

Noble Wife 351

Chapter 351 Whose Letters Were Locked in the Box?]

“Xuexin’s marriage? Why?” Qu Zhilin was stunned for a moment before reacting. He had not thought about it since the accident.

The Old Lady said, “Xuexin is not young anymore. Her reputation has been tainted because of the previous matter with He Mansion. Now, there is the matter of her falling into the river. She even had a dispute with Eastern Palace’s Side Princess. Who would dare to marry her in such a situation? We should settle her marriage as soon as possible. She will be fine as soon as she gets married.”

Qu Zhilin stuttered, “But... but there is no one suitable for her right now.”

The Old Lady reminded Qu Zhilin, “There is. Xiao Hanyuan.”

“Xiao... Xiao Hanyuan?” Qu Zhilin was stunned for a moment. He really did not pay attention to Xiao Hanyuan. Although he had seen Xiao Hanyuan before, he thought he was too pedantic and didn’t pay much attention to him.

The Old Lady said in a low voice, “Yes, Xiao Hanyuan. I think Xuexin has a good relationship with him. After this accident happened to Xuexin, he was the most anxious. He came to me several times to inquire about her. It seems that he won’t look down upon Xuexin. Moreover, he is from the Xiao Family. After Xuexin marries into his family, I will ask people to take special care of her.”

Qu Zhilin pondered for a moment and nodded helplessly. Originally, he had great expectations for his daughter. Otherwise, he would not have let his wife take her on blind dates again and again. However, things happened to this daughter again and again. Even if he didn’t care about internal affairs in the family, he understood some things.

“Alright, mother. I will listen to you.”

The Old Lady wanted to make sure that Luo would know that Qu Zhilin had made the decision, so she reminded Qu Zhilin. “Tell Luo about this after you go back.”

“Mother, I know. I’ll go back and tell her now.” Qu Zhilin stood up. He had to discuss it with Luo. Luo had higher expectations for Qu Xuexin than him.

“Talk to her nicely. Don’t quarrel.” The Old Lady was worried and reminded him again.

“Mother, don’t worry.” Qu Zhilin nodded and turned to leave. At this time, it was indeed best to marry his daughter out. The more people knew about what happened last night, the worse Qu Xuexin’s reputation would be. It was best to settle her marriage before words got out.

At this time, Qu Zhilin only wanted to solve the matter as soon as possible. But he didn’t expect that Qu Xuexin was now full of expectations, feeling as if she was going to become a Side Princess of Crown Prince’s Mansion...

This matter had nothing to do with Qu Moying right now. At the moment, she was looking at a key in front of her nervously.

It was a key that was a bit familiar to her.

When she was Ji Hanyue, she had seen such a key in her father’s place, so this key belonged to her father.

She picked up the letter in her hand again and carefully read it. It was a letter from Madam Duan, saying that she had found the key in the secret compartment of Ji Hanyue’s mother’s old room.

The secret compartment used to be the place where Ji Hanyue’s mother placed some important items. However, after she passed away, the yard was left unused, and the secret compartment had not been opened until today. Today, when Madam Duan was cleaning the old room, she found this secret compartment and saw this key, so she sent it to Qu Moying.

The box she got from Earl Ling’an’s Mansion was put on the table. There was almost no pattern on the box, and it was much heavier than it appeared to be. There was a cloud pattern on each corner, and there was a tiger head pattern on one side, which contrasted with the cloud pattern.

Qu Moying put down the letter, picked up the key, and opened the box in front of her.

With a click, the box was opened. Such a heavy box was actually opened.

There were actually a few letters inside.

Qu Moying picked up a letter and read it. After reading it, she put it down and picked up the next letter. After reading the letters, she frowned.

These letters looked very ordinary. They were written by a man to a woman. Although they were quite affectionate, there was nothing special.

Qu Moying could know from these letters that the man who wrote them did not seem to be from Central Plains but from the North. He mentioned the local customs, local practices, geographical features, and so on in some letters, which showed he was quite an elegant man.

There were just a few thin letters. However, these letters were really nothing. Looking at these letters thoughtfully, Qu Moying felt that there was something special about these letters.

But after thinking about it for a while, she still couldn't figure out anything.

These letters were so strange that she felt that they didn't seem to be left by her father at all. They didn't seem to be written by her father, nor did they seem to be written by her mother.

Who wrote these letters?

Did these letters mean literally? Or did these letters have any other meanings? Qu Moying keenly found that there was a seal at the end of a letter. One of the words imprinted was "Lie", and the other word could not be seen clearly. It was hard to tell whether it was because the seal was not clearly imprinted or because it had faded with time.

Who was the man with the word “Lie” in his name? When she was Ji Hanyue, she was sure that her father had never mentioned such a person to her.

And he seemed to come from the North!

She frowned slightly. Just as she was thinking about it, she suddenly heard Yu Dong report from outside, “Lady, First Lady is here!”

“Qu Xuexin? What is she doing here at this time?”

Qu Moying put down the letter in her hand and closed the box again. Then she put away the key and the box together and said slowly, “Come in and tell me what happened.”

Yu Dong walked in. Just now, Qu Moying wanted to be alone for a while, so he went out.

Yu Dong said, “Lady, First Lady said she has something to tell you.”

“What is she doing here?” Qu Moying asked lightly. She did not think that Qu Xuexin still had the mood to chat with her at this time.

Yu Dong said angrily, “I don’t know. Anyway, I think she is quite anxious. Lady, there is no need to see her. She didn’t have any good intentions before.”

He was just a little suspicious of Qu Xuexin before, but he said it out bluntly now.

“Let her go back. Just tell her that I’m not feeling well.” Qu Moying said with a faint smile. No matter why Qu Xuexin came to her at this time, she was definitely up to no good.

“Yes, I will tell her now.” Yu Dong said cheerfully. He turned around and left. With Qu Moying’s words, he didn’t have to bother about Qu Xuexin.

Qu Xuexin was waiting anxiously in the yard. When she saw Yu Dong come out, she hurriedly walked up to him and asked anxiously, "What is Moying doing? Did she let me in?"

As she asked, she lifted her foot to walk in.

Yu Dong reached out and stopped her. "First Lady, I'm really sorry. Our lady is tired and is still asleep. I'm afraid she won't be able to see you now."

Qu Xuexin said unhappily, "Is she still not up? It's so late."

"First Lady, I'm really sorry. Our lady fainted yesterday. We asked a doctor to check her. If she hadn't been to Eastern Palace with you, she would have long rested." Yu Dong stood still with a fake smile, not intending to get out of the way.

Hong Mei raised her eyebrows and wanted to scold Yu Dong. But seeing Yu Dong look at her coldly, she was so frightened that she did not dare to speak.

"I have something urgent. You go and wake your lady up." Qu Xuexin had no choice but to stop with a terrible look.

"First Lady, I'm afraid this won't do. Our lady is really uncomfortable. At this time, she definitely can't see any guests. Tomorrow, when she feels better, she will go to apologize to you." Yu Dong refused to give in.

"You..." Qu Xuexin was so angry that her face turned pale. She almost couldn't control herself and wanted to slap Yu Dong. But in the end, she took a step back and tried to calm down. "Well, when your lady gets better, let her come to me. I have something important to tell her, which concerns her future life."

"Yes, I get it. See you, First Lady." Yu Dong said with a cheeky smile. He didn't seem to take it seriously at all.

Qu Xuexin was so angry that her heart ached, but it was not the right time to quarrel with Qu Moying, so she had to leave the yard.

After coming out of the yard, she stomped her foot forcefully and left in a huff.

She couldn't be more anxious now. Ever since she heard from her mother that her grandmother wanted to marry her to Xiao Hanyuan, she was extremely anxious. She came to Qu Moying because she wanted to let Qu Moying express her desire to marry Xiao Hanyuan. She thought it was already a blessing for Qu Moying to marry Xiao Hanyuan, and she would not fight with her for him.

"Eldest Cousin Sister!" As Qu Xuexin was walking, she heard a surprised voice from the side. She had to stop, only to see Xiao Hanyuan coming over with an excited face.

The happiness on his face could not be concealed. Just now, Qu Zhilin had asked him some things, almost pointing out that he wanted to marry Qu Xuexin to him. How could Xiao Hanyuan not be happy? Compared with Qu Moying, he liked the gentle and decent Qu Xuexin more. Ever since he entered Qu Mansion, only Qu Xuexin would send people to his place and care about him from time to time.

He didn't know when he had the intention to marry Qu Xuexin. Qu Zhilin told him that the matter of Qu Xuexin falling into the river tainted her reputation. However, he did not care because he knew Qu Xuexin was very good.

Xiao Hanyuan took a few steps forward and asked with concern, "Eldest Cousin Sister, are you alright?"

"I'm fine. Cousin Xiao, if you have nothing to do, I will go back first." Qu Xuexin said with a serious face as if she wanted to keep a distance from him.

Xiao Hanyuan was stunned and looked at Qu Xuexin in front of him in shock. In the past, when Qu Xuexin talked to him, she was always gentle, as if she had feelings for him. When she looked at him, she was a little shy. But now, she seemed to want to cut off all relations with him.

This made him very uncomfortable.

In the past, there was no relationship between the two of them, but now they were about to get engaged.

Xiao Hanyuan continued implicitly, "Eldest Cousin Sister, Eldest Uncle just said..."

Qu Xuexin rudely interrupted Xiao Hanyuan, "Cousin Xiao, if you have nothing else to do, I will leave first. I have something to do now. Moying is sick. If you are free, you can go and see her. I heard that she was also frightened by what happened yesterday."

After saying this, Qu Xuexin left with Hong Mei without looking back.

When Hong Mei left, she turned back to look at Xiao Hanyuan. Xiao Hanyuan could clearly see a hint of ridicule and contempt in her eyes.

Xiao Hanyuan was so angry that his hands and feet went cold. He had been in Qu Mansion for so long, and the servants in the mansion were quite respectful to him for the sake of the Old Lady. He had never been looked at with such a contemptuous look by a maid. What did Qu Xuexin mean? If she didn't want to marry him, she could just say it.

But why was she so close to him before?

"Cousin Brother, why are you in a daze here?"

Chapter 352 Instigated Him to Cause Trouble

Xiao Hanyuan greeted Qu Mingcheng dejectedly, "Second Cousin Brother!"

Qu Mingcheng was walking over with the help of a lad servant. He was much better than before, and he sometimes took a walk.

Qu Mingcheng came over and asked with a smile, "Cousin Brother, what's wrong?"

Xiao Hanyuan forced a smile. "I'm fine. Second Cousin Brother, you haven't fully recovered yet. You should rest more."

"Was it Eldest Sister who passed by just now? Did she come back from Moying's place?" Qu Mingcheng smiled as if he did not know anything. He looked in the direction that Qu Xuexin had gone.

"I don't know where she has been." Xiao Hanyuan smiled bitterly and shook his head. He felt an indescribable pain in his heart. He did not understand why Qu Xuexin suddenly changed into a different person.

Qu Mingcheng asked, "Do you think that Eldest Sister has changed?"

This question hit Xiao Hanyuan's mind. He nodded and sighed, "It's strange. Eldest Cousin Sister... seems to have changed into another person."

"Maybe it's because she came back from Moying's place." Qu Mingcheng looked at the place from where Qu Xuexin just came over.

Xiao Hanyuan noticed the implied meaning in Qu Mingcheng's words and grabbed him. "Second Cousin Brother, do you know something? What happened? Hasn't the matter with the Side Princess of Crown Prince's Mansion been settled?"

He heaved a sigh of relief when he heard that the matter was settled.

"It seems to be settled..." Qu Mingcheng forced a smile. He stood with the help of the lad servant in silence for a moment. Then, he pointed to a pavilion on the side and said, "Cousin Xiao, let's talk over there."

"OK!" Seeing that he couldn't stand still, Xiao Hanyuan nodded and reached out to help the lad servant support him.

The three of them sat down in the pavilion.

As soon as they sat down, Xiao Hanyuan couldn't wait to ask, "Second Cousin Brother, is there something behind this? Did Crown Prince's Mansion's people go back on their words?"

Qu Mingcheng said meaningfully, "No, that's not the case. It's just that the Side Princess of Eastern Palace has a special relationship with Moying."

