

Indulgence 371

Chapter 371: Negotiation

Chu Yu glanced at Yuwen Ya before calling Yun Jinnian, Yuwen Ya, and Old Hu to one side.

"Old Hu, you're from Nanjiang. Why do you think this is happening?"

After a moment of contemplation, Old Hu answered, "It must be because there's something among us that those wild beasts fear, and that thing is most likely on Young Master Han's person!"

Though aware that Yun Jinnian was a woman, he still courteously addressed her as Young Master Han.

After all, it was Yun Jinnian who had led them to the Snow Lotus, and now, with the Spiritual Poisonous Insect leading the way, finding the Snow Lotus again would be effortless.

"Could it be that insect?" Yuwen Ya said, his eyes suddenly widening.

Chu Yu and Yun Jinnian were no fools and instantly understood.

It wasn't because of the insect, but because of the small cauldron in Yun Jinnian's purse, which seemed to be of similar nature to the Spiritual Poisonous Insect, hence its fearlessness.

Moreover, the small cauldron had absorbed Yun Jinnian's blood and started showing some changes.

No, that wasn't quite right either. It should be since the Spiritual Poisonous Insect had nestled in the cauldron that they had begun to notice. At the start of the journey, they had also encountered some beasts on the road.

Without a word, Chu Yu simply looked indifferently at Old Hu, "You may go back to your tasks, just remember not to blabber!"

"Your Highness, rest assured, this servant understands!"

After finishing his words, Old Hu went off to attend to other matters.

Yun Jinnian, Chu Yu, and Yuwen Ya stood still, looking at each other in silence. After a while, Chu Yu finally spoke, "Jinnian, don't leave my side or Yuwen Ya's in the future!"

He didn't trust anyone else.

"Madam Qian and her group are quite reliable, but Old Hu and those from the Great Zhou Kingdom..." Chu Yu continued.

These were the two groups he was primarily on guard against.

Yun Jinnian nodded, understanding Chu Yu's point.

The three of them discussed some other matters, mostly with Chu Yu and Yuwen Ya talking, while Yun Jinnian listened, interjecting occasionally with a suggestion. Their discussion was very clear-cut.

"Uncle, what if the people from Nanjiang come asking for the Spiritual Poisonous Insect?" Yuwen Ya asked worriedly.

"That's why we must find the Snow Lotus as quickly as possible, so when they come, we can just give the insect back to them!" whispered Yun Jinnian, though she also seemed somewhat reluctant to part with it.

After a moment of silence, Chu Yu finally said, "A strong dragon cannot suppress a local snake, so if they come for it, giving it back is the best course of action!"

But, it was hard to let go.

With the Spiritual Poisonous Insect, they could find the Snow Lotus, and after such effort to get it, giving it back was not something Yuwen Ya was keen on, his brows furrowed with concern.

Yet, it didn't seem right not to return it.

Chu Yu lightly patted Yuwen Ya's shoulder, "This trip has still been quite fruitful for us!"

Yuwen Ya took a deep breath, "Indeed, at least we found the Tian Mountain Snow Lotus. Once we find it again, we shall set up camp and focus on cultivating the Blood Lotus!"

Having settled on a plan, Hemei could be seen eagerly looking their way from a short distance, signaling that the food was ready.

The three of them then walked towards the group.

As if nothing was amiss.

"Wow, this smells amazing!" exclaimed Yuwen Ya as he tore off a rabbit leg to offer to Yun Jinnian, and two more for Hemei and Henuan, "You two eat as well!"

Since Hemei and Henuan were young, it was natural for Yuwen Ya to favor them a bit, and nobody would find fault with that.

Quarreling with a ten-year-old kid wasn't very heroic or honorable.

And it was embarrassing just for the sake of food.

"Thank you!"

Thanks to Old Hu's experience, everything needed for their journey into the mountains had been well prepared, including a full supply of seasonings.

The roasted rabbit was delicious, and, enjoying the flavor, Yun Jinnian ate a whole leg for once.

After eating nearly half a bowl of rice, Chu Yu even made Yun Jinnian have a bowl of chicken soup, leaving her feeling quite full.

Once sated, they rested briefly, boiled snow to wash the dishes clean, filled their flasks with hot water, and then continued on their way.

Chapter 372: Laying a Trap

Yun Jinnian took out the Spiritual Poisonous Insect, coaxed it for a while, then followed it. After walking for a bit, he was carried on Chu Yu's back. Chu Yu didn't allow other men to carry Yun Jinnian, nor would he let them touch her at all.

After walking for a full two hours, everyone rested on the spot and took a few sips of water.

Yun Jinnian fed the Spiritual Poisonous Insect with her blood again before letting Chu Yu carry her and follow it.

"Jinnian, does it hurt?"

"This little blood is nothing; it's just a few drops each time!" Yun Jinnian didn't care at all.

But Chu Yu was deeply concerned, "After we get down the mountain, I will make sure to nourish you well!"

"I'm quite healthy!"

"Still, you can't be careless!"

