

Indulgence 311

Chapter 311: Heavy

Yun Jinnian knew that this trip to Nanjiang would not be simple, but he had not expected it to involve witchcraft and Gu.

Looking at the book again, it read, "There are eleven types of Gu: Snake Gu, Golden Silkworm Gu, Bamboo Strip Gu, Stone Gu, Loach Gu, Centre Harm Spirit, Chancre Poisonous Insect, Swelling Poisonous Insect, Frenzy Poisonous Insect, Yin Snake Gu, and Birth Snake Gu!"

There were so many types, and these types further divided into countless subcategories.

Yun Jinnian felt his scalp tingle as he continued to read, growing more alarmed the further he read.

"It turns out that in Nanjiang, an expert using Gu would not show any flaw at all!" Yun Jinnian said, unable to hide his worry.

Soon, Hemei had Chu Yu and Yuwen Ya summoned over, with Han Tianci holding a brocade box. Yun Jinnian didn't ask about the contents of the box, and simply relayed what he had seen.

"Moreover, Nanjiang has its Saintess and Poisonous Insect King, it's said they have consumed countless poisonous insects and are meticulously nourished with human blood..." Yun Jinnian paused slightly as he spoke.

Chu Yu was also looking at Yun Jinnian, "Money has the power to move even ghosts, I have already sent people to Nanjiang, and we should soon receive a message. However, it might require considerable effort from you by then!"

"I am not afraid of hard work, I fear only that..." Yun Jinnian spoke, pausing briefly before continuing, "I will definitely try my best to learn it!"

"I believe you!"

Chu Yu's word of trust made Yun Jinnian feel slightly more at ease.

"Thank you!" After expressing his gratitude, he turned to Han Tianci, "Tianci, you should also start learning more about this!"

"I will do as Sister says!" Han Tianci obediently responded.

He worked hard at play when it was time to play and was diligent in his studies when it was time to learn.

Regarding the matter of that enchantress, by evening, Magistrate Wang had already come to report back, having thoroughly investigated the issue, and the poor woman had been released.

"Understood, such incidents must absolutely not happen again in the future!" Chu Yu spoke firmly.

"Yes!" Magistrate Wang replied, then after a moment of thought added, "Your Highness, there is a severe drought in Tortoiseshell City, and regarding the Emperor..."

"I have already sent a letter by express delivery over 800 miles back to the Capital City, and for additional surety, I've also sent a pigeon post. With these two methods, the Emperor should receive the news very soon!"

"Many thanks, Your Highness!"

Chu Yu waved his hand, "I have pressing matters and cannot stay here, for the rest, you must put in more efforts. Try to minimize the effects of the drought as much as possible. I have also sent a petition to the Capital City, requesting a three-year tax exemption, to give the people a chance to breathe!"

"Your Highness, how good it would be if you could stay!" Magistrate Wang spoke, then knelt before Chu Yu.

Chu Yu took a deep breath, "I am afraid I cannot stay, but I will leave Luo'er behind. Luo'er will fully represent me; you can discuss any matters with him. In a few days, the first batch of grain that I prepared will be sent here, and you will also need to lead people into the mountains to find water sources, to provide the people with water!"

"Your Highness!" Magistrate Wang called out softly, tears in his voice.

"Control your subordinates well, do not let a single case of corruption and injustice occur, I will not tolerate it!"

"Yes, this official will bear it in mind!"

"You may leave now!"

After Magistrate Wang left, Chu Yu rubbed his temples.

He called for Luo'er, gave him several orders, and Luo'er went down to carry them out.

Chu Yu then got up and headed towards Yun Jinnian's courtyard, noticing the door was wide open and the oil lamp still burning. Chu Yu's heart warmed as he slowly approached.

Hemei and Huanan greeted Chu Yu with a bow, and Chu Yu nodded his head, proceeding towards Yun Jinnian, who was seriously reading a book, occasionally taking up a pen to write down what she deemed important.

"Have you discovered anything?" Chu Yu asked softly.

Upon hearing the question, Yun Jinnian looked up at Chu Yu, "Indeed, I have found something!"

Chapter 312: Accident

Chu Yu sat down upon hearing this, and Yun Jinnian began to speak seriously, "I have read from this book that Nanjiang has always been unstable. It is said that led by the Saintess, there are two factions,

one is the secular faction and the other is the defending faction. Those from the secular faction must be people with great ambitions, not only seeking Silver but also power. The poison that you and Prince Yanjun suffered probably has something to do with them. Of course, the defending faction might also be supporting them secretly!"

"What if we find a way to make these two factions completely at odds with each other?" Chu Yu asked.

"That's a good plan, to sow discord among them and then send troops to quell the disturbances. That way, we should be able to completely reclaim Nanjiang!" Yun Jinnian paused after saying this. These matters were considered state affairs, and it wasn't appropriate for her, a girl, to intervene too much. She continued, "It is said that every five years on the tenth day of the ninth month, a new Saintess is selected, and this year happens to mark the end of the five-year period. If the Saintess were one of our own..."

