

## Indulgence 261

### Chapter 261: Plotting Against Her

At this moment, Yun Chen detested the old lady and loathed Xu Xinmo.

He immediately decided to write a letter, asking Xu Xinmo's father to come and take her back to the Xu Family. The Yun Family could no longer keep her.

All day long, she knew nothing but to stir up trouble, simply...

Yun Chen immediately scolded his four daughters, sternly lectured them, then said, "Stay away from Xu Xinmo from now on!"

Yun Muyou and the others had long known that Yun Jinnian had been taken into the Imperial Palace, and they softly asked, "Father, has, has the Emperor come to know something?"

Yun Chen looked at his eldest daughter, "Don't ask too many questions when it's unnecessary, be kinder to Jinnian in the future, don't think about scheming against her all the time!"

Yun Zihan felt a chill in her heart.

So her father had always known what kind of life the fourth sister had been living in the Yun Family. It turned out he had just been pretending to be deaf and dumb, feigning ignorance.

Could such a Yun Family really find her a good match?

Yun Muyou and the others muttered their agreement.

The carriage entered the Imperial Palace, and De Gonggong carefully assisted Yun Jinnian off the carriage. Yun Jinnian hesitated for a moment before gently extending her hand.

De Gonggong's first thought was that the hand was so small, it felt like skin and bones.

But the fingers were slender—well-nourished and given time to grow flesh, they would be the envy of many, the beautiful hands of a beloved!

After alighting from the carriage, Yun Jinnian quickly withdrew her hand, tucking it into her sleeve and gently wiping it with a handkerchief.

She then boarded the sedan chair, which first took her to Weiyang Palace to pay respects to the Empress.

At the entrance of Weiyang Palace, Yun Jinnian felt a bit dazed; after all, she had lived here for a few years...

But the memories she left behind were barely pleasant!

Gradually, she had forgotten those pleasant memories, only Momo remained.

Now, she was striving to change her past; she was no longer the miserable, laughable, and pitiful Yun Jinnian of her previous life!

The Empress came from the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence of the Dai Family—she was Dai Hanmi's direct aunt. Seeing Yun Jinnian, she smiled amicably.

After all, Yun Jinnian had saved her mother, Old Lady Dai.

As Yun Jinnian was about to kneel in salute, the Empress immediately signaled a nearby mammy to step forward and support Yun Jinnian.

"Fourth Miss, there's no need for such formalities!"

Yun Jinnian, puzzled, looked toward the Empress.

The Empress beckoned to Yun Jinnian, "When you see me in the future, there's no need to kneel; a respectful bow will suffice!"

"Thank you for Your Majesty's grace!" Yun Jinnian bowed and, approaching the Empress, a palace maid immediately brought over a soft stool, placing it beside Yun Jinnian with a friendly smile.

"Let's talk seated," said the Empress, scrutinizing Yun Jinnian carefully.

Indeed, she was an exceptional beauty, and in a few years, it was likely none in the palace could compare with her.

But beauty is fleeting; those who serve the emperor with their beauty, how long could their favor last?

No wonder the Divine Doctor had sought a favor in advance!

Yun Jinnian sat down respectfully, and only then did the Empress speak, "Indeed, the Emperor is ill and requires you to have a look, but no word of this must get out. Do you understand?"

"I understand. If anyone asks, I shall say it is the Empress who is unwell!" Yun Jinnian replied calmly.

The Empress nodded, then said after a moment of consideration, "You have performed a great service in this matter, and I will reward you. Tell me, what would you like?"

"Your Majesty, I only wish to serve you well," Yun Jinnian followed the Empress to Yangxin Hall.

By the way, how is my mother's health?" inquired the Empress, unable to stop thinking about her aged mother, relieved that she was well.

"Replying to Her Majesty, Old Lady Dai has been rid of the inner poison and with some time for recuperation, she will be completely well," Yun Jinnian reported.

The Empress was overjoyed at the news and after a brief pause, she said, "You have established a great merit for this deed, and I shall reward you. Tell me, what do you desire?"

### Chapter 262: Audacious Beyond Measure

"Thank you, Empress, any reward is a blessing for this humble girl!"

It also had another meaning, which was that she would accept whatever she was given!

The Empress smiled lightly.

She was somewhat astonished by Yun Jinnian's indifference.

Upon their arrival at the Yangxin Hall, Eunuch Hai greeted them, "This servant has seen the Empress and greets Miss Yun Four!"

The Empress nodded her head, "How is the Emperor now?"

The Empress had not seen the Emperor since he fell ill, hence her question.

"To reply to the Empress, His Majesty is much better now!" said Eunuch Hai, before he turned to Yun Jinnian, "Miss Four, please follow this servant inside, Divine Doctor Han is also there!"

Yun Jinnian nodded, took her medicine chest, and followed Eunuch Hai inside, while the Empress and the others were stopped outside Yangxin Hall.

Inside the great hall, there was a whiff of an ambiguous aura.

Yun Jinnian frowned slightly.

Once inside the inner chamber, Han Xuzi stood up and looked towards Yun Jinnian.

