

Indulgence 691

Chapter 691: Reprimanding Mian Ke

The Emperor tried every possible means to kill Chu Yu, but Chu Yu would not sit still and wait for death; instead, he struck back fiercely.

There was a favorite concubine of the Emperor, seductive like a fairy, who almost monopolized the Emperor's love. The concubines in the Imperial Palace grew restless, and the undercurrents surged.

Several princes were eager to flex their muscles, hoping to soar to the heavens and become the Crown Prince.

Chu Yu looked at the secret letter in his hand, silently.

"Prince!"

Chu Yu raised his eyes to Luoyi, put down the secret letter, and rubbed his temples.

How many days and nights he had been unable to sleep, constantly having nightmares when he did, and waking up with his clothes soaked in sweat.

He was not a cowardly person; it was just that there was something he couldn't get over, and he would always wake up startled during the night.

But with Yun Jinnian by his side, he could always sleep undisturbed.

"Prince..." Luoyi called softly again, handing the letter to Chu Yu, "The Fourth Miss has sent a letter!"

"What?" Chu Yu exclaimed, standing up abruptly.

Due to the haste and urgency, he knocked over the chair.

"Where's the letter?" Chu Yu asked eagerly, a look of joy spreading in his usually calm eyes.

Luoyi hurriedly presented the letter.

Chu Yu took it, both eager and careful as he unfolded it, taking out the paper, then smelling a faint scent of Snow Lotus, and Chu Yu smiled broadly.

Opening the letter, it was Yun Jinnian's handwriting.

Reading the letter was like seeing her face.

He could imagine the peace and tranquility Yun Jinnian was in when she wrote this letter.

Though the words were few, they filled Chu Yu with ecstatic joy, "She is coming back, she is coming back!"

Luoyi was also happy for Chu Yu, "Congratulations, Prince!"

"Is everything ready in the main courtyard? Are the furniture pieces all new? What about the decorative items? Are all the books in the study unique? And the pharmacy, is everything prepared? We should also start preparing the medicines, don't worry about silver, as long as there is that ingredient, it must be in the Wang Residence!" Chu Yu instructed nonstop, a stark contrast to his usual indolence.

As for Princess Mianke, who had been living in the Wang Residence, Luoyi thought to remind him of a few things, but seeing Chu Yu's demeanor, decided to hold back the words.

"Everything's ready!"

"No, I must go and check everything out myself!"

He got up and left the study.

Heading straight for the main courtyard.

This place had been demolished and rebuilt since Yun Jinnian's departure, and now it was finished. Yet, no plaque hung there, because he wanted to wait for Yun Jinnian to name it. Later, it would become their wedding chamber, and the adjacent courtyard would serve as Yun Jinnian's pharmacy, where she could treat her patients when necessary.

The pharmacy was spacious with an open layout, and there was a small garden nearby which would also be nice for receiving guests.

Chu Yu checked everything meticulously, ensuring there were no issues before he could relax.

"Luoyi, prepare the horses. I need to go out of town!"

He did not know where she was or whether he would encounter her on this trip out.

But still, he wanted to try his luck.

He had just stepped out of the main courtyard when he saw Qu Mianke running over happily, "Cousin!"

Several noble young ladies from Prestigious Families were following her.

Chu Yu frowned slightly, "Hmm!"

"Cousin, are you going out?" Qu Mianke asked.

Although she had been living in the Prince Rui Residence for over a year, her cousin had never brought up the matter of marrying her, which made her anxious, and she did not want to displease him.

"Hmm!"

Another indifferent hum.

Seeing the young noble ladies looking at him with flushed faces, Chu Yu's frown deepened, "In the future, do not bring people of ill-repute into the residence!"

After saying this, heedless of the expressions on the faces of the noble ladies and Qu Mianke, he directly left the Wang Residence.

Qu Mianke's face flushed with embarrassment, and after coming to her senses, she called out softly, "Cousin..."

Leaving the noble ladies behind, she chased after him.

Chapter 692: A Long Wait

The ladies looked at each other, bewildered.

They watched Qu Mianke's receding figure with varying expressions.

They had originally thought Qu Mianke's marriage into the Prince Rui Residence was a done deal, but it turned out that Prince Rui didn't give Qu Mianke a second glance.

In that case, did that mean they also had a chance?

Even if not as the principal wife, becoming a concubine was also possible!

Qu Mianke chased out of the Wang Residence, only to find Chu Yu's figure long gone. Stamping her feet in frustration, Qu Mianke felt utterly wronged.

"Commandery Princess!" Simei called out softly.

Qu Mianke felt scared and worried with such a situation.

"Simei..."

"This servant is here!"

"If mother comes to Capital City, would cousin agree to marry me for the sake of mother's dignity?"

Upon hearing this, Simei's heart skipped a beat, "He will!"

