Farmhouse 1481

Chapter 1481: Requesting the Jade Seal

After a moment, he said, “Since it’s all been cleared up, what more is there to investigate? Should we directly restore the Ducal Residence’s honor and give the Marquis a grand funeral?”

Jin Tianzhong was so pleased upon hearing this that he nearly floated away, joyfully saying, “The Emperor is wise, thank you, Emperor, and the Jade Seal…”

The Emperor glanced at Wan Gonggong beside the Empress Dowager and said, “Wan Decheng, give him the Jade Seal!”

“Emperor, this… this… it can’t be, are you muddled from illness, that Ducal Residence case…” Wan Gonggong was anxious to the point of tears.

Jin Tianzhong was displeased and dragged Wan Gonggong out from behind the Empress Dowager, saying, “Wan Decheng, you audacious eunuch, how dare you disobey the Emperor’s words? The Emperor wants you to take out the Jade Seal, take it out…”

Jin Tianzhong glared at Wan Gonggong, his eyes almost popping out.

He didn’t care whether the current Emperor was muddled from illness, he just wanted things to proceed smoothly, he wanted King Jin to be the Emperor and he wanted the Jade Seal.

He also wanted the Ducal Residence to regain its honor so that he could rightfully inherit the throne from King Jin in the future.

“I… I…” Wan Gonggong was being squeezed so hard by Jin Tianzhong’s pincers-like grasp that his bones were about to shatter. He was terrified to the point of sweating profusely, yet gritted his teeth, and in hate, angrily said, “I’d rather die than hand over the Jade Seal!”

Wan Gonggong's fierce resistance as an old eunuch took Jin Tianzhong by surprise and also angered him.

"You'd rather die than hand over the Jade Seal, right?" Jin Tianzhong pulled out his sword and placed it against Wan Gonggong's arm, saying, "Fine, then I'll grant you that wish!"

The icy blade rested against Wan Gonggong's neck, and to say he wasn't afraid would be a lie.

But he had just made such bold declarations, how could he take them back now?

He truly was lifting a rock only to drop it on his own foot.

He cried out, "Emperor, this old servant will go ahead, to explore the way for you on the other side…"

Jin Tianzhong couldn't really kill Wan Gonggong, after all, the Emperor was already so ill, the Jade Seal was in this old eunuch's hands, and if he hid it away, killing him would leave such a big palace with nowhere to search for the Jade Seal.

By the time he scoured the palace and found the Jade Seal, the cooked vegetables would be cold.

After Wan Gonggong shouted, he gritted his teeth and was about to dash towards the blade, but Jin Tianzhong took his sword off the eunuch's shoulder, saying, "Wan Gonggong, how could someone as important as you die so easily? This general has ways to make you wish you were dead."

The Emperor sighed softly and said, "Wan Decheng, give it to him."

"Emperor, this wretched creature, the Jade Seal must not be given to this wretched creature!" Heaven knows, facing that glaring blade, how much courage it took for the terrified Wan Gonggong to utter such words.

"Give it to him, cough, cough…"

The Emperor raised his voice, leading to a bout of coughing.

Wan Gonggong and the Empress Dowager were frantic with worry, but since the Emperor insisted, and fearing to upset him, they ultimately had to yield to Jin Tianzhong.

Wan Gonggong went to the courtyard, Jin Tianzhong's face full of excitement, waiting impatiently, but thankfully Wan Gonggong soon returned, bringing a yellow cloth bundle.

Jin Tianzhong was delighted and grabbed it eagerly.

Once opened, seeing a Jade Seal inside indeed, he was truly overjoyed.

"The Jade Seal? This is the Jade Seal, haha, this is the Jade Seal…"

Jin Tianzhong was so pleased he couldn't contain himself, loudly calling, "Someone, ink and brush, prepare!"

Soon someone brought him ink and brush.

He looked at the weak Emperor lying on the bed, ultimately deciding not to trouble him, and instead wrote an imperial decree himself.

Chapter 1482: King Jin is Not Here

After finishing writing, he eagerly picked it up and said to the Emperor, "With this imperial decree, the Ducal Residence's grievances will be cleared. All of this was done by Jin Zijin, who has long plotted for the throne, framed King Jin, framed the Ducal Residence, and killed the Protector Duke. He deserves death!"

This was an imperial decree nationwide for the crimes of Jin Zijin. With it, as soon as Jin Zijin returns, he can be openly captured, or even be executed on the spot.

