

## **Noble Wife 261**

### Chapter 261 Vicious Hai Lan and Yu

Granny Wu came in with a panicked expression.

“What’s the matter?” The Old Lady asked.

“Something happened to Madam. She needs a doctor.” Granny Wu said anxiously. She looked at Qu Moying at the side and decided not to report in detail.

However, the Old Lady understood, and her expression changed slightly. “Have you sent for a doctor?”

“I have already sent for a doctor. Your Ladyship, do you want to go take a look?” Granny Wu asked. No matter how bad Yu was, she was still Old Lady Qu’s daughter-in-law and the madam of Qu Mansion.

“I’ll go take a look.” The Old Lady stood up after thinking for a while. “Is Zhizhen in the mansion?”

“I’ve already sent someone to wait at the mansion’s door. If Second Master comes back, he will be informed immediately.” Granny Wu said. She had served the Old Lady for many years, and she was experienced and prudent. She had arranged everything well before coming to the Old Lady.

Knowing that Qu Zhizhen was not in the mansion, the Old Lady felt more obliged to visit Yu.

“Grandmother, should I go?” Qu Moying also stood up and asked softly.

“You’d better not go. It’s not a big deal.” The Old Lady didn’t want Qu Moying to go over.

“But...” Qu Moying still wanted to say something but was stopped by the Old Lady.

Seeing that the Old Lady insisted, Qu Moying did not say anything more. After following the Old Lady to the door and watching the Old Lady leave, she returned to her yard.

Qingyu Garden was in a mess, but there was nothing serious. After the doctor left, Yu cried loudly on the bed.

“Mother, mother, please uphold justice for me.” She cried and said to the Old Lady, who was sitting opposite the bed.

“What’s the matter?” The Old Lady said impatiently.

Although Yu didn’t have a miscarriage, she must abort her child. If she gave birth to a mentally retarded child, it would be better not to have it at all. Yu had taken so much strong medicine before, so the child couldn’t be fine. The Old Lady had asked several doctors before, and they all said that the child would be abnormal.

Yu brought this to herself. If she hadn’t schemed against Qu Moying back then, these things might not have happened. It was a convincing example of retribution for sin, and Yu had only herself to blame. She didn’t even know that she was pregnant and therefore drank those strong medicines.

It seemed that she wanted to cause trouble at this point. Looking at her, the Old Lady felt annoyed.

Although Yu didn’t have a miscarriage, the Old Lady was not happy at all. She thought it was better for Yu to lose the child, which could save the effort to abort it in the future.

“Your Ladyship... Your Ladyship... The prescription was given by the Fourth Lady... It was the Fourth Lady who gave Madam the prescription. Madam took it and looked at it for a while, and she ended up like this.”

Hai Lan also cried loudly and knelt on the ground, complaining tearfully for Yu.

“What exactly happened?” The Old Lady asked coldly.

Hai Lan took out a prescription from her pocket, which was stained with oil, and handed it over. "Your Ladyship, please smell it. Please let someone smell it. There is a smell on it. This prescription almost caused Madam to miscarry."

Hai Lan was surprised to see that the child in Yu's belly was alright. She continued to act according to the instructions given by Yu.

Granny Wu took a step forward, received the prescription, looked at it and handed it to the Old Lady. The prescription had a strong smell of the soup, and it gave off an unpleasant smell at this time.

"This is the prescription Her Ladyship gave the Fourth Lady." Granny Wu said with certainty. She kept many things for the Old Lady before, and this prescription was given to Qu Moying by her, so she naturally recognized it.

"What's wrong with this prescription? Did she feel unwell after taking something made according to it?" The Old Lady asked coldly. Looking at Yu, she couldn't help but feel annoyed.

Yu could have a healthy child, but she ruined it because of her own doing, yet she still tried to make trouble. Thinking of this, the Old Lady was really angry.

"Your Ladyship, it's not that there's something wrong with the prescription, but something was smeared on the prescription. When Madam took it and checked it carefully, she breathed in a lot of the powder."

As Hai Lan spoke, Yu also cried on the bed. Her face was extremely pale. She held her belly carefully as if she was holding the most precious thing in the world.

No one would have thought that the medicine that was harmful to the fetus was smeared by herself.

Even a beast would never eat its own child. However, Yu had utilized the child in her belly again and again. Last time, she used it to drive Yue away, and now she was using it to deal with Qu Moying.

Yu thought that even if the Old Lady did not like her, the Old Lady would not ignore her for the sake of the child in her belly. She was sure that the Old Lady would not let someone hurt the child in her belly, even if the person was Qu Moying!

Even though Yu did such a thing, the child in her belly was still alright. It must be a considerate child. How could Yu not treasure it?

“What is on the prescription? It’s so greasy. How could it be like this? Was it also Ying who got someone to do it?” The Old Lady frowned and said coldly.

“Someone serving the Fourth Lady bumped into me and spilled the soup on the prescription at the kitchen door, so the prescription became greasy. But just now, Madam asked the doctor to take a look at the prescription. The doctor said that there was some medicinal powder on the prescription that could make people miscarry. This prescription was given by the Fourth Lady.”

“Even if Ying gave it to her, how did she know that Yu was pregnant?” The Old Lady became even more displeased. The child in Yu’s belly was supposed to be aborted, but Yu was still using this child to make a fuss, which was really annoying.

“Mother, the Fourth Lady knows. I have asked the kitchen to prepare a lot of food in the past few days, and there was some sour food sometimes. The Fourth Lady is definitely able to guess it.” Yu felt wronged and cried while holding her belly, looking extremely pitiful.

Back then, she wanted to inform Qu Moying of her pregnancy through Qu Qiuyan. However, Qu Qiuyan did not give any response, and Yu didn’t have the opportunity to hint at it in front of Qu Moying. Otherwise, this scheme would be even more perfect.

Anyway, she almost had a miscarriage because of Qu Moying. She believed both the Old Lady and Qu Zhizhen would stand on her side.

After all, the prescription was indeed borrowed from Qu Moying.

“Ying doesn’t know you are pregnant.” The longer Old Lady listened, the more annoyed she became. Seeing that Yu was fine, the Old Lady stood up and turned to leave. She thought it was better to let Qu

Zhizhen deal with this matter. As for their accusations against Qu Moying, she did not believe them at all. Qu Qiuyan had just framed Qu Moying, and now Yu also targeted Qu Moying.

Having witnessed the fact that Qu Qiuyan framed Qu Moying again and again, the Old Lady felt that Yu's words were even more nonsensical.

The Old Lady had already felt guilty towards Qu Moying, and now she didn't even want to continue talking with Yu.

She ignored Yu and Hai Lan's complaints and didn't even ask if the child in her belly was well.

Things were completely different from what Yu and Hai Lan had imagined. They were both stunned.

Hai Lan reacted quickly and suddenly stood up. She cried and rushed out, "Your Ladyship! Your Ladyship, please help Madam!"

Just as she reached the door, she saw Qu Zhizhen standing at the door with a gloomy face. She was stunned for a moment and hurriedly knelt down, "Master, please go and see Madam. She almost had an accident. Fortunately, the baby is still alright. Master, please protect Madam!"

As she spoke, she moved her knees to make way.

Qu Zhizhen paid the most attention to his children. When he knew that Yu was pregnant, he provided Yu with good food even though Yu was still locked up. He even freed Hai Lan and let her get whatever Yu needed. He also sent some good things over to Yu from time to time.

Hai Lan believed that Qu Zhizhen would definitely punish Qu Moying if he knew that Yu almost had a miscarriage.

The Old Lady had always been partial to Qu Moying, but Qu Zhizhen was not like the Old Lady...

Qu Zhizhen strode into the door. As soon as he came back, the one Granny Wu sent to wait for him told him that something had happened to Yu and asked him to come over quickly.

When he came into the yard, he saw the Old Lady coming out with a cold face. After seeing him, the Old Lady said, "Take a good look at Yu. Don't allow her to keep thinking about making trouble."

When he entered the room, he saw Yu holding her belly with a pale face and red eyes.

"My lord, our child... our child, almost gone." When Yu saw Qu Zhizhen walking to the bed, she was overjoyed. She hurriedly hugged Qu Zhizhen and heaved a sigh of relief in her heart. Just like Hai Lan, Yu also thought the Old Lady was partial to Qu Moying.

The evidence was conclusive, so why couldn't she convict Qu Moying?

Since she got the prescription from Qu Moying and she almost had a miscarriage, Qu Moying could not get away from this. Moreover, the medicinal powder that could lead to miscarriage was not special. Any doctor could tell what it was used for. She did smell so much that she almost had a miscarriage.

Qu Zhizhen did not respond to her hug. He coldly looked at her and asked, "What are you trying to do now?" There was not a single trace of pity but only coldness and anger in his eyes.

He had long given up on the child in Yu's belly. In addition, he, as the Vice Minister of Work, had been questioned recently because the assassins had not been found yet, so he was very annoyed.

If he hadn't been busy in the past few days, he would have already let Yu abort the child. If so, such a thing would not have happened today.

"Master... It was the Fourth Lady... It was the Fourth Lady who wanted to harm Madam. The doctor said that the medicinal powder on the prescription that the Fourth Lady gave Madam could make Madam miscarry if Madam smelt it. The Fourth Lady wanted to destroy the evidence and she sent someone to bump into me, trying to destroy the evidence." Hai Lan spoke for Yu, crying.

Yu and Hai Lan had been cooperating for many years. Their performance was almost perfect.

Nobody could get away from such a situation. Although Yu and Hai Lan were crying, they were laughing inside. Yue was driven out of Qu Mansion because of a similar play before, and now it was Qu Moying's turn.

"She gave you the prescription and let the maid bump into you to destroy the evidence. Are you pregnant?" Qu Zhizhen said coldly.

Both Yu and Hai Lan were stunned by this question. Yu hurriedly said, "My lord, I am pregnant!"

"What does your pregnancy have to do with the prescription Ying gave to the maid? Did you have to check the prescription yourself and smell it before letting the cook make the dish for you? It is the servants' business. Why did you have to do it yourself?" Qu Zhizhen's cold gaze landed on Yu's face.

Yu was still so stupid after so many years, and she seemed to think that Qu Zhizhen was also a blockhead.

#### Chapter 262 Qu Qiuyan Quarreled with Yu

"My lord, it's true this time. I..." Yu continued.

Qu Zhizhen became more and more impatient and asked coldly, "Which time was it not true?"

"My lord... it was true every time. Why don't you believe me but believe in Ying... I am pregnant with your child. Don't you think about the child in my belly? If not, I would rather die." Yu didn't know why things were like this. She cried out and patted her belly. She didn't believe that Qu Zhizhen didn't care about the child.

Qu Zhizhen pushed her away and looked coldly at Yu. "Yu, don't mess around with me. The child should have been aborted. Since you think the same way as me, it's even better."

“Wh... what...” Yu moved back on the bed in shock.

“Don’t you understand? You have taken so much strong medicine. How can you give birth to this child? I have asked the Imperial Doctor. You probably couldn’t give birth to this child. Even if it is born, it will be an abnormal child. What’s the use of having such a child?”

Qu Zhizhen said coldly.

He had indeed asked an Imperial Doctor about this in secret, and the Imperial Doctor had indeed said so. After hearing the Imperial Doctor’s words, Qu Zhizhen decided to give up the child in Yu’s belly.

Since this was a useless child, it didn’t matter whether Yu miscarried or not. Moreover, Yu was brazenly framing Qu Moying. Qu Zhizhen clearly knew that it was not the first time that Yu had framed Qu Moying.

In the past, he did not care about such things at all. His daughter, Qu Moying, hadn’t been brought up by him since she was a child, and she was blind. But recently, he felt that Qu Moying was not useless. She looked decent, and she behaved properly. In contrast, Qu Qiuyan, who was raised by him, behaved inappropriately many times, and she even did such a shameless thing in Dabei Temple.

Qu Zhizhen felt inexplicably irritable. In fact, he had calmed down after talking with his son. However, seeing that Yu did not behave herself but wanted to frame Qu Moying again, Qu Zhizhen couldn’t help but be angry.

He was annoyed because Yu and Qu Qiuyan just kept making trouble. He wasn’t in the mood to listen to Yu’s detailed description of the matter. He knew that it must be another trap. Not only did Yu frame Qu Moying, but Qu Qiuyan also framed Qu Moying. Yu misled her daughter.

If not for that person’s persuasion back then, he wouldn’t have chosen Yu, nor would he bring her back to the mansion. His mother was right about Yu. Yu was a troublemaker, causing chaos in the house.

