

## Medical Princess 751

### Chapter 751 The Mixed Poison from the Xu State

"Miss Yu, did you also saw it?" The Nanny in charge asked.

"Yes... I also saw it!" Miss Yu said in a panic.

Shao Wanru glanced at Miss Di and Miss Yu, both of whom seemed to be timid and only wanted to stay quiet for self-protection.

If their interests were not threatened, they would not risk offending anyone.

Therefore, both Miss Yu and Miss Di chose to stay quiet yesterday instead of offending Wang Yuxin. In fact, with so many people in Shao Caihuan's room yesterday, there would inevitably be some of them noticing something suspicious, because Wang Yuxin was definitely not cautious enough to carry out her plan without being noticed.

"Since you saw it, why did you keep quiet before?" The Nanny in charge rebuked Miss Yu harshly. She had asked before, but Miss Yu did not dare to say anything about it until now she heard that she would probably be driven out of the imperial palace.

"Nanny, I dare not risk offending anyone in the imperial palace!" Miss Yu said tearfully in panic and looked at the Nanny in charge pleadingly, suggesting that she was in a helpless situation where she was much inferior to Wang Yuxin in status, so she didn't dare to offend Wang Yuxin.

The Nanny in charge glared at Miss Yu, causing the latter to teeter in horror with her face turning pale.

"Miss Wang, do you have anything else to say now?" Ignoring Miss Yu whose face changed dramatically in fear, the Nanny in charge stared at Wang Yuxin coldly and asked.

"Nanny, how can you declare my guilty with their accounts? I didn't do it, so I won't plead guilty!" Wang Yuxin was panic-stricken, but she still refused to admit it with clenched teeth.

Without any evidence, she did not believe that a Nanny in charge could really deal with her. What was more, she had the backing of Prince Yue who had an affection for her. As long as she insisted that she didn't do it, she believed Prince Yue would definitely help her out.

A Nanny in charge was nothing but a servant in the imperial palace!

Thinking of this, Wang Yuxin returned to composed and looked at the Nanny in charge arrogantly. There were plenty of Nannies in-charge in her mansion. They looked very severe, but they had to submit themselves to her, their master. She didn't believe that the Nanny in charge could force her to admit it by torture!

Wang Yuxin thought that the Nannies in-charge in the imperial palace were much the same as the Nannies in charge of some affairs in her mansion.

"Slap her in the face!" The Nanny in charge glanced at Wang Yuxin's face coldly. Seeing the indignant expression on her face, she suddenly smiled and said coldly.

This kind of conceited woman could bring about her own destruction easily in the imperial palace. She thought that she really had someone's backing. If she did, the Nanny in charge would have been ordered to give extra care to her like the First Miss Shao and the Fifth Miss Shao of Duke Xing's Mansion.

The two Misses looked meek and gentle, while Miss Wang, who had an exaggerated opinion of her status, dare to set herself against her!

A palace maid came over, took a step forward, and was about to slap Miss Wang.

"How dare you! My father is the vice minister of the Ministry of Works!" Wang Yuxin, who did not expect that the Nanny in charge would dare to take action, took a step back and rebuked her loudly.

However, her words were not intimidating. The palace maid grabbed her by the collar mercilessly and slapped her fiercely, almost knocking her out of the room.

"How... dare you slap me!" Wang Yuxin said. She, who had always been overbearing at home, now was slapped by a servant. After being stunned for a moment, she was furious and reached out in an attempt to scratch the palace maid's face.

The palace maid took a quick step back and avoided Wang Yuxin's attack. After giving Wang Yuxin a cold look, she retreated to the back of the Nanny in charge and sneered at Wang Yuxin.

The palace maid thought the way the Nanny in charge did. Only smart people could survive in the imperial palace. A silly person like Wang Yuxin would live a miserable life in the imperial palace even if she was selected this time.

"Miss Wang, are you displeased with it?" The Nanny in charge looked at Wang Yuxin, who was making threatening gestures, and asked coldly.

"How dare you! My father is the vice minister of the Ministry of Works. He won't allow you to bully me like this!" With a burning pain in her face, Wang Yuxin was pissed off. Feeling humiliated and ashamed, she reached out to point at the Nanny in charge and shouted, "Who do you think you are? You are just a servant. How dare you treat me like this? My father will make you pay with your life!"

Looking at Wang Yuxin, who nearly went off her head and was talking nonsense, Shao Yanru decided to give up on her and looked away. She had intended to send the palace maid, who had expressed kindness for her before, to ask Wang Yuxin to be careful and tell her a way to deal with the situation. Unexpectedly, the palace maid, who had secretly passed on messages for her before, did not come.

So she had no choice but to come out of her room.

She had thought that if Wang Yuxin was smart enough, she could shift the blame onto the maid and claim that the maid was actually sent by someone else to set her up. Since this kind of thing happened all the time in the imperial palace, it was more likely to happen in the vice minister's mansion.

She just needed to say that the maid was sent by someone in the vice minister's mansion to set her up. However, Wang Yuxin was so stupid that she even set herself against the Nanny in charge who was much superior to any nanny in her mansion. Basically, a nanny in charge of the affairs of a palace had an official title. Even Vice Minister Wang couldn't set himself against the Nanny in charge!

Moreover, Wang Yuxin obviously had done wrong this time.

Shao Wanru watched over Wang Yuxin, while keeping an eye on Shao Yanru. Compared with Shao Yanru, Wang Yuxin was nothing other than a pawn ahead that had outlived her usefulness at the moment.

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Of course, even if what this pawn had done was exposed, Shao Yanru would only lose a person to make use of rather than getting involved in it.

This was what Shao Yanru thought when she tried to set up Shao Wanru. However, given that Shao Caihuan was accidentally implicated in it, she would not allow Shao Yanru to get out of it unscathed so easily.

The third branch had always been suppressed by the second branch, and the Misses of the third branch had always been suppressed by Shao Yanru. Shao Caihuan was not supposed to dare to set herself against Shao Yanru, but in the current situation, Shao Caihuan had no scruples...

"Keep Miss Wang in detention!" Unwilling to continue the conversation with such a stupid person, the Nanny in charge waved her hand and said.

"How dare you! I am the daughter of Vice Minister Wang!" Wang Yuxin said in rage.

The Nanny in charge didn't even bother to give her a look. This time, two eunuchs came over, grabbed Wang Yuxin's hands on each side of hers, and dragged her away. Since the Nanny in charge had basically found out the truth, she should hand over the case for further investigation, and Wang Yuxin would be interrogated by someone else.

"I got it!" the imperial physician suddenly struck the table, laughed loudly, and said. He finally remembered what this incense sheet was.

"Have you found any clue?" The Nanny in charge was about to leave, but now she looked at the imperial physician and asked with a frown.

"This incense sheet is not made in the Central Plains, but a kind of tribute paid by the Xu State a few years ago. At that time, these kinds of incense sheets were specially sent to the Imperial Institute of Medicine for examination. The envoy from the Xu State said that this kind of incense sheets could cause the human body to be covered with red spots, which could leave scars easily!"

The imperial physician said loudly, extremely excited that he discovered what the incense sheet was.

Shao Caihuan, who was in the inner room, had been listening to them. At this time, she almost fainted in shock and realized that she had been trapped.

She clenched a corner of the quilt and bit her lip, deciding that she would neither let go of Wang Yuxin nor Shao Yanru, who could not be innocent!

If she was disfigured, her life would be totally ruined. At the thought of this, she had no scruples!

"No, no, isn't this supposed to be a joss-stick? Why is it an incense sheet? Could it be that someone turned a joss-stick into an incense sheet? Or it contains something else?" the imperial physician, who had a new doubt after saying that, frowned again and said to himself.

Shao Wanru glanced at the imperial physician, who seemed to be lost in thought again, and asked, "Sir, may I ask if my third sister will have scars?"

"Uh... I'm afraid so. She has stayed in such a stuffy room for the whole night and has a lot of red spots, so it's difficult for her to recover completely!" The imperial physician, who was lost in thought, didn't want to be disturbed, so he waved his hand and said impatiently. At this time, his mind was occupied with the incense sheet.

The reason why he remembered it so clearly was that the Xu State sent a few imperial physicians to compete with the imperial physicians from the Imperial Institute of Medicine, and in the competition, an imperial physician from the Xu State used this kind of mixed poison to disfigure someone without being noticed.

At that time, it shocked all the imperial physicians and even reminded them if someone used the mixed poison to deal with the imperial concubines, it would cause chaos. After the competition, the joss-sticks left by the Xu State were sealed up. Unexpectedly, he saw it again after all these years.

The imperial physician was not present at that time and heard about the mixed poison later, so he failed to recognize it at once.

He, who didn't have the right to deal with the situation, had to report it to the head of the Imperial Institute of Medicine, who would report it to the Emperor.

Thinking of this, he stood up.

Seeing that the imperial physician was about to leave, Shao Wanru hurriedly asked, "Sir, may I ask why my third sister has this kind of red spot? At that time, besides my third sister, there were other people in her room. Why are the others all right? Is it because my third sister has stayed in this stuffy room for the whole night? Then why is her maid fine?"

"She got something that activated this kind of incense sheet, a mixed poison. I didn't expect that there would be such a kind of severe mixed poison in Vice Minister Wang's Manor!" The imperial physician shook his head and said. Since he had basically figured out what had happened to Shao Caihuan, it was useless for him to stay. They could fetch the ointment suiting Shao Caihuan's case from the Imperial Institute of Medicine, but it would probably produce little effect. He had told them at the beginning that if Shao Caihuan had too many red spots, they might leave scars.

But the imperial physician didn't know what exactly was going to happen. It was the first time he had seen this kind of red spot. The Third Miss Shao, whose face was covered with these horrifying red spots, would probably be disfigured!

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After telling the little eunuch following him here to fetch the ointment, the imperial physician left in a hurry to report this matter. This was a serious problem. How could a Miss from the Vice Minister's Manor get the poison that had been locked up?

"Nanny, I know who trapped me. Nanny, please uphold justice!" With her face covered with a veil, Shao Caihuan struggled to walk out through the door of the inner room with the help of her maid, knelt in front of the Nanny in charge, and said, revealing a pair of red eyes filled with hatred.

## Chapter 752 The Problem in the Talisman Is Exposed!

"Third Sister, get up first. Since it's Miss Wang who did this, the Vice Minister's Manor will definitely give us an explanation. It's impossible for Miss Wang to get this kind of mixed poison, so Vice Minister Wang must also get involved in it!" Seeing Shao Caihuan kneel and beg the Nanny in charge to uphold justice, Shao Yanru immediately realized what Shao Caihuan was going to do. She hurried to help Shao Caihuan up and tried to appease her in a low voice.

She tried both coaxing and threatening and even suggested that Shao Caihuan should not get herself into trouble, because the poison was from the Xu State and ordinary people had no access to it.

Shao Wanru sneered in her heart and looked at her indifferently. Seeing the anxiety in Shao Yanru's eyes, she thought in the past Shao Caihuan would definitely be threatened by Shao Yanru's words and stay quiet, but Shao Yanru's tricks didn't work on Shao Caihuan, who almost went crazy at the moment.

With her mind occupied with hatred for Shao Yanru rather than the concern that she would get herself and Duke Xing's Mansion into trouble, Shao Caihuan wished she could kill Shao Yanru now.

Shao Caihuan had clearly heard the words of the imperial physician just now. Learning that both her face and life had been ruined, she definitely would not let Shao Yanru off.

"Nanny, it's this talisman. Someone must have poisoned it!" Shao Caihuan pushed Shao Yanru away, handed the talisman to the Nanny in charge and said.

Glancing at the talisman and at Shao Caihuan, who had lost her mind, Shao Wanru slowly lowered her head and let out a gasp.

Sure enough, Shao Caihuan knew that there was something wrong with the talisman, so she didn't dare to wear it and thought that putting it under her pillow would do no harm to her.

However, she gave Shao Wanru an identical talisman and told Shao Wanru to wear it because it would bring her good luck.

The regular way to wear a talisman was to put it around the neck.

However, this talisman contained a severe poison that could take effect when it was within a certain range of someone, so although Shao Caihuan just put it under her pillow, it still did harm to her.

"This is it?" The Nanny in charge, who didn't dare to take it directly, looked at it and asked.

"Yes, this is it. It must be the thing activating the incense. This is the only thing I got after entering the imperial palace, and plenty of people had access to it before it finally reached me!" Shao Caihuan said with hatred.

