

Venomous 891

Chapter 891 Aristocratic Family (2)

Consort Jing sneered. "Sister, you're still so glib-tongued. It seems like you trust Princess Consort Rui very much and have decided to side with her."

Empress Xiande did not comment.

"But there is only so much you can do." Consort Jing suddenly smiled. "You can help her for a while, but you can't help her for the rest of her life. Prince Rui won't just have one woman. Even if my fourth sister doesn't have the luck to marry him, someone will." Looking at Empress Xiande's face, Consort Jing said, "His Majesty doesn't seem to like Princess Consort Rui very much."

Empress Xiande said, "Prince Rui's matter is not something the two of us can interfere in. He knows what to do."

"I don't dare to interfere." Consort Jing smiled. "I just want to give you a piece of advice. You're not a Bodhisattva. Even if you're so kind-hearted that you want to help everyone, you don't have the ability." With that, she seemed to have regained her confidence. She raised her head proudly and left with the maid.

The gentle smile on Empress Xiande's lips gradually disappeared, and a trace of worry flashed across her eyes.

In the carriage, Shen Miao asked, "What did the emperor say to you?"

"Some trivial matters in the imperial court," Xie Jingxing said.

Shen Miao knew that if it was really a trivial matter, Emperor Yong Le would not specially summon Xie Jingxing. Without thinking, she could guess that it must be related to her. Today, Emperor Yong Le's attitude had already shown that he did not like Shen Miao, nor did he like Xie Jingxing to think highly of her. Perhaps it was because Shen Miao's identity was too sensitive, or perhaps... Emperor Yong Le had found someone better for Xie Jingxing.

Seeing that Shen Miao did not speak, Xie Jingxing turned around and pinched her face. "But you've impressed me today. I haven't seen you so fierce in a long time."

"Fierce?" Shen Miao asked.

Xie Jingxing sighed and said as if he was reminiscing, "Back then, when I saw you in the Wolong temple in Ming Qi, you struck me as a fierce woman. I was wondering which young master would be unlucky enough to marry such a shrew in the future."

Shen Miao looked at him calmly. "Do you want to quarrel?"

Xie Jingxing smiled and said, "That's right. This is the right attitude of the Xie family."

After being interrupted by him, Shen Miao's displeasure with Xie Jingxing hiding what Emperor Yong Le said disappeared. She said, "It's fine if you don't tell me what the emperor told you, but who is Consort

Jing? The emperor seems to dote on her very much, but..." She deliberated over her words." I don't think there's anything special about her."

Xie Jingxing said, "Consort Jing is the eldest daughter of General Lu. General Lu... is equivalent to your father."

Shen Miao raised an eyebrow. So it was a family with military power. No wonder Emperor Yong Le was especially tolerant of her.

"The Daliang Dynasty is different from Ming Qi. Ming Qi has very few generals. The Shen family and the Xie family each have half of the military power. The Daliang Dynasty has many generals, among whom, General Lu is considered the most powerful. It's precisely because of this... that he's a little impudent lately." At this point, a trace of coldness flashed across Xie Jingxing's eyes.

"Just by looking at Consort Jing's attitude in the harem, I can tell what kind of status the Lu family has in Long Ye," Shen Miao said. The women in the harem often represented the family behind them. The more influential a family was, the more fearless they were. For example, in her previous life, if not for the Shen family backing her, Fu Xiuyi would probably not even be bothered to look at her.

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Xie Jingxing praised, "That's right. Consort Jing is arrogant and willful, and the Lu family is impudent. My brother wants to suppress them, but he has to do it slowly."

"Can't we keep them in check?" Shen Miao asked.

Xie Jingxing shook his head. "The Lu family served the late emperor. Most of the people left behind by the late emperor have been cleaned up by my brother. Apart from the two families, the Lu family, which is a military family, and the Ye family, which is an official family. The two families have a deep foundation. They have many henchmen. If we want to uproot them, we will suffer a backlash. My brother can't act rashly. They know this very well, so they don't have any scruples."

