

Finest 246

Chapter 246 The Letter from the Eldest Miss

He had turned the envelope over and over several times, but it was blank with no hint of who had written it. Hastily opening the letter, he was greeted by a faint, ethereal scent. His keen senses, akin to a dog's, caught a whiff of a rose-like perfume after a few sniffs.

There were only a few lines on the pristine paper, with neither salutation nor valediction. His eyes scanned over the beautifully written characters: "Since your departure, news has been scarce, and my younger sister is anxious, having sought me out multiple times to ask about you. She's requested me to write you a letter. With a childlike worry, she asks you to eat meat when hungry, add clothes when cold, avoid raw and cold food, keep away from strangers, avoid disputes, and stay away from young women! All is well at home, so you may assist Mr. Xu without worry. Do not dwell on home matters. Safety is paramount when abroad. Do not act impulsively; be prudent and circumspect. Do not seek prosperity, only a safe return. Once you receive this letter, write back, to put Yushuang's mind at ease. Even a few words will suffice, don't write too much, so as not to trouble me. All the instructions given above are Yu Shuang's words, not mine. If you hold her in your heart, you must take care of yourself and return as soon as possible. If you forget, even as a ghost, I won't let you off! Remember!"

Lin Wanrong read the letter several times over. Its content was puzzling - a mix of concern and irritation that was difficult to grasp. One thing, however, was clear: the letter was written by the Eldest miss. It was completely unexpected. He couldn't figure out how she had managed to get it to Xu Wei. No wonder that old Xu had referred to it as a "family letter."

The letter, peculiar as it was, fit the Eldest miss's character. Lin Wanrong could almost see Xiao Yuruo, frowning under the lamplight, huffing in exasperation. Without a doubt, the girl must have been upset with him. Having spent so much time with the Eldest miss, he had developed feelings for her. After days without seeing her, his longing was strong. Overwhelmed with emotion, he grabbed a piece of paper and a pencil. Without thinking, he wrote hastily, "Eldest Miss, I miss you; Second Miss, I miss you; Madam, I miss you, too."

His letter was indeed succinct and startling, just as the Eldest miss wanted, and he didn't feel like writing more. He sealed the envelope and summoned a soldier on guard outside his tent, instructing him to deliver the letter to Marshal Xu and onward to the Xiao family in Jinling.

After writing the letter, he felt overwhelmingly tired. He yawned several times before collapsing onto his bed, quickly falling asleep.

The next morning, he was awakened by the sounding of the military training horn. As he remembered what he had done the day before, a cold sweat broke out on his forehead. He urgently called for the messenger from the previous day, "Hurry, hurry to Marshal Xu's tent and retrieve the letter I wrote yesterday."

The messenger returned after a moment, saluting, "General, Marshal Xu sent the letter to Jinling by express courier yesterday. It's too late to retrieve it now."

"Darn it!" Lin Wanrong sprang up instantly. That old Xu, who never showed enthusiasm for anything else, was surprisingly prompt in sending the letter. Wasn't this creating trouble for him? Thinking back to the content of his letter from the previous day, he was filled with regret. He didn't know what had come over him to make him pen such strange words. Missing the second miss was one thing, but missing the eldest miss and even the madam - what the hell was that about? The eldest miss couldn't see the letter, neither could the second miss, and certainly not the madam. If it landed in their hands, he could only wonder what their reaction would be. Upon his return, would they flay him alive?

As he sat there, helpless and worried, Gao Qiu walked in with a smile, "Brother Lin, did you sleep well last night?"

"Don't even mention it. I was sleeping just fine until I realized that I've done something foolish, now I'm filled with regret," Lin Wanrong said with a wry smile.

Gao Qiu shook his head, hardly believing it, "With your wit and wisdom, Brother Lin, how could you have done anything foolish? Don't be overly modest."

Whether it was foolish or not, time would tell. Lin Wanrong sighed and asked, "Brother Gao, have you ever been interested in a woman?"

"Interested in a woman?" Gao Qiu was surprised. "What would I need that for? Oh, Brother Lin, are you missing a wife? That's easy to solve. Tomorrow, I can accompany you out of the camp, we can visit some local brothels and that should rid you of your worries."

A cold sweat formed on Lin Wanrong's brow as he hastily replied, "Brother Gao, how could a brothel girl compare to a woman one is truly interested in?"

Gao Qiu nodded in agreement, "That's true. Finding a woman you're interested in is time-consuming and hard. It's not as easy and enjoyable as being with a courtesan. I still prefer courtesans."

There was clearly no common ground for conversation. Seeing that it was getting late and Xu Wei should have set up his command tent, Lin Wanrong quickly put on his armor. Just then, Hu Bugui, Li Sheng, and Du Xiuyuan, dressed in brand-new armor, walked in looking quite formidable. They saluted him, "Greetings, General!"

Lin Wanrong returned the gesture with a grin, "Good morning, thousand-man commanders!" All three men had been newly promoted to thousand-man commanders and their faces radiated joy. They had come early to pay their respects to General Lin.

Hu Bugui's dark face was flushed with excitement, "Thank you for your guidance, General. We swear to follow you to the death!"

"We swear to follow you to the death!" Du Xiuyuan and Li Sheng echoed in unison, their faces stern with determination.

Knowing that he would not stay in the army for long, yet sharing a deep bond with these hundreds of soldiers, Lin Wanrong found it hard to let go. He simply smiled and asked, "So, how does it feel to be promoted to thousand-man commanders?"

Du Xiuyuan gave a bitter smile, "Without your guidance, General, even if we were promoted to ten thousand-man commanders, it wouldn't be enjoyable."

Seeing their earnest words, Lin Wanrong didn't know what to say. He excused himself, mentioning that the command tent had been raised, and left with Gao Qiu. Xu Wei's command tent was situated at the center of the large camp. When Lin Wanrong entered, everyone was already in place. The military discipline was strict, and upon seeing Lin Wanrong, everyone nodded but no one dared to speak.

Lin Wanrong, serving only as a military strategist, held no formal rank and didn't even know where to stand in the command tent. Therefore, he had no choice but to take the last seat. Gao Qiu, his personal bodyguard, stood at his back without a care for the stares of those present. The other generals, surprised to see that this military strategist had brought a bodyguard into the command tent, fell silent as they noticed the supreme commander, Marshal Xu Wei, smiling without a word.

Once everyone was present, Xu Wei nodded and loudly asked, "Does anyone have any important reports to deliver?"

The leader of the cavalry, Tong Cheng, suddenly stepped forward and reported, "Marshal, my deputy Zhai Canghai, who was ordered to rescue General Lin and his party, returned yesterday with both legs crippled and his tongue injured. We ask for your justice, sir."

