

## Indulgence 841

Chapter 841: Speaking the Truth (1 Update)

Yun Jinnian looked at the Emperor laughing heartily, stood up, and slightly bowed, "Thank you, Your Majesty, for the reward!"

Regardless of his thoughts or whom he rewarded, she just accepted it.

As for whether to use it or not, that was up to her.

Noble Consort Le looked at Yun Jinnian, surprised that Yun Jinnian would actually rise to give thanks.

Everyone knew that the Emperor's reward had some ill intent, and among those rewarded were certainly the Emperor's spies.

This Princess Yijia was indeed a smart person.

Noble Consort Le laughed, "Your Majesty, don't forget about my matter!"

Upon hearing this, the Emperor embraced Noble Consort Le, "Beloved Consort, rest assured, how could I dare forget your matter!" Then he looked at Yun Jinnian, "Yijia, I leave Noble Consort Le to you!"

Yun Jinnian was puzzled.

Noble Consort Le stood up laughing and walked to Yun Jinnian, "Let's not bother with him, come, let's go to my palace for a chat!"

"Yes!"

They left Yangxin Hall together, Noble Consort Le holding Yun Jinnian's hand.

She was charming and witty, speaking humorously.

She had none of the arrogance of a favored concubine, and her approachability made it easy for people to feel goodwill towards her.

If Yun Jinnian didn't know her background, she would have been deceived by her appearance.

It's no wonder the Emperor favored her so much; not only was she seductive, but she also knew how to conduct herself and read people's expressions.

Noble Consort Le's palace was called Yile Hall.

"Sit wherever you like, I'll go change my clothes first!"

Noble Consort Le said and then entered the inner chamber.

The palace maids ushered Yun Jinnian to sit, she nodded slightly and glanced around.

Everywhere was exquisite and luxurious.

So this was what the palace of a favored concubine looked like?

Yun Jinnian felt a bit dazed.

Zhu Yan's palace in her past life wasn't like this; she had been out of favor for many years, and she was just a concubine, not even a Noble Consort, let alone the Empress.

"Commandery Princess, have some tea!"

"Thank you!"

The palace maid smiled and withdrew.

Yun Jinnian took a sip of the tea.

It was Dahongpao's tender shoots, seemingly this year's new tea.

"Is the tea good?" Noble Consort Le asked with a smile.

She was dressed in a brocade palace jacket, with a voluptuous figure, enchanting and charming.

"Good!" Yun Jinnian responded indifferently.

"This is this year's new tea, Wuhu Dahongpao. It's said that spray pots were set up all around, and charcoal fires were lit inside, causing the tea to sprout new buds after the new year. It was delivered to the palace just yesterday. You're really lucky to taste it!" Noble Consort Le said, also taking a sip.

"Can tea be forced to sprout like this?" Yun Jinnian asked curiously.

"Yes, it's the first time I've heard of it too. It's quite rare. The Emperor even ordered basins to be set up in the rear garden to force flowers to bloom. I wonder what the result will be!"

"It will surely succeed!"

Noble Consort Le looked at Yun Jinnian and smiled.

This Princess Yijia was indeed cautious.

Even after all this casual chatting, she remained as composed as ever.

Putting down the teacup, she finally said, "I've been in the palace for some days, but my health has never been quite well. Although the Imperial Physician has checked, they couldn't find anything. Today, I invited you to the palace because I know your medical skills are unparalleled and I want to ask for your help!"

Upon hearing this, Yun Jinnian put down her teacup.

She said to Hemei, "Hemei, make the preparations!"

"Yes!"

Noble Consort Le already knew that Yun Jinnian had many rules for her consultations, but seeing Yun Jinnian wash and dry her hands several times still caused her to widen her eyes.

However, she said nothing, rolling up her sleeve and placing her arm on the pillow.

Yun Jinnian took Noble Consort Le's pulse.

"How is it?" Noble Consort Le asked softly.

"Your Ladyship probably fell into water in your childhood, and it was in the coldest of winters. You might have had a fever then, but it wasn't properly treated, leaving you with a hidden illness!"

Noble Consort Le was immensely surprised.

This could be detected through the pulse?

After gathering her thoughts, she spoke deeply, "Continue!"

Chapter 842: The Empress Dowager Falls Ill (2nd Update)

"Your Highness, you were given a malicious poison over a year ago, one that is cruel and unforgiving. After taking it, you will become infertile, and there is no cure!"

Consort Le's eyes instantly turned red.

Trembling lips, tears began to fall.

"If I hadn't taken the medicine, could my body still have been nursed back to health?"

"Yes!"

As Yun Jinnian's words fell, Consort Le let out a cry, "Wooo!" and started sobbing, "Wooo, wooo..."

She wouldn't let those people go, not a single one of them.

As a woman, who doesn't want to bear a child of their own, but those people cruelly deprived her of it, she would never let it rest, never.

