

Indulgence 431

Chapter 431: Punishing the Scum

Yun Bi fell silent all of a sudden.

What on earth was he saying to the child?

"Next we'll need to trouble Third Uncle!!" Yun Jinnian didn't mind at all.

Seeing that Yun Jinnian was unconcerned, Yun Bi also felt puzzled, his niece was indeed bold and had a great capacity for composure.

"Don't worry," he said. "Those girls of the Nuandong family, following the Fen Family, could be ground to death any given day. I actually took it upon myself to have them divorce. The Nuandong sisters following their mother is as good as saving their mother's life!"

"It's good they're divorced, giving them a peaceful place to stay. I'm sure mother and daughters will be able to lead a decent life!"

Because of Nuandong's family matters, there wasn't much celebration. After a simple meal together, everyone went back to rest.

Originally, it was decided that they would set off for Capital City at dawn, but due to Nuandong's family matters, the decision was made to stay an extra day or two. Once the matter was settled and Mrs. Xia and the others were properly taken care of, they would leave.

With so much time already delayed, a few more days wouldn't hurt.

In the dead of night, Mrs. Xia awoke and immediately had maids and nannies bring her food.

"You've just given birth and your body has been greatly depleted. Fourth Miss said you need to recover slowly and shouldn't eat anything too nourishing all at once!" said the nanny, intending to feed Mrs. Xia.

Mrs. Xia quickly said, "I can do it myself!"

"You should rest well!" insisted the nanny, slowly feeding Mrs. Xia.

Inside, she felt very jealous.

Being a servant herself, just because Mrs. Xia had a good daughter who was liked by the young lady, even Mrs. Xia and her family were rescued from the abyss.

Why was their fate so good?

No matter how hard it was before, the future was surely going to be very good.

In the prison

The members of the Fen Family were all in a state of anxiety. Fen Zhiqiu and Fen Zhidong had already been beaten several times, crying with hardly any voice left.

They regretted it.

Their hearts were shattered with regret, but there was no medicine for regret in this world. If there were, they would not have provoked Mrs. Xia and brought everything to an unmanageable state out into the open.

The butler of the Fen Family seemed to have aged ten years, his temples graying. Mrs. Chen Fen curled up in a corner, not daring to make a sound, because the butler had hit her as well.

The three sons of the Fen Family were huddled in the corner, hating each other, especially resenting Fen Zhiqiu's husband.

How did he end up marrying such a wife?

Dawn had long broken, yet no one came with food. All of them, accustomed to luxury, were now so hungry they could hardly muster any strength.

Only then did the prison door creak open, and the prison head's rough rebuke scared the members of the Fen Family to the point of incontinence.

"Hurry up, don't dawdle, follow me!"

"Officer, where are we going?" the butler asked.

In fact, they were so suddenly arrested that they still had some silver on them, so he quickly took it out to bribe the guard.

"The Governor said your Fen Family is a den of cold-hearted, ruthless wolves, ungrateful and merciless. You are to be publicly tried at the entrance of the Governor's Office, so get moving!" said the prison head, snatching the silver the butler handed over.

Only a fool would refuse money.

At that moment, the Fen Family truly felt terrified to their core.

Being publicly tried at the entrance of the Governor's Office meant they could end up skinned if not dead.

Once they left the prison, the procession was in utter disarray. Upon reaching the entrance of the Governor's Office, many women began to hurl rotten eggs and spoiled cabbage leaves at them.

The more fiercely they threw, the more it showed they had a wicked mother-in-law at home. It was a shared vendetta.

"Order in the court!"

Yun Bi struck the gavel, and the members of the Fen Family knelt down. Before the beating or interrogation even started, they already confessed everything.

The first to confess was the eldest daughter-in-law of the Fen Family.

"Your Honor, it was all under my mother-in-law's orders. It was her, who, back in the day, did everything she could to marry Mrs. Xia into our family. She said Third Uncle had a cruel streak, and if he married a fierce woman, there could be trouble. He could only marry someone weak and incompetent who would be at the mercy of Third Uncle and our family to knead and flatten at will. And there's more, my mother-in-law took Xun Cuihua's silver to cover up for her, saying that Mrs. Xia was desperately seeking to marry Third Uncle. In fact, it was none of Mrs. Xia's business at all!"

Chapter 432: Resolute Divorce

One remark set off a thousand waves, and everyone was already very curious about this lawsuit. Now, with all this commotion, who could still be unaware of what's going on?

This Fen Family and the He Family are scheming against a helpless woman.

The old have no shame, and neither do the young; the whole household is shameless.

Heartless and unrighteous, those who are unkind and unjust don't deserve to stay in Hengzhou City.

Madam Chen of the Fen family had already been left speechless, and Fen San was also completely astonished.

It wasn't that Mrs. Xia insisted on marrying him, nor was it she who tore him apart from the girl he loved, but rather that the young lady, greedy for vanity, wanted to leave him. And his mother knew it all, even extorted her.

Mrs. Xia...

Fen San wanted to say something, yet he felt unable to utter a single word.

