

Medical Princess 711

Chapter 711 You Frightened Me!

When they entered the mourning hall again, it was the time to offer incense. As the most honorable guest, Old Madam was the first to enter the mourning hall, which was too small to accommodate all of them at the same time.

Wang Shengxue led Old Madam into the mourning hall, while the five Misses of Duke Xing's Mansion were waiting outside.

Old Madam only instructed someone to offer three sticks of incense before she came out with a gloomy face. She had to come today. Considering that she had shown enough respect for the Wang's Mansion by showing up here, she was not willing to do anything else.

Ning Xueqing came up to her and said with a smile, "Old Madam, please go to the wing room for a rest. It won't take long for several Misses to offer incense!"

Old Madam glanced at her and followed her to the wing room next door without answering her.

Wang Shengxue stretched his hand as a hint for Shao Yanru and Shao Jie'er to get inside and said with a smile, "First Miss, Second Miss, please get inside!"

Shao Yanru adjusted her expression and walked in. After giving Wang Shengxue a hard look, Shao Jie'er followed her inside. Wang Shengxue did not take it seriously and followed them in.

When they got inside, the old maid in the mourning hall gave each of them three sticks of incense. After taking the incense, they bent slightly toward the coffin and were about to insert the incense into the censer in the middle.

"Thump! Thump!" There seemed to come a series of strange sounds from the ground, which made the two of them raise their heads in shock. When they realized that the sounds came from inside the coffin, Shao Jie'er felt her legs went limp and almost fell down. Fortunately, the maid beside her supported her in time.

Shao Yanru took a step back. Although her face was as pale as snow, she was much composed than Shao Jie'er. She suddenly looked at Wang Shengxue and asked harshly, "Childe Wang, what do you mean by doing that?"

"Maybe it's because my sister died of persecution, so she couldn't rest in peace. I heard that someone dying of persecution will turn into a fierce ghost and go to ask the person, who killed her, to pay back with life!" Wang Shengxue said with a sigh.

Shao Yanru said with a sneer, "Childe Wang, you seem to be telling the truth. In fact, cousin Yishu died of illness, and our mansion has done all we could for her. Why do you seem to mean that there's something fishy about her death?"

"First Miss, I'm really not sure of this. My sister has lived in your mansion for three years, but she died without a definite explanation. As her brother, I have neither the ability nor a way to find out the truth for her," Wang Shengxue said, looking extremely innocent.

Of course, he got benefits. Otherwise, he wouldn't have had his current residence. Despite the benefits he had gotten, he didn't intend to let it go so easily. At least, he could get more benefits.

However, Duke Xing's Mansion would not promise him more benefits for the time being. It wouldn't do any harm to leave room for negotiation. In particular, he had to make the First Miss Shao know that she was under his control.

Shao Yanru glared at Wang Shengxue angrily and said with her face darkening, "Childe Wang, do you mean that cousin Yishu died of persecution? In this case, why don't you go to the government office to cry out about your grievances? Even our Duke Xing's Mansion can't treat people's lives with utter disregard!"

Shao Jie'er looked at her and looked at Wang Shengxue. She learned what had happened that day later and only heard that when Wang Yishu passed away, Old Madam, Shao Yanru and even Shao Wanru went to see her. Except for this, she knew nothing else.

In the beginning, she also knew what Wang Yishu had done. But she was surprised at the fact that Wang Yishu got increasingly sick later and could only lie in bed. No one had expected that such a healthy person would fall into such a situation after falling.

She was not surprised at Wang Yishu's death. She didn't think Wang Yishu, who had lied in bed for three years, would recover, so it was reasonable that Wang Yishu died at this time.

But at the moment, there seemed to be something fishy about it.

After figuring this out, she felt her legs again, but she still held the hands of the maid beside her, tilted her head slightly, leaned against the maid and slightly closed her eyes. She acted as if she were frightened, but actually she had been listening to the conversation between Shao Yanru and Wang Shengxue.

Wang Shengxue, who seemed to have a good temper, still said with a smile, "If I got any evidence, I will definitely show it to the government office so that they can make an investigation. Even if it is not the fault of Duke Xing's Mansion, I should get an explanation for my sister."

"You got no evidence?" Shao Yanru said while turning her eyes slightly.

"Of course I got no evidence. Otherwise, I will definitely send it to the government office, the only place where such solid evidence could be preserved properly. If it is in my hands, it may be missing at any time. In this case, I will not only be unable to seek justice for my sister, but even be likely to... get killed," Wang Shengxue said meaningfully.

Shao Yanru looked down and blinked slowly. Then she looked up and fixed her eyes on Wang Shengxue's face.

Wang Shengxue bowed deeply to Shao Yanru and said, "First Miss, I'll count on you later."

Shao Yanru suddenly cracked a beautiful and charming smile, looking as delicate as a spring flower, which added some vitality to the whole pale mourning hall. She bowed to Wang Shengxue sideways and said, "Cousin, don't mention it! Since we're family, we don't need to be overcourteous!"

"That's right. Since we are family, I'll be straight with you. Thanks to the help of Duke Xing's Mansion, we conducted a decent funeral for my sister. You have always been on friendly terms with my sister, so you must have made a lot of efforts. Nevertheless, I don't have a good job now. If you feel pity for my sister..."

Wang Shengxue immediately turned into a graceful child. As he said, he bowed to Shao Yanru politely and leaned to one side to distance himself from her after they approached each other unconsciously a moment ago.

"Cousin, rest assured. I got it! I'll tell my father about it after going back!" Shao Yanru said kindly, as if it were not she who acted fiercely.

They called each other cousin politely, which confused Shao Jie'er, who was beside them. Then she followed Shao Yanru out in confusion.

Shao Caihuan and Shao Cailing were the second batch to enter the mourning hall. They got in and out quickly.

Shao Wanru was the last one to get inside. The others got inside in pairs, leaving her alone to get inside at last.

Wang Shengxue also led her in with a smile. When she inserted the incense in her hands into the censer in the middle, there suddenly came a series of strange sounds from behind the coffin.

Shao Wanru glanced at Wang Shengxue calmly and inserted the incense into the censer. After that, the three sticks of incense stood steadily in the incense ash.

With her long eyelashes fluttering, Shao Wanru raised her watery eyes. She was an exceedingly beautiful lady with her skin as smooth as lard and her delicate face, which was almost perfect. Shao Yanru was a well-known beauty in the capital city. But when Shao Yanru stood beside her, Shao Yanru became inconspicuous and might even be neglected.

She looked up with a gentle but inexplicably chilling smile. There was a kind of strange deepness in her eyes, which made her smile look a little bit gloomy.

"Child Wang, Miss Wang is talking to you!" She said with a smile.

Wang Shengxue, who had been fascinated by her delicate face, trembled and returned to himself. When he was about to speak, the maid beside Shao Wanru turned to look at the coffin with interest and said, "Miss, Miss Wang must feel aggrieved, because even her family members made use of her. She will even climb up from the Jiuyou Hell!"

"The Jiuyou Hell?" Shao Wanru said with a smile, seeming to be talking to Wang Shengxue as well as to herself. "The Jiuyou Hell is full of blood and hatred. All those who climb up from it are fierce ghosts and evil spirits. Even the gods three chi above our heads can't stop her from revenging!"

Her voice was not loud and could be considered soft, but it somehow sounded gloomy.

Wang Shengxue shivered unconsciously, and his face changed slightly. He had never believed in the existence of ghosts and gods, so he carried out this plot in the mourning hall today. But at this time, he

shivered in fear and immediately felt that the whole mourning hall seemed to be shrouded in a strange atmosphere.

He stretched his hand as a hint for Shao Wanru leave, didn't dare to cast another glance at the mourning hall and hurriedly said, "Fifth Miss, you can leave now!"

Ning Xueqing was right. The Fifth Miss was not someone to be trifled with!

"Thank you, Childe Wang!" Shao Wanru said with a smile and walked out with Yujie's help. But when she reached the door of the mourning hall, she stopped and happened to stand behind an flying white curtain, which hid most of her body except for her deep beautiful eyes, which were almost bottomless.

Perhaps the white curtain and her pure black eyes formed a sharp contrast. Perhaps the atmosphere in the mourning hall was too strange.

"Childe Wang, it's your sister who lies in the coffin. Speaking of which, both you and your sister set me up before. If your sister sees what's going on here, will she come to pay me back? In fact, I have been waiting for the people or ghosts, who hurt me before, to pay back the debt they owe me!"

Her voice was very gentle and could even be considered soft, but it somehow sounded chilling in the strange atmosphere. Wang Shengxue had never expected that he would be so timid. He stepped back and looked at the beautiful face, half of which was hidden by the white curtain in front of him, in horror.

He was frightened and wanted to raise his trembling hands, only to find that they were so heavy that he couldn't raise them at the moment, as if they were held down by something. The atmosphere became ghastly.

"Miss Wang, it's useless for you to hold down your brother... Someone should pay back the debt he owes." Shao Wanru looked at somewhere around him and suddenly spoke with a smile. Then she turned and left with her maid.

With his hands and mouth trembling, Wang Shengxue turned his head back with difficulty, with an attempt at a smile which made him look like crying

Finally, he turned his head and glanced the coffin behind him. When he didn't found his sister's figure there, he breathed a sigh of relief and then suddenly glanced at the several sticks of incense. His face changed dramatically, because he remembered that the several sticks of incense had been burning just now. Why did they go out in such a short time?

Not only could he not move his hands, but he couldn't move his feet either now.

"Sister, don't blame me for being cruel. I was incapable of saving you even if I wanted to. If you want to take revenge, take it on Madam of Duke Xing, who killed you, and the First Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion. It's they... it's they who killed you after making use of you and even intended to make the Fifth Miss Shao take the blame for your death... Sister, go and take revenge on them!" Wang Shengxue said to himself in a low voice and the words almost rolled off his tongue.

After he finished speaking, he felt relaxed. He hurriedly made a few deep bows to the coffin, lit up a few sticks of incense with trembling hands, and respectfully inserted them into the censer, while keeping mumbling fast in a very low voice which could only be heard clearly by himself!

"First Young Master, bad news! Please come out quickly!"

Chapter 712 An Emerald Bead that Caused Trouble

"Why do you make such a fuss?" Wang Shengxue said grumpily with frown after pulling himself together. Things didn't go well today, so how could he be in a good mood?

"The Second Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion beat Concubine Dong and intended to beat Madam!" the maid said anxiously.

The Second Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion was Shao Jie'er. Among the Misses of Duke Xing's Mansion, Shao Jie'er was the most inconspicuous in both appearance and identity. The rest of the Misses were all legitimate daughters, no matter they were from the main branch, the second branch or the third branch. Only she was an insignificant daughter of a concubine.

How dared she make trouble here for no reason?

"Let's go and have a look!" Wang Shengxue said. Then he turned around and strode to the wing room, where Old Madam had stayed for a rest before.

Before he entered the wing room, he saw a group of people around the door. There came familiar crying, which gave him a headache. It was Dongxing. Wang Shengxue didn't like this concubine, whom he had to marry at that time, very much. Compared with Ning Xueqing, Dongxing was much less beautiful and knowledgeable.

But at that time, Duke Xing's Mansion made him take Dongxing as a concubine on an equal footing with Ning Xueqing. He didn't dare to offend Duke Xing's Mansion, so he naturally didn't dare to treat Dongxing badly.

He didn't know why Dongxing pissed off Shao Jie'er.

Someone in the crowd said, "The First Young Master is here!" The surrounding servants of the Wang's Mansion immediately left, leaving the two people in the middle alone.

Shao Jie'er stood there with an angry look, while Dongxing sat on the ground and cried. The Misses of Duke Xing's Mansion behind Shao Jie'er watched them and said nothing. Ning Xueqing, who was beside Dongxing, seemed to be persuading her in a low voice to apologize to Shao Jie'er.

"Cousin, what's wrong with this concubine of yours? She bumped into me rashly and blamed me for that. She is just a concubine. Does she really think that she is the hostess of the Wang's Mansion? Besides, even if she is the hostess, she shouldn't have done that, right?"

Seeing Wang Shengxue come over, Shao Jie'er spoke with a sneer. She, who had always been arrogant in front of those inferior to her, even suggested that even Wang Shengxue's legal wife couldn't afford to offend her.

The servants of the Wang's Mansion looked at this Second Miss Shao and thought that she had gone too far. Some of them saw that it was obviously the Second Miss Shao who bumped into Concubine Dong. However, she claimed that Concubine Dong bumped into her, and requested Concubine Dong to kowtow and apologize to her!

Although she was a Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion, she couldn't act so arbitrarily. Moreover, since she came here to offer incense today, how could she humiliate the host family like this?

Wang Shengxue walked up to Dongxing, looked at her coldly, and said, "Apologize to my second cousin!"

Dongxing looked up, only to see the anger in Wang Shengxue's eyes. She shivered, didn't dare to say anything else, and could only hold Ning Xueqing's hand, bend down and apologize to Shao Jie'er tearfully.

"That's it? She just need to apologize after bumping into me? How dare such a b*tch bump into me..." Shao Jie'er said harshly in a sharp voice, and her words became more and more harsh.

