

Medical Princess 1101

Chapter 1101 Take It Out on Doctor Qiu, Beat Him Up

When Infanta Yuan'an came over, she didn't see Doctor Qiu. She was still wearing a veil, so her countenance couldn't be seen.

Ruiping Great Elder Princess didn't come — Infanta Yuan'an came to visit Shao Wanru alone with her servant girl.

Ruiping Great Elder Princess had often taken Infanta Yuan'an to the Rui'an Great Elder Princess's Mansion, so Nanny Gao didn't stop her when seeing her coming over. Instead, she stepped aside to let her in.

Infanta Yuan'an was quite pleased by this treatment because Nanny Gao, in the name of Rui'an Great Elder Princess, had rejected several imperial consorts who came over together.

Upon entering the tent and seeing Shao Wanru's pasty face, Infanta Yuan'an was secretly delighted. Yet, assuming an air of concern, she took two steps forward, sat down on the chair next to Shao Wanru, and asked with concern, "How did you get hurt so badly? Are you all right?"

"I'm fine. Thanks for your concern," Shao Wanru replied in a feeble voice.

Since her wound had not healed yet, she did not dare to speak loudly, giving people a feeling of weakness.

"You are in poor health, but why did you come here? The Empress Dowager asked you to rest, didn't she?" Seeing Shao Wanru's listless and pale look, Infanta Yuan'an was so happy that she could barely refrain from smiling. It took her a lot of efforts to hide the joy in her heart and ask seriously.

"Imperial Grandmother said I didn't have to come, but I thought I should be here. This is the first time for me to attend her birthday party!" Shao Wanru said softly.

Infanta Yuan'an felt depressed at the sight of Shao Wanru's smile. "How could she still be alive? Why didn't the killer shoot her to death?"

"Prince Zhou, as the legitimate son of the Empress, was supposed to be the first to marry. But somehow, Prince Chen married before him. Otherwise, I would have been the one who called the Empress Dowager 'Imperial Grandmother' in a justified way like her.

"I could have strengthened the tie with the Empress Dowager through her birthday banquet. After all, it's much easier for the first granddaughter-in-law to win elders' favor. But now, Shao Wanru snatched away everything."

"It's not good for you to hold on like this!" Infanta Yuan'an said with more concern on her face.

"The Empress just came over and brought me a doctor surnamed Qiu. He doesn't seem to be from the Palace. I heard Prince Zhou sent him to the Palace before, and he stays in the Phoenix Palace. Right now, he is waiting for orders outside the door. If I don't feel well, I can ask for his help. He has excellent medical skills," Shao Wanru said, beaming with satisfaction.

"Doctor Qiu?" Infanta Yuan'an asked in surprise.

"Yes, his family name is Qiu! Do you also know him?" Shao Wanru asked with curiosity.

Of course, Infanta Yuan'an had heard of this doctor. How could she not know him? When her face was injured, Prince Zhou specially asked Doctor Qiu to treat her wound, and the treatment was very effective. But later, she was told that Doctor Qiu had returned to his hometown, which turned out to be a lie: he actually entered the Phoenix Palace. Because of his absence, Infanta Yuan'an had to find another doctor.

Why would Prince Zhou ask Doctor Qiu to stay in the Palace when the Empress was fine?

Inexplicably, Infanta Yuan'an felt a little annoyed. "What does Prince Zhou mean? Is he not satisfied with me, or does he take a fancy to another woman? How could he be so careless about my appearance?"

"The appearance is of great significance for any woman. How could he take Doctor Qiu away from me?"

"Is the Empress not feeling well?" Infanta Yuan'an forcibly suppressed the anger in her heart and asked.

"Not feeling well? No way. Her Majesty seems to be in good health. When I went to the Palace that day, she asked me to see Secondary Consort Shao, who had been in bad condition and badly needed the imperial physician's treatment." Shao Wanru shook her head in confusion and added, "I suppose Her Majesty has been very well, hasn't she?"

"Shao Yanru? He must have done that for Shao Yanru."

At once, Infanta Yuan'an confirmed that it was all about Shao Yanru. Without thinking it over, she knew Prince Zhou must have sent Doctor Qiu to the Palace for Shao Yanru. "That bitch has been keeping in contact with Prince Zhou." Infanta Yuan'an twisted her handkerchief hard a few times and could no longer suppress the anger in her heart.

She lurched to her feet. "I've asked Doctor Qiu to treat my injury before. I wonder if he can check on my wound now."

"Oh, Doctor Qiu had taken care of your face?" Shao Wanru said in surprise, "Then you'd better let him have a look at your face. I heard that Doctor Qiu has excellent medical skills. Moreover, if you've changed your doctor, you might have to use different medicines. Perhaps, the properties of medicines given by the two doctors might impose restraints on each other, which is bad for the wound's recovery."

"Thanks for that!" Infanta Yuan'an didn't stand on ceremony with Shao Wanru and said, only feeling her anger flame up.

She might not have cared so much if Shao Wanru had mentioned someone else. But Shao Yanru was not someone irrelevant. As the granddaughter of Ruiping Great Elder Princess, how could she know nothing about the relationship between Shao Yanru and Prince Zhou? However, Ruiping Great Elder Princess had advised that Shao Yanru had become the Emperor's Secondary Consort and would never have anything to do with Prince Zhou, so she had let go of this matter.

Did this mean that Prince Zhou got in touch with Shao Yanru again?

Shao Yanru was sick, and Prince Zhou took Doctor Qiu into the Palace with the excuse that the Empress needed him. They worked in unison to help Shao Yanru. It must be the truth. No wonder they suddenly withdrew Doctor Qiu, who had taken great care of her wound. They feared she would be suspicious, so they told her that Doctor Qiu had returned to his home village.

Back to his hometown? What a nice try! He didn't return to his hometown at all. Instead, he was in the Palace, checking on Shao Yanru.

Others might not know about the dispute between Chu Liuyue and Chu Liuzhou in the Palace, but Infanta Yuan'an learned something. As the future Princess Zhou, how could she not be in a rage? Shao Wanru's words touched the most sensitive spot in her heart, and she could not hold her jealousy and anger on a leash.

As soon as Infanta Yuan'an walked out of the tent, she forced a smile and asked Nanny Gao, "Nanny Gao, have you seen Doctor Qiu?"

Nanny Gao pointed to the side and said in astonishment, "Eh? He was there, but where is he now?"

"Where did he go? He must have gone into hiding upon seeing me. Sure enough, he feels guilty."

In a burning fury, Infanta Yuan'an came over with her servants. As expected, she saw Doctor Qiu hiding aside. As soon as she noticed his astonished look when seeing her, she was sure that he had been avoiding her. Infanta Yuan'an could no longer control the anger ignited by Shao Wanru in her heart. She took two steps forward and rebuked, "Guards, take this person away and flog him ten times. He is disrespectful to me!"

She couldn't do anything to Prince Zhou, but she could ruin his subordinate who took orders from him. After this harsh punishment, Doctor Qiu could no longer attend Shao Yanru.

As the imperial infanta, she didn't need reasons to beat a doctor who was not even an imperial physician.

"Infanta Yuan'an..." Doctor Qiu attempted to defend himself, but several eunuchs came over and dragged him away. In the future, Infanta Yuan'an would be Princess Zhou, who was likely to be the future Empress. So, everyone in the imperial Palace was more than willing to do something to curry favor with her.

Doctor Qiu was given a beating for no reason. To his dismay, he couldn't find a place to sob out his grievances. Thus, he had no choice but to find a young eunuch who looked kind, asking him to deliver a message to the Empress. Then he limped back to the Phoenix Palace. Given his condition, he couldn't stand outside Princess Chen's tent anymore.

Infanta Yuan'an gave vent to her anger by giving Doctor Qiu a violent beating, which was a trivial matter. The eunuch didn't even see the Empress, for her servants had blocked him.

The Empress was accompanying the Empress Dowager, so she was too occupied to deal with such a thing of no significance. Besides, Infanta Yuan'an merely inflicted punishment on a doctor. Since she was the Empress's future daughter-in-law, how could anyone dare to make her pay the price for that?

The people serving the Empress nearby didn't take this matter seriously. As a result, the Empress didn't even know what had happened.

When the Empress Dowager came over, the Empress accompanied her to meet those Old Madams and Madam Dowagers, each of whom had noble character and high prestige. The whole time, the Empress sat aside with a bright smile, pretending to be a filial daughter-in-law.

What had happened before seemed to have nothing to do with her. Although many people knew the Empress hadn't been cleared of her suspicion, so what? She was still the Empress, and Prince Zhou was still the legitimate son in the Imperial Palace, the most likely prince to ascend the throne. In this case, no one dared to offend her.

At this time, all the guests here were female members of the invited families. Prince Yue, who had come to send the message on behalf of the Emperor, also went to the front. There were songs and dances prepared by the Empress going on the flower platform.

They had been rehearsing these shows for a long time.

In the morning, these people, arranged by the Empress, focused on singing and dancing. In the afternoon, some Young Madams went up to demonstrate their talents.

The birthday banquet specially prepared by the Emperor would last for the whole day. When the officials and their family members entered the Palace, they would stay there for a day. After lunch, they would have a little rest and gather to watch these Misses' fantastic shows, which was the major event today.

Compared with the singing and dancing of the palace maids, the superb performance of these Misses was the most eye-catching, which could also show the dignity of the Empress Dowager. Otherwise, her birthday banquet would be the same as that of an ordinary Old Madam.

Some began to offer gifts to the Empress Dowager one after another. Of course, presenting gifts before the Emperor and his officials was considered the most honorable thing. However, some people, who preferred keeping a low profile or whose gifts were not particularly outstanding, didn't think it necessary to wait until later. Anyway, it wouldn't make any difference. So, they began to demonstrate their gifts at this time.

Those unremarkable gifts might be more than one piece. If they presented their gifts earlier, they were less likely to awkwardly demonstrate the same ones others had shown.

It was still early, and everyone presented their gifts quickly. As one item was offered, the Empress Dowager would enjoy it with other noble ladies. Then, the next one would be sent over. It was also pleasant to watch the performance on the flower platform while appreciating various gifts. In the meantime, those Madams and Young Madams sitting outside could still chat leisurely.

"My Lady, they start presenting gifts!" After Yujie got the news, she went back to the small tent. Shao Wanru was waiting there for her message. Hearing Yujie's words, she nodded. It was the best time. She was injured and could not hold on there until the banquet. So, she planned to go back to rest after sending the gift.

Because of her injury, the Empress Dowager wouldn't criticize her even if she did the job rather incompetently! She didn't want to waste such a rare opportunity. A shadow of a smile touched her mouth, bringing an air of easy assurance and calmness. Then, she reached out to put her hand on Qu Le's and said, "Help me up. I'm going to present the gift in person!"

Today, she made this trip to the Palace to show her sincerity by presenting the gift. Since it was a show of good faith, she had to do it properly...

Chapter 1102 Who Chose the Decorative Border?

The Empress Dowager was in the large tent in the middle, and some people with high status originally in the two tents on each side also came over. Some princesses and imperial consorts of high distinction stayed beside the Empress Dowager, chatting with her. From time to time, the Empress Dowager smiled as she heard something particularly funny from a few of them.

Some Madams sent a few gifts over. After the Empress Dowager viewed the gifts, they withdrew from the tent.

In a hurry, Nanny Gao came in from the outside and whispered something in the Empress Dowager's ear. Then, the Empress Dowager nodded with a smile and said, "Let Princess Chen in!"

Nanny Gao nodded and walked out. Some with sharp ears heard the Empress Dowager's words and couldn't help winking at those they knew well. "Is Princess Chen here to deliver the gift in person?"

The assassination of Princess Chen caused a mighty uproar. Everyone knew that some people wanted to destroy Princess Chen and even used the crossbow in the army. But when others heard that Princess Chen had survived the unexpected disaster, they sighed with emotion, saying that Princess Chen was fortunate enough to stay alive in such a violent scene.

No one had seen Princess Chen since she was shot. It was said that she had been in poor physical condition. But now, she could get up. It seemed that her injury was not as severe as they had imagined.

She was indeed a blessed woman!

Shao Wanru came in with the support of Yujie's hand. With her injured arm hanging down, she put the other fine one on Yujie's hand to prop herself up. She plodded forward slowly with a pale face as if she would pass out at any time.

"Anyone? Go and help Princess Chen!" the Empress Dowager ordered.

Immediately, a palace maid walked over and supported Shao Wanru with extreme caution, not daring to touch Shao Wanru's wounded arm hanging aside.

"Greetings, Imperial Grandmother!" Eventually, Shao Wanru stepped up to the Empress Dowager, gasping for breath. Though it was a short distance, dizziness overcame her, blurring her vision, and her fair and delicate forehead was dripping sweat. At first glance, the others knew she could not hold on anymore.

"You have suffered terrible injuries, but you insisted on coming. Hurry up and help Princess Chen sit down," ordered the Empress Dowager. A eunuch had set up a chair between the Empress Dowager and Rui'an Great Elder Princess.

