

Indulgence 651

Chapter 651: Jinnian Wakes Up

Mrs. Yuan knew why Yun Jinnian's anger flared.

For the first time, she started to hate Mrs. Han.

It had been nearly a month since she went to Huguo Temple and not only had she not come back, but she hadn't even sent a message.

Now that her young mistress had returned, as a newly titled Commandery Princess, yet without a single person beside her to rejoice, it would be strange indeed if she hadn't fallen ill with anger!

Yun Jinnian's illness had caused a fever that left her delirious. When she woke, she felt as if she were in a different era, and when she fell asleep again, she had the sensation of slipping into an endless slumber.

She only felt her forehead alternate between hot and cold, while her nanny hummed a soft tune beside her, holding her hand and feeding her medicine.

When she woke again, it was the morning of the fifth day of October.

"Miss has awoken!"

Yun Jinnian, looking at the disheveled and haggard Mrs. Yuan in front of her, tried to smile and said, "Nanny!"

Her voice was hoarse, and her throat extremely sore.

"Now that you're awake, rinse your mouth; the kitchen has cooked porridge. Have some light porridge in a bit!" Mrs. Yuan said softly.

The day Yun Jinnian returned, someone had been sent to inform the lady at the Huguo Temple, but now three days had passed without her return.

Mrs. Yuan didn't know how to break the news to Yun Jinnian.

"Uh-huh!"

Yun Jinnian responded with a sound.

Assisted by Mrs. Yuan and Ru Yue, she washed, changed into clean clothes, and ate a bowl of white porridge.

Yun Jinnian leaned against the headboard, "Nanny, I want to take a bath!"

"Miss, you've just woken up. Rest a while longer and have your bath in the afternoon," Mrs. Yuan advised.

"Alright!"

Yun Jinnian later still asked how many days she had been ill.

Mrs. Yuan answered each question.

Three days.

She had been in a stupor for three days, and her mother hadn't returned from Huguo Temple.

"Fifth sister, sixth sister, and seventh sister came three times, staying for a short while before leaving; eighth sister and ninth sister came twice, also only sitting for a moment before departing. The lady sent people to deliver medicinal herbs, but the old lady and my cousin made no indication. It's likely that the eldest brother and the second brother don't know, as they also didn't send anyone to inquire. However,

there are invitations from Zhuangyong Marquis Residence, Duan Residence, the residence of the Commandery Princess of Zhen Guo, Count Xuanping's Residence, and Elder Chen's Residence, inviting the miss to visit at her leisure!"

Yun Jinnian listened quietly, then after some thought, asked, "What about second sister?"

"Your second cousin has severed ties with the Yun Family and has not sent messages through the main entrance. However, she managed to send medicinal herbs and a letter through a doctor, explaining things a bit!"

"Second sister has a hard life; I understand her!" Yun Jinnian took a deep breath.

It was not easy for her second sister to escape the pit that was the Yun Residence, and then to lose their mother; she must be heartbroken.

Yun Jinnian took another deep breath.

She understood her sister's pain, and her sorrow, so she forgave her for not visiting the Yun Residence.

It was better she did not come, for fear she would only be mocked and ridiculed.

"Speaking of which, although your second cousin has lost her mother, her second cousin's husband treats her extremely well. According to the doctor, when she went to see him, her husband, Yeye, was with her!"

"That's good," Yun Jinnian said, taking a deep breath.

Lying in bed, she asked Mrs. Yuan to go wash up and rest.

Mrs. Yuan thought for a moment, "Alright, I will go now!"

But she called Jiayu to serve her.

Jiayu was talkative and enthusiastic, full of energy, which made her perfect company for Yun Jinnian.

Ru Yue entered the bedroom and said in a low voice, "Miss, fifth sister, sixth sister, and seventh sister are here!"

Yun Jinnian frowned slightly, "They are?"

She hadn't wanted to see them, but considering they had come to visit every day during her illness and recalling their commendable behavior during the Double Ninth Festival,

Even though their purpose seemed driven by self-interest, for daughters born outside the main line, it was quite normal.

"Let them in!"

Chapter 652: Three Concubines

Ru Yue nodded and left the bedroom.

In the courtyard, Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingqing, and Yun Qingzhi were nervously wringing their hands.

Now, their legitimate sister had become a Commandery Princess.

Upon meeting her, should they call her "sister" or "Commandery Princess"? Should they perform a kneeling ceremony?

"Fifth Miss, Sixth Miss, Seventh Miss, the young lady invites you to come in!" Ru Yue said softly.

She was polite and courteous.

Taking a few steps forward, Yun Zuomo asked quietly, "Ru Yue, why do you still call my Fourth Sister as 'young lady'?"

Ru Yue smiled, "A 'young lady' is a 'young lady' for life, calling her that feels more intimate!"

Yun Zuomo and her sisters were not fools, they naturally understood Ru Yue's reminder.

They entered the bedroom together and saw Yun Jinnian leaning against the bedhead with Shi Jiayu sitting on the side, busy with her needlework.

They hurriedly paid their respects, "We pay respect to Fourth Sister!"