Shao Yanru interrupted her in a soft voice and scolded her in a low voice, "Second Sister, stop making a scene. What if you disturb grandma?"

"But she did it on purpose..." Shao Jie'er was still unwilling to let it go.

"Don't focus on that. This concubine didn't mean to bump into you!" Shao Yanru interrupted her again with a solemn and dignified look, "Grandma is going back to our mansion for some business soon. If you keep arguing about it, are you going to stay?"

On hearing her words, Shao Jie'er froze, glared at Dongxing with hatred and didn't dare to say anything else.

How could she handle the situation if she was left here alone? Thinking of the strange conversation between Shao Yanru and Wang Shengxue in the strange atmosphere, she knew that she could not stay here at this time even if she was not smart.

"Thank you, Eldest Cousin!" Wang Shengxue thanked her sincerely.

"My Second Sister is in a bad mood. If she did anything offensive, I hope you can forgive her!" Shao Yanru said gently, bowed to Wang Shengxue sideways and then turned into the wing room.

Shao Caihuan and Shao Cailing followed Shao Yanru in.

Shao Wanru was the last to get in the wing room. She glanced at Dongxing, who was crying, and then looked at Ning Xueqing, who was supporting her. The two of them snuggled up together closely, as if they were a pair of full sisters.

She didn't see what had happened just now clearly. As soon as she came out, she saw them arguing there. Shao Jie'er insisted that Dongxing had bumped into her, and requested Dongxing to kowtow and apologize to her. However, Dongxing was superior in the Wang's Mansion, where there was no official Madam so that even a concubine could be considered a master.

Except for Ning Xueqing, who served as the official Madam but was actually a concubine, Dongxing was superior in the mansion.

Dongxing denied that she had bumped into Shao Jie'er. Ning Xueqing, who was beside Shao Jie'er, tried to persuade her to let it go. No one knew what Ning Xueqing had said so that Shao Jie'er flew into a rage and reached out to slap Dongxing, and Dongxing was knocked down.

There was nothing unusual about it, and it seemed that it ought to turn out that way.

Shao Jie'er's character and Dongxing's status in the Wang's Mansion was bound to escalate the conflict between them. But was it really an accident? Shao Wanru was not sure of it at the moment.

So she also turned around without turning a hair and followed the others in front of her into the wing room.

In the wing room, when Old Madam saw them come in, she said with a snort, "Where are we? Who do you think you are? What kind of loser will argue with an ignorant concubine?"

Shao Jie'er lowered her head, clenched the handkerchief in her hand and felt aggrieved, but she did not dare to defend herself, because Old Madam had always shown little respect for her.

"Copy the Precepts for Women ten times after going back!"

"Yes, grandma!" Shao Jie'er said tearfully.

"Let's go!" Old Madam said, stood up and walked out, followed by a group of granddaughters. She came to the Wang's Mansion today to attend Wang Yishu's funeral as a mere formality just in order to show some respect for Wang Shengxue.

How could someone as arrogant as Old Madam bear to stay here any longer?

Seeing Old Madam come out, Wang Shengxue, who was waiting outside the door, came up to her with a smile. Shao Wanru looked around, only to find that Dongxing and Ning Xueqing had left and there were no servants of the Wang's Manor around.

Wang Shengxue ignored Wang Shengxue, who was respectful, and walked out. She thought it a shame that she had to come here with a group of granddaughters, so she did not intend to respond to Wang Shengxue at this moment.

Shao Yanru smiled kindly at Wang Shengxue and followed Old Madam out.

Shao Jie'er lowered her head, because she had cried just now and was afraid that the servants of the Wang's Mansion would notice it and laugh at her.

Shao Wanru was still the last to leave. When she passed the place, where Dongxing fell before, she suddenly discovered something and winked at Yujie. Yujie, who got it, squatted down, grabbed the thing in her hand while pretending to adjust the edge of her dress, and then followed Shao Wanru out of the Wang's Mansion.

Wang Shengxue walked them to the door. Watching those from Duke Xing's Mansion leave, he left all the domestic affairs to Ning Xueqing and hurried out.

After they returned to Duke Xing's Mansion, Old Madam let them go back to their own courtyards. Shao Wanru headed for the Piaoyun Courtyard, followed by Yujie.

"Miss, it's a small emerald bead. I think it seems to belong to the First Miss!" Yujie said after looking around and finding no one else around. She took out a small emerald bead, that she picked up when she squatted down just now, and handed it to Shao Wanru.

Shao Wanru reached out to take it and put it in her palm to have a look. It was a well-polished small emerald bead, which was very small but very beautiful. Shao Yanru was dressed in very plain clothes today, but there was indeed a pattern consisting of several small emerald beads at the edge of her clothes. At that time, she took a few more glances at it because she thought it a delicate pattern.

Why did Shao Yanru's emerald bead show up in the place where Dongxing fell? Blinking her eyes slightly, she figured out what had happened. The collision between Shao Jie'er and Dongxing should be planned by Shao Yanru, but why did she do that?

Shao Yanru wouldn't do anything from which she couldn't benefit, so she would never set up a humble concubine for no reason. But at the moment, Shao Wanru couldn't figure out why she did that.

It should be Ning Xueqing who benefited from it, right?

She put her hands together, handed the bead to Yujie and said, "Put it away!"

Since the cause of Wang Yishu's death hadn't been revealed up to now, she decided to wait and see for the time being. Shao Yanru entered the mourning hall with her face darkening today, but after she came out, she looked much calmer and even called Wang Shengxue "cousin" warmly when meeting him.

In this case, was her plan targeted at Shao Jie'er or Dongxing or Wang Shengxue and Ning Xueqing?

Thinking of this, she immediately had some clues. At present, she just needed to wait and see. Shao Wanru didn't expect that she not only figured out the truth but also left an important clue for what happened later.

What had happened to Wang Yishu was dug up and became the subject of public discussion in the capital. The accident she had three years ago could be considered an unsettled case. Now since what had happened to her was dug up, some people immediately thought that there was something fishy about it. Even some imperial censors thought that it was not merely the internal affairs of Duke Xing's Mansion.

Several reports were submitted to the Emperor, and each of them was about the complaint that Duke Xing was not strict enough in managing his mansion so that terrible things happened in his mansion one after another. Some of them even implied that the former Heir of Duke Xing died without a definite explanation, and the one, who got most benefits from it, was certainly the current Duke Xing from the former second branch of Duke Xing's Mansion.

Of course, this kind of specious opinion was refuted by other officials, who thought it just a rumor spread among ignorant people. Even the daughter of the former Heir of Duke Xing's Mansion didn't say anything about it. How could this groundless talking be brought to the imperial court for discussion?

Watching the officials debating intensely below, the Emperor listened quietly at first, and then got furious. He picked up a report, threw it at Duke Xing, who was kneeling in front of him, and said, "Today I come to the imperial court to solve the problem, not to listen to you talk about these groundless things. If you can't handle your domestic affairs properly, how can you manage your family? Go back and spend a few days reflecting on yourself!"

As soon as the Emperor got furious, all the officials trembled with fear and didn't dare to talk nonsense anymore. At the moment, the imperial court fell into dead silence.

Noticing the good opportunity, Chu Qing came out and said, "Your Majesty, I beg to report!" He had been looking for an opportunity just now, and now it was the right time!

Chapter 713 Commandery Prince Qing Is in Power

"What's the matter?" asked the Emperor.

"Your Majesty, I've found some clues about the case of Prince Zhou's falling at the palace gate caused by a startled horse. Your Majesty, please have a look!" Chu Qing said, took out a memorial from his sleeve and presented it respectfully.

A eunuch came over to fetch it and then unfolded it on the desk in front of the Emperor after getting back to the Emperor.

The Emperor lowered his head and began to read it. As he read it, he became increasingly sullen. When he finished, his face had been livid with anger. He struck the desk heavily with his hand and said harshly, "Continue looking into it. We must find out the truth. How dare an uncivilized small country interfere in our internal affairs!"

It was so close to his speculation. How could the Emperor not be angry?

"But, I'm afraid... I'm afraid there are some obstacles in my way!" Chu Qing said cautiously.

"There's nothing able to prevent you from looking into it. Since you are sent by me to look into it, you don't have to take account of anyone's interest. If you find anyone who dares to collude with this uncivilized small country, report it to me immediately!" The Emperor said angrily.

The Changxing Grass. The Changxing Grass was found again as he expected. It was said that a doctor working in Chu Liuzhou's mansion found a small piece of the Changxing Grass in a sleeve of the clothes Chu Liuzhou wore that day. It was a very small piece stuck in a pleat of the sleeve, so it was not found although the clothes had been checked over before.

After Chu Liuzhou was undressed at that time, instead of being sent to be laundered, his clothes were put aside after being simply checked. Unexpectedly, the Changxing Grass was found in them later.

The Changxing Grass from the Xu State seemed to have something to do with the case of Chu Liuzhou's falling caused by a startled horse in their country. However, now he couldn't find out why a few of the Changxing Grass in the national treasury was missing.

Chu Qing even pointed out that the Changxing Grass found in Chu Liuzhou's clothes might be from somewhere else rather than from the national treasury, because the Changxing Grass stored in the national treasury for so many years must not be very fresh, but the small piece of the Changxing Grass he found didn't seem to have been stored for so long.

It made the Emperor even angrier. After instructing Chu Qing to investigate it thoroughly, he scolded all the civilian and military officers at court again for ignoring their proper duties and spending most of their time making groundless accusations outside rather than performing their duties properly.

Of course, the Emperor vented most of his anger on Duke Xing, while he was very appreciative of Chu Qing and even invited him to the imperial study for a talk after the court session.

This was a privilege, which represented that he gradually won the Emperor's favor and got close to the center of power.

Chu Qing suppressed the excitement in his heart and followed the imperial carriage to the imperial study. After they arrived at the imperial study, the Emperor encouraged him again and then asked with a smile, "How are you going to handle what happened that day? Anyway, she's a Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion. Your delay in handling it will be a bad influence on both of you."

"Your Majesty, you are right..." Chu Qing thought of this matter after freezing for a moment, and then knelt down in a hurry and said, "But the Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion fell into the water..."

He did not directly mention which Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion fell into the water, because he did not believe that the Emperor really knew nothing about what had happened in the imperial palace.

"It's true. Although the Second Miss of the Shao's Mansion is the daughter of a concubine, she is qualified to marry into your mansion!" The Emperor said with a smile and a gentle look, as if he were just having a small talk with him.

When Chu Qing heard that, there was a trace of disappointment across his eyes. The Emperor meant that he had to marry Shao Jie'er even if he was reluctant to and it was absolutely impossible for him to marry Shao Yanru.

It was obviously the First Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion whom he had saved at that time, but no one in the imperial palace wanted to see him marry Shao Yanru, so they talked black into white and claimed that it was Shao Jie'er whom he had saved.

He lowered her head and said respectfully, "I'm at your command, Your Majesty!"

He had to obey the Emperor's orders. It took him a lot of effort to get the Emperor's attention, so he could not displease the Emperor by rejecting marrying Shao Jie'er. Although he looked down on Shao Jie'er, he had to agree to marry her.

"Speaking of this, you saved her out of kindness. I can't let you suffer a loss because of your kindness. How about taking the non-lineal daughter of Duke Xing's Mansion as your concubine?" The Emperor asked with a smile in a gentle voice, acting a way completely different from the way he discussed official business in the hall just now.

But even so, Chu Qing did not dare to let down his guard, and said, "Okay. My mother happens to have arranged a marriage for me!"

Hearing that Shao Jie'er was just going to be his concubine, Chu Qing breathed a sigh of relief. Despite his reluctance, he could only accept her as his concubine.

"Your mother has arranged a marriage for you?" The Emperor froze for a moment and asked. He really didn't know about it.

"Yes, she is the daughter of a family who has saved my mother's life. It was just a verbal promise before, and I didn't think I would meet her again, so I didn't take it seriously. Unexpectedly, my mother met her a few days ago. I was going to report this to Your Majesty, but I have been busy with Prince Zhou's case and forgot it!"

Chu Qing spoke.

“What a coincidence! That’s great. I have been thinking of choosing a young lady from a noble family to be your Princess. Unexpectedly, you got the right person!” The Emperor said and nodded repeatedly.

He didn’t really care about his nephew’s marriage and said that just in order to project himself as a good uncle. He thought that picking a few more young ladies for Chu Qing during the consort selection wouldn’t affect the whole situation. Of course, he wouldn’t choose a young lady from a noble family like Shao Yanru to be Chu Qing’s Princess, in case Chu Qing coveted the throne.

It was impossible for a family Chu Qing’s mother promised to unite by marriage when she was in a difficult situation, to be a decent family. The Emperor was glad to give his consent to the marriage and hoped that Chu Qing’s future Princess came from a powerless family. He had thought that he should lower the standards for the consort selection so that he could choose a suitable Commandery Princess Qing. Now Chu Qing solved this problem for him.

Chu Qing was indeed a capable person. He needed such a capable person, but he didn’t want him to be ambitious. His sons had been fighting fiercely for the throne, so he didn’t want to see an outsider interfere in it.