"Oh? Something like this happened?" Xu Wei's eyes narrowed as he said, "Zhai Canghai is a deputy of the cavalry, in charge of five thousand men. Who would dare touch him? Do they have a death wish?"

Lin Wanrong stepped forward, fist to palm, and admitted, "Marshal, I am responsible for this."

Tong Cheng, enraged, asked, "May I ask, General Lin, why you would order such harm to a man who was sent to rescue you? Even as a military strategist, what right do you have to punish my deputy?"

Damn it, everyone knows what happened, Lin Wanrong snorted and responded, "Everything has its cause and its root. I, Lin San, always act justly and stand straight. No one can frame me. Deputy Zhai Canghai of the cavalry, while rescuing our army, was late and that's tolerable, but he insulted our soldiers who had fought to the death and disrespected our fallen comrades. This offense is detested by both humans and gods, and it chills the hearts of our soldiers. Breaking his legs was already letting him off easy."

After recounting the previous night's experience, Lin Wanrong asked, "This is all witnessed by the soldiers and cavalry. I ask all the generals here, what would you have done if you were me?"

Every general in the tent was a commander. As they heard of Zhai Canghai's words and deeds, they started to curse. Zuo Zongyou, the general of the left flank, cursed, "Serves him right! I've disliked this Zhai Canghai for a long time. Just because he is a protege of Minister Tie, he acts high-handedly. How dare he insult our fallen soldiers? If I were there, I would've killed him with a single strike. Brother Lin, you did right. It's a great relief to us all."

Xu Wei asked with a poker face, "Tong Cheng, has Lin Wanrong said anything untrue?"

Tong Cheng clenched his teeth and replied, "Even if General Zhai was wrong, how can Lin San, a mere military strategist, punish my deputy? I request you to enforce strict military discipline, Marshal."

Xu Wei nodded and agreed, "Enforce strict military discipline? General Tong, your words align with my intentions. Zhai Canghai insulted our fallen soldiers, chilling the hearts of our army, he should be beheaded according to the rules. But considering his disability, I'll spare his life and strip him of his deputy position, sending him back to till the fields."

Ah, this old Xu is quite just, thought Lin Wanrong, nodding in approval. However, he heard Xu Wei continue, "As for military strategist Lin, the punishment should indeed be severe for taking the law into his own hands, a flogging is inescapable."

Lin Wanrong jumped up, cursing inwardly, Damn it, Old Xu, if you think I'm going to let you whip me, I'd rather turn tail and run. I can't bear that shame.

Xu Wei smiled slightly and said, "However, Zhai Canghai was the one at fault first. Lin San, in his effort to uphold the army's morale, struck out in anger. His actions are somewhat understandable. Just a few days ago, he fought nearly a thousand of the White Lotus elites single-handedly and even killed Meng Du, our army's first war merit. Balancing this merit against his mistake, the two offset each other. As Marshal, I will neither reward him nor punish him. What do the rest of you generals think?"

"All hail to the Marshal's wisdom and fair judgment!" the generals chorused in unison. General Lin had courageously held off the enemy's elite forces and valiantly slain their greatest warrior. These heroic deeds far overshadowed the minor transgression of breaking the leg of a foul-mouthed deputy general. Though it was said the merit and fault were balanced, any discerning eye could see that the merit far outweighed the fault. Naturally, there were those who sympathized with him.

Xu Wei laughed and asked, "Lin San, do you have any objections?"

"Marshal Xu is wise and heroic, honest and upright. I have the utmost respect for you," Lin Wanrong replied.

"Don't be so quick to feel relieved," Xu Wei interjected. "Having broken the legs of their deputy, the cavalry of five thousand is now without a leader. This cannot be simply dismissed." He slapped the armrest of his chair and shouted, "Lin San, hear my command!"

"I'm here!" Lin responded.

"You've crippled the cavalry's deputy, leaving thousands without leadership. This is your fault. I'm punishing you by putting you in charge of these five thousand elite horsemen. I'll integrate them with your original troops, and assign an additional five thousand infantry and Divine Machine Unit soldiers to your command. I order you to lead these ten thousand elite soldiers as the vanguard of our right wing, heading straight for Jining. Are you willing?"

"This..." Ten thousand soldiers? The vanguard of the right wing? General Lin was momentarily stunned.

Chapter 247 Trouble

If there's no great general in the army, Lin San becomes the vanguard? Such a thought suddenly flashed through Lin Wanrong's mind, causing an immediate wave of displeasure. 'Damn it,' he thought. 'Why such a crazy idea? Am I not more handsome than Liao Hua? Do I not have more skills in courting women? I am far superior to him.'

"Well, Marshal Xu, that may not be the best idea. I am both inexperienced and lacking in knowledge. I haven't fought many battles, and aside from being somewhat decent looking, I don't have much else to offer. Maybe it's best to let someone else take the vanguard position on the right flank. I'd be content to serve as a military strategist," Lin Wanrong modestly proposed.

Xu Wei smiled without uttering a word. Instead, Zuo Zongyou spoke up, "Ah, Brother Lin, you are too modest. As the saying goes, 'ambition is not a matter of age.' Even though you are new to the military, you fought extraordinarily well in your first battle and even killed Meng Du. Who can compete with such accomplishments? Saying that you lack knowledge and experience is a clear understatement. You have outsmarted thousands. I bet those damned dogs from the White Lotus Sect tremble at the sound of your name. If you don't take the lead on the right flank, then who will?"

Coughing twice to conceal his embarrassment, Lin Wanrong thought, 'Zuo Zongyou sure knows how to flatter.' He was pleased with the compliments. Xu Wei laughed, "General Zuo is right, and he speaks my mind. Brother Lin, considering your achievements and the loyalty of your soldiers, no one can compare to you. The vanguard position on the right flank is rightfully yours."

'Ah, I have always been modest, but Old Xu insists on pushing me into this situation. Is he trying to make others jealous of me?' Lin Wanrong shook his head helplessly, "In that case, I must obey your command. I am young and lack experience in leading troops. I hope you, respected generals, will guide and help me in the future. I would be extremely grateful."

"Great, then it's settled." Xu Wei laughed loudly, "Hear my command, all officers!"

"Present!" They responded.

"After breakfast today, our army will march forward. In three days, we will capture Jinan. Whoever conquers Jinan first, I will recommend him to the Emperor for the highest merit!"

"Understood!"

After dismissing the meeting, Xu Wei retained only Lin Wanrong, laughing as he spoke, "Little Brother Lin, the right flank is now in your hands. I await news of your triumphant return."