Yun Jinnian lifted her eyes to see a middle-aged man in yellow robes leaning on the bed, her grandfather encouragingly smiling at her.

"This humble girl of the Yun Family, Jinnian, pays respects to the Emperor!" Yun Jinnian bowed slightly.

The Emperor waved his hand, "Dispense with the formalities!"

After standing up, Yun Jinnian bowed to Han Xuzi, "Grandfather!"

Han Xuzi nodded his head, "Come and take a look at the Emperor!"

"Yes!" Yun Jinnian answered, and then said to Eunuch Hai, "Please have someone fetch a basin of hot water for me, and prepare a bowl for cleaning the scalpel."

Eunuch Hai nodded and immediately signaled a young eunuch to prepare everything.

The Emperor was sizing up Yun Jinnian.

Despite her young age, she was remarkably composed, but thinking of the reasons behind Yun Jinnian's calm nature made the Emperor feel somewhat awkward.

It seemed inconceivable that, as of today, he actually needed a child to save him.

And he knew all too well how difficult and bitter the years had been for this child.

Yun Jinnian did not look much at the Emperor, and once the hot water was brought, she first washed her hands, dried them, and then said, "Open all the windows, please!"

Eunuch Hai looked at the Emperor, who nodded his head.

Eunuch Hai promptly took the lead in opening the windows, and a breeze blew into the great hall, diluting its murky atmosphere.

Yun Jinnian sat on a soft stool to take the Emperor's pulse.

Han Xuzi stood by Yun Jinnian's side.

With just one pulse, Yun Jinnian knew why the Emperor had been poisoned; she had handed the poison to Chu Yu, who then used it on the Emperor.

Despite her great shock, Yun Jinnian maintained an unchanged expression.

However, she dared not immediately detoxify the Emperor.

After a while, Yun Jinnian relaxed her hand.

"How is it?" Han Xuzi asked.

"The poison affecting His Majesty should come from Nanjiang, as for the exact nature, it cannot be determined at this moment," Yun Jinnian said indifferently.

Bowing her head slightly, her eyes flickered.

She wasn't very good at lying, afraid of being caught out.

The Emperor's eyes darkened as he watched Yun Jinnian, intuitively feeling that the child knew something she wasn't saying.

"Is there a way to determine it?" the Emperor asked.

"There is!"

"What way?" the Emperor pressed, staring intently at Yun Jinnian.

"We need the blood of His Majesty!"

To need blood meant there must be a wound.

The Emperor, the dignitary of the highest order, to speak of wounding as if it were a casual affair.

A hushed anger suddenly fell over the great hall.

Even Han Xuzi looked at Yun Jinnian somewhat astonished.

This child certainly dared to speak her mind!

"From where do you need the blood, and how much?"

"From the major artery at the wrist, about a bowl's worth," Yun Jinnian replied calmly.

She had to remain calm, otherwise, she might reveal something inadvertently.

This was the Emperor, not just an ordinary person.

The Emperor was silent for a moment, then said, "I consent!"

A healthy body and a bowl of blood, the Emperor knew well how to make his choice!

## Chapter 263: Scared Half to Death

Yun Jinnian rose to pay respects to the Emperor, "Your Majesty, I beg your pardon!"

Then he turned his head to Han Xuzi and said, "Grandfather, please take care of His Majesty's bleeding later!"

"Mm!" Han Xuzi nodded.

He was also curious about what Yun Jinnian was going to do.

After all, he really couldn't think of a way to detoxify the Emperor!

The Emperor stretched out his left hand.

Yun Jinnian opened the medicine box, took out a knife, placed it in a basin with alcohol, and had someone prepare a bowl before he took out the knife again and made a cut on the Emperor's wrist.

It wasn't very deep, but blood immediately began to flow out.

The Emperor turned his wrist over, allowing the blood to steadily flow into the bowl.

Although it was the same poison, in Chu Yu's body it had turned into worms after more than a decade, but in the Emperor's body, it had been just over a year, so even if they were worms, they would be tiny, or even just worm eggs.

Once the bowl was full, Han Xuzi swiftly stopped the bleeding for the Emperor.

Yun Jinnian took the bowl to the side, scooped some blood with a spoon into a clean bowl, and poured some powder into it.

Soon, the color of the blood slowly faded, eventually becoming as clear as water.

But the faint wriggling could be seen very clearly.

"Heavens!"

Eunuch Hai screamed.

He considered himself well-informed, but had never imagined that there would be worms inside the Emperor's body!

That was the Emperor, the supreme ruler.

"What's wrong?" the Emperor asked in a deep voice.

Eunuch Hai looked at Yun Jinnian, then brought the bowl in front of the Emperor, "Your Eternal Majesty, please look!"

The Emperor looked into the bowl, saw the wriggling worms, and felt a chill, "Did all these come out of my body?"

Or were they existing inside his body?

Yun Jinnian nodded, "Yes!"

The Emperor felt weak and numb, "Can you cure it?"

Yun Jinnian shook her head slightly, "It can't be solved right away!"

"How long will it take to develop an antidote?" the Emperor asked, his voice unable to hide his urgency.

