

## **Venomous 511**

### **Chapter 511 Chang Zaiqing (6)**

It did not matter to Chang Zaiqing if Shen Xin did not have a place for her in his heart, because what Chang Zaiqing cared the most from the beginning to the end was the opinion of outsiders. Once Luo Xueyan died, she would be Shen Xin's only wife. She would be able to live without worry for the rest of her life. Chang Zaiqing was the most realistic person. She never pursued love.

She was a clear-minded and smart woman.

If nothing went wrong, perhaps Chang Zaiqing would continue to live a rich life, and Shen Miao would even feel that she was a pitiful woman. However, the truth could not be hidden forever. Two years after Luo Xueyan passed away, Chang Zaiqing's husband and son from Liuzhou came to look for her.

That's right, it was Chang Zaiqing's gambler husband and sick son. Chang Zaiqing got married a long time ago. Perhaps at that time, the two of them were indeed in love, but nothing went smoothly and well to poor couples. How could a proud person like Chang Zaiqing tolerate living in poverty for the rest of her life? She took the money, abandoned her family, and went to the capital.

Her husband asked around for a long time before finding out that Chang Zaiqing was now in the capital and had become Shen Xin's concubine. He brought his son to look for her. It caused a huge sensation in the capital. Chang Zaiqing was gentle and elegant, but she actually abandoned her sick son. It was obvious that she was not as kind as she looked on the surface.

Chang Zaiqing was taken away, leaving Shen Xin to become a laughing stock in the capital. He had actually been raising someone's wife for so many years.

Shen Miao closed her eyes.

She had always been worried about the day when the past would repeat itself, but she did not expect the day to come so quickly. Chang Zaiqing appeared just like in her previous life, and she quickly made Luo Xueyan feel close to her.

In terms of acting, Shen Miao admired only two women. One was Chang Zaiqing, and the other was Consort Mei. However, Consort Mei was arrogant and would show her true colors. On the other hand, Chang Zaiqing was meticulous. She wouldn't do anything that would expose herself.

However, this life was different from her previous life. Shen Miao would not let Chang Zaiqing have her way no matter what. She still had to plan how to use this chess piece well.

As she was thinking, she saw the lights in the room flicker. Suddenly, someone said in her ear, "What are you thinking about?"

Shen Miao was stunned for a moment. She subconsciously leaned back and almost fell. The person grabbed her arm and held her back with one hand.

Under the light, his face was unbelievably handsome. With a familiar mischievous smile, he looked down at her and said, "You're so lost in thought. Are you thinking of how to repay me?"

"What are you doing here?" Shen Miao was so used to Xie Jingxing doing this that she couldn't even be bothered to be angry. However, she was a little surprised. She had clearly instructed Mo Qing to put more guards outside the courtyard, but she didn't expect Xie Jingxing to still be able to come in and out freely.

Xie Jingxing smiled. "I'm here to get my cloak."

This afternoon, at Princess Ming An's place, Xie Jingxing took off his black cloak and handed it to Shen Miao to help her out. Only then did Shen Miao remember that Xie Jingxing was looking at the ground with a meaningful gaze.

As soon as Shen Miao came back this afternoon, she was asked to see Chang Zaiqing. After changing her clothes, she brought Jingzhe and Gu Yu out. The black cloak was casually thrown on the chair, but for some reason, it slipped off the chair. At this moment, it was on the ground, curled up into a ball, looking tragic.

Xie Jingxing crossed his arms and said coldly, "You're really rude."

Prince Rui's clothes were expensive after all, but they were treated worse than a rag by Shen Miao. Shen Miao did not feel embarrassed at all. "Your Highness, your cloak is on the ground. Thank you." She did not even bother to say anything. Anyway, the royal family of the Daliang Dynasty had money, so they did not lack one or two cloaks. As she thought about it, Shen Miao glanced at Xie Jingxing. Everyday, he would be dressed in a completely different outfit. Shen Miao did not know how the Daliang Dynasty could afford this prodigal son. The money in the treasury was probably all used to make clothes for him.

Xie Jingxing looked at Shen Miao for a while and said with interest, "Are you angry because of that woman called Chang Zaiqing?"

#### Chapter 512 Invitation (1)

Shen Miao was slightly stunned and looked up at Xie Jingxing. Xie Jingxing lived in the capital since he was young and knew every corner of the capital. In addition, with the Exiled Immortal Pawnshop behind him, Xie Jingxing might even be better informed than Fu Xiuyi.

