

## Venomous 61

### Chapter 61: Blood on the Arrowhead

"You guys were the ones who set the rules, and now you're the ones who refused to abide by the rules. Do you think you can do whatever you want? Are all the officials in Ming Qi like this?" Her words were sharp, making Lord Cai immediately break out in cold sweat.

There were so many of his colleagues present. Some of them were his friends, and naturally, there were also his foes. Moreover, there were members of the royal family here. If he was not careful, the entire Cai family would probably be in trouble, let alone Cai Lin.

"Miss Shen is right." It was Prince Yu who spoke. He smiled at Shen Miao strangely and said, "Lord Cai, Young Master Cai naturally has to abide by the rules he set up."

As soon as he said that, everyone immediately looked at Shen Miao with meaningful gazes.

Prince Zhou and Prince Jing looked at each other. Prince Jing sighed and said, "Even Uncle spoke up for her."

"Perhaps we will have a young aunt soon?" After saying that, Prince Zhou felt that it was funny and shook his head without saying anything.

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Since Prince Yu had already spoken, no matter how unhappy Lord Cai was, he did not dare to refute. Although he was angry, he could only bite the bullet and say, "I... I didn't think it through." He glared at Cai Lin and turned to leave.

Cai Lin watched his father leave, feeling anxious. He originally thought that Shen Miao was just good at trash talking, but when he met Shen Miao's eyes, he couldn't help but feel a chill run down his spine. She was like a calm beast. She looked like a little girl, but was she so scary?

He lowered his voice and said, "If you hurt me, the Cai family will definitely not let you off." This was a threat. Cai Lin was now in a difficult position. If Shen Miao missed her mark, he would lose his life. When he was hunting with his good friend, he had seen arrows shoot into the eyes or buttocks of his prey. The way the prey struggled and died was really tragic.

He only hoped that Shen Miao would know her limits and draw the bow gently. He whispered again, "If you cooperate this time, in the future... in the future, I won't find trouble with you in Guangwen Hall."

Shen Miao raised an eyebrow and looked up at him.

Cai Lin looked nervous, as if he was afraid that she would not agree. Unfortunately, Shen Miao had seen many such people in her previous life. They were just bullying the weak and fearing the strong. Now, they were afraid, so they begged. Once today's matter was over, Cai Lin would definitely be like before and would even wait for an opportunity to take revenge.

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She smiled. "I gave you a chance to kill me, but you didn't dare."

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"Now that it's my turn to answer this question, do you want to hear my answer?"

Her face was as smooth as jade, and it was slightly tender, like a young sprout growing in spring. However, her words were so ferocious that it made one's heart palpitate.

"I dare."

After saying that, she turned around and walked to the shooting stage.

Cai Lin stood rooted to the ground in a daze. He only came back to his senses when the examiner called his name. Only then did he realize that everyone was looking at him with anticipation.

His gaze landed on the girl in pink in the women's section. Shen Yue was talking to someone beside her and did not look at the stage. He suddenly felt a little disappointed.

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He was the one who called Shen Miao now, so there was no reason for him to back down now. If he lost to a woman, the Cai family would probably become a laughing stock in the capital. Moreover, Shen Yue was watching from below the stage. If he made a fool of himself, he could forget about pursuing her.

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Did she really dare to kill someone? Even if she had signed a death contract, kissing was never an easy thing.

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After thinking this through, Cai Lin mustered up the courage and walked to the white line 30 feet away before placing the apple on his head.

Everyone looked at him and then at Shen Miao, feeling a little strange.

In the distance, Xie Jingxing asked, "Do you think she will miss her mark?"

"Of course she will." Su Mingfeng glared at him. "Let's not talk about whether she has the guts to shoot Cai Lin or not. Even if she does, does she have the ability? There are very few women who practice archery. Moreover, you should know that Shen Miao is a good-for-nothing in the capital."

Xie Jingxing chuckled. "Not necessarily."

"Are you going to bet with me again?"

"Why bother? I can already see the ending."

Su Mingfeng was used to his good friend being mysterious, so he said, "What ending?"

Xie Jingxing said lazily, "You lose."

Shen Yue looked at Shen Miao on the stage and her heart tightened. She asked Chen Ruoqiu in a low voice, "Mother, will she hurt Young Master Cai?"

"Of course not." Chen Ruoqiu looked at her daughter, who was a little unlike herself today because of Shen Miao, and couldn't help but sigh in her heart. Thinking that her daughter was still too young and couldn't remain composed, she said, "It's not that easy to shoot. I heard from your uncle that drawing the bow requires strength. When has your fifth sister ever drawn the bow and shot an arrow in the mansion? I'm afraid it's already difficult for her to pick up the bow. Don't let your thoughts run wild. Your fifth sister is just playing around."

Was Shen Miao really just playing around?

Of course not.

She raised her hand, positioned the arrow, and drew the bow in one go. Her movements were smooth, as if she had practiced it thousands of times.

The next moment, the arrow flew towards Cai Lin with killing intent.

The entire place fell silent. In the dead silence, the arrow that fell to the ground made a crisp sound.

There was some blood on the arrowhead.

## **Chapter 62: The Third Arrow**

On and off the stage, everyone froze.

It was Cai Lin who broke the silence. He reached out to touch his left cheek, where the arrow had brushed past, revealing a trace of red blood.

Everyone was stunned.

Shen Miao actually dared to shoot. She did not stop the arrow halfway, nor did she deliberately miss. The arrow brushed past Cai Lin's cheek.

