

Indulgence 721

Chapter 721: Asking for a Promise

Han Xuzi finished speaking and burst into tears.

He was the sinner of the Han Family.

But he would rather be a sinner than let thousands of innocent lives in the Han Family be tragically lost.

Yun Jinnian and Han Tianci stood to one side, silent.

For the first time, Han Tianci understood that besides protecting his sister, he also had to protect the Han Family.

Only if the Han Family stood firm could he protect those he wished to protect.

The grandfather, son, and grandson stayed in the secret room for a while before returning to the study.

Knelt in front of Han Xuzi, Han Tianci said, "Grandfather, I want to study in Songshan Academy next year and participate in the imperial examination afterwards!"

"Good!"

Entering government service was a good thing.

Han Xuzi agreed and helped Han Tianci to his feet.

Mrs. Han had intended to make some pastries, but upon learning that Yun Jinnian had purchased many, she packed them and personally delivered them to the study.

After chatting for a while, she happily went to the kitchen to get busy.

As Han Xuzy watched, he sighed and said, "Your mother was without her own mother from a young age, and I raised her playing the roles of both father and mother. She was inevitably spoiled. She was so wilful as a child, yet she married Yun Qi. Yun Qi is good, I've never denied that, but he has a mother who doesn't know her place!"

"Many things were that old lady's doing, Jinnian, Tianci..."

"Grandfather!"

"Grandfather!"

Han Xuzy looked at the two children in front of him, "You are both good children. Your mother may have some quirks, but she truly loves you. In the future, no matter what she does, could you for my sake, not hold it against her, or perhaps give her another chance?"

Han Tianci remained silent.

Yun Jinnian took a deep breath, "Grandfather, rest assured, she is our mother, forever and always!"

"And you, Tianci?" asked Han Xuzy.

Han Tianci looked towards Yun Jinnian and earnestly said, "I feel the same as my sister!"

If his sister forgave, he would forgive.

Even if he didn't forgive, he wouldn't show it, so as not to make things difficult for his sister.

Perhaps it was a fellow feeling, but he felt especially close to his sister.

The moment he first saw her, he decided he would be close to his sister for a lifetime, and nothing and no one could change that.

Han Xuze was moved.

For dinner, Mrs. Han prepared a full table of dishes.

"Wow, it looks so delicious!" Han Tianci said with a delightful laugh as he pulled Mrs. Han to sit down.

The family of four ate happily together.

Mrs. Han looked at the two children with eyes full of tenderness and care.

She served this dish to one, that dish to another, and also served her elderly father, bustling about merrily.

"Eat slowly, don't choke!" Mrs. Han said gently.

She felt that days like these were truly wonderful.

The children were well-behaved and thoughtful, always remembering to visit her when they came back from outside and bringing her one or two things.

They kept her in their hearts.

She was the one who had been wrong in the past, but she would change!

After dinner, the family played a game of cards, with Han Tianci having good luck and winning continuously.

Yun Jinnian didn't lose much, while Han Xuzi lost miserably.

Mrs. Han also won a bit but it was far too little compared to Han Tianci's winnings.

"Grandfather, silver!"

The warm hall was lively.

Han Zhong stood to the side watching, the corners of his usually cold lips slowly forming a smile.

Hemei and Henuan bustled about, serving tea, pouring water, preparing snacks and fruits.

In such cold weather, there were still pomelos and tangerines.

Tianci liked to eat them, so Hemei and Henuan peeled them clean, leaving only the core, which was how Han Tianci liked to eat them best.

Hemei and Henuan, being older than Tianci, treated him like a younger brother despite the distinction between servant and master.

Compared to Zhengwen and Zhengwu, the two pageboys who stood to one side and hadn't spoken a word from beginning to end, Hemei and Henuan talked a lot more.

Chapter 722: Late Night Meeting

Prince Rui Residence

Chu Yu soaked in the bath, his eyes closed.

His mood wasn't good.

He knew that Yun Jinnian was angry.

He also knew he shouldn't have allowed Qu Mianke to stay in his residence, but when he sent Yun Jinnian back and returned, Qu Mianke had already settled in, and he couldn't just kick her out.

"Luo'er!"

"Yes, my lord?"

Chu Yu took a deep breath, "Tell me, was I wrong?"

"?"

Even though Luo'er was smart, he couldn't answer such an abrupt question!

"Come up with a way to get rid of Qu Mianke!"

Luo'er immediately understood, "My lord, to get someone to leave now, it's a bit difficult!"

Chu Yu glared at Luo'er.

Luo'er quickly added, "But, it's not impossible!"

"What's the solution?"

"Princess Mianke stays in the residence because her mother is not in the Capital City, but if her mother comes and she gets engaged, she won't be able to live in the Prince Rui Residence anymore, will she?"