He could naturally know whatever he wanted to know.

"What does this have to do with you?" Shen Miao said angrily, "Prince Rui, are you so free as to worry about other people's family matters?"

"Family matters?" Xie Jingxing raised his eyebrows and said, "You seem to be very afraid of that woman."

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A trace of coldness flashed across Shen Miao's eyes. She said, "What's there to be afraid of?"

"That's not right." Xie Jingxing rubbed his chin and glanced at her. Suddenly, he leaned over and stared into Shen Miao's eyes carefully. He did not feel that it was inappropriate for him to be so close to her. He pondered for a moment and said, "You've never been to Liuzhou. Why do you seem to know her very well?"

Shen Miao suddenly looked up and met Xie Jingxing's gaze. The young man's face was as attractive as ever, but his eyes were sharp. He said, "It's same with Princess Ming An. You've never been to the State of Qin, but you seem to have a deep grudge against her."

Shen Miao still did not speak, but her eyes gradually turned cold.

"You've lived in the capital since you were young. The furthest you've been is Spring City. While you were in Spring City, you didn't go anywhere. It's impossible for you to have been to Liuzhou or seen the princess of the State of Qin." His voice echoed in the room, carrying the faint coldness of early winter.

"What do you want to say?" Shen Miao looked at him.

He said in a low voice, "Are you Shen Miao?"

For a moment, a thin layer of goosebumps appeared on Shen Miao's entire body. It was as if a chilling wind was blowing down from the top of her head, making her shiver in an instant. She had seen many people. Relying on the experience from her previous life, she knew those people like the back of her hand. However, towards the man in purple in front of her, she seemed to be clueless.

Shen Miao's impression of Xie Jingxing was that in her previous life, he was just a handsome young man who died young. In this life, when she found out that he was unfathomable, she felt even more afraid. What she did would indeed arouse suspicion, but she didn't expect Xie Jing to actually suspect her identity as Shen Miao.

She was not Shen Miao, but Empress Shen. Xie Jingxing had a wild imagination, and his imagination was very close to the truth. The discomfort of having her secret exposed made Shen Miao panic for a moment. However, she did not lose her composure. She only stared at Xie Jingxing's face and smiled.

However, that smile only lasted for a moment before her expression turned cold. "Not everyone in the world has a double identity like Prince Rui."

Xie Jingxing's playful smile froze.

It was unknown if Shen Miao was really Shen Miao, but Xie Jingxing was no longer Xie Jingxing. Now that Young Marquis Xie of Lin'an had become Prince Rui, were they still the same person? After all, Xie Jingxing had nothing to do with the Daliang Dynasty in the past.

## Chapter 513 Invitation (2)

"You got me there." Xie Jingxing stood up straight, and his eyes darkened. He said with a faint smile, "I'll just take it that you are still Shen Miao." He seemed to be talking to himself, but at the same time, he seemed to be talking to Shen Miao. "It's really difficult to find out all the secrets about you."

"Prince Rui, why won't you let me off?" Shen Miao looked at him. "Whether I have secrets or not, it has nothing to do with you."

"Unfortunately, I'm interested in your secrets." Xie Jingxing said leisurely, "Besides, after thinking about it, you seem to be the only person I can trust in Ming Qi."

Shen Miao smiled instead of being angry. "Prince Rui, don't you still have Su Mingfeng and Princess Rong Xin?"

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Xie Jingxing smiled. "Let the past stay in the past."

For some reason, under the light, the smile on his lips looked a little lonely.

Xie Jingxing looked at her and continued, "How do you plan to deal with Chang Zaiqing? If you beg me, I might help you."

Shen Miao said expressionlessly, "I only hope that Prince Rui can stay out of my matters."

"It seems like you've already thought of what to do." Xie Jingxing raised his eyebrows. "Impressive."

Shen Miao lowered her eyes and heard Xie Jingxing say, "The princess of the State of Qin won't let this matter rest."

"You don't have to remind me." Shen Miao glared at him. "I have to thank Prince Rui for 'helping' me today."

With Princess Ming An's jealous personality and the fact she seemed to be quite infatuated with Xie Jingxing, after Xie Jingxing was protective of Shen Miao, she would definitely vent her anger on Shen Miao.

"She's not your match." Xie Jingxing reached out and rubbed Shen Miao's head. She shook his hand off.

She did not want to speak. Princess Ming An was not smart to begin with, so Shen Miao was not worried at all. The most difficult person to deal with was Huangfu Hao. In fact, Huangfu Hao and Princess Ming An came to Ming Qi this time to form an alliance with Ming Qi. Ming Qi was also interested in befriending the State of Qin.

