

Finest 371

Chapter 371 Fairy Sister, I Love You

Catching ghosts? Ning Yuxi blinked, then she understood, listening to his tone as he spoke with the other two, he was planning to capture some people from Dongyin.

"Do you want me to be your interpreter?" Ning Yuxi smiled slightly. This man had so many tricks up his sleeve. Clearly, he needed her help, but he acted as if it was no big deal.

"You said it yourself," Lin Wanrong laughed heartily, clapping his hands, "Fairy Sister is so clever. Looking at your compassionate and kind face, I see a wonderful future mother. I will be a good father."

Fairy Ning didn't understand what he was talking about. She shook her head coldly and said, "Our agreement does not include so much. You better find someone else."

There were two light sounds of "bang bang." Du Xiuyuan was knocking at the door from outside, "General Lin, everything is ready, we are waiting for your command."

"I'm coming right away." Lin Wanrong replied loudly. But as he spoke, he noticed Ning Yuxi's figure swaying and disappearing like a wisp of smoke, leaving behind an enchanting silhouette.

She ran away like that? Lin Wanrong was stunned for a while. After all, they were on the same side; how could she just leave? Women really couldn't be trusted to keep their word!

Time was of the essence, and capturing the Dongyin people was the priority. He hurriedly opened the door and went downstairs with Du Xiuyuan. He had been too engaged in conversation with Fairy Ning to notice that the once bustling western gate street had now become sparsely populated. Seeing Du Xiuyuan's mysterious smile, Lin Wanrong asked, "What happened? Where are the people? Did you chase them away?"

Du Xiuyuan laughed, "How could I do that? I just arranged for two brothers to find two gold ingots outside the city gate. When word spread, everyone rushed there. They're lining up outside the gate."

"How can you be so deceitful? Brother Du, you should learn from me. Learn my honesty and integrity." Master Lin shook his head, deeply displeased with Du Xiuyuan's actions.

Du Xiuyuan was indeed straightforward. In a moment, he had gathered thousands of soldiers to surround the small courtyard tightly, not even a fly could escape. Lin Wanrong walked over, stared at the main gate, and coldly snorted, "Brother Du, is there any movement inside?"

Du Xiuyuan shook his head, "Not a sound. These Dongyin people really know how to endure."

"That's because you don't know their name, Brother Du. In Dongyin, they are called 'ninjas,' which means 'enduring'." Lin Wanrong chuckled, waving his hand to the hundreds of archers in the Divine Machine Unit, their arrows dipped in oil and set ablaze, aiming at the small courtyard.

"Listen, those inside, you are surrounded! Resistance will be met with severity, surrender will be even more so. You have the time it takes to brew a cup of tea to surrender; otherwise, you'll all be dead!" Master Lin called out loudly, hands cupped around his mouth. With no translator, he was somewhat at a loss, but fortunately, he knew some common "Dongyin language" - Yosh, sura sura, flower girl - and he shouted it out!

The house was eerily quiet, a silence as profound as death itself, the sparks from the fire crackling and dancing wildly. The noise seemed particularly grating.

"General Lin, what should we do?" Du Xiuyuan asked in a deep voice, "Should we rush in? Shall we leave any survivors?"

"First, we'll use fire to burn them. If they don't burn, then we'll rush in. We only need one alive, able to speak; the rest, legs, feet, anything else, doesn't matter," Lin Wanrong chuckled, speaking very lightly, yet Du Xiuyuan listened, breaking into a cold sweat. He waved to the archers behind him, and a team holding fire arrows advanced, aiming at the house beams, preparing to fire. Suddenly, from inside the house, a sharp whistle sounded, and a dozen of black-clothed figures burst out like a swarm of locusts, their curved swords emitting a mournful howl as they charged toward the crowd with ferocious momentum.

"Archers, fire!" Du Xiuyuan, a battle-hardened warrior, was unfazed by the sight. At his command, hundreds of arrows were launched like a shower of locusts. These black-clad men, skilled in individual combat and stronger than anyone else on the field, were nevertheless no match for this iron-blooded and battle-tested army. Before they could even cry out, they were enveloped in a rain of arrows and pierced through the heart, becoming like human pincushions. A few more tenacious ones, though riddled with arrows, managed to break through the barrier and charged straight toward Lin Wanrong.

"Infantry, guard!" Du Xiuyuan bellowed, and hundreds of foot soldiers formed a formation, their long spears whirling together to create an impenetrable wall in front of Lin Wanrong and Du Xiuyuan. Those who had broken through the rain of arrows were already spent and impaled themselves on the sharp spears, their bodies riddled with holes. With a forceful shove, the soldiers threw their corpses back into the courtyard.

This attack and shooting, under Du Xiuyuan's command, were completed in a matter of moments, cleanly and efficiently, demonstrating the superb quality of this troop. Lin Wanrong watched with great satisfaction. Such a team could easily take on even the fiercest barbarians.

A dozen of Dongyin warriors were annihilated without uttering a sound. Lin Wanrong inspected the scene but found all of them dead, not one able to speak.

"Brother Du, did you count them yesterday? How many people were hiding in this house?" Lin Wanrong asked, frowning.

"Fifteen in total, but now there are only twelve corpses," Du Xiuyuan answered confidently, nodding toward the house.

Lin Wanrong was greatly relieved. 'I wondered why Brother Du was so calm. He had calculated that some were still alive. These Dongyin warriors are crafty. If Du Xiuyuan hadn't checked the numbers last night, some might have escaped today. In other words, these twelve were bait, and those left must be important.'

"Alive, I want them alive," Lin Wanrong signaled Du Xiuyuan, speaking softly.

Du Xiuyuan nodded and waved again to the archers behind him. Dozens of them slowly stepped forward, aiming at the house's windows. Their arrows were peculiar, with sharp points and conspicuous thin bags wrapped around them, filled with a powdery substance, a mysterious detail that caught the eye.