Yun Jinnian didn't know how to comfort Consort Le, so she took out a handkerchief and handed it to her.

Consort Le took it and wiped her tears, and after a long while, she asked, "Is there any chance otherwise?"

Yun Jinnian shook her head.

"The poison is truly powerful. Even a heavy dose of medicine would be of no use, and if not careful, it could even cost Your Highness's life!"

"I understand, thank you for coming all this way!"

"Your Highness is too kind!"

Just then, Eunuch An came on behalf of the Empress Dowager to summon her. Consort Le said, "You should go, the Empress Dowager has been thinking about you!"

"Yes!"

Leaving Yile Hall, Yun Jinnian pursed her lips.

Eunuch An immediately approached, "This servant greets the Commandery Princess, blessings to you!"

"How has Eunuch An been lately?" Yun Jinnian asked with a smile.

"In response to the Commandery Princess, this servant has been well, the illness has not recurred, many thanks to the Princess for the medicine back then!"

"It was just a small favor. By the way, how has the Empress Dowager's health been over the past year?"

"Sigh!"

Eunuch An sighed, moved a bit closer to Yun Jinnian, and whispered, "The Empress Dowager's health hasn't been good, her condition has been relapsing. Upon hearing that you have entered the palace today, she sent me to invite you to take a look at her!"

"What did the Imperial Physicians say?" Yun Jinnian asked.

"The Imperial Physicians have seen her, and it is as it is. Nowadays in the Imperial Medical Bureau, the physicians tend to protect themselves, doing nothing out of the ordinary, even though many of them are skilled, their medical ethics..." Eunuch An said, shaking his head.

They truly don't compare to half of Yun Jinnian.

Poor medical ethics?

Not necessarily poor medical ethics.

"The Imperial Physicians are good, they are just in this position, and cannot act freely!"

Upon hearing this, Eunuch An thought carefully and felt Yun Jinnian made sense.

After all, in the palace, the Emperor is getting older, the Princes are growing up and becoming capable, the concubines become anxious, hoping their children will ascend.

But they forget, the Emperor is just old, not foolish, he still holds all the power in his hands.

But the Imperial Physicians have learned to protect themselves, not offending anyone.

"The Commandery Princess sees it clearly!"

Yun Jinnian smiled without speaking.

"Empress Dowager, Princess Yijia is here!"

Upon hearing that, the Empress Dowager squinted with a smile, "Please come in!"

Yun Jinnian entered the main hall and saw the Empress Dowager leaning on the Arhat bed, her hair was snow-white, her complexion wasn't good, and her overall spirit was lethargic.

"Empress Dowager?" Yun Jinnian called softly.

Then she ran to the Empress Dowager's side, squatted down, and held the Empress Dowager's hand.

During those days in the Imperial Palace, she had a harmonious relationship with the Empress Dowager, and there were some feelings.

The Empress Dowager's eyes instantly reddened.

Those princesses, princes, and concubines also came to see her, but how many were truly sincere?

Each one just showed up and then left.

"Jinnian, you've come back!" the Empress Dowager said, seriously looking at Yun Jinnian.

In the past year, her eyesight had worsened.

Now, seeing Yun Jinnian, it was somewhat blurry.

"Yes, I have returned, and I've brought something good for you, Empress Dowager. Please wait a moment, I will get it for you!"

Chapter 843: Who Made the Poisonous Move (3 more updates)

The Empress Dowager hurriedly straightened her posture, "Good!"

Yun Jinnian took out the items she brought back for the Empress Dowager, a string of old sandalwood prayer beads. "This Buddha bead is said to have been worn by several abbesses. When I saw it, I thought it was very suitable for the Empress Dowager at first sight!"

The Empress Dowager held the sandalwood, carefully stroking the patterns on it.

Smooth and round, as Yun Jinnian said, it had been worn for many years, truly a rare and good thing.

The Empress Dowager took off the jade bracelet on her hand and put on the sandalwood Buddha beads.

"It is truly a good thing, you were considerate!"

These Buddha beads must have taken a lot of effort to obtain.

Unfortunately, she feared that she wouldn't live for long.

Thinking of this, the Empress Dowager couldn't help but feel sadness welling up in her heart.

"Empress Dowager?" Yun Jinnian called softly.

The Empress Dowager looked at Yun Jinnian, "Hmm?"

"May I take your pulse, Your Majesty?"

Upon hearing this, the Empress Dowager gently shook her head, "No need, come sit and chat with me!"

She originally had a good body, why it suddenly collapsed, she knew in her heart.

She thought the child she raised would be affectionate, but it turned out to be just her wishful thinking.

Yun Jinnian was puzzled but didn't ask more, accompanying the Empress Dowager, talking about some interesting things.

"Tianci is your brother?"

"Yes!"

The Empress Dowager smiled, not asking whose child he was.

