

## Indulgence 851

### Chapter 851: Words Don't Match the Heart

"Yes!"

She answered and carefully packed the things away.

Shaoyao then turned and left.

The palace maids looked at each other, cautiously continuing to pack up the items.

They had met Princess Yijia before but never expected the Empress Dowager to favor her this much. Now that the Empress Dowager had passed away, she left all her cherished possessions to Princess Yijia, showing immense love and affection.

The Emperor sat on the Dragon Throne, listening to the Imperial Astronomical Bureau choose a date.

"Your Majesty, the best date is March 21st. If we miss that, the next suitable day would be June 5th!"

The Emperor rubbed his temples, finally saying after a long silence, "Then March 21st it is!"

In truth, he preferred to conduct the burial immediately.

That old hag, schemed against him even on her deathbed!

No burial goods for her then, not a single item, not even the Zitan Buddha Beads. She will go with nothing.

With this in mind, the Emperor made up his mind.

"Your Majesty, Prince Rui has entered the palace!" Sea Eunuch whispered from the side.

The Emperor frowned at the news, "Where is he?"

"He's already gone to Cining Palace!"

The Emperor took a deep breath before standing up, "I shall go to Cining Palace as well!"

Cining Palace

Chu Yu was offering incense, his expression somber as he looked at the Empress Dowager's coffin.

"The Emperor has arrived!"

Chu Yu turned to see the Emperor walking slowly towards them, now dressed in mourning clothes. His expression carried sorrow yet his eyes betrayed a certain joy and abandon.

Poisons the object of his admiration, what's there to be so free and unrestrained about?

Chu Yu could not understand.

"Greetings, Your Majesty!" Chu Yu offered a slight bow.

"No need for formalities among brothers!" The Emperor offered a symbolic gesture of support.

Both men were full of feigned concern.

"Since Your Majesty says so, I will dispense with the formalities!" Chu Yu said and turned back to the Empress Dowager's coffin, asking quietly, "Your Majesty, it is said that the Empress Dowager gave all her lifelong collected treasures to Princess Yijia before she died?"

"Yes!" The Emperor responded, probing, "Could it be that you have an interest in Princess Yijia?"

"Princess Yijia is a beauty of peerless elegance, kind and gentle. She is also my savior. Naturally, I have some feelings for her. But I don't know if Your Majesty would consent!"

"You are not young anymore either. It's rare to find someone you truly like. Of course, I approve. However, has Princess Yijia agreed?"

"I haven't dared to speak to her yet, Your Majesty. Please don't let it slip. Girls are thin-skinned, I'm afraid if word gets out, it would tarnish my reputation, and she might refuse!"

The Emperor laughed, "You are aware of your bad reputation. I've told you many times to cherish it. Now you see the consequences!"

Chu Yu chuckled awkwardly.

He chose to remain silent.

The Emperor said nothing but was inwardly wary of Chu Yu getting close to Yun Jinnian.

Yun Jinnian's medical skills were famously precise. A woman who could heal and save lives could bring tremendous advantages, countless wealth, and connections.

Therefore, he must prevent Chu Yu and Yun Jinnian from being together.

Thinking of this, he realized his suitable sons were the Fifth Prince, Sixth Prince, and Seventh Prince. The others were too young, so the Fifth Prince it must be.

Yun Jinnian, a Commandery Princess by his decree, could never be a concubine.

Furthermore, Consort De was sensible and well-behaved, and the Fifth Prince was both scholarly and skillful in martial arts, with a commendable character. In every respect, he matched well with Yun Jinnian.

"Your Majesty!"

The Emperor turned to look at Sea Eunuch.

"Your Majesty, Princess Yijia has entered the palace!"

The Emperor frowned, "She has entered the palace?"

Chapter 852: A Hammer to End It All

"Yes, Your Majesty!" Eunuch Hai responded quietly, fearing the Emperor might forget, he reminded, "Your Majesty, you have given Princess Yijia a token allowing her to enter the palace freely!"

The Emperor suddenly realized, "Oh, it seems I had forgotten. Go and welcome her!"

"Yes!"

Eunuch Hai personally went to welcome Yun Jinnian.

Seeing Yun Jinnian dressed in mourning attire, yet adorned with the Commandery Princess's crown on her hair, she walked gracefully.

Prince Rui was the first to enter the palace, and Princess Yijia was the second.

Was this a coincidence? Or was it prearranged?

Many people speculated.

But one was Prince Rui, the other was the unparalleled medical skilled Princess Yijia, so no one dared to openly speak much.

Chu Liange looked over when Yun Jinnian appeared.