Then he saw Mrs. Xia, her head wrapped in a scarf, stepping down from a carriage, holding a child in her arms, with four others following beside her.

That was his daughter...

Mrs. Xia, holding a child, walked very slowly, her four daughters accompanying her, careful and cautious for fear she might fall.

"Who is this person?"

"That is the pitiable Mrs. Xia!"

"Seeing her so emaciated, and the children are not well-nourished either, it seems life has been truly difficult for her!"

Mrs. Xia, holding her child, walked to the front of the court hall and slowly knelt down, "Your Honor, this humble woman has been wronged!"

Yun Bi looked at Mrs. Xia and was reminded of once Han Shu Niuang.

He felt even more pity for her.

"Speak!"

"This woman married into the Fen family at the age of fifteen, abided by her duty, respected her in-laws, maintained harmony with her sisters-in-law, and treated the younger generation kindly, yet she was bullied by her in-laws and sisters-in-law; even the younger relatives would hit and insult her whenever they wished, not to mention my four poor daughters!" Mrs. Xia's voice was filled with sorrow.

"Your Honor, this woman wishes to take her daughters and be divorced from this Fen San, so that henceforth we go our separate ways and have nothing to do with each other!"

Upon hearing this, Fen San was about to open his mouth and disagree.

But then he heard several women saying, "Your Honor, please grant Mrs. Xia's request. With such a wicked mother-in-law and spiteful husband, if you don't grant it today, Mrs. Xia and her daughters can't survive!"

"Yes, Your Honor, please grant it!"

Yun Bi swept his gaze over and realized these women might have been brought in by someone, but he did not expose it.

"Mrs. Xia, besides the divorce and taking your five daughters, what else do you want?" Yun Bi asked.

"Your Honor, aside from my daughters and the divorce papers, this woman wants nothing else, only that after the divorce, he must no longer come to trouble this woman and her daughters!" Mrs. Xia said, as she continued to kneel and kowtow.

Yun Bi looked on and could not bear it.

"In doing so, you can indeed be considered to have compassion and righteousness!" Yun Bi said, then looked at Fen San, "Are you willing to divorce?"

Fen San, his mouth agape, wanted to say he was not willing to divorce.

But facing the icy Mrs. Xia, he found himself unable to speak a word.

The more he understood how much he had hurt her over the years; if not for the children, Mrs. Xia would have long stopped being with him. Now that she had someone to rely on, she was all the more determined to leave him.

In the end, he just nodded slightly.

"If that's the case, then as the official here, I shall decide that you two may divorce. Mrs. Xia wants the five children and seeks not a single penny from you. Let all past grievances evaporate with this divorce paper!" Yun Bi said as he quickly took up a pen, dipped it in ink, and wrote swiftly. He had two copies made and showed them to the literate crowd before instructing Mrs. Xia and Fen San to press their finger prints and write their names. With this formality, the divorce was counted.

Mrs. Xia wanted nothing, not even her own dowry.

Yun Qi regarded the people of the Fen family, "I never dreamed that there could be such parasites in my household. It's a sign of my blindness and folly. You all best go back and pack your belongings and take your leave!"

Chapter 433: The Goodness of Third Uncle

Yun Jinnian left fifteen thousand taels of silver for Nuandong's family. As for whether her mothers could keep it safe, Yun Jinnian, far away in the Capital City, could not manage that. She could only entrust her third uncle, Yun Bi, to look after them a bit, and she had also instructed the Moon-watching Sect to help out now and then so her mothers could live a little more comfortably.

Mrs. Xia and Nuandong were silent for a long time after seeing what Yun Jinnian had left them. Mrs. Xia put away the items, "Nuandong, from today on, you are not just my daughter but also Nuanchun and their sisters'; mother knows this isn't fair to you, but I can see that the Fourth Miss treats you differently. Your sisters cannot replace you, and in the future..."

"Mother, I know what to do. You don't have to worry. I'll live splendidly, just as Sister Yun said I should!"

To live splendidly is to be worthy of seeking out Sister Yun.

The promise made at the age of sixteen — she would definitely attend.

Yun Bi prepared several large boxes of things for Yun Jinnian, who accepted them courteously.

"Third Uncle, when will you return to the Capital City?"

Yun Bi smiled as he looked at Yun Jinnian, "Very soon!"

"Then I'll wait for Third Uncle in the Capital City!"

"Alright!"

Although Yun Bi was reluctant to let Yun Jinnian and Han Tianci leave, he still smiled as he saw the two children out of the city, giving Han Tianci a Precious Sword that was incredibly sharp.

During the journey, when Han Tianci showed off, Chu Yu recognized that it was the Longming, the personal Precious Sword of the former Great General, which was said to be worth a fortune.

"This Third Uncle treats you well!" Chu Yu teased.

Han Tianci chuckled gleefully.

Yun Jinnian stayed silent, smiling as she thought of that slender figure at Shili Pavilion, who walked for a long time, pulling back the carriage curtain to look; Third Uncle was still standing there, waving his hand now and then, regardless of whether they could see him.