What on earth was this? Lin Wanrong had never seen it before and marveled at the contraption. Du Xiuyuan laughed, saying, "This idea came from Li Sheng. He said he learned it from you, General Lin."

"Learned from me? I don't even know how to shoot an arrow," Lin Wanrong replied with a smile.

Du Xiuyuan laughed heartily, glanced at the archers, and commanded, "Aim at the windows. Fire!"

With soft "thud" "thud" sounds, the arrows flew through the windows. Upon hitting the ground, they pierced small bags, and white smoke billowed, filling the room.

"Sleeping powder!" Lin Wanrong recognized this white mist all too well; it was one of the treasures he always carried with him. That Li Sheng could come up with such a trick was indeed brilliant. Lin Wanrong laughed heartily, 'No wonder Du Xiuyuan said he learned from me; he didn't wrong me at all.'

After waiting for the smoke to dissipate, Du Xiuyuan drew his sword and yelled, "Brothers, charge with me!" Hundreds of soldiers swarmed in, filling the courtyard. Lin Wanrong followed Du Xiuyuan into the house and found two black-clothed men lying on the ground, coughing incessantly, clearly affected by the sleeping powder but not yet unconscious.

Some soldiers rushed over and tied them up. Including the previously dead ones, there were only fourteen in total. Du Xiuyuan led a thorough search but found no trace of the fifteenth person.

"Brother Du, you didn't miscount, did you?" Lin Wanrong asked with a smile, glancing at the captured Dongyin warriors.

"There's no mistake, fifteen people!" Du Xiuyuan asserted firmly, "There's one more, the leader. I recognized his slim figure last night, but I haven't seen him today."

That leader was exactly what they needed! Lin Wanrong's spirits lifted as he thought about it. Du Xiuyuan and his men had been guarding the outside, and no one had left, so the man must still be there!

No one had left? Wait, someone came in and then left again. Could it be—Lin Wanrong slapped his thigh: "Oh no, he switched places, that scoundrel escaped, disguised as the steward. Xu Zhen, call for Xu Zhen quickly."

"What do you mean switched places?" Du Xiuyuan, not as quick-witted as Lin Wanrong, didn't understand what he meant.

"General, a body has been found in the front yard," a soldier hurriedly reported. Du Xiuyuan was startled and looked at Lin Wanrong, who sighed, "No need to look, the dead one is the real steward, the one who left is the imposter. Damn these cunning dogs."

"General, what do we do now?" Du Xiuyuan said with frustration. After guarding for a day and night and letting the leader escape, his disappointment was palpable.

"He thinks he can run? Can he really escape?" Lin Wanrong chuckled, "Brother Du, Xu Zhen is following him. Damn, it's like making a brilliant move in a bad game of chess."

Du Xiuyuan also realized, that's right, with Xu Zhen following him, the imposter wouldn't be able to escape. General Lin truly had some extraordinary skills; he always had a contingency plan.

"Killing the real steward and posing as a fake one, these scoundrels are truly malicious," Lin Wanrong snorted, pacing a few steps in the courtyard, and mused, "Killing even one of their own means only one thing — he's in a hurry to meet someone very important, and he needed to use the steward's identity to cover himself!"

"At least you have a bit of intelligence," a woman's mocking laughter came from outside the window, followed by a thumping sound. A shadow fell into the courtyard; it was the imposter steward who had just escaped.

"Fairy Sister, I love you!" Lin Wanrong exclaimed, jumping up in excitement.

Chapter 372 Furious Interrogation

The room was silent, and Lin Wanrong didn't know if Fairy Ning had heard his words. He didn't care. He had many loves, and one more made no difference. It was as simple as saying, "I want to eat."

"General, who is Fairy Sister?" Du Xiuyuan asked, puzzled. Lin Wanrong shook his head and sighed, "Concerning Fairy Sister, it is a poignant love story. I'll tell you when we have more time. Now find Xu Zhen. That boy was tailing the master, and the master is back. Why haven't I seen him?"

As he spoke, a voice came from outside, "General Lin, Brother Du, something terrible has happened!" Xu Zhen, panting, ran past everyone and hurriedly approached them. Gasping, he said, "I saw, I saw—"

"Did you see a ghost?" Lin Wanrong and Du Xiuyuan looked at each other and laughed.

"No, not a ghost. It's the master. He entered, entered—" He looked around and whispered, "—entered Prince Cheng's mansion."

Du Xiuyuan's face changed, and he hastily asked, "Are you sure you didn't see it wrong?"

Lin Wanrong laughed, "The world is vast, and strange things happen. Seeing two people who look alike is not unusual. You must have seen it wrong, right, little Xu?"

Xu Zhen was stunned for a moment. Being clever, he hurriedly nodded and laughed, "Yes, yes, I must have seen it wrong. General, please disregard my words. Eh, he, he, how is he here?" In his haste to question, Xu Zhen had not yet noticed who was lying on the ground. Upon seeing the face, he was astonished, his face full of surprise. How could this be? Could it be true as General Lin said, that there were two identical people in the world who happened to appear in two places at the same time?

Lin Wanrong chuckled, not surprised by Xu Zhen's astonishment. He was, however, quite impressed with Ning Yuxi's skills. The leader of Dongyin warriors, disguised as the master and entering Prince Cheng's mansion, must have had some plot. But Fairy Ning had managed to capture him without detection. Her skills were extraordinary indeed.

The fake master lay motionless on the ground, and it was unclear whether he was dead or alive. Previously, Lin Wanrong and others had not seen the master's face, allowing Dongyin man to take advantage. He had changed into new clothes, added a small mustache, and slipped out by pretending to be someone else. Now that they knew, they would not let him go. Lin Wanrong kicked him twice, and the man fell to the ground without a sound. Du Xiuyuan bent over and touched his nose, then shook his head, "General, he's not dead, just knocked out."

