

Indulgence 631

Chapter 631: Rising Fame

Madam Feng wept and nodded her head.

Feng Wushuang hurriedly helped her elderly mother into the carriage, then apologized profusely to Yun Jinnian with a bow, "Fourth Miss, Mother has been speaking of you for some time, could you please accompany her and talk for a while?"

Yun Jinnian nodded slightly.

Mrs. Yuan then supported herself into the carriage as well.

Feng Wushuang, seeing this, breathed a sigh of relief and turned to the onlookers with a fist in palm salute, "Everyone, I'm really sorry for obstructing your way. My apologies, truly sorry!"

"Oh, isn't that Lord Feng? What has happened to you?" someone recognized Feng Wushuang and eagerly inquired, also taking the opportunity to establish a connection.

"I do not wish to conceal from everyone here that when my mother and I first came to the Capital City to sit for the examinations, my mother fell ill on the way, and we had used up all our provisions. We sold everything we had to treat her illness, and by the time we arrived at the Capital, we were utterly destitute and reduced to begging. That day, outside the Xufuji Store, we saw the young lady of the Fourth Miss's family and had the audacity to beg, and the Fourth Miss, being kind-hearted, gave us two hundred taels of silver. It was with this silver that I was able to rent a room, hire a doctor, buy medicinal herbs for my mother's treatment, and also purchase the Four Treasures of the Study to sell my paintings for silver. Over the past year, I have been searching for the Fourth Miss to repay the kindness of that day, and fortunately, heaven favors the diligent, and I finally found her!"

As Feng Wushuang spoke, he couldn't help but get teary-eyed.

"Moreover, my mother thinks of her every day. That day, I recognized the Fourth Miss outside Huiquan Tower but did not dare to acknowledge her rashly, so I went home to inform my mother, hoping for a proper solution. But unexpectedly, today I saw the Fourth Miss by chance, and my mother recognized her, which led to this situation. I've made a joke in front of everyone," he said.

As Feng Wushuang spoke, he saluted again with a bow.

The crowd also listened with tears brimming in their eyes, touched by the account, praising the Fourth Miss Yun as having the heart of a bodhisattva.

And she was certainly generous.

She had given two hundred taels of silver to a beggar without hesitation.

Others then mentioned the incident at Qiaoshi Pavilion, and suddenly everyone knew that the Yun Fourth Miss truly had a kind heart and also extraordinary medical skills - she had even given away a Tian Mountain Snow Lotus worth a fortune to save a stranger.

In light of this, the two hundred taels of silver really didn't seem like much at all.

The only dramatic aspect was that she had coincidentally assisted the current top scholar, Feng Wushuang.

Truly discerning eyes!

Having watched the excitement, the crowd then said their farewells with a fist in palm salute.

But there was a carriage stopped to the side, and a man stepped forward, bowing to Feng Wushuang, "Lord Feng!"

"Lord Xu!"

This Lord Xu was the third master of the Xu Family, Xu Sheng, the husband of the third madam of the Xu Family.

Xu Sheng saluted and called into the carriage, "Fourth Miss of the Yun Residence!"

As it turned out, the Xu Family and the Yun Family were related by marriage, so it was fitting for Yun Jinnian to address Xu Xinmo as 'Third Uncle'.

Yun Jinnian, inside the carriage, found it awkward as the elderly Madam Feng kept weeping, and she wasn't very good at consoling people.

When she heard someone calling her, she immediately felt relieved.

Lifting the carriage curtain, she looked at Xu Sheng puzzled, "You called for me?"

"You don't recognize me, Fourth Miss Yun?" Xu Sheng asked.

Yun Jinnian shook her head.

"I am the third master of the Xu Family, Xinmo's Third Uncle!"

The Xu Family...

Yun Jinnian quickly realized and hurriedly got down from the carriage, bowing to Xu Sheng, "Jinnian greets Third Uncle!"

Xu Sheng nodded.

This Fourth Miss Yun was indeed more sensible than Xinmo by quite a bit.

"Fourth girl, I've heard that your medical skills are exceptional?" Xu Sheng inquired, his voice betraying an urgent desperation.

"I know a bit," Yun Jinnian replied modestly.

Xu Sheng took a deep breath, unable to care about decorum, and hurriedly said, "It's like this, my wife had complications with her pregnancy, and the messenger said that there is a fear we cannot save both mother and child..."

As Xu Sheng spoke, tears fell from a man's eyes.

His voice also trembled intensely.

Yun Jinnian quickly asked, "Are there any other symptoms?"

"The messenger said that she's bleeding non-stop..."

Chapter 632: Willing to Make a Move

Blood flowed ceaselessly, and the most urgent task was to stop the bleeding.

However, ordinary imperial physicians and doctors dared not take the risk and depart from conventional methods.

A single misstep could indeed cost two lives.

Yun Jinnian fell into brief contemplation before speaking, "Third Uncle, if you trust me, may I accompany you to your home?"

"Good, good, good!"

Xu Sheng held an official position in court and knew a bit about Yun Jinnian's achievements, including reviving the Emperor and curing Prince Rui and Prince Yanjun of severe poison.

