

Ghost 132

Chapter 132: pregnant empress

Ghostly energy flickered inside the Whisper Bowl as the evening settled across the sky. The three ghosts floated in a circle in the training yard, pushing their spiritual power to its next limit.

Fen Yu practiced forming spiritual threads from her fingertips, each thread glowing like moon-silk.

Li Shen drilled forms with his sword, creating sharp arcs of icy-blue spiritual energy.

Wei Rong stood like a mountain, silently drawing spirit force into his core—stable, powerful, relentless.

When they finished their final meditation and returned to the main hall, the Empress felt proud. They had grown faster than she ever imagined.

But fate had no intention of giving them time to enjoy the progress.

Because at the same time—

the Emperor received secret documents from the capital.

Reports of barbaric attacks.

People disappearing.

Shops destroyed.

Villages losing livestock and money.

And the strangest part—

Even powerful martial masters could not detect the attackers.

They moved unseen, unheard, and untraceable.

Standing in a narrow alley of the market, disguised in plain robes, the Emperor frowned deeply.

"This is no ordinary barbaric tribe..."

His general stood beside him, also dressed as a commoner.

"There is something unnatural about them, Your Majesty," the general whispered. "We investigated—no tracks, no footprints, not even spiritual residue left behind."

"And yet they steal with perfect precision."

The Emperor looked toward the mountains in the distance.

"And no one has heard their voices."

Even the Emperor's suspicions grew darker.

"If even grandmasters cannot sense them..."

His jaw clenched.

"Then perhaps the threat is... not entirely human."

The general's eyes widened.

"You think—?"

"Not now."

The Emperor turned sharply.

"I must enter their camp. Not as Emperor. As a refugee couple fleeing hardship. Only then can we learn the truth."

He instructed the general:

"Go to the palace. Inform them that I will be leaving on a secret mission. DO NOT mention the Empress."

The general bowed.

He did not know the Empress wasn't in the palace.

He didn't know she was running a restaurant.

He didn't know she wasn't sick.

Only one person knew the truth:

The Emperor.

And he would use that truth today.

He went into the market and purchased:

✓ A bundle of plain clothes

✓ Two sets of rough refugee cloaks

✓ A large cloth bag

✓ Cosmetic powders

✓ A padded pillow to fake a six-month pregnant belly

✓ A simple wooden hairpin

He held the hairpin longer than necessary.

He shouldn't care how she wore her hair.

He shouldn't want to buy her anything.

He shouldn't feel... anything.

But he did.

The Whisper Bowl Was Lively Today

Workers were practicing taking orders.

Slaves were learning how to read.

Cooks were chopping vegetables.

The renovation workers next door hit the walls rhythmically.

The whole street buzzed with life.

The Emperor stood at the entrance—

and for a full breath, he forgot how to walk.

Because there she was.

The Empress.

Her skin looked brighter than moonlight.

Her aura more refined.

Her presence almost ethereal.

She looks... different.

Prettier.

Stronger.

More alive...

He stepped forward before he could stop himself.

The moment people saw him carrying a little package, they whispered loudly.

"Aiyo, Sister Lian's husband came again!"

"So sweet!"

"He brought her another gift!"

"That man is a treasure—educated, polite, hardworking, SQUATTING to apologize!"

"Real husband material!"

The Empress froze.

He froze.

They stared at each other.

She had expected him to be gone for days.

Yet here he stood again.

Dirty from travel.

Holding a hairpin.

He approached slowly and extended the parcel.

"It's for you."

People around screamed.

"A hairpin!"

"He gave her jewellery!"

"He LOVES her!"

"No man does this after marriage!"

"She's so lucky..."

The Empress nearly fainted from embarrassment.

He shouldn't do this here.

He shouldn't bring attention.

He shouldn't look at her like—

—like she mattered.

But he stepped even closer, lifted the hairpin, and without hesitation—

fixed it into her hair himself.

Her breath caught.

Workers gasped.

Renovators stopped hammering.

Trainers forgot how to breathe.

"He touched her hair!"

"That's so intimate!"

"He truly loves her..."

"Bless this couple!"

Inside the Empress's mind:

This shameless man...

Why does he do this publicly?!

Is he trying to expose me?!

He then grabbed her hand firmly.

"We need to talk. Backyard."

Everyone whispered:

"He even takes her hand gently..."

"They're so in love..."

"Oof, I'm jealous..."