No matter what, she could not let Fu Xiuyi and Huangfu Hao get together. It would naturally take a lot of effort to break the tacit alliance between the two countries. Shen Miao's gaze involuntarily landed on Xie Jingxing. She did not know what kind of role the Daliang Dynasty would play in this chess game.

In her previous life, she died too early, so she did not know what kind of accomplishment Xie Jingxing had made at the end of his life. It was clear that he did not die in battle, but instead, he escaped and returned to the Daliang Dynasty to be Prince Rui.

Xie Jingxing noticed her gaze and smiled. "What is on your mind now?"

Shen Miao looked at him steadily. "When does Prince Rui plan to return to the Daliang Dynasty?"

"You don't want me to leave?" Xie Jingxing glanced at her with a smile and looked out of the window. "Don't worry, I won't leave for the time being." He said, "I also want to see the show between Huangfu Hao and Prince Ding to the end."

Shen Miao's heart palpitated. Xie Jingxing said, "Don't you want to see it too?"

"I don't know what Prince Rui is talking about." Shen Miao didn't mean what she said.

Xie Jingxing bent down and picked up the black cloak on the ground. The cloak was wet from the pond water and crumbled into a ball. His expression froze for a moment before he said casually, "Shen Miao, you and I are the same kind of people."

"Your Highness, you're noble, and I am humble. We have nothing in common."

"You're underestimating yourself." The corners of the purple-robed young man's lips curled up. "You're just like me, born to rule."

### Chapter 514 Invitation (3)

When that person was no longer in the room, the candlelight seemed to have gradually dimmed. Shen Miao was still sitting at the table. What Xie Jingxing said before he left made her unable to calm down for a long time.

You're just like me, born to rule.

Could it be that Xie Jingxing had discovered something? However, that was impossible. She thought carefully about her interaction with Xie Jingxing in her previous life and realized that they had never interacted at all. Shen Miao thought about it and suddenly realized that she had wasted too much time dwelling on this. Thinking that Xie Jingxing had disrupted her life for no reason, she was angry.

On the other side, in Prince Rui's mansion, Xie Jingxing returned to the room. The room where he slept was almost as big and exquisite as the emperor's bedroom. He threw away the cloak in his hand and wiped his hands with a handkerchief. A white thing suddenly pounced out of the corner and bit the black cloak, shaking its head happily.

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Xie Jingxing looked coldly at the white tiger playing with the cloak for a while before lifting it up from the ground.

"How naughty." He looked displeased.

The white tiger cub sneezed and branshished its claws at Xie Jingxing. Xie Jingxing threw it into the nest by the bed expressionlessly.

"Tie Yi," Xie Jingxing said.

A black figure rushed in from outside. "Master, what can I do for you?"

Xie Jingxing pointed at the cloak on the ground. The corners of Tie Yi's mouth twitched. That was a cloak made of black lion fur. It was hard to find. How could the only cloak made of black lion fur be ruined like this? Tie Yi felt sorry for Emperor Yong Le.

"Take it out and throw it away." Xie Jingxing started to take off his clothes.

Tie Yi picked up the cloak in a daze and nodded. Everyone knew that Prince Rui was obsessive about cleanliness. No one was allowed to touch his things. Now that this cloak had been ravaged to this state, Xie Jingxing probably would not want it anymore.

Just as Tie Yi walked to the door, He heard Xie Jingxing say, "Wait."

Tie Yi turned around. Xie Jingxing hesitated for a moment and frowned. "Forget it, wash it and put it away."

Tie Yi was stunned for a moment before nodding happily. He carried the cloak and quickly left the room. It was good that Xie Jingxing could learn to be less extravagant and wasteful. This way, he could lead the Daliang Dynasty towards lasting prosperity.

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The capital welcomed the first snow of this winter.

In the winter, the women on the street began to put on thick coats with all kinds of patterns embroidered on them, giving colors to the monochrome capital.

In the west courtyard of the Shen family, someone was standing in front of the courtyard and looking at the snow falling outside.

"Miss Chang, why don't you go in and get warm? It's cold outside. The capital is not as warm as Liuzhou. The wind in the winter is very strong," Chen Ruoqiu said with a smile.

Chang Zaiqing turned around. She smiled and said, "It rarely snows in Liuzhou in the winter. The snow in the capital is really beautiful, so I want to take a good look."

