

## Indulgence 621

Chapter 621: Heartache Indescribable

How poignant is a parent's love in this world.

Still, what exactly had Aunt Cu learned about Yun Chen? And how was it related to the note she wrote for Kang You?

Yun Jinnian rubbed his forehead, deciding not to tax his brain further.

Grasping Mrs. Yuan's hand, he said, "Nurse, could you cook something for me to eat?"

Caught by surprise, Mrs. Yuan laughed, "My cooking isn't very good. It's not as delicious as Yaniang's!"

"I just suddenly felt like eating it!"

Looking at him, Mrs. Yuan's heart softened a great deal, "What would you like to eat?"

"Anything's good!"

"Alright, I'll go see what we have in the kitchen!"

Although Yun Jinnian lived at the Yun Residence, Mrs. He didn't oversee his food and clothing expenses, which were all covered by his own silver. Even going out to buy groceries had nothing to do with the Yun Residence.

When Mrs. Yuan arrived at the kitchen, she saw plenty of vegetables, all very fresh.

Nevertheless, she decided to cook noodles for Yun Jinnian; he liked the noodles she made.

When Yun Jinnian ate noodles, he preferred less noodles and more soup.

By the time Mrs. Yuan had cooked and served them, Yun Jinnian slowly finished off the entire bowl.

Perhaps he was truly hungry, or maybe it was for some other reason, but after eating his fill, Yun Jinnian felt exceptionally content.

One day, he would leave the Yun Family and never return.

Yun Zihan took Aunt Cu's body to a nunnery for prayers and chants for her soul and buried her in the mountains behind the nunnery.

Kneeling in front of Aunt Cu's grave, Yun Zihan lamented, "Mother, I could not call you this in life; it is my filial failing!"

"Now, I truly have no ties left with the Yun Family, but this was not the outcome I desired. We agreed to plan slowly, so why would you rush to fulfill my desires to such an extreme!"

"Mother..."

Yun Zihan mourned in front of the grave with cries of sorrow.

Standing some distance away, Liao Shijie watched her quietly, keeping her company.

He knew the struggles of a concubine, just like his own aunt...

Only when the sky had completely darkened did Liao Shijie step forward to kneel beside Yun Zihan.  
"Mother-in-law, from now on, I will take good care of Zihan. For my whole life, she will be the only one for me!"

At his words, Yun Zihan looked at Liao Shijie with shock and astonishment.

Liao Shijie took her cold hand in his, "Fool, I've wanted to say these words for so long but never found the right moment. Now, in front of your mother, I promise you a lifetime of togetherness."

A lifetime of togetherness!

Yun Zihan gazed at Liao Shijie, and even in the darkness, where his face was not clear, her heart saw him very clearly.

She threw herself into Liao Shijie's arms, sobbing, "Husband, from now on, you're the only family I have!"

She never again mentioned the affairs of the Yun Family or those of the fourth sister; she couldn't bring them up.

She and the fourth sister would drift further apart eventually. Aside from Liao Shijie, she had no other family!

Liao Shijie remained silent.

He just held her tightly, offering comfort and warmth.

The night deepened.

Yun Jinnian turned over in bed and, upon touching something hard, sat up abruptly, startled.

In the dimness, the breath of the man next to her calmed her heart—it was Chu Yu, this rogue, sneaking into her bed again in the dead of the night, and right now, he was asleep so deeply that he didn't even notice her getting up.

She lifted the bed curtain, and with a little more light inside, Yun Jinnian could see Chu Yu's face covered with a long stubble.

She reached out and touched it; it was rough and prickly.

Thinking of how he hadn't appeared since they parted at the Han Residence days ago, and not knowing what he had been up to, she figured that his deep sleep now meant he must be exhausted.

Feeling pity for him, Yun Jinnian began to gently get out of bed, but Chu Yu suddenly pulled her back into his arms, holding her tightly, his hoarse voice murmuring low, "Stay with me for a while. I haven't closed my eyes in days!"

#### Chapter 622: Gentle Treatment

Yun Jinnian struggled for a while but quieted down upon hearing Chu Yu's words.

Rourou spoke up, "You go to sleep, I'll heat up some water for you to wash up!"

Not asking where he had been?

Not inquiring what had happened, content just to be there for him!

Chu Yu gently released his hand, Yun Jinnian slowly climbed out of bed, dressed, brought water from the clean room, and with his own towel, wiped Chu Yu's face and hands, gently cleaning each finger.

Noticing his nails had grown long and there were wounds on his hands.

Glancing outside to check the time, it was already the ninth day of the ninth lunar month, he then took an oil lamp and found scissors, sitting by the bed cautiously trimming Chu Yu's fingernails.

Afterwards, he applied ointment to the wounds.

He fetched a stool, brought more hot water from the clean room, and prepared to wash Chu Yu's feet.

But he saw that Chu Yu had fallen asleep on her bed with his shoes on. As she reached out to remove the shoes, Chu Yu mumbled in his daze, "I haven't washed my feet for several days, they stink a lot!"