"Find a way to get her engaged quickly, no, find her someone she likes. Think carefully, among those prominent families, isn't there a young man who is especially charming and handsome?"

"Yes, there definitely is!"

"Then find him, I want to make friends with him!"

Luo'er immediately grasped Chu Yu's intent.

"Don't worry, my lord, I will find someone swiftly!"

Chu Yu waved his hand, stood up, dressed, and decided to head to the Han Residence.

He had to see Yun Jinnian and explain.

Especially after seeing the look in Yun Jinnian's eyes today, he felt uneasy.

After finishing the card game, they each returned to their rooms to rest.

Yun Jinnian returned to Chaoyang Academy, changed into her clothes, and cuddled up in bed with a brazier, having sent Mrs. Yuan, Hemei, and Henuan to rest early.

In the vast bedroom, she was alone.

The room's heated floor was very warm; she didn't need the brazier, but Mrs. Yuan insisted she keep it, fearing she would catch cold.

Sounds of fighting came from outside.

Upon hearing the noise, Yun Jinnian sluggishly got out of bed, dressed, put on her cloak, and then opened the door to her room.

She saw Chu Yu being attacked by several people.

He wasn't at a disadvantage, but the Hidden Guard taught by the Wang Residence obviously weren't to be trifled with.

Without a word from Yun Jinnian, the Hidden Guard wouldn't let Chu Yu get close to Yun Jinnian; even without injuring Chu Yu, they could hold him off indefinitely.

Chu Yu wanted to speak several times but held back.

When Yun Jinnian thought it was enough, she took a deep breath, "Hold off!"

Hearing this, the Hidden Guard stopped.

"You may all go down!"

The Hidden Guard nodded and withdrew.

Chu Yu put away his sword and approached Yun Jinnian, asking cautiously, "Are you angry?"

"What do you think?" Yun Jinnian retorted.

At her words, Chu Yu grew nervous.

Seeing that Yun Jinnian's expression wasn't good, he asked softly, "I know I was wrong, and now I'm trying to find a way to remedy it!"

"Heh!" Yun Jinnian laughed out loud.

She turned and went into the room.

Chu Yu quickly followed.

Seeing Yun Jinnian taking off her cloak, he swiftly caught it and hung it on a nearby stand.

Yun Jinnian sat at the table, took a teapot from the small stove, poured a cup of hot water, and handed it to Chu Yu.

Chu Yu took it but dared not drink.

"Drink it, it's cold outside; warm up with a cup of water!"

"I'm not cold, it's very warm inside the room!"

"Chu Yu!"

"I'm here!"

Yun Jinnian looked at Chu Yu with his cautious and careful appearance and sighed softly, "Don't be nervous. Although I'm angry, I'm not confused. Besides, you already know you were wrong. So now tell me, where did you go wrong, and how do you intend to remedy it?"

Chapter 723: Soft-hearted in the End

Yun Jinnian's voice was light, yet when Chu Yu heard it, he felt somewhat afraid.

"Jinnian..."

"Put yourself in my shoes, if I lived under the same roof with another man for over a year, even if nothing happened, wouldn't you feel uneasy?" Yun Jinnian countered.

Chu Yu fell silent.

More than just uneasy, he thought about killing that man.

"Jinnian, I know I was wrong!"

"Since you know you were wrong, and I trust you, it's getting late. You should go back, I need to visit the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence again tomorrow!"

After visiting the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence, she didn't plan to have lunch there. She needed to make a trip to the Liao Family to see Yun Zihan.

In the Yun Family, the only person who could make her worry was Yun Zihan.

Chu Yu looked at Yun Jinnian and took a deep breath, "Then you should rest early!"

Although the two of them hadn't quarreled, Chu Yu still felt uneasy and didn't dare to stay and bother Yun Jinnian.

He stood up anxiously and got ready to leave.

"Chu Yu!" Yun Jinnian called out softly.

At her words, Chu Yu felt overjoyed.

"Wait for a moment!" Yun Jinnian got up and went into the inner chamber, opened her wardrobe, and took out a bundle.

Opening the bundle, inside was a black cloak.

The edges were lined with sable fur, very warm.

She had seen some fine sable fur in the storehouse while she was in Nanjiang, both large and pure white, without a single stray hair, and had taken some to make something for Chu Yu.

The black brocade was lined with silk wadding, each corner sewn very securely.

Holding the cloak, Yun Jinnian came out and handed it to Chu Yu, "This is for you. The night road is cold; don't catch a chill!"

She thought for a moment and then personally draped it over Chu Yu.

"Ayu, stay true to your heart, and I will always be by your side!"

Chu Yu reached out and held Yun Jinnian tightly in his arms, "Jinnian, I was certain about you when I was sixteen. After nearly five years of twists and turns, how could I forget!"

In those five years, he had encountered exceptionally beautiful women, but not one stirred his heart.