Lin Wanrong nodded. Fairy Ning indeed knew restraint, realizing they needed this man. He waved his hand and shouted, "Bring water."

Two soldiers brought a basin of cold water and poured it over the man. The fake master shivered, slowly opened his eyes, and seeing the many soldiers, screamed "Baka!" He quickly stood up and instinctively reached for his sword. Xu Zhen's quick reflexes landed a heavy kick on his back knee.

There was a soft crack, and the fake master fell to his knees, his forehead covered in cold sweat, writhing in pain.

Without a translator present, Lin Wanrong had no choice but to fend for himself. He blinked and playfully said, "Yosh, do you understand English?"

"Ba ka—"

"Screw you!" Lin Wanrong landed a kick in the man's abdomen, fiercely stating, "You can't even understand English, the international language? What a lack of culture! I can't even communicate with you. With your cowardly appearance, how dare your emperor send you to mess around in our Great Hua? Beat him—"

Xu Zhiqing and Du Xiuyuan were unaware of what the English language was, but seeing Lin Wanrong's ferocious command, they couldn't resist. Together, they lunged toward the warrior with fists and kicks.

The Dongyin warrior's eyes were wide with anger, and he blabbered something unintelligible as he struggled to stand, his leg having been broken by Xu Zhiqing's kick. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't stabilize himself. In a matter of moments, under the fierce blows from Du Xiuyuan and Xu Zhen, his face was swollen, his nose bruised, and blood oozed from the corners of his mouth.

Lin Wanrong stopped the two men, a sly smile appearing on his face. "Alright, stop hitting him for now. Our Great Hua is a land of propriety; we believe in winning people over with virtue—We'll beat him again later. Mr. Warrior, you don't understand English. It's not your fault; your father didn't teach you well. I won't say anything about that. But since you're here messing around in my Great Hua, you must at least understand our language, right?"

"Dumu ma, sogazu fuisuta!" the Dongyin warrior roared, his eyes flashing with murderous intent, his face twisted with rage.

Xu and Du looked at each other, bewildered by the incomprehensible Dongyin language. They turned their pleading eyes to the all-capable General Lin. Lin Wanrong chuckled and nodded, "Oh, I understand now. You're saying you've come to Great Hua to visit your ancestors. Sigh, please enunciate next time, or else I really find it hard to understand."

A soft laugh came from outside the window, then silence. Lin Wanrong was overjoyed; he knew that his "fairy sister" must be hiding nearby. He was about to continue his playful banter when the

Dongyin warrior suddenly shouted in awkward and broken Chinese, "Ba ka, Dongyin warrior, your insult, Great Hua, pig!"

"Screw your ancestors!" Lin Wanrong was furious. He grabbed a knife from the side and used the thick back of it to strike the Dongyin man's back. The blow sent him stumbling forward, and he fell flat on his face.

Though Xu Zhiqing and Du Xiuyuan did not understand Dongyin, they heard the insult to Great Hua clearly. Fire in their eyes, they rushed forward, fists flying. The three of them kicked and punched with great satisfaction. Lin Wanrong casually glanced over and saw the man's eyes roll back, as if he couldn't take any more. He immediately cried out and quickly stopped the two men, laughing, "Don't hit him anymore. There's plenty of time in the future; we don't need to rush."

He looked at the warrior and chuckled, speaking in awkward Dongyin, "You, what's your name, what are you doing?"

The Dongyin warrior was panting heavily and couldn't answer. Lin Wanrong laughed and said, "Actually, even if you don't tell me, I know. Your little prince is called Tsugumi, and since you look so much like him, I guess you're his older brother, named Eightgumi. How about that, I didn't guess wrong, did I?"

"Nonsense, what absurdity!" The Dongyin warrior glared at him angrily, his Great Hua language seemed to flow much smoother, "You, you have a wicked conscience. Our, Prince Tsugumi, the son of Amaterasu, I am not his elder brother. I, under the Amaterasu, am the samurai leader Shinyuemon Sasaki."

Shinyuemon Sasaki? Damn it, these Dongyin people write in half-simplified Chinese characters, yet they strain to concoct a name. If they say they aren't freaks, no one would believe them.

"I say, Shinyuemon Sasaki," Master Lin chuckled, patting him on the shoulder, "What is your noble purpose in coming to Great Hua this time?"

"Me, no purpose, nothing at all." Sasaki snorted through his nose, "I, live here, you all, barged in, kill my comrades, I, must report to the Emperor, punish the Great Hua Emperor."

Punish the Great Hua Emperor? Lin Wanrong burst into uproarious laughter. Strange things happened every year, but this year was particularly abundant. These Dongyin people could come up with any excuse.

Sasaki looked at him with doubt and disbelief. This Master in front of him looked like an official, but his actions were more akin to a bandit.

"Shinyuemon Sasaki, actually, without you saying, I also know what you are here for." Master Lin smiled slightly, "The incident at Grand Prime Minister Temple yesterday, it was you all who did it, right?"

Sasaki's expression changed in his eyes, but before he spoke, Lin Wanrong waved his hand and laughed mysteriously, "Don't deny it, I don't like playing games. Why you are here, who invited you, I've investigated everything clearly. Haven't you thought about where I captured you from?"

Sasaki had fainted as soon as he entered the prince mansion and woke up here, without time to think about cause and effect. Hearing his words, his face changed drastically, "Could it be the prince—impossible, he, he would never, in Shandong—" He stopped abruptly, realizing something, and cast a furtive glance at Lin Wanrong.

"You mean in Shandong, you jointly stole three hundred and fifty thousand taels of silver, right?" Lin Wanrong was secretly delighted but showed no sign on his face, speaking carelessly.

