

Noble Wife 51

Chapter 51 Ming Xian'er, the Star of the Xifu Opera Group

When Qu Moying went back to accompany the Old Lady, the Old Lady had known what happened. She held her granddaughter's hand and let her sit down next to her.

Many people were staring at Qu Moying when she came up to the pavilion. The rumors about Young Master Yongning saving Second Lady Duan were spread out, and Madam Duan had already headed there. It seemed like the marriage arrangement between the Qu Family and the Marquis Yongning's Family would be broken off.

Young Master Yongning did the right thing to rescue the young lady who fell into the lake, but now he had to marry her. With Second Lady Duan's family background, she couldn't possibly be a man's concubine. Her mother, an arrogant and tough shrew, wouldn't let it happen either.

It was not anyone's fault but just the rules of society.

There was finally a conclusion to this famous engagement between Fourth Lady Qu and Young Master Yongning. Some people sighed, some people felt bad for Qu Moying, but most of them looked down on her. Among the three people involved, only her life would be ruined.

Her reputation was already bad before, and now the failure of her engagement added fuel to the fire. Who would marry her in the future? What a poor girl!

Some sharp-eyed people noticed Yu was gone too after someone came to talk to her. Before she left, she whispered something to the Old Lady, who looked displeased after hearing it.

Now the Old Lady held Qu Moying's hand as if she was trying to comfort her, showing her intention clearly.

More and more people started to look at Qu Moying with sympathy. But sympathy was the only thing they felt since many of them didn't approve of this engagement in the first place. They didn't think Fourth Lady Qu, an ugly, blind girl who grew up in a village, deserved a good man like Young Master Yongning. Now, everything just went back to the position where it should be.

Under people's complex gaze, Qu Moying sat next to her grandmother calmly as if nothing happened while the Old Lady was irritated. But it was not the time to tell people that the engagement was already broken off.

She suppressed her anger and asked Qu Moying, "Ying, when will your eyes fully recover?"

"Grandma, my eyes will recover soon. My eyes need some time to get used to all kinds of light. I still feel uncomfortable when the sunlight is too strong outside," Qu Moying said softly.

"That's good. That's good." The Old Lady nodded at her, then let out a quiet sigh, "He's not a good match for you anyway. Your father was supposed to go to the Marquis Yongning's Mansion and talk to them about it. What happened just now is a good coincidence for us."

Around all the female guests eavesdropping on them, the Old Lady couldn't directly talk about it. Still, she could imply it by saying other things.

The engagement was broken off because Xu Lipeng had an affair with Yu Qingmeng. The Qu Family didn't tell any outsiders and let him find a proper reason to cover the scandal up out of courtesy. But now, they brought shame to her granddaughter and made everyone think Qu Moying was a poor, abandoned fiancée. How could the Old Lady not be angry?!

"Yes, Grandma!" Qu Moying lowered her head and squeezed the hanky in her hand.

"Since your eyes will recover soon, everything will be alright for you. Ying, I'm actually not worried about your future at all. You are not worse than anyone, no matter at temperament, appearance, manner, or competence. If I have to be picky, I'd say you like being alone too much and should mingle with people more. But as your grandmother, I very much enjoy your companionship, and I don't want you to go back to that village again," said the Old Lady.

Qu Moying knew the Old Lady was trying her best to help her, and she found people's reactions pretty ridiculous since they all looked at them in shock. Temperament, appearance, manner, and competence... She wondered how her grandmother came up with these words.

For others, three of them would still sound reasonable except for her appearance. She bet people present were laughing at them inwardly right now!

Her grandmother spent so much effort, so she had to keep it up with her. She answered the Old Lady in a soft voice, "Grandmother, I will not go back there. I will stay here for you."

"Good, good!" The Old Lady smiled and nodded at her.

She looked around and noticed all the madams and young ladies who heard them curled their lips in disdain. Sensing her glance, they all looked away and started to chat with each other or watch the performance as if they didn't hear anything.

Things went as most people expected. After a while, a servant came to call the Old Lady over, and Qu Zhizhen, sitting in the opposite pavilion, left at the same time.

So far, Qu Moying's plan had been carried out smoothly. She stayed in the pavilion since it was not appropriate for her to interfere with the discussion among the two families' elders.

"This female role looks stunning with her makeup on. I heard the performer herself is a gorgeous woman too," someone not far away from Qu Moying muttered.

"I heard about it too. People said it's so hard to book her. When someone tried to invite her last time, she said she was not feeling well, and their schedule was tight because they were rehearsing a new show. Come on, they are just an opera group. Who do they think they are?" another one snorted.

"Shall we meet this female performer?" the first person who talked proposed in a low voice.

"Sure. I do want to know why an opera performer can be so popular. I heard her name is... Ming Xian'er, right?" the second one said with a bit of annoyance. Clearly, she was one of the people who got rejected by the opera group before.

Being rejected by a low-life opera performer was one of the most irritating things for those prideful madams and ladies.

Qu Moying fiddled with the round silk fan in her hand and listened to them absentmindedly.

“First Madam Luo, can you call Ming Xian’er, that female performer, over? We like her singing and want to give her some tips,” the first person said to Luo.

Since the Old Lady and Yu were both gone now, Luo, the madam from the East Mansion, was the only one who could make a decision here.

This was just a little request from the guests, so Luo nodded and sent someone to bring Ming Xian’er over.

Ming Xian’er was well-known in the city, but not many people had seen her in person. When she came closer, many young ladies put on a weird look.

How come a low-life opera performer was even more beautiful than most of them? The more they thought, the more jealous they felt as they sized her up warily.

“It’s an honor to meet you, madams and ladies,” Ming Xian’er said and bowed to them.

She was called over in a hurry, so she only had time to remove her makeup. She was still wearing the costume and keeping the same hairstyle for the performance. She was supposed to rest after getting washed and changed since she had finished her part of the performance. Now she had no choice but to come here since the female guests wanted to meet her in person.

“You are Ming Xian’er?” asked Luo, sizing her up with surprise.

“Yes, I am!” Ming Xian’er slightly lowered her head.

“I heard you are the star of the Xifu Opera Group, but the group has rejected many performance invitations. I wonder how you make money to pay all these people,” one person questioned her, sounding unfriendly. Many among them didn’t have a good impression of her.

"We do accept invitations. It's just we spend most of our time preparing new shows for the Crown Prince, so we don't have much time left to perform outside," she answered calmly in a polite manner.

"I heard the Crown Princess hasn't been feeling well, and the prince is very concerned about her. How come he has so much time to spend on entertainment?" another person said in disdain.

Her words drew everyone's attention to Ji Hanyue, the Crown Princess. Rumors about her sickness had been spread for a while.

"I wonder how the Crown Princess is doing now. She always looked energetic when I saw her before," someone sighed.

"Yeah. Who knows? She got sick all of a sudden, and I heard it's pretty bad," another person agreed with her.

"First Lady Ji also lives in the Eastern Palace now..."

"Not First Lady Ji anymore. You should call her Princess Ji!" Someone giggled with sarcasm, but she didn't dare to say it out loud.

"Princess Ji... She surely knows how to grab her chance!" another person sighed...

Ming Xian'er stood quietly in front of the guests with her back straightened up and head lowered, looking confident but obedient.

Qu Moying had been observing Ming Xian'er's reaction. Seeing her calm behavior, Qu Moying curled up her lips with a trace of coldness in her eyes. Then she signaled Yu Dong by patting his hand. He moved closer and bent over, and she whispered something by his ear. He nodded at her and left quickly.

She planned to meet Ming Xian'er outside before. Now, Ming Xian'er was standing right in front of her, which still worked for her plan. Her arrangements outside could be canceled now, and she was going to

deal with her right at this place. Qu Moying had prepared something good for this woman who lived in the Eastern Palace, also the Crown Prince's secret lover.

After people chatted for a while, someone got back to the point, "Ming Xian'er, you live in the Eastern Palace too. Have you seen the Crown Princess? How's she?"

"I stay at a side house near the Eastern Palace temporarily. I don't know about things that happened inside the palace," said Ming Xian'er.

"You haven't seen the Crown Prince?" someone asked.

"I've only seen His Royal Highness from a distance," she answered.

That person wanted to ask more, but another lady next to her pulled her sleeve, signaling her to stop. Talking about a performer didn't matter, but they couldn't afford the consequence if they related her with the Crown Prince.

Before they met Ming Xian'er in person, everyone thought the Crown Prince liked the Xifu Opera Group's performance because of another male star, as the rumors said. But now they saw Ming Xian'er's appearance and understood the situation immediately – this young woman was probably the one he was actually fond of. No wonder the Xifu Opera Group had the guts to reject many noble families' invitations. The Crown Prince was their secret patron!

Since the Crown Prince had the time to make Ming Xian'er prepare new shows when the Crown Princess was heavily sick, he must've paid a lot of attention to her. Then, didn't it mean that the Crown Prince didn't really care about his wife?

Many madams' expressions changed after they had a guess.

They heard that the Crown Prince got sick because he worried too much about the Crown Princess' health conditions. Was it a lie so that the Crown Prince could have a good reputation? So, he was actually a double-faced man rather than a loyal, honest husband in the rumors.

A simple answer led to many deep thoughts, which was not what Ming Xian'er expected. Noticing the judgmental looks on these madams' faces, she started to get flustered. She thought about the words she said again and realized her carelessness, frowning slightly.

"Someone, give her some tips!" First Madam Luo raised her hand and said hurriedly. She realized the change of the atmosphere after her first daughter Qu Xuexin pulled her sleeve.

An old maid behind her rushed forward and gifted Ming Xian'er a small purse.

"I heard there'll be another show later, but the performer is not you. Many madams haven't had enough watching your show. I wonder if you can perform another one for us later?" Luo gave her a smile.

Ming Xian'er's work was done today, but she couldn't really reject them at this moment. She didn't have any good reason since she was already here. She grabbed her sleeve secretly to calm herself down and said in a low voice, "Yes, madam!"

Chapter 52 The First Seed Planted

Many madams started to give Ming Xian'er small purses as tips, and it took her a while before she left the pavilion. There was another show waiting for her to perform, which was not hers originally but became hers.

Ming Xian'er stood under the pavilion as the smile on her face faded away and her eyes darkened. She raised her eyes and let out a deep breath. Right now, she was nothing and had no power to reject these madams. But in the future... In the future, she would let these prideful madams kneel in front of her.

After suppressing her rage, Ming Xian'er turned back to the beautiful, polite performer and even showed a faint smile on her face.

She turned around and headed backstage.

"Miss Ming, please wait."

Ming Xian'er stopped and looked at the side path where the sound came from. A cute maid was standing there, who looked pretty and wore an amiable smile.

"What's the matter?" asked Ming Xian'er.

"Please, Miss Ming. The lady wants to talk to you," said Yu Dong politely. The bright smile on his face looked harmless.

"Who's your master?" Ming Xian'er asked warily. Right now, they were standing under a tree at a crossing. She looked around but didn't notice anyone passing by, feeling unsettled.

"Miss Ming, please!" Yu Dong ignored her question and said firmly.

However, Ming Xian'er was a different woman than the others. She quickly calmed herself down and nodded at Yu Dong.

She followed Yu Dong all the way to a rockery where a small pavilion was located. She climbed up and saw a slender figure standing inside with a long, wide veil tied on the face. Even though half of the lady's face was covered, Ming Xian'er still found her gorgeous.

As a performer, she had traveled around the country when she was younger and met all kinds of people, which gave her a sharp eye. So, although she didn't see Qu Moying's whole face, she could still tell how beautiful the lady was.

She recalled what the Crown Prince told her before. Judging by Qu Moying's clothes, she quickly figured out the identity of this lady in front of her.

Ugly? Blind? Ming Xian'er thought people who spread the rumors were actually blind! She was sure that Fourth Lady Qu was totally not the person as people said.

"It's an honor to meet you, Fourth Lady Qu." The unsettled feeling was gone after recognizing Qu Moying. Ming Xian'er walked up and bowed to her.

It was said that this lady had a solitary, odd personality and grew up in a village. In the Qu's Mansion, no one really treated her like a lady. They just regarded her as a poor, abandoned girl. Even Ming Xian'er thought she was in a better position than this lady.

"Have you seen my cousin?" Qu Moying sized her up and said in a flat tone.

"My lady, do you mean the Crown Princess? She has been feeling unwell. I'm afraid... there's not much time left for her!" Ming Xian'er answered her with a bit of disdain.

She would never show this kind of attitude if she were with those madams and ladies before. But facing a poor, powerless girl like Fourth Lady Qu, she didn't need to care about her manners.

"Slap her!" Qu Moying yelled coldly.

"What...?" Before Ming Xian'er had any reaction, Yu Dong already rushed forward and slapped hard on her face. Startled by the sudden pain, she stepped back and almost fell off the rockery. She hurriedly grabbed a bulging rock next to her to support herself as she pulled a long face.

