

## Medical Princess 201

### Chapter 201 The First Miss or the Second Miss

When her carriage stopped at the doorway of Ning's Mansion, Qin Yuru didn't get out of it immediately. Instead, she sat inside it looking at the mansion through and through, it had become deserted and crumbled now. Some sort of ridicule appeared on her face. "It is impossible that such a poor house could cultivate some good girls. That so-called cousin is just someone from an impoverished family!"

What she didn't notice was that Qin Wanru was sitting in another carriage, which was among several others in the corner, and her eyes were fixed on the doorway of Ning's Mansion through the window, which was slightly raised.

Having known that Qin Yuru wouldn't easily dismiss this anger from her mind, Qin Wanru naturally waited here earlier to be a looker-on. "Since that Ning Caixian intended to plot against me, she shouldn't blame me to take vengeance on her!"

"Go tell the gatekeepers that we ask to see the First Miss of Ning's Mansion," Qin Yuru said to Mei Xue.

"Yes, Miss!" Mei Xue got out of the carriage and went to the gate of Ning's Mansion, then she became serious and shouted at the gatekeeper who was coming out, "Is your First Miss in?"

"The First Miss is in the mansion, but you are?" The gatekeeper didn't know Mei Xue, so he asked while looking her up and down with confusion.

"I am the servant girl of Duke Yong's Mansion, and my childe wants to see your First Miss. Please take her out for a meeting, we have something for your First Miss," Mei Xue said with a smile.

"Now that your childe has something for our First Miss, why doesn't he simply take it in instead of asking for my First Miss to go out?" the gatekeeper was puzzled and asked. For Childe Di had always taken something into the mansion directly as he wished before. Never had he stayed so hesitantly outside the gate while asking the First Miss out for a meeting.

"Pah!" Suddenly Mei Xue slapped the gatekeeper in the face. "How dare you ask so much about what my childe thinks! Certainly it is something important that must be handed over to your First Lady. Go now to tell her."

"Well, well, well!" After being slapped, the gatekeeper dared not say anything. At present, Ning's Mansion was so run-down, so it was natural that he kept silent. Although Childe Di had always been friendly in the past, the gatekeeper was not sure if he was in a good mood today.

Silently, the gatekeeper hurried to report to the First Miss. Mei Xue went back to the carriage and told Qin Ruyu what happened just now, then she stood by the carriage.

The gatekeeper came back very quickly. He came out and ran to the front of the carriage. With a smile, he said to Mei Xue, "My First Miss is coming out soon, but she is weak, it will take some time, please wait a moment!"

"How could she be so slow!" Mei Xue frowned and snorted quietly.

Sure enough, after waiting some more, they saw Ning Caixian come slowly with a servant girl. Her every step was so delicate that it made her look like a willow branch trembling in the wind.

In the carriage, Qin Yuru looked at her carefully and thought, "Her face isn't as beautiful as mine, and is somewhat mournful-looking, but that pair of eyes looks full of affection and some sort of tenderness. Such an appearance is easy to make people disgusted. As expected, she is a coquettish bitch." Qin Yuru was exceedingly wrathful.

"Unexpectedly, this bitch used to see herself as the future female master of Duke Yong's Mansion. It was said that she had punished two sex-serving servants girl. What the hell is she!"

"My cousin, why don't you come in?" Ning Caixian stopped in front of the carriage, raised her head, and said with some shyness. She couldn't think of any reason that she had to come out to personally take something and thought that Di Yan had to be joking with her. So after coming over, she looked at the carriage femininely, waiting for Di Yan to jump out of the it all of a sudden.

Mei Xue lifted the curtain of the carriage, and Qin Yuru jumped down.

Ning Caixian's face changed. She moved back two steps, staring at Qin Yuru, who had a gloomy face. She knew that something bad was coming.

But before she got back to a safe place, Qin Yuru had rushed up and given her two slaps severely in the face. She couldn't help taking a few steps back and fell heavily to the ground. The servant girl who was with Ning Caixian was shocked to almost faint. She rushed over to help her, screaming and shouting, "Missy, Missy!"

"Bitch, you f\*cking bitch looking so delicate and weak, God knows how dirty you are! You not only hooked up with the supervisor of my mansion, but also tempted other men to my mansion as you cannot stand the loneliness. What a licentious bitch!"

Qin Yuru went up close to Ning Caixian and kicked her body violently, which almost took her breath away. Upon hearing clearly what Qin Yuru said, she blushed deeply and said, "You are talking nonsense, and who are you? I don't know you!"

"Of course you don't know me. You and the supervisor of my mansion hooked up with each other, keeping a vague relationship. Didn't you think that my supervisor had a wife? He is nobody but someone in charge of our inner affairs. You dirty woman, why are you so dirty!" Qin Yuru raised her head, sneered coldly, and said.

"You... What are you talking about?" Ning Caixian finally came to her senses. She was so angry that couldn't help screaming and shouting. With the help of her servant girl, she stood up. Her face was ghastly pale.

"Is it nonsense? Do you want me to ask some people to confirm that your servant girl came to my mansion tempting men purposely? You look like an elegant lady from an aristocratic family, but what you have done is so disgusting. Even though Ning's Mansion declines nowadays, you don't have to be so low!"

Qin Yuru had come here prepared. She took out a hair clasp from her cuff and shook it in her hand. "Look, we have your hair clasp as evidence. Your name is engraved on it. Does the word 'Cai' mean anybody else?"

Two sex-serving servant girls took Qin Yuru to find the hair clasp secretly in Di Yan's room. Indeed it belonged to Ning Caixian, as she had left it in Di Yan's room on purpose. Now it was in Qin Yuru's hands as evidence.

They created such a disturbance, which had already attracted quite a few people. There was no more space outside Ning's Mansion. Besides, all the shops were gathered on both sides. This place having such a big disturbance immediately became surrounded by a large group of people.

Originally, people thought it was impossible that an elegant lady from an aristocratic family would hook up with a supervisor. After all, a supervisor was just a servant no matter how big the mansion was that he was in charge of. Although Ning's Mansion was in decline nowadays, she was always a noble Miss, which was different from other ordinary people. But when people saw this hair clasp held by Qin Yuru, they all believed her. Ning Caixian's face became pale.

At that moment, people were all talking about it. In their words, this Miss Ning Caixian looked like a noble one in daily life. Nobody could tell that she was a dirty woman like this.

Some ruffians were among the crowd, and they even said obscene words to Ning Caixian, taking her as a whore in a brothel by their words.

Ning Caixian's face changed either blue or pale. Until now, she hadn't figured out who that Miss was and why she came to fight her all of a sudden.

It was impossible that she hooked up with the supervisor. At most, she would choose Di Yan, as Countess Yong was originally going to let Di Yan marry her. But now the bride-to-be became the Miss from Qin's Mansion. She couldn't accept it, so she used many means to contact him. She even sent a servant girl to supervise him at the gate, as she was afraid that Di Yan would keep living in Qin's Mansion.

She never realized that her servant girl could get caught by people from Qin's Mansion when the girl went to secretly contact Di Yan. The girl even led those people to meet her. Ning Caixian was anxious and in a panic.

Fortunately, the old maid from Qin's Mansion was actually friendly. She said that only Ning Caixian herself could enter Duke Yong's Mansion, but now the person who stopped her was the Second Miss from Qin's Mansion. According to the old maid, this Second Miss had some sort of relationship with Di Yan, and thought that the two sisters could marry Duke Yong's Mansion together. If the Second Miss was really successful, it would be impossible for Ning Caixian, even as a concubine.

If these words were only from an old maid, Ning Caixian would not believe it. But she remembered that once Di Yan had said some words to her. He said that the most beautiful Miss from aristocratic families in the whole city was none other than the Second Miss from Qin's Mansion. At that time, she kept these words in her mind.

Now she put all these words together and made a decision not to let the Second Miss succeed. She immediately found ways to do it. That hair clasp got from Qin's Mansion had been sent to a ruffian by her now. When the time came, she would arrange someone to ruin the reputation of the Second Miss.

She would create rumors that the Second Miss from Qin's Mansion had hooked up with the ruffian and sent him a hair clasp, on which the word "Qin" was engraved.

She never thought that before she herself could take action, other people would take her hair clasp here to make troubles for her.

All of a sudden, Ning Caixian realized who she was. Looking at Qin Yuru's beautiful face, she thought she knew her.

"Second Miss Qin, do you know what the crime of framing up others is?" Ning Caixian was so angry that she trembled. If she had known that the Second Miss from Qin's Mansion was this terrible, she would have taken action earlier and ruined her reputation first. Now because of her mercy, she missed the good opportunity so that her opponent had a chance to deal with her.

Ning Caixian felt angry and hateful because she wasn't evil-minded enough.

"Second Miss Qin? Sure enough, you are a bitch who has been blind. How did my second sister mess with you so that you could slander her like this?" Qin Yuru said with a cold smile.

Ning Caixian narrowed her eyes. Immediately, she realized that she was wrong. Unexpectedly, the Miss who was standing in front of her was the First Miss from Qin's Mansion. Also, she was the one who should be engaged to Di Yan. At that moment, she was in a real mess, so she took a step backward and almost fell in the arms of her servant girl. Her face was as pale as white snow. "First Miss Qin, you... Why do you slander me like this?"

"Do I slander you? You are a profligate. You sent your hair clasp at random to the supervisor of my mansion, and even contacted men at their own house. Why don't you dare to recognize it? Do you want some people of my mansion to prove your servant girl's whereabouts?" Qin Yuru was full of confidence now because two sex-serving servant girls had told her some information secretly. She laughed grimly while putting all these bad rumors on Ning Caixian.

The resentment that she had previously gotten from Qi Rongzhi had a chance now to be released at Ning Caixian.

Qin Yuru looked Ning Caixian up and down with her eyes full of contempt. "So, you have the guts to do it, but now don't dare to admit it? You are so old yet still not married. Do you plan to find a better man?"

Ning Caixian was older than Di Yan. According to the plan, she would be engaged to Di Yan at first, but the Great Madam didn't agree to it. Besides, they needed time to observe mourning for the dead. So the engagement was delayed.

"You... you have gone too far. Is it for the reason of my cousin? I sent this hair clasp to my cousin, I went to his mansion to contact him previously. I... I would have been engaged to Duke Yong's Mansion. But because of you... my cousin said... said that he would marry you! However, even so, you shouldn't ruin my reputation." Ning Caixian's face had turned dreadfully pale, her eyes were full of despair. Looking at

Qin Yuru, she let tears fall down helplessly. After saying these words, she fell in a faint, and her servant girl hurried to hold her in her arms.

"Cousin Yu, what's the matter with you?" Qin Yuru didn't expect that Ning Caixian would fall down in a faint. She was shocked for a moment. When she prepared to say something, suddenly the voice of Di Yan came from outside the crowd.

Chapter 202 She Is Not Sick. How Can I Save Her?

The crowd was parted to both sides by Di Yan, who rushed in hurriedly. Seeing that Ning Caixian exhaled more than she inhaled, he nearly pounced on her in a hurry. Di Yan instantly took her in his arms and asked anxiously, "Cousin Xian, Cousin Xian, are you okay?"

Puffing and blowing, Ning Caixian seemed to be nearly out of breath. Seeing that Ning Caixian's situation was awful, all those people around them quickly stepped aside to make more space for her to breathe.

"Cousin!" Qin Yuru was so angry that her face turned white because Di Yan came in and hugged Ning Caixian without even asking her.

"You shut up!" Watching the delicate Ning Caixian in his arms, Di Yan roared.

"Cousin, you... Did you yell at me only because of this b\*tch?" As Qin Yuru saw the sarcasm on the faces of the people around her, her face turned ghastly pale, her lips quivered a few times, and her eyes' rims went red.

"Have you finished giving vent to your anger? If you have done, go back. I will not spare you if anything bad happens to Cousin Xian!" Di Yan was worried about Ning Caixian, so he shouted angrily. He really worried about Ning Caixian, who was in poor health. Any slight disturbance would make her delicate body sick.

"You, you, you actually..." Qin Yuru's tears fell. After taking two steps back, she covered her face with the handkerchief and ran back.

Mei Xue found that the situation was getting worse now. While calling Qin Yuru, she went to chase her in a hurry.

When Di Yan saw that Qin Yuru ran away even without her carriage, he also got into a flap and immediately turned around to catch her. But Ning Caixian grabbed his hands now. With a dreadfully pale face, she looked at Di Yan. "Cousin, you... Go to pursue First Miss Qin quickly. She... It is only because she envies us!"

