

Indulgence 761

Chapter 761: The Elder's Illness

Chen the Senior Official, whose students are found everywhere under the heavens and who serves as the current Emperor's mentor and the late Emperor's study companion—as well as being the top scholar of his time—maintained an air of authority even in illness.

It was an authority that made people dare not look him in the eye.

But Yun Jinnian did not dare sit down.

Lady Dowager Chen watched with a smile, "Jinnian, take his pulse first!"

"Yes!"

In the face of her elders, Yun Jinnian dared not neglect the proper respect and obedience.

Lady Dowager Chen stood up, giving up her seat.

Yun Jinnian wiped her hands before sitting down at the bedside and taking his pulse.

The Senior Official extended his wrist, placing it on the pulse pillow.

Yun Jinnian raised her hand and took the Senior Official's pulse with great care.

Only after a good while did she withdraw her hand.

"How is it?" Lady Dowager Chen asked eagerly.

"With age comes various inevitable health issues, but fortunately, the Senior Official has always maintained his health well. This time it was a rush of intense emotion that caused harm to his root vitality. He must be well cared for from now on!"

Yun Jinnian's words were not much different from those of the Imperial Physician from the Imperial Medical Bureau.

The Senior Official shook his head slightly.

Actually, he had a feeling that his days were numbered.

Especially after this bout of illness.

Lady Dowager Chen saw this and hurriedly asked Chen Danyan to invite Yun Jinnian to stroll in the garden, knowing the Lady Dowager wanted to send her away.

There were some things she dared not say too plainly, as after all, the Lady Dowager was advanced in years and could not withstand the shock.

So, rising to her feet and curtsying, she followed Chen Danyan out of the room.

However, they did not go to the garden but instead to Chen Danyan's boudoir.

Chen Danyan dismissed the maid, leaving just her and Yun Jinnian alone.

"Sister Jinnian, tell me the truth, how is my grandfather really doing?" Chen Danyan asked anxiously.

Yun Jinnian took a deep breath, "Not to deceive you, sister, the Senior Official does not have much time left!"

Upon hearing this, Chen Danyan felt dizzy and weak, staggering back several steps; her body struck the table, and she collapsed onto the cushioned stool.

"How could this be, grandfather, he..."

"It's the same thing, advanced age. Plus, he took this blow, vomited blood, and on top of that, when the Senior Official was young, he must have suffered a serious internal injury that damaged his internal organs. Back then, he should have been properly taken care of, but in the end, it still harmed his root vitality. Vomiting blood this time has brought out the latent illness!" Yun Jinnian said solemnly.

The prescriptions provided by the Imperial Physician were rather conservative, thus they didn't have much effect on the Senior Official.

Chen Danyan clutched at her chest, struggling for a long time before she asked softly, "Then, if you took over his treatment, how long could my grandfather have?"

"At most, no more than three months!"

Hearing this, Chen Danyan immediately burst into tears.

"It's all Chu Renzhi, that bastard's fault!"

Indeed, this matter was inextricably linked to Chu Renzhi. If he had not instructed Chu Yu to call off the engagement, the Senior Official would not have fallen ill from anger.

Yun Jinnian didn't know how to console Chen Danyan, so she could only offer a handkerchief, "Sister Chen, I will do my utmost!"

Chen Danyan looked at Yun Jinnian, taking a long while before saying, "Jinnian, please, I..."

A thousand words could not compare to the heartache and discomfort she felt at that moment.

At first, there was resentment towards Chu Renzhi, but now, Chen Danyan harbored hatred in her heart.

If not for Chu Renzhi's betrayal, would her grandfather have been angered like this?

In this lifetime, she was determined not to marry Chu Renzhi.

The engagement had to be called off as soon as possible!

"Don't worry, sister!"

In truth, if the Senior Official had not been angered to the point of vomiting blood, he could have lived another year or two, but now, truly, three months were already the limit.

"Princess Yijia, the Old Master requests your presence!"

From outside the door, came the maid's gentle and respectful voice.

Chapter 762: Elder's Request

Chen Danyan hurriedly sniffled and wiped her tears with a handkerchief.

Yun Jinnian watched her, feeling particularly heartbroken.

The two walked out of the room together, entering the vast courtyard of the elder Chen. When the old Madam Chen saw Chen Danyan, she knew that the girl had been crying.

Being advanced in age and having witnessed much, including white-haired people sending off those with black hair, Madam Chen knew that the condition of Elder Chen meant his days were numbered.

And in that moment, Chen Danyan's red and swollen eyes, along with her distraught appearance, further confirmed Madam Chen's suspicions.

Taking a deep breath, "Jinnian, you go in alone!" she said.

"Yes!"

Yun Jinnian gently pushed the door and entered the room.

Elder Chen was reclining alone on the Arhat bed.

