she didn't choose me..."

"What else are you hiding from me?" Gu Ling asked again.

Nangong Lin's head tilted slightly as if in thought, "There's one thing ... Yue Mei said that Mo Yan has a powerful magic treasure..."

"Anything else?" Gu Ling asked.

"Nothing else." Nangong Lin shook his head slightly. As he shook, his body began to tremble violently, and his eyes rolled up.

Gu Ling's eyes narrowed, and he grabbed Nangong Lin's pulse, which was beating very fast.

Immediately after, Nangong Lin spat out blood, stiffened, stopped breathing, and fell to the ground.

Gu Ling reached out to check his breath and found that he was dead.

At this time, Nian Ruxue had already woken up and had been silently watching the commotion. She couldn't help but scream and shrank into the corner when she saw Nangong Lin was poisoned to death. She was not sad for Nangong Lin because she didn't know him before. She suddenly realized

that with Yue Mei dead, Sheng Yue gone, and Nangong Lin also dead now, she was the only one left in the dungeon. Any poisonous drug that came later would be targeted at her...

Gu Ling directly unlocked Nangong Lin's chains, dragged him out, and informed Su Liang to take a look at Nangong Lin's cause of death to save Qi Yan from having to clean up later.

After Gu Ling dragged the corpse out, the dungeon became quiet again. Nian Ruxue looked around, and it wasn't cold, but she was shivering from fear. Suddenly, she cried out, "Gu Ling... Gu Ling, let me out!"

Of course, there would be no response. Nian Ruxue's cries echoed in the dungeon, and she began to confess her past wrongs to the air, more devout than ever...

Gu Ling returned to Yuanming Pavilion after washing up in the kitchen, and saw Zheng Zheng holding a small bowl, feeding Gu Xiaonuan some complementary food, while Ji Xiaoshu was leaning against Su Liang, chatting. Weng Ming and Lao Bai hadn't woken up yet, as they were too tired and went to bed late last night.

Gu Xiaonuan called out sweetly when she saw Gu Ling walk in, "Daddy."

Gu Ling bent down and kissed Gu Xiaonuan's forehead, then sat next to Su Liang. He took Ji Xiaoshu, who was leaning against Su Liang, into his arms.

Ji Xiaoshu sat on Gu Ling's lap and grinned, "Master, you just wanted to hold me!"

"How is it?" Su Liang asked, "How's the drug effect?"

Ji Xiaoshu's eyes lit up, "Right, Master! Didn't you go to test the truth-telling drug on that baddie? How did it go?"

Zhengzheng looked at Gu Ling curiously as well.

Gu Ling nodded, "The drug works well. After taking it, the user will quickly confess everything they know without being able to lie."

"Wow! That's amazing!" Ji Xiaoshu exclaimed, "My Master's wife is too awesome, right?"

However, Su Liang sensed from Gu Ling's tone that there was more to say, so he asked, "Are there any side effects?"

"Even if there are side effects, it's fine since it's for the bad guys." Ji Xiaoshu said.

Gu Ling nodded, "There are some."

"What kind of side effects?" Su Liang urged Gu Ling to stop being mysterious.

"It's a bit poisonous." Gu Ling said, "Nangong Lin is dead."

Su Liang looked stunned.

Ji Xiaoshu blinked, "Sending the bad guy to see the Yama King early can also be considered a good deed."

“He’s actually dead?” Su Liang stood up, “I’m going to have a look.” The final drug formula had been decided by Weng Ming and Old White. Su Liang thought it was a little poisonous at the time, but he didn’t expect it to be so toxic...

Ji Xiaoshu also wanted to go, but he was thrown back at the door by Gu Ling, who asked Zhengzheng to look after him.

“Xiaoshu, don’t make a fuss. What’s so good about seeing the dead bad guy?” Zhengzheng put down his bowl and grabbed Ji Xiaoshu.

“Is master afraid of scaring me? I’m not afraid.” Ji Xiaoshu shook his head.

“Kids who see that kind of thing will have nightmares.” Zhengzheng said seriously.

“Alright.” Ji Xiaoshu nodded as Zhengzheng let go of him, and slipped away immediately.

Zhengzheng touched his forehead, being a big brother was really not easy!

At this time, Su Liang had already seen Nangong Lin, who was thrown under a big tree by Gu Ling. His face was blue and purple, and his eyes were still open. It was apparent that he wasn’t frightened before death, probably because the truth-telling drug still controlled his mind.

“Master’s medication is indeed bold.” Su Liang said as he examined, “Some are usually not used together.” Especially Old White, as the Poison King, he liked to use some poisonous ingredients.

Su Liang confirmed that Nangong Lin’s cause of death was a sudden cardiac arrest, which was caused by the overstimulation of the drug.

Ji Xiaoshu, who had secretly come over, heard Gu Ling say that he would get a hundred words written as punishment if he took another step forward. He immediately turned around and ran away, muttering as he ran, “Why can master always punish me?”

So, when Gu Ling and Su Liang returned to Yuanming Pavilion, Ji Xiaoshu asked, “Master’s wife, can we refuse if master gives us unreasonable punishments? I think there should be at least a supervision mechanism. There shouldn’t be tyranny where master’s words are final!”

Su Liang laughed when she heard it, “Xiaoshu makes a lot of sense.” He already had a democratic mindset.

“Besides, master is teaching us martial arts, why should we be punished by writing? Eldest Brother, am I right?” Ji Xiaoshu pulled Zhengzheng as an ally.

Zhengzheng pretended not to hear.

“You’re right.” Gu Ling nodded slightly, “As punishment for disobedience today, you’ll have to run three laps.”

Ji Xiaoshu stared blankly, “What if I don’t agree? Does Master’s wife think it’s reasonable?”

Su Liang smiled, rubbed Ji Xiaoshu's head, "Three laps should be fine, and if you keep arguing, your master may increase it to ten."

Ji Xiaoshu sighed, "Master's wife is always on master's side, I'm going to find my father to supervise."

It happened that Ji Yuebai came to visit his son that day. After hearing Ji Xiaoshu's account, he immediately said that his idea was very good, but also believed that Gu Ling's punishment was appropriate: children can be curious, but it's wrong to run off and see a corpse.

Ji Xiaoshu, who had not even seen the corpse, could only grudgingly accept the punishment and ran his three laps. Of course, the warm-hearted eldest brother Zhengzheng volunteered to accompany him.

After studying the cause of Nangong Lin's death, Old White felt it was not a big deal. He deserved to die anyway, and dying so easily was letting him off lightly. Besides, the effect of the truth-telling drug was achieved before his death.

However, Weng Ming felt that this was not acceptable. If the truth-telling drug would cause someone to die so quickly, it would be a failure, because its own purpose might be affected. What if it took a long time to interrogate someone? What if the person needed to stay alive?

"It's already a success, it just needs some more improvement," Su Liang said.

So, based on the original recipe, they planned to find a way to adjust it. They had previously taken some of Sheng Yue's blood, but it hadn't been used yet. Weng Ming suggested adding it to the mix, and Lao Bai agreed.

As such, time flew by and the end of the twelfth lunar month arrived.

The spring couplets in the household were written by the elderly and children together. Ji Xiaoshu and Zhengzheng also wrote couplets for their own homes, which they thought of themselves.

Gu Ling taught the children how to cut paper for window decorations, and Ji Xiaoshu couldn't help but praise, "Master has such nimble fingers!"

That day, they steamed flower buns at home, and the children made the shapes they liked. Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu made a small rabbit-shaped bun for Gu Xiaonuan. They thought it was quite good until they saw the other "little rabbit" Gu Ling casually made, which was delicate and cute, completely outclassing theirs.

"Master's rabbit is too dull, not as lively as ours," Ji Xiaoshu comforted Zhengzheng.

But when the steamed flower buns were ready, Gu Ling's little rabbit looked lifelike, plump and white, while Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu's rabbit was also chubby, chubby to the point their stomachs exploded...

"What if sister likes ours better?" Ji Xiaoshu insisted theirs was still cute.

When the two "little rabbits" appeared in front of Gu Xiaonuan, she made the aesthetically correct choice without hesitation.

So, Ji Xiaoshu bit off the exploded rabbit's head in one bite, and asked soulfully, "How can I be as nimble as Master?"

Su Liang gave him an answer, "Your hands are too small, they just need to grow a bit."

Gu Ling continued, "Listen to your master."

Ji Xiaoshu was instantly happy, "Haha! I've always been very obedient, haven't I, Master?"

Gu Ling gave him a look, letting him understand on his own.

When the two children brought the flower buns they made by hand back to their homes, Ji Yuebai was moved, saying he would worship them; Wan Hui and Lu Yu were also delighted, feeling that the children had grown up.

Another New Year's Eve.

After finishing their New Year's Eve dinner in the lively Su Mansion, Gu Ling personally sent Ji Xiaoshu back to the Yin King Mansion.

"Master, prepare a big red envelope for me, I'm coming to pay my respects tomorrow!" Ji Xiaoshu waved goodbye to Gu Ling, "Big Brother also has to give me a red envelope!"

Zhengzheng, lying on Gu Ling's back, nodded with a smile, "No problem!"

"Xiaogu, after sending Zhengzheng and little sweetie home, would you come back here and have a few drinks together?" Ji Yuebai enthusiastically invited him.

Ji Xiaoshu shook his head, "Dad, that's just nonsense. Master must be eager to go back to be with his wife for the New Year's Eve. Who wants to drink with you?"

