

Indulgence 971

Chapter 971:, Mrs. Xu

"Did the young lady ask anything?"

"She asked the madam!"

Chong Ling sighed, "The young lady is so good, I wonder why the madam doesn't cherish her. Fortunately, the master treats the young lady extremely well..."

"Enough, stop talking, or you'll wake the young lady!"

"Got it!"

On the bed, Nalan Jinlian gently turned over and fell asleep.

In the evening, Nalan Jinlian bathed early, changed into clean clothes, leaned on the Noble Consort's couch, waiting for Nalan Bo.

Nalan Bo came over, bringing two plum blossoms along.

Nalan Jinlian smiled and asked, "Father, where did the plum blossoms come from?"

"Got them from a friend's house!" Nalan Bo said, handing them to Chong Ling, "Find a vase and put them in!"

"Yes, master!"

Father and daughter sat at the table, with over a dozen dishes, a mix of meat and vegetables, all very appetizing.

Nalan Jinlian served Nalan Bo some greens.

Nalan Bo looked surprised for a moment then laughed, "Don't only serve me, you should eat as well. How's your head, still hurting after the fall a few days ago?"

"A bit painful, but not particularly so; it doesn't hurt much if I don't touch it!" Nalan Jinlian said, smiling.

In a somewhat foolish manner, Nalan Bo looked on, deep in thought.

His expression suddenly darkened, and after taking a sip from his wine cup, he quietly said, "If you don't like them, don't let them stay here with us. I'll arrange for someone to escort them back to the Imperial Capital, and once there, I'll settle them outside and not bring them back to the Marquis Residence!"

Nalan Jinlian paused with her chopsticks in hand, lifted her eyes puzzledly at Nalan Bo, her heart slightly troubled, "Father, bring them back here. It's not good for your reputation to keep them outside. As long as they're not difficult to get along with, I won't make things hard for them!"

Conversely, if they cause problems without reason, she won't hold back.

"You're a good child!" Nalan Bo said, serving several more pieces of food to Nalan Jinlian.

Father and daughter ate slowly, feeling particularly warm.

A small courtyard in the back of the Nalan Residence.

A woman knelt on a prayer mat, chanting Buddhist scriptures facing the White Jade Guanyin.

She only opened her eyes after finishing a scroll.

"Madam, it's time to eat!"

The woman gently shook her head, "I have no appetite, don't want to eat!"

It's just pickled vegetables and tofu daily, what's there to eat.

"Madam, today's dishes are different. They are said to be personally ordered by the young lady, asking the kitchen to make several new dishes, including a dish of vibrant green vegetables, a scrambled egg with chives, and a tofu soup!"

"The young lady..."

The woman mumbled a phrase, immediately tears streamed down her face.

Her unfortunate daughter was long gone, where could a young lady come from...

The curtain was lifted by an elderly hand, a gray-haired old woman in a worn cotton jacket entered the room, walked to the woman, helped her up, and gestured for the little maid to leave.

She then said, "Madam, our opportunity has arrived!"

"Why does old woman say that?"

"Madam, what kind of person is our master? Fearing you would harm that person, he never brought them back, but now this young lady is publicly said to be your child, master's legitimate eldest daughter, the maids and old women around the young lady, I watched briefly the other day, not only well-behaved but also adept in Martial Arts, and that young lady is ill!"

"III?"

"Yes, there are medicine residues emptied outside, and fresh vegetables delivered to the residence daily. The master even had dinner at the Lotus Garden in the evening, showing he values the young lady highly!"

The woman fell silent.

The old woman wasn't in a rush to persuade.

Chapter 972: The Sky Is About to Change

After a long while, the woman finally spoke in a calm voice, "The old maid is right. With Nalan Bo's self-serving nature, this woman's identity must not be simple. He appears to display deep father-daughter affection, but is it not just courting and deceiving? Even if this woman does not come from a clean background, the places she will go in the future are certainly beyond our reach!"

The old maid nodded, "Madam speaks the truth!"

"Enough, enough. Since she is my daughter, I must show her some care. It's not easy to be mother and daughter!"

"Indeed, a father cannot compare to a mother's care. Besides, Miss has instructed the kitchen to send dishes over as a gesture of goodwill. As long as Madam treats her sincerely, and wins over Miss's heart, the opportunity for a turnaround will come. By then, don't even mention restraining that concubine, selling her off would leave Master with no choice but to swallow his broken teeth and blood, enduring it!" The old maid added.

The woman stood up and looked outside the door.

"Old maid, the snow has come extraordinarily early this year, and the chilly wind is exceptionally strong!"