Yun Jinnian looked at her three half-sisters; they were not bad people. In the past, following behind Xu Xinmo, they merely watched Xu Xinmo bully her, acting as Xu Xinmo's lackeys.

She did not know what became of them in her past life.

In this life, these past years, if it were not for that day Yun Zuomo knelt in front of her, she would not have planned to keep Yun Zuomo in her heart.

Had it not been for the next day, when Yun Zuomo spoke in the carriage about Mrs. He's scheming against her, perhaps she would have never thought of these three at all.

She pointed towards a stool on the side, "Please, sit down!"

"Thank you, Fourth Sister!"

The three of them went to sit on the stools, somewhat reservedly.

As if on cue, Ru Yue came in with tea, "Fifth Miss, Sixth Miss, Seventh Miss, please enjoy the tea, snacks will be here shortly!"

"Thank you, Ru Yue!"

While speaking, Yun Zuomo lifted the tea gently and took a sip.

The tea felt better than the one from two days earlier, more aromatic and richer!

Ru Yue smiled and turned to get the snacks from the kitchen.

Hemei and Henuan had to attend to some business outside and had not returned, and Hongxiu, Hongye, and Hongdou usually did not enter the bedroom.

Yaniang went to rest, the chief matron never managed affairs, and the mute maid only took care of cooking in the kitchen.

Now, it was just her and Jiayu.

Yun Jinnian watched her half-sisters drinking tea. Only when they had finished and put down their cups did she say, "Do you know what is going on with grandmother and Xinmo being sick?"

"To answer Fourth Sister, I know a bit!" Yun Zuomo said.

"Let's hear it then!"

Yun Zuomo nodded, feeling somewhat inexplicably excited, "Cousin Xinmo initially pretended to be ill, and that day she was crying and threatening to hang herself. Uncle berated her for it, and grandmother fell ill too. These past days, Cousin Xinmo has only gone to Cixin Academy and then back to Yicai Garden; she does not go out anymore!"

"What did Uncle say?" Yun Jinnian asked.

It was unexpected that Yun Zuomo actually knew so much.

It seemed she had quite a few informants in the household.

It should be said that her aunt, Mrs. Su, had quite a few informants in the household!

"Uncle was very angry that day, saying that if Xinmo made any more trouble, either let her really die or send her back to the Xu Family and forbid her from ever stepping into the Yun Family again. Even Uncle's wife laid down harsh words, saying if she continued with her antics, they would send her back to the Xu Family!"

Yun Zuomo intentionally did not hide anything, wanting to display her openness.

However, she did not know why Xu Xinmo was afraid of returning to the Xu Family and seemed unwilling to mention them.

"I see, no wonder!" Yun Jinnian murmured softly.

That day, Xu Xinmo was sent back from the Xu Family even before the Double Ninth Festival was over, and Madam Xu had a difficult childbirth. Presumably, these two events were related.

Yun Zuomo did not dare to ask what caused the "no wonder," and when she saw Ru Yue bringing in pastries, she took one and nibbled on it bit by bit.

Her aunt had said, now that she had made an appearance before Fourth Sister, she should just obediently listen to her. With time, Fourth Sister would surely notice her obedience and treat her better.

Chapter 653: The Pious Old Lady

With the Fourth Sister as her support, she would not be bullied by anyone in the future, whether she married or simply went out and about.

Yun Jinnian watched her three half-sisters eating pastries devotedly and smiled slightly, "Ru Yue!"

"Yes, Miss?"

"Go check the kitchen and see if there are any pastries left. If there are, pack three portions for them to take home!"

"Yes!"

Ru Yue responded and left.

Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingzhi, and Yun Qingqing quickly stood up to express their thanks. As soon as Ru Yue brought the pastries, they took them, thanked Yun Jinnian, and left Niannian Garden to return home.

Yun Jinnian watched their retreating figures and lowered her eyes in silence.

"What's wrong, Miss?" Shi Jiayu asked.

"It's nothing. I just feel a little dizzy. I'll take a short rest," Yun Jinnian said, lying down and closing her eyes.

But this time, she truly could not sleep.

There were things she kept telling herself not to think about, not to overthink, that there's no mother who doesn't love her own children, but now, she began to doubt!

Yun Jinnian spent several days in bed, and before she knew it, it was October 8th. Finally feeling healthy, she left Niannian Garden and took gifts to visit the old Madam Yun at Cixin Academy.

She hadn't expected to see anyone, but to her surprise, the old Madam Yun allowed Yun Jinnian into her bedroom.

"Please, sit!"

"Thank you, Grandmother!"

Yun Jinnian sat down but didn't mention taking the old lady's pulse to avoid making others think she harbored ulterior motives to harm her own grandmother.

"I heard you've been ennobled as a Commandery Princess?" the old Madam Yun asked indifferently, neither happy nor excited about it.

On the contrary, she felt quite displeased in her heart.

Why wasn't it Xu Xinmo? What was so good about Yun Jinnian? Clumsy and stupid, of what use was her beauty?

Did she truly possess medical skills, or was it all for show, just luck?

