

Venomous 71

Chapter 71: Her Marriage

Since Ren Wanyun had already said so, Old Madam Shen was not so stupid as to not understand what she meant. From what Ren Wanyun said, Prince Yu was clearly a devil. In his hands, Shen Miao would only suffer. The one who really benefited was still the Shen family.

"From what you said, Prince Yu indeed seems to be a good husband for Shen Miao," Old Madam Shen said matter-of-factly. She was extremely thick-skinned. When she said such words, a trace of disdain flashed across Chen Ruoqiu's eyes.

"Even Mother agrees." Ren Wanyun was good at lying through her teeth. She immediately added, "When I pick a husband for Fifth Miss, I naturally won't choose someone with a low status. Prince Yu is a novel. Fifth Miss marrying him is really a fortunate thing."

Old Madam Shen nodded when she heard that. Then, she thought of something and said, "Then did Prince Yu send someone over to talk about marriage?"

Ren Wanyun's face twitched. She knew this old woman was vicious, but she did not expect her to be so anxious to marry off Shen Miao. Of course, the sooner the better. Otherwise, it would be troublesome when Shen Xin returned. However, even if the marriage was a done deal, Shen Xin still might not agree to Shen Miao marrying Prince Yu. Therefore, she had to use some unusual tricks.

"Mother, it's still too early." Ren Wanyun smiled and said, "Fifth Miss is still young. There's no hurry. If we marry her off like this, people will inevitably say something bad behind our backs. Let the two of them get along first. When the two of them are in love and Fifth Miss is happy, we'll talk about marriage. This way, no one will say that we forced Fifth Miss."

Chen Ruoqiu smiled and did not speak. Although she also wanted to see Shen Miao suffer, she was cautious by nature. It was better to leave this matter to Ren Wanyun. If Shen Xin really pursued the matter in the future, he would not be able to blame her. Sitting in the arena and watching the tigers fight was what Chen Ruoqiu was best at.

Behind the screen, Shen Yue and Shen Qing were both a little afraid. They did not expect that in just a few words, Shen Miao's life would be decided. To girls, a husband meant the happiness of the rest of their lives, and Shen Miao was destined to be unhappy. However, Shen Yue and Shen Qing did not have a trace of sympathy for Shen Miao. In the imperial court, Shen Xin was better than their fathers, and in terms of status, Shen Miao was higher than them. Seeing that Shen Miao would suffer, they smiled gloatingly.

Although Old Madam Shen knew nothing about managing a family, she was very good at scheming and using dirty tricks. Back then, she was able to become the mistress of a general because she had some dirty tricks up her sleeve. Therefore, after hearing Ren Wanyun's words, she understood what Ren Wanyun meant. She smiled and said, "Oh, in that case, let's get Fifth Miss to be closer to Prince Yu first. Indeed, if we really force Fifth Miss to marry him, it won't be good for us when the general comes back."

When an amiable expression appeared on her mean face, it made people feel like she was a weasel with a smile on her face. Shen Yue and Shen Qing shuddered and quickly retreated far away from the screen.

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In the west courtyard, under the oil lamp, Shen Miao sat quietly. There was a snow-white piece of parchment in front of her. There was nothing on it, and the brush and ink were already prepared. She wanted to write something, but after a moment, she sighed and put away the parchment.

It was good to plan for the future, but now that she was just a young girl, she could only rely on the information she had. However, these things were not of the greatest use to her now. She needed to take one step at a time.

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Seeing her sigh, Gu Yu and Jingzhe thought that she was thinking about Prince Yu. Gu Yu went forward and comforted her, "Miss, don't worry. If he's really trying to hurt you, we'll protect you with our life. In the capital, there are people who are good friends with your father. At most..."

Shen Miao shook her head. "Prince Yu is a noble and is protected by the royal family. Even if some people are friends with my father, they won't protect me at the risk of becoming enemies with the royal family."

"Why don't we write a letter to Master?" Jingzhe said, "Master can't return because of his duty, but Young Master can. He won't be punished if he returns to the capital. With Young Master around, he can always protect Miss."

"It will take Brother more than a month to rush back from the northwest. How can he make it in time? Do you think they will wait for that long?" Shen Miao said indifferently. They would try to make her marriage a done deal as soon as possible so that even if Shen Xin came back, he wouldn't be able to change anything.

Shen Miao might let others manipulate her life, but Empress Shen would never!

"Then what should we do?" Gu Yu and Jingzhe's expressions changed drastically. Although they knew that it was a tricky matter, they did not expect it to be so serious. Whenever Prince Yu took a fancy to a girl, even if they were daughters of high-ranking officials, he would try all he could to get his hands on her and brutalize her before abandoning her. However, these officials couldn't seek justice for their daughters because Prince Yu was protected by the royal family.

"Other people are unreliable." Shen Miao looked at the dancing flames. "I can only rely on myself."

"But Miss..." Gu Yu was a little anxious. How could Shen Miao protect herself? The madams from the second and third branches might have already formed an alliance with Prince Yu.

"I have my ways." Shen Miao played with the paperweight in her hand.

Prince Yu was protected by the royal family because he once saved the emperor. If the royal family was unwilling to protect him, he was just a miserable rat.

Shen Miao would start with dismantling the royal family from Prince Yu. She looked out of the window and saw a faint figure moving outside. It was a fat figure. Who else could it be but Nanny Gui?

At the same time, she would shake up the west courtyard, getting rid of people who posed a threat to her.

Chapter 72: Secret Talk

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After this year's Chrysanthemum Banquet, the center of discussion in the capital finally changed.

Young Marquis Xie had destroyed the prestige of his two younger brothers in an extremely domineering manner. Although he was arrogant, the demeanor he displayed during the test made people understand that he was known as the Jade-faced Asura on the battlefield for some reason.

The other person who was discussed was Shen Miao.

It was as if she had been reborn, or perhaps the warrior bloodline in the Shen family had been awakened in her. Shen Miao, who was no longer stupid and weak, did not bat an eyelid when she faced Cai Lin. The fierce temper that she revealed made the young men and women of her generation quite afraid.

As a result, in Guangwen Hall, the people who were originally mocking her restrained themselves.

When Cai Lin came to Guangwen Hall again, he faced Shen Miao and stared at her with an unfriendly expression. However, he did not act rashly.

