

## **Noble Wife 71**

### Chapter 71 Back to Reality

Her words reminded Qu Qiuyan. She remembered one of her close friends once told her that Noble Consort He was fond of Liu Jingyu.

Her friend mentioned it when she was insulted by Liu Jingyu in that argument.

Was it true?

Qu Qiuyan started to feel panic as she ground her teeth and cursed inwardly. Lord Jing could only belong to her. Even though Liu Jingyu had a better family background than her, she was still prettier. She was not any worse than Liu Jingyu.

Even that blind girl Qu Moying's cousin could become the Crown Princess. Why could she not become Madam Jing?

She still wanted to say something, but suddenly, she saw someone waving at her from a distance – it was Second Young Master Yan. The look on Qu Qiuyan's face became hesitant.

Her mother told her not to communicate with Second Young Master Yan, but he took the initiative to talk to her this time. So, it shouldn't count as she disobeyed her mother.

"You go take a walk. Give me some time alone," said Qu Qiuyan.

"Qiuyan, I'm here with you. I will be worried if you walk alone," Qu Caiyue flattered her.

"You don't need to be so hypocritical," Qu Qiuyan said to Qu Caiyue disdainfully. Then she ignored her and walked toward a narrow path aside with her maid.

Qu Caiyue froze there in embarrassment, but she dared to do nothing except for forcing a smile. "Then be careful, Qiuyan. If anything happens, you can come back and tell me...and First Sister."

"I want to take a walk alone, too," said Qu Xuexin, who frowned, watching Qu Qiuyan leaving.

"It's okay. I heard there were purple peach flowers in the temple, but people never found them. I might as well go look for them, and maybe I'll be the lucky one to see the rare flowers first," Qu Caiyue put on a bitter smile. Qu Xuexin was not someone she dared to offend either.

It took Qu Xuexin a few seconds to stare at where Qu Qiuyan left, and then she walked toward another path.

Now, Qu Caiyue was standing alone with a sullen face.

"My lady, are we going to look for the purple peach flowers?" her maid asked discreetly since her master lowered her head in silence for a while.

"Purple flowers...? Are you dumb? If the purple flowers really exist, why haven't other people found them? Obviously, they don't exist," Qu Caiyue glared at her maid and scolded. She pinched the maid's arm hard to vent her anger and walked straightforwardly without noticing the direction. After she married into a good family and climbed up someday, she would make those wives' daughters pay for all the insult she had taken from them.

Tears formed in the maid's eyes, feeling the pain from her arm, but she didn't even dare to make a sound, only trotting behind her master.

After a little bit of walk, Qu Qiuyan saw Yan Yu at a crossing.

"Third Lady Qu." Yan Yu cupped his hands in front of his chest and bowed to her. As Xu Lipeng's close friend, he had visited the Qu's Mansion with Xu Lipeng several times and was pretty acquainted with Qu Qiuyan.

"Second Young Master Yan." Qu Qiuyan had entirely calmed down and put on her usual polite look. She curtsied to Yan Yu and looked at him blankly, "How can I help you?"

"About what happened yesterday..." said Yan Yu.

"Yesterday? Do you mean the thing about you and Second Sister? My grandmother is furious about it. Second Young Master Yan, please don't do it again. If you are really interested in Second Sister, you can visit my family and make an official proposal. Doing it in private will only ruin both families' names," Qu Qiuyan chimed in quickly.

She talked as if she was innocent and knew nothing about it.

Her attitude was not expected by Yan Yu. He raised his eyes and stared at Qu Qiuyan in astonishment. His initial plan was to ask Qu Qiuyan about the details and discuss the next step with her. Now, it didn't seem necessary to him!

He was willing to ruin his own name to help them because he genuinely cared about Xu Lipeng as a friend. Now he felt like he was treated like a fool.

He never thought about suspecting them since he fully trusted Xu Lipeng, but Qu Qiuyan's words pulled him back to reality!

Yu Qingmeng was close to her aunt Yu, so it was not strange that she could bribe some servants in the Qu's Mansion to make them work for her. But right now, they were in the Dabei Temple, and everyone only brought their trusted servants here. No matter how close Yu Qingmeng to the Qu Family and how competent she was, her power couldn't possibly reach the East Mansion, let alone the Old Lady Qu. Therefore, instead of Yu Qingmeng, the most suspicious one was Third Lady Qu, who looked determined to disassociate herself from the current situation.

He was told someone from the Qu Family would help him, which should mean Qu Qiuyan.

Now their plan went wrong just a little bit. However, Qu Qiuyan immediately faked this innocent look and pushed all the responsibility on him without hesitation.

"If this is your real opinion, Third Lady Qu, I have nothing else to say. Excuse me, I'll leave first." Yan Yu pulled a long face, bowed to Qu Qiuyan again, and left at once.

Seeing Qu Qiuyan's true colors made him start to suspect Yu Qingmeng and even his close friend, who he always trusted. This situation reminded him of an old saying – birds of a feather flock together.

Qu Qiuyan was stunned by his determined attitude and then said hurriedly, "Second Young Master Yan, please wait."

She didn't intend to make Yan Yu leave, only wanting to put pressure on him and make him more obedient to her.

"Third Lady Qu, you don't know anything about it. What do you want to talk about?" Yan Yu stopped and asked her coldly.

Qu Qiuyan started to hesitate. Saying nothing right now surely could help her stay out of trouble, but she still wanted to make use of Yan Yu. If she chose to be in silence, she would lose the opportunity forever.

The more she dealt with Qu Moying, the more annoyed she felt. She had to find a way to get rid of her as soon as possible. Qu Qiuyan heard that Madam Yan was a tough woman. If she could make Qu Moying shamefully marry into the Yan Family, Madam Yan alone could make Qu Moying suffer enough for the rest of her life.

Qu Qiuyan once tried to end it quickly by asking her private maid Qing He to execute her plan. She didn't expect Qu Moying could get around with it, and even Qing He was involved, making her dare not to act rashly again. She could only use other people's hands now.

"Actually, I know a bit of your situation. But now, I'm more than bewildered. Second Young Master Yan, are you interested in my Second Sister or my youngest sister?" Qu Qiuyan put on a cautious smile and fiddled with her hanky as if she was really in confusion.

"Who do you think I'm interested in, Third Lady Qu?" Yan Yu asked meaningfully.

Qu Qiuyan hesitated for a second and said, "I think it's my youngest sister. After all, she is my father's first daughter, given birth by his ex-wife, who passed away. But my Second Sister is my uncle's daughter,

given birth by a concubine. Although my youngest sister grew up in a village, she's no worse than my Second Sister except for having an eye problem."

After all the times she had seen Qu Moying, Qu Qiuyan gradually figured out Qu Moying's appearance was not ugly, even though her face was always covered by the veil, which made Qu Qiuyan feel even more jealous. But right now, in order to fulfill her evil wish, she had to hold back her annoyance and put in a good word for Qu Moying.

"If Fourth Lady Qu is as good as you describe, why did Young Master Yongning break off their engagement?" Yan Yu patted his paper fan on his palm, glanced at Qu Qiuyan, and asked with a playful smile.