Gu Ling nodded, "I'll take my leave."

After sending Zhengzheng home, Gu Ling quickly returned to Su Mansion.

Yuanming Pavilion had quieted down, Ying Ye had been taken to Lian Mansion by Lian Shun to spend the New Year two days earlier.

The snow castle by the lake had been decorated with big red "fortune" characters, hung with strings of red lanterns, and lit up, looking dreamy.

As Gu Ling went upstairs, the room was warm, and Gu Xiaonuan was still awake, rolling and playing on the bed. Su Liang sat by the bed, watching her to make sure she didn't fall off.

"Didn't Xiaoshu's dad invite you for a few drinks?" Su Liang asked with a smile.

Gu Ling walked over, took off his coat, and hugged Su Liang as they sat down, "He did, but I didn't want any."

Gu Xiaonuan crawled over, and Gu Ling held her in his arms, "Nuannuan, do you want to hear a story?"

Gu Xiaonuan nodded her little head, clapping her hands and saying, "Story!"

Gu Ling leaned on the bed holding his daughter, looking at Su Liang and said, "Tell us a story."

When Su Liang looked at the two similar faces, she felt an overwhelming sense of happiness in her heart. Happiness must be something like this.

After thinking for a moment, Su Liang realized that she had already told Gu Ling all the interesting stories from her previous life that she could remember. “Great God, why don’t you tell us a story instead?”

As Gu Ling held his daughter in one arm and Su Liang in the other, he thought for a moment and said, “What if you hadn’t come to this world and I had crossed over to yours? What would our meeting be like?”

Su Liang became interested upon hearing this, “Maybe, Great God, you would have been mistaken for an actor in a costume drama who ran out without changing their clothes.”

Gu Ling shook his head, “I would soon be discovered as having no identity, and I would have no money.”

“And you would be too eye-catching. People would take photos and videos of you and post them online. It would actually be very dangerous. Even Superman has to live low-key and hide his identity on Earth for fear of being treated as an alien,” said Su Liang.

“I need someone to protect me,” Gu Ling said, “that would be you.”

“I couldn’t give you a fake identity either. The only option would be to hide you at home and not let you go out,” Su Liang laughed.

Gu Ling nodded, “That’s fine. This way, I can make you breakfast every day, send you to work, and stay at home reading, surfing the internet, and playing games. When you come back, we can eat dinner and sleep together. How comfortable.”

Su Liang imagined it and shook her head slightly, “It is better for me to come to this side. It’s more liberating.” Highly developed technology and a legal society with high transparency mean that discovering a transmigrator would result in them being 100% taken away for research, and possibly even dissected. Even if it were more public on this side, they could still be treated as an alien and burned to death, but at least they could hide.

Gu Ling was a very romantic person. He always had some whimsical ideas in his mind, which Su Liang found interesting.

The couple chatted about their wild ideas. Even after being together for a long time, there were always endless things to talk about.

Gu Xiaonuan couldn’t understand what her parents were saying, and her little head nodded off to sleep soon enough.

By midnight, the wind outside was howling, and it seemed that it had started snowing again.

“New Year’s Eve snow is a good omen,” Su Liang said and yawned.

“Let’s sleep,” Gu Ling said, holding and lying down with Su Liang, gently patting her back.

“It’s a pity that Cheng Yun and master couldn’t come back for the Lunar New Year.. Sheng Yue must have almost returned to Xingluo Island by now...” Su Liang sleepily thought and drifted into dreamland.

Gu Ling softly kissed Su Liang’s smooth forehead, secretly vowing in his heart: the next time the Lunar New Year came around, Su Liang would be worry-free. Then, they could bring their child back to the Su family village and tell them about the interesting things they once experienced together...

Xingluo Island.

Being secluded from the world and without seasons, even the concept of celebrating the New Year could hardly be deemed amusing here.

Sheng Yue returned to Xingluo Island on New Year’s Eve. His ship had already been spotted before he even got close, and people quickly assembled on the shore, adopting defensive postures.

Obviously, this was because of the earlier raid on Xingluo Island by Gu Ling and Qiao Jing that had instilled a sense of vigilance in the islanders.

A subordinate of Sheng Yue shouted to the people on the shore, “It’s Master Sheng who has returned!”

As the ship docked, no one came forward to welcome Sheng Yue. The guards on the shore told him that he would only be allowed to go ashore after they received instructions from the Island Master. They asked for his understanding.

Sheng Yue understood completely. He had been away for too long, and He Wei would undoubtedly be spreading rumors of his possible death or betrayal.

However, Sheng Yue was not worried about being labeled as a traitor outright. Xingluo Island was in a dire situation, and they needed him.

As expected, He Wei didn’t take long to personally welcome Sheng Yue with a group of people.

As Sheng Yue stepped ashore, He Wei looked at the completely unfamiliar subordinates behind him and asked coldly, “Who are these people? Where are the elders you took with you?”

Sheng Yue’s expression was calm, “I will explain this matter to my Master.”

He Wei snorted coldly, “You better have a clear explanation for where you’ve been all this time!”

Chapter 457: 457. Enemies and Opportunities

After this year’s “proactive assault”, the biggest change on Starfall Island was that there were fewer people.

Previously, the island was full of elderly people who were all top-notch masters, making up the main force on Starfall Island. However, those main forces, who followed He Wei to the capital city of Qian Country, were all wiped out, leaving only He Wei alive. Later, the old men who followed Sheng Yue to capture Gu Ling also died in the cold river water that night.

Hidden for many years, Starfall Island emerged as a formidable force but returned in defeat, suffering considerable losses. Moreover, Gu Ling led the troops to bomb the island, rescuing all the hostages like it was a land without people, and immediately blocked the nearest route from the island to shore.

The morale on the island is now low, and the atmosphere is weird. Everyone walks with their heads down in haste, no longer possessing the “confident happiness” that once was part of their belief that “we live in a paradise, just waiting for the right time to go out and achieve our desires.”

Once, Mo Yan was the absolute ruler of the island and considered a “god” by all. Some masters were even willing to become Death Soldiers to accomplish Mo Yan’s grand cause and ensure a better future for their descendants.

However, a god is only safe when worshipped. Once discovered to be nothing but an ordinary person or even a single failure, admiration will turn into doubt.

As Sheng Yue followed He Wei through the woods, they saw several corpses hanging from the trees. Some were already dried up, and some had just died not long ago. All of them were people they knew.

When they encountered the first corpse, He Wei said to Sheng Yue, “All traitors! Those who want to betray and escape only end up like this!”

The so-called betrayal was merely due to some people losing faith in Starfall Island and Mo Yan and thinking that staying on the island offered no promising future. They wanted to return to the mainland and live like normal people. After all, most men here were masters, and they could find a place to live a decent life at the very least, and it would surely be safe.

In the past, people stayed on this island because of hope and faith. Now, they are being controlled by the corpses hanging from the trees. How long this control through intimidation will last is hard to say.

After He Wei brought a group of people into the City Lord Mansion, only he and Sheng Yue went to meet Mo Yan while the others returned to patrol the shore. The two subordinates brought by Sheng Yue were asked to wait outside the City Lord Mansion.

After the previous incidents, they had no choice but to believe that Gu Ling would lead the troops to bomb the island again, so they had prepared a fleet of ships and sent people to patrol the waters around the island day and night. Once anything unusual was discovered, they would immediately sound the alarm, and the island’s fleet would quickly set sail to intercept the enemy. This is exactly what Gu Ling and Su Liang had predicted.

Mo Yan was still in the forbidden area, where he lived.

Although it was winter, the island was still blooming with flowers. Looking only at the environment, it was not wrong to describe it as a paradise, but it was impossible for people who had seen the vast outside world to be willing to stay on this island for their entire lives, living the same life day after day. The purpose of the people here was to hide and wait for the right opportunity to strike.

“Sheng Yue, let me kindly remind you that the Master is currently not in a good mood. You better think carefully about what you should say and what you should not

say.” He Wei lowered his voice, his gaze threatening. He had once blown himself up, leaving his face half covered in scars, but he did not wear a mask.

Sheng Yue’s gaze fell on He Wei’s scars and he nodded slightly, “Thank you, Elder He, for the reminder.”

Entering Mo Yan’s courtyard, a large banyan tree with dense foliage blocked out the sun, casting large shadows on the red walls.

Mo Yan, dressed in a brown robe with white hair, sat quietly in the shade. Only his fingers were moving as he played chess against himself.

A gentle breeze brought a leaf fluttering down onto the chessboard. As Mo Yan touched it with his finger, the leaf instantly disappeared, and Mo Yan placed a chess piece where the leaf had vanished, leaving the board as clean as before.

Sheng Yue and He Wei both knew that the leaf had been taken away by Mo Yan’s magic treasure. This was also Mo Yan’s greatest ability: to make anything disappear.

Mo Yan did not hide this from his closest subordinates, He Wei and Sheng Yue. Displaying this “miracle” was meant to conquer their hearts and make them revere and loyal to him.

Mo Yan said that the magic treasure was one with him, and no one else could use it.

Whether this was true or not was still uncertain, but it was enough to deter He Wei and Sheng Yue from taking any rash actions.

“Master, Sheng Yue is back,” He Wei respectfully reported.

Only then did Mo Yan look up and his gaze fell on Sheng Yue, carrying a touch of vicissitudes and a hint of coldness.

Sheng Yue knelt down on one knee, lowered his eyes, and said solemnly, “This subordinate is incompetent and failed to complete the mission.”