Nor made him want to risk his life to protect them. Yun Jinnian was the only one!

"I've always had faith in you, and this time is no different. I believe you can handle it well, but I hope there won't be a next time!"

"There definitely won't be a next time!"

When Chu Yu left, the feelings within him were indescribable.

His heart was warm, the wetness on his back, even his hands and feet were trembling.

Upon returning to the Prince Rui Residence, Chu Yu had Luo'er pack his belongings; he wanted to go find Princess Jinfeng, and also to bring her back along with him. Yun Jinnian would be coming of age next year, and having Princess Jinfeng by her side would be very helpful.

But after more than a year, he was unsure how Jinfeng was doing.

Even though her letters always said she was fine, without any trouble, he always felt like Jinfeng was hiding something from him.

However, before Chu Yu could even leave, he received a letter from Princess Jinfeng, sent by her people. She was already on her way to the Capital City, saying that she had a big surprise for him.

"Luo'er!"

"My lord?"

Chu Yu caressed the cloak Yun Jinnian had made for him, unable to put it down.

His heart felt happily warm.

"I always feel like Jinfeng is going to give me a shock!"

"..."

Luo'er didn't know what to say.

Princess Jinfeng was known to hold grudges; he didn't dare speak ill of her behind her back.

"Well, since Jinfeng is coming, I should go find Zhaowei. That lad apparently got a treasured item; I'll see if I can snatch it to give to Jinnian!"

Chu Yu added, "Go find out what it is, and don't let him fool me!"

"Yes!"

After Chu Yu left, Yun Jinnian sat up until dawn.

In her previous life, when it came to love, she was clueless; she worked hard to learn to be worthy of Chu Liange, but despite learning so much, if her feelings weren't sincere, it was all futile.

Chapter 724: A Short Rest

In this life, Chu Yu appeared when she was at her lowest, pulling her out of the mire. This kind of affection was naturally different.

Beyond love, there was gratitude.

Because of gratitude, she was often more forgiving towards Chu Yu.

Otherwise, she feared she would have long retreated into her shell, sealing herself away from the world.

At dawn, Mrs. Yuan came to find Yun Jinnian sitting by the window which startled her, "Miss, did you wake up early? Or did you not sleep last night?"

"I woke up early!"

"That's good, that's good!"

Mrs. Yuan immediately had someone prepare hot water and breakfast.

After washing up and changing into proper attire, Yun Jinnian paid her respects to Mrs. Han and Han Xuzi, and only then did she take Han Tianci out with her.

They headed straight for the Zhuangyong Marquis Residence.

Dai Hanmi was a year older than Yun Jinnian, and she had already come of age this year, soon turning sixteen. The Marchioness did not seem in a hurry about her marriage, as if she had plans of her own.

As soon as Yun Jinnian got out of the carriage, Dai Hanmi dashed over, "Jinnian, I've been eagerly awaiting your return!"

Yun Jinnian held Dai Hanmi's hand, "Sister Hanmi!"

"Quick, let's go inside. Grandmother and sister-in-law have been talking about you for a long time!" said Dai Hanmi as she turned to look at Han Tianci, "Tianci, feel free to wander!"

"Yes!" Han Tianci bowed with his hands clasped.

Dai Hanmi, pulling Yun Jinnian along, kept asking eagerly about her past year away.

"Everything has been fine!"

Old Madam Dai was still in good health. The second young madam was holding a baby boy in her arms, which Yun Jinnian immediately understood to be the second young madam's son.

"How old is he?"

"He was born on the third day of the first lunar month, almost a year old now. You must come for his birthday!"

"I'll definitely come!" Yun Jinnian said as she took a brocade box from Hemei and handed it to the second young madam, "Sister-in-law, this is for the little one!"

"Why give him so much? Don't pamper him to the point of spoiling him!"

"He's still young, it's fine to spoil him a bit!"

After chatting for a while, Yun Jinnian took Old Madam Dai's pulse.

"Grandmother, you are in good health. Keep it up, and you shall live to a ripe old age!"

Having aged and recently recovered from a serious illness, Old Madam Dai took her health more seriously than ever.

"You child, your words are sweeter than ever. Stay for lunch, won't you? It would be nice to have a chat," said Old Madam Dai.

Although Dai Hanbo had left home disheartened, no one bore any grudge against Yun Jinnian.

Love in this world cannot be forced.

"No, I have to drop by my second sister's place later. With the New Year approaching, I want to visit everyone so I can spend a peaceful holiday with my maternal grandfather. He's been by himself at home for more than a year now, and it's quite lonely!"

Hearing this, Old Madam Dai no longer insisted on keeping Yun Jinnian.

"That's also good. Now that you're back, and we are both in the Capital City, we'll have more time to spend together!"

"Thank you for your understanding, Grandmother!"

Yun Jinnian was about to leave, but Dai Hanmi was reluctant to see her go.

