

Indulgence 601

Chapter 601: A Hint

Yangxin Hall

The Emperor knew the moment Yun Jinnian entered the palace that Yun Jinnian had returned.

"There are many skilled experts around Han Residence, we cannot get close, but when Fourth Miss returned, there were four highly skilled Hidden Guards secretly protecting her!"

The Emperor fell silent upon hearing this.

Should he get those four people out of the palace, or should he let them stay?

"What about the Empress?"

"The Empress Dowager said she was feeling unwell, so the Empress went to Cining Palace!"

The Emperor waved his hand, ultimately allowing the four Hidden Guards to stay.

When the great hall had emptied, the Emperor finally closed his eyes, and after a while, called out, "Someone come!"

Eunuch Hai immediately entered the bedroom, "Your Majesty!"

"That..."

The Emperor hesitated for a moment.

He was somewhat impatient about this matter.

But when Le Xun entered the palace, she was still a virgin, and the pleasure was truly exquisite, he really didn't want to execute her.

Eunuch Hai was astute, immediately understanding why the Emperor was hesitating to speak, so he said, "Your Majesty?"

Every Emperor does not wish for their thoughts to be thoroughly understood by others, and Eunuch Hai knew this, so even though he was clear about what the Emperor wanted to ask, he pretended not to know.

The Emperor hesitated once again.

After a short moment, he finally said, "That woman..."

Eunuch Hai pretended to suddenly understand, "Your Majesty can rest assured, this servant has already hidden her away, no one knows where!"

"You servant!" The Emperor reprimanded.

But that was the end of it.

He nevertheless agreed with what Eunuch Hai had done.

Eunuch Hai hurriedly knelt down, "This servant deserves to die for taking liberties with my duties, please spare me, Your Majesty!"

"Enough, leave!"

No matter what, Eunuch Hai had taken the blame, and the Emperor did not kill him, showing great understanding and kindness.

"Yes!"

Eunuch Hai knew in his heart that Le Xun might soar to great heights in the future.

Leaving Yangxin Hall, he went to check on the abandoned palace. At that time, he had just tossed the person along with the brocade blanket aside and did not care whether she lived or died, but now it would not do.

Upon arriving at the abandoned palace, Le Xun was still wrapped in the blanket, asleep. Eunuch Hai frowned slightly and instructed someone to take Le Xun and the blanket away.

Throughout it all, Le Xun never woke up.

Eunuch Hai thought about the two palace maids who had been executed in public by him and furrowed his brows.

A face, a body, had fought for their own life and a splendid future.

"Eunuch..." a young eunuch called out softly.

Eunuch Hai looked at the young eunuch, "What is it?"

"Eunuch, look!" said the young eunuch, pointing to the ground.

The young eunuch was Eunuch Hai's confidante; he had been in charge of cleaning up after the Emperor had favored a concubine, and he knew the ins and outs of cleaning up the filth very well.

Eunuch Hai followed the direction and frowned deeply, "Could it be..."

Had someone been here?

But in this harem, apart from the Imperial Guards patrolling, there shouldn't be any men!

"Should I go check it out now?" asked the young eunuch.

"There's no need for now. That person is audacious; it seems they have some status and background. Since they've done such a thing, they are likely keeping a close watch as well. If you were discovered while investigating, even your life couldn't be preserved. Pretend as if you know nothing!" Eunuch Hai instructed quietly.

The young eunuch thought about it and agreed.

He was just a little eunuch, and if things went wrong, his life would not be guaranteed.

"Thank you for the guidance, Eunuch!"

Eunuch Hai laughed, "Go now. From now on, you will serve by the side of this little master; be careful!"

The young eunuch's eyes lit up, but then, thinking of something, they dimmed again.

This was clearly not a good place to be!

Deputy Eunuch laughed, unable to resist, "I'm giving you a clear path, young man!"

"Thank you, Eunuch!"

Eunuch Hai laughed, then leaned in close to the young eunuch, "Weiyang Palace, Fourth Miss Yun!"

Chapter 602: A Minor Stratagem

The little eunuch was stunned for a moment, but then he understood.

"Hehe!" He chuckled foolishly.

Eunuch Hai glanced at him, "Let's go!"

The little eunuch, named Dengzi, entered the palace at the age of five and had been there for ten years, witnessing all the complexities of human relationships. Clever, sharp-minded, and caring, Eunuch Hai had always taken good care of him, and in turn, Dengzi was sincerely devoted to him.

With Eunuch Hai's guidance, Dengzi was well aware of the situation and naturally started to pay close attention to Yun Jinnian.

Weiyang Palace

Yun Jinnian returned to the side hall with Shaoyao attending to her attentively.

"Sister Shaoyao!"

"What can I do for you, Fourth Miss?" Shaoyao asked respectfully.

"Prepare yourself, we will soon go to take the Emperor's pulse, I have thought of a method!"

Every day the Emperor consumes the Snow Lotus Elixir, and sooner or later the Poisonous Insect in his body will die,

She must detoxify him soon to let the Emperor experience that pain, so he won't think granting her a favor is so effortless.

Of course, these were thoughts that Yun Jinnian would never voice.

And would never let others know.

She had a little mischief in her, it was enough that she alone knew.