Lin Wanrong laughed bitterly, "Mr. Xu, it seems you had this planned from the start. You tricked me into becoming a military advisor, only to end up making me lead troops into battle. This difficult task is really troubling."

Difficult task? The position of the right flank general is a desirable job that many yearn for but cannot get. This kid gets a good deal and still acts coy. Xu Wei felt rather disgruntled. Shaking his head, he said, "Little Brother Lin, what are you talking about? I invited you here to lend me your strength. Sending you to Chuzhou to command the remnants was also a way to let you accumulate some experience. I didn't expect so many things to happen, let alone for you to display such valor, completely annihilating thousands of Meng Du's troops. With just this battle, you've become the foremost meritorious officer and the bravest warrior in my massive army."

The foremost meritorious officer and the bravest warrior? 'I am ashamed,' thought Lin Wanrong. 'If it were not for the musket, my brothers and I would have been doomed in that battle. I should thank Qingxuan, my beloved wife, for this.'

"Perhaps you're unaware, but the story of your righteous fury on behalf of your brothers has already spread throughout the army. Everyone praises your leadership and your affection for your troops. At this moment, your prestige is unparalleled. If we didn't assign you as the vanguard general, I'm afraid the tens of thousands of soldiers wouldn't spare me. Naturally, I need to recognize and utilize your talent," Xu Wei told him.

"Well, prestige and fighting wars are completely different matters. To be frank, Mr. Xu, my so-called tactical foresight comes purely from luck. I'm afraid I might end up messing up your plans," Lin Wanrong modestly replied.

Xu Wei roared with laughter, "Opportunity doesn't favor the unprepared, Little Brother Lin. As long as you can win battles, who cares if it was by luck or not? If you have the ability, then you're a hero."

Lin Wanrong shook his head helplessly. The situation was escalating. How he missed his freedom when he was just a servant in the Xiao family. Although he now had many brothers-in-arms in the army, he felt more restrained, shackled. He missed the Xiao family and missed her. Lin San sighed heavily as he looked up at the sky.

Seeing through his thoughts, Xu Wei said seriously, "Little Brother Lin, to be honest, I recruited you to serve in the army to provide us with a strategic advisor and also for your own benefit. While you had freedom as a servant in the Xiao family, you were burdened with trivial matters every day. Hanging out with Miss Xiao, Miss Luo, and Miss Qiao didn't do any good for your ambition. It even made you the butt of jokes."

Hang on, Hanging out? He would call it interaction. Wooing virtuous women was merely a by-product.

"With your talent and wit, if you spent all your days in women's company, your ambition would likely be whittled away. Men of our great nation are born as heroes and die as valiant spirits. I couldn't bear to see you waste away like this, so I took the trouble to invite you to help me in the army." Xu Wei explained with great effort, but Lin San's face was expressionless, as if he wasn't listening at all.

This young man was truly unique, Xu Wei sighed inwardly, "Actually, there's another reason why I brought you into the army. With some military experience under your belt, when the time comes to go to the capital with Miss Xiao, you'll have quite a bit of assistance."

What's all this about being born a hero and dying a valiant spirit? He wasn't that noble. However, the reason of providing help in the capital was somewhat acceptable. Regardless, Xu Wei was looking out for him and didn't harbor any ill intentions.

Lin Wanrong nodded, "In that case, I really must thank you, Mr. Xu. However, let's get this straight: this is the last time. I don't want to be promoted again, I have a phobia of high-ranking positions."

Xu Wei thought, 'Can I even promote you again? You're already the vanguard of the right flank. If you were to be promoted again, you would have to be the Marshal.'

"Oh, by the way, Mr. Xu, thank you for sending the letter yesterday." Lin Wanrong said with a forced smile, wishing he could give the old man a good beating. Xu Wei was too eager to meddle in trivial matters but wasn't concerned with serious issues. He didn't know what kind of torment awaited him when he returned home.

"Little Brother Lin, having performed such an extraordinary feat, it's only right for an old man like me to attend to these trivial matters. That letter was personally delivered by Gao Shou a few days ago. Miss Xiao sought out Luo Ning in order to deliver this letter, yet she had no idea of our whereabouts. Afterward, Miss Xiao found Luo Min and pleaded with him to get the letter to me. As you know, our whereabouts are absolutely confidential. Aside from Luo Min, his own children were clueless. But Miss Xiao beseeched him daily, looking pitiful. Luo Min had no choice but to send Gao Shou, specifically to deliver this letter." Xu Wei sighed.

So that was the story behind the letter. Xiao Yuruo, that little minx, usually likes to keep a cold face, but when it was important, she was remarkably righteous. She had prejudices against Luo Ning, but for this matter, she put her pride aside and asked both Luo Ning and Luo Min. Thinking of the Eldest Miss' thin face and the content of the letter, Lin Wanrong was suddenly moved. If he had known this before, he should have written a grand letter yesterday. How could he have known that his playful mood would produce such an unusual thing? He was truly regretful.

"Little Brother Lin, your deep affection for the Xiao family and Miss Xiao's kindness towards you have earned my utmost envy. You must not let her down," Xu Wei said with a laugh.

Let her down? When had he ever let anyone down? When he got back, he wouldn't argue with the Eldest Miss. He would speak to her properly to repay her caring heart.

When Lin Wanrong left the big tent, several people had already surrounded him with congratulations. Not to mention Du Xiuyuan and others, even a few of the thousand-man commanders from under Zhai Canghai's command came to pay their respects. They had all been reassigned under the Right Vanguard General Lin, and after witnessing General Lin's bravery and righteousness yesterday, they were genuinely respectful.

Xu Wei hadn't lied this time. The five thousand infantry and cavalry soldiers assigned to Lin Wanrong were all elite troops, far superior to the previous supply troops. Lin Wanrong had Du Xiuyuan place the original brothers in various ranks, conveying the intentions and spirit of General Lin.

The story of General Lin's power to split Meng Du and his rage against Zhai Canghai had already spread throughout the army. Once the supply troops who had experienced the battle spread this, the

tens of thousands of soldiers immediately admired and respected him, raising the fame of Right Vanguard General Lin to the peak.

Du Xiuyuan, Hu Bugui, and Li Sheng had all been promoted to thousand-man commander, but General Lin had been promoted to Right Vanguard General overnight, which excited them enormously. Their training enthusiasm surged, vowing to train their soldiers to be capable of taking on ten enemies at once.

