

Indulgence 531

Chapter 531: Calculations in the Heart

"Uncle King, don't worry about this matter; let the two of us handle it. Rest assured, Princess Consort Zhengqin won't even have a place to cry. She will knock her teeth out and swallow the blood, tearing apart her façade of a beautiful woman!" Chu Renzhi said fiercely.

Chu Yu nodded, "Then I'll leave it to you two. Make sure it's done cleanly and efficiently. And that Xiu Xunxun, send someone to seduce her, or incite her to seduce Prince Zhengqin!"

If you want to send someone to the palace, that's fine.

Just by looking at how Xiu Xunxun managed to escape from the Xiu Family, it shows she is a schemer.

Although Prince Zhengqin is somewhat old, he holds power and influence. If Xiu Xunxun flirts with him, even if nothing comes of it, it would be enough to sicken Princess Consort Zhengqin for a while.

"Don't worry, this is easy to handle!" Chu Zhaowei said nonchalantly as he and Chu Renzhi divided the medicine pills. They didn't speak, but their eyes had already fought hundreds of battles.

Chu Yu glanced at them.

"Virtuous!"

Yet he couldn't help but feel touched.

The medicine pills were precious; Yun Jinnian had given him a big bottle all at once, easily a hundred pills. He knew the value of the ingredients that went into them.

At the time she gave them with such nonchalance, seeing how the elderly wood and earth leaders were pained as if they were bleeding, yet unable to rebut, even now it makes him laugh when he thinks about it.

The followers of the Moonwatching Sect truly respect Jinnian.

Chu Zhaowei and Chu Renzhi weren't upset and finally decided to give a pill each to the Farmland Patriarch, their mother, and grandmother.

Then there was only one pill left.

They looked eagerly at Chu Yu, "Uncle King, we are helping you with this matter. Could you reward us with two more pills?"

"Do the job well. Once it's done, you'll be rewarded!"

The two were overjoyed, "Then Uncle King, we're off to take care of business, hehe, hehe!"

The two left happily.

Chu Yu shook his head, yet he couldn't help but smile foolishly.

In fact, the two princes had no intention of rebelling, but the Emperor insisted on keeping the two nephews in the Capital City, causing both princesses to fret over their sons, which was utterly condemnable.

After grooming himself, he lay down on the bed.

The bed seemed to still carry the scent of Yun Jinnian, he hugged the quilt and took in two deep breaths, his mind filled with the lovely smile of Yun Jinnian.

Gentle and tender, her laughter wasn't loud, yet it warmed the heart immensely.

He thought he wouldn't be able to sleep, but unexpectedly, he quickly fell into a deep slumber.

On the fifteenth of August, the Mid-Autumn Festival.

Every household makes mooncakes. Wealthy families tend to be more elaborate, with more varieties and generous fillings, while the less affluent make do with simpler ones, satisfied just to have them.

At the Feng Family,

Although the old Madam Feng no longer managed the household affairs, Feng Wushuang had instructed early on to hire the pastry chefs from Xufuji to make them, and after they were made, she sent many to the Liao Residence.

Liao Shijie currently had no official position and was supporting many of his fellow townspeople. Although not destitute, finances were likely tight.

Feng Wushuang thought that perhaps Yun Zihan would send some back to the Yun Family, and with their relationship, Jinnian wouldn't be left out. If Jinnian found them tasty, she would certainly ask about them.

Feng Wushuang hoped to integrate herself and Feng Xiyu into Yun Jinnian's life, to be remembered without being disliked.

Her status was clear, but she hesitated to directly propose a marriage for fear of being presumptuous towards Yun Jinnian.

Even more, she feared that Yun Jinnian might not like her and would reject her outright, making it difficult to even see her again in the future.

If one day she could become truly aligned with Yun Jinnian, she wouldn't mind using some schemes at the start, because that was the dream in her heart, a dream revisited in countless midnight reveries, always featuring that gentle, elegant smile, soft enough to coax two hundred taels of silver from someone.

That glance was enough to show her hope.

If she could hold Yun Jinnian's hand in this life, it would be the blessing of ten lifetimes.

If not...

Chapter 532: Deep Obsession

Feng Wushuang raised her eyes to the sky and took a deep breath.

She prayed that the heavens would bless him to see his wishes fulfilled and his desires achieved.

"Master, the mooncakes are ready, shall we send them to the Liao Residence now?"

Upon hearing this, Feng Wushuang came back to her senses and nodded slightly, "Send more over!"

"Yes!"

Feng Wushuang watched the servant's retreating figure, her tightly clutched hands feeling somewhat uneasy.

Today, she would see him at the royal banquet, even though it might just be a fleeting glimpse, and they might not even exchange a single word, but she was so excited that her palms were sweaty.

Liao Residence

Yun Zihan had also risen early to supervise the mooncake making, and upon learning that Feng Wushuang had sent over several large boxes of food, she immediately had some sent to the front courtyard and then ordered the kitchen to prepare a lavish dinner for her and Liao Shijie's friends.