Prince Rui had spent two years with Princess Ning'an when he was younger, and there was still some affection there, perhaps with Princess Ning'an's intervention, Prince Rui might agree.

Qu Mianke, looking at Simei, smiled, "Let's go write a letter to mother quickly. Have her come to the Capital City after the New Year!"

She was already of age to get married, and if she didn't, she would become a laughingstock.

Simei responded eagerly.

Chu Yu rode out of the city just as the sky began to snow.

It was light at first but gradually grew heavier, eventually turning into a blizzard.

The roads were busy with people entering and leaving the city, all heading home.

Chu Yu stopped at Shili Pavilion. There were several paths ahead, and not knowing which one Yun Jinnian would come from, he decided to wait there.

From noon until evening...

Snow had accumulated on him.

"Prince, it's getting dark. Let's go back," a voice suggested.

When it appeared there really were no carriages coming from afar, Chu Yu responded indifferently, "Let's go back."

He turned his horse around to head back to the city, but then he heard the sound of horse hooves.

And a crisp yet unfamiliar shout, "Hyah!"

Chu Yu quickly looked back and saw Han Tianci wearing a blue cloak, riding his horse at full speed, followed by a group of riders and carriages.

A smile suddenly appeared on Chu Yu's face.

His eyes reddened slightly.

"Chu brother!"

Upon seeing Chu Yu, Han Tianci called out loudly and swung his horsewhip.

Inside the carriage

Yun Jinnian abruptly sat up straight, his calm eyes suddenly shining like stars.

Seeing this, Mrs. Han also smiled, "He's quite considerate!"

In this kind of weather, under the snow, who knows how long he had been waiting at Shili Pavilion!

"Mother..." Yun Jinnian called softly,

Her cheeks turning red.

"Mother understands your feelings. Since he is willing, mother certainly won't oppose!" Mrs. Han said, taking Yun Jinnian's hand.

"Thank you, mother!"

"Silly child!"

At Chu Yu's status and position, it wasn't really about schemes or manipulation.

Her Jinnian was stronger than her, more tenacious, more thoughtful when it came to emotions, more serious, and more forgiving.

He would definitely not lead a life like hers.

Chu Yu got off his horse, waiting for Han Tianci to approach, looking at his tall figure and thin, elegant face, "Tianci!"

"Chu brother!"

Han Tianci called out, disembarked from his horse, and approached Chu Yu, now only half a head shorter than Chu Yu.

"How did you get so tall?"

"Hehe, good food, that's why I grew!" Tianci chuckled naively and enthusiastically.

Chu Yu ruffled his hair, "What about your Martial Arts? Any progress?"

"Why don't you try me and see, Chu brother!" said Han Tianci, attacking Chu Yu swiftly and without holding back.

Chu Yu countered quickly, and the two of them began to spar on the spot.

Despite only a year's time, Tianci had improved remarkably fast. With his agility and Chu Yu giving him some leeway, the fight was evenly matched.

Chapter 693: Unchanged

Mrs. Han, who was sensitive to the cold, stayed in the carriage, holding Tuanzi and feeding it small snacks.

Yun Jinnian got out of the carriage and looked at Chu Yu in his black brocade clothes, a warm glow in her eyes.

She had not expected him to come and meet her.

Looking at the snow on his cloak, he must have been waiting for a long time.

"Oh my, Sister! Save me!"

About to lose, Tianci ran to Yun Jinnian's side, giggling with laughter.

Chu Yu stopped and shook the snow off his cloak, walked up to Yun Jinnian, pressed his lips together, nervous and somewhat unsure of how to begin.

Yun Jinnian, seeing this and feeling amused yet not wanting Chu Yu to be so nervous, asked, "Did you come to meet me?"

"Yes, I came as soon as I received your letter!" Chu Yu said, grinning foolishly.

"Have you been waiting long?"

"Not long!"

"Really? Then why does Luoyi have so much snow on him?"

Chu Yu turned to look at Luoyi, who quickly shook off the snow from his body.

"He gets snowed on easily!"

What a lie that was...

Yun Jinnian laughed, "I'm back now!"

"Yes, I'm very happy!"

Han Tianci, watching these two being so affectionate, afraid to become a third wheel, grabbed some hot tea from inside the carriage and went to talk to Luoyi.

He handed the hot tea to Luoyi, who reached out to take it.

"Luoyi, how long have you been waiting?"

"Prince got the letter before lunch and left the Wang Residence. We've been waiting here for a good three hours, and he hasn't even had lunch!"

Hearing this, Han Tianci looked at Chu Yu not far away.

Originally, he had prepared to make things difficult, but now he thought that if Chu Yu truly cared for his sister, he'd give him a break!

To avoid making his sister feel caught in the middle.

But if anyone dared to bully his sister, no matter who it was, he would not hesitate to fight.

Chu Yu, looking at Yun Jinnian, extended his hand and adjusted her cloak, covering her head, "I have always kept my promise, does it still count?"

