

## Three-Time 461

Chapter 461: 461. Good idea

Su Liang followed Gu Ling's gaze towards the crowded streets below, "Are there any suspicious people?"

Gu Ling nodded slightly, "Someone was watching me just now."

Su Liang laughed when he heard this, "You are good-looking, of course, people will look at you."

Gu Ling could no longer see Feng Ming and Zhu Zan in the crowd, there were too many people. Lin Bojun had arranged for soldiers to maintain order and keep the crowd moving to avoid accidents.

Ji Xiaoshu saw Ji Yuebai below and wanted to go find him, but Ji Yuebai was already carrying his youngest son and making his way towards the restaurant through the crowd.

"Brother! Brother!" Ji Yuebai's youngest son excitedly waved to Ji Xiaoshu.

Ji Xiaoshu ran downstairs, "Little brother, you're here! Dad, why are you only here now? Let's go play!"

Ji Yuebai shook his head, "There are too many people now, don't go out."

Recalling that he had promised Gu Ling not to run out, Ji Xiaoshu looked outside and nodded helplessly, "Alright then." Then he laughed again, "Master bought me a very beautiful lantern, little brother, come and play with it!"

Dressed in plain clothes, Duanmu Chen came to the Wan Family Restaurant to avoid causing a commotion. He originally wanted to bring his children out for some fun, but the Empress Dowager was afraid that it would be unsafe with so many people and kept the children in the palace.

"You two are really at leisure, not having to take care of the children yourselves. Where's Nuannuan?" Duanmu Chen asked as soon as he entered, looking for Gu Xiaonuan.

Su Liang pointed to the next room, "She should be with Old Qin."

Duanmu Chen poured himself a glass of alcohol, picked it up, and walked to the window. Looking at the bustling people below and the colorful lanterns, he sighed, "Finally, it feels like a time of peace."

Su Liang reminded Duanmu Chen, "Your Majesty, if you stand there, you will be a live target for anyone who wants to assassinate you."

Duanmu Chen laughed when he heard this, "What do I have to fear from assassination when I share a room with the two of you?" He sat down beside Gu Ling and drank half a glass of alcohol, "You two are the people who make me feel the most secure. If anyone wants to kill me, let them come. I want to see how Gu Ling kills them."

“Your Majesty, you can go down and join in the fun with the common people,” Gu Ling suggested.

Duanmu Chen snorted, “I know what you’re thinking – that I’m intruding on your couple’s world. With so many people below, if something were to happen to me, wouldn’t I just cause trouble for you? I might as well stay here and chat with you.”

“Emperor Uncle!” Ji Xiaoshu suddenly burst through the door, grabbing Duanmu Chen and leading him out, “Come on, come on!”

Duanmu Chen was puzzled, “Where are you taking me, Xiaoshu? We can’t go downstairs to play.”

“We’re not going downstairs, I’ve already promised Master and Mistress! I’m very well-behaved! We’re playing a game, and we’re just one person short. Dad asked me to invite Emperor Uncle!” As Ji Xiaoshu spoke, he had already dragged Duanmu Chen to the door.

Duanmu Chen: ... Well, it seems he is quite popular with the kids.

The next moment, Ji Xiaoshu turned around and laughed at Gu Ling, “I’ve taken Emperor Uncle away, Master! You owe me a favor! Don’t make me run as punishment next time!”

Gu Ling actually said a word of thanks, “Thank you.” Then he added, “No running is fine, I’ll punish you by making you practice writing instead.”

Duanmu Chen was speechless: Am I that annoying?

Ji Xiaoshu: ... He knew!

In the next room, the game Ji Xiaoshu was talking about was actually a card game taught to them by Gu Ling. Gu Ling had made the game according to Su Liang’s description and specially brought it over for everyone to play together.

Zhengzheng was explaining the rules to everyone, and Duanmu Chen found them interesting. He gestured for everyone not to be overly formal, sat down next to Ji Yuebai, and picked up the beautifully made and unique wooden cards.

Zhengzheng quickly finished explaining, “Does anyone not understand?”

Ji Xiaoshu asked Ji Yuebai, “Dad, if you don’t understand, just ask now, so you won’t lose face later.”

Ji Yuebai snorted, “We’ll see after playing.”

Duanmu Chen saw that both children were definitely experts, so he didn’t dare to boldly declare anything. After all, he wasn’t familiar with the rules yet, so he quickly chose to be on Zhengzheng’s and Ji Xiaoshu’s team during grouping.

As expected, in the first round, the novice team led by Ji Yuebai lost quickly.

“Interesting, interesting! Let’s play again!” Duanmu Chen said cheerfully.

Only extraordinary people could enter the Wan Family Restaurant today, especially after Duanmu Chen's arrival. The inside was heavily guarded, and all the guests were not ordinary nobles, but the highest power circles in the world today.

Qi Yan and Nangong Qian strolled around with a delicate Small Lantern in Nangong Qian's hand. They also came to the restaurant.

Lin Bojun was standing at the entrance of the restaurant, listening to his subordinates report the situation in various places. There were no disturbances for the time being.

Seeing Qi Yan and Nangong Qian being stopped, Lin Bojun ordered them to be allowed in.

"Is there anything I can help with?" Qi Yan asked Lin Bojun.

Lin Bojun patted his shoulder, "You two go up and take a seat."

At this moment, a commotion came from outside the restaurant, and Lin Bojun's expression tightened. As he hurriedly looked over, he saw a figure in black clothes swiftly weaving through the crowd. The man quickly reached an unstable, high shelf and supported it before it could topple. There were many lit lanterns hanging on the wooden shelf, and people were all around. If it had fallen, it would have injured people, caused a panic and a stampede and even started a fire.

The potentially dangerous situation was resolved, and people applauded and praised "Gu Ling the beauty" for spotting and resolving the issue in time.

Lin Bojun immediately ordered more soldiers to be sent to help the vendors reinforce their booths, especially the shelves with hanging lanterns.

When Duanmu Chen, who was playing cards upstairs, heard the report, he paused for a moment and then laughed, "With Gu Ling around, I can rest easy."

"My master is amazing!" Ji Xiaoshu especially liked to praise his master when he wasn't around Gu Ling.

At this point, Gu Ling had already helped to secure the shelf and returned to the restaurant, sitting next to Su Liang.

"My great god is so handsome," Su Liang gave a thumbs-up.

Gu Ling looked at Su Liang's beautiful smile, reached out, closed the window to block the view from outside, and then embraced her for a deep kiss.

After a while, the window was opened again, and the two continued to talk and watch outside, ready to take action if anything seemed wrong.

Lin Bojun noticed two men walking back and forth suspiciously near the restaurant and was about to arrange for someone to monitor them closely when the two men approached Lin Bojun.

Feng Ming and Zhu Zan hadn't gotten close to Lin Bojun when they were stopped.

Soon, a soldier reported to Lin Bojun, "The two of them claim to be from Xingluo Island and want to see His Highness the Regent King."

Lin Bojun, of course, knew what kind of place Xingluo Island was. Upon hearing the report, he ordered the men to be closely guarded and went upstairs to find Gu Ling and Su Liang.

Su Liang was taken aback, “People from Starfall Island?”

“Do you want to meet them? Or catch them first?” Lin Bojun asked.

Gu Ling stood up and closed the window again. Su Liang said to Lin Bojun, “Second Brother, please bring them up.” If they came to assassinate them, they wouldn’t have greeted them.

Moreover, it was almost impossible for the younger generation to kill Gu Ling and Su Liang. If Starfall Island really sent assassins, they must be the old-timers.

Soon, Lin Bojun brought Feng Ming and Zhu Zan into Gu Ling and Su Liang’s room.

“Second Brother, you can go busy.” Su Liang said.

“Be careful.” Lin Bojun gave Feng Ming and Zhu Zan a cold glance and left. He was in charge of the safety of the entire city tonight, not just protecting this restaurant. He was really busy and had no time to stare at this side.

Su Liang looked at Feng Ming and Zhu Zan, both in their early twenties, with average looks, possibly disguised.

Su Liang didn’t think they were sent by Sheng Yue, or else they would directly mention Sheng Yue’s name, instead of just saying Starfall Island. Besides, there wasn’t enough time for Sheng Yue to return to the island and send people over since he left.

“Who are you guys? Why are you looking for us?” Su Liang asked.

Zhu Zan looked at Feng Ming, and Feng Ming looked straight at Su Liang with a clear gaze, saying, “My name is Feng Ming, and his name is Zhu Zan. We were originally from Starfall Island.”

“What kind of people from Starfall Island?” Su Liang asked a seemingly strange question. On Starfall Island, several large families, led by the elders, had more people. The other scattered ones were either voluntarily or forcibly recruited to the island. The old ones had families, while the young ones were mostly alone.

Feng Ming considered for a moment, and understood what Su Liang was asking. He replied, “Both of us were recruited to Starfall Island three years ago, and we have no relatives on the island. After the Regent King led the troops to the island to save people, the Island Master ordered us to leave the island to search for Sheng Yue’s whereabouts because Sheng Yue had no news.”

Su Liang’s expression remained calm, “You came here to find Sheng Yue? To ask if we killed him or arrested him? But even if you took a detour, it wouldn’t take you this long to get here. Not reporting back for months, do you not plan to return?”

Feng Ming admired Su Liang’s ability to read minds, and nodded, “Yes. We followed Sheng Yue when we were on the island, so we were opposed and squeezed out by the family of the Great Elder He Wei. Since we don’t know Sheng Yue’s whereabouts, we dare not return rashly. Moreover, when we first came to the island, we weren’t entirely willing, and after three years on Starfall Island, we deeply felt that it was not a good place.”

“So, are you planning to turn from darkness to light?” Su Liang smiled. Feng Ming was a very eloquent person, obviously very intelligent, and he didn’t hide his intelligence at this moment, as if he wanted Su Liang to know that he was useful.

Feng Ming nodded, “Yes. If the two of you don’t mind, we are willing to be loyal to both of you.”

“What are your skills? Or what secrets of Starfall Island can you provide to us?” Su Liang asked directly.

Feng Ming replied, “Perhaps Su Divine Doctor already knows many things about Starfall Island. But we can tell you everything we know. We have no other skills, and our Martial Arts is just passable.”

Upon hearing this, Su Liang chuckled, “Okay. Since you want to walk on the bright side, I can give you the opportunity. We’ll talk about Starfall Island later. Tonight, there are celebrations in the city with many people and it’s easy for accidents to happen. Each of you finds a high place and helps watch over the common people to avoid chaos.”

Zhu Zan was startled, and Feng Ming had already agreed, “Yes, we will do our best!” As soon as he finished speaking, he took Zhu Zan and left.

On the way downstairs, Zhu Zan whispered, “Is this... going to use us?”

Feng Ming shook his head, “It’s a test. They’re all people with superior intelligence. If you hesitate any further, it’s better to leave early. In dealing with them, just like with Sheng Yue, you can’t play any tricks, or else it won’t be good.”

Zhu Zan sighed softly, “I didn’t want to play any tricks, I’m just a little nervous, unlike your calm and composed manner. Forget it, I’ll listen to you from now on, you’re the boss, and I trust you!”

Soon, Feng Ming chose a position and found another one for Zhu Zan. The two of them went up high and concentrated on watching the crowd below. They didn’t want any trouble but also hoped for a chance to prove themselves.

Thanks to the careful deployment of the Lin Family Brothers and the supervision of Gu Ling and Su Liang, there were no major disturbances at the grand Lantern Festival in the capital, and small disturbances were quickly settled without casualties.

As the night deepened, the common people returned home, and the streets gradually quieted down, and the people in the restaurant also left one after another.

Duanmu Chen, who had been playing cards all night, was not satisfied and invited Ji Yuebai and the children to come to the palace to play together another day.

In the end, Lin Bojun personally led soldiers to escort Duanmu Chen back to the palace.

Qi Yan carried Zhengzheng on his back, while Gu Ling held Ji Xiaoshu, who clung to him like a little monkey, as they all returned home together.

Only after Feng Ming and Zhu Zan believed that there would be no danger did they regroup and silently head towards Su Mansion.

When they arrived at Su Mansion, the main gate was tightly closed. The two of them looked at each other and stood outside the door. Before long, the door opened and Qi Yan called them in, leading them to Yuanming Pavilion.

All the children had gone to sleep, and Su Liang did not come down. He asked Gu Ling to “entertain” their guests.

As Feng Ming and Zhu Zan took their seats and met Gu Ling’s indifferent gaze, they felt even more nervous than when Su Liang had spoken to them earlier.

Gu Ling didn’t ask them about what they had done that night since he had seen everything. Feng Ming’s attention had mainly been on the children, helping several of them who had fallen down. Zhu Zan had extinguished a fire for someone.

“You guys used to follow Sheng Yue. What do you know about him?” Gu Ling got straight to the point. They had already learned most of the basic information about Xingluo Island from Min Rou and Sheng Yue. However, even after Sheng Yue had voluntarily come to Su Mansion and been detained for a while, confessing some things, Gu Ling and Su Liang still felt that he had more secrets. In fact, Sheng Yue seemed even more mysterious to them than Mo Yan.

Zhu Zan didn’t seem to have any ideas, and Feng Ming was still the one to speak first. After thinking for a while, he said, “Young Master Sheng is highly skilled in Martial Arts, intelligent and unflappable. He’s a very formidable man. We arrived at the island around the same time, but Young Master Sheng quickly won the favor of the Island Master and was entrusted with important duties. The island is controlled by the families of the elders, especially the He Family. For young people like us who came to the island alone, it’s difficult to have chances to make something of ourselves. Even if we manage to make some achievements, we’ll be suppressed. But even in such a situation, Young Master Sheng became someone who could contend with the Great Elder, despite having only a few followers. We, too, could only secretly follow him and didn’t dare to openly oppose the He Family.”

Gu Ling’s expression remained indifferent, “Tell me something I don’t know.”

Feng Ming started speaking again, “I don’t know if Your Highness is aware that Young Master Sheng has a younger brother?”

“Go on.” Gu Ling’s expression remained calm.

“It was last year when I accompanied Young Master Sheng on an errand. He asked me if I had any living relatives, and after I honestly told him my situation, he unexpectedly spoke up for once and said that he had a younger brother living in another place.” Feng Ming said, “He only said that one sentence, and I didn’t dare to ask any further because everyone on the island believed that Young Master Sheng had no family members.”

Zhu Zan’s expression indicated that he had not known about this before, and Feng Ming had not mentioned it to him.

Gu Ling already knew that Sheng Yue had a younger brother, Cheng Yun. If Feng Ming had told him this a few months earlier, it would have been useful, but it wasn't much use now.

Feng Ming said he didn't know anything else, and Zhu Zan knew even less.

The two of them were waiting for Gu Ling's decision – to use them, or to doubt them, arrest them, or even possibly kill them...

Gu Ling ordered Qi Yan to make arrangements for Feng Ming and Zhu Zan's accommodations.

"Thank you, Master!" Feng Ming quickly showed his gratitude, knowing that he had passed the first hurdle.

When Gu Ling returned to his room, Su Liang had already put their daughter to sleep and was waiting for him.

"How is it?" Su Liang asked.

"Let's see how it goes." Gu Ling wasn't so quick to trust outsiders who suddenly appeared, "How is the truth-telling drug coming along?"

Su Liang shook his head, "During the second drug test, Nian Ruxue was killed as well. To test the drug again, we'll have to find death-row prisoners from the Heavenly Prison. There's no new progress for now. I think that Feng Ming seems like a smart man. What they said doesn't have any flaws so far, but it's hard to say if they're spies sent by Sheng Yue."

"That's why I'm planning to send Feng Ming back to Sheng Yue's side as an undercover agent." Gu Ling lay down and pulled Su Liang's hand onto his face. "What do you think?"

Su Liang raised his eyebrow, "That's not a bad idea. In the end, it's hard to say who poses the greater threat to us, Mo Yan or Sheng Yue. In that case, I'll have a good chat with him tomorrow."

Chapter 462: 462. Feng Ming agrees, Cheng Yun goes home

The day after the Lantern Festival.

It was still chilly in early spring, and the snow houses and snowmen outside Yuanming Pavilion had not melted yet.

Feng Ming and Zhu Zan were staying in a courtyard with Qi Yan. They got up early and heard some movement outside. Feng Ming opened the door, already dressed neatly.

Qi Yan looked at Feng Ming, "I'll go ask our Master for instructions to see what arrangements there are for you."

Feng Ming thanked him hurriedly, "I appreciate your effort, Brother Qi."

After Qi Yan left, Zhu Zan came out and looked around, "It feels like a dream. Can we really settle down here?"

Feng Ming nodded, "It's up to us. Last night was a not bad start."

They didn't wait long before Qi Yan came back, bringing breakfast and water.

After breakfast, the sun came up and they cleaned up the tableware. They did not dare to leave the courtyard casually, so they sat there and chatted.

Footsteps sounded outside the courtyard gate, and Feng Ming looked over immediately. His face changed as he stood up, "Divine Doctor Su." He didn't dare to call him Master outright.

They hadn't expected Su Liang to come in person. Su Liang looked gentle, "No need to be nervous, please sit down. I have something to discuss with you."

Only after Su Liang sat down did the two of them sit back down. Zhu Zan kept his eyes on his nose, and Feng Ming looked very respectful.

"Actually, Sheng Yue had been here before the New Year." As Su Liang said this, he observed Feng Ming and Zhu Zan's expressions.

Both of them were visibly surprised, especially Zhu Zan. Feng Ming was relatively calm, but he also looked a little uneasy, "Divine Doctor Su means..."

"He didn't die, and it wasn't us who captured him and killed him." Su Liang said, "He failed in his previous confrontation with Gu Ling and escaped alone. Subsequently, he tried several times to capture people but was unsuccessful. After disappearing for a while, he came to us voluntarily, wanting to cooperate with us in dealing with Mo Yan."

Zhu Zan widened his eyes in disbelief, "Young Master Sheng actually..."

"No, he is not like you. He did not surrender to us, nor was he forced to go there like you. He originally went to Xingluo Island with ulterior motives, harboring his own selfish interests. Pretending to be loyal to Mo Yan was a ruse. After his right arm was severed by Gu Ling along with his forearm, his strength was diminished, and he had few capable men left, so he came to discuss cooperation." Su Liang said.

Judging from their expressions, they should not be spies sent by Sheng Yue. For one, their activity times outside the island had no overlap with Sheng Yue's activity in the months before; and secondly, Sheng Yue himself had tried his best to gain Gu Ling and Su Liang's trust, and would not think that sending two subordinates could deceive both of them. He was not such an arrogant person, and there was no benefit for him if they were found out.