Seeing Yun Jinnian coming in, he beckoned her over. When Yun Jinnian approached, he pointed to the embroidered stool in front of him, "Sit!"

Yun Jinnian carefully sat down.

"What's the matter, are you afraid of this old man who's about to kick the bucket?" Elder Chen asked with a smile.

Yun Jinnian shook her head slightly, "Not entirely afraid!"

"Oh? What else is there?"

"There's also respect and admiration. Despite being a woman, I have the utmost admiration for the elder's talents, so I am cautious and dare not presumptuous!"

Upon hearing this, Elder Chen suddenly burst into laughter.

He began to understand why his granddaughter liked Yun Jinnian.

She was a girl with clear thoughts.

"Since that's the case, tell me, how is my condition?" Elder Chen spoke seriously while looking at Yun Jinnian, "Don't delude me. I may be old, but I'm not senile!"

Yun Jinnian took a deep breath.

She rested her hands on her knees, joining them together, and pursed her lips.

Her heart was in turmoil.

But as Elder Chen said, he was only old, not senile.

Whether what she said was true or false, he could guess.

He was too shrewd.

"Elder, I dare not deceive you, your time is short!" Yun Jinnian said, taking another deep breath.

Elder Chen was startled, then laughed, "Finally, someone who dares to speak the truth!"

Yun Jinnian cast her eyes down.

"Those in the Imperial Medical Bureau – a group lacking responsibility – only comfort me, saying that with proper rest, I'll be fine. But I know my own body!" Elder Chen said, seemingly relieved.

Not much time left - the debts of my youth should be properly repaid.

Yun Jinnian remained silent, not daring to join the conversation carelessly.

Elder Chen looked at the top of Yun Jinnian's head and chuckled, "Tell me, how many months do I have left? Do I have two?"

Yun Jinnian nodded.

"That's good, that's good. With two months, everything can be managed," Elder Chen said, smiling warmly and kindly, then asked, "Could you possibly prepare that kind of potent medicine, which after taking, makes one appear very healthy, able to sustain for a month or two like a normal person?"

A potent medicine?

Yun Jinnian looked up sharply, staring at Elder Chen in astonishment.

Elder Chen did not hide his intentions from Yun Jinnian and said lightly, "In the past, I always wanted to climb higher and higher, neglecting my wife significantly. Throughout these years, she has accompanied me through thick and thin, enduring much hardship, yet I have never truly been by her side. If I could steal two more months of life, I would like to genuinely accompany her once, to repay her years of unrepentant devotion and tender companionship!"

After finishing, Elder Chen looked at Yun Jinnian, then sighed, "A child like you, how could you understand? I'm speaking nonsense!"

Yun Jinnian pressed her lips together; she wanted to say that she did understand.

How could she possibly not understand!

In her previous life, she wanted to accompany Chu Liange in the same way, but what was the outcome? Chu Liange and Zhu Yan joined hands to ruin her completely!

"Girl, you still haven't said whether you can prepare it or not!"

Chapter 763: Time is Short

He was old, but not foolish.

Yun Jinnian seemed naive and innocent, yet he always felt this girl was no simple matter.

At least her thoughts were deeper than his granddaughter's, her schemes more formidable than his granddaughter's.

"Elder, I can prepare the concoction, but I cannot do so based solely on your word," she said.

"What if you include me?" Chen Danyan's grandmother entered, her back ramrod straight.

Yun Jinnian looked at the old lady silently.

Yet Elder Chen's eyes reddened.

"Jinnian, go ahead and prepare it!" the old lady said solemnly.

She walked over to Elder Chen, taking his hand.

Yun Jinnian watched, took a deep breath, and said, "Alright!"

She would make the medicine milder, so it wouldn't be so hard on the body when taking it and the parting wouldn't be so painful.

She got up and quietly left the room.

Looking at Chen Danyan, whose eyes were red, and at the several elders and young masters of the Chen Family, Yun Jinnian bowed slightly.

Chen Danyan stepped forward, taking Yun Jinnian's hand, "Jinnian..."

"Sister Chen!"

"Is there really no other way? Even, even a few more months would be good!"

Chen Danyan didn't have any other thoughts; she just wanted her grandfather to live a little longer.

Yun Jinnian shook her head slightly.

If there were a way, she would certainly do it.

But Elder Chen's organs were already worn out, all that was left was these last two or three months to endure.

"Thank you, Princess Yijia!"

Elder Chen, also known as Chen Danyan's father, stepped forward and bowed with clasped hands.

Yun Jinnian dared not accept such respect and quickly bowed, "Uncle, you overstate!"

After all, Elder Chen was the Minister of Rites, a high second-rank official.

Elder Chen looked at Yun Jinnian and couldn't help but lament that the Yun Family had indeed produced someone extraordinary, it was just a pity she was a girl; if she had been a boy, the Yun Family's status would have risen even higher.

