

Indulgence 251

Chapter 251: Knocking

Yun Jinnian was momentarily puzzled.

"What do you mean 'can't be saved'?"

Ann-momo also shook her head, "That little maid asked me for twenty taels of silver, Miss, what do you think..."

Yun Jinnian looked at Mrs. Yuan, "Wet nurse, take two hundred taels of silver and give it to Ann-momo. Ann-momo, next time you see that little maid, give her some silver and have her seriously gather information for me, she won't miss out on her reward!"

Mrs. Yuan immediately went to get the silver.

Yun Jinnian then said, "But Ann-momo, you need to change the way you refer to yourself when speaking. Even though I've never regarded you as a servant, a slip of the tongue is absolutely unacceptable!"

Ann-momo's face flushed with heat upon hearing this.

Ever since she started serving Yun Jinnian, who had soon after visited Huguo Temple, Ann-momo didn't know what sort of abilities Yun Jinnian possessed, nor had she ever seen Yun Jinnian lose her temper with the servants, always acting quite generously, which inevitably led to some complacency, causing her to forget her place.

Now that Yun Jinnian had bluntly pointed it out, Ann-momo felt burning hot on her face.

Busy, she said, "It's the servant's mistake, this servant will remember!"

Yun Jinnian was not one to fuss over small matters, but there were some things she needed to make clear to Ann-momo.

Ann-momo could do as she pleased within Niannian Garden, but what would others think if they found out?

Moreover, the true butler of Niannian Garden should be the wet nurse.

"Ann-momo, I won't always be with the Yun Family. Whether I marry into the Zhang Family or the Li Family, you will have to come with me. The wet nurse is soft natured, and many important matters will inevitably require Ann-momo's intervention. You are a person of great wisdom; surely you understand my meaning!"

Ann-momo was indeed a clever person, from serving in a grand mansion to entering the palace.

And it was Han Xuzi who had saved her life. She had pledged her life in repayment, staying with the Han Family, later to be at Yun Jinnian's side.

It was also in this estate, with no opportunity to make any moves, that she inevitably grew restless.

"What Miss says is absolutely right, it's the servant's mistake!"

Yun Jinnian gave a faint smile, "It's not a big deal. It's getting late, you go down and rest. Everyone else should also go rest. The wet nurse will take care of things here!"

Leading by example, Ann-momo bowed and withdrew.

There were many rules.

Only after everyone had left did Mrs. Yuan speak, "Miss, why bother losing Ann-momo's face in front of the maids? It could have been mentioned quietly!"

"And how does the wet nurse think it would be more effective?" Yun Jinnian retorted.

Mrs. Yuan fell silent.

"Wet nurse, because I want to keep Ann-momo here, I opened my mouth to give her a hint. If I didn't want to keep her, should she continue making mistakes until one day it becomes irreparable, then I would just dismiss her. Why bother with such efforts, don't you think?"

Mrs. Yuan paused, then nodded, "That's true!"

Yun Jinnian smiled and stopped talking. Glancing out the door, she listened as the soft footsteps became more distant before focusing on her book.

Mrs. Yuan wasn't in a hurry to tidy up, either. Taking the gifts, she cleaned each one thoroughly and wrapped them in a white cloth before placing them in a brocade box.

She moved quietly and gently, careful not to disturb Yun Jinnian.

Yicai Garden

Xu Xinmo felt a pain in her chest from anger, "That cheap wretch, that little cheap wretch!"

Pacing back and forth, she kept cursing.

A fire raged within her, searing her whole being. To make matters worse, her wet nurse was not around, and Daidai had no good ideas.

"Miss, Miss!"

Daidai rushed into the room, "Miss, there's good news!"

"What good news?" Xu Xinmo asked.

Whispering a few words into Xu Xinmo's ear, Daidai watched as she began to smile, "It's still my maternal grandmother who loves me the most. This time I want to see how that little wretch turns the tables!"

Chapter 252: Thank You Gift

Daidai also started to laugh along.

May 7th

Early in the morning, Yun Jinnian got up, for today she was scheduled to revisit the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence for the old Madam's follow-up consultation.

Dai Hanmi said she would come over to pick her up, so Yun Jinnian brought Han Tianci to Qiyue Academy for breakfast, then spent time chatting with Mrs. Han.

Yun Qi had stayed with Concubine Lian the previous night, as a result, the oil lamps in Concubine Rou's room were lit all night long.

Mrs. Han knew about this but said nothing.

Mrs. He, upon learning that the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence was sending someone for Yun Jinnian, was both envious and jealous. She didn't want to greet them, but she had to get up; Dai Hanmi was dressed in aquamarine sheer silk, looking charming and enchanting, with sweet dimples showing when she smiled, truly beautiful.

"Why has the Second Miss come in person today?"

Dai Hanmi smiled, "The other day, Sister Jinnian and I agreed to come pick her up to play at our house!"

