

Indulgence 1011

Chapter 1011: Jinlian Tests

Matron Qin observed the situation with a slight furrow of her brow.

This Chunqiu...

No wonder Nalan Jinlian looked displeased.

She appeared respectful on the surface but was actually contemptuous and even scorned people.

"Chunqiu!" Matron Qin said sternly.

Chunqiu was startled and nervously muttered, "Matron!"

"This is the only time. If there is a next, it would be merciful to send you away. Otherwise..." Matron Qin glanced at the approaching Juan Ye, gave Chunqiu a look, and said no more.

"Matron!" Juan Ye curtsied towards Matron Qin.

It was said that Matron Qin was the young lady's nursemaid, so everyone in Qinglian Garden called her Matron. Even though she had become the Head Maid by the young lady's side, Juan Ye still dared not act rashly.

"Since the young lady has promoted you, serve her well from now on!"

"Yes!"

"Enter now!"

"Yes!"

Juan Ye entered the room, which was warm and toasty. Seeing Nalan Jinlian leaning on the Chaise Longue, she hesitated for a moment before softly saying, "Miss, the clay pot and the sieve are ready. Are we still going to Plum Garden?"

Nalan Jinlian opened her eyes, "Yes, why not go? Let's go!"

"Yes!"

Juan Ye went and called four other maids, all of whom had returned from the border town.

Chunqiu wanted to follow, but Nalan Jinlian smiled and said, "You stay in the courtyard, they will accompany me!"

Chunqiu's face turned pale immediately.

Nalan Jinlian gave her a glance but said nothing more, leading the five, including Juan Ye, out of Qinglian Garden to Plum Garden.

Without the meddling Chunqiu and the mysterious Chong Ling, the little maids, though brought from the border town, seemed proper enough.

Juan Ye, newly promoted to Head Maid, obeyed Nalan Jinlian in all things, believing everything she said was right, which greatly delighted Nalan Jinlian.

They gathered the delicate snow from the plum blossoms or picked vibrant blossoms to place in the sieve, intending to dry them later to make plum blossom cakes.

"Lianlian?"

Mrs. Xu softly called.

Nalan Jinlian turned, smiling mildly at Mrs. Xu, "Mother, are you also here to gather plum blossoms?"

"No, I went to Qinglian Garden to see you and learned you had come to the Plum Forest. Why not rest properly?" Mrs. Xu stepped forward, seeing the sweat on Nalan Jinlian's forehead, and quickly took a handkerchief to wipe it for her.

Nalan Jinlian laughed and leaned into Mrs. Xu's embrace.

Though Mrs. Xu's embrace was somewhat cool, Nalan Jinlian found it comfortable.

"Mother!"

"Hmm?"

"How about I sleep with you tonight?"

Mrs. Xu was taken aback, but her heart warmed immediately.

This child wasn't her own, yet she filled her with endless hope.

She embraced Nalan Jinlian from behind, "Alright, I'll have Matron Zhao tidy the bed later!"

The bed had traces of Nalan Bo's presence, and she didn't want Nalan Jinlian to pick up on it.

"How about you come to Qingjue Academy, Mother?"

Mrs. Xu chuckled, "Silly child, it's not customary for a mother to sleep in her daughter's courtyard. Just come over tonight, and we can cook a hotpot, chat while eating, and keep cozy and warm!"

Nalan Jinlian nodded eagerly.

"What a great idea, Mother!"

Mrs. Xu patted Nalan Jinlian's head, "Speaking of which, it's been days since we returned to the Imperial Capital, and I haven't taken you out yet. Once you're feeling better, we'll go out tomorrow. I'll buy you some jewelry and a few sets of pretty clothes. Fabric can't be skimped on either; we'll make several sets for the New Year!"

Even though the Marquis Residence had already instructed to have clothes made for Nalan Jinlian, Mrs. Xu still wanted to take her out for more things.

"Alright, but Mother, let's make it a deal. We'll leave early tomorrow and not just shop for jewelry and fabric. Let's also visit the Bookstore. The books in Qinglian Garden, I don't like any of them. Perhaps I never liked reading books before!"

Chapter 1012: Want to Go to the Study Room

Nalan Jinlian spoke casually, but Mrs. Xu felt alarmed listening to her.

She almost let it slip.

But thinking of herself and the possibility that she might be pregnant, she pursed her lips and said, "In the past, it was my fault as a mother; I was too busy quarreling with your father and neglected you. I will never do that again. You like reading books, so tomorrow we'll go to the bookstore and you can pick whatever you want!"

Nalan Jinlian nodded.

Her heart sank a little.

Judging from Mrs. Xu's behavior, she didn't seem like someone who would ignore her daughter just because of a quarrel, so there must be something fishy here.

But what that something was, Nalan Jinlian couldn't figure out for the moment.