Yun Jinnian naturally wouldn't tell the Emperor that she could solve it immediately and that she was the one who concocted the poison.

That would be seeking death.

And she was also thinking of the poison inside Prince Yanjun's body...

If only she could take a trip to Nanjiang!

"Your Majesty, I'm not certain when the antidote can be developed, but may I take a trip to Nanjiang?" Yun Jinnian said this, finding it unbelievable even to herself.

She was actually thinking of going to Nanjiang.

Of course, if she went to Nanjiang and studied with the local physicians there, she would learn things that were absolutely not in the books.

And the poisons in Nanjiang were indeed baffling, constantly involving worms; Yun Jinnian felt it necessary to make the trip personally.

"You want to go to Nanjiang?" the Emperor asked in astonishment.

A girl, only twelve years old, actually told him that she wanted to go to Nanjiang, was she too young and rash!

Even Han Xuzi was stunned.

He had no idea that his granddaughter had become so decisive.

"Replying to Your Majesty, to solve the poison in your body, a trip to Nanjiang is necessary. And I don't dare to hide from Your Majesty, the poison that afflicted Master Dongfang of Xiaohe Village and the poison Princess Zhenguo suffered from earlier also came from Nanjiang. It was then passed on to Prince Yanjun!" Yun Jinnian said, but made no mention of Chu Yu.

From what she knew in her past life, Yun Jinnian was aware that the Emperor didn't like Chu Yu, even detested and dreaded him to an extent.

The Emperor was aware of the severe poison in Chu Yu's body but didn't know what poison it was. Now that Yun Jinnian had spoken, the Emperor started thinking more deeply.

If one, two, three individuals were poisoned, all originating from Nanjiang, he would not believe for a second that Nanjiang had no treacherous intentions.

#### Chapter 264: Must Go

"Is there no other choice but to go?" the Emperor asked in a deep voice, scrutinizing Yun Jinnian closely, trying to see if she was lying. His spies had reported that she had met with Chu Yu several times.

Once was on the way to Huguo Temple, the second time in Huaxi County, and the third time at the residence of the Princess of Zhenguo.

Chu Yu, with his elegant and graceful demeanor, had the appearance of a "Banished Fairy" under the clear moonlight. Although Yun Jinnian was young, which girl doesn't harbor feelings of affection!

"Yes, I must go!" Yun Jinnian spoke calmly, raising her head and looking at the Emperor with eyes clear and pure.

She had to persuade the Emperor to send someone to escort her to Nanjiang.

As for the reason for going, firstly, it was to learn, and secondly, it was for Prince Yanjun. Without examining his pulse diagnosis records, she was fifty percent confident in treating Prince Yanjun's poisoning; but after seeing his records, her confidence dropped to thirty percent. Naturally, after

Rourou examined his pulse, it might dwindle to a mere ten percent, which was something Yun Jinnian didn't wish to see.

As for the Emperor, with her maternal grandfather present, even if the poison couldn't be completely cured, dragging it out for a year or so wouldn't be fatal.

Towards this father from her past life, Yun Jinnian didn't have any good feelings, so she was in no hurry to cure his poisoning!

"Is it entirely for me?"

The Emperor asked in a deep voice, still not quite believing that Yun Jinnian's intentions were solely for him.

"Replying to Your Majesty, not entirely!" Yun Jinnian told the truth.

"Jinnian..." Han Xuzi exclaimed in surprise.

However, the Emperor actually smiled, waved Han Xuzi to silence, and then looked towards Yun Jinnian, "Then for whom else is it?"

"One is for Your Majesty, and the other is for Prince Yanjun. Because I promised Her Highness the Princess, I would cure Prince Yanjun's poisoning. But after seeing Prince Yanjun's pulse diagnosis, I believe I cannot cure him!" Yun Jinnian said, pausing before continuing, "If I did not come to the palace today, I would still have to go to Nanjiang in a few days!"

This was the truth.

And the honest truth.

The Emperor, rather than being annoyed, smiled again, "It seems I am just an incidental concern!"

Yun Jinnian was amused by the Emperor's words; her beauty, already great, became even more enchanting when she smiled, with the corners of her eyes and brows all evoking a soft charm. Though her appearance was not yet fully developed, she already possessed a beauty that could overthrow cities and kingdoms.

The Emperor looked at her, then averted his gaze, feeling a tickle in his throat.

He reminded himself that Yun Jinnian was just a child; his eldest son was more than ten years older than her.

And he had promised Han Xuzi not to let Yun Jinnian enter the palace.

Quickly collecting his thoughts, he asked, "Then, how long will it take to return from Nanjiang?"

"The journey to Nanjiang requires a month and a half, and I must become acquainted with the local customs and some pharmacology on the way, so the speed of the carriage will have to be slower. It will take at least two months and about four or five days. The return journey can be hastened, so it will be about four months. If I'm lucky, I can be back by the new year, but if not..." Yun Jinnian took a deep breath, "I may not return until this time next year!"

This too was the truth.

The main reason for the trip was Prince Yanjun's poisoning.