“My... my lord...” Yu could not believe what she had heard. She looked at Qu Zhizhen, trembling all over with tears falling down her eyes.



She looked beautiful when she cried before, but now it only made Qu Zhizhen feel disgusted.

"I'll have someone send you medicine later. Have a good rest after you take it. In the future, you should rest well in your yard. Don't make any trouble. As for the people around you..." Qu Zhizhen said as he glanced at Hai Lan, who was also trembling. "Don't come out unless necessary. I will have people send you the necessities like before."

After saying that, Qu Zhizhen turned around to leave.

Yu suddenly pounced forward, grabbed Qu Zhizhen's sleeve, and cried miserably, "My lord, that's your son..."

Qu Zhizhen ignored her. He shook her hand off and turned to leave. Yu screamed behind him. He did not look back and went straight out of the room.

After waiting outside the door for a while, an old maid came in carrying a bowl of black medicine with a strong smell in her hand.

"My lord!"

"Let Madam drink it." Qu Zhizhen glanced at the bowl in front of him and ordered.

"If Madam doesn't want to drink it... what should I do?" The old maid asked cautiously. Yu's pained cry came from the room, sounding rather miserable.

"Ask Madam to enjoy it." Qu Zhizhen emphasized the words "enjoy it". He glanced coldly at the old maid and turned to leave.

The old maid had already understood what he meant. Just as she was about to enter the room, she suddenly saw Hai Lan rushing out of the room and shouting, "Quickly call a doctor... Something has happened to Madam."

The old maid turned around to look at Qu Zhizhen, who had just walked to the gate of the courtyard, only to find that he ordered a young servant at the side, "Go get a doctor."

Then, he left without looking back...

In the end, Yu miscarried. It was said that she miscarried after falling to the ground by accident.

When the doctor arrived, Yu had already had a miscarriage. He only prescribed some medicine for her to improve her health, and the Old Lady also asked Granny Wu to send some medicine for Yu.

When servants passed by Qingyu Garden, they could hear Yu's miserable crying. The noise was really loud. As for what exactly had happened, no one knew. The yard was guarded again, and even Hai Lan, who could go out freely before, wasn't allowed to go out.

The fact that Yu had been pregnant surprised everyone in the mansion, but realizing that Yu had taken all kinds of strong medicine before, everyone thought it was normal that she had a miscarriage.

Some people felt pity because it was not easy for Qu Mansion to have a child. However, Yu found out about her pregnancy so late that the child was already damaged. Now, she even miscarried.

Since Yu miscarried, her two children naturally had to visit her. The Old Lady temporarily allowed Qu Qiuyan to come out from her yard and let her visit Yu.

"Mother, you can't even keep your baby. I heard that you made a scene, but nothing happened to Qu Moying. It's really not worth it."

Qu Qiuyan sat on the chair in front of the bed with a gloomy face. "What a pity. If you had known you would miscarry like this, you should have made a bigger fuss and pushed all the blame on Qu Moying."

"Shut up!" Yu's face was gloomy and pale. She raised her scarlet eyes and glared at Qu Qiuyan.

Qu Qiuyan had always been willful in front of Yu. She had never been reprimanded by Yu like this, so she immediately became angry. She hadn't been in a good mood recently.

She suddenly sat up straight and sneered mercilessly, "Mother, why are you blaming me at this time? It's all your own fault. You failed to kill her when she was a child. Now, she is back to harm me. You have always been proud of yourself, but you are the most useless because you can't even deal with a child."

Hearing that Qu Qiuyan was still mocking her at this time, Yu angrily picked up the teacup and smashed it at Qu Qiuyan. However, she was so weak that the teacup fell down in front of Qu Qiuyan, and several pieces of tea leaves flew on Qu Qiuyan's face.

"Mother, I came to see you out of good intentions. I came to see if my future little brother is really gone. I didn't expect you to treat me like this. Since that's the case, I'd better go back. You don't need me anyway. Perhaps if you did not miscarry, you will have an obedient child."

Qu Qiuyan wiped her face. Looking at the tea leaves wiped off from her face, Qu Qiuyan was immediately annoyed. She stood up and uttered those words to Yu. Then, she turned around and left.

Behind her, Yu was trembling in anger. Qu Qiuyan's words were like a knife stabbing into Yu's heart. It hurt so much that Yu could not even speak. She only reached out to cover her chest. "You unfilial!"

"Yes, I am not filial, so why did you give birth to me? If you didn't give birth to me, maybe you wouldn't have to enter Qu Mansion and could marry someone else."

Qu Qiuyan had reached the door but still mouthed back.

The meaning behind these words was, of course, to mock Yu for being dissolute back then and having a child before getting married. Then, she had to become a concubine in Qu Mansion. Although she was born in a low-ranking official's family, she could be a legitimate wife if she married properly.

"You... you..." Yu was humiliated by her daughter's words. She pointed at Qu Qiuyan's back, wanting to say something. But her body suddenly went soft, and there was a sweet taste in her throat. Then, she spat out a mouthful of blood.

Hai Lan was so shocked that she hurriedly stepped forward to support her, patted her back to calm her down, and said in a low voice, "Madam... madam... please don't be angry. Please take care of yourself."

This time, Yu was seriously ill. Originally, she had been better off, but she was ill again, and she even looked like she was going to die.

Yu had a miscarriage because she fell off the bed. After Qu Zhizhen shook off Yu's hand, Yu hit the corner of the bed and lost her child. When the doctor came over, Yu was already on the verge of death. She rested quite a while to recover from the miscarriage, but now Qu Qiuyan angered her like this, how could she withstand it?

Qu Qiuyan walked out angrily. She was also full of anger. She truly believed that her words were right and that she was implicated because Yu did not kill Qu Moying back then. Thinking that Old Lady Ji saw her meet a man outside at night, she felt even more upset.

She was going to enter Lord Jing Mansion, but she didn't know what title Lord Jing would give her. She was afraid that Old Lady Ji would gossip about her with others, which would make it even more difficult to explain herself.

She wanted to see Lord Jing and tell him about her current situation. However, the people she sent did not see Pei Yusheng at all. She was only informed that Lord Jing was very busy these days and did not have time for her. She was told to wait patiently.

However, how could she not be worried? Her heart was already in a mess. She had no idea what would happen next.

Her reputation was already ruined. If Lord Jing did not want her, it would be impossible for her to marry well in the future.

"Sister, what's wrong?" A leisurely voice came into her ears.

When she looked up and saw Qu Mingcheng's face, she burst into tears, feeling like a drowning person who had caught a life buoy. "Brother."

She wiped her tears with a handkerchief.

“What happened? Who bullied you?” Qu Mingcheng had just heard about Yu’s matter and come over from East Mansion. Seeing Qu Qiuyan’s tearful face, he could not help but feel sorry for her. He thought his sister deserved something better. How could she suffer like this?

“Mother... mother scolded me.” Qu Qiuyan cried and complained. Qu Mingcheng seemed to be the only person she could talk to.

“Don’t be angry with mother. She must be very sad now. Let’s say some nice words to her” Qu Mingcheng said softly as he reached out to hold Qu Qiuyan’s hand. “Let’s go in to see mother and cheer her up.”

#### Chapter 263 Threats from Second Young Master Qu

Qu Qiuyan flung her sleeve and pouted. “I’m not going. You go yourself. I’ll go back first.”

Seeing her expression, Qu Mingcheng knew that he could not force her. He could only let go of her hand and gently comforted her, “You go back first. I will come to see you later.”

“Then I’ll leave first.” Qu Qiuyan said.

Qu Mingcheng nodded and watched Qu Qiuyan leave before entering the room.

After spitting a mouthful of blood, Yu lay on the bed, exhausted. She saw stars, and she was gasping with her eyes closed like a defeated cock.

“Second Young Master has come!” Hai Lan’s excited voice rang in her ears.

Lying on the bed, Yu hurriedly opened her eyes and asked eagerly, “Is Mingcheng here? Where is Mingcheng?”

"Mother, I am here." Qu Mingcheng walked to the side of the bed and sat down on a chair. He grabbed Yu's hand and asked, "Mother, are you feeling better?"

Holding Qu Mingcheng's hand, Yu felt that she had come back to life. She looked at her son and burst into tears. "Mingcheng, that blind girl harmed me. She went to your father to slander me, and she wanted to harm me with a prescription, but your father did not listen to me, and he even pushed me. He... he did not want this child."

Speaking of the lost child, Yu was so distressed that she could hardly breathe. Although she framed Qu Moying with the baby she was carrying, the baby was alright. However, Qu Zhizhen caused her to miscarry. As long as she thought of this, there was a surge of hatred in her heart. The doctor had told her just now that she would never be pregnant again.

"Mother, what do you mean?" Qu Mingcheng frowned, and his face darkened.

Yu told him everything in detail. Of course, she did not say anything that was against herself. She only said that Qu Moying spoke ill about her so that Qu Zhizhen treated her badly because of the false accusation of Qu Moying. That was why she lost her child. In the end, Yu cried bitterly.

"Mingcheng, I only have you now... Your... Your father doesn't want my child. Your father made me lose my child."

Qu Mingcheng did not expect there were so many twists and turns. He immediately frowned, "Mother, if she really harmed you like this, I will not spare her."

"It's true. If you don't believe me, go ask your younger sister. Your younger sister has also been harmed by this blind girl. This blind girl is a disaster. Think about it. She has been in the mansion for only a short time, but she has caused me to be like this. I'm afraid your younger sister is also in a difficult situation. She had just quarreled with me here, but... But what can I do? I can't even protect myself now, and I don't know if I can survive... "

Speaking of this, Yu started to cry again.

Qu Mingcheng frowned, a fierce look flashing through his eyes. After a long while, he comforted Yu and said, "Mother, don't be sad. You still have me and my younger sister. In the future, even if father doesn't protect you, I will protect you. I will go and see my younger sister later."

"Good boy." Yu cried even more sadly. She pulled her son's clothes and cried out all the grievances she had suffered from Qu Zhizhen. "Your father is cruel. I treated him so well, but he treated me like this... He thought I didn't know his secret."

Yu gritted her teeth.

"Mother, please don't say that. Father has also been deceived. Otherwise, he wouldn't have treated you like this." Qu Mingcheng's expression turned serious.

"I know, I... I'm just angry..." Yu cried.

"Well, mother, have a good rest. I will come to see you tomorrow." Seeing that Yu was crying so sadly, Qu Mingcheng comforted her again and looked at Hai Lan beside him.

Hai Lan understood and walked forward to comfort Yu. Finally, they made Yu sleep. Although she fell asleep, she sobbed from time to time in her dream. It could be seen that she was really sad.

Seeing Yu like this, Qu Mingcheng stood up and warned, "Take good care of my mother. I will go and see my sister first."

"Take care, Second Young Master!" Hai Lan wiped her tears sadly and lowered her head to send him off...

"Second Brother is here?" Qu Moying asked in surprise.

"Yes, Miss, Second Young Master said that he wanted to see you." Yu Dong said.

"Invite Second Brother in!" Qu Moying said. Although she was a little surprised that he came so soon, it was not that unexpected.

Yu Chun stepped forward and helped her tie the eye veil again.

Yu Dong nodded. Soon, he led Qu Mingcheng in.

"Second Brother." Qu Moying stood up and bowed.

Qu Mingcheng bowed back with a smile. They sat down on both sides of the table, and the maid served them tea.

Qu Mingcheng took a sip of tea, put it down, and asked slowly. "Moying, I heard that you have just returned from Dabei Temple. Is everything going well?"

"Not bad." Qu Moying answered vaguely.

"I heard from Granny Wu that you and Qiuyan had a dispute in Dabei Temple again. I am here to apologize to you for Qiuyan. Although Qiuyan is a little narrow-minded and scheming, she really won't harm anyone. Father has found out about the scoundrels who caused trouble. They may be related to some mansion."

Qu Mingcheng looked at Qu Moying calmly and uttered those words.

"Which mansion?" Qu Moying asked.

"I... I'm afraid I can't tell you now. But please rest assured, Moying. Father and I will definitely not let the person behind the scene get away with it. Since the person wants to deal with our mansion, he must have left some evidence. Our mansion has never been an easy target, no matter who the other party is." Qu Mingcheng said coldly.

Qu Mingcheng looked at Qu Moying and said, his tone becoming a little colder.



Qu Moying looked at him with a smile as if she did not understand the meaning of his words. She even bowed sideways after he finished speaking, "Thank you, Second Brother."