Although she told Di Yan to chase Qin Yuru, her hands still held onto him tightly. She looked as if something bad would happen to her once Di Yan left her alone.

"I, I should go to see her first..." Now, Qin Yuru had already walked out of his sight. Di Yan also panicked. He felt worried about both Ning Caixian and Qin Yuru. If something bad happened to Qin Yuru, he really did not know how to explain it to his grandmother.

However, he did not dare to go because Ning Caixian was so weak that her body could not withstand any more suffering. What could he do if something happened to her?

Di Yan was now caught in a dilemma, sweat streaming down his forehead.

"The doctor is coming. The doctor is coming!" It didn't know who shouted loud outside the crowd. These people around Ning Caixian hurriedly made way for the doctor. In a hurry, a middle-aged doctor ran up to her with a medical kit, sweat dripping from his face. Everyone could tell that he was very anxious.

"This... I do not know this doctor. I do not... want him!" Ning Caixian said, gasping.

"Come on. Go to get the old doctor who has been treating your Young Lady here!" Di Yan hastily ordered the girl servant of Ning Caixian.

"At this time of crisis, she still wants to choose the doctor. Is she truly sick or not?" Yujie yelled out in the crowd. Qin Wanru had already got down from the carriage when Qin Yuru was making a scene. It was she who asked the cart driver to invite the doctor whom she had picked early here.

"Yeah. Any doctor is capable of treating illness. She still has the strength to choose the doctor at this time. Does she really pretend to be sick?"

"Is she playing the trick of pretending to die?"

"Even until now, I haven't understood what is going on. But this First Miss indeed has exchanged love tokens secretly with someone. But I do not know if she changed the token with the child here or some other men?" ...

The crowd began to discuss animatedly. The matter was a mess now. No one knew whose words were right and whose were not. But judging by the conversation, the people who had witnessed the whole thing was sure that First Miss Ning, who looked delicately pretty, had done some bad conducts. It seemed that she was involved with men.

"Young Madams of Ning's mansion are not women of fine character. Last time, I saw Second Miss of Ning's mansion pulling and pushing with a man like a prostitute in front of the gate." Someone who witnessed that Second Miss Ning pulled and pushed with the nephew of Duke Xing said. Although the thing like that did not always happen, it would occasionally happen one or two times.

"In this case, last time I saw this child send the extremely delicate First Miss Ning back. And it seemed that he carried her in the arms when he walked into the mansion!" someone in the shop around said. This person had seen the things that happened between Ning Caixian and Di Yan.

Hearing the words in her ears, Ning Caixian became anxious and panic. The color on her face repeatedly changed between green and white. Moreover, she felt that it became increasingly difficult for her to breathe. She clutched at Di Yan's hands and would not let him go.

But she still stretched out the other hand to let the middle-aged doctor feel the pulse and dared not to give more advice.

After feeling her pulse, the middle-aged doctor landed his eyes on Ning Caixian's face. In confusion, he frowned. "This Young Madam, please give me the other hand!"

Di Yan took her other hand to the doctor, who then placed his hand on her pulse. After feeling the pulse on this hand, the doctor cast a look at her ghastly pale face once again.

"Doctor, how is she? What first-aid measures should be taken?" As soon as he saw the doctor put down her hand, Di Yan asked eagerly.

"She does not need any first-aid measure. Isn't she all right?" The doctor wiped his hands with a handkerchief and said without looking up.

"What?" Di Yan thought he had misheard him, so he asked again in astonishment, "Doctor, could you tell me how to afford the first-aid to her?"

"I said that she does not need any first-aid measure. She is just a little short of the vital energy and the blood. There is nothing really wrong with her." The doctor stood up and picked up his medical kit. It seemed that he was going to leave. He said while shaking his head. "She has sufficient medical resources, so she can let a doctor run all this way in vain! Don't make such a row. When she is only in a bad mood because of the quarrel, she is going to faint. What the h\*ll did she act like that for?"

"You... What did you say?" asked Di Yan, scarcely believing his ears.

"I said that this Young Madam is short of breath because she kicked up a row. Also, she is a little anemic but has no other illnesses. She does not need any first aid treatment. At first, I thought it was a big deal. I have had enough of wasting so much time!" the middle-aged doctor said grumpily. He was initially giving treatment to someone, but a girl servant anxiously pulled him out. He hurriedly ran here because she told him that someone was going to die here.

"Is she... all right?" Di Yan asked in disbelief. He was a little dumbfounded because Ning Caixian was always very fragile in his mind. "Usually, if there is any sign of disturbance, she will immediately make a big thing out of it. The thing that happened today looked like a big deal. So how can she be alright?"

"I, I am weak since childhood... Doctor, is it possible that you have misdiagnosed me?" Ning Caixian argued anxiously. Holding Di Yan's hand, she stood up and questioned at the doctor's back.

"I did not misdiagnose. If you do not believe me, you can go to ask an imperial doctor to check on you. My grandfather works in the imperial hospital." When the doctor heard that Ning Caixian questioned his medical skills, he turned his head unpleasantly and looked her up and down. "This Young Madam, I don't care what you are up to, but you should never play this kind of trick to fool others. Any case involving human life is to be treated with the utmost care. You can never afford the price."

After that, he turned around and walked away.

He took no notice of Ning Caixian.

"Cousin Di, where is my Big Sister?" Just when the doctor left, Qin Wanru cropped up. She still looked dusty, but she had removed those butterfly-like hairpins on her head. There left only one simply butterfly knot. Though inconspicuous, it was not an eyesore. Under her thick fringe, Di Yan could see her angry face.

"I..." Di Yan was really dumbfounded at this time. Things came one after another, and they were all to his surprise. "This time, Qin Wanru came out of nowhere. Didn't she go back to her mansion early?"

"Cousin Di, the marriage between you and my Big Sister will be settled soon. Who is she? Why are you so intimate with her? Is she the one that you are going to marry instead of my Big Sister?" Qin Wanru

landed her ice-cold eyes on Ning Caixian, glancing her up and down. Then, she sneered and said, "She looks so sick and weak. Is she putting it on to deliberately make you stay?"

If Qin Wanru said these words before, Di Yan would not believe her. However, even the previous doctor, who seemed to have excellent medical skills, said that Ning Caixian had no other serious illnesses. At this moment, Di Yan was in a state of utter stupefaction. Hearing Qin Wanru's words, he suddenly remembered that Qin Yuru left everything behind and walked away just now. Then, he was obviously rattled.

Di Yan immediately got rid of Ning Caixian's hand, which pulled him tight and pushed Ning Caixian into her girl servant's arms. After that, he said to Qin Wanru in a hurry, "I am going to look for Cousin Yu!"

"Cousin, cousin!" Ning Caixian cried subconsciously.

"First Miss Ning, why are you pulling Cousin Di?" "Is Cousin Di your fiance or my Big Sister's? Have you and Cousin Di ignored my Big Sister and already changed your love tokens secretly?" Standing naturally and gracefully before Ning Caixian, Qin Wanru asked in a little cold voice. "Though I am young, I have heard the means of pretending sickness and ignorance. But are these means usually done by those cheap little concubines? Are you trying to destroy the marriage between Cousin Di and my Big Sister?"

"I, I..." Ning Caixian really did not know how things went so badly wrong and who this humble girl before her was. In great confusion, her whole person was shaking.

"First Miss Ning, stop making more trouble after I'm gone. I have to look for my Big Sister. If anything happens to her, people from Qin's Mansion will definitely get justice for her." After casting a few glances at Ning Caixian, Qin Wanru turned around and left with Yujie.

Although Qin Wanru came and left in haste, she made the final judgment.

"Sure enough, she is so cheap that she tried to ruin others' marriage!"

"She also pretended to be sick and made a fuss as if she was going to die soon."

"This kind of thing could only be done by concubines. The two Young Madams in Ning's Mansion are not some decent girls." These people around understood the whole thing and immediately burst into an uproarious sneer.

In these people's eyes, Ning Caixian was a cheap woman who wanted to destroy the marriage between others. Hence, none of them would be nice to her.

In particular, they had seen her delicate appearance when she pulled Di Yan and did not want to let him go.

It did not know who first threw the rotten leaves in the hands out and smashed them right on Ning Caixian's face. After that, some people began to throw eggs, rotten fruits, and some other useless things.

The gatekeeper of Ning's Mansion and the servant saw that the situation was going bad, so they hurriedly protected Ning Caixian and retreated. But even so, several rotten eggs still landed on Ning Caixian. Then in a fluster, she got back behind the gate.



Leaning against the gate, Ning Caixian gasped violently. She felt that she was out of breath and dizzy. In the past days, she used to be delicate and had never suffered like this. In previous, everyone treated her with great care because they feared that the scene would become ugly and hard to explain if she fainted!

"First Miss, I will take you to change clothes first. This, this is really stinking!" Pinching her nose, the girl servant grabbed Ning Caixian's hand and ran inside.

Ning Caixian could only try desperately to keep up with her. For a time, she could not even breathe because of gasping. But just when she took a few steps, someone gave her a hard push. She stumbled and fell heavily onto the ground!

### **Chapter 203 When Did You Meet the Man from Outside**

"You... What are you doing?" Ning Caixian gasped, covering her chest. She glared at Ning Xueqing, who was standing in front of her.

"What am I doing? I'm the one to ask that. Ning Caixian, you did a great job today. How will you compensate me for the reputation you have ruined together with yours?" Ning Xueqing looked down at Ning Caixian, disdainfully.

"You... But your usual... usual behavior is frivolous. What... what good reputation do you have left?" Refusing to admit to being inferior, Ning Caixian stared back angrily.

"I do not care what I have done. At least, I won't allow someone to block me in front of the gate and curse me that I have grabbed her man, which is an extremely cheap act!" Ning Xueqing sneered.

"Whether your reputation is good or not is none of my business. However, you are from the Ning family. I'm afraid you will get those people in the same strain of the family with you into trouble. Wait to be put in a pig's cage drowned!"

After Ning Xueqing finished, she disdainfully glanced at Ning Caixian. Then, she turned around and left.

Ning Caixian was trembling all over with anger because Ning Xueqing whispered these words in her ears. "Haven't you ever looked in the mirror to see who you are? You try like mad to marry Childe Di!"

"Help me get up!" Clenching her teeth, Ning Caixian ordered the girl servant who was standing stupidly next to her in a sharp voice.

"Yes, First Miss!" The servant girl hurriedly held out her hands and pulled Ning Caixian up.

After she stood still and took a few short breaths, Ning Caixian said with gritted teeth and bitter hatred. "Be quick. Take me to see my father!"

Even at this point, she would not sit waiting passively for her end!

No, she must marry into Duke Yong's Mansion. In any case, she would not let Di Yan go. No matter who blocked her way, she would remove the obstacles. The venom in her heart overflowed little by little.

"Qin Yuru got me into such a bad situation. I will never spare her!"

"The unspectacular girl who looked a little dusty, is she Second Miss of Qin's Mansion?" At this time, Ning Caixian was soberly aware that no one would love such a girl who was not very eye-catching and not too young. She would never waste that hairpin on Qin Wanru.

In this case, Ning Caixian decided to frame First Miss of Qin's Mansion instead of Second Miss.

Since the people of Qin's Mansion were ruthless, then they should not blame her for being heartless...

When Qin Wanru's carriage returned to the mansion, the place was already in a mess. Not caring about her health, Madam Di brought Qin Yuru to Duke Yong's Mansion in a huff.

Initially, Old Grandma was about to stop her and let her consider carefully before making a decision. However, Shui Ruolan held her back, so Old Grandma just let Madam Di solve this matter herself.

Shui Ruolan paid respects to Old Grandma and then told her everything she had seen. Old Grandma sighed. "Duke Yong's son is not a good marriage prospect!"

At an advanced age, Old Grandma had gone through many things and had seen many people. From her heart, she thought Di Yan was nothing compared to Qi Tianyu. However, Madam Di acted wilfully and broke off Ning Caixian's engagement with Qi Tianyu. She even schemed against Qin Wanru. But now, when things came to this stage, Madam Di could not go back to the past.

"Mother, we cannot get involved in this matter. Just let them deal with it themselves!" Sitting aside, Shui Ruolan appeased Old Grandma in a soft voice.

"This child Yuru, alas!" Old Grandma felt helpless and sighed. For a time, she did not even know what to say.

"Grandma, is it possible that my Big Sister will not marry Cousin Di?" Qin Wanru asked curiously.

