

Medical Princess 921

Chapter 921 Entrusted with the Care of Princess Chen

The Empress was willing to make a temporary concession for everything she wanted!

The Empress lowered her head to hide the anger in her eyes and tried to calm down. She was still kneeling, looking dignified and decent and making no complaints against Chu Liuyue, who had quarreled against her son.

"Uncle the Emperor!" Chu Liuchen stepped into the Imperial Study and saluted the Emperor.

"Have you finished the acupuncture? Do you feel better?" The Emperor was in a fury, but he inquired about Chu Liuchen with great concern as soon as he saw the latter. He observed Chu Liuchen's face and rested assured when he saw Chu Liuchen's better complexion.

"Thank you for your concern, Uncle the Emperor. I'm very well now!" Chu Liuchen said, "I heard that you punished the two brothers by flogging. Please spare them, Uncle the Emperor."

There was no reluctance on his face, nor was there any intimacy toward the two princes.

"The two unfilial sons have done such a thing. How can I let them go so easily?" As soon as Chu Liuyue and Chu Liuzhou were mentioned, the Emperor became angry. Recently, they had caused lots of trouble, which annoyed the Emperor so much.

For the Emperor, the case discussed today was not even such a big deal, but it happened to be a good chance for him to vent his anger that had been accumulated since the two princes started to make trouble again and again. Therefore, he punished them by flogging at the same time, after which he even ordered them to kneel. Both the Empress and Consort of Virtue in the harem were alerted.

However, the Emperor did not intend to spare them because of Empress and Consort of Virtue's interceding for their sons.

The Emperor clenched his fists and suppressed the surging anger in his heart.

"Uncle the Emperor, though you've punished Duke Yong's Mansion, you didn't remove Duke Yong's title, which means that it is not such a serious crime. If you punish Eldest Brother and Second Brother again and again, what will the officials think? They might draw a wrong conclusion!"

Since the Emperor was silent, Chu Liuchen continued with a calm voice, "I didn't intend to come. After all, I don't want to get involved in this case. In addition, it's not convenient for me to express an opinion on it, as I've just been recovered a little. Otherwise, the officials will be all in a muddle again!"

With his hands against the desk, the Emperor looked bitter. He knew what Chu Liuchen meant. "A wrong conclusion? Yes, they will!"

The crown prince had not been decided yet! He had always wanted to make a choice between Chu Liuyue and Chu Liuzhou. However, he had severely punished the two princes for such a "trivial" incident today. The officials might doubt whether the two princes were the people he chose!

Including Chu Liuchen, there were four princes in total. Either the first two or the second two were the candidates of the crown prince. Many officials had been observing it in secret. It was very likely that what happened today might lead to something more serious! And then it would be even more out of control.

As for what Chu Liuchen had just said, it made the Emperor distressed. He pursed his lips tightly. "If possible, I really didn't want to see such a scene!"

"Let the two unfilial sons go back to rest!" the Emperor said coldly.

Derong immediately answered and went out. He asked several young eunuchs to help Prince Yue and Prince Zhou up. When they were helped up, they almost fainted.

The Empress and Consort of Virtue hastened to stand up and go to comfort their sons. They ordered someone to bring cushions and take the princes to get a rest.

The Empress was the last one to leave. She whispered to Derong, "Eunuch Derong, please take my gratitude to Prince Chen!"

"I will pass on the message!" Derong said with a smile.

"I am very curious! How did Prince Chen persuade His Majesty to spare them? Later, I must express my greatest gratitude to him! If it weren't for Prince Chen, God knows how long the punishment will last!" the Empress said with a grateful face.

Derong shook his head and said, "Your Majesty, you're too serious. It is also owed to His Majesty's worry about the two princes!"

As for what Chu Liuchen said, Derong spoke no word.

As the Empress couldn't get any information, she could only turn around and leave. "Derong is as annoying as he was! I still cannot get anything from him."

Consort of Virtue, who was not far away from them, looked at the Empress and then left with a cold face.

She was not the Empress, so she didn't have to keep calm and dignified in front of others like the Empress, who showed kindness to both the princes even though she hated Prince Yue in her heart. Nor was she able to do so! Now she hated Prince Zhou so much that she only wished he and the pretentious Empress would die from an incident.

"My son is the eldest. How can he not inherit the throne?"

In the Imperial Study, Chu Liuchen had already been seated when Derong came in to report. Then, he stood behind the Emperor. Derong was the only person in the study except for the uncle and nephew.

"Chen'er, who do you think is more suitable, your eldest brother or second brother?" the Emperor suddenly asked, casting a pair of examining eyes at Chu Liuchen's face.

Derong stood still behind the broad chair the Emperor sat on, wishing to keep himself out of their talk. He did not want to hear such a subject, but he had to.

None of the Empress, Prince Yue, or Prince Zhou had thought that the Emperor would want to get an answer to such a big question from Prince Chen, who they believed was the last prince to inherit the throne!

But, was it the case? Eunuch Derong, who had experienced years of ups and downs, didn't think so.

Nothing was impossible in the Palace!

"I don't know!" Chu Liuchen said, with his delicate lips showing a cold and emotionless smile. It seemed that he was talking about something very common that had nothing to do with him.

"Say your opinions!" The Emperor insisted on getting an answer from him.

"Uncle the Emperor, if you insist, I can only say that I can't tell! I can't tell who is better, Eldest Brother or Second Brother. It will be best if they can complement each other!" Chu Liuchen said bluntly. He didn't intend to hide his opinion.

"Zhou'er might be a little impulsive, but Yue'er can take the overall situation into consideration!" The Emperor hoped to see a slight emotional fluctuation in Chu Liuchen's face, but he was still calm.

"If Eldest Brother had considered the overall situation, the case we talked about today would not have happened! No matter how we look into it, it was a well-planned plot! Uncle the Emperor, you haven't got any definite evidence by now, have you?"

Chu Liuchen retorted upon him with sarcasm, which gave a strike on the Emperor's heart and made him ashamed.

Compared with Chu Liuzhou, Chu Liuyue was more likely to be the person behind the sense. After all, Chu Liuzhou was an impatient guy prone to make mistakes. He didn't look like a scheming person.

However, it was just a proposition. Since the Emperor could not figure out who on earth was behind it, he punished the two sons together.

"Now that neither of them confesses, I'll punish them both! Anyway, they have caused a lot of trouble recently!" the Emperor thought just now.

"Do you think Xin'er is better?" After hearing Chu Liuchen's words, the Emperor didn't want to talk about the two annoying sons anymore. He thought for a while and started to talk about his youngest son.

"Fourth Brother is good!" Chu Liuchen nodded without hesitation.

But that was not what the Emperor expected. He had never thought of choosing Chu Liuxin as the crown prince of Eastern Palace. Compared with his other sons, the youngest son was too unrestrained and had a child's temperament. He was still a child, so he wouldn't become sensible unless he grew older.

Chu Liuxin started to avoid meeting people since Shao Yanru's incident happened. Not only did he refuse to go to the imperial court with various excuses, but he was also rarely seen in the Palace. If someone came across him, he always showed bashfulness and shame in his eyes.

The Emperor has recalled the memory of Shao Yanru. That was also a piece of awkward memories for him.

Therefore, every time he met his youngest son, he would feel inexplicably embarrassed. It felt like he had robbed his son of a woman. When the Emperor thought that it was all Shao Yanru's fault, he became more and more displeased with her.

"No matter how beautiful that woman is, I don't like her! She is such a troublemaker! I shall lock her up in the Palace so that she can't see others in the rest of her life!"

"Xin'er is not the one!" The Emperor looked at Chu Liuchen and shook his head. In fact, compared with other princes, the Emperor appreciated the one in front of him more. Although he didn't agree with Chu Liuchen on the latter's recommendation of his three sons, Chu Liuchen was neither anxious nor impatient. Any other prince could never compete with him on such self-restraint.

"Then it can only be Eldest Brother or Second Brother!" Chu Liuchen casually flicked the dust on his clothes. He behaved calmly and elegantly. People could sense the nobility and confidence in his bones from his lazy attitude. He could charm people with just a gesture without a word.

The Emperor no longer wanted to talk about the two disappointing sons. He changed the topic and became worried. "Are you sure that you can go to Nan Jiang this time?"

At first, he didn't agree that Chu Liuchen sent the ambassadors to Xu State, Nan Jiang, in person. He thought Chu Qing could deal with the problem alone. That was just a small state which could not shake his country!

"Uncle the Emperor, I have always wanted to go out on a journey. Why not take this opportunity?" Chu Liuchen said with a smile, "I used to wish to travel further, but I couldn't because of the bad health at that time!"

Jiangzhou was the furthest place he had been by now. There he met his favorite girl. Thinking of this, Chu Liuchen couldn't help showing a handsome smile on his face, and his eyes became gentle.

"You've just got married. It's not good for your princess if you leave her now!" The Emperor understood that Chu Liuchen married Shao Wanru out of love. At this time, he couldn't help mentioning Shao Wanru, hoping that it could change his mind. He didn't want Chu Liuchen to take the risk, not at all.

"Zhuzhuo will visit Imperial Grandmother when she is free. She will be fine under the protection of Imperial Grandmother and you, Uncle the Emperor. I have also asked her to turn to Imperial Grandmother and Uncle the Emperor when she can't deal with the problem herself. No one can bully my princess!" Chu Liuchen raised his head with a proud face and a pair of shining eyes.

It could even be said that it was an arrogant expression. At first glance, one could tell that he was a favored prince. But the Emperor agreed to fulfill his expectation. He nodded repeatedly and said, "Yes, yes! No one can bully your princess. You can rest assured to go. I will take care of her!"

Chapter 922 The Emperor Is Partial

The Emperor was very explicit about his attitude! He had always taken good care of the young couple. Now Chu Liuchen was leaving to escort the ambassadors to Nan Jiang, so he would naturally promise his

nephew to look after his wife well. He also enjoyed his nephew's trust in him, though Chu Liuchen was a little arrogant.

Compared with his two sons who always wanted to benefit from him, Chu Liuchen was much better.

"I thank you on behalf of Zhuozhuo, Uncle the Emperor!" Chu Liuchen stood up with a smile.

His intimate attitude delighted the Emperor a lot. Later, the uncle and nephew talked about Nan Jiang for a while before Chu Liuchen left.

It became quiet in the Imperial Study after Chu Liuchen left. "Derong, do you think I am wrong?" the Emperor suddenly asked.

Derong's forehead was covered with sweats. He quickly lowered his head and said, "You are a wise emperor, Your Majesty!"

"Nonsense! If I were wise enough, such a thing would not have happened!" the Emperor sighed and leaned against the broad chair. "I've betrayed him, haven't I?"

"Prince Chen will not blame you, Your Majesty!" Derong said carefully.

"He will if he knows it! But I had no choice at that time..." the Emperor sighed heavily again, looking extremely upset.

"You always treat Prince Chen so well as you do to your son, Your Majesty!" Derong tried his best to calm himself. "Prince Chen is the most favored person, who can do whatever he wants in the Palace!"

The Emperor became delightful due to Derong's words. A benign smile gradually came into being on his frowned face. "The kid was born with a weak body and pushed to the edge of his dying for several times. How lucky it is that he can grow up well. How can I allow others to bully him?"

"Your Majesty, you are benevolent!" Derong lowered his head and said.

The Emperor fell in silence for a while and thought of the past. Compared with the other princes, Chu Liuchen was whom he paid the most attention to. He was afraid that Chu Liuchen could not survive. Fortunately, Chu Liuchen was getting better, and it gratified the Emperor so much. Compared with his other sons, Chu Liuchen was smarter, and he did not care about the throne at all.

They looked more like father and son when they talked to each other.

"However, he doesn't have a deep affection for his other brothers!" the Emperor said and couldn't help frowning again.

"Prince Chen has been in poor health since he was a child, and the imperial physician repeatedly warned him to keep calm. After so many years passed, it is hard for him to get close to other princes even if he is in good health now!" Derong said in a low voice.

What he said upset the Emperor again. "The child lives a bitter life! But he does keep a light brotherhood with his brothers! It doesn't mean there is no relationship between them!"

"He actually regards his family as important!" the Emperor sighed and said.

