

## Venomous 271

### Chapter 271: Ambiguous (1)

Every year, countless girls would be abducted by kidnappers during the Jade Rabbit Festival in the capital. If a boy was abducted, he would most likely end up being sold to a sonless family in remote places. If a girl was abducted, it would be terrible. Those who were not beautiful would be sold to a rich family as low-grade maids. If they were good-looking, they would be sold to a troupe, a brothel, or even become a plaything of the rich.

Among these girls, there was no lack of people from rich families. However, whether from a rich family or poor, the girls would be treated equally cruelly.

“Miss Shen was kidnapped?” In the room, Ji Yushu immediately stood up and started pacing, looking a little worried. “Miss Shen is not bad-looking. I’m afraid she will definitely be sold by the kidnapper. Although I also like Miss Shaoyao, I don’t want Miss Shen to be sold to a brothel. Third Brother Xie, should we save her?”

Gao Yang couldn’t help but say, “Are you alright? With Shen Miao’s ability, how can she be kidnapped by someone? Moreover, kidnappers will only target girls who are alone or lost. Shen Qiu and Shen Xin are not far from Shen Miao. Those kidnappers are not fools. Why would they choose such a risky target? It’s not like Shen Miao is drop-dead gorgeous. It’s not worth taking the risk at all.”

Gao Yang was right. Kidnappers would only make moves when they were certain that the success rate was high. Even if they wanted to kidnap a daughter of a rich family, they would only do so when the girl was alone. However, according to the information, Shen Miao was at the edge of Wanli Lake at that time where there was a crowd. If they were spotted kidnapping Shen Miao, they wouldn’t be able to escape under the nose of so many people. It made sense if they took the risk to kidnap a once-in-a-hundred-years kind of beauty, but Shen Miao was by no means one of that kind.

Most importantly, at that time, Shen Qiu and Shen Xin were not far away. Who in the capital didn’t know the almighty general? Only the most stupid of kidnappers would have designs on Shen Miao.

Ji Yushu was enlightened. “In that case, it wasn’t done by kidnappers? Then who could it be? They’re clearly targeting Miss Shen. Could it be the remaining members of Prince Yu’s mansion?” As he spoke, he shook his head. “It makes no sense. Even Prince Yu doesn’t know that Shen Miao is involved in the massacre. Could it be someone from the Shen family? I heard that the Shen family doesn’t get along well. Could it be someone from the other branches?”

Xie Jingxing, who had been sitting at the side in silence, stood up. “It’s them.”

“Them?” Gao Yang immediately became nervous and looked at Xie Jingxing. “They’ve already discovered it?”

“I don’t think so.” Xie Jingxing shook his head. “Previously, I waited for them to make a move, but nothing happened. Now I understand. They might have found out about the secret room and through one way or another known that Shen Miao was present that day. Our identities have not been exposed yet. They want to get information from Shen Miao.”

Ji Yushu was stunned for a moment before feeling a headache coming on. "Oh no, given how brutal those people are, Miss Shen will definitely not have a good time in their hands."

"Gather the people of the Black Feather Army to look for them. Search around Wanli Lake. I think they haven't gone too far yet," Xie Jingxing said in a low voice. The casual expression on his face had already disappeared, replaced by a look of seriousness.

## **Chapter 272: Ambiguous (2)**

"It's not good to mobilize the Black Feather Army now." Gao Yang frowned and said, "There are too many people watching you in the capital. If you alert the palace, I'm afraid it will be quite troublesome. Why don't we get someone to guard the city gate? Tomorrow morning, you can send people from your mansion to secretly search the city. We will find her. It's not good to alert the enemy now."

"Do we still have to wait for a night?" Ji Yushu jumped up. "Miss Shen will be dead long ago if we wait for a night!" Ji Yushu was young and impetuous, and he admired Shen Miao. Unlike Gao Yang, who was already as cruel and heartless as a politician, Ji Yushu still retained the sincerity and naivety of a young man.

Gao Yang was furious. "Why are you still thinking about Shen Miao at a time like this? If we're not careful, our identities will be exposed!"

"Send people from the Black Feather Army to look for her now." Xie Jingxing said coldly, "I don't want to say it a second time."

"Xie!" Gao Yang looked at him. "Are you going to ruin your plan for a girl? Don't forget what you swore."