He Wei reminded Sheng Yue to be cautious but couldn’t help but speak out, “You should explain why all the elders who went out with you never returned, and where the strangers you brought back came from.”

Sheng Yue recounted the process of capturing Gu Ling: Gu Ling was already on guard and had Qiao Jing posing as him, turning their plan against them, while he ambushed them on the way.

“My hand was severed by Gu Ling that night,” Sheng Yue raised his right arm, missing his forearm and hand, with only a hanging sleeve remaining from the elbow joint.

“That was already a few months ago. Why didn’t you come back after that?” He Wei asked coldly.

“This subordinate suffered severe injuries and was left alone, so I decided to find a place to heal my wounds and try to continue the uncompleted mission,” Sheng Yue said. “This subordinate went to the north, where it was easy to carry out my tasks, not expecting Gu Ling to bring soldiers to the island to rescue people.”

“What did you do in the north for so long? Don’t tell us it was just to recruit two subordinates,” He Wei sneered.

“The two men were originally assassins of Yanyun Building. Due to internal conflict within Yanyun Building, the assassins fled with their money and belongings. When they encountered me, they chose to pledge allegiance to Starfall Island,” Sheng Yue explained.

He Wei snorted lightly, “Just like that? They have money and martial arts skills, so why would they still follow a cripple like you?”

Sheng Yue appeared indifferent, “They are used to living a life of bloodshed and cannot adapt to the life of ordinary people. They no longer trust Yan Shiba, but they couldn’t live a normal life either. Does Elder He think that Starfall Island doesn’t deserve their loyalty?”

He Wei’s face changed, “What nonsense are you talking?”

Sheng Yue ignored him and continued, “After this subordinate recovered from the injury, I went to the capital city, captured Duanmu Chen’s daughter and then Lin Shuzhi’s eldest grandson, trying to force Gu Ling to comply, but all efforts failed.”

“You had children hostage, how could you possibly fail?” He Wei questioned again.

With a faint sigh, Sheng Yue said, “Taking Gu Ling away wasn’t that simple.” He raised his stump of a right arm, “I almost lost my life.”

“That’s it? You have never accomplished anything, and you keep saying that Gu Ling is so powerful, but you’ve managed to escape from him time and time again. I don’t think it’s as simple as you say.” He Wei spoke with a hint of sarcasm.

Unexpectedly, Sheng Yue nodded, “Yes, there’s one more thing.”

He Wei suddenly felt that something was wrong, then listened to Sheng Yue saying, “The last time, I was actually caught by Gu Ling. I thought I was going to die for sure, but a few days later, he let me go.”

He Wei’s eyes narrowed as he drew his sword and placed it on Sheng Yue’s neck. “In that case, every word you’ve said is untrustworthy!”

Mo Yan’s expression remained unchanged, neither stopping He Wei nor giving any instructions.

Sheng Yue continued, “Gu Ling let me go, asking me to bring a message to Master.”

“Regardless of what message it is, it must be a trap, a lie!” He Wei became anxious. He knew what it was about – it concerned Su Liang’s identity, something he had intentionally kept from Mo Yan.

Mo Yan’s icy gaze swept over He Wei’s face, and finally, he spoke, “Continue.”

Sheng Yue bowed his head and said, “Gu Ling asked me to inform Master that his wife, Su Liang, is Master’s granddaughter and that they will meet Master twenty miles to the east of Jiaye City on the first day of next year’s lunar March.”

He Wei's face stiffened! He had not worried about Sheng Yue revealing Su Liang's identity before, because he and Sheng Yue had conspired on this. However, against his expectations, Sheng Yue had spoken after all.

All it took was for Mo Yan to check Su Liang's appearance to find out. Denial at this point would be pointless.

Mo Yan's face darkened drastically, and his gaze was like sharp swords aiming at He Wei. No need for Sheng Yue to say anything further, He Wei's previous performance already revealed that he had known about this long ago but had deliberately kept it hidden.

He Wei's sword fell to the ground, and he knelt beside Sheng Yue, "Master, please forgive me. When I went to Qian Country's capital city, I had suspicions about this matter but couldn't confirm it, thinking it was a coincidence. I was afraid of complications and being used by Su Liang and Gu Ling, so I didn't say anything."

Mo Yan turned to Sheng Yue, "Did you know about this long ago?"

Sheng Yue nodded, "Yes, that night outside Xuanbei City, Min Rou told me. I wasn't aware of Master's daughter, so I didn't dare believe Min Rou's words. He Wei said it was impossible, so I took his word for it and didn't mention the issue."

He Wei became furious upon hearing this, "Bastard! You knew it was true, but you hid it from Master for your own benefit."

Sheng Yue calmly looked at He Wei, "He Wei just said that he thought it was fake, and I simply followed his words, thinking that I misunderstood him that night. In that case, it seems He Wei already knew it was true."

He Wei's face stiffened, realizing that he had been set up by Sheng Yue. He was too impulsive, and he should have followed Sheng Yue's words, insisting that he thought the similarity between Su Liang's appearance and Mo Yan's daughter was just a coincidence, not wanting to create extra trouble...

Mo Yan picked up the sword from the ground and pointed it at He Wei, his tone low, "Is this your loyalty?"

Thinking of those who had recently betrayed Mo Yan and later found hanging from trees, He Wei broke out in a cold sweat, "Master, please forgive me! I merely thought that even if Su Liang knew she was Master's granddaughter, meeting with Master would only ruin Master's grand plans, and it's impossible for her to be on our side. I took a risk in hiding the truth, but it was all for Master's sake! Master once personally said, after his daughter left, it's as if he never had a daughter. What good would it do for Master to know about his granddaughter? It's better to be carefree!"

"It's my decision how to handle this," Mo Yan said, cutting off He Wei's right ear with one swift motion as He Wei screamed.

With the bloody sword pointed at Sheng Yue, Sheng Yue remained motionless and did not beg for mercy. Mo Yan asked him coldly, "Can Gu Ling truly predict the future?"

Sheng Yue answered, "I asked him, and he denied it. But from what happened before, I think he must have some special abilities, maybe not predicting all possible outcomes."

“Su Liang,” Mo Yan’s aging eyes narrowed, “Is she really my granddaughter? And her father, is he really Su Yuanzhou’s son?”

“Based on my investigation, it appears so. Su Liang’s father, Su Hongzhao, was a businessman dealing in medicinal herbs. Before that, he had even earned a scholarly title and is said to have some martial arts skills. He was intelligent and well-traveled,” Sheng Yue explained. “As for Su Hongzhao’s wife, I could find nothing about her, only that she was an orphaned girl he saved during one of his trips. They died at the hands of a group of Escort Masters who conspired with bandits to rob and kill them. Su Liang was hidden by one of the Escort Masters and was later found by the Government Office. That man later tried to leave the gang and was killed. As for the others, it seems they had internal conflicts over dividing the spoils, and most of them died, with the survivors going into hiding.”

He Wei’s hand trembled. Sheng Yue’s investigation had revealed the truth, but behind those Escort Masters and bandits, there was another person – He Wei. He Wei had not acted personally, but had paid a large sum to tempt those Escort Masters to take the risk. He Wei later found and silenced the survivors. It would be impossible to uncover his involvement now.

“You go back first,” Mo Yan said to He Wei.

“Yes,” He Wei picked up his bloodied ear, accepted Mo Yan’s sword, glanced at Sheng Yue who was still kneeling on the ground, and turned to leave. He had conspired to keep the secret with Sheng Yue, but in the end, he had lost an ear, while Sheng Yue had gotten away unscathed. As he left the courtyard, He Wei saw Sheng Yue rise and sit opposite Mo Yan, seemingly preparing to play chess... His eyes flickered coldly, and he hurriedly left.

“Whether my daughter’s death had anything to do with the island, I could not find any information, and I dare not make wild guesses,” Sheng Yue said, all but pointing a finger at He Wei and accusing him of killing Mo Yan’s daughter.

Mo Yan didn’t bring up his daughter again, picking up the chess pieces and resetting the board. He asked Sheng Yue a question, “What do you want?”

He Wei wanted the world, and he wanted his descendants to enjoy eternal glory.

Sheng Yue’s face remained calm, “I want to follow Master’s footsteps and see another world.” That’s what he had said before.

“Do you think Su Liang would want to go if she knew about that world?” Mo Yan asked Sheng Yue.

Sheng Yue shook his head, “Based on my understanding of her, she wouldn’t. She is a sentimental person, and everyone she cares about is here, she also has a child.”

“What if Gu Ling is already there?” Mo Yan asked.

Sheng Yue pondered for a moment, then nodded slightly, "If Gu Ling is there and confirms it's safe, Su Liang might choose to follow him and bring their child. The couple's relationship is deep, and they can't accept being apart."

Mo Yan sighed deeply, "Do you think Gu Ling can truly go there?"

Sheng Yue nodded, "We'll know if we try."

"Gu Ling is indeed my greatest enemy, and the opportunity I've been waiting for all my life. I believe that if there's one person in this world who can achieve this, it must be Gu Ling," Mo Yan's gaze was slightly narrowed, and a smile suddenly appeared on his lips, but his woodenly cold face showed no warmth, "He is actually my granddaughter's husband, since we have such a connection, I will take good care of him."

Chapter 458: 458. The Rebellion on Xingluo Island

At the end of the first round, Sheng Yue won by one point.

Mo Yan's expression remained unchanged, "Whether you want to stay here or go to the other side, I believe you can achieve great things."

