

Medical Princess 161

Chapter 161 The Two Purses That Was Sent Out

There was no flaw in Madam Di's words. She even said in a very generous and decent way. Nobody could find out any fault in whatever aspect of her words. However, Qin Wanru still antagonized her when Madam Di had an advantage in the event now.

"General, just look... Wanru now doesn't know the true meaning of the filial piety at all. She is very willful! We are now in the capital city, not Jiangzhou where we used to live. Young Ladies from aristocratic families are now everywhere in this city. Let alone our mansion, any lady from a noble aristocratic family in the capital city dare not be so willful like her!"

When finding out that Qin Wanru stood out again, Madam Di looked very sorrowful. She wiped her tears with a handkerchief, pretended to be very heart-struck and said, "When I cared for Wanru, she had been a very innocent girl!"

She meant that Shui Ruolan failed in educating Qin Wanru well when she raised her up. It was in a short time that Qin Wanru had become so willful. And Qin Huaiyong would not let her be wayward like this so it would be better for him to punish Qin Wanru heavily.

At that time, Shui Ruolan would be much heartbroken and sad. It would be better to add fuel to the flame!

Qin Huaiyong frowned and set his eyes on Qin Wanru. He looked a little bit angry and asked, "Wanru, do you know what you are talking about?"

"Father, it is the old maid who caused this trouble deliberately," Qin Wanru answered calmly, looking into Qin Huaiyong's eyes.

"What do you mean?" Qin Huaiyong sunk his voice to ask.

A satisfied look came into Madam Di's eyes. She knew that Qin Huaiyong was a little bit angry. That would be great! She was afraid that Qin Huaiyong wouldn't get irritated at all. She believed that Qin Wanru was unable to explain Qionghua's trouble.

If this event was inexplicable, then however Qin Wanru said well she would be punished in the end. She was only a little mean girl who knew nothing and even tried to meddle in this mess. How dare she!

"Well, it could be considered as a surprise! I have thought that it is not enough to only punish Qionghua. It would be better to make Shui Ruolan feel more sorrow."

"Father, the old maid is ill-disposed! I have evidence!" said Qin Wanru.

"What?" asked Qin Huaiyong.

Madam Di's heart suddenly raced. She subconsciously looked at Nanny Zhou beside her and felt relieved when seeing Nanny Zhou's impassive face. She was terrified of the girl's words and even thought that she did have some evidence just now.

“What kind of evidence could be left by this event? There is no material evidence at all. The old maid is very careful and there must be no witness.”

Thinking for a while, Madam Di smiled lightly. She stared at Qin Wanru, with seeming kindness. It seemed that Qin Wanru was unreasonable. Now her character setting was very like the one she had many years ago. In front of Qin Huaiyong, she always pretended to treat Qin Wanru very well, even better than Qin Yuru sometimes, just in order to show her real motherly care.

Qing Yue who was behind Qin Wanru now stood out. After bowing to Qin Huaiyong, she pointed at the old maid and said, “General, I have seen this old maid before. She arrived here earlier than me. She even walked to the bird’s nest porridge and looked around. I have heard from my Lady that the bird’s nest porridge is cooked for Madam Shui. She doesn’t want to have it all by herself so she gave half of the porridge to my Lady. However, there are many bowls here!”

While saying, Qing Yue let Yujie and Qionghua make way and show all people the four medium-sized stoves, on which there were three same bowls of bird’s nest porridge.

From the outward appearance, they looked exactly the same.

Qin Huaiyong stunned and then he turned and squinted at Madam Di.

Madam Di’s heart raced again. She quickly calmed down and feared that Qin Huaiyong would discover something from her expression. She said, “General, I asked the kitchen to cook bird’s nest porridge for Yuru and me. About the bird’s nest, I let the purchaser of our mansion buy it for me. If you still don’t believe me, you could send servants to check!”

In case that she would get involved in this matter, she deliberately let the purchaser buy it.

The cause of this matter was the bird’s nest porridge.

When Madam Di finished, opening her eyes wide, Qionghua gazed at Madam Di with astonishment. Needless to say, she must think in this way just now.

“General, couldn’t my Madam cook some bird’s nest porridge in our mansion?” Realizing Madam Di’s intention, Nanny Zhou quickly helped her Madam and said.

What problem could have when an official Madam of the General cooked bird’s nest in her house? The question sounded like that Madam Di was repressed by Shui Ruolan and she even could not have bird’s nest porridge.

Qin Huaiyong frowned tightly. He looked slightly irritated.

“Madam, I heard from grandmother that Duke Yong’s Mansion has returned lots of bird’s nests as presents when you came back from Duke Yong’s Mansion. Then why would you buy bird’s nest from outside? Or are those bird’s nest on sale outside better than those given by Duke Yong’s Mansion?” Qin Wanru asked with smiling eyes.

Her question was unexpected and hard to answer. If Madam Di said no, then why would she still purchase bird’s nest from outside? If answering yes, then she would lose Duke Yong’s Mansion’s face.

“Well, Madam doesn’t want to eat that bird’s nest now because those given by Duke Yong’s Mansion were extremely good. She also wants to give some to Old Grandma and Madam Shui.” Seeing things going wrong, she quickly helped Madam Di and explained stiffly.

“Is that Madam Di?”

Qin Huaiyong’s eyes flickered but he said nothing.

“Well, you are so kind. I must thank you for my mother and grandmother!” Qin Wanru smiled, bowed sideways, turned and looked at the old maid. “Nanny Zhou, could you please explain that why the old maid would stay in the kitchen during the time from the point that Qing Yue has come back from the kitchen to that Qionghua came in? She is a new servant. She didn’t leave but still stayed and did nothing in the kitchen. What was she doing on earth in the kitchen during such a long time?”

“When Qing Yue came back, it even took me some time to arrive at the kitchen. The time the old maid spent in the kitchen was over the time that we made a round trip time from our court to the kitchen.” Yujie proved.

“Tell me what was going on,” said Qin Huaiyong coldly. Nobody knew he was asking the old maid or Nanny Zhou.

Nanny Zhou gaped and flustered. She didn’t expect that there would be something like this. She didn’t know how to answer. She set her eyes on the old maid and gave her a sign furtively.

The old maid quickly understood. She struggled to sit on kneeling with her hands still covering her chest at once and said, “General, I just wanted to see whether the bird’s nest porridge was okay. Madam likes the bird’s nest being stewed rotten. I was to leave but when I found out that the bird’s nest porridge didn’t cater to Madam’s demand so I waited for a while. Then, the servant girl of Madam Shui came!”

After answering the question, she even coughed painfully deliberately, seeming that she was very weak.

“Ah, no wonder you have left for so long!” Nanny Zhou seemed to take a tumble. She turned and said reverently to Qin Huaiyong, “General, the old maid is new here. I fear that she doesn’t know my Madam so I especially told her that Madam likes the bird’s nest porridge being stewed very, very rotten. And I let her not be eager to take the porridge. I just said so casually but I didn’t know she is so die-hard and even waited here!”

Seeing Nanny Zhou and the old maid echoing each other and finding out that a satisfied look flickered in Madam Di’s eyes, Qin Wanru gave a dirty look. “The old maid totally is an old fox! How could she make up such a seemingly sound reason.”

“Then why would she give a purse to the kitchen supervisor furtively to my face?” Qing Yue asked loudly. She pointed at an old maid hiding in the throng. “I was also curious why there would be other two bowls of bird’s nest porridge. Then I saw her giving a purse to the supervisor and she even glanced at me. It seemed that she gave out the purse just in order to let me find out!”

“Yes! She did! I also saw her giving out the purse! To my face! She did it very furtively and seemed to hide her behavior from me. However, she just did it in a way that I could see clearly. She gave the purse to this supervisor!” Qionghua now became sober. She pointed at another supervisor hiding in the

throng. "That old maid was also glancing at me while I wanted to check whether my Madam's bird's nest porridge was okay!"

The two identified supervisors tried to hide into the crowd while the crowd parted and showed them clearly.

"What was going on then?" Qin Huaiyong set his cold eyes on the two old maids directly.

They looked at each other and suddenly knelt down.

"General, she just let me care for her Madam's bird's nest porridge and let us do our best. She also said that the purse was given by Madam Di."

"Yes! Yes! It is true! There was no other thing!"

The two maids dare not hide anything and answered hurriedly.

"However, the old maid gave the two supervisors the purses especially when Qing Yue or Qionghua could see them. Weird! She seemed to let Qing Yue and Qionghua be able to see her giving purses to supervisors deliberately! The two servant girls didn't know Madam Di let the purchaser buy bird's nest. Moreover, what she did is very dubious! She just wanted the kitchen to stew the bird's nest in a better way and then she gave the supervisors two purses. How rich Madam Di is!"

Qin Wanru exclaimed.

"Well, that, that's my order. I fear that the kitchen would mess Madam Di's porridge for the kitchen now consider Madam Shui's health as their most important thing!" Nanny Zhou quickly lowered her head and answered.

What she meant was that the kitchen only focused on Shui Ruolan but didn't care about Madam Di. As an official Madam in the mansion, she had to spend money to let the kitchen take more care of her foods when she wanted to enjoy her foods in a comfortable way.

However, when Qin Huaiyong heard this answer, there was a cold and serious look in his eyes. Although he didn't like Madam Di and didn't try to let the kitchen treat her in a bad way, if these words were spread out, then not only Madam Di would lose face but also Duke Yong's Mansion. They would not leave this thing alone.

"Cousin, it seems that there is a mystery in the event. Then I want to catch them all and question them!" Now Shui Ruolan had understood the whole thing. A hint of anger flashed upon her eyes.

"Sister, are you okay with your health? If you get irritated then, it might hurt you. Moreover, one of them is your servant!" Madam Di pretended to care about her but when she looked at Shui Ruolan's face, a defiant look was in her eyes. What she meant was that Shui Ruolan should step out this matter.

"Well, when you were to punish Qionghua, your words didn't accord with your behavior then. The old maid is your servant, isn't she?" Qin Wanru didn't want to let her be so satisfied. If Shui Ruolan needed to step out, so did Madam Di. She smiled with a corner of her mouth upward and said, "What's more, there is another thing. I want to tell everyone and let Madam Di make a comment on it!"

Madam Di was shocked and felt subconsciously that thing would go worse!

Chapter 162 To Make You Unspeakable

"What? Say it," asked Madam Di.

"I just want to ask why these bowls which the porridge is poured into are the same. If there is a mistake, then what should we do when the unborn boy in mother's belly might be hurt?"

Qin Wanru said calmly.

"Madam, why would you want to have bird's nest porridge like mother's especially? I remember that you used to do not like that porridge. I still remember once that the kitchen misunderstood your meaning and cooked bird's nest porridge instead of bird's nest thick soup. Then because of this, you even beat the supervisor of the kitchen and threw the porridge directly upon the supervisor. Do you remember this event?"

This event happened in Jiangzhou and even made an uproar because Madam Di threw the scalding bird's nest porridge upon the supervisor of the kitchen. As for why this event would go viral, it was because this supervisor actually was not a child of a servant who was born in the Qin's Mansion but a servant who did a better job than others and then was appointed to be the supervisor for a time.

Although Madam Di had made compensation to the supervisor, the families of the supervisor were not satisfied. Therefore, the event had escalated. Fortunately, Qin Huaiyong was very powerful in Jiangzhou so this event finally was repressed. Even so, people in the Qin's Mansion all knew about this.

After hearing her words, Qin Huaiyong's face became stern!

If that was true, what Madam Di did today was very dubious. Considering Madam Di's attitude in the past, and thinking about this event which was caused by the bird's nest porridge, Qin Huaiyong gradually looked very serious when glancing around at the four same bowls. Madam Di's target might be the unborn baby in Shui Ruolan's belly.

Otherwise, what was she doing when she didn't like the bird's nest porridge at all?

She first asked the purchaser to buy some bird's nest especially and didn't cook those sent by the Duke Yong's Mansion. Then the new old maid confronted Qing Yue and Qionghua while Qing Yue was all right and Qionghua was caught into trouble. Or was that Madam Di's purpose? If so, then those vague explanations before could be very clear now.

"She has prepared the plan very early and just waits for me to ask about these!"

"Madam Di does have bad intentions!"

Shui Ruolan finally relaxed. Although she said nothing, she feared that Qin Wanru was unable to handle Madam Di. Nanny Zhou's words before sounded that Madam Di was very innocent and she seemed to be wronged by them. Moreover, her people got involved in this event so she'd better not to meddle in this and only could pin her hope on Qin Wanru.

Hearing Qin Wanru's words, Madam Di quickly knew that thing went wrong as she knew that Qin Huaiyong gradually distrusted her. In Qin Wanru's words, there were doubtful points everywhere. When Madam Di raised her head and saw Qin Huaiyong's angriest, sternest and worst look, she could not

pretend a calm and kind expression any more. She immediately shouted at Qin Wanru, "Wanru, what do you mean? Couldn't I turn to like having porridge now even though I didn't like it before?"

"Well, of course you could like it or hate it as you want but don't you think that everything is too coincidental? You even came faster than any servant here. Compared the distance from your court to the kitchen with that from my court to here, I suppose that I should be faster than you. However, when I arrived, I saw that you just finished the interrogation and wanted to punish Qionghua 20 flogs!"

