

Chapter 351: Die Without Descendants (4)

"What courtyard?" Shen Dongling, who was reading behind the screen, looked up.

"You've always stayed in this crowded courtyard with me. Other ladies who are your age all have their own courtyard. You should move out. This place is too crowded after all."

"They're the daughters of the first wife, and I'm the daughter of a concubine," Shen Dongling said calmly.

Hearing this, Concubine Wan's heart ached. The fact that she couldn't change Shen Dongling's background had always unsettled her. She didn't think Shen Dongling was inferior to Shen Qing and Shen Yue in any way, but in the past ten years, she had to ask Shen Dongling to keep a low profile and be as invisible as possible. Now that the situation was different, she wouldn't ask Shen Dongling to make compromises again.

Concubine Wan said, "Eldest Miss's courtyard is unoccupied now. You don't have to sleep in her room. That courtyard is facing the south and the scenery is beautiful. It's a pity to leave it empty. Now that your father treats us well, I think he will agree to this request."

"No need." Shen Dongling rejected her suggestion. "Now is not the time to lift our heads. We've already endured it for more than ten years. It won't hurt to endure it a big longer. Although Father is good to us now, I understand what kind of person he is. Let's talk about this when things are more stable."

Concubine Wan wanted to persuade her further, but she suddenly saw her personal maid, Lu Hua, run in and say hurriedly, "Concubine Wan, Fifth Miss is here!"

"Fifth Miss?" Concubine Wan stood up immediately. "Why is she looking for me?"

Shen Dongling also looked at Lu Hua.

Lu Hua shook her head and said, "She's not here to look for you. I saw her go to the room where Second Madam is recuperating."

"Fifth Miss is going to see Second Madam!" Concubine Wan's voice suddenly rose. "Why is Fifth Miss going to see Second Madam? Second Madam has already gone mad!"

"I wanted to eavesdrop, but Fifth Miss brought a few maids to guard the door, so I couldn't get close." Lu Hua asked, "Concubine Wan, what should we do now?"

Concubine Wan walked around the room, deep in thought, and muttered to herself, "What's going on? Is Fifth Miss seeing Second Madam out of concern for her health? But Second Madam and Fifth Miss have been at odds before. How can Fifth Miss be so kind?" She looked at Shen Dongling. "Dongling, what do you think?"

Shen Dongling lowered her eyes and thought for a while before saying, "Since we can't eavesdrop, then don't. Fifth Sister is smart. If she doesn't want anyone to eavesdrop, then no one can."

"Are we just going to sit back and wait?" Concubine Wan was a little indignant. "What if she and Second Madam are plotting something together?"

"Second Madam and Fifth Sister are not people who will let go of their grudges with a smile." Shen Dongling said indifferently, "Besides, we've never been enemies with Fifth Sister. Even if Fifth Sister wants to scheme against someone, she won't scheme against us." She looked at Concubine Wan. "We'll just wait and watch the show."

Outside Rosy Cloud Garden, Gu Yu, Bai Lu, and Shuang Jiang were guarding a few steps away from the house. Jingzhe followed Shen Miao into the house. The servants in the courtyard were all doing their own things obediently. Ren Wanyun had already gone crazy, so the servants naturally did not have to fawn on her anymore. Moreover, the servants had never liked Ren Wanyun. Compared to Ren Wanyun, they were more willing to please the gentle Concubine Wan.

Therefore, when Shen Miao, who was backed up by Shen Xin, came, the servants did not stop her.

However, not everyone was like this. Ren Wanyun had her own trusted aides for many years, her personal maids, Xianglan and Caiju. At this moment, in the room, Xianglan and Caiju were staring at Shen Miao warily.

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Facing their fierce gazes, Shen Miao didn't know what to do. Since the two of them refused to go out, it didn't matter if they heard it.

On the bed, the woman sat in the corner with a blanket wrapped around her. Her eyes were unfocused, and her hair was messy. Her clothes were even dripping with saliva. Her lips were moving slightly. She stared at the ceiling, muttering something incomprehensible.

"Fifth Miss, as you can see, our Madam is not fully recovered yet. If you disturb her like this, it will only make her condition worse," Xianglan said.

"I'm here to tell Second Aunt something today." Shen Miao smiled. "I think Second Aunt already knows. Second Brother was executed at noon today. His corpse is lying in the coffin and will be buried soon."