Xiao Hanyuan was stunned. He didn't know about this. "What relationship?"

"The ex-Crown Princess of Eastern Palace was Moying's Cousin Sister. Princess Ji was also the ex-Crown Princess' Cousin Sister. She entered Eastern Palace to take care of the seriously ill ex-Crown Princess back then. It could be seen that their relationship was not ordinary. If Princess Ji sees Moying, she will call her Cousin Sister warmly."

Qu Mingcheng explained the relationship between Qu Moying and Ji Youran.

Xiao Hanyuan pondered over it and asked doubtfully, "Since Princess Ji has such a good relationship with Qu Mansion, why did she make things so difficult for Eldest Cousin Sister? It was just an accident, but why did she make a fuss?"

Since the relationship between Qu Moying and Princess Ji was so close, why did Princess Ji make such a big fuss? Although this matter could be considered settled, Xiao Hanyuan knew that words would get out, and it would taint Qu Xuexin's reputation. In addition, Qu Xuexin fell into the water and was rescued by a man last night.

This matter did harm to Qu Xuexin's reputation, and what happened now added fuel to the fire. Ji Youran was the Side Princess of Crown Prince's Mansion, whose move would be watched by many people, and it meant that what happened to Qu Xuexin would be seen and known by many people.

Qu Mingcheng didn't give a direct answer. He just curled his lips and said helplessly, "That's why I asked you just now if my Eldest Sister came back from Moying's place."

"Is it because of Fourth Cousin Sister?" Xiao Hanyuan's face changed.

"I'm not too sure about that. I just think that if something happens, it is very likely to have something to do with Moying. Of course, I may have guessed wrong. After all, I did not see what happened with my own eyes. I heard it from others. Unlike you, you saw it with your own eyes."

Qu Mingcheng's words were watertight but meaningful.

Xiao Hanyuan thought about it carefully, and the corners of his eyes twitched. "Did Fourth Cousin Sister do it on purpose?"

"It can't be!" Qu Mingcheng waved his hand. "Alright, Cousin Xiao. Maybe what we guessed is wrong. Moying has always been very good to Eldest Sister. The relationship between the two of them is the closest among the sisters. It's meaningless for us to do the guesswork."

Qu Mingcheng said hurriedly as if he wanted to dispel Xiao Hanyuan's suspicions.

But he sounded insincere. It reminded Xiao Hanyuan of how Qu Xuexin and Qu Moying got along that day. They didn't seem to be close to each other, and he felt that they were somewhat hostile to each other.

Thinking of this, he figured something out. He suddenly stood up, his face livid from anger. He turned around and was about to leave.

Qu Mingcheng grabbed his sleeve and asked, "Cousin Xiao, what do you want to do?"

Xiao Hanyuan said angrily, "I'm going to ask Fourth Cousin Sister about it. She clearly set up Eldest Cousin Sister on purpose."

"Did you misunderstand something? What we said just now was just a guess. There is no evidence. Even if there is a grudge in Moying's heart, it is impossible..."

At this point, Qu Mingcheng realized that he had made a slip of the tongue and quickly shut his mouth.

"Second Cousin Brother, what do you mean?" Xiao Hanyuan grabbed Qu Mingcheng's hand and asked anxiously. He detected many other messages from Qu Mingcheng's words.

Qu Mingcheng knew that he had misspoken and hurriedly waved his hand. "Cousin Xiao, I don't know. I don't know anything. I only know that you'd better not get close to Eldest Sister now."

After saying that, he held the lad servant's hand and stood up. He pushed Xiao Hanyuan's hand away and was about to leave in a panic.

How could Xiao Hanyuan let him go at this time? Qu Mingcheng didn't even finish his words, and it made Xiao Hanyuan so curious that he grabbed Qu Mingcheng's sleeve tightly, and the veins on his forehead bulged. "Second Cousin Brother, if you still take me as your Cousin Brother, you should make it clear to me. Why can't I get close to Eldest Cousin Sister? Why didn't she let me get close to her?"

After saying this, Xiao Hanyuan was stunned. He stared at Qu Mingcheng blankly. He opened his mouth, but he could not say a word.

He suddenly knew the answer!

Seeing him like this, Qu Mingcheng knew that he understood. Xiao Hanyuan loosened his grip. Qu Mingcheng pulled his sleeve back from Xiao Hanyuan's hand and shook his head with a bitter smile, "Cousin Xiao, you made a mistake. You should not have been so close to Eldest Sister. It could be said to be your fault. Originally, your family and our mansion..."

At this point, Qu Mingcheng sighed again and reached out to pat Xiao Hanyuan on the shoulder. "Cousin Xiao, take care of yourself! Grandmother has decided on the marriage."

After saying that, he turned around and left, leaving Xiao Hanyuan standing there alone with a darkened face.

It turned out that Qu Xuexin suffered because of him. Her fall into the water yesterday might have something to do with Qu Moying. After all, Qu Moying was on the boat while they were both chased off

the boat by the owner of the boat. If he and Qu Xuexin were not driven off the boat, there would be no subsequent trouble.

Qu Xuexin would not have had a conflict with Princess Ji.

Therefore, Xiao Hanyuan thought it was all his fault, and it was he who landed Qu Xuexin in trouble.

Xiao Hanyuan's face was livid at first, but then it became ashamed and regretful.

He didn't want to marry Qu Moying, and he had never thought of marrying her. He didn't like her fickle personality.

He couldn't accept that she stayed with the boat's owner alone last night, not to mention her previous blind date with Third Young Master He.

The more he thought about it, the angrier he became. Xiao Hanyuan could not help but angrily turn around and walk towards Qianyue House.

After arriving at Qianyue House's gate, he went straight in. Seeing him, an old maid hurriedly stepped forward to greet him.

"Where is the Fourth Lady?" Xiao Hanyuan was not totally irrational and stopped in his tracks.

The old maid quickly said, "Please wait for a moment, Young Master Xiao. I will go and report your arrival now."

Xiao Hanyuan nodded.

The old maid went in to report. After a while, Yu Dong came out. Seeing Xiao Hanyuan standing in the middle of the yard with an angry face, Yu Dong was also angry.

He didn't know why Xiao Hanyuan was here. Qu Xuexin had just left, and now Xiao Hanyuan came. There was no moment of peace.

Yu Dong stepped forward and bowed to him, "Greetings, Young Master Xiao."

Xiao Hanyuan said self-righteously, "Where is your lady? I want to see her."

Yu Dong replied with a smile, "I'm really sorry. Our lady is not feeling well and is resting. It is inconvenient for her to see anyone now."

Xiao Hanyuan's face immediately darkened. "Didn't she see First Lady just now? Why can't she see me now? Does she feel guilty?"

"Young Master Xiao, what do you mean? Our lady didn't see First Lady just now." Yu Dong raised his head, and the smile on his face slowly faded away.

Hearing Yu Dong's words, Xiao Hanyuan thought that he was trying to cover it up and shouted coldly, "Do you think your words are credible? First Lady is gravely wronged, and it is all your lady's fault. I am here to tell her that it is impossible for me to accept her. Let her drop the idea forever."

He made such a noise at the yard's gate, and some maids and old maids who walked past the yard were stunned by him.

They all knew him, but what did his words mean?

They wondered if Qu Moying was going to marry him.

Seeing that he shouted angrily without caring about Qu Moying's reputation, Yu Dong was also annoyed. He put his hand on his waist, sized up Xiao Hanyuan, and sneered coldly, "Young Master Xiao, what do you mean by this? What does our lady have to do with you? She has only seen you a few times. How dare you dream so wildly?"

If he was not in Qu Mansion and if he was not only a maid here, he would have beaten Xiao Hanyuan. How could Xiao Hanyuan be so insensible? He was tainting Qu Moying's reputation.

Yu Dong's words were blunt. Xiao Hanyuan felt as if he was slapped twice after hearing such words from a maid. He was embarrassed and angry. He glared at Yu Dong and was about to make a scene.

But then, another maid who also served Qu Moying came out in a hurry. Seeing Xiao Hanyuan, the maid bowed sideways to him and said, "Young Master Xiao, our lady invites you in."

Chapter 353 Nothing Comes Out of Nothing

Xiao Hanyuan fiercely flicked his sleeves and snapped, "Alright, I would like to hear what your lady will say."

Then, he followed Yu Chun inside.

In the main room, Qu Moying was already sitting there with the eye veil. Seeing Xiao Hanyuan come in, she stood up and bowed slightly. Then, she said indifferently, "Cousin Xiao, please sit."

Xiao Hanyuan was here to make trouble and vent his anger, but he was stopped by Yu Dong just now and was angry at him. At this time, he could only sit down in a huff.

A young maid came in to serve tea and immediately left.

Qu Moying pinched her sleeves and elegantly picked up the teacup to take a sip. Then, she slowly put it down.

Xiao Hanyuan couldn't hold it in any longer. Seeing Qu Moying put down the teacup, he immediately snapped, "Fourth Cousin Sister, I don't know what's the relationship between you and me that makes you deal with the Eldest Cousin Sister like this."

No matter what Qu Moying said next, he had to make their relationship clear to Qu Moying. He would not hesitate. He wanted to stop Qu Moying from coveting him. If Qu Moying still wanted to be with him, he would make a big fuss. As a man, he was not afraid that his reputation would be tainted.

He thought to himself, "Even if my reputation will be tainted, so what? In any case, Eldest Cousin Sister's reputation is worse than mine. If my reputation is tainted, I might suit her better."

Xiao Hanyuan mustered his courage and glared at Qu Moying. He planned to refute Qu Moying no matter what she said, and he was determined to make it a mess. He would screw up the possibility of him marrying Qu Moying. Anyway, he would not marry Qu Moying. He disliked her very much.

"Cousin Xiao, I don't know what you mean." Qu Moying glanced coldly at Xiao Hanyuan without emotions.

"Don't you understand? Then I'll make it clearer. Fourth Cousin Sister, I felt pity for you when your engagement was annulled back then. However, there is nothing more than feeling pity for you. I won't marry you. You don't have to keep targeting Eldest Cousin Sister. No matter whom I will marry in the future, I am absolutely sure that I will never marry you. Your personality is too incompatible with mine. You are way out of my league!"

Xiao Hanyuan stood up and looked down at Qu Moying with contempt in his eyes.

He sounded to be polite. He said that Qu Moying was way out of his league and that they were incompatible. But what he meant was to tell Qu Moying not to covet him.

Seeing him like this, Qu Moying almost laughed out of anger. Needless to say, he must have come here because of someone's instigation. Although she didn't know who instigated him, she knew it was one of those few people.

Xiao Hanyuan really thought too highly of himself.

She smiled faintly and said, "Young Master Xiao, please rest assured. You won't have anything to do with me, and I won't target Eldest Sister for you. As for whether Eldest Sister is targeting me or not, that is not what I know."

She was not in the mood to resolve Xiao Hanyuan's doubts. Seeing how he acted, Qu Moying knew he was here to ruin her reputation, and she thought it was unnecessary for her to be polite to him.

She had no intention of calling him "Cousin Xiao" anymore.

"What... What do you mean by this?" Although Xiao Hanyuan was planning to make a scene, he was stunned when he heard Qu Moying's words. He subconsciously asked. Qu Moying did not seem to be guilty at all.

She sat there steadily. Although he could not see her eyes, he could tell from her cold face that she was looking straight at him coldly.

"Young Master Xiao, let me make it clear to you. My marriage has already been arranged, and it has nothing to do with you. It was arranged by my grandmother and father, but it hasn't been announced yet because it's not the time. It has been arranged long before you came to our mansion."

Looking at the self-conceited Xiao Hanyuan, Qu Moying said more and more impolitely.

Xiao Hanyuan was tongue-tied for a while, but then he found something suspicious, "How... how is this possible? Grandaunt said..."

He remembered that when he just came to study at Qu Mansion, his grandaunt had implied to him that he should get along more with Qu Moying. But what did Qu Moying mean now?

"Young Master Xiao, grandmother might have said something to you because she was ignorant of it at that time. In fact, my father has already prepared everything. I seldom met you after you came to our mansion because I have to avoid meeting men."

Qu Moying said calmly.