"Moying, you and Qiuyan don't get along well with each other. You two always have some small conflicts, and that's the reason why others could sow dissension between you two. Since you two are sisters, how can you be like this? No matter which of you gets married first in the future, you two should be harmonious and help each other."

Qu Mingcheng said.

Qu Moying frowned and looked at Qu Mingcheng. The corners of her lips curved slightly. She thought Qu Mingcheng's words "small conflicts" were ridiculous. The so-called "small conflicts" almost killed her. She couldn't imagine what if "small conflicts" turned into "big conflicts".

She could see that although Qu Mingcheng was polite, he looked at her with a bit of scrutiny and pride, and he even looked domineering.

Qu Moying stopped smiling and said coldly. "Second Brother, this is not a small conflict."

"Qiuyan grew up in the capital. She has been a famous noble lady in the capital since she was a child. Lord Jing thinks highly of her. She might have a promising future. As for you, you grew up in a village outside the city. Although you are good, you are not famous. Perhaps you will need Qiuyan's help in the future, so you'd better get along well with her."

What Qu Mingcheng had just said in the beginning could be considered nice words, but now the threat in his words was obvious.

He almost pointed out that Qu Qiuyan would be Lord Jing's woman in the future, whereas Qu Moying was nothing and did not have a good reputation because of the previous scandals. Even Marquis Yongning's Mansion canceled the marriage with her. Her future was really unclear.

Qu Moying sneered in her heart. "Sure enough, Qu Mingcheng came to speak up for Yu and Qu Qiuyan."

Previously, when Yu and Qu Qiuyan wanted to harm her, Qu Mingcheng did not stand up and say a word for her. He did not ask Qu Qiuyan to be kind to her for the sake of sisterhood. But now, he said such words for Qu Qiuyan.

Qu Mingcheng was indeed studying at East Mansion and rarely returned to West Mansion. But no matter what, West Mansion was his home. She believed he must have known something. Just from the way Qu Mingcheng looked at her in the past, she knew that he did not take her seriously and he did not care about her.

After all, Yu and Qu Qiuyan were his true family members. As for the others, he did not care at all.

But now, he couldn't sit still anymore.

Since she understood what Qu Mingcheng meant, Qu Moying did not beat around the bush and said with a smile, "Second Brother, I don't care what will happen to me in the future. Anyway, I have managed to live my life alone. I heard that something happened to Mrs. Yu this time, and there are even rumors that it was my fault. Second Brother, are you here for this matter?"

Qu Mingcheng forcefully put down the teacup in his hand, and the smile on his face slowly faded. His gaze turned cold as he stared at Qu Moying and slowly said, "Then, let me ask you, is this matter related to you?"

"Second Brother, if I say I have nothing to do with it, will you believe me?" Qu Moying said, not yielding at all.

Qu Mingcheng's eyes fell on her face. Qu Moying's expression could not be seen clearly because her eyes were covered by the eye veil, but her words made him unhappy. He had never looked at her seriously in the past. He had never taken her seriously at all. She was just a daughter abandoned by Qu Zhizhen and she had an insignificant role in the mansion.

Whether she came back or not, it had nothing to do with him.

But right now, he felt like being provoked by her. He was West Mansion's only successor, and he was good at studying. His father and uncle had always praised him. When Lord Jing came to the mansion, he would sometimes invite him to have a talk. He was outstanding among his peers, but now he was provoked by someone he had never taken seriously.

"You are my sister, of course I believe you." Qu Mingcheng said.

Sister? Qu Qiuyan had only one sister!

Qu Moying looked at Qu Mingcheng and said without any hesitation, "Since you believe in me, let me make it clear: mother's accident has nothing to do with me."

Yu brought it all on herself. Qu Moying only added fuel to fire by making Yu appear to be overdoing and sensational, and the rest was Yu's own doing.

"Moying, if so, that's good. Then I am relieved. As for Qiuyan, I still think you two should try to get along well with each other, so that outsiders cannot plot against us. You two should try to be nice to each other." Qu Mingcheng stood up and said coldly.

He naturally did not believe Qu Moying.

Qu Moying knew that he didn't believe her. She smiled and stood up, bowing to Qu Mingcheng. "Goodbye, Second Brother!"

It didn't matter whether Qu Mingcheng believed it or not. Judging from Qu Mingcheng's attitude, Qu Moying knew that this matter wouldn't be resolved peacefully.

## Chapter 264 Being Implicated and Discredited

The assassins had yet to be found out. Everyone in the capital was trying to find out who launched the assassination, but it was too difficult.

The assassins had all escaped unscathed. Just as the guards were about to attack them with all their might, they all escaped.

The Crown Prince and Lord Jing were both safe and sound, so many people thought that there was something strange about the assassination. Some people even thought that it was related to the Crown Prince and Lord Jing.

After all, the previous assassination involved Lord Yun, so it was possible that the Crown Prince and Lord Jing planned this assassination to purge themselves of suspicion regarding the previous assassination.

Otherwise, why couldn't an assassin be caught? The injured assassin was taken away. The only one who was hurt was a woman in the Crown Prince Mansion. The one in Lord Jing Mansion did not even have a title.

Because of the assassination, the fact that Qu Caiyue had entered Lord Jing Mansion was publicized. Previously, in order to keep a low profile, she was carried into Lord Jing Mansion by a small sedan. Now, most people knew about it.

Qu Mansion was being discussed again. Some aristocratic madams secretly despised Qu Mansion, thinking that Qu Mansion's ladies were really not up to much.

Later, there were rumors spread from the Ji Family's servants and some pilgrims, saying that Third Lady Qu, who was close to Lord Jing, colluded with a group of scoundrels to harm Fourth Lady Qu in Dabei Temple and that Third Lady Qu was so frivolous that she met a man outside in the middle of the night.

The more the rumor spread, the worse it became.

The reputation of Qu Mansion's ladies was almost ruined. People thought Qu Qiuyan was not a decent lady, and neither was Qu Moying. Otherwise, how could Qu Moying always be involved in Qu Qiuyan's matters?

Members of a noble family were always interrelated. Whoever surnamed Qu was considered ill-bred, no matter whether she was innocent or not.

Thus, some people said that it was lucky for Marquis Yongning's Mansion to cancel the marriage with Qu Moying because it was not a good thing to marry someone from Qu Mansion.

Noble families didn't want their sons to marry women from Qu Mansion.

Qu Xuexin's reputation was also implicated. It was even more difficult for her to get married. In the past, she went on a blind date from time to time, but now, she didn't go out. Every time when people saw her in the Old Lady's place, she had a sad face.

The older she was, the harder it was for her to get married.

Apart from this, Qu Mansion had been very peaceful recently. Ever since Yu's incident, Auntie Hai Lan had not appeared in front of anyone. As for what Yu had done before, everyone took it as a farce. Yu said that Qu Moying made her miscarry, but it was obviously fake, and no one bought her story.

Qu Qiuyan was grounded. She had been copying Buddhist scriptures, and she had been quiet recently.

Qu Mansion seemed to have suddenly quieted down. Qu Mansion's ladies had a bad reputation, and none of the masters in the mansion looked happy.

Qu Moying had been living a peaceful and leisurely life these days.

Yu and Qu Qiuyan had stopped plotting against her, and Qu Zhizhen rarely appeared. Only Qu Moying and the Old Lady were in West Mansion, so West Mansion became peaceful.

The outside world was in chaos. Everyone was searching for the assassins. The officials were really busy. However, the inner yard was peaceful.

"Since you have taken a fancy to that woman, you can just get her into your mansion. Why didn't you do anything?" The emperor walked with his hands behind his back. He casually asked Pei Yuanjun, who was next to him. Pei Luo'an, the Crown Prince, was on his other side. Pei Luo'an just smiled quietly and did not speak. He looked warm and kind as usual.

“Your Majesty, I want to wait a little longer.” Pei Yuanjun said indifferently. He smiled gently, but there was a hint of coldness in his smile.

“What are you waiting for? That woman is not young. I think you can marry her now.” The emperor advised. If Pei Yuanjun did not get married, he couldn’t let go of his worries.

“Your Majesty, there’s no hurry. I want to see who else wants to harm her. I’m afraid there are many people who don’t want her to enter my mansion.” Pei Yuanjun said with a faint smile. His indifferent attitude made the emperor speechless.

“You are going to marry her, not to make her a target of your enemies.”

“Your Majesty, there’s no hurry. Since she is my woman, I naturally won’t let others scheme against her. I will watch out for her.”

Pei Yuanjun’s words sounded somewhat affectionate. But looking at his cold eyes, one could tell that he didn’t really mean it.

“She’s the first woman you like. I heard that she has had a sad life. You can’t just leave her there. Vice Minister Qu’s Mansion doesn’t seem to be peaceful.” The emperor was still persuading him with a gentle voice.

His gentle smile was only for Pei Yuanjun. Pei Luo’an looked up at the emperor, and then immediately lowered his head, feeling a bit angry.

He was the Crown Prince, son of the emperor. Pei Yuanjun was not the son of the emperor. However, the emperor was so good to Pei Yuanjun.

But he did not dare to say anything.

“Your Majesty, I just happened to see a woman whom I’m willing to be with, but she doesn’t have much to do with me now. If she really can’t enter my mansion, or if she is killed because of me, I will definitely seek justice for her. Don’t worry, Your Majesty.”

Pei Yuanjun said indifferently, shaking his long sleeves. He looked at Pei Luo’an and said lazily, “The Crown Princess has passed away. Eastern Palace should have someone to manage the palace. It is better to choose a Crown Princess first.”

Looking at Pei Yuanjun, who deliberately changed the topic and didn’t take what he said to heart, the emperor sighed silently. Pei Yuanjun was no longer a young man, but he was not keen on women, which made the emperor worried. He could understand why there was no woman in charge of Lord Yun Mansion’s inner yard.

Since Pei Yuanjun had finally found a woman he liked, the emperor wanted Pei Yuanjun to get her into his mansion first. After that, he would urge Pei Yuanjun to take a Princess Consort. As long as Pei Yuanjun started to have a woman, the following things would be easy.

Unexpectedly, Pei Yuanjun just casually used the woman as an excuse.

Thinking of this Qu Mansion’s lady being framed and the reputation of Qu Mansion’s ladies in the capital recently, the emperor snorted, and a trace of coldness flashed through his eyes. There was actually someone who cared so much about Lord Yun’s marriage and did not want him to have descendants. He had to investigate this matter thoroughly.

Recently, there were rumors about Qu Mansion’s ladies everywhere in the capital. The emperor had inquired about the reason behind the matter. It seemed that Qu Moying was innocent, but her reputation was implicated. Everyone was saying that Qu Mansion’s ladies were not virtuous.

Was there really not someone who added fuel to the fire on purpose? He could not help but feel a little annoyed.

Although he doted on Pei Yuanjun, Pei Yuanjun did not have any improper thought. Could it be that these people really could not tolerate Pei Yuanjun?

Hearing that he was mentioned, Pei Luo'an hurriedly shook his head and smiled gently. "Uncle Yun's marriage is important. I still want to be in mourning for the ex-Crown Princess for a while."

"I'm not in a hurry anyway. I've heard that Princess Ji was injured, and no one is in charge of affairs in your mansion now." Pei Yuanjun said indifferently.

He glanced sideways at Pei Luo'an and continued, "You can't just let any concubine with a low status manage the inner yard, right?"

Pei Luo'an had always pretended to be affectionate to the ex-Crown Princess, Ji Hanyue, but actually, there were many concubines in his mansion. It was just that they did not have a formal status. Previously, two women dancers almost fought with Ji Youran in Ji Hanyue's mourning hall. Others did not know about it, but Pei Yuanjun knew it.

As for Ji Youran, it was said that she entered Eastern Palace to serve the ex-Crown Princess. But it didn't seem to be true. Pei Yuanjun tended to believe that Pei Luo'an had an affair with Ji Youran a long time ago, and the ex-Crown Princess probably could do nothing about it, which was why they got together.

Pei Luo'an pretended to be affectionate to Ji Hanyue, and Ji Youran pretended to be Ji Hanyue's considerate sister. What an interesting couple! Pei Yuanjun raised his eyes, implying something.

Being ridiculed by Pei Yuanjun, Pei Luo'an blushed. He could not retort but only swallow his anger. He lowered his head and said, "I will wait. I'll wait a little longer."

When he said this, he looked sad, and his eyes were red. Whoever looked at him would think that he was affectionate. Who would believe that Pei Luo'an had killed Ji Hanyue?

"Alright, the empress will take care of your matter. She will choose a new Crown Princess for you. As the Crown Prince, how can you have no official wife all the time?" The emperor scolded Pei Luo'an in a low voice.