Therefore, when he heard about Miss Fourth Young Lady of the Yun Residence earlier among the crowd, he paid attention and confirmed it was indeed Yun Jinnian, the Fourth Young Miss of the Yun Residence, before he approached so abruptly.

Little did he expect that Yun Jinnian would be even more sensible and courteous than he had imagined.

It was great that Yun Jinnian was willing to accompany him.

"Third Uncle, please wait a moment. I was climbing the mountain with my three younger sisters; I will arrange for their care and join you shortly to proceed to the Xu Residence!" Yun Jinnian nodded slightly and walked over to Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingqing, and Yun Qingzhi, noticing their faces brimming with excitement.

She couldn't help but smile at their mix of pride and excitement, their eyes less calculating and cold, more filled with respect.

"I need to make a trip to the Xu Family. Now, there are two options: continue to the Little City Mountain or return to the Yun Residence!"

The three sisters Yun Zuomo looked at each other, and Yun Zuomo quietly asked, "Fourth Sister, what do you think we should do?"

"If I tell you what to do, will you do it?" asked Yun Jinnian, not quite believing them.

Yun Zuomo nodded vigorously.

Yun Qingzhi and Yun Qingqing also nodded in agreement.

"If you are willing to go to Little City Mountain, someone will protect you. No matter what happens, you must not separate. Stick close to Nurse, Ru Yue, Jiayu, and especially not leave Hongdou, Hongxiu, and Hongye. Can you do that?"

Going was inevitable, as Mrs. He dared to calculate against her, and she had to teach Mrs. He a lesson.

Yun Zuomo nodded energetically again.

This was an opportunity to prove herself, and perhaps the only chance to get closer to Yun Jinnian.

She didn't want to miss it.

Yun Qingzhi and Yun Qingqing also nodded.

With a father who did not love them, a grandmother who was partial, an aunt who was powerless, a first mother with a heart like scorpions, and a legitimate mother who ignored them, all they could do now was to cling to Yun Jinnian, their legitimate sister.

Especially since Yun Jinnian's prospects looked bright.

If Yun Jinnian was willing to take care of them, just a little help from her would be better than them struggling and injuring themselves.

Yun Jinnian looked at them and couldn't help feeling sorrowful.

She reached out and gently touched Yun Zuomo's head, "I will remember this!"

Yun Zuomo's eyes instantly reddened, and tears began to fall.

Yun Jinnian turned away, not looking at Yun Zuomo crying.

Taking a deep breath, she approached Feng Wushuang, "Sir Feng!"

"What are your orders, Fourth Young Miss?" Feng Wushuang asked, slightly bowing, his mind already formulating ideas.

"Sir Feng, I need to make a trip to the Xu Family. My three sisters rarely go out, so I'd trouble you to accompany them to Little City Mountain and ensure their safe return to the Yun Residence. Is that alright?"

"Sure, it happens that my mother will also be less bored along the way, with the Fourth Young Miss and her three sisters for company, she will likely not feel lonely!"

Yun Jinnian bowed to Feng Wushuang.

She boarded the carriage with Henuan provided by Xu Sheng.

As Xu Sheng was a gentleman, he could not ride inside and instead sat at the front of the carriage.

The carriage sped all the way, kicking up dust in abundance.

Inside the carriage, Yun Jinnian gripped the armrest tightly, and as Henuan wanted to suggest slowing down, Yun Jinnian shook her head slightly.

The life of Mrs. Xu hung by a thread, and it was inevitable for Mr. Xu to feel anxious.

She only hoped that she could truly save Mrs. Xu and her child, accumulate blessings for Momo, and give them a chance to continue their bond...

Chapter 633: Using Their Own Way

Because of Yun Jinnian's relationship, Mrs. Feng was very fond of Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingzhi, and Yun Qingqing and was aware of the customs of Capital City, where elders typically give gifts when meeting their juniors, so Mrs. Feng prepared about fifty purses, and if she encountered the family members of Feng's colleagues, she would give out one.

The purses were embroidered by the maids in the residence, and inside was a pair of exquisite pearl earrings from Qiaoshi Pavilion.

A hundred pearls, round and dazzling, were a gift from a subordinate to Feng Wushuang.

However, Feng Wushuang had taken them to Qiaoshi Pavilion to have them made into earrings, a pair worth two hundred taels of silver.

They made for a generous gift that was also socially appropriate, indeed, very good.

But what Feng Wushuang actually thought, only he himself knew.

Mrs. Feng enthusiastically chatted for a while and then began to inquire about Yun Jinnian's preferences.

That stumped Yun Zuomo and the others.

They hadn't interacted much with Yun Jinnian, so how could they know what he liked?

They had no choice but to stiffly claim that Yun Jinnian liked reading, painting, and medical skills.

"And food?"

"Eldest sister likes light food!"

As Yun Zuomo spoke, she added, "She also likes Xufuji's pastries!"

Mrs. Feng made a mental note, "In the future, when you come to Feng Residence with your fourth sister, I will have Wushuang invite a pastry chef from Xufuji to make them in the residence!"

"Yes!"

The three sisters respectfully responded.

It was the first time they felt the wonderful sensation of being treated kindly and liked.