She would be sixteen soon, and her marriage would likely be settled.

Whether she would marry within the Capital City or outside of it, her father and mother had not yet decided.

She didn't really care, because she didn't know who the other party was or what they looked like anyway, she only hoped they wouldn't be too terrible.

Of course, if he had several concubines or mistresses, it wouldn't bother her; they could forget about ever entering her room.

The best these concubines and mistresses could do was to stay out of her sight, otherwise, she wouldn't hesitate to sell them off.

"Jinnian..."

"Sister Hanmi?"

"How about we meet up properly at Huiquan Tower another day?" Dai Hanmi said, her eyes slightly reddening.

"Sure, we'll also invite sister Ruan and sister Chen!"

"There's snow on the roads now, so take your time. Don't rush!"

Chapter 725: Liao Family's Female Cousin

Watching Yun Jinnian leave, Dai Hanmi turned and wiped her face.

Men of the Dai Family never took concubines, yet she had no idea what her future husband would be like.

If only she could go find her third brother.

Together with the third brother, they could have roamed the world with swords in hand, but she couldn't break her mother and grandmother's hearts any longer.

Yun Jinnian, sitting inside the carriage, was also filled with emotion, "Sister Hanmi is a good girl!"

"Good girls will be happy!" Han Tianci said.

"Yes, good girls will be happy. Sister Hanmi is too. She is certain to marry a satisfactory gentleman, and from then on, enjoy connubial bliss..." Yun Jinnian said, pausing ever so slightly.

Lifting the carriage curtain, "The snow is getting heavier!"

"A snow year, a rich year, it's a good sign!"

Yun Jinnian laughed.

The carriage clattered along, soon arriving at the courtyard of Liao Shijie and Yun Zihan.

With the examination coming up next year, Liao Shijie and a few close friends were studying diligently.

Yun Zihan was busy managing the household and taking care of Liao Shijie, as well as several other scholars. In addition, being three months pregnant, she was currently resting on the chaise longue.

Liao Shijie was doing business with Feng Wushuang. The farm had seen good returns, and the shop was on the right track. Liao Shijie and a few fellow scholars from his hometown had also started selling calligraphy and paintings, and they no longer relied on money from the residence. Occasionally, they could afford to buy a table's worth of good food to share, the discussions enriching everyone involved.

It had been over a year since the passing of her aunt, and Liao Shijie was very kind, not taking any concubines or mistresses. Since all household affairs were decided by her, she was in good spirits, and hence, after a miscarriage of her first child, it took her a while to conceive the current one.

Yun Zihan was extremely cautious.

But upon hearing the old servant announce, "Miss Yun of the Yun Residence has come to visit!"

Yun Zihan, excited, quickly got down from the chaise longue, "Bring me my cloak, I want to go and welcome my younger sister!"

"Madam, Madam, please be careful, don't hurry!"

A woman in blue quickly walked in, "Cousin sister-in-law, what is the matter with you?"

"Chuxi, my fourth sister has come to see me!"

Xun Chuxi was a cousin of Liao Shijie's late aunt. With no one else left in her family, she sought refuge at the Liao Residence, and Madam Liao had sent someone to bring her to the Capital City.

The girl, about fifteen or sixteen, seeing Liao Shijie's utmost care for Yun Zihan, began to get ideas.

Liao Shijie, however, remained quiet.

Yun Zihan, on the other hand, talked to her at length.

Telling her that even as Liao Shijie's cousin, she could only ever be a concubine, and if she behaved with propriety and stability, she might have a peaceful life.

If she did not remain content and keep to her place, she would end up with nothing in the end.

In the Capital City, a concubine was but a plaything, a woman who could be sold by the main wife at will, and even the children she bore might not have much of a future.

Not every concubine could be like her, with a kind cousin to lend a hand.

The dirty truth between the legitimate and the illegitimate finished, Yun Zihan left Xun Chuxi crying in fear.

For the sake of Liao Shijie, Yun Zihan felt some compassion for Xun Chuxi and gently persuaded her, suggesting they arrange for her to marry a scholar from the front courtyard and become the principal wife, even promising to help with her dowry.

Xun Chuxi, timid but sensible, was frightened by Yun Zihan's words and went to see Liao Shijie.

Liao Shijie wouldn't undermine Yun Zihan's authority, and since he had no intention of living a life of polygamy, his words were even more severe than Yun Zihan's.

This truly frightened Xun Chuxi and she dared not harbor any more thoughts.

She stayed obediently by Yun Zihan's side, waiting to be married off as a principal wife.

Chapter 726: Asking About the Past

"Cousin-in-law, is your fourth sister the one known as Princess Yijia?" Xun Chuxi asked.

"Yes, that's her. Chuxi, let's hurry!" Yun Zihan was very anxious.

In the Yun Family, only Jinnian still remembered her.