Jin Tianzhong, feeling triumphant, flaunted the decree he had written in front of the Emperor.

The Emperor remained calm, without much reaction, making him feel as if he punched into cotton, lacking any sense of achievement.

It was the Empress Dowager and Eunuch Wan who were quite frightened.

The Empress Dowager angrily said, “You shall not place the blame on Zijin. People are not fools; they know what the truth is. You will not succeed.”

Jin Tianzhong snorted coldly, “The truth? Only the victor has the right to speak of the truth; this is not something you need to worry about, Empress Dowager.”

Everything was ready. By the time he calculated, Ya Song should have brought King Jin back from the Zongrenfu by now.

He instructed those around him, “Summon the ministers to the palace and tell them that the Emperor, in caring for the Empress Dowager, has not slept for days and has fallen ill. The Emperor, unable to attend to state affairs, but he has something important to announce!”

Jin Tianzhong, assured of his victory, tidied his clothes proudly, glancing at the Emperor, the Empress Dowager, and others.

He then laughed and said, “Emperor, you are so gravely ill. Ordinarily, I would not disturb your recovery, but in these extraordinary times, I must trouble you. I hope you will cooperate and personally go out to explain the situation to everyone.”

After speaking, he gave orders to himself, “I must also trouble the ladies to help the Emperor and Empress Dowager change clothes!”

The Empress Dowager cursed, but seeing the Emperor like a puppet, felt helpless.

The Emperor had resigned, what could she do?

The Empress Dowager and the Emperor were attended by palace maidens into splendid attire and neatly arranged, and then supported by palace maidens and eunuchs out of Renshou Palace.

Due to the Emperor's health, the court session was not held in Taihe Hall, but chairs were brought directly for the Emperor and Empress Dowager in the courtyard outside Renshou Palace.

The ministers, who had been waiting at the palace gate, entered in line, and by the time the Emperor was seated, they were all standing properly.

Jin Tianzhong was surprised to find that Ya Song, who had been gone for a long time, had not returned. Could he have encountered trouble at the Zongrenfu?

After all, he commanded the military and carried the Emperor's orders to fetch someone; who would dare stop him?

"Someone, go find out what's up with Ya Song? Why hasn't he brought His Highness King Jin yet?"

Eunuch Wan stood behind the Emperor, watching him like a clown.

It must be said, experience counts; despite all your calculations, you didn't foresee that the Emperor had secretly let King Jin leave long ago.

Without King Jin, let's see how you conclude this matter.

Eunuch Wan smiled triumphantly.

On the other side, Ya Song had returned, his face dark throughout, and the guards behind him were holding a few men from the Zongrenfu.

“Where is King Jin?” Seeing this scene, Jin Tianzhong knew that something had gone wrong.

Ya Song cupped his hands and said, “General, His Highness King Jin is not in the Zongrenfu.”

“Not there?”

The ministers’ faces changed dramatically, whispering among themselves below the stage.

“Not there? Where did he go?” Jin Tianzhong grabbed Ya Song by the collar, his face extremely ugly.

Ya Song directed his gaze at the Zongrenfu guard kneeling.

Chapter 1483: An Important Chess Piece Is Gone

The guards at Zongrenfu stammered, “Your Excellency… we don’t know where King Jin and the princess went. The first time we found out that King Jin was missing was half a year ago. It seems like they ran away…”

“What?” Jin Tianzhong staggered backward; this news was undoubtedly a bolt from the blue for Jin Tianzhong, who was confident of victory.

“They ran away? Why didn’t you inform us of such a significant matter sooner?” Jin Tianzhong shouted angrily, kicking one of the Zongrenfu guards.

Another guard hurriedly knelt down, bowing his head to the ground, saying, “When I took over, I discovered King Jin was already gone. I heard… I heard they fled long ago. No one dared to speak of such a grave matter because blurred heads would roll if it got out, so everyone decided to keep it hidden.”

Jin Tianzhong’s face had turned livid with rage.

The guard continued, “No one in Beijing would ask about King Jin. Everyone discussed and decided to act as if nothing had happened. After a year or several years, when everyone had forgotten about King Jin, just set the courtyard on fire, throw a couple of corpses inside to pose as King Jin and the princess, and be done with it. Who would have thought… who would have thought General Yan would come seeking him so soon…”

The guard even looked at Ya Song with an aggrieved expression, infuriating Ya Song.

Of course, Jin Tianzhong was even more furious.

King Jin was missing, not just half a year ago but even before that, such a significant matter was concealed by these animals, and they thought they could deceive everyone?

