

Venomous 51

Chapter 51: The Maid (1)

On the stage, Gao Yan finally finished reciting Circulation of Law.

The surroundings were quiet at first, then they started discussing softly. The students did not understand the meaning of this strategy, but they knew that it was very beautifully written. However, the adults in the men's section knew the depths. This strategy seemed to be unintentional, but it could solve the loopholes in the law of Ming Qi in one go and make up for it.

The examiner on the stage probably did not expect Gao Yan to come up with such a good essay. Once the examiner was incredulous of the student's work, he naturally had to test the student further. For example, Shen Miao's painting. To be honest, this "Circulation of Law" was more brilliant than Shen Miao's painting. It was both well-written and practical. The examiner asked, "As you mentioned in the essay just now, Ming Qi's law should be divided. How do you want to distinguish them?"

Gao Yan was delighted. In addition to the "Circulation of Law", in the paper he received, there was also a question that was exactly the same as what the examiner asked. He was very grateful to the person who wrote the essay for him and thought that he would definitely reward the person handsomely when the test finished. He raised his head and replied, "It's divided into three levels. The commercial law, the official law, and the civil law."

Below the stage, Official Gao was already grinning from ear to ear. He had reached his current state in the bureaucracy only because of the support of the emperor and the connections he had. However, he really wasn't a capable person. Fortunately, he had a good son, Gao Jin, who could help him deal with many things at a young age. Now that his second son, Gao Yan, had also shown such an extraordinary talent, he planned to go back to the ancestral hall and thank his ancestors.

Gao Jin was smarter than his father, so he didn't believe that his brother could be so smart, but he had no clue how his brother got his hands on this piece of essay. It was impossible to bribe the examiner.

Pei Lang picked up the teacup on the table and took a sip. His hand was still trembling. For some reason, everything Gao Yan said seemed to be imprinted in his mind. That familiar feeling made him feel very uncomfortable, and he could not calm down at all.

Su Minglang just woke up from a nap and saw that everyone around him was looking at Gao Yan with admiration. He tugged at Mr. Su's sleeve and asked, "Father, did he do a good job?"

"A young talent," Mr. Su said directly.

Su Minglang curled his lips, as if he could not understand. After turning around and not seeing Su Mingfeng, he asked, "Why isn't Brother back yet?"

Mr. Su cleared his throat. "Your brother is not feeling well these days. It's not easy for him to come today, so let him rest for a while longer."

When Fu Xiuyi heard the conversation, he glanced at Mr. Su. Seeing that Mr. Su's expression did not change when he mentioned Su Mingfeng, he looked away thoughtfully.

No matter what, Gao Yan did an extraordinary job today. He was able to answer the questions raised by the examiner smoothly, which dispelled the doubts in everyone's hearts. Without a question, he naturally got first place. In the future, when people mentioned their family, in addition to Gao Jin, everyone would also think about Gao Yan.

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Gao Yan left the stage proudly. This round of "Choose" ended, and the "Choose" of the women's group began.

Feng Anning did not go on stage. She already performed well in the Guqin test and wasn't good at anything else, so there was no need for her to go on stage. Shen Qing chose chess while Shen Yue, as expected, chose Guqin.

Chapter 52: The Maid (2)

Shen Yue had always liked these things that could make her look otherworldly. Chen Ruoqiu was good at playing the Guqin, so she taught her daughter everything she knew. Not only did she know how to play the Guqin, but she also knew how to compose songs and write lyrics. Every year, Shen Yue would get first place, and people enjoyed listening to her performance.

In the women's group, once Shen Yue was there, no one would choose the Guqin to embarrass themselves. Shen Qing put a lot of effort in practicing chess, so she ended up getting first place.

When it came to the Guqin, the crowd started discussing again.

Shen Yue slowly went on stage. She was born delicate and graceful, and her pink clothes made her look gentle and charming. With a faint smile on her lips, she really looked like a little fairy.

She was playing "Ode to the Moon" today.

"Ode to the Moon" was an extremely difficult song. It was a song about a wanderer who missed his homeland and family in the far distance. At the beginning, it was gentle and melancholic, then it was intense and sad. In the end, it was moving.

In her previous life, Shen Yue was also in the limelight because of this song. In comparison, Shen Miao was ridiculed. Now that she thought about it, it seemed that she had always been a stepping stone for Shen Yue.

Shen Miao looked at the girl on the stage.