"Yes, His Majesty has granted me the title Princess Yijia and bestowed upon me the Princess Residence," Yun Jinnian replied calmly.

"Now that you are a princess, you must be more proper in your behavior, more careful with your speech and actions, and treat your sisters at home even better. Xinmo is sick, so when you have time, keep her company. His Majesty has rewarded you with so many things; you should give some to Xinmo!"

Not mentioning Xinmo, the old Madam Yun was still sharp-witted, but upon mentioning her, she immediately became confused.

Upon hearing this, Yun Jinnian simply looked at the old Madam Yun indifferently.

"What are you looking at me for? Did I say something wrong? Even though you're a princess now, you are still a part of the Yun Family. I am your grandmother, can't I even reprimand you?" the old Madam Yun grew more and more agitated as she spoke.

Her eyes widened.

Seeing Yun Jinnian looking at her as if she were crazy made her so angry that she started to cough.

Ming Liu immediately stepped forward to pat her back, "Old Madam, would you like some water?"

"Water? Do you want to choke me? Go kneel outside, you blind thing. I've been too indulgent with you all, letting you become unruly!" the old Madam Yun shouted fiercely.

With eyes reddened, Ming Liu exited the bedroom and knelt down in the courtyard.

Yun Jinnian continued to look unflinchingly at the old Madam Yun as she ranted incoherently.

Truly, she had her doubts—was this really her own grandmother? Why did she love Xu Xinmo so intensely, with such an extreme bias?

Getting up slowly, she said softly, "Grandmother, perhaps you are unaware, but when Eunuch Hai sent me back that day, he conveyed an imperial decree. He declared that the rewards given to me are to be placed in the Princess Residence, and no one is to covet them!"

She could have passed them on.

But she didn't want to.

She would rather let those items mold in the storeroom than give them to Xu Xinmo!

"You, you..." the old Madam Yun glowered at Yun Jinnian, pointing towards the door, "Get out of here!"

Chapter 654: To Huguo Temple

"Since Grandmother needs to rest well, then I shall take my leave!" Yun Jinnian said slowly as he walked towards the small hall. After a few steps, he suddenly stopped, turned his head to the old Madame Yun, and said, "Eldest cousin will be getting married in November, Grandmother must take good care of herself and not..."

Before he could finish his sentence, he covered his lips, "Look at me talking nonsense, Grandmother is strong and is sure to live a long and healthy life!"

"Grandmother, please rest well. I will take my leave!"

He swaggered off.

Yun Jinnian gave a faint smile at the sight of Ming Liu kneeling in the yard and left Cixin Academy.

This feeling of unrestraint was simply too good.

In the future, she would no longer be timid or hesitant. She decided to live as she desired.

Yun Jinnian went to see Mrs. He and mentioned that she would be visiting Huguo Temple the next day. Naturally, Mrs. He wouldn't object, especially with She Hong's issue weighing on her mind.

"Do you need me to prepare a carriage for you?"

"No need, I'll just take Hemei and Henuan with me. Uncle Cheng will drive the carriage. Thank you, aunty He!"

Mrs. He nodded, "When will you return then?"

"I'm not sure. Once at Huguo Temple, I will stay for two or three days to pray and bless the family. But, I will make sure to come back by the fifteenth at the latest!"

October fifteenth was Yun Musi's eleventh birthday.

Yun Jinnian remembered it!

Mrs. He started to smile, "Alright then, take care on your way. Bring a couple more maids who know martial arts; after all, Capital City has been somewhat restless recently!"

"Hmm!"

In the eighteenth year of Yuanhe, on the sixth day of October

Early in the morning, Yun Jinnian set out with Hemei and Henuan towards Huguo Temple.

One purpose was to pray and see Abbot Wuxin, and the other was to check on Mrs. Han and to also let her own feelings die.

Uncle Cheng drove the carriage out of the city towards the direction of Huguo Temple with a steady trot.

Yun Jinnian leaned inside the carriage, closing her eyes to rest.

The weather in October was a bit cool, but not too cold. The autumn breeze was refreshing, though some leaves had already turned yellow.

The Huguo Temple was quite far. Having set off in the morning, they would only arrive by evening. Uncle Cheng drove the carriage a bit faster.

The bumpy ride made Yun Jinnian's head hurt. "Uncle Cheng, we're not in a hurry; we can take it slow!"

"Are you not in a hurry, Miss?" Uncle Cheng asked in return.

"Not at all. Take your time, Uncle Cheng. If it really doesn't work out, we can just spend the night at a farmhouse and set off early tomorrow!"

She indeed wasn't in a rush to confirm anything; it was like a snail's pace to her.

Upon receiving Yun Jinnian's instructions, Uncle Cheng indeed slowed down the carriage.

The slower ride allowed Yun Jinnian to sit more comfortably. She took out a book to read but could not concentrate on a single word.

Thinking about it, she hadn't seen Chu Yu for quite some days now. What was he doing?

Did he know she had been ill?

Did he miss her?

"Miss, what are you thinking about?" Hemei asked.

"It's nothing!"

Around noon, the carriage stopped at a teahouse.