The two of them chatted happily. When Chu Qing went out, he showed a bright smile. It was a bonus that he solved three problems at a time.

He had wondered how to handle the thing happening between him and Shao Jie’er. Now it was settled. His mother would be pleased with his taking Shao Jie’er as his concubine. Regarding the candidate for his Princess, although he was not very satisfied with it, his mother was very satisfied with it, and his future Princess could help them later.

If Duke Xing’s Mansion agreed to marry Shao Yanru to him, he would never humiliate Duke Xing’s Mansion by doing this. But now it was Shao Jie’er who was going to marry him, and she took Shao Yanru’s place to marry him. Considering this, Duke Xing’s Mansion could not challenge it.

They would not reject it even if he took Shao Jie’er as an inferior concubine. It was the Emperor who allowed him to take Shao Jie’er as a concubine, and they could not disobey the Emperor’s order.

As a non-lineal daughter, Shao Jie’er was a little inferior and not valued by Duke Xing. Nevertheless, she was Duke Xing’s daughter after all, so Duke Xing more or less cared for her. Under some special circumstances, his care for her might be infinitely magnified.

When he thought of what his mother had told him before, he involuntarily felt a little relieved. He could wait patiently, since he had been waiting for so many years.

“Your Highness, be careful.”

“Your Highness, this way, please.”

“Your Highness...” Hearing several servants flattering someone warmly not far away, Chu Qing stopped and looked at a crossing not far away.

Chu Liuchen was turning at the crossing. He was dressed in a flying gorgeous snow fox cloak and a gorgeous brocade robe. Despite his light-colored lips, he still gave the impression that he was extraordinarily distinguished.

A few eunuchs led the way around him and kept currying favor with him, for fear that he would slip accidentally.

Seeming to sense that Chu Qing was looking at him, Chu Liuchen stopped, turned his head, and squinted at him. After that, he continued moving forward, just ignoring Chu Qing, who was about to greet him with a flattering smile.

"Your Highness!" Noticing Chu Qing's gloomy face, the little eunuch attending upon Chu Qing said in a low voice.

"Let's go!" Chu Qing pulled himself together, restrained the jealousy and hatred in his heart, and said slowly.

Chu Liuchen was just a dying invalid unqualified to compete with him. Anyway, this invalid could get nothing in the fight over power. It was impossible for Chu Liuchen to inherit the throne!

"What a useless fool!"

After cursing in his heart, Chu Qing moved his feet and continued walking out, while asking casually, "Has Prince Chen recovered?"

"I really don't know. I heard that Prince Chen insisted on going back to his mansion. Neither the Empress Dowager nor the Emperor allowed it, but Prince Chen insisted it. The Emperor and the Empress Dowager couldn't do anything about it!"

The little eunuch leading the way said with a smile.

Everyone in the imperial palace knew that the Empress Dowager and the Emperor doted on Prince Chen so much that they treated him as the apple of their eye. Although Prince Chen was in poor health, no one dared to look down on him, especially on the surface.

"Do Imperial Grandmother and Imperial Uncle dote on Prince Chen so much?" Chu Qing asked with a surprised look, showing his close relationship with the Emperor and the Empress Dowager without being noticed by addressing them as Imperial Uncle and Imperial Grandmother.

"Exactly. The Empress Dowager and the Emperor love Prince Chen so dearly that they send all the good things they got to Prince Chen. Sometimes even the other princes don't get any." The little eunuch said with a smile, and then he watched Chu Liuchen disappear in his view and said, "Prince Chen is the Empress Dowager's and the Emperor's favorite. I heard that the Empress Dowager chose a Miss to be Princess Chen before the Emperor chooses consorts for the other princes!"

"Is this a convention?" Chu Qing felt his heart skipped a beat and asked.

"Not exactly. The Empress Dowager is just concerned about Prince Chen and hopes to choose the best wife for Prince Chen!" The little eunuch replied.

The best wife? Shao Yanru?

Chu Qing somehow thought of Shao Yanru, and there was a trace of complacency across his eyes. When he got into the water, he deliberately held Shao Yanru tightly, so Shao Yanru's reputation was ruined and she was no longer a pure lady. Although Chu Liuchen was the Empress Dowager's and the Emperor's favorite, Chu Liuchen had to marry the woman whose reputation had been ruined by him.

"The First Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion?" He asked calmly.

"It can't be the First Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion. I heard that the First Miss is going to marry either this prince or that prince. It can't be Prince Chen anyway!" The little eunuch shook his head, lifted a finger cleverly and then another finger, and spoke.

The first finger represented Chu Liuyue, and the second finger represented Chu Liuzhou!

"The First Miss Shao is the phoenix among women and won't be betrothed to someone easily!" After finishing speaking, the little eunuch added with an envious look.

The phoenix among women? The Empress was known as the phoenix. The First Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion seemed to have a great ambition. But it was better. He thought that he should prepare for dealing with Shao Jie'er as early as possible...

Chapter 714 An Etiquette Instructor from the Imperial Palace

"Miss, Madame Dong said that the problem has been solved!" Qu Le reported the news she got from someone sent by Madame Dong to Shao Wanru.

Shao Wanru smiled slightly as a hint that she got it, and then put down the writing brush in her hand and went aside to wash her hands.

Then she walked up to the couch and sat down, picked up the teacup in front of her and took a sip, and then put it down thoughtfully. Yesterday she got the news that it was an officer of the Ministry of Revenue who managed to persuade the Business Department to return the detained goods of her store. This officer didn't have a high position but was quite powerful.

The most important thing was that this officer had something to do with Chu Liuyue.

Duke Yong worked for Chu Liuyue. In the last life, Chu Liuyue didn't gain power and Duke Yong's Mansion didn't stand out in the end. Although Duke Yong, who followed the lead of Duke Xing's Mansion, was not an important powerful official in the last life, Duke Yong's Mansion had never declined and even showed a faint hint of rising.

Shao Wanru got the news that besides Huangrui, the maid who seemed to be from a good family and was sent to the Qin's Mansion by Old Madam of Duke Yong's Mansion, there were plenty of maids like her in Duke Yong's Mansion. In this case, Duke Yong's Mansion seemed to be after something big. Of course, their cultivating this kind of maids, who seemed to be from a good family, was not just targeted at Qin Huaiyong.

If it were not for the fact that Madam Di had always been unfavored and suppressed by Shui Ruolan, Old Madam of Duke Yong's Mansion would not have sent Huangrui to the Qin's Mansion. Although Huangrui was raised in Duke Yong's Mansion, she had never met Di Yan. It was obvious that she did not prepare it for the male masters of Duke Yong's Mansion.

Since they had cultivated a lot of such maids, but not for the male masters in their mansion, it must have something to do with someone other than one of them. Thinking of this, Shao Wanru immediately realized that they must have the backing of someone.

This time she tricked Duke Yong's Mansion into agreeing to help her in order to make the person behind Duke Yong's Mansion come forward. As she expected, it was Chu Liuyue.

After thinking for a while, she walked up to the window, picked up the writing brush, and wrote down her thoughts on a piece of blank paper. Then she folded the paper after drying it off and handed it to Qing'er, who was beside her.

"Qing'er, deliver it to His Highness!"

"Yes, I will do it right away!" Qing'er said with a nod, took the note, and left. As a second-class maid, she could not stay in the main room all day long.

"Is the Fifth Miss inside?" There suddenly came a familiar voice from outside.

Shao Wanru was stunned for a moment and nodded at Yujie, who was at the door.

Lifting the curtain and seeing that it was Nanny Yu who walked into the yard, Yujie hurried to greet her with a smile.

"Nanny Yu, my master is inside. What brought you here?" Yujie looked at the four maids standing behind Nanny Yu and asked in surprise.

Each of them was holding a bolt of gorgeous cloth.

Nanny Yu looked back at the maids behind her and said with a smile, "Old Madam instructed me to come over and measure the Fifth Miss for making some new clothes for her. The Spring Festival is coming, and the Fifth Miss just has a few sets of clothes."

"Please express our gratitude towards Old Madam. Please come in, Nanny Yu!" Hearing that she was going to make new clothes for her master, Yujie said happily and reached out to lead her in.

Nanny Yu walked into the room, bowed deeply to Shao Wanru, who was still painting, and said, "Greetings, Fifth Miss!"

Shao Wanru put down the writing brush in her hand, turned back, and said with a smile. "Nanny Yu, you don't have to be overcourteous!"

Nanny Yu instructed the four maids to put all the brocade in their hands on the table and said, "Fifth Miss, Old Madam wants you to pick the cloth first!"

"Didn't you measure me for making a few sets of new clothes for me not long ago?" Shao Wanru took the handkerchief from Qu Le, wiped her hands with it, and asked in confusion.

It was true that they had measured her for making two sets of winter clothes for her before, but the clothes had not been finished yet.

"That was then, and this is now. Fifth Miss, Old Madam means that you have been dressed simply in the Yuhui Nunnery in the past three years. Now that you are going to finish observing mourning for your

parents soon, you should have a few more sets of clothes. The other Misses in the manor have two more sets of clothes because of you!”

Nanny Yu said with a smile.

She meant that the other Misses in the mansion were only supposed to have two sets of clothes.

Walking up to the table, Shao Wanru looked at the brocade Nanny Yu brought here. Each of them was indeed gorgeous and exquisite.

Comparing the colors, she drew two plain bolts of cloth and said, “Nanny Yu, I’ll have these two bolts!”

“Why did you only choose these two bolts, Fifth Miss? Old Madam means to make a few more sets of clothes for you. You can choose as many as you want, and even keep all of them. Old Madam got other cloth for the other Misses!” Nanny Yu said with an increasingly kind smile.

Shao Wanru’s hand paused above the brocade for a while, thinking that how desperately they hoped that she would be excluded by all the others in the mansion so that they did this.

The others in the mansion would consider it hardly acceptable that she chose the cloth first as the youngest sister, not to mention that she kept all of the cloth. Old Madam seemed to treat her generously, but in fact, she put her in an adversarial position towards the entire Duke Xing’s Mansion.

Both of the daughters of the third branch were lineal daughters, and they wanted high-quality brocade more than she did. If she took the high-quality brocade before them and even kept all the brocade, it would be impossible for them to have a good impression of her.

It seemed that Old Madam learned that Shao Caihuan and Shao Cailing had come to visit her!

Shao Wanru lifted the corners of her mouth silently, thinking that Old Madam indeed showed her hostility to her in every respect and now she even tried to upset her with a few bolts of cloth!

The brocade couldn’t make her lose her head. She really didn’t care about these. But since Old Madam intended to upset her with the brocade, she should certainly “pay her back”.

“Well, I’ll pick three bolts from them. I can’t pick much more cloth than the other sisters. Otherwise, what will they think of me? Old Madam doesn’t want me to be isolated by the other sisters, does she?”

Shao Wanru seemed to be joking, while fixing her eyes on the brocade in front of her and beginning to check them, and seeming to be focusing on the brocade in front of her.

Nanny Yu was stunned for a moment. In fact, Shao Wanru’s remark was extremely inappropriate. Although it was a joke, the meaning in her words was unpleasant. However, seeing that Shao Wanru was concentrating on picking the brocade and didn’t seem to have satirized Old Madam just now, she didn’t rebuke Shao Wanru on behalf of Old Madam after thinking for a while.

“Nanny Yu, what do you think of this bolt I pick?” Shao Wanru reached out to draw a bolt of bright red brocade and said with a smile. Although the dark-colored pattern was joyful, it looked a little too dull for Shao Wanru, who was a teenage girl. Besides, the brocade was not Shao Wanru’s usual style of dressing.

"Of course it's good. Fifth Miss, you can pick a few more bolts. Old Madam feels very guilty for what she has done to you and wants to compensate you. The more you pick, the happier she will be. Regarding the other Misses' feelings, rest assured, Fifth Miss. Old Madam will definitely be impartial and won't arouse the other Misses' hatred for you!"

Nanny Yu pulled the other bolts of brocade to the front of Shao Wanru, reached out to pat one of them, and said, "Look, this brocade is excellent. It's perfectly weaved with a good-looking color. Would you like to keep it?"

Shao Wanru pushed the cloth away from her, walked slowly to the chair to sit down, and then shook her head with a smile and said, "I really appreciate Old Madam's kindness. I've picked enough cloth, and there are some winter clothes which have not been finished yet. There are too many clothes for me!"

"Fifth Miss, you are not raised by Old Madam, so Old Madam is not clear about what you like. Sometimes she doesn't know how to get close to you even if she wants to." Nanny Yu stopped persuading Shao Wanru to pick a few more bolts of cloth and said in earnest with a sigh.

"I know. I also want to get close to Old Madam!" Shao Wanru lowered her head and said with a gentle smile, "On the day when something terrible happened to Miss Wang, I lost control because I was furious. Nanny Yu, I have to trouble you to apologize to Old Madam on behalf of me!"

What had happened at Wang Yishu's place that day could be said to be a real conflict between the two of them. Although Old Madam didn't mention it again, how could she really not care about it?

"Fifth Miss, it's great that you think so. Old Madam had a hard time. The Wang's Mansion... intended to make a scene. Old Madam had no choice but to take the Misses there. If it weren't for the fear that the matter would become significant and affect the marriage of all the Misses in the manor, Old Madam wouldn't have suffered such a grievance!"