But they also understood the reason for this kind treatment.

The trip to the Little City Mountain wasn't far.

By the time Feng Wushuang and his entourage arrived, there were already many commoners and official families present.

The men immediately greeted Feng Wushuang warmly as he arrived.

The ladies were very enthusiastic towards Mrs. Feng and also towards Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingzhi, and Yun Qingqing who came with her.

In the course of interactions, the three sisters received quite a few gifts,

They remembered Yun Jinnian's words and did not leave Mrs. Feng's side for a moment, even when going to the restroom, they went together, accompanied by Mrs. Yuan and others, never alone.

She Hong and his group had waited for a long time, but Yun Jinnian still hadn't come.

She Hong was furious, "Go find out if the fourth miss of the Yun Family has come or not!"

The servant immediately scurried off and soon came back drenched in sweat, "Young master, that fourth Miss Yun indeed came, but she returned to Capital City with the third master of the Xu Family due to some matter halfway, leaving only the three daughters from the second branch of Yun Residence!"

"Are they good-looking?"

The servant slightly shook his head, "They can be considered delicate at best, skinny and small, they haven't fully grown yet!"

"Pah, unlucky!"

She Hong spat in disgust.

It was an entirely wasted trip, and he was extremely displeased.

"Let's go, back to Capital City!"

The servant hurriedly answered and went to steer the carriage back to Capital City.

But, they didn't expect to be attacked by mountain bandits en route; the bandits, all masked and highly skilled in martial arts, robbed anyone they saw and killed anyone who resisted.

Apart from She Hong, all of She Hong's entourage died, and She Hong himself was seriously injured, barely alive...

The carriage arrived at Xu Residence

Xu Sheng immediately got down from the carriage and politely asked Yun Jinnian to alight.

Seeing that Yun Jinnian's complexion was not good, and her hairpin was disheveled, he immediately understood, "Fourth Miss..."

Yun Jinnian slightly shook her head, "Uncle Xu, I'm fine!"

She appreciated Xu Sheng's urgency; had he not been in a hurry, she would have thought less of him.

"I really am sorry, I was a bit too anxious, I hope the fourth Miss will forgive me!" Xu Sheng said, bowing to Yun Jinnian with clenched fists.

Yun Jinnian hurriedly bowed in return, "Uncle, let's go inside first, shall we?"

Chapter 634: Calm and Composed

Saving a life is as urgent as putting out a fire.

Xu Sheng hurriedly led Yun Jinnian into the Xu Residence.

He saw several Imperial Physicians shaking their heads as they came out. Upon seeing Xu Sheng, they expressed their apologies with deep regret, "Master Xu, you should go in and see your wife for the last time!"

Xu Sheng staggered a few steps, calling out, "Susu..."

And he dashed away.

When the Imperial Physicians spotted Yun Jinnian, they were taken aback for a moment, and then quickly bowed, "Miss Yun Jinnian?"

"Uncle Xu invited me to come and have a look!"

"Then please, Miss Yun Jinnian!"

Yun Jinnian nodded and had the servant lead her to Lady Xu's courtyard.

Seeing this, the Imperial Physicians did not leave either.

After all, Yun Jinnian's medical skills were indeed superior to theirs, and they wanted to see for themselves whether Yun Jinnian could truly perform a miracle and bring Lady Xu back from death's door, as she was believed to be beyond saving.

When Yun Jinnian followed the servant to Lady Xu's courtyard, the yard was filled with people, who appeared to be masters of the house, judging by their attire. The sound of Xu Sheng's anguished crying could be heard from inside the room.

Along with restrained sobs.

"Excuse me, please make way!"

Yun Jinnian's voice was calm and gentle, yet it commanded the attention of everyone present.

"And you are?"

"Yun Jinnian of the Yun Residence at your service. I've been invited by Uncle Xu to take a look at Lady Xu!"

Yun Jinnian of the Yun Residence?

"Miss Yun Jinnian?" someone quietly exclaimed.

Yun Jinnian nodded, "Yes!"

Someone then said, "It's the same Miss Yun Jinnian who saved someone at Qiaoshi Pavilion, resolved the severe poisoning of Prince Rui and Prince Yanjun, and even went to the palace to cure the Emperor's poisoning!"

As a result, Yun Jinnian was ushered to the entrance of the birthing room.

An elderly woman with white hair bowed to Yun Jinnian, "Miss Yun Jinnian, I beg you, please save Susu at all costs!"

Yun Jinnian looked at the old lady, taken aback.

Uncle Xu called her 'fourth girl', but this old lady addressed her with formal respect as Miss Yun Jinnian, which was really peculiar.

"I will do my best!"

She stepped into the birthing room.

Inside the birthing room, the stench of blood was overwhelming, the room dark and heavy, making it hard to breathe. There was even a charcoal brazier in the corner.

"Open the windows, and move the charcoal braizer out!" Yun Jinnian commanded calmly.

"But..." the midwife began to explain.

Yun Jinnian cut her off coldly, "But what? Have you not noticed the difficulty breathing? Even you, a healthy person, struggle to breathe, let alone Lady Xu!" She looked at the women standing by aimlessly, "What are you waiting for? Get moving!"

