

I. Dynasty 390

Chapter 390: Using a Borrowed Knife to Kill?

The sounds of fighting kept echoing in the Eastern Palace.

As soldiers poured in, the shouting and fighting gradually lessened. Soon, Du Heng brought thirteen people before Xiao Wenxuan.

Seeing their clothes, anger rose in Xiao Wenxuan's face. His body shook and he almost fell.

"Father!" Xiao Ming quickly helped steady him.

After closing his eyes and resting for a while, Xiao Wenxuan slowly straightened and sighed. He asked, "Crown Prince, how do you explain this now?"

The thirteen looked much like Great Yu people, but they wore barbarian clothes, had messy hair, and most importantly, their hair was slightly curly—a barbarian trait, same as the group who tried to kill Xiao Ming.

"Father... Father, this..." The Crown Prince was so anxious tears nearly fell.

"Speak!" Xiao Wenxuan suddenly drew Du Heng's sword in anger and pointed it at the Crown Prince.

The Crown Prince's face turned pale from fear. He stammered, "Father, I really did not try to kill Xiao Ming. These are slaves I bought, just for playing with me."

“Playing? Playing what?” Xiao Wenxuan’s face flushed with anger.

This was the Crown Prince—the future heir of Great Yu. Regardless of whether he tried to assassinate Xiao Ming, hiding barbarians in the Eastern Palace was unforgivable. Even if half were Great Yu blood, any commoner knew their hearts belonged to the barbarians.

“Playing... playing...” The Crown Prince lay on the ground, breathing hard. Though not smart, he knew this was no excuse.

“Your Majesty, have mercy!”

Just as tension reached a breaking point, a voice came. Everyone turned to see Empress Zhao approaching with the concubines.

“Mother! Save me!”

Seeing Empress Zhao arrive, the Crown Prince grabbed her feet desperately.

Xiao Wenxuan was still angry and sneered, “You sure get news fast. Did you already know the Crown Prince was hiding barbarians in the Eastern Palace? I trusted your Zhao family so much—this is how you repay me?”

Empress Zhao didn't know what had happened.

But when she heard Xiao Wenxuan brought many soldiers into the Eastern Palace, she sensed something was wrong and went there.

She hadn't expected to see Xiao Wenxuan pointing a sword at the Crown Prince, so she stepped in to save him.

Kneeling before Xiao Wenxuan, she said, "Your Majesty, I don't know what the Crown Prince did to anger you, but he is still your son and the heir. Please let him explain."

"Fine, fine. Let him explain where these barbarians came from," Xiao Wenxuan said angrily.

Empress Zhao helped the Crown Prince up and urgently asked, "What is going on? Tell your father clearly."

Supported by Empress Zhao, the Crown Prince quietly said, "I bought these barbarians specifically to pretend to be barbarians for fun. I played the role of the barbarian Khan, and they played the taiji and generals."

Hearing this, Xiao Wenxuan's sword hand weakened and lowered. "What a Great Yu Crown Prince, future king. You actually like playing barbarian Khan? Ridiculous and shameful!"

By the end, Xiao Wenxuan almost shouted.

Empress Zhao's face also turned cold. She slapped the Crown Prince and scolded, "You always fool around, but now you can't even tell right from wrong! The barbarians are Great Yu's enemies. How can you play such an absurd game?"

The Crown Prince had expected Empress Zhao to defend him, but this slap stunned him. Now he finally realized how serious this was.

At this moment, Du Heng hesitated and said, "Your Majesty, wounds were found on these people, probably from last night."

Du Heng's words completely ignited Xiao Wenxuan's anger. He said, "Seal off the Eastern Palace immediately. Until the investigation is complete, no one may enter or leave without my order."

"Yes, Your Majesty!" Du Heng replied.

Though Empress Zhao wanted to plead for the Crown Prince, she knew this was not the time. And she had to know about the assassination attempt on Xiao Ming—it could be either a big or small matter.

The Crown Prince's face was deathly pale. Sealing the Eastern Palace was basically house arrest. He looked at Xiao Ming with hatred and cursed, "You despicable man! This must be your plot. Xiao Ming, you think making some merit means you can replace me? Dream on! Dream on!"

Xiao Ming sneered coldly and ignored the hysterical Crown Prince. He walked with Xiao Wenxuan back to the palace, leaving the Crown Prince's screams behind.

After bringing the captured assassins from the Eastern Palace back to the palace, Xiao Wenxuan ordered Du Heng to immediately take them for interrogation.

Then he asked seriously, "You knew the Crown Prince was suspicious when you came to me, right?"

"Yes. Father must already know I went to Third Brother's mansion," Xiao Ming said.

"Hmph. Second, third, and fourth brothers are no fools. This time, they really found a reason to remove the heir. But Ming'er, don't be used by them as their killing sword."

At this moment, Xiao Wenxuan's eyes were very deep, as if he knew everything.

Xiao Ming pondered a moment and said, "Father, rest assured, I won't easily believe them."

"Good. Then do you believe it was the Crown Prince who tried to kill you?"

"No," Xiao Ming said frankly. Just as Xiao Wenxuan said, he didn't want to be anyone's killing sword.

Xiao Wenxuan nodded lightly. "You are smart. Don't worry, I will give you justice and find the real mastermind. For now, prepare for your wedding. It's soon, and I don't want this matter to affect your marriage to Fei Yue'er. You may leave for now."

Xiao Ming nodded and bowed in farewell.

Now that things reached this point, Xiao Ming could only wait for Xiao Wenxuan's answer.

The more others wanted to use him to remove the Crown Prince, the more he would resist. Instead, he would use this matter to find the true mastermind.

Leaving the palace, Xiao Ming returned to his temporary mansion in Chang'an.

Before reaching it, he saw many carriages parked in front. Stopping at the gate, someone came up to him — it was Prince Wei.