"Yes!"

Although Shaoyao wanted to ask the Empress for permission, the matter involved the Emperor and could not be delayed. She immediately sent a message to Yangxin Hall, and after getting ready, prepared a palanquin to take Yun Jinnian there.

Hemei and Huan followed, carrying the medicine chest on their backs.

Upon arriving at Yangxin Hall, Eunuch Hai immediately came out to invite Yun Jinnian inside, while Dengzi watched from a distance with a suppressed smile.

He then turned to prepare tea.

Yun Jinnian entered the sleeping chamber and saw the Emperor, dressed in bright yellow robes, leaning against the bedhead, looking much healthier than he had in the morning.

It seemed that the Snow Lotus Pills really were beneficial for his health.

"Your servant pays respects to the Emperor!"

"Rise," said the Emperor, joy spread across his face.

The Emperor did not speak of it, but he truly treasured Yun Jinnian, the granddaughter of Divine Doctor Han Xuzi.

Looking at Yun Jinnian again, she once seemed rather youthful.

However, upon closer inspection today, her already delicate features appeared to have matured, becoming even more stunning.

Unlike Le Xun, whose beauty made one want to pin her down, Yun Jinnian's grace was noble and inviolable, the kind that made you want to hold her in the palm of your hand and protect her, wishing to bring the best of the world to her just to coax a smile from her.

Yun Jinnian, a woman of such beauty, certainly beautiful, but lacking in flirtatious charm, there were too many women in the palace as proper as her.

She wouldn't be missed.

Yun Jinnian stood up, completely unaware of the Emperor's myriad thoughts, took a few steps forward, and stood by the dragon bed, "Emperor, your servant will take your pulse first!"

"Hmm!"

The Emperor hummed softly, collecting his thoughts.

Eunuch Hai immediately came forward, lifted the Emperor's sleeve, and placed the pulse pillow. Yun Jinnian sat on the brocade stool and began to take the Emperor's pulse.

After a moment, Yun Jinnian withdrew her hand.

"How is it?"

Yun Jinnian was silent for a moment, "Emperor, your servant will administer acupuncture first, then we can start the medicinal bath!"

"Hmm!"

The Emperor thought that Yun Jinnian's acupuncture would be like those of the Imperial Medical Bureau's Imperial Physicians, not particularly painful. However, he did not expect the pain to be so intense that he wished he could die.

"Ah..."

The Emperor cried out, his back drenched in sweat.

Eunuch Hai watched anxiously from the side, having never seen acupuncture cause such pain before.

And this person was the Emperor; she couldn't be so bold, could she?

Looking at Yun Jinnian, his eyes searched her for answers.

Was the detoxification truly supposed to be this painful, or had she used some methods of her own?

Yet seeing Yun Jinnian's serious, dignified, and composed demeanor, he had doubts that she had employed any tricks.

In this regard, Eunuch Hai was not certain.

Chapter 603: Tricked the Emperor

After the acupuncture was done, Yun Jinnian removed the needles, and the Emperor had already fainted from the pain.

"May Eunuch Hai change the Emperor into clean clothes and make sure he doesn't catch a draft. We will begin the medicinal bath shortly!"

"Yes!"

Soon after, a large tub was carried in, filled with dark, bubbling medicinal liquid that emitted steam.

Yun Jinnian turned her face away, letting Eunuch Hai and several young eunuchs lift the Emperor into the large tub. At first, the Emperor didn't feel pain, but gradually, he felt as if ants and insects were gnawing inside his body.

It was both itchy and painful.

Several times he wanted to get up, but recalling how he had almost perished earlier, he could only bear with it.

"Fourth Miss, could you give the Emperor another acupuncture to ease some of his pain?" Eunuch Hai asked anxiously.

Just as Yun Jinnian was about to speak, she heard eunuchs outside heralding, "The Empress Dowager, the Empress, are arriving!"

The Empress Dowager hurried in immediately after, "How is the Emperor?"

Without waiting for a response, she went straight to the Emperor's side. Seeing the Emperor in such pain, she said urgently, "Fourth girl, think of something quickly to alleviate the Emperor's pain!"

Yun Jinnian walked up to the Empress Dowager and curtsied, "Empress Dowager, the first detoxification is always this painful. It will be much better the next time!"

"There will be a next time? Can the Emperor's body endure it?" the Empress Dowager asked urgently.

"To reply to the Empress Dowager, I am eighty percent confident!"

Upon hearing this, the Empress Dowager's anxiety was put to rest.

She took a deep breath, "That's good, that's good!"

As long as the detoxification was possible and the Emperor could recover, although the process was torturous, if it was necessary, then it had to be endured.

The Empress Dowager went to the front of the Emperor, took a silk handkerchief, and wiped the sweat off his forehead, "Your Majesty, it will be over soon, the pain will soon subside!"

At this moment, the Empress Dowager was gentle, kind, and benevolent.

Yun Jinnian looked on, feeling a bit heartbroken and turned her head away guiltily.

The Empress watched, keeping all her thoughts hidden, and approached Yun Jinnian, "Jinnian!"

"Empress?"

"The Empress Dowager is not feeling well. After a while, would you take her pulse?"