"Fifth Miss, Madam is already sick! She can't take the shock!" Caiju shouted angrily. However, although Xianglan and Caiju had serious expressions, they really did not have the guts to be rude to Shen Miao and force her out. Now, they all knew that Shen Miao was not an easy person to deal with. A large part of the reason why the second branch was in such a state was because of Shen Miao. Shen Miao was the enemy of the second branch, but now, not only was Shen Miao scheming, but she also had Shen Xin behind her. No one in the second branch dared to go against her.

Shen Miao ignored the two maids and looked at Ren Wanyun with a smile. "I think Second Aunt knows that when Second Brother was executed today, no one went to visit him. Second Uncle, Third Uncle, Third Aunt, Old Madam, none of them went." She looked at Ren Wanyun and said, "I think if Second Aunt was not sick, you would definitely go and see Second Brother for the last time. Now, it will never be possible. How pitiful."

"Fifth Miss!" Xianglan couldn't help but shout again.

"What are you shouting for?" Shen Miao smiled. "Second Aunt is sick and can't understand a word I said. Are you afraid that I'll agitate her?"

"Of course not," Xianglan quickly denied.

"Then you'd better shut up." Shen Miao raised an eyebrow. "Otherwise, I have a way to make you shut up."

Xianglan and Caiju were shocked. The certainty in Shen Miao's words actually made them shiver.

"I think Second Brother was very sad that he didn't get to see you for the last time too."

Ren Wanyun was still staring at the ceiling with a dazed expression, but her fingers were clenched slightly.

"A few days ago, Concubine Wan even came to look for me." Shen Miao smiled and said, "I think she's in a hurry to build a good relationship with me. If I put in a good word for her in front of Old Madam, I think Second Uncle will probably make her his wife in the foreseeable future."

As soon as she said that, Xianglan and Caiju's faces turned pale. Everyone knew that Concubine Wan had regained her favor in the second branch. In the past, Ren Wanyun was strict with Concubine Wan, forcing her to stay in her courtyard and not show herself in any occasions. When Concubine Wan became the legitimate wife, wouldn't she take revenge? Ren Wanyun already lost favor with Shen Gui and was disliked by Old Madam Shen. How miserable would her life be in the future?

"Of course I don't want that to happen." Shen Miao tilted her head and thought for a moment. "Second Aunt is the first wife of the second branch, so I'll naturally stand on your side. However, Concubine Wan isn't going to give up that easily. Besides, now that Seventh Brother is still taken care of by Old Madam, when Seventh Brother is older and Concubine Wan becomes the legitimate wife, won't Seventh Brother be handed to Concubine Wan? Tsk tsk, I can't imagine what she'll do to Seventh Brother."

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"If you dare to have designs on my son, I'll make you wish you were dead!" In the corner, Ren Wanyun roared. For some reason, her voice was extremely rough. The pair of eyes that had been staring at the ceiling since Shen Miao entered the room had been locked on Shen Miao at some point, and the fierce light emitted from them was like that of a vicious wolf.

"Why would I have designs on Seventh Brother?" Shen Miao smiled. "Second Aunt, if you don't believe me, I can swear that if I have designs on Seventh Brother, I'll be struck by lightning and die a horrible death."

As soon as she finished speaking, the few people in the room looked a little surprised. Jingzhe, who had been silent all this time, was a little anxious. How could Shen Miao make such a heavy oath? They had always taken oaths very seriously. Shen Miao said it so calmly that Jinzhe did not even have a chance to stop her.

Ren Wanyun did not let down her guard against Shen Miao because of this. She sneered. "You didn't come all the way here just to say these things to agitate me and want to see if I'm crazy or not, did you?" She said, "Shen Miao, you are smarter than me and I underestimated you. If this game can start all over again, I'll definitely kill you before you grow to this age. I won't be merciful!"

"Second Aunt, you're really funny." Shen Miao said, "When have you ever been merciful to me?"

"You've already forced me to this extent, and I believe my son and daughter's death was also your doing. If not for Yuanbai, I would definitely die with you." Ren Wanyun gritted her teeth.

"I know that for the sake of Seventh Brother, Second Aunt will try to live on."

"What exactly do you want to do?" Ren Wanyun stared at her. "Do you have any other tricks up your sleeve?"

Shen Miao smiled kindly. "Second Aunt, why do you have to take me for an inhuman person? I came to give you a way out."

"A way out?" Ren Wanyun said miserably, "At this point, what way out do I have?"

"Second Aunt, do you think the current situation is as bad as it can be?" Shen Miao was surprised.

"Second Aunt, you have always been smart. How can you be so stupid?"