Though it was called a banquet, it was nothing more than sitting down for a few bites of food and saying a few words before she had to get up and leave, after all, there was a difference between men and women.

"Madam, there's still quite a bit left!"

The family was small, and they couldn't finish it all.

Distributing it to the servants didn't seem proper.

Yun Zihan thought for a moment, "Then pack it up nicely, I will personally take some back to the Yun Residence later!"

Not for anyone else, but the Yun Residence still had her aunt and four younger sisters as well as her second aunt.

Today at the palace banquet, her mother and second aunt would be going to the palace; she could at least talk to her aunt.

With this in mind, Yun Zihan was also filled with joy.

She quickly found Liao Shijie to explain her intentions, and Liao Shijie naturally agreed, "I'll take you back!"

"Great!"

Today, with no masters at the Yun Family, Yun Zihan was more than willing to return there.

And with Liao Shijie accompanying her back, she was even more delighted.

The two happily packed up, and Liao Shijie went to the front courtyard to speak with his friends for a moment, promising he would definitely return in the evening. Then he left with Yun Zihan.

Princess Residence

The Princess looked at Hemei, initially not understanding what it meant that Yun Jinnian was unwell.

"Is it serious? Is she too exhausted?"

Hemei's face turned red, being a young girl after all, she shook her head and then nodded.

Seeing the nanny so anxious, it must be serious.

Nanny Song instantly understood something and whispered a few words in the Princess's ear. The Princess had an epiphany, dismissed the maids and old women before asking Hemei, "Did your young lady get her first menstruation?"

Hemei's face grew even redder, and she nodded shyly.

The Princess laughed, "I see, well, tell your young mistress to rest well. I will come and see her in a few days. The first time for a young girl needs to be treated carefully. Song, go to the storeroom and take some blood-tonifying herbs for this little girl to take back!"

"Yes!"

Nanny Song immediately left joyfully.

A young girl's first menstruation signifies her coming of age, and once she turns fifteen, she can start discussing marriage.

Of course, there are those who get engaged before reaching the age of fifteen, and if the Fourth Miss and Prince Yanjun could make good things happen...

With this in mind, Nanny Song deliberately chose the finest items while selecting, filling a large chest for Hemei to take back.

When she mentioned this to the Princess, the latter laughed, "These herbs are nothing!"

Seeing Prince Yanjun approach elegantly in a white robe, the Princess was very satisfied, her heart brimming with joy, "Little Wu!"

"Mother!" Prince Yanjun spoke, his gaze sweeping slightly, not seeing Yun Jinnian, "Did Jinnian not come?"

The Princess laughed, "She isn't feeling well and couldn't come; let's not wait for her later!"

Not feeling well?

Prince Yanjun frowned slightly, "Is it an illness caused by exhaustion?"

"No, don't overthink it. Don't ask her about it next time you see her to avoid making her uncomfortable," the Princess whispered, wondering if he would understand.

As she spoke, the Princess observed Prince Yanjun.

Seeing his puzzled expression turn to one of realization after a moment, she knew that he understood.

Chapter 533: Send someone to check

"Mother, your son understands," Prince Yanjun uttered calmly, extending his hand to help the Commandery Princess of Zhen Guo rise. "Mother, the imperial cousin will soon be here; let's go to the hall to wait for him!"

Having lived for decades, the Commandery Princess of Zhen Guo was well aware of Chu Yu's little schemes.

She nodded with a smile.

Looking at her robust son, she thought that even if she were to pass away, her life would have been worthwhile.

Today's trip to the Imperial Palace was to ask the Emperor for that little mountain.

With that mountain, Yun Jinnian would have a fine place to cultivate medicinal herbs.

In the hall, her daughters-in-law were also beaming and respectful, and as for her granddaughters, they need not be mentioned. Yuwen Ming stood gracefully to the side and, with a smile, stepped forward to hold her arm. "Grandmother!"

The Commandery Princess of Zhen Guo nodded. "Hmm, the imperial children will arrive soon; let's sit and wait!"

No sooner had she finished speaking than Chu Yu's laughter could be heard at the entrance. "Aunt!"

As his voice faded, Chu Yu entered with a hearty laugh, striding confidently.

He extended his hand toward Princess Jinfeng, who was clad in splendid attire.

"I pay my respects to my aunt!" Chu Yu bowed with a clasped fist, while Princess Jinfeng curtsied respectfully.

The Commandery Princess of Zhen Guo smiled warmly, "No need for such formalities!"

After exchanging greetings, Chu Yu asked, "Is Miss Yun the Fourth not here?"

"She is unwell and has already sent a maid to inform us earlier; she will not be coming to the palace. Let us proceed!"

Chu Yu had a grasp of the situation and did not inquire further.

Princess Jinfeng, unaware of the details, thought Yun Jinnian was angry with her.

She stole a glance at Chu Yu and, seeing that he appeared unperturbed, felt slightly relieved.

The party left the premises, swaying their way toward the Imperial Palace.

Today's Mid-Autumn Palace Banquet would undoubtedly see the Emperor bestow several matrimonial matches, which may seem impulsive but were long calculated by the Emperor to seek the greatest benefit for himself.