The old maid smiled and draped an old cloak over the woman's shoulders, "That's because a wind is a sign of a changing sky!"

The woman, who was actually Nalan Bo's first wife, Mrs. Xu, suddenly laughed softly, murmuring, "Indeed, the wind is rising, and those who owe me should repay their debts!"

"Madam, it's good that you have thought it through!"

Nalan Bo had dinner at the Lotus Garden and hurriedly left the residence, taking a carriage to the gate of another house.

A young servant at the door quickly came forward to greet him, "Master has arrived!"

"Where is your Madam?"

"Madam is in the inner courtyard, and Miss and Young Master are there too!"

Nalan Bo nodded and went directly to the inner courtyard.

Mrs. Liao was the concubine he kept outside, who had given birth to a son and a daughter for him, and now was pregnant again, naturally making her highly important to him.

There were some matters he needed to instruct her about.

From a distance, Nalan Bo could hear laughter coming from the courtyard and smiled slightly.

These two children were indeed lively and cheerful. Once they returned to the Capital City, they would surely win their mother's favor.

With their mother's affection, their days at the Marquis Residence wouldn't be too difficult.

"Father!"

Nalan Mingcong noticed Nalan Bo and called out, running quickly over.

Nalan Bo embraced him, the eight-year-old child was quite sturdy, making him a bit heavy to hold.

"Father!" The thirteen-year-old Nalan Mingzhu respectfully called, walking over to Nalan Bo's side and curtsying.

Nalan Bo patted her head, "Are you cold?"

"Not cold. I just came out with my brother, prepared to gather some snow and build a snowman, and then you arrived!"

"Continue playing, I'll go inside and have a chat with your auntie!"

"Alright!"

Nalan Bo entered the small hall, and Mrs. Liao immediately ordered tea to be served, gently saying, "Why come over in such cold weather?"

Mrs. Liao was the epitome of a delicate beauty, gentle as flowing water—not very beautiful, but very pleasing to the eye.

Her temperament was also gentle and endearing, considerate and attentive.

"Just came to talk to you!"

Mrs. Liao smiled, nodding gently, "Is the eldest young lady's health better?"

"Much better. We even had dinner together today. She also mentioned, as long as you all don't provoke her, she will not make things difficult for you!"

"Don't worry, Master. I understand and will also remind Mingzhu and Mingcong to respect and admire their elder sister without disobedience!" Mrs. Liao softly replied.

Without the slightest hint of displeasure or pettiness, she truly knew how to handle things which made Nalan Bo profoundly fond.

Knowing that upon returning to the Marquis Residence, everything would need to be arranged, and realizing Mrs. Liao didn't have much money, Nalan Bo took out a stack of silver notes, "Keep these safe!"

Chapter 973: Visiting Mrs. Xu

Mrs. Liao hesitated for a moment, then reached out to take the silver note and placed it on the table.

"To be honest with you, Sir, I actually don't want to return to the Capital City. But Mingzhu and Mingcong are growing up; they need a proper identity. The child in my belly as well — they are all your children, Sir, and with your care, their future will certainly be boundless and prosperous!"

Mrs. Liao was not foolish; she naturally understood how the Nalan Bo's eldest daughter came back.

Never mentioned before, but suddenly emphasized now. Naturally, she would avoid its edge and be a proper person.

As for the two children, despite her meticulous education, compared to the Imperial Capital Marquis Residence, it was a world of difference.

Nalan Bo smiled satisfactorily.

Originally not intending to stay, but eventually decided to remain.

After resting for three days, Nalan Jinlian's health improved considerably. Her head hurt less, but she still couldn't think deeply; if she did, her head would hurt badly, so she simply chose not to dwell on it and lived her life with ease.

She even thought of going to the backyard to see her mother.

Mother...

A familiar yet unfamiliar term.

But deeply remembered in her heart.

Nalan Jinlian wore a heavy cloak, holding a warm stove, and slowly proceeded toward the backyard.

"Miss, are you really going to see Madam?" Chong Ling asked in a low voice.

"Yes!"

The backyard was much more worn than where she lived, with snow all over the ground, and just a few footprints back and forth in the snow, clearly indicating no one came here.

Nalan Jinlian didn't continue forward. She just stood there, thinking.

After a while, she turned to leave, and then heard a cough. Nalan Jinlian looked towards the sound and saw a thin middle-aged woman quietly watching her from nearby.

That woman's clothes were very old, and she wore just a Jade Hairpin in her hair, looking quite plain.

The woman's appearance was not outstanding, even somewhat old, but her eyes were full of tears that did not fall, seemingly suppressing many emotions.

Nalan Jinlian pursed her lips.