Feng Ming and Zhu Zan exchanged glances, not knowing what kind of cooperation Sheng Yue had talked about with Su Liang, and dared not ask rashly. They just waited for Su Liang to continue speaking.

"At that time, Sheng Yue stayed at my house for a while, and then we let him go. Regarding the matter of Xingluo Island you mentioned last night, and that he has a younger brother, we already knew about it before." Su Liang said.

Feng Ming was a little ashamed, "It seems that we have not been able to provide any useful information."



Su Liang continued, "Our cooperation with Sheng Yue is currently very simple, just letting him return to Xingluo Island and inform Mo Yan that we will meet on the sea outside Jiaye City on the first day of the third month. If everything goes as planned, Sheng Yue should have returned to the island before the New Year. As for you two, do you dare to go back?"

Upon hearing this, Zhu Zan looked at Feng Ming, who pondered for a moment before asking Su Liang, "Divine Doctor Su, do you mean for us to return to the island as insiders?"

Su Liang nodded, "Yes. Although we have learned quite a bit about the people and environment on Xingluo Island, it remains a closed place. Sheng Yue is not a trustworthy person, and you should also be unsure of his intentions, right?"

Feng Ming and Zhu Zan nodded subconsciously. They had never been able to see through Sheng Yue, and their allegiance to him was merely because they had to take sides on Xingluo Island, and they could not get along with the He Family's atmosphere, leaving them with no choice.

"Of course, it would be risky for you to return after several months, so it's up to you. There's no problem if you don't want to go, but if you do and can help, you can ask for anything in return," Su Liang said indifferently.

Feng Ming and Zhu Zan knew what Su Liang meant. Xingluo Island was just a small place, and Su Liang and Gu Ling were the real power holders in the world today. The possibility of Xingluo Island seizing the throne was slim. By contributing to the destruction of Xingluo Island, they would have boundless opportunities and endless wealth and glory. Moreover, they could trust Gu Ling and Su Liang's character — simply put, they knew they were good people, unlike the people on Xingluo Island.

Feng Ming recalled what his father had said before he passed away: To deal with truly righteous people, one simply needs to do the right thing. But when dealing with evil people, if you cannot be more wicked than them, stay far away, or else there will never be a good outcome.

Feng Ming spoke up, "I'm willing to go back to the island as an inside agent."

Zhu Zan hesitated, and Feng Ming said, "I can go back alone. I'll just say that I got separated from you halfway."

Zhu Zan sighed, "Master Su, Ming, I'm a simple-minded person and can't deal with scheming people. Life on Xingluo Island has always been exhausting, especially in front of Sheng Yue. Whenever he looks at me, I break into a cold sweat... If I return, I'm afraid I'll not only be unable to help but may even mess things up."

Su Liang nodded, "I understand. In that case, Feng Ming will go back alone, and Zhu Zan will stay here for now, working with Qi Yan. Actually, I do need someone in my house."

Zhu Zan's face lit up, "If I can be of use, that would be great!" He had considered leaving but didn't know where to go.

"Please instruct me how to act when I return to the island, Master," Feng Ming said respectfully.

"Take a break for a couple of days first. We'll discuss the specifics of how you should act and let you know later." Su Liang stood and left after finishing her sentence.

As they watched her figure disappear at the door, Zhu Zan patted Feng Ming's arm, "You're really brave. I dare not go back."

Feng Ming smiled, "As long as you stay here and work hard without any crooked thoughts, the Master won't mistreat you."

Zhu Zan hit Feng Ming again, "Don't you know me? If I were such a cunning person, I would have joined He Peng long ago. My martial arts are not inferior to yours."

"I know, I just wanted to remind you." Feng Ming smiled, "Actually, this is a good opportunity. In today's peaceful world, it's not easy to achieve great things. This is what I've been waiting for."

"I'm just riding on your coattails. The Master values your intelligence the most and is keeping me here as an afterthought," Zhu Zan noticed this.

Feng Ming laughed, "Don't say that. We're brothers after all. But this shows that Master is a kind and generous person."

"That's for sure, she looks so gentle! It's a pity that my parents died of illness when the Master was still young. If we could have met during a good time like now, perhaps they could have lived a long life," Zhu Zan sighed, "Having a Divine Doctor as our Master, it suddenly feels like I have an extra life!"

Qi Yan, who had been hiding in the shadows, overheard their conversation and went to report to Su Liang.

"I seem to have a good eye for people," Su Liang said with a smile, "Feng Ming will leave soon, and Zhu Zan will stay here as your little brother. He must be quite skilled to be chosen to go to Xingluo Island at such a young age. You are getting married this year, so you should take him under your wing, and when needed, you can give him tasks to do."

Qi Yan said that it was no problem. Now that he had become the head housekeeper of Su Mansion, and his younger brother Qi Jun had previously held the position, he had changed a lot since following Su Liang, having been just as simple-minded as Zhu Zan before.

After a while, Su Liang went to see Yan Shiba. Upon entering the room, she saw Yan Shiba's resentful face, "Were the lanterns last night beautiful?"

Su Liang nodded, "They were beautiful." Yan Shiba was recuperating and couldn't go out due to the cold. She lacked the strength to walk freely since her legs weren't strong enough yet. Su Liang had been researching the truth-telling drug and would often forget about Yan Shiba when she got busy. Weng Ran was mainly taking care of her.

Weng Ran did ask Yan Shiba if she wanted to go out and have fun last night, but at the time, Yan Shiba asked if Su Liang had suggested it. Weng Ran honestly said that Su Liang hadn't. In a huff, Yan Shiba said that she wouldn't go so as not to cause trouble for everyone.

Weng Ran didn't want to make a fuss as she needed protection from others with her average martial arts skills. Since Yan Shiba said she wouldn't go, Weng Ran let her drink medicine and go to sleep early. However, when Weng Ran returned, she brought back a lantern in the shape of a swallow that she had chosen for Yan Shiba.

When Yan Shiba saw it in the morning, she didn't particularly like the lantern's shape. She didn't choose her surname Yan and preferred eagles to little swallows... However, she liked the straightforward and kind Weng Ran, who treated her well, and was more gentle with Weng Ran than Su Liang.

At the moment, a blown out "Little Yan" lantern still hung in Yan Shiba's room. Seeing this, Su Liang laughed, "It suits you well."

Yan Shiba glared at her, "You still laugh? Even Xiaoran thought of bringing me a lantern, but I am not in your heart at all!"

Su Liang shrugged, "Busy, sorry." She then took Yan Shiba's pulse, "Your main task now is to recuperate as soon as possible. When you're able to jump around again, you can do whatever you want."

"I'll elope with Nuannuan then, hiding her away where you won't find her," huffed Yan Shiba lightly.

Su Liang shook her head, "I advise you to be sober. If you do that, you'll be hunted down by Gu Ling and my masters, and I won't stop them. What if your ugly death scares Nuannuan?"

Yan Shiba raised her hand and punched Su Liang lightly, "You heartless girl! Did Xiaoyun send any letters?"

Su Liang shook her head, "You're also heartless. I'm the one who saved and took care of you, but you still long to be with Cheng Yun. Cheng Yun didn't send any letters, and even if he did, it wouldn't be for you. As I said before, since you've decided to start anew, you should also treat your relationship with Cheng Yun with a normal mindset. You can't force matters of the heart."

"How do you know he won't like me?" Yan Shiba instantly softened her demeanor, trying hard to smile.

Su Liang rejected the idea with a straight face, "You better act normal. This scares me a bit, you're smiling like you want to eat someone."

Yan Shiba: ...

Su Liang inspected Yan Shiba's body and concluded that her recovery was going well. In a few days, once she could move around, her recovery would speed up. After chatting with her for a while and promising to cook her favorite dish at noon, Su Liang left.

Jiaye City.

Qiao Cong, who had come to the south to celebrate the New Year with Qiao Jing, was not in a great mood. The longer he stayed away, the more he missed his home in the capital city and the lovely children there.

Although he always complained about Qiao Jing, deep down, Qiao Cong truly hated the people of Xingluo Island. If those bastards were dealt with, they could rest easy.

Old Mu stayed behind to help. He didn't even go home for the New Year because he was afraid that if he left, Qiao Cong's heart agitation would worsen. After all, the two were of the same generation, both Su Liang's masters and considered brothers, so they had more in common.

Su Liang had said that among all of her masters, Old Mu was the kindest and most empathetic.

Cheng Yun, who had already returned to lay life, touched his hair every day. He also missed the children at home, but being a former monk, he always had a good mindset and got along well with Qiao Jing and the two seniors.

One day, Qiao Jing was practicing martial arts with Cheng Yun, when a subordinate rushed over, "General! There are ships approaching the southern shore!"

Qiao Jing immediately sheathed his sword and strode out, "How many people have come? They didn't throw explosives on the shore, did they?" Qiao Jing instinctively thought that the people of Xingluo Island had come to attack during the daytime.

"Answering the General, the ship is not big, there are only two people, both not young. One of them shouted that they were here on the orders of the Island Master of Xingluo Island to deliver gifts, specifically asking the General to receive them," the soldier replied.

"Deliver gifts? For me to receive?" Qiao Jing frowned.

Cheng Yun thought for a moment and said, "It's probably because you are in charge here. I think the gift is for Su Liang." If Mo Yan really intended to send a gift, it must be for his granddaughter. However, since Su Liang was not here and they couldn't pass the checkpoints at Jiaye City, Qiao Jing had to receive them.

Qiao Jing understood, but still suspected a trick. He quickly fetched Qiao Cong and Old Mu, and they all went to the shore to check the situation.

Cheng Yun put on a mask. Su Liang had instructed him not to expose his face to the people of Xingluo Island. Some of the old people on the island might recognize his appearance and associate it with his mother who had been captured by Xingluo Island in the past.

Upon reaching the shore of Jiaye City, they saw guards on the shore holding bows and arrows. A boat floated about a hundred meters from the shore, with two people and several chests on it.

Qiao Jing climbed up the lookout tower, followed closely by Qiao Cong, who vigilantly stared at the boat.

"I am Qiao Jing," Qiao Jing called out loudly. "You are here to deliver gifts? Whose gifts are these?"

One of the old men answered, "These are gifts for the Divine Doctor Su family from the Island Master." He did not openly point out that Su Liang was the granddaughter of the Island Master, which also demonstrated goodwill.

“Alright, come over.” Qiao Jing did not order the soldiers to put down their arrows. But given the current situation, there was no one hiding in the sea, so the two men could not do anything and must be genuinely here to deliver gifts.

Qiao Cong still instinctively shielded Qiao Jing behind him, as always.

Old Mu and Cheng Yun stood on the shore, watching the boat approach. Then the two old men lifted the chests from the boat one by one and threw them over.

As the last large chest was thrown onto the shore and the boat pushed away to drift in the opposite direction, the two men quickly sailed away, shouting their last words, “Many thanks! Please be sure to pass these on to the Divine Doctor Su!”

Qiao Jing did not order the soldiers to shoot and detain the men, as they were just running errands.

“Could it be explosives?” Old Mu said as he opened a chest. Of course, he didn’t really think it was explosives; it was just a casual remark.

As it turned out, the square wooden chest contained He Wei’s severed head. The sight was quite horrifying, startling Old Mu greatly, while Cheng Yun instinctively clasped his hands together and chanted “Amitabha Buddha.” If Su Liang were here, she would surely comment that this was his former “occupational disease”.

He Wei’s head?” Qiao Cong cursed, “As expected, Xiaoliang is right. As long as Sheng Yue goes back, the He family’s days are numbered.” They had been in touch with the capital city and knew that Sheng Yue had come and gone.

The other chests were opened one by one, each containing normal treasures. The largest chest contained ancient books and some extraordinary-looking weapons. Another chest was filled with glittering precious stones, crystals, and jade, obviously intended for Gu Xiaonuan.

Old Mu checked and confirmed that there were no traps, hidden compartments, poison, or hidden weapons in the chests, so he ordered them to be taken back.

“We need to send someone to deliver these,” Old Mu looked at the weapons and played with them one by one, finding one of them engraved with the Mu family’s name.

“Grandpa...” Qiao Jing looked at Qiao Cong.

Qiao Cong shook his head, “The New Year has passed, and Xiaoliang will be coming in a while. I won’t go back for such a small matter!” In fact, he still couldn’t let go of Qiao Jing, as he had been worrying about Gu Xiaonuan earlier, and Nuannuan might not come to Jiaye City when the time came.

Old Mu waved the ancient sword in his hand, “I’ll stay too.”

Qiao Jing patted Cheng Yun on the shoulder, “Then it’s up to you to go back.”

Cheng Yun blinked, not knowing how to disguise himself, and his face revealed a hint of joy. “If that’s the case, I’ll go back.” He wanted to go home, and it was also a proper task.

Old Mu left the ancient sword engraved with the Mu family's name behind, saying that he would polish it up and present it to Gu Xiaonuan. The other items were resealed, along with He Wei's head, and loaded onto the carriage.

Mo Yan's letter was for Su Liang, and they didn't open it. They let Cheng Yun carry it with him to give to Su Liang when he returned.

As it was unplanned, Qiao Jing also hastily wrote a letter to Min Rou and asked Cheng Yun to help deliver it back to the capital city.

Cheng Yun, unchanged from his arrival, donned a disguise, wore a wig, and led a group of people, setting out that same day.

Chapter 463: He is only suitable for explosion

Feng Ming and Zhu Zan stayed in Su Mansion for two days.

Qi Yan showed them around and introduced them to everyone in the mansion. To their surprise, considering the status of Gu Ling and Su Liang, the mansion seemed to have almost no servants. Even an elder on the small Xingluo Island had several servants tending to them. The servants on Xingluo Island were all captured from the outside and their status on the island was equivalent to slaves. They even saw Gu Ling and Su Liang cooking in the kitchen and Gu Ling teaching martial arts to two little disciples.

During this time, the two learned a shocking fact that left them speechless: Su Liang was actually the granddaughter of Mo Yan, the island master of Xingluo Island. She was his only living relative and descendant in the world!

It was Su Liang who told them this. She said that He Wei had discovered this long ago but deliberately concealed it from Mo Yan. By now, Sheng Yue should have already informed Mo Yan about this matter.

At that time, Feng Ming said, "The He Family is doomed."

Su Liang smiled, "I hope so."

Two days later, Su Liang met with Feng Ming alone.

Feng Ming knew it was time for him to leave.

"When you go back, tell Mo Yan and Sheng Yue that you searched for someone all the way to the north, but you never found any information. You also fell ill and were delayed. Zhu Zan separated from you during this time and decided not to return to the island." Su Liang said, "Don't make the story too complicated, or it will arouse suspicion."

Feng Ming nodded seriously, "I understand, Master."

"I believe you are smart enough to handle it," Su Liang smiled. "However, if Mo Yan or Sheng Yue suspect you and want to kill you, you can tell them that you have pledged loyalty to me to save your life. I believe this would be valuable to them."

Feng Ming was moved, "Thank you, Master! I will be extremely careful not to fail your trust!" He knew that if he exposed himself as Su Liang's subordinate, he would be used as a hostage to threaten Su Liang. Su Liang's suggestion showed that she would try to save him under such circumstances. Up to now, he hadn't done much for Su Liang, yet he already felt cared for and valued. He had many interactions with Qi Yan and knew that Qi Yan and his brothers had all followed Su Liang in the past. In Qi Yan's words – if you work hard, there will be unexpected surprises.

Even Su Liang's decision not to force Zhu Zan to return to the island and not to drive him away but to let him stay in the mansion showed her acceptance of those who pledged loyalty to her.

"I trust you," Su Liang said. "If you return to the island and pass the test, just continue to follow Sheng Yue. You don't need to investigate anything deliberately. Any suspicion could be discovered by him. You just need to see what he does, and we will have a chance to contact you later."

"Yes," Feng Ming nodded. He knew that he was a pawn ready to be used, and his future role would depend on the development of the situation. This required him to have a strong ability to adapt. He had confidence in himself, but not too much. Su Liang's affirmation and trust in him inspired him greatly. For the first time, he truly believed that he could achieve great things.

On the same day, Feng Ming bid farewell to Su Liang and Zhu Zan, left Su Mansion secretly, and headed south at the fastest speed to return to Xingluo Island. Su Liang gave him some self-defense medicines but told him to throw them all away before going to the island and not to bring any suspicious items back.

The weather was good that day, and Yan Shiba was helped by Su Liang to come out and bask in the sun.

The snow house outside Yuanming Pavilion was slowly melting. To prevent snow from falling and hitting people, Gu Ling decided to dismantle the snow house.

The children were also interested in this task and moved the knocked-down snow blocks to one side under Gu Ling's guidance.

Yan Shiba waved vigorously at Gu Xiaonuan on Gu Ling's back, but she was stretching out her little hand to touch the snow house and didn't notice.

Yan Shiba sat down in the pavilion and took the hand warmer from Su Liang, tossing it onto the table. "It's not that cold. Are you treating me like a delicate woman?"

Su Liang shook her head, "It doesn't matter whether I care about you or not, you'll always complain. Why don't you try going to heaven?"

Upon hearing this, Yan Shiba laughed, "Heh, I'd like to go to heaven, but I can't! If I can ever go there, I'll definitely take you with me to fly!"

Then Yan Shiba asked about Feng Ming. She had held a deep hatred for Sheng Yue, who had imprisoned her for a long time and created a substitute for her. Therefore, she had always been concerned about the progress of dealing with Xingluo Island. Weng Ran had once been almost

harmful by the people of Xingluo Island along with Feng Ming, so she held the same attitude as Yan Shiba on this matter and would promptly inform Yan Shiba of any news she learned.

“Girl, it’s not that I don’t trust your judgment on people. For example, you saw potential in me, which was a good judgment.” Yan Shiba said seriously.

Su Liang rolled her eyes, letting Yan Shiba draw her own conclusion.

“However,” Yan Shiba frowned, “have you ever thought that even if Feng Ming is not sent by Sheng Yue, once he returns to Xingluo Island and meets Sheng Yue again, he may become Sheng Yue’s man and deceive you? You can’t trust the information he provides so easily!”

Su Liang nodded, “You’re much more cautious than before. We’ve thought about this, but Feng Ming is a smart man. He knows that working with Sheng Yue won’t end well, and he’ll make the smart choice.”

Yan Shiba snorted lightly, “So, you believe in human nature, Sister Liang.”

Su Liang nodded, “Otherwise, I would have killed you long ago.”

Yan Shiba playfully punched Su Liang, “Thank you!”