Although he was notorious for being a playboy, he still had an outstanding appearance, especially those upturned eyes that showed affection as if he always wore a flirty smile. Qu Qiuyan already had someone she liked, but she still blushed under the gaze of this handsome young master.

"It's Young Master Xu's own fault not to notice it. I'm sure he will regret it," Qu Qiuyan let out a sigh and looked away.

That pretty face could easily fool those naive noble ladies, but not her. She chose Lord Jing because marrying him could give her everything she wanted. Any woman who married Second Young Master Yan would have a pathetic life without power and could only depend on his brother to make a living.

For Qu Qiuyan, a man only having a pretty face was useless.

She didn't think there was anything good about a playboy who could only rely on his family.

Of course, she'd love to see Qu Moying marry this playboy, better without any legit title.

As long as Qu Moying led a miserable life, no one would ever mention Qu Qiuyan was originally a concubine's daughter, nothing better than Qu Moying, who grew up in a village.

"Maybe Young Master Xu had already regretted it." Yan Yu's words sounded meaningful, but Qu Qiuyan couldn't understand his intention. She stared at him in suspicion and decided to leek more information to him, "My grandmother loves my youngest sister the most, more than all the other ladies in my family. As for Young Master Xu..."

"What's about him?" Yan Yu raised his brow and asked.

"It was such a coincidence that day! The timing was too good that I even felt strange about it! My youngest sister was there as well." Qu Qiuyan hoped he could understand her implication.

"Third Lady, do you mean Fourth Lady Qu designed everything? But what's her intention?" Yan Yu asked. Now, Qu Qiuyan's words sounded similar to what Xu Lipeng said before. Xu Lipeng once indicated that he was unwilling to marry Second Lady Duan, but he was forced.

Meanwhile, Yu Qingmeng claimed that she married into the Marquis Yongning's Family in such a shameful way because Qu Moying set her up.

"I...can't figure it out either. Maybe my youngest sister thinks Young Master Xu is not worthy of her! I don't know. However, Second Young Master Yan, you have to win her heart first if you are interested in her. After all the years Young Master Xu kept the two families' promise, he still ended up marrying someone else. Other people all think my youngest sister is a poor girl, but obviously, she doesn't care about those formalities."

Qu Qiuyan let out a deep sigh as if she really cared about Yan Yu and Qu Moying. Then she said goodbye to Yan Yu and left elegantly with her maid, leaving Yan Yu standing alone while he was still fiddling with his paper fan with a meaningful look on his face...

When Qu Moying returned, other ladies were still outside, so she visited the Old Lady first. After hearing the ladies were separated again, the Old Lady couldn't be more worried and sent people to look for them. The other three didn't come back until a while later.

When Qu Xuexin, Qu Caiyue, and Qu Qiuyan all returned, the Old Lady had to give them an angry lecture again before dismissing them.

When the four of them walked to the Old Lady's yard door, Qu Caiyue suddenly turned around and said to Qu Moying in disdain, "Moying, where did you get those purple peach flowers? How come you didn't tell us and invite us to see them together? You walked away by yourself again! Did you already forget what Grandmother said to us?"

After seeing the beautiful purple peach flowers in the Old Lady's vase, Qu Caiyue couldn't hold back her envy and vented it out on Qu Moying immediately.

If the same thing happened to Qu Xuexin or Qu Qiuyan, she would do nothing but flatter them. But she naturally took the blaming gesture facing Qu Moying, who she looked down upon the most.

"Second Sister, do you like it?" Qu Moying looked at Qu Caiyue and said indifferently.

"We all like it, but we couldn't find it after spending all the effort walking around. Moying, it's so lucky of you to see the purple flowers. However, how come you never thought about us but only picked one branch for Grandmother?" Qu Caiyue snorted.

"Second Sister, you can go pick some if you like. I hear the purple flowers only grow in Lord Yun's place, and they are watered by human blood," Qu Moying said as if she was talking about something that couldn't be more common while her three sisters looked astonished. She raised her brow coldly and left.

Now Qu Caiyue tried to use the name of sister love to manipulate her? Why did she need to keep it up when the other three didn't even care...?

Mentioning they were sisters made Qu Moying feel really disgusted while they used every means to ruin her life!

## Chapter 72 Time to Change the Strategy

"What did my mother say?" Qu Qiuyan asked the old maid sent by Yu with a sullen face after returning to her yard.

"My lady, the Second Madam asked you not to interfere anymore. Lady Yu has arrived at the Dabei Temple today." The old maid talking was a servant that Yu trusted the most.

"Yu Qingmeng is here too? What is she doing here?" Qu Qiuyan asked in annoyance.

Before, Qu Qiuyan still treated Yu Qingmeng nicely. For her, Yu Qingmeng was more like a sister compared to Qu Moying. However, everything had changed. Yu Qingmeng became a shameful concubine who was carried into the Marquis Yongning's Mansion by a sedan. Keeping a good relationship with her would only embarrass Qu Qiuyan.

"The Second Madam thinks it's good timing, so she asked Lady Yu to come here. If anything happens later, Lady Yu can be the spokesperson. Madam doesn't want you to be involved at all," the old maid told Qu Qiuyan what Yu said.

Her words calmed Qu Qiuyan down and suppressed her disdain. She frowned and suddenly asked, "Did my cousin come here by herself or with Young Master Xu?"

"They came here together, of course, since Lady Yu has married into the Marquis Yongning's Family already. Lady Yu is just a concubine for now. However, as long as Young Master Yongning is fond of her, and you, my lady, get to a higher status, the Marquis Yongning's Family will be willing to promote Lady Yu for your sake. When Lady Yu becomes a real madam, she can be a great help for you again, my lady," the old maid whispered beamingly.

Her words sounded convincing enough for Qu Qiuyan, who nodded and said, "Tell my mother I know what to do, and I won't make a move by myself. In terms of people who dislike Qu Moying, my dear cousin should be the first one!"

"Yes, that's right, my lady." The old maid kept nodding.

In the old maid's opinion, the Third Lady had always been a smart girl, but sometimes she was a bit too impulsive, which was the Second Madam worried about. That was why the Second Madam sent her to remind the Third Lady.



As long as the Third Lady was calm and acted after a second thought, the Fourth Lady couldn't possibly fool her.

No matter how much the Old Lady liked the Fourth Lady, she couldn't do anything serious to the Third Lady since the Third Lady had Lord Jing's support. With Lord Jing, the Old Lady couldn't afford to offend the Third Lady.

Qu Qiuyan asked more about Yu Qingmeng and Xu Lipeng and then waved at the old maid to let her leave.

For Qu Qiuyan, she didn't need to do anything more since Yu Qingmeng was here. She overestimated Qu Caiyue too much before and almost was affected by that stupid girl. Luckily, Second Young Master Yan was not as foolish as Qu Caiyue. Otherwise, the consequence could be destructive.

Rumors were spread, but none of the two people involved confessed. Plus, the Old Lady didn't give any actual punishment to Qu Caiyue, which was the best outcome Qu Qiuyan could expect.

