

Finest 316

Chapter 316 Assassination

When they returned to the Xiao residence, it was deep into the night. Du Xiuyuan and others had to support him, and despite General Lin's self-proclaimed resilience, he couldn't withstand the intense beating. His back was covered with countless wounds, with bloodstains barely visible on the clothes. Even the soldiers, accustomed to the sight of battles, were inwardly shocked. Old Hu was indeed a straightforward man.

When soldiers fought, they followed a straightforward path until the end, admitting defeat without any further argument. Originally, there were thousands of soldiers under Su Mubai. Today, having personally witnessed General Lin's loyalty and righteousness, they all admired him secretly, and even shook hands with him. Despite enduring a beating, General Lin managed to win over the hearts of the people, and his prestige in the army escalated, an outcome that Du Xiuyuan and the others hadn't anticipated.

Hu Bugui was also covered in wounds, but he was a hardened veteran, having endured countless battles. Unlike the young, dark-skinned General Lin, he could withstand the blows. After enduring the beating and drinking strong liquor with everyone, Hu Bugui fell asleep on the ground, completely ignoring the many wounds on his back.

‘This big bearded man, no matter how much I disapprove of him, I must admit his toughness.’ General Lin in his white robe, threw his cloak and feathered fan, thinking helplessly.

As they helped General Lin to the entrance of the shop, they saw a small sedan hurrying from a distance. Before it got close, they heard a woman's anxious voice from inside, "Stop, stop quickly."

The sedan stopped abruptly, and a woman flew out of it, looking at Lin San who was being supported by others. She was first stunned, then involuntarily her eyes reddened, and tears began to fall, "What happened to you?"

Lin Wanrong grinned, "It's nothing, I accidentally fell from a horse today. It will be fine tomorrow."

"You and your lies," the woman wiped her tears, rushed over and looked at him, biting her lip and weeping, "Do you think everyone else is a fool?" The Eldest Miss moved closer to Lin San. When

she saw the chaotic whip marks on his back, her heart jumped with fright. She covered her mouth with her hand and her tears fell faster.

Du Xiuyuan, who had escorted Lin Wanrong back, was visibly embarrassed. He bowed, "Madam, I was unable to protect the general well, please punish me."

"What madam?" The Eldest Miss's face turned red, although tears were still streaming down her face. She glanced at Lin Wanrong and forcibly said, "You, you better not talk nonsense."

"I never talk nonsense." Lin Wanrong said with a wry smile, "But if others talk nonsense, I can't control it."

"You... You're such a dead man. You're in such a state and still tease others." The Eldest Miss reproached him with a heartache, holding his arm. She took a covert peek at his back and was instantly saddened again. She held back her tears and said, "Gentlemen, please sit inside. Huan'er, prepare tea..."

Du Xiuyuan hurriedly waved his hands, "Madam, you're too kind. Today, I feel deeply guilty for not being able to protect General Lin well. Now that the general is safe and sound, I can only entrust his care to you. General Lin is the soul of our army. On behalf of tens of thousands of soldiers in our army, I thank you for your kindness."

As Du Xiuyuan spoke, he fell to his knees, kowtowing to the Eldest Miss.

Xiao Yuruo exclaimed anxiously, "Why are you saying such things, sir? Taking care of him is my responsibility, it isn't a favor. You, say something and quickly get this man up!"

Lin Wanrong gave a grin, "Brother Du, please get up quickly. Otherwise, she might find some way to torment me later. Ouch—" He winced, having been pinched in the waist by the Eldest Miss for his nonsensical talk. The sudden pain from his wound made him yelp, and seeing his reaction, Xiao Yuruo was filled with regret and worry. She quickly grabbed his hand, her eyes brimming with guilt.

Du Xiuyuan rose to his feet and sighed, "The general and his wife share such an extraordinary love, it truly is enviable. I won't interrupt the two of you any longer. I'll take my leave now. General Lin, the brothers will visit you tomorrow."

Lin Wanrong waved and laughed, while the Eldest Miss blushed as she escorted Du Xiuyuan out. When she returned, she saw Lin San looking pale and haggard, a stark contrast to his usual lively demeanor.

With no outsiders present, she no longer concealed her worry and anger, her tears flowing freely like a dam had burst, "You fool, I was gone for just one day, and you ended up like this?"

Lin Wanrong chuckled, "Today's events were unexpected. The brothers were a bit too enthusiastic. A few lashes don't matter much. Weren't you staying at Miss Xu's house? How did you return so soon? I thought you'd stay there at least a fortnight."

Wiping her tears, the Eldest Miss softly said, "I did want to chat with Sister Xu more, but I was worried about what trouble you might stir up at home. Just as I was feeling uneasy, Sister Xu returned and told me you were seriously injured. I, I was so frightened that I almost lost my soul—"

At this point, Xiao Yuruo could no longer hold back her tears. Remembering her worry, her tears flowed ceaselessly like a burst river.

What on earth had Xu Zhiqing said to make the Eldest Miss so terrified? Seeing her trembling and crying, he couldn't help but feel guilty. He reached for her hand and laughed, "Stop crying, I'm fine. Don't believe me? Why don't you give me a kiss to check? What, you don't want to? You want me to kiss you? Please, I am the one who's injured!"

"Kiss your head!" Embarrassed and annoyed, the Eldest Miss huffed, "Even in this state, you're still thinking of such nonsense."

Seeing Lin San's dejected expression, her heart softened, and she couldn't keep up her stern facade. She extended her small hand to gently touch the whip marks on his back, her voice shaking, "Who did this? Why did they hit you so hard? Does it hurt—"

Lin Wanrong sighed lightly, "It does hurt a bit, but no matter how much it hurts, it can't compare to the pain in your heart, Eldest Miss."

"Smooth talker." Xiao Yuruo blushed, her eyes shimmering softly, and she softly called out, "Huan'er—"

The young maid outside hurried in, and the Eldest Miss gently said, "Lin San is injured, come and help me take him inside."

Huan'er acknowledged and the two women cautiously supported him, making their way into the house. The sensation of being wedged between two women, feeling their tender shoulders and waist, and glimpsing at Eldest Miss's beautiful face and soft, white earlobes made Lin Wanrong's heart flutter. He leaned over to Xiao Yuruo's ear and exhaled lightly, causing a shiver to run through her. Her knees went weak and she nearly lost her footing. Her face flushed, she shot him a disgruntled look, the blush on her face enhanced by her anger, and her embarrassment was enchanting.

"Lying in bed is so comfortable!" Once the two women had laid him face down on the bed, Lin Wanrong hugged his pillow and exhaled deeply.

Eldest Miss ignored him, instructing the maid, "Huan'er, go and prepare some medicinal water. Oh, and bring scissors!"

Lin Wanrong was startled, "Eldest Miss, why do you need scissors? Please, don't do anything rash. I'm not dead yet, everything is still functioning perfectly, don't you trust me?"

Huan'er chuckled lightly. Flustered and slightly embarrassed, Eldest Miss wanted to hit him but couldn't bring herself to do so. She merely grabbed his hand and squeezed it tightly, "Stop talking nonsense! You're making us look ridiculous."

After the little maid left the room, Lin Wanrong took her hand. Eldest Miss sat gently by his side. She remembered what Xu Zhiqing had told her but couldn't figure out how to achieve it, and she sighed softly.

Lin Wanrong said, "Eldest Miss, you seem a bit off today. Did you suffer any ill-treatment from Xu Zhiqing? I will seek justice for you."

"Thank the heavens that I am not being bullied by you. How could anyone else bully me?" Eldest Miss sighed and said, "Lin San, I have a question for you, and I need an honest answer, with no deception whatsoever."

"Is there anyone more honest than me in this world?" Lin Wanrong replied with a straight face, "Eldest Miss, we have been together for such a long time, you must know this trait of mine very well, do I need to reiterate it?"

Eldest Miss stared at him, her expression vacant, and softly said, "Lin San, if one day I were to disappear like Miss Xiao, would you search for me desperately? Would you do anything for me?"

Lin Wanrong was startled. What did Eldest Miss mean by that? What on earth had Xu Zhiqing told her that she was having such whimsical thoughts?

Xiao Yuruo anxiously watched his expression, seeing his hesitation, a pang of pain shot through her heart and tears welled up in her eyes. She turned away resolutely, saying, "Never mind, you don't have to say it, I don't want to hear your lies."

"Eldest Miss, look into my eyes," Lin San said earnestly and with utmost sincerity.

"Why?" Eldest Miss glanced at him, his eyes wide and bright, seemingly filled with honesty.

"What do you see in my eyes?" Lin San asked, smiling gently.

Suppressing her laughter, Eldest Miss replied softly, "Besides bloodshot veins, I see nothing."

Lines of frustration marred Lin Wanrong's forehead. 'Why couldn't this lass just play along?' He sighed lightly and said, "Eldest Miss, everyone perceives a different reflection in my eyes. Similarly, in my heart, you and Qingxuan are unique entities. She's pure and noble, like a celestial maiden from the moon palace, while you're mature and charming, like the goddess of the Luo River. Both are equally beautiful and noble, like the two ends of a pole. Forcing me to weigh which end is heavier, isn't that making things difficult?"

"What beautiful talk of moon maidens and river goddesses," Eldest Miss smiled, her eyes softening, and asked gently, "If it is as you say, would you leave Miss Xiao for me?"

Lin Wanrong shook his head and said, "That's impossible. Just like if Qingxuan asked me to leave you, I wouldn't agree. It's the same principle. Alas, universal love is a grand sentiment. Even if the world fails to understand it, I will embrace it to the end."

"You insufferable rogue!" Eldest Miss lightly hummed, a blush spreading across her face as she held his hand tightly. "I, Xiao Yuruo, have always considered myself clever, yet somehow you've ensnared me. If you dare to act unkindly towards me, I swear I'll die just to spite you."

"Unkind?" Lin Wanrong exclaimed in surprise, "That's inhumane! Eldest Miss, please never mention that word around me; they make me shiver."

"Scoundrel!" Eldest Miss chuckled, lightly scratching his palm. Lin Wanrong felt an itch in his heart, and despite the pain on his back, pulled her with such force that she gasped in surprise before falling onto the bed, ending up right beside his pillow.

"What are you planning?" Eldest Miss saw the teasing smile on his face, his cheek almost touching hers. Her heart pounded wildly, yet she found herself incapable of resistance.

Her chest heaving, Xiao Yuruo trembled slightly, her face flushing a deep red. Her long eyelashes fluttered, her lips parted slightly as a fragrant, intoxicating breath escaped them. It was unbearably enticing.

Damn it, all or nothing. Lin General's eyes blazed, his heart stirred, pain on his back forgotten as he rolled over, wrapping Yuruo in his arms.