"You are a lovable one, your brother must also be very pleasing. He should be rewarded!"

Yun Jinnian accompanied the Empress Dowager for a while, and the Empress Dowager got tired.

"Enough, you may go back! Little Anzi, give the things I prepared to Jinnian, let her take them back and enjoy!"

After being the Empress Dowager for many years, she still had some good things in her hands.

Not wanting to give them to the Emperor's child, she gave them all to Yun Jinnian.

Rarely did Yun Jinnian catch her eye and earn her liking.

"Thank you for the Empress Dowager's reward!"

But Yun Jinnian did not expect that the Empress Dowager rewarded her with three large chests.

"Eunuch An, are these all rewards from the Empress Dowager?"

Eunuch An smiled, "Replies to the Commandery Princess, yes, the Empress Dowager herself specifically instructed, these are all for the Commandery Princess. Some of them are gifts for your coming-of-age ceremony. The Empress Dowager is not well and may not be able to attend then, so she let you take them back in advance!"

Yun Jinnian looked back at Cining Palace and took a deep breath.

The Empress Dowager was poisoned, the poison had already attacked her vital organs, her days were numbered, and now that they met, who knew when the next time would be?

The Empress Dowager being poisoned, she should know who poisoned her, yet she had no power to retaliate.

And now, in this palace, those who dared to poison the Empress Dowager openly and nobody found out, there was only one person!

The Emperor!

Thinking of this, Yun Jinnian couldn't help but feel a chill down her spine.

When she went to bid farewell to the Emperor when leaving the palace, the Emperor did not make it difficult, and still rewarded her with several things.

"Go see if you like the place at the Princess Residence, if not, I'll find you another one!"

"The Emperor's reward, it must be extremely good!"

"If so, then you may leave the palace, come often to accompany Concubine Le, you two are of similar ages, you should become friends!"

"Yes!"

Yun Jinnian originally wanted to go to Weiyang Palace, but Shaoyao came and said that the Empress was resting, so Yun Jinnian took the Empress Dowager and the Emperor's rewards and left the palace.

"Commandery Princess, what do you think the Empress Dowager has rewarded you with?" Hemei asked.

"No matter what it is, it must be the treasures that the Empress Dowager has collected!" Yun Jinnian said, sighing.

The Emperor is really too ruthless.

The Empress Dowager raised him and supported him step by step to become the Emperor, yet now he repaid her kindness with enmity, didn't he fear being condemned by others?

Yangxin Hall

The Emperor leaned on the Dragon Throne, "What did the Empress Dowager say when talking to Princess Yijia?"

The Hidden Guard reported one by one.

"Did Princess Yijia take the Empress Dowager's pulse?"

Chapter 844: The Emperor Takes Action (4 updates)

"Reporting to the Emperor, Princess Yijia mentioned it, but the Empress Dowager refused."

The Emperor waved his hand, signaling the Hidden Guard to retreat.

That old woman knew her place.

She caused his mother's death; letting her be the Empress Dowager for so many years, enjoying wealth and prosperity, she should be content.

Cining Palace

The Empress Dowager called Eunuch An to her side, "Little Anzi!"

"Empress Dowager?"

"My days are numbered, what are your plans for the future?" the Empress Dowager asked calmly.

Eunuch An's eyes immediately reddened.

"Empress Dowager, I... I..." Tears fell, and he choked with sobs.

"Would you be willing to serve Jinnian?"

Eunuch An raised his head and looked at the Empress Dowager upon hearing this, "Empress Dowager?"

"Among so many children, so many younger ones, she is the only one who pleases me. She doesn't vie for power, doesn't act arrogantly, is neither submissive nor overbearing. No matter the time, she has a kind heart. She remembers my kindness and brought me these Zitan Buddha Beads, but little does she know that I can no longer enjoy such blessings," the Empress Dowager said as she caressed the beads.

"Empress Dowager, I am willing to follow you!"

The Empress Dowager smiled, "I wish I could take you with me, but the girl is too pure-hearted. The large Princess Residence houses many demons and monsters; without someone to manage it, it would be chaotic. I want you to serve her, not to enjoy yourself, and she has done you a great favor. You must protect her completely. Do you understand?"

"I understand, I will follow the Empress Dowager's arrangements!"

"In that case, go pack up. In a few days, I will let you leave the palace!"

"Yes!"

Eunuch An was willing to serve Yun Jinnian.

Upon returning to his residence, he called his recognized son, Bu Zhi, and gave him some instructions.

Eunuch An was cunning and resourceful; his son must have some abilities.

Bu Zhi was happy for Eunuch An, "Godfather, take me with you!"

Eunuch An smiled, "You rascal, stay here and serve the Empress Dowager well, understand?"

"I understand, I will do as Godfather says!"