Cai Lin shouted, "Shen Miao, what are you doing?!" Before he could finish his sentence, a second arrow swept over with a strong wind and brushed past his right cheek. Cai Lin immediately felt a burning pain on his right cheek. He reached out to touch it and was shocked to find that there was a smear of blood.

He was about to go crazy. He stared at Shen Miao in disbelief. Lord Cai wanted to stop her, but Prince Yu was still around, so he did not dare to move.

Ren Wanyun stood up immediately. "Is Fifth Sister crazy? How dare she really hurt Young Master Cai?"

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"Shen Miao is really strong." Mrs. Yi pretended to be surprised and said, "How can ordinary women have the guts to do that? If she hurts the young master of the Cai family, won't your husband have more enemies in the Imperial Court?"

These words hit the nail on the head. They had thought that Shen Miao would make a fool of herself, but who knew that not only did Shen Miao not make a fool of herself, but she also hurt Cai Lin. If they offended the Cai family, how could Shen Gui and Shen Wan not be implicated? At the thought of this, Ren Wanyun was anxious. She wanted to shout to stop Shen Miao but was stopped by Chen Ruoqiu.

"Sister, what are you doing?" Ren Wanyun said unhappily, "Are you going to watch her get us into trouble? If Master asks, who can bear the responsibility?"

Chen Ruoqiu couldn't be bothered to argue with her second sister-in-law. She was born into a family that was more noble than Ren Wanyun's. She disdained such vulgar women the most. She said, "Second Sister-in-law is right, but you heard what Prince Yu said, didn't you? Otherwise, why do you think Lord Cai hasn't spoken until now and just watched his son get injured? Even if Second Sister-in-law speaks, do you think you have a say here? It's better to wait and see."

"Are we just going to sit back and wait?" Ren Wanyun knew that what Chen Ruoqiu said made sense, but she still couldn't help but worry. "What if Shen Miao really killed Cai Lin?"

"What's there to be afraid of? Didn't you see what Shen Miao did just now?" Chen Ruoqiu smiled and said, "She clearly knows how to draw the bow. She's just deliberately embarrassing that kid. She's deliberately taking revenge. However, she will stop when she sees fit. Otherwise, he'd already be dead." Chen Ruoqiu sighed. "We've offended the Cai family anyway. Let's be patient and let nature take its course."

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Shen Qing and Shen Yue heard every word. They were still young and did not know anything about the bureaucracy. Shen Yue looked at Shen Miao on the stage. Today, she was calm and composed, and she was in the limelight. Shen Yue thought that if Shen Miao really shot Cai Lin to death, it would be good, because no one would dare to marry her in the future.

The more Shen Yue thought about it, the more expectant she became. She had long forgotten about Cai Lin, who was standing up for her. She even hoped that Cai Lin would use his life to make Shen Miao infamous.

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Although the people below the stage were discussing, they did not dare to make a sound because of Prince Yu. Even the Cai couple was burning with anxiety and could only watch as their son stood on the stage as a target.

"Shen Miao, what exactly do you want?" Cai Lin's face was burning with pain. Apart from anger, he also felt a trace of fear towards Shen Miao. He suddenly realized that there was nothing Shen Miao did not dare to do. She was clearly a lunatic. She would do anything!

Shen Miao's voice was a little muffled, so it couldn't reach the audience, but it could reach Cai Lin's ears.

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She said, "To teach you a lesson."

Shen Miao suddenly raised her voice. "There's still one more shot!"

Everyone present stared at the arrow. Cai Lin's legs were about to go limp. He pinched himself hard to prevent himself from going limp, because he saw Shen Miao's arrow aimed at his head.

He was very afraid. It was a fear towards the Shen family. This fear was overwhelming and occupied all his attention at this moment. He wanted to escape from this test platform, but Shen Miao's arrow was aimed at him, as if it could chase him to the ends of the earth.

"Miss Shen is too strong-willed." Although the adults in the men's section admired Shen Miao's calmness, they were also disapproving of what she was doing at this moment. It had to be known that it was not a good thing for a woman to be too strong-willed. The reason why she was insisting to continue the competition now was none other than to take revenge on Cai Lin for provoking her just now. However, Cai Lin did not cause her any harm. Shen Miao had caused Cai Lin's face to bleed already. Although it was fine for boys to have a scar, it was still better to have a smooth face.

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"That's more like General Shen's daughter." Some people cheered for Shen Miao. "If General Shen finds out that his daughter gets bullied and doesn't fight back, he will probably be furious."

"But look, she's aiming the arrow at Cai Lin's head. She's planning to kill Cai Lin. Isn't that too vicious?"

Cai Lin's legs were trembling as he looked at the girl in the distance, as if he was looking at a ghost.

Shen Miao said softly, "The third arrow."

She loosened her grip and the arrow shot out, charging towards Cai Lin's forehead, scaring him so much that he knelt down and screamed, "Help!"

"Lin!" Madam Cai and Lord Cai exclaimed in unison.

Everyone stood up and craned their necks to see what was going on on the stage.

Cai Lin collapsed to the ground, and the apple on the ground was pierced through by the black arrow.

### **Chapter 63: You Can Leave**

She retracted her bow and bent down to pick up the apple on the ground. She glanced at Cai Lin and suddenly smiled. "You lost."

She had an innocent look, but today, she looked too calm from the beginning to the end, making people ignore her age. Now that she was smiling, she looked like a young girl again. Everyone looked at her and felt that she was not stupid. This little girl actually had bright eyes and molars, looking quite graceful and gorgeous.

Cai Lin couldn't say a word. There was still blood on his face from the cut just now, and his tears fell, spreading the blood. His face was red and swollen, looking extremely miserable. At this moment, he couldn't care less about his reputation. There was only fear in his eyes.