She would definitely enter Lord Yun Mansion. Both the Old Lady and Qu Zhizhen knew this well, and they would not arrange any marriage for her. What happened in the palace that day and the water lotus that Pei Yuanjun asked Qu Zhizhen to send to her were adequately convincing.

Xiao Hanyuan shut his mouth and felt speechless for a moment. This was completely different from what he had thought before.

“Young Master Xiao, do you think that I have a grudge against Eldest Sister because of you? But my marriage has been arranged and it has nothing to do with you. Moreover, I have always been avoiding meeting you and have almost never talked to you in private. Do you still think that I am targeting Eldest Sister because of you?”

Qu Moying continued to ask with a calm expression. Did the one who instigated Xiao Hanyuan to come here just to make him make such a scene?

He made such a scene in Qu Mansion. Even if it was spread out, it would not be sensational. Compared with the matter that Qu Xuexin fell into the river and was rescued by a man in public, this was really a trifle.

“But... but why?” Xiao Hanyuan was stumped. His face flushed and turned pale. He felt quite ashamed.

“I don’t know. I don’t know who made you think this way. The person who made you think this way must be deliberately stirring up trouble, but I wonder which caring elder brother and sister did it?”

Qu Moying curled her lips in ridicule.

Her words were full of contempt, with a bit of mockery and indifference. Qu Moying was really indifferent to these siblings in Qu Mansion.

Xiao Hanyuan was stunned. He looked at Qu Moying in shock. For the first time, he seemed to see the young girl in front of him clearly. Even though she was wearing an eye veil and most of her face was covered, he still had to admit that she was actually beautiful. She was elegant and decent. Even though she was just sitting there, she still had a calm bearing.

This kind of bearing was more convincing than Qu Xuexin's dignity and gentleness.

It seemed that Qu Moying was the paradigm of a noble lady.

However, what Qu Moying meant was so detached that it made his hair stand on end. But at the thought of what she had been through, he thought that he was not qualified to criticize her.

She had been abandoned for so many years, and she had no relatives to look after her. Wasn't her pitiful to grow up like this?

For some reason, Xiao Hanyuan felt that Qu Moying's words were credible. After thinking about it carefully, he directly said, "It's Second Cousin's guess."

Qu Mingcheng was Yu's son. Xiao Hanyuan had heard that Yu had plotted against Qu Moying before, and Qu Qiuyan had been discriminating against Qu Moying.

It was normal for Qu Mingcheng to be hostile to Qu Moying.

Xiao Hanyuan was a knowledgeable scholar, so he was naturally not a fool. It was just that he had been misled by Qu Xuexin and Qu Mingcheng before. At this time, Qu Moying's words enlightened him. He figured out something he couldn't in the past, and he even had some doubts that he had never had before.

"Does Eldest Cousin Sister really like me? Or am I thinking too much?"

"It seemed that a long time ago, Eldest Cousin Sister had been courteous to me. On one hand, she told me that I came to Qu Mansion because of Fourth Cousin Sister. On the other hand, she implicitly made me feel that she had a good impression of me. She took care of my daily life. She appeared near my yard from time to time. However, I rarely saw Fourth Cousin Sister, who lives in West Mansion. How come I meet Eldest Cousin Sister, who lives in East Mansion, so frequently?"

"Moreover, Fourth Cousin Sister said that her marriage has already been decided. If everyone in Qu Mansion knows about this, am I the only one kept in the dark?"

Xiao Hanyuan's face darkened as he thought of this.

"So, it is Second Brother. He is Madam Yu's son." Qu Moying curled her lips. She was not surprised at all. She glanced out of the window. It seemed that there would be a follow-up. Moreover, probably not only the people of the inner yard saw that Xiao Hanyuan made a scene in Qianyue House.

"Cousin Xiao, since we've talked it out, please go back. Maybe there will be something else later. You're preparing for the exam, so you'd better not get involved in this kind of thing." Qu Moying stood up and smiled, indicating that he should go.

Hearing her words, Xiao Hanyuan was shocked. He immediately came to his senses. His main purpose in coming to the capital was to take the Imperial Examination. As for the marriage, it was not discussed seriously, so it couldn't count!

He nodded and turned to leave. After taking a few steps, he suddenly turned around and asked with a serious face, "Fourth Cousin Sister, are you engaged to the owner of that boat?"

"Yes!" Qu Moying smiled calmly.

Xiao Hanyuan was speechless. He wanted to say something, but he saw Qu Moying's indifferent smile. He knew that even if he continued to ask, Qu Moying might not tell him anything. Although he was full of doubts, he could not ask more at this time. He cupped his hands to Qu Moying and turned to leave.

Since he knew that Qu Mingcheng did not have any good intentions, it was obviously inappropriate for him to stay in Qu Mansion any longer.

When he reached the door, he looked back. Then, he left decisively. It seemed that Qu Mansion was not a good place for his study. He should move out. He decided to talk to the Old Lady and move out after talking to Qu Xuexin.

Qu Mansion was too complicated and was not a quiet place.

Although Xiao Hanyuan had mixed feelings, he already had the intention of leaving.

Not long after he left, a few people came over on the way, including Qu Zhizhen, but he was not the one who was the center of attention...

Coincidentally, they headed towards Qu Moying's Qianyue House...

Chapter 354 Another Troublemaker

The man who walked in the lead was about fifty years old. His face was fairly white-skinned, but he had no beard at all. He was a eunuch and seemed to have a special identity.

Beside him were four young eunuchs, escorting him like stars around the moon. His aura was incomparable to that of an ordinary eunuch.

When they reached the gate of Qianyue House, they stopped, and the leading eunuch asked, "Is it this yard?"

"Yes, this is the yard. It is my daughter's residence now." Qu Zhizhen said with an obsequious smile. The eunuch's name was De Fu. He used to be the head steward of the Empress Dowager's palace. Although the Empress Dowager was gone now, he still enjoyed quite a bit of respect from the Emperor.

Eunuch De Fu glanced at Qu Zhizhen with a fake smile. "Your youngest daughter? She should be the one Lord Jing likes, right? I heard Lord Jing mention her before."

He was referring to Qu Qiuyan. Before Qu Moying returned to the capital, very few people in the capital knew about her. Most people thought that Qu Qiuyan was Qu Zhizhen's only daughter and the youngest child.

Qu Zhizhen smiled obsequiously. "No, Eunuch De Fu. She is the youngest daughter of my ex-wife."

If it was in the past, he could gloss it over and indicate that Lord Jing liked his youngest daughter, but now, he did not dare to mix up the facts.

He was afraid of irritating Lord Yun, especially when he thought of the fact that his son almost lost his life in West Prison after having a few words with Third Young Master He.

“Vice Minister Qu, you actually have another daughter.” Eunuch De Fu smiled and said indifferently. Then, he pointed at the yard and asked, “Can we go in and take a look?”

“Of course, of course. Eunuch De Fu, please.” Qu Zhizhen nodded repeatedly.

Seeing Qu Zhizhen coming over, the old maid guarding the gate hurried forward to bow to him. Qu Zhizhen ordered, “I will take Eunuch De Fu to look at the pine tree in the yard. Tell your lady not to panic. She could just rest in her room!”

The old maid retreated and entered the main room to report.

Standing in front of the window, Qu Moying looked outside with a cold smile. “Sure enough, a follow-up has been arranged. But Xiao Hanyuan has left, and he did not cause any trouble here, so I didn’t get involved.”

Her eyes fell on a lad servant beside Qu Zhizhen. Qu Zhizhen had brought many lad servants this time, but this person clearly looked crafty. He looked in the direction of the main room from time to time with a face full of doubts. He seemed to know something.

“Lady, he is the head eunuch who used to work for the Empress Dowager. His name is De Fu. Even if the Empress Dowager has passed away, he still enjoys the respect of others and even His Majesty. It is because he once protected His Majesty when His Majesty was young. The matter seemed to be related to the rebellion of the three princes.”

Yu Dong said in a low voice.

Although he had never interacted with Eunuch De Fu before, he had seen him from afar, so he knew his identity. Although the current head eunuch in the palace was Eunuch Li Quan, who was by the Emperor's side, Eunuch De Fu was actually quite powerful.

"What is he doing here?" Qu Moying frowned, sensing something unusual.

It had been too long since the rebellion of the three princes. It was said some of the three princes' children escaped. However, it had nothing to do with Qu Moying. She just treated it as a story, and she did not know if it was true or not. It had been more than thirty years, and there were still a few people who remembered it clearly!

"I don't know, but I heard that Eunuch De Fu is directly in charge of the Empress Dowager's mausoleum. He does not stay in the palace, so he must have come because of something important." Yu Dong was also puzzled. Eunuch De Fu didn't usually stay in the capital. Instead, he was at the Empress Dowager's mausoleum, which was a distance away from the capital.

Qu Moying's heart skipped a beat. She narrowed her eyes and felt that this matter was becoming more and more complicated. Was it really the scheme of Qu Mingcheng alone?

He wasn't this capable!

The room quieted down. Qu Moying and Yu Dong listened carefully to the sound outside the room.

Eunuch De Fu walked up to a large red pine tree on his right in the yard and examined it. This red pine tree was originally inside the yard. When Qu Moying moved in, she had specially looked at it a few times. She thought that such a large pine tree must have a lifespan of over a hundred years. She wondered when it was planted and who planted it.

Eunuch De Fu walked to the front of the pine tree and patted it. He repeatedly nodded, "Good... not bad, this one will do!"

Qu Zhizhen said, "Yes, I will arrange it immediately. Since you like it, it will do!"

“Why didn’t you mention such a pine tree before? I’ve always been looking for a pine tree.” Eunuch De Fu turned to look at him, and his gloominess made Qu Zhizhen feel a chill on his back.

“Sorry, Eunuch De Fu. It’s all my fault. I didn’t notice that there was such a pine tree in my mansion that could impress you. It’s my negligence.” Qu Zhizhen nodded repeatedly, not daring to defend himself.

He really forgot that there was such a pine tree in his mansion. It was more than a hundred years old. Although he had seen it in the past, he did not pay much attention to it. He forgot it after seeing it, although he heard that Eunuch De Fu was looking for such a tree and that the Empress Dowager liked this kind of pine tree that was over a hundred years old.

After all, the Empress Dowager was gone, so Qu Zhizhen naturally wouldn’t think too much about it.

However, now that Eunuch De Fu had come to him, he naturally had to receive him properly, which was why he brought him here.

“Vice Minister Qu, you’re really careless. Did you also forget something else? Tell me about it so I don’t have to come again.”

Eunuch De Fu said as he grinned.

Being stared at by Eunuch De Fu like this, Qu Zhizhen only felt cold sweat on his back. He hurriedly shook his head and said, “No... no. There’s nothing else.”

Eunuch De Fu asked with a smile, “Really?”

“Yes. There’s really nothing else!” Qu Zhizhen hurriedly said, not daring to hesitate.

“But I heard that one of your daughters...” At this point, De Fu paused and looked at Qu Zhizhen.

Qu Zhizhen's face changed. He raised his head in shock. He did not understand what Eunuch De Fu meant by this. "What he said just now clearly meant that he thought I only have one daughter, and she is the one related to Lord Jing. But what does he mean now?"

Eunuch De Fu said with a smile, "I heard that you have a daughter who has seldom met people of the opposite sex. She was brought up in a quiet place. Unlike the vain noble ladies who were brought up in the capital, she can be considered the purest noble lady. She has rarely seen men and doesn't like to associate with them either."

As soon as he said this, not only Qu Zhizhen, but also Qu Moying and Yu Dong behind the window changed their expressions.

The so-called "purest girl" was almost an exaggeration. But how many girls could deserve this compliment? Even an unmarried noble lady who barely went outside her house would also see men, such as her father, her cousins, and so on. How could there be such a girl who barely saw men?

However, Qu Moying was different. She grew up in the village, accompanied by a lot of women and almost no men. She sometimes returned to the mansion, but Qu Zhizhen might not be able to see her. Compared with the other noble ladies, she was really much purer in this sense.

"Lady..." Yu Dong's face changed as he said in a low voice.

Qu Moying gently shook her hand, indicating for him not to speak. She looked at Eunuch De Fu, who was standing in the middle of the yard, her eyes deep and cold.

She could already figure out his meaning now.

