

## I. Dynasty 377

### Chapter 377: Warm Waters of Spring Blossom Pool

“Minister Feng, slow down! The best dishes are still coming,” said Wei Chengmo as he served at Feng Deshui’s side.

He was carefully following Xiao Ming’s orders before his departure. Wei’s Restaurant used to be just fairly well-known in Qingzhou, but now it was booming.

The big difference came after the government purchased the restaurant and spent a fortune to renovate it.

Wei Chengmo had witnessed all the changes personally.

Besides remodeling the place as Prince Qi ordered, the most important upgrade was that the chefs learned many new recipes from the royal kitchen.

That was what turned Wei’s Restaurant from an average place into a must-visit spot for merchants from other regions.

Feng Deshui was making funny faces from the spiciness. He had always loved spicy food, which in the Great Yu Empire usually meant adding dogwood berries. But even that had lost its kick over time—until today. Now he understood what real spicy meant.

Wiping his mouth, Feng Deshui grinned. “This chili pepper is seriously spicy! After eating this spicy chicken, how can I ever enjoy other meals again?”

Seeing his reaction, Wei Chengmo felt proud.

Two years ago, visiting merchants often looked down on Qingzhou. But now their opinions had changed completely.

“Minister Feng, that’s easy.. just stay in Qingzhou a few more days,” Wei Chengmo joked with a smile.

Feng Deshui shook his head. “I’d love to live in Qingzhou, but I’ve got orders from the Emperor. I don’t have a choice. Such a pity.”

While they were chatting, two more dishes arrived: spicy tofu and braised carp—both cooked with chili peppers.

Feng Deshui’s eyes lit up, and he immediately grabbed his chopsticks again.

Dinner lasted about half an hour. Feng Deshui was so full he could barely move.

He couldn’t finish all twelve dishes, but they were too delicious to leave untouched—so he ate a lot from each one.

By now, it was completely dark outside. Red lanterns began glowing throughout the restaurant.

Because there was no electricity, the restaurant's nighttime look would have suffered. That's why Xiao Ming ordered them to hang up extra lanterns.

Now, even at night, the whole place stayed brightly lit.

Once the waiter cleared the dishes, Wei Chengmo said, "Minister Feng, it's getting late. Let me show you how to use the bath. After that, I'll leave you to rest."

Feng Deshui nodded. He had been looking forward to it.

Wei Chengmo took him to the bathroom and explained how to use all the equipment. Then he left the guest room.

Now alone, Feng Deshui smiled playfully like a child. He turned on the faucet at the sink, and water flowed out.

"This place is even more comfortable than the palace! Heh, I really need to find more reasons to come to Qingzhou," he muttered as he admired the running water, then turned off the tap.

Next, he turned the knob on the bathtub. Hot water poured out immediately.

He looked through the window at a water tower next to a cold water tank. On top of the tower was a large iron furnace. Below it, two men were stoking the fire. The hot water flowed directly from that furnace.

“Finally, a hot bath,” he said in bliss, eyes squinting with satisfaction.

Meanwhile, at the King’s residence, Xiao Ming was also enjoying a hot bath.

Even while he had been away, construction in the residence hadn’t stopped.

Now there were two water towers inside the royal estate: one for cold water and one for hot. These towers supplied all the daily water needs.

The hot water tower had a large upright boiler. The top held water, while the bottom burned coal—just like the ones in modern public bathhouses.

Steam filled the bath. Ziyuan and Lu Luo, wrapped in towels, gently scrubbed Xiao Ming’s back.

Their faces were flushed from the heat, looking especially charming.

As she scrubbed his back, Ziyuan said, “Your Highness, now that Minister Feng is here, I suppose we’re heading to Chang’an soon?”

“Of course. His Highness is getting married this time. That Fei Yue’er is truly lucky! After conquering Shanhai Pass, His Highness is destined to shine even brighter,” Lu Luo said, pouting playfully.

Xiao Ming lounged lazily in the tub—this was his most relaxing time of day.

Lu Luo was scrubbing his arms while Ziyuan stood behind him, massaging his shoulders. As her body swayed slightly, something soft gently brushed against his head.

At that moment, he finally understood why power was so addictive.

When you stand at the top, the world spins in your palm. ‘To hold the power of the empire while lying in a beauty’s lap’—what a life of elegance and charm.

While the girls were chatting, Xiao Ming suddenly pulled Lu Luo into the tub with him.

With a surprised cry, Lu Luo’s towel slipped off completely. Her fair skin was now in his arms. Xiao Ming playfully lifted her chin and said, “How bold—daring to gossip about the princess! I should punish you.”

Lu Luo blushed like a red apple. Their bodies touched, and her heart pounded uncontrollably.

Even though he tilted her chin up, she didn't dare meet his eyes.

Xiao Ming laughed heartily. 'This is my second life—I'll live it exactly how I want.'

Seeing Lu Luo so shy, he certainly wasn't going to act reserved.

Ziyuan, much more confident, said softly, "This servant is willing to accept punishment."

Smiling, she stepped in front of Xiao Ming and untied her towel. With a seductive look, she said, "Your Highness, the royal wedding is near. The Empress sent a message that it's time for you to learn about intimacy. Why don't you let us serve you tonight?"

Lu Luo also understood this custom. In the Great Yu Empire, men and women were usually taught about such things before marriage. Families often prepared the bride and groom for intimacy in advance.

Apparently, Consort Zhen still saw Xiao Ming as an innocent boy. That's why Xiao Ming had once asked her for Ziyuan and Lu Luo during his previous life.

Though he was a bit surprised Ziyuan brought it up herself, no man could refuse such an offer.

Looking at their smooth, creamy skin, Xiao Ming smiled.

He reminded himself once again: 'I'm no longer the Xiao Ming from the modern world—I am the seventh prince of the Great Yu Empire.'

Warm steam filled the room. But what was even warmer was the fire in his heart.

Just like the poem:

"In the spring chill, she bathed in the Blossom Pool; warm spring water slid over her smooth skin. The handmaid lifted her tender frame—thus began the time of royal favor."