Derong was confused, wondering why the Emperor drew such a conclusion. Everyone in the Palace knew that Prince Chen was cold-hearted. He never let go of anyone who annoyed him for anyone's sake. Either when they were children or now, the other princes once suffered because of Chu Liuchen, though they were all princes of the same status.

Of course, Derong would not take the initiative to ask the Emperor. The Emperor was partial, and as his trusted eunuch, he had to turn a blind eye on it.

"At least, Prince Chen is very filial to you and Empress Dowager!" Derong talked about something pleasant with a smile.

"It might be Prince Chen's only advantage. He cares about no one else in the Palace except for His Majesty and Empress Dowager. Of course, under the protection of Empress Dowager and the Emperor, Prince Chen doesn't have to show respect to anyone else, including the other princes.

"When he is in a good mood, he might call those princes Brothers. When he is in a bad mood, he will just be indifferent.

"As for the occasional gentle smile on his face, it is actually a mask!" Derong tended to believe that Prince Chen was an emotionless person.

As he thought of these, he felt a chill on his back. Every time he saw Prince Chen, who didn't look well, Derong always became intense.

After Chu Liuchen left the Imperial Study, he was not in a hurry to return to his mansion. He ordered Xiao Xuanzi to push him in the wheelchair to the Empress Dowager's Palace of Benevolent Peace.

When he arrived at the Palace of Benevolent Peace and found that Consort of Virtue was also there, with wet eyes. At first glance, he knew she must be crying just now. She hurriedly looked away and wiped her tears when she caught sight of Chu Liuchen. When she looked back, she kept a smile on her face. After Chu Liuchen bowed to her, she said, "Empress Dowager, Prince Chen is so filial to you. He comes to visit you now!"

"This child cherishes affection and personal loyalty!" Empress Dowager smiled and waved her hand in a gesture that indicated Chu Liuchen to sit next to her. Chu Liuchen was pleasing to her eye. "Not only is he good-looking, but he also values the relationship with me so much. Now that he has recovered, he will be able to bring me a great-grandson soon!"

Consort of Virtue cast an annoyed glance at Empress Dowager, and then looked at Chu Liuchen's face. Chu Liuchen behaved properly but he didn't show respect to her! After he bowed to her, he totally ignored her! "Is it the so-called cherishing affection and personal loyalty?"

However, Consort of Virtue didn't dare to rebuke Chu Liuchen. After all, he was Empress Dowager's favorite grandson! "My son is the eldest son of the Emperor and the first grandson of Empress Dowager. Shouldn't Empress Dowager like him more? Why does everyone pay attention to such a sick person?"

"Do you feel better, Your Highness?" Consort of Virtue asked. She was dissatisfied, but she didn't dare to show it on her face.

"Thanks to you, Consort of Virtue, I feel good!" Chu Liuchen said.

"Did the imperial physician say something?" Empress Dowager asked. She became worried as long as it came to Chu Liuchen's health.

"Don't worry, Imperial Grandmother! I have been in good health now. I am leaving for Nan Jiang to escort the ambassadors in a few days. I hope that Imperial Grandmother can take care of Zhuozhuo!" Chu Liuchen said softly.

"Can you not go?" Empress Dowager had just informed it and she was very displeased.

"Someone has to go! Anyway, I'm getting better now. It doesn't matter if I take the task!" Chu Liuchen comforted Empress Dowager with a smile.

Empress Dowager was very reluctant about it, but she was well aware that she couldn't stop Chu Liuchen since he had made up his mind. "He has always been a strong-willed child."

"As a patient who had just recovered a little, how dare he travel far? Be careful and don't lose your life in another country!" Consort of Virtue sneered in her heart, "Well, I wish he could die outside in case he becomes fully recovered and then plots against us."

"Empress Dowager, you can rest assured! Prince Chen wants to dedicate himself to our country! Yue'er has told me about this and he praised Prince Chen again and again. He said he also would like to go out to broaden his horizons if Prince Chen did not accept this decree. It is said that there are many things in Nan Jiang that we have never seen before!" Consort of Virtue flattered Empress Dowager with a smile.

But she was implying that Chu Liuchen was going to have fun in Nan Jiang.

"If Consort of Virtue likes Nan Jiang, I can give up my chance to Eldest Brother!" Chu Liuchen said.

With only a few words, Chu Liuchen made her speechless and nervous. Of course, she did not want Chu Liuyue to go to Nan Jiang, even if there was no danger. At the critical moment of striving for the throne, how could Chu Liuyue leave the capital city?

She became embarrassed and laughed. Then she tried hard to show an aggrieved smile on her face. "I want him to go, but he was punished by His Majesty just now. I'm afraid that he needs to stay in bed for ten days or half a month!"

When it came to what happened at the Imperial Study, Consort of Virtue's eyes turned wet again. She turned around and said, "Empress Dowager, Yue'er was framed, he shouldn't have been punished. When I went to see him just now, he asked me to see whether His Majesty felt uncomfortable or not! Yue'er cares about His Majesty so much, even when he himself is still in pain!"

"Eldest Brother are so considerate of Uncle the Emperor. Uncle will definitely be gratified if he knows!" Chu Liuchen said in an indifferent tone.

It was a perfunctory reply, obviously.

Consort of Virtue blinked her eyes. It didn't get the expected effect, so she was unable to do the show anymore. She could only reply to Chu Liuchen with a simple word and looked away to wipe her tears. She couldn't talk about the topic anymore. Suddenly, a trace of anger flashed in her eyes. "Chu Liuchen becomes more and more annoying, but I can't do anything to him!"

She couldn't deal with Chu Liuchen. Instead, she had to pretend to care for Chu Liuchen for the sake of the Emperor and Empress Dowager. It really made her feel wronged and angry!

The Emperor's decree was brought to Duke Yong's Mansion. Countess Yong passed out as soon as she heard that Di Yan's position as the heir of a duke was removed, which meant the title of Duke Yong would be kept until Di Rufeng passed away.

Di Yan was pale. He looked at the eunuch announcing the imperial edict in disbelief. After the eunuch finished the announcement, Di Yan took over the imperial edict and read it over and over again. He staggered and almost fell over.

He had no title anymore. From now on, he would be the same as ordinary people. If he couldn't pass the imperial exam, the Di Family would completely decline and no longer be a noble family.

"How could it happen? Why was I implicated in the matter? It was Mother and Qin Yuru who made the trouble, and it had nothing to do with me!"

Di Yan was in a daze. He stared at the imperial edict in his hands with his fingers trembling.

"Cousin..." Qin Yuru also couldn't believe it. She came over to read the imperial edict in Di Yan's hands. "Could there be a mistake? How could it end up like this?"

Early in this morning, Countess Yong took Di Yan to Ningyuan Army General's Mansion. She promised that she would return all the money to Qin Yuru, and that Di Yan would expel all his concubines away and live a peaceful life with Qin Yuru in the future!

Qin Yuru was easily convinced. Persuaded by Qin Huaiyong and Madam Di with a few words, she followed Di Yan back to Duke Yong's Mansion. Unexpectedly, no sooner had she entered the gate than the imperial edict was issued, with such bad news that Di Yan's title was removed.

"Di Yan's title is gone, then even if I give birth to a son in the future, he won't have a title." Qin Yuru panicked.

"Pa!" She was heavily slapped in the face...

Chapter 923 Go Back to Marquis Xing's Mansion; Chu Qing Pays a Visit

Though it was just a domestic affair between Countess Yong and her daughter-in-law Qin Yuru in Duke Yong's Mansion, Qin Yuru was very decisive and directly reported her mother-in-law to the court. After all, Countess Yong had embezzled Qin Yuru and Madam Di's money made in their dowry shops for nearly twenty years!

What's more, she also accused Countess Yong of secretly feeding her medicines that prevented pregnancy when she suffered a miscarriage.

Countess Yong became an unbelievably greedy, vicious and unregenerate woman in others' eyes because of these accusations.

But even so, it was just a dispute in the inner court in other people's eyes. And they were waiting for Duke Yong's divorcing Countess Yong.

Things did not go as expected, however! The daughter-in-law was reconciled with her mother-in-law early the next morning! People were told that the daughter-in-law misunderstood her mother-in-law in the money problem. In fact, the daughter-in-law's biological mother had always known about it, but she didn't tell her daughter because she was afraid that her daughter was too young to deal with such a large sum of money! As for the infertility-preventing medicine, an old maid of the mother-in-law did it. It was said that the old maid was bribed by one of Di Yan's concubines to frame the daughter-in-law and alienate the daughter-in-law from her mother-in-law.

Qin Yuru went to the yamen and withdrew the lawsuit in person!

It seemed that the matter was about to be minimized. Those who watched the fun were very disappointed. They had thought it was a big show, anyway.

But what happened next was totally beyond many people's expectations. Instead of Countess Yong, Duke Yong and his son took the responsibility.

Di Yan's title as the Heir of Duke Yong was removed and the title of Duke Yong would be gone.

Such a punishment was much more serious than expelling Countess Yong. For a moment, all the officials were shocked, not understanding why such a trivial matter would bring Duke Yong's Mansion such big trouble.

Some well-informed people secretly got some news. It was said that it had something to do with two princes' colluding with Duke Yong! That's why his family could just keep the title of Duke Yong until he died.

It was the news from the Imperial Palace, so it was more or less correct. Not only Duke Yong but also Prince Yue and Prince Zhou were punished. The two princes were flogged at the Imperial Study. Even the Empress and Consort of Virtue were alert to it and they knelt outside the Imperial Study to intercede with the Emperor for their sons.

The Empress and Consort of Virtue had the highest status in the harem, but they even knelt to beg for mercy. It meant that the Emperor must fly in a rage! In such cases as these, it was actually his luck that Duke Yong could keep his life and title when being implicated in such a matter.

But here was another question!

The whole thing had nothing to do with Di Yan. Why was he punished instead of Duke Yong? Could it be that Duke Yong put all the blame on his son when making a confession in the Imperial Study, so the Emperor was so furious that he dismissed Di Yan's title?

Such a statement was quite close to the truth. When Di Rufeng was in the Palace at that time, he indeed pushed the blame on Di Yan.

However, Di Rufeng just wanted to modify the issue into a less serious dispute in the inner court at that time, so he got his son involved in his confession. If he had known that it would make his descendants lose the title of nobility forever, Duke Yong would have made Countess Yong take all the blame.

Everyone outside the Palace had various speculations about the case as onlookers, while people in the Palace were highly concerned about it, though the lawsuit had been withdrawn. They secretly inquired about the details of the incident.

They all wanted to know the Emperor's attitude toward the two implicated princes.

Rumors and gossip were everywhere outside the Palace, but it was very tense in the Palace—everyone apprehended danger in every sound! Even the imperial concubines remained cautious every second, for fear that they would make a mistake and end up like Duke Yong.

What an undeserved disaster it was!

The Heir of Duke Yong was quite pitiful, marrying an unwomanly wife and having a greedy and vicious mother. Some people said that they saw him leave Duke Yong's Mansion and rush out of the city in anger and he hadn't come back by now.

"Miss, the carriage is ready!" Yujie came in and reported to Shao Wanru.

"Let's go!" Shao Wanru nodded and walked out, followed closely by Yujie and Qu Le.

Marquis Xing's Mansion sent her an invitation yesterday, saying that Commandery Prince Qing would pay a visit to their mansion and propose to one of their daughters. They hoped that Shao Wanru could come to guard a pass for them.

Of course, the so-called "to guard a pass" was just an excuse. It had never been Shao Wanru's turn to cut in the marriage of a Miss of Marquis Xing's Mansion.

However, since they said so, Shao Wanru didn't intend to refuse them. Otherwise, she might be criticized as unfilial and impersonal. Old Madam of Marquis Xing's Mansion was at an advantage in filial piety. Before they came to a showdown, Shao Wanru could only obey filial piety.

Of course, she would not keep humble in front of them. She would just be friendly to Old Madam of Marquis Xing's Mansion on the surface. She had always had doubts about Marquis Xing's Mansion. In the past, she was oppressed due to the identity of an unmarried daughter. Now, as Princess Chen, she didn't have to show weakness when being oppressed!

She got on the carriage of Prince Chen's Mansion with her servant girls. The carriage left the gate of Prince Chen's Mansion for Marquis Xing's Mansion.