"Fourth Lady Qu, what do you mean by this?"

"You are just an opera performer. How dare you curse my cousin? What do you think I mean by this?" Qu Moying asked her in an icy voice, standing on the stairs and looking down at her.

"Fourth Lady Qu, do you know I work in the Eastern Palace?" Ming Xian'er covered her face and said in embarrassment and anger.

"I don't care if you work in the Crown Prince's palace or you are the Crown Prince's woman. It doesn't matter for me," Qu Moying said without any emotion.

Her words directly tore apart Ming Xian'er's disguise, making her fly into a rage immediately. Funny enough, she heard the same words before, but from a different person, Ji Youran, the Crown Prince's second wife. Ming Xian'er still remembered the disdainful look on her face at that time. Even though she

couldn't see Lady Qu's face right now, she could tell through her tone that she was wearing the exact same look as Ji Youran. Ming Xian'er couldn't feel angrier about it.

She was powerless facing Ji Youran, but she couldn't accept being insulted by a blind girl from the Qu's Family.

"Fourth Lady Qu, since you know I'm the Crown Prince's woman, how dare you slap me?" With no one around, Ming Xian'er didn't care about maintaining her disguise anymore.

Qu Moying was just an abandoned, blind lady living in the Qu's Mansion that no one cared about. Ming Xian'er thought it would be easy to deal with a weak girl like her.

Qu Moying's eyes darkened after hearing her shameless admission. She pressed her lips into a straight line, and the look on her face became more displeased. "It's good that you admit it. How about you go to meet my grandmother with me and say the exact same words to her again?"

"Fourth Lady Qu, are you stupid? Why will I tell the Old Lady about it? Since no one else heard what I said, people will not trust your words. Moreover, if the Crown Prince knows you threatened me, he will not go easy on you."

Ming Xian'er's voice was arrogant.

"Slap her!" Qu Moying said shortly. She didn't want to waste one more second on talking.

Yu Dong stepped forward and gave her another two slaps. As a man, he was naturally more robust than a woman, and the impact made Ming Xian'er directly fall on the ground. Her fair face became red and swollen at once.

Ming Xian'er couldn't believe she was punished by a blind girl whom she looked down upon. Thinking about the insult given by Ji Youran in the Eastern Palace and the current situation, she almost lost her mind due to rage. She struggled up and rushed toward Qu Moying, aiming for her hair and face. She wanted to make a scene here so that she could tell people that Fourth Lady Qu bullied her.

With the Crown Prince's support, she thought nothing of this blind lady.

What was the meaning of her noble identity if this lady ended up having a more miserable life than a low-life opera performer?

Yu Dong rapidly reached out and pressed her shoulder to stop her.

"You want to make a scene? The Crown Prince apparently disobeys the etiquette by letting a young woman stay in his palace when his wife is sick. There's nothing wrong if I drive you out of there in my cousin's name! To be honest, you are just an opera performer. Do you really believe you will become the next Crown Princess?"

Qu Moying slowly walked down the stairs and stopped next to Ming Xian'er, who was controlled by Yu Dong. She looked at her and suddenly smiled, "If I were you, I would really think about my future. No matter who's the real master in the Eastern Palace, no one would accept you. The Crown Prince? Do you really believe he loves you? I heard his true love is the Crown Princess, but look at how she ended up. I wonder what will happen to you."

Qu Moying said it carelessly as if she was talking about something totally unrelated to her. There was no pain but only disdain and sarcasm left in her words. She said it to mock Pei Luo'an and also mock herself in her past life.

She was indeed blind as Ji Hanyue, even blinder than her current self, a physically half-blind girl. She was ignorant of everything, herself and the people around her, and her ignorance brought harm to her father and younger sister.

So, when she was physically blind in this life, she actually felt better. In this way, she could see herself and other people more clearly.

After finishing her words, Qu Moying passed by Ming Xian'er, who was stunned in shock. "After you think it through, you can come to meet me. I want to know my cousin's situation. If you couldn't figure it out, I promise your life will become miserable after one year!"

She said it in such a straightforward way to put pressure on Ming Xian'er. Ji Youran wasn't as kind and ignorant as Ji Hanyue, and she wouldn't let Ming Xian'er have a peaceful life in the palace!

Qu Moying was not afraid of Pei Luo'an if he investigated her after knowing what happened from Ming Xian'er. Pei Luo'an was an extremely skeptical person, but she was not worried about her situation at all. Ji Hanyue was one of the few people who treated Qu Moying well and even sent a doctor to check on her eyes, which Pei Luo'an was aware of.

Back in the village, she didn't really go out because of her solitary personality. But since she came back to the mansion, it would be reasonable for her to ask about the Crown Princess. Even though she did say some rude words, who would blame a blind, poor lady who grew up in a village? Everyone would just think it was her usual behavior.

If Pei Luo'an still wanted to keep up with his character of a loyal man who deeply loved Ji Hanyue, he couldn't possibly blame her for doing it.

As for Ming Xian'er, her matter couldn't be exposed in public, especially when Ji Hanyue was still heavily sick...

After knowing Ji Youran's true colors now, Qu Moying was sure that Ming Xian'er would have a tough life in the Eastern Palace. All the well-educated behavior she saw before was merely Ji Youran's disguise. Now without Ji Hanyue, she probably had become the real princess in charge.

Qu Moying was not offering Ming Xian'er a way to survive but planting a seed in the Eastern Palace.

One seed, two seeds, three seeds...

She would give herself enough time and patience to complete her revenge. She wanted to refute a significantly unjust verdict, and her enemy was the noble Crown Prince...

She was no longer the dignified Crown Princess but just a Qu's daughter who was looked down on by everyone and almost got abandoned. Coupled with the breaking off of her engagement, her reputation as Qu Moying was utterly ruined.

Fortunately, she never expected herself to get married in this life. A person whose life was at risk anytime didn't have the time and energy for that...

"Call someone from the opera group over and take her away," Qu Moying said to Yu Dong, who followed her to the foot of the rockery.

"Yes, my lady." He left hurriedly.

Both Qu Moying and Yu Dong left, leaving Ming Xian'er alone, who was sitting on the ground with a sullen face. She stayed in the same position for a while and still couldn't believe she was hit by that useless Fourth Lady Qu. She touched her face – it hurt and felt swollen. Everything that happened just now was real.

A few days ago, Ji Youran hit her; a few more days ago, Ji Youran's maid hit her; even before that...

Everyone treated Princess Ji as the real princess in charge of the Eastern Palace now. Before that happened, she was respected by both Ji Hanyue and Ji Youran and had the Crown Prince's love. The Crown Prince even promised to arrange a wedding ceremony for her and marry her as his concubine after Ji Hanyue and his wedding.

The Crown Prince said she was born in a decent family, so her name could be justified. As long as she stopped working as a performer and regained her identity as a lady, he was willing to do anything for her.

But right now, everything he said didn't come true, and her life was tough, almost terrible.

"Miss Ming? Miss Ming?" a familiar female voice came from below. It was a woman from her opera group.

Ming Xian'er leaned on a rock and supported herself up. Her voice was hoarse, "I'm here!"

The woman walked up anxiously, "Miss Ming, you..."

She froze once she saw the red, swollen slap marks on Ming Xian'er's face.

"H-How did you know I'm here?" Ming Xian'er raised her head and asked.

"A maid told me that you are here. She said you were arguing with someone..."

It seemed that Fourth Lady Qu was not worried about her making a big scene at all. Ming Xian'er lowered her head, bit her lips, and fell into silence for a while. Then she said, "Nothing happened. Let's go!"

Chapter 53 Yu Qingmeng Got Married as a Concubine

The birthday banquet held for the Old Lady from the Qu family had finally ended in a buzz with joy.

People all considered the Old Lady's life pleasing and satisfying. The Qu Family didn't have a long history, but the Old Lady's two sons had remarkable career development and lived decent lives.

Her first son Qu Zhilin worked as an Imperial Censor, while her second son Qu Zhizhen was the Vice Minister of Works. They were still young with a bright future, so many people attended the banquet to celebrate the Old Lady's birthday.

As people left with satisfaction, rumors started to spread. They said the Marquis Yongning's Family must break off the engagement between Xu Lipeng and Qu Moying because Second Lady Duan and Young Master Yongning had intimate body contact in public. If he didn't marry her, Second Lady Duan had no choice but to marry someone else as a concubine. Otherwise, her life would be ruined.

As everyone expected, a few days later, the engagement was officially broken off by the Marquis Yongning's Family, and Young Master Yongning got engaged with Second Lady Duan. Fourth Lady Qu was the only one who suffered. After losing her engagement, no one would want to marry this blind lady.

Some people thought it was meant to be like this, while some people felt sorry for her.

However, no one noticed that Yu Qingmeng was taken into the Marquis Yongning's Family and married Xu Lipeng as a concubine.

This was the agreement they reached with the Duan Family. Xu Lipeng broke off his engagement with Lady Qu for the sake of Duan Jinxiang. About Yu Qingmeng, he made up a different story, saying that he had no choice but to hold her in his arms to save her, which disgraced her name.

Since he married Duan Jinxiang because of saving her, it was the same for Yu Qingmeng. He claimed that he had no choice but to marry her as well. The Duan Family couldn't disagree with his reasoning, and they had to let Yu Qingmeng marry him as a noble concubine. There was only one thing they disapproved of – holding a wedding ceremony for Yu Qingmeng.

Since the Yu Family had already agreed to let Yu Qingmeng be a concubine, she could only secretly move into the Marquis Yongning's Family, carried by a sedan. Before Xu Lipeng married his wife, it was inappropriate to hold a ceremony for a concubine.

Originally, the Duan Family didn't agree to let Yu Qingmeng move in first because the marriage between Xu Lipeng and Duan Jinxiang was still in discussion. It was absurd that a noble concubine moved into the mansion before a wife. However, the Marquis Yongning's Family already made their decision, and it was a crucial reason that let the Qu Family approve of canceling the engagement. According to Yu, Qu Moying also agreed before that Yu Qingmeng could marry Young Master Xu as a noble concubine. So, the Duans couldn't say no to it since their daughter was saved by Young Master Yongning, and they owed the other two families.

Since Xu Lipeng was willing to marry Duan Jinxiang, the Duan Family owed the Marquis Yongning's Family a favor and even felt guilty for the Qu Family. Yu proposed to let Yu Qingmeng move into the mansion first, and Xu Lipeng agreed. The Duans didn't have any proper reason to reject them. Then, Yu married into the Marquis Yongning's Family as a noble concubine without having a wedding ceremony.

The breaking off of the famous engagement drew everyone's attention away, and only a few people noticed it.

There was another small thing that only a few people knew about. The Xifu Opera Group, which lived in the Eastern Palace and was hard to book, went to perform at the Old Lady Qu's birthday banquet. Some guests even met Ming Xian'er, one of the stars in the group, in person. She was a stunning beauty, and everyone was surprised by how attractive she was.

The madams liked her singing a lot and asked her to perform one more show. But somehow, she tumbled on the road later and couldn't perform anymore. The group arranged for another performer to finish the show as planned before, while Ming Xian'er excused herself to the host family and left early.

Some people said she was a pampered performer who became too arrogant, while others saw Ming Xian'er left the Qu's Mansion with a red, swollen face, and she was not lying.

This was not a big deal, not even comparable to Yu Qingmeng's matter, let alone the canceled engagement and sudden marriage among the three families. However, rumors about the relationship between Ming Xian'er and the Crown Prince started to spread in the city. They said the beautiful performer had a secret affair with the Crown Prince, and that was why she had the guts to reject the madams' request and left directly.

People all thought the Crown Prince was a loyal, honest husband who deeply loved his wife because of the behaviors he showed when the Crown Princess was heavily sick on the bed. Now the rumors about Ming Xian'er broke his perfect-husband mask, and all kinds of stories arose...

Some people even started to suspect the cause of the fire in the Eastern Palace, and the rumors about the Crown Prince's private life became more and more absurd.

"Grandma, you want to do fasting for a few days in the Dabei Temple?" Qu Moying raised her brow, looking surprised.

"Yes, you can go there to do fasting and relax. Don't stay at home all the time. Since you just came back, it's time for you to take a look there!" Yu rubbed her hands and said with an amiable smile.

Qu Moying's eyes fell onto Qu Qiuyan, who was sitting further away, and darkened.

"Relax? What do you mean? No one is stressed here. We are just going there to enjoy the view and good weather." The Old Lady glared at Yu sternly. She didn't want Yu to mention anything about the Marquis Yongning's Family again.