Qin Wanru said softly.

However, the slight words heavily smashed Madam Di's heart, which made her unspeakable. There were too many coincidences, too many abnormalities and standing friction between Madam Di and Shui Ruolan. If she still wanted to argue that she was concerned with Shui Ruolan, she could be unspeakable now.

"Madam Di prefers light taste recently!" Seeing thing went wrong, Nanny Zhou quickly helped Madam Di and explained, "When the servant girl came to report, Madam Di happened to be in a place which is quite near here but not in her yard!"

"Quite near here? Where is it? When the First Young Master of the Qi Family came to our mansion to look for Lady Qi, Madam Di even sent the maid to tell us and reminded that we should be away from them. What? Madam Di yourself did not avoid them, did you?"

Raising her beautiful eyebrows, Qin Wanru asked.

Madam Di did let others warn them before. She said that though Qin's Mansion and Qi Family were old friends, it would be better to avert suspicion when in the capital city. Her purpose was definitely to not let others encounter the scene that Qin Yuru and Qi Tianyu were together.

However, this now became her unspeakable reason. She never expected that this would be tangled with the matter happened in the kitchen.

Taken by surprise, she had to explain while gnashing her teeth, "I watched Qi Tianyu grow up and there is no need for me to avert suspicion. When we arrived in the capital city, his mother even asked me to take good care of him!"

"Then you went to see the First Young Master of the Qi Family?" Qin Wanru pushed her harder and quietly nudged the conversation towards Qi Tianyu!

"I was late and didn't see him. Then I ran into this matter here." Madam Di gnashed her teeth as a ferocious look appeared in her eyes. She wouldn't admit it and would tackle problems quickly and effectively when the next problem came.

"Then mother you need to talk to the First Young Master of the Qi Family, don't you?" Qin Wanru continued to lead the topic towards Master Qi. Her every word carried a question. Madam Di had to answer them all.

"Nothing. Just want to see him!" Thinking for a while, Madam Di answered.

"Well, if there's nothing, then what kind of attitude would you treat the First Young Master of the Qi Family with as you think it is great when you encounter him while it is okay when you fail in seeing

him?” Qin Wanru slowly ripped off the wound she targeted as a hint of sarcasm came into her eyes. This was also an unspeakable and inexplicable thing for Madam Di though she knew there was a question.

There was not only Qionghua who was unspeakable!

When Madam Di saw the sarcasm in Qin Wanru’s eyes, her eyes even trembled with anger and her voice became sharp. She said, “Qin Wanru! This is not your business! You, a little girl, doesn’t learn something good but knows how to push your foster mother. Or are you going to force me to admit that this thing is true?”

“No, I dare not. Madam, I am only telling a truth. Now just let father investigate what happened when First Young Master of the Qi Family came to our mansion. We could know where he went to, where you went to or who he met. Then we could figure out the whole thing!”

Qin Wanru smiled slightly and advised Qin Huaiyong. When she found out that it was a good time to quit, she went back and stood beside Shui Ruolan. She looked at Qionghua who was the cause of this matter, so it was able to lead the matter towards Qionghua again now. Madam Di wanted to handle this matter slowly so she could not hurry and flurry!

Seeing Qin Wanru gave a sign, Qionghua quickly stared at Madam Di warily.

Madam Di’s eyes were bloodshot because of anger. If Qin Huaiyong were not here, she would have slapped Qin Wanru in the face for several times!

She didn’t fear that Qin Huaiyong would know something but feared that others would know!

Duke Yong’s Mansion sent her several right hands and some of them followed her now. However, she couldn’t ensure that nobody would tell this matter to people in Duke Yong’s Mansion. If her sister-in-law knew Qin Yuru dated with Qi Tianyu privately in the yard, the engagement between her mansion and Duke Yong’s Mansion would fail.

“General! Please listen to my explanation! It is not what you think!” When seeing Qin Huaiyong’s livid face, Madam Di hurriedly explained. She couldn’t say it out in public but she could tell Qin Huaiyong in privacy.

“Madam, you just asked me what the old maid spoke evil of my madam and I could not say it out in front of people. However, I also could tell Madam Shui and General in privacy!”

Qionghua was waiting for Madam Di’s words. When she said that, Qionghua quickly answered.

She was unspeakable before. She not only let the old maid have an advantage in the matter but also was caught by Madam Di who even tried to punish Qionghua immediately. If Qin Wanru had arrived here late, Qionghua would have been punished by them. If she became disabled, it would be considered as a mistake. What could she do? Even if Shui Ruolan wanted to seek justice for Qionghua, she could do nothing.

However, Qionghua caught this chance and used Madam Di’s words to prove her innocence. Moreover, there were too many coincidences in the truth that Qin Wanru said. Qin Huaiyong would definitely believe that this matter was another trouble planned by Madam Di. He would not want to hear her explanation.

He shouted at her very angrily, "Leave!"

Then he turned back and left, leaving Madam Di standing there with a pale look. She set her malicious eyes on Qin Wanru and Shui Ruolan, gnashing her teeth and then followed Qin Huaiyong and left.

During the lunch time, someone reported to them that Qin Huaiyong had a quarrel with Madam Di in her court and he even kicked her heavily. Now she had to lie in bed and was unable to get up.

Qin Yuru went to see her mother and then went to Qin Huaiyong's study room to ask him to send a doctor to treat Madam Di.

One doctor was not enough and then they asked several doctors to come. It just seemed that Madam Di was dying. In Madam Di's Yulan Pavilion, everything was in a mess.

Even though how it was in a mess in Madam Di's Yulan Pavilion, the old maid who led to this trouble was punished very heavily. After flogging her twenty times, the mansion asked her families to bring her back.

When the servant trader sold this servant, they both signed a death contract that it was okay even if the servant was beaten to death.

Moreover, she was trying to plot against the unborn baby in Madam Shui's belly.

The matter went so viral that everyone in the mansion knew. It happened in the kitchen and there were lots of people there. Though Qin Huaiyong didn't say directly who should be responsible for this, many people saw Qin Huaiyong left with Madam Di. After that, Madam Di was kicked heavily and the old maid came to a really bad end.

Then, all servants who just came to the mansion felt afraid. They were new here and then saw a new old maid beaten to be disabled. If they didn't try their best to accomplish their task, they might have a worse end.

A mess was in the mansion. Then there came fear. However, there were too many people in the main kitchen and some couriers would deliver vegetables to the mansion from outside. They might stay in the mansion for several hours and subsequently, some words about this matter was spread outside.

People of Duke Yong's Mansion came Qin's Mansion in the afternoon. It was Duke Yong himself who came to visit Madam Di with his own son.

Qin Huaiyong invited Duke Yong to his reading room in the outer court while Di Yan visited Madam Di in Yulan Pavilion.

"Huaiyong, I still remember that when you asked me to let my sister marry you, you said that you would always treat her well. You even told me that there are strict family rules in your mansion. So are you gonna tell me that this is your so-called family style? How dare you kick her! What a great general you are!" Duke Yong was Madam Di's natural bother. He used to favor his sister very much. Without saying anything, he banged the cup heavily on the table, and said to Qin Huaiyong with his fierce eyes.

When his sister married Qin Huaiyong, Madam Di's status was higher than Qin Huaiyong's. Duke Yong's Mansion, as an aristocratic family was to look down upon Qin Huaiyong. However, they had to let Madam Di marry Qin Huaiyong in that situation!

Qin Huaiyong was well-prepared. He raised his head and looked into Duke Yong's eyes with a bad expression. He said, "Brother-in-law, you know I don't have a son. I had waited too long until Madam Shui was pregnant. How could Madam Di be intolerable! She always wants to kill that child! Look, how could I calm down! Moreover, it was an accident! When I left, she suddenly rushed to me and I kicked her accidentally!"

"If killing this baby is good for your career?" Duke Yong sneered and said directly. He knew what his sister was thinking about!

Chapter 163 The Invitation Card Conveyed From Duke Xing's Mansion

"What do you mean, brother-in-law?" Qin Huaiyong's face turned gloomy.

"Nothing. I just think that there are so many women who could give birth but why would you marry a widow, who has always stayed in your mansion? If others know this, the censor would not let you go easily!" Duke Yong sneered and threatened him coldly.

"The witness before is still there. Don't you remember?" said Qin Huaiyong with an unkind expression.

"So what? Or you don't need the help from Marquises' Mansion of Fengyang, do you?" said Duke Yong very slowly as a sharp look appeared in his face. He said, "When I went to Marquises' Mansion of Fengyang, I have mentioned you to them. They told me that your position would be confirmed soon. However... If the censor gets involved in this because of Madam Shui, then things would become complicated!"

"You wouldn't show the witness in front of others and say something vague, would you?"

He meant that if Qin Huaiyong did have evidence to prove that Shui Ruolan didn't mean to marry into Qin's Mansion before but it was not only because Madam Di plotted against her but also because she was to take care of Qin Wanru who was used by Madam Di that she married Qin Huaiyong. Then Madam Di would not only be considered as a woman who violated women's virtues but also a malicious woman. Duke Yong would never let Qin Huaiyong say this out.

Otherwise, it would not only damage the reputation of Duke Yong's Mansion, but also would affect negatively the daughters of Di's Family!

In other words, if Qin Huaiyong unveiled the truth, Duke Yong's Mansion would not only deny the truth but also would break up the relationship between Qin Huaiyong and them!

Duke Yong's Mansion's power was incomparable to Qin's Mansion's.

Qin Huaiyong's face turned livid but he repressed his anger and didn't let it vent out. He set his cold eyes on Duke Yong and said, "Thanks for your concern. However, it is my business, and you don't need to care too much about it!"

Seeing Qin Huaiyong's bad look, he knew Qin Huaiyong got irritated but tried his best to repress the anger. Duke Yong knew that he should stop here and decided not to ask about this thing. As his expression relaxed, he said, "Although I don't know how you would deal with this matter, no need to say, you know you need to do something as my sister got hurt without any reason, right?"

"Then what do you want me to handle this?"

"It is quite easy. My sister married you first so she is the first lady in the mansion. Although Madam Shui now is your wife, she was only the second lady. Her position is incomparable to my sister's position, the official wife of this mansion. Now my sister got hurt and Madam Shui has to take care of her, don't you think so?" said Duke Yong.

"She now is pregnant! It is quite inconvenient for her!" Qin Huaiyong immediately refused this advice. If Shui Ruolan did go to take care of Madam Di, she could not ensure the safety of her unborn baby. This unborn child might be his only son so he would definitely not agree with this suggestion.

"Then let your second daughter go! My sister has raised her for a time before. So I think this would be reasonable for her to take care of my sister, right?" Duke Yong settled for the second choice.

His words made Qin Huaiyong silent for a moment. Then he finally nodded in agreement.

Compared with Shui Ruolan, Qin Wanru was more appropriate. According to Duke Yong's Mansion, they would not let Qin Huaiyong go easily if he didn't send one of them to take care of Madam Di!

"Well, that would be great. Now I am gonna see my sister and let her be more careful in the future. It is not good for her to always be so careless. This time she hurt herself but next time she might make others get hurt!" A smile appeared in Duke Yong's face. He now became gentle and kind. He even said that it was Madam Di that hurt herself accidentally.

"She should be more careful next time! She could not be fine every time!" Qin Huaiyong also forced a smile in his face. However, it seemed that he also meant something else.

Duke Yong's smile suddenly disappeared but he then smiled again. He stood up and patted on Qin Huaiyong's shoulder. "Great, great. Now we join hands and would help you find your steady position in the royal court soon!"

When finishing his words, he then walked outwards with a smile. After a few steps, he stopped and turned to look at Qin Huaiyong who still sat in the chair behind him. He said in surprise, "What? You don't see my sister with me? Now she gets hurt and people would misunderstand if you don't see her. If the censor of the capital city knows this and reports it to the royal court, then though it might be easy for you to explain, the whole thing would sound bad!"

Knowing that he was threatening, Qin Huaiyong sneered, stood up and walked in front of his desk. He said, "Brother-in-law, you go first. I would come later in case I would bother your conversation with your sister. I have the invitation card sent by Rui'an Great Elder Princess and wonder whether I should go and take a look!"

"From the Rui'an Great Elder Princess' Mansion?" Duke Yong stunned. Then a hint of dissatisfaction flashed upon his seemingly proud face. Now, the whole capital city knew that the Madam of Duke Yong's Mansion was kicked out by Rui'an Great Elder Princess. Many kinds of bad comments were overwhelming the Duke Yong's Mansion. This was also an important reason that Countess Yong didn't come to Qin's Mansion.

Whoever she met, she would feel ashamed. Especially that, though those madams who she was familiar with didn't say something about that, they all showed their disdain by their expression.

"Is Rui'an Great Elder Princess going to hold a banquet again?" Duke Yong sneered. She was just a princess of sinecure without any power. Why would they treat her as the Empress Dowager in the court! Today the Princess' Mansion had already declined. The Princess' Mansion in which there was only the Rui'an Great Elder Princess living only had the title to awe others.