Chu Yu pondered for a moment, "If we could bribe someone from the secular faction, and they were willing to give up the method for raising Poisonous Insects and the solution for continuous detoxification, Jinnian, would you learn it?"

"Learn!"

Yun Jinnian responded without hesitation.

Why not learn?

Whether raising or dispelling the Poisonous Insects, as long as it can save people, that's what matters.

"That person should be arriving soon. But you must be careful when dealing with him and always have someone by your side!"

Chu Yu trusted that person in other matters, but when it came to Yun Jinnian's safety, he had to be cautious.

"Mm!"

Yun Jinnian nodded. Seeing Hemei bring in some tea, Yun Jinnian poured a cup for Chu Yu before asking, "How is that woman doing?"

"She's safe now; everything in the letter was true."

Yun Jinnian fell silent, looking at the book in her hands. After a while, she said, "This world is always harsher on women."

That simple statement seemed to carry the weight of countless hardships, causing Chu Yu's heart to inexplicably ache.

"Jinnian, I won't..."

Yun Jinnian looked at Chu Yu indifferently, and he immediately fell silent.

Suddenly, he remembered a few lines, which went something like: 'Light promises are always empty, and vows made on mountains and seas are never true. If there is true love, how can one recklessly promise a lifetime commitment!'

A smart girl like Yun Jinnian would be less likely to believe in mere words; it was better to prove it with actions.

"What won't you do?" Yun Jinnian asked.

"Nothing, it's so late, aren't you going to rest? We still have a long journey early tomorrow!"

Yun Jinnian turned her head to look at the hourglass; indeed, it was quite late.

"I'm going to sleep now!"

Chu Yu stood up, "Then I'm leaving!"

"Good!"

Yun Jinnian got up to see Chu Yu out. Watching his tall figure fade into the dim moonlight, just like that segment of memory, was hazy and unclear.

Nor could she fathom her own heart.

Yun Jinnian lowered her gaze.

Was she a coward?

No, she was not a coward; she just wanted to find a way where everyone could win. But how could there be such a perfect solution in this world, without disappointing anyone!

She turned back into her room and had Hemei and Henuan tidy up.

Taking out the pouch from around her neck, she opened it to get the bead and gently wiped it with a handkerchief.

Every time she faced this bead, her heart softened, and she didn't want to do anything else; just holding it was enough.

"Heh!" Yun Jinnian chuckled softly, shaking her head helplessly.

She put the bead back in the pouch, hung it around her neck, and lay down to sleep.

After letting go of some matters, Yun Jinnian managed to sleep quite peacefully. Hemei watched by the bedside for a while, and after seeing Yun Jinnian fall into a deep sleep, she drew the bed curtains and went to sleep on the adjacent Arhat bed.

"Not good, not good, water is leaking, water is leaking!"

A sharp alarm jolted Yun Jinnian awake, who quickly called out, "Hemei, Henuan?"

"Miss?"

"Quickly go check what's going on! And see how Tianci is doing!"

Hemei and Henuan hurriedly went to check.

Yun Jinnian also quickly got out of bed to put on her shoes and clothes. Upon getting ready to leave the room, she was knocked unconscious by someone...

Chapter 313: Kidnapped

Because it was the main court of the City Lord Residence that had caught fire, Chu Yu and the others were alerted, and the fire was particularly intense. Chu Yu then instructed the guards to help, lest it spread and burn down more houses, causing greater losses.

Han Zhong, protecting Han Tianci, also came over, "Big Brother Chu? How's it going?"

"Tianci, why are you here? Your... your brother?" asked Chu Yu.

"My brother is in the room!"

"This place is dangerous. Go and stay with your brother!"

Han Tianci found it logical and went to look for Yun Jinnian taking Han Zhong with him.

On the way, he saw Hemei and Henuan. Han Tianci furrowed his brows, "You've all come here, leaving my brother alone?"

A bad feeling suddenly washed over him.

Upon hearing this, Hemei and Henuan also ran towards the courtyard where Yun Jinnian was staying.

The door was open, and there was a handkerchief on the ground.

Hemei and Henuan, greatly shocked, rushed inside, "Miss?"

The room was completely empty; not a single person was there.

Han Tianci also dashed into the room searching for someone while Han Zhong immediately went to inform Chu Yu of the situation.

"What did you say? Who's missing?" Chu Yu barked with anger.

"The young master is missing!"

Chu Yu immediately understood that the fire was merely a ruse to draw them away from the mountain. None of them had noticed that Yun Jinnian, though not well-versed in martial arts, possessed exceptional medical skills. It was clear that the kidnapper had come prepared, and their martial arts prowess was formidable. They had managed to take the person away without anyone noticing.

"Split up and pursue!" After saying this, Chu Yu immediately sent up a signal into the night sky, mobilizing all the undercover contacts in Hongchou City and the surrounding towns and counties.

He must find Yun Jinnian and bring her back.

"Prepare pen and ink!"

Once the writing brush, ink, paper, and inkstone were ready, Chu Yu quickly sketched a portrait of Yun Jinnian and marked it with a secret signal for Luo'er to send out.