Most of the carriages of Prince Chen's Mansion were spacious, luxurious, and comfortable. The moving one was Shao Wanru's exclusive carriage arranged by Chu Liuchen. It didn't look eye-catching, as its materials were only a little more gorgeous than those of other carriages. It was spacious and comfortable. No other ordinary carriage could compare with it in terms of material, design, etc.

It was a kind of low-key luxury.

They arrived at Marquis Xing's Mansion. When the servants of Marquis Xing's Mansion saw the carriage of Prince Chen's Mansion, some of them rushed to report to their masters, and the other opened the door to welcome Shao Wanru.

When the carriage was well parked, Zhao Xiran had been out to welcome her with Shao Cailing.

They greeted each other and headed for the inner court together. It was said that Commandery Prince Qing had been waiting for them in Old Madam's Chuntang Courtyard now.

Zhao Xiran was such a good talker. Her words were like a spring breeze, neither flattering nor remote. She talked with Shao Wanru as if they were biological sisters, showing that she was never alienated from Shao Wanru because the latter had been married.

Shao Cailing also had a happy talk with Shao Wanru, though she was not as talkative as Zhao Xiran. She could always stir up the atmosphere in their conversation. The three of them talked and laughed very intimately.

As soon as they arrived at Chuntang Courtyard, a sharp-eyed servant girl saw them and hurried in to report. Old Madam winked at Nanny Yu beside her. Nanny Yu understood and hurried to the door to welcome them.

"Show my greatest respect to you, Your Highness!" Nanny Yu greeted with a smile and bowed to Shao Wanru.

Shao Wanru waved her hand and asked, "Is grandma inside alone?"

"Commandery Prince Qing and First Young Master are also present!" Nanny Yu answered with a smile.

Shao Wanru nodded and entered the room. The servant girls lifted the curtain to let Shao Wanru in.

Old Madam sat on the couch next to the window and had a smile on her face. She looked very vigorous in a light brown coat with some traditional patterns. She held a string of Buddha beads in her hand and fiddled with them casually as if she started to look forward to a peaceful life.

The smile on her face made her somewhat look like Shao Jing. At this moment, she looked very friendly. When she saw Shao Wanru, her eyes lit up and she couldn't help sitting up straight. Before Shao Wanru bowed to her, she waved and said, "Fifth Girl, come here and sit down beside me. You always keep caring about Marquis Xing's Mansion under the situation where you are busy with other affairs. Take good care of yourself!"

Old Madam's kindness made Shao Wanru think that she had come to the wrong place and met the wrong person!

She narrowed her watery eyes and went forward to bow to Old Madam. "Grandma!"

"Fifth Sister, you'd better sit next to Grandma. She's looked forward to seeing you since you married, afraid that you live a bad life in Prince Chen's Mansion and take no responsibility for your young age. If you make any trouble in Prince Chen's Mansion, she is afraid that she cannot support you!"

Zhao Xiran flattered Old Madam and said to Shao Wanru affectionately. Someone might think that Shao Wanru had been favored in Marquis Xing's Mansion in the past after they heard such words, if they had no idea about the truth.

Shao Wanru only thought they were hilarious. Old Madam was going to show off in front of Commandery Prince Qing. Of course, she also wanted to take advantage of Chu Liuchen's power to suppress Commandery Prince Qing. That was not against her expectation, so she was very willing to watch a good show quietly.

She didn't mind if Old Madam was willing to perform.

With a slight smile, she greeted everyone politely and then sat beside Old Madam with a gentle look. "Thank you for your concern, Grandma. I'm fine in Prince Chen's Mansion. There are a few people in the Prince Chen's Mansion, so I have rare chance to come into trouble!"

Her tone was neither cold nor warm, nor as intimate as Old Madam's. She sat straight beside Old Madam, in an attitude that she was not a favored granddaughter. The hot red plum blossoms patterns embroidered on the elegant plain white dress made her look vivid and charming.

Her cherry lips were as red as fire, and her skin as white as snow. People were charmed by the movement of her long eyelashes that flipped their hearts.

On catching sight of her, Chu Qing couldn't help swallowing lightly, though he had seen her before. "Fifth Miss Shao is indeed a gorgeous beauty. No wonder I mistook her for someone else in the Yuhui Nunnery." He thought First Miss Shao was the most beautiful girl before, but he changed his idea after that. Fifth Miss Shao was the one!

He remembered what he had received at that time. His eyes became darkened with his heart skipping a beat. "Was it Shao Wanru's plot or Shao Yanru's scheme?"

Chapter 924 Elder Sister Gives the Marriage Up to Younger Sister

Old Madam felt unhappy about Shao Wanru's calmness in secret, but she didn't show any dissatisfaction on her face. She kept a friendly face and pushed the pastries in front of her to Shao Wanru. "Fifth Girl, have a taste of these pastries. The new chef in our mansion made them. If they agree with you, you can take the chef back. She is also from Jiangzhou and good at making local pastries!"

There were only about ten pieces of pastries on the plate. They were indeed the specialties of Jiangzhou, where Shao Wanru grew up. Even though she lived in the capital city now, she occasionally wanted to eat Jiangzhou food out of her food habits.

However, no one in the capital city was good at making the cuisine of Jiangzhou, so she slowly gave up such an idea.

She couldn't help moving her index finger when she saw them now. Yujie took a piece with a handkerchief to her. Shao Wanru took a bite. She nodded with a smile and said, "It tastes authentic!"

"Since then, I give you the chef!" Old Madam said with a smile.

"Thank you, Grandma!" Shao Wanru said with a gentler smile on her jade-like face. She put down the dim sum in her hand, stood up, and bowed deeply to Old Madam.

"You are too polite. I am your grandmother! Of course, I hope that you can eat well. You used to live in Jiangzhou for so many years, so I'm afraid that the food in the capital city might not be to your taste. I happened to find such a cook, and I thought of giving her to you if you are satisfied with her!" Old Madam, with affection, held Shao Wanru's hand and asked her to sit down.

"Grandma, Fifth Sister must understand your affection to her. She has always been filial to you," Zhao Xiran suddenly said with a smile. She flattered both Old Madam and Shao Wanru at the same time. Zhao Xiran was indeed a tactful person who could always please others.

She seemed to be very intimate with everyone in Marquis Xing's Mansion, as if what had happened on the wedding day had nothing to do with her.

Shao Wanru smiled calmly and then turned to look at Chu Qing with deepness in her watery eyes.

As she turned and noticed Chu Qing, Old Madam winked at Zhao Xiran. Then Zhao Xiran pointed at Chu Qing and said with a smile, "Fifth Sister, we are in need of your help in making a decision!"

"Sister Zhao, you're too polite. As a married daughter, how can I make a decision for you! There is the elder present!" Shao Wanru smiled.

"Fifth Sister, though you are married, you are always a daughter of the Shao Family. Grandmother should make such a decision alone, but the marriage might be the key to the lifelong happiness of the two sisters. So Grandmother wants to hear more opinions from others. That's why we invited you here!" Zhao Xiran explained.

Shao Wanru said gently, "Sister Zhao, please tell me the details!"

She had known early that Old Madam would definitely tell her what happened if she came here. She pretended to be polite just now because she wanted Old Madam to understand that she could have refused to help.

"It's about Second Sister and Third Sister..." Zhao Xiran looked up at Shao Cailing and sighed, "it was the matter of Second Sister, but later Second Sister said she wanted to give her marriage up to Third Sister!"

"Give the marriage up to Shao Caihuan?"

According to Zhao Xiran's words, it sounded like Shao Jie'er did that for Shao Caihuan's good. How was Shao Caihuan recently? Anyway, her disfigured face cannot be fully recovered yet. Therefore, Shao Jie'er pitied Shao Caihuan and gave up the marriage to her?

Could Shao Jie'er be such a kind person?

A trace of suspicion flashed in Shao Wanru's eyes. How could she not know what kind of person Shao Jie'er was!

"Grandma, what do you think of this?" Shao Wanru asked.

"I... I disagreed with it at first. But I pondered it and thought it might be a good idea. Third Girl is somehow a legitimate daughter, while Second Girl is just a concubine's daughter. It's also a good thing for Commandery Prince Qing to marry a legitimate daughter," Old Madam sighed.

Chu Qing's heart skipped a beat when he heard that. Old Madam did mention that they wanted him to marry Shao Caihuan just now. When they were talking, Shao Wanru came.

"If that is the case, it won't be bad. A legitimate daughter is naturally better than a concubine's daughter!"

"But many people living in the Palace know about the relationship between Second Sister and Commandery Prince Qing!" Shao Wanru slowly raised her watery eyes and reminded them.

"That's the only disadvantage! But such an idea is good for both Marquis Xing's Mansion and Commandery Prince Qing's Mansion. So we hope that you can explain it to Empress Dowager, Fifth Sister. It's not that we are reluctant to part with Second Sister, but that Third Sister is more suitable than her!" Zhao Xiran frowned, glanced at Shao Wanru's face, and said in distress.

Both Shao Jie'er's and Shao Caihuan's incidents happened in the Palace. Based on the situation at that time, both of them seemed to be innocent victims.

If they were innocent and willing to exchange with each other, it would be a good thing for the two mansions. Empress Dowager and the Empress should agree on it after they knew that.

"Grandma, I'm just a married woman, and I'm younger than Second Sister and Third Sister. I'm afraid it's not appropriate for me to speak to Empress Dowager about it!" Shao Wanru shook her head and refused with a smile.

Old Madam's face instantly darkened.

"Fifth Sister, you don't have to persuade Empress Dowager. You only need to tell her the details of the marriage between our mansion and Commandery Prince Qing, and she will give us a response!" Zhao Xiran explained.

"I don't dare!" Shao Wanru answered with an imperceptible sneer on the corner of her mouth. "So they want me to take the responsibility, don't they?"

There must be a secret reason why they wanted to replace Shao Jie'er with Shao Caihuan. And her Second Uncle must be involved in such a plan. No matter what he was plotting, it would definitely not do her any good.

If the plot was exposed in the future, Prince Chen would be the one who took the blame.

Then, Marquis Xing's Mansion could get away with it. At that time, they could say that Shao Wanru took the advantage of her status as Princess Chen and made arbitrary decisions in Marquis Xing's Mansion! She forced Shao Jie'er to give up her marriage to Shao Caihuan because she didn't get along well with Shao Jie'er!

As soon as Old Madam opened her mouth, it was enough to turn right and wrong upside down. As for Zhao Xiran, she was such an excellent nonsense talker.

"Fifth Girl, why do you not help us? You are the dignified Princess Chen. You just need to pass on a message. Why don't you dare?" Old Madam questioned with a cold face.

"Grandma, I can't! It's not that I don't dare to explain it to Empress Dowager, but that I am afraid Prince Chen will be angry. He hates me meddling in other people's business the most. When I married into Prince Chen's Mansion, he has told me that as Princess Chen, I should be indifferent to others' business. I must not care too much and annoy Empress Dowager and His Majesty. Prince Chen's Mansion has never interfered in the affairs of the officials!" Shao Wanru said calmly.

It meant that Prince Chen's Mansion would not form cliques, nor would it be entangled in any interest conflict with officials. When she married into Prince Chen's Mansion, Prince Chen had already warned her.

"Fifth Girl..." Old Madam was so angry that she almost slammed the table.

Once realizing that a conflict was imminent, Zhao Xiran hastened to catch Old Madam's sleeve and say with a smile, "You are right, Fifth Sister. Prince Chen has always been indifferent and unwilling to cut in the affairs of any ministers. However, Marquis Xing's Mansion is different. After all, it is your parents' home. Even though you have married into Prince Chen's Mansion, you are still related to Marquis Xing's Mansion, right?!"

Her words suppressed Old Madam's anger and managed to win some time for Old Madam to think.

Thinking for a few seconds, Old Madam realized that she couldn't lose her temper and scold Shao Wanru, whose status was different. She was backed by Prince Chen's Mansion now!

Prince Chen was a very difficult person to deal with! Zhao Xiran had heard from his father again and again that Prince Chen was not as gentle and leisurely as he looked on the surface. He was the last man in the world you dared to annoy. Otherwise, you would have to bear the consequences.