Shen Miao frowned. Xie Jingxing and Emperor Yong Le were biological brothers, and the late emperor was their father. Why did Xie Jingxing call him "the late emperor" instead of "Father"? Moreover, as Xie Jingxing said, the Lu and Ye families were both the late emperor's people. Emperor Yong Le was the rightful successor to the throne, so these elders should do their best to assist him. Why did it seem like the Lu and Ye families were ambitious, and Emperor Yong Le wanted to eradicate them.

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Could it be that the late emperor did not want to see Emperor Yong Le govern the country? Or did the Lu and Ye families have a change of heart after the late emperor died?

Shen Miao was sensitive enough to notice this.

Suddenly, she felt that it was a little ironic. In Ming Qi, the Shen family and the Xie family were loyal and honest. However, the royal family was paranoid and tried their best to wipe them out. When it came to the Daliang Dynasty, the situation was completely reversed. The officials were treacherous, but the royal family could only compromise and deal with them slowly.

"Which family is Her Majesty from?" Shen Miao asked.

"She's from the Ke family." Xie Jingxing said, "The Ke family is a family of historians."

Shen Miao was stunned. "Historian families don't have real power. The emperor is willing to marry a girl from a historian family and even made her the empress. It's obvious that he loves the empress very much."

Xie Jingxing did not comment.

"But..." She continued, "Since he has the empress in his heart, why did he allow Consort Jing to be disrespectful to her? Since Consort Jing dares to be disrespectful to the empress, it's obvious that she's permitted to do it." If Emperor Yong Le doted on the empress, no matter how arrogant Consort Jing was, she would not dare to be disrespectful to the empress. However, since Consort Jing dared to argue with the empress without any manners, it was obvious that she knew that Emperor Yong Le would not blame her for this.

Since he married her not for power, why didn't he protect her?

Xie Jingxing smiled faintly. "My brother is different from me." He patted her head. "My sister-in-law is also different from you."

Shen Miao waved his hand away and said, "So the fourth miss of the Lu family is in love with you?"

Xie Jingxing was stunned for a moment before smiling. "Why are you still jealous?"

"But there's something strange." Shen Miao continued, as if she was talking to herself, "If the Lu family wants to control the imperial court or show their ambition, they've already sent a daughter to the palace, and they've already achieved their goal. Why would they send another girl over?" Shen Miao looked at him. "Even if they want to send a girl over, why should they give her to you? You're just Prince Rui, not the emperor. The daughter of the Lu family doesn't have to control all the royal brothers, right?"

She was stunned when she looked up. Xie Jingxing looked at her deeply, his gaze unreadable. Before she could ask, Xie Jingxing had already pulled her forward. He wrapped his arms around her waist and buried his head in Shen Miao's shoulder, half hugging her.

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His low voice came from beside her ear. "If you continue, I'll soon have no secrets from you."

Secret? Shen Miao's heart skipped a beat. Was she right about something?

"You still have secrets from me?" she asked deliberately.

"Don't you have secrets from me too?" Xie Jingxing said.

She froze. Xie Jingxing let go and stared into her eyes. The corners of his mouth curled up, but his gaze was locked on her, making her unable to breathe.

He said, "Why don't we trade? My secret for yours?"

Shen Miao's heart skipped a beat, but she quickly reacted and turned around. "I don't want to know your secret."

Xie Jingxing nodded and smiled. "Anyway, you have the ability to find out yourself, right?"

Shen Miao turned around and looked at him in silence.

Xie Jingxing said lazily, "You have the ability to find out about my secrets. Do you think I have the ability to find out about your secrets too?"

Shen Miao instantly panicked.

She had secrets from her previous life. However, she did not have the courage to tell anyone, not even Shen Qiu, Shen Xin, and Luo Xueyan.

Not to mention whether people would think that she was crazy if she laid bare her heart, she was just afraid that no one would believe her, and she was even more afraid that people would look at her strangely.

Would they blame her for being too stupid and weak and causing the death of her children and family? Shen Miao did not dare to try.