If King Jin were an inconsequential person, it wouldn’t matter, but he was the main character of this game. Crucially, how was he to conclude this?

“What do we do now?” Official Cheng below was as anxious as an ant on a hot pan. If it failed, Jin Tianzhong could return to the Beiping Army Camp, but he was already cornered.

The bow was drawn, and he had no choice but to release the arrow; the only outcome of failure was death. How could he not be anxious?

Jin Tianzhong was momentarily flustered, glanced coldly at the Emperor and Empress Dowager, among others.

Now was the time for a performance.

The Emperor was unfazed; even as others came to seize his throne, he maintained the same expression. Everyone was accustomed to it, though no one knew what it meant.

Jin Tianzhong shifted his gaze to the Empress Dowager’s face.

The Empress Dowager looked surprised, shaking her head and said, “I don’t know? They’ve been gone for so long?”

Indeed, they’ve been gone for such a long time. If they ran away recently, it would be possible that the Emperor had arranged it deliberately, but half a year ago, could the Emperor have anticipated a day like this?

He felt it might be possible, yet it seemed somewhat incredible.

Jin Tianzhong looked toward Eunuch Wan.

Eunuch Wan even countered, saying, “Zongrenfu is heavily guarded; if it weren’t for your assistance to King Jin, how could he have escaped? Jin Tianzhong, you’re adamant about supporting King Jin’s legitimacy, yet you secretly concealed him. Is it not to find an excuse to assume the position personally?”

Jin Tianzhong coldly replied, “Who hid King Jin?”

“King Jin vanished over half a year ago!” Eunuch Wan responded blandly.

This matter was truly hard to clarify.

Since King Jin was absent, whom would be made Crown Prince now?

He contemplated making himself Crown Prince, but was that possible?

The Emperor had three sons: King Jin was missing, Prince Qin had broken his leg, and hadn’t returned to Beijing, still lying with Xiao Jinfei. He certainly couldn’t forcibly extract anyone from Xiao Jinfei’s camp.

And Jin Zijin was evidently not considered.

Thus, the Emperor remained the Emperor?

Chapter 1484: How to End It?

Although he couldn't figure out what was going on, the result was that he had struggled for several days without gaining the slightest advantage?

This made him enraged with shame, certain that the old cunning Emperor had it all planned out.

In front of everyone's eyes, the furious Jin Tianzhong suddenly drew his sword, its tip aimed directly at the Emperor's chest.

The Empress Dowager gasped in shock!

The ministers were also startled, what was he trying to do?

Regicide?

Wasn't it agreed to carry out this matter beautifully, merely forcing the Emperor to appoint King Jin as Crown Prince? What does he want now?

They could support King Jin as Crown Prince, but they couldn't bear the crime of regicide, nor could they endorse a regicidal ruler.

Someone shouted, "Jin Tianzhong, what are you doing? That's the Emperor!"

"Shut up!" Jin Tianzhong, enraged to the point of losing his composure, had sworn an oath to his elder brother to secure this task. Since he had secretly entered Beijing, everything went smoothly due to the Emperor's illness. With success so near, how could he be willing to fail?

So, in his fury, he suddenly reversed the sword aimed at the Emperor and accurately hurled it into the body of the speaking minister.

The minister’s eyes widened, then he collapsed with a thud.

Everyone was stunned into silence, what was he trying to do, had he gone mad?

This was someone who supported him.

Everyone was too shocked to speak. Despite the overwhelming comments, no one dared to stand out for fear of being killed by the now irrational Jin Tianzhong.

Jin Tianzhong coldly swept his gaze over those ministers incapable of even tying up a chicken, saying, "I, General, have been in Beijing for so long and done so much, failure is not an option, do you understand? If I hear any dissenting voices again, your fate will be the same as his!"

This crazy and violent demeanor frightened ministers who were not used to such bloodshed, and Jin Tianzhong’s act of intimidation effectively silenced all dissent.

Suddenly everyone realized they were on a pirate ship. The current situation was far more complicated than simply supporting King Jin as Emperor; Jin Tianzhong had gone completely mad.

But at this point, they all seemed like ducks driven to the edge, with no way back.

Everyone was too frightened to even breathe near the body at their feet.

Eunuch Wan stammered, "What do we do now? With His Highness King Jin absent, perhaps we should... invite His Highness Prince Qin?"

Jin Tianzhong’s face turned as black as the bottom of a pot, a savage expression on his face.