"Not the Princess' Mansion, it is from the Duke Xing's Mansion. Rui'an Great Elder Princess conveyed this invitation card from Duke Xing's Mansion to us!" Qin Huaiyong walked around the desk and sat behind it. He picked up the card, looked at it for a while and said.

"What? Duke Xing's Mansion?" Duke Yong's expression changed.

Duke Xing was not the same as Duke Yong's Mansion. Its rank of nobility was higher than Duke Yong's Mansion's and the Emperor even preferred Duke Xing's Mansion to the latter. Duke Yong's brother-in-law Duke Fengyang's position and the Emperor's favor toward him were far from Duke Xing's Mansion.

Although Duke Yong's Mansion seemed to be very strong and magnificent, it actually didn't have too much power. In the circle of aristocrats, everyone knew that Duke Yong's Mansion had declined. Whoever in the Duke Yong's Mansion, the present Duke Yong or the heir, Di Yan, was not a powerful and intelligent man, but only a mediocre one.

Di Yan was even far from a mediocre man as he could only be considered as a dude among the aristocrats in the capital city.

Duke Yong's Mansion was incomparable to Duke Xing's Mansion which was very powerful now.

"Yes, it is from the Duke Xing's Mansion. It says that they want to thanks Wanru for saving Master Hao of Duke Xing's Mansion. This master was the grandchild of the Rui'an Great Elder Princess, right?"

Now Qin Huaiyong had the advantage in this confrontation. He looked very calm and soft and he still stared at the invitation card in his hand without raising his eyes, pretending not to see Duke Yong's livid face.

"The second Lady Qin saved Duke Xing's master so Duke Xing wants to appreciate Qin's Mansion and let Rui'an Great Elder Princess conveyed this invitation card to here, to you?"

Duke Yong suddenly found out that he could not look down upon Qin Huaiyong anymore. He didn't expect that Qin Huaiyong would establish a relationship with Duke Xing. If he asked Duke Xing to help him, then his position would be confirmed soon within one or two days.

"Qin Huaiyong is a military general who went to the war and has been rewarded for his battleground achievement when he is very young. This is also the reason that he was stationed with his own army before. Now he has been recalled to the capital city and he would definitely be promoted. If I always put him on the spot, he might part company with me. Now with the Duke Xing's Mansion's help, I could not get him stuck even if I want."

Thinking about that, Duke Yong smiled again and said to Qin Huaiyong, "Then you could read this card carefully for Duke Xing's Mansion is quite worthy to build a relationship with. I now go to see my sister first. She could not blame others but herself as she hurt herself so carelessly."

“Okay, then I sure appreciate, brother-in-law!” Qin Huaiyong smiled and answered, setting his eyes on the card in his hand.

The Rui'an Great Elder Princess didn't send this invitation card to him, but to Qin Wanru. It was Qin Wanru who let Qing Yue send this invitation card to him.

Qin Wanru was only to let him to take a look and to ask him about his meaning. He didn't make a judgment at once and just put it on the desk casually. He actually worried about letting Qin Wanru such a little girl to go to the Duke Xing's Mansion. Moreover, Shui Ruolan now was pregnant and he didn't want her to follow her and be tired.

Duke Xing's Mansion was very complicated and he didn't want Qin Wanru to meddle too much in it.

He didn't find a reason before. Now Duke Yong helped him have a good excuse and he also used this to awe Duke Yong.

It made the best of both worlds.

“Servant! Write to Rui'an Great Elder Princess' Mansion that Madam Di hurt herself accidentally and the Second Lady Qin could not go to the Duke Xing's Mansion because she had to take care of Madam Di!”

When Qin Huaiyong made up his mind, he gave the order to a servant.

A servant quickly came up from behind the door, bowed reverently to him and picked up the invitation card from Qin Huaiyong.

Qin Huaiyong waved his hand and then the servant left with the invitation card.

Standing up, walking in front of the window and looking at the hurried figure of his servant, Qin Huaiyong gradually looked very serious. “Duke Yong's Mansion...”

Duke Yong didn't stay in the Qin's Mansion for a very long time. He only stayed in Madam Di's court, talked to Madam Di for a while and then left in a hurry.

However, Di Yan stayed. Although the engagement between Qin Yuru and him was not confirmed yet, the Old Grandma of Duke Yong's Mansion and Madam Di had accepted him. Thus, it would be reasonable for him to stay and take care of Madam Di.

In the evening, Qin Wanru heard from Qin Huaiyong that she had to take care of Madam Di tomorrow.

Hearing this order, her two servant girls and Nanny Yu felt extremely anxious, like ants on a hot pan. Madam Di did antagonize Qin Wanru. This time it was Qin Wanru who let Qin Huaiyong expose her intrigue. If Qin Wanru went to Yulan Pavilion, she would definitely be tortured by Madam Di to death!

Qin Wanru was calm and even took a little shower to water the domestic swallow flowers near the window carefully. The domestic swallow flowers definitely should be raised in this capital city. Although they didn't grow very well now, their look was much better than their dying look in Jiangzhou.

“Does father talk about the invitation card?” asked Qin Wanru. She turned a direction and watered the root of the flowers carefully. She sent this invitation card to Qin Huaiyong deliberately after knowing Madam Di hurt herself.

Although she felt surprised at the accident that Madam Di was kicked by Qin Huaiyong, she was sure that Duke Yong would come with this matter as an excuse!

However, though Madam Di and Duke Yong's Mansion could take advantage of other's power, she could also manage it...

Chapter 164 Insisting on Taking Care of Madam Di

"General says that he has refused the offer!" Qing Yue answered.

"Great!" Qin Wanru smiled. She put down the little shower and picked up a handkerchief to wipe her hands. Until all things were clear, she wasn't willing to be close to Duke Xing's Mansion.

The invitation card would definitely be sent to Qin Huaiyong while Duke Yong came to Qin's Mansion just in time. On the one hand, Qin Huaiyong could take advantage of Duke Xing's power by using this card. On the other hand, she could let Qin Huaiyong refuse this offer.

"It is much better and more reasonable to let Qin Huaiyong reject this offer than to let me do this."

Qin Wanru had a suspicion and she tried to deduce it with this invitation card. Now she seemed to be able to see part of the truth...

To take care of Madam Di? No! Absolutely not!

She set her dewy eyes on her handkerchief and watched herself wiping her lily-handed fingers, one by one. Her long and jet-black eyelashes fluttered, which perfectly covered all her emotion in her eyes.

"Lady, have you, have you really decided to go to Madam Di's court and take care of her?" Nanny Yu worried about Qin Wanru very much. Looking at Qin Wanru who still behaved very leisurely, she couldn't wait to ask.

"Yes. Of course! If this is Duke Yong's Mansion's demand, then how could I refuse!" Qin Wanru smiled slightly. She turned around, sat steadily in the chair and said to Nanny Yu as she raised her eyes to see her, "Would you please ask Lady Qi whether she wants to come with me when I am going to take care of Madam Di tomorrow?"

"You want to go with Lady Qi? I suppose she would be unwilling, right?" Nanny Yu didn't understand her meaning.

"No, she would be willing to do that. I hear that the heir of Duke Yong would stay in our mansion to take care of Madam Di!" Qin Wanru raised her head and said with her bland eyes.

"Lady Qi, she, she favors the heir of Duke Yong? He, he, he is the First Lady Qin's fiance who is chosen by Madam!" Nanny Yu was so shocked that her eyes opened very wide!

"So what?" Qin Wanru said leisurely.

Qin Wanru had known Qi Rongzhi's thought on the first day that Qi Rongzhi came to Qin's Mansion. Qi Rongzhi would absolutely not let this perfect chance slip through her fingers!

"Madam Di would vent her anger on you!" Frowning, Nanny Yu said worriedly.

"She has vented her anger on me because of what I have done, hasn't she?" Blinking her eyes, she said very wittily.

Hearing her words, Nanny Yu was lost for words. Looking at her pretty and graceful lady, she could say nothing now as she felt heartbroken about her lady. She didn't know why Madam Di would be so malicious and why she would try to plot against the Second Lady Qin. Even though her lady was not her natural daughter, the Second Lady Qin was a very lovely and well-behaved girl. Why would Madam Di always insist on harming her Second Lady Qin for the First Lady Qin's life!

"I think if something happened, our lady would have nothing to do with that. Madam Di always wants our lady to be the scapegoat for the First Lady Qin's faults and wants her to become the First Lady's stepping-stone. If so, then why should our lady care about her? This time they made a big deal of it just in order to drive our lady mad! It is hard to know what they would do when asking our lady to take care of Madam Di!"

Yujie said. She was totally on the side of Qin Wanru. Recalling the scene, she sneered. She saw Madam Di's eyes and her expression which showed that Madam Di wanted to kill her lady right now. She remembered very clearly.

"Nanny Yu, I also agree. If Madam Di or the First Lady Qin does want to do harm to our lady, they couldn't be free to implement their plan for at least Lady Qi would be there!" Qing Yue agreed with Yujie and said.

Qin Wanru smiled brightly. Of course this was one of her reasons. However, her main purpose was to let Qi Rongzhi distract Madam Di and her daughter, which would make them unable to keep a close watch on her!

If Qi Rongzhi who had evil intentions was there, it would be extremely difficult to keep order!

"Then I go to ask Lady Qi!" Seeing these two girls protecting Qin Wanru wholeheartedly, Nanny Yu smiled spontaneously and kept nodding in agreement. However, she was moved to tears. Then she turned back and wiped her tear. A firm look appeared in her eyes when she thought that the two little servant girls were on the side of her lady wholeheartedly, she should definitely protect her lady.

"Nanny Yu, wait! Let Qing Yue do that! I have something to ask you!" Qin Wanru suddenly called her and let Qing Yue pass the message to Qi Rongzhi.

Qing Yue nodded and left hurriedly.

"Nanny Yu, what has Qing Xue been doing during these days?" asked Qin Wanru. She asked Nanny Yu to look after all businesses of the inner court. which was the reason that even if there was something, she didn't let Nanny Yu leave the court.

"Compared with Qing Xue's character in Jiangzhou, she now has changed a lot. It seemed that she now is much more passionate. Especially Nanny Dong and Dong Xiuer, when Nanny Dong isn't there, she would be with Dong Xiuer. They now have a really good relationship. They could be considered as a bosom friend to each other!" Thinking for a while, Nanny Yu answered.

Qing Xue was under her supervision. Thus she knew Qing Xue very clear.

“Dong Xiuer is her bosom friend?” Qin Wanru frowned. Qing Xue was a servant girl who had a bad intention. Madam Di once deliberately plotted against Qu Le just in order to deal with Qing Xue’s problem. Of course Qu Le had her own problems in that event. However, Qing Xue was absolutely one of the most important reasons.

Madam Di and Qin Yuru sent this servant girl here, which seemed that their purpose was more than that. She also had implied Nanny Dong that Qing Xue was not a good person before. Although Nanny Dong felt okay with that, she didn’t expect that Qing Xue would have such a good relationship with Dong Xiuer! Or didn’t Nanny Dong tell Dong Xiuer?

“Except this news, is there anything else?”

“Nothing else. I seldom allow her to leave this court. I only let her manage those coarse servant girls. Although she is still in the name of your private servant girl, she now doesn’t have too many tasks. Do I snub her too much?” said Nanny Yu.

According to Qin Wanru’s order, Qing Xue was not allowed to get into Qin Wanru’s room even though she was the first servant girl.

“If there is a task that cleaning the outhouse, take her!” she said with her mouth curled into a slight smile.

If she now was the first servant girl, then she should finish some private tasks. Now it was her “internship”. Then Qin Wanru would gradually allow her to get into her house, of course, the outhouse, under supervision.

“Lady, got it!” Yujie said, smiling.

Qi Rongzhi’s answer was that she was willing to come with her. She even especially said that she would come and wait for Qin Wanru earlier in the morning before they went to Madam Di’s court. Qin Wanru had guessed Qi Rongzhi’s response right.

“Now Qi Rongzhi has a bad relationship with Qin Yuru. If she goes to see Madam Di, she could only stay in her court for a while. Moreover, Madam Di doesn’t like Qi Rongzhi and she wouldn’t let her stay longer. Not to mention, it is impossible for her to see Di Yan.”

“If she comes with me, she could have the excuse that she is with me. Although it is unceremonious, she has a reason. If she keeps following me, Madam Di and Qin Yuru could not get her out of their court directly.”

The next morning, Qi Rongzhi had arrived very early. Because Qin Wanru had to take care of Madam Di, she also got up very early. Then they went to Madam Di’s Yulan Pavilion together.

They had arrived at Yulan Pavilion too early and Qin Yuru hadn’t come yet. They waited in the lobby.

Qin Wanru stood very straightly and didn’t talk to Qi Rongzhi. Qi Rongzhi moved from one foot to the other impatiently. She had never done this kind of job taking care of others before. Now her feet were aching for standing so long. If she had not had her own purpose, she would not have been willing to suffer this with Qin Wanru early in the morning.

It was so early in the morning and it was very cold for there was a wind gap here!

