

Venomous 161

Chapter 161: Plans (5)

Shen Miao smiled coldly. Ren Wanyun's plan had fallen flat. She naturally didn't want Shen Qing to marry Huang Dexing. However, the two families had already agreed. It was not easy to go back on her word at this time.

Ren Wanyun had shot herself in the foot. Of course, even if Ren Wanyun's plan failed, Shen Miao still would not let her off easily. A few days later at the banquet, she would use Ren Wanyun to deal Prince Yu a heavy blow in front of everyone.

Outside the door, Luo Xueyan and Shen Xin's expressions darkened. Luo Xueyan said angrily, "What's wrong with Old Madam and your brothers? Why do they want to arrange a marriage for Jiaojiao for no reason? This is the first time I've heard of such a thing."

"Madam, don't be angry." Shen Xin said, "I'll go and ask Old Madam immediately. If it's true, I'll immediately talk to the Wei family. I'm afraid there's something fishy about them hiding it from us."

"I guess Jiaojiao has suffered a lot this year." Luo Xueyan said angrily, "I'll call Jiaojiao's maids over to ask them what happened. And, Nanny Gui is also missing." After all, she had been on the battlefield for many years and was sensitive to small details. She said, "I think Jiaojiao is right. If we don't stay in the capital for half a year to teach these people a lesson, I'm afraid Jiaojiao won't live long!" As she spoke, she glared at Shen Xin.

Shen Xin rubbed his nose. He naturally knew that Luo Xueyan was unhappy with his two brothers. Not to mention Luo Xueyan, he was also angry. He instructed the two guards beside him, "Take good care of Miss these few days. If anything goes wrong, tell me immediately. If anything happens to Miss, you will be punished by military law!" With that said, he looked at Shen Qiu and frowned. "You little brat, what are you thinking?"

Shen Qiu only came back to his senses after being shouted at by Shen Xin. He said vaguely, "Oh, I was thinking about something just now." He had been thinking about what happened to Shen Miao. The people sent to the Wolong Temple had already reported and told him they did not find anything. Shen Qiu was not a fool. He knew that this was because the people who knew about it had all been replaced. It seemed that it was not someone in the Shen family who did it. The truth that Shen Miao was hiding made Shen Qiu even more suspicious.

Unknowingly, her sister was becoming more and more unfathomable.

Shen Xin vented his anger on his son. "Go and investigate what happened in the mansion. I'll ask you tomorrow."

"Ah." Shen Qiu was put on the spot. He knew what was going on, but his sister wouldn't let him say it.

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At this moment, the Rosy Cloud Garden was in a mess.

Shen Gui had just left after having a big quarrel with Ren Wanyun. Ever since the day Shen Xin returned on Old Madam Shen's birthday, Shen Gui had been having quarrels with Ren Wanyun. In fact, Shen Gui knew that Shen Miao was grounded. However, it was his habit to push all the blame to Ren Wanyun.

The reason why he and Shen Wan had reached this point was because of the connections built up by Shen Xin. Although they had a certain status in the imperial court now, if Shen Xin wanted them to suffer, Shen Gui and Shen Wan would definitely suffer. This was a world where military heroes were respected. Although the civil officials mocked the generals for being uncivilized, whoever had military power was more important in Ming Qi.

In the past, the two of them had put on a flawless show in front of Shen Xin, and Shen Xin was willing to help them. Unexpectedly, this time, Shen Xin saw Shen Miao in a sea of fire with his own eyes. Shen Xin regarded Shen Miao as his life, and in his anger, he would do anything. Therefore, ever since Shen Xin returned, Shen Gui had been extremely frustrated. And at this very moment, Ren Wanyun was stupid enough to bring up breaking off the engagement with the Huang family. It was almost like adding fuel to the fire. His dissatisfaction with Ren Wanyun for the past few days exploded.

Chapter 162: Plans (6)

It was the same today. He quarreled with Ren Wanyun angrily and said that Shen Qing had to marry into the Huang family. With that, he stormed out, leaving Ren Wanyun no chance to refute.

"Beast! Beast!" Ren Wanyun rubbed her chest, her lips trembling.