Throughout history, few could match the current Emperor's level of calculation.

The palace banquet was to be held in the morning, with lunch served in the palace. Afterwards, attendees would leave the palace and return home for a reunion dinner with their families.

This time, officials of the Fifth Rank and above, along with their families, were permitted to enter the palace. The palace gates were already crowded, but fortunately, there were many eunuchs and Palace Maids, and guards directed the carriages to park orderly while eunuchs and Palace Maids escorted people to the Imperial Garden.

The Imperial Garden had long been set with long tables according to rank and title, with the most noble and distinguished families seated closer to the Emperor.

Adjacent to the Emperor were two chairs, respectively for the Empress Dowager and the Empress.

Next to the Empress Dowager were several Imperial Concubines who had given birth to princesses. The princesses had long since married off, and the Imperial Concubines remained in the palace to live out their days in tranquility, always keeping to themselves and never meddling in gossip. Beside the Empress sat the Noble Consort, followed by the Virtuous and Virtue Four Consorts, as well as a dozen favored concubines.

To the left of the Emperor sat the entire family of Prince Zhongqin. Below him sat Chu Yu, Princess Jinfeng, and then the dukes, marquesses, and earls, seated according to their titles.

Next to the Commandery Princess of Zhen Guo were princes and their families, followed by princesses, their husbands, and children.

After everyone had taken their seats, the ranks following Chu Yu were of military officers of the First Rank and below, whereas next to the Commandery Princess of Zhen Guo were civil officials of the First Rank and below.

A casual count in the Imperial Garden would reveal at least a few thousand people. Although it was a bit crowded, no one dared to make a noise.

Seated on the Dragon Throne, the Emperor's gaze swept over the crowd below but did not find Yun Jinnian.

His brows furrowed slightly as he turned to Eunuch Hai, who immediately understood the cue, quietly withdrew, and promptly dispatched someone to investigate.

"Come, my loyal subjects, a toast!"

"To the Emperor!"

The Emperor cheerfully drank the wine in his cup, then paid his respects to the Empress Dowager and several Imperial Concubines before clinking glasses with the Empress, sensing her distracted mind, but without understanding why, he did not pay it any mind.

An Empress without a child...

Chapter 534: Enduring Cold Treatment

Empress was beautiful and dignified, but the Emperor didn't like her much, always feeling that he couldn't see any attachment or adoration in her eyes toward him.

Somewhat displeased.

However, with the powerful influence of the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence, especially when the Empress hadn't made any significant mistakes, it was impossible to depose her and establish a new one.

The relationship between the Emperor and Empress was outwardly harmonious but inwardly discordant, not many knew, but also not few.

Yun Muyou sat in a front-row seat for the first time, her head raised to see the Emperor,, and looking down, she could see many ministers, secretly delighted in her heart.

Not seeing Yun Jinnian, she was somewhat astonished.

During the palace banquet, there were dancing girls and musicians playing.

"Enjoy yourselves, my dear courtiers!" the Emperor thought of Yun Jinnian entering the palace to detoxify and was in a very good mood, more easygoing than usual.

He then granted a few marriage alliances.

Among them were Wang Yanran and Yun Zhen.

He let the ministers relax, stood up, and respectfully invited the Grand Princess of the Nation into the Imperial Study, accompanied by Prince Zhongxin.

Chu Yu thought for a moment and followed as well.

When the Emperor left, the Empress Dowager also excused herself, tired, and the Empress escorted her back to her palace.

Several Imperial Concubines also followed suit and left.

Noble Consort Wang and Noble Consort Wei stayed, but without the Emperor and with several Princes, Chu Zhaowei, and Chu Renzhi lifting the spirits, the atmosphere actually became lively and casual.

Mrs. He was overjoyed, the Emperor's bestowed marriage was a great honor, and with Princess Yanran being a County Princess and having the support of Noble Consort Wang and the Crown Prince, Yun Zhen's future was bound to be limitless.

The old matriarch Yun was all smiles; it had been a long time since she had mingled socially, and today she realized she didn't recognize many people. Not many of the old titled nobility had come, and she had expected a lot of people would seek her favor, but she was mistaken.

Those who approached her held lower official ranks than Yun Chen and Yun Qi, and none from the ducal or count residencies or those with deep ancestral roots came forward to greet her; even when she approached them with a thick face, they made small talk and found an excuse to leave.

The old matriarch Yun suddenly froze in place.

"Grandmother?"

Xu Xinmo called out softly.

Her grandmother and several uncles and aunts had also come, including some of her female cousins. Initially, she looked down on them, unwilling to speak with them, wanting to find Dai Hanmi. However, she saw Dai Hanmi, Chen Danyan, and Yuwen Ming just gave her a faint glance and didn't willingly speak to her; they turned and walked away.

Princess Yanran was talking with Yun Muyou, Yun Mu Si, and Yun Mulan. She tried to join them several times, but Princess Yanran glanced at her and turned away her head arrogantly.

Seeing her cousins from the Xu Family chatting with Yuwen Ming, she hurriedly approached, but her cousins from the Xu Family also merely greeted her casually and then ignored her.