Eunuch An gave many things to Bu Zhi, "Take and use these, but don't get overconfident just because you have some cleverness. Remember, there are many smarter than you in this palace. Understand?"

"I understand!"

Bu Zhi giggled, "Godfather, I have something nice, I'll get it for you!"

"What good thing?" Eunuch An asked.

"I won't tell you yet. I'll get it and you'll see!"

Bu Zhi went to get the thing, but when he returned, he saw Eunuch An hanging from a beam, and was startled, "Godfather!"

He quickly dropped what he was holding, rushed forward to hold Eunuch An's legs, and brought him down, but Eunuch An was already gone.

"Godfather!"

At three years old, he entered the palace, suffering many hardships and beatings.

Starving, freezing, only this person held his hand and said, "Call me father, I will protect you," but now, this person was dead.

Dead!

"Godfather!"

Bu Zhi cried out.

He knew that Godfather remembered Princess Yijia's great kindness and was about to leave the palace to serve her. There was no way he would commit suicide.

Then it must be murder.

In this palace, only one person could silently and daringly kill the Empress Dowager's chief eunuch—the Emperor.

But when others asked, Bu Zhi always said Eunuch An hanged himself.

The Empress Dowager, upon learning of Eunuch An's death, lay in bed, silent for a long time, then summoned Bu Zhi, "Are you Little Anzi's godson?"

"Reporting to the Empress Dowager, yes, I am!"

Bu Zhi's voice was hoarse, his eyes swollen from crying.

The Empress Dowager felt sorrow too, her long-term attendant was suddenly gone.

"You arrange your godfather's funeral yourself, give him a proper burial!"

"Yes!"

The Empress Dowager waved her hand, signaling Bu Zhi to leave.

The Emperor was starting to target her old servants; soon it would be her turn.

Chapter 845: Empress Dowager understands (1 more

The Empress Dowager reflected on her life and thought it was worthwhile.

Struggling to sit up, she called out, "Someone come!"

"Empress Dowager!"

"Invite the Emperor, Empress, Noble Consort Wang, Noble Consort Wei, and the four other consorts, along with the princes and princesses, to see me!"

The palace maid hesitated for a moment before leaving to carry out the order.

Soon, the Emperor arrived at Cining Palace. Upon seeing the Empress Dowager's aged and sickly face on the bed, his gaze turned cold.

"Emperor!"

The Emperor remained silent; the grand sleeping chamber housed only him and the Empress Dowager.

"Do you believe that it was I who caused your mother's death?" the Empress Dowager said with a bitter smile. "I misspoke; I should say your mother, for you have enthroned her as the Empress Dowager!"

The Emperor still remained silent.

"Over the years, I have asked myself if I have been fair to you. In the early years, I was favored for no more than a couple of years. Step by step, I climbed from being a county magistrate's daughter to become a Noble Consort. But the Emperor seems to have forgotten, above the Noble Consort stands the Empress; below the Noble Consort, there are four consorts, concubines, Zhaoyis, and beauties. So many people could have harmed your mother! So many could have raised you! At that time, did anyone reach out a hand to you?"

The Empress Dowager paused and slowly sat up. "No one, not a single person. And why is that?"

"First, your mother indeed had committed sins, and everyone did not want to be implicated. At that time, my body was already damaged; I could no longer bear children. Still, I raised you beside me, disregarding the ridicule of others. From then on, my life in the palace became increasingly difficult!"

"Second, the former Emperor felt guilty for why I ended up with a broken body. I pleaded for your mother's sins not to implicate you or my family, thus sparing your mother's clan, allowing you to rise to the throne with their support!"

Speaking, the Empress Dowager began to cough.

She covered her mouth with a handkerchief, which, when removed, was stained with blood.

Blood dripped down her wrist, soaking into the Zitan Buddha Beads.

"Have you ever considered that your mother's family was enormous? If they had not been caught red-handed, would she have resigned herself to die? Why did your maternal grandfather and uncles not dare to rebel? Do you think, with her capabilities and scheming within the palace, I could have harmed her? You overestimate me greatly!"

The Emperor looked at the Empress Dowager, speaking lightly, "Even at this moment, you still evade the truth!"

"So, you believe I killed your mother, thus poisoning me? What I don't understand is, why did you stop a year ago and then suddenly resume later?" the Empress Dowager questioned.

But she already knew.

At that time, Yun Jinnian was in the Capital City.

Later, Yun Jinnian went on a long journey. By the time he returned, it was too late to save me.

"You already guessed it, didn't you?" the Emperor replied in a deep voice.

Truthfully, the Empress Dowager had nothing that could be used to threaten him throughout her life.

She did not care about her family, never saw them or promoted them.

She rose to become the Empress Dowager, her family could have had a Duke, yet she gave none of them such title.

"In any case, I still admire you for knowing the truth yet never saying it!"