Nanny Yu shook her head and sighed again.

Nanny Yu described Old Madam as such a kind and righteous person, as if Old Madam really devoted herself to Duke Xing's Mansion and did all these for Shao Wanru.

"Old Madam had a hard time indeed!" Shao Wanru said sincerely with a sigh.

"Fifth Miss, it's great that you think so. Since you've made your choice, I'm leaving now. I should take the rest of the cloth to the other Misses' courtyards for them to pick!"

Nanny Yu reached out to wipe the corners of her eyes and said with a flattering smile.

Shao Wanru walked her to the corridor, and then frowned slightly. After thinking for a while, she sent Qu Le out.

It didn't take long for Qu Le to get the news that the list of the candidates for the consort selection in the imperial palace had been issued. All the four lineal Misses in Duke Xing's Mansion were all included in it, except for Shao Jie'er.

An etiquette instructor in charge of teaching the four Misses of Duke Xing's Mansion came with the list.

The etiquette instructor was supposed to be prepared by each mansion. The candidates had to learn necessary etiquette before entering the imperial palace to participate in the consort selection. The Misses from each mansion had to learn the rules and etiquette in the imperial palace and to perform them properly. Although the Misses had learned it before, they might not be able to perform them properly.

It was meaningful that Duke Xing's Mansion got an etiquette instructor from the imperial palace. It meant that some of the four Misses would definitely marry into a prince's mansion, or all of them got such an opportunity? Of course, it was also possible that the etiquette instructor sent to Duke Xing's Mansion represented the respect for Duke Xing's Mansion.

In fact, there were very few etiquette instructors from the imperial palace directly sent to a mansion. This kind of etiquette instructors were all the nannies serving the masters in the imperial palace. They were different from the nannies in each mansion, not subject to each mansion, and might even report what they had seen in each mansion to their masters after returning to the imperial palace.

What was more, the etiquette instructor was sent by the Empress and was said to be a nanny serving the Empress, so it was an unusual privilege.

Duke Xing had been rebuked not long ago, so the privilege cheered up the whole Duke Xing's Mansion.

At the same time, all the members of their mansion had to be careful and hide their secrets from the etiquette instructor. Although the Empress would not directly intervene in their domestic affairs, no one knew when the Empress would take action.

Therefore, this was the reason why Old Madam came to make peace with her? It was possible in other mansions, but it might not be the truth in Duke Xing's Mansion!

She looked at Old Madam's courtyard with deep eyes...

Chapter 715 A Bolt of Cloth Incites Her into Action

"Deliver the brocade I just chose to the ancestral hall and put it there when there is no one around!" Shao Wanru walked in and gave Yujie an order in a low voice.

"Why?" Yujie froze for a moment and asked.

"Nothing. I just want Madam of Duke Xing to know that Big Sister has been thinking about her and trying hard to save her!" Shao Wanru curved her eyebrows, showed a bright smile, and said with deep eyes. The cloth with the pattern on it should be of Madam of Duke Xing's favorite style, because she had seen Madam of Duke Xing dressed in a similar style of clothes. She had not figured out how to use the cloth when she picked it just now.

At this time, the news of the etiquette instructor's arrival inspired her.

She decided to give it to Madam of Duke Xing, who would definitely like it.

After so many things happened, judging from Shao Yanru's character, Shao Wanru could tell that she would definitely have no time to pay attention to her mother!

"Madam, the etiquette instructor has come!" Nanny Sheng came in excitedly and said to Madam of Duke Xing, who was kneeling in front of the small Buddha statue.

Madam of Duke Xing was dressed in plain clothes, looking very haggard and different from the gorgeous lady she had been.

She stopped knocking the wooden fish in her hand, opened her eyes, and asked, "How many etiquette instructors?"

"One!" Nanny Sheng said, and her eyes lit up with excitement, "It must be that the First Miss won the Empress's favor, so the Empress sent the etiquette instructor to educate the First Miss and check over her etiquette."

After being locked up here for a few days, Nanny Sheng, who had been a powerful supervisor working for Madam of Duke Xing, could only get stuck in this small ancestral hall now. How could she, who felt as if she had fallen from heaven, not get excited on hearing such good news?

"Why is there only one etiquette instructor sent here? How many Misses are going to attend the consort selection?" Madam of Duke Xing surnamed Jiang compressed her lips and asked.

When she compressed her lips, her cheekbones stood out on her plump face, making her look a little mean and ungrateful.

"Four Misses are going to attend the consort selection, except for the Second Miss. I heard that she has been engaged to Commandery Prince Qing, so she doesn't need to attend the consort selection!" Nanny Sheng said. She just went out once but got a lot of news.

Shao Jie'er had been engaged to Commandery Prince Qing? Thinking of this, Madam of Duke Xing surnamed Jiang sneered. Shao Jie'er, a humble Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion, and Commandery Prince Qing, a useless and idle prince, could make quite a perfect couple.

"She's not going to be the Princess, is she?"

Nanny Sheng thought for a while and said, "I heard that... she's not going to be the Princess... but because Prince Qing hasn't come to our mansion, it hasn't been confirmed yet!"

Madam of Duke Xing raised the corners of her mouth and changed the topic, "Has the First Young Master gotten the information I want?"

This was the most important reason why she sent Nanny Sheng out today.

"The First Young Master said that he couldn't... get the information in such a short time... He told you to wait patiently. As long as the Duke often goes somewhere... he will notice it." Nanny Sheng hesitated for a moment and said with her head down. She did not accomplish her main task today.

"Notice it? If he could notice it so easily, I wouldn't have failed to find the Duke all this time..." Madam of Duke Xing said with a sneer and smashed the wooden fish in her hand on the ground with an indignant look. "I'm having a hard time here, while they couldn't even do me a little favor outside. They have forgotten who their mother is!"

"Madam, don't be angry. The First Miss is in a bad mood now. I'm wondering... how she is feeling now!" Nanny Sheng defended Shao Yanru cautiously.

Speaking of this, even she felt guilty. It was Madam who gave the First Miss the drug, but it was taken by the First Miss. If the toxin couldn't be removed from the First Miss's body, the First Miss's life would be ruined. How could the First Miss be in the mood to visit Madam at this time?

Madam of Duke Xing said with a gloomy face, "I'm her mother, but now she gives me the cold shoulder. If she is filial, she should complain tearfully to her father a few more times and think of some ways to get me out of here. The Spring Festival is coming, but I don't even have a set of decent clothes. How can I meet others after getting out of here?"

Nanny Sheng lowered her head and didn't dare to say anything else. Madam kept thinking of getting out of here and even vented her anger on the First Miss and the First Young Master. But judging from the current situation, she thought that it was impossible for Madam to get out of here before the Spring Festival.

But she didn't dare to say that.

"What is this?" Madam of Duke Xing suddenly looked at a bolt of brocade next to the hamper unkindly and asked.

Nanny Sheng looked back and also saw this bolt of brocade. She said, "I... I picked it up at the door when I went out!"

"Where did you pick it up?" Madam of Duke Xing was confused and asked another question.

"At the door of the ancestral hall. I saw it when I came in, but I don't know who brought it to you. Perhaps the person was afraid to be discovered by others, so she didn't even enter the ancestral hall!"

Nanny Sheng walked over, picked up the brocade, and examined it. After that, she carefully presented it to Madam of Duke Xing and said, "Madam, look, this is of your favorite color. It should be sent by the First Miss, who is so filial that she didn't forget you even at this time. Otherwise, she wouldn't have chosen such decent cloth and sent it here."

The red brocade with a dark-colored pattern was indeed Madam of Duke Xing's favorite. It well suited her, a noble lady, and the joyful atmosphere of the Spring Festival. At the thought that she didn't know when she could get out of here, Madam of Duke Xing felt profound anger and resentment.

At this moment, this bolt of cloth cheered her up a little. She picked up the cloth and touched it, feeling the smooth cloth in her hands.

She now lived in the ancestral hall and was dressed in plain clothes made of ordinary cloth. Once again touching the gorgeous cloth that represented her identity, she became more and more eager to get out of here.

She could not stay in the ancestral hall obediently.

"Ru'er is filial, but the most important thing at the moment is to get me out of here. It's useless to send me the cloth. No matter how beautiful it is, I can't wear the clothes made of it!" Madam of Duke Xing

said grumpily, but she was still reluctant to give up such good cloth, so she reached out to rub it a few times.

"I also think so. Madam, please wait a little longer. Since the First Miss sent you the cloth, it means that she has forgiven you for the mistake you made and should be thinking of ways to get you out of here. But it is not so easy to persuade the Duke and Old Madam to release you at the moment. I heard that the Duke was reprimanded by His Majesty before!"

Nanny Sheng served her a cup of tea and spoke with a smile.

"What does that have to do with me? He's so useless that after locking me up, he even failed to hide the cause of Wang Yishu's death from Wang Shengxue so that Wang Shengxue managed to find some evidence. Look what he has done. He even allowed a rogue like Wang Shengxue to threaten Duke Xing's Mansion. If I were in charge of the mansion, I would neither allow Wang Shengxue to get in and out of the inner court at will nor allow him to have much contact with Wang Yishu, let alone allow him to get in Wang Yishu's room and get the evidence as soon as Wang Yishu died!"

Madam of Duke Xing said with a snort. She got the news from Shao Hua'an. When she thought that the pawn she had set up long before was spoiled and the useless scoundrel Wang Shengxue managed to get evidence of what they had done to Wang Yishu, Madam of Duke Xing got furious.

The reason why they allowed Wang Yishu to live for three more years was that they wanted to make use of Wang Yishu to deal with Shao Wanru. Now not only did they fail to deal with Shao Wanru, but Wang Shengxue also benefited from it. As Madam of Duke Xing thought about it, she became increasingly angry.

If she had not been locked up at that time, such a thing would not have happened.

"Madam, don't be angry with the Duke. There's nothing we can do about it in the current situation!" Nanny Sheng tried to appease her.

"Since they can't get me out of here, I'll think of a way to get myself out of here. They only dare to secretly send me something without the courage to come forward and speak up for me!" With her face softening a little, Madam of Duke Xing put the brocade on the table and spoke.

"Madam, what do you mean?" Nanny Sheng asked.

"There came an etiquette instructor, right? Can you bring the etiquette instructor here..." Madam of Duke Xing said. At first, she didn't have so many thoughts, but when she saw the brocade, an idea came into her mind. She tried to save herself here, while her daughter tried to save her outside. With their joint efforts, she believed that she could get out of this difficult situation.

In addition, she had a son, who was the only son of the Duke. In any case, she should not be locked up in the ancestral hall all the time.

"Madam, you can't do that. If it is seen by others, your reputation will be ruined!" Nanny Sheng said anxiously, "If others see that you are locked up here, it will have a bad influence on the First Miss's reputation. The First Miss is going to participate in the consort selection soon!"

If a Miss wanted to be selected in the consort selection, she should have a flawless reputation and parents with a good reputation. Although some people knew that Madam of Duke Xing was locked up in the ancestral hall, they had neither spread the news nor exposed it.

“What are you afraid of? You can say that I specially stay here to pray for the whole mansion!” Madam of Duke Xing said disdainfully.

It was a good thing to pray for the whole manor, but no Madam would do it in person. It was even said that praying for the manor was just a soft name for being punished. No Madam would really do that!

Nanny Sheng didn’t think it was a good idea at all. Madam would never come up with such a bad idea in the past. But now Madam desperately wanted to get out of here. Nanny Sheng sadly found that her master became more anxious than before so that she dared to trick the nanny from the imperial palace with only a bolt of brocade.

If things went well, of course, the nanny would feel pity for her and put in a good word for her in front of the Empress, so that the Empress released her. But if things didn’t go well, it might even be known to everybody that she was locked up in the ancestral hall. In this case, not only her but also the First Young Master and the First Miss would inevitably be implicated.

However, looking at her master’s bright eyes, Nanny Sheng couldn’t say anything to persuade her master to drop the idea even if she wanted to.

No matter what she said, Madam would not follow her advice at this time.

“Madam... it is also possible that the brocade isn’t sent by the First Miss!” Nanny Sheng thought that it was better to enlighten Madam from another point of view.

Madam of Duke Xing waved her hand impatiently and said, “No one other than Ru’er knows my preferences so well and would pick such good cloth and send it here. I’ve made up my mind. I won’t ruin Ru’er’s future!”

Now she thought that the wedge between her and her daughter had gone now and they began to understand each other.

“But... but your being reprimanded and locked up has something to do with the Empress Dowager!” Nanny Sheng reminded her carefully. No matter how powerful the Empress was, she was Empress Dowager’s daughter-in-law anyway. Did the Empress really dare to disobey the Empress Dowager’s order as her daughter-in-law?

“The Empress has been displeased with the Empress Dowager for a long time!” Madam of Duke Xing said with impropriety and slightly raised the corners of her mouth, “Pass on a message to Honored Consort Shu!”

Chapter 716 Nanny Xi Comes to Stir up Trouble

“Master, look!” Xiao Xuanzi presented a confidential letter and spoke.