"Alright!" Nalan Jinlian replied sweetly, and after a moment of thought, she said, "It would be great if I could visit the main study in the front courtyard!"

"It's not impossible to visit the main study!"

Hearing this, Nalan Jinlian's eyes lit up, and she asked eagerly, "Mother, do you have a way?"

"Go and ask your grandfather. If he agrees, you can go to the study in the front courtyard!"

Nalan Jinlian was suddenly enlightened.

"Thank you for reminding me, Mother!" She then turned to Juan Ye and said, "Go now and find out if Grandfather is at home. If he's gone out, when will he be back?"

She pointed to two maids, "You two, pick some blooming and charming plum blossoms!"

"If we have plum blossoms, how can we not have beautiful and exquisite plum vases?" Mrs. Xu reminded, and then said to Lian Qiao, "Go to my storeroom and look, I remember there are two White Jade Long-Necked Plum Vases, bring them to Lianlian!"

Those two White Jade Plum Vases were exquisite treasures. With those as a gift, the old Marquess would definitely agree to let Nalan Jinlian go to the study in the front courtyard to pick books to read.

"Mother is really good to me!" Nalan Jinlian held Mrs. Xu's hand, smiling charmingly and playfully.

Seeing this, Mrs. Xu's eyes immediately turned red.

If her Lianlian were still alive, she would be this big now...

Seeing Mrs. Xu's eyes redder, Nalan Jinlian puzzledly called, "Mother?"

Mrs. Xu came back to her senses upon hearing the call, taking a handkerchief to wipe her eyes, "It's nothing, Mother just realized that in the blink of an eye, you've grown so much. After you come of age, you'll get married and won't be able to spend much time with me anymore!"

"Then I won't get married, I'll stay at home to keep you company!"

Mrs. Xu laughed out loud, "That won't do; a girl must be married, Mother can't keep you as an old maid!"

"Haha, then Mother can help me find a steady and sincere husband, and give me plenty of dowry, so that once I go to my husband's house, I can stand tall and no one can bully me. I can do what I want and then often return home to keep Mother company!" Nalan Jinlian said, laughing naively and romantically.

Mrs. Xu also laughed.

This is indeed the kind of marriage every girl dreams of, but how many girls in the world can marry such a good husband.

And meet a reasonable and kind mother-in-law.

"Hmm, our Lianlian is so wonderful, it will naturally be so!"

"Hehe!" Nalan Jinlian laughed, pulling Mrs. Xu to pick plum blossoms.

Mrs. Xu smiled helplessly, noticing that the maid following Nalan Jinlian today wasn't Chunqiu or Chong Ling. Though she was curious, she didn't ask more.

Happily, she followed Nalan Jinlian to pick plum blossoms. Mistress Zhao's plum blossom cakes were excellent, and she also made plum blossom dew and plum blossom rouge.

After a busy round, the mother and daughter really did pick quite a lot.

Juan Ye hurried back after gathering the news, "Miss, I found out!"

Nalan Jinlian looked at Juan Ye, playing with the plum blossoms in her hand, and responded lightly, "Hmm?"

"The old Marquess is at the mansion today, currently in the main study in the front courtyard!"

Chapter 1013: Know What to Expect

Nalan Jinlian heard this, and smiled at Mrs. Xu saying, "Mother, I'll take you back first, then go to the front courtyard to see Grandfather!"

"No need to escort me, I still want to pick some plum flowers. You take some people to deliver plum flowers to your grandfather!"

Nalan Jinlian thought for a while, waited for Lian Qiao to bring the White Jade Plum Vase over, broke off some plum branches and put them in the vase, and with Juan Ye, she called a maid to accompany her and headed towards the front courtyard.

Juan Ye was a maid in the residence and naturally knew the way.

Nalan Jinlian did not ask the maid's name, and assessed the appearance of the residence as she walked.

Overall, the foundation of the Fuwei Marquis Residence was quite profound, exuding fineness everywhere.

The front courtyard was even more grand and bold, not quite the same as the exquisite elegance of the back courtyard.

Nalan Jinlian glanced a few times but found no interest and directly headed to the study of the old Marquess.

At the door of the study, she let the servant go in to announce her presence.

"Who did you say has arrived?" the old Marquess asked.

"Replies to the Marquess, it's the Sixth Miss!"

The old Marquess was taken aback for a moment, "Wasn't she supposed to be going into the palace?"

The servant was also unaware of the details, so he remained silent.

The old Marquess pondered for a moment, "Invite her in. Also, instruct them to prepare tea and bring some snacks over!"

"Yes!"

The servant respectfully invited Nalan Jinlian inside.

Nalan Jinlian nodded and elegantly entered the study with two maids.

The old Marquess, sitting in the Taishi Chair, smiled at Nalan Jinlian, "What brings you here?"

