

Indulgence 811

Chapter 811: Teaching Discipline

Hemei and Huanuan laughed upon hearing this, "Miss, don't worry, just give the order and we will go up fiercely!"

Yun Jinnian smiled.

Concubine Xi slowly walked over, looking at Yun Jinnian with a half-smile, "So it's the fourth Miss. Where are you going?"

Yun Jinnian looked at Concubine Xi's haughty demeanor and smiled.

"Concubine Xi, is it?"

"That's me!" replied Concubine Xi.

She still had some haughtiness.

"First, you do not salute the Commandery Princess, nor do you use respectful language. Second, as a concubine, a lowly servant, you dare to refer to yourself as 'I'!" Yun Jinnian's voice was cold.

Concubine Xi's face immediately turned red.

She had heard that Yun Jinnian had a soft temperament and came today to test it out on purpose.

However, she found the rumors to be completely untrustworthy.

Just as she was about to speak, Yun Jinnian had already enunciated, "Hemei, teach her well, show her what it means to be a concubine in a noble family!"

Yun Jinnian finished speaking and walked away.

Hemei then stepped forward, kicking Concubine Xi at the back of her knees, causing her to kneel heavily on the ground.

"Ah..."

"Concubine..." the maid Dongjuan beside Concubine Xi screamed.

She wanted to step forward to support Concubine Xi but was frightened into a daze by Hemei's gaze.

Concubine Xi wanted to get up but found that she had no strength in her knees and couldn't stand up at all.

Hemei spoke calmly, "Concubine Xi, in the future, when you see my lady, you must bow like this!" Saying this, she demonstrated a standard posture.

And continued, "And you must refer to yourself as 'this servant'!"

After Hemei finished speaking, she looked at Concubine Xi's face, which had turned pale several times, "Alright, Concubine Xi should remember now. I will go and catch up with the Commandery Princess!"

She chased after Yun Jinnian.

Dongjuan hurriedly tried to help Concubine Xi, "Concubine?"

"Get lost!"

Concubine Xi pushed Dongjuan away with one hand.

Her face was pale with anger, her teeth trembling.

Dongjuan fell backward but did not dare to cry out. She quickly climbed back to Concubine Xi's side, "Concubine, let me help you up!"

This time, Concubine Xi did not push Dongjuan away, letting her support her to stand up.

"Let's go back!"

Good, very good, Yun Jinnian.

Just you wait.

However, Yun Jinnian being so arrogant could actually be beneficial. The more she appeared tyrannical and bullied her, the more Second Master would take her side.

By then, it would just be a matter of time before Mrs. Han is dismissed.

Concubine Xi returned to the courtyard with grievances. Yun Qi was not there, so she said to Dongjuan, "When the Second Master returns, you know what to say, right?"

"Yes!"

Dongjuan replied.

Concubine Xi claimed she was unwell and sent Dongjuan to ask permission from Mrs. Han to call for a doctor.

Yun Jinnian arrived at Qingjue Academy.

"Mother!"

"What did you bring?"

"I bought some pastries from Xufuji and brought some for you!" Yun Jinnian said, leaning against Mrs. Han, "Others have some too!"

"Did everyone get some?"

"Yes, everyone received some!"

Mrs. Han instantly understood Yun Jinnian's intentions, "That's good then, come inside, it's cold outside!"

"Alright!"

The two entered the small hall together. Then Yun Jinnian said to Mrs. Han, "Mother, earlier on the way here, I met Concubine Xi. I had Hemei teach her some manners!"

Mrs. Han thought of the person she saw at the main gate yesterday, "Indeed, she should be properly taught, but in the future, let me handle such matters!"

"I'll listen to you, mother!"

Mrs. Han smiled gently.

She took a piece of pastry and started eating, "Xufuji's pastries are truly delicious!"

"If you like them, Mother, I'll buy some and bring them back every time I go out!"

"Alright, but don't just buy a few pieces. Buy more, and also get some for the maids and old women in Niannian Garden and Qingjue Academy!"

Yun Jinnian had money, and Mrs. Han did not make her save any.

Chapter 812: Turbulent Undercurrents

"That's true, thanks to your reminder, Mother. But now that we're back, have you rewarded them yet?"

"Rewarded. Each person received two hundred taels of silver. What about your Niannian Garden?"

"Not yet. I was waiting to see how much Mother would reward, so I can match it!"

Two hundred taels sound like a lot, but in the inner city of the Capital, it doesn't do much.

If they go to the Outer City, it could have many uses.

While they were chatting, Bai Que entered the small hall, "Madam, the maid from Mistress Xi's side has arrived. Mistress Xi feels unwell and asks for help in summoning a physician!"

Mrs. Han smiled faintly, "Tell her to find Lady and request the Mansion Physician!"

"Yes!"