Yujie and the palace maid helped Shao Wanru to sit down.

Rui'an Great Elder Princess shot out her hand to support Shao Wanru, observing her face anxiously. When she checked on Shao Wanru before, her face looked pale and bloodless, but now her face was drenched with sweat — she must have taken a lot of effort to come over. Her miserable condition made Rui'an Great Elder Princess's heart ache, and she stretched out her handkerchief to wipe the sweat on Shao Wanru's face.

"Look at you... You're so seriously injured, but... you insisted on presenting your gift to Her Majesty." Rui'an Great Elder Princess choked with sobs and gnashed her teeth, trying hard to suppress the bitterness in her heart.

This was the first time the Empress Dowager had seen Shao Wanru after she was injured. At this time, she couldn't help but be stunned. She had asked Nanny Gao to send medicinal materials to Shao Wanru several times. Nanny Gao reported that Princess Chen was okay and only needed to recuperate each time. However, Shao Wanru looked much more badly hurt than Nanny Gao had described. She couldn't help looking at Nanny Gao with a frown.

There was a trace of displeasure in her eyes.

"Grandma, this is a token of the regard of Prince Chen and me... How can I let someone else demonstrate it for me?" Shao Wanru said softly with a happy smile. She turned to look at the Empress Dowager and said, "Imperial Grandmother, please don't blame me for being late!"

"You... little girl... It is so considerate of you to do that! If you are not in good health, you should go back and rest early. Don't worry about anything else. I'll be there for you!" Her face was drained of color, and her forced smile looked slightly unnatural. Yet, the Empress Dowager could see she was struggling hard to do well on her birthday. The Empress Dowager couldn't help feeling sorry for her, thinking that Shao Wanru was so genuine and sincere that she came to send her gift in person even at this time. Merely for her filial heart and Chen'er's goodwill, the Empress Dowager was willing to protect Shao Wanru.

"Imperial Grandmother, after presenting my gift, I'll have to apologize and return home," Shao Wanru said and nodded to Yujie, who had been waiting aside. Yujie went out and came back with a brocade box in her hands after a while.

She placed the large brocade box in the center of the table and took out a table screen from it. Many people widened their eyes in surprise as soon as they saw the gift.

They were astonished, not because of its exquisite embroidery but because of the gorgeous and long trimming added under the table screen. They didn't go together. Or, more specifically, this frill didn't match the table screen at all. This pair was simply offensive to the eye.

For a moment, Nanny Wei was slightly taken aback and looked at the table screen in astonishment, blinking her eyes in disbelief. "Is... Is this the piece I've praised and recommended? Anyone with eyes could tell that they were ill-matched. Was Princess Chen blind to see it?"

"Even if she couldn't see that the decorative border was not suited to the table screen, were all the people around her blind?"

“The trimming doesn’t go with the elegant table screen at all, whichever way I look at it: its color, pattern, or material. How could Princess Chen really send it to the Empress Dowager?”

Nanny Wei’s heart jolted, and she inexplicably had a bad feeling. “What does Princess Chen want to do?”

The imperial consorts around the Empress Dowager began to whisper, glancing sideways at Shao Wanru. So, this was the gift that Princess Chen carefully selected for the Empress Dowager regardless of her poor health?

Judging from Shao Wanru’s bloodless face, they could tell that she was serious and was not joking, but the match was too ridiculous.

The Empress Dowager was also stunned and looked at the table screen in astonishment.

“Imperial Grandmother, I embroidered this screen and drew the painting myself. May your fortune be as boundless as the sea, and may you live a long and happy life,” Shao Wanru said in a low voice. Everyone could see that she was weak from her illness at this time, but she still forced a smile. Seeing her like this, Rui’an Great Elder Princess felt her stomach knot.

“This child has been injured so badly, but she insists on sending her gift in person. Why is she so stubborn?”

Rui’an Great Elder Princess could be said to be the only one who ignored the table screen. She had been nervously watching Shao Wanru — Once Shao Wanru had any problem, she could deal with it immediately.

As for what birthday gift she had prepared, Rui’an Great Elder Princess didn’t think it was important.

“Thank you... for your effort!” At this time, the Empress Dowager couldn’t bear to blame Shao Wanru and only felt tender and protective toward her. She reached out and patted Shao Wanru’s hand gently. “Go back and have a good rest. When Prince Chen comes back and sees you like this, he will blame me for not taking good care of you!”

“Thank you, Imperial Grandmother. I know.” Shao Wanru said. She raised her eyes with gratitude to Nanny Wei. “I had no idea about your preferences. Fortunately, Nanny Wei told me this frill was good, so I decorated the table screen according to your taste.”

As soon as she said that, Nanny Wei’s face changed drastically. She looked at Shao Wanru in horror. It had never occurred to her that Shao Wanru would send this gift and tell her ill-intentioned suggestion to the Empress Dowager in public.

If Princess Chen wasn’t injured, Nanny Wei could say anything against her as she wanted. She could even instigate the Empress Dowager to choose consorts for Prince Chen. Also, she could tell the Empress Dowager in private that Shao Wanru was not fit to be Princess Chen because she couldn’t even choose a proper gift. With these tricks, she could make the Empress Dowager loathe Princess Chen.

But now, her words against Princess Chen might bring disaster to her. The Empress Dowager took pity on Princess Chen, who had suffered terrible injuries. Moreover, she struggled to come over just to give

the birthday gift to the Empress Dowager in person. The Empress Dowager would say she liked her gift, no matter how unattractive it was.

Princess Chen came with sincerity to celebrate the Empress Dowager's birthday when she was so severely injured. Anyway, in this situation, no one would believe her slanderous talk.

"Your Majesty, I didn't say that!" After Nanny Wei thought carefully about it in her heart, her legs went weak, and she couldn't help kneeling. "Did Her Highness misunderstand me?"

"I... I made a mistake?" Shao Wanru was a little confused. She swayed and almost fell down. Rui'an Great Elder Princess hurriedly held out her hand to steady Shao Wanru and said impatiently, "It doesn't matter if you got it wrong. You're seriously ill. It's no big deal if you have misheard. Her Majesty won't blame you for that!"

"What is this all about?" The Empress Dowager asked, looking at Nanny Wei with a gloomy face.

"Your Majesty, when I went to deliver your message to Princess Chen that day, she was choosing the trimming for the table screen. The piece I happened to see was this one. Princess Chen tried it and asked me how it was going with the screen. At that time, she was in high spirits. Since Princess Chen was a noble master, as a servant, I mustn't put a dampener on her, so I said it was not bad. Maybe Princess Chen misunderstood me because of this. It was my fault. Please punish me, Your Majesty!"

Nanny Wei reacted very quickly. As the cause and effect of this matter flashed in her mind, she got a reason to explain.

Anyway, that was what she had said. Could Princess Chen give other evidence?

Shao Wanru rose to her feet by holding Rui'an Great Elder Princess's hands and was on the verge of collapse. Others were deeply alarmed for fear that she would pass out any time if she couldn't hold on any longer. "Imperial Grandmother, I... I must have made a mistake. If you don't like it, I'll pick up another one and send it over!"

She said nothing to defend herself. Because she exerted too much strength, she broke out in a cold sweat on her forehead. The few imperial consorts nearby could see that. Nanny Wei gave a justifiable explanation while Princess Chen almost admitted her mistake. But looking at her fragile look, others began thinking carefully about Nanny Wei's words and her cool composure. Many inexplicably felt Nanny Wei had deliberately schemed to embarrass Princess Chen.

Uncontrollably, they looked at Nanny Wei with alert.

If any of them came across the same thing, they might be fooled like Princess Chen. After all, Nanny Wei said this as the Empress Dowager's personal Nanny, a trusted servant.

Needless to say, Nanny Wei was up to no good and had deliberately set up Princess Chen.

"I like it. How could I not like it? Go back and rest first. We'll talk about it later. I'll grant you a reward later!" The Empress Dowager said gently and waved her hand to motion Nanny Wei to get up.

Then she asked someone to send Shao Wanru back because it seemed she couldn't hold on any longer. Seeing the Empress Dowager beaming with delight, Shao Wanru was relieved and left to rest in the tent.

nearby. After getting some rest, she would ask someone to help her get into a soft sedan chair and return to the Prince Chen's Mansion from the side door.

This matter seemed to be over: Nanny Wei was right, Princess Chen gave the proper gift, and the Empress Dowager liked this style of table screen.

The table screen was put away, but Nanny Wei, standing behind the Empress Dowager, broke out in a cold sweat on her back...

This matter was not over...

Chapter 1103 Concealing Something, Excessively Fragrant Soup

When Shao Wanru returned to the small tent, she was almost exhausted. Going back step by step had used up every ounce of her energy. Finally, she collapsed on the couch feebly and closed her eyes. Rui'an Great Elder Princess covered her gently with a soft cloak and gave Yujie and Qu Le some instructions in a low voice.

She carefully told them not to go back in a hurry and let Shao Wanru sleep for a while. If she was in good spirits, she could go back and even come to watch the performance in the afternoon. In any case, she wouldn't have to run around like this.

Though this tent was small and was at the back, it was still in the middle. As long as the tent's curtain was lifted, Shao Wanru could see the performance on the high flower platform. There was no need for her to go outside to watch the show.

"Your Grace, should Her Highness attend the banquet later?" Yujie asked.

Rui'an Great Elder Princess shook her head and said, "She doesn't have to go to the banquet. If she doesn't want to return when she wakes up later, tell Nanny Gao to ask the people from the imperial kitchen for lunch. She can have lunch in this tent. After that, ask some people to clean it up. Then she can wait here for the afternoon performance!"

"No... I'll go back!" A weak voice came from the bed. Shao Wanru felt dizzy. After she struggled to offer her gift, she could no longer hang in there.

She had told Yujie that she wanted to see the performance in the afternoon, but now she was too listless to do that.

"Yes, you'd better go back to rest. You can watch this kind of performance at any time. Your health is the most important thing." Rui'an Great Elder Princess breathed a sigh of relief. She was really afraid that Shao Wanru would insist on watching the fun. After all, she was a young girl. At this time, she might choose to stay.

It was the best thing that Shao Wanru brought it up herself.

Rui'an Great Elder Princess came over and tucked the cloak in firmly. She sighed heavily and said, "Alas, you..."

Rui'an Great Elder Princess was at a loss for words when seeing her coming over with terrible injuries. Her eyes fell on Shao Wanru's pale, almost transparent face, and her nose twitched. If her parents had

been alive, she could have lived a carefree life under the protection of her parents. How could she become so sensible?

Even though she was seriously injured, she still struggled to come over to celebrate the Empress Dowager's birthday.

The more Rui'an Great Elder Princess thought about it, the more she felt sorry for the overly considerate child.

"Grandma, I'm fine!" Shao Wanru couldn't open her eyes but whispered. It wasn't that she didn't want to open her eyes but that she didn't have the strength to do so. She had used up all her strength at the Empress Dowager's place. She didn't even hear the footsteps when Rui'an Great Elder Princess left. Slowly, she fell asleep.

When she woke up again, she reached out to touch her head and felt it didn't hurt as much. Then, she opened her eyes.

"My Lady, you've woken up!" Yujie said joyfully with surprise. Then Shao Wanru saw her appear in her sight. "What ails you?"

Shao Wanru shook her head and replied, "I'm fine!"

"My Lady, you've slept for four hours!" Qu Le said with red-rimmed eyes and hurried over to check Shao Wanru's complexion. Seeing that her master looked much better than before despite her pale face, she breathed a sigh of relief.

The longer they waited, the more flustered and scared they became. They even disturbed the Empress Dowager, who had sent the imperial physician to check on her. Luckily, the imperial physician said she had just fainted because of her severe injuries. Upon hearing that it was not a matter of life and death, the two servant girls felt slightly relieved but were still very worried. When they saw that Shao Wanru had woken up, they finally breathed a sigh of relief.

"I've slept for four hours?" Shao Wanru asked with her long eyelashes fluttering a few times and reached out to touch her head, which was still a little dull.

She had thought that she would be fine after a short rest, but she didn't expect that she would have slept for four hours. The banquet should have begun by now.

She listened carefully. Sure enough, it was quiet outside.

"Did all the people outside go to the banquet?" Shao Wanru asked.

"Yes, they all left. Great Elder Princess specially came to see you and left when making sure that you were fine!" Yujie said.

Qu Le walked back to the table, where there was a food basket. "My Lady, it's getting late. Please eat something. We'll stay and watch the show if you're in good spirits later. If not, we'll go back. Great Elder Princess said that there was nothing interesting to see. It was just that some Misses wanted to marry the princes by taking this chance."

Yujie went over to help and pulled the table to Shao Wanru's couch. Then she opened the food basket and took out the dishes one by one. It was actually a sumptuous feast.

There were eight dishes, one soup, and a large bowl of rice.

The big food basket was almost full.

The dishes were still hot. It seemed that when they had just been served, Shao Wanru happened to wake up. It was just the right time to eat them when they were neither hot nor cold!