She thought even more of the unwillingness in his reddened eyes when they parted and the faint choke in his voice.

Compared with that man, Third Uncle seemed more like a father.

The gifts they gave her were not numerous but valuable in quality and usefulness.

Dozens of sheets of fine Xuan paper and top-quality Hui Ink, colorful embroidery thread, and a shiny little mirror.

The sword worth a fortune that was given to Tianci.

Prattling endlessly about trivial matters.

"I like Third Uncle!" Han Tianci said, then began fiddling with the sword in his hands.

Yun Jinnian smiled.

Thinking to herself, I like him too, even more than I like our real father.

Han Tianci, being a child at heart, said, "Brother Chu, let's compete in swordplay!"

Seeing Yun Jinnian seemed a bit uncomfortable, Chu Yu suggested, "You go find Yuwen Ya. I need to talk to your sister!"

After glancing at Yun Jinnian, Han Tianci nevertheless obliged Chu Yu.

He crawled out of the carriage, not caring that the carriage was still moving, and with one leap, he jumped onto the roof of the carriage, then with another leap, he landed on the second carriage and made his way inside.

"Commandery Prince!" Han Tianci called out sweetly, showing off his Precious Sword. "This is the Precious Sword my Third Uncle gave me!"

"It's a good sword. Take good care of it, don't lose it, and don't let anyone take it from you!" Yun Jinnian said calmly and gently.

Han Tianci nodded, "Where is brother Yuwen Ya?"

"He's sleeping in the carriage behind!"

Han Tianci's eyes rolled, "Then I'll go and surprise him!"

"Be careful not to hurt him!" Prince Yanjun expressed his concern.

At his age, not having children was once unthinkable, but now, watching Han Tianci, he began to entertain the notion whimsically.

He wondered if a child with her would be particularly adorable?

"Okay!"

Han Tianci once again leaped onto the carriage roof, aiming to surprise Yuwen Ya.

The two began to scuffle inside the carriage.

Inside the first carriage, Yun Jinnian leaned against the carriage wall, listless.

"Are you sick?"

Chapter 434: Wandering Thoughts

Chu Yu said, reaching out to check Yun Jinnian's forehead.

It was slightly warm, but it didn't seem like a fever.

After touching his own forehead, Chu Yu confirmed that Yun Jinnian was simply in a bad mood.

"Do you miss your Third Uncle?" Chu Yu probed.

Yun Jinnian gave him a glance, shook her head slightly, then nodded.

"Half and half, I guess!" Yun Jinnian said softly, flashing Chu Yu a faint smile.

Actually, she was still feeling downhearted.

"Don't overthink it. If you're feeling stifled, why not dress up as a man? I'll take you horseback riding!"

"Horse riding?"

Yun Jinnian thought that she had never ridden a horse before.

"Yes, horse riding. Do you know how?" Chu Yu asked gently.

With eyes and brows filled with tenderness, he made Yun Jinnian's cheeks turn slightly red.

"No!"

"Then let's go, I'll teach you. There are so many benefits to learning to ride a horse!"

Yun Jinnian arched an eyebrow, "I don't know martial arts, but it might come in handy when I need to run for my life!"

"Don't talk nonsense. I'll protect you!"

Yun Jinnian laughed.

She wanted to say, what if you're not here? But she felt that such words would hurt Chu Yu's feelings, so she said, "Then you go prepare the horses while I change my clothes, and we'll go riding together!"

"Deal!"

Chu Yu left the carriage, and only then did Yun Jinnian rustle as she changed into men's attire inside the carriage.

Han Zhong focused on driving the carriage.

Regarding Chu Yu and Yun Jinnian, Han Zhong was rather content with Chu Yu.

Although Chu Yu was a bit of a rogue, he became entirely disciplined and sincere in front of Yun Jinnian.

"Uncle Zhong!"

Han Zhong grunted in acknowledgment.

"I'll take Jinnian horseback riding later. You find a cool place by a stream to rest, and we'll catch up with you soon!"

"Okay!"

Yun Jinnian emerged from the carriage after changing, and Chu Yu reached out towards her.

Without hesitation, Yun Jinnian placed her hand in Chu Yu's. He pulled firmly, drawing Yun Jinnian into his embrace, one hand clasping her waist, the other bending to whistle into his mouth, and a snow-white horse swiftly ran over.

Chu Yu, holding Yun Jinnian, leaped into the air towards the horse.

"Spread your legs!"

Upon hearing this, Yun Jinnian's face flushed, but she did as told and parted her legs.

Chu Yu held her as they safely landed on the horse's back.

With one hand on Yun Jinnian's waist and the other pulling the reins, he placed them in her hands, "Try pulling on these!"

Yun Jinnian held onto the reins tightly.

Chu Yu still had one hand on Yun Jinnian's waist as he bent to place her feet in the stirrups. Since it was his horse, when Yun Jinnian stepped into the stirrups, her legs were fully extended.

After securing both sides, Chu Yu's heart raced a bit faster as he thought of the softness and gentleness in his palms, feeling as if he were floating.