Originally, before commanding the troops, Lin Wanrong had thought of the prestige of leading tens of thousands of men. But when the day came, he lost his interest. Looking at the tens of thousands of soldiers with their shining weapons and strict discipline, and recalling the bloody battle of that night, Lin Wanrong sternly told his thousand-man commanders, "In the art of training troops, laziness is absolutely forbidden. As for the elimination system, you must implement it strictly. I do not wish to see a repeat of the Battle of Pei County."

Hu Bugui and the others nodded their agreement, deeply understanding his sentiment. The thousand-man cavalry commanders had personally witnessed the horror of the soldiers who had died in the battle that night, and they strongly agreed with this concept of training elite troops.

Watching tens of thousands of soldiers training, the drill ground filled with the constant sound of weapons clashing and clouds of dust billowing, Lin Wanrong couldn't help but sing: "In the beginning, when my team was first established, there were only about a hundred men and a few dozen guns" Gao Qiu, following behind him, broke out in goosebumps all over his body.

Xu Wei gave the order with all seriousness that Jinan should be captured within three days. The armies from the north and south advanced together, implementing a tactic of layered compression, forcing the elite of the White Lotus Army, who had no route of retreat, to withdraw into the city of Jinan.

The right-wing army led by Lin Wanrong adhered to General Lin's usual principle: to train strong soldiers and create happy warriors. They practiced military drills morning and evening, and traveled during the day, leading a life that was quite leisurely and comfortable.

However, the closer they got to Jinan, the more uneasy Lin Wanrong became. The battle had been going on for days now, and according to the news from the left-wing and central armies, the White Lotus Army had been continuously defeated and had already retreated back into the city of Jinan. However, no matter how much he inquired, he hadn't heard any news of Xian'er. Could she still be in the city of Jinan? That would indeed be a problem.

Chapter 248 Siege Drills

Having marched continuously, within less than two days, they heard the distant roar of cannons, signaling their approach to Jining City.

General Lin was leisurely discussing with Gao Qiu whether the courtesans of Nanjing or Hangzhou had larger buttocks when Hu Bugui hurriedly arrived. He reported, "General, Jining City is about twenty miles ahead. The armies from the left and center have already encircled the north and east gates of Jining. The navy has also blocked off the southern gate leading to Weishan Lake, thus the soldiers from these three routes are already clashing with the rebel White Lotus Army inside the city. All that is needed is for our army to head north and trap them at the western gate, then the White Lotus Army will be completely surrounded and unable to move."

Jining City was situated by Weishan Lake, serving as the lake's northern origin point. With naval blockades, the White Lotus Army naturally had no escape route.

Lin Wanrong sneered, "Naval blockade? Can we really trust that? Remember when we were in Pei County, wasn't there supposed to be a blockade then, too? But those damned White Lotus rebels still managed to sneak attack us by sailing along the lake unnoticed."

Du Xiuyuan, standing beside him, replied, "What the general may not know is that after the attack on Pei County, Marshal Xu thoroughly investigated the navy at Weishan Lake and appointed a new commander. This time, the rebels will have no chance to escape via Weishan Lake."

So Old Xu has done this, why didn't I know? It seems that the old man didn't intentionally use me as a pawn last time, Lin Wanrong nodded, "If that's the case, tell our brothers to slow down. We'll rest every five miles and build a fire every ten miles, so that everyone can take their time on the road."

Hu Bugui exclaimed, "General, how can that be acceptable? The three armies are currently besieging the city and are all waiting for us to complete the encirclement."

"Encircle? Encircle my ass." Lin Wanrong laughed, "After encircling, we launch the siege?"

Hu Bugui asked puzzled, "Are we not going to launch a siege?"

Lin Wanrong, still laughing, said, "Brother Hu, even though I've never been to Jining, I know the White Lotus has been entrenched there for many years. If this city was so easily conquered, would Marshal Xu need to personally lead tens of thousands of troops to subjugate it?"

As a native of Jining, Hu Bugui agreed, "What the general said is extremely accurate. The White Lotus has entrenched themselves in Jining for many years, having fortified it like an iron bucket. The city is robust, easy to defend and hard to attack. Moreover, it's their last stronghold, where all their elite troops have gathered. They would not give up the city easily, if we forcefully attack, we would face fierce resistance and our army would suffer heavy losses."

Du Xiuyuan chuckled, "Old Hu, your analysis is indeed quite sound. It seems you've become quite clever recently."

Beaming, Hu Bugui replied, "Of course, being with General Lin, how could I not become clever?"

Lin Wanrong, laughing and chiding, said, "Enough with the flattery from you guys. Slow down the march, let the brothers eat and drink well, and get plenty of rest."

Du Xiuyuan cautiously asked, "The other three forces are all hoping for us to encircle Jining, why does the general want to slow down the pace?"

Hu Bugui added, "Yes, hasn't General Lin forgotten that Marshal Xu said, whoever first breaches Jining City would be the one he recommends for the first merit before the Emperor?"

"Seeking merits? I've never cared for such," Lin Wanrong said with a laugh, though he knew Hu Bugui and Du Xiuyuan still depended on their military achievements for promotion. He turned to Du Xiuyuan, "Brother Du, I have a question for you. If you were the commander of Jining City's defense force and saw large armies attacking from three sides, with only the west quiet, what would you think?"

Du Xiuyuan took a moment to consider before answering, "I certainly would not let my guard down. No movement does not mean there is no danger. On the contrary, the quieter it is, the more vigilant I should be. If I were the defense force, I would surely reserve an elite force to guard the west. Ah, I understand now. General, your idea is to block the west, to surround but not attack. This not only minimizes our army's sacrifice but also restricts the enemy's movements, preventing them from deploying all their forces to the other three sides."

Lin Wanrong laughed, "You've only got half of it right. By surrounding and not attacking, it puts tremendous pressure on the White Lotus Army, causing them to panic and reducing their combat effectiveness. Of course, our brothers on the other three fronts might have some complaints, but half of our ten thousand brothers are cavalry, unsuitable for sieging a city. If the remaining five thousand infantry were to lay siege, the White Lotus would surely mobilize all their forces for defense. Even if we managed to break the city, our losses would be heavy. This trade-off doesn't make sense. We might as well hold the western gate, occasionally performing attack and defense drills, keeping these bandits on edge, and thereby somewhat alleviating the pressure on the other three sides. Someone will understand our painstaking efforts."

"Attack and defense drills?" Du Xiuyuan asked, "What do you mean by that?"

Lin Wanrong gave a mysterious smile but did not answer. Instead, it was Hu Bugui who asked, "What if the enemy chooses to break out?"