Shao Wanru's eyes fell on a bowl of soup with pork ribs and yam in the middle. A few pork ribs were added to flavor the soup. There were some yams in it, but when she took a closer look, she saw mushrooms and the like. The aroma of meat with the rich fragrance of mushrooms smelled delicious.

"The eunuch delivering the meal said that the Empress Dowager specially ordered the imperial kitchen to make this soup for you. Besides yams and mushrooms, they added some nourishing seasonings, which are very suitable for you to drink. Great Elder Princess also sent someone to emphasize that you should take good care of your health and drink it as much as possible!"

Yujie explained with a smile when she saw that Shao Wanru was focused on the bowl of soup.

It was very fragrant indeed. When she smelled it carefully, she noticed a faint scent of medicine in the fragrance of meat and mushrooms. It was no longer an ordinary bowl of soup but a medicinal cuisine.

Qu Le poured her a bowl of soup, and Shao Wanru took a sip. The soup tasted fragrant and smooth. With the fresh flavor of the meat, it became more appetizing. The taste of traditional Chinese medicine was mild, which seemed to have made the soup more palatable.

However, as soon as the soup entered her mouth, Shao Wanru's face changed slightly.

"What's wrong?" Yujie, who had been paying attention to Shao Wanru's expression, saw her frown and asked hurriedly.

Shao Wanru put down the bowl, wiped the corners of her mouth with a handkerchief, and asked, "Who sent the soup?"

"It was said to be a eunuch from the imperial kitchen. The Empress Dowager specially asked someone to make it, and Great Elder Princess also sent someone to let you drink more. Is there anything wrong?" Yujie asked.

Yujie, imbued for a long time with what she had seen and heard near Shao Wanru, had become more meticulous.

The food from the Palace was delivered by a eunuch she had never seen before, so she was undoubtedly on guard. But when the person sent by Great Elder Princess urged her master to drink the soup, she immediately threw away her doubt. "What's wrong with the soup?" Yujie's gaze fell on the bowl of soup.

Among these dishes, this soup was the most fragrant and had a medicinal smell that the other dishes didn't have. It sent out a strong fragrance.

"The eunuch brought it here. Then my grandma specially dispatched someone to tell us about it. Perhaps, she was afraid we would not believe it, right?" Shao Wanru raised her eyebrows, looked at the soup and the other dishes, and said, "Put this bowl of soup on the other table. Its fragrance covers the flavors of other dishes!"

Although Qu Le and Yujie didn't know the reason, they still obediently removed the large soup bowl in the middle. The rich fragrance before Shao Wanru immediately faded.

"Cover the lid!" Shao Wanru ordered.

Yujie did as she was told and covered the soup bowl.

"Yujie, come and smell it. Are there any other flavors in the dishes?" Shao Wanru closed her eyes and muttered. Although she had designed her injury, she had lost so much blood. How could she fake her feeble condition? Just now, to show her sincerity, she insisted on walking over step by step to see the Empress Dowager and moved back, inch by inch.

She had used up all her strength. Although she was much better after a nap, she still felt weak all over and couldn't handle laborious work.

Fortunately, Yujie was here. When it came to traditional Chinese medicine, Yujie knew more herbs and was more familiar with them than Shao Wanru.

Yujie came over, picked up a few dishes before her, and began to identify them one by one. Without the mixed flavor of traditional Chinese medicine and the meat soup, the smell of these dishes that were no longer covered by the strong soup fragrance became apparent.

After smelling them, Yujie took out two of the dishes. Then, after a moment of hesitation, she took out the big bowl of rice and put it together with the two dishes.

Afterward, Yujie suddenly knelt with a thud and apologized, "My Lady, I overlooked this problem!"

"Tell me, what's the matter?" Shao Wanru was not surprised. With her eyes closed, she slightly raised the corners of her mouth, trying hard not to waste her energy.

"There seems to be a strange smell in these two dishes, but I'm not sure about it. When I smelled it carefully, I found the scent of traditional Chinese medicine in the soup. I don't know if the two dishes picked up the traditional Chinese medicine smell in the soup. I can confirm that something is in the rice. This bowl of rice has been drugged. I used to have a sensitive nose, but I didn't find anything unusual this time. After all, Great Elder Princess sent someone to tell me, and the rich scent of the soup concealed the other scents. I almost made you..."

Speaking of this, Yujie showed hatred and anger on her face. Because of her negligence, Princess Chen was nearly murdered. Princess Chen would have been killed this time if she hadn't kept a calm mind.

The most genius design was that she and Qu Le would be fine even if they also ate this meal.

No one would know how the Princess died. They might think she died because she had braced herself to send the birthday gift. No matter how her death was investigated, no one would doubt the food.

Qu Le didn't understand these things. At this time, when she heard Yujie's words, her face also changed greatly. She looked at the rice on the table in horror and asked in astonishment, "Is it... poisoned? Who... who wants to murder you? Didn't the Empress Dowager specially instruct them to cook the meal? How could even the people in the imperial kitchen be part of this scheme? No way. The imperial kitchen has been under the most stringent regulation, hasn't it?"

The imperial kitchen was one of the most critical places in the Palace. The royal family had always been afraid that people would poison their food, so the background of anyone working in the imperial kitchen was thoroughly surveyed. Only innocent people who had done anything wrong could enter the imperial kitchen. In addition, the Emperor would send his people to check on the kitchen from time to time to ensure that nothing would go wrong with their food.

This was also why Qu Le and Yujie didn't doubt much about the food. Now it seemed that it was not the case, so how could the two servant girls not be panic-stricken?

"No, it's not poison!" Shao Wanru, resting on the bed, said softly and slowly opened her watery eyes, which appeared clear and cold.

Chapter 1104 Doubts in Two Lives Piled Up

"Is it a kind of medicine that can invigorate the circulation of Qi and blood?" It sounded like a question, but Shao Wanru was not asking. Instead, she was telling the truth.

Yujie wiped away her tears and nodded vigorously. "Yes, My Lady. It can promote Qi and blood circulation. If you eat it with the medicated food best for your health, you will bleed badly, and your wound will burst open. We can't find out the truth, no matter how much we want to!"

"Get up, and let's talk!" Shao Wanru ordered.

"My Lady..." Yujie still wanted to say something, but Shao Wanru shook her hand and said, "Get up before we go on our conversation."

Qu Le pulled Yujie up. Both of them were angry and hateful, and their eyes were bloodshot. They thought they had protected their master well, but they didn't expect someone to almost succeed in murdering their master by taking this chance. If their master hadn't kept a cool head, she might have been dead now. In that case, they wouldn't absolve themselves from the blame even if they died ten thousand deaths.

"There should be nothing wrong with these people in the kitchen. The main suspect should be the person who delivered the meal. Perhaps, someone else sent the meal today. Or, poison might be put into the meal on the way. My grandma sent a person. Someone must have encouraged my grandma's maid to come over and tell me those words. Of course, the person did it to convince me of the matter... As for this bowl of soup, this superb medicated dish plays the most important role."

Shao Wanru analyzed in a low voice.

Everything planned by this person was perfectly coherent, and the person even knew that the Empress Dowager would ask someone to send her a bowl of medicinal food. This showed that this person was very familiar with the Empress Dowager's character.

Since Shan Wanru was injured, sending her a bowl of soup was necessary. Of course, the medicinal cuisine would be the best. Seeing her poor condition, the Empress Dowager would inevitably instruct the imperial kitchen to make her a bowl of medicinal cuisine, which must have contained the smell of traditional Chinese medicine. Although there was also a faint smell of medicine brought by the medicine sprinkled into the rice, it was not apparent among the flavors from those dishes and herbs.

Moreover, the person who intended to poison her didn't know the dishes Shao Wanru would like to eat. However, judging by her poor health, Shao Wanru must not have eaten much. If she didn't eat the medicine put into her meal, the person's sinister plot against her would fail. Therefore, the person sprinkled the poison on the rice.

Even if she had little appetite, the two servant girls would persuade her to eat more. After all, she was recuperating now, so she should eat more.

"My Lady, who on earth wants to take your life?" Yujie asked, grinding her teeth with rage.

"This person should know that I have medical skills. Otherwise, there was no need to cover the smell of the drug with the strong fragrance of the soup. Then, only ordinary soup would be served," Shao Wanru said slowly and slightly narrowed her liquid eyes. "This person wanted to kill me. Besides, this person knew what happened in the Palace today. Or even if the person didn't know it, he or she must have learned what had happened from others!"

There weren't many people who could meet these conditions.

"My Lady, could it be Secondary Consort Shao?" Qu Le was struck by a thought and asked.

When Princess Chen married into the Prince Chen's Mansion, she greatly offended Madam Jiang and Secondary Consort Shao. The two of them had devoted themselves wholly to hurting Princess Chen, but they eventually met their tragic fates, which they brought upon themselves.

There was hardly anyone who wanted to murder Princess Chen except for the two of them. Moreover, Princess Chen had treated Old Madam when she stayed in the Marquis Xing's Mansion, so everyone there knew that Princess Chen had some medical skills.

In addition, Secondary Consort Shao was living in the Palace. It seemed that she matched all the conditions.

"My Lady, it's unlikely to be Secondary Consort Shao. She can't even protect herself in the Palace, so how could she get the energy to plot against you?" Yujie shook her head and said, thinking it was impossible.

Although Secondary Consort Shao knew her master well and had the motive to harm her, she wasn't capable of scheming against Princess Chen in the Palace.

Secondary Consort Shao couldn't order the Empress Dowager's servants, not to mention that the person should be familiar with the Empress Dowager's character. How could Secondary Consort Shao say anything when she couldn't even go anywhere near the Empress Dowager?

"Even if it's not her, it has something to do with her. She couldn't approach the Empress Dowager, but she could ask someone else to do it. In other words, she can't deal with me in person but can secretly

ask others to do things for her. She has helpers in the Palace.” Shao Wanru said slowly, with a trace of coldness flashing across her eyes.

It sounded unreasonable, but after carefully reflecting on the whole thing, she thought it made sense.

“Who, who would help Secondary Consort Shao?” Yujie asked in confusion, “With her terrible state, how could there be anyone who thinks highly of her? Perhaps, Prince Yue or Prince Zhou?”

After she finished speaking, Yujie was also shocked.

“It’s possible. I think Prince Yue and Prince Zhou must have been supporting her. Secondary Consort Shao wants to deal with you because of the old grudges. And Prince Yue or Prince Zhou may have done it to deliver a terrible blow to Prince Chen. You’re injured but survived the disaster. This time, they are determined to watch you die.”

Qu Le repeatedly nodded, feeling that Yujie’s words made sense.

After their assassination failed, they devised another plot, which would inevitably take away Princess Chen’s life. If Prince Yue or Prince Zhou had been involved, some things could have been done. It was not a big deal for them to change or order a person in the imperial kitchen. Coupled with Secondary Consort Shao’s knowledge and hatred for Princess Chen, they could act in time according to the circumstances.

“Not them! There is a more suspicious person!” Shao Wanru shook her head and said. She had always suspected that person, but she did not want to stir up trouble since that person had been very mysterious. Now it seemed that that person had already taken the initiative to hurt her, even if she had been trying to avoid the dispute.

“The dishes without medicine are safe, and we can also drink the soup. I’ll have some, and so should you. As for the rice, you can eat some. It’s okay for you because you are not wounded,” said Shao Wanru.

If she didn’t eat anything, she wouldn’t have the energy to think. Only after getting something to eat could she gain some strength to think about tricky things.

Because she was sick and weak, her reactions were much slower than usual. Those people must have figured out that she must eat something to recharge her strength and energy. Initially, she had to eat this bowl of rice. But now, she could no longer eat it. Fortunately, she could still eat other dishes.

Yujie and Qu Le hurriedly helped Shao Wanru up. After she sat down with her back against the couch, Yujie brought over two suspicious dishes so that Shao Wanru could smell them. Shao Wanru shook her head, indicating that they were okay. The scent of the soup must have wafted over them, so she seemed to have smelled medicine on them.

The servant placed some dishes and the soup on the same layer. After a long time, the other dishes also picked up the strong smell of medicine, which seemed to be drugged.

Yujie and Qu Le brought the soup and ate something together with their master. Then they stopped eating.

After Shao Wanru was full, she felt refreshed and slightly knitted her willowy eyebrows. "Am I the sole target? They spent so much effort and even mobilized their power in the imperial Palace only to deal with me, a useless princess to them?"

"I've been seriously injured. Even if I died here, it would not be too surprising."

"Today is the Empress Dowager's birthday. I've deliberately announced that I would come to present the birthday gift in person. They could plot against and murder me, but is that all?"

Shao Wanru reached out to rub the space between her eyebrows. In her previous life, she didn't hear about this kind of thing. Of course, she wouldn't inquire about it at that time and only occasionally heard something from the servants in the Palace. She would enter the Palace later on when the Pageant was held. It had been three years since this moment. What had happened in the Palace had passed.

