

## Medical Princess 761

### Chapter 761 Exchanging a Simple Requirement With a Difficult One

"Was Prince Yue unwilling to come?" Shao Yanru said with a gloomy face.

"Prince meant that you don't have to worry, Miss. He... will... will figure it out..." Shuqi stammered. The so-called meaning was roughly summarized by herself.

"What about Shao Wanru?" Shao Yanru asked, and her eyes were almost overflowing with malice. She felt that it was all Shao Wanru's fault, because Prince Yue would not have been like this before. It was definitely because of Shao Wanru. She hated Shao Wanru so much that she wanted to kill her right now. But she also knew that it was not the right time to hurt Shao Wanru.

"Fifth Miss was in the pavilion where she had talked to Prince Yue just now. She looked happy and even prepared some tea and snacks!" Shuqi said angrily. Only after she had finished her words did she find that she had added the words "where she had talked to Prince Yue".

So she was a little flustered for a moment and hurriedly lowered her head, for fear that Shao Yanru would punish her.

"B\*tch! She is a b\*tch!" Shao Yanru was furious and gritted her teeth in anger. Prince Yue was the one she liked, but Shao Wanru seemingly came to steal her man and Prince Yue also had a crush on Shao Wanru. How could Shao Yanru bear this?

She had originally wanted to take advantage of Prince Yue's special treatment of her as a deterrent to other Misses and let them know who the final winner would be. But now she found that Chu Liuyue seemed to be somewhat estranged from her. How could she bear it?

After so many years of planning, how could she let it fail at the most critical moment?

Her eyes looked empty, and she stared at somewhere in the air coldly. Anyway, she must ask Chu Liuyue to come to Chuxiu Palace again for her.

"You go to invite Prince Yue again tomorrow. Tell him that I have something important to tell him and ask him to come here quickly!" Shao Yanru said slowly in a low voice.

"Tomorrow... where am I going to find... Prince Yue?" Shuqi hesitated. They were in the palace now, so she could not wander anywhere or know where Prince Yue would be. As a little servant girl brought by a beauty, she might lose her life if she was not careful.

"What are you afraid of? I will let you find him." Shao Yanru said coldly. Wang Yuxin had told her where Chu Liuyue could be found.

At first, she had not cared where Chu Liuyue would be. At that time, Shao Yanru had just heard it and even said that Prince Yue might really have a crush on Wang Yuxin and let her cherish it. She had also secretly congratulated Wang Yuxin that she would be the future wife of Prince Yue. Wang Yuxin had been so happy about this sweet talk that she had told Shao Yanru everything that she had known.

She had not cared about it before, because she had known that it was impossible for Chu Liuyue to really like Wang Yuxin. Besides, Chu Liuyue had also mentioned to her before that Wang Yuxin could at most become a consort.

In order to help Chu Liuyue get that position, Shao Yanru once had said that she didn't care about these. As long as Chu Liuyue was fine, she could accept anything, even if she suffered wrong.

Her generosity had been on the premise that Chu Liuyue would be devoted to her and take her seriously. But now, Shao Yanru felt a crisis, so how could she not care anymore?

She couldn't let Shao Wanru steal her position as Princess. If Shao Wanru also wanted to marry into Prince Yue's Mansion, she could only be the lowest concubine. Therefore, Shao Yanru had to seize the opportunity and couldn't let Shao Wanru beat her to it.

"Yes, I'll go there tomorrow. But will Prince Yue... not come?" Shuqi still said uneasily with hesitation.

If she was rejected by Prince Yue again, Miss would definitely vent all her anger on Shuqi.

"He won't. Just say that it's an important thing related to Wang Yuxin!" Shao Yanru gritted her teeth, and mentioned Wang Yuxin after thinking for a moment.

Had it been before, she would have been sure that Chu Liuyue would come, but now she was not that sure, and she even had to use Wang Yuxin as an excuse.

She clenched her fists and felt annoyed and resentful. She made up her mind that if he still didn't come, she would turn into Chu Liuzhou's arms and help him deal with Chu Liuyue.

Chu Liuzhou was restrained by the powerful Empress, so it was inconvenient for him to do something. But as long as Chu Liuzhou promised her to be his Princess forever, she could still take him into account.

She took a deep breath, looked at the screen coldly, and asked, "Is Shao Wanru still in the pavilion outside?"

"She was still in the pavilion when I came here, but I don't know if she is still there now!" Shuqi reported.

"Go to see whether she is there. If not, bring that palace maid named Han Dan here secretly. I have something to ask her!" Shao Yanru said.

She had few people who could be used in the palace. Shuqi could not manage everything only by herself, and it was easy to attract people's attention to use Shuqi. The best way was to use the people in the palace.

This palace maid named Han Dan was not bad. She seemed to be clever and had taken the initiative to show kindness to Shao Yanru again and again. If there was any news normally, she would report it to Shao Yanru as soon as possible, so Shao Yanru had a good impression of her.

The chief eunuch had sent someone to investigate the case related to Wang Yuxin. Shao Yanru had known little about it and she had only known that some palace servants had seen Han Dan and Shuqi being furtive. This had not been real evidence or proved anything about her. At most, it had just been a suspicion, so she had not been asked to confront the palace maid called Han Dan.

At this moment, Shao Yanru thought that this palace maid was sincerely coming over to her.

Originally, it was not Shao Yanru's character to easily trust people. However, Shuqi was the only one that she could use at the moment. She finally had a person crossing over to her, and this palace maid had done a good job these days. She was indeed devoted to Shao Yanru, so she could be used first.

When Shuqi went out again, Shao Wanru and her servant had left. Looking at the empty pavilion, Shuqi carefully walked to the door of Shao Wanru's room, only to find that the door had been closed and both of them were inside.

It was time for dinner. The little eunuch who delivered the food put it down, and when he was about to leave, Shuqi came out and gave a pouch with money to the little eunuch with a smile. When he took it, the little eunuch beamed with smiles.

Shuqi whispered some words in his ears, and the little eunuch nodded repeatedly. He looked around and left after seeing that no one noticed him.

Not long after, the palace maid Han Dan secretly entered Shao Yanru's door in the dark. She was a little palace maid and was not eye-catching in the Chuxiu Palace. Besides, it was a dark winter night now. How could it be possible for those noble and delicate beauties to come out now? The accident had just happened, so no one dared or wanted to go out.

No one would see her when she went out at this time.

"Your name is Han Dan?" Shao Yanru sat under the lamp. She looked dignified with gorgeous clothes, and her hair was well combed.

She looked beautiful and behaved with elegance. Even in the inner room at such a time, she could still show her temperament as a Miss from an aristocratic family. Han Dan was impressed with this immediately.

Even some imperial concubines in the palace did not have such kind of temperament. She once had seen the Empress from a distance, and the Empress seemingly had such a calm temperament.

"Yes, my name is Han Dan!" Han Dan replied timidly.

"You are indeed an outstanding girl. If there is a chance in the future, I will definitely give you a great fortune!" Shao Yanru smiled slightly and looked calm. She was still the noble eldest daughter of a lineal descendant from Duke Xing's Mansion, the most famous beauty in the capital for a long time.

"Thank you, First Miss Shao! Thank you, First Miss Shao! I will definitely serve you with all my heart and soul!" Han Dan was very excited. What she wanted was such an opportunity to stand out. Now that this opportunity was in front of her, how could she not take it?

She was so excited that her eyes turned red. Although she was young, she had lived in the palace for a few years. Seeing that her sisters had lost their lives one by one for different reasons, she felt that she could only live better if she climbed up.

She wanted to be a chief palace maid and a decent person. If there was a chance, she might even try to approach the Emperor and become an imperial concubine.

"It's best of you to think so!" Shao Yanru wiped her lips with a handkerchief slowly, and there were flickers in her eyes under the light. "Here is a thing that I need you to investigate. If you do it well, I will take you with me. If not..."

"Don't worry, First Miss. I will do a good job, absolutely!" Han Dan hurriedly expressed her loyalty.

"It's not a big deal. Do you know Prince Zhou?" Shao Yanru asked.

"I know, I know. Prince Zhou is the legitimate son of the Empress. He has an extraordinary status!" Han Dan was so excited that her heart almost jumped out of her mouth. Did this First Miss Shao mean that she had something to do with Prince Zhou?

"Find out Prince Zhou's whereabouts and the places at which he mostly would appear. Also, find out if he will come to Chuxiu Palace. If he comes, you must report it to me as soon as possible!" Shao Yanru said slowly.

Shuqi glanced at Shao Yanru in surprise. She didn't understand why she mentioned Prince Zhou at this time. Since Prince Yue's affairs were not settled, it would be easy to get into trouble if she got Prince Zhou involved.

"First Miss... I'm just a little palace maid. I don't dare to inquire about the whereabouts of Prince Zhou casually. I will be beaten to death!" Han Dan stammered and said with a bitter face.

It was not that she wanted to refuse. Considering her identity, she could not ask too much about this, otherwise, it would arouse suspicion.

"I'm just asking about his common whereabouts. But if Prince Zhou comes over, you must inform me of this immediately. And if you can't find out Prince Zhou's whereabouts, help me keep an eye on my Fifth Sister!" Shao Yanru said generously, as if she had found another simple thing because Han Dan failed to do the first task.

Her task being changed from inquiring about Prince Zhou to monitoring a beauty, it seemed that Han Dan took advantage. If it were someone else, they would be overjoyed to thank Shao Yanru at this time. But the person that she needed to monitor was Fifth Miss Shao!

Han Dan's heart was beating wildly. Among the people she was afraid of, Shao Wanru was high on the list.

Either Prince Zhou or Prince Yue had superior status. Even though she was afraid, they normally had nothing to do with her, and would not find trouble with a little palace maid for no reason. But this Fifth Miss Shao was different.

Every time Han Dan saw her, she would show a meaningful smile. Fifth Miss Shao's smile was very beautiful, but in Han Dan's eyes, this Fifth Miss's hand seemingly had been hitting home, which made her dare not to disobey.

Was it Fifth Miss Shao who First Miss Shao was going to deal with?

Han Dan looked up in a panic and opened her lips subconsciously as if she wanted to say something.

## **Chapter 762 The Pledge of Allegiance That One Had to Take**

"What's wrong? Won't you do so?" Shao Yanru raised her eyes and looked down at her.

Shao Yanru looked kind as if this substituted task was not a big deal. Since she couldn't complete the task about Prince Zhou, she had to finish the work of keeping an eye on Shao Wanru.

Her fingers trembled but Han Dan did not dare to hesitate anymore. "Yes, I will keep an eye on Fifth Miss Shao. If there is anything unusual, I will definitely report it to First Miss!"

This was her pledge of allegiance. She had to do so and didn't dare to refuse it.

Now she had already known the secret of First Miss Shao. If she didn't help First Miss Shao, it would be easier for First Miss Shao to kill a little palace maid than to deal with Fifth Miss Shao.

"Not only something unusual but also common things should be paid more attention to. My Fifth Sister has a lot of thoughts and perhaps she will do something wrong, so I need to pay more attention to her, lest her behaviors affect the whole Duke Xing's Mansion!" Shao Yanru said slowly.

Han Dan nodded in a panic. Then Shao Yanru gave her a few more words of warnings and asked her to leave first.

Shuqi led Han Dan out and opened the door. Seeing that there was no one outside, she asked Han Dan to go back, and then closed the door to return to the inner room.

Shao Yanru was sitting still with cold eyes under the lamp in the inner room.

"Miss..."

"Pick another clever little eunuch. Ask him to secretly do some errands first, and then let him work for us!" Shao Yanru interrupted her.

She was still short-handed. Only one palace maid was not enough, so she had to find more people. Besides, she didn't quite trust a little palace maid.

"Miss, do you mean to select a few more?" Shuqi asked.

"No need to select a few. Just one little eunuch will be ok!" Shao Yanru shook her head. She dared not to openly use the people in the palace, because it would be easy to be noticed if she used too many people. If someone found out that she, as a beauty, had bribed the eunuchs and palace maids in the palace, she would definitely get in big trouble.

"Yes, Miss. I understand. How about the little eunuch who delivers the food? He looks smart and quick in action." Since she had not seen any little eunuch being alone before, Shuqi asked after thinking for a while.