Chu Liuchen took it and drew the letter out of the envelope. After reading it, he raised the corner of his thin lips and said, “Let them take actions! And find out the spoiler!”

There was a faint scent of medicine in the air.

"Master, do you mean that we should wait and see?" Xiao Xuanzi asked with his eyes wide open.

"Since neither of them wants peace, I'll let them take action!" Chu Liuchen looked down with a smile and spoke. His long black hair was hanging loose, making him look elegant and beautiful.

Under the soft light, the handsome young man smiled gently.

"Make them fight against each other. If the spies take any unusual actions, kill them all!" Bloodthirsty words came out through his pale lips.

"What about Duke Xing's Mansion?" Xiao Xuanzi hesitated for a moment and asked.

"Keep an eye on them. The consort selection will be held after the Spring Festival. I don't want to see my brothers do anything to Duke Xing's Mansion at this time." Chu Liuchen stood up and said in a gloomy voice, "Just get rid of anyone daring to do anything to Duke Xing's Mansion!"

"Even if the one is sent by a master in the imperial palace?"

"Yes!"

The etiquette instructor from the Imperial palace came to Duke Xing's Mansion the next day. Old Madam instructed some servants to invite the four Misses over.

The etiquette instructor, who sat in the seat on the right of Old Madam and looked at the four Misses of Duke Xing's Mansion up and down several times with picky eyes, was obviously examining them.

Old Madam smiled quietly and cast her eyes on Shao Yanru from time to time. She was very satisfied with her eldest granddaughter, who was not only ravishing with a good reputation but also refined in manners. However, recently she had been implicated by her mother.

Thinking of this, Old Madam secretly regretted it. If she had known it earlier, she would have raised Shao Yanru by herself. In this case, now Shao Yanru's reputation would not be tarnished by her mother.

Ru'er had always been kind and gentle. Although she had made some minor mistakes, it was because her mother didn't teach her well. Thinking of this, Old Madam somehow thought of Infanta Qinghua and turned her eyes to Shao Wanru, who was sitting in the rear. She really didn't like this granddaughter.

However, no matter how much she disliked her granddaughter, she had to admit that her youngest granddaughter was not less beautiful than her eldest granddaughter and even seemed to be more ravishing than her eldest granddaughter, which displeased her a lot.

Her eldest granddaughter was bound to be selected in this consort selection. Duke Xing couldn't keep waiting. Her eldest granddaughter had full assurance of success before, but now her eldest granddaughter had to join the game of fighting for the throne. In this case, of course, her eldest granddaughter should marry into Prince Yue's Mansion or Prince Zhou's Mansion as the Princess.

Until now, Old Madam had not decided into which manor her excellent granddaughter should marry. What about her youngest granddaughter in front of her?

Nevertheless, one thing was certain. Old Madam didn't want Shao Wanru to marry into any prince's mansion. It was impossible for two sisters from the same mansion to marry two brothers from the royal family. Even for her eldest granddaughter's future, she shouldn't give Shao Wanru any chance to marry a prince. But could she prevent her ravishing youngest granddaughter from marrying a prince?

Old Madam frowned gloomily and looked at Shao Wanru coldly with a scrutinizing look from time to time.

Who would Shao Wanru marry after the consort selection?

With such a gorgeous look, Shao Wanru would definitely be selected. In addition, Shao Wanru was her granddaughter as well as the granddaughter of Rui'an Great Elder Princess. Judging from these, she could tell that once Shao Wanru was selected, Shao Wanru, who was of high status, would definitely be a Princess.

If Shao Wanru was selected, Ru'er would have no chance!

She would not allow such a thing to happen.

It was strangely quiet in the room. Shao Wanru seemed to sense that she was being examined by more than one person including Nanny Xi and Old Madam, who were sitting in the seats of honor. However, Shao Wanru lowered her head with a calm look and stared at a floor tile in front of her without any emotion.

Her cold eyes were hidden behind her long black eyelashes, which fluttered slightly, so others could only see half of her gentle and delicate face.

She, who was dressed in a set of plain clothes with her skin as white as snow and delicate lips, gave a sense of breathtaking beauty.

Nanny Xi finally fixed her eyes on the Fifth Miss Shao in front of her. After examining her carefully, she coughed in a low voice and spoke.

"Fifth Miss Shao."

On hearing herself called, Shao Wanru raised her head, smiled at Nanny Xi, who was sitting in the seat of honor, and asked softly, "Nanny, what can I do for you?"

"Fifth Miss Shao, I heard that you have been cultivating in seclusion for your mother. Have you finished your three-year cultivation?" Nanny Xi picked up a file on the table and looked through it according to official principles, and then asked with a serious look.

"Not yet!" Shao Wanru said.

Nanny Xi smashed the file on the table and said with a cold face, "Fifth Miss Shao, do you know about the principles of moral conduct? How can you attend the consort selection before finishing observing mourning for your parents?"

Her harsh words directly pointed out that Shao Wanru was unfilial.

"Nanny, you are wrong. I can't decide whether to attend the consort selection or not. What's more, I heard that the consort selection has not been held yet. I will have finished my three-year cultivation when the consort selection begins," Shao Wanru said unhurriedly.

When Nanny Xi asked her the first question, she knew that this nanny harbored an evil intent towards her. Now she could tell that the nanny was targeted at her as she expected.

Every girl's marriage was arranged by her parents and the matchmaker, and girls had no voice in their marriage, not to mention in a major event like the consort selection. How could she decide whether to attend the consort selection or not?

There were some officers in charge of identifying the candidates, and they wouldn't allow a girl, who was still observing mourning for her parents, to attend the consort selection.

Nanny Xi just intended to pick on her and use this as an excuse to cause her trouble.

"Fifth Miss Shao, it seems that you really want to attend the consort selection?" Nanny Xi raised her eyebrows and asked. Although she did not push Shao Wanru on the previous question, she showed an evil intent by saying that.

It was really unusual that an etiquette instructor kept picking on her student.

Shao Wanru glanced at Old Madam who was sitting beside Nanny Xi, only to find that she acted indifferently. Shao Wanru sneered in secret. So Old Madam decided to just stand by and watch this Nanny Xi humiliate her?

"Nanny, as a Miss, I can decide whether to attend the consort selection or not. All the candidates on the list have been confirmed by Her Majesty. Nanny, do you mean to doubt Her Majesty's decision and think that Her Majesty has been deceived by someone!" Since no one would help her, Shao Wanru became increasingly serious and cold.

She raised her eyes and looked at Nanny Xi with a faint smile.

As a servant of the Empress, how dare Nanny Xi doubt the Empress's decision? Nanny Xi was choked by Shao Wanru's words and couldn't answer at the moment. But then she became angry from embarrassment. As a servant of the Empress, she had always been the one rebuking others, but now she was choked by a girl's words.

"How dare you!" Nanny Xi shouted.

Shao Wanru smiled at her and didn't look humble nor timid. She stood up, bowed deeply, and said, "I don't dare. But do you come here to rebuke me or to educate us on instructions from Her Majesty? If it's the former, I'll go back and examine myself critically right away. Regarding why our mansion entered my name for the consort selection, please rebuke our mansion!"

After saying that, Shao Wanru bowed deeply to Nanny Xi again and then turned to leave.

It was obvious that Nanny Xi, who came from the imperial palace, was here to pick on her. In this case, she decided not to stay here with her.

Seeing that Shao Wanru dared to give her a cold shoulder and intended to leave after a short conversation, Nanny Xi was so angry that her face turned livid. She pressed her hand on the table and was about to lose her temper.

Old Madam put down the teacup in her hand heavily. On hearing the crisp sound caused by the teacup hitting the table, Shao Wanru stopped.

“Wanru, sit down! How can you lose your temper after such a short conversation?”

“Okay!” Shao Wanru paused, but she still obediently turned around and sat back in her chair! Nanny Xi, who came from the imperial palace, tried to show severity at their first meeting and even took advantage of the Empress’s power. However, she didn’t expect that she also humiliated Duke Xing’s Mansion and even Old Madam of Duke Xing’s Mansion by saying that.

How could Old Madam bear to be humiliated in front of her granddaughters?

“Nanny Xi, Wanru is selected as a candidate for the consort selection on instructions from the Empress Dowager and the Empress. Don’t you know that?” Old Madam said coldly.

She had intended to pretend that she didn’t notice their conversation so that the nanny sent by the Empress could humiliate and suppress Shao Wanru. However, she didn’t expect that the whole Duke Xing’s Mansion would be involved, and she didn’t want to see an etiquette instructor act domineeringly in her mansion.

The Empress was very noble. Although Nanny Xi, who served the Empress, was highly favored, Nanny Xi couldn’t be so presumptuous in her mansion. In particular, Nanny Xi kept doubting Shao Wanru’s being selected as a candidate in front of her. Didn’t Nanny Xi try to humiliate her by doing that?

Old Madam, who had always been obeyed by others in Duke Xing’s Mansion, had never been humiliated like that, so she became displeased at once!

Seeing that Old Madam got furious and hearing that she mentioned the Empress Dowager, Nanny Xi didn’t dare to stir up any other trouble. She turned to Old Madam and said with a flattering smile, “I came in a hurry, so I didn’t know that there are four Misses in your mansion going to attend the consort selection. I just learned it after checking the file. If I made any mistake, please forgive me, Old Madam!”

Since Nanny Xi had made a concession, Old Madam would not keep arguing with her. Moreover, she indeed needed to ask Nanny Xi for a favor. She nodded at once with her face softening, reached out to point at the rest of her granddaughters in the parlor and introduced them to Nanny Xi one by one. After the introduction, she said with a smile, “I’ll have to trouble you in the following days!”

“Don’t mention it. This is what I should do. The Empress sent us out to teach several good Misses from aristocratic families the rules and etiquette in the imperial palace!” Nanny Xi said with a smile, looking completely different from the one intending to stir up trouble fiercely just now.

She suggested that the Misses of Duke Xing’s Mansion would definitely be selected. On hearing that, Old Madam smiled and said with a nod, “Although you are sent by the Empress, I still need to express my gratitude to you, Nanny Xi. Do you think we should start the course today or tomorrow?”

"Let's start the course tomorrow, and the Misses can have a rest today!" Nanny Xi thought for a while and said, seeming to be very considerate of the Misses of Duke Xing's Mansion and looking very kind. If it weren't for Shao Wanru's experience just now, she probably would have thought that Nanny Xi was actually very kind.

"That's great!" Old Madam said and nodded with a smile. Coincidentally, she needed to arrange something, and now she thought that she could make it in time!

Shao Wanru narrowed her eyes and looked at the two of them, who were sitting in the seats of honor and talking happily, with deep eyes...

Chapter 717 She Wants to Stay in the Piaoyun Courtyard

Old Madam asked Nanny Xi to stay for a talk and told the four sisters to go back to prepare for the course of the rules and etiquette in the imperial palace, which was going to begin tomorrow morning.

The four sisters agreed and left. When they arrived at the gate of the courtyard and were about to separate, Shao Yanru said with a smile, "Third Sister, Fourth Sister, and Fifth Sister, why don't you go to my place for a small talk? It's rare that we are all here today."

"Thank you for your invitation, Big Sister. But my mother doesn't feel well, so Fourth Sister and I have to go back early to look after her." Shao Caihuan refused without hesitation.

She had never been close to Shao Yanru. Besides, it could actually be said that since three years ago, the third branch and the second branch had never been close to each other.

They just showed some respect to each other.

"Third Sister and Fourth Sister, since you need to go back to look after Third Aunt, you can leave now. I'll have a chat with Fifth Sister!" Refused by them, Shao Yanru did not insist on inviting them to her courtyard and said with a smile.

The two sisters left after bowing to her and saying goodbye to Shao Wanru.

"Fifth Sister, you should be available at the moment, right?" Shao Yanru turned to Shao Wanru and asked.

"I'm available indeed, but just have some trivial things to handle!" Shao Wanru said with a smile. She knew that Shao Yanru's target was her.

"Since they are just trivial things, just leave them to be handled by your servants! I happen to want to have a talk with you!" Shao Yanru said with an increasingly friendly smile.

"Big Sister, what do you want to talk with me about?" Shao Wanru raised her eyes to look at Shao Yanru with deep eyes and asked.

Seeing them standing at the door and talking, several old maids at the gate of Old Madam's courtyard all lowered their heads and tried to make as few sounds as they could at work, for fear of disturbing the two Misses.

Smart servants all knew that neither the First Miss nor the Fifth Miss was a master to be trifled with.

"Let's go to my courtyard for a talk. Now that I've been to the imperial palace more often than you have, I might know some things and taboos that you don't know. We are going to represent our whole mansion in the consort selection, so the four of us are a whole. I'm not worried about Third Sister and Fourth Sister, but I'm really worried about... you, Fifth Sister."

Shao Yanru said calmly, not giving up because of Shao Wanru's unkind expression.

"I didn't enter the imperial palace often indeed, so I almost got into trouble the last time I entered the imperial palace. However, Big Sister, if you give me some instructions, I will definitely get into trouble in the imperial palace. Thank you for your kindness, but the etiquette instructor will give me advices teach me the rules and etiquette in the imperial palace."