The Old Lady was still in a sulk. She couldn't have a hand in her granddaughter's last engagement, but this time, she would be more careful and find her a brilliant fiancé. She bet she could find another young man better than Xu Lipeng.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah, it's my fault. Ying, Grandmother will bring you and Qiuyan together. Enjoy your time there. I heard the peach forest behind the temple was famous for its beautiful view. The peach blossom should be stunning right now," Yu said solicitously, acting surprisingly passionate.

After seeing this, if people didn't know their relationship, they would think Yu was Qu Moying's real mother.

"I'll follow whatever you said, Grandma," Qu Moying lowered her head and said softly.

Yu kept nodding, feeling pleased. Her eyes met Qu Qiuyan's, and a sophisticated smile showed up on their faces.

"Ying, go pack your clothes first. We will leave tomorrow morning. The earlier we go, the fewer people there will be so that we can enjoy the peace and tranquility," said the Old Lady.

Qu Moying nodded at her. She accompanied her grandmother for some more time, then left to pack her stuff.

She didn't have too many things to bring with her, but she still needed some time to organize them.

Qu Qiuyan's voice came from behind and stopped her when she just walked out of the door.

"Moying." Qu Qiuyan caught up with her, showing a bright smile on her face as if they never argued before. "Moying, wait for me."

"Sis, what's the matter?" Qu Moying asked in a flat tone.

“Can you do me a little favor?” Qu Qiuyan said in embarrassment, “I have too many things I want to bring with me, but I’ve already packed a lot. If I take them all, I’m afraid grandmother will scold me. Can you help carry a small bag of mine?”

She didn’t want to be refused, so she added, “it’s just a small one, a piece of clothes of mine. Can you help me, Moying?”

“A piece of clothes?” Qu Moying asked, not showing any expression.

“Yes, it’s just a piece of clothes, which I like a lot, but all my packages were full. And it’s a new one. Can you help me keep it, Moying?” Qu Qiuyan asked again smilingly.

She acted like a totally different person than the one who claimed to destroy Qu Moying’s eyes and pretty face.

This was probably her usual attitude to people. Otherwise, she couldn’t have such a good reputation outside. She acted so rudely to Qu Moying before because she always looked down on her, regarding Qu Moying as a low-life girl with whom she could do anything.

But right now, she finally realized Qu Moying was not just an abandoned girl who grew up in a village.

“If grandmother knows that I have your clothes, I will be scolded by her too,” Qu Moying rejected her in a calm voice.

“But... But it’s just a piece of clothes, not a big deal. If we don’t tell anyone, grandmother will not know about it. If she notices it and asks, you can say it’s yours!” Qu Qiuyan was too angry that she almost wanted to laugh. She couldn’t believe Qu Moying would reject such a small request from her.

“Sis, please go back. You can ask grandmother to help you carry it,” Qu Moying said. She turned around and left.

“Aye, why do you take it so seriously? It’s just a piece of clothes!” Qu Qiuyan felt displeased and pulled a long face.

Qu Moying ignored her and directly left with Yu Chun and Yu Dong.

The look on Qu Qiuyan's face was sullen. She gritted her teeth, suppressing the urge to rush over and slap on Qu Moying's face. What a shameless girl! If her mother didn't tell her to hold back her temper, she would never show any respect to Qu Moying.

"Let's go!" Qu Qiuyan turned around furiously as a group of maids followed behind.

When Yu came to her room, Qu Qiuyan was still in her rage. The madam waved her hand, signaling all the maids to leave. Auntie Hai helped them close the door considerably, and she guarded right outside.

"What's the matter? That blind girl disagreed?" Yu sat down, picked up a cup of tea, took a sip, and asked.

"Yes. How dare that little bitch reject me! Does she really think she's still something after she lost her engagement? So shameless! In my opinion, we should do as Father said, send her to our family's temple and let her live her whole life with monks and Buddha. Her existence is literally our family's shame." Qu Qiuyan cursed her angrily, "Mother, why do we need to spend so much effort on this bitch? She doesn't deserve to let me lower my manner and beg her." Qu Qiuyan pouted.

She was a noble lady who would soon become Madam Jing, something totally different than a little low-life bitch.

"If she isn't willing to do so, we can still get around with it. The two daughters from the East Mansion will go with you this time, right? We can let Qu Caiyue give it to her!" said Yu.

The Old Lady invited all her granddaughters this time to do fasting in the Dabei Temple.

So, the First Lady, Qu Xuexin, and the Second Lady, Qu Caiyue, from the East Mansion would go together. Qu Caiyue was given birth by Madam Mei, the First Master's concubine, so she had the lowest status among all the ladies. As for her mother, Madam Mei, the First Master wasn't very fond of her, and she got a decent life all because of her daughter.

As a concubine's daughter, Qu Caiyue didn't have the confidence as other ladies in the family, who were given birth by wives. Qu Qiuyan was notorious for her arrogance, while Qu Caiyue always acted obediently in front of her. Although people from the two mansions didn't often gather, on the few occasions when they met each other, Qu Caiyue always followed behind her cousin Qu Qiuyan. Strangely, people rarely saw her staying with her older sister.

"Let her do it?" That sounded a good idea for Qu Qiuyan. Qu Caiyue was just a concubine's daughter, and she would never reject Qu Qiuyan's request.

"Yes, let her do it. There will be two carriages for four people, and Qu Moying wasn't qualified to sit in the same carriage as you. She's more suitable to stay with a concubine's daughter." Yu sneered, "I will never allow a little bitch to think of herself as a real lady in this family."

"Will grandmother disagree?" Qu Qiuyan was hesitant.

"Don't worry, your grandmother has to agree!" Yu's words were meaningful. The Old Lady wouldn't have time to worry about others by then.

Chapter 54 The Arrogant Second Lady Qu

Qu Moying got up early the next morning. She brought two maids with her and left all the affairs in her yard to Granny Miao. With Granny Miao in charge, she was not worried at all.

When she arrived at the Old Lady's yard, Yu and her daughter were already waiting, but the Old Lady hadn't got up. Qu Moying saw many servants coming and going hurriedly, all keeping their voice low.

"Second Madam, good morning. How's grandmother?" Qu Moying bowed to Yu and asked.

Yu seemed worried, "the Old Lady doesn't feel well. She caught a cold last night."

"Then we are not leaving today?" Qu Moying's instinct told her that something was wrong.

“It’s not that bad. Your grandmother is getting up. She told us to wait for her. You’re still going.” Yu said in a low voice, “Take a seat first. She will be ready soon.”

Qu Moying nodded at her and sat down. Soon, the two ladies from the East Mansion arrived. Each of them was followed by two servants – one was for taking care of their daily life; another acted as a companion.

The First Lady Qu Xuexin seemed to be an amiable girl, always wearing a genuine smile, whether she was talking or not. She was well reputed for her easy-going personality, and Qu Moying heard about it in her past life. But when she was Ji Hanyue, she was surrounded by high-born ladies, so they hadn’t met each other yet.

All she knew was that First Lady Qu had a mild personality, treating everyone with a friendly smile. Although she was not as beautiful as Qu Qiuyan, it was still very pleasing to be around her.

The Second Lady Qu Caiyue had a relatively long face shape, looking similar to Qu Xuexin but a bit more coquettish. When she gazed at Qu Moying, her eyes were apparently filled with sarcasm, showing her bilious temperament. Before she sat down, she sized Qu Moying up quietly in disdain. Without her saying anything, Qu Moying could already tell she was an arrogant, ill-mannered girl.

In fact, the Second Lady did feel shameful sitting next to the ugly, blind girl with a bad reputation. If her aunt didn’t ask her for help, she would never get close to Qu Moying.

The Old Lady looked dispirited when she showed up, clearly tired from her sickness. She only had a bowl of congee for breakfast and left quickly as her four granddaughters followed behind. She already tried to get ready as soon as possible, but still, they departed much later than expected.

Four carriages were waiting for them outside of the mansion. The one for the Old Lady was the most spacious, and the two behind were for the young ladies, having the same size. The last one was for the servants.

The Old Lady climbed into the carriage with Granny Wu’s help. Not having the energy to talk at all, she lay down and closed her eyes immediately after she got inside.

“Madam, do you want me to call the Fourth Lady over?” asked Granny Wu, knowing the Old Lady planned to share her carriage with her favorite granddaughter.

“Forget about it. I don’t want to get her sick,” the Old Lady said feebly.

“No problem. Then allow me to go help the ladies get ready,” Granny Wu nodded and asked someone to bring the cushion they prepared for the Old Lady. After she settled her master, she turned around and said to Yu, “Second Madam, the Old Lady doesn’t feel well. It’s better to let her rest in the carriage alone. The remaining two carriages should be able to accommodate four ladies perfectly.”

“Don’t worry, Granny Wu. Leave it to me. Please take good care of the Old Lady!” Yu smiled at her.

With a maid’s help, Granny Wu climbed into the carriage too.

Qu Xuexin came out from the mansion and got into the second carriage first, followed by Qu Qiuyan. Now, the third carriage was the only one left for Qu Caiyue and Qu Moying.

The last carriage was crowded. It carried servants, candles they would use in the temple, and the ladies’ luggage that couldn’t fit in the front carriages.

Qu Moying brought Yu Dong to her carriage while Yu Chun got into the last one. It was the same for Qu Caiyue, who was accompanied by a young maid, and the old maid she brought sat in the servant carriage.

Yu Dong and Qu Caiyue’s maid were both holding a package that would be put in their carriage.

The two ladies got in with the two maids sitting next to them, and they placed the two packages together aside.

The carriage prepared by the Qu Family had a quite big space that could easily accommodate four people and two packages.

After all people settled themselves, the carriages took a slow turn around and left the Qu's Mansion.

"Moying, have you seen the peach forest in the Dabei Temple?" Qu Caiyue asked, beaming friendly.

Qu Moying shook her head, "No, I haven't."

She barely left the village before. How could she possibly go to the Dabei Temple?

"What a shame. The Dabei Temple is well-known for its peach blossom. After a while, the peaches will be ripe, and the taste of them is amazing. But they are not for sale, only gifted to the temple's guests who come for the worship." Qu Caiyue sounded regretful, "When autumn arrives, we can ask grandmother to take us there again. Then we can have some delicious peaches."

"But grandmother is sick," Qu Moying lowered her head.

"She's always like that. Don't worry," Qu Caiyue said carelessly, "a few days of rest, and she'll be fine again."

"She's always like this?" Qu Moying's heart suddenly missed a beat.

"You know, just being old. Grandmother's health condition is not that good, and she gets sick from time to time. We don't know the exact cause, but sometimes she will have palpitations when she gets anxious, stressed, or angry. Maybe she's irritated because of you this time! After all, you lost a perfect marriage arrangement. Who wouldn't be angry?!" said Qu Caiyue.

Her tone was still amiable, but the implication in her word sounded hurtful.

Qu Moying raised her eyes, looking at Second Lady Qu, who's wearing a friendly smile. However, a trace of disdain flashed across her eyes – clearly, she didn't respect Qu Moying at all.

“Grandmother has been unwell for a long time?” Qu Moying ignored her meaningful words and continued to ask as if she didn’t understand her implication.

“No... Her health has been fine, but I bet she is so furious this time because your engagement was broken off all of a sudden. No one will be willing to marry you in the future. Even if there’s one, he will never be as excellent as Young Master Yongning,” said Qu Caiyue as her lips twisted into a smirk.

Qu Caiyue couldn’t understand how Qu Moying could be so lucky to get such an amazing fiancée. The Fourth Lady was barely comparable to her. Still, she got an enviable engagement for something her mother said. Qu Caiyue had met Young Master Xu a few times when she came to the mansion and had a good impression of him. There was no better choice of a husband than him, who was a handsome, tender gentleman. How did he end up being engaged with a blind girl like Qu Moying?

She even tried to find more excuses to visit the mansion and meet this young master more. She wished Young Master Xu could notice her and be attracted by her charm. But after she was ignored by him a few times, she gave up. Now, it had become her biggest regret since their engagement was broken off. She should have chased after him more persistently, then maybe she would be the one who married him now.

If she were in Qu Moying’s position, she would never allow her fiancée to rescue Second Lady Duan. Every noble lady knew that she was an ill-mannered shrew. If Young Master Xu didn’t mind marrying that shrew, he should be more willing to marry her.

Second Lady Duan had been a hot topic in town recently. People all said that she fell into the lake in front of Young Master Xu on purpose. Otherwise, why did the rail suddenly break? It must be her scheme because she was the only one who gained benefits from the situation.

Qu Caiyue only wished she could come up with that kind of idea. She bet Young Master Xu would be much happier rescuing her rather than that shrew.

Qu Caiyue just couldn’t stop talking about Qu Moying’s canceled engagement. Qu Moying pressed her lips into a straight line. She glanced at her, leaned back, and stopped responding to the Second Lady Qu.

“Moying, the engagement between you and Young Master Xu is such a pity. We all know he’s one of the most promising young men in the capital, and he has never complained about the unfair marriage

arrangement with you. Who would have thought he married Duan Jinxiang in the end? Moying, if I were you, I would not go easy on her.”