This sort of thing was not something that these servants in the Palace could casually talk about.

In this case, did only the incident about the maple leaf painting happen on the Empress Dowager's birthday? Was there anything else? Prince Zhou rose in revolt. He was forced to do that, wasn't he?

What made Prince Zhou and the Empress feel that rising in rebellion was their only way out? Did they think it was their best choice?

In this life, the incident about the maple leaf painting also happened. It was brought under control, and not many people knew about it, but still, it happened. Also, the Empress was involved. But even after this incident and the assassination targeted at her that might have been planned by Prince Zhou, the Empress was still the Empress, and Prince Zhou was still the legitimate son of the Palace.

Anyway, Prince Zhou and the Empress had not been pushed to a dead end, so they did not need to rebel.

But what if something happened at this time that made the Empress and Prince Zhou the only ones to blame? For example, her death?

Shao Wanru suddenly felt a chill in her mind, and an ice-cold, brutal look slipped across her watery eyes. "Did someone plan to use my life to force Prince Zhou to rebel? So, in the last life, what events had been added to the Empress and Prince Zhou so that they had to rise in rebellion?"

Some traces of her two lives were similar, while some were different. Due to the loss of her memory, Shao Wanru couldn't remember the specific situation.

If she guessed it right, the Empress should have advised her grandma to send someone to remind her.

Shao Wanru suddenly asked, "Yujie, Qu Le, if you see the person who delivered lunch again, can you recognize him?"

Yujie and Qu Le looked at each other and nodded with certainty. "My Lady, we were afraid that something would happen just now, so we deliberately took a few more glances and remembered his appearance!"

This person was probably a eunuch in the Empress's place.

She would die for nothing if she couldn't find out the truth. Once the case was entirely cleared, it would involve the Empress. With the assassination in the Prince Chen's Mansion and the poisoning incident happening in the Imperial Palace, the Empress would inevitably find it difficult to convince the public that she was innocent. Thus, Shao Wanru thought that as soon as the cause of her death was uncovered, the Empress would lose her high position.

Risking her life to make the Empress fall out of power.

She was dead, and the Empress and Prince Zhou were also implicated. In the end, Prince Yue was the one who benefited, right? And Shao Yanru?

Shao Wanru still felt that she hadn't yet figured out the overall situation.

So, when things had come to this, it didn't matter whether she was alive or dead, did it?

"Is Her Highness awake?" A shrill voice suddenly came from outside the tent. The unique, high-pitched voice undoubtedly belonged to a eunuch in the Imperial Palace.

Shao Wanru motioned to Yujie, and Yujie hurriedly got out of the tent. Looking at the eunuch standing before her, Yujie asked unhappily, "What's the matter?"

"Great Elder Princess is worried about Princess Chen, so she sent me here to ask if she has woken up?" The eunuch bent down slightly and said with a smile.

"Are you sent by Rui'an Great Elder Princess?" Yujie looked the eunuch up and down and asked. After what had happened just now, her heart was still fluttering with fear, so she asked him in detail at this time.

Rui'an Great Elder Princess was not the only Great Elder Princess who had entered the Palace today. Therefore, she had to make it clear in case she should get confused and leave loopholes to others.

"Yes, Rui'an Great Elder Princess sent me here." The eunuch nodded vigorously with a smile. He seemed to be good-tempered. Of course, with Princess Chen's noble status, no eunuch in the Palace dared to act rudely.

"Go back and report to Rui'an Great Elder Princess that my master has woken up. There is nothing serious. She can rest assured!" Yujie said.

"Well, I'm going to report it to Her Grace now. You can serve Princess Chen for lunch!" The eunuch replied with a bright smile, as if he was sincerely worried about Shao Wanru. Then he turned around and left without saying anything else.

Everything seemed to be normal. The information he got was that Princess Chen had woken up and was about to have lunch...

Chapter 1105 Scheming, Who Will Come Back First?

"Then you can go back!" Yujie waved her hand and turned into the tent, but the eunuch didn't leave immediately. After rolling his eyes a few times, he carefully approached the sheer curtain hanging down to the ground.

The curtain of thin and light material was not thick, but it was not very transparent. Thus, he could vaguely see the figures inside when he got close to it.

"My Lady, Great Elder Princess wanted to know if you had dinner!" The eunuch heard a servant girl report. It sounded like the servant girl who had come out to meet him.

"My grandma has always been so worried about me!" The feeble voice of the woman should be Princess Chen's.

"My Lady, let us serve your meal!" Another woman's voice came from inside. It was another servant girl with Princess Chen.

"I'll have some soup. I don't feel like eating." Princess Chen's voice sounded very weak.

"My Lady, you're not in good health, so you ought to eat more. Please eat some rice before drinking the soup, okay?" The servant girl advised.

"Well... okay!" Although Princess Chen felt reluctant to do so, she listened to her suggestion.

The sounds of bowls and plates colliding came out of the tent. The eunuch nodded with satisfaction, turned around, and left to report to his master.

After the eunuch left cautiously without any noise, Yujie asked in an undertone, "My Lady, the eunuch has gone. Do you want me to follow him and see who is plotting against you?"

"No!" Shao Wanru said, her intelligent eyes as cold as a deep pool, "It's useless for you to go there. We're in the Palace. Besides, this eunuch is not an important person. Even if you follow him, you'll only see another servant from the Palace later. If you go on watching that servant, you will leave some traces."

"My Lady, are we going to let them plot against you?" Yujie said indignantly. Not only did they scheme against her master, but they even sent a eunuch to check on her for fear that her master had not eaten the poisonous rice yet. Princess Chen had repeatedly asked her not to act rashly for the time being. Otherwise, she would have slapped the eunuch several times in a fit of anger.

"We don't have to do anything now. An accident is around the corner!" Shao Wanru said coldly.

When the eunuch came over, she struck upon an idea. She remembered their target in the last life was Chu Liuchen.

Yes, Chu Liuchen was the most fragile and could hardly stand some strong herbs. The medicine for stimulating blood circulation in the rice was overpowering. As long as he was injured, it was easy for him to bleed heavily. Though he had no wound, he was in poor health, so Chu Liuchen could not stand the drug either.

She didn't know how Chu Liuchen had escaped in the last life. Perhaps, he had been as healthy as he was now, so the drug exerted no effect on him. Nevertheless, one thing was sure: they were all plotting against Chu Liuchen in her last life. It was because Chu Liuchen was the most suitable target. The medicine that was not harmful to others might be lethal for him.

These people were indeed detestable!

“Help me lie down. I want to have a rest!” Shao Wanru said.

Yujie and Qu Le exchanged a glance. Though puzzled, they still assisted her to lie down as they were told and covered her with the cloak again.

“Some people should be coming later. Just tell them that something happened to me. I’ve been lying still on the bed, and you can’t wake me up!” Shao Wanru’s long eyes fluttered, and her eyes were deep and steely.

“My Lady, if an imperial physician is sent here, he will find out we’re lying,” Qu Le said.

“Don’t worry. I’ve been rather ill lately, so I may slip into a trance when sleeping,” Shao Wanru said.

When in a trance, the person can neither sleep soundly nor stay awake. This symptom usually happens to the weak ones. In this state, the person can’t be woken up by whatever method. In addition, the wounded person who lacks Qi and blood and is in weak health is very likely to die. At present, Shao Wanru was in poor condition, so the two servant girls looked pretty worried.

They feared that something terrible might happen to their master in her sleep.

Her watery eyes squinted at the food on the table that had not been tidied up yet and ordered, “When the Empress Dowager comes back, Yujie, go to see Her Majesty and tell her that you can’t wake me up no matter how hard you’ve tried!”

Since these people wanted to use her life as a stepping stone, she would make a bigger deal out of it...

“My Lady, I understand. When Rui’an Great Elder Princess comes back later, should we tell her the truth first?” Yujie nodded and asked.

“You don’t have to tell my grandma the truth. She is straightforward and is not good at hiding her true feelings, so telling her might ruin our plan. It’s better to keep her in the dark!” Shao Wanru shook her head and said. With her grandma’s forthright character, others could tell the difference even if she thought she had done a good job hiding the secrets. The best way was that she knew nothing about it, so all her reactions would be authentic.

In this way, their story would appear more convincing.

“But if Rui’an Great Elder Princess comes back and wants to see you, what should we do?” Qu Le had other doubts. She was afraid that Rui’an Great Elder Princess would come to check on Princess Chen. If her master looked fine at that time, they couldn’t tell the Empress Dowager, who came later, that their master was not feeling well.

Their panic expressions wouldn’t look real.

If they dared to report their master’s condition to the Empress Dowager, why didn’t they say it to Rui’an Great Elder Princess, Princess Chen’s biological grandmother?

“If my grandma came earlier than Her Majesty, you would make a panicky scene right away. But if they were back together, you should go straight to the tent in the middle to see the Empress Dowager.” Shao Wanru thought it over and came up with a solution.

Under normal circumstances, Rui'an Great Elder Princess would accompany the Empress Dowager to come here. They were sisters-in-law in a good relationship. In addition, she had said that she would go back, so Rui'an Great Elder Princess should not have come to see her early.

But this did not mean that it was impossible. Therefore, Shao Wanru came up with two ideas.

The Empress Dowager would eventually know her bad condition, informed by either the people of the Prince Chen's Mansion or Rui'an Great Elder Princess.

Shao Wanru didn't want to get Rui'an Great Elder Princess involved, so she could only hope that her grandma would come later.

Of course, those who planned behind the scenes were unwilling to involve Rui'an Great Elder Princess either. People from the Prince Chen's Mansion would appear more agitated than Rui'an Great Elder Princess when reporting this emergency to the Empress Dowager. It would be much easier for them to attract the attention of the Empress Dowager and the Emperor.

After giving Yujie and Qu Le a few more detailed instructions, Shao Wanru closed her eyes to rest. She seemed to have fallen asleep in a daze, or maybe not...

Rui'an Great Elder Princess wanted to come over early because she was worried about Shao Wanru. She had sent someone to see if her granddaughter had a good meal. Also, she told her to eat more. However, she still felt worried when hearing the Empress's words.

The banquet was very lively. Each gift for the Empress Dowager was of fine quality, but Rui'an Great Elder Princess wasn't in the mood to appreciate them, for she was very concerned about her granddaughter's health.

When all the gifts had been shown, and everyone had almost finished eating, she took out a handkerchief to wipe her mouth and wanted to get up.

"Where are you going?" Ruiping Great Elder Princess, who was sitting nearby, saw that she was leaving and asked in a low voice. All the people at this table were princesses, and they were close to the table of the Empress Dowager.

"I'm worried about Princess Chen, so I want to go and see her!" Rui'an Great Elder Princess whispered the truth.

Ruiping Great Elder Princess glanced at the Emperor sitting in the middle with enthusiasm and softly persuaded her not to go away, "No one has left at this time. If you withdraw like this, you will displease His Majesty!"

"But Princess Chen is in poor health!" Rui'an Great Elder Princess argued.

She certainly knew that it was not improper for her to leave early at this time, but she was not at ease. She felt inexplicably uneasy and thought she must go there and check up on Shao Wanru.

"If you go now, Princess Chen may have gone back. Didn't she say that she would go back?" Ruiping Great Elder Princess suggested, "Everyone is happy today, and the Empress Dowager and the Emperor are in high spirits. If you go out at this time, you may stir up trouble."

When Ruiping Great Elder Princess mentioned that Shao Wanru might have returned home, Rui'an Great Elder Princess hesitated a little. It was okay if her granddaughter was there. But if Shao Wanru weren't there, she would go there in vain. Maybe someone would use this as an excuse to slander her.

When Rui'an Great Elder Princess was alone in the past, she had always been free. Anyway, she had no one to care about. Others might not approve of her deeds, but so what? She didn't care. But now she was no longer alone and must protect her granddaughter and grandson well, so she shouldn't do things merely according to her own will.

After thinking for a while, she took Ruiping Great Elder Princess's advice and sat down.

The banquet lasted for another two hours. The Empress Dowager didn't leave immediately. Instead, she took a group of people close to her to the inner hall to chat.

The Empress Dowager was supposed to have a rest at this time, but she was in a good mood today and looked energetic. A group of princesses and imperial consorts of the royal family accompanied her. As they were talking joyfully together, she didn't feel exhausted.

After a short rest, someone came to report that the flower platform was ready and invited the Empress Dowager to go over.

Therefore, the Empress Dowager moved to the flower platform with the Empress, imperial consorts, and princesses.

The crowd surrounded the Empress Dowager and the Empress and went over together. When they walked up to the previous big tent, they suddenly heard a commotion before them. The Empress Dowager frowned slightly but didn't care much about it. There were so many people in the Palace today, so sometimes it would be a little noisy.

But then the noise grew louder, and there seemed to be people crying.

"Someone? Go and see what's going on." The Empress Dowager ordered.

A palace maid answered and left. After a while, she rushed in with a flustered look and said, "Your Majesty, Princess Chen is in danger. She had a meal... Then she never wakes up..."