Thinking about all the things that happened recently, Qu Qiuyan admitted that she acted a bit too impulsively.

She initially thought Qu Moying was just a useless blind girl, but it turned out that she was kind of smart. It's time to change the strategy, Qu Qiuyan thought.

If a lightning strike couldn't take Qu Moying's life, then she would do it slowly as how a creek flowed.

"Here, help me send Moying some of these jeweled hairpins," after Qu Qiuyan made up her mind, she said to Qing Ju, her maid standing aside.

"My lady, are you sure?" Qing Ju raised her eyes and gazed at Qu Qiuyan in shock, who suddenly acted like a different person.

“What? Moying doesn’t have many accessories. What’s wrong with me giving her some hairpins as her older sister?” Qu Qiuyan smiled meaningfully as she picked up one of the jeweled hairpins. It was made delicately, decorated with handcrafted pink flowers with purple pistils, but didn’t look too fancy.

Every one of the four jeweled hairpins was distinct from each other, looking adorable.

These were all newly made products from the royal palace, not the luxurious ones but not easily accessible to ordinary noble ladies. Lord Jing sent these in private as a gift to Qu Qiuyan, and there were only eight of them. It was very generous of Qu Qiuyan to give four to Qu Moying.

“Don’t you like these hairpins the most, my lady?” Qing He asked. Seeing Qu Qiuyan’s calm face was a big relief for her, and she finally dared to utter words.

“They are just some hairpins. If Moying likes them, I can give her all and ask some more from His Royal Highness,” Qu Qiuyan said in an indifferent voice as she curled up her lips.

The more she thought about what she had done before, the more foolish she felt. She was thinking too simply about burning Qu Moying to death in one go. Even though Qu Moying was just a blind girl who grew up in the village, that didn’t mean she was stupid. Such a straightforward trap didn’t work on her.

The best way was to do it slowly but surely, like using a blunt knife to cut meat. What’s more, this blunt knife shouldn’t even be noticed by Qu Moying.

“Yes, my lady. You treat the Fourth Lady so nicely,” Qing Ju flattered.

“We are sisters. Of course, I should treat her like this. Hurry and send them to Moying. My cousin should arrive soon. After Lady Yu gets to our yard, invite her to come over. It’s been a while since I saw her last time.”

A disdainful smile showed up on Qu Qiuyan’s face. If it wasn’t that Yu Qingmeng still had some value to her, meeting her would be the last thing Qu Qiuyan wanted to do.

Lady Yu was no longer the decent, graceful noble lady before, but rather just a low-life concubine.

Concubine Yu? What a shame!

But Qu Qiuyan had to keep up with her image as an amiable sister or cousin, facing Qu Moying or Yu Qingmeng. She needed to make people think she was the innocent one who treated her family nicely so that no one would blame her for what would happen later.

Of course, giving Qu Moying those jeweled hairpins was showing her good intention. So, if anything happened to Qu Moying, no one would blame it on her. Thinking about this, a trace of guile flashed across Qu Qiuyan's eyes. She was going to kill two birds with one stone this time. No ordinary person was qualified to get those hairpins from Lord Jing – they had to deserve it first.

Qing Ju responded to her master's order, picked up the box containing four jeweled hairpins from the table, and left.

After leaving her master's yard, Qing Ju walked toward Qu Moying's yard. The guest yard provided by the Dabei Temple was not large. Even though these two yards were separated by the other two ladies' and the Old Lady's, she soon arrived at the door of Qu Moying's yard.

When Qing Ju was about to knock on the door, it suddenly opened as Yu Dong walked out. Seeing Qing Ju, he smiled, "Miss Qing Ju? What brings you here?"

The two masters didn't see things eye to eye, neither did the two maids.

"The Third Lady notices the Fourth Lady doesn't have many accessories, so she asked me to bring her some jeweled hairpins," Qing Ju grinned as she showed Yu Dong the box in her hands.

"That's very kind of the Third Lady. Follow me in!" Yu Dong seemed to cancel her plan of going out, turned around, and said amiably.

Following Yu Dong, Qing Ju stepped into the main room where Qu Moying sat while reading a book. She hurriedly walked up, curtsied to the Fourth Lady, and showed her the accessory box. "Fourth Lady, the Third Lady notices you don't have many accessories, so she asked me to bring some jeweled hairpins to you. They are just a small gift from the Third Lady, not very valuable. She hopes you don't mind."

When Qu Moying just came back to the mansion, Qing Ju and Qing He both looked down on Qu Moying as Qu Qiuyan's maids. They were unwilling to treat Qu Moying as a master in the mansion and curtsy to her, and they even teased her often. However, after what happened to Qing He, Qing Ju didn't dare to offend Qu Moying again.

Now she acted like an ordinary maid in front of Qu Moying.

"Please let Third Sister know that I'm very grateful," said Qu Moying as Yu Dong took the box from Qing Ju's hands.

"The Third Lady said you don't need to mention it, and this is what sisters should be like, my lady. There was some misunderstanding between you and the Third Lady before you got to know each other, but sisters are still sisters. For the Fourth Lady, you are the closest person here." Qing Ju beamed while making her words sound as pretty as possible.

Indeed, in terms of blood, Qu Qiuyan and Qu Moying were the closest among the four ladies.

However, Qu Moying would rather not have this connection with her through blood.

She already had a good lesson on how malicious Yu and her daughter could be after she was reborn. By any means, they wanted to take Qu Moying's life, a poor girl who lost her mother and grew up in the village. Burning, drowning, disfiguring her, and injuring her eyes – all the things they tried to do after she came back to the mansion showed clearly enough their guile and viciousness.

Now, their strategy changed because all the previous ones had failed, and they realized Qu Moying was not easy to deal with as they expected.

The conversation with Qing Ju was short since she left soon after finishing her job. She excused herself for leaving politely, and Yu Dong walked her out. He didn't close the door and return until he made sure Qing Ju had left. It seemed like he had something more important to do now instead of heading to the kitchen to ask for some snacks.

"My lady, what's the Third Lady's intention?" Yu Dong asked right after he stepped back inside. Although he was clever, he had always stayed around Ji Hai and didn't have a good understanding of how women thought yet. "Does she intend to make peace with you after she tried to set you up?"

"No." Qu Moying opened the accessory box on the table and curled her lips into a smile, "It seems like they've prepared something else for me."

"My lady, what do you mean?" Yu Dong asked in confusion. Even Yu Chun leaned closer with a curious face.

"They have come up with another plan to frame me. If anything happens to me, people won't suspect Qu Qiuyan since she treats me better than my two cousins. She wants to prove she does a good job as an older sister by sending me the jeweled hairpins," Qu Moying said carelessly as she curled up her lips.

The better Qu Qiuyan treated her, the more possible that they would frame her again.

"My lady, do you want me to send someone to keep an eye on the Third Lady? I brought two men here to guarantee your safety," Yu Dong sounded worried.

"No need. Qu Qiuyan can't do anything since she wants to become Madam Jing. Her identity was not qualified enough, so she had to be outstanding in other aspects to make up for it. The most basic one was her behavior, or she can't even get the approval of Noble Consort He." Qu Moying's eyes darkened.