Feeling a huge disparity in her heart, she walked to the old matriarch Yun's side and softly called out. The old matriarch Yun was lost in her own thoughts and didn't hear her. Xu Xinmo called again, this time much louder, "Grandmother!"

She was almost on the verge of crying.

The old matriarch Yun was startled back to reality and looked at Xu Xinmo with displeasure, "What is it?"

"Grandmother, I..." Xu Xinmo's eyes lowered, tears falling.

But she also knew that she couldn't cry today, quickly raising her hand to wipe away the tears.

The old matriarch Yun, seeing this, understood everything.

She looked towards Mrs. He, who was engaged in a lively conversation with Noble Consort Wang, then toward Mrs. Han, who was chatting enthusiastically with Marchioness Zhuangyong and Marchioness Zhongyi, and felt a surge of anger in her heart.

But she also knew that she couldn't make a scene today. If she really did, her actions were not secrets; she would surely suffer greatly.

She pulled Xu Xinmo to sit down, "Don't rush, your great fortune lies ahead!"

Xu Xinmo thought of something and suddenly said, "Grandmother, may I return to the Xu Family for a while?"

"What for?"

Chapter 535: Marked by Someone

"I just remembered that among mother's dowry, there's a double-sided embroidery screen, perfect for grandmother's use and a good reason to visit her as well!" Xu Xinmo said.

The epitome of deference and filial piety.

Yun Muyou felt gratified inwardly, "Good, but there's no rush to go today. Go tomorrow instead. While you're at it, stop by Xufuji to buy some pastries to bring back, your grandmother loves them!"

"Mm!"

As the two chatted, a few ladies of lower official ranks approached to offer flattery, and Yun Muyou conversed with them smilingly. The elderly marchioness from Marquis Residence Yuanshen also came over, beaming with warmth as she affectionately called out, "Dear mother-in-law!"

Yun Muyou also smiled in response.

The elderly Marchioness Yuanshen wasn't actually much older; it was just that the old marquess had passed away, and Weng Jianrui had inherited the title, so she became the elderly marchioness.

Clad in brand-new robes with a smile in her eyes and at the corner of her brows.

Yun Muyou entered with a substantial dowry, and today's palace banquet had just provided her with two new sets of clothes. Her younger son and daughter received new clothes as well.

The younger son and daughter were also ready for marriage arrangements. She glanced at Xu Xinmo, who was quite petite and cute, and, moreover, favored by Yun Muyou. Considering the dowry left by Xinmo's short-lived mother, she was sure to have an even more lavish dowry than Muyou when she was married off.

With this thought, her enthusiasm grew a few degrees.

Every sentence she spoke was full of compliments, praising Xu Xinmo as if she were a flower.

Xu Xinmo thoroughly enjoyed being flattered, and when Weng Jianbo came over, she even felt a moment of astonishment.

Weng Jianbo, being the younger son, was especially good at charming others and was even handsomer than Weng Jianrui by a margin, fair and clean-cut.

"Greetings, dear mother-in-law!" Weng Jianbo made a fist in salute and then turned to Xu Xinmo,
"Greetings, cousin!"

Given his relationship to Muyou, calling Xu Xinmo 'cousin' was entirely correct.

Xu Xinmo nodded slightly and stole a glance at Weng Jianbo, marveling at how handsome he was. She recalled how carefully Weng Jianrui had escorted Muyou on her return, speaking softly and tenderly to her.

She couldn't help but take several more looks at Weng Jianbo. Known for his ability to read others, when Xinmo cast her gaze in his direction, he looked back, eyes blazing as though they could set her aflame.

Xu Xinmo quickly lowered her head, her cheeks turning crimson.

Her small hand clutched her handkerchief tightly.

The elderly Mrs. Weng, noticing this, felt that there might be prospects here and spoke with even greater warmth to Yun Muyou.

Meanwhile, Marchioness Zhuangyong also intended to establish a matrimonial alliance with Mrs. Han and was equally effusive in her warmth, "When will the Second Lady of the Yun family visit the Marquis

Residence? The elderly marchioness has been expressing keen interest, always saying she wants to see the person who gave birth to such a delightful and winsome child as Jinnian!"

Whether Jinnian was winsome or not, the other ladies didn't know, but they were all aware of Jinnian's exceptional medical skills.

For minor ailments, summoning a physician or the Imperial Physician would suffice, but in the face of challenging diseases or severe poisoning, they would probably still need to call on Yun Jinnian.

While the Divine Doctor Han's medical skills were excellent, ordinary people could hardly afford to engage him, so their efforts had to focus on Yun Jinnian instead.

As everyone spoke, the atmosphere was filled with conviviality.

Imperial Study

The Emperor, making a fist in salutation to the Grand Princess Zhennation, greeted, "Aunt!"

The Grand Princess Zhennation nodded slightly, "Mm-hmm," she acknowledged with a sound.

The Emperor then saluted Prince Zhongqin, "Uncle!"

Prince Zhongqin hurriedly returned the salute, "Your Majesty!"