Is she her mother?

Without memory, there was not much emotion, but because she was her mother, she inexplicably wished to approach.

She stepped forward slowly.

Mrs. Xu watched, and tears immediately fell.

Though the approaching girl was not her daughter, she could still feel the faint yearning in the girl's eyes.

She gently curled her lips into a smile, "Lianlian!"

Nalan Jinlian heard this and paused, then quickened her steps, walked to Mrs. Xu, slightly bowed, "Mother!"

Mrs. Xu reached out, held Nalan Jinlian, and asked with concern, "Is it cold outside? Would you like to come in and drink some hot water?"

"Alright!"

Nalan Jinlian followed Mrs. Xu into the room. Inside, it was cold and empty, with a simple shrine, a relatively small White Jade Guanyin, a table, four stools, and further in was a bed, a wardrobe.

The room lacked an underfloor heating and a fire basin.

She brought in an iron kettle and held a tray with two porcelain cups.

The old maid quickly poured hot water, then retreated, very polite and courteous.

Nalan Jinlian turned to look, Mrs. Xu smiled slightly, "That's Zhao Nanny. Don't you remember? She even held you when you were little!"

"I fell from the stairs that day, bumped my head, and forgot everything!" Nalan Jinlian said softly, sipping the hot water gently.

Originally thought it lacked tea flavor, but unexpectedly it was extremely fragrant, with a faint plum blossom scent.

"How could you fall? What were the maids and servants doing at the time?" Mrs. Xu was somewhat angry, seemingly thought of something, her anger quickly subsided, concerned and soft-spoken, "Is it better now? Does your head still hurt? Are you taking your medication?"

Chapter 974: Sincere or Insincere

Nalan Jinlian nodded.

The mother and daughter talked for a while longer, mostly Mrs. Xu speaking while Nalan Jinlian listened.

"Miss, it's time to take your medicine, we should go back!" Chong Ling whispered from the side.

Nalan Jinlian nodded again.

Mrs. Xu's eyes suddenly reddened, and she hurriedly said to the outside, "Nanny, bring a jar of the Plum Blossom Snow Water I saved last year for Lianlian to take back!"

"Yes!"

Nanny Zhao immediately went to fetch the Plum Blossom Snow Water.

Nalan Jinlian thought for a moment, "Thank you, Mother!"

"I don't have much to give you. This snow water was collected last year and buried under the plum trees together with the blossoms. It has a faint plum blossom fragrance!"

Nalan Jinlian nodded.

When Nanny Zhao returned with the snow water, she left together with Chong Ling.

Mrs. Xu watched Nalan Jinlian leave, took a deep breath, and said to Nanny Zhao, "Seeing her beauty that captivates the world, her elegant poise and courteous manners, even if she's lost her memory, she remains composed and fearless. Although she doesn't feel close to me, she is respectful and filial..."

As Mrs. Xu spoke, she suddenly began to cry.

Yet she intended to use this child as a sharp blade to avenge the disappearance of her daughter.

"Madam, if you feel compassion, show it with genuine love and care in the future. After all, she is Nalan Jinlian, your legitimate daughter!" Nanny Zhao softly advised.

"Nanny is right indeed!"

Nalan Jinlian returned to the Lotus Garden, took her medicine, and said to Nurse Qin, "Check if I have any charcoal here, send some to Mother, and also take a few thick and warm quilts to her. Instruct the kitchen to make sure Mother doesn't lack fresh vegetables. Even if she eats vegetarian, make varied dishes. Don't forget the snacks. When Granny gives the orders, also reward the kitchen maids and maids!"

"Yes!" Nurse Qin responded and went down to prepare.

Meanwhile, Chong Ling was shocked into a cold sweat.

Even if she's forgotten everything, she still retains her former intelligence and manages everything meticulously.

Her innate grace has not diminished in the slightest.

Mrs. Xu looked at the charcoal and quilts, and smiled modestly at Nanny Zhao and the maid Lian Qiao, "This child really has a considerate heart!"

But, this wasn't the end; the lunch noticeably had more dishes, and there were even a few small snacks.

Mrs. Xu ate a piece and let Nanny Zhao and Lian Qiao share it.

Nanny Zhao smiled gently in silence, not refusing, while Lian Qiao was reluctant to eat, "I won't eat, Madam, please keep it and enjoy it slowly!"

"Silly girl, wait for tonight, there'll be more!"

Indeed, there was more at night.

They were sent by Chunqiu, who personally delivered them from Nalan Jinlian's side—a total of five pieces arranged in a porcelain dish, beautifully crafted.