"Gao Yang, remember who you are and who you are talking to," Xie Jingxing suddenly said sternly. He frowned slightly, and his eyes were as dark as ink. The anger he suddenly emitted actually made Gao Yang tremble.

Seeing this, Ji Yushu quickly tried to smooth things over. "It happened too suddenly today. No one expected it, but the situation might not be that bad."

Xie Jingxing was silent for a moment before saying, "I won't tolerate them doing this kind of thing in my territory. Since they have the guts to come, I'll make sure you can't go back."

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The crowd on the shore of Wanli Lake surged, and cheers and laughter drowned out all the other sounds. The disappearance of an official's daughter did not seem to have caused much of a chaos. Of course, this was because the Shen family kept it a secret. However, even if the news really spread, people would probably be too busy enjoying the grand occasion to care about it.

After Fairy Jade Rabbit finished her dance, the men were all infatuated with her performance, and the women were all secretly cursing in their heads. The huge jade rabbit lantern was made of a snow-white silk cloth, and it was painted with a jade rabbit symbol. The lantern floated calmly on the lake with candles inside it.

People cheered and ran to the lake to set free the lanterns they had made on the lake. The lanterns carried their wishes for the next year.

It started to snow moderately, but the lights on Wanli Lake brightened up the dark night, and the fireworks in the sky were dazzling. For a moment, it was difficult to tell if the fireworks were played in the sky or underwater. Such bright scenery was rare even during the Jade Rabbit Festival in the past. In the center of the lake, there were a few exquisitely carved pleasure boats floating. Usually, the nobles would book the pleasure boats to have a space to drink and have fun. No one knew who was inside the pleasure boats today, because the surface of the lake was filled with lanterns, making the pleasure boats look less eye-catching.

An unlit pleasure boat floated down the lake. There were fewer people downstream, but the lanterns were all floating along the water in that direction. From afar, the pleasure boat seemed to be surrounded by those lanterns. However, the further down it went, the fewer people there were. In the end, it was completely deserted.

Shen Miao sat in the innermost room of the pleasure boat and looked at the two people in front of her coldly.

In the dim pleasure boat, a small oil lamp was lit. Shen Miao had a rag in her mouth, and her hands and feet were tied up.

The two people on the boat were both wearing linen clothes and looked unfamiliar. A tall and thin man stood at the bow of the boat and looked around. He walked into the cabin and nodded at the shorter one. "Alright, there's no one here."

### **Chapter 273: Ambiguous (3)**

The short man chuckled and reached out to pull out the rag from Shen Miao's mouth. "Miss Shen, there's no one here. Don't shout. If you shout, we will still kill you and run away."

Shen Miao's gaze flickered and she did not speak.

These people did the opposite of what others thought they would. The pleasure boat floated downstream, away from the center. Shen Xin and the others would only look for their whereabouts on the shore.

Just now, when she was standing on the stone platform waiting for Shen Qiu to return, she was dragged away from behind. The two of them were so fast that she did not even have time to react before she was tied up and thrown into the boat.

Seeing that Shen Miao did not speak, the short man looked quite satisfied. The tall and thin man walked over and sat down opposite her. His eyes were very dark as he said, "Miss Shen, I'll just cut to the chase. We got you here to ask you something." The tall and thin man exuded a very unique aura nothing like that of a common bandit.

He said, "You've already been to the secret room in Prince Yu's mansion that day, right?"

Shen Miao's eyes flashed. When she was kidnapped, she had thought of many possibilities. Perhaps it was someone from the second or third branches, or perhaps it was Shen Yuan, or Prince Yu's subordinate. She had even thought of Fu Xiuyi, but she never expected that the person would bring up the secret room. Other than Xie Jingxing and Gao Yang, no one else knew the existence of that secret room. Could it be that Fu Xiuyi knew about it a few years ago?

However, since they had come prepared, it was obvious that they knew her background very well. Shen Miao did not hide it and replied, "Yes. That day, when my brother was handling the case concerning Prince Yu's death, I was waiting in the tearoom and accidentally found that secret room. I was curious and went in to take a look."

The two people opposite her looked at each other and the short man said, "Then you should have met someone else in the secret room. Who is that person?"

Shen Miao's fingers tightened.