Chu Yu did not believe Yun Jinnian was as healthy as she claimed.

In her childhood, those years had taken a heavy toll on her health, and it was only with careful treatment in the valley that she got a bit better.

If she had still been in that condition, he would not have dared to bring her into the snow mountain.

Yun Jinnian smiled gently and did not argue with Chu Yu.

She let him be.

Zhou Yunshen and his group followed behind, with Zhou Yunshen paying close attention to Chu Yu and Yun Jinnian. He didn't know what they were whispering about, but it was evident that Chu Yu cherished Yun Jinnian. Also, Yun Jinnian was quite open with Chu Yu, otherwise, she wouldn't have let him carry her.

Moreover, Zhou Yunshen noticed that Yun Jinnian treated Chu Yu better than she treated anyone else.

Even if she didn't say it, her actions proved it.

It was almost dark, and they still hadn't found the Snow Lotus. Yun Jinnian and Chu Yu were fine, but Yuwen Ya was a bit anxious.

"Impatience won't get us hot tofu. This Tian Mountain Snow Lotus is a rarity; it's not so easy to find!" Chu Yu comforted Yuwen Ya.

Yuwen Ya took a deep breath, "I'm okay!"

But was he really okay?

Yuwen Ya glanced at Yun Jinnian, who was busy feeding the Spiritual Poisonous Insect, and sighed to himself.

If Yun Jinnian hadn't complained, what right did he have to do so?

As a man, one should be silent and supportive.

Chu Yu patted Yuwen Ya's shoulder, stepped forward to command setting up a camp in a wind-sheltered place, but he didn't dare to do it at the base of the mountain for fear of not being able to escape an avalanche in time.

While Chu Yu's group rested, Zhou Yunshen also ordered a rest.

This time, Zhou Yunshen didn't have Teng Fei come to invite Yun Jinnian over for tea; instead, he sent over some meat.

Chu Yu accepted it with a smile.

Having lost the Spiritual Poisonous Insect, Amdo did not dare to keep it a secret and immediately sent people to the Moon Gazing Sect to pass on the message. When the five elders heard of it, their faces turned ashen.

Without the Saintess and the Sacred Relic, and now even without the Spiritual Poisonous Insect, the five elders of the Moon Gazing Sect were thrown into a panic. They could no longer afford to care that much and immediately issued orders, mobilizing the entire sect to search for the Spiritual Poisonous Insect.

The elders knew all too well how important the Spiritual Poisonous Insect was to the Moon Gazing Sect.

All at once, under the snow mountain, the crowd surged.

After dinner, Chu Yu took out his flute and played a tune for Yun Jinnian to listen to, as Yun Jinnian listened with a soft smile, peacefully content.

Yuwen Ya sat on the side, occasionally requesting a particular melody.

Meanwhile, Zhou Yunshen lay on his bed, feeling unwell for the past few days. Since he hadn't given a silver note, Chu Yu hadn't offered him any Tian Mountain Snow Lotus. Yun Jinnian hadn't come to check his pulse, nor had she sent any medicine his way.

"It's different after all!!"

Zhou Yunshen muttered and closed his eyes.

The faint intentions he harbored grew more intense.

He called Teng Fei in and whispered a few sentences into his ear, which left Teng Fei utterly astonished, "My lord, are you sure this is what you want to do?"

"Why, is it inappropriate?"

Teng Fei hesitated.

"The man isn't married, and the woman isn't wed. As a Crown Prince, it's also time to take a wife. Great Zhou is willing to form a marital alliance with Tianchu Country, and the Emperor of Tianchu will agree!"

Chapter 373: Seizure

Though he said that, Teng Fei still felt it was inappropriate.

It was clear that Miss Yun and Prince Rui had an unusual relationship. If his lordship were to intervene, Miss Yun might hate him for it.

This was not the conduct of a gentleman.

"Go and do it," Zhou Yunshen said, then closed his eyes.

He wanted to keep Yun Jinnian by his side, not for love, but because Yun Jinnian's medical skills were truly exceptional and had to be retained in the Great Zhou Kingdom.

Teng Fei wanted to advise against it, but in the end, he sighed and went to make arrangements.

Yun Jinnian yawned, and Chu Yu quickly put away his flute, "Go to sleep, we have to get up early tomorrow!"

Yun Jinnian nodded, went off to relieve herself at a distance, then returned to the tent to wash her face and feet before crawling into the warm bedding. Only then did Yun Jinnian comfortably exhale.

Hemei and Henuan also slept beside Yun Jinnian, waiting for her to fall asleep before they rose to lean against something to sleep.

These last few days, Yun Jinnian had been very exhausted and soon fell asleep.

Madam Qian came in twice in the middle of the night to freshen the air inside the tent.

As dawn barely broke, Hemei and Henuan got up to help with the chores. It wasn't much; being there to help was enough. Once Yun Jinnian got up, the two quickly ran back to assist her in washing up.

"Is it cold outside?" Yun Jinnian asked.