Actually, what Yun Jinnian hoped most was for Prince Yanjun to accompany her to Nanjiang; perhaps there would be some unexpected encounters...

The Emperor fell silent.

Han Xuzi couldn't cure the poison inside him, but Yun Jinnian had to go to Nanjiang, "..."

"My maternal grandfather's medical skills are extraordinary. With Your Majesty's cooperation, he will surely be able to manage Your Majesty's illness!" Yun Jinnian said and then lowered her head again.

This modified Poison Scripture simply required abstinence from the company of women to improve; once one indulged, it was truly...

Irreversible.

If it weren't for her maternal grandfather's timely arrival at the palace, the Emperor might have rapidly deteriorated and eventually died from exhaustion!

Chapter 265: Malicious

Yun Jinnian didn't feel a shred of guilt about this.

Especially after learning from Chu Yu that the Emperor knew the Yun Family had collectively mistreated her but had only summoned Yun Chen for a few questions of reprimand, she was disappointed.

So when she found out the poison he suffered from was by her own hand, Yun Jinnian felt a bit of schadenfreude.

"Then I will send someone to escort you!"

It was an escort, but also surveillance.

"Yes!" Yun Jinnian rose to perform a courtesy and then added, "I hope the Emperor sends female guards, and they're to be under my command for the time being!"

"Rest assured on that matter, I have it in mind!"

"Then I will take my leave to make preparations for our departure first thing tomorrow morning!"

"Go ahead!"

The Emperor waved his hand, "Master Han, you may also return now!"

"Yes, Your Majesty!"

After Han Xuzi had clenched his fist towards the Emperor and left Yangxin Hall with Yun Jinnian, the Empress was still waiting outside. After the granddaughter and grandfather paid their respects to the Empress, they were led by Eunuch Hai out of the Imperial Palace and left in Han Xuzi's carriage.

"Jinnian!"

"Grandfather!" Yun Jinnian quietly called out.

Han Xuzi looked at Yun Jinnian, "You..."

He wanted to say that Yun Jinnian had lied, but in the end, he couldn't bear to question her.

Taking a deep breath, he asked, "Where to first?"

"Let's go to the Princess Residence of Prince Rui first!" Yun Jinnian said, holding Han Xuzi's arm tightly and leaning her head on it.

Her heart felt sour, somewhat uncomfortable.

Han Xuzi stroked Yun Jinnian's hair, "You child, I don't know what to say to you. At this point, it's impossible to ask you not to go. You can only bring more poison and wound medicines with you. Your journey to Nanjiang will be fraught with difficulties. Be very careful and make sure to protect yourself well!"

"Hmm!"

Yun Jinnian responded, feeling a bit like crying.

This was her first act of defiance.

What she received was not reprimand, but sympathy.

"Good girl!" Han Xuzi hugged Yun Jinnian's shoulders tightly, gently patting her.

He was very proud inside.

While his fame as a Divine Doctor might have been somewhat undeserved, since he lacked a compassionate heart.

Not like Yun Jinnian, whose compassionate heart attracted good karma.

If it were not for the Han Family's teachings, he wouldn't want to treat the Emperor.

"Grandfather, I will come back safely, and all of our family will be fine!"

Han Xuzi felt a slight tightness in his chest, "I wanted to accompany you on your journey!"

"I know!"

She knew that her grandfather truly loved her.

She wasn't an ignorant girl; she understood everything.

"Then let Tianci accompany you!"

Yun Jinnian was taken aback, looking up at Han Xuzi in shock.

"Tianci is already seven, and in a few months, he will be eight. It is said that traveling a thousand miles teaches more than reading a thousand books. Let him accompany you to gain some experience. Besides, Tianci's martial arts and strategy are both quite good. With you siblings together, I can rest easy!"

Yun Jinnian thought for a moment before saying, "I will protect my little brother well!"

"Good!"

Imperial Palace

The Emperor leaned back on his bedpost, and a dark shadow landed in front of him, "Your Majesty!"

"Where is Prince Rui?"

"Prince Rui has left the Capital City to welcome Prince Yanjun back!"

The Emperor frowned, "Prince Yanjun is coming back?"

"Indeed!"

"How is the Prince Rui Residence doing?"

"The spies report back that His Highness Prince Rui is still taking medicine, and there are no maids in the residence; he still falls ill from time to time!"

The Emperor gestured for the shadow guard to leave.

A vindictive thought crossed his mind.

Could Yun Jinnian cure only him and not Chu Yu? Or might Chu Yu be urged to favor a woman and meet with an early death?

This thorn in his side, this source of hatred, truly infuriated him!

The carriage stopped at the gate of Princess Residence of Prince Rui. Han Xuzi said to Yun Jinnian, "You go alone; I won't go in!"

#### Chapter 266: Persuasion

Yun Jinnian nodded, not asking the reason, and got off the carriage.

When the gatekeeper saw it was Yun Jinnian, he immediately welcomed her with enthusiasm, "I've seen Miss Yun, the fourth one!"

He reached out to take the medicine box that Hemei was carrying on her back, but Hemei shook her head.