"What do you want to say?" Ren Wanyun's face darkened.

"Simple." Shen Miao smiled. "Now that Concubine Wan has won Second Uncle's favor, Second Aunt, have you thought about what will happen to Seventh Brother if Concubine Wan gives birth to a son for Second Uncle?"

Ren Wanyun's body stiffened.

"Second Aunt, you know very well whether Second Uncle values you or Concubine Wan. If one day, Concubine Wan is made the legitimate wife, the second branch will have two legitimate sons. However, these two legitimate sons are not full brothers. Do you think," Shen Miao lowered her voice, "they will kill each other?"

Ren Wanyun was shocked.

"That new son will be protected by Concubine Wan, and Seventh Brother will naturally be protected by you. But Second Aunt, at that time, can you still have a say in the second branch like before?"

What Shen Miao said dealt a huge blow to Ren Wanyun. Ren Wanyun couldn't help but retort, "That b*tch didn't give birth to a son in the past, and nor will she in the future."

"Second Aunt is indeed smart." Shen Miao sighed and said, "That's what I want to say. Second Aunt, do you think that other than Concubine Wan, Second Uncle will have no other women in the future?"

Ren Wanyun was stunned by Shen Miao's calmness. That's right. She knew better than anyone what kind of person Shen Gui was. How could Shen Gui be satisfied with only one woman? When she was still the madam, Shen Gui took concubines home one by one. If not for the fact that she fed those women infertility drugs, the second branch would probably be overcrowded now.

"There are countless women in the world who can give birth, and there are also countless women who want to enter the second branch of the Shen family. Unless Second Aunt can still control the second branch like before and feed every concubine infertility drug, one of the women will give birth to a son for Second Uncle. But Second Aunt, do you still have the ability now?"

Ren Wanyun looked a little flustered. Every word Shen Miao said was aimed at her weakness. What she could rely on was the fact that her son was the successor of the second branch, but what if there were more successors?

"Second Aunt, do you want to see all the assets that you worked so hard to manage be obtained not by Second Brother, not by Seventh Brother, but by the son of another woman? Second Brother is brilliant. Everything in the second branch should belong to him, but now he's dead. Are you willing to give everything out?"

Ren Wanyun stared at Shen Miao. "What do you want to say?"

"I'm here to give you a way out." Shen Miao smiled and took out a small bag from her sleeve and placed it on Ren Wanyun's palm.

"Infertility pill for men," she whispered.

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Ren Wanyun lowered her head and looked at the paper bag in Shen Miao's hand. She could not help but tremble.

"It's not a good idea to drug concubines. Even if one can't give birth to a son, there will be a second one. Second Aunt, you have to find a solution that can work once and for all."

"Why should I trust you? Who knows if it's poison or not?" Ren Wanyun said disdainfully.

"Second Aunt, if you don't believe me, you can naturally get the maids to bring it to ask the doctor or find an animal to test. In any way, you can just throw it away and buy it yourself. I'm just pointing the way out for you."

"Why should I do that?" Ren Wanyun stared at Shen Miao and said coldly.

"Why?" Shen Miao thought for a moment. "It's probably because if Second Uncle is sterile, Seventh Brother will be able to hold firmly onto the inheritance right. Not only that, as Second Uncle's only successor, Seventh Brother will definitely be favored by Second Uncle. The rarer something is, the more precious it is."

Ren Wanyun smiled. "Do you think I don't know what you're up to? Shen Miao, I underestimated you. You want the second branch to have no descendants!"

"You can't put it that way." Shen Miao pretended to be surprised. "Don't you still have a son? The second branch will have at least one descendant. Second Aunt, you are not telling me you want to have another child with Second Uncle in the future, are you?" She teased, "Even if you want, I don't think Second Uncle is willing to do it."

"How dare you!" Xianglan shouted angrily!

"You're shameless!" Ren Wanyun was so angry that her face was red. Shen Miao was clearly mocking her for being old. However, Ren Wanyun also understood that after so many years, Shen Gui indeed had lost all interest in her. It was very difficult for her to have another child with him. Shen Miao smiled.

"I've already given Second Aunt a way out. It depends on what you choose." She stood up and seemed to have thought of something. She tilted her head and said, "Of course, Second Aunt can also choose to tell Second Uncle about this, but I have to remind you that now that my parents and Old Madam have already fallen out, we're not afraid of anything."

Ren Wanyun sat there without saying anything. Xianglan and Caiju stared at Shen Miao warily.

"That's all I have to say. Goodbye." Shen Miao smiled and walked out.