She glanced at the room disdainfully. Not to mention, Madam Di was torturing Qin Wanru deliberately. What a malicious woman! She didn't know when the heir Di would come. If he saw she waiting in the lobby, would he take pity on her?

Qi Rongzhi had absolute confidence in her appearance. When she was in Jiangzhou, Qin Yuru and she were two well-known beautiful women who were endowed with both beauty and talent. Before she fought against Qin Yuru, there were so many pursuers that the threshold of their mansion was almost broken.

It was Qin Yuru! Otherwise, she would have married that man she chose favorably now. That man had a lot to do with the capital city and, moreover, his family background was perfect. He had not planned to marry someone in Jiangzhou but he came because of Qi Rongzhi's name. However, her engagement was destroyed by Qin Yuru in the end.

Every time she thought of that, Qi Rongzhi felt that she did hate Qin Yuru to death!

She would not let Qin Yuru marry into an aristocratic family favorably after Qin Yuru discarded her brother and ruined her reputation!

Now that Qin Yuru had ruined her engagement, then she would rob Qin Yuru's fiancée!

She definitely would not act so rudely as before. Although her brother didn't tell her directly, she knew his meaning clear that she could not act as she behaved in Jiangzhou! If she acted well, Madam Di and Qin Yuru would not dare offend her openly!

Now Qin Yuru finally came late. When seeing Qi Rongzhi standing in the lobby, she paused because she didn't expect to see Qi Rongzhi here.

After they bowed to each other, Qin Yuru said, "Why would Rongzhi be here?"

"I come here to take care of Madam Di with Sister Wanru. Your mansion has taken very good care of me after I arrived in the capital city. Now Madam Di is sick and I feel really sorry," Qi Rongzhi tried her best to soften her voice and said.

"You want to take care of my mother?" Qin Yuru was shocked and her eyes opened very wide. Although Qi Family and Qin Family had a very long and deep relationship, they were not related to each other. It was too surprising!

"Well, I'd love to and it is my heart!" answered Qi Rongzhi, smiling. Her gentle and kind smile made Qin Yuru step backwards spontaneously. A vigilant look gradually came up in her eyes. "What does Qi Rongzhi want to do?"

"How, how could I let you do this? You are the guest!" Qin Yuru quickly calmed down and blamed her slightly.

"However, I am living in Qin's Mansion now. My parents asked Madam Shui and the General to take care of me. I also remember well the love and care Madam and the General have given me. Thus, how could I not take care of Madam Di when she needs help? Otherwise, my elder brother would be the first one who would not let go of me easily."

Qi Rongzhi said more and more gently. It seemed that she did appreciate Qin's Mansion and she seemed to be really willing to take care of Madam Di.

Her words almost put Qin Yuru's nose out of joint. When did Qi Rongzhi become so polite and educated? She even seemed that she felt very thankful and grateful. Or did she plan something? Qin Yuru didn't want to cause some troubles as she had caused one in the Rui'an Great Elder Princess' Mansion.

"My mother would appreciate your kindness but please go back!" Qin Yuru rejected.

"Why don't you allow me to take care of Madam Di? I truly consider Madam Di as my mother and I do want to thank her!" Qi Rongzhi's eyes turned red. She reached out, took Qin Yuru's hand and shook her hand powerfully, seeming that she was really wronged.

Her behavior gradually annoyed Qin Yuru. Qin Yuru put Qi Rongzhi's hand down impatiently, lowered her voice and asked, "What do you want? You..."

"What is going on here? What happened?" A sudden gentle voice came behind her and also interrupted her.

Chapter 165 Fighting to Feed Madam Di Medicine

Behind Qin Yuru, Di Yan tilted his head to look Qi Rongzhi up and down. There was the shadow of a smile on his amicable face.

He was a step too late and happened to catch Qin Yuru pull Qi Rongzhi's hand away impolitely. Qi Rongzhi looked so upset that the rim of her eyes was red. Her demeanor was somewhat timid. It really reminded him of his older female cousin. He couldn't help himself and stepped forward to greet them.

When Qin Yuru turned his head and saw Di Yan, he said unhappily, "Cousin Brother!"

"Crown Prince!" Qi Rongzhi was rejoicing inside, but she looked more upset than ever. She turned sideways to perform a curtsy before deliberately dabbing at the corner of her eyes as if she was wiping her tears. She forced a smile on her face. To Di Yan, it looked like she was feigning her happiness.

Qin Wanru curtsied as well before saying, "Cousin Brother!"

She then moved aside and observed the three people present with her. Di Yan looked sympathetic, Qi Rongzhi looked evasive and wronged, while Qin Yuru could barely hide his anger.

She blinked twice, allowing her long lashes to sweep her cheeks, with a faint smirk. She continued standing there, observing the proper etiquette, and acted as if she didn't notice the conflict brimming between the three of them!

She had just arrived in the capital; she had a lot to attend to. She had no time to put on a show with Madam Di, much less allow Madam Di to torment her by making her a carer.

Di Yan reluctantly looked away from Qi Rongzhi to turn around and ask Qin Yuru, "What's wrong, Cousin Yuru?"

He couldn't help marveling at the beautiful women in Jiangzhou. Not only was his cousin a beauty, but so was Magistrate Qi's daughter. Both had their merits and were as lovely as orchids in the spring and chrysanthemum in the autumn. Qin Wanru was beautiful, but she was still too young. It was hard to consider her a young lady who had come of age at first glance.

Thus, she wasn't as attractive as Qi Rongzhi!

"Miss Qi insisted on coming here to serve Mother at her sickbed! What a joke!" Qin Yuru said impatiently. She had noticed how reluctant Di Yan looked when he had to look away from Qi Rongzhi, and it made her feel deeply resentful.

"Why would you want to serve Mother at her sickbed, Miss Qi?" Di Yan, finally getting a legitimate excuse to speak to Qi Rongzhi, turned to question the latter.

"It was Madam Di and General Qin who took care of me on behalf of my parents when I first came to the capital. My parents had repeatedly reminded me of our familial ties and told me to treat them as my own family. I must be as filial to them as I would my parents. Now that Madam Di has fallen ill, I must care for her myself, or I'll feel ill at ease!"

Qi Rongzhi replied in a soft voice.

Di Yan nodded. The admiration in his eyes became even more evident. What a good-natured woman, he thought. Even though she came from a small town in Jiangzhou, she wasn't lacking in etiquette by any means. In fact, her manners were even better than most young ladies from well-off families.

"Since that's the case..." Di Yan said. Since she was here, she could just enter. It wasn't a bad thing to have another carer. Qin Wanru was so young anyway; what did she know about taking care of the sick? Qi Rongzhi would be far more dependable.

"Cousin Brother, you must get Mother's permission for this!" Qin Yuru said, hastily trying to stop him when she saw that he intended to agree.

Di Yan was unhappy with Qin Yuru's interruption but didn't take it to heart. Indeed, Madam Shi must be the first one to make the decision. "Let's enter together for now. It's quite cold here under the air vent. Cousin Sisters, how can you withstand the cold when you're all so thin and weak?"

Though Qin Yuru was the host, Di Yan went ahead and led them into the house. It was indeed cold standing in the corridor. He would have trembled if he stayed a minute longer.

The sky was overcast with clouds today. Even though it didn't rain, the atmosphere was gloomy and cold.

The sky was overcast with clouds today. Even though it didn't rain, the weather was gloomy and cold.

Once Di Yan had spoken, he spun around and entered Madam Di's outer room. Seeing him enter, a helpless Qin Yuru invited Qin Wanru and Qi Rongzhi to come along. It had been her Mother's idea to have Qin Wanru shiver in the frigid wind.

The group followed the servant past a screen and entered the interior of the house, where Madam Di was taking her medicine. A young maid was kneeling by the bed, carefully feeding Madam Di the bowl of medicine in her hand. Madam Di's head was bound with several stripes of plain white cloth. She looked

wan and sallow as she reclined partially on a thick cushion. The house was permeated with the pungent smell of medicine.

Just a quick sniff was enough to tip Qin Wanru off that Madam Di was just putting on a show. The medicine that she was taking was just ordinary medicine to treat injuries and with low dosage at that. It was just the smell that was pungent. It seemed as if she deliberately ordered the medicine soup to smell worse. This much was obvious to Qin Wanru.

Under the fog of such intense-smelling medicine, Qin Wanru could smell a strange but indistinct odor. Her eyelashes came to a standstill before brushing against her cheeks twice.

Her gaze finally fell on the young maid who was kneeling on one leg by the bed. Such a young maid, she thought. The maid was more or less her height. There were so many maids in the house and yet the older female servant didn't step up to take over the feeding. It was obvious that the young maid was straining herself to feed Madam Di. Her expression was so tense that even her knee was trembling.

She looked like she was about to collapse!

So, it was all planned!

After everyone performed their curtsies, Qin Yuru stepped forward to take the bowl of medicine out of the young maid's hand with the thought of feeding Madam Di herself.

Nanny Zhou tugged on her arm to stop her. "Oh my, First Miss. Your height isn't suitable for this. The kneeling will just discomfort you, and you won't even be able to reach Madam's mouth. You're a bit too tall for this!"

"But... I'm trying to care for Mother. Shouldn't I personally feed her the medicine?" Qin Yuru replied hesitantly, as if she was sincere about helping Madam Shi take her medicine.

Qin Wanru lowered her head and pretended she didn't see Qin Yuru's gaze. She blanked out, looking dumb and foolish. Right now, she was the only one who could replace such a petite maid. It seemed that this was the "caring for the sick" plan that Madam Di and Qin Yuru had prepared for her!

"First Miss, you're too tall for this." Nanny Zhou shook her head with a helpless expression. "You'd be perfect if you're a little shorter. Your hand will be able to reach Madam's mouth then!"

"It's unfortunate I can't stretch my hand. It'd have been for the best if I can drink the medicine myself, but sadly, I must ask all of you to attend to me! Looks like I must trouble you all seeing as this little maid won't be able to take this much longer!" Madam Di said with a wry smile. Without makeup, she looked especially old and tired. Qin Wanru knew it wasn't just because of her injuries. These days, Madam Di's life couldn't be compared to when she was in Jiangzhou. When one encountered obstacles at every corner, that was when one appeared the oldest.

After hearing her words, nearly everyone turned to look at Qin Wanru. She was the only one that fitted the bill, after all. Who must step up if not her?

Madam Di seemed hell-bent on making Qin Wanru serve her on her sickbed. Kneeling was just the first step. What was next? Would Madam Di overturn the bowl of medicine and spill it all over her face?

Qin Wanru sneered deep inside. When she looked up, her watery eyes were tainted with coldness. Her gaze fell on Madam Di and a smile crept onto her face. "Madam, allow me to do this seeing as Big Sister isn't suitable. We can't very well ask the Crown Prince to feed you the medicine. Though I've heard that sons from noble families in the capital are well-trained in horse stance; even if they must kneel, they can kneel for a long time!"

That said, she took several steps forward and reached out to grab the bowl of medicine.

Di Yan felt awkward. His horse stance wasn't that good for he had little perseverance in learning and practicing. He'd be happy enough if he could pull off some resemblance to the real thing. How could he crouch and feed Madam Di?

When Qi Rongzhi noticed Di Yan's expression, an idea came to her and she tugged on Qin Wanru's arm. "Let me do it, Second Miss!"

In her opinion, she would be dispelling Di Yan's embarrassment if she stepped forward now. Naturally, he would like her even more. In the first place, she had come here for Di Yan. How could she let go of such a great opportunity to show off her merits?

"That's... inappropriate, is it?" Qin Wanru looked at Qi Rongzhi with a hesitant look before glancing at Di Yan.

"How is it inappropriate? I came here with sincere thoughts of attending to Madam Di on her sickbed. How can I turn up my nose at something like this? Even if I'm a bit taller, I can kneel a little lower. I'm confident I can do this well without enough sincerity!"

Qi Rongzhi took two steps forward as she spoke and snatched the bowl of medicine out of the young maid's hand. She was about to kneel.

"Quick! Stop Miss Qi!" Madam Di hastily said after recovering her senses. It was truly inappropriate to have Qi Rongzhi kneel and serve her.

Qi's Mansion had been harping on previous matters; it wouldn't do for her to give them something new to talk about. She didn't want to appear even weaker in front of those from Qi's Mansion.

Nanny Zhou was a faster responder. She hastily reached out her hand to stop Qi Rongzhi while crying, "No, you mustn't!"

"Miss Qi, let me do it! Big Sister, hurry up and get me that bowl of medicine." Qin Wanru's large eyes blinked. She stepped forward, acting as if she wanted to grab the bowl that Nanny Zhou and Qi Rongzhi were holding.

After hearing what Qin Wanru said, Qin Yuru had no choice but to step forward and attempt to grab the bowl as well.

Thus, the four of them collided. It wasn't certain who knocked into who or whose hand slipped. The bowl of seemingly steaming hot medicine spilled all over Madam Di just like that.

Since she was lying on the bed, Madam Di naturally couldn't evade in time. Seeing that the bowl was about to spill all over her, she panicked and blocked the bowl with her hand. Following cries of "Ouch!" and "Clang!" and "Argh!"...

Sounds of all kinds mixed to form an orchestra of chaos.