"No—" Lying in his arms, Eldest Miss felt weak. Her eyes sparkled seductively, her breath hot as she whispered tremulously.

"Yes, yes." Lin General smiled slightly, his hands slowly moving up her soft shoulders. After massaging them gently, his hand roamed downwards, lingering around her smooth waist, then ventured further down, reaching her pert buttocks.

Eldest Miss quivered, pressing his wandering hand against her buttocks. Her lips barely parted as she said, "You rascal, how dare you be so audacious. Aren't you afraid my mother will punish you?"

"If she punishes me, I'll punish you." Lin Wanrong shamelessly grinned, appreciating the round and smooth figure of Xiao Yuruo through the silky fabric. Swallowing hard, his hand slipped underneath her skirt, venturing inside.

"Miss——" The maid's voice echoed from outside, startling the two people who were engrossed in each other's company. The Eldest Miss swiftly turned over and got up, her face was so red that it looked like water could be wrung out from it. She gave Lin Wanrong an annoyed glance and bashfully said, "You rascal, even when injured, you're capable of mischief. I hate you to death."

"Ah, if you hadn't mentioned it, I wouldn't have remembered that I'm injured." Lin Wanrong chuckled, "Ah, not even sparing a wounded man—"

"What did you say?" The Eldest Miss blushed and was also angry. She pounced on him, and the two of them tussled together, laughing and playing.

After a while, they finally stopped. The Eldest Miss looked at him and suddenly threw herself into his arms, tears falling down like rain, "You devil, every day, I am constantly thinking about you, longing for you, wishing I could always be like this with you."

"There's no helping my charm," Lin Wanrong held out his hands and encircled her petite waist, saying softly, "This isn't even the best part. There are even better things waiting for us to do. We could even do them now. It's been a long time since I used the 'Old Tree Twining Roots' and 'Upside-down Candle' techniques. Why don't we explore them together today?"

Although she didn't understand what these two techniques were, seeing the lascivious grin on his face, she knew it was nothing good. The Eldest Miss scratched him out of annoyance, just as Huan'er, the maid, hurried in with the medicine.

"Huan'er, your timing is impeccable." Lin Wanrong grinned, his voice dripping with innuendo.

"Behave yourself!" The Eldest Miss blushed deeply and smacked him hard on the buttocks.

"Harder, harder, oh yes——" Lin San let out a strange shout that made both the girls blush. Huan'er turned her head away in embarrassment, while the Eldest Miss was both angry and embarrassed. She wished she could kick him until he was thoroughly bruised, but secretly, she savored this cheerful atmosphere.

She took the scissors, gently cutting away the bloody fabric stuck to his body. Although Lin Wanrong was moaning inappropriately, his face was covered in large sweat beads and his voice was trembling, revealing his immense pain. Huan'er was terrified and turned her head away, unable to look at his mangled back.

Xiao Yuruo bit her lower lip, her hand trembling as she cut away his clothes. Tears swirled in her eyes. Seeing the fresh blood he had bitten out from his lips, she couldn't hold back any longer. She threw the medicine and scissors away, threw herself onto his back, and gently rubbed his hot scars with her soft cheeks, "You devil, you're really going to be the death of me——"

Seeing the Eldest Miss crying in pain, Huan'er also threw herself onto Lin San's shoulder and sobbed. Their tears rolled down his shoulder, seeping into his wounds, causing waves of pain.

'Damn, I'll endure it!' Lin Wanrong was uncomfortable, but his heart was thrilled. A grin spread across his face, uglier than crying.

"Hehe, what a pair of lovers with shared destinies. What a touching scene of deep affection between a man and his love!" A teasing laughter echoed from the courtyard. The voice sounded both far and near, as if it were resonating in everyone's ears.

The Eldest Miss was startled and immediately stopped crying. She turned around in alarm, exclaiming, "Who's making that noise?" The maid Huan'er was also frightened, she quickly hid behind the two of them.

With a loud crash, the door was kicked open. Standing in the doorway were three black-clothed, masked men, their hands holding gleaming steel blades. Their eyes emitted a profound light, tightly fixed on Lin Wanrong.

"Who... who are you?" The Eldest Miss was taken aback. A trace of fear appeared on her face, but she bravely shielded Lin San, refusing to let him come to any harm.

'It's here, it's here, the drama that Sister An was playing is here.' Lin Wanrong's heart jolted with a mix of surprise and trepidation. "Bravely" he leaped forward, positioning himself in front of the two women, declaring, "Whoever comes, identify yourself quickly, and this general might spare you a death——"

Before his words even fell, a glinting blade was seen flashing towards him. The sound of the blade whistled through the air, its momentum was swift and relentless, showing no mercy, intending to split him on the spot.

Chapter 317 Peerless Twin Beauties

Seeing the cold glimmer of the blade hurtling towards his chest, Lin Wanrong's heart lurched. This was not a mere act, it was reality. Swiftly sidestepping the strike, he winced as a sharp pain shot through the wound on his back. The assassin's blade didn't pause, transforming the thrust into an upward jab that aimed at his lower abdomen, the move even faster than before.

'Damn it, thinking me as feeble as a sick cat when I hold back,' Lin Wanrong roared in rage and pain. Ignoring the sting on his back, he focused on the assailant's face and launched a powerful punch. Despite his delayed response, his attack outpaced the assassin's blade. The sudden burst of speed caught the killer off guard. He quickly swiped his long blade, barely managing to shield his vital spots in time.

"Go to hell!" Lin Wanrong barked, retracting his fist and swiftly lashed out with a powerful kick to the assailant's abdomen. With a thud, the man was sent flying out the door. Meanwhile, the other two assassins inside the room wasted no time, their blades whirling as they bypassed Lin Wanrong to attack the Eldest Miss behind him.

Having gained the upper hand, Lin Wanrong felt a surge of confidence. He was not afraid of the two assassins. He quickly picked up a long bench nearby and hurled it at the attackers. The sound of the blade slicing through the bench echoed, splintering it into pieces. Lin Wanrong didn't hesitate, throwing the remnant forcefully at one of the assailants' chests. His fury augmented his strength, the impact forced the man to retreat several steps, gasping for breath.

"Run!" Lin Wanrong shouted, grabbing the Eldest Miss and Huan'er and made a dash for the door. Just as they stepped into the courtyard, they heard a delightful laugh, "Trying to escape? Not so easy!!" As the voice faded, a sharp whistle cut through the air, bringing a strong gust of wind, heading straight for Lin Wanrong.

Upon hearing the sound, Lin Wanrong let out a sigh of relief, which quickly morphed into annoyance. 'Damn it, this sneaky vixen An Biru, we were supposed to be acting, but when has any of this felt like an act? Of all the days, she chose to strike when I'm injured. I could have been killed by those brats just now.'

If there was one person in this world who remained a mystery to him, it was Sister An. Her tactics, her strategies were on par with his, all hidden beneath an alluring facade that was hard to defend against. The projectile she sent flying was an exquisitely polished white lotus flower, spinning continuously, fierce as a tiger. Catching it, Lin Wanrong felt a great force traveling through the metal lotus, like a hammer slamming into his chest. He stumbled backward a few steps to regain balance. Before he could catch his breath, he saw a shadow leap into the air, a long sword trembling in its hand, rushing towards his chest like a shooting star.

Although the figure was veiled in a light gauze, her voluptuous curves and seductive sway were captivating. She traced a beautiful and enchanting trajectory in the air, which was utterly captivating. "Damn it, you've finally shown yourself," he muttered to himself. After all this fighting and several close calls, there was no sign of any divine rescue. He wondered if An Biru, this sly

vixen, had any idea about the whereabouts of her senior sister. He hoped she was not just playing with him.

The shadow moved with her sword, swift and unrivaled like a bolt of lightning. As she drew near, Lin Wanrong could see the icy killing intent in her eyes. He dared not gamble with his life, dodging quickly. A flash of cold light sparked in An Biru's eyes as she flicked her sleeve, a small dart shot out, blinking towards Lin Wanrong's chest. The darthead was a sinister black, evidently dipped in deadly poison.

'Damn it, you're really after my life!' Lin Wanrong was soaked in cold sweat, scrambling desperately to the side. The dart came with terrifying speed, it seemed destined to hit him when a light whistled in from the side, a silver sword flew out, hitting the poisoned dart. Sparks flew as the two collided, the dart was deflected just barely brushing past Lin Wanrong's shoulder and, with a thud, lodged into the wooden pillar behind him.

'Damn, someone actually came to rescue me,' Lin Wanrong marveled inwardly, uncertain whether to feel joy or dread. An Biru let out a surprised cry, "Who dares interfere?"

A woman's voice sighed softly, "Junior Sister An, we meet again." The voice came from the opposite rooftop. Everyone turned to see a slender woman standing on the beam, her face veiled, dressed in white. A breeze stirred her long hair, creating an image of quiet elegance, noble purity, as if a fairy being had descended.

Though her face was obscured, Lin Wanrong knew with a single glance, this was the fairy sister who had been injured by his hand that night. She had clearly been poisoned then, yet today she stood before him, alive and well. It seemed An Biru had been right, such a fairy-like person could not be so easily defeated. Given that she and An Biru, as well as Xian'er, shared a common origin, dispelling that poison would have been a simple task for her.

"So it's Fairy Ning who has graced us with her presence. I apologize for not welcoming you sooner. After all these years, you are even more beautiful than before, truly a cause for celebration."

An Biru stood in the middle of the courtyard, her tight black dress accentuating her voluptuous figure, her face veiled in a thin scarf, exuding a seductive allure. The two women, one lofty as a Fairy, the other enticing as a vixen, both strikingly beautiful yet of contrasting temperaments, were surprisingly from the same sect, a sight that astonished all.

The Eldest Miss leaned against Lin Wanrong, whispering, "Lin San, why does this person seem familiar?"

She was referring to An Biru standing opposite them. Lin Wanrong chuckled, 'How could she not be familiar, you've been jealous of her a few times.' But of course, he would not be foolish enough to point it out, instead he responded with a smile, "Is that so? I didn't notice. In my eyes, besides the Eldest Miss, Qingxuan, and my wives, all other women look average to me, I can't distinguish between their beauty and ugliness."

"You're such a tease!" the Eldest Miss scolded playfully, snuggling closer to him. Remembering how he had bravely shielded her earlier, her heart swelled with happiness and gratitude. She gently opened her mouth, whispering in his ear, "Scoundrel, don't be so reckless in the future. If something happened to you, I wouldn't want to live in this world alone."

The pair's sweet and passionate exchange contrasted starkly with the sigh that escaped from the ethereal figure perched on the rooftop. "Why do you persist in this, sister?" she queried, her voice gentle yet firm. "The events of years past were nothing but a misunderstanding. Why pour your resentment onto an innocent bystander? After not seeing each other for more than a decade, we should be embracing and celebrating our reunion, reminiscing our bond."

