

Indulgence 461

Chapter 461: The Unwilling Emperor

Yun Jinnian smiled tenderly.

She would not leave, and neither would Fa Zun and the others.

If Chu Yu encountered any trouble, he wouldn't be left without assistance.

Chu Yu was very clear about Yun Jinnian's intentions.

But Yun Jinnian said nothing, which made him feel even more grateful.

"Mm!"

They spent their time together calmly, with a gentle warmth. Yun Jinnian was sewing, working on a garment for Chu Yu. Chu Yu pretended to read a book but was actually staring at Yun Jinnian non-stop, not even noticing when the book turned upside down.

Yun Jinnian did not remind him, focusing intently on the garment, with just a few stitches left to complete.

She snipped the thread with scissors, "Brother Chu, it's done!"

Chu Yu carefully set down his book, "Alright, let me try it on!"

He put on the new clothes made by Yun Jinnian and found them very fitting, "It's just the right size!"

"Sister!"

Han Tianci walked in with his brand-new clothes, looking very handsome.

"Sister, these clothes look so nice!"

"As long as you like them!" Yun Jinnian said with a smile. "Why did you take so long to bathe?"

"Hehe, the water was so comfortable!"

"Now it's fine because the water is still warm, but once the weather cools down, you shouldn't do this. Did you dress yourself?" Yun Jinnian asked.

"Yes, yes, I put on the inner and outer garments myself, and even the shoes. Sister, am I not amazing?"

"Mm, you're super amazing!"

A year ago, he was surrounded by maids and nursemaids, but a year later, he was dressing and putting on shoes by himself, and had even learned to look after others.

He was indeed super amazing.

Han Tianci giggled and greeted Chu Yu, "Brother Chu!"

Seeing Chu Yu's new clothes, Han Tianci also showed off his own.

Yun Jinnian scooped some chicken soup from a small stove, "It's a bit hot, drink slowly, and have some appetizers!"

"Have you eaten, Brother Chu?" Han Tianci mumbled the question.

"I've eaten, eat slowly!" Yun Jinnian said, sitting gently on the side, watching without helping him pick out dishes.

After drinking a bowl of chicken soup, Han Tianci passed the bowl to Yun Jinnian, "Sister, I want to eat some chicken meat!"

"I'll go and add some for you right now!"

"I want some more soup too!" Han Tianci hastily added.

Han Tianci was at the age of growing, and eating more was a blessing.

Madam Qian and the others finally breathed a sigh of relief learning Yun Jinnian and Chu Yu were finally returning to the Capital City.

At the current moment in the Imperial Palace,

Imperial Study,

The Emperor looked sternly at the person kneeling before him.

"You're saying that out of a hundred men, only you returned?"

Chu Yu, Chu Yu...

He's really growing up now!

"Your Majesty, if I'm not mistaken, that must have been the Golden Guard left by the late Emperor!"

Upon hearing this, the Emperor paused for a long while before bursting into loud laughter, "Golden Guard, Golden Guard, the late Emperor truly favored Chu Yu by leaving him the Golden Guard. He had such a partial heart!"

And it was not just the Golden Guard; he had also left countless Hidden Guards for Chu Yu. As soon as Chu Yu married a Princess and had a legitimate eldest son, these people would come forward to serve him.

The Emperor closed his eyes, waved his hand, and signaled the Hidden Guard to leave.

A hundred of the top men, which he had spent so much silver and effort to train, killed by the Golden Guard until only one remained.

That Golden Guard which should have been his...

Taking several deep breaths, the Emperor finally spoke faintly, "Summon Yun Qi and Yun Chen!"

Of the two brothers who were officials, the Emperor relatively trusted Yun Chen more.

Because Yun Chen had something the Emperor could hold over him, but Yun Qi...

It's said that by now his two concubines had borne him three sons. Did he still have his whole heart for Mrs. Han?

"Your Majesty, the two Lord Yuns have arrived!"

Chapter 462: The Emperor's Divide and Conquer

Eunuch Hai spoke softly, his eyes downcast and breath scarcely escaping.

The Emperor waved his hand, signaling Yun Qi and Yun Chen to enter the Imperial Study.

Once they entered the Imperial Study, they saw the Emperor sitting regally on his throne, smiling at them, "We greet Your Majesty. Long live, long live, long live the Emperor!"

"My dear courtiers, please dispense with the formalities. I have summoned you to the palace today to inform you both that I have just received news that the Yun Family's Fourth Miss will be able to return to the Capital City before the fifteenth of August. I have decided, then, to hold a Mid-Autumn banquet in the palace at that time. Do remember to bring your family members. Oh, by the way, does the Old Madame of the Yun Family presently have an Imperial Decree?"

Upon hearing this, Yun Qi felt that this was not a good sign.

Now with a son, his persistence towards Mrs. Han seemed to have waned as before.

Moreover, Auntie's tender care and exceptional talents were not the least bit inferior to Mrs. Han, without the many rules and tempers, and she was exceedingly thoughtful towards him.