Chen Ruoqiu smiled, "If Miss Chang settles down in the capital, after seeing the snow for a few times, you won't find it rare anymore. It's cold every year."

#### Chapter 515 Invitation (4)

Chang Zaiqing smiled but did not say anything. The two of them were both elegant and from scholarly families. Their every move was pleasing to the eye, like a pair of sisters. Chen Ruoqiu held Chang Zaiqing's hand. "No matter how much you like this snow, don't stay outside for too long. There's a heater in the house. Let's go in and sit."

Chang Zaiqing did not decline, and the two of them entered the house hand in hand. After entering the house, the maid brought them hot tea.

Chen Ruoqiu was the first to pick up the tea and take a sip. She smiled and looked at Chang Zaiqing. "I have been looking for a friend who can appreciate the tea and arts with me but to avail. Now that you're here, I'm very happy."

"Third Madam, you are very kind." Chang Zaiqing smiled back.

"Miss Chang has a likable personality. Anyone will like you." Chen Ruoqiu said, "I hit it off with you at first sight. I knew you were an intelligent and elegant person. We get along unexpectedly well. I wonder how you got along with my sister-in-law a few days ago?" After a pause, Chen Ruoqiu sighed. "My sister-in-law came from a family of generals. She doesn't know anything about tea or arts, but she's a good person. I wonder if she made things hard for you."

Chen Ruoqiu was obviously probing. Chang Zaiqing rubbed the tea lid and replied obediently, "First Madam is a very good person and told me many interesting things that I've never heard of. She didn't look down on me because of my humble background. I'm very thankful."

"I knew it." Chen Ruoqiu nodded. "Have you seen General Shen?"

Chang Zaiqing shook her head. "It was too late that day. I left before General Shen returned. I planned to pay him a visit another day."

Chen Ruoqiu smiled deeper. "It's good to visit him another day. After all, we're all family. Now that we're both living in the capital, it's very convenient for us to see each other."

As she spoke, she saw a maid coming in with an invitation. Seeing that Chen Ruoqiu was also here, she first bowed to Chen Ruoqiu and handed the invitation to Chang Zaiqing. "Miss, this is the invitation sent by the servant."

Chen Ruoqiu's eyes flashed as she smiled and said, "Miss Chang, you've only been in the capital for a short time, but you already made a good friend? Who is it?"

Chang Zaiqing opened the invitation letter and took a look. She smiled and said, "Third Madam, the only people I know in the capital are from the Shen family. I don't have any other friends. This invitation is sent by First Madam."

"Sister-in-law?" Chen Ruoqiu was stunned. She looked at Chang Zaiqing in surprise. "It seems like Sister-in-law likes you a lot. When Sister-in-law was living with us, she rarely invited anyone home." After saying that, she seemed to be very happy for Chang Zaiqing. "It seems like the two of you really hit it off at first sight. I'm a little jealous."

Chang Zaiqing smiled. "Third Madam, you are teasing me again."

"Today is the day of this invitation." Chen Ruoqiu looked at the invitation in Chang Zaiqing's hand and said in surprise, "Miss Chang, aren't you going?"

"I'm afraid... It's too early." Chang Zaiqing was a little hesitant.

Chen Ruoqiu smiled and patted her hand. "Why are you so shy? You have to know that we're family. Moreover, with Sister-in-law's personality, she won't be happy with you being so shy. She likes straightforward people. Why do you have to make people not like you?"

Chang Zaiqing looked at the invitation and Chen Ruoqiu continued, "To be honest, I also have selfish motives. I think if you become good friends with Sister-in-law, it will be much easier to resolve the misunderstanding between us in the future. I... still have to rely on you." As she spoke, she sighed.

#### Chapter 516 Invitation (5)

"Third Madam, don't say that." Chang Zaiqing quickly said, "I'm grateful that the Shen family took me in. Moreover, I went to see First Madam a few days ago. She's a broad-minded person. I think she won't take the misunderstanding to heart. I'll go. If there's a chance, I'll definitely help you explain. Third Madam, I have been meaning to do it even if you don't tell me."

When Chen Ruoqiu heard that, she was very relieved. "I knew you were a good person." As she spoke, she took off a bracelet from her hand and put it on Chang Zaiqing. Chang Zaiqing wanted to decline, but Chen Ruoqiu held her hand and said firmly, "This bracelet is not worth a lot of money, but it's well-crafted. I know you're not greedy for money, so you won't accept anything expensive. Take this

bracelet. General Shen might be at home today. It's not wrong to dress up to see him. You can't let people look down on the Chang family, right? You have to think for the Chang family."