The medicine spilled on Madam Di. Fortunately, most of the concoction fell on the bed, with only a small part of it hitting her hand. Even so, the scalding medicine caused her to cry out in pain. She had maliciously ordered the servants to boil the medicine at a higher temperature than usual with the plan of splashing it all over Qin Wanru. Who knew she would be the victim instead?

It felt as if every inch of her body was connected to this part of her skin. The pain pierced her heart!

The empty bowl rolled off the bed and crashed onto the floor. It broke into several pieces, with some being sharp shards. Qi Rongzhi bore the brunt of the crash and a shard sliced her wrist. She yelped in pain and fell on the floor. Nanny Zhou fell on the bedside and had a shard cut her foot. Qin Wanru, who was leaning behind Qi Rongzhi, pressed her hand with the other hand with great force. The other piece of shard lay next to her foot. It seemed that she was also injured.

Qin Yuru was late. She was the last to join the scuffle. Right at the moment of the crash, a maid pulled her backward so that she was able to regain firm footing. However, she was also dumbfounded at the spectacle before her!

Chapter 166 The Second Ruse That Caused Injuries!

“Quick, see if Madam is fine!” Nanny Zhou held onto a nearby chair to hoist herself back on her feet. She was so panicked that her face had turned pale. The injury on her leg was minor; all it did was slice her skin enough to produce some blood. Panicked as she was, she couldn’t process the pain.

The dumbfounded maids and older female servants hastily ran over. Some propped, while others pulled. They helped the two ladies in front of the bed stand upright and led them to the chairs before checking on bedridden Madam Di.

The medicine concoction, so dark it was almost black, spilled all over the bed. Madam Di was as pale as a sheet of paper. There were still traces of a dark liquid on her hand. She was hurting so much that she was shuddering and incapable of speaking even a word. She stood upright on the bed, dispelling all of her sickly demeanor from before.

Nanny Zhou immediately ordered the other servants to fetch a clothing rag. After wiping Madam Di’s hand, she excused everyone else from the room and changed everything on Madam Di’s bed as well as her clothes. She then hastily sent someone to fetch a physician.

Qi Rongzhi and Qin Wanru sat on the chairs in the exterior room in silence. Both looked frenetic as if they had received a shock.

Qin Yuru looked even ghastlier. She sat on the chair, eyeing the two of them with a cold gaze. She picked up the cup and threw it on the floor. “Did you two do this on purpose?”

Qi Rongzhi looked up, revealing her wan face. “Sister Yuru, how... how can you accuse me of such a thing? I’m sincere about serving Madam Di... Who knew Nanny Zhou will snatch the bowl from me? I wouldn’t have expected you to come and snatch it as well.”

Qi Rongzhi looked like she had been mistreated.

"When have you ever been so kind as to help me attend to Mother? I'd be worshipping the gods if you don't cause any trouble," Qin Yuru retorted unhappily. When she recalled Madam Di's screech earlier, she could almost feel her pain.

"Sister Yuru... you... how can you say that about me...?" Qi Rongzhi began tearing up and sniffing. She wiped her tears with her handkerchief, but the cloth was stained with blood instead. It was stained from when she pressed the handkerchief over her injured foot.

"Big Sister, it's not like Miss Qi did it on purpose," Qin Wanru said softly, sounding as if she couldn't stand watching an injustice.

"You're one to talk. You did it on purpose, didn't you? You're here to create chaos, didn't you? I just knew that you two didn't come to attend to Mother on her sickbed without malice!" Qin Yuru said through gritted teeth.

"Big Sister, how could you think so poorly of us?" Qin Wanru replied, looking shocked. "I came here on Madam's orders. Do you mean that Madam wanted me to come here and create chaos?"

"You..." Qin Yuru was livid, but Di Yan interrupted her and said, "Enough. These two wouldn't want to see this happen. Who'd expect such an accident? No one wanted this. Besides, they're both injured as well."

"Cousin Brother, how can you stand on their side? Look at them! Neither of them bears any goodwill!" Qin Yuru said indignantly. The rim of her eyes reddened after hearing Di Yan admonish her. She glared at Qin Wanru and Qi Rongzhi.

"Prince, I... I didn't do it on purpose. I swear. Please help me prove my innocence, Prince, or my father will punish me when he comes to the capital!" Leaning against the side table, Qi Rongzhi sobbed so hard that she could hardly breathe and her entire body was trembling. Evidently, she was terrified of the familial punishment of Qi's Mansion.

Di Yan was surprised to learn that an influential clan with less than a hundred years of history would have such strict family education. He became increasingly fond of Qi Rongzhi. He stared at Qi Rongzhi, who was a crying mess, and then at his cousin, who was grim-faced despite her red eyes. He inexplicably felt frustrated. Wasn't his cousin the gentlest person he knew? How could she be so fierce now?

Could it be that whatever his cousin displayed before was meant for him to see? Was his mother right?

"Cousin Sister Yu, let them go home for now. They can't attend to Aunt like this and will just create a mess. If someone sees this, they might wonder what great commotion has happened!" Di Yan said unhappily.

The sound of Madam Di lashing out the servants drifted from the interior room. They could even faintly hear the sound of someone being slapped. Meanwhile, the exterior room was filled with the sound of Qi Rongzhi crying. Coupled with Qin Yuru's vicious voice, Di Yan suddenly felt the onslaught of a headache as well as frustration.

"How can they just leave after scalding Mother?" Qin Yuru asked through gritted teeth.

"That was no more than an accident. Cousin Sister Yu, we should worry about dealing with Aunt's injury first. They're both injured as well. It's useless to keep them here; they'll add on to our troubles instead!" Di Yan said.

"Prince, it's alright. We'll stay here. I'm worried about Madam Di!" Qi Rongzhi raised her head. There were remnants of two trails of sparkling tears on her fair cheeks which made her look even more delicate.

"It's alright. You two should return first and deal with your injuries. Once the physician is done attending to Aunt's injury, I'll bring him over to check on you both," Di Yan said.

He made the final decision without listening to Qin Yuru.

"Thank you kindly, Prince!" Qi Rongzhi stopped crying as soon as she heard Di Yan would be coming over. She wiped her tears, and her cheeks flushed with the faintest of color.

"Go back then!" Di Yan said, waving his hand. With the situation being a mess over here and Qin Yuru looking as if she was incapable of handling matters, he had no choice but to step up and deal with everything.

Qi Rongzhi teared up again. Holding on Chun Yi's hand, she limped out of the room.

Qin Wanru didn't stand on ceremony either. She performed a curtsy at Di Yan before holding onto her maid's hand and sauntering away.

Qin Yuru stamped her feet when she saw the troublemakers had left just like that and cried indignantly, "Cousin Brother!"

"Cousin Sister Yu, go and check on Aunt. I'll see if the physician is here!" Feeling a headache, Di Yan rubbed his head. Suddenly, he felt as if his father asking him to come to Qin's Mansion and care for his sickly Aunt was a mistake.

He spun around and walked out of the house with large strides as soon as he was done speaking, ignoring Qin Yuru who was protesting coquettishly.

When Qin Wanru returned to her own house, Yu Jie and the rest immediately helped her walk inside. She didn't limp much on her walk back, so the maids thought her injury wasn't severe. When they lifted her skirt, however, they found that blood was dripping down her right calf and even soaked her underpants.

"Miss! How did you get this badly injured?" Yu Jie turned pale from fright. Earlier, she had been standing behind Qin Wanru. She had wanted to pull her mistress backward, but Qin Wanru shoved her hand aside and allowed herself to crash. Yu Jie had received a shock then, but she knew Qin Wanru had charged forward herself.

Even if Qin Wanru had charged ahead on her own, that didn't warrant such a severe injury. Qi Rongzhi, who was closest to the bowl, wasn't this badly wounded either. She had merely suffered a cut that was neither deep nor light on the foot. From where Yu Jie stood, she managed to see what had happened to Qi Rongzhi but not to Qin Wanru. Little did she imagine that her mistress would be so badly cut.

Qing Yue carefully rolled up the leg of Qin Wanru's underpants and sure enough, there was a large cut on her calf. The cut was both lengthy and deep, and had yet to scab. The wound was rather frightening. Qing Yue clapped a handkerchief over it and blood instantly stained the white cloth!

The servants in the room turned pale.

"Miss, you..." Nanny Yu was so worried that tears were threatening to spill from her eyes. She turned around and said, "I'll see if the physician is here! I'll go and wait at the entrance of Madam's courtyard right now!"

Qin Wanru looked deathly pale, and even her lips turned a few shades paler. Still, she smiled and said, "No need, Nanny Yu. The physician will stop by in a moment. I did this myself. The injury isn't serious!"

"Miss, how can you do this to yourself?" Nanny Yu couldn't help raising her voice. She simply refused to believe that her mistress would do something like this.

Qin Wanru leaned backward, and her smile turned cold. The corner of her eyes twitched as malice swam in her pupils. "Numerous things can happen when you're caring for the sick. If Qi Rongzhi hadn't thrown a wrench in matters today, the bowl of medicine would have been spilled all over me! The bowl contains scalding medicine that will make it hard for wounds to heal!"

If such a scalding-hot bowl of medicine were splashed on Qin Wanru's skin, she would probably be disfigured if not dead. Even if the whole thing didn't splash on her face and only a little touched her skin, the wound would still be a challenge to remove. Moreover, Qin Wanru also got a whiff of some other medicine in that bowl.

It was a smell different from ordinary medicine meant to heal injuries. It belonged to exceptionally good medicine, which had a rather special smell that became indistinct when mixed in that strange-smelling concoction. This medicine had a particular function, which was to slow the healing of wounds. The mother-and-daughter pair, Madam Di and Qin Yuru, had come prepared this time!

"Madam Di is a monster!" Nanny Yu gasped.

"It's not like it's her first time. Miss, what do we do now?" Yu Jie, who grew up in the monastery, had little respect or reverence for Madam Di.

"Di Yan will likely tag along with the physician when he comes to check on my injury later. Qin Yuru will surely come as well," Qin Wanru said slowly. "I'm sure she wouldn't believe that I've truly injured myself and will propose examining my wounds herself. You all must stop her."

Now that Madam Di and Qin Yuru's plan was thwarted and got the former's hand scalded instead, they would surely refuse to let matters be. They would surely come and examine her and Qi Rongzhi's wounds, especially her own. They would never let her off that easily and would want nothing more than to find proof of her faking her injury. If they did, they would be able to push all the blame on her.

"Rest assured, Miss. I promise I'll protect you and not let First Miss examine your wound!" Nanny Yu said. Then, she hesitated momentarily before asking, "Miss, do you truly refuse to let First Miss examine your wound?"

"We must let her, of course! Not only that, but we must Father examine it. If you deny Qin Yuru, she'd surely protest and become convinced that I'm faking it. She'll kick up a fuss. Yu Jie, you should fetch Father immediately when that happens. You're a faster walker," Qin Wanru said, giving her orders to Yu Jie.

Caring for the ill? She would never give Madam Di the chance to torment her!

Sometimes, the reason was simple. She would beat Madam Di at her own game. However influential Duke Yong's Mansion was, they wouldn't be able to interfere in the fact that she was injured, much less when the cause was Madam Di!

With the bait thrown, all she had to do was wait for Qin Yuru to bite it.

Sure enough, Qin Yuru didn't betray her expectations. Qin Yuru was lying on her bed in fresh clothing when she heard a commotion outside the door. It was complete chaos...

"Nanny Yu, please redecorate the flower rack!"

Chapter 167 Thrashing the Chinaware in the House

"Why isn't she seeing the physician when she's injured? Is... she uninjured?" Qin Yuru's gaze landed on Nanny Yu with a malicious expression. Even though the nearby Di Yan didn't say a word, doubt crept into his pupils as well. Behind him was a physician in his thirties or forties.

They had come here from Qi Rongzhi's house. Qi Rongzhi was indeed injured, but her wound wasn't serious. Qin Yuru had her maid examine it and came to the conclusion that it wasn't as serious as Qi Rongzhi's limping suggested.

She didn't forget to leave Qi Rongzhi with some sarcastic remarks before coming to Qin Wanru's place. She figured that Qin Wanru's injury was even more superficial than Qi Rongzhi's, who had been standing in front of Qin Wanru in the first place. Qi Rongzhi at least drew blood, but Qin Wanru might very well be causing trouble on purpose.

Thus, when she heard that Nanny Yu said that Qin Wanru didn't want to see the physician, she couldn't stop herself from sneering at her.

Madam Di had injured her hand, and badly at that. More importantly, the medicine was mixed in with quite a large amount of a special ingredient. They had planned to spill it all over Qin Wanru. No matter which part of her skin the concoction touched, the scars would take a very long time to fade. Little did she imagine that Madam Di would fall victim to her scheme and spill the thing all over herself.

A drop of the concoction even splashed on her face. That was far harsher than what Qin Yuru had suffered on her face!

How could she be in a good mood?

"First Miss, um... The physician is a man. Our mistress hurt her calf, so it's not very appropriate," Nanny Yu said with a hesitant expression.