Now she had completely severed ties with the Yun Family, never to meet again until death.

"Cousin-in-law, look at the snow outside. You're pregnant, what if you slip and fall? Shall I go and welcome Princess Yijia for you?" Xun Chuxi asked quietly.

She meant well.

After her initial excitement, Yun Zihan calmed down and thought about it. "Alright, you go. I'll wait here!"

"Yes!"

Xun Chuxi was also very curious about Yun Jinnian.

Firstly, a cousin finding a husband for her cousin was quite strange, but it had somehow worked out.

And now, her cousin and cousin-in-law were exceptionally affectionate toward each other.

Her cousin's academic progress was even more astoundingly rapid.

All these could not be separated from her cousin-in-law's contributions and hard work!

When Xun Chuxi saw Yun Jinnian, she instantaneously felt embarrassed and inferior, but she still mustered the courage to step forward and pay her respects, "Greetings, Princess Yijia!"

"You?" Yun Jinnian looked at Xun Chuxi indifferently.

Who is this?

"I am Xun Chuxi, Liao Shijie's cousin. My cousin-in-law was originally going to personally welcome Princess Yijia, but she is pregnant and with the snow today, I was afraid something might happen to her, so I volunteered to come and greet the Princess!"

Hearing this, Yun Jinnian's guard was slightly lowered.

"You lead the way!"

This was her first visit to the Liao Residence; previous plans to visit had never come to fruition.

It had to be said, Yun Zihan knew how to live; she kept the house clean and decorated everything with care.

The New Year was approaching, and red lanterns were hung everywhere. There were not many maids or old servants, but they all seemed to be diligent.

When Yun Zihan saw Yun Jinnian, her eyes immediately reddened.

Yun Jinnian approached and took Yun Zihan's hand, "Sister, how has your health been?"

"Good, good!"

Yun Zihan replied, turning to Han Tianci on the side, "Tianci!"

"Second sister-in-law, I greet you respectfully!"

Yun Zihan looked at Han Tianci with great affection. "Someone, go and call the master over!"

The maid immediately went to carry out the order.

Yun Zihan then said to Xun Chuxi, "Chuxi, go to the kitchen and ask them to prepare more dishes!"

Xun Chuxi responded and left eagerly.

She was still quite happy in her heart.

She had actually met the Princess!

Yun Zihan, holding Yun Jinnian's hand, asked anxiously, "How has your past year been living outside?"

"All is well!"

"That's good, that's good. When I found out you were taking the second aunt out for treatment, I had prepared some medicinal herbs to send to the Han Residence, but you had already left!"

"Grandfather mentioned that you had the intention, second sister!"

Yun Zihan shook her head. "What I've done for you doesn't even amount to one ten-thousandth of what you've done for me. When Auntie was alive, she always said we should properly thank you, but before we could, she passed away!"

Remembering Auntie Cui, Yun Jinnian also felt a deep sense of loss.

A very kind woman.

Yet fated to become nothing more than a concubine.

But Auntie Cui had been kind to her, something she would never forget.

And then she remembered the word Auntie Cui had written on the palm of her hand before she had left.

"Second sister, speaking of Auntie Cui, I went to see her before she passed. She wrote the character 'kang' in my palm. Do you know what this 'kang' character represents? What does it mean?" Yun Jinnian asked softly.

She didn't expect that Yun Zihan would know much about it.

Yet Yun Zihan's expression suddenly changed, and she gripped Yun Jinnian's hand. "Jinnian..."

"Second sister, don't force yourself. I actually haven't thought deeply about it. I just felt like it was Auntie Cui's blessing for me!"

Yun Zihan shook her head slightly. "It's not like that..."

Chapter 727: A Slight Hint

Yun Zihan spoke hesitantly, clearly struggling with uncertainty.

Although a woman, she possessed both integrity and trust.

Yun Jinnian didn't know how to speak of the excess things, but she also couldn't bear the thought of Jinnian being unaware of anything. Faced with a promise and her sister, she didn't hesitate to choose Yun Jinnian and after a moment's thought, she said, "I wonder if Fourth Sister still remembers Third Sister!"

"Third Sister?"

Yun Tai, the sister rumored to have been kidnapped by human traffickers?

As for this Third Sister, Yun Jinnian knew nothing at all.

What was her relationship with her?

Yun Zihan nodded slightly, signaled Yun Jinnian to have some pastries, and said no more. At least she had given a hint. Jinnian was so smart that she would surely think of more. Even if she couldn't figure it out, she would have someone look into it, right?

Yun Jinnian also knew that Yun Zihan wouldn't mention this person for no reason. She took a mental note to ask the wet nurse, Mrs. Yuan, about it when she returned home.

As the sisters talked, Liao Shijie approached quickly.

As her husband, he naturally knew the great pressure Yun Zihan was under and her disheartened mood.