Hemei and Henuan were already kneeling on the ground, eyes brimming with tears, hardly daring to breathe.

Han Tianci was also pale, with fists clenched tightly.

Chu Yu looked at Han Tianci, then at Hemei and Henuan, kneeling on the ground, "The two of you, get up!"

Turning around, he walked outside, but Han Tianci quickly grabbed Chu Yu, "I'll go with you!"

"No, your sister is most worried about you, you must stay!" Chu Yu rejected the idea without a second thought.

Han Tianci couldn't have an accident in front of him.

"But..."

"There are no 'buts,' Tianci. Be good and listen, I will bring your sister back safely!" Chu Yu said, looking at Han Zhong, "Take good care of Tianci and wait for my news!"

Then he left the room, leaped onto the roof, and disappeared into the night.

Han Tianci sat on the chair somewhat helplessly, feeling for the first time that he was too weak.

At that moment.

Four people, carrying a bamboo stretcher, swiftly glided across rooftops, flanked by twenty black-clothed figures, quickly leaving the city.

Some villagers waking in the night thought they were seeing things.

When Yun Jinnian woke up, she found herself on a large bed, the room very brightly lit, so much so that it was somewhat dazzling.

Yun Jinnian hastily sat up and got out of bed to check her clothes, which were intact.

She let out a slight sigh of relief.

"Miss Yun, my apologies." A deep female voice came through, followed by an elderly woman with gray hair walking out, flanked by four maids.

"Who are you?" Yun Jinnian asked in a low voice.

This person knew her identity, so they must be no ordinary individual.

She reached out and grasped her left wrist.

On her wrist was a bracelet given to her by Chu Yu that hid a secret weapon.

This was the first time she ever needed to use it, and she didn't dare to be careless.

"This old servant's surname is Tan. Miss Yun, you may call me Granny Tan!"

Yun Jinnian got off the bed, only to realize her shoes had not been removed, and paused slightly, "Granny Tan, may I know why you had someone bring me here?"

"Miss Yun is a straightforward person, which this old servant likes very much. Since Miss Yun has put it that way, I will not beat around the bush. You have been brought here to treat an ailment of my master!"

Chapter 314: Fearless

Yun Jinnian looked at Madam Tan, observing her clad in brocade with precious pearl hairpins atop her head, her demeanour proper and exuding a sense of superiority.

"Who is your master?" Yun Jinnian asked.

"There's no need for the Fourth Miss to concern herself with that. As long as the Fourth Miss does her utmost to heal my master, she will be handsomely rewarded!"

"And if I refuse?" Yun Jinnian's voice was heavy.

Rewards?

Did she care about rewards?

Being kidnapped without a word had already displeased her greatly.

"Then, I'm afraid the Fourth Miss will be at a disadvantage," Madam Tan said, her eyes suddenly turning cold as they shot towards Yun Jinnian like two sharp arrows.

Yun Jinnian straightened her back, "Are you threatening to kill me?"

"Kill?" Madam Tan sneered and shook her head, "With the Fourth Miss's exceptional medical skills, I wouldn't dare to kill you. But if the Fourth Miss were to become my master's woman..."

Upon hearing this, Yun Jinnian cursed inwardly at the shamelessness.

She replied with a cold laugh, "Then you might as well try, and see whether I'll save him, or use every means to ensure he's unable to sire progeny, leading a life worse than death!"

Having said this, Yun Jinnian pushed a nearby lamp-stand.

Her eyes were icy cold, and her pretty face was stern.

She was a doctor, but she could also concoct poisons and could become a mercenary, depending on the kind of environment she was in and the kind of person she wanted to be.

As the lamp-stand fell, the oil lamp inside was extinguished, darkening the room slightly.

Madam Tan was startled, not expecting Yun Jinnian to be so fierce.

The information she had received claimed that Yun Jinnian was timid, gentle as water, with a heart of compassion for the world, even tender towards ants; how could she possess such ferocious eyes and tone?

With a quick thought, "Why put yourself through this, Fourth Miss? If I have spoken out of turn, I acknowledge it. Without notifying the Fourth Miss and bringing her here was indeed inappropriate, but my master truly cannot wait!"

Yun Jinnian looked at Madam Tan, "Who is your master? Without a clear explanation, I will absolutely not treat your master!"

Madam Tan didn't expect that even after conceding, Yun Jinnian would still be this persistent. "Fourth Miss, don't be one to refuse a toast only to be forced to drink a forfeit..."

"Refuse a toast only to drink a forfeit? What insightful advice do you have, Madam Tan?"

"Insightful advice I do not have, but I am aware of a few matters concerning the Fourth Miss!"

Yun Jinnian was slightly startled, yet her expression remained unchanged, "Is that so?"

"Does the Fourth Miss truly believe that your dealings with His Highness Prince Rui have been so well concealed that no one knows?" Madam Tan's voice was heavy, tinged with a trace of smugness.

Her dealings with Chu Yu?

Which ones?

