

## **Noble Wife 271**

### Chapter 271 Who's Your Master?

They watched Qu Moying enter the shop. Judging by her appearance and bearing, they could tell who she was.

Her eye disease was the most obvious sign.

The crowd gathered outside and switched the topic to Qu Moying. As they were talking, they suddenly saw Granny Miao and Yu Dong coming out. After wiping the table at the door, they put some pastries on it.

They also put some incense sticks and strings of paper money on the table. It seemed that they were going to worship heaven to dispel the bad luck. It was indeed an unlucky thing, and it was normal for the shop owner to do so. Many people would worship heaven after getting out of lawsuits. But the one who was involved in the lawsuit was a shop but not a human.

It was normal to see such things in the capital.

It was said that if one ate the pastries that were used to dispel the bad luck, one's bad luck would also be dispelled. Therefore, many people stopped and waited for the pastries when they saw the scene.

Granny Miao and Yu Dong burned the paper and lit the incense sticks. Then they pointed at the pastries on the table with a smile and said to the passersby, "Guys, you can eat them now."

Then, they stepped aside.

The onlookers picked up the pastries one by one.

Although Qu Mansion prepared many pastries, quite many people were watching. All the pastries were taken away in a short time.

Granny Miao tidied up the table with a smile. A busybody came over and asked, "Fourth Lady Qu just went inside. Is she going to take charge of this shop?"

Granny Miao looked garrulous, and she was indeed so. She answered the person quickly. "This shop was our ex-Madam's dowry. Our Fourth Lady was in the village before. Now that she has come back, the shop should naturally be under her charge."

Many people who were about to leave stopped.

"Your ex-Madam has passed away for a long time, right? Who was in charge of this shop before?" Someone else asked.

"Second Madam was in charge of it. Now, it is returned to our Fourth Lady." Granny Miao continued to tidy up things without raising her head.

"So, that's why you changed the shop name?" A passerby pointed at the shop name and asked.

"The shop was named 'Yue's Clothing Pavilion' when the ex-Madam was alive. The ex-Madam was from Yue Family in the South. When she married into the capital, her shops' names all started with 'Yue'. Now that the shop was returned to our miss, she would naturally resume the original name. Otherwise, she would be unfilial and forgetting her origin."

Granny Miao said righteously.

What she said was reasonable, and the passersby realized that this shop was renamed because it was under Second Madam Qu's charge before. Thinking about it, they could know that Second Madam Qu had changed "Yue's Clothing Pavilion" to another name because she wanted to have the shop for herself.

Someone immediately thought of the previous case of deception and asked, "So... did someone sell this shop on purpose?"

Granny Miao shook her head and replied in confusion, "I... I am just a servant. I don't know about the case, but I know that the shop is now returned to our Fourth Lady, and it will be under our Fourth Lady's charge in the future. It has nothing to do with the mansion."

As a servant, she really didn't know the details of this matter. No matter what questions they asked her, she could hardly answer any of them.

Seeing that she really did not know about the case, a passerby suddenly pointed to the shop next to Yue's Clothing Pavilion and asked, "Is this shop also the ex-Second Madam Qu's dowry? Why was its name changed? Could it be that this shop has not yet been returned to Fourth Lady Qu and has been occupied by others?"

It was easy to connect these things together. What Granny Miao had just said and the previous name of the shop all led to his question.

Hearing this passerby's words, many people immediately looked at the shop adjacent to Yue's Clothing Shop. It was still early, and the shop had not opened yet.

Granny Miao looked up at the shop next to Yue's Clothing Pavilion. She was also very confused. She looked at the two shops' names and muttered to herself with confusion, "Wasn't that shop called 'Yue's Gold Pavilion' before? Why did it change its name? Could it be that...it has a new owner now?"

Someone realized something and asked. "Isn't that shop your mansion's?"

"It doesn't belong to our mansion. It is the dowry of the ex-Madam's elder sister. But it had a different name a few days ago." Granny Miao explained.

The ex-Second Madam Qu's surname was Yue, and her elder sister's surname was naturally Yue. The two shops looked similar, and their names both started with 'Yue'. It was obvious that they belonged to the same mansion.

"Let your miss check it up. Perhaps this shop should also be hers, and someone took it from her." Someone kindly reminded Granny Miao.

"Yes, this shop is similar to your mansion's other shops. Perhaps the owner of this shop failed to keep the shop for her own children and others took it away from her. Its name was changed now. It seems to be the case." Someone echoed.

"No way..." Granny Miao pointed at the shop by the side hesitantly. Her expression changed drastically. She suddenly went into Yue's Clothing Pavilion without saying anything, leaving only Yu Dong to clean the ashes on the ground.

Looking at the two shops' names, someone suddenly realized something and exclaimed, "Isn't Fourth Lady Qu's mother's elder sister the wife of Earl Ling'an?"

"What?" Someone could not understand what it meant.

"She was the ex-Crown Princess' mother." Someone suggested in a low voice.

"So, this shop was the ex-Crown Princess' mother's dowry?" It was easy to connect these things together.

"Yes, it's the ex-Crown Princess' mother's dowry. The ex-Crown Princess' mother's family doesn't have many people. Is the owner of this shop changed?" Someone realized this and pointed at the name of the shop.

"How could it be? Right now, it is still the first branch, the branch the ex-Crown Princess was in, that is in charge of Earl Ling'an's Mansion. I heard that the first branch adopted a son, and the title was given to him. Of course, these shops are also his. How can the owner of this shop change?" Someone said disapprovingly.

People in the capital talked about Earl Ling'an's Mansion the most now. The ex-Crown Princess and Earl Ling'an had both passed away. It was said that the ex-Crown Princess' younger sister also died. A concubine was desperate to file a lawsuit against Third Lady Ji before, and then, a son was adopted.

These things could not be considered trifles.

As they spoke, the shop next to Yue's Clothing Pavilion opened. A manager walked out. He looked at the people outside and chased them away arrogantly. "Go away. Go away. Don't affect our business."

As he spoke, he pushed the crowd rudely, almost causing a few passersby to fall.

Looking at the arrogant manager, many people found him displeasing to the eye.

"Who is the owner of the shop?" Someone asked.

The manager glanced sideways at the passerby who asked the question. He snorted and raised his head arrogantly, "It's none of your business. Does it have anything to do with you?"

He was just recruited as a manager, and Ji Youran let someone hire him. Naturally, he knew the owner of the shop was the Crown Prince's Mansion's Side Princess. How could ordinary people dare to talk about her?

"Who is your master?" Granny Miao came out from Yue's Clothing Pavilion again, took two steps forward, and glared at the manager.

It seemed that Qu Moying, who was now in Yue's Clothing Pavilion, was suspicious and had specially asked Granny Miao to ask the manager.

"It's none of your business. Does it have anything to do with you?" Seeing that Granny Miao was just a maid, the manager became more and more impatient. As the manager of a gold shop, he felt that he was superior to others in status. Moreover, his master was Eastern Palace's Princess Ji.

"Of course it does. This is our miss's relative's shop. Why is its name changed now?" Granny Miao pointed at the shop name. "Did your master take it away from others?"

The manager was pissed off. "How could my master take other people's shop? My master's status is extraordinary. She doesn't need to take other's shop. This shop belongs to our master."

“You’re talking nonsense. This shop doesn’t belong to your master!” Granny Miao became even angrier.

Someone remembered what Granny Miao had just said. In addition, this shop had indeed changed its name. Looking at the manager’s domineering face, he couldn’t bear it and said, “This shop clearly doesn’t belong to your master. How did it become hers?”

“The owner of this shop must have changed.”

“I wonder what kind of master was so mean to...”

Everyone chimed in. The manager didn’t know who said these words. He pointed at the crowd with a livid face and asked, “Who said that? Come out.”

No one in the crowd came out, but there were still people speaking.

“Manager, who is the owner of the shop? Our master wants to meet her. Let your master come over.”  
Granny Miao took a step forward and stood in front of the manager.

Seeing that Granny Miao kept provoking him and even stood in front of him, the manager couldn’t hold back his anger any longer. He suddenly pushed her forcefully and scolded, “Who the hell are you? What are you talking about? Your lowly master wants to see my master? Who does she think she is?”

His action was so rude that Granny Miao lost her balance and fell backwards, causing the few people behind her to fall to the ground together. Immediately, the crowd began to curse the manager.

Someone helped the few people who fell to the ground up, and someone helped Granny Miao up.

Granny Miao stood up, gasping for breath and scolding the manager, “You... Which family are you from? How dare you... do such a thing?”

Some passersby couldn’t stand it and glared at the manager, “Which family is he from? The granny was just asking questions. How could he be so arrogant? Who gives him the power to do so?”

“Could it be that someone from Earl Ling’an’s Mansion’s second branch stole the first branch’s property?” Someone said.

Many people knew about the matter of Earl Ling’an’s Mansion. It was a big deal before. It was said that the issue was about the stepson. In the end, the title was given back to the first branch. Although the stepson was born in the second branch, he was now adopted by the first branch, and he had to call his parents from the second branch uncle and aunt.

“Your Second Madam actually dares to take the dowry of the Eldest Madam. It is really unreasonable. Now she felt guilty, but she is still so arrogant.” Granny Miao continued to speak more and more confidently.

“How dare she? She took the first branch’s Madam’s dowry. That belongs to the first branch, and it should be left to the first branch’s young master. The second branch’s Madam could not take it away.”

“Your master stole other’s dowry. How could she be so arrogant?”

“That’s right. He really thinks that his master is great. He is so self-righteous.” Hearing all those words, people all thought that the Ji Family’s second branch’s madam took away the first branch’s madam’s dowry. Moreover, because of the manager’s arrogant attitude, they were all filled with righteous indignation.

The current Earl Ling’an’s Mansion was no longer as powerful as it used to be. Many people knew that Earl Ling’an’s Mansion had declined...

## Chapter 272 Qu Moying Visited Earl Ling’an’s Mansion

“What nonsense are you talking about...” The manager was angry and annoyed at being scolded by so many people. However, he was unable to argue against so many people. He was so angry that he pushed the people again while shouting, “My master has a distinguished status. How can you lowly people judge her?”

This time, Granny Miao was at the front of the crowd again. She fell badly. After she was pushed to the ground, she rolled her eyes up and fainted, foaming at her mouth. But coincidentally, when her feet reached out, she tripped over the manager, and the manager also fell to the ground with a plop.

When Granny Miao fell over, everyone hurriedly reached out to help her, but when the manager fell, many people stepped back, not wanting to help him.

He fell to the ground, his face turning green with pain. He held his waist with one hand and pointed at the people around him as he cursed, "How dare you make trouble here? I will ask Princess Ji to catch you all, throw all of you into the prison, exile you, and chop off your heads."

The manager was very confident. His master was not a random nobody but the Side Princess Ji. Maybe she would be the future Crown Princess and even the empress. How could anyone slander her?

Someone couldn't stand the manager anymore, so he picked up the cabbage leaves at hand and threw them at him. More and more people threw things at him, and they even threw two rotten eggs at him. Not long after the manager stood up, he fell down again and became unconscious.

Someone shouted, "Someone died! Someone died!"

"Report the case to Yamen. Hurry up!"

The onlookers immediately shouted. Some people ran out to find people, some went to the next door to report, and some went to help Granny Miao and the manager up. It was really a mess.

As for the manager's mention of "Princess Ji", few people heard him. Even though the people next to him heard it, they didn't understand what it meant for a moment.

When Qu Moying came over, Yamen's people had already come over. They were sent by the governor of the capital, and they were responsible for the capital's public security.

Yu Dong went forward to help Granny Miao up. Seeing that Granny Miao was still in a coma, she was anxious. Someone reminded him to pinch her philtrum, so he did it.



Granny Miao's philtrum turned red after being pinched a few times. Finally, she was awake. As for the manager, he had been slapped awake by Yamen's people.

The manager sat up, still dizzy. When he saw Yamen's people, he immediately grabbed them and shouted, "Catch these troublemakers! Quickly catch them!"

He spoke in a tone of command, making people uncomfortable.

Yamen's people pushed him away, glanced at him coldly, and asked the people around him what was going on.