Noble Consort He, another familiar name!

"But my lady, didn't she try to get rid of you by herself before?" Yu Dong still couldn't figure it out.

"Yeah, but that was before. At that time, Qu Qiuyan thought I was just a weak girl who couldn't do anything against her. She believed she could get rid of me even more easily than getting rid of a maid in one go, and no one would care. Now, she has to change her strategy since she realizes it's impossible. Yu must tell her something different this time. From now on, Qu Qiuyan will play her role of a good sister," said Qu Moying meaningfully.

Her gaze behind the veil fell on those jeweled hairpins. When she took a careful look at them, her expression suddenly changed as her heart started to pound in her chest. Almost trembling, she picked up one hairpin...

## Chapter 73 Hairpins Related to Lord Jing

The hairpin looked so familiar, familiar to the point that the pink petals almost seemed to have a color of blood in Qu Moying's eyes.

A cold shiver was sent down her spine. The only warm thing left in her body was her pounding heart as her limbs felt so numb. A strong feeling of hate hit her. Memories of the past seeped from her veins, soaked in blood.

The pretty hairpin... Once, it was a cherished gift for her that carried someone's love. Now the cruel truth was revealed in front of her – it was just a gift that couldn't be more common.

It reminded her of herself in the past life, cherished by someone and then thrown away like filthy garbage when she lost her value.

"Hanyue, I found a talented female handcrafter and asked her to help me make this hairpin. The petals were cut by myself. It's not the best one, but I hope you like it. If there are more chances, I want to design more accessories for you. Then in the future, all your accessories will be designed by me."

The Crown Prince's smile was affectionate as his gaze fell on her gently.

She noticed the small wound on the Crown Prince's finger just now but didn't expect it was because of a hairpin for her, which made her feel more sorry.

"Thank you, Your Royal Highness. I really like it but please don't do it again. As the Crown Prince, you can't hurt your noble body just for making me a hairpin. People will speak ill of you if they know it."

Feeling touched deep inside, Ji Hanyue blushed as she lowered her head and bit her lip.

"I'm willing to do it for you, my beautiful confidant. Don't worry. It's just a hairpin. After...we get married, and you move into the Eastern Palace, I want to make so many things for you. Hairpins, earrings, jewels... Oh, and hairpins with your name carved on! After we live a long, happy life and pass away, these keepsakes will still be there. People will tell our love story generations after generations," Pei Luo'an's voice sounded even more charming.

Pei Luo'an always had acted like a gentleman and treated people well, especially Ji Hanyue after they were engaged. If he saw something nice, he would think of her first and give it to her whenever possible to please her.

Was it why she and her family had such a miserable ending?

Now she looked back on the past and realized how cruel reality was. It hurt so much as if someone stabbed her hard in her heart. Even though she was reborn, the wound was still there, bleeding.

"My lady...what's wrong with the hairpins?" Yu Dong asked cautiously. He had always been good at reading people's minds. He noticed the change in Qu Moying's expression immediately and saw her lips that turned pale.

"Nothing wrong. I just feel they look familiar to me." Qu Moying took a deep breath to suppress her boiling emotions.

"Familiar? You have seen this kind of royal hairpins before, my lady?" Yu Dong blinked and asked in confusion. Before he took the maid job, he had known the Fourth Lady's background from Lord Yun's thorough investigation of her. She was just a girl who grew up in a village outside the city, so she couldn't possibly see any royal hairpins before.

"Has this kind of royal hairpins become popular recently?" Qu Moying ignored his question and asked back.

"Yes. I heard it was designed by a maid in the royal palace and is adored by many royal madams. So, it has become trendy recently," Yu Dong responded.

"For how long?" Qu Moying's eyes darkened as she lowered her head.

"Since about a month ago," Yu Dong sounded a bit uncertain about his answer. He actually didn't care about this kind of girly thing very much since there was no such woman around Lord Yun.

"Around the Crown Prince's wedding?" asked Qu Moying.

"Yes! It was around the Crown Prince's wedding." Yu Dong clapped his hand and kept nodding, "Right, right. The trend started around that time."

"Before the wedding or after the wedding?" Qu Moying clenched her hanky hard. Ever through the hanky, her nails were dug deep in her palms as she pressed her lips into a straight line.

"Let me think about it." Yu Dong did some counting with his fingers and then said for certain, "It should be a few days before the wedding!"

A few days before the wedding, she didn't even know the so-called personally made hairpin had already been popular in the royal palace. She released her lips and curled them into a sarcastic smile.

After she knew all Pei Luo'an's lies, she realized how blind she was in the past life.

If she could know even a little bit of the truth, her life wouldn't end so miserably. It's not that the Crown Prince's lie didn't have any flaw, but her own ignorance led her situation to a dead end.

"My lady, I heard the maid who designed the hairpin worked for Noble Consort He. These hairpins given by the Third Lady should be from Lord Jing." Yu Dong didn't notice Qu Moying's mood, still deep in his thoughts.

"A maid in Noble Consort He's palace designed this?" Qu Moying calmed herself down and asked.

"Yes, a maid in Noble Consort He's palace. I heard about it from some maids working for Noble Consort He when I went to the royal palace with Lord Yun one time," Yu Dong answered after taking a few seconds to think.



Noble Consort He? The Crown Prince?

Qu Moying felt something was weird about it. Weren't these two rivals? Did it mean Pei Luo'an went to ask for Noble Consort He's help because he wanted to make the hairpin to please Ji Hanyue? But it didn't make any sense! Was there any other reason?

She picked up one of the hairpins and sniffed it. There was a faint fragrance exuded from it, refreshing, appealing, but familiar especially for her. It was already one month later, but she still remembered this smell clearly. A trace of shock showed up on Qu Moying's face. The hairpin dropped from her hand and made a small noise when it landed on the ground.

"My lady, what happened?" Yu Chun asked hurriedly. The two maids were in shock as well – they had never seen their master acted like this.

Qu Moying reached out her trembling hand to pick up the hairpin and sniffed it again. It was the same faint, appealing smell like the one in her memory.

She had cherished this hairpin in her past life after receiving it since it was personally made by Pei Luo'an. She liked it so much that she kept it in her drawer and only took it out to look at it sometimes. Once Pei Luo'an jokingly said he wanted to see her wear it, which was the only time she put it on her hair. That was why she remembered it so clearly. However, something unexpected happened at that time.

It was in the Eastern Palace. On behalf of her father, she visited the Crown Prince with Ji Youran to send him a gift. After the two entered the Eastern Palace, they ran into Lord Jing, so they sat down in a pavilion and had a chat. Then Ji Youran went to get changed with her maid, and the Crown Prince was delayed by something and hadn't come to meet them yet. Suddenly, only she and Lord Jing were left in the pavilion.

The three of them had some fruit wine together. While talking with Lord Jing, she started to feel very tired and leaned on the table. She didn't even know when she fell asleep. A while later, she opened her eyes and found herself and Lord Jing sitting in an intimate position. Lord Jing wrapped his arm around her shoulder, and she looked like leaning on Lord Jing's chest.