An Biru's laugh was a melodious and mocking trill. "Reminisce? That's rich. It has indeed been a while, senior sister, and I have missed you dearly." Even as her words fell, her delicate hand moved swiftly, releasing two gleaming silver needles that darted toward Lin Wanrong.

An Biru's move was fast, yet the ethereal figure seemed to anticipate her perfectly. Before anyone could react, she had swept in front of Lin Wanrong, her long sleeves whisking the rapidly approaching needles into their folds.

Her face paled for a moment before regaining its calm composure. Looking at An Biru, she smiled and said, "Junior sister, it seems your skill with the Ice Spirit Needles has greatly improved during our years apart. Our Master did not misjudge you when she passed this technique onto you."

'So that's what they're called, Ice Spirit Needles,' Lin Wanrong mused to himself, instinctively touching his bottom. He sneaked a glance at the sultry figure of Sister An, a vivid image of her administering the needle treatment to him by the Weishan Lake surfaced, prompting a wave of nostalgia.

An Biru chuckled, but her words were laced with a certain bitterness and desolation, "Senior sister, I'm grateful that you remember our Master. If you hadn't mentioned it, I might've forgotten that it was she who personally taught me how to use these Ice Spirit Needles. A disciple should remember the debt to her Master. However, the words she said in front of us both, I could never forget even if I died. 'The Miao girl is naturally inferior. Even with talent, she harbors a calamitous potential.' I

recite these words a hundred times each day, senior sister, have you forgotten? Oh, I forgot, you are a treasured flower born in this world, and our Master was always fond of you. How could you understand the feelings of this lowly Miao girl?"

Lin Wanrong comprehended her feelings. In those times, the concept of racial equality was far from realized. The Miao girls were viewed as members of a barbaric tribe yet to be civilized and therefore held in low regard. This An Biru, with her exceptional beauty and intelligence, should have been seen as a divine creature, yet her Miao heritage was an indelible mark of stigma. Their Master must have been a purist who disdained her upon discovering her Miao identity, hence An Biru's bitterness. For someone as proud and sensitive as An Biru, it would have been surprising if she had not rebelled against her Master.

That being said, what was wrong with Miao girls? They were simple yet passionate, free-spirited, and daring, a refreshing alternative to the delicate, sheltered ladies of high society. An Biru was a living testament to this, her character leaving an indelible impression on Lin Wanrong.

The fairy-like woman fell into a period of silence, emitting a soft sigh, and slowly spoke, "Our Master has long passed away, and we owe her nurturing and guidance. How can we now debate her right and wrong? In my humble opinion, our Master did not aim those words at you; she was thinking of the bigger picture. In my heart, regardless of ethnicity, we are all citizens of our great empire. There is no such thing as superiority or inferiority, but people in this world can be malicious, not all of them are tolerant and kind. 'Jade Virtue Fairy Hall', our sect, has been a martial arts leader for generations, assisting the Emperor in building the nation and maintaining peace. It commands the respect of the world. At the time, our country was in a grave crisis. If someone had exploited your heritage to cause chaos, the situation would have worsened. To appease the people and ensure peace and tranquility in our Empire, our Master had no choice but to reveal your identity publicly. It was an act of desperation."

Sweat trickled down his forehead as Lin Wanrong pondered. The public humiliation of An Biru by her own Master was excessive. Given An Biru's pride, it would be strange if she didn't react vehemently. Besides, what right did this old woman have to disclose someone's secret under the guise of serving the country and the people? Was it all for the so-called leadership and salvation of the people? Rubbish. He was furious, and his sympathy for An Biru grew stronger.

An Biru laughed heartily, her eyes glistening with unshed tears. "Well said, well said! Leading the martial world, maintaining the nation's peace, such lofty ideals! For these, you have lived a life of abstinence and solitary devotion, destined to die alone, without ever tasting the sweetness of love. How noble that is. But there's one thing I don't understand. The martial world belongs to those who practice martial arts, and the world belongs to everyone. Who needs the 'Jade Virtue Fairy Hall' to lead them? Who asked you to bring peace and prosperity to the nation? Sister, this question has puzzled me for years, and I still don't understand it. Could you explain it to me?"

‘Well said!’ Lin Wanrong praised internally. ‘What’s wrong with being a Miao woman? That’s precisely what I like.’ The world is diverse; without the determination to be inclusive, how can one talk about leadership? An Biru was indeed a clever woman who had hit the nail on the head. The world belongs to everyone, not to any fairy, nor to the ‘Jade Virtue Fairy Hall.’ Whether to wage war or to seek peace, it’s none of their damn business. They cannot control it. And yet, they still talk about sacrificing others for the sake of so-called justice and world peace. What a load of nonsense!

"You claim it's for the greater good, disregarding me, a helpless woman, sacrificing my entire life for the sake of world peace and the stability of the state?" An Biru said passionately. When she mentioned the painful part, tears trickled down her cheeks. Catching sight of Lin Wanrong's encouraging smile, completely different from his usual playful demeanor, she felt as if he was the only one in this world who truly understood her. A warm feeling filled her heart. She returned his smile gently and held her head high with newfound resolve.

The fairy-like maiden shook her head, saying, "Sister, your words certainly have merit, but this nation has existed since ancient times; it did not begin today. Countless instances have proven that the populace needs someone to lead them; without it, they are like scattered sand, vulnerable to the aggression of foreign tribes. Today, our great nation is invaded by foreigners, overrun by barbarians. Without someone to lead, how can we talk about peaceful living and national prosperity? This issue of the nation and the people is an eternal topic. To serve the nation, sacrifices must be made, if not by you then by me. You certainly have suffered many injustices, but has my heart been at ease? Our Master handed down her legacy to me, wanting me to cherish the centuries-old reputation of 'Jade Virtue Fairy Hall.' I am terrified and constantly on guard, how dare I make a wrong move?"

Fairy Ning was indeed an individual with profound thoughts; her words revolved around the relationship between the nation and the people. The topic of the collective versus the individual was indeed an age-old dilemma. Even in Lin Wanrong's previous life, everyone held their own views, and nobody could convince anyone else.

"Words are of no use!" An Biru exclaimed with a huff, "We pursue different paths, and hence we do not share common goals. Sister, the matters of today have nothing to do with you. Please step aside, and don't force me to take action against you."

The fairy-like maiden glanced back at Lin Wanrong. Her eyes were tranquil, her face as serene as an ancient well; it was impossible to discern her expression. Lin Wanrong grinned and waved at her, saying, "Hey, sister, you look familiar. Have we met somewhere before?"

The Eldest Miss seemed to respect the fairy-like maiden greatly and gently poked Lin Wanrong, whispering, "You, don't disrespect the fairy sister." He was taken aback, "Me? Disrespect her? It's more like I'm worried that she'll disrespect me."

The fairy-like maiden neither nodded nor shook her head. She gave him a brief glance, then turned her back to him and stood as if rooted to the spot, steadfastly shielding him. Everything indeed seemed to be within An Biru's calculations. This fairy sister was extraordinarily upright, even excessively so. To prevent her junior sister from causing harm, she could put aside past grudges; truly a noble stance.

An Biru's eyes were resolute, her voice filled with joy as she said, "Very well, very good. Senior Sister, you are as upright as ever. We haven't seen each other for many years. Today, let me see what new and intriguing martial arts the world-renowned Fairy Ning has learned."

The fairy sister shook her head, saying, "Junior Sister, you have conspired with Prince Cheng, disregarding human lives. Now that I am aware, I cannot ignore it. Although this man is despicable, he cannot die by your hand."

"You're interfering..." Mid-sentence, An Biru leaped like a swallow, her slender fingers curled into hooks. Her long nails glowed silver in the light. The speed of her attack was many times faster than her previous attempt on Lin Wanrong. She darted towards the fairy-like maiden's face.

Fairy Ning's face remained composed. With a slight flick of her long sleeves, a soft glow appeared between her hands. Resembling a holy lotus, she moved even faster, and in the blink of an eye, blocked An Biru's hand.

An Biru hummed lightly, converting her claw-like hand into a palm, pushing forcefully towards her chest without conceding any ground. The two women battled, both employing speed against speed. In a mere moment, they clashed palms thrice. After the third impact, both retreated hastily, their ears slightly red, and chests heaving slightly, indicating a clear stalemate.

However, An Biru was not so easy to deal with. As she retreated, she conjured a small sword from thin air. Concentrating all her power in her palm, she flicked her wrist and the small sword shot out like a comet, aimed directly at the fairy sister's chest.

The two were close, and Lin Wanrong had personally witnessed Sister An's martial prowess. Seeing her use a hidden weapon and strike with full force, the fairy sister seemed to have no place to dodge, and a hint of regret sprung up in his heart. If they were to destroy the fairy sister like this, it would indeed be a waste of heavenly talent.

However, things didn't go as Lin Wanrong thought. Fairy Ning and An Biru had fought each other for many years and were intimately familiar with each other's styles. Seeing the flying sword tremble in An Biru's hand, Fairy Ning didn't panic. Instead, a piece of brocade cloth appeared in her hand. With a gentle flick of her wrist, the cloth spun slightly - a beautiful sight that covered the flying sword. This series of moves took place in a flash, clean and elegant, so magical and dazzling that it made one's eyes spin.

Lin Wanrong clapped his hands and laughed, "Beautiful, beautiful! Sister, I didn't know you could juggle scarves too!"

It was as if the fairy sister had eyes on the back of her head. A long sword suddenly slid out from her drooping sleeve. The cold light flashed, blinding Lin Wanrong, and all his lascivious thoughts vanished.

Retreating from the palm strike, An Biru was unyielding. She conjured a precious autumn water sword from her sleeve, as cold as the moonlight. Lin Wanrong was dumbfounded. How many treasures did this vixen hide on her body, and why hadn't he found them every time he had frisked her? If next time he flirted with her and she silently pulled out a weapon, giving him a surprise, all his wives would become widows.

"Pear Blossom Path!" An Biru let out a sharp cry, charging forward, her precious sword trembling lightly. She managed to conjure seven sword flowers in succession, attacking Fairy Ning from different directions. The sword flowers, bright as blooming white pear blossoms, were dazzling. The faint cold light was as sharp as a blade, deterring anyone from advancing. Lin Wanrong, standing behind the fairy sister, could not help feeling chilled to the bone. This Sister An was indeed an expert. Her casual interactions with him had concealed much of her martial prowess.

The fairy sister frowned slightly. The long sword in her hand danced in front of her at a speed that was too fast to catch, aiming at one of the pear blossoms. Ignoring the other flashes of cold light, she thrust straight at it. With a crisp "clang", the two swords collided, and the seven pear blossoms scattered.