They didn't ask about what was in the secret room, but instead, they asked who was in it. Were they aiming at Xie Jingxing and Gao Yang? Many questions flashed across Shen Miao's mind. These people probably only knew that there was someone else in the secret room that day, but they did not know who that person was. Xie Jingxing and Gao Yang might be hiding something. If she told them, the secret that Xie Jingxing and Gao Yang were hiding would be exposed.

She looked at him in confusion. "That person?"

The tall and thin man looked at her sinisterly. "Miss Shen, don't play tricks. We believed that it was a coincidence that you entered that secret room. However, the thing in the secret room has already been taken away. Who did you see in the secret room? Tell us and we'll spare your life."

Shen Miao stared at him, her mind racing. She knew about the secret room because of her previous life, so in the eyes of these people, she wasn't suspicious. These people might be investigating something, but they did not know who it was. Xie Jingxing and Gao Yang were the people these people were looking for.

She shook her head. "When I went into the secret room that day, there was no one else inside. As for the thing you talked about, I didn't see it either. Perhaps the people you mentioned have already left before I went in."

"Impossible!" The tall and thin man looked at her and suddenly revealed a cruel smile. "Miss Shen, since you don't want to tell me, I'll make you tell..."

As soon as he finished speaking, the short man's eyes lit up. He touched Shen Miao's face with one hand and said with a lecherous expression, "Little beauty, your skin is quite smooth and fair. Perhaps you'll remember everything after serving me." With that, he reached out to unbutton Shen Miao's clothes.

#### **Chapter 274: Ambiguous (4)**

"If you touch me, I'll definitely bite my tongue and kill myself. You won't be able to find out anything." Shen Miao said indifferently, "If I lose my virginity, I will be too hopeless to continue living. Do you think you still have a chance to get what you want out of me?"

As soon as she said that, the short man stopped and turned to look at the tall and thin man. The tall and thin man stared at Shen Miao and asked, "Do you know who it is?"

Shen Miao smiled. "Maybe I can still remember."

The short man was a little dumbfounded, and the tall and thin man's gaze was dark and unfathomable. Perhaps it was because Shen Miao's calm attitude caught them off guard, or perhaps it was because they were surprised that Shen Miao could still threaten them under such circumstances. That's right. If Shen Miao really knew who was in the secret room, once they touched her, she would probably choose to die with the secret.

Shen Miao's gaze turned cold. Everyone had their own weaknesses. The two people opposite her seemed to want to know who was in the secret room very badly. Now, she might be the only person in the world who knew the secret. If she was a young daughter of an official, she might tell the truth after being frightened. Unfortunately, she was Empress Shen, who had gone through hardships most people couldn't imagine.

"What do you want?" The short man stopped touching her and put on a friendly expression. "Tell us who that person is and we'll give you whatever you want." His tone was like he was coaxing a child.

Shen Miao asked without batting an eye, "Who are you?"

The two of them were stunned for a moment. The tall and thin man sneered. "What good will it do you to know who we are?"

"Maybe I can remember who that person is once you tell me who you are." Shen Miao smiled at him.

"You're stalling for time."

Shen Miao did not comment.

The short man stood up and slapped Shen Miao without thinking. He seemed to have run out of patience and said, "B\*tch, I guess you want us to do it the hard way. Don't talk nonsense with her. Shen Xin's soldiers are still around. Let's bring her back first. When we get back..." His smile was a little wicked. "Naturally, we have ways to make her speak."

He leaned down and rubbed Shen Miao's face with his disgusting hand. "Girl, I was kind to you just now but you didn't appreciate it. Since you don't want to live, don't blame others!"

Shen Miao's eyes turned cold. She suddenly raised her hand and stabbed the knife in her hand at the man's face. The short man was caught off guard and was cut on the face by Shen Miao. Immediately, blood flowed out. Behind Shen Miao, the rope that was tied to her hands and feet had been cut open at some point. She was used to hiding a dagger in her sleeve. Now the dagger came in handy. After cutting the rope, she ran out of the boat and shouted, "Help!" Just as she ran to the cabin, she was forcefully dragged back in and thrown to the ground. Her entire back hit the wooden table on the boat and she gasped in pain. The boat shook a few times. She reacted quickly and immediately got up and ran out.