"Well, put it here. I will find out the truth!" The Nanny in charge said and pointed to a corner of the table as a hint for her to put it down. She did not dare to hold it for fear that she would be poisoned by accident. It was better to ask the Imperial Institute of Medicine to send someone to take it away. No one knew what other evil things the Xu State, an uncivilized country, got.

"Nanny, this must have something to do with my eldest sister!" After putting the talisman on the table, Shao Caihuan pointed at Shao Yanru and said with red eyes.

"Third Sister, what nonsense are you talking about? I know nothing about your talisman. How could you say it has something to do with me?" Shao Yanru said with her face turning pale from fear.

Shao Caihuan gritted her teeth and said, "Do you really know nothing about it? That day, when I asked the palace maid to get me talismans, you clearly heard it. Didn't you happen to pass by and take a few glances at the palace maid?"

"I just took a few glances at her. There's nothing weird about it. Third Sister, it's unfair of you to say that. Can't I take a few glances at a palace maid? Third Sister, we are both from Duke Xing's Mansion, and the second and third branches of Duke Xing's Mansion have always helped and cared for each other. Why... why do you have to push the blame to me now?"

Shao Yanru said tearfully with her eyes turning red, looked at Shao Caihuan sadly and said, "Third Sister, are you... are you trying to drag me into this?"

Hearing her questions and seeing Shao Caihuan's ferocious face, everyone would think that Shao Yanru looked more convincing while Shao Caihuan had lost her mind and even tried to drag her sister into this.

The Nanny in charge frowned. She was displeased with Shao Caihuan's claim based on no evidence that Shao Yanru, who had just taken a few glances at the palace maid, was the culprit. This reason made no sense and was ridiculous. She was wondering if the Third Miss Shao couldn't bear this and went crazy!

The Nanny in charge didn't want to get the First Miss Shao involved in this at all, because she had been told by a master to take care of her.

"Third Miss, is it strange to glance at a palace maid?" The Nanny in charge asked indifferently. If it weren't for Shao Caihuan's identity as the legitimate Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion, She would have left.

"It's not strange to glance at a palace servant, but she also turned to this palace maid later to buy talismans!" Shao Caihuan, who seemed to be ready to pay any price, pointed at Shao Yanru and said loudly, "Why did she turn to the same palace maid? She must have done something to my talismans."

"Third Miss Shao, since you could turn to the palace maid to buy talismans, why couldn't the First Miss Shao do so?" the Nanny in charge asked in displeasure.

"Why was my talisman poisoned after she turned to the palace maid? It must be her who has poisoned my talisman!" Shao Caihuan had no evidence, but she had an intuition that Shao Yanru was the culprit. Looking at Shao Yanru's hypocritical face, she was so angry that she wanted to scream.

Since her life had been ruined, she would not let off Shao Yanru.

"Stop it. Third Miss Shao, even if you're insane, you should reserve this nonsense until you go home. Do you think the First Miss Shao intended to disfigure you because she's jealous of you?" the Nanny in charge asked with a mocking smile. Although the Third Miss Shao was good-looking, she still couldn't match the First Miss Shao.

"Her target is not me, but... Fifth Sister. Eldest sister intended to disfigure Fifth Sister." After Shao Caihuan choked for a while, she looked at Shao Wanru fiercely, pointed at Shao Wanru, and said loudly.

"She intended to hurt me?" On hearing herself mentioned, Shao Wanru looked up at Shao Yanru and at Shao Caihuan, pointed at herself, and asked in confusion.

“Yes, she intended to hurt you. Fifth Sister, Eldest Sister has been displeased with you and afraid that you will be selected and take her place in the consort selection, so she doesn’t want you to be selected. She considers no one other than you, the legitimate daughter of the first branch as well as the daughter of the eldest uncle, as a threat. Their second branch has always considered your first branch as a threat and will never let off any member of your first branch.”

Shao Caihuan, who had almost lost her mind at this time, just said whatever she thought, with her mind occupied with a crazy idea that she must drag Shao Yanru into this and put her in a miserable situation. She would never let off Shao Yanru.

Suddenly Shao Caihuan was slapped hard, causing her head to tilt to one side.

Then Shao Yanru knelt down beside Shao Caihuan, held her hand tightly with both hands, and said tearfully, “Third Sister, sober up. We are sisters from the same mansion. No matter you or Fifth Sister gets hurt, grandma will feel distressed. Grandma values rules the most. How can she bear to see the conflict among us? Now... you are trying to distress grandma and break her heart!”

“Third Sister, you got hurt today. I know I should blame myself for not having taken good care of you. If you’re unbearably indignant, you can beat me. After we return home, I will definitely ask grandma to find a way to cure you. The imperial physician said that you may have scars. If our Duke Xing’s Mansion mobilizes all our connections, we might be able to find a way to cure you. But if the conflict among us brings trouble to our Duke Xing’s Mansion, we won’t have time to find a good doctor for you!”

Shao Yanru choked with sobs. She let go of Shao Caihuan’s hand, held her tightly in her arms, and said, “Third Sister, we are from the same family, and we share prosperity and bear losses together. Ordinary people have no access to the mixed poison from the Xu State. If anyone is discovered to possess this kind of mixed poison, her family will be exterminated with their property confiscated.”

In that case, none of them could survive!

Shao Caihuan, who had lost her mind just now, shivered and calmed down on hearing Shao Yanru’s words. When she comprehended what Shao Yanru meant, she suddenly trembled with panic in her eyes.

She, who said those words on impulse, was panic-stricken after hearing Shao Yanru’s words. If Duke Xing’s Mansion got into trouble, she would really be disfigured and even die with no doctor to treat her.

Both the second branch and the third branch were members of Duke Xing’s Mansion. Before they divided up family property and lived apart, all the three branches of Duke Xing’s Mansion were a whole.

Shao Wanru composedly watched Shao Yanru threaten Shao Caihuan, silently sneering. She was now also a member of Duke Xing’s Mansion. Given this, she certainly would not let Duke Xing’s Mansion get involved in this matter. In fact, she did not expect Shao Yanru would be exposed this time.

Shao Yanru had always been so cautious that she wouldn’t fall into the trap so easily.

The clues were unlikely to lead to her, and there was no direct evidence to prove that she was the culprit. Nevertheless, Shao Caihuan’s crazy words had already made her suspicious!

That was enough. A solid dyke could collapse because of an ant hole in it. Shao Yanru's great reputation now was flawed.

Shao Yanru, who had attracted much attention before she was officially selected, would become the target of many of her opponents who were more competent than her...

Shao Wanru glanced at the Nanny in charge's face, only to see her staring at Shao Yanru thoughtfully and emotionlessly with her deep eyes.

Everyone in the imperial palace was shrewd. Shao Yanru seemed to be persuading Shao Caihuan to stop making a scene, but in fact, she meant something else. The First Miss Shao was not as dignified and good-natured as she was said to be. She was obviously a scheming person. Thinking about what Shao Caihuan had said before, the Nanny in charge turned to look at Shao Wanru, who was standing aside.

Shao Wanru, who was standing quietly aside, frowned slightly. It seemed that she was at a loss about what to do in the current situation, so she didn't come to appease Shao Caihuan immediately. Her long eyelashes fluttered a few times, which made her look delicate and aloof, while her eyes and red lips made her look charming.

There were various beauties in the world. Some were domineering, some were charming and some were as delicate as an orchid in autumn. But the Fifth Miss Shao was a unique beauty who was both charming and a little cold. She reminded her of the aloof fairy in the Moon Palace. However, her smile looked like blooming flowers, making her less cold and slightly enchanting.

She could be considered peerlessly beautiful, or even beautiful enough to overthrow a city. It was reasonable that the First Miss Shao, known as the first beauty, wanted to deal with the Fifth Miss Shao. Moreover, the First Miss Shao was not as gracious as people said.

### **Chapter 753 Driven out of the Imperial Palace**

Shao Caihuan was taken out of the imperial palace after lunch!

Shao Wanru and Shao Yanru walked her all the way to the palace gate and watched her leave slowly with the help of two palace maids on each side of hers followed by an imperial physician.

With those red spots all over her body, she certainly could not attend the consort selection, and it would even be difficult to restore her face.

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"Fifth Sister, let's go back!" Seeing Shao Caihuan's figure disappear behind the palace gate, Shao Yanru turned around and said to Shao Wanru.

Shao Wanru glanced at Shao Yanru's face and found she looked a little tired with a trace of haggardness in her eyes.

Shao Wanru sneered and was about to speak when she suddenly heard someone crying behind her. The two of them turned around and saw three people walking towards them. The one in front was Wang Yuxin. However, the arrogant and rude Miss from the Vice Minister's Mansion now was disheveled, covering her face and crying while walking.



She was followed by two eunuchs rather than her maids, and they looked obviously impatient.

With her eyes becoming deep, Shao Wanru realized this morning a chief eunuch and a chief palace maid were sent over to deal with what had happened to Shao Caihuan.

She was called over once, and Shao Yanru was called over several times. Shao Yanru's look of haggardness at the moment was partly true and partly faked.

Although Shao Caihuan failed to push the blame to her, Shao Caihuan's crazy acts before and the palace maid's testimony indicated that Shao Yanru must have played a role in this plot even if she wasn't proved to be the culprit. No one considered her innocent despite no evidence to prove her guilty.

When the chief eunuch and the chief palace maid left, they were extremely cold to Shao Yanru, showing an attitude completely different from that when they came.

Shao Yanru must be panic-stricken, so she showed a haggard look. Otherwise, someone like her would maintain her composure even if she was really tired.

Wang Yuxin eventually took the blame. Her maid was detained and probably had been tortured. Considering she was the Miss of the Vice Minister's Manor, they could not do anything to her before finding out the truth, so she was driven out of the imperial palace.

Since she was driven out of the imperial palace, she certainly didn't deserve to be treated kindly. The two eunuchs were obviously rude to her. Seeing that she walked slowly, one of them even pushed her, and she almost fell. Getting her footing after staggering, she saw Shao Yanru and Shao Wanru standing in front of her.

She turned her eyes from Shao Yanru's face to Shao Wanru's. There was hatred on her face, but she didn't dare to act as presumptuously as before.

Shao Wanru glanced at Wang Yuxin composedly. Now the truth had been basically revealed. Wang Yuxin occasionally picked up such a piece of incense sheet. Hearing that Shao Wanru had been poisoned and it could cause red spots on her face so that she wouldn't be able to attend the consort selection, Wang Yuxin secretly used it to deal with Shao Wanru and caused a series of subsequent things.

She had been supposed to go to Shao Wanru's room. Unexpectedly, Shao Wanru didn't return to her room at that time, so she went to Shao Caihuan's room instead, put the fragrant incense sheet in Shao Caihuan's censer and then asked Shao Caihuan to invite Shao Wanru there.

Unexpectedly, Shao Caihuan was poisoned and got red spots instead of Shao Wanru.

Shao Caihuan got her talismans from a palace maid at a high price. Talismans were rare in the imperial palace, especially consecrated ones. The palace maids actually sold talismans that were not consecrated, at high prices. The nuns in the Buddhist hall said that they did not know about it.

They made some talismans, but only consecrated ones were recorded. Sometimes, when some chief palace maids came to ask for talismans, they would give them talismans that weren't consecrated. Because these talismans were just ordinary ones not for the masters in the imperial palace, the nuns didn't care about where they went.

Therefore, it was impossible to trace the source of Shao Caihuan's talismans.

There were two points getting Shao Yanru involved in this matter. One was Shao Caihuan's words and the palace maid's testimony. Shao Yanru did send someone to contact her, ask about talismans, and also buy one from her. Moreover, the palace maid delivered a talisman to Shao Yanru before delivering the other two talismans to Shao Caihuan.

The other was another palace maid's testimony. She claimed to have seen Shao Yanru and her maid speak in each other's ears after the palace maid left. For fear of being heard, Shao Yanru's maid deliberately went to the door, and closed the door after looking around. The palace maid saw through the window that they acted in a sneaky way.

However, she didn't hear their conversation and only remembered that the maid pointed at the Fifth Miss Shao's room at that time!

Because of the two palace maids' testimonies and some inexplicable reasons, the chief eunuch and the chief palace maid sent over thought that Shao Yanru was not innocent.