"Yes!"

Although Yun Jinnian did not know what the Empress meant, she did not feel it was appropriate to refuse.

Perhaps due to what Chu Yu had said, Yun Jinnian had become wary of the Empress, pondering her words with extra caution.

Half an hour later, the Emperor's time in the medicinal bath was up. Eunuch Hai led people to clean the Emperor and changed him into clean clothes.

Yun Jinnian took the Emperor's pulse.

"How is it?" the Empress Dowager asked anxiously.

Yun Jinnian withdrew her hand, slightly smiling as she curtsied to the Empress Dowager, "To report to the Empress Dowager, the poison from the Poisonous Insect inside the Emperor's body has weakened slightly!"

She then took a porcelain bottle, walked to the side of the large tub, and sprinkled some powder into it.

In the dark medicinal liquid, several tiny red insects surfaced, wriggling a few times before going stiff and dead.

The Empress Dowager, looking on, felt a chill down her spine and turned pale. She commanded in a stern voice, "Take it out and boil it in a big fire. Make sure they are thoroughly boiled alive, and do not dispose of this medicinal liquid carelessly. Bury it together with the tub underground!"

The Empress Dowager's expression was somewhat odd.

Yun Jinnian could not immediately pinpoint what was strange, so she did not dwell on it.

Eunuch Hai immediately called people to carry the tub out, and the Emperor continued to remain unconscious.

With the Empress Dowager present, the Empress did not have the right to speak, thus remained silent and stood aside, as if she did not exist at all.

The Empress lacked not only genuine concern for the Emperor but even feigned interest.

Yun Jinnian observed, deep in thought.

Seeing the Empress Dowager staying beside the Emperor's bed, Yun Jinnian stepped forward and said respectfully, "Empress Dowager, since the Emperor will not awaken for a while, please return to Cining Palace to rest. Let me stay here to watch over him. Once the Emperor awakes, I will immediately send someone to inform you, is that alright?"

Chapter 604: Secrets of the Palace

Although she had tricked the Emperor, facing the loving Empress Dowager, Yun Jinnian still felt soft-hearted.

The Empress Dowager sighed deeply upon hearing this.

"The Emperor was most afraid of pain when he was young, and afraid of taking medicine. Every time he was ill, it was I who had to hold him and coax him repeatedly before he would take his medicine. Over the years, the Emperor has become a grandfather, and I have been wholeheartedly enjoying my own blessings, yet I have forgotten to care for him more! No matter how formidable he is, in my heart, he is still that child who is afraid of the bitterness of medicine and of pain!"

Yun Jinnian remained silent.

This...

Why would the Empress Dowager say these things?

The Empress watched from the side, her lips curling into a smile.

The Empress Dowager's thoughts were profound, otherwise, she wouldn't have climbed from a mere palace lady to her current position step by step, and the Emperor was not even her biological son. What she intended to convey with these words, Yun Jinnian did not know, but she certainly understood.

The Empress Dowager was both anxious and afraid.

However, this had nothing to do with her.

Seeing that Yun Jinnian did not respond and neither did the Empress, the Empress Dowager felt somewhat displeased, but did not show it on her face. She took a silk handkerchief and wiped the corner of her eye, "Look at me, so muddle-headed, speaking of the embarrassing moments of the Emperor's childhood. When the Emperor wakes up, he might not be so forgiving!"

"Enough, enough, I shall return first. You should also freshen up and have some food. Let the Empress stay behind to watch over the Emperor," said the Empress Dowager nonchalantly.

Yun Jinnian immediately understood, the Empress and the Empress Dowager were not on good terms.

Although staying to serve the Emperor was something the concubines of the Imperial harem were very willing to do, the Empress might not be willing.

Yet the Empress Dowager had the Empress stay behind...

"Yes!"

The Empress Dowager was helped away by Eunuch An.

Dengzi stepped forward to invite Yun Jinnian to the side hall for a meal, and Yun Jinnian looked towards the Empress.

The Empress smiled gently, "Go ahead, I'll stay here to guard him. After you have eaten, come back and relieve me!"

"Yes!"

Yun Jinnian, accompanied by Hemei and Henuan, followed Dengzi to the side hall where six or seven dishes, a soup, and a bowl of pearl rice were laid out on the table.

But there was only one pair of chopsticks.

Thinking of Hemei and Huan, Yun Jinnian said to Dengzi, "Eunuch!"

"Your servant is here!"

"Please bring two more bowls of rice and two pairs of chopsticks for me!"

Dengzi was taken aback, then responded and immediately went to prepare.

He was curious, who was Yun Jinnian going to reward? And did he have a share?

If he did, that would be wonderful.

It was a great honor indeed.

Yun Jinnian began to eat, only picking dishes from in front of her, not touching those in the middle.

When Dengzi brought the chopsticks and rice,

Yun Jinnian selected three dishes and said to Dengzi, "These three dishes are for you!"

Dengzi was overjoyed at her words, "Thank you, Fourth Miss, for the reward!"

The dishes, even leftovers from Yun Jinnian, were a great reward. Even more so because Yun Jinnian hadn't touched them at all, which was a matter of great prestige.

Eunuch Hai truly showed him a clear path.