"I was in the Plum Forest earlier and saw the plum flowers were blooming well, so I picked some for you, Grandfather. This White Jade Plum Vase is from my mother!"

She praised herself and also complimented her mother.

The old Marquess looked and laughed, "Hmm, these plum flowers are good, and the plum vase isn't bad either, put it on the shelf over there!"

Juan Ye immediately placed the vase down.

Nalan Jinlian smiled and asked, "Grandfather, I've brought plum flowers for you, can you agree to a small, very small request of mine?"

"It's said that people don't visit the temple for no reason, tell me, what exactly is this small request?"

"Actually, it's no big deal, it's just that the books in my Qinglian Garden, I don't like reading any of them. I wanted to see if there are any I like in your study, can I, Grandfather?"

"Of course, you can take the books back to read, but you must return them and not damage them, understand?"

"Mm mm, thank you, Grandfather, I'll go find books now!"

Nalan Jinlian finished speaking and eagerly went to search for books.

The old Marquess smiled helplessly.

Because he was aware of the Crown Prince's subtle interest in Nalan Jinlian, he indulged her a bit more, not daring to go against her wishes.

Carefully cherishing her.

Hoping she would have more affection for the Marquis Residence, and if she truly became influential one day, to pull the Marquis Residence up somewhat.

Moreover, the Crown Prince takes great care for her, seemingly genuinely interested.

Everything done by the Marquis Residence now was naturally also for the Crown Prince to see.

Nalan Jinlian wandered by the bookshelves, examining them row by row, seriously selecting and picking, indeed finding several books, all regarding Medical Books.

Nalan Jinlian did not know why, she just wanted to read books on this topic.

"Does Miss know medical skills?" Juan Ye asked softly.

Nalan Jinlian shook her head, "No!"

"Then why is Miss choosing Medical Books?"

"You can learn if you don't know, maybe one day I'll become a renowned physician!" Nalan Jinlian said while seriously selecting again.

Juan Ye nodded in agreement.

Thinking Nalan Jinlian made a very good point.

The maid Qing Zhu who came along subtly changed her expression, pursed her lips without speaking.

Nalan Jinlian casually and imperceptibly glanced at her, her eyes deep and silent, continuing to choose Medical Books...

Chapter 1014: Some Differences (Part 1)

After selecting a few Medical Books, Nalan Jinlian left the study with her attendants.

The old Marquess watched, his thoughts shifted slightly as he looked at the departing Nalan Jinlian, remaining silent for a long time.

Knowing Nalan Jinlian's identity, there were many things he couldn't do, and many words he couldn't say.

With the books in hand, Nalan Jinlian arrived at the Plum Forest, where Mrs. Xu was still picking plum blossoms.

Seeing Nalan Jinlian, she smiled and said, "Did you find some books you enjoy reading?"

"Not really, I just picked a few at random, I'll take a look later!" Nalan Jinlian softly murmured.

"Well then, let's first go to your mother's courtyard, where she'll brew plum blossom tea for you to drink!"

"Alright!"

The mother and daughter chatted happily as they headed to Mrs. Xu's courtyard.

Nalan Jinlian helped pick some plum blossoms, and Mrs. Xu instructed Madam Zhao to take them down to crush, then bring the juice to a boil and add some tea leaves.

The whole room was filled with the delightful fragrance of plum blossoms.

"Try it, do you like this taste?" Mrs. Xu poured a cup and pushed it in front of Nalan Jinlian.

"Thank you, Mother!"

Nalan Jinlian gently sniffed before taking a sip, "The taste is really nice, very fragrant and sweet. How did you come up with this, Mother? It's truly ingenious!"

Mrs. Xu smiled, "It was something I randomly thought of in the past, but if you like it, have another cup, and later let Madam Zhao make plum blossom paste for you to eat!"

"Alright, I'll stay here with Mother today and not go back!"

Mrs. Xu laughed, "Then don't go back, let's have a good chat between us, mother and daughter!"

"Okay!"

Despite saying that, Nalan Jinlian ended up spending the day reading Medical Books.

The more she read, the more shocked she became.

In the past, she could remember almost everything in the books at a glance, and could even come up with various prescriptions and alter them according to the severity of the illness.

In her past, she must have been skilled in medicine, and quite accomplished.

But why isn't there a single Medical Book in Qinglian Garden?

The maids never mentioned her medical skills.

What exactly are these people hiding from her?

Nalan Jinlian looked up at Mrs. Xu, who was engrossed in embroidery, her mother.

Looking closely, there wasn't as much resemblance as imagined. Mrs. Xu was genuinely kind to her, more so than Nalan Bo and the rest of the household.

Mrs. Xu sensed Nalan Jinlian's gaze and looked up to smile at her, "What is it?"

"Mother is truly beautiful!"