Bai Que left the small hall and looked at Dongjuan standing in the courtyard, "Go to Lady and request the Mansion Physician!"

Dongjuan responded and immediately left Qingjue Academy.

To report back to Mistress Xi.

Mistress Xi promptly instructed Dongjuan to find Mrs. He.

The Mansion Physician has been bribed by Mistress Xi. He will surely exaggerate her illness.

Though she isn't sick at all.

Inside Qingjue Academy, the mother and daughter were happily eating, ignoring Mistress Xi's bribery, just drinking and eating pastries, chatting away.

Mrs. Han didn't ask Yun Jinnian where she went or what she did today. She believed Yun Jinnian knew what she was doing.

Besides, Yun Jinnian was about to come of age, and it was time for her to have her own opinions.

Mrs. He was surprised for a moment when Tianmi reported, "What did you say?"

"Fourth Miss disciplined Mistress Xi, and now Mistress Xi is feigning illness, sending her maid Dongjuan to ask if you could summon the Mansion Physician to check on her?"

Mrs. He suddenly laughed, "Go and call the Mansion Physician to see Mistress Xi!"

"Yes!"

Mrs. He sipped her tea lightly.

Unexpectedly, Yun Jinnian returned home with such a strong temper.

No longer the timid Yun Jinnian who didn't dare to speak up or even breathe loudly.

She took a deep breath.

Mrs. He remembered Yun Jinnian's identity.

The Commandery Princess Yijia, conferred by the Emperor, was different from Princess Yanran or other Commandery Princesses who were conferred titles but not honored with a name.

Initially, she deliberately overlooked this, but today Yun Jinnian bought Xufuji pastries and openly disciplined Mistress Xi, showing that she could no longer treat Yun Jinnian the same way.

But how could she be willing!

Rubbing her aching temples, Mrs. He suddenly remembered Xu Xinmo.

Xu Xinmo had a petty and vengeful nature, always jealous, and now she must be envying Yun Jinnian, wanting to replace her.

So Xu Xinmo would not remain silent and would look for an opportunity to act.

Tomorrow is the Lantern Festival, and with Xu Xinmo's temperament, she would definitely want to go out and play...

Should she agree or disagree when the time comes?

Xu Xinmo also learned that Yun Jinnian disciplined Mistress Xi and quickly asked Granny Jin, "Granny, what do you think of this matter?"

"No matter what she means, we should remain unchanged and observe. There's no rush. Tomorrow is the Lantern Festival; try to get her out of the mansion, and I will send someone to test her!"

Xu Xinmo nodded, "Granny, what if she doesn't want to go?"

"That's simple. You first approach the girls from the main and second branches, make sure everyone decides to go, and then she won't refuse!"

"Granny is indeed wise!"

Granny Jin smiled, her eyes deep and meaningful...

Chapter 813: Pretentious

Yun Qi came back and learned that Yun Jinnian had dealt with Concubine Xi.

With a sense of amazement, he went to see Concubine Xi.

"Second Master, it was my fault, I don't understand the rules, so the Fourth Miss..."

"From now on, don't call her the Fourth Miss, call her Commandery Princess!"

Concubine Xi was puzzled.

Yun Qi helped Concubine Xi sit up, "It's not just you. Nowadays in this residence, even I must be respectful when I see her. She is a First-Rank Commandery Princess, with a title, a dukedom, and a Princess Residence, while I am merely a Third-Rank official!"

As Yun Qi spoke, he thought of Grand Secretary Chen's illness.

And he received news that several masters of the Chen Family had started to find successors for their power.

The position of Minister of Rites, in particular, was eyed by many.

He too wished to advance further, but the Chen Family intended for the position of Minister of Rites to be passed to Feng Wushuang.

A top scholar who had only been an official for three years, advancing at an astonishing pace.

Feng Wushuang would take over the influence left by Grand Secretary Chen and the Chen Family. In three years...

If one of the Prime Ministers stepped down then, wouldn't Feng Wushuang ascend to the top?

How old is Feng Wushuang? Twenty-two or twenty-three now?

"Second Master, I will follow your orders!"

Concubine Xi spoke, seeing Yun Qi seemed disinterested.

Her heart shrank slightly, but she dared not speak more, gently nestling into Yun Qi's arms, silent.

After a long time, Yun Qi finally said, "You rest well, I'll go to Qingjue Academy!"

"Second Master?" Concubine Xi exclaimed.

"I can't let Jinnian reprimand you for nothing. After all, you are her stepmother!"

Concubine Xi's heart was secretly delighted, but she said on the surface, "Second Master, it has nothing to do with the Commandery Princess; it's all because of me..."

"Enough, you rest well, I'll be back soon!"

Yun Qi quickly left the room.

Concubine Xi excitedly rolled around on the bed.

"An old hag, dare to compete with me, just wait and see!"