The palace maid claimed that she fetched the three talismans in one go, so it was impossible that one of them was alright while the other two were poisoned. However, Shao Yanru's talisman was eventually proved to be alright.

Meanwhile, Shao Caihuan's talisman and the talisman Shao Caihuan gave Shao Wanru contained something else.

Shao Wanru clearly explained why she wasn't poisoned. She didn't like this talisman, but for fear that Shao Caihuan would be upset if she didn't accept it, she accepted it and put it by the window. Her maid accidentally thought it was unwanted and threw it out of the window. In the end, the talisman was found outside the window.

It could be said that Shao Wanru escaped being poisoned by accident.

If Shao Wanru also wore it, even if she was not as severely poisoned as Shao Caihuan, she would inevitably have red spots and be taken out of the imperial palace.

"Miss Wang!" Seeing Wang Yuxin stop in front of them, Shao Wanru raised her eyes slightly, looked at her, and asked, "Miss Wang, we've held no grudge against each other. I'm wondering why you did this to me. Could it be that you can benefit from my being disfigured?"

Since they met, Shao Wanru happened to have something to ask Wang Yuxin, who seemed to have such a profound hatred for her that she must ruin her life. They obviously had no connection. Although they had been in conflict with each other once, they had hardly met throughout the rest of the time.

"Don't you remember what you've said and done? Shao Wanru, don't be too complacent. God is watching you!" Wang Yuxin squeezed out the words through clenched teeth and looked at Shao Wanru with resentment.

Her words were inexplicable, and she seemed to suggest that Shao Wanru deserved it. Yujie was so furious that she was about to step forward, but Shao Wanru winked at her as a hint for her not to act rashly.

"Miss Wang, do you really think it's over now?" Shao Wanru asked with a sneer while glancing at the high palace walls on both sides of them. People standing here seemed insignificant and felt depressed, especially Wang Yuxin who was driven out of the imperial palace.

Hearing this, Wang Yuxin folded her trembling hands with her face changing dramatically.

"My Third Sister is hurt by a poison, which is said to be a tribute from the Xu State. It's impossible for a Miss living in the backyard like you to have access to this kind of thing. Now I'm afraid both you and Vice Minister Wang can hardly absolve yourselves from the blame!" Shao Wanru calmly turned her eyes to Wang Yuxin and said with some pity in her eyes, "Miss Wang, do you really have no idea that you have been used by someone?"

After that, she looked away and walked past Wang Yuxin with a look of disdain.

After Shao Wanru walked over, it was Shao Yanru in front of Wang Yuxin.

"Miss Wang, don't worry. How could your father get involved in it? My Fifth Sister just tried to frighten you!" Shao Yanru comforted her softly.

Compared with Shao Wanru, Shao Yanru could be considered gentle with some pity for Wang Yuxin, which made it easy for her to leave a good impression on others.

The two eunuchs ignorant of what had happened before thought that the First Miss Shao seemed to be good-natured and gracious.

Comforted by her, Wang Yuxin seemed to want to say something with her lips trembling, but didn't know where to begin and burst into tears again.

"Eldest Sister, do you think Miss Wang is wronged? I remember that the case has been settled with a definite conclusion. Both Third Sister's face and her life have been ruined. I didn't expect that you still consider Miss Wang is wronged. In this case, Third Sister should feel aggrieved, because you cherish Miss Wang, a friend you just met a few days ago, more than Third Sister, who has been your sister all these years!"

Shao Wanru turned around behind them and looked across Wang Yuxin at Shao Yanru coldly. Their eyes met with Wang Yuxin between them.

The smile on Shao Yanru's face froze. Wang Yuxin had been proved guilty of trapping Shao Caihuan. She, who didn't take her sister's side but showed kindness to Wang Yuxin instead, seemed to be trying to cover up something. Clenching the handkerchief in her hand, she thought Shao Wanru became increasingly cunning.

Although they were at the palace gate, where there seemed to be no one paying attention to them, the two eunuchs around them would spread what they heard. Shao Yanru was sure that what she said here today would inevitably go out.

She, who had intended to console Wang Yuxin, had to stop talking now.

"Shao Wanru, what do you mean?" Wang Yuxin turned her head and asked with rage in her eyes.

"I just want to make it clear that our Duke Xing's Mansion is no longer on friendly terms with your Wang's Mansion. But if you and my Eldest Sister have a close relationship, I can say nothing about it. After all, I can just represent myself rather than the whole Duke Xing's Mansion. No matter if you intended to trap me or my Third Sister, my Third Sister and I will no longer be on friendly terms with you. Vicious people will eventually fall into the trap set by themselves! I'm just wondering who will benefit the most in the end!"

Shao Wanru's words were extremely cold and merciless. After that, she turned to look at Shao Yanru and said with a faint sneer, which made the atmosphere between the two high walls a little cold and evil, "Eldest Sister, if you have such a close relationship with Miss Wang, you can walk her out. I'm going back now. By the way, please ask her who spoke evil of me in front of her so that she believes that I want to hurt her. Is it... necessary for me to care about someone like Miss Wang and hurt her?"

### **Chapter 754 It's Too Late to Realize the Truth!**

After saying that, Shao Wanru glanced at Wang Yuxin contemptuously and then walked back to the imperial palace in an extremely arrogant manner.

"Fifth Sister, wait for me!" Shao Yanru said. At this time, she certainly couldn't stay any longer. Shao Caihuan was poisoned because of Wang Yuxin, so it was obviously inappropriate for her to stay and see Wang Yuxin off reluctantly!

Wang Yuxin's face turned livid and then red from anger. When Shao Yanru passed by her, a thought suddenly flashed through her mind and she looked at Shao Yanru's back in horror.

She originally did not think that Shao Yanru had anything to do with it, but Shao Wanru's words just reminded her that she indeed heard that Shao Wanru spoke ill of her in private from a friend of hers, to whom she had always been close, and she didn't doubt Shao Yanru at first.

However, Shao Wanru's words just enlightened her.

She went weak, feeling dizzy and cold with her hands on the palace wall beside her. Shao Wanru and Shao Yanru were the most outstanding candidates in the consort selection with the prettiest appearances and the best family backgrounds. Only they could rival each other.

If Shao Wanru was poisoned, the biggest winner definitely would be Shao Yanru.

Coincidentally, every time her friend mentioned that the Fifth Miss Shao spoke ill of her behind her back, the First Miss Shao was present and kept defending her Fifth Sister. It seemed that they had a close relationship. But just now, she noticed that they were not close to each other at all!

Thinking of some rumors and what she had seen, Wang Yuxin blacked out and finally realized that she seemed to have been used by Shao Yanru.

Every time Shao Yanru defended Shao Wanru, she would get angrier and feel more uncomfortable.

If the First Miss Shao was neither so close to her sister nor so generous, she must have been up to something else.

Could the First Miss Shao be the culprit!

Wang Yuxin reached out and wanted to grab Shao Yanru and ask for an explanation, but she found that she couldn't say a word because she had no evidence to prove that First Miss Shao had intervened in this matter.

Wang Yuxin was trembling all over with trembling fingers. She was panic-stricken now. If this was really Shao Yanru's scheme, Shao Yanru must have included her in her scheme when she first met her. She didn't expect that she had fallen into such a trap at the beginning. At this time, she couldn't explain it clearly even if she wanted to.

No wonder First Miss Shao invited her to Shao Caihuan's room instead of her room for a chat. No wonder she and Shao Wanru had held no grudge against each other, but she always heard from her friend that Shao Wanru cursed her in private so that she became displeased with Shao Wanru.

Therefore, she would definitely not let go of such an opportunity to set up Shao Wanru.

"First Miss Shao..." The voice seemed to come out of her throat. Wang Yuxin thought it loud, but it was actually not. Seeing the Shao sisters disappear in front of her, Wang Yuxin collapsed on the ground with her face turning pale. What Shao Wanru had said rang in her ears loudly.

She, who didn't care about it at all before, now felt her mind was occupied with it.

Shao Wanru meant only thing clearly: it wasn't over yet. Not only her, but also her father would be implicated because Shao Caihuan was hurt by poison from the Xu State, and ordinary people had no access to tributes.

"Miss Wang, are you unwilling to leave?" One of the eunuchs stepped forward, looked down at her, and mocked her.

He certainly didn't dare to do so a few days ago. But now Wang Yuxin had lost her value, so he could say whatever he wanted. He thought Wang Yuxin didn't seem to be smart because she dared to talk to the two Misses from Duke Xing's Mansion like that regardless of the big possibility of their being selected.

However, if she was smart, she would not do such a thing. He was uncertain what was going to happen after she was sent back home. But one thing was certain: her life had been ruined, and even her father, Vice Minister Wang, could not help her out of this.

People in the imperial palace had always been snobbish, so it was time to hit her when she was down.

Seeing that she collapsed on the ground with her eyes drifting and seemed to be too shocked to return to herself, the other eunuch came over, pulled her up, and said impatiently, "It's useless to play dumb now. Get up and leave as soon as possible so that we can report on our mission! It's so unfortunate that we have to walk you out!"

After pulling her up, he pushed her forward hard. This time, Wang Yuxin lost her footing and fell heavily to the ground. Her knees hit the big green stone under her feet, making a crash.

The sharp pain brought her back to earth. She slowly stood up with her hands on the ground and looked at the imperial palace desperately. Then she struggled to turn around, gritted her teeth, and staggered out. She could not just let it go. She decided to return home and tell her father that it was a conflict within Duke Xing's Mansion and had nothing to do with her, and she was set up...

This matter caused a stir in the imperial palace. More palace maids were sent to the Chuxiu Palace, and they paid more attention to the candidates. The originally relaxed atmosphere immediately became tense because of this matter.

The candidates considered their companions unreliable and had an intuition that their companions might trap them. Everyone in the Chuxiu Palace was plagued by imaginary fears. In order to avoid suspicion, even good friends gave up their acquaintance for the time being. Only sisters from the same manor and best friends occasionally gathered.

The news from outside could not reach the Chuxiu Palace for the time being. Shao Wanru did not know what Wang Yuxin would do after returning home, but as long as Wang Yuxin was not completely stupid, she would understand that she had fallen into someone's trap and become someone's sharp weapon. Regarding the person making use of her, it should be someone that would benefit the most from Shao Wanru's being disfigured.

Although Shao Yanru did not carry out her plot directly, it was certain that she had inflamed Wang Yuxin's hatred for Shao Wanru. As long as Wang Yuxin could figure out Shao Yanru was behind the scenes, she would be able to find some traces of what Shao Yanru had done and thus to find some evidence in favor of her. Of course, Shao Wanru couldn't predict whether these pieces of evidence, that were not solid enough, could help her out of this situation.

It depended on how Vice Minister's Manor was going to deal with it.

Anyway, this matter had nothing to do with her now, and it was Shao Yanru who got involved in it. Shao Yanru seemed to have won this round, because there was no evidence to prove her guilty, but in fact, more people were suspicious of her intention.

Everyone, especially the other candidates in the consort selection, would consider Shao Yanru, a ravishing and scheming candidate from a noble family, a threat, because they didn't know when they would be set up by her.

No one knew where the rumor came from, because the news was originally suppressed. The candidates only knew that Miss Wang from Vice Minister's Mansion set up the Third Miss from Duke Xing's Mansion, but they had no idea of the details. However, some candidates overheard some palace maids talk about the whole story in private.

Many people in the imperial palace were smart, so they realized that the Third Miss Shao fell into the trap by accident and the target was supposed to be the Fifth Miss Shao. Plenty of people guessed it was the First Miss Shao behind the scenes.

It was understandable that the First Miss Shao set up her cousin because she couldn't bear to see her cousin replace her to be the first beauty, she was way too vicious.

...

There had been some rumors in the capital, some of which were about Duke Xing's Mansion, some about Madam of Duke Xing, and some about Shao Yanru. Everyone thought them implausible before. After all, the First Miss Shao had always been known as a good-natured Miss, so they didn't take hearsay seriously, but now everyone thought the rumors were very likely to be true.

What they had heard and seen could easily change their thoughts. This was the case for the candidates at the moment. They stayed away from the First Miss Shao, because they did not want to end up like the Third Miss Shao.

The First Miss Shao was cruel enough to hurt the Third Miss Shao, her cousin who was also from Duke Xing's Mansion and had gotten along with her all these years, let alone hurt others!