She had heard about such a thing when she was still Ji Hanyue. But she did not take it seriously at that time. She had forgotten it because it had been too long since she had heard it. After hearing Eunuch De Fu mention "purest lady", she remembered something.

Just now, Xiao Hanyuan came to make a scene here, so she was naturally not nice to him. But Eunuch De Fu would think that she disliked men if he witnessed the scene.

Sure enough, it was a chain of traps that would force her into the corner.

They were looking for a purest girl who didn't like to interact with men. She didn't expect that they were still looking for such a girl after so many years.

She really didn't expect it.

"Eunuch De Fu, you must have made a mistake. My daughter's marriage has been arranged!" Qu Zhizhen said with a smile. If not for Lord Yun's warning, he wouldn't say anything that might offend Eunuch De Fu.

Even the Emperor respected Eunuch De Fu.

Eunuch De Fu said with a fake smile, "She is engaged? You must be lying. I've found out before that your daughter isn't engaged with anyone now. Her previous engagement was canceled. I heard that your daughter disliked men even more because of Young Master Yongning. Vice Minister Qu, I am doing this for the Empress Dowager. If there is really such a lady, she is what the Empress Dowager wanted."

"But... but her marriage really has been arranged." Beads of sweat broke out on Qu Zhizhen's forehead.

Eunuch De Fu said domineeringly, "Who is the other party? It can be canceled, right? After all, this matter is related to the Empress Dowager."

If Qu Moying was engaged to anyone other than Lord Yun, Qu Zhizhen would immediately agree to Eunuch De Fu's request, but now he did not dare.

He looked around and waved his hand. The lad servants following him all took a few steps back. Only then did Qu Zhizhen take a few steps forward, lean close to Eunuch De Fu's ear, and whisper, "If you don't believe me, you can ask His Majesty or Her Majesty."

He did not dare to mention Pei Yuanjun directly, so he could only bring up the Emperor and the Empress. Since Lord Yun firmly said that Qu Moying would enter his mansion, he must have told the Emperor and the Empress about his decision.

“She actually got engaged to someone in the royal family?” Eunuch De Fu’s face darkened. The one who told him about Qu Moying did not mention this.

Did that person deliberately instigate his trip to Qu Mansion?

In fact, the matter of the pine tree was not important. Qu Zhizhen’s daughter was more important. Hearing that there was such a pure girl, Eunuch De Fu immediately came to Qu Mansion. But now, it was not a small matter because it was related to the Emperor and the Empress. Did that person deliberately make him provoke the two of them?

His face darkened as he thought of this. He looked at Qu Zhizhen gloomily, wanting to see through him.

But Qu Zhizhen didn’t seem to cheat him, and he did not dare to lie to him.

Behind the window, Qu Moying gave Yu Dong a look. Yu Dong understood, turned around, and walked out of the main room. He went to the wing room on the side to look for someone...

Chapter 355 The So-Called Purest Girl

Eunuch De Fu sneered and glared at Qu Zhizhen. “With your daughter’s status, she couldn’t be any prince’s Princess Consort, right?”

Qu Zhizhen felt guilty from being stared at and hurriedly said with a smile, “No... no.”

“Since she will not be a Princess Consort, it doesn’t matter. The Empress Dowager’s matter is more important.” With a scornful smile, Eunuch De Fu looked at the slightly closed main room and slowly walked over.

It seemed that he was going to see Qu Moying.

Cold sweat began to break out on Qu Zhizhen's forehead. Ignoring the fear in his heart, he hurried forward and said, "Please hold on, Eunuch De Fu!"

"What? Don't tell me your daughter is going to be a Princess Consort?" Eunuch De Fu said coldly. He was indeed a little angry at the person who told him about Qu Moying but did not tell him that she was engaged. However, he did not intend to give up now.

Since she would not become a Princess Consort, he could still convince the Emperor.

After all, he had been looking for such a purest girl for a long time. After so many years, he finally found a girl who had a clean history and disliked men. It was not easy.

It was impossible for a girl to be totally pure, but it was fine as long as she was close to that level.

Eunuch De Fu thought that such a girl would not be happy even if she entered a prince's mansion because she disliked men, so it would be better to sacrifice her freedom to serve the Empress Dowager. He wanted to let her pray for the Empress Dowager at her mausoleum. It would also be beneficial to the fate of the entire Great Zhou Kingdom.

"Eunuch De Fu..." Qu Zhizhen's fingers trembled, and his face turned red.

"What? Do you still have something to say?" Eunuch De Fu sneered and continued to walk forward. Behind him, Qu Zhizhen was anxious but helpless. With his status, he could not stop Eunuch De Fu at all.

A woman walked out of the wing room and stopped in front of Eunuch De Fu. "Greetings, Eunuch De Fu."

It was Granny Yan!

They both served the Empress Dowager back then, so they could be considered old acquaintances.

Eunuch De Fu stopped and asked in surprise, "Granny Yan, why are you here?"

He didn't expect Granny Yan to be here.

"Her Majesty sent me here." At this time, Granny Yan did not conceal anything and directly mentioned the Empress.

Eunuch De Fu finally started to take this matter seriously. "Did Her Majesty send you here to take care of Fourth Lady Qu?"

Granny Yan nodded calmly, "Yes. I've been here for a period of time. I was sent here since Fourth Lady Qu's engagement was made."

"Which prince is she engaged to?" Eunuch De Fu was stunned for a moment. Even if the lady was the future Crown Princess, the Empress would not assign someone to serve her like this. It seemed that Granny Yan was specially sent here to protect her.

He thought to himself, "I haven't been in the palace recently. Did anything that I don't know happen?"

"It's not a prince. You know who His Majesty cares about the most, right?" Granny Yan looked at Eunuch De Fu with a faint smile.

After thinking for a while, Eunuch De Fu's expression changed greatly. He stretched out his finger and trembled slightly. "That one?"

Granny Yan said meaningfully, "Yes, that one. Fourth Lady Qu is the only woman he wants to be with."

Eunuch De Fu took a deep breath and looked at the door of the main room with a little fear. Then, he decisively turned around and looked at Qu Zhizhen.

"Vice Minister Qu, Why didn't you say it just now?"

"I... I don't dare to say it!" Qu Zhizhen breathed a sigh of relief, but then his heart was up in the air again. Eunuch De Fu didn't seem to be happy.

Eunuch De Fu sneered. "Since Granny Yan has been sent here, why don't you dare to say it? Are there any other reasons?"

"I..." Qu Zhizhen still wanted to explain, but Eunuch De Fu flung his sleeves and turned around. "I don't want this pine tree anymore. Take it as a gift for Fourth Lady Qu. Vice Minister Qu, you should behave yourself!"

With that, he strode away.

Qu Zhizhen was stunned for a moment before hurriedly chasing after him.

He did not dare to offend Eunuch De Fu.

After watching Eunuch De Fu leave, Granny Yan turned around and returned to the main room.

In the main room, Qu Moying was sitting on a chair and listening to the sound outside quietly. When she saw Granny Yan come in, she smiled and calmly asked, "Does this eunuch know Lord Yun?"

"Lord Yun grew up in the palace. When he was a child, the Empress Dowager was still alive. But she didn't like him, and she told His Majesty about her dislike of Lord Yun many times. However, His Majesty never took it to heart. She once punished Lord Yun, and he was unconscious because of his poor health. His Majesty angrily argued with the Empress Dowager, and after that, he didn't see her for a long time. After Lord Yun recovered, His Majesty allowed him not to pay daily respects to the Empress Dowager."

Granny Yan said.

At that time, she was the Empress Dowager's servant. She knew that the Empress Dowager had never liked Lord Yun. But no matter how much she disliked Lord Yun, the Emperor liked Lord Yun very much. The Emperor liked Lord Yun even more than his own sons, namely, those princes.

The Emperor liked Lord Yun so much that the Empress Dowager was jealous of Lord Yun. She even dealt with Lord Yun, who was then still a little child, out of jealousy.

But even so, she did not get what she wanted.

Later, she took advantage of her birthday to make a concession, so the Emperor made peace with her.

From then on, the Empress Dowager and the people around her knew that they could not afford to offend Lord Yun. Moreover, Lord Yun was no longer a delicate child many years later. Instead, he became a decisive and ruthless fiend. A mere head eunuch of the Empress Dowager was just a petty being to him, not to mention the fact that he enjoyed the Emperor's favor.

Eunuch De Fu had no choice but to give in.

"Granny Yan, why are they looking for the so-called purest girl?" Qu Moying continued to ask. She had expected that Eunuch De Fu would be frightened and give in, but she didn't expect that it could be this easy. She also didn't expect that Pei Yuanjun had once had a conflict with the deceased Empress Dowager when he was a child.

"This started before the Empress Dowager passed away. At that time, the Empress Dowager was sick, and she said that she wanted a purest girl. It would be best if this girl has never seen or rarely seen a man since she was a child, unlike those noble ladies who frequently meet their male relatives. If such a girl was found, she would be asked to become a nun and pray for the Empress Dowager."

Granny Yan said after thinking for a while. She knew this because she served the Empress Dowager back then.

Qu Moying's heart skipped a beat and she asked, "How long ago did it start?"

Granny Yan said, "It should have been more than ten years!"

"Did it happen before I was born?" Qu Moying raised her eyebrows and quietly looked at Granny Yan.

Granny Yan replied, "Yes... It should be the case. Because of this, His Majesty had people expand the scope of the search and go to the South to find such a girl."

"Who suggested it? Or did the Empress Dowager think of it herself?" Qu Moying's face darkened. She thought of another possibility, but she felt that it was impossible. There was no way to verify it now, but she still asked carefully.

For some reason, she felt that this matter had something to do with her.

"The Empress Dowager was sick those days. She had nightmares for several days on end, so she invited a nun and a female Taoist to the palace to explain her nightmares. Later, a female Taoist of Qingyun Temple mentioned such a method, and her peers agreed with her, so this became the key to curing the Empress Dowager."

"Qingyun Temple?" This was not the first time Qu Moying had heard of this place.

"Yes, Qingyun Temple. The first abbot of the Qingyun Temple was a member of the royal family, so the Qingyun Temple had a close relationship with the royal family. The next abbot was also capable, and she was quite famous, but she was implicated in something at that time and had to seek asylum in Qingyun Temple. She was much appreciated by the first abbot, so she later used Qingyun as her Taoist name. She was called Qingyun Zi."

Granny Yan was very clear about this thing. Seeing that Qu Moying was interested, she told her at length.

While listening, Qu Moying thought about it carefully. These things strangely overlapped with some of her mother's things.

At that time, her mother did not see anyone. Outsiders only knew that there was a Second Lady in the Yue Family. However, even those close relatives of hers would find it hard to see her. She was said to be sick all the time.

According to this, her mother could be considered a purest girl. Moreover, the decree of finding a purest girl was sent to the South, which meant that the palace wanted to find such a girl in the South.

“After finding such a girl, this girl will be asked to be a nun. She will live alone in a Buddhist Temple for the rest of her life, which is why she’d better not like men, or like what Eunuch De Fu has said, it is best that she has been hurt by a man, which is the case with me.”

“But was mother also hurt by a man?”

“Who broke mother’s heart? How did mother manage to avoid being chosen?”

Qu Moying was puzzled for a while. She gently bit her lips and felt that she might be wrong. She stopped thinking about it and asked, “But what is going on now? The Empress Dowager has passed away. Why are they still looking for a purest girl?”

“Although the Empress Dowager is gone, before she died, she asked His Majesty to find such a girl and let her become a nun to pray for her. In this way, she said that she would be able to have a next life. After saying this, she passed away not long after. His Majesty remembered it and asked Eunuch De Fu to look for such a girl. However, after so many years, he had not found a suitable one, so this matter was delayed!”

Granny Yan explained in detail.

Hearing this, Qu Moying thought to herself, “Therefore, Eunuch De Fu came to my yard today. Xiao Hanyuan wanted to make trouble with me just now, and there was the matter that Xu Lipeng had broken off the engagement with me. On the surface, it seemed that I have been hurt again and again by men, so I might dislike men.”

“I am indeed the most suitable one!”

She frowned. Something seemed to be connected strangely again. Thinking about it for a while, she couldn’t help but clench the handkerchief in her hand. If what she thought was true, things were not as simple as what she saw.

Who was it that set up such a big trap so long ago and continued to...