Yun Jinnian slowly disembarked the carriage, with Uncle Cheng having already taken care of everything.

"Uncle Cheng is really efficient. Miss, we should always take Uncle Cheng with us when we go out!" Hemei said.

"Yes!"

The teahouse was very clean, and Uncle Cheng had already prepared meals and a pot of hot tea.

Yun Jinnian remembered, it was there she had encountered Chu Yu that year, his pretentious demeanor seemed so long ago, yet it was etched in her memory.

Yet it also seemed a bit blurred, as if she could not recall the past disputes.

Sitting down, Yun Jinnian was about to pick up her chopsticks when a loud shout came from outside, "Is there anyone in this teahouse who knows medical skills?"

The voice was thunderous, causing a headache with its resonance.

The room seemed to shake too, giving a sensation of being on the verge of collapse...

Chapter 655: Reunion with an Old Friend

Yun Jinnian heard the words and paused with the chopsticks in hand.

After hesitating for a moment, he picked up a dish to taste and, finding it good, helped himself to another chopstickful.

It wasn't that she was heartless and would not save a life.

But rather, the owner is reflected in their pet.

If a person is rude and impolite, she has already taken a dislike to them without meeting, so naturally, she would not lend a hand.

The tea house was not large, with only four tables laid out in the lobby, a counter, and on the other side, a wall with alcohol on display.

The doorway was not very big, either.

So when the bearded burly man stood at the entrance, he blocked the light, causing the room to suddenly darken.

The man scanned the room.

There were people seated at two tables, one with two men, the other with a middle-aged man and two children, among whom was a beautifully dressed woman who also appeared young.

"I'm asking if any of you know medical skills?" he demanded.

The two men shrank their necks, bowing their heads, focusing on the food in front of them to avoid trouble.

The bearded man turned his gaze to Yun Jinnian's table, his eyes widening, "How about you, does anyone here know medical skills?"

Yun Jinnian didn't respond.

She had the right to ignore someone so impolite.

Uncle Cheng did the same.

Seeing this, the bearded man was about to erupt in anger when he heard a gentle voice say, "Zhao Mang, don't be ridiculous!"

The voice was soft, yet it made Zhao Mang bow his head and call out guiltily, "Master!"

He stepped aside and cleared the way.

Yun Jinnian, hearing the voice, frowned slightly, feeling a trace of familiarity.

Looking up with her chopsticks in hand, she saw two men carrying a wheelchair, and in the wheelchair sat a man in blue brocade, his complexion pale and giving her a frail smile.

If it wasn't Zhou Yunshen, then who could it be?

Teng Fei, who followed inside, smiled upon seeing Yun Jinnian, "Miss Yun, when the master said he recognized the carriage earlier, I didn't believe it, but it turns out it really is you!"

At this point, Yun Jinnian could do nothing but put down her chopsticks and stand up to greet him, bowing slightly, "Greetings to Young Master Zhou!"

"Miss, please, no formalities," said Zhou Yunshen in a weak murmur.

It seemed that on top of his previous illness, he had also been injured.

Yun Jinnian straightened up, standing to one side in silence.

The atmosphere was somewhat awkward.

Zhou Yunshen knew that his appearance had once again left a bad impression on Yun Jinnian. Irritated, he cast a sidelong glance at Zhao Mang, who immediately bowed his head and stealthily moved towards the outside.

Zhou Yunshen watched, finding the situation bittersweet and amusing, then turned to Yun Jinnian with a gentle inquiry, "Miss Yun, are you heading out?"

"Yes," she replied.

"And where to?" he asked.

Yun Jinnian pressed her lips together and answered, "To Huguo Temple, to visit my mother."

Zhou Yunshen hesitated.

He wanted to ask Yun Jinnian to examine him, but he could not bring himself to ask.

Watching Yun Jinnian, his hand on the wheelchair tightened into a fist.

Yun Jinnian, observing Zhou Yunshen, took a deep breath and then said, "Young Master Zhou, it seems your condition has worsened?"

"Yes, a few days ago I was stabbed by an assassin," Zhou Yunshen said casually, thinking about that night. If it wasn't for the fact that the assassin was alone and he had many people with him, skilled in martial arts, who ganged up on the assassin, he might not have survived.

Still, he suffered severe internal and external injuries.

Five of his people died, ten sustained serious injuries, and thirty had minor injuries. Yet they still let the injured assassin escape!

"How about I take a look at you first?" she offered.

She did not want to get involved, but at this point, it was too late not to intervene.

Zhou Yunshen nodded.

Immediately, Teng Fei cleared the room, courteously ushering the two men who were too frightened to move out and tossing a gold ingot to the shopkeeper, "From this moment on, this tea house is not serving anyone. Go wherever you please that's out of the way!"

Chapter 656: An Understanding Heart

The shopkeeper hurriedly took the young servants and left.

A gold ingot was enough to buy this teahouse.

The pace of their departure was swift!

After tidying up the hall, Uncle Cheng went to the carriage to fetch the medicine chest, Hemei handed over a damp towel, and Yun Jinnian leisurely wiped her hands.

Teng Fei was accustomed to Yun Jinnian's meticulousness and attentiveness.