"You, you know?" Sasaki could no longer hide his astonishment. The robbery in Shandong, the assassination attempt at Grand Prime Minister Temple; all were intricately planned and arranged. Even if this man was skilled, he couldn't have found out so quickly.

"Ha ha ha ha—" Master Lin laughed heartily, "I don't know? Is there anything in this world that I don't know? Do you think your Amaterasu knows where those silvers are hidden? He definitely doesn't, but I, this great man, do know."

"Impossible." Sasaki cried out in shock, "Those, soldiers, poison, all dead dead. You will never know!"

Soldiers? Poison? Five thousand men! Lin Wanrong inhaled sharply, his eyes flashing with a thick murderous intent, his fists clenched tightly, he spoke slowly, "Three hundred and fifty thousand taels of silver, carts and horses moving day and night, would take several days and nights, it's impossible to vanish overnight. Those silvers are certainly still hidden around Jining—"

Sasaki remained silent and wooden, Lin Wanrong could no longer restrain himself, kicked him in the leg, and cursed, "You beastly creature, how dare you poison and kill people, I'll slaughter you!"

Chapter 373 Absolutely Shameless

Du Xiuyuan and Xu Zhen, although not clear on the full details, understood the general gist. They knew that these Dongyin people, for the sake of silver, had poisoned so many of their Great Hua compatriots. They were immediately filled with righteous indignation. Seizing hold of Sasaki, they restrained him, and Lin Wanrong kicked him repeatedly. Drawing his steel knife and placing it against Sasaki's neck, he coldly said, "I'll ask you one more time, were those five thousand soldiers all poisoned to death by you Dongyin people?"

Sasaki snorted, "They were useless. Their deaths, very good!"

The veins on Lin Wanrong's forehead stood out, and he forcefully suppressed his rage. Smiling coldly, he said, "Xu Zhen, I leave him to you. You must guarantee to me that he must still be alive a year from now, but, he must suffer more than if he were dead."

"At your command," Xu Zhen grinned, eyes aflame with fury. "I will certainly complete the task."

Waving his hand, Xu Zhen led Sasaki away. Du Xiuyuan saw that General Lin seemed to be in a foul mood, so he obediently withdrew, leaving General Lin alone in quiet contemplation.

"Do you really want to kill this Dongyin man? Don't you want to know where they hid the silver?" A woman's voice sounded in Lin Wanrong's ear, gentle and ethereal, a faint fragrance entering his nostrils, stirring his thoughts a little. Had it been an ordinary day, he would have flirted with her, but today, he had no interest.

"These are Dongyin ninjas, trained as suicide troops. The place where they hid the silver – do you think he would reveal it? Three hundred and fifty thousand taels of silver are not so easily moved. As long as it's within the boundaries of Jining, even if I have to dig three feet into the ground, I will find it. As for this wretch, I don't want to kill him – I want him to live a life worse than death, to regret ever being born." Lin Wanrong gritted his teeth, his eyes filled with rage. "Five thousand people, a full five thousand! These Dongyin people, on the soil of my Great Hua, poisoned five thousand of my compatriots. Fairy Sister, if it were you, what would you do?"

Ning Yuxi's brows lightly furrowed, and she softly said, "Though the Dongyin people are ruthless, have you considered that these five thousand were traitors to the Emperor, joining another camp and becoming rebels? To put it bluntly, they abetted evil and deserved death!"

Lin Wanrong glanced at her, his eyes filled with an indescribable disdain, completely different from his previous lecherous gaze – it was utter contempt, an expression he had never worn before. Ning Yuxi's brows tightened, "What's wrong? Did I say something incorrect?"

"You're not wrong! What's wrong is your master," Lin Wanrong sighed lightly. "She trained you to be an aloof and detached fairy, representing justice and faith, admired by all, with limitless glory. But do you really think you're so amazing?"

Ning Yuxi angrily said, "Don't you dare talk about my master behind her back."

"Talk about her? I have no interest. I'm teaching you, teaching you a simple truth that you and your master have never understood." Lin Wanrong said coldly, his words as swift and harsh as a storm, without a shred of mercy.

Ning Yuxi turned and walked away, unwilling to listen to his nonsense. Lin Wanrong watched her leave, shaking his head in disdain and smiling, "You really don't understand what people live for."

Ning Yuxi slowly came to a halt and turned to glance at him, speaking indifferently, "What did you say?"

"Was I not clear? Fairy Sister, do you know what people live for?" Lin Wanrong leaned against the table, his face full of a cynical expression.

Ning Yuxi pondered for a moment, and said seriously, "Everyone has a dream; it is their motivation to live in this world."

"Nonsense." A hint of a smile appeared at the corner of Lin Wanrong's mouth, and he waved his hand disdainfully, "Let me tell you, Fairy Sister, people live in this world to eat. Ideals, pursuits, they're all the result of having more than enough, on the same path as indulging in desire when well-fed. You say those five thousand soldiers are rebels, but have you ever thought about whether there is any difference to them in loyalty to the Emperor or loyalty to Prince Cheng? Both demand the selling of their lives, both require food to eat, and only a few are destined to rise to greatness, while others will die on the battlefield. Many will never understand in their lifetime what they are fighting for, but most people don't have the opportunity to choose. Simply put, they are not criminals, nor our enemies, they, like us, are pitiful creatures being used, whether by the Emperor or

Prince Cheng. In their eyes, the people are always objects to be used—do you understand what I'm saying?"

Ning Yuxi's face was full of astonishment. Evidently, she found his shocking words difficult to grasp. Lin Wanrong shook his head and bitterly smiled, his thoughts suddenly turning to Xiao Qingxuan. During his time in Jinling, he would chat with her daily in his small house, discussing various astonishing theories, with her always enjoying listening and then deeply pondering and questioning him, leaving him unable to respond. Speaking of political ambitions, only Qingxuan was his confidante. He sighed deeply, whispering softly, "In rise, the common people suffer; in fall, the common people suffer!"