"OK, just him! You can observe him carefully for a few more days!" Shao Yanru nodded. At present, this little eunuch was indeed the most suitable one. There were four rooms in the row, but now only the innermost room and the outermost one were occupied. So just one little eunuch came to deliver meals to her and Shao Wanru. If this little eunuch could work for her, he would do more than monitoring.

"Just him. Be careful and give him more money!" Shao Yanru made up her mind again, and her eyes were filled with viciousness in the candlelight...

“Do you mean that my eldest sister asked you to keep an eye on me?” Shao Wanru smiled slightly, and her watery eyes silently swept over Han Dan’s face. Her question was extremely casual and she did not show the dignified look that Shao Yanru always had on her face, but her eyes with deep coldness seemingly could penetrate people’s hearts.

Even though she was smiling, there was no glimmer of a smile at the bottom of her eyes.

This kind of smile made Han Dan feel that she had just made the right choice to come here now. If this Fifth Miss Shao found that Han Dan was monitoring her, Han Dan would definitely lose her life.

After Wang Yuxin’s affair, she didn’t dare to disobey Fifth Miss Shao, because Fifth Miss Shao had something on her. No matter what she did now, she had to think about it. As long as Fifth Miss Shao came out to say that Han Dan had testified to deal with First Miss Shao, she would definitely lose her life.

First Miss Shao would not stand for her.

She had also thought that she could sneak a peek behind Fifth Miss Shao and then report it to First Miss Shao. Later, after thinking twice about it, she still did not dare to fool the two of them at the same time.

Just at a glance, one could tell that First Miss Shao was not easy to deceive. Both Fifth Miss Shao and her servant girl were very smart. She would definitely be detected by them as long as she appeared around them. Last time, she had just wanted to stall for more time, but Fifth Miss Shao had noticed her and then she had had to tell the truth.

After thinking it over last night, Han Dan came to see Fifth Miss Shao with two dark circles around her eyes today. She felt that it was better to tell the truth. At least, since she told the truth last time, she had been living well, and Fifth Miss Shao had not used that evidence to deal with her.

She also regretted why she had felt it was right to listen to Fifth Miss Shao’s words at first. She could not only please Fifth Miss Shao, but also keep First Miss Shao in the palace. If First Miss Shao really stayed in the palace because of this and became her master, it would be great!

As a palace maid, if she wanted to find a master, it would be best that the master could stay in the palace. Otherwise, no matter how good the master was, she would have nothing to do with her. It was because of this that she had been forced by Fifth Miss Shao’s servant girl to give evidence. But now, this matter became a giant mountain pressing on her head.

Now, it was after lunch. Shao Wanru took Yujie to walk around casually to help digestion. She had been learning the etiquette and rules for the whole morning. Even though she had learned it before, she still felt a little tired.

When she walked to this yard, Han Dan rushed out from the shadow and knelt in front of her.

“Yes, First Miss asked me to keep an eye on you. She said that I must report to her first if anything happens. She wants to know everything, including both something special and matters that need to be dealt with every day,” Han Dan lowered her head and said.

“She wants to know everything? My elder sister really cares about me. Can you tell me the reason?” Shao Wanru’s voice sounded a little joyful, as if she were really happy.

Han Dan stammered, "She... she said that... she was afraid that Fifth Miss would do something bad, which would... affect the whole Duke Xing's Mansion!"

"Something bad?" Shao Wanru tried to understand these words and smiled more leisurely. "Get up!"

Shuqi came over to help Han Dan up and patted the dust on her sleeves with a handkerchief.

"You could keep an eye on me!" Shao Wanru said.

Han Dan's heart skipped a beat. She raised her head in a hurry and felt her mouth and tongue dry. She didn't know what to say. She only felt that Fifth Miss Shao's cold eyes were as beautiful as the water. But she could not guess what was under the water.

"You can keep an eye on me and tell Big Sister where I have gone. But if you go to report, you must report what I say!" Shao Wanru continued to say.

"Yes, I know!" At this time, Han Dan did not dare to argue.

"I have nothing to do in the past two days. You can say that I sometimes walk around after lunch or go to the painting room to have a look. For the rest of the time, I stay in the room and I haven't been in touch with anyone. As for two days after..." Shao Wanru looked up at Han Dan's beautiful little face. "As for two days later, I will tell you what to report!"

"I understand!" Han Dan's heartbeat was very fast. She lowered her head again and felt uneasy. She always felt that there was something special about it.

"It's best if you can understand. My Big Sister wants to compete for Prince Yue's Mansion. But now Prince Yue treats her like ordinary people. Big Sister would never admit her failure. If she can't enter Prince Yue's Mansion, it's possible... for her to stay in the palace. With her appearance, it's very easy for her to gain a position in the palace!"

Shao Wanru's voice was as soft as flowing water. Han Dan felt overjoyed after hearing her words.

"Plop!" She knelt down again, kowtowed to Shao Wanru for three times, and said in a trembling voice, "Thank you for your help, Fifth Miss!"

The master she wanted was never from Prince Yue's Mansion or other princes' mansions. She wanted to rely on the master of the palace. However, as a little palace maid, she couldn't get close to the favored Noble Lady. But if she gained the trust of the Noble Lady before the lady was favored, it was the best.

She did not expect First Miss Shao to marry any prince. It was best for her to stay in the palace and marry the Emperor. This was also the best way she thought of.

Fifth Miss Shao was indeed smarter than First Miss Shao, and it was easier for her to see through what she was thinking. This also indicated that Fifth Miss Shao agreed to her. How could she not be excited?

"Get up. Don't kneel. If someone asks you why you kneel and kowtow, you should say that you accidentally bumped into me, and I scold you!" Shao Wanru looked around. There was no one around in the corridor. However, there were many people in the palace, and no one knew if anyone else had seen it.

"Thank you, Miss. I know!" Han Dan felt that this Fifth Miss Shao was so clever that she was almost not like a human. She had already thought of what Han Dan had and had not thought. Han Dan didn't dare to disobey her. It was right to come to work for Fifth Miss Shao today.

Otherwise, with Fifth Miss Shao's means, Han Dan might not even know how she died.

"Do you have the key of the room next to mine?" Shao Wanru asked.

"I... I don't have it, but I know who has it!" At this time, Han Dan was convinced by Shao Wanru. After asking, she immediately answered. She was afraid that Shao Wanru didn't believe her, so she deliberately said, "Fifth Miss, I will try my best to get the key of the room you want."

"The room beside my eldest sister's. It originally belonged to my third sister," Shao Wanru raised her delicate lips and said.

"Yes, I'll try to get the key of Third Miss Shao's room!" Han Dan nodded repeatedly. After that, she bowed to Shao Wanru and turned to leave. This was the first time that Fifth Miss Shao had asked her to do something. How could she not try her best to do it?

"You'd better get the key of my fourth sister's room too!" Shao Wanru said lazily. She narrowed her eyes and looked at the sun in the sky. It was another good day. Since she entered the palace, the weather had been good these days. There was no wind in the corridor, and the sun shone on her body, which made her feel warm.

"Fifth Miss, why do you want the keys of the two rooms?" Han Dan asked in confusion. She understood why she wanted the key of Third Miss Shao's room, but she didn't understand why she needed the one of Fourth Miss Shao's room.

"You don't have to ask more. Just prepare the two keys. You will definitely need them!" Shao Wanru said meaningfully.

Seeing that Shao Wanru didn't intend to explain, Han Dan came back with many doubts. The more she thought about it, the more she didn't understand why she wanted the keys of the two rooms. However, she was frightened and tempted by Shao Wanru. At this time, she didn't dare to disobey her. Standing at the intersection, she thought about it and then went to find the Nanny in charge.

Stealing two keys was the same as stealing one key. She had to take them first. Since Fifth Miss Shao had said so, she must have her reasons...

### **Chapter 763 Brothers Came Together**

Chu Liuyue came in the evening, but he was not the only one who came. He and Chu Liuxin walked to the gate of the Chuxiu Palace.

"Elder brother, it seems that this place is really different from where we used to live. It's rare to have such a chance, so we should go and have a look!" Chu Liuxin stopped, pointed at the palace gate, and said with great interest on his face.

Of course, he was more interested in the people there.



Chu Liuyue frowned and was unwilling to enter the Chuxiu Palace. He looked at the three big characters at the gate of the palace and said, "Fourth brother, it is inappropriate for us to be here now. If our father knows this, he will punish us again!"

"What's wrong with it? This place is supposed to be for us to choose our people, so we have to see them. What's the use of just looking at the portrait? I heard that in the previous dynasty some of the beauties were painted quite ugly!" Chu Liuxin said carelessly. In fact, he had always wanted to come and have a look. Today, when he heard Chu Liuyue mentioned that he saw First Miss Shao outside the palace yesterday and sent the fallen First Miss Shao to the Chuxiu Palace, he tried his best to persuade Chu Liuyue to come with him.

Of course, he didn't go for seeing Shao Yanru. But Misses of Duke Xing's Mansion must live together.

"And the portraits have not been given to us. I don't know how long it will take. Are you not curious about the appearance of all the girls in this Beauty Contest?" Chu Liuxin tried his best to persuade Chu Liuyue. They were already at the gate of the palace. How could he give up halfway?

"First Miss Shao is fine. You don't have to see her!" Chu Liuyue said with a cold face.

"I know. Of course I know that First Miss Shao is fine, but I have to have a reason to see them. Since there is such a good reason and we have always been close to Duke Xing's Mansion, we have to visit First Miss Shao and Fifth Miss Shao. They entered the palace alone and only have a servant girl to serve them. They are very poor!"

Chu Liuxin sighed and spoke.

Chu Liuyue looked at him speechlessly. He didn't understand why they were pitiful for bringing only a servant girl to the palace. Which beauty didn't go to the palace to attend the Beauty Contest like this? Did they have to bring seven or eight servant girls?

When he heard that Chu Liuxin deliberately mentioned Shao Wanru, he was not surprised. He had already known that Chu Liuxin followed her from Rui'an Great Elder Princess' Mansion to Duke Xing's Mansion.

Therefore, he used this to plot against Chu Liuxin. Why did Shao Yanru have to see him at this time? In this case, why didn't she say yesterday? He had waited for a long time outside the door.

But he had to come. Shao Yanru was supported by Duke Xing's Mansion. So she determined the attitude of Duke Xing's Mansion!

"Let's go!" He waved his sleeves and said helplessly. He strode to Chuxiu Palace. Han Dan had seen the two Princes early. When she saw them coming in, she ran back excitedly to report to Shao Yanru.

Shao Yanru had been waiting for Chu Liuyue to come. Her feet were injured, so she asked for leave from the Nanny in charge in the morning. Yesterday, Prince Yue asked someone to help Shao Yanru come over and asked the imperial physician to treat her. The Nanny in charge had already known it, so she agreed.

Shao Yanru waited from morning to afternoon, and her expression became more and more gloomy. She was very anxious. She couldn't help wanting to ask Shuqi to go again. Why didn't he come until now? Did Chu Liuyue want to see her later for not being seen by others?

When she heard from Han Dan that Chu Liuyue had come, she stood up happily. "Really?"

"Yes, not only Prince Yue but also Prince Xin came together. They should come to the First Miss's place!" Han Dan flattered.

"Okay... okay. Shuqi, reward Han Dan!" Shao Yanru felt relieved again, and the gloom on her face disappeared. She smiled and ordered Shuqi.

Shuqi took out a purse and gave it to Han Dan. Shao Yanru had prepared a lot of such purses. After entering the palace, she needed manpower, so she had to pay a lot of money.

Han Dan took the purse and left gratefully.

When Chu Liuyue and his brother came over, Shao Yanru had already cleaned up. She was sitting in the chair in front of the window, reading "The Classics".

The room was filled with a faint fragrance of incense. When the windows were slightly lifted, the fragrance became lighter. There was a red plum in the wide bottle by the window. The red plum was like fire, giving off fragrance. The beauty beside the bottle was like the jade. Her beautiful face became more attractive against the red plum.

Chu Liuyue saw this scene in front of him exactly.

The door was opened and Shao Yanru was sitting in front of the window. She was as beautiful as jade and flower. She sat there and read the book in her hand quietly, like a quiet and peaceful painting.

"Elder brother, why aren't you leaving?" Chu Liuxin anxiously looked over behind Chu Liuyue and saw Shao Yanru sitting by the desk in front of the window. He shouted, "First Miss Shao is here!"

Chu Liuyue walked in, and Chu Liuxin followed him quickly.