"Ahem!" Chu Yu forced himself to calm down.

"Squeeze the horse's sides gently with your legs!" Chu Yu said, his face turning red.

Yun Jinnian, engrossed in grasping the reins, didn't notice Chu Yu's reaction.

Chu Yu was overjoyed.

He wasn't worried about Yun Jinnian riding the horse out into the wilderness; his horse was very spirited.

Although horseback riding was nice, after a while, Yun Jinnian's behind started to hurt from the rough ride.

"Big Brother Chu, Big Brother Chu, how do I make the horse stop?" asked Yun Jinnian.

Chu Yu, still lost in his bliss, didn't hear Yun Jinnian's words.

"Big Brother Chu?" Yun Jinnian raised her voice.

"What?"

Chapter 435: Chu Yu Proposes Marriage

Chu Yu felt somewhat guilty.

After all, he had just been thinking those thoughts in his heart.

"How do we get the horse to stop?" Yun Jinnian raised his voice but remained gentle and warm.

Towards Chu Yu, Yun Jinnian was truly sincere, filled with joy and pity.

Chu Yu extended his hand to cover Yun Jinnian's, tugging on the reins, "Whoa..."

The horse clopped a few times and came to a halt.

Chu Yu's hand was large and warm, tightly enclosing Yun Jinnian's delicate and soft hand.

From his big hand to her small one, the warmth spread, tingling and numbing.

From skin to flesh to heart, and to the soul, Yun Jinnian immediately felt extremely shy, wanting to pull her hand away, but Chu Yu held on tightly.

"Chu..."

Her voice trembled, unable to articulate a complete sentence.

Yun Jinnian lowered her head, gazing at the snow-white horse.

Chu Yu's heart was also filled with joy.

What could be more joyful than liking someone who just so happens to like you back?

"Jinnian, there's no one here!"

Yun Jinnian turned even shyer, unable to withdraw her hand, so she let Chu Yu hold onto it, her heart though, was thumping wildly.

Chu Yu gently nudged the horse's belly, letting it walk at a leisurely pace.

The two nestled close together.

They both knew that once back in the Capital City, they would never have this kind of tranquil ease again.

So they cherished it all the more.

Chu Yu relaxed gradually, not thinking about the mess, and just feeling the happiness and peace of the moment.

"Jinnian!"

"Hmm?"

"You're thirteen this year, can I ask my aunt to propose to your family on my behalf?" Chu Yu asked cautiously.

Yun Jinnian was utterly astonished.

"..."

"We could get married first, rest assured, I won't do anything untoward before you come of age!" Chu Yu said carefully, his heart filled with nervousness.

Yun Jinnian was beautiful and talented, and once her fame spread, he feared the suitors would come like fish swimming across the river; he had to plan ahead.

Yun Jinnian remained silent.

She wanted to ask Chu Yu if he could be wholeheartedly devoted, never to have a change of heart in this lifetime?

This question was hurtful to ask.

But with her parents in mind, she wasn't particularly eager to marry.

Moreover, she had other considerations.

It wasn't until much later that Yun Jinnian spoke softly, "Let me think about it, okay?"

To say he wasn't disappointed would be a lie.

"Okay!"

After all, he couldn't bear to pressure Yun Jinnian.

Both were somewhat distracted.

"Let's go catch up to Tianci and the others!" Yun Jinnian suggested.

"Okay!"

Once again, the horse took off at a gallop, and Yun Jinnian was much more at ease this time, also deciding that after returning, she needed to find time to learn at least the basics, perhaps study with Tianci.

By the time Yun Jinnian and Chu Yu returned on horseback, Han Tianci and the others were already resting in a small grove near a stream, where Han Tianci was catching fish.

Next to them, a large pot was filled with fish soup.

Steaming white with an enticing aroma.

Chu Yu dismounted first, then picked up Yun Jinnian off the horse, patted the horse's rump, and let it graze on its own.

He walked with Yun Jinnian towards the stream.

Madam Qian glanced surreptitiously, hesitating inwardly whether she should mention to the Emperor upon returning. Was Prince Rui's relationship with the Fourth Miss out of the ordinary?

"Sister, look at the fish I caught!" Han Tianci called out to Yun Jinnian with a smile, showing her his catch.

"How many have you caught?" Yun Jinnian asked.

"Five so far, I'll grill them for you to eat later!" said Han Tianci.

"Keep it up!" Yun Jinnian squatted down and dipped her hands into the cool water of the stream, washing away the worries in her heart.

She gradually settled down.

Her and Chu Yu's matters, it seemed, would be difficult to come true.

Chapter 436: Love for the House Extends to the Crows

Chu Yu also removed his shoes and socks and waded into the water to catch fish with Han Tianci.

After catching several fish, the two of them started playing in the water.

Han Tianci scooped up water and splashed it toward Chu Yu, drenching him, and Chu Yu quickly retaliated. They soon got completely soaked.

Yun Jinnian laughed and stepped aside.

Watching Yuwen Ya laughing heartily, thrashing around in the creek, and joining Han Tianci to splash Chu Yu, the three of them played together, filling the air with laughter.