An Biru's sword fell empty, but she did not hesitate. The precious sword in her hand pointed forward and began to tremble slightly. It was like a constantly writhing poisonous snake, winding its way toward Fairy Ning.

The fairy sister had a serious look in her eyes and dared not act hastily. When the sword light was about to reach her chest, she suddenly switched from sword to finger and a swift wind shot towards An Biru's wrist.

An Biru didn't dare to underestimate this defensive strategy of attacking as a defense. She quickly jumped back, giggling, her chest heaving dramatically. "Sister, you indeed have great skills. Years have passed, but your psychic finger technique has become even more divine. It's a pity that you, a virgin all your life, haven't found someone who could connect with you spiritually. What a waste of such a beautiful psychic name."

'Psychic finger technique? Damn, that's an invaluable secret technique! I must try it when I have the time!' Looking at Sister An and the Fairy Sister, these two stunning beauties, one in black and one in white, Lin Wanrong extended his finger and gave a fierce poke, his face filled with a lascivious grin.

Chapter 318 Who Said Fairies Don't Kill?

Fairy Ning spoke softly, "The art of martial arts is just a simple name. When the heart is upright, the form follows, having nothing to do with any psychic. However, my dear junior sister, your scheming mind and fine skills are truly admirable, your whole body filled with hidden weapons. You've truly earned my admiration."

The fairy maiden was mocking An Biru's use of hidden weapons to hurt others. How could Sister An not understand this? She giggled and responded, "My senior sister, indeed, your heart is noble, and I admire you. However, let's be clear. Is there really a difference between you killing with a treasure sword and me killing with poison? Both take lives. Do you think your killing is noble while mine is despicable? Unlike you, a noble, fairy-like beauty, admired and desired by many, I am but a lowly Miao girl, alone in the world, navigating among many men. If I didn't have my unique abilities, I fear I wouldn't even have bones left. How could you understand?"

These two striking women, their faces veiled, conversed casually as if discussing common affairs. Yet, their hands never paused. In the blink of an eye, their swords crossed, sparks flying. They fought more than twenty rounds, each more intense and ruthless than the last. As sworn sisters who knew each other well and had battled for many years, one was killing, the other saving. Both pulled out all the stops, neither could gain an upper hand.

The courtyard of the Xiao family was vast, with very few men besides Lin Wanrong. No one dared to interfere with the fight between the two women. The Eldest Miss had been watching An Biru for a long time when she suddenly said, "No wonder she looked familiar, it's actually her. You dead

man, you sweet-talked and deceived me earlier, and now I see you've colluded with her for this performance. To think I was worried about you, you've conspired with outsiders to trick me—"

Lin Wanrong quickly covered her mouth, whispering, "It's not as simple as you think. Just believe me, men have their reasons for what they do. Look closely, am I a bad guy?"

Eldest Miss broke free, glanced at him, and retorted, "If you're not a bad person, then everyone in this world is good."

Seeing her blush, who knows what she was thinking. Lin Wanrong chuckled, wrapping his arm around her slender waist, "Exactly, I only misbehave with you."

In the courtyard, the two had battled for more than a hundred rounds without a clear victor. An Biru, finding it hard to defeat her opponent, quickly changed tactics. With a giggle, she dodged the fairy sister's sword, spun lightly as if a wisp of smoke, and appeared in front of Lin Wanrong in an instant. She held one of his arms, locking onto his pressure point.

Lin Wanrong, engrossed in his tender moment with the Eldest Miss, was taken aback by a sudden fragrant scent. An Biru had him. She chuckled, her voluptuous body lightly pressing onto his, flirtatiously saying, "I've got you now."

"Hey, sister, what are you doing? It's improper for men and women to touch each other, I will shout harassment—" Lin Wanrong exclaimed. Fairy Ning was not slow to react. Seeing An Biru's move, she darted forward and held Lin Wanrong's other arm. The two women, with him in between, formed a triangle, neither giving an inch.

An Biru gave a soft hum, swiftly waving her palm. An icy white aura filled her palm, a chill that seared into his arm. Lin Wanrong shivered all over, feeling as if he had been dropped into an icehouse, chilling beyond words. On the other hand, Fairy Ning did not utter a word, instead, her delicate hand gently pressed against his other arm. Instantly, a surge of warmth streamed into his body through his arm, overwhelmingly hot. Two opposing forces, one cold and one hot, battled incessantly within his body.

"Hey, ladies," Lin Wanrong shouted loudly, "Could you be a bit more professional about this hot and cold treatment? I've paid good money for the experience!" The sensation was like hiding in an icehouse with a roaring furnace, his body shivering from cold on one side and sweating on the other. It was an indescribable discomfort. Damn, was this the legendary "ice-fire experience"? And it was delivered by these celestial-like sisters. If he was lying in bed for this, with an iceberg on one side and fire on the other, how wonderful that would be.

An Biru giggled and said, "Sister, are you protecting this boy because you've taken a fancy to him?" Fairy Ning's face remained as calm as still water, showing no reaction.

An Biru shouted softly, exerting force with her feet. With Lin Wanrong in tow, her body gracefully rose like a wild goose. Fairy Ning, holding onto Lin Wanrong's other arm, could not exert any force and had to follow An Biru's movement. With their bodies suspended in the air, they shot toward the wall.

"Lin San, Lin San!" the Eldest Miss shouted in alarm, quickly giving chase.

How could Xiao Yuruo, a delicate lady, keep up with the incredible speed of An Biru and Fairy Ning? By the time she rushed out the door, there were only vague shadows in the sky, with no sign of the three.

"That jerk!" the Eldest Miss stomped her foot in anger. Although Lin San was taken away, it looked like he had colluded with that An person. Those two were always suspiciously close. That vixen An was charmingly enchanting and particularly nice to Lin San, surely she would not harm him. As for the fairy woman, she had come to rescue him, so Lin San would not be in danger. But she had no idea when that rascal would return from his mischief outside, and he still had whip wounds on his back.

"Let go of me, let go of me, I can't fly, I have a fear of heights!" Suspended in mid-air by two women, Lin Wanrong struggled hard. He leaned toward An Biru, pressing against her plump bosom. With reckless abandon, he squeezed it, marveling at its slipperiness and elasticity.

An Biru, however, had no time to deal with his brazen act. The two women held Lin Wanrong on either side, moving quickly through the treetops like wild geese. Their free hands did not rest either, clashing before Lin Wanrong's face. The gusts caused by their movements brushed past Lin Wanrong's cheeks, leaving an indescribable sensation. "Damn it, you two can fight all you want, but don't harm my handsome face. I have to make a living with it!" Lin Wanrong's nose broke out in a cold sweat, his heart full of unease.

Two identical, slender and supple hands constantly swung before his eyes, Lin Wanrong could even detect the faint, ethereal fragrance from their fingertips. Being hoisted into the sky by the world's most outstanding women, and additionally benefiting from occasional perks, was an exhilarating experience.

These two women were among the world's most skilled. Their intense struggle, accompanied by myriad hand movements, was reminiscent of flitting orchids, causing confusion in one's vision but causing no harm to his cheeks. Lin Wanrong worried for a while before settling down. Watching these two, a fairy and a vixen, each having an arm around him amidst their battle, he was surrounded by tantalizing fragrance, and their quivering bosoms were very pleasing to the eye.

Consider this: these two were the world's most outstanding women. To engage so intimately with them was an opportunity bestowed by heaven. If he didn't seize the moment, he would be letting himself down.

Being a fearless individual, he was moved by the sight of Sister An's quivering bosom. Seeing the two women preoccupied, he subtly brushed against Sister An's chest.

An Biru's eyes were dizzying, she glanced at him amidst her busyness, her eyes full of blame.

Got it, she must be upset that he was only taking advantage of her and not her sister. He must be fair and impartial. He rationalized this, and his other arm swept toward Fairy Sister's chest.

Fairy Sister's eyes flashed with a divine light, and she hummed, increasing her strength, a burning pain came from his arm.

Lin Wanrong cried out, "Hey, why are you burning me? This will leave a scar! So what if you can heat up! I can shoot water!"

Fairy Sister hummed faintly, not saying anything. An Biru giggled, "My sister's body is pure as jade and ice, it is not something a crude person like you can defile. Sister, this lad took advantage of you, let me kill him!"

"He deserves to die, but not by your hands," Fairy Ning said in a soft voice, her tone inexplicably calm as if nothing could affect her state of mind.

"I hate your self-righteous attitude, acting as if you control everyone's fate," Lin Wanrong yelled, "Talking to you is not interesting. Black-clothes sister, you kill me instead."

Fairy Ning's expression did not change, but she suddenly let go of his arm. Her left hand flicked the long sword and aimed it at An Biru.

Sister An's expression tightened, barely blocking her sword. Her body shivered, and her left hand no longer held Lin Wanrong. The trio, originally standing on top of a tall tree, lost their balance. Lin Wanrong screamed as he fell straight down like a rock.

An Biru watched anxiously as Lin Wanrong's descent accelerated. If she did not act, he would lose his life. Biting her lip, she twisted her body, and like a leaf, she began to descend the tree.

She was fast, but someone was faster. Fairy Ning attacked forcing An Biru to let go, her body shot downwards along the tree, and in the blink of an eye, she reached the ground. Looking up, she saw Lin San, who wanted to take advantage of her, falling straight down, looking as if he was about to crash into her.

'You wish to save me, don't you? Then open your arms, I promise I won't knock you over,' Lin San's face lit up with a salacious smile. He rather enjoyed this 'kindness' of this 'sister'.

It seemed as if Fairy Ning could see through the vulgar thoughts in Lin Wanrong's mind, a cold smirk gracing her porcelain-like face, veiled behind her thin shroud.

"Fairy, I'm coming." Seeing Fairy Sister right in front of him, Lin Wanrong stretched out his arms, intending to give her a big embrace. But just as his hands were about to touch her waist, he felt a cold, long object blocking his body. It immobilized him, stretching from his chest to his groin. Fairy Sister's eye was incredibly sharp, her hand precise. This move didn't deviate in the slightest, perfectly halting his fall, no more, no less.

"Damn, what did Fairy Sister use to stop me?" Lin Wanrong grumbled internally, looking down to see a thin sword sheath wedged beneath him.

He landed grudgingly and clapped his hands, laughing, "Sister, your technique is so accurate. Do you also use this thing to poke yourself when you're free?"

An Biru, relieved, descended not far from the pair, laughing, "Great strategy, Sister. It was a diversion. Truly worthy of being the successor of the Jade Virtue Fairy Hall."

Fairy Sister faintly smiled, "Sister, we have fought for quite a while today. You can't beat me, and I can't do much about you. This man might be vulgar, but you can't just kill him. Everything you have done is because of my 'Jade Virtue Fairy Hall'. Who you want to harm, I will protect."