The people around him began to explain everything that had happened. The manager's actions aroused the disgust of everyone. Because of this, everyone said that he was a domineering and arrogant person. Most importantly, they said that the manager's master took away the Elder Yue's dowry.

Changing the name of the shop was a piece of important evidence. Just like Yu changed Yue's Clothing Pavilion into another name before, the one who changed Yue's Gold Pavilion's name wanted to keep the shop for herself.

There were so many people as witnesses, and they all spoke against the manager.

The manager was furious and didn't care much at this time. Moreover, he had already said that his master was Princess Ji, so it was not difficult for him to bring it up again. He glared at the people around him and shouted, "My master is Crown Prince's Mansion's Princess Ji. What does Yue have to do with Princess Ji? I am warning you! Don't you ever try to slander my master!"

The manager threatened fiercely.

Hearing his words, the crowd quieted down. This was completely different from what everyone had thought before. Even Yamen's people felt that it was difficult to handle.

The Crown Prince's Mansion was beyond their control. For a moment, everyone was strangely silent.

“Does this shop belong to Crown Prince’s Princess Ji?” A gentle and cold voice sounded. Everyone looked at the source of the voice and saw Qu Moying, who was standing in front of Granny Miao.

The long and wide eye veil covered most of her face, but it could be seen that there was a bit of coldness on her face. She tightly pursed her lips, and her gaze seemed to fall on the manager through the eye veil.

“Yes, our master is the Crown Prince’s Princess Ji.” The manager said. He was helped to stand up by an employee who came out of the gold jewelry shop, and he wiped his face proudly.

Qu Moying stared at the manager and asked again, “Are you sure your master is the Crown Prince’s Princess Ji? Do you know that if you talk nonsense, you will be heavily punished?”

Many people looked at the manager simultaneously.

The manager was a little flustered by Qu Moying’s question. After calming himself down, he felt that he had worried too much. Why was he afraid of a blind girl? “My master is the Crown Prince’s Princess Ji. If you don’t believe me, you can send someone to investigate. I am not afraid of being investigated!”

“Why does this shop belong to Princess Ji? Why?” Qu Moying said word by word.

“Why? Because it belongs to Princess Ji in the first place, so it belongs to Princess Ji. Why is there a problem?” The manager said indifferently. He thought that Qu Moying was afraid, so he emphasized his words and sneered, “If it was not our Princess Ji’s, do you think it would be yours?”

After saying that, he looked Qu Moying up and down. He thought that she was just an ordinary young lady. When he looked at Granny Miao standing behind Qu Moying, he was even angrier. “Is she your old maid? If you want to live well, I advise you to sell her or beat her to death so that she wouldn’t cause any trouble.”

These words made the onlookers angry. It was the manager who made such a mess, but now he pushed the blame on others.

"Since you said that this shop belongs to Princess Ji, do you dare to confront her in person?" Qu Moying's cold gaze landed on the manager.

Yu Dong turned around and said to the two Yamen runners standing there, "Sir, our young lady wants to sue Princess Ji."

"Wh... what?" The two court runners did not expect such a thing to happen. They were tongue-tied and did not know how to answer for a moment. They were just ordinary court runners, and they didn't dare to take such a case.

"Our lady's aunt left this shop for the ex-Crown Princess and Third Lady Ji. Now that the ex-Crown Princess and Third Lady Ji are both dead, this shop should be left for Young Master Ling'an. Why did it become Princess Ji's dowry?" Yu Dong said angrily.

"Hey, what are you talking about? These were left by the ex-Crown Princess. Now that the ex-Crown Princess is gone, they naturally belong to Princess Ji." Hearing Qu Moying's words, the manager knew that she was Vice Minister Qu's Mansion's Fourth Lady. But even so, he was not afraid.

"The ex-Crown Princess' dowry was left to Princess Ji? How powerful Princess Ji is! She actually did such a thing." Qu Moying sneered and turned to leave.

Of course, she would not really sue Ji Youran. On one hand, two court runners were not enough. On the other hand, it was inconvenient for a noble lady like her to go to court directly. Although this matter was exposed, she was an outsider in this matter.

The carriage was waiting by the side of the road. Qu Moying got on the carriage and left with her people.

Seeing that they had nothing to do, the two court runners also hurried away. This kind of thing was really not something the two of them could manage.

Seeing the court runners all left, the onlookers immediately dispersed. As soon as they dispersed, they began to talk about everything they did not dare to talk about just now.

“Is Princess Ji the one who entered Eastern Palace to take care of the ex-Crown Princess?”

“Yes, it’s her. It seems that there is something fishy about this matter. She is clearly not a good person. She even dares to plot and steal the ex-Crown Princess’ dowry.”

“I heard that if one is dead not long after getting married and doesn’t have a child, her parents’ family could claim her dowry back. Why isn’t anyone mentioning this?” Someone asked.

“I heard that the branch in charge in the ex-Crown Princess’ parents’ family is the second branch, and the second branch’s madam is Princess Ji’s mother. Why would she claim the dowry back? It’s good to leave it to her daughter.” Someone said in a low voice.

“That’s right. So, this is the reason why Princess Ji stole the ex-Crown Princess’ dowry? If so, Princess Ji might not have entered Crown Prince’s Mansion because of the ex-Crown Princess. Could it be that she was the one who killed...”

The man didn’t dare to continue. He rolled his eyes and immediately lowered his head, but everyone understood what he meant.

It was said that Princess Ji entered Eastern Palace because of the ex-Crown Princess, but maybe the ex-Crown Princess was angered to death by her. The ex-Crown Princess was so young. Even if she was sick, it was impossible for her to pass away so early.

This was a big deal!

“Does it mean that before Princess Ji entered Eastern Palace, she had already had a relationship with...” Another person guessed. His words were vague, but the meaning in his words was obvious. He was guessing that Princess Ji and the Crown Prince had an affair long ago. Otherwise, she would not have entered Eastern Palace at that time.

Such a thing could not be discussed. Once it was started to be discussed, the gossip would appear to be true. But the fact was that it was indeed the truth. No one mentioned it before, but it seemed to be true

now. If it was true, the Crown Prince's so-called deep affection for the ex-Crown Princess was way too fake.

What was more, when the ex-Crown Princess was seriously ill, he let such a woman enter the palace to anger the ex-Crown Princess. When the ex-Crown Princess was angered to death, she took away the ex-Crown Princess' dowry and even changed the name of the ex-Crown Princess' shop. Was she trying to steal the shop just like Yu stole the ex-Madam's shop?

The Crown Prince was the heir to the throne. If he really did such a thing, it would make people doubt his moral quality and think whether he was really suitable to be the next emperor.

While everyone was discussing and speculating about Pei Luo'an and Ji Youran, Qu Moying had already arrived at Earl Ling'an's Mansion.

Yu Dong went up to knock on the door. A guard came out. Hearing that Qu Moying was looking for the first branch's Madam Duan, the guard was very hesitant. After a moment of hesitation, he said, "Madam Duan is sick. It is inconvenient for her to receive guests. Fourth Lady Qu, please go back!"

## Chapter 273 Reclaimed the Shop

"Hey, what are you talking about? It's Madam Duan who invited our miss here. What do you mean by saying that Madam Duan is seriously ill and it's inconvenient for her to receive guests?" Standing at the gate, Yu Dong shouted.

Seeing that this maid was so tough and that Qu Moying was invited by Madam Duan, the guard felt helpless. Although Xiao didn't allow Madam Duan to see guests, he couldn't refuse Qu Moying because she had already come to the gate and she was invited by Madam Duan.

Although the first branch was weak, Young Master Ling'an was still around. It was hard to say what would happen in the future.

After hesitating for a moment, the guard went in to report. Not long after, Madam Duan arrived at the door. Although she was Earl Ling'an's legitimate wife now, she remembered her identity as Yue's servant before. She was very respectful to Qu Moying, her little master.

"Greetings, Madam Duan." Qu Moying bowed to her. Now that Madam Duan was her formal elder, she should do the courtesies.

Madam Duan took two steps forward to hold Qu Moying's hand and said gratefully, "Fourth Lady Qu, please save the formalities."

"Madam Duan, I came here to see Old Lady Ji." Qu Moying stood up straight and said.

"Fourth Lady Qu, please follow me." Madam Duan said without hesitation. She did not ask why Qu Moying wanted to see Old Lady Ji. She admired Qu Moying from the bottom of her heart.

"Cousin brother will be here in a while. Madam Duan, please tell the servants at the door to take him to Old Lady Ji when he arrives." Qu Moying said with a serious face.

She had already asked Granny Miao to invite Yue Wenhan. Besides Ji, there was also one person who had legitimate rights concerning the dowry shops, Yue Wenhan.

No matter if it was Younger Yue or Elder Yue, they were both from the Yue Family, so Yue Wenhan had a lot of say over this issue.

In fact, before this, Qu Moying had secretly communicated with Yue Wenhan through letters. She asked him something about her shop, and she also mentioned Yue's Gold Pavilion. She asked Yue Wenhan if he was busy today and if he could help if she couldn't manage the matter of the shop.

Yue Wenhan agreed immediately and told her that he was in his mansion this morning and that she could look for him if she needed anything.

Her biggest secret was her rebirth, so she definitely would not let others find out, not even Yue Wenhan. Such a thing would only make people feel strange and suspicious and even make people think that she was a monster, so she would naturally hide it carefully.

She had to do everything carefully and naturally.

Old Lady Ji did not want to see Qu Moying, but Qu Moying had already been led over by Madam Duan. She glared coldly at Madam Duan, waved her hand, and said, "Invite Fourth Lady Qu in!"

Qu Moying had helped her in Dabei Temple, so she had to see her.

Qu Moying came into the room and greeted Old Lady Ji. Then, she sat down on a chair on the side and looked up at Old Lady Ji. She frowned and said, "Your Ladyship, is my aunt's shop taken away by someone?"

"What do you mean, Fourth Lady Qu?" Old Lady Ji's face darkened.

"My mother and aunt both came from the Yue Family in the South. When they married into the capital together, their dowry shops were adjacent to each other. But today, I saw that the shop next to my shop changed its name, and I heard that its owner has also changed. I don't know what happened. Your Ladyship, if someone really took away my aunt's shop by utilizing cousin sister, please tell me."

Qu Moying said bluntly, looking at Old Lady Ji.

"Someone took away your aunt's shop? How could that be?" Old Lady Ji was not in charge of the affairs, so she didn't pay attention to these matters. Hearing Qu Moying's question, she found Qu Moying not only annoying but also indiscreet.

"Your Ladyship, don't you know about this?" Qu Moying said lightly. Her eyes under the eye veil were calm. She naturally knew that Old Lady Ji had never been in charge of anything. Everything was under the control of the second branch's Xiao. However, when Ji Hanyue was in the mansion, Xiao was not that daring.

“Fourth Lady Qu, what you said is indeed very strange. You are an unmarried lady from Qu Mansion. Even if something happens to the Ji Family, it is none of your business, right?” Old Lady Ji said unhappily. Her face darkened, and she put down the teacup in her hand.

She and Qu Moying had dealt with each other several times, but she faintly felt that Qu Moying stepped on her bottom line from time to time. She was annoyed. She felt like Qu Moying knew her bottom line because Qu Moying almost overstepped her bottom line every time, but Qu Moying did not really overstep it, so she had no excuse to be angry with Qu Moying.

But now, Qu Moying had crossed the line.

“Your Ladyship, Mr. Yue wants to see you.” An old maid reported from outside the curtain.

“What Mr. Yue?” Old Lady Ji asked impatiently.

“The Vice Minister of the Dali Temple.” The old maid added.

The veins on Old Lady Ji’s forehead throbbed. Both Qu Moying and her cousin Yue Wenhan came. It seemed that the two of them had planned to come together today. She had let Qu Moying in, so she could not say no to Yue Wenhan.

“Invite him in.” Old Lady Ji said coldly.

The old maid said “yes” and went out.

Seeing that Old Lady Ji had sent someone to invite Yue Wenhan, Qu Moying became more and more confident. She smiled and said, “Old Lady Ji, something happened in front of my aunt’s shop just now, and court runners of the governor of the capital have intervened. Some bigger trouble might happen.”