Qu Caiyue was still bubbling, not noticing Qu Moying’s frowning eyebrows.

“Second Lady, the Fourth Lady is tired. She wants to have some rest,” Yu Dong interrupted her non-stop talking and said beamingly.

“Hey, how can you be so rude?! We are sisters. What’s wrong with us chatting on the way to kill some time?” Qu Caiyue hit the ceiling immediately. She had no choice but to act obediently in front of the other two ladies. Now she finally got a chance to trample on someone else’s ego, yet a bold, low-life maid dared to chip in her great lecture. This was something she couldn’t tolerate.

“Second Sister, if you want to have some chat, you can join them in the other carriage,” Qu Moying said in a flat tone, with her eyes still closed.

Hearing that Qu Moying wanted to drive her away, Qu Caiyue’s eyes darkened immediately. She had always enjoyed the feeling of pushing other people around, following Qu Qiuyan’s lead. Now being looked down on by a useless lady like Qu Moying, she totally lost her temper as her face turned gloomy.

Facing people who had a higher status than her, like Qu Qiuyan, Qu Caiyue would act like the kindest girl in the world, doing everything she could to flatter them. If they hit her on her left face, she would even turn her head and show them the right one. However, if it was Qu Moying, who she thought poorly of, she would turn into a bad-temper person. Right now, she was on the edge of losing her temper.

Not until her maid pulled her sleeve hard did she remember the thing Qu Qiuyan asked her to do. She had no choice but to suppress her rage, yet the look on her face was still disdainful.

“Moying, what a well-behaved maid you have! How dare she meddle with her masters.” Qu Caiyue couldn’t do anything about Qu Moying right now, and only bubbling could make her feel a bit better.

“She’s just concerned about me!” Qu Moying leaned next to the window with a calm look on her face.

Only a few words had already shown Qu Caiyue's true colors. Qu Moying didn't want to waste time on her as her mind was occupied with the Old Lady's health condition. It was the first time she heard about it. Having palpitations didn't sound like a good sign for her. It might be not a big deal, but it also could cause severe problems like a stroke. If her grandmother was not taken good care of, her life would be easily put at risk. She couldn't underestimate it.

It's better to prepare some medicine that could ease her palpitations or make some sachets to help her stay calm!

"Moying, your package looks quite big. What's in there? Let me have a look." Qu Caiyue went more irritated because Qu Moying deliberately ignored her. She took a glance at the package next to Yu Dong's feet, bent over, and quickly reached out her hand.

This was what she had suppressed her anger for. Otherwise, she would never sit next to Qu Moying and act so friendly. Qu Qiuyan told her that she would pay her back with a considerable price if Qu Caiyue helped her with it. She even promised to grant Qu Caiyue's biggest wish. And of course, Qu Caiyue agreed...

Dealing with the Fourth Lady would be a piece of cake for her. After all, Qu Moying was just a blind rustic that no man wanted...

Chapter 55 An Extra Piece of Clothes

Qu Caiyue had already opened the package before the others had time to stop her. There was not much inside, only some simple clothes coupled with some smaller bags.

"Second Lady, why did you mess the Fourth Lady's package?" Yu Dong pulled a long face and took the bag back from her hand.

"What's the matter with you, Second Sister?" Qu Moying said coldly. It was not hard to tell her anger through her icy tone, even though her eyes were covered by the veil.

Questioned by Qu Moying and her maid, Qu Caiyue was stunned. She watched Yu Dong picking up the bag expressionlessly and then realized she was startled by someone she looked down on the most, feeling more furious.

“Moying, I just want to take a look at what you have. If there’s anything you need, I can give it to you. How can you misunderstand my good intention? Oh right, I guess you need everything because you probably don’t have any valuable things!” said Qu Caiyue in disdain.

“Thank you for your concern, Second Sister. I have everything I want already!” Qu Moying’s tone was calm. She ignored the sarcastic look on Qu Caiyue’s face.

Qu Moying hadn’t met that many people of her kind in her past life. After all, she was the lady who would become the Crown Princess, treated by people respectfully. No one really dared to offend her, but it didn’t mean she was unaware of people like Qu Caiyue.

A daughter given birth by a concubine was always second to those righteous noble ladies. These girls usually felt aggrieved at their identities because they were always treated poorly and unfairly. But at the same time, their sisters could have a much easier life than them. They hated their own lives and tended to act sourly. When there was any chance, they would take advantage of the situation immediately and push around other people who had a more miserable life than them. Their intention was understandable, but sometimes they could be really malicious.

Second Lady Qu was a living example of this kind.

“No way. These are the only clothes you have! I heard we will stay there for quite some time. Besides, since grandmother is sick, she will definitely stay longer to recuperate. How can these be enough for you? I happened to have brought some extra clothes with me. Let me give you one!”

Qu Caiyue seemed to think about something. Suddenly, her sour face turned into an amicable one as her tone softened. She waved her hand at Qu Moying, pretending to be generous. “I just wanted to check if you had brought enough clothes with you. Moying, please forgive me if I offended you.” After finishing her words, she even smiled at Qu Moying.

Her maid opened her bag obediently and passed one small package to Yu Dong.

Yu Dong was occupied with tidying Qu Moying's package. Instead of taking the one given by the Second Lady, he looked at his master, waiting for her order.

"Moying, we are sisters. You don't need to be bothered by this!" Qu Caiyue was beaming at Qu Moying. If she didn't nearly lose her temper just now, Qu Moying would almost believe her.

She waited for a while until Qu Caiyue's smile started to get frozen. Then she said in a flat tone, "Thank you, Second Sister."

As Yu Dong took the small package, she closed her eyes again. "Second Sister, I'm tired. Allow me to have some rest!"

"Alright, rest well. There's still a long way before we get there. I'll have some rest too!" A complacent smile showed up on Qu Caiyue's face as she saw Yu Dong put the package into Qu Moying's bag. She knew this would be a piece of cake for her. It was just a piece of clothes. Her aunt didn't need to act so cautiously at all!

Since her job was done now, there was no point in talking to Qu Moying anymore. She leaned on a cushion, and her eyelids started to feel heavy.

Qu Caiyue's maid fell asleep as well after she tidied up.

The carriage fell into a peaceful silence as everyone was taking a nap. Qu Moying closed her eyes before just to avoid talking to the Second Lady. But now, tiredness really hit her after a morning of waiting in the Old Lady's yard.

When her mind became blank, she suddenly felt someone pulling her sleeve – it was Yu Dong. She closed her eyes and opened them again, and then she noticed the small package next to his feet.

It was the one given by Qu Caiyue.

A piece of clothes was lying inside. Without touching it, Qu Moying could already tell it was well-made. The fabric looked smooth and exquisite, better than any of her clothes.

This reminded her of something – Qu Qiuyan asked her to help her bring one piece of clothes. This one happened to look like the kind that Qu Qiuyan would wear.

Before they made their clothes, the Old Lady would let the ladies pick the fabric they liked from the same batch. However, Qu Qiuyan would usually be the first one to pick while Qu Moying could only choose from the leftovers, which would have relatively worse qualities. The fabric used for this piece of clothes was a kind she never saw.

Yu Dong quietly pointed at Qu Caiyue's package placed next to her maid's feet.

Qu Moying nodded at him. Of course, she wouldn't take anything without knowing their intention. Since Qu Caiyue was clearly helping Yu, she should be more discreet.

She let her guard down and took a nap because Yu Dong was here with her. Since everyone was tired from getting up early this morning, Qu Caiyue and her maid would naturally fall asleep in the quiet environment, which was the chance Qu Moying had been waiting for.

Yu Dong opened Qu Caiyue's bag swiftly, put the small package inside, and wrapped it up again. After everything was done, Qu Moying nodded at him.

Qu Caiyue and her maid were still deep in their sleep, having no idea the small package they gave out had returned to its original place.

When they finally arrived at the Dabei Temple, it was already lunchtime.

The Qus' carriages stopped at the parking lot outside the Dabei Temple, and the place was full of carriages. Many people had come for the worship.

The Old Lady got out of the carriage first. She hadn't felt any better during the trip, so Granny Wu hurriedly helped her settle inside.

A Reception Monk led them to the yard they would stay at this time, which was booked long ago. The middle house was for the Old Lady; on the right was Qu Xuexin and Qu Moying's house, and on the left was Qu Qiuyan and Qu Caiyue's house.

They were told it was a whole yard before they came. But actually, there was just one main house, two wing rooms, and a small courtyard.

Their yard sat in the temple along with many other yards. They were adjacent to each other, but the space was not too crowded.

The lunch was ready. The Old Lady soon sent the young ladies away after she ate a little. She really needed some rest now. She thought her sickness would just be a small problem, but she was still feeling very unwell.

Qu Moying didn't go back to her room until she was done with helping the Old Lady get on the bed.

Her lunch was also sent to her room already. They were told by the Reception Monk that lunch would be sent to their rooms as today for the following days. If they required any extra food, they could tell the kitchen staff in the temple.

There were three dishes and one soup for lunch. The food was all made of vegetables, but it was surprisingly appetizing. Qu Moying felt hungry long ago, and she ate even more than usual.

After she and her two maids finished lunch, Yu Chun put the tableware in the food basket and headed to the kitchen to return them.

"Did you find anything?" Qu Moying took the teacup from Yu Dong and asked after having a sip.

"Nothing really, my lady. It's just an ordinary piece of clothes, like the kind you wear." Yu Dong checked it carefully, but there was nothing unusual about that clothes. If Qu Moying didn't ask him to put it back, he thought it would be a nice dress for her to wear, at least much better than the clothes she had right now.

"It's better than my clothes. Did you notice the difference?" Qu Moying asked with a serious look on her face.

Seeing her stern look, Yu Dong thought carefully about it. "The fabric seemed better than your clothes, but it's hard to tell if you don't look at it carefully. And the color is brighter. The stitching method and the embroidery pattern don't seem to be made by our embroidery workshop."

"What makes you say that?" Qu Moying raised her brow.

"I know the usual stitching method and embroidery pattern used by our tailors. The clothes they made, including yours and the Third Lady's, are not as exquisite as this one. This one reminds me of the clothes from the Huayi Boutique I saw before."

The Huayi Boutique was where Xu Lipeng wanted to take Qu Moying to, but they ended up not going because of the accident.

It was the most popular boutique in the capital. Many young noble ladies were proud of owning the trendy clothes designed by the Huayi Boutique.

"How do you know it so clearly?"

"Some of the lord's clothes are made by them, so I've been there with Mr. Ji Hai a few times. Once I see more, I get to know about it," Yu Dong said, grinning.

That meant the cloth was made by the Huayi Boutique, and it had the trendiest design. But why did Qu Caiyue have to give it to her? It should be a rare one even for Qu Caiyue! Why didn't she keep it herself instead of giving it to Qu Moying? Now, it was impossible for Qu Moying not to suspect it.

Or to be more precise, what did Yu and Qu Qiuyan try to do?

"My lady, no matter what they are planning, there should be no problem since we have returned it to Second Lady Qu. I've noticed that she has a lot of stuff in her bag. She won't be able to find it out so quickly."

“Is the Fourth Lady inside?” suddenly, a voice came from the yard.

They glanced at each other, and then Yu Dong walked out. An old maid was standing in the yard, who was one of the four servants Qu Qiuyan brought to the temple.

“How can I help you?” Yu Dong stepped forward and asked.

The old maid was beaming, “The Old Lady said the young ladies could leave her alone and hang out first. After the Third Lady had lunch, she wants to go out for a walk. The First Lady and the Second Lady have joined her, and she sent me to invite the Fourth Lady. There’s a popular street in front of the temple that she wants to take a look at. Will the Fourth Lady go with them?”

“Wait here for a minute. I’ll ask the Fourth Lady!” Yu Dong said.

The old maid stayed in the yard while Yu Dong went back inside.

Qu Moying had heard them clearly in the room. It would be inappropriate if she didn’t go with the three, so she nodded at Yu Dong.

Yu Dong went out to confirm the meetup time and location with the old maid when Yu Chun was back. Then the two maids returned together.

After getting washed, Qu Moying put on her veil.

“My lady, you don’t need to wear the veil anymore, right? Didn’t you say your eyes almost recover, and they won’t hurt even it’s sunny outside?” Yu Dong asked. It was inconvenient for her to wear the veil, and it also made her obtrusive among people.

Qu Moying shook her head, “I’m not in a rush to take it off!”

Being cautious was always not the wrong choice. She was waiting for a good chance to take it off, but now it was not the right time.

Before she left, she went to check on the Old Lady. Granny Wu told her that the Old Lady was alright, just feeling fatigued. Hearing her granddaughters were going out, she asked them to be careful outside.

