

M. Slaying 84

Chapter 84: A Private Meeting

Observing the sudden gentleness displayed by Lord Xia, Chu Liang could only sigh inwardly. The effectiveness of the Evil-Dispelling Spell, though a bit cunning, had proven to be quite useful.

However, the effect of this spell could only last for a certain period. It was estimated that Lord Xia would regain his senses after tonight, and by then, he might harbor some resentment toward Chu Liang. Yet, once the incident had passed, there was nothing he could do to Chu Liang.

To conceal his own secret, Chu Liang had no choice but to allow Lord Xia to endure undeserved hardship.

Watching Lord Xia silently shoulder the blame, Xue Lingxue also remained quiet. As a musician, she knew well that this sandalwood kite-shaped guqin couldn't possibly be fake. When the strings broke, she felt such immense emotional pain.

The root cause of the broken strings was her attempt to test Chu Liang. It seemed to have triggered an abnormal phenomenon within Chu Liang's body, resulting in this unfortunate incident.

Her probing had revealed that Chu Liang's cultivation level was not high, but there seemed to be something secretive within his body. Perhaps, that was the reason behind his ability to unleash that powerful sword technique.

In the cultivation world, having some secrets was not uncommon. Even Xue Lingxue herself had her own secrets. She felt that it would be rather presumptuous of her if she were to accidentally glimpse into Chu Liang's secret. Revealing it publicly would be even more inappropriate.

Therefore, she could only remain silent, allowing the situation to be speculated by others, ultimately leading to an unfavorable direction for Lord Xia. For the sake of protecting Chu Liang, she could only let Lord Xia endure this undeserved hardship.

Lord Xia sat back down in his seat. However, he then felt quite aggrieved.

After all, he had gifted a high-quality guqin, and now everyone was looking at him as if he were a liar. He certainly didn't feel happy about it, but he couldn't express anger either. All his emotions turned into a sense of grievance for the time being.

Xue Lingxue injured her finger. She gracefully bowed to the guests and then left the stage to attend to her wound. In reality, a wound of this degree meant nothing to a cultivator. Even if left untreated, it would heal on its own after a while.

It was merely an excuse to exit the scene.

Everyone was aware of this fact. While the inner disciples of the South Melody Conservatory would be present to provide a prelude performance for the guests, they weren't expected to mingle like typical musicians or performers or engage in conversations and toast with higher-status individuals.

After the performance, even if she hadn't been injured, she would, at most, sit down for a simple meal before finding an excuse to leave.

After Xue Lingxue departed, it seemed like the banquet was just beginning. The distinguished guests of South Gate City mingled and began socializing, toasting and chatting.

Chu Liang, watching Lin Bei integrate into the core social circle of South Gate City and engage with the elite members, reluctantly drew him aside.

"What's up?" Lin Bei smiled. "I still have some socializing to do over there."

"Don't forget why we're here..." Chu Liang whispered. "If you have a chance, ask the Lord of the Marquessate about the sister of Miss Xiaoyu'er."

"Why don't you ask?" Lin Bei was puzzled.

"I can't," Chu Liang said as he shook his head, looking at Lord Xia leaving the hall and his figure gradually distancing. "Considering the performance just now, he might resent me."

"He seemed pretty calm when he was talking to you just now. I think Lord Xia has a good temper," Lin Bei commented.

"Just because he showed a good temper earlier doesn't mean that his temper will always be good..."

Chu Liang wasn't sure about the exact duration of the effect of the Evil-Dispelling Spell, so he would rather not take the risk.

"Alright, I'll go find out," Lin Bei replied.

He waved to Chu Liang and left the hall, chasing after Xia An.

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Lord Xia walked out of the banquet hall, with the black-clad Master Lu following closely behind, never leaving his side.

A servant from the Marquess' residence appeared very anxious outside the hall. Upon seeing Lord Xia, the servant exclaimed, "Lord Xia, something bad happened at the boat cabin!"

"What happened?" Xia An inquired.

The servant lowered his voice as he said, "The woman you had Master Lu send over yesterday escaped!"

"She escaped?" Lord Xia frowned and asked, "How could a weak woman escape from a tightly guarded boat cabin?"

"She's not an ordinary woman; she... she's a demon!" The servant panicked. "She rescued a cabin full of women. Thanks to our sufficient manpower, we managed to capture the other women promptly. But that demon hasn't been caught yet. A team of warriors is currently chasing her along the Qinnan River."

"We mustn't let anyone know about the cabin. We must capture her, dead or alive! Lord Xia gritted his teeth as he spoke.

The servant had no choice but to nod in response. "Yes..."

Lord Xia turned back and said, "I have another meeting with the members of the Eastern Whale Division. Master Lu, you should head back first. I can't trust others to handle things."

"Yes."

Master Lu wasted no words, swiftly vanishing into the vast night.

After that, Lord Xia continued forward, traversing a courtyard until he arrived at a small pavilion nestled among the trees. He sat down inside the pavilion.

A burly man stepped into the courtyard. He bore a striking resemblance to Xue Hu of the Eastern Whale Division, whom Lord Xia had met just the other day.

Xue Hu had indeed infiltrated this banquet for this discreet meeting. It was Xue Hu's suggestion to use this banquet as the meeting place. Recently, there has been a lot of tension in the Four Seas Whale Gang. By using the banquet as a cover, their private meeting would arouse less suspicion.

Xue Hu cupped his hands together in greeting. "Lord Xia."

Their previous encounter had been far from pleasant, leaving matters unresolved as Xia An departed abruptly, leaving Xue Hu alone. Nevertheless, Lord Xia didn't cause a scene during their last interaction, and Xue Hu maintained his composure and politeness during this second meeting.

"Brother Xue, how have you been?" Lord Xia carried on as if the unpleasantness from their last meeting hadn't occurred. He greeted Xue Hu with a smile before inquiring, "What are Master Cheng's thoughts on the issue I pointed out during our previous conversation?"

"I conveyed your exact words to Master Cheng. His stance is that, even if the collaboration continues, after the completion of the next shipment, we must temporarily suspend operations for one or two months. Discussions about continuation will be held later. Xu Bashan's daughter has been leading a crew to investigate the activities of the Eastern Whale Division and the situation is very tense. We absolutely cannot give her any chance to find evidence that they can use to control us," Xue Hu explained.

"If it's a short-term suspension, we naturally have no objections." Lord Xia nodded in agreement. "In any case, we need some time to prepare the goods. At worst, we will simply accumulate them."

"Thank you for understanding," Xue Hu expressed his gratitude and then inquired, "So, when is our next shipment scheduled?"

"It will take place on the night of Xue Lingxue's performance. At that time, the entire city's attention will be focused on the estate, making our river boats highly inconspicuous," Lord Xia decided.

Xue Hu nodded. "That's excellent."

Foregoing further pleasantries, he turned to leave.

Suddenly, he detected a subtle stir in the nearby woods.

His gaze sharpened, and a surge of apprehension mixed with a hint of hostility erupted as he sternly demanded, "Who's there?"

Whoosh!

Almost immediately upon speaking, he darted forward like a leopard, arriving in an instant.

As a core member of the Eastern Whale Division and a martial artist who had been through countless battles, Xue Hu's murderous aura heightened as he deftly cut through the bushes in the vicinity.

Then, he saw a young man with thick eyebrows and big eyes, seemingly intoxicated, lifting his trousers and looking frightened.

The young man shook his head, sobering up a bit, and shouted at Xue Hu, "What's the matter? Haven't you seen anyone relieving themselves before?"