Shen Miao raised her eyebrows, satisfied to see the fear in his eyes.

The servants quickly helped Cai Lin, who was so frightened that his legs went limp, down the stage. The examiner in charge of the test walked up to Shen Miao and asked in surprise, "Miss Shen, you used to practice archery too?"

Archery not only required accuracy but also a lot of strength. Shen Miao, a delicate little girl, was so good at drawing the bow. Moreover, everyone could see clearly that the last arrow hit the apple when Cai Lin was moving out of terror. It was truly impressive.

Did she ever practice archery? Shen Miao tilted her head slightly and fell into deep thought.

That was the first year she went to the State of Qin as a hostage. The prince and princess all liked to humiliate her. It seemed to be extremely interesting to see her, the empress, being humiliated, but she couldn't get angry at them because at that time, the State of Qin was lending troops to Ming Qi.

Those princesses and princes had invented a new way of playing, which was the rule set by Cai Lin at the test today. When she was used as a target, the royal family of the State of Qin would deliberately shoot her hair, tear her clothes, and even accidentally shoot her arm and neck.

At that time, every night, she would carefully set up a target in her room and practice diligently. She treated those targets as people who had hurt her. She practiced seriously and shot hard. Finally, she polished her skill to the point that she never missed her marks.

However, during the day, when it was her turn to shoot, she would still deliberately miss or be too weak to draw the bow. She had no choice. She had to return to Ming Qi alive to see Wanyu and Fu Ming.

That tiring life lasted for an entire year. Today, when Cai Lin mentioned it again, she suddenly returned to those humiliating days. In this life, she could kill and shoot whoever she wanted. If anyone dared to provoke her, she would make them shut up!

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This was what she should do.

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She smiled. "I've seen my elder brother practice hard in the courtyard and learned over the years."

The Cai couple below the stage were so angry that they almost fainted. Their son used to be an archer, but today, not only did he miss his marks, but he even made a fool of himself in front of everyone. Shen Miao said that it was just the first time she drew the bow, but she hit the apple. What was more humiliating than that?

Everyone turned around and saw Prince Yu clapping. "Not bad."

Shen Miao glanced at him but did not say anything.

The examiner said loudly, "Is there anyone else who wants to challenge her to archery?"

Shen Miao naturally won this round. If no one else challenged her, Shen Miao would be the winner.

Hearing this, Shen Yue's expression turned ugly. In the first test, she was completely overshadowed by Shen Miao. She looked at Fu Xiuyi, who was talking to Prince Zhou and Prince Jing, from afar, and clenched her fists tightly.

However, the next moment, someone shouted, "I want to challenge Shen Miao!"

In the male section, a young man stood up. This person looked to be only 16 or 17 years old and was quite good-looking. But one could tell at a glance that he was an honest person.

Shen Miao knew who this person was. She found it funny. This was the son of the Xie family, the second young master, Xie Changwu.

This person was extremely tactful and extremely bureaucratic. Later on, when the Xie family was declining, he, his brother, and their mother, Madam Fang, lived very comfortably with the pension granted by the new emperor. Xie Changwu and his younger brother, Xie Changchao, even became officials in the imperial court. At that time, she really did not like these two brothers, because the two brothers were on the side of Consort Mei and were on good terms with Fu Sheng. They even often helped Fu Sheng suppress Fu Ming.

The reason why Shen Miao reminded Xie Jingxing to find a chance to get rid of his half-brothers was because she hated them and wanted to seek revenge.

Now, before she could take her revenge, this person took the initiative to come to her. But why? She glanced at Lord Cai's seat. Lord Cai's face was dark, and Xie Changchao seemed to be comforting him.

By the way, recently, the two brothers of the Xie family had been taking the initiative to befriend Cai Lin. Unfortunately, the person Cai Lin wanted to befriend had always been Xie Jingxing and he ignored the two brothers. Now was a good opportunity for the two brothers to curry favor.

At the end of this year in her previous life, when Shen Miao forced Prince Ding, Fu Xiuyi, to marry her, Xie Changwu and Xie Changchao both joined Lord Cai. Then... two years later, the Cai family was involved in a corruption case and was wiped out.

There were many things that were changing, but there were also many things that remained unchanged.

The Xie brothers wanted to use this change to please the Cai family.

Just as Shen Miao was about to answer, a voice suddenly sounded from the side.

The voice was lazy and carried an indescribable mockery. "You don't dare to challenge me at home, but now you're challenging a young girl? Xie Changwu, you're getting worse."

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Xie Jingxing appeared on the stage. He crossed his arms and looked at his half-brothers below the stage with a faint smile. "How about I challenge the two of you? Let me teach my younger brothers a lesson. Don't be a coward and embarrass our family by competing with a young lady outside."

He glanced at Shen Miao again and said, "You can leave."

## **Chapter 64: Provocation (1)**

Shen Miao stared at him without moving.

She had reminded Xie Jingxing before, so she was naturally expecting him to go on stage. However, she did not expect to see such a scene. She did not know whether to laugh or cry. It was as if Xie Jingxing was purposefully helping her out, but that was not the case.

Xie Changwu did not expect Xie Jing to suddenly show up. He just wanted to please the Cai family. He thought that since Shen Miao had already offended the Cai family, as long as he made Shen Miao look bad and taught her a lesson on behalf of the Cai family, the Cai family would naturally have a good impression of him. Although it looked like Shen Miao was indeed good at archery, there was a huge difference in strength between women and men. Moreover, the reason why Cai Lin failed was because he underestimated her.