The gatekeeper didn't insist, and enthusiastically escorted Yun Jinnian towards the inner courtyard, someone had already run ahead to inform them.

When the Princess of Zhenguo heard that Yun Jinnian had come, she was quite surprised, but still said, "Please bring the guest in!"

Yun Jinnian entered the parlor, paid her respects to the Princess, and was invited by the Princess of Zhenguo to sit down and talk before asking, puzzled, "Why have you come?"

"Your Highness, I had earlier made a trip to the palace and came specially to tell you that I will be setting off for Nanjiang tomorrow!"

"Heading to Nanjiang? What about little five?" the Princess of Zhenguo exclaimed in shock.

There were few people besides the Emperor who could make Yun Jinnian leave so hastily.

But her little five...

"Your Highness, if possible, please let Prince Yanjun accompany me to Nanjiang!"

The Princess of Zhenguo fell silent, quietly watching Yun Jinnian.

Yun Jinnian also looked up at the Princess of Zhenguo and said, "Your Highness, I had about a fifty percent certainty of curing the Prince's poison, but after examining the Prince's pulse, it has dropped to thirty percent, no, perhaps even less than thirty percent. If I'm not mistaken, the Prince is now not only mute, but I fear his eyesight is also deteriorating, and he could become blind..."

"No, no, no!"

The Princess of Zhenguo waved her hands away, "I don't believe it, little five, how could he..."

Yun Jinnian watched the Princess in such a state, feeling pained herself, and reached out to hold her trembling hand, "Your Highness, I will do my utmost!"

"Really?" the Princess of Zhenguo asked with a hoarse voice.

"Your Highness, although Jinnian is young, she understands the importance of keeping her word—a promise is worth its weight in gold!" said Yun Jinnian, her eyes briefly sweeping before she continued, "Whatever happened in the palace, Your Highness would be able to find out if you intended to. This trip to Nanjiang, I'm going not only to improve my medical skills, which accounts for thirty percent of the reason, but seventy percent is for the Prince!"

Upon hearing this, the Princess of Zhenguo was astoundingly bewildered.

Then she thought of the news she received, several palace maids had died mysteriously in Yangxin Hall, and it seemed they were violated to death.

Thinking of the poison on Chu Yu.

The Princess of Zhenguo immediately associated it with the Emperor being afflicted by the same kind of poison.

If Yun Jinnian could treat Chu Yu, naturally she could treat the Emperor as well, but such detoxification couldn't be done overnight. Attending to the Emperor meant her little five would have to wait...

People are selfish, especially when it comes to the youngest child, whom they've spoiled and felt guilty towards since the beginning. The Princess of Zhenguo was even more so.

Yun Jinnian was not confident, which was why she needed to go to Nanjiang to enhance her medical skills first before daring to treat the Prince with such caution—it made sense.

After a long while, the Princess of Zhenguo finally took a deep breath, "You go ahead first, I will have Yaya escort little five to Nanjiang, agree on a location, and you can meet up along the way!"

"Mhm!"

Yun Jinnian nodded.

The Princess of Zhenguo gently reached out and caressed Yun Jinnian's head, "Girl, you are a good child. I had intended to have little five leave with you, but I'm afraid that once you leave, I may never see him again. So, I will have him come back first to see him one more time..."

"Your Highness, I will exhaust all efforts to bring the Prince back, safe and sound!" Yun Jinnian said, eyes brimming with tears.

Such is the love of parents.

Yun Jinnian thought of her own mother; if something happened to her, she would probably be devastated as well.

"Alright, alright, with your word, I feel reassured!"

Chapter 267: Attracting Hatred

Yun Family

Xu Xinmo ceaselessly prayed to the gods and Buddha, hoping that Yun Jinnian had offended a noble in the palace, that he had been beaten or scolded; in short, as long as he didn't gain any benefits, it was fine.

Cixin Academy

The old lady was very anxious as well.

After all, that man had been taken away by General Weiyuan. If he confessed, what should she do then?

She would be laughed at by everyone in the world, disliked by her son, despised by her grandsons, and hated.

Grasping a string of Buddha Beads, she chanted non-stop, "Amitabha!"

It was unclear whether she hoped the Buddha would ensure their deed remained concealed or that Yun Jinnian had offended someone of importance in the palace.

Tian Momo looked on, feeling a chill down her spine...

After returning home, Yun Jinnian went directly to Qiyue Academy. Mrs. Han was not there; only after asking did she find out that Mrs. Han had gone to Niannian Garden.

Yun Jinnian then returned to Niannian Garden.

She saw Han Tianci sitting beneath the window reading a book. The study window had a direct view of the courtyard's entrance. Mrs. Han sat on one side, sewing clothes.

Yun Jinnian watched and a smile touched the corners of her eyes and brows.

"Sister is back!"

Han Tianci dropped his book and ran quickly to Yun Jinnian's side, grabbing her hand, "Sister, is the palace fun?"

"The palace is very magnificent, but it's not fun!" Yun Jinnian said, leading Han Tianci toward the small hall.

"Ah..."