Thinking this, Dengzi became even happier.

"Fourth Miss, you eat first, your servant will eat after you have finished!"

Yun Jinnian nodded, calling over Hemei and Henuan to eat.

Hemei and Henuan shook their heads slightly.

At home, anything went, and nobody could say anything, but this was in the palace, and they could not be without manners.

Yun Jinnian fell silent for a moment, quickly finished eating, and stood up, "I'm done eating; you two divide it up and eat!"

And she wondered where the Empress would dine.

In Yangxin Hall? Or back at Weiyang Palace?

When Yun Jinnian returned to Yangxin Hall to take over for the Empress, the Empress seriously said, "I shall return to Weiyang Palace first and come back later!"

Chapter 605: Too Painful to Look Back

"Yes!"

Yun Jinnian respectfully saw the Empress off.

Watching the Empress straighten her back as she left, he felt somewhat dazed.

Once upon a time, he, too, had strived to stand tall like the Empress, only to become weak and pitiful at the last moment.

Chu Liange always looked at him with eyes filled with disappointment and disdain.

It made his heart race and his self-esteem suffer.

Actually, in his past life, he had always been inferior, feeling even more so after marrying Chu Liange.

He would never know how hard she had worked to be worthy of the status of the Fifth Prince's consort, how hard she had strived to be a good Empress.

And the hardships she had endured to be a mother.

He would never know; he would only press his heavy body onto her in the dark of night, panting, rhythmic.

Chu Liange always thought she didn't understand, that she couldn't see through his unwillingness, that she couldn't decipher the disdain and disgust in his eyes.

Yet he never considered that she, who had suffered all sorts of grievances and experienced the full spectrum of emotions since childhood in the Yun Residence, could possibly fail to understand.

She wasn't a good wife, but Chu Liange was not a good husband either.

They were just the same.

Just like the current Emperor and Empress, they appeared harmonious on the surface, but were both extremely ruthless characters deep down, neither resting until the other was destroyed.

Yun Jinnian suddenly understood why Chu Yu had warned him to be cautious of the Empress.

"Fourth Miss, what are you thinking about?" Eunuch Hai asked softly.

Even as a eunuch, he could feel the intense sorrow, grievance, and heartache emanating from Yun Jinnian.

Had she remembered something?

Yun Jinnian came back to her senses, looked at Eunuch Hai, and shook her head slightly, "It's nothing. Eunuch Hai, how is the Emperor doing?"

"The Emperor woke up a moment ago, only the Empress was..." Eunuch Hai said, then raised his hand to slap his own mouth, "Look at this loose tongue of mine, babbling nonsense. Fourth Miss, the Emperor said that after you take his pulse, you can rest at Weiyang Palace!"

Yun Jinnian offered a gentle, faint smile.

She understood Eunuch Hai's kind reminder.

The Emperor had already woken up but did not wish to see the Empress, so he pretended to be in a coma.

To reach such a state between husband and wife was indeed rare.

She entered the sleeping chamber and curtseyed to pay her respects.

"Dispense with the formalities!"

The Emperor said weakly.

Despite the weakness of his body, he could feel the relief within him, as well as a deep-seated comfort.

Something he had not experienced in a year.

"Thank you, Your Majesty!"

The remaining tasks, such as rolling up the sleeves, arranging the pulse pillow, and having a clean wet towel for Yun Jinnian to clean her hands, Eunuch Hai handled deftly.

Yun Jinnian took the Emperor's pulse while sitting on the brocaded stool.

"How is it?"

"Your Majesty, some of the Poisonous Insects have been cleared out. After another session tomorrow, and four or five more times thereafter, the Poisonous Insects within your body should be essentially eradicated. With careful recuperation after that, you will gradually recover."

The Emperor nodded, "Will it hurt as much as today?"

"No, it will be much less painful!"

"That's good. You have worked hard today. Go rest at Weiyang Palace. Come back early tomorrow, and there's no need for the Empress to come over!"

Yun Jinnian stood up, "Thank you, Your Majesty. Your servant will take her leave!"

The Emperor weakly waved his hand.

Yun Jinnian, carrying her medical kit, left Yangxin Hall, the sky was completely dark. Lanterns had been lit in the corridor, illuminating all of Yangxin Hall, where Hemei and Henuan were already waiting; Hemei quickly reached out to take the medical kit.

Yun Jinnian spoke softly, "Let's return to Weiyang Palace."

"Yes!"

She knew the way.

Yet Dengzi came over with a lantern, "Fourth Miss, it is dark, let this servant escort you back to Weiyang Palace!"

"Thank you, Eunuch!"

"Oh no, no, it's this servant's duty," Dengzi said, his face turning slightly red.

Chapter 606: Gathering Information

The Fourth Miss is gentle and magnanimous, as well as kind and approachable, without any airs.

Compared to those princesses and ladies' home sisters and nieces, she is indeed much better.

"The Fourth Miss's medical skills are truly amazing. I've never seen such impressive needle techniques in all my years in the palace!"

Every set of her needles is both accurate and swift.

None of the numerous Imperial Physicians from the Imperial Medical Bureau could rouse His Majesty, yet a few needles from the Fourth Miss did the trick.