Chapter 356 Mysterious Woman

Seeing that Qu Moying's face was pale and she was silent, Yu Dong hurriedly called out in a low voice, "Lady! Lady!"

Qu Moying let out a deep breath. She felt depressed. Although there was no direct evidence, she couldn't help but feel depressed. She felt like she was trapped in a confined space, and she could see nothing but the dappled light from outside.

Why was it like this?

Did someone really set up a trap, or was she overthinking it?

It was almost impossible for someone to set up such a big trap, but she couldn't help but think this way.

Qu Moying gently pursed her lips and asked, "They failed to find such a girl for a long time, but why did they suddenly start to look for such a girl again?"

It had been a long time since the matter of looking for a purest girl was brought up for the first time. No matter how much the Emperor cared about the Empress Dowager, he would not be so keen on this matter.

"I don't know. Perhaps it is because Eunuch De Fu has returned to the capital." Granny Yan shook her head. Since she had taken Qu Moying as her Master, she would not hide anything from her.

"Could it be that someone deliberately mentioned this and might even give him some benefits?" Qu Moying said coldly. It was obvious that Eunuch De Fu was a wily old fox. She didn't think that he would offend a prince for the sake of the deceased Empress Dowager.

After all, he had acted based on the assumption that she was going to marry a prince in the first place.

"Maybe." Granny Yan thought about Eunuch De Fu's personality and nodded. Then, she said with certainty, "However, whoever they are, the people who told him about this will definitely fall into the pit of their own digging."

Eunuch De Fu was not the kind of person who would do nothing after suffering a loss.

Qu Moying lightly flicked her fingers on the table, and a trace of coldness flashed through her eyes. If this really was a trap set up for her mother and her, she would overturn it and bring the truth into daylight.

Her mother was only a lady from the Yue Family of the South, which could not be compared with those aristocratic families in the capital. Who are those people that could not tolerate her?

Thinking about it carefully, Qu Moying felt that she was worrying too much.

However, regardless of whether she was overthinking it or not, she would keep this matter in mind. This was her second life, and she had to be extremely cautious. Otherwise, she would fall into irreversible danger at any minute.

Qu Moying analyzed in an orderly manner, "Just be careful for the time being. See if anyone is watching us. Eunuch De Fu left without looking back. If the person wants to know what happened, they might send someone to inquire. Since they have not figured out what exactly is going on, I think they haven't left yet."

Yu Dong immediately understood. He rolled his eyes and said, "Lady, I will go out and take a look."

Qu Moying nodded.

Yu Dong quickly turned around, walked to the entrance of the yard, and popped his head out to look around. Then, he walked out and took a side path.

He was sharper than ordinary people. Just now, when he looked around, he found something unusual. He took this side path because he just saw a figure on this path, and the figure immediately hid at the sight of him.

He couldn't tell who the person was from behind, so he took this path to find out who it was.

A hint of coldness appeared on Yu Dong's face as he thought, "You petty maid. I would definitely find you."

Qu Zhizhen chased Eunuch De Fu to the gate of Qu Mansion. However, Eunuch De Fu kept a straight face and ignored his obsequious manner. He looked at him coldly and said in a sharp voice, "Vice Minister Qu, please go back, lest I offend you."

After saying that, he left without looking back. Qu Zhizhen's face immediately darkened.

He watched Eunuch De Fu leave. He didn't expect things to turn out like this, nor did he expect that Eunuch De Fu had been here not for the pine tree but for Qu Moying.

Qu Zhizhen felt much aggrieved that Eunuch De Fu vented his anger on him. If Eunuch De Fu had said he was here for Qu Moying, Qu Zhizhen believed that he would have told him the truth in the first place. In that case, Eunuch De Fu would not have been embarrassed.

In fact, if Qu Moying was not related to Lord Yun, Qu Zhizhen would have given her away!

However, he did not have the slightest say concerning Qu Moying's fate now.

He stomped his foot at the gate of the mansion, turned around and went to the study with a frustrated look.

A few young eunuchs helped Eunuch De Fu up to the carriage. One of them timidly shrank to the side, afraid that Eunuch De Fu would see him. At this time, the carriage had already set off.

Eunuch De Fu sneered and asked, "Little Li, what was all this about? You found out about this. You told me that the youngest lady of Vice Minister Qu's Mansion was turned down by men again and again, and she no longer trusted men and that she had barely seen men since she was a child, so she was the purest girl I have been looking for."

Eunuch De Fu's voice was very gloomy. "Little Li, you are up to something, aren't you?"

"Eunuch De Fu, no! I dare not! I dare not!" Little Li plopped down on his knees in the carriage, his voice trembling. Although he was just eleven or twelve years old, Eunuch De Fu appreciated him very much. He was clever and deeply trusted by Eunuch De Fu.

Eunuch De Fu had once said that he would take Little Li as his godson, and the relationship between them had become even closer.

"Tell me... what exactly was going on?" Eunuch De Fu said coldly and pressed his hand on the table in the carriage. His eyes were cold.

"That is what I heard... I asked a few people, and they all said the same thing. They said that Fourth Lady Qu was brought up in the village, so she barely saw anyone. She couldn't even see her father, not to mention other men. They also said that Young Master Yongning cancelled the engagement with her, and it was his fault."

Little Li was so panicked that he stuttered.

"With just a few passers-by's words, you were sure that Fourth Lady Qu was suitable. Little Li, how dare you!" Eunuch De Fu smiled sinisterly. As long as he thought about how he had almost provoked the terrifying Pei Yuanjun, Eunuch De Fu couldn't help but get angry.

Fortunately, Lord Yun was not in the capital right now. Otherwise, he might be having a hard time now.

Every aristocrat in the capital knew how much attention the Emperor paid to Pei Yuanjun's marriage. Pei Yuanjun had never agreed to marry any woman for so many years. Now that he finally wanted to be with someone, the Emperor must be very happy. Things would get easy if Pei Yuanjun wanted to be with someone.

Although Qu Moying's status as Vice Minister Qu's daughter was not high enough, she would at least be Lord Yun's Side Princess since Lord Yun wanted to be with her. If she became Lord Yun's Side Princess, her status would be higher even than those princes' Princess Consorts. Moreover, the Emperor liked Lord Yun so much that even in the Emperor's harem, no one would dare to scheme against Qu Moying.

At the very least, they would maintain a certain level of respect for Lord Yun's woman on the surface.

Little Li still hadn't figured out why, and he stuttered again, "Eunuch De Fu, I... I really didn't expect this. But even if he is a prince... even if he is the Crown Prince, he is still the Empress Dowager's junior!"

Slap! Eunuch De Fu hit Little Li so hard in the face that his head swayed to the side.

"Do you think that I will believe you with just these few words?" Eunuch De Fu sneered and gritted his teeth. The light through the curtain of the carriage shone on his teeth. The other young eunuchs were so scared that they did not dare to breathe heavily.

They were all Eunuch De Fu's subordinates. They had been guarding the Empress Dowager's mausoleum for several years under Eunuch De Fu.

In the Empress Dowager's mausoleum, Eunuch De Fu had the most power. He could decide these young eunuchs' lives.

"Eunuch De Fu..." Tears streamed down Little Li's cheeks. He felt both pain and fear.

Eunuch De Fu leaned back and closed his eyes. "I know you won't tell the truth. Actually, I don't need you to tell the truth. After you go back, you can die. It can be considered as repaying your Master."

Little Li was so scared that he collapsed to the ground and begged, "Eunuch De Fu... Eunuch De Fu, please spare my life!"

"Someone, pull him down." Eunuch De Fu frowned unhappily and ordered without opening his eyes.

Two young eunuchs stepped forward, ordered the carriage driver to stop the carriage, and pulled Little Li down from the carriage. Then, they followed behind the carriage all the way to Eunuch De Fu's temporary residence in the capital.

In the carriage, Eunuch De Fu sneered, pursed his lips, and muttered to himself, "I haven't been back to the capital for a long time. I thought things like this had nothing to do with me, but I didn't expect to encounter such a thing just one day after returning. Moreover, even I was involved. The one behind this is really capable."

Another clever young eunuch stepped forward, poured him a cup of tea, and asked cautiously, "Eunuch De Fu, are you really going to kill Little Li?"

"Not now. Otherwise, I will have no evidence. Beat him hard, but make sure that he is alive so that I could explain to Lord Yun after he returns to the capital. If not so, I'm afraid that Lord Yun will think that I am playing tricks on him. That will destroy my relationship with Lord Yun." Eunuch De Fu laughed creepily.

The young eunuchs shivered and tried their best to control their expressions, not daring to reveal expressions of fear.

Behind the gauze curtain, a woman said with surprise, "What? Little Li, the one by Eunuch De Fu's side?"

"Yes, it is Little Li, the one by Eunuch De Fu's side. He passed the news over, and Eunuch De Fu found it was his doing. Eunuch De Fu just came back from Vice Minister Qu's Mansion. Maybe... maybe..." The old maid's voice was getting smaller.

Behind the gauze curtain, the woman snorted and scolded, "How useless! Never make, but always break! A good chess piece is wasted!"

It was not so easy to plant an agent around the shrewd Eunuch De Fu, but now the one they arranged was out of use.

"Then... what should we do?" The old maid said in a low voice as if she had not heard the woman's scolding.

The woman said coldly, "There's no need to do anything. Let's just wait and see what will happen. We don't need to contact Little Li anymore. He doesn't know who we are anyway."

"Yes!" The old maid knelt on the ground and lowered her head.

There was no more sound behind the gauze curtain. When the old maid looked up again, there was no one.

The wind rolled up the curtain, revealing a large chair with a few gold ornaments...

Chapter 357 Someone Took a Fancy to Yu Dong

"Qing Mei, what are you doing here?" Yu Dong looked at a maid who was hiding and obviously uneasy.

"Our lady heard that there was a big shot coming over, so she asked me to come over and take a look." Qing Mei blinked uneasily. She had been in Qu Mansion for a period of time and had always been on good terms with Yu Dong. Every time she met Yu Dong, she would take the initiative to talk to him. She was very close to Yu Dong, and sometimes she would even especially send some women's accessories to Yu Dong.

It could be said that her relationship with Yu Dong was quite good.

Their relationship was not affected by the grudge between Qu Moying and Qu Qiuyan.

"Yu Dong, who came just now? What exactly happened? I saw Second Master chasing after a person, and that person seemed to be angry."

After answering Yu Dong's question, Qing Mei seemed to be quick-witted again. She stretched her head to look behind Yu Dong as if she wanted to find out more information.

Yu Dong stood in front of her with an unfriendly expression. He glanced at Qing Mei and his face darkened. "What is your lady trying to do?"

Qing Mei explained, "Our lady doesn't want to do anything. She just heard that a big shot had come and asked me to come over to take a look. I didn't expect that he would enter Fourth Lady's yard."

She then stood on tiptoe to look behind Yu Dong as if she was still trying to find out something.

Yu Dong said bluntly, "He has already left. If there is nothing else, you can go back!"

"Let me take a look. I won't talk nonsense." Qing Mei pleaded. She wanted to slip past Yu Dong, but Yu Dong stopped her.

Yu Dong snapped, "Why aren't you leaving? Are you waiting for our lady to come?"

Qing Mei had a glib tongue. She blinked her eyes and said tactfully, "Alright, I won't go over, in case Fourth Lady gets angry after knowing that you let me go over."

As she spoke, she took out a sachet from her pocket and handed it to Yu Dong. She smiled and said, "Right, I have this for you."

"What is this?" Yu Dong did not take it. He asked with a frown. He was not interested in the little things that Qing Mei gave him. She had sent him a handkerchief, rouge powder, and some things women liked. Although he disguised himself as a woman now, he was not a woman. He did not like these women's things.

In the past, he only casually applied some makeup to avoid being incompatible with other maids.

Fortunately, he was not bad looking. He looked quite beautiful even with only a little makeup, and no one could recognize him as a man.

However, Qu Moying wanted him to continue to be friends with Qing Mei to see what she was up to, so he pretended to be interested in her and got along with her.

Qing Mei took out a pair of pearl hairpins from the sachet as if she was presenting a treasure. "This is a pair of new pearl hairpins. Take a look. I especially kept it for you. It is beautiful, isn't it?"