Shen Yue had already started. As soon as she played the Guqin, the strings seemed to have a mind of their own. The tune was ethereal and fell into the ears of everyone present. Her fingers danced on the strings like butterflies flying through a sea of flowers.

Feng Anning bit her lip. Even if she didn't like Shen Yue, she had to admit that Shen Yue's Guqin skills were outstanding. Compared to her performance, the song Feng Anning played earlier seemed lousy.

It was a song about family and homeland, but it made Shen Miao gradually clench her fists in anger.

Even if she was reborn, the people who had already died would not be able to revive. Wanyu and Fu Ming, her children, would never appear again. Shen Yue's song not only didn't comfort Shen Miao, but it made her more vengeful.

Cai Lin left his seat. He tried his best to get closer to the stage so that he could see every expression of his sweetheart. He was immersed in the beautiful sound of the Guqin when he was suddenly interrupted by someone talking.

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"Second Miss is really unlucky. She's never gotten second place, but Fifth Miss used some tricks to snatch her glory." The person who spoke was a slender girl. Cai Lin recognized her as Shen Yue's personal maid, Shuxiang. He couldn't help but look over.

"That's right. Besides, Fifth Miss didn't even choose. She's deliberately going against Second Miss," another maid said.

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"Sigh, what a pity. Second Miss is kind-hearted and has suffered a lot at home. Fifth Miss only dares to treat Second Miss like this because of her father? Second Miss is really pitiful. She prepared for so long, but the fruit was snatched away by someone else."

"If only someone could stand up for Second Miss. For example... challenge Fifth Miss during the Challenge session."

"What nonsense are you talking about?" Shuxiang interrupted her. "Everyone knows that Fifth Miss doesn't know Guqin, chess, calligraphy, and painting. Challenging Fifth Miss is equivalent to lowering your status. I think no girls will challenge her. If the boys over there challenge her, it'll be more satisfying to watch."

Cai Lin looked at Shen Yue on the stage and was suddenly struck by an idea.

Chapter 53: Challenging Her

After Shen Yue finished her song, everyone was naturally mesmerized by it. Women with outstanding Guqin skills would be liked wherever they went, especially when this woman was quite good-looking. In the men's section opposite, many of the young men in the second and third grade looked over. Although in Guangwen Hall, Qin Qing was more beautiful, she was arrogant and could not compare to Shen Yue.

"Your sister is really good at playing." Feng Anning said reluctantly, "I wonder where she learned it from. I'll ask my mother to find a famous Guqin master to teach me tomorrow."

They were all young and competitive. For example, when Shen Miao just became the empress, she didn't care about anything, but she cared a lot about Fu Xiuyi. As long as Fu Xiuyi treated other women nicely, she would be worried. She was the type of person who would immediately get back at someone for something they did to her, and that made her plenty of enemies. Now, her personality had not changed at all, but she would choose to do it a different way.

"Second Miss of the Shen family is truly both talented and beautiful." Everyone loved beauty, and Prince Zhou was also stunned by Shen Yue. He said, "What a pity."

What was the pity? Others might not understand, but the princes did. Shen Yue was beautiful and talented. If one could have this girl by his side, it might be the greatest thing in the world. Unfortunately, Shen Yue did not come from First Branch of the Shen family, but Third Branch.

However, Shen Xin, who was leading the troops, gave birth to an idiot like Shen Miao. Even though she surprised everyone today, their impression of her didn't change much. They believed that Shen Miao was only able to perform well with the help of someone. They still saw her as a useless idiot.

After Gao Yan got off the stage, Pei Lang gradually calmed down. This was the first time he had encountered such a scene in his life. Although he did not understand, he tried his best to relax. At this moment, when he heard Prince Zhou's words, he could not help but look at the purple-clothed girl in the women's section opposite him.

She held the chess piece and turned her head to the side, deep in thought. Her eyes were deep and unfathomable. How could such a person be an idiot?

However, people would not change overnight. Then, was Shen Miao just acting stupid? Why would she do that?

Even someone as smart as him could not figure out what was going on.

The "Choose" of the women's group ended with Shen Yue's "Ode to the Moon". Shen Yue naturally got first place. However, not only was she not happy about this today, but she also felt a little embarrassed.

She glanced at Shen Miao. Shen Miao was obsessed with the chess game and did not look at her at all. Chen Ruoqiu noticed her daughter's expression and reminded her in a low voice, "Yue, you're losing your composure."