"Thank you for your praise, Master." Sheng Yue nodded slightly, "I hope so."

Both of them collected their chess pieces and prepared for the next round.

"I never mentioned to you that I have a daughter." Mo Yan began, his expression somewhat regretful, "Her name is Mo Gui Xin. I had originally planned to take her back to the other side with me. But she's not like me, and she's not like my child. She's like her mother and just wants to be an ordinary person. She doesn't understand or accept what I tell her; she thinks I'm crazy."

Mo Yan gave a self-deprecating smile, "My only child once wanted to kill me, just to save a stranger who had nothing to do with her. At that moment, I knew that I shouldn't have had her. I don't belong to this ignorant and backward world, and she doesn't belong to me. So, she left, and I let her go without looking for her again. What could I do even if I found her? Kill each other as father and daughter?"

Sheng Yue knew why Mo Yan's daughter had such a name, and he also knew that the "unrelated stranger" Mo Yan had mentioned, who Mo Gui Xin had tried to kill him for, was actually Sheng Yue's mother. However, Mo Yan didn't know this.

"I never thought that after so many years, I would still have blood relatives in this world." Mo Yan sighed deeply, "Now, there is not only Su Liang, but she also has a child, a daughter, right? What's the child's name? Have you seen her?"

Sheng Yue nodded, "It's a girl, named Gu Nuan. I haven't seen her."

“Gu Nuan?” Mo Yan repeated the two words, and his eyes suddenly softened, “She must be a lovely child... When Xin’er was born, I also thought of forgetting everything about that side and staying here. For a few years, I really tried not to think about the past, but in the end, I failed. I despise everything here, both the people and the environment are so backward and crude. I couldn’t convince myself to force myself to get used to these things, even for my daughter.”

As he spoke, Mo Yan’s gaze shifted from the shadows of the banyan tree on the wall to Sheng Yue’s face, looking as kindly as if he were his grandson, “You are right to want to go to the other side. Just having this idea puts you on a completely different level from the barbarians of this world. People like He Wei are pursuing power, and it’s just a joke. Frogs at the bottom of a well can only see a small patch of the sky above but have no idea how vast and fantastic the outside world is. That’s all they will ever know in their lives, but you and I are different.”

Sheng Yue nodded, “It’s thanks to you, Master, for showing me the way and helping me find the meaning of life.”

As for this title of “master,” He Wei didn’t know, and neither did Gu Ling and Su Liang. In fact, Sheng Yue was not only Mo Yan’s loyal subordinate but also his disciple.

“But...” Sheng Yue placed a chess piece on the board and asked Mo Yan a question, “Why didn’t Gu Ling ever think of going back?”

Mo Yan’s hand paused, the smile on his face disappeared, and then he pressed the chess piece in his hand heavily onto the board, snorting coldly, “He didn’t even know it was possible to go back, so he had resigned himself to his fate. Believe me, if he went back, he would never return to this barbaric and backward world for anyone.”

However, Sheng Yue shook his head, “I think Gu Ling is different.” He knew that Mo Yan was displeased, but he continued, “People are different from one another. Some, like Su Liang and Gu Ling, have only love and affection in their hearts, and they will still be the same even after experiencing a vast world.”

Mo Yan said coldly, “What are you trying to say?”

Sheng Yue placed another chess piece on the board, “What I’m trying to say is that when dealing with people like Gu Ling and Su Liang, we mustn’t have any illusions. There is only one way to deal with them: defeat them, control them, and leave them with no other choice.”

Mo Yan looked deeply into Sheng Yue’s eyes and slowly smiled, “Are you worried that I will be soft-hearted towards Su Liang because of our relationship?”

Sheng Yue shook his head, “I’m not worried about that. I just believe that when dealing with that couple, we must be tough. There is no room for negotiation with them.”

Mo Yan nodded lightly, “I was originally worried that you would be won over by Gu Ling and Su Liang. Now it seems I was overly concerned.”

In the midst of their conversation, the second round ended, and Sheng Yue won again.

“Never mind, you can go back and rest, and then take charge of the island’s defense.” Mo Yan waved his hand, and the ruby ring on his finger sparkled dazzlingly in the sunlight filtering through the leaves.

Sheng Yue left Mo Yan’s courtyard and returned to his residence at the City Lord Mansion.

As soon as he entered the door, he saw He Wei standing in the courtyard waiting for him. He Wei’s ear was not bandaged, but it had stopped bleeding and still looked very scary.

As the courtyard door closed behind him, He Wei quickly walked over, grabbed Sheng Yue’s neck, and slammed him against the wall. His eyes were full of maliciousness, “You despicable bastard! You actually betrayed me! What on earth are you trying to do? Have you been conquered by Su Liang, like my granddaughter Min Rou? How did she conquer you? Did she let you into her bed? Is that what you wanted?”

Sheng Yue swung his palm, pushing He Wei away, coughed twice while clutching his chest, and said coldly, “Mind your language. Su Liang is the Master’s granddaughter. If I tell the Master how you insulted her, do you think he would really turn a blind eye? Su Liang is more noble than you He Family servants, whether the Master cares about her or not.”

When He Wei heard the words “servant,” he was completely infuriated and drew his sword to attack Sheng Yue. Soon, He Wei’s two sons also joined the fight.

It didn’t take long for Sheng Yue, who had only one hand left, to get injured.

He Wei’s eyes were filled with murderous intent. Sheng Yue had been gone for so long and yet still had Mo Yan’s trust. Mo Yan cut off one of He Wei’s ears today, but did not punish Sheng Yue, who had also deceived him. This made He Wei realize that he had lost Mo Yan’s favor, and as long as Sheng Yue was alive, the He Family’s power on Xingluo Island would soon fall into his hands!

However, He Wei still had some sense left. If he and his sons killed Sheng Yue in broad daylight, they would definitely anger Mo Yan. Although He Wei was increasingly dissatisfied with Mo Yan, it was not time to turn against him yet.

“Stop!” He Wei called off the attack and ordered his sons to stop, “Enough!”

Sheng Yue looked at the wound on his arm, still appearing calm.

He Wei hated Sheng Yue’s face the most, as if nothing could touch or frighten him. He Wei said coldly, “Let today’s matter end here. If you dare to spout nonsense in front of the Master again, I won’t be so polite next time! Let’s go!”

Sheng Yue watched the He Family father and sons leave his courtyard before turning and returning to his room.

“Father, why did you let him go? He’s a cripple. Even if we kill him, can the Master really hold a grudge against our He Family? Who on this island dares to disobey our He Family?” He Wei’s son was puzzled. In the time Sheng Yue was missing, members who originally advocated for him had been removed by the He Family. Two of them were found hanged in a grove by the sea. Actually, the two wanted to escape but had

no ill intentions. They just couldn't survive on the island anymore after being excluded by the He Family both openly and in secret.

And two others, who had been sent by Mo Yan to search for Sheng Yue, hadn't returned either.

Upon hearing his son's words, He Wei's anger burned even hotter, "Shut up!"

His other son, seeing that no one was around, whispered into He Wei's ear, "Father, we can't stand this humiliation any longer... Our He Family played a huge role in establishing the power on Xingluo Island. You were loyal to the Master for your whole life. Who could compare to your achievements and hard work? Yet in the Master's eyes, your status is lower than that of that cripple Sheng Yue! We can't swallow this resentment!"

"That's right, Father! If we continue like this, when will it end? Father, you have already sacrificed half of your life for the Master, and our sister died outside. Let's just seize the magic treasure and make our He Family the Master!" He Wei's eldest son also joined in.

He Wei frowned deeply, "Both of you, be quiet! How can you say such nonsense?" However, since he didn't stop them from speaking at first and only spoke up after listening to them, it meant that he didn't completely disagree with his sons' thoughts. He was just hesitating.

But soon, He Wei received a report that Mo Yan had ordered all defenses on Xingluo Island to be handed over to Sheng Yue, with everyone else acting on his orders.

This was equivalent to Mo Yan openly slapping He Wei in the face by putting newly returned Sheng Yue in a higher position than everyone else on the island. It made the He Family's authority on the island a complete joke.

This directly led to He Wei, who had been hesitating, to finally make up his mind under the constant instigation of his children. Not only that, but many people also followed them.

Today was New Year's Eve. Following the continuous failures of Xingluo Island over the past year, Mo Yan's reputation had fallen. The elders on the island knew that their martial arts skills were not much worse than Mo Yan's, with masters everywhere. What they were genuinely afraid of was Mo Yan's magic treasure that could create "miracles." If the magic treasure could change hands, why did they have to be Mo Yan's servants?

After having his ears cut off, being stripped of power, and controlled by his own children and grandchildren, He Wei's suppressed ambition quickly swelled, leaving him with no choice but to rebel.

And the first step in the He Family's rebellion was to spread a certain truth across Xingluo Island: their greatest enemy, Su Liang, was actually Mo Yan's own granddaughter.

Knowing this was enough to break the resolve of the martial arts masters who had originally followed Mo Yan, hoping for power and riches one day: so their failures were because Mo Yan was unwilling to kill his own granddaughter? The biggest spy on Xingluo Island turned out to be Island Master Mo Yan himself! Mo Yan already had control of the world through his bloodline, so how could they have any chance to rise? This made their loyalty and sacrifices for Xingluo Island over the years seem like a huge joke!

Meanwhile, He Wei naturally became the people's choice and was elected as the new Island Master. Their time of action was on New Year's Eve.