Mrs. Xu laughed, "You child, you even tease your mother!"

"I mean every word, why does Mother not believe it?"

"Silly child, how could Mother not believe you!" Mrs. Xu said, pulling Nalan Jinlian's hand, "You are Mother's dear treasure, truly a blessing to me!"

Mrs. Xu wasn't lying.

Because of Nalan Jinlian's status, she had to have a legitimate mother, so even though Nalan Bo disliked her immensely, he didn't dare divorce or harm her.

As for that woman in the rear courtyard, did she really think she could safely give birth?

Dream on!

Nalan Jinlian sweetly chuckled, "Mother is the one with the gift of gab!"

"Cheeky!"

Madam Zhao made some plum blossom paste, and Nalan Jinlian consumed a bowl, "Madam Zhao's skills are truly superb!"

"Would Miss like another bowl?" Madam Zhao asked.

"Yes!"

In the early afternoon, the old matriarch of the Nalan family returned with the young ladies of the household, and after a moment's hesitation, Nalan Jinlian went with Mrs. Xu to pay her respects.

Upon entering the old matriarch's courtyard, laughter could be heard from inside.

The mother and daughter exchanged a glance.

It seemed this visit to the palace went very smoothly.

"The maids greet the Third Madam and the Sixth Miss!"

Mrs. Xu nodded slightly, and she and Nalan Jinlian entered the small hall.

There they saw Nalan Mingzhu sitting beside the old matriarch of the Nalan family, chatting and laughing happily.

Nalan Jinlian was slightly taken aback...

Chapter 1015: Who Am I?

Nalan Mingzhu saw Mrs. Xu and Nalan Jinlian coming in, and quickly stood up to greet them with a curtsey.

Her pretty face was somewhat pale.

Nalan Old Madam gave her a reassuring nod.

Even though it was a subtle change, Nalan Jinlian noticed it.

She wasn't exactly jealous, just felt something was off.

"Grandmother!" Nalan Jinlian called out, curtseyed, and walked over to sit beside Nalan Old Madam.

Nalan Old Madam smiled, "Is your body feeling better?"

"Much better, thank you for your concern, Grandmother!"

"That's good, that's good!" Nalan Old Madam said, taking a brocade box from the hands of the maid, Juzi, and handing it to Nalan Jinlian, "Even though you didn't go, the Empress still sent a gift for you with me, and exempted you from paying respects!"

Nalan Jinlian reached out to take it, opened the brocade box and looked inside; it was a gold hairpin, very beautiful and seemingly precious.

Yet, Nalan Jinlian did not seem very pleased.

"Sixth sister, don't you like it?" Nalan Huanhuan asked.

Everyone received the same gold hairpin, without any favoritism.

"I do like it!" Nalan Jinlian said, handing it to Juan Ye.

She chatted with Nalan Old Madam for a while, and seeing that she was tired, bade farewell and left.

"Is sixth sister going to our third aunt's place?" Nalan Huanhuan asked.

Today at the palace, the Empress seemed quite fond of the fifth sister, which made Nalan Huanhuan uneasy.

"Yes, going to my mother's place, and staying there for the night!"

Nalan Huanhuan nodded.

Along the way, everyone parted to go their separate ways.

Nalan Mingzhu felt happy and went to Aunt Liao's courtyard.

Aunt Liao, whose belly was already very big, felt joyful seeing Nalan Mingzhu, "Mingzhu!"

"Aunt, are you well?"

The mother and daughter met and asked each other how they were.

They exchanged a look and smiled.

Today, after going to and from the palace, Grandmother was much better to her, which made Nalan Mingzhu happy; thus, seeing Aunt Liao, her grievances lessened.

Moreover, the Imperial Capital was truly prosperous, and the Imperial Palace even more luxurious, incomparable to the border town.

"Seeing you this happy puts my mind at ease!"

Nalan Mingzhu laughed, "Aunt, you must take care, and give Father another brother!"

"Yes, rest assured, I am cautious in everything, I don't go out, your father visits occasionally, the maids and old servants serve diligently; you must take care of yourself, don't provoke Nalan Jinlian, and certainly don't provoke your legitimate mother. Mingcong is in the outer courtyard, under your father's care, so I am at ease!"

The only worry was still for Nalan Mingzhu.

Back then, she had caused the death of Mrs. Xu's daughter, and Nalan Bo did not know; moreover, this had driven a wedge between the two, making them irreconcilable. So now this eldest lady is an impostor, and Nalan Bo also thought she did not know.

Since he believed she did not know, she pretended not to know.

"Aunt, don't worry, I will protect myself well, and refrain from appearing before my legitimate mother; it's better to curry favor with Grandmother instead!"

"Yes, that's right!"

After all, this backyard was still Old Madam's domain.

Pleasing others wasn't as beneficial as pleasing Old Madam.