The Emperor looked towards Chu Yu, "Brother!"

Chu Yu made a slight fist, exuding a bit of a rakish air.

Uncertain of Chu Yu's intentions, the Emperor didn't dare to act rashly and simply invited, "Uncle, please take a seat. Aunt, please sit down. Brother, please have a seat as well."

The Grand Princess Zhennation was the late Emperor's most respected elder sister and also held in high regard by Prince Zhongqin. Prince Zhongqin, with utmost respect, said to the Grand Princess Zhennation, "Please be seated, elder sister!"

"Everyone, please take your seats!"

Chapter 536: Deep Calculations

The Commandery Princess was her senior, and if she said to sit, the Emperor could not object.

After seating themselves in order, a palace maid brought tea. The Commandery Princess picked up her teacup, sipped briefly, and after setting it down, she spoke, "I came to the palace today to ask His Majesty for a favor!"

The Emperor hurriedly said, "Aunt, whatever you command, please say it without hesitation!"

The Commandery Princess had not entered the palace for quite some time, and her sudden visit now to ask for a favor must be for Prince Yanjun.

Speaking of which, he was a few years older than Prince Yanjun, and now he even had grandchildren, but Prince Yanjun had no progeny of his own.

It was indeed pitiful.

"Since the Emperor has said so, I won't beat around the bush. I have purchased two five-section residences on White Tiger Street, and I wish to include the mountain behind them to give to Jinnian as a token of gratitude for her providing the antidote to Yanyan!"

Two five-section residences plus a mountain seemed a rather hefty reward.

But Prince Yanjun had been born with a severe poison, suffering unbearable pain daily for over forty years.

Now that he had finally seen the light again, it was reasonable for the Commandery Princess to want to offer a substantial reward.

"Since Aunt has made the request, I will immediately instruct the Ministry of Revenue to prepare the deed for the mountain. In a few days, it will be delivered, and once Aunt has presented it to the Yun Family girl, it shall belong to her!"

Upon hearing this, the Commandery Princess smiled.

"Thank you, Your Majesty, for your fulfillment!"

"Aunt speaks in such a way, you flatter me too much!"

Prince Zhongqin was somewhat curious; the strange poison that no one else could resolve, how did this fourth miss of the Yun Family, a mere girl, manage to do so?

But it was not the right moment to ask.

Chu Yu was mostly silent, while the Emperor earnestly inquired about the Commandery Princess's health, showing great concern.

"I'm well!"

"Then I am relieved!"

The Commandery Princess nodded, "The Emperor is preoccupied with the affairs of state, I am quite well here, there's no need for you to worry!"

Whether true or false, at this point, it was necessary to maintain an appearance of peace without breaking the facade.

"To be able to serve my Aunt is my good fortune!"

Chu Yu watched the Emperor's insincere expression and sneered inwardly.

Heaven knows how much he wished for the early demise of the Commandery Princess, so no one would be left to control him.

"Then let it be so, I will also take my leave. I am growing old, and it's quite taxing on my body to come out and about!"

"Then allow me to see Aunt out!"

"No need, just let Yu'er escort me, that will suffice!"

Upon hearing this, the Emperor's expression stiffened briefly.

As he stood to see the Commandery Princess and Chu Yu out, he glanced at Prince Zhongqin beside him, "Uncle, what do you make of this matter?"

"It's just a mountain after all; if the Emperor has given it, then it is given!"

The Emperor sneered inwardly.

Indeed, it was just a mountain, fencing it off for Yun Jinnian was not significant. But with the Commandery Princess granting such a high reward beforehand, how would he reward Yun Jinnian when she entered the palace to cure his poison? If he rewarded too much, surpassing the Commandery Princess, or too little, as a ruler, he would struggle to save face.

"It really is just about the mountain, but..."

Seeing the Emperor halt, Prince Zhongqin immediately grasped the implication, "A mountain in the Capital can be bought with some silver and connections, but a title like Commandery Princess or County Princess, bestowed by the Emperor, cannot be bought for all the gold and silver in the world!"

Upon hearing this, the Emperor felt there was sense in the words.

"Uncle, you have indeed reminded me!"

Prince Zhongqin shook his head with a smile.

Yet, it was not his place to say more. After all, this concerned the Emperor's private matters, and it would not do well to offend the Commandery Princess. Should his elder sister become angry, he too would not be spared.

The Emperor, understanding Prince Zhongqin's thoughts, knew well that the Commandery Princess – the legitimate elder sister of the late emperor, born with the title of Commandery, having lived a prominent life, and one who could command authority – was not someone to be trifled with indeed!

Chapter 537: Sisters' Heart-to-Heart Talk

"Uncle Prince, let's go to the Imperial Garden!"

"Yes!"

The Loyal Prince was the youngest brother of the late Emperor, and having grown up under the late Emperor's wing was a matter of immense honor.

Everything was fine except for the way he treated his legitimate eldest son, Chu Xinchun, which was outrageously wrong.

"Uncle Prince!"

"Your Majesty?"

"Any news of Cousin Xinchun?"