"Break out? That would be great," Lin Wanrong said with a grin. "Our five thousand cavalry have yet to be put to use. I look forward to making the enemy work while we rest. If they dare break out, we can surround them with our cavalry and storm the city with our infantry, killing two birds with one stone. Hehe, in that case, won't it still be our brothers who first breach the city?"

It was only then that Du Xiuyuan understood the ingenious plan. General Lin was indeed far-sighted.

Leading his right-wing soldiers, Lin Wanrong slowly pushed forward. The twenty-mile journey took them until noon. By this time, the soldiers from the other three fronts were battling the city with drumbeats reverberating in the air.

From a distance, Jining City indeed appeared to be fortified exceptionally well. The White Lotus soldiers defending the city, their heads wrapped in white gauze, held swords and spears, fiercely resisting the ladder-climbing soldiers. These White Lotus soldiers were well-trained, and though they numbered only about ten thousand, they were repelling wave after wave of attacking soldiers by making use of the city's high walls and natural defenses.

Lin Wanrong recalled what Xu Wei had said before they set off from camp, claiming the White Lotus sect had only five thousand soldiers, all of them ragtag. Clearly, that wasn't the case. Looking at the White Lotus's forces, there must be over ten thousand of them, and they were far from ragtag. He wondered where they got such well-trained soldiers.

Upon seeing the arrival of a large army from the west, the White Lotus defenders became tense. Thousands of soldiers stood on the city wall, not daring to slack off in the slightest.

Lin Wanrong had a chair brought over and a cup of tea prepared. He leisurely sat down, sipped some tea, and yawned a few times facing the west gate of Jining. Suddenly, he called out loudly, "Li Sheng, where's Li Sheng?"

"Here, general!" Li Sheng responded hastily.

"Target your five cannons at the top of the western city wall," Lin Wanrong commanded. "Fire a few good rounds and let those bastards know that my formidable right-wing army has arrived."

The cannons played a huge role in the suppression of the White Lotus. Originally, the ten cannons of the Divine Machine Unit were not enough. Xu Wei had mobilized twenty newly modified cannons from Anhui and Shandong, transporting them to the frontline. During the reorganization in Feng County, Lin Wanrong's right-wing army received five cannons, and the left-wing army under Zuo Zongyou also got five. The central army led by Tong Cheng, having more cavalry, was given the remaining twenty cannons by Xu Wei, kept for their use in city sieges.

Li Sheng turned the muzzle, aimed at the west gate of Jining, and fired a series of powerful volleys. Amid the thunderous noises, chunks of dust fell from the western city gate, and several White Lotus soldiers who were hit fell from the wall.

Lin Wanrong gave Hu Bugui a knowing look. Hu Bugui dismounted and loudly ordered, "Boys, charge with me!"

Behind him, thousands of elite cavalry and three thousand infantry let out earth-shattering roars and charged with him.

The White Lotus soldiers defending the city hurriedly fired a shower of arrows, but they fell to the ground far away, causing no harm to the soldiers.

Mid-charge, Hu Bugui suddenly waved his hand. The soldiers behind him all stopped, changing their formation. The cavalry and infantry split, no longer charging forward. To the surprise of the defenders, they brazenly started to drill right before their eyes.

The White Lotus soldiers on the city walls dared not slack off. They watched the government forces' movements nervously, only to see them finish their drills after a while and orderly return to camp.

The defenders finally let out a sigh of relief. Suddenly, another round of thunderous cannon fire resonated. The government's cannons roared again, causing a part of the city gate to collapse. As the firing ceased, Du Xiuyuan led another wave of soldiers to charge forward, but they too, just like Hu Bugui, stopped mid-charge and began to drill.

The White Lotus soldiers were at a loss but dared not slack off because no one knew when this drill would turn into a real attack. Anxiety pervaded the city walls.

Lin Wanrong chuckled. I have plenty of cannonballs, let Li Sheng bombard day and night and keep you restless. With ten thousand soldiers divided into three waves, taking turns to drill, let's see if you're scared or not, defend or not. Damn it, don't blame me for having more men. Yes, I am bullying you, so what?

Hu Bugui returned, dismounted and laughed, "General, your plan is ingenious indeed. With our mix of real and feigned attacks, we didn't lose a single soldier, but those bastards from the White Lotus must be scared shitless."

The sounds of cannons and fierce fighting became even more intense on the other three sides, clearly entering the siege phase.

"General, a messenger from General Tong Cheng, the commander of the Central Army, requests our cooperation in the siege!" a courier reported.

"Reply to General Tong," Lin Wanrong said. "Tell him our army is in the middle of siege training."

Watching the courier rush off, Hu Bugui chuckled, "I only learned yesterday that the man whose leg we broke, Zhai Canghai, is actually General Tong's nephew by marriage. Zhai Canghai's sister is the beloved concubine of General Tong."

His actual nephew? Damn, I made a casual guess and didn't expect to hit the nail on the head. So Tong Cheng stood up for Zhai Canghai, and it indeed had a good reason behind it. Lin Wanrong glanced towards the Central Army's direction. Twenty or so giant cannons were firing continuously at Jining City. The blasts of fire were blinding, and the dust stirred up by the explosions shrouded the city walls in smoke. This Tong really does have powerful artillery. If he aimed a few rounds at me, even with my skills, I'd be done for.

With ten thousand soldiers performing these back-and-forth drills several times, the White Lotus soldiers defending the city became increasingly tense and dared not let their guard down.

Listening to the rumble of cannons and the sounds of combat from the other three sides, Hu Bugui anxiously said, "General, it seems Jining City is about to be taken. If we don't attack now, someone else will seize the merit..."

Before his words had fallen, a deafening war cry was heard. The west gate of Jining City swung open, and a flood of soldiers charged out.

Chapter 249 You Killed My Master...

"Here they come!" Lin Wanrong exclaimed in great excitement. Hurriedly, he rose from his chair and gazed into the distance.

The approaching army seemed to be in the thousands, predominantly cavalry, their warhorses tall and majestic. The warriors atop these horses were fierce and aggressive, emanating an aura of lethality. At a single glance, it was evident that they were not ones to be easily trifled with.

Lin Wanrong scrutinized the army for a few moments, then turned to Gao Qiu and Hu Bugui, asking, "Brothers, can you help me look for any women among their ranks?"

After surveying for a while, Gao Qiu and Hu Bugui shook their heads, "We see no women."

Nodding, Lin Wanrong ordered, "Alright, Li Sheng, fire at my command"

Cannons boomed simultaneously, and in a blink, dozens of cavalrymen were knocked from their horses. However, these men were notably tenacious. In an instant, they rushed forward a considerable distance. Lin Wanrong smirked, about to order another volley, when suddenly, two to three hundred infantrymen surged out from the cavalry formation. With white turbans around their heads, their upper bodies bare, and faces smeared with paint depicting monstrous figures, they struck a terrifying image.