Yun Jinnian stood by, also bursting into laughter.

"Sister, come and join us!" Han Tianci called out to Yun Jinnian, his movements slowing, and he got splashed in the head by Chu Yu.

"Ah..."

Han Tianci shrieked and quickly splashed water back at Chu Yu.

As they played, they started to learn how to draw water.

Han Tianci didn't know how, so Chu Yu and Yuwen Ya patiently taught him.

Yun Jinnian smiled and instructed someone to prepare clothes for them, and to cook a pot of ginger soup.

Fortunately, it was the end of May and the weather was quite hot.

It was good for Tianci to learn how to draw water.

As for cooking, Yun Jinnian couldn't do it and wouldn't have been able to help even if she wanted to, so she went to speak with Prince Yanjun.

"Commandery Prince!"

Prince Yanjun smiled at Yun Jinnian and gestured for her to sit down. He poured her a cup of tea, "Have a taste. It's Kuding tea, a bit bitter. I don't know if you'll get used to it?"

Yun Jinnian took a sip from her teacup and said earnestly, "It's bitter at first, but leaves a sweet aftertaste, and Kuding tea also has the effect of clearing heat and detoxifying. It's good tea!"

"I chanced upon it in the city yesterday. If you like it, come and drink it often!"

"Sure!"

Prince Yanjun saw that Yun Jinnian enjoyed quietness and he wasn't much of a talker himself. Besides, he had just recovered from an illness and was still weak, so he preferred not to talk much.

"Why don't we play a game of chess?"

Yun Jinnian nodded in agreement.

Tongge hastily prepared the chessboard and pieces.

The two of them started to play under the big tree, quite leisurely.

Han Tianci seemed to have learned how to draw water and was frolicking happily in the water. Yun Jinnian turned her head to look, and her eyes and brows were filled with a gentle and doting smile.

Prince Yanjun glanced at Yun Jinnian, "Ayu and Yuwen Ya will take good care of him!"

Han Tianci was a prodigy and had a sister who planned for his future, presenting the best of everything before him and educating him with great care. His potential knew no bounds.

Take this trip to Nanjiang, for instance; everyone gained a lot, but Han Tianci learned many skills and his martial arts improved at an astonishing rate.

At such a young age, if he desired to take someone's life, there would be few who could escape.

"Tianci is too active!" Yun Jinnian agreed, placing a chess piece.

Yun Jinnian played chess in the same manner, gentle and considerate, thinking three steps ahead with each move calculated precisely and deeply. Her chess skills were incredibly formidable, and Prince Yanjun never underestimated her.

He, therefore, played chess with Yun Jinnian seriously.

Chu Yu was still worried Han Tianci would catch a cold, so after some time of frolicking, he had Han Tianci change into dry clothes and drink a bowl of ginger soup before coming over, his hair still dripping.

Yun Jinnian rarely saw Chu Yu with his hair down and disheveled, and now that she suddenly did, she found him exuding a carefree and devilish charm, clean-cut features contrasting the moon's light and breeze, making it hard to look away.

"Sister, are you playing chess with the Commandery Prince?" Han Tianci asked, then took a seat next to Yun Jinnian.

Seeing his hair still wet, Yun Jinnian said to Chu Yu, "Chu elder brother, why don't you keep the Commandery Prince company for a chess game? I'm going to get a towel to dry Tianci's hair!"

"Sister, it's fine, the sun is strong, it will dry in a moment," Han Tianci chirped, in very high spirits.

Yun Jinnian tapped his forehead, "No mischief now. If you don't take care of yourself when young, you'll end up with many troubles when you're older, and you'll be the one to suffer then!"

Chapter 437: Beautiful Everywhere

"Ha-ha, then I'll listen to big sis, you're the best!" Han Tianci said with a giggle.

Yun Jinnian looked at him with feigned annoyance and stood up.

Chu Yu also said with a smile, "Jinnian, braid my hair too, will ya?"

Yun Jinnian paused, her face flushing red, "Let Luo'er do it for you!"

In broad daylight, she braided Tianci's hair because she was Tianci's sister, and nobody could say anything about it.

But her and Chu Yu...

Thinking this, Yun Jinnian quickly walked away.

"Chu Big Brother, you're too bad, teasing my sister!" Han Tianci spoke up for Yun Jinnian.

Chu Yu laughed, "You lucky kid!"

He himself begged but couldn't get it.

This rascal did have it easy, Jinnian was always looking out for him.

However, the person Jinnian would be accompanying in the future was him, so he wouldn't bother with this kid for now.

"Hehe, that's right, Sis loves me the most!" Han Tianci said, picking up a chess piece and placing it on the board.

Chu Yu didn't bother with right or wrong but just reached out and grabbed Han Tianci, giving him a few twists.

"Ow, ow!" Han Tianci cried out.

"Still bragging now?" Chu Yu asked fiercely.

"No more, I dare not!" Han Tianci pleaded relentlessly until Chu Yu let him go and made him focus on the chess game.