Old Lady Ji’s heart skipped a beat. Her face darkened. Right now, she was most afraid that things would get out of hand. No matter what it was, it was best to prevent it from escalating.



The biggest secret she hid was one that could destroy the whole Earl Ling'an's Mansion. Although no one told her about this secret, and it was her own guess, and her guess was almost right.

Therefore, she didn't dare to ask too much about many things. If she did, she might break the peace. It was better to pretend that she didn't know anything. She couldn't destroy the entire Earl Ling'an's Mansion. Even without the first branch, she still had the second branch.

The eldest son and the second son were both her sons.

The eldest granddaughter and the second granddaughter were both her granddaughters. They were the same to her.

She couldn't harm one granddaughter for the other granddaughter. Moreover, the eldest granddaughter was the one she liked the most. She liked her from the bottom of her heart. She even wished that the eldest granddaughter was the one who married into Eastern Palace.

"What exactly happened?" A trace of panic appeared on Old Lady Ji's face.

Qu Moying sneered in her heart. Old Lady Ji panicked when she heard that things might get worse, which showed that she actually knew something. But all she cared about was herself. She had never cared about Ji Hanyue and Third Lady Ji.

She was mean and heartless! She had never shown family affection to them!

Thinking of this, Qu Moying decided to forget about her previous kinship with Old Lady Ji...

After confirming again and again, she was even more certain that Old Lady Ji knew something. Otherwise, it was impossible for her to have such an attitude. With her status as Earl Ling'an's Mansion's old lady, how could she be afraid of other people causing trouble?

"Your Ladyship, please prepare yourself. Maybe this matter will become even bigger. I came here to figure it out, so that I can answer others if they ask me. After all, the shop belongs to my aunt. Nobody is allowed to take it." Qu Moying deliberately glanced at Old Lady Ji with a slightly angry face.

She pursed her lips tightly. Although her eyes could not be seen, they must have been filled with anger.

Seeing Qu Moying like this, Old Lady Ji became more and more restless, but she was still calm on her face because she had gone through a lot in the past. She asked, "Your words are really strange. You are a young lady of Vice Minister's Mansion. Why do you interfere with our mansion's matters? You even wanted to make it a bigger deal? What are you trying to do? Please make it clear!"

"Do you want me to make it clear?" A faint sneer appeared on the corner of Qu Moying's mouth.

"Yes. Fourth Lady Qu, please explain clearly. Why are you constantly making trouble for our mansion? You have been on the opposite side of our mansion again and again. You made a scene in our mansion. You are an unmarried lady. Aren't you afraid of ruining your reputation by doing so? Don't you think you have gone too far?"

The curtain of the door was lifted. Xiao stood at the door with a gloomy face. She had just received the news and rushed over. When she heard Qu Moying's words, she was extremely angry. Her words were extremely unpleasant to hear.

Seeing her come over, Qu Moying was not surprised. Looking at Xiao who was coming over, she stood up and bowed. "Greetings, Mrs. Xiao."

Xiao ignored Qu Moying's greetings and said with a gloomy face, "Fourth Lady Qu, what brought you here today?"

Qu Moying stood there calmly and looked up at the angry Xiao. She knew that Xiao must have rushed over after hearing the news that she had come. It was impossible for her to get the news that something had happened to the shop because the shop was not under her control but under Ji Youran's control.

However, Ji Youran was injured before, so she might not be able to know and deal with the matter immediately. She might even delay it. After all, it was a matter of a small shop. She was Eastern Palace's Princess Ji. A mere shop manager could not casually see her. Moreover, she was injured now.

"I came here to ask something about my aunt. If I offended you and Her Ladyship, please forgive me. Mrs. Xiao, as for what you have just said, it was too much. My aunt has passed away, so I naturally have to take care of her things. How can I not ask about it since someone has taken away my aunt's shop?"

Qu Moying said calmly.

"Fourth Lady Qu, you have gone too far! This is our own business. It has nothing to do with Qu." Xiao said grumpily.

"But my mother was from Yue Family, and so was my aunt." Qu Moying said indifferently.

"Then let Yue's people come. It has nothing to do with Qu." Xiao hated Qu Moying for always showing up to cause trouble, so she blurted out these words.

"As expected, you will insist on letting Yue's people come over. Alright then, let me take care of it." A voice came from the door, carrying a bit of coldness.

## Chapter 274 I Will Ask for It!

It was a man's voice. It was not Qu Moying speaking.

Xiao was stunned. When she turned around, she saw the maid at the door had lifted the curtain. Yue Wenhan was standing at the door in an official robe with a cold face.

Xiao's lips trembled. She really did not expect that Old Lady Ji had already invited Yue Wenhan over.

"Greetings, cousin brother." Seeing Yue Wenhan come over, Qu Moying stood up and bowed with a smile.

"Cousin sister, you are too polite. Please sit down." When Yue Wenhan looked at Qu Moying, his expression softened, and he waved his hand.

Qu Moying sat down on the side.

Yue Wenhan went forward and bowed to Old Lady Ji.

Old Lady Ji could be rude to Qu Moying, but she could not do the same to Yue Wenhan. She wanted to suppress Qu Moying because she felt that she could. However, Yue Wenhan was obviously not someone she could suppress. Therefore, her expression softened a little.

Granny Miao came in with Yue Wenhan. After entering the door, she followed Yue Wenhan to bow to Old Lady Ji. Then, she turned to stand quietly behind Qu Moying.

As a high-ranking official with rich experience in interrogation, Yue Wenhan was used to asking questions in a straightforward manner. After sitting down, he looked at Old Lady Ji and asked bluntly, ignoring Xiao, who was standing at the side. "Your Ladyship, I heard that my aunt's dowry was taken away. Is that true?"

Xiao did not have any title. To him, she was just an ordinary lady from an aristocratic family. She was just an ordinary senior to him, and he would treat her well only because she was his relative.

Old Lady Ji explained with a frown, "Mr. Yue, no one took away your aunt's dowry. It is still..."

"Mr. Yue, my mother doesn't know about this. Let me tell you!" At this time, Xiao was aware of the situation and interrupted Old Lady Ji with a smile. Her attitude towards Yue Wenhan was way better than when she talked with Qu Moying just now.

She was unfriendly to Qu Moying, but she treated Yue Wenhan obsequiously.

Old Lady Ji did not know about the first branch's shops, but how could Xiao not know?

Qu Moying cast a mocking glance at Xiao, quietly watching how she would justify herself.

"Mrs. Xiao, please go on." Yue Wenhan said coldly.

"Mr. Yue, sister-in-law's belongs are naturally all here, and they are naturally left to the first branch. But now that sister-in-law has passed away, everything is in Madam Duan's hands. Perhaps someone among them caused some trouble, but they are all small matters. When Madam Duan is in charge of everything, those useless people will be replaced."

Xiao smiled and pointed at Madam Duan. "Madam Duan, have you finished reading the account books I gave you?"

Those account books were in a mess. Even if she wanted to read them, she would have to spend a lot of time. Xiao did not believe that Madam Duan would be able to read them so quickly.

As long as Madam Duan said that she had not finished reading, Xiao would have a lot of excuses for the shops. No matter what Qu Moying and Yue Wenhan came for, she was not afraid.

Xiao's words could be said to be watertight. No matter what happened and no matter what the cause was, Xiao felt that she could deal with it.

"I've almost finished reading all of them, but I don't know which shop Fourth Lady Qu is talking about." Madam Duan had been lowering her head just now. Her presence here was very insignificant. Hearing Xiao's words, she slowly raised her head and looked at Xiao without dodging. Qu Moying said that she was now the first branch's madam, so she had the confidence to look straight at Xiao.

If Yuanhai really inherited the title in the future, she would be the next Old Lady of the mansion and get an official title from the imperial court.

"Madam Duan, have you finished reading them?" Xiao's face darkened. She didn't expect this.

"I've finished reading them. Which account books are you talking about?" Madam Duan said calmly, not dodging at all.

Xiao's face darkened. She did not expect Madam Duan to finish reading them. How could she finish reading them? Those account books were in such a mess, and it had only been a short time since Madam Duan got them. Xiao thought she must be lying.

Just as she was about to contradict Madam Duan, Qu Moying smiled and spoke up before her. "It's about the shop next to my mother's shop. It is called 'Yue's Gold Pavilion'. Do you remember it, Madam Duan?"

"I remember. That was the Madam's dowry. The Yue Family in the South established it for Madam in the capital. The shop's name started with Yue, and so was Second Lady's clothing shop." Madam Duan thought for a moment and said. She knew which shop Qu Moying was talking about, and she didn't need to check the account book at all.

Along the way to Old Lady Ji's yard, Qu Moying had told her to go against Xiao no matter what Xiao said. She hadn't finished reading the account books yet. She used to be in charge of account books before, and she knew Xiao deliberately made them such a mess because Xiao was unwilling to give the shops back to her.

Qu Moying continued to ask, "Madam Duan, do you own this shop now?"

"No, when Second Lady married into Eastern Palace, a number of shops were given to her as her dowry." Madam Duan said with certainty. Back then, she had helped in preparing the dowry. There were not only shops but also some other things in Ji Hanyue's dowry. Earl Ling'an gave all of them to Ji Hanyue, saying that the dowry had to be luxurious because Ji Hanyue was the future Crown Princess.

The list of dowry had been prepared long ago when the Elder Yue was still alive.

As for Third Lady Ji, she was still young at that time, and her dowry could be slowly prepared. They had asked Third Lady Ji, and she agreed to let Second Lady Ji have those things as her dowry. Therefore, the Elder Yue and Earl Ling'an ordered Madam Duan to prepare the dowry.

Qu Moying turned to look at Xiao and asked, "Since my cousin sister has passed away without a child, why don't you take back the dowry? Earl Ling'an's Mansion's first branch doesn't have any wealth now, so the dowry should be left to the young master and Madam Duan."

Old Lady Ji frowned. By now, she had more or less understood what Qu Moying meant and she became even more displeased. Although Ji Hanyue could no longer use her dowry, Ji Youran could use it. Old Lady Ji thought, "Does she want me to go to Crown Prince's Mansion to get the dowry back?"

Old Lady Ji coughed and said, "Fourth Lady Qu, since the dowry has been in Eastern Mansion, of course it is inappropriate to ask for it. Do you want the Crown Prince to send the dowry back?"

"Your Ladyship, it was originally my elder aunt's dowry. Why can't the mansion ask for it? Could it be that the Crown Prince wants the ex-Crown Princess' dowry?" Yue Wenhan shook his robe and said slowly. He looked straight at Old Lady Ji with sharp eyes and continued, "It was originally the Yue Family's asset. It is just alright for Yue Family's people to ask for it, right?"

These words made Old Lady Ji and Xiao's hearts skip a beat.

Both the Ji Family and the Yue Family had a reason to ask for it.

Although Ji Yuanhai could be considered the first branch's son, he was not born by the Elder Yue. Yue's two daughters had passed away, so it was reasonable for the Yue Family to ask for the dowry.

Qu Moying secretly praised Yue Wenhan in her heart. Ji Wenhan deserved to be Vice Minister of the Dali Temple. His words were so perfect that no one could find fault with him. He praised Pei Luo'an appropriately and pushed the blame on Earl Ling'an's Mansion for not doing what it should have done, absolving Pei Luo'an from any responsibility.

Qu Moying smiled silently as she quietly watched.

Old Lady Ji and Xiao were both shocked by Yue Wenhan. Both of their faces darkened. If Yue Family's people went to Crown Prince's Mansion to ask for the dowry, they would be in an awkward position, and words against them would come out. After all, Ji Youran was still in Crown Prince's Mansion.

However, the current situation was also tricky.

The atmosphere suddenly became awkward. Old Lady Ji coughed again and said to Yue Wenhan with a forced smile, "Mr. Yue, we are discussing this matter. Yuanhai is now adopted by your aunt, so we should leave some for him, right? He is now Earl Ling'an's Mansion's Young Master."

"Your Ladyship, thank you for having Yuanhai adopted by my aunt. At least someone will worship my aunt and uncle. It is reasonable to leave my aunt's dowry to him, but now the dowry is in Crown Prince's Mansion, Your Ladyship, what should we do?" Yue Wenhan asked indifferently.