"No, it is impossible. Madam Di is even capable of... No matter what happens, your Big sister will marry Di Yan!" Old Grandma whispered slowly. She reached out her hands to rub her forehead, feeling a bad headache.

"Di Yan acted like that even before he married Qin Yuru. I'm afraid he will go from bad to worse when they get married!" Old Grandma thought.

Qin Wanru chatted with Old Grandma for a while longer. When she saw that Old Grandma was looking a little better, she left!

When Qin Wanru got back from Old Grandma's place, she asked someone to call Dong Xiu'er over.

Dong Xiu'er was having a slight typhoid fever, so she did not look well now. Qin Wanru asked her to sit on a small stool on one side, she was looking at Dong Xiu'er's face, but remained silent.

Under her gaze, Dong Xiu'er was flustered. She reached out to take her handkerchief in her hands and crumpled it into a ball.

Qin Wanru was still quiet after a long while. Only then did Dong Xiu'er look up at Qin Wanru, a little timidly, and she asked, "Second Miss, why did you want to see me? Is there something wrong about my mother?"

"Xiu'er, you and Nanny Dong followed me to the capital. After we arrived in the capital city, you stayed in the mansion and barely left the courtyard. But I do not know when you met a man from outside."

Qin Wanru asked lightly. Her pair of watery black eyes exuded radiance, which looked very calm. But after taking a closer look, Dong Xiu'er felt that Qin Wanru had seen through her.

Dong Xiu'er's hands trembled, and she nearly dropped the handkerchief in her hands. Her face became more and more pale, and she muttered, "Second... Second Miss, I do not know what you are talking about."

"You can't understand what I said?" Qin Wanru slightly smiled and asked meaningfully.

Dong Xiu'er was so frightened that she immediately stood up and waved her hands wildly. "Second Miss... I... I really do not know. Please... please enlighten me, Second Miss!"

"It is actually pretty easy to find out whether you really do not know or you're just pretending. Someone bring Qu'er here!" Qin Wanru leaned back and said with a slight smile in her eyes.

She said these words in a very soft voice, and the smile on her face also looked quite gentle. But Dong Xiu'er still felt that Qin Wanru gave her heart a heavy blow. In a flurry, she took a step back and nearly kicked over the square stool she just sat on.

"Second... Second Miss..."

"Qu'er took a hairpin outside. You don't need me to remind you of that, right?" Qin Wanru looked calmly at Dong Xiu'er as if she was able to see everything.

"Second... Second Miss... I... I..." Dong Xiu'er's pale face was suddenly flushed. She was so afraid of being found out that she barely knew what she was saying now.

"Are you still going to hide it from me? Or maybe you're prepared to let your mother come here to ask you with me?" Qin Wanru's smile became even softer.

"Second Miss, I..." Dong Xiu'er was ashamed and embarrassed, and her eyes became red. However, she was still a little hesitant. After glancing at Qin Wanru as well as Qing Yue and Yujie behind her, Dong Xiu'er bit her lips. But she still felt to ashamed to speak!

"Miss, I am going to bring Qu'er here and let them confront each other!" Qing Yue whispered in Qin Wanru's ear.

Qin Wanru nodded.

Seeing Qing Yue about to leave for real, Dong Xiu'er started to get flustered. Subconsciously, she reached out to stop her. Then, Dong Xiu'er turned to look at Qin Wanru and begged, "Don't, don't do that. I... I will tell everything!"

"Go ahead. I am listening!" Qin Wanru said slowly.

Dong Xiu'er trembled all over. Then, she covered her face, crying.

"Let Xiu'er sit down and pour a glass of water for her!" Qin Wanru said.

Qing Yue turned her palms over and supported Dong Xiu'er as she sat down. Yujie poured a cup of tea for her and placed it in front of her.

"I'm afraid you do not know the hairpin is now in the hands of a woman!" Dong Xiu'er kept crying. Choking in her sobs, she could not utter a word. Seeing this, Qin Wanru picked up the teacup next to her and took a sip. Then, she said lightly.

"What?" Dong Xiu'er stopped crying. In shock, she lifted her face, which was full of tears now.

"Are you surprised?" Qin Wanru raised her beautifully arched eyebrows.

"It is actually a trap set by a woman. Whoever you saw somewhere, I suppose that you would not fall in love with a woman at first sight and secretly give her my hairpin. The most important was that the hairpin was engraved with the word 'Qin.' Since you are my personal maid, it appeared that the hairpin engraved with 'Qin' should be mine!"

Qin Wanru said, a little seriously.

"How... How could it be..." Dong Xiu'er exclaimed in astonishment.

"Everything is possible, Xiu'er. I don't know if Nanny Dong protects you too well to know the ways of the world." Qin Wanru confirmed.

"But Qing Xue gave the hairpin to me!" With red-rimmed eyes, Dong Xiu'er said in disbelief.

"Do you think anyone can have such a hairpin? You've lived in Jiangzhou for some time with your mother. I suppose you would have visited the jewelry stores there. Do you think a servant like Qing Xue can have such a piece of jewelry?" Qin Wanru asked lightly and coldly.

With those few words, Qin Wanru rendered Dong Xiu'er speechless for a time.

In fact, Dong Xiu'er had always lived in terror and uncertainty since Qing Xue sent her the hairpin. Was it also the reason that she subconsciously sent this red hot hairpin away?

"Dong Xiu'er, Nanny Dong went to the capital city because of me. I thought that Nanny Dong had good skills, so I brought her to the capital city, and she indeed did a good job. Therefore, as my servant, Nanny Dong actually has a great relationship with me, her master. If I finally choose to dismiss Nanny Dong because of you, then you should know what will happen in the end. Unlike Jiangzhou, the capital city is a place full of unfamiliar places and strangers. Anything can happen to you!"

Qin Wanru's face turned cold, and her cold eyes fell on Dong Xiu'er like icicles.

"Did you really consider nothing before you sent the hairpin away?"

Previously, Qin Wanru looked kind and amiable. In Dong Xiu'er's eyes, she was only a little sister who hadn't grown up yet. And Qin Wanru was always kind to Dong Xiu'er. But this time, Qin Wanru's ice-cold manner and her hard face made Dong Xiu'er no longer dare to look down upon her. For the first time, Dong Xiu'er realized that the Young Madam before was not the same person as her. She was instead Second Miss of Ningyuan Army General's Mansion and also the master who could decide her and her mother's fate.

In fear, Dong Xiu'er felt she could no longer guard the secret in her heart any more. She did not dare look at Qin Wanru, so she bowed her head and twisted the handkerchief in her hands. While biting her lips, Dong Xiu'er asked sadly, "Second Miss, was it really a woman who took the hairpin away?"

"It was a woman. Beyond that, it was also the woman who tangled with First Miss today. If it were not for Nanny Dong, Xiu'er, I wouldn't have bothered with your business!"

Qin Wanru said, a little heartlessly.

If she had not found this thing early and brought up the matter between Ning Caixian and Di Yan first, then she would have become the victim today.

At that time, even a hundred mouths could not absolve her guilt.

Dong Xiu'er had never left the mansion. Qin Wanru was the one who left the mansion. Moreover, Dong Xiu'er did not have that kind of hairpin, so the hairpin must belong to Qin Wanru. Everything was aiming at her.

When a hundred mouths could not explain the thing about the hairpin away, Qin Wanru might follow the old routine as her last resort. The vicious Madam Di ruined her through Ning Caixian. But now, Qin Wanru would like to wait and see whose reputation would be destroyed, Qin Yuru's or hers!

Qin Yuru made a big noise when she ran back, so even Dong Xiu'er, who stayed in the courtyard, had heard about this thing early. At first, she thought that it had nothing to do with her. But when she figured everything out this time, Dong Xiu'er became so panicky that even her lips became as white as snow. She nearly collapsed. "Second... Second Miss, I... I will tell you everything I know!"

#### **Chapter 204 A Trap! When Will He Marry Me?**

The thing that happened with Dong Xiu'er was simple to explain.

Qing Xue sent her the hairpin but told her that her master gave it to her as a reward. She also told Dong Xiu'er that though she was a principal maid in Zhifang Pavilion, she was not in the master's good graces. In the past, Second Miss did not truly regard her as a trusted maid. Now she sent the hairpin to Dong Xiu'er because she not merely would like to make good friends with her, but also wanted Madame Dong to put in a good word for her.

Dong Xiu'er saw the situation of Qing Xue in Zhifang Pavilion clearly, so she felt that what Qing Xue said was true. Dong Xiu'er finally accepted the hairpin after Qing Xue repeatedly implied that it was okay.

Dong Xiu'er met the man when she accompanied Qing Xue to do something at Madam Di's place. Originally, Qing Xue was with the servant girl Qu'er, but the moment they were about to leave, Qu'er got a stomachache. So she asked Dong Xiu'er to go with Qing Xue in her place. With pleasure, Dong Xiu'er left with Qing Xue.

It just so happened that Qin Wanru was not in the mansion on that day, and Shui Ruolan called Nanny Yu away. Dong Xiu'er was so careful when she left with Qing Xue that no one noticed that she had left.

On that same day, she saw a handsome man. When they accidentally bumped into each other, the man gently pulled her up and then asked her name with languishing eyes. The man told Dong Xiu'er that he

had never seen such a woman like her before. At first sight, he had already lost his heart to her. He was going to ask her parents to marry her to him.

Nanny Dong protected Dong Xiu'er very well since she was born. Hence, she had never seen such an affectionate gentleman. At the moment, she blushed, but she still told him her name. After that, the man gave her a jade pendant as a token and left.

When Qing Xue came over, the man was saying goodbye to Dong Xiu'er. Then, the man asked her to take good care of Dong Xiu'er because he would come to the mansion to propose to Dong Xiu'er as soon as possible.

Although Dong Xiu'er was not very young, she had never encountered such a thing. At that time, she certainly felt frightened and uneasy. But then, Qing Xue repeatedly told her that this man was quite good. He was a cousin who was related to Qin's Mansion. Besides, the man was a Xiucai who had small family property. Both his reputation and talent were excellent.

Qing Xue told Dong Xiu'er that if she could marry this person, she would no longer need to work so hard!

Qing Xue said a lot of nice things about this man, talking all about the benefits he could offer Dong Xiu'er, whose desire for marriage was then aroused. Immediately, she hid the jade pendant and came back with Qing Xue.

After that, Qing Xue would bring a letter to her from time to time. She said that the Xiucai secretly sent a letter to her when he came to the mansion and asked her to bring the letter to Dong Xiu'er. Gradually, Dong Xiu'er had her heart set on this talented Xiucai and waited to marry him.

Qing Xue added that since the Xiucai had given her a jade pendant, she should also show her love. Also, Qing Xue hinted that the jade pendant was worth a fortune, so Dong Xiu'er should give him something of equal value. Previously, Qing Xue wanted to make friends with her. She also wanted Madame Dong to say something nice about her in front of the master. Hence, she gave Dong Xiu'er the hairpin. Now, it was the only valuable thing that Dong Xiu'er had.

Then, Qu'er went to send the hairpin for her. As for the place, Qing Xue had discussed with Dong Xiu'er and made the final choice for her.

"A cousin? A Xiucai?" Qin Wanru looked at Qing Yue for an answer. Compared to Yujie, Qing Yue knew the things in the mansion better.

"There is no such a man like that. Qin's Mansion has just moved to this place. Madam Di's maiden home is Duke Yong's Mansion. There is no other cousin unless this man is from Duke Yong's Mansion!" Qing Yue thought about it and replied very affirmatively.

"Where does this person come from then?" Qin Wanru narrowed her eyes and asked.

"Miss, I will go to inquire about it." Qing Yue turned around and was about to leave. However, Qin Wanru stopped her. "Xiu'er, how long ago did you see him?"

"About a month ago!" While biting her lips and lowering her head, Dong Xiu'er gave them a clear answer.

"It happened a month ago. I am afraid that it will be challenging to find out who the man is!" after a brief moment of silence, Qin Wanru said. After all, it had been too long.

"But did you say that the man kept sending you letters later on?" without knowing why, Qing Yue asked. "Since letters came constantly, we can certainly find out who came over frequently. We can always find a man who had come to the backyard."

"But, he did not have to show up in person to deliver a letter!" Yujie shook her head and said.

Dong Xiu'er bit her lips, and her tears fell one drop after another. By this time, how could she not understand that she had been tricked?

On the very first day, she ran into the man. Qing Xue must have specially arranged it.

"Second Miss, I... I brought trouble to you!" With a thud, Dong Xiu'er dropped down on her knees. She covered her face with a handkerchief and began to weep.