"What?" Rui'an Great Elder Princess wanted to stand up, but her legs were so weak that she staggered and almost fell. Fortunately, Nanny Gao was quick-witted and hurriedly reached out to help her up. Finally, Rui'an Great Elder Princess could stand firm.

"Who... Who had an accident?" Rui'an Great Elder Princess reached out her trembling hands to hold Nanny Gao, her face ghastly pale.

"It's... Princess Chen!" the palace maid answered timidly.

"Zhuzhuo..." Rui'an Great Elder Princess almost fainted. After trying hard to calm down, she suddenly pushed Nanny Gao's hand away and hurried away. When she reached the tent entrance, a hairpin on her head hooked the sheer curtain and tore off a piece of the curtain. Rui'an Great Elder princess struggled and ran out, regardless of the fact that her hairpin had cut through the curtain.

Nanny Gao chased after her in a hurry.

"Let's go to see her together!" The Empress Dowager was anxious and angry, pushing herself up from the table.

Chapter 1106 The Empress's Dilemma

"Imperial Mother, please summon the imperial physician first!" The Empress reminded her.

The Empress Dowager nodded and asked someone to call the imperial physician over. Then she went to the small tent with some people.

When they arrived at the tent, they saw Rui'an Great Elder Princess sitting on the couch in a panic. Shao Wanru was lying on the bed, and she held her hand with tears streaming down her face.

The Empress Dowager staggered and only managed to stand still by holding a palace maid's hand. After taking a deep breath, she asked solemnly, "How is Princess Chen?"

"Your Majesty..." Rui'an Great Elder Princess was helped up by Nanny Gao and struggled to salute the Empress Dowager. However, right after she called out, she burst out crying.

"What's wrong with Princess Chen?" The Empress Dowager ignored Rui'an Great Elder Princess and hurried to the bed. When she saw Shao Wanru lying motionless on the bed with a pale face, she was shocked and almost fell.

Her grandson had asked her to take good care of Princess Chen thousands of times. How could she die at her birthday party banquet? How could she explain it to her grandson?

"What on earth is going on?" After pulling herself together, the Empress Dowager turned around and asked Yujie and Qu Le, who were kneeling on the ground. The Empress Dowager had seen the two servant girls who served Shao Wanru.

Nanny Wei reached out to help the Empress Dowager sit down on a chair aside.

The Empress sat on another chair while those imperial consorts and princesses crowded at the tent entrance. They all looked inside nervously. Princess Chen looked fragile when presenting the gift, but it had never occurred to them that she would suddenly die.

How could her life end abruptly?

Since everyone here had some connections with the royal family, they certainly took it as a plot against Princess Chen's life. Some people tried to assassinate Princess Chen and even made a big scene. Last time, Princess Chen narrowly escaped death, but it didn't mean that she could also survive this time.

Those people familiar with each other exchanged glances, knowing full well that they were thinking the same thing.

"She was fine before. How could such a thing happen? You didn't serve her well, did you? Some people, come here! Take the two servant girls away and heavily flog them twenty times." The Empress Dowager was in a towering rage. When her grandson returned and asked her how Princess Chen ended up like this under her protection, she would feel too guilty to answer him. Would Chen'er think that Princess Chen had an accident because she had struggled to send her the birthday gift?

Thinking that she might take the blame, the Empress Dowager Queen could no longer suppress her anger.

"Your Majesty, please spare us. My master was fine before and even got up to have the meal. After that, she went to sleep... Then, she became like this." Yujie cried loudly and kowtowed hard several times on the ground.

Qu Le kowtowed twice to the Empress Dowager and sobbed out, "Your Majesty, when Her Lady fell asleep, she was all right. We had been waiting on her. But she didn't get up after sleeping for so long, so we went up to wake her up. But no matter how hard we tried, Her Lady didn't wake up. We panicked and reported it to you."

The two servant girls kowtowed very hard. Though on the mud ground, they repeatedly kowtowed with thuds. Instantly, they got a blue mark on their foreheads.

"Did she become like this... after the meal?" Rui'an Great Elder Princess asked hurriedly. At this time, she was so anxious that she ignored the Empress Dowager. Now her granddaughter was lying there with a pallid face. Seeing that there was no trace of blood on her face, she was greatly flustered.

"Yes, my master didn't want to eat at first. But Great Elder Princess sent someone to tell her to have the meal. So, my master ate a little more, but... but... Why couldn't she get up for no reason?" Yujie explained in tears.

Shao Wanru was lying stone still on the couch. Her face was colorless, but her expression was extremely calm. Under the cloak, her hands could be seen folded properly before her chest, as if she were sleeping as usual.

"Having a meal? Was it because of the food?" Though Rui'an Great Elder Princess was smiling, she looked more painful than when she was crying. She looked around with her alarmed and panicky eyes, seemingly searching for something. Finally, she saw the food basket in the corner of the tent. "Check, check what's in it. Is there anything strange in it?"

"Your Majesty and Your Grace, when only the two of us were in the tent, a eunuch of the kitchen came to take the hamper, but we didn't give it to him. He was not the one who sent the lunch here. Why would another person come to do this after such a short time?" Yujie said.

"Great Elder Princess had specially sent someone to ask my master to eat more. Otherwise, my master wouldn't have had more food..." Qu Le added in tears.

"I... The Empress reminded me, so I asked someone to come here." Rui'an Great Elder Princess muttered subconsciously to herself.

The Empress Dowager was calmer than her. At this time, she had already collected herself, her eyes falling on the Empress's face. "You asked the imperial kitchen to prepare lunch for Princess Chen, didn't you?"

In the beginning, it was the Empress Dowager who wanted to prepare the lunch for Princess Chen and was about to send someone there. It happened that the Empress's servant would go to the kitchen for the banquet, so the Empress took over the matter. The Empress Dowager didn't feel anything wrong

about this, but it turned out that the meal went wrong. Upon hearing Rui'an Great Elder Princess's words, everyone on the spot felt that something fishy was going on with the food.

Did the Empress plan this?

It sounded reasonable if this matter was done by the Empress. The assassination targeting Princess Chen hadn't yet been investigated thoroughly. But there were only a few people who might have schemed against Princess Chen. The Empress and Prince Zhou were very likely to do this. Since their previous plan failed, they devised a second plan to murder Princess Chen.

The Empress appeared gentle and kind on the surface, but she was vicious. How could she be so kind-hearted?

The Empress could do such a thing to Princess Chen. After all, the Empress was the leading suspect if anything unusual happened in the Palace.

"Imperial Mother, I indeed had asked someone to order lunch for Princess Chen according to your instruction." Seeing that the Empress Dowager was suspicious of her, the Empress was angry and resentful, but she had to stand up and explain.

"The eunuch who took back the food basket was not the one who sent it over. Do you know that?" The Empress Dowager questioned her sternly with a cold face. As soon as the imperial physician came, she would tell him to check the food first.

Everything in the Palace should be done according to the strict rules. No one was allowed to take over other people's business at will.

"Imperial Mother, I don't know it. I have no idea why the imperial kitchen would send different eunuchs. I'll investigate it now. Once I find out who did this, I won't let the person go easily." The Empress hurriedly said, eager to put the blame elsewhere.

"Punish a few eunuchs? If something bad happens to Princess Chen, you'll only punish two eunuchs. Do you disdain Princess Chen or look down on Prince Chen? If Prince Chen gets into trouble for no specific reason like this, you'll promise to punish some people and leave this matter behind, won't you?"

The Empress Dowager rebuked, pounding the table angrily with annoyance.

All the princesses and imperial consorts kept quiet out of fear and lowered their heads, not daring to say a word.

When the Empress Dowager and the Empress had a fierce dispute, how could they dare to say anything with their inferior status? At this time, they might be put to death because of an indiscreet remark.

Many people were secretly sizing up the situation. It was said that Prince Chen would arrive in the capital city soon. No one knew what terrifying things he would do then.

It was not all because Prince Chen highly valued Princess Chen. On the surface, Prince Chen had been gentle and refined, but he was an overbearing bully who held grudges. If he was enraged, it was hard to predict what would happen next.

He wouldn't yield an inch, even to his eldest brother or second elder brother.

"Imperial Mother, I'll find out the truth and the people behind this. Princess Chen wouldn't suffer in vain." The Empress was in a peeve over it. Somehow, she had to be responsible for this, but she hadn't done anything. She just asked someone to deliver the message and offered to help out of kindness. It turned out that she was wrong to do all of this.

If she had known this, she wouldn't have kindly reminded Rui'an Great Elder Princess. The whole episode turned out to be entirely her fault.

Yujie wiped away the tears from her bloodshot eyes and said, "Your Majesty, I can recognize the two eunuchs. I've seen the one who delivered the meal and the one who came over to get the food basket. We've paid some attention to them and remembered their looks!"

"We can identify them!" Qu Le echoed.

"Take one of them to the imperial kitchen to pick out the eunuchs!" The Empress Dowager ordered coldly. She had made up her mind. Though she was completely surprised by Shao Wanru's accident, it didn't happen to Chu Liuchen after all. Although the Empress Dowager looked at the Empress gloomily, she stayed rational.

"Anyone? Come here and take a person away to identify the eunuchs!" The Empress ordered loudly.

"There is no need to use your people. My servant will take her there!" The Empress Dowager said, looking at her servants in the Palace of Benevolent Peace. Then, a eunuch came over and took Qu Le away as the Empress Dowager had ordered.

The Empress was humiliated in public. There was a flash of anger in her eyes, but she couldn't say anything. The Empress Dowager was preventing her from doing something on the sly.

Speaking of this, the Empress felt aggrieved and angry. After all, she was inexplicably involved in this matter. In the previous, the Empress had been trying to ease the relationship with Shao Wanru so that the Emperor and the Empress Dowager would stop suspecting her. But now she was suspected of plotting against Shao Wanru. She was so annoyed that she almost lost control.

The imperial physician entered in a hurry and saluted the Empress Dowager and the Empress. Then he was taken to the corner to check the dishes Princess Chen had had.

First, he tested the food with silver needles but found nothing wrong. Then he checked all the things carefully. When he figured it out, his face changed drastically.

"What do you think?" The Empress Dowager asked.

"Your Majesty, there is the medicine for promoting blood circulation in the rice. Princess Chen's wound hasn't healed yet. If she had taken this medicine, she would... would..." The imperial physician stammered. He had only heard that something had happened to Princess Chen, but he didn't know what exactly it was. Judging from the current situation, he deduced that Princess Chen's wound must have burst open, and she had bled to death.

"Zhuozhuo!" Rui'an Great Elder Princess wailed. Her body crumpled, and she passed out.

Nanny Gao reached out to hold Rui'an Great Elder Princess and cried out anxiously, "Your Grace, Your Grace!"

“What happened?” A cold voice suddenly came from the door. The Empress, who was about to speak, was suddenly shocked and felt a chill on her back...

Chapter 1107 Chu Liuchen Back to the Capital

Why would Chu Liuchen come back? Didn't they say he was far away from the capital and couldn't come back soon?

Chu Liuchen, standing at the entrance, looked worn out by the long journey. His light-colored brocade robe was not as bright and tidy as usual. His handsome face looked a little weary. His pale skin was almost transparent, and only the corners of his mouth were light red, which made him look more indifferent than others.

At this moment, his eyes looked gloomy, as if he were a diabolical devil from hell. The Empress, who turned around to see him, couldn't help but take a step back in horror. Subconsciously, she clutched her chest in fear, her heart beating wildly.

Chu Liuchen, known to be treacherous and ruthless, might suddenly turn hostile. He was gentle and cheerful a moment ago, but the next moment, he might become cold and cruel. But at least in front of the Empress, he was usually very refined and elegant. However, he inexplicably made people feel that he was gloomy and frightening. The Empress had never seen him like this before.

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Not just the Empress but also these princesses and imperial consorts spontaneously stepped back cautiously to avoid Prince Chen's eyes. His bloodthirsty gaze made them feel suffocated.

Only the Empress Dowager stood up in surprise and said, “Chen'er, you finally come back!”

According to the message from the Emperor, Chu Liuchen couldn't attend the Empress Dowager's birthday party in time, which greatly upset the Empress Dowager. So, when Chu Liuchen cropped up before her, she was joyfully surprised. But immediately, she felt guilty. After all, Princess Chen, lying on the couch, had just had an accident.

She hurriedly took a few steps forward, trying to stop him from looking inside.

“How can I not care about your birthday? I hurried back to the capital at top speed. I just went to report to Uncle the Emperor, and now I'm here to see you, my Imperial Grandmother!” Chu Liuchen said and withdrew his cold eyes. His eyes turned soft only when he looked at the Empress Dowager.

After that, he lifted his robe and knelt before the Empress Dowager. “Imperial Grandmother, I wish you long life and happiness. May you have prosperity every year, and may blessings descend upon every house!”

“Great... good, blessings descend upon every house!” The Empress Dowager was so excited that she helped Chu Liuchen up. As she examined his gorgeous face, the rims of her eyes turned red. Then, holding his hand, she exclaimed with emotion. “It's good that you're back. I'm so happy that you're here!”