The weird situation made her wake up in shock. She immediately pushed Lord Jing away from her and found Lord Jing drunk too. It seemed like they both fell asleep by the table and somehow ended up moving too close to each other.

Her push woke up Lord Jing. Noticing the situation, Lord Jing became flustered too. He kept apologizing to her and excused himself to leave immediately. In the end, he didn't even meet the Crown Prince at that time.

The situation was very odd, but luckily, only Lord Jing's trusted servant and her maid were around, so no one would know about it. Although she was extremely panicked after waking up, slowly, she calmed herself down. After a while, Ji Youran returned, and then Pei Luo'an came over.

When she saw Pei Luo'an, he was clearly not in a good mood. She simply thought he might have some trouble in his work and even tried to comfort him. However, her words were no use, and they ended up sitting there together with a sullen face. Soon, she left with Ji Youran. Pei Luo'an, who always acted like a gentleman in front of her, surprisingly didn't walk them out at that time, only waving his hand to let them leave.

Technically, she and Pei Yusheng made a big mistake, disobeying etiquette. But it was just an accident, and no one saw it, so Ji Hanyue soon forgot about it. Now, this familiar smell reminded her of that weird situation immediately – the truth finally revealed itself.

There was a smell that only belonged to a particular herb hidden in the fragrance. It was faint, not easy to tell, but people would feel exhausted and sleepy after smelling it.

In her past life, Ji Hanyue didn't know about this. But in this life as Qu Moying, she learned a lot of medical knowledge from Granny Miao and could distinguish it at once.

Not until today did she know that she fell asleep that day not because of the fruit wine but this hairpin.

Was she framed by Pei Luo'an, or were she and Pei Luo'an fooled by someone else? Since Ji Youran hooked up with Pei Luo'an long ago, she definitely had a way to reach that hairpin "handmade" by Pei Luo'an.

“Someone put in a particular herb while making the fragrance on the hairpin. Once people smell it, they will fall asleep,” Qu Moying said in a flat tone with a stern look in her eyes.

“The Third Lady wants to set you up again?” Yu Dong immediately understood it.

“The smell is very faint. Even though someone notices, they can just claim it’s a soothing herb, and an Imperial Doctor can’t even argue back.” Qu Moying curled up her lips. If she didn’t go through that odd situation in her past life, she wouldn’t even care about it after noticing the weird smell.

It was just a very faint smell, and feeling sleepy didn’t mean losing consciousness. Of course, with the effect of some fruit wine, it then would make people lose consciousness for a while.

Exactly like what happened that day...

“The Third Lady hasn’t given up on harming you, my lady!” Yu Dong said aggrievedly.

“If I don’t die, both she and Yu won’t give up.” Qu Moying’s tone was still surprisingly calm as if she wasn’t talking about herself.

However, this kind of calmness somehow set the whole room into silence.

Everyone fell into their own thoughts, in shock and sadness. After a while, Yu Chun looked at the box and asked, “My lady, since you can’t wear them, let’s keep them in a safe spot.”

“It’s okay as long as they are locked inside. Let’s just put the box here,” Qu Moying put the hairpin in her hand back into the box and closed it.

Yu Chun took the box and glanced at Qu Moying, waiting for her order.

“Put in at an obvious spot on my dressing table,” said Qu Moying while looking at the dressing table in the room. Every female guest’s main room had one, thoughtfully prepared by the Dabei Temple.

Since Qu Qiuyan planned to change her strategy, she must use someone else to carry out her scheme this time. It couldn't be Qu Caiyue who had enough trouble herself, so the next one was probably Yu Qingmeng. If so, Qu Moying would for sure give her a "warm" welcome...

As expected, Qu Moying heard about Yu Qingmeng's arrival in the afternoon. She nodded while showing a faint smile and didn't pay much attention to the news.

But a while later, Yu Qingmeng came unasked. She only took a maid here, and Qu Qiuyan was not with her this time.

Yu Dong opened the door and walked her inside. Seeing Yu Qingmeng dressed up as a married woman, Qu Moying wore a calm smile and didn't show any displeasure for her ruined engagement.

"Fourth Lady Qu, I'm here to apologize to you on behalf of the madam," contrast to her words, Yu Qingmeng's tone was quite rude. She acted as if she was still the noble lady of the Yu Family, which was annoying.

Obviously, she still thought highly of herself and believed she would become Young Master Xu's official wife one day.

Qu Moying let Yu Chun serve her tea. Then she took a sip from her own cup and raised her head to look at Yu Qingmeng. After knowing Yu Qingmeng's arrival, Qu Moying was aware that this meeting couldn't be avoided.

But it was sooner than she expected...

## Chapter 74 A Shameful Couple

"Fourth Lady Qu, are you happy now?" Yu Qingmeng's first sentence was still peaceful, but the following words she said carried all her anger and hatred as if she was the deceived one.

"Concubine Yu, why do you say that?" Qu Moying stared at Yu Qingmeng with an indifferent look on her face.

"If you want to cancel your engagement, just break it off. Why did you have to dirt my name, frame Young Master Xu to make him marry that shrew? You malicious woman!" Yu Qingmeng's eyes were bulging in rage. She wished she could run up to Qu Moying and shatter her into pieces.

She should be Young Master Xu's wife, but now she had to be a concubine, bullied by that aggressive woman – it was all thanks to Qu Moying. Yu had told Yu Qingmeng everything. If Qu Moying didn't mess up their plan, Yu Qingmeng's situation wouldn't be as bad as right now.

Thinking about this, Yu Qingmeng clenched her teeth as her eyes turned red.

If she knew this blind bitch was so hard to deal with, she would convince her aunt to kill her when she was still in the village. Then Qu Moying wouldn't get any chance to mess up with their life.

Qu Moying looked at Yu Qingmeng, who was almost losing her mind in rage, and she curled up her lips, "Concubine Yu, you were born in a decent family as a noble lady. Before Young Master Xu's engagement was broken off, you had already hooked up with him and acted intimately in public. Do you really believe Young Master Xu will marry you as his wife for your past behavior? Or to say, Lady Yu, do you ever suspect why Young Master Xu, who cares about his name more than anything, was willing to disobey etiquette in public for you?"

Qu Moying didn't care about Yu Qingmeng, so she just said whatever she wanted to her.

Their positions had been exchanged when Yu Qingmeng held Xu Lipeng's hand in public.

"Qu Moying, I knew it was you who framed Second Lady Duan and me." Hearing her careless words, Yu Qingmeng quivered furiously.

"You should be the most aware one about who framed who, Lady Yu! Just accept reality. If Young Master Xu really loved you so deeply, he would've broken off his engagement much earlier and married you as soon as possible." Qu Moying looked into Yu Qingmeng's eyes as her sharp words revealed the truth of Xu Lipeng's so-called love for Yu Qingmeng.

The doubt should have been in Yu Qingmeng's heart since long ago, but she just didn't want to accept it.