Then if Xie Jingxing found out that she had been married before and was Fu Xiuyi's wife, what would he think of her?

Shen Miao used to think that she didn't care what others thought of her, but at this moment, she suddenly felt a little afraid. She didn't want Xie Jingxing to treat her like an enemy.

Xie Jingxing saw her strange expression. His eyes darkened, but he sighed and hugged her again.

"I don't like to force you. If you don't want anyone to know, I won't ask," he said.

"But don't make me wait too long."

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After returning home, Xie Jingxing quickly went out again. He always had a lot of things to do, so Shen Miao did not ask further. The situation of the Lu and Ye families that Xie Jingxing explained to her in the carriage made her realize that the Daliang Dynasty was essentially no different from Ming Qi. Under the harmony and peace, there were dangers lurking in every corner, even more so than Ming Qi precisely because it was more powerful.

Emperor Yong Le and Xie Jingxing's attitude towards their father was also very strange. Shen Miao remembered that when she first met Xie Jingxing in Ming Qi, he seemed to be searching for something. In the secret room of Prince Yu's mansion, Xie Jingxing and Gao Yang seemed to have obtained something.

But what exactly was it?

Shen Miao originally thought that it was a map that showed the layout of Ming Qi's capital, but she thought that such a map would probably not be placed in the secret room of Prince Yu's mansion. As for what it was, she did not know.

As she thought about it, she thought of something else.

Pei Lang followed them all the way to the Daliang Dynasty to run away from Fu Xiuyi. He also brought Liu Ying along. Liu Ying could settle down anywhere, but Pei Lang aimed high and would probably not be satisfied with the status quo. Originally, he was forced to work for Shen Miao because of Liu Ying. However, now, Shen Miao had no reason to ask Pei Lang to do anything for her.

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In the end, Shen Miao stood up and walked out of the room, deciding to talk to Pei Lang face to face.

Pei Lang was arranged to stay in the room on the east side of Prince Rui's mansion. The environment was not bad, and Pei Lang was treated quite well.

When Shen Miao arrived, Pei Lang was sitting in the courtyard and playing chess. Two maids in green stood beside him. The two of them were pouring tea for Pei Lang from time to time. Occasionally, their gazes would land on Pei Lang. Although they had been restraining themselves, their eyes still revealed admiration.

The sight of which made Shen Miao stop in her tracks and look from afar, thinking about what happened in her previous life.

In her previous life, Pei Lang was extremely talented. In the end, after Fu Xiuyi ascended the throne, he supported Pei Lang and made him the state preceptor. Pei Lang was handsome and lofty, looking like a sage. The court officials all knew that he was trusted by Fu Xiuyi and did not dare to be his enemy. Pei Lang was considered very famous throughout Ming Qi.

Fu Xiuyi once tried to matchmake him with the daughter of a minister, but Pei Lang rejected it. Fu Xiuyi thought that Pei Lang probably had someone he liked, so he let him be. Before Shen Miao went to the State of Qin to be a hostage, she was quite close to Pei Lang and had once asked him if he had a girl he liked.

What was Pei Lang's answer at that time?

Shen Miao looked a little dazed.

Pei Lang answered, "Love is not what I'm pursuing." Pei Lang was a very rational person, so much so that when he was helping Fu Xiuyi make a decision, he would eliminate any possibility of being emotional to ensure that nothing would go wrong.

Speaking of which, until Shen Miao died in her previous life, Pei Lang had always been alone and had never had a relationship with women.

As Shen Miao was thinking, the maid beside Pei Lang who was fanning him to chase away the flies saw Shen Miao. She was first stunned, then she quickly bowed and said, "Greetings, Princess Consort."

The other maid in green quickly bowed respectfully.

Pei Lang looked up and saw Shen Miao. Shen Miao smiled and walked over, saying to the two maids in green, "You can leave."

The maids looked at Pei Lang with a troubled expression. Pei Lang waved his hand, and the two maids left. Shen Miao looked at the backs of the two of them and asked, "It's rare to see Mr. Pei together with women."