Qin Wanru frowned and looked at Yujie.

Yujie hurriedly went to help Dong Xiu'er stand up.

"Xiu'er, could you recognize the man if you saw him again?" after giving it some thought, Qin Wanru asked with the same composure.

"I... I can recognize him!" Dong Xiu'er said, wiping her tears.

"Qing Yue, go to check who has come to the mansion first. It should be a man, a young man with decent looks and elegant manners," Qin Wanru ordered.

"But Miss, didn't you just say that we could not find out who the man was?" blinking her eyes blankly, Qing Yue asked.

"Go to check it out first. It is okay if you cannot find out," Qin Wanru said indifferently. After all, she did not count on this.

"Yes, Miss!" Qing Yue left in a rush.

After making a detailed analysis of all the things, Qin Wanru had got some ideas. A trace of a deep and complex expression flashed across the bottom of her eyes. She said a few words to Dong Xiu'er and let her go back. After that, she asked Yujie to bring Qu Le over.

"Has anything happened with Qing Xue recently?" Qin Wanru asked after Qu Le saluted her.

"I found nothing unusual about her. Mostly, she spent her time with Dong Xiu'er. If there was something to do, she would help us do it for you. But when she was free, she also behaved quite well!" Qu Le said. Qin Wanru gave her the task of keeping an eye on Qing Xue.

"Did you see anything out of the ordinary?" Qin Wanru asked.

"Nothing unusual!" Qu Le shook her head with certainty. "She was well-behaved and always kept her nose clean. She did not like to talk to me. Sometimes, I tempted her to talk more, but she was constantly on guard against me!"

"On guard?" Qin Wanru's long eyelashes flicked twice, and her watery eyes showed a glimmer of a smile. "She had nothing unusual only because everything was normal. But what if something unusual happens?"

"What a coincidence! The thing happened today was so unusual that even Madam Di could not sit still and went to denounce people of Duke Yong's Mansion for what they have done..."

Sitting by the window, Qing Xue looked out of the window restlessly. She looked calm and was doing embroidery with needle and thread in her hands, but she actually stretched her attention outside the window.

She heard that Madam Di took Qin Yuru to denounce people of Duke Yong's Mansion for what they had done, and she also heard people say that Duke Yong's son seemed to have an affair with his cousin. All those words made her more and more restless.

When she spotted Dong Xiu'er running out from Qin Wanru's room with red-rimmed eyes, Qing Xue found it hard to remain seated. However, she did not come to her at once. Instead, Qing Xue waited for a longer time. Only when she saw Qu Le walk into Qin Wanru's room did she put down the needle and thread in her hands and go to Dong Xiu'er's room.

Qing Xue pushed the door open and walked in. Then, she saw Dong Xiu'er's red eyes, which showed that she must have been crying. Hurriedly, Qing Xue went up to her with concern. "What's wrong? Did Second Miss reproach you?"

"Yes, she did!" Dong Xiu'er lowered her head and wiped her tears with a handkerchief.

"Why would Second Miss blame you when you have done nothing wrong? You are the one who acts the most dutifully and properly in this courtyard. Usually, you stay in the mansion and spend most of your time doing some toggle-and-loop buttons and embroidery. What more does Second Miss want from you?" Sitting next to Dong Xiu'er and holding her hands, Qing Xue spoke angrily after lowering her voice. But after that, she added with disappointment, "Second Miss likes clever maids, not us, who do not have a sweet tongue!"

It seemed that her words went into the heart of Dong Xiu'er, who nodded repeatedly. She was choked with sobs and could not even utter a word.

"Well, cheer up. Can you tell me why Second Miss would reproach you?" Qing Xue asked softly, stretching out to pat Dong Xiu'er's shoulder.

"She just asked how many pieces of embroidery I had made. After I told her, Second Miss was dissatisfied with the number. Not merely did Second Miss blame me, but even Qing Yue and Yujie said that I could not compare with my mother, and I was a drag on her!" With this, Dong Xiu'er bowed her head and began to wipe her tears again.

"On what basis could they say that? Whenever you were free, you went to make these exquisite embroideries and toggle-and-loop buttons. As long as you have finished and displayed them in the shop, everybody has to praise you. How could they speak like that?" Out of anger, Qing Xue's face went pale. She instantly stood up and made two turns around the room.

"I... I also have told them that it would take a lot of effort to make these things..."



"They went too far. In their eyes, you were a soft touch. That was why they let you make these things. Xiu'er, do not be afraid. You have Madame Dong. Even if they said so, Madame Dong will always be your supporter, so it doesn't matter," Qing Xue said, gasping out in anger. Her delicate little face seemed to be full of rage when she defended Dong Xiu'er against the injustice.

"Qing Xue... can you tell me... when will he marry me? I... I really want to leave this place." While biting her lips, Dong Xiu'er flushed. She whispered in a voice as small as a mosquito's.

"Who? Oh, don't worry. Soon, he will marry you soon!" At first, Qing Xue did not get it. But then, she understood and hurriedly promised. After that, she went to sit beside Dong Xiu'er.

"But I... I cannot stay here a minute longer! This place... makes me so depressed!" Dong Xiu'er said with a sad face, lowering her head and flushing.

"Don't say these demoralizing words. Second Miss dislikes you, but you have Madame Dong. She will not blame you too much even for Madame Dong's sake, right?" Qing Xue asked gently.

"But I... I feel not at ease. I want to see him!" Dong Xiu'er cried again, tears falling one drop after another. Immediately, her face was covered with tears. She turned her palms over and held Qing Xue's hands instead. "Sister Qing Xue, can you help me? I... I just want to meet him. If not, I'll feel anxious."

Qing Xue hesitated as she said, "But... I'm afraid that it is not a good time to see him."

"Even if I cannot see him, I'd like to read his letters. Sister Qing Xue, please help me. Otherwise, I... I really cannot wait for him any longer. I... I am going to tell Second Miss about this and ask her to let me go because someone will marry me!" Wiping her tears, Dong Xiu'er made her last desperate effort.

"No, this plan will not work. As soon as Second Miss knows about this, I will be finished!" Qing Xue said anxiously.

"I do not care. Otherwise, I cannot wait any longer!" Dong Xiu'er leaned over and said willfully.

"Then... I will go and have a look." Dong Xiu'er's request brought Qing Xue a headache. She knew that man, of course. But aside from the first time they met when the man showed up, she had never seen him again. Those letters were from Madam Di, but she was not in the mansion at this time.

Even so, Qing Xue dared not refuse Dong Xiu'er because she feared that Dong Xiu'er might disregard all the consequences and tell everything to Second Miss. Clenching her teeth, she had no other choice but to say yes!

### **Chapter 205 No Money? Give Your Earrings Instead**

Qing Xue made a trip and she took Dong Xiuer away in secret.

Something bad had happened to First Miss in the family, and Second Miss went to comfort Madam Dowager. All the servants in the yard were busy with their own work and no one noticed that Qing Xue left again after she came back.

But even if someone noticed, everyone was speculating things about the First Miss secretly. It wouldn't bother them if they discussed it with their friends in private.

Under such circumstances, Qing Xue left with Dong Xiuer from the back door.

Qing Xue sent away the old woman there with an excuse.

Dong Xiuer followed Qing Xue all the way, and from a distance, she saw the man whom she missed for a long time standing under the tree at the door. At that time, she felt sad and her eyes teared up even before she reached.

Qing Xue quickly soothed her, "Xiuer, you should be happy. He came here as soon as I told him in case you worried about him!" Then she led her to the man who was dressed up as a scholar and made a move to leave.

However, Dong Xiuer grabbed her hand. Trembling slightly, she pulled her sleeve and looked at her, her eyes pleading with her not to leave.

Qing Xue pulled her sleeve back and said, "I'll be there to keep a look out for anyone who might come."

But Dong Xiuer held on her sleeve tightly. It seemed that she would not let her go.

Qing Xue helplessly turned to the comely scholar with a wry smile.

The scholar stepped forward and said to Dong Xiuer gently, "Miss Dong, please... let her go first, I have things to tell you!"

Dong Xiuer looked at the scholar before her, and then she lowered her head and looked at her feet, "I ... I want to be with her, you ... can tell me now!"

The scholar said hesitantly, "It's not very convenient... because she's here."

Dong Xiuer still looked at her feet, and still held on to Qing Xue tightly, unwilling to let her go, "It's... it's convenient, she knows everything about me!"

"But, it's ..."

Dong Xiuer whispered, "Have you received the hair clasp I sent you last time?"

The scholar seemed a little impatient, but luckily, Dong Xiuer was looking down then and did not see his expression, "Yes, thank you, Miss Dong!"

Dong Xiuer seemed to be indulging in her imagination and asked, "What ... what do you think of it?"

"Very delicate, it's so kind of you, Miss Dong!"

Dong Xiuer moved a little, bit her lips and her hands shivered a little again. "Did you notice that the hair clasp is dented? I hit it by accident, but luckily, the dent is not big. "

The scholar had a very gentle voice, which is in sharp contrast with the obvious impatience on his face, "Yes, but it's okay. After you marry me, I'll take you to buy a new hair clasp!"

Dong Xiuer suddenly raised her head, tearfully looking at the scholar's impatient expression. She hadn't any doubts up till then.

Not only the scholar, but also Qing Xue was not pleased with Dong Xiuer's clingy behavior, and she also looked askance at her then. Neither of them expected Dong Xiuer to look up just then, and both of them were frozen.

Dong Xiuer's hand slipped from Qing Xue's, she stretched out her hand and pointed to the two people in front of her, "You... you ..." And she then cried and ran away with her face in her handkerchief.

Qing Xue became worried and was about to chase after her, "Hey... hey..." But the scholar quickly caught her sleeves.

He asked sullenly, "What's this? Did I rush here to see this silly woman make a fuss over nothing?"

Qing Xue felt worried and said quickly, "No, you need to placate her!"

The scholar frowned, "Placate her? Who can placate someone who behaves like this? She acts as if she is really the beloved daughter of the family! Pay me!" He was actually a local ruffian. He was asked to masquerade because he looked comely. It was agreed that he'd do it for the first time, but now he was suddenly asked to do it a second time.

Qing Xue didn't expect the scholar to ask her for money. She said quickly, "The old woman who asked you here didn't pay to you? I'll tell the Madam later then, and send the old woman to you with the money. The Madam isn't at home at the moment. Why don't you go back and wait! "

The person who went to find him was Madam Di's servant. Since Madam Di was not at home, it was possible that she didn't have the money to pay him.

The local ruffian who was dressed up as a scholar looked at the Qing Xue and pointed at the pair of earrings on her and said, "No money? Who knows if you will default on your payment? Give me these first, and you can redeem them when you have money!"

Qing Xue was so angry that her expression changed, "You..."

The ruffian frivolously pulled Qing Xue closer and plucked off her earrings and even gave her pink face a gentle pinch, "What about me? You asked me to act and cheat that silly woman. Being so old and ugly, how dare she imitate others to meet her lover? You should do it yourself. I might not have asked for any money!"

Qing Xue was angry and ashamed. She pushed him away with her hands. But when the ruffian saw such a pretty maid and there was no one around, how could he let her go through the door so easily? He reached out to grab her hands, held her in his arms, and kissed Qing Xue's face.

As the two tangled with each other, they heard someone shouting, "Somebody! Catch these two!"

The ruffian got a fright and was about to run away, but the path was blocked by two strong women...

As Qing Xue and the ruffian were escorted to Madam Dowager, Qin Wanru was still there. She looked at the two people below with a casual smile.

Qu Le was telling others the whole story of her leading people to catch them. She said that she happened to pass by the backyard when she saw the two people tangling with each other. She then hurried back to find the woman in charge in the mansion and caught them.

Qin Wanru looked at Qing Xue and said calmly, "Grandmother, send them directly to the feudal official. It's better to let the judge deal with such matters. It's only about a maid!"

Qing Xue got nervous after what Qin Wanru said to Madam Dowager. She pointed at the ruffian and argued, "Second Miss, second Miss, I was wronged, I really have nothing to do with this guy. When I walked to the backyard, he jumped out from behind a tree and grabbed me. I ... I ..."

Qin Wanru put down the cup casually and said slowly in a low voice, "So it's all this man's fault? How dare he molest a servant girl of the Ningyuan Army General's Mansion? With your impudence, even if you don't die, you will end up crippled."

The ruffian also panicked and he said at once, "Second Miss, the maid of your mansion invited me here and she especially called an old woman to be with us. She wanted to meet me in private. I didn't mean to molest your mansion's maid!" It was not a big deal for a ruffian to say he has an affair with others. But it was not a small thing if he was believed to have despised the Ningyuan Army General's Mansion.