"This is related to Crown Prince's Mansion. The Crown Prince intended to give it back to us, but the ex-Crown Princess had just passed away at that time. Everyone was too sad to think about it. This matter will definitely be properly handled soon." At this time, Xiao stepped forward with a fake smile.

Although she had a smile on her face, it was a forced one. It was clear that she was stalling for time to think of other countermeasures. With Crown Prince's Mansion behind her, she could gloss them over easily.

After all, it was Crown Prince's Mansion.

Xiao had already made up her mind. She would go find Ji Youran later and think of a way to smooth this matter over. What if Yue Wenhan was aggressive? Did he dare to disobey the Crown Prince?

She thought their idea to reclaim the dowry in Crown Prince's Mansion was ridiculous, and she was confident that her daughter could deal with the two of them with ease.

With this thought, Xiao calmed down, and the smile on her face looked much more sincere.

"Then I'll have to trouble you, Mrs. Xiao." Yue Wenhan said. Then, he turned to Qu Moying and asked, "Cousin sister, do you want to go back together with me?"

"Okay." Qu Moying nodded. She was done with today's matter. She stood up, bowed to Old Lady Ji and Xiao, and turned to leave.



Old Lady Ji and Xiao were eager to see her leave, so they smiled and saw them off. In order to show her sincerity, Xiao specially asked Madam Duan to send Qu Moying and Yue Wenhan off.

Madam Duan sent the two of them out.

When they came out of the mansion, Madam Duan went back to the mansion. Qu Moying turned to Yue Wenhan and bowed, "Thank you, cousin brother."

She was sincerely grateful to Yue Wenhan. He came here in an official robe, which indicated that he was very busy. But even so, he still came to help her.

A faint smile appeared on Yue Wenhan's face. He stretched out his hand to support Qu Moying and said meaningfully, "Let's wait and see. Cousin sister, if you have any difficulty, you can come to me. Whether it's about the elder aunt or the younger aunt, I will help you, and I ought to help."

He really appreciated Qu Moying. He originally thought that she was no different from those weak and ordinary young ladies in the capital. It turned out that she was totally different from what she was said to be. He quite liked her because she was intelligent and had an extraordinary manner. He wanted to know who the ex-Crown Princess invited to teach Qu Moying that she was not inferior in the slightest to ladies from big aristocratic families.

## Chapter 275 Xiao and Ji Youran Plotted Together

Besides not being inferior to others, she also made people feel that she was advancing toward her goal step by step.

Hearing Yue Wenhan saying that he would support her without hesitation, Qu Moying was touched. She smiled gently, nodded heavily, and thanked Yue Wenhan again, "Thank you, cousin brother."

"Yue is also my elder aunt. I should help her." Yue Wenhan said with deep meaning, "If anything happens in the future, don't forget me! Just wait and see!"

After entering the mansion just now, Granny Miao told him what had happened on their way to Old Lady Ji's room. Old Lady Ji and Xiao knew nothing about it. They thought that Qu Moying had just seen something because she didn't mention what had happened.

In fact, when Qu Moying first entered the mansion, she told Old Lady Ji about it. However, Old Lady Ji later forgot about it. She thought it was just a small matter, or perhaps Qu Moying had deliberately exaggerated it. Therefore, she didn't take it seriously.

"Then let's wait first. Cousin brother, be careful." Qu Moying said with a smile.

"I will be careful. You... need to be careful too. If there is anything, let me do it." Yue Wenhan reminded Qu Moying in a reserved manner. A trace of pity flashed through his eyes. Qu Moying was young, yet she was so intelligent and could do such a thing. She must have lived a bad life. Otherwise, how could she be so sensible?

"Did the Yue Family mistreat her?" Thinking of this, Yue Wenhan couldn't help but get angry.

Qu Moying knew what Yue Wenhan meant. After all, she was an unmarried young lady. It was inconvenient for her to do and even talk about many things because a lady's reputation was so important that her future depended on it.

"Thank you, cousin brother." This time, Qu Moying did not say anything else but nodded with a smile.

The two of them did not say anything in detail, but they were both smart people. What would happen next was not just their business.

Pei Luo'an was the Crown Prince. He would never covet the ex-Crown Princess' dowry. Moreover, the ex-Crown Princess died because of him, and he kept showing his deep affection for her in front of others.

Yue Wenhan and Qu Moying parted at the Ji Family's gate and returned to their respective residences.

Not long after they left, another carriage drove out of the gate of Earl Ling'an's Mansion. In the carriage sat Xiao, and her face was gloomy. She had to tell her daughter about this matter and let her daughter explain it to the Crown Prince. She thought Qu Moying was just a mere Vice Minister's daughter who didn't have the right to meddle in the affairs of their mansion.

As for Yue Wenhan, she believed that he would not dare to ask for the dowry as soon as the Crown Prince flared up because he had to think about his future.

The carriage went all the way to the Crown Prince's Mansion and stopped in the parking lot. Xiao got off the carriage and was about to move forward when she suddenly saw a few eunuchs coming over. Seeing her carriage stop here, a eunuch screamed, "Where did this carriage come from? Quickly get out of here."

The maid beside Xiao stood up and said loudly, "It's our madam's carriage. Can't you see it? She is here to see Princess Ji."

In the past, when Xiao came over, Ji Youran had always shown her respect. Every time Xiao got off the carriage, there would be people coming to greet her. Therefore, Xiao's maids became arrogant. They thought that their miss was the master of the inner yard of Crown Prince's Mansion, so she was naturally far more superior to ordinary visitors.

What was so great about a eunuch? He was just a servant serving their miss.

One of the eunuchs glanced at the maid and said coldly, "What madam? Someone, get the carriage out of here."

A eunuch came over, jumped onto the carriage, pushed the carriage driver down, and then whipped the horse with the horsewhip to drive the carriage out.

Xiao trembled with anger. She had never been treated like this before in Crown Prince's Mansion. She pointed at one of the eunuchs and said, "Okay... Okay. The Side Princess will deal with you! Just you wait!"

“The Side Princess? Who is that?” A eunuch sneered, and the other eunuchs also laughed and echoed, “We’ve never heard of any Side Princess being our master.”

They looked at Xiao with disdain and turned to leave.

Xiao was so angry that she wanted to yell at the few eunuchs. However, she knew that this was Crown Prince’s Mansion, so she didn’t dare to be too presumptuous. She could only grit her teeth. She was determined to let her daughter whip these eunuchs severely to disable them when she saw her daughter. She was determined to teach these eunuchs an unforgettable lesson so that they would not dare to be so arrogant in the future.

Supported by her maid, she walked out of the parking lot. Seeing her carriage that was pushed into a corner, Xiao was even more furious. She had never been so angry before. These eunuchs really went too far.

“Madam, let’s go find Princess Ji first.” The maid advised.

Xiao tried her best to calm down and ordered the carriage driver to drive the carriage in again. She also let an old maid guard the carriage in the parking lot. She would like to see if anyone would dare to drive her carriage out again.

There was not a single carriage in such a large parking lot. Anyone could stop their carriage here. There were even fewer carriages than in the past. Why did she have to stop her carriage in a corner outside the mansion and make room for others?

She thought these despicable eunuchs were too insensible to recognize her and deliberately made things difficult for her.

Xiao went to Ji Youran’s yard with her maid. Someone had already reported to Ji Youran. It was inconvenient for Ji Youran to walk out, but she sent a maid over. Seeing that the maid was actually Ji Hanyue’s senior maid, Xiao was furious. She snorted and turned around to enter Ji Youran’s room.

The maid, Xie Feng, did not dare to say anything. She carefully followed Xiao into the room.

Ever since she began to serve Ji Youran, Xiao had never liked her, but Ji Youran trusted her very much and repeatedly told her not to provoke Xiao.

Ji Youran was half leaning on the bed. Her injuries were not serious, and she had almost fully recovered. However, her body was still very weak. The Crown Prince had treated her well these past few days. He came to see her from time to time and chatted with her, which made her less depressed and more cheerful. She believed that what happened that day was an accident and that the Crown Prince didn't mean it.

Thinking of this, she no longer felt upset.

The Crown Prince had indeed treated her very well these past few days. He brought all kinds of good stuff to her, which had driven the last bit of uneasiness and discomfort out of her heart.

After all, the Crown Prince had her in his heart. Thinking of what happened to Ji Hanyue that day and the treatment she now enjoyed, Ji Youran felt very happy. She thought she was the most important woman in the Crown Prince's heart. Even if Ji Hanyue was still alive, she would not be able to compare with her.

As for the Crown Prince's deep affection for Ji Hanyue, the Crown Prince was just acting. Who would take it seriously?

Therefore, Ji Youran was living well recently, but the things in the Ji Family made her annoyed. She was thinking about what to say to let the Crown Prince take care of the Ji Family's matter. Concubine Xiang became the legitimate wife of the deceased Earl Ling'an. Ji Youran was unhappy about this. At present, the Crown Prince was attentive and gentle to her. It was just that she had not found the right time to talk to him about the issue.

Seeing Xiao coming in with an angry face, Ji Youran asked, "Mother, what happened?"

She looked at Xie Feng behind Xiao, but Xie Feng shook her head silently because she didn't know what had happened either.

"What else could it be? Some servants in your mansion have really gone too far." Xiao was really angry that she didn't even bother to talk about the Ji Family's matter first but directly brought up what had happened just now. She sat down on the chair beside the bed and angrily told the story.

After she finished speaking, Ji Youran's face darkened. She was in charge of almost everything in Eastern Palace, but there was actually someone who dared to disrespect her mother.

"Go and find out which despicable servants did this!" Ji Youran ordered.

An old maid went out to ask around.

"Mother, don't be angry. It's not a big deal. It is just a eunuch. I will beat him half to death and throw him out later. Mother, don't be angry." Ji Youran said with a gentle smile.

"It's not just a despicable servant. There is also that damned girl from Qu Mansion." Xiao said, glancing at the people in Ji Youran's room.

"Mother, don't worry. They are all my people." Ji Youran smiled and leaned back.

She had been in charge of the affairs in Eastern Palace's inner yard for a period of time, so she naturally had some trusted people.

"Greetings, Princess Ji. Madam, your carriage is overturned." An old maid hurriedly came in to report. It was the old maid who Xiao asked to guard the parking lot just now.

"Who did it?" Xiao suddenly stood up and asked sternly.

Ji Youran's gaze turned cold. She frowned. Who dared to do such a thing in this mansion? She ordered, "Go find out who did it and beat him to death."

This was a slap in her face. Ever since she entered Eastern Palace, no one had embarrassed her like this. Even the people around the Crown Prince were quite polite to her.

Another old maid stormed out aggressively, bringing several rough old maids with her. Ji Youran's meaning was very clear. No matter who overturned Xiao's carriage, she would beat the troublemakers to death first to declare her prestige.

"Mother, sit down first. Don't be angry. No matter which servant did this, I will definitely help you vent your anger." Ji Youran comforted Xiao.

"You should teach your servants well, lest they don't know who their master is." Xiao snorted and sat down. She had suffered a lot today.

Ji Youran frowned, unwilling to continue the topic. She said, "Mother, I understand. Tell me what happened to the Fourth Lady of Qu Mansion?"

"She came to us again, saying that Ji Hanyue's dowry shops belonged to your elder aunt. She said that since your elder aunt has passed away, the Yue Family can reclaim the dowry." As soon as Xiao mentioned Qu Moying, she felt annoyed. A trace of coldness flashed in her eyes as she said impatiently, "What's wrong with this damn girl? Why has she always made things difficult for us? You should think of a way to deal with her, in case she keeps making trouble for us."

## Chapter 276 How Embarrassing: Xiao Was Driven Away

"So, it's that cheap girl again?" Ji Youran's face was cold and solemn.

"Yes, it's that cheap girl from the Qu Mansion. I don't know what is wrong with her. Do you have any suitable men? Pick one and marry her to that guy so that she won't be able to hang around and cause trouble."

Xiao said in a bad tone.

There were quite a few clansmen in the Pei clan. They could be considered members of the imperial house. However, some of them had already gone downhill and were not much better than ordinary households.