Yet he didn't have the strength to sit up.

After three days and nights of nonstop riding, all he could think of was returning home and going with Yun Jinnian to enjoy the heights, picking chrysanthemums, and harvesting cornus fruit.

"No worries, I'll just burn some incense in a moment!"

Yun Jinnian said as he forcefully removed Chu Yu's shoes, which indeed smelled awful. Seeing the blisters on the soles of Chu Yu's large feet, his heart ached for him all the more.

Yun Jinnian placed Chu Yu's feet into a washbasin, then turned around to fetch herbal powder from the cupboard, sprinkling some into the basin. After several trips back and forth, Yun Jinnian finally wiped Chu Yu's feet, lanced the blisters, applied ointment, and pulled the blanket over him.

Only then did he start to tidy up the room, also washing Chu Yu's smelly socks.

Opening the window and lighting incense, he found fabric and sat by the bed to make socks for Chu Yu.

Despite his exhaustion, Chu Yu was aware in his drowsy state that Yun Jinnian was tending to him.

That feeling, so heart-wrenching and yet so deep, he didn't want to wake up.

Feeling his beloved woman by his side, listening to her rustling movements, was extraordinarily comforting.

He slept especially soundly.

Even snoring loudly.

Yun Jinnian made three pairs of socks for Chu Yu, and as she listened to his snores, she too began to feel drowsy and laid her head down by the bed to close her eyes.

As dawn began to break, Chu Yu woke up.

After a good night's rest, he felt reenergized, full of vigor.

Turning to see Yun Jinnian lying by the bed, her rosy lips softly breathing, a side covered with needlework and several pairs of neatly folded socks.

Chu Yu stared, smiling foolishly to himself.

But thinking of Yun Jinnian staying up late to make him socks, he again felt a pang of pity for her, fearing for her eyesight.

He lightly patted Yun Jinnian, tiptoed out of bed, careful not to make noise with his shoes, instead walking barefoot on the floor, picked her up, and placed her on the bed.

He covered her with a thin blanket before starting to put on the socks.

"They fit perfectly!"

Chu Yu studied the socks on his feet and then observed his own clean hands.

In that moment, he couldn't entirely describe his feelings, but he knew that in this lifetime, no one else would ever touch his heart like Yun Jinnian did, influencing his emotions in every way.

No matter what she did, it was all so beautiful.

Incomparable to anyone else.

Having put on his shoes, Chu Yu looked at Yun Jinnian's soft, fair face, kissed her forehead gently, and quickly left.

To avoid any discovery that could tarnish Yun Jinnian's reputation.

Mrs. Yuan came over early in the morning and was taken aback to see the windows of Yun Jinnian's chambers open; she had certainly closed them the night before when she went to sleep.

Could the young mistress have opened them in the middle of the night?

Chapter 623: Mrs. Yuan's Heartache

Pushing the door open, I entered the small hall and tiptoed into the bedroom, where an odd smell lingered briefly before disappearing.

Yun Jinnian was sound asleep on the bed.

With affection, I tucked the blanket around Yun Jinnian, closed the window, and was about to leave the bedroom when Yun Jinnian woke up.

"Nurse, what time is it?"

"It's still early, Miss. Sleep a little longer!"

Yun Jinnian shook her head, "No more sleep, Nurse. There's a pair of men's cloth socks in the cleaning room, please quietly take care of them later!"

"..."

The nurse was so shocked she couldn't speak.

Men's cloth socks—had a man been here last night? Was it that man who had opened the window?

Thinking of this, the nurse felt both alarmed and scared.

"Miss, are you all right?"

"Nurse, I'm fine. It was Prince Rui who came last night!" Yun Jinnian explained softly, then added after a moment of thought, "Nurse, Prince Rui and I...we care for each other..."

Yun Jinnian spoke, her cheeks blushing slightly.

Mrs. Yuan looked at her, feeling bittersweet yet happy.

She stepped forward and took Yun Jinnian's hand, "The Miss has grown up. It's wonderful to have someone you cherish, I'm happy for you!"

"It's just that Prince Rui, he..."

Mrs. Yuan wanted to ask, how sincere is Prince Rui?

If he is truly sincere, then Prince Rui would indeed be a fine young man.

He's handsome and has a manly fortitude. That day in front of Huiquan Tower, he spoke so righteously, standing up for the common people; it warmed her heart.

"Are you serious?" Mrs. Yuan asked Yun Jinnian softly.

Yun Jinnian nodded shyly with a blush.

Mrs. Yuan suddenly smiled, "Well, that's great. I can start preparing the dowry!"

"Nurse!" Yun Jinnian called out shyly.

"My dear Miss, every girl has her time to blush, there's no need to be shy. But in the future, you can't let Prince Rui come here anymore, especially not in the dead of night—it wouldn't look good if people found out!"