Mrs. He felt resentful.

This little minx, going off to play in the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence without calling on her own sisters, was just too selfish.

"So it was like that. I've already sent someone to fetch Jinnian; she will be here soon!"

No sooner had Mrs. He spoken than Yun Jinnian indeed arrived.

She was still accompanied by Han Tianci, Hemei, and Henuan, with Hemei carrying a medicine chest.

After exchanging a few polite words with Mrs. He, Yun Jinnian followed Dai Hanmi and left.

Mrs. He watched the departing carriage with hatred...

Yet she never even considered the fact that Yun Jinnian was going to the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence to treat the old Madam!

"Sister Jinnian, who is this little sister?"

"Sister Hanmi, this is my cousin Tiantian!" Yun Jinnian introduced softly.

Han Tianci beamed at Dai Hanmi, "Sister Hanmi!"

"Such a dear!" Dai Hanmi said, as she slid off the coral bracelet from her wrist, "Here Tiantian, this is for you to play with!"

Yun Jinnian wanted to say that Han Tianci didn't need it.

However, Han Tianci reached out and took it, "Thank you, Sister Hanmi!"

He might not need it, but he could keep it for his sister!

Once they arrived at the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence and it was known that Han Tianci was Yun Jinnian's cousin, and seeing how Yun Jinnian was especially attentive to him, the Marchioness, Crown Princess, and the second young wife all immediately gave generous welcome gifts, and the old Madam even gave a box of beautiful, exquisite jewelry.

"Thank you, Old Madam!" Han Tianci felt delighted inside and sweet with his words, bringing much joy to the old Madam Dai.

After washing her hands, Yun Jinnian took the old Madam's pulse.

"The toxins in the Old Madam's body have been completely cleared. If acupuncture is performed every six months for three or four times more, you can fully recover!"

Old Madam Dai was overjoyed, "Good child, you are a great benefactor to this old lady. Tell me, what do you want?"

With a gentle, soft smile, Yun Jinnian said, "Old Madam, Sister Hanmi and I are close sisters, and her grandmother is just like my own. Although I call you Old Madam out loud, in my heart, I regard you as my grandmother too. I don't want anything!"

"How can you not want anything!" Old Madam Dai urged anxiously, then said, "I must properly reward you!"

"But..." Yun Jinnian still wanted to refuse.

Old Madam Dai's face darkened, "A senior's gift must not be declined!"

Yun Jinnian had no choice but to stand up and bow to the old Madam, "Thank you for the reward, Old Madam!"

"That's more like it!"

The Old Madam said, and added, "Don't worry, it won't be sent to the Yun Family. I'll secretly have it sent to the Han Family!"

Yun Jinnian couldn't help but admire the old Madam's wisdom.

"Yes!" She nodded slightly.

Old Madam Dai had many valuable things, and after she gestured to the Marchioness to help take them out, Dai Hanmi, taking Yun Jinnian and Han Tianci, went to the second young wife, Mrs. Qu's place to eat cakes.

"These items were originally prepared for Hanmi's children, but Jinnian has been a great benefactor to our Marquis Residence, and we cannot skimp on our thanks!" Old Madam stated.

"Mother, I understand!" said the Marchioness.

Once the old lady passed away, her sons would have to observe three years of mourning.

How difficult that would be for the Empress in the palace.

Chapter 253: The Conspiracy Comes

"It's good that you understand, and you've already tipped off the children about it. Fortunately, Mimi still has a few years before she gets married, so there's still time to prepare anew!"

The Marchioness nodded, "Mother, please don't say that. Mimi is a sensible child and won't mind these things. I'm thinking of taking some more things from my side, as the gratitude gifts cannot be lightened, after all, the child took a great risk back then, we can't let her feel that we are stingy!"

The old dowager smiled, "Is it just because of this?"

The Marchioness laughed softly, "Of course not just because of this. Just thinking about if this could happen, I feel utterly delighted!"

"Indeed, if such a treasure really came to our house..." The old dowager smiled and fell silent.

The mother-in-law and daughter-in-law shared a knowing laugh without saying a word.

The pastries made by Mrs. Qu, the second junior wife, were exceptionally delicious, and Han Tianci especially loved them. Yun Jinnian was afraid that he would choke and kept patting his back, also feeding him sips of clear soup to wash away the sweet richness in his mouth.

It was only after Han Tianci had eaten his fill and burped contentedly that he smiled at Yun Jinnian and said, "Sister, it's really tasty!"

Mrs. Qu, the second junior wife, smiled very happily, "If you like it, come often in the future. I can also send some to you whenever I make them!"

Seeing her culinary skills appreciated, the second junior wife grew even fonder of Han Tianci.

She thought the child was extremely endearing.

Yun Jinnian checked Mrs. Qu's pulse again.

"How is it?"

Yun Jinnian nodded, "Stop taking the medicine!"