However, Xie Changwu was not someone who would underestimate his opponent. If possible, he would even do some tricks on the arrow. Shen Miao would definitely not notice the difference.

He did not expect his brother to come out of nowhere.

Not only were the Xie brothers stunned, but the others below the stage were also stunned. If the Marquis of Lin'an was here today, he would probably be stunned on the spot too. Xie Jingxing had never participated in the annual test, but even so, everyone knew that he was good at martial arts. Although he did not compete, he had fought in the battle a few times and won himself a good reputation in the army.

However, the reason why he did not participate in the annual test was purely because he was a person who did not care about this kind of occasion. Because he did not participate, everyone turned their attention to the two illegitimate sons of the Marquis of Lin'an. Xie Changwu and Xie Changchao also worked hard, so they could always come out first every year.

But this year, the most unworldly young marquis of the Xie family was going to compete with his two half-brothers. Who would win?

Although Xie Jingxing was famous in the battle, people were more familiar with the two illegitimate sons. In the capital, Xie Jingxing had never displayed his talent. People knew him mostly through gossip told by the soldiers who came back from the battle.

The young men were all envious of Xie Jingxing for being so carefree. They were happy that someone could finally teach Xie Jingxing a lesson. In addition, the two brothers of the Xie family were people people and had a good relationship with the young men, so they were all rooting for the two brothers.

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On the other hand, the girls couldn't help but blush when they saw Xie Jingxing's handsome face. Looking at his extraordinary figure, they felt that he had a heroic aura that was completely different from the soft aura of the young masters in the capital. He was like a piece of ice flowing with blood. On his face, there was always an evil smile, making him look even more charming. Therefore, the girls were all focused on Xie Jingxing.

Shen Miao scrutinized the expressions of everyone present. These people probably thought that Xie Jingxing came up to challenge her two half-brothers on a whim. However... Shen Miao smiled. Xie Jingxing was not an easy person to deal with. Since he was already on the stage, there was no way he would let his two half-brothers escape unscathed. The difference between Xie Jingxing and her was that she still had some misgivings and had to take it slow to achieve her goal.

However, Xie Jingxing feared nothing because he had the Marquis of Lin'an behind him.



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But was there only the Marquis of Lin'an behind him?

## **Chapter 65: Provocation (2)**

While she was thinking, Xie Changwu said from below the stage, "Brother, I'm afraid... that's not appropriate."

"What's wrong with that?" Xie Jingxing glanced at Shen Miao, then at Xie Changwu. Suddenly, he smiled and said, "Or do you think Shen Miao is more challenging than me?"

The audience booed and laughed out loud.

Xie Jingxing continued, "She doesn't know martial arts, but you chose to compete with her. I can't understand why you would choose a woman who doesn't have the strength to fight." He suddenly smiled and said in a low and magnetic voice, "However, she's not bad-looking. If you compete with her over who is better looking, that will be fairer."

At this moment, the young men laughed. Some of them even leered at Shen Miao. Indeed, now that Shen Miao had proven to people that she wasn't useless, her facial features seemed to be glowing. She was born good, and there was a calmness on her cute face. This kind of comparison made people unable to take their eyes off her.

The girls were unhappy. Xie Jingxing was obviously praising Shen Miao's looks. Shen Yue and Shen Qing's expressions changed. Although they both liked Fu Xiuyi now, there were many handsome men in the world. A young man like Xie Jingxing was unique in the capital and even in the entire Ming Qi. However, the fact that such an excellent young man praised that idiot made Shen Yue and Shen Qing mad with jealousy.

Yi Peilan frowned and muttered, "Is Young Master Xie blind? Why does he think Shen Miao is good-looking?"

"He must have been bewitched by Shen Miao." Bai Wei bit her lip and stared at the young man on the stage. "Shen Miao is really shameless. She used to pester Prince Ding, but now she's pestering Young Marquis Xie."

Shen Miao did not know what they were talking about, but even if she did, she would just laugh it off. This was because she knew that the purpose of Xie Jingxing saying this was neither to tease her nor to help her out. Instead, he was forcing his half-brothers to go on stage in a way that the Xie brothers could not refuse.

In all fairness, the two brothers of the Xie family were naturally unwilling to go against Xie Jingxing. Xie Ding had always doted on Xie Jingxing. What would he think if the sons of a concubine and Xie Jingxing challenged each other on the test platform? He would only think that the brothers were not on good terms and naturally he would be biased towards Xie Jingxing.

Therefore, Xie Changwu and Xie Changchao would definitely think of a way to decline. However, Xie Jingxing was also a smart person. He did not force them but directly provoked them.

Yes, it was too strange that Xie Changwu was unwilling to challenge Xie Jingxing but wanted to challenge Shen Miao, who was weak. His intent was almost obvious to everyone.

In order to dispel everyone's thoughts and prove that he did not want to curry favor with the Cai family, Xie Changwu had no choice but to go on stage and compete with Xie Jingxing. However, after he agreed, his plan to teach Shen Miao a lesson in order to get close to the Cai family failed.

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He braced himself and stood up. "Since Brother said so, I have no reason to say no."

Xie Jingxing raised an eyebrow and said, "Third Brother, come join us."

### **Chapter 66: One Man Formation**

Hearing this, Xie Changchao was stunned.

When he saw Xie Jingxing suddenly appear, he thought that Xie Jingxing was deliberately helping Shen Miao out. Anyway, this brother of his never conformed to social norms. But now, Xie Jingxing's words stunned him. Xie Changwu was the one who agreed to go on the stage. What did it have anything to do with him?

Xie Changchao looked at Xie Changwu and asked in a low voice, "Second Brother, what's going on?"