She even knows how to neutralize the poison in His Majesty's body.

As Eunuch Ruhai said, the Fourth Miss will be quite formidable in the future.

Yun Jinnian merely smiled without speaking.

Dengzi then realized this topic wasn't to Yun Jinnian's liking and, after some thought, said, "Does the Fourth Miss like the meal served tonight?"

"Mmm!"

Yun Jinnian replied blandly.

Now that they had found a common topic, Dengzi was overjoyed, "Then, for tomorrow's midday meal, shall we serve the Fourth Miss the same?"

Yun Jinnian looked at Dengzi, "Were my meals prepared by you, Eunuch?"

"Not entirely, but if the Fourth Miss dines in Yangxin Hall tomorrow, the meals will indeed be prepared by this servant!"

So that's how it was.

Yun Jinnian thought for a moment, perhaps she would be detoxifying His Majesty in the morning, and after such an event, she would certainly need to dine in Yangxin Hall.

"Then make it light, I don't like rich and heavy food. However, these two maids of mine do enjoy it, thank you for your trouble, Eunuch!"

Dengzi laughed, "Certainly, this servant will make sure everything is properly arranged!"

Dengzi was very good at conversation and always found topics that Yun Jinnian would respond to.

Topics that Yun Jinnian didn't dislike.

Upon reaching the entrance of Weiyang Palace, Yun Jinnian took a careful look at him, "Thank you for escorting me back, Eunuch!"

"It's my duty, my duty. The Fourth Miss should head in, I'll watch you enter and then return to report back!"

"Mmm!"

Yun Jinnian entered Weiyang Palace with Hemei and Henuan.

Madame Ma greeted them with a beaming smile, "The Fourth Miss has returned, the Empress has sent for you!"

Yun Jinnian nodded, "Hemei, Henuan, you two return to the side hall first, I will come over soon!"

"Yes!"

Yun Jinnian followed Madame Ma into the main hall, the Empress had already changed her attire and had taken off her Phoenix Crown, her facial makeup also much lighter.

"I pay my respects to the Empress. His Majesty asked me to convey a message, said that the Empress need not go over!"

However, it was very obvious that the Empress had no intention of going anyway.

"Hehe!" The Empress chuckled, "Have a seat, keep me company for a chat!"

"Yes!"

Yun Jinnian took a seat below the Empress.

Madame Ma served the sweet soup and then withdrew.

"Try it, Madame Ma personally stewed this sweet soup. It tastes quite nice, and I am very fond of it!"

"Yes!"

Yun Jinnian took a sip and indeed, it was delicious.

She slowly sipped a few mouthfuls before setting down the cup and spoon.

The Empress also took a few sips before asking, "How is the Emperor's health?"

"His Majesty is not in grave danger and will recover soon. Your Highness, rest assured!" Yun Jinnian's reply was vague.

The Empress also knew that Yun Jinnian might not be willing to tell her the whole truth.

"That is very good to hear. Take great care in treating His Majesty, and there will certainly be rewards for you!"

"Yes!"

Yun Jinnian was very respectful and deferential.

The Empress felt it was uninteresting to continue, "You must be tired from the day, you should go and rest!"

"Yes, Jinnian takes her leave!"

Having left the main hall, Yun Jinnian pursed her lips and headed towards the side hall.

Main Hall

Madame Ma came out from behind the screen, "Your Highness, this Fourth Miss indeed seems very astute!"

"How could she not be astute to have learned such extraordinary medical skills at such a young age? You saw it too, her technique and posture when administering acupuncture were quick and accurate. How many in the Imperial Medical Bureau do you think can accomplish that?"

Chapter 607: The Emperor's Thoughts (3rd Update)

Facing an ordinary person, one might hesitate, let alone when facing the Emperor.

Yet Yun Jinnian did not hesitate at all. With one hand, she accurately found the acupoint and swiftly inserted the needle, without dragging her feet.

At such a young age, her composure was indeed impressive.

Madam Ma remained silent.

"Alright, serve well with dedication. To say nothing else, she saved mother and helped the second daughter-in-law conceive. Bobo is also fond of her, and everyone in the Marquis Residence speaks well of her. It seems she is indeed commendable!"

The Empress said, lowering her gaze.

Fiddling with her own fingers.

Madam Ma answered.

Yangxin Hall

The Emperor had taken his medicine, and Eunuch Hai was tidying up when the Emperor suddenly spoke, "Hai Zi!"

"Your servant is here!" Eunuch Hai promptly stopped and stood respectfully in front of the Emperor, keeping his eyes downcast in concentration.

"What do you think would be a good title to bestow upon her?" the Emperor asked casually.

Eunuch Hai couldn't help but laugh, "Your Majesty has stumped your servant with this question. Your servant knows but a few characters, and compared to Your Majesty's brilliant strategies and tactics, they are worthless. Please, spare your servant this ordeal!"

"You servant, you always neglect your studies when you are supposed to be reading. Now you realize your own worthlessness. Never mind, I will consider it carefully myself. It must reflect the vast imperial grace, yet not be too extravagant!"

"Why not let the Hanlin Academy draft a few options for Your Majesty to choose from?"