Chen Ruoqiu asked her daughter to be calm no matter what happened. No matter if she was really calm or pretending, she had to make people see her calm side. Once a woman was calm, her temperament would attract men. Chen Ruoqiu's way of teaching her daughter was indeed not bad, and she did it quite well. Unfortunately, Shen Yue was still young and had never experienced failure, so she naturally couldn't see the merit of being calm.

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Hearing Chen Ruoqiu's reminder, Shen Yue put away her anger. The maid beside her handed her a cup of tea. "Miss, have some tea to moisten your throat."

Shen Yue took the tea and looked at Shuxiang. Shuxiang smiled at her. Shen Yue smiled smugly and said, "I'm very looking forward to the Challenge session later."

Because Shen Qing had just won first place, she was in a better mood. She smiled and said, "Students are not divided by gender this year but by grades. The competition will definitely be more intense."

Challenge was the most anticipated of the three categories. Because in Draw, you might not draw the subject you were best at. In Choose, one could pick a subject they were best at. However, in Challenge, what normally happened was two people competing on the subject they were both best at, which made the competition intense and interesting to watch. Young men liked to compete. At this age, the desire to win was the strongest, so every year during Challenge, it was the most intense.

This year, students were allowed to challenge people of different gender or grade. However, although that was the case, it was unlikely to see a man challenging a woman.

As expected, no one challenged the literature category this year, so the highlight naturally fell on the martial arts category.

This almost cut off the possibility of the woman participating. Although there were many daughters of martial artists present, the woman was much weaker than the man, so it was naturally impossible for the woman to win.

In the men's section, Cai Lin was the first to stand up and walk to the stage.

When the examiner asked him what he wanted to challenge, he pointed at the target and said, "Archery."

Cai Lin, this little tyrant at Guangwen Hall, knew nothing about literature, but he was considered outstanding in the martial arts. Among them, he was the best at archery and won first place in archery last year too.

Who was he going to challenge today? In the entire venue, there was no one better than him.

Cai Lin raised her head and suddenly pointed at the women's section.

When everyone saw that he was actually pointing at a woman and not a man, they were shocked. When they saw who he was pointing at, they opened their mouths in surprise and stopped talking.

He even deliberately shouted, "I want to challenge her, Shen Miao!"

The girl in purple, who was immersed in the chess game, raised her head and looked straight at the person on the stage. Her expression did not change, and she didn't show any signs of panic, as if his challenging her meant nothing to her.

Chen Ruoqiu frowned. She put in a lot of effort to teach Shen Yue to stay calm, but Shen Miao seemed to have learned to be calm and collected on her own.

In the distant pavilion, the handsome young man spat out his tea and looked surprised. "Is Cai Lin crazy?"

Shen Miao stood up. On the chessboard on the table, a black chess piece crossed the border and was marching towards her.

She picked up the white piece to capture the black piece, throwing it into the chess basket.

"I'll accept his challenge," she said.

Chapter 54: Life and Death Contract (1)

The autumn wind was always refreshing and pleasant. However, at this moment, because of the tense atmosphere, even the fragrance of flowers seemed to have become stronger.

Shen Yue covered her mouth and said in surprise, "This... Fifth Sister is a girl. How could she know archery?"

"That's right." Chen Ruoqiu also said worriedly, "Shen Yue, don't force yourself. Although your father is a general, you never learn these kinds of things."

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"But... the rules of this competition can't be changed." Shen Qing looked anxious, but her tone was filled with schadenfreude. "Once you're challenged, no matter what kind of subject you are challenged with, you have to complete the competition. However, people will normally choose an opponent who is equally good at the subject. Fifth Sister, do you have a trick up your sleeve? Otherwise, why would Cai Lin challenge you?"

Ren Wanyun added with a smile, "Qing, what are you talking about? Of course, Shen Miao knows nothing about martial arts. Shen Miao, if you don't want to go on stage to compete, Second Aunt will go and tell the examiner that you're still young and not suitable for this dangerous competition. They will let you off for the sake of your father."

Although Ren Wanyun sounded like she was trying to help her out, on second thought, that was not the case. After all, no one had made an exception in the test for many years. If Shen Miao was the first to do so, who knew what kind of rumors would spread among the people in the capital tomorrow? Moreover, if she relied on her father, people might say that she was using her privileges. This was not a good thing for Shen Xin who was thousands of miles away from the capital.

And she would never allow anything to anyone to harm her father.

"Thank you, Second Aunt. There's no need." She stood up from the women's section and slowly walked towards the stage. The venue gradually quietened down, looking at the girl with wide-eyed shock.

"I accept his challenge."