"Madam, these are the snacks sent by Miss, please have a taste!" Lian Qiao said, feeling joyful.

She had been by Mrs. Xu's side since she was ten, and in the blink of an eye, ten years had passed.

There were many things she didn't know.

In the past, in this rear courtyard, she knew nothing of the outside world, nor was she aware that there was a young lady in the mansion.

Mrs. Xu chuckled lightly, still ate only one piece, "You and Nanny share the rest!"

Lian Qiao was very loyal, understanding, and acted swiftly, just lacking in experience from being in the rear courtyard with her.

Lian Qiao smiled and took a bite, "It's really delicious!"

"Indeed, it's truly delicious!" Mrs. Xu murmured softly.

Nalan Bo returned from outside and learned that Nalan Jinlian went to the rear courtyard to see Mrs. Xu, his face turned very dark, changing repeatedly, and hurriedly headed to the Lotus Garden.

He was stopped at the door, "Master, Miss is already resting!"

Chapter 975: The Difference Between Wife and Concubine

Nalan Bo's face turned extremely unpleasant.

He wanted to say something but ultimately said nothing and turned to leave.

The maid watched him leave and immediately went to tell Nanny Qin about it. Nanny Qin was silent for a moment, "Let him be!"

They say time reveals the heart, but it's been only one day. The young lady went to see the madam once, delivered some things, and rushed over here.

What does she intend to do? To make accusations? Does she not see if she's worthy?

But neither Nalan Jinlian nor Nanny Qin expected that the next morning, Nalan Bo would bring back Nalan Mingzhu.

Nalan Mingzhu was charming and delicate, dressed in pink attire that was very endearing.

Nalan Bo brought her to the Lotus Garden.

"Mingzhu greets Sister!" Nalan Mingzhu curtsied gracefully.

She secretly lifted her eyes to see Nalan Jinlian, also dressed in pink, and upon seeing her appearance and attire, Nalan Mingzhu was a bit surprised.

A trace of jealousy crept into her heart for no reason.

"No need for formalities!" Nalan Jinlian spoke softly, slightly bowing to Nalan Bo, "Father!"

"Jinlian, no need for formalities. This is your younger sister Mingzhu. Let her accompany you for a few days so you two can get to know each other better!"

Nalan Bo spoke to himself.

Missing the displeasure in Nalan Jinlian's eyes.

But Nalan Mingzhu saw it.

Her heart tightened.

Before coming, her mother had instructed her to be respectful to her legitimate sister, but her mother hadn't told her that her sister might not like her.

Now it seems the sister indeed doesn't like her.

"I'm not feeling well these days. Father, please rearrange a place for Mingzhu within the residence!" Nalan Jinlian said calmly.

Whether like or dislike, she simply didn't want to see her so soon.

Nalan Bo was very surprised by her words.

He hadn't expected to be rejected.

But now that she had been brought back, sending Mingzhu back would upset her, "Alright, then I'll give the courtyard next to yours to Mingzhu. You can call her over if you're bored, or you can visit her; it's close!"

"Hmm!"

Nalan Jinlian responded lazily.

Nalan Bo then left with Nalan Mingzhu.

Out of the Lotus Garden, Nalan Mingzhu started to cry.

"Mingzhu..." Nalan Bo looked at her, feeling deeply distressed.

"Father, does Sister not like me?" Nalan Mingzhu asked softly.

At home, she was the young lady, with servants flattering her everywhere.

But in the Lotus Garden, she realized no one gave her a second glance; all eyes were on Nalan Jinlian.

Even though both wore pink outfits, she was completely outshone, lowered into the dust.

Her appearance, the material of her clothes, her jewelry all fell short.

Nalan Bo took a deep breath, "How could that be? Your sister just isn't feeling well, a bit tired. When she feels better, come visit her to play!" Nalan Bo said, patting Nalan Mingzhu's head, "Our Mingzhu is so delightful and sensible; she's very likable!"

"Really?" Nalan Mingzhu asked softly.

Innocent and pure.

"Of course it's true!" Nalan Bo smiled.

Though he felt somewhat annoyed with Nalan Jinlian, thinking he was being attentive to her by bringing Mingzhu back, he hoped she would show Mingzhu some favor.

But he hadn't expected Nalan Jinlian to completely ignore her.

"I naturally believe Father. But Father, am I living here alone? When will Mother and Brother come?"

"What's that? Missing your Mother?"

Nalan Mingzhu nodded.

Nalan Bo smiled, "Then stay here first, and we'll pick up your Mother and Mingcong later, alright?"

"Okay!"

Nalan Mingzhu nodded but felt watched. Turning her head, she saw Nalan Jinlian standing not too far away, feeling a bit scared.