"Imperial Grandmother, if I don't come back, I may not see Zhuozhuo one last time, right?" Chu Liuchen's face suddenly turned cold again, and his eyes darkened. His clear eyes hardened and looked as spooky and deep as the bottomless hell.

Several imperial consorts, who had just gotten over the shock, immediately lowered their heads in horror, not daring to look at his extremely good-looking face again.

Men could also be pretty, but this beautiful man was not gentle and refined. On the contrary, he had a bloodthirsty aura, as if he could destroy everyone here in an instant.

"Princess Chen, Princess Chen, she... she..." Rui'an Great Elder Princess slowly regained consciousness from her shock. She was not frightened by Chu Liuchen and only felt very aggrieved and furious. Taking a step forward, she walked up to Chu Liuchen and angrily denounced, "What did you promise me? You said that you would take good care of Zhuozhuo, but how could she end up like this under your protection? You... you..."

Rui'an Great Elder Princess felt angry and annoyed, and her breath came in convulsive gasps.

Chu Liuchen put down the Empress Dowager's hand and bowed deeply to Rui'an Great Elder Princess. Then he raised his head and said, "Great Elder Princess, don't worry. I will catch the murderer who came after her."

"What's the point of doing that? Just now, already... Someone poisoned the food and hurt Zhuozhuo." Rui'an Great Elder Princess lost control and cried out loud.

Chu Liuchen pursed his lips tightly, and there seemed to be a storm forming in his eyes. After a long while, he slowly asked, "Who did it?"

"It was... it was said the Empress's people delivered the message to the imperial kitchen..." Rui'an Great Elder Princess was distressed and said with tears in her eyes, "Zhuozhuo is a wretched child. She lost her parents when she was a child and had been wandering outside. Even if she had returned to her original family, no one loved her sincerely. Finally, she married you, and I thought her misery ended and her happiness began. I didn't expect that... I didn't expect that she would end up like this. If I had known... If I had known it, I wouldn't have allowed her to marry you. At least she could have stayed alive and lived a peaceful life!"

Her granddaughter was merely a woman who had spent most of her time at home. How could anyone bear such a big grudge against her and want to kill her? Anyway, she died in the Imperial Palace. Everyone knew that the ultimate reason for her death was Prince Chen. If some people aimed at Prince Chen, they would deal with Princess Chen first.

Thus, it was reasonable for her to say that Shao Wanru died because she married Prince Chen!

Some soft-hearted people couldn't help lamenting Princess Chen's miserable life. What had happened to her in the Marquis Xing's Mansion was widely known. The elders there had been unkind to Princess Chen. At present, Old Madam was sent to live a secluded and hard life. Although there was no specific reason for that, those well-informed people learned that Old Madam was punished for her cruelty to Shao Wanru.

If nothing had happened, how would an Old Madam have chosen to live an austere life instead of enjoying a comfortable life in her mansion?

"Please rest assured, Great-aunt. I will find out the truth!" Chu Liuchen said. His eyes fell on Shao Wanru, who was lying on the couch inside. At this time, Shao Wanru was still lying on the wide couch, soundless and stirless.

"Imperial Grandmother, you should return with my great-aunt first. Just leave the imperial physician here," Chu Liuchen murmured. Though he said this to the Empress Dowager and Rui'an Great Elder Princess, his eyes were still fixed on the person lying inside.

"Chen'er... you... don't be too sad..." The Empress Dowager tried to appease him. She was really worried about Chu Liuchen.

"Don't worry. I'm fine!" Chu Liuchen said, his eyes still glued to her beloved woman inside.

The Empress Dowager still wanted to say something, but she didn't know where to start. Helplessly, she sighed and left with the others. At first, Rui'an Great Elder Princess felt reluctant to leave. But when she saw Chu Liuchen's look, she could do nothing but walk out while crying. As she walked to the tent entrance, she abruptly said, "Tell the imperial physician to examine her carefully. She was fine. How could she not get up after falling asleep? Maybe she can be saved!"

After saying this, she walked away with the help of Nanny Gao behind the others.

The Empress Dowager also heard her words. In astonishment, she turned around and saw Rui'an Great Elder Princess, who was sobbing too bitterly to speak. She had wanted to say something to her, but on second thought, she thought Rui'an Great Elder Princess couldn't answer her questions anyway. So, the Empress Dowager could only give up, shaking her head. Rui'an Great Elder Princess might have cried so hard that she couldn't think straight. How could the imperial physician bring the dying back to life?

After all, Rui'an Great Elder Princess only had one granddaughter, and she had always doted on her the most. Perhaps, she believed that her granddaughter still had a feeble thread of life.

It was good for the imperial physician to see her. The Empress Dowager didn't take Rui'an Great Elder Princess's words seriously. However, she completely forgot that Rui'an Great Elder Princess was the only one who had touched Shao Wanru when they came in. Thus, only Rui'an Great Elder Princess knew that Shao Wanru was still breathing, though she was lying there motionlessly.

The Empress, those imperial consorts, and other princesses had the same idea as the Empress Dowager. They all thought that Rui'an Great Elder Princess must have been in a confused state of mind after suffering such a great blow. She was full of wild talk. How could a dead person come back to life?

No one cared about Rui'an Great Elder Princess's words.

The Empress didn't even look up and just lowered her head with anxiety. It had been difficult to deal with this matter, and it became even more tricky now. Somehow, she was deeply involved in this matter. When Chu Liuchen was not around, she could hardly get rid of it. Now that Chu Liuchen had come back, she knew it was almost impossible for her to be cleared of suspicion.

Infanta Yuan'an, next to Ruiping Great Elder Princess, had been in a good mood. With pleasure, she deliberately looked back at the sheer curtain hanging behind her and silently raised the corners of her mouth. "Shao Wanru is dead. That's great!"

It was better for a woman like her to die. No matter how much Prince Chen loved her, she was ill-fated. How could she compare with her, who was blessed with a wealthy and distinguished life?

Infanta Yuan'an was born at the best time and was blessed with an honorable fate. In contrast, Shao Wanru suffered a grim fate. So, how could she stand in comparison with Infanta Yuan'an? Besides, Shao Wanru had turned Infanta Yuan'an down without considering her feelings. Infanta Yuan'an's grandma had asked her to curry favor with Shao Wanru and make friends with her. But now, Shao Wanru died, which was great news for Infanta Yuan'an.

Though all these people looked solemn, they had different thoughts. The Empress Dowager returned to the big tent. There wasn't a trace of a smile on her face.

The Empress was also in a state of preoccupation. Since the two remained silent, no one else dared to speak. Only Rui'an Great Elder Princess's sobs could be heard from time to time in the big tent.

In the small tent, the imperial physician carefully reached out to feel Shao Wanru's pulse. Feeling the faint warmth coming from her hand, he finally relaxed and looked surprisingly at Princess Chen, who was lying on the bed. "She is not dead?"

He came here later than others. As soon as he entered, he saw that Princess Chen was lying there stock-still and that Rui'an Great Elder Princess had burst into loud sobs. For a time, he thought Princess Chen was dead. When Prince Chen asked him to feel her pulse, he was terribly frightened. How could he feel the pulse of a dead person? But he didn't dare to refuse this frightening Prince Chen, so he touched her hand while shivering.

Now he took a deep breath of relief and felt that he had come back to life. Fortunately, Princess Chen was still alive, and Prince Chen was not crazy. Back then, Princess Chen lying on the couch seemed to have died, but Prince Chen still ordered him to feel her pulse. He had feared that Prince Chen might madly slaughter him if he could not feel her pulse.

After calming down, he carefully felt the pulse and frowned.

After a long while, he put down her hand.

"How is she?" Chu Liuchen asked coldly, with his steely eyes on the imperial physician.

The imperial physician shivered and hurriedly said, "Her Highness should be fine!"

She had suffered a significant loss of Qi and blood, so she was very fragile. Princess Chen had a delicate body. It was a miracle that she survived after suffering such a severe injury. But nothing else had happened to her: she had no poisoning symptoms and was unimpaired by the drug that could invigorate blood circulation. The imperial physician felt pretty strange!

"Since it's not a big deal, why doesn't she wake up?" Chu Liuchen asked with a chill in his dark and fathomless eyes, "If you only made a perfunctory effort and talked nonsense to get rid of this matter, I'll kill you!"

Though his tone was calm and unhurried, his eyes looked ice-cold and sinister, which made the imperial physician's heart race with fear. He understood that Prince Chen was serious and didn't threaten him in a fit of anger.

Initially, the imperial physician wanted to tell the truth, but now he began to doubt if he had made the correct judgment. "Could it be that something bad happened to Princess Chen but I failed to see it?"

Chapter 1108 Remember: There Won't Be a Next Time

"Your Highness, Princess Chen... I'm afraid she is not in good condition now," the imperial physician answered cautiously.

"I only want to know when she will wake up," Chu Liuchen said harshly, his eyes piercing and grim.

The imperial physician subconsciously raised his head and happened to meet his daunting gaze. His lips trembled a few times in a panic before he finally answered, "Your Highness, I... I don't know the specific time. We can only wait until Her Highness wakes up!"

"Wait... wait, you actually let me wait. Well, I'll wait. But if anything happens to her, I'll bury you alive with her!" Chu Liuchen said mercilessly with cruel coldness.

His voice was not loud, but the determination in his words was apparent. The imperial physician was sure that if Princess Chen died, he would be buried with her.

The imperial physician was so scared that his legs went limp, and he fell to his knees.

"Leave and wait outside," Chu Liuchen ordered with a gloomy face.

The imperial physician didn't dare to stay any longer. The depressing atmosphere in the tent made his flesh creep. His heart raced uncontrollably as if something terrifying were going to jump out of his chest. He staggered to his feet and walked out of the tent. A chill stole over his body, and he looked back at the tent with unforgotten trepidation. He could only hope that Princess Chen would be fine.

"Sir, how is Princess Chen? The Empress sent me to ask about her condition." A young eunuch had stayed not far from the tent. Seeing the imperial physician coming out, he trotted to him and asked in a low voice. The Empress sent him to inquire about the news.

"Princess Chen..." The imperial physician shook his head and wiped his cold sweat with a bitter smile. At present, he was not sure about Princess Chen's condition. "It depends on when she wakes up. Otherwise..."

Speaking of this, the imperial physician shook his head again, not daring to say that she was okay.

"Princess Chen hasn't..." The eunuch blinked his eyes and didn't dare to finish his words. He pouted at the imperial physician, knowing that he would understand.

In the past, the imperial physician would have readily told the people sent by the Empress all he knew, but now he was at a loss, so he was not in the mood to reveal anything to the young eunuch.

With his medicine chest on his back, he frowned and stood near the small tent, waiting for Prince Chen to summon him.

The young eunuch still wanted to ask something, but the imperial physician lowered his head in silence as if he didn't hear his words. The young eunuch saw that the imperial physician didn't feel like answering his question. So, he scratched his head confusedly and returned to report to the Empress.

But the eunuch didn't quite understand what he meant. Could Princess Chen be saved? Or could it be that she was at her last gasp?

All the people in the tent had left. Then, Shao Wanru, lying on the bed, slowly opened her eyes and looked into a pair of beautiful and furious eyes. Chu Liuchen's handsome face was right above hers, but he looked severe and angry.

Shao Wanru smiled, moved her stiff hands to pull his sleeve, and shook it gently.

The sleeve in her hand was violently pulled away, and her hand dropped heavily. She slightly knitted her willowy eyebrows and cried out in pain in a low voice.

"Does it hurt?" Chu Liuchen hesitated for a moment. In the end, he reached out, took her hand, and asked sternly, "Is your wound in this arm?"

His tone was cold and harsh, but his hands were gentle. With care, he pulled her hand and wanted to roll up her sleeves to see her injury.

"It's not this hand. I had been lying long, so it became a little stiff." Shao Wanru shook her head and said softly, reaching out to pull his sleeve again with a lovely and innocent look. "Don't be angry. I didn't mean to do that. In that case, it was the best choice. Otherwise, people would question you."

"I'll deal with anything after the event. But it has nothing to do with you!" Chu Liuchen reproached sharply with a grim look in his eyes. He stared at Shao Wanru coldly and remained unmoved.

"But... in that case, even the Emperor and the Empress would be alarmed..." Shao Wanru argued aggrievedly with red-rimmed eyes, "Back then, if I didn't do that, I was afraid you might not get away with it. I feared that you... would become one of the suspects. My injury would be the best evidence to prove your innocence!"

Chu Liuchen's eyes fell on Shao Wanru's pale face. Her colorless face made his heart ache. On his way here, he had been simmering with rage since he got the news. He had wanted to scold her harshly, but when he saw her bloodshot eyes and pallid face, he instantly gave up the idea, and his anger disappeared in a flash.

He sighed heavily at the bottom of his heart and carefully held Shao Wanru in his arms. His eyes still looked a little fierce, but Shao Wanru couldn't see them. "Remember: there won't be a next time!"