Ji Xiaoshu flew across the lake and landed steadily outside the pavilion. He rushed in and placed a cloth-wrapped package on the table, containing two grilled sweet potatoes with charred skins and a sweet, steaming aroma.

They were grilled by Gu Ling, who had taken them out just when they were ready.

“Master’s wife, Aunt Yan, eat them while they’re hot! I’m going back to snatch my master’s share!” Ji Xiaoshu handed them two wooden spoons and then happily flew back the way he came.

Knocking open the crispy skin, the sweet potato split in half, revealing its soft interior.

Yan Shiba followed Su Liang’s example, scooping a bit of the sweet potato with the wooden spoon, and nodded involuntarily, “Delicious.”

After finishing her own portion, Yan Shiba ate half of Su Liang’s as well, sighing comfortably, “You all know how to enjoy life.” Then she mentioned Cheng Yun again, “I wonder if Little Brother Yun has started eating meat yet. If he starts eating meat, he shouldn’t refuse me, right?”

“Stop daydreaming during the day.” Su Liang always poured cold water on Yan Shiba concerning this matter because she felt that Yan Shiba and Cheng Yun were not suitable and had no chance. It wasn’t that she wanted to stop Yan Shiba from pursuing Cheng Yun, but she was worried that if Yan Shiba was rejected, she wouldn’t be able to accept it and would do something she shouldn’t.

“Humph! We’ll see!” In fact, Yan Shiba had subtly been affected by Su Liang’s attitude. Although she still occasionally mentioned Cheng Yun, she wasn’t as confident as



before. This was a good thing since there was no guarantee; she could pursue him but had to accept the possibility that Cheng Yun wouldn't like her.

A few days later, under the arrangements of Ji Yuebai, Bai Yang and Ji Yue Xuan officially got married. The marriage of the former Yin Country princess and Qian Country Imperial Concubine caused quite a stir in the capital city. After all, in everyone's eyes, Ji Yue Xuan was the emperor Duanmu Chen's only woman.

Duanmu Chen didn't publicly announce that he and Ji Yue Xuan had never been a real couple. He had already done enough for Ji Yue Xuan and Bai Yang. Some things don't need to be explained, as wise people will know the truth, and those who want to spread gossip will only concoct new rumors after your explanation. As for the inevitable rumors, they didn't affect Duanmu Chen, who lived in the Imperial Palace. If Bai Yang and Ji Yue Xuan were affected, they would have to digest it themselves.

Su Liang was still studying the improved truth-telling drug with her two masters. The main goal was to avoid the drug's side effect of killing people quickly after ingestion, but they all hit a bottleneck and made no new breakthroughs.

As for who would go to meet Mo Yan on the first day of March, as previously discussed by Su Liang and Gu Ling, and what to do with the child at that time, it hadn't been decided yet. There was still some time, and if there were no other changes in between, it would still be possible to set off in early February to attend the appointment.

By the end of the first month of the year, Yan Shiba was already moving freely and didn't need anyone to help her. Su Liang said that she could start exercising slowly, which would be good for her recovery. So, Yan Shiba exercised with the children every day and took the opportunity to play with Gu Xiaonuan, saying that it was a good way to work out.

Yan Shiba's temperament had become much gentler than before, but her personality still had traces of the past. She was very unrestrained and quickly became friends with the children.

Especially Ji Xiaoshu, who knew that Yan Shiba used to be an assassin leader and was quite interested in her. Ji Xiaoshu liked to hear Yan Shiba talk about her "glorious history."

Yan Shiba liked children and was always careful around them. She didn't talk about bloody and violent things, fearing that it would have a bad influence on them or lead them astray. When she looked back on her past, she realized that she had made many mistakes. Sometimes, she did have a choice, but no one had taught her what was right or good before meeting Su Liang.

Yan Shiba still mentioned Cheng Yun often, and everyone in the mansion, even the children, knew that she admired him.

On this particular day, the weather was nice, and Yan Shiba was competing in a swordsmanship match with Ji Xiaoshu and Zhengzheng. It was a two-on-one fight.

Both Ji Xiaoshu and Zhengzheng were talented disciples of Gu Ling and had already practiced the Cold Moon Sword Technique quite well. Yan Shiba was not as strong as before, and she restrained herself during the fight. She became distracted by Gu Xiaonuan's laughter and was poked in the leg by Ji Xiaoshu's wooden sword.

“Ah, I’m dead!” Yan Shiba threw away her wooden sword, fell to the ground, and closed her eyes.

Ji Xiaoshu quickly rushed over and shook Yan Shiba’s head, “Aunt Yan, don’t die! My master is making Sweet and Sour Ribs for lunch! If you die, you won’t be able to eat them!”

Yan Shiba laughed without opening her eyes, “Ribs are good, I like them, so I’d better stay alive to eat the Sweet and Sour Ribs! Cough, cough, cough... Xiaoshu, stop shaking me, I’m going to be shaken silly.”

Zhengzheng shook her head: So childish!

Yan Shiba was pulled up by Ji Xiaoshu and saw Qi Yan and a thin young man not far away.

“Uncle Qi!” Zhengzheng greeted Qi Yan.

Ji Xiaoshu looked at the man beside Qi Yan and then tugged Yan Shiba, “Aunt Yan, look who that is!”

Yan Shiba glanced at him and shook her head, “I don’t know.”

“It seems like it’s not true love.” Ji Xiaoshu smirked, “No matter what my master looks like, my master wife will definitely recognize him!”

Yan Shiba’s face stiffened. She looked again at the young man standing beside Qi Yan, who was waving and smiling at them. She couldn’t help but widen her eyes, “Little Brother Yun?”

Zhengzheng had already run over to greet Uncle Cheng Yun.

It’s no wonder Yan Shiba didn’t recognize him. Cheng Yun was wearing a wig and had disguised himself, so he didn’t look at all like the beautiful little monk who Yan Shiba remembered. However, upon closer inspection, his physique and temperament still had traces of his former self.

“Little Brother Yun!” Yan Shiba also rushed over.

Cheng Yun heard the familiar yet strange voice and recognized Yan Shiba. He frowned slightly and considered going straight to the Yuanming Pavilion to find Su Liang to protect him, given Yan Shiba’s blatant “harassment” in the past. However, he saw Zhengzheng running over and thought it would be rude to leave.

Qi Yan had already gone in to report to Su Liang.

By the time Yan Shiba ran up to Cheng Yun and was about to lean in to get a closer look at him, Su Liang had just come out of the Yuanming Pavilion and stopped her.

“Little Brother Yun, you didn’t forget about me, did you? You saved my life!” Yan Shiba smiled happily at Cheng Yun. After all, she had been thinking about him for years, and it was exciting to see him again after surviving her ordeal.

Cheng Yun leaned down to hug Zhengzheng and didn’t look at Yan Shiba, but he politely responded to her words, “I remember, Miss Yan...But there’s no need to bring up the matter of saving you again. It was Su Liang who truly saved you back then.”

“You can talk more later,” Su Liang said, “Cheng Yun came back for an important matter.”

Cheng Yun quickly followed Su Liang into the Yuanming Pavilion, and Yan Shiba also went in, “My body has almost recovered, and I can help with important matters, so I want to listen too.”

As soon as Weng Ran came to send medicine to Yan Shiba, she entered the room and saw Cheng Yun without his wig. She was surprised and greeted him with a smile, “You’re back.”

Cheng Yun nodded, “Yes.”

“Sister Yan, drink your medicine.” Weng Ran put the steaming medicine in front of Yan Shiba.

Yan Shiba hugged Weng Ran and asked her to sit beside her, “Little Ranran, sit down quickly. I’ll drink it when it’s cooler. Little Brother Yun is going to talk about important matters.”

Cheng Yun tried his best to ignore Yan Shiba’s intense gaze and only looked at Su Liang when speaking.

“A gift from Mo Yan?” Su Liang looked surprised.

“There’s a head, which Elder Qiu said was He Wei’s.” Cheng Yun said, “The rest are just some ancient books and treasures.”

Qi Yan had already ordered someone to carry the boxes over.

Cheng Yun quickly pointed at the box containing the head, “It’s not suitable to open that one in front of the children.”

After checking the books and the treasures, Su Liang found the books useful, but the treasures weren’t particularly interesting. They didn’t lack such things, and the children were used to seeing them.

“This is the letter from Mo Yan to you.” Cheng Yun took out the letter and handed it to Su Liang, still sealed.

Su Liang took it, sat down, and opened it to read.

In the letter, Mo Yan said that when his daughter, Mo Gui Xin, left Xingluo Island, she wanted to live in the outside world. He didn’t want to force her to stay, so he decided to accompany her, not because he didn’t care about her. Mo Yan was deceived by He Wei, believing that Mo Gui Xin had died from illness long ago, leaving no children behind. That’s why he didn’t know about the existence of his granddaughter, Su Liang, for all these years.

In the letter, Mo Yan sincerely apologized to Su Liang, saying that if he had known about her, he would have taken good care of her and protected her without allowing her to suffer any grievances. There would have been no conflicts between them.

He Wei was beheaded, and the He Family members were executed. Mo Yan hoped that Su Liang could forgive him for his previous mistakes due to misunderstandings. He hoped that the grandfather and granddaughter could sit together and talk about the future.

“As for the matters between me and Gu Ling, everything is negotiable. I believe that with our combined strength, we can succeed in anything. I’m looking forward to meeting you on the first day of the third month. I can’t wait to hug Little Nuannuan, who must be the most adorable child in the world.”

After reading the letter, Gu Ling came over and took it to read it himself.

After finishing quickly, Gu Ling’s eyes were slightly cold, “Hugging Nuannuan? Keep dreaming. He’s only fit for explosions.”

Chapter 464: 464. Yan Shiba’s Confession

Cheng Yun’s stomach growled, and he felt somewhat embarrassed. Fearing it would delay serious matters, he had rushed back without resting and eating properly on the way.

Weng Ran got up upon hearing the sound and chuckled, “I’ll make you a bowl of vegetarian noodles!”

“No need to go to the trouble...” Cheng Yun wanted to say that he could wait and eat lunch with everyone, but Weng Ran was already at the door.

Yan Shiba’s smile was brilliant, “Little Brother Yun, why are you being so polite? We’re all family here. Have you started eating meat now?”

Cheng Yun frowned and shook his head, “I don’t eat meat.”

Yan Shiba felt that eating only vegetarian food was too miserable. “Since you’ve secularized, you don’t need to be so hard on yourself. Give it a try, you’ll love it.”

Cheng Yun was at a loss for words. Just then, he saw Lao Bai bringing Gu Xiaonuan in, and his eyes lit up. He quickly got up and greeted, “Nuannuan, do you still remember your uncle?”

Gu Xiaonuan tilted her head curiously, looking at Cheng Yun.

Cheng Yun realized, “I’ve changed my appearance, so it’s normal for Nuannuan not to recognize me.”

But Gu Xiaonuan reached out to touch Cheng Yun’s head and giggled, calling out, “Uncle!”

Cheng Yun became happy, “Nuannuan recognized my hair and voice? You’re so smart.”

No sooner had he handed Gu Xiaonuan to Cheng Yun than he almost bumped into Yan Shiba, who had somehow appeared behind him. Cheng Yun quickly stepped back two steps.

“Auntie Yan!” Gu Xiaonuan sweetly waved to Yan Shiba.

Yan Shiba smiled gently, “Such a good baby! Little Brother Yun, let’s take Nuannuan to see what delicious food Little Ranran is making for you!”

“You’ve been sick, you should rest. I’ll take Nuannuan.” Cheng Yun was already at the door as he spoke.

Yan Shiba was pleasantly surprised, “Little Brother Yun, you actually knew I was sick? You care so much about me!”

Cheng Yun: ...

In the kitchen, Weng Ran was boiling water to prepare the noodles. The noodles were leftover from breakfast, along with some vegetables. Knowing that Cheng Yun didn’t eat meat, Weng Ran had also taken out a special pot for him.

Seeing Cheng Yun appear at the door, Weng Ran used a fire poker to pull out the last sweet potato from the stove. Since it was big, it took longer to bake, but it was finally done.

“I’ll do it, I’ll do it!” Yan Shiba let Weng Ran make the noodles and put the sweet potato on a plate. She then found a spoon and took Gu Xiaonuan from Cheng Yun, saying, “Little Brother Yun, have some baked sweet potato while it’s hot! It’s delicious! We’ve all had it!”

Gu Xiaonuan reached out with her little hand, wanting to touch the blackened baked sweet potato.

Weng Ran laughed and said, “Cheng Yun, take the sweet potato and go outside to eat with Yan sister and Nuannuan, it’s smoky in here.”

So, Yan Shiba carried Gu Xiaonuan out, walking around the lake to the pavilion, with Cheng Yun following behind with the sweet potato.

As they sat down in the pavilion, Cheng Yun scooped a bit of sweet potato, blew on it to cool it down, and fed it to Gu Xiaonuan.

Gu Xiaonuan took a bite and didn’t want any more. She wasn’t hungry and had already eaten. She just wanted to touch the “black ball”.

As a result, Yan Shiba opened her mouth and made an “ah” sound, indicating Cheng Yun to feed her...

Yan Shiba was actually just joking, knowing that Cheng Yun wouldn’t do such a thing. Still, Cheng Yun was frightened, and he quickly put the spoon down, pushed the plate to Yan Shiba, and strode out of the pavilion, leaping across the lake, leaving only the words, “You enjoy it, I should go help Weng Ran with the fire.”

Yan Shiba looked at Cheng Yun’s retreating figure, sighed, and whispered to Gu Xiaonuan’s face, “Nuannuan, am I that scary? Why does Little Brother Yun look like I’m going to eat him...”

However, thinking that Weng Ran would soon have the noodles ready for Cheng Yun, Yan Shiba unceremoniously ate the sweet potato that was originally for Cheng Yun. She liked this.

Weng Ran was surprised at Cheng Yun’s quick return. Seeing him immediately sit on a small stool, stoking the fire and not saying anything, Weng Ran asked, “What’s wrong? Did you finish the baked sweet potato?”

Cheng Yun shook his head, “Yan sister wanted it, so I gave it to her.”

Weng Ran was surprised by Cheng Yun’s address for Yan Shiba, “I thought you were close with Yan sister.”

Cheng Yun immediately denied, “Not close, just an acquaintance.”

“You... seem to be afraid of her?” Weng Ran asked half-jokingly.

Cheng Yun nodded, “Yes, she’s very... she’s too... she’s a bit...” terrifying... But he felt it was wrong to speak ill of Yan Shiba behind her back, considering that she had been accepted by Su Liang and was not an outsider.

Weng Ran found Cheng Yun’s indescribable expression for Yan Shiba quite amusing, “Since you’ve secularized, I’ll be straightforward. Yan sister likes you a lot, you know? I actually find her quite interesting and very enthusiastic.”

Cheng Yun knew he had prejudices against Yan Shiba, but even ignoring their past, today’s encounter with Yan Shiba still gave him a creeping feeling... Yes, it wasn’t an exaggeration at all. Every time he met Yan Shiba, he felt chilled to the core, and she was truly terrifying. In contrast, getting along with Su Liang had always been warm and relaxing for Cheng Yun, whereas Yan Shiba was the polar opposite – one’s feelings couldn’t simply be changed by willing them to, nor could they be adjusted by reason.

“Please don’t...” Cheng Yun wanted to say not to mention Yan Shiba liking him again, but he felt that saying so would be impolite, so he paused and said, “I’ll clarify things with Yan sister. We’re not suitable.”

Weng Ran shrugged, “Alright, just have a good talk with Yan sister as soon as possible and don’t hurt her feelings. She’s been through a lot getting to where she is now.”

As they spoke, the noodles were ready. Weng Ran served them, asking Cheng Yun where he wanted to eat.

“I’ll eat here.” Cheng Yun took the chopsticks and thanked Weng Ran.

The box containing He Wei’s severed head was tightly sealed, and Gu Ling and Su Liang did not open it. Although it was still winter in the north and had not warmed up, the head had been sent from the south and must have already decayed, making it unrecognizable.

Gu Ling instructed Qi Yan to take it out directly, find a place in the wilderness to bury it, and save people from being frightened.

Zhu Zan went out with Qi Yan, and opened the box to look at the head before burying it. He knew He Wei and despised him, but just a glance made Zhu Zan puke, and he couldn’t eat anything for three days.

Su Liang received the books sent by Mo Yan. After roughly flipping through them, she picked out a few to read first. Among them was a book on ancient poison techniques that recorded some drugs for controlling the human mind. Su Liang hoped to find a breakthrough in improving the truth-telling drug from this book.

As for the box of jade stones and crystals, she handed them directly to Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu, so they could play with them.

Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu found some of them very beautiful and soon decided unanimously to make use of these items and the carving skills Gu Ling had taught them to create a treasure tree for Gu Xiaonuan to play with.

Su Liang knew that Yan Shiba would be excited with Cheng Yun's return and would do something, but she didn't interfere. She had important things to do, and they were all adults. Even if Yan Shiba was irrational, Cheng Yun was not helpless, and nothing would happen.

At noon, when the Yuanming Pavilion was serving lunch, Cheng Yun did not come. Wen Ran said he had eaten earlier and went to rest. However, at dinner time, Cheng Yun was still absent. Wen Ran explained that he had woken up in the afternoon and gone to Huguo Temple to visit Master Huiming, and that he would eat there.

Su Liang thought that was normal, but Yan Shiba felt that Cheng Yun must be avoiding her.

So, when Cheng Yun returned from Huguo Temple and walked into Su Mansion, as soon as he entered, Yan Shiba appeared before him, her voice deep, "Are you so afraid of me?"

Cheng Yun sighed, "Miss Yan, let's talk."

Yan Shiba turned and walked away, and soon the two sat down in a pavilion by the lake.

It was not early, the children were all in bed and the surroundings were quiet. There were no lights in the pavilion, but the moonlight was good tonight.

Wen Ran brought Yan Shiba the medicine he had prepared and, finding her absent from her room, went to the Yuanming Pavilion to look for her. From afar, he saw her sitting with Cheng Yun in the pavilion, sighed, and then left, but kept the medicine warm on the stove.

The lights were on on the second floor of Yuanming Pavilion; Gu Ling and Su Liang had not gone to bed. Su Liang was reading the books sent by Mo Yan during the day, and Gu Ling was reading another book.

In fact, Gu Ling had seen Yan Shiba and Cheng Yun through the window, but he didn't care and didn't mention it to Su Liang, who was engrossed in the book she was reading.

Yan Shiba and Cheng Yun looked at each other for a moment, and Cheng Yun immediately lowered his gaze, "Miss Yan, I..." He had removed his disguise and was not wearing a wig. His face was even more delicate than a few years ago. The former little monk was now a graceful and beautiful young man.