The night was getting late.

Nalan Jinlian lay next to Mrs. Xu.

But couldn't fall asleep.

Mrs. Xu was also awake; she knew Nalan Jinlian had something to say to her, but just didn't know how to start.

She reached out to hold Nalan Jinlian's hand.

In her palm, she gently wrote two words, "Something wrong?"

Nalan Jinlian was slightly taken aback, and after thinking for a while, wrote in Mrs. Xu's palm, "Am I your daughter?"

Chapter 1016: So That's How It Is

Mrs. Xu was too shocked to speak.

She had always known the child was clever, but never imagined how quickly she would figure it out.

Hesitation, conflict.

Mrs. Xu thought over and over in her mind, pondering again and again.

Nalan Jinlian wasn't in a hurry; she just lay there quietly.

Actually, Mrs. Xu's behavior made her understand that she was not Mrs. Xu's daughter.

Waiting and waiting.

Nalan Jinlian thought Mrs. Xu would never admit it or tell her. Just as she began to feel disappointed, Mrs. Xu gently wrote, "No!"

Nalan Jinlian was momentarily stunned.

No, indeed she wasn't.

"Then who am I? Where did I come from? How old am I?"

Mrs. Xu shook her head slightly, gently writing, "I don't know where you came from or how old you are. 'Nalan Jinlian' is the name of my daughter who died thirteen years ago!"

Nalan Jinlian was bewildered.

She gently leaned against Mrs. Xu's embrace, "From now on, I am your daughter, no matter who I am, where I came from, or where I will go. I am your daughter!"

Mrs. Xu's eyes suddenly turned red.

She nodded slightly, reaching out to hold Nalan Jinlian tightly.

"I am too, you are my daughter, you always will be!"

Not changing for any reason.

Nalan Jinlian nodded, gently writing in Mrs. Xu's palm, "Mother, you are pregnant, almost a month now!"

Mrs. Xu sat up in shock.

She looked at Nalan Jinlian in disbelief.

Nalan Jinlian nodded.

Mrs. Xu suddenly laughed, lying down next to Nalan Jinlian, holding her hand as she wrote, "Do you know medical skills?"

"I must have known before!"

Mrs. Xu remained silent.

After a moment, she said, "Tomorrow, let's have the Mansion Physician come over to take my pulse and confirm it!"

"Okay!"

"Sleep now, whatever it is, we'll take it slow. One day, we'll find out your identity. Perhaps we can return and ask your two uncles for help!"

"Mm!"

Nalan Jinlian couldn't sleep the entire night, nor could Mrs. Xu.

She was pregnant.

A child.

Her child, her very own child.

This time, she would definitely protect him and not let anyone hurt him; no one could.

Some matters must be put into action.

The next day

Nalan Jinlian went to request permission from the Old Madam Nalan to go out with Mrs. Xu to shop.

The Old Madam Nalan readily agreed.

Mrs. Xu was wealthy; her dowry back in the day was astonishingly generous. Over the years, although she was not in Capital City, her stores were managed by her two brothers and reportedly doing well, with considerable annual income.

"Go ahead!"

No money out of her own pocket, so naturally, she wouldn't stop them.

Mrs. Xu then took Nalan Jinlian out.

To Nalan Jinlian, the Imperial Capital was very unfamiliar; everything seemed curious to her, but she didn't particularly feel fond of or like it.

"What's wrong?" Mrs. Xu asked softly.

Nalan Jinlian shook her head.

Mrs. Xu guessed some of it and hurriedly said, "Don't overthink. Cheer up, we came out to have fun, not to sulk!"

"You're right, Mother!"

A day spent happy is like a day spent unhappy; it's better to be happy.

And who knows, maybe staying relaxed will help her recall those forgotten pasts.

The mother and daughter went to jewelry shops and clothing stores, buying the most beautiful, exquisite, and best items without considering the cost, as if to say, "I'm rich, I'm so rich."

The extravagant shopping drew glances and speculations about which family's ladies they belonged to.

Especially Nalan Jinlian, whose beauty and delicacy made her look like a little fairy.

"Make way, make way, the Princess is coming here to choose clothes, everyone must clear out!"

Chapter 1017: The Princess Arrives (Part 4)

A few palace maids entered with an imposing presence, rudely dismissing people.

Many of the ladies were displeased but left in silence.

Mrs. Xu also pulled Nalan Jinlian, intending to leave.

No matter what, it's best not to offend, after all, she is a princess.

"Wait a moment!"

Princess Fengyi spoke gently.

Mrs. Xu, a mere woman, was unimportant to her.

But Princess Fengyi couldn't stand anyone being more beautiful than she, and today just such a person appeared before her, more beautiful and more graceful.

A person like that absolutely cannot be allowed to exist in this world.