But for Zhao Mang, it was his first time seeing that the physician was a young lady, and this time, he had come specifically for her.

Still, Zhao Mang really couldn't see what was so remarkable about this young lady; she just looked delicate and pretty, with a rather cool demeanor.

In Great Zhou Kingdom, those ladies of good families would drool over their masters, shamelessly clinging to them without any self-respect.

Several times he opened his mouth to say a few words, only to be interrupted by Teng Fei, leaving him unable to speak his mind.

Zhou Yunshen, however, was gently watching Yun Jinnian busy at work, a faint smile lingering on his lips.

It wasn't until Yun Jinnian sat beside him that he spoke softly, "I'm troubling you, Fourth Miss!"

"It's but a slight effort!"

Yun Jinnian checked Zhou Yunshen's pulse, and she was slightly taken aback.

His own body's cold poison had deepened, and with internal and external injuries, it was a miracle he was still alive.

"Fourth Miss, how is my master's condition?" Teng Fei asked eagerly.

"Not very optimistic!"

Yun Jinnian told the truth and, after thinking it over, opened the medicine chest and handed a porcelain bottle to Zhou Yunshen, "Young Master Zhou, this contains Snow Lotus Pills. Take one daily!"

As she spoke, Yun Jinnian took out a brush and some paper and ink from the medicine chest and wrote down a list of medicinal herbs, "Young Master Zhou, prepare these herbs first. After I return from Huguo Temple, I'll prepare the medicine pills for you!"

"Thank you!" Zhou Yunshen took the prescription and passed it to Teng Fei.

Teng Fei just glanced at it and his heart trembled.

Thousand-Year Ginseng, Thousand-Year Ganoderma, Hundred-year Superior Cordyceps, Hundred-Year Stone Lotus...

A long list of herb names, all demanding the very best.

But, looking at the porcelain bottle Yun Jinnian had given to his master, he couldn't voice his concerns. The medicine Yun Jinnian provided last time was excellent; the Imperial Physician replicated an identical one back at the palace, but the efficacy was far less, and eventually it had no effect at all.

There were two reasons for coming to Tianchu Country this time: one was for treatment, and the other was for a marriage alliance.

Great Zhou Kingdom had sent a Princess over, so Tianchu Country also had to send someone for marriage to Great Zhou, and that person...

Teng Fei glanced at Yun Jinnian.

Although he had known his master's plan for a long time, Teng Fei felt it might not be quite appropriate!

The water that can carry the boat can also overturn it. If Fourth Miss Yun was willing, it would be fine, but if she were unwilling, and the master forcibly married her, and only as a concubine...

"Young Master Zhou is too polite!" Yun Jinnian said as she began to pack up the medicine chest.

Watching her, Zhou Yunshen said gently, "Fourth Miss, may I accompany you to Huguo Temple?"

"This..."

Yun Jinnian hesitated.

Zhou Yunshen's presence would actually be quite troublesome.

If others spoke of it later, they would only criticize her behavior, while for Zhou Yunshen, it would just be a lovely anecdote.

Seeing Yun Jinnian hesitate, Zhou Yunshen said nothing, patiently waiting for her answer.

"Young Master Zhou is seriously injured, it's better to find a place for a good rest. The mountain road to Huguo Temple is difficult and it won't do any good for your injury!"

"With Fourth Miss's superb medical skills and her accompanying me, I'm sure I won't face any danger. What do you say, Fourth Miss?"

At his words, Yun Jinnian stiffened and pursed her lips, feeling rather displeased inside, "Suit yourself then!"

Turning her head to Uncle Cheng, she said, "Uncle Cheng, go prepare the carriage. Hemei, Henuan, prepare some food, let's go!"

Chapter 657: Sincere or Insincere

Yun Jinnian spoke his piece and left the tea house.

His back remained ramrod straight, and his pace was neither hurried nor slow.

But Zhou Yunshen could see that Yun Jinnian was angry.

He took a deep breath.

"All I wanted was to spend more time with her. Isn't affection the result of keeping company?"

Teng Fei remained silent.

The Crown Princess Consort of the Great Zhou Kingdom could not possibly be a lady from Tianchu Country, and moreover, in the Great Zhou Kingdom, the Empress had already selected a suitable candidate, simply waiting for the master to agree. Yet, the master was insistent.

However, although Miss Yun appeared to have a mild temperament, such a woman actually had strong principles, and she might not be willing to become a Concubine!

Could it really come down to using force in the end?

Teng Fei immediately felt somewhat embarrassed.

If it were anyone else, he might just turn a blind eye, but it was Yun Jinnian, who had once saved his master's life.

If he really forced Yun Jinnian, he felt it would be unbecoming of a gentleman.

"Teng Fei..." Zhou Yunshen called out softly.

Teng Fei quickly responded, "My lord?"

"What are you thinking about?"

"..."

Seeing that Teng Fei remained silent, Zhou Yunshen paused for a moment before speaking faintly, "Speak!"

"My lord, I think... you cannot force Miss Yun!" After speaking, Teng Fei lowered his head.