A few days ago, news came from the frontier that Chu Xinchun had fallen into an ambush and was severely injured, but his whereabouts were unknown.

As soon as Chu Xinchun was mentioned, the Loyal Prince's face immediately turned very grim.

"Don't speak of that scourge!"

The Emperor looked on, filled with sighs.

The Loyal Prince was his right-hand man, and he did not want to hurt Uncle Prince's feelings. He patted the Loyal Prince's shoulder, "Uncle, let's not talk about it. Don't think too much about it. Let's go, you and I should have a couple of drinks!"

Although Yun Jinnian did not enter the palace today, the poison in Chu Yu had been neutralized, and Prince Yanjun had also been detoxified. By the time Yun Jinnian entered the palace, his poison would have been neutralized as well, and he would be a completely healthy person.

Even though he couldn't be the Emperor for thousands of generations, he was now in the prime of his life and sitting on the Dragon Throne for another thirty years would be no problem.

"Yes, I shall respectfully comply!"

Yun Residence

Yun Zihan and Liao Shijie arrived happily, first visiting Auntie Cui. After Liao Shijie left on business, Auntie Cui quietly mentioned Yun Jinnian's visit to Auspicious Water, which left Yun Zihan astonished for a moment, "Is Fourth Sister at home now?"

"Yes, she is!"

Auntie Cui took Yun Zihan's hand.

No matter how she looked at it, she was satisfied.

"Well, Auntie, I'll go see Fourth Sister. Big Brother Feng sent quite a few mooncakes over, and I can't eat them all, so I brought some back to share with the family. Fourth Sister has a share too, and now that she's in the house, I will deliver them personally!"

Actually, bringing back the mooncakes was just an excuse to see Auntie Cui.

That Yun Jinnian was here was just unexpected.

"Go ahead!"

When Yun Zihan arrived at Niannian Garden, she saw Yun Jinnian lying in bed under a thin blanket, with all the windows in the room shut and faint incense burning.

"Why has Second Sister come?" Yun Jinnian asked with a light smile.

"Big Brother Feng sent over a lot of mooncakes today, and your brother-in-law and I couldn't eat them all, so we sent some back!" said Yun Zihan as she sat down beside the bed.

Yun Jinnian knew Yun Zihan's thoughts but did not expose her.

"Second Sister, have you ever thought about getting Auntie Cui out of here?" Yun Jinnian asked softly.

The Yun Family was a pit of fire that was bound to be destroyed sooner or later.

Auntie Cui was a good person, and staying in the Yun Residence really wronged her.

On hearing this, Yun Zihan's eyes reddened, and her voice choked up, "I've thought about it, but I'm still planning. I want to get Auntie out, but not without a foolproof plan!"

"If Second Sister needs my help, just say the word!"

Yun Zihan didn't hear clearly but simply nodded slightly.

Indicating that she understood.

Seeing this, Yun Jinnian knew Yun Zihan hadn't heard clearly, "Second Sister, how are you and brother-in-law getting along?"

Yun Zihan nodded, her face slightly blushing.

"Does brother-in-law treat you well?" Yun Jinnian asked again.

Yun Zihan, unsure how to respond, simply kept nodding her head, and Yun Jinnian took this as confirmation.

"As long as brother-in-law is good to you, that's what matters. I was actually worried before!"

Yun Jinnian also felt embarrassed.

Initially, for some reason, she had thought Liao Shijie suitable for Yun Zihan at first glance and had suggested it, never expecting that, unintentionally, she had brought about a happy union.

"Although your brother-in-law doesn't have an official position now, he is devoted to studying and preparing for exams. I believe that in two years, he will certainly succeed!"

Chapter 538: Matchmaking

Seeing Yun Zihan so confident, Yun Jinnian was also pleased.

"Second sister, I heard that your dowry was all exchanged? Is that true?"

Yun Zihan nodded, "Not just the dowry, but the betrothal gifts as well. Among the things sent by the Liao family, the good and valuable items were all switched out!" Yun Zihan said, feeling aggrieved in her heart.

Those were gifts from the Liao family, but they were exchanged for Yun Muyou.

To say she didn't hate it would be a lie.

Yun Jinnian looked at Yun Zihan and knew the hatred in her heart.

She hated Mrs. He just as much.

After a moment of thought, she grasped Yun Zihan's hand tightly, "Second sister, why don't we partner up and open a shop together!"

"Ah..."

Yun Zihan was utterly astonished.

"I have three shops in the best locations in Capital City. I originally planned to lease two of them and keep one to sell rouge and face powder with Tianci. We've decided to sell expensive ones, which really are pricey, and we have the same customers buying over and over. If we could open another shop selling mid-range products, we could earn quite a lot if the business goes well!"

Yun Zihan did not understand everything Yun Jinnian said, but she heard that Yun Jinnian wanted to open a shop with her.

"But I don't know how to make rouge or even which rouge and face powders are good!"

"I know how to make rouge and face powder, and you don't need to worry about manpower or supplies, second sister. I will arrange all that. I just can't let people know the shop is mine, and you also have to use the shop to help me gather information!"