Because of her father's warning, Zhao Xiran certainly dare not do anything to Shao Wanru, who was under Prince Chen's protection, and she had to stop Old Madam from getting angry in case things went out of control.

"No matter how different Marquis Xing's Mansion is, it's the mansion of an official. Even if Prince Chen's Mansion has declined, it's still the mansion of a prince. I heard that Duke Yong's Mansion got into trouble because it colluded with princes," Shao Wanru said with a smile.

Not only Old Madam but also Chu Qing showed a scared face after hearing her words. Although they didn't know what on earth had happened in Duke Yong's Mansion or what Duke Yong had done, they understood that it was related to the two princes and the Emperor flew into a rage because of it.

"Duke Yong's Mansion was punished because its case implicated both Prince Yue and Prince Zhou. So, what will the Emperor think if he finds Commandery Prince Qing and Marquis Xing's Mansion are related to Prince Chen?" Shao Wanru continued to say after she saw them change their expressions at the same time.

Old Madam could hardly take a breath and panicked in her heart.

Prince Chen and Commandery Prince Qing were both princes too, and they were the sons of the Former Emperor! If Marquis Xing's Mansion built a relationship with both of them, people would think that the Shao Family had ulterior motives, wouldn't they? Even if they had no ulterior motives, incidents might happen anytime. Then it was hard to say that the Emperor would not be suspicious of Marquis Xing's Mansion.

If it were in the past, Old Madam wouldn't be afraid of the Emperor's unreasonable suspicion! but now Marquis Xing's Mansion could not withstand any storm. At this time, she should be humble, as any high-profile action could bring disaster to Marquis Xing's Mansion!

"Commandery Prince Qing, this is also your marriage. What do you think? Do you accept to take a different bride? Whether you accept it or not, you must have a reason! You are a prince! It is not a good idea that you don't express your own views and let Marquis Xing's Mansion decide everything, isn't it?"

Before they came to their senses, Shao Wanru raised her watery eyes to look at Commandery Prince Qing and questioned him!

Chapter 925 Refused to Echo with Them

Chu Qing was stunned. He didn't expect that Princess Chen, who looked delicate and gentle, would dare to argue with him outright. A trace of surprise flashed through his eyes.

"Commandery Prince Qing is a descendant of the royal family. You should decide who to marry or not. No one else can make the decision for you!" Shao Wanru said.

She looked at Chu Qing's face indifferently, as if she didn't see Old Madam and others changing their expressions in an instant.

Of course, Chu Qing's marriage was his decision. Even if he could not make the decision, his elders would make the decision for him. His elders included the Emperor, the Empress and the Empress Dowager, so no matter how senior Old Madam was, in fact, she was not in the position to make the decision for Chu Qing.

"Fifth Girl..." Old Madam said in a cold voice, wanting to stop Shao Wanru.

"Grandma, Commandery Prince Qing is a member of the royal family and has a high status. How can we make the decision for him? You were hesitant, and I don't dare to talk about it. We'd better listen to Commandery Prince Qing!" Shao Wanru said indifferently.

Shao Wanru looked delicate. Her smile was charming and soft. But if her face darkened slightly, she would immediately look cold, which diluted her original charm, and no one would not dare to underestimate her.

Although Chu Qing and Shao Wanru had met before, they had hardly talked at that time, and most of the time Chu Qing had paid attention to Shao Yanru. Now he began to take Princess Chen seriously.

"You're right, Princess Chen. I should go to the imperial palace and ask for Imperial Grandmother's opinion on this matter!" Chu Qing nodded and agreed. Since Shao Wanru had mentioned he was in the royal family, he certainly could not lower his status, and he put all the blame on Marquis Xing's Mansion.

Old Madam got extremely angry and couldn't calm down for a while.

Zhao Xiran again reacted quickly and said jollily, "This is the best. We should ask for the Empress Dowager's opinion!"

"If the Empress Dowager agreed, this matter would be settled." Old Madam thought to herself.

"Alright." Old Madam said with displeasure on her face.

Since this was the plan, Chu Qing stood up and said, "Old Madam, I'll go to the palace and ask for Imperial Grandmother's opinion about it. After she gives the order, I'll discuss it with your mansion!"

Chu Qing addressed the Empress Dowager as "Imperial Grandmother" outside the palace, just like the other princes did.

"Sorry to trouble you, Commandery Prince Qing!" Old Madam said unhappily, but she had to pull out a polite smile.

Chu Qing made obeisance to Shao Wanru, then he turned around and walked out.

"Fifth Girl, both the Second Girl and the Third Girl have agreed on this. Your Second Uncle also thinks it's great. If it doesn't work, I'm afraid your two sisters' lives will be ruined!" Old Madam said, her eyes turning red.

"Grandma, don't you cry. How could Fifth Sister not care about it? She wants her sisters to live a good life, doesn't she?" Zhao Xiran conciliated Old Madam.

"Fifth Girl, you go to the palace with Commandery Prince Qing now. The happiness of your two sisters all relies on you!" Old Madam wiped her tears and said.

"Grandma, don't push Fifth Sister. Fifth Sister has just married Prince Chen; thus, she can't do anything about it!" Zhao Xiran conciliated Old Madam again. Her words seemed to be for Shao Wanru's sake, but in fact, they didn't.

"But now, who else can go into the palace to see the Empress Dowager right away except for Fifth Girl?" Old Madam said absent-mindedly.

"Fifth Sister, Fifth Sister, could you..." Zhao Xiran turned to Shao Wanru and said awkwardly, as if she didn't know what to do and asked Shao Wanru for help. Given Shao Wanru's current position, she was indeed a suitable advisor for matters related with the royal family.

"Grandma, even the Emperor can't disobey Empress Dowager's decision!" Shao Wanru was not surprised that the two of them echoed each other.

"Fifth Sister..." Zhao Xiran still wanted to leverage their relationship but was interrupted bluntly by Shao Wanru. Shao Wanru said, "Does Grandma want to persuade Empress Dowager to change her mind?"

"Given the situation the Third Girl is in right now, no one is willing to marry her!" Old Madam looked at Shao Wanru and said, "Fifth Girl, if you can help her, please help her. I know that you are in a dilemma since you are a newlywed Princess, but... we indeed have no other way. If we were still a Duke's Mansion, I would beg the Empress Dowager no matter how embarrassing it would be. But now... with this situation... what should we do with Third Girl?"

"Fifth Sister!" Seeing that Old Madam was truly speaking for her sister's interest, Shao Cailing couldn't help feeling moved and said to Shao Wanru imploringly.

Her sister's current situation was not very good. Even her mother said that it would be difficult for her sister to find a good husband now, not to mention that her sister was not young anymore.

"Grandma, Commandery Prince Qing's Mansion is not a fancy place. Second Sister must have a reason not unwilling to go there. Because previously Second Sister liked this marriage!" Shao Wanru said calmly. Old Madam was trying to move everyone to force her to go to the palace and vouch for this matter.

Not to mention that Shao Wanru had never had such an idea, even if she had had such an idea, she would never listen to them at this time. Old Madam had been kind in appearance and evil in heart for a long time.

Hearing Shao Wanru's words, Shao Cailing immediately flinched away. She looked at Old Madam doubtfully and stole a few glances at her. Others might not know about Shao Jie'er's character, but everyone in the mansion knew.

She was mean, insidious, flexible, and ingratiated herself with the mother and daughter of the second branch in an embarrassing way. However, she was particularly vicious to those who couldn't compare with her.

"Would grandmother actually care about such a person and wanted to organize a good marriage for her?" Shao Cailing wondered and decided to ask her mother about it later so that she would not fall into Shao Jie'er's trap.

Thinking of this, Shao Cailing stopped interrupting. Although she was still paying attention to the situation in the room, she lowered her head and kept silent.

Looking at her, Old Madam got extremely angry. "The people of the third branch were indeed useless. Look at this girl, she was obviously fighting for the interests of the third branch, but she didn't dare to say a word again," Old Madam thought to herself.

"Grandma, if there's nothing important, I'll go back to my place!" Shao Wanru stood up and said.

"Fifth Girl, am I being annoying?" Old Madam asked bluntly. She failed to achieve her goal, so her face darkened.

"As your granddaughter, how can I think that you are annoying? But when I came here just now, Prince told me to go back as soon as possible. If I go back late, I'm afraid that Prince Chen won't be able to take the medicine on time. Prince Chen has always been grumpy, so he needs someone to remind him to take the medicine for multiple times!" Shao Wanru said.

There was a hint of worry in her calm expression.

Everyone knew that Chu Liuchen was in poor health. Some people also knew that he had a temper, and Old Madam happened to know about it. She also knew how much Empress Dowager valued Prince Chen's health. Every time he was unwilling to take medicine, Empress Dowager was so worried that she couldn't even eat.

There was nothing more important than Prince Chen's health.

"When you go out next time, prepare the medicine for Prince in advance, so you will not have to leave for this kind of reason again!" Old Madam said angrily because she had to let her go.

"Yes!" Shao Wanru answered, but it could be seen that she was being perfunctory and did not take that seriously at all.

Old Madam was depressed and angry, but she couldn't do anything to Shao Wanru. After all, Prince Chen was still waiting for medicine. If it was postponed and affected his health, she couldn't afford to take the responsibility.

Watching Shao Wanru leave with her servant girl, Old Madam took the teacup at hand and smashed it hard on the ground.

She used so much strength that the Buddhist beads on her hand slipped off. A few beads broke and their fragments flew out.

The room suddenly became quiet. The servants looked at the broken Buddha beads on the ground with fear, and their faces were pale.

Last time when the Buddha beads broke, several people serving in the room were punished, including a much-favored principal maid.

“Old Madam, don’t be angry. We can discuss this matter in the future. The Fifth Miss has now become the Princess Chen with a higher status, but her higher status can also bring glory to our mansion. Look, even Commandery Prince Qing came here today.” Nanny Yu said with a smile. She walked over and picked up the Buddhist beads.

“Old Madam, these few beads were broken. A few days ago, the monks of the Huaguang Temple said that the string of Buddha beads you sent there was consecrated by the Abbot, and now they are being worshiped. If you want to wear it, I’ll have them send it over tomorrow. It’s consecrated by the Abbot. It’s very rare in the capital city!” Nanny Yu said.

Nanny Yu knew Old Madam the best. At this time, she of course brought about Old Madam’s favorite things. Although she put on a smiling face, Nanny Yu was actually in a cold sweat. She got the news about the consecrated string a few days ago, but she was too busy to report it to Old Madam. She wanted to tell her about it at a proper time. Now it happened to be the case!

“Grandma, I didn’t expect that you have the Buddha beads consecrated by the Abbot of Huaguang Temple. It’s a great blessing. I’ve long heard that the Abbot of Huaguang Temple only consecrates the Buddha beads for those with great luck, but I’ve never met those people before. I didn’t expect that you’re so lucky. Grandma, when you receive the Buddha beads, you must show them to me and let me benefit from your luck.” Zhao Xiran said with a smile.

She helped to pick up two beads on the ground and held them to the front of Old Madam with her handkerchief.

Old Madam’s face relaxed a little and said, “Leave them alone.” And then she rebuked Shao Wanru unkindly, “This girl is getting more and more ignorant of her family background. If it weren’t for Marquis Xing’s Mansion, she could never marry into the Prince Chen’s Mansion and have such a high status!”

Nanny Yu took the two beads from Zhao Xiran and carefully placed them on the table in front of Old Madam. When she was about to conciliate her, she suddenly heard Old Madam mutter to herself, “It cannot be like this. I will make this girl know that if I could get her married into a good family, I could also make her live a miserable life!”

Being rebuked by a junior made Old Madam feel ashamed. Shao Wanru didn’t treat her as a grandmother, so no one could blame her for not treating Shao Wanru as a granddaughter!

Nanny Yu was flustered. As she moved her hand, a bead almost fell to the ground!

Chapter 926 A Mysterious Mansion

"Princess, Old Madam is very angry!" Yujie said worriedly. When they left, Yujie specially took a glance at Old Madam and noticed the undisguised disgust in her eyes.

"I have never been in a good relationship with her before!" Shao Wanru said casually. They just had a superficial relationship, and they were both pretending to be friendly on the surface. Of course, Shao Wanru was willing to maintain this superficial relationship for the time being.