Xie Changwu was usually smarter than Xie Changchao. When he heard Xie Jingxing's words, he was a little angry. Xie Jingxing wanted to challenge him but added that he alone was not enough and that Xie Changchao had to join in. What did Xie Jingxing mean? He was simply humiliating the two of them. Wasn't he a bit too arrogant to think that his brothers were not his match even if they joined forces?

Infuriated by Xie Jingxing's words, Xie Changwu had long lost his composure. His expression turned unfriendly, and his tone seemed to be filled with anger. "Brother, you're so confident. You don't take us seriously at all."

On the stage, Xie Jingxing played with the apple he had taken from the examiner. He narrowed his eyes and said lazily, "That's right. I'm not taking either of you seriously."

"The two of you have never competed with me since you were young. I heard that you are outstanding. Show me what you are made of and teach me a lesson if you can," he continued.

Everyone present seemed to have sensed the discord between the Xie brothers. Everyone in Ming Qi had heard about what happened at the Marquis's Residence. All along, everyone had been speculating about the relationship between the brothers, and Xie Jingxing had always been indifferent and even disdained talking to his two half-brothers.

This was the first time Xie Jingxing had embarrassed his two half-brothers in front of everyone. Everyone present started discussing, both wanting to watch the show and looking forward to the outcome.

Shen Miao looked at the handsome young man who was acting with indifference. Xie Jingxing was really strange. He looked willful and indulgent, but at the same time he knew exactly what he wanted. The two brothers of the Xie family had no clue that they were led by the nose.

When Xie Changwu heard this, he suddenly sneered and said word by word, "It's just a friendly competition. What's wrong with that?" He looked at Xie Jingxing, his shrewd eyes filled with all kinds of emotions. He said, "Since you want to compete with both of us at the same time, we'll grant you that wish. But Brother, don't complain about us being unfair when you lose."

In other words, if Xie Jingxing lost to the two of them, it would be Xie Jingxing who asked for it. It had nothing to do with the two of them. Xie Jingxing would even make a fool of himself.

Xie Changchao was still a little hesitant, but when he saw the look Xie Changwu gave him, he immediately came back to his senses and said, "I'll join too if that's what you want."

Xie Jingxing smiled, and his evil smile attracted the attention of many girls. He said teasingly, "Do you want to sign a death contract too?"

Xie Changchao and Xie Changwu froze, and their expressions turned ugly. However, Xie Jingxing said lazily, "I was just joking. We're brothers. There's no need to kill each other."

The corners of Shen Miao's mouth curled up slightly. Since the Xie brothers had already gone on stage, she had nothing to do here. She straightened her dress and left the stage.

When she reached the women's section, Shen Yue and Shen Qing did not come over to talk. Feng Anning quickly ran over and said, "Your archery is actually so good. Are you going to be a general just like your father?"

Shen Miao's heart skipped a beat. Now that the royal family was scheming to eradicate the Shen family, not to mention her, even her brother was in an extremely dangerous situation. Back then, her brother's life was ruined by a woman. Now that the Shen family had not fallen apart, she had to use her own method to protect the Shen family. Just like on the stage just now, if anyone dared to humiliate the Shen family, she would make them regret it.

"But who do you think will win?" Feng Anning suddenly changed the topic and said, "Although Young Marquis Xie is famous, we've never seen his skill with our own eyes. Perhaps the rumors are not credible. Xie Changwu and Xie Changchao both got first place last year. No matter what, Young Marquis Xie is at a disadvantage."

Would Xie Jingxing be at a disadvantage? Shen Miao laughed in her heart and shook her head gently.

On the stage, Xie Changwu said, "Let's compete over horse spear."

This time, Shen Miao laughed out loud.

Xie Jingxing raised an eyebrow. "Horse spear? Sure!"

The officials quickly found three horses. The tall platform was extremely wide to begin with, and if it was controlled well, it could accommodate horses galloping on it. A spear was handed out to each of them.

"Xie Changwu and Xie Changchao are pretty good at spearing," Feng Anning exclaimed. Xie Chao and Xie Changwu could perfectly as a team. They could combine two spears into one and then attack their opponent together. With this method, they were able to come out first in the horse spear every year. Xie Changwu probably chose the horse spear because he wanted to humiliate Xie Jingxing.

However, in reality, it was different. Shen Miao lowered her eyes, deep in thought. Others might not know, but she knew very well. In her previous life, she had read a record about the formations the Xie family used on the battlefield. Xie Jingxing was not simple because he could create an formation alone.

The formation was called Spirit Snake, requiring only a horse, a spear, and a person. Such a formation was only suitable for fighting with the head of the opposite army, and with this formation, Xie Jingxing had never failed to behead his foes.

How could the two brothers of the Xie family fight someone who fought a battle? They would probably make a fool of themselves today.

The drummer hit the drum heavily. When the drum sounded, the competition began.

Xie Changwu and Xie Changchao looked at each other. The two horses ran side by side. They had undergone strict training in the first place, and the steps of the horses were almost identical. Their spear moves were also the same. From afar, it was as if one person had split into two. It was really a little terrifying.

The young man in purple grabbed the rein, and the black horse under him suddenly raised its hooves and ran in the opposite direction. Everyone was in an uproar. His clothes were like purple clouds and lightning. He was like a storm, and his killing intent instantly overflowed.

### **Chapter 67: Sneak Attack (1)**

Usually, fancy moves and fierceness wouldn't come together. However, Xie Jingxing was different. He was handsome to begin with. When he lay on the horse with his spear in front of him, he was like a valiant god of war. The iron-blooded temperament that he had gained on the battlefield made people unable to take their eyes off him. He was like a beautiful wolf, noble and fierce.