These words came from the bottom of her heart, and every word she said was for Chang Zaiqing's sake. Chang Zaiqing did not decline anymore and only said, "I will remember Third Madam's kindness to me."

"What are you talking about? We're family." Chen Ruoqiu stood up and looked outside. "Miss Chang, dress up first. I won't disturb you anymore. Go before it snows so that you can come back early at night." She reminded the two maids who served Chang Zaiqing something before leaving.

After Chen Ruoqiu left, Nanny Zhao put away Chang Zaiqing's invitation letter and said, "Miss, are you really going to see First Madam Shen?"

"Why not." As soon as Chen Ruoqiu left, Chang Zaiqing's smile faded, and she seemed to have changed into a different person.

"That First Madam Shen..." Nanny Zhao was a little hesitant.

"She's a good person." Chang Zaiqing sat at the table, opened a small box of rouge, and pursed her lips. The color of the rouge was light, looking like it was the natural color of her lips.

"In that case, I am relieved." Nanny Zhao heaved a sigh of relief.

"That's right." Chang Zaiqing looked at herself in the mirror, but it was unknown if she was talking to herself or to others. "I'm also relieved."

Outside, Chen Ruoqiu returned to the Autumn Water Garden and held the hand warmer in her hand. When she turned around, she met Shen Yue.

"Mother." Shen Yue said, "Why do you keep going to see Chang Zaiqing? I've been looking for you."

"Why are you looking for me?" Chen Ruoqiu stroked Shen Yue's head. Shen Yue was getting older and older, but her standards were still high. Chen Ruoqiu couldn't just keep her daughter at home like that. Chen Ruoqiu knew that her daughter liked Prince Ding, but why would Fu Xiuyi take a liking to her? Shen Yue would definitely not be happy with just being a concubine. Shen Wan had already flared up with Chen Ruoqiu a few times because she turned down all the people who came to propose marriage to Shen Yue.

"I just received new dresses from the embroidery workshop." Shen Yue said, "I want you to see which one looks better."

Looking at her daughter, who was like a flower, Chen Ruoqiu felt a headache coming on. She said, "What's the use of these colorful patterns? You're already beautiful. You might as well spend the time learning something from that person in the west courtyard instead of dressing yourself up."

"The west courtyard?" Shen Yue was puzzled. "Mother, are you talking about Chang Zaiqing? What can I learn from her?"

Chen Ruoqiu shook her head. "There's a lot to learn from her. If you have 30% of her ability, I won't have to worry about you anymore."



She knew what kind of a person Luo Xueyan was. Although Luo Xueyan was hospitable, it was never likely for her to invite someone she had just met once. Chen Ruoqiu knew that Chang Zaiqing was a person who made people feel comfortable but not hostile. However, it was really beyond her expectations that Chang Zaiqing could get Luo Xueyan's trust so quickly.

#### Chapter 517 Invitation (6)

However, this was a good thing for Chen Ruoqiu.

She tapped Shen Yue's forehead and said, "In short, learn more from her. It's much more useful than dressing up."

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In the new Shen mansion, Gu Yu said as she combed Shen Miao's hair, "Miss, if Madam finds out that you sent an invitation to Miss Chang in her name, will you be in trouble?"

Shen Miao said indifferently, "It's all the same. We're family after all."

"But Miss, why don't you send the invitation in your own name?" Jingzhe was wiping the table at the side. She was a little curious as to why Shen Miao would invite someone she barely knew using her mother's name.

"I have no relationship with her whatsoever. Why should I invite her here for no reason?"

Jingzhe and Gu Yu looked at each other, not knowing how to respond. That's right. Shen Miao did not have much of a relationship with Chang Zaiqing. Why would she use her mother's name to write an invitation letter to Chang Zaiqing? When Chang Zaiqing came to visit that day, Shen Miao didn't look happy at all.

Shen Miao lowered her eyes. Luo Xueyan was not around today, so Shen Miao invited Chang Zaiqing over. She had to meet her alone. Luo Tan had been sent away early in the morning. In the entire mansion, Shen Miao was in charge.

Just as she was thinking, she heard a servant inform her that Miss Chang had arrived.

"So soon?" Jingzhe was a little surprised.

Shen Miao smiled. People who had ambitions would naturally show them here and there. In the past, she couldn't tell because she was in the dark and didn't care about anything in the Shen family. Things were different now. She wanted to find out what Chang Zaiqing was made of.