Teng Mu remained silent on the side.

Zhao Mang was very surprised.

It was well known that Teng Fei was devoted to his master, yet today he seemed to be persuading the master otherwise...

Zhou Yunshen said nothing upon hearing these words.

After a while, hearing the sound of horse hooves outside, knowing that Yun Jinnian had already left, Zhou Yunshen finally spoke indifferently, "Teng Fei, if one day you found a woman you liked, you would surely be like me today, losing your rationality, losing yourself, just desiring to spend more time with her, especially when she already has someone else in her heart, hating not to constantly be with her, not giving any chance to others!"

He took a deep breath.

Everyone thought that his interest in Yun Jinnian was solely for her medical skills.

Few may have thought his heart was moved, and emotions stirred!

Teng Fei remained silent.

He was with his master all day long, where did he have the chance to meet women? Besides, having seen the ferocious means by which the concubines in the palace fought for favor, he dared not lightly bring one home and invite disaster upon himself.

"Let's go, follow her!"

Coming one after another, she probably wouldn't mind!

Yun Jinnian sat in the carriage, and Hemei peeled an orange for Yun Jinnian, who took a bite and said, "Sour!"

Hemei took a bite herself, "It's not bad!"

"Then you eat it!"

Hemei smiled and ate the orange, bite by bite.

Yun Jinnian watched her, leaning against the carriage window, wrinkling her nose in distaste at the curtain.

"It's raining!" Yun Jinnian murmured softly, then hurriedly said, "Uncle Cheng, stop the carriage first, and put on a raincoat!"

Hearing these words, Uncle Cheng smiled slightly, "Alright!"

He felt warmed at heart.

The carriage stopped, and Uncle Cheng put on a raincoat and hat, also taking a swig of liquor, before continuing to drive slowly.

"Miss, shall we stop at a farmhouse in the village ahead?" Uncle Cheng asked.

"Sure!"

It began as a drizzle, which then grew heavier.

Seeing a village, Uncle Cheng directed the carriage into it, stopping at the gate of a rather decent-looking house.

He got down from the carriage and knocked on the door.

"Who's there?" A voice inquired lowly.

The door creaked open.

An elderly man with white beard and hair, holding an oil-paper umbrella, looked at Uncle Cheng, "You?"

"Travelers here. The rain is getting heavy, making it tough to continue. My young mistress wishes to seek shelter in your home for the night. Would that be possible?"

The old man looked at Uncle Cheng, then at the carriage on the side, "Wait here; I'll go ask my young master!"

Uncle Cheng was taken aback.

But the old man had already lifted his umbrella and turned back towards the house...

Chapter 658: Seeking Shelter in the Rain

Uncle Cheng hurriedly turned and walked over to the carriage, "Miss, an old man opened the door, he said he would go ask his young master!"

This place is only half a day's journey from Capital City, and there are still many wealthy households.

So, Uncle Cheng didn't think too much of it.

"Mhm, Uncle Cheng, if it is inconvenient for them, let's seek shelter from the next household!" Yun Jinnian spoke softly.

"Yes!"

Uncle Cheng replied and waited on the side.

The old man entered the main room and walked towards the room on the left-hand side. Entering the room, he saw his young master lounging in a chair, napping, with the book he had been reading fallen to the floor.

After hesitating for a moment, he still called out softly, "Young master, there are guests outside seeking shelter from the rain and a place to stay. What do you think ..."

"Ancestor Uncle, is the rain coming down hard outside?"

"Quite heavily!"

"Since the rain is falling so heavily, they must truly be seeking shelter from it. Go invite the guests in, and have Ancestor Auntie make a pot of ginger tea. Whatever good food we have in the house, cook some of it, and don't neglect our guests!"

"Yes!"

Ancestor Uncle replied and, turning, left the room and also closed the door behind him.

He took an umbrella and went to the entrance, where he saw Uncle Cheng still standing by the carriage, and hurriedly said, "My young master invites you and the other guests inside!"

As he spoke, he opened the gate and then glanced at the carriage, "Oh dear, this gate is too narrow, and the carriage too wide. Please enter through the back door. It's spacious enough to accommodate the carriage!"

Uncle Cheng responded, "Good, then let me help the young mistress out of the carriage first!"

Ancestor Uncle nodded.

Uncle Cheng quickly took a large oil-paper umbrella and carefully helped Yun Jinnian out of the carriage. The moment Ancestor Uncle caught sight of Yun Jinnian's appearance, he was stunned.

Such a stunningly beautiful lady. No wonder the coachman was so careful and cautious.

Observing Yun Jinnian's brocade attire and exquisite head ornaments, he hurriedly said, "Miss, please!"

Yun Jinnian nodded slightly and curtsied, "Thank you for taking us in, old sir!"

"Not at all, not at all, Miss. Please take care, the ground is slippery in the rain!"

Ancestor Uncle led Yun Jinnian into the main room, towards the guest room at the back.

The courtyard behind the house was quite sizable. Ancestor Uncle opened the door to one of the rooms and said, "Please!"

Yun Jinnian entered the guest room, followed by Hemei and Henuan.