Mo Yan, who was in the forbidden area, seemed unaware of everything, and He Wei was deeply wary of Sheng Yue, who was like a venomous snake in his eyes. Thus, the first order he issued after becoming the new Island Master was: Kill Sheng Yue; he is a traitor and has submitted to Gu Ling and Su Liang.

However, when night fell and several masters charged into Sheng Yue's courtyard, they found it empty. Sheng Yue's whereabouts remained a mystery even after searching the entire island, and the two subordinates he brought back during the day were also gone.

By now, He Wei had realized that something was wrong, but once the arrow was on the bowstring, he had to shoot. The rebellion had begun and there was no turning back. Their next target, their real enemy, was Mo Yan, who had ruled Xingluo Island for decades. Only by eliminating Mo Yan and seizing his magic treasure could He Wei become the new king of Xingluo Island.

New Year's Eve.

The red lanterns all around Xingluo Island were lit, illuminating the New Year paintings and Fu Lu characters on the doors. But tonight, no one could eat their New Year's Eve dinner in peace, nor keep vigil.

Women and children locked their doors, while men gathered near the forbidden area holding torches, surrounding the mysterious forbidden area where they could not enter casually.

The forbidden area was surrounded by high walls, with one gate guarded by two elders, who were Mo Yan's trusted subordinates. These two did not yield to He Wei and were no longer guarding the gate.

"Father, could Mo Yan have escaped?" asked He Wei's son.

He Wei, surrounded by others, walked over. He was still unmasked and had not bandaged the wound of his cut ear. It was intentionally left exposed, so everyone would know how Mo Yan treated him.

"We can't even find Sheng Yue, could they both have escaped?" He Wei's grandson He Peng was a bit excited and wanted to kick down the gate.

He Wei pulled his grandson back, "Don't go in recklessly. Sheng Yue might have escaped, but Mo Yan wouldn't leave." There were treasures inside the forbidden area, and Mo Yan had guarded them for a lifetime. If he could leave, he would have done so long ago.

He Wei signaled to another elder to call out to Mo Yan, "Mo Yan! All these years, we have been loyal to you, but in the end, we gained nothing! The world you promised us has ultimately ended up in your granddaughter's hands! We've lost so many brothers because we believed your lies. Now, you must give us an explanation!"

"Explanation!" The crowd's emotions surged, chanting together.

He Peng shouted, "Mo Yan! Come out if you dare! Why should all the treasures in the forbidden area belong to you? They belong to everyone on Xingluo Island!"

As soon as he said this, echoes of agreement erupted.

Seeing He Wei didn't stop him, He Peng was even more encouraged. He kicked the door hard, snatched a torch, and threw it inside the wall, "Mo Yan, hand over the magic treasure that belongs to Xingluo Island! We can spare your life and let you meet your granddaughter! Let's see if she'll recognize you!"

"Hand it over! Hand it over!"

As the torches lit up the sky, a fire started within the forbidden area, but still, no one responded to the commotion outside.

He Wei was growing uneasy in his heart. In fact, he couldn't be sure if Mo Yan's magic treasure could change hands. With today's events, he could no longer bear to serve Mo Yan as a servant. Even if he couldn't get the magic treasure, he had to get rid of Mo Yan; otherwise, there would be no prospects for the He Family!

He Wei pointed at two people, "You two, go in and check."

The two immediately stepped back, knowing that going in now, with the uncertain situation, they might be the first to meet the Yama King.

However, other unselected people naturally supported He Wei's order. If those two didn't go in, it might be their turn next. Especially since He Wei had chosen young people with no roots on the island.

Soon after, the two reluctantly leaped over the high wall and entered the forbidden area.

"Mo Yan, I've sent someone to invite you out. If you have any requests, just mention them, and we can discuss them." He Wei pretended to call out again.

But the two who entered the forbidden area made no sound, and the fire inside did not spread. The situation remained unclear.

So He Wei sent in two more people, with the same result.

The torches thrown in afterward also failed to ignite a large fire inside the forbidden area.

As time went on, the men gathered outside began to feel uneasy, as if the sinister darkness behind them contained Mo Yan, who could make them disappear with just a wave of his hand.

Even He Wei's face couldn't stay composed as he heard his son suggest using explosives, forsaking the treasure, and blowing up the forbidden area. He couldn't decide and was still unwilling. Without the magic treasure, he doubted whether he could control the masters on Xingluo Island...

At that moment, He Wei heard someone behind him say, "Why is the ground shaking?"

The next moment, He Wei saw the high wall in front of him tilting toward him. He thought it was an illusion, and subconsciously turned to run, only to disappear along with the surrounding people and the high walls into the dark night...

In the forbidden area, Sheng Yue watched Mo Yan withdraw his hand from the ground, stand up, open his eyes, and saw that many things that had been in front of them earlier had disappeared. The big banyan tree they had seen during the day, the stone table in the courtyard, even the ground had become bare, and the walls were gone, leaving their vision even more open.

It was terrifying, as if a typhoon had just swept through their surroundings, ravaging everything on the ground so thoroughly that it was as if those things had never existed at all...

Seeing the horror in Sheng Yue's eyes, Mo Yan smiled contentedly, "I never thought you would make such a face."

"Master, this... it's incredible." Sheng Yue marveled, "That magic treasure can even take people in! Are they... still alive?"

Mo Yan nodded, "They're alive. With a single thought, I can send them back to where they belong." He then took off the ruby ring and handed it to Sheng Yue, "He Wei thought it was this, but it's just a souvenir."

Mo Yan looked up at the starry sky, "Everything that I can touch can be taken into the small world I possess. Of course, the space inside is limited, but it's enough to teach them a lesson."

Sheng Yue respectfully returned the ring to Mo Yan, who put it back on its original finger, "Master, with such power, Gu Ling and Su Liang are no match."

"In consideration of Su Liang being my granddaughter, I will give her a choice when the time comes." Mo Yan snorted coldly.

Chapter 459: 459. Can you bear to let go of Nuannuan?

The first day of the new year.

Gu Ling and Su Liang offered their New Year greetings to the elders in their family, receiving red envelopes in return. But the one who received the most gifts was naturally the youngest, beloved treasure of the family, Gu Xiaonuan.

Gu Xiaonuan wore a festive red dress today, with a collar and cuffs adorned with snow-white silver fox fur, looking absolutely adorable. From her clothes to her shoes and socks, everything was handmade by Gu Ling himself.

Not long after, visitors came to offer New Year greetings one after another.

Gu Ling had taken in many disciples, with Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu being the two oldest. The rest were still little children.

Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu had agreed to come together, and they each prepared valuable New Year gifts for Gu Xiaonuan.

The New Year gifts Gu Ling prepared for Ji Xiaoshu and Zhengzheng, his two disciples, were two wooden boxes that looked exactly the same from the outside.

Zhengzheng opened his box, his face full of surprise. "Thank you, Master!" Inside was an airplane model he had never seen before, with sleek lines and a shiny finish. It was beautiful. Zhengzheng liked airplanes the most and had already collected a few, all given by Gu Ling.

Ji Xiaoshu, on the other hand, was speechless as he opened his box to find another box inside...

After opening four layers of boxes, Ji Xiaoshu was getting fed up. "Master, don't tell me the New Year gift is just this pile of boxes!"

“It’s called nesting boxes.” Gu Ling pointed at the lacquered nesting dolls on the window sill, which he had also made himself.

When Ji Xiaoshu opened the fifth layer of the box, he finally saw something different: a black ribbon with a dark green, embroidered little pine tree on it.

“Master, what is this?” Ji Xiaoshu picked up the ribbon, comparing it to his wrist. It seemed to be a wristband with a buckle.

Ji Yuebai coughed lightly, “Xiaogu, couldn’t you have given him a jade one? Or even one made of wood?”

“I guess it’s a hidden weapon.” Zhengzheng leaned in.

The next moment, a silver needle shot towards Ji Yuebai. He dodged hastily, stumbled, and fell to the ground. Wiping the cold sweat from his forehead, he got up and looked at the seemingly ordinary bracelet, with a completely different expression. “Son, are you trying to murder your father? Xiaogu, can I have one of these nice things too?”

The two children had already figured out the mechanism. Ji Xiaoshu grinned, “A hidden weapon should look unassuming to catch people off guard! I like it, haha!”

Zhengzheng was a bit envious. Turning his head, he saw Gu Ling take out another ribbon from his pocket and hand it to him. Besides the pattern being a little sun, it was identical to Ji Xiaoshu’s ribbon.

“Thank you, Master!” Zhengzheng immediately put it on his own wrist.

Ji Xiaoshu now felt unbalanced. “Master gave my senior brother two gifts, while I only got one!”

“You got six.” Gu Ling pointed at the pile of differently-sized wooden boxes.

Ji Xiaoshu: ... Master is really going to great lengths to tease him!

Zhengzheng laughed, saying that he would play with the airplane model together with Ji Xiaoshu. Their toys originally belonged to both of them. Because Ji Xiaoshu came later, Zhengzheng already had many when he arrived.

As for Ji Yuebai’s request to have a self-defense hidden weapon, it was totally ignored by his son and his son’s master.

When Ji Yuebai came, he brought Ji Xiaoshu with him. But when he left, he was alone.

Ji Xiaoshu waved casually, “Dad, go back quickly! I’ve already spent the New Year with you! From now on, you mind your own business, and I mind mine! Master still has to punish me by making me run!”