"Oh White Lotus Holy Mother, shield your faithful followers, where blades and spears fail to penetrate, and cloud-riding prevails" These oddly dressed White Lotus warriors, brandishing their massive cleavers, chanted slogans as they charged toward the front lines.

Several soldiers shot arrows at them. The arrows hit and penetrated their flesh, but these White Lotus fanatics seemed oblivious to the pain. Their faces showed no signs of suffering as they bravely charged forward.

An expression of horror spread across the soldiers' faces. Were there really people in the world who did not know pain? Could it be true that blades and spears could not penetrate them?

This was probably the White Lotus Sect's suicide squad. Damn, I despise these charlatans, Lin Wanrong muttered under his breath. He didn't believe the claim about invulnerability; they must be using some sort of pain-suppressing concoction. But his disbelief alone wouldn't change anything. The power of faith was deeply rooted in people's hearts, and the sight before them had dealt a significant blow to his soldiers. This pseudo-sorcery needed to be debunked.

Lin Wanrong drew the musket from his pocket, and with two quick shots, two of the charlatan warriors fell. One was hit in the chest, the other had his head blown apart. Seeing these warriors collapse, the soldiers erupted in cheers.

Gao Qiu was also swift to act. With a swift movement, he dashed into the enemy ranks as fast as lightning. His blade flashed, decapitating more than ten foes in an instant.

"Brothers, fear not," Lin Wanrong yelled. "These charlatans are playing tricks. Aim your arrows at their eyes, their heads"

Hu Bugui, wielding a powerful bow, sent an arrow whizzing through the air, hitting one of the monstrous figures squarely in the forehead. The arrow pierced through the skull, and the warrior dropped dead without a sound.

"Aim for their heads" The soldiers suddenly came to their senses and adjusted their targets, focusing on the enemies' eyes and heads. The White Lotus suicide squad fell one after another. The soldiers' morale soared, and in a short while, they had felled the two hundred enemies with their arrows.

After this assault, Li Sheng's artillery fire ceased momentarily, and the remaining enemy, the cavalry advanced further. It appeared they were determined to carve out a path through bloodshed.

The leader of the enemy cavalry had a broad, black face that suggested a significant presence. Hu Bugui suddenly exclaimed, "General, look! That man is the White Lotus Holy King, Lu Kanli."

White Lotus Holy King? And he was surnamed Lu? Lin Wanrong's mind raced. Could it be that Lu Zhongping was his son? That would explain why Xian'er's master had insisted on rescuing Lu Zhongping. He wondered about the origins of Xian'er's master. Since the Holy King had chosen to flee, it indicated that the fall of Jining City was imminent. However, Xian'er was still missing, which made Lin Wanrong incredibly anxious.

"Aim at the Holy Kingfire!" Lin Wanrong commanded furiously, his wrath stoked by his failure to locate Xian'er. His wrath was directed towards this Holy King, Lu Kanli.

Li Sheng lived up to his reputation. He aimed the five cannons at Lu Kanli. In an instant, another hundred White Lotus cavalymen were annihilated. However, the soldiers surrounding Lu Kanli shielded him with their own bodies, ensuring his temporary safety.

"Archers, prepare" Seeing that the cavalry had left more than two hundred corpses behind and were already near the government army's front lines, Li Sheng stopped the cannons and ordered loudly.

The Divine Machine Unit launched volley after volley of arrows from repeating crossbows at the remaining White Lotus cavalymen, killing another three to four hundred. Only the Holy King, Lu Kanli, narrowly survived, protected by his guards who used their own bodies as shields. Faced with the remaining five hundred cavalries, Hu Bugui, licking his lips excitedly, requested, "General Lin, allow me to fight!"

"Allow us to fight!" Several thousand-man commanders also requested to participate.

If it was a fight of five thousand against five hundred, even Lin Wanrong would have jumped at the opportunity. He laughed and said, "If that's the case, Brother Hu, as well as the other thousand-man commanders, each of you lead a thousand elite cavalymen to capture Lu Kanli. Whoever captures him first will be rewarded."

"Understood!" The thousand-man commanders excitedly accepted the order. They all knew what it meant to capture the White Lotus Holy King, Lu Kanli. In a fight where they outnumbered the enemy ten to one, who wouldn't be excited? Five thousand elite cavalymen charged forward, shaking the ground with the thunder of their horses. They kicked up a cloud of dust and in the blink of an eye, the five hundred White Lotus members were swallowed in a sea of men.

Leisurely sipping his tea, Lin Wanrong knew that no matter who captured the Holy King, the credit would go to him, the General of the right wing vanguard. Ah, with so many accomplishments, would he really have to replace Xu Wei and become a marshal? Such a thought was not honorable.

Turning to Du Xiuyuan, Lin Wanrong asked, "Brother Du, does the White Lotus Sect have only one top leader, the Holy King? Capturing him is not satisfying enough."

Watching Hu Bugui battle fiercely against the guards of the White Lotus Holy King in the distance, Du Xiuyuan laughed and said, "This Lu Kanli was originally a powerful warlord from Shandong. After he was persuaded to join forces with the Holy Mother of the White Lotus Sect, they founded the sect together. As for the top leaders, besides him, there's only the Holy Mother."

White Lotus Holy King and White Lotus Holy Mother? Were they a couple? Could this Holy Mother of the White Lotus be Xian'er's master?

In the midst of their conversation, they saw Hu Bugui sever the legs of Lu Kanli's horse with a single strike. The White Lotus Holy King tumbled to the ground, struggling and with a look of terror on his face. Hu Bugui charged forward on his horse, leaned over and hoisted Lu Kanli above his head single-handedly. He bellowed, "Lu Kanli is captured! You White Lotus rebels, surrender now!"

Lin Wanrong rose to his feet and laughed heartily. "Excellent, Brother Hu has performed a great deed. We have surely stolen the limelight this time."

Du Xiuyuan respectfully said, "General, now that Lu Kanli is captured and the west gate lacks strong troops, I request permission to attack! Let us seize Jinan and create new victories for our army."

"Good, permission granted!" Lin Wanrong exclaimed.

Du Xiuyuan shouted, "Brothers, the White Lotus Holy King Lu Kanli has been captured by our army. We'll breach Jinan City next, and our army will be highly honored. Into Jinan City, then home for the New Year! Charge"

Five thousand foot soldiers surged towards the city like a tidal wave, excitement on their faces. With the west gate virtually undefended, capturing it was as good as done.