Eunuch Wan quickly corrected himself, "Or perhaps we should... wait for the Eldest Prince to return to the palace?"

Jin Tianzhong slapped Eunuch Wan, sending him flying and leaving him unconscious.

"Humph, don’t even think about it!" Jin Tianzhong said coldly, "Someone, bring the eldest grandson from Prince Qin’s residence!"

He intended to set up a puppet; neither Prince Qin nor the Eldest Prince should even think about it; instead...

He sneered at the Emperor, "His Highness King Jin has no children. Emperor, you, being the Emperor, have been called father by His Highness King Jin for over twenty years. Surely you wouldn’t want to see his line end, would you? Prince Qin has two sons; shouldn’t one be adopted by His Highness King Jin?"

"That requires the consent of their parents!" The Emperor replied blandly.

Jin Tianzhong snorted, "I think it’s better to forget it, too troublesome. You are both their family head and the sovereign of the country; what you say goes!"

Someone had already gone to fetch the eldest grandson, and Jin Tianzhong laughed heartily, bringing out the decree previously stamped with the Jade Seal.

The eldest grandson wouldn’t arrive for a while, so in the meantime, wouldn’t it be better to settle accounts with the Ducal Residence and Jin Zijin first?

Chapter 1485: The Jade Seal Is Also Fake

Jin Tianzhong held up the imperial edict and said to the ministers, “This is an edict personally issued by the Emperor, pass it around and take a look!”

Everyone took turns passing the edict around, each displaying a peculiar expression after reading it.

The Ducal Residence has become a family of loyalty and bravery? Framed by Prince Jin Zijin?

It’s unclear if the Ducal Residence was framed by Prince Jin Zijin, but everyone saw clearly that sword you, Jin Tianzhong, pointed at the Emperor just now. If that’s considered loyal and brave, then what isn’t?

Does he take everyone for fools?

Many began to regret; it seemed they had indeed boarded a pirate ship.

In reality, only a few shared the Ducal Residence’s honor and disgrace without a path of return. Most ministers were coerced, and some had always supported the King Jin’s party. Under the current circumstances, supporting King Jin was no issue for them.

However, they were just an ordinary faction. The Emperor passing the throne to King Jin was a normal succession, but you, Jin Tianzhong, threatening the Emperor with a sword and having the throne passed to the foster son of King Jin, that was wrong, wasn’t it?

As for this obviously non-authentic imperial edict, they were at a loss for words.

At this time, someone suddenly said, “The Jade Seal is fake, General, if the edict isn’t written by the Emperor himself, that’s one thing, but a fake Jade Seal might be hard to gloss over, right?”

“What?” Jin Tianzhong strode forward, snatched the edict, and, eyes wide, said: “Fake? How could it be fake? This is personally stamped by this general.”

A warrior stationed abroad long-term, encountering an imperial edict stamped with the Jade Seal infrequently, how could he tell authenticity?

Master Cheng mustered the courage to look and said, “General, this… this is really fake, the real one isn’t this big…”

Everyone said it was fake, and Jin Tianzhong’s eyes nearly spewed fire.

Just thinking how the old Emperor was so easygoing, handing over the Jade Seal like it was nothing, turns out it was a fake?

Jin Tianzhong glared with blood-red eyes and furiously slammed the edict, striding toward the Emperor.

The Emperor, an aged and terminally ill man, was lifted from the Dragon Throne by Jin Tianzhong, his blood-red eyes emitting the signal of a dangerous beast. Clenching his teeth, he shouted, “Did you do all this? Gu Yi gave me a fake Jade Seal, generously releasing King Jin, while in fact, you knew there was no King Jin in the Zongrenfu, right? Tell me, where is King Jin?”

The Empress Dowager screamed, “What are you doing? Why are you all just standing there watching? How dare you disrespect the Emperor…”

The Empress Dowager tried to stand but was forcibly pressed back by the guards.

The entire Imperial Palace, even the whole of Beijing, was under Jin Tianzhong’s control, who could oppose him?

Faced with such a situation, all the ministers had no choice but to turn a deaf ear and pretend to be deaf and mute!

Jin Tianzhong’s vicious gaze fixed on the Emperor, who smiled serenely, his smile somewhat eerie.

He said, “What are you saying? How could my things be fake? I…”

“You old wretch, still daring to be stubborn…” Jin Tianzhong slammed the Emperor to the ground, preventing him from continuing.

Everyone gasped in shock, yet moments later, the Emperor on the ground started convulsing violently, vomiting tirelessly. Everyone knew the Emperor was gravely ill, all were frightened out of their wits.