"Yes, father. It's all up to you." Pei Luo'an nodded, no longer trying to explain or refuse.



“Since your Side Princess is injured, haven’t you investigated your mansion? This kind of thing has happened again and again. Have you never thought that there might be assassins in your mansion?” The emperor said as he walked, and he grunted coldly with extreme displeasure.

Pei Luo’an was the Crown Prince, but the Crown Princess died, and his Side Princess was injured now. It was not a good thing. The emperor did not know if it was because the Crown Prince was incompetent or because someone had been targeting him all the time.

“Father, I will do my best to investigate this matter.” Pei Luo’an lowered his head, his back covered in a cold sweat.

“Crown Prince, it is true that you should investigate this matter thoroughly. There was an accident in Lord Jing Mansion, too. A woman accidentally fell into the lake, but it was nothing serious. On the other hand, your mansion made a big fuss over the accident. It’s really worrying. Crown Prince, if you need help, let me know. I will let West Prison investigate. Maybe they can find out something.” Pei Yuanjun said lazily.

West Prison’s people were executioners and Pei Yuanjun’s subordinates. How could Pei Luo’an dare to let them enter the mansion to investigate?

“Thank you very much, Uncle Yun. I will investigate this matter thoroughly. Don’t worry about me.” Pei Luo’an answered carefully, afraid to sound improper in front of Pei Yuanjun.

Fortunately, Pei Yuanjun did not pursue the matter any further. He only smiled and nodded at Pei Luo’an. “Crown Prince, if you need anything, just let me know.”

“Thank you, Uncle Yun.” Pei Luo’an said hurriedly.

While they were talking, they had arrived at the empress’ Pepper House Hall. Pei Yuanjun stopped and said, “Your Majesty, I will stop here.”

“Are you leaving the palace now?” The emperor frowned.

"I'm not in a hurry to leave. I just want to take a walk in the palace and see if there are any familiar things." Pei Yuanjun said with a smile.

The emperor had liked Pei Yuanjun since Pei Yuanjun was a kid. He let Pei Yuanjun live in a hall that was almost the same as the other princes' halls and raised him up in the palace. After Pei Yuanjun grew up, he left the palace and returned to his own mansion, never coming back to live in the palace again.

"Alright, since you want to go take a look, just do it!" The emperor waved his hand.

Pei Yuanjun bowed to the emperor, turned around, and left with his hands behind his back.

The emperor brought Pei Luo'an to Pepper House Hall. The empress had already been informed that they were coming, so she brought palace servants out early to welcome them...

## Chapter 265 Cousin Xiao Moved In

"Fourth Lady, Her Ladyship wants to see you." An old maid sent by the Old Lady said with a smile.

"Is there anything?" Qu Moying asked in surprise. When she greeted the Old Lady this morning, the Old Lady didn't say anything. Why did the Old Lady suddenly send someone over at this time?

"Fourth Lady, you will know as long as you get there." The old maid was all smiles. It seemed to be a good thing.

Seeing that the old maid really didn't want to tell her, Qu Moying didn't ask again. She asked Yu Chun to help her freshen up. Then, she went to the Old Lady's yard with Yu Chun.

When Qu Moying entered the Old Lady's room, she saw that there was a guest in the room. She lowered her head and went forward, and then she bowed to the Old Lady in the middle. "Greetings, grandmother."

"Come here. Come and meet your Cousin Xiao." Old Lady Qu said with a smile.

Qu Moying obediently took two steps forward and looked at the young man sitting next to Old Lady Qu. She lowered her head slightly and bowed sideways again. "Greetings, Cousin Xiao."

However, she did not know who this so-called "cousin" was.

"Fourth Cousin Sister, nice to see you." The young man stood up and looked Qu Moying up and down. Even though her eyes were covered by an eye veil, he could tell that she should be good-looking. He relaxed slightly, but he didn't know what her eyes looked like. He didn't know if she could still see things or if her eyes would affect her appearance.

After all, she was said to be neither talented nor beautiful.

But she looked fine now.

After they both took their seats, Qu Moying looked up at the young man. He was around seventeen or eighteen years old. He looked gentle, kind, and handsome.

"Ying, this is the nephew of my parents' family. You can call him Cousin Xiao. He will be staying in our mansion during this period of time to prepare for the Imperial Examination next spring. Your father became an official after taking the Imperial Examination, and Minister Liu had the same experience. They took the same Imperial Examination."

Qu Moying did not know about this. She smiled and nodded gently.

"Later, take your Cousin Xiao with you and arrange a yard for him. It doesn't need to be big, but it must be quiet, so that your Cousin Xiao won't be disturbed when studying."

Qu Qiuyan was grounded to copy Buddhist scriptures. Although she was still in charge of matters, trivial matters were all handled by Qu Moying. The matter of finding a yard naturally was the business of Qu Moying.

"I will arrange it now." Qu Moying stood up and said.

"Then bring your cousin along to take a look. It's better for him to pick one himself." Old Lady Qu suggested with a smile.

Qu Moying looked at the Old Lady and then looked at Cousin Xiao, who had been smiling at her. She frowned slightly but still nodded. "Yes."

"Hanyuan, although Ying has eye disease, she has basically recovered. Right now, she is in the final stage of recuperation. She'll be no different from normal people in the future." Old Lady Qu explained to Xiao Hanyuan with a smile.

Xiao Hanyuan stood up and bowed deeply to Old Lady Qu. "Grandaunt, Fourth Lady is very good."

"That's good. The two of you have just met. You can take a walk with her and pick a suitable yard." Old Lady Qu nodded in satisfaction.

Watching the two of them leave one after the other, Old Lady Qu kept smiling. Granny Wu knew the situation, so she came over and said to Old Lady Qu, "Your Ladyship, you can rest assured now. Fourth Lady didn't say anything, and Young Master Xiao seemed to be satisfied with Fourth Lady."

Old Lady Qu nodded and said, "Let's wait and see. I don't know if they can get along well with each other. He is not bad, and he is from my parents' family. Therefore, it is easy for me to protect Ying if they get married. Although I've hinted to them before, it depends on themselves. If they couldn't be together, I will choose someone else for Ying."

Old Lady Qu didn't want her granddaughter to suffer at all, even if the other party was her grandnephew.

"Your Ladyship, you are doing this for the Fourth Lady's good. She will understand." Granny Wu knew what Old Lady Qu was thinking and comforted her.

The Old Lady sighed and didn't say anything else. Her smile slowly faded, revealing a trace of worry.

This was all she could do now. As for the rest, she could only wait and see...

Qu Moying and Xiao Hanyuan went out of the yard one after the other. When they arrived outside the courtyard, Xiao Hanyuan stood still and waited for Qu Moying. Seeing her step forward, he smiled and said, "Fourth Cousin Sister, I will have to trouble you."

"It doesn't matter." Qu Moying smiled and said gently, slightly distancing herself from Xiao Hanyuan.

Xiao Hanyuan naturally knew that Qu Moying wanted to avoid arousing suspicion, so he did not wait any longer and slowly walked forward. The two of them walked one after the other towards the backyard. In the end, Xiao Hanyuan chose a relatively remote and medium-sized yard. This yard was also close to the back door, so it was convenient to get in and out of the mansion. It was indeed a good place, and the environment was also elegant.

Since Xiao Hanyuan had chosen the yard, Qu Moying asked the maids to clean up the yard and carry Xiao Hanyuan's things into it.

Xiao Hanyuan only brought a young servant with him, so Qu Moying assigned some young and old maids to serve him. After that, she said goodbye to him and left.

Xiao Hanyuan stood in the corridor and watched Qu Moying leave. He smiled gently and looked very polite.

He was the Old Lady's grandnephew, and the Old Lady let him live here. None of the servants in the mansion dared to neglect him. They took him seriously and served him wholeheartedly.

When Qu Zhizhen returned to the mansion, he learned that Xiao Hanyuan had come to the mansion. He specially asked Xiao Hanyuan to go and have an audience with him. After a brief talk, he was extremely satisfied with Xiao Hanyuan and kept praising him. He said that Xiao Hanyuan was quite knowledgeable and that Xiao Hanyuan should be able to pass the Imperial Examination next spring.

Qu Mingcheng also knew about Xiao Hanyuan's arrival. He went to see Xiao Hanyuan in the afternoon.

Hearing that Qu Mingcheng was coming over, Xiao Hanyuan specially went out to greet him. The two of them had a very pleasant conversation. Qu Mingcheng was also going to take the Imperial Examination next spring. The more they talked, the more congenial they became. That night, Qu Mingcheng did not even return to East Mansion but stayed in West Mansion.

When someone reported it to Qu Zhizhen, Qu Zhizhen smiled. He thought it was a good thing. Previously, Qu Mingcheng had only one study companion, namely, the son of Qu Zhizhen's eldest brother. Now that there was another person with good knowledge, it would be a good chance for Qu Mingcheng to improve.

Since everyone in Qu Mansion had accepted Xiao Hanyuan's arrival, Xiao Hanyuan stayed in Qu Mansion. He sometimes followed Qu Mingcheng to East Mansion. He did not meet with Qu Moying often, and he was very polite when he met her occasionally. They would exchange a few words after they greeted each other.

Such a peaceful life was suddenly disrupted by one thing.

But for Qu Moying, this matter was not surprising...

Yamen's men came to the door, looking for the shopkeeper Yu Qian.

Coincidentally, Qu Moying was at the Old Lady's place. She saw the Old Lady let someone from the Ministry of Justice enter the living room. It was a young official.

The official from the Ministry of Justice politely bowed to Old Lady Qu and said, "Your Ladyship, I would like to meet the Second Madam Qu and ask her about some things."

Qu Moying and Qu Xuexin were both there. The two of them looked at each other in surprise and continued to look through the folded screen.

The two of them were originally in Old Lady Qu's living room, but now they hid behind the folded screen.

“What do you want to know?” Old Lady Qu frowned and asked carefully.

“I want to know if a person called Yu Qian works for her? Does she know what he has done? Or did she ask him to do it?” The official from the Ministry of Justice said.

“What happened?”

“There is indeed some trouble. Yu Qian used the name of the Second Madam Qu to swindle people, and the victim sued him.” The official said with a smile, not trying to hide anything.

Old Lady Qu’s heart skipped a beat. She hurriedly asked Granny Wu to call Hai Lan over. It was inconvenient for Yu to see anyone now, and she had not woken up yet.

Aunty Hai Lan soon followed Granny Wu into the room.

After Aunty Hai Lan bowed, the Old Lady asked, “Hai Lan, do you know Yu Qian?”

Just now, the Old Lady had heard the official mention Yu Qian several times. Hearing the name “Yu Qian”, she felt that he must have something to do with Yu.

Hai Lan did not understand why the Old Lady called her over. She was already uneasy. Hearing the Old Lady’s question, she became increasingly uneasy. However, she did not dare to hide it. “There is indeed such a person. He is a shopkeeper of Madam. He has been managing Madam’s shop for so long. He is quite capable.”

“Do you know that he is going to sell your Madam’s shop?” The Old Lady asked coldly.

Aunty Hai Lan was stunned. “How... how could this be?”

"He said that it was Second Madam Qu's intention. It was Second Madam Qu who asked him to sell the shop." The official looked at Auntie Hai Lan and said, "He accepted the buyer's money, but he couldn't give the buyer the deeds of the shop. Now, he has been caught by the Ministry of Justice."

"Madam... Madam won't do such a thing." Hai Lan anxiously said. She hated Yu Qian for causing the trouble. How could he do such a thing and even involve Yu at such a time? She asked suspiciously, "Are you mistaken? He is just a shopkeeper. How can he have the right to sell the shop?"

She found it suspicious. Yu Qian used to be quite reliable and had never made any big mistake. How could such a big thing happen at this time?

"It's true. He said that Second Madam Qu ordered him to do it. Since you work for Second Madam Qu, go to the Ministry of Justice with us to give testimony." The official said.

Since Second Madam Qu could not go with him, he could bring her private maid with him.

Both sides had to confront each other in court since they both had a point.

Hearing that she had to go to the court alone, Hai Lan panicked. She looked up at the Old Lady and said sadly, "Your Ladyship, I still have to serve Madam."

The Old Lady pondered for a moment, looked at her, and said, "Go to the Ministry of Justice first and find out the truth. I will send someone else to serve Yu."

It meant that Hai Lan had to make this trip.

Behind the folded screen, Qu Moying's eyes flashed with a hint of gloom, and the corners of her lips curved up silently. This thing happened at the right time...

