

Noble Wife 341

Chapter 341 I Want to Offer a Stick of Incense to Crown Princess

“Was it the thing that she fell into the water?” After thinking for a moment, Yu Dong asked. He guessed that the matter that Qu Xuexin tried to hurt Qu Moying had been exposed. He didn’t expect Qu Xuexin to be so stupid to expose this thing.

“First Lady fell into the water? When?” Yu Chun asked in surprise, her eyes wide open.

“If that’s not the case, what is it?” Yu Dong was also stunned. He looked at Yu Chun and asked hesitantly. It seemed that something else had happened after Qu Xuexin separated from them.

Qu Xuexin really was a troublemaker. She actually caused trouble again in such a short time. Yu Dong couldn’t help but get interested. He pulled Yu Chun to the side, wanting to listen to the whole story.

Yu Dong did not have a good impression of Qu Xuexin because she plotted against Qu Moying. Hearing that something bad had happened to Qu Xuexin, he cheered in his heart.

Yu Chun said, “I don’t know the exact details. She seemed to have a conflict with Crown Prince’s Mansion’s Princess Ji. Princess Ji seemed to do something to her, and Eldest Young Master saw it. Eldest Young Master did not recognize Princess Ji, and he pushed her. Then, this matter became big.”

The matter would undoubtedly become big because Crown Prince’s Mansion’s Princess Ji was pushed and fell.

Yu Dong naturally knew Princess Ji, who was not a good person, either. Previously, Qu Moying had asked him to trick her into going to the Sea of Lanterns.

But why did Princess Ji have a conflict with Qu Xuexin? There shouldn’t be a conflict between the two of them. If there was a conflict between Princess Ji and someone, the other person should be County Lady Jingyu, who was casting greedy eyes on the position of Crown Princess.

“First Lady is really unlucky!” Yu Dong sighed without much sincerity.

At that time, when Princess Ji left Yue's Clothing Pavilion, she was obviously looking for trouble. However, it seemed that she didn't meet County Lady Jingyu. Instead, she had a conflict with Qu Xuexin. Yu Dong only felt that Qu Xuexin was really unlucky.

Qu Xuexin had fallen into the water once, and now she ended up in such a mess. It seemed that there was a follow-up!

Yu Dong was glad to watch the fun, but he was afraid that this matter would implicate Qu Moying if it escalated. Now that Pei Yuanjun was about to leave the capital, it would be bad if Qu Moying was involved in this matter.

Yu Dong was worried that Qu Moying would be implicated. At the same time, in Crown Prince's Mansion, Ji Youran was angry and also worried.

She was worried because Pei Luo'an refused to see her.

After leaving Yue's Clothing Pavilion in a fit of anger, Ji Youran went directly to the Sea of Lanterns. After asking around, she knew where the lanterns that had caught fire were piled up. She walked over to the place and quickly saw a pair of lanterns with Pei Luo'an and Liu Jingyu's handwriting.

The words on the lanterns were taken from their names. If one did not look carefully, one would not be able to notice them. Of course, they would not be able to recognize whose lanterns they were.

One of the lanterns read "An" and the other read "Rou".

They were placed aside. No one suspected that they were Pei Luo'an and Liu Jingyu's lanterns. Even if they were put together, no one could be sure that they were their lanterns.

However, Ji Youran still recognized them at a glance. The word "An" was clearly Pei Luo'an's handwriting. As for the "Rou", it must be Liu Jingyu's writing. Seeing these two words, Ji Youran was so angry that she wanted to slap Liu Jingyu. She worked so hard to reach this step by pleasing Pei Luo'an, but Liu Jingyu reaped her fruit.

How could she be reconciled?

Just as she was about to go find Pei Luo'an and Liu Jingyu, she saw a woman coming over. The woman came to take Pei Luo'an and Liu Jingyu's lanterns.

The people around Ji Youran tried to stop her but failed. The woman said that this pair of lanterns belonged to her.

Ji Youran was in a rage. Hearing the woman say that the lanterns were hers, she asked someone to slap her twice, causing the woman to fall to the ground and cry.

The onlookers all looked at them. Just as they were making a big ruckus, a man came over and pushed away Ji Youran's people. Ji Youran was surrounded by her people, and she was pushed to step back and fall to the ground.

Her servants were frightened and immediately shouted "Princess Ji" while preventing the man from leaving.

Ji Youran was helped up. After the interrogation, she found out that the woman and the man were siblings from Qu Mansion. The woman was First Lady Qu, and the man was Eldest Young Master Qu. They were the children of Imperial Censor Qu.

Ji Youran couldn't help but think of Fourth Lady Qu, and she got even angrier. Her current situation had a lot to do with Fourth Lady Qu.

She asked someone to send Qu Xuexin and Qu Minghui back and asked Qu Mansion to give her an explanation tomorrow.

After that, she went back to Eastern Palace. She heard that Pei Luo'an had already returned. Without washing up, she went directly to Pei Luo'an to complain about the matter. However, Pei Luo'an rejected to see her.

A eunuch came out and smiled at Ji Youran. "Princess Ji, His Highness is tired today. He asked you to go back first."

Ji Youran covered her eyes with a handkerchief and begged while crying, "I... I was pushed and fell just now. An official's daughter did it. I want to talk to His Highness about this."

The eunuch looked at her awkwardly.

"Go and report this matter to His Highness. Tell him that there should be a minister coming over tomorrow to talk to him about this." Ji Youran said. She was using this excuse to ask for an audience.

Pei Luo'an was very cautious, so he would definitely meet her.

Sure enough, the eunuch had no choice but to enter the room and report to Pei Luo'an. Not long after, he came out and said to Ji Youran, "Princess Ji, please follow me in."

Ji Youran wiped her tears and said, "Yes!"

Inside the room, Pei Luo'an was sitting with a qin by his hand. He put his fingers on the qin, but he did not make a sound. His expression was obscure and difficult to understand.

"Greetings, Your Highness." Ji Youran stepped forward to greet him. She restrained the jealousy in her eyes and told herself that her enemy was County Lady Jingyu.

"Get up!" Pei Luo'an waved his hand, his eyes still fixed on the qin in front of him, and he did not look at Ji Youran.

Pei Luo'an asked, "What's going on? Which minister's daughter was it?"

"She's... she's from Qu Mansion." Ji Youran's eyes became redder. She looked pitiful.

Qu Mansion?

Pei Luo'an raised his head and looked at Ji Youran. Her dress was a little messy, and her hair was disheveled. She looked pitiful, and her eyes were red. Even when she was in such a mess, she still looked pitiful. He used to enjoy the sight of her being delicate like this.

But he felt dull as he looked at her now!

Although Ji Youran was not as beautiful as Ji Hanyue, he thought she was gentle and considerate. Even when she suffered from Ji Hanyue, she never complained to him about that. When he found out that Ji Hanyue treated Pei Yusheng differently, she still covered up for Ji Hanyue.

But now, Ji Hanyue was gone, and his feelings for Ji Youran seemed to fade away as well.

He didn't know if it was because of Ji Hanyue or because what Ji Youran had done recently dissatisfied him.

He thought what his mother said about Ji Youran was right. Ji Youran didn't deserve to be the Crown Princess with her upbringing. She made Eastern Palace into such a mess.

Pei Luo'an looked at Ji Youran thoughtfully and remained silent.

Pei Luo'an did not speak, and Ji Youran raised her eyes in worry and stole a glance at him. Seeing that he was deep in thought, she panicked and called out softly, "Your Highness!"

Pei Luo'an said coldly, "Make it more detailed!"

"I went to Sea of Lanterns because I wanted to hang a pair of lanterns for you and me. However, a woman ran out and grabbed a couple of burned lanterns and tried to take them away. I thought she was going way too much, so I had someone stop her. That woman quarreled with the servants, and then a man rushed out of the crowd. He reached out and pushed people beside me, which caused me to fall down. Your Highness, I was useless. I disgraced you. After asking for their identities, I knew that they

were from Qu Mansion, so I didn't make things difficult for them. I just asked the Master of Qu Mansion to come to Eastern Palace tomorrow to apologize!"

Ji Youran felt wronged and sobbed. She portrayed herself to be extremely innocent.

She didn't mention Liu Jingyu either.

She knew that she could not mention Liu Jingyu before she was deadly sure about the thing, or it would be bad for herself. Moreover, she wanted to mess up the matter so that County Lady Jingyu wouldn't be able to marry into Eastern Palace.

If she had known that County Lady Jingyu would marry Pei Luo'an one day, she would rather keep Ji Hanyue alive. At least, Ji Hanyue was nice to her.

However, the two of them were destined to be enemies. She wanted to step on Ji Hanyue and take her place.

But now, Ji Hanyue was dead, and it seemed that she was not as obsessed as before.

"Which young lady from Qu Mansion?" Pei Luo'an asked after listening carefully. His eyes flashed slightly.

"It's First Lady Qu." Ji Youran's heart skipped a beat. Although the Crown Prince did not say anything, she understood the meaning behind his words because she had followed him for quite a period.

She did not like this meaning.

"The daughter of Imperial Censor Qu. Alright, I see." Pei Luo'an nodded indifferently. His gaze was still on the qin, and he did not say anything to keep Ji Youran.

"Your Highness..." Ji Youran still wanted to say something, but seeing Pei Luo'an act like this, she could only bite her lips and lower her head, "I will go and light off a stick of incense first to the Crown Princess..."

Pei Luo'an asked casually, "Why are you doing it now?"

Ji Youran said with a bitter smile, "The Crown Princess used to like such a day... Thinking of this, I feel sad. What happened that day was an accident. No one wanted it to be like this. It was the Crown Princess' fault, but I couldn't help feeling sad when I thought of her. It's my... I'm sorry. I want to talk to her."

After saying this, Ji Youran bowed to Pei Luo'an and prepared to leave.

"I will go with you." Pei Luo'an's voice came from behind her ear.

The jealousy in Ji Youran's eyes was obvious. She tried hard to suppress her feelings before turning her head again. There was even a surprised smile on her face. She asked with tears in her eyes, "Really? Your Highness, are you really going to see Hanyue?"

As she called out "Hanyue", she saw a trace of bitterness appear on Pei Luo'an's face. Pei Luo'an stood up and said faintly, "Let's go!"

Ji Youran's heart sank. Her heart was filled with hatred and jealousy. She clenched her hands tightly and felt the sharp pain in her hands. She wouldn't be reconciled even if she died...

Chapter 342 Ji Youran Had No Dowry

Ji Hanyue's memorial tablet was placed in a yard that was not close to the main yard of Crown Prince's Mansion.

It was the Empress' idea and also Pei Luo'an's idea. There would be a new Crown Princess in Eastern Palace in the future, and the past Crown Princess' memorial tablet might make the future Crown Princess uncomfortable if it was placed too close to the main yard.

Ji Youran was currently in charge of Eastern Palace. She was actually not willing to set up such a place to pay respects to Ji Hanyue even if the place was small and remote.

However, she had to do as Pei Luo'an requested. He wanted to gain a good reputation by making use of Ji Hanyue. If he appeared to be affectionate to Ji Hanyue, the officials would trust him more. Therefore, a small mourning hall was set up.

Although the mourning hall was small, it was quite exquisite. Two Taoist nuns with good reputations were invited from Qingyun Temple to take care of the mourning hall.

Ji Youran went to take a simple look at the mourning hall when it was just built, and she hadn't been there since then.

Seeing Pei Luo'an and Ji Youran coming together, the two beautiful Taoist nuns came over to greet them.

One of the Taoist nuns placed three incense sticks in front of the memorial tablet in the middle. Then, she sensibly left with the other Taoist nun. Only Pei Luo'an, one of his trusted men, and Ji Youran were left in the mourning hall.

Pei Luo'an's face darkened as he looked at the memorial tablet in the middle. He became gloomy and looked at the memorial tablet in a daze. After a long while, he sighed softly and muttered to himself, "Hanyue, you asked for it. If you were loyal to me, it would not have turned out like this..."

"Your Highness, don't be sad. Hanyue... lost her head at that time..." Ji Youran knew the inside story the best. Seeing Pei Luo'an's expression, she hurriedly comforted him in a soft voice, just in the same old way as when Pei Luo'an was displeased with what Ji Hanyue did back then.

However, her gentleness made Pei Luo'an feel sick now.

Things had changed. It was really difficult for him to believe that Ji Youran had no selfish motives at all.