Toward the Yun Family, Yun Qi, and Yun Chen, Elder Chen was disdainful.

In his heart, he also approved of his daughter becoming friends with Yun Jinnian.

"Let's talk in the front hall!" Elder Chen said.

At this moment, father and mother must have a lot to say.

Their children, of course, should not hold them back.

Just as they were about to leave the courtyard, they saw Feng Wushuang coming in a hurry. Upon seeing Elder Chen, he bowed, "How is my mentor?"

Elder Chen slightly shook his head.

Feng Wushuang's expression darkened, then he turned to Yun Jinnian and bowed, "Princess Yijia?"

Actually, the moment he entered, he had seen Yun Jinnian right away, but under all these watchful eyes, how could he act rashly? Moreover, he dared not cause any harm to Yun Jinnian's reputation.

"Brother Feng!" Yun Jinnian bowed.

"My mentor, he..." Feng Wushuang stopped mid-sentence.

Yun Jinnian pursed her lips.

Elder Chen quickly said, "Let's talk in the front hall!"

Elder Chen knew some of Feng Wushuang's story, so it was not strange to him that Yun Jinnian was acquainted with Feng Wushuang. On the contrary, he valued Feng Wushuang's character, someone who believed in repaying even the smallest kindness with a fountain of mercy and who, unreservedly, sought his benefactor from the past.

This was perhaps also why his father made an exception to take Feng Wushuang as a disciple.

Though Feng Wushuang was deep and calculating, in this Capital City, among the officials who entered court, how many were clean?

The group arrived in the front hall, where all the members of the household from the Elder Residence were present. Even the concubines, who normally did not have a place of honor, had been invited; there were more than a hundred people, not even counting the married-off daughters and Elder Chen's disciples. It was indeed a gathering of the whole clan.

Elder Chen sat in the seat of honor, looking at the relatives below.

He then looked at Yun Jinnian and Feng Wushuang seated on his left and said heavy-heartedly, "Father's health has been poor for years, but recently, it has gotten severely worse. Even he seems to feel that his days are numbered..."

Chapter 764: Make Arrangements

Chen Dalao spoke, his eyes reddening.

He was also over fifty, his eldest son was in his thirties, and his oldest grandchild was over ten years old, yet he couldn't forget the days when he had followed by his father's side since childhood.

His father was strict, but he was also affectionate towards him.

Furthermore, his father took him by the hand to teach him how to grow up, and that affection was naturally different.

Especially in these days, his father had called him to his side and carefully instructed him, even going so far as to divide the family assets. His younger brothers who were also present knew about this too.

"Princess Yijia, please speak!"

Yun Jinnian took a deep breath, "Elder Chen's days are numbered, and even with aggressive treatment, he will not last more than three months!"

As soon as Yun Jinnian finished speaking, cries were heard in the hall.

No matter how one looked at it, Elder Chen was a very successful elder.

Chen Danyan was even more devastated.

"We must trouble Princess Yijia with everything!" Chen Dalao said, then stood up and bowed to Yun Jinnian in respect.

Following this, other senior members of the Chen Family and those from the younger generations, including grandchildren and great-grandchildren, did the same.

Even Feng Wushuang stood up and solemnly bowed to Yun Jinnian.

Yun Jinnian returned the bow, feeling a sense of awe at the genuine scholarly family before her.

Chen Dalao asked Chen Danyan to take Yun Jinnian to the pharmacy to prepare the medicine, while the others remained in the hall.

"From this moment on, no one in the residence is allowed to wear bright red or green or cause any disturbances; everyone must begin preparations!" Chen Dalao said, then turned to Feng Wushuang, "Wushuang, the letters to your senior fellow disciples will be written by you!"

"Yes, Senior Brother!"

Feng Wushuang knew that this was a sign of great trust to have him write these letters.

"There's no need to mention that father doesn't have much time left, just say his health isn't great and ask everyone to come back to see him one last time."

"Yes!"

Yun Jinnian followed Chen Danyan to the pharmacy, where Chen Danyan finally burst into tears.

Standing by her side, Yun Jinnian did not know how to comfort her.

So she simply stood by quietly.

It wasn't until Chen Danyan's eyes had swollen severely, and she looked at Yun Jinnian through squinted eyes, "Jinnian, I..."

"It's alright, do you feel any better?"

"Much better!"

This was just to comfort Yun Jinnian, though.

Yun Jinnian didn't expose the charade and moved aside to prepare the prescription.

Elder Chen had reached such a state that not even Thousand-Year Ginseng, Tian Mountain Snow Lotus, Lingzhi, or miraculous elixirs could help; his life was nearing its end, and if medicine was used rashly, it would only hasten Elder Chen's death.

This was also why she had Snow Lotus Pills but dared not use them.