After Shen Miao left, Xianglan took a step forward and asked Ren Wanyun, "Madam, do you really want to listen to Fifth Miss?"

"Fifth Miss must be up to no good." Caiju said, "She's clearly going against Master."

"She is going against Master." Ren Wanyun said in a low voice, "But now, Master and I are no longer on the same boat."

"Madam, you mean..." Xianglan widened her eyes.

Ren Wanyun lowered her head and said, "I'll think about it."

In the east courtyard, there were naturally people paying attention to every move Shen Miao made. As soon as Shen Miao and Jingzhe left, they saw an unfamiliar maid walk over with a smile and say, "Fifth Miss, Concubine Wan heard that you came to the courtyard and wants to invite you in to talk."

"I still have something to do. I'll drop in on her another day." Shen Miao rejected without hesitation. The maid was a little embarrassed, but there was nothing she could do. She could only watch as Shen Miao and the others walked away.

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"Is she trying to deliberately distance herself from us?" Concubine Wan was a little angry, but she was more worried. She said to Shen Dongling, "Dongling, is Fifth Miss siding with Madam and wants to deal with us together?"

"How is that possible?" Shen Dongling shook her head. "Because of Eldest Sister, they will never team up."

"But why does Fifth Miss always turn a blind eye to our goodwill?" Concubine Wan paced back and forth. "Could it be that she looks down on our background..." At this point, her voice darkened. "After all, she is the daughter of the first branch..."

"Mother." Shen Dongling put down her book and said with a headache, "What are you thinking? Fifth Sister doesn't want to have anything to do with us not because of our background. She is not close to

anyone in the Shen family. I'm afraid she doesn't want to have anything to do with the second branch, so she ignored us. In that case, it's useless to curry favor with her. It's better to do less in the future."

"But..." Concubine Wan wanted to say something.

"No buts." Shen Dongling interrupted her. "Let's just behave ourselves and make sure nothing goes wrong. Naturally, we won't get into trouble."

On the other side, Jingzhe, who had returned to the house, asked Shen Miao in a low voice, "Miss, will Second Madam really drug Second Master?"

"Of course." Shen Miao looked at her nails and said casually, "Ren Wanyun values her children the most. Now that she has lost a son and a daughter in a row, Shen Yuanbai is the only one left. However, Shen Gui is not a kind person. Only by drugging Shen Gui can she protect Shen Yuanbai's position."

"But what if Second Madam tells Second Master about this?" Gu Yu had always been worried about this.

"She won't. If Shen Gui finds out that he was drugged with an infertility pill, he will definitely hate Ren Wanyun to the core. Even if Shen Yuanbai is his only child, he will still take his anger out on him. To keep Shen Yuanbai safe, Ren Wanyun will do all she can to keep it a secret. Perhaps Shen Gui will never find out that he can't have children anymore."

"Then..." Jingzhe gritted her teeth, as if she was hesitating about something. Finally, she made up her mind and said, "Even if Second Madam successfully drugged Second Master and made him unable to have any children, doesn't he still have Seventh Young Master? Seventh Young Master is still young now. When he grows up, he will probably take revenge on Miss for Second Young Master and Eldest Miss. Miss, aren't you raising an enemy for yourself? You even made that oath..." Shen Miao swore in front of Ren Wanyun that she would not have any designs on Shen Yuanbai. Otherwise, she would be struck to death by lightning.

"Since I swore, I have no intention of harming Shen Yuanbai," Shen Miao said.

"Even so, Seventh Young Master will still treat Miss as his enemy." Gu Yu reminded her, "Having an enemy by our side all day long..."

"That will depend on whether or not he can grow up to take revenge." Shen Miao smiled. Unfortunately, Shen Yuanbai did not have the chance to grow up.

A year later, there was a plague in the capital, and Shen Yuanbai died of smallpox. At that time, everyone in the capital was in a panic. Fortunately, Shen Xin and the others were away in the northwest and weren't affected. The big families in the capital were fine, but many poor people died.

Shen Miao had always believed in retribution. In her previous life, Shen Yuanbai paid with his life for what Shen Gui and his wife did. However, the second branch still had Shen Yuan and Shen Qing. Without Shen Yuan and Shen Qing in this life, the second branch would eventually cease to exist.

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Instead of killing them all now, it was better to let them live with hope. Shen Gui thought that he still had a son, and Ren Wanyun also thought that Shen Yuanbai would replace Shen Yuan. However, one day, when Shen Yuanbai could not escape the calamity, the seed of despair lurking in the second branch would break out of the ground and drown the entire second branch.