If one were to speak of elegance, dressed in mourning, today's Princess Yijia stirred the heart more than that night in Huiquan Tower, more tenderly and more pitifully.

This kind of beauty was touching and pitiable, it needed to be held tenderly and cared for, not desecrated.

It was different from the flamboyant and arrogant Concubine Hele, whom one would wish to strip naked and ravish.

Chu Liange glanced once, then quickly turned his head, daring not to look more, fearing Yun Jinnian would notice.

Little did he know, when Yun Jinnian entered, she glanced at him.

Having seen enough, she realized her heart had gradually calmed, the obsession and resentment she once had were lessened.

Entering the mourning hall

Yun Jinnian bowed slightly to the Emperor and Chu Yu, her gaze fell on the coffin, her eyes immediately reddened.

Earlier, a living person bestowed so many gifts to her, now lying coldly in the coffin.

Kneeling on the prayer mat, Yun Jinnian's eyes were red, tears uncontrollably fell.

Hot and scalding.

A palace maid handed her incense, Yun Jinnian held it and bowed thrice, then rose up and placed the incense in the censer.

She took a handkerchief from her sleeve, gently covering her lips, letting the tears fall freely.

She actually wanted to see the Empress Dowager, wanted to organize her clothes, but she knew it wasn't her turn, nor possible.

Chu Yu saw Yun Jinnian crying, his heart ached terribly.

He wished he could step forward and hold Yun Jinnian in his arms, wipe away her tears, letting her be happy for life.

He took a step forward...

"Yijia!" the Emperor whispered.

"Your Majesty?"

The Emperor nodded slightly, "The Empress Dowager cherished you deeply!"

Yun Jinnian remained silent, glanced at Chu Yu, Chu Yu then stepped back.

Yun Jinnian moved her gaze away.

Following closely, the Princess's Residence family, except for Anger and Sister Ru, all came, followed by the Commandery Princess's Residence, several Duke Residences, Marquis Residences, Count Residences, General Residences, Wang Residences, and all civil and military officials who could come arrived.

The ladies knelt row by row, according to their rank, kneeling at the end, without braziers or floor dragons, making them shiver from the cold regardless of how many layers they wore or how many warmers they hugged.

Yun Jinnian felt sorry for Mrs. Han, had Henuan repeatedly change warmers for her.

The Empress saw this, had Shaoyao invite Mrs. Han into the mourning hall, kneeling beside Yun Jinnian.

"Mother!" Yun Jinnian whispered.

Mrs. Han gently shook her head.

Though outside was cold, one hour of kneeling could lead to rising and leaving the palace, returning for another hour the next day.

However, kneeling inside the mourning hall meant continuously kneeling, with little time for eating or resting.

Seeing the Emperor and Empress's attitude towards Jinnian now, it was likely she couldn't leave the palace with her.

In the Imperial Study

The Commandery Princess gently laid down the teacup, listening to the Imperial Astronomical Bureau stating the burial date in March, she stated calmly, "Since the burial is set in March, let everyone return home during this period. The Empress and concubines can take turns guarding the palace, the relatives of officials will start guarding seven days before the burial. Your Majesty, what do you think?"

Chapter 853: Reluctant Heart

The Emperor heard these words and felt a grudge in his heart.

The Commandery Princess, the legitimate elder sister of the former emperor, had been transcendent from the moment of her birth, and the former emperor had always listened to her in everything, never once showing any displeasure in decades.

How could he, the Emperor, not listen to her words?

"Aunt's words are indeed correct. Let the ladies of each family all return. When the time comes, they can return to the palace seven days in advance to keep vigil!" The Emperor said, and then asked, "Aunt, in the meantime, should everything else remain as usual?"

"As usual, as long as it is not excessive!"

"Yes!"

The Emperor conceded.

After all, she was not his biological mother; he could act as he pleased.

The Commandery Princess glanced at the Emperor, knowing he was reluctant, but during this time, Mingming's marriage could not be delayed, and Jinnian's coming-of-age ceremony could not be too restrained.

Moreover, with Ayu's temperament, if there were an uproar at this moment...

"Since that's the case, I shall leave the palace. At my age, even such a short time is exhausting!"

"Allow me to escort Aunt!"

"Very well!"

The Emperor walked beside the Commandery Princess, holding her hand in support.

"Your Majesty!"

"Aunt?"

"No matter the circumstances, it has been many years; she did raise you, and you must give her the due respect. Do not let the world make a mockery of you!"

"Yes!"

As soon as the Commandery Princess left, the Emperor issued a decree.

The families of the civil and military officials breathed a sigh of relief, each leaving the palace to return to their residences. Yun Jinnian and Mrs. Han walked together, leaving the palace and boarding the Vermilion Carriages.