The women glanced at each other, but quickly removed the charcoal brazier and opened the windows.

The rush of fresh air into the room immediately made breathing much easier, and the midwife felt a significant relief.

Her eyes on Yun Jinnian were now decidedly mixed.

Yun Jinnian stepped forward as Xu Sheng tightly held Lady Xu's hand, sobbing uncontrollably. Lady Xu's pupils were dilating, and her voice was so faint it seemed she was uttering her last words. Yun Jinnian quickly took out a Blood Lotus Elixir and fed it to Lady Xu, "Bring some warm water!"

The serving woman hesitated, then realized that Yun Jinnian needed warm water to help Lady Xu swallow the elixir.

She hurriedly brought warm water.

"Help Lady Xu sit up and drink this!" Yun Jinnian ordered, then turned to Xu Sheng, "Uncle Xu, please wait outside for now, and help me prepare silver needles, as well as clean damp towels, pen, ink, and paper, as I will need to write a prescription later!"

Upon hearing this, Xu Sheng looked at Yun Jinnian, "Fourth girl, I beg you..." Xu Sheng said, standing up and bowing to Yun Jinnian.

"I will do my best!"

She could not guarantee that she would definitely be able to save the person's life.

Xu Sheng was at a loss for words, and ultimately said nothing more, leaving to make the arrangements.

Yun Jinnian pulled out a silk handkerchief from her sleeve and wiped her hands. Once the women had helped Lady Xu drink the warm water and lie down, Yun Jinnian sat beside the bed to take Lady Xu's pulse.

Chapter 635: Saved

The pulse is weak.

The most important issue is that the child in the womb has already passed away.

Yun Jinnian looked at the midwife, "Tell me, how can Lady Xu's child be safely delivered?"

"This servant, this servant..." the midwife stuttered.

"Lady Xu's child has lost its heartbeat and breath. Next, I will stop Lady Xu's bleeding. You have the time it takes an incense stick to burn, and no matter what you have to do, you must deliver the child!"

The midwife swallowed hard, "This servant, this servant will try her best!"

The silver needles were prepared and brought in, and Yun Jinnian wiped his hands with a damp cloth before starting to administer the needles to Lady Xu.

Soon the bleeding stopped.

The midwife was utterly shocked.

The imperial physicians before had all shaken their heads and sighed.

Because the bleeding could not be stopped, even if Lady Xu delivered the child, she would die of hemorrhage.

Yet the girl before her, so young in age, had such formidable medical skills?

Lady Xu, who was previously faltering, also seemed to gain some strength.

"Lady Xu, push hard!" the midwife encouraged Lady Xu from the side.

Buckets of hot water were carried into the delivery room. Buckets of bloody water were taken out.

As the sun set and dusk fell, the midwife finally came out of the room, "Lady, Master, Lady Xu is safe, but the child..."

Upon hearing this, Lady Xu's mother-in-law breathed a sigh of relief and looked at Lady Xu, "You go have a look!"

Lady Xu nodded and entered the delivery room.

The child was wrapped in swaddling clothes. Two sets of swaddling clothes, two children, already without breath.

Lady Xu uncovered the swaddling clothes; both children were boys, one child was missing hands, the other lacked a foot.

"Ah..."

Lady Xu was startled.

"How could this be?" Lady Xu asked in a hurry.

Yun Jinnian tidied up a bit before slowly approaching Lady Xu, "Have someone bury these two children."

"Are they, are they ominous?" Lady Xu asked.

Yun Jinnian shook his head, "No, they are not ominous beings; they are like all children in the world, the flesh and blood of their parents, the crystallization of love, only because their parents are first cousins, and their blood relationship is too close, that's why they were born with defects!"

Yun Jinnian remembered what Zhu Yan had said about the offspring of close relatives often having problems.

Lady Xu looked at Yun Jinnian.

She did not like the Yun Family, not even Yun Hui, but she was beginning to like Yun Jinnian a little.

"Have a good talk with the old lady later!"

Yun Jinnian nodded slightly.

Lady Xu had been cleaned up and moved to another room.

Yun Jinnian left the delivery room. The old Lady Xu saw the exhausted Yun Jinnian, who bowed slightly, "Lady, Jinnian is very sorry!"

"No, why apologize? You saved Lady Xu and the child in her womb!"

Yun Jinnian was astonished.

Lady Xu's child clearly...

"Susu has longed for a child all her life. If she wakes up to find the child gone, she may not be able to bear it, I am her mother-in-law, and her aunt..." Lady Xu paused, "So Yun Jinnian, one day you may have to come again, to prove that my poor daughter-in-law truly had a healthy and lovely child!"

A ruse...

Yun Jinnian hesitated for a moment before nodding slightly.

"Lady Xu is no longer in danger of losing her life, I will take my leave first!" said Yun Jinnian, bowing slightly.

After a moment of silence, the old Lady Xu called for the butler to escort Yun Jinnian out. At the gates of the Xu Residence, Uncle Cheng immediately came to meet her.

"Miss!"

Yun Jinnian spoke a few words to the butler of the Xu Residence, and then rode in Uncle Cheng's carriage back to the Yun Residence.