The second branch was destined to have no descendants, but now, they were filled with hope. They did not know that the footsteps of misfortune were already slowly approaching them and the day when the sickle would swing down and reap their hope was not far.

The chess game was ready, and the chess pieces were advancing forward step by step as planned. Wasn't this good?

"Miss, Mo Qing came over just now." Bai Lu walked in and said with a troubled expression, "He said that he has already spent all the banknotes you gave him and asked if he should continue going to the Treasure Fragrance Chamber."

Bai Lu was a little embarrassed and confused. What kind of master would give her subordinates money to find a girl? Moreover, it wasn't a small sum of money. What was more confusing was that every time Mo Qing came back from the Treasure Fragrance Chamber, he looked like he had just survived a catastrophe.

"Go and give him another 500 taels of silver. Also, tell Mo Qing that it's time to say that to Liu Ying," Shen Miao said.

The maids in the room were stunned and looked at Shen Miao in confusion. After all, none of them knew what Shen Miao meant by "that".

Just as Bai Lu was about to go out, she suddenly thought of something and said, "By the way, Miss, Mrs. Zhang from Rongjing Hall came over a while ago. She seems to want to ask about Master and Madam splitting up from the Shen family."

After Luo Xueyan found out the truth from Jing Guansheng that day and quarreled with Old Madam Shen, she came back and told Shen Xin about it. Shen Xin was naturally furious and immediately went to Rongjing Hall to argue with Old Madam. Luo Xueyan wanted to split up from the Shen family, and Shen Xin was also disappointed by the Shen family, so he agreed without hesitation. Even if it meant he couldn't inherit the assets left behind by Old General Shen, Shen Xin was still bent on splitting up. Old Madam Shen knew that she still needed to rely on Shen Xin's reputation and money. Seeing that this time, Shen Xin was being serious, she pretended to have a stroke and fainted.

Naturally, Mrs. Zhang came to ask if Shen Xin and Luo Xueyan really meant everything they said.

"If she comes to ask again, tell her that we've made up our mind to split up from the family. And tell her to take good care of Old Madam. If Old Madam can't recover from her stroke, we'll get the elders from the family to come and help us with the splitting up procedure."

The elders in the family had always looked down on Old Madam Shen's background. When Old General Shen was alive, he favored Shen Xin, so the elders would naturally be biased towards him. They wouldn't let Old Madam Shen get too much out of the separation.

"I understand." Bai Lu smiled and left.

Shen Miao sat down at the table. Her path in this life had just begun, but she already had to plan so many things. It was not easy to protect the Shen family while taking revenge.

She had to take one step at a time and do it slowly.

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Gradually, the events happening in the capital became just a topic for casual chats between the commoners. After some time, there would be new topics to replace the old.

The Treasure Fragrance Chamber was as lively as ever. Recently, a new batch of Persian dancers arrived. They were beautiful and open-minded, and the young masters of the capital flocked to patronize them. The Treasure Fragrance Chamber was already prosperous, but now, it was almost packed with people.

Men liked new excitement. When the dancers became popular, the courtesans were pushed out of the limelight. However, among these pleasure-seeking men, one of them was especially different. Just as he walked to the door, the girl at the door waved her handkerchief and said with a smile, "Master Mo, you're not seeing Miss Liu Ying today, right?"

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Mo Qing placed the money in the girl's hand and said, "As usual."

The girl said enviously, "Master Mo, you are really a sentimental person. Liu Ying is really blessed to have you." With that, she sashayed upstairs to call for Liu Ying.

While everyone was rushing towards the new girls, Mo Qing insisted on seeing Liu Ying. People who didn't know better would think that he was in love with Liu Ying, but only he and Liu Ying knew if he was in love or not.

Opposite the Treasure Fragrance Chamber, three people were drinking by the window. Ji Yushu pointed at Mo Qing from afar and said, "Look, he's here!"

"What's there to see?" Gao Yang rolled his eyes at Ji Yushu. "He comes once every three days and then sits through the night. The moment the sun rises, he leaves immediately. I've remembered his schedule like the back of my hand. Why are you so surprised?"

Ji Yushu glared back at Gao Yang. "Are you stupid? We knew this, but Third Brother Xie doesn't. I'm just explaining things to him."

Opposite the two of them, Xie Jingxing leaned against the couch and looked at the Treasure Fragrance Chamber lazily. For the first time, he was not wearing purple today. Instead, he was wearing a black robe with a narrow waist, making him look much colder. However, looking at him carefully, he seemed to be travel-worn. Clearly, he just had a long journey.