"Then Madam Tan might as well speak up, what matters are those?"

Even though her heart was already tumultuous, Yun Jinnian forced herself to remain calm.

Because as soon as she showed fear, Madam Tan would know how to manipulate her.

"The things you and His Highness Prince Rui did at..."

Madam Tan, brimming with triumph, was about to speak when a cold, angry male voice interrupted, "Silence!"

Madam Tan immediately knelt down in fright, "My lord!"

The man didn't even glance at her as he had someone pull her away.

"My lord, I know I've erred, I know my mistake, please have mercy on me!"

Before Madam Tan could finish speaking, she was already being silenced.

The gentleman was dressed in black which made his face appear as pale as paper. He walked slowly, evidently suffering from a serious illness, and he seemed to be frail, barely clinging to life.

He bowed to Yun Jinnian with a fist to his palm, "My servant has behaved disgracefully. I apologize to the Fourth Miss and hope for her generous forgiveness!"

Chapter 315: Probing

Yun Jinnian bowed slightly toward him, "I originally didn't pay much attention to it, but as I said, who are you, sir?"

"My surname is Zhou, Miss Fourth can call me Young Master Zhou!"

Zhou, the royal surname of the Great Zhou Kingdom.

The man before her was dressed in expensive brocade, acted with the grace and propriety befitting the rich, and radiated unmatched elegance, presumably a royal relative of the Great Zhou Kingdom.

Yun Jinnian did not know much about the Great Zhou Kingdom, so she couldn't guess his identity.

Zhou Yunshen looked at Yun Jinnian and curved his lips slightly, then walked over to a chair and sat down, his hand formed into a fist covering his lips as he coughed.

It was as if he would cough out his heart, liver, and lungs before he stopped.

The thin and frail body trembled with each cough, looking extremely weak.

Yun Jinnian watched, exhaled softly, then approached and sat beside Zhou Yunshen, took a close look at him – he had refined features and carried a touch of pitiful frailty in his illness.

"Let me take your pulse first!"

"Thank you, Miss Fourth!"

Yun Jinnian shook her head slightly, "Don't thank me yet, it's still uncertain whether I can treat it or not!"

"As long as Miss Fourth does her best, the rest is up to fate!" Zhou Yunshen said, stretching out his wrist and placing it on the table.

His hand was very thin, almost skeletal in appearance.

The wrist too was delicate, even the small veins were visible.

Fearing she might inadvertently crush his veins, Yun Jinnian rubbed her hands together.

"Why does Miss Fourth do this?" Zhou Yunshen asked curiously.

"I have a rather cool constitution and you are weak; it's always best to be cautious!" Yun Jinnian said. After feeling her hands were warm enough, she gently placed them onto Zhou Yunshen's wrist to take his pulse.

After one hand, Yun Jinnian finally said, "Let's try the other one, shall we?"

"Alright!"

Zhou Yunshen did not ask further and switched to the other hand.

After seriously taking his pulse, Yun Jinnian then said, "Young Master Zhou's illness has been many years in the making. It began with poisoning, and after detoxification, you were stricken with a chill. It was originally just a simple chill, but then you were poisoned again with a cold toxin, injuring your heart and lungs. Fortunately, countless precious herbs have sustained you!"

The consequences, Yun Jinnian did not speak of.

Zhou Yunshen had thought of them too.

"Is it still treatable?" Zhou Yunshen asked casually.

His voice fluttered, lacking even a hint of vitality, as if he had resigned himself to his fate.

Yun Jinnian looked at Zhou Yunshen, and after a while finally said, "It's possible, but the treatment will need to be gradual."

She had not originally intended to treat him, but seeing his look of despair, Yun Jinnian's heart softened, and she ultimately compromised privately.

Upon hearing this, Zhou Yunshen's eyes brightened, and he slowly stood up, bowed with his fist to Yun Jinnian, "Miss Fourth, your kindness in saving my life will never be forgotten. I'd like to offer you three requests that do not go against benevolence, righteousness, and morals!"

This was something Yun Jinnian had not anticipated.

After looking at Zhou Yunshen for a while, Yun Jinnian finally said, "Your thoughts are appreciated, Young Master Zhou!"

She paused, then continued, "But Young Master Zhou, there's an order to everything, matters of urgency and importance. Your illness is urgent, but not as urgent as Prince Yanjun's!"

The man standing to the side drew his sword upon hearing Yun Jinnian's words.

Zhou Yunshen gave him a faint glance and the man stepped back.

Zhou Yunshen looked at Yun Jinnian, who was dressed in precious blue men's clothing, her hair tied high and bound with a headband that had skewed and loosened from the journey, letting a few strands fall, adding a touch of charm to her already stunningly beautiful face.

She was still so young, after all.

Only twelve years old, and in a few more years when her features matured, she would likely be a beauty capable of toppling cities. Yet here she was, not at home learning the virtues expected of women, but out practicing medicine and helping the world.