In preparing the prescription, Yun Jinnian had to think it over carefully and certainly couldn't prescribe just any medicine rashly.

She planned to go back and consult with her maternal grandfather before deciding how to prepare the medicine, which would then be combined with the Snow Lotus Pills for Elder Chen to take.

After leaving the pharmacy, the young ladies of the Chen Family were all waiting at the door; Yun Jinnian gave them their meeting gifts—a single Eastern Pearl for each, all tucked into their purses. The ladies

returned the favor with books, paintings, and the like, befitting the thoughts of young ladies from a scholarly family.

The married women each gave jade bracelets, lustrous and round in quality, clearly made from jade that had been aged for many years, and quite valuable.

After eating lunch and sitting for a while, Yun Jinnian rose to take her leave. On her return, it was Chen Danyan's elder brother, Chen Kang, who escorted her back to the Han Residence on horseback. The second carriage was filled with medicinal herbs for Yun Jinnian, all selected for their value without knowing what prescription she would need.

The rest would be decided later.

After Chen Kang had delivered Yun Jinnian back to the Han Residence, Han Tianci came forward to welcome them. After only sharing a cup of tea, Chen Kang took his leave.

Once the visitor had left, Han Tianci asked Yun Jinnian, "Sister, is Elder Chen's illness very serious?"

Chapter 765: Visiting to Inquire

Yun Jinnian nodded slightly.

"How serious is it?"

"All his internal organs have withered. Even if he clings on to life, he won't last more than three months!"

It was then that Yun Jinnian understood that even the Snow Lotus of Tian Mountain wasn't all-powerful.

"Elder Chen is over seventy now. Passing away at his age could be considered dying a natural death. Plus, he's blessed with a full house of children and grandchildren and has attained the highest position one could hope for. Over the years, he's enjoyed all the wealth and respects one could wish for. He can depart this world without regrets!"

Yun Jinnian actually agreed with Han Tianci's words, "That's true, it's no wonder Elder Chen didn't show much panic when he learned he only had a few months to live, he was instead quite serene!"

It's really rare to find someone who can view life and death with such indifference.

Han Tianci remained silent.

Only then did Yun Jinnian ask, "What about Grandfather?"

"Grandfather went out and didn't say when he would return!"

Yun Jinnian was startled for a moment but quickly regained her composure.

This was something she would encounter in the future as well.

However, she had not anticipated that several Imperial Physicians from the Imperial Medical Bureau would come together, asking to see her.

"To see me?"

"Yes, they came to find you, and are now waiting in the hall. The young master is entertaining them!"

Yun Jinnian thought for a moment and realized why these people were here.

"Let's go and have a look!"

Before reaching the hall, she heard Han Tianci talking confidently with others.

His composed demeanor filled Yun Jinnian with a sense of accomplishment. The Imperial Physicians also appeared to be humbly learning from him, which she found amusing.

But she also felt sentimental, as Tianci was truly growing up.

He was no longer the soft and delicate child that everyone pitied; now he was a young man, worthy of being depended on and trusted.

"What Young Master Han said is quite insightful. I have benefited greatly from your guidance. Thank you for sharing your wisdom, Young Master Han!"

"I dare not presume!" Han Tianci said, exceedingly humble.

Yun Jinnian pursed her lips and straightened her clothes before she entered the hall, where the Imperial Physicians promptly stood up, "Greetings to Princess Yijia!"

Although they were Imperial Physicians, their official ranks were rather low.

The head of the Imperial Medical Bureau was only a third-rank official. Even still, countless Imperial Physicians coveted that position, longing to sit in it.

"My lords, there is no need for such formalities!"

Yun Jinnian sat down at a spot to the side, without taking the main seat.

Although she was a princess, in the presence of the Imperial Physicians, she was still a junior.

"Princess, we are here today regarding Elder Chen's illness," one said.

Yun Jinnian nodded her head in recognition. It was as she had expected.

"May I know if the lords have any suggestions?" Yun Jinnian asked calmly.

"We dare not claim to have any superior insights. It's just that Elder Chen's condition..." one of the Imperial Physicians hesitated.

"Please speak freely. I imagine you must have already thought about what to say before coming!" Yun Jinnian said bluntly.

"Not to conceal from the Princess, we have all treated Elder Chen. His body is at its limit, unable to hold on much longer. However, our influence is limited, and Elder Chen is a pillar of the state. We did not dare speak the dire truth to him. The prescriptions we've given are mostly tonics, but in reality, they don't have any significant effect. Princess, you've also diagnosed Elder Chen today. Did you notice anything? Could you enlighten us on your findings...?"

They spoke in bureaucratic circles, full of probing.

It's no surprise Elder Chen called them a bunch of incompetent doctors, each one cautious and unwilling to convey the hard truth.