Even when he went to rest at Auntie's place, she wouldn't utter an extra word.

Yun Chen hastily replied, "Answering Your Majesty, she has not!"

"Ah, this is my oversight," the Emperor said, pausing momentarily. "In that case, let us bestow upon the Old Madame of the Yun Family the title of Old Madam of the First Rank. She has birthed three sons, all pillars of the Imperial Court, and is indeed worthy of this title!"

Although Yun Chen was taken aback, he was nonetheless overjoyed. "This subject thanks Your Majesty. Long live, long live, long live the Emperor!"

Yun Qi, puzzled, followed suit with the formalities.

"Alright, you may both withdraw for now. The Imperial Decree will reach the Yun Residence shortly; have the Old Madam prepare herself!"

Compared to Yun Chen's joy, Yun Qi was much more composed.

He always felt that something was amiss.

Could it be that the Emperor wanted to reutilize the Yun Family?

The Old Madame of the Yun Family... should now be addressed as the Old Madam.

Since she had been granted the Imperial Decree to become the Old Madam of the First Rank, the Capital City was abuzz with excitement, those who were well-acquainted with the twists and turns of the Yun Family naturally scoffed.

Esteemed families simply sent respectful gifts, but would not personally visit, whereas smaller households flocked to their door, the Yun Family's status soaring overnight, practically trampling their doorstep.

What surprised people the most was that the Emperor had arranged a new position for Yun Zhen and permitted him a second chance at the imperial examination in two years' time.

Suddenly, the Yun Family was in the limelight.

Yun Muyou's marriage to the Marquess Yuanshen had been going well; her dowry covered all of their household expenses. Weng Jianrui was clever, having coaxed Yun Muyou into taking out her dowry savings to open a shop, which did well in business.

Now that the Yun Family suddenly had an Old Madam, and Yun Zhen had been given a position, though not a major one, Weng Jianrui was even better to Yun Muyou.

Yun Zihan's married life with Liao Shijie was also prosperous, with no overbearing mother-in-law to manage her, nor sisters-in-law or younger brothers-in-law to worry about. All she needed to do was to take good care of Liao Shijie and hold onto his heart.

However, with more than a dozen hometown acquaintances living in their residence, their expenditures suddenly increased greatly, to the point of deficit.

This greatly troubled Yun Zihan.

"What's the matter?" Liao Shijie asked.

Yun Zihan smiled at him, took his hand, and sat in his lap, "It's nothing serious, just, take a look at this account book, will you?"

Liao Shijie immediately understood.

Three meals a day for over a dozen people, plus tea and snacks, seasonal clothing, and the expenses for maids, nannies, and servants indeed consumed a considerable amount of silver.

With a modest family fortune, such spending was unsustainable for them.

"It's my lack of foresight. Now that they're already residing in the house, it would probably be unseemly to send them away!"

And among these acquaintances, some truly had talent, but were poor and had already spent their traveling funds upon arriving in the Capital City. As a former schoolmate and good friend, he naturally couldn't leave them in the lurch.

Chapter 463: Discuss Nicely

"Look at you, where is your mind wandering off to!" Yun Zihan glared at Liao Shijie, irritated.

"I know your plan, among these people there must be a few capable ones. In the future, you want to secure a steady footing in the imperial court. Having the support of Prince Rui alone won't suffice. But my dear husband, we only have so much silver. The revenue from the several estates we own will still take some time, and the money from the shop isn't enough for our regular expenses, let alone for the scholars' ink, paper, brushes, and inkstones—all of which cost a hefty sum. We still have more than two years to go, we must think of a solution!"

As Yun Zihan spoke, she hugged Liao Shijie's neck, "Driving people away is the most unreliable option. Nowadays, before I step out, I have to check myself several times, just to make sure I don't tarnish your reputation and jeopardize your future!"

"I have wronged you!" Liao Shijie embraced his delicate wife tightly.

He was fortunate to have married such a flower-like beauty—a wife who always put him first and held him dear in her heart.

"Nonsense, it's me who has cultivated lifetimes to marry a husband as perfect as you. You mustn't belittle yourself. I'm still waiting for you to earn me a noble title!"

Speaking of the noble title, Yun Zihan thought of her grandmother at home.

Even someone like her now had the title of a venerable lady—a real twist of fate.

Looking at his coy and slightly irritated wife, Liao Shijie felt a warmth spreading through his chest, holding Yun Zihan in a tender and passionate embrace.

Afterward, as they lay close together, "My dear husband, with the return of your fourth sister soon, what do you think of me opening a rouge shop with her?"

"Fourth sister?" Liao Shijie suddenly remembered that girl with the tranquil eyes who glanced at him indifferently, causing him to sweat profusely and to be afraid of even breathing too loudly.

He had almost forgotten her, but now that Yun Zihan mentioned it, he remembered.

