

## Indulgence 901

### Chapter 901: Brotherly Affection and Sisterly Respect

Many people think that Chu Yu, who never enters the court as an official and doesn't do serious work, spends his days flaunting with a group of second-generation lords, is a man without skills. Yet no one notices that Chu Yu is not the same Chu Yu as five years ago.

From the day he met Yun Jinnian, watching helplessly as Yun Jinnian cried in his arms, pounding his chest and accusing him of bullying her too, he began to change.

Having witnessed the cruelty and heartlessness of the royal family, Yun Jinnian became the only pure land in his heart, and his sole attachment. He absolutely cannot allow even the slightest mistake to occur in front of Yun Jinnian.

When Zhou Yunshen arrived in Tianchu Country and refused to leave, he understood Zhou Yunshen's intentions.

Today is Yun Jinnian's coming-of-age ceremony, and he is even more aware that Zhou Yunshen will try to stop him from arriving on time. Openly, he brings Luoyi and Luo'er, while secretly he has already arranged everything. As long as Zhou Yunshen's men dare show themselves, he is determined to make Zhou Yunshen suffer both loss of men and wives!

Thinking of this, he strikes even harder, showcasing his skills with great prowess, slaughtering the assassins that approach him one by one, leaving none alive.

Looking at the ground full of corpses.

Chu Yu sheathed his sword, "Let the Princess Residence come here. In broad daylight, how can there be assassins in the Capital City? What is the Princess Residence doing?"

"Yes!"

Chu Yu swaggered up into the carriage, looking at Princess Jinfeng, "Were you scared?"

Princess Jinfeng shook her head, "Such assassination attempts happen several times a year. I'm just worried about brother!"

Looking at Chu Yu's immaculate body, not even a drop of blood stained.

One cannot help but wonder if it came to a confrontation between Leng Bingham and brother, who would have the greater chance of winning?

"What are you worrying about me for? Today is Jinnian's birthday; I will ensure everything is perfect!"

He had promised her to attend her coming-of-age ceremony. Although he cannot personally pin the hairpin for her, he hoped to see her first hairpin adorned.

"Brother treats Jinnian so well!"

Even better than he treats me!

Princess Jinfeng can't help but feel a bit jealous.

But she also understands, family and lovers are different, especially with Yun Jinnian's appearance giving her brother so much that she, as a sister, couldn't give, nor can.

Chu Yu smiled at Princess Jinfeng, "You are my sister. That will never change in this lifetime. Don't overthink it. If Leng Bingham truly cares for you, he would never make you a concubine. As long as he is willing to marry you as his wife, even if there's only a one-in-ten chance, I will help you make it ten out of ten. Jinfeng, no matter who you like, I will support you. But if the person doesn't value you, even if you resent me for a lifetime, I won't let you demean yourself!"

Afraid that Jinfeng might not understand, he continued saying, "If he has you in his heart, he wouldn't let you suffer the slightest grievance. Leng Bingham is not a man without skills, but he can only make you a concubine—such a man is not worth having!"

Princess Jinfeng suddenly felt very wronged, throwing herself into Chu Yu's arms, "Brother, I know everything you said, but I am so unwilling. I saved his life and bore him his first son. We've shared so many firsts, yet he cannot see my devotion, my true feelings. For the throne and grand plans, he can marry another woman. Brother, tell me, is the throne really that important? If it were you, between Jinnian and the throne, whom would you choose?"

Chu Yu held the tearful Princess Jinfeng tightly, thinking for a while before saying, "If it really comes down to choosing one or the other, and only one, I would definitely choose Jinnian. I believe she would be willing to stay with me through thick and thin. A throne is inherently lonely; if one cannot even protect the woman he loves, what is the point of ruling? Zhaozhao, listen to me; forget Leng Binghan and start anew!"

#### Chapter 902: The Crown Prince Provokes

Princess Jinfeng wanted to say she couldn't do it, but upon careful thought, she realized that despite knowing Leng Binghan for so many years and giving everything to give birth to Nuannuan, she still ended up with nothing.

"Brother, I'll listen to you!"

Forget Leng Binghan, become an arrogant Princess Jinfeng, and be the support for her brother.

Help her brother achieve greatness, raise Nuannuan, and never marry in this life.

"Good!"

Chu Yu tenderly embraced his sister.

Already in her twenties and unmarried, he dared not force her into marriage.

The Emperor would rather have her remain unmarried!

"Brother, I want to bring Nuannuan to my side and raise her myself. In this life, I won't marry, is that okay?" Princess Jinfeng asked softly.

Chu Yu was silent.

Princess Jinfeng looked eagerly at Chu Yu.

After a long while, Chu Yu finally nodded, "Good, as long as you're happy, not marrying is fine. Raising Nuannuan, your brother will help you!"