Chapter 636: The Emperor's Test

In the carriage

Hemei spoke about the affairs of the She Family.

"She Hong was injured by bandits when he returned to the Capital City?" Yun Jinnian asked.

"Yes, the Jingzhao Prefecture and the Imperial Guards were all mobilized. They robbed quite a few commoners along the way and injured many as well, but none suffered as tragically as the She Family!"

Yun Jinnian frowned slightly, "Was it our people?"

"No, after I found out, I went back to the Han Family once. Elder Mu said it wasn't them!"

"That's strange then!"

Yun Jinnian murmured, feeling quite puzzled.

But she couldn't quite pinpoint what was odd.

Upon returning to Niannian Garden, Mrs. Yuan immediately pulled Yun Jinnian into the parlor, "Miss, your cousin has come back and threw quite the fit; Daidai was beaten so terribly!"

"Do you know why?" Yun Jinnian asked.

She somewhat suspected it was not without connection to Xu Xinmo's miscarriage.

"It is said that the cousin was forcibly sent back by the Xu Family and that from now on, she doesn't need to return to the Xu Family. The Lady and the Old Madame didn't come back either!"

Yun Jinnian nodded, not wishing to bother with Xu Xinmo's affairs, "Are those three obedient?"

"Obedient, they've behaved very properly all the way!"

Yun Jinnian hummed faintly and only after bathing and changing, eating with her hair down, did she allow Hemei and Henuan to start preparing to enter the Imperial Palace.

With the Emperor's token, even if it's later, she could still enter the palace.

After getting ready, she left the Yun Residence. Uncle Cheng was already waiting for a moment. Upon reaching the entrance of the Imperial Palace, Eunuch Hai immediately came to greet her, "Fourth Miss is back in the palace!"

"Eunuch Hai, have you been waiting long?"

"Just arrived. The Emperor was afraid that Fourth Miss might be scared on your first time entering the palace alone, so he sent me to wait here!"

"Is His Majesty well today?"

"Very well indeed!"

"That's good, then let's head to Yangxin Hall first!"

After Yun Jinnian finished speaking, she boarded her palanquin and headed to Yangxin Hall.

The Emperor's health had improved a lot, and the poison from the poisonous insect was almost completely dealt with. In the later stages, it only needed to be slowly healed.

When receiving acupuncture, it wouldn't hurt as much as it did during the previous few times.

"Fourth girl, did you also go to the small city mountain today?"

"No, on the way I ran into the third master of the Xu Residence. I learned about the difficult labor of Mrs. Xu, so I visited the Xu Family. It turned out that the wet nurse had accompanied my younger sisters there!"

Yun Jinnian spoke softly.

"Was the child delivered smoothly?"

"Although the child was delivered, it was stillborn. The Old Madame being kind, said that Mrs. Xu and her child were safe, so it seems likely she will adopt a child from somewhere else to bring back!"

The Emperor nodded; that was honest of her.

He had already received news of what Yun Jinnian had done after leaving the palace.

He had thought that Yun Jinnian would lie, but she ended up speaking the truth.

"Do you know about the matter of the bandit robbery later on?"

"I know some of it. When I was returning to the Yun Residence, the wet nurse told me about it!"

Seeing Yun Jinnian not mentioning the affair with Feng Wushuang, the Emperor didn't ask.

He thought to himself, if Yun Jinnian didn't marry another, she could perhaps be betrothed to Feng Wushuang.

He intended to place great trust in Feng Wushuang. Although the Yun Family was not that impressive, the Han Family was indeed powerful.

The least the Emperor wanted was for Yun Jinnian to marry Chu Yu or to be sent to the residence of the Princess of the State of Zhen.

Even the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence was not an option.

"Jinnian girl!"

"This subject is here!"

"My health is indeed improving day by day, and the poison from the poisonous insect is mostly resolved. After some more recuperation, I will be fully recovered. What reward would you like to ask for?" the Emperor inquired, looking meaningfully at Yun Jinnian.

After thinking for a bit, Yun Jinnian responded, "Thunder and rain are all Your Majesty's grace. Whatever reward Your Majesty bestows, this subject will accept!"

"Hehe..."

The Emperor laughed, "Is there nothing you want?"

"There is, but what this subject desires is improper by the rites, so it's best left unsaid!"

Chapter 637: Feeling Somewhat Wronged

The Emperor perked up upon hearing this.

"Tell me, perhaps I will allow it!"

Yun Jinnian lifted her gaze towards the Emperor, "Your Majesty isn't deceiving your subject's daughter?"

"A ruler doesn't make jokes, moreover, you haven't said what you seek. How can I grant it without knowing?"

Saying so, the Emperor carefully took a sip from his teacup.

Yun Jinnian stood up and then knelt down, "Your Majesty, what your subject's daughter seeks is to be able to decide her own marriage matters in the future!"

"Deciding your own marriage matters?"

"Yes, your subject's daughter hopes to have a say in her own marital affairs in the future. I do not wish to marry someone who doesn't delight my heart, or whom I do not delight. Someone who would marry me solely because Your Majesty decrees it, or because of parental orders, compelled to marry, as I am compelled to wed!"