The Emperor paused and then pondered for a moment, "Now that you mention it, I do have a few in mind. Tell me, which one sounds good to you!"

"Your servant... your servant... any title bestowed by Your Majesty would surely be most excellent!" Eunuch Hai said, smiling.

"Flatterer, bring me brush, ink, paper, and inkstone!"

Having written, he also made a choice.

In the matter concerning Old Madam Yun, he had wronged Yun Jinnian; therefore, by putting some thought into this title, he could make amends.

"Yes!"

Eunuch Hai immediately prepared the brush, ink, paper, and inkstone, setting them in front of the Emperor. The Emperor then wrote a few names: "Yiyan, Yizi, Yijia!"

"Yiyan, 'yan' denotes beauty and kindness, and also implies cleverness!"

"Yizi, a beauty beyond compare, unequaled in all the land!"

"Yijia, 'yi' already signifies noble character, virtuous words and noble deeds, and 'jia' represents beauty and elegance!"

The Emperor explained, leaning on the bed.

Eunuch Hai felt that the Emperor must have some ulterior motives while writing these three characters.

If it wasn't for the fact that the Han Family had served as shadow agents for generations, and Han Xuzi had stated beforehand that Yun Jinnian would not enter the Imperial Palace, and given that Han Xuzi had only this one granddaughter, whom the Emperor had also promised to spare...

Otherwise, with Yun Jinnian's beauty, the Emperor would certainly have taken her into the palace.

"Which one do you think is best?" the Emperor asked.

Eunuch Hai thought carefully, "Your servant believes Yijia is the best, indicating noble character, virtuous words and deeds, and elegance. If Your Majesty were to take the imperial examinations, you would undoubtedly be Tianchu Country's most literary Top Scorer in history!"

The Emperor was amused by Eunuch Hai's flattery, "You flatterer, take this away. When I'm feeling a bit better, I shall write the Imperial Decree. It's no small matter that she, at such a young age, journeyed to Nanjiang for me!"

And incidentally cured Prince Yanjun and the Commandery Prince of their poison...

If only the Commandery Prince and Prince Yanjun had not accompanied her, how great that would have been!

"Yes!"

Eunuch Hai respectfully took the items and left, then suddenly remembered and said, "Your Majesty, the Empress Dowager came earlier and spent some time reminiscing with Your Majesty about your childhood!"

The Emperor paused, then waved his hand dismissively.

After Eunuch Hai had exited, the Emperor turned to a shadowy corner and called out softly, "Hidden Guard, where are you?"

A dark figure leaped down from the roof beams, "Your Majesty!"

"Stop whatever you are doing at Cining Palace!"

Chapter 608: Digging a Pit

A sudden, seemingly random statement, yet the Hidden Guard complied and withdrew.

The Emperor leaned against the headrest of the bed and, after a moment, took a deep breath.

Lying down, he closed his eyes and fell into a deep sleep.

Life in the Imperial Palace for Yun Jinnian was both busy and leisurely. During the day, she detoxified the Emperor, letting him endure pain for a while, followed by a medicinal bath, concluding his day's suffering.

The afternoons were mostly free and easy; reading books, taking naps, and the day would pass.

Tomorrow would be the Chrysanthemum Festival. There would be chrysanthemum cakes to eat, chrysanthemum wine to drink, and chrysanthemums to admire. But with the Emperor in such a state this year, not even holding court, how could there be a palace banquet? Nevertheless, chrysanthemum wine and cakes were still distributed in the palace.

The Emperor had graciously allowed Yun Jinnian to leave the palace, requiring her to return before dark the following day.

Initially, Yun Jinnian planned to leave the palace on the ninth day of the ninth month to return to either the Yun Residence or the Han Family, but she learned that Mrs. Han had gone to Huguo Temple, and with no master in the Han house aside from the servants.

Her maternal grandfather had not returned from a trip, and Tianci had gone to Nanjiang.

With her mother at Huguo Temple and Yun Jinnian not wanting to go back to the Yun Residence, for a moment, she didn't know where she could or should go.

"Have you decided where you want to go tomorrow, Fourth Miss?" Shaoyao asked.

Yun Jinnian pursed her lips, "Yes, I have decided!"

She would go and visit her second sister.

She wondered whether her second sister and brother-in-law would welcome her intrusion?

Accompanied by Hemei, Henuan, Ru Yue, and Shi Jiayu, Yun Jinnian left the palace, told the carriage driver the address, and boarded the carriage.

As soon as she got on the carriage, Yun Jinnian regretted it.

What about her wet nurse if she went to her second sister's place?

If she went back, she could still take her wet nurse out to enjoy the outdoors and pick cornelian cherries.

"Let's go back to the Yun Residence!"

Although perplexed, the carriage driver turned and drove back to the Yun Residence.

The Yun Residence was bustling at the moment, for the marriage between Yun Zhen and Princess Yanran had been settled. Even though Noble Consort Wang had been punished by the Empress Dowager with confinement for reflection, the Emperor had not imposed any punishment.

The Wang Family had agreed to the marriage also in the hope that Yun Chen would put in a few good words for Noble Consort Wang in front of the Emperor.

Today was the day for the two families to exchange marriage appointment letters.