Although the pearls on the hairpins were not big, no ordinary maid could possess such an item. Moreover, Qing Mei got a pair, and they were made with exquisite workmanship. Yu Dong could tell that this pair of pearl hairpins was finely made, and they were almost comparable to those made in the palace. How could a mere maid have them?

In fact, the same thing had happened before. Qing Mei was Qu Qiuyan's new maid, but she seemed to be more favored than ordinary maids. She always had something that other maids didn't have, such as the rouge, makeup powder, and the delicate pearl hairpins she gave him right now.

Yu Dong asked with a frown, "Where did you get this?"

"You... you don't have to ask. It's good stuff. I always keep the good stuff for you. Ever since I saw you, I've liked you. It's a pity that we are not serving the same lady. Otherwise, we could live together and talk frequently. Unlike now..." Qing Mei said sullenly and kicked a small stone beside her foot.

Yu Dong said, "Then come and follow our lady!"

"Really? Can I?" Qing Mei raised her head excitedly and looked at Yu Dong with hope.

Yu Dong shook his head expressionlessly. "Of course not. I am just a maid. How can I make the decision? Moreover, our lady has enough senior maids."

Qing Mei did not get angry because of Yu Dong's refusal. Instead, her words became even humbler. "I don't need to be a senior maid. It's fine even if I could only be a junior maid. I just feel like we are fated to be together."

Yu Dong seemed to be shocked after hearing Qing Mei's words. Seeing his expression, Qing Mei knew that she was too rash. Every junior maid wanted to be a senior maid, but no senior maid wanted to be a junior maid. Her words were quite doubtful. She immediately laughed and said, "Alright, I was just joking with you. But how about you come to serve our lady? Our lady treats the people around her pretty well."

Yu Dong directly refused, "No! No matter whom I serve, I am still a maid. There is no difference. What is the point of changing a Master?"

Qing Mei rolled her eyes and advised, "Of course it's different. Fourth Lady won't give her maids accessories as fine as mine... These pearl hairpins are not something that ordinary people can get."

"Where did you get these pearl hairpins?" Yu Dong asked in confusion. He didn't think Qu Qiuyan was a generous person.

"Of course someone gave them to me." Qing Mei looked at Yu Dong shyly and wanted to say something but stopped at a second thought.

Yu Dong said calmly, "If you have something to say, just say it!"

"Actually, it's not a big deal. I just feel pity for you." Qing Mei looked Yu Dong up and down and sighed, "I have seen all the maids in our mansion. None of them is more beautiful than you. It is a pity..."

Yu Dong asked impatiently, "What's the pity?"

He really was not in the mood to discuss whether he was beautiful or not with a maid. He was just a eunuch, and he didn't need to be beautiful.

If not for the fact that Qu Moying had repeatedly told him to be nice and tried to obtain some information whenever he saw Qing Mei, he would have turned around and left long ago.

"It's a pity that you waste your beauty. I think you are the most beautiful one in Qianyue House." Qing Mei pointed at Qianyue House not far away.

She said Yu Dong was the most beautiful one in Qianyue House, and she naturally put Qu Moying in count.

Yu Dong asked calmly, "So what?"

Today, Qing Mei spoke more than usual. Was she going to reveal her real purpose?

"Someone likes you, and he lets others give these things to you." Seeing that it was the right time, Qing Mei said in a delicate voice. She had been observing Yu Dong's reaction. If a girl knew that someone liked her and the one kept sending her gifts, she would be shy even if she might not accept him.

Yu Dong felt like vomiting.

He thought to himself, "I can't believe there is some man who takes a fancy to me. I know I look well in female attire. If not so, Eunuch Ji Hai would not have sent me over. But I don't think that it is a good thing that a man takes a fancy to me!"

Yu Dong lowered his head slightly, took a deep breath, and suppressed the discomfort in his heart before asking, "Who is it?"

He looked a little shy. Qing Mei was satisfied, but she didn't tell him directly. She pushed the sachet into his hand. Then, she pulled his hand and whispered, "Don't worry. It's not a lad servant. Sister Yu Dong, you will be blessed in the future. Don't forget me when the time comes!"

After saying that, she turned around and ran away without waiting for Yu Dong to say anything.

“She actually ran away like this. She was playing hard to get. She is not simple.” Yu Dong sneered at Qing Mei’s back and turned to leave.

In the main room, Granny Yan had already left. Qu Moying looked at the sachet on the table and the pearl hairpins in the sachet and sneered.

She picked up a pearl hairpin and looked at it. As Yu Dong had said, it was a fine product. It was not something that could be made in ordinary shops. Although it was not very expensive, the workmanship was very good.

“She left without saying anything?” Qu Moying looked up and asked thoughtfully. Qing Mei was not simply because she left at such a timing.

Or rather, the person behind Qing Mei was not simple!

Yu Dong said indifferently, “Yes, she said that the one who likes me is not a lad servant. Who else could it be? A Master? How could it be?”

Qu Moying was silent for a moment before she suddenly smiled. “This is really possible!”

“Who?” Yu Dong was stunned for a moment and asked anxiously. He hated the person who took him for a woman and wanted to know who was plotting against him.

He would never believe that someone had taken a fancy to him.

He was not the kind of woman who loved to dream. Those women really would dream of becoming a Master one day.

He was realistic.

“Second Young Master.” Qu Moying smiled. Her eyes were cold.

There were only a few male Masters in the mansion. It seemed that there was really no one else but Qu Mingcheng who could let the people around Qu Qiuyan do things for him. Moreover, it was said that this maid named Qing Mei was picked from East Mansion.

Of course, it could also be Eldest Young Master Qu.

However, Qu Moying didn't think Eldest Young Master would do such a thing. Moreover, Qing Mei was Qu Qiuyan's trusted maid. Even if the Eldest Young Master dared to make use of her, Qu Qiuyan would not agree.

"So, what does Second Young Master want to do?" Yu Dong sneered and felt sick. He was not familiar with Qu Mingcheng at all and had only met him once or twice with Qu Moying.

"I think he wants to make you his agent to spy on me and do things for him at critical moments." Qu Moying said. She pinched her fingers. Then she looked down at her fingers and slowly said, "Since she is playing such a game with you, let her continue her act."

"What if Second Young Master comes to me?" Yu Dong was anxious. Although he was disguised as a woman, he did not want to have anything to do with a man.

"Don't worry. Second Young Master will only say a few words to you at most. Do you think he will like the maid of a sister he hated?"

Seeing the anxious look on Yu Dong's face, Qu Moying burst out laughing. Her long eyelashes fluttered twice as she raised her pair of

apricot-like eyes. Her eyes were misty, and there was a touch of redness at the corner of her eyes, which made her look even more beautiful. There was a kind of gentle and charming temperament in her coldness. Even her slightest facial expression was attractive.

Yu Dong felt that Qu Moying was the most beautiful woman. A few years ago, a lady who wanted to be with Lord Yun was said to be incomparably beautiful. However, Yu Dong thought she couldn't compare with Qu Moying.

He thought only Lord Yun was worthy of Qu Moying...

Qu Moying suddenly changed the topic and asked, "Who do you think is behind today's matter?"

Nothing came out of nothing, so why did this happen?

Chapter 358 She Wanted to Be the Crown Prince's Woman

Yu Dong pondered for a moment and said, "I think today's matter is related to Third Lady. Although Qing Mei didn't mention today's matter as if she was sincerely waiting for me to go over, what if I didn't go out just now or failed to see her? I don't think she was that urgent to see me."

Qing Mei seemed to have come for Yu Dong. Although she had followed Qu Qiuyan's orders to look around, her major target was Yu Dong.

But what if this was not the case? Qing Mei had been playing nice with Yu Dong for a long time. She shouldn't be so anxious.

She was planning to let him fall into the trap slowly.

In this case, her appearance in front of Qian Yue House today was hasty and doubtful. It seemed that she was here to keep an eye on Eunuch De Fu, which meant that she was one of the people who knew that Eunuch De Fu would come.

Qu Moying sneered. "Qu Qiuyan?"

Yu Dong shook his head and said, "No. I think it is Second Young Master. Qing Mei obviously has something to do with Second Young Master. If she really works for him, she could come to keep an eye on the situation for him. After all, with her identity, you couldn't do anything to her even if she is discovered. She could say that Third Lady had asked her to watch the fun here."

Everyone in the mansion knew that Qu Qiuyan and Qu Moying didn't get along with each other, so it was not a big deal if Qu Qiuyan's maid occasionally came to pry on Qu Moying's yard.

But it would be different if Qu Mingcheng was the one who sent Qing Mei over.

Qu Mingcheng appeared to be impartial. He seemed to be pretty good to Qu Moying. Although he was not particularly close to Qu Moying, he did not help Qu Qiuyan by making things difficult for Qu Moying. He seemed to be very fair.

Moreover, as a man, how could he send someone to pry on his sister's yard?

"Yu Dong, since he is trying to make use of you, he will definitely meet you." Qu Moying said meaningfully with a sneer.

"Lady, I understand." Yu Dong immediately understood and secretly gritted his teeth. He was waiting for Qu Mingcheng to come to him. "Should I go and look around again?"

He was afraid that Qing Mei was not the only one who had come over just now. Maybe Qing Mei made him miss the opportunity to find the others.

"No need! They will come." Qu Moying said thoughtfully. How could the person behind the scenes be willing to give up like this since he had set up such a big trap?

To be able to set up such a big trap, the person must have drawn support from others, but there seemed to be people who took the initiative to help him!

She was now in a fog, waiting for the other party to make a move. Meanwhile, Qu Xuexin seemed to be even more restless...

Qu Xuexin was restless in her room. She stood up and walked to the window to take a look several times. When she finally saw Hong Mei return, she hurriedly asked her to come in. After hearing Hong Mei's report, she was stunned for a moment. She had expected something terrible to happen. "What? He left? Nothing happened?"

Hong Mei reported. "I am not sure. It's just that Second Master chased after him. I don't know if something bad happened or not, but Yu Dong looked calm when she came out to check. It didn't seem like something bad had happened."

Qu Xuexin's face darkened. Although she was not outstanding in appearance, she looked gentle in normal times. However, she looked quite mean now.

She frowned and turned around before instructing Hong Mei, "Go and bring her over."

Hong Mei nodded and left. A short while later, she came in with a middle-aged maid over thirty years old, who seemed to be quite quick-witted.

"Go and report to your lady that nothing has happened." Qu Xuexin tried to compose herself and said. Even now, she still had a blank look on her face.

Previously, she had sent someone to the Liu Family to ask for help from Liu Jingyu. However, as soon as she sent a maid out, one of Liu Jingyu's old maids came. The old maid asked her to send someone to keep an eye on Qu Moying, saying that something big would happen in a while. As of now, the maid she sent to Liu Jingyu had not returned yet.

This made her really angry. If this old maid was not sent by Liu Jingyu, Qu Xuexin would really think that someone was deliberately making a fool of her.

The old maid was stunned and asked in surprise, "Nothing happened? Nobody came over?"

She didn't show much respect to Qu Xuexin, which made Qu Xuexin unhappy. However, she was sent by Liu Jingyu, so Qu Xuexin didn't dare to offend her.

Qu Xuexin could only suppress the displeasure in her heart. "Someone came over. I heard that it was a eunuch, but he only had a brief walk in Moying's yard. After that, he left. My Second Uncle chased after him. I don't know if they said anything, but Moying's yard was peaceful. Nothing happened."

Hong Mei was just a maid, so she naturally could not recognize Eunuch De Fu, who used to be the head eunuch of the Empress Dowager. She could only tell that he was a eunuch and hear his sharp voice from afar.

The old maid was overjoyed and clapped hard. "Second Master Qu chased after him. Did Second Master Qu look panicked?"

Hong Mei replied, "He seemed to be panicked."

The old maid bluntly reprimanded Hong Mei, "Then why did you say nothing happened? Something must have happened! Even your mansion's Second Master was in such a panic, how can you say nothing happened?"

Hong Mei's face turned red from being reprimanded and she could not help but retort, "There was nothing unusual in Fourth Lady's yard. The maids and old maids of her yard didn't panic at all. There shouldn't be anything serious. Even though someone from the palace went to see Fourth Lady, it might not be something bad. Fourth Lady has even received a reward from the palace before."