She looked up for help to Nalan Bo but saw his face turning from green to white...

Chapter 976: Fear in the Heart

Mother...

There's nothing wrong with a child born outside the family calling their biological mother 'mother,' but that was before she returned.

Now she has returned to this family.

"Father, what are you and Mingzhu talking about? Is it about Mingzhu's mother?"

"..." Nalan Bo was rendered speechless.

Especially after seeing the faces of Qin Nanny, Chong Ling, and Chunqiu behind Nalan Jinlian, which were very unpleasant.

His face became even paler.

"Sister, indeed it is Mingzhu's mother, is there any problem with that?" Nalan Mingzhu did not quite understand the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate.

Nalan Bo wanted to stop it but it was too late.

Nalan Jinlian did not speak, she just looked at Nalan Bo, "Father, is this what you think too?"

"No, it's not like that!"

"If it's not, then, Father, you'd better explain to Mingzhu about the differences between legitimated and illegitimate children in large families, and the difference between a mistress and a concubine!" Nalan Jinlian finished speaking and slowly walked towards the backyard with Chong Ling and others.

Backyard...

That's where Mrs. Xu's place is.

Nalan Bo's face immediately became even more unpleasant.

"Father?" Nalan Mingzhu called softly.

"Let's go!" Nalan Bo solemnly said.

The things he never cared about in the past, today, when Nalan Jinlian mentioned them, he was suddenly awakened.

A legitimate wife, a concubine, and an outsider are different.

The children born to concubines are illegitimate, but they must be included in the family registry, whereas those born to outsiders cannot be, the family does not recognize them at all.

The wife is the wife, the concubine is the concubine, the outsider is the outsider, and they are completely different.

Mingzhu can call her 'mother' outside, but when she returns to the Capital City, she can only call her 'concubine mother'...

Thinking of this, Nalan Bo regretted bringing Nalan Mingzhu back immensely.

Having stayed in the small town near the frontier for too long, he had forgotten he had to return to the Imperial Capital, where he must abide by the rules.

Mrs. Liao cannot become the legitimate wife, especially since Mrs. Xu is still alive.

If Mrs. Xu had died years ago, then all might be fine, but now there is Nalan Jinlian, and people of her status wouldn't allow her to mourn for her legitimate mother for three years.

"Father, I'm sorry!" Nalan Mingzhu said, crying even more sorrowfully.

His own biological daughter, cherished for many years, seeing her cry still made him feel very distressed.

"It's not your fault, it's because Father didn't think it through, you go back to your mother first, and I'll explain it to you in detail later!"

"Yes!"

Mrs. Liao never expected Nalan Mingzhu would be sent back, her gentle demeanor almost couldn't hold up.

But in front of Nalan Bo, she couldn't reveal any signs, she welcomed them with slight concern, "Why are you back?"

"Let's talk inside!" Nalan Bo entered the room first.

Mrs. Liao looked at Nalan Mingzhu, seeing her red eyes, feeling utterly sympathetic, she blamed the legitimate young lady she hadn't met.

But her face did not show, she gently said, "Let's go inside and listen to what your father has to say!"

"Okay!" Nalan Mingzhu nodded obediently and followed Mrs. Liao into the small hall.

Nalan Bo sat on the Arhat bed at the head of the room, the maid had already served hot tea, but he didn't touch it.

Mrs. Liao, although not knowing what had happened, seeing her daughter with tear-streaked eyes and Nalan Bo's furrowed brow, had some understanding, softly whispered, "Master, what happened?"

Nalan Bo gestured for Mrs. Liao to sit down, and then had someone summon Nalan Mingcong back, before seriously saying, "In a few days, we'll be heading to the Marquis Residence in the Imperial Capital, once there, your identities will inevitably change!"

The change in status has both good and bad aspects.

The good part is that the background will improve, even if it's illegitimate from the Marquis Residence, it's still from the Marquis Residence, outside many people have to give some respect when carrying this banner.

But there's also a bad side to it...

Chapter 977: Distinction between Legitimate and Illegitimate

In the small border town, everything was decided by Madam Liao, but once they returned to the Imperial Capital, everything from clothing, food, accommodation, and travel was managed by the Crown Princess, and the children were taught by the old marquis, following strict rules.

The old marquis was most concerned with the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children.

In the future, they wouldn't be able to leave the main gate or step through the secondary one...

And once he returned to the Imperial Capital, he would never come back.

Madam Liao remained silent.

Nalan Mingzhu was also silent.

She had always thought that once she returned to the Capital City, it would be like now, carefree and without worries, only needing to be happy.