Shen Gui did not care about his daughter's happiness and only wanted to rely on the Huang family to climb up the ladder, which made Ren Wanyun burn with anger. Now Shen Xin was back and Luo Xueyan was not an easy person to get along with. If not for the fact that this matter was extremely confidential, when Shen Xin and his wife found out that she was planning to change Shen Miao and Shen Qing's marriage, they would probably be driven to kill her. Even if Shen Xin and his wife did not find out this time, the fire in the ancestral hall was enough for the couple to be alerted. It would be difficult for Ren Wanyun to scheme against Shen Miao in the future.

Ren Wanyun wished she could cut Shen Miao into pieces. Back then, it was Shen Miao who schemed against Shen Qing. If not for Shen Miao, Shen Qing would not have to marry a homosexual. Now that Shen Miao was protected by Shen Xin, it would probably not be easy for her to tamper with the marriage.

"Madam, calm down." Xianglan calmed Ren Wanyun down and said, "Don't be angry. The royal banquet will be held in a few days. If you fall ill because of the anger, you won't be able to attend it."

Ren Wanyun's gaze changed, and a sinister smile appeared on her face. "You're right. In the royal banquet... I want that little b*tch to live a life worse than death!" She turned to look at Cai Ju. "Did Prince Yu receive the letter already?"

"He did," Cai Ju said carefully.

"That little b*tch ruined my daughter's life. I will ruin hers too!" Ren Wanyun sneered. "With Shen Xin protecting her, I can't do anything to her. If they have the ability, they can go against Prince Yu." She

looked like a vicious snake, sticking out her tongue sinisterly. “There will always be someone who can deal with her!”

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In Prince Yu’s mansion.

In the magnificent main hall, beautiful Persian dancers were dancing in thin clothes. Their snow-white feet were on the soft carpet, and there were colorful bells tied to their slender ankles.

The middle-aged man on the seat had an ugly and sinister face. His left leg was empty. At this moment, a petite girl was kneeling under him. The girl was about 11 or 12 years old. She was born with a delicate face, but her eyes were filled with fear. At this moment, she was naked and was gently massaging Prince Yu’s legs.

This young girl’s snow-white body was covered in purple and green bruises. Looking carefully, there were also red whip marks. Clearly, she had experienced extraordinary pain and torture.

Prince Yu looked at the letter in his hand and suddenly smiled. He suddenly patted the lion’s head on the seat. The girl screamed in fear and fell to the ground, trembling uncontrollably.

“Shen Xin...” Prince Yu slowly said,” Shen Miao... how dare she fool me. ”

After that night, because he found new plaything, he threw this matter to the back of his mind. To Prince Yu, these girls were just fun toys, just like those cats and dogs. As for what would happen in the future, he did not care at all. Moreover, with Shen Gui hiding it, he did not find anything wrong that night.

However, after reading this letter, it dawned on him that there was indeed something unusual that night. Shen Miao actually had so many tricks up her sleeve. Not only did she beat Ren Wanyun in her own game, but she also fooled him.

In Ming Qi, except for the emperor, everyone had to be respectful to him. How dare a little girl like Shen Miao trick him like that? This time, Prince Yu was so angry that he wanted to kill her.

However, now that Shen Xin was in the capital protecting his daughter, how could he make a move? Or should he get rid of Shen Xin too?

Prince Yu rubbed his chin, a trace of ruthlessness flashing across his eyes.

Chapter 163: The Royal Banquet (1)

Three days later, the royal family held a banquet and all the officials were required to attend with their family. Although it was a joyous occasion, everyone knew that this banquet was just a celebration for Shen Xin.

The Shen family held a lot of power, and they had fierce generals like Shen Xin and Shen Qiu. If they were used well, they would be a good weapon for Ming Qi. If they were not used well, they could

threaten the people sitting on that throne at any time. The Ming Qi royal family was both dependent and wary of the Shen family. However, before the enemy was cleared, the Shen family was at least safe.

As long as the Shen family did not get involved in the competition for the throne, the royal family would not attack the Shen family for the next ten years. This was something that anyone with a brain could tell. However, previously, Shen Miao was infatuated with Prince Ding, making people think that if Shen Xin married his daughter to Fu Xiuyi, the status of the Shen family in the imperial court would become shaky. However, later on, it seemed that Shen Miao's interest in Fu Xiuyi gradually faded. The Shen family did not have to be involved in the competition for the throne, so they would naturally be safe. In the next ten years, the title of the mighty general in the capital would still be able to intimidate many people.