Mrs. Xu and Nalan Jinlian stopped in their tracks at the words and looked towards Princess Fengyi.

Wearing a brocade gown, with gold hairpins and hairpieces swaying elegantly, her lips red and teeth white, she was a very beautifully refined beauty.

"This humble wife greets the princess, may the princess have boundless fortune and peace!" Mrs. Xu slightly curtsied in salute.

Nalan Jinlian watched and followed suit, "Greetings to the princess, may the princess have boundless fortune!"

Princess Fengyi looked at them but did not tell the mother and daughter to rise.

She made them bow over.

These past few days, Nalan Jinlian went out with Juan Ye, not bringing Chong Ling or Chunqiu.

Lian Qiao, though clever, was ultimately inexperienced, and seeing it was the princess, dared not speak much.

Mrs. Xu saw Princess Fengyi did not tell them to rise, and after initial shock, stood up straight.

Nalan Jinlian saw this and also stood up straight.

The mother and daughter stepped aside, "Please, princess!"

Princess Fengyi was infuriated, letting out cold laughs.

What audacity, this was the first time someone so disregarded her.

They should know she was a princess raised under the Empress's care, with the Crown Prince brother treating her very well, different from those other princesses raised by concubines.

"Someone, take down these insolent mother and daughter!"

"Princess, are you certain?" Nalan Jinlian spoke calmly.

She wanted to gamble on whether the person who placed her in the Nalan family secretly assigned someone to protect her.

If not, then it was her unfortunate fate.

Seeing Nalan Jinlian's lofty and unashamedly exquisite face, Princess Fengyi shouted angrily, "Open your mouth for this palace!"

First, destroy that face, then tear apart her fine looks and turn her into an ugly beast.

The palace maid beside Princess Fengyi wanted to step forward upon hearing this but fell to her knees with a thud, noticing the intense pain in her knees, unable to stand.

Princess Fengyi was also startled.

She had been domineering for years; this was the first time she hit a snag.

"Hidden Guards, where are you? Kill this mother and daughter for this palace!"

From taking them down, opening their mouths, to killing, it was all decided within moments.

As soon as several Hidden Guards appeared, they were intercepted by another group and mercilessly slaughtered.

Princess Fengyi's expression changed immediately.

In this Great Zhou Kingdom, who dared lay hands on her people, and ruthlessly take lives at that?

Nalan Jinlian observed it all, now understanding.

The person who planted her in the Nalan family was no ordinary figure.

She reached out to hold Mrs. Xu's arm, "Mother, let's go!"

"Alright!"

Mrs. Xu responded, and together with Nalan Jinlian, they left the clothing shop.

"Lianlian, is it okay for us to do this?"

"Don't worry about it; someone will handle it. Mother, let's go home, I'm tired!"

"Not going to the bookstore?"

"No, there are plenty of books in the Marquis Residence's study, I'll take a look and decide later!"

"Alright, then let's head back!"

The mother and daughter boarded the carriage, with Nalan Jinlian leaning silently against Mrs. Xu.

She didn't know who placed her in the Nalan Residence, nor was she aware of the situation in the Imperial Capital of the Great Zhou Kingdom.

The few serving her gave her a strange feeling, wanting to probe but unsure of where to start.

Chunqiu.

Perhaps she could start with Chunqiu.

That girl seemed to have some ulterior motives in attending to her!

Chapter 1018: Following the Sound

Nalan Jinlian took a deep breath.

Mrs. Xu reached out and hugged her, offering silent comfort.

No matter what, there were some feelings between mother and daughter.

Back at the Marquis Residence, Nalan Jinlian returned to Qinglian Garden.

Nanny Qin immediately came forward to greet her, "Miss is back!"

"Nanny!" Nalan Jinlian called softly, smiling gently and tenderly.

She discreetly sized up Nanny Qin.

In this courtyard, all the maids called her Nanny Qin, even treated her with great respect, never daring to contradict her.

"Miss, it's quite cold outside, let's go inside first. Would you like some sweet soup or hot tea?"

"Hot tea. But I'd like to have some plum blossom tea made by Old Madam Zhao. Nanny, how about I go learn from her, so in the future, I can make it for you to try?"

"Alright!"

Back in the warm room, Chunqiu immediately came forward to attend to her. Nalan Jinlian glanced at her, noticing her red eyes, obviously from crying. She asked in puzzlement, "Chunqiu, what's wrong with you?"

"N-No, it's nothing!" Chunqiu quickly responded, lowering her head.

But in doing so, accidentally tugged Nalan Jinlian's hair.

"Ouch!" Nalan Jinlian cried out in pain.

Chunqiu was stunned upon hearing her cry, realizing she had grabbed Nalan Jinlian's hair.

Startled, she dropped to the ground in a kneel, "This servant deserves to die, it wasn't intentional, please forgive me, Miss!"