Chang Zaiqing was welcomed by a servant to the main hall to wait. The maid brought over a cup of tea, and she quietly sized up the new Shen mansion.

The new Shen mansion was different from the old Shen mansion. Because the old Shen family was where Old General Shen lived, the feng shui was good. Coupled with Old Madam Shen's extravagant tastes, it was quite garish. On the other hand, the new Shen mansion had a spacious courtyard, perhaps because Shen Xin and Luo Xueyan needed a place to practice martial arts, and the decorations in the main hall were simple. Although the decorations were simple, for some reason, they gave off a dignified

feeling. The first time Chang Zaiqing came, she did not look around carefully. At this moment, she felt like her body was covered in a layer of cold sweat. It was as if she could not help but feel nervous.

The maids were coming in and out as they cleaned the house, and no one spoke to Chang Zaiqing. Chang Zaiqing had always been well-mannered and patient. However, after the tea turned cold, no one came out. Chang Zaiqing grabbed a maid and asked her why Luo Xueyan was not here yet.

The maid had a smile on her face, and her attitude was respectful and polite. She said that she would go and ask, but after she was gone, she never came back. For some reason, this happened several times in a row. Chang Zaiqing couldn't sit still anymore. The first time she met Luo Xueyan, she had almost figured out her temper. Luo Xueyan was a straightforward person and was very enthusiastic. Why did she deliberately make things difficult for her this time?

For the first time, Chang Zaiqing actually felt a little uncertain. The maids coming and going seemed to be looking at her, but at the same time, they didn't seem to be looking at her. She finally lost her patience and wanted to get up to leave, but she heard someone say with a smile, "Auntie Chang, I'm really sorry for keeping you waiting. I wet my clothes in the room just now and took a while to dry it up."

Chang Zaiqing was stunned and quickly stood up. She saw a few maids following her as Shen Miao walked in.

The girl was wearing a jade-patterned brocade cloak with a heater in her hand. When she entered the room, she took off the cloak, revealing the purple embroidered dress inside. It had an extremely gorgeous and complicated pattern. What was rare was that the purple color didn't look ugly on her. Instead, it made her look noble. As she walked in, the room seemed to have brightened up.

Chang Zaiqing felt dizzy for a moment.

She had seen many people, including Shen Yue, who was praised by Chen Ruoqiu for being outstanding and beautiful. However, only Shen Miao could give her a sense of awe. That day, Shen Miao was accompanying Luo Xueyan and didn't look all that dazzling. Today, she came by herself and stole all the limelight, making people feel pressured.

"Fifth Miss?" Chang Zaiqing glanced behind Shen Miao.

"There's no need to look for anyone else." Shen Miao smiled. "It was me who sent you the invitation, Auntie Chang."

#### Chapter 518 Nightmare (1)

Chang Zaiqing was stunned and asked with a forced smile, "Fifth Miss, this..."

"Last time, Auntie Chang came and went in a hurry, so I didn't get to chat with you. You said that you would come back another day. I waited for a long time, but I didn't see you coming, so I took the initiative to invite you over. I was afraid that it wouldn't be appropriate to use my name, so I used my mother's name. Auntie Chang won't blame me, right?"

Chang Zaiqing looked at the girl in front of her. Shen Miao had a natural smile on her face, not looking embarrassed at all. If Chang Zaiqing got angry, it would make her look like she was being petty. She immediately smiled and said, "Of course I won't. It's my honor to be invited by Fifth Miss." As she spoke,

she sized up Shen Miao again. Last time she was here, although Shen Miao was not cold to her, she was definitely not friendly. She even made some rude remarks a few times. Being invited by Shen Miao unexpectedly, Chang Zaiqing couldn't help but be on guard.

"It's cold in the main hall. Auntie Chang, come to my room." Shen Miao smiled and stood up. "It's not far from here. I really can't stand the cold wind."

Chang Zaiqing agreed. When they arrived at Shen Miao's room, Shen Miao asked the maid to serve tea and pastries. The stove was burning. Shen Miao opened the window a little before closing the door. The room was warm, but it was not stuffy.

Shen Miao pushed the teacup to Chang Zaiqing. Chang Zaiqing smiled and took a sip, her expression suddenly becoming a little strange.

"This is Zhudan tea. It tastes very bitter and doesn't smell good. Auntie Chang is probably not used to it," Shen Miao explained with a smile.