When Qu Moying arrived at the place, the other three ladies had been waiting for her already. Seeing her walking over, Qu Qiuyan gave her a bright smile...

Chapter 56 Been A Long Time, My Enemy

On the street in front of the Dabei Temple, the locals ran a market, selling candles, meals, native snacks, and some toys for children. Tourists who came to the Dabei Temple would also take a walk here to have some fun.

Yu Chun stayed in the yard to clean up while Qu Moying brought Yu Dong to meet with her sisters. The other three ladies all brought one maid with them. They were just a tiny group, not conspicuous.

The Dabei Temple was well known in the capital and received many guests every day. Ladies and young masters from noble families could be seen everywhere in this place. Compared to many of them, the four ladies from the Qu Family could only be considered ordinary. Anyway, they should keep a low profile here, which the four all bore in mind.

Because for those real aristocratic families, their family was literally nothing.

There were all kinds of booths in the market. Among those, jewelry booths were the most popular ones, crowded with young ladies and madams. Once they saw those beautiful, sparkling things, they stopped moving as their eyes lit up.

There were times they went out to do some shopping before, but all with the elders in the family. Today was the first time they visited a market by themselves, so everyone was in a relaxed mood. They wandered around the booths and sometimes stopped to buy things they liked.

Qu Moying didn't have much savings, but the Old Lady gave some to her before they left the mansion. Right now, the money she had was enough for her to feel comfortable on such an occasion.

However, Qu Caiyue was quite poor compared to them, but there was a lot she wanted to buy. After spending all her money, she could only watch the others shopping with envy. Of course, she didn't dare to feel jealous of the First Lady and the Third Lady. Qu Moying was the only one she could vent her exasperation on. She couldn't accept Qu Moying, whom she looked down on, had more money than her and cursed Qu Moying inwardly.

The Old Lady must have given money to Qu Moying in private. When she thought about it, she started to blame her grandmother for showing partiality. Both she and Qu Moying were her granddaughter, but why Qu Moying had money while she didn't?

The stupid girl only knew blaming her grandmother but totally forgot that Yu barely gave Qu Moying money for all these years. The money Yu sent to her was actually even less than what a concubine's daughter should get. When Qu Moying lived in the village, she seldomly spent money on anything except for her daily necessities. Even with her frugal lifestyle and the financial help from the Old Lady and Ji Hanyue from time to time, she only made a minimal amount of savings.

Since Qu Moying just came back to the mansion, the Old Lady asked Granny Wu to give some extra money to her. But technically, this was what she should get in the first place.

Qu Caiyue's face was twisted in jealousy. She clenched her hankies hard and opened her mouth but ended up staying quiet. She looked at Qu Qiuyan, who threw a glare at her, making her lower her head immediately. She felt free to do anything to Qu Moying. Yet, Qu Qiuyan's words were like law for her since she had been the Third Lady's loyal follower and bullied people under her leadership.

Qu Moying noticed their petty actions, but she chose to ignore them. Suddenly, Qu Xuexin was attracted by one booth as the others stopped with her. It was a booth selling kites, all kinds of kites. They were made delicately, with exquisite paintings on them. The booth decorated by the kites was an incredible view, catching many people's eyes.

They started to pick the kite they liked. Since the ladies would stay in the temple for a period, flying kites sounded like a nice entertainment.

They were all together when Qu Moying bent over and looked at the kites. But when she stood up and turned around after some time, the other three were all gone. The only person she knew around was Yu Dong next to her.

“Where did they go?” Qu Moying put down the kite in her hand and asked. Everyone said they wanted to buy a kite a moment ago, and now, they had all disappeared.

“The Second Lady said she saw something she liked and asked the First Lady to go take a look with her. The Third Lady followed them and left too.” Yu Dong had kept a close eye on them. He pointed to one direction, “They went that way. This place is too crowded. I lost sight of them after they walked away.”

The whole street was packed, and they melted into the crowd long ago.

“My lady, do you want me to look for them?”

“No need. We can just have fun by ourselves!” Qu Moying said carelessly. She wondered what they were up to this time.

The crowd suddenly started to move to the sides as something was happening in the middle of the street. Qu Moying was standing in front of the kite booth but got shoved by people to the gap between the booths. If it weren't for Yu Dong, she would have fallen to the ground already. She held Yu Dong's arm and turned around. A large group of people was walking in her direction.

The person at the front was apparently well-respected by the others. Surprisingly, it was someone she knew.

The leading woman wore a showy, gorgeous dress embroidered with delicate and vivid butterfly patterns, making her look as beautiful as a fairy. Her beauty was not the peerless kind, but the dress definitely added to it. At first sight, she looked a bit similar to Ji Hanyue, and even her earrings seemed so familiar. It was a pair of butterfly-shaped earrings shining in the sunlight.

Ji Hanyue loved butterflies, so many of her clothes had embroidered patterns of butterflies and flowers, and most of her jewelry was butterfly-shaped.

Qu Moying clenched her fists hard. In her mind, the woman's fancy dress, her beautiful jewelry, and even herself were all covered with blood, the blood of Ji Hanyue and her entire family. Ji Youran climbed up to her current position at the cost of Ji Hanyue and her families' lives!

Staring at that woman, Qu Moying bit her lip so hard that blood started to flow into her mouth from the wound. Her mouth was filled with a metallic taste, but it was also the taste of hatred.

"My lady, my lady!" Yu Dong pulled her sleeve hurriedly and called her with worry. When he was observing the surroundings, he didn't forget about his master. He noticed Qu Moying was staring at that woman with an almost manic look on her face. In a daze, she bit her lips and didn't even know she was hurting herself.

Fortunately, Yu Dong's voice pulled her back to reality. She lowered her head, calmed herself down, and wiped the blood off her mouth.

"What's the matter, my lady?"

"I'm fine!" Qu Moying shook her head and said softly, staring at the ground. Slowly, she suppressed her anger and hatred. The taste in her mouth reminded her that she was still alive. Right, she was still alive, but not as Ji Hanyue. She was Qu Moying right now.

Ji Youran not only killed Ji Hanyue but also took everything away from her. Ji Youran's clothes, jewelry... They once all belonged to Ji Hanyue. The most ironic thing was she was using this method to act as Ji Hanyue. Qu Moying couldn't help but wonder if Pei Luo'an would feel angry seeing her ridiculous impersonation.

Princess Ji in the Eastern Palace? How wonderful the title sounded!

For this title, Ji Youran killed Ji Hanyue's whole family!

"Your Royal Highness, these kites look amazing. Do you want to buy some?" It was Ji Youran's private maid, Shui Yan's voice.

“That sounds like a good idea, Your Royal Highness. You can pick the ones you like, and we can fly them for you later,” another person said with a high thin voice, sounding like a eunuch.

Their suggestion drew Ji Youran’s attention. She picked up some kites to take a look and put them back down again. Then her eyes fell on Qu Moying, who was still standing in the narrow gap between the booths. When Ji Youran came, all the other people left to make space for her, and only Qu Moying and Yu Dong were stuck here.

Qu Moying was holding a kite in her hand. She picked it up before but hadn’t got time to buy it.

It was a beautiful butterfly-shaped kite with delicate embroidered patterns on its wings. No matter how people looked at it, there was no doubt it was well-made.

“Present the kite to Her Royal Highness,” the eunuch immediately demanded when he saw Ji Youran looking at the kite in Qu Moying’s hands.

“Our lady got it first,” Yu Dong said, feeling annoyed.

“Her Royal Highness wants to take a look. Give it to her, quick!” The eunuch sounded impatient.

Qu Moying stopped Yu Dong before he continued to argue and passed the kite to Ji Youran. Her glance fell on her dress first and then moved to Ji Youran’s hair. She left some long hair lying down in front of her ears, which looked a bit unusual.

Ladies typically had a little hair in front of their ears. However, Ji Youran made it longer and thicker, even covering part of her face as if there was something under which she wanted to hide. It looked inharmonious with her whole dress-up style.

Ji Youran touched the butterfly kite and nodded. She gave a glance at Qu Moying, who was wearing a veil. Ji Youran hadn’t met a lady who had an eye problem or was blind, so she didn’t pay much attention to her and nodded to the eunuch indifferently.

"This one is not bad. Her Royal Highness will take it!" The eunuch surely knew how to please his master. He quickly took out some money and gave it to the booth owner.

"But the lady picked it first." Yu Dong felt aggrieved.

"You should feel blessed to have the same taste as Her Royal Highness. Don't tell me you want Her Royal Highness to lower herself and give it back to you!" the eunuch said coldly and flicked a disdainful glance at Qu Moying and Yu Dong.

Qu Moying stopped Yu Dong before he talked again, quietly staring at Ji Youran. She suppressed her boiling emotions and twisted her lips into a smile.

It was not the right time yet.

"Are you the Fourth Lady from the Qu Family?" After Ji Youran walked a few steps away, she suddenly stopped and turned around, sizing Qu Moying up curiously.

The Crown Prince mentioned her before, but Ji Youran didn't pay much attention to it at that time. She suddenly remembered it just now.

"Yes, Your Royal Highness," Qu Moying answered and slowly bowed to her.

"So, it's really you! I thought I was wrong," Ji Youran said delightfully as she turned back and walked over. She reached out enthusiastically, trying to hold Qu Moying's hands.

However, Qu Moying hurriedly took two steps back, looking at her warily.

It was not surprising that a girl who grew up in a village felt scared and nervous when she saw such a big scene. Qu Moying's reaction made sense with her background. If she didn't do so, Ji Youran would probably be suspicious.

"I know you are the Crown Princess's cousin. I'm her cousin too but from her father's family. I heard about you from her before, and she said you had lived in a village. It's great that you came back. She will be so happy after knowing it," Ji Youran's voice was soft. She was wearing a bright and genuine smile, looking like a graceful, gentle lady.

For years, she had always acted like this in front of Ji Hanyue.

Gently and smilingly, she destroyed Ji Hanyue's life. The stairs she stepped on were built by Ji Hanyue's families' flesh and blood, leading her all the way to the Eastern Palace...

How could Ji Hanyue be happy about it since she was already dead? How ironic her words were for Qu Moying! Yet she did feel happy, for a different reason. She was happy to see Ji Youran alive because it meant she could avenge herself, her father, and her sister's death with her own hands...

"Since we both are the Crown Princess's cousin, technically, we are also related. If you don't mind, you can call me cousin too," Ji Youran said with an amiable smile. She had been looking for an excuse to prove how close she and Ji Hanyue were for a while. Luckily, the chance came itself!

Chapter 57 How Many People Were Involved?

After Ji Youran finished her words, she looked at Qu Moying beamingly, expecting an enthusiastic response.

It should be a great honor for Qu Moying to be related to the Crown Prince's wife. If Qu Moying were a smart girl, she would agree immediately. After all, it was a win-win situation for both of them.

Ji Youran also heard that Qu Moying's engagement with Young Master Yongning was broken off. Becoming Princess Ji's cousin would benefit Qu Moying a lot when she had no one to rely on.

However, the blind girl fell into silence for a long time, long enough to make Ji Youran's smile freeze on her face.

"It's my pleasure, Your Royal Highness!" Qu Moying finally uttered some words. She lowered her head, her voice was slow and calm, even with a trace of indifference. She would never allow such a malicious woman to be around her in this life.

Well, no one could immediately get along with a stranger who claimed to be her cousin. Moreover, Qu Moying was known for being solitary and introverted.

Ji Youran pressed her lips into a straight line, feeling displeased. She shouldn't expect this girl who grew up in a village to know about proper manners. She didn't really care about her, but people close to Ji Hanyue were all dead except for her. Otherwise, she would never make friends with a low-life girl she looked down on to prove her good relationship with Ji Hanyue.

"Cousin, are you here to visit the Dabei Temple too? How many people came with you?" Ji Youran ignored her indifference and kept her friendly smile, looking graceful.

"I came with my sisters and grandmother," Qu Moying said in a flat tone. She had already hidden all her emotions and turned back to her usual self.

"I will stay in the temple for a period as well. You can come to hang out with me when you are available. I still have something else to do, and I'll leave first." Ji Youran casually pointed at one random place and left with her group.

She didn't really mean to get acquainted with a blind girl since all she needed was to make a show in public.

When Ji Hanyue's death was announced in the future, she could use Qu Moying to show the touching family love between her and Ji Hanyue as cousins. By then, no one would relate her to the Crown Princess's death.

Subconsciously, she touched her cheek. Near her ear was a scar made by Ji Hanyue, hidden under her long, thick hair. On the day Ji Hanyue died, Ji Hanyue held her and jumped into the water, and Ji Youran's face hit a rail while falling. It hadn't recovered yet, and the Imperial Doctor said the scar might stay on her face permanently. Thinking about it, she couldn't help but gnash her teeth. That woman just couldn't give her any peace even after her death! The reason why she was here was Ji Hanyue as well –

the Crown Prince asked Ji Rouran to pray for Ji Hanyue in the Dabei Temple so that she could rest in peace.