Early in the morning, Luo Xueyan came over to see Shen Miao. Over the past few days, Luo Xueyan and Shen Xin had been investigating what had happened in the Shen family over the past year. However, they weren't able to find anything because it was always done meticulously by the other two branches. Even so, Shen Xin and his wife still felt that something was wrong. These days, they had become much more distant from Old Madam Shen and the others.

Shen Miao did not tell Shen Xin and his wife that Shen Qing had lost her virginity, so it was even more impossible for Ren Wanyun and Chen Ruoqiu to take the initiative to make this news public. As for Nanny Gui's death, they said that she was kicked out of the mansion because she had sticky fingers. Ren Wanyun thought that Shen Miao would tell Shen Xin the truth, but to her surprise, Shen Miao said nothing.

"Miss, you need more hairpins." Bai Lu combed Shen Miao's hair into a long bun. Now that Shen Miao had lost some weight, she gradually looked more like a young girl. It was a little inappropriate for her to dress up in a cute fashion like before. Moreover, she was going to attend the royal banquet today, so she probably had to dress up more gracefully. However, in the past, Shen Miao's jewelry was all handled by Ren Wanyun, and most of them were gold and silver jewelry. Those jewelry had long been sold and now, the jewelry box was empty.

"Didn't Master bring back a lot of rewards from the palace yesterday?" Shuang Jiang had an idea. "Miss, why don't you choose some? There must be a lot of good things in them."

"Forget it." Shen Miao rejected the offer immediately. All the things in the palace were stained with blood. Now, she didn't want to wear those things at all. It was as if wearing them would remind her of those tragic years. She thought for a moment and opened a compartment in the jewelry box to pick out a hairpin.

"Eh, this hairpin is so beautiful!" Bai Lu said in surprise, "When did Miss get such a hairpin? Did Madam give it to you?"

Shen Miao picked up the hairpin and looked at it carefully. On the day of the test, Xie Jingxing used this jade begonia to exchange for the real begonia on her head. If Bai Lu hadn't mentioned that there was no jewelry in the box, she would have forgotten about it.

The hairpin was made of jade and was a sparkling purple-red color. The craftsman who carved it was also very skilled. The begonia petals were curled up and blooming, making it look like a large piece of

prosperous jade. It was cold to the touch, and it was obviously made of high-grade jade. Such a begonia hairpin was probably worth more than a thousand gold. In her previous life, Shen Miao had seen many good things in the palace, so she could naturally tell that this hairpin was extraordinary.

Chapter 164: The Royal Banquet (2)

Seeing that Shen Miao was deep in thought, Bai Lu said, “Miss, this hairpin is beautiful. I’ll put it on for you.”

Only then did Shen Miao come back to her senses.

In the end, Shuang Jiang put some rouge on Shen Miao’s face. Gu Yu walked over with a green cloak with rabbit fur and smiled. “Miss, you’re really beautiful. Madam will definitely be surprised to see you.”

Outside the door, Luo Xueyan and Shen Xin were waiting. Shen Qiu tore off a leaf and said, “Mother, why don’t you let Sister find clothes and jewelry to wear from the rewards? This will save a lot of trouble.”

“What do you know?” Luo Xueyan said angrily, “Who knows if those clothes have been worn by consorts? As for jewelry, forget it. Jiaojiao can wear whatever she likes. It’s better not to interfere.”

Shen Miao had always liked tacky clothes, which gave Luo Xueyan a headache. No matter how Luo Xueyan persuaded her, Shen Miao could not abandon her love for gold and silver jewelry. Therefore, after a long time, Luo Xueyan was used to it.

Shen Qiu stuck out his tongue and said softly, “If my sister wears something shiny again...” Before he could finish his sentence, the door was pushed open.

“S-Sister...” Shen Qiu opened his mouth and stared at Shen Miao like a fool.

The girl was wearing a purple dress with jade patterns and a lotus green cloak with rabbit fur on the outside. The fluffy rabbit fur covering her chin, making her small face look even smaller. Her skin was fair to begin with, and when she wore a lotus green dress, she looked extremely noble.

Luo Xueyan and Shen Xin looked at her in a daze. In an instant, they seemed to have seen the noble golden phoenix behind the throne hall.