Prince Yanjun did not show any mercy to Han Tianci just because of his age, he still took the game seriously. Despite Tianci's young age, he was an excellent chess player.

Yun Jinnian brought a towel to braid Tianci's hair, and seeing Chu Yu's wet black hair still dripping and that neither Luoyi nor Luo'er had come over, she hesitated for a moment, "Chu Big Brother, do you want me to braid your hair?"

Upon hearing this, Chu Yu was overjoyed inside, smiling so broadly his eyes disappeared, "Then thank you, Jinnian!"

The smug look on his face was annoying to behold.

Han Tianci reached out to pinch Chu Yu, who only laughed happier.

Han Tianci cursed inwardly, "Idiot!"

And concentrated on his game with Prince Yanjun.

Chu Yu, on the other hand, was floating on cloud nine, utterly blissful.

Braiding by Yun Jinnian felt different from when his wet nurse did it, and even from Luoyi and Luo'er. Jinnian's touch was light, yet Chu Yu felt he could drown in this tenderness.

It was so unlike him.

"All done!" Yun Jinnian said indifferently and turned to wash her hands.

Chu Yu couldn't stop grinning.

Han Tianci glanced at him and sighed, "Gone goofy!"

Prince Yanjun smiled warmly but said nothing.

Youthful and frivolous, love was deepest and most genuine.

Never with a shred of pretense.

No matter if others might enter his heart in the future, they wouldn't match the intensity and sincerity of his first love.

But, Prince Yanjun hoped no one else would enter Chu Yu's heart. Once Chu Yu missed out on Yun Jinnian, it would be a true loss, one not retrievable by any scheming or means.

This, Prince Yanjun felt it necessary to remind Chu Yu of.

Fish soup, roasted fish, buns, and a big pot of rice.

The fish, caught from the stream, was delicious. Yun Jinnian ate a roasted fish and had two bowls of soup which filled her, so she took a slow walk under the big tree.

Chu Yu slowly approached Yun Jinnian, "Thank you!"

Yun Jinnian glanced at him and shook her head slightly.

Together, they walked circles around the big tree.

Han Tianci, holding his bowl, glanced over, and Yuwen Ya gave him a piece of the belly, "Eat up, the bones here are the least!"

"Thanks, Seventh Brother!"

Yuwen Ya chuckled, "Eat up, and later we'll have another round!"

Once Han Tianci's sneak attack succeeded, Yuwen Ya thought he understood what had previously eluded him.

"Sure!"

Hemei, warm, and Shi Jiayu sat eating roasted fish together. Shi Jiayu's face was radiant with joy, clearly happy and fully recovered from the nightmare of losing her family.

Chapter 438: Ruin and Decay

She knew why Yun Jinnian did not take the same path as before, fearing that the scenery would evoke her emotions.

This miss ah, has the kindest heart.

She holds everyone in her heart, thinking of them carefully and earnestly.

"Big Brother Chu!"

"Hmm?"

"I'm somewhat puzzled," Yun Jinnian said, frowning slightly.

Chu Yu looked toward Yun Jinnian, seeing her fair cheeks, so delicate, wondering what it would feel like to kiss her?

Licking his lips, he cleared his throat roughly, "What's puzzling you?"

"On the snow mountain, when I took Zhou Yunshen's pulse, his illness seemed to have worsened, but why didn't I hear of him sending for me while in Nanjiang? Could it be that he has found a doctor more skilled than I am?" Yun Jinnian said slowly.

This too was baffling.

Zhou Yunshen's illness, if not properly treated to eradicate its root, would be greatly detriment to his offspring in the future.

Yet as a girl, it was not appropriate for her to speak of such matters.

"It is said that the Emperor of Great Zhou is seriously ill, so he must have gone back to fulfill his filial duties!" Chu Yu said carelessly.

Inside, he hoped that Zhou Yunshen would roll far away, never to appear in front of Yun Jinnian again.

He detested him to death.

"Oh!"

That explained it.

She couldn't help but sigh, "It's a pity that the Snow Lotus didn't sell, and it was priced quite high too!"

Chu Yu laughed, "There will be a chance!"

After suffering from his illness for so many years and still not getting better, it was inevitable that he would seek out Yun Jinnian again.

"Hmm, when he comes to me, I'll definitely make him continue using the Tian Mountain Snow Lotus!"

"When we earn the silver, I'll share half with you!"

Yun Jinnian laughed, "Alright, then I'll be earning double!"

Zhou Yunshen would have to pay a consultation fee when he came for treatment, right?

Seeing Yun Jinnian laugh, Chu Yu was also overjoyed.

After having lunch and getting ready, they continued on their journey. Lying inside the carriage, Yun Jinnian felt drowsy. Shi Jiayu made the mat comfortable for Yun Jinnian to lie down and sleep.

"Then, I'll take a nap!"

After Yun Jinnian fell asleep, it became a bit stuffy, so Shi Jiayu picked up a silk fan and gently fanned her, cooling her down and making her sleep even more soundly.