"It's alright, Miss. Put on your cloak!"

Yun Jinnian nodded.

After breakfast, Yun Jinnian pricked her finger to feed the Spiritual Poisonous Insect with blood.

A few drops were enough for the insect to feed heartily. Then it looked at Yun Jinnian, waiting for her command.

"Let's go!"

The Spiritual Poisonous Insect ran ahead, with Chu Yu carrying Yun Jinnian behind, followed by Yuwen Ya and his men.

After approximately two hours, amidst the cold wind, Yun Jinnian exclaimed with joy, "Big brother Chu, I smell the strong fragrance of the Snow Lotus!"

"Could there be more than one?"

"It should be!"

Chu Yu was overjoyed, turned his head and said to Yuwen Ya, "Yuwen Ya, have everyone follow up!"

Upon hearing this, Yuwen Ya understood immediately and summoned his men to follow.

Ahead was a true cliff, where ordinary people never ventured, for it was too remote in the mountains and too steep.

Looking down was a vast expanse of white, a hazy fog that made it impossible to see the bottom.

The Spiritual Poisonous Insect stopped at the edge of the cliff, waiting for Yun Jinnian.

Having had the experience before, Yun Jinnian did not hesitate and immediately had ropes tied around her.

Since she had been injured before, Madam Qian had wrapped one end of the rope with cotton.

Once Chu Yu finished tying the ropes, the two of them followed the Spiritual Poisonous Insect down.

Meanwhile, Zhou Yunshen found a spot and had people descend the cliff to search, inch by inch, hoping to find a Snow Lotus.

Hu Laotian and his men watched, both angry and resentful, yet they too got themselves ready and descended the cliff.

Madam Qian and her group waited at the edge of the cliff.

Worried, Hemei and Henuan said, "Madam Qian, we'll go down too!"

"You two stay up here. If you truly want to help, go boil some hot water for your mistress when she comes up," Madam Qian said, then had herself lowered down as well.

The cold wind whistled, and Yun Jinnian shivered with cold.

She followed the Spiritual Poisonous Insect slowly, and turning her head, she saw Chu Yu right beside her, which reassured her.

Seeing that many people had descended the cliff, Yun Jinnian held her tongue.

"These people..." Chu Yu muttered with resentment.

"Let them be. Whether they find it or not depends on Yun Qi. Besides, we have a cheating artifact in our hands. Why fear them taking it away?" Yun Jinnian softly persuaded.

Her heart was at peace.

"You do have a carefree view!" Chu Yu said, exhaling a breath, and tried not to worry about it.

Chapter 374: Petty

"What can we do if we can't get over it? The cliff is so vast, and it's not ours to claim. Moreover, we can't search the whole area. We need to find more Snow Lotuses before those people from Nanjiang arrive!"

"Yes!"

Of course, we should also leave one plant to cultivate the Snow Lotus.

But Yun Jinnian knew that with Zhou Yunshen and the others around, it was unlikely they could keep one.

The two of them didn't talk much and followed the Spiritual Poisonous Insect quickly.

They finally found the first Snow Lotus.

The Spiritual Poisonous Insect was clever, quickly killing the small snakes around the Snow Lotus and allowing Yun Jinnian to pick it, not even letting Chu Yu get close.

It was very protective of Yun Jinnian.

Chu Yu thought to himself that even if the people from Nanjiang found their way here, the Spiritual Poisonous Insect might not be willing to return with them.

He hoped that those people would never find their way here.

Elsewhere, Lao San Hu and his group also found a Snow Lotus, but someone was bitten by a snake guarding the Snow Lotus.

Lao San Hu was both alarmed and delighted.

After all, finding a Snow Lotus could also earn them some silver.

Yun Jinnian quickly found the second, the third, the fourth Snow Lotus.

Zhou Yunshen also found one on his side.

For a moment, Chu Yu realized he wouldn't be earning the two million taels of silver.

"What a pity!"

"What's a pity, Brother Chu? No one but me can cure Young Master Zhou's illness. Since you want to earn this silver, I will certainly find a way to help you," Yun Jinnian said earnestly.

Taken aback by her words, Chu Yu paused and then began to laugh.

"Then I must thank Jinnian for your help!"

Yun Jinnian smiled.

The Spiritual Poisonous Insect waited for Yun Jinnian to pick the Snow Lotuses before leading her to the next spot, but the deeper they went, the more precarious it became.

The rope was almost not enough.

"Little thing!"

The Spiritual Poisonous Insect turned to look at Yun Jinnian.

"Let's go back up first!"

Not understanding, the Spiritual Poisonous Insect still listened to Yun Jinnian.

Yun Jinnian acted this way to make the others think that there might not be any more Snow Lotuses here.

But there were definitely more below, Yun Jinnian still wanted to cultivate a Snow Lotus.

This time, they had picked five coins worth of Snow Lotus.

Chu Yu signaled upwards, and Yuwen Ya immediately ordered, "Pull!"