"Your fourth sister is a formidable one. Be sure to spend more time with her when the time comes. As for those people in your family, once your aunt leaves the house, you should cut them off if you can!"

Yun Zihan was deeply moved, "My dear husband, what you said makes perfect sense, but it's not easy for my aunt to leave the house overnight. We need to plan this carefully over the long term!"

"Hmm, we're spending more than we're bringing in. I still have some silver here, let's use it for now. The crop from the estates will be ready soon; we won't sell it but rather keep it for our own use, and also plant crops suitable for winter. The tenants will surely agree!"

"The silver you have should be used for your own purposes. Even though we're spending more than we're earning, I will surely find a way. But my dear husband, since we are struggling financially, should we inform your friends from our hometown?"

"Absolutely not. The food on the table can stay the same in variety, but we can slightly reduce the portion sizes. If they're smart, they'll notice. Then we'll see who suggests leaving and who pretends not to know and continues to stay for more handouts. We just need to be aware!"

"If they don't have silver because they're too proud to stick around, you must keep them, my dear husband. If they have money and still harbour the thought of freeloading, it's quite depressing to think about!"

Yun Zihan was still courteous and attentive to those students, only slightly reducing the portion sizes of the food.

There were indeed those who spent their time immersed in the Sages' Books, oblivious to the world outside.

There were also those who noticed the signs and offered to leave. Liao Shijie honestly shared the true state of their household and was even more willing for them to stay. If they could just get through this period, once the harvest from the estates was in, they could make it through.

The situation wasn't great, but it wasn't disastrous either.

It was certainly better than being outside with not enough clothes and food.

Someone suggested cutting back on a few dishes, and that having meat just once every few days would be fine.

Chapter 464: Reluctance in Heart

Yun Zihan wiped her tears in public, "I will have a way to handle this matter, let the husbands and the old masters rest assured and focus on their studies, and everyone will make it to the golden list next year!"

Afterward, Yun Zihan thought it over and had the maid pawn the dowry given by Mrs. Han and Yun Jinnian, pawning it for two years and getting fifty thousand taels of silver in return.

When Duoduo and the butler mamasan spoke of it, a young maid overheard and soon the news spread throughout the residence.

Everyone envied Liao Shijie for marrying a virtuous wife and also secretly worked even harder on their studies; they were naturally grateful to Liao Shijie.

Yun Zihan knew about this and, with a silent sigh, sold the gossiping young maid and harshly reprimanded both Duoduo and the butler mamasan.

"Ahahaha, this is so funny!" Yun Muyou laughed heartily.

Since coming over as a bride, her mother-in-law had let her manage the household; her sisters-in-law and brother-in-law were all trying to please her, and her husband doted on her immensely. With her life going so well, her mood was also good and she became more carefree and confident.

"Mother, is this really true?" Yun Muyou asked, tugging on Mrs. He's sleeve.

"It's indeed true. I have no idea how that couple is living their lives, to actually reach the point of pawning their dowry!" Mrs. He frowned slightly.

Should she consider helping out? These days, the second concubine had been very sensible.

"Hmph, the dowry Second Aunt gave to my Second Sister was so luxurious, worth at least eighty thousand taels, but what about mine? Even at its best, it was worth no more than twenty thousand taels of silver. Second Aunt probably never dreamed that my Second Sister would end up pawning it!"

Yun Muyou said this with a touch of schadenfreude.

Mrs. He really wanted to say that it was because your Second Sister had nothing valuable to show for, all the good things were allocated to you as your dowry!

But she couldn't say such things.

"Mother, you mustn't go helping her!" Yun Muyou added.

Hearing this, Mrs. He could only nod in agreement.

"How well does your mother-in-law treat you?"

"Very well, indeed. She excuses me from morning greetings, and at dinnertime, I'm not required to serve. I have the final say in everything at home, and my husband also treats me well. He even said he wants me to have a child soon, whether it's a boy or a girl!"

Yun Muyou said, blushing slightly.

Relieved by her words, Mrs. He said, "That's good, matters of children depend on fate, you can't rush it!"

"Mhm, I'll listen to you, Mother!"

Now she was a Marchioness herself, but seldom had people invited her over for visits, and those who did were often from families that were not presentable.

She had also sent invitations to visit the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence, but the reply came that the Dowager Marchioness was unwell and might not be a good host.

She sent invitations to Count Xuanping, the Ministry of War Residence, and the Elder Residence as well, only to be rejected indifferently.

As for the Princess Residence, it was not even worth mentioning; her invitations couldn't even be delivered, let alone the most prestigious residence of the Princess of the Nation.

Thinking about this, Yun Muyou felt a surge of annoyance.

Suddenly, it was the beginning of August.

The fragrance of osmanthus filled the courtyard, but Mrs. Han was somewhat listless, prompting Bai Que to immediately call for Han Xuzi.

"What you have is a sickness of the heart, and it needs a cure from the heart!"

Indeed, it was a sickness of the heart.