Ji Yuebai could only laugh and cry, “Alright. Your father will come another day to see you. Study hard with your master and master’s wife. Could you lend your wristband to your father for a couple of days?”

Ji Xiaoshu shook his head, “Of course not, Dad. Your wrist is too thick to wear it. But don’t worry, when I learn how to make it with Master, I’ll make one for you!”

Ji Yuebai laughed heartily, "Alright, alright! Your father will be waiting!"

Zhengzheng didn't stay. Most of the Wan Family members had moved to the capital city, and he had many relatives. There were quite a few "social engagements" during the New Year. In the words of Old Master Wan, Zhengzheng was now the most promising person in their family. It wouldn't do for him to be absent during the New Year.

It started snowing again in the afternoon. Ji Xiaoshu put Gu Xiaonuan to sleep, but he didn't want to sleep himself. Instead, he snuggled up to Su Liang, sitting by the window on the second floor of Yuanming Pavilion, enjoying the snow outside.

"Master's wife, is the world at peace now?" Ji Xiaoshu asked Su Liang.

Su Liang nodded, "I guess so."

Ji Xiaoshu frowned, "My dad also said that, but aren't there bad guys who want to cause trouble?"

Su Liang smiled, "There are so many people in the world, there will always be evildoers, no matter what time." It's a peaceful era when there's no war and the world is united.

Ji Xiaoshu sighed, "My master and mistress really have it hard. Do the bad guys think that harming you all can somehow bring them the whole world?"

Su Liang nodded, "You can say that. But the leader of Xingluo Island wants something other than this world." If Mo Yan and He Wei were just ambitious for power like He Wei, things would be much simpler.

At that moment, Gu Ling entered the room with a plate of desserts he had made for Su Liang and the children.

Gu Ling put down the tray, and Ji Xiaoshu went over to open one of the cups, his eyes lighting up. It was the red bean pudding that Gu Ling had made once before.

"Big brother missed out on a treat today!" Ji Xiaoshu took a spoonful and tasted it. It was sweet, smooth, and absolutely delicious.

After trying it, Su Liang also praised, "Great God, it's much better than last time."

"Master, after eliminating all the bad guys, let's open a restaurant!" Ji Xiaoshu suggested, "Master can be the chef, and I'll be in charge of collecting money."

Gu Ling knocked on Ji Xiaoshu's forehead, "Dream on."

"Well, my big brother's family has a restaurant already, I can just go there to collect money, haha!" Ji Xiaoshu laughed again.

Su Liang couldn't help but smile, Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu were really like two sons she and Gu Ling had raised together, one sensible and well-behaved, the other mischievous and adorable.

After finishing their desserts, Ji Xiaoshu was tired. Su Liang let him sleep with Gu Xiaonuan, but Gu Ling disagreed and told Ji Xiaoshu to go back to his own room to sleep.

“No, I want to sleep here!” Ji Xiaoshu had already taken off his shoes, climbed into bed, and tucked in beside Gu Xiaonuan. He pulled up the quilt and closed his eyes, “Don’t make noise, my sister and I are asleep now.”

Su Liang held Gu Ling’s hand and chuckled softly, “Great God, don’t be so sensitive about the children.”

“He’s not little anymore,” Gu Ling huffed, “I’m sure Ji Yuebai has taught him how to steal Nuannuan.”

Su Liang coughed lightly, “Where can he go? They are all part of our family. It’s too early to think about these things now. As for the future, it depends on who your precious daughter likes. Our opinions don’t matter.”

Gu Ling sighed, “I know.” That’s also the reason he didn’t throw Ji Xiaoshu out.

After a while, Gu Ling suddenly frowned, looked at the sleeping Ji Xiaoshu and Gu Xiaonuan, and asked Su Liang, “What if Zhengzheng and Xiaoshu both want to be with Nuannuan in the future? What should we do?”

Su Liang shook her head, “Great God, don’t think too much. The children are still so young. Maybe Nuannuan will like someone else when she grows up, not the two of them. They are siblings first.”

Gu Ling said melancholy, “We were once each other’s best friends.”

Su Liang nodded, “Indeed. But for the children’s matters, let nature take its course.”

Gu Ling sighed, “I hope time passes slower, and Nuannuan doesn’t grow up so quickly.”

That night, since Zhengzheng wasn’t here, Ji Xiaoshu wanted to sleep with Gu Ling and Su Liang, saying that he would be scared if he slept alone in a room.

“Master, if you don’t want me to sleep with Mistress and sister, that’s fine. You can go to my room and sleep with me, I don’t mind!” Ji Xiaoshu’s little face was serious.

“You seem wide awake, go build a snowman downstairs,” Gu Ling said.

Ji Xiaoshu tilted his head and placed one hand on his forehead, “Is Master abusing his disciple during New Year’s? Doesn’t Mistress care?”

“Enough. Great God, you take Xiaoshu to have a bath,” Su Liang stopped Gu Ling’s childish argument with his disciple.

Gu Ling grabbed Ji Xiaoshu and headed out.

Ji Xiaoshu kept laughing, “Master never took me to bathe with him before. Were you afraid I would see you naked? My dad said that men should be confident!”

Su Liang’s lips twitched, and she heard Gu Ling say, “Su Xiaoliang, can I bury your disciple in the snow?”

Su Liang replied in agreement, “You can. Plant a little tree on the first day of the new year, and by autumn, you can harvest a big tree.”

Ji Xiaoshu “wailed”, “Sister, save me!”

Gu Xiaonuan happily rolled on the bed, “Second Brother is so dumb!” It must be Gu Ling who taught her that.

Ji Xiaoshu heard it, “Master, you’re slandering me in front of my sister!”

Gu Ling immediately asked Ji Xiaoshu a question, “Why does the sun rise in the east and set in the west?”

Ji Xiaoshu was stunned, “Huh?”

“Dumb.” Gu Ling summed it up in one word.

Ji Xiaoshu was speechless, “As if you know the answer, Master!”

“I know.” Gu Ling said.

Su Liang heard the sound of the door opening and closing next door. Gu Ling went downstairs to fetch hot water.

Ji Xiaoshu shouted in the room, “Master, come back quickly and tell me why the sun rises in the east and sets in the west!”

“Where’s Big Brother?” Gu Xiaonuan leaned into Su Liang’s arms, tilted her little head, and asked about Zhengzheng.

Su Liang smiled, “Your big brother is not here today.” In the eyes of Gu Xiaonuan, Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu probably had never been apart.

After a while, Su Liang heard the sounds of the master and disciple next door “making noise” again.

“Master, hurry up and come in! It’s so warm in here!”

“Master, you’re actually shy and dare not undress in front of me?”

“Shut up.”

“It’s not like there are strangers around.”

“Shut up.”

“The mouth is for talking.”

“Uh ... help me, Master!”

When Gu Ling carried the freshly bathed Ji Xiaoshu back to the room, Gu Xiaonuan was almost asleep.

“Master!” Ji Xiaoshu, barefoot, was thrown onto the bed by Gu Ling, rolled over, lay down beside Su Liang, then raised his head and looked past Su Liang to Gu Xiaonuan on the far side, “Is sister asleep?”

“Yeah, don’t bother her, or I’ll make you take her to another room to sleep.” Su Liang said.

“Master must hope for that so he can monopolize my mother! I won’t let him get what he wants!” Ji Xiaoshu looped his arm around Su Liang’s and said with a happy grin, “I’ll be good.”

With only one lamp left on, Gu Ling lowered the mosquito net and lay down on the outer side, then he reached out and pulled Ji Xiaoshu next to him.

“Master, will you secretly throw me out in the middle of the night?” Ji Xiaoshu asked in a low voice.

Gu Ling answered, “I will.”

Ji Xiaoshu: ...

“Mother, don’t let Master throw me out.” Ji Xiaoshu said while yawning.

“He won’t. Go to sleep.” Su Liang tucked Ji Xiaoshu in.

“Mother is the best.” Ji Xiaoshu said, resting his little head on Gu Ling’s shoulder and closing his eyes. He fell asleep quickly.

During the New Year, Gu Ling and Su Liang didn’t stay up late reading or making medicine like before. The room was warm, and the two of them went to bed early with their child.

The second day of the Lunar New Year.

When Su Liang woke up, Ji Xiaoshu was still sleeping, and Gu Ling had already gone out with the girl and returned.

“Mom...” Ji Xiaoshu muttered in his sleep and snuggled closer to Su Liang.

Su Liang then stayed with Ji Xiaoshu until he woke up naturally before getting out of bed.

Su Liang didn’t have a home to go back to, but Su Mansion was Ren Dong and Ying Ying’s home.

Ren Dong was now pregnant as well and stayed at the Marquis Zhong Xin Mansion during the New Year. Today, she and Qi Jun came back early. Right after they arrived, Lian Shun and Ying Ying came too.

Ren Dong and Ying Ying hadn’t shown their pregnancy yet, but Qi Jun and Lian Shun were both extremely nervous, fearing they might get hurt.

Ying Ye also came, of course. He loved Su Mansion the most, but he also had a great time at Lin’s Family. After coming back and seeing Ji Xiaoshu, he picked him up and raised him high, then they went out to the snow house to play together.

“You guys go help Xiaoye and Xiaoshu build a snowman.” Su Liang said to Qi Jun and Lian Shun.

Qi Jun stood up, “Okay.”

Lian Shun held Ying Ying’s hand and warned her, “Don’t eat anything cold, and get up slowly.”