Now that Jinnian had returned, he hoped that his young sister-in-law would spend more time at his mansion to keep his wife company.

There was also another reason, and that was Feng Wushuang's intentions.

He hadn't noticed at first, but after Feng Wushuang inquired several times, despite her careful concealment, he saw through some clues.

He understood why Feng Wushuang had initially approached him and supported him in every possible way, even partnering with him in business.

But regardless of Feng Wushuang's motives, he had indeed gained a lot. Feng Wushuang had never had any ill intentions towards him, and as a trusted good friend, he naturally wanted to give her a hand.

"Fourth Sister!" Liao Shijie greeted with a clasped fist, then glanced at Han Tianci and gave a slight bow.

Han Tianci followed with a clasped fist of his own.

Not too fond of socializing, he simply called out lightly, "Brother-in-law!"

Yun Jinnian quickly stood up and curtsied towards Liao Shijie, "Brother-in-law!"

Liao Shijie smiled, "It's rare for Fourth Sister to visit, why not stay a few more days at home!"

"I'm afraid that won't be possible this time, but after the New Year, I will definitely come and spend more time with Second Sister!" said Yun Jinnian, holding Yun Zihan's hand.

"Then let's follow Fourth Sister's arrangements. When you are free, do come to keep your Second Sister company. She has only you as a close kin!"

"Yes!"

Yun Zihan pulled Yun Jinnian to sit down, and Liao Shijie also took a seat nearby.

Han Tianci, not liking such formalities, excused himself to the front courtyard, and Liao Shijie hurriedly had a servant lead Han Tianci there.

"Next year is the important examination. Brother-in-law, if you need any books, just send someone to the Han Family. My maternal grandfather has quite a few, and I didn't know which ones you needed today, so I just brought a few with me," said Yun Jinnian as Hemei quickly brought over a brocade box.

Yun Jinnian took the brocade box and handed it to Liao Shijie.

Liao Shijie received it with immense gratitude and couldn't wait to open it, "My heavens, to think it's 'Records of the Ten Continents' and 'The Six Secret Teachings'! I've been searching for these books for a long time without success!"

Part of the problem was a lack of silver, and the other was a lack of connections. Those who possessed these books were unwilling to gift or sell them, and even to borrow or scribe, many were reluctant.

It was still a matter of insufficient family heritage.

Yun Zihan's eyes crinkled into a smile.

Even without an aunt, she had a Fourth Sister who treated her just as before.

Yun Jinnian took a sip of tea before speaking, "Brother-in-law, there are a few more books below, don't you want to take a look?"

These books had already become rare copies, and it was no wonder considering the deep heritage of the Han Family.

Yun Jinnian wouldn't really use the true rare editions, but had simply taken ancient paper to create a copied version.

Chapter 728: Too much happiness

In the study rooms of Nanjiang, there were also many unique and precious books. Yun Jinnian would not bring these rare books back but instead would copy them meticulously and bind them into volumes.

This time, he brought back several chests full of them.

The ones given to Liao Shijie were all copied in Nanjiang.

There were also some in the Han Family study, but they had to be searched for.

"I'm so happy!" Liao Shijie said, picking up a few more books from beneath the others.

"'Awakening to the World through Perpetual Tales', 'Enlightenment to the World through Didactic Tales', 'Warning to the World through Universal Tales', 'Shenjian', 'Zhonglun'!" Liao Shijie's voice trembled with each title he read out.

Yun Zihan had read some books, but she did not know about these.

Liao Shijie's face was flushed with delight, his hands shaking slightly as he held the books, "Fourth Sister..."

He had dreamt of owning these books.

And now, Yun Jinnian had truly given him what he had long desired!

"I won't lie to you, brother-in-law, these are not the original editions but copies. I hope you won't find them disappointing!"

"Not at all, not at all, I will cherish them greatly!" Liao Shijie hurriedly responded, flipping eagerly through the books.

Yun Zihan couldn't help but smile at the sight.

She had never known her husband to have such a childlike side.

Grateful, she looked at Yun Jinnian, who smiled and said, "Second Sister, let brother-in-law have a look first. Would you take me for a tour around your residence?"

"Sure!"

Yun Zihan left a maid to attend to Liao Shijie, in case he wanted some tea, and took Yun Jinnian on a tour of the residence.

"Your brother-in-law is not usually like this!" Yun Zihan felt compelled to explain.

"I know. It's good that brother-in-law is so studious. Second Sister, just wait, you'll be the wife of an Imperially Accredited Scholar soon!"

Yun Zihan laughed, "I'll take that as a blessing. Next year is the grand examination. I don't dare to put too much pressure on him, but now, with these books you've given, he will surely gain more confidence!"

As Yun Zihan spoke, she paused briefly, "Fourth Sister, I know your maternal family has deep resources. Could you possibly..."