Yun Qi arrived at Qingjue Academy.

"Greetings, Second Master!" The old woman immediately stepped forward to salute.

"Where is your Madam?"

"Replies to Second Master, she is in the small kitchen with the Commandery Princess..."

Before the old woman finished speaking, Yun Qi had already headed for the small kitchen.

From afar, he smelled the fragrance of food and heard Mrs. Han's voice earnestly instructing Yun Jinnian.

Yun Qi stood still, unable to move, his eyes slightly moist.

This is his wife and daughter. They should have been the closest family, but now he couldn't enter their world at all.

In the kitchen

Mrs. Han instructed Yun Jinnian to add salt and sugar, finally taking over when she couldn't stand it anymore.

Yun Jinnian laughed joyfully.

Obviously, she was very happy.

Yun Qi thought back carefully, it seemed that when Yun Jinnian was young, she used to laugh like this.

Laughing genuinely, with arched eyebrows, running towards him, tenderly calling, "Daddy, hug!"

At that time, she was the daughter he fought for his wife, until one day he found that this pawn wasn't so useful, and he discarded her without hesitation.

Now, he realized that she was his daughter, a daughter with his blood in her veins, not a pawn.

How could she be a pawn!

How monstrous was he then, to let her be mistreated for so many years!

Wiping his face, he entered the kitchen.

The sound of laughter abruptly stopped upon noticing Yun Qi's arrival. Yun Jinnian blushed, straightened up immediately, and slightly bowed to Yun Qi, "Father!"

The word father was bland, without any emotion.

It seemed like it was just the title "Second Master."

Yun Qi felt an ache in his heart.

But Mrs. Han smiled gently, casually saying, "You're here, are you here for your Concubine Xi?"

Chapter 814: Husband and Wife Getting Along

Yun Qi fell silent.

He couldn't deny it.

"Yes!"

Hearing Yun Qi's admission, Mrs. Han looked at Yun Qi seriously, "So? Are you here to punish our mother and daughter?"

She handed the spatula to the cook.

She no longer had the mood or mind to cook.

Looking at Yun Jinnian, she said, "Jinnian, you go read a book first. I have a few words to say to your father!"

"Okay!"

Yun Jinnian curtsied, exited the kitchen, and quickly left.

Mrs. Han walked to one side to wash her hands, took off her apron, and then said to Yun Qi gently, "This Qingjue Academy is quite large, let's take a walk together!"

Yun Qi looked at Mrs. Han.

He couldn't believe it, yet he was overjoyed.

Following beside Mrs. Han, Yun Qi's hands clenched and unclenched, unclenched and clenched, repeatedly.

How many years had it been since the two had walked together like this?

He felt like a young lad, afraid to say or speak too much, fearing he would say the wrong thing and make Mrs. Han unhappy.

Mrs. Han turned to look at Yun Qi, then said seriously, "Yun Qi!"

"Yes!"

Seeing Yun Qi so cautious and earnest, Mrs. Han smiled slightly, "Jinnian is about to come of age!"

Yun Qi paused.

Come of age?

Is Jinnian fifteen now?

He thought about it, she must be fifteen by now!

"Hmm!"

"You've owe her ten years, now that she's coming of age, shouldn't you start controlling the people around you so they don't cause her trouble? That concubine Xi, shouldn't you give her a good warning? Everyone knows why she appeared in front of Jinnian today. We're not fools, right?" Mrs. Han spoke straightforwardly, without beating around the bush.

Yun Qi fell silent.

He favored Concubine Xi because she was skilled in handling matters and had big ambitions.

"Don't worry, she won't be so unruly anymore!"

"Since you mentioned rules, from the sixteenth, have the concubines, and the illegitimate sons and daughters come to Qingjue Academy to establish the rules!"

"Alright!"

Yun Qi's agreement made Mrs. Han very satisfied, she continued, "Speaking of which, the people around you were all chosen by yourself. I haven't picked a few good ones for you yet. Tell me, what kind do you like? I'll find a few close ones for you outside!"

Yun Qi only felt his heart was suddenly hollowed out.

How much he wanted to tell Mrs. Han that he only liked someone like her.

He used to think, those wives who offer concubines to their husbands, how happy must the husbands be.

Now he understands, if she loves you, she definitely wants to have you all to herself. How could she possibly bear to share you with others by offering concubines? Only when she doesn't love you anymore, when she no longer has you in her heart, can she be at peace enough to offer you concubines.

The more the better, as long as you don't bother her.

And now with Mrs. Han speaking like this, it shows that she truly no longer has him in her heart.

She returned to the Yun Family for Jinnian.

Jinnian is about to come of age, and after that, they will discuss her marriage. She is the daughter of the Yun Family, and naturally, she has to be married off from the Yun Family.

After Jinnian gets married, will Mrs. Han propose a separation?