"Reveal it? To whom? I just wanted to see how heartless, how cruel you truly are, and I am curious about your ultimate fate—whether you will end up being abandoned and betrayed by everyone!" the Empress Dowager said, coughing again.

She believed the Emperor would eventually be abandoned and not die a good death!

"You will not live to see my fate, but I will see yours!"

The Empress Dowager nodded, "Good, very good. Emperor, I have indeed misjudged you!"

Chapter 846: Took an Army

Shaking her head, she leaned against the headboard.

When the Empress and others arrived, the Empress Dowager had her eyes closed and said nothing.

"Empress Dowager?" the Empress softly called.

The Empress Dowager opened her eyes, gazing at the people before her, a room full of people, and then slowly said, "Someone, bring out those chests of mine!"

"Yes!"

The Empress Dowager had twenty chests in total, three were given to Yun Jinnian, now there were seventeen left.

When the chests were brought forward.

The Empress Dowager then said, "Empress, I know you have always been fair and just. I entrust these chests to you, to give to Princess Yijia, that girl!"

The princesses all gasped in surprise.

This was the Empress Dowager's private collection, and she gave it all to Yun Jinnian!

"Yes!"

The Empress responded, greatly astonished in her heart.

The Empress Dowager coughed again, and as the Empress wanted to approach, the Empress Dowager waved her hand to stop her and continued, "After I pass away, other than this string of Zitan Buddha Beads on my wrist, no accompanying burial items are needed!"

Upon hearing this, the Empress knew that the Empress Dowager did not have much time left.

Perhaps, this moment was the last light before darkness.

"Yes!"

"Furthermore, those serving in my palace, grant them a favor and send them to the Princess Residence to serve Princess Yijia!"

The Emperor suddenly stood up.

The Empress glanced at the Emperor.

She actually hoped the Emperor would cause a scene, because if he did, he would be the one disgraced.

The whole world knew he poisoned and killed the Empress Dowager.

Perhaps, the Empress Dowager had already kept something hidden, but what exactly was it?

"Yes, I shall faithfully follow the Empress Dowager's last wishes!"

The Empress Dowager nodded slightly, took a deep breath, and then said, "Bring my burial robe!"

Very soon, the Empress Dowager was dressed in her burial robes.

Lying on the bed, looking at the canopy.

She called the Emperor forward, took a letter from a hidden compartment in the headboard, and handed it to the Emperor, "Your Majesty, this is the last thing I can do for you!"

The Emperor took the letter.

He immediately opened it, and after reading it, he started trembling all over, "No, this absolutely cannot be true, this absolutely cannot be true!"

Looking at the Empress Dowager on the bed, "Mother, tell me, this absolutely cannot be true!"

However, the Empress Dowager had already stopped breathing.

"Mother, mother, please wake up, wake up and tell me this isn't true!"

The Emperor cried out, suddenly kneeling in front of the Empress Dowager.

This old lady, even at death's door, had deceived him.

His mother actually had a Hidden Guard, under her control, but never used it, nor handed it over to him.

It turned out that all these years, she had been watching his actions, to see if he was truly filial or just pretending.

If truly sincere, she would give him the Hidden Guard, if insincere, she would never tell him.

Now at the end of her life, she told him about the Hidden Guard, but didn't provide a way to contact them...

The Empress simply ordered people to go out and announce, "The Empress Dowager has passed!"

As for those things given to Yun Jinnian, "Take them all to Weiyang Palace. After the Empress Dowager's matters are settled, deliver them to Princess Yijia!"

The Empress was also curious, the Empress Dowager actually gave all her collection to Yun Jinnian.

Now in this Capital City, there really wasn't a girl richer than Yun Jinnian!

"Empress, the Emperor requests your presence to discuss the Empress Dowager's posthumous matters!"

"Let's go!"

Upon reaching Cining Palace, the Emperor was seated on the Dragon Throne, with Consort Le by his side.

The Empress bowed slightly, "Your Majesty!"

"I asked you to come because I need your help with a matter!"

"What matter?"

"It's necessary to send someone to inspect the items the Empress Dowager bestowed upon Princess Yijia!"

Chapter 847: Unease in the Heart

The Empress raised an eyebrow.

"Don't worry, I am only asking someone to inspect. As for the other things, since the Empress Dowager gave them to Princess Yijia, I will not take them back!"

"Then, Your Majesty, please send someone to Weiyang Palace!" the Empress responded.

She understood that the Emperor was desperately cornered.

From her perspective, it was absolutely impossible for there to be Hidden Guards.

Otherwise, why wouldn't the Yu Family know and remind the Emperor!

The Empress Dowager just wanted to embarrass the Emperor!

The Emperor glanced at Eunuch Hai, and Eunuch Hai received the order and left, bringing along two lords from the Yu Family.

They would definitely know what belonged to the Yu Family.

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Yun Jinnian left the palace, and her eyelids kept twitching.

She reached up to rub them.