Qu Moying and Yu Qingmeng had become enemies long ago, so no matter what happened, Yu Qingmeng wouldn't give up on getting rid of her. Qu Moying's intention was not to make Yu Qingmeng believe the truth but to destroy her hypocritical ego. Yu Qingmeng had always thought highly of herself and looked down on Qu Moying. Right now, Yu Qingmeng dared come to her room alone to scold her because she still thought Qu Moying was just a weak, blind girl.

If it was Qu Qiuyan, Yu Qingmeng wouldn't dare to say anything.

She actually fell under the same category as Qu Caiyue, but she knew how to act pitifully, weakly, and innocently to earn people's sympathy better than Qu Caiyue.

From this perspective, she was a bit like Ji Youran too.

"Qu Moying, you..." Now, Yu Qingmeng's face turned pale as she was irritated so much by the girl she always disdained. She walked up, trying to slap Qu Moying across her face. Even if she beat Qu Moying, she believed nothing would happen since she still had her aunt's support.

Yu Dong reacted swiftly. He grabbed Yu Qingmeng's hand and threw her hard onto the ground.

Yu Qingmeng lost her balance and staggered away. If her maid didn't go up to support her, she would've fallen on the ground already.

"Yu Qingmeng, haven't you known your identity clearly? You were just a usual official's daughter who became a noble lady in the capital due to your relationship with my family. Now, you are just nothing. As a concubine, how dare you beat Vice Minister Qu's daughter?"

Qu Moying snorted, her voice full of disdain. Even though her eyes were covered by the veil, her curled lips showed enough sarcasm, which was extremely irritating for Yu Qingmeng.

"Qu Moying..."

“Concubine Yu, please leave. It’s not appropriate for a concubine to meet a noble lady. People who know about your situation will think you have a good relationship with the Fourth Lady. However, people who don’t know will think Young Master Yongning sent you here to threaten the Fourth Lady. The Marquis Yongning’s Family is fully responsible for the broken engagement, and everything is already over. If people think the Marquis Yongning’s Family sent a low-life concubine to insult the Fourth Lady, Young Master Yongning will feel ashamed,” said Yu Dong in a disdainful tone.

After years of working for Pei Yuanjun, Yu Dong had become bold enough to say anything he thought was right. He didn’t care if Yu Qingmeng was a wife or a concubine and didn’t regret what he said.

He was not an ordinary maid. He was not even a woman. So, he naturally acted more boldly than typical maids, and his words tended to be more straightforward.

Feelings offended by a maid’s words, Yu Qingmeng’s face turned red in rage, “How dare you say this to me, you little bitch.”

“I can say whatever you want to hear, Concubine Yu, but you’d better go back now. You are not a wife but just a concubine. Visiting the Fourth Lady is too inappropriate for your current identity.” Yu Dong didn’t take any step back.

So many different emotions were boiling inside Yu Qingmeng that she pointed at Qu Moying but couldn’t say anything. It was her first time being insulted by a maid, not to mention Qu Moying’s maid.

Then she turned around and strode out.

But she heard footsteps coming from behind. “Concubine Yu, let me walk you out to thank you for your visit this time. We can’t let people think the Fourth Lady and her maids mistreat you, right?”

It was Yu Dong, who was beaming.

Yu Qingmeng wished she could rush up to slap this rude maid, but her wrist was still hurting, reminding her not to do so.

When they finally arrived at the yard door, Yu Qingmeng walked faster, trying to leave this place as quickly as possible.

However, Yu Dong's pitiful voice came from behind again, "Concubine Yu, take care! The Fourth Lady really doesn't have anything to do with your situation. Please don't blame it on her. Her engagement has already been broken off. What else do you want? Please don't find her trouble anymore."

Yu Qingmeng shivered in rage.

Some guests of the Dabei Temple passed by and looked at her with a weird look, while others heard Yu Dong's words, pointed at her, and whispered with each other.

She almost lost control of herself and vented it all out. Then she suddenly remembered what Yu said to her before she went here. She tried hard to suppress the boiling emotions and even had a taste of blood around her throat. With her maid, she continued to walk outside.

Ever since Qu Caiyue made a big scene, more people showed up around the Qu Family's yard, trying to get the newest update of this drama. Whenever a stranger showed up here, they would discuss with each other and look at the stranger curiously.

Seeing many people around, Yu Qingmeng gave up on heading to Qu Qiuyan's yard. She turned right and returned to Xu Lipeng and her yard.

Upon her entry, Yu Qingmeng's eyes turned red immediately as tears formed inside. She ignored her servants' greetings, slowed her walking pace, and used a hanky to wipe her eyes. The anger on her face turned into sadness and grievance.

When she stepped into the room, she was already sobbing.

"What happened? Didn't you go to visit Third Lady Qu? Why are you crying right now?" Xu Lipeng asked her in shock. He walked closer and gently pulled her down on a chair.



"I-I met Fourth Lady Qu. She...she..." Yu Qingmeng couldn't even finish her words. She leaned on Xu Lipeng's chest and started to cry out loud.

Xu Lipeng waved his hand to signal every servant in the room to leave.

"What happened? What did she do to you?" Xu Lipeng asked in a soft voice, frowning.

"She...she... She and even her maid insulted me, saying that... They said that...I lowered myself...to...to be your concubine..." Yu Qingmeng choked while sobbing, her hand grabbing Xu Lipeng's coat.

"How dare they!" Xu Lipeng said coldly as a trace of rage flashed across his eyes. Then he comforted Yu Qingmeng gently, "It's alright. Don't cry. Just don't even go meet her again. I don't think she can have the chance to marry into a decent family anymore. Maybe you don't even need to deal with her in your entire life."

In Xu Lipeng's eyes, Qu Moying was just a girl with an eye problem and no talent. After her engagement with him was broken off, no decent man would be willing to marry her. Moreover, Yu wouldn't allow her to marry into a good family either.

"But I will visit my cousin and my aunt from time to time. If she keeps...keeps doing so, what should I do?" Yu Qingmeng sniffed, raised her eyes, and looked into Xu Lipeng's. Even while crying, her eyes were full of affection for Xu Lipeng.

Xu Lipeng always enjoyed the feeling of being admired by a woman like this.

Yu Qingmeng had occupied an important spot in his heart for years, so he naturally treated her differently than other women. He felt guilty for making her marry him as a concubine and treated her even more nicely after their marriage.

"I'll go with you next time when you visit the Qu Family."

It meant he would go support her.

That was good news for Yu Qingmeng. She nodded and straightened up, but a few seconds later, she started to wipe her eyes again as if she had thought about something else.

“Why are you crying again? If there’s anything else, just tell me. Don’t bear it by yourself. I know Qu Moying mistreats you, and we will have chances later to make her pay for it,” Xu Lipeng reassured Yu Qingmeng.

“Young Master... Does Qu Moying fall in love with someone else, and that’s why she...she set you up? I heard it from my cousin. Qu Moying is such an annoying girl. After all the years you had kept the promise and been laughed at by everyone else, you still didn’t even think about breaking off the engagement. But how dare she forced you to break it off and marry...marry that shrew because of a tiny little thing?”

Yu Qingmeng looked at Xu Lipeng and said with aggrievance and sadness.