Feng Anning looked at Cai Lin and smiled. "I didn't expect the tyrant to be afraid of you now."

Shen Miao glanced at Cai Lin, and the latter quickly looked away, looking a little afraid. She laughed in her heart. In her eyes, Cai Lin was just an arrogant and mischievous young master. She did not want to spend too much time on him. Moreover, the Cai family was not far from destruction. In the future, this noble young master would have to suffer a lot.

"However, when he heard that the Xie brothers were seriously injured, the Marquis of Lin'an did not blame Young Marquis Xie." Feng Anning sighed and said, "It seems that it's true that the Marquis of Lin'an favors his firstborn the most."

Shen Miao asked, "How do you know?"

"I eavesdropped on the conversation between my parents." Feng Anning was a little smug. "But if it were anyone else, they would probably dote on Young Master Xie too. He was born to Princess Yuqing, who has the royal bloodline..."

Shen Miao raised her eyebrows. To be honest, she felt that there was something strange about the death of Princess Yuqing.

While she was thinking, she saw Pei Lang walk in.

Pei Lang had a gentle smile on his face as he looked at Shen Miao. When he met her gaze, he couldn't help but be stunned.

At the Chrysanthemum Banquet, Shen Miao's performance finally made Pei Lang take her more seriously. From then on, he began to sense that Shen Miao was not ordinary. He also felt that Shen Miao

seemed to be secretly paying attention to him. Although he did not know why, it made him, a young teacher, feel a little uncomfortable, as if he was being targeted by something. However, at the thought that no matter how powerful Shen Miao was, she was just a girl, he felt that he was overthinking.

“Why are you always staring at him?” Feng Anning asked curiously. Then, she thought of something and was shocked. “Don’t tell me you like him.”

Shen Miao had stopped mentioning Fu Xiuyi, as if he didn’t exist at all. This made people think that Shen Miao probably realized that she was not worthy of the royal family and had gradually given up. Although Pei Lang was of a lower status, he was elegant and knowledgeable. It was natural that girls liked him.

Shen Miao felt a headache coming on. She looked away and said, “Of course not.” She was just thinking that since Pei Lang did not exhibit “Circulation of Law” at the Chrysanthemum Banquet, Fu Xiuyi naturally wouldn’t notice him. However, this person was still a huge problem. If he worked with Fu Xiuyi in the future, he would be a blocking stone to her success.

However, she did not have the ability to kill Pei Lang without anyone knowing now. She could only think of another way.

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At this moment, the Hundred Fragrance Restaurant in the capital was filled with singing and dancing. Even in the daytime, the gauze curtains and night pearls placed everywhere made the entire building glow. Occasionally, people would stop outside, but they could only look inside with envy. Ordinary people couldn’t afford to patronize such a place. Here, even a small pot of tea was enough to cost them a fortune.

At this moment, a middle-aged man in luxurious clothes was sitting by the window. This man was dressed in top-grade clothes, but he was hideous and thin. Under his robe, his left leg was empty. It was Prince Yu.

“Have you made things clear with the Shen family?” After a while, he asked with a dark tone.

“Your Highness, I’ve already made arrangements with the second madam of the Shen family. Three days later, the women of the Shen family will go to the Wolong Temple to offer incense. At that time...”

“Three days.” Prince Yu frowned, a trace of displeasure flashing across his eyes. Then, he waved his hand and said, “Go and prepare everything. It’s been a long time since I’m so interested in someone.”

Over the years, he had been lecherous and cruel, and countless women had died at his hands. However, no matter how aggrieved those women were, they could not do anything. In the entire Ming Qi, people would tremble when they heard the name Shen Xin being mentioned. He couldn’t wait to taste the daughter of the almighty general. That day at the Chrysanthemum Banquet, the ruthlessness Shen Miao displayed made him very interested. A wild cat that knew how to resist might be much more delicious than those wooden beauties.

He licked his lips, and a trace of lust flashed across his eyes.

Opposite the room closest to him, a man in white was sitting at the glass table. He was about twenty years old, handsome, and had a very gentle temperament. After listening for a while, he said to the person opposite him, "It seems that the girl you saved is probably in trouble again."

Opposite him, the purple-clothed youth sat lazily and said casually, "Shen Xin has made the Shen family too powerful. Now, it's just a test. One day, no one in the Shen family will be able to survive."

The man in white paused for a moment and suddenly looked at the young man seriously. "Why did you do that to your half-brothers? Do you want to start your plan early?"

The person sitting opposite him was none other than Xie Jingxing. He smiled. "Does it make a difference if I start it early or later?"

"If you make a move early... Do they know?" The white-robed man asked hesitantly.

"Gao Yang, you don't understand. As of now, I have the say here." Xie Jingxing said indifferently, "The longer I wait, the worse it will be for me. If the mountain doesn't come to find me, I'll go find the mountain." When he said the last sentence, his eyes darkened, not looking like a seventeen or eighteen-year-old boy.

The man named Gao Yang was stunned for a moment before smiling bitterly. "Forget it. I'm just here to check in on you. But in fact, I'm not confident that I can stop you." He changed the topic. "But three days later, won't you also have to go to the Wolong Temple to investigate something? Perhaps, you'll save the beauty a second time."

"Gao Yang, you are terribly wrong as always." Xie Jingxing raised an eyebrow. "That girl from the Shen family is not to be trifled with."

Chapter 73: Commander, Mo Qing

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After school, Shen Yue walked up to Shen Miao and said with a smile, "Miss Yi invited me and Eldest Sister to her house today, so I won't go back with you. Fifth Sister, you can go back first."

Yi Peilan and Shen Yue were close to each other, and they often hung out without Shen Miao. Hearing that, Shen Miao did not react much and only nodded.

Over the past few days, the Shen family had been treating Shen Miao very warmly. It was obvious that they were planning something against, but Shen Miao couldn't be bothered with them.

On the way back, they passed by the most prosperous street in the capital. Gu Yu said, "There's a pastry shop ahead. Don't you like the pastries the most? I'll go buy some."

"Go," Shen Miao said with a smile.

After Gu Yu got out of the car, Jingzhe lifted the curtain of the carriage and looked out. When she saw something, she let out a cry of surprise. Shen Miao followed her gaze and saw a pawn shop beside the pastry shop. At this moment, there were many people around, seemingly arguing about something.