"I didn't let him in; he sneaked in. I don't even know where he went this time. Last night, when we were on the bed, he was so tired he had no strength left, his feet were covered in blisters, and his hands were wounded. I couldn't let him go back!" Yun Jinnian said, lowering her head slightly.

She was embarrassed.

Mrs. Yuan, hearing this, wanted to say something, but didn't know what to say.

She wanted to ask something, but felt it was inappropriate.

All she could really do was offer her sincere blessings. No matter who Yun Jinnian cherished, she would wholeheartedly bless and support her.

With this thought, Mrs. Yuan stood up, "I'll go tidy things up first to avoid being seen. Miss, you get some more rest!"

"Mhm!"

Yun Jinnian nodded slightly.

She hadn't expected to discuss Chu Yu with her nurse.

When she first mentioned him to her mother, she had deliberately avoided the subject.

Yun Jinnian leaned against the headboard, closed her eyes, and soon fell asleep again.

Mrs. Yuan quickly finished tidying up, even washed Chu Yu's pair of cloth socks and hung them out to dry, then sat on the chair in the small hall, feeling somewhat sad.

Her tenderly nurtured Miss was now taking care of others.

Even though it might be her future husband, she hadn't married him yet. After marriage, it could be considered a joy of the bridal chambers, but now...

To put it bluntly, Mrs. Yuan was reluctant.

"Mrs. Yuan!"

Ru Yue and Shi Jiayu came together.

They called out softly and glanced toward the bedroom, "Has the Miss woken up?"

Mrs. Yuan shook her head, not very willing to speak.

Firstly, Aunt Cui had left, and it wasn't proper for them to go out happily. Secondly, Prince Rui had stayed the night, and Yun Jinnian had taken care of him all night.

"Mrs. Yuan, what's wrong?" Shi Jiayu asked.

Having spent a few days in the palace, Shi Jiayu felt she had learned a lot.

She once thought her family had some silver, but upon arriving in the Capital City and seeing what truly wealthy families were like, she realized that the little silver her family had wouldn't even buy a decent house in the Capital. The gap was that large.

#### Chapter 624: Baba Approaching

"It's nothing; I was just wondering if I should ask Miss if she wants to visit the Second Miss at the Liao Residence!"

In this residence, there were also the Second Miss and Mrs. Cui, who had some human touch.

Shi Jiayu fell silent.

Ru Yue thought for a while before saying, "Considering the relationship between Miss and the Second Miss, she should pay a visit, but as for Mrs. Cui's incident, the household only mentioned that she passed away without specifying where she was sent. Miss rushing off to the Liao Residence might not be appropriate!"

After Ru Yue finished speaking, she let out a sigh.

She usually spoke little, and speaking so much all at once, this was indeed the first time.

Mrs. Yuan thought the same, "That's why I was hesitant!"

To go or not to go, both choices were difficult.

"Nanny!"

Yun Jinnian called out softly, sitting at the head of the bed.

Upon hearing this, Mrs. Yuan responded hastily, calling out, "Miss is awake, quickly bring some water, and bring the breakfast from the kitchen over here!"

She entered the bedroom to assist Yun Jinnian in getting up and washing.

She then styled Yun Jinnian's hair into a beautiful bun, dressed her in a white tube-top dress with little chrysanthemums embroidered on the hem. Her white waistband was also embroidered with chrysanthemums. As the belt hung down and the wind blew, it looked like the chrysanthemums were fluttering in the breeze.

A purse embroidered with a large chrysanthemum hung at her waist, and even the hair accessories were chrysanthemum-related.

"What a lovely chrysanthemum fairy!" praised Mrs. Yuan.

All the unhappiness was thrown to the back of her mind, and her heart and eyes were filled with the sight of Yun Jinnian before her.

"Nanny has such skillful hands; this dress looks so pretty!"

Although she had tried it on yesterday, she hadn't dressed up so carefully as she had now; indeed, she looked very beautiful.

"We also have a pink set; we should bring it along just in case!" Mrs. Yuan reminded her.

"Yes, I'll listen to Nanny!"

After eating breakfast, they left Madam Rong and Yaniang to watch over Niannian Garden. They took with them food and drink, and set out.

They were preparing to travel by carriage from the front courtyard.

Unexpectedly, Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingqing, and their former three maids were each accompanied by a maid, waiting at the second gate.

Seeing Yun Jinnian, the three of them were quite embarrassed, blushing to the tips of their ears.

"Fourth Sister, can we join you on your trip?" Yun Zuomo mustered up the courage to speak.

She had thought it over all night. Despite wanting to give up, this could be her only chance.

Moreover, in this household, the only one she could rely on in the future was Yun Jinnian.

As for their father, there was no need to hope.

Their stepmother was confined to the courtyard, unable to even step outside.

The Eldest Aunt only cared for her own children; she had almost sold the Second Sister - let alone the children of the second room.

And as for their grandmother, she only had eyes for Xu Xinmo, her granddaughter from outside the family, and did not even consider her illegitimate granddaughters.

Early in the morning, they called Yun Qingzhi and Yun Qingqing to come over to give her some moral support.