The way the two maids looked at Pei Lang was filled with admiration.

Pei Lang shook his head and smiled bitterly, but he did not refute. These two maids were sent to him by Prince Rui. If it were in the past, Pei Lang would definitely think of a way to chase them away and not keep them by his side. However, this was not Ming Qi, and they were not his servants. He did not know if it was Xie Jingxing's idea, but no matter how much he disliked them, he could only endure having them around.

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However, seeing that Shen Miao did not seem to be jealous at all, Pei Lang couldn't help but feel a little sad.

"Sir, I had no choice but to bring you to the Daliang Dynasty." Shen Miao said, "Now that we're here, what are your plans for the future?" She paused for a moment. "Back then, I forced you to do what you didn't want to do. I really feel guilty for causing you to leave your country. If you want to leave, that's fine."

Hearing this, Pei Lang looked at Shen Miao in surprise.

All along, when Shen Miao faced him, for some reason, she always behaved and spoke in a righteous manner. From the beginning, when she threatened Pei Lang with Liu Ying, Pei Lang had vaguely sensed that Shen Miao was hostile to him, but it was not just hostility. Pei Lang had also investigated carefully because he was puzzled, but in the end, he found nothing.

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At this moment, when Shen Miao faced him, her hostility was gone. It was as if she had let go of something. She was very calm, but it made Pei Lang a little disappointed. It was as if something special had disappeared as Shen Miao let go of something.

Shen Miao looked at Pei Lang and felt a little emotional.

She had always defined Pei Lang as someone who owed her a lot. However, that day, when Xie Jingxing said that Pei Lang was locked up in Fu Xiuyi's dungeon and tortured but did not betray her, Shen Miao changed her opinion about Pei Lang. Shen Miao knew how ruthless Fu Xiuyi was when it came to punishing the traitors. Under such circumstances, Pei Lang did not yield. Shen Miao didn't know how she should feel about that.

Now that she thought about it, the reason why she hated Pei Lang and was angry with him was because Pei Lang had been on Fu Xiuyi's side from the beginning to the end. When Fu Xiuyi dealt with the Shen family, Pei Lang chose to stand by and do nothing. Even when the crown prince was deposed, he did not say a word for Fu Ming. When Wanyu was married off to Xiongnu, he did not try to stop it either.

However, in this world, no one was obliged to help another person. Pei Lang's relationship with her was not to the extent where he would risk his life to help her.

In this life, Pei Lang was no longer Fu Xiuyi's man. He had even turned against Fu Xiuyi and had no reason to pledge loyalty to him again. Therefore, Shen Miao let go of the hostility.

Revenge was something that she had to rely on herself. Hatred or resentment was not going to help.

Pei Lang suppressed the disappointment in his heart and said, "What are your plans for the future?"

Shen Miao was stunned. "Me?"

Pei Lang's gaze suddenly became sharp as he said, "Prince Rui is not as invincible as he looks on the surface. I think a storm is brewing in the Daliang Dynasty."

He looked at Shen Miao. "Even if the Daliang Dynasty has nothing to do with me and Prince Rui has a way to protect himself, your path might not be smooth."

Shen Miao frowned slightly. "That's true. But why are you telling me this..."

"I can help you," Pei Lang said.

Shen Miao asked, "Sir?"

"Although I'm not considered a talent in statecraft, I can still do my best. Liu Ying and I are both relying on you to gain a foothold in the Daliang Dynasty now. The better your life is and the more stable your position is, the better our lives will be. Even if it's for my own sake, I have to help you. I want to stay in Prince Rui's mansion." He paused. "If I can also participate in the state affairs of the Daliang Dynasty or give counsel on your matters when needed, it might be better."

After a moment of silence, Shen Miao said, "Sir, think about it carefully. You don't owe me anything. There's no need for you to be on the same boat with me. You don't have to rely on me. With your ability, you can live a good life. You're not a person who chases fame and fortune."

Pei Lang smiled bitterly in his heart. Shen Miao seemed to know him very well, even better than he himself.