She wanted to dig out more secrets from Old Madam and Marquis Xing's Mansion.

As for Old Madam, after she plotted against her so many times, Shao Wanru no longer treated her as an elder. The lesson she learned from her last life was that she'd better not treat Old Madam as an elder relative.

"Old Madam will plot against you!" Qu Le also felt uneasy.

"She already did," Shao Wanru said indifferently. When she mentioned Old Madam, she had no scruples at all and didn't care much about her.

Since it had nothing to do with the family relationship, she didn't need to care about Old Madam. She would just fight against Old Madam's dirty tricks more fiercely.

Old Madam must know something about what had happened in the past. Shao Wanru didn't believe that she didn't know anything. But even though Old Madam knew something, she was still so mean and vicious to her brother and sister. She was determined to cut off the family line of Shao Wanru's branch from Marquis Xing's Mansion to make way for the second branch's bright future.

In her last life, Shao Wanru knew nothing, so she was deceived. In this life, she would not be manipulated and trampled by these people again!

"Princess, was the deceased heir of the Marquis a biological son of Old Madam?" Yujie couldn't help feeling surprised and asked. If he was her biological son, how could she treat him like that?

"It doesn't matter!" Shao Wanru raised the corners of her mouth and said with a cold smile, "In her heart, the most important thing is the glory and wealth of Marquis Xing's Mansion that she relies on."

Old Madam cares about nothing else other than wealth and honor.

"Fifth Sister, please wait a minute!" Zhao Xiran caught up with Shao Wanru from behind and shouted. She was gasping because she was in a hurry.

"Princess, please wait!" the maid who accompanied Zhao Xiran said loudly while holding her arm.

Shao Wanru stopped and saw Zhao Xiran walking towards her in a hurry.

"Sister Zhao, do you have something to say to me?" When Zhao Xiran approached her, Shao Wanru asked calmly. Her watery eyes were full of indifference.

Zhao Xiran was not easy to deal with. But if it had nothing to do with her, Shao Wanru was willing to turn a blind eye to her.

"Fifth Sister, let me see you off!" Zhao Xiran said with a smile.

"Thank you, Sister Zhao!" Shao Wanru nodded and said casually. With Shao Wanru's current status, it was proper for Zhao Xiran to see her off.

"Fifth Sister, don't be angry. Grandmother is getting old and couldn't think comprehensively. She is very concerned about the marriages of your sisters and blurted out some unpleasant words just now. Fifth Sister, please forgive Old Madam for the sake of her old age!" Zhao Xiran followed Shao Wanru out and said to her sincerely.

Shao Wanru pursed her lips and said lightly, "So what if I don't want to forgive her?"

Her words almost made Zhao Xiran speechless. She had imagined how would Shao Wanru reacted. In her imagination, she thought Shao Wanru would feel wronged, or indifferent, or angry. However, she had never thought that Shao Wanru would say such disrespectful words outright. If the imperial censor knew such words, with her identity as Princess Chen, she would definitely get criticized for being disrespectful to the elders.

"Sister Zhao, do you think what I said is inappropriate?" Shao Wanru said lightly with a leisurely smile, as if she didn't know how disrespectful her words were just now.

"Fifth Sister, don't say that at will. It will have bad influences if others hear it. It may even affect Prince Chen's reputation!" Zhao Xiran suddenly realized and quickly lowered her voice. After looking around and making sure that no one noticed them, she breathed a sigh of relief.

"I've only told you that. I believe you won't spread these words, will you?" Shao Wanru glanced at Zhao Xiran calmly. There was no fear or panic on her calm face at all.

Zhao Xiran's heart skipped a beat, and she suddenly felt that she had underestimated this Princess Chen who was standing in front of her!

Before Shao Wanru got married, she might care about this trivial reputation. But now she has married Prince Chen, why would she still care about such a trivial reputation?

What's more, what Shao Wanru said just now was to warn her. Zhao Xiran was sure that if she divulged a word, she would have a hard time in the future. From some things she had found out, this Princess Chen was already very crafty before she got married. Now, with the support of Prince Chen's Mansion, she was even more incomparable.

Before getting married into the Marquis Xing's Mansion, Zhao Xiran didn't care about Shao Wanru at all. Shao Wanru was just a granddaughter who had returned to her ancestral roots. Shao Yanru was the one she cared about. The First Miss Shao was truly talented, beautiful, and famous in the capital city. Therefore, she casually schemed against Shao Wanru.

However, she did not expect that not only did she fail to scheme against Shao Wanru, but she also angered Shao Caihuan, which led to her losing face on her wedding day and losing the favor of Old Madam. After she calmed down and investigated it carefully, Zhao Xiran found out that she was wrong. Fifth Miss Shao, whom she thought was normal, was actually the craftiest.

The Fifth Miss Shao was inconspicuous in Marquis Xing's Mansion. Even though Old Madam didn't like her, and she was plotted against by Madam of Marquis Xing, she still lived a smooth life. Moreover, she married Prince Chen, who was the most favored by Empress Dowager and the Emperor.

"Fifth Sister... Don't worry, I'm not that kind of a person who lacks judgment!" Zhao Xiran smiled awkwardly. She thought that she had the initiative, but now she found that she had nothing.

She had to be more careful in front of this Princess Chen.

"Thank you, Sister Zhao. In the future, you should be the one to manage the inner courtyard of Marquis Xing's Mansion. However, the Madam of Marquis Xing, who is living in seclusion on the mountain now, may go back any time. Before I returned to Marquis Xing's Mansion, I heard that she and Old Madam are as close as mother and daughter. After such a long time, Old Madam, as a 'mother', will definitely miss her 'daughter'!" Shao Wanru said lightly.

Zhao Xiran's eyelids fluttered. A thought struck her, and she got panicked. The Madam of Marquis Xing's Mansion wasn't in the mansion, and she didn't even attend Shao Hua'an's wedding. No one would believe that she was living in seclusion on the mountain.

No matter how long she needed to take a rest, she was not actually too ill to even attend her son's wedding. Because of this, there was a lot of gossip about Madam of Marquis Xing outside. Besides, Zhao Xiran also did not want her to come back. No daughter-in-law would want to have the mother-in-law come back for no reason.

What's more, this one was a troublesome mother-in-law.

"Mother is taking a rest on the mountain. No matter how worried Grandma is about Mother's health, she couldn't come back!" Zhao Xiran calmed down and said with a smile.

"Is that what you think, Sister Zhao? Then you really look down on Madam of Marquis Xing. Madam of Marquis Xing has been leveraging her relationship with Old Madam to manage the backyard of Marquis Xing's Mansion tightly for so many years. She is not an ordinary woman!" Shao Wanru said in an extremely peaceful manner.

"Fifth Sister, what do you mean..." Zhao Xiran couldn't stand it anymore and asked carefully.

"What do I mean? I don't have any other intentions. It's just that Madam of the Marquis Xing has a bad temper and likes to make trouble. If Sister Zhao invites her back, I'm afraid that you won't be able to manage the backyard in the future!" Shao Wanru smiled slightly and said meaningfully.

Zhao Xiran was smart, and it was easy to talk with a smart person. Judging from her thoughtful look, Shao Wanru knew that she must be thinking of a solution.

When they were about to arrive at the parking place, Shao Wanru turned around and said with a smile, "Sister Zhao, I'll go back now. Thank you for seeing me off!"

"I'm not in a hurry, let me see you off!" Zhao Xiran said kindly.

"Sister Zhao, you should stay here. When the carriage runs, the dust will rise. You should stay away from it!" Shao Wanru said with a smile and then went to the carriage with two servant girls.

Zhao Xiran moved her feet and wanted to follow her, but eventually felt that Shao Wanru was right, so she stopped there.

After seeing Shao Wanru take a few steps, Zhao Xiran suddenly became anxious and said loudly, "Fifth Sister, I mean no harm to you!"

Shao Wanru stopped, but then slowly walked up and said, "Sister Zhao, if there is anything I can do in the future, I will help you. But I hope that what you told me is the truth!"

"Fifth Sister, don't worry. What I told you is the truth!" Zhao Xiran said in a hurry.

"Sister Zhao, Marquis Xing's Mansion is a mysterious mansion. You'd better be careful!" Shao Wanru said in a low voice, but Zhao Xiran heard her clearly.

Zhao Xiran frowned and stood in the same place, watching the two servant girls help Shao Wanru get on the carriage. Then the inconspicuously luxurious carriage of Prince Chen's Mansion turned around and slowly passed by her. Perfectly, it was not too far away or too close, and the dust didn't catch her.

Seeing the carriage go away, Zhao Xiran's eyes narrowed slightly.

She was also a cautious person and had observed carefully. When the carriage turned around in front of her, she could see some dark patterns on the corner of the carriage, which were in the shape of butterfly wings. It looked more like a woman's carriage.

There was no female master in Prince Chen's Mansion before, and it was impossible for Prince Chen's Mansion to specially prepare a carriage for women, so the carriage should be specially prepared for Shao Wanru by Prince Chen.

Prince Chen really treated Shao Wanru differently. No wonder Shao Wanru could challenge Old Madam now. What about her? Should she stand on the side of Old Madam or Shao Wanru?

If it were in the past, she might think it was better to be on Old Madam's side. After all, Old Madam was righteous and her elder. But now, thinking of the Madam of Marquis Xing, who was in the Yuhui Nunnery, Zhao Xiran felt that no matter how good she was to Old Madam, she could not compare with the "mother-daughter relationship" between Madam of Marquis Xing and Old Madam for so many years.

From this point of view, she had no advantage over the Madam of Marquis Xing. She could get close to Princess Chen. What was the secret of Marquis Xing's Mansion? What was Shao Wanru investigating? Was it the same as what she was investigating?

Chapter 927 The Mercenary Wei Dahai

The carriage slowly passed in front of Zhao Xiran. Through the screen window, Shao Wanru noticed her absent-mindedness.

"Princess, do you want the Young Madam to dig something out?" Yujie remembered what Shao Wanru had said just now and couldn't help asking.

"She also wants to dig something out!" Shao Wanru said and twitched the corners of her mouth. "She may not find out anything about me, but now she is the person that is the most likely to find out something in Marquis Xing's Mansion!"

These words were a little difficult to understand, but the two servant girls were also smart. They immediately knew that at present, the most useful person in Marquis Xing's Mansion was indeed the Young Madam who had just married into the mansion.

First of all, this Young Madam was also a smart person. Besides, it seemed that she married into Marquis Xing's Mansion for a special purpose.

"Princess, what is the Young Madam trying to find out?" Qu Le asked curiously.

"I don't know, but it's good to have her on our side!" Shao Wanru said meaningfully. Now that she was married, it was not appropriate for Shao Wanru to pay too much attention to the affairs of Marquis Xing's Mansion. If Zhao Xiran stirred up trouble in it, it would be more convenient for Shao Wanru to investigate it by herself.

She also had some speculations about Zhao Xiran. But no matter what, Zhao Xiran shared the same position with her. She was definitely unwilling to have her mother-in-law come back to keep an eye on her all the time, especially when this mother-in-law was very difficult to get along with.

Shao Wanru would not let Madam Jiang go out of the Yuhui Nunnery again unless it was necessary...

The carriage went out of Marquis Xing's Mansion, turned a corner, went to the street, and stopped at a tea house on the opposite side of Butterfly Clothing Shop. Shao Wanru got off the carriage with a curtain hat. She took a glance at Butterfly Clothing Shop on the opposite side, but did not go in. She turned around and went into the tea house. Qu Le went in with Shao Wanru to serve her. Yujie did not go in but went to the opposite Butterfly Clothing Shop.

They went to the second floor and ordered a private room near the window. Shao Wanru took off her curtain hat and sat down. Qu Le went to order some fruits and snacks.

The location of this window was perfect, and she could see Butterfly Clothing Shop across the street and could see clearly that several sneaky people had been peeking at Butterfly Clothing Shop. Shao Wanru had intended to go directly to Butterfly Clothing Shop just now, but when she saw these people, she turned around and went to the tea house.

Madame Dong came out of Butterfly Clothing Shop in a hurry, looked coldly at those sneaky people at the door, and then crossed the street and went straight to the second floor while wearing a cold face.