Nalan Jinlian shook her head slightly, "You may rise, just be more careful in the future." She turned and went into the bedroom, sitting by the dressing table, she untied her hair and gently combed it herself.

Suddenly, she heard the sound of a flute.

Sad, desolate.

Like mandarin ducks who have lost their companion, or someone waiting sorrowfully for their beloved to return.

Her hand holding the comb paused, then quickly twisted her hair into a bun.

For some reason, she wanted to go see.

"Nanny, where's my cloak?"

"Miss is going out?"

"Yes, I want to see who's playing the flute so well!" Nalan Jinlian said, a bit hurried.

Nanny Qin promptly fetched the cloak, Nalan Jinlian took it, draped it on herself, and hurriedly left Qinglian Garden.

She followed the flute sound.

But found that the sound was coming from the outer courtyard.

There was an old woman guarding the entrance; normally, people were not allowed to pass, but Nalan Jinlian was different. She could enter the old Marquess's study and was quite favored by the old Marquess.

"Sixth Miss wants to go to the outer courtyard?"

Nalan Jinlian nodded slightly, glanced at Chunqiu who followed behind, "Yes!"

And then she exited the inner courtyard.

Following the flute sound, Nalan Jinlian walked quickly, Chunqiu following behind.

Until the flute sound grew closer, only separated by a wall, Nalan Jinlian leaned against the wall, gasping for breath.

"Huff, huff, huff!"

Then the flute sound stopped, but Nalan Jinlian wasn't afraid of not finding this person, so she was not anxious at all.

She stood and tidied her clothes and hair, then slowly walked forward.

Saw a man approaching with a flute, dressed in a brocade white outfit, his face slightly smiling, extremely gentle.

Nalan Jinlian frowned slightly.

Was it him?

But it doesn't feel right, how could such a gentle and jade-like man produce such mournful and poignant music?

"Miss?" Zhou Yunshen called softly.

Even though aware that she had forgotten everything, seeing her confused expression couldn't help but soften his tone.

Nalan Jinlian nodded slightly, "Was it you who just played?"

"Yes!"

Nalan Jinlian pressed her lips together, "You played very well, does this melody have a name?"

"Not yet, it was just an impromptu inspiration, didn't think of a name!"

Chapter 1019: Speculating Identity

Nalan Jinlian nodded slightly, a little disappointed, "I wonder if the young master could play it once more? There were some parts I didn't hear clearly earlier!"

Zhou Yunshen couldn't ask for more.

"It's not very convenient here, why don't we find another place?"

"Let's go to the garden in front then!"

"Please lead the way, miss!"

Nalan Jinlian nodded.

The two walked one after the other.

Little did they know, on the other side of the wall, several men in black were attacking Chu Yu, who, holding a flute in one hand, was calmly responding.

Each move was ruthless, showing no mercy.

He had just sent Luoyi to handle something, and happened to think of Jinnian, playing the flute randomly, only to attract these people.

After dealing with the last person, Chu Yu heard a familiar flute melody.

"..."

Who is it?

He hurriedly followed the sound to find out.

Nalan Jinlian pressed her lips together.

The young master in front played well, but something was missing.

That indescribable feeling, it was different.

At the end of the tune, Zhou Yunshen said, "Forgive my poor performance!"

"Quite good!" Nalan Jinlian smiled slightly.

She looked up to see a man in the distance, dressed in a black brocade robe, exuding a murderous aura.

The whole person staring blankly at her.

Then he moved quickly as if hiding something.

Who is he?

Chu Yu had imagined a thousand ways they might meet, the scene of their reunion, but never thought it would be like this moment, with the person right in front of him, close yet seemingly worlds apart.

He didn't dare to step forward and ask a question, didn't dare to speak, or even move.

Afraid it was a dream, and when he woke up, she would still be gone.

No matter how much he looked, he couldn't find her.

"..."

A thousand words, reduced to a slight choke.

Then he turned and walked away.

"..."

Nalan Jinlian was stunned.

How strange, who is this person?

Why not even say hello?

Zhou Yunshen, regardless of his inner displeasure, appeared very calm and gently asked, "Who was that person?"

"I don't know!" Nalan Jinlian shook her head, thought for a moment, and then said, "Thank you, young master. I should go back now!"

"Until we meet again!"

Nalan Jinlian curtsied slightly and left without saying more.

Just wondering, which of these two is the Crown Prince of Great Zhou and who is the Duke of Tianchu Country?

Chu Yu walked some distance and suddenly realized.

Why did he leave?

He suddenly turned back, and saw Nalan Jinlian coming with a maid, instantly freezing in place.

At a loss, not knowing what to say.

Tianci said she was injured and lost her memory, forgetting everything from before.

Meaning she forgot him too. What should he do? Should he go up and talk?