Mrs. He was radiant with joy, enthusiastically inviting Lady Wang for drinks and making plans to go out with the children to enjoy the high views the next day.

This also conveniently allowed Princess Yanran and Yun Zhen to spend more time together.

Yun Muyou chatted with Princess Yanran, flattering her at every opportunity, while Yun Musi and Yun Mulan, though young, also demonstrated their understanding of the situation.

Xu Xinmo smiled and chatted with Princess Yanran, who glanced at Xu Xinmo with disdain.

When she married into the family, her first step would be to send Xu Xinmo back to the Xu Family.

"Miss Xu!"

"Princess Yanran!"

"Miss Xu, tomorrow is the Chrysanthemum Festival. Aren't you going back to pay your respects and seek peace from Madam Xu? If you don't, isn't that unfilial..." Princess Yanran said, covering her mouth with a giggle, as she teased Xu Xinmo mockingly.

In matters of cunning, Xu Xinmo was no match for Princess Yanran.

And in terms of status, Princess Yanran was a county princess.

Xu Xinmo, blushing with embarrassment, stood up with flushed face, "Who said I'm not going back? I— I'm going back right away!"

"Is that so? Then when I return, shall I give you a lift by the way?"

For a girl with relatives, staying for a long time at her maternal family's home and causing so much trouble, she certainly had thick skin.

Xu Xinmo, now in a difficult position, couldn't afford to offend Princess Yanran either, knowing that her aunt would not let it slide.

After some thought, she said, "Sure, why not!"

She didn't believe that after returning, the Xu Family would turn her away!

She was young and ignorant before, but now she was grown up, sensible!

"Then, Miss Xu, please prepare yourself, as we will be leaving soon!" Princess Yanran smiled warmly.

Yun Muyou secretly snickered to herself.

If Xu Xinmo returned to the Xu Family, it was unlikely she'd have a peaceful time. The third wife of the Xu Family was nine months pregnant and close to giving birth...

Chapter 609: Trouble is Coming

He lifted the teacup to hide the schadenfreude in his eyes, and Yun Muyou's lips curled into a slight smile.

But he forgot one thing, though Xu Xinmo was indeed a daughter of the Xu Family, when you look at the other girls of the Xu Family, each one is dignified, beautiful, and appropriate in their behavior.

Who else among them is like Xu Xinmo, full of pettiness, affected, and unsuitable for public display?

Old Madam Yun thought she had raised Xu Xinmo well, but she didn't realize that Xu Xinmo was actually spoiled by her upbringing.

Wang Yanran glanced at Yun Muyou and then began to smile as well.

"Fourth Miss is back!"

The maid's announcement suddenly quieted the lively scene.

Mrs. He's face changed slightly.

With Mrs. Han gone, she had felt much more relaxed, and now that Mrs. Han's Qiyue Academy had been renamed Qingjue Academy, she had felt a sense of smug triumph for some days. Whatever love Yun Qi had for Mrs. Han, now they were like a pair of separated swallows, estranged, without even a son to show for it.

Thinking of this, Mrs. He also remembered hearing that the young master of the Han Family had come to see Mrs. Han. Word was that the young master of the Han Family was very handsome and tall, but she wondered how old he was.

"What is she coming back for?" Mrs. He asked aloud, annoyance in her voice.

Every time Yun Jinnian came back, there was trouble at home, and she could not wait for the second household to split off and be out of sight and mind.

Even if they did not split, it would be good as long as Mrs. Han and Yun Jinnian were not around.

"Tomorrow is the Double Ninth Festival, perhaps the Fourth Miss is returning for the festival!" Lady Wang said with a laugh.

Yet she was thinking she wanted to meet this Fourth Miss.

On the day she went to the palace, she had made the Noble Consort suffer a setback, and now she wanted to see what sort of person could do that.

Mrs. Han gave a dry chuckle, "That must be it, she's always been dutiful!"

Mrs. Han's words held some truth, and Lady Wang did not expose her. A daughter's marriage was not just a downward move, but also for the sake of the Noble Consort and the Prince, "Then let's invite the Fourth Miss over, so I can recognize her too. It would be awkward to not know her if we meet outside in the future!"

"Go on," said Mrs. Han.

She knew a bit about Yun Jinnian's temperament, which wasn't particularly difficult to get along with.

Yun Jinnian had just returned to Niannian Garden and was speaking with Mrs. Yuan. Mrs. Yuan thought Yun Jinnian would not come back and was feeling upset.

Seeing Yun Jinnian return, she was so happy she cried and laughed, pulling Yun Jinnian into a continuous stream of conversation.

Yun Jinnian watched her with a smile, listening attentively.

"Nanny, let's go climb high tomorrow!"

"Am I going too?" Mrs. Yuan asked joyfully.

She had had so much fun the last time she went out and had even received many gifts. She had made new clothes and was just thinking of wearing them out.

"Mm!"

Yun Jinnian had come back specifically to take her nanny out.

In her previous life, she had been powerless to prevent her nanny's early demise; in this life, she hoped her nanny would live a long, healthy, and happy life.

Mrs. Yuan beamed, "Then you should get ready quickly and try on the new clothes I made for you. Tomorrow is the Double Ninth Festival, and I've embroidered chrysanthemums on the hem of your dress—tiny ones, very lovely!"