Some of them, who had been on friendly terms with Shao Yanru, now had to weigh up their friendship. Was it comparable to the sisterhood between Shao Yanru and Shao Caihuan? They had heard long before that as the eldest daughter, Shao Yanru took good care of other siblings in the mansion. Was this the way she took care of them?

The candidates were all suspicious and stayed away from the two sisters from Duke Xing's Mansion. They were not willing to get close to them, one of whom was likely to be trapped and could bring them bad luck, while the other trapped her sister and might make use of any of them!

Shao Yanru discovered a strange phenomenon that there were fewer and fewer people around her. There had been plenty of Misses willing to talk with her, but now there was no one around her. Wherever she went, people looked at her with vigilance. Sometimes the candidates, who had been talking, just dispersed when she walked over.

At first, she thought that it was a coincidence. After this happened several times, Shao Yanru found that they were not coincidences. After sending Shuqi to inquire about it, she was so furious that her fingers trembled.

However, she didn't know where this rumor came from or who mentioned it. She couldn't explain it even if she wanted to, so she had to swallow it.

After calming herself down, she thought of Shao Wanru. She and Shao Wanru were born to be enemies, and they couldn't coexist. It must have something to do with Shao Wanru, and the rumor was probably caused by what she had said to Wang Yuxin at the palace gate that day.

At first, she wanted to explain to Wang Yuxin and comfort her. But after Shao Wanru said that, she had to stop talking with Wang Yuxin and follow Shao Wanru back. Now thinking of it, she realized Shao Wanru must have done that on purpose. Feeling a deep hatred, she put the teacup on the table heavily.

She would never let go of Shao Wanru, this b\*tch!

She took a deep breath and tried to suppress her anger. Then, she closed her eyes and took another deep breath. When she opened her eyes again, she calmed down. She could not stay in this isolated and suspected situation without doing anything, lest the masters in the imperial palace suspect her and it affected her consort selection. She must help herself out of this!

## **Chapter 755 The Painter Madam Ou**

Shao Wanru had lived a peaceful life these days. She had only a few acquaintances here, so she didn't care about the other Misses' staying away from her. Moreover, given that she was the victim rather than the culprit, other Misses still looked at her with kindness. Although they thought that her gorgeous appearance made her their strong opponent, she was still much less dangerous than Shao Yanru!

Shao Wanru gradually got acquainted with a female painter, who even invited her to her place for a chat when she was at leisure.

The female painter was known as Madam Ou, and she was the wife of a petty official. After her husband passed away, she, who had no kids, was put forward as a painter portraying the candidates in the imperial palace.

Madam Ou had been a famous talented lady in the capital city when she was young. However, she didn't come from a noble family, so she only married a petty official.

She, a childless widow, was in a very similar situation to that of Shao Wanru in her last life. It somehow reminded Shao Wanru that she had entered the imperial palace to portray the candidates after Wen Xichi's death in the last life. The difference was that she was notorious in the capital at that time, so she must be put forward as an imperial painter on instructions from someone.

Although she still couldn't remember what Chu Liuchen had done in the last life, she could sense his existence everywhere after entering the imperial palace. Therefore, she could hardly remember what had happened after she entered the imperial palace.

She could only remember the scenes, where Chu Liuchen was not present, clearly.

Shao Wanru didn't know why she lost the memory of Chu Liuchen since she had her life to live over. But this didn't prevent her from realizing that she probably got the opportunity to enter the imperial palace with Chu Liuchen's help, because Qi Baiyu wasn't powerful enough to do that.

Madam Ou in front of her proved her conjecture. There were plenty of female painters entering the imperial palace, and all of them were famous for their talents. Madam Ou finally got the opportunity to enter the imperial palace after passing several tests. However, at that time, it seemed that as soon as Qi Baiyu recommended her, she immediately entered the imperial palace without any difficulty.

In the last life, she was so muddle-headed that she neglected numerous things, so she did not notice there must be something fishy about it. Now thinking of it, she found it ridiculous. What convinced her that Qi Baiyu was powerful enough to send her into the imperial palace?

Both in this life and in the last life, Chu Liuchen had always been around her, but she didn't notice it. Thinking of this, Shao Wanru felt so guilty. There was a person who had been staying by her side and helping her, but she forgot everything about him.

If he knew, how distressed he would be! At this time, she suddenly felt glad that it was she rather than Chu Liuchen who had their life lived over.

Other candidates kept staying away from her for fear that they would be implicated in trouble if she was trapped when they were around her. As such, she, who was at leisure, visited Madam Ou again.

Sometimes, Madam Ou modified her works instead of painting, and modification also took a lot of time.

"Madam Ou, you've done such a great job!" Shao Wanru, who turned to the back of Madam Ou, said with a smile after glancing at the portrait she was working on. She really appreciated Madam Ou's painting skills. In her last life, she had portrayed a lot of candidates. Now seeing Madam Ou's work, she involuntarily made a comment.



"It's not very good. I feel there's something missing in the portrait!" As Madam Ou said, she put down the painting in her hand, took a step back, looked at her painting, and then looked at Shao Wanru. She felt that there was something missing in her painting. The Fifth Miss Shao in front of her was obviously more ravishing than her painting.

Now she was modifying Shao Wanru's portrait. In fact, she had already drawn one before, but she was not satisfied with it, so she drew another one.

But she was still not satisfied with this one.

Shao Wanru smiled and said leisurely, "It's good enough. Madam Ou, are you going to portray me as a fairy?" She, who enjoyed the peaceful atmosphere in the drawing room a lot, came to visit Madam Ou from time to time.

"Fifth Miss, you're as fascinating as a fairy, so it's not a matter of my painting skills. However, I don't think I can depict your charm!" Madam Ou shook her head helplessly and said. She thought that she was not good enough at painting, otherwise, she wouldn't have failed to depict the charm of the person in front of her. She looked at her work while saying, "I heard that the Third Young Master of the Prime Minister is excellent at painting. I think he can definitely depict your real charm."

Madam Ou said with great pity.

Of course, she didn't really mean to ask Wen Xichi to portray Shao Wanru. She just mentioned it.

Shao Wanru's hand, which was holding the album, paused for a moment, and then she slowly put down the album. In the last life, when she met Wen Xichi, he, a well-known gentleman in the capital city, had been in a miserable situation after suffering from a serious disease for a long time. He usually stayed in bed for recuperation. But even so, he still gave her some instructions on painting.

However, she made real progress after entering the imperial palace and being taught by Chu Liuchen, but she did not know whether he taught her in person or sent her his paintings.

She reached out to rub the part between her eyebrows and felt uncomfortable as if there was something weighing on her mind. She knew it, but she couldn't see it.

"Fifth Miss, are you tired?" Seeing Shao Wanru rub her eyebrows, Madam Ou asked with concern.

"I'm fine. I just have a headache!" Shao Wanru tried to hide her feeling.

"Fifth Miss, please go inside and have a rest!" Madam Ou said with concern. She, who had no children, had already regarded Shao Wanru as her niece after getting along well with Shao Wanru these days.

"Thank you, Madam Ou!" Shao Wanru said with a nod, picked up the album she had put down, and turned to walk to the back of the screen. The painting room was divided into two parts. The front part was for painting, and the rear part was for rest.

There was a large rattan chair by the rear window with two thick cushions on it. After Shao Wanru came over and sat down, Yujie put a cushion behind her so that she could lean against the back of the chair.

The rattan chair was large, and Shao Wanru was petite enough to nestle in the rattan chair. The sun was shining through the window, which made her feel very comfortable.

Yujie served a cup of tea on the table in front of her and then left, leaving Shao Wanru alone to rest inside.

After leafing through a few pages, she felt her eyelids became heavier and heavier and fell into a deep sleep...

Shao Wanru seemed to be in an endless dream shrouded in darkness. It started from the moment her bridal sedan chair arrived, her bridal veil was pulled off by Qi Tianyu, and then she was disdained by everyone in Jiangzhou. She began her tragic life from then on.

From then on, she became a shameless girl, who snatched her elder sister's fiancé from her elder sister, who had always doted on her. Later, the scandal between her and Qi Baiyu even intensified her image as a dissolute girl.

Then, after she moved to the capital with the Qin's Mansion, she was set up again and again so that one and another her engagements were ruined. Finally, she married into the Deputy Prime Minister's Chambers in the name of counteracting bad luck. However, she was driven out of the mansion. She was pushed into one and another dire straits and eventually got killed in a bloody scene. Throughout her life, she was set up all the time and ended up in an eternal hell...

She was so depressed that she couldn't breathe as if she were choked by something. She wanted to say something to scare the nightmare away, but she couldn't say a word.

"Zhuozhuo, Zhuozhuo..." Suddenly, she heard herself called. The bloody dream slowly faded away, and she fell into thick darkness, where there seemed to be a figure. She couldn't see it clearly and only knew that it was a man with a hat and a pair of beautiful and gloomy eyes, but she couldn't tell who it was.

She suddenly opened her eyes, only to see a pair of eyes in front of her. She looked at them in a daze, subconsciously covered them with her trembling fingers, and asked, "Who... Who are you?"

"Did you have a nightmare?" Chu Liuchen reached out to hold her slender hand and only felt that her fingers were cold. Thinking that she must have been frightened, he said in a soft voice.

Shao Wanru blinked. After a long while, she finally recognized that it was Chu Liuchen in front of her. His gentle eyes were completely different from the gloomy eyes in her dream. Sure enough, it was a just dream, not reality. At the moment, she, who had been tense just now, let her guard down, reached out to hold Chu Liuchen, and burst into tears.

Chu Liuchen froze for a moment. He didn't expect that Shao Wanru would suddenly burst into tears out of control. Thinking of what had happened recently, he raised his eyebrows, reached out to hold Shao Wanru's thin body, and asked, "Did Shao Yanru bully you?"

There was a hint of bloodthirsty coldness in his pretty eyes. He didn't mind directly sending someone to deal with Shao Yanru although she had the backing of Duke Xing's Mansion!

"No... no..." Shao Wanru said tearfully and even choked.

Chu Liuchen reached out and patted her gently on the back, asking, "Who else could it be?"

"I... I had a nightmare!" Shao Wanru said vaguely. Although she choked with sobs, she could still sense Chu Liuchen's rage. She did not want Chu Liuchen to intervene in this kind of thing.

"There, there. Don't be afraid. It's over now. What kind of nightmare can make you cry so miserably!" Hearing that she cried because of a nightmare, Chu Liuchen smiled, reached out to pat Shao Wanru's back, and comforted her. He fixed his eyes on her childish little face, thinking that she was such a child who was scared out of her wits by a nightmare.

He patted Shao Wanru's back in an increasingly soft manner.

It was very quiet in the room, except for Shao Wanru's crying and Chu Liuchen's gentle comforting from time to time.

Yujie glanced at Xiao Xuanzi, who was standing beside her, and stepped aside with disdain, because she didn't want to stand by his side. She was supposed to get in to serve her master, but she was stopped by Xiao Xuanzi, who looked weak but was actually stronger than her. At the thought of this, Yujie was really upset.

Seeing that Yujie stayed away from him, Xiao Xuanzi leaned in and said with a smile, "Take it easy. With my master around, the Fifth Miss will stop crying soon!"

He sounded so confident, as if his master did a great job in consoling others. Yujie snorted lightly, thinking Prince Chen obviously didn't look like someone good at consoling others. It was possible that he made her master cry. Originally, her master was quiet, but as soon as Prince Chen got in, her master burst into tears.

Nevertheless, Yujie was not anxious. She and the other maids Shao Wanru trusted knew very well about the relationship between Shao Wanru and Prince Chen.

#### **Chapter 756 How to Deal with Wang Yuxin?**

It became quiet in the room, and only Shao Wanru's sobs could be heard occasionally.

Shao Wanru lowered her head and blushed. After a moment of confusion, she discovered the two of them were so intimate at the moment. Chu Liuchen sat in the rattan chair, holding her, who was crying bitterly, in his arms.

When she indulged in crying just now, she didn't notice it. Now she, who had returned to herself, felt ashamed and buried her head deeply. In fact, she didn't feel like crying now and was wondering how to get out of this awkward situation.

"What's going on? Are you done with it?" Chu Liuchen looked down at Shao Wanru, who almost buried her entire face in his arms, and asked her. He was in a good mood, showed an elegant and soft smile and reached out to touch Shao Wanru's hair, which made her heart beat so fast that it almost jumped out of her throat.