There's no such thing as a free lunch, a point Yun Jinnian hoped Yun Zihan understood.

She could pull Yun Zihan in to make silver, or she could arrange for someone else.

"Fourth sister, don't worry, I know what to do!"

Yun Zihan was no fool, and she wouldn't foolishly push silver out the door.

Especially in the Liao family's situation where income was not covering expenses.

"In that case, let's settle it with the second sister like this, and as for the rest, we can talk in detail in a few days," Yun Jinnian said, suddenly craving mooncakes.

Yun Zihan hurriedly fetched one and fed it to Yun Jinnian.

Yun Jinnian took a bite from Yun Zihan's hand and narrowed her eyes slightly, "Mmm, delicious!"

It was fragrantly soft, sweet but not cloying, and tasted excellent.

Seeing Yun Jinnian's enjoyment, Yun Zihan picked out another flavor to feed her.

Yun Jinnian actually reveled in being pampered and just smiled gently, allowing Yun Zihan to feed her.

Their sisterly affection grew.

"Second sister, did you make these mooncakes? Next time I visit your house, I want to eat more!"

Yun Zihan laughed, "So you really didn't listen when I said earlier that someone else sent these!"

"..."

Yun Jinnian thought hard, "You said they were sent by Brother Feng, who is he?"

"Last year's Top Scorer, Feng Wushuang, who now serves at Hanlin Academy, a third-rank official, and has taken Elder Chen as his mentor!"

Elder Chen is the emperor's former teacher, and with Feng Wushuang taking him as a mentor, his future is bright, and it's likely he will enter the cabinet eventually.

"Oh, I don't know him!"

Yun Zihan smiled.

Thinking of the graceful, well-mannered, and amiable Feng Wushuang, she felt he was very well suited to Yun Jinnian.

Especially since the old lady of the Feng family didn't interfere with affairs, and Feng Wushuang basically managed the Feng household, which was short-staffed and had none of the trivial matters caused by numerous aunts and uncles.

If it could happen...

At that thought, Yun Zihan sneakily glanced at Yun Jinnian.

Perhaps it was because of the Auspicious Water she received, Yun Zihan felt Yun Jinnian had lost her greenness and was tinged with charm.

Her already breathtaking beauty was even more enchanting now.

Every move she made was incomparably graceful, almost unreal.

Chapter 539: Daydreaming

But this was only a thought; when it came to actually playing matchmaker, Yun Zihan still hesitated.

After all, Yun Jinnian's status was no ordinary one.

Her medical skills predestined that she would not be confined to the inner quarters; in the future, she would walk the jianghu, or visit various grand households.

"Fourth sister, do you have someone in your heart who pleases you?" Yun Zihan tentatively asked.

Upon hearing this, Yun Jinnian turned to Yun Zihan, "Why does Second Sister ask such a question?"

"Thanks to the blessings of Fourth Sister, I've been living so well; I hope you can have an even better life than I do!"

This was Yun Zihan's sincere sentiment.

She hoped Yun Jinnian would be happier than she was.

Because Yun Jinnian deserved it.

Yun Jinnian smiled, "I do have someone I fancy, and I will marry no other in this lifetime!"

Yun Zihan took a sharp breath but then sighed in relief.

"Congratulations, Fourth Sister!"

Yet she didn't ask who this person was in Yun Jinnian's life.

It didn't matter who it was, as long as Yun Jinnian liked him.

"Thank you, Second Sister!"

After talking for a while longer, Yun Zihan got up to leave.

Yun Jinnian wanted to keep her for a meal at Niannian Garden, but since she was currently indisposed and Yun Zihan needed to spend more time with Mrs. Cui, Yun Jinnian did not insist and had Mrs. Yuan see Yun Zihan out.

She also prepared a gift.

After sending Yun Zihan off, Yun Jinnian went to the cleansing room, sat on the bed eating a few mooncakes, asked Mrs. Yuan to distribute them, and then lay down in bed to sleep.

It wasn't long before she fell asleep.

The fifteenth's palace feast was relatively successful.

Many returned home with gains, while others, like Xu Xinmo, felt so wronged they wanted to cry.

Once, she thought that flaunting power in the Yun Family was enough and thus didn't care about her reputation, but it wasn't until she attended the academy that she realized without a good reputation, no one wanted to deal with her.

It was only upon coming to the Imperial Palace today that she saw clearly, she was nothing.

Many pointed and gossiped, saying she didn't live at her own home and always stayed at her maternal grandparents', and the Xu Family ignored her because she had malicious intentions, causing her own aunt to miscarry; in truth, no one in the Xu Family liked her.

Those people then went to ask Xu Xinmo's cousins; the younger ones had no idea, but the elder ones certainly did.

One by one, they were evasive and didn't clarify for her, solidifying the impression that she was malicious at heart.

No matter how she explained, nobody was willing to listen to her.

Once outside the Imperial Palace, upon boarding the carriage, Xu Xinmo burst into tears with a 'wah' sound.

She was heartbroken.

Grandma Yun's mood, however, was rather good, having enjoyed the flattery of Grandmother Wu very much; still basking in the euphoria, she was startled by Xu Xinmo's crying.