The pawnshop assistant seemed to be a little impatient. His voice was so loud that even Shen Miao could hear him clearly. "I said ten taels of silver. It's up to you if you want to sell it or not! It's just a sword. Don't make things difficult for us."

"I think they have a business dispute," Jingzhe said.

The people in the pawnshop would naturally lower the price. Obviously, this was an unacceptable price for the person who came to pawn things, but they were unwilling to leave.

"There's nothing to see." Seeing that Shen Miao looked away, Jingzhe lowered the curtain. A moment later, Gu Yu came back with two big paper bags. Jingzhe pulled open the curtain and let her in. The moment she pulled open the curtain, Shen Miao's gaze landed outside the carriage. She saw the person who was arguing with the shop assistant turn around and walk out of the crowd. He was still holding a sword in his hand. Probably because he did not manage to sell his item, he looked a little disappointed.

After Gu Yu got into the carriage, she was about to close the curtains when Shen Miao stopped her. She stared at the person holding the sword carefully. It was a young man who looked ordinary. Seeing that their miss was staring at the strange man, Gu Yu and Jingzhe were confused.

Shen Miao frowned. Why did this person look so familiar?

The young man shook his head and sighed. He looked at the sword in his arms and gritted his teeth. He turned around and walked towards the pawnshop again, as if he was finally going to make a decision to make that deal that he was not too satisfied with.

"Gu Yu!" The moment he turned around, Shen Miao suddenly shouted, "Go down and stop him. Tell him that I want his sword!"

"Miss..." Jingzhe and Gu Yu looked at her in surprise, not knowing why Shen Miao was doing this.

"Quick!" Shen Miao said coldly.

Seeing her serious expression, Gu Yu did not dare to ask further. She immediately jumped out of the car and walked towards the young man.

As soon as the young man took a step forward, he heard someone behind him say, "Mister, wait."

He turned around and saw a woman who looked like a maid smiling at him and saying, "Mister, are you going to sell the sword in your hand?"

The young man was stunned for a moment before saying without hiding anything, "That's right."

The woman continued, "Coincidentally, my Miss wants this sword in your hand. Mister, are you willing to sell it to us?"

The young man glanced at her. Seeing that the woman didn't seem to be lying, he nodded his head and said, "My sword isn't exquisite. If you want a better one, go to a blacksmith's shop to make one." He was also surprised. Ordinary girls wouldn't be interested in swords.

Gu Yu's expression softened slightly, and she praised in her heart. This person in front of her was obviously in urgent need of money, but he was still considerate of her. It seemed that he was an upright person.

At the thought of this, Gu Yu's expression softened. She said, "My Miss sincerely wants to buy this sword from you. Mister, why don't we talk in private?"

The young man probably did not expect Gu Yu to be so stubborn. He glanced at the pawnshop and nodded. "Alright."

When they arrived at an empty alley, he saw a carriage parked in the alley. Gu Yu walked up to the carriage and said softly, "Miss, he's here."

The young man walked to the carriage and hesitated for a moment. In the end, he cupped his fists and said, "Miss, my sword is indeed not suitable for women to use. It's too heavy and sharp, and it'll hurt you. Therefore..."

"What's your name?" Before he could finish her sentence, a woman's voice came from the carriage. This voice didn't sound old, but there was an indescribable feeling to it, as if she was someone who used to have power over everyone. For a moment, he couldn't tell her age.

"I'm Mo Qing." After a moment of hesitation, the young man cupped his fists.

After saying that, there was no response for a long time. Just as the young man called Mo Qing and Gu Yu were both a little puzzled, a woman's voice came from inside. "I'm not interested in your sword. It's useless to me."

Hearing this, a trace of anger appeared on Mo Qing's face. He said, "Miss, are you playing with me? Although this sword looks ordinary, it was forged by a famous swordsmith and has accompanied me for many years. If you called me over just to humiliate me, sorry, I don't have the time."

After saying that, he turned around and was about to leave when he heard a sigh coming from the carriage. The sigh was light, but it seemed to contain an inexplicable emotion, making people's hearts ache.

"Mo Qing, you're short of money, right?" The person in the carriage said.

Mo Qing was stunned. For some reason, when she called his name, he had a strange feeling. That feeling was very familiar but not entirely so. However, the moment he heard her speak, he couldn't help but stop in his tracks, as if he couldn't refuse anything she said.

"Your sword is indeed worthless to me, but your swordsmanship is worth a hundred gold coins."

Mo Qing was stunned and shook his head. "Miss, I'm flattered. I'm just an ordinary person." He was surprised that this person knew that his swordsmanship was outstanding.

"You even have to sell the sword that has been with you for many years just to get by. With your swordsmanship, you can live a much better life than that." The curtain of the carriage was suddenly lifted, and a girl in purple walked out.

She looked young and delicate, but there was a rare noble and dignified aura around her.

“Mo Qing, are you willing to work for my family?”

She asked with a smile, but there was a faint joy in her eyes.

Mo Qing, the commander of the guards in her previous life, remained really... unchanged.

Chapter 74: Guard

“Miss...” Mo Qing was slightly stunned and frowned at the girl in front of him.

He knew that some rich families did not care about human lives. Buying a servant was like buying an animal. At this moment, the girl probably thought of him as a servant, so he was naturally unhappy. However, when he looked into her eyes, the displeasure instantly disappeared.

She was not looking at him with disdain but with respect. He subconsciously blurted out, “Miss, have we met somewhere before?”

Shen Miao sighed softly. “No.”

“Then why...”

“You have an extraordinary aura, and I believe you will make a name for yourself. Now that you’re going to sell the sword you’ve been with for many years, you’re obviously at a dead end. You’re in dire need of money, but even if I give you money today, it still won’t solve the problem in the future. I’m the daughter of the mighty general. When my father returns to the capital at the end of the year, I can introduce you to him. It’s a pity that your excellent swordsmanship is wasted.”

“General Shen?” Mo Qing was stunned. He did not expect the girl in front of him to be Shen Xin’s daughter. Everyone in Ming Qi knew about Shen Xin. He was a hero on the battlefield. Men aspired to make contributions for their nation. If he followed such a general... Mo Qing felt like his blood was boiling.

However... According to the rumors circulating in the capital, Shen Miao was a complete idiot. Although she seemed to have saved the situation at the Chrysanthemum Banquet a few days ago, not many people had seen it with their own eyes. At this moment, it seemed like the rumors were not necessarily true.