The Emperor was silent.

Only then did Yun Jinnian continue, "Your subject's daughter doesn't remember what life was like when she was young, yet she remembers those years when there were no parents by her side, when she was subjected to all kinds of hardships at the Yun Residence, after which, even when parents were around, there were more departures than reunions. They do not understand my preferences, just as I wish to show filial respect yet do not know theirs. Your Majesty, you are a wise ruler, you will grant your subject's daughter's request, correct?"

Yun Jinnian's words had several layers of meaning.

She was also reminding the Emperor that she had endured hardships at the Yun Residence, yet the Emperor had honored the elderly madam of the Yun Family.

And this was while she was out seeking an antidote for him.

Yun Jinnian didn't believe that the Emperor was unaware of the life she led at the Yun Residence.

The Emperor was silent.

After a moment, he finally said, "I grant your request; your future marriage will be for you to decide. No one, including myself, shall decide for you without your consent. Even if it's an imperial marriage, it will be with your agreement!"

"Thank you for Your Majesty's grace!"

Leaving Yangxin Hall, Yun Jinnian breathed a sigh of relief.

Back at Weiyang Palace, the Empress had already retired for the night, so Yun Jinnian returned to her own side hall.

Shaoyao, as attentive and polite as always, assisted Yun Jinnian in settling down for the night before leaving the main hall.

The night deepened.

Yun Jinnian couldn't sleep.

On the Double Ninth Festival, she hadn't seen her father, her mother, or her maternal grandfather, and had barely seen any relatives she cared about.

She hadn't tasted a single chrysanthemum cake, nor had she sipped any Chrysanthemum Wine.

Of those she cared for, how many felt the same yearning for her at this moment?

Anxiously returning home, yet her mother had gone to Huguo Temple.

Not a word left for her—did they assume she wouldn't return to the Yun Family? Or did they simply forget her?

"Meow..."

Yun Jinnian heard the sound of a cat, got up from bed, put on her shoes, casually draped a garment over herself, and slowly opened the door.

"Meow..."

The sound seemed to be coming from a corner of a wall.

The moonlight was clear this night, and Yun Jinnian didn't go back for a lantern, simply following the sound at a leisurely pace.

"Meow!"

A tiny kitten, so small, inside a basket.

Yun Jinnian looked left and right but saw no one.

However, she knew that this kitten definitely had not come here on its own—it must have been deliberately placed here by someone.

Yun Jinnian had intended to ignore it, to let it fend for itself, but then felt it was truly adorable. After hesitating for a moment, she picked up the basket and returned to her room.

Just as she set the kitten down on the table, she noticed a faint scent of ambergris. Looking at the small cat on the table, she began to smile.

She couldn't describe her feelings, only sensing a bit of grievance, yet it also didn't seem just that.

There was definite joy.

An unfamiliar feeling.

Turning her head towards the sleeping quarters, a head quietly peeked out, and as their eyes met, she caught him red-handed.

"To think I've been discovered!" said Chu Yu slowly as he came out, hands clasped behind his back.

Chapter 638: Beautiful Time and Scenery

She walked leisurely towards Yun Jinnian.

"Does the kitten like it?"

Yun Jinnian nodded, "I do!"

Chu Yu smiled, revealing his white teeth, then presented a bunch of wildflowers, "These are for you, too!"

Yun Jinnian reached out to take them.

"I picked them from the mountains of the small town!"

Yun Jinnian immediately understood that Chu Yu had done something concerning the She Family, but wasn't sure, "That She Family..."

"I was the one who arranged it!"

How dare they covet Chu Yu's woman, they must be feeling bold.

"..."

Yun Jinnian fell silent.

"That good-for-nothing, he was never worth a damn. It's just as well he's gone; now let's see what he can use to harm innocent people!"

"..."

Yun Jinnian was silent again.

Her heart felt strangely full, as if stuffed with sour and unsettling emotions.

Suddenly, she threw herself into Chu Yu's arms, holding him tightly without saying a word.

When a beauty throws herself into your arms, it's a wonderful feeling. Chu Yu was stunned for a moment before he joyfully embraced Yun Jinnian, "What's wrong?"

Yun Jinnian shook her head.

Her heart was happy, but she didn't know how to express it,

"I also brought Chrysanthemum Wine, chrysanthemum cakes, and a few dishes made with chrysanthemums. The chrysanthemum chicken tastes quite good. How about we eat first? It will get cold later!"

Though it was wonderful to have the beauty in his arms,

Chu Yu knew that Yun Jinnian had a rough day.

And she had been wronged!

Otherwise, she wouldn't have gone through the trouble to get a milk-fed kitten.

Yun Jinnian nodded slightly, sat down on a stool, and held the kitten in her arms, "Have you washed it?"

"I have!"

It even scratched him!

As Chu Yu spoke, he took out the dishes from the food box and placed them on the table.

The plates were small, the portions meager.

There were two chrysanthemum cakes, the bottle of Chrysanthemum Wine was also small, and even the bowl for the chicken soup was tiny.

Yet inexplicably, Yun Jinnian felt content.

Chu Yu handed the chopsticks to Yun Jinnian, "Try them!"