"Xie, how did it go this time? How are those people?" Gao Yang asked.

"They're all death warriors. I can't get anything out of them, so I killed them all." Xie Jingxing was a little absent-minded. "Time is tight. We have to act quickly."

"How can we act quickly?" Ji Yushu complained. "We haven't found the thing we need."

"Shen Yuan might have it hidden somewhere. Otherwise, he wouldn't dare to get so close to Fu Xiuyi. However, now that he's dead..." Gao Yang pondered and said, "Fu Xiuyi will think of a way to find it."

"I need to go to the Shen family again." Xie Jingxing frowned. "I must find it."

"Hey, hey, hey, let's not talk about this for now." Ji Yushu interrupted their conversation. "We've been observing here for so long. What's the meaning of this Mo guy coming to the Treasure Fragrance Chamber every few days? Is Miss Shen so generous to her subordinates? She even paid her subordinates to have fun. She's even more generous than me, the shopkeeper of the Exiled Immortal Pawnshop."

"Have you ever seen a man who just sits for a night and then leaves when they go to a brothel?" Gao Yang looked at Ji Yushu. "He's more like completing a mission."

"Are you blind?" Xie Jingxing glanced at the two of them. "Can't you see that there's someone else opposite?" He glanced down, and the other two were stunned. Following Xie Jingxing's gaze, they saw a man in green standing at the corner opposite the Treasure Fragrance Chamber, looking at the room on the second floor in a daze.

"He looks nothing special." Ji Yushu said, "Look at how shabby he's dressed. It's obvious that he doesn't have money to go in."

"This person..." Gao Yang looked at him from afar. "He looks familiar. I think I've seen him somewhere before."

"Pei Lang," Xie Jingxing said.

"Who is Pei Lang?" Ji Yushu asked.

"A teacher at Guangwen Hall."

"I remember now." Gao Yang added, "I saw him at the palace banquet before. But what is he doing here?"

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"Teacher?" Ji Yushu said with surprise, "Even the teacher visits the brothel? Guangwen Hall even said that it's a school that all the nobles in the capital want to enter. How can a teacher engage in such an immoral conduct?"

"You visit the brothel pretty much every day. Why don't you say you engage in immoral conduct?" Gao Yang asked Ji Yushu.

Ji Yushu retorted, "I'm not a teacher!"

"Shut up." Xie Jingxing said, "How can the two of you fail to notice him?"

"I don't know him." Ji Yushu felt aggrieved. "There are so many people coming and going. I only pay attention to the abnormalities. This teacher doesn't look any different from ordinary people. How would I know that he's a teacher?"

Gao Yang looked at Xie Jingxing. "Do you think there's something wrong with Pei Lang? But he's just a poor teacher."

"Shen Miao never does anything unnecessary. There must be a reason why she asked her subordinate to look for Liu Ying. I didn't understand it before, but when I saw him, I understood." Xie Jingxing's gaze landed on Pei Lang in the distance.

"You mean..." Gao Yang was deep in thought. "Shen Miao goes to such an extent just for Pei Lang?"

Xie Jingxing smiled, and his gaze was meaningful. "For some reason, I feel that Shen Miao takes Pei Lang very seriously. From what I found out, Pei Lang is just a poor scholar. There must be something more to him."

"That's simple!" Ji Yushu said, "I know the reason."

Gao Yang and Xie Jingxing turned to stare at him.

Ji Yushu cleared his throat and said matter-of-factly, "That's too simple! He looks handsome and talented. Coupled with the fact that he's a teacher, he will definitely be knowledgeable. Miss Shen is young. After spending years in school with her teacher, she found herself in love with him. Unexpectedly, he turns out to be a hypocrite who visits the brothel. In a fit of anger, she got her subordinate to take revenge on Liu Ying..."

"Wait." Gao Yang asked, "Why does Shen Miao like Pei Lang but want to take revenge on Liu Ying?"

Ji Yushu thought for a while and replied, "It's probably because Pei Lang can't afford to patronize Liu Ying, so Miss Shen asked her subordinate to do it. She's deliberately trying to anger Pei Lang!" The more Ji Yushu spoke, the more excited he became. His saliva flew everywhere as he spoke, and he almost climbed onto the table. "Pei Lang must have broken Miss Shen's heart. Otherwise, she wouldn't squander her money just to take revenge."