Of course, Xiao could not allow Qu Moying to marry well. She just wanted to choose someone from the Pei clan without power or influence for Qu Moying to tie her up. In that case, Qu Moying would no longer be able to cause trouble for the Ji Family.

“Mother, let’s postpone this matter for now. What did she do this time? How many people know about it?” Ji Youran asked impatiently. Xiao had been talking for so long, but she still hadn’t grasped the key point.

“She came to the mansion to see your grandmother, and Yue Wenhan also came. The two of them made a scene in front of your grandmother. They wanted to get back the ex-Crown Princess’ dowry from the Crown Prince’s Mansion.” Xiao said.

Ji Youran’s expression changed greatly and she said in disbelief, “What did she say? About that shop?”

That shop had just changed its name, and she was the one who gave it the name. How could she not know?

“Yes, it was caused by that shop. I don’t know how she saw it. If she had the time to worry about other people’s matters, why didn’t she worry about her own matters? Her own shop was involved in a scandal, but she had the face to interfere with other people’s matters.” Xiao snorted coldly.

The expression on Ji Youran’s face was as deep as water, and her eyes looked cold as she thought, “This Qu Moying really took herself seriously.”

“What does this bitch want?”

Xiao nodded. “I don’t know what she wants. No matter how much trouble she makes, it can’t benefit her at all. She is Vice Minister’s Mansion’s lady, how can she be so bold and dare to do such a thing?”



"Yue Wenhan also showed up?" Ji Youran wasn't interested in Qu Moying. She felt that this matter had more to do with Yue Wenhan.

"Yes, he was also there. Shen came to the mansion with that damned cheap girl. Apparently, he came to cause trouble." Xiao said resentfully. The instant she thought of Qu Moying, her teeth itched.

"What was Yue Wenhan doing there? How come he has the guts to ask the Crown Prince's Mansion to return Ji Hanyue's dowry? Does he really think he is a big potato?" Ji Youran sneered.

"Bang!" A heavy sound came from outside the door.

Ji Youran, who was inside, was shocked. Then, there were continuous sounds. It sounded like the painful groans of someone who had been knocked down and beaten.

"Who is so bold? Quickly go and find out." Ji Youran was furious and shouted harshly. This was her yard, who dared to be so impudent?

Her two private maids Shui Ning and Xie Feng immediately walked out. Only when they lifted the curtain did they see the Crown Prince Pei Luo'an looking at them coldly. They were so scared that they trembled and hurriedly knelt down.

"Well then, can't I come here?" Pei Luo'an entered the room with a cold face. His malicious gaze fell on Ji Youran, and he was furious.

Xiao hurriedly stood up and said in a panic, "Greetings, Your Highness."

"Mrs. Xiao, go back if you have nothing to do here. After all, you are only the Side Princess' mother. If my Princess Consort sees you in the future, I'm afraid she will complain!" Pei Luo'an said unceremoniously.

These words made Xiao's face turn green and white. This was the first time the Crown Prince had said such words to her. Didn't her daughter often say that the Crown Prince would make her the next Princess Consort?

She couldn't help but look at her daughter.

Pei Luo'an was not in the mood to talk to a woman without any official title. He waved his hand and said, "Someone, send Mrs. Xiao back!"

A eunuch came over and smiled at Xiao in a strange way, which made the hair on Xiao's body stand up. "Mrs. Xiao, please!"

His words were polite, but his tone was not polite at all, and he sounded very tough.

When Xiao sensed the atmosphere, she did not dare to say anything else. She turned back to look at her daughter and secretly gave her a look. Then, she hurriedly lowered her head and carefully retreated. She knew the Crown Prince was now angry. She wondered who had provoked the Crown Prince to such an extent that he even vented his anger on her.

After leaving Ji Youran's yard, the eunuch led the way in the front. As they walked, Xiao felt the route became more and more desolate. She was very flustered, but she did not dare to ask. In the end, as they walked further and further, she had to smile and say, "Eunuch, my own carriage is not parked on this side. Is there any mistake?"

"Impossible. Mrs. Xiao, your carriage is parked here." The eunuch said with a fake smile. Then, he pointed to a place in front of him. "The Eastern Palace's carriages are parked there. Mrs. Xiao, you can take a carriage back to your mansion."

After saying that, he turned around and was about to leave.

Xiao was anxious and said quickly, "Eunuch, please stay. What happened to my... my carriage?"

The old maids who Ji Youran had sent before had not returned yet. Judging by the current situation, how could she not know that something had happened to her carriage?

She came to the Eastern Palace to see her daughter, the Side Princess, today. How could something happen to her carriage?

Moreover, the carriages that were parked here were apparently not for masters. At a sight, she knew they were taken by the servants who were out to run an errand. No wonder she was led to such a remote place.

The eunuch stopped. He looked at Xiao and said, "Lord Yun came to the mansion today to inquire about the assassin. The Crown Prince instructed the guards to be on high alert. There must not be any mistake. Your carriage was parked at the place reserved for Lord Yun. It was considered a source of danger and was directly overturned."

After all, Xiao was Princess Ji's biological mother. The eunuch was not willing to offend Princess Ji too much. At present, the inner yard was still managed by Princess Ji.

"My carriage stopped in the wrong place, so it was overturned?" Xiao's eyes widened. She opened her mouth and said after a long time, "But... but there is nothing unsafe in my carriage."

"Who knows? Previously, the Crown Prince's Mansion was invaded by assassins several times. Lord Yun and the Crown Prince had ordered to make a thorough investigation. However, Princess Ji's people came over without saying anything. They even wanted to punish the eunuchs who were serving Lord Yun. This angered Lord Yun to such an extent that he even reprimanded the Crown Prince."

The eunuch said coldly.

He really didn't know why the people sent by Princess Ji were so bold. They came up without saying anything and wanted to slap Lord Yun Mansion's eunuchs. After being seized by Lord Yun Mansion's guards, they even shouted that it was Princess Ji's order and asked the several eunuchs to die.

Didn't they know who Lord Yun was? Even the Crown Prince had to greet this Lord with a smile. How could a Side Princess be so audacious? Just because she was a woman that the Crown Prince cared about?

Had she offended Lord Yun? Xiao's face turned pale. Everyone in the capital knew that Lord Yun Pei Yuanjun was a formidable person who would seek revenge for the smallest grievance. Thinking of this, her body was on the verge of collapse. She stammered, "E-eunuch... could you please..."

"No!" The eunuch directly interrupted Xiao. This time, he decisively turned and left. He had been away for a long time. The Crown Prince was angry at this time. He had better go back as soon as possible to wait on the Crown Prince.

Lord Yun was furious and scolded the Crown Prince. He did not care about the Crown Prince's feelings at all and mocked him in front of all the servants. He said that even the Princess Consort did not have as much face as this Side Princess. He also said that the Crown Prince's so-called deep love for the Crown Princess was fake. The person he really cared about was this Side Princess.

These words were too harsh, like a slap in the Crown Prince's face. All of the Crown Prince's trusted subordinates knew that the Crown Prince had always expressed his deep affection for the ex-Crown Princess in front of others. Now that he was ridiculed by Lord Yun like that, how could he not be angry?

However, the Crown Prince could not be angry with Lord Yun. This resentment was naturally vented on Princess Ji.

Seeing the eunuch's attitude, Xiao did not dare to say anything at this time. Flustered and frightened, she got on a carriage and went straight back to the Ji Family...

"Your Highness, what happened?" Seeing Xiao go out, Ji Youran said softly. She held the maid's hand and slowly stood up. She was confused, but the expression on her face was concerned. "Did my mother do something that made Your Highness unhappy? If that's the case, I will warn her and tell her not to do any similar thing in the future."

Her tone was very gentle. Although she had difficulty walking, she was extremely concerned about Pei Luo'an. It was as if she was wholeheartedly thinking for Pei Luo'an. Although Pei Luo'an had uttered harsh words to her, she seemed to not have heard them.

This kind of Ji Youran was what Pei Luo'an liked the most in the past. He felt that she was more to his liking than Ji Hanyue. She was gentle and elegant, and her mind was filled with concern for him. But now, a trace of coldness flashed in Pei Luo'an's eyes.

Just now, Pei Yuanjun's words had severely humiliated him.

He was a dignified Crown Prince, yet he had actually pampered his Side Princess to such an extent that he disregarded the etiquette of the imperial family for her. Lord Yun also accused him of faking his affection for the Crown Princess in public but doting on the Side Princess in private.

"Ji Youran!" Pei Luo'an calmed down a little.

"Your Highness!" Ji Youran replied in a sweet voice.

"Ji Youran, you are my Side Princess. Remember your identity and act properly. I will definitely reward you accordingly. If you think you are my favorite and dare to make trouble for me, I will definitely punish you." Pei Luo'an warned with a gloomy look in his eyes.

"Your Highness, I don't dare." Ji Youran bowed gently and said delicately.

"That would be the best. If the same thing happens next time, I'm afraid I don't need to protect you." With a gloomy face, Pei Luo'an flicked his sleeves and left.

Just now, the actions of the two old maids sent by Ji Youran were extremely arrogant. They even beat Pei Yuanjun's people, causing him to lose all his face in front of Pei Yuanjun. Once again, it made him feel the taste of being suppressed, which pissed him off.

Ji Youran slowly stood up straight and looked at Pei Luo'an's back. She frowned and said to an old maid beside her, "Go and find out what exactly happened that made the Crown Prince so angry."

The old maid left. Soon, she ran back with a panicked face. Apparently, she was overly frightened. "Er... Princess Ji, those... those two haven't died completely..."

"Who haven't died completely?" Ji Youran lay on the bed and frowned as she listened to the old maid's confusing report.

“They were the two...people sent by you. The Crown Prince got someone to break their legs... and... there were also many people who were pulled to watch... watch the execution...” The Old maid’s face was extremely pale. It wasn’t that she had never seen someone flogged to death. Ji Youran also frequently punished people here. She had beaten a few servants to death.

However, she had never seen someone with broken legs, rolling on the ground and crying. The sight was extremely terrifying!

“What?” Ji Youran understood the meaning of the old maid’s words. She suddenly sat up straight, and her vision turned black. Her people had been severely punished by the Crown Prince as a warning to others. How was she going to manage Eastern Palace in the future?

#### Chapter 277 Aunt Yang Was Reinstated

Qu Moying did not directly return to Qu Mansion. Instead, she went to Yue’s Clothing Pavilion. After being locked up for several days, Yue’s Clothing Pavilion’s entire business was halted. Not only was the shopkeeper arrested, but many of the shop assistants were also taken away for questioning. Although they were all released at this time, many of them ran away.

They were here to make a living. Who would have expected that they were sent to prison? Therefore, some of the shop assistants ran away.

However, some of the shop assistants stayed behind. Qu Moying asked Granny Miao to deal with the aftermath. After a brief inquiry, Granny Miao was very happy. She took the register and entered the former shopkeeper’s office.

“My lady, most of the people who stayed behind were old people hired by madam when she was still alive. Two of them were brought by madam from her hometown.”

The people who ran away were all hired by Yu later on, especially the people who worked under Yu Qian. Now that Yu’s patron was gone and Yu Qian was in prison, these people naturally ran away like rats that deserted a sinking ship.

“Two people brought by Mother? Let them in!” Qu Moying said with a smile.

This was a surprise. She had originally thought that the people from before were all gone. Unexpectedly, some of them remained. Since Yu kept them, they must be quite capable.

A middle-aged woman and a lean middle-aged man entered the room.

“Greetings, my lady.” The two of them bowed respectfully to Qu Moying.

“Are you brought to the capital by my mother when she married? What did you do in the shop in the past?” Qu Moying asked after sizing them up.

The middle-aged woman at the front had an extremely respectful expression. After hearing Qu Moying’s question, she bowed sideways and replied, “My lady, my surname is Yang, and I indeed came to the capital with madam. However, thanks to madam’s great kindness, we regained our citizenship and were no longer hereditary servants. After that, we have been working in the shop. I used to be the shopkeeper of this shop, and standing next to me is the accountant, Mr. Wang.”