“Quick, call the Imperial Physician!” Ya Song was the first to react, hastily instructing someone to get the Imperial Physician.

Jin Tianzhong was also stunned, saying, “This… what is he doing?”

Chapter 1486: The Emperor Had a Stroke

The Empress Dowager pushed aside a few guards and stumbled over with the help of Madam Li, crying loudly, “The Emperor is having an attack, the Emperor…”

The Imperial Physicians arrived immediately, and after a frantic effort, they finally managed to save the Emperor.

However… the Emperor lay on the long chair, looking quite strange.

Seeing the Emperor’s odd appearance, Jin Tianzhong twitched his lips and asked, “The Emperor… won’t die for the moment, will he?”

The Imperial Physician hastily said, “The Emperor is temporarily out of life-threatening danger?”

“Then why does he look like this? How do you treat illnesses? Does this count as curing him?”

The Imperial Physicians were terrified and all knelt down saying, “The Emperor is just temporarily out of life-threatening danger, but… but he just had a stroke, his current appearance is the aftermath of a stroke…”

A twisted mouth and slanted eyes, drooling, looking almost paralyzed, that’s the Emperor’s current state.

Jin Tianzhong was furious and asked with suppressed anger, “Emperor, your humble servant asks you again, where is the Jade Seal?”

The Emperor could only make incoherent sounds, unable to speak a complete word.

Jin Tianzhong felt himself about to die from anger.

The Imperial Physicians on the ground continued kneeling and explained, “The Emperor can’t speak, perhaps… perhaps he doesn’t even recognize people, his current state is not much better than a living dead, asking him is useless!”

Jin Tianzhong: “…”

“Get lost, what use are you?” The speaking Imperial Physician was kicked flying by him with a swipe of the leg.

Everyone was so frightened they didn’t dare to make a sound, except for the Empress Dowager who was still crying continuously.

At this moment, a Commander quickly came to report.

“Report!”

“What is it?” The person coming looked anxious, forcing Jin Tianzhong to pay attention.

“General, Xiao Jinfei has taken his troops to attack the west gate recklessly, the west gate is in imminent danger now…”

Jin Tianzhong knew that time was running out for him, they would break through sooner or later.

The disappearance of King Jin had already thrown all his plans into disarray.

A person like Xiao Jinfei takes direct orders from the Emperor, and since King Jin cannot act as Crown Prince Regent, unless Jin Tianzhong could control the Emperor to order Xiao Jinfei to retreat, he would not withdraw.

But the Emperor in his current state, suffering a stroke?

Twisted mouth, slanted eyes, drooling, just looking at it was revolting.

Jin Tianzhong was very angry but helpless.

That's right, there's still the old eunuch, as long as he could get the Jade Seal, a decree with the Jade Seal stamp might just hold them off!

Jin Tianzhong strode towards Eunuch Wan, ordering someone to pour a basin of water to awaken him.

Eunuch Wan shivered and was jolted awake by the cold water, momentarily confused about the time and place.

Jin Tianzhong grabbed Eunuch Wan's collar and said, "Old guy, dare to deceive me?"

Eunuch Wan, upon realizing, cried out in pain, "When did this humble one deceive you?"

"Hmph, daring to trick me with a fake Jade Seal!"

Jin Tianzhong threw the fake Jade Seal along with its box to Eunuch Wan.

Eunuch Wan was suddenly shocked and said, "The Jade Seal is fake? How is that possible, this humble one personally hid the Jade Seal, how can it be fake…" Before he could finish speaking, Eunuch Wan took the Jade Seal and was completely stunned.

The Jade Seal was supposed to be in a good box, wrapped well in yellow cloth, kept properly all along.

He took it out wrapped in the yellow cloth, but Jin Tianzhong snatched it from him, and he hadn’t verified whether the Jade Seal inside was real or fake.

At a glance, it seemed real, but upon a closer look, it was indeed fake.

The real Jade Seal isn’t this big, it was obviously fake.

Who would make a fake Jade Seal so carelessly!

Eunuch Wan was too shocked to speak.

“Fake?”

Chapter 1487: All Connections, So Annoying

He was stunned for a moment, swaying as he stood up, and said, "This is fake? Then where is the real one?"

Jin Tianzhong furiously said, "I’m asking you, where is the real Jade Seal?"

The Eunuch Wan shook his head like a rattle-drum, as if his brain still couldn’t process it, refusing to believe the Jade Seal was fake.