Chang Zaiqing's expression froze. She was a little confused, not knowing what Shen Miao was up to. The way to treat guests was naturally to take out the best tea. Why did Shen Miao use such lousy tea to treat guests? Was it to humiliate her? However, Shen Miao's expression was kind and did not seem to be hostile towards her.

"Although this tea is bitter, it's extremely good for the body. If you drink it in the winter, it can ward off the cold and keep you warm. My father and brother are both martial artists. They always drink Zhudan tea in the winter. Gradually, this tea also grew on me." Shen Miao looked at Chang Zaiqing. "Auntie Chang comes from a scholarly family. You probably don't like to drink such tea, but in our military family, we're not so particular about tea."

Chang Zaiqing waved her hand and smiled. "Fifth Miss, you must be joking. The Chang family is just an ordinary family. Although this Zhudan tea is bitter at first, after I take a few more sips, it doesn't taste bitter anymore."

Shen Miao shook her head. "It's easy to force yourself for a moment, but it's difficult to force yourself for a lifetime."

Chang Zaiqing was stunned. She felt that there was something else in Shen Miao's words and couldn't help but look at her.

Shen Miao smiled. "Speaking of which, I heard that Auntie Chang has been living in the old Shen mansion. Do the people there treat you well?"

"They're all good people." Chang Zaiqing smiled and said, "They take good care of me."

"You and Third Aunt are like-minded. I think you two must hit it off very well." Shen Miao smiled and said, "Third Aunt has always liked to draw and write. Back then, Third Uncle took a liking to her very much because of this. I think you've seen how well Third Uncle treats Third Aunt. Third Aunt is the only wife in the entire third branch." As she spoke, she sighed. "Unfortunately, Third Aunt hasn't been able to give a son to Third Uncle. If she did, she wouldn't be so sad."

Chang Zaiqing had been in the old Shen mansion for quite some days, so she naturally knew that because the third branch didn't have a son, Chen Ruoqiu and Old Madam Shen were not on good terms. However, she did not expect Shen Miao to bring this up. After all, Shen Miao was an unmarried girl. Chang Zaiqing felt a little awkward. However, when Shen Miao spoke, her expression was natural, as if she did not think that this was something inappropriate for her to say. Chang Zaiqing could not tell if Shen Miao was smart or just naive.

#### Chapter 519 Nightmare (2)

"Third Madam is so kind-hearted. She will definitely be blessed to have a lot of descendants in the future," Chang Zaiqing said.

"People always liked to compare the first branch with the third branch." Shen Miao picked up the teacup and blew at the tea leaves on the surface. She smiled and continued, "But my family is alright. At least I have a brother. My brother is about to reach the age of marriage. In no time, he will be engaged. When I have a sister-in-law and a nephew, this house will be quite crowded and lively." Shen Miao seemed to be a little smug. "But the third branch is not as lively as our first branch."

Chang Zaiqing first felt that Shen Miao was probably naive and was at odds with the third branch. However, when she heard everything Shen Miao said, she suddenly thought of something and her expression changed.

That's right. In the first branch, Luo Xueyan was foolish and straightforward. Shen Xin didn't take in any concubines, so she didn't have to be wary of being schemed against. However, Chang Zaiqing almost forgot that there was still Shen Qiu. Shen Qiu was the eldest son of Shen Xin. He was young and promising. If he married a wife from a powerful family, even if Chang Zaiqing kept a low profile, she would not be able to get anything.

When Shen Miao saw the change in Chang Zaiqing's expression, her eyes turned cold.

In her previous life, when Chang Zaiqing moved in with the first branch, Shen Qiu was already harmed. After Shen Miao married Prince Ding, no one in the entire first branch could become a threat to Chang Zaiqing. With such a smooth start, how could Chang Zaiqing let this good opportunity slip?

However, it was different now. Shen Qiu was still doing very well. With a healthy and living heir, the possibility of her becoming the legitimate wife of Shen Xin would forever be gone.

What kind of path would this woman who liked to weigh the pros and cons choose?

Shen Miao picked up the pastry on the table and said with a smile, "What a pity. When Grandpa was still around, he used to say that Third Uncle is the smartest in the Shen family. He's handsome and gentlemanly. If he had a son, his son would definitely be as smart as him. Unfortunately, Second Sister is the only child he has. Second Sister is about to get married. When Second Sister gets married, there will only be Third Uncle and Third Aunt in the third branch. They will definitely feel lonely."

Chang Zaiqing was originally listening absent-mindedly, but as she listened, her heart started to race.