The tall and thin man sneered and kicked her kneecap. The pain was almost excruciating. Shen Miao raised the dagger in her hand to stab the man in the eye. The tall and thin man dodged to the side. He cursed at her and snatched the dagger from her hand. Meanwhile, Shen Miao endured the pain in her legs, grabbed the window of the cabin with both hands, and jumped down into the lake.

“You want to run?” The tall and thin man sneered. Without hesitation, he threw the dagger in his hand over and hit Shen Miao’s calf. Although the wound wasn’t deep, bright red blood still spread out on the lake.

## **Chapter 275: Ambiguous (5)**

Shen Miao knew how to swim, but in the coldest of winter days, the lake water was bone-chilling. Once one sank into it, they would feel like their entire body was made of ice. After struggling a while, Shen Miao lost her strength.

The tall and thin man was about to jump into the lake to fish Shen Miao out. After all, Shen Miao was the only one who knew what they wanted. However, before he could move, he heard the sound of fireworks in the sky. He looked up and saw a firework lit in the west.

“The situation has changed!” The short man wiped the blood off his face and said, “Retreat!”

“We need to take her with us.” The tall and thin man cursed and was about to jump into the lake when the ship suddenly wobbled. Two men in black were already standing at the bow. On the shoulders of the two men in black were eagle-like patterns embroidered with golden thread. The short man cried out in surprise, “Black Feather Army! Why is Black Feather Army here?”

Before the two of them could react, the two men in black had already flashed in front of them, instantly knocking them to the ground.

In the lake, Shen Miao was still struggling violently. From what the short man and the thin man said, it seemed that there was a mastermind behind them, and the mastermind seemed to be very powerful. If Shen Miao fell into the hands of these two, she would still be able to think of a way to escape. However, if she fell into that mastermind, the Shen family would probably never be able to find the murderer.

However, she did not expect that this desperate jump would actually trap her in a dead end. The two of them did not jump down to save her for a long time. The lake was cold. Could it be that she was going to die here?

Her head began to feel a little heavy, and her ears were buzzing, as if she had fallen into an icehouse. She could still see the bright lights of the lanterns drifting above her, but she didn’t have the strength to reach out and grab them.

Just as she was about to lose her consciousness, she suddenly saw a figure swimming over from afar. That person’s figure was robust. In the brightly lit lake, he was like a god that had descended from the sky and was swimming towards her.

The person swam up to Shen Miao and hugged her by the waist, bringing her to the surface. On this snowy day, the lake was bone-chilling. It was difficult for a person to swim alone, but it was easy for him

to swim while carrying another person. When he swam to the pleasure boat, he lifted Shen Miao up and threw her onto the boat before climbing up.

Shen Miao spat out a few mouthfuls of water and slowly looked up at the figure. That figure was also wet from head to toe. There was no longer a playful expression on his face as before. He looked at her with a frown.

It was Xie Jingxing.

When Shen Miao saw Xie Jingxing, she wasn't particularly surprised. The two of them were originally here for him. She thought that Xie Jingxing must have known about it and rushed over.

She struggled to get up and saw two more corpses in the cabin. They were the tall and the short men. Two men in black walked out of the depths of the cabin. One of them walked to Xie Jingxing's side and said something in a low voice. Xie Jingxing waved his hand, and the two of them left with the two corpses. Before they left, they even wiped the blood in the cabin.

Shen Miao couldn't be bothered to think about who these two people were. Even a fool could tell that they were Xie Jingxing's people. She moved her body and felt that her entire body was sore. After soaking in the ice water for a good five minute, she was so cold that she kept shivering. Previously, she had been thrown by the tall and thin man several times, and her back was in pain. The most painful part was probably her calf. She looked down at her dress. The entire dress was stuck to her body, and there was blood flowing out of her calf. It was mixed with the red embroidery on the dress, making it difficult to see clearly.

## **Chapter 276: Ambiguous (6)**

She was cold and in pain and could not say a word. Xie Jing walked into the cabin. There were usually some heaters and clothes in these exquisite pleasure boats. He took out a furnace from the wooden box and lit it with a lighter, adding a little charcoal.

The furnace started to burn as the boat swayed in the lake. Xie Jingxing glanced at Shen Miao and suddenly smiled. "I am going to change. Do you want to keep your eyes open?"