There might be many rumors, but he believed Jinfeng could handle them.

"Thank you, Brother!"

Jinfeng sincerely thanked him.

Grateful in her heart to have a good brother!

The carriage sped forward and stopped at the Yun Family's entrance, "His Highness the King Rui and Princess Jinfeng have arrived!"

Yun Jinnian heard it and was immediately overjoyed.

The corners of her mouth lightly curled into a smile.

Mrs. Han was also delighted, quickly joining Yun Qi in greeting them, and after a few simple words, Chu Yu handed over the congratulatory gift.

He only had one brocade box, and so did Princess Jinfeng.

They lacked neither gold, silver, nor jewels, what was more important than heartfelt intentions.

"Thank you, Your Highness the King Rui, and Princess for attending Jinnian's coming-of-age ceremony!" Mrs. Han said, bowing slightly.

Princess Jinfeng promptly supported Mrs. Han, "Auntie, don't say that. I truly like Jinnian, but over the years, we repeatedly missed chances to meet and couldn't gather properly with her!"

Mrs. Han smiled.

Turning around, she saw Yun Jinnian gracefully approaching.

"Jinnian greets the Princess and His Highness!" Her tone was gentle, her gaze toward Princess Jinfeng and Chu Yu full of smiles.

Etiquette must not be neglected.

At least for now, their relationship isn't clear, so maintaining distance is wise.

However, Yun Jinnian's happiness was evident to everyone!

"Jinnian, there's no need for such formality. It was I and my brother who arrived late. Is the coming-of-age ceremony about to start?" Princess Jinfeng asked.

Tightly holding Yun Jinnian's hand.

This girl, even as a child, she felt some pity for her.

Now, in the blink of an eye, she's a grown woman, transformed from a young child to a beauty, missing each other time and again with few gatherings, yet she trusts her immensely.

Not only because she would become her brother's wife but because at their first meeting, those solitary, silent eyes, indifferent yet pitiful, thin enough to be blown over by the wind.

Clearly a child, yet not knowing how to smile.

"The auspicious time is almost here!" Yun Jinnian said softly.

"Then I'll greet Aunt after, let's start then!" Princess Jinfeng said, glancing at Chu Yu.

Chu Yu naturally had no objections.

First entering the main hall to pay respects to the Princess of the State, who laughed, "Today is Jinnian's joyous day, no need for such formalities!"

"Thank you, Aunt! Then I shall take my leave first!"

The Princess of the State nodded.

Chu Yu followed Yun Qi to the adjacent small hall.

Seeing Zhou Yunshen for the first time, Chu Yu smiled, Zhou Yunshen though surprised, covered it well.

After some pleasantries, Chu Yu sat next to Zhou Yunshen, "Unexpectedly, the Crown Prince is here too!"

Zhou Yunshen smiled, "Princess Yijia is my lifesaver; I ought to attend Princess Yijia's coming-of-age ceremony! The same goes for you, King Rui."

Chapter 903: Chu Yu Fights Back

"My intentions are the same as those of the Crown Prince!"

A double entendre.

What Zhou Yunshen was thinking, Chu Yu naturally understood.

But Chu Yu knew that Zhou Yunshen did not have much genuine affection for Yun Jinnian; he might want to use her more than anything.

"Heh, then I'm curious, Prince, what are your true intentions?" Zhou Yunshen said, leaning closer to Chu Yu, speaking in a voice only the two could hear, "Does the Wise Prince also wish to marry Princess Yijia?"

Chu Yu tilted his head, a smile on his face, but his eyes were icy, "What if I do? What if I don't?"

"Then it seems we are of one mind!" Zhou Yunshen also smiled, his demeanor still gentle and refined.

"I won't let you succeed!" Chu Yu did not back down.

Jinnian is his, and she can only ever be his.

For this lifetime and beyond, she must be his wife and the mother of his children!

"Then I shall wait and see, and I hope His Highness the Wise Prince will do his best. However, I believe there are many who would not want His Highness to marry Princess Yijia. Perhaps the Wise Prince should relinquish his hold, and I am willing to help elevate the Wise Prince to a higher level?"

Tempted by the throne, Zhou Yunshen believed many would choose the throne, and he believed Chu Yu would too.

"Heh, heh!" Chu Yu laughed coldly, looking at Zhou Yunshen as if he were a fool, "So, the Crown Prince of the Great Zhou Kingdom is such a person. Do you think I would trade a woman just to ascend to that

highest position? Besides, what I want is both the kingdom and the beauty in my grasp, as for you, Crown Prince, it seems you lack the capability. At the very least, the Empress of the Great Zhou would not agree!"

The Empress of the Great Zhou did not come from a high status, yet she became the empress of the Great Zhou Kingdom.