His expression suddenly darkened, and he said, "The Jade Seal the Emperor gave me can’t possibly be fake. Is it you, with wolfish ambitions, who secretly swapped the real Jade Seal given to me?"

Jin Tianzhong was stunned on the spot.

Swap? With the fire already burning his eyebrows, why would he swap the Jade Seal? Is he crazy?

This damn old eunuch, looking at him, he doesn’t know either.

Jin Tianzhong, enraged, slapped Eunuch Wan, knocking him completely unconscious.

Only then did they realize what it truly meant to be riding a tiger and unable to dismount.

Jin Tianzhong knew very well that his elder brother had already set off with the Beiping Army towards Beijing. The original plan was for him to control the situation in the Imperial Palace, allowing King Jin to smoothly become the Crown Prince or the Emperor. They would coordinate from inside and out, with Jin Tianyuan leading the army into the capital, all under the guise of supporting the royal power.

But now? The Emperor had a stroke, King Jin, who was supposed to stay safely in the Zongrenfu, had disappeared, keeping it a secret from everyone. Without the consent of either the Emperor or the Crown Prince, Jin Tianyuan leading the army into the capital was without a valid pretext.

So be it...

"Hahaha..." Jin Tianzhong burst into laughter.

So be it, in that case, there is only one hard battle left, where the fish would die and the net would be torn.

If they lost, at worst, it was just death.

If they won, the world would belong to his elder brother. So what if they took the throne from Jin Moning? If it weren’t for the Ducal Residence back then, how could Jin Moning have become Emperor?

They were merely taking back the world that originally belonged to them from his hands.

Jin Tianzhong’s eerie laughter shocked everyone. They exchanged glances with each other; these ministers, powerless as they were, could only watch the show unfold.

After his maniacal laughter, Jin Tianzhong carried out a series of even crazier actions.

He ordered the concubines who were under house arrest to be brought out.

He casually grabbed a young and beautiful concubine and threw her before the Emperor, saying, "So you've had a stroke? Can you still recognize one of your own?"

The Emperor looked at him askance, mumbling inaudibly.

Jin Tianzhong laughed heartily, "Seems like your mind is still clear, haha, daring to fool me, let's see how I make your lives worse than death!"

He drew his sword and slashed at the concubine's clothes, leaving a bloody gash on her body.

The woman screamed in pain, pleading incessantly for the Emperor to save her.

But how could the Emperor protect her when he couldn't even protect himself?

At this moment, an old man among the ministers stepped forward, kneeling loudly, "General, please, please have mercy and spare the Lady Jin..."

"Hmm...?" As a general stationed in Beiping for years, he did not recognize all the ministers.

The Lady Jin let out a wail, crying out for her father.

Jin Tianzhong paused for a moment, angrily pushing Lady Jin aside.

Since she was the daughter of one of our ministers, he let her go.

He then grabbed another concubine, who had learned her lesson and didn’t plead with the lifeless Emperor, but instead cried out loudly among the crowd for her elder brother.

Minister Xu stepped out, hurriedly saying to Jin Tianzhong, "General, no, please no, this is my own sister. I am utterly loyal to you, please see clearly, General!"

Jin Tianzhong: "..."

Even Minister Cheng, the most sycophantic, couldn’t stand it anymore and quickly came forward to explain, "General, all the concubines are the legitimate daughters sent into the palace by various prominent families. Please... please don’t take your anger out on them!"

Chapter 1488: Noble Consort Sheng Commits Suicide

"Can’t a guy vent a little frustration? Whose daughter isn’t yours?"

Everyone turned their gaze towards Sheng Guifei, who had no background whatsoever.

Jin Tianzhong gnawed his teeth with anger, thinking Sheng Guifei, a rather unsightly old woman, wouldn’t be worth looking at even if she undressed completely.

Yet, considering she was the emperor’s favorite, he felt somewhat intrigued.

He gestured, and soon someone brought Sheng Guifei over.

The emperor’s urgent cries grew louder, delighting Jin Tianzhong who laughed heartily.

Spitting in disdain at the old woman that didn’t appear too remarkable, he said, "Your taste is really something else; why are your eyes so crooked? Such ugly people can be favored for over twenty years?"

Sheng Guifei’s face was drenched in tears as she lamented, "Your Majesty, I’ve tried my best in this life. Even if Miss resented me, I must go."

With that, she bit down on the poison she'd hidden in advance.

From the moment she walked this path, she prepared to die at any moment, so she'd hidden a poison in her rear molar early on.