Yu Qingmeng acted so pitifully and showed her full support for Xu Lipeng, which pleased him, but her words aroused his anger. Qu Moying was such a shameless woman! If it weren’t for her, he wouldn’t try to set up the lady of the Duan Family. But the one he wanted was First Lady Duan instead of Second Lady Duan, who had a bad reputation for being vixenish.

Thinking about himself being forced to marry a shrew, Xu Lipeng felt annoyed. Even though he had a good reason to break off the engagement because he had to save Second Lady Duan, who fell into the lake, some people still suspected his true intention, such as the young masters who were with him together that day. They even jokingly asked did he save another lady because he didn’t want to marry the blind lady of the Qu Family.

Because of this, he was no longer the perfect Young Master Yongning in people’s eyes and brought big trouble into his own life. He could foresee his unpeaceful marriage life after marrying Duan Jinxiang.

Noticing the stiff look on Xu Lipeng’s face, Yu Qingmeng knew she successfully made him angry. Then she said with her teary eyes, “I heard from my cousin that there seems to be something between Fourth Lady Qu and Second Young Master Yan. They almost made a big scandal before...”

"There's nothing between them!" Xu Lipeng interrupted her immediately.

Yan Yu had told him about it already.

"But if there's really something between them, will Second Young Master Yan marry Fourth Lady Qu?" asked Yu Qingmeng, her voice curious.

"No!" Xu Lipeng answered affirmatively.

"Why? If Second Young Master Yan really likes Fourth Lady Qu and wants to marry her, Earl Fengyang won't necessarily disagree. After all, Second Young Master Yan is not his first son, so he shouldn't have a high expectation for him." Yu Qingmeng looked confused, but she talked about the possibility of Yan Yu marrying Qu Moying again.

After she mentioned it a few times, it even started to sound real.

Xu Lipeng really began to think about the thing that sounded impossible for him before.

Qu Moying and Yan Yu? Letting Yan Yu marry Qu Moying? Yan Yu was just a playboy. Even if he married Qu Moying, he would treat her like a decorative article and not care about her too much. Then for Qu Moying, marrying Yan Yu would be way worse than marrying Xu Lipeng. After all, Xu Lipeng would give her the proper respect in public as his wife, but Yan Yu couldn't.

"Young Master, Second Young Master Yan is here!" a young servant reported at the door.

"Hurry, let him in!" Xu Lipeng smiled and let go of Yu Qingmeng in his arms.

Yu Qingmeng stood up, wiped her eyes with her hanky, turned around, and entered the inner room. Although she was familiar with Yan Yu, she'd better leave these two men alone for now.

Yan Yu entered, greeted Xu Lipeng with a smile, and sat down in a guest chair.

"I heard you got to the temple too, so I hurriedly come here to check, and you really are! I thought you wouldn't have time to go out after marrying your darling," said Yan Yu jokingly. He patted his paper fan on his palm and raised his brow, his words sounding meaningful.

"Come on, stop teasing me." Xu Lipeng let out a sigh as the smile on his face faded away.

"Why? Did something bad happen? Well, you already canceled the engagement with the Qu Family, and your family and Fourth Lady Qu's are no longer related. What can make you upset now?" Yan Yu leaned back in his chair and asked lazily.

"That day was truly an accident. It's my fault to break off the engagement with Fourth Lady Qu and make her so miserable. I shouldn't save Second Lady Duan that day. I even heard before that some ladies would use this kind of method to... But I didn't expect that kind of story could really happen to me."

Xu Lipeng lowered his head, looking more upset.

Yan Yu was with him that day. Before he jumped into the lake to save the lady, Yan Yu even pulled his sleeve, trying to stop him.

"It's not your fault. Who would have known Second Lady Duan is that type of person." Yan Yu had been close friends with Xu Lipeng since they were kids. Naturally, he would choose to stand at Xu Lipeng's side and blame everything on Second Lady Duan, who had a bad reputation.

Moreover, Yan Yu was not the only one who said that. Many noble madams had the same opinion as well.

Young Master Xu saved a lady out of good intention but expectedly sacrificed his own engagement confirmed more than a decade ago. Among all the people involved, Qu Moying was the most pitiful one. That was why her reputation was still much better than those ladies whose engagement was broken off typically.

Because most of the blame was put on Duan Jinxiang.

"I owe Fourth Lady Qu," said Xu Lipeng with a serious look. Then his eyes fell on Yan Yu. After hesitating for a few seconds, he continued, "I heard...you are somehow involved with Fourth Lady Qu after you got to the Dabei Temple. Are you...interested in her?"

"No, no, no. Why will I be interested in her?" Yan Yu shook his hand and hurriedly explained, "It really has nothing to do with me. I just want to teach her a lesson for you since I heard you were forced to marry Second Lady Duan because of her scheme. Is it true?"

"I-I'm not sure." Xu Lipeng shook his head with a bitter smile, "I only know that Second Lady Duan followed First Lady Duan to the lake. Then Fourth Lady Qu called First Lady Duan away, and you know what happened later... Although Fourth Lady Qu's appearance and personality are not that great, she should not be such a malicious person. It must be just rumors!"

Xu Lipeng's tone sounded hesitant, different than his normal confident attitude. Yan Yu's smiling upturned eyes fell on him while he said jokingly as usual, "Not necessarily. Some women look pitiful but actually have an evil heart. Who knows if Fourth Lady Qu is that kind of person?"

"Yan, you can't say that about a noble lady!" Xu Lipeng stopped him, looking righteous.

"Aye, don't be so cautious. It's just us two here. We have been close friends, and you have my full trust. You are such a gentleman! The engagement with Fourth Lady Qu had already delayed you for so long. Now that it's finally broken off, you have to marry that one. I guess many noble ladies in the capital are heartbroken."

Yan Yu's pretty words pleased Xu Lipeng, and he couldn't help but laugh out. After a bit of chat, Yan Yu took his leave.

When Yan Yu walked out of the yard, he saw Yu Qingmeng sitting under a tree, looking at the beautiful flowers, and strode over.

"Second Young Master Yan, good to see you." Yu Qingmeng had been waiting for him for a while. Seeing him, she stood up and curtsied with a smile.

"Concubine Yu!" Yan Yu cupped his hands in front of his chest.

"Second Young Master Yan, did our plan fail?" Yu Qingmeng asked him directly.

"Concubine Yu, why did you ask that stupid girl for help? She failed to send the thing out but even kept it in her own hands. She seemed not afraid to ruin our plan at all," Yan Yu snorted.

"It indeed was Second Lady Qu's fault. She didn't expect Qu Moying to be so cunning and walked into her trap. Please forgive her this time, Second Young Master Yan."

"Regardless of forgiving her, I hope there's no next time, Concubine Yu." Yan Yu pulled a long face and said sternly, "I know my reputation is not that great, but it is still my reputation, not something people can easily ruin as they want!"

"Yes, I apologize to you, Second Young Master Yan! I was not being thoughtful enough," Yu Qingmeng curtsied to him again, sounding pretty honest.

Her cousin told her to act as humbly as possible.