Should he smile? Or...

"Young master, are you unwell?" Nalan Jinlian asked softly.

Seeing him covered in sweat, she thought he must be ill.

"I, um..." Chu Yu swallowed, took a deep breath, and said, "Feeling a bit unwell!"

"Shall I call a doctor for you?"

"Yes, please!"

Chu Yu responded softly, his voice trembling.

Nalan Jinlian nodded, pointing to the pavilion opposite, "You can sit there for a while, and I'll accompany you while my maid goes for the mansion physician. Is that okay?"

"Okay!"

Chu Yu couldn't ask for more.

He turned and walked towards the pavilion, accidentally revealing a glimpse of his flute.

Nalan Jinlian noticed it.

After a moment of surprise, Nalan Jinlian decided to remain unobtrusive; she wanted to see what these two were all about.

She turned to Chunqiu and said, "Go call the Mansion Physician!"

Chunqiu nervously swallowed, "Miss, that's not wise!"

"Why not?" Nalan Jinlian asked.

It was clear that Chunqiu was very nervous, but this was different from earlier; the earlier nervousness came with a hint of excitement.

Which means, Chunqiu and that previous person were in cahoots!

Chapter 1020: Who Exactly Is It

Chunqiu couldn't respond immediately.

But she truly didn't dare let Nalan Jinlian stay alone with His Highness of Tianchu Country.

It was her hesitation that allowed Nalan Jinlian to realize that she and her mistress were both very cautious and concerned about the man in front of them.

And they guessed each other's identities.

The one in white brocade was Crown Prince Zhou Yunshen, and the man in black before them was His Highness of Tianchu Country.

Thinking of this, Nalan Jinlian saw some maids approaching from not far away, who had clearly also noticed her. They quickly came forward to greet, "Your humble servants greet His Highness and Sixth Miss!"

Chu Yu nodded slightly.

Had already lost his voice.

Nalan Jinlian spoke softly, "Go prepare tea and invite the Mansion Physician over, His Highness is feeling unwell!"

"Yes!"

Two of the maids left separately, while two remained on the side.

Only then did Nalan Jinlian raise her eyes to look at Chu Yu.

He was very handsome.

This kind of handsomeness was different from the Crown Prince's gentle elegance, with a square chin and a full forehead, a very stern man, and most surprising to Nalan Jinlian, he had gray hair at his temples.

This...

At such a young age, why had his hair turned white?

What was he troubled about?

Chu Yu smiled at Nalan Jinlian. Nalan Jinlian only felt a bloom in her heart, with an intuition that she knew him.

Their interaction should be like this, yet not exactly like this.

"I find Your Highness somewhat familiar!" Nalan Jinlian said, and then her eyes widened.

What was wrong with her?

Chu Yu laughed out loud, unable to hide his joy, "Hmm, I find Sixth Miss very familiar as well!"

Nalan Jinlian lowered her head with a smile.

Chunqiu, on the other hand, was sweating anxiously all over.

It's over...

Indeed, it's over.

Despite all their calculations, they never thought they would meet like this, and that Nalan Jinlian would be the one to speak first.

Leaving her unable to say anything, or not allowed to.

The atmosphere was silent and odd, and Chunqiu carefully glanced at Nalan Jinlian. Seeing her expression as normal, with no shyness or secret joy, yet His Highness was smiling so brightly it shocked her.

Chunqiu looked toward the garden, only to see Crown Prince Zhou Yunshen standing not far away, looking solemnly at the pavilion before turning and leaving.

Chunqiu then looked at His Highness Chu Yu, who gave her a half-smile glance, just as the maid brought up the tea.

Nalan Jinlian smiled lightly, "Your Highness, please!"

"Sixth Miss, please!"

Nalan Jinlian nodded, taking small sips from the teacup.

They shouldn't have known each other, yet felt inexplicably familiar.

Now in the Marquis Residence, apart from Mrs. Xu, she trusted no one, yet Mrs. Xu had no manpower, so despite having many doubts, she didn't know who to ask.

Just like today, those people dared to harm those by the Princess's side, aside from the Crown Prince, no one else would dare.

But what did Zhou Yunshen want to do?

Who did he want to threaten using her?

Just then, the Mansion Physician came along with a man in black, whom Nalan Jinlian guessed was a retainer of His Highness Chu Yu.

And when that man saw her, he was delighted but quickly hid it, constantly winking at His Highness Chu Yu, his joyous expression genuine.

Nalan Jinlian suddenly understood.

These two also knew her.

But they were people of Tianchu Country, how could they know her?

Who was she?

Why did she come to this Fuwei Marquis Residence? What did these people intend to do?

Nalan Jinlian tried to think, suddenly feeling a splitting headache, struggling to stand up, her body softened and fell to the side.

Then she was caught.

"Jinnian..."