Lin Wanrong snorted secretly, recalling how she had also wanted to kill him once. Shouldn't An Biru be protecting him based on this logic?

An Biru snorted, "I couldn't kill him today, but there will be another day. I refuse to believe that you can stay by his side for a lifetime."

"I might not necessarily protect him for a lifetime, but I can certainly protect him for a while." Fairy Ning said lightly, thick confidence flashing in her eyes.

"Is that so? Have you taken a liking to this kid, Sister? Lin San, you are indeed lucky—" An Biru laughed lasciviously, her voluptuous figure undulating, drawing a wonderful curve. Her laughter suddenly stopped as she said coldly, "But don't be too happy too soon. My sister here is a hundred times better at toying with men than I am. Once you fall into her trap, you'll be begging for life and death—you'd be better off with me killing you. That would be much more enjoyable."

"Really?" Lin Wanrong took several steps back in disbelief, staring at her.

"Lin San, take care of yourself." As her words fell, An Biru gave Lin Wanrong a deep look, her body twisted, and she vanished into the vast forest like a light swan.

Fairy Ning didn't speak, gazing at An Biru's retreating figure. She sighed lightly, her gaze deep, it was unclear what she was thinking.

Lin Wanrong looked longingly at An Biru's beautiful figure. Compared with this icy Fairy Sister, An Biru was like a blazing fire, seductive and boundless. Speaking with her was incredibly enjoyable. If he could get this provocative and mature woman into bed, and sing her 'A River of Spring Water', goodness, what would that be like?

In the forest, only the two of them remained, the silence between them almost palpable. Fairy Ning sighed wistfully, turning to see Lin San leering into the distance, salivating, the picture of lustful debauchery. Her brow furrowed involuntarily. Could this really be the man Qingxuan had fallen for? She remembered her decision to kill him that day, and it felt as if it had been an incredibly wise choice.

Seeing the silent Fairy Ning approach, Lin Wanrong quickly exclaimed, "Don't come over, I'm not a loose man!"

Fairy Ning stopped in her tracks and asked indifferently, "Do you believe me or her?"

"Her? Who is she?" Lin Wanrong was taken aback at first, then realization dawned. "You mean the one in black? Isn't she your junior sister? If I have to choose, I'd rather believe your junior sister."

"Why? Don't you know she wants to kill you?" Fairy Ning asked, her eyes devoid of emotion.

"Well, it seems she does want to kill me, but I'm no pushover either. I'm not the type who'd let her kill me just because she said so," Lin Wanrong chuckled, adding, "I chose to believe her because she has a better figure."

Fairy Ning didn't get angry. She took a few steps forward and said, "You're no simple character. Indeed, your martial arts skills are average, but when it comes to cunning and deceit, there are few in this world who can match you. That day, I was nearly killed on the spot, and that's proof."

Lin Wanrong feigned ignorance. "Killed on the spot? Did I do that? Fairy Sister, you must be mistaken. Who would dare to harm someone as beautiful as you? Ah, I wouldn't do such a thing, I only engage in more noble pursuits."

Fairy Ning, hearing his deceit, snorted, "Is that so? Don't you recognize me then?"

Lin Wanrong looked at her carefully, then shook his head after a while. "Sister, your elegance and beauty are unparalleled, you're like Chang'e from the moon palace, breathtakingly beautiful. But with your face veiled, even if I have met you before, I wouldn't be able to tell."

"Do you recognize this then?" In Fairy Ning's delicate hand, she held a thin bee needle that softly glowed silver.

"Ah, where did this embroidery needle come from? Fairy Sister, your hands are too delicate for such crude tasks. Give me the needle, I'll throw it away for you," Lin San said without a change in expression, reaching out for the bee needle.

With a swift twist of her hand, Fairy Ning moved incredibly quickly. The needle harshly pierced Lin Wanrong's hand with a 'zi' sound.

"Ah—" Lin Wanrong cried out, his face turning pale. He felt as if he could already sense the suffocation of his heart. This was the poisonous needle personally prepared by Xian'er, if he died like this, it would be a real tragedy. He had used the bee needle on others, but never thought it would be used on him. Without another thought, he reached into his pocket for the antidote.

Seeing his movements, Fairy Ning faintly smiled and asked, "What are you looking for?"

"I'm looking for the antidote— Ah, no, just kidding. I'm looking for candy. Sister, do you want some? I'll give you a piece," Lin Wanrong quickly found the antidote and without thinking, swallowed one. After waiting for a while, he felt a pain in his stomach, followed by the dispersal of the pain, a warm current spread from his abdomen, making him feel much better all over.

Fairy Ning didn't try to stop him. She watched him quietly as he finished the antidote, then gave him a small nod with a smile. "How does the antidote taste?" she asked. "Is there first a stomach pain, followed by a wave of heat coursing through your body?"

"Oh, is that so?" Lin Wanrong chuckled, a sudden chill passing through his heart. Fairy Sister had described the effects of the drug without a single mistake. It seemed she could indeed counteract the deadly poison.

Fairy Ning lifted the bee needle in her hand, a smile playing on her lips. "The person who concocted this poison in the needle put a great deal of thought into it, using seven different deadly poisons. If not for my profound abilities, I fear I would have fallen to your hand that day."

'Damn, she really knows how to turn the tables,' Lin Wanrong thought. Had he not been armed with a pair of guns and needles, he might have been killed by her sword. He chuckled and said, "Fairy Sister, I think you've mistaken me for someone else. How could a humble man like myself use such a sinister weapon? Ah, the thought that someone is impersonating me to commit murder... given my striking good looks, I fear countless innocent girls might be harmed. I must report this to the authorities and bring him to justice to protect the safety of these young ladies. As for the girls who've already been harmed by him, sigh, I'll take responsibility!"

As Fairy Sister saw his act, the amusement in her eyes deepened. She took a few steps forward, saying, "Whether it was you or not, doesn't matter at this point. This deadly poison was carefully concocted, and the antidote is just as extraordinary, composed of seven deadly poisons that kill upon entering the bloodstream..."

"Seven... deadly... poisons... that... kill... upon... entering... the bloodstream?" Lin Wanrong repeated her words slowly, a tremor in his voice.

"Exactly," she affirmed, nodding slightly. "One thing suppresses another. Seven deadly poisons are neutralized by another set of seven deadly poisons. The person who concocted this poison is truly ingenious. If I didn't have some knowledge of medicine and poison, I might have turned into a pile of bones today."

Upon hearing her words, Lin Wanrong was greatly shocked. He understood the principle of fighting poison with poison. In the hospitals of his previous life, many antidotes were extracted from venomous snakes. He thought of Fairy Sister playing with poisons, dealing with twenty different kinds. Wasn't this a terrifying thought? If one day she took a disliking to someone and added a pinch of her poison to their food, that would spell the end.

Fairy Sister continued calmly, "Deadly poisons can harm people, but they can also save people. However, what do you think would happen if someone who is not poisoned takes this antidote?"

"They would certainly be poisoned and die," Lin Wanrong replied with a laugh. Thankfully, he had already been poisoned before taking the antidote, otherwise he would have surely met his end.

"Judging by your appearance, you don't seem completely foolish," Fairy Sister said with a smile. "However, sometimes you do enjoy pretending to be confused. It's not a problem if you don't recognize me, but if you don't recognize this bee needle, that would be truly improper." Fairy Ning flicked the bee needle in her hand with a cold laugh.

"Fairy Sister, your words are too profound for a simple man like me to understand," Lin Wanrong replied.

Fairy Sister let out a light laugh, handing the bee needle to Lin Wanrong. "The deadliest of poisons cause silver to change color. What color do you think this bee needle would be if it was tainted with a deadly poison?"

"Deep blue, or perhaps black—" Lin San began, but as he held the shimmering silver needle in his hand, he felt something was wrong. The smile on his face quickly froze.

"Do you understand now?" Fairy Sister asked with a gentle smile.

'Damn, I've been had,' Lin Wanrong thought, rage welling up inside him. He exclaimed loudly, "You, you're the renowned Fairy Sister, how could you resort to murder?"

"Who says that a fairy doesn't kill?" Fairy Sister replied, her eyes sparkling with amusement. She twirled her delicate body, lightly brushing her hair from her ears, exuding a charm that was even more seductive than that of Sister An.

Chapter 319 I Will Give You an Explanation

Before An Biru left, she had mentioned that the Fairy Sister was a master manipulator, and it indeed seemed to be true. Lin Wanrong's heart pounded in his chest. Seeing Fairy Ning standing there as pure as a white lotus, no one would have ever guessed her cunning side, if not for her unexpected move.

Lin Wanrong grunted and pricked his own wrist with the bee needle a couple more times, a slight tingling sensation quickly spreading.

Fairy Ning smiled lightly, "What are you doing? Is it that you're not dying quickly enough? The needle is no longer poisonous; even a hundred more pricks will be of no use."

Lin Wanrong responded with a small smile, "Fairy Sister, you weave a good story. An average person might have been scared by you. It's a pity you've met me. I, Lin San, am known as the unkillable cockroach. Do you think it would be so easy to trick me?"

The Fairy Sister's eyes remained calm, she glanced at him indifferently, "What do you mean by this? When did I ever try to scare you?"

General Lin chuckled, pacing a few steps, "The principle of fighting poison with poison indeed sounds profound. If it were someone else, they might have been scared to death by you even if not poisoned. But you fail to understand that the poison needle was given to me by someone close to me. If the antidote was truly poison, she would have told me early on. It wouldn't be your turn to play mind games with me. This is one reason—"

Fairy Ning didn't nod nor shake her head, her beautiful face concealed under the light veil, making it hard to discern her expression. She slowly laughed, "So, the idea of the antidote being non-toxic

is just your conjecture?" Fairy Ning was indeed brilliant, catching Lin Wanrong's loophole with a single sentence, exposing his thoughts.

Lin Wanrong shook his head and laughed, "As I mentioned earlier, this is only one of the reasons. There's another even more important one. You, Fairy Sister, have gone to great lengths to save me. It can't possibly be just to kill me. If I had died at the hands of your junior sister, it would have been understandable since she's viewed by the world as a merciless she-devil. Killing one more like me wouldn't make a difference. But you, Fairy Sister, are revered by the world. If I were to die mysteriously after being taken away by you under the watchful eyes of many, I can't say for others, but Miss Xiao for sure would know whose hand I died at. If she were to spread the word, your hands being stained with blood not only tarnishes your reputation but also harms your...what was it? Some workshop or hall—"

"It's 'Jade Virtue Fairy Hall'," Fairy Ning softly corrected him.