He said, "This is my choice."

Shen Miao took a deep breath. Just as she was about to speak, she saw Jingzhe walk in with an exquisite invitation. She said, "Madam, the invitation to the Summer Banquet has been sent over. It's said that it's an invitation to Princess Consort Rui. I accepted it. Madam, take a look."

As soon as Shen Miao arrived at the Daliang Dynasty, someone sent an invitation. This would be the first time she would appear in the circle of noble ladies in Long Ye. The other party clearly had ulterior motives.

She asked, "Who sent the invitation?"

"It's from Mrs. Lu, the wife of General Lu."

Shen Miao paused.

The Ye family and the Lu family seemed to have an extremely subtle relationship with the royal family of the Daliang Dynasty.

They really did not come with good intentions.

Chapter 896 Wife and Concubine (1)

That night, when Xie Jingxing returned, Shen Miao told Xie Jingxing about the invitation. Xie Jingxing told Shen Miao that if she did not want to go, she could decline. Although the Lu and Ye families were arrogant, they did not dare to really fall out with Prince Rui now. In other words, Shen Miao had the right to refuse.

However, Shen Miao did not want to refuse. She knew nothing about the Daliang Dynasty now, so she could take this opportunity to understand more about it.

Xie Jingxing naturally wouldn't stop Shen Miao from making the decision. After they discussed for a while, Shen Miao got someone to reply to the invitation and said that she would be there on time.

Two days later, it was the day of the Summer Banquet.

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Shen Miao woke up early. When it was time for breakfast, Xie Jingxing had already gone out. It seemed that after returning to the Daliang Dynasty, he was very busy every day. He went out early in the day and returned home at night. Shen Miao knew that Long Ye was not as peaceful as it looked on the surface.

Jingzhe combed Shen Miao's hair. After Shen Miao came to the Daliang Dynasty, she still used her personal maids. There were very few women in Prince Rui's mansion. Apart from the female cooks and a few nannies, there were all men. She heard from Uncle Tang that after Xie Jingxing returned to the Daliang Dynasty two years ago and was conferred the title of Prince, he caught a few spies dressed as maids at home. He probably felt that if there were too many women, it would be easier for some people with ill intentions to take advantage of him. In the end, he dismissed all of them.

However, it was precisely because of this that the mansion was like an impregnable wall. For so long, the people outside could not find a way in.

Gu Yu said, "Madam, this is the first time you're attending a banquet in Long Ye. You have to dress up beautifully. When others see you like this, they won't dare to disrespect you. You will definitely make Ming Qi proud."

Xie Jingxing was considered the most outstanding among the young men in Long Le. When Jingzhe and Gu Yu went out to buy things, they would occasionally hear people saying that Shen Miao was not worthy of being Prince Rui's wife. Hearing this, Jingzhe and Gu Yu were extremely indignant. Even in the capital of Ming Qi, Shen Miao was one of the top young ladies. Not only was she smart, but she was also kind. Her aura was not inferior to a princess. How was she not worthy?

Gu Yu thought that if Shen Miao stunned everyone at the banquet this time, those people would stop talking nonsense.

"It doesn't bother me." Shen Miao laughed. "They belittle me just to make themselves feel better, but I'm not affected."

"Madam, Gu Yu is right." As Jingzhe picked a hairpin for Shen Miao in the jewelry box, she said, "We can't let them look down on us."

As they spoke, Uncle Tang knocked on the door outside. Shen Miao gestured for him to come in and saw a young girl following behind Uncle Tang. She looked a little younger than Shen Miao and was a little chubby. Perhaps because she was still young, people couldn't help but find her likable. Her eyes were smiling, and her lips were very wide. In an instant, Shen Miao thought of Su Minglang... However, it was a girl.

"Madam, you are going to the Summer Banquet today." Uncle Tang smiled and said, "Master instructed me to find some to be your guide. I brought Miss Ba Jiao. Take her as your maid. If you can't find the way, Miss Ba Jiao will tell you."