The poison was potent, causing no great pain, taking her life in mere seconds.

Years ago, Sheng Guifei, aware of too many secrets, knew of Jin Zijin's existence. The emperor had given her this poison, saying, "If you fail to play the role of Sheng Guifei well, if anyone notices, and you can't endure it, take this poison. Rather die than reveal any secrets about Zijin!"

Back then, even the emperor was on shaky ground, and Zijin's existence couldn't be uncovered.

Sheng Qiaoyue had done well, deceiving everyone. Apart from the emperor and herself, no one knew she wasn't the favored consort.

She endured those difficult times, thinking she could maintain the title of favored consort and live out her days in the palace peacefully. Unexpectedly, this poison was finally utilized.

Sheng Qiaoyue closed her eyes, the tears still clinging to her face.

Her final words were heard clearly by all.

She did not refer to herself as a consort, but as a humble servant.

A favored imperial concubine of over twenty years calling herself a servant before dying?

What secrets were hidden between them?

Of course, no one paid much attention to the secrets between Sheng Guifei and the emperor at that moment; they simply thought about how to clean up this mess now?

They had risked their lives indeed.

Seeing Jin Tianzhong getting somewhat wild, Minister Cheng stepped forward to calm everyone's uneasy feelings.

"No need for panic, esteemed ministers. The Great General's army of one hundred thousand has already camped near Beijing. Soon, they will storm the capital; when the time comes, the fate will be sealed, and all present will be recognized as founding heroes!"

Founding heroes?

The ministers finally realized what they were embroiled in; it was no longer about supporting King Jin for the throne, it was obvious a regime change was planned!

Yet, the allure of the title 'founding hero' was immense; the ambitious ones among them grew even more eager.

If the end is inevitable, why not gamble everything? One might just transition from a subject of a fallen regime to a founding hero!

The palace's consorts had already been scared pale.

Should there be a regime change, women like them in the court faced the bleakest fates.

If fortunate, they might be granted as concubines to the victorious commanders; if not, they would become courtesans or military prostitutes, marking their future lives!

They, nobly crowned imperial wives, even if they were to be buried with the emperor in death, would do so with lifelong honor, dying with dignity; who would willingly become those lowly women?

...

Chapter 1489: Siege the City

Jin Zijin and his party were already approaching the Imperial City, accompanied by Xiao Jinyan leading the fastest squad of light cavalry.

Xining is vast and sparsely populated, with bandit disturbances; there aren’t many vanguard troops that can be dispatched quickly, and the main army won’t arrive so soon.

"I hope we’re not too late!"

Xiao Jinyan said, "As soon as I got the news, I brought these people immediately. Cousin, when did you get the news?"

Yue Rujing replied, "We also came as soon as we got the news. We heard the Emperor was seriously ill. Originally, Gu Youyou was supposed to come with us, but fearing it would be too late, we came ahead, and she’s still behind."

Yixi sighed lightly, "We were originally going to escort the master, but unexpectedly, we returned first."

At the west gate of the city, Xiao Jinfei was launching a fierce attack. The structure of Beijing makes it easy to defend and hard to attack. The capital of a great nation is not so easily breached. Moreover, Xiao Jinfei knew very well that Jin Tianyuan’s army was also arriving soon. If he couldn’t breach one of the gates in the Imperial City before Jin Tianyuan’s forces arrived, he would face enemies on two fronts.

That day was a nightmare for the people.

Not a single person was on the streets; everyone remained behind closed doors. Families gathered in one place, clutching any weapons they had to defend against intruders. If anyone dared to break into their homes to kill or loot, they would fight back with kitchen knives.

The Imperial City was shrouded in darkness; apart from a few bustling gates, it was as silent as a ghost town.

"Hurry, we must break in quickly!" Xiao Jinfei shouted loudly while riding his battle steed.

The archers at the rear provided cover, shooting arrows towards the city walls in rows.

Dozens of soldiers lifted a thick log, chanting rhythmically, and rammed it against the city gate.

"One, two, three..."

"Again!"

The commander on the city wall raised his sword and shouted loudly, "Quick, throw stones, release arrows!"

Xiao Jinfei took the large bow handed to him by his subordinates, along with arrows.

At such a distance, ordinary bows and arrows were ineffective; only a fully drawn bow using both hands and feet could reach.

He aimed at the man on the city wall, pulled the bow taut with his foot, and shot!

An arrow stronger than normal ones shot out, hitting the man’s chest directly.