Feeling Zhou Yunshen's intense gaze, Yun Jinnian furrowed her brow and swept her eyes indifferently over Zhou Yunshen, who quickly coughed to hide his embarrassment, "What Miss Fourth says is very true, but I wonder, how serious is Prince Yanjun's illness?"

Chapter 316: Quit While You're Ahead

"I cannot disclose that, just as I would not reveal the details of Young Master Zhou's illness to anyone who might ask in the future," Yun Jinnian flatly refused.

Surprised by her response, Zhou Yunshen's appreciation for Yun Jinnian only grew.

She was neither servile nor arrogant, calm and composed. Even having been kidnapped to this place, she didn't seem the least bit frightened.

"It is my fault!"

Yun Jinnian shook her head, "I don't know if the people who brought me here took my medicine kit."

At her words, Zhou Yunshen turned to look at the guard Teng Fei, "?"

"It has been taken, I'll go fetch it right now!" Having said this, Teng Fei glared at Yun Jinnian.

This child, so young yet cunning.

He had looked inside the medicine kit himself; it was full of valuable items. The knives were thin and sharp, the vials were filled with precious elixirs and powders, and the silver needles were of excellent quality.

When the medicine kit was brought before Yun Jinnian, she didn't open it but asked indifferently, "Has anyone opened it?"

Zhou Yunshen looked again at Teng Fei, whose face turned red as he said quietly, "I have opened it."

Zhou Yunshen rubbed his forehead.

Yun Jinnian, however, just smiled faintly, opened the medicine kit, and took out the silver needles, "I shall administer acupuncture to Young Master Zhou now."

Zhou Yunshen nodded.

Being observant, he still noticed the subtle change in Yun Jinnian's demeanor during the moment.

"Please fetch me a bowl, the strongest liquor you have, and prepare ink, brush, paper, and inkstone. After I administer the acupuncture, I need to write a prescription!"

She had originally intended to prescribe some harsh medicine for him, followed by a gradual treatment. But now Yun Jinnian thought it best to take it slow, lest his servants think she was young, easily bullied, and deceived.

With this in mind, she addressed Zhou Yunshen again, "Young Master Zhou, please remove your clothes now."

Once everything was prepared, Yun Jinnian methodically placed the silver needles in the burning liquor to sterilize them, washed her hands, and slowly dried them with a clean towel.

Teng Fei wanted to speak several times, but each time he was silenced by Zhou Yunshen's gaze.

Teng Fei was puzzled; why had Yun Jinnian asked Zhou Yunshen to remove his clothes so early?

With everything ready, Yun Jinnian looked at Teng Fei and asked, "Are you puzzled?"

"Yes!"

"Your master is frail, with a deep chill in his body, yet his skin is burning hot. Acupuncture should not be administered lightly. Have you not noticed that with each session, your master's condition worsens?" Yun Jinnian softly explained.

Teng Fei's head exploded with realization.

Because what Yun Jinnian said was exactly right. Every time Zhou Yunshen received acupuncture after disrobing, there was an initial improvement, but days later his condition worsened, repeating this cycle several times until they dared not to continue with the treatment.

Teng Fei immediately knelt down, "Miss Yun, Teng Fei apologizes to you!"

"?" Yun Jinnian feigned ignorance.

"Teng Fei should not have opened Miss Yun's medicine kit, nor should I have coveted its contents. I am willing to do something to make amends," Teng Fei admitted.

"Anything?" asked Yun Jinnian.

"Except betraying the young master!"

Yun Jinnian raised an eyebrow, "What if I asked you to die?"

"How would you like me to die, Miss Yun?" Teng Fei said, pulling out a dagger and pressing it against his own throat.

He was serious.

Yun Jinnian was jolted, then laughed, shaking her head, "Forget it. Your master has already granted me three wishes; how could I be insatiate? Stand up. If you truly feel guilty, simply do not doubt me while I treat your master in the future!"

"Miss Yun, you jest!" Teng Fei was somewhat stunned, stood up, sheathed his dagger, scratched his head, and seemed slightly embarrassed.

Yun Jinnian didn't say anything further, accurately located an acupuncture point with one hand, and with the other, swiftly and adeptly inserted a silver needle.

"Hmm..."

Zhou Yunshen groaned with pain.

Chapter 317: Treatment

The pain was like it seeped from his bone marrow and soul, as if millions of ants were gnawing inside his body. Even though he usually remained composed, it made his whole body tremble.

"Don't move!" Yun Jinnian hurriedly said, "Teng Fei, come and hold down your master!"

Teng Fei immediately stepped forward to press down on Zhou Yunshen's shoulders.

So that Yun Jinnian could administer the acupuncture smoothly.

Although Teng Fei had no medical skills, he could tell from the way Yun Jinnian inserted the needles—both quick and accurate—that he shouldn't underestimate this twelve-year-old girl.

After the session, Yun Jinnian herself was drenched in sweat and let out a breath.

Zhou Yunshen's pain also gradually lessened, and he sat in the chair, feeling extremely weak.

Yun Jinnian wiped her hands with a cloth and walked to the side to write a prescription, "Take the medicine according to this prescription, reduce three bowls of water to one bowl for ingestion, three times a day!"