Ancestor Uncle stayed outside without entering, "Miss, please rest for a moment. I will go arrange things. Shortly, I will have the old maid bring you hot water!"

"That's very kind of you!" Yun Jinnian thanked him again.

Ancestor Uncle smiled and withdrew.

The room was very neat, filled with the fragrance of sandalwood, light and pleasant to the smell.

Yun Jinnian sat down on a stool, while Hemei and Henuan discussed briefly – one stayed, and the other went out to look around.

They saw an old woman carrying tea coming over, "Sorry to keep the young mistress waiting!"

Yun Jinnian quickly stood up, curtsied to Ancestor Auntie, and Hemei stepped forward to take the teacup, placing it in front of Yun Jinnian.

Ancestor Auntie smiled, "Please sit for a while, Miss. I will go to the kitchen to prepare some food and bring it over soon!"

"Auntie, let my maid run errands for you!" Yun Jinnian gestured towards Hemei.

"Okay!"

Hemei followed Ancestor Auntie to the kitchen to help. As night approached, a man and a woman braved the wind and rain to return, bringing some fruits, grains, vegetables, and meat.

Ancestor Auntie immediately asked the woman to bring over some fruits.

After some conversation, they learned her name was Qing Bi, one of the maids in this household, and the young manservant's name was Qing Zhu.

Since it was not good to be too proud or silent when staying in someone else's house, after dinner – when Qing Bi seemed reluctant to leave, chatting away enthusiastically –

Yun Jinnian responded with a smile occasionally, while Hemei and Henuan kept her company the whole time.

"Hehe, Miss Yun, you should go to bed early. I'm off to sleep as well. Tomorrow morning, I'll wake up early to make you breakfast. The pancakes I make are really delicious, even the young master praises them!" Qing Bi said, laughing as she spoke.

Chapter 659: Attracting Suspicion

Yun Jinnian nodded his head, "Alright!"

Although Qing Bi talked a lot, she was a good girl.

She talked about some interesting things and was quite amusing.

Qing Bi reluctantly returned to her room to sleep.

Hemei and Henuan finally let out a sigh of relief, "She finally left!"

She sure can talk.

Just babbling on and on, doesn't her mouth get tired?

Yun Jinnian chuckled, "Qing Bi is a very kind and enthusiastic girl. This might be our only meeting, and we may not have the chance to meet again in the future!"

"That's true!" Hemei agreed.

"Let's go to sleep early. We still need to hit the road tomorrow!"

However, having stayed in this village for one night, we should be able to reach Huguo Temple by noon tomorrow, just Mother...

Yun Jinnian's thoughts shifted slightly as he lay down on the bed and sighed so faintly it was almost inaudible.

Zhou Yunshen and the others arrived at Huguo Temple overnight, and the Little Monk immediately arranged for their stay in the monastery and prepared vegetarian meals.

After settling in, Zhou Yunshen had Teng Fei go to gather some information, only to learn that Yun Jinnian had not come to Huguo Temple.

"My Lord?"

Zhou Yunshen remained silent for a long while before finally saying, "Perhaps she took shelter from the rain!"

It shouldn't be that she did it intentionally to avoid him!

Thinking this, Zhou Yunshen felt a bit better.

Teng Fei remained silent.

He sat with Zhou Yunshen through the night without a word.

It was still dark, and the rain was still pattering down when Yun Jinnian woke up to a fragrant smell. After getting up and grooming, she stepped outside to find Qing Bi enthusiastically bringing something over, "Miss Yun, you're awake. I've made some pancakes, please have a taste!"

"Alright!"

Yun Jinnian took a bite and found it truly delicious.

To show her gratitude, Yun Jinnian gave a gold hairpin to Qing Bi, who was delighted and repeatedly asked Hemei while wearing it on her head, "Does it look good, Hemei?"

"Beautiful!"

"Thank you, Miss Yun. I'm so happy, hehe!" Qing Bi said gleefully.

Yun Jinnian smiled.

From last night until now, she hadn't seen the young master mentioned by the old servant, but she didn't inquire further.

It would be inappropriate not to show any appreciation for being allowed to stay over and for such warm hospitality.

Giving Silver would be too demeaning, so after some thought, Yun Jinnian handed over a Snow Lotus Pill to Qing Bi to pass it on.

"The young master rarely goes out. Please don't take it to heart, Miss Yun!"

"Of course not."

Yun Jinnian bid farewell to Qing Bi, the old servant, and the old servant's wife. Qing Zhu stood aside, smiling and waving.

He had spent last night with Uncle Cheng who taught him a couple of moves.

He was so excited that he didn't sleep all night.

Watching the departing carriage, Qing Bi handed the porcelain bottle to the old servant, "Old servant, this is from Miss Yun. She said it was for the young master!"

The old servant looked at Qing Bi with a hint of annoyance, glanced at the gold hairpin on her head, and sighed.

He took the porcelain bottle and went into his room.

"Young Master..."

"Have the guests been sent off?" Ma Wenyan asked softly.

He was holding a book in his hand.

"They've been sent off. But that Miss Yun has left behind a porcelain bottle, saying it's for the young master!"