Madam Liao also deeply understood that entering the Marquess Manor was like entering the deep sea, but facing such an environment, she didn't want to go, didn't want to take the children there, but she had no choice.

"Husband, don't worry, I'll do my best to teach Mingzhu and Mingcong well, I won't let them embarrass you, I won't compete with your wife, and Mingzhu and Mingcong won't compete with the eldest daughter!" Madam Liao said, her heart bleeding.

If possible, she wished they wouldn't compete or snatch.

"Mm!" Nalan Bo took a deep breath.

He knew he was wronging Madam Liao, but he couldn't stay at this moment.

He had to go back and appease Nalan Jinlian, that was his bright future.

As she watched Nalan Bo leave, Madam Liao withdrew the smile from her face and asked Nalan Mingzhu, "Did you go and see the eldest daughter today?"

"Yes, I did!"

"How was it?"

Nalan Mingzhu hesitated for a moment, then immediately answered seriously.

The more Madam Liao listened, the more her brow furrowed.

After a moment, she sighed deeply, "You went too early!"

"Mother..." Nalan Mingzhu called out softly.

"Mingzhu, you cannot call me mother anymore after this!"

"Then what should I call you?" Nalan Mingzhu asked, puzzled.

"You should call me aunt!"

And once you return to the Imperial Capital, there would be no such freedom.

But for the two children, one could receive better education, and the other could marry well, she should be satisfied and not think too deeply.

Nor should she harbor resentment.

Nalan Mingzhu suddenly understood the meaning behind Nalan Jinlian's words.

"No, no, mother, I don't want it, I don't want it!" Nalan Mingzhu cried very sorrowfully.

At first, she cried in front of Nalan Bo to win sympathy, but now she was genuinely crying.

"Mingzhu, it's not up to you or me, your father has made the decision, we can't change it, the only thing we can do is to carefully handle the upcoming steps, you too, can't be as naive as you are now, you need to become sensible, in everything, you must think ahead, it's said that entering the Marquess Manor is like entering the deep sea, the place we're going is the Marquis Residence, in the future you'll be a young lady of the Marquis Residence, even if you're born of a concubine, you're more esteemed than many other noble misses, and the husband you'll marry in the future will be either rich or noble, much better than living in this small town!"

Madam Liao said, wiping Nalan Mingzhu's tears, continuing to counsel, "As for your sister, don't provoke her, you may dislike her, but you must maintain appearances, if possible, you should win her over so that she likes you!"

Prominent families place great importance on legitimate and illegitimate status.

Madam Liao deeply understood this.

"Mother, I don't want to, nor am I willing to, you didn't see it today, how proud she was, just sitting there, full of grace and wealth, wearing and using such exquisite and luxurious things, we're both father's daughters, why can she use such fine things, father always said he cared for me and loved me, but today I realized, it's different, really different!"

Always saying he cared for her and loved her.

But after going there today, she understood, in reality, it's very different.

Madam Liao was truly furious, "Enough, do you still not know where you went wrong?"

Chapter 978: Panicked and Frustrated

Wrong?

Nalan Mingzhu trembled.

Where did she go wrong?

Where exactly did she go wrong?

Was it being born as an illegitimate daughter?

No, this was not something she could choose.

She looked at the old lady in confusion, shock, sadness, and covered her face as she ran away crying.

Mrs. Liao opened her mouth, wanting to say something, but ultimately couldn't.

Turning, she saw Nalan Mingcong standing silently, watching her with a heavy gaze, and Mrs. Liao felt her heart ache.

"Mingcong?"

"Mother, I don't want to go to the Capital City!"

Though he was still young, he already understood the difference between legitimate and illegitimate.

"But we must go!"

If we don't go, how will we survive here in this small border town?

Her gentle façade would surely collapse, let alone she is burdened with a life on her back.

If she were left alone with two children in this frontier, Mrs. Xu would return with manpower to deal with her, she wouldn't have a chance to fight back or even protect herself.

But going back with protection from the master.

The children would be somewhat safe.

"I know, mother don't worry, one day, I will bring you and sister back here!"

By then, the sky will be vast for birds to fly, the sea wide for fish to leap!

"Alright, I remember what Mingcong said!"

In the mansion

Nalan Jinlian and Mrs. Xu chatted with great rapport, both being gentle and elegant people with wisdom, they could connect over conversation.

"Miss, it's time to drink your medicine!" Chunqiu softly called from the side.

Hearing this, Nalan Jinlian frowned slightly and spoke softly, "Go get the medicine, and while you're at it, go to the kitchen and prepare a few vegetarian dishes for me to have here with mother!"