It was precisely because Shen Miao had always been wearing gold and silver that now, the more simple she wore, the more noble she looked. That calm attitude was something they had never seen before. Luo Xueyan subconsciously rubbed her chest. Because she came from the Northwest Desert, after she married Shen Xin and came to the capital, she was often mocked by the noble ladies here for being vulgar and impolite. Luo Xueyan had also secretly invited someone to learn how to dress. However, even if she could learn how to dress, she could not learn the gracefulness and nobleness rich ladies exuded, so she gave up.

Now, her daughter looked more noble and dignified than any noble lady in the capital. How could she not be surprised?

“Hahahaha.” It was Shen Xin who broke the silence first. He looked up and laughed loudly. When he looked at Shen Miao again, his eyes were filled with pride. “My daughter has grown up. My Jiaojiao is now a gorgeous beauty!” His words were extremely vulgar, making Luo Xueyan glare at him. When she turned around, she saw that the soldiers Shen Qiu brought back were all staring at Shen Miao with sparkling eyes. She couldn’t help but feel a little smug. Then, she said, “Forget it, let’s get into the carriage first. It won’t be good to be late.” After saying that, she walked up to Shen Miao to talk to her.

Shen Miao was not used to being treated like a child, but when she saw Shen Xin and Shen Qiu’s doting gazes, she paused. In the eyes of her parents and brother, she was still Shen Jiaojiao.

Ren Wanyun noticed the begonias hairpin on Shen Miao’s head and smiled. “Jiaojiao, this hairpin is really beautiful. Did you choose it yourself?”

Chapter 165: The Royal Banquet (3)

Shen Miao replied vaguely. When she walked to the door, she saw that two carriages were already parked there.

Shen Gui and Shen Wan stood outside. When they saw Shen Miao and the others walking over, they looked a little awkward. These days, Shen Xin had never been nice to the two of them. No matter how they explained, he would not listen.

“Brother.” Shen Wan had to be more tactful and greeted Shen Xin with a smile.

Shen Xin nodded and walked to his carriage. He said to Shen Miao, “Madam, Jiaojiao, go in first.” Shen Xin and Shen Qiu did not have the habit of riding in carriages, so they rode horses after the carriage.

Shen Gui and Shen Wan did not look happy being ignored like this. A trace of anger flashed across Shen Gui’s eyes. The curtain of one of the other two carriages was lifted up, revealing the faces of Shen Yue and Chen Ruoqiu. Shen Yue said gently, “Fifth Sister, do you want to sit in the same carriage as us? This carriage is big enough. Aunt can also sit with us too.”

“No need,” Luo Xueyan said with a cold expression. “It’s safer to sit in my own carriage.”

Shen Miao clapped for Luo Xueyan in her heart. In the past, Luo Xueyan and the other two madam did not have any interaction. She was straightforward and sincere, so no one had ever seen such a mean side of her. One had to know that on the battlefield, she was known for being merciless.

In the other carriage, Shen Qing and Ren Wanyun were also listening to the talk outside. Shen Qing’s face was still a little pale. She held Ren Wanyun’s hand and subconsciously tightened her grip, making Ren Wanyun cry out. When Shen Qing let go, there were scratches on Ren Wanyun’s wrist.

Ren Wanyun was not in the mood to care about her hands. She pulled Shen Qing into her arms and felt Shen Qing’s body trembling.

“Qing...” Ren Wanyun comforted her in a low voice.

“I have to kill her...” With Shen Qing in her arms, Shen Qing said, gritting her teeth. Shen Qing had gradually regained her senses and could recall the terrifying night at the Wolong Temple. All of this was

caused by Shen Miao. What was even more terrifying was that she was already pregnant and could not abort the child. Otherwise, she might not be able to be a mother for the rest of her life. Thinking of the pain she had suffered, Shen Qing wished she could make Shen Miao feel the same pain. No, she should make Shen Miao suffer ten times more!

“Mother will avenge you...” Ren Wanyun felt like her heart was being stabbed by a knife. She wished she could turn into a wolf and pounce on Shen Miao to bite her throat. Shen Qing’s cry was like a knife stabbing into her heart. Facing Shen Qing, she would always think of that night. She stayed next door, but she chose to stand by and do nothing.

“I will avenge you...” Ren Wanyun muttered.