Seeing Yun Jinnian ascend, Lao San Hu, Zhou Yunshen, and others thought there were no more Snow Lotuses and followed.

"Phew!"

Yun Jinnian exhaled a breath.

Hemei brought over some warm water for Yun Jinnian to drink, "Come into the tent and warm up quickly!"

"Yes!"

Inside the tent, it was warm and snug.

It took a while for Yun Jinnian to feel warm, and she felt much more comfortable.

Curious, Zhou Yunshen and the others came to ask, "Young Master Han!"

Yun Jinnian looked at Zhou Yunshen, "Do you have something to ask, Young Master Zhou?"

"I came to inquire whether there are any more Snow Lotuses below or if Young Master Han could tell me how to use the Snow Lotus. I've not been feeling well these past few days!" Zhou Yunshen said, glancing discreetly at Yun Jinnian, noting her calm demeanor without any sign of impropriety.

"Since Young Master Zhou has asked, let me take your pulse first. But it would be best to take the Snow Lotus with some other medicines, otherwise, the effect will be diminished!"

"Then I'll trouble Young Master Han in half a year!"

Yun Jinnian smiled and said nothing, having Henuan bring a wet cloth to wipe her hands before following Zhou Yunshen into his tent to take his pulse.

"How is it?"

Zhou Yunshen was feeling a mixture of emotions. He wasn't a fool, nor was he a local, and he already had a guess. He felt that Yun Jinnian must be aware of his illness but remained silent, surely scheming something in her mind.

Was it Chu Yu's idea?

Chapter 375: Ambushed

Zhou Yunshen had considered much, but he also guessed a few things.

However, it wasn't entirely Chu Yu's intention, Yun Jinnian also had his own thoughts in it.

She was kind, but not foolish.

"Young Master Zhou should not have come to the mountains," Yun Jinnian said, slightly frowning, "This has not helped Young Master Zhou's condition but has instead made the coldness in his body worse, and his health has deteriorated!"

Yun Jinnian said this as she took a deep breath.

She didn't care about Zhou Yunshen, and she had forgotten whether she had reminded him that day not to enter the mountains.

Zhou Yunshen looked at Yun Jinnian and remained silent for a long time.

Then he looked softly at Yun Jinnian.

Seeing Yun Jinnian with a calm face, he couldn't bring himself to say any words of reproach, "We'll go down the mountain tomorrow!"

Yun Jinnian nodded slightly.

She could not bring herself to say anything more, "When we return to Nanjiang, let's administer acupuncture to Princess Hemei then!"

"Alright!"

Yun Jinnian stood up, returned to the tent, opened the medicine chest, and had Hemei send a bottle of pills to Zhou Yunshen, instructing him to take three pills at a time, once a day.

As for Zhou Yunshen, Yun Jinnian did not go to see him again.

It all felt awkward.

At dinner time, Yun Jinnian was somewhat distracted.

Yuwen Ya, on the other hand, was cheerful because, this time down, Yun Jinnian had obtained five zhu of Tian Mountain Snow Lotus, and including the earlier ones, she now had seven in total.

"What's wrong?" Yuwen Ya asked Yun Jinnian in a low voice.

Yun Jinnian shook her head slightly and ate bite by bite.

"Don't think too much!" Chu Yu said as he added soup to Yun Jinnian's bowl.

Yun Jinnian smiled faintly and sipped from her bowl little by little.

They had to rest after eating because they would descend from the mountain early the next day. Chu Yu decided to leave some people in place to guard, leaving behind tents, food, and the like.

"But leaving these things might not be enough to eat!" Yuwen Ya said.

In this icy and snowy place, once there was no food, it would indeed be very troublesome.

Not to mention charcoal and the like.

"I think we should all go back together!" Yun Jinnian said quietly.

Chu Yu considered, "Alright, then let's all go back. We'll mark the place and come again next time!"

In the end, no one stayed behind. In the mountains covered in snow, not having charcoal was indeed problematic.

"Let's go to sleep early!"

Everyone returned to their own tents.

Yun Jinnian lay on the small bed, finding it difficult to fall asleep for a long time.

What she was thinking about even more was Zhou Yunshen's disease; although it was not as severe as she had said, it was not much better.

This time going back, he was likely to suffer a great deal.

She had not been asleep for long when it began to brighten outside.

It wasn't until then that Yun Jinnian learned that Zhou Yunshen and his group had set off at daybreak.

She felt a slight sense of loss.

But she didn't dwell on it!

After eating breakfast, packing up, and making the markers, they were about to head back, but they were surrounded and blocked by many people.

"What are you trying to do?" Hu Lao San immediately stepped forward to negotiate.

"Return the Spiritual Poisonous Insect!" Amdo stepped forward and bellowed.

Hu Lao San suddenly realized that these people had come for the Spiritual Poisonous Insect.

He turned and explained to Chu Yu.

Chu Yu then looked at Yun Jinnian.

With this look, Amdo and his group also turned their gaze to Yun Jinnian.