If Yun Jinnian were to refuse them again, they couldn't blame her.

Yun Jinnian thought, why should she care about them?

Legitimate and illegitimate members of a family are natural enemies. Because of their stepmothers, she had suffered for so many years, and in her past life, she had died a miserable death in the palace.

But she had been reborn, and now she was living a better life.

As for these three illegitimate sisters, though they had food, drink, and clothes, they never really had a moment of true comfort and pleasure.

Yun Jinnian sized them up, thinking carefully if they had ever harmed her in their previous life, or if they had lived well later on? She couldn't remember anything.

"If you want to follow, then follow. Oh, have you prepared your own food? Don't expect me to feed you later!"

Having said that, Yun Jinnian walked towards the outside.

Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingzhi, and Yun Qingqing were startled and hurriedly followed, with their maids carrying food containers closely behind.

"Fourth Sister!"

Yun Zuomo called out softly, her face flushed as she ran up to Yun Jinnian's side, panting and clutching the handkerchief in her hand.

She was determined that one way or another, she must share a carriage with Yun Jinnian...

#### Chapter 625: Helpless Tacit Consent

This time on the trip to Lesser Town Mountain, two carriages had been prepared. Initially, the idea was for everyone to sit in one carriage and use the other for luggage, but now there were six extra people.

Yun Jinnian had planned to have Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingqing, and Yun Qingzhi ride in the rear carriage with their maids, but to her surprise, Yun Zuomo, thick-skinned, directly boarded the carriage. Yun Qingzhi and Yun Qingqing also directed their maids to the rear one and, in Yun Jinnian's astonishment, they followed suit and got on the carriage as well.

"They..." Hemei was so angry she couldn't speak.

Yun Jinnian raised her hand to stop Hemei.

The street where the Yun Residence was located housed families of officials and nobility. Today, they were all out for the traditional outing to climb to a high place. If anything untoward happened, it would reflect badly on Yun Jinnian, unable to accommodate her half-sisters.

"Hongdou, Hongxiu, Hongye, how would it be for you to go in the rear carriage?" Yun Jinnian asked.

Although the three young maids were not too keen on the idea, they still nodded and went.

Initially hoping to give those three maids a good lesson, upon boarding the carriage and seeing them huddled together, looking at their mistresses with cautious, flattering eyes, they abandoned the thought.

As they were loyal to their own mistresses, they paid them no mind.

The carriage rattled on its way.

Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingzhi, and Yun Qingqing sat in a row, sitting up straight, not looking around, clutching their handkerchiefs tightly in their little hands, their faces flushed red, lips pressed tightly together.

Mrs. Yuan poured a cup of water for Yun Jinnian.

Holding the cup, Yun Jinnian took a sip and then looked at her three half-sisters, "Would you like some?"

"Ah..."

"No..."

"Okay..."

Three people, three answers, but all visibly nervous and extremely cautious.

Yun Jinnian raised her eyebrows slightly, "Nurse, pour them a cup as well!"

Then she lifted the curtain to look outside.

Their plain trip out did not attract much attention, but it did not dampen the enthusiasm of those celebrating the festival.

Although there were soldiers guarding the city gate, they did not conduct inspections, and one could simply walk out.

Yun Residence

Mrs. He was overjoyed upon hearing that Yun Jinnian and her group had left the house.

She also learned that Yun Piao, Yun Qingqing, and Yun Qingzhi had shamelessly followed along and smirked disdainfully, not caring in the least.

"Let them go. They're twelve now. It's time they started thinking about marriage and planning for themselves. However, I am curious to see how a person who can hardly take care of her own affairs will meddle in theirs!" Mrs. He said with utter contempt.

She was eager for an early division of the family, to split off the second branch.

But the old dame never mentioned it, neither did the master nor the second master.

Not to mention the third master who had not returned for many years!

"Let's go, we will also make our way uphill!"

However, she was not headed to Lesser Town Mountain but to Greater Town Mountain, to meet with the wife of the king.

She hoped everything was well arranged by the king's wife, to add a personal touch to their relations!

The Old Lady Yun, advanced in years, wasn't in the best of moods because Xu Xinmo had returned to the Xu family, but knowing that there would be sedan chairs available for ascending the hill, she would not have to walk and decided to go out with Mrs. He.

"Mother, Princess Yanran will also be there!" Mrs. He said respectfully.

Old Lady Yun nodded, "Hmm, send someone to the Xu family tomorrow to bring Wanwan back!"

At the words, Mrs. He felt as disgusted as if she'd swallowed a fly.

She had mentioned Princess Yanran to remind the old dame that this was her legitimate eldest grandson's wife, and yet she only talked about bringing Xu Xinmo back.

"Did you hear what I said?" Old Lady Yun, seeing Mrs. He silent, intensified her tone.

"Yes, mother, rest assured, I will send someone to the Xu family to bring Xinmo back tomorrow!" Mrs. He said, her heart filling with hatred for Xu Xinmo all over again.