“If Miss is really willing to introduce me to your father, I will naturally not decline. If there’s a chance in the future, I will definitely repay you.” Mo Qing was a straightforward person.

Seeing this, Shen Miao smiled and took out a silver from her pocket. She gave it to Mo Qing and said, “I don’t need you to repay me. I’ll just take it that you agree to work for me. My father will only be back at the end of the year. From now on, you have to return to the Shen family with me. I want you to pretend to be a guard of the Shen family, but you have to secretly protect me.”

When Mo Qing heard this, he was naturally surprised. He had also heard that on the surface, the big families were rich and powerful, but in private, they were scheming against each other with dirty tricks. Seeing that Shen Miao wanted him to protect her, he knew that the girl in front of him was probably not safe. Mo Qing was a little surprised. Since Shen Miao was Shen Xin’s daughter, why was she still in such a difficult situation? He did not ask and only said, “As you wish.”

"Take this money." Shen Miao said, "You have to come to the Shen family within three days. Then I'll get you a place to stay."

Mo Qing cupped his fists again. His aura was quite strong. After he left, Gu Yu and Jingzhe both frowned. Jingzhe said, "Miss, we know nothing about this person. If he has evil intentions, I'm afraid he will..."

Shen Miao walked towards the carriage. "What are you afraid of? It's safer to be around people like him than those at home."

Right now, the people in the west courtyard were all spies from the second and third branches, and Shen Miao had very few people on her side. Moreover, Mo Qing was by no means a stranger.

Shen Miao sat in the carriage and sighed. She didn't expect to meet Mo Qing here.

In her previous life, Mo Qing was the commander of the royal guards. Back then, he was recommended by Shen Xin and was an expert in martial arts. When Shen Miao went to the State of Qin to be a hostage, Mo Qing went along as a guard. If not for Mo Qing, it would probably be very difficult for her to return unscathed.

Mo Qing was loyal to Shen Xin, so he was naturally loyal to Shen Miao. Unfortunately, after Shen Miao returned to Ming Qi, because of the battle between Consort Mei and Shen Miao, Consort Mei schemed against Mo Qing and accused him of molesting the women in the palace. Fu Xiuyi had long wanted to get rid of Shen Xin's people, and Shen Miao tried all means to stop him, but to no avail. She could only watch helplessly as Mo Qing was sentenced to death under a groundless accusation.

Now that she saw Mo Qing again, she did not know that Mo Qing was in such a difficult situation. However, it was precisely because Mo Qing was in a difficult situation that she could recruit him so easily. Shen Miao understood Mo Qing's personality. He was the most loyal and upright. In the trip to the Wolong Temple in three days, she would feel safer with him around.

When she returned to the Shen family, Shen Miao was the only one in the mansion because Shen Yue and Shen Qing went to the Yi family's mansion. As soon as she arrived at the west courtyard, Nanny Gui came up to her and said with a fawning smile, "Miss, you're back. I asked the kitchen to make some sugar soup. Miss, do you want some?"

"Sure," Shen Miao said.

Seeing that Shen Miao, who had been treating her coldly these days, suddenly became friendly, Nanny Gui was delighted and quickly said, "I'll bring it over now."

When Nanny Gui brought the sugar soup over, Shen Miao had already been resting for a while. Nanny Gui carefully placed the sugar soup on the table and said with a smile, "Miss, I've already prepared everything for the trip to the Wolong Temple. Do you need anything else?"

Shen Miao glanced at her and said calmly, "Nanny, you seem to be very enthusiastic about this."

Nanny Gui was stunned for a moment before saying with a smile, "Miss, it's rare for you to go on a long trip, so I naturally have to make sure everything is in place."

"With Nanny following me, I'll naturally be safe." Shen Miao suddenly smiled. When Nanny Gui saw that smile, she felt a little uneasy.

"Since Second Madam is the one arranging and in charge of this trip, naturally nothing will go wrong," Nanny Gui said.

"Then I'll have to trouble Nanny Gui to thank Second Aunt for me." Shen Miao nodded. "You can leave."

Hearing this, Nanny Gui heaved a sigh of relief and quickly left after saying a few words. For some reason, Shen Miao had become very strange. It was as if staying with Shen Miao gave her enormous pressure. However, after leaving the room, she straightened her back and glanced at the room in disdain. She said in a low voice that only she could hear, "After three days, let's see if you can still be so arrogant."

In the room, Shen Miao held the bowl of sugar soup in her hand and walked to the window. She poured the sugar soup into the soil outside the window.

"Miss, are you really going to the Wolong Temple?" Bai Lu asked.

"Yes," Shen Miao replied.

In her previous life, at this time, she accidentally heard the maids of Rongjing Hall talking. When she found out that Old Madam Shen wanted to marry her to Prince Yu, she fled to Prince Ding's mansion the night before she went to the Wolong Temple, which led her life to a wrong path.

Now, she wouldn't escape or hide, but follow them to the Wolong Temple. Whoever wanted to scheme against her, she would make them suffer.

Chapter 75: Wolong Temple

Three days passed quickly.

Three days later, early in the morning, Ren Wanyun prepared everything and asked her maid, Xianglan, to tell Shen Miao some things. Before leaving, everyone went to Rongjing Hall.

Old Madam Shen said something with a serious expression. She wanted everyone to follow the rules. Although it was famous, usually she did not go to the Wolong Temple because it was located in a remote area.

Shen Qing, on the other hand, looked extremely happy. She said that she would definitely worship devoutly for Old Madam Shen and Shen Yuanbai. Hearing that, Old Madam Shen was more amiable towards her.

Before leaving this time, they brought some guards with them. Shen Miao stood in front of the carriage and did not move for a long time. Seeing this, Ren Wanyun frowned and asked, "Fifth Miss, what are you waiting for?"

"I just feel that we need more guards. To prevent any accidents, Second Aunt, why don't you get more guards to come along?"

Ren Wanyun frowned. She did not expect Shen Miao to make such a request at this time. However, everything was settled today. Ren Wanyun smiled and said, "Fifth Miss, I've already arranged enough guards to come with us. We can't take all the guards of the Shen family away. If there are too many people, it will be more inconvenient. Let's just leave it at that."

Shen Miao shook her head firmly.

Seeing this, Shen Yue and Shen Qing did not say anything. Shen Qing was unhappy and said, "Our Shen family is not a royal family. How grand does Fifth Sister want this outing to be?"