Mrs. Han tightly held Yun Jinnian's hand, "Everyone ultimately faces death!"

Yun Jinnian leaned on Mrs. Han's shoulder, "Mother, I know, it's just that the person we saw this morning, now only a few hours later, has passed away. And Eunuch An..."

Yun Jinnian had already learned that Eunuch An had passed away.

"Don't think too much about it, let's go home!" Mrs. Han comforted.

She did not want Yun Jinnian to overthink or get involved.

Too many complex intrigues occurred within the Imperial Palace.

"Mm!"

They returned together to the Yun Residence.

Yun Jinnian returned to Niannian Garden, washed up, changed clothes, and lay down to rest.

Yaniang brought a soup.

Hemei carried the soup into the room and saw Yun Jinnian looking dejected. She advised, "Commandery Princess, Yaniang has cooked your favorite soup, have some!"

"I have no appetite!"

Yun Jinnian said faintly, lying in bed and pulling the blanket over herself.

Taking a deep breath, "I want to sleep for a while, call me at dinner time!"

Hemei responded and left the bedchamber.

She shook her head at Henuan, Shi Jiayu, and Ru Yue.

The three glanced at the bedchamber but dared not say more.

After all, the Empress Dowager had been genuinely kind to Yun Jinnian.

Much better than some people in the residence.

Hearts are made of flesh, and people can feel kindness or harm. The servants attending by her side could see that as well.

Pretenses would eventually be exposed and would not stand up to scrutiny.

Yun Kuan, Yun He, and Yun Mu came over, and Shi Jiayu stepped forward to block them, "The Commandery Princess is unwell and resting!"

"What's wrong with sister?" Yun Kuan asked.

His heart filled with worry.

Was it because he annoyed his sister last night?

"Yes, what's wrong with sister?" Yun He and Yun Mu also asked urgently.

"Not ill, just tired. You are all good children, do not disturb sister, alright?" Yun Zuomo stepped forward.

Holding Yun Kuan's hand, she pulled Yun He and Yun Mu to her side, "How about Fifth Sister plays Eagle Catching Chicks with you?"

Yun Kuan shook his head.

He did not like Eagle Catching Chicks; he liked being with his sister.

Chapter 854: Appeasing the Younger Half-Sister

Yun Zuomo wasn't angry, "Then how about I read to you? Fourth Sister loves children who can read the most!"

"Really?" Yun Mu asked.

Sister seems to really like reading.

"Of course it's true!"

The three children quickly believed and were willing to play with Yun Zuomo, letting her read to them.

Shi Jiayu smiled at Yun Zuomo.

Yun Zuomo returned the smile, holding the hands of the three children and leading them away.

There were many things she didn't know before, but last night Auntie told her everything. She understood and realized a lot.

One should not speak of their mother's faults, but she couldn't deny that Auntie was wrong, terribly wrong.

She wanted to make amends, but didn't know how.

Yun Jinnian got up at night, ate a few bites, and then went back to sleep.

Coincidentally, she was having her period, and she didn't want to move at all, so she curled up on the kang reading medical books. Occasionally, her three younger stepbrothers and three younger stepsisters would come to chat with her, giving her a sense of stolen leisure for half a day.

"At the beginning of human life, nature is inherently good. Though people's natures are similar, their habits make them different..." Yun Mu recited, shaking his head as he did so.

Yun Jinnian covered her mouth and laughed.

"Well done!"

Receiving praise, Yun Mu was extremely happy and loved studying even more.

Even Yun He and Yun Kuan secretly put in extra effort, all for a word of praise from Yun Jinnian.

Watching her three stepbrothers being so earnest, Yun Jinnian said, "They should have a tutor who can teach them both literary and martial arts, so they can pave their own bright future!"

"Sister..." Yun Zuomo called out softly.

Yun Jinnian looked at Yun Zuomo, "If you have something to say, just say it. I don't want to hold a grudge over our past feelings or the adults' entanglements."

Yun Zuomo's eyes turned red instantly.

"Zuomo, Qingqing, Qingzhi, we are sisters in this life and won't have another chance in the next. If we truly want to get along, we should be sincere, more honest, and more trusting. I believe we will get along well!"

The three of them nodded vigorously.

Yun Jinnian didn't know how much they took in or understood. She just wanted to give them a chance for their past acts of spying and inform them of her position in the Yun Residence. She also remembered how she had once cried out for help to no avail and wanted to lend them a hand.

This was their only chance; if they missed it, they would miss it forever.

She would never acknowledge them again.

"Sister, thank you!" Yun Zuomo said solemnly.

Yun Jinnian smiled, shook her head, and flipped through a book. After a long time, she said, "No need to thank me, thank yourselves!"