"It won't work to go to my grandfather's house, I'm afraid. My grandfather is quite reclusive. You can tell by the fact that he never hosts banquets or attends others'. However, if brother-in-law needs any books, just have him write a list and send it over. I'll have Tianci find the books and send them. He can just copy them and then send the original books back!" Yun Jinnian spoke candidly.

Yun Zihan was also overjoyed, "That's wonderful, though it's a bit of trouble for Tianci!"

Unique editions are hard to come by; even copying them holds great value.

Although Liao Shijie has yet to earn an official title, having a few unique manuscripts will certainly raise his stature among scholars.

No matter how you look at it, it's a gain for Liao Shijie.

"It's no trouble. Tianci can come over and learn a lot from brother-in-law and the other scholars!"

"They'd consider themselves lucky!"

But Yun Zihan knew that Yun Jinnian was paving the way for Han Tianci.

Nowadays, wherever she went, she brought Han Tianci along. With Yun Jinnian as such a supportive elder sister, if Tianci was willing to work hard, his future was incredibly bright.

The sisters were close to begin with.

Having not seen each other for over a year, they had much to talk about.

Inevitably, they discussed the three shops given by the Duan Family. The original plan was to go into business together, but due to Mrs. Han's illness and Yun Jinnian's need to travel, they decided to rent them out.

Yun Jinnian had intended to discuss business with Yun Zihan, but seeing that she was pregnant, he decided against mentioning it.

"Running a shop is both worrisome and laborious. Jinnian, you should focus entirely on your medical skills. Your brother-in-law is preparing for the imperial examinations, and I'm with child. I'm willing, but I don't have the capacity!"

Chapter 729: Gentle Persuasion

Yun Jinnian nodded, "Second sister speaks sense; there's no rush on this matter!"

Originally, she had little interest in opening a shop, but since Tianci wanted to, she wholeheartedly supported it.

They talked about Yun Muyou again.

"I don't know what she's thinking, actually using her dowry to support that entire big family. You should also be careful not to get involved with them. The Marquess Yuanshen is somewhat acceptable, but his mother is nothing but trouble. I've heard that she had her eyes on you..."

The rest of her words were not suitable for Yun Zihan to say out loud. Despite being from the Marquis Residence, she truly looked down upon it.

Yun Jinnian was stunned for a moment, "That day at the Imperial Palace, she indeed tried to get close, and I thought it was because of Yun Muyou. So that was what it meant!"

"The nerve of her!"

Married and managing her own household, Yun Zihan had grown quite formidable.

Yun Jinnian smiled, "We don't see each other often anyway; no need to bother about it!"

"That's true, but just be wary of her slinging mud on you!"

"Thank you for the reminder, second sister. I'll remember it!"

As they walked, Xun Chuxi approached briskly, her cheeks plump and rosy, "Sister-in-law, Commandery Princess!"

Yun Jinnian smiled lightly, "It seems you're a bit older than me. If you're willing, you can call me Jinnian, just like second sister does!"

Xun Chuxi immediately nodded in excitement, "Yes, yes, yes!"

Yun Jinnian watched with a smile, unaware that the Liao Family had a Xun Chuxi.

"Then Sister Jinnian, continue talking with sister-in-law. I, I'll go check on the kitchen!" After saying this, Xun Chuxi departed impolitely after performing a curtsy.

Yun Jinnian watched her and then asked Yun Zihan, "Sister, what are your plans for her?"

"She had a fancy for Shijie at first, but after I talked to her and your brother-in-law cajoled and deceived her, she set aside that thought. Now, she wants to marry a decent and honest man as his principal wife. I think the students in the front yard are all very good candidates. I've asked your brother-in-law to carefully observe who has a good character, a smaller family, as Chuxi is too naïve. Marrying into a big family, she would suffer!" Yun Zihan said, feeling a touch of pity.

Chuxi was a year younger than her and had not seen much of the world.

She was timid when she arrived at the residence, and it took some time to coax her into her current demeanor.

Although not her sister, she was the only relative of Shijie's mother, and Yun Zihan could not possibly neglect her.

"Second sister, how about I have Nanny Rong come teach her the rules?"

Yun Zihan was overjoyed at the suggestion, "That would be fantastic. Your brother-in-law's friends are all talented, and Elder Brother Feng often visits to provide guidance. Sometimes, they can even go to the Elder Residence. Elder Chen provides personal advice and, given these opportunities, their future is bound to be bright. Their wives certainly cannot be timid!"

Of course, Yun Zihan was aware that Shijie and his companions could enter the Elder Residence partly because of Yun Jinnian's influence.

Even if she hadn't said a word, but with her friendship with Chen Danyan, Danyan would often speak of her in front of her grandfather.

And then there was Feng Wushuang...

Thinking of Feng Wushuang, Yun Zihan remembered what Shijie told her.