"Anything you pick will surely be excellent!"

Like Concubine Lian!

Indeed, she was excellent, gentle to guests, knowledgeable and sensible, and understood him well.

The beauty rescuing the hero at the beginning was just an orchestrated play.

After all, what kind of hero was he? More like a cowardly bear!

"In that case, I will carefully find some good ones for you!" Mrs. Han said, realizing she no longer felt heartache or hate towards Yun Qi.

However, there were some matters she still had to clear up.

"Yun Qi..."

"Hmm?"

"Have you found out anything about what happened back then?" Mrs. Han asked calmly.

Yun Qi's heart skipped a beat.

Mrs. Han still held a grudge about what happened back then, and she would definitely investigate.

"Didn't find out anything, what about you, do you have any clues?"

Chapter 815: A Thousand Words

Mrs. Han gently shook her head, "Not yet!"

She never intended to reveal anything about Concubine Kang.

Speaking of this Concubine Kang, she had a daughter. After she and Yun Bi were set up back then, Concubine Kang's daughter Yun Tai went missing and hasn't been found to this day.

Yun Qi let out a sigh of relief upon hearing this.

But then Mrs. Han added, "It's still the same story; the incident back then can't be separated from the Old Madam. I think you're very clear on this!"

"Shuniang!" Yun Qi called out softly.

Mrs. Han laughed and said, "You don't need to be nervous. So many years have passed; I'm not looking to pursue it. I just want to find out the truth!" She paused, collected her smile, and continued, "After all, it ruined us, almost caused us to lose our daughter completely. Yun Qi, don't you really want to understand?"

Yun Qi was silent.

How could he not want to understand?

The problem is, he had already guessed it.

"Forget it, I won't force you. Let's have dinner together tonight," Mrs. Han invited.

Yun Qi was taken aback, stammering, "Alright, alright!"

Dinner.

The three of them sat together.

Mrs. Han never treated herself poorly, nor did she treat Yun Jinnian poorly. The food was quite sumptuous.

However, the three of them were relatively quiet, all unsure of how to communicate.

So they just ate in silence.

Midway through, Yun Qi served Yun Jinnian some food.

Yun Jinnian paused and, after a moment of silence, said to Yun Qi, "Thank you, Father!"

Yun Qi nodded slightly, only feeling a tightness in his chest, making it hard to bear.

After dinner, Yun Jinnian returned to Niannian Garden.

Yun Qi sat in a small hall drinking tea, not wanting to leave, wishing to stay. Doing nothing but being in the same room with Mrs. Han was a great comfort.

But it was getting late, and Yun Qi stood up, "I should..."

"Alright, I'll see you off!"

Mrs. Han saw Yun Qi out of Qingjue Academy.

"It's cold outside, go back in!"

Mrs. Han looked at Yun Qi with a gentle smile, "It's fine, I'll watch you walk away before I go in!"

Yun Qi took steps towards the front courtyard.

He thought, if Mrs. Han asked him to stay, with just a word or a gesture, he would abandon everything and spend the rest of his life by her side.

Whatever she asked him to do, he would agree.

But he waited and waited, and Mrs. Han never spoke.

Turning around, he saw that there was no sign of Mrs. Han at the entrance of Qingjue Academy, and Yun Qi left for the study in the front courtyard with a heart full of desolation.

Tonight he didn't want to see anyone, didn't want to deal with anyone.

It was his own mother who destroyed his happiness, his home. He wouldn't let her achieve her wishes, absolutely not!

Pain and despair—he wanted her to taste it, too!

Aunt Xi never dreamed that Yun Qi would stay for dinner at Qingjue Academy, and then go to the study in the front courtyard afterward. She sent Dongjuan to invite him, but Yun Qi didn't even see her.

"I'm so angry!"

But at this point, being angry was useless.

Yun Jinnian found out that Yun Qi went to the front courtyard and smiled, "As expected!"

Even up to now, her father still harbored some hope!

It's really both laughable and sad!

The fifteenth day of the first month

Lantern Festival

Yun Jinnian woke up early and gave silver to everyone in Niannian Garden.

After grooming, she went to Qingjue Academy to have breakfast with Mrs. Han, but unexpectedly Yun Qi was also there.

"Father!"

Yun Qi nodded, "Sit down!"

Yun Jinnian had just sat down when Mrs. Han slowly came out, dressed in a vibrant red outfit, making her look fair and beautiful, not at all like a woman in her thirties.

Yun Qi looked at her, unable to take his eyes off her.

"Jinnian is here!" Mrs. Han spoke, pretending not to notice Yun Qi's gaze.

Yun Qi looked away, lifting his cup to drink some hot water, feeling somewhat restless.

This feeling seemed to take him back to the early days when Mrs. Han and Yun Bi were close. If it weren't for Yun Bi, he wouldn't have had the chance to meet Mrs. Han.