His purple clothes were like flowing clouds and lightning, and the horse under him was galloping. The audience seemed to be excited by the sound of the hooves. He had a strange aura that could make people awe-struck.

Xie Changchao and Xie Changwu followed the purple-clothed youth closely. They separated, wanting to surround Xie Jingxing from both sides and attack.

Everyone present exclaimed, and Fu Xiuyi commented, "The future for that young guy from the Xie family will be bright."

"I don't think so." Prince Zhou smiled. "He's so wild that even his dad can't control him. I'm afraid sooner or later he'll cause trouble."

Unlike Prince Zhou's arrogance and Prince Jing's cautiousness, Fu Xiuyi had always been very good at evaluating people. Therefore, there were all kinds of people in his team. Some were talented, some were knowledgeable, and some were just plain commoners. There were also officials who lost their posts because of something.

Xie Jingxing was such an outstanding man that he really wanted to take him in. Unfortunately... he was the son of the Marquis. After all, the Marquis wouldn't have long to live.

Fu Xiuyi continued to look up at the young man on the platform. Xie Jingxing was agilely dodging the two Xie brothers' encirclement like a snake. No matter how hard Xie Changwu and Xie Changchao tried to surround Xie Jingxing, he could always escape.

Only when there was a competition could people judge who was better. In the process of fighting, it was almost obvious who was stronger and who was weaker. The Xie brothers were really weak in front of Xie Jingxing.

"Oh my god." Bai Wei covered her mouth and exclaimed, "Young Master Xie looks like he's playing with the Xie brothers."

"Right, in comparison..." Yi Peilan also exclaimed, "The spear moves of the Xie brothers seem comical."

Even the women could tell who was the winner, how could the men in the men's section not be able to tell? Xie Jingxing could knock them off the horse with one strike, but he didn't. He deliberately played with Xie Changwu and Xie Changchao, like a lion playing with its prey.

"Young Master Xie is really an amazing person." Feng Anning said, "Horse spear has always been something the Xie brothers are proud of, but now, in comparison, they are clearly not a match for Xie Jingxing. I'm afraid they'll be defeated very badly today."

Shen Miao looked down at the chessboard in front of her.

## **Chapter 68: Sneak Attack (2)**

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Of course they would be badly defeated, and the humiliation had just begun.

She slowly placed the white piece down, and the two black pieces were instantly eaten, leaving a small blank space on the chessboard.

On the stage, Xie Changwu and Xie Changchao were finally angered. They had been played by Xie Jingxing for a long time like monkeys, and they were angry and humiliated. Xie Jingxing was obviously deliberately making them embarrassed today. A killing intent suddenly appeared on Xie Changwu's eyes as he glared at the man in purple in front of him.

In an extremely sorry state, Xie Changwu finally lost the composure he had been maintaining. He roared, grabbed the spear, and charged straight at Xie Jingxing. At the moment he passed by, he fiercely stabbed the spear into the horse butt under Xie Jingxing!

Everyone was shocked!

In the horse spear competition, no one had ever attacked the other party's horse. Because the horse was a mount, and attacking it would very likely hurt the contestant. Falling off the horse's back COULD inflict serious damage. After all, the test was only a way to evaluate students, so damages should be avoided.

What Xie Changwu did was really despicable.

Xie Changchao was also shocked by Xie Changwu's actions, but he quickly came back to his senses. Without hesitation, he rode his horse towards Xie Jingxing.

He wanted to trample Xie Jingxing who was going to fall off the horse to death!

Are these two brothers crazy?! Everyone present thought. Not to mention whether they were violating the law, if the Marquis of Lin'an found out about this, if anything happened to Xie Jingxing, the two brothers would definitely be killed.

The women exclaimed, and the men gasped. The timid ones even covered their eyes. Feng Anning, the delicate girl, also screamed in fear.

Shen Miao stopped and looked up at the young man on the stage.

The Xie brothers were indeed not good opponents. The move they made was too lousy, and Xie Jingxing... was destined to not let go of this opportunity.

The black horse neighed, raised its two front hooves, and almost stood up straight. Then, it struggled crazily. The purple-robed youth made a beautiful gesture with his spear and kicked the horse's hooves. The horse fell to the ground and never stood up again.

Before anyone could react, Xie Jingxing tapped the ground with the tip of his foot and jumped up. His figure was ethereal. With a stretch and a flip of his spear, Xie Changwu was knocked to the ground. With his other hand, he picked up a stone and flicked it into the bend of Xie Changchao's knee. Xie Changchao could not dodge in time and fell to the ground.

The two brothers were both knocked off their horses in just a moment. Xie Jingxing stepped on Xie Changchao's shoulder with one foot and pointed his spear at Xie Changwu's head with the other. He said with a faint smile, "You even dared to sneak an attack on me. You really... wanna die, don't you?"

### **Chapter 69: Using the Same Trick**

The young man on the stage was charming and defeated his opponents in one go. Although he was young, his demeanor was not inferior to that of an older person.

The girls below the stage were already stunned. They normally didn't get the chance to see such a scene. However, even the past years' tests combined were far from as exciting as Xie Jingxing's performance this year. Most of the girls admired heroes, and with Xie Jingxing's looks and aura, he naturally attracted another batch of fans today.

Some of the young men were jealous, but most of them were shocked. Su Mingfeng looked from afar and shook his head with a smile. "So this is what he mean by something to be happy about. He is still as arrogant as ever." However, Su Mingfeng also knew that what Xie Jingxing showed today was only the tip of the iceberg. Xie Jingxing was a person who hid his strength. Now that he revealed his ability, did he want to challenge the royal family? His expression gradually became solemn. He could not tell what his good friend was thinking.