“You can leave first. I want to talk to Hanyue alone.” Pei Luo’an waved his hand.

“Your Highness, let me accompany you. I will be worried if you stay here alone. Moreover, I also want to be with Hanyue for a while.” Afraid that Pei Luo’an would drive her away, Ji Youran mentioned Ji Hanyue again.

Hearing that, Pei Luo’an frowned but did not drive her away. He only went forward and took three incense sticks, lit them, and then inserted them into the incense burner. He bowed deeply to the memorial tablet in front of him with a frown.

He couldn’t describe his feelings.

If it was in the past, he wouldn’t feel anything wrong, and he wouldn’t think that he had done anything wrong. After all, Ji Hanyue disappointed him first, and Ji Yongming was not sensible. Since Ji Yongming refused to give in, he acted ruthlessly. It was just a woman, and he could afford to lose her.

Did he regret it now?

Not really. But he felt that it was a pity.

If things hadn’t been like that at that time, Ji Hanyue would have already married him and become the real Crown Princess, and there wouldn’t have been so many things involved...

The mourning hall was quiet for a long time.

After a long while, Pei Luo’an asked, “Have you returned Hanyue’s dowry?”

“Yes. Madam Duan and my Second Brother can deal with them now. However, Madam Duan used to be just a concubine, and my Second Brother was young. I asked my mother to help them in case they didn’t know what to do after suddenly getting so much money and shops.”

Thinking of what Xiao had told her, Ji Youran quickly responded to Pei Luo'an.

Xiao wanted to intervene in the first branch's affairs, but she had no proper reason to intervene. Old Lady Ji insisted on returning everything to the first branch. Although Ji Youran had kept a lot of Ji Hanyue's dowry items in secret, the items she had returned were still an enormous wealth because Ji Hanyue had too many dowry items, which made Ji Youran and Xiao jealous.

"That's the matter of Hanyue's branch. It has nothing to do with you. You'd better tell your mother not to intervene." Pei Luo'an said unhappily. Although he did not care about this kind of thing, it did not mean that he was ignorant.

Ji Youran was unreconciled and said boldly, "Your Highness, since I have returned them to Earl Ling'an's Mansion, my maternal family will take care of them. I can't control my mother."

Pei Luo'an glanced sideways at her and sneered, "If your mother does so, you will lose your position as Side Princess."

"Your Highness!" Ji Youran was shocked and fell to her knees with a sad look, "Your Highness, did you say so because I didn't do well?"

"You've done quite well. But you should not be too greedy. You don't have any dowry, but so what? As long as I'm alive, you won't starve."

Pei Luo'an said unhappily.

Ji Youran was both angry and resentful, but she had no choice but to lower her head, "Yes, I understand."

Of course, she was not short of food. However, she was short of money. She needed money. She wanted to use the money to hire some people for her own use to deal with Pei Luo'an's concubines and the other women.

To deal with them, she needed quite a lot of money.

Seeing that she was so obedient, Pei Luo'an looked less stern. He raised his hand, indicating for her to get up. "When you entered the mansion, you were in a tricky situation. Now, you are saying that you have no dowry, but I don't mind. Anyway, everyone knows that you don't have any dowry."

Ji Youran was ashamed and hateful.

Originally, although she could not compare with Ji Hanyue, she could have dowry with her identity as a wife-born daughter of Earl Ling'an's Mansion. However, she entered Crown Prince's Mansion in an urgent situation to "take care of" Ji Hanyue, and her mother asked her to occupy Ji Hanyue's dowry, so she didn't have her own dowry.

Therefore, despite being a lady from Earl Ling'an's Mansion, she had no dowry in the end.

Those princesses and ladies had secretly mocked her because she entered Crown Prince's Mansion without any dowry, which was really shameful. She couldn't compare with even a lady of an ordinary family.

Ji Youran had heard these mocking words several times. Some people said them in secret, but some laughed at her openly. Every time she heard these words, she comforted herself that it was no big deal. Ji Hanyue's dowry was hers. She did not lack dowry, nor was her dowry inferior to those people. How many people in the capital could have a dowry more valuable than that of Ji Hanyue?

However, ever since the incident with the dowry shops, Ji Youran felt even more shameful among the imperial members.

How could she have no dowry? Dowry was the lifeline of a married woman!

"Your Highness..." Ji Youran felt wronged and looked at Pei Luo'an with tears in her eyes.

However, Pei Luo'an's gaze was not on her. He looked at the memorial tablet in the middle gloomily. After a long while, he said, "Do you think that I misjudged the situation back then? Could it be that I

mistakenly thought Hanyue and Pei Yusheng were secretly talking to each other because of my angle of view?”

The hatred in Ji Youran’s heart surged. Her fingers twitched and pressed against the ground. The ground was very cold, but she did not feel it at all. She only felt that the blood in her body was almost boiling.

What did Pei Luo’an mean by this? Did he blame her for letting him see that scene? Did he think that she did it on purpose?

The boiling blood slowly calmed down and then became cold. If the Crown Prince knew the truth, he would definitely not spare her.

At that time, Ji Hanyue was framed and fell asleep on the stone table. It was the same for Pei Yusheng. From the place where Pei Luo’an “accidentally” passed by, he saw that the two of them seemed to be whispering to each other.

Ji Youran answered, “Your Highness, maybe we really misunderstood them.”

She had to answer like this.

The mourning hall quieted down. After a long while, Pei Luo’an said flatly, “Get up. Let’s go!”

After that, he turned around and left.

Ji Youran hurriedly got up and turned to look at the memorial tablet in the middle. She sneered. When Ji Hanyue was alive, she enjoyed everything. Did she still want to occupy Pei Luo’an after she was dead? However, she was dead, and she could do nothing even if she still occupied Pei Luo’an.

Right now, she could use the dead Ji Hanyue to probe into Pei Luo’an’s mind and fight with Liu Jingyu, who wanted to enter Crown Prince’s Mansion and be the future Crown Princess.

Thinking of this, Ji Youran smiled gently. She turned around and chased after Pei Luo'an. She still had to talk to him about what had happened tonight. She had to make the matter big, and it would be best if she could have County Lady Jingyu involved in it. Pei Luo'an had previously expressed his deep affection for Ji Hanyue. The Empress had not given the order for him to marry Liu Jingyu yet, but Pei Luo'an had already hung Love Lanterns with her. It was not wise for him to do this!

Didn't Pei Luo'an want people to think that he was a man of deep affection and loyalty? Didn't he want to portray himself as a grateful person?

On the next morning, Qu Moying got up and knew what had happened in the mansion.

She knew what had happened to Qu Xuexin and Qu Qiuyan.

She heard that Lord Jing came to the mansion last night with Qu Qiuyan. He talked with Qu Zhizhen in the study for a while before leaving.

As for the matter of Qu Xuexin, because of Lord Jing's intervention, it was not such a big deal. Lord Jing said it was a small matter and Eastern Palace's Princess Ji was only accidentally injured. Qu Mansion's people were asked to send a gift to Crown Prince's Mansion as an apology. Lord Jing would personally explain this matter to the Crown Prince.

In the Old Lady's opinion, this matter had been resolved perfectly.

After hearing the story from the Old Lady, Qu Moying thought for a while and knew that this matter was not simple. Lord Jing must have come to Qu Mansion for Qu Qiuyan. It seemed that it was a certainty that Qu Qiuyan would enter Lord Jing Mansion. However, it seemed that Qu Qiuyan would not enter Lord Jing Mansion with a high position, which was why Lord Jing talked to Qu Zhizhen.

How could Ji Youran concede since Qu Qiuyan would not have a high position? Recently, Ji Youran had been living a depressing life. Last night, Qu Xuexin got in her line of fire.

Since such a matter that could manifest her identity as Side Princess happened at such a time, how could Ji Youran not make use of it?

The Old Lady was a bit too optimistic.

However, Qu Moying was happy to see this. She was happy to see a dog-eat-dog show...

Chapter 343 He Couldn't Tell Right from Wrong

Sure enough, a piece of bad news was sent over.

"Fourth Lady, Her Ladyship invites you over." Granny Wu came in a hurry with the news and the Old Lady's words.

Qu Moying was not surprised. She nodded and followed Granny Wu.

She knew what happened yesterday would definitely involve her. The matter of falling into the water ought to be taken as the prelude to this matter. If Ji Youran wanted to dig into it, Qu Xuexin could not hide the matter that she had tried to hide.

In the Old Lady's room, Qu Xuexin was crying so much that she could barely speak.

Not only Qu Xuexin but Xiao Hanyuan was also there. His eyes fell on Qu Xuexin with pity.

Qu Moying was speechless at Xiao Hanyuan, who could not tell right from wrong. He judged her just based on Qu Xuexin's one-sided words. He hated her, and she could tell.

She herself had a lot of things to do, and all of them were vital. She would not care about an insignificant cousin who hated her.

Sure enough, the moment she entered the door, Xiao Hanyuan's gaze fell on her with strong disgust again.

Qu Moying was speechless at him. He treated her badly as if he had a deep grudge against her.

In her previous life, she had mistakenly believed in those relatives, which was why she had fallen into such a state and implicated those closest to her. But now, she was much more detached.

She stepped forward and bowed to the Old Lady. "Grandmother."

The Old Lady waved her head, indicating for her to get up, and then asked, "Tell me, how did your Eldest Sister fall into the water last night? Your Eldest Sister and cousin brother mean that it was because of you."

Qu Moying stood up straight and asked unhurriedly, "Grandmother, why is this related to me? What did Eldest Sister and cousin brother say?"

She had to know what they said in order to better deal with them.

"Xuexin said that Young Master Wang was the one who saved you before. She said that she got on the boat in order to find out the identity of that person. After that, she wanted to help you get on the flower terrace, and she was knocked into the water by a boat..." The Old Lady wanted to say something but hesitated. She thought for a while and said slowly, "I heard that the person in that boat is Lord Yun, right?"

Last night, Qu Moying was sent back by Lord Yun, and the Old Lady knew about it.

Qu Moying sneered in her heart. Combined with the fact that Pei Yuanjun sent her back to the mansion, it really sounded like a trap which she set up on purpose.

"Grandmother, Young Master Wang was indeed the one who saved me that day. When I met him, we were squeezed by the crowd to the side of the lake. However, Young Master Wang did not look like a good person, and I did not want to board his boat. But Eldest Sister insisted on getting on his boat. Later, I got off the boat myself. Eldest Sister was at the bow of the boat and almost stepped over the gangplank I was walking on."

Qu Moying organized her thoughts and said indifferently.

After that, she looked at Qu Xuexin, whose eyes were red and swollen. "Eldest Sister, was the situation the same as what I said? At that time, there were many people on the flower terrace. They should have witnessed it. Grandmother, if you don't believe it, you can ask someone to inquire about it."

"Fourth Cousin Sister, what you said is so unreasonable. It was so chaotic at that time. Who could see clearly what happened? Moreover, Eldest Cousin Sister has fallen into the water. Fourth Cousin Sister, don't you think your words are too indifferent?"

Xiao Hanyuan interrupted angrily.

He almost pointed at Qu Moying and said that she wanted to frame Qu Xuexin.

Qu Xuexin, who was kneeling on the ground, cried again. She reached out to touch her face and tears fell down, which made her look very pitiful. She was too aggrieved to speak, which increased Xiao Hanyuan's anger.

He glared at Qu Moying in anger and disdain.

"Cousin Xiao, what do you want to say? Just say it. There are no outsiders but only Grandmother and Eldest Sister here." Qu Moying looked at Xiao Hanyuan calmly.

"Yesterday, you spent your time with the man in the big boat, so you naturally did not know what had happened. Of course, you didn't know that Eldest Cousin Sister and I had been driven off the boat. I wonder what you did with that man. Your sister was driven off the boat, but you did not even care about that."

Xiao Hanyuan blurted out these rude words angrily.

Qu Moying narrowed her eyes and asked, "Cousin Xiao, what do you want to say?"

“Don’t... Don’t you know what you have done?” Xiao Hanyuan was so angry with Qu Moying’s calm attitude that he almost couldn’t control himself. It took him a long time to suppress the words he wanted to say.

Qu Xuexin tugged his sleeve and said, “Cousin Xiao, don’t blame Fourth Sister. She must be ignorant of what happened at that time. If she had known, she would not have watched me being driven out of the boat and stayed alone.”