Yan Shiba furrowed her brows, interrupting Cheng Yun, "Don't speak yet, let me talk first."

Cheng Yun nodded slightly, "Alright, you go ahead."

"I really like you," Yan Shiba cut straight to the chase, "You know this, and the whole family knows it."

The atmosphere became silent, and Cheng Yun looked at Yan Shiba again, nodding gently, "Yes, I know."

"Don't speak!" Yan Shiba shook her head, "Let me finish. I know what kind of person I was before, people called me a witch, scum, villain, and evildoer. If it wasn't for meeting that brat Su Liang, I would have died long ago, or even if I was alive, it'd be

no different from being dead. In fact, being alive and coming back here to see you is like a dream.”

“The first time I met you, I fell off a cliff and thought I was going to die. You suddenly appeared in front of me, your head completely bald, but that face was incredibly beautiful, like an immortal descending from the heavens... You may laugh, but honestly, I never realized one thing: Su Liang always calls Gu Ling ‘Great God’, but in my eyes, you are as beautiful and perfect as Gu Ling is to Su Liang.”

“You may not understand what it’s like to fall in love at first sight, but I do. That’s the feeling you gave me,” Yan Shiba said, “All I showed was teasing you, and I apologize for that. I just didn’t know how to express my feelings for you. You may not believe it, but I didn’t believe it before today either. When I saw you again today, I finally understood it was because I felt deeply inferior. You are like a pure and unblemished snow lotus, and I am just a stone in a gutter.”

Upon seeing Yan Shiba’s self-deprecating grin, Cheng Yun couldn’t help but furrow her brows, but she didn’t speak up.

“When I was locked up in Wolong Snow Mountain, I looked at the snow outside the cave every day, thinking, if I die and don’t drink anxiety relief soup to forget my past life, I must become a person like Su Liang in my next life. That way, I can pursue you without being ashamed of my checkered past, I can pester you and be with you without reprisal.”

Yan Shiba stopped and lowered her eyes.

When Cheng Yun thought she’d finished speaking and was about to open his mouth, Yan Shiba continued, “However, I also know that you don’t like me. This has nothing to do with whether you’re a monk or not. Just like when you were a monk and liked Su Liang, you could be friends with her. Back then you hated me, and it’s the same now. Don’t deny it, you’re human, and it’s normal for you to dislike someone. It’s not a big deal; everyone has someone they dislike.”

Yan Shiba’s tone became quicker, “You saved me and always treated me politely because you’re kind-hearted, but I’m not stupid. That brat Su Liang has already poured cold water on me many times, saying that you will never like me and that we’re not compatible. I know she’s afraid I’m too crazy and would drug you and sleep with you. I admit, I have thought about doing that, more than once.”

Cheng Yun’s brows furrowed even more, but Yan Shiba laughed, “You must be thinking that I’m indeed a scheming temptress, right? You don’t understand romantic relationships, so you might not be able to comprehend the feeling of wanting to be close to someone you love, wanting to hug them, kiss them, and sleep with them... Perhaps one day you will understand, but obviously, it won’t be with me.”

Yan Shiba was clearly smiling, but a crystal-clear tear rolled down her cheek. Cheng Yun was startled, and she seemed surprised as well, touching the tear incredulously before licking her finger,



“Salty... I cried? No, I didn’t cry... Why did I shed a tear? Fine... I admit, I’m a little heartbroken, but just a little. After all, I knew the outcome all along—you don’t need to say it. It’s just... maybe it’s a physical reaction, probably a physical reaction. I’ve been thinking about you for too long... It’s fine, it has nothing to do with you...”

Yan Shiba took a deep breath and looked at Cheng Yun again, “Yes, it has nothing to do with you. That’s what I wanted to say. My liking you has nothing to do with you. You don’t have to avoid me, and I won’t harass you anymore. I have important things to do. I want to be a proper person and not lead the children astray. Next, I have to help the brat Su Liang deal with Xingluo Island. After all, I used to be somebody, and I really hate needing Little Ranran to wait on me while lying in bed. I still have to teach Ji Xiaoshu swordsmanship. He adores me, really! Anyway, let’s end it here. The brat Su Liang is right: love isn’t beautiful when it consumes your entire heart. Now my heart has many people in it: Su Liang, Zhengzheng, Xiaoshu, Nuannuan, and Little Ranran. If she were a man, I’d have slept with her already.”

As she spoke, Yan Shiba stood up, “Alright, that’s it. It’s all nonsense. Just forget what you heard and don’t even remember saving me. In any case, I’m not repaying you with my body... Haha! I suddenly remembered that when you returned today, Ji Xiaoshu asked me to guess who was back, and I couldn’t recognize it was you at first. Xiaoshu said I must not truly love you, and I think he’s right. I’m not that heartbroken now, and I even feel like giving you a hard slap... I really am sick. Goodbye.”

Cheng Yun wanted to say something, but Yan Shiba walked out of the pavilion without giving him a chance to speak.

Cheng Yun furrowed his brows again as he sat back down, just as Yan Shiba suddenly came running back, “I forgot one thing; you should really try eating meat, especially the ones cooked by Gu Ling! Also, as a man, if you’re not interested in women, you might as well become a eunuch! Since you’ve left your monastic life, why not be a normal man? Alright, I’m really done this time!”

Cheng Yun still didn’t get a chance to speak. When he looked out, Yan Shiba had already disappeared.

Chapter 465: 465. Breakthrough

Wen Ran, who was thinking about Yan Shiba and hadn’t fallen asleep yet, was reading in her room. Hearing footsteps in the courtyard, she immediately put down her book and came out.

Yan Shiba had already entered her room and closed the door heavily.

Wen Ran knocked on the door and heard Yan Shiba talking inside, but she didn’t respond to her. Wen Ran pushed the door open forcefully and saw Yan Shiba pacing back and forth in the room, holding her head with both hands and muttering, “I’m not sad... I’m not upset... I am Yan Shiba, after all...”

Wen Ran sighed, walked over, and had just touched Yan Shiba’s shoulder when she was embraced by her as she turned around.

“Yan sister, feelings can’t be forced. Don’t be too sad,” Wen Ran advised Yan Shiba.

“Who said I’m sad? I’m fine!” Yan Shiba’s voice suddenly raised.

“Uh-huh, it’s okay,” Wen Ran gently patted Yan Shiba’s back, as if comforting a child.

“No, no, I’m not sleepy at all tonight. Let’s go for a walk. I haven’t been out since I recovered!” Yan Shiba said, waving her hand to put out the lamp in the room and then dragging Wen Ran outside.

Wen Ran suspected that Yan Shiba might have cried but didn’t want to let her see it for fear of losing face. So, she didn’t expose her and didn’t deliberately look at her either, just following her out, “Drink the medicine first. It’s warm on the stove.”

“I’ll drink it when I get back!” Yan Shiba shook her head.

During their conversation, the two had already left the room, left the courtyard, and were walking towards the main gate.

Wen Ran didn’t know where Yan Shiba wanted to go, but it didn’t matter. Although she had never experienced this kind of “heartbreak” before, she guessed it must be unbearable. After all, Yan Shiba had liked Cheng Yun for a long time and always talked about him before he came back. But on the day of their reunion, her love affair was declared over.

Cheng Yun had just left the lakeside and saw Yan Shiba and Wen Ran from a distance, wondering where they were going. But thinking that Yan Shiba had not fully recovered yet and Wen Ran was not very skilled in martial arts, he felt somewhat uneasy. After hesitating for a moment, he decided to stealthily follow and protect them. After all, Yan Shiba’s emotional instability was due to him.

Actually, Yan Shiba’s words tonight surprised Cheng Yun. He thought Yan Shiba would be very aggressive in pursuing him and leave no room for refusal. However, he didn’t expect that he wouldn’t have to say anything, and she had figured it out herself.

The biggest thing Cheng Yun felt about this was: gratitude.

Now that they were family, Cheng Yun hoped to get along peacefully with Yan Shiba and avoid any misunderstandings and conflicts, which would trouble him.

The current situation was quite good and made Cheng Yun feel at ease. As for being moved by Yan Shiba’s unique confession and deciding to give their relationship a try, that was out of the question. If there were no feelings, it just wouldn’t work.

After leaving Su Mansion, Yan Shiba dragged Wen Ran aimlessly, initiating a walking spree. It was not wrong to say she had thought things through, but rationality and emotions were ultimately two different things. Rationality told her she should let go, but her emotions were still a tangled mess, making it difficult for her to stay calm and quiet. She needed to do something to vent.

Walking on the deserted streets late at night, with a refreshing breeze on their faces, their bodies gradually warmed up as they walked. Perhaps they were sweating because they were walking fast and not paying attention to the changing environment around them, as if they were in a maze not knowing where they came from or where they were going. Only the sound of their feet hitting the ground one after another, making them feel alive... This feeling, lingering between dreams and reality, initially felt more like a dream, but later on, as the cool breeze dried the sweat from their foreheads and their legs gradually began to ache, they slowly returned to reality. At that moment, physical exhaustion made their mood more peaceful.

Yuanming Pavilion.

It was not until bedtime that Gu Ling mentioned Yan Shiba and Cheng Yun's conversation at the lakeside pavilion to Su Liang.

Su Liang was taken aback, "They laid their cards on the table tonight? What was the outcome?"

"Yan Shiba left first. It should be alright," Gu Ling said. If Cheng Yun had left first and Yan Shiba chased after him, there would be a problem.

Su Liang sighed, "This has been Cheng Yun's trouble all along. He should have clarified things with Yan Shiba. However, I don't think Yan Shiba, as she is now, would cause any problems. But it's not that easy to let go just by saying so."

As Su Liang was about to go and check on Yan Shiba, Gu Ling pulled her back into bed, "Wen Ran is with her. There will be no problems."

After thinking for a moment, Su Liang said, "That's true. They've become very close lately. If she really wanted to find me, she would've come by now. So, let's leave it at that and discuss it tomorrow."

It was already late at night when Yan Shiba decided to go home.

By the time she and Weng Ran walked back hand in hand, it was no longer a furious walk, but a stroll.

Suddenly, Yan Shiba laughed and swung both of their hands high like a child. "Little Ranran, I've decided!"

Weng Ran asked what she had decided.

Yan Shiba's tone was upbeat, "What man? To hell with all of them! I can live without a man! I want to try to be a good person, someone people like! What do you think?"

Weng Ran smiled, "That's right. Fate is something that can't be forced. We women shouldn't live or die for men; it's so undignified. We can do anything men can do."

Then Yan Shiba said, "I really want to drive Gu Ling away so we can live with the little devil, haha!"

Weng Ran coughed lightly, "That won't work; they're a match made in heaven."

"I know! I've watched them come this far, and I'm even their matchmaker!" Yan Shiba said, somewhat melancholic as she reminisced about the past.

"How did you meet?" Weng Ran was curious. She only knew a little about it.

Yan Shiba was in high spirits, "When we first met, it was full of ups and downs, thrilling! Let me tell you about it!"

The two chatted and walked home without mentioning Cheng Yun again.

Cheng Yun always maintained a distance and silently followed them. He couldn't hear what they were saying, but he could tell from the pace that Yan Shiba was back to normal. He was relieved.

When they returned home, Yan Shiba took Weng Ran to sleep in her room. They talked all night long about each other's pasts until the sky brightened before they fell asleep.

At breakfast, Su Liang only saw Cheng Yun and not Yan Shiba or Weng Ran.

Weng Ming found it strange since Weng Ran usually woke up early and dragged him to practice martial arts together.

"I'll go check!" Ji Xiaoshu said as he tried to rush out.

Cheng Yun grabbed Ji Xiaoshu, "No need. I know."

Su Liang smiled lightly, "What happened last night?"

Ji Xiaoshu wore a gossiping expression, "Did Aunt Yan try to assault Uncle Cheng Yun last night, but he fought back, and they had a big fight, eventually knocking out both Aunt Yan and Aunt Ran?"

Weng Ming's mouth twitched, and Cheng Yun held his forehead, "Xiaoshu, is that what I look like to you?"

Ji Xiaoshu laughed loudly, "Just kidding! Uncle Cheng Yun is so kind-hearted; how could he hit someone? Hurry up and tell us what happened!"

"They went out for a walk last night and came back very late. So they might still be sleeping now. But I'm sure they returned home safely." Cheng Yun said seriously.

"Did you go for a walk with them?" Su Liang asked.

Cheng Yun coughed lightly, "I was afraid they would run into trouble, so I secretly followed them."

Su Liang nodded, "Not bad, you have the potential to be a good man."

"So, what about you and Aunt Yan, Uncle Cheng Yun?" Ji Xiaoshu quickly asked, "Are you getting married? Or did you break up?"

Cheng Yun frowned, "We have never been together, not married, and not broken up, Xiaoshu don't talk nonsense."

Ji Xiaoshu sighed, "So there's no chance?"

Cheng Yun nodded, "We decided to be friends."

Zhengzheng patted Cheng Yun's hand, "Uncle Xiaoyun, I wish you and Aunt Yan both find your good partners."

Cheng Yun was a little embarrassed, "Well...that's also..."

Ji Xiaoshu chuckled, "Uncle Cheng Yun, just say thank you! Don't say you won't like anyone or get married in this life, in case you change your mind in the future, it would be so embarrassing!"

Cheng Yun couldn't help but laugh and cry, "Yes, thank you Zhengzheng, thank you Xiaoshu, thank you everyone for your concern."

So, without paying attention to Yan Shiba and Weng Ran, everyone started eating first, and after the meal, they went on with their respective tasks.

Old Bai and Weng Ming researched the ancient books with Su Liang again, and Cheng Yun took care of Gu Xiaonuan.

The weather was good today, and Cheng Yun held Gu Xiaonuan outside for a while. Upon returning to Yuanming Pavilion, he saw Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu sitting on the ground, playing with a pile of jewelry and jade stones.

Gu Xiaonuan liked shiny things and wanted to join them, but Cheng Yun was worried, "Will Nuannuan put these things in her mouth?"

Zhengzheng shook his head, "No, little sister is very smart and never eats random things! Uncle Xiaoyun, come and help us, we're making a treasure tree!"

Cheng Yun held Gu Xiaonuan and sat down to help. First, he sorted the gemstones, jade, and crystals in the box by color and material, and put them in different wooden boxes.

By the time Weng Ran and Yan Shiba got up and cleaned up, they came to Yuanming Pavilion and saw Gu Xiaonuan putting pearls in Cheng Yun's hair. Cheng Yun was very cooperative and let her play, his head decorated very "gorgeously".

Yan Shiba laughed at the sight, "Nuannuan, I want it too!"

"Aunt Yan, Aunt Ran!" Gu Xiaonuan called sweetly, waving her little hand to let them join in the fun.

"Aunt Yan and Aunt Ran, go eat something first," Zhengzheng said.

The two finished their breakfast and joined in making the treasure tree. Weng Ran couldn't help but sigh, "Playing with these, I suddenly feel like I'm rich."

Zhengzheng picked out a beautiful pearl, "I think this would suit Aunt Ran well, it could make a pearl hairpin."

Weng Ran looked at it and liked it, took it and asked with a smile, "Is it for me?"

Zhengzheng nodded, "Master said these are all for us."

Yan Shiba pouted, "Nothing for me?"

Ji Xiaoshu picked up a ruby and compared it to Yan Shiba's brow, "You could make a necklace and hang it here, it would definitely look good."

Weng Ran confirmed Ji Xiaoshu's aesthetic appreciation.

Cheng Yun asked inexplicably, "Anything for me?"

Yan Shiba glanced at him and couldn't help but tease, "You should eat meat first before considering wearing jewelry."

Cheng Yun: ...

Zhengzheng pointed to Cheng Yun's head, "Little sister has already picked for Uncle!"

Cheng Yun coughed lightly, how could he meet people with a head full of pearls?

When Su Liang saw Yan Shiba again, she was holding Gu Xiaonuan and playing with her, laughing brightly. Zhengzheng said that Cheng Yun had gone to help Weng Ran cook lunch.

“How did it go?” Su Liang asked Yan Shiba.

Yan Shiba showed an arrogant expression, “I confessed, but I told him that my liking him has nothing to do with him!”

Su Liang gave a thumbs up, “You’ve grown up.”

Yan Shiba rolled her eyes at Su Liang, “Get lost!” She laughed again, “It’s strange. I was sad last night, but when I woke up today, I felt like love whoever, be with whoever you want, all men can go to hell! I still have a long and happy life ahead of me!”

Su Liang smiled, “That’s the spirit.”

“When I saw Cheng Yun today, besides wanting to beat him up, I didn’t have any other feelings,” Yan Shiba said. “In a few days, I’m still a bit weak now and probably won’t win. We have to fight sooner or later!”

Su Liang understood that Yan Shiba was determined to have a fight, probably like drawing a line between their relationship after a hug, it was a formality, but important. They were not suitable for hugs, the former demoness and the former monk had both left their former identities behind. Yan Shiba chose reason and self-esteem, but she wanted to regain some dignity in another way.

Five days after Mo Yan’s gift arrived at Su Mansion, Su Liang had not yet made the mind-control drug recorded in the ancient book because two of the required herbs had been lost for a long time and they did not have them.

However, based on that prescription, Su Liang and his two masters had improved the formula of the truth-telling drug previously made and produced a new truth-telling drug.

It had not been tested yet and its efficacy could not be guaranteed, but it was considered a breakthrough.

Because there was a risk, Su Liang informed Duanmu Chen while visiting Duanmu Zhen in the palace that she needed to borrow a death row prisoner for use, who might have returned as a dead body.

Most of the death row prisoners in the Heavenly Prison were not beheaded in public, but mostly died of poison, strangulation, or being beheaded in prison.

Duanmu Chen agreed and gave Su Liang a token to fetch the prisoner.

Su Liang and Gu Ling went to the Heavenly Prison, specifically asked the officials there about the crimes committed by the death row prisoners, and then selected and brought back to the Su Mansion a prisoner who had several murder cases on his back.

Although they did not know much about the death row prisoner, they would observe his condition after taking the drug, and it was unlikely that he could still lie deliberately after taking the truth-telling drug. Before, both Nangong Lin and Nian Ruxue had tried it, and there was no problem with the drug controlling them to tell the truth.

So, the prisoner took the truth-telling drug, and then Gu Ling asked him several questions, including whether he had other unconfessed crimes. Some information was indeed not discovered

by the prison officials, such as his multiple murders in the past, and his kidnapping and trafficking of good women and children.

Gu Ling asked in detail about the information of the victims and the information and locations of the kidnapped and trafficked women and children.