With her fair and tender fingers trembling, she slowly let go of Chu Liuchen's sleeve, bit her lip embarrassedly, trying to get out of Chu Liuchen's arms. Unexpectedly, with a sudden effort, he pulled her back into his arms with his hands around her waist and asked, "Would you like to cry for a little longer?"

His teasing tone made Shao Wanru, who was too embarrassed to deal with the situation, fly into a shameful rage. She pushed him hard, raised her face, put on an indifferent look and said seriously, "Prince, let me go!"

She, who was sullen with her long eyelashes fluttering like butterfly wings, was obviously very nervous and shy, but she still tried to put on a fierce look. At the sight of this, Chu Liuchen couldn't help laughing, stretched out his other hand and gently pinched her delicate face.

Her skin was as smooth as a piece of fine jade. Seeing that she gradually blushed again, he involuntarily chuckled and reached out to pinch her little face again.

Shao Wanru reached out and pushed his hand away, and then pushed him away. She almost fell from Chu Liuchen's lap because of the rebound force. Fortunately, Chu Liuchen reached out to hold her so that she could get her footing in front of the chair.

"Sit down!" Knowing that Shao Wanru's cheeks were burning hot with a blush, Chu Liuchen pointed at another rattan chair in front of him, narrowed his eyes and said with a smile.

This rattan chair was not as big as the one he was sitting in, but suited Shao Wanru well.

Seeing that he dropped the topic, Shao Wanru sat in the rattan chair with a blush and tucked a strand of her loose hair behind her ear. She looked a little unkempt and not dignified enough. However, Chu Liuchen was increasingly pleased with her and kept looking at her up and down, causing Shao Wanru, whose face had just returned to normal, to blush again and feel burning hot all over.

She felt hot all over as if she was about to be burned.

"It's too hot over there. You can actually sit here with me. This chair is big enough for us to share!" Chu Liuchen patted the chair he was sitting in and said with a faint smile.

Shao Wanru glared at him fiercely, thinking he was so evil that although he knew why she blushed, he still suggested she sit with him.

"I'm not feeling hot!" She, ashamed and annoyed, said grumpily, while clenching the handkerchief in her hand and avoiding looking at his wickedly handsome face.

He did it on purpose!

Chu Liuchen moved and looked sideways at Shao Wanru's flushed face. Then he stood up, reached out to pull his large rattan chair towards Shao Wanru, pulled away the table between them and said impatiently, "It's quite a hindrance!"

Shao Wanru was stunned as she watched him push the table away, pull his rattan chair over and sit down beside her.

He did it so naturally and even considered the table a hindrance. What was wrong with the table, which was supposed to be placed between two chairs?

In addition to shame and annoyance, she somehow felt a trace of warmth in her heart, which eased the depressing feeling she had in the nightmare just now. At least in this moment, she felt real and that she didn't live a miserable life as she did in the nightmare.

Now she was living a real life, and what had happened in the last life was gone.

Sunlight shone in diagonally through the window. The warm sunshine in winter warmed her heart at this moment.

She moved slightly and leaned to one side. Chu Liuchen sat in such a large chair, but he still leaned towards her, which embarrassed her.

“Don’t move. It’s nice to lean against each other!” As Chu Liuchen said, he grabbed Shao Wanru’s sleeve, pulled her, who had leaned to one side to stay away from him, to his side, and said with his arm around her shoulder, “After the consort selection, I can finally come to visit you justly!”

Shao Wanru blushed and looked at him speechlessly. Well, he also knew that it was not justifiable for him to visit her now!

“Imperial Grandmother has learned this. During this period, you should live with the other candidates in the imperial palace. If the First Miss from your mansion intends to do something to hurt you, I’ll deal with her!” Chu Liuchen said with a trace of gloom across his sharp eyes.

Knowing that he was worried about her, Shao Wanru lowered her head and turned over the handkerchief in her hand. She shook her head and said, “Don’t do anything to Shao Yanru. Duke Xing’s Mansion is not simple, and nor is she. It’s not a good choice to intervene rashly. I can deal with her!”

In this life, she had seized the decisive opportunities and never been blinded by the so-called kinship.

Shao Yanru was no longer Shao Zhaoyi who was in a prominent position, and Shao Wanru was no longer the helpless female painter who could only be tortured by her after entering the imperial palace and was even set up and killed by her in the end.

Nowadays, she and Shao Yanru were almost equal in status.

She even seemed to be of nobler birth with Rui’an Great Elder Princess as her maternal grandma, and her father, the former heir of Duke Xing’s Mansion, made her identity as the lineal Miss of Duke Xing’s Mansion more justifiable.

“Well, be careful. If you can’t deal with her, just tell me. No matter who is behind her, I won’t spare her!” Chu Liuchen said with a nod in a clear and cold voice, not looking as gentle as he usually did in front of others, but this was the real side of him. How could Chu Liuchen, who was born in the imperial palace where he was threatened by growing crisis, really be an innocent teenager as handsome as someone coming out of a painting?

“I will be careful!” Shao Wanru nodded, and said after hesitating for a moment, “I heard that this matter is also related to the Xu State. It’s said that my Third Sister was hurt by a poison from the Xu State!”

She had to tell Chu Liuchen about this, lest he accidentally got involved in this matter which was supposed to be a conflict among the candidates, but now became a conflict among the officials.

What Shao Yanru said to threaten Shao Caihuan that day was not a complete exaggeration. It was not a simple thing that a tribute from the Xu State, which was supposed to be stored in the national treasury, was missing. If it was really discovered to have something to do with Duke Xing’s Mansion, Duke Xing’s Mansion would inevitably be implicated and even face an uncertain result despite its great power.

"This matter has been settled. My uncle broke into a furious rage in the main hall. A lot of officers working in the national treasury get involved in this, and Vice Minister Wang also got into trouble. Although he's not discovered to have something to do with this, it is certain that his daughter got the incense and poisoned someone with it. So he has been demoted!"

Knowing that she, who stayed in the imperial palace, was ill-informed, Chu Liuchen looked at her and said with a smile.

As they began to talk business, the blush on Shao Wanru's face faded away, and she looked natural now. If it weren't for his hand around her waist making her lean against his chest, she would have felt more at ease at this time.

Knowing that she was not strong enough to push him away, she simply let him hold her. Anyway, he had always been very domineering. She had thought so before they made their relationship clear. After they made it clear, now she found that he was not only domineering, but even fiercely protective of her.

At the thought of this, she, whose face had just returned to normal, blushed again.

"How should we deal with Wang Yuxin?" Seeing that Shao Wanru blushed again, Chu Liuchen blinked and asked in a languid tone.

"Let her go!" Shao Wanru bit her lip, suppressed the shyness in her heart, and said after thinking for a while.

Wang Yuxin was in a difficult situation now. As she got into big trouble and even implicated her father, the whole Wang's Mansion would not protect her. Even if she were to marry into a family living in a far away place, she could only marry a man who was ignorant of what she had done and much inferior to her.

In the last life, Wang Yuxin was Shao Yanru's helper. Although it was the same in this life, Shao Wanru had gotten rid of this helper early. Now Wang Yuxin's fate was in her own hands!

"Okay. Tomorrow, I will introduce her to a businessman who can be a perfect husband for her!" Chu Liuchen thought for a moment and said evilly.

"A businessman?" Shao Wanru raised her head and asked in surprise. A businessman was too humble for Wang Yuxin, who was arrogant and set her mind on being selected in the consort selection. How could she bear to end up marrying a business man?

"Exactly, but I'm afraid it's not easy to find a businessman to marry her now." Chu Liuchen said in a languid tone.

Shao Wanru blinked with a sneer and pinched her handkerchief with her fingers. She had always been a cool person who would not have any sympathy for someone who had harmed her. Wang Yuxin deserved this.

"When you are at leisure, I will take you to my mansion and pick a nice courtyard!" Chu Liuchen looked at her delicate side face and said with a playful smile. Her long eyelashes cast irregular shadows on her eyes, making her look lovely. He, who originally intended to tease her, now unconsciously looked at her with a serious look.

“Why?” Shao Wanru, who failed to understand what he meant, raised her head in astonishment, looked sideways at him and asked.

“You should pick a nice courtyard for our wedding. Since we are going to live there later, you should pick one with which you are pleased!” Chu Liuchen said.

His words made Shao Wanru blush again. She gritted her teeth secretly, thinking he didn’t feel ashamed to say that at all.

Chu Liuchen laughed in a muffled and low voice, which made him, who usually talked in a clear voice, sound a little hoarse. Nevertheless, it gave an impression that he was laughing sincerely. She was melted by his sweet smile and somehow felt a little embarrassed and annoyed.

Shao Wanru simply ignored him and turned her head to look at the bookshelf on one side. He had always been a prince who rarely showed a sincere smile. Why did he act like a completely different person now?

### **Chapter 757 The Hiding Palace Maid**

“Are you angry?” Seeing Shao Wanru turn her face away in annoyance, Chu Liuchen stopped teasing her. He reached out to touch Shao Wanru’s messy hair and spoke softly, which reminded Shao Wanru of his fat cat. Did he also pet it in this way?

“Don’t be angry. Tell me what you want. Have you gotten used to the life in the imperial palace? If you aren’t used to it, I can ask Imperial Grandmother to allow you to live in her place. There used to be candidates living with the Empress Dowager.” Chu Liuchen asked.

Knowing that he was afraid that she would have a hard time in the Chuxiu Palace, she was moved. She lowered her head, shook her head, and said, “You don’t have to trouble the Empress Dowager. I’m fine with the life in the Chuxiu Palace, which is far away from the harem. It’s not a good thing to live too close to the harem!”

The life around the Empress Dowager might not be peaceful. In particular, if she moved to live with the Empress Dowager without a proper reason, she could easily become the other candidates’ target.

“Don’t worry. Shao Yanru is now a conspicuous target, so I’m safe here!” Fearing that he was really going to ask the Empress Dowager to help her, Shao Wanru added worriedly.

She said with great certainty and delight in her watery eyes. There were rules of survival in the harem, and it was the same in the imperial court. If he rashly intervened in the affairs of the harem, he could get into trouble easily.

She didn’t know what had happened to Chu Liuchen in the last life, but the bloodstained steps and plenty of dead women lying on them in her memory, all indicated the horrifying situation at that time. Who was he fighting against at that time? It seemed that he had no opponent at that time because no one was a match for him.

As the crown prince in charge of affairs of state when the emperor was seriously ill, he had almost inherited the throne. Those qualified to fight for the throne with him were dead or injured or weak. No one could compete with him. But why was there such a scene in her memory?

Besides, there was one more thing that she didn't understand. In that case, why did Chu Liuyue, who was busy enough with his own affairs, killed her at all costs as Shao Yanru told him? Could he get any benefit from her death?

"Well, if there's any problem you can't deal with, just tell me. I have my own way to deal with it!" Hearing Shao Wanru's words, Chu Liuchen said with a smile and nodded. He glanced at Shao Wanru's messy hair and said, "Tell Yujie to comb your hair. It's a little messy!"

After finishing his words, he naturally touched her hair again and then leaned over to her. She could almost feel his warm breath as she heard him say, "The consort selection won't last too long. How about I help you comb your hair after it ends?"

"Your highness!" As Shao Wanru said, she involuntarily blushed and tried hard to throw her head back to avoid looking at his face. Comb her hair? How could he think of such a thing? As Prince Chen, did he really want to do such a thing?

"Your Highness, why are you here?" She changed the topic with a blush. She had never seen such a wicked person in her two lives.

Sometimes he was as handsome and gentle as an immortal, sometimes acting like an evil and enchanting playboy, and he dared to say whatever he wanted!

Chu Liuchen saw that she blushed like a piece of slightly flawed jade, pursed her thin lips tightly, and tried hard to put on a dignified look. However, her charming look and watery eyes made him feel protective toward her.

He was amused by her, who was obviously shy and uneasy but still tried hard to put on a composed look.

Of course, Chu Liuchen knew that if he laughed at this time, she would inevitably turn angry from embarrassment, so he pretended not to notice her forced calmness and said, "I happened to come here to look for an album!"

"Where is Madam Ou?" Shao Wanru asked, listening carefully, but didn't hear any sound from Madam Ou, who was supposed to be here at this moment.

"Maybe she happened to go out for some business when I came here!" Chu Liuchen said casually. Of course, he would not tell her that he deliberately drew the female painter away. "Why didn't you come to visit me when you were at leisure? My place has always been idle with a much better view than that of here!" Chu Liuchen said.