"My husband never holds my hand..."

The Empress wanted to scream.

A Secret in the Backyard

He dropped the heavy bag into her hands.

"Open it."

She did—

Pillow.

Clothes.

Cloak.

Hair ties.

Pregnancy padding.

She stared at him.

Cold.

Unblinking.

"...What is this?"

"You promised," he reminded her calmly.

"If I keep quiet about your faked plague, you will obey anything I say."

She ground her teeth.

"Obey what?!"

"You're going undercover."

His voice was quiet, serious, urgent.

"We are entering the barbaric camp. As a couple. You will be six months pregnant."

She blinked.

"What? Why me?! Why pregnant?! Why—"

He cut her off.

"For the kingdom's safety."

Her anger froze.

He never used that tone unless something truly dangerous was happening.

He held her shoulders lightly.

"This threat is... unnatural. I need you with me. And your spiritual intuition is stronger than anyone's."

She trembled slightly.

He continued:

"I will return tonight to take you along. Prepare yourself. Use the pillow. Look weak. We must blend in."

He stepped back, bowed to her gently—

and left.

The Friend's Reaction

Yao Qing rushed in like a storm.

"WHAT DID HE SAY?! Why did he come? Why do you look like someone stole your soul?!"

The Empress exhaled sharply.

"That bastard wants me to pretend to be pregnant. He wants me to go with him. Somewhere."

Yao Qing's eyes widened.

"That bitch Emperor! Always using you! Cheap man! Good-for-nothing—"

Only the Empress heard her because she whispered furiously under her breath.

Then she grabbed Lian An's hands.

"Don't worry. Twins and the new man will follow from far.

The Empress nodded gratefully.

Having humans and ghosts together...

Yes. That felt safe.

Shadows of Danger

While the Empress prepared—

the Emperor walked away silently, cloak fluttering behind him.

He looked at the setting sun.

"Barbarics who leave no trace...

Ghosts who breed with humans...

Something ancient is waking."

And in the middle of it all—

his wife.

His troublesome, infuriating wife...

Mine, he thought before he could stop it.

Tomorrow, he would enter darkness.

But tonight—

he would return for her.

The Emperor had just turned the corner and vanished into the crowd when Yao Qing exhaled sharply, fanning her face with her hand.

"That cheap Emperor... using you again."

She muttered it low so only the Empress could hear.

But she didn't waste time.

She turned to the scholar ghost floating lazily in the rafters.

"Li Shen!" she called.

Li Shen blinked, confused.

Only the Empress and ghosts could see him.

But standing below him was the living scholar they hired for teaching — the human one — sorting scrolls near the training desks.

"Him," Yao Qing said, pointing to the human scholar.

The Empress raised a brow.

"What do you intend to do?"

Yao Qing straightened her back like a true merchant lady.

"We won't be here. Twins, the new man, you, and me—we're all leaving with that stubborn Emperor."

She huffed.

"So someone must watch the restaurant while we're gone."

Lian An nodded slowly.

That was indeed true.

Then Yao Qing walked to the scholar, tapped his shoulder, and said firmly:

"From today onward, we appoint you as the acting manager of the Whisper Bowl."

The scholar froze mid-breath.

"...M-Me? Manager?"

He looked around, unsure if she spoke to someone behind him.

"Yes, you," Yao Qing confirmed.

She continued calmly:

"You are educated. You write well. You teach well. You know discipline.

And most importantly — you don't cause trouble."

The scholar tried to swallow but had no saliva left.

Yao Qing loosened a small pouch and tossed it into his hands.

It jingled heavily.

"This is your salary—100 silver taels per month."

The scholar dropped the pouch.

Literally.

"ONE... HUNDRED...?!"

His voice cracked.

His entire body shook.

"I—I earn only four taels per month at the academy! F-Four! This... this..."

He stared at the pouch as if it were some divine artifact.

Yao Qing waved her hand.

"We will be gone for a while. You will oversee everything.

Supervise training.

Handle customers if any come asking before opening.

Keep the records straight.

No one questions you."

The Empress nodded gently.

"You will do well. We trust you."

The scholar's face turned red, then pale, then red again.

"I-I ACCEPT!" he shouted, bowing so hard he nearly hit the floor.

Up above, Li Shen the ghost smirked.

"Look at him... acting like they offered him a kingdom," the ghost scoffed.

The Empress rolled her eyes.

You also begged for praise earlier, she thought.