Shao Yanru, who was sitting there, seemed to be surprised. The book in her hand fell to the ground. She looked up at Chu Liuyue with her bright eyes, which were as clear as water.

Shuqi, who was tidying up the room, came out in a hurry. When she saw the two princes, she hurriedly knelt down and said, "Greetings, Your Highnesses."

"Get up, get up!" Chu Liuxin waved his hand impatiently and looked around. "Is Fifth Miss Shao not here?"

Shao Yanru stood up and bowed sideways with some difficulty. It was obvious that her legs were injured. After standing up, Shuqi hurriedly supported her and let her finish the bow.

When she stood up, she said softly, "Fifth Sister is in her own room."

"Which room is Fifth Miss in?" Chu Liuxin came here today for Shao Wanru. He immediately beamed with joy and didn't care why his brother beside him frowned with an even colder face.

"It's next to mine, the innermost one. If Your Highness goes to find my fifth sister, my fifth sister will be very delighted!" Shao Yanru raised her mouth and became happier.

Chu Liuxin was a surprise to her. Chu Liuxin had never concealed his affection for Shao Wanru. After Shao Wanru returned to the mansion, he had come here several times, but he had no chance and no reason to see Shao Wanru every time.

"I'll go and see Fifth Miss Shao!" Chu Liuxin said excitedly and turned to run out. Eunuch Liu followed him closely.

Chu Liuyue frowned more and looked at Chu Liuxin's back unhappily. Originally, he took advantage of Chu Liuxin's affection for Shao Wanru and brought Chu Liuxin here. But at this time, he was in a bad mood, and his eyes were as cold as dark clouds and storms.

However, he did not stop Chu Liuxin. It was indeed inappropriate for him to stay here.

"Your Highness!" When she saw that Chu Liuyue's eyes were still fixed outside the door, Shao Yanru's eyes were filled with jealousy and hatred. But then the jealousy and hatred turned into tenderness. She called him in a low voice and winked at Shuqi.

Shuqi understood and walked to the door. Standing in her position, she could see Prince Xin standing at the door of Fifth Miss's room and knocking. The door seemed to be closed.

"How are your feet?" Chu Liuyue coughed in a low voice and turned to look at Shao Yanru.

"Thank you for your concern, Your Highness. I'm much better now!" Shao Yanru lowered her head. Her clothes were a little frail today. But there was a stove in the room, so it was not a big deal. Her elegant clothes made her look graceful and slender.

She lowered her head slightly, and her white and tender neck was exposed in front of Chu Liuyue, which could make people have tender affection for her.

"Sit down first!" Chu Liuyue sat down in the chair opposite her and asked in a low voice.

"Yes!" Shao Yanru said softly. She picked up the teapot on the table and gave him a cup of tea before sitting down.

"There were so many people yesterday, so I couldn't come in to see you. Today I have my fourth brother with me. Even if there is any gossip, it won't affect you!" Chu Liuyue said.

This explained his strange behavior yesterday. If he hadn't stopped Shao Wanru, Shao Yanru would have believed his words. But now she felt that his words were intended to cover up.

She took a deep breath and looked up with a delicate smile. She clearly knew that she should be obedient at this time. She also knew how to make men cherish her more.

"I know that Your Highness has your difficulties and will not misunderstand you. But as you know, my father..." Shao Yanru hesitated when she said this.

"What happened to your father?" Chu Liuyue asked her.

"My third sister had such an accident before, so my father was very angry. He blamed me for not protecting my third sister. Now he only has my fifth sister and me. In the future, my fifth sister... my father will also arrange for her. As for me..." Shao Yanru blushed when she said this. She gently pressed the corner of her mouth with a handkerchief, raised her beautiful eyes, and looked at Chu Liuyue delicately. Her eyes were full of affection, which was self-evident.

"Who is your father going to marry your Fifth Sister to?" Chu Liuyue's heart skipped a beat. He felt a little unhappy for some reason.

"In fact, I don't know. It's just... it's just my father's idea. It seemed that Great Elder Princess also agreed to it. They mentioned Your Highness... I don't know if it's what I understand!" Shao Yanru didn't say it in a definite way. In her hesitation, she said no definite thing but seemed to hit on some key points.

Originally, she wanted to say like that. It was a surprise for Chu Liuxin to come here together today, and it also made people feel that what she said was true.

"Consort Ming will not agree!" Chu Liuyue did not like Shao Yanru's hesitation and said bluntly.

"If Your Highness likes her, you can ask His Majesty for a marriage proposal. Besides, Her Highness, Rui'an Great Elder Princess, doesn't object... My father doesn't object either. This matter... can be done!" When she saw Chu Liuyue's expression, Shao Yanru's heart was burning with jealousy, but she tried hard to suppress it and said softly.

"You and your Fifth Sister can't enter the royal family together!" Chu Liuyue said impolitely.

"Even so, there were some special cases. I heard that... there were such things in the past..." Shao Yanru's words became more and more ambiguous, which reminded Chu Liuyue of an old thing. He couldn't help but have a cold look on his face. He knew what she was talking about!

This thing had something to do with him.

Rules were rules, but nothing was absolute. These things were common in the royal family. There were cases in both the previous dynasty and in this dynasty...

## **Chapter 764 The Rules of the Imperial Palace**

Chu Liuyue was the son of Consort of Virtue, the head of the four concubines. Apart from the Empress, she was the noblest in the palace.

But in fact, when she was brought into the palace in the beginning, she had just been a concubine at the lowest rank. She and her elder sister were brought into the palace together, but her sister, the eldest lineal daughter of their family, was given a higher position. As for her, the second lineal daughter of their family, if it had not been for the special event, she would not have been summoned to the palace along with her sister.

No two imperial concubines shall come from one mansion. Even if she had been brought in because of a special situation, she had been deliberately made a nameless concubine. Compared to her sister brought in when she was in her golden age, she had just been a small wave.

But in the end, the small wave had become a huge one, which completely defeated her sister, and emerged victoriously. Since then, no one had ever remembered her noble sister.

This was Consort of Virtue's story, and there was also Consort Lan's...

In theory, the royal family was the most rule-bound, but it was, in fact, the unruliest. Rules were always ignored on special occasions.

"Nonsense!" Chu Liuyue slammed the table and shouted.

"Your Highness!" Shao Yanru looked at Chu Liuyue in shock. Then, her eyes turned red, and she sobbed, "Your Highness... what... what do you mean?"

Chu Liuyue calmed down, suppressed his anger, and said gently, "How could you talk irresponsibly about such a thing? It will be bad if someone hears it!"

"Right... I know you're doing this for my good, Your Highness!" Shao Yanru looked at Chu Liuyue tearfully, wiped away her tears gently with her handkerchief, and then smiled shyly, "My father means... when I am your woman... he will do his best... I'm his only daughter... he will always think for me!"

Chu Liuyue frowned but knew what Shao Yanru meant. Duke Xing was an old cunning fox. He looked kind and smiled at everyone he met, but he didn't give his word.

This promise was quite reliable, but he had to marry Shao Yanru. He had wanted to marry her earlier. Even if he only took Duke Xing's Mansion into account, he would have to do it.

However, after the accident that Shao Yanru fell into the water in the palace, he inexplicably felt bad when he thought about marrying her. Others might not know it, but Chu Liuzhou and Chu Qing knew it.

He felt that he would be secretly ridiculed by Chu Liuzhou and Chu Qing if he really took Shao Yanru as his princess. A man like Chu Liuzhou would possibly hurt him with it from time to time, making him feel that he was a cuckold.

He didn't like Chu Qing. When he remembered that he had held Shao Yanru in his arms in the water and many people had seen it at that time, he felt a gag at his throat. He could not swallow it or spit it out. The feeling was terrible.

But he couldn't let anyone else take her. After all, Shao Yanru had sincerely said that Duke Xing, the old cunning fox, would unhesitatingly support the one who married her.

Let Shao Yanru be his consort? Then what about Shao Wanru?

He thought quickly and made up his mind. Shao Wanru was absolutely beneficial to him, but he would have to give her up if he got Shao Yanru. And Chu Liuxin would have a reaction. Then, he had to take all these things into consideration.

When he got that high position, he would have all kinds of beauties. If he still could not let go, he would just need to take the woman back from Chu Liuxin. Anyway, this man would not be his rival!

He held Shao Yanru's hand that was on the table and gently squeezed it twice before he looked at her softly and said, "Don't worry. I'll marry you and bring you into my mansion, but you also know that my word is not guaranteed to be the final word for a few things. I will try my best to recommend you to Their Majesties. But if something unexpected happens... you should trust me. Even if you only get a lower position, it is temporary!"

"What do you mean, Your Highness?" Shao Yanru raised her slightly red eyes and looked at Chu Liuyue eagerly. Seeing the watery eyes full of affection, even the most iron-hearted man would inevitably want to hold her in his arms and love her with a tender heart.

"I'm just afraid there's an 'if'. You know that I only love you. In the future... everything will be yours!"

Chu Liuyue knew that Shao Yanru understood, so he consoled her softly.

He couldn't let her be his princess, but he could make her his consort. Of course, he knew that neither Shao Yanru nor Duke Xing's Mansion would be satisfied. It was necessary to give them another great false hope. Over the years, Duke Xing had never chosen to stand in line with anyone, nor had he ever shown his attitude toward his obvious invitation. And he had kept Shao Yanru unmarried from then to now. No doubt, he wanted to stand on the side of the one who was sure to win!

He had a mocking smile. Duke Xing had really dared to do so! What were the children of the royal family in his eyes?

With this thought, he began to hate Shao Yanru inexplicably. The charming face in front of him looked so unreal. What she showed on her face should be what she was willing to show!

Shao Yanru had been smart since her childhood. Even when she was a child, she would please him and Chu Liuzhou. But she didn't care so much about Chu Liuxin. As for Chu Liuchen, could she have the luck to please him?

He felt bad about having been selected. No matter how affectionate Shao Yanru showed she was, Chu Liuyue inexplicably felt uncomfortable and thought it was quite fake.

"Don't worry, Your Highness. I... I will listen to you, absolutely!" Shao Yanru lowered her head and silently turned her face to wipe her tears. When she turned back, she was already full of smiles, showing that she would listen to Chu Liuyue even if she had to force a smile.

Chu Liuyue did not notice that she was tearing her handkerchief violently. She had almost pinched the handkerchief into her palm.

Shuqi coughed hard and retreated to the side.

The two people in the room became quiet. Chu Liuyue withdrew his hand calmly, and Shao Yanru put her hands down on her knee cap, one over the other.

"Greetings, Your Highness and Fifth Miss!" Seeing a figure at the door, Shuqi took another step back and bowed respectfully.

"Brother, Miss Shao, Fifth Miss Shao and I are here to chat with you." Chu Liuxin suddenly came in and waved his hand, signaling to Shuqi to rise.

Shao Wanru slowly walked after him, bowed respectfully to Chu Liuyue, and called "sister".

"Your Highness, please sit down. Fifth Sister, sit down, too!" Shao Yanru stood up as if to greet them, but she rose so quickly that she shook and almost fell. Shuqi hurried over and supported her.

"Sister, you are injured, so don't get up." Shao Wanru smiled and sat down next to Shao Yanru.

Chu Liuxin sat down next to Chu Liuyue.

After he knocked on Shao Wanru's room door, Shao Wanru had asked him to wait for a while and then followed him to Shao Yanru's room.

The more he looked at the side of her face, the more Chu Liuxin liked Shao Wanru. He even thought that she was indeed a lady of manners.

"Fifth Miss, I was really rude just now. I knew you were next door to First Miss, so I came straight over." Chu Liuxin apologized.

This was his fault indeed. It was not suitable for a man and a woman to be together alone.

"You're so courteous, Your Highness!" Shao Wanru said with a smile, showing that she didn't mind.

"It's not that I'm courteous, but that I'm really sorry. It was indeed inappropriate for us to stay in the same room alone. It's better for us to stay with my brother and First Miss!" Chu Liuxin apologized sincerely. "Fifth Miss, you're a well-behaved lady, but I offended you. I'm really sorry!"

Chu Liuxin thought like this and he said like this. After he finished, he saw that Chu Liuyue's face had turned cold and that Shao Yanru was embarrassed. Immediately, he realized his wrongdoing.