Just that person, she was actually given the title of Dowager Old Madam.

Where was the Han Family supposed to place its face?

Mrs. Han thought of the hardships Yun Jinnian had faced over the years and wished she could devour Yun Old Madam alive.

"Father, I can't accept this!" Mrs. Han said, bursting into tears in Han Xuzi's arms.

She was not the only person who felt indignant.

He too was indignant, but the time was not yet right.

"Wait and see, Shuniang. It's still uncertain whose game this will be. Let me tell you the good news, Jinnian and Tianci will be back in another three to five days!"

Chapter 465: Unwilling to be Lonely

Mrs. Han hurriedly raised her head, "Dad, what did you just say?"

"You look at you, a person in your thirties, still acting like a child!" Han Xuzi said, also helplessly doting.

Mrs. Han quickly wiped away her tears and straightened up, "Even when I turn ninety-nine, in front of Dad, I am still a child!"

"By that time, I'll be over a hundred!" Han Xuzi said, laughing.

Because her beloved granddaughters and grandson were coming back, the grief that came from the Emperor's actions and the feeling of a hare dying, and a dog being cooked, had diminished quite a bit.

Han Xuzi didn't know what the Emperor was thinking, but the Emperor indeed severely slapped the Han Family's face and hurt the hearts of the Han Family. If you say that they still had the same undivided loyalty as before, that was impossible.

The Han Family had been loyal for generations, but the Emperor had destroyed the bridge after crossing the river...

Moreover, Yun Jinnian had been running around for the poison in his body and had not returned for a year, and yet the Emperor had given glory to the person who had treated Yun Jinnian the worst in the past, truly chilling one's heart!

Mrs. Han laughed, "Has everything at home been tidied up? Niannian Garden also needs to be sorted out, now it's just the original ornaments left!"

The items Yun Qi had given weren't touched by Mrs. Han, but she had Mrs. Yuan pack up the things sent by others and take them to the Han Family.

"Just leave them as they are, no need to add anything, just clean up carefully!"

Mrs. Han nodded, hesitated for a moment, and then said, "Dad, if I want to divorce Yun Qi..."

Han Xuzi was silent for a moment, then sighed, "You make the decision. Dad will definitely support you. Jinnian is sensible and will probably not oppose, and Tianci is also clever and understand, will respect your choice. As long as you feel happy, the Han Family will always be your home!"

"Thank you, Dad!"

Han Xuzi prepared medicine for Mrs. Han, who was suffering from emotional distress, and therefore, she recovered quickly.

The next day, she went out with Bai Que and bought quite a bit of fabric, then hurriedly worked through the night with a few people from Niannian Garden to make clothes for Yun Jinnian and Tianci.

"I don't know if they will be too big!" Mrs. Han said, sighing slightly.

Mrs. Yuan busily said, "Madam, don't worry, we'll cut the fabric first and embroider the patterns. When the young lady and the young master return, we'll measure their sizes and then sew. I guarantee that the young lady and young master will have new clothes to wear the very next morning!"

Mrs. Yuan, Yun Jinnian's wet nurse, naturally adored Yun Jinnian the most. She didn't even glance at her own children and didn't bother to think about them, wholeheartedly waiting on Yun Jinnian.

She had long ago made clothes for all four seasons for Yun Jinnian, and the patterns were delivered by Dai Hanmi's people, reputedly drawn by Dai Hanmi herself, ensuring they were unique.

"The wet nurse is really thoughtful!" Mrs. Han praised Mrs. Yuan, managing to make Mrs. Yuan blush with embarrassment.

As the Old Madam Yun became the Dowager, naturally she wanted to show off, and with her spirits high in joyous occasions, had Mrs. He write invitations early, sending them to all official families in the Capital City.

The date was set for the thirteenth of August.

Mrs. He had people tidy up the garden, pavilion, and even the nooks and crannies early on. She was curious to see how many people would attend.

Xu Xinmo ended up staying at the Yun Family. Her father was rumored to be remarrying and his term had not yet ended, so he could not return temporarily. The Xu Family loathed her to death, preferring to be pointed at and criticized rather than come to fetch her.

The third lady of the Xu Family even threatened with her death not to let anyone come for her, and now she was pregnant.

It was said that the third lady of the Xu Family had been pregnant before, to the eighth month, but somehow lost the baby. Since then, she lost every baby she conceived, and now she was only in her thirties, finally pregnant with this child. The third lady was the dear niece of Old Madam Xu, who had also raised her herself, and their bond was naturally extraordinary. This child was the apple of Old Madam Xu's eye. With the third lady threatening death, Old Madam Xu would, of course, refuse.

Chapter 466: Sowing Discord

Not many people knew the past of the Xu Family, anyway, after the third lady of the Xu Family had a miscarriage, Xu Xinmo was sent to the Yun Family. During the holidays, the Xu Family didn't show any sign of caring, nobody came to visit Xu Xinmo, let alone take her back.