The younger ones didn't recognize Yun Jinnian, but the older generation, especially the five great elders, were shocked and overjoyed upon seeing her, "Catch her!"

Hu Lao San was greatly alarmed, "Your Highness, protect Little Master Han!"

Naturally, Chu Yu quickly protected Yun Jinnian, who was already moving back, while the group led by Mother Qian also closely guarded Yun Jinnian.

The Moon Gazing Sect had mobilized all its members this time; now that they had Elder Jin's orders, they all pounced on Yun Jinnian and Chu Yu.

Chu Yu escorted Yun Jinnian to retreat toward the back, "Jinnian, don't be afraid, I will protect you!"

Chapter 376: Take care

Yun Jinnian nodded and retreated with Chu Yu, while Momo and her group also protected them.

The two groups quickly engaged in battle. The five great elders had a clear target: they wanted Yun Jinnian, so all their subordinates rushed towards Yun Jinnian's side.

"Escort His Highness to safety!" Momo's voice rang out.

Chu Yu also left the Tian Mountain Snow Lotus behind, carrying Yun Jinnian on his back and running quickly.

The five great elders didn't bother with anyone else and were solely focused on pursuing Chu Yu and Yun Jinnian.

Amidst the howling cold wind, Chu Yu ran swiftly with Yun Jinnian on his back, but the five great elders were truly formidable. Momo and the others could hardly hold them off for long, and they were injured to boot.

At that moment, they realized that compared to those who had practiced martial arts for years, they were hardly worth mentioning.

Now, it was only Chu Yu carrying Yun Jinnian. However, the five great elders were quickly closing in.

Chu Yu placed Yun Jinnian behind a hillside to shelter from the wind, "Jinnian, those people are following too closely. I can't take the risk of bringing you with me. I'll lead them away first. You run in the opposite direction I'm going. Momo and the others will come to find you!"

As he spoke, Chu Yu took off his cloak and also removed Yun Jinnian's cloak, draped them over himself to appear as if he were carrying someone, and ran in another direction.

"Big Brother Chu, be careful!" Yun Jinnian called out softly.

Upon hearing this, Chu Yu stopped in his tracks, turned back for a glance at Yun Jinnian, and in that look, there was tenderness and thousands of unspoken words. Without saying anything, he continued to run forwards.

Yun Jinnian's eyes suddenly grew red, "Big Brother Chu!"

If she could return safely this time, she would definitely agree to his proposal!

Yet, she did not dare to hesitate and, wearing Chu Yu's cloak, she ran in the opposite direction.

The five great elders chased after Chu Yu for a while before they realized something was amiss.

"Wrong, wrong!"

Chu Yu stood in place and laughed heartily, "You bunch of old fools!"

The five great elders were reluctant to entangle with Chu Yu and intended to search for Yun Jinnian right away, but Chu Yu wasn't about to let them leave.

He immediately lunged at them, one against five.

Chu Yu's own martial arts were formidable, but the five great elders were not weak, and soon Chu Yu found himself at a disadvantage.

"Shall we kill him?" the Elder of Wood asked.

"No, capture him!" announced the Elder of Metal, and they poisoned Chu Yu.

Chu Yu fully understood what they wanted to do, and he felt both hatred and rage.

Had he known, he would have fled.

Even though his body was in extreme pain, Chu Yu did not back down and started to laugh.

As long as Jinnian was safe, what did it matter if he suffered a bit!

Yun Jinnian ran swiftly, the wind and snow cold. The snow quickly covered the footsteps she left behind.

She ran aimlessly, not even sure where she was.

But fearing that she might be pursued, Yun Jinnian did not dare to hesitate. She tripped, tumbled, and rolled down.

"Ah..."

Though the cauldron was small, it hurt considerably.

Fortunately, it was all snow, so the fall wasn't that painful. Yun Jinnian rubbed her waist as she got up, with the world around her engulfed in a blinding snowstorm, not knowing where to go.

In that moment, Yun Jinnian felt fear and terror.

She feared dying of cold in these mountains, not finding any way out. She still had so much left undone, she hadn't yet waited for Momo...

"Yun Jinnian, you can definitely make it out. You can!"

Yun Jinnian said to herself, exhaled a few breaths, opened her pouch, took out the Spiritual Poisonous Insect that was sleeping in the small cauldron, woke it up, and said gently, "Little thing, we're lost. Can you lead me out of here, please?"

Chapter 377: Injured

The Spiritual Poisonous Insect looked at Yun Jinnian, looking confused for a while, then nodded.

Yun Jinnian was overjoyed, quickly following it.

Together, a person and an insect walked through icy snow. Yun Jinnian was sweating profusely, with a gnawing hunger. She could only dig out a piece of snow, hold it in her mouth, and let it slowly melt, swallowing it down.

Her entire body was both cold and hot.

If only Brother Chu were here, he definitely wouldn't let her be in such a sorry state.

After resting for a while, Yun Jinnian once again followed the Spiritual Poisonous Insect and continued forward.