Then he did a fist and palm salute to Chu Liuyue and then explained with a smile, "Brother, First Miss, I'm not talking about you. You two have an unusual relationship. It's nothing even if you meet in private!"

These words slipped out of his mouth. But when he had finished, he realized that he had made another mistake. Shao Yanru, who was sitting opposite him, blushed and lowered her head.

These words sounded like Chu Liuyue and Shao Yanru had been in an affair for a long time.

"No, no, I didn't mean that. I just mean that you are different from us." Seeing Chu Liuyue turn around and look coldly at him, Chu Liuxin shook his hands panickily and made up for it again.

Shao Wanru smiled sweetly. These words were like the salt put on the new scar, which exposed the relationship between Chu Liuyue and Shao Yanru in broad daylight.

Having an affair was against Miss Shao's usual dignified way of conduct.

But she couldn't explain it now. Ashamed and with hatred, she could only try her best to lower her head.

"Don't talk nonsense!" Chu Liuyue reprimanded him unhappily. He looked at Shao Wanru but found that she was smiling, in a way of watching the fun, so he became even unhappier.

"Brother, I'm not talking nonsense. I saw Miss Shao's portrait in your study some time ago!" Chu Liuxin said with a smile. He stealthily looked at Shao Yanru and drew something in the air with his thumb for his brother to see. He had a close relationship with Chu Liuyue, and Chu Liuyue was nice to him, his younger brother. Therefore, others might hold their tongues about a few things, but he would say anything he thought of.

With the handkerchief in her hand, she instantly felt relieved. She really blushed at this time. Sure enough, Prince Yue had always liked her and even drew a portrait of her. When he couldn't see her, he must be looking at her portrait. Then what he just said was true.

Even if she could not get a high position now, so what? Prince Yue only loved her, so it was not a big deal for her to remain at a lower status for the time being. The one who could laugh to the end was the winner. And she was sure to be the one!

Chu Liuxin inadvertently got rid of Shao Yanru's hesitation.

Shao Wanru observed the scene calmly. She raised her eyebrows and chose to be a silent bystander. But when she suddenly raised her head subconsciously, her watery eyes met Chu Liuyue's cold, calm eyes.

"Well, don't talk nonsense. There's no such thing!" Chu Liuyue had not intended to explain anything, but he suddenly blurted it out without knowing why. He didn't like the look of watching a show in Shao Wanru's eyes.

Shao Wanru quietly lowered her eyes and didn't watch the interaction between Chu Liuyue and Shao Yanru anymore, but Chu Liuyue stared at her as if he was annoyed, his eyes closely chasing after her.

Shao Yanru looked up shyly but found that Chu Liuyue was not gazing at her with affection but looking attentively at Shao Wanru. She was quite shocked and remembered the scene in the pavilion yesterday!

## **Chapter 765 Making Waves, Unwilling to Give up**

Shao Yanru glanced at Shao Wanru, her eyes as cold as those of a venomous snake.

"Are you used to sitting here, Fifth Miss Shao? Do you feel anything inconvenient? If you need any help, I can help you. If you don't think you have enough servants, I can send someone to you." Chu Liuxin's character was the most elusive, and he behaved a little carelessly. He didn't notice that his words had made the people present have different thoughts.

"Thank you, Prince Xin. My grandma said that this is the imperial palace and I can't be so unruly!" Shao Wanru said with a courteous smile and refused in the name of Rui'an Great Elder Princess.

"This is not unruly. Great-aunt should blame me if she wants to blame anyone. If one servant is not enough, I can send more!" Chu Liuxin said with a smile. He was not aware of Shao Wanru's implication. Instead, he was just thinking about if she had suffered from injustice in the imperial palace.

Shao Wanru looked at Chu Liuxin speechlessly because his words were almost impolite. Chu Liuyue was present, but he didn't say anything, so it was clear that the two brothers had a very good private relationship.

No wonder, Chu Liuxin had died because of Chu Liuyue in her previous life.

"Your Highness, I'm here to attend the Consort Selection. I'll do the same thing as others, or I'll be taken as a troublemaker! Thank you for your kindness!" Shao Wanru said and stood up. "Madam Ou has something to ask me, so I have to go, princes!"

"Who is Madam Ou?" Chu Liuxin froze and then stood up.



"The painter who painted my portrait. She said that she would make a few changes!" Shao Wanru explained softly.

"She has finished it? That's great. I'll go and take a look with you!" Chu Liuxin was happy to hear that. He didn't care about others' portraits, but that Shao Wanru's portrait was done was great news for him.

He had to get the painting first and then asked his father, the emperor, to give him marriage permission before his brothers took action. Anyway, he could not let Fifth Miss Shao marry any one of them.

It was better to act first. Even if his mother disagreed, it was not important as long as his father agreed!

He remembered that he had hinted several times that he wanted to marry the Fifth Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion, but his mother had ignored him. Chu Liuxin felt wronged. If it weren't for Fifth Miss Shao, he wouldn't want to get married. He was so young, and he was the youngest one. Why should he be in a hurry? Which prince chose his wife so hurriedly?

Of course, if the candidate was Fifth Miss Shao, he thought that he would consider it.

"Your Highness... it's inappropriate for you to go now!" Shao Wanru stopped and said helplessly.

The portraits of the beauties had not finished, so it was unsuitable for the princes to take a look in advance. Instead, they would be sent to the empress in charge of this event. After that, some would be picked out for the princes to choose from.

It was against the rule for Chu Liuxin to see them now.

She rubbed her forehead and inexplicably remembered a few scenes, which seemed to be the ones in her previous life. It seemed that someone had come to see them in advance, but she couldn't remember the specifics at the moment.

It seemed that her memories about her previous life were injured. Whenever she remembered such fragments, her heart hurt.

"Don't be afraid. I'll explain to the Empress. Besides, I'll sneak there, and no one will notice me!" Chu Liuxin said in a carefree manner.

Shao Wanru pressed her temples again.

Chu Liuxin did not notice that she was uncomfortable, but Chu Liuyue did. He looked at Chu Liuxin, who was still talking energetically but looked a bit noisy, pursed his lips, and asked, "Is there anything wrong with you, Fifth Miss Shao?"

"What's wrong with you, Miss?" Finally, Yujie also found that Shao Wanru was not in good condition, so she instantly supported her.

"Fifth Sister!" Holding Shuqi's hand, Shao Yanru stood up and looked at her with concern.

Shao Wanru closed her eyes and calmed down, and then she opened them weakly and shook her head, saying, "I'm fine. I just feel a little uncomfortable. Maybe I can't even go to Madam Ou!"

She felt a dull pain in her head. She had even seen Chu Liuxin in her fragmented memories moments earlier, but she couldn't see that clearly.

"Are the things I saw yesterday the things I saw just now? Did Prince Xin's current performance also happen in my previous life? Is it because his same behavior has aroused my similar memory?" she thought.

"Fifth Miss, if you are not feeling well, go and rest then!" Chu Liuxin shut his mouth at this time. Seeing Shao Wanru's ashen face, he was so worried.

"Your highnesses, I'll take my leave now!" Holding Yujie's hand, Shao Wanru bowed sideways and then bowed to Shao Yanru before leaving with Yujie.

"What's wrong with Fifth Miss Shao?" Staring at Shao Wanru's back in a daze, Chu Liuxin asked in confusion. She had just been well, but she had suddenly become so weak. He thought about it and turned to Shao Yanru, asking, "Do you know the reason, First Miss?"

"I don't know either!" Shao Yanru shook her head and sat down again.

"She was fine just now, but why did she suddenly feel uncomfortable?" Chu Liuxin spoke to himself.

Shao Yanru looked at Chu Liuyue. Although he didn't say anything, he frowned. Was he also worried about Shao Wanru?

She felt like her heart was being gnawed, and then she, who had calmed down, could not keep calm anymore.

"Maybe because Fifth Sister suddenly remembered something, and it was not suitable for her to stay here anymore!" Shao Yanru said.

"What could make her so weak?" Chu Liuxin blurted out.

"Fifth Sister has always been in good health. She has never been so weak. Maybe it's not because she was ill. I'm afraid that she might have remembered something bad and unsuitable," Shao Yanru said immediately because she also had something on her mind.

"Something bad and unsuitable?" Chu Liuxin couldn't figure it out, but Chu Liuyue found something else from these words.

"Well, Liuxin, it's getting late. We have seen First Miss Shao, and we should go back!" Chu Liuyue stood up and said to Chu Liuxin.

"Okay, brother!" Shao Wanru had gone back, so Chu Liuxin didn't have the mood anymore. At this time, he was only thinking about if something was wrong with Shao Wanru.

Holding Shuqi's hand, Shao Yanru stood up and saw them off to the door. Watching them leave, she gradually stopped smiling, her eyes turning grim.

Shuqi helped her back to the room. She sat in the chair and stared at the wide-mouth vase with the red plum blossoms in it, but she inexplicably had hatred. With a wave of her hand, the vase fell on the ground, leaving the flowers lying in a mess on the floor.

"Miss!" Shuqi shrieked.

"Bitch, bitch, bitch!" Shao Yanru roared frantically. Looking at the bright-red plum blossoms on the floor, she stepped hard on them a few times, crushing them into dirty red mud.

"Miss!" Shuqi took a step back in fear and hit the writing desk behind her in a panic, making cups fall and break with a piercing sound.

"Please forgive me, Miss!" Shuqi trembled and dropped to her knees, ignoring the porcelain pieces beneath her. Fortunately, she wore many clothes in the winner, which prevented the pieces from piercing into her knees, but her skirt was scratched.

The room turned so eerily quiet that it was hard to breathe.

After a long while, Shao Yanru sat down feebly, supported her head with her hands, and closed her eyes.

Then Shuqi cleaned the broken pieces on the floor quickly.

"Tell Prince Zhou about Shao Wanru's situation!" Shao Yanru closed her eyes and said after a long while. She couldn't allow Prince Yue and Shao Wanru to go on like this. Although Chu Liuyue had covered his feelings quite well, she had seen them!

She had to be the spoiler. Chu Liuxin was not strong enough, so she had to find someone else who was Chu Liuyue's rival. No one was better than Chu Liuzhou.

"What should I tell Prince Zhou? Miss, your own business..." Shuqi stopped and gingerly explained.

In fact, Shao Yanru had not given up Chu Liuzhou while keeping a relationship with Chu Liuyue. Of course, Chu Liuyue was more likely to win, but Chu Liuzhou, son of the empress, also had a big chance.

Shao Yanru frowned deeply at these words. She was really unwilling to give up, and she appreciated the two of them, so she could never leave them to Shao Wanru.

"Try to learn about Prince Chen's affairs!" After thinking for a while, she thought of another person.

She didn't want Chu Liuyue or Chu Liuzhou to marry Shao Wanru. If someone should take her, it was Prince Chen, who was the most suitable one. A dying patient was the most suitable husband for her.

He was a powerless person in a high position, and he spent every day like it was the end of his life. He was likely to die before Shao Wanru was married to him, but Empress Dowager loved Prince Chen so much. Even if he died, Shao Wanru would have to marry him and be his widow.

And there was another benefit. Once Shao Wanru became Chu Liuchen's woman, neither Chu Liuyue nor Chu Liuzhou could think about her. Even if they had some thoughts, they would have to do everything in the dark. Thus, Shao Wanru would never have the chance to stand by them aboveboard.

After all, they were Chu Liuchen's brothers.

"I'll do it, but I may not be able to find anything!" Shuqi nodded and took the order. After she finished the work that she was doing, she went out carefully.

Coincidentally, the little eunuch who delivered the dinner arrived. He came to Shao Yanru's place first and put down the food box, ready to leave with a smile, but Shuqi stopped him and gave him a pouch of money that weighed heavy.

"Prince Chen and our Fifth Miss know each other. Just now, Fifth Miss was still asking about Prince Chen. Prince Yue and Prince Xin were all here. Why didn't Prince Chen come? I heard that this place is very close to the side door of Prince Chen's Mansion. Where is it?"

Shao Yanru had told Shuqi a few things. Now Shuqi behaved like she was very familiar with Prince Chen's Mansion. This matched her claim perfectly well that Shao Wanru and Chu Liuchen knew each other.

"Prince Chen will not come here. He is not healthy, but he is sure to visit one place. It is said that he takes a rest there from time to time!"

The little eunuch thought for a while and found that there was no one around, and then he whispered in Shuqi's ear.