"How is it inappropriate? It's not like the physician will examine the wound himself. Meiyan can do it and just tell the physician after. That way, the physician will have a better grasp of the medicine and dosage he should prescribe," Qin Yuru replied impatiently.

"First Miss, there's no need to examine the wound. The physician can just prescribe some ointment. I've already bandaged the wound earlier. The wound has scabbed!" Nanny Yu said evasively, all while smiling.

"The wound has scabbed? Does that mean her wound isn't that deep? If that's the case, why did she act like she's badly injured earlier? Did she put on an act because she didn't want to care for Mother on her sickbed?" Qin Yuru said indignantly, glancing at the tightly-closed doors. She sneered.

No matter what, she swore that she would tear down Qin Wanru's pretenses today!

Her suspicion had now blossomed into certainty. Qin Wanru was putting on a show!

Seeing as Qin Yuru had misunderstood things, Nanny Yu hastily tried to explain herself. "The wound has scabbed now... but there was... a lot of blood earlier. Our mistress is pretty badly injured!"

"Then why can't she show her wound? What's wrong with me asking Meiyan to examine the wound? This back-and-forth refusal makes it seem like she can't show it to people!" Qin Yuru said coldly. She was determined to look at Qin Wanru's wound today.

"We've just bandaged the wound. If you open it now, you might exacerbate her wound... I think... it's best if the physician prescribes some ointment!" Nanny Yu said earnestly.

"Cousin Sister Yu, let's just leave some medicine for Cousin Sister Wan for now!" Di Yan said.

"Cousin Brother, how can you say that? If Qi Rongzhi barely wounded herself, how bad can her injury be?" Qin Yuru stamped her foot in anger.

Di Yan fell into silence. He cast Nanny Yu a doubtful look and asked, "Is she really badly injured?"

"Crown Prince, she's really badly injured! I'm not lying, neither is my mistress!" Sweat was gathering on Nanny Yu's forehead. Spreading her hands, she gave Di Yan a pleading look.

Her expression made Qin Yuru even angrier. She stepped forward to push Nanny Yu away and was about to storm in.

"First Miss, please halt! Our mistress is recuperating from her injury! Please don't disturb her rest!" Qing Yue came over, reaching out her hand to stop Qin Yuru. She looked as if she was going to stop Qin Yuru from entering.

She made Qin Yuru feel even more convinced that Qin Wanru was guilty. She shoved Qing Yue aside with greater force this time, causing the maid to knock into a nearby chair. The chair knocked into the side table and the teacups atop it tumbled downward, crashing loudly on the floor.

Seeing as Qing Yue was about to fall, another maid tried to grab her. To her surprise, Qing Yue didn't stop her falling momentum in the slightest and knocked on the flower rack beside her. The row of flowers, including the pots made of china that carried them, all fell to the floor and crashed one after another.

This gave Qin Yuru a fright as well. She took two steps backward, barely avoiding the pots.

The side table, the chair, the flower rack, flowers, and all sorts of chinaware were reduced into fragments on the floor, making for a very dire mess. Fortunately, the china pots didn't fall on anyone. The maid had pulled away Qing Yue just in time.

However, everything inside the house was ruined. Everyone, including the servants inside and outside the house, was stunned. Did First Miss come here to thrash Second Miss' house?

"Big Sister, why have you come to thrash my house?" No one knew when the doors opened. Qin Wanru stepped through the curtain and stood weakly by the door. She looked pale and frail. Her typically dark-red lips were an ashy white, a sign of her illness.

"I..." Qin Yuru wanted to deny the accusation and call everything an accident, but Qin Wanru interrupted her.

"Big Sister, I hurt my calf today. If you and Madam insist on me serving the ill, I'll do so but please allow me to rest for the day. I'll go tomorrow. What do you think?"

"Sure enough, you're bluffing!" Qin Yuru was distracted just like that.

"Cousin Sister Yu, Cousin Sister Wan is really injured!" Di Yan whispered, tugging on Qin Yuru's arm. After seeing how Qin Wanru looked, all of his suspicion dissipated.

He didn't even have to look at her wound to know that she was truly hurt and that the servant was telling the truth.

"Elder Sister, why are you always prejudiced against me? Why do you always think that I'm lying? Why do you think that I don't wish to care for Madam? With Madam being injured on top of being ill, shouldn't you be serving her now? Why are you so aggressive now, acting as if I'm committing a great sin if I don't go now?" Qin Wanru looked up, revealing a pair of watery eyes. Her pupils were as placid as water and yet they carried a hint of coldness.

She leaned on the door frame, with one leg partially suspended. Everyone could tell that she was truly injured.

"We'll know the truth once Meiyan examines your wound!" Qin Yuru sneered. She wouldn't believe whatever Qin Wanru says. Moreover, Qin Wanru's reluctance convinced her that the former was acting.

"Big Sister, what if I refuse to show Meiyan?" Qin Wanru's gaze turned a few degrees colder. Her body swayed ever so slightly and Qing Yue hastily ran over to support her.

"You don't dare to show her?" Qin Yuru asked icily. She was more and more certain that she was correct.

Qin Wanru coughed quietly. She looked at Qin Yuru with her limpid eyes and asked, "Big Sister, did you bring your people to thrash my house because you think I'm feigning my injury? Does Madam know you're kicking up a fuss here?" Even though she had few people on her side, her aura wasn't lacking in the least.

Di Yan reached out his hand to pull Qin Yuru. His frustration was growing. Hedonistic as he was, he found something very wrong with the way Qin Yuru was dealing with matters. The broken fragments all over the floor showed just how unreasonable Qin Yuru apparently was. Shouldn't she speak politely at this point?

Qin Yuru had no plans of letting Qin Wanru off. She flung off Di Yan's hand and asked, "So what if Mother knows? Qin Wanru, you don't want to care for her, do you?"

"I'll be there tomorrow. I just want to rest for the day. Can't you and Madam soldier on for a while?" Qin Wanru's long and sharply brows knitted as she looked at the mess in her house. "Is that way Madam told you to thrash my house?"

In contrast to Qin Yuru's aggressive stance, Qin Wanru appeared particularly tolerant and even a little lenient. Perhaps she could even be considered taking the larger picture to mind!

"So what if that's true?" Of course, Qin Yuru took it to mean that Qin Wanru was feeling guilty. Her voice became even louder.

She had just finished talking when she heard an ice-cold voice coming from behind her. "Yuru, who sent you here to thrash your sister's house?"

Qin Huaiyong entered the house with large strides. Taking in the broken fragments on the floor and Di Yan's presence, he was so livid that his face was tainted green. Conflicts between sisters were no big deal but to get into an argument in front of an outsider? How could Qin Huaiyong not get mad?

Di Yan's expression alone told him what Qin Yuru had done. It made Di Yan very unhappy as well. Perhaps it was more accurate to say that no man would want his fiancée to be a shrew instead of a dignified young lady from a distinguished family!

The moment she saw Qin Huaiyong, Qin Yuru immediately went up to him to accuse Qin Wanru. She said, "Father, Second Sister is feigning her injury to avoid caring for Mother."

She had already sent someone to inform Qin Huaiyong about what happened in Madam Di's courtyard earlier.

"She feigned her injury?" Qin Huaiyong's gaze fell on Qin Wanru. It wasn't clear what he thought about it.

"General, Second Miss is truly injured and badly at that. If you don't believe, you can let someone examine it. You can't let First Miss slander our mistress!" Nanny Yu ran up to Qin Huaiyong and knelt in front of him. Tears began streaming down her face. "First Miss insisted that our mistress is lying and even turned the house upside down. Even though our mistress says she'll serve Madam tomorrow after a day's rest, First Miss is still unsatisfied."

"Father, please send someone to examine the wound then." Qin Wanru looked at the fragments on the floor helplessly before looking up. Her watery eyes were filled with a hint of grief but her face was calm and serene.

She then turned around and entered the interior room.

"Meiyan! Go in and take a look!" Qin Wanru ordered, looking rather pleased with herself.

"Miss..." Meiyang suddenly became flustered.

"What are you waiting for? Go in!" Qin Yuru said sharply.

Meiyang had no choice but to enter the interior room. Qin Wanru was sitting on the bed. Qing Yue helped her lift her skirt and slowly undid the bandage on her calf. Crimson red permeated the cloth. Meiyang turned pale and her teeth began chattering. Still, she dared not say a word.

The pungent smell of blood drifted in the air as Qing Yue undid the bandage. When it was finally unveiled, a wound much larger than Qi Rongzhi's came into view. The wound appeared to drag across Qin Wanru's slender calf. It was so bloody that it wasn't clear how deep the wound was. Blood began spilling out the moment the bandage was unwrapped as if because no ointment was placed on it.

The smell of blood became even more pungent!

"Meiyang, did you get a clear look?" Qin Wanru looked up, directing a cold gaze at Meiyang. Under her watchful eyes, Meiyang began to tremble. "Is the injury real?"

Chapter 168 Yulan Pavilion's Affairs Don't Concern You

When Qin Yuru saw Meiyang stepping out, she hastily asked, "Second Miss is uninjured, isn't she?" There was a smug look on her face.

"First, First Miss..." Meiyang stammered, looking pale even now. She trembled as she looked helplessly at Qin Yuru.

"Speak!" Qin Yuru rebuked. She knew something had gone wrong.

"Second Miss... is badly injured!" Meiyang said, shuddering. She looked pitifully at Qin Yuru. She had no choice but to tell the truth; anyone could verify her words with a quick examination.

But she also knew the consequences of telling the truth. Qin Yuru would never let her off.

Her legs went weak and she fell on her knees with a loud thud. It was obvious that she was trembling.

Qin Yuru was stunned but quickly recovered her senses. With widened eyes, she cried, "Impossible!"

"What makes you say so?" With Qing Yue's support, Qin Wanru was once again standing in front of the curtain. "If you don't believe me, Big Sister, you're free to send even more people to examine me."

"I'll... examine it myself!" Not even Qin Yuru knew where did this stubborn refusal to give in come from. Try as she did, she couldn't suppress her anger.

"Enough!" Qin Huaiyong rebuked, his anger evident from the way his eyes and brows twitched. He kicked a nearby chair out the door and the chair crashed noisily on the floor. The entire house descended into silence.

"Father, I..." Qin Yuru said softly, beginning to feel afraid.

Holding Qing Yue's hands, Qin Wanru stood in silence. Her long lashes fluttered downward and yet she said nothing.

"Isn't your Mother ill? Injured too! What are you doing here, not attending to her?" Qin Huaiyong said sternly.

"Father..." Qin Yuru felt humiliated that Qin Huaiyong was admonishing her in front of Di Yan. Her entire face was red and tears were flowing from her eyes.

"You'll care for your Mother from now on. Your sister is so badly injured; how can she care for another person?" It was, of course, obvious to Qin Huaiyong by now that this was all the work of Madam Di and Qin Yuru.

He had endured Madam Di's earlier show being severely wounded out of respect for Duke Yong's Mansion. It was his fault, after all, and Madam Di was indeed injured. Then, they came up with this commotion that seemed to design to torment his younger daughter to death. No matter how much he tried, he couldn't suppress his fury this time.

"Father, I..." Qin Yuru began to feel mistreated. Even now, she refused to believe that Qin Wanru had truly sustained a heavy injury.

"What are you waiting for? Go back now! I don't want to hear you causing more trouble!" Qin Huaiyong's gaze was frigid. He was tremendously disappointed in Qin Yuru. He had hoped that this daughter would go even further. Madam Di and her unruly ways had shaped her daughter in her image. It seemed that he would have to consult his Mother about this. He couldn't afford to have Madam Di misguide Qin Yuru.

The repeated admonishments from Qin Huaiyong turned Qin Yuru's face as red as blood. She looked at him and then at Di Yan, who had his head lowered. Tears sprang forth. Sobbing loudly, she ran out of the house. However, she ran a little too fast and accidentally knocked into the chair lying on the floor. A quick-thinking maid immediately grabbed Qin Yuru's arm but she shoved the maid aside with force. The maid staggered backward and fell down.

After pushing the maid aside, Qin Yuru covered her face and ran out. Meiyan, who had been kneeling on the floor, hastily got to her feet. Lifting the hem of her skirt, she chased after her mistress.

"What a farce!" Qin Huaiyong roared.

"Uncle, I'll excuse myself and check on Aunt as well. She was badly scalded earlier. I'm sure Cousin Sister is just concerned about her," Di Yan said, raising his head. He had no choice but to speak up for Qin Yuru. Madam Di was his father's sister, after all, he had come to Qin's Mansion to bolster her influence. Even though he was unhappy with how Qin Yuru handled things, he must take her side.

"I apologize for showing you such a shameful show, Nephew!" Qin Huaiyong let out a deep sigh. Even though his expression was still cold, it had been somewhat relieved.

Di Yan, not knowing what else to say, bowed deferentially to Qin Huaiyong and excused himself. Had he known what a mess Qin's Mansion would turn out to be, he would never come here. Even he was embarrassed at all that commotion earlier.

Neither his Cousin Sister nor his Aunt was as he had imagined them to be. In fact, he found them loathsome. They had even tearfully lamented their mistreatment in front of Grandmother. Di Yan thought the one who deserved to lament anything was Qin Wanru.