Her legs no longer felt like her own. When hungry, she ate a few mouthfuls of snow, when thirsty, she took another bite.

Yun Jinnian did not know how long she had been walking or where she was going, but she felt like she couldn't move any further.

Her mind was also foggy. Yun Jinnian reached up to touch her forehead, only to realize she had a fever.

Her medicine was all in the medicine box. Now, apart from a small cauldron and a single Spiritual Poisonous Insect, she had nothing.

Yun Jinnian thought, she had been too confident after all.

Her foot stepped into the void, and she fell rapidly downward. Seeing Yun Jinnian falling, the Spiritual Poisonous Insect quickly jumped over, biting her neck in one go and gripping her skin tightly with its claws.

With a splash, they landed in the rushing underground river.

Yun Jinnian only felt a total ache before passing out...

"Mother, mother..."

"Momo?"

"Mother, wake up, you mustn't sleep, I'll take you home!"

"Home? Where?"

Yun Jinnian asked softly.

What happened to her?

"Mother, don't be afraid, just follow me, follow Momo!"

A small hand reached out, and without hesitation, Yun Jinnian grabbed it.

It was Momo's hand, soft and squishy.

Yun Jinnian went along with him, feeling entirely at ease.

Yet, she saw another scene, a child gnawing on a bloody piece of meat, a man in armor stood before him, "Do you want to seek revenge!"

Yun Jinnian could not see the man's face clearly, only his back.

But, for some reason, it felt so familiar.

The child lifted his head to look at the man and asked coldly, "Who are you?"

"Who I am is not important. What matters is whether you want to avenge your mother. If you do, I will help you!"

That child was Momo, then she...

Yun Jinnian turned to the person beside her, yet it was still a chubby white hand.

Looking again at the child's face, it was indeed her Momo!

"Good, I want revenge. Today, I am forced to eat my mother's flesh. One day, I will make these people eat their own flesh!"

Yun Jinnian watched, her heart breaking.

And suddenly it became clear; she had died, been murdered.

Who was that man, and why did he want to help Momo? Who exactly was he?

"Hey, turn around!"

Yun Jinnian was anxious, but the man walked away with Momo.

Yun Jinnian wanted to catch up and have a look, but no matter how hard she tried, she just couldn't catch up!

"Wait for me, wait for me!"

Yun Jinnian struggled frantically, and then she sat up abruptly, staring blankly at everything before her.

"Old man, old man, come quickly, the Saintess has awakened!"

A grandmother ran out joyfully, and soon she dragged in an old man with hair as white as frost.

The two knelt before Yun Jinnian, "We greet the Saintess!"

Yun Jinnian could not understand their words, but seeing them kneeling on the ground, she could not help feeling compassionate, "You..."

She started speaking only to realize that her throat was incredibly sore and her voice was hoarse, almost broken.

"The Saintess need not speak. You've been injured and have had a fever for many days. You've hurt your throat, but it will be better with some rest!"

Yun Jinnian looked at her, full of confusion.

The couple exchanged puzzled looks as they realized Yun Jinnian didn't understand their language.

There's a Sacred Relic in hand and a Spiritual Poisonous Insect nearby, and she looks exactly like the Saintess, she must be the Saintess, right?

But why can't the Saintess understand their language?

Chapter 378: Outwitting Whom

"You are the girl I've guarded all my life, not knowing why, the concealment in your brow deeply pains my heart. I only wish I could support everything for you, to let you live without worry, laughing brightly!"

Pain at its extreme, Chu Yu leaned against the cold wall, murmuring to himself.

Thinking of Yun Jinnian made him feel much better.

Such hatred.

Why didn't he confess to her, tell her that his heart was delighted by her, wanting to watch her grow up in the light, to marry her as his wife.

"My beloved girl, where are you, do you, like me, ache with longing for you!"

"Stop your whining, every day it's the same thing, for over a dozen days, aren't you tired of it? I'm sick of it!"

A roar came from the neighboring cell, followed by a man getting up and looking at Chu Yu, "If you miss your little woman that much, just go out and find her!"

Chu Yu gave him a glance, "Easy for you to say. Now, I've been poisoned, all my Martial Arts gone; I can't even think about leaving, let alone get out of this cell!"

Having said that, Chu Yu was about to start wailing again.

"Stop howling, you're a grown man. Aren't you ashamed?"

"Ashamed, ashamed of what? If I don't howl now, once I'm dead, I won't be able to at all!"

The man was truly annoyed but couldn't do anything about Chu Yu, so he cooped up in the cell, listening to Chu Yu's continued wailing.

Until he really couldn't take it anymore, he spoke in a dark voice, "You little brat, stop shouting, I'll figure out a way to let you out!"

"It's no use going out, I haven't cured the poison yet!" Chu Yu was still unmoved.

Ready to continue howling.

This strange old man in the neighboring cell had been there since Chu Yu's arrival; he had seen him eat centipedes raw and sneak out without anyone noticing.

That's why he had started howling.

To take a gamble.

Now, it seemed he had gambled correctly.