Chunqiu hesitated for a moment, then responded, "Yes!"

The mother and daughter continued to discuss other matters.

They even went to the backyard to see the plum tree.

"Unfortunately, we can't see it this year!" Mrs. Xu lamented in a low voice.

"There's plum blossoms in the Imperial Capital too!"

Perhaps the plum blossoms in the Imperial Capital are better, more beautiful, more delicate.

Even more intimate.

"Lianlian!" Mrs. Xu softly called.

"Hmm?"

"Do you really not remember what happened in the past?" Mrs. Xu asked gently.

"Truly can't remember, in the past I was ignorant, I hope mother doesn't take it to heart!"

Mrs. Xu shook her head.

She reached out and gently hugged Nalan Jinlian, "It's okay, back then mother wasn't a good mother either, from now on we'll be well!"

Poor child.

What is her origin?

Why did she lose her memory for no apparent reason?

Was it really a fall from the stairs? Or was she harmed by someone else?

No wonder Mrs. Xu thought this way, because Nalan Jinlian was truly beautiful.

"Alright!"

Nalan Bo returned and immediately summoned the butler to inquire, learning that Nalan Jinlian was in Mrs. Xu's courtyard, had eaten lunch and hadn't returned, even took the medicine to drink there, his expression turned very unpleasant.

"Master?" the butler whispered.

He didn't know the origins of the young miss, but he knew that the young miss in this mansion drowned ten years ago, since then the mistress moved to the backyard.

Never came out again, didn't attend to the affairs of the mansion, nor cared for the master.

"Butler Wu!"

"This old servant is here!"

Nalan Bo wanted to say something, but in the end said nothing, waving his hand to signal the butler to leave.

After Butler Wu withdrew, Nalan Bo smashed quite a few things.

Only when Nalan Jinlian left did he enter Mrs. Xu's courtyard.

Nalan Bo could not see the desolation and bleakness in the courtyard, but upon entering the room, seeing Mrs. Xu kneeling before the White Jade Guanyin, he stepped forward and swept the White Jade Guanyin to the ground.

The White Jade Guanyin instantly shattered into several pieces.

Chapter 979: See Clearly

Mrs. Xu was not afraid, slowly stood up, and looked coldly at Nalan Bo, "Nalan Bo, you're scared!"

"What am I scared of?" Nalan Bo asked, stiffening his neck.

"You tell me what you're scared of. Lianlian has been gone for a long time. Where did you get that girl? And you lied to her that she is the eldest daughter of this household. What exactly have you done to her? Why has she lost her memory?" Mrs. Xu questioned repeatedly.

She had been in the back courtyard for many years.

It wasn't that she didn't want to go out, but Nalan Bo wouldn't allow her to.

Her maiden family was in the Imperial Capital, and in this remote town, she couldn't fight against him, nor could she send letters back.

Now the opportunity has come.

Nalan Bo cares so much about that child, he must be hiding something, having some intentions towards her.

"Don't interfere, don't ask more, and don't talk too much. If you ruin the master's matters, not even you or your family will be spared. Try it if you don't believe me!"

After shouting, Nalan Bo turned and left.

Watching Nalan Bo go far, Mrs. Xu asked, "Grandma, who do you think the master he's referring to is?"

"That isn't clear at the moment, but we shouldn't rush. When we return to the Imperial Capital, we'll naturally find out!"

"What Grandma said is true!" Mrs. Xu slightly curled her lips into a smile.

Grandma Zhao was silent.

After a while, Mrs. Xu said, "This child is truly talented!"

Mrs. Xu considered herself a person with both talent and virtue, well-educated, but this child surpassed her in every way, even excelling beyond her.

"She must be the daughter of a good family!" Grandma Zhao spoke up.

"She should be from a good family, who undoubtedly dislikes the master Nalan Bo mentioned, which is why they devised such a plan to make her lose her memory!" Mrs. Xu said, her eyes deepening.

Turning to look at Grandma Zhao, "Grandma, what do you think I should do?"

"There's no need to do anything, just watch quietly and wait for things to change. When we return to the Capital City, we'll act according to the situation. Since she is a girl from a good family, someone will surely come looking for her!"

Hearing this, Mrs. Xu suddenly laughed, "Grandma is right. Since she is a girl from a good family, someone will surely come looking for her!"

And that master Nalan Bo is also afraid that her family will come looking for her, and afraid that she will regain her memory.

It seems this girl's background is not simple.

Nalan Jinlian returned to the Lotus Garden, and Nalan Bo came over, holding a cage in his hand.

"Father!"

"I was afraid you'd be bored, so I got a cat for you!"