Ma Wenyan smiled, "She stayed for just one night and ate two meals, yet Miss Yun seems to be an interesting person!"

While speaking, Ma Wenyan took the porcelain bottle from the old servant's hand and smelled it. His expression turned slightly serious, "Although I'm no physician, if I'm not mistaken, this pill contains Snow Lotus, as well as Ginseng and Lingzhi, and all of them are of a very old vintage!"

The old servant was startled.

"This Miss Yun is quite generous. This pill could be worth quite a lot of Silver if sold!"

The old servant pursed his lips, as if he wanted to say something but stopped.

"Old servant!"

"Eh?"

"Go and check, which Yun Family's young lady is this Miss Yun? Find out everything clearly!"

The old servant's eyes reddened slightly.

Since the Ma Family's downfall, this was the first time the young master had made use of the power left by the Ma Family.

"Yes, this old servant will go right away!"

Chapter 660: Mrs. Han's Departure

Ma Wenyuan looked at his great-uncle, who had redness around his eyes, and slightly lowered his gaze.

The Ma Family, from top to bottom, had over a thousand members spanning several generations, yet now only he remained. Even with his vast knowledge of literature and his understanding of both astronomy and geography, he didn't dare to venture out carelessly for fear of being recognized as the lone survivor of the Ma Family.

And invite fatal trouble upon himself.

Therefore, he had been hiding in this small mountain village, but now he thought, rather than being trapped without recourse, it would be better to accomplish something significant, to become formidable enough that others would fear to harm him.

And possibly avenge the extermination of his entire family.

However, the one who had annihilated the Ma Family was the current emperor himself. With his individual power, how could it be easy...

"Great-uncle!"

"Young master!"

"It's time I got married!"

Upon hearing this, the great-uncle's tears began to flow.

"Young master, this old servant will arrange it right away. I will definitely find you a bride as beautiful as flowers and jade!"

Ma Wenyuan smiled, "She doesn't have to be as beautiful as flowers and jade, but she must be exceptionally intelligent and both brave and careful!"

Only such a woman could remain fearless in the face of danger.

Such women existed, but they were not easy to find!

The great-uncle smiled, "Rest assured, young master, I will inquire diligently and make sure to please you!"

Ma Wenyuan smiled without a word.

The rain drizzled, sometimes heavy, sometimes light.

Fortunately, Huguo Temple was growing ever closer, yet Yun Jinnian felt a hint of trepidation as she neared her home.

She wondered if her mother was doing well at Huguo Temple.

Because of the rain, the carriage stopped at the foot of the mountain, and Yun Jinnian had to go up on a sedan chair.

Unexpectedly, Abbot Wuxin was waiting at the gate in person.

"Abbot Wuxin!" Yun Jinnian called softly, smiling.

Abbot Wuxin looked at Yun Jinnian, his smile also emerged, full of tolerance and kindness, warm and gracious, "Fourth Miss!"

Then, he added, "Amitabha, I should be addressing you as Benefactor Yun!"

Yun Jinnian covered her lips with a light chuckle, "Abbot, you don't have to be so formal with me, it feels rather unnatural!"

"Alright, alright, no need for pretense. Fourth Miss, please!"

"After you, Abbot!"

Upon entering Huguo Temple and walking along the cloister, they headed directly to the meditation hall where Yun Jinnian was staying in the back mountain.

This place was serene and elegant.

But...

"Abbot, my mother..." Yun Jinnian hesitated.

"Your esteemed father stayed for three days, and then left with the maid. As for where they went, I really do not know!"

Hearing this, Yun Jinnian pursed her lips.

And remained silent for a long time.

Seeing her distress, Abbot Wuxin hurriedly said, "However, there is an old acquaintance of yours in the temple!"

Thinking it was Zhou Yunshen, Yun Jinnian replied indifferently, "I don't want to see him!"

"What, did you have a quarrel? He has been asking about you every day. He couldn't even swallow his medicine while unconscious. It was only when I told him that you would visit once he was better that he reluctantly agreed to take his medicine," Abbot Wuxin said, surprised.

Yun Jinnian also sensed something amiss, "Who is it?"

"Why not follow me and see for yourself?" suggested Abbot Wuxin.

"Then let's go!"

The meditation hall was tended by others, so Hemei and Henuan stayed behind to sort out the bedding.

As for her mother who had left, Yun Jinnian suddenly realized that she didn't miss her as much as she thought.

It just hurt a bit.

A clutching, uncomfortable pain!

"How was your trip to Nanjiang?" Abbot Wuxin inquired.

"I got quite a few good things. I even brought some for you. I was planning to give them to you earlier, but you mentioned I had a guest, and I forgot!"

"No harm done, 'What is destined will reach you even if it be beneath two mountains; what is not destined will not reach you even if it be between your two lips.' Since you mentioned you have something for me, it must be there!"

Seeing Abbot Wuxin react like this, Yun Jinnian genuinely laughed, "Abbot, since when did your eloquence become so impressive?"

"Ha ha ha!" Abbot Wuxin laughed heartily, "Secret, secret!"