"Right, right, that hall. You're truly smart, Fairy Sister, that hall is way more famous than our Xiao family's perfume and soap workshop." Lin Wanrong chuckled, "If you kill me, it will damage the reputation of your master's hall. Even if people don't voice it, their respect for you will diminish greatly. You wouldn't conduct such a loss-making transaction. If we take a step back, even if you really wanted to kill me, you could have just let your junior sister do it. It wouldn't have required your involvement and it would have eliminated someone you didn't want to see. Killing two birds with one stone. You could have even justified your actions under the guise of demon elimination. Wouldn't such a profitable transaction be more to your liking?"

The Fairy Sister gently laughed, "My 'Jade Virtue Fairy Hall' exists to save all living beings, it is not in the business of making trades, your deduction is untenable."

Lin Wanrong sneered, "Saving all living beings? Give me a break, apart from yourself, you can't save anyone. In this world, some people pursue profit, others love fame. You wave the banner of serving the country and the people, yet your true thoughts lie in preserving the honor of your master's sect, so everyone will always look up to it. For this goal, you can sacrifice anything, how is this different from business? It's just that some people do it in plain sight, while others do it covertly."

Listening to him speak, the Fairy Sister didn't seem to get angry. She swept him a glance and said, "Are you done? From a single poison pill, you've moved on to the reputation of my master's sect. You are truly capable in a peculiar way."

Lin Wanrong took out another antidote and put it in his mouth, chuckling, "This is not a falsehood—I'll try another one and see if it can kill me. I reckon that this antidote is about the same as a supplement, you can't bluff me."

The Fairy Sister smiled as she looked at him, "You're uncertain yourself, that's why you're trying to get an answer from me, hoping I'll tell you this antidote isn't poisonous, right?"

‘Damn it, this Fairy Sister and Sister An are indeed worthy of being from the same sect, they're equally cunning. I wasted all that talking and she wasn't fooled. Such a troublesome character, I wonder what kind of relationship she has with Qingxuan. It's best to avoid her in the future.’

General Lin, laughed loudly three times, "Poisonous or not, it's known after a trial. I've taken two pills and I'm still vibrant and vigorous, you can't fool me, Sister. You should confess quickly." His words had barely finished when his body felt limp and his eyelids began to weigh heavy. The Fairy Sister's face gradually blurred in his sight.

"Knockout drug!" General Lin's expression changed. Back in Jinling, Xiao Qingxuan had given him a knockout drug. He kept her kindness in mind, never expecting that today, Qingxuan's kin would give him a powerful knockout drug again.

The Fairy Sister smiled faintly, "When you're clever, you're hateful. When you're foolish, you're quite adorable. The antidote is indeed non-toxic, but this needle was coated with a knockout drug. It's funny how you thought yourself wise, ignoring my words as if they were wind past your ear. Now you've asked for this bitter fruit."

The knockout drug on this needle was minimal. Once it entered the bloodstream, it wouldn't cause unconsciousness, but it could make one dizzy. Lin Wanrong felt a mix of relief and worry. He was relieved to not be poisoned, but worried because he'd been hit with the knockout drug. He'd previously only used it on others, never expecting to be the victim today, spending all day shooting geese, yet being pecked blind by one. From start to finish, the Fairy Sister was simply toying with him. Damn it, Sister An was right.

"I never expected, Fairy Sister, that you would also use knockout drugs," Lin Wanrong, fighting dizziness, said, "I thought only people like me, with ordinary martial skills, would resort to such despicable means."

Fairy Ning gave a faint humph. "Do not do unto others what you don't want done unto you. You used those toxic bee needles to harm others, causing me to be bedridden for several days, my life hanging by a thread. Why should it be inappropriate for me to teach you a lesson today?"

Someone like Fairy Ning, lofty and proud, rarely resorted to such underhanded methods like using a knockout drug. It was just that Lin San was truly detestable, and by some twist of fate, she couldn't kill him that day. So, she employed a little trick to let him experience the taste of being plotted against.

She had used a minimal dose of the drug, intending only to punish Lin San. Lin Wanrong's dizziness had faded significantly after a while, but his steps were still a bit wobbly. He walked a few steps forward and suddenly lost his balance, leaning toward Fairy Sister.

Fairy Sister furrowed her brows, thinking, 'Even a small dog should have recovered from the dosage I used. How could this man be so sensitive to drugs?' Seeing that Lin San was about to collapse, she raised her sword's sheath with a flicker of her thoughts, intending to stop his falling body. However, Lin San suddenly shifted, bypassing the sheath, and fell directly towards her chest.

Fairy Sister was both surprised and angry. She let out a soft shout and swiftly sidestepped. There was a soft ripping sound as Lin San grasped her sleeve, tearing it open from the middle, revealing her immaculate white wrist.

"Damned rogue!" Seeing her snow-white wrist exposed to a strange man, especially one she deeply disliked, Fairy Ning couldn't suppress her anger despite her usually exceptional self-control. She pointed her sword at him, ready to pierce his body.

"My apologies, Fairy Sister, I didn't mean to do that. I'm just feeling a bit dizzy after being drugged by you," Lin Wanrong chuckled, with a mischievous look on his face. It was obvious he was taking advantage of the situation, totally unrepentant. 'I am indeed a rogue, what are you going to do about it?'

In her fury, Fairy Ning's sword had already reached his chest, barely a moment away from piercing him. However, she was no ordinary person, and had better control over her emotions than most. Seeing his unconcerned demeanor, she gritted her teeth, and her sword swerved, with a crisp "ding" sound the hilt of the sword was held against his chest.

Lin Wanrong chuckled again, pressing the muzzle of his firearm against Fairy Sister's abdomen. "You have a sword, Fairy Sister, and I have a gun. We're even once again."

This Lin San was truly cunning. On the surface, he was trying to provoke her, but he had readied his firearm in secret. She had to admit, his tactics were spot-on, and she had once again fallen for his trick.

Fairy Ning kept a poker face, and uttered a faint humph. "Among the world's deceivers, none can compare to you."

"Such an overstatement," Lin Wanrong laughed lustily. "And among the world's beauties, none can compare to Fairy Sister." His back was covered in whip lashes, horrifying to behold. He had just teased Fairy Sister and drawn his gun, which took a lot of effort. Now that the firearm was in his hand, he felt a sense of relief, but the pain in his back started to surge again.

Fairy Ning lightly touched his chest with her sword hilt. "Your whole body is a hidden weapon, truly extraordinary."

"Hidden weapon? Are you referring to this?" Lin Wanrong laughed as he pulled out an object from his chest: "Just a gold medal I use as a heart shield. Sister, feel it; it's still warm from being against my skin." What he held was the same gold medal gifted to him by the elegantly dressed old man he had encountered outside Lingyin Temple in Hangzhou. Once he arrived in the Capital, he never had time to find the man at the government office. Seeing the fine workmanship of the medal and liking its feel, he decided to wear it as a heart shield. He hadn't expected it to play such a critical role today. Fairy Ning's sword had been stopped right at this peculiar "heart shield".

Upon seeing the strangely shaped gold medal in his hand, Fairy Ning couldn't help but let out a soft gasp. Surprise flashed in her eyes as she quickly asked, "Where did you steal this gold medal from?"

'Damn it, I'm wealthy enough to buy as many gold medals as I want. Why would I need to steal?' Lin Wanrong gave Fairy Ning a look, chuckled, and said, "Fairy Sister, please choose your words carefully. This small gold medal... I have at least eighty, if not a hundred of them at home. I even use them as a pillow when I sleep. Why would I need to steal?"

Fairy Ning sheathed her sword and calmly said, "Lin San, may I take a closer look at this gold medal?"

"Why so formal?" Lin Wanrong laughed, "If you want it, just say so. If you don't tell me, how am I supposed to know? Ah, it seems this broken medal is indeed interesting if it's caught Fairy Sister's attention."

"Are you going to lend it to me or not?" Fairy Ning asked with a slightly furrowed brow.

"Of course!" He lifted the gold medal in his hand and laughed, "You want to see this gold medal? Easy. Fairy Sister, what's your name?"

A flash of annoyance passed through Fairy Sister's eyes before she quickly calmed down, lightly stroking her hair and saying, "A name is just a symbol. I haven't used mine in a long time. Besides, does my name have anything to do with this gold medal?"

"The gold medal is just a piece of gold. I've loved gold for a long time. I'll definitely have to treasure this." Lin Wanrong grinned, his firearm trained on Fairy Sister while he slipped the gold medal back into his chest.

Seeing his smug expression, Fairy Sister sighed, "Fine, just let it be. Out of everyone in the world, you're the first to coerce me—I am Ning Yuxi."

"Ning Yuxi? Yu [Feather] in Yuhua [Feathering] and Xi [West] in Xiqu [Go west]?" Lin Wanrong shook his head, "That's not a very lucky name. You should go with 'Ning Jiahe' [Ning Riding a Crane] instead!"

Annoyed, Fairy Ning retorted, "What are you talking about? My name is Ning Yuxi. Yu [Rain] as in Luoyu [Falling rain], and Xi [Past] as in Xiri [Past days]. What does it have to do with a feather going west?"

"Ning Yuxi? That's a good name, on par with my name, Lin San." Lin Wanrong nodded and unabashedly continued, "So, Yuxi, what do you want with this gold medal—"

Listening to him, Ning Yuxi felt as if her divine self had been dragged into the mortal world. Her eyebrows furrowed, her teeth clenched, and her chest heaving. Despite her profound cultivation, she had to suppress her anger. She faintly said, "The name 'Yuxi' is only my mundane name from many years ago, and I have long abandoned it. Please stop calling me that."

"I understand, Yuxi," Lin San nodded, "Yuxi, what do you want with this gold plaque? Given our relationship, if you want gold, I can just give you some. This plaque isn't that interesting to look at."

"If you're going to back out of your word, then forget it," Ning Yuxi said calmly. She had a feeling that the shameless man before her was going to cause her great trouble.

Lin Wanrong chuckled, "Don't rush, don't rush. Let me ask one last question, and after that, you can see the gold plaque."

Ning Yuxi shook her head, "If you want to ask about Qingxuan's whereabouts, you can spare it. There won't be any outcome between you two. I didn't use the forgetting technique on you today. You're already at an advantage."

‘Damn, as cunning as Sister An,’ Lin Wanrong thought irritably, snorted and said, "Qingxuan is my wife, whether there is an outcome between us or not, it's none of your business. In this world, there might be rivers one can't cross, but there are no thoughts one can sever. I won't ask about Qingxuan's whereabouts. Let's change the question—Yuxi, how old are you this year?"

Ning Yuxi glanced at him lightly, "Age doesn't matter for cultivators. You could say I'm sixteen, or sixty—it doesn't matter."