Chapter 266 Who Owned the Deed of the Shop?



“Moying, did you find anything?” Qu Xuexin whispered into Qu Moying’s ear.

Qu Moying raised her eyebrows and looked at Qu Xuexin. She shook her head and pointed outside, signaling Qu Xuexin to continue listening.

The matters outside had basically been dealt with. Hai Lan could do nothing except follow the Ministry of Justice’s official.

After the people outside left, Qu Xuexin and Qu Moying came out from behind the folding screen.

The two of them sat down on both sides of the Old Lady.

“Grandmother, what shop were you talking about? Is it Madam’s own shop?” Qu Moying looked up and asked.

In fact, Yu didn’t have her own shop. She entered the mansion as a noble concubine. How could she have any shops?

Qu Moying’s words reminded the Old Lady, and she said, “Granny Wu, go and find out which shop Yu is in charge of. Where did she get the deed of the shop?”

The mansion was in charge of a number of shops, which were recorded in a booklet. However, there were no shops under Yu’s name. None of them was Yu’s private property.

For so many years, Yu had been in charge of the property of the mansion. However, at the very beginning, the Old Lady had deliberately kept some of Yue’s property. Although it seemed to be controlled by Yu, it was still in the hands of the Old Lady because these were all Yue’s. At that time, Yu wanted to kill Granny Zhou through Qu Zhizhen’s hand because she coveted Yue’s property.

When Granny Zhou went to Earl Ling’an’s Mansion, she specifically told the Old Lady about Yue’s private property. She asked the Old Lady to help Yue keep her private property, saying that it was for Qu Moying.

At that time, the Old Lady also agreed. After that, the property was locked up by the Old Lady, but most of it was taken away by Yu because the Old Lady was too old to effectively guard against her. Later, Yu controlled the internal affairs of the entire mansion. However, she couldn't find the deeds of some shops in Yue's property because the Old Lady had placed them well early.

After that, the Old Lady handed Yue's shops and the mansion's shops over to Yu and let her manage them. However, the Old Lady still kept the deeds of the shops.

However, others didn't know about this, and they all thought that Yu had the deeds.

The shopkeeper Yu Qian thought so, and even Qu Moying thought so. Therefore, when she heard the Old Lady's words, she raised her eyes, looking surprised and touched. She felt complicated, "Did grandmother keep Mother's things to herself long ago?"

If this was the case, it would be way too beneficial for her!

Sure enough, Granny Wu found out in a while.

"Your Ladyship, it's ex-Madam's shop. It's a clothing store." Granny Wu soon checked it out.

The Old Lady was silent for a moment before ordering Granny Wu, "Go to Third Lady's place and bring over the account books of all the shops that belong to Fourth Lady. In the future, those will all belong to Fourth Lady."

Looking at the account book in her hand, Granny Wu hesitated for a moment and asked, "But what if Third Lady asks about it?"

Yue left behind many shops, and none of them was lost. They were managed together with the mansion's shops, and they were now managed by Qu Qiuyan because she had managed the accounts before. Although Qu Qiuyan was locked up and punished to copy Buddhist scriptures, she was still dealing with some matters. Although she could not come out, the manager could go into her place to report the accounts.

Moreover, such accounts basically didn't need to be reported too frequently. They were reported once a month, sometimes once every three months, and even once every half a year.

The account books were all in Qu Qiuyan's hands. She might not be willing to hand over the account books of so many shops. Although Granny Wu worked for the Old Lady, Qu Qiuyan might not listen to her at this time.

"Ying, you go with Granny Wu. Your mother's shops should indeed be for you. However, I forgot about them before. This accident reminded me. In the future, you can take care of them yourself. You can promote the people you like, but if you think the previous managers are alright, you can keep them."

The Old Lady said.

Qu Moying raised her head, bit her lips and asked. "Grandmother, is it my mother's shop that is involved in the incident?"

"Yes, it's your mother's shop. It's my fault. I should have given it to you a long time ago." The Old Lady sighed, her expression gentle.

It was indeed her fault. After Yu's incident, Qu Qiuyan was temporarily in charge of the mansion. Later, Qu Moying also took care of the business in the mansion. At that time, the Old Lady should have settled this matter. If so, perhaps this dispute would not have happened.

The Old Lady forgot this thing because she was busy with different things. If Qu Moying didn't say those words just now, she would think that the shops in Yu's hands were the mansion's shops.

"Thank you, grandmother." Qu Moying lowered her head and bowed respectfully to the Old Lady. Her eyes welled with tears.

It was really not easy for the Old Lady to do this for Yue and her.

"Go!" The Old Lady nodded with a smile.

Qu Moying turned to leave.

“Grandmother, I’ll go with Moying.” Qu Xuexin suddenly said.

Qu Moying raised her head and looked at Qu Xuexin in shock. She did not expect that Qu Xuexin, who had been crying these past few days, would bother to take care of her business.

“Alright, then you may go with Moying.” The Old Lady thought about it and nodded because she thought that Qu Xuexin was gentle, so if Qu Qiuyan and Qu Moying quarreled, Qu Xuexin could stop them.

Qu Xuexin, Qu Moying, and Granny Wu said goodbye to the Old Lady. Then, they headed towards Qu Qiuyan’s Furong House.

Qu Xuexin was still distressed. When she spoke to Qu Moying, she had been frowning. Qu Moying knew that Qu Xuexin was in a bad mood, so she didn’t mention anything that might upset her. She only talked about some trivial things in the mansion. Qu Xuexin had been helping Luo manage East Mansion’s affairs, so she knew some things.

As they spoke, they had already arrived at Furong House. The old maid guarding the gate had already gone in to report their arrival to Qu Qiuyan. When they entered the yard, the curtain at the door of the room was lifted high, and a maid was already waiting there.

Qu Moying and Qu Xuexin entered the room and saw Qu Qiuyan sitting in the middle. Seeing them, Qu Qiuyan appeared somewhat gentle.

They all sat down.

“Third Lady, Her Ladyship asked me to come and get some account books.” Granny Wu said with a smile.

“What account books?” Qu Qiuyan’s expression changed slightly as she glanced at Qu Moying.

"The account books of a few shops. These are not our mansion's shops, and there are a total of six shops." Granny Wu gave a paper with the names of the shops on it to Qu Qiuyan.

Qu Qiuyan took it and glanced at it. Her face darkened. Her hands holding the paper trembled, and she asked, "Granny Wu, what is the meaning of this?"

These shops were nearly half of West Mansion's shops, and they happened to be the shops that her mother promised to give her as dowry.

Qu Qiuyan had already taken these shops as her own.

"Third Lady, Her Ladyship said that these shops belong to Fourth Lady, so these account books should also be Fourth Lady's. Third Lady, please tidy up the account books and give them all to Fourth Lady." Granny Wu said with a smile.

Qu Qiuyan was stunned. She suddenly looked at Qu Moying and gritted her teeth. "Moying, what did you say to grandmother? Did you ask her to give half of the property of the mansion to you? Are you preparing dowry for yourself?"

"Qiuyan, speak properly." Qu Xuexin raised her head and scolded softly.

However, Qu Xuexin's words did not cool Qu Qiuyan down. Instead, Qu Qiuyan got even angrier. Her hands on the table were clenched into fists.

Her voice became sharp. "Didn't I speak properly? Since when is it Moying's turn to inherit anything in this mansion? Father has only one son. Even if the shops were to be passed down, they would be my brother's. Why are Moying having them? Did Moying say anything to grandmother that grandmother did such an unreasonable thing?"

Qu Qiuyan was so anxious that her words were harsh.

These shops were originally hers. How could she be willing to let Qu Moying take them away? After she entered Lord Jing Mansion, these would be her foundation. With these, she could have a more

promising future. With these shops and other properties as her dowry, she was sure that most of the noble ladies in the capital couldn't compare with her in terms of dowry.

Even the noble ladies from large aristocratic families could hardly compare with her. Although these families were wealthy and influential, they had too many sons and daughters. If they distributed fortune like this, their future descendants would have fewer and fewer properties.

Hearing Qu Qiuyan's sharp words against her, Qu Moying couldn't hold it in. She looked up at Qu Qiuyan, took the teacup at hand, took a sip gracefully, and slowly put it down under Qu Qiuyan's angry gaze.

Only then did she look at Qu Qiuyan with contempt. "Third Sister, what you said is so unreasonable. They were originally mine. Why can't grandmother give them to me? Do you think she should leave them to you?"

"They belong to the mansion. Even if they are not for me, they are for my brother. Why should I let you take them away? My brother and I have the same parents, so I take care of them for him. What's the problem?" Qu Qiuyan glared at Qu Moying.

"Qiuyan, these are really Moying's. How can you say that to Moying? Grandmother has agreed to it." Qu Xuexin continued to persuade Qu Qiuyan.

Qu Moying glanced at Qu Xuexin, her eyes deep.

"Why are they hers? They are clearly my brother's. Everything in this mansion belongs to my brother. How can they be hers?" Qu Qiuyan couldn't hold back anymore and glared at Qu Moying.

"Qiuyan..."

"Eldest Sister, please stop." Qu Moying interrupted Qu Xuexin. She looked up at Qu Qiuyan and said coldly, "Qiuyan, these were originally my mother's dowry, how can they be Second Brother's? Don't tell me that I shouldn't have my things and that I should leave them to Second Brother!"

The dowry of an aristocratic family's madam was left for her children. If she passed away when she was still young and did not have any children, her parents' family could get her dowry back, just like Earl Ling'an's Mansion getting back Ji Hanyue's dowry.

Yue's dowry was just a prelude, and Ji Hanyue's dowry was her real goal. However, this matter had to start from Qu Mansion. After all, Qu Moying could not do it righteously with her current identity.

Those who had high status in Earl Ling'an's Mansion would not speak up for her. Those who had low status in Earl Ling'an's Mansion could not help in this...

## Chapter 267 Duchess Yu Was Involved

"Your mother's dowry?" Qu Qiuyan was stunned. Her heart skipped a beat, and she looked at Qu Xuexin beside her, only to see Qu Xuexin nodding at her.

"Yes, it is my mother's dowry." Qu Moying said flatly. The corners of her lips curled into a faintly mocking smile.

"You... you're talking nonsense. They belong to the mansion. They are father's shops." Qu Qiuyan shook her head in disbelief and said subconsciously.

Qu Moying still smiled and said, "They are my mother's property. How could they be the mansion's property? Grandmother has made it clear. Third Sister, please give the account books to me so that I could investigate them clearly in case the Ministry of Justice comes to us again and charges us with the crime of deception."

"What... what do you mean?" Qu Qiuyan's expression changed drastically. Why was this related to the Ministry of Justice?

"I heard that someone from Mrs. Yu's family is taking care of my mother's shops. He spread fake information to sell one of the shops, and he accepted the buyer's money but he could not give the buyer the shop. Now, the buyer has sued him to the Ministry of Justice."

"Which family is the buyer from?" Qu Qiuyan's heart was in a mess.

"I don't know, but it must be an aristocratic family. Otherwise, it wouldn't have caused such a big fuss. It is actually the Ministry of Justice that is dealing with this matter. Perhaps our father has been questioned." Qu Moying said to Qu Qiuyan with a faint smile.

Qu Qiuyan turned to look at Qu Xuexin. She wanted Qu Xuexin to tell her that Qu Moying was lying. However, Qu Xuexin nodded at her again.

"You..." Qu Qiuyan felt like she couldn't make a sound. She opened her mouth but could not spit out a word.

Qu Moying looked at Qu Qiuyan and said slowly and firmly, "Third Sister, please return my mother's shops. If you think that something is wrong, you can ask Father. Father happens to have something to tell you. He said that he has found some clues about the scoundrel, and he might need you to help confirm it!"

The scoundrel was related to Granny Qing, who worked for Qu Qiuyan. Although Granny Qing was dead, Qu Qiuyan was not cleared of suspicion. Now the scoundrel had fallen into Qu Zhizhen's hands. Perhaps Qu Zhizhen had really obtained some information. Qu Qiuyan thought her father was so capable that he must have found out the truth.

The previous slap he gave her had proved it.

She was no longer the daughter that her father loved dearly. When she thought of this, Qu Qiuyan's eyes turned red. She gritted her teeth, and her face stiffened.

Qu Qiuyan believed that if Yu was still Qu Mansion's madam-in-charge, Qu Moying would not dare to insult her like this. However, Yu could do nothing now.

"Third Sister, please hurry up. Grandmother is waiting for me to return." Qu Moying looked at her and said word by word.