"Because there are many nobles in the palace, I couldn't run around or jump, as it might cause offense to someone of importance, so it's not fun!"

Han Tianci immediately understood.

"Then it's better to stay at home!"

Yun Jinnian led him to where Mrs. Han was seated.

"Mother!"

Mrs. Han smiled, "Are you hungry? Let Yaniang bring the food up!"

"There's no rush, I have something to tell Mother!" Yun Jinnian was very serious.

Mrs. Han suddenly felt at a loss.

"Speak, I'm listening!"

"Mother, I need to take a trip early tomorrow morning!"

"Where to?" Mrs. Han asked in surprise.

Why did she have to leave just after returning?

"To Nanjiang, taking brother with me!" Yun Jinnian said as she held Mrs. Han's hand, "Mother, I must go, and brother..."

Mrs. Han looked at Yun Jinnian, then at Han Tianci who stood beside her, his face full of anticipation.

He was a boy, the future of the Han Family, the hope of the Han Family.

But growing up sheltered in a greenhouse is not conducive to robust growth. It's good for him to see the world outside.

"Go, then. It's good to have someone to look out for each other on the road. But remember one thing, take care of yourselves and return safely."

Yun Jinnian nodded firmly.

Han Tianci nodded as well, "Mother, I will protect Sister, and I will protect myself too!"

"Good boy!" Mrs. Han said, standing up, "I'll go make you something to eat, then pack your things!"

"Mother, my things don't need much packing, I'm about the same height as brother, wearing his men's clothing will do!" Yun Jinnian quickly spoke up.

Mrs. Han paused, "That's right, men's clothing is more convenient when traveling. Let's pack a bit and send you over to your maternal grandfather's house!"

Just as Yun Jinnian was about to nod, the butler came in beaming with joy.

"Fourth Miss, Fourth Miss, people from the palace have come with several large chests; they say it's a reward given to you by the Empress!"

Yun Jinnian and Mrs. Han looked at each other.

Mrs. Han examined Yun Jinnian carefully, "Let's go, it's time to receive the reward!"

Everyone who could be present was there. From the outset, De Gonggong had passed the benevolent decree from the Empress, excusing the need to kneel; a respectful bow to receive the reward was sufficient.

"Miss Yun, please receive your reward!" De Gonggong said with a smile.

Compared to his assessment in the morning, he was much more respectful now.

Yun Jinnian bowed respectfully, and De Gonggong praised her verbally for a few moments before letting her stand. Mrs. Yuan immediately presented a purse that contained two silver notes, each worth a thousand taels.

It wasn't excessively heavy, but it was not light either.

De Gonggong happily accepted it, said a few more words, and then returned to the palace.

In the hall

The dozen or so large chests really did inspire envy, jealousy, and hate!

Chapter 268: Different on the Inside and Outside

Yun Jinnian didn't care who was jealous or envious, he turned to Mrs. He to pay respect, "Elder Aunt, could you please have someone carry these items to Niannian Garden?"

Yun Jinnian had just suddenly won the favor of the Princess of the State, and now had received gifts from the Empress upon entering the palace.

The matrimonial prospects for Yun Muyou were not looking good, and she thought about arranging a marriage for Yun Zhen, advocating the principle of 'starting a family before establishing a career,' but she couldn't possibly match him with the daughters of noble families, and she looked down on commoners' daughters.

Feeling utterly frustrated, now things were looking up with Yun Jinnian's sudden stroke of luck...

"Good, good!"

Mrs. He immediately agreed and instructed her servants to quickly carry the chests to Niannian Garden.

Xu Xinmo had been cursing Yun Jinnian in Yicai Garden, only to learn that Yun Jinnian had returned.

She was so annoyed she wanted to smash things.

But before she had the chance to destroy anything, she found out that someone from the palace had come, and it was to bestow gifts upon Yun Jinnian.

This nearly made Xu Xinmo faint with anger.

She could have chosen not to see what exactly Yun Jinnian had received, but driven by jealousy, she thought about possibly gaining something from the situation.

Yet, in her dreams she would never have imagined that after giving thanks, Yun Jinnian wouldn't even let anyone see the gifts, having them carried straight to Niannian Garden.

Feeling aggrieved, she looked to the senior lady of the house, seeing her also full of astonishment and anger, Xu Xinmo immediately went to her side and softly called out, "Grandmother!"

The senior lady was also feeling suffocated and frustrated, but with everyone around, making a scene would inevitably lead to gossip.

She took Xu Xinmo's hand and gently patted it, as if to say, "Don't rush, we'll get those things for you sooner or later!"

Xu Xinmo immediately understood.

Watching the servants carrying away the items back to Niannian Garden, she was curious about what exactly was inside, and at the same time disdained Yun Jinnian's stinginess.

Just like her mother, full of petty household mentality, not likable at all!

However, as the chests were carried away one by one, Xu Xinmo still clutched her handkerchief tightly, as if those things were rightfully hers, but taken away by Yun Jinnian.

But with Mrs. Han present, Xu Xinmo did not dare to make a scene.

Nor did the senior lady.