Xu Xinmo's father was ranked second in the Xu Family, with an elder brother above and three legitimate younger brothers and two half-brothers below.

One eldest aunt by marriage, five aunts by marriage, could they all have forgotten about her?

These were things that the Old Madame of the Yun Family wouldn't think about, and neither did Xu Xinmo wish to.

This time, when Mrs. He sent the invitation over, the old lady of the Xu Family, fearing that it would alarm the third lady, immediately ordered the invitation to be burned. She was always decisive in her actions, and this time was no different.

And sent a message back saying that the family had too many things to attend to and couldn't come!

"The Xu Family is only the size of a palm, how busy can they be!" Mrs. He spoke, then went to inform the Old Madame of the Yun Family about this matter.

The Old Madame of the Yun Family snorted coldly, "Well, if they don't come, so be it, as if we're dying for them to show up!" After thinking, she added, "Right, what about the Princess of Zhen Guo?"

"The invitation wasn't delivered!"

It was the same with several Marquis Residences.

"What about the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence?"

Mrs. He swallowed hard, "The Marchioness said the Old Madame is unwell and cannot do without someone by her side!"

Those who were previously unwilling to associate with the Yun Family still declined this time.

The Old Madame of the Yun Family's face turned blue with anger.

It was a hot day, and she hadn't put on a wig, her hair that had grown for two years wasn't very long, and at this moment, it was simply tied up, unable to be styled into a luxurious and complicated hairdo.

It made her whole person look sharp and mean.

Mrs. He didn't feel like attending to her, but after a thought, she said, "Why don't you take a rest first, mother, while I go see what else is missing, so we can prepare early."

"Go ahead, go!"

The Old Madame of the Yun Family had wanted to ask Mrs. Han for help and have Mrs. Han contribute some silver, but she was afraid of Mrs. Han and therefore didn't dare to ask.

After school, Xu Xinmo came back. She had now made a name for herself at the academy, and she knew her past self wouldn't suffice.

She wasn't good enough at concealing her thoughts; whatever she did, people would quickly find out.

That's why she observed others carefully, even if she was unhappy, she wouldn't show it, and wouldn't easily get into a quarrel, maintaining a kind demeanor, which actually made things easier for her.

Therefore, after returning, she went to Cixin Academy, "Grandmother!"

Xu Xinmo was a pretty girl, who smiled sweetly and cutely. The Old Madame of the Yun Family of course adored her, pulled her into her embrace to ask about her day, then let her go to freshen up and change.

"Grandmother, why isn't my second aunt helping with the party you're hosting in a few days?"

"Her? I simply can't ask her to do anything!"

Xu Xinmo laughed, "Why would you say that, grandmother? She is your daughter-in-law, isn't it natural for a mother-in-law to tell her daughter-in-law what to do? Grandmother shouldn't let her be lazy; you should make her help my eldest aunt. If anything is missing, just ask her for it directly, she certainly has plenty of silver!"

The Old Madame of the Yun Family pondered upon hearing this.

Xu Xinmo continued, "Grandmother might not be aware, but my second aunt had people move the valuable things from Niannian Garden to the Han Family!"

"What?" The Old Madame of the Yun Family exclaimed in shock.

In her eyes, those were properties of the Yun Family; they were only temporarily kept in Niannian Garden until Yun Jinnian returned. She was determined to have Yun Jinnian bring them to show her filial respect.

"They've all been transported away, box by box, there were so many of them, my nanny saw it with her own eyes!"

...

After a moment of silence, the Old Madame of the Yun Family finally said, "Go back and get cleaned up first, I will take care of this matter myself!"

"Yes!"

After Xu Xinmo left, the Old Madame of the Yun Family called for Ming Liu to summon Mrs. Han.

Chapter 467: Not at a Disadvantage

Mrs. Han looked at Ming Liu with a detached air, chilling Ming Liu to the bone, yet Ming Liu mustered her courage and said, "Second Lady, the Old Dowager summons you to speak with her!"

Mrs. Han laughed scornfully, "Very well!"

She went with Bai Que to Cixin Academy.

Mrs. Han seldom moved about in the Yun Residence; when maids and old women saw her, they were startled and hastily saluted her.

Arriving at Cixin Academy, Mrs. Han looked around the large courtyard and sneered coldly.

Just by having an Old Dowager title, she acts so arrogantly. Very good, exceedingly good!

She wanted to see just how long this pious old woman could continue her charade!

She stepped into the small hall, found a seat, and sat down without greeting or opening her mouth.

The Old Lady Yun rebuked angrily, "How dare you, Mrs. Han, see me and not kneel and salute!"

"Heh heh, heh heh!" Mrs. Han laughed coldly. "Old Dowager? Do you deserve it? A vile old hag like you, you don't deserve to be the Old Dowager. If the Emperor knew all the dreadful deeds you've committed, if he knew you plotted against your own daughter-in-law, drugged her, and let another man into her bed, do you think the Emperor would confer upon you that title? Dream on!"