This made Qu Qiuyan feel even more humiliated. She pressed her hands on the corner of the table and clenched her fists tightly. Her eyes were red as she glared at Qu Moying, as if she wanted to devour her.

“Qiuyan, quickly take them out. Grandmother is really waiting.” Seeing her like this, Qu Xuexin hurriedly stepped forward and grabbed her hand.

“Go and bring over the account books of these shops.” Qu Qiuyan suppressed the various emotions in her heart and said, gritting her teeth.

Her heart was burning with jealousy and hatred.

Qing Ju hurriedly went into the room and took out a set of account books. They were the latest account books, and the rest of the account books were in the storeroom.

Yu Dong stepped forward and took them from Qing Ju. After a quick examination, he nodded at Qu Moying.

“Third Sister, since the matter has been settled, we will go back first.” Qu Moying stood up and said leisurely as if she did not see Qu Qiuyan’s vicious expression.

Qu Qiuyan bit her lips and did not say anything because she was afraid that she couldn’t control herself when she spoke. She only glared fiercely at Qu Moying.

Qu Moying smiled at Qu Qiuyan again and turned to leave with Yu Dong.

Qu Xuexin still wanted to say something to Qu Qiuyan, but she knew Qu Qiuyan wouldn’t listen to her in this situation. Previously, Qu Qiuyan was the most respected one among Qu Mansion’s three ladies, and she was indeed the most outstanding one. She always received special treatment when there was something nice. But now, the situation had changed.

Shaking her head slightly, Qu Xuexin stood up and followed behind Qu Moying.

Granny Wu walked in the back and bowed to Qu Qiuyan. She comforted Qu Qiuyan gently, "Third Lady, don't be angry. These were originally the ex-Madam's shops, and they are indeed left for the Fourth Lady."

Qu Qiuyan bit the corner of her mouth until it was dark red. The hatred in her eyes could not be concealed as she lowered her head forcefully.

Seeing that she was silent, Granny Wu sighed and advised her, "Third Lady, there are still many shops in the mansion. They are still under your control. Just manage them well."

Qu Qiuyan still did not respond.

Seeing her like this, Granny Wu could not say anything else and could only turn around and leave...

Qu Moying was quite surprised because she got the account books smoothly. At the same time, she was truly moved by the Old Lady. If the Old Lady did not specially keep them for her and if Yu got these shops, Qu Moying would not be able to regain them so easily.

Granny Wu found some old account books and moved them from the storeroom to Qianyue House.

It was rare for Granny Yan to intervene, and she actually helped Qu Moying check these past accounts, which helped Qu Moying a lot.

The others were not very familiar with the accounts. In fact, only Qu Moying was able to read them. Now that Granny Yan had helped, Qu Moying sorted out so many accounts quickly.

For the past gains of the mansion, Qu Moying did not want to reclaim all of them. After all, some of the benefits were taken by the mansion. Although Yu took a lot, the mansion also got some of them. It was not good to settle accounts too precisely because Qu Moying had not broken off with Qu Mansion, and she still needed Qu Mansion.

Moreover, the Old Lady was in the mansion, and she was deeply moved by the Old Lady.

She did not want to make the Old Lady unhappy because of this kind of thing. It was already such a surprise that she could get all the shops back so quickly. She originally thought that she would have to spend a lot of effort, but the Old Lady saved her much trouble.

The subsequent things would also be easier...

When Hai Lan came back from the Ministry of Justice, she first went to see the Old Lady.

“What happened? Which family did he trick?” The Old Lady asked.

“He tricked someone from Duke Yu Mansion.” Auntie Hai Lan’s face was deathly pale. She knelt to the Old Lady and began to cry, “Your Ladyship, please speak up for Madam. This matter has nothing to do with Madam. Madam does not know anything. She hasn’t seen Yu Qian for a long time. How could... How could she tell him to sell the shop? Moreover, Madam does not have the deed of this shop.”

Hai Lan was Yu’s confidant. Of course, she knew the truth. Yu only had the account books and profits. The most essential thing, namely, the deed of the shop, was still with the Old Lady. It was impossible for Yu to let people sell the shop.

Yu Qian insisted that Yu send someone to tell him to do that. Then, he took out a pouch with some silver inside. It was an ordinary pouch, and many Qu Mansion’s servants had this kind of pouch. Yu Qian said that he let an old maid come to ask her. Hai Lan explained that she thought he asked about the matters in the shop, and she told him to do as Madam said.

She didn’t know Yu Qian misunderstood it.

There was one thing that could absolutely prove that Yu was innocent. The deed of this shop was not in Yu’s hands, but it had to be verified by the Old Lady.

The trickiest part was that the matter involved Duke Yu Mansion.

Although Duke Yu Mansion had declined, it was still a Duke's mansion. It could not be defamed. Although Duke Yu didn't hold a position in the court and didn't even stay in Duke Yu Mansion on normal days, nobody dared to look down on him. After all, he was once a valiant general of Great Zhou.

It was only because he had been implicated that he lived a low-key life. He was actually not that old, and he was about the same age as Qu Zhizhen.

But when Qu Zhizhen was still a nobody, Duke Yu was already famous in the country. There were even rumors that Lord Yun hardly listened to others, but he would listen to Duke Yu. After all, Duke Yu was no worse than Duke Qi in terms of military talent, and he was much younger than Duke Qi.

"Which person did he trick?" The Old Lady's face did not look good. She did not expect Duke Yu Mansion to be involved.

"It seems to be a manager who served Duchess Yu." Aunty Hai Lan cried.

"Duchess Yu?" The Old Lady asked.

"Yes, it's Duchess Yu." Aunty Hai Lan said with certainty.

The Old Lady fell silent. When Duchess Yu was young, she used to be Great Zhou's most famous beauty. She met Duke Yu, who was a young master at that time. Their marriage had once caused a stir in the capital. Whether it was in terms of family background, identity, or appearance, they could be called a perfect couple.

Unfortunately, Duke Yu Mansion was also implicated because of Duchess Yu, which led to the decline of Duke Yu. However, there was one thing that made the capital's people praise him. Although Duke Yu was implicated by Duchess Yu back then and was deprived of his military power, he remained affectionate to Duchess Yu.

He rarely lived in Duke Yu Mansion because Duchess Yu was not in good health and was recuperating in the village outside Duke Yu Mansion. It was said that Duchess Yu had been sick since she returned to the capital. She had been in poor health and had never socialized with other madams for so many years.

Even if there were some occasions that she had to attend, she would attend them with her son. It was said that he was a capable person. He was young but sensible, and he was good at martial arts. He was famous in the capital.

The Old Lady was unable to access people around Duchess Yu. Duchess Yu had not shown up for so many years, so she had to turn to Duke Yu.

"Is Zhizhen back?" The Old Lady looked at Granny Wu and frowned. She could do nothing about Duke Yu Mansion's matter. Duchess Yu was not in good health, and she wouldn't even show up for the royal family's things, let alone such a trifle.

"He's already back." Granny Wu said.

"Let's go and see him." The Old Lady stood up and said. She could not solve this thing. She had to deal with it as soon as possible. Otherwise, it would be even trickier.

## Chapter 268 The Extraordinary Young Master Mo Yixuan

When the Old Lady arrived at Qu Zhizhen's study, Qu Zhizhen had already received the news. After he helped the Old Lady inside to sit down, he looked at Hai Lan, who had already knelt in front of him, and said with a gloomy face, "Tell me everything in detail."

Auntie Hai Lan didn't dare to hold back anything, so she told him everything in detail, including Yu Qian asking an old maid to ask for her instruction.

"Mother, Yu's people did this themselves." Qu Zhizhen said with certainty after hearing Hai Lan's confession.

"I know, but this matter is related to our mansion. Think about it, others will wonder how Yu Qian had the guts to lie to the people of Duke Yu Mansion? He wouldn't dare unless he has someone backing him up." The Old Lady couldn't help but frown as she sighed.

"You can leave now." Qu Zhizhen ordered Auntie Hai Lan coldly.

Auntie Hai Lan hurriedly retreated.

"Mother, even big families like us could not afford to make a fool of Duke Yu Mansion." Qu Zhizhen said flatly.

Qu Zhizhen's words were true. Even though Duke Yu Mansion had declined, Duke Yu used to be the one the emperor trusted the most. It was said that the emperor still trusted him the most now. Qu Zhizhen even heard that the emperor was going to promote Duke Yu again. Whether it was now or in the future, Qu Mansion could not compare with Duke Yu Mansion.

"What should we do now?" The Old Lady asked anxiously.

"Mother, let me handle this matter. I will go talk to Duke Yu about it and explain it clearly." Qu Zhizhen thought for a moment and said. Although it seemed that Qu Mansion was the one behind this, Qu Mansion's strength was far below Duke Yu Mansion's. Qu Mansion could not scheme against Duke Yu Mansion.

He should be able to explain it clearly.

Seeing that Qu Zhizhen was confident to take care of the matter, the Old Lady heaved a sigh of relief in her heart and asked, "How should we deal with Yu Qian?"

"Let the Ministry of Justice's people deal with him. He worked for Yu, but he actually schemed against Yu after she fell ill. I wonder whom he colluded with. What's the use of keeping such a person?" Qu Zhizhen said coldly. He reached out and rubbed between his eyebrows. He was really annoyed.

He was increasingly disgusted with Yu. Not only was she useless, but even her people were also useless. She now caused such a scene, which made him a laughingstock to people in the capital.

He thought he really shouldn't have let Yu enter the mansion back then.

The Old Lady nodded and said, "Alright, you take care of it." Then, she suddenly thought of something and said to Qu Zhizhen, "I have given all of the dowry of Yue in Yu's hands to Ying. Those shops were originally intended to be left for Ying, and the shop that is involved in the incident is also hers."

Qu Zhizhen really didn't know about this and asked in surprise, "They were all Yue's?"

"Yes, they were all Yue's. Now, they are all returned to Ying. In the future, Ying can manage them herself. She could keep the old staff or hire whoever she wants. After all, those shops will all be hers in the future. When she gets married, she has to take them with her, so she should learn to manage them now."

The Old Lady nodded.

"She is still young. Mother, please take care of her." Qu Zhizhen thought for a while and agreed. He did not care about these things.

Since those shops were Yue's dowry, it was only right to leave them to Qu Moying.

Seeing her son directly agree, the Old Lady breathed a sigh of relief. She was afraid that her son would insist on keeping these shops for her grandson. Although her grandson was nice, these shops belonged to Qu Moying. They did not belong to her grandson in the first place, so he should not take them.

The Old Lady did not want Qu Moying to suffer losses again.

Now that Qu Zhizhen did not object, the Old Lady was happy. She specially asked Qu Zhizhen about his situation, but Qu Zhizhen looked very tired, so she stood up and went back to the inner yard with Hai Lan. She also informed Qu Moying to go to the shops in the next few days, especially the clothing shop.

After the Old Lady left, Qu Zhizhen rubbed between his eyebrows, feeling a headache. He stood up and walked to the back window. He looked out of the window. A breeze blew in, bringing over the faint scent of lotus flowers. There was a pool of lotus flowers outside his window, and they bloomed very beautifully. Although there were not many flowers, they brought pleasant fragrance when the wind blew.

Qu Zhizhen looked at the pool of lotus flowers, and his lips slightly curved. Then, he closed his eyes and rested for a while. He already had an idea in his heart.

He opened his eyes, turned around and strode away. Although it didn't seem to be a big deal, he didn't want to delay it. Otherwise, it would affect Qu Mansion's reputation.

As for Yu and the people around her, Qu Zhizhen would not let them appear in front of others again, lest they continued to be a drag to him.

Qu Mingcheng's words touched him that day. He thought he would anyhow let Yu out in the end. After all, Yu had a daughter and a son.

But now, the idea had faded away. He now thought Yu was just a troublemaker, and the people around her were the same.

Coincidentally, he met Duke Yu in the palace today, so Duke Yu should be in the capital's Duke Yu Mansion now.

He got on the carriage and headed towards Duke Yu Mansion. As soon as he arrived at Duke Yu Mansion, he asked someone to deliver his letter.

The gatekeeper received the letter and sent it inside. Soon, a young man of fourteen or fifteen years old came out. He was tall, like a man of seventeen or eighteen years old, and handsome. He was Duke Yu's son, Mo Yixuan, who welcomed guests on behalf of his father.

Qu Zhizhen had met Mo Yixuan when the latter was a child, but he had never seen him since then. Like his parents, Mo Yixuan always kept a low profile. He rarely showed up unless there were important banquets.