This was no secret. The place where Prince Chen rested was not far from the gate of the Chuxiu Palace. The eunuch often got in and out of the palace, so he knew it. "There is indeed a door in Prince Chen's Mansion that is connected to the palace. It is not far from here, but it is guarded. No one is allowed to enter without permission!"

#### **Chapter 766 Truth Obtained Through Eavesdropping**

"Go and get the key to the room next to my sister Wanru's room!" Shao Yanru looked at Han Dan and said coldly.

"First... First Miss, you want the key to that room?" Han Dan said in a shiver.

"What? Is there a problem?" Shao Yanru's face darkened.

"No... no... uh... there's... a small problem. All keys are in the hands of the nanny in charge. I'm afraid it's hard to get it!" She touched the key in her chest pocket and said in a panic.

She was indeed shocked and frightened. Fifth Miss Shao had taken away the key to the room next to First Miss Shao's room from her. She asked her to take out the two keys, but she just took away one key, saying that she took it for another purpose. She also asked her not to hand over the other one so easily. Was the person she referred to First Miss Shao?

Han Dan felt a chill at the center of her spine as if something had gone through that spot and numerous eyes were staring at her from the dark. So, she couldn't help wanting to see if Fifth Miss Shao was in the dark behind her!

The calculation was so accurate!

Thinking of Fifth Miss Shao who was like this, how could Han Dan not feel panicky? In fact, she was more willing to let Fifth Miss Shao go to the palace. With such calculation and her beautiful looks, she was most likely to become outstanding.

"Is that difficult?" Shao Yanru said sulkily. She looked eerie in the lamplight.

"The nanny in charge always brings the unused keys with her. It's so hard to take it away secretly. But don't worry, First Miss. I'll try my best to get the key."

Han Dan calmed down and spoke with loyalty.

Fifth Miss Shao had given her word: if she did as she was asked to do, she would be fine and get a lot of benefits in the future.

Hearing these words, Shao Yanru looked a little placid and nodded, saying, "Is there anything unusual about my sister Wanru?"

"Nothing is unusual about Fifth Miss, but..." After a moment of hesitation, she stole a glance at Shao Yanru's face in fear.

"If you have anything to say, just say it. Anything you've seen!" Shao Yanru became kinder and kinder. She even raised her hand, signaling to Han Dan to rise.

With a smile, Shuqi took her and helped her up.

"A little eunuch came to see Fifth Miss when you were having your meal, First Miss. The eunuch looks familiar to me. He seems... seems..." Han Dan lowered her head slightly.

"Whose man?" Shao Yanru became nervous and felt something bad.

"He seems to be Prince Yue's man. You know that Prince Yue came here with a little eunuch. I paid special attention to him and found that he is Prince Yue's man," Han Dan said as Shao Wanru had told her.

Shao Yanru had been suspicious of Chu Liuyue. Hearing what Han Dan said, she immediately believed it. She stood up angrily and pressed the corner of the table hard, feeling that Chu Liuyue didn't care about her so much simply because of Shao Wanru.

"What did they say and do?" Shao Yanru asked angrily.

"I couldn't hear them clearly, nor did I dare to get too close. The eunuch stayed there for a short time. Even if I wanted to go over, it was too late. But I saw that the eunuch talked to Fifth Miss respectfully. He saluted Fifth Miss Shao again and again and also gave her a small delicate jewelry box!" Han Dan said.

Shao Yanru trembled with anger. Chu Liuyue had always been nice to her and given her a lot of gifts. The good head-ornaments and jewelry in her hands were Chu Liuyue's gifts to her. She knew that the man would give a woman jewelry if he liked her. But now, he had sent jewelry to Shao Wanru, not her, which meant that he cherished that woman more than her?

She got angry with her lips shaking. She picked up the cup of tea on the table, gulped it down, and then put the cup heavily down. "Get the key quickly. I'll give you handsome rewards!"

"Thank you very much, First Miss. I will get it as soon as possible. Don't worry, First Miss!" Han Dan said hurriedly with gratitude.

Shao Yanru waved her hand and Han Dan left. Shuqi saw her off to the door and let her leave only when she found that no one was around outside.

Shao Yanru also took the next day to rest, and she claimed that her legs could not move. When Shao Wanru got back, it was already after lunchtime. And all the people had lunch together.

When she walked past Shao Yanru's room, she found that that door was closed. She turned her eyes and went to her room.

When she walked past Shao Cailing's room, she saw a closed lock, which, however, didn't lock the door, and smiled silently. Han Dan had already come and reported that the key had been taken away by Shao Yanru.

She walked back to Shao Caihuan's room. Then, Yujie took out a key from her chest pocket, opened the lock, removed the lock from the door handle, hung it, and closed it, looking like the door was locked. Those who were not careful would think the door was locked. After all, the lock was closed.

Yujie was fast. The two of them paused for a moment and then went back.

When she got back in her room and sat down, Yujie brought her tea. She drank the tea and then said, "Let me see what the gift is."

"Miss, I've seen it. It is a set of head-ornaments inlaid with extremely beautiful ruby and pearls. Such exquisite head-ornaments are not something that ordinary people can have. I've never seen such beautiful head-ornaments in so many years. This set is much more beautiful than the one that First Miss wore last time!"

The last set that Yujie mentioned was, in fact, a gift from Chu Liuyue to Shao Yanru. The reason why Yujie remembered it so clearly was that Shao Yanru had been dressed so beautifully that day. And Shuqi, who followed her, had repeatedly hinted that no better one could be found in the whole capital. It was not only expensive, but it also showed the status of the wearer.

"Miss, having this set of jewelry alone proves that you are nobler than First Miss and that you are cherished more than she... is," Yujie said with a smile. It was hard to say something clearly, and such vague words sounded even more convincing.

Next door, Shao Yanru tugged her handkerchief and clenched her teeth in fury. Chu Liuyue had indeed given Shao Yanru a set of jewelry, which was even better than the one in her hands. The envy and hatred were like thousands of ants gnawing her heart. She couldn't wait to go over and slap Shao Wanru a few times, asking her to hand over the jewelry.

That was hers. She was the future Princess Yue.

"Stop that. People will think wildly if they find it out!" Shao Wanru said in a soft, low voice. But Shao Yanru thought that she was shameless, lowly, and vulgar when she heard it. She thought, "Do you really think that you are Chu Liuyue's sweetheart only with a set of jewelry? I'll never let your dream come true!"

Standing beside her with her head lowered, Shuqi didn't dare to utter a single word. She knew that her Miss was quite resentful.

"Miss, this is nothing... Didn't you see it yesterday? First Miss tried to lean against Prince Yue like a vulnerable bird. That was so ridiculous. Prince Yue didn't take her seriously, but she still thought that she

was important. Earlier, when First Miss fell into the water, Prince Yue saw it clearly. Does she really believe that Prince Yue doesn't care about it and still wants her to be his princess?"

Yujie mocked unabashedly. The voice went straight to Shao Yanru's ears, and her heart seemed to be hit hard. She felt great pain and was flustered.

She didn't want to think about this incident, but she warned herself repeatedly: now everyone thought it was Shao Jie'er who fell into the water, and it had nothing to do with her; It was also Shao Jie'er who wanted to marry into Prince Qing's Mansion, and it had nothing to do with her.

However, no matter how much she said to herself, she could not fool herself that she did not feel the guilt. If it had not been for all kinds of reasons, she would not have joined the Consort Selection at this time. Instead, she should have worked out ways to be a bystander. When the fight for the throne had come to an end, she would come out to pick the fruit of victory.

Prince Yue and Prince Zhou clearly knew that it was she who fell into the water. She couldn't figure out the scene at that time, but she could guess it. All men hated such things. Was it because of this that Chu Liuyue tried to stay away from her and began to like Shao Wanru?

If Shao Wanru married into Prince Yue's Mansion, she, Shao Yanru, would have no chance!

Putting aside her mixed feelings, Shao Yanru gritted her teeth and continued to listen. She had especially come here simply because she wanted to confirm the matter herself. She did not believe the words of the palace maid, but now she had to believe them.

Chu Liuyue was really interested in Shao Wanru. The main reason was that she fell into the water and lost her reputation. She was unwilling to give up. She was also a victim at that time! It was all Shao Wanru's fault. It was Shao Wanru who had hurt her. Now she also wanted to seduce Prince Yue. How could there be such an easy meal in the world?

"Well, stop it. As for Prince Yue... it's not suitable for us to talk about... My sister's current situation was caused by herself. Because she plotted against me!" Shao Wanru said. This sounded ironic, but it was true. It was a truth that Shao Wanru had never said before.

Shao Yanru had always known that she had been framed because Shao Wanru had made a new plot based on her plot. Otherwise, Shao Wanru would have been the one who fell into trouble at that time. But she could not find any one of her loopholes. She knew that the woman had trapped her, but she could not find any evidence. She felt so terrible about it.

She didn't want to suppress her anger, but she didn't know how to vent it.

Now when she heard Shao Wanru's words, she suddenly felt that she had seen the light. Since Shao Wanru had said such words, what she had just said must be true.

Sure enough, Chu Liuyue misunderstood her because she fell into the water. She couldn't let him misunderstand her like this, nor could she let him choose Shao Wanru. She held the armrest of her chair firmly, making the chair move with a creak. Shuqi instantly looked at Shao Yanru and was sacred ashen.

No sound should be made in this room, or Fifth Miss would be alarmed.

Shao Yanru also realized her reckless behavior, so she stopped moving and continued to listen. Anyway, she was here today to eavesdrop on Shao Wanru's conversation and learn the truth.

"First Miss was really... She was carried by Commandery Prince Qing, and several guards also helped her by taking her hands. In fact, even if she were married to Commandery Prince Qing, he might not want her, let alone Prince Yue!" With sharp ears, Yujie immediately heard the sound next door. She winked at Shao Wanru and also signaled to her with her hand.

They had long known that Shao Yanru was eavesdropping on them in the room next door.

The two rooms were adjacent, and it was hard for people on both sides to hear each other clearly. Coincidentally, there was a small window high in the wall between the two rooms, and the sound could go through it. Besides, the voices of the two girls were loud.

Shao Wanru had checked her room when she came in, and Shao Yanru, who was so cautious, must have also checked her room and noticed it. Then there was the matter about the key. Shao Wanru had thought about how to send the wrong message to Shao Yanru. With this window, her big problem was solved.

#### **Chapter 767 You Eavesdrop on Me, I Eavesdrop on You**

Shao Wanru spoke of that incident again and again, making Shao Yanru so angry that she almost couldn't control herself. And she had almost torn her handkerchief into pieces.

This was the last thing she wanted to mention. Although the truth had been hidden, the two people who should never have seen it saw it. And she was also injured. Although she was being treated with Doctor Qiu's medicine, the doctor said that her condition would only be clear in the future.

The medicine used on her was strong, and her future condition was hard to predict, so Shao Yanru clenched her teeth.

These words pained her heart and made her so guilty, but now Shao Wanru mentioned them repetitively, so how could she not hate her?

But she had to keep quiet at this time. She suppressed her anger so hard that she broke her lips with her teeth.

"Commandery Prince Qing will be willing to marry my sister Yanru, but now I heard that he already has a princess. Even if she clung to him, she would not be his princess. If she is only a consort, her future will be hard to predict!" Shao Wanru said suggestively. Obviously, there were hints in her words.

Shao Yanru's heart had a violent shake. She remembered that Chu Liuyue had promised to make her his consort and added that she could also have further plans after that. Then, she couldn't help picking up her ears to listen, but she wondered if there were still tricks that she didn't know in being a consort.

"Miss, in fact, it's not bad to be a consort at the beginning as long as she has the chance to be the princess in the future!" Yujie said.

These words made Shao Yanru calm down. Her face was no longer so dark that she would swallow others. These words were reasonable. A consort had her own benefit. She was not noticeable at the beginning, but she could laugh till the end.



“How many consorts could defeat the princess and have the greatest power in the end in history? When one has a lower status at the beginning, it’s hard to guess what she will achieve later, let alone that those who can have a high status must be able to give birth to a son. Can she guarantee that she will give birth before the princess and surely have a boy?”

Shao Wanru seemed to think for a moment before answering.

Shao Yanru was furious. This time, she was afraid that it would be hard for her to meet the baby-bearing requirement because of Shao Wanru. It was so hard to get pregnant, let alone guarantee the sex of the child.