Triumphant, Lin Wanrong mounted his horse, ready to join the battle. Suddenly, he heard a light whistle. A woman leaped out from the city, effortlessly soaring several feet into the air. She appeared like an ethereal fairy walking on waves. The woman was indescribably charming, with peach-like eyes and an alluring face. Her curvy body was mature and enticing, like a fully ripened peach.

Caught off guard, Lin Wanrong wondered, Who is this seductress, so dangerous to men? Her movements seem to defy the laws of gravity. He turned to Gao Qiu and asked, "Brother Gao, is this the legendary lightness skill?"

Gao Qiu solemnly nodded. "Indeed. Brother Lin, this woman is highly skilled, I fear I am no match for her."

Lin Wanrong chuckled. "Who cares if you're no match? We have cannons and repeating crossbows. Why should we fear her?"

This little lady thinks she can play with lightness skills, huh? He waved to the back and commanded, "Li Sheng, aim at that woman. Repeating crossbows, cannons, let them all loose!"

At Li Sheng's command, thousands of arrows from repeating crossbows shot toward the woman. No matter how skilled she was, facing a swarm of arrows, she had no chance to fight back. After she was forced to retreat under the arrow rain, Li Sheng adjusted the cannon. In the booming sound, several cannonballs whistled out. The woman narrowly escaped being scorched by the cannonballs, and her state was incredibly disheveled.

Lin Wanrong chuckled darkly. A martial arts expert, huh? And a beautiful one at that. Well, I too am half an expert, but I've never been as ostentatious as you, showing off your skills as if you're afraid people won't recognize your expertise. A few cannon shots from me and see how 'high' you can be.

Under the barrage of crossbows and cannons, the woman could no longer withstand the assault. After a thunderous cannon blast, the beautiful martial arts expert screamed and collapsed to the ground.

Leading the army, Du Xiuyuan furiously stormed toward the city gate. In the blink of an eye, they broke into the city.

"Jinan City has fallen, Jinan City has fallen" Lin Wanrong, leading thousands of soldiers, roared in unison. The White Lotus Army, still resisting, was terrified and quickly subdued.

"Master" From the west gate, a young woman suddenly rushed out, running frantically towards the fallen female expert.

"Xian'er" Lin Wanrong jumped up instantly. My little treasure, you finally showed yourself.

"General, should we attack this female thief?" Li Sheng asked.

"Attack your head! That's my wife!" Lin Wanrong snapped, spurring his horse, and darted toward Qin Xian'er like an arrow.

As he approached, he leaped off his horse to see Qin Xian'er with her hair disheveled, her face pale and haggard. Her pretty cheeks were stained with tears, and she looked dazed and foolish, kneeling on the ground, staring blankly at the female martial arts expert who had been bombarded by the cannons.

"Xian'er, Xian'er" Lin Wanrong called out softly.

Qin Xian'er turned around and looked at him blankly. A flicker of joy crossed her face, then tears started to stream down again. She covered her face with both hands and said, "Young Master, you killed my master"

Chapter 250 Duped

"No, I didn't kill her, it was the cannon" Lin Wanrong hastily defended himself, inwardly cursing his misfortune. Alas, the beautiful martial arts expert was really Xian'er's master. He had aimed his cannons too accurately, satisfying as it was, it was immensely regrettable for Xian'er. He blamed the female master, her training seemed so fragile, having been taken down by just a couple of shots.

He feigned seriousness, saying, "Xian'er, we are one and the same, your master is also mine. How could I possibly attack her with a cannon? Something must have gone awry in between!"

Qin Xian'er was dazed and tearful, uncertain if she understood his words as she cried relentlessly.

Lin Wanrong took a few steps forward, held her small hand, and Xian'er collapsed into his arms, sobbing, "Young Master, what should I do, my master is no more, what should I do...?"

Lin Wanrong declared righteously, "Of course, I'll take care of you for the rest of your life, Xian'er. You know I love you the most. By the way, your master was the Holy Mother of the White Lotus Sect, right?"

Qin Xian'er nodded, "Yes, she was. Since I was a child, I've depended on my master. She cared for me like my birth parents would, teaching me to read and write, and also trained me in martial arts. Without her care in the White Lotus Sect, I fear I would have suffered much humiliation."

Lin Wanrong recalled Lu Zhongping, who harbored lustful intentions towards Xian'er, and felt gratified. Dammit, he dared to have designs on my Xian'er, his fate is deserved.

Lin Wanrong nodded, "Mmm, Xian'er, rest assured. Lu Zhongping has already been dealt with by me. No one will dare to bother you again. But wasn't Lu Zhongping your master's son? Didn't your master see him falling for you and decide to help her own son?"

As he spoke, he couldn't help but glance at the female master lying on the ground. Her mature, curvaceous body was hidden beneath her long skirt. Her cheeks were pale, but her oval face was stunningly beautiful. Her smooth skin was fair and rosy, and her relaxed body lying on the ground was like an enchanting curve, like a sultry woman asleep, unconsciously revealing a languid, seductive charm.

Damn, the Holy Mother must be of considerable age, yet she looked so young, even in death, she looked stunning. Lin Wanrong's heart skipped a beat, and he quickly averted his gaze from her body.

"Young Master, don't talk nonsense. Who said Brother Lu is my master's son?" Qin Xian'er pouted.

"He's not your master's son?" Lin Wanrong asked in surprise, "Lu Kanli is the Holy King of the White Lotus Sect, Lu Zhongping is his son, your master is the Holy Mother of the White Lotus Sect. Isn't she Lu Zhongping's mother? The Holy King and the Holy Mother are supposed to be a couple, aren't they?"

Qin Xian'er's face flushed as she said, "What do you mean 'couple'? Why are you saying it so distastefully? My master, although known as the Holy Mother of the White Lotus, has never married or had a child. She intended to use Lu Kanli's power for the growth of the White Lotus Sect and hence pretended to be his wife, but they never lived together. Brother Lu is the son of the Holy King's concubine. To stabilize the Holy King, my master took Brother Lu as a disciple."

Once Qin Xian'er had finished speaking in one breath, Lin Wanrong finally understood the full picture. So it appeared that Xian'er's master was truly the head of the White Lotus Sect. The gods above and below must be thanked - his cannons had struck their target with precision, bringing down the head of the White Lotus Sect.

While they spoke, Lin Wanrong's army had already charged into the city, fully seizing Jining. The passing soldiers were all amazed as they saw their commanding general cradling a beautiful woman. Qin Xian'er's face blushed red, she softly said, "Young Master, please let me go."