"Commandery Princess, what's wrong?" Hemei asked softly.

"I don't know, my eyelids have been twitching, and my heart feels heavy, as if something is going to happen!" Yun Jinnian said, lifting the curtain of the carriage and seeing someone selling wontons.

"Hemei, let's go down and have some wontons!"

"Alright!"

Hemei responded, asking Uncle Cheng to stop the carriage.

She helped Yun Jinnian out of the carriage.

"Boss, a bowl of wontons!" Hemei shouted.

Yun Jinnian smiled slightly, "Make it four bowls!" She looked at Hemei, Huan, and Uncle Cheng, "You all sit down, let's eat together!"

"Yes!"

The four of them sat down.

The wonton shop owner immediately cooked and brought out the wontons.

Yun Jinnian took a spoon and ate slowly in small bites.

"Commandery Princess, these wontons are not bad!" Hemei praised.

Huan also smiled and focused on eating.

Uncle Cheng remained silent, fearing he would spray saliva if he spoke.

"Indeed, not bad. Next time, we'll bring Kuankuan and the others out to eat!"

Hemei glanced at Yun Jinnian, saying nothing.

She didn't like Yun Kuan and Yun Zuomo; they were too insincere and not their kind of people.

Having finished the wontons, Yun Jinnian saw a group of people from the palace running quickly.

"Henuan, go find out what is happening. I will return to the Yun Residence first, come back after you find out!"

"Yes!"

Henuan responded, immediately getting up and leaving.

Yun Jinnian put down the spoon.

Hemei immediately asked the price, took out some copper coins, paid, and helped Yun Jinnian back into the carriage.

Uncle Cheng, thinking the wontons were delicious, drank the soup in one go before going to drive the carriage back to the Yun Residence.

At the Yun Residence, Yun Jinnian met Yun Muyou.

"Elder Sister!"

"Fourth Sister!"

They called out to each other warmly but felt very distant.

Yun Jinnian could see through Yun Muyou, but Yun Muyou found it hard to read Yun Jinnian's gentle smile.

"Fourth Sister, it's good you are back. I came today to discuss something with you!"

"Alright, Elder Sister, let's go sit in my Niannian Garden."

"Okay!"

They walked side by side, and Yun Muyou said, "Actually, your brother-in-law has been nagging me, saying I haven't invited you to the Marquis Residence. I said you were busy, and it seemed I was right. Even today I waited for you for a long time. Who were you seeing in the palace?"

"I wasn't seeing anyone for medical reasons, just went to give thanks," Yun Jinnian responded indifferently.

Listening to Yun Muyou flaunting her happiness.

Not mentioning how she shamelessly took Yun Zihan's betrothal gifts.

"Let's not talk about this. When will you visit the Marquis Residence?"

Yun Jinnian thought for a moment, "We'll see. After giving thanks at the palace today, I plan to visit the Princess Residence. Once everything is settled, I will invite you over, and we sisters can gather properly!"

"That sounds great!" Yun Muyou responded, her face slightly reddening.

Embarrassed.

Chapter 848: Shockingly Pale

After thinking for a while, she said, "Fourth Sister, actually, there is something I did wrong. Can you not blame me for the sake of our many years of relationship?"

Relationship?

Many years?

Yun Jinnian found it amusing, but still smiled and said, "Go ahead!"

"That day, when eldest brother and sister-in-law got married, mother borrowed a few things from you to make a good impression. I liked one of the vases and took it without asking mother, not realizing it was yours. Yesterday, mother mentioned it, so today I specially brought it back to you!"

"So that's what happened. It's not a big deal!"

"As long as Fourth Sister doesn't blame me!"

Yun Muyou finally breathed a sigh of relief.

She was really afraid that Yun Jinnian would make a fuss about it, making her lose face.

"We are sisters, Big Sister saying this makes us seem distant!"

They arrived at Niannian Garden, Yun Kuan and the others had already left, and Yun Jinnian invited Yun Muyou to sit down.

Yun Muyou looked at the things in the room and said, "Fourth Sister, why is it still the same as before? You have so many good things, why don't you take them out and display them!"

"This is also quite good. As for those things, they were rewarded by the palace. I plan to take them to the Princess Residence!"

"I see, then I will have to take a good look when the time comes. Fourth Sister has quite a few good things in her hands!"

"Then Big Sister should have a baby soon. I will give the little baby a few gifts by then!"

Yun Muyou smiled, "That would be wonderful!"

She reached out and touched her belly, perhaps she really should prepare to have a child.

After all, it has been a few years since she got married.

Suddenly, she asked Yun Jinnian, "Have you seen Second Sister?"

"I have seen her. Second Sister is pregnant, and her husband treats her quite well!" Yun Jinnian said, sipping a cup of tea.

Yun Muyou felt particularly uncomfortable upon hearing this.