“Well, let’s end the talk about my sister’s affairs. They have nothing to do with us. Let’s just watch the show. Now my sister wants to marry into Prince Yue’s Mansion... but I’m afraid that she has no chance. The far future? She can’t even grasp what is present, let alone the future. If the consort has been the taboo of the princess, the princess will immediately suppress her to the point that she will never have her day. A consort is just a concubine!”

The contemptuous voice made Shao Yanru even feel the pain in her exhaled air.

Her heart was burning with pain. She had not been so confident, and now her confidence was all gone after she heard Shao Wanru’s words. She held her handkerchief, but her fingers were trembling. A few words were reverberating in her ears: “A consort is just a concubine!”

A consort was a concubine. If Chu Liuyue loved her, she would have the strength to fight. But if he wavered between Shao Wanru and her, or if Shao Wanru became the princess, she would have no chance at all.

The two of them had challenged each other several times, but she had never won. Now she had been made so embarrassed, so how could she defeat Shao Wanru in winning the favor?

The veins on the back of her hand holding the handkerchief were bulging. This was the fruit of her victory, so she would not let Shao Wanru have it.

She stood up and walked out quietly. She had learned what she wanted to know, so she did not want to stay and hear the heart-wrenching words anymore.

Shuqi followed her gingerly. The teasing voices of Shao Wanru and Yujie came from the next room, and they were ridiculing Shao Yanru. Really, the following words were too unpleasant to hear.

When they came to the door, Shao Yanru took a deep breath, suppressing her envy and hatred, and then turned and went to her room.

Shuqi instantly grabbed her sleeve and pointed to the closed lock. It was on the door, but it didn’t connect the door handle. The door seemed to be locked, but the lock was actually useless.

Shao Yanru shook her head, indicating that they could do it later. Shao Wanru was in the next room. If they made any sound, it was easy to get her alarmed.

Shao Yanru, followed by her maid, returned to her room, but both of them didn’t notice that the closed lock on the door of their next room was another one that did not lock the door.

After they walked into their room, Yujie came out of the next room. She looked around and found that there was no one around, and then she slipped into Shao Caihuan's room. She walked quietly into it and leaned against the wall between this room and the next, beginning to eavesdrop.

There was also a window in the wall between the two rooms.

Every two rooms seemed to be one suite with a small window in the wall between them. But it was high and it was covered by something, so it was not conspicuous.

Shao Yanru's vicious voice came from the next room. "Bitch, I won't let you get what you want!"

"Miss, what should we do now? Does Prince Yue mean that you should take the consort's position temporarily? But... but..." Shuqi said anxiously. She had also heard the conversation between Shao Wanru and Yujie moments earlier.

She had been so confident in Shao Yanru previously, while she was unconfident in her the same degree now. After all, her lady was no longer the stunning First Miss with an excellent reputation.

Even her maid did not believe in her anymore. How could Shao Yanru not know what Shuqi meant? She slapped her angrily and scolded, "What do you mean by 'What should we do'? I'm not willing. I just want to be the princess. I'll only be the princess of Prince Yue's Mansion. No one should think about taking the position from me, not even Prince Yue!"

"But... but..." Shuqi knelt down and said panickily with her head down, "But the jewelry Prince Yue sent to Fifth Miss is even better than what he gave you, First Miss. If... if Prince Yue approves of Fifth Miss, you won't even get the consort's position, Miss!"

If Shao Yanru ended up in a poor fate, they, her maids, would also have to accept a poor fate. No matter how scared she was, Shuqi had to tell the truth.

Shao Yanru pondered for a moment with a gloomy face, her heart burning with hatred.

Of course, she couldn't just let it happen.

"Let's go and visit Prince Yue!" She suddenly stood up and said coldly.

"Your foot is injured, and Prince Yue had come here yesterday. If you go to him, what will he think?" Shuqi reminded her gingerly.

Shao Yanru was silent for a moment. What Shao Wanru had said moments earlier was still rattling in her ears. She really couldn't let it go, but she also knew that what Shuqi said was true. It was indeed not suitable for her to visit Chu Liuyue at this time.

In the past, she had been quite experienced in maintaining equivocal relationships with Chu Liuyue and Chu Liuzhou. She knew when she should write to them and when she should keep a distance from them. Now was the most inappropriate time.

Her former teacher, whom her mother brought to her from a brothel, had repeatedly told her the bad nature of such men. They held the view that a wife was not better than a concubine, a concubine was less attractive than someone else's woman, and having some else's woman was not as alluring as having no chance to get a woman.

Over the years, she had always kept ambiguous relationships with Chu Liuyue and Chu Liuzhou because she wanted them to know her affection toward them. But they could not get her. Only in this way could she lead them by the nose. It was not wise to go straight to Chu Liuyue at this time. Once the man got tired of her, no matter how well she behaved, he would not like her.

“Take out the generous gifts my grandmother prepared for me and send them to Consort of Virtue. Tell her that I wanted to go and thank Prince Yue in person, but Prince Yue is a prince and I am one who has joined in the Consort Selection, so it is not suitable for me to do it. But ask Her Highness to accept them and tell her that when I get home, my father will prepare other valuable gifts for Prince Yue!” She took a deep breath and said.

When she came to the palace, Shao Yanru had prepared generous gifts. Now was the right time to send them out.

Since she could not start with Chu Liuyue, she should start with Consort of Virtue. Her grandmother had been to the palace a few times, and Consort of Virtue had been showing her friendliness to her secretly.

Consort of Virtue was different from Chu Liuyue. She would let Chu Liuyue know that marrying her was much better than marrying Shao Wanru.

At this time, Shao Yanru couldn't help taking Shao Wanru as her rival for the princess's position. If this were not the imperial palace, she would dare to do anything. Now, she couldn't stand Shao Wanru, the b\*tch, anymore.

She warned herself not to act rashly or be provoked by Shao Wanru at will in case she be in a mess herself. Gradually, she calmed down.

She still had a lot of time, and she had many ways to trample on Shao Wanru.

Shuqi showed the prepared generous gifts to Shao Yanru. After seeing them, Shao Yanru told her a few things to pay attention to but asked her not to mention Shao Wanru at all. The more she mentioned her, the more suspicious this looked. Since Consort of Virtue could be a consort with the highest rank after the empress, how could she be cheated so easily?

She wanted Consort of Virtue to know her sincerity, not her calculation.

After Shuqi went to send the gifts, Yujie returned to their room quietly. Shao Wanru was leaning against the bed with a book in her hand in the room. She casually flipped through the book, ready to have an afternoon nap.

“Miss, First Miss has asked Shuqi to take her gifts to Consort of Virtue, extending her gratitude to Prince Yue for saving her that day. She also said that after she leaves the palace, Duke Xing will also show his gratitude. I feel that First Miss's idea seems to be the idea of Duke Xing.” Yujie recounted everything she had just heard, and came to a conclusion.

Shao Wanru smiled, put down the book, and nodded. This was indeed Shao Yanru's idea. She wanted Consort of Virtue to see her role in Duke Xing's Mansion. Naturally, the whole mansion supported her marriage. Of course, Shao Yanru was different from her, Fifth Miss, whom the whole mansion hated.

“Go and keep hearing when Shuqi gets back. Shao Yanru should have something else to say!” Shao Wanru said with a sweet smile. In fact, she was very curious about what Shao Yanru would do next. Shao Yanru was striving to get the princess’s position, and she was too busy to deal with her. That was good for her!

Shao Yanru had always kept secret ambiguous relationships with Chu Liuyue and Chu Liuzhou. If one day they found that Shao Yanru was not as affectionate as they had imagined, she wondered what would happen then!

She strongly looked forward to seeing the scene in the end. Who would marry Shao Yanru in the end? People would have to see who was sincerer to her.

Consort of Virtue planned for her son’s future wholeheartedly, how could she know nothing about what happened in the palace? She probably cared more about the overall situation compared to Chu Liuyue. This was also an important reason for Shao Yanru to ask for her help. Now, she could also make use of her!

“You should take an afternoon nap in that room. When Shuqi returns, hear what Shao Yanru says to her and then come back!” Shao Wanru yawned and lay down, her long eyelashes fluttering a few times. She was really a little tired now.

#### **Chapter 768 The Hints Are Confusing**

Consort of Virtue looked at the gifts on the table below, picked up the teacup at hand casually, wiped away the tea foam on it with the teacup lid, took a sip, and said, “First Miss of Duke Xing’s Mansion was once good, but now... she is not very good.”

As soon as Shao Yanru’s maid had left, the curtain behind Consort of Virtue was lifted, and Chu Liuyue came out and sat down on the chair next to her, ignoring the gifts.

“What do you think, mother?” Chu Liuyue said with a cold face.

“Yue’er, there are many benefits to marry her, especially when she is very guilty now. If you can marry her, Duke Xing’s Mansion will not say anything even if you pick a few other high-ranking consorts!” Consort of Virtue thought for a moment and said smilingly to her son. In fact, it was acceptable to make Shao Yanru the princess!

Although this was a little unfair to her son, it would not be a problem when he got that high position. If Duke Xing’s Mansion was useful, they should show it high respect; if it was not useful, they could abandon it. By then, she and her son would have the final say on the choice of the empress.

“Mother...” Chu Liuyue said with a darkened face as if he had swallowed a fly.

It was not only he but also Chu Liuzhou who had witnessed Shao Yanru fall into the water and tangle with Chu Qing. Remembering this, he felt so uncomfortable.

“Yue’er, you feel wronged, right? A man of great ambition does not stick to small details. Actually, it’s easier to control Shao Yanru when she is now in this situation. The ancient military general Han Xin could bear the shame of crawling through between a hooligan’s legs, so what’s the trouble for you to

bear the small grievance today?” Consort of Virtue persuaded with a smile. Her voice was soft, but it was powerful.

The family of Consort of Virtue’s parents was also a great force, enough to compete with the empress. What she lacked was that her son didn’t have the lineal son’s title. If she had been the empress at that time, her child would be the eldest lineal son. If Chu Liuyue were the eldest lineal son, she would not have to face the chaos now.

But she just thought about it. In fact, she had not been involved in the fight after she joined the imperial harem back then. She should have never had a chance to go there, and her presence in it was just an unexpected case.

“Mother, I... can only marry her?” Chu Liuyue had not given up yet. As a man, he had the self-esteem of a man. Marrying Shao Yanru meant that he would be a cuckold, and his rival Chu Liuzhou would know it. Such embarrassment did make him restless.

But he was wise after all. He gritted his teeth, then he calmed down and said, “Mother, you’re right. I will marry her, but it would be better if she could marry into my mansion as a consort, wouldn’t it?”

Although he had calmed down, he was still unwilling to give up.

“Will the eldest lineal daughter of Duke Xing’s Mansion be willing to go to your mansion as a consort?” Consort of Virtue glanced at her son and gently reminded him.

Shao Yanru had noble status. Except for a few princesses and infantas of the royal family, few could compare with her. This was also an important reason why Consort of Virtue had hoped to let her be her daughter-in-law earlier.

“What if she is willing? If she is willing, all the problems will be solved, right? She is the eldest lineal daughter of Duke Xing, so how could the duke not support me? And I can leave the princess’s position to another noble lady. She is already impure, so she can’t say anything even if I just let her be a consort!”

Chu Liuyue suggested.

He was irritated inwardly. He had thought that he had reached an agreement with Shao Yanru. He had hinted this when he was in her place yesterday, and she seemed to have understood and also accepted it. But how could she suddenly go back on her word after only one day? What did she mean by deliberately bringing gifts to fawn on his mother? She obviously wanted to win his mother’s heart, so he felt that he had been trapped.

“It’s best if you can let her willingly be your consort!” Consort of Virtue pondered for a moment and said. She did not want her son to suffer unfair treatment, but she did not have any other choice.

But if Shao Yanru was willing to be a consort, they would have it both ways. Then, the princess candidates she had selected for her son could be used.

“Mother, don’t worry. I will talk to her again!” Chu Liuyue promised.

Seeing that her son was not angry or annoyed but looked calm, Consort of Virtue nodded secretly. It was indeed best if her son could deal with this problem calmly. She would be even more satisfied if Shao Yanru could be a consort.

When he spoke of First Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion earlier, her son, who always had a cold face, had put a small smile on his face. In fact, she was very dissatisfied. She needed a strong helper, and it was best to have a daughter-in-law with a capable family. Her son was hers, so she didn't want him to snub her when he had a wife.