"You, come here!"

At these words, Chu Yu hooked his lips and slowly moved to the old man's side, stretching out his hand.

The old man looked at Chu Yu with disdain, "Well, you do have a handsome face." He raised his hand to take Chu Yu's pulse.

"Eh?"

He took the pulse again more carefully, "Ah!"

How could this be?

This young man...

Chu Yu watched the old man, "How is it?"

"Have you been poisoned before?"

"Yes, yes, whenever the poison acted up, I would desire that, that something; but later, I detoxified!" Chu Yu said, a small sense of pride in his voice.

His Jinnian was just that amazing.

"Who detoxified you?" the old man asked hurriedly and was extremely surprised.

Because the poison was cured very cleanly, even the focus of the disease was completely cleared.

"A young girl. Let me tell you, she was unparalleled in medical skills at the age of twelve!" Chu Yu spoke of Yun Jinnian with sheer pride.

The old man frowned tightly upon hearing this, "Impossible!"

No one could surpass his eldest martial sister.

"How is it impossible? My Jinnian is just that incredible. You'll know once you meet her!"

Chu Yu said, but then he started to worry about Yun Jinnian again.

It had been so many days; he wondered if she had been found by Madam Qian and the others, if the snowy mountain was too cold for her, if she was freezing, starving...

Suddenly, the old man stood up, turned open the prison door, stepped out of the cell, and then unlocked the iron chains of Chu Yu's cell door, "Get out!"

"But I haven't been detoxified yet!"

The old man threw a bottle to Chu Yu, "Eat this!"

Chu Yu hesitated for a moment, picked up the bottle, poured out a pill and swallowed it, feeling a fiery sensation throughout his body, terribly uncomfortable.

"What did you give me?"

"A strong poison, it can temporarily suppress the poison in your body. Wait for your Jinnian to detoxify you. Didn't you say she's formidable? I really want to see just how formidable she is!"

Chapter 379: She Was Betrayed

Chu Yu didn't get angry either, slowly stood up and exhaled several breaths.

It was good as long as he could get out.

Having found Jinnian, he no longer feared not being able to neutralize the poison in his body.

The old man, holding Chu Yu's collar, quietly and quickly escaped the cell, and with a few leaps, they were out of the Moon-watching Sect.

It was only then that Chu Yu realized that it was true: there were skies beyond skies, and people beyond people.

He had indeed been too arrogant before.

Chu Yu first took the old man back to the Nanjiang courtyard, only to learn that there was still no news of Yun Jinnian, and Yuwen Ya had taken people into the mountains to search for her, and had not returned for five days now. Chu Yu stood in place, silent for a long time.

He was completely stunned.

"Silly boy, what are you dazing off for!"

Chu Yu raised his head to look at the old man, his eyes reddened, lips trembling.

If anything happened to Jinnian, he swore he would spare no effort to destroy the Moon-watching Sect, without a doubt.

"Brother Chu!" Han Tianci called out softly, his eyes red.

He had obviously cried.

"Tianci!"

"Brother Chu, take me with you to find Sis, waaah..."

In the end, he was still a seven-year-old child. After the worry and fear, no matter how clever, he was utterly confused.

Especially since it was his dearest sister who had gone missing.

"Tianci, you can't come with us, you need to stay here safe and sound. I will definitely find your sister!" Chu Yu comforted Han Tianci, worry written all over his handsome and now thinner face.

Meanwhile, the old man was looking at Prince Yanjun, not saying what poison had afflicted him, let alone offering to cure him.

Turning to look at Chu Yu, "Stop dawdling, are you leaving or not? If you're not leaving, I'm going!"

"Let's go!"

Chu Yu responded resolutely, masking the emotions in his eyes, patted Han Tianci's shoulder, and followed the old man.

Han Tianci chased out crying, but Chu Yu and the old man were already out of sight.

Shi Jiayu brought a cloak over for Han Tianci to wear, "Young Master, don't cry, Miss will surely return safely!"

She must.

Such a good girl couldn't possibly meet with misfortune.

Heaven must be watching over her.

Definitely!

In the valley, Yun Jinnian found the small cauldron and Spiritual Poisonous Insect placed by the pillow, where the insect was sleeping inside. She had been seriously injured, with internal injuries affecting her internal organs and a fractured left leg, without knowing how long she had been staying here.

The elderly couple treated her well, fed her well, though she couldn't understand what they said. Yet the medicine they gave her contained Lingzhi and ginseng. They seemed to have profound knowledge about herbs.

After lying in bed for five or six more days, Yun Jinnian managed to get out of bed with the help of the old lady. During these days, eating, drinking, and all other bodily functions took place in bed, entirely dependent on the old lady's care, which made Yun Jinnian feel quite embarrassed.

When the old lady helped Yun Jinnian out of the room, she saw a sea of flowers, butterflies dancing, and hundreds of flowers in bloom – a sight too beautiful to describe.