Chapter 816: Children Born Out of Wedlock

Yun Jinnian stood up and curtsied towards Mrs. Han, "Mother!"

"No need for such formalities, quickly sit down, breakfast will be ready soon!" Mrs. Han said, and then saw a few concubines slowly coming over.

Beside them were their children.

Mrs. Han glanced at Yun Qi, but did not expect him to let them come today.

"We greet the master, the madam, and the Commandery Princess!" Concubine Su took the lead and they all saluted.

Yun Zuomo and the others quickly followed, "Greetings to father, mother, and sister!"

Although Yun Kuan, Yun He, and Yun Mu were still young and didn't understand, they still clasped their fists and saluted, "Greetings to father, mother, and sister!"

Mrs. Han smiled gently.

Yun Jinnian remained calm.

From the day she decided to return to the Yun Family, she knew this day would come sooner or later.

Looking at Mrs. Han's gentle smile, Yun Jinnian felt somewhat relieved.

Yun Qi seemed quite satisfied with the politeness of the concubines and their children.

Yun He and Yun Mu ran over to Yun Jinnian, Yun He softly asked, "Are you the sister? The one who bought Hehe pastries yesterday?"

Yun Jinnian already loved plump little children, and Yun He and Yun Mu were both plump, looking very much alike, with big, clear, and innocent eyes, now filled with joy and admiration.

Her heart softened slightly, and she asked gently, "Yes, do you like them?"

"We like them, the pastries sister bought were delicious, but the concubine didn't let us eat too much, she's so mean!" Yun Mu said, leaning softly into Yun Jinnian's arms, "Sister smells so nice, it's different from the concubine's scent!"

Yun Jinnian paused.

Looking at Yun Mu leaning in her arms, she eventually picked him up and sat him on her lap, "The scent on sister is medicinal, are you Mumu?"

"Sister is really clever, sometimes even the concubine can't guess right!" Yun Mu said, giggling.

Yun Jinnian liked children who could laugh. Yun Mu's laughter was so adorable that she couldn't help but feel even more affectionate towards him.

"Have you had breakfast yet?"

Yun He and Yun Mu shook their heads.

They were dressed by the wet nurse and brought here before they had time for breakfast.

"Then have breakfast with sister, what do you like to eat? We can ask the kitchen to make it for you, okay?"

"We like everything!"

Mrs. Han, watching this, gently instructed Bai Que to go to the kitchen and inform them that a few young masters and young ladies would be staying for breakfast.

Then she said softly, "Boys and girls will stay for breakfast. Concubines, you may each return. Going forward, there's no need to come over so early. After breakfast is fine. As for the boys and girls, if they want to come here for meals, they are welcome!"

The concubines withdrew.

Nine people sat around the table, yet it didn't feel crowded.

Yun He and Yun Mu sat on either side of Yun Jinnian, chattering away happily. After each sentence, they giggled.

Saliva dribbled down.

Yun Jinnian didn't mind, she took a handkerchief to wipe their mouths. Yun Kuan watched enviously, but he was shy and afraid of Yun Qi, so he didn't dare speak, his face flushing red.

Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingzhi, and Yun Qingqing also dared not speak, their palms sweating in nervousness.

Mrs. Han kept smiling gently, and Yun Qi remained silent, but the upward curve of his lips showed he was quite happy.

Throughout, Yun He and Yun Mu kept talking, their giggles constant.

Yun Jinnian looked at Yun Kuan, whose face was red from holding back, and asked gently, "Are you Kuankuan?"

Yun Kuan responded immediately, looking at Yun Jinnian and nodding vigorously, "Yes, yes, sister, sister..."

Too nervous and excited to speak clearly.

"It's okay, take your time!"

Chapter 817: What's the Plan

Yun Jinnian spoke gently.

She comforted Yun Kuan.

In her past life, she didn't have these three younger stepbrothers, but in this life, due to her changed fate, she had these three children as family.

Coincidentally, these three children seemed to like her a lot.

Putting aside the grudges and feuds of the previous generation, besides Tianci, these six stepbrothers and stepsisters were her blood relatives.

They were different from the ones from the main house and also different from Xu Xinmo.

Yun Kuan's face turned red, almost crying out loud.

Yun Jinnian waved at him.

Yun Kuan was taken aback for a moment, then slid off the stool and walked up to Yun Jinnian. Yun Jinnian patted his head, "I figured out that you are Kuankuan early on. Did you like the cakes I sent you yesterday?"

Yun Kuan nodded vigorously.

"I'm glad you liked them. Next time, I'll take you to Huiquan Tower for a big meal, alright?"

Yun Kuan's eyes immediately lit up.

He was over three years old and had never been out before.

"Really, really?"

"Of course, big sister would never lie to you!"

Yun Kuan started to smile.