They were no longer Qu Mansion’s hereditary servants after regaining their citizenship. This should be one of the important reasons why Yu could not do anything to the two of them.

When Qu Moying heard this, she already understood the situation.

“Aunt Yang was the shopkeeper that madam appointed in the past, but later... after the Second Madam took over the shop, Aunt Yang became Yu Qian’s assistant. In fact, everything in the shop was done by Aunt Yang. Yu Qian was just the shopkeeper in name and he usually did not do anything.”

Mr. Wang said indignantly.

“Yu Qian used to be idle in the past?” Qu Moying asked curiously.

"That's right. In the past, Yu Qian would only go to the Second Madam to flatter her. He would leave everything for Aunt Yang to do. If Aunt Yang wasn't so capable, he would have driven her away long ago." Mr. Wang said. He was a veteran in this shop, so he naturally saw the situation clearly.

Yu Qian was making use of Aunt Yang to do things for himself. On the surface, everything seemed to be done by him, and that was why Yu appreciated him.

"Aunt Yang..." Qu Moying said.

"My lady, you are my master. Don't address me like that." Aunt Yang hurriedly shook her hand.

"You were originally my mother's dowry maid. Now that you are no longer Qu Mansion's servant, I should naturally address you like this. Aunt Yang, you don't have to be so modest. From now on, you will be Yue's Clothing Pavilion's shopkeeper. You can restore the original shop name when my mother was alive. I wonder if you can do the job well?" Qu Moying said softly with a smile.

Aunt Yang's eyes turned red when she heard that the little master appointed her to such an important position. Her voice choked with sobs. "My lady, back then, madam was afraid that this shop would be taken over by the Second Madam, so she specially ordered someone to restore our citizenship. This way, we wouldn't be controlled by the Second Madam. I... I have been guarding this shop for so many years just to wait until the day my lady is in charge."

As Aunt Yang spoke, she turned to Mr. Wang and nodded at him. Mr. Wang also took a step forward. "My lady, I have been in charge of the accounts all these years. I specially kept an extra copy of the accounting books for you. I had wanted to show you the accounts when I had the chance. Now, I have finally been able to repay madam's kindness."

Qu Moying's heart skipped a beat. "What? Could it be that you have kept all these years' accounts?"

He was really too considerate.

It was not easy to make another copy of the accounting books under Yu's eyes. If Yu Qian, who was Yu's confidant, knew about it, something big would definitely happen.



There were also accounting books in the mansion. Every store sent people to deliver accounting books every year. However, when Granny Yan checked them before, she said that some accounting books were missing. After so many years, it was somehow normal that some accounting books were unavailable. Generally, it was not a big deal. However, for some reason, Qu Moying felt that something was wrong.

The accounting books that were missing were not made in the first few years. They were all made in recent years. Besides, not just a single shop had this problem. Some other shops also lost their accounting books that were made in recent years. Apparently, someone might have taken the accounting books away.

However, when she asked about the missing accounting books, nobody could explain it clearly. It had been a long time, and there was no one to watch over them. After the accounting books were placed in the warehouse, they had been left there unattended. No one had sorted them out. Now, there was naturally no way to find the missing accounting books.

Unexpectedly, there was a surprise in front of her.

"I have kept all of them, including the general ledger, my lady. If you want to check the accounts, I will go and get them now." Mr. Wang nodded.

Qu Moying smiled and expressed her gratitude. "Thank you, Mr. Wang. Yu Dong, go and help Mr. Wang bring the accounting books over. I will take a look."

Yu Dong nodded and left with Mr. Wang.

Qu Moying then asked about the business of the shop. She knew that the business of the shop was good. On one hand, the shop was located in the bustling sector of the city. On the other hand, most of the goods that she learned about came from the South. The shop also had a business relationship with the Yue Family in the South.

Yue Family's lady married into the Qu Mansion. Although the Yue Family's lady was gone, she still had a daughter. Although the two families had not been in contact for so many years, the Yue Family in the South would still offer help. Some of the goods of Yue's Clothing Pavilion were supplied by the Yue Family. This was why Yue's Clothing Pavilion's business was so good.

The situation in the gold shop on the side was different. Yue's Gold Pavilion was also in Ji Hanyue's hands in the beginning. Qu Moying clearly knew that most of the people that Yue's Gold Pavilion hired were local gold craftsmen. Few goods in the shop were from the South. The craftsmen in the shop made fashionable jewelry and accessories. They were all things that were popular among the ladies in the capital.

But occasionally, some fashionable jewelry pieces that were especially popular in the South were sent to the shop with the help of Yue.

The two shops were actually still related to the Yue Family in the South. This was another important reason why Yu did not dismiss Aunt Yang and Mr. Wang.

After all, they were the best options to keep in touch with the Yue Family.

"What should we do in the next few days to improve the situation?" Qu Moying pondered for a while and asked Aunt Yang.

This was also a dilemma. Such a scandal was also fatal to the shop. Who would be willing to buy things in a shop that was involved in a lawsuit? That would make customers feel unlucky.

Qu Moying had thought of several plans before, but she couldn't make up her mind at the moment. She wanted to hear the opinion of this shrewd Aunt Yang.

"My lady, now that something like this happened to the shop, everyone in the capital knows about it. Even if you want to hide the fact, it won't work." Aunt Yang said. When she heard that Fourth Lady Qu was going to take charge of this shop, she had an idea. She was both excited and happy. She wanted to help Fourth Lady Qu get the shop back to track.

She had promised madam that no matter what happened, she would keep watch over the shop and assist the little master when she grew up and took charge.

"What's your plan?" Qu Moying raised her eyebrows with interest. At a sight, she knew that Aunt Yang had really thought of a plan for her. She was both surprised and moved.

“My lady, we have to get the South to send a new batch of goods over. The goods must be the most fashionable ones this year. I heard that the South has a new kind of material called ‘five-color brocade’. It is very good, but it is very rare. If we can get the materials and match them with exquisite embroidery, we will inevitably attract many customers.”

Aunt Yang suggested.

This idea exactly echoed with Qu Moying’s plan. It was indeed a little difficult to purchase the five-color brocade. However, if she wrote a letter to her maternal grandparents’ family in the South, she should be able to purchase some. The influence of the Yue Family was a little weak in the capital, but it was indeed a big family in the South.

“What about the embroidery?” Qu Moying nodded and agreed with Aunt Yang. She felt that this matter had to be considered carefully.

Yue’s Clothing Pavilion’s best goods were ready-made clothes.

“Regarding embroidery, I can find the best embroideresses who used to do embroidery in the shop. It would be even better if we could find two more embroideresses in the South. The South has always been very famous for its embroidery, but it is not easy to find a good embroideress in the South.”

Aunt Yang hesitated for a moment and said. Originally, she would not discuss the issue in detail, but seeing the confident look of her little master in front of her, Aunt Yang said everything that was on her mind. Previously, she thought that if she really did not have any other option, she could only use the previous embroideresses. The shop used to have some embroideresses, and she could pick the most outstanding ones.

“It’s not easy to hire outstanding embroideresses from the South. I will send a letter to ask about it first. If there are embroideresses available, my maternal grandparents’ family may recommend one or two.” Qu Moying thought about it and said. She had to ask for help from her maternal grandparents’ family. With her current ability, she really could not find outstanding embroideresses in the capital who came from the South.

After all, the South was famous for embroidery. When outstanding embroideresses from the South entered the capital, they were immediately reserved by people.

When she was Ji Hanyue in her previous life, she heard her mother say that when Yue was in the South, she seemed to have many skilled embroideresses working for her. If one or two of them happened to be available, that would be great.

Hearing the clear and logical explanation of Qu Moying, the last trace of hesitation in Aunt Yang's heart dissipated. Although Fourth Lady Qu had never been in charge of the shop before, she was extremely intelligent. With just a brief hint, she immediately understood the key issue. It was really a pleasant surprise. If the deceased madam saw her daughter was so intelligent, she would definitely be happy.

## Chapter 278 The Missing Account Books

As they spoke, Yu Dong and Mr. Wang had already moved over a few thick account books. These account books were hidden at the bottom of a huge pile of documents because Mr. Wang was afraid that people would see them. Now, he fetched them out.

Qu Moying glanced over a few account books that were not in the mansion. Then, she put them down and began to ponder.

Seeing that Qu Moying was silent and seemed to be deep in thought, Mr. Wang hurriedly asked, "Miss, what do you think is wrong?"

"Is the revenue of the shop this good these years?" Qu Moying looked at the annual revenue figures and asked in surprise. The income of Yue's Clothing Pavilion was so high that it was almost comparable to Yue's Gold Pavilion.

However, Yue's Gold Pavilion was a gold shop. It appeared to be extraordinary, so its business was naturally better.

"Yes, it has been good these past few years. Second Madam purchased a batch of goods from somewhere and sold them in the shop. Some of them seem to be tributes to the royal family."

Aunt Yang said, frowning.

How could tributes to the royal family be casually sold? Trading tributes without permission was a crime. Qu Moying flipped through the account books carefully again and found that the goods came from the South. She frowned and her eyes darkened. "Aunt Yang, are you sure there are some tributes to the royal family sold in the shop?"

"Yes, I once checked some goods carefully. Although they were said to be brought over from the South, they were not from the Yue Family in the South. I felt strange, so I specially asked some people from the South who were in charge of purchasing. They all said that there was no such a source of goods."

Aunt Yang said with a serious face. This matter was hidden in her heart, which made her very uneasy. Now that Qu Moying asked, she directly said it out. Although she had only met Qu Moying for a short time, she had already admired Qu Moying, so she said what had been hidden in her heart.

Since the Yue Family did not send over the goods from the South, Yu must have obtained the goods from her own channels. However, Yu was not that capable to get goods like tributes to the royal family.

Qu Zhizhen was just a Vice Minister. His status was much lower than those high-ranking officials in the capital. Qu Mansion was not a noble family in the capital. Qu Mansion started to exist in the capital after Qu Zhizhen passed the imperial exam. Before that, Qu Family was just a normal wealthy family. It was impossible for Qu Mansion to know someone who had access to tributes.

Aunt Yang said that some of the materials were tributes. With her knowledge, she would not be wrong. Moreover, she had also checked the goods. They were not from the South, but they were recorded in the account books as goods from the South. Qu Moying thought about the situation and felt full of doubts.

Were the account books missing because of the tributes?

Was it Yu's people's doing?

"Are such tributes still on sale?" Qu Moying asked.

"No. They were not on sale since last year. There were only some ordinary goods." Aunt Yang said. Suddenly, her eyes lit up. "Miss, there is still a batch of embroidery tents that has not been completely sold. They were not sold for some unknown reason, and then, they were piled up in the warehouse. But there aren't many left."

"Can they still be found?" Qu Moying asked.

"I think so. I'll find them later." Aunt Yang said. She had seen those goods before, and then, other goods piled up on them. Although it had been more than a year, they should still be there. However, a lot of things were piled there. It would not be easy to find them in a short time.

"Okay. You look for them later and let me know when you find them. As for this shop's working capital, grandmother has given me some money. You can use it first, and if the shop needs anything, just purchase it. If you need hands, hire some people. Just get everything back on track first." Qu Moying glanced at Yu Dong. Yu Dong took out a few pieces of check from his sleeve and pushed them over. They were all large checks. Old Lady Qu specially asked Granny Wu to send them over.

The shop indeed needed a large sum of money to start anew. The money in Yu Qian's hands had long been used up.

"Miss, don't worry. I will deal with everything as soon as possible." Aunt Yang promised with red eyes.

Although Qu Moying had never been in charge of any shop before, she was clear about the matter of the shop. Originally, Aunt Yang was worried about how to ask for restart funds.

Although the shop had a lot of stock, they had to purchase some new goods.

Qu Moying pointed at Yu Dong and said, "Aunt Yang, if there is anything in the future, you can come directly to our mansion to find Yu Dong. She will tell me."

Yu Dong smiled and bowed to Aunt Yang.

Knowing that Yu Dong was Qu Moying's senior maid, Aunt Yang did not dare to neglect her. She hurriedly called her "Miss Yu Dong" and bowed to her.