Cai Lin's gaze changed. He did this because he wanted to stand up for Shen Yue. In the martial arts test, it was the first time a man challenged a woman. However, he was used to being a bastard. At most, he was just going to go back and be taught a lesson by his parents. However, at the thought of being able to stand up for Shen Yue, Cai Lin was happy from the bottom of his heart.

However, he did not expect Shen Miao to accept his challenge so readily. Not only that, but she was also so calm. Looking at the purple-robed woman walking slowly towards the stage, Cai Lin had a strange feeling in his heart.

It was as if she was not afraid at all.

But how was that possible? He knew better than anyone whether Shen Miao knew archery or not. People who had never practiced martial arts naturally knew nothing about archery. Everyone would panic when doing something they were not good at or had never tried.

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How could she be so calm?

Cai Lin was deep in thought when he suddenly felt a gaze on him. He turned around and met Shen Yue's gaze. When Shen Yue saw him looking at her, she blushed and lowered her head.

Every man wanted to be a hero. In Cai Lin's eyes, he was the hero who stood up for beauty. As for Shen Miao, she was a vicious and ugly villain.

Chapter 55: Life and Death Contract (2)

Even if she didn't accept his challenge today, he would definitely find a change to humiliate Shen Miao in front of everyone one day.

He wanted her to always keep her head low in front of Shen Yue!

Generally speaking, the challenger would be the one who set the rules, and the one being challenged would have to accept the rules no matter what. Because no one knew what would happen next, this round was always the most eye-catching.

Shen Miao walked to the stage.

The examiner was in a difficult position. After all, Shen Miao was just a girl. If they competed on literary subjects, then it was not a big deal. Obviously, Cai Lin wanted her to make a fool of herself.

"We got a good show to watch today." Prince Zhou clapped his hands and seemed to be very interested. "I'm afraid the reputation of the Shen family will fall again."

Prince Jing shook his head and sighed. "General Shen is famous for fighting on the battlefield, but his daughter is just a disappointment." He thought to himself that she was not only a disappointment, but also a fool. Today, it was obvious that it was wrong for her to accept the challenge. If she acted like this, it would make people laugh even more.

Cai Lin curled his lips proudly. "I thought of an interesting rule this year. It's too boring to do it the normal way. This year, how about we put an apple on each other's head and shoot it?"

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As soon as he said that, everyone was shocked!

The examiner was also shocked. Shen Miao was Shen Xin's daughter after all. If anything happened to her, who would bear the responsibility when Shen Xin came back at the end of the year?

He quickly said, "Student Cai..."

Cai Lin waved his hand. "Sir, the challenger has the right to set the rules. Why? Is the daughter of a general such a coward?"

Shen Yue lowered her head to conceal her smile. Feng Anning frowned, but she did not know what to do.

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"You're right." Prince Yu said with a husky voice. A strange smile appeared on his ferocious face. "It has always been the case that the challenger sets the rules. Will General Shen flee on the battlefield because the enemy is too powerful?" After saying that, he seemed to find it funny and laughed.

Shen Miao's gaze suddenly turned sharp.

These people were all mocking Shen Xin. Did they really think she was the weakness of First Branch of the Shen family? She looked at Cai Lin, who had a smug smile on his face, and then at the malicious mockery of the people present. The anger that had been accumulating for a long time finally burst out.

Shen Miao, who had been reborn, could tolerate it, but Empress Shen, the head of the harem, couldn't.

She said coldly, "My father fought bloody battles outside to protect the country. That's why there is a chrysanthemum banquet today and a competition between students." A trace of mockery flashed across her eyes. "Winning the competition is nothing compared to fighting for the country. As for the rules you set, why should I be afraid?"

Everyone was stunned.

"Why should I be afraid? Your archery skills are superb, so you'll naturally hit the apple. I'm not good at archery, so if I miss, you'll be the one who'll be in danger."

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She smiled, and her voice seemed to come from afar, enveloping the venue.

"In that's what you want, sign the life and death contract. If you're injured or killed, I won't bear the consequences."

"Do you dare, Cai Lin?"

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Chapter 56: Do You Dare to Kill Me?

The huge Yanbei Hall was silent.

The girl stood straight. She was petite, but she seemed to contain infinite strength, stepping the entire world under her feet.

Cai Lin was speechless.

Shen Miao was right. He should be the one in the most danger if they shot at each other like this. Because Shen Miao didn't know archery, if she missed by a little, the arrow might pierce his head. However, Cai Lin didn't think too much. He thought that as long as he shot first, with Shen Miao's personality, she would definitely be so scared that her legs would go weak and she would beg him for mercy.