Shen Miao smiled. "Thank you, Uncle Tang."

Chapter 897 Wife and Concubine (2)

Uncle Tang said with a smile, "I originally thought that Madam wouldn't accept the invitation, but I didn't expect you to accept it. Madam, you're so bold. I'm impressed." Ordinary people would always be a little afraid when they were in a completely unfamiliar place.

"I'm just going to have a tea talk." Shen Miao said casually, "Why should I be afraid?"

Uncle Tang nodded. "That's right, that's right." He looked at Shen Miao with admiration and said a few more words before leaving.

Shen Miao looked at Ba Jiao. She was standing very upright and was smiling at her. Her expression was a little silly, but it made her look very cute. Today, Shen Miao was going to attend the Summer Banquet. It was indeed difficult for her to navigate her way without someone to guide her. If there was someone familiar with this place, it would save a lot of effort. Xie Jingxing was thoughtful. Suddenly, Shen Miao thought of something and looked at Ba Jiao. She asked, "I heard that there are no maids in this mansion. You..."

Apart from a few female cooks and nannies, there were only servants and guards in Prince Rui's mansion. Therefore, Jingzhe, Gu Yu, and the others Shen Miao brought were very popular in the mansion.

Ba Jiao smiled. "I'm not a maid from Prince Yu's mansion. I'm from the Black Feather Army and was specially transferred here to accompany Madam."

"Black Feather Army?" Shen Miao was stunned. She had once heard Xie Jingxing mention it vaguely. When they were in Ming Qi, this army had helped Xie Jingxing do many things. It seemed to be an army that Xie Jingxing had privately established. It seemed to be extremely powerful. However, since Xie Jingxing dared to use the people of Black Feather Army so openly, Emperor Yong Le should know something about it.

She asked, "Do you know martial arts?"

"I know how to kill people," Ba Jiao replied with a smile. Hearing this, Jingzhe and Gu Yu gasped. This girl, who was smiling innocently, was actually a trained assassin.

Shen Miao was satisfied. At least, with Ba Jiao around, she wouldn't be in danger at the banquet.

Shen Miao said, "In that case, follow me. Jingzhe, you stay in the mansion and clean up the storeroom with Bai Lu, Shuang Jiang, and the others. Gu Yu, you and Ba Jiao will set off with me."

Jingzhe had already prepared to go with Shen Miao, but she was suddenly told that she could not go. She felt very aggrieved and was quite unhappy with Ba Jiao, but she was afraid that Ba Jiao would kill her in a fit of anger, so she reluctantly reminded Ba Jiao to take good care of Shen Miao before leaving.

When everything was ready, Shen Miao got into the carriage and rushed to the Lu mansion where the banquet was held.

Long Ye was different from the capital. The Daliang Dynasty was closer to the east and had more sun. Even winter was not as cold as the capital, let alone summer. During May, the capital was still in spring, but in Long Ye, it was already early summer.

As the carriage drove, Shen Miao and Gu Yu lifted the curtain a little and looked out. They saw that the street was really crowded and lively.

Chapter 898 Wife and Concubine (3)

It was no wonder that the people of the small countries that were being attacked by the Daliang Dynasty would even open the city gate to welcome them. To the people, peace and prosperity were clearly more important than who the ruler was.

After walking for almost two hours, the carriage finally stopped. Ba Jiao lifted the curtain and said, "Madam, we're here."

Gu Yu and Ba Jiao helped Shen Miao out of the carriage and saw that there were already many carriages parked at the entrance of the Lu mansion, but there was no one to welcome them. Gu Yu was dumbfounded and said, "This... Why isn't anyone here to welcome us? Could it be that we've come to a wrong place?"

However, it did not look like they had come to a wrong place, because the door was not tightly shut, as if it was specially left open for them.

Shen Miao glanced at the door and asked Gu Yu, "What time does the banquet start?"

Gu Yu quickly took out the invitation and opened it. She said, "It's nine o'clock. It's not nine yet."

"I think only our invitation says it starts at nine," Shen Miao said indifferently.