On the surface, the Emperor cherishes her greatly, but in reality, the Empress has long rendered the Emperor powerless, controlling the entire royal family of Great Zhou. After all, she has very powerful brothers who hold the few million-strong armies of Great Zhou and a childhood confidant wholly devoted to her, controlling the court, willing to live or die for her.

Mastering both civil and military, the Empress is indeed a figure.

Yet such a formidable woman only bore one child, which is Zhou Yunshen.

Deep Affection for You!

As for whom she holds such deep affection, only the Empress of the Great Zhou knows.

"So we are the same!" Zhou Yunshen spoke indifferently.

He sat up straight.

He has his mother to block him, and Chu Yu has the Emperor to block him, making it exceedingly difficult to win over the beauty.

The superficial harmony but inner discord between Chu Yu and Zhou Yunshen was clear to everyone, yet they pretended not to notice.

Zhou Yunshen, the Crown Prince of Great Zhou, is now merely a guest in Tianchu Country, and Chu Yu dares to confront him as others wouldn't dare.

Han Xuzi stroked his beard, viewing Chu Yu with approval and praise.

Seeing Han Tianci happily eating at the side, Han Xuzi shook his head lovingly but said nothing.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the auspicious time has arrived, please!"

The auspicious time arrived.

The coming-of-age ceremony must proceed to the ancestral hall.

Mrs. Han and Yun Qi warmly invited the guests to the hall to witness the ceremony, only to see a man rushing in hurriedly, "Princess, Princess..."

The crowd paused.

All eyes turned to this man.

Only Xu Xinmo lightly curled her lips.

For the coming-of-age ceremony, such a grand event, if someone's reputation is ruined and they're pursued to the door, what of their pure and noble image, how can they be the first Commandery Princess of Tianchu Country?

"Princess, Princess Yijia, I am Shaozhi!"

The crowd was shocked, but did not change color.

Yun Jinnian stood in place, unmoving.

Dai Hanmi, however, stepped forward, "I am Princess Yijia, what is your business with me?"

#### Chapter 904: This Pot of Dirty Water

Yun Jinnian took a slight step back.

She had discussed today's matter with Dai Hanmi beforehand, which is why Dai Hanmi was dressed so grandly. Now that she stepped back, Dai Hanmi stepped forward, and no one would expose the truth. Who would believe what the man in front said?

On the contrary, he and the mastermind behind the scenes would be exposed!

Xu Xinmo instantly became extremely nervous, her palms were sweaty, and her back was soaked through.

No one was looking at her, but she felt that the matter had already been seen through by others.

Just waiting for this person to appear.

The Commandery Princess smiled slightly, and which Marchioness did not understand such trivial matters of the inner house, so they also smiled gently.

The men showed no expression, making no reactions.

Dai Hanmi looked at the man who called himself Shaozhi and stepped forward again, "What are you looking for me for?"

In luxurious clothes and adorned luxuriously, without a hairpin, it should be the Princess Yijia he was looking for.

"Commandery Princess, I am Shaozhi!"

Dai Hanmi nodded, "This Commandery Princess knows, you've said it several times already!"

"Commandery Princess, we..." Dong Shaozhi was nervous.

Under the watchful eyes of everyone today, if he could marry the famed Princess Yijia, if failed, his life would be over.

"What do you want to say? I don't recognize you!" Dai Hanmi said in a deep voice.

The auspicious time was about to come, she did not want to be entangled with this man.

"Someone, take him away!"

Seeing that he was not given a chance to speak, Dong Shaozhi could no longer hold back, "Commandery Princess, that day by chance I saved you, you said you wanted to marry me, and you even had physical intimacy with me!"

Dai Hanmi was very calm.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes!"

Dai Hanmi nodded slightly, "Then was it during the day or night?"

"Of course it was night!" Dong Shaozhi said, unafraid of anything.

A burst of laughter came.

Dong Shaozhi became even more terrified.

"Then when you rescued me, was it during the day or night? Are you sure of my appearance?" Dai Hanmi pressed on.

This bastard dared to ruin Jinnian's reputation, truly tired of living!

"Not sure, but..." Dong Shaozhi hesitated.

To speak or not to speak?

But the arrow was on the string...

"But what?" Dai Hanmi demanded.

"The Commandery Princess gave me a token, telling me to come to the Yun Family to propose marriage!"

As Dong Shaozhi's words fell, Han Tianci was the first to laugh out loud.

"Pathetic, laughable, shameful, my sister is an angelic person, how could she take a liking to you, this toad? Didn't you say you had evidence? Then show the evidence!" Han Tianci said loudly.

Dong Shaozhi became anxious, "I, I have evidence!"