"Why should I let you go? My Xian'er is precious, I can hold you whenever I wish," Lin Wanrong pulled her closer, shamelessly insisting.

"Brother Lin, I will enter the city with the army first," Gao Qiu called from a distance with an exaggerated wave and smile. Gao Qiu and Li Sheng were preparing to enter the city with their camp, the last batch of troops from the right wing. The battles on the other three sides were still fierce, but with the fall of Jining, it was just a matter of time before the remaining White Lotus Sect members would be dealt with.

Lin Wanrong laughed, "Brother Gao, you all go ahead, I can handle things here."

Gao Qiu and Li Sheng chuckled heartily a few times, leading their troops into the city.

Qin Xian'er looked at the army entering the city and let out a soft sigh, "I've lived in Jining for many years. I didn't expect that the city would fall today, even my master..."

Her voice broke into soft sobs. Lin Wanrong could understand her feelings. She had been an orphan since childhood, growing up under her master's care. Now the city had fallen, her home was lost, her master was gone. The heartache was unimaginable.

"Xian'er, do you know, I've been worrying about you these past few days. I didn't want to meet you on the battlefield, that's why I was slow in leading my troops. Today, we only surrounded Jining without attacking, because I was worried about you. The fire of our cannons is fierce and extremely

dangerous. If you were to get hurt, I would feel guilty for the rest of my life," Lin Wanrong spoke sweetly.

"I know you care for me" Qin Xian'er cried even harder, "Today, the west gate was surrounded, but there was no attack on the city. My master said it was your trick, claiming that the leader of the army was cunning and vile, trying to disrupt our morale. But only I knew, you cared about me, and you didn't want me to get hurt."

Damn, Xian'er's master was too wicked, how could she attribute the actions of a gentleman to such sinister intentions. If only everyone saw him the way Xian'er did.

"What happened afterward? How did you break out?" Lin Wanrong asked again.

"After being surrounded on all sides, my master insisted on defending the city, while the Holy King wanted to break out. They disagreed greatly. But the White Lotus Sect's troops were loyal to the Holy King, and my master had no way to control them," Xian'er explained.

At this point, Lin Wanrong suddenly interjected, "Right, where did the White Lotus Sect get so many well-trained troops?"

Qin Xian'er sighed, "Our White Lotus Sect has been accumulating resources for decades, and we've always had people helping us train troops. If it wasn't for the government forces bypassing Jiangsu and launching a surprise attack from Anhui and Shandong, surrounding us, the White Lotus wouldn't have fallen so easily."

Someone was assisting the White Lotus Sect in training their soldiers? The realization dawned on Lin Wanrong in an instant. Damn, no wonder the White Lotus Sect's military prowess was exceptional, it almost cost him his life. As for the identity of the one assisting them, even Lin Wanrong could venture a guess Xu Wei and Luo Min, those two old foxes, must undoubtedly be well aware.

"So, in the end, the so-called White Lotus Holy King decided to break out?" Lin Wanrong continued.

Qin Xian'er nodded: "Despite my master's earnest dissuasions, the Holy King was determined to break out. Left with no choice, my master agreed. However, they disagreed again about the route for the breakout. My master suggested choosing any one direction from the other three to break out. She said, even though the battles on those sides were fierce, it actually indicated that the

government forces had no reserve forces left, making a breakout worth attempting. The problem was the military general at the west gate, whose tactics were strategic and psychological, choosing to surround without attacking and always ready to strike. Therefore, she deemed breaking out from the west gate the worst option."

Lin Wanrong nodded. This master of Xian'er seemed to have a clear understanding of him, quite the female Zhuge. It was a pity, though. She, who was as beautiful as a flower, had been bombarded by his cannons. His skills at ruining beauty would probably become world-renowned.

"So, what did the White Lotus 'great king' think?" Lin Wanrong asked.

Upon hearing him refer to the Holy King as the 'great king', Qin Xian'er found it odd. She wanted to laugh but felt it was inappropriate. "The Holy King's thoughts were completely opposite. He said that you surrounded but did not attack out of cowardice. He also speculated that you might be at odds with the other government forces, deliberately wanting them to suffer more casualties. Therefore, he chose to break out from the west gate, thinking he could catch you off guard and achieve a great victory."

Creative and bold, Lin Wanrong laughed heartily. This Holy King must have received some secret intelligence, knowing about my dispute with the commander of the central army, Tong Cheng, and so he made this diagnosis. He unknowingly gave me the advantage, not only did I capture the thief's head, but I also took Jining.

"So, your master knew the west gate was not feasible, and seeing the Holy King captured by me, why did she still choose to break out from the west gate?" Lin Wanrong was puzzled, sensing that something was amiss.

"I don't know either," Qin Xian'er said, "I told my master that you, Young Master, would never harm her or me. I had barely finished speaking when she rushed out. I didn't know what had happened, but I followed her out. But as soon as I stepped out, I saw my master" Qin Xian'er choked and could not continue.

Lin Wanrong quickly embraced her shoulder, "Xian'er, don't cry, it was purely an accident. I will investigate immediately to find out which damn person fired that cannon. I clearly told them not to fire at any women."

At this point, Qin Xian'er, who had nothing else to hold on to, saw his loving care for her, which made her eyes well up with grateful tears. She threw herself into his arms, "Young Master, your

great kindness to Xian'er, even if my bones are crushed and my ashes scattered, I could not repay you."

Lin Wanrong playfully lifted her chin and said with a lecherous smile, "Why talk of crushing bones and scattering ashes? Just keep me company every day, eating, drinking, and sleeping with me."

Qin Xian'er felt both shy and happy, initially wanting to throw herself into his arms and act spoiled. But remembering her master's body was still nearby, she dared not overdo the frivolous behavior with her beloved, "Young Master, my master she"

Seeing Qin Xian'er's mournful expression, General Lin slapped his chest and declared righteously, "Xian'er, we have a long time ahead of us. Let's put aside our feelings for now and give your master a proper burial today."

Qin Xian'er nodded tearfully. Lin Wanrong stepped forward to support the body of the beautiful female master. The moment he touched her, he found her skin to be delicately smooth and still slightly warm, which was delightfully pleasant. He couldn't help but wish to feel her more.

Even in death, she was still so attractive, it was outrageous! He chuckled to himself, ready to lift her up, when he suddenly remembered the mysterious manner in which the female master had rushed out. A thought flashed through his mind, "Not good, it's a trap"

His reaction was swift, reaching for the musket pistol in his embrace. However, he felt a chill on his chest, where a sharp dagger was now pointed.