"You're lying, it was you!"

"You're lying. You clearly came to me. How dare you deny it now?"

The two of them started shifting the blame on each other.

Qin Wanru suggested to Madam Dowager, "Grandmother, let two old women take them away for questioning so they will not talk nonsense."

Madam Dowager nodded, narrowed her eyes and gestured to Nanny Duan. Nanny Duan understood and sent for people to drag the two into separate rooms.

Qin Wanru stood up and said, "Nanny Duan, you interrogate the man. I'll question Qing Xue!"

Madam Dowager disagreed, "You want to do it yourself?" It was not an honorable thing, and Madam Dowager didn't want Qin Wanru to get involved, in case it harmed her reputation.

This matter didn't look simple!

Qin Wanru looked at the Madam Dowager and smiled gently, "Grandma, Qing Xue is my maid. What she does may also involve me. I'd better get to the bottom of this."

Madam Dowager thought about it and nodded helplessly. She wanted to protect her little granddaughter, but could not. It would be a good thing if Zhuozhuo could grow up faster.

Yujie was asked to go accompany Nanny Duan to question the scholar-like ruffian while Qin Wanru went with Qing Yue to the wing room where Qing Xue was. She sat down when she entered.

Qing Xue cried and rushed to Qin Wanru as soon as the latter came in, "Second Miss, second Miss, I was really wronged!" She was about to hug Qin Wanru's legs but was blocked by Qing Yue.

Yujie said harshly, "Qing Xue, how will you explain this?"

Qing Xue burst into tears and said, "Second Miss, I was really wronged. I didn't do anything. I just... just helped Xiuer make an appointment. Second Miss, please believe me. Ask Dong Xiuer if you don't believe me. She knows everything. I really didn't have an affair with that man, it was Xiuer!"

Her words were half-true, but it sounded real.

If it was not a trap set by Qin Wanru, she might even believe her!

Qin Wanru knocked at the table with a gentle smile on her face, "Qing Xue, you have followed me for some time. Do you think I am a fool? Or like the others, you think I am too young and ignorant and easily bullied?"

Her eyes rested on the Qing Xue's face as she smiled mildly. Today, she was dressed as usual. The heavy bang was pinned up. She seemed both angry and happy with a carefree and indifferent spirit, so unlike those of her age. It was as if the person in front of her was not her principal maid.

She behaved as if what was happening around her was not a scandal.

As if she was used to these things...

Qing Xue trembled. It was not the deliberately stretched voice she just had but this time, she really trembled with her teeth chattering. A chill struck her and she collapsed to the ground directly.

Was Qin Wanru a master who could be bullied? Of course not. Qing Xue had been scrupulous since she began following Qin Wanru. And it was because she felt her master was so intelligent. She dared not move and could only lurk the dark, waiting for the right opportunity.

She was complacent in secret when Dong Xiuer's business was quietly in the process. She thought the Miss hadn't grown up after all. She could do nothing even if she was intelligent. Now looking into her eyes which seemed to see through everything, she found she was wrong.

"Second... Second Miss, you planned the whole thing, didn't you?"

## Chapter 206 Who Schemed Against Whom

Qin Wanru smiled. She picked up the cup at hand and took a sip, "Are you accusing me?" The misty steam passed through her thick and curled eyelashes, giving her face an unreal charm.

Her delicate little face used to exude a childlike beauty. Because she was still a child, that beauty had more to do with being adorable. People could imagine how beautiful she would grow up to be, but they will not have much hostility to her at the time because her beauty was still that of a child.

However, Qin Wanru looked unreal behind the steam, as if she suddenly changed from childlike to ethereal and beautiful.

Behind the curtain of steam, she seemed to have grown up in an instant. There was a charm in her vulnerability. But her cold beauty made even Qing Xue tremble with fear!

"Qing Xue, you became a slave at an early age, but you did not enter the Ningyuan Army General's Mansion. Instead, you were raised in a manor where you were supervised by older women. You are smart and good looking. Therefore, you were bought to Qin's Mansion a second time, and became my girl servant. Unfortunately, Qu Le came in at the same time as you, and she happened to know you when she was a child and knew that you had already been in Qin's Mansion!"

Qin Wanru looked at Qing Xue with shining eyes.

“Second... Second Miss ...”

Qin Wanru continued in a low voice, “Of course, you were bought to deal with me. If you were beside me, you will at least know some of my actions, and because you’re clever, you’ll not do what Qing Cui did before. Of course, to begin with, Mrs. Di left you in the manor not to deal with me, but to train you to become my elder sister’s personal girl servant.”

Her soft voice was very pleasant to listen to, but it sounded like the monastic drum and bell in Qing Xue’s ears. She was shocked and dumbfounded.

Very few people knew about this. Even Qu Le was not very clear about it. It was even more impossible to know her past ever since she arrived in the capital city.

But Qin Wanru told the whole story so clearly, as if she had witnessed it herself.

Qin Wanru smile even more gently, her beautiful eyes blinking and head leaning to one side, making her look very childlike, “You thought since my elder sister will soon be the daughter-in-law of Duke Yongkang, things won’t go well with me in every aspect because I have always been suppressed. So you panicked and volunteered to deal with Dong Xiuer yourself! ”

Qing Xue’s turned white as snow, even paler than when she was led to Madam Dowager. She became really desperate. How could she be more hopeless when every actions of hers had all along been witnessed by the one she deceived? And she had been complacent with her cleverness.

She thought that she had deceived the Second Miss.

The Madam thought that she had deceived the Second Miss!

But in fact, it was they who’d been deceived!

“Do you know what your life will be if I sent you to the Administrative Office? As a girl servant, you dared to have an affair with a ruffian, and you also secretly plotted against your own young madam, you will be sent to the army after your face is tattooed. There are plenty of people who would like to help me because my father has just become the Ningyuan Army General. ”

Qin Wanru’s eye were narrowed as she uttered the words.

Every word was like a sword piercing deep into Qing Xue’s heart. Hearing them, Qing Xue couldn’t help herself. She broke down and fell on the ground crying, “Second Miss, Second Miss, I will confess. I will tell you everything as long as you don’t send me to the Administrative Office!”

Nanny Duan finished her questioning as quickly as Qin Wanru. After the interrogations, Qin Wanru took Qing Xue away while the ruffian was put into prison. Although the whole thing was only about the girl servant, it might also affect the reputation of her young madam!

When Madam Di came back, so did Countess Yong.

Madam Di led her to visit Madam Dowager. Today, Countess Yong came to Qin’s Mansion for the marriage of Qin Yuru and Di Yan. The two families decided to get them engaged immediately. Countess Yong had brought Di Yan’s resume to exchange it for Qin Ruyu’s. After the exchange between the two families, the official ceremony will be held.

Madam Dowager felt she had no say in Qin Yuru's marriage. So she agreed with every decision Countess Yong and Madam Di made. Madam Di had the final say in everything.

Qin Huaiyong also suggested to Madam Dowager that it was imperative for the two families to be united in marriage. Since Qin Wanru's parents agreed, Madam Dowager was certainly not in a position to show her disapproval.

Now that Madam Di and Countess Yong had talked to Madam Dowager, it's considered that the most senior in the household has been informed. They then returned to Yulan Pavilion.

Although Madam Dowager was informed of the whole thing, the ladies still had the details to iron out.

No one knew what Di Yan and Countess Yong talked about in the house. When Countess Yong left, all they knew was that the marriage was in the near future.

Di Yan even moved into Qin's Mansion the next day. He was poor at studies so he decided to throw himself into military affairs. On the one hand, he lived in because there were very few descendants in the mansion. On the other hand, Di Yan might be a military officer in the future, so he could learn some basic knowledge about it from Qin Huaiyong.

However, those were only excuses. In fact, Duke Yong's Mansion sent Di Yan to Qin's Mansion temporarily to put him under the supervision of Madam Di in case he involved himself with Ning Caixian.

Madam Dowager in Duke Yong's Mansion suggested it. She hated Ning Caixian and had never been nice to her when the latter lived in the mansion. She always took a fancy to her granddaughter Qin Yuru.

Countess Yong did not agree to it at first, but Ning Caixian's reputation was greatly damaged after the previous incident. It was said that now people in the whole capital city were talking about Ning's Mansion. It was not only about Ning Caixian, but also her sister Ning Xueqing, who was said to have an affair with a gentleman of Duke Xing's Mansion. The gossips made them out to be disreputable girls.

People would often just let it go when they didn't know something. But the more they talked about the sisters, the more they believed the girls to be sluts.

A daughter of an aristocratic family should have moral integrity even if she was humiliated. How could she be so disrespectful to the discipline and pander to a man who was already engaged, even throwing herself at him? It was not clear whether they had an affair from what others said. Everyone who heard such a thing would feel disgusted.

Only some rascals felt it very romantic and were envious of Di Yan. They only thought it was better to have seven or eight sweet cousins such as them.

Aristocratic families who used to have contact with Ning's Mansion spurned them one after another. They also told their daughters to avoid the Ning sisters in case they were affected by their bad reputation.

The Ning sisters couldn't be more despised in the capital city at that time.

They couldn't marry people in higher social positions under such circumstances; even ordinary decent families wouldn't have them.

The next few days were quite peaceful. The Ning sisters were so beaten down that they had no strength to fight back. They had to go about with their tails between their legs. There were many onlookers in front of Ning's Mansion every day, the door never opened for them. Only their father's carriage passed through occasionally.

Di Yan also seemed to be well-disciplined these days, staying at home almost every day. He would chat with Madam Di, accompany Qin Yuru or occasionally ask Qin Huaiyong questions about military matters. He even stayed in the study in his yard, reading books at ease.

It was as if what happened out there had nothing to do with him.

Both Madam Di and Qin Yuru were very pleased with him. Qin Yuru became kind again, but now her favorite activity was to visit Madam Dowager with Di Yan so that she could meet Qin Wanru on the way or in Madam Dowager's house. She was very proud of herself!

She would soon be the wife of Duke Yongkang's son. As for Qin Wanru... Her mother said she was just a bitch and she would not let her have a good end!

This day, someone came to Qin Wanru when she was still at Dowager's Xinning Pavilion. So Qing Xue hurried out to look for her young madam, but she was stopped not far from the courtyard.

A smiling woman and stepped out from behind a tree. She stopped Qing Xue, took out a letter from her bosom and handed it to her. "Miss Qing Xue, someone has a letter for you."

Qing Xue took it and asked casually, "Whose is it?" She opened the letter at once and started to read it.

The old woman answered, "She looked old and told me she was your aunt. And she made a special trip to see you when she heard that you're working in Ningyuan Army General's Mansion. She wrote you this letter for fear I didn't explain it clearly."

It was not a long letter. After reading it, Qing Xue folded it again and asked, "Where is she?"

The old woman said, "She's in the back garden. Miss Qing Xue, if you go now, you should be able to meet her!"

Qing Xue said, "Thank you very much!"

The old woman waved her hand and left with a smile on her face, "Miss Qing Xue, you're welcome!" People are glad to help a principal maid of the mansion such as Qing Xue when they can in hopes of the maids saying something to their madams or masters in their favor. No harm for the maids to become familiar with their appearance either.

Qing Xue didn't go immediately. She opened the letter to read it once more. Then her expression changed. She thought about it and then turned back to Zhifang Pavilion. She left again saying a few words to Qu Le.

Qu Le followed her out of the courtyard. Then they separated at the gate. One went to look for Qin Wanru and the other went to the back gate to meet that "aunt"!



She did have an “aunt” before, and Madam Di helped her get in touch with this person to get Dong Xiuer to send the hair clasp. Dong Xiuer was too shy to let her girl servant do it in front of her. She would know since she had paid close attention to her.

This “aunt” also helped spread the news about what had happened the day the hair clasp was taken out.

As for the rest, Qing Xue was not clear about it. She was only told to listen to that “aunt” and tell her how Second Miss got along with Childe Di, how beautiful the Second Miss was and how much Childe Di cared about her...

Of course, these things happened before the hair clasp incident. Since the hair clasp was sent out, the “aunt” had never been here again. But today, she actually came, as predicted by Second Miss...

## **Chapter 207 Sending Another Hairpin**

In the backyard, an old maid was walking to and fro, quite anxious!

As a creak finally came from the door behind her, she turned instantly and saw Qing Xue coming in a hurry. Instantly, she was overjoyed, reaching out her hands to pull her to a corner next to her. After craning her head to look at the door and find no one was tailing, she was relieved.