She didn't want to say anything more.

Saying too much would be meaningless.

Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingqing, and Yun Qingzhi understood and could not help but break into a cold sweat.

They also secretly rejoiced for taking this step initially.

After staying in Niannian Garden for a few days, once her period passed, Yun Jinnian decided to visit the Princess Residence.

Since she was going, she decided to take Xu Xinmo, Yun Musi, and Yun Mulan with her.

Early in the morning, the group set off from Yun Residence and headed towards the Princess Residence on Vermilion Bird Street.

The three stepbrothers were the most excited, chattering away with Yun Jinnian.

Yun Jinnian smiled, occasionally responding to them, and opened the curtain of the carriage to let them see the bustling market crowd.

"When you grow up, you'll be able to travel anywhere you want!"

"Really, Sister?"

"Of course it's true. So you must study hard. In a few days, I'll find you a tutor. The tutor will teach you to read and write, and also martial arts. Only those with skills can travel all over the world and see all the mountains and rivers!"

"Will Sister come with us?" Yun He asked seriously.

Chapter 855: Envy and Jealousy

"Elder sister might not be able to go!" Yun Jinnian said earnestly.

"Why? I will protect you, elder sister. I study hard, I'll protect you. Come with us, alright?" Yun He said earnestly.

"Sure, but you must be capable enough to protect me, then I'll go with you!"

Xu Xinmo pouted.

Really doesn't like how Yun Jinnian treats those three little brats so well.

They're not even her real brothers, why be so nice?

She saw Yun Zuomo and the others looking at Yun Jinnian with admiration as well, then turned away to talk to Yun Musi and Yun Mulan.

Yun Musi and Yun Mulan didn't have half-brothers or half-sisters, nor did they like the half-brothers and three half-sisters from the second branch.

They didn't want to engage with them either.

So they talked with Xu Xinmo, ignoring Yun Jinnian and the others.

The carriage stopped at the entrance of the Princess Residence, and Mama Qian led Dengzi and others to wait at the entrance.

"Servant greets the Commandery Princess!"

Yun Jinnian looked at Mama Qian, smiled, "No need for such formalities!"

No matter what the Emperor had in mind, Mama Qian and the guards indeed had real skills. She wouldn't be foolish to push them away.

"Commandery Princess, please come in!" Mama Qian said.

"Mama Qian, you have worked hard all these years!"

"It's what I should do as a servant!"

Initially, Mama Qian had been a bit worried, fearing Yun Jinnian might give her a hard time, but to her surprise, Yun Jinnian was so amiable.

But thinking about it, Yun Jinnian wasn't a harsh person.

"The residence is very clean and refreshing!" Yun Jinnian praised as they walked.

"Some items already existed here, so I took the liberty to rearrange them. Some of the less good ones are stored in the warehouse. You can take the ledger back to check, Commandery Princess!"

"I trust Mama Qian's work, and Mama Qian has done very well!"

"Thank you for the praise, Commandery Princess!"

Yun Jinnian smiled.

"Mama Qian, is there lunch available now in the residence?"

"Yes, Commandery Princess. If you want to order some dishes, I can have someone buy them immediately. There's still time!"

"Then have someone buy some items. It's the first time my younger siblings are visiting my residence, I'll take them around!"

"Shall I leave someone to guide you, Commandery Princess?"

"Alright!"

Mama Qian left someone behind to guide them and went to handle things. The person left was also very smart, introducing things to Yun Jinnian earnestly along the way.

This Princess Residence is very large, with many courtyards. The previous owner must have been quite wealthy; the layout is excellent, and every courtyard has many rare flowers and trees.

If it were really torn down and the flowers sold, it would still fetch a considerable sum.

"Elder sister, can we go play by ourselves?" Xu Xinmo asked.

"You may, but be sure to stay safe. It's also my first time here, so don't wander too far!"

"We understand, elder sister!"

Xu Xinmo was incredibly jealous inside.

They had walked half a day, and it seemed that they hadn't even seen half of it.

If only this residence were hers, wouldn't that be wonderful?

Xu Xinmo took Yun Musi and Yun Mulan in another direction, while Yun Jinnian glanced into the shadows, knowing someone was following them.

Yun Jinnian then took Yun Zuomo and the others towards the garden.

"The garden has many varieties of peonies. When they bloom, Commandery Princess must stay for a few days!"

"Are there peonies in the garden?"

"Yes!"

"Are they planted in the ground or in pots?"

If they're in pots, they could be moved into the greenhouse, and might bloom earlier!

Chapter 856: A Visitor Arrives

"The common varieties are planted in the ground, while the rare varieties are planted in large flower pots!"