After giving her instructions, Yun Jinnian then went to Zhou Yunshen's side, took his pulse, and quietly shared her plan, "Master Zhou, I will give you another acupuncture treatment later to draw out the cold phlegm in your chest. The process will still be very painful, but as long as you cough up that phlegm, one third of the poison in your body will be eliminated, so you must hold on!"

Zhou Yunshen nodded, "Thank you for your effort!"

Yun Jinnian shook her head slightly, preparing everything, even taking out two porcelain vials, "Get someone else to assist!"

Teng Fei immediately called for a man, "Fourth Miss, this is Teng Mu!"

"Hmm!" Yun Jinnian glanced at him, "As soon as your master coughs up the phlegm, feed him this medicine and then have him inhale this!"

Yun Jinnian allocated the items and taught Teng Mu how to use them.

Teng Mu listened intently, finally uttering a firm "Yes!"

Yun Jinnian took a deep breath.

Only then did she pull out the longest silver needle, causing Teng Fei and Teng Mu to both jump in alarm.

It was so long...

"Master Zhou, when the silver needle goes in later, you'll want to cough, but you must hold it in until I tell you to cough, then you can cough!"

"Okay!"

After getting an answer, Yun Jinnian slowly inserted the silver needle into the skin, manipulating it so that it went in bit by bit.

She was very serious, not daring to even breathe too loudly, her head drenched in sweat, soaking her clothes.

Normally, Teng Fei would have taken a few more glances or made some teasing comments, but at that moment, he felt that those small shoulders carried too much, deterring any thoughts of irreverence.

Zhou Yunshen endured as Yun Jinnian gently twisted the silver needle, and then pushed it outward a bit, "Cough!"

"Cough cough cough!" Zhou Yunshen immediately coughed agonizingly, the phlegm that seemed stuck suddenly came out and was spat into a porcelain basin, still emitting cold air and appearing black and nauseating.

Teng Mu quickly fed Zhou Yunshen a medicine pill and had him inhale the medicine vapor from another porcelain basin.

"Master Zhou, let's do this one more time, after that, you won't need to take any more elixir!"

Having gone through it once, the second time was much easier, and as Zhou Yunshen coughed out increasingly lighter-colored phlegm, Yun Jinnian eventually retracted the silver needle.

After taking his pulse again and feeling the changes in Zhou Yunshen's body from coughing up the phlegm, Yun Jinnian's eyes lit up with joy, and her entire young face brightened.

"Master Zhou, once the medicine is ready, you can take it. I'm going to rest for a while," Yun Jinnian said before leaning back in the chair, feeling limp all over.

A coat was laid over Yun Jinnian, and she looked up in surprise to see Teng Fei, "?"

"Fourth Miss, hot water has been prepared, and your clothes are ready. You can go bathe and change. The kitchen has prepared food for you. You've worked hard, Fourth Miss!"

Chapter 318: Scheming

Yun Jinnian was stunned but still said, "Thank you!"

As she left the room, two maids immediately came forward and bowed, "We've seen the Fourth Miss, please follow us!"

"Hmm!"

Looking at the men's clothes on the rack, Yun Jinnian was slightly taken aback.

It seemed that this Young Master Zhou had thoroughly investigated her.

What exactly was his background?

After bathing and changing clothes, Yun Jinnian was even more surprised.

Because the clothes fitted just right, neither too big nor too small...

Yun Jinnian frowned, and after a while, she left the bathhouse and let the two maids dry her hair.

She didn't ask further, knowing they wouldn't tell her even if she did.

Once her hair was dry, and she had tied it back into a man's topknot, Yun Jinnian returned to the room she had been in before, where Zhou Yunshen had also changed into a new set of clothes and was sitting at a table waiting for her.

"Young Master Zhou!" Yun Jinnian called softly.

"Please take a seat, Fourth Miss!"

Yun Jinnian sat down, indeed feeling quite hungry after all the rushing around.

"Please help yourself, Fourth Miss!" Zhou Yunshen said indifferently, still sounding rather weak.

Yun Jinnian served herself a bowl of chicken soup and sipped at it slowly. After finishing the soup, she picked up her chopsticks and ate a few bites of the other dishes.

Setting down her bowl and chopsticks, she took a cloth from the maid to wipe her mouth and hands, then spoke, "Young Master Zhou, please arrange for someone to send me back!"

Zhou Yunshen looked at Yun Jinnian, "I could also escort the Fourth Miss to Nanjiang!"

Yun Jinnian was silent but shook her head slightly.

Everyone had their own convictions, and she was no exception.

Zhou Yunshen thought for a moment, "Since the Fourth Miss is determined to go, I shouldn't insist on you staying. However, the journey to Nanjiang is long and arduous; may I travel with the Fourth Miss?"

"You should discuss this matter with Prince Rui, I'm only responsible for medical care!" Yun Jinnian replied.

Zhou Yunshen actually smiled.

For someone so young, her actions were quite meticulous.

"Very well!"