After stepping out of the entrance of Zhifang Pavilion, he looked at the crossing and paused in his tracks. He was so frustrated that he had no mood to comfort Qin Yuru. With a turn of his foot, he began walking without a destination.

He hadn't gone far when a person suddenly emerged from the side. The person was in such a hurry that he collided with Di Yan. Di Yan, already frustrated, looked vexed at someone knocking into him. He was about to berate the person when the person tugged at his hand. The one who was trying to stop herself from falling was Qi Rongzhi.

When Qi Rongzhi regained firm footing and saw that the person in front of her was Di Yan, her cheeks reddened. She hastily stepped backward, but because she did it so hastily, her body swayed and nearly fell.

Di Yan reached out to grab her hand in time.

Qi Rongzhi, finally firmly on her feet, looked at him. With red cheeks, she asked softly, "Prince... where are you heading?"

"Just walking around." Di Yan scowled as he removed his hold on her hand. Indeed, he was planning to walk around because he didn't know what to say to Madam Di and Qin Yuru after returning.

Noticing his lack of enthusiasm, Qi Rongzhi knew something must have happened. An idea came to her and she asked concernedly, "Did you just leave Sister Wanru's place? How is her injury?"

Her concerned expression reminded Di Yan that Meiyang had said Qin Wanru was badly injured. Now that he thought about it, Meiyang had said Qi Rongzhi's injury was minor and Qin Yuru had made snide remarks about it. It made him feel even more smothered.

He thought Qin Yuru was too insistent and excessive. If Qin Wanru was that badly injured, how could Qi Rongzhi's injury be minor?

Qi Rongzhi had gotten injured out of the blue and even had to hear snide comments. Qin Yuru's action was truly disappointing.

With such a thought, his expression turned gentler. He smiled and replied, "The physician is still attending to Cousin Sister Wan's injury. It'll probably be better with some ointment and medicine. Miss Qi, how's your injury?"

"I'm fine. It's no big deal. It just hurts a little when my feet touch the ground." Qi Rongzhi stomped her feet as if she was trying to walk for Di Yan, but her legs gave in and she nearly crashed to the ground. Her long and shapely brows were knitted tightly in agony. It really made one feel a deep heartache for her.

Di Yan immediately reached out his hand to prop her up. His gaze fell on her legs. "Does it hurt that much?"

"No, not at all. It's just a bit inconvenient!" Qi Rongzhi said softly, shaking her head in a panic as if she was afraid that he wouldn't believe her.

However, she was still holding onto Di Yan's hand. To support the weight of her body, she was practically leaning on him. The faint smell of fragrance drifted and filled his nose.

Di Yan lowered his head to look at her lovable face. Imperceptibly, his breathing began to quicken. He didn't push her away. His expression began increasingly gentle as he said, "Why did you run out for a look in your current state? I'll walk you back to your house."

"That's... inappropriate, isn't it?" Qi Rongzhi looked bashful as she gave Di Yan a gentle push.

Di Yan looked around before letting go of her hand and adjusting his clothing. He nodded and said, "Then I'll watch you walk home from here."

It was truly inconvenient this time!

Inside Zhifang Pavilion, Nanny Yu led a few maids to quickly and efficiently clean the house. Qin Huaiyong sat on the central seat while a maid helped Qin Wanru sit on a chair on the other side. The physician had left after leaving behind the necessary medicine.

The house was quiet. The silence was so strange that it gave the people inside an unexplainable feeling.

Nanny Yu, who stood behind Qin Wanru, stared at the floor in front of her. She remained on tenterhooks. Even with her head lowered, she could still tell that the mood of the room was off.

The maids, Qing Yue, and Yujie, were long dismissed.

"Wanru, I'm so sorry!" Qin Huaiyong's voice was quiet but severe. He rubbed his temples, looking like he had a headache.

"Father, I don't blame you," Qin Wanru replied softly. Her gaze was both serene and tranquil, without the slightest bit of Qin Yuru's temper and agitation. It was as if she was the older one of the two. She faced everything calmly, without any fluctuation in emotion.

After a deep sigh, Qin Huaiyong looked up and looked at Qin Wanru as if he had something to say. In the end, however, nothing came from his mouth. He paused for a moment before saying, "From now on, Yulan Pavilion's affairs don't concern you."

This meant that Madam Di could no longer interfere with Qin Wanru's affairs or torment Qin Wanru using some other excuse or the status of an elder.

Nanny Yu's heart skipped. She was so agitated that she nearly leaped. Qin Huaiyong's words spelled a great advantage for her mistress.

"But... what will Duke Yong's Mansion say?" Qin Wanru looked a little worried.

"Di Yan is here today; he's seen everything. Even if I don't say anything, I believe Duke Yong's Mansion won't interfere in this. Moreover, this is a matter within my inner courtyard!" A trace of anger flitted across Qin Huaiyong's expression but he swiftly suppressed it. Now wasn't the time for him to have a fall out with Duke Yong's Mansion.

"Then, thank you kindly, Father!" Qin Wanru dropped the courtesy. Holding onto the chair arm, she stood up with immense difficulty and made a deep bow at Qin Huaiyong. When she looked up, childish joy was reflected on her face.

It was obvious that she was sincerely happy.

But that hardly warranted an explanation. Whoever met someone like Madam Di would feel emotionally exhausted even seeing his or her shadow. It was best to stay away from Madam Di.

“But Mother will still have to interact with Madam.” Her smile on her tiny face swiftly dimmed. Qin Wanru’s delicate brows furrowed as worry filled her expression. “Mother is still pregnant. If Madam deliberately creates trouble like the kitchen incident and targets Mother’s people, how can she take care of her unborn child in peace?”

Imperceptibly, two different matters were linked together!

“I have arrangements for your Mother. I’ll let my other two concubines handle the inner court affairs. Your Mother will just have to deal with them!”

Qin Huaiyong had been thinking about this for a long time. His mother was so old and frail that she could no longer take charge of the household matters. But if Madam Di continued to create fresh drama each day, Shui Ruolan’s health wouldn’t be able to take it. The two concubines would be his best bet at handling the household affairs. Shui Ruolan would only have to deal with them.

This was just an idea in the beginning, as he had to worry about Duke Yong’s Mansion. But the commotion earlier swiftly made up his mind.

This was what Qin Wanru had been waiting for. A flicker of an unfathomable expression crossed her eyes as she smiled and said, “Father, I have an idea but I don’t know if it’s feasible.”

Chapter 169 Father, Let’s Give It a Try!

“What is it? Tell me,” Qin Huaiyong said.

“Your two concubines will be no more than de facto supervisors of the household affairs,” Qin Wanru said hesitantly, biting her lower lip.

“What should we do then?” Qin Huaiyong didn’t know what she meant. Considering Madam Di’s character, it was unsuitable to let her be a housekeeper. If she could cause so much trouble without being a housekeeper, she might very well turn the mansion upside down if she became one.

“Father, your two concubines aren’t the only one unsuitable for the position. Even for Mother, it’s a little... inappropriate. Madam is your first wife, after all,” Qin Wanru said, blinking.

She imperceptibly switched the focus of the conversation to Shui Ruolan.

Even though the first wife and the second wife were both wives, the first wife would always hold a more official position. It was unreasonable to have the second wife manage household affairs when the first wife was perfectly fine, much less leaving the job to two concubines.

If someone accused Qin Huaiyong of favoring his concubines over his wives, things would be quite a headache.

In her past life, after Qin Wanru married Wen Xichi, she would accompany him by his sickbed each day. Whenever he felt better, he would often tell her about court affairs as well as what he had previously learned—things that Qin Wanru, who was trapped deep within the inner courtyard, never knew about.

Those things unveiled a whole new world for her. Her curiosity would prompt her to question him down to the root of the matter. Sometimes, Wen Xichi wouldn't even be able to answer her questions. Once, he even laughed and said that she could be a court official if she was a man, and a better official than most because of her thirst for knowledge.

In her past life, she was far away from officialdom. In this life, officialdom seemed a little closer within reach!

"Father, you're a general. Your appointment will inevitably come. Even delays won't last. Grandmother said even though a general doesn't have as high a standing as a minister, a general's control over the army means he'll basically never be relieved from duty if he makes no mistake. Moreover, I heard you earned great merit by exterminating rebel bandits before."

Qin Wanru pushed everything to Madam Dowager. It sounded as if Madam Dowager was responsible for the meaning behind her words.

She knew very well that she was still a child. If she was overly precocious or sharp-eyed, people might not necessarily find it to be a good thing. Abnormality was unusual, and excessive abnormality would only be uncanny. It would even draw all sorts of unfavorable speculations.

Being moderate was the most appropriate conduct in life!

Of course, the so-called moderation didn't mean she couldn't show off. She would demonstrate and hide her intelligence when she had to.

She owed all this knowledge to Wen Xichi in her past life. He had been both a master and a brother to her then. Unfortunately, her reputation was ruined early in life and other noble young ladies ostracized her. She didn't have the chance to develop her skills then.

"I know!" Qin Huaiyong didn't conceal things after seeing how much of a headache his youngest daughter was having. He nodded and gave her a curious look. To think that this neglected youngest daughter of his possessed extraordinary intellect. Even though she received guidance from his mother, it was still enough to make one exclaim over how bright she was.

He didn't know when his youngest daughter shed off her childish temper and grew up into a noble young lady that startled him.

Recalling how Madam Di would look frustrated and helpless whenever she talked about Qin Wanru in the past, he realized that was just Madam Di being selfish. He felt ashamed that he believed her and often treated Qin Wanru as an insensible girl who only knew how to make a scene.

"Father, since you're about to hold a post, you can rightfully request for the title of Honorary Lady," Qin Wanru said.

Qin Huaiyong finally caught onto her point. With a raised eyebrow, he asked, "Do you mean to request the title of Honorary Lady for your Mother?"

"Yes!" Qin Wanru said frankly.

Madam Di had the title of Honorary Lady: five-rank Yiren. It was conferred when Qin Huaiyong became the Ningyuan Army General.

“Grandmother said you have a high chance of getting a lateral transfer. Since it’s a lateral transfer, a higher title can’t be requested.”

That meant Madam Di couldn’t get a higher title anymore.

“But I earned no merit. How can I request for another title?” Qin Huaiyong explained with a frown. He thought she didn’t quite understand how titles work.

“Outpost officials are given a chance to request for the title of Honorary Lady when they’re transferred to the capital, aren’t they?” Qin Wanru tilted her head in confusion.

“That’s when they don’t have a title in the first place. Madam Di is already an Honorary Lady and I have no major merits. I’ll surely be rejected if I request another one. The so-called request of the title of an Honorary Lady is just a show!” Qin Huaiyong said with a wry smile.

The establishment of this practice was, in fact, to raise the status of the officials’ first wives. Still, it wouldn’t be approved for a lateral transfer.

“Father, just give it a try. Perhaps the Ministry of Rites will approve it!” Qin Wanru raised her long and shapely brows as she looked at Qin Huaiyong. “If the Ministry of Rites approves of the Honorary Lady title for Mother, she’ll be able to officially manage the household. Even if she’s unwell and leave the duties to your other two concubines, it’s still acceptable. It’s been bestowed by the court, after all.”

If that were the case, it would really solve the issues in the inner courtyard. Madam Di would no longer be able to find a chance to torment Shui Ruolan. Duke Yong’s Mansion wouldn’t be so free to criticize Shui Ruolan as well. The bureaucrats at the Censorate wouldn’t be able to say anything about it either if they had the approval of the Ministry of Rites.

This was an outcome that delighted Qin Huaiyong. But upon second thought, he still found the matter unlikely. He wasn’t someone whose merits were greater than the sky itself. How could both his wives be conferred the title of Honorary Lady?

He looked into Qin Wanru’s expectant and innocent eyes with such a thought. In the end, he couldn’t bear to reject her. He nodded and said, “Very well. I’ll give it a try!”

Qin Wanru smiled, revealing dimples that resembled blossoming flowers. With unwarranted confidence, she said with certainty, “Father, you’ll definitely succeed!”

“That’d be for the best!” Qin Huaiyong felt helpless at his daughter’s utter confidence. “Get some rest for now. Make sure to put ointment on your wound.”

“Yes, Father!” Even though Qin Wanru looked pale, her expression was rather firm. It truly made one’s heart ache seeing how wan her delicate face looked.

She held onto Nanny Yu’s hand as she spoke, preparing to step out and see Qin Huaiyong off.

Qin Huaiyong immediately stopped her. “Get some rest first. I need to leave now. You don’t need to see me off!”

“Then, please remember your promise, Father,” Qin Wanru said, obediently pausing in her tracks.

"Very well, I'll keep it in mind." Qin Huaiyong nodded perfunctorily and walked away with large strides.

Nanny Yu had been watching Qin Huaiyong's expression. When he was gone, she said with unease, "Miss, I don't think the General is taking this seriously!" It seemed to her that Qin Huaiyong was just placating Qin Wanru.

It would be an immense blessing if they could get the title of Honorary Lady for Madam Shui. That meant that Madam Di wouldn't be able to overdo her bullying when she and Madam Shui visit Duke Yong's Mansion.