"Oh my!" Mrs. Qu exclaimed in surprise, rising to her feet and pacing in place a few times, rubbing her hands together before grasping Yun Jinnian's hand tightly, "Sister Jinnian, I really can't thank you enough!"

In this way, the thank-you gifts sent to the Han Family became quite substantial, with seven or eight chests, each one packed tightly with brocaded boxes. Han Xuzi glanced at them and said, "Send them all to the Chaoyang Academy!"

Yun Jinnian saved the old dowager of the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence, and the Marquis Residence sent over a heavy gift of gratitude, which was duly accepted.

After leaving the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence, Yun Jinnian went directly back to the Yun Family.

Upon returning to Niannian Garden, she devoted herself to reading books about Nanjiang.

Han Tianci sat at one side, taking a book on medical skills and earnestly memorized it.

When Mrs. Han came over, she saw the siblings sitting in a row, both of them looking extremely serious, and she could not bear to disturb them, so she just stood gently to one side, watching them.

These were her children, her dearest ones.

For dinner, Mrs. Han had many dishes prepared and ate at Niannian Garden with the siblings. Yun Qi was very aware of every move Mrs. Han made.

"Jinnian's cousin?"

With Yun Jinnian's temperament, would she be this fond of a cousin? Would her eyes light up like that, keeping her close by, taking such meticulous care?

Just look at how she treats the sisters of the Yun Family; it's all just for show. As for whether they live or die, she doesn't care at all!

However, Yun Qi also knew that Yun Jinnian and Mrs. Han were not fond of him, so he did not come over to disturb their happily intimate dinner.

He drank himself into a stupor alone, and in his drunkenness, he pulled a maid with him and spent a wild night together!

It was already late into the night

Mrs. Han was reluctant to leave her children, but sleeping over at Niannian Garden wasn't proper, so she had to stand up and return to Qiyue Academy.

Just as she reached the doorway, she heard a thud, as if something had fallen into the courtyard.

Bai Que immediately stepped forward, seeing an injured man.

Her brow furrowed deeply, "Madam, it's an injured man!"

Upon hearing this, Yun Jinnian's brow furrowed as well.

She didn't approach immediately, but turned and went into the study, opened the medicine chest, took out a porcelain bottle, poured some powder onto her finger...

Chapter 254: Take Ruthless Measures

He had barely left the room when Yun Jinnian spoke up indifferently, "Is the injury serious?"

"Don't know!"

Bai Que replied.

Yun Jinnian took measured steps forward, "Let me take a look at him."

"Miss, what if he's a bad person?"

"Bad person or good, at this moment he's just an injured soul hanging by a thread. How could I stand by and watch him die!" Yun Jinnian said this and had Hemei bring over an oil lamp to illuminate the surroundings so she could clearly see his face and his injuries.

"Save me, save me!"

The voice was soft, carrying a suppressed pain, yet it sounded pleasant.

He was quite handsome, and even though he was in pain and his brows were furrowed, it did not diminish his charm.

She went to examine his injury, which was on his left arm, not serious, nor life-threatening.

It was indeed for her sake that he came.

The old lady was truly heartless. She was her own granddaughter, yet she could think of such a despicable scheme just to destroy her!

And this man was colluding with the old lady, which was utterly detestable.

Given that, she would not be merciful.

She ripped open a section of his clothing to reveal the bloodied wound.

With a rub of her two fingers, the medicinal powder from her fingertips fell onto the wound and instantly disappeared.

Having achieved her aim, Yun Jinnian had no desire to treat his wound any further. She stood up and said, "The injury is not severe, and it won't be life-threatening for a while. However, I'm very curious as to why he appeared in Niannian Garden."

"Jinnian?" Mrs. Han called out softly.

"Mother, in the dead of night, this man appeared in Niannian Garden. We do not know who he is, so we should send him to the authorities!"

Xiu Xinfeng paused.

This... this wasn't right...

Wasn't it said that they would save him? Why check his wound and then not only not save him but also send him to the authorities?

Mrs. Han nodded, "Yes, send him to the authorities!"

Xiu Xinfeng realized that this mother and daughter pair were not joking, and this situation was completely different from what he had anticipated. He rose to run, but Bai Que and five maids surrounded him.

"You..."

"Catch him!" Mrs. Han shouted.

Bai Que immediately took action.

Hemei and Henuan, along with the other three, did not hesitate. The five formed a small formation, which significantly bolstered their martial arts.

Xiu Xinfeng then understood that he was in trouble.

This taels of silver were not easy to earn.

The nursemaid went to call for Yun Chen and Yun Qi. Such matters of turning someone in to the authorities were better handled by men.

No sooner had they tied up Xiu Xinfeng than Yun Chen and Mrs. He strode over quickly.

"What happened?" Mrs. He asked anxiously.