"Okay!"

Yun Jinnian smiled as she watched Mrs. Yuan bustling in and out.

Mrs. Yuan's affection for Yun Jinnian was without any pretense.

Although the clothes made in the palace were fine, Yun Jinnian hadn't brought any with her.

"Miss, the Lady invites you over, saying that Lady Wang wishes to see you!" Ru Yue whispered.

Having stayed in the palace for a few days and observed Shaoyao's behavior, Ru Yue secretly mimicked it, managing to look somewhat presentable.

Yun Jinnian raised her eyebrow slightly.

"Is there something wrong?" she asked, puzzled.

Ru Yue was also unsure. It was Tianmi, someone from Lady's company, who came personally. Ru Yue was a bit baffled about what Lady had up her sleeve.

Chapter 610: Unexpected

Mrs. Yuan came out holding the clothes and said hurriedly, "It's my oversight. Today is the day Princess Yanran and the eldest young master exchange their marital appointment letters, but although Princess Yanran is here, the matchmaker is not..."

Exchanging marital appointment letters, yet Princess Yanran followed over.

What is the Han Family trying to imply?

"The eldest aunt and Mrs. Wang must have decided privately. It would be the same to invite the matchmaker to formally propose the marriage later!"

Yun Jinnian always felt there was something odd.

However, since they had come to ask, she would go and take a look.

"Nanny, I'll come back and try on the clothes later!"

Mrs. Yuan nodded, "Mmm, go ahead!" And, concerned, she instructed Hemei and Henuan, "You two follow the young miss closely, don't leave her side, you understand?"

Hemei and Henuan nodded solemnly.

Although Mrs. Yuan wasn't very decisive, she was a kind person, and both Hemei and Henuan were extremely fond of her.

Yun Jinnian couldn't help but laugh.

Such a small matter, yet she was being treated as if she were about to enter a dragon's den or a tiger's lair with all this nervous caution.

Accompanied by Hemei and Henuan, she left Niannian Garden and saw Tianmi.

Tianmi also looked at Yun Jinnian carefully, still remembering how the weak and timid Yun Jinnian had once stood before her with her head bowed, calling her "Sister Tianmi." A few years had passed, and Yun Jinnian now carried herself with an unapproachable noble grace. Her beautiful eyes looked gently at her.

It made her heart beat fast, as if all the guilty deeds she'd done could not be hidden. Hastily, she bowed, "This servant has seen the fourth young miss!"

"Mmm!"

Yun Jinnian responded indifferently.

Her voice was light and airy but made Tianmi extremely nervous.

Tianmi swallowed hard, "Fourth young miss, the madam and Mrs. Wang are in the main hall!"

"Mmm!"

Discussing marriage in the main hall was indeed reasonable; the next time the matchmaker would come would be in the front hall.

Yun Jinnian walked in front, straightening her spine.

Dressed in splendid clothes, her skirt fluttered as she moved, which revealed her grace and peerless beauty even more.

Just her silhouette alone was dazzling.

Tianmi had never dreamed that Yun Jinnian would become what she was today.

Walking behind Yun Jinnian, she wanted to say something several times but didn't know how to start.

Unless Yun Jinnian had lost her memory, she wouldn't forget how Tianmi once threw her weight around.

Outside of the main hall, laughter could be heard.

Yun Jinnian stood still for a moment, her lips curling slightly before she finally stepped inside.

"Oh my, our Jinnian is back!" exclaimed Mrs. He with joy.

Her face carried a smile that was warm and joyful, yet it couldn't hide the disdain in her eyes.

Yun Jinnian saw it all too clearly.

She moved forward a few steps and bowed slightly, "I've seen the eldest aunt, and I've seen Mrs. Wang!"

Mrs. He smiled.

Mrs. Wang hadn't expected Yun Jinnian to be so beautiful, almost fairy-like.

With such beauty, if she entered the palace, she would likely be solely cherished.

Fortunately, the emperor had promised the Han Family, so Yun Jinnian would not go to the palace, which put the Noble Consort's mind at ease.

Seeing her now, Mrs. Wang's thoughts shifted, and she had some plans. She assessed Yun Jinnian with a more calculating gaze, "Miss Yun need not be so formal. I've long heard that Miss Yun is like a celestial maiden, and seeing you today, it is indeed true!"

"Thank you for the compliment, Mrs. Wang, but Jinnian dare not accept it!" Yun Jinnian said lightly.

Her politeness was accompanied by a hint of distance.

Mrs. Wang watched her and sneered inside.

Once the thing she was thinking of succeeded, she would see if Yun Jinnian dared to be so impolite then, and she would know how to deal with her.

Mrs. Wang smiled as she slid off the jade bracelet from her wrist, "Meeting for the first time, Miss Yun, you can take this bracelet to play with!"

The jade bracelet was translucent and bright, with excellent quality. It seemed Mrs. Wang had worn it for many years.

She was certain Yun Jinnian would refuse, at which point she planned to take it back casually, either giving her something else or nothing at all.

To her surprise, Yun Jinnian bowed slightly, "Thank you, Mrs. Wang!"

She reached out to take the jade bracelet.