Qu Zhizhen found Mo Yixuan a bit familiar, perhaps because he had seen him when he was a child.

"Vice Minister Qu, this way please." Mo Yixuan stepped forward to greet Qu Zhizhen in a natural manner. It could seem that he was experienced in receiving guests.



“Young Master, it’s very polite of you. Is Duke Yu here?” Qu Zhizhen smiled as he walked in. He looked at Mo Yixuan beside him with admiration. Although his son was very outstanding, he had to admit that Mo Yixuan was even more outstanding.

He behaved decently and calmly, and he was friendly to others. He would keep a proper distance from others, neither close nor detached, and he was not arrogant at all.

His bearing was no ordinary. He lived up to his identity as Duke Yu’s son.

Mo Yixuan talked with Qu Zhizhen as they walked, and they arrived in front of a study. Then, Mo Yixuan stopped and bowed to Qu Zhizhen, “Vice Minister Qu, please go in. My father is waiting for you inside.”

“Thank you, Young Master.” Qu Zhizhen also bowed with a smile.

Mo Yixuan was really good. He had the demeanor of the young Duke Yu back then.

Mo Yixuan turned and left. Qu Zhizhen went into the study and saw Duke Yu sitting in the middle. He hurriedly walked forward and bowed to Duke Yu with a smile.

Duke Yu, Mo Nianheng, looked at Qu Zhizhen and smiled. Then, he gestured to Qu Zhizhen to take a seat and said, “Vice Minister Qu, please sit!”

He was a handsome middle-aged man. Even though he was already middle-aged, it could be seen that he was very handsome when he was young. He had a temperament different from that of ordinary civil officials. Although his fierce temperament had faded away, he still gave off a sense of dignity.

Qu Zhizhen sat down on the guest seat. He heard that Duke Yu disliked beating around the bush the most, so he went straight to the point, “Duke Yu, I came here today for the dispute between the servants of our two mansions. I shouldn’t have been the one to come here, but my wife was too sick to get up, and I heard that Duchess Yu is not in good health.”

Since the matter had gotten to the Ministry of Justice, Duke Yu must know about it as well.

As expected, Duke Yu didn't beat around the bush. He nodded and asked, "What exactly is going on?"

Qu Zhizhen smiled bitterly. "My wife is seriously ill, and she couldn't manage the shops. The shopkeeper wanted to earn benefits, so he made such a farce. I don't know who asked him to do this. The Ministry of Justice is still investigating it. But no matter what, our mansion shared part of the blame, so we should make up for the loss of your mansion."

As Qu Zhizhen spoke, he took out some checks from his pocket. The total amount of the checks was the same as the money that Yu Qian asked for the shop. Hai Lan had informed him of every detail about the deal. The checks represented Qu Mansion's apology.

After all, Yu appointed Yu Qian to be the manager, so Qu Mansion could not absolve from the blame.

"Vice Minister Qu, who did you offend?" Duke Yu asked bluntly.

"I don't know, but it's normal for an official to unknowingly offend other peers." Qu Zhizhen smiled even more bitterly. "Not long ago, my mother brought my two daughters to Dabei Temple, and my eldest daughter's old maid was bribed to cause trouble. It somewhat ruined my two daughters' reputations."

He was talking about Granny Qing. He had interrogated the scoundrel, but no matter how he asked the scoundrel, the latter only said that Granny Qing asked him to do this, and he only knew Granny Qing. The scoundrel said that Granny Qing's master asked her to say so, and there was nothing else.

Qu Zhizhen could do nothing else. He secretly punished the scoundrel in the end.

"I wonder who was behind it?" Duke Yu was astonished.

"I don't know. Perhaps the person behind these two matters was the same. But no matter what, this matter has to do with us. Duke Yu, I am sorry to cause trouble for you. Please forgive us." Qu Zhizhen lowered his head in distress.

“Since there are other reasons, please bring the checks back. Let’s wait and see the result of the Ministry of Justice’s investigation.” Duke Yu refused Qu Zhizhen’s checks.

It meant that he would not hold the Qu Mansion accountable. Qu Zhizhen was overjoyed and hurriedly thanked him, “Thank you for your generosity, Duke. I will definitely give you an explanation after I get to the bottom of this.”

He did not expect Duke Yu to be so nice, and he breathed a sigh of relief.

“You’re welcome, Vice Minister Qu. If there is nothing else, please go back. I still have to go out to see my wife.” Duke Yu looked at Qu Zhizhen and said indifferently.

He was ordering Qu Zhizhen to leave. But since the matter had indeed been settled, Qu Zhizhen did not need to waste time here. It was said that Duke Yu had a deep affection for his wife, and it seemed to be true.

“It just so happens that I have something to do. Sorry to trouble you, Duke Yu. Goodbye!” Qu Zhizhen tactfully stood up and cupped his hands towards Duke Yu.

“Vice Minister Qu, you’re welcome.” Duke Yu waved his hand and watched Qu Zhizhen leave. His eyes flickered slightly. Then, he called a young servant beside him and said, “Go and invite Young Master over.”

## Chapter 269 Has Mr. Ji Returned?

“Is it related to Duke Yu Mansion?” Qu Moying also received the news at this time. She was surprised. She did not expect Yu Qian to have connections with someone in Duke Yu Mansion.

“Yes, I heard that it was a manager beside Duchess Yu.” Granny Miao reported. She had just heard it from outside the mansion. Ever since Hai Lan had returned, no one in the mansion dared to gossip about this matter.

“Has Duchess Yu returned to the capital?” Qu Moying blinked her eyes and asked.

“I don’t think so. I didn’t hear about her. I only heard about the manager beside Duchess Yu. Master had just gone out. I heard that he went to Duke Yu Mansion.” Granny Miao connected the things that she had heard before and said.

Qu Zhizhen was out. He must have gone to explain to Duke Yu.

Qu Moying didn’t know much about the matter between Duchess Yu and Duke Yu in her previous life. She only knew that her father respected Duke Yu very much, saying that Duke Yu was the most valiant general in Great Zhou.

Duke Yu was much stronger than Ji Yongming and the Guardian General. Ji Yongming even said that if Duke Yu did not resign at that time, he would have a higher status than Ji Yongming himself and the Guardian General. When it came to the matter of Duke Yu being implicated by his wife, Ji Yongming would always say that it was fated.

But Ji Hanyue had never seen Duchess Yu, who was in poor health.

“Let’s stop here for now. I’ll go check this shop after I sort out the accounts. Granny Miao, go make a plaque for me first. I want to change the shop name.” Qu Moying no longer paid attention to Duke Yu Mansion’s matters. Since Qu Zhizhen had intervened in the matter, Qu Moying would definitely get back the shop.

It was just a matter of time.

Yu Qian’s matter should have nothing to do with Yu, but it was not a big deal because Yu was no longer of much use.

After saying “yes”, Granny Miao asked in surprise, “Are we going to change the shop name into the name that the ex-Madam had used before?”

“Yes, change it to Yue’s Clothing Pavilion.” Qu Moying nodded.

Yue's Clothing Pavilion was Younger Yue's dowry when she married into Qu Mansion, while Yue's Gold Pavilion was the dowry when Elder Yue married into Earl Ling'an's Mansion.

The two shops were adjacent to each other. Judging from their outlook, decoration and layout, it was obvious that they were owned by the same person.

After Yu took over Yue's Clothing Pavilion, she didn't want others to know about it, so she changed the name of the shop and decorated it, but their outlooks were still basically the same.

Now that Qu Moying wanted to change the name back to Yue's Clothing Pavilion, it was because she wanted to link this shop with Yue's Gold Pavilion.

Coincidentally, Ji Youran had also changed Yue's Gold Pavilion's name a while ago. She changed its name out of the same concern as Yu. She didn't want Yue's Gold Pavilion and Yue's Clothing Pavilion to be related, and she didn't want others to know that Yue's Gold Pavilion was a part of the dowry of the ex-Crown Princess, Ji Hanyue.

Ji Youran didn't want others to link these two shops together, but Qu Moying exactly wanted the opposite.

"I will take care of it in a while. Miss, when are you going to Yue's Clothing Pavilion?" Granny Miao asked.

Qu Moying pointed at the account books in her hand. Granny Yan had sorted out part of the account books for her, but she had not finished reading them. "There's no rush. I'll take care of the accounts first. The Ministry of Justice needs time to go through the procedure. The shop will definitely be closed during this period of time."

"Is the shop not doing any business at all now?" Granny Miao thought of a problem and asked. Because of this affair, the loss was inevitable.

“Yes, but it doesn’t matter. It’s okay to lose money for the time being. I’ll take the chance to adjust the personnel. Granny Miao, ask Granny Zhou if there are any suitable people I can use. It will be best if they used to work for my mother in the past.”

Qu Moying smiled and said.

Granny Zhou knew the most about Mother’s matters, so it was better to ask her. Granny Zhou must know more about manpower and specific matters than Granny Miao.

“I get it. I will now go to Granny Zhou and discuss with her.” Granny Miao said. Just as she was about to retreat, Qu Moying stopped her.

“Granny Miao, wait a minute.”

“Miss, what else can I do for you?” Granny Miao turned around again.

Qu Moying pinched the account book in her hand and frowned slightly. “Granny, send someone to the village to ask if Mr. Ji is back.”

“Miss, is there anything wrong?” Granny Miao keenly sensed something and asked. In the past, Ji Luoxuan had been out quite often. Every time he left the village, he would prepare enough medicine for Qu Moying, and Qu Moying would not ask about his whereabouts. Now that Qu Moying asked about Mr. Ji, Granny Miao was surprised.

“There’s nothing wrong. I am just afraid that someone might look for Mr. Ji.” Qu Moying’s long eyelashes fluttered as she said. She faintly felt that Liu Lanxin’s matter was not over yet.

When she pretended to be Liu Lanxin that day, she said Liu Lanxin was about to leave. She let others inquire about it and knew that Liu Lanxin had indeed left the capital. The scene on the day Liu Lanxin left was quite big. It was said that Lord Yun sent her out of the capital, and Lord Jing was also there. Liu Lanxin had two lords send her off at such a sensitive time. It was natural for others to think about the meaning behind it.

Could it be that Liu Lanxin, the Guardian General's daughter, would marry someone in the capital?

Qu Moying was not worried about whom Liu Lanxin would marry. She was afraid that Liu Lanxin would expose her if they met each other in the future. After all, she had been pretending to be Lady Liu for a while. She did not know who was going to the border this time, how Pei Yuanjun settled this matter, and what purpose he had.

Previously, she told Pei Yusheng that her eye disease had been cured, and that she would invite the doctor to treat Lady Liu's eye disease. Qu Moying worried that she would be involved in the end.

She had enough trouble to deal with. She did not want to get involved with Lady Liu or Lord Jing at all, but she felt that this matter would involve her in the end, so she could not help but ask about Ji Luoxuan.

Qu Moying already had an idea in her heart. Her long eyelashes fluttered as she said to Granny Miao, "Inform me immediately when Mr. Ji is back."

Granny Miao was the one who contacted the village. It was good for Granny Miao to pay more attention. Lady Liu's matter was a little strange, so Qu Moying did not want Ji Luoxuan to get involved. If Ji Luoxuan could avoid this trouble by not returning to the capital, it would be the best!

"I understand." Granny Miao nodded, "I have counted the days. Mr. Ji should be coming back soon. He didn't leave much medicine before. He asked you to make do with it first, and he said that you could remove the eye veil after taking all the medicine. He said he would come back to see you in a while. Miss, you have used up the medicine now."

Qu Moying had used up her medicine, and she could remove her eye veil now.

Qu Moying gently bit the corner of her pink lips. Her long eyelashes fluttered twice, casting a shadow on her fair face. "If Mr. Ji comes back, tell him not to go back to the village first."

As for what to do exactly, she would deal with it when the time came. Liu Lanxin's matter kept her uneasy. Pei Yuanjun would definitely not act without careful planning...

“Yujiao, does your Second Brother really like Fourth Lady Qu?” A beautiful lady exclaimed in surprise.

It was a pavilion in the mansion, facing a waterside pavilion. The burning sun couldn’t reach this place. There was only a gentle breeze. It was really comfortable.

There were a few young ladies in the pavilion, either drawing or writing poems. Two ladies were sitting in a corner and whispering. They were Liu Jingyu and Yan Yujiao.

Just now, Liu Jingyu’s voice was a little too loud, startling the surrounding ladies. They turned their heads in surprise. Perhaps they didn’t hear the words clearly. They all looked at them.