Yun Jinnian took the chopsticks and placed them on the table, "Shouldn't we start with the Chrysanthemum Wine first?"

"Oh, right, the Chrysanthemum Wine first!"

Chu Yu poured the wine, both raised their cups, clinked them gently, exchanged smiles, drank the Chrysanthemum Wine, and thus celebrated the Double Ninth Festival together.

Yun Jinnian's eyes felt sore, but she lowered her head without shedding any tears.

She pursed her lips, picked up the chopsticks, and began to eat the chrysanthemum cakes slowly, while Chu Yu also picked up a piece with his chopsticks to eat.

The two ate in silence, yet their understanding of each other was unmistakable.

After they finished everything on the table, Chu Yu put away the dishes into the food box.

"How's your cousin doing?" asked Yun Jinnian.

"Much better, he will secretly leave the city in a few days. He said he wants to find a place to heal, and I didn't feel it was right to keep him!" Chu Yu said, not without a sigh.

Chu Xinchun was a good soldier and a fine general.

But to end up in such a state...

"The Princess isn't his birth mother, right? Do you think it could be..." Yun Jinnian started to say but then stopped.

Chu Yu suddenly stood up, "What are you suggesting?"

Those directly involved can be too close to see clearly. Not just Chu Xinchun, even he hadn't suspected the Princess.

"I'm just speculating wildly!"

Yun Jinnian would never reveal that in her past life, it turned out that it indeed was the Princess who acted.

But by mentioning it now, she hoped it would be of some use to Chu Yu.

After a moment of silence, Chu Yu said, "Jinnian, you should rest early. I have to leave the palace now, and as for this cat, just feed it some cow's or sheep's milk. Wait a few days before feeding it fish!"

Having said that, Chu Yu picked up the food box and left.

Happy to have been of help to Chu Yu, Yun Jinnian softly stroked the kitten's head as she heard it purr contentedly, quietly, yet rhythmically.

"Why hasn't the fourth miss gone to bed yet?"

Chapter 639: True and False

Yun Jinnian turned around upon hearing this and looked at Shaoyao with a slight smile, "Not yet, Sister Shaoyao, have you not slept either?"

"To answer the Fourth Miss, I had already gone to sleep, but I woke up and saw that the light was still on in your quarters and the door was open, so I came to check!" Shaoyao said.

She took a deep breath.

The air carried the scent of alcohol, dishes, and a faint aroma of chrysanthemums.

Then she saw that Yun Jinnian was holding a cat in her arms, which took her aback for a moment, but she didn't voice her surprise.

"Oh, then you go back to sleep, I will sit up a little longer!" Yun Jinnian said lightly, caressing the kitten in her arms.

"Fourth Miss, is that a cat in your arms?" Shaoyao asked tentatively.

"Yes, it is!"

"Was it given by someone else, or did you find it in the palace?"

Shaoyao remembered that when Yun Jinnian had entered the palace, she had not brought a cat with her.

"It was given by someone else!" Yun Jinnian said, looking at Shaoyao, "However, I hope Sister Shaoyao can help me conceal it and say the cat ran into Weiyang Palace on its own, and I felt pity for it and decided to take it in. Would you be willing to do that, Sister Shaoyao?!"

"If the Fourth Miss says the cat was found, then it was found!"

Shaoyao said and bowed slightly.

The person who could send a cat into Weiyang Palace without anyone noticing must either have impressive martial arts skills, or there were not many Hidden Guards in this section of the palace.

If a fuss was made, the Empress too would be questioned.

Yun Jinnian laughed softly, "Sister Shaoyao seems anxious, the cat actually ran to the corner of Weiyang Palace wall on its own, and I picked it up after hearing its cries. But, I do need to trouble Sister Shaoyao to find out if the cat has an owner!"

Truth and lies, lies interwoven with truth.

Shaoyao was somewhat unsure whether the cat was really picked up or given as a gift.

However, she guessed it was the latter.

But if Yun Jinnian says it was found, then it was found.

Yet, the defense of this section of the palace was a concern, and she would have to speak to the Empress about possibly adding more personnel, right?

"Yes, the Fourth Miss should rest early, this servant will take her leave!"

Shaoyao said, then stepped out of the reception room, closing the door behind her.

Yun Jinnian sat for a while, then put the cat in the basket, washed her hands, and went to bed.

Dawn was breaking.

Yun Jinnian woke to a stinky smell, sniffed, and saw the little kitten had climbed out of the basket and pooped in a corner, scratching at the floor with its paws.

She had never raised cats or dogs before, not even the Spiritual Poisonous Insect which only needed a few drops of blood every other day and never seemed to poop or pee.

She pinched her nose, got out of bed, and opened the door, "Hemei, Henuan..."

"Miss?"

"The cat pooped!"

Hemei and Henuan were taken aback.

"A cat?"

They entered the reception room and searched around, then went into the bedroom and saw a snow-white kitten digging on the ground, with a cat turd beside it.

"Wow, where did this cat come from?"

Hemei and Henuan, who had never raised animals, were very curious and their hearts softened.

Cradling the cat, they stepped out of the room, leaving the cat poop unattended.