As for what happened after that, Cai Lin did not even think about it. In his heart, Shen Miao would naturally be frightened out of her wits after he shot the arrow. How could she have the strength to shoot him? Moreover, she was a woman who had never even drawn a bow before. She might not even be able to draw a bow and make a fool of herself in front of everyone.

That was what Cai Lin thought, but he didn't expect Shen Miao to be so collected. She looked at him quietly. That calmness that exceeded her age made Cai Lin angry. Shen Miao's gaze was like she was looking at a child who was playing with her.

They were both at the age where they were the most impulsive. Without hesitation, Cai Lin said, "Why wouldn't I dare? Let's sign a death contract!"

"Sigh!" Lord Cai, who was in the men's section, sighed anxiously. He wished he could rush up to the stage and beat up his idiotic son. Previously, he thought that Cai Lin just wanted to have some fun, but he did not expect him to choose Shen Miao. Lord Cai was not worried about his son's safety, but he was afraid that Cai Lin would really embarrass Shen Miao or hurt her. He didn't want to make enemies with Shen Xin yet.

Shen Yue said anxiously, "How can Fifth Sister sign a life and death contract? It's just a test. Why did it end up like this?"

"That's right. Why is Fifth Sister so insensible?" Ren Wanyun frowned. "She is being too hot-headed. What if something goes wrong?"

She did not mention that Cai Lin was the one who challenged Shen Miao. They all blamed Shen Miao for being too hot-headed. Chen Ruoqiu shook her head and sighed. "She's too competitive sometimes, always wanting to win."

They were "concerned" about Shen Miao and were "anxious" for her. Naturally, there were people in the male section who were interested in this competition.

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Prince Yu stared at the girl in purple on the stage with interest, as if he was a wild beast watching its prey. It was disgusting.

"This Miss Shen is really brave but not smart." Prince Zhou pointed out, "She actually signed a death contract. Doesn't she know that if anything happens, Shen Xin won't be able to help her?"

"She probably just wants to protect the Shen family's reputation." Fu Xiuyi looked at Shen Miao on the stage and said, "After all, no one wants their family to be looked down upon."

"Being angry won't help." Prince Jing shook his head. "She's too hot-headed. No wonder they say she's ignorant and stupid."

Pei Lang picked up the tea on the table and took a sip. He also felt that Shen Miao's actions were too rash. If Shen Miao really wanted to protect her family's reputation, she should think of a way to withdraw from the competition. Although she might be criticized for the time being, it was better than making a fool of herself in public.

"Father, she will definitely win." Su Minglang clenched his fists and expressed his stance to his father.

Mr. Su glanced at his youngest son. For some reason, he felt that Su Minglang paid special attention to Shen Miao. Since Su Minglang reminded the Su family to retreat from the imperial court last time, Mr. Su had been much more patient with his youngest son. Now that he didn't want to rain on his youngest son's parade, he said, "Right, she will definitely win."

Chapter 57: Do You Dare to Kill Me? (2)

Su Mingfeng did not know Su Minglang and Mr. Su's attitude. If he knew, he would definitely sneer at them. This was because at this moment, he was sitting in the pavilion and looking at the test platform from afar. He could not help but say, "Miss Shen is really bold. She even signed a life and death contract. Is it because General Shen always tells her about what happened in the military camp that she thinks she is a soldier too? She's too stupid."

Su Mingfeng never tried to hold back anything when he spoke to his best friend, but today, he did not hear his best friend agree. He could not help but look back at him.

The young man in purple held the begonia in his hand and tilted his head to the side in deep thought. The sunlight was just right, and the breeze made the tassel on his dagger flutter slightly. His face was handsome and resembled a hero.

"Xie, what are you thinking about?" Su Mingfeng couldn't help but ask.

Xie Jingxing suddenly stood up with a smile. "Interesting. How about we make a bet?"

"What bet?"

"Let's bet—" Xie Jingxing pointed at the stage and smiled. "Who will win?"

"Of course, Cai Lin will win." Su Mingfeng frowned. "Do you think there's another possibility?"

"I bet Shen Miao will win," he said.

The preparations were already underway on the stage.

The Guangwen Hall really got someone to make a death contract. The blood-colored handwriting on the snow-white piece of paper was especially eye-catching. Shen Miao wrote her name, looking like she was certain to win.