"This thief must have stolen from someone and got injured. Panicking, he fled to our residence. Brother, sister-in-law, it's good that you've come. Now that we have captured him, we'll send him to the Governor's Office first thing tomorrow morning!" Mrs. Han said, her eyes cold.

Yun Jinnian stood there, saying nothing, her expression indifferent.

Yun Chen did not have time to reproach them for much. He immediately had people drag Xiu Xinfeng away. Xiu Xinfeng tried to slander Yun Jinnian, saying that they knew each other and had an affair or some such nonsense, thinking that ruining Yun Jinnian's reputation would suffice. However, he realized that his arm, where the wound was, started to burn painfully, accompanied by numbness.

All of a sudden, his eyes widened as he looked toward Yun Jinnian.

She, she, she had poisoned him...

When had it happened?

Xiu Xinfeng was not a fool and quickly understood when it had occurred.

He had underestimated Yun Jinnian, a miscalculation indeed.

Now, he could only be sent to the Governor's Office first. After all, he had no criminal record and could be freed after a few days of detention.

But Yun Jinnian watched Xiu Xinfeng with a faint smile curving her lips.

Once inside Jingzhao Prefecture's prison, he thought he could get out without betraying the old lady—what a foolish dream!

Chapter 255: Counterattack

Yun Jinnian watched Xiu Xinfeng laugh with a cold and grim expression.

Xiu Xinfeng was taken away.

Mrs. Han gently held Yun Jinnian, "Don't be afraid, mother is with you!"

Even if the road ahead was bumpy, she would accompany her.

Yun Jinnian hugged Mrs. Han back, "Mother, I'm not afraid!"

At that moment, she truly wasn't afraid.

Yun Chen said a few comforting words before leaving with Mrs. He.

Mrs. Han sat with Yun Jinnian for a long while, but Yun Qi didn't come, "Go to sleep early, tomorrow morning mother will take you to the Songshan Academy to meet your grand master uncle to see if he will take you in!"

"Hmm!"

The siblings escorted Mrs. Han out of Niannian Garden. Han Tianci, who hadn't spoken a word, finally asked, "Sister, is it really such a coincidence?"

Yun Jinnian looked towards Han Tianci, "What do you think?"

"I don't think it is!"

"Indeed, it isn't!"

Yun Jinnian quickly went to the study, wrote a letter, sealed it, and then summoned Hemei and Henuan, "Take this letter to the Prince Rui Residence now. When you are at the side gate, mimic a dog's bark first three times, then after a while one bark, then three more times, then two more times, and someone will come out. If he asks who you are, say 'An old friend from the valley,' and if he asks why you didn't come through the main gate, say there are big dogs at the main gate and he will then take you to see Prince Rui. Remember, you must personally hand the letter to Prince Rui!"

Hemei nodded, taking the instructions seriously.

Carrying the letter, Hemei and Henuan climbed over the wall of the Yun Residence and headed straight to Prince Rui Residence.

It was better for the two to go together to look after each other.

After all, they were both children.

Yun Jinnian then sat by the window waiting...

Han Tianci stood to one side, silent and with a somewhat ugly expression on his face.

If this happened at the Han Family, whoever dared to harm the master like this would have been killed and thrown into the mass burial grave long ago.

At the side gate of Prince Rui Residence.

"Woof woof woof, woof, woof woof woof, woof woof!" Hemei mimicked a dog's bark.

A shadowy figure swiftly emerged, making no sound.

"Who are you?"

"An old friend from the valley!" Hemei responded calmly.

"Why didn't you use the main gate!"

"There are big dogs at the main gate!"

The shadowy figure looked at the two children, Hemei and Henuan, "Come with me."

He then whistled.

Hemei and Henuan were somewhat nervous because they could sense that there were many experts hidden in the darkness, any of whom could instantly take care of the two sisters.

They dared not be careless.

They followed the shadowy figure for a good while before finally arriving at a large courtyard, and then they entered, "Wait here!"

The figure then walked to the entrance and called out, "Your Highness!"

Chu Yu was woken up and angrily shouted, "What is all this racket in the dead of night, what's going on?"

"An old friend from the valley has come to seek audience!"

Upon hearing this, Chu Yu's anger subsided.

Yun Jinnian sending someone in the middle of the night clearly meant there was trouble.

"Take them to the study, I will be there shortly!"

"Yes!"

Hemei and Henuan were led to the study, and not long after, Chu Yu walked in, "What's happened to your mistress?"

Hemei took out the letter and handed it to Chu Yu, "The mistress instructed her servant to personally hand it to Your Highness!"

Chu Yu took the letter, studied it carefully, and then said, "Go back and tell your mistress to just be at ease!"

"Yes!"

About two hours after Hemei and Henuan left, the General Weiyuan's Residence in the Capital City was burgled—the priceless Jade Guanyin was stolen, and General Weiyuan led his men in pursuit of the thief...