He hurriedly pulled out a bellyband from his bosom, "This is what the Commandery Princess left after being intimate with me that day!"

But the bellyband was rose-colored, embroidered with a few green patterns.

The end was embroidered with words.

The old matriarch of the Yun Family, who had been silent, almost fainted upon seeing it.

Ming Liu recognized it as the old matriarch's bellyband and screamed, "Ah..."

That, that, that...

How did the old matriarch's bellyband end up in this man's hands?

Xu Xinmo tightly covered her mouth.

She naturally recognized the old matriarch's bellyband, but the bellyband that Granny Jin took out was clearly not this one!

"Hmph, you bastard, this bellyband is clearly in a color only old women would use, and you dare to slander my sister, I will beat you to death today!"

After Han Tianci finished speaking, he stepped forward and landed a smack on Dong Shaozhi.

Dong Shaozhi cried out in pain.

As a weak scholar, how could he withstand Han Tianci's strength? He immediately spat blood.

"Stop hitting, stop hitting!"

"Hmph!"

But Han Tianci did not relent, snorting coldly, he continued to beat Dong Shaozhi.

## Chapter 905: Coming-of-Age Ceremony Completed

Yun Jinnian looked indifferently at all the members of the Yun Family; when she was wronged, not a single person stood up to speak for her.

Father and brothers, uncles.

Her mother knew about it, but the others did not.

To the Yun Family, she had completely given up.

"Send him to the Princess Residence, or to the Ministry of Punishment. I must see who it is that dares to slander me like this!" Yun Jinnian spoke calmly.

Dong Shaozhi suddenly understood; he had mistaken the person.

No wonder such a major issue was not stopped, letting him speak, yet from beginning to end, he had been wrong.

"Such a petty person must be acting under someone's orders. If the Commandery Princess trusts this prince, hand this person to me, and I will certainly find the truth for you!" Chu Yu spoke loudly.

Yun Jinnian nodded, "Then I am very grateful, Your Highness!"

"It's a small matter!"

Dai Hanmi, feeling sorry for Yun Jinnian, quickly said, "Jinnian, the auspicious time is near, let's go to the ancestral hall!"

"Hmm!"

Dong Shaozhi seemed like a joke, no one believed him at all.

While Han Tianci fiercely gave Dong Shaozhi two more punches, though they seemed nothing, they injured Dong Shaozhi's internal organs enough to make him suffer.

And slandering the Commandery Princess, once the crime is established, Dong Shaozhi's fate is predictable...

Luoyi and Luo'er stepped forward to hold down Dong Shaozhi, and the group proceeded to the ancestral hall.

Everyone had different thoughts, and it was clear that someone came today to cause trouble for Yun Jinnian, but who could it be?

There was much speculation.

At the ancestral hall, the red carpet had already been laid, the incense table set, and the guests had entered the hall.

Only to see Yun Jinnian, having changed into a new outfit, slowly walk up.

"Commence the ceremony!"

Yun Bi shouted.

Yun Jinnian slowly approached, kneeling on the large red cushion.

Chen Danyan and Dai Hanmi held a basin; the Grand Princess washed her hands, took a jade comb, and combed Yun Jinnian's hair into a bun, adding hairpins.

Yun Jinnian stood up, went before Mrs. Han and Yun Qi, and knelt to show gratitude for their raising her.

Mrs. Han's eyes were red.

How challenging this day had been.

Her daughter had suffered so much, and finally, finally, she would escape this sea of bitterness!

Then, she bowed to the Grand Princess to show respect for teachers and elders.

"Good!" The Grand Princess praised.

Yun Jinnian withdrew to outside the ancestral hall, bowing in gratitude to the guests inside for attending the ceremony.

After this, she went again to Mrs. Han and Yun Qi to kneel and listen to their teachings.

Mrs. Han pursed her lips.

Yun Qi didn't know what to say.

He had no right to speak.

Yet, he gave Yun Jinnian a small name written on paper, placed it in a brocade pouch, and handed it to her.

Yun Jinnian did not open it; her small name was not to be disclosed lightly.

"The ceremony is complete!"

Yun Qi and Mrs. Han stood up, "Thank you all for attending my daughter's coming of age ceremony today, the banquet is prepared, please join us!"

Though the coming of age ceremony was elaborate and heavy, Yun Jinnian's heart was secretly joyful.

In her past life, she was all alone, without a coming of age ceremony, without so many gifts, without friends and family.

In this life, her parents and friends were all here, and the person she loved was also here.

And fortunately, the person she loved also loved her, truly wonderful!

"Congratulations, sister, on your coming of age!" Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingqing, and Yun Qingzhi sincerely congratulated her.

Yun Jinnian responded with a smile.

"Cousin, congratulations to you!" Xu Xinmo said absentmindedly.