"It counts!"

Chu Yu smiled, "Is that your mother in the carriage?"

Yun Jinnian nodded her head.

Chu Yu took a deep breath, stepped forward, and bowed with a fist, "Chu Yu pays respects to Auntie!"

It was Chu Yu, not the Prince.

Yun Jinnian smiled with teary eyes.

Inside the carriage, Mrs. Han waited a moment before lifting the carriage curtain. Seeing Chu Yu still in the bowing posture and noting his noble and bright appearance, she felt greatly satisfied and said gently, "You may dispense with the formalities!"

Chu Yu straightened up.

Mrs. Han glanced at the sky, "It's getting late, let's enter the city first. We can talk about everything else another day, alright?"

"Yes, I'll follow Auntie's instructions!"

Before boarding the carriage, Yun Jinnian looked at Chu Yu and saw his face full of smiles. Smiling, she boarded the carriage.

The procession once again set off.

Inside the carriage

Mrs. Han took Yun Jinnian's hand, "He seems quite good!"

"Mother..."

"Having waited for you for so many years, his sincerity is evident. However, given his position, it might be difficult for him to stay out of affairs. To get married may not be easy!"

Yun Jinnian fell silent.

She had not known her maternal grandfather's identity before, but now that she did, she could not help feeling apprehensive.

"But don't be afraid; solutions are devised by people. We've already waited so many years; a bit longer won't make much difference," Mrs. Han consoled.

"Mother, let's not worry about marriage for now. Escaping the Yun Residence is the priority," Yun Jinnian reminded.

The Yun Residence had already become corrupt and was bound to collapse sooner or later.

The sooner they left, the sooner they'd have peace of mind.

"You're absolutely right. Let's proceed as you have planned," Mrs. Han said, taking a deep breath.

Having thrown herself in without looking back, she was now using all her wits to escape.

She had lost much but gained two treasures.

That was enough!

Chapter 694: family harmony

A group of people entered the city, and Chu Yu exchanged a few words with Yun Jinnian beside the carriage before returning to Prince Rui Residence.

Yun Jinnian and his group first returned to the Han Family.

Yun Jinnian understood that even if he were to return to Yun Residence, he should be received rather than going back on his own initiative.

He also needed to get a clear understanding of the situation at Yun Residence.

Only by knowing both your friends and your enemies can you win every battle.

The Han Residence had long been informed that Grandmother, Cousin Miss, and the young master were coming back. Several courtyards had been tidied up early, with several pots of hot water prepared in each courtyard. The kitchen was stocked with plenty of snacks, sweet soups, and meals, all ready to be served after a quick reheating.

Han Xuzi, rarely staying in, was at home waiting for his three treasures.

Although his daughter was over thirty, she was still a child in his eyes, his heart's delight.

Seeing the carriage stop at the gate, Han Xuzi's eyes reddened immediately.

"Grandfather!"

Han Tianci called out joyfully, quickly running to Han Xuzi and hugging him tightly, "Grandfather, I've missed you so much!"

Choking with emotion at Tianci, who was now as tall as him and hardly looked like a ten-year-old, Han Xuzi said, "Grandfather has missed you too!"

"Did you miss sister and mother too?"

"Yes, I missed them all!"

"Hehe!"

Yun Jinnian helped Mrs. Han down from the carriage and entered the main hall.

She bowed to Han Xuzi, "Daughter greets Father!"

"Greetings to Grandfather!"

Han Xuzi felt that with this, his life was complete.

"Good, good, stand up, everyone, stand up. You've all worked hard on the journey, go back to your courtyards to freshen up. We will eat in the dining hall later. After the meal, we can chat leisurely in the warm room!"

"Yes!"

Everyone went back to their courtyards to freshen up.

Yun Jinnian returned to Chaoyang Academy and told Mrs. Yuan to go and rest.

Mrs. Yuan's eyes crinkled with a smile, "I'm not tired!"

Even if it was a journey, she liked being bustled about. If it wasn't for her reluctance to leave Yun Jinnian, she wouldn't have wanted to come back. It would have been nice to stay in Nanjiang, tending to the flowers and caring for the grass.

"Nanny!" Yun Jinnian emphasized.

Mrs. Yuan quickly responded, "Alright, alright, I'll go freshen up and rest now!"

Yun Jinnian watched her with a slight smile.

After freshening up and changing into a warm silk-wadded cotton jacket and styling her hair in a simple updo, Yun Jinnian headed to the warm room.

After being away for over a year, Chaoyang Academy hadn't changed much.

There wasn't much change along the way either, just that the trees had grown a bit taller, and many potted plants were still in their original spots, untouched!

It was as if she had never left.

But thinking about it, she indeed had been away for over a year, and after experiencing so much, she was no longer the same Yun Jinnian, with a heart that had changed.

Not yet reaching the dining hall, she could hear Tianci's hearty laughter. Without even seeing him, she could imagine his unrestrained joy.