How could something this great be possible?

Worried that Qin Wanru's high hopes would lead to tremendous disappointment, Nanny Yu thought she should be straightforward and prepare her mistress in advance.

"I know." Qin Wanru smiled as she entered the house with Nanny Yu's help and sat on the bed.

Yujie took off the haphazardly-wrapped cloth around Qin Wanru's leg before taking a strip of white silk cloth laden with medicine and binding it around her wound. The ointment was of Qin Wanru's own making, not the one that the physician sent over.

The physician's ointment was a little too ordinary and not as effective as hers.

"Miss, since that's the case, why do you still bring it up with the General?" Nanny Yu asked as she helped Yujie.

"That way, he'll know there's such an option and mention it at the right timing. Sometimes, some things are forever impossible if you never mention it. But if you bring it up, you give it a chance," Qin Wanru said meaningfully with a smile.

"Miss, you mean you're making an initial report to the General, so he'd mention it himself when an opportunity presents itself?" Even though the clever Yujie couldn't quite understand Nanny Yu's words, she could somewhat grasp the point.

The worried Nanny Yu burst into laughter when she saw Yujie acting as if she knew something when she didn't. She gave Yujie's head a gentle pat and said with a smile, "This girl!"

"Nanny, am I incorrect?" Yujie raised her head in dissatisfaction. Mingqiu Nun would often argue with her like this in the past, always telling her false things that sounded so much like the truth. After listening to such nonsense for a long time, she would also spout logical-sounding things and participate in many discussions.

"You're right! You're absolutely right!" Looking at Yujie's mischievous look, Nanny Yu's frayed nerves began to ease and her laughter became increasingly uncontrollable.

Happiness soon filled the house, ushering the gloominess out the door.

Qin Wanru smiled as she looked at her calves that were buried under the quilt. Suddenly, she thought they didn't hurt that much anymore.

She didn't intend for her father to immediately request the title of Honorary Lady from the Emperor, only to leave such an impression on him. With the addition of several supporting incidents, everything would go according to plan when the time came.

What sounded impossible now might not be so impossible anymore!

Opportunities would come and she could find one as well. The only thing she needed now was the right timing...

When Qin Huaiyong arrived at Madam Di's courtyard, she was still throwing a tantrum inside the house. The young maid who had been half-kneeling to feed her earlier had been beaten into a pulp. Blood covered every inch of her motionless body. It was a mystery whether she was still breathing.

Qin Huaiyong stormed inside the house in a fit of rage. When he saw Qin Yuru was here as well, he chided, "Go out!"

"Father!" Qin Yuru was tattling to Madam Di when she saw a furious Qin Huaiyong entering the house. Little did she expect that he would ask her to leave without another word? She couldn't help feeling stunned.

"Leave!" Qin Huaiyong was emanating a frigid aura all over. He looked at his eldest daughter with enough coldness to freeze her over.

"Fa-Father..." Qin Yuru was about to say something when an older female servant, sensing that it was a bad idea, hastily pulled her out of the house. It was evident that Qin Huaiyong had something to tell Madam Di that wasn't meant for Qin Yuru's ears. If Qin Yuru was short-sighted and tried to butt in, she would surely infuriate Qin Huaiyong even more.

Chapter 170 What Didn't Matter in the Past Has Become Crucial Now

"What are you fussing about now?" Qin Huaiyong gave Madam Di a cold look.

"I... How am I fussing? I'm already ill! Who would've expected those girls to spill the medicine all over me? General, I'm the injured one!" Madam Di started sobbing. She reached out to show her bandaged hand as she swept.

Quite a large patch of her skin was scalded. The cloth that bandaged her hand was quite long as well.

Qin Huaiyong's gaze traveled to her face and landed on the ointment-coated scar on it. A flicker of resentment flashed in his eyes. He was getting increasingly sick of Madam Di.

"Get Yuru to serve you when you're ill next time. Don't try anything with Wanru!" Qin Huaiyong said callously.

"General, I've raised her for so many years and I'm a senior in life too. Shouldn't she care for me when I'm ill?" Madam Di said in dissatisfaction, wiping her tears. She couldn't accept failing to torment Qin Wanru this time. How could she let such a good chance go to waste? It wasn't easy for her to get her brother's support. She didn't want this to slip out of her hands.

"You know very well what you've done!" Qin Huaiyong's anger surged when he saw how persistent Madam Di was. With a sharp glint in his eyes, he walked over to her with large strides and dragged her out of the house. He used so much strength that she nearly fell.

Sensing that things were going south, Madam Di hastily grabbed a nearby pillar and asked in a panic, "General, what are you doing?"

"I'm taking you back to Duke Yong's Mansion. Qin's Mansion is too small for such an ambitious person like you!" Qin Huaiyong tugged with force, causing Madam Di to loosen her hold over the pillar. She was so frightened that she cried out and immediately threw herself at him. She hugged his leg, refusing to let go.

"General, how am I ambitious? I'm just ill and wants my daughters to dote on me. Who knew Qi Rongzhi would be so insensible as to join us and even make a mess out of the house?" Madam Di knew from Qin Huaiyong's stern expression that things were dire. Thus, she instantly pushed all the blame on Qi Rongzhi.

She never imagined that Duke Yong's Mansion, typically Qin Huaiyong's taboo, was no longer as effective a deterrent as it used to be.

It was useful for giving Qin Huaiyong a scare, but she never thought of leaving Qin's Mansion.

Qin Huaiyong looked coldly at her with an unfathomable gaze. He pressed his lips tightly together and remained quiet.

Madam Di became terrified when his bad mood and silence persisted. She hugged his leg and wept sorrowfully, "General, I'm not trying anything. It was just an accident. I was just mad because of my injury!"

Qin Huaiyong's expression remained cold. He pulled his leg away with force, kicking Madam Di in the process and causing her to fall. A loud creak rang out when her elbow hit the ground.

She could hardly worry about the pain in her elbow now. She turned her hand over to hoist herself upward and swiftly embraced Qin Huaiyong. She pleaded, "General, I, I won't do this again. I still want to see our daughter marry into a good household and watch her enjoy a splendid life!"

She had never seen him this furious in their many years of marriage. She didn't dare to go against him anymore and started placating him.

"You want to watch your daughter enjoy a splendid life?" Qin Huaiyong grabbed Madam Di by the collar and lifted her to her feet. His gaze was still cold.

Madam Di was truly panicking. She subconsciously tugged at Qin Huaiyong's hand, trying her best to make him let go of her. His tight hold over her collar smothered her. Even breathing felt difficult. Her face reddened but no words would come. Right now, she felt as if she could see the murderous intent in his eyes.

She tried her best to voice out, but the tugging at her collar made it impossible. The only thing she could do was struggle like a shored-up fish that couldn't reach the waters no matter how it jumped.

Madam Di's face was beet-red and her eyes were bulging. Cold sweat covered her forehead. Her two legs tried their best to support her weight. She pulled Qin Huaiyong's hand with as much strength she could muster. Her vision began to cloud.

Suddenly, the force on her neck eased and her throat area immediately found relief. Madam Di fell hard on the ground. Holding onto her stomach, she started coughing as if she was trying to cough her lungs out.

The air that she inhaled through her mouth made her feel like she had come back to life, even as it gave her a bad cough, drenched her face with tears, and reopened her bandage. Brown ointment slid down her face, forming a trail of what seemed like brown-colored tears. She looked both strange and pitiful.

"Hire an etiquette instructor from the palace for Yuru. If she keeps behaving like you, what would I need her for?" His cold voice filled her ears. This coldness didn't belong to Qin Huaiyong's voice that she remembered. She was truly terrified this time. Shivering, she staggered backward with her hand clasped over her stomach and distanced herself from him.

"Hadn't I told you that in the past?" Qin Huaiyong lowered his head to look at Madam Di.

Memories of the past filled Madam Di's mind. The redness of her face faded, leaving a deathlike pallor. Even her hands were trembling.

"I, I understand..."

"Remember your words!" Qin Huaiyong scoffed. He gave her another look before turning around and walking away with large strides.

Qin Yuru was still waiting outside. She wanted to rush in after hearing all the strange noises, but the older female servant with her refused to let her. When the doors opened, she ran over and saw a grim-faced Qin Huaiyong. She was so surprised that she stopped in her tracks.

Qin Huaiyong didn't even spare her a glance as he walked out of the courtyard.

Seeing that he had left, Qin Yuru ran inside the house and saw a panicking Madam Di on the floor. She looked pale and pathetic as she stared dazedly in the sky, trembling.

Qin Yuru immediately went over to help her get up. Worried, she asked, "Mother, what's wrong?"

Madam Di turned her head and fixed her lifeless gaze on her. It was as if she could only recognize Qin Yuru after a moment. She hugged Qin Yuru and started weeping loudly. Right now, she felt like she had just been revived.

"Mother, what's wrong? Are you alright?" Qin Yuru was beginning to panic. She had never seen her mother act like this. The rim of her eyes reddened as well. She felt both furious and resentful at this moment.

Nanny Zhou stepped in right then. Together, they hoisted Madam Di upward and helped her walk to the bed. Nanny Zhou got someone to change Madam Di's clothes. It wasn't until Madam Di was presentable again that she recovered her senses. She leaned sideways on the bed, holding tight on Qin Yuru's hand, refusing to let go.

Qin Yuru handed a wet handkerchief to Nanny Zhou before looking at her mother and asking, "Mother... are you alright?"

"I'm fine now." With a cold expression, Madam Di closed her eyes and slowly let go of her daughter's hand. "Go back. I have something to discuss with Nanny Zhou."

"Mother, I'm still worried. I don't want to go!" Qin Yuru remained by the bed.

"Go. I'm alright now. I'll get you an etiquette instructor from the palace in a few days. She'll teach you the etiquette of the capital," Madam Di said slowly.

"Mother..." Qin Yuru was startled. She didn't know why her mother would bring this up right now.

"Nanny Zhou, please see First Miss off," Madam Di said weakly as she closed her eyes. What happened earlier replayed in her mind over and over, provoking memories she had nearly forgotten.

"First Miss, please go back for now. Madam isn't in the mood to talk to you right now. Rest assured, I'll be here to lend her a sympathetic ear," Nanny Zhou told Qin Yuru in a gentle voice. She knew what Madam Di meant.

"But Mother's current state..." Qin Yuru said, still ill at ease.

"First Miss, don't worry. I'm here," Nanny Zhou said. Since Nanny Zhou had said so, and Madam Di was keeping her eyes shut as if she didn't want to speak to her, Qin Yuru helplessly stood up. She bit her lip and glanced at Madam Di before deciding to leave.

"Yuru, stop causing trouble anymore. Don't provoke Shui Ruolan or Qin Wanru," Madam Di suddenly said.

Qin Yuru had no plans of letting Qin Wanru off. She flung off Madam Di's hand and asked, "So what if Mother knows? Qin Wanru, you don't want to care for her, do you?"

"You may leave." Madam Di waved her hand. Qin Yuru had no choice but to leave. Her mother's words were all over the place today, making it difficult for her to grasp the main point. She stood in the corridor in contemplation but understanding eluded her. Clenching her teeth, she directed all of her fury and resentment to Qin Wanru. Once an opportunity arises, she swore that she would repay that lowly wench a hundredfold, even a thousandfold!

"Where is the Prince?" she asked, suddenly remembering Di Yan.

"The Prince left with you. Hasn't he been out all this while?" Meiyan stammered.

Seeing that it was Meiyan who answered her, Qin Yuru immediately slapped her on the face. She pointed to the young maid lying motionless in the courtyard that no one dared to pay attention to. "See that? That'll be your outcome if you do this again!"

Her voice, twisted with maliciousness and ruthlessness, was cold. It scared Meiyan so much that she fell noisily to her knees. Trembling, she knocked her head hard on the ground. "First Miss, I dare not anymore, I dare not anymore!"

Qin Yuru scoffed, ignoring her pleas. She stepped on Meiyan's hand and spun around to leave the courtyard.

The pain shot straight into Meiyan's heart but she dared not say anything even as she heard a loud creak coming from her fingers. It hurt so much that she nearly screeched but she tried her best to suppress it...

Inside the house, Madam Di slowly opened her eyes after Qin Yuru had left and revealed a pair of gloomy eyes. "Nanny Zhou, have you found the seal?"

Nanny Zhou had been looking for it in quite a few places but found nothing. Now that Madam Di was asking her about it, she replied helplessly, "Madam, I haven't found it. What, what should we do?"

"Forget it! Just make a new one for a replacement," Madam Di said coldly. A trace of bloodthirstiness flitted across her eyes—the same kind of bloodthirstiness that she saw when Qin Huaiyong nearly strangled her to death.

"Madam, what do we need it for? You didn't really want it before," Nanny Zhou whispered, inhaling a mouthful of cold air. She truly had no idea what use her mistress had for the seal. Madam Di had never cared for it before or she wouldn't have nonchalantly toss it away.

"What didn't matter in the past has become crucial now!" Madam Di lowered her head and clenched her hands. That sensation of struggling for her life seemed so vivid to her!

In the past, it was just an insignificant chess piece to her...