Gu Yu said, "Madam, what do you mean?"

"There are carriages all over the entrance. Clearly, the guests have arrived long before us. There's no one at the door to welcome us, but they left the door open, knowing that we would definitely come. If I'm not wrong, on the invitations of others, it must be seven o'clock, but on our invitation, it's nine o'clock. They deliberately made us come late." After saying that, she smiled. It seemed that be it in Ming Qi or the Daliang Dynasty, these noble ladies were all the same.

Gu Yu was enlightened. Then, she said angrily, "But what good will it do them to tease us like this? They're going too far!"

Shen Miao's voice turned cold. "If we enter without being welcomed in, it will be considered rude. They will say that the Shen family from Ming Qi is uncivilized. If we don't enter, we will be disrespectful. If we leave, we will break the promise. They have all kinds of reasons to criticize us."

Ba Jiao asked, "Madam, are you still going in?"

"Absolutely." Shen Miao picked up her dress and was about to walk in.

"But Madam." Gu Yu asked in confusion, "If we go in, we'll be pointed at. Since it's wrong to go in, why do we have to go in?"

"Then let others make a mistake bigger than yours." Shen Miao smiled. "This way, no one will care about what mistake you made."

At this moment, the atmosphere in the hall of the Lu mansion was very harmonious. As a very famous general in Long Ye, the Lu family had an extremely high status, so the mansion was built grandly. Today, the Summer Banquet was personally held by Madam Lu, and the praises were endless.

Madam Lu was in her early forties this year, no longer considered young. When she was young, she was probably a beauty, but when she turned old, she looked thin and mean, less dignified. Even so, she still dressed extremely gorgeously, as if this could add a little charm to her.

However, when a woman was old, not only would gorgeous clothes not help her look young, but it would also make her wrinkled face stand out even more.

"Madam Lu, you're really lucky." A round-faced madam smiled and said ingratiatingly, "Consort Jing is doted on by His Majesty and is also so filial to you. His Majesty even specially sent a gift to you this time. It's enough to show how important Consort Jing is to His Majesty."

Chapter 899 Wife and Concubine (4)

Madam Lu was smug, but on the surface, she didn't show it.

Another short madam smiled and said, "Consort Jing is favored, and your second daughter is married to a commander. I heard that she's pregnant with twins recently. You are really lucky."

Madam Lu shook her head and said with a sigh, "But the other two children are giving me a headache."

The round-faced madam quickly said in an exaggerated manner, "Madam, why are you worried? The Third Young Master is talented and outstanding in martial arts at such a young age. I wonder which girl will be lucky enough to marry him in the future. As for Fourth Miss, there's no need to mention her. She's like an angel and knows Guqin, chess, calligraphy, and painting. Is there a need to worry about her?"

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"You flatter me." Madam Lu shook her head and smiled bitterly. "I'm not worried about my third son. It's only right for him to make a name for himself before settling down. But the marriage of my fourth daughter really gives me a headache..."

"Mother, you're making things up about me in front of other madams again!" A delicate female voice suddenly sounded. Everyone turned around and saw a young girl appear in the hall. This girl looked to be about 16 or 17 years old. She was wearing a light purple dress with butterfly patterns and a cherry-colored lotus flower. Her hair was tied into a bun and she had a butterfly-shaped pearl hairpin. With the red hairpin, she looked dazzling, like a graceful butterfly fairy walking on the grass in spring.

This was the fourth miss of the Lu family, Lu Wan'er.

Madam Lu rubbed her head lovingly and said, "I didn't make things up about you."

Lu Wan'er pouted and stopped talking. She stood in the hall, where there were other young ladies, but compared to her, they looked overshadowed.

Lu Wan'er looked around arrogantly and said, "Why isn't Miss Shen from Ming Qi here?"

Her voice was not low. When the madams and young ladies in the hall heard this, they immediately started whispering.