"I know, I know." Ying Ying waved her hand, "Hurry up and make a beautiful snowman."

Finally, all the men left, and Ying Ying couldn't help but sigh, "Being pregnant is like being in prison. Someone is watching me no matter what I do." However, the smile on her face showed that even being in prison was sweet and fulfilling.

Ren Dong expressed the same feeling. Sometimes she couldn't help but want to hit Qi Jun. Ying Ying felt the same way.

"It's normal. My husband was like that when I was pregnant too." Su Liang laughed.

Ying Ying quickly mentioned Xingluo Island, "The agreed date is the first day of the third month. What should we do then? Should we let Xiaogu take someone there?"

Su Liang shook her head, "That's not settled yet. Ideally, we should all go."

"Should we leave the children in the capital city?" Ying Ying frowned. Not that there was no one to help with Gu Xiaonuan, but it was hard for her to accept being away from her parents at such a young age, let alone for Gu Ling and Su Liang to accept.

"Let's talk about it later. We still have some time to plan." Su Liang sighed softly, "You don't have to worry about it. Just focus on having a safe pregnancy and delivery."

Ren Dong gently stroked her still-flat belly, "If I'd known, I would have married later. Now that people are needed, I can't help at all."

Su Liang shook her head, "What are you talking about? It's true that people are needed, but with only one enemy left on Xingluo Island, we're not that short on manpower."

"If you all have to go south together and leave the kids behind, you can send them to my house. My parents will be overjoyed." Ying Ying said.

Su Liang nodded, "I know, but I'll talk to Gu Ling again."

Before lunch, a cute big snowman appeared next to the snow house.

In the afternoon, Qi Jun and Ren Dong, as well as Lian Shun and Ying Ying, left, and Ying Ye also went back to Lin's Family with Ying Ying.

The children were napping, and Su Liang brought up what she talked with Ying Ying today.

"I'll go, you guys stay at home." Gu Ling said.

"But the identity of Mo Yan's granddaughter might be more or less useful, and I think I should show my face. After all, I am the real Transmigrator." Su Liang pondered.

"Can you bear to part with Nuannuan?" Gu Ling asked.

Su Liang countered, "Can you bear to part with Nuannuan?"

Gu Ling frowned, "But we can't take her to dangerous places."

Su Liang sighed softly, "If there's no other way, we have to find a place to hide her."

Chapter 460: 460. Lantern Festival Light Show

Xingluo Island.

Three days had passed since Mo Yan imprisoned the rebels in his portable space when Sheng Yue saw He Wei again.

Sheng Yue did not see how Mo Yan had done it, but everything in the forbidden area had been restored to its original state. The high wall that had been collected in space appeared again, lying on the ground, having been broken from its foundation.

Crossing the collapsed walls, Sheng Yue entered the forbidden area and saw all the people who had marched aggressively with torches on New Year's Eve kneeling outside Mo Yan's courtyard, their heads lowered, looking miserable and haggard.

Hearing footsteps, one person turned his head in a daze, it was He Wei's eldest grandson, He Peng. His gaze fell on Sheng Yue without the previous disgust and arrogance, leaving only fear as if he had just experienced something terrible.

Mo Yan was in his small courtyard, holding a broom, sweeping the fallen leaves under the banyan tree.

"Master." Sheng Yue bypassed the kneeling people and stopped at the door to salute.

He Wei, who was kneeling in the front, raised his head at the sound, glanced at Sheng Yue, and immediately lowered his head again, his body trembling slightly as if he had thought of something.

"I don't blame them." Mo Yan swept the fallen leaves into a pile, lit them with a match, and the flames quickly shot up, casting half-light and half-dark on his face. "People often act foolishly out of ignorance. Fearlessness is a good thing, but the fearlessness of the ignorant can sometimes be fatal."

Sheng Yue respectfully asked, "How does Master plan to deal with the rebels?"

Mo Yan's expression was indifferent, "Do you think, after this incident, that they would still harbor ill intentions?"

Sheng Yue shook his head, "No."

"Since I did not know before and now I do, and it is the New Year, I should give some gifts to my granddaughter, grandson-in-law, and little great-grandson as a token of my intentions." Mo Yan smiled slightly, "Ayue, what do you think I should give?"

After a moment of thought, Sheng Yue replied, "Gu Ling and Su Liang have everything they need in terms of status and wealth. If Master wants to give a gift, the thought is what matters most."

Mo Yan nodded, "You're right. The previous conflicts were mostly caused by He Wei's deception. If I had known Su Liang was my granddaughter earlier, we could have sat down and discussed things properly. Many things didn't have to happen. They know that my purpose is not to harm anyone, and if the path is opened, wouldn't they be overjoyed to return with me to a more civilized and advanced world? What do you think?"

Sheng Yue nodded, "Master is right. However, in my opinion, Gu Ling and Su Liang may not be willing to take risks for this cause."

Upon hearing the last two words, Mo Yan's face was shrouded by a layer of gloom, as if muttering to himself, "We must take that step eventually..." Then, he abruptly changed the topic, "Although I believe they will not dare to harbor any ill intentions again, we cannot pretend this hasn't happened. Let He Wei come in."

As Sheng Yue left the courtyard, he met He Wei's uneasy gaze.

"Master wants to speak with Grandfather He." Sheng Yue's expression was calm. For a long time, everyone knew the animosity between him and the He Family, as they had always targeted him. But Sheng Yue had never lost his composure in front of the He Family members, not even showing a hint of anger.

He Wei got up from the ground, almost unable to stand steadily, and was caught by Sheng Yue's outstretched hand. He looked deeply into Sheng Yue's eyes, a trace of regret flashing through them, but not for treating Sheng Yue that way, only for not being able to stay as composed as Sheng Yue.

Entering the courtyard, He Wei knelt down again, crying in pain, "Master, please forgive me! Forgive me! I was confused and committed a grave mistake, disgracing the decades of trust you placed in me. I deserve to die!"

In the past, He Wei never referred to himself as an old servant, and Mo Yan had given him the respect he deserved on the island, even promising to help him gain the world before leaving, and truly taking practical action for it. However, it was obvious that after the failure of the rebellion and being taken into Mo Yan's space, He Wei had completely lost his previous ambition.

"Old He, haven't I been good to you all these years?" Mo Yan's voice was cold.

He Wei nodded repeatedly, "Yes, Master has been extremely kind to this old servant. It was this old servant who committed a grave mistake! Please grant me another chance to redeem myself! I swear I will serve you with my life, along with my children and grandchildren, without any hesitation!"

"We've been living in seclusion on Xingluo Island for so many years, and only started leaving the island last year. What I asked you to do was for your own good, as well as the whole island, not for myself. Do you really think I'm interested in the power and wealth of this world?" Mo Yan asked.

He Wei's forehead was covered in cold sweat, "Yes... Master did everything for this old servant, for the people on the island... Master has no interest in worldly power and wealth, this old servant knows..."

The word "people" elevated Mo Yan's status to that of a king.

"And how have you repaid me? If only you had informed me as soon as you found out that Su Liang is my granddaughter, none of this would have happened. Before the conflict between Su Liang and me escalated, we had a chance to recognize each other and negotiate properly. The glory and wealth you want would not have been difficult to achieve." Mo Yan sneered.

He Wei raised his hand and slapped himself hard, "It's all this old servant's fault!"

"Now, for the sake of Xingluo Island's future, I must apologize sincerely to my granddaughter Su Liang for the past events." Mo Yan stared coldly at He Wei, "You are the culprit behind our inability to recognize each other and the escalation of the conflict. Despite all these years of loyalty, and even though you've been incompetent, I've always given you opportunities. But you didn't cherish them, and now you can't blame me for being heartless. Rest assured, when you're gone, I'll leave a bloodline for the He family. Rou'er is my favorite child after all."

Upon hearing this, He Wei fell to the ground, his face turning ashen. The moment he entered the room, he knew he would have a hard time leaving alive. Whether it's a large or small country, rebellion is always unforgivable, and Mo Yan has never been a benevolent and kind person. Mo Yan wants to use his death to establish authority and deter others. But until the last moment, He Wei still thought that Mo Yan would spare his children and grandchildren out of sympathy. However, when Mo Yan said he would leave a bloodline for the He family, he mentioned only Min Rou, who had already defected to Su Liang... even though Min Rou was his own granddaughter, she didn't even have the He surname!

"Master, this old servant knows that he deserves to die a thousand times, but I beg you, spare my children and grandchildren, and let them atone for their sins! It's all this old servant's fault!" He Wei knocked his head heavily on the ground, over and over again, soon enough blood was flowing from his forehead.

Everyone outside who was kneeling heard He Wei's plea, but those who had been following He Wei three days ago and claimed to be willing to go through fire and water for him, were now as silent as cicadas in winter. Even He Wei's sons and grandsons didn't have the courage to lift their heads.

Mo Yan's clear and icy voice came from the courtyard, "The He family stirred up rebellion, disrupted the peace of Xingluo Island, their crimes are unforgivable, execute the entire clan."

He Wei's children and grandchildren, some quick to react, tried to escape as soon as they got up, while others sat on the ground with a dazed expression. Some already foresaw their inevitable death and began to wail.

However, Mo Yan and Sheng Yue didn't need to take action themselves, as the escapees were soon caught by others. As long as only the He family was in trouble, it meant that others were safe, so they naturally seized the opportunity to gain merit and let Mo Yan vent his anger on the He family.

Soon, the once-powerful He family members on the island were all captured.