At this stage of Elder Chen's life, what he cared about most was his offspring.

If he were to pass away, his sons would have to observe a three-year mourning period, and his grandsons one year. But a lot can happen in those three years.

Had he known earlier about the imminence of his death, he could have made arrangements sooner.

Not for anyone else's sake, but for Chen Danyan's, she couldn't possibly reveal the actual condition of Elder Chen's health.

"My lords, I beg your pardon, but I cannot disclose anything!"

Chapter 766: Not Easy to Bully

Chen, the Elder Statesman, lived through three dynasties and had numerous disciples. No one could clearly say how many officials his death would involve.

With his demise, there were many with different intentions.

This matter was of great significance; how could she speak carelessly?

Moreover, these Imperial Physicians were not acting alone; each had their own backers. They had come so blatantly today, likely to probe for information.

"This..."

Several Imperial Physicians hadn't expected that Yun Jinnian wouldn't say anything.

They were momentarily conflicted.

"If there's nothing else, sirs, please take your leave!" Yun Jinnian stood up, effectively dismissing her guests.

The Imperial Physicians' faces turned unsightly, but thinking of Yun Jinnian's grandfather, who was even more cantankerous and stubborn than her, they felt that Yun Jinnian had been comparatively polite—not turning them away at the door.

As for what they would say once they left, that was their affair.

"Sirs, my sister hasn't said anything today, and I hope there won't be any rumors outside claiming she did..." Han Tianci suddenly spoke up. Seeing the physicians' expressions shift, he continued, "Although I'm young, it doesn't mean I don't understand anything. In this world, everyone strives to be untainted by a speck of dirt. I may still be a child, but the Han Residence will eventually be mine. I command hundreds of people here; if I want to find out something, it's quite easy to do!"

"You..." One of the Imperial Physicians looked extremely displeased.

He left with a flick of his sleeves.

Han Tianci didn't care about their reactions. After they had gone, he said to Yun Jinnian, "These people clearly had bad intentions!"

"I can see that!"

Yun Jinnian returned to Chaoyang Academy, looked over Leng Nuan, and then ordered her servants to keep an eye on the Imperial Physicians who came earlier, and to secretly investigate their possible hidden agenda.

She also wanted them watched to prevent any potential slanderous talk.

Mrs. Han saw Yun Jinnian coming to hold Leng Nuan and said, "You should wash up before holding him, the child is still so young, and you've been in contact with sick people!"

Yun Jinnian thought it over and agreed, heading to the bathhouse to bathe and change clothes.

After changing, she held Leng Nuan, playing and cooing with him.

"This child would rather sleep in bed than be held by anyone!" Mrs. Han complained.

She truly adored the child, but he wouldn't let her hold him, nor let anyone else do so.

"He has his father's disposition!"

Mrs. Han had wanted to ask who the child's father was, but considering his mother was Princess Jinfeng, it wasn't a topic she could inquire about casually.

In the end, she asked nothing.

"What would you like to eat this evening? I can go make it!"

"Let the cook prepare it!"

Mrs. Han laughed, "While I'm still able, I want to cook a few meals for you. Once we return to the Yun Residence, I won't have the chance!"

The Yun Family was definitely bound to return; not returning would leave Jinnian's marriage prospects compromised.

She also needed to go back and divorce Yun Qi.

"Then I'll help you in the kitchen!"

"No need, it's rare for this child to want you to hold him, so stay and hold him!"

Mrs. Han headed to the kitchen to cook dinner, while Yun Jinnian spent time with Leng Nuan. Han Tianci was in the study, reading books. He no longer needed a teacher and would make notes on things he didn't understand to ask Han Xuzi later.

That evening, only the three of them dined. After dinner, Yun Jinnian and Han Tianci discussed the medicine prepared for the Elder Statesman.

In just over a year, Tianci's medical skills had vastly improved.

After much deliberation, the siblings finalized the prescription.

The two prepared the ingredients and crafted thirty medicinal pills in the pharmacy.

"Sister, do we need to deliver these pills to the Elder Residence tomorrow?"

"Yes, but I have to visit the Duan Family tomorrow, so you'll handle this for me, alright?"

Chapter 767: Seeing Through Everything

Han Tianci nodded at the words.

His sister always paved the way for him without leaving a trace.

"Also, once you get there, you must personally deliver the medicine straight to Elder Chen!"

If Tianci caught Elder Chen's eye, and he casually gifted Tianci a few books with his annotations, it would be extremely beneficial for Tianci.

Warmth flooded Han Tianci's heart as he hugged Yun Jinnian, "Sister, thank you!"

"Silly, as your sister, I naturally treat you well. Do we need to say thank you to each other?"

As she spoke, Yun Jinnian patted Tianci's back.

Han Tianci laughed, "Sister, good night!"

"Good night!"