Hemei and Henuan watched; after a while, Henuan took over the fanning duties from Shi Jiayu, who did not refuse and sat aside, slowly embroidering with a needle and thread.

Just as it was getting dark, they entered a small town and found the only inn to stay.

After bathing, they went to the dining hall for dinner.

The dishes were rich, and they tasted good.

"Tianci, have half a bowl of chicken soup!" Yun Jinnian said, scooping chicken soup for Han Tianci herself.

"Thank you, sister!"

Han Tianci obediently drank the chicken soup and ate half a bowl of rice until he was so full that he burped continuously.

Yun Jinnian walked around the room with him to aid digestion, while Han Tianci recited from 'The Four Books and Five Classics'.

Yun Jinnian also memorized quite a bit.

"Sister..."

"Hmm?"

"Tomorrow morning, let's take a stroll around the town before we leave!"

Yun Jinnian nodded, "Then you should get up early so we can find a street stall, have something to eat, and then set off!"

"Good!"

After walking some more, Han Tianci no longer felt so full, and he went to sleep.

Yun Jinnian also got ready and lay down on the bed that Shi Jiayu had prepared.

The mat, blanket, pillow, and mosquito net were all things she had used along the way, and Shi Jiayu's thoughtfulness moved Yun Jinnian.

Despite saying it several times, Shi Jiayu persisted in her ways, and Yun Jinnian let her be.

When the next day dawned, Han Tianci got up early; touched by her promise to Han Tianci, Yun Jinnian also got up early, got dressed, washed up, and called on Chu Yu, Yuwen Ya, and Prince Yanjun to leave the inn together.

This group of people, with handsome men and women who were as beautiful as celestial beings, attracted countless onlookers.

Seeing their unusual clothing and the refinement in every detail, they must have promising backgrounds.

Many people pointed and talked amongst themselves, full of curiosity.

As they reached a stall selling breakfast, Yuwen Ya smiled and asked, "What are you selling?"

"We have wontons, buns, soy milk, and deep-fried dough sticks!" A crisp voice came through.

The crowd turned to look and were all stunned.

Chapter 439: Jiu Niang is Polite

It wasn't that the girl was particularly beautiful or particularly ugly, but that one half of her face was very delicate, while the other half was scarred.

It looked like a burn injury.

A few men, realizing it wasn't polite to stare at the girl, quickly lowered their heads and found seats to sit down.

Even the usually boisterous Han Tianci was unexpectedly quiet.

Yun Jinnian watched and smiled faintly.

These noble descendants can also show pity and sympathy. Each of these masters in the Capital City struts around, but today proved to be quite the surprise.

As he sat down with a slight smile, the woman approached cheerfully, "What would the customers like to eat?"

"Bring us a bit of everything you have, and if we eat well, our master will reward you!" Tongge said, laughing to himself.

Jiuniang smiled, "Please wait a moment, sirs. The food will be served shortly!"

Soy milk, deep-fried dough sticks, steamed buns, rice porridge—the taste was superb. The soy milk was rich and fragrant, without much of a fishy taste; indeed, it was very good.

Han Tianci had two bowls and still wanted more, but Yun Jinnian smiled and shook his head in refusal.

"Sister..."

"Drinking too much is bad for your health!"

Han Tianci hesitated for a moment, "Then I'll wait to eat wontons!"

He looked toward the elderly couple busy boiling wontons, eagerly waiting.

When the wontons were served, they tasted extremely delicious. Han Tianci ate most of the bowl, and then Yun Jinnian signaled Shi Jiayu to go and inquire about the recipe.

The soy milk had a strong bean scent; how did this woman achieve this?

The wonton wrappers were thin and the meat tender, particularly the skins, which had a hint of fish flavor.

Shi Jiayu approached Jiuniang and bowed, "Miss, my young lady sent me to ask for guidance, and we hope for your gracious instruction!"

Jiuniang quickly shook her head, "I dare not!"

"Miss, it's like this: Our young master really loves the soy milk and wontons that you make. May I ask if you have any secret tips?" inquired Shi Jiayu, adding, "Don't worry, Miss—these will not be sold to the public. They are just to satisfy the young master's cravings privately, and my mistress will surely not forget your kindness!"

Jiuniang paused slightly and then smiled, "Actually, there's nothing much, just some little tricks!"

For the soy milk, she added something during the soaking of the beans. After the wonton dough was ready, she'd steam fish meat to remove the fishy taste and mix it into the flour before rolling it into thin skins. As for the meat, it required more effort to make the aspic, all of which Jiuniang taught to Shi Jiayu one by one.

Fearing Shi Jiayu would not remember, she even found pen and ink to write it down.

Jiuniang was so meticulous that Shi Jiayu asked, "Miss, what happened to your face?"

"When I was a child, I was helping my parents with work and accidentally fell, my face pressed against the stove, and then I overturned it and got burned by the charcoal fire," Jiuniang said with composure.

Now, her parents were doing well, and her breakfast stall was doing good business, leaving some Silver for the family after covering their living expenses.