Zhou Yunshen said, and had Teng Fei arrange for someone to escort Yun Jinnian back.

This time the return was by carriage, a spacious and luxurious carriage, with twenty people escorting her, just as many as when she had arrived.

But they treated her with much more respect than before.

Yun Jinnian did not ask where she had been taken, nor did she lift the curtain to see where they were; she sat quietly in the carriage.

Zhou Yunshen didn't mention a consultation fee, and she didn't ask for one, as she had only been gone a few hours.

But Yun Jinnian knew that Chu Yu and the others must have been searching everywhere for her, and they must have been extremely anxious.

Before, she had been too busy to feel it, but now that she had a moment to herself, Yun Jinnian realized her heart was fluttering with unease.

After several deep breaths, Yun Jinnian finally exhaled.

At this moment, Tortoiseshell City was in full lockdown, allowing entry but not exit, which made Teng Fei's entourage all the more conspicuous.

They were stopped at the city gates.

"What's your business?"

"Just have some matters to attend to in the city!" Teng Fei replied, handing over a purse.

The soldier played with the purse, smiled in satisfaction, and said, "Go on in!"

The entry into the city was smooth enough.

Teng Fei led his men directly to the City Lord Residence. At the same time, Chu Yu, who had been out searching for a whole night, had just returned and frowned upon seeing the carriage stopped at the entrance.

His frown eased when he saw Yun Jinnian descend from the carriage, safe and sound.

Dismounting his horse, he came over and said, "Jinnian!"

Yun Jinnian nodded slightly to Chu Yu, then said to Teng Fei, "Thank you for bringing me back. You can go now!"

"Fourth Miss, Teng Fei takes his leave!"

"Hmm!"

Once Teng Fei was out of sight, Yun Jinnian turned to Chu Yu and said, "Send someone skilled at tailing to follow him!"

Upon hearing this, Chu Yu understood.

This man named Teng Fei must be related to the people who had abducted Yun Jinnian.

"I will send someone, let's go inside to talk!"

"Alright!"

Chapter 319: Shocked

From a distance, Han Tianci saw Yun Jinnian and sprinted over, throwing himself into Yun Jinnian's arms, "Sister!"

"It's alright, I'm back now!"

Han Tianci nodded vigorously, not daring to ask where Yun Jinnian had gone.

Especially after Yun Jinnian changed her clothes.

Upon entering the room, Yuwen Ya had gone out to search for her and not yet returned, while Prince Yanjun was indeed present.

After greeting Prince Yanjun with a bow, Yun Jinnian slowly said, "The person who abducted me last night was surnamed Zhou, from the Great Zhou Kingdom, already of age, frail in body, but it was clear he was of no small standing!"

"Great Zhou Kingdom, poor health, and already of age, accompanied by a wet nurse and guard, then there's only one person..." Chu Yu's eyebrows furrowed as he spoke.

"Who?" Yun Jinnian asked.

Han Tianci also looked on curiously at Chu Yu.

"Crown Prince Zhou Yunshen!"

Yun Jinnian was taken aback, "Could it just be a coincidence?"

"We don't know yet, let's wait for the Hidden Guard to bring back news," Chu Yu said as he poured tea for Yun Jinnian, "Did you treat his ailment?"

"Yes," Yun Jinnian nodded.

"Is it serious?"

"Quite serious, if not treated and conditioned in time, it could affect his offspring!"

That was the truth from Yun Jinnian.

And Zhou Yunshen did not force Yun Jinnian to stay because he had heard what she said to Aunt Tan, that she would exhaust all means to make him childless and lead a life worse than death; he did not dare to force her.

Otherwise, he wouldn't have cared about the well-being of Prince Yanjun.

"If it is indeed the Crown Prince," Chu Yu pondered, planning to have Yun Jinnian ask Zhou Yunshen for some benefits.

"He promised me three wishes that do not violate benevolence, morality, or righteousness!"

"Do you have anything in mind?" Chu Yu asked.

Yun Jinnian slightly shook her head.

What she wanted, no one in this world could give.

"Then let him owe you for now. When you've made up your mind later on, knock him hard for a sum!"

Yun Jinnian smiled gently, saying nothing.

However, Yun Jinnian knew a fair bit about the Crown Prince of Great Zhou, and what impressed her most was the Empress of Great Zhou.

It was said that she was also a legitimate daughter of a prominent family, step by step she had reached the position of Empress. With the Emperor's frail health, she managed all court affairs, and the Emperor had only one son, the Crown Prince. Although there were other concubines in the harem, none had given birth to a child.

Yun Jinnian did not think too deeply about the extraneous details.

Treating Zhou Yunshen's illness had already been exhausting, and Yun Jinnian felt somewhat drained.

Chu Yu, seeing her tired, said with deep concern, "You should go to sleep first, we'll set off again tomorrow!"

"Alright!"

Saying she would sleep, Yun Jinnian did just that. For other matters, she trusted Chu Yu to handle them.

Within an estate.

Zhou Yunshen sat on a chair, while an old man beside him took his pulse, "Eh?"