She said that Qu Moying stayed in the boat alone, which indicated that Qu Moying was with a man at that time. Her words confirmed that Qu Moying did not care about her and did not follow the rules for unmarried women.

The Old Lady frowned. She knew that Qu Moying was sent back by Lord Yun Mansion’s carriage. Did that boat belong to Lord Yun?

She raised her head to look at Qu Moying, only to see Qu Moying nod silently, and she knew that her guess was correct.

It seemed that this was the truth. Even if Lord Yun really bumped into the front boat and knocked Qu Xuexin off the boat, he would not bother to care about her. The reason why he agreed to let Qu Xuexin and the others temporarily board his boat must be Qu Moying.

The Old Lady didn’t think that Lord Yun really cared about Qu Moying, but he just didn’t want others to talk about her.

How could a person like Lord Yun care about the reputation of an unmarried lady? He wouldn’t care although he knocked Qu Xuexin into the water. Qu Xuexin could not blame anyone for being driven off the boat. If she provoked Lord Yun, he might even throw her into the river.

Thinking of this, the Old Lady knew what to do. She looked at Xiao Hanyuan with a bit of disappointment. Originally, she had a good impression of him, but it turned out that he couldn’t tell right from wrong. A person like him would be easily fooled even if he passed the exam and became an official in the future.

The Old Lady took a deep breath and looked at Qu Xuexin. "Xuexin, tell me, did you fall into the water because of Moying? Did Moying ignore you after that?"

"Grandmother..." Qu Moying was here, and Qu Xuexin did not know how to answer the Old Lady. She cried sadly again.

Xiao Hanyuan stood up again. "Grandaunt, I know about this whole issue. You can ask me."

Qu Moying ignored them. She turned around and sat down on a chair. Then, she looked up at them and mocked them in her heart.

Xiao Hanyuan really cared about Qu Xuexin, but the latter only used him as a tool. How could Qu Xuexin take a fancy to Xiao Hanyuan, who had not yet become an official? She was just using Xiao Hanyuan's good impression of her to seek benefits for herself.

It was ridiculous that Xiao Hanyuan, who was a well-learned scholar, fell into Qu Xuexin's trap without knowing it.

Xiao Hanyuan interrupted so frequently that the Old Lady was angry and scolded him coldly, "Hanyuan, don't interrupt. I know whom to ask."

Seeing that the Old Lady was angry, Xiao Hanyuan did not dare to speak anymore. Although he was somewhat unconvinced, he shut his mouth and glared at Qu Moying.

The Old Lady said coldly, "Xuexin, tell me everything!"

If possible, Qu Xuexin was not willing to confront Qu Moying directly. She reached out to wipe away her tears, but she had to say it. She told the whole story without making any distortion. Anyway, she didn't say anything to blame Qu Moying just now.

Of course, she defended herself. She said she boarded Young Master Wang's boat because of Qu Moying. Later, when Qu Moying wanted to go ashore, she wanted to help. But then she was knocked off

the boat and became dizzy. After she was rescued, she got on a boat. However, she did not see the owner of the boat, and she changed into ordinary clothes on that boat.

Because she changed into ordinary clothes, the servants of Eastern Palace didn't recognize her as a lady of Qu Mansion and directly slapped her.

Qu Xuexin slowly told the whole story. She seemed to be impartial, but there were many hidden meanings in her words.

The Old Lady fell silent. Lord Yun, who mustn't be mentioned, was involved in this matter. He had made it clear to her that Qu Moying would definitely enter Lord Yun Mansion. Even if he met Qu Moying in private, who in the capital dared to gossip about them? Who could intervene in it?

However, his relationship with Qu Moying had not been officially announced yet. Even if the Old Lady knew about it, she could not say it.

They were not outsiders, so it was alright to tell them. However, Xiao Hanyuan seemed to be muddle-headed, and Qu Xuexin seemed to have ulterior motives. Thinking of this, the Old Lady did not explain anything to them.

She looked at Qu Xuexin and sighed in her heart. She used to think that Qu Xuexin was decent and elegant and that she was the most outstanding one among her granddaughters that were brought up in the mansion. But it seemed that it was not the case. Qu Xuexin clearly had ulterior motives, and she had been pretending in the past.

The Old Lady thought it was not a big deal if Qu Xuexin had other motives as long as she didn't frame others. But what was the case now?

The Old Lady was not stupid. She had seen many vicious fights in the backyard, which were even more terrible than fights between men. Was Qu Xuexin doing the same thing?

She thought of how attentive Qu Xuexin was and how often she greeted her, and she was really disappointed.

"Tell me about how you bumped into the Crown Prince's Mansion's Side Princess." The Old Lady did not want to ask about the previous matter anymore. If Qu Xuexin didn't repeatedly mention Qu Moying, the Old Lady would not even want to call Qu Moying over.

"Grandaunt, the previous matter has not been resolved yet!" Seeing that the Old Lady had actually let Qu Moying off, Xiao Hanyuan could not help but jump out again.

Qu Moying sneered and lowered her head to look at the handkerchief in her hand, waiting for the Old Lady to speak.

"Hanyuan, this has nothing to do with you. You can go back to study!" Sure enough, the Old Lady impatiently ordered him to leave.

Chapter 344 Decision of the Old Lady

"Grandaunt..." Xiao Hanyuan was stunned and wanted to say something but was interrupted by the Old Lady. "Go back and read your books. The matter in the backyard has nothing to do with you. I asked you just now to make things clearer. Studying is important. Don't delay your study because of such a trifle!"

The Old Lady then looked at Granny Wu.

Granny Wu understood and walked to Xiao Hanyuan with a smile. "Young Master Xiao, I'll send you out."

At this point, Xiao Hanyuan couldn't stay any longer. He could only bow to the Old Lady. Then, he glared at Qu Moying and turned to leave.

Seeing Xiao Hanyuan leave, Qu Xuexin cried again, trembling all over.

Xiao Hanyuan saw this scene, and he pitied her even more, but he had to leave. He could only walk out of the yard. However, he was still worried, so he did not go back to the outer yard. Instead, he lingered outside the Old Lady's yard.

"Moying, what do you say?" After Xiao Hanyuan left, the Old Lady heaved a sigh of relief. His absence made it easier for her to ask the questions.

No matter how bad Qu Xuexin was, she was still her granddaughter. The Old Lady really did not want Xiao Hanyuan to see the unspeakable side of Qu Xuexin.

"Grandmother, Young Master Wang saved me back then, but I don't think he is a good person. I thought I had an accident because someone had plotted against me. Therefore, I didn't ask who he was because I wanted to avoid associating with him. I wanted to avoid meeting him this time, but Eldest Sister insisted on getting on the boat. I had no choice but to follow her."

Qu Moying looked up naturally and recounted what had happened before. She did not blame Qu Xuexin but just said that Young Master Wang was weird.

"When I was about to get on the board, he laid down the gangplank, which was small and unstable. He stood by the boat, and he seemed to want to support me, but I didn't want him to support me because I was afraid that it would taint my reputation and I would fall into someone's trap, so I got on the boat with Yu Dong's help. The same situation happened again when I got off the boat. His gangplank was too small and unstable. At that time, Eldest Sister was standing by the gangplank. If she accidentally kicked the gangplank, I would have fallen into the water."

Qu Moying said indifferently.

Her words pointed out how suspicious Young Master Wang was. Qu Moying believed that it was easy to investigate this suspicious Young Master Wang.

They could also find out whether Qu Xuexin wanted to hurt her or not. It would be easy to find out the truth if they asked the passers-by at that time. With Qu Zhizhen's ability, as long as he wanted to find out, it would not be difficult.

The Old Lady immediately understood. "Someone plotted against you? A chain of traps was set to deal with you?"

"It should be the case. Grandmother, it is best to have my father investigate who is behind this matter, who wants to deal with me or..."

Qu Moying paused at this point. She was an unmarried lady, and she had been abandoned once, but someone dealt with her again and again. Such a perfect trap was set up to deal with her. She thought she was not the main target of the other party. It seemed that the other party was trying to deal with someone by making use of her. The real target of the other party could be Qu Zhizhen or Lord Yun!

If someone else said so, the Old Lady would only take it as a joke.

However, since Qu Moying said so, the Old Lady had to pay attention to it. Previously, someone tried to assassinate Qu Moying in the street. It was possible for the other party to set up another trap to deal with her.

Was the one behind this trying to deal with Qu Zhizhen or Lord Yun? If so, it was not a trifle.

The Old Lady nodded. "I'll go talk to your father later and ask him to check it out."

Hearing the Old Lady's words, Qu Xuexin panicked. If this matter had proceeded as planned, it wouldn't matter even if Young Master Wang was investigated. He would have gone far away, and no one could find out about him. However, he screwed the matter up. In the end, Qu Moying was fine, whereas she was in trouble. If they found out anything, she would be in real trouble.

She raised her eyes and sobbed in a trembling voice, "Grandmother, how could it be? How could someone want to deal with Moying? Moying is just a weak girl. It's impossible."

"Eldest Sister, do you know something?" Qu Moying curled her lips in ridicule.

Qu Xuexin hurriedly explained, "No... I just think it's impossible."

Qu Moying said gently, "Oh, I forgot that Eldest Sister was saved by Young Master Wang in the end. If Young Master Wang comes to..."

The Old Lady didn't know about it and asked immediately, "What? Xuexin was saved by this Young Master Wang of an unknown origin?"

Just now, Qu Xuexin's words were vague. She only mentioned the surname of Young Master Wang and did not say anything else about him. The Old Lady still thought it was Xiao Hanyuan who saved Qu Xuexin.

"Yes. At that time, many people saw it. Grandmother, if you don't believe it, you can ask Third Sister. She left at that time because Cousin Xiao blamed her." Since Xiao Hanyuan was not here, Qu Moying let out the whole story bluntly.

Even if Qu Qiuyan did not testify for Qu Moying, she would testify for herself. She had to make her leaving at that time sound reasonable. Only then could she gain a firm foothold.

If the Old Lady asked her about this thing, she would definitely tell the truth.

Qu Xuexin was rescued by a man in public, and she had bodily contact with him. If he asked to marry her, she would have to marry him. Would Qu Xuexin marry a man with an unknown background and even with malicious intentions?

The Old Lady couldn't let this happen. She would rather let Qu Xuexin live in Qu Mansion for the rest of her life than let her marry such a man.

She was clear about the whole story now. Qu Xuexin clearly had no good intentions. The Old Lady believed that Qu Xuexin, who had always acted properly, must have sensed something. Moreover, Qu Moying repeatedly mentioned that Qu Xuexin stood by the gangplank at that time, and she understood what Qu Moying meant.

At this time, Qu Xuexin knew she was in a tricky situation. Her tears fell down, and she said anxiously, "Grandmother, I... I really don't know if there was something wrong with him. Grandmother, I... I don't want to have anything to do with him."

The Old Lady asked in a low voice, "Did many people see it at that time?"

Qu Moying replied, "Everyone saw it."

This matter could not be hidden because many people saw it. If this matter spread out, Qu Xuexin's reputation would be ruined.

The Old Lady asked in detail, "Does anyone know who you guys are?"

Qu Moying thought for a moment and answered frankly, "If Cousin Xiao didn't make a fuss, probably nobody would recognize us. However, I guess many people should have recognized us!"

Xiao Hanyuan must have been waiting for a chance to set Qu Moying up. Otherwise, how could he be there so coincidentally? But now, he was the culprit in exposing Qu Xuexin's identity.

The Old Lady was both angry and resentful. She was really speechless at her grandnephew. She slapped the table hard and looked at the crying Qu Xuexin with disappointment.

The Old Lady said in a deep voice, "Alright, don't cry. Princess Ji asked you to go to Eastern Palace to apologize to her. Otherwise, this matter will not be over."

"Grandmother..." Qu Xuexin looked at the Old Lady with a pleading face. Her heart was full of fear.

It was really an accident. At that time, she just wanted to take County Lady Jingyu and the Crown Prince's Love Lanterns. She did not expect to encounter such a thing. She wanted to do it to please County Lady Jingyu, but now she provoked Eastern Palace's Princess Ji. She did not expect that the matter would end up like this.

Qu Moying lightly reminded her, "Eldest Sister, Princess Ji has always been domineering. You should have made a concession at that time. How could you have gotten into a conflict with her and even implicated Eldest Brother? The Crown Prince is different from the other princes. He is the future Emperor. This... might even implicate Eldest Uncle and Eldest Brother's career."