Ning Yuxi was somewhat surprised. Since her youth, she had been an object of admiration for many, and over the years, she had grown accustomed to the beautiful sights of a prosperous world. Who had ever lectured her like this before? Yet Lin San's words were profound and filled with deep insights, presenting a novel and unique perspective that made one delve into deep thought.

"It's too complicated; you might not understand," Lin Wanrong chuckled, "But with your intelligence, it's understandable if you don't."

She didn't need to think to know what he meant. Ning Yuxi glanced at him and snorted, "You, why do you insult people out of nowhere?"

"I'm not insulting, just comparing you involuntarily to Sister An. Fairy Sister, you and Sister An have been struggling against each other for so many years, and you must know each other very well. Coincidentally, this little brother, me, has had intimate contact with both sisters. Do you know who I like more?" Lin Wanrong laughed, throwing out an enticing candy that no woman could resist.

Ning Yuxi smiled faintly, "I won't listen to your nonsense. My matter with Sister An is not as simple as you think, and who you like has nothing to do with me—even if you like her more, so what?"

This Fairy Sister was indeed very cunning. Lin Wanrong laughed heartily, "You're right; I do like Sister An more than you, Fairy Sister—as for the reason, sigh, Fairy Sister, you certainly don't want to know, so it's best if I don't say."

Ning Yuxi shook her head, helplessly saying, "You're truly a bore, doing nothing serious all day long. I won't listen to your nonsense anymore; I'm leaving."

Lin Wanrong chuckled to himself, thinking, 'Usually, you leave without warning. Why are you hesitating today and even giving prior notice? It seems even a fairy has her worldly thoughts, and she is also a woman, unable to escape those little feminine schemes.'

"The reason is simple," he continued, "Although Sister An lost to you, her constant struggle, her strength, and resilience, her cunning appearance but gentle inside nature, moved me and made me cherish her. She lives more genuinely, more like a real woman. As for you, Fairy Sister, you are high above, unattainable, like a flower in water, a moon in a mirror, out of reach, elusive, hard to approach. To put it crudely, forgive my frankness, apart from the flesh on your chest, I really can't see any feminine charm in you." Lin Wanrong grinned, openly appraising her full chest, his face filled with self-righteousness.

"You—" Even Fairy Ning, with her good upbringing, couldn't help but feel angry at his vulgar words. "You, you despicable man, shameless."

"Sister, your curse is not malicious enough," Lin Wanrong chuckled, "Actually, there's an art to cursing. For example, you could have just said — ah, you're so bad!!! You can learn a lot from Sister An on this. And of course, when you learn how to seduce me, you'll barely be ready to graduate — oh, oh, what are you doing? A gentleman speaks, a woman acts, it's okay to steal a peach, but don't slap the face—"

Outside, Du Xiuyuan and Xu Zhen looked at each other, bewildered by the commotion. Was General Lin performing a duet inside? Playing two voices, imitating so skillfully, how amazing!

With a crash, the main door opened, and as Du Xiuyuan and the others stared at General Lin, who had pushed his way out, their mouths fell open wide, enough to fit two eggs.

"What are you looking at? Never seen a man wear blush before?" General Lin snapped, covering his cheek, visibly annoyed.

"We have, we have," the two managed to stifle their laughter, "The General thinks what others dare not think, does what others dare not do, truly creative and admirable!" As they spoke, they continued to peer sneakily into the house, as if looking for some treasure.

"Come here!" General Lin, angered by their winking and nudging, ordered loudly.

"Here, sir!" Several soldiers quickly came forward to await General Lin's command.

Without hesitation, Lin Wanrong ordered, "Go to the street and buy ten pounds of blush, and cover the faces and behinds of these two rascals. Don't miss a spot." Everyone burst into laughter as Du Xiuyuan and Xu Zhen scurried off, fleeing faster than rabbits, leaving behind a trail of laughter in the courtyard.

On a distant rooftop, Fairy Ning stared blankly at her delicate hands, her face filled with disbelief. 'I have cultivated myself for so many years, and today, I was actually provoked to anger by him. He is truly shameless.'

Chapter 374 "Work-related Injury"

Though Lin Wanrong had quite a thick skin, he was marked with a vivid trace left by the fairy. He felt quite embarrassed to return home like this, so he lingered for a long time within Du Xiuyuan's army. Having nothing better to do, he pulled up Sasaki for a thorough interrogation, beating him with fists and kicks. As Lin Wanrong expected, this man from Dongyin would rather die than speak, having cultivated the spirit of Bushido to the extreme.

Considering the time, even if Sasaki had wings, he couldn't have robbed the silver in Shandong and then flown to the capital to attempt an assassination. From this, it seemed the robbery in Shandong must have been carried out by another group of Dongyin people in collaboration with Prince Cheng. The exact hiding place of the silver might be unknown to Sasaki, but it was certainly around Jinling. Today's capture of these Dongyin assassins was conducted quietly, but Prince Cheng was no fool. If he didn't see Sasaki, he would undoubtedly become suspicious. The silver in Shandong might be on the move. Time was of the essence, and the trip to Shandong could not be delayed. Lin Wanrong was uncertain about the results of Xu Wei's negotiations with the old Emperor. Unable to sit still, he couldn't be bothered to chit-chat with Sasaki anymore, ordering Xu Zhen to "take care" of him before leaving with a slap of his behind.

By the time he returned to the mansion, the lanterns were just being lit. He had been called away by Xu Wei early yesterday morning and was only just returning now. He shook his head helplessly, sighing, 'Who did I wrong? It seems I'm destined to labor. A man really shouldn't be too capable.'