The old man frowned deeply, taking Zhou Yunshen's pulse repeatedly, "How is this possible? Who exactly is it, with such formidable medical skills? Even I dare not act rashly, yet he dared..."

Zhou Yunshen sat calmly, while Teng Mu could barely contain himself, "Master Yuan, how is my master's health?"

"Good, very good!" Master Yuan said, retracting his hand.

He was considered a Divine Doctor in Great Zhou, yet when it came to Zhou Yunshen's condition, even he dared not use acupuncture needles carelessly, let alone use the needles to draw out the cold phlegm.

"Really?" Teng Mu asked in surprise.

"Your Highness, I do not know which doctor examined you, but I would like to meet him!" Master Yuan said, somewhat excited.

Zhou Yunshen smiled faintly, "Master, you won't be able to meet her for now, but in a few days, we're bound to run into her in Nanjiang!"

Chapter 320: The Agreement

Mr. Yuan paused before eagerly asking, "Your Highness, are you going to Nanjiang?"

"Yes, to Nanjiang!"

"But Your Highness..." Mr. Yuan still wanted to persuade him.

"My mind is made up, Mr. Yuan. Don't you want to gradually treat the people I'm responsible for?" Zhou Yunshen said lightly.

Mr. Yuan hesitated, "Could it be that the master also intends to go to Nanjiang?"

"Yes!"

He then showed Mr. Yuan the prescription written by Yun Jinnian.

"In that case!" Mr. Yuan pondered for a moment, "Then let's go to Nanjiang!"

Teng Fei entered the room, "Young Master!"

"Have you sent it back?"

"Yes, but I've brought a tail back with me!"

Zhou Yunshen was slightly taken aback, "Let him be!"

Teng Fei responded, also somewhat unsure whether that tail had intentionally let him know or was simply not as good as him.

But no matter what, he still needed to be cautious.

City Lord Residence

Because of Yun Jinnian's return, everyone breathed a sigh of relief, and Chu Yu ordered everyone to return. After the Hidden Guard returned, they knelt on one knee before him.

"I have been discovered!"

Hearing this, Chu Yu was silent for a long time before he waved his hand, "Go!"

"Yes!"

After the Hidden Guard left, Chu Yu frowned deeply.

Discovered...

One must know that the Hidden Guards under his command were left to him by his father, yet they had been discovered by someone from the Great Zhou Kingdom's Zhou Yunshen.

It seemed that he needed to send someone to the Great Zhou Kingdom or invite a capable person to retrain the Hidden Guards!

Chu Yu tapped the armrest of his chair, "Doing both would be most appropriate!"

He himself also needed to practice diligently. Otherwise, in front of Jinnian, he feared he might never have the chance to show his face again.

Chu Yu's complicated schemes were unknown to Yun Jinnian, who slept until dark. When she woke up and saw Han Tianci lying beside the bed watching her, Yun Jinnian's heart softened, "Have you been watching over me all day?"

"Sister!" Han Tianci grabbed Yun Jinnian's hand.

"Yes!"

"I will practice diligently so that I can protect you in the future!"

Yun Jinnian's eyes reddened slightly, "Alright!"

Her brother, whom she had never met in her previous life, was willing to sacrifice his life for her. Not to mention in this life, as they grew up together.

"Then, Sister must also take good care of yourself. No matter what happens, sister must stay alive, do not seek death, and do not leave Tianci behind, okay?" Han Tianci spoke, his eyes brimming with tears.

"Alright, for Tianci, sister will take good care of herself. No matter what happens, I will stay alive and never seek death!"

Having received his sister's promise, Han Tianci smiled foolishly, "Pinky promise!"

Yun Jinnian extended her finger and made a pinky promise with Han Tianci, then took a handkerchief to wipe the tears from the corner of his eyes, "Sister has promised you, and I will do it!"

"I believe in Sister!"

Yun Jinnian ruffled Han Tianci's hair, while Han Tianci, blushing, ran out.

Yun Jinnian smiled as she got out of bed and dressed. After tidying herself up, she left the room and saw Han Tianci and Chu Yu gesticulating, seemingly discussing something exciting, with Han Tianci appearing very enthusiastic.

Yun Jinnian quietly watched, not wanting to disturb them.

Chu Yu turned and smiled at Yun Jinnian before continuing to speak with Han Tianci. It wasn't until Han Tianci noticed Yun Jinnian that he shouted, "Sister!" and ran to her side.

Yun Jinnian took out a handkerchief to wipe his sweat, "In the future, you should call him Brother!"

"I will remember that!"

There was a special warmth between the siblings that truly enviable.

As with her and Jinfeng, though thousands of miles apart, they cared for each other deeply.

Chu Yu stepped forward a few paces, "Let's go, dinner is ready!"

"Alright!"

They talked about the fire at the City Lord Residence, and after pondering for a while, Chu Yu said, "There's no need to worry about the City Lord. He has a son who is doing exceptionally well in his studies. The examinations are about to start; let him give it a try!"

"Is it the triennial grand examination this year?" Yun Jinnian asked.