“Auntie, anything else?” Qing Xue broke free of the old maid’s hands unhappily, asking, “Previously, didn’t you say you wouldn’t come again?”

The so-called “previously” referred to the time after the news that Dong Xiuer was to send the hairpin was spread.

“Something happened, the hairpin is missing!” the auntie said helplessly.

“Why missing? Everything was done according to plan, wasn’t it?” Qing Xue said anxiously. At this time, anyone would be anxious when hearing the item they sent out after overcoming difficulties was missing.

“Don’t you worry, our miss is also trying to find a way!” The old maid gave a flattering smile.

“No other ways!” Qing Xue opened her palms. “Only one hairpin, no more, how can we get another one now? How did your miss make this happen!”

Qing Xue turned more sullen.

“Could you find another one?” the old maid hesitated and said.

“Find? From where?” Qing Xue couldn’t help speaking a little louder, and the old maid was scared to shudder and cover her mouth instantly, whispering, “No, my dear lady, please lower your voice; it is bad if others hear us!”

“I can’t find another one from anywhere. Madam’s people only asked me to cooperate with you and send some news, but never said I should find another hairpin for you!” Qing Xue pushed the old maid’s hands away unhappily. “It is Madam giving me the hairpin, or how could I have something so expensive? You lost one and must return us one!”

“Let’s do it this way. Our miss lost the hairpin, now we return you one!” The old maid took an exquisite hairpin out of her arms and passed it to her.

"This is..." Qing Xue asked confusingly.

"Also, our miss prepared a pair of eardrops for you. You've helped us for so long, our miss also extends her gratitude. Recently, has your madam asked you to do anything?" The old maid took out another pair of eardrops, very beautiful cat's eye gems, making Qing Xue happy as she saw them.

"The eardrops for me?"

"Of course for you, we always ask you to deliver messages. Although this is Madam Di's idea, our miss also needs to thank you!" The old maid put the eardrops in Qing Xue's palm.

With the earrings, the two's talk became harmonious. "Recently, our mansion has been busy with the marriage of First Miss and Duke Yong's son, so Madam has no time to give me tasks. Besides, I am also Second Miss' girl servant, and Madam cannot meddle in Second Miss' business that much!"

"Your Second Miss and Madam Di have disputes, right?" the old maid asked with a gossiping look, putting the hairpin thing at the back of her mind.

This was but a beginning.

"Of course!" Qing Xue tucked the eardrops away. Looking around and seeing no soul, she approached the old maid's ear and whispered, "Our madam dislikes Second Miss most; she asked me to serve her and keep an eye on her."

"Keep an eye on your Second Miss? Why do that? Your Second Miss is not beautiful and is also small, even not beautiful than a girl servant like you, why keep an eye!" The old maid pursed her lips, showing she had seen Qin Wanru before.

"Not eye-catching? Not beautiful?"

Qing Xue's look twinkled, and she thought the speaker was blind indeed!

"If Second Miss were not eye-catching or beautiful, who would be in the world?"

"Madam dislikes Second Miss indeed. Previously in Jiangzhou, Madam also sent men to kidnap Second Miss. That time, she was burning incense in the temple." Driving the ridicule in her mind away, Qing Xue lowered her voice further, looking like she had been completely bribed by the eardrops.

"What? Such a thing even happened!" The old maid was quite shocked.

"Yes, she wanted to kidnap Second Miss and sell her!" Qing Xue pursed her lips.

"Your madam really has an evil heart!" the old maid was dumbstruck and whispered.

Hearing her comment, Qing Xue lowered her head. Instantly, she seemed to have thought of something and turned silent.

"Your madam has such an evil heart, and now you serve your Second Miss but works for her. In the future, if something bad happens, you won't have a good result!" The old maid looked very sophisticated.

Qing Xue nodded, but said helplessly, "But my indenture is in Madam's hands."

"You can ask your Second Miss to get it. You are her girl servant, why should your madam keep your indenture?" the old maid turned her eyes and instigated.

"Our Second Miss is still young and doesn't know such things. Besides, I had contacts with Madam in the past, and Second Miss doesn't really believe me!" Qing Xue heaved a sigh.

"This is not good for you, stay between the two masters and shift your stances. As a servant, this is the worst thing. Especially in the capital city, a servant must be loyal, or you won't have a good result." Looking experienced, the old maid extended her hand to pat Qing Xue on the shoulder, agreed very much, and said, "You yourself should plan early, or you will probably be taken out as a scapegoat!"

Hearing the old maid's words, Qing Xue became dispirited with the tip of her shoe rubbing the ground several times and nodded.

"Take the hairpin first. Once successful, our miss is bound to thank you with lots of rewards. Being our miss, she can ask you directly from Madam Di or your mansion's Second Miss. In fact, that's not difficult, and you won't have to shift stances between your two masters."

The old maid pushed the exquisite hairpin in her hands to Qing Xue.

These words seemed attractive to Qing Xue, who didn't refuse anymore, extending her hand to receive it. "What shall I do?"

"Can you send the hairpin to your First Miss?" the old maid smiled and said. Her miss was sure Madam Di wouldn't tell the previous cooperation with her to her daughter.

With such a thing troubling her, Madam Di wouldn't notice the girl servant, either. This girl must have no idea that it was her miss who made the trouble.

This was a very good opportunity!

"Why?" Qing Xue was shocked, asking, "What does this have to do with First Miss?"

"No, now go to First Miss, give Dong Xiuer a hairpin as a gift through First Miss, or how could Dong Xiuer have such a good hairpin?" the old maid asked in reply and made Qing Xue speechless.

"In fact, you won't have to disturb First Miss, and you can ask her girl servant to help you. Anyway, it must be those around the master. Didn't you say you are not in Second Miss' favor? How could you have such expensive hairpins again and again? If you ask First Miss' girl servant to help you, you wouldn't be dragged even if something went wrong, right?"

The old maid persuaded.

These words and the words said before made Qing Xue hesitant.

Since she was silent, the old maid knew the thing could be done and persuaded with a whisper instantly, "Lady Qing Xue, considering your position, you had better not get involved. With such a madam, you will perhaps die tragically in the end. "Take this hairpin to First Miss or her close girl servant silently, then go and tell Madam, your madam will definitely agree."

"Madam doesn't like to get First Miss involved in this!" Qing Xue lowered her head anxiously.

“So, you may put it there silently, once done, let me know. I will try to find First Miss’ girl servant and ask her to send the hairpin to Dong Xiuer. In this way, you are not involved. Anyway, Madam and our miss had a very good relationship in the past, and this is not something big!”

The old maid spoke more earnestly, looking like she stood so much on Qing Xue’s side to think about the thing.

“Can this work?”

“Yes, of course. As long as you put the hairpin in your First Miss’ or her girl servant’s place, the thing is done, and the rest won’t have any relations with you!” the old maid pointed the hairpin and said.

“But... I don’t know how to send it!”

“You can put it on the road as you see First Miss coming. Such a beautiful hairpin, your First Miss is bound to like!” Qing Yue’s concern was what the old maid wanted to mention, so she smiled and provided a solution instantly. “In this way, you don’t have to show yourself or have contacts with First Miss and can also be an outsider!”

“Then, okay!” Qing Yue was persuaded successfully and nodded.

“These days, I will be in the shop across the street behind your mansion every day. After you put the thing, come to find me, and our miss will do the rest!” The old maid looked confident.

“Good!” Qing Xue nodded.

As the negotiation was done, Qing Xue tucked the hairpin away. Returning to her mansion and closing the back door, she smiled at the old maid doorkeeper and went back.

When she returned to Zhifang Pavilion, Qin Wanru had already returned. After she asked to see Qin Wanru under the porch, Qing Yue led her in.

Also, Qin Wanru had just arrived in the room.

“First Miss, this is what the previous ‘auntie’ sent. She asked me to send it to First Miss’ or her close girl servant’s place, and gave me these eardrops!” As soon as Qing Xue stepped in, she told the thing in detail for once, and then took out the hairpin and eardrops, handing them in respectfully.

Yujie came over, took the hairpin and eardrops, and put them on the table before Qin Wanru.

The eardrops were inlaid with the cat’s eye gems, which were translucent with good quality, and the hairpin was even more exquisite. As Qin Wanru’s look swept across the top of the hairpin, her eyes became deep. This hairpin was exquisite indeed, or even exceptionally exquisite, but the style did not look new.

Qing Xue could not see it through, but she could!

This was not a newly made hairpin, but one passed from ancestors, and an ordinary family could not have such a hairpin.

She took up the hairpin and observed it carefully against the light. It seemed there were no marks on it, but in the sun, she could see a very very small ancient Chinese character on a butterfly wing pattern consisting of exquisite gold accessories on one side.

Seeing the character clearly, Qin Wanru smiled. "Coincidental, really coincidental, it looks like Ning Caixian also spent so much energy.

"Very good! Ning Caixian, Qin Yuru, and Madam Di are all not easy to deal with. With evil hearts, they are those who will sacrifice others for their own profits. So, let them attack one another like wild dogs!"

"Do as she said!"

## **Chapter 208 Sending Two Palace Maids**

"Miss, what does the Duke Xing's Mansion want to do by inviting you again? Wasn't it unpleasant last time?" After Qin Wanru told Qing Xue what to do and let her leave, Yujie couldn't help asking instantly, looking at the gifts on the table.

This was also one of the reasons why Qing Xue went hurriedly to Qin Wanru just now.

Surprisingly, these were gifts of the Duke Xing's Mansion, which also claimed that Madam of Duke Xing liked Qin Wanru very much, so she invited her to have a chat in their mansion.

On the table lay two gift boxes, all open. In one box, there was a set of brocade dress, made of fine cloth. From the first look, one knew it couldn't be found on the market. Qin Wanru reached out her hands and raised a piece of the dress, and the cloth slipped silently from her hands, delicate and smooth.

Such fine cloth was sure from tributes!

The dress was tailored according to her previous height, with bluegrass patterns at its corners, and these patterns were like the ones on her, Qin Yuru's, and Qi Rongzhi's clothes that day.

The only mistake was that she had grown really fast during this period, and the dress was short!

Madam of Duke Xing had sharp eyes and could know her height just by taking a look. If she wore it with her height of that time, the dress would be perfect, but now, she could not put it on anymore.

What a pity!

Only a little shorter!

Her watery eyes looked deep. "A small error ruins everything. This is a typical example!"

In the other gift box, there was a set of dressing jewelry with exquisite, novel peony patterns, popular at the time. From the appearance, one could judge it was just made.

Such a gift given to a common friend Qin Wanru was too expensive to be accepted.

"Put the things down and left?" Qin Wanru took up one hairpin to observe. With excellent handicraft, it had a colored peony, coiled by gold threads, with a big, glossy, mellow bead set in the center.

Even the bead was worth lots of money.

"I've heard they put things down and left. At that time, Qing Xue also tried to stop them, but the comers only said so and left. They also said if you have free time, you can visit the Duke Xing's Mansion." Qing Yue had learned the details of the thing before and spoke slowly.

"Miss, last time, Madam of Duke Xing said she would come and apologize for the incident of First Miss, didn't she? But now, she hasn't visited First Miss or Madam Di, but has come to you, why?"

Yujie witnessed what happened that day and couldn't help asking.

"Maybe she wants to ask indirectly!" Qin Wanru smiled and said thoughtfully.

"Ask about what? About First Miss' thing? Why does Madam of Duke Xing pay so much attention to First Miss?" Yujie asked first, but suddenly understood, opening her eyes wide and saying.

"Maybe she thinks there is something!" Qin Wanru narrowed her eyes, focusing on the hairpin in her hands, with a look which was turning cold.

"What is her misunderstanding?"

In her preexistence, they also misunderstood something at the beginning, but later, the misunderstanding turned to a trick, deliberately making others think like this, but their real aim was hidden behind Old Madam of the Duke Xing's Mansion's favor of Qin Yuru. In this life, she would disclose the thing and act before them, leading them to a misunderstanding.

Like them, she also began with a misunderstanding. But as one knowing the result, she needed to change it in advance, but now she was still unclear about the whole picture of it.

Madam of Duke Xing was testing her, and so was she.

The reason why Madam of Duke Xing didn't visit Qin Yuru or Madam Di first was due to her misunderstanding, and the "culprit" was the several sets of garments with the similar embroidery patterns!

"Qing Yue, help me comb hair; I want to go out!" Qin Wanru put down the hairpin in her hands, walked to her dressing table, and said.