As soon as she finished speaking, Shen Miao glanced at her. That glance made Shen Qing suddenly feel a chill run down her spine.

"Let's add two more." Shen Miao pointed at the two guards by the door. "They'll do."

Seeing that Shen Miao only wanted to bring two more people, Ren Wanyun heaved a sigh of relief. She did not want to waste too much time on this matter. Adding two more guards wouldn't make a huge difference anyway, so she said, "Fifth Sister, you're really... Forget it. What can I say? Do as you please." She instructed Xianglan, who was beside her, "Go and get those two guards over to come with us."

"Thank you, Second Aunt." Shen Miao smiled.

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After getting into the carriage, Shen Qing deliberately did not speak to Shen Miao. Although Shen Yue spoke to Shen Miao, she was mostly just asking questions. Shen Miao could not be bothered to answer her. On the other hand, Ren Wanyun was in a good mood along the way. She brought up what happened back when Shen Miao was little and talked like they were very close. If it happened in her previous life, Shen Miao would probably be attached to this kind-looking second aunt of hers. However, now that she looked at this woman, everything she did was hypocritical and ugly. In front of her, who was used to seeing all kinds of people, she was really not good enough.

They set off in the morning and arrived at their destination, the Yangjing Peak, in the evening.

Wolong Temple was located halfway up Yangjing Peak. The mountain was tall and the valley was deep. If one walked here in spring, there would be birdsong and fragrant flowers everywhere. The leaves were lush, and the scenery was pleasant. However, it was already early autumn, and the vegetation was withered, making it look a little desolate.

Because Yangjing Peak was too far from the capital, the road to the Wolong Temple was not easy to walk on. Therefore, other than devout believers, most people wouldn't choose to come here. When Shen Miao and the others got off the carriage and arrived at the entrance of the Wolong Temple, they saw that outside the huge temple, there was only a young monk sweeping the floor.

"It's quiet here." Shen Yue chuckled.

Shen Qing sniffled, as if she wanted to complain. Suddenly, she thought of something and stopped herself.

Ren Wanyun said, "I heard that the Buddha here is very efficient. When you burn incense, you have to be sincere."

When the young monk saw them, he stood up to welcome them. Other than the servants who were moving things down the carriage, Ren Wanyun and the others followed the monk into the temple.

The more they walked into the temple, the more they felt that the Wolong Temple was really sparsely populated. There were not many monks, let alone devotees. However, the temple was spacious, so it felt empty. If they stayed at night, it would probably be a little scary.

When they saw the abbot, he assigned rooms for them. The girls each had a room, and they were very close to each other. When it was Shen Miao's turn, a middle-aged monk beside the abbot said, "I'm really sorry, but there are no more rooms for you in the southern pavilion. If you don't mind, how about staying in the northern pavilion?"

Everyone looked at her. Shen Miao smiled. "I'm sorry, I mind very much."

"Fifth Miss." Ren Wanyun reprimanded softly, "We are in a temple. Don't be so willful."

"It's just a little strange." Shen Miao continued, "It doesn't look like there are a lot of visitors. Why is the pavilion full?"

The middle-aged monk frowned. He had probably never seen such an arrogant lady before. However, Shen Miao was not like those unruly ladies who made a fuss.

"Young lady, although there aren't many visitors, there are many monks in the temple." The old abbot smiled and explained to Shen Miao.

"But I'm really afraid to stay alone. What should I do?" she asked.

"This..." Ren Wanyun was still comforting her. "Fifth Miss, just make do with this one night. If Buddha sees your sincerity, he will answer your prayer."

If it were in the past, when Shen Miao heard this, she would have been convinced. After all, she used to be amenable to persuasion but not coercion.

But now, it was a little different.

Ren Wanyun also felt a headache coming on. For some reason, the current Shen Miao was getting more and more annoying. In the past, Shen Miao would believe whatever she said and was very easy to coax. But today, Shen Miao went against her whenever she could.

"How about this?" Shen Miao smiled and said, "Auntie, can you stay in the north pavilion with me? I'll feel more at ease with someone accompanying me."

Chapter 76: Room

"This..." Ren Wanyun was a little hesitant. If she lived with Shen Miao, it would be difficult for her to get away if anything happened to Shen Miao. Without waiting for her to think of a better idea, Shen Miao continued, "If Aunt doesn't want to, I can make do with living in the same room as Eldest or Second Sister."

Shen Yue did not say anything. Although Shen Qing did not know what her mother was up to, she could vaguely guess that this trip was targeted at Shen Miao. Moreover, she hated Shen Miao so much that she did not even want to pretend to be friendly with her. She naturally said coldly, "I'm used to living alone."

"In that case..." Shen Miao pondered for a moment.

"Then I'll stay in the north pavilion with Fifth Miss." Before Shen Miao could finish speaking, Ren Wanyun took the initiative to speak.

Shen Miao smiled. "Thank you for showing some consideration, Second Aunt."

Ren Wanyun couldn't help but frown. In an instant, she smiled again. "We're all family."

After settling the problem of where to stay, it was time to unpack the luggage. Because Shen Qing and Shen Yue said that they were a little tired, they did not eat together. When they arrived at the north pavilion, without waiting for Ren Wanyun to speak, Shen Miao said, "I also feel very tired, so I'll go back to my room first."

Ren Wanyun was stunned for a moment before saying with a smile, "Alright, if you're tired, rest early."

Shen Miao nodded in agreement.

When the young monk led Shen Miao and her servants to the room, Shen Miao couldn't help but sigh.

Indeed, in a simple temple like the Wolong Temple, this room looked especially elegant. Beside it was a forest, which was quite quiet. Although the furnishings in the room were simple, they were exquisite.

"The scenery here is really beautiful." Gu Yu was a little surprised.

"Only the noble guests of the temple can stay in this room. The madam who came with you instructed us to leave the guest room to you," the young monk said with his head lowered.

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"Help me thank Second Aunt for her kindness," Shen Miao said indifferently. She looked around. This was the innermost room in the north pavilion. In other words, this place was isolated. Even if someone shouted, they couldn't be heard.

They had really carefully planned this to make sure she couldn't escape. As for the exquisite decoration of this room, it was probably prepared for that man.