Fortunately, one of the Palace Maids in the side hall had raised a cat before and brought over a basin with some ash to clean up the poop and placed it in a corner.

She held the cat over to it, let it sniff around, and then set it down on the floor.

"Fourth Miss, if you call it now, it will come to this basin to do its business next time!"

"Is it that smart?" Yun Jinnian asked.

"Yes, indeed, it has a very keen sense of smell!"

After having breakfast, when Yun Jinnian went to pay respects to the Empress, the Empress asked, "I heard you found a cat?"

"Yes, a snow-white kitten!"

"In this imperial harem, there indeed are quite a few cats, but this one's fortune is good!"

The other cats were only there to catch mice, and their food would not be as fine as what Yun Jinnian's cat was getting, not to mention having someone to take care of it.

"Perhaps it's fate!"

Chapter 640: Past Events

The Empress smiled, "That's true, everything in the world can indeed be explained by fate!"

It's just a matter of good or ill fortune.

The Empress stood up, "Let's go, we shall head to Yangxin Hall to take the Emperor's pulse!"

"Understood!"

The Empress could feel it, after returning from their trip outside the palace, Yun Jinnian had subtly changed. It wasn't obvious, but there were still some traces.

Arriving at Yangxin Hall, they took the Emperor's pulse.

After a while, Yun Jinnian said, "Your Majesty, there's no need for medicinal baths anymore, just acupuncture and oral medication will suffice!"

"Hmm!"

The Emperor nodded slightly.

He hadn't expected that despite Yun Jinnian's young age, his medical skills were so impressive.

Not to mention, he could feel his body gradually getting better, and there was no longer any inexplicable urge related to matters of men and women.

After administering acupuncture to the Emperor, Yun Jinnian wrote a new prescription. Once the Emperor had taken his medicine, Yun Jinnian and the Empress exited Yangxin Hall together.

Throughout the entire visit, the Emperor and Empress spoke no more than ten sentences.

They had just returned to Weiyang Palace when Eunuch An from the Empress Dowager's palace came to invite them, "This servant pays respects to the Fourth Miss!"

Eunuch An smiled amiably.

Respectful and proper in every way.

"Eunuch An, there is no need for such formalities. How is your health?"

"Thanks to the Fourth Miss' concern, this servant is feeling much better!" Eunuch An replied with a smile.

His nights were now pain-free, and he could sleep peacefully.

In the past, he used to wake up several times a night, but now he could sleep until dawn, and he felt much more spirited.

There was some distance from Weiyang Palace to Cining Palace, but the weather was agreeable that day, and Yun Jinnian decided to walk.

Along the way, Eunuch An introduced Yun Jinnian to the chrysanthemums in the Imperial Garden.

"The chrysanthemums are in full bloom right now. Once they fade, it will be time to plant peonies!"

"Peonies won't bloom until next year, why not plant some potted plum blossoms instead?" Yun Jinnian said indifferently.

Eunuch An paused, then replied joyfully, "Ah, what a great idea, Fourth Miss. Every year, the Empress Dowager feels the Imperial Garden is too desolate and lacks color. This year, this servant will definitely give her an unexpected delight!"

"Eunuch An is very thoughtful!"

Upon arriving at Cining Palace, Yun Jinnian paid her respects to the Empress Dowager, who greeted her with a smile, "Dispense with the formalities, come sit next to me!"

"Yes!"

Yun Jinnian approached the Empress Dowager and took a seat by her side.

The Empress Dowager then asked gently, "Are you accustomed to living in the palace?"

"Accustomed!"

"Good, good. I've been suffering from severe headaches these past few days. Why don't you examine me?"

"Yes!"

The Empress Dowager placed her wrist on the small table, and Yun Jinnian received a towel from Henuan to wipe his hands before taking the Empress Dowager's pulse.

His eyebrows knitted slightly.

"What's wrong?" the Empress Dowager asked gently.

"To be frank, Your Majesty, you have been poisoned!"

The Empress Dowager didn't seem surprised upon hearing this, "Can you treat it?"

"Yes," affirmed Yun Jinnian.

The poison that afflicted the Empress Dowager wasn't difficult to cure, as long as they had all the necessary herbs. Certainly, if they had some Snow Lotus Pills to act as a catalyst, it wouldn't be difficult at all.

"Then proceed with the detoxification for me," the Empress Dowager said, her gaze towards Yun Jinnian filled with mirth.

"Yes!"

Yun Jinnian wrote a prescription first, and Eunuch An took it to prepare the medication. While the medicine was being prepared, Yun Jinnian stayed in Cining Palace to chat with the Empress Dowager.

However, as the conversation went on, Yun Jinnian actually said very little; it was mostly the Empress Dowager who did the talking.

The Empress Dowager noticed this and asked, "Jinnian, my child..."

"Empress Dowager?"

"You don't seem to talk much!"

Yun Jinnian stood up, giving a slight curtsey to the Empress Dowager, "Empress Dowager, this servant used to be quite talkative as a child. But later, as I depended on others, I often brought disaster by speaking too much and thus refrained from speaking freely. After that, if I could remain silent, I would never speak unnecessarily. Gradually, I grew to dislike speaking!"