While they were talking, Granny Miao, who had just gone outside, came in and said with a gloomy face, "Miss, Young Master Yongning is here. He wants to see you!"

Granny Miao did not have a good impression of Young Master Yongning because he wanted to earn a good reputation by using Qu Moying and he secretly hooked up with Yu's niece.

He did not have the intention of marrying Qu Moying at that time. When Qu Moying first met him in the mansion, he was indifferent to her. He ignored Qu Moying but flirted with other women. Granny Miao really did not like him.

She had thought that he would not have any contact with Qu Moying anymore, but she didn't expect him to come here. He didn't seem to come here out of nothing but with a purpose.

Although she was unwilling to receive him, she had to report to Qu Moying because she was just a servant.

Qu Moying did not know why Xu Lipeng came to her. She frowned and said faintly, "Invite Young Master Xu over."

Granny Miao had no choice but to go out and invite Xu Lipeng in.

Aunt Yang and Mr. Wang also left to clean up the shop.

Xu Lipeng slowly walked into the yard. His handsome face looked a little gloomy. He only brought a young servant with him. He followed Granny Miao into the shopkeeper's room.

Seeing Qu Moying sitting in the room, he unconsciously frowned.

Qu Moying was the same as what he had remembered. Her face was covered with a long eye veil. Although she looked good, people would still think that she had an eye disease.

She seemed to be talking to the maid next to her. Unlike the first time they met, she was now gentle and elegant. Even if she had an eye disease, it did not seem to be a big deal. She was not as panicky and gloomy as when they first met. He even felt that she was like a pure jade.

Even though he couldn't see her face clearly, he was sure that her face under the eye veil must be gorgeous. His thought had completely changed.

But he was facing the same person.

In the past, he had never thought highly of Qu Moying and he had thought that marrying Qu Moying was only for show. Yu Qingmeng was different from Qu Moying. Yu Qingmeng was the woman he appreciated. But now, Yu Qingmeng could not compare with Qu Moying at all.

If he hadn't cancelled the engagement at that time, would he feel that marrying Qu Moying was actually not bad? Although Yu Qingmeng didn't have an eye disease, she was still far inferior to Qu Moying. Whether it was in terms of bearing, posture, or words, all of them showed that Qu Moying had received a better education.

She was said to be neither beautiful nor talented, but it was not true.

"If I had known this earlier, should I go to find it out myself?" Xu Lipeng pursed his lips tightly, and his eyes darkened. His anger inexplicably subsided a little.

"Greetings, Young Master Xu." Seeing that Xu Lipeng had come, Qu Moying stood up and bowed sideways.

"It's very polite of you, Fourth Lady Qu." Xu Lipeng said, and they both sat down.

Qu Moying did not bother to talk to him. After sitting down, she went straight to the point. "Young Master Xu, is there anything you want to talk to me about?"



"I do have something to ask you." Staring at her, Xu Lipeng felt complicated. She was graceful and calm in front of him. Was she his ex-fiancee whom he had never paid attention to?

"What is it? Please tell me." Qu Moying asked briefly. She raised her eyes and looked at Xu Lipeng. She didn't expect him to come.

What on earth made Xu Lipeng specially come to her? Qu Moying was very curious, but she was sure that Xu Lipeng did not bring any good news.

After carefully sizing up Qu Moying, Xu Lipeng suddenly felt angry and sneered. "Fourth Lady Qu, you seem to have been plotting for a long time!"

Qu Moying put down the account book in her hand seriously and looked at Xu Lipeng coldly. "Young Master Xu, what do you mean?"

Xu Lipeng sneered and stared at Qu Moying angrily, "You were dissatisfied with Marquis Yongning's Mansion, but you took a fancy to Earl Fengyang's Mansion. How interesting! You seem to be delicate and obedient, but you are actually such a person."

"Young Master Xu, your words are very strange. Do Marquis Yongning's Mansion and Earl Fengyang's Mansion have anything to do with me?" Qu Moying smiled slightly with a bit of contempt. Xu Lipeng really came with bad intentions.

"Do you mean they have nothing to do with you? What about Yan Yu?"

Xu Lipeng suppressed the anger in his heart and asked.

"Who is that?" Qu Moying asked indifferently. Her finger gently tapped on the account book and her eyes fell on Xu Lipeng's face. "Young Master Xu, I don't care what kind of rumors you have heard or who you believe, but please know things clearly before talking with me. Moreover, there is one thing that you need to know. I have nothing to do with you!"

She thought that they had nothing to do with each other since they had already broken off the engagement.

Although Qu Moying's words were gentle, they carried her unique alienation. It seemed that Qu Moying had already been like this when the two of them started talking.

However, her words were not ceremonious at all, not giving Xu Lipeng any face.

Xu Lipeng did not expect that Qu Moying's reply would be so harsh. He originally felt very angry, but her words were like a basin of cold water, making him cold all over, and they also made him realize that he was indeed not qualified to question her, so he fell silent for a moment.

He came here on impulse, an impulse which he had never had before.

Originally, he didn't have to come...

## Chapter 279 A Showdown

The room quieted down. For a moment, no one spoke. Even the sound of low and rapid breathing could be heard, and then it slowed down...

"Young Master Xu, may I ask you whether you are here to blame me or for something else? If you are here to blame me, what did I do? Who asked you to come here? Do you think that no one is gossiping about us, so you come to provide a topic for others?" Qu Moying added.

Xu Lipeng's face darkened. He didn't want to hear any more gossip about him in the capital.

Because of the previous matter, his original appointment as an official had been shelved. Until now, it had not been settled. Moreover, he had been very low-key recently because of the matter with Yu Qingmeng. He just wanted others to forget about it.

However, when he saw Yan Yujiao's letter, a surge of anger surged in his heart. For some reason, he felt depressed and angry. He felt that all of this was because of Qu Moying. He was not doing well, but Qu Moying had a relationship with his friend Yan Yu. He realized why Yan Yu had not come to him during this period of time. That was because Yan Yu was feeling guilty.

He asked someone to keep an eye on Qu Mansion. When he heard that Qu Moying had come to Yue's Clothing Pavilion today, he came to the shop with anger. But upon hearing Qu Moying's words now, he immediately felt that something was fishy.

He was not stupid. At this time, he already felt that there was something wrong. He suddenly stood up and said, "Fourth Lady Qu, I still have something to do, so I'll take my leave first."

With that, he turned around and strode away.

"Lady..." Looking at the disappearing figure of Xu Lipeng, Yu Dong curled his lips. He thought, "He is so impolite! How could he come and go at will?"

Qu Moying shook her hand and stopped Yu Dong. "Go and see if Young Master Xu's fiancée has come to the door! If she is really here, let her in!" If there was anyone who would cause trouble upon seeing Xu Lipeng and her being together, it must be Imperial Banquet Minister's Mansion's Second Lady, Duan Jinxiang.

Yu Dong hurried over.

Sure enough, as soon as Xu Lipeng went out of the shop, several young ladies came over. The one in the front was Xu Lipeng's fiancée, Duan Jinxiang.

Seeing Xu Lipeng come out, Duan Jinxiang was stunned for a moment, and her face darkened. She just knew that Qu Moying was in this shop, and this shop belonged to Qu Mansion.

Thinking of the joking words of the young ladies just now, Duan Jinxiang couldn't help but get angry.

"Greetings, Young Master Xu."

A lady who knew Xu Lipeng greeted him. Duan Jinxiang also greeted him. She looked up at Xu Lipeng, only to see his gloomy face and cold eyes. He looked at her with an unfriendly gaze and asked, "Second Lady Duan, why are you here?"

This question made Duan Jinxiang angry. She looked at Yu Dong who was beside Xu Lipeng, knowing that this was not Xu Lipeng's maid. Xu Lipeng brought a lad servant with him, and the lad servant was behind him.

"Since this is a shop, if you can come, I can naturally come as well." Duan Jinxiang said.

Yu Dong took two steps forward, bowed to Duan Jinxiang, and said politely, "Second Lady Duan, please come in. Our miss has been waiting for you for a long time."

Yu Dong's action stunned everyone. Did she mean that Qu Moying had already made an appointment with Duan Jinxiang?

Duan Jinxiang was stunned for a moment and was about to reprimand Yu Dong. However, Xu Lipeng looked at her again and said indifferently, "Since you are here, come in together. I have been waiting for you for quite a while."

After saying that, he turned around and walked in. He seemed to have come to pick up Duan Jinxiang.

Just now, when he saw Duan Jinxiang's angry face, he quickly realized that he had said something wrong. While he was feeling annoyed, he heard Yu Dong's words, which provided him with an excuse. It was not proper to talk here because his reputation might be ruined no matter what they talked about, so it was better to go in and talk.

"Second Lady Duan, please." Yu Dong smiled and led the way.

"Ladies, wait here for me for a while." Duan Jinxiang said to the ladies around her. At this time, she had to go in and take a look.

If she found out that Qu Moying and Young Master Xu were still meeting each other in private, she would definitely not let them off.

Qu Moying was a blind person whose engagement had been cancelled. Did she want to be Young Master Xu's concubine? Duan Jinxiang would never allow such a thing to happen.

She came out for a walk today. She had made an appointment with a few close ladies to come out today. When they walked here, they talked about the case that had caused a storm in the city, so they stopped at the shop to take a look. A lady said that the shop's door was open, and she wondered if Fourth Lady Qu was there.

Another lady said that she saw Young Master Yongning when she got off the carriage, and she joked that perhaps Qu Moying had asked Young Master Yongning for help because they used to be engaged.

These words made Duan Jinxiang angry, so she came over to see what was going on. She did not expect to really see Xu Lipeng come out from inside. For a moment, she was both jealous and angry.

She walked behind Xu Lipeng with her maid. When she entered the room, she saw Qu Moying sitting inside. There were several large account books on the table, and Qu Moying was reading them. Hearing the footsteps, Qu Moying looked up and saw Xu Lipeng again, not feeling surprised at all. Then, she looked at Duan Jinxiang.

"Young Master Xu, please deal with your personal affairs yourself." She said indifferently and read the account book in front of her again.

She didn't want to get involved in the matter between Xu Lipeng and Duan Jinxiang at all. They were just two persons who were drifting away from her. They didn't deserve her slightest bit of efforts. She invited the two of them in because she was afraid that Duan Jinxiang would make a scene at the entrance of her shop and ruin her business.

As for etiquette, she would be polite to people who were polite. But to Duan Jinxiang who had come to cause trouble, Qu Moying didn't want to waste her time with her. She could tell from Duan Jinxiang's resentful and gloomy eyes that she had never felt guilty about ruining others' engagement.

"Fourth Lady Qu, what do you mean?" Duan Jinxiang said angrily as soon as she saw Qu Moying.

Qu Moying's face darkened, and she said harshly, "Second Lady Duan, if you want to quarrel, go quarrel with Young Master Yongning. I also want to know who instigated Young Master Yongning to come to me in a rage. Second Lady Duan, your arrival is even more unexpected. You come here at such a time. Do you want to ruin Young Master Yongning's career or the engagement between the two of your families?"

Yu Dong was very clever. He pointed outside and said, "The young ladies who came with Second Lady Duan are all outside watching the show now. When I came in just now, I heard them whispering that there was fun to watch."

Just now, Yu Dong deliberately stayed behind and observed the young ladies behind him. He saw that these young ladies were looking into the shop together. They whispered to each other. Yu Dong could almost guess what they were talking.

It seemed that someone had planned this, so there must be a gossip among them.

After hearing what Yu Dong said, Duan Jinxiang's face turned cold, and she calmed down a little. She knew the ladies with her well. A few of them liked to gossip about others. If she really made a scene here, there would be unpleasant rumors soon.

Duan Jinxiang clearly knew how she got engaged with Xu Lipeng. It was she who destroyed Xu Lipeng's engagement with Qu Moying. She didn't think that Xu Lipeng wanted to marry Qu Moying, but after Yu Qingmeng's matter happened, Xu Lipeng warned her that he would break up the engagement with her if she caused any trouble.

Now that she heard what Qu Moying said, she panicked. She could not help but look at Xu Lipeng, only to see that his face was gloomy and that his eyes were cold and fierce. He was clearly angry, and she couldn't help but be flustered.