"It won't happen again." Shao Wanru hurriedly promised.

"It's good that you remember. If you do it again, I don't know what crazy things I'll do!" Chu Liuchen warned her. Upon entering, he saw Shao Wanru's eyelids move slightly. After that, she lay still again. He would have believed that she had died if he hadn't seen that.

Luckily, she was fine! Chu Liuchen felt he was fortunate to the extreme!

He was eager to hold her tightly, but he was afraid of touching her wound, so he could only hug her with great care. At this moment, his heart was at ease again. He felt at peace — he didn't lose his most precious treasure.

For him, Shao Wanru was his priceless treasure. But this time, she fell into such a dangerous situation. Although she cleverly took advantage of the scheme against her, he did not want to see her get hurt again for him. He couldn't accept it even if she did it on purpose. She was injured no matter what.

She wounded herself to perfect his plan and eliminate him as a suspect. He married her because he wanted to protect her, but he didn't expect her to cover up for him this time.

It was the last time. He wouldn't allow her to do it again. He could have become stronger and made better arrangements. Anyway, he would never let her get hurt again.

He had not protected her well.

He exerted a little strength, holding her closer to his chest. Recently, his heart had been in his mouth. At this moment, he finally felt relieved, as if a heavy weight had been lifted from his mind. Then he put her down, looked down at her tender face, and asked, "What did Mingqiu Nun say?"

Shao Wanru leaned against his chest and answered softly, "She said I was okay and should recuperate for some time. I'm in weak health, but that's all. Otherwise, why would I come here to present my gift to Imperial Grandmother?"

"What happened today?" Chu Liuchen nodded and asked again. The incident happened suddenly today, so he hadn't yet received any news. He only knew what Shao Wanru had gone through during this period, but he had no idea of the accident today.

Shao Wanru had given a subtle hint to him when he came in. Without that, he nearly believed that she died for real. At that moment, overwhelmed by negative feelings rising from the bottom of his heart, he felt a great compulsion to destroy the whole world. But lucky for him, she was fine...

Hearing Chu Liuchen's question, Shao Wanru told him what had happened today in detail. She couldn't tell him about her previous life, but she referred obliquely to it when telling Chu Liuchen the whole story. In this way, she could carefully lead Chu Liuchen to that idea.

"I see. You should go back and rest first." After Shao Wanru finished speaking, Chu Liuchen nodded, his eyes turning thoughtful. Some things coincided with his ideas.

"Then I'll go back first!" Shao Wanru also knew it was the best time for her to go back. After all, she was in the Palace, where many people were closely watching her. But when she returned to Prince Chen's Mansion, these people could no longer spy on her situation.

"I'll send you back!" Chu Liuchen nodded and carefully put down Shao Wanru. Then he wrapped her in a cloak, picked her up without thinking, and strode out.

Yujie had been guarding the door. Seeing this, she hurriedly lifted the curtain for them.

"Go and report to my Imperial Grandmother that I'll come back to celebrate her birthday later!" Chu Liuchen ordered as he walked out.

"Yes, Your Highness!" Yujie lost no time in replying. At this time, she also breathed a sigh of relief. Prince Chen had come back. Since the backbone of the whole mansion was here, Princess Chen no longer needed to throw herself forward.

When Prince Chen left with Princess Chen in his arms, Yujie turned around and went to the big tent in the middle.

The atmosphere in the tent was pretty dull. The Empress Dowager was still sitting there with a gloomy face, and the Empress didn't dare to speak. She had just received the news that Princess Chen seemed to be still breathing, but so what? Even the imperial physician had been sent out of the tent. It could be seen that things were not going well in the tent. She wondered how much she would have to get involved in this and how to cope with the changes.

She thought of this way and that, twisting the handkerchief in her hand into a ball.

Rui'an Great Elder Princess had stopped crying and kept wiping her tears. Her eyes were red and blank.

Since they said nothing, the others didn't dare to say anything. As a result, everyone remained silent and sat there as if in a trance.

"Your Majesty, Princess Chen's servant girl is here!" A eunuch came in and reported in a low voice.

"Let her come in and talk," The Empress Dowager composed herself and said in a deep voice.

Yujie was brought in. After kneeling and kowtowing to the Empress Dowager, she said, "Your Majesty, His Highness has taken my master back to the mansion. He said he would come back to celebrate your birthday later!"

"Princess Chen... How is she now?" asked the Empress Dowager.

"I... I don't know either..." Yujie said, the rims of her eyes turning red, "His Highness carried my master away in his arms and asked the imperial physician to go with them!"

Her words reminded the Empress Dowager, who instantly turned around and ordered, "Send over a few more imperial physicians. They must... should save Princess Chen."

In her heart, Shao Wanru was dead. But at this time, even for Chu Liuchen, she had to dispatch a few more imperial physicians.

What she feared most was seeing her grandson suffer a great blow. It had not been easy for him to recover, so he might not survive such a big disaster.

The Empress Dowager had planned to get several consorts for Prince Chen's Mansion, but now she had given up this idea. She had to admit that her grandson's love for Shao Wanru was never a passing infatuation. For so many years, he had only fallen in love with her.

He had waited for her for three years when she was in mourning.

It hadn't been long since they got married, but they parted forever. Even ordinary people could not cope with such inconsolable grief, let alone her grandson, who had just recovered.

"The Empress, you can sit with them for a while and watch the show. I have a headache, so I'll go back first!" The Empress Dowager, not in the mood to celebrate her birthday, stood up and said after thinking for a while.

With her hand on an old Nanny's shoulder, she left. Her servants from the Palace of Benevolent Peace also withdrew in a well-ordered way. The Empress and the other noble ladies, who were here to celebrate the birthday, stood there dumbfounded as they watched the Empress Dowager walk away...

Since the Empress Dowager had left and Princess Chen's life was uncertain, they weren't in the mood to enjoy themselves. Of course, no one dared to have fun...

Chapter 1109 Retreating to Advance, Meeting the Emperor in the Imperial Study

Shao Wanru had fallen asleep when they returned to Prince Chen's Mansion.

Chu Liuchen's hands were steady. When he carried her back, she felt the journey smooth and stable, as if she were lying on the bed. Besides, Chu Liuchen's scent calmed her down. During this period, she missed him terribly. With him in her heart, she slowly fell asleep.

When she pretended to be in a coma, she had been lying quite still but had never fallen asleep. With great concentration, she was listening to the conversations in the tent. But involuntarily, she relaxed at this time, entering a resting state.

As usual, Chu Liuchen entered Prince Chen's Mansion through the side door. When a palace maid there saw him, she excitedly walked up to him but was stopped by his cold glance. Then she retreated carefully. When she was out of Chu Liuchen's sight, she lifted the hem of her dress and ran fast away.

She had to tell her master that Prince Chen had come back at this time. She had been looking forward to Prince Chen's return every day. This was great!

Chu Liuchen returned to the inner court with Shao Wanru in his arms and carefully put her on the bed. Looking at her ghastly pale face, he felt greatly distressed, as if needles were pricking his heart. Then he lowered his head and gently kissed her face.

As he looked up, his face became cold and stern again. His tenderness just now seemed just an illusion.

He reached out to take a quilt from the side for Shao Wanru and carefully covered her with it for fear that she couldn't sleep soundly and would wake up.

He stared at her in a daze for a while. Then he stood up, walked out of the door, and asked Qing Yue who had been waiting there.

"What did Mingqiu Nun say?"

"Mingqiu Nun said Her Highness would be fine, and she just needed to nourish herself to regain her health." Qing Yue didn't dare to hide anything and repeated Mingqiu Nun's words.

Only then did Chu Liuchen feel relieved. He nodded and said, "She is sleeping inside. Stay here and take good care of her!"

"Yes, I know!" Qing Yue answered. Yujie and Qu Le went to the Palace with Princess Chen, but only Princess Chen came back. Qing Yue was also very nervous but didn't dare to ask about it.

Chu Liuchen strode out and returned to the Palace through the side door. After making sure of his direction, he went straight to the Imperial Study, where the Emperor was.

In the Imperial Study, the Emperor had already got the message. Hearing that he was coming, he hurriedly asked someone to call him in. Prime Minister Zhang and Prime Minister Wen, who had been discussing official business inside, left there.

On the way, when they saw Chu Liuchen hurrying over, they saluted him in unison, "Greetings, Your Highness!"

"You don't have to do that, Your Graces!" Chu Liuchen raised his hand slightly and replied, his gentle eyes on them. In their eyes, Prince Chen was still as mild and handsome as he used to be.

But he appeared a little different from the past: his manner when facing two high-ranking officials was more imposing than before. His bearing was even more convincing than that of Prince Zhou, the legitimate son of the Empress.

As Chu Liuchen walked in, Prime Minister Wen and Prime Minister Zhang looked at each other with a trace of worry in their eyes.

Prince Chen was different from the past. He seemed a little more aggressive, like a newly cast sword out of the box, which inexplicably frightened them.

"Prince Chen has always been staying aloof from the power game. But what does this mean?" The two prime ministers were suddenly preoccupied with anxiety and felt uneasy.

Chu Liuchen entered the Imperial Study. No other people were in it except the Emperor and Derong, the principal eunuch.

"Uncle the Emperor!" Chu Liuchen strode in and knelt to salute the Emperor.

The Emperor came out from behind the desk excitedly and said, "Forego formalities! Get up now!"

But Chu Liuchen didn't stand up. Still, he was kneeling and said, "Uncle the Emperor, please uphold justice for me."

The Emperor frowned. "Get up, and let's talk about it!"

"Uncle the Emperor, when I was on my way back, some people had deliberately held me back several times. My carriage also had an accident and almost overturned. To get to the capital in time and celebrate Imperial Grandmother's birthday, I left my carriage and rode a horse to the capital. But I didn't expect that my wife would nearly die. How could the public order in the imperial city be so bad? Why couldn't these people tolerate a powerless woman?"

Chu Liuchen said solemnly, but he still didn't get up.

The Emperor's face darkened. He stretched out his hands, trying to pull Chu Liuchen up, but when he saw the determined look in Chu Liuchen's eyes, his face froze, and he dropped his hands.

“Get up first. I know about this.”

“Uncle the Emperor, do you really know that?” Chu Liuchen stood up without hesitation this time and looked indifferently at the Emperor with indescribable sadness in his eyes. “Uncle the Emperor, I know you saved my life. I’ve been weaker than others. I should have felt satisfied as long as I was alive. There was no need to treat me. In particular, I shouldn’t have gotten married. If Princess Chen hadn’t married me, she wouldn’t have almost died because of rebellion!”

The men in black that night used military crossbows. Thus, strictly speaking, their action could be regarded as a rebellion.

The Emperor took a step back, and his face suddenly paled. His lips trembled before he said with difficulty, “Chen’er, why shouldn’t you live? You are of noble blood. Why can’t you live in this world? It’s...it’s my fault!”

“Uncle the Emperor, you don’t have to say that. You know, I didn’t want to live long before I met my wife. After all, I didn’t want to disturb others. It would be a great crime for me to survive. How could I implicate you and my Imperial Grandmother because of my mortal sin? But then, I found my true love and wanted to live with her for an entire lifetime. Can’t I even do that?”

With his eyes fixed on the Emperor, Chu Liuchen said calmly as if he were talking about the affairs of someone else. The Emperor felt his heart ache as if something were biting it downward violently.

Of course, he knew Chu Liuchen’s previous condition — he had abandoned himself to despair and never taken his life seriously. If it weren’t for Princess Chen, he might not even care about his life.

What did he do wrong?

He had done nothing wrong. He was the most innocent one. Was it the toxin inherited from his mother? He had suffered a lot even when he was in the womb. After he was born, he was at the gate of death. When Chu Liuchen was little, the Emperor didn’t even dare to breathe heavily before him for fear that he would catch a cold. It was not easy for him to grow up. Now, he finally had the desire to survive. Such a result was hard-won.

“Don’t worry. I will protect you... and people in your mansion.” Looking at Chu Liuchen’s expressionless eyes, the Emperor took a deep breath. He was afraid to see Chu Liuchen like this, as if he cared nothing about this world. He wore a serene look, seemingly disassociated from everything in this world. He cared nothing because he had given himself over to despair.

“Uncle the Emperor, I just want to live my life with Princess Chen!” Chu Liuchen muttered, and there was a slight fluctuation in his eyes.

The Emperor captured his change. Only when Chu Liuchen mentioned Princess Chen would he faintly display his feelings and attachment to the world.

“Uncle the Emperor, those people were restless even on my Imperial Grandmother’s birthday. How could they make such a scene in the Palace? This time, they brought disaster to my wife. What will happen next time? Will they target my Imperial Grandmother? Or anyone else? I only have a few families. I sincerely hope that we can live in peace and safety.”

Chu Liuchen added.