Lu Wan'er called Shen Miao "Miss Shen from Ming Qi" instead of Princess Consort Rui". That explained a lot. Back then, everyone said that the fourth miss of the Lu family was going to marry Prince Rui and be his princess consort. Lu Wan'er was also very satisfied with Prince Rui. Unexpectedly, Shen Miao appeared out of nowhere. The Lu family was unhappy, and Lu Wan'er was even more indignant.

Most of these madams were here to watch the show. Perhaps they wanted to build a good relationship with Lu Wan'er. That Miss Shen was now in the limelight, but she was not from Long Ye. Who knew how far she could go? Prince Rui was still young. It was only a matter of time before he married a concubine.

All in all, Miss Shen did not look like she would have a good ending.

Madam Lu smiled and said, "Maybe she was delayed by something on the way."

"How rude." Lu Wan'er said unhappily, "The other madams and ladies are all here on time, but she's late. Are there no rules in Ming Qi?"

As she spoke, a girl with a round face suddenly appeared outside. No one knew when she came in. The girl smiled and said, "Excuse me, is this the Summer Banquet?"

Madam Lu was stunned for a moment before saying with a smile, "That's right. Are you Princess Consort Rui?"

"I'm not." The girl said, "Princess Consort is here." As she spoke, she ran out and walked in again, holding a young girl.

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With the round-faced girl as a contrast, when the young girl walked in, everyone was stunned.

She was wearing a dress with a lotus and butterflies embroidered on it. It was not gorgeous, but it was not simple either. She only had a phoenix-shaped gem on her head, but it made her look noble.

This young girl had crescent eyebrows, almond-shaped eyes, a small and straight nose, a red mouth, and an extremely delicate face. She looked like a very gentle person, but with her chin slightly raised and her back straight, she walked over with a faint smile. Every step she took made people's hearts tremble. They couldn't help but look up at her, as if she was a royal.

Today, Princess Consort Rui and Fourth Miss Lu were both wearing purple dresses. Fourth Miss Lu's purple was light, and Princess Consort Rui's purple was dark. Young girls looked gentle and lively in light purple, but in dark purple, they looked old and unfashionable. However, today, Shen Miao's purple dress seemed to be tailor-made for her. She had a graceful beauty that was unparalleled. In comparison, Fourth Miss Lu's dress was like the one worn by the performer in a brothel.

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Lu Wan'er had always been used to being the center of attention. She did not expect someone to steal her thunder today. What was more, it was Shen Miao, who had snatched her position as the princess consort.

Madam Lu's eyes flashed and she smiled. "Princess Consort, you're finally here. The madams are all waiting for you."

Shen Miao smiled and said unhurriedly, "I didn't expect the madams to come so early. The invitation said that the banquet would start at nine o'clock. His Highness Prince Rui asked me to stay for breakfast. It's all His Highness's fault. I should be able to make it in time if I left at seven."

Madam Lu's heart skipped a beat. She did not expect Shen Miao to say it so openly. As expected, as soon as she said that, the surrounding madams looked at her differently.

Shen Miao was an outsider after all. Although those madams were always biased towards the Lu family, they still found it ridiculous that the Lu family would use such a childish trick. Madam Lu also felt a little regretful. She originally just wanted to invite Shen Miao over and intimidate her, but she couldn't stop Lu Wan'er from tampering with the invitation. When Shen Miao said that on the invitation, it was said that the banquet would start at nine, everyone present knew very well what the Lu family was up to and they found it funny.

If Shen Miao told Prince Rui about this later, how could a smart person like Prince Rui not understand? If he was unhappy with the Lu family because of this, the loss would be greater than the gain.

Lu Wan'er couldn't stand Shen Miao doing well. She sized up Shen Miao and said, "Princess Consort Rui, why did you come in without asking the servant to inform us?"

It was indeed considered rude to come in without asking the servant to inform the madam of the mansion in advance. Shen Miao looked at Lu Wan'er and smiled. "That's exactly what I am going to say. It's really a little dangerous for you to leave the door wide open." She smiled gently. "So I asked my guards to watch the door for you to prevent strange people from sneaking in."