Yun Residence

Xiu Xinfeng was tied up and locked in the firewood shed when a man silently entered, "Tsk tsk tsk, look who it is. How did you end up so wretchedly?"

"Stop taking pleasure in my misfortune; quickly look at this. I can't feel my arm at all!"

Chapter 256: Threats and Intimidation

Xiu Xinfeng didn't say it, but his heart was also in a panic.

After all, this was the Divine Doctor's granddaughter. Now that he thought about it, he realized he must have been bewitched to take on this task.

The man heard the statement and put away his smile, stepping forward to check on Xiu Xinfeng, "Ah..."

"What is it?" Xiu Xinfeng asked.

"You're poisoned, and I can't cure it!" the man spoke with a voice that turned grave.

Xiu Xinfeng knew he wasn't lying.

"Zi'an, go find Old Lady Yun and tell her I've been exposed. Ask her to bring fifty thousand taels of silver to buy my silence, or else, I'll definitely spill her scheme of bribing an outsider to trap and ruin her own granddaughter in Jingzhao Prefecture!"

Upon hearing this, Zi'an said, "That's a good idea, but this poison..."

"Go find Miss Yun the Fourth. Tell her I didn't mean any offense, and ask if her generosity might extend to selling me the antidote!"

As Xiu Xinfeng said this, he had already braced himself for Yun Jinnian's steep demand.

"Alright, you wait for me. I'll go see Miss Yun the Fourth right away!" Zi'an also had medical skills.

But when it came to this poison, he couldn't even say he had seen it before, let alone cure it.

"Hurry, I feel my heart twitching already..." Xiu Xinfeng said, taking a deep breath.

It was unexpected to capsize in a gutter.

Ten thousand taels of silver.

Depressing...

No sooner had Zi'an landed in Niannian Garden Academy than Han Tianci sprang in front of him, "Who are you?"

"Are you Miss Yun the Fourth?" Zi'an looked at Han Tianci.

It was somewhat dark and hard to see Han Tianci's face clearly.

"Yes!" Han Tianci replied.

Zi'an was surprised to find that Miss Yun the Fourth carried such a commanding presence, "Miss Yun the Fourth, I've come to..."

"Are you looking for the antidote?" Han Tianci spoke indifferently.

"Yes!"

"You can have the antidote, but it will cost you two hundred thousand taels of silver, not a tael less!"

Zi'an was furious.

This deal had originally been for ten thousand taels, and now for an antidote, it was asking for two hundred thousand—it was simply...

"Fine!"

For the sake of Xiu Xinfeng, Zi'an had no choice but to agree.

"Prompt, I like it. Bring the silver note, and take the antidote!" Han Tianci said.

"I don't have that much silver on me at the moment. Wait for me, I'll bring the silver note soon!" After speaking, Zi'an quickly left.

Han Tianci gave a cold smile and stealthily followed.

Seeing that he didn't leave the Yun Residence but went to Cixin Academy instead, Han Tianci stood still, feeling a coldness engulfing him.

Cixin Academy

The Old Lady was furious upon learning of Xiu Xinfeng's capture, smashing a teacup, "Useless thing!"

What a waste of ten thousand taels of silver.

Tian's Mother did not dare to make a sound either.

She knew the inside of the house was dirty, but it was the first time she had seen a blood grandmother harm and ruin her own granddaughter's innocence.

"It seems the Old Lady is very angry!" Zi'an said as he hopped into the room.

Seeing the Old Lady's furious demeanor, Zi'an let out a cold snort.

"You, who are you?" the Old Lady exclaimed in shock.

"Who I am is not important. I'm just here to tell the Old Lady that my man has been captured and will soon be sent to Jingzhao Prefecture's prison, to ask the Old Lady for some hush money!"

The Old Lady stood up immediately upon hearing this.

"Who exactly are you?"

She knew that man had been captured and had failed to frame Yun Jinnian.

She had thought that Jinnian was kind-hearted and would definitely save this man, so she could then catch them in the act.

Yun Jinnian had secretly harbored a man in Niannian Garden. No matter the reason, her innocence was gone.

Zi'an, seeing the Old Lady's foolish appearance, couldn't bear to look, "Stop the chatter and bring out two hundred and fifty thousand taels of silver. Otherwise, my man will confess at Jingzhao Prefecture as soon as tomorrow, and I'll stir up such a fuss that everyone will know. Then, it won't just be your old hag's reputation that's ruined, but your son and grandson's futures will also be destroyed!"

Chapter 257: Scared to Death

The elderly madam upon hearing the words, felt her whole being falter.

If this matter were to really escalate, even if her son and grandson didn't deal with her, the clan wouldn't spare her either.

Besides, if her son and grandson's futures were destroyed, what would she amount to?

"Please, no, I'll give it, I'll give it!"

Though parting with two hundred thousand taels of silver was akin to carving flesh from her heart, compared to their reputation and her son and grandson's prospects, she still chose the latter.