"Well, I'll visit you when I have time!" Seeing Chu Liuchen fix his burning eyes on her face, Shao Wanru lowered her head and said in embarrassment. She somehow felt her heart beat so fast that it almost got out of her control. Clenching the handkerchief in her hand with more strength, she said, "With so many people in the imperial palace, I'm afraid that my visit will be discovered and spread!"

"If your visit is discovered, so what? You are only one step away from being my wife. It doesn't matter even if your visit is discovered. Of course, if you have scruple, I can come up with a way to enable you to meet me without arousing suspicion!" Chu Liuchen said with a smile.



"What is it?" Shao Wanru asked curiously.

Shao Wanru didn't expect that before she could adopt the method Chu Liuchen mentioned to tease her, Shao Yanru really adopted it.

Chu Liuchen left after talking with Shao Wanru for a while, and Shao Wanru sat down again so that Yujie could help her comb her messy hair and adjust her clothes. When Madam Ou came back, Shao Wanru was sitting there quietly and reading an album.

After Madam Ou apologized to Shao Wanru for her leaving just now, the two of them made comments on some paintings. Then Shao Wanru came back from Madam Ou's place.

Just as Shao Wanru and Yujie arrived at the palace gate, they saw a figure flash. Yujie took a few steps forward and quickly caught the person.

It turned out to be the palace maid Han Dan.

"Why did you run away at the sight of me?" Shao Wanru looked the palace maid up and down and asked.

"I... I didn't see you, Fifth Miss..." Han Dan stammered.

"Do you think we are blind and didn't see that you hid here deliberately?" Yujie, who was so angry that she was about to laugh, took Han Dan's hand, pointed to the place where Han Dan had hidden before, and said.

Shao Wanru looked at Han Dan composedly and said, "You keep an eye on the moves of the candidates in the imperial palace and follow them. If it's reported to the Nanny in charge, you will land yourself in serious trouble!"

"Fifth Miss Shao, I didn't do that indeed. I was just working and didn't notice that you were coming!" Han Dan denied it and knelt down in front of Shao Wanru, looking very pitiful.

Seeing this, a candidate, who walked past them, stopped and looked at Shao Wanru in astonishment.

Shao Wanru sneered in her heart, thinking this palace maid was indeed not simple. Her kneeling with a pitiful look gave an impression that she was weak, while Shao Wanru was bullying her.

No Miss dared to act presumptuously in the Imperial Palace, no matter which mansion they were from. Wang Yuxin's being driven out of the Imperial Palace was a warning for the other candidates. So the palace maid was sure that Shao Wanru couldn't do anything to her.

"Get up! You can deny it. But if my Eldest Sister learns that you also bore witness that day, I'm wondering if she will still want you to work for her!"

Shao Wanru calmly glanced at the trembling and extremely pitiful palace maid and said in a low voice. Then she picked up the hem of her dress and walked inside with satisfaction when she saw the palace maid open her eyes wide in shock.

The palace maid was left alone.

At the sight of this, the candidate, who passed by, did not know what was going on. Glancing at the palace maid, who knelt on the ground with a pale face, and then glancing at Shao Wanru, who left leisurely, she shook her head, ignored this and walked out.

It was just the business of a palace maid. Besides, the Fifth Miss Shao didn't do anything to the palace maid. So it was nothing serious.

After the candidate left, Han Dan, who was kneeling on the ground, suddenly came to her senses. She hurriedly got up and chased after Shao Wanru. When she caught up with Shao Wanru, she lowered her voice and said, "Fifth Miss, please wait."

"Is there anything else you want to say?" As Shao Wanru said, she stopped but did not turn around. However, Yujie turned her head and glared at Han Dan with dissatisfaction.

"Fifth Miss... it's... it's the First Miss who sent me to see if you've come back!" Han Dan, who did not dare to hide anything, answered. If the Fifth Miss told the First Miss Shao that she had testified that the First Miss Shao acted in a sneaky way and conspired with her maid, she would definitely get into trouble.

The First Miss Shao was not easy to deal with, while the Fifth Miss Shao was even more difficult to deal with.

At this time, Han Dan regretted her effort to gain an advantage from both of them. She had thought that they were both kind and had a promising future. Unexpectedly, she misjudged them, neither of whom was a woman to be trifled with, but now she had to take the path she chose with no opportunity to turn around.

"What happened to my Eldest Sister?" With her long eyelashes fluttering like butterfly wings, Shao Wanru asked slowly. It was impossible for someone as cautious as Shao Yanru to do such a thing, unless she could gain great benefit from it.

"Prince Yue... is... at the First Miss's place!" Han Dan gritted her teeth and had to tell the truth. If she failed to stall the Fifth Miss Shao, the Fifth Miss Shao would definitely see it after returning.

"Why is Prince Yue here?" Shao Wanru had to ask, as she found it strange after thinking about it carefully.

The Chuxiu Palace was the place where the consort selection was held. Before the consort selection ended, the princes should avoid coming here so as not to arouse suspicion. No one knew who the candidates were going to marry. They could marry one of the princes or even be an imperial concubine.

In this case, it was inappropriate for any prince to come here before the final decision was made. Chu Liuyue's visit was very strange.

"When the First Miss Shao went out in the afternoon, she fell from the rockery. Prince Yue, who happened to pass by, saved the First Miss Shao and sent for an imperial physician to treat her. At this time, Prince Yue is still in the First Miss Shao's room!" Since Han Dan had brought it up, of course, she would not hide anything and said truthfully.

Shao Wanru was stunned at first, and then burst into laughter. Chu Liuyue took an approach similar to that of Chu Liuchen. They were indeed brothers, who came up with so similar approaches.

Of course, Chu Liuchen just said that to tease her at that time, but Chu Liuyue was so anxious that he immediately took this approach to come to Shao Yanru's side. It seemed that he was here to support Shao Yanru.

It was not easy for them to come up with this idea. Shao Yanru pretended to fall from the rockery and happened to meet Prince Yue, and then the two of them got into a relationship. It had always been easy for a hero to win a beauty's favor by saving her. What was more, he saved such a fascinating beauty.

"Let's go and see my Eldest Sister!" Shao Wanru stepped forward, blinked, and said with a smile. She would like to see what the two of them were going to do in collusion this time

She knew that Shao Yanru would not accept her fate without doing anything!

### **Chapter 758 We've Met Several Times, Your Highness!**

Shao Wanru had to pass through Shao Yanru's room before entering her room.

When they arrived at the door of Shao Yanru's room, a little eunuch came out in a hurry and almost bumped into Shao Wanru. Yujie pulled her to take a step back so that the little eunuch didn't bump into her.

The little eunuch didn't expect to come across someone here. After freezing for a moment, he suddenly bowed to Shao Wanru and asked with a smile, "Is this the Fifth Miss Shao from Duke Xing's Mansion?"

"Exactly!" Yujie said.

Shao Wanru looked the little eunuch up and down, wondering if the little eunuch unfamiliar to her was sent by Chu Liuyue. Now that he sent a little eunuch here, did it indicate that he thought highly of Shao Yanru?

"Fifth Miss, my master wants to ask you something about the First Miss Shao. Fifth Miss, please follow me!" The little eunuch said with a smile. It seemed that he came out to lead Shao Wanru to meet Chu Liuyue rather than to fetch the ointment.

Shao Yanru, who was lying on the bed in the inner room, clenched a corner of her quilt in hatred with her face changing dramatically. The palace maid, who had submitted herself to her, was so useless that she failed to stall Shao Wanru and let her come over.

She winked at Shuqi, who was standing on one side. Shuqi glanced at her hesitantly and then at the imperial physician who was sitting in the chair beside the bed and feeling her pulse. If Shuqi also went out, Shao Yanru would be left alone with the imperial physician in the room, who was a man anyway despite his old age!

Seeing that Shuqi was hesitant and kept glancing at the old imperial physician, Shao Yanru realized what Shuqi was thinking. She took a deep breath and waved her other hand slightly as a hint that Shuqi didn't need to go out. It was indeed inappropriate for Shuqi to go out at this time, but she was eager to know what Chu Liuyue and Shao Wanru were talking about.

"Imperial physician, how is my condition?" Shao Yanru asked.

The imperial physician put down his hand and said slowly in a low voice, "It should be fine, but you might have sprained your ankle, so you should be careful these days."

In fact, there was nothing serious with her. Just now, the imperial physician had treated her. However, Prince Yue thought that everything about the candidates should be taken seriously, especially not long after a candidate was poisoned and disfigured. Shao Yanru's getting hurt might cause other trouble, so the imperial physician had better take it seriously.

As such, the imperial physician had to come over to feel the First Miss Shao's pulse for the second time. In order to show he attached great importance to it, he specially sent the little eunuch following Prince Yue here to the Imperial Institute of Medicine to fetch the ointment for treating the First Miss Shao's sprained ankle.

It was the First Miss Shao's maid who said that the First Miss Shao had sprained her ankle but was not seriously injured. In this case, it was more appropriate to let the First Miss Shao's maid apply the ointment to her ankle. In the course of feeling her pulse, the imperial physician found her pulse condition was very peaceful and she seemed to be fine except for palpitation caused by being frightened.

"Thank you, imperial physician!" Shao Yanru thanked him softly.

"First Miss Shao, you're over courteous!" The imperial physician said with an amiable smile and narrowed eyes.

"Let me walk you out!" As Shuqi said, she came over and deftly helped the imperial physician pack up the medicine chest on the table.

Shao Yanru closed her eyes slightly in approval, only glancing at the imperial physician in front of her through her narrowed eyes and frowning unconsciously. The situation was a little different from what she had expected.

Shouldn't Prince Yue stay in front of her bed at this time? Why did he stay away from her and only leave a little eunuch behind to act on her instructions? When the little eunuch met Shao Wanru, he even led Shao Wanru to meet Chu Liuyue. If it weren't for Chu Liuyue's instruction, the little eunuch would never have done that.

She had thought that Chu Liuyue probably didn't stay in her room for fear of tarnishing her reputation. She had sent Shuqi to check it out, and Shuqi found that Chu Liuyue was standing in a pavilion not far from her room and seemed to be worried about her. After the imperial physician took her pulse, he asked the imperial physician to feel her pulse again, which convinced Shao Yanru that Chu Liuyue really cared about her.

But why did he invite Shao Wanru over? She somehow felt threatened. It was not convenient for her to go out, so she sent Shuqi out.

After packing up the medicine chest, Shuqi drew a bulging pouch from her sleeve, handed it to the imperial physician, and said, "Thank you for making this visit. We may have to trouble you again in the future!"

The imperial physician accepted it with a smile, and then picked up his medicine chest and walked out, accompanied by Shuqi.

The little eunuch and Shao Wanru were not at the entrance at the moment. When they walked past the corridor, Shuqi looked at the pavilion where Prince Yue had been. Sure enough, she saw the Fifth Miss standing there and bowing to Prince Yue.

At the sight of this, she stopped, wondering why Prince Yue wanted to meet the Fifth Miss.

The imperial physician also stopped in the corridor. Glancing at the maid, who came out in the name of walking him out, and glancing calmly at Prince Yue, who was in the pavilion, he turned to leave quietly.

He had thought that the First Miss Shao was a well-behaved lady, but it turned out that she tried to spy on Prince Yue. The First Miss Shao didn't deserve her good reputation and now even seemed to have an ulterior motive.

Other people in the imperial palace were not clear about the case related to the mixed poison from the Xu State, but several imperial physicians in the Imperial Institute of Medicine were very clear about it. The First Miss Shao was involved in the case. The victim was said to be the Third Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion. Now the Miss invited over by Prince Yue should be the Fifth Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion!

The imperial physician shook his head and adjusted the medicine chest on his back, thinking the First Miss Shao of Duke Xing's Mansion was so narrow-minded that she even poisoned her sister. Was there anyone she didn't dare to hurt?

She was not trustworthy!

Shao Yanru did not expect that a slight negligence today would bring her trouble caused by the imperial physician's distrust of her.

Chu Liuyue stood in the pavilion with his hands clasped behind his back, staring at Shao Wanru with a scrutinizing look in his bright and cold eyes.

After bowing deeply to him, Shao Wanru, who followed the little eunuch over, lowered her head and stood aside.

A gust of wind blew over, lifting her loose overall, which brought out her slender figure. Although she was dressed in thick winter clothes, he could see her graceful figure.