Her youngest sister, unmatched in beauty and grace, with exquisite medical skills and a compassionate heart, would naturally be liked by a remarkable man like Feng Wushuang.

"Then, after the New Year, I'll have Nanny Rong come over!"

"Excellent!"

"Sister, you've arranged this estate quite exquisitely!"

Yun Zihan smiled, "The objects are not valuable, so I had to focus on the details!"

Yun Jinnian knew Yun Zihan felt aggrieved.

Some of the Liao Family's betrothal gifts were indeed good, but they were exchanged for Yun Muyou's use by Mrs. He.

It was unclear if Yun Muyou knew or did not know about it.

"Our own home, where husband and wife live harmoniously, is a place of happiness, even if it's a thatched cottage. But if the husband and wife are not in harmony, even a golden palace can't provide happiness!"

Chapter 730: Cousin Chuxi

Yun Jinnian spoke softly to console her.

Yun Zihan nodded, "That's the logic, but I still feel some hatred in my heart. I don't mind the change in my dowry, but my aunt, she is so innocent!"

Yun Jinnian took Yun Zihan's hand, "What goes around comes around, heaven watches what we do. Sooner or later, retribution will come. Sister, just wait and see!"

Yun Zihan nodded.

"Yes, I'll wait for those people to get their retribution!"

As the sisters talked, Xun Chuxi had already prepared lunch.

It was all set in the dining hall, Chuxi came over beaming with joy.

"Cousin-in-law, Sister Jinnian, lunch is ready. Let's go and have lunch!" Xun Chuxi said, and then asked Yun Zihan, "Cousin-in-law, is cousin joining us?"

"Together, did anyone go to invite Tianci from the outer courtyard?" Yun Zihan asked.

"I've already sent someone. Today I took charge and ordered extra dishes for the outer courtyard as well, hee hee hee!"

Yun Zihan was momentarily taken aback but then smiled, "You did the right thing, let's go!"

Xun Chuxi quickly linked arms with Yun Zihan, sneaking a glance at Yun Jinnian and started to giggle.

As a country girl, she couldn't believe her luck to be in the Capital City, let alone calling a Commandery Princess her sister.

"Hee hee hee!"

Xun Chuxi giggled to herself.

Yun Zihan looked on and sighed softly.

In the presence of Yun Jinnian, she still left some dignity for Xun Chuxi, not scolding her for laughing like that.

When Chuxi first arrived, she spoke with a strong provincial accent, called Xun Erniu, and Yun Zihan had Liao Shijie help her pick a new name and teach her the language of the Capital City. It took a lot of effort for Chuxi to achieve the progress she had made.

She had indeed come a long way.

When they reached the dining hall, Liao Shijie and Han Tianci were already there, chatting. Shijie didn't expect that Tianci, the same height as him, was not yet ten years old, yet he had a wide range of knowledge.

He knew things from all over, and when he got excited, he would laugh heartily, truly like a ten-year-old child.

"Sister!" Han Tianci called out happily upon seeing Yun Jinnian.

Yun Jinnian nodded her head.

The lunch was very sumptuous.

There were already guidelines in the big kitchen, and with the New Year fast approaching, the household had plenty of everything. Chuxi had ordered plenty of dishes at first, and later added a few more.

However, they were mostly meat.

Yun Jinnian didn't like meat much, but Han Tianci thoroughly enjoyed it.

Liao Shijie kept serving Yun Zihan dishes and scooped up half a bowl of soup for her mid-meal.

"Six parts full will do, you can eat more later!" He said tenderly.

Yun Jinnian and Han Tianci looked on and burst into laughter.

Xun Chuxi too started to giggle.

Yun Zihan's face reddened, and she glared at Liao Shijie, "I know!"

Many pregnant women tend to overeat, resulting in the baby growing too large, which not only leads to a difficult childbirth but also a high risk of complications.

For this reason, Liao Shijie was adamant about not letting her overeat, though she ate several meals a day.

Despite this, the meal was still extremely pleasant.

After the meal, Liao Shijie took Han Tianci to the front courtyard. At first, Tianci said he was just going to walk around in the courtyard and did not intend to disturb anyone.

Xun Chuxi directed the servants to clean up.

Yun Zihan shook her head slightly, "Chuxi, come sit!"

Xun Chuxi walked over to Yun Zihan with a smile, "Cousin-in-law!" and then called out to Yun Jinnian in a low voice, "Sister Jinnian!"

Her heart was filled with joy.

Yun Jinnian smiled and nodded, lifting her tea to take a gentle sip, the picture of grace.

Xun Chuxi watched, envious and giggling with delight.

"There are maids and old women at home to do these tasks; you only need to give the orders, no need to do everything yourself. Also, don't laugh like that, showing all of your teeth!"

As she spoke, Yun Zihan started to worry about Chuxi's prospects for marriage.