Qu Xuexin became more and more flustered. She looked at the Old Lady helplessly, and her hands trembled. "Grandmother... what... what should I do?"

She just wanted to please County Lady Jingyu. She didn't want to do anything else!

Qu Moying looked at Qu Xuexin calmly and said, "Eldest Sister, if you have any method, try it out. I'm afraid that Princess Ji will not let it over easily, and the Crown Prince will also intervene. You embarrassed Princess Ji, and even the Crown Prince will feel disgraced. I heard that Princess Ji fell heavily."

Hearing Qu Moying's words, the Old Lady also became flustered. This matter sounded difficult to handle. Moreover, judging from the message her son had just sent over, it seemed that Princess Ji did not intend to make concessions.

The room suddenly quieted down, and only Qu Xuexin's even more flustered sobs could be heard. This matter was indeed not easy to handle. The other party was Eastern Palace's Princess Ji. She was the only female master in Eastern Palace now. She was really powerful. Even if she would remain a Side Princess in the future, if the Crown Prince ascended to the throne, her status would be incomparably distinguished. Other mansions' Side Princesses would not be able to compare with her.

"Grandmother..." Qu Xuexin could not stand the silence and looked at the Old Lady pleadingly again.

"You can leave first. Ask your mother to prepare some gifts. You take them to Eastern Palace to apologize. As for whether it will work or not..." The Old Lady sighed. She was not sure. No one in Qu Mansion was sure. She could not help but turn to look at Qu Moying. If Lord Yun could intervene, this matter should be easy to handle.

However, the Old Lady immediately denied this thought. How could a person like Lord Yun go to the Crown Prince for a woman? He knocked Qu Xuexin into the water this time, and he let Qu Xuexin get on his boat to change her clothes for Qu Moying's sake. But that was all.

How could he do everything for Qu Moying?

Thinking of this, the Old Lady couldn't help but pity Qu Moying. She clearly knew that Lord Yun wanted Qu Moying to enter his mansion not because he was in love with her but because he just happened to meet her. Qu Moying could not refuse to be with him, and the Old Lady dared not do anything.

"Grandmother..." Qu Xuexin still wanted to say something else.

The Old Lady shook her hand weakly and leaned back. She closed her eyes and did not speak again. Seeing her reaction, Granny Wu walked to Qu Xuexin and gently helped her up. She said in a low voice, "First Lady, go back first. Let Her Ladyship think of another way."

"OK... then... I'll go back first." Qu Xuexin answered in a daze, her heart becoming more and more flustered...

Chapter 345 Three Ladies Went to Eastern Palace

Seeing Qu Xuexin come out of the yard, Xiao Hanyuan called out at the door with a face full of concern, "Eldest Cousin Sister."

"Cousin Xiao, I'm leaving now." Qu Xuexin was not in the mood to speak to Xiao Hanyuan. She bowed slightly, turned around, and left. She did not even bother to waste any time with him.

Originally, Xiao Hanyuan was useful to her, but now he was of no use at all. She had to think of a way by herself. The best way at present was to ask County Lady Jingyu for help.

She thought the conflict with Crown Prince's Mansion could be solved with Lord Jing's intervention. However, there was another trouble. If County Lady Jingyu could intercede with the Crown Prince for her, dealing with a Side Princess would not be a problem.

Seeing Qu Xuexin leave without looking back and recalling the hint of disgust in her eyes just now, Xiao Hanyuan was really stunned. He almost couldn't believe what he had just seen.

"Does she dislike me?"

"How could she dislike me? She is so gentle. How could she be like this? Am I mistaken?"

Staring blankly at Qu Xuexin's receding figure, Xiao Hanyuan began to doubt Qu Xuexin for the first time...

After saying goodbye to the Old Lady, Qu Moying also left. The one to make the decision on this matter wasn't her, but the Old Lady together with her two sons, Qu Zhizhen and Qu Zhilin.

She came here because Qu Xuexin mentioned her, and she was asked over to tell what had happened. Qu Qiuyan was not here now, so Qu Moying could tell that the final decision on this matter had nothing to do with her.

When she walked out of the yard, she saw Xiao Hanyuan standing outside, staring at Qu Xuexin's back in a daze. With a silent smile, she turned to walk in another direction.

Qu Xuexin was not in the mood to care about Xiao Hanyuan now. Of course, she could not be as considerate as she used to be, making Xiao Hanyuan appear to be self-sentimental.

The solution to this matter was informed to Qu Moying in the afternoon.

She, Qu Qiuyan, and Qu Xuexin were asked to go to Eastern Palace together to apologize to Princess Ji. As for whether Princess Ji could forgive them or not, no one could be certain. But such a visit could show Qu Mansion's seriousness regarding this incident.

Qu Moying was not surprised by this result.

No matter how many conflicts there were between the three of them, they were one in the eyes of outsiders.

Qu Qiuyan was not involved before for the sake of Lord Jing. But Lord Jing didn't really help in this matter, so Qu Qiuyan was involved now. At least she somewhat represented Lord Jing. Even if Princess Ji didn't consider other people, she had to consider Lord Jing.

Qu Moying should have been involved for a similar reason.

However, Lord Yun was not Lord Jing, and he did not care much about Qu Moying, so Qu Moying was probably just a sort of make-weight. After all, it could show the sincerity of the Qu Mansion if the three of them went together.

“Lady, after First Lady went back to her yard, she did send someone out, but the one she sent out hasn’t come back yet.” Granny Miao reported as she entered the room.

She did not manage Qianyue House’s matters. She only needed to build a good relationship with the servants in the mansion, including both the East Mansion and West Mansion. Everyone in the mansion knew that she was Qu Moying’s trusted servant and had suffered a lot with Qu Moying. Qu Moying treated her well now and did not burden her with many things for the sake of the hardship they had been through together.

Every servant thought that Granny Miao was quite lucky. Although the one she served was Qu Moying, who was insignificant, Qu Moying was nice, and she treated people around her generously. She let Granny Miao have an idle job. Granny Miao didn’t have to do many things, but she could get the salary of a chief maid, which was really enviable.

Because of this, Granny Miao had a good relationship with many old maids in the mansion. She knew this information because she went to chat with a gate-keeping old maid of East Mansion, and they talked about this matter.

Qu Moying nodded. She guessed that Qu Xuexin must have sent someone to look for Liu Jingyu. Qu Xuexin must have thought that the one she could rely on right now was Liu Jingyu.

But it could be useless because even if Liu Jingyu met the person, she might not agree to help Qu Xuexin. The person hadn’t come back yet, which showed Liu Jingyu’s attitude.

Liu Jingyu treated Qu Xuexin just in the same way the latter treated Xiao Hanyuan. It was indeed a typical example of karma.

The carriages had already waited outside. Qu Moying, Qu Xuexin, and Qu Qiuyan got on the big carriage in the front together. Granny Wu took the carriage behind, which also carried the gifts for Princess Ji.

The gifts were prepared by East Mansion, and the Old Lady put some extra gifts into the carriage to make sure that Princess Ji would be satisfied.

This matter could be played down as a slap in the face of Princess Ji, but it could also be exaggerated as a disgrace to the Crown Prince.

Who would dare to disgrace the Crown Prince?

Seeing Qu Xuexin enter the carriage, Qu Qiuyan asked unhappily, "Eldest Sister, you fell into the water at that time. Why were you still in the mood to go to the Sea of Lanterns? Could it be that you went with Young Master Wang?"

She was inexplicably involved, and now she was full of anger.

Moreover, this matter somewhat embarrassed Lord Jing, so how could Qu Qiuyan be nice to Qu Xuexin? She would enter Lord Jing Mansion in the future. She felt that her status was not inferior to Princess Ji. But now, she was forced to apologize to Princess Ji with Qu Xuexin. How could she not feel aggrieved?

Before Qu Moying returned to the mansion, Qu Qiuyan was the most powerful one among the three ladies in the mansion. East Mansion's Qu Xuexin and Qu Caiyue had to be watchful and reverent in front of her.

Qu Xuexin sat down with a darkened face. The maid she sent to ask County Lady Jingyu for help had not come back yet. She did not know if it was because she had not seen County Lady Jingyu or for other reasons.

So far, Qu Xuexin had not received any reply. She was not in the mood to quarrel with Qu Qiuyan. She was very annoyed. She twisted the handkerchief in her hand and lowered her head in silence.

She didn't seem to hear Qu Qiuyan's mocking words.

The carriage slowly drove forward. The atmosphere in the carriage was very dull. Although Qu Qiuyan was angry, she did not know what to say because Qu Xuexin did not reply to her whatever she said. She

looked at Qu Moying and held back the urge to provoke. In the end, she did not say anything. Qu Mingcheng had told her that she'd better not provoke Qu Moying.

She didn't know why Qu Zhizhen and the Old Lady treated Qu Moying so well. She thought she should not do anything to Qu Moying for the time being because her mother could not back her up, but she had plenty of opportunities in the future. After she entered Lord Jing Mansion, she would definitely let Qu Moying suffer.

When the time came, she could do whatever she wanted to Qu Moying easily.

Last night, Lord Jing treated her kindly. He even sent her back to the mansion and went to talk to Qu Zhizhen for a while before leaving. She thought it showed that Lord Jing still cared about her. As for what he talked about with Qu Zhizhen, Qu Qiuyan thought it must be about her marriage to him.

Thinking of this, Qu Qiuyan was very confident.

She glanced at Qu Moying and Qu Xuexin with disdain. She thought it was disgusting to just sit with them. They looked miserable.

She did not say anything else. The three of them sat in the carriage with different thoughts silently.

When they arrived at Crown Prince's Mansion, the maids got off the carriage behind that of their masters and helped the ladies down from the big carriage one by one. The three ladies walked to the gate of Crown Prince's Mansion and handed over their name cards to inform their visits.

The servant of Eastern Palace at the gate should have received the news that they were coming. He glanced at them and said coldly, "Wait here."

After saying that, he slowly went in to report.

After a long time, an old maid came out and sized them up before saying, "Three Ladies, please follow me in!"

Then, she turned around and walked in. Qu Xuexin took the lead, followed by Qu Qiuyan, and Qu Moying was the last. The three of them followed the old maid with their maids.

In such a situation, no one knew what to say. Even Qu Qiuyan, who had always been domineering, did not dare to make a loud noise.

They followed the old maid all the way. After passing a few paths, they arrived at Ji Youran's yard. As soon as they entered the yard, they saw someone come out. It was actually the Crown Prince. The three of them quickly lowered their heads and bowed.

Pei Luo'an came out of Ji Youran's room and saw the three of them coming over. He stopped and said, "No need for formalities!"

The three of them stood up straight, each of them lowering their heads and quietly waiting for the Crown Prince to pass.

Pei Luo'an's gaze shifted from Qu Xuexin to Qu Qiuyan and finally fell on Qu Moying. Then, he took a serious look at Qu Moying.

He naturally knew that Lord Yun took a fancy to Qu Moying, and she would enter Lord Yun Mansion. But he thought the so-called fancy was just a coincidence. It would be ridiculous if Lord Yun seriously took a fancy to Qu Moying.

However, would such a weak woman really survive after entering Lord Yun Mansion? Pei Luo'an felt that it was a joke.

Pei Yuanjun was like a fiend. Even a man had to avoid him, not to mention such a delicate woman.

Thinking of this, he couldn't help but take another look at Qu Moying. But then, he shifted his gaze back to Qu Xuexin, who was said to be the cause of the accident yesterday. Lord Jing had spoken up for her once, and Pei Luo'an had only casually told Ji Youran about it. As for how to deal with the matter, it was up to Ji Youran. After all, it was not a big deal.

Ji Youran was pushed to the ground, which disgraced him as well. Even if Lord Jing had said something to him, Ji Youran could still make a fuss. Otherwise, others would say that he was afraid of Lord Jing.

He glanced at Qu Xuexin casually. He lifted his foot, but then he stopped. He looked at Qu Xuexin with a burning gaze. Then, he turned around and walked to Qu Xuexin.

He stopped in front of Qu Xuexin.

Qu Xuexin was so nervous that her whole body almost went stiff. Just now, she felt that the Crown Prince was looking at her, and he actually walked over now. What did he mean? Did he take a fancy to her? The great joy made her mind blank, not knowing what to do for a moment. She stood still and looked at the pair of golden embroidered boots in front of her.