More importantly, her daughter-in-law might be the empress of the country. If Shao Yanru did not listen to her in the harem in the future, how could she like her?

Now she didn't have to worry about this. Shao Yanru was just so so in her son's heart. Duke Xing's Mansion was a helping hand. If it was good to use, they would use it. If not, his son would ignore Shao Yanru.

The mother and her son talked for another while. Seeing that his mother looked tired, Chu Liuyue stood up and left.

When he got out of the palace where his mother lived, he thought for a while and strode to the Chuxiu Palace. He wanted to give Shao Yanru another chance. If she continued to be stubborn and insisted on being his princess, he would not show her mercy.

In order to make her his woman, he had given up a lot of things. Inexplicably, he remembered Shao Wanru's face and frowned even more coldly.

On his way, he suddenly saw Chu Liuchen walking slowly at the intersection ahead. He hurriedly strode over and asked, "Are you feeling better, Liuchen?"

Chu Liuchen stopped and waited for him to come over. "Where are you going, brother?"

"I went to see my mother just now. Now I'm going there to have a rest." Chu Liuyue pointed to an area ahead, a place for him to rest in the palace. It occupied the area outside the Chuxiu Palace.

"I came from the imperial study..." Chu Liuchen said as he tilted his head and had a light cough.

Chu Liuyue couldn't help staring at the side of his face. His snow-white fox fur overall made him look even paler, but he seemed to look better than before. Chu Liuyue inevitably had suspicions, but he thought that he was wrong when seeing him coughing with a clenched fist. "How could Chu Liuchen look better?" he thought.

But his father seemed to have summoned Chu Liuchen more frequently these days, and Chu Liuchen was not as weak as the rumors claimed that he could not even climb out of bed. Chu Liuyue had been confused about one thing: why was his father so nice to Chu Liuchen?

He was the eldest lineal son of the former emperor, so his father should care about him so much that he wanted him to die. However, after several observations, Chu Liuyue thought that his father truly cared about and loved him. He loved him even more than he loved his own sons. People could not only see this kind of love but also feel it.

How could his father hide his true feelings so well? He had even made those who saw it think that he was sincere to Chu Liuchen, eh?

Since his father held such an attitude, he certainly could not have a poor show. He became gentle. When Chu Liuchen turned around, he asked with concern, "Are you all right? Do you need an imperial physician to come and take a diagnosis? Please go to my place and take a rest first!"

"Thank you, brother. I'm fine. It's an old problem. It can't be healed!" Chu Liuchen said with a smile. But his voice was softer than it had been earlier. He looked at the Chuxiu Palace in the distance and suddenly asked, "What do you think of First Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion?"

Chu Liuyue's heart had a violent shake. He scrutinized Chu Liuchen but didn't find anything unusual, and then he asked, "Why do you speak of this?"

"In fact, it's just a casual question. I saw First Miss Shao's portrait at your place in the past. Later, I also painted one and wanted to exchange it with yours!"

Chu Liuchen's voice sounded gentle, without the usual moody hostility. Now it was even harder to see him through.

"You must be joking, Liuchen. It's just a casual piece. Not comparable to yours!" Chu Liuyue smiled and calmly observed Chu Liuchen.

These words were straightforward without showing enough respect. Initially, he had wanted to marry Shao Yanru, so he naturally couldn't let others look down upon her. Now it was different from the past. He didn't care about her so much. Shao Yanru had a bad reputation, but that was not bad for him.

"My painting is good? What will happen if I take it to Emperor Uncle?" Chu Liuchen said with a faint smile.

Chu Liuyue's face darkened, and his eyes glistened with fierceness. He would not give Shao Yanru to another man even if he only took Duke Xing's Mansion behind her into account. He would not even if the man was the dying patient, Chu Liuchen.

"Don't make fun of me, Liuchen. First Miss Shao is the eldest lineal daughter of Duke Xing's Mansion. If you take this painting to my father, you are sure to be scolded by him. We are all descendants of the royal family, and we can't treat our senior official so improperly. Otherwise, how will the other officials think of us if they find it out!" Chu Liuyue reprimanded with a serious face.

But Chu Liuchen waved his hand gently and said with a smile, "You're right, brother. This is not what I want to do. I have poor health. No matter how beautiful a woman is, I can't enjoy her, let alone the most beautiful woman in the capital. I'm afraid that many people like her, so I won't go and try my luck. In fact, I'd rather let a woman without ambition take the princess's position!"

After saying that, Chu Liuchen smiled and presented a fist palm salute to Chu Liuyue, saying, "Brother, I'm leaving now. My lodge is also near here, but I'm very tired now, so I won't invite you to go there!"

"Please!" Chu Liuyue stepped aside and waved his hand gently.

Chu Liuchen walked past him with a smile and went farther and farther away.

Behind him, Chu Liuyue seemed to be thinking about something, and his face turned cold. There were obviously hints in Chu Liuchen's words. What did he mean by saying that?

He looked in the direction Chu Liuchen had come. It was indeed the place where his father's imperial study was located. Did anything happen in his father's study? Or did someone also take a fancy to Shao Yanru and say anything to his father?

And what did Chu Liuchen mean by "the princess's position" and "a woman without ambition"? Did Shao Yanru also like Chu Liuchen and want to get that princess's position? If he couldn't provide her with the princess's position, would she want to be Prince Chen's princess? His heart pounded involuntarily. Surprisingly, he even thought this was possible.

Once he saw Shao Yanru accidentally bump into Chu Liuchen when she was going to the palace. Chu Liuchen didn't support her. But he always felt that the scene was a bit abnormal whenever he thought of it. And he often met ladies from noble families who threw themselves into his arms with the help of tricks.

"Go!" Chu Liuyue's face turned cold and his eyes were full of anger. And he strode forward. If Shao Yanru really dared to sit on the fence, he would not even be willing to let her be a consort!

### **Chapter 769 Well-prepared to Wait for Prince Yue**

Shao Yanru's foot recovered quickly. After resting for two days, she came back to study the course with those beauties.

She was a good learner. Most of the time, she sat on the side like Shao Wanru, watching the other beauties practice. Good learners watched the others and rested on the side.

After two days, the nanny in charge found that those few good learners were from noble families, so she told them not to come back until the next learning project.

Hearing the words of the nanny in charge, most of the beauties heaved sighs and watched these few ladies leave with pride. Why did they have such good performance? It was because they had learned very formal etiquette in their mansions a long time earlier. They behaved quite well whenever they saluted others or took steps.

In fact, the beauties brought to the palace had learned palace rules for a period of time at home. However, some etiquette instructors themselves could not put the rules into standard practice, and some beauties had just learned the rules for a short time, so they had not truly integrated the rules into their words and behavior. Naturally, they would have to keep learning for a longer period under the supervision of the nanny in charge.

"Would you like to go out for a walk, Wanru?" Shao Yanru said to Shao Wanru with a smile. This was the first time they had left the Chuxiu Palace in the morning since their arrival here.

Shao Wanru nodded and looked around. All the beauties who were out didn't want to stay in the Chuxiu Palace, so they all headed to the palace gate.

When they were outside the gate, Shao Yanru pointed to a small path in front of the palace and said, "Let's go there and enjoy the scenery."

Shao Wanru nodded. She wanted to walk around casually, so she didn't mind going anywhere.



They walked down this road, and another two beauties followed them. Shao Wanru quietly looked back and saw that several other ladies walking together or alone in different directions, but people on this road were the most.

She looked up to judge where she was going, and then she had a small smile. It turned out that everyone had a purpose.

The two beauties behind them also saw them, but they did not approach them. Instead, they were moving 10 steps behind them at a steady pace. They looked at them from time to time while talking.

They were also people with purposes!

“Wanru, it seems that the flower is about to bloom. The flowers in the palace bloom so early!” Shao Yanru walked up to a winter jasmine and praised.

Winter jasmines bloomed early, but they wouldn’t bloom so early that they already had buds.

“This is not an ordinary species, right?” Shao Wanru also came over, looked it up and down, and said.

Winter jasmines were the most common flowers, and there were many in the countryside. Such common flowers were usually not planted in the palace, let alone in a specially designed flowerbed.

These winter jasmines were indeed extraordinary. Shao Wanru could recognize these few peonies beside her. The flowers that could compete with the peonies would never be common ones. When she looked at them carefully, she found that their branches were different from those of the winter jasmines she had met before. Their branches were much thicker and bigger.

A carefully made flowerbed and the peony flowerbed on the other side looked nice in a symmetric fashion. If Shao Yanru hadn’t pointed it out, she would not have recognized that they were winter jasmines.

“This is not the ordinary winter jasmine, but one carefully cultivated by the flower house gardeners in the palace. It is cold-resistant. It is said that there are only a few in the palace. I didn’t expect to see such one here. Previously, I saw it in front of the empress’s palace gate!” Shao Yanru said with a smile.

While they were talking, the other two ladies arrived and stood beside them. They were quite amazed by the winter jasmine.

Shao Wanru frowned and suddenly remembered such a winter jasmine. “That one was also a winter jasmine.”

There was one in Prince Chen’s Mansion. It was in the place where she had been framed for strangling the sixth prince to death. The bloody red flowers were so many that what she saw was all blood. For a moment, she didn’t know whether it was true or not.

She closed her eyes hard. When she looked up again, she was clear-headed. “The flower is bright red?”

“Yes, it is bright and beautiful. The appearance of the flower is comparable to that of the peony. It is said that the flower and the peony were cultivated with the cutting method, but I don’t know about the details. It seems very complicated, and it seems so hard to succeed. Otherwise, there would not be only a few!” Shao Yanru looked at the tightly wrapped bud with great pity.

The flower seemed to be able to bloom flourishingly soon.

She remembered it so clearly, not only because she had seen it at the gate of the empress's palace, but also because Chu Liuzhou had accompanied her at that time. He broke a twig of the winter jasmine that the empress liked so much, put it into her hair, and praised her that she was more beautiful than the flower and extremely charming.

But it felt like a dream when she recalled it now.

She was now interested in Chu Liuyue.

She was here today because of Chu Liuyue. She believed that Prince Yue would surely come out to meet her when he saw her.

This road led to Prince Yue's lounge. All these princes had their lounges outside the Chuxiu Palace, and they were in very high places, designed for them to pick beauties with their own eyes.

Not far away from here was Chu Liuyue's place. One could see the penthouse and even the guards at the palace gate.

Shao Wanru stopped watching the guards at the penthouse. Not only Shao Yanru but also the two ladies who had come later were watching the penthouse secretly. They were talking about the winter jasmine and looked quite absorbed, but they had different things on their minds.

She had no purpose, so she was much calmer than the three ladies.

Since Shao Yanru was here, Chu Liuyue would surely come.

As expected, as soon as she finished, Shao Yanru heard a clear voice coming from behind. "First Miss Shao, you are wrong. This winter jasmine was not bred in the palace."

The tall, handsome Chu Liuyue came out from behind the rockery and put a gentle smile on his everlasting cold face. With his hands behind his back, he walked over slowly.

With the wind blowing his brocade robe, he looked more handsome and more attractive.

Shao Wanru stopped watching and bowed. These brothers of the royal family were all good-looking. Although Prince Zhou, Chu Liuzhou, was slightly less handsome, he was exceptionally handsome if he appeared outside. As for Chu Liuchen, he was amazingly handsome. Anyone who saw him would think that he should not have descended to the earthly world.

Of course, he who was so weak should have died a long time ago!

"Greetings, Prince Yue!" Shao Yanru and the other two beauties bowed shyly. Their tender faces turned pink, looking extremely lovely.

Chu Liuyue's eyes swept over the faces of these ladies and finally fell on Shao Wanru's face. Shao Wanru looked extremely calm. Her long eyelashes flapped a few times, leaving irregular shadows on her face. Her skin was snow-white and her lips were deep red. Even if she didn't speak or smile, she could attract people's attention.

"Up!" Chu Liuyue stopped looking and said gently.

All of them stood up straight.

Looking at Chu Liuyue with joy, Shao Yanru couldn't hide the pride in her eyes. As expected, after sending gifts to Consort of Virtue, Consort of Virtue had asked Chu Liuyue to come over. And he didn't avoid her.

"Why do you think I'm wrong, Your Highness? People in the palace said so earlier!" Shao Yanru continued the topic and said softly.