"What incense is this?" Jingzhe picked up the incense on the table and sniffed it. "It smells like an orchid, but even better than that." Her gaze landed on the incense burner that was made of orchids. "This incense burner is really unique."

When Gu Yu saw this, she smiled and said, "It seems like the temple knows a lot about Miss. Without incense, Miss can't fall asleep at night."

"Now I think this Wolong Temple is not bad." Jingzhe chuckled and teased, "No wonder Second Madam insisted on coming over to pray."

Shen Miao frowned slightly and walked to the table. She took the incense from Jingzhe and sniffed it. After smelling it, she frowned even more.

Seeing this, the two girls asked hesitantly, "Miss, is there anything wrong with this incense?"

Ever since Shen Miao entered the Wolong Temple, she had never been at ease. The more perfect this place seemed, the more she could see the dangers inside. Before she went to bed, she indeed had a habit of lighting incense.

However, Shen Miao had been the head of the harem for so many years in her previous life, so she wouldn't be fooled easily. She had seen many of these dirty tricks and things. For example, the aphrodisiac in the incense, it had been used by the concubines countless times.

If she were an ordinary girl, she would naturally have never heard of this thing.

"It's nothing good." She let go and the incense landed on the table.

Gu Yu and Jingzhe were shocked and looked at each other. A moment later, Jingzhe said, "Then should I throw this out?"

"No need." Shen Miao's gaze landed on the tea table. Ren Wanyun and that person had spent so much effort preparing good gifts for her. It would be a pity if these gifts were wasted. A cold smile suddenly appeared on her lips. "Keep it. It will be useful eventually."

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In another room far away from Shen Miao's house, Ren Wanyun sat in front of the couch. In front of her stood a hunched old woman. It was none other than Nanny Gui.

"You know what will happen tonight. If it succeeds, you will naturally be rewarded. If it doesn't..." Ren Wanyun snorted. "You don't need me to remind you of the consequences."

When she spoke, she was no longer as amiable as usual. Her gaze was really cold.

Nanny Gui smiled obsequiously and said, "Madam, don't worry. I'll take care of everything. I think everything will go smoothly tonight."

Only then did Ren Wanyun's expression soften. She said, "Of course I trust you. After all, you're the closest person to Fifth Miss. We're doing this for the sake of the Shen family. When Fifth Miss becomes sensible in the future, she will naturally know that you're doing this for her own good and will treat you well."

Nanny Gui nodded in agreement, but she felt disdain in her heart. When Shen Miao found out about this in the future, it would be strange if she didn't hate her to death. At the thought of what was going to happen tonight, Nanny Gui couldn't help but feel a little frightened. She didn't expect Old Madam Shen, who was usually amiable, to think of such a vicious method. After all, if this happened to any unmarried woman, she would suffer for the rest of her life.

The next moment, she saw Ren Wanyun give Caiju a look. Caiju smiled and took a sachet over. She stuffed the sachet into Nanny Gui's hand and said with a smile, "Thank you in advance, Nanny Gui."

Nanny Gui grabbed the sachet and realized that it was quite heavy. She immediately smiled and said, "Madam, don't worry. I definitely won't disappoint you."

After saying a few more words, Nanny Gui stood up and left.

"Madam, are you really going to rest here tonight?" Xianglan asked, "After all, it's close to Fifth Miss's room."

"It's all right." Ren Wanyun waved her hand. "Tomorrow morning, do whatever I say. Perhaps when the general comes back, his daughter will be long gone. There's nothing to be afraid of." She smiled fiercely. "Shen Miao, it's your fault for getting in my daughter's way."

Chapter 77: Dark Moon, Wind, and Night

In the mountains of Wolong Temple, when the sky was getting dark in the evening, it started to rain. The rain brought a chill. Gu Yu closed the window and looked at Shen Miao. "Miss, be careful not to catch a cold."

Jingzhe put on a cloak for Shen Miao and said worriedly, "It's not easy to walk on the mountain path. If it rains tonight, I wonder if we can set off tomorrow morning after offering incense. We might have to rest here for another day."

"It's not all that bad to stay here one more day." Gu Yu smiled and said, "The scenery here is very good, and it is very quiet. It's better than..." She swallowed the rest of her words.

Shen Miao sat at the table and played chess. Now, she liked to play chess more and more. Unfortunately, the servant girls around her didn't know how to play, so she always played alone. Occasionally, Gu Yu and Jingzhe would find it strange. When their Miss played alone, she would sometimes show some strange expressions, making people feel a chill down their spines.

The door was pushed open, and Nanny Gui walked in with a smile. She held some food in her hand and said with a smile, "Miss, this is the vegetarian food of the temple. Although it's all vegetarian, it is not bad. I even went to get a bowl of crystal osmanthus soup. The first and second miss have already tasted it and said it tasted good."

"Oh, leave it there," Shen Miao said indifferently.

"Miss, you'd better eat it while it's hot. It won't taste good if it's cold." Nanny Gui picked up the bowl and was about to hand it to Shen Miao.

"Nanny, what's the hurry?" Jingzhe took the porcelain bowl from Nanny Gui's hand and said with a smile, "Didn't Miss tell you to leave it on the table? She is feeling a little uncomfortable and will eat it later."

Nanny Gui was a little angry, but when she saw that Shen Miao did not seem to be angry with Jingzhe for interrupting, she gritted her teeth. In the past, Shen Miao had always listened to Nanny Gui more than she did to the other maids. If Nanny Gui got into an argument with the girls, Shen Miao would definitely punish the girls first.

Just as she was deep in thought, she suddenly heard Shen Miao say, "Nanny has been with me for 14 years, right?"

Nanny Gui's heart skipped a beat as she looked at Shen Miao. Coincidentally, Shen Miao also looked over. Her clear eyes were as innocent as ever. Nanny Gui was in a daze.

In the blink of an eye, the baby had grown into a fair girl. Nanny Gui sighed in her heart. Back then, Shen Xin and his wife were on the battlefield all year round and asked her to take good care of Shen Miao. Since then, fourteen years had passed.

“Nanny has been close to me since I was young.” Shen Miao said softly, “I remember one night, I had a fever and it was raining outside. Nanny was worried and ran out to look for a doctor. In the end, you slipped on the way and broke your head, but you endured the pain and insisted on looking for a doctor for me.”

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Nanny Gui was stunned and her expression softened. “Miss, you still remember that.”