Both of them were the type to bully the weak and fear the strong; when Mrs. Han got fierce, she was indeed very intimidating.

Mrs. Han glanced at the senior lady and Xu Xinmo.

They truly wanted to play the harlot while also erecting a monument to chastity.

"Ha!"

With a cold laugh, Mrs. Han took Yun Jinnian to Niannian Garden.

Yun Qi and Yun Chen exchanged a look, then each went their own way.

All of a sudden, Yun Muyou said, "Mother, may I go and see my fourth sister?"

"I'll go too!"

"I'll go as well!"

Yun Musi and Yun Mulan also clamored to go.

Mrs. He smiled, "Hmm, Han'er, you go too!"

Yun Muyou, leading her three sisters, headed directly to Niannian Garden, without even bothering to ask if Xu Xinmo wanted to come along.

And Xu Xinmo also realized that her cousins were all distancing themselves from her, blatantly and without any scruples.

Her heart felt inexplicably panicked.

Mrs. He said, "I'll go to the main kitchen to have a look!"

Then she turned and left.

The senior lady sat in the main seat, feeling a chill passing through her heart...

Niannian Garden

Upon hearing that Yun Jinnian was about to leave the house again, Mrs. Yuan felt distressed and kept wiping away tears, unable to muster any excitement for the Empress's gifts; Yun Jinnian could only smile helplessly, while Mrs. Han quietly consoled her.

To Mrs. Yuan, Yun Jinnian was someone who had both contributed and suffered; throughout the years, if it weren't for her unwavering protection, Yun Jinnian would not exist in this world.

"Fourth sister (elder sister)!"

Hearing the voice, Yun Jinnian was quite surprised, how did Yun Muyou and the others come?

Yet, she let the servants welcome them in.

As she opened the chests bestowed by the Empress, "Each of you pick a piece of fabric, and then choose a piece of jewelry!"

Chapter 269: Grateful for Kindness

In fact, in households where sisters are harmonious, dignitaries often share their gifts, aside from a few items that cannot be casually given away, with the sisters in the family, uniting them in solidarity.

The Yun Family should have been the same, but because the dowager didn't make things clear, there was disharmony among the Yun sisters, sometimes even failing to maintain a façade of unity.

Yun Muyou, Yun Musi, and Yun Mulan were overjoyed, while Yun Zihan looked somewhat troubled as she glanced at Yun Jinnian.

"Second Sister, you pick as well," said Yun Jinnian softly and gently.

Accustomed to this kind of indifference, she couldn't adopt an overly enthusiastic demeanor.

Yun Zihan also knew Yun Jinnian's personality, nodded slightly, and made her choices very quickly, unlike Yun Muyou and her sisters, who were indecisive, liking this one moment and that one the next.

Yun Jinnian wasn't concerned, because, in the end, there wouldn't be many of these items that she would actually wear.

For one, they had been worn by others, and secondly, how many items from the palace were untainted by blood?

She would just save them to give away in the future.

She didn't care for them, but others certainly did!

Only then did Yun Jinnian remember that she had been back for several days, and aside from Dai Hanmi, she had yet to see Ruan Wanrong, Hu Shuiling, and Chen Danyan, nor had she delivered the gifts she had prepared for them!

She quickly said to Mrs. Han, "Mother, would it be alright for me to host dinner for Sister Wanrong and the others at Huiquan Tower tonight?"

"Mhm, you should write a letter and send it over now, then wait for them at Huiquan Tower," said Mrs. Han, knowing that Yun Jinnian was going to Nanjiang and it was uncertain when she would return. She added, "Miss Ruan and Miss Hu seem to have reached marriageable age, and you haven't given them their hairpinning gifts yet; you should also prepare a gift for them to bring over!"

"Mhm," Yun Jinnian nodded, went to the study, quickly wrote a letter, and had Hemei deliver it. She personally picked out two jade hairpins, two gold inlaid jade bracelets, and for each person, a cool piece of snow silk brocade. The Empress had bestowed a total of ten pieces of this fabric, each a different color. Yun Muyou and her sisters knew good material when they saw it and each took one piece, as did Ruan Wanrong and Hu Shuiling, leaving only five pieces remaining.

After thinking it over, Yun Jinnian took one of the pieces and gave it to Yun Zihan, "Second Sister, this is for you!"

Yun Zihan joyfully accepted it.

Aunt Cui had not been feeling well these past few days, and even though the weather had not yet warmed, she would be drenched in sweat with any movement.

Yun Zihan thought about it and decided to take this Toona tree brocade to make a set of clothes for Aunt Cui.

Four pieces remained.

Yun Jinnian intended to give one to Mrs. Yuan; the remainder would go to Mrs. Han, for her to make clothes. This snow silk brocade was very comfortable to wear in the summer, but it was unfortunately only available within the palace and unobtainable by the common folk.

Even among the nobles within the palace, one could not acquire many pieces in a summer.

The Empress had bestowed ten pieces, but was it for the sake of the dowager of the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence, or for the Emperor?

Yun Jinnian didn't delve too deeply into these thoughts.