“Where... did you get your sachet?” The Crown Prince’s gentle voice rang in her ears, which made her feel warm.

“I... I embroidered it myself.” Qu Xuexin was so nervous that she could not hear herself. At this time, she could not remember what she had embroidered. In the past, she had embroidered some sachets. Although she did not know which sachet she used today, she must have embroidered it herself.

But which one did she hang today? She couldn’t remember, and it was inappropriate for her to turn her head to take a closer look. She only vaguely saw a touch of color.

She wondered which sachet it was...

Chapter 346 Forced Her to Tell the Truth

“It’s very beautiful!” Pei Luo’an’s gaze once again fell on the sachet on her clothes and said gently, but then he turned around and strode away.

Only after he left did Qu Xuexin feel like she had come back to life. She stiffly looked up at the Crown Prince, who was surrounded by a large group of attendants.

Then, she lowered her head and looked at the sachet hanging on her clothes. When she saw it clearly, she was stunned for a moment. She subconsciously raised her eyes to look at Qu Moying. It was the sachet that she made at Qu Moying's place.

Qu Moying drew the pattern for her, and the pattern was Love of Butterfly. Its color was pink. It was delicate and beautiful.

In fact, she had planned to steal the light color sachet that Qu Moying had embroidered by herself because having that sachet would be more convincing if her plan worked. However, she didn't get a chance to steal it, and her plan failed. She almost forgot her initial motivation of going to Qu Moying to embroider sachets with her.

Qu Moying had been staring at Pei Luo'an from below her eye veil. She also saw that Pei Luo'an looked at Qu Xuexin's sachet with a thoughtful look. She curved up her lips silently. Did he recognize the pattern, Love of Butterfly?

However, Ji Hanyue was not the only one who could draw this kind of pattern. Even if he knew that the pattern was drawn by Qu Moying, so what?

Moreover, Qu Xuexin had admitted to making that sachet herself.

A maid walked over and said coldly, "Princess Ji invites you in."

Qu Xuexin hurriedly collected her romantic thoughts and withdrew her gaze. She tidied up her clothes and followed the maid inside. Qu Qiuyan and Qu Moying walked behind her.

The main character today was Qu Xuexin. Qu Qiuyan and Qu Moying just followed her here. As for how to solve the problem, it was not up to them.

There was a medicinal smell in Ji Youran's room, and there was a bowl with medicine on the table, which was obviously for Ji Youran.

Ji Youran leaned against the couch, and her gaze first fell on Qu Moying, who she thought was different from the other two ladies. She had associated with Qu Moying before, and after that, she found out that Qu Moying was not as easy to bully as others thought.

Ji Youran even suspected that the fact that Concubine Xiang was promoted to become Madam Duan had something to do with Qu Moying. If that was really the case, Qu Moying could not be underestimated.

But it was only her guess, and there was no direct evidence.

Even so, Ji Youran felt that she still needed to pay more attention to Qu Moying. Moreover, if Qu Moying entered Lord Yun Mansion in the future, she would become her aunt.

At the thought of this, Ji Youran couldn't be happy. She seemed to have a congenital dislike of Qu Moying. Whether it was the first time she met Qu Moying or later when she tried to get close to her, she felt uncomfortable for no reason at the sight of her.

Just like right now, she should have first looked at the troublemaker, Qu Xuexin, but she inexplicably looked at Qu Moying, who was standing behind the other two elder sisters.

She had a weird feeling. She felt uncomfortable, but she couldn't tell why.

The three of them bowed to Ji Youran together.

Ji Youran restrained the emotions in her heart and asked Qu Moying in a soft voice, "Cousin Moying, why are you here too?"

"I accompanied my Eldest Sister here. Princess Ji, I hope you can forgive her." Qu Moying gracefully walked out from the back of the line, bowed to Ji Youran, and stood at the side.

Ji Youran waved her hand at Qu Moying. Then, she turned her eyes to Qu Xuexin and asked unhappily, "Speaking of this... First Lady Qu, why did you go to get the Love Lanterns that were the Crown Prince's? It was alright for me to get the Crown Prince's Love Lanterns. But First Lady Qu, what was your reason for doing it?"

Her words were quite meaningful. After pondering them, Qu Xuexin's expression changed drastically, and she explained in a trembling voice, "Princess Ji, it was an accident. I thought they were the Love Lanterns hung by someone else, so I went to get them. I didn't expect that I would have a conflict with your people."

Qu Xuexin had no reason to take the Crown Prince's Love Lanterns. Even Liu Jingyu was not qualified to do such a thing now, so she could not give Liu Jingyu away.

Qu Xuexin was very regretful now. "Why did I want to give Liu Jingyu a surprise? Up to now, Liu Jingyu hasn't spoken up for me. It is just a piece of cake for her to beg mercy for me."

At this moment, Qu Xuexin started to hate Liu Jingyu.

Ji Youran asked, "Whose Love Lanterns were you trying to get?"

Qu Xuexin's face turned red, but she couldn't say a word. Who else could she say? No matter what she said, people would believe she had an affair with someone.

What was she supposed to say?

"First Lady Qu, please tell me..." Ji Youran was sure that Qu Xuexin must have something to do with Liu Jingyu. Just because of this, she would not let Qu Xuexin off the hook easily.

Qu Xuexin stuttered, "I... I wanted to take those two lanterns because they were beautiful, and I wanted to bring them back."

"First Lady Qu, do you think what you said is credible?" Ji Youran sneered. This reason was too far-fetched.

Qu Xuexin fell to her knees. "Princess Ji, I really didn't mean to offend you. At that time, it was a mess, and my brother didn't see you, so he accidentally pushed the person beside you and caused you to fall."

Qu Qiuyan looked at Qu Xuexin and did not kneel down. Although her status was low now, who knew what would happen in the future?

Qu Moying also pretended not to see Qu Xuexin kneel down. She would not kneel to Ji Youran. As long as she thought of what happened in her last life, she wanted to eat Ji Youran alive when she saw her.

“Eldest Sister, get up and talk. Princess Ji is asking you about the situation!” Qu Qiuyan stepped forward to support Qu Xuexin while speaking.

Qu Xuexin was the eldest. Since she had knelt down, the two of them were supposed to kneel as well.

Qu Moying quietly went to the other side and supported Qu Xuexin.

The two of them helped Qu Xuexin up.

“First Lady Qu, do you really not want to tell the truth?” Ji Youran said unhappily. She swept coldly over Qu Qiuyan and Qu Moying with an unfathomable look.

She didn’t like the scene in front of her. At this time, shouldn’t the three of them kneel in front of her and beg her?

Qu Qiuyan and Qu Moying didn’t know what was good for them!

Ji Youran had long known that Qu Moying was aloof, but she didn’t expect Qu Qiuyan to be so disrespectful. However, she could understand it as she thought of Lord Jing.

Qu Qiuyan was fighting for Lord Jing!

Thinking of this, she was more determined not to let Qu Mansion’s people off the hook easily.

“Princess Ji, I... I don’t know what you’re talking about.” Of course, Qu Xuexin wouldn’t change her words.

Ji Youran sneered and waved her hand. “Since that’s the case, you should go back first. I don’t want to hear a lie.”

A maid came over and bowed to the three of them. Then, she said coldly, “Ladies, please leave. Princess Ji needs to take medicine. She still felt pain because of the previous injury. The Imperial Doctor has prescribed a lot of medicine for her. She has to rest a lot recently.”

She meant that Ji Youran was seriously injured, and her behavior of driving them away also showed her dissatisfaction with Qu Mansion.

Qu Xuexin panicked. How could she be calm? It seemed that Ji Youran really did not want to spare her, but how could she survive her anger?

She pulled Qu Moying and Qu Qiuyan and looked at them with tears in her eyes. Her lips trembled, and she asked for help, “Qiuyan, Moying.”

“Eldest Sister, what exactly happened? Just tell Princess Ji.” Qu Moying looked at Qu Xuexin and said. Her eyes under the eye veil were serious.

“Eldest Sister, just tell the truth. Who told you to do it?” Qu Qiuyan said it more clearly. Although she tried to hold on, she was in a panic. Something had happened to her in Eastern Palace before, and she was still a little afraid of Princess Ji. It could even be said that she had a guilty conscience. She hoped to solve this matter quickly and leave.

As for what Qu Xuexin would say, she did not care. She just wanted her to say something that Ji Youran could believe.

What she said was what Ji Youran wanted to hear.

Qu Moying echoed, “Eldest Sister, just tell the truth!”

"I..." Qu Xuexin opened her mouth because of their urge, and her mind went blank.

County Lady Jingyu still hadn't responded to her, and she could no longer hold on.

Qu Moying reminded Qu Xuexin in a low voice. "Eldest Sister, we're now in Eastern Palace. Since Princess Ji has been badly injured, you should give her an explanation, or it will be bad for both you and Eldest Brother."

Ji Youran felt Qu Moying and Qu Qiuyan were not too stupid. At least they said the right words in such a situation.

She looked coldly at Qu Xuexin, silently increasing the pressure on her.

Qu Xuexin couldn't take it anymore. Her legs went soft, and tears immediately fell down. She felt wronged. "I... I was just curious. I wanted to... wanted to take a look, so... so..."

"Curious? First Lady Qu, are you interested in the Crown Prince's Love Lanterns?" Ji Youran keenly sensed that Qu Xuexin was giving up, and she straightened up slightly. Her goal today was about to be realized.

She did not dare to directly ask the Crown Prince with whom he hung the Love Lanterns, but she could know it from someone else, and this was not crossing the line.

Qu Xuexin stuttered, "I... I didn't know it was the Crown Prince's lanterns. I saw a couple go over, and their lanterns were very... very beautiful..."

Ji Youran asked, "You saw the Crown Prince hang Love Lanterns together with a woman?"

Qu Xuexin was so nervous that she just nodded subconsciously.

Ji Youran asked again, "Did you see the Crown Prince hang Love Lanterns with a woman? Did you see that?"

Qu Xuexin said, "Yes... yes!"

"Did you see who the woman was?" Ji Youran snapped, her eyes fixed on Qu Xuexin.

"I... I didn't see it clearly. I only saw... her back... and I didn't know it was the Crown Prince either." Qu Xuexin explained in a hurry. She was panicked and scared.

"Alright, you can go back now. Since it's a misunderstanding, I naturally won't pick on you." Ji Youran had known what she wanted to know, and her attitude softened.

Chapter 347 She Fell Again

Did Ji Youran mean that she was willing to reconcile?

Qu Xuexin's back was covered in a cold sweat, and she almost collapsed.

Qu Qiuyan breathed a sigh of relief. It was best that the matter was solved like this.

However, Qu Moying smiled and looked away coldly. Qu Xuexin had said what Ji Youran wanted to hear. Otherwise, how could she bring this up to Pei Luo'an?

Ji Youran would not dare to say that she had followed Pei Luo'an there.

"Thank you, Princess Ji." Qu Xuexin was on the verge of collapse, and her legs went soft.

“Since we’ve already talked it out, let’s forget about this matter. But First Lady Qu, don’t be so curious in the future. Otherwise, it’s easy for you to get into trouble.” Ji Youran said calmly and looked at Qu Xuexin with a mocking gaze.

Qu Xuexin’s status could never compare with hers. It was especially the case now.

“Yes... yes!” Qu Xuexin blushed with shame.

Noble ladies were always expected to be chaste and gentle, and they were supposed to act decently and elegantly. Ji Youran’s words meant that Qu Xuexin was not decent at all!

However, after what had happened just now, Qu Xuexin was so flustered that she did not dare to say anything.

“Ladies, please leave. Our Master is not feeling well, so she won’t see you off.” Xie Feng stepped forward and looked at the three of them with a forced smile.

She was chasing them away in an extremely rude way.

She was a mere maid, but she walked up to them before Ji Youran said anything. She was clearly not treating them as noble ladies, and what she did was like a slap to their faces.

Qu Qiuyan could not help but turn to look at Ji Youran.

Ji Youran leaned back and closed her eyes as if she did not see what was happening. Or else, she acquiesced to what the maid was doing.

“Ladies, please leave.” Xie Feng became more and more arrogant. She raised her head high in disdain.

Qu Moying sneered. Ji Youran really thought of herself as Eastern Palace’s female Master. Even her servants were so arrogant, which showed that she really thought she was something.

Qu Moying had prepared a show for Xie Feng, the maid who betrayed her...