Old Lady Yun nodded in satisfaction, thinking that Xu Xinmo was after all going to be the Empress and would need to be valued even more, adding, "If you are not too busy, go and fetch her yourself!"

Chapter 626: Extremely Petty Mind

Mrs. He suddenly had the feeling that the Old Madam Yun had gone mad.

As a lady of the house, wouldn't she have anything to do? There were so many trivial matters throughout the day, and she had to take care of them.

She had to manage the needs of the whole household, as well as the social visits and relationships.

Xu Xinmo had no mother, and her father was on an official mission elsewhere. It was understandable that the old lady doted on her a bit more, but this was too much.

Way too much.

"Mother, I am not free. If you wish, please go receive her yourself!" Mrs. He said, turning her head away.

Old Madam Yun was utterly astonished.

Mrs. He actually dared to contradict her; it was as if the world was turning upside down.

As she opened her mouth to say something, she caught the astonished gazes of Yun Musi and Yun Mulan, their eyes reddening.

"..."

"Grandmother!" Yun Musi called out softly.

"Hmm?"

"Please dote on us a bit more too!" As Yun Musi spoke, she leaned closer to Old Madam Yun, pressing her little face against her grandmother's knee.

Old Madam Yun only felt a warmth on her leg; she knew that Yun Musi was crying.

She initially felt some resentment towards Mrs. He, but considering that it might be jealousy and envy that prevented her from wanting to fetch Xu Xinmo, she felt much better and less angry, "Good child, you are my own granddaughter. If I don't dote on you, then whom should I dote on?"

"When cousin was here before, I couldn't even get close to you, Grandmother. Could you let cousin stay a few more days in the Xu Residence, and let me spend more time by your side, please?" After saying this, Yun Musi began to sob softly.

Yun Mulan also hurriedly said, "Grandmother, me too!"

The two girls, one on each side, nestled into Old Madam Yun's arms and cried.

In the end, their tears softened Old Madam Yun's heart, and she coaxed them with endearing words until they calmed down.

And she did not mention going to the Xu Residence to receive Xu Xinmo the next day again.

Yun Musi and Yun Mulan were indeed clever and quick-witted; they sang and responded in a way that greatly pleased Old Madam Yun.

Upon reaching Greater Town Mountain, they met Lady Wang and others. Princess Yanran, who knew how to behave appropriately, quickly joined Yun Musi and Yun Mulan's group, charming the old lady until she couldn't stop smiling.

Yun Zhen watched from the side, his satisfaction with Princess Yanran increasing by the minute.

Initially, his satisfaction was based on family background and status. Now, he found a few more reasons to like her as a person.

The entire party proceeded together in high spirits.

## Xu Residence

Xu Xinmo's return was unexpected, but now that she was back, it wasn't appropriate to send her away again. Old Madam Xu instructed Lady to hurriedly prepare a courtyard for Xu Xinmo to move into and assigned three old maids and six maids to serve her.

One of these maids was her Head Maid.

Though it was said to be for serving her, it was actually for surveillance, as Mrs. Xu, pregnant for nine months, was about to give birth, and they couldn't afford any negligence.

They also couldn't let her know about Xu Xinmo's return; otherwise, it would cause trouble.

Mrs. Xu harbored deep-seated hatred for Xu Xinmo. Over the years, Xu Xinmo stayed with the Yun Family, and Mrs. Xu's hatred never diminished; rather, it intensified after several miscarriages.

Therefore, on the Double Ninth Festival, Old Madam Xu did not go out for the traditional hiking but stayed home to attend to Mrs. Xu.

The Xu Family girls went hiking under the protection of their brothers, with Xu Xinmo among them.

Once she returned to the Xu Residence, Xu Xinmo could not feel any joy or the comfort she had while at the Yun Residence, let alone acting assertively.

At this moment, the group was making its way up the mountain.

Her female cousins whispered and giggled among themselves.

Xu Xinmo wanted to join them, but they were indifferent and guarded against her; she had never been treated like this at the Yun Residence.

A fire was building up inside her chest.

"Daidai, come on, let's go back and pack our things; we're going to grandmother's house!" With that, Xu Xinmo turned and walked away.

Daidai looked on, unable to persuade her, "Miss, miss, please wait for this servant!"

#### Chapter 627: Teasing and Amusing

The Yun Family's siblings looked at each other, their faces a mix of confusion and anger.

"Big brother..."

"Big brother..."

They all turned to look at the eldest brother of the Yun Family, the legitimate eldest son and grandson, Xu Ximin.

Xu Ximin was twenty-one that year. His marriage had been arranged early, but his fiancée had passed away before they could wed. He observed three years of mourning for her, and now that the three years were over, his marriage was arranged once again, to his former fiancée's legitimate cousin.

After thinking for a moment, Xu Ximin said, "Let's also head back. Seeing her like that, it will probably lead to a disturbance if we return. Grandmother is getting old, and the third aunt's condition isn't convenient either. There's always another year to go up the mountain; we can come back next year, right?"