Fifteen minutes passed, and the prisoner was still alive. An hour passed, and he had sobered up, could not remember what happened after taking the drug, and did not die either.

Weng Ming examined the prisoner's pulse and said it was normal. Old Bai also said that he could not see any signs of poisoning.

Su Liang was very happy, thinking that this time it should be successful, and the "side effects" of the truth-telling drug could be avoided.

The prisoner stayed at the Su Mansion until late that night. When it was confirmed that he would not die from the truth-telling drug, there was no point in keeping him any longer. Gu Ling asked Qi Yan and Zhu Zan to send him back to the Heavenly Prison, along with the recorded information of the prisoner's confession, so that the Ministry of Justice officials could continue the investigation, give an account to the victims, and let the trafficked women and children return home as soon as possible.

That night before going to bed, Su Liang sighed, "If only we could catch Sheng Yue now and ask if he has any more secrets."

"There will be a chance," Gu Ling kissed Su Liang softly.

Chapter 466: 466. She is your master now.

After the New Year, the weather warmed up, and Yan Shiba's complexion got better and better.

On the night she confessed her feelings to Cheng Yun, Yan Shiba told Weng Ran that she wanted to become a likable person, and she really did put it into practice.

The first thing Yan Shiba decided to do was to learn how to cook. The reason was simple: everyone likes a good cook.

Weng Ran was supportive, and said she could teach Yan Shiba. For a former assassin leader, wanting to live an ordinary life and experience some daily chores, cooking was indeed the most direct way.

However, on Yan Shiba's first day in the kitchen with Weng Ran, she almost burned the kitchen down. Her hands, which had killed countless people, cut herself while chopping vegetables.

Yan Shiba went to Su Liang with her bandaged finger and said, "Look at me, you little devil, I'm so stupid that I can't even chop vegetables properly!"

Su Liang, who was looking at an ancient book sent by Mo Yan, looked up and said, "If you don't want to do it, just don't."

"Who said I don't want to do it?" Yan Shiba immediately retorted, "I really want to learn!"

Su Liang closed the book in her hand and looked at Yan Shiba seriously, “To be a masterful cook, you do need talent, but to learn simple things like home cooking and cutting vegetables, you don’t need talent, just be serious. You’re not a stranger to knives. If you think cutting your fingers is fun, then forget about what I said.”

Yan Shiba frowned, “Do you think I’m not serious? But I ...” She hadn’t really listened to Weng Ran’s instructions because she thought it was too simple. She cut her finger because she had the smooth side of the pumpkin facing up, and when the knife went down, the pumpkin slipped away, and the knife and her finger made intimate contact. In theory, she could avoid cutting her hand if she corrected her mistake. And to be fair, a finger injury was nothing to her. Why did she immediately come to Su Liang to show off her wound? It seemed a bit sick now...

“Fine! You’re right! I’m going back to Little Ranran! I refuse to believe that I can’t even conquer a kitchen knife!” Yan Shiba left as soon as she finished speaking.

Su Liang picked up her book again, shook her head, and laughed. So-called culinary killers were mostly just careless. For example, those who couldn’t tell salt from sugar should learn to distinguish them after the first mistake, and if they still couldn’t, at least taste them before adding. As for Yan Shiba, she had always been a bit of a performer in front of Su Liang, liking to start things and attract attention, and coming over with her injured finger was just her old habit. But she was already much better than before.

Yan Shiba realized that she was still a little impatient and took Su Liang’s remarks to heart. She not only insisted on helping cut two more dishes but also stewed soup under Weng Ran’s guidance. Although Weng Ran taught her each step little by little, it was still her own work, and she felt a great sense of accomplishment after tasting it and knowing it wasn’t a problem.

When it was time for lunch, Yan Shiba enthusiastically served soup to everyone.

“Little devil, how is it? I made it!” Yan Shiba was looking forward to Su Liang’s evaluation.

Su Liang nodded after tasting it, “Very good, almost as good as Weng Ran’s.”

Zhengzheng gave a big thumbs up, “Aunt Yan, it’s amazing for you to cook this well on your first try!”

Yan Shiba was so happy she could jump, “Haha! I think I can learn many dishes! What do you guys like to eat? I’ll make it for you later!” This was more fulfilling than her first successful kill or defeating any opponent. Drinking her own soup made her feel like a normal person, a normal person with a home.

Su Liang thought it was a good thing for Yan Shiba. It wasn’t about having to learn how to cook or cooking herself; it was just a process of getting her back on the ground and living life in a down-to-earth way. Cooking was not the goal; what mattered was what she felt and gained during this process.

Afterwards, Yan Shiba was busy every day, learning to experience various things she had never done before – not just cooking and making fires, but also washing clothes, embroidering, fishing, attending Lin Shuzhi’s classes with the children, reading and writing, and even completing homework.



Other than discovering that her handwriting was uglier than the two little ones, and that she couldn't compose poetry, everything else was quite interesting. However, not knowing how to compose poetry wasn't a big issue, as Yan Shiba wasn't planning on becoming a top scholar. She quickly found her own way with poetry – spouting all sorts of bizarre limericks that made Lin Shuzhi shake his head.

Su Liang found this quite amusing; limericks were still considered poetry. As long as it didn't lead the clever children astray, Yan Shiba could be free-spirited and happy.

Thus, time flew by, and it was already mid-February.

More than half a month had passed since Mo Yan sent his gifts, but Gu Ling and Su Liang still hadn't made their final decision as to who would attend the appointment, planning to wait until the end of the month to decide.

Zhu Zan quickly adapted to life in Su Mansion. He told Qi Yan that this was the first time he felt like he had a home since his parents passed away, and everyone in the mansion was so kind that it felt like a real paradise on earth.

Su Liang had been keeping track of time, as Feng Ming, who arrived on the night of the Lantern Festival with Zhu Zan, should have almost returned to Xingluo Island, even if he had taken a detour.

Su Liang hoped that Feng Ming could successfully pass Mo Yan and Sheng Yue's tests and remain on the island safely. However, even if something went wrong, it wouldn't be a big issue. After all, she and Mo Yan were now in the stage of "negotiating." Unless Mo Yan wanted to break the agreement for the meeting on the first day of March, he wouldn't do anything else to upset Su Liang. Judging from the previous gifts and letters, Mo Yan wanted to acknowledge Su Liang, and even if Su Liang didn't believe he was sincere, she knew he would at least pretend to be.

It's worth mentioning that Su Liang had informed Min Rou about the execution of the He Family on Xingluo Island. Min Rou was neither indifferent nor heartbroken. She knew that her father was still alive solely because Su Liang gave face to her grandfather, Minister Min. Min Rui was now bedridden and unable to do anything. Having already made her choice, Min Rou had been looking forward, leaving Xingluo Island and everything on it far behind.

Xingluo Island.

After the execution of the He Family, the elders on the island became even more low-key, and their descendants lost their previous arrogance.

With Mo Yan being the highest authority, Sheng Yue enjoyed the highest status on the island. Even the elders who used to dislike him were increasingly polite to him and no longer dared to act against him secretly.

The two elders whom Mo Yan had sent to Jiaye City with gifts returned as scheduled and reported that the gifts were delivered to Qiao Jing.

The island's food supply was mainly purchased from Jiaye City and Nanshan City in the past, but now it was no longer necessary. When Mo Yan left his retreat last year, he acquired a large amount of military supplies, which were meant to be sent by the Yin Country to the Liang Country. However, seeing the situation worsen, Mo Yan decided to leave abruptly without leaving the

provisions for the Liang Country's army, which was also one of the reasons for the fall of Liang Country.

Now, those supplies filled the warehouses of Xingluo Island. As for vegetables and meat, the island had always been self-sufficient. Moreover, due to the warm climate all year round, there had never been a shortage of such supplies. Even if the island was under a blockade, survival wouldn't be a problem for the time being.

One day, Sheng Yue visited the forbidden area to have a game of chess with Mo Yan. This had become a daily routine for the master and apprentice since Sheng Yue returned at the beginning of the year.

Sheng Yue's chess skills were formidable, winning more often than Mo Yan, but Mo Yan didn't mind.

After one game, Sheng Yue won again, "Master, you let me win."

Mo Yan smiled, "I didn't ask you to. Ayue, I told you long ago that even if you hadn't come to Xingluo Island, you would have achieved greatness elsewhere. I am very happy that you share my intentions. Last night, I suddenly thought of something."

Sheng Yue listened respectfully as he set up the chessboard while Mo Yan spoke.

"You've been on the island for more than three years, and I never let you try diving into the water. It was really neglectful of me. I also cherished your talent because many people didn't make it out alive."

Mo Yan continued, "However, I always believed that those chosen by heaven to travel through time and space are extraordinary, and you are undoubtedly one of them. Just because others couldn't do it doesn't mean you can't. Even if Gu Ling tries and succeeds later, it doesn't mean you'll definitely be able to go back, especially since you're not a Transmigrator. Do you want to try it today?"

Mo Yan looked at Sheng Yue's expression and saw him ponder for a moment before nodding, "It is a good idea. I have always only heard of my master's words, and it's time for me to go down and see if I can find any clues."

"Good. It's commendable that you have the courage," Mo Yan said while leading Sheng Yue towards the depths of the forbidden area. "To open the gate of time and space, you must be sincere and fearless. I believe you can do it."

The two entered a cave, walked through a long corridor, and then went down some more. Sheng Yue saw the pool that Mo Yan had guarded for most of his life. Mo Yan said that he came from here. At that time, there was no Mo Family among the island's indigenous people. Mo Yan eliminated the original inhabitants and developed his own power on the island.

As for why Shen Qingxue married Mo Yan back then, it was because Mo Yan painted a portrait and asked his subordinates to search the world for someone who looked like the woman in the painting. He hoped his lover could come too, even though he knew it was just a wishful fantasy.

In the end, they really found someone who looked quite similar to the image in the painting – Shen Qingxue. Unfortunately, she was not Mo Yan's lover from his previous life. They married, had children, but there was no love between them.

Returning to the present, Sheng Yue stood by the pool, gazing at the white mist above under the illumination of luminous pearls on the surrounding stone walls. It seemed to evoke a dreamy feeling.

“I won’t force you to stay in there for long, but if you want to succeed, try to dive deeper for a longer time,” Mo Yan instructed Sheng Yue.

Sheng Yue nodded, “I understand.” He began to unwrap his outer garments.

After removing his outer clothes and shoes, he neatly placed them on the side, stretched his limbs, took a deep breath, and said, “Master, I’m going in.”

Mo Yan patted Sheng Yue’s shoulder, “Go on. I hope a miracle happens.”

Sheng Yue quickly entered the water and started diving. Mo Yan sat cross-legged on the shore, watching the shadow and ripples in the water gradually subside, closed his eyes, and silently counted the time like he had done so many times before.

As the sound of water rippled again, Mo Yan opened his eyes and saw Sheng Yue’s head break the surface. He was gasping for air.

Mo Yan’s face showed some disappointment as another attempt had failed. He had hoped that no one would return – certainly not a corpse. However, the results so far were either corpses or people floating back up, with the latter being a rare occurrence. Ying Ying was one of them. Her mother was a Transmigrator, and Mo Yan thought that perhaps that was special. However, he had originally planned to let Ying Ying prepare and go underwater later, but she had been taken away by Gu Ling.

Sheng Yue swam to the shore, and Mo Yan stood up and helped him up.

“I disappoint Master, as I didn’t encounter a miracle,” Sheng Yue said, his mood downcast as he picked up his outer clothes and covered himself.

“It’s alright,” Mo Yan patted Sheng Yue’s shoulder. “You’ve been underwater almost as long as Ying Ying. Did you see anything?”

Sheng Yue shook his head, “I only saw the rocks at the bottom of the pool, and I decided to come up before I lost consciousness.”

Mo Yan sighed, “Let’s go back for now. If you want to try again in the future, just let me know. I think if you can dive longer, there might be some discoveries.”

Sheng Yue nodded, “Yes, Master. I will find an opportunity to practice more.”

The master and apprentice left the cave, and Sheng Yue excused himself to return to his residence.

After closing the door, Sheng Yue didn’t dry his hair or change his clothes. Instead, he sat quietly at the table with his eyes closed. A bright light appeared in his mind, and the corners of his lips curled slightly into a fleeting, imperceptible smile...

The next morning, Sheng Yue received a report stating that Feng Ming had returned. Quickly, Mo Yan also found out about it.

Sheng Yue had someone take Feng Ming directly to see Mo Yan, and he went there as well.

“Why did it take you so long to come back? What about the person who went with you?” Mo Yan frowned as he coldly questioned Feng Ming, who was kneeling before him.

Feng Ming looked much thinner since he had left, and his complexion was not good either. He respectfully answered that he and Zhu Zan had left together last year, on a mission to find out about Sheng Yue’s whereabouts. Due to people guarding the coast of Jiaye City, they took a long detour to land ashore. They didn’t hear about Su Liang’s incident and worried that something had happened to Sheng Yue. The two decided to go to the capital city for investigation, but they still didn’t find any useful news. Zhu Zan believed that something had happened to Sheng Yue and that they would be bullied by the He Family if they returned to the island. Instead, he decided to flee and live a carefree life. However, after much thought, Feng Ming decided to return.

“I parted ways with Zhu Zan before the New Year and have no idea where he went. It was my first time going to the North, and I caught a severe illness during the cold winter. There was no one around me, and I was on the verge of death. I struggled through some days in a daze, but fortunately, I recovered under heaven’s grace. Before I returned, I went to the capital city again but still didn’t find any news about Young Master Sheng. So I came back,” Feng Ming answered respectfully.

“Why aren’t you afraid of being ostracized by He Wei and his family upon your return?” Mo Yan was obviously suspicious of Feng Ming.

Feng Ming shook his head, “It’s because of Young Master Sheng. I believe that as long as I have talent, my master will see it. Young Master Sheng is my example. I want to stand out and not be an unknown pawn. When my master sent me on the mission, it was a sign of his trust in me. I cannot let him down.”

Mo Yan narrowed his eyes, shifted his gaze to Sheng Yue, who had been quietly standing there since he entered, and asked, “What do you think?”

Sheng Yue glanced at Feng Ming, “He is a talent.”

Mo Yan nodded, “Then I’ll leave him to you.”

Feng Ming followed Sheng Yue out of the forbidden area and to Sheng Yue’s courtyard.

After entering Sheng Yue’s study, Feng Ming stood with a slight bow, saying nothing.

Sheng Yue sat down and silently looked at Feng Ming. After a while, he spoke, “You’re a smart man, and that’s precisely why you came back alone. There’s only one reason for that: This is Su Liang’s intention. She is your true master now, am I right?”

Chapter 467: 467. Gu Ling’s Decision

Feng Ming tried to remain calm, but when he pursed his lips slightly, Sheng Yue noticed it.

“No need to worry, I won’t kill you,” Sheng Yue said. “If you’re really Su Liang’s person, you should know that I’m not the enemy. Of course, Su Liang sending you back and having you hide your identity from me means that she thinks I’m an enemy too.”

Feng Ming shook his head. “Young Master Sheng is overthinking it. I am not a subordinate of that Divine Doctor Su.”

“It’s alright if you don’t want to admit it,” Sheng Yue shook his head. “It doesn’t make much difference to me. Go back and rest, we can discuss other matters later.”

“Yes, thank you, Young Master Sheng, for helping me with the Island Master.” As soon as Feng Ming finished speaking, he lowered his head and left.

Sheng Yue gazed at Feng Ming’s retreating figure and lightly tapped the table with his fingers.

Leaving Sheng Yue’s courtyard, Feng Ming hurried back to his former residence on the island, which was the same as when he had left the year before, dusty and uncleaned.

It wasn’t until he entered the room and closed the door that Feng Ming’s expression relaxed a bit, and he took a long breath.

Sheng Yue discovering his secret as soon as he returned was something Su Liang had warned Feng Ming about, so he was mentally prepared for it.

He knew that Sheng Yue’s words were a firm belief that he was now loyal to Su Liang, whether he admitted it or not. But he still chose to deny it, because if he admitted that he was Su Liang’s man, he would have to explain more things in front of Sheng Yue, such as how he became loyal to Su Liang and what Su Liang had told him to do on the island. Although Sheng Yue could guess most of it, his guesses were different from the truth.

Although Su Liang had said that even if Sheng Yue discovered Feng Ming was a spy, he wouldn’t kill him, Feng Ming still broke into a cold sweat under Sheng Yue’s piercing gaze and questioning, because Sheng Yue’s oppressive aura was too strong.

The reason why Su Liang believed Sheng Yue wouldn’t kill Feng Ming was that Sheng Yue obviously still needed to cooperate with Su Liang and Gu Ling to achieve his goals, which required Feng Ming to be alive as a demonstration of his sincerity.

He had passed the first test upon returning to the island, but Feng Ming did not truly relax. Su Liang’s task for him was to watch Sheng Yue, but he had been exposed on the first day. As such, the things Sheng Yue let him see from now on might be intended to mislead him, making his task more difficult.

A few days later, Mo Yan still hadn’t seen Feng Ming again, and Sheng Yue hadn’t given him any trouble. He had only arranged for him to be in charge of patrolling the coastline. This was a position with actual power and authority, allowing him to command all the masters on the island below the elder level. After the incident on New Year’s Eve, nobody dared to cause trouble again.

Therefore, in the eyes of everyone on Xingluo Island, Sheng Yue was Mo Yan’s confidant, and Feng Ming was Sheng Yue’s confidant. However, Feng Ming knew this wasn’t the truth.

One night, Feng Ming personally led a young master to patrol along the coast. Although Mo Yan and Su Liang had agreed to meet on the first day of March, they were still on high alert for potential attacks on Xingluo Island.

The young man was called Xie Jun, who had come to the island the same year as Feng Ming. They had a good relationship at first, but Xie Jun had chosen to side with the He Family, was willing to be ordered around by He Peng, and had thus distanced himself from Feng Ming and Zhu Zan.

“There’s no movement. Let’s go,” Feng Ming said, patting Xie Jun on the shoulder.

Xie Jun seemed frightened, and the lantern in his hand shook violently.

Feng Ming felt something was wrong. “I’ve been meaning to ask you, ever since I came back, I noticed that you’re always jumpy. Is it because of the He Family’s misfortune? There are many people on the island who were close to the He Family, and they’re all fine. Even if the Island Master wants to settle scores, it won’t be with you.”

Xie Jun shook his head. “I’m fine.”

Feng Ming looked around and led Xie Jun in another direction, lowering his voice and saying, “You know me, if you have any problems, just tell me. We are brothers; if I can help you, I definitely will.”