"That Young Marquis Xie is indeed extraordinary." A hint of admiration appeared on Feng Anning's face. "I don't think anyone in the younger generation of the capital, or rather, the entire Ming Qi, can compare to him."

Shen Miao shook her head.

What Xie Jingxing was best at was not competing here. He was good at fighting battles. In fact, if not for the fact that he was eventually killed by the royal family of Ming Qi in his previous life, with the power of the Xie family and the prestige of Xie Jingxing in the army, he could get at least half of the Ming Qi empire.

However... The decline of the Xie family was still a mystery. Shen Miao sighed in her heart. In her previous life, she was focused on helping Fu Xiuyi and did not know much about the Xie family. Now, she was at a loss what to do to help him.

Xie Changchao and Xie Changwu were so angry that their faces turned livid. Xie Jingxing's attack looked light, but in fact, only the two of them knew how serious their injuries were. However, the people around them did not pity the Xie brothers at all, because Xie Changwu and Xie Changchao were the ones who launched a sneak attack first. In the test, the most important thing was fairness and justice. Not only did the audience look down on the Xie brothers, but the examiners on the stage also looked down on them. After today, the good reputation they had accumulated would disappear.

"What a good move," Shen Miao said softly as she looked at the purple-clothed youth standing on the stage with his arms crossed.

Xie Jingxing had led the two brothers of the Xie family by the nose today, which was why the two brothers of the Xie family lost their usual sense of propriety and used despicable methods to harm people.

Today, the difference between the legitimate son of the Marquis of Lin'an and the illegitimate sons was clear.

Xie Jingxing said lazily to the two of them, "It's clear who won. Who else wants to challenge me?"

There was silence.

Everyone had seen how Xie Jingxing dealt with Xie Changwu and Xie Changchao just now. He almost knocked down the two of them with a single shot, and these two were among the best. For a moment, no one said anything. Xie Jingxing casually threw the spear in his hand to the side and said, "Since there's nothing else, I'll take my leave." With that, he brushed his clothes and disappeared, causing the girls to shout with excitement.

"This guy is strong," Prince Zhou commented. "But apparently he's a tough nut to crack."

Pei Lang sighed in his heart. The Ming Qi Royal Family looked smart, but they were short-sighted at evaluating people. This young man must have done it on purpose on the stage. Although Pei Lang didn't know why, he could vaguely guess Xie Jingxing was aiming at the royal family.

He glanced at Prince Zhou and Prince Jing. If the royal family confronted Xie Jingxing, they would probably end up miserably, because he was a lion, just like Shen Miao.

The examiner couldn't stop Xie Jingxing from leaving wilfully, but he still announced that Xie Jingxing was the winner. The servants of the Xie brothers quickly helped the two of them down. The two of them were too embarrassed to stay any longer and left immediately in a carriage.

In the next few rounds, because of Xie Jingxing, the rest of the challenges looked very boring. Therefore, everyone yawned.

Shen Yue and Shen Qing looked up at Shen Miao from time to time. Today, in the Shen family, except for Shen Miao, Shen Qing and Shen Yue were upstaged. Because of Fu Xiuyi, Shen Qing had long hated Shen Miao to the core. She felt that Shen Miao had stolen someone who belonged to her. As for Shen Yue, she was unwilling to accept the fact that Shen Miao outperformed her in the competition.

Shen Miao did not know what the two of them were thinking, or rather, she did not care. She instructed Gu Yu to come to her side and whispered a few words to her. When Gu Yu heard this, her expression turned serious, and she quickly left.

At the same time, Prince Yu waved his hand, and a guard appeared beside him. After listening to Prince Yu's order respectfully, the guard quickly disappeared from the table.

In the distant pavilion, Xie Jingxing appeared beside Su Mingfeng.

Su Mingfeng clapped his hands and looked at him from the corner of his eye, asking, "Are you ready to deal with your half-brothers? It's not like your normal way of doing things."

"I was enlightened by someone." Xie Jingxing raised his eyebrows. "Some things need to be taken care of the sooner the better. I can't wait anymore."

Su Mingfeng frowned. He felt that there was a hidden meaning in Xie Jingxing's words, but he did not ask further. Even though he had been friends with Xie Jingxing for many years, he had never crossed the line of what a friend should do. His gaze suddenly landed on the audience below and said, "However, the girl you helped out just now seems to be in trouble."

Xie Jingxing glanced at the women's section and saw a guard handing something that looked like an invitation letter to the second madam of the Shen family, Ren Wanyun while looking at the girl in purple.

Ren Wanyun held the invitation and was a little excited. She said, "Shen Miao, come and thank Your Highness for the invitation."

Shen Miao's gaze focused on Ren Wanyun, and her lips curled into a cold smile.

Was he really going to use the same trick again?

Facing Shen Yue and Shen Qing's gloating gazes, she stretched lazily, and her clear eyes suddenly darkened.

"Sure." Her lips curled up. "I'll definitely 'thank' him."



A trace of interest flashed across Xie Jingxing's eyes. "There's a good show to watch."

## **Chapter 70: Scheme**

In the carriage back to the Shen family, Shen Miao was still sitting in a carriage alone. Gu Yu and Jingzhe, who were beside her, were both worried for her. Everyone in Ming Qi knew that Prince Yu was notorious, but he still sent a letter to Shen Miao. Everyone could tell what Prince Yu was up to.