Always feeling something was going to happen.

Yun Jinnian smiled slightly, "Thank you!"

Not intending to say more, Yun Jinnian suddenly asked, "Xinmo, what's wrong with you? You don't look well?"

Chapter 906: Yanran Causing Harm

Xu Xinmo heard the words and felt extremely guilty, quickly covering her face, "Do? Do I?"

"Hmm!" Yun Jinnian slightly nodded.

Xu Xinmo bit her lip, "I, I am feeling a bit unwell, but it's not a big issue. I'll be fine after sitting for a while!"

"Then have a good rest for a bit, let the maid know if you need anything!" Yun Jinnian smiled and turned to speak with Dai Hanmi, Chen Danyan, and Ruan Wanrong.

The coming-of-age ceremony was lively, but without Hu Shuiling, everyone still missed her quite a bit.

But fortunately, Hu Shuiling would soon enter the capital.

Yun Zihan had cut off ties with the Yun Family and didn't come, but she sent the ceremony gift to the Han Family early. Yun Jinnian was already aware and understanding.

Even felt that it was right for Yun Zihan not to come.

After eating and sending off the guests, Yun Jinnian's coming-of-age ceremony was considered complete.

Mrs. Han had all the gifts carried back to Niannian Garden and sat aside listening to Bai Que's report.

"During the event, someone tried to cause trouble, but it was noticed, the person is locked in the woodshed, would the lady like to go see?"

Mrs. Han was surprised, "Who is it?"

"Lady, take a guess, I can assure you won't guess correctly!"

Seeing Bai Que's confidence, Mrs. Han chuckled slightly, "In this household, there are only a few who wish us ill, probably Lady, the Old Lady, and that little girl Xu Xinmo. As for the mistresses, they don't have the courage to cause trouble today, and the young masters, though they might dislike Jinnian,

wouldn't stir up trouble in the inner chambers. The gentlemen may be clueless, but they still have some humanity!"

Bai Que saw Mrs. Han's comprehensive analysis and shook her head slightly, "But the lady still missed someone!"

"Who?" Mrs. Han asked confused.

"The eldest daughter-in-law!"

"Her..."

Mrs. Han sat up straight.

Lightly pressed her lips!

Talking about Wang Yanran, she had very little impression, as when she returned, Wang Yanran was already pregnant, seldom making appearances. Today, on Jinnian's ceremony, she only sent a congratulatory gift but did not come herself.

"It's indeed her. She believed she hid deeply and unnoticed, but didn't expect the young lady to be prepared. So when her people made a move, the young lady was already watching!"

Bai Que understood well, Yun Jinnian was no longer the Yun Jinnian of the past.

She had silver, people, and moreover wisdom. A single order and many would help her handle these things.

"Truly unexpected, you can't judge a book by its cover. While everyone is guarded, she was overlooked, truly a surprise!" Mrs. Han said, standing up and stretching her stiff body, with eyes devoid of any emotion, she continued, "Investigate why she wants to harm Jinnian!"

"Simply just jealousy of the young lady!"

Mrs. Han shook her head, "Not so simple!"

Although Wang Yanran was titled a county chief, she only had the title, nothing else.

She was the cousin of the eldest prince, niece of Noble Consort Wang, mingling in struggles since childhood, and was accustomed to the deceitful intrigues of the imperial harem, her mind couldn't be good.

A faint jealousy? Perhaps because Yun Jinnian surpasses her in every aspect, aside from jealousy, there must be hatred.

"Then, lady, what should we do?" Bai Que asked.

Although she was smart and capable, missing once, she dared not miss again, so she sought Mrs. Han's advice in everything.

"No rush, let's wait and see. Go check if the maid locked up is still alive? If she is, hand over to the Lady!" Mrs. Han instructed.

"Yes!" Bai Que responded and left Qingjue Academy.

She quickly reached the woodshed but saw that the lock outside had been tampered with. Her eyes narrowed slightly as she opened the woodshed, finding the maid had hanged herself!

#### Chapter 907: What You Don't Want

"Hang oneself to commit suicide?" Bai Que snorted coldly.

Then said to the maid beside her, "Take the person to Lady, and say this girl tried to cause trouble at the Commandery Princess's coming-of-age ceremony, but I caught her and locked her up, a triumph of justice!"

"Yes!"

Mrs. He, having long known about Wang Yanran's actions, sighed and ordered someone to deal with the maid, as she was somewhat afraid of Mrs. Han.

Especially today, although there were not many guests, all were among the most powerful and influential in the Capital City, and the gifts couldn't fit in several halls. Right now, several children in the household had gone to Niannian Garden to help unwrap the gifts.

"Lady!" Tianmi called softly.

"What is it?"