She gathered her things to head to Huiquan Tower and wait for Dai Hanmi, Ruan Wanrong, and the others.

Yun Muyou, holding onto Yun Jinnian, said, "Little Sister, can we come too?"

She was now fifteen years old and would turn sixteen after the new year, but as for marriage...

Yun Muyou didn't even know what kind of man she wanted to marry, but faced with her current situation, she was afraid.

Her mother had issued several invites, all of which had been declined.

And, the families of Dai Hanmi, Ruan Wanrong, Hu Shuiling, and Chen Danyan each had brothers of marriageable age. If she could win their favor, they would speak to their mothers at home...

Yun Jinnian hadn't wanted to bring Yun Muyou and the others along, but looking towards Yun Zihan and thinking for a moment, she relented, "Alright, you guys quickly get ready and inform Auntie, we'll leave in a while!"

Chapter 270: Seeing the Beautiful Lady Smile Again

"Alright!"

Yun Muyou was overjoyed. After paying her respects to Mrs. Han with a curtsey, she quickly left with her two younger sisters.

Yun Zihan suddenly asked, "Fourth sister, am I going too?"

"Yes, go. Second sister, quickly go back and get dressed up beautifully!"

Yun Zihan's face turned red instantly. She nodded and turned towards Mrs. Han to curtsey, "Second Aunt, I'll be leaving first then!"

"Go ahead!"

Watching Yun Zihan leave, Mrs. Han then said to Yun Jinnian, "Who knows if she realizes all you're doing for her?"

Yun Jinnian paused, then smiled faintly, "Whether she knows or not doesn't matter. I've done my best!"

Yun Zihan hadn't had an especially good life in the Yun Family, especially since Mrs. Cui received much of Yun Qi's favor, Mrs. He must have hated it in her heart, though she didn't say it aloud.

She just hadn't dared to lay a hand too harshly and cause Mrs. Cui's death.

But looking at the main branch with three legitimate sons, two legitimate daughters, and not a single illegitimate child, and several of the concubines now without child, could Mrs. He really be that simple?

Yun Jinnian didn't believe it.

"Hmm, Mother will also keep an eye out for suitable matches for her. She'll be of age next year!" Mrs. Han said.

"Thank you, Mother!"

Mrs. Han patted Yun Jinnian's head, "Silly child!"

Han Tiani didn't like the people of the Yun Family. As soon as Yun Muyou and her sisters arrived, he hid away. Although Mrs. Han had some criticisms about Yun Muyou and the others focusing solely on the rewards bestowed by the Empress and not even inquiring about him, it seemed that Yun Jinnian didn't mind, so she didn't say much more.

Mrs. Han decided to send Han Tiani back to the Han Family shortly after Yun Jinnian left for Huiquan Tower. She arranged for Han Tiani to meet up with Yun Jinnian outside the city the next day.

As soon as Yun Jinnian and the others left, Mrs. Han immediately sent Han Tiani back to the Han Family.

Xu Xinmo, upon learning that Yun Jinnian and the others had left, cried out of anger.

"Hmph, a bunch of little tramps, who'd be jealous of them, who'd want them!"

Daidai remained silent.

Not daring to say another word!

Weiyang Palace

The Empress was carefully pruning a pot of flowers, clipping off the superfluous leaves and branches meticulously, when De Gonggong entered the grand hall carefully.

"Your Majesty!"

The Empress slightly lifted her gaze, "Hmm!"

She replied softly, continuing to groom the branches of the flowers.

De Gonggong hesitated for a moment before speaking, "Your Majesty, I have just received news that Miss Yun, the fourth young lady, is going to Nanjiang to find an antidote for the Emperor and Prince Yanjun!"

The hands of the Empress holding the scissors paused, and after a while, she gently put down the scissors, "Prince Yanjun?"

"Yes!"

She took the handkerchief passed to her by a palace maid and carefully wiped her hands, then after a while, she spoke, "The rewards were perhaps too little after all!"

If only she had known, had known earlier...

The Empress touched her chest over her heart.

Her eyes seemed to wander!

"Your Majesty!" De Gonggong called softly.

The Empress came back to her senses, "It is fine to give her rewards another time, it is I who have been muddled!"

"That's the right idea!" De Gonggong said softly.

The Empress took a deep breath, "The weather seems nice, let's go for a walk in the Imperial Garden!"

As for the Emperor's poisoning, if the Emperor himself does not speak of it, she would pretend as if she knew nothing about it.

She would just offer care when it was needed.

To regret having seen, is to have become another's wife...

Yun Jinnian and her sisters quickly arrived at Huiquan Tower. The shopkeeper immediately led Yun Jinnian to a private room on the third floor, where pastries and tea were served quickly. Yun Jinnian then had the waiters prepare a table full of delicious food—All the signature dishes of Huiquan Tower.

Dai Hanmi was the first to arrive, escorted personally by Dai Hanbo.

There was no avoiding a formal volley of courtesies.

Dai Hanbo smiled warmly, stealing glances at Yun Jinnian.

After several months, Yun Jinnian had grown taller, yet seemed all the thinner for it.