

## **I. Dynasty 387**

### Chapter 387: Clues

Chang'an city was destined to be restless tonight.

When Du Heng arrived with the military token at the Left and Right Guards' headquarters, the army immediately mobilized. Soldiers held torches as they poured into the streets and alleys of Chang'an.

"Keep up! Search everyone! The Emperor's order is clear: turn Chang'an upside down if needed to catch the assassin!"

The streets looked deep and dark in the night. Du Heng's gaze was cold and sharp.

He had followed Xiao Wenxuan for a long time, so he knew well the status of Prince Qi in Xiao Wenxuan's eyes. Especially after Xiao Ming took Shanhai pass, Xiao Wenxuan had been talking about Xiao Ming almost every day lately.

Because it was Prince Qi's repeated military victories that slowly erased Great Yu's disgrace of the past years. The rise of a strong royal prince made the other feudal lords tone down their arrogance one by one.

"Yes, sir!"

At the order, fierce soldiers flooded into every street and alley of Chang'an. This time, whether commoners or nobles, no one could stop the Left and Right Guards from searching. This showed how furious Xiao Wenxuan was.

While Du Heng was commanding the search, suddenly the gate of a mansion opened. A man came out while putting on his clothes.

When he saw Du Heng, he couldn't help but ask, "General Du, what is going on? Why such a big mobilization?"

"It's Fei Zhongshu," Du Heng said.

Seeing him, Du Heng lowered his guard and said, "Fei Zhongshu, you don't know. Prince Qi was attacked when returning from a family dinner. I have orders to search the whole city."

"Someone attacked Prince Qi!" Fei Ji was shocked and quickly asked, "Is the Prince safe now?"

"His Highness is safe, but many of his guards were killed or injured. The Emperor is furious about this."

"To be so reckless under the Emperor's nose is lawlessness," Fei Ji was furious. Xiao Ming was his future son-in-law. Naturally, he was very angry.

While they talked, some soldiers tried to rush into Fei's mansion to search. Du Heng shouted, "Don't search Fei Zhongshu's house now, don't disturb Miss Fei."

Fei Ji said, "General Du, since it's the Emperor's order, the search must happen. I don't want people talking badly about me."

Hearing this, Du Heng said, "If so, then I must offend you."

Fei Ji nodded and went inside with Du Heng.

The outside noise also woke up Fei Yue'er. She and Xiao Huan came out of their rooms. Seeing Fei Ji, they asked, "Father, what's wrong?"

Fei Ji sighed and told them about the assassination attempt on Xiao Ming.

Fei Yue'er and Xiao Huan turned pale with fright, but when they learned Xiao Ming was safe, Fei Yue'er breathed a sigh of relief. She said, "To dare assassinate the Prince on his first day in the city — Father, who would be so bold?"

"Who benefits most if Prince Qi dies?" Fei Ji wondered aloud.

Such a reckless move showed the force behind it was desperate.

"Of course, the Crown Prince. Prince Qi is favored and has military achievements. Isn't this exactly like the Emperor years ago? And the Emperor plans to move the capital to Bianzhou. The palace would then be right under Prince Qi's watch," Fei Yue'er said, frowning.

Fei Ji paced back and forth, thinking hard. "If you understand this, others will too. Though the Crown Prince is foolish, he is not surrounded by fools. Well, before things are clear, let's not guess wildly."

Fei Yue'er nodded slightly, her bright eyes full of worry.

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The next morning.

Xiao Ming got up early. Last night, Consort Zhen was so scared after hearing about the assassination that she cried. Only after his comfort did she calm down.

He had not slept all night, thinking about who wanted to kill him. After much thought, it seemed many people had reasons.

His only clue now was the vague words from the Third Prince when he left.

But he knew if he confronted the Third Prince now, he would deny everything, and those words meant little.

After a simple meal, he went straight to the Imperial Hospital. The injured guards from last night were there being treated. Hearing that more than twenty guards could not be saved, Xiao Ming's heart tightened.

"Your Highness, the Imperial Doctors say Zhao Hu cannot survive," Zhao Long, who had stayed up all night caring for the soldiers, said.

"That's good, that's good," Xiao Ming patted Zhao Long on the shoulder. They had been together for a long time; there was naturally some feeling between them.

Zhao Long sighed and said, "Such a pity for those twenty soldiers. They did not die fighting barbarians but died at the hands of their own people."

"That's wrong. These assassins are barbarians, not our people."

While they talked, a voice came from a corner. An old man in a black night robe with a long beard stepped out.

"Doctor Wu!" Xiao Ming recognized the doctor. In his previous life, Doctor Wu always treated him when he was ill. In the Imperial Hospital, Doctor Wu was famous for his excellent medical skills.

“Your Highness,” Wu Shangke bowed to Xiao Ming. “The assassins’ bodies are in the morgue. I have examined them. Although they look like Great Yu people, careful inspection shows they are mostly descendants of barbarians and Great Yu slaves.”

“Bastards!” Zhao Long cursed.

Though rude, Zhao Long’s words were true. If Doctor Wu was right, these people were likely children of barbarians and slaves.

“Is it barbarians who want to kill me?” Xiao Ming asked uncertainly.

Zhao Long thought for a moment. “It’s possible. The barbarians trained a group of mixed-blood soldiers to infiltrate Great Yu and carry out assassinations. When Shanhai pass was captured, this mixed-blood army played a big role. They infiltrated and assassinated the general guarding the pass, causing the defenders to lose leadership.”

Xiao Ming nodded. Without the Third Prince’s warning, he would have believed it was the barbarians.

But now, he had doubts.

“Doctor Wu, can you be sure?” Xiao Ming asked again.

“Yes. Barbarians have curly hair. These men’s hair is loose, but eight or nine out of ten have the same trait. Generally, children of barbarian men and Great Yu women have this feature,” Doctor Wu explained.

“Your Highness, I must report this to the Emperor. Excuse me.”

Xiao Ming nodded. “I am going to meet Father in the front hall. Let’s go together.”

Then the two of them went to the front hall.