Moreover, Granny Yan was still living in Qianyue House.

"How ignorant!" The old maid sneered and pouted.

Her expression made Qu Xuexin feel like she was mocked as well. Qu Xuexin's face darkened even more. She felt annoyed. If she hadn't asked Liu Jingyu for help, she would not have tolerated this old maid now. Did this old maid think she was superior to them simply because she was Liu Jingyu's maid?

Qu Xuexin's face darkened as she asked coldly, "What is going on?"

"First Lady Qu, I don't know exactly what happened. Our lady just asked me to see if there is anything wrong. Now that there is something, I will go back and report to her." The old maid answered ambiguously, not intending to tell Qu Xuexin the truth.

In her opinion, Qu Xuexin was useless. It was better not to tell her.

Her contempt was so obvious that Qu Xuexin was a little annoyed. But Qu Xuexin tried to suppress her anger and said, "I sent someone to your lady. When you see her later, let her come back!"

She felt that the maid she sent out should have already seen Liu Jingyu and told Liu Jingyu that she needed help. There must be a response right now.

The old maid said with a smile, "Yes, First Lady Qu. I will take my leave."

After saying that, she turned around and left. She didn't even bow. Being neglected like this, Qu Xuexin was so angry that her face turned livid. She was more determined to seize the opportunity.

As long as she got the favor of the Crown Prince, it didn't matter even if Liu Jingyu would be the Crown Princess.

Thinking of this, she clenched the sachet in her hand. She made this sachet before, and it was even more exquisite than the previous one taken by the Crown Prince. Since the Crown Prince liked the sachet she made, she would send this sachet over as well. She must let the Crown Prince understand her feelings.

She could even improve this sachet. She decided to embroider a true love knot on the sachet later.

She would not marry someone so casually. Although she had thought of Xiao Hanyuan as an option before, she would choose him only if she couldn't find anyone better than him. However, she would never consider him now.

She would not listen to her father! Never!

What she wanted was glory and wealth in the future. She didn't want to marry a mere examinee. Even if Xiao Hanyuan passed the Imperial Examination, he couldn't compare with the Crown Prince.

Other princes' concubines could not compare with the Crown Prince's concubines. As long as she could win the Crown Prince's heart, she would have endless possibilities.

She heard that the Crown Prince loved Ji Hanyue the most. But now that Ji Hanyue was dead, there was no one in the Crown Prince's heart. What she had to do was to make the Crown Prince fall in love with her.

Right now, she had already taken the first step, or perhaps the Crown Prince had already taken the first step, and it was also the best step. She now had unlimited opportunities.

Thinking of this, Qu Xuexin was spirited.

Her mother could hold back her father for the time being. As long as she received the Crown Prince's reply, nothing else would be a problem.

Now she had an opportunity. She didn't want to make any mistake again.

After Liu Jingyu's old maid returned to the Liu Family, she went straight to Liu Jingyu's yard. When she walked close to the yard, she saw maids and old maids standing in two rows neatly outside. She immediately panicked.

She called the old maid standing at the back and asked her what had happened. Only then did she know that Mrs. Liu had come. She did not dare to immediately go in and report, so she just waited outside the yard.

After waiting for a long time and finally seeing Mrs. Liu leave with her servants, the old maid cautiously entered the yard and asked someone to report her arrival.

A maid came out and called her in.

As soon as the old maid entered the room, she looked up and saw the livid face of County Lady Jingyu, who was sitting on the top. Her heart started beating wildly, and she did not dare to be rash. She hurriedly recounted everything that Qu Xuexin and Hong Mei had said and added her own guess. The final conclusion was, of course, that something bad had really happened to Qu Moying, but it was unknown what exactly happened for now.

After she finished speaking, she quietly waited for Liu Jingyu's response. She had already keenly sensed that the atmosphere in the room was weird. Just now, she even saw that Liu Jingyu's eyes were red as if she had cried.

But how was this possible? Mrs. Liu had always treated County Lady Jingyu the best and had never scolded her. What was going on now? Could it have something to do with what happened today?

Thinking of this, the old maid became even more respectful.

It was so quiet in the room that the old maid could almost hear her heartbeat, and she was getting more and more flustered...

The atmosphere was so tense that the air even seemed to stop flowing.

The old maid stooped even lower as if she was pressed by something, and her forehead began to sweat.

Liu Jingyu finally spoke with a bit of gloom, "That's all?"

"That's... that's what First Lady Qu said!" The old maid stammered, not daring to say that a part of her report was based on her guess.

Chapter 359 A Cunning Maid

"Someone, pull her down and beat her twenty times."

"County Lady..." The old maid was so scared that her body went soft. She hurriedly looked up at Liu Jingyu, only to see Liu Jingyu's slightly swollen eyes staring at her sinisterly.

She did not dare to continue.

Two lowly old maids came over and grabbed the old maid, whose legs had gone soft. The old maid did not dare to struggle and only looked at Liu Jingyu with pleading eyes. However, Liu Jingyu coldly watched her being pulled away.

Even if the old maid did not die after being beaten twenty times, she would be seriously injured.

“County Lady, don’t be angry. First Lady Qu always messed things up. She messed up the thing that night, and she also blew it today.”

A maid next to Liu Jingyu comforted her in a low voice. She was Hai Tang, one of the two senior maids that Liu Jingyu trusted the most.

“She is indeed useless.” As long as Liu Jingyu thought of what happened that night, she gritted her teeth in hatred. Qu Xuexin actually screwed up such a simple thing, causing the man surnamed Wang to come to her, which aroused the Crown Prince’s suspicion. After that, the Crown Prince asked her to bring that guy over.

However, that person surnamed Wang had run away a long time ago. Where could she find him?

At that time, the Crown Prince looked at her with unfathomable eyes. Apparently, he suspected her.

This was the critical period in which discussion of her marriage with the Crown Prince was under way, but something like this actually happened. How could she not be angry?

She could have gotten away with what happened to Qu Moying last night. Originally, no matter what filthy place Qu Moying would fall into, she would still be the mighty County Lady Jingyu, and no one would know that she was the mastermind behind the scenes.

However, she was suspected again and again because of Qu Xuexin. She heard that Qu Xuexin went to the Sea of Lanterns last night and had a quarrel with the Crown Prince’s Side Princess, Ji Youran. Because of this incident, many people knew that she had something to do with the Crown Prince. Now that she and the Crown Prince were not engaged, it was unfavorable to her reputation when people talked about them at this time.

Moreover, the royal family paid the most attention to reputation.

Back then, Ji Hanyue was able to be engaged with the Crown Prince not only because of her background but also because of her good reputation.

Ji Hanyue was a lady of high status and had a good reputation, which was the reason why the Crown Prince decided to marry her.

Liu Jingyu also knew that the Empress considered her at the very beginning but gave up on her and chose Ji Hanyue in the end, so she could only turn to Lord Jing.

Liu Jingyu said with a sneer, "Chase away the person sent here by Qu Xuexin."

"Yes, I will do it immediately." The other senior maid, Du Juan, replied quickly. She bowed to Liu Jingyu and retreated.

The maid sent by Qu Xuexin had been waiting outside for a while, but Liu Jingyu did not want to see this person, so she just ignored her. Now, she felt annoyed, so she asked Du Juan to drive the maid away.

Hai Tang observed Liu Jingyu's expression and asked, "Lady, what should we do now?"

Just now, Mrs. Liu was angry and reprimanded Liu Jingyu. Hai Tang had never seen Mrs. Liu being so angry.

"I won't do anything. Just wait!" Liu Jingyu gritted her teeth.

She happened to know that Eunuch De Fu was looking for the purest girl to pray for the Empress Dowager and that Eunuch De Fu had just returned to the capital, which was why today's matter happened.

Only knowing the information was not enough, she also secretly informed Qu Mingcheng's people, but it seemed that Qu Mingcheng was also useless.

Originally, she had given up on Qu Xuexin and tried to make use of Qu Mingcheng. Now it seemed to her that Qu Mansion's people were all trash, and none of them was useful.

Her mother's reprimand was still ringing in her ears word by word. She felt that she had never suffered like this before.

All of this was because of Qu Mansion. How could she not be resentful?

She lost an important agent, and her mother reprimanded her and told her to put everything aside. The most important thing for her now was to marry the Crown Prince.

Many people realized that the Liu Family was discussing marriage with the Crown Prince. Lord Jing had not come to the Liu Family for a long time, and it could be seen that he had also known about it.

Needless to say, Lord Jing had ceased to be an option. If she couldn't get married to the Crown Prince, then she could only consider the other two princes. But neither Lord Wei nor Lord Yan was eligible for the throne. How could she be willing to accept such a result?

Her status was much higher than those women!

Her mother had also said that she was destined to be extraordinary in the future and that she would have everything she desired.

She had made two plans before. Now that the arrow had been placed on the bow, she could only aim at the Crown Prince. This was the only feasible plan. This time, she would not miss it again.

She thought her mother was right. The most important thing for her now was to marry the Crown Prince. As for the other things, she could put them aside...

“What? You didn’t see County Lady Jingyu?” Qu Xuexin was anxious. She originally thought that Liu Jingyu would pass some words to her, but she did not expect that the person she sent wasn’t received by Liu Jingyu.

So, why did Liu Jingyu send someone over earlier?

“I waited there because I was told that the County Lady happened to have something to do, but then I was told that the County Lady was busy, and I was asked to leave.”

Hearing this, Qu Xuexin became angrier. After turning around in place a few times, she waved her hand to let the maid leave.

“Hong Mei, go and see if there are any abnormalities with Fourth Lady.” Qu Xuexin instructed. She did not believe that something Liu Jingyu cared so much would end up so peacefully.

It seemed that Liu Jingyu even resented her now!

What exactly happened at Qu Moying’s place? Where was that eunuch from? Why did he come here? Why did Qu Zhizhen chase after him? Could it be that she had really made a mistake?

Hong Mei also felt that something was wrong and quickly responded, “Yes, I will go now.”

With a gloomy face, Qu Xuexin watched Hong Mei leave. Her brows were still knitted. Since she couldn’t rely on Liu Jingyu, she could only rely on herself. She needed to find a way to meet the Crown Prince. She believed that the Crown Prince would help her out.

Her mother told her that her grandmother and her father insisted on marrying her to Xiao Hanyuan. Her mother would not be able to stall the time for long. She had to help herself out quickly. Thinking of this, she sat down again and picked up the needle thread next to her hand. She began to embroider. It was too blatant to embroider a true love knot, so she decided to embroider twin lotus flowers that shared the same stalk.

Hong Mei entered West Mansion through the door that connected East Mansion and West Mansion. She took a small path to go to Qianyue House. It was not easy to walk on because it was too narrow, but it was a shortcut. Qu Xuexin barely took this path whenever she came to West Mansion, but Hong Mei had no better option now.

The road was indeed very narrow. Along the way, she was brushed by small branches. It was very difficult for her to walk. Only when she stood diagonally opposite to Qianyue House did she stop. She did not dare to walk any further, afraid of being discovered.

She just watched quietly for about an hour. The maids and old maids in and out were all very calm, as if nothing had happened. But she clearly saw the eunuch sent by the palace, and Qu Zhizhen chased after that person. Was there really nothing wrong?

Hong Mei rolled her eyes and looked at Yu Chun, who came out from the yard. Compared with the shrew Yu Dong, Yu Chun looked much easier to get along with. Yu Chun was also Qu Moying's senior maid, so she should also know something!

Hong Mei knew that she should talk to a senior maid like Yu Chun or a granny in charge if she wanted to find out the truth.

However, none of Qianyue House's grannies in charge seemed to be approachable. Hong Mei thought Yu Chun was a good option. It just so happened that Yu Chun came out, and she seemed to have something to do. That was great.

Hong Mei looked in the direction where Yu Chun was going and found that she seemed to be going to the kitchen. She calculated the time and took a shortcut to get to the front of Yu Chun.

Yu Chun was walking towards the kitchen, but she did not expect to bump into someone in a corner. Both of them staggered. Yu Chun reacted quickly and stabilized herself by holding the corner of the wall. Unfortunately, the person who bumped into her fell to the ground and cried out in pain.

Yu Chun took a closer look and found that she knew the person. It was Hong Mei. She held Hong Mei up and asked, "Are you alright?"