With the "blush" on his face not yet disappeared, he couldn't let others see it. He was tiptoeing, about to sneak in, when he heard a soft cry: "Big brother, Big brother is back!" Several people rushed out of the mansion, with Qiaoqiao in the lead, followed by Eldest Miss Xiao. Her face was pale, and she looked blankly at Lin Wanrong, calling out, "Lin San—" but could say no more. Madam Xiao behind her gently patted her frail shoulder and smiled at Lin Wanrong with a nod.

"Ah ha, everyone's here! Have you eaten? If you've eaten, go to bed early!" Lin Wanrong laughed, covering his cheek with his hand.

"Big brother, what happened to your face?" Qiaoqiao was the closest and immediately noticed the bright red on his face, exclaiming in shock.

Unaware until they looked, everyone was startled and quickly cast their eyes on his face. Lin Wanrong tightly covered his cheek, stammering: "Oh, nothing, I accidentally ran into a tree, hitting both sides of my face. But don't worry, my handsome face hasn't been damaged at all."

Qiaoqiao pulled his large hand away, touching his face tenderly, tears welling: "Who did this to you, beating you like this? Big brother, does it hurt?"

'This little girl, she didn't even know how to cover for her husband. Was this a beating? It was a mishap from being affectionate with Fairy Sister. It's a work-related injury, you know?'

He was usually the one bullying others; nobody had ever seen him beaten. What was going on? Eldest Miss anxiously glanced at him, wanting to step forward but stopped upon seeing Qiaoqiao's tender look.

Since the truth could not be concealed, he decided not to hide it at all. He grabbed Qiaoqiao's little hand and gently pinched her rosy cheek, laughing playfully as he saluted Eldest Miss and Madam Xiao: "It's nothing, just an accidental injury. I'll heal in a few days."

"Big brother, are you all right?" Qiaoqiao examined him up and down, her voice filled with a crying tone, "You were called away by the Emperor yesterday, and we heard nothing from you all day and night. We were all worried to death. Eldest Miss didn't sleep at all last night, and she went to look for Mr. Xu this morning but didn't find him."

Lin Wanrong looked at Eldest Miss, and saw her face tinged with pink, her cherry lips slightly bitten, as she gazed at him longingly.

"It's fine, it's fine, how could anything happen to me?" Lin Wanrong chuckled, "I was discussing matters with the Emperor yesterday, and it got late, so the old Emperor asked me to make do with a night in the palace. I didn't realize it would worry you all. It's all my fault, the trouble caused by the moon!"

Xiao Yuruo snorted softly and said, "Keeping you in the palace? The Emperor treats you quite well, doesn't he? Has the matter of becoming the prince consort been settled? When will you marry the princess?"

"Qiaoqiao, how did you bring such a big jar of vinegar outside?" Lin Wanrong laughed.

"What? I didn't bring any vinegar—" Qiaoqiao was stunned for a moment, and halfway through her words, she glanced at Eldest Miss's expression and burst into laughter, "Big brother, you're so naughty."

Eldest Miss's eyes reddened, and she said nothing, picking up her long skirt and quickly running back into the shop. Lin Wanrong was taken aback, and Qiaoqiao urgently pushed him, saying anxiously, "Big brother, look what you've done with your nonsense, hurry up and chase after her."

This commotion, just having sent away Qian'Er, and now welcoming Eldest Miss, these two jars of vinegar, he didn't know which one was deeper. He looked helplessly at Madam Xiao, who shook her head and smiled, "You young people's affairs, I don't quite understand. You handle it yourselves. I trust you and Yuruo. But honestly, Lin San, these past couple of days without you, our home has seemed lifeless, as if it's lost its backbone. Yuruo has been listless and unfocused, as if she's become a different person. Before you came, she was full of energy and fearless, but now it's the opposite. What do you think is going on?"

Madam's words contained deeper meaning. But truly, Lin Wanrong had always considered himself part of the Xiao family, actively promoting the spirit of the master, never treating himself as an outsider. Lin Wanrong laughed and said modestly, "Is that so? Madam, you're flattering me. Alas, if I've so disrupted Eldest Miss's mind, I'm truly ashamed. Being outstanding is indeed a mistake; I'll remember that next time."

This was called not knowing one's own face; Lin San's thick skin was indeed unparalleled. Madam Xiao smiled bitterly and sighed, "My Xiao family has struggled for so many years, relying solely on two weak women. Since you came, our burden has been much lighter. Calling you the backbone of the Xiao family is not wrong at all. You go, go see Yuruo, comfort her. This child—" Madam wiped away two tears, unable to continue speaking.

The gentle offensive of Madam Xiao was truly formidable, trapping him tightly, leaving no escape. Lin Wanrong was thoroughly impressed by her tactics. He bowed and made his way into the house, heading straight for the backyard. The sky was completely dark, and there was no light in Eldest Miss's room; it was pitch black, and he had no idea if she was inside.

He gently tapped on the door twice and cleared his throat, calling softly, "Eldest Miss, it's Lin San. Please open the door; I have something to say to you."

Inside the room, all was silent and still. He waited for what seemed like an eternity, but the door remained closed. Lin Wanrong shook his head, sighing, "This is forcing me to use my trump card. I don't mind, but I fear you, young lady, might not be able to handle it. 'Yuruo, my sweet, my darling, my treasure, my heart...'"

In the front hall, Madam Xiao shivered all over, hearing Lin San's words. How could Lin San say such things? Truly a breach of propriety. How young people these days behave! Qiaoqiao blushed, accustomed to her big brother's nauseatingly sweet tactics. If she didn't hear them one day, she might even miss them.

Before he had finished his call, the door creaked open, and Eldest Miss stood before him, her face stained with tears, both shy and angry, "What are you shouting about so recklessly? Aren't you afraid mother will hear?"