Xie Jun looked up at Feng Ming and asked, “Some people say that you killed Zhu Zan.”

Feng Ming laughed when he heard this, “You believe that? Why would I kill him? You might even see him again after you leave the island. It’s fate that brought all of us orphans together.”

“Is he really alive?” Xie Jun asked.

Feng Ming nodded, “I swear, he’s alive, he just doesn’t want to come back.”

Xie Jun frowned, “I can’t figure out why you came back. You’re the smartest among us; Zhu Zan knows that this place is a trouble zone, and coming back wouldn’t end well for anyone. Why did you...?”

Feng Ming glanced around, and the two reached an open area by the sea where no one could eavesdrop. He sighed and said, “I’ve thought about not coming back before, that’s why I dragged my feet for so long. But in the end, I decided to return because I have no other home to go to. I honestly didn’t know where else to go.”

Before Xie Jun could ask more questions, Feng Ming stared at him intently, “What exactly happened on the island before I came back? The fall of the He Wei family alone shouldn’t have scared all of you like this.”

Feng Ming had noticed the strange atmosphere on the island as soon as he returned. Technically, with He Wei dead, the other elders should have leapt at the opportunity to seize power. But those who had previously been haughty were now timid as quails, hiding their heads. Feng Ming felt that it wasn’t just because the entire He family had been executed. Considering the foundation of the He Family, Feng Ming had thought it was highly possible for He Wei to lead a rebellion with the other island dwellers. How did Mo Yan manage to kill the entire He family in just one day? And it wasn’t just the He family who had rebellious intentions.

“Don’t ask anymore; it’s better that you don’t know. You’re lucky now that Young Master Sheng holds you in high regard,” Xie Jun said, shaking his head as if recalling a horrifying event.

Feng Ming grasped Xie Jun’s shoulder, “If it’s not a secret that only you know, why can’t you tell me? If I don’t know anything, I’ll feel uneasy, and I won’t be able to help you.”

Xie Jun hesitated, “If something happens, would you really help me?”

Feng Ming earnestly nodded, “Zhu Zan hasn’t come back, so you’re now my best brother on the island.” To be cautious, he didn’t inquire about anything in the past few days and only arranged for Xie Jun to patrol the night with him today.

Xie Jun took a deep breath, subconsciously glanced behind him to ensure no one was there, and began speaking, “On New Year’s Eve, something big happened. If I tell you, you might think I’m talking nonsense.”

Feng Ming shook his head, “Just tell me, I believe you.”

“That day, when Young Master Sheng returned from the outside, and Master found out that the Divine Doctor Su was his granddaughter, he became furious because He Wei had deliberately concealed it. As punishment, he cut off one of He Wei’s ears. That very night, He Wei gathered the island’s people to rebel,” Xie Jun said in a low voice, “At that time, everyone followed him, except for Young Master Sheng. But I couldn’t speak up in front of Sheng, so I had no choice but to follow He Peng to the forbidden area to stage a coup.”

Feng Ming’s eyes narrowed slightly. Besides Sheng Yue, all the other masters on the island joined the rebellion? How did Mo Yan suppress them? And his methods must be extraordinary...

“And then, we were...”, Xie Jun licked his lips, which was a sign of his nervousness, “We were all caught by the Island Master.”

Feng Ming frowned, “The Island Master caught so many of you by himself? Did he use poison?”

Xie Jun shook his head, “No... no, the Island Master never uses poison. It was... that...” He glanced behind him again, then whispered into Feng Ming’s ear, “The magic treasure.”

These two words were not unfamiliar to Feng Ming. All the masters on the island knew that Mo Yan had an incredible magic treasure, but no one knew what it was or what made it so powerful. Feng Ming had unintentionally heard that the magic treasure could hold many items.

Still, when Xie Jun said that Mo Yan could snap his fingers and make them disappear, confining them within the magic treasure, Feng Ming was shocked, “It can actually hold living people inside?”

Xie Jun nodded, “A lot of people. The Island Master is invincible; he is a god. Only a god could do such things.”

When he said this, Feng Ming noticed that Xie Jun’s eyes were filled with both fear and a touch of piety amidst the horror.

People are always afraid of the unknown, and witnessing something they cannot understand makes them even more fearful.

Feng Ming couldn't understand it either. If someone had told him about this before, he would have thought it was nonsense, impossible. However, the atmosphere on the island now and Xie Jun's personal account of his experience made Feng Ming realize that it was true.

"Everyone on the island knows about this except me?" Feng Ming calmed down his astonishment and asked Xie Jun.

Xie Jun nodded, "Young Master Sheng wasn't taken there that time, but one night afterward, he asked me to tell him what it looked like inside... I didn't dare not to tell him."

"You did the right thing." Feng Ming patted Xie Jun's shoulder again, "If you hadn't told him, Young Master Sheng would have asked someone else."

As they talked, the two walked back.

"I really don't know what the Island Master wants to do. Since he knows that Su Divine Doctor is his granddaughter, he should recognize her, right?" Xie Jun said.

Feng Ming sighed softly, "Who knows." But at this moment, the only thing on his mind was that Su Liang probably didn't know about Mo Yan's magic treasure which could capture a living person and release them. Since people on the island only found out about it on New Year's Eve and there was no news before that, no one who knew about it had left the island afterward.

Feng Ming felt that it was necessary for him to find a way to inform Su Liang about this as soon as possible. Otherwise, if Mo Yan used that move during their meeting on the first day of March, he could capture both Su Liang and Gu Ling and force them to yield. After all, no ordinary person could even imagine that happening...

After separating from Xie Jun, Feng Ming returned to his residence, which was close to midnight.

The moonlight shone through the window, and with the door closed, he didn't light a lamp. He sat down at the table, frowning in contemplation. The more he thought about it, the more important he believed the matter was. But now, he had no companions, so he either had to escape from the island and inform Su Liang himself, or else wait until the sea meeting on the first day of March and try to inform Su Liang then. However, he might not have the qualifications to go with Mo Yan in the latter case.

"Thinking about how to pass the message to Su Liang?"

The voice coming from a distance shocked Feng Ming, and he subconsciously stood up, only to see a figure emerge from the shadows. If not Sheng Yue, who else?

"Young Master Sheng is looking for me?" Feng Ming narrowed his eyes, his voice respectful. At this moment, he suspected that perhaps his conversation with Xie Jun had been overheard by Sheng Yue. It wasn't that Xie Jun had betrayed him, nor that Sheng Yue had eavesdropped; perhaps Sheng Yue had simply guessed it. His mind had always been terrifying.



"I gave you a chance last time, and you didn't take it." Sheng Yue approached Feng Ming, "Tonight, I'll give you another chance to admit that you're Su Liang's man."

However, Feng Ming shook his head firmly, "I really have nothing to do with that Su Divine Doctor. I did talk to Xie Jun about some matters tonight, but only because the atmosphere on the island is strange, and I don't understand why."

Sheng Yue looked at Feng Ming, and suddenly said something inexplicable, as if talking to himself, "Even if you were to swear your loyalty to me, I wouldn't believe you. In this world, I only believe in myself."

Feng Ming saw the coldness in Sheng Yue's eyes, icy like the snow in the north during winter, utterly devoid of warmth. Instinctively, he wanted to run, but it was already too late.

Sheng Yue waved his hand, and Feng Ming's body stiffened, losing consciousness. Before he blacked out, he thought about the fact that Sheng Yue had used poison. It was obvious that Sheng Yue had been watching him all along, proving just how important this matter was to Su Liang and making Sheng Yue extremely wary...

The next day, Xie Jun discovered that Feng Ming had disappeared. He didn't dare to ask about it, and he was soon appointed by Sheng Yue to replace Feng Ming's previous position.

Mo Yan didn't pay attention to Feng Ming, but the two elders beside him informed him that the island was missing a person.

So, when Mo Yan played chess with Sheng Yue again, he asked about it.

Sheng Yue answered calmly, "He's not dead; he's in the dungeon."

Mo Yan frowned, "Why?"

"He's a spy sent by Su Liang," Sheng Yue said.

Mo Yan's hand holding the chess piece paused, "How did you find out?"

"Last night, he was inquiring about Master's magic treasure with Xie Jun, and then he tried to escape to pass on the information," Sheng Yue replied.

Mo Yan's face darkened, "No wonder he returned so late."

"After I caught him, he tried to win me over and wanted me to cooperate with him," Sheng Yue said, "When he failed to win me over, he threatened to tell Master that I had been colluding with Su Liang. So, I locked him up in the dungeon."

Mo Yan snorted coldly, "My granddaughter really doesn't have any sincerity to talk peace."

"It's quite normal, considering all the incidents that happened before. Knowing Master's intentions, they would naturally be on guard," Sheng Yue replied.

"Interrogate him thoroughly to find out what Feng Ming's purpose was in returning to the island, and see if you can get any useful information." Mo Yan instructed, without any intention of bringing Feng Ming to him.

So, after leaving the forbidden area, Sheng Yue went to the dungeon.

Feng Ming had awakened and hadn't shouted to denounce Sheng Yue, remaining quiet. He knew that if he made any rash moves, Sheng Yue might really kill him.

Sheng Yue waved his hand, driving everyone else out, leaving only him and Feng Ming in the dungeon.

"If you confess something useful, it'll be easier for you," Sheng Yue said indifferently, "As long as my Master doesn't ask for your life, I won't kill you."

Feng Ming shook his head, "It's all a misunderstanding; Young Master Sheng, you've overestimated me. I'm not some kind of spy."

Sheng Yue looked at Feng Ming with deep and mysterious eyes, "So loyal to her? I can understand people like you. However, that matter really can't be known to her; you shouldn't have inquired about it."

Seeing Sheng Yue about to turn away and leave, Feng Ming asked, "What's Young Master Sheng's purpose, then?"

Sheng Yue didn't respond, disappearing from Feng Ming's sight.

Capital city.

In late February, the matter that hadn't been settled before was brought up again.

"We won't show our faces," Gu Ling had already thought it through, "We'll have Qiao Jing pretend to be me instead. In case something happens, I'll save him."

Chapter 468: 468. Still so silly

The capital city was already in the season of spring warmth and blooming flowers.

This day, Gu Ling took Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu, the master and his two disciples went to Wangxiang Mountain to play. There were no others around, and they did not bring Gu Xiaonuan.

Ji Xiaoshu was running at the front, seeing that Zhengzheng wasn't chasing after him for a race, he found it boring. So he ran back and grabbed Gu Ling's hand, "Master, are you leaving for a long journey soon?"

"Hmm." Gu Ling nodded.

"We definitely can't go." Ji Xiaoshu was well aware of this, "Is the mistress going, then?"

Gu Ling shook his head, "No."

"Then when master is away, I will protect the mistress and my sister!" Ji Xiaoshu puffed out his small chest.

"Let's talk about it when you grow taller." Gu Ling looked down at Ji Xiaoshu.

Ji Xiaoshu looked at his height, which only reached Gu Ling's thigh, and couldn't help but look a bit worried, "I eat meat every day, why am I still growing so slowly?"

Zhengzheng laughed, "We're still young. When we're grown up, we'll be tall."

Ji Xiaoshu, of course, knew this. He wanted to have the ability to protect Su Liang and Gu Xiaonuan now, but unfortunately, he needed protection himself.

They reached the familiar spot where the ice had melted. The two children spotted tadpoles again and excitedly called Gu Ling over to look.

"The hibernating frogs are awake, and the big bad guys who hibernate should also be coming out." Ji Xiaoshu sighed.

Gu Ling ruffled Ji Xiaoshu's hair, "You're acting old before your time."

"I'm much younger than you, master!" Ji Xiaoshu huffed, though he was just sensitive to the fact that Gu Ling and Su Liang seemed to have some worries recently.

After viewing tadpoles, the master and his two disciples climbed to the peak. Gu Ling even caught a rabbit for them. They skinned and cleaned it on the spot and had a roast meat meal.

They played happily in the wild. By the time they returned home, it was already late afternoon.

Entering the house, Gu Ling saw that Lian Shun and Ying Ying were visiting. Ying Ye was entertaining Gu Xiaonuan.

"Uncle Ersan!" Zhengzheng greeted Lian Shun as he entered the house.

Lian Shun was grinning from ear to ear, opened his arms wide, and hugged Ji Xiaoshu who was passing him, "Xiaoshu, why didn't you call me when you went out to play?"

Ji Xiaoshu was a bit dumbfounded, "Apart from accompanying Aunt Ying, is there anything else Uncle Ersan wants to do?"

Lian Shun chuckled, "No one understands me better than you, Xiaoshu."

Ying Ying was chatting happily with Yan Shiba. Yan Shiba liked cheerful and outgoing girls, Weng Ran was one, and Ying Ying even more so.

In fact, the reason why Lian Shun and Ying Ying came today was because they were concerned about Su Liang's appointment with Mo Yan on the first day of March. They had asked before, but Su Liang had not made a decision yet. They thought the time was right and came to inquire again about the final arrangements. If Su Liang and Gu Ling were both going to the south, they would be happy to help look after the children.

Su Liang had already said that Gu Ling was going and she had not yet decided.

It was getting late, so Lian Shun and Ying Ying took Ying Ye and left. Weng Ran and others were preparing dinner. Gu Ling went upstairs, changed his clothes, and sat down by the window to watch the children running in the sunset outside.

Su Liang came in, sat next to Gu Ling, and looked down with him, and she couldn't help but sigh, "If time could reverse, go back to childhood..."

Gu Ling shook his head, "I would accept it if time could reverse back to the day we met. Not any earlier." If they went back to childhood, they would be from two different worlds.

Su Liang smiled, "Okay, let's imagine another scenario then, we wake up and find ourselves back in childhood, and we grow up together again. How's that?" As a couple with unique life experiences, they often have some imaginative topics, which could lead to interesting long stories.

"Not good either." Gu Ling shook his head, "Children need protection and are prone to danger." In any case, to ensure their safety together, some scenarios were not feasible for him.

Su Liang shrugged, "Okay, idle talk is over. I told sister Ying, I might go with you. Have you decided to go alone?"

Gu Lining held Su Liang's hand, pressed it against his face, and nodded, "Yes, you'll stay home." It wasn't that he underestimated Su Liang. After becoming parents, they reached a consensus: even if something happens, at least one parent should stay with the children. They could be less cautious when the children grow older, but not now.

"Alright, I thought, since I am the real transmigrator, but now you are not much different from a transmigrator. I can hardly find any new things to tell you. In fact, sometimes you seem more like a transmigrator than I do." Su Liang laughed, "You are skilled in martial arts, you should go, I'll stay at home waiting for you to come back. However, it was us who made the appointment with Mo Yan. At the time, the main thought was to calm the strife and buy some time, and we didn't talk about what to do when we meet him. I'm sure you, the Great God, have some ideas now."

Gu Ling nodded, "We've already discussed it once."

Su Liang looked surprised, "Did I lose my memory?"

"He is fit for a blast." Gu Ling said.

Su Liang held her forehead. Yes, on the day that Cheng Yun came back with the gift from Mo Yan, when she saw in Mo Yan's letter that he wanted to hug Gu Xiaonuan, Gu Ling said: Mo Yan is suitable for a blast.

"Great God, are you planning to blow him up?" Su Liang pondered, "That's not impossible, but he will surely be prepared, and it may not be easy to succeed." Both sides knew that they would use explosives and had a lot of it.

"On the first day of March, while Mo Yan is away, go to Xingluo Island and bomb the forbidden area." Gu Ling suggested.

"The ploy of drawing a tiger away from its territory is a good one. But what threatens us is not the forbidden area or any path, but people. If we bomb the forbidden area and Mo Yan is still alive, his life ambition will come to an end, he will definitely go

completely mad. If we can't solve him as soon as possible, it will further escalate the conflict." Su Liang felt this plan was not very reliable.

Gu Ling continued, "When we meet Mo Yan then, we'll say we have sent people to the island to bomb the forbidden area and threaten him to hand over his magic treasure."

"The magic treasure may not be something that can be handed over. What if it exists in his mind? Others can't snatch it, nor use it. Although it seems very likely that it's the ruby ring, it might also be a diversion." Su Liang said and then her eyes slightly narrowed, "We, beforehand, have always ignored one thing."

"What?" Gu Ling asked. As a matter of fact, the two had not discussed what to do during the meeting on the sea on the first day of March. Earlier, Gu Ling's talk of the explosion was just a joke, and they were currently discussing feasible schemes.

"Mo Yan's space, we only know that it has kept explosives and large amounts of grain," Su Liang said. "We ignored whether living creatures could enter."

Gu Ling was slightly taken aback. Regarding the concept of portable space, Su Liang only mentioned it as something seen in novels and movies from her previous life, and it is not explainable by science. Gu Ling had a rich imagination, but his focus previously was not on the interior of the space but on what kind of principle it might be, so he neglected Su Liang's point.

"If living things can enter and leave, so can people." Gu Ling's face hardened slightly. If it is true, Mo Yan poses a greater threat to them. Imagine, Mo Yan could take people into his space, saying he is a god, a certain level of a ruler, it wouldn't be an exaggeration.

Compared with that, Gu Ling's special ability is more of a "Buddhist attribute," which more often than not provides him no benefits but only demands him to pay. As a transmigrator, Su Liang had no special abilities and no magic treasures. A lot of things required her to learn on the spot.

"Although we currently have no evidence to suggest that he can take living things in and out of his space, we have to be cautious," Su Liang frowned. "With a mere twitch of his finger, he could trap you in a place out of my reach and sight, a place I can't penetrate or do anything about. That would be dreadful, as it would leave him to do as he pleases."

After exchanging glances, the tension suddenly heightened in their previously relaxed discussion.

Gu Ling clutched Su Liang's hand. "In that case, we should make a pre-emptive strike on Xingluo Island, regardless of the previous agreement of attacking on the first day of the third month."

"After the last incident, they will surely be on guard." Su Liang said, "We could first take soldiers to the island where my master resides and lie in ambush. After we find out that Mo Yan has left the island, we can split our forces. One group can intercept and besiege him at sea. The other can attack Xingluo Island and destroy the

forbidden area. The most important thing is to kill Mo Yan. Whether we can obtain the magic treasure is not that important.”

Gu Ling nodded. “I’ll set off tonight.”

Su Liang hugged Gu Ling, sighing, “I originally thought we still had a few days, but it’s good to leave tonight. Only by eliminating Mo Yan as soon as possible can we rest easy.” This wasn’t easy. By now, both sides had shown most of their hands. They realized attacking Xingluo Island again was unlikely to succeed, since it had defenses in place, which Feng Ming’s previous report also corroborated. Gu Ling and Su Liang had always hoped to avoid casualties in resolving this issue.