Stepping into the dining hall, she saw Grandfather sitting on a chair, Tianci hopping around and speaking with flying spit, amusing the old man to no end.

"Grandfather!"

Han Xuze waved towards Yun Jinnian, motioning for her to sit by his side.

Yun Jinnian went over and sat down, Han Xuze poured her some warm water, "Have some water to moisten your throat first. Once your mother arrives, we can eat!"

"Thank you, Grandfather!"

Yun Jinnian sipped the tea in small gulps.

Tianci's temperament seemed lively and animated, but that was only towards those he was close to. If it were strangers, he could go days without talking, let alone laughing.

His warmth was reserved for his family alone.

During the conversation, Mrs. Han approached carrying a warming pan, "Oh dear, I'm actually late!"

Han Tianci looked towards the doorway, his eyes twinkling, and joked, "Wow, who is this beauty coming through the door, so stunningly attractive!"

Chapter 695: Tianci's Thoughts

He stepped forward to hold Mrs. Han's hand, "Allow me to assist you!"

Mrs. Han's eyes crinkled into a smile, her heart filled with joy, "You child, who teases their own mother like this?"

"Mother, please don't say that. When you go out and sit down, instead of looking like someone with children, others might think you're a newlywed young mistress!"

"You child, your words are becoming more and more far-fetched!"

Mrs. Han expressed mild annoyance with her words but wasn't truly annoyed at heart.

One's own child is always pampered a bit too much, and indulged a little too deeply.

"Let's all come and eat!" Han Xuze said with a smile.

It had been so many years, and it was rare for this home to be filled with such comforting laughter.

"Yes, Father (Grandfather)!"

The family of four sat together. Han Xuze personally poured the wine, and even Tianci got some, "Our Tianci is also a man now, let's have a bit too!"

With a smile, Han Tianci said, "Thank you, Grandfather!"

Raising his cup toward Han Xuze, "Grandfather, to you!"

"Good, good!" Han Xuze held up his cup and drank all the wine in it in one go.

His heart was a mix of many feelings.

Then Han Tianci turned his smile to Mrs. Han, "Mother, thank you for giving birth to me. Today, I also offer you a toast!"

Mrs. Han was somewhat flattered and hurriedly raised her glass, "Tianci..."

With a smile brimming with warmth, Han Tianci watched Mrs. Han drink down the wine, and then turned to Yun Jinnian, "Sister..."

This was his most beloved and most respected sister.

She had suffered so much injustice and been through so much sorrow, yet she never held resentment against anyone.

She never thought of seeking revenge actively.

She had paved a smooth and broad road for him to walk on for the rest of his life.

Thinking of this, Han Tianci's eyes reddened slightly.

"Tianci!"

Yun Jinnian stood up with her glass and looked at Han Tianci with a light smile, "Whatever you want to say, sister understands. We are true siblings!"

This life is all we have, with no next life guaranteed.

She was fortunate to have this life, but it might not be the case in the next, so she intended to treat Tianci as well as she could.

"Hehe, what Sister said is true. To you, Sister!"

In his "to you," there was so much wealth of feeling.

"Alright, let's drink this glass together, siblings!"

After a satisfying meal and drink, they had originally planned to go to the warm hall for a chat, but Han Xuze, thinking they hadn't had a proper sleep through this journey, suggested everyone go to their rooms to sleep; any conversation could wait until tomorrow.

Yun Jinnian returned to the Chaoyang Academy.

She went to bed and fell asleep.

As Han Tianci lay on the bed, he exhaled deeply and closed his eyes.

He felt grateful that another day had passed. How wonderful!

He wasn't a heartless person, but neither was he particularly gentle. As for his mother, he didn't have much yearning but rather a sense of resentment.

She thought she was being impartial, but never realized that both her son and daughter felt let down.

He knew the life his sister had led in the Yun Residence, which his mother never bothered to think about or visit. Her personal Hidden Guard could've made a difference with just one word.

In Sanzhou, even without his parents, his grandfather treated him extremely well, and the maids and nanny dared not neglect him.

He always had the best food and clothes, and whenever he thought of his sister's days in the Yun Residence, he would feel an urge to burst in and eradicate those responsible.

Compared to those people, he found the fact that she was his birth mother even less forgivable.

As for his mother, he had also intended to disregard her, but his sister's kind heart and shared sufferings restrained him—he didn't want to let his sister down or see her hurt again.

But keeping up this pretense without giving anything away was truly exhausting...

He slapped his own face, pulling a silly face, closed his eyes, and told himself not to overthink.

Sleep.

"Tomorrow will bring tomorrow's challenges. Those despicable villains are still waiting to be dealt with!"

Yun Residence

Learning that Mrs. Han and Yun Jinnian had returned, many were unable to sleep...