But, at this moment, she had no mood to appreciate the beauty of the flowers. She was worried about Tianci, worried about Chu Yu, and even more concerned about Prince Yanjun's illness.

No matter how much she tried to communicate, the elderly couple couldn't understand her words. The old man had not been seen for several days, presumably busy with something.

Yun Jinnian sat down on a reclining chair, and the old woman went inside to fetch some fruits, telling Yun Jinnian to eat slowly. She then started brewing medicine by the side.

Yun Jinnian ate the fruits, enjoying their sweet and sour taste.

"I need to recover quickly and leave this place!" Yun Jinnian murmured to herself.

However, she heard noises and the sound of horse hooves, and soon saw a group of women in white enter the courtyard, followed by the five elders and Amdo, whom she was familiar with, along with many others she had never seen before.

Yun Jinnian's anxiety showed as she clenched her fists tightly, looking at the old woman with anger and disappointment in her eyes.

Chapter 380: Direct Refusal

"Greetings to the Saintess!"

The five elders said as they knelt down.

Immediately following were Amdo and another two women and one man who also knelt down,
"Greetings to the Saintess!"

Then, four men dressed in grey knelt, "Greetings to the Saintess!"

They were closely followed by a throng of people who knelt en masse, "Greetings to the Saintess!"

Behind them, Yun Jinnian could not see anyone, but the calls came from different directions, getting louder and louder.

These people all spoke in official tones, which Yun Jinnian naturally understood.

And she was scared.

What's wrong with these people?

A Saintess, her?

How could that be!

Towards the five elders, Yun Jinnian was not fond of them; had it not been for them, she would not have been injured and separated from Brother Chu Yu, and she had no idea how he was doing now.

"You...."

Yun Jinnian began speaking softly, a hesitant look on her delicate face.

Lead by the elders, all these people were kneeling and didn't get up.

Should she tell them to stand? But if she did, wouldn't it mean she was acknowledging their claim, becoming their Saintess?

But to not call for them to stand, was also problematic—so many people were kneeling, and she couldn't comfortably inquire!

The five elders looked up, their gazes eager as they watched Yun Jinnian's indecision.

"What does the Saintess command?" Elder Jin asked.

"I am not your Saintess, you do not need to kneel before me; if there's anything, any words, say them after standing up!"

"Thank you, Saintess!"

Yun Jinnian pressed her temples and took a deep breath, "Are you here because of this Spiritual Poisonous Insect?"

As she spoke, Yun Jinnian opened her pouch and took out a small cauldron.

The Spiritual Poisonous Insect was asleep inside the small cauldron; it opened its eyes to look at Yun Jinnian, then went back to sleep.

While it was merely an insect, it was also a loyally devoted good insect. Yun Jinnian fell into a snowy hole, landing in the raging undercurrents of a dark river, and it quickly bit onto Yun Jinnian, feeding her all its essence blood, leaving it extremely weak these past days.

Fortunately, Yun Jinnian had been consuming medicine containing Snow Lotus from Tian Mountain in the previous days, and the elderly couple was also from the Moon-watching Cult, so they naturally knew to feed her blood to it, which slightly revived the insect.

Elder Jin respectfully responded, "Replying to the Saintess, yes, this is the Moon-watching Cult's Spiritual Poisonous Insect, and the small cauldron in the Saintess's hands is indeed the Moon-watching Cult's Sacred Relic!"

"...."

Now, Yun Jinnian was confused.

Elder Jin waved his hand, and the people in black retreated, leaving behind the four Hall Masters, the four Holy Envoys; even the elderly couple left.

Yun Jinnian remained seated on the chair, her initially anxious heart now settling down.

These things never belonged to her; she could simply return them to the rightful owners.

But what Yun Jinnian didn't know was that without the Saintess, the Spiritual Poisonous Insect would die, the Sacred Relic would be useless, and the Moon-watching Cult would fall into panic.

In the end, it was essential for the Saintess's blood to nurture the Spiritual Poisonous Insect and irrigate the Sacred Relic.

After Yun Jinnian's disappearance, the five elders realized they had erred, but where could they search for Yun Jinnian? And what should they do once they found her?

So, although they captured Chu Yu and threw him in jail, they dared not torture him, not knowing that Chu Yu would escape due to his own abilities, and that Yun Jinnian would be found.

"Saintess, please follow this one and others back to the sanctuary!"

"I won't go!"

Yun Jinnian outright refused.

She had no desire to associate with these people.

"Then may the Saintess stay in this valley to recuperate. Subordinates will arrange for people to tend to the Saintess," Elder Jin spoke cautiously, even the others behind him stayed bowed.

Yun Jinnian took a deep breath, "If I return the small cauldron and the Spiritual Poisonous Insect to you, can you send me back? Or perhaps carry a message back so someone can come to pick me up!"

"That cannot be! It is permissible for the Saintess to wish to leave this place to go back, but on one condition; the Saintess must be recognized as the Saintess of the Moon-watching Cult, and both the Sacred Relic and the Spiritual Poisonous Insect must remain in the Saintess's possession!"