"Oh!"

Yun Jinnian responded, leading Yun Zuomo and the others to the garden, indeed there was a large area of peonies.

Then, Nanny Qian hurriedly came, "Commandery Princess, there is a visitor!"

"Who?"

Yun Jinnian asked curiously.

She had just arrived at the Princess Residence, who could it be?

"His Highness, the Crown Prince of Great Zhou!"

"Is he alone?"

"Yes!"

Yun Jinnian nodded, "I will go to the main hall!"

She turned to Yun Zuomo and said, "I have some matters to attend to, please take good care of them!"

"Sister, you can go without worry!"

Yun Jinnian nodded, she trusted Yun Zuomo, but was worried about Xu Xinmo causing trouble.

Xu Xinmo was ruthless, there was nothing she wouldn't do.

When Yun Jinnian arrived at the main hall, Zhou Yunshen was drinking tea, with Teng Fei standing by his side.

"Brother Zhou!" Yun Jinnian called softly.

Zhou Yunshen stood up and clasped his fists toward Yun Jinnian, "Jinnian, I apologize for my sudden visit, but the matter is urgent!"

"What is the matter?" Yun Jinnian asked.

Zhou Yunshen frowned, not knowing how to explain.

"Brother Zhou, isn't it an urgent matter? Why not tell me, maybe I can help you!"

"It's like this, that night, Jingjing she..." Zhou Yunshen said, pursing his lips.

Looking at Yun Jinnian, pain flashed in his eyes.

He was not usually a man swayed by such matters, but that night he seemed to go mad, it was truly unbelievable.

Yet he clearly knew Jingjing had rejected and resisted his forcefulness and unreasonable behavior.

"What happened?"

Yun Jinnian really didn't understand what Zhou Yunshen was keeping to himself.

But seeing his demeanor, he indeed encountered a difficult problem.

"It's just..."

Zhou Yunshen took a deep breath and said, "That night, I molested Jingjing!"

Yun Jinnian was taken aback for a moment, then suddenly realized.

That Dou Jingjing had feelings for Zhou Yunshen.

Was it Zhou Yunshen who molested her? Or did she intentionally set up Zhou Yunshen? It was hard to say.

But such words, she could not say.

"Brother Zhou, what can I do to help you?"

"Now Jingjing is crying to return to Great Zhou, I..."

If Dou Jingjing went back, his mother would surely demand him to return too. He had been in Tianchu for more than a year for Yun Jinnian's sake, his mother must have run out of patience.

"This kind of matter, I don't think I can help you!"

If someone was sick, she could help, but this kind of matter, how could she help?

Her own affairs were already in a mess.

Besides, she did not like Dou Jingjing, nor her father.

At such an age, to still have a child, he must be up to no good.

The matter of old men marrying young women might be seen as romantic by men, but she deeply disliked it.

Her father and mother had estranged due to such scandals, and Chu Liange had had multiple wives, leaving her alone for long periods.

If Chu Yu in the future...

Thinking of Chu Yu having multiple wives in the future, Yun Jinnian's face instantly darkened.

"Jinnian?" Zhou Yunshen called softly.

Thinking Yun Jinnian disliked him because of what happened with Dou Jingjing.

"Brother Zhou, I'm fine. These matters are for you to decide yourself. Besides, Princess Jingjing is quite nice!"

Indeed, she was nice, but Yun Jinnian felt a bit insincere saying this, and also somewhat schadenfreude, and even a touch of enjoying the spectacle. She thought she might be a bit wicked and shook her head, sighing softly.

Chapter 857: A Wake-up Call

Zhou Yunshen was incredulous when he heard what Yun Jinnian said.

He didn't know if Yun Jinnian truly didn't understand his feelings or was just pretending not to know. Either way, it made him feel sad.

Now that he had a relationship with Dou Jingjing, even if he didn't marry her as his principal wife, he had to take her as his concubine.

But if his mother intervened, she would surely want Dou Jingjing as the principal wife and Yun Jinnian as the concubine...

"Jinnian, are you joking?"

"Joking? Why would I joke?" Yun Jinnian asked.

He had a relationship with Dou Jingjing. What did that have to do with her?

She wasn't very familiar with either him or Dou Jingjing and didn't want to meddle.

"You..." Zhou Yunshen was immediately enraged.

He didn't know how to respond.

After taking a deep breath, he said, "What about Jingjing then..."

"I can hardly see Princess Jingjing. I'm afraid I can't help you, Brother Zhou!"

They had only met once and had no particular friendship. Dou Jingjing was wary of her, and she didn't like Dou Jingjing.

Zhou Yunshen immediately understood that Yun Jinnian truly didn't know his feelings and didn't want to help him.