After that, he bowed to the Emperor and said, "Uncle the Emperor, I'm going to see my Imperial Grandmother. What happened to Princess Chen just now also scared her. She might not be in the mood to watch the performance. But this is a good thing. A lot of people entered the Palace today. Since the Palace had been thronged with various visitors and servants, it won't be easy to investigate this incident. Besides, we're not supposed to check up on the family members of officials above the fourth rank. In this way, the Palace becomes more insecure!"

After that, he turned around and walked out.

"Wait!" The Emperor's voice came from behind.

Chu Liuchen turned around.

"How are you? Are you feeling unwell after you hurried back to the capital?" The Emperor took two steps forward and asked with concern.

"Don't worry, Uncle the Emperor. I've fully recovered. I'm a little tired on my way back, but I can still hold on," Chu Liuchen turned around and answered.

The Emperor's eyes fell on his handsome face, which looked a little weary. It could be seen that he was indeed exhausted. He had thought Chu Liuchen couldn't make it in time, but he showed up here. Chu Liuchen must have traveled day and night and barely stopped.

"Are you really all right?" the Emperor asked again.

"Rest assured, Uncle the Emperor. It's not a big deal. I only need to go to bed early at night. Then I should be fine!" Chu Liuchen replied.

The Emperor examined him again and checked his complexion. Although his face was still as pale as before, and his lips were paler than ordinary people's, he was in good spirits. Eventually, the Emperor felt relieved. Chu Liuchen must have recovered. He could withstand such a long and rapid journey, which meant he was stronger than ordinary people!

"Since you are in good health, you can go to court tomorrow!" With a wave of his hand, the Emperor said. It seemed he had made an important decision.

"I'm leaving now!" Chu Liuchen nodded and withdrew.

When he was out of the Imperial Study, he looked back at the tall and wide gate of the hall, his eyes becoming increasingly deep and calm. He was not surprised by what the Emperor had said just now. This was what he had wanted.

He had regained his health and was no longer a useless prince. His fast-speed march was more authentic than the words of imperial physicians. After all, facts speak louder than words.

Out of the Imperial Study, Chu Liuchen went to the Palace of Benevolent Peace but didn't see the Empress Dowager. He was told that the Empress Dowager didn't feel well and was asleep.

Chu Liuchen knelt outside the Empress Dowager's place and kowtowed three times respectfully before he got up and went back.

When he returned to his mansion, Shao Wanru had not woken up. After washing up, Chu Liuchen also went to bed, gently holding the slender figure in his arms, and closed his eyes.

He was indeed tired out on the way here!

Shao Wanru was weak and lacked vital energy and blood, while Chu Liuchen was exhausted. The two of them slept until the night. Nanny Yu and Nanny Zheng woke them up, and they had some food. Chu Liuchen changed the dressing for Shao Wanru's wound. At the sight of her wound, he looked gloomy again. It took Shao Wanru a while to coax him.

After that, they fell asleep early. The Prince Chen's Mansion was in peace, but the imperial Palace was not because the Empress Dowager fell ill...

Chapter 1110 The Imperial Court Was Also Affected and Slid into Chaos

At dusk, the servants found that the Empress Dowager fell ill.

In a great fluster, Nanny Wei hurriedly went to get the imperial physician and reported it to the Phoenix Palace.

However, the general steward of the Phoenix Palace said that the Empress had gone to the Emperor's Imperial Study. After sizing up the situation, Nanny Wei could only go to the Imperial Study.

As soon as she arrived at the door of the Imperial Study, she heard the Emperor's angry rebuke. Several eunuchs stood at the door with bowed heads, trembling with fear. When they saw her coming, they immediately winked at her.

Nanny Wei didn't dare to go in, so she stood aside with the eunuchs.

The Emperor scolded loudly. It was evident that he was in a towering rage.

"You should be a motherly model for the whole nation! You are the Empress in charge of the imperial harem! What's the point of making you the Empress? Great... Well done..."

"Do you think that... you alone can decide everything in the imperial harem... the imperial kitchen... intervened... Prince Chen..."

Nanny Wei couldn't hear the Emperor's voice clearly. From time to time, snatches of their conversation would come over. However, Nanny Wei kept stepping back cautiously, her face dreadfully pale. She had no guts to listen to such words, so she had to stay away as far as possible.

The voices inside dropped. Perhaps, it was because she had retreated far enough. Now, she could only vaguely hear the Emperor's furious reproach, followed by the Empress's low sobs. Nanny Wei took a few more steps back and almost retreated to a corner this time.

After a long time, Nanny Wei's feet almost went numb. Then she saw the Empress leave with the support of several imperial servants. The Empress was crying and kept wiping her tears, staggering forward. Without the servants' help, she couldn't stand steadily. The Empress had been managing the

imperial harem and was respected and esteemed by people all over the country. But at this time, she left the Imperial Study, weeping and wailing like an ordinary woman.

Nanny Wei, even more scared, didn't dare to move forward and discreetly hid on one side. She was so afraid that someone would see her. In her heart, she regretted coming over at this time. She should have arrived here later.

After waiting for a while, she saw Derong, the Emperor's servant, go to the imperial harem with the imperial edict in his hands. A few little eunuchs went after him. "Is he going to announce the imperial edict?"

Nanny Wei felt increasingly uneasy. After waiting for a while, she walked up to the door of the Imperial Study with fear and trepidation and said to several young eunuchs standing there, "Could you help me inform His Majesty that the Empress Dowager is sick?"

Hearing that the Empress Dowager was ill, the young eunuch did not dare to delay and hurried in to report. After a while, she was called in.

It was not the first time Nanny Wei had come to the Imperial Study. Its atmosphere was peaceful in the past, and the Emperor was kind to her. In fact, the Emperor treated her very well because she was the Empress Dowager's trusted servant. But now, she was overwhelmed with anxiety.

Hearing that the Empress Dowager was in poor health, the Emperor asked Nanny Wei to take good care of her and return first, saying he would come over later.

Nanny Wei walked back to the Palace of Benevolent Peace. Before long, the Emperor came. According to the imperial physician, the Empress Dowager was old and had been bothered by worries in her heart. When she couldn't stand the pressure, she fell ill. In the end, he said that the Empress Dowager should rest well.

The Emperor and the Empress Dowager ordered all the others to leave. After talking with the Empress Dowager for a while, the Emperor left the Palace of Benevolent Peace. Nanny Wei didn't hear their conversation, but she felt anxious and distracted, thinking that something big was going to happen.

The news that Prince Chen had returned soon got around. At the imperial court the next day, Chu Liuchen appeared in public, and everyone couldn't help looking narrowly at Prince Chen.

Surprisingly, Prince Chen looked vigorous. Although his face was paler than that of ordinary people, he looked okay overall. Many officials whispered to themselves in their hearts. "But why did I hear Prince Chen was in poor health and could barely walk a few steps? He had to rely on a wheelchair to move around the Palace.

"What's going on right now?"

Some observant people thought it was quite a coincidence that Prince Chen appeared at this time. "Why would Prince Chen be here? What does the Emperor mean?"

Everyone guessed in their hearts and inexplicably had a bad feeling. But the next moment, the Emperor dropped the bombshell, and all the officials were no longer in the mood to think about Prince Chen.

The Emperor was going to depose the Empress. He announced this idea in the imperial court and asked the officials for their opinions!

Such a big thing happened without warning. Because of the incident that happened to Princess Chen, everyone was secretly guessing this thing. However, no matter how they thought in private, none of them had expected that this matter would suddenly be made public before the officials.

How could the Empress of a country be deposed so easily? This change would cause turmoil in the imperial court.

The Emperor declared that the murder targeting Princess Chen in the imperial harem was closely related to the Empress. All the people who had contact with Princess Chen were more or less related to the Empress. Yesterday, Princess Chen almost died in the Imperial Palace. Lucky for her, she didn't eat the rice. Otherwise, she wouldn't have been alive at this time.

After listening to the Emperor's order, many officials stood up and begged the Emperor to show mercy. They said it seemed to be the Empress, but it might not be her. There must be someone scheming against the Empress in the dark. They hinted that the Consort of Virtue might also do this, except for the Empress.

After all, only Prince Yue, Consort of Virtue's son, was Prince Zhou's most competitive rival.

Some stood on Prince Zhou's side, claiming that Prince Zhou was the legitimate son of the Empress, who had always been steady and reliable. This time, they must have been framed and suffered an injustice. Maybe some people had deliberately planned all of this. Anyway, whoever benefited from it would be the real culprit.

Others chose to speak for Prince Yue. They praised Prince Yue, who was steady and fair-minded. Besides, the Consort of Virtue had been well-behaved in the imperial harem. Now that the Empress would be punished, the Consort of Virtue would feel uneasy. So, this decision needed further consideration.

Of course, there were officials remaining silent. They just stood aside quietly and listened to the arguments of the other officials with a frown.

Chu Liuzhou looked gloomy and cold, with a murderous aura all over his body. Upon hearing that his mother would lose her power, he was trying his best to restrain himself. Otherwise, he would have given a few stinging slaps to those officials who suggested more time should be taken to consider this matter. They meant that his mother should take the blame.

After this incident happened yesterday, Prince Zhou also heard about what had happened to Princess Chen. He wanted to sneak into the Palace to meet his mother. However, he hadn't yet found any chance to see her. At this time, he was at a loss, feeling restless and irritable. He clenched his teeth, swallowing his anger.

In contrast, Chu Liuyue looked much more composed but turned a blind eye to their arguments. Quietly, he stood aside and listened as the officials were arguing heatedly.

Chu Liuchen was also very calm but didn't lower his head. He looked at the officials talking about this matter with a stern look.

Part of them requested to deprive the Empress of her position, while some only suggested deferring making the final decision. The imperial court was in an uproar in the heat of the argument. There was even an overly excited imperial censor who even risked his life in pressing the Emperor to adopt his advice. On an impulse, he almost bumped his head into the rosewood pillar carved with dragons in the hall.

The Emperor was so furious that he threw away all the memorials in his hand. Instantly, the hall fell silent, and even the sound of breathing could be heard.

“Let’s call it a day and discuss it tomorrow!” The Emperor said coldly and swerved to leave the court.

When the Emperor had left, everyone in the hall finally calmed down. They looked at each other and didn’t know how to respond to this situation for a while. Since the Emperor had proposed this matter, it would be discussed again in the imperial court in the future. How could things come to this?

How was Princess Chen?

Some people wanted to ask about Princess Chen, but Prince Chen cast a cold glance at them. Upon meeting his ruthless and beautiful eyes, they couldn’t help shivering with fear and zipped their mouths at once. Prince Chen seemed to be in a bad mood. If they annoyed him, they would suffer a lot.

Most of the high-ranking officials had witnessed in the Imperial Study how much the Emperor cared about Prince Chen, so they didn’t dare to walk up to him at this time. Since even these important officials hesitated to come forward, other ordinary officials gave up the idea of asking him for information.

They could only watch him walk away without a backward glance.

When they turned to look at Prince Yue and Prince Zhou, they were surprised to find that the two princes had also left.

The imperial court was in such a mess that everyone was arguing, but the imperial harem appeared calm. The Empress’s Phoenix Palace had few visitors as if it had been closed. All the imperial consorts were not allowed to disturb the Empress Dowager and the Empress, who were said to be sick.

Both of them were ill, so no one dared to make any trouble for a while. The atmosphere in the entire imperial harem was inexplicably tense. Everyone thought that the Empress was going to lose her power this time. After that, Prince Zhou would no longer be the Empress’s legitimate son and become one of the ordinary princes.

At that time, these princes would enjoy the same status, and Prince Yue was the eldest son. In any case, Prince Yue would be the most likely to inherit the throne.

Many imperial consorts, who couldn’t pay their respects to the Empress, turned to visit the Consort of Virtue. It would benefit them much to butter up and strengthen the relationship with Consort of Virtue at this time.

They had determined to win the favor of the Consort of Virtue before she became the Empress. Otherwise, once she became the Empress or the Empress Dowager in the future, they could hardly get any good chance to get close to her.

The palace where the Consort of Virtue lived was instantly crowded with visitors.

But at this time, Chu Liuchen secretly met Consort Lan in the attic where he usually rested. This place close to Prince Chen's Mansion was not far from the back door of his mansion.

When Chu Liuchen came over, Consort Lan had been waiting for him upstairs for a long time. Seeing him coming over, Consort Lan looked at him excitedly, and tears immediately rolled down her delicate face. However, Chu Liuchen only stood far away, looking at Consort Lan coldly in silence.

Consort Lan looked him up and down, ensuring that he was in good health and didn't force himself to be tough. She breathed a sigh of relief, pointed to the chair aside, and said, "You... sit down before we talk!"

Chu Liuchen glanced at her indifferently and walked over slowly. He pulled the chair further away before sitting down, his eyes cold. He looked at Consort Lan as if watching a stranger. There was no trace of warmth on his pretty face.

"You... Couldn't you..." Consort Lan begged with a pleading look.

"No!" Chu Liuchen refused without any hesitation.

Consort Lan suddenly became agitated and said with tears in her eyes, "Chen'er, you... Are you still blaming me? Like before? But what could I do? I... I had no choice."