He Wei never saw his children and grandchildren again, as Mo Yan ordered Sheng Yue to behead him, and Sheng Yue immediately obeyed.

"Send He Wei's head to the capital city as a token of my sincerity in apologizing to my granddaughter." Mo Yan said to Sheng Yue with a gentle gaze, "I've written a letter explaining the whole story. The other gifts are also prepared."

Sheng Yue wrapped He Wei's head in a cloth, putting it in a box. Mo Yan didn't ask Sheng Yue to arrange for someone to deliver the gifts to Jiaye City, but instead, he asked two other subordinates who had always guarded the forbidden area to go.

The two men soon left Xingluo Island with a full ship of gifts, including He Wei's head, as well as many treasures Mo Yan's subordinates had collected from various places over the years, including numerous precious medical books. There was also a letter written by him to Su Liang.

Mo Yan ordered the two men to deliver the items to the coast of Jiaye City, hand them over to Qiao Jing, and then return without going ashore.

Within a day, the He family, which had once been second only to Mo Yan on Xingluo Island, had completely disappeared. He Wei's headless corpse and his children and grandchildren were thrown into the sea.

Peace returned to Xingluo Island, even more so than before. The number of corpses hanging in the woods by the shore didn't increase, but aside from ignorant children, it seemed that no one on the island other than Mo Yan knew how to smile.

That night, Sheng Yue personally went to patrol the coast. A young man reported the situation to him and was about to leave when Sheng Yue stopped him, "Help me light the way."

The young man quickly took the lantern from Sheng Yue's hand and followed him in one direction.

After walking for a while, it was quiet all around, and the sound of the distant waves could be heard. Sheng Yue didn't look back and asked nonchalantly, "On New Year's Eve, where did you go?"

The lantern suddenly shook, and the young man looked uneasy, "Master Sheng, are you asking about..."

"That space." Sheng Yue said directly, "You know what I'm talking about, you've been in there. How big is it inside? What does it look like?"

"This... This humble one dares not speak too much, for fear of the Master's blame." The young man's voice grew lower and lower, and the lantern in his hand kept shaking.

"You can choose not to speak, but if I kill you now, all I need to say is that you wanted to defect. No one will care about you, and no one will remember you. You're still young, do you really want this?" Sheng Yue's tone was cold.

The young man looked up and saw a corpse hanging from a tree not far away, swaying gently in the wind, which was quite chilling.

"Young Master, don't kill me... I'll tell..." The young man's voice trembled.

About a quarter of an hour later, the two arrived at a cliff by the sea.

The wind howled, and the waves beat against the rocks below.

Sheng Yue stopped, turned around, and reached out. The young man hurriedly handed over the lantern in his hand.

Sheng Yue took the lantern and saw the young man subconsciously backing away. He said indifferently, "I'm not going to kill you, you can go back."

The young man's face was full of relief, "I won't tell anyone about tonight!" He turned and ran away.

Sheng Yue stood on the edge of the cliff, looking at the darkness of the rocks and the sea below, and stood quietly for a long time before finally leaving with the lantern.

Capital city.

After New Year's Eve, the Lantern Festival came quickly.

This was the first Lantern Festival since the unification of the world, and a grand lantern fair was to be held in the capital city.

Duanmu Chen specifically consulted with Gu Ling and Su Liang, asking if it would be inappropriate to hold a lantern fair at this time, and if anyone from Xingluo Island would come to cause trouble? After all, there would be a large crowd, and any accidents could have dire consequences.

Gu Ling and Su Liang both thought there was no need to be so nervous. The biggest enemy left, Xingluo Island, had already fought with them several times. From the beginning they wanted to kill Duanmu Chen and Su Liang, and to help Liang Country's Royal Family fight against Qian Country. Now, Mo Yan and his followers have retreated back to Xingluo Island, and his close aide Sheng Yue even actively showed goodwill to Gu Ling and Su Liang. It is almost certain that Mo Yan already knows that Su Liang is his granddaughter... The struggle is inevitable, but there will no longer be low-level tactics like harming innocent common people which only intensify conflicts – Mo Yan is not an impulsive person, or he wouldn't have endured for more than half a lifetime for a single goal.

Although Su Liang and Gu Ling believed there would be no problem, they reminded Duanmu Chen to arrange for personnel to maintain order and prevent accidental stampedes and other incidents. Duanmu Chen left this matter to the now Prime Minister Lin Boyan and General Lin Bojun, letting the two brothers take charge.

As soon as the sun set, the children in Su Mansion couldn't wait to go out and play. This was also Ji Xiaoshu and Ying Ye's first time celebrating the Lantern Festival in the capital city, and they were looking forward to it.

"Xiaoshu, Uncle Xiaoye, don't be in a hurry. Our family's restaurant has reserved the best room for us, and we'll be able to see the most beautiful lanterns." Zhengzheng was very patient.

"I'm going to see why my master and mistress are still not done cooking the glutinous rice balls!" Ji Xiaoshu ran out in a flash. In no time at all, she came trotting back behind Gu Ling.

Gu Ling and Su Liang not only made glutinous rice balls, but also fried rice balls. The different fillings made the skins different colors, but they were all made very small and cute. Because Su Liang said that eating big glutinous rice balls could be too greasy.

Everyone gathered around the table to taste the delicious glutinous rice balls.

Ji Xiaoshu ate one after another and quickly finished. She took another one from Gu Ling's bowl, "It's so delicious!"

Cen Man wanted to give Ji Xiaoshu two more servings, but he cheerfully refused, "No need, I'm full already, I just love eating my master's food!"

Everyone knew this.

After dinner and tangyuan, everyone in Su Mansion went out on the street to see the lanterns.

Lao Bai held Gu Xiaonuan, Cen Man accompanied Weng Ming and his grandson Weng Ran, Qi Yan accompanied his fiancée Nangong Qian, Gu Ling held Zhengzheng, and Su Liang held the jumping Ji Xiaoshu. Ying Ye ran back and forth among them.

To avoid the crowded children, the group bypassed the crowd and went directly to Wan Family Restaurant, where many friends and family had already arrived early.

"Master's wife, that lantern is so beautiful!" Ji Xiaoshu pointed to the lotus lantern hanging high on the shelf below.

"Ask your master to buy it." Su Liang said with a smile.

"Master, I want that one!" Ji Xiaoshu shook Gu Ling's arm.

Gu Ling turned his head and asked Zhengzheng, "Do you have one you like?"

Zhengzheng looked for a while before pointing at one.

Then Gu Ling flew out of the open window, causing a stir. It was really like an immortal descending to earth, incredibly beautiful.

Soon, Gu Ling brought back the lanterns his two disciples wanted. The condition was that they were not allowed to run around below, it wasn't safe.

Ji Xiaoshu and Zhengzheng took the lanterns and ran to the next room to play. Lao Bai, Cen Man and the others went to chat and drink tea with friends. Nangong Qian and Qi Yan strolled hand in hand below, and Nangong Qian went to talk to Min Rou.

Only Gu Ling and Su Liang were left in the room, sitting by the window, looking at the bustling and prosperous view below.

In the crowd, there were two ordinary-looking men, walking slowly with the flow of people. They were Feng Ming and Zhu Zan, who had been sent by Mo Yan to find Sheng Yue after Gu Ling rescued Old Man Mu and the Ying Ying siblings. The two of them were originally followers of Sheng Yue on the island.

The reason it took them so long to arrive at the capital city was that the two had traveled a long way to avoid detection by defenses near Jiaye City after leaving Xingluo Island. As soon as they landed, they heard Su Liang had not encountered any accidents and couldn't help but suspect Sheng Yue had an accident and never returned to Xingluo Island.

Feng Ming, a shrewd man, knew that if Sheng Yue died or had other accidents and couldn't return to the island, or could return but didn't, it would be best for him and Zhu Zan not to return to Xingluo Island either. Because the place was controlled by the He Family, they would only be

ostracized, and there would be no opportunity for them to get ahead. Also, the environment and relationships among people on the island made them feel uneasy: Mo Yan was too mysterious, and it was unclear what his intentions were.

Thus, under Feng Ming's strong persuasion, Zhu Zan finally decided to join him in taking advantage of their mission away from Xingluo Island to break away from its control and live as free men.

However, both of them were orphans, otherwise they wouldn't have gone to Xingluo Island in the first place. Going to Xingluo Island meant they wanted to make a name for themselves. After aimlessly visiting many places, the two finally decided through discussion to come to the capital city to seek opportunities.

At this moment, Feng Ming looked up and saw the stunning couple sitting by the window in the restaurant, illuminated by moonlight and lamplight, so beautiful that they could be considered heavenly immortals.

"Stop looking, be careful they notice us. If they find out where we came from, we'll be in big trouble." Zhu Zan pulled Feng Ming aside and whispered.

Feng Ming lowered his head, holding a child who was about to fall, then pretended to look at the lanterns on the roadside stall, "What if we reveal our identity and seek refuge with those two, what do you think?"

Zhu Zan stared wide-eyed, "Are you crazy?"

Feng Ming shook his head, "I'm not crazy, I've thought about it for a long time. If it wasn't for a martial arts competition that got me noticed by the people of Xingluo Island, I would've planned to join the army in Qian Country and fight. I just missed the opportunity. If you're scared, we can part ways here and go our separate ways. I came to the capital city to find a worthy lord." As Feng Ming finished saying this, he looked towards the restaurant again, meeting Gu Ling's indifferent gaze.