Those sneaky people seemed to want to follow her and moved their steps, but they eventually stopped and looked up at the tea house.

Out of scruples, they didn't come over straightly. Shao Wanru looked downstairs thoughtfully.

There was a knock on the door. Qu Le went over and opened the door and saw Madame Dong with a cold and angry face.

When they went into the private room, Madame Dong mollified her facial expression.

"Princess!" she said.

"Sit down first. Are you targeted?" Shao Wanru turned around and asked with a smile.

Madame Dong nodded. After sitting down opposite Shao Wanru, she said angrily, "Princess, I have never seen such a person. He had the nerves to ask me to be his mistress. I had left this ungrateful person in the past; how could he think that I want to be with him now?"

Thinking of what the man said, Madame Dong felt even more disgusted. Wei Dahai thought that she had always been obsessed with him and that even being a mistress was what she ever wanted. How could he be so shameless? He even said that for so many years, he had always treasured her in his heart. She had never seen such a disgusting person like him.

"Wei Dahai is now a moderate official with some real power in the imperial court. I heard that he is not ordinary now!" Shao Wanru said with a faint smile.

"No matter how extraordinary he is, he is not in my league!" Madame Dong said with hatred.

She deeply regretted that she had been blind in the past and thought Wei Dahai was a good person. Moreover, when she was in Jiangzhou, she had even tried to find Wei Dahai to ask him to treat her daughter's leg injury and save her daughter. How blind she had been! She could not entangle him anymore.

Shao Wanru picked up the teacup at hand, took a sip, and said, "He found his aunt. I heard that she is related to him by blood so they are very close. His aunt is Nanny Wei, who is the right-hand woman of the Empress Dowager. Even though he is not a high-ranking official now, many people do not dare to offend him!"

Shao Wanru asked Qing'er to investigate it. Of course, part of this information came from Chu Liuchen. Otherwise, how could Qing'er find out this kind of information?

"A servant of the Empress Dowager?" Madame Dong said. Her expression changed.

"Yes, Nanny Wei is the Empress Dowager's personal servant. Nanny Wei has a lot of power in the Palace of Benevolent Peace, and the Empress Dowager also listens to her and values her very much!" Shao Wanru said meaningfully, "By chance, Nanny Wei met Lord Wei Dahai and they talked about something. Then they knew that they are not only from the same province but also relatives. Lord Wei's father is Nanny Wei's elder brother or cousin!"

"Aunt?" Madame Dong frowned.

"It should be like this," Shao Wanru nodded and said.

"When I was with Wei Dahai in the past, he said that he came to the capital city to find his aunt, but he never found her. I didn't know if he was telling the truth or not, but now he actually found her! No wonder he dared to ask me to be his mistress with his current official position," Madame Dong said with disdain. She really felt that this matter was a little complex!

"With Nanny Wei, he has gained a foothold in front of Empress Dowager. Lord Wei's recent official career is modest, but no one dares to target him. He is actually living a very good life! I heard that he has

connected with Commandery Prince Qing now and getting better and better!" Shao Wanru said softly with a smile.

The result of these investigations really shocked her. She didn't expect that these matters would end up related.

"He has connected with Commandery Prince Qing?" Madame Dong really didn't expect that there were so many windings in it. Suddenly, she thought of something, and her face changed. "Does he think that I own this shop?"

"It's very likely!" Shao Wanru smiled slightly and said leisurely, "I seldom show up, especially in the past three years. I've basically been in the Yuhui Nunnery on the mountain and have never gone down the mountain. Even Yujie and Qu Le, who live with me, rarely went down the mountain. But you have been to the Yuhui Nunnery to make a pilgrimage several times. However, there are many women who go to the Yuhui Nunnery to make a pilgrimage. You are not eye-catching!"

"So, he wants me to be his mistress just because of this shop?" Madame Dong's face turned blue and then pale. In the end, she was so angry that she almost wanted to find Wei Dahai immediately and make it clear to him.

"From what you said, you wanted to open a shop named Butterfly Clothing Shop at the beginning. But it didn't work out, then you left. Now you have a shop named Butterfly Clothing Shop. After a thorough investigation, he found that you have been alone since you came to the capital city with no master behind you. You said you have a master, but when others hear it, they are not sure whether you have a master or not. Maybe you just want to spread this word and make people think that you have a master," Shao Wanru analyzed with a smile.

These words were all relatable to the recent doubts in Madame Dong's mind. She always felt that Wei Dahai was not such an affectionate person. Moreover, after so many years, she was no longer young and beautiful. It was impossible that Wei Dahai still considered her attractive. Besides, she only had a daughter named Xiu'er. Wei Dahai had his own children. How could he aim at Xiu'er?

But now, Madame Dong had thought everything through. If it wasn't for the fact that he wanted something from her, Wei Dahai wouldn't have taken a fancy to her and even sent people to keep an eye on her.

Although Madame Dong had no expectations for Wei Dahai, she still despised him. She was so angry that she trembled, and her face went pale.

"Madame Dong, don't be angry. Wei Dahai has no good intentions. He wants you to become a mistress after he swallows your property! However, he doesn't dare to do such a thing openly," Shao Wanru said.

Shao Wanru reached out and pointed to several people below the window. Those people did not leave. They were still staring at the tea house. Obviously, they were still spying on Madame Dong.

"Princess, he is so mercenary!" Madame Dong also saw several people below and said angrily.

"He should be lacking money!" Shao Wanru said vaguely with a smile. There were some things that Madame Dong didn't need to know. The more she knew, the worse it would be for her.

She only needed to be a simple shopkeeper!

If it weren't for such a coincidence, she would think that this kind of thing had nothing to do with her. The twists and turns revealed an unpredictable fate.

This matter was so complex. Shao Wanru had thought that the two of them would have nothing to do with each other in the future, but they were still related. Shao Wanru was surprised and thought of a lot of things, especially because it involved Commandery Prince Qing!

At least, what had happened in the Yuhui Nunnery was not without reason!

If she were just an ordinary Miss from an aristocratic family, this complex matter would have nothing to do with her. But she was not only a Miss from Marquis Xing's Mansion, but also the Princess Chen now!

"He is such an asshole!" Madame Dong scolded him with hatred, and then looked at Shao Wanru with burning eyes, "Princess, what should I do now?"

Since the Princess had intervened, it meant that she would take over this matter. Madame Dong felt relieved about this. With the princess on her side, no matter who was behind Wei Dahai or what kind of plot he had against her, it would definitely be cracked.

Madame Dong had huge confidence in Shao Wanru.

"Now that he doesn't want to make a big deal of it, does Madame Dong dare to make a big deal of it?" Shao Wanru raised the corners of her mouth slightly and her eyes darkened a little. There was a cold smile and a bone-piercing chill on her beautiful face, which made her look no longer like a delicate flower in a greenhouse.

"Yes, I do, Princess. Why not? Anyway, I don't intend to marry him. Xiu'er is living a good life now. I don't want to let her know that she has such a shameless and lawless father!" Madame Dong gritted her teeth and stuck out her chest decisively. She was not afraid of making a big deal out of it!

She was a widow on her own now, and she had no intentions in the future. Why would she be afraid?

Chapter 928 Panic, Caused A Mess!

The people downstairs all cast their eyes at the servant-like man for instruction after they saw Madame Dong go out of the tea room on the opposite side and go downstairs.

When Madame Dong entered the tea room, he stopped the other people from following her.

This servant was Wei Dahai's henchman. He had been wandering around the gate of Butterfly Clothing Shop for the past few days, with the purpose of getting her whereabouts to see if there was anyone behind her.

Butterfly Clothing Shop was indeed enviable. It was not big in scale, but it ran a booming business. It also sold some exquisite toggle-and-loop buttons.

Even though Wei Dahai's servant did not know much about the needlework, he knew that the shop must make profits with so many customers satisfied with it, such as noble ladies and madams who always came and left with happiness. "How great it is!"

Of course, he had more than one purpose in spying at this place. It would be better if he dug out some secret information about Butterfly Clothing Shop to threaten Madame Dong. In that case, everything would be a lot easier for him.

“Now we have to stay still and go on the tracking first. As long as we keep an eye on her, we will finally find something,” the young servant thought in his heart and then waved to those unrelated people.

The people dispersed, pretending to be busy. The servant was about to leave, but suddenly Madame Dong walked straight to him! His heart skipped a beat and he had a bad feeling about it.

“Did Madame Dong find out that I have been keeping an eye on Butterfly Clothing Shop these days?”

With such an idea in his mind, he stepped back, turned around, and was about to leave. But Madame Dong had already arrived in front of him and slapped him hard, which made him stagger a few steps and almost fall down!

“Hey! Why did you slap me?” The servant tried hard to keep his balance and glared at Madame Dong.

“Go and tell Wei Dahai to stay away from me! I will not marry him even if that takes my life. Does he think that he can force me to marry him by sending you to be on the trail of me in this place? No way! If he wants to change a wife, I advise him not to bother persuading me because I’m not interested in him at all!” Madame Dong said harshly.

She put her hands on her hips, with her eyes focusing on the gathering people, and said again, “What do you think of it, everyone? I am a widow, and I should have the right to decide whether I remarry or not, right? Should they force me to give in like this?”

Madame Dong’s loud voice immediately interested those people on the road. Most of them were Misses and Madams from aristocratic families, the regular customers of Butterfly Clothing Shop.

“He forces someone to marry him? And he even plans to divorce his current wife?”

“Who sent this servant? He even sent a stalker?”

“Which mansion does such a bad guy come from? How can there be such an evil man? If I were his wife, I might die of anger if I heard such a thing!” The pedestrians on the street began to point and comment. More and more people stopped their footsteps and listened there out of curiosity, whether they had heard about it or not.

Anyway, there was a lot of information in Madame Dong’s words, and the more they thought of them, the more unusual they thought of the matter.

“Could it be Lord Wei, Wei Dahai?” someone who had heard about Wei Dahai’s name before asked with his eyes flickering.

“Who is Lord Wei?” another person immediately asked him when hearing such a name.

That person didn’t want to say too much. But since he had been questioned too many times, he had to be perfunctory. “Lord Wei is a good governor. I don’t think he could do such a thing!”

“Why can’t he? People like Lord Wei do such kind of thing! I heard that he had got about ten beautiful concubines in his mansion so far!” some other person who knew Wei Dahai curled his lips and said disdainfully. Obviously, he was discontent with Wei Dahai.

“What... what are you talking about?” the servant hurriedly rebuked when realizing the situation was out of control.

“Did our shopkeeper say it wrong about you? You and your people have hovered outside here every day and cottoned up our workers once they walked out of the shop. You asked them about Madame Dong and her husband’s family and bragged about how good your mansion was. We have nothing to do with you. Why do you keep an eye on our shopkeeper?” a shop-boy squeezed out from Butterfly Clothing Shop and shouted at them, with his hand pointing at those people.

In recent days, Madame Dong was not the only one who saw these people sneaking around.

“Go back and tell your master not to pester me anymore. It has nothing to do with me whether your master divorces his wife and remarries or not!” Madame Dong said in anger, turned around, and left, without taking a look at the servant.

After Madame Dong left, the onlookers’ attention fell on the servant. Since someone had already known his master’s name, the servant did not dare to track Madame Dong anymore. He turned around, pushed the onlookers, and fled.

He rushed to a place where there was no one, and then he gasped for air with his hand holding against the corner of the wall when he was sure that he was beyond people’s notice.

He calmed himself down and started to ponder. The more he thought about it, the stranger he felt. So he rushed back to his mansion.

Wei Dahai was in the study discussing with his advisor. When he heard that the servant he sent out had returned, he asked him to come in and report.

“Master, the shopkeeper of Butterfly Clothing Shop said your name out in front of other people just now. She also told others that you wanted to divorce your wife and remarry. In the end, she said that you’d better give up because she wouldn’t marry you even if you do so!” the servant reported.

“What? Did she really say that?” Wei Dahai’s face turned livid. That was such an insult against him! What’s more, he didn’t intend to divorce, and he just wanted to take Lady Ming as his mistress, which could not be publicized to everyone!

The veins on Wei Dahai’s forehead bulged. He predicted that the imperial censors would impeach him tomorrow.