Were they saying that Yan Yujiao’s useless Second Brother had taken a fancy to Fourth Lady Qu? They wondered who this Fourth Lady Qu was. Was it Qu Moying?

Seeing that everyone had turned to look at them, Liu Jingyu shook the round silk fan in her hand with guilt and smiled apologetically at everyone. Then, she lowered her voice and said to Yan Yujiao, “I’m sorry, Yujiao. I overreacted just now.”

Yan Yujiao was originally a little unhappy, but after hearing Liu Jingyu’s words and seeing her face full of shame, she did not say anything else, and her expression softened a little.

She didn’t say anything else but focused on the qin music score in her hand.

They were the few most renowned noble ladies in the capital. Several like-minded young ladies formed a group to hold regular meetings in turn in their mansions. When they were together, they were quite at ease, writing, drawing, playing the zither, composing music scores, or even playing chess.

Without the elders around, they could all do whatever they liked, and everyone was in a good mood.

“County Lady Jingyu, which family is this Fourth Lady Qu from?” A young lady could not help but walk over and ask the two of them curiously. She wondered whether this Fourth Lady Qu was the one from Vice Minister Qu’s Mansion with an eye disease.



"I didn't say which family she is from. You might have misheard me just now." Liu Jingyu covered it up unnaturally.

However, such words made people more suspicious.

Yan Yujiao glanced at Liu Jingyu, and her face darkened again. She coughed and said, "She is from my mother's family, but it won't work! My father doesn't like her."

"We've never heard that your mother has a cousin surnamed Qu." Someone doubted.

"Well, we all have distant relatives. Since that was the case, let's not ask about it. I've heard a strange thing that happened in the capital recently. Have you guys heard of it?" Liu Jingyu switched the topic to help Yan Yujiao out while shaking the round silk fan in her hand.

"What is it? What is it?" Another young lady walked over.

"Really? Haven't you heard that? It's a scam of buying and selling a shop. The swindler was caught by the Ministry of Justice." Liu Jingyu leaned against the railing of the window and said with a smile, "Everyone in the capital is talking about this matter now. I've never seen such an interesting thing!"

She was dressed in a light color dress, its gauze fluttering in the wind. Her hair was pinned with lotus hairpins with three strings of pearls. The pearls were round and shining, making her look even more beautiful and eye-catching. Moreover, she had a noble status, which made her the focus of attention in this gathering.

Hearing her interesting words, another two young ladies came over. "County Lady, we didn't hear about it. Please tell us about it!"

## Chapter 270 The Shop Resumed Its Original Name

"Someone from the Qu Mansion cheated others and was caught by the Ministry of Justice. I don't know if it's true or not." Liu Jingyu smiled and answered casually.

"Someone from the Qu Mansion cheated others? Is that true?" A lady who had never heard of this before widened her eyes in disbelief.

"I know about this matter. I heard that a servant of Vice Minister Qu's Mansion cheated someone by selling their mansion's shop to the person without authorization. This matter is still under investigation." A lady with family members who worked in the Ministry of Justice heard about it, so she joined the topic.

"Why is the case handled by the Ministry of Justice? Is it that serious?" Another lady asked in confusion.

Yamen would usually take care of such fraud cases, and the most serious ones would be handled by the governor of the capital. But the Ministry of Justice took care of the case this time. Was this case that serious?

"I heard that it involved Duke Yu Mansion." A lady said in a low voice. She had heard her elders talk about it.

"Duke Yu Mansion? This... This is indeed not a small matter. How dare Vice Minister Qu's Mansion's people do such a thing?" The surrounding young ladies took a deep breath. Duke Yu Mansion was once one of the top aristocratic families. Now, even if Duke Yu didn't hold a position in the court, no one dared to underestimate him.

Some of the well-informed ones even heard that Duke Yu could be reinstated recently.

Since such a thing happened at such a juncture, it was natural that people would overthink. It was said that Duke Yu was implicated back then because someone set him up. But it had never been proved for so many years. Now that such a thing happened at the juncture when Duke Yu was going to be reinstated, it was no wonder that Yu Qian was caught by the Ministry of Justice.

Although noble ladies were usually weak, they could be sharp sometimes.

"Vice Minister Qu's Mansion has caused so much trouble. None of the ladies in the Qu Mansion is good. Second Lady Qu entered Lord Jing Mansion, but I heard that Lord Jing didn't care about her at all. He

casually placed her in a corner of his mansion, and she was treated even worse than an ordinary singer. As for Third Lady Qu...”

The lady curled her lips with disdain. They were all friends with County Lady Jingyu, and most of them had a higher status than Qu Qiuyan, so they were scornful when talking about Qu Qiuyan. Everyone had heard about the matter between her and Lord Jing. Although it was a rumor, it was somewhat tenable.

Qu Qiuyan hadn’t gotten married yet, but she was already involved with Lord Jing. It meant that she would definitely enter Lord Jing Mansion. However, with her reputation and status, it was impossible for her to enter Lord Jing Mansion with a high position.

“I heard that Third Lady Qu had a private meeting with someone in Dabei Temple at night, and Old Lady Ji witnessed her doing. Moreover, at that time, someone set Fourth Lady Qu up, and Old Lady Ji was accidentally injured. It was caused by an old maid who served this Third Lady Qu. After that, the old maid committed suicide. But we are not idiots.”

A straightforward young lady said without qualms.

The ladies kept talking about it. But Liu Jingyu, who started the topic, was sitting with a smile and did not speak. She stood up, called a few maids to take away the previous desserts and replaced them with new and delicate ones.

After she was done, she came back and smiled at the group of young ladies. “Alright, let’s not talk about this anymore. It has nothing to do with us. Ladies, if you need anything, please tell me, and I’ll get someone to fetch it.”

Today, Liu Jingyu was the host, and they were now in Minister Liu’s House.

“County Lady Jingyu, it’s really kind of you. It is good enough.”

“We need nothing else, thank you.”

The ladies expressed their thanks to Liu Jingyu, and this topic was no longer discussed. Their attention returned to the things in front of them, and they forgot the case of the Qu Mansion quickly.

Of course, the matter of Qu Mansion had spread out silently. Whether it was Qu Caiyue, Qu Qiuyan, or Qu Moying, all the young ladies in Vice Minister Qu's Mansion were notorious. Judging from the current situation, no one knew if they would get into trouble. The things related to Duke Yu could be really serious.

Was it really a coincidence, or was there someone behind it?

Did Vice Minister Qu's Mansion take a side?

Yan Yujiao sat at the side, frowning even more. She looked very concerned.

The ladies who had been sitting around sat back in their previous seats. They no longer paid attention to Qu Mansion's matter because Liu Jingyu changed the subject, but Yan Yujiao was still worried.

"Yujiao, sorry, I made a slip of the tongue just now and attracted their attention." Liu Jingyu came over and apologized softly.

"It's not your fault. Qu Mansion is indeed a disgraceful place." Yan Yujiao said with a frown.

Just now, Liu Jingyu switched the topic to help her out, and Yan Yujiao had seen it all.

"Yujiao, your Second Brother will not have anything to do with this. Anyway, he does not intend to marry Fourth Lady Qu." Seeing that she was still worried, Liu Jingyu comforted her in a low voice.

Yan Yujiao lowered her head and pinched the corner of her handkerchief, not saying a word.

"Does your Second Brother really want to..." Liu Jingyu said in surprise. But this time, she controlled her voice well and didn't attract others' attention.

"My Second Brother does have the intention, but my parents do not agree." Yan Yujiao nodded, feeling extremely depressed. She thought her Second Brother was too rebellious to have such an idea. Her parents were pissed off.

"How could Second Young Master Yan have such an idea? Fourth Lady Qu used to be the fiancée of his good friend, Young Master Yongning!" Liu Jingyu asked in confusion.

Her words made Yan Yujiao feel more and more depressed and restless.

Young Master Yongning, Xu Lipeng, used to be the person she secretly liked. She thought Qu Moying was not worthy of him and did not like him. She had seen this handsome and extraordinary Xu Lipeng several times, and she had always wanted to marry him after he broke off his engagement with Qu Moying.

Unfortunately, although he had broken off the engagement, he was suspected and even engaged with another woman who had a bad reputation.

"My Second Brother temporarily lost his mind. He will think it over." Yan Yujiao said gloomily.

Liu Jingyu leaned her head closer to Yan Yujiao and whispered to her, "Doesn't your Second Brother listen to Young Master Xu the most? Can't you ask Young Master Xu to persuade him?"

"Young Master Xu?" Yan Yujiao's eyes lit up. This was indeed a solution, but she quickly shook her head. "But I have no chance to see him right now."

Young Master Xu hadn't been to their mansion since he broke off his engagement with Qu Moying.

"It doesn't matter. You can write a letter in the name of your Second Brother and send it to Marquis Yongning's Mansion." Liu Jingyu continued.

It was a good idea. A faint blush appeared on Yan Yujiao's face. She bit her lips. Thinking of writing a letter to Young Master Xu, she couldn't calm down.

This was the first time she wrote to Young Master Xu.

Fortunately, it was in the name of her Second Brother. Otherwise, she would really be ashamed...

Liu Jingyu glanced at Yan Yujiao, a trace of ridicule flashing through her eyes. Yan Yujiao had always regarded her as a bosom friend, so how could she not understand Yan Yujiao's feelings? A long time ago, Yan Yujiao had taken a fancy to Xu Lipeng, but at that time, Xu Lipeng wanted to fulfill the engagement with Qu Moying, and he had never looked at Yan Yujiao seriously.

Right now, it was just the right time for Yan Yujiao to do something!

As far as Liu Jingyu knew, Xu Lipeng had suffered a hidden loss back then...

In fact, it was not difficult to investigate the fraud case. Yu Qian insisted that it was Yu who sent people to tell him to do it, but in the end, he could not show any evidence.

As for Yu, she had evidence. She had been sick all this time and had never left her yard. Her personal manager Hai Lan could go in and out of the yard. However, according to the words of the old maid who was sent by Yu Qian and Hai Lan herself, Hai Lan casually answered the old maid's question because the question was vague.

In fact, the two of them were not talking about the same thing.

That was even stranger. How could a shopkeeper have the guts to do such a thing? Moreover, the person who was cheated was Duchess Yu's manager, and he was cheated because he wanted to find a suitable shop for Duchess Yu.

Did it have anything to do with Duke Yu?

Although the truth hadn't been found out yet, it was clear that there must be something wrong with the shopkeeper. However, his testimony remained the same no matter how others asked him. In the end, the Ministry of Justice received an order to end this case quickly and cleanly to prevent other disputes from happening.

Therefore, Yu Qian was convicted. He was convicted and exiled to the border two thousand miles away.

Since the case was ended, the closed shop could be opened.

Early in the morning, Qu Moying reported the news to the Old Lady. Then, she brought some pastries newly made by the mansion to inspect the shop with Granny Miao and Yu Dong.

This shop had been closed for a few days, and many people knew about it because of the case. They would point at it when they walked by. The seal was removed last night. Not only the seal that the Ministry of Justice had put on was removed, but the old plaque with the shop name was also replaced. Last night, the new plaque with the new shop name had been hung up.

Its name was Yue's Clothing Pavilion.

Some people did not understand what "Yue's Clothing Pavilion" meant, but they knew the shop next to Yue's Clothing Pavilion had just changed its original name to Yue's Gold Pavilion. However, they did not know why this shop was renamed "Yue's Clothing Pavilion". Could it be that the two shops were owned by the same person? Did the two shops both belong to Vice Minister Qu's Mansion?

Many people now knew that the shop that had been sealed previously belonged to Vice Minister Qu's Mansion.

But the sealed one was a clothing shop, while the one next to it was a gold jewelry shop. Whether in terms of wealth or other aspects, the clothing shop could not compare with the gold jewelry shop.

Moreover, the gold jewelry shop also changed its name only recently.

The gold jewelry shop changed its name silently, so not many people knew about it. But after the matter that involved this clothing shop happened and caused a stir in the capital, many people had a lot of guesses after seeing its new name.

Some people who had lived in the capital for more than ten years found the name of the clothing shop familiar. After thinking about it carefully, they remembered that the clothing shop was named Yue's Clothing Pavilion a long time ago, but it was changed later.

When Qu Moying came over, many people surrounded the plaque and pointed at it. Some people were saying that the shop's name was not strange at all because it had been called Yue's Clothing Pavilion once and had just resumed its original name.

Seeing Qu Moying and her people coming over, the passers-by all moved aside and watched as Qu Moying entered the shop with Granny Miao and Yu Dong on her both sides.