She had racked her brains to be engaged with him. She would not let her engagement be cancelled.

“Of course, I’m not here to cause trouble. I just want to make things clear. Fourth Lady Qu, please behave yourself. After all, you have nothing to do with Young Master Xu now!” Duan Jinxiang forced herself to be calm. Thinking of the possible consequences, she no longer dared to act recklessly. She even deliberately stood next to Xu Lipeng as if she was on his side.

She was bluffing.

Judging from her reaction, Qu Moying knew that this matter would not get big. She looked at Xu Lipeng and asked indifferently, “Young Master Xu, what do you think?”

At this point, anyone who was not stupid to the extreme would find something fishy in this matter.

It was too much of a coincidence. If Duan Jinxiang had rushed in when Xu Lipeng was still here just now, there would have been a big quarrel. Duan Jinxiang was so jealous and angry just now. She might say some terrible words and do some unexpected things, and so many people were waiting to watch the fun.

In that case, Qu Moying wouldn’t end up well, and neither would Xu Lipeng.

“Yan Yu’s sister told me those words.” Xu Lipeng said coldly. This time, he did not hide it.

“I am not familiar with Miss Yan. Why did she do this to me? I’ve seen her before, and she didn’t seem to like me. She was with County Lady Jingyu at that time. I wonder if Miss Yan has been sending messages to you in the past, or is this the first time?” Qu Moying asked calmly, her eyes under the eye veil as calm as water.

Qu Moying sneered in her heart. She was now sure that this matter had a great deal to do with Liu Jingyu, but she didn’t know why Liu Jingyu hated her so much that she kept plotting against her. Liu Jingyu was so vicious, and it seemed that she would not stop unless she destroyed her.

Xu Lipeng frowned. He naturally knew Yan Yujiao. She was Yan Yu’s younger sister. They would greet each other when they met in the past. They would talk for a while if Yan Yu was also there. However, she had never sent him a message before. But this time, she sent him a message saying that Yan Yu wanted to marry Qu Moying and asked him to see Qu Moying to confirm the issue.

At that time, he didn't doubt it at all. He felt extremely angry. That was why he had people keep an eye to make sure whether Qu Moying had left the mansion. Now that he thought about it, there were many doubts. Why did the well-behaved Yan Yujiao do such a thing? Was it really because he was Yan Yu's friend?

And what did Liu Jingyu mean? What did she have to do with this?

## Chapter 280 Who Was Behind This?

"County Lady Jingyu and Miss Yan are good friends." Duan Jinxiang finally interjected.

However, Qu Moying and Xu Lipeng both gave her a cold look.

Xu Lipeng realized that something was wrong, and he cupped his hands towards Qu Moying with a cold face, "Fourth Lady Qu, I was rude today. I must have fallen into someone else's trap."

Qu Moying gracefully stood up, bowed sideways in return, and said seriously, "Young Master Xu, let bygones be bygones. Your current fiancée is Second Lady Duan. You two are a good match. Please cherish it. As for my matter, you don't have to worry about it."

Her words were extremely cold, and she did not show the slightest bit of shyness in front of Xu Lipeng, which could be seen that she had no feelings for him.

After being silent for a moment, Xu Lipeng said, "Goodbye!"

Then, he turned around and left. Duan Jinxiang still wanted to say something, but seeing that he was leaving, she could only glare at Qu Moying fiercely before turning to leave.



Xu Lipeng and Duan Jinxiang walked out of the shop. As expected, the few young ladies waiting outside were chatting and laughing. Seeing the two of them come out, one of the young ladies asked in surprise, "Didn't Young Master Xu and Second Lady Duan have a quarrel?"

As soon as these words left her mouth, the young lady knew that she had misspoken. She immediately shut her mouth and lowered her head with embarrassment.

"Why would I quarrel with Second Lady Duan?" Xu Lipeng asked coldly. He glanced at the few young ladies coldly, causing them to stop talking and become uneasy.

Xu Lipeng looked at Duan Jinxiang and asked, "Second Lady Duan, can I have a word with you?"

"Alright!" Duan Jinxiang did not expect that Xu Lipeng would want to talk to her. She lowered her head shyly, her face blushing.

The two of them walked aside to talk.

"Second Lady Duan, you have seen it too. Someone must have schemed against me, and it's a woman. I wonder if there is anyone who has a close relationship with County Lady Jingyu among your friends?"

Xu Lipeng asked coldly with a hint of impatience in his eyes.

Qu Moying's words reminded him. It had been a while since that incident. At that time, he did not think too much about it and just thought that he was unlucky.

Duan Jinxiang thought about it and said, "Yes, there is one. She is over there. She was the one who urged me to come out for a walk."

"You'd better be wary of her and County Lady Jingyu in the future." Xu Lipeng's face darkened after he confirmed his guess. He did not have any interaction with County Lady Jingyu, but why did she do this to him? Or did she intend to deal with Qu Moying?

But no matter what, he was already involved.

“Okay, I will be careful.” Duan Jinxiang felt that Xu Lipeng was caring for her. She shyly twisted the handkerchief in her hand and was about to say a few words of concern, but Xu Lipeng had already turned around and left.

She became angry again.

Seeing that Xu Lipeng had left, the few ladies came over to Duan Jinxiang and asked, “Second Lady Duan, is there anything wrong? Is Fourth Lady Qu inside? Did she talk to Young Master Xu before?”

A young lady came over, held Duan Jinxiang’s hand, and said with a face full of concern, “If there really is something, we will definitely stand on your side. Right now, you are Young Master Xu’s fiancée.”

Hearing her words, the other ladies nodded, saying that they would support Duan Jinxiang.

Duan Jinxiang turned to look at the young lady who spoke first. She was the one who had a very good relationship with County Lady Jingyu whom Duan Jinxiang had just mentioned. Duan Jinxiang heard that this lady was even some sort of a relative of County Lady Jingyu. Thinking of this, Duan Jinxiang immediately became angry. She reached out to push her and said angrily, “What do you mean? Are you deliberately stirring up trouble? You asked me to come out for a walk and then led me here. Now you are speaking ill of Young Master Xu. Who told you to do this?”

The young lady did not expect that Duan Jinxiang would directly push her. She lost her balance and fell backwards. She was in so much pain that her tears fell down. How could she defend herself?

“What are you trying to do? Are you trying to break up me and Young Master Xu? Do you have a crush on Young Master Xu and that’s why you did this?”

The anger in Duan Jinxiang’s heart surged. She couldn’t say anything when she faced Qu Moying just now, and Xu Lipeng left ruthlessly. Thinking that she might have been set up by others, she got angry and stared at the lady on the ground fiercely.

Being reprimanded by Duan Jinxiang like this and seeing that all the passers-by turned to look at her in a sorry state, the lady immediately cried out.

Some of the young ladies went over to help her up, and the others went to comfort Duan Jinxiang. For a moment, it was a mess...

Xu Lipeng ignored the few young ladies who were in a mess behind him and frowned. He suddenly remembered one thing. After he cancelled the engagement with Qu Moying, he went to the Ministry of Appointments to ask if he could become an official as planned. His appointment had almost been settled, but an official told him that he probably could not be an official because his reputation was tainted.

The official from the Ministry of Appointments had a close relationship with Marquis Yongning's Mansion. Under Xu Lipeng's repeated questioning, the official told him that this matter had something to do with Duke Qi. He said that Duke Qi had specifically told the minister of the Ministry of Appointments that Xu Lipeng was not a good person and that he was pretending in the past. He said that Xu Lipeng was hypocritical and it was not a good idea to put him in an important position. Therefore, Xu Lipeng failed to be an official as planned at that time.

After the matter, Xu Lipeng thought that Duke Qi misunderstood him because he did not deal with the engagement with Qu Moying properly. However, after listening to Qu Moying just now, he realized that County Lady Jingyu seemed to be behind this. Duke Qi was County Lady Jingyu's grandfather. Could there be something that he did not know about?

Duke Qi was dissatisfied with him. County Lady Jingyu even framed him and Qu Moying. What was the reason for this? Was Duke Qi or County Lady Jingyu the one behind this?

If Duke Qi wanted to deal with him, it would be a piece of cake. What was happening now was more like a woman's trick.

He was sure that County Lady Jingyu was the one behind the scene. But he had rarely seen her. She was a good-looking woman from an outstanding family. How could she have anything to do with Qu Moying? Qu Moying lived a simple life in the village before. She didn't seem to have anything to do with County Lady Jingyu.

“If her target is not Qu Moying, is it me?”

At the thought of this, Xu Lipeng suddenly stopped in his track and clenched his fists in disbelief. Was it because County Lady Jingyu had a special feeling for him that she was so hostile to him and Qu Moying?

If this was the case, it seemed to be a proper reason why Duke Qi was angry with him at first and why County Lady Jingyu dealt with him, Qu Moying, and even Duan Jinxiang later.

It turned out that County Lady Jingyu was in love with him, but he didn't know anything. It was difficult for him to do anything now.

Xu Lipeng was annoyed. He just wanted to turn back time. If he had known it earlier, he would not have chosen Duan Jinxiang as his fiancée. He was angry, but he was also secretly happy. He had a mixture of feelings and did not know what to do next.

County Lady Jingyu was not a normal noble lady. Her status was very high, and her background was not something that Duan Jinxiang could compare with. For a moment, he could not help but think about it...

“Miss, they have all left.” Yu Dong came in and reported. He only came in after seeing the young ladies leave.

Qu Moying nodded and continued to review the account book in her hand. She casually asked, “Is Young Master Xu thinking while walking and stopping as if he has realized something?”

Yu Dong nodded repeatedly. Qu Moying had really guessed everything. “Yes, after a few words with Second Lady Duan, Young Master Xu turned around and strode away. But before he went far, he suddenly stopped, not because of the quarrel between the young ladies behind him. After standing for a while, he left thoughtfully slower than just now. I saw that the expression on his face was very strange.”

Yu Dong saw Xu Lipeng's expression when he was turning a corner. Xu Lipeng's expression was indeed strange. He could not tell how exactly Xu Lipeng felt because he seemed to feel sad, remorseful, and even a bit helpless.

Qu Moying turned a page and curled her lips silently. It seemed that Xu Lipeng indeed had realized something. It was not in vain for her to mention Liu Jingyu just now.

“Miss, why is County Lady Jingyu making things difficult for you?” Yu Dong asked curiously. He thought Liu Jingyu was really strange.

“I don’t know.” Qu Moying shook her head. She really couldn’t figure it out, but she knew Liu Jingyu had hated her for a long time, and she tried to destroy her again and again.

Yu Dong thought for a moment and suddenly said, “Miss, could it be that County Lady Jingyu also likes Lord Yun, so that she is jealous of you?”

Qu Moying looked up at Yu Dong speechlessly. “You are thinking too much!”

In terms of appearance, Pei Yuanjun, who was even more good-looking than ordinary women, could indeed be said to be incomparably handsome. It was understandable if many women liked him. However, his nickname was “Devil King”, and his aura was terrifying. Qu Moying really did not think that Liu Jingyu had taken a fancy to Pei Yuanjun.

Liu Jingyu was most likely interested in the Crown Prince, Pei Luo’an. According to what had happened, she would try to be the Crown Princess next. But Qu Moying didn’t think she had anything to do with it. Did she block Liu Jingyu’s path?

There was no inexplicable hatred in this world. There must be a conflict of interests between the two of them. But Qu Moying couldn’t figure out why Liu Jingyu had wanted to ruin her since she was a little girl.

However, Qu Moying was not a pushover. A trace of ruthlessness flashed through her eyes. Since Liu Jingyu was so vicious, she would fight back.

“Have the previous words been spread out?” Qu Moying asked. She had already asked Yu Dong to do it.

“Yes. I think many people have already known about those words now. They are all talking about this matter.” Yu Dong nodded. While everyone was talking about what happened, he spread out the words. By this time, maybe the matter had spread all over the city.

Qu Moying nodded. Since Liu Jingyu had intervened in this, she would pull her into the limelight and see what she wanted to do!

At this time, the matter had indeed caused a sensation. Crown Prince’s Mansion, the Ji Family, and even Minister Liu’s House were all involved.