Chapter 696: The Heart of a Petty Person

Yicai Garden

Xu Xinmo was the first person from the Yun Family to know of Yun Jinnian and Mrs. Han's return. She sat by the dressing table, holding a golden hairpin gently placing it into the brocade box.

"Good that she's back, after all, she is a daughter of the Yun Family. It's indecent for her to be away from home all year round!"

Madam Jin looked at Xu Xinmo and nodded slightly, "Indeed, this is how it should be. Even if you have a million thoughts inside, never show them. Whatever you say must be appropriate, revealing not a hint of ill intentions!"

"It's all thanks to your teachings, Madam!" said Xu Xinmo, smiling at Madam Jin.

"A smile must be proper, your eyes curved, head slightly lowered and eyelids drooping just enough to hide all emotions in your eyes. Only then will people fail to see through you!" Madam Jin stepped forward to show Xu Xinmo exactly how it's done.

Only after Xu Xinmo had done everything as she was told did Madam Jin nod in satisfaction, "Now you're perfect!"

With a smile, Xu Xinmo asked, "Madam, do you think I should go to the Han Residence to see her?"

"There's no need to go for now!"

Xu Xinmo was puzzled, "Why not?"

"Wait until everything is prepared, then you can go to the Han Residence!"

"I'll follow your advice, Madam!"

Mrs. He learned of Mrs. Han and Yun Jinnian's return and felt a splitting headache coming on.

With a slight turn of thought, she had a plan in mind.

She couldn't make a move against Mrs. Han and Yun Jinnian, but there were still Xu Xinmo and the old madame in the house!

Wang Yanran had been married into the Yun Residence for a year and was now three months pregnant.

She was given the best of everything, and Yun Zhen was kind to her, having caused no trouble with concubines or mistresses.

As a Commandery Princess and the legitimate eldest daughter-in-law of the Yun Residence, she naturally commanded the wind and summoned the rain.

"Who has come back?"

"The second madame and the fourth miss have returned, but they didn't go to the Yun Residence; they went to the Han Residence!"

Wang Yanran frowned, "She's back, huh?"

Wang Yanran was jealous of Yun Jinnian.

Three large interconnected estates and a small mountain truly made her the wealthiest Commandery Princess in Capital City. Although the Emperor had granted her a title with lands and a stipend, Yun Jinnian had declined them.

The servants rewarded by the Emperor were still collecting their monthly silver in the palace, simply because Yun Jinnian had not returned from her travels.

Many women ruin their reputations by going out, but because Yun Jinnian possessed medical skills and had first left to detoxify the Emperor, aiding Prince Yanjun and Prince Rui as well, both the Emperor and

the Princess Residence had shown gratitude. Prince Rui had remained silent, leading many to speculate he was considering marriage...

This time she went out to treat her mother's illness.

Her reputation was not only unharmed by going out but had also garnered praise.

She had sent people to spread rumors, but those who left never returned, frightening her from making any more underhanded moves.

She had wanted to curse fiercely, but upon hearing Yun Zhen coming out of the bath, she quickly tempered her emotions and said tenderly, "It's good that she's back. A family should stay together after all. I just don't know what Mother is planning!"

"What is Mother planning?" Yun Zhen asked.

"The fourth sister and second aunt have returned to Capital City. However, they went to stay at the Han Residence!"

Yun Zhen frowned slightly, "The fourth sister, Jinnian?"

"Yes!"

Wang Yanran carefully gauged Yun Zhen's emotions and seeing that he didn't seem particularly pleased, she felt relieved.

"Let them return if they must. Uncle will handle this matter; we need not interfere!" He stepped forward to support Wang Yanran's arm, "You are pregnant, from now on, stay away from Jinnian."

"Ah?"

"Jinnian knows medical skills. While meant to save lives, if she harbors ill will, it's hard to guard against, especially given her exceptional skills. What if she hurts you and the child?"

Chapter 697: Reluctance in the Heart

Wang Yanran's eyes widened upon hearing this.

"What? No, that can't be!"

She had indeed not considered this possibility.

Yun Zhen's words suddenly filled her with a sense of anxiety.

She became more hostile towards Yun Jinnian.

In the past, it was due to beauty and status, but now she always felt like Yun Jinnian intended to harm her, to harm her child.

"One must always guard against others, Jinnian and the Yun Family are not close, you must never be alone with her in the future, and also stay away from her. I always feel that my cousin is very strange!"

"Ah, my husband, why do you say that?" Wang Yanran was extremely astonished.

She hadn't expected Yun Zhen to think of Yun Jinnian this way.

"She is so young and just a girl. She has been at home all these years, except for that one year she spent at Yingci'an, but after she returned, she knew medical skills. Even if she's really intelligent, how much could she learn in just over a year? So many people spend their entire lives and still achieve nothing!"

Yun Zhen spoke and sighed, "But no matter what, she has succeeded!"

Yet he remained stationary.