When she wrote the surrender letter for Fu Xiuyi to the Xiongnu, when she willingly became a hostage of the State of Qin, when Wanyu got married, when the crown prince was deposed... Shen Miao had signed a death contract countless times. No one could understand the suffering she went through.

In contrast, Cai Lin was not so relaxed.

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This was the first time he had signed a life and death contract. Cai Lin was just a child who was protected too well by his family and was not even mature enough. Shen Miao's calmness made him even more afraid.

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The pen weighed more than 500 kilograms. It was difficult for him to put down his name, and his handwriting was crooked, forming a sharp contrast with Shen Miao's name.

After writing, he couldn't help but ask, "Shen Miao, aren't you afraid that I'll miss in the first round? If I'm afraid that you'll shoot me in the second round, I can naturally shoot you to death in the first round."

Shen Miao was about to get the apple when she turned around and stared at Cai Lin. "Young Master Cai, you thought so? I don't think that way."

She continued, "Everyone knows that Young Master Cai is an excellent marksman. If you miss, it definitely won't be an accident. It can only be done on purpose. Everyone knows that I know nothing about archery. It's understandable if I miss my mark."

Cai Lin was stunned for a moment, looking at Shen Miao dumbfoundedly. He was suddenly overwhelmed by hopelessness.

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Yes, if he missed, people would think he did it on purpose, but if Shen Miao missed, it was only natural.

He thought he was pushing Shen Miao to the edge of the cliff, but he didn't know that he was on the edge too.

It was all wrong.

"In order to avoid being shot by me in the second round, Young Master Cai can naturally kill me in the first round. The life and death contract is set. If you kill me, it will only be the outcome of the competition. You don't have to take any responsibility other than being despised by the entire world."

"Now I give you a chance to kill me, do you dare?"

Chapter 58: It's My Turn

"Now I give you a chance to kill me, do you dare?"

Cai Lin stared at the girl in disbelief, as if it was the first time they had met.

He was used to being tyrannical in Guangwen Hall and had always been pampered. Today, he just wanted to teach Shen Miao a lesson. Unexpectedly, not only was Shen Miao not afraid, but she also went against him. At this moment, he was the one who seemed to be at a disadvantage.

Would Cai Lin dare?

Not to mention whether he had the guts to do so, even if he did, would he be able to? The young master of the Cai family could do whatever he wanted in a moment of anger, but what would happen to the Cai family afterwards? If he really killed Shen Miao today, Shen Xin would definitely make the entire Cai family pay with their life.

Besides, he didn't dare.

He was just a trash talker and had never been to the battlefield. Although he was good at shooting, he only shot grass, fruits, or animals.

However, there was no reason to retreat now. Shen Miao didn't retreat. If he, a man, retreated, he would probably be too ashamed to leave home tomorrow.

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At the thought of this, Cai Lin said arrogantly, "Let's wait and see. You might be scared out of your wits later," he said rudely. It was unknown if he was trying to hide his panic. The calmer Shen Miao was, the more uneasy he was. He wanted to see her panic, as if that was the only way to make him confident. Therefore, he hoped that his words could scare Shen Miao.

If it were an ordinary girl, she would naturally feel scared or even cry. However, when Shen Miao heard this, she only glanced at him indifferently, making Cai Lin feel that he was like an idiot.

Shen Miao had already gone to the examiner to get the apple. The apple was about the size of an adult man's fist. Shen Miao stood at the east side of the stage and placed the apple on her head.

The venue gradually became noisy.

"She must be pretending to be calm, but she's actually terrified." Yi Peilan smiled and said, "I really can't wait to see her cry."

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"Ever since Ming Qi's test, no woman has been challenged by a man with martial arts." Jiang Xiaoxuan raised her little finger and tilted her head. "I can't wait to see Shen Miao break down begging."

"No, why is Shen Miao still standing there on the stage? What if Young Master Cai misses his shot?" Ren Wanyun said. She felt a little troubled. If anything really happened to Shen Miao, she would be the first to be punished by Shen Xin.

"Second Sister-in-law, what are you worried about?" Chen Ruoqiu said casually, "It's just a child's play. Young Master Cai is not a child who doesn't know anything. As long as Shen Miao begged for mercy, he naturally won't make things difficult for her. I just hope that Shen Miao won't be too stubborn."

Ren Wanyun was the one managing the Shen family. If anything happened, she would be responsible for it. However, Chen Ruoqiu's words hit the nail on the head. It was all Shen Miao's fault. If Shen Miao had begged for mercy and apologized to Cai Lin, things would not have ended up like this.