Pray? She'd love to see Ji Hanyue go to hell after death!

Watching Ji Youran leaving, Qu Moying's eyes only showed coldness. It was lucky for her that Ji Youran showed up herself since she was planning to approach her anyway.

Butterfly patterns were Ji Hanyue's favorite, and now ironically, it became Ji Youran's favorite...

Now that Ji Youran left, the street was crowded again. Qu Moying wearing the veil drew the interest of some punks. They walked over and said frivolously,

"Look, this chick is waiting for someone. I wonder who that is!"

"She'd rather hide in the gap than leave when that noble lady came. She must be waiting for her secret lover! But this man is quite rude to let the chick wait for so long."

"The chick looks pretty cute, but she's blind. What a pity!"

"What's wrong with her being blind? It's fine for me as long as she's cute..."

The punks talked carelessly as they walked closer. Yu Dong stood in front of Qu Moying to protect her. It was not that he was afraid of these brats, but it was better not to expose themselves now. He glanced over a crossing nearby where the two secret guards he brought were hiding.

Lord Yun assigned him these two before, and he brought them here just in case something bad happened during this trip.

"How dare you harass a lady in public? Who are you?!" A young man scolded, who was wearing a dark blue brocade robe, followed by some servants.

The punks fell into silence, looked at each other for a second, and fled away.

They could tell he was a young master from a noble family, and they'd rather not offend him.

Qu Moying's eyes fell on the young man, but she didn't recognize him. Judging by his righteous look and decent appearance, he seemed to be a gentleman. He even bowed to Qu Moying politely before talking to her. "It's a pleasure to meet you, Fourth Lady Qu."

"Who are you?" Qu Moying looked at this stranger.

"I happened to hear your conversation with Her Royal Highness. That's why I know you are Fourth Lady Qu," the young man said with a smile. He acted naturally and confidently as he reached out and pointed at a corner. "Fourth Lady Qu, can we have a talk in private?"

The corner was behind the booths with fewer people around.

"What's the matter?" Qu Moying didn't move an inch.

"Can we talk in private? It's... about the Marquis Yongning's Family. Young Master Yongning is my..." He was hesitant when saying these words.

His hesitance annoyed Qu Moying at once, let alone he wanted to talk about her ex-fiance.

Qu Moying sneered at him and sized him up. Then she turned around from the gap between the booths and walked away with Yu Dong, leaving this good-looking young master standing alone there.

Even topics about the Marquis Yongning's Family couldn't draw her attention. No wonder everyone said she was a weirdo.

The young man watched Qu Moying leaving and started to understand Xu Lipeng's situation more. She was the one who set Lady Yu up, forced her to become a concubine, and made Xu Lipeng end up

marrying a shrew. No one would want to marry a weird woman like her, who looked weak but did things with such malice. Xu Lipeng was really unlucky being tricked by her.

The young man's lips twisted into a smirk as he waved the paper fan in his hand. From his temperament, it was easy to tell that he had an ulterior motive.

He talked to her so politely and even saved her just now from the punks. Instead of expressing her gratitude, she left him alone rudely.

What an uncourteous girl!

He shook his head and left. He didn't achieve his goal today, but at least he finished half of it. All he needed was to inform those from the Qu Family and see what they would do for the next step.

Before, Yu Qingmeng contacted him to ask for a favor. She claimed that with his help and her arrangement in the Qu Family, things would work out. Since he was not the first son in his family, he didn't care about his reputation. There was no harm to help her.

He thought this of showing his good intention to Lord Jing. Although he didn't necessarily need Lord Jing's help in the future, he surely didn't want to have a grudge against him. Moreover, helping Lady Yu could stop his mother from urging him on marriage temporarily. He didn't want to get married at all now.

Generally speaking, it was not a bad idea.

Besides, he never liked Fourth Lady Qu in the first place. He'd love to do something that could kill three birds with one stone...

After Qu Moying came back from the market, she went straight to the Old Lady's yard. After having some sleep and taking the medicine, the Old Lady regained a bit of energy. She heard Qu Moying entering the yard, so she sent a servant to let her in.

"Why did you come back alone? Where are the others?" the Old Lady saw her coming inside alone and asked surprisedly.

She remembered Granny Wu said the ladies went out together.

"I got lost and was separated from the others. It's getting late, so I came back by myself first," Qu Moying said smilingly as she held the Old Lady's wrist and acted coquettishly by shaking her hand. Meanwhile, she quietly lowered her head and pressed her thumb on the Old Lady's vein to feel the pulse.

"It's okay. You can go there with me next time," the Old Lady said gently, amused by her childish behavior.

"Yeah, let's go together next time, Grandma. With you, I won't get lost," Qu Moying responded with a smile.

However, the Old Lady's heart suddenly lost a beat as something crossed her mind. She knew the market in front of the temple was popular among the tourists, but she never heard that someone got lost there. The other three granddaughters never got separated before when she took them here. This time, the ladies left together, but the lost one happened to be Ying, who rarely went out.

This was too suspicious. The Old Lady knew Qu Qiuyan disliked Qu Moying, which made her wonder if this was designed by Qu Qiuyan.

"Your three sisters are all gone? How did you get separated?" the Old Lady asked as she pondered for a while.

"I don't really know. We were looking at some kites at a booth because everyone said they wanted one. After I picked mine, I couldn't find them anymore," said Qu Moying blankly. Then she shook the Old Lady's hand again and pouted cutely. "Grandma, it's okay. Maybe they had something urgent to do. Fortunately, I remember the way back."

“Why couldn’t they tell you before leaving you alone?!” The Old Lady got irritated. She thought her first granddaughter was a reliable girl, yet she didn’t expect her to be so irresponsible, leaving her youngest sister without saying anything in a place crowded with people.

When the Old Lady was thinking about it angrily, some noise suddenly came from outside. An old maid came in and reported, “Madam, the First Lady, the Second Lady, and the Third Lady are back.”

“Let them in!” the Old Lady’s voice was cold.

Qu Moying stayed quiet, moved a little bit away from the Old Lady, and seated herself near the door. She wondered how many people were involved this time. One, two, or three?

The three ladies noticed Qu Moying sitting aside when they came in, and all looked a bit flustered. Qu Caiyue was the first to make a sound, but it was a rude scold, “Moying, you are back?! How could you not tell us? We’ve been looking for you!”

“You are looking for me?” Qu Moying raised her eyes and asked.

“Yeah. We went to the opposite booth to buy some candies. But when we returned, you were already gone. We’ve been looking for you everywhere, but the place was too crowded. Luckily, we met a young master who saw you before. He told us that you walked in the direction of the temple. Otherwise, we would still be looking for you right now,” said Qu Caiyue.

She meant it was Qu Moying’s fault to leave by herself and cause them trouble to look for her. Strangely, she particularly mentioned a young master. But there were so many people on the street. Who would notice her and watch her walking all the way to the temple?

Qu Moying sneered inwardly. Before, she still doubted if it was just a coincidence or something done on purpose. But right now, Qu Caiyue was the first one to talk and accused her before she said anything. She was sure that this was their trap set for her. Besides, the direction Yu Dong told her they went in was not somewhere opposite.

"Sisters, did you go to the opposite booth? But I don't remember there's a candy booth on the opposite side. I've also looked for you around, and I didn't see you there," said Qu Moying as her lips curled up, looking kind and generous. "Anyway, it doesn't matter now since I'm back. I'm glad to see you alright!"

"Xin, where have you been?" However, the Old Lady didn't intend to go easy on them. With a stern look, she questioned her eldest granddaughter, who was the most well-mannered and gentle one among the three.

It was not the first time that the three ladies had come to the temple, so of course, they would be fine. It was most likely that her youngest granddaughter would run into danger since she was a timid girl who just came back from the village and hadn't met many people yet. Qu Caiyue's words sounded more like accusing Qu Moying of no reason, not convincing at all, which irritated the Old Lady more.

Chapter 58 The Sneaky Man

"Grandmother, we were really at the candy booth..." Qu Caiyue hurriedly explained, looking flustered. She didn't seem confident in her words as her eyes avoided her grandmother.

"Granny Wu, take Third Lady away and let her kneel in the yard," the Old Lady said with an icy voice.

Qu Caiyue's face turned pale immediately. She looked at Qu Qiuyan, wishing Qu Qiuyan could help her, but Qu Qiuyan lowered her head and ignored her.

"Third Lady, this way, please!" Granny Wu walked up to Qu Caiyue and said coldly. The Third Lady was terrible at understanding the situation. How dare she, a concubine's daughter, fabricate a story in front of the Old Lady when the First Lady and the Second Lady didn't even say anything?

Qu Caiyue didn't dare to utter another word, walked out, and knelt on the ground with a pale face, trembling in fear.

"Xin, tell me what happened!" the Old Lady continued to question the other two granddaughters, her voice was still angry.

“Grandmother, we were really buying some candies. It’s just... It’s just a bit far away from the kite booth. We didn’t know Moying would leave by herself...” Qu Xuexin bit her lip and said. Then she looked at Qu Moying and bowed to her, “Moying, it’s my fault. I forgot it’s your first time going out. I’m sorry to make you frightened in a place unfamiliar to you.”

Her words sounded honest, and she didn’t use any excuse to defend herself. The Old Lady’s expression softened a bit as she continued to ask, “who suggested it?”

Subconsciously, Qu Xuexin glanced at Qu Qiuyan, who was still staring at the ground with her head lowered. She bit her lip and answered, “Grandmother, no one suggested it. We were talking about the local candies, saying they taste better than what we have in the mansion. Then... Then we left together.”

She made it sound mild, but the Old Lady saw her petty reaction clearly. Without the need for confirmation, she already knew that Qu Xuexin was covering up for Qu Qiuyan, again. The Old Lady almost laughed out in rage, and she pointed at Qu Qiuyan, “Yan, you tell me. Who suggested it?”

“I-I don’t really remember. It’s like everyone was talking about it.” The Old Lady’s anger was beyond her expectation, making her flustered. Qu Caiyue did as she said and drew their grandmother’s anger to her, but she didn’t expect the Old Lady to punish Qu Caiyue that hard by letting her kneel in the yard.

There were many guests in the temple, and they all lived close to each other. If the Old Lady asked her to kneel as well, there would be no difference from losing her face in public.

She inwardly cursed Qu Caiyue for her stupidity, which put her in such an awkward situation. All she could do right now was saying things consistent with Qu Xuexin’s story and not admitting her fault no matter what happened.

“Do you really not know whose fault was that?” asked the Old Lady again.

“Grandmother, I-I really don’t remember... Everyone was talking about it, and I can’t remember who said it first. Maybe it was me; maybe it was First Sister,” she defended herself in a low voice, sounding frightened.

Qu Xuexin almost jumped up hearing her name from Qu Qiuyan's mouth, but she didn't deny it. She looked at the Old Lady, "Grandmother, I will make sure this won't happen again. I will protect Moying with all my heart in the future. If you want to punish someone, please punish me! I'm the eldest sister here, and it's my fault to let Moying get lost!"

Compared to her eldest granddaughter, who took the responsibility proactively and didn't blame it on others, Qu Qiuyan's attitude was more disappointing. The Old Lady gave Qu Qiuyan a displeased glare but didn't ask her to kneel with Qu Caiyue.

Qu Moying immediately understood the Old Lady's concern. Apparently, the Old Lady was aware of what was happening between Qu Qiuyan and Lord Jing. She might not think it was the best choice for Qu Qiuyan to marry Lord Jing, but she couldn't insult Qu Qiuyan too much. After all, who knew what would happen in the future?

Qu Qiuyan was obviously involved in this. But Qu Xuexin took the blame, while Qu Caiyue didn't have the guts to speak out the truth. There was no need for the Old Lady to go further on the questioning.

Asking them more didn't do anything good, and luckily, Qu Moying came back safe and sound. The situation came to a conclusion for now. The Old Lady lectured the two granddaughters and asked them to apologize to Qu Moying. Then after a few words, she dismissed them.

After Qu Moying returned to her yard, she sent Yu Dong out. But Yu Dong came back hurriedly soon after and said, "My lady, I ran into the young master we met today just now."

"Where?" Qu Moying put down the teacup in her hand as her eyes darkened. This coincidence was too unnatural!

"A few minutes ago, when I came out of Granny Wu's place, I noticed someone who looked very suspicious. It was that young master, followed by only one servant," said Yu Dong.

Yu Dong went to the Old Lady's yard because Qu Moying wanted to ask about her grandmother's daily diet and the cause of her long-term sickness. It was improper to talk to the Old Lady about it directly, so she sent Yu Dong to ask Granny Wu in private. She didn't expect Yu Dong would meet that man here.