The Xu Family placed great importance on the legitimate eldest line.

Therefore, the younger members of the Xu Family respected Xu Ximin deeply.

"Big brother, we'll listen to you. Let's go back!"

"Yes, big brother, let's go back!"

They grew even more resentful towards Xu Xinmo in their hearts.

What a mess.

If she didn't like the Xu Family, she should have just stayed with the Yun Family. Why come back and ruin their fun?

A troublemaker is truly a troublemaker. She had caused the third aunt to miscarry before and still hasn't learned her lesson.

The group had only made it halfway when they decided to head back to the residence, feeling quite upset. The masters were uncomfortable, and the maids and nannies were also annoyed.

It was not easy to get a chance to go out, only to return halfway.

Xu Residence

The belly of Lady Xu, the third wife, was very large. Several physicians had said she was carrying twins; even the Imperial Physician had visited and confirmed she was expecting two.

At that moment, she was being supported by a maid as she walked slowly in the garden.

In order to safely deliver these two children, Lady Xu, the third wife, was extremely cautious. Despite her swollen body making walking difficult, she still moved slowly with the support of two sturdy maids.

She had to preserve a line of descent for Lord Xu, the third, no matter what.

"Third sister-in-law!" Lady Xu, the first wife, came over with a smile, a maid following her carrying some pastries.

"Sister-in-law!"

"How long have you been walking?"

"Just half an incense stick, with another half to go!"

Lady Xu, the first wife, laughed, "You're sweating a lot. Why don't you rest for a bit, have some pastries, and then continue walking?"

"No, I'm afraid once I sit down, I won't feel like getting up again!"

"Alright then, I'll keep you company for a while!" Lady Xu, the first wife, sat to the side and watched Lady Xu, the third wife, walk.

When it came to getting along with the sisters-in-law in the residence, it was this third sister-in-law who was dignified and generous, and she was also extremely good to the children.

That's why the children remembered her kindness. As soon as she became pregnant, they sent over many things used for babies.

They were hopeful that their affection would help her keep the children safe.

It also seemed to work out well; this pregnancy was quite stable.

Lady Xu, the third wife, responded with an acknowledgment and continued to walk slowly, "Sister-in-law!"

"Hmm?"

"Since Min'er and the others have gone out, later could you instruct the kitchen to make some herbal tea and cool it down, so there's no need to store it in the ice cellar? And do the same with the fruits. They will surely be very playful when they're out and coming back to eat something chilled all at once is not good for their stomachs. I have some honeysuckle at my place; I'll have my maid retrieve it. The rest I'll leave to you, sister-in-law!"

Lady Xu, the third wife, said leisurely.

Lady Xu, the first wife, burst into laughter, "You're just too worried about them!"

"They are my children's elder brothers and sisters, and they are all good kids. It's only right for me, as an elder, to be more concerned. In the future, my children will need their care even more!"

Upon hearing this, Lady Xu, the first wife, laughed.

"Then the amount of honeysuckle you have may not be enough!"

Upon hearing this, the maids and nannies covered their mouths and giggled softly.

Lady Yun, the Dowager, came slowly with the support of a maid, "What are you two talking about that's making you laugh so heartily?"

#### Chapter 628: Sending Back to the Yun Family

Lady Xu hurriedly stood up and steadied the elderly Lady Yun as she sat down, recounting the events and then covering her mouth to chuckle.

"You two are such characters!" the elderly Lady Yun also burst into laughter, remembering Xu Ximin's wedding preparations, "Is everything ready for Ximin's marriage?"

"Mother, rest assured, everything has been prepared!"

Lady Yun nodded, "What about the midwife and the wet nurse?"

"They have been arranged as well!"

Lady Yun couldn't help but be sentimental, "I remember when you gave birth to Ximin, I was so anxious and worried that I couldn't sleep for days. Now, in the blink of an eye, Ximin has grown up, and in a couple of years, I'll be able to hold my great-grandson!"

"When the time comes, your daughter-in-law will certainly urge the new bride!"

"No rush, no rush, these matters should take their natural course. We must not ruin the affection between Ximin and his wife!"

"We will listen to you, mother!"

In comparison, the Yun Family was rather lively and harmonious.

Just as Lady Xu number three had also walked properly and was preparing to come over, the elderly Lady Yun was still sitting while Lady Xu had stood up ready to help, but then she saw a figure hurriedly running over.

It happened so fast that it took everyone by surprise. Lady Xu number three's maid hurried to intercept her, trying to prevent a collision.

But upon release, Lady Xu number three couldn't stand firm and fell to the ground.

"Ah..."

"Third sister-in-law!"

"Lady Xu number three!"

"Susu..."

Everyone was calling out, while the troublemaker Xinmo stood there petrified after being stopped, unaware of what she had done.

"Ah..."

Lady Xu number three screamed, as pain spread from her abdomen throughout her body.

Blood had already soaked through the fabric beneath her.

"She's bleeding, she's bleeding..."