Chu Liuyue's eyes became deep.

"Fifth Miss, do you still remember me?" Chu Liuyue asked. He, who had a clearly defined face, exuded naturally cold and intimidating air.

Such a person gave a sense of righteousness as if he would not do anything shady behind the scenes. But in fact, not only had he done shady things, but he also had colluded with Shao Yanru to carry out plenty of plots.

In the end, he even gave an order to kill her.

She took a deep breath, and the cold air came into her nose and suppressed the bloody smell in her throat. It made her clearly realize who she was and who the person in front of her was at the moment. Now she was no longer the humble painter Chu Liuyue could deal with as he wanted!

“Your Highness, we have met several times!” Shao Wanru said respectfully. She didn’t raise her head and just stared at the bluestone ground under her feet.

Although she acted respectfully, she spoke coldly, not acting like those Misses from aristocratic families who became shy at the sight of him. Chu Liuyue frowned and felt a little displeased.

Besides, he was quite displeased with her reply, which made him sound like the one who tried to hit on her.

“Fifth Miss, when we first met in Jiangzhou, you were still young. Unexpectedly, you’ve grown up now.” Chu Liuyue said slowly. Despite his cold tone, he showed a little gentleness, which made him different from the cool man he usually was.

He fixed his eyes on Shao Wanru’s beautiful hair worn up in a simple bun fixed by nothing other than a very simple pearl hairpin.

She lowered her brows in an extremely respectful and graceful manner. At the thought that as a girl as ravishing as a flower, she had such a temperament, he admired her even more, while feeling like to see the real side of this gentle and respectful girl. It was rare to see a girl of the hairpin age with such a temperament!

In fact, he needed this kind of girl, who could remain stable at any time, to be the mistress of his mansion. In the past, Chu Liuyue had always thought Shao Yanru an extremely stable Miss and appreciated her a lot. However, the Fifth Miss Shao in front of him looked even steadier, although she was obviously younger than Shao Yanru.

“Your Highness, I was not sensible at that time in Jiangzhou and must have offended you!” Shao Wanru answered in a rigid manner.

“After we parted in Jiangzhou, it has been three years. If I could foresee that you would attend the consort selection, I should have made friends with you at that time!” Chu Liuyue softened his tone.

It seemed that he said that openly without suggesting any love affair. But if others heard it, they would definitely doubt whether there was a love affair between them at that time, so that Prince Yue said that in such a regretful voice.

“No one could foresee the future back then, and it’s the same now. Your Highness, if you’ll excuse me, I’m going to see my Eldest Sister. I heard that she fell, and I’m wondering how she is!”

Shao Wanru raised her head and said with a smile. After she finished speaking, she bowed sideways and turned to leave.

Her treating him without proper respect made her completely different from the respectful girl she had been a moment ago. Chu Liuyue looked at Shao Wanru in surprise, as he didn’t expect that Shao Wanru would dare to do so. Did she know who she was talking to?

"Fifth Miss Shao, aren't you going to ask how the First Miss Shao fell?" As an idea came into his mind, he blurted it out with a faint smile on his cold face.

He thought that Shao Wanru was not only exceedingly beautiful but also interesting.

After saying that, he turned to walk up to Shao Wanru in a few steps and blocked her way.

There was only a narrow exit in the small pavilion, and Chu Liuyue stood at the exit of the pavilion. If Shao Wanru wanted to leave, she had to squeeze past him, which certainly was very indecent.

Shao Wanru pulled herself together and raised her head slowly. Originally, she didn't want to have any contact with Chu Liuyue, who killed her directly in the last life. However, she couldn't afford to offend him now, so she naturally didn't intend to offend him at this time. But now Chu Liuyue obviously didn't intend to let her go.

She didn't know whether it was Chu Liuyue's or Shao Yanru's idea, but in any case, since he wouldn't let her go, she decided to stay and see what he was up to!

"Your Highness, since you know it, can you tell me what happened to my Eldest Sister?" Shao Wanru stepped back slowly with a pleasant smile and said.

Under the corridor, when Shuqi saw Chu Liuyue prevent Shao Wanru from leaving the pavilion, she hurriedly turned to get in the room with her face changing dramatically. However, as soon as she entered the room, she saw a person under the window and almost screamed in fear!

### **Chapter 759 Fail to Continue the Conversation!**

"Shut up!" Shao Yanru said in an icy voice.

Shuqi hurriedly shut her mouth, pulled herself together, closed the door, and walked up to the window.

A corner of the gauze curtain in front of the window was lifted. The window was facing the corridor outside and the pavilion where Prince Yue was.

"Miss, Prince Yue stopped the Fifth Miss and didn't let her go!" Shuqi came up to Shao Yanru, who was standing in front of the window and lifting the curtain to peek at Chu Liuyue and Shao Wanru, and reported in a low voice.

Shao Yanru got furious with her face as gloomy as the peaceful sky before a storm. She stood motionlessly in front of the window and stared quietly at the pavilion outside the window.

In the pavilion, Shao Wanru was delicate and gorgeous, while Chu Liuyue was handsome and noble. They were both charming, looking like a perfect couple. But Shao Yanru stared at them with her eyes full of resentment.

Prince Yue was the perfect candidate for her husband she had chosen since she was a child. How dare Shao Wanru try to steal him from her? She would definitely make the b\*tch die a terrible death!

She clenched a corner of the gauze curtain, staring coldly at the pavilion.

Seeing her face darken, Shuqi did not dare to say anything else. She stood behind her and looked through the raised curtain, even breathing cautiously.

As Shao Yanru's principal maid, Shuqi was certainly clear about Shao Yanru's intention. Prince Yue, about whom the First Miss cared the most, had an unusual relationship with the Fifth Miss. It was reasonable for the First Miss to get furious at this time.

In the pavilion

Shao Wanru was extremely composed, and her watery eyes looked particularly gentle as if there were limpid ripples in them.

She was such a girl close to the hairpin age who exuded a sort of indescribable charm even when standing gracefully in front of others. Her bright red lips attracted others' attention easily.

She had a perfect-shaped bulge in the middle of her upper lip, which was quite tempting.

Although she asked about Shao Yanru and seemed to be concerned about her, she did that after being stopped by him. It could be seen that she didn't want to ask nor talk to him at first.

It upset Chu Liuyue. He fixed his eyes on her face again. When he first met her in the imperial palace after the three years she had spent in the Yuhui Nunnery, he was amazed at her beauty. He didn't expect that it was her, the little girl he happened to see in Jiangzhou when she jumped over the wall.

She had grown up into such a beauty several years later!

"Your Highness, can you tell me what happened to my Eldest Sister?" Shao Wanru said impatiently, tilting her head slightly to dodge Chu Liuyue's eyes.

"Not long after I came out of the Empress's palace, I met the First Miss Shao at the rockery. The First Miss Shao probably wanted to bow to me, but she didn't expect that she would miss her step and fall. I've sent for an imperial physician after bringing her here, and the imperial physician just said that there was nothing serious with her," Chu Liuyue coughed in a low voice and said.

"Thank you, Your Highness!" Shao Wanru bowed sideways to him and said. Despite the conflict between Shao Yanru and her, in the eyes of outsiders, they, who were both legitimate daughters of Duke Xing's Mansion, were families anyway.

But she didn't understand what Chu Liuyue meant.

Did he suggest that Shao Yanru tried to hook up with him, but he had nothing to do with Shao Yanru? However, did it have anything to do with her whether there was any relationship between the two of them?

What was more, others didn't know the relationship between them, but she was clear about it. In the last life, even if Shao Yanru married into the imperial palace as Chu Liuyue's step-mother, they still had an affair.

"Fifth Miss Shao, I heard that you also got involved in the Third Miss Shao's case. Is that true?" Chu Liuyue asked in displeasure.

Shao Wanru looked up at him speechlessly, wondering if he was trying to drop the former topic after realizing her unwillingness to talk with him.



But since he decided to drop the former topic, what was the point of his talking about something else?

She glanced over Shao Yanru's room. The door of the room was closed tightly, and there seemed to be no one inside. However, Shao Wanru knew clearly that Shao Yanru was inside. Shao Yanru probably had lost her head so that she closed the door to cover up her act!

Was it because of Chu Liuyue?

Thinking of this, Shao Wanru found this was the case. In the last life, the two of them had acted in close collusion, which indicated their close relationship. Now, Chu Liuyue suggested that Shao Yanru tried to hook up with him. Even if Shao Yanru could not hear the conversation between Chu Liuyue and her, she must have seen Chu Liuyue prevent her from leaving here.

Noticing a corner of the gauze curtain was slightly lifted, Shao Wanru showed a mocking smile, thinking Shao Yanru was running of patience.

It was a good thing to make Shao Yanru lose her composure, but she really didn't want to stay here and continue the conversation with Chu Liuyue. Every time she saw Chu Liuyue, it reminded her of her tragic death in the last life and made it difficult for her to calm down.

Maybe it would take a while for her to hide her resentment. But now, she really couldn't calm down.

"Actually, I don't know the whole story either. Your Highness, I want to go to see my Eldest Sister first. She has closed the door and might be mad at me now!"

Shao Wanru pointed to the door of Shao Yanru's room as she spoke.

Chu Liuyue turned his eyes. When he saw Shao Yanru's tightly closed door, a trace of displeasure rose in his heart. Like Shao Wanru, he knew Shao Yanru's character very well. How could she, who had always been very composed, act so pettily?

Glancing at the half-lifted curtain, he frowned silently. Shao Yanru behaved improperly now. This time, she deliberately fell in front of him, and now she even closed the door and peeked at him through the window pettily.

After thinking for a while, he leaned to one side to get out of Shao Wanru's way and said, "Fifth Miss, go and see the First Miss. I happen to be going with you."

After that, he turned around and walked out.

The two of them took the same path, so Shao Wanru had no choice but to follow him. They arrived at Shao Yanru's door one after the other.

The little eunuch went to knock on the door that was left unlocked. After that, they heard footsteps come from inside. The maid Shuqi hurriedly appeared at the door, acting as if she had just come out.

"Greetings, Your Highness. Greetings, Fifth Miss." Seeing them at the door, Shuqi hurriedly bowed to them and said with her head down.

Even so, they still noticed the panic on Shuqi's face.

"How is the First Miss?" Chu Liuyue asked.

"The First Miss... might have sprained her ankle. The imperial physician just said..." Shuqi hesitated for a moment, seeming to have no idea what to say. She was obviously suggesting that something was wrong with Shao Yanru.

Shao Wanru stood behind Chu Liuyue composedly, intending to wait quietly and see what they were going to do.

Chu Liuyue frowned and said, "If she still feels uncomfortable, go and ask the imperial physician to come again."

"Yes, Your Highness. My master asked me to express her gratitude towards you. If you hadn't happened to pass by, she wouldn't have been able to receive good treatment in time. The imperial physician said that if my master received a treatment a little later, her injury would go worse," Shuqi bowed again respectfully and said gratefully.

"Don't mention it!" Chu Liuyue said and turned around, and Shao Wanru gave way to him.

"Fifth Miss, please take care of the First Miss!" Chu Liuyue said.

Shao Wanru didn't answer, bowed sideways, and then stood with her head down, failing to continue the conversation.

Chu Liuyue frowned again. The girl in front of him seemed to be very meek, but also a little too stupid to continue the conversation.

Every Miss from an aristocratic family came up to hit on him shyly as soon as they met him. Even if they had nothing to talk about, they would bring up some topics. What was more, he tried to offer some topics, but Shao Wanru just couldn't continue the conversation.

Chu Liuyue lowered his eyes slightly and said with a straight face, "Fifth Miss, I have to trouble you to help me find out if the First Miss was set up by someone. Every time the candidates enter the imperial palace to participate in the consort selection, there will always be various accidents. Some candidates, who are very likely to be selected, could fail because of this!"

Chu Liuyue said with his usual prestige on his cold face. Not to mention the Misses from aristocratic families living in the backyard, even the officials in the imperial court did not dare to offend him, who was considered the most prestigious prince, at this time.

However, it seemed that the Fifth Miss Shao in front of him neither took a fancy to him nor was afraid of him!

Shao Wanru smiled, raised her calm and gentle eyes slightly and said, "Your Highness, I'm afraid you have to trouble the Nanny in charge to find out why my Eldest Sister showed up there, whether there was any palace maid sending messages secretly for someone, why my Eldest Sister was set up, and who could benefit most from it."