"To the Duke Xing's Mansion?" Although Qing Yue came over, her eyes were full of surprise.

"No, to the mansion of Rui'an Great Elder Princess. Previously, I promised Shao Yuanhao to see him, and I can't always break my promises!" Qin Wanru raised her eyebrows and said calmly.

"Okay, let me comb your hair right now. Do you prefer a new style or the old one?" Qing Yue replied, put down the previous bunched hair, and asked.

In the past, Qin Wanru was young, and her bunched hair had always been the ordinary double rings, which were only simply pressed by two hairpins.

But Qin Wanru had recently grown taller. If she still used that style, it would look a little ordinary. Qing Yue had also mastered the most popular double rings in the capital city, thinking that, as a beautiful girl, her miss should dress up well before she went out.

"The simplest style will do!" Qin Wanru didn't care about that and spoke, and picked one from the several clothes Yujie carried over. "This one!"

Her previous clothes couldn't be worn, and now her clothes were newly made. To tailor fast, these clothes only had the simplest styles and the most ordinary embroideries. Without good cloth, they would be very inconspicuous.

After combing, washing, and changing her clothes, Qin Wanru with Yujie boarded her horse-drawn carriage, with the two gift boxes from the Duke Xing's Mansion also in it. She might not know some rules, but Rui'an Great Elder Princess must know. Compared with the Duke Xing's Mansion, she preferred and more believed Rui'an Great Elder Princess.

The carriage stopped in the parking lot of the Great Elder Princess' Mansion, and Qin Wanru got off. Just now, when she came in, someone had already gone inside to report; now the old maid supervisor was already there. As she saw Qin Wanru get off, she went to bow hurriedly, and then led the way.

Qin Wanru followed her and went inside along the winding path.

When they came to Rui'an Great Elder Princess' yard but hadn't reached the main entrance, they saw that the main room's door curtain was raised and a small figure rushed out.

Yujie wanted to push Qin Wanru away, but the latter waved no. By the time, a small figure had rushed to Qin Wanru and held her, looking up with his beady eyes. It was Shao Yuanhao.

"Sister, why haven't you come to play with Hao'er until now? Hao'er has been waiting for so long!" Shao Yuanhao said discontentedly.

Qin Wanru touched his head with her hand, asking smilingly, "Has Hao'er been behaving well recently?"

"Of course, well, very well. Sister, come in, quick!" Shao Yuanhao took Qin Wanru's hand hospitably, pulling her to the room.

The door curtain had already been raised high. As she walked in after Shao Yuanhao, she saw a pair of malicious eyes instantly and couldn't help being stunned. "How come Chu Liuchen is here?"

Different from in Jiangzhou, Chu Liuchen almost always sat in a wheelchair when he went out in the capital city. Now, he was also sitting bonelessly there, with an exceptionally beautiful appearance, and only his beautiful eyes looked somewhat sullen. The first look at him could tell he seemed unhappy!

Withdrawing her look, she looked at the center of the room, where Rui'an Great Elder Princess sat with a smile, looking at her kindly.

Releasing Shao Yuanhao's hand lightly, Qin Wanru walked forward to bow to Rui'an Great Elder Princess, and then bowed gingerly to Chu Liuchen, with her eyes focusing on her nose and her nose on her mouth. She didn't know who had offended Prince Chen, who looked quite unfriendly. To avoid being hurt by him, Qin Wanru thought she had better keep a long distance from him.

"Hao'er has been missing you and said you promised to see him in the Duke Xing's Mansion, but you didn't come. These days, he has been troubling me every day!" Rui'an Great Elder Princess asked Qin Wanru to sit down and smiled.

"Father's designation was issued, and our mansion was busy, so I could not spare time," Qin Wanru said apologetically.

Rui'an Great Elder Princess looked at Qin Wanru up and down several times. Only after more than a month had Qin Wanru changed a great deal. First, she was taller. Although she still looked childish, she seemed to have the image of a young lady, and her delicate face looked more appealing and beautiful.

In the past, her beauty was ignored because she was too small, but it gradually caught the eye.

The palace was always full of beauties, but Qin Wanru was absolutely among the best in appearance. Besides that, she also had deep red lips, which made her more gorgeous and shinier. Fortunately, she was still young and looked childish, and so she was not exceptionally attractive.

Sitting on one side, Chu Liuchen didn't utter a word but raised his eyebrows. "Without seeing her for many days, she has suddenly grown taller, not like a stump anymore. This is a real surprise!"

"Liuchen, if you don't feel well, leave early and rest. As for your thing your empress dowager grandma once told me, you should also bear in mind. Anyway, it's your health, and your grandma will feel more assured if someone attends to you!" Rui'an Great Elder Princess turned to Chu Liuchen and said softly.

Chu Liuchen lowered his head and said slowly, "Thank you, great-aunt, but I..."

With a pause, he seemed hesitant and then stopped. For an instant, the room turned quiet, and Qin Wanru heard her breath turn light, too.

"Naughty child! Why can't you be persuaded? This is not only your grandma's worry but also your emperor uncle's. They always worry about your health and spoke of it before me again and again!" Rui'an Great Elder Princess thought he was declining like before and persuaded him graciously.

For the thing, Chu Liuchen had been persuaded for a long time during the several days, but he declined.

If he declined, no one dared to force him, afraid that he would get unwell because of unhappiness.

"So, send two palace maids in a while? I've heard the empress has long prepared. If you agree, she will select the best maids and send them here!" Rui'an Great Elder Princess asked tentatively.

Qin Wanru sensed that she seemed to hear something she shouldn't have heard. So, she became more indifferent to the surroundings!

"I want to pick two beautiful, eye-pleasing ones." Chu Liuchen raised his head. Although his pale face had no trace of blood, he was still an unparalleled beautiful juvenile, also with graceful and noble behavior. As his eyes glided over Qin Wanru, who was standing quietly beside him, a smile came upon the corner of his mouth, and he spoke casually.

"Good, good, good, I will tell your grandma in a while!" She was finally relieved and satisfied she had been keeping an eye on him during these days. Rui'an Great Elder Princess was quite happy and said, heaving a sigh of relief. "Anyway, I haven't made others disappointed. Such things should be done slowly. Now with relief, the rest will be much easier to deal with!"

Qin Wanru didn't raise her head, so she didn't see the ripples in Chu Liuchen's eyes which was also eerily abnormal...



## Chapter 209 The So-Called Colorful Yarn

"Great-aunt, I shall leave the guests to you. I am tired!" Chu Liuchen's slender fingers stroked his head as he said softly,

"Go ahead!" Rui'an Great Elder Princess stood up to ask a servant to lead Chu Liuchen to his chamber.

"Don't trouble yourself, great-aunt. I will go out by myself and take a stroll. I will just rest there if I'm tired!" Chu Liuchen replied casually.

Xiao Xuanzi, who was at the side, hurriedly bowed to Rui'an Great Elder Princess. Then he smiled and glanced at Qin Wanru before pushing Chu Liuchen out. When they reached the door, two elderly maids on both sides reached out together and grabbed the wheel. Xiao Xuanzi raised the back of the wheelchair, and the three lifted the wheelchair steadily.

With a creaking sound of the wheel, they left slowly.

"Sit!" Rui'an Great Elder Princess sat down and smiled, pointing her finger at the chair next to her.

Qin Wanru walked over and sat down.

A servant girl rushed over to serve tea and then left. Shao Yuanhao took a look at Qin Wanru and then at Rui'an Great Elder Princess. He thought for a moment, and then went to sit in a chair on the right of Qin Wanru.

"Hao'er really likes you!" Rui'an Great Elder Princess couldn't help smiling as she watched. The youngsters looked suited for each other.

"I like Hao'er as well!" Qin Wanru grinned and ruffled Shao Yuanhao's soft hair.

"I want to thank you for your help at Duke Xing's Mansion!" Rui'an Great Elder Princess's expression darkened. The people she sent came back with reports of what happened to Shao Yuanhao.

Of course, Rui'an Great Elder Princess reprimanded the man and got a new servant for Shao Yuanhao. There was no point in having a person like him!

"Well, in Duke Xing's Mansion, Hao'er..." Qin Wanru pondered, rephrasing her words, "It seems that Madam of Duke Xing likes him a lot and gives in to Hao'er on everything. Even if Hao'er did something wrong, she would have taken the blame for it!"

Her words were subtle.

"She likes him? She doesn't even like Hao'er's biological mother, how could she like Hao'er. She is just good at acting!" Rui'an Great Elder Princess snorted.

"Princess, Madam of Duke Xing did not get along with you?" Qin Wanru asked in surprise.

"We got along fine on the surface, but in fact... she has never liked my son." Rui'an Great Elder Princess continued, "Since she doesn't like my son, how could she like Hao'er? I heard what happened that day. She apologized on Hao'er's behalf without hesitation, but she pushed all the blame on Hao'er. How dare she bully such a young kid?"

“Hao’er is still so young, why did she treat him that way? This looks like it’s been going on for a while too!”

Qin Wanru was confused, her memories for that day was still vivid. She had thought about it for a long time but came up with nothing. She knew Madam of Duke Xing was improper, but why did she deal with a kid that way?

The title already had nothing to do with Duke Xing’s Mansion. Couldn’t Madam of Duke Xing be good to a kid who had lost his parents?

“She is too ambitious! How dare she try to control Hao’er?” Rui’an Great Elder Princess thought with eyes full of anger, “If I find out they had anything to do with Hao’er’s parents’ death, I will not spare them!”

Qin Wanru remained silent. It seemed that there was something she did not know. She did not want to meddle with other people’s affairs as she was busy with her own. Moreover, a fragile lady like her should not interfere with imperial matters.

She reached out and ruffled Shao Yuanhao’s hair. This child looked so obedient. Staring with his pair of big eyes and straining his ears.

Rui’an Great Elder Princess seemed to realize her words had embarrassed Qin Wanru and changed her topic, “How is that Young Lady from your mansion? Why did she suddenly crash into Hao’er that day? Hao’er claimed that she did it on purpose and toppled his ink!”

“Yes, she did it on purpose!” As soon as the matter was mentioned, Shao Yuanhao fidgeted in his seat, and his eyes widened in anger.

He even pouted his cute little mouth.

He looked angry yet awkward, Qin Wanru and Rui’an Great Elder Princess laughed.

“Okay, I believe you!”

“You are a good sister and she is a bad one, don’t let her come next time!” Shao Yuanhao was satisfied, and his eyes sparkled.

“Sure, we will not let her come over!” Qin Wanru smiled and pacified him.

After that, she turned to Rui’an Great Elder Princess and said, “Though Big Sister had some problems, she would never want to offend you. Someone must have paid her to do this, or she thought she would gain from this! Of course, she didn’t know about Hao’er’s identity at then!”

Qin Wanru knew Qin Yuru well, and she would not dare offend Rui’an Great Elder Princess. However, if someone had suggested something to her without telling her Shao Yuanhao’s true identity, she could probably have done something! She will never forget when Shao Yuanhao and she talked about Rui’an Great Elder Princess, Qin Yuru’s face turned pale.

Then she clammed up and didn’t change her first statement at all.

"Suggestion?" Rui'an Great Elder Princess understood instantly. Her eyes turned cold and she sneered, "This child was born into a bitter life. His father died early and his mother, who is my daughter, died giving birth to him. Duke Xing's Mansion claimed that this child was their blood and forbade me from bringing him away. They promised to treat Hao'er well and since he refused to leave, I let him stay in Duke Xing's Mansion!"

"I didn't expect Duke Xing's Mansion to start scheming so early. It's my fault!"

If someone wanted to spoil Shao Yuanhao's reputation and make him look like an ignorant and rude kid, there is no one else besides those in Duke Xing's Mansion.

Previously, Qin Wanru saved Shao Yuanhao, and Rui'an Great Elder Princess was grateful to Qin's Mansion for that. Then, Qin Yuru purposely crashed into Shao Yuanhao and pushed all the blame on him. Rui'an Great Elder Princess doted on the kid and might unleash her anger on Qin Wanru.

The man who planned everything secretly had fully understood the most crucial point.

He not only could destroy Shao Yuanhao's reputation, but also create a breach between Qin Wanru and Rui'an Great Elder Princess. What a good move!

Qin Wanru never felt that this was malicious speculation towards Duke Xing's Mansion. In her previous life, someone had been planning behind the curtains, causing the tragedy that befell her after entering the capital. Although she had no idea who it was, the person must have been connected to Duke Xing's Mansion.

"Great Elder Princess, do you know the reason?" Qin Wanru asked because this matter was related to herself.