He thought his opportunity had come, only to realize the Emperor had completely forgotten about him.

Wang Yanran pondered, keeping her thoughts to herself, and instead, she coaxed Yun Zhen to sleep.

The two shifted the topic to other matters.

"Husband, the eldest Prince cousin told me there is a County Magistrate position available in a county, do you want to try for it?"

"County Magistrate?"

A petty seventh-rank official, how was that different from his current position?

"Let's wait until after the imperial examinations next year!"

Wang Yanran knew from his response that Yun Zhen was not interested, so she did not push him, "Hmm, my husband has great talent; next year, you will surely top the examination and become the number one scholar!"

Feeling his wife's trust, Yun Zhen felt greatly gratified. "I will surely make you envied by everyone you meet!"

No matter what these people were thinking, the return of Yun Jinnian and Mrs. Han brought joy to some in the Yun Residence.

For instance, Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingzhi, and Yun Qingqing were all happy.

Even though they didn't know how Yun Jinnian managed to get them into Songshan Academy, their father didn't stop them, and even gave them a hundred taels of silver every month in private. Aunt Su and Aunt Hua were also released.

But that did not hinder their admiration for Yun Jinnian.

Yun Jinnian returned in high spirits, also wanting to show her capabilities to her legitimate sister.

The three of them worked on embroidery through the night.

They had little silver in hand, saving and scrimping for a year to buy three colors of Yunyan Brocade.

Two were making handkerchiefs, one was making a sachet.

The patterns had been drawn long ago, and they had been embroidering for days, but some work was left, so they wanted to finish it overnight. When their legitimate sister returned, they planned to present it to her immediately.

Aunt Hua and Aunt Su were also contemplating whether to reveal the truth to Mrs. Han or not.

But would Mrs. Han listen?

What would happen to them after she heard it?

Aunt Su did not understand the differences between legitimate and illegitimate children before, but after all these years, she had come to realize that the difference between them was like that between heaven and earth.

At dawn

Han Residence

Chaoyang Academy

Yun Jinnian yawned, sitting up slowly yet gracefully, and swept her long black hair over her shoulder before slipping her feet into her shoes and standing up.

"Miss!"

Henuan entered the room with a basin of water.

"Hmm!"

"Miss, where would you like to have breakfast?"

Yun Jinnian slightly furrowed her brows at the question, "What's the matter?"

"The lady and the old master are up; they are talking in the study right now, and the young master is still asleep!"

Yun Jinnian laughed, "Tianci must be exhausted from the journey; let him sleep. I will eat breakfast at Chaoyang Academy before heading to the study. You go with Hemei, and take the opportunity to listen in!"

Chapter 698: Clear Objectives

"Yes!"

After breakfast, Yun Jinnian took Hemei and Henuan to visit Han Xuzi's study.

Inside the study, Mrs. Han was softly speaking to Han Xuzi about the situation over the past year.

At first, it was indeed difficult.

But as time passed, things gradually got better, and with the company of her son and daughter, she woke from her stupor.

Eating Snow Lotus every day, it would be strange if her health didn't improve.

Plus, with the scenery within the Moonwatching Sect being peerless, serene, and detached from worldly strife, and the respect Yun Jinnian had from everyone from top to bottom, her years of guilt slowly faded and she started to feel normal again.

Yun Jinnian stood at the door listening, her heart calm and at ease. Yet this year, her grievances and hatred had been buried even deeper.

Her worldview had broadened; competing in the backhouse was not true capability.

She stepped into the study, "Grandfather, mother!"

"Jinnian has arrived. Have you had breakfast?" Han Xuzy asked with gentle affection.

"I have!"

"Then sit down, let's talk!"

"Yes!"

Yun Jinnian sat next to Mrs. Han, and after the maid brought the tea and gave Mrs. Han her teacup,

Mrs. Han accepted it with a smile.

Only then did Yun Jinnian begin to drink her tea.

Han Xuzi motioned for Han Zhong to come in.

"Han Zhong, tell us!"

"Yes!"

Han Zhong relayed all the information he had gathered.

When he mentioned that a woman named Granny Jin had appeared by Xu Xinmo's side, his brow furrowed slightly, "What is the origin of this Granny Jin?"

"We have already sent someone to investigate, but it seems this Granny Jin knows some Daoist magic!"

Yun Jinnian's hand paused slightly, "Some Daoist magic?"

"Yes!"

Yun Jinnian suddenly laughed out loud, "It's like finding something without even searching, as if effortless after such extensive efforts. I sent people everywhere looking for her, but unexpectedly, she appeared on her own!"

Han Xuzi and Mrs. Han were astonished.

Han Tianci entered the study, "Sister, who did you find?"

"The person who switched my destiny!"

She had not believed it initially, but the Law Master had spoken with absolute certainty.

And after she was reborn and returned to her ten-year-old self, she believed him.

Han Xuzy then stood up, "Jinnian, explain clearly!"