"Then so be it. I'll handle it myself!"

Yun Jinnian smiled faintly.

She lightly sipped her tea but saw Xu Xinmo approaching with Yun Musi and Yun Mulan.

The three of them blushed as soon as they saw Zhou Yunshen.

"Cousin (Fourth Sister)!"

All three of them spoke delicately, which made people shiver.

Zhou Yunshen stood up first, cupped his hands, and gave a gentle smile, "Greeting three young ladies!"

Yun Jinnian stood up, "Brother Zhou, these are my cousin and my two younger cousins!"

She then addressed Xu Xinmo and the others, "This is His Highness, the Crown Prince of the Great Zhou Kingdom!"

The Crown Prince...

The three were extremely excited and blushed even more, "Greetings, Your Highness!"

"No need to be so formal!"

After exchanging pleasantries, they all sat down to talk.

Xu Xinmo kept looking for opportunities to speak with Zhou Yunshen, while Yun Musi and Yun Mulan continuously chimed in.

No matter how gentle Zhou Yunshen's temperament was, seeing Yun Jinnian smile without speaking from beginning to end slightly displeased him. He stood up, "Jinnian, it's getting late. I will take my leave now!"

Xu Xinmo and the others wanted to persuade him to stay, but Yun Jinnian's expression kept them silent.

"Very well, I'll see you out, Brother Zhou!"

Yun Jinnian escorted Zhou Yunshen out of the Princess Residence. Only after watching him get on the carriage and leave did she turn back to the hall.

Xu Xinmo and the other two were chattering away, praising Zhou Yunshen.

Yun Jinnian stood to one side, "Are you done talking?"

"Cousin..." Xu Xinmo ran quickly to Yun Jinnian's side, "Cousin, is His Highness the Crown Prince married?"

"It doesn't matter if he's married or not. Don't have any wild thoughts unless you want to marry far away, encounter problems, and have no one to help you, calling to the heavens and getting no answer, calling to the earth and getting no response. If you don't want that, don't cause trouble with him!"

Hearing this, Xu Xinmo thought for a moment and immediately understood.

"Thank you for the reminder, Cousin!"

Yun Musi and Yun Mulan were not children; they understood some things and quickly thanked Yun Jinnian.

Earlier, they had indeed only thought about Zhou Yunshen being the Crown Prince and hadn't considered anything else.

Indeed, if they married far away, they wouldn't even know how they might die.

"Alright, let's go find Zimo and the others. While we're at it, let's check out the garden and also taste the skills of the cooks here at the Princess Residence!"

"Yes!"

In the carriage.

Zhou Yunshen sat upright and closed his eyes.

"Your Highness?" Teng Fei called softly.

Zhou Yunshen opened his eyes and looked at Teng Fei, "No matter what it takes, make sure Yun Jinnian comes back to the Great Zhou Kingdom with me!"

### Chapter 858: Joyful Conversations

Teng Fei heard and looked at Zhou Yunshen in disbelief.

A year has passed, and his master still hasn't given up.

"Master..."

Teng Fei hesitated.

"Speak!"

"There are many experts around Princess Yijia, it will be difficult to take someone away!"

Zhou Yunshen looked at Teng Fei, "So you want to tell me you have no way?"

Teng Fei was silent.

He did not agree with abducting Yun Jinnian to the Great Zhou Kingdom because Yun Jinnian did not like the master, and Yun Jinnian was a very opinionated and knowledgeable lady. Taking her to Great Zhou might not be a romantic story, but rather a tragic fate.

"No matter what methods you use, regardless of the means or the loss of manpower, you must bring Jinnian back to Great Zhou. During this period, you can try to contact Princess Mianke who once lived in the Prince Rui Residence, or the grandmother of the Yun Family, Mrs. He of the second house, or even Jinnian's cousin and two younger cousins!"

At all costs.

This was Zhou Yunshen's command to Teng Fei.

Teng Fei took a deep breath before kneeling on one knee, "Subordinate accepts the order!"

He turned and left the carriage, flying away.

Zhou Yunshen sat in the carriage, slowly clenching his fist.

Yun Jinnian, he was determined to obtain her.

Such extraordinary medical skills, stunning beauty, this lady should be born for him, held in his hands and cherished for a lifetime.

Who else is worthy?

No one is good enough for her!

Thinking of this, Zhou Yunshen suddenly laughed.

No longer the warm and gentle demeanor, now full of a determined arrogance and dominance, his deep eyes conceal his thoughts, making others hesitant to provoke him.

Princess Residence

The dishes were served, each one vibrant and aromatic, just looking at them could stimulate appetite.