If they were chased away like this, Qu Mansion would be disgraced. She did not really care whether Qu Mansion was disgraced or not, but she was not willing to be humiliated by Ji Youran and Xie Feng.

The two of them weren't qualified to do this!

She looked at Yu Dong and nodded silently. Yu Dong immediately understood and turned around as if he was going to help Qu Moying. However, when he turned, he accidentally stumbled and stepped on Xie Feng's foot.

Xie Feng let out a sharp cry of pain and immediately squatted down with her arms around her legs.

Ji Youran was shocked. She hurriedly opened her eyes and saw Xie Feng squatting on the ground and screaming in pain. A trace of disgust flashed in her eyes. Although she gave Xie Feng to the Crown Prince, she couldn't feel happy when she thought that Xie Feng really slept with the Crown Prince. She kept Xie Feng just for the time being.

"I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I didn't mean it!" Yu Dong apologized repeatedly. He squatted down and asked Xie Feng with concern, "Sister, are you alright? Why don't you take off your socks and let me have a look? If you are seriously injured, you should get a doctor!"

Qu Moying bowed to Ji Youran. "Princess Ji, my maid accidentally stepped on your maid. I apologize to you!"

Ji Youran looked at Xie Feng and then at Qu Moying, and her face calmed down. "Cousin Moying, you don't have to apologize. It's just a small matter. It's fine. Xie Feng, step back first. What's the big fuss about?"

Xie Feng was stepped on hard. She looked at Yu Dong with hatred, but she knew that she could not do anything to him at this time!

When Yu Dong had clearly exerted much strength when stepping on her. Otherwise, she would not have been so painful.

Xie Feng limped back to the side. She was furious. She deliberately chased them away rudely just now. She suffered a lot at Earl Ling'an's Mansion last time. This time, she took advantage of Ji Youran's power to bully Qu Moying, but she didn't expect Qu Moying's maid to be so fierce.

She still had a lingering fear of what happened last time. Although she saw Yu Dong smiling, she was a little flustered. Seeing that Ji Youran did not support her, she did not dare to be rash again.

She glared at Yu Dong from the side.

Qu Moying said softly, "Thank you, Princess Ji."

The three of them walked out of Ji Youran's yard together. When they arrived outside the courtyard, Qu Xuexin's legs were still soft. She was really frightened just now. Now that she slackened off, she could barely stand still.

Qu Qiuyan looked at her mockingly but did not say anything. They were still in Crown Prince's Mansion, so she did not dare to be rash.

An old maid walked over and said to the three of them with a smile, "Three ladies, please follow me."

As she spoke, she led the way. Qu Qiuyan was the first to follow her. Qu Xuexin held her maid's hand and also followed. Only Qu Moying looked in the direction that the old maid walked. She knew it was not the direct way to go out of the mansion. How could the old maid lead the way like this?

After hesitating for a moment, she also followed the old maid. She believed that Ji Youran would not dare to hurt the three of them here!

The old maid did not walk very fast. Along the way, there were many twists and turns. Although it was a little detour, the scenery was getting better and better. Qu Qiuyan and Qu Xuexin were confused that

they didn't take the same road as just now, but they could see that the scenery along this road was much more beautiful than the one they had taken before.

Now that the matter was solved, they had the mood to admire the scenery. It was not bad to enjoy the scenery along the way like this. Qu Xuexin also gradually recovered her strength. She slowly let go of her maid and walked on her own.

Just as they were enjoying the view, a maid suddenly came from the opposite side with a tray in her hand. She walked in a hurry, and just as she turned around, she bumped into them.

The old maid, who was leading the way, reacted the fastest. She exclaimed and dodged to the side, leaving Qu Xuexin to face the maid.

It was already too late for Qu Xuexin to dodge the maid, and they bumped into each other.

Qu Xuexin took two steps back and bumped into Qu Qiuyan. Then, she lost her balance and fell heavily.

Qu Qiuyan held her maid's hand and took two steps back. She steadied herself and glared at Qu Xuexin.

She came to Crown Prince's Mansion to apologize, and she fell. How embarrassing would it be if this got out?

"Lady, are you alright?" Qu Xuexin's maid, Hong Mei, hurriedly squatted down to support Qu Xuexin.

The maid of Crown Prince's Mansion also fell to the ground. She held her waist with a painful look. The fruits in the tray in her hands fell down, and several of them fell on Qu Moying's feet.

Qu Moying's breathing quickened as she saw the fruits at her feet. But she soon relaxed, and her eyes turned cold.

This kind of fruit was a tribute to the royal family. It was not from the capital, and it seemed to be from the North. Because the yield of this fruit was small, and the Crown Prince liked to eat it, it was all sent to him.

When Qu Moying was Ji Hanyue, she had also gotten some from Pei Luo'an, but she did not like the taste and did not eat it again.

The taste was a little strange. She couldn't get used to it. She gave the fruit to several maids around her. They all said that they couldn't get used to its taste and that it tasted strange. At that time, she did not understand why Pei Luo'an liked this fruit. Later, she found out by chance that this fruit was useful for calming the mind. Pei Luo'an liked its effect of calming the mind.

So, this maid was sent by Pei Luo'an?

Who was he looking for?

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry. It's all my fault. Lady, please follow me. I'll ask the doctor to check if you are injured." The maid of Crown Prince's Mansion couldn't bother to care about the fruits on the ground. She quickly stood up and helped Qu Xuexin up together with Hong Mei.

Seeing the maid, Hong Mei became angry and scolded, "How could you walk like that? Do you have eyes?"

"Alright, let's go to the side and take a look!" Qu Xuexin stopped Hong Mei in time.

She clearly knew that this was Crown Prince's Mansion.

Hong Mei also realized this and did not dare to say anything. She supported Qu Xuexin and follow the maids and old maid to an empty yard in the front.

Qu Xuexin fell heavily and felt that her skin was probably broken.

After they left, Xie Feng poked her head out from behind a large rockery. She looked at the fruits on the ground and then at the three ladies who had left in front of her. She snorted with jealousy and turned to go back. She was going to report to Princess Ji that Qu Mansion's three ladies were indeed not good. They just came here, but they were trying to hook up with the Crown Prince.

"Noble ladies like them are even worse than a maid like me. They just came here, but they dared to seduce the Crown Prince."

Xie Feng thought indignantly.

"What? They were brought to the yard where the Crown Prince is having a rest?" Ji Youran suddenly sat up from the bed and snapped with a cold face.

"Yes... Yes, I saw that the Crown Prince's favorite fruits fell to the ground, but no one picked them up. That maid worked in the Crown Prince's resting yard, and that old maid also served the Crown Prince."

Xie Feng complained angrily.

"Let's go take a look." Ji Youran couldn't sit down any longer. She had just found out that Liu Jingyu was her rival in love, and now there seemed to be a new one.

"Your Grace, you can't go at this time." Her maid, Shui Ning, immediately stopped her.

Xie Feng said angrily, "Why can't Her Grace go? They are all here."

Shui Ning looked at Xie Feng coldly and said to Ji Youran, "Your Grace, what are you going to do there? Or what can you stop? If His Highness really likes one of them, how are you supposed to stop him?"

Her continuous questions made Ji Youran grit her teeth. However, she had no choice but to endure it. She indeed had no reason to care about the Crown Prince's private affairs. She was just a Side Princess. Even if she was his Princess Consort, she would not be able to do anything if the Crown Prince really liked someone else.

“Your Grace, please don’t act rashly now. His Highness can’t take a fancy to all three of them. It might be just one of them, but we don’t know whom His Highness is interested in. Why don’t we discuss it after we figure it out?” Seeing that Ji Youran was persuaded, Shui Ning suggested again. Ji Youran was in a bad situation recently, and she needed to be careful at this time.

If she annoyed the Crown Prince, she might be killed!

Some things were unknown to others, but as Ji Youran’s trusted maid, Shui Ning had always known them...

Chapter 348 Daydreaming Because of a Sachet

Qu Xuexin was brought to a wing room to check her wound while Qu Qiuyan and Qu Moying were seated in front of a stone table in the yard.

A big tree blocked the sunlight. Dappled sunlight shone through the leaves of the tree and cast shadows on the stone table and stone benches. It was comfortable and cool to sit under the tree. There was a pool on one side, in which there were gravel and swimming fish.

It was a good place to avoid the heat!

Qu Moying and Qu Qiuyan sat in front of the stone table. They were both looking at the small fish hiding in the gravel that occasionally swam out.

When it was just the two of them, there was really nothing to say.

Qu Moying’s eyes fell on the pond, but she was paying attention to the sound in the wing room. Her ears had always been sharp. After hearing Qu Xuexin enter the wing room just now, she heard Qu Xuexin let out a low scream and then return to normal. Seeing the old maid who just led the way retreat outside the door, she curved her lips silently.

It was Pei Luo’an!

She was sure that Pei Luo'an was here right now.

There should be a back door in that wing room. He entered the wing room through the back door so that they could not see him. Why did Pei Luo'an spend such great efforts to meet Qu Xuexin?

Was it for what happened last night?

Qu Moying didn't think so. She didn't think that Pei Luo'an would personally ask about this. Was it because of Qu Xuexin?

She denied this guess at once. A person like Pei Luo'an would not fall in love with someone at first sight. He had been pretending to be affectionate only to Ji Hanyue, but it turned out that he was just creating an illusion for Ji Hanyue.

The blood of the first branch woke Ji Hanyue up from the illusion.

How could someone from the royal family really be affectionate?

Pei Luo'an was such a man. Pei Yusheng and Pei Yuanjun were naturally the same. She believed they were all cold-hearted.

Therefore, she thought it unnecessary to talk about love with such people. She thought it was best to talk about the deals directly as she and Pei Yuanjun did, which would not hurt each other.

If not for those reasons, was it for the sachet?

After thinking about it, Qu Moying felt that it was not very possible. But if not for this, she could not think of anything else. She stared at the fish in the water and quietly waited to see what would happen. Even if Pei Luo'an acted perfectly, she would know after Qu Xuexin came out later.

“Your... Your Highness?” Qu Xuexin’s voice trembled as she knelt down. She didn’t expect the Crown Prince to sit in the room.

As soon as the door opened, she entered the main room with Hong Mei’s support. Then, she followed the maid into the inner room. She was shocked and panicked to see Pei Luo’an in the room, but she was also secretly happy.

“Get up!” Pei Luo’an said gently and reached out to help her.

The maid of Eastern Palace helped Qu Xuexin up. Qu Xuexin did not dare to look up and said in a shivering voice, “Thank you, Your Highness.”

As if not noticing Qu Xuexin’s embarrassment, Pei Luo’an smiled and asked, “Did you embroider this sachet? Can I have a look?”

“Yes... yes.” Qu Xuexin hurriedly said, her face blushing.

Hong Mei helped Qu Xuexin take off the sachet hanging on her waist and handed it over. The maid took it and presented it to Pei Luo’an.

Pei Luo’an did not take it. He looked at the sachet in the maid’s hands with a strange expression and remained silent.

Qu Xuexin calmed herself down and stole a glance at Pei Luo’an. She saw a trace of sorrow on Pei Luo’an’s handsome face. He slowly reached out and gently pinched the sachet. Then, he pinched it in front of his eyes and carefully examined it.

His hand moved slowly as if the sachet in his hand was heavy. He was very gentle as if he was looking through the sachet.

Qu Xuexin was standing right opposite him. She saw the affection in his eyes and hurriedly lowered her head. Her heart was beating so crazily that it almost jumped out of her mouth. She subconsciously reached out and clenched the handkerchief in her hand. Her face was almost burning.

Was the Crown Prince interested in her? Was this why he deliberately let someone bump into her?

Her heart was beating wildly, and she was shy and happy.

Pei Luo'an's gaze slowly fell on the sachet. He looked at the sachet over and over again. Then, he held it tightly in his palm as if he was holding something extremely precious. After a long while, he asked, "Did you embroider this?"

Qu Xuexin hurriedly replied, "Yes, I... I embroidered it."

"Did you really embroider it?" Pei Luo'an asked again. His eyes darkened, and he looked down at Qu Xuexin.

Qu Xuexin's face turned pale as she sensed his chilling aura. Her legs felt weak again, but she didn't want to let go of such a great opportunity. She might not have any other opportunity in the future. She gritted her teeth and forced herself to say, "I embroidered this sachet, and I drew the pattern myself."

"Really?" Pei Luo'an asked again, as if he was confirming something.