"Fetch the doctor, the midwife... the midwife..."

"Hurry, call for Third Master Xu to come back!"

For a moment, the garden was thrown into chaos.

Lady Xu number three was carried away, and before she left, she cast one glance at Xinmo, recognizing her.

Xinmo's return to the Yun Family was known to her, but as an elder, she obviously couldn't cause a fuss.

Thus, knowing that Xinmo had gone to ascend the heights, she came out for a walk as usual.

People in the household knew that this pregnancy had been challenging for her, and not even the adults, but even the children would tread lightly around her. Who dare act as wildly as Xinmo?

"I hate you, Xinmo, I hate you!"

Naked hatred, unmasked.

"Hate me, for what? I didn't bump into you, you fell on your own!" Xinmo retorted sharply.

She was fed up.

Back in the Yun Family, everyone looked at her with suspicious eyes as if she had committed some unforgivable sin.

Even the servants showed no respect for her, giving her dirty looks right at the front door; out of anger, she ran back, ready to pack up her things and return to the Yun Family.

There she had her maternal grandmother who loved her.

"Yes, I'm wrong, it's all my fault, I should never have pitied you for losing your mother at a young age, doting on you wholeheartedly. It's my fault!"

After Lady Xu number three finished speaking through clenched teeth, she cried out in pain again, clutching the hand of the elderly Lady Yun, "Mother, you must save my child, no matter what, save the child!"

"Susu..." Lady Yun called out urgently, then ordered, "Send her back to the Yun Family, right now, immediately. Tell Lady Yun the old dowager that our Xu Family's home is too small to accommodate such a great Buddha, and she is not to come back here again!"

"..."

Xinmo stood there, stunned.

There was a difference between wanting to go back herself and being cast away as if she were an unwanted burden.

"Let it be, who longs to return? Just wait until I'm rich and you come begging to me!" she said, then, dragging the dumbstruck Daidai back to her quarters to pack.

It took a while for Lady Yun to begin weeping and exclaiming, "What a disaster, such a disaster!"

Chapter 629: Revealing the Truth

How did Yun Hui give birth to such a heartless creature?

The matter of Xu Xinmo being sent away was quickly ordered by Lady Xu, instructing the servants not to gossip.

Fortunately, the midwife had been residing within the estate. However, upon examining Mrs. Xu, the midwife exclaimed in alarm, "Lady, I'm afraid Mrs. Xu is going to have a difficult labor!"

Old Lady Xu paled with fright, "Can both mother and child be saved?"

"What I fear is that neither mother nor child can be saved, Lady. You must make a decision quick. In case of an emergency, should we save the child or the mother?"

Tears immediately sprang to Old Lady Xu's eyes, "The adult, save the adult..."

Her voice, however, was significantly weaker.

"Mother's words are very true, save the adult. Without the adult, there can still be children. The third brother and his wife are still young!" Lady Xu also advised.

She feared that the elderly Lady would change her mind at the last moment, saving the child and then living with regret.

"Alas, if Mrs. Xu hadn't fallen, this child would definitely have been born safely!" The midwife spoke carelessly before entering the birthing room.

Upon hearing this, Old Lady Xu heavily closed her eyes.

The midwife didn't need to say it; she knew all too well...

But now that things had happened, could they make Xu Xinmo pay with her life?

She was the second son's only daughter! With his stubborn nature, how could she break her son's heart!

The third son was also her child...

The old lady felt incredibly distressed, praying to the heavens for the safety of both mother and child!

"Eldest daughter-in-law, quickly have someone check if the Imperial Physician has arrived!"

Lady Xu nodded, "Mother, rest assured, I already have someone waiting by the door!"

Inside the birthing room, the cries of pain from Mrs. Xu came one after another, piercing the hearts of listeners...

Outside the city

Yun Jinnian's party leisurely proceeded towards Little City Mountain.

Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingqing, and Yun Qingzhi were very restrained. It was their first time being so close to their legitimate elder sister, a different sort of feeling than with Yun Muyou. They mostly tried to please Yun Muyou, who always looked down on them as if they were clowns.

Although Yun Jinnian did not like them, he did not possess Yun Muyou's arrogance or condescension.

Several times, Yun Zuomo wanted to speak of Mrs. He's conspiracy, but she dared not.

Yun Qingzhi and Yun Qingqing watched anxiously, signaling Yun Zuomo that she could speak several times.

"Fourth Sister!"

Yun Zuomo gathered her courage.

Yun Jinnian, holding a teacup, glanced at Yun Zuomo coolly, "If you have something to say, say it!"

Whether or not to speak was Yun Zuomo's decision, but whether or not to agree was his to make.

Yun Zuomo took a deep breath, then glanced at Mrs. Yuan, Hemei, Henuan, Shi Jiayu, and Ru Yue before whispering, "Madame Uncle informed the Wang mistress of your movements today, mentioning something about adding kin..."

Mrs. Yuan understood the implications, even from within the confines of the inner chambers.