Revealing his small neat rice teeth.

Yun Mumu hurriedly grabbed Yun Jinnian's hand, "Big sister, Mumu wants to go too!"

"Hehe wants to go too!"

"Alright, I'll take all of you!"

Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingqing, and Yun Qingzhi also became anxious.

After exchanging glances, Yun Zuomo finally said in a small voice, "Big sister, can we come too?"

"You all want to go as well?"

Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingqing, and Yun Qingzhi hurriedly nodded.

Yun Jinnian thought for a moment then said, "It just so happens that today is the Lantern Festival. There will be a lantern show tonight. How about I take you all to see the lanterns?"

"Yes, yes!"

Yun He and Yun Mumu, who were more carefree by nature, were overjoyed immediately.

Breakfast was served.

Yun He, Yun Mumu, and Yun Kuan used spoons, eating tiny bites. Yun Zuomo and the others were both nervous and excited.

Their minds were not on the food, already thinking about what clothes to wear in the evening and bringing some silver coins just in case they could guess a lantern riddle correctly.

After breakfast, Yun He, Yun Mumu, and Yun Kuan wanted to follow Yun Jinnian to Niannian Garden.

Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingzhi, and Yun Qingqing said nothing, naturally wanting to go to Niannian Garden too.

"Then let's all go together!"

Leading the three stepbrothers and three stepsisters, they headed to Niannian Garden.

Madam An looked at them, finding it hard to figure out Yun Jinnian's thoughts, but still warmly welcomed them.

Everyone in the mansion was guessing what Yun Jinnian intended to do, even Mrs. He couldn't figure it out.

In the end, Yun Mulan and Yun Musi were also allowed to play at Niannian Garden.

Xu Xinmo also brought some things over and happened to meet Yun Mulan and Yun Musi.

"Oh, you're all here, we are indeed the ones late!"

Yun Jinnian was teaching them to recognize medicinal herbs, holding herbs in her hand for Yun Kuan, Yun He, and Yun Mumu to smell and feel.

"Oh, it's Xinmo, come sit!"

Xu Xinmo handed the things to Ru Yue and smilingly asked, "Cousin, what are you doing?"

"Oh, nothing much, just teaching them to recognize medicinal herbs!"

"Could it be that cousin wants to teach them medical skills?"

Yun Jinnian smiled faintly, "Besides medical skills, there's nothing else I can teach them!"

Xu Xinmo covered her mouth and laughed.

After laughing, she said, "Cousin, I heard you are taking Zuomo and the others to the lantern festival tonight?"

"Yes, I've already sent Hemei to prepare at Huiquan Tower. I heard there will be a lantern riddle contest at Huiquan Tower tonight, each riddle corresponding to a specific lantern. I want to take them to try their luck!" Yun Jinnian said, handing the medicinal herbs to Shi Jiayu.

Shi Jiayu took them, cleaned them, and carefully placed them in a brocade box.

Yun Kuan, Yun He, and Yun Mumu squeezed next to Yun Jinnian, sitting on her right-hand side, all three staring at the hourglass by the side, constantly swapping positions...

Chapter 818: Feigning Intimacy

Yun Jinnian had always known what they were up to, but she kept silent and ignored them, allowing them to do as they pleased.

Xu Xinmo watched and thought these three children must be out of their minds.

What was so special about Yun Jinnian that made them compete for her attention in such a harmonious way?

The three children were very well-behaved and obedient.

During this season, there were no fresh fruits.

Chu Yu had secretly sent over some oranges and grapefruits from last year. Although they were sweet, the taste was still different from fresh ones.

However, it was rare to have something to eat, so the three children still ate with relish. Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingzhi, and Yun Qingqing also ate small bites, while taking the opportunity to care for Yun Kuan, Yun He, and Yun Mu.

This allowed Yun Jinnian to focus on talking with Xu Xinmo.

Though Yun Zuomo and the others didn't say anything, they were still concerned about Yun Jinnian in their hearts. They were worried that Yun Jinnian would be busy taking care of her three younger brothers and end up being schemed against by Xu Xinmo.

Xu Xinmo smiled and said, "Cousin, can you take me with you?"

"You want to go too?" Yun Jinnian asked.

"Yes, Cousin, please take me with you. I promise to be obedient!"

Yun Jinnian smiled slightly, "It's fine to bring you along, but I also have to take Kuankuan, Hehe, Mumu, and the three of them. I might not be able to look after you, so you'll need to bring two more people with you, preferably ones who know some martial arts!"

"Thank you, Cousin, I'll remember that!"

Yun Musi and Yun Mulan quickly added, "Fourth Sister, take us with you too!"

"You can come as well, just like Xinmo!"