"Sister Bai Que from the second Lady's side sent over a maid, the one locked in the woodshed, and she's already lifeless!" Tianmi whispered, not daring to say that Bai Que sent over a corpse.

"Outrageous!" Mrs. He cursed in anger.

Though she knew it was her daughter-in-law who provoked others, she was furious and ashamed of Mrs. Han's obvious exposure and aggressive pressure.

Tianmi kept her head low, not daring to breathe.

After a moment, Mrs. He said, "Bury her and give her parents two hundred taels of silver!"

"Yes!"

Tianmi hurried off to handle matters.

The maid's parents were initially saddened by the loss of their daughter, but the eldest daughter-in-law sent over five hundred taels of silver, and Lady sent another two hundred, making it seven hundred taels in total. By the time Tianmi's foot was out the door, they couldn't hold back their smiles.

They cheerfully saw Tianmi out the door.

Tianmi felt a lump in her throat, neither going up nor down.

She felt a sorrowful sense of betrayal, more urgently wanting to marry and leave the Yun Family's pit of fire!

Niannian Garden

Yun Jinnian had no interest in those gifts but instead opened the silk pouch Yun Qi gave her, looking at the two characters written on the snow-white rice paper: "Harmony and Peace."

This was her given name!

Harmony and happiness.

"Harmony..." Yun Jinnian whispered softly.

She didn't know if it was her father or mother who gave her this name, but she loved it very much.

In life, all one seeks is peace and harmony.

Over there

Xu Xinmo and a few others were unwrapping gifts, their hands almost giving out.

Nanny An led people from Niannian Garden to register and record everything, as Yun Jinnian needed to return gifts to those who sent them.

So everything sent had to be meticulously recorded.

"Cousin, when eldest sister came of age, she didn't receive this many gifts!" Yun Musi said, full of envy.

Xu Xinmo smiled slightly.

Bumpkin.

Not only were there fewer, but the value was incomparable.

Of the ten items, none equaled this one, not to mention the ones carried into the house. The ten-plus boxes bestowed by the Empress Dowager, and the gifts from the Crown Prince and the Grand Princess of the Great Zhou Kingdom, which of those aren't worth a fortune?

If only there were so many gifts for her coming-of-age next year!

Xu Xinmo thought and suddenly looked at Yun Jinnian, seeing her leaning by the window, quietly holding the rice paper, so serene and beautiful, such that people couldn't take their eyes off her.

Biting her lip, Xu Xinmo still got up and approached Yun Jinnian, "Cousin, what name did uncle give you?"

Next year she would come of age, and her father would return, then who would dare bully her!

Yun Jinnian smiled slightly, "One cannot easily share their given name with others!"

"Is that so?" Xu Xinmo asked.

"Of course!"

"Oh!"

Xu Xinmo responded and then asked, "Cousin, what will you do about that man today?"

"Why should I deal with him? For slandering the Commandery Princess, the Ministry of Punishment will certainly interrogate him; his end won't be good. I'm just curious, who does the bellyband in his hand belong to? It seems quite familiar!"

#### Chapter 908: Delivering the Skull

Yun Jinnian spoke, looking contemplative.

Xu Xinmo was immediately anxious.

Although Yun Jinnian didn't know whose bellyband it was, she did, but she couldn't reveal it now, or else her grandmother would not forgive her.

Instantly, she lost the thought of asking Yun Jinnian for some benefits while unwrapping the gift.

"Cousin, I'll go back to Yicai Garden first and come back later to help you unwrap gifts!"

Yun Jinnian smiled and agreed.

Xu Xinmo hurriedly left, and Yun Musi and Yun Mulan also couldn't stay, so they left right after.

Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingzhi, and Yun Qingqing, however, continued unwrapping, helping Nanny An register the items, while the three children, Yun Kuan, Yun He, and Yun Mu, played for a while and then went back.

"Commandery Princess, the eldest miss didn't come today!" Shi Jiayu whispered.

Since she came to the Capital City, having stayed with the Yun Family for some time, it seemed she had seen all kinds of peculiar things.

"Didn't she say she's pregnant? It's normal for her not to come!" Yun Jinnian responded calmly.

Whether Yun Muyou came or not didn't matter at all since there wasn't much sisterhood to speak of; she simply didn't care.

If Yun Muyou thought she would be upset, then she was truly overthinking!

"Are all these things to be sent to the Princess Residence?"

"No need to send all of them; it's always nice to leave some for others, don't you think?"

Shi Jiayu understood and burst into laughter.

Laughing so hard tears came out, she finally said, "I need to drink some tea, can't handle it anymore!"

Yun Jinnian gave her tacit approval.

She took the gift Chu Yu gave her, opened the exquisite box, and found various gemstone hairpins, polished smooth without any edges.