Shao Wanru spoke.

"Fifth Sister... since you are so displeased with me, just forget it and ignore my words!" Shao Yanru said with a sigh and turned to walk out.

She just quitted persuading Shao Wanru to go to her courtyard.

Yujie, who was beside Shao Wanru, looked at Shao Yanru, who had gone far away, in surprise and wondered why the First Miss Shao did that. It was impossible for Shao Yanru, who had come to an open break with Shao Wanru, to be so kind to give Shao Wanru instructions. Needless to say, Shao Yanru must have set a trap. But why did Shao Yanru leave after a short conversation?

Could it be that Shao Yanru thought that Shao Wanru would not take the bait, so she gave up?

Thinking of this, she found something wrong, because the First Miss Shao definitely would not give up easily.

"Miss..."

"Let's go back!" Shao Wanru interrupted Yujie indifferently.

"Yes!" Yujie said with a nod and then followed Shao Wanru back to the Piaoyun Courtyard. As she walked, she looked back, only to see that the First Miss Shao stopped at the corner and was looking at them with deep eyes. She was shocked and said subconsciously, "Miss!"

"What's wrong?" Shao Wanru asked without looking back.

"The First Miss is watching us over there!" Yujie turned back her head, took two steps to catch up with Shao Wanru, and whispered.

With a sparkle in her eyes, Shao Wanru said with a smile, "Ignore it, and let her do that!"

"Miss, what does the First Miss mean by doing that?" Yujie agreed and didn't look back again, but she couldn't help asking as she walked forward behind Shao Wanru.

"She deliberately did that in front of the nanny sent by the Empress!" Shao Wanru said lightly. She, who had been a little confused at the beginning, now realized why Shao Yanru did that.

Nanny Xi was not the only one sent by the Empress, and she came here with two palace maids. Just now, the two palace maids were standing at the door, not far from the entrance of the courtyard. All the

servants in the courtyard were uneasy to see the two Misses argue at the entrance of Old Madam's courtyard. They were not supposed to watch it. However, it was very quiet in the courtyard, which enabled the two palace maids to hear the conversation between the two Misses clearly.

Their conversation gave the two palace maids the impression that the two Misses of Duke Xing's Mansion not only did not get along well with each other but also were hostile to each other!

The two palace maids would probably think that the First Miss was gentle, while the Fifth Miss was unfriendly. As soon as the servants sent by the Empress entered the mansion, Shao Yanru began to play tricks.

"It is obvious that this Nanny Xi is an evil person!" Yujie curled her lip and spoke. When she stood behind Shao Wanru a moment ago, she got so furious that she almost came forward to refute the remark of the nanny, who was obviously up to no good. "Why did the Empress send her here? The First Miss just doesn't need to play any trick, because this nanny is on her side!"

Shao Wanru smiled slightly, stopped walking and looked at the intersection in front of her. One of the roads led to her Piaoyun Courtyard, while the other led to the ancestral hall of the mansion.

"Miss, are we going to the ancestral hall?" Yujie also stopped walking, looked forward in the same direction and asked in confusion.

"We don't need to!" Shao Wanru shook her head and said, looking at a figure coming from the other side of the road. Although the figure was a little far away, Shao Wanru recognized that it was Nanny Sheng, who was a little plumper than ordinary old maids. However, Nanny Sheng seemed to have also seen Shao Wanru from a distance and hid behind the rockery beside her.

Shao Wanru stepped forward and continued moving forward, as if she didn't stop just now. After returning to the Piaoyun Courtyard, she sat down. But before she had time to take a sip of tea, she suddenly heard a maid's voice from outside, "Fifth Miss, Old Madam has sent someone here!"

"Let her in!" Shao Wanru put down the teacup in her hand and said with gloomy eyes. Nanny Xi was not to be trifled with indeed. It had been less than a day since Nanny Xi entered the mansion, but Nanny Xi had caused so much trouble. It seemed that Nanny Xi, who came from the imperial palace, became more eager to humiliate her after having a talk with Old Madam.

Old Madam had talked much about her in front of Nanny Xi from the imperial palace, so they became partners because of their common hatred against her. Now she didn't know what kind of trouble they were going to cause her., but one thing certain was that they were definitely up to no good!

Qu Le led a maid serving Old Madam to her.

The maid bowed to Shao Wanru and said respectfully, "Fifth Miss, I'm sent here by Old Madam. She said that you have the largest courtyard, so it's most suitable to let Nanny Xi stay here. However, for fear that it's inconvenient for you to let her stay here, Old Madam sent me to ask if you can let Nanny Xi stay here?"

Let Nanny Xi stay in her courtyard?

Shao Wanru took a deep breath with an angry look. Since she was not Nanny Xi's only student, why did Nanny Xi have to stay in her courtyard? Moreover, this Nanny Xi was hard on her. If Nanny Xi moved here, Nanny Xi would definitely stir up trouble here. When the time came, she would be the one to be blamed.

"Miss, Old Madam thinks that if Nanny Xi lives here, it will be more convenient for her to teach you. Your maternal grandma is Rui'an Great Elder Princess. With such a maternal grandma, no matter whether you can be selected in the consort selection, the rules and etiquette in the imperial palace are necessary for you. Old Madam made this arrangement for your own good. Fifth Miss, do you think it right?"

The maid was smart. Seeing that Shao Wanru fell silent, she knew that Shao Wanru was displeased with it, so she hurriedly mentioned something else Old Madam had said in order to persuade Shao Wanru to let this Nanny Xi stay.

Shao Wanru picked up the teacup at hand, took a sip slowly, and then put it down heavily and said, "Go back and tell Old Madam that I don't need the etiquette instructor from the imperial palace, because I have an etiquette instructor, who has taught me for a long time. If Nanny Xi wants to educate someone, she can educate the other three Misses and live in the courtyard of one of the other three Misses!"

She said with cold eyes.

If Nanny Xi moved in, it would definitely be a bad thing. Nanny Xi would not only mess up her courtyard, but also cause other trouble. If Nanny Xi sent by the Empress became her etiquette instructor, Nanny Xi would be able to take control of her easily, and she could not resist.

As a servant from the imperial palace, Nanny Xi could not be simple. Neither Nanny Xi nor the Empress behind her wanted Shao Wanru to attend the consort selection, but she had to do so.

If Nanny Xi moved to her courtyard, it would be impossible to guard against her. She was better off rejecting it directly at the beginning, so as not to cause a lot of trouble in the future.

After working this out, Shao Wanru said decisively. Although she didn't introduce Nanny Zheng to the other members of Duke Xing's Mansion when Nanny Zheng moved in, Nanny Zheng was indeed an etiquette instructor from the imperial palace on the record. It was impossible for the servants sent by the Empress to deny it.

Chu Liuchen had told her before that if someone from the imperial palace meddled too much with her affairs, she could ask Nanny Zheng to come forward to deal with the person. Although she did not know why an etiquette instructor in distress could deal with those from the imperial palace, she could only seek help from Nanny Zheng at this time.

She could not allow Nanny Xi to move in and stir up trouble. Nanny Xi could even make use of the Empress's power to suppress her trusted servants and accuse them of something. When the time came, even her maternal grandma would not be able to save her trusted servants, let alone her!

The maid sent by Old Madam was stunned for a moment and looked up at Shao Wanru in surprise. She didn't expect that Shao Wanru would turn down Old Madam and Nanny Xi's request. No one could refuse Old Madam nor Nanny Xi casually.

"Fifth Miss, this is Old Madam's idea, as well as Nanny Xi's idea. Nanny Xi said that she found you agreeable at your first meeting and wanted to live with you during this period of time. In the future, she will take care of you in the imperial palace!" The maid quickly restrained the shock on her face and spoke.

"What's your name?" Shao Wanru, who turned her attention to the maid, asked. It was rare to see such a smart maid.

Chapter 718 Company's Humiliation

Hearing Shao Wanru asking about her, Shuiyi answered hurriedly, "My name is Shuiyi, and I am a second-class servant girl of Old Madam!"

Shao Wanru threw a few glances at her and asked slowly, "What did Nanny Xi and Old Madam say just now? Why did Old Madam suddenly ask Nanny Xi to live in the Piaoyun Courtyard?"

When she left just now, she was sure that neither Old Madam nor Nanny Xi had suspected her. Unexpectedly, in the blink of an eye, they had made her a target.

"I don't know. I was in the courtyard!" Shuiyi lowered her head and spoke.

Shao Wanru stopped talking but looked at Shuiyi, leaving a cold atmosphere in the room.

After quite a while, Shao Wanru waved her hand and said, "Go ahead and tell Old Madam that there will be an etiquette instructor here and she doesn't have to worry about it!"

"Fifth Miss..." Shuiyi seemed to not want to give up on trying to persuade her, but Shao Wanru's eyes had been slightly closed, as if she didn't want to talk anymore. As soon as she saw Shao Wanru's look, Shuiyi bowed to her and left.

"Miss, Old Madam won't let it go!" Yujie said after Shuiyi left. How dare she defy Old Madam's decision? Wasn't it like a slap in her face in front of Nanny Xi?

"Go and ask Nanny Zheng to come here!" Shao Wanru shook her head calmly and spoke.

"Yes, I will go now!" answered Yujie. She did not dare to hesitate and then left.

Nanny Zheng seldom showed up in front of others. She usually did embroidery in the wing room and helped Shao Wanru deal with some affairs in the courtyard. When Shao Wanru was not there, she secretly arranged people around Shao Wanru and paid extra attention to the new servant girls and old maids in the courtyard.

Everyone in the Piaoyun Courtyard knew Nanny Zheng, but others in Duke Xing's Mansion didn't even know that she existed.

On the surface, the supervisor of the Piaoyun Courtyard was Nanny Yu. The servants in the courtyard also had their own guesses about Nanny Zheng's identity. Most of them thought that she was the Fifth Miss's henchman but was not as useful as Nanny Yu, so she just helped the Fifth Miss with some errands, and usually she had nothing to do but some embroidery in the wing room.

"Miss, is there an etiquette instructor coming from the palace?" Nanny Zheng came over very fast and asked. On her way over, Yujie had brought up this matter.

Shao Wanru stood up to welcome her, and then the two of them sat down separately.

"Yes, have you ever heard of Nanny Xi?" Shao Wanru nodded and asked.

"She works for the Empress!" Nanny Zheng thought for a while then said with certainty.

"She's the Empress's pawn. There are four people in our mansion who will attend the Beauty Contest this time. The Empress sent a nanny especially for me who was very hostile. Just now, she provoked me again and again in Old Madam's courtyard. She said that I shouldn't attend the contest because I was supposed to mourn for my parents..." Shao Wanru also told her what had happened in Old Madam's courtyard including what she told her at the gate of the courtyard.

After hearing Shao Wanru out, Nanny Zheng thought about it then said, "I think Old Madam must have reached an agreement with Nanny Xi!"

"What agreement? It didn't seem to be like that before." There was a glint in Shao Wanru's eyes. That was exactly what she thought too, but there were still some key points missing.

"The Empress must have seen the background of Duke Xing's Mansion. If she wants to choose a Miss from there to marry her son, it's most likely to be the First Miss."

She had been in Duke Xing's Mansion for a while. In fact, Nanny Zheng had secretly found a lot of evidence, and this also helped Shao Wanru come to some conclusions.

This conclusion was drawn by what she found out and what she had already known.

"Since First Miss is going to marry a Prince from Prince Zhou's Mansion, of course you won't be able to do it. The royal family will not allow two sisters both to be Princess. What's more, there are only so many single princes in the Mansion!" Nanny Zheng was even more sure.

Shao Wanru knew it. There were only four princes, including Chu Liuchen, who was raised and ranked as a Prince. The amount of selected people was numbered, and there was only one Princess, two Consorts, or even only one Princess for each Prince. If there were two selected from Duke Xing's Mansion, what would the other officials think?

Shao Wanru had heard a lot of phrases like "the balance of power" in her last life.

In both the front court and the imperial harem, people paid close attention to the balance of power, which meant that the result was destined. Between Shao Yanru and her, if one was selected, the other could no longer be chosen as the consort of a prince, unless there was a special reason.

"The reason why the Empress and Old Madam were so eager to work together was that they wanted her to lose the contest. However, with the power of Rui'an Great Elder Princess, maybe she still had a slight chance to win." Shao Wanru thought.

"They were worried, so they wanted to get rid of the hidden danger as soon as possible!" Shao Wanru connected all the dots and slightly narrowed her watery eyes.

"That's their trick. After the Beauty Contest starts, it's not up to them to decide. Even if the Empress wants to meddle, she has to take Rui'an Great Elder Princess's wishes into account. If this matter is exposed to the Empress Dowager, it will be even more complicated!" Nanny Zheng said.

"What if I won't change my mind about attending the Beauty Contest?" Shao Wanru asked slowly.

"If you really want to participate in the Beauty Contest, they will definitely make a move, unless you take the initiative to withdraw. According to Nanny Xi's aggressive manner, she'll probably deal you a head-on blow and shock you. Then, she will give you a hint with soft words. If you take her advice and give up, it would be the best result for her; but if you don't, I'm sure Nanny Xi must have other tricks up her sleeve. At that time, she will force you to withdraw from the Beauty Contest!"