"Don't worry." Chen Ruoqiu said, "I think that Young Master Cai just wants to scare Shen Miao. He will stop when he sees fit."

"Mother, don't worry." Shen Qing also said to Ren Wanyun, "Cai Lin is very good at shooting. He won't miss no matter what."

Shen Qing was still thinking about how Shen Miao would stop her from becoming the princess consort. Now, she couldn't wait for Shen Miao to embarrass herself. She heard that some people would pee their pants when they were shocked. She wondered what would happen to Shen Miao.

If Cai Lin really missed his shot and Shen Miao was disfigured because of that, It wouldn't be a bad thing either.

Shen Yue did not think as far as Shen Qing. She just wanted to see Shen Miao kneel and beg for mercy, as if that could help her regain her dignity. She glanced at Cai Lin from afar, but he did not look at her.

Cai Lin held a longbow in his hand and faced Shen Miao, who was 30 feet away. Cold sweat broke out on his forehead.

Shen Miao stood there quietly. The wind blew at the corners of her cloak. Her purple clothes fluttered and her eyes were bright. That dignified aura and that calmness after a storm made Shen Miao look dazzling.

Cai Lin slowly drew the bow. He thought to himself, As long as Shen Miao begs for mercy, I can take the opportunity to humiliate her. She doesn't have to make things difficult for both of them.

Unfortunately, his wish was in vain. Shen Miao's expression was calm, as if she did not care about him.

Shen Yue frowned.

Why didn't Shen Miao cry and beg? Why did Shen Miao look even calmer than Cai Lin?

Many people had already realized this, and their impression of the originally useless girl was slowly changing. Not every girl could stand calmly in front of a person with a bow and arrow.

Cai Lin's hands began to tremble. Normally, he could easily shoot an apple 30 feet away, but today, it was especially difficult.

Shen Miao's words lingered in his ears. "I give you a chance to kill me, do you dare?"

Would he dare? Would he dare?

With a whoosh, the arrow let the bow.

However, it only swayed in the air for a moment before falling down without even touching Shen Miao's shirt.

Everyone laughed.

A classmate of Cai Lin's teased, "Cai Lin, don't tell me you're pitying her. Usually, you can shoot a target 100 feet away, but today, you can't?"

Cai Lin wiped the sweat off his forehead and immediately started shooting. The second arrow only landed at Shen Miao's feet.

The third one brushed past Shen Miao's hair and knocked down the apple on Shen Miao's head. Shen Miao's hair was scattered, and her black hair flowed down her shoulders.

However, when the arrow brushed past her face, she did not show any emotion.

She had black hair, a purple dress, and fair skin.

Cai Lin's hands went weak, and the longbow and arrows fell to the ground.

Even a fool could tell that the person who was scared was Cailin, but Shen Miao.

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I give you a chance to kill me, do you dare?

He doesn't dare

I dare

She smiled, and a hint of cruelty appeared in her bright eyes. Coupled with her innocent face, she was terrifyingly beautiful.

"Now, it's my turn."

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Chapter 59: Betting Her Life (1)

"It's my turn," Shen Miao said flatly, but it sounded like thunder to Cai Lin.

Cold sweat rolled down Cai Lin's face as he looked at Shen Miao in a daze.

Shen Miao took a few steps forward and bent down to pick up the longbow on the ground. Everyone present was watching her every move.

This was really unexpected. They thought they would see Shen Miao faint from fright, but she was fine. Instead, Cai Lin was sweating profusely and missed the target.

After a short silence, the people below the stage started to discuss.

"Like her father, Miss Shen is so brave!" The person who spoke was usually on good terms with Shen Xin. At first, when he heard that Shen Miao was stupid, he was a little incredulous. Now that he saw her today, he thought that those words were just rumors. With such courage and bravery, how could she be an idiot? It was obvious that someone deliberately spread false rumors about her.

"She's indeed not bad. She didn't even blink just now when that arrow was next to her face. That girl is really like a general. If it were me, I would probably flinch."

"Don't you know who she is? How can General Shen's daughter be bad? It seems like there are a lot of false rumors about her. Sigh, no wonder people wanted to slander her. They are just jealous of her being so outstanding at such a young age."

Most of the people in the imperial court had a good relationship with Shen Xin. After all, they were connected by many interests. Moreover, they worked in the imperial court all day long and were not as gossipy as the women in the house. In the past, Shen Miao was young, but now that she was older, she would naturally reveal who she really was.