She selected one, inserted it into her hair, and leisurely examined it in the mirror, slowly smiling.

Soon, she would marry Chu Yu, becoming his wife.

"Ah..."

Yun Zuomo cried out.

Yun Qingqing and Yun Qingzhi curiously looked over and followed with a scream, "Ah..."

"What happened?" Nanny An asked, stepping forward to inquire.

"Nanny An, look, look..." Yun Zuomo pointed at the box, her voice breaking in fear.

Nanny An glanced at the box and, despite her vast experiences, was startled, "Outrageous!"

Hemei and Huan also took a close look, their expressions changing.

"What happened?" Yun Jinnian walked over slowly, asking softly.

"Commandery Princess, someone sent this!" Nanny An said, lifting the box up to show Yun Jinnian.

Inside the box was a skull.

Yun Jinnian was prepared, neither frightened nor disgusted.

After a moment of silence, she said, "Nanny An, keep it first; once you've recorded everything, we'll analyze who sent it!"

The number of people who found her, Yun Jinnian, unappealing wasn't many, and by carefully watching those few, they could uncover the truth.

Just a skull, could it really make her panic, thinking bad luck had come?

If so, that person was truly mistaken.

She had endured a miserable previous life till her thirties, much less this life where everything was smooth; she had obtained many things other women longed for but couldn't seek.

She wouldn't consider dying from something like this.

The person behind this really underestimated Yun Jinnian!

Nanny An was momentarily surprised, quickly closing the box and putting it aside, cursing the ill-omen inwardly.

Today was the Commandery Princess's coming-of-age ceremony; who was heartless enough to do this?

Yun Jinnian looked at her three frightened half-sisters, shaking her head slightly, yet with some sympathy, "Come sit down, have some sweet soup, chat with me. Once you're married, the chances to sit and talk like this won't be many. Let Hemei and the others clean up!"

Chapter 909: Sisterly Love

Yun Zuomo and the other two responded obediently and sat next to Yun Jinnian.

It was mid-February, and although the weather had warmed up, it was still somewhat cold. A bowl of warm sweet soup made the whole body feel exceptionally comfortable.

Yun Zuomo let out a sigh.

She had been longing for such a moment for a very long time.

Sitting with her sisters, happily drinking a cup of hot tea and eating a few pieces of pastry.

Talking about the recent joys and sorrows.

"Have you thought about my proposal from that day?" Yun Jinnian asked.

"I have thought it through!" Yun Zuomo said, still feeling quite shy.

After all, she was only fourteen, and she would come of age next year.

"What are your plans?" Yun Jinnian asked softly.

She was not a good sister and had never intended to be one. Her treatment towards the three of them was purely to repay their past assistance in sending warnings.

Once she arranged their marriages, she would no longer be concerned with them.

As for their future paths, they would have to walk them themselves.

"I am willing to marry a scholar with an average family background!" Yun Zuomo said, her face turning even redder.

Yun Qingzhi also whispered, "So am I!"

Yun Jinnian looked at Yun Qingqing, "And you?"

"I am the same!"

Yun Jinnian smiled slightly, "That's good!"

She turned around and asked Ru Yue to bring over three ornate boxes. Yun Jinnian took them and handed one to each of her three half-sisters. "This is your dowry from me!"

Their mother would definitely not care about the three half-sisters. All Yun Jinnian could do was ask Feng Wushuang or Liao Shijie for help in finding out which scholars had good character. Their family background did not have to be exceptional, but their character absolutely had to be!

"Sister..."

Yun Zuomo and the other two were extremely surprised.

In their wildest dreams, they had not expected Yun Jinnian to give them a dowry.

"Just take it!"

Aunt Su and Aunt Hua never left their homes and had no way of earning money. Even if they scrimped and saved, they wouldn't have much silver in hand.

It was even more impossible for them to provide a decent dowry for the three half-sisters.

Mrs. Han would never care; ignoring them and not suppressing them was already the kindest she could be.

Mrs. He was two-faced, daring to even alter the dowry of the half-daughters, let alone those of the second branch's half-daughters.

As for Yun Qi, he was simply an inadequate father who would never think to prepare dowries for the three half-sisters.

The family matriarch was even less reliable, fully biased towards Xu Xinmo; her grandchildren, in total, were less valued than Xu Xinmo alone.

"Sister!"

Yun Zuomo called out softly, and tears immediately fell.

But then she remembered that today was the happy occasion of Yun Jinnian's coming-of-age ceremony. How could she cry and bring bad luck?

However, her heart suddenly felt full, and her eyes stung with emotion.

She couldn't hold back.

Yun Jinnian smiled, holding her teacup and sipping her tea.

It took Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingzhi, and Yun Qingqing a while to compose themselves and accompany Yun Jinnian for tea.