If Shen Xin was here, he would definitely reject the invitation on his daughter's behalf, but he was not around. The two madams of the Shen family were up to no good. In the past, Shen Miao was still young, but now that Shen Miao was old enough for marriage, they naturally couldn't wait to scheme against her.

Jingzhe tried to hold it in, but in the end, she couldn't help but say, "Miss, Prince Yu... What should we do about that? Why don't we get someone to write a letter to your father? If your father knows it, he will definitely rush back."

"That's right." Gu Yu was also worried. "Now that Miss stole their thunder today, I'm afraid the two madams will find trouble with Miss in the mansion." She sighed.

Shen Miao was young at first, so she didn't think much of it. However, the two maids, Gu Yu and Jingzhe, who were specially chosen by Mrs. Shen for Shen Miao, understood. The second and third branches were obviously jealous of the first branch, which was why they deliberately made things difficult for Shen Miao. With the narrow-mindedness of these two madams, Shen Miao had probably become their eyesore again today. If Prince Yu was involved... If he had any evil intentions, it would probably be difficult for Shen Miao to deal with him. After all, most of the people in the first branch had been replaced by the other two branches.

Shen Miao said indifferently, "What's there to be afraid of? He can't hurt me yet."

Gu Yu and Jingzhe looked at each other. For some reason, the panic they had just now dissipated a little, and then they gradually calmed down.

When they returned to the Shen family's mansion, Shen Miao only said that she was tired and needed to rest today and said that she had to go back to the west courtyard first. Ren Wanyun and Chen Ruoqiu smiled and said something to Shen Miao, reminding her to rest well. Ren Wanyun rubbed Shen Miao's head and said warmly, "You have already grown into a beautiful woman. It won't be long before you get married."

"That's right." Chen Ruoqiu chimed in meaningfully, "Only people of noble status can match our fifth Miss."

A trace of joy flashed across Shen Yue's face. Shen Qing could not wait to say, "Of course. Fifth Sister will definitely get a very 'noble' husband." After saying that, she covered her mouth and giggled.

However, even under the mockeries, Shen Miao's expression did not change at all. Shen Qing's smile froze. The more indifferent Shen Miao was, the angrier she was. Everyone knew why Prince Yu sent Shen Miao an invitation today. He was into her. But Shen Miao acted like she couldn't care less. Shen Qing thought to herself with a sneer, "She is probably too stupid to realize what kind of danger she was in."

"I don't think it's my turn to get married yet." Shen Miao said flatly, "In terms of age, Eldest Sister and Second Sister are slightly older than me. They are supposed to get married before me."

Hearing that, the few of them were stunned. Ren Wanyun smiled and said, "Because your father isn't in the capital, your aunties are very worried about you. As for your sisters, your third aunt and I are both in the capital, so naturally they can wait."

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"Is that so?" Shen Miao asked softly. Her clear eyes did not seem to have any expression, but they made people's hearts tremble. It was as if she could read their thoughts with one glance. She smiled and said, "I definitely have to repay you in the future for worrying about me so much."

For some reason, Ren Wanyun and Chen Ruoqiu felt a little uneasy. However, they immediately threw this ridiculous thought to the back of their minds. Although Shen Miao was smarter now, she was still just a 14-year-old girl. What could she do? Moreover... at the thought of Prince Yu taking a fancy to Shen Miao, the two of them smiled smugly.

"Don't mention repaying us. We're family." Ren Wanyun smiled and said, "Since you're tired, go back and rest first. Your second aunt and I still have something to do. Gu Yu, Jingzhe, help Fifth Miss in."

Gu Yu and Jingzhe left with Shen Miao.

After they left, Ren Wanyun and Chen Ruoqiu looked at each other and smiled meaningfully.

Half an hour later, Old Madam Shen frowned and said, "Are you saying that Prince Yu likes Fifth Miss?"

Shen Yue and Shen Qing were both asked to leave the inner hall. It was not appropriate for them to hear the conversation. Even so, the two of them still secretly ran behind the screen and listened to the conversation despite being stopped by Mrs. Zhang.

"That's right." Ren Wanyun was all smiles. "Fifth Miss performed well at the test today and attracted Prince Yu's attention. I think he is interested in Fifth Miss and wants to take her in. I think it won't be long before we have a princess consort in our mansion."

When Chen Ruoqiu heard this, the corners of her mouth curled up into a smile. Ren Wanyun made it sound nice, but Prince Yu did not say that he wanted to marry Shen Miao officially. Moreover, even if he really married her, with Shen Miao's body, she might not be able to last for a few days. After all, everyone in the capital knew how notorious Prince Yu was.

Hearing this, Old Madam Shen's expression darkened. In her heart, she naturally did not want the first branch to do well. When the old general was alive, he had always liked the first branch. Now that the first branch was going to have a princess consort, she was really unhappy. She immediately said, "With her temperament, how can Shen Miao be a princess consort? Shen Qing and Shen Yue are more qualified than her."

Old Madam Shen stayed in the mansion all year round. She did not know anything about the outside world. Hearing her words, Chen Ruoqiu and Ren Wanyun's expressions changed. Shen Yue and Shen Qing, who were hiding behind the screen, were also shocked. Old Madam Shen did not know, but the

two of them knew after entering Prince Yu's mansion, they would most likely end up being tortured to death.

Ren Wanyun hurriedly said, "Mother, that's not the case. We naturally want Fifth Miss to do well. Although Prince Yu is a widower and is a little old and has a bad reputation, fortunately, he is one of the royal family." She thought of something and smiled. "If anything happens to Fifth Miss, Prince Yu will definitely treat our family better and the official career of your sons will be more smooth-sailing."