Yun Zihan is pregnant!

Yun Jinnian went to see Yun Zihan, but did not come to the Marquis Residence to see her.

Does she look down on her?

"I don't know what's wrong with Second Sister, she doesn't socialize with the family nor with me anymore, she really seems to have forgotten about the Yun Family!"

"Concubine Cui's passing was hard on Second Sister. Moreover, that day, Uncle said there was no longer such a daughter, so..." Yun Jinnian sighed as she spoke.

Yun Muyou took a deep breath, "Father was just angry back then, how could she take it seriously? Never mind, I will visit her someday, after all, she is our sister!"

"Hmm!"

The two talked about trivial matters here and there.

Just then, Henuan rushed in, "Commandery Princess, I have found out!"

Yun Jinnian glanced at Yun Muyou, "Speak!"

"The Empress Dowager has passed away!"

The teacup in her hand suddenly dropped to the ground, shattering into pieces with tea spilling everywhere.

Yun Jinnian suddenly stood up, "What did you say?"

The Empress Dowager was fine when she left the palace.

What exactly happened?

Could it be the Emperor did not want the Empress Dowager alive?

At this thought, Yun Jinnian sat back down on the stool, her hands trembling.

Hemei immediately stepped forward to hold Yun Jinnian's hand, "Commandery Princess, I am here!"

"Prepare, I want to enter the palace to pay my respects to the Empress Dowager!"

"Yes!"

Yun Muyou was also stunned.

Originally, she planned to talk about Weng Jianrui with Yun Jinnian today, but she did not expect the news of the Empress Dowager's death.

There was nothing to say now.

"Jinnian, you can enter the palace at any time?"

"Back then, the Emperor gave me a token, which I have never used. But now, I can't care about so much, I just want to enter the palace to see the Empress Dowager. She was a very nice old lady!"

Yun Jinnian said, her eyes reddened.

Her heart ached, but no tears came.

Chapter 849: Mrs. Han's Instructions

She is ultimately a ruthless person.

Yun Jinnian thought this.

Nanny An learned that the Empress Dowager had passed away, and Yun Jinnian had to enter the palace, so she went to the bedroom to find clothes and prepare the Commandery Princess's hair accessories.

Usually, Yun Jinnian could dress casually, but when entering the palace soon, Yun Jinnian relied on her status and the Empress Dowager's favor to send the Empress Dowager off, and this time she didn't know when she would leave the palace.

A few more sets of clothes must be prepared.

Yun Jinnian looked at Yun Muyou, "Elder sister, I cannot entertain you well today, I will visit another day!"

"No problem, there is nothing more important than the Empress Dowager's matter now, I must immediately return to the Marquis Residence and discuss with my mother-in-law about entering the palace to keep vigil. I'll leave first!" Yun Muyou said, standing up and bowing slightly towards Yun Jinnian.

Yun Jinnian also stood up and gently bowed, a reciprocal greeting to the Marchioness Yun Muyou.

Yun Muyou looked at her, feeling relieved, and left Niannian Garden.

Then she learned that the palace had already sent someone to deliver the Imperial Decree, all third-rank and above noblewomen must enter the palace to keep vigil for the Empress Dowager.

Mrs. He had already started preparing, she and Mrs. Han were both of the same third rank, and also had to enter the palace for the vigil.

Afraid of being criticized, she ordered someone to inform Mrs. Han.

Mrs. Han stood in the courtyard, looked at the sky for a while before saying, "Bai Que, go and prepare, I will enter the palace with the Lady later, and go ask Yun Jinnian if she will enter the palace first."

Yun Jinnian was a Commandery Princess personally conferred by the Emperor, and the Empress Dowager cherished her dearly, so at this moment, she should enter the palace first to keep vigil.

"Yes!"

Bai Que went to Niannian Garden, learned Yun Jinnian was about to enter the palace immediately, and advised Hemei and Henuan a few words before returning to Qingjue Academy to inform Mrs. Han.

Mrs. Han smiled upon hearing this, "This child, truly a deeply affectionate person!"

More considerate than she had imagined.

Bai Que responded with a smile, "The Commandery Princess is a rare kind-hearted person!"

But she is definitely not someone who can be easily manipulated or bullied.

Maybe before the age of ten she was, but after ten, looking at her steady and firm steps without any rashness, and seeing Prince Rui's affection for her, waiting for her for five years, one can tell she is absolutely a calculating person.

She has her own principles in dealing with people and matters.

Mrs. Han glanced at Bai Que, "Go and prepare yourself!"

A kind-hearted person...

Her daughter could not possibly be just a kind-hearted person; such a person would be bullied to death.

So during their time in Nanjiang, several nannies from prominent families taught her in turns, Bai Que did not see those days, otherwise, she would not say this!

Yun Jinnian was about to enter the palace, but she came to Qingjue Academy.