Shao Yanru was really good at talking. It was she who had started the topic moments earlier, so giving an answer was quite natural for her. No one would think she was currying favor. But it would look much awkward if someone else answered.

"This is winter jasmine, but it was actually not bred by palace gardeners. It was the empress who asked people to breed it. The palace climate is actually not suitable, and it's not convenient to take care of it. It is bred outside and then sent to the place, and palace servants are asked to take good care of it. Even so, few can survive in the palace. Initially, the palace leader wanted to grow this flower in an independent courtyard!"

Chu Liuyue looked up at the winter jasmine that was about to bloom and spoke.

There were still no leaves on the branches, but there were already quite a few buds. In such a cold winter wind, it was pleasant to see so many buds.

"Only this flower? How many flowers should be sent in?" Shao Yanru looked surprised. She gently covered her mouth with her handkerchief, showing her softness and charms to a proper degree.

She behaved quite appropriately. She didn't look too pretentious or boring. Shao Wanru glanced at her face and had doubts. Shao Yanru could not do so well even if she was quite scheming. After all, she was just a lady living in the depths of a big house. Was she so skilled in some aspects?

Was she born with such skills?

She looked at her demeanor thoughtfully and found that she was natural and charming and looked delicate and lovable. She didn't seem to find anything unusual in her, but after pondering it over, she realized that she had changed a few small details, which made her whole image quite different.

She felt something strange inexplicably!

She couldn't tell what the strange feeling was, so she stood aside and watched her talking and behaving, hoping to figure out why she felt she was strange.

"A lot of them were sent here at the beginning. It should be more than 100. However, only a few survived in the end and were then distributed to different palaces!" Chu Liuyue said. He looked so urbane, quite different from his usual cold look, making the other two young ladies very excited.

They had taken this path for the sake of seeing Chu Liuyue! One of them opened her mouth, ready to say something, but Shao Yanru spoke before she could.

"Was the courtyard unoccupied then?" Shao Yanru's eyes were full of curiosity. She had stunning looks, or she would not be called the most beautiful woman. The eye expression with a little yearning gave

people a better impression of her. Although he was quite dissatisfied with her, Chu Liuyue thought that it was pleasant to see a beauty with such yearning.

“That courtyard was indeed unoccupied, but no plants were found suitable for that place,” Chu Liuyue nodded and said. Then he pointed to a place not far ahead and explained, “It’s actually that place.”

“Prince Yue... can we go and take a look?” Shao Yanru always knew what she should say next, and what she said made Chu Liuyue satisfied. She looked up at the distance but blushed as if she was embarrassed by her advice.

“I happen to be free, so let me take you there for a walk!”

## **Chapter 770 The Idea of Making the Maple Leaf Collage**

The courtyard, which was large but empty, could be regarded as a discarded place. Only at the corner of the wall were there a few unknown saplings, which were so inconspicuous.

The pavilions, terraces, and towers were clean and tidy, but everything here looked deserted maybe because it had been so long since someone had been here the last time.

There were many courtyards like this in the imperial palace, so who would visit a discarded one without scenery or trees? More importantly, this place was far away from the center of the imperial palace.

Prince Chen’s Mansion, Chu Liuchen’s house, was also called the Southern Palace, which had a side door here. Even just for the sake of avoiding arousing suspicion, the palace concubines did not dare to come here.

A path led to the secluded place where there were beautiful pavilions, terraces, and towers. Actually, this place was not bad except that there were no flowers or trees that looked interesting being together nor were people moving inside it.

This place was tranquil. After bypassing the one-story pavilion ahead, one could even see a big lake, where there was a waterside pavilion connecting an islet. Rarely, there were trees on it. Watching from afar, one could see a pavilion among the trees.

Shao Wanru looked back at the pavilion behind her and then looked at the building in the center of the lake. This place was actually very secret. One who came here to take a walk would find that this was a quiet place and that he would not be easily found.

Shao Yanru also saw the islet in the heart of the lake and asked, “Your Highness, that place is nice. Could we go and take a walk?”

Chu Liuyue glanced at the islet in the center of the lake and nodded. He really wanted to talk to Shao Yanru about something, and it was not suitable to have many people around.

“Sister, Your Highness, go ahead. I’m a little tired. I’ll take a rest here, okay?” Shao Wanru said and pointed to the pavilion behind her.

“Well, Wanru, please take a rest. We will be back soon. Are there servants here, Your Highness?” Shao Yanru was overjoyed and immediately said when hearing that Shao Wanru was going to stay.

"There are no servants here, but there's one who has been cleaning the furnishings here. It's good for you to stay and rest, Fifth Miss!" Chu Liuyue nodded and walked to the waterside pavilion, and Shao Yanru was close after him.

Shao Wanru turned around and walked back, but the other two ladies looked at each other, wishing to follow them. But Chu Liuyue did not invite them, so they felt too ashamed to follow. Yet, they did not want to give up. So, they exchanged a glance, clenched their teeth, and followed Shao Yanru.

Since Prince Yue did not say anything to them, he naturally wanted them to follow him.

Yujie looked back and said to Shao Wanru with a smile, "Miss, they all have gone over!"

Shao Wanru nodded. Obviously, the two ladies were here because of Chu Liuyue, so how could they stop following him so easily? This way, she could enjoy some quiet moments here.

Actually, the array of tall buildings ahead had a large courtyard, facing the gate they had just come from earlier. Probably, it was the main section of the house. In the courtyard, there was a row of five main rooms and there were eight wing rooms on each side. No wonder this was the imperial palace. Even a discarded courtyard was so large.

Shao Wanru did not enter the main rooms but sat down in the cloister. She narrowed her eyes and looked at the sunshine from the opposite direction. The sunshine was warm, not strong, and there were walls on all sides, preventing the wind from coming in. So, it was quite comfortable to sit here.

There was an unknown big tree in the center of the yard, but there were only a few leaves on the tree. When the wind swept past, they fell one after another. They were all withered yellow broken leaves.

Shao Wanru asked Yujie to sit down beside her, but her eyes fell on the big tree.

They looked like maple leaves. Even if they were, the fallen leaves were all withered now. They were not as red and lively as they had been in autumn. They still had beautiful colors, but they had lost all their water and become broken, so it was hard to deal with them.

Sitting sideways under the cloister, she put her hand on the balustrade, supported her chin, and listened to the dismal squeaks of the wind that went past her ears. At this moment, she felt so quiet and calmed down.

Yujie couldn't sit quietly here. Only after a while did she say that she was going to pick some maple leaves. Shao Wanru let her do it and saw that she was happily picking up leaves under the tree. Yet, every time she picked up a leaf, she had to throw it away because they were either ugly or broken. Some of them would immediately break a bit if she touched them.

"Miss, why are all of them bad? The ones that we picked up earlier were all good, weren't they?" After picking up a few leaves, she still didn't find anyone intact or good-looking or hard to get broken, so she could only return without real gains.

"The previous ones were leaves that fell in the golden age of the autumn, so they were extraordinary. But leaves at this time only look beautiful!" Shao Wanru explained with a smile.

"Miss, what is the collage you made earlier? It is so beautiful," Yujie asked with a smile as she turned her eyes and remembered the collage Shao Wanru had pasted with maple leaves earlier.

In fact, she had asked other people about it in private, but they all said that they didn't know. But they had picked up a lot of beautiful maple leaves for their young lady earlier.

"First, pick up the suitable maple leaves, then build a good foundation, and finally stick them to it, making a collage. I'm going to make it a gift and send it to someone!" Shao Wanru did not hide it this time. It would be Empress Dowager's birthday soon. In her previous life, something had happened at that birthday and Empress Dowager had had a serious illness because of it.

And this had something to do with the maple leaf collage!

Now she had also made a maple leaf collage because she simply wanted to avoid this disaster.

That memory also seemed to be related to Chu Liuchen, so she could not remember it clearly. She only vaguely felt that Empress Dowager's illness had affected Chu Liuchen greatly. It seemed that he had almost been ruined at that time. As for the specifics, she could not remember them, but she knew that she must stop it from happening.

Therefore, she had long prepared the maple leaves and started to make the collage bit by bit.

The collage made of maple leaves required her painting skills. She had a moment of enlightenment because of Wen Xichi. However, in her previous life, when she met Wen Xichi, the man had already been in very poor health. It was just his novel idea. After all, he had never tried it before. It was a whim he had had when he was ill. Since he could not make it come true, he had told Shao Wanru about it and the points for attention !

When she was in the Deputy Prime Minister's house, Shao Wanru had not done anything. But when she was in the imperial palace, she had tried to learn it by herself for some time.

The skillful painting with the properly made maple leaf theme looked even more vivid and different.

Although she had skills, Shao Wanru had ruined many maple leaves. The maple leaves she had gathered earlier were not enough, so she had asked a few other servant girls to gather some more later.

In the past, she didn't know if she could make a good maple leaf collage, so she didn't tell her servant girls about her intent. Now, when she had made one with much difficulty, she was not afraid of leaking some information.

"Send it to someone as a gift? What a pity! Miss, you've spent so much effort making this one!" Yujie said, feeling pity for Shao Wanru.

That was how she really felt!

Her lady had failed numerous times before she finally got this good work, but she would give it to another person. Thinking of all this, she really felt pity.

"No matter what, I'll send a gift!" Shao Wanru said with a smile and shook her head. She didn't think it was a pity. In fact, a painting like this was not good, but it was unique indeed. If it was taken as a real painting, it was naturally incomparable to the paintings of the painting masters. Actually, the advantage of this one was only the creative design.

It was just a small trick used to make Empress Dowager happy and prevent the disaster from happening on that day. That was the best result to expect.

Seeing Shao Wanru smile without saying anything, Yujie knew that her lady had made up her mind, so she stopped persuading her. But she pointed to the maple tree and said, "Miss, do you want me to pick some more for you?"

"No, I've had enough, and these are basically useless!" Shao Wanru shook her head. Although they had beautiful colors, they had withered. It was almost impossible for her to fold and cut them into the shapes she wanted. Besides, she had almost done it, so she didn't need more.

One was enough!

Yuejie, who was facing the gate of the courtyard, suddenly pointed to the gate and said in surprise, "Miss, I saw someone just now. It's strange. There is usually no visitor here, but how could someone pass by?"

"They are back?" Shao Wanru turned to the gate.

"Let me go and check it out!" Yujie went out and looked around at the gate, but she didn't see anyone, so she looked back in surprise at Shao Wanru and said, "No one!"

After that, she walked out of the courtyard in disbelief and went in the direction where they had come from. She really felt that she had seen someone moments earlier, but why was there no one outside?

Without finding anyone, she stamped her feet and turned around to go back. Unexpectedly, when she turned around, she saw Xiao Xuanzi standing with a smile behind her. So scared, she took a step back and almost fell.

"Why... why are you here?" Yujie asked angrily. After standing still, she covered her chest and looked in horror at Xiao Xuanzi who had suddenly appeared behind her.

"I came here with my master. Let me take you to watch a good show!" Xiao Xuanzi said happily without feeling that Yujie was frightened. At the moment, she didn't want to go out with him at all.

"I won't go. I have to guard my lady!" Yujie said coldly and returned to the courtyard.

"Hey, don't go back. My master is there!" Seeing that she was going back, Xiao Xuanzi hurriedly came back, stood in front of her, and whispered, "Madam, don't go back. If you disturb my master, I will be in big trouble!"

His master had just gone inside. If the stupid Yujie rushed in, his master would be angry.

"No, I have to go and take a look first, or I will be worried!" Yujie said. Then she pushed Xiao Xuanzi away and turned, walking toward the gate. After thinking for a while, she did not dare to rush in. Instead, she carefully pressed herself against the gate and looked inside.

Chu Liuchen's sudden appearance made Shao Wanru so surprised that she stared at him in astonishment. She didn't know why he had suddenly come here at this time.

Chu Liuchen smiled, walked up to her, held her hand, and said, "Let's go inside and watch the show!"

After saying that, he led her, who was still in a daze, to the main room in the middle. But he suddenly looked at the gate insidiously, which made Yujie so scared that she took her head back and leaned against the wall in a great panic and a cold sweat!

So surprised, she thought, "Why did Prince Chen suddenly come here?"

"Hurry! Let's watch the good show, or we'll miss it!" Xiao Xuanzi pulled her sleeve hard, trying to take her to the right side of the courtyard...