Lin Wanrong slipped inside like a monkey, giggling, "What's there to fear? I shout what I want; she listens to what she wants. She's pleased with what she hears; I feel energized by what I shout. It's win-win. My heart, shall I say it again? Do you like to hear it?"

"Who wants to hear it? You can save your sweet words for your princess," Eldest Miss snorted, though her expression had already softened.

"How can that be? I swear to the heavens, Yuruo is my heart, unique and unparalleled," Lin Wanrong declared, raising his right hand high, his face serious, his eyes unwavering. He was not lying; Eldest Miss was his heart, Xian'er his sweet, and they got along amicably, without encroaching on each other.

Eldest Miss's expression softened even more, a faint blush appearing on her cheeks, as she gently asked, "Then do you dare to say that the Emperor keeping you overnight in the palace wasn't about recruiting you as his son-in-law?"

'The Emperor would never want me as his son-in-law, but the princess is set on being my match.' Lin San sighed and shook his head, "This is a long story, full of twists and turns, and would take days and nights to tell. Oh, my heart, you look so beautiful in this purple gown today, like a fairy. How have I never seen it before?"

Eldest Miss, however, was not so easily deceived. Seeing his evasive words, she knew that he was hiding something, and tears immediately fell from her eyes. "Do you really think you can fool me with words? Do you think I'm that easily bullied? You didn't come back all night yesterday, and you scared my soul out of me. I was in front of Mr. Xu's residence, waiting for news of you just after the first watch of the night. Is this how you treat me? Get out, get out, go find your 'little heart'!"

Eldest Miss pushed him, trying to make him leave, but Lin Wanrong twisted his waist, scooping her delicate body into his arms, giggling, "Isn't this exactly what I'm doing, looking for my little heart? Look, I've been 'injured at work.' Ah, speaking of which, the twists and perils I've been through these last two days are something you could never imagine. The few words I spoke to you were all true, no deceit to young or old, and if there's any falsehood, may thunder strike me down, may I never..."

"Why are you making such a vow out of nowhere?" Eldest Miss was so frightened that she quickly covered his mouth, urgently saying, "What if it comes true? What would I do without you?"

Lord Lin helplessly rolled his eyes, thinking, 'Does she really believe I'm so insincere?' He took Eldest Miss's small hand and lightly kissed it, speaking solemnly, "Eldest Miss, I have to ask you something, and you must answer me honestly—what would you do if one day I became the Emperor?"

Chapter 375 I Have Sinned

Eldest Miss stood agog, staring blankly at him for a long time, before finally recovering her wits. She glanced around, ensuring that no one had overheard, and then lowered her voice, trembling as she said, "Are you trying to get yourself killed? How dare you speak such seditious words?"

"Hehe, I was only joking," Master Lin laughed heartily, "If I were to become the Emperor, I would certainly make you the Grand Imperial Concubine, so that you would be honored in your hometown, and everyone would envy you."

Eldest Miss hastily pulled him closer, on guard lest the rebellious words be overheard by others. Her eyebrows raised, she said, "Have you lost your mind? It's not yet completely dark, and you're already dreaming. If I become the Imperial Concubine, who will be the Empress above me?"

"Ah, that... I was just speaking casually. It's getting late; you should rest. I will come to see you again tomorrow morning," Master Lin quickly finished, trying to leave. Eldest Miss snorted and angrily asked, "Just how many seductive vixens do you keep? You'd better confess quickly."

"Really, am I that kind of person?" Lin Wanrong chuckled, "Just look at me, and you'll know how innocent I am."

Eldest Miss looked at his cheek, reaching out to gently touch it, suddenly sobbing, "Did she do this to you? How could she bear to hit you? She's bullying you even before the wedding! Is the Princess so great? I'll go confront her right now!"

Sweat, what a mix-up! The woman who could bully Lin San hasn't been born yet. He laughed it off and quickly grabbed the angry Eldest Miss, "You misunderstand. The Princess is like a cat in front of me."

"Then what happened to you?" Eldest Miss asked softly, gently caressing his face.

"It's a work-related injury, an accident," he said unabashedly, "Enough, let's not talk about this. Tomorrow early, I have to go to Shandong. You and Qiaoqiao take care of things at home."

"Shandong? What are you doing in Shandong?" Lin San had been busy as a mule these days, and Eldest Miss hadn't even seen his shadow. Though she scolded him, her heart was filled with concern. Hearing he was leaving again, she was naturally shocked.

Lin Wanrong thought for a moment, holding her hand, "Yuruo, this matter is significant. Normally, I shouldn't tell you, but you're no outsider, and I'm honest and upright, so I don't want to lie to you. Promise me that after hearing this, you'll keep it a strict secret and not let anyone else know."

Master Lin was adept at this; he concealed small matters but not big ones. With these words, Xiao Yuruo was sweetly caught by his sugar-coated words, but she didn't realize it. Seeing his serious face, Eldest Miss felt a sweetness in her heart, obediently nodding her agreement.

"There's trouble in Shandong, the Luo family is in trouble," Lin Wanrong sighed deeply, explaining the whole story. As a businesswoman, Eldest Miss had a deeper understanding of money than anyone else. Hearing about the loss of three hundred and fifty thousand taels of military salary in Jinling, she was instantly pale with shock. Being a woman, naturally jealous of Miss Luo and Lin San's relationship, she knew this was not the time for jealousy. Looking at Lin San worriedly, she asked, "So what do you plan to do?"

"How are we going to manage?" Lin Wanrong said with a bitter smile, shaking his head. "Back in Jinling, Luo Min helped me; Luo Yuan is my brother; and Ning'er and I have some connection. If I were to abandon them, what kind of person would I be? Early this morning, I sent Old Xu into the

palace to plead for mercy, hoping the Emperor will grant a delay. I'll try to help them recover the silver."

"The thieves who dared to steal the silver must have already made arrangements. You're going in blindly; what if you can't find it?" Eldest Miss looked at him anxiously, not daring to continue her thought.