His expression was very serious.

Having wandered the jianghu for many years, he too was aware of certain things.

There were indeed some Daoist practitioners in the jianghu who had the ability to change one's fate, so as soon as Yun Jinnian mentioned it, he believed her.

Mrs. Han too was anxious, her heart raised as she looked intently at Yun Jinnian.

"Originally in Nanjiang, when the Law Master saw me, he said I was destined for greatness, but my destiny had been partly stolen from me. He told me to seek a highly accomplished Daoist to help me swap it back. So, for the past year and more, I have been sending people to search for such a person. However, there are many in this world who are merely pretenders, and few indeed possess genuine ability!"

Han Xuzy nodded, "That Law Master..."

"The Law Master is old. If he were to lose his life in the process of swapping my fate, I would rather continue as I am now!"

She was unwilling to be loved and cherished by the Old Madam Yun, for by seeing what Yun's beloved Xu Xinmo turned into, it was clear how muddled, selfish, and self-centered the old lady was.

"Leave the matter of finding this person to me. Back in the day, I did know someone, and I obtained some fortuitous encounters through him. I will go look for him!"

Even if he was unwilling to come out of seclusion, his disciples probably had some ability too.

The Law Master was indeed getting on in years.

"By the way, how old is the Law Master now?"

"Over a hundred and sixty years old!"

Han Xuzy was momentarily stunned, "That is indeed a ripe old age!"

Someone who was over a hundred and sixty years old surely had extraordinary life experiences and wisdom. Tianci was indeed fortunate to have received his meticulous guidance; it was a blessing Tianci must have cultivated over several lifetimes.

Thinking of Granny Jin by Xu Xinmo's side, Han Xuzy spoke with a heavy tone, "Now that we know the person is in the Yun Residence, both of you must be extremely cautious when you return!"

Chapter 699: Han Teaches His Daughter

Yun Jinnian nodded.

However, Mrs. Han truly harbored deep-seated hatred for the Yun Family now.

Especially Xu Xinmo; such a young age, yet so viciously minded.

Which soul had Old Jin swapped Jinnian's fate with? Was it Xu Xinmo? If so, Xu Xinmo was indeed guilty of a most heinous crime.

This time when she went to Nanjiang, she did not bring Bai Que with her, but at this moment, Mrs. Han felt it was time to call Bai Que back.

Han Xuzy then gave additional instructions, the most important being to investigate Old Jin's background; what had she been doing all these years?

Han Zhong received the order and left.

The study was suddenly engulfed in silence.

Han Tianci fiddled with the Jade Paperweight, not uttering a single word.

Mrs. Han also remained silent, deep in thought.

Yun Jinnian wanted to speak several times but ended up saying nothing, overwhelmed with helplessness.

He had no choice but to say, "Alright, let's all be happy, New Year's is almost here!"

"Jinnian is right, the New Year is coming, let's be happy!" said Han Xuze. "Jinnian, why don't you and Tianci go out and have fun? Your grandfather and your mother have some words to exchange!"

"Yes!"

Yun Jinnian answered, calling Han Tianci out of the study.

Inside the study

Han Xuze looked at Mrs. Han, "Shuniang, do you realize your mistake now, after everything that happened?"

Mrs. Han suddenly burst into tears.

Standing up, she knelt before Han Xuze, "Father, your daughter knows her wrongs!"

"Tell me, where did you go wrong?" Han Xuzi asked sternly, without asking Mrs. Han to get up.

"As a mother, I have failed. All these years, I never fulfilled my responsibility as a mother. In earlier years, I was hot and cold toward Jinnian because I was upset with Yun Qi, and later on, after Tianci was born, I left her at the Yun Family, letting her suffer hardships and humiliations. I didn't do right by her; I forgot that she was still a child, without parental love. In the wolfish Yun Family, how was she supposed to live?"

As Mrs. Han spoke, she wept uncontrollably.

She knew she was wrong, truly wrong.

Especially since Jinnian's fate had been swapped – had her luck not been great...

The consequences were unimaginable.

"Since you know your mistake, you should also know what you must do. You have to make a clear choice between Yun Qi and your children. All this for a man, is he worth your madness..."

Mrs. Han hurriedly said, "Father, I've never gone mad for Yun Qi. Just thinking about how filthy he is, I regret that I was blind and didn't listen to you in the past!"

Han Xuzi sighed, helping Mrs. Han to stand, "Shuniang, you are my only daughter, you've always had whatever you wanted. My opposition to your marriage with Yun Qi wasn't just because of him; on the contrary, Yun Qi was very good back then. If he had a sensible mother, your life would have been happy and comfortable!"

Thinking it over, wasn't the misfortune of Shuniang and Yun Qi down to every single act of Old Madam Yun?

The Old Madam, Mrs. Zhu, was undeserving!

Mrs. Han looked at Han Xuzy in shock.