She had no intentions of getting married. If push came to shove, she thought of picking up a beggar from the streets to sleep with for a few nights and have a child.

There was someone who liked her, but his parents didn't approve of her, not even his brothers, sisters-in-law, or sisters, so she had given up on the idea.

"Didn't you get proper treatment at the time?" Shi Jiayu looked at her, feeling sorry for Jiuniang.

"We weren't well-off when I was a child; my grandparents weren't in good health, and we needed a significant amount for medical expenses every year!"

The bitterness of the past couldn't be fully expressed in just a few words.

Shi Jiayu carefully stored away the recipe. Jiuniang's parents, who were quite old, treated this rare visitor with warmth, kindness, and enthusiasm.

When Shi Jiayu came out, everyone had finished eating and was waiting.

Tongge placed two bars of gold on the table, startling Jiuniang's parents. Jiuniang, however, collected them calmly and thanked them with a bow.

Yun Jinnian gave Jiuniang one last glance before heading back to the inn.

Chapter 440: Eager to Return Home

Jiayu mentioned to Yun Jinnian the injuries on Jiuniang's face, and after thinking for a while, Yun Jinnian said, "Later, you should take a few bottles of medicine to her, and tell her about the serious nature of them, whether to use them or not should be her own decision!"

"Yes!"

Upon returning to the inn, Yun Jinnian found three bottles of medicine, "The medicine in this blue bottle will corrode the skin, rotting the skin on her face. After that, wipe it clean with a gauze, then apply the medicine from this red bottle to promote new skin growth until the skin heals. Lastly, use this purple bottle for skin renewal. These are pills for her to consume while applying the red medicine for skin growth, one pill per day!"

Fearing Jiuniang might not remember, Yun Jinnian took a pen and painstakingly wrote it down.

She had Jiayu send them over.

Jiayu, of course, was happy to make the trip.

Jiuniang was astonished when she saw Jiayu bringing the medicine.

"This is my young lady's will, rest assured and use it, my young lady's medical skills are formidable, she will definitely heal your face, so that you can marry a suitable gentleman!"

Jiuniang couldn't help but laugh; she was already twenty-five, yet they were talking about a suitable gentleman.

"I am truly very grateful, but I don't know the name of my benefactor?"

Seeing no one around, Jiayu leaned closer to Jiuniang and said, "My young lady is the fourth Miss Yun of the Capital City, her given name is Jinnian!"

The fourth Miss Yun of the Capital City, her given name Jinnian.

Her benefactor, as beautiful as an angel, was the fourth Miss Yun of the Capital City, her given name Jinnian.

She remembered that.

After saying a few more words, Jiayu took her leave and departed.

Jiuniang watched Jiayu go, then took a deep breath, gathered up the items, and decided to use them when the weather cooled down.

She mused that there were indeed good people in ancient times!

This minor incident, except for Jiuniang, was dismissed by the others, and they left Shuanghe Town early.

Before long, it was June 20th.

"Just ahead is Yangxi City. We'll stay in Yangxi City for the night, and after another half month's travel, Jiuniang, you'll reach the Capital City!" Chu Yu said, unable to conceal his joy.

He had thought they would only arrive by the fifteenth of August, but the journey had been smoother than expected.

Yun Jinnian and Han Tianci were also elated.

They were finally going home.

Thinking of their beloved mother and their kind grandfather, the siblings exchanged smiles.

"Hmm..."

Han Zhong pulled the reins tightly, looking at the bloodied man in the bushes by the roadside, unsure whether he was dead or alive.

Yun Jinnian gently lifted the curtain, "Uncle Zhong, what's the matter? Why do I smell blood?"

"There's a bloodied man in the bushes by the road, I don't know if he's still alive," Han Zhong said. Just then, Chu Yu had already ridden over on his horse.

Luoyi and Luo'er were also by his side.

"Shall I go down and take a look?" Yun Jinnian asked.

"Jinnian, you stay in the cart. Luoyi, you go and drag the person over!" Chu Yu commanded.

And Luoyi really dragged the person over.

Regardless of whether it might kill the man.

When he threw the man in the middle of the road, his wounds on the body had started to fester and pus due to the hot weather, and his face, covered in blood and swollen like a pig's head, made it impossible to discern his original features.

After checking, Luoyi reported, "My lord, this man is gravely injured. If he doesn't receive treatment soon, I fear he won't survive!"

Before Chu Yu could respond, Yun Jinnian had already spoken up, "Carry him into the last cart, remove his clothes, and cut away the rotten flesh on his body. Hemei, Warmth, prepare the medicine box and hemostatic drugs!"

Chu Yu caught on that Yun Jinnian was about to treat another man's wounds, and feeling jealous, he glared at Elder Mu. Elder Mu felt amused inside, but fearing to irritate Chu Yu, he quickly said, "Saintess, let your subordinate treat his external wounds first. Can the rest wait for the Saintess's care?"

Yun Jinnian, slightly startled, smiled faintly, "Alright, as you say!"

Hearing this, Chu Yu finally breathed a sigh of relief, thinking having those bothersome old men around was indeed useful!