"If we can't find it, I'll sell off our family assets to save them," Lin Wanrong stated resolutely, his face showing not a hint of hesitation.

Eldest Miss's eyes misted over as she said mournfully, "If you dissipate our family wealth, what will you do in the future? For Luo Ning, are you really willing to give up everything?"

"If it were for you, I would do the same," Lin Wanrong grinned. "To me, money is an external thing; if it's gone, I can earn it back. But if I lose someone I love, life would lose its flavor."

Eldest Miss remained silent for a long time before suddenly embracing him and sobbing, her little fists pounding his chest like raindrops. "You unfaithful dead man, I hate you, I hate you."

Lin Wanrong corrected her with a stern face, "Not unfaithful, but passionate; there's a fundamental difference."

"It's unfaithful, just unfaithful." Eldest Miss wiped her tears, giving him a relentless glance before whispering, "Wait a moment, I'll be right back." Without waiting for Lin Wanrong to speak, she turned and left, closing the door behind her with a clang.

Lin Wanrong's brow furrowed, wondering what the girl was up to, being so secretive. After waiting quite a while, Eldest Miss returned and handed him a small bundle, softly saying, "Take this."

"What is this?" Lin Wanrong asked in surprise, finding the bundle very light, seemingly containing only a few thin sheets of paper.

"These are the deeds to my Xiao family's properties in Jinling, Hangzhou, the capital, and other places. All together, there are over ten of them; they should be worth some silver. Also included are our shares in various businesses, which would also be valuable if pawned," Eldest Miss said calmly, her eyes full of determination.

"How can this be acceptable?" Lin Wanrong was shocked, quickly pushing the bundle back into her hands. "If you give these to me, the Xiao family will have nothing left. How will you explain this to your relatives, to Madam?"

Eldest Miss snorted, "I'm in charge of the Xiao family now; my mother won't object. But what about what you just said? Have you forgotten already? 'Money is an external thing; if it's gone, it can be earned back, but if we lose someone we love, life would lose its flavor.' You taught me this, and I remember it well."

Eldest Miss was always like this, seemingly cold and stern, but when she was tender, it always moved Lin Wanrong to tears. His eyes were moist, and his heart was surging. Just as he was about to embrace her tightly, he suddenly noticed a shining pair of scissors in Eldest Miss's hand, aimed at his chest. The scissors glinted sharply, gleaming with a cold light under the faint moonlight that shone through the window.

Lin Wanrong's tenderness was suddenly replaced by horror. "Eldest Miss, what are you doing? Please, don't do anything rash!"

Xiao Yuruo snorted and said coldly, "Everything of the Xiao family is now yours; aside from you, I have nothing left. From now on, this pair of scissors will be with me. If you ever betray me, I will use them to stab you first, then myself." Eldest Miss's expression was icy as she gestured menacingly toward him and then towards herself. Her determination made her look like a completely different person.

Cold sweat streamed down Master Lin's back as if he had witnessed himself being stabbed eighteen times, like a traitor. Eldest Miss's personality was unique and fiery; he loved it so much. He carefully took the scissors and threw them on the ground, tightly embracing Eldest Miss, his gratitude overflowing. "Eldest Miss, Yuruo, my love, you are too good to me. If I ever betray you, I would be less than human."

Eldest Miss nestled in his arms, a victorious smile on her face, and said softly, "As long as you treat me well for the rest of your life, I will be content."

Such simple words! The best women in the world had all been encountered by him. Master Lin felt waves of shame, hugging Eldest Miss tightly, tears and snot streaming down his face. "Eldest Miss, I must confess, I have sinned. My intentions towards you were impure, always wanting to take advantage of you."

"Nonsense! Could you have taken advantage without my consent?" Eldest Miss's face was flushed with heat, feigning indifference as she embraced him and patted his shoulder. "It's good that you know, but you must correct this behavior in the future."

"Not just that, I have an even greater sin. Eldest Miss, my thoughts have been filthy. Every time I see you and the Second Miss together, I think, I think—"

"You think what?" Eldest Miss clenched her little fist, her heart pounding twice.

"I have sinned; I think of stripping you both naked and deceiving you together—ah—" A sharp, piercing scream resounded, reaching the ears of Madam Xiao and Qiaoqiao. Qiaoqiao frowned, saying, "Madam, did you hear that? It sounded like big brother's voice!"

"Really? I didn't recognize it. Maybe you're just thinking of him too much," Madam Xiao laughed. "He's talking with Yuruo. You know her personality, don't you? She treasures Lin San as a treasure in your family. What could possibly go wrong?"

That made sense; it would have been strange if big brother hadn't done something to Eldest Miss. If it was said that Eldest Miss had restrained big brother, that would have been the most preposterous thing in the world.

As she was thinking about this, a figure suddenly appeared at the doorway, causing Qiaoqiao to let out a shrill scream, "Big brother, what happened to you?"

Master Lin, looking quite the mess with torn clothes and hair like a bird's nest, tightly covered his cheek and gave an awkward smile, "Nothing much, I was just careless and ran into a tree again. It has nothing to do with Eldest Miss, really nothing at all."

Eldest Miss emerged from behind him with a smile, placing a small bundle into his arms. She tenderly and sweetly fixed his disheveled hair, straightened his clothes, and a sweet smile spread across her face. "Did you remember everything I just told you? Be careful on the road, mind your eating habits, be aware of fire and theft. Don't be fickle, changing your mind all the time, otherwise, I'll be very angry, and you know the consequences!"

"I know, I know, the consequences are severe," Master Lin replied, covering his cheek and smiling obsequiously. Qiaoqiao and Madam Xiao watched his demeanor, and they exchanged a glance. A word rose in both their minds: bizarre, inexplicably bizarre!