In the other carriage, Shen Yue and Chen Ruoqiu were sitting opposite each other. Just now, Shen Yue was a little unhappy to be rejected by Luo Xueyan. She looked down on vulgar military women like Luo Xueyan to begin with. Now that she was mocked by her, she was even angrier.

“Yue.” Chen Ruoqiu frowned slightly. “How many times have I told you to stay calm under all circumstances? Why do you have to lose your temper because of her?”

“Mother, I just can’t stand it.” Shen Yue looked at her palm. “Shen Miao used to be respectful to us. Now that Eldest Uncle and his family are back, she’s acting more and more arrogantly. Isn’t she deliberately doing this for us to see?”

Chapter 166: The Royal Banquet (4)

Chen Ruoqiu looked at her daughter and sighed. “You’re still too young and impulsive.” After a pause, Chen Ruoqiu continued, “You don’t have to think too highly of Shen Miao. Now that the first and second branches are in a deadlock, your second aunt will definitely get back at Shen Miao for offending your second aunt.”

When Shen Yue heard that, she looked at Chen Ruoqiu. “But after all these days, Second Aunt hasn’t managed to make Shen Miao suffer.”

Chen Ruoqiu was slightly stunned. Indeed, Ren Wanyun had been dealing with Shen Miao for a long time. However, after so long, not only did Ren Wanyun not gain anything, but she also made a lot of mistakes. It was strange that an experienced woman like Ren Wanyun would lose to a young girl like Shen Miao.

A moment later, Chen Ruoqiu shook off the thought and said, “It’s precisely because your second aunt has made her suffer that she will continue to try with all she can.”

Shen Yue seemed to have understood something and said, “In that case, let’s just sit back and watch the show.”

“That’s right.” Chen Ruoqiu said, “This is what I want to teach you. In the mansion, don’t make a move unless it’s necessary. If you can use something or someone to achieve your goal, don’t do it yourself. If you use it well, you can benefit from it without suffering loss.”

“Thank you, Mom.” Shen Yue sat up straight. “I understand.”

As they chatted happily, they did not know that Luo Xueyan's carriage had already left them in the dust. As Shen Qiu and Shen Xin rode, the people who recognized them all looked at them with admiration.

In the carriage, Luo Xueyan kept looking at Shen Miao and smiling happily. Even though Shen Miao was calm, she was still puzzled by the smile on Luo Xueyan's face.

"Jiaojiao is really good-looking now." Luo Xueyan sighed and said, "After not seeing you for a year, you have grown into a big girl. I think no one in the capital is as good-looking as you."

Luo Xueyan had always been a little domineering when she spoke. If others heard this, they would probably laugh at her. However, it was true that parents always found their children to be the best looking. In addition, Luo Xueyan was quite bad-tempered, but Shen Miao was calm and collected. People always liked things that they didn't have. Naturally, Luo Xueyan loved her daughter even more.

Shen Miao smiled. Only her parents would be proud of her while others regarded her as an idiot.

"Last night, I discussed it with your father." Luo Xueyan changed the topic and said, "What you said before about letting your father stay in the capital for another half a year is not a bad idea. Your father and I are not in the mansion all year round, so we have to spend more time with you. When His Majesty asks about it today, your father will make this request."

Hearing that, Shen Miao couldn't help but be stunned. She knew Shen Xin would listen to her in the end, but she didn't expect him to do it so quickly. Before she could react, Luo Xueyan had already hugged her and smiled. "In this half a year, I can spend time with you and watch you grow up."

Luo Xueyan was fierce in front of her enemies, but in front of Shen Miao, she was very amiable. If her former opponents saw her, they would probably be shocked.

"Thank you, Mom," Shen Miao leaned against Luo Xueyan and said softly.

Chapter 167: The Royal Banquet (5)

Today's banquet was not a so-called celebration banquet. It was definitely extremely dangerous. The capable ones had laid their chess pieces, waiting for others to fall into the trap. They all wanted to gain the upper hand in this competition.

Of course, to Shen Miao, it meant something different. She had finally returned to the palace where she had been imprisoned for her entire life and where her children and family were buried.

Meeting Emperor Wen Hui, the Fu family, and her old friends in the palace again, it was still unknown who would win. The corners of her lips curled up slightly, and in the depths of her clear eyes, there was a storm in the making.

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The palace was majestic. The tiles were glazed and carved with red paint. Patterns of coiling golden and burning phoenixes could be seen everywhere. It was golden and dazzling, but it was also cold and bleak.