They each returned to their rooms to sleep.

Yun Jinnian returned to Chaoyang Academy. Mrs. Yuan was under a lamp making tiger-head shoes for Leng Nuan, who was sound asleep in his little bed.

"This child is so well-behaved. After eating, he sleeps; wakes up to poop, eats again, and sleeps without crying or fussing at all!"

"He really is an understanding child!" Yun Jinnian tucked him in before going to the cleansing room to wash up.

After changing into new clothes, Mrs. Yuan handed the finished tiger-head shoes to Yun Jinnian, "Miss, how do they look? Are the tiger-head shoes pretty?"

Yun Jinnian took a careful look, "They are pretty!" She then added, "Nurse, he already has several pairs of tiger-head shoes. Next time, you should make them bigger!"

"That's true. The child grows so fast, changing every day. It's a good thing you reminded me!" Mrs. Yuan said, and chuckled merrily.

Now that Yun Jinnian was all grown up and she had no particular skills, she often felt idle. Fortunately, with this child, she now had a use for her talents.

Mending and sewing for the child every day was indeed an excellent thing.

Yun Jinnian's eyes softened and filled with tenderness and pity as she looked at Leng Nuan.

She wondered when this child would be able to reunite with his parents.

"Nurse..."

"Hmm?"

"Have two maids come up to take care of Nuannuan, ones who are honest and diligent. As for the candidates, you can discuss them with my mother!"

"Okay!"

"It's getting late, you should go rest as well, Nurse!"

Looking at the sandglass, Mrs. Yuan said, "I'll sleep in the side room. Call me if there's anything!"

Mrs. Yuan got up, organized everything, took one last look at Leng Nuan, and then left the hall.

Watching her figure, Yun Jinnian felt a pang in her heart.

She didn't know how to tell the nurse that her daughter had died a long time ago...

Taking a deep breath.

Yun Jinnian also went to bed.

"Miss!"

Hemei entered the room and walked to the bedside, calling softly.

"What's up?" Yun Jinnian answered and sat up.

"The Yun Family has made a move!"

Yun Jinnian raised an eyebrow, "Who?"

"Xu Xinmo seems to want to come to see you. That old woman with her knows some crooked tricks!"

"Come to see me?" Yun Jinnian murmured softly.

"Yes, it seems like she wants you to take her out to meet more people, probably to get acquainted with high-ranking officials and nobles!"

Xu Xinmo was soon to turn fourteen, and the next year fifteen when she would celebrate reaching maturity. After that, it would be time to discuss marriage. But with her current status, how could she hope to attract a match from a truly reputable and noble family when she had never even entered the doors of such a household?

"That must be it!"

"Pay her no mind. Even if she comes, do not let her into the manor!"

It was best to have less to do with such people.

She then thought of Yun Qi, her father...

"Has my father made any moves?"

"Nothing so far, but he has ordered the servants to tidy up Qingjue Academy and Niannian Garden, and he has added some things to them!"

Yun Jinnian fell silent.

A while later, she took a deep breath, "I see. You should go to sleep too!"

Hemei nodded and then asked, "Miss, what do you think the Second Master's intentions are?"

Chapter 768: Heartfelt Sorrow

Yun Jinnian looked at Hemei, the corners of his lips slightly hooked, and he said in a calm voice, "No matter what his intentions are, they can't change the fact that he's my father, nor can they change the mistakes he's committed, and certainly not the fact that in the end, Mother will divorce him, and I and the Yun Residence will ultimately sever ties!"

By that time, it will be time to seek revenge for grievances, and hold grudges for resentments!

Of course, during this period, they'd better not provoke me, and if they do, if they want to harm me, I won't hold back because of any so-called familial ties, not to mention those that are already frail.

"Miss is right, but the news that came said that Xu Xinmo seems to have changed a lot!"

"A dog can't change its habit of eating crap, rest assured, that person, even if she has changed, it's only skin-deep, not in the bone, let alone the soul!"

The fact that her own paternal family changes their expressions when speaking of her, the younger generation despises her, the elders dislike her, and Lady Xu wishes she were dead, all without showing repentance, shows how deeply flawed Xu Xinmo is in her bones and soul.

After Yun Jinnian had finished speaking, she then took Leng Nuan to urinate, before placing him into the cradle to sleep.

But the child didn't want to sleep, looking at her with his large, dark eyes wide open.

"Nuannuan!"

Yun Jinnian held Nuannuan's hand, squeezing it, feeling the baby fat.

Her heart felt warm and full.

She sent Hemei to go to sleep and casually picked up a book, opening it and reading aloud for Leng Nuan to listen.

In the spacious room heated by the warm floor, the house was also warm and cozy, Yun Jinnian's voice soft and gentle, while Leng Nuan listened attentively, unsure whether he understood or not.

But Yun Jinnian thought, he must have understood.