Gao Yang held his forehead with a headache. "Ji Yushu, have you read some strange books lately?"

"You guys continue. I'll get going first." Xie Jingxing stood up expressionlessly and glanced at Ji Yushu. "If you have nothing better to do, the tower jail is short of people. When are you going to pack up and go with Tie Yi?"

Ji Yushu immediately fell silent.

On the other side, in Liu Ying's boudoir, Mo Qing was sitting at the table and drinking tea as usual.

Now, Liu Ying had completely given up on Mo Qing. Previously, she still wanted to conquer this man, but now, she did not have the slightest intention of doing so. She walked over, picked up the silver ingot on the table, and put it into the box. She sat down opposite Mo Qing, poured a cup of tea, and took a sip. She said indifferently, "Thank you, Young Master Mo, for coming to support me as usual. This way, I won't be starving."

When the customers were snatched away by the new Persian dancers, only Mo Qing supported her as usual. The girls in the brothel were extremely envious of Liu Ying, but they did not know that in Liu Ying's eyes, Mo Qing was just a strange person.

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Liu Ying did not intend to talk to Mo Qing either. Mo Qing had been here so many times, but he had never spoken to her. If not for the fact that every time he would speak to the bawd, Liu Ying would even think that Mo Qing was mute.

However, today, Mo Qing spoke to her for the first time. Mo Qing said, "It's not me."

Liu Ying was so surprised that she opened her eyes wide and looked at him. "What?"

"I'm not the one who gave you the money," Mo Qing said.

Liu Ying was puzzled. "What money?"

"My master wants me to come here to look for you every three days just to give you money and do nothing."

This was probably the longest sentence Mo Qing had said since he came to the Treasure Fragrance Chamber. However, as soon as he said that, Liu Ying immediately became vigilant. She stood up and asked, "Who is your master?"

Mo Qing shook his head. "I can't say."

"You!" Liu Ying glared at him.

"My master will come and see you in a few days." Mo Qing said, "Don't see other customers for the time being."

Liu Ying smiled bitterly. "Brother Mo, I don't know who your master is, and I don't know what your master wants, but I'm a girl from the brothel. Now that I'm losing popularity, if I don't see other customers, who is going to pay for my food? You?"

Mo Qing fell silent.

Seeing that Mo Qing did not say anything, Liu Ying was even angrier. If other men were here, they would at least say something nice to her like "I'll give you money", even if they didn't really mean it. However, Mo Qing was simply a block of wood. He was serious and refused to even say a good word to make people feel better. When she was angry, she wanted to shout. Just as Liu Ying opened her mouth, she lost her words. It was indeed unlikely to hear anything sweet from Mo Qing. He had said it himself that he was just following his master's instruction. At the thought of this, she felt that it was really meaningless to ask him to do these things.

Seeing that Liu Ying's expression was changing drastically, Mo Qing was a little puzzled. He hesitated for a moment before saying something that Shen Miao did not instruct him to say. He said, "My master is a good person. Don't... be afraid."

Liu Ying was stunned for a moment and looked at Mo Qing, but Mo Qing lowered his head and drank his tea. For some reason, Liu Ying felt better and said, "I believe everything you said."

Mo Qing didn't know what to say to that.

...

That night, Shen Miao chatted with Luo Xueyan in Luo Xueyan's room for a while before returning to her courtyard. On the way, Jingzhe told Shen Miao the information she had gathered during the day. "Miss, I heard that the Jing family will set off for Suzhou this afternoon. Before they left, they took away some valuable furnishings in the side courtyard of Rongjing Hall. Old Madam was so angry that she almost had a stroke again."

"I didn't expect that the Jing family would abandon Miss Jing and flee back to Suzhou with their tails between their legs. They knew that Miss Jing wouldn't have a good ending in the Sun family, but they didn't even bother to help her out at all. They were just trying to get more money," Jingzhe said.

Shen Miao smiled. "The Jing family probably just realized who they've offended."

"They're all not good people." Jingzhe pursed her lips.

Shen Miao did not comment. The Jing family rushed back to Suzhou overnight, but how could they be allowed to make it back so easily? Sun Tianzheng was not a pushover. In her previous life, when Shen Qiu was in trouble, Jing Chuchu escaped, but the rest of the Jing family did not. Sun Tianzheng had never been a soft-hearted person. No one knew what happened on her way back to Suzhou.

When she walked to the courtyard, Shen Miao was about to push the door open and enter when she suddenly paused and glanced at the window.

"Jingzhe," Shen Miao said, "Go boil the water first. I want to take a bath."