"It's all because of the nobility title. Do you really think that the title of nobility for Duke Xing's Mansion will exist forever!" Rui'an Great Elder Princess snorted and banged on the table. "They were willing to do anything just for a title. Now that Hao'er is in my mansion, I warned the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. If I ever hear any rumors about Hao'er again, I will not spare them!"

Qin Wanru's eyes flashed with understanding. No wonder after that day, there was almost no word about Shao Yuanhao's incident. It turned out that Rui'an Great Elder Princess had made her move!

This must have been why Madam of Duke Xing was so quiet. Looking at the situation that day, Madam of Duke Xing had already thought of an excuse to go to Qin's Mansion.

Whether it was the clothes left by Qin Yuru or to show their appreciation, she could go to the mansion. However, Duke Xing's Mansion remained still and kept things the way it was.

Looking at the gift from Madam of Duke Xing, it was surely not just speculation.

"Today, Madam of Duke Xing sent me a gift!" When Qin Wanru came to the mansion, she immediately winked and quietly mentioned it

"She sent you a gift?" Rui'an Great Elder Princess was surprised.

"Yes, just today, she said that she liked me and welcomed me as her guest at Duke Xing's Mansion!" Qin Wanru told the truth.

Rui'an Great Elder Princess looked Qin Wanru up and down, yet she couldn't see why Madam of Duke Xing thought so highly of her. She certainly didn't believe that Madam of Duke Xing liked Qin Wanru because of her love for Shao Yuanhao.

"What did she give you?"

"A set of clothes and a set of jewelry!" Qin Wanru answered.

"Did you bring them?" Rui'an Great Elder Princess asked.

"Yes, they are in the carriage. Yujie, go and get it!" Qin Wanru commanded.

Rui'an Great Elder Princess nodded and called an old maid over to accompany Yujie.

When the two returned, they placed the gift box on the table. After opening it, Rui'an Great Elder Princess was surprised by the set of delicate clothes, "Colorful Yarn?"

"What is Colorful Yarn?" Qin Wanru asked as she had not heard of it.

Rui'an Great Elder Princess reached out and picked up the clothes, and she placed it in her palm. The material slipped down, and she took it up again and walked to the window, examining the clothes against the sunlight.

Immediately, the clothes revealed an extremely vibrant color, which got even more vibrant as if it had been highlighted. Moreover, there seemed to be traces of other colors glowing from it.

But as she studied it in detail, it was just one color.

"Sure enough, it is Colorful Yarn. This is a very rare tribute. Even in the palace, it is hard for the maidens to get such clothes. Mostly, they use Colorful Yarn to make handkerchiefs!" Rui'an Great Elder Princess took the clothes and sat back down in front of the bed, examining the clothes thoughtfully.

Duke Xing's Mansion was generous with this gift!

She looked up at Qin Wanru and compared her size with the clothes, then she sneered, "Unfortunately, the best-laid plan was destroyed by your size. Otherwise, which young lady could resist the temptation of such beautiful clothes? But if you wore it, and let... see it, that would be a disaster!"

## **Chapter 210 Sister, Let's Run!**

"Why... why is that?" Qin Wanru was shocked and suddenly sat up straight.

Although she knew things were not as simple as they seem, she did not expect such a disaster.

"The emperor doesn't like it!" Rui'an Great Elder Princess wasn't vague this time. She looked at the curtains and whispered, brief yet concise!

Qin Wanru did not expect this answer. She thought about many kinds of possibilities, but none of them matched this answer. The emperor did not like it. The emperor of a country stands high above the masses, and his usual concerns should be matters of the nation. How could it be? How could he concern himself with ladies' clothing!

“What about this jewelry set?” After the shock, Qin Wanru stopped asking and pointed to another gift box instead!

Since Rui’an Great Elder Princess did not explain, she would have her reasons not to!

The secrets of the royal family were not told easily. Few knew that this matter was related to the emperor, and even if they did, they dared not spread it.

Seeing Qin Wanru had stopped asking, Rui’an Great Elder Princess’s eyes showed a trace of appreciation. This child was indeed smart and knew her position well.

She put down the clothes, then picked up the jewelry and looked at it. She said unenthusiastically, “This is fine! But do not wear the clothes.”

Knowing that Rui’an Great Elder Princess was helping her, Qin Wanru nodded hastily.

“Sister, sister, I have something nice to show you, please come take a look with me!” Shao Yuanhao, who had stayed in the background all this while, could no longer sit still. He pulled Qin Wanru’s sleeve and looked at Rui’an Great Elder Princess with his innocent eyes, “Grandma, I want sister to play with me!”

Seeing him twisting his body like a rubber band, Rui’an Great Elder Princess and Qin Wanru laughed.

“Well, go ahead, but don’t overdo it!” Rui’an Great Elder Princess smiled as she said the words.

“Okay, I will do as you say. I’m a good boy!” As soon as Rui’an Great Elder Princess agreed, Shao Yuanhao hurriedly jumped out of the chair and started pulling Qin Wanru along.

Qin Wanru stood up helplessly, bowed to Rui’an Great Elder Princess and left with Shao Yuanhao.

“Sister, let’s go, hurry up!” As soon as he went out of Rui’an Great Elder Princess’s sight, he became more active. He held Qin Wanru by the hand and led the way.

After passing through a few crooked paths, they came to a garden. “Sister, look, the flower is blooming, isn’t it beautiful?”

Shao Yuanhao said proudly as he pointed to a plum tree at the door.

The plum tree was majestic, and red flowers blossomed on its branches. Winter had just begun, and it was amazing to see such a beautiful plum blossom.

“It’s blossoming this early?” Qin Wanru held Shao Yuanhao’s hand and asked in surprise.

“Yes, only here at Maternal Grandmother’s place. It would not blossom this early at Paternal Grandmother’s place. I discovered this before. I had been waiting for you to come because I knew you’d like it.” Shao Yuanhao’s small face was white and chubby. Now he was pretending to be an adult. He seemed pleased with himself as he looked at Qin Wanru as though he expected her to praise him.

Qin Wanru smiled and reached out to ruffle his hair. No wonder Chu Liuchen used to like ruffling her hair, the soft hair felt really comfortable.

“I love it! You are really good to know I would love it!”

“Sister, there is more inside, let me take you in there!” When Qin Wanru praised Shao Yuanhao, he nearly jumped for joy. The adult look he put on immediately fell apart. He pulled Qin Wanru with him to the inner part of the garden.

Plum blossoms were everywhere in the garden, some flowers had blossomed, and some hadn’t. The trees were arranged accordingly. One section had red blossoms, and another had white.

Along the curved path, there was a pavilion ahead of them. A man was inside with his back toward them.

When she saw his back, Qin Wanru sighed helplessly. That was Chu Liuchen. She could not be mistaken. It was the same clothes that Chu Liuchen wore earlier.

“Sister, Prince Chen is here!” Shao Yuanhao stopped and lowered his voice.

When she saw Shao Yuanhao’s behavior, Qin Wanru couldn’t help laughing out. It was the first time she saw him looking scared. This child never seemed to be afraid of anything, but even he was scared of Chu Liuchen!

“What’s wrong, are you afraid of Prince Chen?” Qin Wanru lowered her voice and looked around. Weirdly enough, Xiao Xuanzi was nowhere to be seen.

“Yes, I am scared of him!” Shao Yuanhao nodded, looking tensed. He pulled Qin Wanru’s hand to retreat.

“Why are you afraid of Prince Chen?” Qin Wanru was intrigued. She smiled as she asked him.

“Prince Chen wanted me to read and hit my palm! It was painful.” Shao Yuanhao’s face was full of grievance, and he pulled at Qin Wanru’s hand.

He was terrified of Prince Chen.

In the past, he used to be the king in Duke Xing’s Mansion, and everyone gave in to him. Also, he was enticed to not learn reading. After Rui’an Great Elder Princess brought him back, she hired a teacher for him. However, he was too naughty, sneaking out to play every day instead of studying. His teacher had no choice but to complain to Rui’an Great Elder Princess.

Then Rui’an Great Elder Princess got him back and sent him to the study room.

However, Shao Yuanhao couldn’t sit still. That particular day, he sneaked out of the study room again and bumped into Chu Liuchen. Chu Liuchen’s guard caught him and hung him on a tree.

At first, Shao Yuanhao remained stubborn. After realizing no one was going to save him, he started crying. The moment Chu Liuchen freed him, he rushed to the study room. After this incident, whenever he saw Chu Liuchen, he was meek, not wanting to provoke Prince Chen ever again! After all, when Prince Chen got angry, even his grandmother couldn’t do anything!

“Come here!” The casual voice coming from before them shocked the two.

Shao Yuanhao looked pitifully up at Qin Wanru and lowered his voice. “Sister, let’s run!”

"You want to run? Would you like to be hung on the tree again?" The voice was gentle with a hint of a smile. Panicking, Shao Yuanhao hurriedly hid behind Qin Wanru and buried his head in her vest.

This was the voice Prince Chen used to command the guard to hang him on the tree no matter how much he cried.

Sensing the child's fear, Qin Wanru helplessly held his hand and pulled him over. They then strolled toward the pavilion.

In the pavilion, the wheelchair had changed direction. Chu Liuchen leaned against the chair rail and cupped his head with one hand. His posture was relaxed and casual. He had an exquisite appearance with a gentle look, a smile was playing at the corner of his mouth. His gaze fell on Qin Wanru and then slowly on Shao Yuanhao.

Qin Wanru felt Shao Yuanhao shivering as he leaned heavily against her.

"Hao'er, you don't like studying?" Chu Liuchen asked gently.

"I do, I want to study!" Shao Yuanhao's small body shivered again before he straightened himself and shouted out the answer. Grandmother had said that Prince Chen liked children who were willing to study. He couldn't let Prince Chen know he hated studying.

"Do you want to read this book?" Chu Liuchen asked with a smile as he held up the book in his hand.

Shao Yuanhao took a step back, looking nervous, "I am still young and know only a few words. When I learn more in the future, I will be able to read such books!"

Grandmother had said that if he did not read the book given by Prince Chen, he will suffer a beating!

"So do you want to go and study now or read my book?" Chu Liuchen smiled lazily.

"I am going to study now. The teacher is waiting for me." Shao Yuanhao felt he couldn't stay any longer. He looked at Qin Wanru timidly and pulled her hand. When Qin Wanru bent down toward him, he whispered, "Sister, I am going to study now. Come look for me in the study room later!"

Then he apprehensively took a look at Chu Liuchen before he let go of Qin Wanru's hand and rushed out.

An old maid behind him followed closely and said hurriedly, "Master Hao, be careful, slow down, don't fall..."

The sound gradually drifted away, leaving Qin Wanru alone at the entrance of the pavilion feeling nonplussed.

Chu Liuchen laughed. At first, his voice was low, then it gradually got louder. He took the book in his hand and patted his chair rails. The book that seemed valuable was almost falling apart now!

"Prince, Hao'er is just a child!" Qin Wanru felt helpless as she reminded Chu Liuchen, who had lost his usual decorum.

Why would he get such a sense of achievement by scaring a kid?

Chu Liuchen stopped laughing suddenly and started coughing loudly, with one hand covering his chest.

Qin Wanru hurried forward and patted him gently on his back.

Chu Liuchen took a while to stop coughing. His pale face turned red because of the cough, showing an unhealthy look. However, the red made his delicate face even more beautiful. Lifting his watering eyes, he looked at Qin Wanru and his expression suddenly turned cold.

He pushed Qin Wanru away, his eyes sparkling as he said, "Do you think I am dying?"

"Prince..."

"Qin Wanru, if I am dead, what do you think will happen?" Chu Liuchen suddenly smiled.

Qin Wanru stepped away from him. This was the temperamental Prince Chen, "I... I don't know!"

"Would anyone avenge me?" Chu Liuchen asked with interest as if Qin Wanru had misread the gloom earlier.

"You will definitely have a long life!" Qin Wanru did not understand what he meant as she replied cautiously.

"Long life?" Chu Liuchen looked as if he'd just heard a big joke. He raised his thin lips into a mocking smile. The sick yet beautiful young man looked so dispirited, "Others may have a long life, but not me!"

"If others can, you surely can!" Qin Wanru blinked her eyes as she said the words, not understanding what he meant.

"I can live as long as others? Qin Wanru, you are good at flattering!" Chu Liuchen smiled and seemed to be in a good mood, but Qin Wanru shivered. His smile was just at the surface, not the kind he had earlier on.

No, what was he hinting?