This Fairy Ning truly maintained an extreme calm. Even when asked such a question, she could keep her composure. Lin Wanrong admired her poise deeply. He chuckled, handed the gold plaque to her, and said, "Yuxi, your answer was very philosophical. You may admire the gold plaque. But there is one condition you must abide by."

Even if Ning Yuxi was a fairy from heaven, she couldn't figure out what this shameless thing was going to say. She asked, "What is the condition?"

Lin San said with absolute seriousness, "By giving you this gold plaque, I'm as good as giving myself to you. You must be gentle and considerate, observe from a distance but do not disrespect!"

Ning Yuxi took the gold plaque silently. Seeing her silent figure, Lin Wanrong felt unspeakably thrilled in his heart, ‘Even a fairy can be teased, I truly am a genius.’

Ning Yuxi examined the gold plaque from all sides, scrutinizing it before sighing softly, "Where did you get this gold plaque?"

This was the second time the Fairy Sister had asked this question. Lin Wanrong had no idea about the origins of the richly dressed elder, so how could he tell the story? He hesitated and chuckled, "It was a gift from someone. Why, do you recognize this item, Yuxi?"

Hearing him speak so fluently, Fairy Ning furrowed her eyebrows and looked at him intently, "It must have been a gift, indeed. You wouldn't be able to steal something like this. This gold plaque has significant use for my 'Jade Virtue Fairy Hall', how could I not recognize it?"

Sweat! A broken plaque somehow connected to Fairy Ning's master's hall? Even if it was a plaque bestowed by the Emperor, it couldn't be that important, right? Damn, he accidentally stumbled upon a treasure. He just didn't know how useful this plaque really was. Could it make Fairy Ning hand over Qingxuan and take off her clothes?

His eyes radiated lust, but before he could speak, he heard Ning Yuxi murmur, "How could something so important fall into the hands of someone irrelevant?" A glimmer of divinity appeared in her eyes as she stared at Lin Wanrong, "Lin San, have you been to the palace?"

Been to the palace? This thing really came from the palace? Lin Wanrong was startled. If that were the case, the old man he met outside Lingyin Temple, wouldn't he be a big shot from the palace?

"What do you mean, 'been to the palace'? I don't know!" Lin Wanrong grinned, "As you know, I'm a robust man. What would I be doing in the palace? Even though this thing is from the palace, it doesn't necessarily mean I've been there to find it."

Fairy Ning sighed lightly, "You're so evasive and untruthful, hardly credible. Well, since I've seen this gold plaque again, I'll personally visit the palace. Lin San, take care of yourself."

She said she would leave and she left. Her figure floated away, and in the blink of an eye, she disappeared into the depths of the forest.

"Hey, hey, my heart shield, give it back to me—" Lin Wanrong shouted, "Are you a fairy or a robber?"

A soft laugh echoed, and Ning Yuxi's voice rang out, "Rest assured, I will give you an explanation."

An explanation? What could she explain to him? Watching her retreating figure, General Lin was profoundly puzzled.

Chapter 320 The Emperor Summons You

Ning Yuxi came and went like a gust of wind, her intentions as elusive as her presence. Even before Lin Wanrong could decipher her intentions, she had disappeared, leaving behind an air of unbound freedom.

After interacting with Fairy Ning twice, Lin Wanrong still couldn't clearly articulate his impression of her. However, one thing was certain - he would undoubtedly have opportunities to meet her in the future.

As for the gold token she had taken, given that it originated from the palace and considering the regal bearing of the old man in the splendid robes, could he possibly be—Lin Wanrong's heart quickened. If that were true, then he had truly hit the jackpot. He laughed heartily. The forest was quiet and expansive, and his laughter echoed without end.

General Lin, injured and in pain, slowly limped back to the Xiao household, causing the Eldest Miss to startle. She quickly grabbed his hand, asking, "Why... why did you return so soon?"

Lin Wanrong replied helplessly, "Was I supposed to wait for them to invite me to a midnight snack? Ah, the pain is killing me..."

Xiao Yuruo hurriedly helped him into the room and applied ointment to his wounds, alleviating some of the pain. The Eldest Miss, despite her soft and considerate words, couldn't help but feel exhausted from the day's events. Lin Wanrong, despite his severe injuries and fatigue, couldn't resist teasing her as her delicate fingers gently caressed his back. Unknowingly, he drifted off into a deep sleep.

Seeing Lin Wanrong's peaceful sleeping face with drool at the corner of his mouth, illuminated by the moonlight, Xiao Yuruo felt a different kind of affection compared to his usual wild and unrestrained demeanor. This scoundrel, always caught up in the troubles of An Biru, Qin Xian'er, and the myriad of chaotic matters. She wondered how he had managed to endure it all.

A soft tenderness welled up in her heart. Unable to resist, she reached out and gently stroked his face. His short, stubbly beard tickled her soft palm, stirring a gentle itch. A blush crept onto her face, but the sensation of happiness was undeniably real.

The Eldest Miss sat by his bedside for a long time, waiting until his sleep was deep before she carefully covered him with the quilt, then slowly walked out of the room.

"Miss, Miss Xu has arrived." As she was about to step out, she was informed by the maid.

"Miss Xu?" Xiao Yuruo frowned, glancing at the half-submerged moon in the sky, she asked, "Why has she come so late?"

While speaking, she continued her stride, soon reaching the living room, only to find Xu Zhiqing sitting there, her eyebrows furrowed in thought.

"Miss Xu, it's so dark and the road is not good, why did you come in person?" The Eldest Miss quickly walked over, grabbing Xu Zhiqing's hand.

Miss Xu gave a small smile, "I came to check on you. I was worried that seeing him in such a state would upset you, and you might do something reckless."

Xiao Yuruo's face reddened, "Sister, you're making fun of me again. He willingly took that beating. Even if I wanted to be angry, I couldn't blame anyone but him."

Xu Zhiqing nodded slightly and chuckled, "If you think that way, then it's for the best. Today's incident can't be truly blamed on anyone. There is no right or wrong here, you shouldn't blame him anymore."

"How could I blame him!" The Eldest Miss grabbed Xu Zhiqing's hand and led her to sit, sighing, "Although he appears to be a servant in our house, he doesn't act like one. It has always been this way, and now, I fear it will only get worse." A faint blush appeared on Xiao Yuruo's face, making her look inexplicably charming.

Xu Zhiqing sighed lightly, taking out a jar of ointment from her bosom, "I got this miraculous salve from the palace's royal doctor. It's made from top-quality snow ginseng and deer antler velvet, specially for external injuries. A scab forms in a day, peeling in three, healing in seven. It's incredibly precious. You should take it and use it on him."

Receiving the small jar of medicine, the Eldest Miss exclaimed, "Really, Sister Xu? Thank you so much! You were still at home during dinner. When did you enter the palace to get this medicine?" No wonder Xu Zhiqing visited so late, it turns out she came specifically to deliver medicine. From dinner time until now was only a span of two hours at most. With the complicated procedures of entering the palace, Xu Zhiqing had to obtain the medicine first, then deliver it personally. This friendship was indeed profound.

Seeing Xiao Yuruo's grateful face, Miss Xu shook her head, "Miss Xiao, you needn't thank me. Today, Lin San's performance on the battlefield was truly astounding. What's this little jar of

medicine compared to that? I just hope he doesn't think that today's incident on the battlefield was some deliberate deception on my part."

The Eldest Miss hurried back upon hearing of Lin San's injuries. As for the details, she didn't know. Hearing what Xu Zhiqing said, she became even more confused, but didn't ask.

"Has he slept?" Xu Zhiqing glanced at the Eldest Miss and asked softly.

"He's been through quite an ordeal tonight and has just fallen asleep." Seeing Xu Zhiqing's hesitant expression, the Eldest Miss couldn't help but ask, "Sister Xu, is there something you want to tell me?"

Xu Zhiqing smiled, "Miss Xiao is indeed astute. No wonder even that wild Lin San is completely subdued by you."

The Eldest Miss blushed and softly said, "Sister Xu, you're joking. How could I subdue him? I'm more afraid that I'm the one being controlled by him."

Seeing the Eldest Miss's flushed face and content expression, Xu Zhiqing sighed lightly and said, "Miss Xu, you are so gentle and caring towards him. I hope Lin San knows and understands you, and treats you well. There aren't many happy endings in this world. I hope you two won't let minor issues interfere with your relationship."

Hearing this, the Eldest Miss blushed even more and nodded, but then she thought of something from Xu Zhiqing's latter sentence. She quickly raised her head and asked, "Sister Xu, is there something you want to tell me?" She was startled, and then added, "Is there... is there something wrong?"

Xu Zhiqing sighed, neither shaking nor nodding her head. She softly asked, "Eldest Miss, do you truly like this Lin San?"

The question left the Eldest Miss hard-pressed to respond. After a moment of pondering, she heaved a sigh and said, "He and I, we're a pair of natural antagonists. In the past, he used to infuriate me daily, yet I found myself drawn to him, unable to shake him off. It's as if I'm under a spell. Every day, he would make me lose my temper twice. But when he's not around, I feel something is missing. I think about him, I miss him, I want to see him..." Her face flushed ever deeper, her voice barely above a whisper as she spoke the last words.

Xu Zhiqing nodded, "The matters of men and women are the most intricate knots in the world. Even if one lived ten lifetimes, one wouldn't fully understand it. If you care about him so deeply, then you should seize this opportunity and make sure no one takes him away from you."

Take him away? The Eldest Miss raised her head and asked, "Sister Xu, what do you mean by that? Did he provoke some young lady again, this dead man—"

Xu Zhiqing laughed and took her hand, "Don't panic just yet. It's not certain if he caused this. Though he's quite arrogant, I don't think he's capable of that. There's something fishy about this."

Xiao Yuruo grew even more puzzled. Looking intently at Xu Zhiqing, she gave a bitter smile, "Sister Xu, what exactly is going on? Just tell me all at once, I can handle it."

Xu Zhiqing exhaled and stood up. Pacing back and forth in the hall, she finally said, "Sister Xiao, although I don't know where Lin San came from, his knowledge and wisdom far exceed that of an average person. You'd agree, wouldn't you?"

'I know him better than you do, I know his abilities more than anyone. Not only does he excel in knowledge and wisdom, but also in deceit and scheming.' As she thought of his past deeds, the Eldest Miss smiled faintly and nodded, "I'm aware of that. The things he's done are widely told in Jinling."

Xu Zhiqing couldn't help but laugh, "The stories you're talking about, I've heard from my father too. The bean sprouts supporting the Buddha statue, washing hands in a pot of oil, burning copper coins. Also, mocking the Couplet King, fighting Mei Yanqiu, and the Poetry Contest. Sometimes it's hard to believe that Lin San was responsible for all of these. Actually, there's a lot you don't know, like his significant role in eliminating the White Lotus Sect. He was regarded as the number one warrior among the three armies. Today, at the drill ground, in front of the Emperor, he faced formidable foes, one against five, yet achieved a dramatic victory. If you consider all these things, Lin San indeed deserves to be called an extraordinary person."