Immediately, she had the wet nurse, Tian, beg to retrieve the silver note.

"Elder Madam..." Tian hesitated.

"Aren't you going to get it?!" the elderly madam snapped furiously.

Having no choice, Tian entered the back room, retrieved the silver note, and presented it before Zi'an. Zi'an, holding the silver note, counted out two hundred thousand taels and tossed the remainder into his chest before turning to leave.

The elderly madam's legs gave way, and she collapsed onto the floor, "It's always said these people from the pugilistic world can't be trusted, yet you insist on finding such people. What are we to do now!"

Tian knew the elderly madam felt she had bungled the matter and quickly slapped her own face, "It's all this servant's fault, all my fault!"

Zi'an holding the silver note returned to Niannian Garden, handed over the note, and Han Tianci gave him an antidote.

"Thank you!" Zi'an took the antidote and left.

He rushed back to the woodshed, fed the antidote to Xiu Xinfeng, and then started to untie him, "Do you feel any better? Let's get out of here fast!"

Xiu Xinfeng nodded, "Let's go!!"

But just as they exited the woodshed, a dark figure streaked over, hurling a bundle at Xiu Xinfeng and Zi'an, "Brothers, grab your things and run!" Notably, there were pursuers not far behind.

Xiu Xinfeng and Zi'an were dumbfounded.

Then they were surrounded by a group.

"Catch them!" roared the leader, and Xiu Xinfeng and Zi'an were apprehended.

The martial skills of those who caught them were almost supernaturally good; they couldn't even manage a counterattack before they were seized.

Yun Chen, upon receiving the news, also quickly rushed to the scene.

"General Weiyuan!"

General Weiyuan faced Yun Chen, "I am so sorry, Lord Yun. These thieves stole a Guanyin statue granted by His Majesty from the residence, and I personally led men in pursuit. It seems they had accomplices!"

When Yun Chen heard this, he turned his head to look, and saw that one of the men was the same man caught in Niannian Garden; a chill ran down his spine.

"Great General, may I have a word with you in private?" Yun Qi asked cautiously.

He was afraid of angering General Weiyuan and implicating the Yun Family as part of the thieves' gang.

"Fine," General Weiyuan responded gravely.

The two stepped aside, and Yun Chen recounted the events. General Weiyuan was silent for a moment, "So you mean to say, this man was caught by Lord Yun, but just not promptly sent to the Jingzhao Prefecture?"

"That's right, initially I thought it was just a petty thief, who could have imagined..."

Yun Chen was sweating profusely with anxiety.

Compared to a first-rank Great General, he was nothing.

And with General Weiyuan holding the emperor's trust and immense power, he was certainly not someone a minor official like Yun Chen, the Imperial Censor, could afford to offend.

"I see. Whatever the case, let's first take the men back for interrogation and decide then!"

Having said this, General Weiyuan gestured grandly and departed with his men from the main gate of the Yun Residence.

Yun Chen had a feeling that something wasn't right, as if he'd been schemed against, fearing political enemies were aiming to doom him, he hurriedly sought out Yun Qi for advice.

After learning Yun Qi was in the front yard, he dashed anxiously to Yun Qi's courtyard.

In his haste, Yun Chen didn't notice any noise and pushed open the door to Yun Qi's room, "Second brother..."

Chapter 258: Flesh and Blood Indistinct

"How did you get here!" Yun Qi asked indifferently.

Yun Chen looked at him, "Second brother, how did you become like this?"

Yun Qi said nothing.

Indeed, how had he ended up in such a state.

Once, he too was driven and optimistic, heading out joyfully, returning cheerfully, thrilled to no end just by the thought of Shu-niang waiting at home for him, completely oblivious to the directions.

Then that year, Shu-niang bore him Jinnian, and he was absolutely over the moon.

A soft and tender daughter, ah, the crystallization of his love with Shu-niang.

They were a happy family of three.

He thought they would always be happy, until that day, she woke up in Auntie Su's bed, and then Auntie Su, crying, went to kneel before Shu-niang, who immediately turned pale, and then she cried.

At that moment, Yun Qi knew, he was doomed.

Although Auntie Su kept saying it was her fault, Shu-niang said nothing, only that she didn't want to see him.

He desperately explained, swore an oath, but in the end, waking up in Auntie Hua's bed turned into a colossal joke.

Shu-niang no longer wanted anything to do with him.

She never let him come near her again.

For four years, the woman he loved was right by his side, yet as distant as the horizon.

The most despairing part was that Shu-niang actually got together with his third brother....

They were together.

Third brother professed his love for Shu-niang, and Shu-niang, from beginning to end, never offered an explanation, only demanding a divorce, wanting to leave with Jinnian.

He didn't want a divorce, how could he bear to divorce her.

He had already thought it over, Shu-niang despised him, and now she too had done it once, could it not even the score.

