

I. Dynasty 385

Chapter 385: Assassination

In the dark of the night, only the lanterns cast a faint glow.

Xiao Ming looked at the Third Prince's face, which appeared hazy and unclear in the candlelight. A sense of displeasure rose within him, and he couldn't help but ask, "Third Brother, what do you mean by that?"

"No special meaning, I just wanted to tell you, this is Chang'an. Some people aren't fit to be here," the Third Prince said, still smiling.

Xiao Ming's expression turned cold. He understood that his presence in Chang'an had clearly displeased the royal princes who viewed Chang'an as their territory.

With a calm glance at Xiao Zhen, Xiao Ming replied, "Thank you for the warning, Third Brother. But this is the Great Yu Empire, and Chang'an is Father Emperor's domain. Whether I stay here or not is for Father Emperor to decide. Others have no right to say otherwise."

The smile on the Third Prince's face slowly froze. Xiao Ming's words struck a nerve.

The scene at the family banquet, where Xiao Wenxuan treated Xiao Ming as an equal, was still vivid in his mind. Now, in Xiao Wenxuan's eyes, Xiao Ming's status was on par with theirs.

“Hmph!” The Third Prince coldly said, “Seventh Brother, your achievements are remarkable, and I have no objections to that. But just because I accept it doesn’t mean everyone else will. I’ll stop here, you can figure it out yourself.”

With that, the Third Prince dropped the curtain and his carriage gradually disappeared into the darkness.

Xiao Ming stared at the departing carriage, his brows furrowing. He didn’t fully understand why Xiao Zhen had chosen to act in such a way.

Shaking his head, Xiao Ming also began his journey toward the palace, guarded by his soldiers.

Inside the carriage, Xiao Ming continued to ponder the unusual behavior of the Third Prince. The more he thought about it, the more uneasy he became.

As he gazed out at the endless night, a sense of unease crept into his heart. Just as the Third Prince had said, this was Chang’an, not Qingzhou.

He couldn’t fully grasp the situation here.

While he was lost in thought, a sudden sound of a bowstring being released pierced the silence. In the pitch-black night, the sound was extremely clear.

Instantly, Xiao Ming’s body went rigid, his hairs standing on end.

“Assassin! Protect His Highness!” Zhao Long and Zhao Hu, who had heard the sound of the bowstring, immediately shouted.

At once, over a hundred elite cavalymen who were assigned to protect Xiao Ming formed a tight circle around his carriage.

“Assassins!” The soldiers shouted.

The sound of bowstrings being released continued. Xiao Ming heard the constant “thunk, thunk” of arrows hitting the wooden frame of the carriage, and the screams of soldiers and the whinnying of horses filled the air.

After the attempt on his life in Qingzhou, Xiao Ming had strengthened his security measures. For this trip to Chang’an, he had specially prepared firearms for self-defense.

In the face of danger, he instinctively reached for the firearms hidden inside the carriage.

“Your Highness, the enemy is in the dark, and we can’t see them. Please, stay inside the carriage and don’t come out!” Zhao Long’s voice was filled with urgency.

Being attacked in the darkness left them with no choice but to fight defensively.

Xiao Ming glanced at the box inside the carriage. It was filled with fireworks, which had been prepared for use at the wedding. An idea struck him, and he instructed Zhao Long and Zhao Hu to bring the box outside. He called out, "Quickly, these are fireworks. Once they explode, everyone will see us, and the light will help you spot the enemies."

Zhao Long and Zhao Hu, who had been guarding the carriage, immediately carried the box outside and, using torches, lit the fireworks and sent them flying into the sky.

"Boom boom..."

Six consecutive fireworks exploded in the air, lighting up the ground as bright as day.

At that moment, Xiao Ming saw a group of figures in black closing in on them from the front. There were hundreds of them. He lifted the curtain of the carriage again and looked behind. There were also hundreds of black-clad figures approaching from behind.

The arrows on both sides had not ceased, and they were now surrounded.

Outside the carriage, Zhao Long and Zhao Hu also saw the black-clad figures. The cavalymen, who had been shot by arrows, had lost half their numbers but were still in the fight.

"Zhao Hu, protect His Highness. The rest, follow me!" Zhao Long shouted.

Despite being attacked, the cavalry protecting Xiao Ming didn't panic. These soldiers had experienced the battle at Jizhou, and the slaughter on the battlefield had forged their steel-like will. They drew their sabers, and half the cavalry charged toward the black-clad figures.

The injured soldiers didn't give up fighting either. They clustered around the carriage, using their bodies to block the incoming arrows.

These cavalymen wore breastplates, which, although not as strong as plate armor, were much thicker and more durable, designed to withstand bullets. While many soldiers were injured, most of the damage was to their arms and thighs, and the armor protected their heads from the arrows.

Seeing Zhao Long lead the charge, Zhao Hu wasn't idle either. He cursed loudly, "You cowards hiding in the shadows, today I'll show you how to behave."

While speaking, Zhao Long handed out more fireworks to the soldiers, shouting, "Aim the fireworks at these dogs and blow them up!"

Zhao Long lit another rocket and shot it directly into the crowd of black-clad figures.

"Boom!"

The firework exploded among the black-clad figures, and several screams rang out as the light from the explosion illuminated the area.

The black-clad figures, like ghosts, had already closed in on the carriage, now less than twenty meters away.

At this moment, other soldiers also lit various kinds of fireworks, some of which were rocket-type fireworks that would shoot for a full minute. These fireworks, once lit, kept the area lit up.

“Kill!” Zhao Long, with over twenty cavalymen in a tight formation, charged fiercely toward the black-clad figures, cutting through the enemy with the sounds of battle and screams.

But while they managed to block the black-clad figures behind them, they couldn’t pay attention to the ones coming from the front.

“Kill!”

The black-clad figures charged into the ten-meter range around the carriage and let out a battle cry. Each of them held short swords and rushed toward Xiao Ming.

Zhao Long threw a firework at the ground and, along with the other soldiers, surrounded the carriage, his eyes fierce as he looked toward the black-clad figures. “If you want to kill His Highness, you’ll have to step over our bodies.”

He drew his saber and stood in front of the carriage.

At this moment, the black-clad figures reached the front of the carriage, and the guards immediately clashed with them.

Xiao Ming sat inside the carriage, watching the scene unfold. He realized that his trip to Chang'an would not be peaceful, but he hadn't expected someone would try to kill him.

Thinking back to the warning from the Third Prince outside the palace gates, a cold sweat ran down Xiao Ming's back.

If it wasn't the Third Prince's doing, then this must have been premeditated—someone was trying to kill him quickly.

The number of black-clad figures continued to increase, and the scene of Zhao Long and the guards fighting the attackers played out before Xiao Ming like a movie.

A cruel smile appeared at the corner of Xiao Ming's mouth as he leapt up, drawing two firearms and shooting at the two black-clad figures charging at Zhao Long.

"Bang, bang!"

The two black-clad figures, who had just reached Zhao Long, fell to the ground as the shots rang out.