Glamor was always on the surface, just like the flowers on the soil. Countless men and women were buried in the depths of the palace, but in the end, the bones withered. The more glamorous the palace looked, the more dangerous it was.

In the garden, a palace maid and a eunuch were watering the flowers. These boring tasks were done by the new eunuchs and maids. The two of them looked to be no more than 16 or 17 years old.

The little palace maid said, "A lot of people came to the front hall today. If it weren't for the fact that I made a mistake and was demoted, I would have been able to go to the front hall to serve those nobles. You probably don't know but if you get tipped by them, you can live comfortably without working for a year."

"The royal banquet..." The eunuch looked forward to it. "Do they really tip that much?"

"You are clearly very ignorant." The palace maid curled her lips. "You really haven't seen the world. The royal banquet is specially held by His Majesty for the mighty general. The people who come are all high-ranking officials, so they're naturally generous. If you wait a few more years and are lucky, you might be able to see it once. At that time, you will know that the tip given by those nobles is generous."

The young eunuch said enviously, "The mighty general is really something. His Majesty even specially held a banquet for him. He must be in the limelight."

"What's the point of being in the limelight when you have that kind of idiotic daughter?" The palace maid said with disdain.

"Idiotic daughter?" The eunuch asked, "Are you talking about the general's daughter?"

"Let me tell you something." The palace maid said mysteriously, "General Shen is invincible, and Mrs. Shen too. Deputy General Shen is also brave and good at fighting, but the daughter of the mighty general is a complete idiot. Not only is she not good at the four arts, but she also had a vulgar taste in clothes. Every time General Shen brings her to the royal banquet, she will make a fool of herself. I served her at the royal banquet last year. Can you believe she didn't even know the basic etiquette. She even stepped on her dress and rolled down the stairs. Those ladies love to mock her the most. Even with the Shen family protecting her, everyone still looks down on her."

"I didn't expect that..." The eunuch sighed. "She really let her parents down."

"That's right." The palace maid continued, "She is a failure of the Shen family. However, her two cousin sisters are both better than her. General Shen was embarrassed by his daughter every time. Moreover, she was infatuated with Prince Ding previously. Everyone in the court knows about it."

"What a vulgar woman." The little eunuch also looked disgusted.

That palace maid stayed in the palace every day, so she only knew what happened in the palace. She had no clue that Shen Miao had impressed everyone at the test

Chapter 168: The Banquet (6)

As they spoke, they saw someone coming from the other side. The two of them quickly buried their heads in their work and did not dare to speak. They heard the person walk up to them and say in a sharp voice, "Are you new?"

"Yes, Eunuch Gao, they are new," someone replied.

The young eunuch mustered up his courage and looked up. There were three people standing in front of him. One of them was dressed as the head eunuch, and the other two were dressed as the second-class eunuch. The head eunuch was called Eunuch Gao.

Eunuch Gao glanced at the two of them and asked, "What's your name?"

"I'm Lizi," the young eunuch replied respectfully.

"Him." Eunuch Gao said to the person beside him, "We need someone to serve wine at the banquet. He looks obedient and can probably please the nobles. Let him do it."

"Yes."

Lizi was also excited. In that case, wouldn't he be able to receive a lot of tips as the palace maid had said? If he could catch the eye of some master, he might be able to get out of here.

In the palace, everyone tried their best to climb up. Even the lowest-ranking servant would dream of flying to the top overnight.

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In the front hall, many madams and ladies had already arrived. Apart from those who were related to the consorts in the palace, most of the women were sitting outside and chatting.

"Why aren't Mrs. Shen and General Shen here yet?" A madam with high cheekbones smiled and said, "They're the protagonists today. Did they come late on purpose?"

"Mr. Shen must be concerned about her daughter." Another round-faced madam smiled, but her tone was filled with mockery.

As a mighty general with outstanding achievements, Shen Xin not only did not take in any concubines, but he was also loyal to Luo Xueyan. All the ladies were jealous of Luo Xueyan, who had an outstanding son and was loved by her husband.

What women loved the most was comparing themselves with each other. The happier Luo Xueyan was, the more envious the other madams would be. They wished that something unfortunate could happen to Luo Xueyan too. Therefore, they used Shen Miao to mock Luo Xueyan. Shen Miao was stupid and talentless. She was not good looking and would even make a fool of herself in the palace. This time of the year was the happiest time for these madams.