“Of course I remember. I’ve been with you for more than ten years. I didn’t even spend so much time with my parents. I already treat you as my family.”

“Miss, you flatter me.” Nanny Gui sighed in her heart. She did not expect Shen Miao, who had been cold to her recently, to suddenly be so close to her today. As she sighed, she felt sorry for Shen Miao. Nanny Gui wasn’t always a bad person. When Shen Xin and his wife made her Shen Miao’s nanny, Nanny Gui’s son was not married yet and she did not have a grandson. At that time, she naturally treated Shen Miao as her granddaughter. There were times when she treated Shen Miao sincerely, but... people were selfish. After all, Shen Miao was not her biological granddaughter, and the second branch also promised that if she succeeded, her son and his family wouldn’t have to worry about money for the rest of their life.

On the other hand, Shen Miao couldn’t help her at all. Nanny Gui shook her head and still said with a smile, “Miss, it’s cold at night. It’s better to eat and rest early. When you’re tired, light an incense stick and sleep. Tomorrow morning, you can pray for your parents.”

“Thank you for your concern, Nanny.” Shen Miao smiled, but her smile seemed to have something in it. She said, “Nanny, you can leave. I’ll eat later.”

Nanny Gui wanted to stay for a while longer, but seeing that Shen Miao was chasing her away, she could only leave awkwardly. After she left the room, she walked to the window to eavesdrop.

A moment later, Gu Yu said, “Miss, the food is getting cold.”

“Set the table.”

Immediately after, there was the sound of utensils being put on the table and someone sitting down to eat. Jingzhe asked, “Miss, do you think this soup is good?”

“Not bad.” Shen Miao said, “It suits my taste very well.”

“Then eat more,” Gu Yu said with a smile.

After listening for a while, Shen Miao seemed to have finished eating. The sound of dishes being cleared was heard in the room, and Gu Yu walked out with a food basket. Jingzhe said, “Miss, do you still want to read for a while?”

“I’m a little tired. Go and light the incense,” Shen Miao said in a sleepy voice.

Nanny Gui stood up and heaved a deep sigh of relief. She turned to look at the window again and walked out of the courtyard. When she was out of the courtyard, she couldn't help but turn around and mutter, "Miss, don't blame me. If Second Madam wants to deal with you, no one can stop her."

When Nanny Gui left, she didn't notice that a man was staring at her back. He looked angrily at Nanny Gui's back as she left in a hurry.

In the house, Jingzhe looked at Shen Miao worriedly. "Miss, Gu Yu has already gone out. I still don't understand what you want to do."

For some reason, Jingzhe felt a little uneasy, as if something was about to happen in this quiet mountain. She asked, "Miss, is Nanny Gui going to do something harmful to you so that you have to put on a show just now?" Jingzhe asked nervously.

Shen Miao looked at the burning incense stick in a daze. The soft crackling sound it made formed a contrast with the dripping rain outside.

Pretending to eat and lighting incense were just a temporary solution. As for why she said that to Nanny Gui, it was not because she was soft-hearted.

Once she took the path of revenge, there was no coming back. Evil people were never worthy of mercy just like the bunch of consorts she dealt with in the herem.

She closed her eyes gently.

"Miss, what do you want to do now?" Seeing that Shen Miao did not answer her, Jingzhe had no choice but to change the topic.

"Waiting."

"Waiting for what?"

The girl's eyelashes fluttered and her lips curled up.

"When the moon is dark and the wind is strong."

Chapter 78: Uninvited Guests (1)

The sky gradually darkened. In the temple, the monk who rang the bell finished the last bell. The sky was as dark as ink, and the rain was hitting the bushes, emitting a fragrant soil smell.

Shen Yue sat at the table and put down the book in her hand. She rubbed her eyes and seemed to be a little sleepy. The maid beside her asked, "Miss, are you going to rest?"

Shen Yue did not speak and opened the window. The person living next door was Shen Qing. Shen Qing's room was not far from hers and was still lit.

"Second Miss, do you want to sleep with First Miss?" The maid asked hesitantly.

"No." Shen Yue turned around in disgust. "Go and close the courtyard door."

On the other side, in Shen Qing's room, Shen Qing was playing with the things in her hand. She yawned lazily and looked outside. "It's already so late," she stood up, saying, "I should probably rest."

When she passed by the table, she suddenly saw a unique incense burner and an incense stick. Shen Qing picked it up and smelled it. She felt that it was fragrant and said, "Light this incense stick too."

After a while, the lights in the room went out.

Everything fell silent. It was quiet at night in the temple deep in the mountains. Other than the sound of birds chirping and insects, there was only the crisp sound of rain hitting the tiles and dripping down the roof.

In the extreme silence, the lights of the rooms in the north pavilion were quietly extinguished.

In the darkness, there seemed to be the sound of someone's footsteps approaching. At this moment, if someone passed by, they would see a girl in purple sitting at the table by the window. Her face was cold and expressionless, and only her eyes were clear in the night.

There seemed to be some movements on the tiles of the roof. Gu Yu and Jingzhe, who were standing behind Shen Miao, looked up at the same time and were immediately vigilant.

A moment later, a meow came from outside the window.

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The two of them heaved a sigh of relief.

However, before they could feel relieved, they heard hurried footsteps again. Then, the window was opened and a figure jumped in.

"Miss, it's me, Mo Qing," the person said softly.

Only then did Gu Yu and Jingzhe heave a sigh of relief. Jingzhe lit a thin candle, afraid that the light would shine outside. At first glance, they were very surprised to see that there was someone on Mo Qing's back. It was none other than Shen Qing.

At this moment, Shen Qing's eyes were tightly shut, looking like she was in a deep sleep. Jingzhe and Gu Yu were both terrified, but Shen Miao glanced at Shen Qing and said indifferently, "You did well."

Mo Qing looked a little embarrassed. This was the first time he had done such a thing. He did not know what Shen Miao was planning to do. He only thought that it was probably because Shen Miao was unsatisfied with the room she lived in and wanted to change it secretly in the middle of the night. However, if he was careless and was found out, he would be treated as a rapist.

Fortunately, there were only two guards outside Shen Qing and Shen Yue's house. Before that, he followed Shen Miao's instructions and mixed something into Shen Qing's incense to make her sleep soundly.

"Carry her to the bed," Shen Miao said.