Nanny Zheng sorted out her thoughts and spoke.

She actually knew what kind of person Nanny Xi was. When they were in the palace that day, they didn't have much interaction, but she could tell from the details.

"What should we do now?" Shao Wanru blinked and asked. Currently, her power was certainly not equal to Old Madam's, let alone the Empress's.

Chu Liuchen had his aspiration for her to win the Beauty Contest.

"Don't worry, Miss. I knew this Nanny Xi. She will definitely come over later. I will deal with her then!" Nanny Zheng suggested.

This proposal made Shao Wanru feel relieved. Since Nanny Zheng had offered to help, it was obvious that she was confident that she could handle it.

"Can you guarantee that she won't be living in the Piaoyun Courtyard?" Shao Wanru asked cautiously even though she knew the answer.

"She won't be living in the Piaoyun Courtyard," Nanny Zheng said with certainty, while reminding Shao Wanru, "But she probably will live in the mansion someday, so I'm afraid that she will cause us some trouble. After all, she has the Empress on her side!"

"Then get her out of the mansion!" Shao Wanru sneered.

As soon as Nanny Xi entered the mansion, she wanted to meddle in her affairs. They were enemies, and she would never show mercy to her enemies. She had set up the pawns around Madam of Duke Xing, and she had figured out that the people sent by the Empress would not be easy to get along with.

She didn't believe that her etiquette instructor had to be sent back to Duke Xing's Mansion while the Empress would have the nerve to send another one instead.

As an etiquette instructor, she taught the ladies basic rules of etiquette. If she couldn't follow them herself, how could she teach others?

"I heard that the Empress and Old Madam are distant relatives. Honored Consort Shu in the palace is also related to Madam of Duke Xing. Nanny, do you not know?"

Shao Wanru had asked Nanny Zheng about Honored Consort Shu before, but she was caught up in Wang Yishu's matter, so she didn't pay much attention to it for a while. At this time, it came back to her.

"The Empress is indeed a distant relative of Old Madam, but their relationship was not close at all, they did have the same ancestry, which could be traced back five generations. Old Madam brought it up, but the Empress wouldn't admit it. As for Honored Consort Shu and Madam of Duke Xing, they visited each other and had a closer relationship."

Nanny Zheng thought about it and detailed their relationships in a few words.

Given the status of the Empress, she couldn't care less about such a distant relative. However, she didn't mind them reaching out to her. After all, the stronger Prince Zhou was, the better.

Honored Consort Shu had no child. It would benefit her a lot if she could have a good relationship with them. This was also the reason why she would occasionally visit Duke Xing's Mansion.

To admit it or not, it was just a matter of benefits.

This was in line with Shao Wanru's guess. The corners of her mouth were slightly raised, and her smile was sweet but also a little cold. Her charming smile looked even a bit colder because of this distance.

She had already made arrangements for it. The rest was up to how much Nanny Xi could take before she was driven out of the mansion...

"How... how dare she refuse..." Hearing Shuiyi's report, Old Madam almost couldn't catch her breath. Her lips trembled and she couldn't believe what she had heard.

Seeing that it was not going well, Nanny Yu hurriedly went up to Old Madam and patted her on the back to help her catch her breath.

"She's gone too far!" Nanny Xi was even angrier. She smacked her hand heavily on the table, and her face was livid with anger. Not to mention outside the palace, even in the palace, few people dared to say such disrespectful words to her. She was the etiquette instructor sent by the Empress. How arrogant Fifth Miss Shao was to say such words.

She couldn't bear it.

"Old Madam, since I am Fifth Miss Shao's etiquette instructor, I should teach her to behave. And Fifth Miss Shao has a lack of respect for others, I think it's my duty to ask your permission to do my job!" Nanny Xi said, taking a deep breath to suppress the anger in her heart.

She didn't expect Shao Wanru to refuse her offer. She felt so ashamed.

"You... you go ahead!" Old Madam said with difficulty, gasping for breath—she was really angry. Nanny Yu did not dare to speak, she just slapped her back gently worrying that she would really faint out of anger.

She took Old Madam's order. Angrily, Nanny Xi stood up and let an old maid lead the way to the Piaoyun Courtyard along with two palace maids of hers.

She didn't believe that she couldn't handle a little girl!

After they arrived at the Piaoyun Courtyard, they didn't wait for the servants to report, but went straight for the main room while putting on airs. When they were in front of the door, she said coldly, "Fifth Miss Shao, I've come to teach you some manners on the orders of the Empress!"

After that, Nanny Xi lifted the curtain and walked in. When she stood still, she saw a woman turn around. Their eyes met and she took a step back in shock...

Chapter 719 It Is Not an Exaggeration to Say that They Are Old Enemies!

Nanny Zheng looked at Nanny Xi with cold eyes.

"Aren't... aren't you..." Nanny Xi stammered and pointed at Nanny Zheng in astonishment.

It was very rude of her to do so. In the imperial palace, if someone was found pointing at someone else in the conversation, she would be beaten or even driven out of the imperial palace. It could be seen that Nanny Xi was so shocked that she lost her composure.

"I am the etiquette instructor and have served my master for several years." Nanny Zheng looked at Nanny Xi calmly and said as if she did not notice her extremely rude behavior.

"Weren't... weren't you driven out of the imperial palace?" Nanny Xi gasped with surprise, put down her hand, looked Nanny Zheng up and down, and said in disbelief.

She got the news from the Empress that Nanny Zheng had been driven out of the imperial palace. Unexpectedly, she met her in the Fifth Miss Shao's courtyard. How could she not panic?

"I was indeed driven out of the imperial palace. Coincidentally, the Qin's Mansion was in need of an etiquette instructor at that time, so I have been the Fifth Miss's etiquette instructor since then and have educated her for many years."

In contrast to Nanny Xi who looked astonished, Nanny Zheng looked very calm, as if she didn't realize Nanny Xi's implication. Being driven out of the imperial palace was not only a disgrace but also an indication of her being out of favor. Of course, it could also be said that her former master was too incompetent to protect her servant.

Nanny Zheng suggested with a smile before Nanny Xi could say anything else, "Nanny Xi, since you come here under the Empress's order, let's educate my master together!"

Shao Wanru fixed her eyes on Nanny Xi, who seemed to be in a dilemma and obviously very reluctant to accept it.

"I'm sent by the Empress..." Nanny Xi pulled herself together and calmed down at this time. She looked at Nanny Zheng and said with a gloomy face, "The Empress wants me to educate the Fifth Miss all by myself."

"Why does the Empress want you to educate the Fifth Miss all by yourself?" Nanny Zheng did not get angry at Nanny Xi's blunt words but asked lightly.

"Of course, it's because the Fifth Miss is going to enter the imperial palace to attend the consort selection. Shouldn't she receive meticulous guidance? There are plenty of noble masters in the imperial palace, and it's not good if she offends any of them. The Empress sent me here out of kindness. If it

weren't for the Empress's kinship with Duke Xing's Mansion, the Empress wouldn't have bothered about it."

Nanny Xi spoke.

Shao Wanru raised the corners of her mouth slightly. Nanny Xi said in a much softer tone, not assuming a haughty air as she had done in front of Old Madam.

Nanny Zheng said with a faint smile on her face, "When I served my former master, even the Empress spoke highly of my manners. Nanny Xi, are you doubting my work in educating the Fifth Miss and thinking that she needs to be educated by you?"

Nanny Xi got choked and subconsciously didn't dare to answer her directly.

As a trusted servant of the Empress, she knew something about the Empress. If there was anyone in the imperial palace the Empress considered as a threat, it would be Nanny Zheng's former master, who was such a low-profile consort in the imperial palace that she was almost an invisible person.

No new imperial concubines took her seriously. They didn't see her in favor with the Emperor nor even her in person, so they didn't need to be jealous of her.

In fact, not only the new imperial concubines, but even the old imperial concubines showed no concern for her. However, the Empress considered her as the biggest threat.

Since the Empress considered her as the biggest threat, the Empress's trusted servants certainly had made some efforts to check her out.

Of course, they knew that they should be very cautious and avoid being caught when dealing with her servants. Speaking of which, Nanny Zheng was driven out of the imperial palace in a battle where the Empress got the upper hand.

However, Nanny Zheng was only driven out of the imperial palace. Although the Empress wanted to get rid of Nanny Zheng, she did not dare to interfere for fear of enraging the Emperor. As such, most of the servants driven out of the imperial palace did not end up well, while Nanny Zheng became an etiquette instructor although she was driven out of the imperial palace.

In fact, Nanny Zheng had just served her former master as a major palace maid.

But even so, Nanny Xi didn't dare to say that Nanny Zheng didn't teach the Fifth Miss well, not only because the Empress had praised Nanny Zheng indeed, but also because Nanny Xi was afraid that she would end up like Nanny Zheng.

Moreover, she was sure that if she got into that kind of trouble, she would face a punishment much more severe than being driven out of the imperial palace. Being beaten to death was just a light penalty. It was very likely that not only she would be killed, but also her relatives would be implicated.

Thinking of this, Nanny Xi didn't dare to argue with Nanny Zheng on impulse.

Nanny Zheng was saved by her former master, but the Empress would not necessarily save her.

“Nanny Xi, if you think it inappropriate, you can go back to the imperial palace and ask the Empress.” Nanny Zheng did not aggressively force Nanny Xi to answer directly.

With her face darkening, Nanny Xi nodded righteously and said, “This kind of thing should be reported to the Empress and be decided by her!”

It was not an exaggeration to say that she and Nanny Zheng were old enemies. They, who worked for their respective masters, had fought many times in secret.

After saying that, Nanny Xi cast a few more glances at Shao Wanru, who was standing behind Nanny Zheng, wondering what made her win the favor of that person? Or was it just a coincidence that Nanny Zheng was hired as Shao Wanru’s etiquette instructor and educated her in the past three years?

Shao Wanru looked at Nanny Xi calmly with clear ripples in her watery eyes. Then she smiled slightly with her long eyelashes fluttering, looking increasingly ravishing and delicate. But at the same time, she remained dignified and refined in manners, not panicked at Nanny Xi’s gaze.

Even in the imperial palace, as the Empress’s trusted servant, when Nanny Xi fixed her eyes on any of those imperial concubines, they all avoided eye contact with her in fear. However, this Fifth Miss Shao, who had not turned 15 years old yet, looked at her with composure, as if she really didn’t know what an intimidating person she was in the imperial palace!

It seemed that she didn’t know it!

After thinking it through, Nanny Xi turned around and left, because she really couldn’t make the decision.

Seeing Nanny Xi turn around and leave, those who came with her and had been waiting in the courtyard, immediately followed her out and returned to Old Madam’s courtyard.

“Nanny Zheng, will she come back?” Shao Wanru blinked her eyes, watched Nanny Xi and the others leave in a hurry as they came, and asked with a smile. Standing by the window, she clearly saw that Nanny Xi was almost in a flurry at the moment.

Nanny Zheng also walked up to the window and stood behind Shao Wanru. Seeing Nanny Xi and the others leave, she said with a smile, “They will come back, but they won’t be too harsh on you on the surface, Fifth Miss.”

How could the Empress back down so easily? Moreover, the First Miss of Duke Xing’s Mansion should be the one she chose as her daughter-in-law, so she would never let go of such an opportunity.

Judging from the Empress’s character, she would take action to make Shao Yanru, the perfect daughter-in-law she chose, marry Prince Zhou so that Prince Zhou could have the backing of Duke Xing’s Mansion.

The Empress had cast greedy eyes on the throne long before.

“Well, I’m waiting for her!” Shao Wanru said with a nod and looked thoughtfully at the gate of the courtyard where she could no longer see Nanny Xi and the others. She was really not afraid of Nanny Xi’s coming back.

The fighting spirit aroused by the first roll of drums was depleted by the second. What was more, she had prepared other things for Nanny Xi!

In the main room, Old Madam had already gotten her breath back. She took a sip of tea slowly and was thinking about something with a gloomy face. Suddenly there came some sounds from the door. She looked up and was stunned when she saw Nanny Xi coming in angrily.

Wasn't Nanny Xi supposed to be picking on Shao Wanru in the Piaoyun Courtyard at this moment? Nanny Xi had the support of the Empress, so Shao Wanru could not refuse to let Nanny Xi stay in the Piaoyun Courtyard even if she was unwilling to accept it.

Even if she told Great Elder Princess about it, Great Elder Princess could do nothing about it.

Even Rui'an Great Elder Princess didn't dare to refuse the Empress.

At the thought that she finally gained the upper hand this time after all these battles with Shao Wanru, Old Madam was very satisfied. Unexpectedly, not long after Nanny Xi went there, she came back angrily. The situation seemed to be terrible.

"Old Madam, since the Fifth Miss of your mansion already has an etiquette instructor, why did you trick us and even keep the Empress in the dark!" As soon as Nanny Xi entered the room, she said with her face darkening. How could she not be angry? She led a large group of people to the Piaoyun Courtyard in order to suppress Shao Wanru. Unexpectedly, she not only failed to do that but also had to come back in disgrace.