“She did say so, and there were many onlookers at that time. Some... some people even mentioned your name. It seemed that... they knew you!” the servant said timidly.

Wei Dahai stood up in annoyance and walked around the study a few times before he said, “Go and call those people back. Stop keeping an eye on Butterfly Clothing Shop for the time being!”

Wei Dahai did not want to get into big trouble. He was just an average official without any greatly powerful ministers as his friends. Among his acquaintances, at most one or two were high-ranking officials, and the rest were just the ordinary. He himself was not in the eye-catching group currently.

No situation could be better than that!

Wei Dahai didn't want to stand out at all, especially at this time. He had thought it was simple to keep a low profile, but he didn't expect that Lady Ming was so ruthless that she traded her own reputation for the exposure of his name. He had to stop forcing her.

He had to put it down first.

"Yes, Master!" The servant breathed a sigh of relief, turned around, and left.

"Sir, are you going to let it go?" A middle-aged man sitting by the window looked at the irritated Wei Dahai with cold eyes.

Wei Dahai was out of sorts and said with evasive eyes, "Butterfly Clothing Shop's business is in a booming state!"

"Butterfly Clothing Shop is running a booming business, so you can't do anything to it now. Since the shopkeeper dares to offend you openly, I am afraid that she will spare no life to fight against you if you push her too hard. Moreover, in the capital city, there are a lot of officials at your level or above yours. But, you have acquaintance with Nanny Wei!" the middle-aged man said slowly, with a meaningful look on his face.

Wei Dahai slammed his hand on the table and said, "She's just a woman. How could she push me into a dilemma?"

"So, what are you going to do, Lord Wei? The previous plan won't work anymore!" the middle-aged man asked.

Wei Dahai was stunned for a while. He frowned and looked at the middle-aged man. "Why don't you teach me, Sir?"

"As the ruthless shopkeeper doesn't care about the friendship with you, why should you care about it?" the middle-aged man said.

"What do you mean?" Wei Dahai could sense something in his advisor's words, so he calmed down slightly.

"Since she refused your asking for a marriage with her, why not make her beg you?" the middle-aged man said with a sinister smile, "No matter how good the business is, her shop is merely a small one without power behind it. It is still very easy to deal with her. You don't have to do it yourself. You can take action in other ways!"

"Shall I ask someone else to deal with Lady Ming?" Wei Dahai asked.

"Yes! It will be just fine as long as others never suspect you! Then, you can do anything you want once she submits to you. Not only she herself but also her shop will be under your control. No one is going to criticize you because it is she who asks for that. I think no one will know about it if you hide her outside

from the mansion! Since she gives in to you, she won't make any trouble!" the middle-aged man suggested.

Wei Dahai nodded repeatedly and thought it was a good idea.

"Who should do that for me?"

"Don't you have a good relationship with Marquis Xing, Lord Wei? It was also he who told you about the shopkeeper surnamed Dong. There is an old saying that a guest doesn't bother a second host! Why not ask Marquis Xing for help?" The middle-aged man thought for a while and believed it was the best and most reasonable way.

In addition, Marquis Xing also knew about their past. He would understand why Wei Dahai could be affectionate for so many years. It was quite reasonable to ask him for help.

"Marquis Xing may not agree!" Wei Dahai shook his head and said, "He is a proud man! When we were young, we had a good relationship. But after he got the title of Duke Xing, he alienated himself from me, and later we nearly lost touch with each other. It was surprising that he took the initiative to tell me about Lady Ming!"

"But the situation is different! If it were in the past, he might not even give you a glance. But he is going through a difficult time now. Since he took the initiative to tell you, why don't you seize such a good chance? A powerful aristocratic family like his has a strong foundation! It still has more power than other families even though it seems to be declining. Marquis Xing's Mansion has been haunted with bad luck recently and everything goes wrong for it. Many of their close acquaintances start to keep a distance from them!"

"Lord Wei, if you ask him for help now, he will feel your kindness and trust. Marquis Xing will agree to help you! Furthermore, we don't have to deal with a shopkeeper on the surface at all. We just need to make her shop be ostracized by some other shops!" the middle-aged man said meaningfully. Obviously, he knew Marquis Xing's current situation well and saw through his mind.

If Shao Jing had heard the middle-aged man here, he would definitely be shocked. "How can an advisor of such a small official be so smart?"

Chapter 929 Came Across Zhaoyi Di

When Empress Dowager's invitation arrived, Shao Wanru was playing chess with Chu Liuchen.

Hearing Empress Dowager's order, Chu Liuchen stood up and tidied up his robe. "I'll go with you!"

"Your Highness, you'd better not go!" Shao Wanru said with a smile. She stood up and threw the chess in her hand into the chess basket aside.

"Why?" Chu Liuchen knew from her expression that Shao Wanru had an idea, but he couldn't help making fun of her.

"I have told you about the complicated marital thing between Second Sister and Third Sister in Marquis Xing's Mansion, haven't I?" Shao Wanru squinted at him and said. Then she walked to sit at the dressing table. All the servant girls were absent. They left before to make private space for the couple.

Chu Liuchen walked behind Shao Wanru, picked a sapphire hairpin, and gently put it in the right place of her bun. "Are you sure that you don't need me to go with you?"

"Yes, I am sure! You'd better stay here. If Empress Dowager sees that you are always around with me, she must be unhappy!" Shao Wanru said with a slight smile and looked at Chu Liuchen in the mirror.

"He is so charming that it seems he has a circle of moonlight around him." She couldn't help but raise the corners of her mouth.

"It is so lucky to marry him!"

Chu Liuchen looked at the girl in the mirror and said with a smile, "Well, you go by yourself. If you bump into any problem, leave it alone first!"

"Okay!" Shao Wanru answered. She felt warm in her heart.

She took the way through the side door as Empress Dowager's messenger did just now. Shao Wanru went to the Palace through the side-door way more times than through the gate after she married into Prince Chen's Mansion.

The Nanny leading the way was very polite to Shao Wanru.

Of course, it was because of Chu Liuchen, who was the most favored prince of Empress Dowager. So she, as Princess Chen, got more respect from others.

When she went through the side door and then passed by Chuxiu Palace, Shao Wanru suddenly remembered the painter Madam Ou, who painted for the beauties.

Shao Wanru casually looked in the direction of Chuxiu Palace and asked, "Nanny, are the painters who drew the portraits for the beauties still here?"

The Nanny knew that Princess Chen used to attend the Pageant. She answered with a smile, "Yes, they are! I heard that those painters haven't left yet. His Majesty thought highly of their paintings, so he asked them to stay and draw a few more paintings of beauties!"

"Paintings of beauties? Who is he going to give them to?" Shao Wanru was stunned and asked subconsciously. Most of the princes had been betrothed, anyway.

"I am not sure! Some people said it was to Prince Cheng, but some others said it was not. They said that Prince Cheng needed to take them to Xu State," the Nanny answered.

"There is a visit to Xu State?" Shao Wanru's heart skipped a beat. There was no such a thing as an overseas journey in her last life! But she seemed to have some memories related to Xu State. It seemed that a princess from Xu State married to their country. She wasn't sure whether Chu Liuchen had anything to do with it, because he didn't appear in this piece of her memories.

However, along with her heart skipping a beat, something in the depths of her memory was stirred.

She couldn't help rubbing her forehead. She was bewildered by the memory of her last life. Why was the memory related to Chu Liuchen lost? She could do nothing but keep searching for it in her head.

There seemed to be a woman in such a piece of memories. Where was she from, the capital city or Xu State? She had something to do with a failed marriage. Why? Shao Wanru could not remember...

"Are you feeling uncomfortable, Your Highness? Do you want to have a rest? Empress Dowager has told me that you can walk slowly if you are tired!" The Nanny misunderstood Shao Wanru's action and slowed down with a smile.

Even Empress Dowager's servants did not dare to slight Princess Chen. They had witnessed how gentle the emotionless Prince Chen became when he was talking about his wife! Such kind of gentleness was also different from that he showed to keep a distance from others.

And Empress Dowager certainly cared about what he liked. It could be seen from the fact that Empress Dowager only allowed Princess Chen to take her time. When Empress Dowager summoned other people in the past, the Nanny never saw that she allowed any of them to slow down their paces. Everyone was in a hurry, for fear of delaying Empress Dowager's business.

Princess Chen was the only one, and she would be even if Prince Yue and Prince Zhou got married in the future. Because only Prince Chen was favored by Empress Dowager like that.

Since the Nanny didn't urge her, Shao Wanru walked at a slow pace and tried to search for the lost memory in her mind. However, she failed though she tried so hard. "Who on earth got married? Was it that the princess of Xu State married to our country or that one of our princesses married to Xu State?"

If it weren't a famous marriage, she wouldn't have known in her last life. So it must be a well-known marriage. Could it be Chu Liuchen's?

With such a thought, she felt inexplicably uncomfortable. She felt sad and envious once thinking that Chu Liuchen might marry someone else in her last life.

Then she bumped into a graceful young lady at the corner. The young woman, followed by a palace maid, was stunned and showed surprise on her beautiful face when she saw Shao Wanru. It seemed that she didn't expect to meet Shao Wanru here.

"Princess Chen?" The young woman smiled gently.

She looked a little familiar to Shao Wanru. But Shao Wanru couldn't recognize her after taking a close look at her. She had never seen the young woman before.

"Who are you, please?" Shao Wanru raised her watery eyes and asked with a confused face. She stopped to look at the woman in front of her up and down.

"This is Zhaoyi Di, Your Highness!" the Nanny reminded Shao Wanru. Nanny bowed to Zhaoyi Di in a normal attitude, without any trace of flattery. As the servants of Empress Dowager, they were confident in front of Zhaoyi Di.

Zhaoyi Di was the daughter of a concubine in Duke Yong's Mansion. It was said that Zhaoyi Di had only been in the Palace for a few years, but she was always favored by the Emperor. She could be regarded as one of the favorite concubines in the Palace.

Zhaoyi Di was lower than Princess Chen in rank, but Zhaoyi Di was the Emperor's people and Shao Wanru's elder.

"Princess Chen is going to see Empress Dowager?" Zhaoyi Di took a step back, stepped aside politely, and asked in a soft tone.

"Empress Dowager summoned me!" Shao Wanru said lightly. "No wonder she looks familiar to me! She looks like Madam Di."

But Zhaoyi Di was much more beautiful and younger than Madam Di, though they had similar eyebrows and eyes. It was said that Zhaoyi Di was the daughter of a concubine favored by Old Duke Yong. However, the concubine died soon after Old Duke Yong passed away. They left the youngest daughter, who later was brought up by the Old Madam of Duke Yong's Mansion.

As she was a beautiful girl, Old Madam of Duke Yong's Mansion didn't treat her badly. Instead, Old Madam raised her wholeheartedly. Later, she entered the Imperial Palace to attend the Pageant and was picked and awarded the title of Zhaoyi by the Emperor.

Shao Wanru didn't expect to see Zhaoyi Di here, who was so gentle.

"After you, Princess Chen!" said Zhaoyi Di with a smile.

"You're too polite, Zhaoyi Di!" Shao Wanru said politely. However, she moved her feet and walked by Zhaoyi Di slowly, with a kind smile and her eyes glancing at Zhaoyi Di's face.

In the last life, when Shao Wanru entered the Palace, Zhaoyi Di had been a favored imperial concubine. It seemed that she never lost her beauty even in front of Shao Yanru. However, she had always been a Zhaoyi. Shao Yanru was also in such a position at that time.

Shao Wanru had never seen Zhaoyi Di in her last life. So she had no connection with Zhaoyi Di and knew nothing about her.

It was the same at the moment. But one thing was certain. Zhaoyi Di designed to meet her here!

They were near Chuxiu Palace, where few imperial concubines or other people would come, because Chuxiu Palace only served the beauties during the Pageant. Although the scenery was good there, it was not outstanding or special at all compared with other places in the Palace. Zhaoyi Di could not go here for sightseeing.

Moreover, Southern Palace and princes' resting places were also near. It was inappropriate for her, as an imperial concubine, to meet any prince here alone.

Shao Wanru stopped and looked back. She found that Zhaoyi Di still stood there looking at her. Zhaoyi Di smiled gently at Shao Wanru, behaving like an elegant and beautiful lady.