Speaking of which, the situation in the first branch and the third branch was almost similar. Shen Xin and Shen Wan only had one woman. However, Shen Yue was two years older than Shen Miao. Shen Yue was

about to get married, and the third branch didn't have an heir. It seemed like the third branch was easier to get into.

"Auntie Chang and Third Aunt have similar personalities, and, I dare say, look alike in some way. You are both gentle and know a lot about elegant things. Those who don't know might think that you're sisters." Shen Miao looked Chang Zaiqing straight in the eyes and said unhurriedly, "However, in my opinion, Auntie Chang is more outstanding than Third Aunt, because... Auntie Chang is younger."

The corners of Chang Zaiqing's mouth curled up subconsciously. She knew that the people in the Shen family compared her to Chen Ruoqiu. She was also a talented woman like Chen Ruoqiu. However, Shen Miao was right. No matter how beautiful a woman was, when she was old, she would begin to wither. In comparison, Chang Zaiqing looked more charming. Moreover, Chen Ruoqiu thought that she was the daughter of a noble family and was even a little arrogant. However, Chang Zaiqing had grown up in a humble family and knew when to make compromises. When it was time to lower her head, she would lower it. This was why people found her likable.

Chang Zaiqing thought with a dark gaze that she was better than Chen Ruoqiu.

Shen Miao picked up the tea and drank it. The tea tasted bitter, but she drank it like honey and smiled.

### Chapter 520 Nightmare (3)

Chang Zaiqing was already 26 years old. Most unmarried women of her age in the capital could only be accepted as a concubine. They had to raise a child who did not belong to them. Moreover, the Chang family was small. Even with the help of the Shen family, it was still difficult for her to marry into a good family.

Chang Zaiqing abandoned her husband and son and came to the capital in search of a better life, so naturally she wouldn't just marry an ordinary man. She was just too hung up on Shen Xin that she forgot Shen Wan was also a choice. Since Chang Zaiqing was best at weighing the pros and cons, Shen Miao would help Chang Zaiqing see what choices she had and let her choose for herself.

Chang Zaiqing's expression changed drastically, and her heart was in a mess. Shen Miao's suggestion reminded her of something that she had not discovered.

That's right. Since Shen Wan liked Chen Ruoqiu's personality, he would naturally like her too. Compared to a martial artist like Shen Xin, Shen Wan was a gentleman and knowledgeable. He was the man after her own heart.

However, how did things suddenly end up like this? She originally wanted to come to test Shen Xin, and Shen Xin was the man she had in mind... But in the end, the arrow was directed back at Chen Ruoqiu. Was it because Shen Miao kept talking about irrelevant things that she was distracted? Was it Shen Miao... Shen Miao?

Chang Zaiqing suddenly looked at Shen Miao.

The girl in purple sat in front of the window. The snow outside had stopped at some point. The sun came out and shone on the side of her fair face. Her neck was slender, and she was holding a teacup and slowly sipping it.

She had a dignified aura.

Chang Zaiqing shuddered. It was as if she had just realized now that she had been led by the nose by Shen Miao from the beginning until now.

This girl was definitely not stupid and naive. Instead, she was like a monster.

Chang Zaiqing thought of the first time she came to the new Shen mansion. Shen Miao was already rude to her at that time. Her heart skipped a beat. Could it be that at that time, Shen Miao already knew what she was up to, so she gave her a hard time on purpose?

Shen Miao looked at her and smiled. "Auntie Chang, why are you sweating profusely? Is the room too hot?"

Chang Zaiqing suddenly came back to her senses. She braced herself up and looked at Shen with a smile. "Probably."

Shen Miao said indifferently, "If you close the window too tightly, it will be uncomfortable in the room. It's much cooler outside." She instructed Jingzhe to open the window and looked at Chang Zaiqing. "Auntie Chang, am I right?"

"Fifth Miss is right." Chang Zaiqing forced a smile, but when she saw Shen Miao's smile, she was a little frightened. Even if she had been hiding her ambition so well, Shen Miao could still see through her at a glance. She was simply a monster. Chang Zaiqing was glad that she had discovered it early. If she really married Shen Xin and had to confront Shen Miao, her life would be a misery.

Chang Zaiqing would not take the risk. She would only choose the safest way.

As expected, after chatting with Shen Miao for a while, Chang Zaiqing said that she had to leave. Shen Miao naturally would not stop her. After Chang Zaiqing left, Gu Yu said curiously, "Why is Miss Chang so strange? She seems to be hiding from something. What frightened her?"