Nanny Qian smiled and said, "Princess, please taste and see if it suits your palate!"

Yun Jinnian smiled slightly, picked up chopsticks, placed the food in her mouth, and nodded in praise, "The taste is indeed good, today we left in a hurry, didn't bring any good things. Nanny Qian, remember this for me, next time we come, we must reward them heavily!"

"On behalf of them, servant thanks the Princess!" Nanny Qian immediately bowed.

"Not just them. Nanny Qian, you and the guards and maids will also be rewarded, but gold and silver are too vulgar. I have some items that aren't useful to me, Nanny Qian, you give me the names of the Princess Residence servants later, I will reward according to their ages!"

Yun Jinnian in this way, firstly to know who are in the Princess Residence, their ages, so next time when rewarding, Huanan and Hemei can recognize them, also to investigate who their masters are behind them!

To have things in mind, to use them confidently in the future.

The other concern is the Servitude Contract of these people. Where exactly are the Servitude Contracts now? Yun Jinnian is unsure.

Nanny Qian, being an elder from the palace, could understand Yun Jinnian's thoughts, no longer underestimating her as before. After experiencing Nanjiang, she understood that this Princess Yijia is a wise person.

Besides, towards the Emperor, she and those guards and maids felt somewhat discouraged. If Yun Jinnian genuinely treats them well, they would naturally be loyal to Yun Jinnian.

Even if their master behind remains the Emperor, they would certainly not betray Yun Jinnian.

"Thank you, Princess. This servant will go and bring the Servitude Contracts of everyone for the Princess!"

Yun Jinnian smiled, "Okay!"

She called her half-brother and half-sisters to eat.

"Xinmo, Mu Si, Mu Lan, why aren't you eating? Are the dishes not to your taste? What do you want to eat, I will immediately have the kitchen make it!" Yun Jinnian asked gently, truly displaying the role of a good elder sister.

Chapter 859: Starting to Panic

Xu Xinmo felt a tremor in her heart.

Just now, Yun Jinnian easily obtained the servitude contracts of the servants in the residence with just a few words, and she smiled so gently and kindly that it was hard to believe this was really the same Yun Jinnian who could be bullied at will back then.

No, she was Yun Jinnian, but she was definitely not the same Yun Jinnian who could be bullied at will, not daring to utter a word, rebut, or fight back.

Now, she is Princess Yijia, a Commandery Princess appointed by the current Emperor, with a Princess Residence and a fiefdom. Yet, she cherishes the common people and respects the soldiers at the border, thus indirectly giving her fiefdom's income to the soldiers as military pay.

She is capable and has a reputation. Now, wherever she goes, many people give her a thumbs-up, praising her compassion and kind heart.

Although she hasn't saved many people at all.

But what does it matter? The ones she saved are nobles, and there are plenty of people willing to testify for her.

"Cousin, there's no need to trouble the cook, these dishes are extremely delicious!"

Not only delicious and well-presented, but also very expensive.

Most people wouldn't see such dishes in their entire lives, and even wealthy families might not have them for every meal, yet today, such a feast was laid out with over a dozen exquisite dishes.

Yun Kuan, Yun He, and Yun Mu were all engrossed in their bowls, as Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingzhi, and Yun Qingqing each cared for one, and they did so very well.

"That's good, let's eat then!"

During the meal, Yun Jinnian also called out to Yun Zuomo and the others, "Zuomo, Qingzhi, Qingqing, you all eat too, don't just focus on Kuankuan and the others!"

Yun Zuomo and the others smiled.

They didn't know how to be good elder sisters before, but Yun Jinnian set a good example for them.

Besides, with their future relying on Yun Jinnian, they naturally wanted to perform well.

After the meal, Mammy Qian brought everyone's servitude contracts over. Yun Jinnian took them and handed them directly to Hemei without even looking at them.

She instructed Hemei to store them carefully.

Then she said to Mammy Qian, "For the next few days, pack away the things in the Princess Residence and put them in the storeroom. The other things will arrive in a few days, and I'll come over to arrange them then!"

"Yes!"

The Princess Residence had to be arranged sooner, as Yuwen Ming would soon be getting married.

Originally, it was planned to be a grand occasion, but now that the Empress Dowager had passed away, it could only be a small and modest event, which was ultimately an injustice to Yuwen Ming.

To make up for this, the Princess Dowager of the Nation opened a chest and added some dowry for Yuwen Ming.

"Grandmother!" Yuwen Ming leaned in the embrace of the Princess Dowager of the Nation, reluctant to get married just yet.

If possible, she would rather never marry for life.