Mrs. Han glared at the Old Dowager with a fixed stare.

Seeing her face change drastically and fear flash in her eyes, Mrs. Han knew she had hit the mark.

Originally, that person wasn't supposed to be Third Master Yun Bi, but how it ended up being Yun Bi, Mrs. Han had her suspicions and felt a painful complexity.

Their youthful meetings, the companionship during their younger years, Yun Bi had always believed they would end up together, yet her heart changed when she met Yun Qi halfway through.

"You're talking nonsense!" The Old Lady Yun scolded furiously.

This matter...

Mrs. Han should have no evidence, right?

"Whether I'm speaking nonsense, you know best. What exactly happened with Aunt Su and Aunt Hua back then, you may not say, they may not say, Yun Qi may not know, but I have a clear idea. With your deeds, would the Emperor confer upon you if he knew?"

Mrs. Han was disdainful.

If the pious old woman truly wanted to pressure her, she was not afraid and would cause a scene. Whether Yun Qi believed it or not didn't matter; her goal was to leave with Yun Jinnian.

Jinnian also wanted to leave the Yun Family, right?

"Don't think of pressuring me. If you really provoke me, I'll make a ruckus without any cares, and we'll see who ends up more ashamed!" Mrs. Han finished speaking, turned around, and left, not caring at all whether the Old Lady Yun would die of anger.

On the eleventh day of the eighth month was Yun Zihan's fifteenth birthday, as well as her hairpin ceremony. She had intended to ignore it since she was already married, but seeing Liao Shijie so insistent, she agreed with a smile. Yun Zihan's hairpin ceremony was simple yet solemn.

Liao Shijie's friends sketched and composed poems for Yun Zihan.

Mrs. Han brought Bai Que with her to give a generous gift. Dai Hanmi, Ruan Wanrong, and Chen Danyan personally delivered presents, and even Hu Shuiling from distant Su Hang had Countess Xuanping make a trip.

Lady Feng served as the commendator.

Mrs. He came with Yun Muyou, Yun Musi, and Yun Mulan, hating those present to death.

Yun Muyou felt the same, both envious and jealous.

Halfway through the ceremony, a white-haired old man appeared at the door.

"Excuse me, is this the Liao Residence, home to the Yun Family's third young mistress?"

Liao Shijie quickly stepped forward with a bow, "Indeed, may I ask who you are?"

"As long as this is the place. I am here on the orders of my young mistress, to deliver a hairpin ceremony gift to Lady Liao!"

Liao Shijie was puzzled. "May I know who your young mistress is?"

The venerable laughed heartily, "My young mistress is none other than the Yun Family's fourth young mistress, your fourth younger sister-in-law, Lady Liao!"

Chapter 468: The Hundred States of All Beings

Everyone was a mix of surprised and joyful, their faces showing various expressions.

Dai Hanmi, Ruan Wanrong, and Chen Danyan's happiness was especially apparent, showing on their faces.

Liao Shijie naturally knew who Yun Jinnian was and was very touched that Yun Jinnian had sent a gift back for Yun Zihan, and he remembered this kindness.

Feng Wushuang's eyes shone brightly.

Because Yun Jinnian was about to return, she was about to return as well.

This year she was thirteen, after the New Year, she would be fourteen, would there be a chance for him...

Mrs. Han stood up, "You say you are a servant of Jinnian?"

Looking at Mrs. Han, the envoy hastily paid his respects, "I've seen the lady, I can be considered as the young miss's servant!"

Mrs. Han didn't know what kind of extraordinary experience Yun Jinnian had had, "Is she well?"

"Well, the young miss will probably return to the Capital City the day after tomorrow or the day after, and the young master is also very well!"

Mrs. Han's eyes immediately reddened.

"It's good she's returning, it's good she's returning!"

Yun Zihan also stood up, bowed to the envoy, and received the brocade box.

"I didn't expect my fourth sister to remember!"

No matter what the gift, this sentiment was too profound.

Liao Shijie invited the envoy to sit, but the envoy spoke directly that he still had important matters to attend to, and then turned and left.

Mrs. He and Yun Muyou were jealous of Yun Jinnian's attention to Yun Zihan and were also curious about what wonderful thing Yun Jinnian had really sent.

Auntie Cui couldn't make it today, Mrs. He wouldn't allow it. Xu Xinmo looked down upon Yun Zihan and used her discomfort as an excuse not to come.

The old lady of the Yun family didn't value Yun Zihan and couldn't be bothered to come.

After the coming-of-age ceremony ended, Yun Zihan and Liao Shijie invited the guests to sit down. The dishes were delicately delicious and plentiful, making for a very happy gathering.

After sending off the guests, Yun Zihan immediately grabbed Liao Shijie's hand, eagerly saying, "Husband, let's go quickly and see what good thing my fourth sister gave me!"

"You just know it's a good thing?" Liao Shijie looked at his wife, who was like a child, and smiled as he ran with her.