Shen Miao suddenly closed her eyes and heard a chuckle, followed by the sound of clothes being put on. A moment later, Xie Jingxing said, "Done."

Shen Miao opened her eyes. Xie Jingxing was buttoning the last button. He had changed into a dark green robe and was wearing a white fox fur coat, making him look cold and solemn. A pair of dark eyes stared at Shen Miao with a faint smile. "Do you want to change too?"

She was wearing wet clothes, so it was very easy for her to catch a cold. Even if she sat by the furnace to get warm, it would take a long time for the clothes to dry completely. She was afraid that when the clothes were dry, she would have already caught a cold. In addition, at this moment, her entire body was very uncomfortable. She looked at Xie Jingxing and said calmly, "Do you have any other clothes?"

Xie Jingxing stood up and took out a set of clothes from a cloth bag on the wooden table. He sat against the wall and said, "I can't find you women's clothes. If you want to change, you can only make do with mine."

If word got out that an unmarried girl was wearing a man's clothes, people would inevitably gossip. Shen Miao looked up at Xie Jingxing. The smile on his lips was a little evil, but she did not know if it was really the case or if he did it on purpose.

Shen Miao realized that Xie Jingxing really had a special charm. Ever since she was reborn, she had been facing everyone with the attitude of "Empress Shen". Even when facing Shen Qiu, she could not treat Shen Qiu as her elder brother. Sometimes, she even felt like she was taking care of Shen Qiu. However, every time she met Xie Jingxing, his playfulness would always make Shen Miao feel like she was not Empress Shen, but the naive fifth daughter of the Shen family.

Taking a deep breath, Shen Miao said, "Give it to me."

Her answer surprised Xie Jingxing. He glanced at her and said incredulously, "You want to wear my clothes?"

"Are there any other clothes here?" Shen Miao asked.

Xie Jingxing smiled and threw the clothes to her. Shen Miao took the clothes and said to Xie Jingxing, "Young Marquis, please turn around."

When Xie Jingxing heard that, he sized her up meaningfully. Shen Miao's clothes were wet and stuck to her body. She was petite, and her figure was revealed. Xie Jingxing said with interest, "Are you being shy? Don't worry." His eyes were picky and disdainful. "There's nothing for me to see." With that, he turned around swiftly and did not look at Shen Miao at all.

Shen Miao heaved a sigh of relief and picked up Xie Jingxing's clothes. It was a light green cotton robe with ironed cuffs. The material and embroidery were both top-notch. Shen Miao subconsciously touched it. In her previous life, only the royal family got to enjoy such material. Apparently, the rumor that the Marquis of Lin'an was as rich as a nation was true.

She slowly took off her wet outer and inner clothes and dried them over the furnace. After wiping the water off her body, she picked up Xie Jingxing's robe. Unexpectedly, Xie Jingxing's robe was hard to put on, and she did not wear it the way it should be worn. Not only that, but the belt was also wrapped around the calf of her left leg. Her calf was already injured by the dagger just now. At this moment, it was still bleeding, looking a little scary. As the belt rubbed against the wound, Shen Miao gasped in pain. She fell to the ground with a bang and knocked over the teapot on the table.

When Xie Jingxing heard the commotion, he immediately turned around and saw Shen Miao fall to the ground. He took a step forward and helped her up. Shen Miao couldn't react in time and fell into his arms. Her clothes were still undone and were loosely wrapped around her body. Her shoulders were slightly exposed, and her hair was still wet. She looked very charming. No matter how calm she was, she was still flustered and helpless at this very moment.

On the other hand, Xie Jingxing frowned and held her calf. He stared at the wound and said in a low voice, "What happened?"



## Chapter 277: Alone Time With Him (1)

“What happened?”

Shen Miao was stunned. Normally, she would’ve pushed him away. However, for some reason, she leaned obediently in his arms and replied honestly, “When I was escaping just now, I was injured by a dagger.”

Xie Jingxing glanced at her, took out a porcelain bottle from his pocket, and threw it to her. “Apply this on the wound.”

Shen Miao took it and did not say anything. She wanted to apply the medicine, but because she was sitting on the ground and had been soaking in the cold lake for a long time, she didn’t even have the strength to get up.