"I was in a hurry and didn't notice you when I came over." Hong Mei said apologetically. She did not deny her fault for bumping into Yu Chun. It was easy for the other party to have a good impression of her!

Yu Chun asked curiously, "Why are you in such a hurry?"

As Qu Xuexin's maid, Hong Mei also appeared to be dignified and calm. She had never been so rash.

"I have an urgent matter. It's about a eunuch..." Hong Mei felt that she had made a slip of the tongue, so she stopped and looked at Yu Chun with a somewhat embarrassed expression, not knowing whether to continue or not.

Yu Chun was stunned for a moment. Then, she became anxious. "A eunuch? Who?"

Hong Mei said hesitantly, "I don't really know. It's a thing related to the eunuch who came to our mansion."

Yu Chun immediately understood and asked in surprise, "Is it the eunuch from the palace?"

"Yes, yes, it's him. I heard that he is coming this way. I came to look for him. Our madam has something to say to this eunuch." Hong Mei nodded and reached out to hold Yu Chun's hand. "Have you seen this eunuch? I heard that he has a strong background. It's not a good thing that he came to our mansion at this time!"

After Hong Mei finished speaking, she looked at Yu Chun's expression. Seeing that Yu Chun's expression changed drastically, she tightened her grip on Yu Chun's hand. She observed Yu Chun's expression, thinking that something really seemed to have happened.

"He is the Empress..." Yu Chun said anxiously, but she soon realized that she had made a slip of the tongue and shut her mouth quickly.

"Is he from the Empress' palace? It... It can't be!" Hong Mei held Yu Chun's hand, not intending to let go of her and inducing her to continue.

“Why not? Granny Yan is already here. It was not strange if someone from the Empress’ palace came.” Yu Chun said disapprovingly, trying to defend her Master.

Chapter 360 Who Instigated Him to Do So?

Hong Mei asked with concern, “But our madam heard from Her Ladyship that this eunuch did not come for something good. Did anything bad happen to Fourth Lady?”

Yu Chun furrowed her brows. It seemed that something bad had indeed occurred.

Seeing her reaction, Hong Mei sensed something and continued to ask, “What? Did something bad really happen?”

“Nothing serious. He just took a casual look and felt satisfied with the pine tree in our Qianyue House. He said that the pine tree was good, but then he said he didn’t want it. We are really confused by what happened in our yard today.” Yu Chun sighed and reached out to press her forehead, complaining.

“Is there anything wrong with that pine tree?” Hong Mei also knew about the pine tree. She heard that it was quite old, but that was all.

“I don’t know about this. Maybe it was because the pine tree was old that he was satisfied with it.” Yu Chun said vaguely. It could be seen that she was not clear about the situation.

Hong Mei continued to ask, “Why didn’t he want it later?”

“I don’t know. This eunuch came at the right time, right after Young Master Xiao left.” Yu Chun sighed.

Hong Mei didn’t know about this, so she asked, “Did Young Master Xiao come to Fourth Lady’s yard?”

Yu Chun said angrily, "Yes, I heard that he was instigated by someone to cause trouble. Our lady is going to talk to Her Ladyship about this. I wonder who instigated this simple-minded Young Master Xiao. We will know as soon as we investigate whom he has met before coming to see our lady."

"Perhaps he came out of his own thoughts." Hong Mei felt a little guilty. Qu Xuexin had met Xiao Hanyuan just now, and she gave him a cold shoulder.

If the Old Lady knew that Xiao Hanyuan met Qu Xuexin before going to Qu Moying's yard to make trouble, there would probably be extra trouble.

Thinking about this, Hong Mei got restless. Since she couldn't find out about anything, she quickly straightened up and said, "I feel better now. Sister Yu Chun, you can go and do your work. I can manage to walk by myself."

Yu Chun asked worriedly, "Are you really alright?"

"I'm okay. I can do it." Hong Mei took a few steps, slow but steady.

Seeing that she was fine, Yu Chun did not say anything else and left.

Seeing Yu Chun leave, Hong Mei turned around and strode away. She hurried back to East Mansion. When she saw Qu Xuexin, she gasped and reported on what she had heard from Yu Chun and also the matter that Xiao Hanyuan went to Qu Moying's yard to make trouble.

Sure enough, Qu Xuexin was immediately attracted by Xiao Hanyuan's matter.

She gritted her teeth in hatred. Why was Xiao Hanyuan causing trouble at this time? She didn't want to have anything to do with Xiao Hanyuan anymore, but she couldn't cut off from him for a while, and it was inconvenient for her to go directly to him now.

After pacing back and forth for a while, Qu Xuexin finally thought of a way. She came to West Mansion with Hong Mei again, but this time she went to find Qu Mingcheng...

“Lady, I waited at the side door that led to East Mansion. As expected, I saw First Lady come back with Hong Mei. But they didn’t seem to head to Third Lady’s residence nor Her Ladyship’s yard. Instead, they seemed to head to the yard where Second Young Master is resting.”

Yu Chun reported.

Qu Moying nodded and was not surprised. She put down the qin cover in her hand. It didn’t have much embroidery, but it was very carefully embroidered. Two butterflies were so vividly embroidered that they appeared to be real ones. This was the work of her previous life, and she was still familiar with it now. She knew how to embroider butterflies without thinking.

She used an embroidery template at first, but she then gave up on using it. She decided to embroider as she liked.

She had always been skilled in embroidering butterflies and flowers, so she didn’t need embroidery templates.

She let Yu Chun go out to create chances for others to enquire about what happened. After all, among the people around her, only Yu Chun seemed to be the most approachable for enquiry.

She had expected that Yu Chun would see Qu Xuexin.

It seemed that Qu Xuexin was going to discuss something with Qu Mingcheng. Qu Moying would like to see how capable Qu Mingcheng was. Qu Mansion only had four young ladies in total. Now, it seemed that the four of them were all entangled with the royal family. Qu Xuexin, who she thought was least likely to have anything to do with the royal family, was also entangled with the royal family.

This was not totally a bad thing for Qu Moying, but she would not let Qu Mingcheng off the hook so easily.

“Let’s go. I want to see grandmother.” Qu Moying said. She sat in front of the dressing table, and Yu Chun skillfully wore the eye veil for her. Then, they went to the Old Lady’s yard together.

Qu Moying thought to herself, "Since Qu Xuexin went to see Qu Mingcheng, she would definitely tell him something that can't be made known to others. I must let the Old Lady know it so that she won't think that the people in the mansion really regard me as a family member."

The Old Lady had already received the news and was about to go to Qu Moying when Qu Moying came over. She hurriedly pulled Qu Moying's hand and sat down. "Did Eunuch De Fu say anything?"

The Old Lady was extremely anxious as she stared at Qu Moying with her dim-sighted eyes.

Qu Moying smiled as she clasped the Old Lady's hand and comforted her, "Don't worry, Grandmother. I'm fine. Granny Yan stopped that eunuch. He originally wanted to enter my room."

"So, he directly went back?" The Old Lady breathed a sigh of relief. Although she didn't know what exactly happened, she guessed that it was not a good thing. Someone that worked for the deceased Empress Dowager had come to her mansion at such a time and even went straight into her granddaughter's yard. She didn't think it was a good thing.

Qu Moying said, "Grandmother, I heard that this eunuch is looking for the purest girl to pray for the Empress Dowager."

"What? Still doing it?" The Old Lady was stunned at first, but then she understood. Her face immediately darkened. She must have remembered such a matter.

It had been many years since this matter was first brought up, and people basically did not take this matter seriously now.

"He meant that because I grew up in the village, I rarely saw my father, let alone other men. Moreover, Marquis Yongning's Mansion cancelled the engagement with me. He thought I was hurt by men and was unwilling to get married, so he thought I was suitable to pray for the Empress Dowager."

Qu Moying said.

“What nonsense was he talking about?” The Old Lady was furious. She slapped the table heavily and said angrily, “Who told him you don’t want to get married?”

“I don’t know. From what I saw just now, my father doesn’t seem to know why this eunuch came. When the eunuch came to my yard, he said that he wanted to see me. Fortunately, there is Granny Yan.” Qu Moying said thankfully again. Her little face was slightly pale, and it could be seen that she was also frightened just now.

The Old Lady felt sorry for her. She held Qu Moying in her arms, patted her on the back and comforted her, “Don’t worry. Everything will be alright. It will be alright.”

Qu Moying quietly leaned into the Old Lady’s embrace with an obedient and respectful look.

After a long while, the Old Lady let go of her and pulled her to sit aside. She was still in shock, and her face was still full of fear. If Eunuch De Fu really chose Qu Moying, Qu Moying’s life would really be ruined. The Old Lady did not believe that this matter came out of nothing.

“Grandmother, fortunately, this eunuch came late. Before he came, Cousin Xiao wanted to make trouble with me. He came right after Cousin Xiao left my yard.” Qu Moying also seemed to be frightened. She reached out and pinched her handkerchief, slightly closing her eyes.

The Old Lady’s heart skipped a beat, and her expression turned serious. “Hanyuan went to your yard?”

“Yes. He said some strange words. I don’t know what he meant. He seemed to be blaming me. He suddenly mentioned Third Young Master He and then talked about the matter that happened last night. He spoke righteously as if he was seeking justice for my Eldest Sister. Perhaps he thought that it was my fault that my Eldest Sister fell into the water last night.”

“Fortunately, I reacted and let him go first. Otherwise, if the eunuch bumped into him and knew what had just happened, he would really believe that I dislike men.” Qu Moying said with a bitter smile.

It was not a bad thing to be mistaken for hating men in normal cases. It was indeed terrible if a lady was known to have an affair with a man. However, it was dangerous to be mistaken for hating men in such a

situation because Eunuch De Fu was looking for the purest girl to pray for the deceased Empress Dowager, and no noble lady would be willing to do such a thing!

“Who instigated him to do so?” The Old Lady was so angry that the veins on her forehead bulged.

Of course, she didn’t think that Xiao Hanyuan just happened to go to Qu Moying.

“I... I don’t know about this.” Qu Moying said vaguely. She pulled the Old Lady by the hand and shook it, “Grandmother, it’s all over. We don’t have to take it too seriously. Forget it.”

The Old Lady said furiously, “I can’t just let it go. I have to find out who instigated him. The one behind this sold you out today, and he could sell the entire Qu Mansion out tomorrow.”

She hated this kind of behavior the most.

“Grandmother, in fact, I asked Cousin Xiao who instigated him to do so, and he told me it was...” Qu Moying was obviously hesitant. She looked at the Old Lady’s face.

The Old Lady said coldly, “Say it!”

“It was Second Brother!” Qu Moying said. This matter could not be hidden from others. As long as the Old Lady asked Xiao Hanyuan, he would definitely tell the truth.

“Granny Wu, go and inquire about it.” The Old Lady nodded and directly gave an order to Granny Wu.

Qu Moying talked with the Old Lady for a while. Then, Granny Wu came back in a hurry. Qu Moying heard Granny Wu whisper a few words into the Old Lady’s ear, including “Second Young Master” and “First Lady”. She knew that Qu Xuexin was found to be in Qu Mingcheng’s place. Judging from Granny Wu’s reaction, she guessed that Granny Wu must have seen something more than the fact that Qu Xuexin and Qu Mingcheng were close to each other.

Qu Mingcheng and Qu Xuexin were siblings, and Qu Mingcheng lived in East Mansion most of the time, so it was nothing if they were close to each other. It seemed that Granny Wu had heard something else.

Qu Moying knew that it was time for her to leave. She stood up and said softly, "Grandmother, I have something to do, so I'll go back first. Father might look for me later."

"You don't have to go back. Go and sit in the inner room!" The Old Lady grabbed Qu Moying's hand and didn't let her go, which surprised Qu Moying.

She raised her eyes and looked at the Old Lady. If she stayed, she might have to fall out with Qu Mingcheng and Qu Xuexin.

But the Old Lady always wanted them to live in harmony.

"Stay here. Let's listen together, lest you don't even know how you are set up in the future." The Old Lady raised her head and looked at Qu Moying. She seemed to have aged a lot all of a sudden. Her voice trembled unconsciously, and her eyes were filled with grief!

"Grandmother..." Qu Moying felt a lump in her throat and nodded slowly and forcefully...