Prince Zhou and Prince Jing looked at each other. Prince Jing shook his head and sighed. "It seems that we were both wrong. She's really a bold person."

"Ninth Brother, are you regretting it now?" Prince Zhou smiled and looked at Fu Xiuyi. "Why did you reject such an extraordinary woman?"

"Such a change won't happen overnight. Either Fifth Miss Shen met a master or she deliberately pretended to be stupid. No matter what, Ninth Sister, you've suffered a great loss," Prince Jing said.

Fu Xiuyi smiled and said, "She is impressive, but it's a pity that she's not the person I like." Fu Xiuyi did not regret rejecting Shen Miao. He was even irritated by the calmness Shen Miao exhibited. He did not believe that people could change overnight either. Could it be that she had really been pretending to be stupid in the past? Why would she do that? Just to make him dislike her?

...

Pei Lang put down the teacup in his hand. For some reason, he was worried about Shen Miao just now. However, to his surprise, she didn't flinch. Not only did she not flinch, but she also frightened Cai Lin so much that he couldn't even shoot properly.

Was Shen Miao actually so powerful?

"She's indeed a wonderful girl." Prince Yu smiled in satisfaction and stared at Shen Miao's figure. "I wonder... what does it feel like?"

Pei Lang frowned. Prince Yu was probably thinking about something nasty again. Unfortunately, he couldn't do anything.

In the pavilion, Xie Jingxing sat by the window and said calmly, "You lost."

"I can't believe it!" Su Mingfeng's eyes were about to pop out. He looked at Xie Jingxing and then at the stage in the distance, asking, "Did you already know it?"

Xie Jingxing stood up and patted the dust off his body.

Chapter 60: Betting Her Life (2)

"All right, I lost. What do you want?" Su Mingfeng replied readily.

"After this competition, how about celebrating and drinking with me?"

Su Mingfeng asked in confusion, "But why are you celebrating? Is there anything to be happy about?"

"Not now, but soon." Xie Jingxing raised an eyebrow. "It'll be something worth being happy about."

On the stage, Shen Miao handed the apple to Cai Lin.

Cai Lin's hand was trembling as he took the apple. He asked, "Shen Miao, have you ever learned archery?"

"No." Shen Miao smiled at him. "This is the first time I've touched a bow. I have three arrows, so I have three chances to learn it."

Cai Lin shuddered and looked at Shen Miao in disbelief. "Are you messing with me?"

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Just now, Shen Miao looked calm and composed, as if she was used to doing this with people. He thought that Shen Miao must be familiar with it. After all, Shen Xin was a mighty general, so it was possible for him to teach his daughter archery. But now, Shen Miao actually said that this was the first time she ever touched a bow.

How dare she!

He said, "You obviously can't hit the apple. Won't I be losing my life for nothing?"

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“Young Master Cai, don’t be ridiculous,” Shen Miao said calmly. Her voice was neither loud nor soft, and when she spoke, everyone could hear her. Everyone looked at the girl in purple who was frowning with her eyes cast down, looking aggressive.

“When Young Master Cai challenged me to go on stage just now, you didn’t ask me if I knew how to shoot. When you shot at me just now, he didn’t ask me if I would die. Why did you ask me if I knew archery when it was my turn?”

...

These words made Cai Lin speechless. Indeed, he was just venting his anger for Shen Yue and deliberately challenged Shen Miao to archery. But now, he had shot himself in the foot.

“Miss Shen, my son is naughty and mischievous. I apologize to you on his behalf. Don’t take it to heart. It’s just that you really know nothing about archery. This will inevitably cause an accident, and it won’t be good for either of you.” Lord Cai finally couldn’t help but speak up. As soon as he spoke, he blushed. However, he really had no choice. Although it was embarrassing, it was better than losing his youngest son.

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However, Shen Miao would never be fooled by an official. She had dealt with the Xiongnu, the royal family of the State of Qin, and the emperor of Ming Qi. She really did not care about officials.

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Therefore, everyone watched as Shen Miao raised her chin. Lord Cai was standing below the stage, so from afar, he looked like a minister crawling under Shen Miao’s feet.

She said, “Lord Cai, I bet my life on it just now. Now it’s Cai Lin’s turn to bet his life on it. The life and death contract has been established. It’s written clearly in the paper. Even if I shoot him to death today, it will have nothing to do with me.”

Without waiting for Lord Cai to speak, she continued, “People have to keep their word. This rule was proposed by Cai Lin. If you go back on your word now, will you also go back on your words in the Imperial Court when the tide is against you?”