"I wonder what Miss Shen will be wearing this year." A mocking smile appeared on Yi Peilan's face. "Last year, her dress with gold leaves on it was very beautiful. With her gold jewelry, she looked quite 'noble'. Could it be silver leaves this year?"

These words immediately caused the surrounding ladies to agree and laugh.

At this moment, a female suddenly said, "Everyone, be careful with what you say. Now Fifth Miss Shen is different. Even Young Master Cai couldn't compete with her. If you make her unhappy, she'll challenge you to a duel next time."

As soon as she said that, the crowd fell silent. Many of the madams and young ladies here were present that day and had witnessed Shen Miao's ferocity with their own eyes. These words actually made them shiver. If they angered Shen Miao, what if she shot an arrow at them?

The person who said this was Feng Anning. As soon as she said this, she was glared at by Mrs. Feng in disapproval. It was not wise to offend so many madams. Feng Anning rubbed her nose in displeasure. She just couldn't stand these people talking bad about Shen Miao behind her back. In front of Shen Xin, they probably didn't dare to say a word.

Before the awkward atmosphere dissipated, they heard a eunuch shouting outside, "The mighty general is here—"

Everyone looked at the door.

Walking at the front were Shen Xin and Shen Qiu. Shen Xin walked like a dragon and a tiger, looking dignified. The iron-blooded aura of a soldier made the women in the hall shudder. Shen Qiu stood tall and straight with a warm smile. His two shallow dimples made him look very amiable. All the girls could not help but blush.

The two of them did not stop in the front hall. They turned around and walked towards the main hall where the men were. Everyone's gaze naturally landed on people behind them.

Luo Xueyan was wearing a soft armor robe. Her hair was combed into a sharp bun. Unlike those madams with heavy makeup, her outfit was extremely refreshing and simple, but because of the high-quality fabric, it did not look rough.

Immediately after her was a slender figure in purple.

Chapter 169: Back and forth (1)

The noisy front hall instantly fell silent. Everyone's eyes landed on the purple figure behind Luo Xueyan.

The girl's cloak had been taken off, and she was wearing a purple dress with complicated patterns, accentuating her slender figure. She raised her chin slightly and looked straight ahead, as if the many noble ladies here were not worthy of her attention. Her skin was fair and even a little translucent, making her eyebrows look even more delicate. However, that pair of bright black eyes was the most attractive. Her eyes were round and clear. At first glance, she looked as pure as a newborn beast, but she was so calm that it was as if she was a woman of the world. This kind of vicissitude and immaturity made her look paradoxically beautiful.

She followed Luo Xueyan into the hall step by step. Unlike Luo Xueyan's agile movements, the girl's hands were placed in front of her, but it did not make her look stiff. It was as if she had done that action thousands of times and was familiar with it. Her long dress fluttered slightly with her footsteps, like a blooming flower. However, the flower was in full bloom and was not ostentatious, just like her. Her

movements were very natural, and every step she took was very graceful. It was pleasing to the eye and gave off a faint dignity. The women present were all from noble families, so they had naturally been taught etiquettes in the strictest possible way. They thought that they had done a good job here, but they could not help but be surprised when they saw this girl. If it were them, they would definitely not be able to walk in such a graceful and collected manner.

Sometimes, the way could be imitated, but the expression could not. The purple-clothed girl's expression was calm, and her posture was composed, as if she was walking in her own backyard. She was not flustered, impulsive, or timid. As she walked calmly, it gave people the impression that she was looking down on all living beings.

It was as if she was the owner of this palace.

When this thought flashed across their minds, the women couldn't help but turn pale with fright. They wouldn't be so surprised if this girl was someone else, but she was that idiot, Shen Miao!

Everyone had seen the change in Shen Miao at the test previously, but ever since then, Shen Miao and Shen Qing both said that they were sick and stayed in the mansion. They didn't even go to Guangwen Hall anymore. Although she defeated Cai Lin at the test, she only displayed ferocity and courage. However, her etiquette and bearing were not something that could be achieved overnight. Unexpectedly, when they saw her today, they felt that Shen Miao was like a different person from before. Not only was her dress and demeanor not wrong, but everyone even felt that Shen Miao was better than the daughters of officials in the hall!