But Elder Brother and Mother would not let Shu-niang take Jinnian away, insistently saying that Jinnian was the Yun Family's child and must stay in the Yun Family, so Shu-niang went to the village estate.

Jinnian lived in the Yun Family as if it were better to be dead, he knew it, but chose to look the other way, to ignore it.

So Shu-niang hated him, Jinnian hated him.

Everything was his own fault.

But he was really so lonely, so alone.

Yu Rou's appearance eased the pain in his body, but his heart ached more and more, grew emptier and emptier, and everything that came after just became increasingly unmanageable!

There was no going back, never going back....

Yun Qi's eyes red with rage, turned to look at Yun Chen, "It was you who destroyed my family, it was you who wrecked my love. It was you, your ever-so-filial mother, she destroyed me, my family, my love!"

"There are many things I have no proof for, but I'm certain, whether it's Auntie Su or Auntie Hua, or the affair between third brother and Shu-niang, Mother must have been involved, your wife, and most likely the third brother participated too!"

All of these were Yun Qi's suspicions, but he had no proof.

Therefore, his suffering was real.

Shu-niang didn't believe him, wouldn't believe him.

And he couldn't find any evidence.

Yun Chen, stupefied, truly wished he had never come.

"You're drunk, and you're crazy!" After Yun Chen roared this, he turned and left.

He was guilty too!

When it came to Jinnian, the Yun Family all felt guilty.

They couldn't speak of it, couldn't mention it, for bringing it up was like slapping themselves in the face with a stinging impact.

Chapter 259: Not Entering the Palace

Yun Qi stood alone in the courtyard, slowly sitting on the ground as he began to cry like a child.

Helpless, yet aggrieved!

"Shun-niang..."

He made so much silver, held high positions, had countless beauties, but his heart felt empty.

It hurt so much.

Yicai Garden

Xu Xinmo was still happily waiting for good news.

Daidai rushed in from outside, flustered, "Miss, something terrible happened!"

"What is it?"

"That man was captured by General Weiyuan as a thief!"

Xu Xinmo was stunned for a moment before finally responding, "Captured?"

"Yes, captured. The master has gone to consult with the second master about a strategy!" As Daidai spoke, she, too, began to feel some panic.

After walking back and forth several times in the room, Xu Xinmo said, "Don't panic, this was done by my maternal grandmother, it has nothing to do with me, I know nothing about it!"

Daidai stood bewildered for quite a while before she understood Xu Xinmo's intention.

If she could so easily cast aside her doting maternal grandmother, what about her, a mere maid...

This night was destined to be restless.

Imperial Palace

The Emperor's poisoning had taken effect, making him somewhat maddened, and several palace maids had already died at his hands.

The Empress immediately sent someone out of the palace to invite Han Xuzi in.

After Han Xuzi entered the palace, he could only temporarily control the Emperor's condition.

"Master Han!"

The Emperor called out weakly.

After a moment of contemplation, Han Xuzi finally said, "Your Majesty, I am temporarily unable to concoct an antidote; I can only temporarily control your condition!"

The Emperor's heart skipped a beat.

After a long silence, Han Xuzi said, "Your Majesty, perhaps you might allow my granddaughter to enter the palace to take your pulse."

Han Xuzi was out of options.

After all, the Han Family had been wholeheartedly loyal to the Emperor for generations; he couldn't just watch the Emperor die.

"Yun Family's Fourth Miss?"

"Yes!"

"Then summon the Fourth Miss to the palace to take Our pulse!"

Han Xuzi stood up and bowed to the Emperor, "Your Majesty, I have a request!"

"Speak, Master!"

"In my generation, I only have one daughter, and now in my grandchildren's generation, only one granddaughter and one grandson. Jinnian, she will not enter the palace as a concubine," Han Xuzi said with determination toward the end.

Yun Jinnian could enter the palace to treat the Emperor's illness, but she would not become a concubine.

The Emperor understood and after a while, replied, "We agree!"

There are many beauties in the world, and someone like Yun Jinnian, if favored for life, that would be enough; but if one day she fell out of favor, she could casually concoct a poison that would take his life.

Regardless of beauty or skill, let someone else have her.

He was unwell, and summoning her to the palace was sufficient, there was no need to chill the heart of this deeply loyal subject.

"Then I will leave the palace early tomorrow morning to fetch her!"

"Let the Empress dispatch someone to do it!"

Han Xuzi agreed.

As dawn broke, a Fengluan Carriage left the palace gate, heading straight for Yun Residence.

De Gonggong, the chief steward of Weiyang Palace, sat by the side of the carriage.

When the carriage stopped in front of the Yun Family's house, the doorkeeper nearly fainted from fright.

"Quickly summon Yun Daren to come here; convey the benevolent decree of the Empress!" De Gonggong said as he entered the main hall.

Yun Qi and Yun Chen arrived promptly.

"I greet you, Yun Daren," De Gonggong bowed slightly in respect.