Despite Mo Yan’s thoughtful gifts and heartfelt letter, they could not change their impression of him— he was a selfish, treacherous, unscrupulous devil who had harmed countless people and would undoubtedly continue to do so. No matter what, neither Su Liang nor Gu Xiaonuan would allow Mo Yan to change what he originally planned to do.

After dinner, Gu Ling didn’t say anything to his family. He only called Cheng Yun, as Su Liang didn’t feel at ease with him traveling alone, but Gu Ling wanted his masters to stay behind as guardians.

Cheng Yun was surprised that Gu Ling would be leaving tonight, but once he heard he was included, he quickly began packing his luggage without any protest.

“Don’t worry, I’ll take care of myself,” Gu Ling said in Su Liang’s embrace, softly patting her back.

Despite their past separations, today they realized their enemy might be more formidable than they had initially thought, hence fermenting an undertone of unrest within Su Liang. She had contemplated the worst-case scenario: Gu Ling failing to kill Mo Yan and getting captured in return. But as long as Mo Yan knew that it was Su Liang rather than Gu Ling who was the transmigrator, he should utilize Gu Ling to force Su Liang into compliance— regardless, as long as they were alive, all other troubles could be resolved.

Feeling somewhat drowsy, Gu Xiaonuan received a kiss from Gu Ling, and she returned the favor by kissing his face and calling out “Daddy”.

The door creaked open, revealing two little heads.

Su Liang beckoned them in. Both little ones, clad in adorable pajamas, approached and asked when they saw Gu Ling, “Master, are you leaving tonight?”

Ji Xiaoshu was the one who picked up on it. He told Zhengzheng that the way Gu Ling looked at Su Liang tonight was different, betraying an unusual warmth and reluctance.

Su Liang nodded. “Yes, there’s been a change in plans, and your master needs to leave earlier.”

“Are you sure you won’t go, Master’s wife?” Ji Xiaoshu asked, looking up.

“Yes, I’m sure I’m not going,” Su Liang smiled. “We’ll wait for him at home.”

“That’s good then. If Master gets captured by the villain, we can still rescue him.” Ji Xiaoshu’s face was brimming with seriousness.

Zhengzheng quickly covered Ji Xiaoshu's mouth. "Don't talk nonsense. It's impossible for Master to get captured by the villain!"

"Of course, I was just speculating." Ji Xiaoshu said with a grin, and then ran over to hug Gu Ling's leg. "Master, you must come back early, or I'll forget you!"

"That'd be even better," Gu Ling replied.

Ji Xiaoshu: ...

Gu Ling laid Gu Xiaonuan on the bed and gave each of his two young disciples a hug. He looked at Su Liang. Su Liang walked over, hugging his neck and giving him a small kiss. "Go, you don't have to worry about the house."

"We'll look after sister. Master's wife, you go see off Master. There's no need to hurry back," Ji Xiaoshu kindly offered.

Thus, Su Liang escorted Gu Ling outside.

Cheng Yun brought his package over. Not seeing Gu Ling come out, he assumed Gu Ling hadn't yet left and decided to wait for him at the entrance of Yuanming Pavilion. Little did he know, Gu Ling was currently saying his goodbyes to Su Liang in the woods.

Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu leaned over the edge of the bed, observing the already sleeping Gu Xiaonuan, they exchanged a glance.

Zhengzheng sighed, "I hope the villain is exterminated soon."

Ji Xiaoshu climbed onto the bed. "With Master away, we should sleep with Master's wife."

Zhengzheng was a bit speechless. "You just want to sleep with Master's wife, Xiaoshu."

"I'm also worried about Master, these two aren't contradictory," Ji Xiaoshu had already picked a spot and lay down, "if Master's wife doesn't want to tell us a story tonight, she will probably miss Master and not be able to sleep."

Zhengzheng gave it some thought and climbed into bed as well.

When Su Liang returned alone, she saw the three little ones lying on the bed with a spot left for her on the outside.

Zhengzheng rubbed his eyes. "Go to sleep, Master's wife, it's very late."

"If Master's wife can't sleep, you can tell us a story or go for a stroll," Ji Xiaoshu covered his mouth to yawn, "I'm not sleepy, really."

Su Liang lay down on the bed, dropping the bed canopy, "Let's sleep. I'm tired too."

With his eyes closed, Ji Xiaoshu muttered, "Let Heaven's eye be open, strike down the villain."

Lightly patting her two disciples, Su Liang also closed her eyes. In truth, she was not tired, she was thinking. If Mo Yan's space could indeed trap people, how could they cope? The size of the space couldn't be infinite, otherwise it would be outrageously powerful, and Mo Yan wouldn't have been hiding for so many years. If he needs to touch someone to trap them, it won't be much of a problem.

They'd just need to maintain a distance. But if he can trap people through a medium, such as a rope or a piece of wood, or even... through the ground..."

Su Liang opened her eyes, looking at the ceiling and then at her sleeping daughter and two adorable disciples beside her. She thought to herself, since their journey thus far, Gu Ling has never let her down. It's not wise to only think about how powerful Mo Yan's magic treasure is, they should also remember that her husband's capabilities shouldn't be overlooked either.

Su Liang exhaled lightly, deciding to sleep well, to gather energy. There would be plenty to do tomorrow. She had already prepared many medicines for Gu Ling, including truth-telling drugs. Many medicines had been taken away, and the home's medicine cabinet needed to be restocked.

At dawn, Cheng Yun and Gu Ling had already ventured a fair distance from the capital.

During a brief rest, Cheng Yun compared his height to Gu Ling's. "Well, I can also serve as your body double now." He used to be shorter than Gu Ling, but now they were almost the same height.

"Why should you be my double?" Gu Ling asked, his expression indifferent.

Cheng Yun answered solemnly, "If someone tries to kill you, you can't be the one to take the hit. No matter the situation, I can replace you. Su Liang is my sister, while you are my brother-in-law. I should protect you."

Gu Ling looked at Cheng Yun's solemn face in the morning light and lightly patted his head, "You are still as silly. Let's go, don't think about unnecessary things."

Chapter 469: 469. Be Honest

On the second day after Gu Ling left.

Su Liang found that the two little disciples were surrounding her all day, secretly watching her every move.

"Master's wife is really fine." Zhengzheng whispered.

"What if she's pretending? She likes Master so much, and suddenly being apart from him must be difficult." Ji Xiaoshu whispered, "I think it's because she doesn't want to make us worry, so she hasn't shown it."

"Even if that's true, what can we do about it?" Zhengzheng asked.

"We can try to cheer her up!" Ji Xiaoshu said.

Zhengzheng thought about it and shook his head, "Master's wife is usually happy when she sees us. Unless that big villain explodes on the spot and Master returns home immediately, it won't solve anything."

"Ah... that's true. You're right, big brother. Let's not make a fuss about it, and let Master's wife do whatever she wants to do." Ji Xiaoshu sighed.



Su Liang listened and smiled. Actually, it wasn't so bad. She was at home, with the child, and Gu Ling, who had to leave home to deal with the trouble, was even more tired. Their journey to today hasn't been easy, but they've been lucky in some ways, especially in finding each other.

That day, Duanmu Chen brought Duanmu Zhen to Su Mansion for a meal. When they learned that Gu Ling had gone south, they comforted Su Liang, "With his strength, he can handle whatever monsters or ghosts are on Xingluo Island."

Su Liang only smiled without speaking. Trusting is one thing, worrying is another. Sometimes they don't conflict. It is because of concern that one becomes confused.

Yan Shiba had something to say, "Why didn't you all call me to help? I've recovered quite well, you can't just forget me when you have something to deal with. Do you want me to go after Gu Ling now?"

Weng Ran said, "The safety of our home is also important, so we need you to stay here to take care of it."

Yan Shiba sighed, "That's true! What if those bastards take advantage of Gu Ling's absence and come to cause trouble at home? I have to protect little ghost girl and Nuannuan baby!"

Jiaye City.

Since Cheng Yun left, Qiao Cong, Qiao Jing, and Old Mu's life had become even more uneventful. The coastal defense that Gu Ling had initially instructed them to set up had long been completed. Old Mu had also made enough explosives to store for backup use, and with time to spare, he even specifically improved the weapons for the Jiaye City army, and together with Qiao Cong, they built a boat.

It was not an ordinary boat made by Old Mu. There was a cannon on the boat that could fire explosives, and it was also equipped with other hidden mechanisms and weapons. This was to prepare for the appointment between Su Liang and Mo Yan on the first day of the third month.

"Why haven't anyone from the capital city come yet?" Qiao Cong asked, looking eagerly for someone from his home to arrive.

Old Mu grinned, "If someone comes, it'll be Xiaogu. Xiaoliang probably won't come, because Nuannuan needs her to take care of her."

"Then Nuannuan is even less likely to come." Qiao Cong looked disappointed, "I can't go back, Nuannuan can't come either, life is really boring!"

Qiao Jing asked, "Does Grandpa think Nuannuan should come here?"

Qiao Cong slapped Qiao Jing, "Who said that? I just miss Nuannuan, that's all. What would she do here? What if that Mo guy has his eyes set on her?"

Qiao Jing: ...Grandpa is always so contradictory. He knows that Nuannuan cannot come, that she shouldn't come, but every day he still talks about it as if she will...

Another day passed, and as usual in the evening, Qiao Jing received a report that the coastline was calm and there were no abnormalities.

Qiao Jing was having dinner with Qiao Cong and Old Mu when they heard a familiar voice outside, "Senior Qiao, Senior Mu."

"Is the Little Monk back?!", Qiao Cong's face lit up, "There must be people from the capital city!" As soon as he said that, he threw down his chopsticks and rushed out.

In a short while, Gu Ling and Cheng Yun entered the door one after the other.

Qiao Jing and Old Mu instinctively looked behind them, but besides Qiao Cong who had just come in last, there was no one else.

Qiao Cong complained, "Just the two of you? Where are the others? Even if Xiaoliang didn't come, old Bai is resting at home too? How can he be so comfortable!"

Cheng Yun seriously explained to Qiao Cong, "We need someone to protect the home."

Qiao Jing pulled Cheng Yun to sit down and told him not to explain. Qiao Cong had always been at odds with old Bai and was now envious and jealous that old Bai could stay at home with the child, which was his dream. It's not false that he has complaints about old Bai, but it's just a matter of talking. It didn't matter. When old Bai had an accident, Qiao Cong was very concerned about him. It didn't prevent them from continuing to look at each other with displeasure after old Bai was better.

After Gu Ling and Cheng Yun rushed back day and night, Qiao Jing saw that they looked exhausted and quickly asked someone to add bowls and chopsticks, "Eat first, then rest well. We'll talk about the important matters tomorrow."

"There's something to discuss tonight." Gu Ling said calmly.

Qiao Cong frowned, "What is it? If you want to say it, say it now."

Gu Ling shook his head, "I'm hungry and tired."

As the bowls and chopsticks were brought over, Qiao Jing noticed that the table was full of meat dishes, even the vegetarian dishes were cooked with meat oil, and the porridge was meat porridge.

"I'll have them cook another dish for you." Qiao Jing said to Cheng Yun.

Cheng Yun shook his head, "No need to bother, I'll just have some porridge." He then scooped a spoonful of porridge and put it in his mouth.

"Um..." Qiao Jing saw that Cheng Yun thought it was plain porridge and hesitated to speak.

It was only after swallowing a mouthful of porridge that Cheng Yun realized it was exceptionally delicious and not the vegetarian mountain delicacy porridge he thought it was. Seeing the look on Qiao Jing's face, he knew there was meat in it.

"Since it's already eaten, might as well eat more." Gu Ling said as he picked up a big chicken leg for Cheng Yun.

Old Mu grinned and encouraged Cheng Yun, "You've been secular for so long, don't bother too much about the rules and precepts. If you can eat it, then it's okay to eat."

“If you don’t eat and starve, and someone comes to kill me, you’ll be too weak to help and let me get into trouble.” Gu Ling said.

Qiao Jing almost spat out the porridge he had just taken. Is this still Gu Ling? What kind of language is he using?

But it seemed very useful to Cheng Yun. Hearing what Gu Ling said, he was hesitant for a while, and then silently picked up the bowl and continued to drink the meat porridge.

After putting down the empty bowl, Cheng Yun said solemnly, “We left home together, we must go back together, and if only one of us can go back, it must be you.”

“Don’t talk about inauspicious things, just hurry up and eat. After all, Xiaogu still has important things to say.” Old Mu said.

After Cheng Yun frowned and ate the chicken leg, Qiao Cong asked, “How does it taste?”

Cheng Yun nodded, wanting to say something, but seemed unable to speak.

When everyone put down their chopsticks, Qiao Cong urged Gu Ling to hurry up and talk about the important matters.

Gu Ling got up to open the door, made sure no one was outside, and closed it again.

“What’s going on? You’ve made me a little nervous.” Old Mu rarely saw Gu Ling like this.

“It’s about Mo Yan.” Gu Ling sat back down, “He has a magic treasure.”

“What is it?” Qiao Cong’s expression became strange, “Magic, treasure?” In this world, this word was not used in reality.

Gu Ling nodded, “Do you all still remember how the food and grass given by Yin Country to Liang Country were transported?”

As soon as these words were spoken, Qiao Jing’s eyes narrowed slightly, and Qiao Cong and Old Mu also straightened their bodies in an instant. They found that matter very strange at that time and also noticed that Gu Ling and Su Liang knew something but did not tell them actively. Now, Gu Ling was about to reveal the truth.

Cheng Yun was a bit puzzled. He had not experienced some matters, so he had no idea about them.

Gu Ling explained that Mo Yan had a miraculous portable space, which could hold a lot of things, such as the large amount of food and grass at that time.

Old Mu’s eyes widened, “Are you saying that there is a place... no, an object, the magic treasure you mentioned, which looks small but has a vast space inside?”

Qiao Cong frowned, “How can that be possible? How can there be such a thing in the world? If there is, does that mean there are gods as well?”

Upon hearing this, Qiao Jing looked at Gu Ling’s face.

Gu Ling’s expression was calm, “Haven’t you always believed that I can predict the future?”

Qiao Jing frowned, "So, were our guesses correct? Can you really predict the future?"

Gu Ling shook his head, "No. I can only sometimes see someone's impending death."

Upon hearing this, they thought of some past events and couldn't help but feel shocked. It was completely different to hear it from Gu Ling's mouth than to guess it themselves. Coupled with Mo Yan's magic treasure, it was as if a door to a new world had been opened in front of them, and they felt somewhat surreal.

Cheng Yun spoke up, "Why does Mo Yan have a magic treasure? Is it innate?"

"Right, even if there is such a treasure, why would Heaven give it to such scum?" Qiao Cong felt it didn't make sense, "How did you all find out?" Ordinary people couldn't even think of such a thing.

Qiao Jing's eyes narrowed slightly, "And also, I never understood, Mo Yan did not know Su Liang was his granddaughter before, and he didn't seem to want to take over the world. Why did he never let you go?"

"That magic treasure was initially a guess, and later Min Rou and Sheng Yue also confirmed it." Gu Ling said.

Old Mu couldn't help but sigh, "Such a treasure is definitely not something humans can make; it must be a gift from Heaven."

"Why would Heaven's gift go to Mo Yan? Heaven is really blind!" Qiao Cong huffed.

"Let Gu Ling finish speaking." Qiao Jing felt that Gu Ling hadn't gotten to the main point yet.

Gu Ling then explained that Mo Yan was a transmigrator from another world, and the portable space he either already possessed before coming here or obtained because of transmigration, but it was unclear. All that Mo Yan had done was to get back, but he didn't dare to return the same way, so he wanted to find a "fellow" to help explore the way.

"A fellow? You don't mean you, do you?" Qiao Cong's eyes on Gu Ling changed instantly, "You are also a transmigrator, discovered by Mo Yan, and that's why he's been watching you and wants to catch you!"

Old Mu's face was surprised as he looked at Gu Ling, pinching his face, "No wonder you are extraordinarily intelligent and knowledgeable, you have lived two lifetimes."

Qiao Jing felt something was wrong, "You and Su Liang...are both transmigrators, right?" He thought of where something didn't seem right; he had always felt that Su Liang was more special than Gu Ling.

"She is, I'm not." Gu Ling said bluntly.

Qiao Cong looked puzzled, "You're not? Then why has Mo Yan been targeting you? Xiaoliang is actually...isn't she a descendant of the Su Family?"

“We found out that someone was looking for the Transmigrator, so we deliberately misled them to believe that I am one.” Gu Ling explained.

Qiao Jing expressed his understanding, “It’s better this way. Letting the enemy make mistakes gives us more initiative.”

For a moment, the amount of information they received was overwhelming. Old Mu was a little dumbfounded, “Xiaoliang is...you are not...it’s right for you to keep this hidden from us before. But it must never be leaked. If it falls into the wrong hands, the consequences are unimaginable. However, now that it’s come to this, you should make things clear to us. Otherwise, when we confront Mo Yan, we won’t even know who he is or what abilities he possesses.”

Gu Ling nodded slightly. Many people on Xingluo Island knew that Mo Yan had a magic treasure. It would be dangerous if their own people didn’t know about it, thinking that martial arts and explosives could solve everything.

Cheng Yun sighed, “No wonder I felt that Su Liang was different from others when I first met her. Despite her young age, she seems to have experienced many things.”

Qiao Cong let out a long sigh, “I thought I had seen everything in my life, but I only realized tonight that I’ve seen too little.” If someone else said this, he would not have believed it. But Gu Ling’s words couldn’t be false. And many previous mysteries were now explained. Su Liang’s intelligence, medical skills, numerous abilities, and many brilliant ideas all had answers now.

Qiao Jing held his forehead, “If I had known earlier that the two of you were extraordinary, why would I have tried to compete with you?” One was a Transmigrator, and the other had special abilities, and they happened to be together. Qiao Jing felt it was normal that he had lost to Su Liang and Gu Ling in the past. It was sheer luck that he had survived until now.

Cheng Yun frowned and pondered, “Mo Yan wants to return to his original world. The path is on Xingluo Island. He wants to capture you and let you explore the way for him, but there’s a chance you could die...is that correct?”

Gu Ling nodded, “Yes.”

Cheng Yun asked again, “What if we tell him that Su Liang is his kind and she is his granddaughter? Will he give up?”

Qiao Cong snorted lightly, “You’re overthinking it. Mo Yan is a despicable person who has harmed countless people. He wouldn’t care who is his kin.”

Cheng Yun sighed, “It’s really sinful. Heaven has already given him a great chance to be reborn, yet he still attempts to act against fate. There’s not going to be any good outcome.”