Seeing this, Xie Jingxing walked to her side and held her shoulder to help her sit on the small couch on the boat. Shen Miao had lived for two lifetimes and was not a little girl who got love-struck easily, so she naturally would not look embarrassed because the two of them were alone on this boat. However, she was wearing Xie Jingxing’s clothes, and her snow-white shoulders were exposed. When the cold wind blew, it was unknown if it was because she was cold or uncomfortable, but she had goosebumps.

Before she could say anything, a warm thing covered her head. Shen Miao shook her head and realized that it was Xie Jingxing’s fox fur coat. Shen Miao subconsciously wrapped it tighter around herself, revealing only her palm-sized face. She looked at Xie Jingxing and did not speak, looking like a furry little fox.

Xie Jingxing found it a little funny. He stood up and walked to the other side to take something. He then squatted down in front of Shen Miao and reached out to grab her leg.

“What are you doing?” Shen Miao dodged and asked.

“If you don’t apply medicine, the wound will fester tomorrow,” Xie Jingxing said. “I don’t want you to go around telling everyone you were hurt by me.”

Shen Miao was speechless. This person was too annoying. What did he mean by that? Shen Miao simply ignored him. She said, “I’ll do it myself.”

“Sure.” Xie Jingxing stood up without a word and leaned against the cabinet beside him with his arms crossed. “I’ll watch you do it. Hurry up.”

Shen Miao bent down, but her hands were so shaky that she could barely hold the medicine bottle. When she was confronting the two abductors, she was thrown a few times by the tall and thin man on the ground, making her entire body ache. At this moment, her hands were trembling. She barely opened the medicine bottle, but she almost spilled the contents.

After struggling for a long time, she finally gave up. She sat there, wrapped in the snow-white fox fur, and glared at Xie Jingxing without saying anything.

Xie Jingxing sneered and snatched the medicine bottle from Shen Miao's hand. He squatted down again and held Shen Miao's calf, saying casually, "If you're being stubborn, you'll only do yourself harm."

Shen Miao didn't speak.

Xie Jingxing held her calf and slowly lifted the leg of her pants. His hand was cold and slender and it had the calluses of someone who trained martial arts. When it rubbed against her delicate skin, Shen Miao felt uncomfortable, as if that piece of skin was also burning. The next moment, the clothes that were stuck to the wound because of the blood were suddenly torn open, and Shen Miao almost cried out in pain.

"The wound is a little deep." Xie Jingxing looked at it and frowned. "Why didn't you say so earlier?"

"I didn't expect you to be so kind-hearted," Shen Miao said. She really did not expect Xie Jingxing to be so kind-hearted as to apply medicine for her. With their friendship, it was unlikely for Xie Jingxing to go to such lengths to help her. Therefore, she originally wanted to wait until she returned to the Shen family before treating the wound.

## **Chapter 278: Alone Time With Him (2)**

Xie Jingxing stood up and picked up the teapot from the table at the side. He poured out the water and reached out to scoop a pot of lake water. He placed it on the stove to boil and said, "I'm indeed not that kind-hearted, but on account of your loyalty, I'll be a good person for once." At this point, he looked up at Shen Miao and said, "Everyone says that Shen Xin is loyal. I didn't expect a girl from the Shen family to be so loyal too. Thank you for not selling me out."

He was half joking and half serious, so Shen Miao did not explain that he had actually misunderstood. At that time, if she immediately said that the person in the secret room was Xie Jingxing, the two of them would immediately kill her. However, Xie Jingxing thought that she did not say it because she was loyal. If she could make Xie Jingxing feel that he owed her a favor, why not? Therefore, Shen Miao did not intend to explain this misunderstanding.

However, Shen Miao lowered her head and thought that even if she really exposed Xie Jingxing, with Xie Jingxing's ability, he would probably be able to escape unscathed.

After a short silence, the water in the pot was boiled. Xie Jingxing casually tore off a piece of fabric from the corner of his robe and wet it with some hot water. He held Shen Miao's calf in one hand and placed it on his knee, wiping the dirty blood around the wound with the other.

Shen Miao felt a little uncomfortable. She turned her head away and couldn't help but curl her toes slightly. In her previous life, other than Fu Xiuyi, she had never been so intimate with another man. Even Fu Xiuyi never treated her with such gentleness. Most of the time, Fu Xiuyi acted like an emperor in front of her rather than a husband. Therefore, she found this intimate interaction quite awkward and uncomfortable.