"But Shuniang, now you have a child of another man, and Yun Qi now has three daughters and three sons. Even if you got back together, could you really be without grudges? You couldn't, so since you can't, it's best to break it off!"

"Father, I'll listen to you!"

To divorce.

She had always been firm in this belief.

It's just that it seemed her family didn't quite believe her!

"Alright, wipe your tears, the New Year is coming. Let's cheer up for the New Year, and take Jinnian and Tianci out to buy some things!"

"Yes!"

Yun Jinnian and Han Tianci decided to go to the herbal garden to look at the medicinal herbs, walking leisurely.

"Sister!"

"?" Yun Jinnian looked at Han Tianci.

"Are you feeling unwell or experiencing discomfort in any way?" Han Tianci asked with concern.

Chapter 700: Arranging Trivial Matters

"No, I feel very well!"

In my past life, my fate had been changed, and I was so foolish and ignorant that I still ended up becoming the Empress.

In this life, I see everything clearly, holding power, people, and silver in my hands; I refuse to believe I can't outwit those thieves.

"Sister, if you feel unwell, you must tell me!"

"Rest assured, I will definitely not hide it from you!"

"I believe in you, sister!"

The siblings exchanged a smile.

One didn't want to worry her brother too much, while the other was concerned something might happen to his sister.

They each had their own thoughts, always putting the other first.

Even though it was nearly New Year's, Yun Jinnian was still busy.

She wrote visitation cards to be sent to the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence, the Duan Residence, and the residence of the Commandery Princess of Zhenguo, planning to visit the Commandery Princess's residence on the twenty-fourth, the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence on the twenty-twenty-fifth, and the Duan Residence on the twenty-sixth.

"Oh right, go inquire at the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence about the Second Lady's childbirth, whether it's a boy or a girl. We need to prepare the right gift for the occasion!"

As for the Duan Family, there were some medicinal herbs that they couldn't get hold of, which just happened to be available within my sect, so I brought some back, hoping to cure everyone's poison.

Regarding the mastermind behind the scenes, Yun Jinnian felt she couldn't let her guard down.

This person must have a deep-seated hatred against the Duan Family, otherwise, they wouldn't have employed such vicious poison.

But for the sake of Sister Ruan, I cannot stand by idly.

Hemei quickly went to make arrangements and soon returned to report, "It's a boy!"

Yun Jinnian nodded, "Then prepare a Red Gold Longevity Lock, a pair of Red Gold Bracelets, and there's that small box of gems I have, pack those, along with that box of ointment—the one that prevents eczema and mosquito bites!"

"Miss, it's still a long way off from summer!"

Yun Jinnian was brought back to her senses and laughed, "That's true, but babies wear a lot and are prone to eczema, so the ointment will be useful!"

"Then I will pack a box!"

"Pack a box!"

Yun Jinnian shook her head, her eyes starting to moisten.

This feeling was just like returning home, wishing to bring everything good back for everyone to share.

"There's no need to send gold and jewels to the Princess Residence, just take six stalks each of Thousand-Year Ginseng and Lingzhi over, as well as six bottles of Snow Lotus Pills; five pills per bottle will suffice!"

Although I have plenty in hand, these items are still highly valuable out in the open.

Giving too much might arouse suspicion.

An innocent man bears the blame for his wealth, I understand this principle well.

"Yes, I will prepare them right away!" Hemei said, and then remembered the Duan Family, "What should we send to the Duan Residence?"

"Just send those medicinal herbs I brought back!

Hemei nodded her head.

My young miss's gifts are truly thoughtful, reaching straight to the recipients' hearts.

"Yes!"

The visitation cards were sent out promptly and soon returned. The Commandery Princess of Zhenguo's residence sent over Nanny Song personally. Seeing Yun Jinnian, Nanny Song's smile was full of wrinkles at the corners of her eyes.

"Nanny Song..."

"This old servant has seen the Commandery Princess; may the Commandery Princess be blessed with peace and safety!" Nanny Song said, hurriedly bowing.

Yun Jinnian quickly assisted Nanny Song, "Nanny Song, please get up!"

Nanny Song was an elder, and also a nanny from the Commandery Princess's side; I couldn't afford such respect.

"Commandery Princess, today is our first meeting, and you have accepted my courtesy. In future meetings, this old servant will no longer bow to the Commandery Princess!"

Yun Jinnian began to laugh, "Nanny is still so fond of jesting!"

Assisting Nanny Song to sit, Hemei quickly served tea, and Yun Jinnian handed it to Nanny Song, "Nanny Song, please have some tea!"

"This trip was definitely worthwhile!" Nanny Song took a sip of the tea and coughed lightly, "Ah, truly fragrant. I've lived so long and yet have never tasted such delicious tea!"

Serving beside the Commandery Princess of Zhenguo, she had seen and experienced a lot, tasting many delicacies, but this tea, she had truly never had before!