Mrs. He was plotting against Yun Jinnian, "Miss..."

Yun Jinnian, however, remained composed. "Are you certain of this?"

"Absolutely certain. I also heard that it's the nephew of the Wang mistress's maternal family, with the surname She..." Yun Zuomo looked at Yun Jinnian nervously, worried that he might not believe her, and hastily tugged at Yun Qingzhi, "Seventh Sister, quick, say something, you know it too!"

Yun Qingzhi nodded slightly and moved her lips, but she was too nervous to speak.

Yun Jinnian believed them, though.

He said that's why Mrs. He made a special trip to Niannian Garden yesterday and why she left later than him this morning. She was waiting for him to leave, so she could send a message to the Wang family.

"Hemei, go back to the city now and find out exactly what kind of person this She family's son is!"

Chapter 630: Chance Encounter with the Unparalleled

Given Mrs. He's malicious nature, how could she possibly be a good person?

She must be up to no good!

Hemei nodded, anger blazing in her eyes.

Yun Jinnian instructed Uncle Cheng to stop the carriage, saying they would rest by the roadside for a moment.

Once Hemei stepped out of the carriage, with several leaps, she had gone quite a distance, leaving Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingzhi, and Yun Qingqing with their eyes wide in astonishment.

Who would have thought that a young girl like Hemei could know martial arts, and be so formidable at that!

Yun Jinnian whispered a few words in Henuan's ear, nodding toward the deeper side of the roadside.

During this time, Yun Jinnian calmly watched the carriages passing by.

Being new to the Capital City, she knew very few people, so as each carriage passed—belonging to high-status families—she recognized hardly anyone.

"Sigh!"

When a carriage stopped in front of her, Yun Jinnian was taken aback for a good while.

Not until Feng Wushuang gracefully smiled and stepped down from the carriage to salute her with a fist and bow did she react, "Fourth Miss!"

Yun Jinnian hurriedly returned the gesture, saluting Feng Wushuang, "I've seen you, Officer Feng!"

"Is there a problem with your carriage?" asked Feng Wushuang.

"No!"

Feng Wushuang pressed her lips together, pondering for a moment before saying, "I don't know where the Fourth Miss is planning to go for the sightseeing. My mother and I are also out for the first time and don't know where to head!"

"Is the old madam also inside the carriage?"

"Yes!"

Recalling the time Feng Wushuang gave up the private room, Yun Jinnian felt she should pay respects to the old lady.

So, she approached the carriage and cursewed slightly, "Yun Residence's Jinnian pays respects to Old Madam Feng!"

The curtain of the carriage was lifted, and a woman stepped out first, carefully assisting an elderly lady to descend.

The moment the old lady laid eyes on Yun Jinnian, her eyes reddened.

"Benefactor!"

She stumbled out of the carriage and, grasping Yun Jinnian's hand, expressed her overwhelming excitement, "Benefactor, it really is you! I thought I'd never find you in this lifetime. When Wushuang said he had found our benefactor, I didn't believe him, but to think it really is you!"

"..."

Yun Jinnian was puzzled.

How had she become the Feng Family's benefactor?

"Does the benefactor not remember? That year, in front of Xufuji, the benefactor gave two hundred taels of silver to a beggar—that beggar was my son and me!" Old Madam Feng said, tears streaming down her face.

After understanding the situation, Yun Jinnian was also greatly surprised.

"It was Officer Feng and the old madam that day?"

This...

In her previous life, she remembered there was no top scholar named Feng Wushuang, nor had she been at Xufuji's entrance, let alone assisted any beggars.

Could it be that her rebirth had also altered many things...

Like the Princess of the state, Nuandong, Feng Wushuang, her second sister, the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence, and most importantly, her fate!

"Yes, it was us. At that time, my son and I were utterly destitute. If not for the benefactor's help, we wouldn't be where we are today!" Old Madam Feng spoke and was about to kneel in gratitude to Yun Jinnian.

Yun Jinnian hurriedly grasped her firmly, Mrs. Yuan and Ru Yue also quickly came forward to help, barely managing to hold Old Madam Feng upright.

On the side, more carriages had stopped to watch the commotion.

Whispers abounded, some even thought Yun Jinnian had wronged someone, leading the old madam to kneel and apologize.

Yun Jinnian's face flushed with embarrassment, and she said urgently to Feng Wushuang, "Officer Feng, please persuade the old madam. There was no great effort on my part that day, it's truly unnecessary for her to do this!"

At that time, two hundred taels of silver truly meant nothing much.

She was happy to have been able to help Feng Wushuang, never expecting any reward in return.

Moreover, she dared not associate the beggar-like mother and son with the current top scholar of the realm and the future full of promise that awaited Feng Wushuang.

Feng Wushuang, seeing the helpless look on Yun Jinnian's face, felt utterly powerless but hurried forward to support his mother, "Mother, mother, please don't cry. Get on the carriage first. If you have anything to say, why don't we invite the Fourth Miss onto the carriage and you can talk there at your leisure?"