They decided to have lunch at Niannian Garden. Yun Jinnian was worried that Yaniang wouldn't be able to manage everything on her own, so she had Shi Jiayu and Ru Yue come to help, and also brought a cook from Qingjue Academy. The lunch was still very sumptuous.

Yun Kuan, Yun He, and Yun Mu ate seriously. Yun Jinnian picked out the bones from the fish and said, "Eat slowly, if you get a fishbone, just spit it out!"

"Thank you, Sister!" Yun Mu said obediently.

Yun Kuan didn't want to be left out, "Thank you, Sister!"

Yun He just kept eating, continuously.

"Hurry up and eat. After we eat, let's get ready. Once we finish dinner, we'll go to the Lantern Festival for some fun!"

After lunch, Yun Jinnian had someone take Yun Kuan, Yun He, and Yun Mu back to Rou Yiniang and Lian Yiniang to prepare.

Rou Yiniang and Lian Yiniang were both worried about their children going out but were hopeful that their children could see the world.

As concubines, they couldn't go out themselves. Now, Yun Jinnian had shown them favor by willing to take the children, so they were keen for it.

Normally, they would compete with each other, but this time, they unanimously agreed.

For dinner, Grandmother Yun decided to have the whole family eat together. Despite their frail health, Yun Yi and Yun Xuan also made an effort to come.

Grandmother Yun sat with the main families of the first and second houses at one table, while the concubines and illegitimate children sat at another. The dishes were the same for both tables.

Yun Qi and Yun Chen sat on either side of Grandmother Yun, while Xu Xinmo sat next to Yun Jinnian, chatting with her.

"Let's start eating!"

As Grandmother Yun spoke, everyone began to use their chopsticks.

Yun Qi hesitated for a long time before picking some food and placing it in Mrs. Han's bowl, "Shuniang, try this!"

Mrs. Han was slightly startled, but she politely smiled at Yun Qi, "Thank you!"

She also picked some food for Yun Qi.

Yun Qi immediately felt a surge of happiness.

Mrs. Han then picked some food for Yun Jinnian, but she didn't urge her to eat more since Yun Jinnian would be out at the Lantern Festival later, where she would have plenty to eat.

"Thank you, Mother!"

Xu Xinmo also picked some food and placed it in Yun Jinnian's bowl, "Cousin, try this, it's really tasty!"

Chapter 819: Big Sale Special Sale

Everyone was taken aback.

Since when did the relationship between Xu Xinmo and Yun Jinnian become so good?

Although Old Madam Yun looked surprised, she was also satisfied.

Now that Yun Jinnian was a Commandery Princess and could enter various prominent families, she naturally hoped Yun Jinnian and Xu Xinmo would get along well.

"Xinmo, don't just focus on serving your cousin; you also need to eat more!" Old Madam Yun instructed.

"Yes, Grandmother!"

The Lantern Festival dinner was quite wonderful. After the meal, the sweet dumplings were served.

"Eat slowly; there are treasures inside!" Old Madam Yun said with a kind and gentle demeanor.

Soon, Yun Jinnian found something and spat out a coin.

"Oh, I got one too!"

"I got one as well!"

"Me too!"

No matter what thoughts anyone had, they all kept them in check, and the atmosphere became lively and harmonious.

After eating the sweet dumplings, they prepared to go out.

The carriages were already prepared, three in total, because there were so many people. Since Yun Jinnian was the eldest, she naturally had to take care of the younger siblings.

"When you go out, you must listen to Jinnian. Jinnian, you should also take good care of them, especially Kuankuan, Hehe, and Mumu!"

"Yes, Grandmother!"

Yun Jinnian responded.

Everyone squeezed into one carriage, which was very crowded but lively.

They entered the bustling area with cheerful smiles.

There were many people watching the lantern festival, and the carriage couldn't get in, so it stopped outside. Hongdou, Hongxiu, and Hongye each held a child's hand. This was Yun Jinnian's task for them: no matter what happened, they couldn't let go. She even devised a method to tie their wrists with cloth strips, making it even harder to get lost.

Although the carriage couldn't get through, there were many vendors selling food on both sides of the street.

Yun Jinnian truly took on the role of an elder sister, constantly asking her younger siblings what they wanted to eat.

Yun He wanted to eat everything, and Yun Jinnian bought it, but she divided it among Yun Kuan, Yun He, and Yun Mu.

"Eat a little less, or you won't have room for the delicious food from Huiquan Tower later!"

Moreover, Yun Jinnian was concerned about the cleanliness of the street food.

Just tasting it was enough.

"Okay, we'll listen to Sister!"

At three years old, growing up in a large estate, they already understood a lot.

Besides, no one had ever treated them as well as Yun Jinnian did, taking them out and buying them food.

"In that case, let's buy less food and more toys, alright? Later, whatever you like, Sister will buy it for you!"

"Alright, alright!"