She said unhurriedly with assurance, neither flattering nor humble, as if she was just talking about a common thing and didn't grasp Chu Liuyue's implied meaning.

Chu Liuyue frowned more tightly, for he didn't like this kind of feeling. He glanced at her little face as gorgeous as a blooming flower, thinking he was just amazed at her beauty when he first met her in the imperial palace. He did have a crush on her, but it definitely couldn't compare with his grand ambition.

But he found it unpleasant to be ignored and even despised by her!

He stared at Shao Wanru with deep eyes. Seeing that there was no trace of shyness on her face, he couldn't help feeling upset, turned around with a snort, and strode away.

The little eunuch bowed to Shao Wanru with joined hands and followed him in a hurry.

As Chu Liuyue's personal eunuch, he could sense that Chu Liuyue, who had always been aloof, seemed to take a little different attitude towards the Fifth Miss Shao. Therefore, he did not dare to treat the Fifth Miss Shao lightly.

"Shuqi, how is my Eldest Sister?" As Shao Wanru walked in, she asked Shuqi, who froze there.

"Ah... Oh, the First Miss is inside!" Shuqi said. Looking outside and finding that Prince Yue had strode away, she could only turn back and follow Shao Wanru inside.

The First Miss actually wanted Prince Yue to come in and wanted to have a private conversation with him. But now Prince Yue had left, and Shuqi dared not stop him!

In the room, Shao Yanru sat on the bed with a livid face. She heard their conversation clearly. When she saw Chu Liuyue come over, she went back to the inner room in excitement and lay down. Unexpectedly, Chu Liuyue just asked about her condition, but he didn't come in. Now she had racked her brains in vain.

"Eldest Sister, are you all right now?" After coming in, Shao Wanru looked at Shao Yanru and asked flatly. She was at least one foot away from the bed.

Shao Wanru just couldn't be bothered to pretend to be a good sister when there was no one else around!

### **Chapter 760 Jealousy! Jealousy Drives Her Crazy!**

Shao Yanru calmed herself down and gritted her teeth secretly. However, she forced a smile, leaned forward, and said softly, "Thank you, Fifth Sister. I'm fine now!"

Seeing Shao Yanru's face get tense from smiling, Shao Wanru suddenly showed a smile that was inexplicably dazzling and disagreeable in Shao Yanru's eyes. She even sensed a trace of shyness in Shao Wanru's smile which made Shao Wanru look like those Misses from aristocratic families who would like to talk about Chu Liuyue but refrained.

In the past, when she saw this kind of Misses, she was extremely disdainful of them and even considered herself superior to them. Chu Liuyue was an unattainable dream to them, but he was very close to her. As long as she nodded her approval, she could marry Chu Liuyue.

But at the sight of Shao Wanru's smile at the moment, she almost failed to maintain her stiff smile.

"Fifth Sister, you seem to be joyful?" She involuntarily blurted it out, "It's hard to say who will be chosen by Prince Yue and marry into Prince Yue's Mansion in the end. Don't you think it's too early to feel joyful now?"

"Eldest Sister, why do you say that? I'm glad to know you're fine. But why do you talk about this? Prince Yue's Mansion? Are you so eager to marry into Prince Yue's Mansion?" Shao Wanru raised her eyebrows and said provocatively.

Shao Yanru, who failed to maintain her composure, pulled a corner of her quilt and said sullenly, "Fifth Sister, what are you talking about? We are here to attend the consort selection. We can't decide whether we will be selected nor whom we are going to marry. What do you mean by saying this? Have you forgotten the instructions for unmarried girls?"

Shao Wanru sneered in her heart. Shao Yanru was so angry from the embarrassment that she just wanted to suppress her and said those words without thinking. "What you said sounds weird. It was you who mentioned which of us would marry into Prince Yue's Mansion. Since it's neither something we can decide nor something we can talk about, why did you say that?" Shao Wanru said unhurriedly.

"You..." Shao Yanru said in rage and wanted to point at Shao Wanru, but she was interrupted by Shao Wanru, "Eldest Sister, we both know what has happened between us. Why bother to pretend to be close sisters? Third Sister, who tried to maintain a good relationship with you, ended up being poisoned. If I do the same thing, who knows what will happen to me! If you'll excuse me, I'm going back."

After that, she turned around and was about to leave.

Overwhelmed by rage, Shao Yanru picked up a cushion beside her and threw it at Shao Wanru, while saying with hatred, "Shao Wanru, you are also a Miss of our Duke Xing's Mansion. How can you say something like that? Why did you blame me for Third Sister's being poisoned? I didn't know what happened nor that someone intended to set us up!"

Even at this time, Shao Yanru was still very cautious and didn't reveal anything about that matter.

Yujie grabbed the cushion thrown at them, glanced coldly at Shao Yanru, who was lying on the bed, and pursed her lips tightly. If it were not for her master's prohibition, she would have even thrown the cushion back.

Shao Wanru smiled slightly and said, "Eldest Sister, you were supposed to trap me, weren't you? I heard that His Majesty has been making a secret investigation. Ordinary people have no access to the mixed poison from the Xu State. Vice Minister Wang may not be able to keep the secret!"

The angrier Shao Yanru was, the calmer she was.

Although Shao Caihuan's case didn't ruin Shao Yanru's reputation, it was enough to make her the focus of attention. Moreover, her gentleness and refined manners were not the reason for the attention she drew as usual.

It became a thorn in Shao Yanru's flesh which was hard to pull out. Thinking of this, she got increasingly upset and lost her mind.

Shao Wanru left after finishing her words, leaving Shao Yanru, who was panting heavily on the bed, alone.

After Shao Wanru left, Shao Yanru became increasingly sullen. She gnashed her teeth with hatred and suddenly waved her hand. All the tea cups and the teapot on the table beside the bed fell to the ground with a loud cracking sound.

Shuqi dropped to her knees in fear.

It was strangely quiet in the room. With her forehead covered with cold sweat, Shuqi thought it had been a long time since the First Miss got so furious!

“Shao Wanru... I will definitely make her end up in the dirtiest and most indecent place!” Shao Yanru said through clenched teeth, and her voice sounded particularly clear in the quiet room.

Sensing the profound hatred in her voice, Shuqi, who was kneeling on the ground, shivered unconsciously, prostrated herself, and did not dare to move.

After a long while, she heard the voice of Shao Yanru, who had calmed herself down again. “Go to find Prince Yue now and ask him why he didn’t come in just now.”

She was in a difficult situation in the Chuxiu Palace now. The few Misses, who had been her friends, were on guard every time they met her, which put her in a very passive position. That was the reason why she did this today.

She didn’t expect that Chu Liuyue would avoid staying with her alone. After instructing someone and Shuqi to bring her back, he just waited in the pavilion outside the door. The more unexpected thing was that Chu Liuyue blocked Shao Wanru’s way. They had no connection at all. Why did Chu Liuyue stop Shao Wanru?

Thinking of Shao Wanru’s delicate and gorgeous face, Shao Yanru felt so jealous that she could not swallow her hatred for Shao Wanru.

Since when did Chu Liuyue have connections with Shao Wanru? What did they say in the pavilion just now? Why did Chu Liuyue, who had always been calm, stop Shao Wanru? Why did he avoid staying with her alone while staying with Shao Wanru alone? Could it be that he took a fancy to Shao Wanru?

Thinking of this, Shao Yanru became sullen. Chu Liuyue was the perfect candidate for her husband. Compared with Chu Liuzhou, the legitimate son of the Empress, she liked Chu Liuyue more.

Stealing a glance at Shao Yanru’s gloomy face, Shuqi did not dare to say anything else and hurried out. In fact, Shao Yanru should neither get so furious at this time nor send her to chase Prince Yue. Not to mention that Prince Yue might have left the Chuxiu Palace at this time, even if she caught up with him, he was unlikely to come back because of Shao Yanru’s words.

With so many people in the imperial palace, if it was discovered that Shao Yanru sent her maid to chase Prince Yue, it would give an impression that Shao Yanru wanted to attach herself to Prince Yue. However, Shao Yanru also had a close relationship with Prince Zhou. If Shao Yanru exposed her close relationship with Prince Yue, it would mess things up!

However, Shuqi did not dare to persuade her master to drop the idea. Her master was obviously so furious that she even wanted to kill the Fifth Miss. Her master, who was obviously not to be trifled with, nursed a profound hatred in her heart at this moment. If her master took it out on her, she would not be able to bear it, so she could only accept her master's instruction without a murmur.

As Shuqi chased Prince Yue in a hurry, she didn't notice that Shao Wanru and her maid were watching her at the door of the inner room.

"Miss, Shuqi goes out to chase Prince Yue as expected!" Yujie said. Judging from Shuqi's anxious and flurried look, she could tell Shuqi was obviously going after someone.

Shao Wanru nodded slightly.

"Even if she goes after Prince Yue now, he has already left. Could she make Prince Yue come back?" Yujie asked curiously. She really felt strange. It was useless for Shuqi to go after Prince Yue in such a hurry, and it might even annoy him.

She saw clearly that Prince Yue obviously didn't want to be associated with the First Miss. He didn't even enter the room and acted more like a stranger.

Although Prince Yue seemed to be very affectionate to the First Miss when talking about her and asked Shao Wanru to take care of her, only Shao Wanru, Yujie and Shuqi, the First Miss's maid, had heard his words besides the eunuch following him, and none of them would spread what they had heard.

Now there were plenty of people seeing Shuqi go after Prince Yue.

"Shao Yanru is panic-stricken!" Shao Wanru said with a smile, turned around, and walked slowly into the room.

Shao Yanru panicked because of being isolated by the other candidates, so she wanted to take advantage of Chu Liuyue's power. However, Chu Liuyue's unwillingness to support her and what Shao Wanru said made Shao Yanru feel threatened so that she was eager to attach herself to Chu Liuyue.

Overwhelmed by these negative emotions, Shao Yanru would take missteps successively. Shao Wanru thought she should give another push at this time. After Shao Caihuan was poisoned, Shao Yanru did not dare to deal with her for the time being.

If the other two Misses of Duke Xing's Mansion got into trouble one after the other, and both cases seemed to have something to do with Shao Yanru, she wouldn't be able to absolve herself from the blame, but Chu Liuyue was in a different situation...

As Shao Wanru thought, she stopped, suddenly smiled cunningly, turned around and suggested, "Let's go out for a walk!"

After saying that, she went out. Yujie followed her with a confused look back to the pavilion where they had been just now.

The pavilion was diagonally opposite Shao Yanru's room and should be facing Shao Caihuan's room. At this time, the sun was sinking in the west, and the sky was full of splendid clouds.

The pavilion was in a good location with one side against the wall and the other side next to a rockery, which kept out the wind and allowed the sunlight to shine into the pavilion. It was a good place to spend some time in winter.

Shao Wanru had never been to this pavilion before today. At this time, she narrowed her eyes to glance at the clouds in the western sky and then asked Yujie to fetch a cushion. After wiping the fence, she sat down. Yujie specially went to fetch a pot of tea and some pastries.

When Shuqi came back with sweat all over her face, she saw Shao Wanru sitting leisurely in the pavilion, drinking tea and eating pastries, and talking with Yujie with her face wreathed in smiles in a low voice. Yujie seemed to be teasing her, and she hit Yujie with her handkerchief while smiling shyly.

Yujie took two steps back with a smile and said in a louder voice, "Miss, I don't dare to talk nonsense anymore. Please spare me!"

Seeing Shao Wanru's smile and hearing them talk in a low voice, Shuqi connected these with what she had seen a moment ago and Prince Yue's attitude, and then clenched her fists, turned around to get in the room, and closed the door behind her.

In the room, Shao Yanru looked behind Shuqi with expectation. When she found no one behind Shuqi, she lowered her eyes, but was still unwilling to give up and asked, "When will Prince Yue come?"

"Miss, Prince Yue said that if you feel uncomfortable, you should send for an imperial physician. It's inappropriate for him to meddle in the affairs of the Chuxiu Palace as a prince. Although he has a close relationship with the Eldest Young Master, he can't take extra care of you because of the Eldest Young Master." Shuqi didn't dare to hide the truth. Thinking of Prince Yue's cold eyes just now, she felt bitter.

She did not dare to ask if Prince Yue had ceased to be faithful to the First Miss, but she thought so!

Not only Prince Yue's attitude but also the Fifth Miss's acts just now made her think so...