Old Mu shook his head, “There are many cruel and evil people in this world, but we haven’t seen the heavens strike them dead with thunderbolts. The heavens are too busy to deal with so many. We still need to find our own way to solve our problems. Disciple, now that we know all of this, what plans do you and Xiaoliang have?”

“Before I set off, Su Liang thought of something,” Gu Ling said. “Mo Yan’s magic treasure might be able to capture a living person and then release them.”

At these words, everyone’s faces changed.

“We can’t meet with him! It’s better to blast him from afar!” Old Mu frowned, “It’s too dangerous to get close to him!”

Gu Ling looked at Qiao Jing, who immediately understood, “We’ll stick to the old plan. I’ll pretend to be you, and if something goes wrong, you can still save me.”

“I can do it too,” Cheng Yun hurriedly said.

“You can’t. If you suddenly blurt out ‘Amitābha,’ our cover will be blown,” Qiao Cong firmly objected. Although he cared about Qiao Jing, when needed, he never held Qiao Jing back. The home given by Su Liang and Gu Ling was the one they must protect together, not by being only sheltered by Su Liang and Gu Ling.

Gu Ling laid out a preliminary plan for Su Liang: split forces into two teams, one against Mo Yan, the other to destroy the forbidden area on Xingluo Island. He would discuss the specifics with Qiao Jing tonight, but much of it would depend on the situation since the enemy might not necessarily be waiting in a certain location as they had anticipated.

“Leave the mission on the island to us old folks!” Qiao Cong slapped Old Mu on the back and said, “You youngsters with brilliant minds, go deal with Mo Yan.”

Cheng Yun raised his hand, “I think there could be more than one body double. Another double would make the enemy more confused. What do you think?”

Qiao Jing couldn’t help but laugh, “It seems you really want to protect Gu Ling. We’ll discuss it and see if it’s possible.”

Chapter 470: 470. Body Double Strategy

Qiao Cong, Old Mu, and Cheng Yun had all gone to bed, while Gu Ling and Qiao Jing were still strolling under the moonlight in the garden.

“After hearing you talk about it tonight, I really want to see what’s inside that magic treasure,” Qiao Jing said.

“I have no guilty conscience about letting you be my stand-in,” Gu Ling knew Qiao Jing was intentionally saying this.

Qiao Jing’s mouth twitched slightly, “Forget I said that, it’s just my sincere thoughts. Of course, I don’t want to be controlled by Mo Yan. If you can seize that magic treasure, we can explore it.”

The two of them, obviously, were not just making small talk in the middle of the night because they couldn’t sleep, but they needed to discuss the detailed plans for the forthcoming chapter. The sooner it was carried out, the better — they should set off tomorrow.

“The question now is, should we deploy troops or not, or should we stealthily attack?” Qiao Jing asked solemnly.

Deploying troops would indeed make a grand gesture and could easily encircle the enemy, but everyone on Xingluo Island, apart from the innocent women and children who had been taken there,

was a master. If their ordinary soldiers went there, they might have an advantage in long-range attacks using explosives, but have no advantage in close combat.

Since they knew that most of the women on Xingluo Island were victims who had been abducted, and there were also children who knew nothing, they obviously couldn't indiscriminately carry out an attack, and blow up the whole island. Besides, Xingluo Island was not exactly small. If they tried to keep their distance and bombed from the sea, they wouldn't be able to reach the central area.

Moreover, the current targets were just two things: Mo Yan and the forbidden area.

As long as they destroyed the forbidden area on Xingluo Island, they would achieve half the success, and could directly block Mo Yan's "way home."

The forbidden area was not large, so, this time, the safest way to attack Xingluo Island was actually through a sneak attack. They shouldn't alert the enemy. It would be best if they could infiltrate the island with explosives.

Therefore, on this point, the two agreed quickly: let Qiao Cong and Old Mu go, without taking any soldiers. Under the current circumstances, troops would not only be of no use but might even cause unnecessary casualties.

Then the problem left was — how to deal with Mo Yan.

"If that magic treasure can really capture people, it would be too tricky. But if we're departing tomorrow, my grandfather and senior Mu could reach Xingluo Island by the end of February at the earliest, and they would have to take a detour to avoid Mo Yan along the way. If no one shows up on the first day of March, Mo Yan will return, and they would be in danger whether they got what they wanted or not." Qiao Jing sighed, "We have to meet with Mo Yan anyway, otherwise, there's no way to deal with him. Don't tell me when we throw an explosive at it, he will directly capture it with that magic treasure?"

Gu Ling nodded slightly, "It's possible."

"Then, are you going with me?" Qiao Jing asked, then immediately said, "You have to go. Dealing with Mo Yan is very important, and we can't do it without you. Let's take the troops, take different ships, you disguise yourself as an ordinary soldier and stay away from me. In case Mo Yan wants to capture people, he will surely target me first. You just have to think of a way to kill him."

"What if he captures you, and I kill him, and you and that magic treasure, perish with his life?" Gu Ling asked.

Qiao Jing was taken aback for a moment, he clearly hadn't considered this possibility. Such a situation was very strange, but after thinking about it, he laughed, "Cousin, you're really concerned about me. But I think it's no big deal, you'll definitely know how to deal with him without killing him." For example, using a sedative on the weapon to make Mo Yan pass out.

In the end, Qiao Jing said, "If Mo Yan also has immunity to all kinds of poison, I could only say that the heavens are indeed unfair."

So, they decided on the plan just like that.

When they were about to separate and go back to sleep, Qiao Jing thought of Cheng Yun, “Do you have any plans for him? He really wants to be your stand-in.”

“Let him pretend to be me and go to Xingluo Island,” Gu Ling said.

Qiao Jing nodded, “Okay, he has good martial arts skills, and can help. Although pretending to be you may not be useful, it’s also not necessarily useless. You have to train him well, make him use his brain a bit more. He shouldn’t be too rigid, nor should he easily trust the enemy.”

At dawn the next day, Cheng Yun was pulled out of bed by Gu Ling.

“Ah? What’s happening? What’s the problem?” Cheng Yun woke up and asked anxiously.

“No problem, you’re supposed to leave now,” Gu Ling said.

Cheng Yun hurriedly got dressed and after getting dressed, he remembered to ask, “Are we leaving now? Are we going to Xingluo Island?”

“You’re going, I’m not.” Gu Ling said, taking out the Disguise Medicine and starting to apply it to Cheng Yun’s face.

Cheng Yun blinked, “Are you having me pretend to be you?”

“Isn’t it what you wanted?” Gu Ling looked indifferent.

Cheng Yun instantly nodded, “If you think it’s feasible, then I am in.”

“Imitate my speech,” Gu Ling instructed.

Cheng Yun cleared his throat and tried, he adjusted his breath under Gu Ling’s guidance and very quickly got the hang of it. He attempted to mimic Gu Ling’s indifferent look and said, “Step aside, or die.”

“You utter ‘die’ so casually, you’ve truly given up your monastic identity,” Gu Ling said.

Cheng Yun coughed slightly, “I was just copying you.”

“Keep learning,” Gu Ling encouraged, “Learn as much as you can, the aim is to deceive Sheng Yue.”

Cheng Yun frowned, “Sheng Yue, will he be on the island at that time?”

Gu Ling nodded, “It is possible. The forbidden area is of great importance. If Mo Yan leaves the island, he might have Sheng Yue stay behind to watch and prevent any mishaps.”

Sheng Yue was Cheng Yun’s biological brother from the same parents, but by the time Cheng Yun came to know him, they were already adversaries. Their father, Pu Cheng, was still alive, whereabouts unknown.

“If you encounter Sheng Yue, don’t let him recognize you,” Gu Ling advised.



Cheng Yun nodded, "That should be very difficult; you all said that he is extremely intelligent. I will do my best."

During their conversation, Gu Ling had already finished Cheng Yun's disguise.

Cheng Yun picked up the bronze mirror for a look. Apart from the hair, his entire face had completely taken on Gu Ling's appearance.

After Cheng Yun put on the wig and mimicked Gu Ling's cold demeanor, he said, "Sheng Yue, surrender your life." He bore no trace of the compassionate Little Monk he used to be.

Gu Ling knocked lightly on Cheng Yun's forehead, "If you really encounter Sheng Yue, don't speak like that. We originally had an agreement of cooperation, which we need to maintain on the surface."

Cheng Yun's eyes brightened, "I understand! If he's in charge of Xingluo Island and I'm disguised as you, I will openly acknowledge him if discovered, saying he's one of ours. This way, others on the island won't trust him anymore!"

Gu Ling nodded, "That's the right approach. But remember, you certainly can't outwit him in cunning. You need to be extra careful and adapt to the situation. Ideally, you shouldn't run into him. Your target is the forbidden area."

Cheng Yun was serious, "I understand. I'll listen to elder Mu at that time." Qiao Cong had the greatest martial power but was somewhat impulsive. Elder Mu was a very reliable individual.

After breakfast, Qiao Jing had already ordered people to prepare a ship and food. The ship was loaded with ample explosives. Gu Ling also gave most of the protection medicine Su Liang had prepared for him to the three people. He explained how to use it and instructed them that the mission could fail, but they had to survive. Being captured was not a big deal, they would find a way to rescue them. It was most important to stay alive, they shouldn't risk their lives for anything.

A ship in Jiaye City was handmade by Elder Mu, which was equipped with a large cannon. But he didn't use it; he said it was for Gu Ling and Qiao Jing to use against Mo Yan.

When the sun rose, the three – Qiao Cong, set off. No one noticed their movements. Qiao Cong was very familiar with the sea. Having lived on an island for many years, he understood the sea's climate and knew how to identify directions. Elder Mu had also been to Xingluo Island before. He was confident in the route, and was confident he'd be able to avoid ships from Xingluo Island.

The Cheng Yun who was pretending to be Gu Ling was earnest. Since setting off, every move, as well as his voice and demeanor, were all imitating Gu Ling. He said he wanted to maintain this state so that he wouldn't be nervous when the time comes.

Qiao Cong and Elder Mu both liked this Lay Monk who had given up his monastic life, so they were happy to go along with him, playing along with the role-play. They also hoped that Cheng Yun could abandon his original way of thinking, which was so naïve to almost being obstinate.

After discussion, Gu Ling and Qiao Jing decided not to set off in advance. They would stick to their "agreement" to meet with Mo Yan at sea on the first day of the third month. If they set off early to intercept him at sea, it would make Mo Yan more alert and they wouldn't be able to prevent what he wanted to do.

Ever since learning that Su Liang was a Transmigrator, Qiao Jing had shown great interest, asking Gu Ling various questions every day. But Gu Ling would not answer anything irrelevant to current matters.

“Then I will wait to ask her when I see her,” Qiao Jing said.

Gu Ling shook his head, “She doesn’t have time.”

Qiao Jing grunted, “If you hadn’t met Su Liang, you would undoubtedly be just like me now, alone in the world.”

“I must remind you of your grandfather and sister, as if they don’t exist,” Gu Ling said indifferently, “Yes, I am fortunate, and there is no use in you envying me.”

Qiao Jing: ... I miss Su Liang, I miss Lian Shun, I miss Min Rou. Anyone is easier to get along with than Gu Ling!

Jiaye City.

Sheng Yue had not seen Mo Yan for seven or eight consecutive days. He occasionally went to see Feng Ming, but Feng Ming never admitted that he was associated with Su Liang. Sheng Yue fished for information but didn’t force it out. If Feng Ming did not wish to talk, Sheng Yue let it be.

Observing that the time to set off for the rendezvous was nearing, Sheng Yue came to the periphery of the forbidden area to seek an audience with Mo Yan that day.

After waiting for about a quarter of an hour, an elderly man guarding the forbidden area opened the doors and let Sheng Yue in.

When Sheng Yue saw Mo Yan, he was by the water pool in the deepest part of the dark cave of the forbidden area.

In his white robe, Mo Yan was sitting cross-legged on the ground with his eyes closed, calling out, “Ayue”.

“Master,” Sheng Yue respectfully saluted him, his gaze falling on the ruby ring on Mo Yan’s finger, “It’s time for the meeting on the first day of March. If we plan to go, we should set off soon.”

“Hmm,” Mo Yan nodded slightly, opened his eyes, but his aged face was somewhat obscured in the foggy haze of the cave.

“I wonder what master has planned for the meeting with Gu Ling?” Sheng Yue asked.

Mo Yan got up, “You stay here.”

Sheng Yue wasn’t surprised and reverently said, “Yes, master. You can rely on me, I will guard the forbidden area until your return.”

“Has that Feng Ming confessed anything?” Mo Yan asked.

Sheng Yue shook his head, “He steadfastly denies any association with Su Liang and won’t confess anything. Should master bring him along for the meeting? In a situation where it becomes necessary, he could serve as a hostage.”

“It seems you are certain that he is linked to my granddaughter,” Mo Yan casually commented, “I don’t need him. Let him stay, you may need him.”

Sheng Yue nodded lightly, “Does the master think Gu Ling will send people to the island?”

“Don’t you think so?” Mo Yan counter-questioned.

Sheng Yue nodded again, “I too feel that once master is out, someone will take advantage and attack the forbidden area. By now, Gu Ling must have guessed the truth about the forbidden area and master’s purpose.”

Mo Yan sighed, “Do you think, I can meet my granddaughter and great-grandchild?”

Sheng Yue shook his head slightly, “Unlikely. Neither Gu Ling nor Su Liang will trust master. Most likely, only Gu Ling will come while Su Liang and the child remains at home.”

“Well, I will go meet Gu Ling,” said Mo Yan, “Take good care of the forbidden area.”

Sheng Yue respectfully responded, “Rest assured, master, I will do my best to prevent any issues.”

Later that day, Mo Yan left Xingluo Island with a group of masters on a boat toward Jiaye City. There was no explosive on the boat, but everyone knew that whatever Mo Yan wished to carry was hidden where no one could see.

That night, Sheng Yue visited Feng Ming in the dungeon again, informing him that Mo Yan had set off.

“Why didn’t young master Sheng go?” Feng Ming asked.

“I need to stay and guard the forbidden area,” Sheng Yue said.

“I don’t understand. If young master Sheng is against Mr. Su, why did you go to Su Mansion in the first place?” With this question, Feng Ming indirectly admitted his affiliation with Su Liang.

However, Sheng Yue didn’t inquire further and even answered Feng Ming’s question, “In my view, there are no friends or enemies. Acting as I did back then was necessary. With Su Liang and Gu Ling, it is a relationship of mutual benefit and use.”

“Young master Sheng does not need to tell me all this.” Suddenly, Feng Ming had a bad premonition.

Sheng Yue casually said, “Don’t worry, I won’t kill you. But, no matter how much you know, it won’t be of any help.” Finishing his sentence, Sheng Yue left.

Feng Ming listened to the surroundings return to tranquility and closed his eyes.

Capital city.

Ever since Gu Ling left home, Su Liang noted Gu Ling’s potential itinerary on the self-made calendar Gu Ling left behind.

Su Liang had never set foot out of her door, occasionally she would have guests over. But to outsiders, Su Liang has been out frequently recently.

That's because three days after Gu Ling left, Yan Shiba had a whimsical idea to disguise herself as Su Liang. Ever since then, she has been wearing Su Liang's clothes, taking Zhengzheng, and Ji Xiaoshu out to play. She enjoyed playing the game of "guess who is your mom" with Gu Xiaonuan every day.

Yan Shiba's impersonation of Su Liang became more and more convincing, even fooling Cen Man and Old Bai once. But she never succeeded in tricking Gu Xiaonuan.

Ji Xiaoshu analyzed that Gu Xiaonuan judged by the look in the eyes: Yan Shiba's eyes were more tender and indulgent when looking at Gu Xiaonuan than Su Liang's, so it's not the same.

Yan Shiba was speechless about this. As a matter of fact, everyone spoiled Gu Xiaonuan too much and Su Liang had to establish rules for the child, so she was somewhat stricter with Gu Xiaonuan.

Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu thought that Yan Shiba was just impersonating Su Liang as a whim and would stop once she got bored. However, after several days, Yan Shiba still impersonated Su Liang every day.

"Aunt Yan, how long are you going to pretend to be my master's wife? Are you planning to wait until my master returns and fool him before you stop?" Ji Xiaoshu asked with a grin.

Yan Shiba gave Ji Xiaoshu a light tap on the forehead, "Look at my face and call me again."

Ji Xiaoshu then sweetly called out, "Mother."

At this moment, Yan Shiba was about to take Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu to the Lin Family for lessons. Before they got on the horse, Yan Shiba pulled the two kids over, and whispered in their ears, "This is my strategy. Although Gu Ling ran off to the south to kill Mo Yan, what if Mo Yan doesn't show up and comes to the capital city to catch people instead? If that time comes, he would take me back thinking I was your master's wife. You'd have to save me then! Hahaha!"

Zhengzheng and Ji Xiaoshu looked at each other in surprise.

Later when the two kids were alone, Zhengzheng sighed, "So Aunt Yan is disguising as mother to protect her! Aunt Yan is really kind to mother!"

Ji Xiaoshu cupped his face in his hands and said, "Of course, that's because mother was kind to Aunt Yan first. Mother is the best person in the world!"

Zhengzheng completely agreed.

At bedtime, the two kids couldn't help but reveal what Yan Shiba said during the day to Su Liang.

Su Liang then laughed, "You play with her all day. If someone wanted to kidnap me and takes her instead, they might take you guys too."

Zhengzheng frowned, "That's true. What should we do then?"

Su Liang calmly said, "If she wants to take you out to play again, don't go. Let her go by herself."

Ji Xiaoshu giggled, "Mother, aren't you worried that Aunt Yan might be kidnapped?"

Su Liang shook her head, "No, she's very lucky with her life."

Zhengzheng's eyes lit up, "I get it! It's just like when father asked Uncle Jing to impersonate him. This is called..."

"A stunt double!" Ji Xiaoshu chimed in, "Just like the real and fake Monkey Kings. Confuse the enemy so they can't distinguish who they're looking for."

"It's not that complicated." Su Liang shook her head, "Just in case something really happens, it can buy us some time. I knew what Yan Shiba was doing the first day she pretended to be me. She just didn't say it on purpose, making people think she was just playing around. Since I didn't say anything either, I decided to just let her have her fun."

"Elder Brother, let's switch identities tomorrow too!"

"Why? Nobody's aiming to kidnap us."

"Start practicing from now on, maybe it will be useful in the future. Isn't that right, mother?"

"As long as you're happy. Go to sleep." Sending them off to sleep, Su Liang closed her eyes to rest, thinking that Gu Ling should be setting off to his rendezvous very soon, hopeful that everything would be smooth.