Chu Yu arrived and stood outside the room for a long while before he gently knocked on the door.

"Come in!"

Chu Yu walked in, removing his cloak at the doorway.

Once inside the bedroom, Yun Jinnian looked up and saw Chu Yu; there was joy and pleasure in seeing him, but also a slight resentment due to Elder Chen's matter.

"Please sit down!"

She got up and went to the receiving area outside, poured a cup of hot water, and handed it to Chu Yu.

"What brings you here at this late hour?"

Chu Yu held the cup, pondered for a moment, and then asked, "How is Elder Chen's health?"

"If he hadn't been so infuriated as to vomit blood, nobody could tell—maybe one year, maybe two. But this time, he's been outraged, he won't live past three months!"

"That day, I shouldn't have gone to the Elder Residence!" Chu Yu was greatly troubled.

"Indeed, you shouldn't have gone. The Princely Heir also went too far. At first, he personally came to propose marriage, and now he wants to call it off..." Yun Jinnian paused, "Regardless of his reasons and excuses, I'm afraid Sister Chen can't help but hate him now!"

Chu Yu felt uncomfortable too.

"I'll ask that young man right away, what exactly is the reason?"

"There's no need to ask, what difference will it make? I guess Sister Chen might move up the date to cancel the engagement!"

Chu Yu fell silent.

Yun Jinnian didn't want to dwell on this matter any further and asked, "How is your cousin doing now?"

"It's said that he can slowly walk around with the aid of a walking stick!"

"That's good. Send him a message from me, tell him to walk more, exercise more, and practice some skills that can calm and soothe the mind. Even if he can't completely recover, it won't be too far off!"

"I will!"

The two of them spoke like an old married couple, their conversation mundane yet filled with warmth.

Chu Yu basically didn't keep secrets from Yun Jinnian, he even shared the details of the court's movements with her to keep her informed.

"If Elder Chen truly can't last three months, there will likely be major changes among the Imperial Court officials!" Chu Yu said gravely.

This was also a good opportunity for him to place his people.

Especially the elders of the Chen Family, with Elder Chen holding a high second-rank official position and the others being from the second-rank and third-rank, each position represented a substantial vacancy.

"I'm just a woman, I don't wish to deal with court affairs. I'm just worried about Sister Chen..."

Chapter 769: Another Warning

Such a good woman, yet she was betrayed by others.

And Chu Renzhi even indirectly harmed Elder Chen...

Yun Jinnian sighed deeply.

Chu Yu held Yun Jinnian's hand, "Jinnian, I will not let you down!"

Deep in his bones, in his soul, he had recognized Yun Jinnian.

In this lifetime, he would only recognize Yun Jinnian.

Some might call it obsession, but Chu Yu liked the feeling of having someone in his heart, especially knowing that person also held him in hers—it was a feeling so wonderful that he wanted to scream out in madness.

Yun Jinnian smiled tenderly and leaned into Chu Yu's embrace, "I trust you!"

Their fingers intertwined.

In this moment, silence spoke louder than words.

Yun Jinnian didn't even know when she fell asleep, but Chu Yu gently cradled her, placing her on the bed.

He swallowed, wanting to steal a kiss before leaving.

But he felt his nose warm and slightly sweet; Chu Yu sniffed.

His nose was bleeding again.

He quickly grabbed a handkerchief to cover his nose and walked over to the cradle. Seeing Leng Nuan with eyes wide open looking at him, he touched Leng Nuan's forehead and said, "Little rascal, just like your dad, so annoying. Go to sleep, don't make a sound and wake your aunt, or I'll spank you!"

He then gently rocked the cradle, soothing Leng Nuan to sleep before quietly leaving.

But he didn't see that Leng Nuan in the cradle slowly opened his eyes again, those dark, unfathomable eyes, as he moved his chubby little hands slightly.

The corners of his mouth curved into a cold, bloodthirsty, and profound smile.

Clearly, only his mother had been reborn, and this Uncle Rui Wang who had loved his mother all his life had a face as thick as ever.

But, he had become much more endearing.

Yet, it seemed his mother had not recognized him...

Yun Jinnian woke up early to clean up Leng Nuan's mess and feed him rice paste, played with him for a while, then got up to head to the Duan Residence.

"Miss, you have a letter!" Hemei came in with the letter.

Yun Jinnian's face changed dramatically, "Hemei, quickly throw away the letter in your hand!"

Hemei obeyed and immediately threw the letter away, only to find her hand turning black and losing sensation.

Yun Jinnian quickly took a pill from her bosom for Hemei to swallow and took out a silver needle to let her bleed.

Only when red blood flowed did Yun Jinnian breathe a sigh of relief.

She took Hemei's pulse.

"Miss, you didn't wipe your hand just now!" Hemei said cautiously.