Feeling that it was awkward, Shen Miao asked, "Who are those people?"

The “those people” she was talking about were naturally the abductors. Hearing this, Xie Jingxing did not say anything. After wiping the dirty blood off Shen Miao’s calf, he sprinkled some powder on it and took out a handkerchief to bandage it for her. When he was doing this, he lowered his head with an extremely serious look, and his methods were very practiced, as if bandaging wounds was a daily thing. The lights on the boat shone brightly on his face. The young man’s eyebrows were unbelievably handsome, and in this short dazzling moment, he gave off a gentleness that was never seen from him.

Even Shen Miao couldn’t help but be slightly stunned. However, this illusion of gentleness did not last long. Xie Jingxing put down her feet and suddenly placed his hands beside Shen Miao, leaning close to her. His well-defined face was inches away from Shen Miao, and his eyes seemed to be filled with intoxicating wine. He looked at her with a faint smile. It was so domineering that it made her unable to breathe.

Shen Miao looked at him calmly and stared at him for a while before Xie Jingxing let go and said indifferently, “It’s not good for you to know too much.”

“I don’t want to know anything.” Shen Miao said, “I just hope you won’t implicate me.” As soon as she said that, she regretted it. For some reason today, perhaps it was because it happened too suddenly, or perhaps it was because she was injured that she was frustrated. When she faced Xie Jingxing, she brought out the temper that she had locked deep inside her.

“As long as you don’t push your luck, no one can implicate you,” Xie Jingxing said. He tidied up the messy boat and found a long pole to hang Shen Miao’s wet clothes on to dry them.

### **Chapter 279: Alone Time With Him (3)**

“When can I leave?” Shen Miao asked.

“There are people outside. If they see us going out together, they’ll inevitably gossip.” Xie Jingxing’s words were still teasing. “So for the sake of my innocence, when the ship docks, I’ll bring you to the princess mansion and let the people from the princess mansion send you back.”

Shen Miao was slightly stunned. “Princess Mansion?”

“Princess Rong Xin.” Xie Jingxing fiddled with the charcoal. “She will help.”

Princess Rong Xin was also born to the late emperor’s concubine. Although she was not as favored as Princess Yuqing, she was also deeply liked by the late emperor. Among the children of the late emperor, Princess Yuqing and Princess Rong Xin were close sisters. Princess Yuqing married the Marquis of Lin’an, and Princess Rong Xin married the top scholar of the dynasty. Unfortunately, the top scholar died of illness a few years later. Princess Rong Xin did not remarry and moved back to the princess mansion. She had been alone for many years.

With Princess Yuqing and Princess Rong Xin’s relationship, she would probably help Xie Jingxing.

Shen Miao looked up at Xie Jingxing. He was thinking ahead. If he got the Shen family to come over at this moment, they would inevitably overthink when they saw the two of them staying alone in a

disheveled state. With the relationship between the Shen family and the Xie family, who knew if it would cause the situation to worsen? It was not a bad idea to get Princess Rong Xin to offer help.

The sound of fireworks came from above. Shen Miao was leaning against the window of the boat. When she heard the sound, she looked out of the window. In the night sky of the capital, there were colorful fireworks. Just as Bai Lu and Shuang Jiang said, the fireworks would not stop for the night. As opposed to watching the fireworks in the crowded street, watching the fireworks on a boat in the middle of the lake felt totally different.

"You like to see these?" Xie Jingxing raised an eyebrow.

"I don't," Shen Miao replied honestly.

At the annual banquet of the Ming Qi Royal Family, the emperor and his concubines would enjoy fireworks together in the royal garden. At that time, after she returned from the State of Qin, Consort Mei successfully won the emperor's heart. On the night of the annual banquet, Consort Mei drank wine and had fun with Fu Xiuyi in the royal garden while Shen Miao sat in the Kunning Palace, accompanied only by Wanyu and Fu Ming, and watched the fireworks burn and disappear alone. That was the coldest fireworks she had ever seen in her life. From then on, she no longer liked these things.

"What's there to see about something so short-lived. It's beautiful but useless." Her tone was a little angry, but her eyes betrayed sadness.