"Yes... Yes." At this point, Qu Xuexin dared not to change her words.

There was a long silence. Qu Xuexin's back was faintly sweating. She felt her throat dry and itchy, but she did not dare to move. She froze there.

"Can you give it to me?" It was a long time before she heard Pei Luo'an's gentle voice. The cold aura around her immediately disappeared, and Qu Xuexin felt like she was about to collapse.

Qu Xuexin said in a panic, "Okay... okay."

"Reward her!" Pei Luo'an held the sachet in his hand and said slowly. Then, he stood up and strode past the folding screen.

The maid smiled and brought over a brocade box to Qu Xuexin. "First Lady Qu, this is a reward from His Highness."

"Thank His Highness!" Qu Xuexin hurriedly said, blushing again.

Hong Mei took the brocade box, which was not big and could be put into her sleeve.

Qu Xuexin changed her clothes. She fell heavily, and her knee was scraped. Coincidentally, there was a set of clothes here for her to change into.

Qu Xuexin did not ask the maid to call the doctor. She held Hong Mei's hand and walked out.

Seeing Qu Xuexin come out of the room in a new set of clothes, Qu Qiuyan stood up and asked arrogantly, "Eldest Sister, can we go back now?"

Her contemptuous attitude made Qu Xuexin angry and annoyed. She secretly gritted her teeth. "She is so arrogant just because of Lord Jing's power, but I will let her pay after I enter Eastern Palace!"

She collected her thoughts and said indifferently, "Let's go!"

However, she was too excited just now, and the blush on her face had not faded yet. Her eyes were more watery than usual, and she looked quite pleasing to the eye.

Qu Moying stood up quietly. She was now certain that Pei Luo'an was in the room just now. Only he could make Qu Xuexin so throbbing that she lost her composure and had not calmed down until now.

She lowered her eyes and found that the sachet hanging around Qu Xuexin's waist was gone. Her eyes were full of mockery. Did Pei Luo'an think that the sachet was embroidered by Ji Hanyue?

Of course, she did not think that he had taken it because he missed Ji Hanyue. At most, he would pretend to be affectionate by using it. She thought she was too negligent to let such a scene happen today.

It seemed that Qu Xuexin did not tell who exactly drew the pattern on the sachet.

However, Qu Moying had expected this. How could Qu Xuexin change her words when she found that she was about to gain wealth and glory?

What happened just now was like a turn for Qu Xuexin, and it was a great turn.

Although Qu Moying did not embroider the sachet, she drew the pattern on it. She could not help but feel sick of Pei Luo'an. She was killed by him, but he still pretended to be affectionate to her, which was ridiculous.

If he was really affectionate to her, why did he plot against her back then? His so-called affection for her was just something to cover his hypocrisy.

She looked outside the yard. Just now, she noticed someone peeking at the entrance of the yard. It should be Ji Youran's people.

She thought that Eastern Palace was getting more and more interesting. The women Pei Luo'an met were all quite scheming. But it would be good if they all entered Eastern Palace. Things would be easier for her.

The three of them walked out together. This time, Qu Qiuyan was walking in front. She was already a little anxious and did not want to care about Qu Xuexin. She had always looked down on Qu Xuexin and Qu Caiyue who were from East Mansion. Even if Qu Xuexin was East Mansion's wife-born daughter, Qu Qiuyan did not take her seriously.

Originally, Qu Xuexin was inferior to her in every aspect.

However, she stopped after a few steps and waited for Hong Mei to help Qu Xuexin over.

Qu Qiuyan asked directly, "Eldest Sister, was there anyone inside just now?"

Qu Xuexin was shocked and quickly shook her head. "There was no one inside. How could there be anyone? My leg is injured, and I have to go back home to deal with it. I just changed my clothes."

"Was there really no one?" Qu Qiuyan looked her up and down a few times. She didn't believe it because Qu Xuexin looked really worked up.

Qu Xuexin knew that Qu Qiuyan suspected her, so she tried to say calmly, "Yes. If you don't believe me, you can go to have a look."

She stole a glance at Qu Moying on her other side, only to see that Qu Moying pursed her lips tightly. Qu Moying's expression was calm and natural, and she did not seem to suspect anything.

"It made sense. With Qu Moying's knowledge and experience, what could she know? But Qu Qiuyan might have discovered something."

Thinking of this, Qu Xuexin focused on Qu Qiuyan.

On the way out, Qu Qiuyan asked Qu Xuexin some questions from time to time, which made Qu Xuexin very panicked. In the end, she didn't answer Qu Qiuyan's questions on the excuse of being uncomfortable.

As they spoke, the three of them had already arrived at the gate of Eastern Palace. Qu Qiuyan and Qu Moying were the first to get on the carriage. Qu Xuexin's legs ached, and she was prepared to be the last to go up. Holding Hong Mei's hand, Qu Xuexin was about to slowly get on the carriage. At this moment, a maid ran out from the gate.

As she ran, she looked left and right. When she saw Qu Xuexin and the others, her eyes lit up, and she shouted loudly, "First Lady Qu, please wait. Our Master still has something to tell you."

Hearing the maid's words, Qu Xuexin blushed again. She no longer moved. She stood still and shyly watched the maid running over. Her heart was beating quickly, "Could it be that the Crown Prince has something to ask the maid to tell me? "

Chapter 349 Hankering for the Position

The maid ran over and wiped her sweat. Seeing that the maid was not the one who bumped into her just now, Qu Xuexin could not help but feel disappointed.

Hong Mei was just as excited as Qu Xuexin. She looked at the maid and asked anxiously, "Who... who is your Master?"

The maid was stunned by the question. She looked at the two of them in confusion and asked, "My Master is Princess Ji. Who else can it be?"

"No... We just thought that there were other Masters in Eastern Palace." Qu Xuexin hurriedly stopped Hong Mei from asking again. The blush on her face faded, and she was disappointed.

"Princess Ji is the only Master of Eastern Palace's inner yard. How can there be any other Master?" The maid curled her lips and continued, "Just now, our Master forgot to reward you ladies. Please wait a moment."

"Reward... reward us?" Qu Xuexin was stunned.

They were here today to beg for forgiveness. It was already good enough to explain this matter clearly. She didn't expect to be rewarded.

As they spoke, another three maids appeared. This time, the three maids each held a brocade box in their hands.

The maid said with a smile, "First Lady Qu, this is for you. The other two are for Third Lady Qu and Fourth Lady Qu."

Qu Qiuyan and Qu Moying were originally in the carriage, but hearing the noise outside, they got off the carriage. The three maids each held a brocade box, one of which was pink, and the other two were both green.

The maid pointed at the brocade box in the middle to Qu Xuexin. This brocade box's color was different from the other two, and its size was bigger. It seemed that there were more things inside.

Qu Moying glanced at Qu Xuexin calmly. Then, she withdrew her gaze. She was the youngest among the three sisters present. Qu Xuexin and Qu Qiuyan would react first, and she was not in a hurry to do anything.

Qu Xuexin said hurriedly, "Many thanks for Princess Ji's reward!"

Qu Qiuyan and Qu Moying also bowed sideways.

The maid at the front waved her hand. "First Lady Qu, you're welcome. In the future, maybe you will become a frequent visitor to our Master. What happened this time is an opportunity for you two to know each other."

The three brocade boxes were presented, and each of the three ladies' maids received one. Hong Mei was almost overjoyed.

Hong Mei's personality was somewhat similar to Qu Xuexin's. The two of them used to look very calm, but now their eyes were shining with excitement.

Since the rewards were given, Eastern Palace's maids retreated, and the three ladies got on the carriage again in turn.

The carriage turned around and drove towards Qu Mansion.

“Eldest Sister, what’s in your brocade box?” As soon as they all got on the carriage, Qu Qiuyan opened her brocade box and saw a hairpin in it. Although it was beautiful, it was just an ordinary one. It should be the most unremarkable kind for Ji Youran, who was the Side Princess of Eastern Palace.

Qu Moying silently opened her brocade box and took a look. It was the same as Qu Qiuyan’s.

However, Qu Xuexin held the brocade box tightly and did not open it.

Hearing Qu Qiuyan’s question, Qu Xuexin shook her head. “I’ll open it after getting home. It’s inappropriate to open it now!”

“Eldest Sister, I just want to take a look. Why are you so stingy?” Qu Qiuyan was unhappy. She reached out and grabbed the brocade box from Qu Xuexin’s hand.

Qu Xuexin didn’t expect that Qu Qiuyan would snatch it away. She would seem to be over-reacting to take it back, so she could only put down her hands.

Qu Qiuyan quickly opened the brocade box. She saw a flower-shaped necklace inside. She picked it up and found that it was extremely exquisite and beautiful. She couldn’t help but widen her eyes. “Eldest Sister, your reward is really fantastic. Ours are just average. She has apparently ignored the two of us.”

The rewards for the two of them were rather intended to serve as a foil to Qu Xuexin’s.

Qu Qiuyan was not jealous, but she didn’t want to see Qu Xuexin having something better than hers. After looking it over, she casually put it back into the brocade box and curled her lips. “Eldest Sister, you are the one who had a conflict with Princess Ji. But now, you actually won her favor. How strange!”

It was hard for Qu Xuexin to reply to her words. She only took the brocade box that Qu Qiuyan threw over and carefully put it into her sleeve. There was still a faint smile on her face. Even now, she still felt like she was dreaming.

“The Crown Prince actually took a fancy to me and even deliberately kept my sachet.”

“A woman’s sachet could not be casually given away. How could the Crown Prince not know it? However, he still asked for my sachet, which means he likes me. When did he take a fancy to me?”

“Was it yesterday?”

“Did he see me from such a long distance yesterday?”

Thinking of this, she was thrilled, and her face was burning.

She had lost her hope before, but now it seemed that she had a greater possibility. She thought she might be the one to marry the best among the ladies of Qu Mansion in the end.

“Eldest Sister... Eldest Sister...” Qu Qiuyan’s voice woke Qu Xuexin up from her trance.

Qu Xuexin quickly raised her head. “What’s the matter?”

“What are you thinking? You seemed to be excited. Didn’t you hear what I said just now?” Qu Qiuyan was very unhappy. She had asked Qu Xuexin several questions just now, but she got no reply. She was really unreconciled.

Qu Xuexin said, “I really don’t feel well. Sorry to neglect you, Third Sister!”

Qu Qiuyan glanced at her and cursed in her heart, “What a liar! She is so weird today. Does she think I am a fool?”

But looking at Qu Moying, who was sitting opposite her with her eyes closed, Qu Qiuyan shut her mouth.

The carriage quieted down. The three of them sat in it with their own thoughts.

One of them was excited, one of them was mocking in her heart, and the other was depressed and confused...

"Your Highness, I heard that First Lady Qu fell just now. I hurried over, but she had already left, so I had someone send rewards to the three ladies of Qu Mansion." Ji Youran sat in Pei Luo'an's study. She was dressed delicately, but she looked a little pale and haggard.

However, she still smiled gracefully.

"So be it." Pei Luo'an said indifferently. He did not even raise his head as he continued to read the documents on the desk.

"Just now, First Lady Qu said..." Ji Youran hesitated.

Her pause finally made Pei Luo'an look up. He pressed his forehead and asked gently, "What did she say?"

"She said that she saw you hang Love Lanterns with a woman last night. She followed you because she was too curious. She didn't expect to have a conflict with me." Ji Youran said as she secretly observed Pei Luo'an's face. She ventured with a smile, "Your Highness, whom did you bring with you to hang the lanterns yesterday? Shall we tell her..."

"Tell her what?" Pei Luo'an's face darkened.

"Tell her that the lanterns were broken and ask her if she wants to hang another pair of lanterns? If she wants, our mansion can make a pair of even more beautiful Love Lanterns. Your Highness, you carried that kind of lantern before." Ji Youran hurriedly lowered her head, not daring to peep at Pei Luo'an's expression.

Pei Luo'an did carry a pair of Love Lanterns to Ji Hanyue before. He originally prepared to hang them with Ji Hanyue, but she did not go with him. In the end, Ji Youran got this pair of Love Lanterns. She secretly hung them in the Sea of Lanterns and took them as the lanterns for Pei Luo'an and her.

She even accidentally hurt her hand because of this. Pei Luo'an felt sorry for her and said that he would hang Love Lanterns with her in the future.

However, even after Ji Hanyue died, Ji Youran was still not the one to hang Love Lanterns with Pei Luo'an.