The Eldest Miss smiled and nodded, a touch of pride flickering in her eyes, "That's him. There's nothing he can't do if he sets his mind to it."

"With Lin San being so remarkable and widely praised, have you ever thought, Sister Xiao, the more extraordinary he is, the further he moves from your Xiao family? Are you sure you can keep him forever?" Xu Zhiqing gently asked.

The Eldest Miss turned pale. This had been her long-standing concern. The more outstanding Lin San became, the less beneficial it was for the Xiao family. Xiao Yuruo bit her lip, her eyes clouding over, "Sister Xu, what exactly has happened?"

Xu Zhiqing spun around, taking Eldest Miss's hand and saying, "Sister Xiao, do you know that during today's military drill on the battlefield, the Emperor himself was present, witnessed his prowess, and praised him highly? He even asked my father to invite him to the palace in a few days."

Eldest Miss was puzzled. "Invite him to the palace? Is it because the Emperor has taken a liking to him? That's a good thing, isn't it? Sister, why did you raise such a strange question?"

Xu Zhiqing shook her head with a bitter smile, "My naive sister, you only see part of the picture. Of course, it's good that the Emperor values him and wants to invite him to the palace to assign him important tasks. If he gets promoted and flourishes, and you two are in a loving relationship, becoming a couple that everyone envies, then indeed, that would be wonderful. But things are not that simple!"

In terms of court affairs, Eldest Miss was far from as knowledgeable as Xu Zhiqing. She bit her lip and asked, "Sister, are there any twists and turns in this?"

Xu Zhiqing looked at her and sighed, "There are twists and turns, but also mysteries. Sister Xiao, you are aware that our Emperor has two princesses."

"Yes, there are two princesses," Xiao Yuruo nodded, "What about it?"

"Oh, you silly girl!" Xu Zhiqing smiled bitterly and patted Eldest Miss's hand, "My father mentioned that when the Emperor invited him to the palace today, besides discussing state affairs, he revealed a significant piece of news - the young princess, who had been wandering abroad for many years, has recently returned to the palace."

"The princess? Returned to the palace? What does that have to do with Lin San?" Eldest Miss pondered for a moment, her face gradually turning pale. "Does sister mean that the Emperor wants to betroth the princess to—"

Xu Zhiqing held her hand, feeling it trembling and seeing her complexion turn deathly white. Miss Xu naturally knew the bitter pain in Xiao Yuruo's heart. She didn't know how to comfort her and could only sigh gently, "The young princess is now twenty years old. Whether she will choose a prince consort, I do not know. But one thing is certain: according to my father, the young princess has suggested to the Emperor that Lin San be invited to the palace—"

This news was enough. The noble princess of the Great Hua Dynasty, who was not yet married, would speak in favor of Lin San in front of the Emperor. Who would believe there was nothing going on between them? If Lin San were to become the prince consort, the royal dignity would be higher than anything else. How could the princess, who was considered the gem of the royal family, allow him to marry a commoner girl again?

When did this rascal meet the princess and kept her in the dark so tightly? Eldest Miss trembled slightly, her palm growing colder, her heart felt as if it was being pricked by needles. Was her affection for him all in vain, disappearing like the waters of the Yangtze River?

Eldest Miss gave a sorrowful smile, "He is indeed very lucky, even the princess has taken a liking to him. In his eyes, what does a simple girl like me mean?"

Xu Zhiqing quickly replied, "Sister Xiao, don't panic, things may not reach that point. From my perspective, Lin San is not a heartless person. I told you all this today hoping you could seize the person you like. Don't wait until the flowers have wilted before regretting it, ending up like me, living a life of solitude."

The Eldest Miss shook her head, tears flowing like rivulets down her cheeks, "A phoenix cannot perch on a small bird's nest, a flood dragon cannot be trapped in shallow water. I have always known who he truly is. With his capabilities, he is bound to soar high one day. On that day, I will be happy for him. If he tires of my family, I will not be a burden. In my eyes, he will always be that detestable servant, Lin San, the scoundrel who stole my heart. I will devote my entire life to him."

She paused, her face wet with tears, seemingly visualizing Lin San leaving her behind. Her heart ached as if it were being torn apart, and her body lurched backward in faintness.

Xu Zhiqing quickly supported her. The Eldest Miss clung to her like a drowning person clutching at a straw, sobbing, "Sister, is this my fate? Why is my life so bitter?"

Xu Zhiqing had only intended to warn Xiao Yuruo with this information so she could prepare herself, but she had not expected such an outcome. Seeing the Eldest Miss's tear-streaked face, she

felt a deep sense of guilt. She tightened her grip on her hand, whispering, "Sister, don't worry. Even if it costs me my life, I, Xu Zhiqing, will ensure that you and Lin San live a life of enduring love."

After suffering injury and fatigue, Lin Wanrong enjoyed a deep slumber until late in the morning. Waking up refreshed, his pain seemed to have subsided significantly. He yawned lazily, noticing a bottle of medicine by the bed. The word "Imperial" was inscribed in the middle of the bottle, of which a small portion was already used. A faint scent wafted from the bottle's cap, pleasant to his senses.

How did the Eldest Miss obtain something from the palace? Lin Wanrong wondered, struggling to get up. His body still ached a little, but the intense pain from yesterday was gone. The medicinal effects of the imperial potion were indeed extraordinary.

As he was examining the bottle, he heard a soft noise. Huan'er, carrying a bowl of porridge, walked in from outside. Seeing him sitting up, she expressed her surprise joyfully, "Brother San, you're awake?"

Lin Wanrong nodded, smiling, "I am. Where's the Eldest Miss?"

Huan'er replied softly, "The Eldest Miss, she left early this morning with Miss Xu."

"With Miss Xu?" Lin Wanrong wondered aloud. 'If I'm not mistaken, that girl didn't visit our home yesterday. Why would the Eldest Miss leave with her this morning?'

Huan'er, noting his confusion, explained, "After you fell asleep last night, Miss Xu came to visit. The medicine bottle came from the palace through her. While you were in deep sleep, the Eldest Miss carefully applied the medicine for you."

'That explains why I dreamed of a cat scratching my back last night. It was the Eldest Miss applying medicine on me. She's becoming more and more like a caring wife,' Lin Wanrong thought, smiling contentedly, "The Eldest Miss left so early with Miss Xu? Do they have any business to attend to?"

Huan'er shook her head, "I don't know. But—" She lowered her voice, glanced around, and mysteriously added, "I don't know what Miss Xu said to the Eldest Miss last night, but she cried all

night. Even Miss Xu couldn't console her. She barely slept for half an hour this morning. Miss Xu stayed up with the Eldest Miss all night, and her eyes were red this morning, as if she had been crying too. They both left early in the morning."

'The Eldest Miss had cried all night? Could it be because I was injured? That girl, sharp-tongued but soft-hearted, I should treat her better in the future. But why did Xu Zhiqing cry? I have no entanglement with her, my vow to pursue her only to let her down has not been fulfilled yet. If she were crying for me, that would be laughable.'

He mulled over it for quite a while, yet he couldn't understand what was going on in the minds of these two women. All he could do was sigh in frustration, asking, "Did the Eldest Miss say when she would be back?"

"No!" Huan'er shook her head, "The Eldest Miss left in a hurry, she didn't leave any messages."

The situation seemed increasingly strange. Could Xu Zhiqing have corrupted the Eldest Miss? Lin Wanrong was momentarily worried but decided to put these thoughts aside. His mind drifted back to the golden token that Fairy Ning had taken away last night. If the man who sent the token was indeed the most prestigious man in Great Hua, wouldn't that have made him the one seated on the high throne in yesterday's military display? Damn it, given his handsome and dashing looks, he couldn't have forgotten him. He probably didn't summon him yesterday because the distance was too great, and he couldn't see his face clearly. If he had known he might be Qingxuan's father, he would have paid respects to his future father-in-law at Lingyin Temple without any hesitation.

Thinking of this, Lin Wanrong became restless. No matter what, he had to find a chance to meet his future father-in-law. A thought flashed through his mind, and he suddenly shouted out loud, "Huan'er, Huan'er, quickly find me a sedan chair. Then go to the east end of the city and buy two top-quality fake paintings. I'm going to visit an old friend."

"An old friend? Do you have friends in the capital, Brother San?" Huan'er asked in surprise.

"Of course. I'm handsome and capable, as the saying goes, friends are all over the world, but only one can be the chosen one. What's a few friends to me?" Lin Wanrong laughed.

Huan'er's little face flushed red, and she ran out hurriedly. Lin Wanrong laughed mischievously, and shouted, "When you buy the fake paintings, be careful not to be fooled. Anything over ten taels of silver is a forgery among the forgeries."

A forgery among the forgeries? What did that mean? As Huan'er's heart pounded, she gained a deeper understanding of brother san's mysteriousness.

After everything was prepared, Lin Wanrong pocketed the "forgery among the forgeries". Just as he was about to ride the sedan chair and leave, he saw several bearers running swiftly from afar. A sedan chair hurried over, its destination pointed directly at the Xiao family shop.

Damn, who was this? Traveling by sedan chair as if it was an airplane? Lin Wanrong chuckled and was about to open the sedan door when he heard a loud shout from afar, "Lin San, wait up, Lin San, wait up!"

Looking up, he saw that the man seated in the fast-approaching sedan was an old man with white hair. It was none other than Master Xu Wei. Xu Wei was wearing a bright red official robe, a black gauze hat with elongated flaps, looking very formal, and was vigorously waving at him.

‘Just the person I was thinking of! This saved me the trouble of traveling.’ Regardless of the pain in his body, he laughed heartily, hurried forward, and greeted, "Hey, old friend, long time no see. How have you been recently?"

As the sedan approached him, Xu Wei stepped out of it, looking quite agile. He grabbed Lin Wanrong's hand and said, "Lin San, come with me quickly!"

"What's the rush?" Lin Wanrong laughed, "Old friend, your timing is perfect. I was just looking for you. Ah, this is a calligraphy piece by Master Guiguzi, a renowned strategist from the Warring States period that I recently collected. Connoisseurs call it 'Ghost Drawing Charm'. It's a small gift, please accept it." He carefully presented the forgery among the forgeries to Xu Wei, with utmost modesty.

"Oh, I don't have the time to care about your 'Ghost Drawing Charm' right now!" Xu Wei took the forgery without a glance, threw it into the sedan chair, and said in a hurry, "You need to come with me quickly. People will die if we are late - the Emperor has summoned you."