Yu Dong had a good sight. Although they were far away, he still recognized the young master. He thought that man was just a stranger they ran into on the street, but it was not a simple coincidence anymore since he showed up here.

“Did you see him near our side of the yard or the other side?” Qu Moying asked. She meant Qu Qiuyan’s place by the other side.

“Near our place. He was looking in our direction at a distance. I don’t know if he is walking over right now. My lady, do you want me to go ask him why he’s stalking us?” Yu Dong said in anger.

He didn’t look like a pervert, but he was behaving like one right now. It would be a disaster if people saw him, a playboy coming out of nowhere, follow a lady all the way here.

“Don’t. If you go, people will think it’s my order,” Qu Moying shook her head and refused his suggestion.

“You’re right, my lady!” Yu Dong understood her intention immediately and kept nodding. He almost forgot that his current identity was the Fourth Lady’s maid. If a maid went out to meet someone, people would naturally think it was an order coming from her master. He represented his master now. “Then what should we do now? Just let him do whatever he wants?”

“Let’s wait and see. I’m not involved yet, so it’s not the time to make a move,” Qu Moying said calmly as her eyes darkened. If her guessing was correct, Yu and Qu Qiuyan should be the ones behind everything. Qu Caiyue was just the one to execute their plan.

Her only concern was how Yu made her grandmother sick at the right moment.

Because her grandmother was sick, she had to share a carriage with Qu Caiyue. Then Qu Caiyue got the chance to give her that piece of clothes, and everything else would make sense too.

Otherwise, she would’ve visited the market with the Old Lady. And it would be impossible for her to run into that young master, let alone make him follow all the way here. Right now, more things were probably waiting for her to deal with.

She was impressed by the well-thought plan. Did Yu come up with it herself?

Qu Moying was knowledgeable in medicine now since she had been sick for a long time. Moreover, she had Granny Miao around. When she checked the Old Lady's pulse just now, she could feel it was blocked somewhere, and the blood flow was not smooth. Her sickness was real, and it did look like a long-term health issue. But it still felt unnatural for Qu Moying. After everything she had been through today, Qu Moying didn't believe this was just a coincidence.

There were many coincidences in the world that people designed on purpose.

If everything was designed, the plan made by Yu was very impressive...

"My lady, I think the Second Lady is definitely involved," Yu Dong said, seeing his master deep in her thoughts.

But this was not what Qu Moying cared about. Her eyes fell on him, and she suddenly asked, "Do you know the princess we met today?"

She was talking about Ji Youran.

"I haven't met her before, but I've heard of her. She and the Crown Princess are cousins, and she was also acquainted with the Crown Prince. She took the chance to move into the Eastern Palace, using the Crown Princess's sickness as an excuse. But I don't think she's there only for taking care of her sick cousin." Yu Dong recalled everything he knew about Ji Youran and made his own summary.

Part of it was from the rumors he heard, and the rest was his guessing.

According to his analysis, this Crown Prince's second wife didn't seem to be a good-hearted person. She was definitely not as simple as she looked, and her excuse of taking care of the Crown Princess sounded a bit fake to him.

"What makes you think that?" Qu Moying was interested in his words.

“My lady, I don’t think taking care of her sick cousin is her true intention.” Yu Dong had no scruples about telling Qu Moying his honest opinions, treating her as his real master. “I heard the Crown Princess is heavily sick, and she indeed needs someone to take care of her. But I bet she has many servants around. Why does she need her cousin in the Eastern Palace to take care of her? Moreover, that princess doesn’t look like one who is good at caring for others. Why does she spend so much effort going all the way to the Eastern Palace?”

“What do you think she’s here in the Dabei Temple for?” Yu Dong’s words reminded Qu Moying of something.

“I think she’s just having fun here with the excuse of praying for the Crown Princess,” Yu Dong said carelessly.

“So, that means the Crown Prince will be here too?” Qu Moying curled up her lips with a stern look on her face.

“Probably. Princess Ji wouldn’t dare to come here alone. No matter what happens, she has to keep up with her image of a kind cousin who cares about the Crown Princess a lot,” said Yu Dong. Then he muttered, “I heard that Noble Consort He moved into the royal palace with the same excuse of caring for Empress Yuan, who was sick at that time. After Empress Yuan passed away, Noble Consort He gave birth to Lord Jing.”

Qu Moying suddenly laughed grimly, reminded by Yu Dong’s words. The same case happened before – when Empress Yuan was sick, Noble Consort He moved into the royal palace to take care of her. After Empress Yuan recovered, He married the emperor and was given the title of noble consort. Then Empress Yuan was banished to the Cold Palace while Noble Consort He was living a good life and gave birth to Lord Jing.

People said the emperor loved Empress Yuan deeply, and she got banished to the Cold Palace because someone set her up. But no one expected the empress died there. Afterwards, the emperor gave all his love to Noble Consort He, which was why Lord Jing and the Crown Prince’s power was comparable nowadays.

After thinking about it, Empress Yuan’s story was exactly the same as the Crown Princess’s.

The smile on Qu Moying's face was bitter, with her eyes having a trace of resent!

"Wait at the door and keep an eye on the outside. If people come to look for trouble, bring them inside," Suppressing her rage, Qu Moying said. She stood up and walked to the window. It was still early before dinner time. Some of the guests who wouldn't stay overnight probably hadn't left yet. It should be the best timing for them.

"Yes, my lady!" Yu Dong understood her intention immediately and left the room.

While they were talking, Yu Chun had lost them long ago. She was a girl, but not smart enough to understand their conversation. She tried to figure it out herself but gave up after a little while. She was aware of her role, which was taking good care of her master since she fully trusted the lady to make all the arrangements. Her master had a smart brain, and all she needed to do was to follow her orders.

As Qu Moying expected, after they waited for a while, noises came from outside. Qu Moying let Yu Chun help her put on the veil, quietly sitting inside...

Chapter 59 Catch the Maid Who Went to the Wrong Yard!

"First Sister, would you like a cup of tea at my place? I've brought some good ones, but grandmother said she was too old for those. We can have some together," Qu Qiuyan invited Qu Xuexin after Qu Moying and others left.

"First Sister, it's really good. You have to try it. Lord Jing gave it to Qiuyan," Qu Caiyue hurriedly added.

"I... I'll pass it," Qu Xuexin said softly and rubbed her temples. "I'm a bit tired. It was my fault not to keep an eye on Moying. I shouldn't cause the trouble and make grandmother disappointed."

"You have nothing to do with it! She's not a child and can walk on her own legs. Does grandmother want us to tie a rope on her and go wherever she goes?" Qu Caiyue said disdainfully, "Everything was fine until she caused us such trouble. Does it mean anything she did at the market was related to us? It's just because grandmother likes her more than us!"

"First Sister, come and have some tea with us!" Qu Qiuyan invited her again smilingly.

Qu Xuexin was hesitant. She looked at these two and turned to look in the direction where Qu Moying left. At last, she still didn't accept Qu Qiuyan's invitation, "What about tonight? Let me have some rest first, and I'll come over later."

"First Sister, how long do you want us to wait? Every time grandmother came here before, she took us three with her. Qu Moying's the extra one this time. It's not that we didn't invite her, she just left too quickly. If grandmother asks about it, it's not our fault that she left early. First Sister, don't worry. You won't be blamed for this."

Qu Caiyue raised her eyebrow, looked in the direction where Qu Moying left as well and pressed her lips.

"Th-This is not appropriate. It's the first time for Moying to be here..." Qu Xuexin frowned, her voice was still soft and gentle.

"First Sister, I know you just don't want to spend time with us together. Second Sister, then let's go!" Qu Qiuyan lost her patience after being rejected a few times. She raised her chin and showed a trace of exasperation on her face.

Qu Xuexin was the Old Lady's first son's first daughter, that is to say, she was the first daughter of the entire Qu Family. Usually, she should have the highest position among all the ladies. However, Qu Zhilin's official rank was lower than Qu Zhizhen's, so the entire family held more respect to Qu Zhizhen. Naturally, Qu Qiuyan thought more highly of herself than her eldest sister because of this, let alone she would become Madam Jing in the future. There was no point in wasting more time on Qu Xuexin since she wanted to make friends with that blind girl instead of her.

"Qiuyan, I'm sorry," Qu Xuexin said in embarrassment, poked by Qu Qiuyan's words.

"First Sister..." Qu Caiyue still tried to convince her. After all, Qu Xuexin was her own sister.

"Second Sister, will you come with me or not? If you don't want to come either, just go back!" Qu Qiuyan sounded irritated.

"Yes, yes, I'm coming with you!" Qu Caiyue didn't dare to disobey Qu Qiuyan and said hurriedly. She had no time to concern about her older sister anymore and caught up with Qu Qiuyan swiftly.

"Qiuyan, don't be too upset about First Sister. It's nothing serious. She's just afraid that blind girl will report on us again. Let's go have some tea. Speaking of the tea, it tastes amazing. If it weren't for Lord Jing, I would never have such high-quality tea..."

"Because it's a gift from Lord Jing. Even Father hasn't had such good tea before..."

As they walked away, their voices gradually disappeared in the air, one flattering and the other one prideful.

Qu Xuexin quietly watched them leaving with a gentle look on her face as usual.

Her maid Hong Mei whispered, "My lady."

"Let's go!" Qu Xuexin turned around and headed to her yard. When they arrived at the entrance, she stopped and looked into Qu Moying's yard next to hers. The door was slightly open with no one around.

"My lady, do you want to visit the Fourth Lady?" Hong Mei said hesitantly.

"Not now. Moying's health condition has not been very good. She's probably having a rest now." Qu Xuexin shook her head and stepped into her yard. But right after she walked in, she closed her eyes and rubbed her temples again.

"My lady, anything wrong?" Hong Mei held her hand to steady the lady and asked worriedly.

"I'm fine, just having a headache," Qu Xuexin said and pressed her forehead again.

"My lady, go have some rest. I'll ask Granny Wu for some medicine. I remember she brought some with her, including the ones you normally use."

“Sure!” Qu Xuexin said softly.

Another maid Bai Mei heard the noise and came out too. The two maids helped Qu Xuexin get into the yard. Soon after, Hong Mei hurriedly walked out again, heading to Granny Wu’s place...

Meanwhile, a maid ran into the Old Lady’s yard, looking flustered, and she was noticed by Granny Wu immediately. Granny Wu knew all the maids they brought here but didn’t recognize this one. Moreover, her clothes didn’t look like the Qu Family’s maid uniform either. Granny Wu pulled a long face and asked, “Who is your master? What are you doing here?”

“I-I came to the wrong place. It’s not the right place...” The maid stuttered as she huddled in fear. After she finished her words, she turned around and tried to leave immediately.

“Catch her!” Granny Wu yelled.

The old maid who was guarding the yard was still in a daze. She was the one who let this strange maid in because the maid said she was sent by the Third Lady. The old maid knew the Third Lady had the most amount of maids. Although she didn’t recognize this one, who was not even wearing their uniform, she didn’t dare offend the most powerful lady in the family. The old maid just thought this maid might have something particular to tell the Old Lady.

After hearing their conversation and seeing the young maid trying to run away, the old maid realized she was used. Irritated, she rushed over, held the maid in her arms tight, and caught her successfully.

“Let me go! I-I just went to the wrong place. I thought... I thought this was my young master’s yard,” the maid screamed while struggling hard.

“But you said the Third Lady sent you just now,” the old maid yelled with rage, exposing her lie immediately.

“Invite the Third Lady over,” Granny Wu said coldly.

A clever maid ran out immediately and came back with Qu Qiuyan and Qu Caiyue soon after.

“Third Lady, this maid said you sent her here. Do you know her?” Granny Wu walked up to Qu Qiuyan, bowed to her, and then asked as she pointed at the maid.

Qu Qiuyan walked closer, sized the strange maid up, and shook her head. “Granny Wu, you should know all the maids I brought here. I don’t know who she is and why she ran into our yard in my name.”

“You said you were sent here by the Third Lady?” Granny Wu questioned her in rage, and the maid’s face turned pale in fear.

“I-I don’t know your Third Lady. My... My master is our Third Lady, not yours...” the maid argued back.

“But you just said you were looking for your young master. Why are you saying your Third Lady now?” Granny Wu stared at the maid sharply.

The noise in the yard was loud enough to alert the Old Lady. She sent out an old maid, asking Granny Wu to bring the caught maid inside.

The group of people followed Granny Wu into the main house. The guarding maid pushed the suspicious maid inside and made her kneel in front of the Old Lady.

Qu Qiuyan and Qu Caiyue followed behind and seated themselves on the two sides of the Old Lady.

“Tell us, who on earth is your master? A lady or a young master? If you lie again, we will send you to the officials immediately!” said the Old Lady slowly as she glanced at the maid, who was kneeling on the ground, shivering.