Ji Youran's eyes turned red, and her face darkened. Although she still had a smile on her face, it was a forced smile.

Seeing that she still forced a smile while handling matters for him although she was dispirited, Pei Luo'an became soft-hearted. "Well, this is Mother Empress' idea, not my intention."

What he liked most about Ji Youran was that she cared about him wholeheartedly. He liked her gentleness.

But recently, Ji Youran had been playing too many tricks in private, which made him very unhappy.

"Has the Empress found someone appropriate?" Ji Youran lowered her head, tears streaming down her face. She didn't complain anything, but she looked extremely pitiful.

It was natural for her to raise this topic by using Qu Xuexin, and Pei Luo'an would not suspect that she had followed him.

Pei Luo'an stood up from the chair and turned to the corner of the desk. He reached out to hold Ji Youran's hand and comforted her, "Mother Empress arranged it for me. I may not be able to give you the position of Princess Consort, but don't worry. As long as I am alive, I will never let anyone bully you. Hanyue couldn't, and neither could anyone else."

This was a promise to her, but Ji Youran could not feel happy.

She was nailed to be a Side Princess forever. She could only be a Side Princess, whereas Liu Jingyu would be a Princess Consort. But why? If she didn't help Pei Luo'an, Ji Hanyue would still be his Princess Consort. How could it be Liu Jingyu's turn?

Why was she nailed to be a Side Princess? He had clearly promised her the position of Princess Consort, and he said he would promote her when the right time came.

“Your Highness, I... I...” Ji Youran could not control her tears, and her voice trembled. She tried her best to control her emotions, but she failed despite her efforts.

Pei Luo’an quietly looked at Ji Youran. He knew what she was up to, but he couldn’t help but feel a little guilty for a moment when he saw her aggrieved look. He stretched out his hand, but when he was about to touch Ji Youran’s face, he saw the scar on her temple, and he stopped.

Then, he slowly put down his hand with a complicated look in his eyes.

“Your Highness...” Ji Youran noticed that something was wrong. She raised her head and looked at Pei Luo’an with tears in her eyes.

The scar on her temple was not obvious, but it was hard to remove it for a while because of two incidents. Ji Youran usually covered it with her hair so it was not conspicuous. At this time, she lost control of her emotions and raised her head high. In addition, Pei Luo’an specially looked at her, so it immediately became obvious.

Her originally beautiful face became somewhat unsightly because of this scar.

Even though Pei Luo’an reminded himself that it was nothing, he still felt uncomfortable. That scar reminded him of the truth that he was unwilling to uncover...

“You can leave! I will accept whatever Mother Empress has arranged for me.” Pei Luo’an said coldly. He turned around and sat behind the desk again.

Behind him, Ji Youran’s eyes were filled with disbelief. She lowered her head and reached out to press her hair. Her eyes were filled with hatred. She clearly knew that the Crown Prince’s heart had softened at that moment, but after he saw the scar on her face...

Chapter 350 I Just Asked Her a Few Questions

The scar was a legacy from Ji Hanyue to her. There was a time when her wound was almost completely healed, and she only needed to have enough rest. But then, something happened that involved Qu Moying.

Qu Moying was plotted against by Second Madam Qu, and Ji Youran was implicated. As a result, her wound that had almost recovered inflamed again, and it was swollen.

When the Imperial Doctor treated her, he said that the wound was hard to heal, but if she rested well, there was still a chance for it to recover.

It had been some time since then, but she still felt a dull pain in the wound. When the weather was bad, she could feel the pain. The wound was scabbed, leaving a scar near her temple. It was obvious that Ji Youran had no choice but to comb down two strands of hair beside her ears to cover the scar.

The scar disfigured her face, causing the Crown Prince to be displeased.

In the old days, the Crown Prince would definitely compensate her at a time like this. He would say some comforting words and might even promise her that she could be in charge of the things in the mansion after Liu Jingyu entered the mansion and that she would still have a chance to become the Princess Consort. But now, the Crown Prince lost his sympathy for her because of her appearance.

How could Ji Youran not be resentful?

She gnashed her teeth in resentment!

But there was nothing she could do. Ji Hanyue was already dead, and the Crown Prince repeatedly told her not to do anything to Qu Moying.

Ji Youran wiped her tears with a handkerchief. She knew that the situation had spiraled out of her control, and she could only see Liu Jingyu take the position of the Crown Princess. However, she believed it was not over yet. Liu Jingyu might not be the final victor, just like Ji Hanyue.

For so many years, Ji Hanyue believed that she would be in charge of Eastern Palace, and everyone else thought so.

But in the end, Ji Youran became the one in charge of Eastern Palace's back yard, and Ji Hanyue died a long time ago.

"Your Highness, I understand. How about First Lady Qu?" Putting away all the resentment, Ji Youran asked softly. She wiped the tears on her face with a handkerchief and looked up again. There were only tears in her eyes, and there was no resentment at all.

"First Lady Qu?" Pei Luo'an asked indifferently, casually picking up a document.

"I heard that you stopped First Lady Qu today. May I know what you mean by that? If you like her, I will send someone to Qu Mansion to propose a marriage." Ji Youran played the role of a submissive wife who did not fight for anything and asked Pei Luo'an gently. She did not mention a word about the grievances she suffered.

Her magnanimity and decency made Pei Luo'an feel a little better. He felt that he had not made the wrong choice, and he could turn a blind eye to her small mistakes.

"No need. I just asked her a few questions." Pei Luo'an shook his head. He didn't have any interest in Qu Xuexin, and he didn't even remember what she looked like.

"But you specially stopped her to ask questions. If she..." Ji Youran said hesitantly. She seemed to be wholeheartedly thinking for Pei Luo'an.

"What she thinks has nothing to do with me." Pei Luo'an said coldly and waved his hand. "You may leave. Qu Mansion has nothing to do with Eastern Palace, neither now nor in the future."

How could a reckless woman have anything to do with him? Up until now, Pei Luo'an still did not quite believe that the sachet was embroidered by Qu Xuexin herself, but she said so affirmatively that he couldn't do anything to her for the time being. He just kept the sachet and let her go.

"Yes, then I will take my leave first." Ji Youran nodded.

"OK!" Pei Luo'an said impatiently. Thinking of the sachet, he was a little annoyed. His eyes fell on the document, but he was not really looking into it.

After Ji Youran left, he took out a sachet from the drawer next to the desk. It was the one he had taken from Qu Xuexin. He looked at it, and his vision gradually blurred. He seemed to see a beautiful girl smiling at him.

"Your Highness..."

He clenched the sachet hard, and the illusion in front of him disappeared. He felt so stuffy that he almost couldn't breathe. He closed his eyes forcefully and let out a long breath. When he opened his eyes again, his eyes were filled with coldness.

"Everything is worth it. In order to secure my position, I have already paid enough, and I don't mind paying even more."

"As long as I win in the end, everything is worth it."

"If I ascend to the throne, I could confer her a posthumous title as the Paramount Empress. If there is a next life, I will definitely make it up to her."

It was a pity that all the belongings left by Ji Hanyue were burnt out in the fire that broke out in Eastern Palace. Otherwise, he would not have asked for a sachet from Qu Mansion's woman. Even though it seemed to be Ji Hanyue's handiwork, it was definitely not. Thinking of this, he was depressed, and he threw the sachet back into the drawer.

He continued to read the document, but he couldn't calm down for a long time. He only felt that the words on the document formed an image of a beautiful smiling girl. Unlike usual gentle noble ladies, Ji Hanyue had her unique charm.

Pei Luo'an threw down the document in his hand and stood up. He felt upset and walked to the window with his hands behind his back. Seeing the scenery outside the window, he stood silently for a long time, unable to control his emotions...

Old Lady Qu looked at the three brocade boxes in front of her and asked in surprise, "Princess Ji rewarded you?"

Not only was this matter resolved quickly, but Princess Ji, who had refused to let Qu Xuexin go before, had even specially sent people to reward the three sisters. Old Lady Qu found it really strange.

"Yes, they caught up with us to reward us. Grandmother, it's really strange. Did something we don't know happen?" Qu Qiuyan glanced sideways at Qu Xuexin's box and continued, "Eldest Sister's brocade box is actually the most valuable. I really don't know why this farce happened!"

"Alright, it's good that it's settled. It's good!" The Old Lady sighed. She waved her hand and asked her granddaughters to put away the brocade boxes.

She glanced at Qu Xuexin and held back the words which sprang to her lips.

The granddaughters turned around one by one. Seeing their receding figures, the Old Lady sighed heavily.

Granny Wu comforted the Old Lady, "Your Ladyship, it's the best result that the problem was solved like this. Eldest Young Master did that because he worried about First Lady. Now it's all right."

"But... what about Xuexin? Zhizhen has investigated the man whose surname is Wang. He is nowhere to be found now, but he is proved to be a bad guy." The Old Lady sighed heavily again. Qu Xuexin's reputation was ruined.

The man with the surname Wang was really not a good person. Qu Zhizhen said that he was related to a group of human traffickers, which was really shocking. The matter was still under investigation, but the most important thing was that the person with the surname Wang was nowhere to be seen.

“Do you think... Xuexin has something to do with this?” The Old Lady asked with difficulty, her eyes dim.

“It couldn’t be. How could a person like First Lady do this?” Granny Wu comforted the Old Lady again, but her words were extremely unconvincing. After saying that, even she herself could not help but sigh in her heart.

It seemed that this matter really had something to do with Qu Xuexin. As for what she did after this incident, it was even more ridiculous. She went to see Love Lanterns herself, and she even had a conflict with Eastern Palace’s Side Princess. Even if she had made an explanation, the Old Lady did not really believe her.

There were many doubts about this, and the biggest possibility was that Qu Xuexin lied!

Thinking of how her granddaughter had become like this, the Old Lady was speechless and annoyed.

“You go and ask Zhilin to come here later. Xuexin’s marriage can’t be delayed any longer.” The Old Lady sighed heavily and finally made a decision. Since Qu Xuexin was almost on the verge of becoming resentful because she couldn’t get married, the Old Lady decided to marry her to someone.

She originally chose Xiao Hanyuan for Qu Moying, but she couldn’t decide Qu Moying’s marriage now. Moreover, Xiao Hanyuan had obviously gotten along with Qu Xuexin. Even after witnessing Qu Xuexin fall into the water yesterday, Xiao Hanyuan still cared about her and tried his best to protect her.

This morning, he specially came to pay respects to her and beat around the bush to ask about this matter.

Since he was interested in Qu Xuexin and did not look down upon her, the Old Lady thought it was good to let Qu Xuexin marry him. Even if Qu Xuexin would misbehave, she wouldn’t end up too miserably with her protection. But the biggest problem was that Qu Xuexin’s marriage was not settled.

It was impossible for her to have a perfect marriage now. The Old Lady was quite satisfied with Xiao Hanyuan. She knew his background well, and he could have a bright future because he studied hard.

Granny Wu thought it was inappropriate and carefully asked the Old Lady, "Your Ladyship, will First Lady be unwilling?"

The Old Lady said grumpily, "In her current situation, it is already good that someone will marry her. Moreover, the Xiao Family is also a prominent one, so she has nothing to complain about. I will discuss this with her father later and settle this matter. I am planning to let her get married before the New Year. She is not young anymore!"

"Yes, you're right!" Granny Wu could only say so. She was still a little worried, but now that the Old Lady was upset, she'd better not say anything else.

While they were talking, someone suddenly came from outside and reported, "Eldest Master is here!"

The Old Lady was happy. She was going to ask him over, so she straightened up and said to Granny Wu, "Go and let the Eldest Master in!"

"Yes!" Granny Wu left and soon returned with Qu Zhilin, the Eldest Master of East Mansion.

"Mother, how is it?" Qu Zhilin's face was also full of worry. This matter concerned not only his daughter but also his son. How could he not worry about it?

Thinking it was about time, he came to the Old Lady to ask for information. He came here from the front yard and happened to miss Qu Xuexin.

The Old Lady said, "Don't worry. This matter has been resolved. Not only did Princess Ji forgive Xuexin, but she even rewarded Xuexin with something."

"That's good, that's good. It's really scary!" Qu Zhilin sat down, picked up the tea on the table, and took a sip. He let out a long breath. Ever since he knew what had happened yesterday, he had been worried.

The Old Lady said seriously, "It's good that you are here. I want to talk about Xuexin's marriage with you."