Cat?

Nalan Jinlian frowned.

Actually, she didn't really like it.

"Thank you, Father!"

Nalan Bo opened the cage, and a kitten mewed out. It was a very small tabby milk cat.

Nalan Jinlian reached out to pet it, "Chunqiu, take it away!"

"Yes!"

Chunqiu took the kitten away.

Nalan Bo then smiled and asked, "Do you like this cat?"

"I like it, thank you, Father!"

Nalan Bo nodded, "As for Mingzhu today..."

"It's okay. No matter what, she is my sister. Although I don't really like her, I don't dislike her either. Still, the same words, don't come to harm me, and I won't make things difficult for her!"

Whether it's the concubine or the illegitimate sister, she has lost her memory and doesn't remember anything.

Her mind is empty, and now she starts to fill it up, whatever goes in is whatever it is, good or bad; she will see with her eyes and understand and perceive with her heart.

She can tell who is truly kind to her or just pretending, she can perceive and comprehend it.

Father treats her well on the surface, he treats Mingzhu sincerely well; otherwise, he wouldn't have come to her side so many times for Mingzhu.

Perhaps he thinks she can't see through it!

Chapter 980: Encounter with Mingzhu

The mother's affection towards her was somewhat insincere and hidden, with a hint of utility, yet it wasn't annoying.

Moreover, the mother was knowledgeable, making conversations with her very interesting.

As for the two maids and the wet nurse, they were very obedient, but too rigid and proper.

The wet nurse seemed to have some affection for her too, but she always felt something was missing.

As for what it was, she didn't know yet.

Nalan Bo saw Nalan Jinlian's indifferent expression and thought it best not to linger, "You should rest early. If you're feeling better tomorrow, I'll take you out to look around and perhaps buy some things!"

"Okay!"

She watched as Nalan Bo departed.

Nalan Jinlian pursed her lips, walked to the study, and picked a book to read.

The book seemed new, as if it hadn't been opened before.

After reading a few pages, she didn't particularly like it and put it back.

She picked up a few more books at random, but none appealed to her.

"Miss has never really liked reading these kinds of books!" Chunqiu remarked with a smile.

"Then what do I like to read?"

"Miss likes reading miscellanies!"

Nalan Jinlian raised an eyebrow, "Really?"

"Indeed!"

Nalan Jinlian smiled slightly, picked up a miscellany, and began to read.

After a few pages, she found it well-written and gradually became engrossed.

Chunqiu immediately fetched several lamps and placed them in front of Nalan Jinlian; the heating in the room was intense, so it didn't feel cold at all.

Nalan Jinlian put down the book in her hand and asked, "Are there any better courtyards in the manor?"

"What does Miss plan to do?"

"Mother's courtyard is really too cold, let's change a courtyard for her!"

Chunqiu thought for a moment before saying, "For this matter, Miss should discuss it with Master!"

"I understand!"

Nalan Jinlian set the book aside and continued, "Also, send some more coal to Mother's side, a couple of heaters too, and see if there's any hot soup in the kitchen to send over!"

Chunqiu responded and went off to carry out the tasks.

After freshening up, Nalan Jinlian lay on the warm bed and slept until morning.

Little did she know how many couldn't sleep through the night.

So young but with white hair!

"Miss, look at this, it's really beautiful!" Chunqiu held a small fish carved from jade, lifelike and very exquisite.

"Buy it, and see if there's anything else. When we return to the Capital City, we can give them to the children!"

"Alright!"

In this search, they found quite a few cats and dogs figurines.

This was a small town on the border between the Great Zhou Kingdom and Tianchu Country, where customs were simple and not very restrictive for girls.

Additionally, Nalan Jinlian was wrapped up tightly, with only her bright eyes visible, so few could see her face clearly.

However, they felt her voice was very pleasant.

Particularly pleasant.

During this outing, they bought a boxful of jade items, all intricately carved, small but quite charming.

The craftsmanship was also very exquisite.

She spent quite a bit of silver, but Nalan Jinlian wasn't distressed at all.

It seemed she was inherently wealthy and didn't particularly value money.

For this reason, Nalan Jinlian looked up at the sky, touched her forehead, "Is it an illusion?" she murmured softly.

"Miss, what did you say?" Chunqiu asked.

"Nothing, let's go home, I'm hungry!"

Chunqiu smiled, "If Miss is hungry, we can go to a restaurant to eat, and then return!"

"That's good, let's also get some pastries to bring back for Mother!"

They first went to a restaurant for a lovely meal, then bought some pastries and noticed that pomelos were for sale.

However, the price was quite high.