Hearing the Old Lady’s words, the maid was frightened. She hurriedly raised her eyes and said, “Madam Qu, I... I’m here to look for your Fourth Lady. I thought this was the Fourth Lady’s yard, and I didn’t mean to offend you. I didn’t know this was the wrong place. Please forgive me, Madam Qu.”

"You... You know we are the Qu Family?" Now the young maid sounded more suspicious to the Old Lady. Her eyes darkened, "Tell me, which family do you belong to? How dare they cause trouble here?"

"Madam, I-I-I am the Second Young Master's maid. H-He w-wants to... ask Fourth Lady Qu... ask about... about..." the maid started to stutter with a scared look on her face. Clearly, she was not telling the truth.

"Who is this Second Young Master?" The Old Lady pulled a long face. Since Qu Moying's engagement was just broken off, it would be terrible for her reputation if she got involved with another man right now. But the Old Lady didn't think it was Qu Moying's problem. She just came back to the capital and didn't even have time to meet any young masters.

"The... The Second Young Master...from Earl Fengyang's family," the maid was still stuttering.

"The Second Young Master from Earl Fengyang's family? Is he Second Young Master Yan?" Hearing the maid's words, Qu Qiuyan's expression changed.

"That playboy... Second Master Yan who's notorious for hooking up with noble ladies?" Qu Caiyue directly spoke out what everyone was thinking. She covered her open mouth with her hanky in shock and turned to look at the Old Lady. "G-Grandmother, what does he mean by this? Is... Is he interested in Moying?"

"Nonsense! Moying hasn't even met any man since she came back," the Old Lady scolded her in rage.

"But... But why did the maid mention Second Master Yan? Is she still lying? Grandmother, we have to send her to the officials and let them give her a tattoo as a punishment for lying," Qu Caiyue said angrily and nodded.

Hearing her words, the maid felt more frightened as she kept shaking her hands. "I-I didn't lie. It's true! It's true! The Second Young Master fell in love with Fourth Lady Qu. He even gave her a gift at the market, and she took it. If she doesn't like my master, why did she accept his gift?"

To free herself from the punishment, the maid didn't dare to lie anymore. She said everything she knew as tears were rolling in her eyes. Then she bowed to the Old Lady and touched the ground with her

forehead three times. "Madam Qu, if you don't believe me, you can look for the gift in Fourth Lady Qu's place. My master put one of his private items inside as a keepsake."

"What is it?" The Old Lady said slowly, pressing the middle of her eyebrows to suppress her rage. She just got rid of her headache, but now it had come back. Her ears were ringing, and she felt like she was about to blackout. At the market? Which meant it happened just now?

Chapter 60 Searching for the Evidence

"What is it?" Qu Qiuyan asked.

"I-It's a piece of clothes and a pair of earrings..." the maid said in a low voice with scare.

"This is outrageous! Grandmother, I'll go to Moying's room and let her return them to Second Master Yan immediately. How... How could she do this?!" Qu Qiuyan said furiously as her face turned red.

As Qu Qiuyan walked out with no hesitation, Qu Caiyue hurriedly said, "Grandmother, I'll keep an eye on Qiuyan in case they argue with each other."

Then she followed the Third Lady out immediately.

The Old Lady just got over with a daze and tried to stop them, but the two ladies had already left with their maids. Feeling giddier in anxiety and rage, she held Granny Wu's hand and slowly stood up, "Let's go take a look."

"Madam, your body condition..." Granny Wu was worried.

"I'm fine. I just need to move slowly," the Old Lady said weakly while holding back the pain in her head. Holding Granny Wu's hand, she faltered toward the door. After every few footsteps, she would stop to take a break. In this way, she and Granny Wu moved to Qu Moying's place very slowly.

Qu Qiuyan led the way. She walked fast and almost got to Qu Moying's yard. To make Qu Qiuyan stop, Qu Caiyue shouted in agitation as she was trying to catch up, "Qiuyan, wait for me! Don't go there first. Even if Moying is involved with Second Master Yan, there's no use to return the things now!"

She found her words inappropriate after she said them all. Then she hurriedly looked around and saw a few guests passing by give her a curious gaze. Her face blushed with embarrassment immediately.

"Second Sister, don't talk nonsense. Even if Moying accepted the clothes and earrings gifted by a man, it still might be a misunderstanding," Qu Qiuyan stopped and scolded Qu Caiyue with a serious look on her face.

Her tone sounded like defending for Qu Moying, but she actually admitted that Qu Moying was secretly dating a man. She tried to cover up the truth, yet it was more convincing for other people who heard them.

The noise caught more people's attention, and they stopped here to see what was happening. Someone was asking the ones who witnessed the whole thing; someone was telling people based on his guessing. But soon, everyone figured out that it was about a lady secretly dating a man. And these two were the lady's sisters.

They all wondered which family was this shameless lady from.

"I-I misunderstood it. It's my fault," Qu Caiyue kept apologizing with a flustered look.

"Go knock on the door," Qu Qiuyan said to her maid. The maid walked up, but before she put her hand on the door, it opened. Qu Moying came out with a calm look on her face.

Qu Qiuyan took a step back subconsciously and then realized what she did, feeling annoyed. She would become Madam Jing in the future. Why was she afraid of a blind girl?

"Moying, we need to talk to you about something. Can we go inside?" Qu Qiuyan calmed herself down and said, looking concerned.

“Third Sister, let’s just talk here. I didn’t do anything that couldn’t be heard by people. If we go inside, I’m afraid that people will think I did something that I shouldn’t do,” Qu Moying said in a flat tone.

“Moying, how...how could you accept a gift from some other man? And... and it’s a... a...” Qu Caiyue walked up to Qu Moying and scolded her in rage.

Qu Qiuyan stepped back quietly. This was the stage for Qu Caiyue now since she was more suitable for this kind of role.

“Second Sister, I don’t know what you are talking about?” The look on Qu Moying’s face was still calm. She looked around and noticed more and more people stopped and surrounded them.

“You... You are shameless.” Qu Caiyue’s face turned red. She stomped her feet with anger, but a trace of panic flashed across her eyes. She didn’t expect Qu Moying to be so confident to block her outside. She had prepared some great lines for her, but she couldn’t finish her full play in public for the sake of her own name.

If they had the conversation in the yard, what people heard outside would have nothing to do with her. But now, she felt flustered under the gaze of so many people. Everyone was witnessing her scolding Qu Moying.

“Second Sister, tell me, what did I do to make me shameless? What made you and Third Sister rush to my yard so furiously?” Qu Moying waited for her to finish her words patiently and then asked with calmness.

The Fourth Lady exuded a peaceful temperament, behaving calmly and confidently. Compared to her, Qu Caiyue, whose face turned red with anxiety, looked more suspicious.

“Moying, do you dare to let Second Sister search your room? Do you have something that you shouldn’t keep?” Qu Qiuyan stared at Qu Moying and asked. She was much more intelligent than Qu Caiyue. Even though she panicked for a second when Qu Moying didn’t let them in, she still reacted quickly.

When she found the hard proof, she doubted Qu Moying could say anything else to defend herself.

“Alright. Please come in, Second Sister. Third Sister, how about we wait outside together?” Qu Moying moved away from the door at once, without any trace of panic on her face.

Her calmness and confidence unsettled Qu Qiuyan. She looked at Qu Caiyue, trying to confirm again with her. Qu Caiyue nodded at her, signaling her to rest assured. After all, she saw the package being put into Qu Moying’s bag with her own eyes.

Seeing Qu Caiyue’s affirmative hint, Qu Qiuyan felt relieved. She smiled, “No problem. It will be the best for everyone if you can prove your innocence, Moying.”

Qu Caiyue entered the yard while everyone else was waiting outside. More and more people stopped to watch them, wanting to know how this drama would end.

After a while, Qu Caiyue hadn’t come out yet, and the sound of people discussing started to get louder. There shouldn’t be many things a lady brought on a trip. At the most, there were just some clothes and accessories since daily necessities were all provided by the temple. What took her so long to search?

She didn’t find it?

So, this was just a story they made up?

There were some noble ladies and madams among the guests. They recognized Qu Qiuyan and also recognized Fourth Lady Qu by her veil. She was Young Master Yongning’s poor ex-fiancee whose engagement got broken off.

The Second Lady and the Third Lady from the Qu Family blocked Fourth Lady Qu at the door, saying Fourth Lady Qu was secretly dating a man. But the Fourth Lady’s reaction seemed totally innocent. Judging on the situation, what the other two ladies claimed wasn’t very convincing.

Thinking of the rumors about Fourth Lady Qu and her background, many people chose to stand by Qu Moying’s side inwardly.

Her stepmother clearly didn't care about her, the same as her father. Now it seemed like her so-called sisters were not good-hearted either, standing at her door aggressively and trying to make a big scene in public. Was Third Lady Qu really the one liked by Lord Jing? In people's eyes, she didn't look like a good wife candidate for the lord.

"Go take a look at Second Sister inside. What takes her so long?" Qu Moying turned to Yu Dong and said with a trace of sarcasm.

Yu Dong nodded and hurriedly walked in.

In the room, Qu Caiyue was still searching Qu Moying's bag. There were not many things inside. She had checked everything several times, including every corner and drawer here, but she couldn't find the thing she wanted. Meanwhile, Yu Chun was wearing a sullen face standing beside her.

"Second Lady, the Third Lady and the Fourth Lady ask you to come out."

Yu Dong's voice was cold. He would never be like Yu Chun, still treating her as a master. He glanced over the mess in the room and said, "Second Lady, are you here to make a scene today? What's your purpose, checking the Fourth Lady's personal belongings or taking something back with you?"

"How dare you!?" Yu Dong's agitating words made her irritated immediately, especially when she felt lost, not knowing what to do. She couldn't accept being insulted by a maid and threw a slap towards Yu Dong's face at once.

How come the package disappeared?

"Second Lady, please leave. The Old Lady will be here soon. If she knows you were searching the Fourth Lady's bag... and didn't find anything...." Yu Dong would never let Qu Caiyue touch him. He swiftly stepped back, avoided her slap, and reminded her in a cold voice.

How complacent Qu Caiyue felt before was how flustered she was right now. The Old Lady would arrive in any second, but she had no evidence to prove that Qu Moying did it. Her grandmother would not go easy on her for making a scene today.

Moreover, the Old Lady disliked her most among all her granddaughters.

In a panic, her brain went blank, and she hurriedly rushed outside. She had to come up with a good explanation. She had to convince the Old Lady that she was not involved, and she was here only to find the evidence.

Meanwhile, the Old Lady had already arrived. Seeing the two young ladies standing in front of the yard door and the crowd outside, she almost fainted again. Granny Wu quickly went to steady her and said, "Madam, don't worry. Don't worry. Everything will be fine! Take it easy!"

"Grandmother, I'm fine. Don't worry. I didn't do it!" Qu Moying rushed over and grabbed her grandmother's one hand from another maid. Her voice sounded confident and firm, filled with genuine concern about the Old Lady. The way she acted reassured the old woman a lot. "Grandmother, I need to prove my innocence, and that's why I let everyone stand in front of my yard so that people can see it."

"Ying, you have nothing to do with it?" Her words hit the spot, making the Old Lady much relieved. She flipped her hand to hold the young girl's and confirmed with her again.

"Don't worry, Grandma. I just came back for a few days. When did I ever have time to meet any man?" Qu Moying gave her a smile and comforted her.

Qu Moying's calm behavior got the worry off the Old Lady's chest. She was too concerned about her youngest granddaughter, who just lost her engagement. If she really was involved with that unreliable Second Master Yan, the Old Lady was afraid her life would permanently be ruined!

She had heard about Second Master Yan before. That young man rescued his cousin after she fell into a lake but was unwilling to take the responsibility to marry her. That poor lady was forced to marry a man living in a city far away from her hometown. The accident had passed over a year already, but people were still talking about it. Everyone said Second Master Yan was a jinx for young ladies, and whoever related to him would get her name ruined.

"Second Sister, did you find the thing you want?" Qu Moying's eyes fell on Qu Caiyue, who just came out, looking nervous. "Second Sister, you tried really hard to push the blame on me. Are you afraid now that people will find out your little secret?"

“Stop talking nonsense!” Qu Caiyue flew into a rage as Qu Moying’s words rubbed salt right into her wound.

“Whether I’m talking nonsense or not, you should be the one who knows it best. Before you even had any evidence, you were already talking about it out loud in public, saying I’m secretly dating a man. After we agreed to search for the proof, you rushed into my room immediately. I guess my room is probably very messy right now. So, Second Sister, did you find it or not?” Qu Moying said coldly.

“I-I was just looking around...” The room was indeed a mess.

Qu Qiuyan stepped back quietly. Watching Qu Caiyue coming out empty-handed, she suddenly had a bad feeling. She lowered her eyes and quickly came up with a solution.