Unlike Shao Yanru, Zhaoyi Di was so mild that no one could sense aggressiveness from her and show hostility to her! What's more, she was so polite and didn't act arrogantly like a favored consort.

Shao Wanru also smiled at Zhaoyi Di and walked away slowly.

Zhaoyi Di kept staring at Shao Wanru's back until the latter disappeared out of her sight. But the smile was still kept on her face.

"Zhaoyi Di, she has been away!" the palace maid reminded her.

“Okay, let’s go back!” Zhaoyi Di said softly and walked on the way Shao Wanru left.

“Why didn’t you talk to her, Zhaoyi Di? We came here to see Princess Chen on purpose! Didn’t Duke Yong say...” the palace maid asked in confusion.

But she was cut off by Zhaoyi Di. “I just want to see Princess Chen in the flesh. I heard that Princess Chen was chosen by Prince Chen himself. I wonder what kind of woman can make Prince Chen fall in love with her. It seems that she is such a gorgeous beauty that we can never find another even in the Palace!”

“Zhaoyi Di, indeed, a beautiful face is essential to become a favored imperial concubine, but it is not the only element!” the palace maid said in defense of her master. She didn’t think Zhaoyi Di was less beautiful than Princess Chen. Her master was both beautiful and amiable, without any aggressiveness. That was why the Emperor liked her!

“Princess Chen is a blessed woman!” Di Zhaoyi shook her head and said with a self-deprecating smile, “How can I be compared with her?”

“How comes that you can’t be compared with her, Zhaoyi Di? You are just unwilling to compete with others. Even Prince Chen...” The palace maid became more and more dissatisfied.

“Shut up! Did you forget what you can and can’t say in the Palace?” Zhaoyi Di’s face darkened, with the smile on her face disappearing and a trace of fierceness showing up.

“Yes, Zhaoyi Di! I made an indiscreet remark!” The palace maid hurriedly lowered her head. She realized something and suddenly turned pale!

Chapter 930 Empress Dowager’s Intention

Chu Qing knelt in front of Empress Dowager in the Palace of Benevolent Peace. She looked at him with a gloomy face and undisguised disappointment in her eyes.

Chu Qing was her eldest son’s biological son, so she was willing to support him anytime. But she thought that he’d better remain in his proper sphere at this time, as the battle for the throne was going on and it was the time that turbulence might happen.

Unlike Chu Liuchen, Chu Qing was neither raised by the Emperor since he was a child nor awarded the status of a prince. He hadn’t been weak and sick since he was young or experienced deaths several times. However, the Emperor saw Chu Liuchen suffer all of these. He even waited outside of Chu Liuchen’s room when the latter was on therapy.

Moreover, Chu Liuchen’s identity...

In the Emperor’s heart, Chu Qing was totally different from Chu Liuchen with such experiences, though they were both the biological sons of the Former Emperor.

Empress Dowager was well aware that even if Chu Liuchen wanted to become the future emperor, the Emperor would not do anything against him. Instead, the Emperor would consider adding one more candidate as long as Chu Liuchen was in good health and he himself had such an ambition.

But Chu Qing would not have the same treatment. Empress Dowager knew very well that if he dared to have any intention, the Emperor must stop his plan and punish him. What was more, Empress Dowager

always had doubts about the person kneeling in front of her. "Is Chu Qing really the son of the Former Emperor?"

"It seems to be against what I have known before, doesn't it?"

Chu Qing grew up in the Yuhui Nunnery for so many years, so no one had ever suspected his identity.

"But is it the truth that his mother had been pregnant before she went to the Yuhui Nunnery?"

No sooner had Consort Yu entered the Palace than she was favored by the Former Emperor. However, the Former Emperor was dying at that time. After the Former Emperor passed away, Empress Dowager, according to the rules, sent the imperial concubines without children to the Yuhui Nunnery to cultivate in seclusion.

Empress Dowager remembered that she was in charge of the ritual. Those imperial concubines cried and kowtowed to her for mercy before they were sent there. As the most favored imperial concubine, Consort Yu was the first to do so. "Since she had been pregnant at that time, why didn't she tell me? Was she afraid that someone would hurt her child?"

"Of course, it could be that she didn't know she was pregnant!"

Empress Dowager didn't believe Consort Yu, but she had an ulterior motive in letting go of Consort Yu, the incumbent Consort Dowager Qing. Since Chu Qing was appointed as Commandery Prince Qing, Empress Dowager had never met Consort Dowager Qing.

Empress Dowager had buried the suspicion in her heart. "At least that can keep a son for the Former Emperor."

Yet, Chu Qing had crossed the line!

"You want to take her to be your consort, the legitimate daughter of the third branch in Marquis Xing's Mansion?" Empress Dowager asked again. She wanted to confirm her thoughts.

"Empress Dowager, it is not my idea! Old Madam of Marquis Xing's Mansion wants me to do so. I wanted to choose Second Miss. Anyway, she was the victim at that time, so I couldn't betray her. But... Second Miss seems to look down on me. Therefore, Marquis Xing's Mansion wants to marry Third Miss to my mansion!" Chu Qing lowered his head and reported.

It was such a cunning explanation! He pushed all the blame on Marquis Xing's Mansion to convince Empress Dowager that he was totally helpless. Before coming to meet Empress Dowager, he thought that it would be more beneficial for him to marry a legitimate daughter, no matter whether she was beautiful or not. That would be of great help to him in the future. After all, it was useless to marry a daughter of a concubine.

Moreover, he was never fond of Shao Jie'er. He didn't like her before, and now he hated her even more.

As long as thinking about her, Chu Qing felt very aggrieved. In the beginning, it was Shao Yanru, the eldest legitimate daughter, who looked down on him. So she passed the chance on to Shao Jie'er, a useless concubine's daughter. What was the use of a concubine's daughter? Shao Jie'er was not valued in Marquis Xing's Mansion at all! How could Chu Qing bear to marry such a woman?

Since then, Chu Qing had never intended to go to Marquis Xing's Mansion and propose to Shao Jie'er. He just delayed it. Anyway, Marquis Xing's Mansion had accepted the engagement between their second daughter Shao Jie'er and him, so Chu Qing was not afraid that they would correct themselves.

A few days ago, he paid a visit to Marquis Xing's Mansion for Chu Liuchen's sake. It would be better if people thought that he and Chu Liuchen had a good relationship. It would be such a good thing if the two biological brothers were both married to the Misses of Marquis Xing's Mansion!

However, Chu Qing had never thought that he would be despised by a concubine's daughter one day!

On thinking of this, he disliked Shao Jie'er even more. "The legitimate daughter of the third branch is much better than that ignorant concubine's daughter!"

"How dare she! How dare a daughter of non-lineal descent look down on a member of the royal family!" Hearing Chu Qing's tactful explanation, Empress Dowager put down the teacup heavily with a darkening face.

She looked down on Chu Qing, but it didn't mean that other people could do the same. He was always the Former Emperor's son no matter how bad he was!

"That's exactly what Marquis Xing's Mansion means, Empress Dowager! They also say that Third Miss is pitiful..." Chu Qing showed a trace of grievance at the right time.

Shao Caihuan was pitiful? Indeed, she was! She entered the Imperial Palace for the Pageant the other day, but unfortunately, she became a scapegoat of Shao Wanru and was framed by others. From this point of view, Shao Caihuan was indeed very pitiful suffering an unexpected disaster.

From this point of view, it seemed that Marquis Xing's Mansion didn't go too far.

"Empress Dowager, Princess Chen arrived!" a palace maid came in and reported in a low voice.

"Lead her in!" Empress Dowager nodded, and then the palace maid left. After a while, Shao Wanru followed the palace maid in.

Empress Dowager granted her a seat after Shao Wanru bowed.

"Princess Chen, do you know what has happened in Marquis Xing's Mansion today?" Empress Dowager did not beat around the bush and asked directly.

"Yes, I do. Old Madam invited me to their mansion, and I happened to arrive when they were talking about the matter!" Shao Wanru answered in a soft voice with a gentle attitude. She was not panicked by Empress Dowager's reprimand.

Her calm look softened Empress Dowager's face. "What do you think?"

It seemed that Empress Dowager wanted Shao Wanru to give some advice. But Shao Wanru didn't want to say anything about it now, neither did she want to do that when she was in Marquis Xing's Mansion at that time.

She glanced at Commandery Prince Qing opposite her with her watery eyes and said, "Commandery Prince Qing should make the decision himself!"

The “buck” was passed to Chu Qing again. It wasn’t as simple as it looked. Shao Jing and Shao Jie’er would not agree to give up such a marriage unless doing so could benefit them. So there must be a reason why they quit.

However, Empress Dowager insisted that Shao Wanru should express her opinion. She asked Shao Wanru again, “Who do you think is more suitable to be Commandery Prince Qing’s wife, your second sister or third sister?”

Shao Wanru was not allowed to stay out of the matter.

With her long eyelashes fluttering, a trace of deepness flashed in her eyes. It didn’t reduce her beauty. Instead, it modified her beautiful face with elegance, making her facial features both charming and elegant.

Compared with a lineal daughter of an aristocratic family who was specially cultivated into an elegant lady, Shao Wanru was even more outstanding.

Empress Dowager suddenly fell in a better mood. No matter what, she got a good wife for Chen’er, a wife with whom he himself was also satisfied. Now, Empress Dowager wanted to test Shao Wanru.

Empress Dowager didn’t care who married into Commandery Prince Qing’s Mansion. Neither of them would have an impact on her. But she cared about Shao Wanru’s attitude a lot!

Due to Empress Dowager’s insistence, Shao Wanru thought for a few seconds and came out with an idea in her mind. “Since Empress Dowager wants my opinion, I have to say something!” Then she said, “As a concubine’s daughter, Second Sister has always listened to Eldest Sister in everything since she was young. But she is not very close to other sisters. She is Second Uncle’s daughter, so people in her mansion value her, though she is not a daughter of lineal descent.”

“Third Sister is Third Uncle’s eldest daughter. She gets along well with other sisters except for Second Sister. Maybe it’s because they are different from each other in their status. Third Sister has been very depressed since the incident happened to her in the Palace. Now she is copying Buddhist scriptures in the Buddha Hall with Second Sister, as she had caused some trouble on Eldest Brother’s wedding!”

Everyone knew why she copied Buddhist scriptures.

When Chu Qing heard that the two girls were copying Buddhist scriptures, his face darkened. At first, he thought Third Miss was a good girl, though she was not good-looking. Now it seemed that she was not as good as he thought. In this case, it might be better to marry that concubine’s daughter.

Empress Dowager was very satisfied with Shao Wanru’s implicit words, which showed that Shao Wanru was partial to Chu Liuchen instead of Marquis Xing’s Mansion.

“Since she has been married to Chen’er, of course, she has to be partial to him. Chen’er is much more important than her parent’s family,” Empress Dowager thought. She treated Chu Liuchen as a treasure, so how could she allow Shao Wanru not to put Chu Liuchen in the first place?

“It seems that Shao Wanru is sincere to her husband, and she doesn’t like Marquis Xing’s Mansion. That’s great!” Her grandson was fond of Shao Wanru, so Empress Dowager wanted Shao Wanru to do everything for her grandson wholeheartedly so that she wouldn’t feel sorry for her grandson.

“Commandery Prince Qing, do you understand what Princess Chen said?” Empress Dowager stopped questioning Shao Wanru and turned to ask Chu Qing.

From Shao Wanru’s words, Empress Dowager could tell that Shao Jie’er was not a good girl. After all, how could a concubine’s daughter be valued by the whole mansion? Moreover, she was not close to her other sisters, which meant she would never be willing to sacrifice herself for them. So, she must give up the marriage because she had had a better choice.

Empress Dowager became increasingly dissatisfied with Marquis Xing’s Mansion. “What do they think the descendants of the royal family are? The radishes and cabbages that they can pick in the market at will? They are just two silly girls!” Empress Dowager had also investigated the incident related to the three happening in the Palace and found that Third Miss Shao was not completely innocent!

Chu Qing looked up at Shao Wanru and then at Empress Dowager. He entered the Palace not only for deciding to marry which Miss, but also mainly to see the Empress Dowager’s attitude...