Nanny Xi could neither suppress her indignation nor vent it. It was stuck in her throat, which made her feel very uncomfortable.

"Nanny Xi, what do you mean by saying that? Our manor has never done such a thing." Old Madam said with her face darkening. Although she did not know what had happened to Nanny Xi, she could not allow her to talk nonsense.

After all, she was the Old Madam of Duke Xing's Mansion. Although Nanny Xi worked for the Empress, Nanny Xi had to show her some respect. After being scolded by Old Madam, Nanny Xi took a deep breath, suppressed her anger, and said with her face darkening, "The Fifth Miss has an etiquette instructor and has been educated by her for several years. Old Madam, why didn't you tell me about it?"

If Old Madam had told her clearly just now, at least she would have thought it through before going there. In this case, she would not have been at a disadvantage when she suddenly met Nanny Zheng and confronted her.

"When did Shao Wanru have an etiquette instructor? She has cultivated in seclusion on the mountain. How could she hire an etiquette instructor?" Old Madam said in surprise.

"Old Madam, it turns out that you didn't know it either! It seems that you really don't care about this granddaughter, who has just returned to your mansion, as the rumors say!" Nanny Xi couldn't help mocking her, "Your granddaughter has an etiquette instructor, who was probably hired when she was in the Qin's Mansion three years ago and had followed her since then. Maybe her etiquette instructor didn't live in your mansion before, so you didn't know it."

The sarcasm in Nanny Xi's words was obvious. Hearing this, Old Madam was angry and upset. She turned to look at Nanny Yu.

Nanny Yu thought for a while and shook her head, indicating that she did not know it either.

"Old Madam, since you didn't know it either, let's put it aside for the time being. I'll go back to the imperial palace to report it to my master. At least I should let my master know it. This etiquette instructor is not a simple nanny. In the past, even I should be very polite to her when meeting her in the imperial palace!" Nanny Xi said with sarcasm.

She worked for the Empress. Although the two of them had never met in public before, she had seen Nanny Zheng secretly. Nanny Zheng probably had seen her as well. Otherwise, they would not have recognized each other as soon as they met!

Was it a coincidence?

Chapter 720 Nanny Yu, Do You Really Want to Know?

After Nanny Xi finished her words, she turned around and left, followed by the two palace maids closely, leaving Old Madam and the servants of Duke Xing's Mansion behind. The servants looked at Nanny Xi's back in astonishment and then looked at Old Madam, who was sitting in the middle with a straight face and lowered their heads silently.

Everyone could see that Old Madam, whose face was twisted, was about to burst with anger.

"Old Madam, please cool down. Nanny Xi didn't make it clear..." Nanny Yu consoled her cautiously.

Old Madam swung her arm, and the teacup on the table immediately fell to the ground. The tea and the fragments of the teacup were scattered all over the ground, turning the room into a mess.

"Let's go and see who the great etiquette instructor is!" Old Madam said with her fingers trembling.

After that, she struggled to stand up.

"Old Madam, don't be angry. What's the point of going there at this time? If there is no such etiquette instructor and Nanny Xi misunderstood it, it's inappropriate for you to make a punitive expedition. If there is really such an etiquette instructor, even Nanny Xi has come back, so it's useless for you to make a punitive expedition!" Nanny Yu said anxiously and reached out to support Old Madam.

If Old Madam really rushed over rashly, she would cause a big trouble!

Hearing Nanny Yu say the point, Old Madam managed to calm herself down after breathing heavily and sat down heavily with Nanny Yu's help. It was indeed irrational to go there when she didn't know what was going on.

"Go and the etiquette instructor's background!" After sitting down for a long while, Old Madam said in a deep voice.

"Yes, I'll go now. Old Madam, please cool down." Nanny Yu nodded while comforting Old Madam in a soft voice.

When Nanny Xi was here, Old Madam basically pretended to be angry. But now, she was really angry. Old Madam was in poor health. If anything terrible happened to her, no one could bear the responsibility.

“Don’t go there empty-handed. Take the bracelets given by the Empress with you!” Old Madam also knew that she was in poor health, so she tried hard to get her breath back and spoke.

Sending Nanny Xi to educate several Misses of Duke Xing’s Mansion indicated that the Empress thought highly of Duke Xing’s Mansion. In order to show her high opinion of Duke Xing’s Mansion, the Empress even instructed Nanny Xi to bring four pairs of bracelets as gifts for the Misses who were going to enter the imperial palace to attend the consort selection.

However, after Nanny Xi came here, she had been busy with establishing her prestige and forgot to give the bracelets to the Misses, so they were kept by Old Madam for the time being. Coincidentally, now they could be used as an excuse for Nanny Yu’s visiting Shao Wanru.

Hearing Old Madam’s words, Nanny Yu knew that Old Madam had really calmed down. She secretly breathed a sigh of relief and hastened to agree.

Then she instructed a maid to fetch a pair of bracelets and headed for the Piaoyun Courtyard.

Nanny Yu also wondered why Shao Wanru had an etiquette instructor. It had been a while since the Fifth Miss returned to the mansion. During these days, she had often visited the Piaoyun Courtyard. Why didn’t she find that there was such an etiquette instructor, who could even suppress Nanny Xi, in the Piaoyun Courtyard?

It was very quiet in the Piaoyun Courtyard as if Nanny Xi’s visit didn’t make any wave. Most of the servants there did not know that the old maid, who came over assuming a haughty air just now, turned out to be a trusted servant of the Empress.

They all thought that Nanny Xi was just a supervisor nanny of a mansion and probably came to visit the Fifth Miss for some business. But seeing her go back with a pale face, they knew that she failed to get what she wanted.

Now seeing Nanny Yu, who served Old Madam, come over, they were all shocked.

Hearing of Nanny Yu’s visit, Shao Wanru instructed Yujie to come out and politely invite Nanny Yu in. When Nanny Yu got in the room, she saw Shao Wanru sitting there and embroidering a sachet with a calm look.

“Fifth Miss, I came here with a pair of bracelets, which are the gifts the Empress instructed Nanny Xi to bring here for several Misses.” Nanny Yu came up to bow to her and said with a smile.

Shao Wanru instructed Yujie to hold her, put down the sachet in her hand, and said with a smile, “Nanny Yu, you’re overcourteous. I’m sorry to trouble you to bring them here!”

“Don’t mention it. This is what I should do!” Nanny Yu looked around as she spoke.

There were only Shao Wanru and Yujie in the room. The others were not here. It was so quiet in the room as if they didn’t have a conflict with Nanny Xi just now.

The maid handed over the jade bracelets, and Shao Wanru stood up and took them respectfully.

“The Empress thinks highly of the Misses of our mansion, so she bestowed special favor on our mansion by sending a nanny, who served her, here to be in charge of educating several Misses in daily etiquette. The imperial palace is a different place from our mansion. The slightest mistake you make in the imperial palace could make you lose your life.”

Nanny Yu said with a smile while talking about how kind the Empress was.

“The Empress is really thoughtful.” Shao Wanru said softly. However, the Empress was thoughtful to the whole Duke Xing’s Mansion rather than to her.

“Just now, Nanny Xi said that she saw an etiquette instructor here. Old Madam said that she didn’t know about it and wondered whether it was true or not!”

Nanny Yu smiled and changed the topic.

“Nanny Yu, are you talking about Nanny Zheng?” Shao Wanru didn’t hide it. She tilted her head slightly and thought for a while, then asked with a smile.

“Nanny Zheng? Fifth Miss, I remember that the supervisor nanny of this courtyard is not your wet nurse, but seems... seems to be a nanny surnamed Yu. Nanny Yu, right?”

Nanny Yu pretended to figure it out after thinking for a long while and said as if she really had paid little attention to the Piaoyun Courtyard.

“The supervisor nanny in charge of the Piaoyun Courtyard is indeed Nanny Yu.” Shao Wanru nodded and confirmed.

“In this case, who is Nanny Zheng?”

“Nanny Zheng is my etiquette instructor Old Madam Qin chose for me when I was in the Qin’s Mansion. At that time, she happened to come out of the imperial palace and said to be refined in manners. Old Madam Qin thought that the First Miss Qin and I had just moved to the capital city and were not good enough in manners. For fear that we would offend others, she specially hired Nanny Zheng to educate us. Later, I suddenly returned to my ancestral roots and went up the mountain for cultivation in seclusion. So I entrusted Nanny Zheng to my maternal grandmother. My maternal grandmother also thinks highly of her. She has just moved to Duke Xing’s Mansion recently.”

Shao Wanru blinked her eyes, no longer hid Nanny Zheng’s existence, and told the whole story of how Nanny Zheng became her etiquette instructor.

As such, not only did Nanny Zheng really come out of the imperial palace, but she also got the approval of Rui’an Great Elder Princess. So it would be difficult for Old Madam to drive her away even if she wanted to.

Old Madam had never gained the upper hand when confronting Rui’an Great Elder Princess!

“Can I meet Nanny Zheng?” Nanny Yu thought to herself and said with a kind smile. Although she worked for Old Madam, she had always show faint kindness to Shao Wanru, so Shao Wanru didn’t find her words annoying.

Nanny Yu's intuition told her that Nanny Zheng was not simple. Seeing was believing and hearsay was undependable. She decided to take a closer look at Nanny Zheng when Nanny Zheng showed up.

Since Shao Wanru had introduced Nanny Zheng as her etiquette instructor, she naturally did not intend to hide Nanny Zheng from others. She nodded to Yujie. Yujie left and brought Nanny Zheng in a moment later.

Seeing that the woman, who came in, was only in her thirties, Nanny Yu was stunned for a moment. Since Nanny Zheng was an etiquette instructor from the imperial palace, Nanny Yu expected her to at least be in her forties or fifties. How could she look so young and beautiful? She looked even more like a competent major palace maid of a master in the imperial palace.

After coming in, Nanny Zheng bowed to Shao Wanru and then turned to Nanny Yu as Shao Wanru asked. After looking Nanny Yu up and down a few times, she asked, "Nanny Yu, do you want to see me?"

She looked very calm and acted with composure as if she didn't know that Nanny Yu in front of her was the most capable servant of Old Madam of Duke Xing's Mansion.

"Are you Nanny Zheng from the imperial palace?" After looking her up and down, Nanny Yu asked cautiously.

Nanny Zheng smiled faintly and nodded.

"Since you came from the imperial palace, why do you follow the Fifth Miss for so many years? Even an etiquette instructor is unlikely to follow the Miss she educates for such a long time, right?" Nanny Yu asked in confusion.

She had been following Old Madam for a long time, so she knew something about etiquette instructors. Duke Xing's Mansion had hired etiquette instructors to educate several Misses for a period of time. In particular, the etiquette instructor, who had educated the First Miss for about a year, had followed her for the longest time.

If Nanny Zheng had really been Shao Wanru's etiquette instructor since when they were in the Qin's Mansion, she would have followed Shao Wanru for at least three years.

Under normal circumstances, how could she follow the Miss she educated for three years?

"I was driven out of the imperial palace, so I am naturally different from ordinary etiquette instructors. I plan to follow the Fifth Miss for the rest of my life!" Nanny Zheng said without avoiding mentioning her past.

"Why were you driven out?" Nanny Yu felt her heart skipped a beat and asked subconsciously. It was not until she blurted out the question that she realized that she shouldn't have asked that.

"Nanny Yu, do you really want to know?" Nanny Zheng looked at Nanny Yu and asked meaningfully, which made Nanny Yu's hair stand on end.

The more one knew the affairs in the imperial palace, the faster she would get killed. Not to mention that she was just a servant, even those Mesdames with the title of Honorary Lady did not dare to inquire about the affairs in the imperial palace casually.

"I made a slip of the tongue just now." Nanny Yu said with her head down, did not dare to inquire further, and changed the subject. "Did Nanny Xi leave after seeing Nanny Zheng?"

"If Nanny Xi is gone now, it may be true!" Nanny Zheng said with a smile.

Shao Wanru calmly watched Nanny Zheng dealing with Nanny Yu. She picked up the tea served by Yujie, took a sip, put it down, and continued embroidering her sachet.

This sachet was a new task assigned by Nanny Zheng, so she should do a good job.

She did not mind that Nanny Yu came to inquire about Nanny Zheng, nor that Old Madam learned Nanny Zheng's existence. Since she decided not to hide Nanny Zheng from others any longer, she would wait and see how things went.

"Nanny Zheng, are you really going to follow the Fifth Miss for the rest of your life?" Nanny Yu pulled herself together and tried to ask calmly.

"Since the Fifth Miss has taken me in, I will definitely follow her!" Nanny Zheng said without hesitation.

Hearing this, Nanny Yu didn't know how to reply at the moment. She looked at Shao Wanru and said with a forced smile, "Nanny Xi has returned to the imperial palace. I can't decide what to do next. It's up to the Empress in the imperial palace. Old Madam doesn't feel well at the moment, so I'm going back now!"

"Nanny Yu, do as you please!" Shao Wanru put down the sachet in her hand, stood up, and spoke.

"Fifth Miss, I'm leaving now!" Seeing that Shao Wanru was so polite, Nanny Yu cracked a smile and spoke.