Feeling displeased, yet considering that Xu Xinmo was her darling treasure, she hurriedly consoled, "What's the matter?"

"Grandmother, they're bullying me, everyone is bullying me!"

Upon hearing this, Grandma Yun's expression also went through several changes, gripping Xu Xinmo's hand tightly, "Wanwan, don't cry; you are meant to be above others. These people are blind to your worth right now, and they bully you, but when you become someone important in the future, you'll repay them tenfold, a hundredfold!"

Xu Xinmo looked up at Grandma Yun, "Grandma..."

"Stop crying now, Wanwan. Believe in your grandmother; you will surely become the most distinguished woman in Tianchu Country, high above, worshipped by tens of thousands!"

Worshipped by tens of thousands.

That position would be the Empress's.

Thinking of potentially becoming the Empress, Xu Xinmo's heart filled with malice as she plotted to disfigure Yun Jinnian's face first, then snatch all her good things and make her life worse than death, and finally, to sell all those who bullied her to the lowest of brothels.

To make their lives worse than death.

"Grandmother, you're so good to me; I will surely take care of you well in the future!" Xu Xinmo said, hugging Grandma Yun's arm tightly.

Chapter 540: Slight Changes

The old Madam Yun felt relieved upon hearing this.

"You are indeed the most clever and considerate!"

While stroking Xu Xinmo's hair, she secretly resented Yun Jinnian once again.

As for Yun Muyou and the others, they were nothing but stepping stones for Xu Xinmo, who, no matter how well they married, would never become an Empress like her.

As for the two from the second house, just give them some dowry and marry them off at will in the future.

She had very little respect for Yun Zihan's in-laws, the Liao family, and she wasn't happy about Yun Zihan always returning to the Yun Family.

She had disagreed with Yun Zihan's marriage from the start, but Yun Chen said it was at the request of the Great General. Remembering the two individuals who had yet to send any news, a chill crept up the old Madam Yun's spine.

Now that Mrs. Han was receiving a lot of attention, old Madam Yun felt even more resentment towards her.

She had been against this marriage from the beginning, but the old man had stubbornly agreed.

Not only was Mrs. Han a troublemaker, but also a streak of bad luck. Ever since she married into the family, the old man had passed away, and when Yun Jinnian was born, she fell seriously ill out of nowhere. Luckily, the Divine Granny sensed something amiss, claiming Yun Jinnian was overpowering her and suggested she keep her distance. Surely enough, her illness improved after that.

Xu Xinmo didn't notice the old Madam Yun's expression at all, immersed in fantasies of being lofty and superior, with others kneeling before her, looking up to her.

A smug smile involuntarily appeared at the corners of her mouth.

The carriage rattled on.

Mrs. Han sat alone in a carriage, disliking such social gatherings, finding them tiring and boring.

Thinking of Yun Jinnian's visit to Auspicious Water, from a little child to a grown lady, her heart swelled with joy, eager to return home.

She couldn't wait to get back and tell her daughter about things to be mindful of.

Then, thinking of Mrs. Yuan's presence and her considerable knowledge, she felt sure Mrs. Yuan would thoroughly instruct Yun Jinnian, which brought her both joy and a tinge of loss.

She sighed deeply.

"What's wrong, Madam?" Bai Que asked.

Mrs. Han shook her head.

Oftentimes, Yun Jinnian would talk to Mrs. Yuan about things she would never mention to her own mother.

Although she was the biological mother, she didn't spend as much time with her daughter as Mrs. Yuan had, who, through years of mutual dependence, must have become highly regarded in her daughter's heart, perhaps even more than herself.

Mrs. Han leaned against the side of the carriage, wondering why lately everything seemed to go awry, making it easy to imagine the worst in every situation.

Bai Que took Mrs. Han's hand, "Madam, let's go out for a walk when we have time, or perhaps we could take the young miss to Huguo Temple to offer incense, how about that?"

Bai Que's gaze was tranquil, seemingly comforting, and, after a moment's hesitation, Mrs. Han nodded slightly, "Alright!"

A carriage sped past swiftly.

Bai Que lifted the curtain of the carriage to take a glance, "It's Feng Residence's carriage!"

"Feng Residence?" Mrs. Han questioned.

"Last year's Top Scorer, now an official of the third rank, many families in the Capital City wish to marry their daughters to him, but for some reason, he has rejected them all!" Bai Que said, also confused.

She looked again at Mrs. Han.

She remembered that the Han Family owned many paintings by the hermit artist, which were originally bought for just a few hundred taels but now were worth tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands, and might not even be available for purchase.

"Who knows why? These things don't concern us. Today, I did feel that the Marchioness Zhuangyong had some intention of praising her third son," Mrs. Han said, her eyes suddenly lighting up.

The Zhuangyong Marquis Residence was known for its integrity, with unblemished history for generations and no record of keeping concubines. The current Marquess, Crown Prince, and second son all had clear backyards with not even a maid to serve them privately.

If this third son was also so principled, he would indeed be a suitable match!