Shen Miao followed behind Luo Xueyan. No one saw the bitter smile on her lips.

She finally returned to this place. She wanted to see if this place could still trap her in this life!

Every brick and tile here was deeply engraved in her memory. Even with her eyes closed, she could still find the way. As for the complicated palace rules and etiquette, they were almost engraved in her bones. In this hall, when she closed her eyes, she could seem to see Wanyu smiling at her and asking her for pastries to eat and hear Fu Ming reading the book out loud. Love and hate were both important. Bitterness and sweetness were mixed. When she stepped into this place again, she had mixed feelings, but what burned in her heart was the flame of revenge!

Lizi looked at the purple-clothed girl walking behind the valiant woman in a daze and was shocked. Just now, he heard from the palace maid in the garden that Shen Xin's daughter was a vulgar idiot, but now that he saw her, he realized that it was not the case at all. This girl had a noble aura around her. How could she be an idiot?

Chapter 170: Back and forth (2)

Just as he was thinking, he saw the girl's gaze sweep past him and he froze. Lizi immediately became nervous. He had never seen Miss Shen before and wondered if Miss Shen was going to value him? Just as he was feeling terrified and excited, he saw Shen Miao's gaze instantly turn away. It was as if it was just a delusion just now. Lizi felt a little disappointed. For some reason, he felt that he had lost a great fortune.

Before Lizi could figure out where this strange thought came from, a tall madam sitting at the front of the hall smiled and said, "Mrs. Shen, you've made us wait a long time!"

Luo Xueyan frowned slightly, then smiled. "I was delayed on the way."

"Fifth Miss is really getting more and more beautiful every day." The tall madam's gaze landed on Shen Miao again and she said half-truthfully, "She's more like someone who's going to be engaged. Back then, she was still a little girl."

Hearing this, the smile on Luo Xueyan's face immediately disappeared. Shen Miao's engagement was simply outrageous to Luo Xueyan. It was decided by the Shen family without her and Shen Xin's knowing. She did not approve it at all, nor was she afraid of offending the Wei family. In terms of family background, the Wei family was not bad, but they were not comparable to Shen Xin. At most, they would offend the Wei family. What was more important than Shen Miao's happiness? Moreover, Mrs. Wei was not around at this moment. Luo Xueyan wanted to clarify this matter and said, "What are you talking about. My daughter is still young. She is in no hurry to get engaged. I still want her to be with me for a few years."

As soon as she said that, all the madams and young ladies were stunned. After all, a few days ago, the news of Shen Miao's engagement had spread like wildfire. Later, at Old Madam Shen's birthday banquet, the other members of the Shen family almost admitted it. Why did it seem like the marriage was going to be canceled now?

The tall madam narrowed her eyes, as if sensing that something was wrong, and her smile became more and more meaningful. She said, "Oh? So Mrs. Shen wants to keep Fifth Miss Shen for a few more years? But a few days ago, didn't they say that Fifth Miss Shen is getting engaged?"

"Madam, you're really funny." Luo Xueyan was not afraid of letting others know the internal conflict in the Shen family. She raised her eyebrows and said loudly, "How come I, as a parent, don't know my daughter is getting engaged? You must be joking."

As soon as Luo Xueyan finished speaking, the madams started whispering to each other. The tall madam did not expect Luo Xueyan to say that and was stunned for a moment.

That's right. How could parents not know if their children were getting engaged? There was only one reason why Luo Xueyan and Shen Xin did not know about Shen Miao's engagement. The Shen family hid it from them. As for why the Shen family did this, no one knew.

While everyone was thinking, Ren Wanyun, Chen Ruoqiu, and the others arrived.

Shen Gui and Shen Wan naturally went to the main hall first. Ren Wanyun brought Shen Qing, Chen Ruoqiu, and Shen Yue over slowly.

This was the first time Shen Qing had gone out since she fell ill in bed. Over the past few days, she had become much more haggard and thin. She was at her best age, but she actually looked slightly old and dispirited. In order to hide her haggardness, she put on extremely thick rouge and powder, and she even wore a red dress. Shen Qing was not suitable for such a bright color. At a glance, she looked very out of place and was a little strange. In addition, she was pregnant. Although she tried her best to hide it, her steps still looked a little clumsy.