A cheer erupted from the soldiers attacking the city wall.

"Report!" In the distance, a light cavalryman rapidly approached Xiao Jinfei.

With joy on his face, the rider shouted loudly, "Young Master Jin Yan is back, along with the Prince; they'll arrive soon!"

Xiao Jinfei was overjoyed, turned his horse's head, and saw dust rising over the distant hillside—a sight unmistakably indicative of his own troops.

Reinforcements had arrived, and the morale of the attacking soldiers soared once again.

"Hey! Big brother..."

Another commander stepped up on the city wall just as their previous commander was killed.

Seeing that reinforcements were coming for the enemy, they became increasingly panicked.

"Quick, notify the general to borrow troops from the north and south gates."

The soldier receiving the order rode the fastest horse toward the nearby north and south gates.

Jin Zijin and the others had reached the city below, leaving no more opportunities for them.

Under the cover of Yue Rujin and Xiao Jinyan, Jin Zijin dodged batches of arrows and falling stones shot down from the city walls.

Near the city gate, he drew out the crimson dagger.

With a light leap, he reached a certain height and plunged the dagger into the solid city wall.

Such was the hardness of the city wall that under this special dagger, it cut through like slicing a potato.

Chapter 1490: Assault on the City Wall

The dagger plunged into the city wall, and Jin Zijin used the force to lightly leap up. Once his body reached a certain height, he kicked the dagger out with his toes, repeating this two or three times until he was on top of the city wall.

Climbing the several-zhang-high city wall wasn’t difficult; what was challenging was having to dodge the boulders being hurled and the rain of arrows coming down during the climb.

Yue Rujing shouted, "Senior brother, what excellent skill!"

The archers focused their bows on Jin Zijin atop the city wall, but none had managed to harm him while he was below. Now that he was up close, not a single arrow shot forth from their drawn bows before they all fell to the ground one after another!

With no archer interference from above the city wall, the attackers below became even more ferocious.

The ladder carriers and the people using logs to batter the door quickly breached the West City Gate.

"Kill..." The cries and shouts of battle resonated through the heavens and earth...

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Jie Zhonglin walked alone on the street, the empty sleeve of his amputated arm swaying with his steps.

As he neared the city gate, the shouts and sounds of combat began to reach his ears, and he stopped in his tracks.

A middle-aged man from a household pushed open the door with a shoulder pole in hand, popped his head out for a look.

Seeing a person standing on the street, he shouted out loudly, "Hey, young man, why are you still on the street? Hurry back home!"

Jie Zhonglin turned around and looked at the man.

The sounds coming from the direction of the city gate grew more intense, the clashing of swords, spears, shields, and axes made the scalp tingle.

The man couldn’t care less and gritted his teeth, coming out to pull Jie Zhonglin into his courtyard.

"Young man, it’s too late, you’d better come hide in my house!"

Jie Zhonglin did not object and repeatedly thanked the man.

There were five in the man’s family, including the man and his wife, a son, and two daughters.

They all held weapons, hiding in a room.

"How are things, dear?" a woman holding a kitchen knife asked.

"The sounds say they’ve arrived!" The man gripped the shoulder pole even tighter.

"Who is this young fellow?" The woman looked at Jie Zhonglin and asked.

The man explained, "I saw this young man alone on the street and he didn’t have time to go home, so I brought him back to hide in our house for a while."

The man looked at Jie Zhonglin’s empty sleeve and asked, "Young man, what happened to your arm?"

Listening to the clamor outside, Jie Zhonglin became calm.

Those sounds felt distant to him, as if enduring a century. He had become a civil official, set to succeed his father, believing he'd never again witness such blood-stirring scenes of battle, only to find this happening right outside his own home.

With a tinge of melancholy, he used his remaining hand to lift the empty sleeve and softly said, "I used to be just like them, but I became disabled!"

"Oh, so young fellow, you were a soldier too? Alas! I don't know why they started fighting, such good days now impossible to enjoy!"

Jie Zhonglin lifted his head and said to the man, "No, this is Beijing, no matter how fierce the fighting outside, it won't harm the citizens! Uncle, if we stay home, we'll be fine."

Then Jie Zhonglin stood up.

The man asked in surprise, "Young fellow, listening to these sounds, they've already reached the doorstep, what are you going to do?"

"I'm going out to take a look!"

"Hey, don't go, it's too dangerous outside!" The man's family all stood up.

Jie Zhonglin said, "No worries, my sword hand still works!"

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