Yun Jinnian glanced at Hemei, "Do you think your mistress really has that many manners?"

It was just her germophobia.

And there were always men when she went to take a pulse; as a woman, she had to follow some proprieties.

"Hehe!" Hemei giggled foolishly.

She knew it!

After making sure Hemei was safe, Yun Jinnian sprinkled some medicine powder on the letter and reached for it.

"Miss, it's poisoned!" Hemei exclaimed.

"It's been neutralized!"

Yun Jinnian said as she opened the letter.

It read, "Do not meddle in affairs that don't concern you!"

"It's because of the Duan Family again!" Yun Jinnian spoke indifferently, putting down the letter.

She beckoned Hemei closer and whispered a few words in her ear, "Go!"

Hemei nodded.

Looking at her unharmed hand, she exhaled.

To arrange what Yun Jinnian had instructed.

Yun Jinnian still left home, with few attendants, only Hemei and Henuan, and Uncle Cheng driving the carriage.

Straight to the Duan Family she went.

Yun Jinnian sat inside the carriage, gently toying with the bracelet on her wrist. It was a gift from Chu Yu on her eleventh birthday, and she had never used it.

Wondering if she would have to use it today...

An arrow flew and stuck in the carriage, its tail wobbling, emitting a piercing sound.

"Whoosh!"

Chapter 770: Assassination in the Dark

Uncle Cheng brought the carriage to a stop.

He plucked the sharp arrow out and spoke towards the interior, "Miss, someone shot an arrow at our carriage, and there's a letter attached to the end!"

Upon hearing this, Yun Jinnian gestured to Hemei.

Hemei lifted the carriage curtain, took the arrow, removed the letter, and handed it to Yun Jinnian.

"Miss, could it be poisonous?"

"It's not!"

Yun Jinnian opened the letter which read, "Proceed further at your own peril!"

Hemei glanced at it, "Miss, who on earth could the Duan Family have offended?"

"I'm not sure, but we should find out soon enough!" Yun Jinnian placed the letter aside, "Uncle Cheng, let's continue!"

"Yes!"

Elsewhere,

In a courtyard,

The room was pitch dark as a figure in black sat on the floor, toying with the herbs in their hands.

"What did you say?" The voice was elderly and hoarse, but unmistakably that of an old lady.

"Princess Yijia continues forward and seems intent on visiting the Duan Residence!"

"Good, very good, such bravery, but if that's the case, she can't blame me!" said the old lady, standing up slowly, "Send the order down, kill Yun Jinnian!"

The little maidservant impostor, I wonder how long she can hold out.

"Yes!"

"Be careful, after all, she is the Saintess of the Moon-Seeking Sect. It's enough to scare her, don't actually harm her!"

The old lady spoke, taking a deep breath.

The Moon-Seeking Sect had been without a Saintess for many years; if those devotees learned someone had harmed their Saintess, they would likely go mad.

She truly couldn't bear the consequences.

However, after waiting and waiting without the return of her dispatched men, the old lady realized she had underestimated Yun Jinnian.

Looking at the person who had been knocked unconscious, Yun Jinnian spoke indifferently, "Take him back and guard him well!"

In the end, she still made her way to the Duan Residence.

Ruan Wanrong greeted Yun Jinnian at the doorway, "I should have come to meet you, but the situation in the residence right now..."

It was also hard to put into words.

Yun Jinnian expressed her understanding.

Together, they entered the residence; the ladies, who should have been dressed in splendid attire, all had faces shadowed with sorrow, and the once vibrant young men were silent and subdued.

"Greetings, Princess Yijia!"

"Dispense with the formalities!"

After the salutations, another silence fell.

Several of the ladies had things they seemed to want to say but held back. A few had even teared up, clearly under pressure from being afflicted with severe poison and unable to bear children.

"Let's get straight to the point then!"

Yun Jinnian spoke softly.

Ruan Wanrong smiled, "That would be great, I've prepared everything!"

If it was time to take pulses, the ladies would go first.

But after a few, Yun Jinnian's expression subtly changed.

Beyond the poisons they had previously been afflicted with, they were now bearing different severe toxins.

Every one of them was like this, each with a different poison.

It was even worse for the men.

"How are things?" asked Ruan Wanrong, her grip tightening on her handkerchief.

"The situation is worse than you imagined but not particularly severe. With all the necessary herbs, I can provide a cure. However, of greater importance now is to identify the mastermind behind this. Today, before I came here, I received a threatening letter and encountered an assassination attempt on my way. I want to ask, who could the Duan Family have possibly offended? We need to find this person as soon as possible and resolve the issue!" Yun Jinnian said, pausing before continuing, "Otherwise, even if I cure you of the poison, that person could continue to administer more. Perhaps next time, instead of a slow-acting poison, it will be a lethal toxin that kills on contact!"