All four sat in silence, yet there was a special understanding between them.

No matter what Yun Jinnian thought, Yun Zuomo, Yun Qingqing, and Yun Qingzhi truly had her in their hearts, respecting and honoring her as their eldest sister.

This bond would never change in their lifetimes.

Absolutely!

Cixin Academy

The family matriarch sat in her chair, trembling all over, while Ming Liu and the maids searched everything inside and out, indeed finding a dudou missing.

"Matriarch..."

The family matriarch's face was cold, her body tense, her eyes filled with fury.

Trembling lips, she stammered, asking Ming Liu, "What did you find?"

"In response to the matriarch, indeed a dudou is missing..." Ming Liu's voice grew increasingly softer, ending in a murmur.

The family matriarch did hear it clearly.

She slammed her hand heavily on the table. "Investigate, find out which thief stole something from Cixin Academy!"

Chapter 910: Framing and Slander

Who could it be, with such audacity, daring to tarnish her reputation?

She has been widowed for years, vigilantly guarding her honor, fearing people might say she couldn't maintain it.

Yet unexpectedly, at the crucial moment, her integrity fails.

"Here!"

Ming Liu responded, knowing well that this culprit would remain elusive.

Yet, seeing the look on the Old Madam Yun's face, she dared not refuse.

Hurriedly leaving the room, several young maids surrounded Ming Liu, "Ming Liu sister, what do we do?"

"What else can we do? The Old Madam wants us to investigate, so we must. I warn you all to stay sharp and don't upset the Old Madam!" Ming Liu cautioned.

Over the years, the maids at Cixin Academy have come and gone, being replaced several times, yet she remained, tactful and loyal to the Old Madam.

But now she no longer desired loyalty; she wanted to plan for herself.

Marrying out to Ming Yang offered no prospects, and marrying a servant meant a life of hardship and she wasn't willing, her last hope lay with one of the three masters in the household.

Should she seek out the eldest, the second, or the third master...

She preferred the third master, who hadn't taken a wife, and if she bore him a child, it would be the legitimate firstborn of the third branch.

But she couldn't express this herself.

Just then, she saw Xu Xinmo hurrying towards her.

Ming Liu's mind slightly shifted, stepping forward with a smile to Xu Xinmo, "Cousin Miss is here, the Old Madam isn't in a good mood right now, Cousin Miss should try to comfort her!"

Xu Xinmo halted, naturally understanding why the Old Madam Yun was troubled.

Gratefully looking at Ming Liu, "You are the Head Maid by grandmother's side, please take good care of her, and if you need anything, just send someone to tell me!"

"Yes, Cousin Miss!"

Xu Xinmo smiled slightly and entered the small hall.

Seeing Old Madam Yun sitting on the Arhat bed, face sullen, her eyes flickering slightly, "Grandmother!"

"Xinmo is here!" Old Madam Yun weakly replied, allowing Xu Xinmo to sit beside her, and sighed.

Her heart felt unusually heavy.

"Is grandmother troubled by the previous incident?" Xu Xinmo asked softly.

"Yes!"

Xu Xinmo bit her lip, swallowed before she spoke, "Grandmother, I always feel that someone deliberately wants to set you up!"

"What do you mean?" Old Madam Yun eagerly inquired.

"Think about it, grandmother, that person repeatedly claimed to have an affair with Cousin Sister, yet didn't recognize her, bringing out a dudou, not knowing whose it was. Do you think it might all be a play orchestrated by Cousin Sister on purpose?"

Upon hearing this, Old Madam Yun understood suddenly.

Perhaps, this was Yun Jinnian's self-directed act; that man's claim of seeking Yun Jinnian, it was evidently Yun Jinnian who instructed someone to steal her dudou to frame her.

"That little schemer, how vicious her schemes are!" Old Madam Yun cursed fiercely.

Even her own grandmother isn't spared, what exactly does she want?

No, Yun Jinnian cannot be allowed to progress further, no way!

"Grandmother..." Xu Xinmo worryingly called softly.

Old Madam Yun shook her head, "Wanwan, grandmother is fine, you should return, grandmother is tired!"

"Yes!"

Xu Xinmo rose and left the small hall.

As she reached the door, she glanced inside and slightly curled her lips into a smile.

Ming Liu stood to one side.

Ming Liu, in her twenties, looked quite attractive, with an oval face, a full chest, a slender waist, and a shapely hip.

Whether she harbored other intentions, if she did, Xu Xinmo wouldn't mind helping her achieve her desires!

"Ming Liu!"

"Cousin Miss, do you have any instructions?"

Xu Xinmo smiled slightly, leaned closer to Ming Liu, whispered, "Ming Liu, do you want to be in charge?"