True to her word, Yun Jinnian bought rattles, clay figurines, root carvings... anything they looked at for a little longer, she bought, treating everyone equally.

Xu Xinmo watched from the side, so angry it hurt his guts.

Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingzhi, and Yun Qingqing carefully picked out a couple of things, holding them like treasures.

Yun Musi and Yun Mulan didn't care much; after all, they didn't have much interest in these little trinkets.

For Yun Kuan, Yun He, Yun Mu, who had never left the residence, and for Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingqing, and Yun Qingzhi, who rarely went out, it was like gaining a precious treasure.

At home, aside from their concubine mothers, no one ever treated them like they were important or doted on them.

At most, they were just adequately fed and clothed warmly.

"Sister, Sister, this bear is so cute!" Yun Mu said, looking pitifully at Yun Jinnian.

"Buy it!"

Yun Jinnian said, immediately asking Hemei to bring the money, "Three of them, put them in the carriage first, and take them back to the courtyard later!"

Chapter 820: At the Forefront of the Storm

The three little rascals burst into joyous laughter.

And they remembered even more, there was a sister who treated them like treasures.

After passing through the food street, they arrived at the place to guess lantern riddles. Yun Jinnian guessed six lanterns, all of which were ordinary ones that Xu Xinmo didn't fancy, nor did Yun Musi or Yun Mulan.

What they didn't like, others cherished greatly.

They quickly divided up the lanterns, afraid of damaging them if carried by hand, so they instructed the maids to place them in the carriage and told them to ensure they were well-protected.

They passed by a stall selling handkerchiefs.

After inquiring about the price, they found out that each cost three copper coins. The three little rascals pooled together three copper coins to buy one for Yun Jinnian.

"Sister, this is from the money we got from eating tangyuan, we give it to you!"

They each only got one copper coin from eating.

They had agreed earlier to buy something for Yun Jinnian.

Yun Jinnian was slightly taken aback.

It would be a lie to say she wasn't touched.

She treated them well, the money she spent on them was nothing in her eyes,

but those three copper coins...

Yun Jinnian handed back the handkerchief, "Please return those three copper coins to me!"

Handkerchiefs wear out over time, but copper coins do not.

The vendor was reluctant, but Yun Jinnian smiled and said, "I'll buy something else!"

"Alright then!"

Returning the three copper coins to Yun Jinnian, she put them into her pouch.

"Sister, why do you have two pouches hanging?"

"Sister has a lot of things to carry!"

"Then I want two pouches too in the future!" Yun Mu said, noticing he didn't have any pouches.

"Alright, when we get back, sister will make one for you!"

"Sister, I want one too!" Yun Kuan softly said, feeling a bit shy.

"Me too, me too!" Yun He shouted.

"Everyone will get one!"

Xu Xinmo also secretly observed but did not see the people arranged by Granny Jin, so he had no choice but to wander around with them.

Then they headed to Huiquan Tower.

But tonight, Huiquan Tower was particularly different because everyone was seated in the main hall, not in private rooms.

Upon inquiry, they learned that Huiquan Tower had many exquisite lanterns tonight, and all they had to do was guess the riddles on them. The more riddles one got right, the more lanterns they would win, and the person with the most lanterns would be the first prize winner, enjoying a 50% discount on all dishes at Huiquan Tower for a whole year.

So, being able to book a table in the main hall was an extremely impressive achievement.

The maids and little servants were not allowed inside; there were dedicated little servants and maids to serve them inside to avoid overcrowding.

Upon entering Huiquan Tower.

Dai Hanmi ran over with a smile, "Jinnian!"

"Sister Hanmi!"

Dai Hanmi glanced at the followers behind Yun Jinnian, "Do you have a seat? If not, come sit with us?"

"We have already booked a seat!"

"Is there any room at your table? I'll squeeze in with you!" Dai Hanmi asked, not holding back.

"Yes, we can squeeze in together!"

With eleven people at one table, it was indeed a bit cramped, but no one would ridicule them, given how hard it was to get a seat at Huiquan Tower tonight, let alone a private room on the second floor overlooking the main hall.

But as soon as they sat down, someone came to invite them.

"Princess Yijia, my master invites you and your companions to the private room on the second floor!"

Yun Jinnian looked up.

It was Teng Fei from Zhou Yunshen's side. She smiled slightly, "Thank you, Brother Zhou, for the kind offer, but we are fine sitting in the hall!"

If she really went up, she wouldn't be able to explain herself no matter how many mouths she had.

Teng Fei heard this, looked up at the private room on the second floor, and saw Zhou Yunshen slightly shaking his head. Teng Fei then responded, "In that case, we shall take our leave!"

"Alright!"

But with Teng Fei's departure, Yun Jinnian was still thrust into the spotlight.

After all, in that private room on the second floor, sat the Crown Prince of the Great Zhou Kingdom, Zhou Yunshen!