Chapter 79: Uninvited Guests (2)

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Mo Qing did as he was told. After some thought, he pulled the blanket over Shen Qing. Even at this moment, Mo Qing still did not understand what Shen Miao was trying to do.

"Miss, now we..." Gu Yu asked tentatively. In this room, probably no one except Shen Miao knew what she wanted to do. Mo Qing thought that Shen Miao was just playing around in a fit of anger, but Jingzhe and Gu Yu could vaguely tell that she was not. Shen Miao was no longer the type to get angry just because the room was not comfortable. Moreover, she carried Shen Miao out in the middle of the night. If it was just for this matter, she would be making a mountain out of a molehill.

"Let's go." Shen Miao glanced at the person on the bed.

"Go?" Gu Yu was stunned. "Where are we going?"

"To my sister's room, of course."

Mo Qing sighed in his heart. She was indeed just angry about not having a good room. He was a little unhappy with Shen Miao. He did not expect that Shen Miao was so vengeful despite looking calm on the surface. Just as he was thinking, his expression suddenly changed and he said in a low voice, "Who is it?"

This time, Gu Yu and Jingzhe panicked.

"Did anyone see you when you came just now?" Shen Miao's expression darkened.

"I'll go out and take a look first." Mo Qing nervously drew the sword. However, just as he walked to the door, he saw a figure flash past the window. Because he did not want to cause a commotion, Mo Qing shouted in a low voice, "Who is it?"

The man in black easily dodged Mo Qing's sword. It was unknown what kind of movement technique he used, but he stepped on the windowsill and flew in like a swallow. As soon as he entered the room, he suddenly turned around. Before Mo Qing could react, the man dodged to the side and easily snatched the sword from Mo Qing's hand. The next moment, the sword was put to Mo Qing's neck.

The sudden change stunned everyone. Shen Miao was also a little surprised. Since Mo Qing's martial arts could get him the position of the commander of the guards, he was naturally not weak. Back then, with his martial arts, he protected Shen Miao in the State of Qin for many years. Now, with just one move, his sword was snatched away by the man in black.

Mo Qing probably did not expect the other party to be so much better than him. He seemed to be ashamed, but he was more worried about Shen Miao's safety. He said, "I have no grudge with you. Why did you do this?"

Apart from the monk, there were only guards of the Shen family in the temple tonight. However, none of the guards of the Shen family had such an advanced movement technique. Mo Qing was surprised. Could there be someone else in the Wolong Temple?

The other party had no intention of letting go. Shen Miao found a lighter and lit the candle that was about to be extinguished.

The man in black did not expect someone to suddenly light up a candle. Without even trying to hide it, he subconsciously revealed a murderous look.

However, when the candle was lit, nothing in the room could be hidden. Under Shen Miao's cold gaze, a trace of surprise flashed across the person's handsome face. Then, he frowned and said coldly, "Shen Miao from the Shen family?"

"Can you let go of my guard?" Shen Miao's voice was colder than the autumn rain outside. "Young Master Xie."

Chapter 80: Meeting the Young Marquis at Night (1)

The person standing opposite her was none other than Xie Jingxing.

Under the dim light, his face was as handsome as a painting, but he was frowning tightly. He looked like a different person.

Jingzhe and Gu Yu had seen Xie Jingxing a few times and naturally knew who he was. In surprise, they couldn't help but step forth to protect Shen Miao.

This was the first time Mo Qing had seen Xie Jingxing. He did not know who Xie Jingxing was, but from Shen Miao's words, he knew that the two of them knew each other. Xie Jingxing stared at Shen Miao and thought for a moment before smiling. He let go and threw the sword back to Mo Qing.

He lazily retreated to the door and crossed his arms. "Shen girl, we met again. Are we fated to meet each other?"

Shen Miao ignored him and only instructed Mo Qing and the two girls, "Leave quickly."

Jingzhe and Gu Yu glanced at Xie Jingxing and nodded. Just as they were about to leave, they saw Shen Miao say to them, "You guys go first. I'll catch up with you later."

In the dark, Gu Yu saw the candle flickering lightly. She called out in a panic, "Miss..."

"Go!" Shen Miao said. Her order was short and firm. Gu Yu trembled slightly. Mo Qing shook his head and jumped out of the window with a girl in each hand.

Xie Jingxing was still watching her with interest. Shen Miao fumbled to the table and finally found the incense burner. She picked up the incense on the table and lit it before leaving the room.

Just as she was about to move, she saw Xie Jingxing frown. He suddenly flicked his finger, and the candle was extinguished. In the darkness, a figure suddenly flashed in front of Shen Miao and gently grabbed her waist. Before Shen Miao could react, she felt like she had fallen into a gentle embrace. The person hugged her and rolled under the bed with her.

"You..." Shen Miao was shocked and angry.

Xie Jingxing put a finger to her lips and murmured, "Someone is coming in."

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Shen Miao froze when she heard footsteps in the room.

She did not expect him to come so quickly.

Fortunately, the people in the room did not light up the candle. However, this was what she expected. She knew he liked excitement and wanted to do nasty things in the darkness.

Someone outside said, "Your Highness, it's all arranged."

"You guys can leave. Guard outside. Don't disturb me," a man said huskily. Shen Miao's gaze darkened. It was indeed Prince Yu.

"Shen Xin, Shen Xin..." Prince Yu's voice was filled with smugness and a little perverted excitement. "I want to have a taste of your daughter."

Footsteps approached the bed.

Shen Miao gradually clenched her fists.

Xie Jingxing lowered his head slightly. Because of the posture, his chin was pressed against Shen Miao's head. He could smell the fragrance of the girl's hair. In the darkness, he could not see Shen Miao's expression but he could tell from Shen Miao's tensed body that she was angry.

The sound of clothes tearing could be heard on the bed. Prince Yu's voice was sinister, and he kept saying nasty things. Shen Qing seemed to have regained some of her senses and resisted slightly. However, her voice was soft, as if she was welcoming him rather than resisting him.

The air was filled with a sex-inducing smell. The smell gradually spread, carrying the fragrance of orchids.

Shen Miao gradually felt that something was wrong. Her heart skipped a beat. Just now, before she left, she lit the incense that contained the aphrodisiac. Now, she had reaped what she sowed. She had never encountered such a situation before, so she couldn't help but vent her anger on the uninvited guest, Xie Jingxing. If not for his sudden appearance, she would have already left.