Seeing Mrs. Han standing on the steps, she quickly stepped forward, "Mother!"

Mrs. Han extended her hand, holding Yun Jinnian's hand and leading her into the small hall, "Sit down, Mother will advise you a few things!"

"Yes!"

Yun Jinnian sat down next to Mrs. Han.

Mrs. Han then said, "This time entering the palace to keep vigil for the Empress Dowager, something is bound to happen, you must be careful not to fall into traps. Also, after entering the palace, do not stand out, just peacefully keep vigil for the Empress Dowager, your grandfather has some people in the palace, but they may not be usable..."

The Empress Dowager's passing might cause chaos in the palace.

Yun Jinnian nodded.

Mrs. Han continued, "Do not trust anyone, those who smile at you may not sincerely help you, it is said that the wasp's tail is the last sting, the most venomous is a woman's heart, especially the women in the palace, avoid the Princes as well, lest you be manipulated!"

#### Chapter 850: Set Up a Trap

Although she knew Yun Jinnian's capabilities, Mrs. Han still felt uneasy.

The Empress Dowager died under unclear circumstances, and Mrs. Han realized that the palace was likely in disorder.

"Mother, don't worry. I will remember to be careful and cautious!" Yun Jinnian gently comforted, worried that Mrs. Han would be anxious.

"How about letting Bai Que accompany you into the palace?"

Bai Que was competent, knowledgeable, and skilled—having her accompany Yun Jinnian was the best choice.

"Mother, if Aunt Que follows me, it will arouse more suspicion. Let Hemei and Henuan accompany me instead; these two maids are reliable and loyal. I often have them by my side. Besides, you need to enter the palace too, so how could you be without Aunt Que!"

Mrs. Han had intended to say something but finally listened to Yun Jinnian.

"Then be cautious in everything you do!"

"Yes!"

Prince Rui Residence

When Chu Yu heard of the Empress Dowager's demise, he remained silent for a long time before saying, "In the end, he still couldn't tolerate her!"

Even the Empress Dowager who raised him was poisoned to death, let alone his half-brother.

"Pass down the order to spread the cause of the Empress Dowager's death!"

"Yes!" Luo Yi received the order and went to arrange it.

Chu Yu then said, "Luo'er, make preparations. I will enter the palace. Have the spies inside be vigilant, and ensure Jinnian's safety!"

Yun Jinnian had entered the palace, and then the Empress Dowager passed away. Although unrelated to her, the fear was that someone might use this incident against her.

If anyone dared to harm his beloved even a little, he would ensure they face eternal torment and regret ever coming into this world.

Luo'er smiled, thinking to make a few jokes.

Chu Yu casually said, "It seems you've been quite idle lately, and in a good mood. Then, you take care of getting Jinfeng back."

"Ah..."

The master's tone did not feel right.

Luo'er dared not be careless and quickly said, "I'll arrange it right away!"

"Ha!"

Chu Yu let out a cold laugh.

Luo'er was so frightened that he ran out immediately.

The Empress Dowager's passing spread through the Capital City with incredible speed, and numerous swift horses sent the news to other regions.

Additionally, there was an imperial edict stating that three months of mourning were to be observed following the Empress Dowager's death, during which no celebrations could be held.

As for mournful events, they should not be overly ostentatious either.

All princesses, princes, and princely heirs, as well as all members of the royal family, were required to return to the Capital City for the funeral.

To ensure everyone was present, the body would be kept for an extended period.

Fortunately, the weather wasn't hot, otherwise, it would be unbearable.

Weiyang Palace

The Yu family's members opened several chests but found no tokens among the precious jewels and jade artifacts, all of which were valuable.

"Who would have thought the Empress Dowager had so many treasures!"

Yu Huachong, the Princely Heir of Duke Yu and the Emperor's cousin, couldn't help but be a bit envious.

He became somewhat curious about the Commandery Princess Yijia, whom he had never met.

The Duke Yu cast a glance at his son, "If you have nothing to say, no one will think you're mute!"

Having been the Empress Dowager for so many years, from a concubine to a Noble Consort, it was not surprising she possessed such treasures. What was surprising was that she bestowed them upon a Commandery Princess of a different surname rather than any of the princes or princesses.

"Father..."

Yu Huachong murmured softly.

Though he was over forty, with a married son and even a grandson, he wondered if his father could spare him some dignity.

"Alright, pack everything back up!"

The items themselves opened, and the palace maids would repack them.

But seeing so many treasures inevitably aroused greed.

Shaoyao spoke lightly from the side, "Keep your hands clean. If anything is missing, none of you will escape!"

The maids immediately grew silent, not daring to have any ill intentions.

These items were entrusted by the Empress Dowager to the Empress to give to Commandery Princess Yijia, and each one was listed. If anything was missing, it would be discovered.

Thankfully, Shaoyao reminded them; otherwise, they would have risked their lives.