Xie Jingxing looked at her with interest. After thinking for a moment, he stood up and took out something from the cabinet. He walked to Shen Miao's side and handed the thing in his hand to her.

"I don't know how long we'll have to wait for the boat to dock. Since it's the Jade Rabbit Festival today, make a lantern," Xie Jingxing said.

Shen Miao looked at the lantern in her hand. It was probably left behind by the people who previously stayed on the boat. The candles had not been placed in it yet, and it was folded neatly. Looking out of the window, the lake was overflowing with lanterns. Their boat shuttled through the dazzling light like a ferry in the Milky Way.

Without waiting for Shen Miao to answer, Xie Jingxing made one himself. After making the lantern, he casually set it free on the lake, Shen Miao asked, "Why didn't you write a note?"

A note written with wishes had to be placed in the lantern by the person who lit it. This way, the gods could hear the prayers and bless them in the following year.

"I don't believe in God." Xie Jingxing said lazily, "It's fine if I don't write it."

Shen Miao thought for a moment and thought that it was only natural for someone as wild and devil-may-care as Xie Jingxing to not believe in God. She unfolded two lanterns, but she didn't write a note or put a candle in them. Instead, she lit them with a matchstick and placed them in the lake.

## **Chapter 280: Alone Time With Him (4)**

The two lanterns were burning from top to bottom, making them look like two balls of fire on the lake. Xie Jingxing was stunned and asked, "These are the lanterns for worship. What are you doing?"

Usually, when one wanted to pay respects to the dead, they would burn the lantern. Since it was a joyful occasion, why would Shen Miao burn the lantern?

Shen Miao ignored Xie Jingxing and watched as the lantern gradually burned to the point where it was reduced to ashes.

After she was reborn, there were some things she couldn't change. For example, she couldn't bring Wanyu and Fu Ming back to life. Whether it was in her previous life or this life, she couldn't possibly see her children ever again.

A handkerchief was handed to Shen Miao. She looked up and Xie Jingxing said impatiently, "Why are you crying again?"

Shen Miao touched her face. Unknowingly, she had started crying while she was in deep thought.

Seeing her take the handkerchief, Xie Jingxing said, "You're quite a trustworthy friend. If you have any difficulties in the future, you can look for me."

This sudden remark stunned Shen Miao for a moment. She looked at Xie Jingxing. The side of the young man's face became even more well-defined under the light. He leaned against the window and looked at Shen Miao, a complicated glint flashing across his eyes. He said casually, "I don't like to owe people favors. Since you didn't sell me out today, I won't treat you badly. I see that you've gotten into a lot of trouble. Perhaps if you need my help in the future, I can offer my hand."

Shen Miao said, "Thank you then, Young Marquis."

Xie Jingxing smiled and suddenly turned to look at her. He said teasingly, "I can help, but don't fall in love with me."

Shen Miao was so amused that she laughed out loud. She said, "Young Marquis, you're thinking too much."

"Is that so?" Xie Jingxing walked over from the window and looked down at Shen Miao, who was sitting on the couch. He suddenly pulled off the hairpin on Shen Miao's head and looked at it thoughtfully. "Then why are you wearing the hairpin I gave you?"

He deliberately emphasized the word "I".

Shen Miao was at a loss for words. Just as she was about to say that the maid put it on for her, she heard Xie Jingxing continue, "But don't worry. I won't force you to marry me." He smiled maliciously. "I'm not into a little girl."

"I don't like you, and I won't in the future. Don't worry, Young Marquis," Shen Miao said sarcastically.

"That's good." Xie Jingxing stared at her. The smile on his lips was still playful, but his dark eyes were filled with a warning and indifference. He said, "Little girl, I'm not a good person."

Shen Miao did not say anything. If Xie Jingxing was not a good person, how could she be considered a good person? Perhaps she was one in her previous life, but in this life, she was going to be sinister and ruthless and had nothing to do with 'good'.

The boat floated quietly down the stream. Outside the window, it was snowing heavily. On the lake, there were snowflakes and resplendent lights. The sky was filled with colorful fireworks. The Jade Rabbit Festival this year did not seem to be a happy one, but it was still special nonetheless.

The young man in purple leaned against the window and looked out pensively for a long time. When he turned around, he realized that Shen Miao had already fallen asleep on the table.