Jingzhe was stunned for a moment before nodding in agreement. Shen Miao pushed the door open and entered. She walked past the outer hall into her boudoir before closing the door.

The light of the oil lamp swayed slightly, and a person was sitting at the table. His robe seemed to be flowing with dark gold, making the darkness in the room look dazzling. He supported his head with one hand and flipped through the books on Shen Miao's table with the other. Hearing the noise, he turned around casually, revealing a handsome face.

"Why are you back so late?" Xie Jingxing was a little unhappy.

"I don't think I invited you here." Shen Miao looked at him calmly and said, "Young Marquis Xie."

"I've been waiting for you for a long time." Xie Jingxing raised an eyebrow. "I'm hungry."

Shen Miao said, "Get lost."

Chapter 360: Turning Over a New Leaf (1)

"Get lost."

Hearing this, the corners of Xie Jingxing's lips curled up. He turned to look at Shen Miao with interest. "It's been a long time since we last met. You're getting more and more irritable."

Shen Miao sat down at the table and said coldly, "You still like to come uninvited."

If anyone saw Xie Jingxing in her room, Shen Miao would never be able to explain herself. However, Xie Jingxing always liked to do this kind of thing. Shen Miao had already decided to stay away from Xie Jingxing because he had too many secrets and was unpredictable. Now that Xie Jingxing came over himself, how could she not be angry?

"I was just passing by and thought I'd drop in on you to see how you are doing." Xie Jingxing shrugged and changed into a more comfortable posture. He was wearing a plain dark suit with a bright white collar. It was dark, but because of his presence, the room seemed to have lit up. He stroked his chin and said, "I have something to ask you."

"Speak." Shen Miao was unwilling to waste her breath on him.

Xie Jingxing was not angry with her cold attitude. He said, "Is there anyone in the Shen mansion that Shen Yuan trusts?"

Hearing this, Shen Miao looked at Xie Jingxing in surprise. She did not expect the person Xie Jingxing wanted to ask was Shen Yuan. Although she did not know what Xie Jingxing was up to, she still said, "No, Shen Yuan has only returned to the capital for a short time and is not close to anyone at home. Why are you asking that?"

"I just searched his courtyard." Xie Jingxing said lazily, "But I didn't find what I wanted, so I came over to ask."

Shen Miao lowered her eyes and pondered. Could it be that Xie Jingxing wanted to find something from Shen Yuan but couldn't, so he thought that Shen Yuan had handed the thing to someone he trusted and asked her about it?

"What exactly are you looking for?" Shen Miao asked, "Is it the same as the thing in the secret room of Prince Yu's mansion?"

As soon as she asked, the room fell silent for a moment. For a moment, Shen Miao could feel a coldness coming from Xie Jingxing. However, the dangerous atmosphere only lasted for a moment. Soon, Xie Jingxing revealed a smile. When he smiled, he was as elegant as jade, but his eyes were dangerously sharp.

Xie Jingxing did not answer Shen Miao. Instead, he asked, "You've been doing well these days. I heard that the second branch of the Shen family is about to lose."

"Young Marquis, you know everything about the Shen family. Those who don't know might think that you're from the Shen family," Shen Miao mocked.

Xie Jingxing shrugged. "Well, the guards of the Shen family are just decorations. They can't do anything. Plus what has been going on in your family is quite interesting. It's hard not to know." He sized up Shen Miao. "I underestimated your ruthlessness."

"Do you wanna try?"

Xie Jingxing looked at her with smiles. "I don't have that much time to play with you."

"It sounds like you're very busy." Shen Miao stared at him. "But at the same time, you still have so much time to stroll around other people's mansions." When she said this, she looked a little angry. If Jingzhe, Gu Yu, and the other maids saw this, they would definitely be shocked by Shen Miao's expression at this moment, because it had been a long time since Shen Miao revealed such a straightforward emotion. Anger or frustration were things that only the Shen Miao from her previous life would have.

Xie Jingxing said, "Little girls are always so easy to get angry."

Shen Miao said impolitely, "Are you done asking? Why aren't you leaving?"

Xie Jingxing stood up and patted his clothes. He opened the back window and was about to jump out when he suddenly thought of something. He turned around and looked at her strangely, asking, "I almost forgot to ask you. Shen Miao, do you love Pei Lang?"

Shen Miao was speechless.

Before she could speak, she saw Xie Jingxing sizing her up critically with a disdainful gaze. "I don't think he's into you anyway." With that, his figure disappeared in an instant.