She was usually reserved and steady, and this was the first time she was half as excited as a child.

Thinking of a little sister choosing a husband for her older sister, he was also very curious about what kind of person this little sister-in-law was.

And what nice gift she had sent his wife this time.

Yun Zihan, holding onto Liao Shijie, entered their room and found the brocade box sent by Yun Jinnian, took a couple of deep breaths, and then opened it.

Two brocade boxes.

Yun Zihan opened one, and inside was a set of gemstone jewelry, a dozen pieces large and small, exquisite and gorgeous, and valuable.

"So beautiful!" Yun Zihan exclaimed.

And very valuable.

Liao Shijie mentally added a sentence.

Just this set of jewelry, there was no way to buy it unless you paid two hundred thousand taels.

This little sister-in-law was indeed generous.

Yun Zihan couldn't wait to open the second brocade box, revealing a porcelain bottle with 'Bailing Pill' written on it.

"What does my fourth sister mean by this?"

Yun Zihan held the porcelain bottle, full of confusion, and opened the wooden stopper of the bottle, a faint scent of lotus assailed her senses.

"This fragrance..." Liao Shijie pondered, "The scent drifts far, pure and not cloying, refreshing and clear-minded, could it be made from Tian Mountain Snow Lotus!"

"Tian Mountain Snow Lotus?" Yun Zihan inquired.

"It should be!"

Yun Zihan took a deep breath, her beautiful jade-like face full of solemnity, "With such a heavy gift from my fourth sister, how can I ever repay her?"

But then she added, "Since my fourth sister has given it to me, I will accept it, husband, quickly get a clean plate, let's see how many there are, maybe we can send a couple back to father and mother. We are young, we don't need this thing much, keeping two is enough, is it okay to send the rest back to father and mother?"

Liao Shijie caressed Yun Zihan's hair, "It's good to send a couple back to your father and mother, and make sure you keep the rest properly!"

Chapter 469: Truly Ruthless

With his own small family, he now had to be more considerate of his wife.

And they would have children in the future.

Giving birth for a woman was like passing through the gates of hell. He would ask his sister-in-law later if the Bailing Pill could be used to save lives.

Yun Zihan thought it over, "Mm, I'll do as my husband says. When we have more money, I'll prepare some other things and ask someone to take them back to my father and mother!"

"Good, you can take care of these arrangements. Take your time, and don't tire yourself out!"

"My husband is so kind!"

Yun Zihan personally opened and checked the rest of the gifts. Seeing the presents from Mrs. He and Yun Muyou, Yun Zihan just smiled faintly and coldly without saying an extra word.

Yun Jinnian had been away for more than a year; he left last May and returned this August. Mrs. Han was extremely pleased.

Mrs. He thought it over and decided to visit the Cixin Academy.

"Mother, Jinnian is coming back!"

Having not mentioned Yun Jinnian for over a year, the Old Madam Yun had nearly forgotten about her in her heart. Now that Mrs. He brought her up, the old madam felt extremely disgusted and said without hesitation, "Why didn't she just die out there!"

Mrs. He was stunned.

This old lady was truly too cruel.

If these words got out, she would no longer be able to be the Old Madam.

The Old Madam Yun paused as well, knowing she had spoken too harshly, but she had grown too accustomed to comfort, and clueless about the outside world, she said in a hard voice, "Well, if she's coming back, she's coming back. After all, it doesn't cost us a penny and there's no need to go out of our way. Are the banquets prepared?"

"They are all ready!" Mrs. He added a few more words, then excused herself to leave Cixin Academy.

With Yun Jinnian away, Mrs. Han was disinterested and detached. Now that Yun Jinnian was returning, the house would likely be in chaos again.

If they couldn't get along, why not just get a divorce.

For no apparent reason, she recalled the commotion from those years ago. Mrs. Han had wanted a divorce and even to take Yun Jinnian with her. Yun Chen insisted on treating Yun Jinnian as his own, and Yun Qi refused to divorce no matter what, usually provoking Mrs. Han to move to the village, where she stayed for seven, almost eight years. Yun Qi also left the Yun Family, leaving Yun Jinnian alone in the household—a child of four or five, who understood nothing, as innocent and pure as a blank sheet of paper, suddenly lost both parents.

In the beginning, she wanted to look after the child, but the old lady was extremely harsh, overtly and covertly endangering Yun Jinnian's life. Yet, the child survived, and now, suddenly enlightened, had gained the favor of several noble families.

Truly causing both jealousy and admiration.

One didn't know if she would arrive on the twelfth or the thirteenth. If it were the twelfth, it would be okay, but if on the thirteenth, it might cause a scandal.

Princess Residence of the Commandery Prince of Zhen Guo

"Is this true?" The Commandery Princess of Zhen Guo stood up, joyful.

"Yes, grandmother. My seventh brother has sent a letter. He will be home tomorrow or the day after!" Yuwen Ming said as he put away the letter.