The Princess Dowager of the Nation lovingly patted Yuwen Ming's head, "Silly child, Grandmother won't leave anytime soon. You can rest assured and get married, support your husband and teach your children. If that young master of the Ma family bullies you, don't be afraid; after all, this land belongs to the Chu family, not the Ma family. Even without Grandmother, there are plenty of people to support you!"

Yuwen Ming nodded.

She understood all of this.

However, facing the unfamiliar Ma family, she couldn't help but feel uneasy.

Fortunately, Mammy Song would accompany her, so no matter what, she would have someone to consult with.

Back at the Yun Residence.

They all parted ways to return to their respective courtyards.

Today's visit to the Princess Residence with Yun Jinnian left Xu Xinmo quite shaken.

Returning to Yicai Garden, she was utterly dispirited.

"What's wrong with Xinmo?" Aunt Jin asked with a smile.

Xu Xinmo took a deep breath before looking at Aunt Jin and saying, "Aunt Jin, Yun Jinnian has changed. Really, you should have seen it today. With just a few words, she got hold of the servitude contracts of the servants in the Princess Residence. With her like this, can we really compete with her?"

Chapter 860: Sowing Discord

Old Madam Jin burst into laughter upon hearing this, as if she had heard something incredibly amusing.

"Silly girl, right now she is in the light, and we are in the dark. Who says we must deal with her ourselves? Isn't your grandmother still there? Your grandmother truly cares for you and is quite muddle-headed. You just need to whisper a few words to her, and guarantee that your wishes will come true!"

Xu Xinmo was taken aback for a moment but quickly understood.

Indeed, now she wanted to use Yun Jinnian, not to offend Yun Jinnian. So why should she play the villain? Let her grandmother handle it.

But thinking about Yun Jinnian's wealth, she sighed and said, "Grandma, you didn't go today. If you had gone, you would have seen how big that mansion is. We walked for half a day and were told we hadn't even covered half of it yet. Also, she has three such mansions, and they're all connected, with a small mountain at the back!"

The more Xu Xinmo spoke, the angrier she became.

Old Madam Jin remained calm, reaching out to stroke Xu Xinmo's head, "Don't worry, those will all be yours sooner or later!"

"Really, Grandma?"

"Of course. When has Grandma ever lied to you? Just wait and see!"

Xu Xinmo laughed along, "Then Grandma, I'll go to Grandmother's place now and tell her about the Princess Residence!"

"That's the way!"

Xu Xinmo arrived at Cixin Academy joyfully. In the past two days, the health of Old Lady Yun had been relatively good, though she was completely lacking in energy, lying slumped on the Arhat bed with Ming Liu massaging her legs.

Seeing Xu Xinmo enter, she smiled brightly.

Xu Xinmo asked Ming Liu to leave and sat down in front of Old Lady Yun to massage her legs, "Grandmother, does it feel comfortable?"

"Comfortable, comfortable, a few rubs will be enough. Don't overdo it or you'll get swollen wrists. Come sit and talk with me!"

Xu Xinmo smiled in response, got up, and sat beside Old Lady Yun.

"Did the Commandery Princess bully you when you visited her today?"

"Not at all, but Grandmother, the Princess Residence is so large. We walked for half a day and didn't even cover half of it. The lunch was also incredibly delicious, even better than Huiquan Tower. Many dishes are ones we can only eat during festivals. Cousin really has a lot of money!"

Old Lady Yun felt a surge of anger upon hearing this.

"She truly is wealthy!"

Such disdain in her tone.

Xu Xinmo, inwardly pleased, put on a serious face and said, "No matter how wealthy she is, Grandmother, she is your granddaughter and should be filial to you!"

"Silly child, you think everyone is as sensible, obedient, and filial as you? Some people, like their mothers, have been poorly brought up since childhood. I don't expect much filial piety from her, but I hope she doesn't cause trouble and bring us any hassle!"

Xu Xinmo nodded vigorously, though her face showed hesitation.

"What's the matter?" asked Old Lady Yun.

"Grandmother, I shouldn't say this, but..." Xu Xinmo hesitated before continuing, "Someone told me that a few nights ago, a man entered Niannian Garden late at night and only left around dawn!"

"What?" Old Lady Yun roared, "Are you certain?"

"Yes, but Grandmother, that maid begged me to keep it a secret. Please don't make me call her to confront it, or I won't be able to get any more information in the future. No one will trust me!" Xu Xinmo pleaded softly.

Feeling extremely pleased internally.

"Don't worry, Grandmother won't make you lose credibility. But Yun Jinnian is indeed audacious to keep a man at Niannian Garden overnight. Leave this matter to me, Grandmother will handle it accordingly!" Old Lady Yun said, also pondering whether to expose Yun Jinnian or let her continue this way.