Yun Qi's official rank, that of Second Rank Zuo Du Shilang, was decided by the Yun Family.

Even though the Imperial Decree had not yet arrived, it was no surprise that De Gonggong was aware, given his extensive network of information within the palace.

"What brings Gonggong here?" Yun Chen asked.

He felt somewhat apprehensive, especially after De Gonggong called them senior officials; Yun Chen knew that Yun Qi's position had been secured.

"Conveying the benevolent decree of the Empress, summoning the Fourth Miss of Yun Residence to bring her medicine chest to see the Emperor!"

Chapter 260: Scared to Death

Yun Qi and Yun Chen were startled.

Yun Chen had no idea that Yun Jinnian possessed medical skills.

Yun Qi was aware to some extent, but she was so young, carrying a medicine chest into the palace...

Who fell ill?

Yun Chen didn't dare hesitate and immediately sent someone to summon Yun Jinnian, then asked Chief Eunuch De to take a seat.

Chief Eunuch De sat down with a smile, drinking tea as he waited for Yun Jinnian.

Niannian Garden

Having gone to bed late the previous night and spent the entire day reading at the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence, she felt somewhat tired. It was still early, and Yun Jinnian was still asleep.

By the time the butler arrived, the gate to Niannian Garden was still tightly closed. After pondering for a moment, the butler began to knock on the door.

Yaniang was the first to get up and opened the door, looking coldly at the butler.

"Is the Fourth Miss awake?"

Yaniang shook her head.

"Could you please go and call the Fourth Miss? Someone from the palace has come to summon her to enter the palace!"

Yaniang looked at the butler and then nodded slightly.

She turned to find Mrs. Yuan.

Mrs. Yuan was the second to get up after Yaniang because she had to help Yaniang with preparing Yun Jinnian's meals.

Yaniang pointed to the main gate, and Mrs. Yuan understood that visitors had arrived.

"Yaniang, you carry on with your work, I'll be right back!"

Yaniang nodded.

She was somewhat worried about Yun Jinnian.

Entering the palace was not a good place to be.

But her eyes were also a bit bright with excitement.

When Mrs. Yuan reached the gate, the butler explained the situation, which gave Mrs. Yuan a fright, "You said the Empress summoned the young miss to the palace?"

This, this...

"Yes, it's Chief Eunuch De from the Empress's side!"

Upon hearing this, Mrs. Yuan didn't dare to delay and hurriedly said, "Wait a moment, I will go wake the young miss!"

Mrs. Yuan entered the bedroom and saw Yun Jinnian sleeping soundly, and felt reluctant to wake her.

But, afraid of causing trouble, she called out gently, "Miss!"

"Miss!"

Yun Jinnian woke up groggily, "Nurse?"

"Miss, someone from the palace has come!"

Yun Jinnian was puzzled, "What does someone from the palace want?"

"I don't know, it's an Imperial order from the Empress!"

Yun Jinnian, though confused, quickly got up to tidy up. After washing and dressing, she skipped breakfast and went straight to the main hall.

Chief Eunuch De could not help but sigh when he saw Yun Jinnian.

At such a tender age, she was already revealing exceptional grace and beauty; when she grew up, she would undoubtedly possess beauty that could cause the downfall of cities and countries. No wonder Mr. Han had asked for grace beforehand, allowing Yun Jinnian to enter the palace to treat the Emperor.

Even though she was still young, only twelve, in another two or three years at fifteen or sixteen, when her looks fully blossomed...

"I have met the Fourth Miss," Chief Eunuch De said, smiling extremely amiably.

But Yun Jinnian disliked the evaluating gaze in his eyes.

Yet one does not strike at a smiling face.

Yun Jinnian bowed to Chief Eunuch De, "I have met the Eunuch."

Chief Eunuch De hurriedly returned the gesture, "The Fourth Miss is exempt from such formalities, please proceed!"

After bowing to Yun Qi and Yun Chen, Yun Jinnian straightened her back and left the Yun Residence, taking Hemei and Huan with her onto the carriage.

Although Chief Eunuch De was the chief butler of Weiyang Palace, he did not have the privilege to enter the carriage and could only sit in front of the compartment.

After the carriage set off, Yun Chen finally asked, "Does Jinnian know medical skills?"

"Some..."

As Yun Qi replied, she paused, remembering the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence and the Princess Residence. Every time Yun Jinnian visited, she had the maids carry a medicine chest!

Yun Chen also recalled and asked hesitantly, "Could it be that Jinnian's medical skills are already extremely remarkable?"

Remarkable enough to alarm the palace? And they even sent Chief Eunuch De to fetch her. That was akin to the Emperor's Chief Eunuch Hai being the Chief Eunuch!

As Yun Chen thought about this, her body felt weak.

The more well-known Yun Jinnian became, the more others would become curious about her situation and seek to unravel it...

By then, all these would become arrows used by others to attack the Yun Family!