The eyesight of the Commandery Princess of Zhen Guo wasn't very good; she depended on others to read letters for her.

"Did he mention anything else?" she asked eagerly.

"No, just that he will be home tomorrow or the day after!"

Yuwen Ya seldom sent letters home in that year and more, and even when he did, he would never mention the Prince. Whether things were good or bad, he kept silent.

"I see..." the Commandery Princess of Zhen Guo murmured and sat back down on her couch.

These days, she often dreamed that she had died in Huaixi County, that there was no appearance of Yun Jinnian, and no return to Capital City.

A few months later, her fifth son also passed away, and the emperor started to oppress her sons. Eventually, a charge of conspiring with the enemy and treason was laid down, and almost no one from the Yuwen Family survived.

Although it was clearly a dream, it felt so real.

And every turning point was because of Yun Jinnian's appearance...

Chapter 470: Their Own Thoughts

"Princess, since the seventh master didn't mention it in his letter, he must want to give you a surprise!" Nurse Song hurriedly consoled.

"Let's hope so!"

However, she couldn't rule out another possibility, that Prince Yanjun was no more, yet the children dared not speak the truth.

Princess Jinfeng heaved a deep sigh.

She wasn't the kind of unreasonable old lady, and she had made all sorts of preparations for this journey, even bracing herself for the possibility of never seeing the child again.

But deep down, she still hoped that he would come back alive.

August 12

As the Mid-Autumn Festival drew near, each household was busy making mooncakes. Of course, those who could attend the palace banquet considered it a great honor.

As for the invitations from the Yun Family, those who wanted to curry favor naturally prepared to go the next day. Those who did not want to go treated it as a joke.

Zhuangyong Marquis Residence

Dai Hanmi fed her grandmother grapes she had peeled, "Grandmother, Sister Jinnian will be coming back soon!"

The old Mrs. Dai, upon hearing this, smiled with narrowed eyes, "Some people are about to have their wishes fulfilled!"

Dai Hanmi couldn't help but laugh aloud.

Dai Hanbo's face turned beet red, and with a clenched fist covering his mouth, he coughed once, "Grandmother, what are you saying? I don't quite understand!"

"Do you really not understand? Or are you pretending not to understand? Who was it that secretly prepared those fancy clothes and had Sister Hanmi deliver them to the Yun Family for Jinnian to wear, oh my, how silly..." the old Mrs. Dai said, giggling.

"Grandmother!" Dai Hanbo exclaimed in haste. Seeing that his sisters-in-law were already laughing so hard they couldn't straighten their backs, he quickly said, "I'm off to the study to read!"

In his rush to leave, he nearly stumbled.

"This child, how thin-skinned he is!"

Mrs. Qu, the wife of the second son, was six months pregnant and had cravings, peeled some grapes and ate them before saying, "Grandmother, the third brother is shy!"

"Not just shy. We all understand what's on his mind. When Jinnian returns, we must push hard to set things in stone for him!" the old Mrs. Dai declared earnestly.

"Yes, we'll follow Grandmother's lead. Once Sister Jinnian is back, I'll send out an invitation to have her come over. It would also allow her and the third brother to meet. Our third brother is scholarly and

graceful, like clear moonlight and a gentle breeze, and also quite handsome. Sister Jinnian will surely like him!" Mrs. Qu said while peeling more grapes to eat.

And she ate with gusto.

The old Mrs. Dai knew it had not been easy for her to be with child and was naturally very considerate, but she also worried that eating too much would make the baby too large and cause difficulties during birth.

She couldn't help but say, "Han Guang's wife, you should eat less. If you eat too much and the baby grows too large, it will make childbirth difficult, and you will be the one who suffers!"

Mrs. Qu paused, her face flushing red. She put the grape she had picked up back down, "Grandmother speaks the truth. Look at how greedy I am!"

"It's not that you shouldn't eat; just eat smaller amounts several times. Walk around more, too. It will make giving birth easier and reduce your suffering!" the old Mrs. Dai said earnestly, as if pleading.

The children were filial, and she couldn't help but care for them more.

"I'll do as Grandmother says!" Mrs. Qu, still craving, picked up another grape to eat.

The old Mrs. Dai looked on indulgently with a smile, "Look at you, look at you!"

The Crown Princess, Mrs. Lu, and Dai Hanmi also laughed.

It was a scene of harmonious joy.

Prince Rui Residence

Princess Jinfeng lay carelessly in a chaise longue, sound asleep.

Meanwhile, Leng Binghan stood by, his expression cold and indifferent, as emotionless as an ice sculpture.

Especially when it seemed both had affections for each other, their ability to coexist in such a manner was peculiar.

Si Qin and Si Ju, carrying tea and snacks, had long since become accustomed to the sight.

But the Princess was already nineteen, and would turn twenty after the new year. Leng Binghan neither proposed nor showed any intention to marry, which made Si Qin and Si Ju quietly anxious.