As she expected, the look on Yan Yu's face softened a bit as he nodded at her, "Since then, I'll leave first."

"Second Young Master Yan, please wait for a second," Yu Qingmeng hurriedly stopped him, who was turning around.

"Anything else?" Yan Yu looked at her.

"Nothing big. It's just...it's just Young Master Xu has been distraught because of Qu Moying. That malicious girl set up both him and me. I wonder if you can help us once more, Second Young Master Yan?" Yu Qingmeng asked hesitantly.

"No," without even asking the detail, Yan Yu rejected her immediately.

"Wh-Why?" His determined attitude surprised Yu Qingmeng. She raised her head and looked at him in shock. After Xu Lipeng suffered so much because of Qu Moying, as his close friend, Yan Yu should be very willing to help Xu Lipeng again.

Even though his reputation was affected a bit last time, he never cared about it anyway. Since their plan failed, shouldn't he try to help one more time?

"I don't see any point in doing so. Even Xu Lipeng himself felt guilty for Fourth Lady Qu. In my opinion, it seems that Fourth Lady Qu didn't do anything rather than became a victim due to the accident. She is just a poor lady whose engagement was broken off suddenly. Be a kind person, Concubine Yu. You shouldn't fixate on her so much. After all, you are the one who married Xu Lipeng instead of her."

Yan Yu's smile was bright, but his words hit hard on Yu Qingmeng's heart.

What did he mean by Xu Lipeng felt guilty for Qu Moying? It was Qu Moying who made her marry Xu Lipeng as a concubine instead of a wife. Why did Xu Lipeng feel guilty for Qu Moying?

A flame of rage started to burn in Yu Qingmeng's chest as her eyes darkened.

Did that blind bitch do something behind her back again to make Young Master Xu feel guilty?

"Of course, if your plan can be more discreet and won't affect me, I can still consider helping you, Concubine Yu."

Yan Yu waved his paper fan lazily as he stared at Yu Qingmeng's irritated face and suddenly changed his mind.

"Are you really willing to help me again, Second Young Master Yan?" The change in his attitude made Yu Qingmeng forget about her anger, and she asked hurriedly.

"Of course! After all, I'm Young Master Xu's friend!" Yan Yu nodded at her, "Just send a person to tell me when you need my help as long as the same mistake won't happen again."

“Don’t worry, Second Young Master. It won’t happen again,” Yu Qingmeng promised and kept nodding. She had to make a perfect plan with her cousin this time. She wouldn’t let Qu Moying get around with it again...

After Yu Dong walked Yu Qingmeng out, he received a message from a secret guard outside. “My lady, Lord Yun asks you to go over,” he quickly returned to the room and reported to Qu Moying.

“Right now?” Qu Moying asked, frowning. The Dabei Temple had been bustling with all kinds of people recently. People should or shouldn’t be here all showed up as if something big was about to happen.

“Yes, right now, in your current outfit.” Yu Dong took one of Qu Moying’s cloaks hung on the screen and passed it to Yu Chun.

After Yu Chun helped Qu Moying tie it up, the three of them walked out together.

It seemed like they were just taking a casual walk, but actually, Yu Dong was walking half-step ahead of them, leading Qu Moying to the back mountain behind the Dabei Temple.

The back hill behind the Dabei Temple actually occupied a lot of space. They first saw a forest of peach trees, on the right side of which was another mountain. From a distance, they could see different layers of mountains expanding endlessly. After they walked further in, they could still see some blooming peach trees standing aside of the path from time to time, and the dark color of the surroundings set off those bright flowers even more. However, it was silent around, and they hadn’t seen anyone in a while.

Any guest of the temple had access to the peach forest but apparently, not this mountain. A small door blocked the tortuous road where stairs led up to the top.

It was said that only royal members could enter this place.

However, Qu Moying had been here with Pei Luo’an as the future Crown Princess in her past life. She also knew about the secret behind the door, a royal family secret that ordinary people had never heard of.



A small nunnery was on this mountain...

## Chapter 76 She Saved Lord Yun?

There was a nunnery inside a temple, which should be an impossible thing in the world. However, it was true.

In her past life, Qu Moying only saw two old nuns in the nunnery on the mountain top, who seemed to have stayed there for a very long time.

Pei Luo'an's explanation was the emperor asked the Dabei Temple to help run this nunnery. But the so-called help was just providing them some daily necessities, such as firewood and food-related supplies. Every first day of a month, the temple would send someone to put the supplies on the road that led to the top of the mountain, and the nuns would walk down and pick them up by themselves. All the other things about the nunnery had nothing to do with the Dabei Temple.

Because it was a direct order from the emperor, and the only path was locked. Even the temple staff couldn't step into this area.

Qu Moying felt weird after hearing about it from the Crown Prince, but she was not too surprised since the royal family always had secrets. Since she was not involved, and the nunnery clearly had something to do with the emperor, it would be better for her not to ask about the detail.

She wasn't sure if Pei Luo'an truly didn't know about it or he just wanted to hide the truth from her, but she would accept whatever explanation he gave her.

She didn't expect herself to be here again after she was reborn. Seeing the door slightly open, she was surprised that Pei Yuanjun wanted her to meet him at this place.

She raised her eyes and saw the twists and turns of the mountain road. There was no one around, and people would never expect a small nunnery on the top of the mountain.

"Yu Dong, I'll meet Lord Yun up there?" Qu Moying pointed up and asked in a low voice.

"Yes, he is up there. My lady, please." Yu Dong stepped back to make way for her.

"Can we really go in by ourselves?" Qu Moying's eyes fell on the door in front of her. When she was here last time, she was accompanied by a Reception Monk from the Dabei Temple. But right now, she was only with her two maids, which made her feel a bit odd.

Even the Crown Prince needed someone to unlock the door for him. But why was this door open now?

Would this affect Pei Yuanjun?

"It should be close. You don't need to go too further in." Yu Dong gave her a reassuring smile, "The message I heard said Lord Yun should be nearby. My lady, shall we go?"

"Yes, let's go!" Qu Moying thought for a few seconds and made up her mind. She walked up slowly and pushed the door more open. The metal chain hung on the door made a clang, and the metallic sound echoed in the silent mountain, somehow giving them a horrifying feeling.

After a few steps, Qu Moying suddenly stopped and pricked up her ears. "Do you hear anything?" she asked her two maids.

"I don't hear anything, my lady." Yu Chun shook her head.

"Someone is not far?" Yu Dong said hurriedly as the expression on his face changed. He had a good hearing and noticed the sound too.

The three of them headed toward where the sound came from in a rush. After they walked around a huge mountain rock, they saw an open space. Pei Yuanjun was standing on a rock, guarded by a group of men, while another group of killers in black stood on the opposite road and flat ground.

The two groups were having a fierce fight. Noticing the unexpected scene, Qu Moying stopped in shock and then stepped back cautiously.

"My lady, we don't go any closer?" Yu Dong asked her subconsciously.

"To do what? To be Lord Yun's burden in the fight?" Qu Moying's voice was calm. When she was the Crown Princess, she had witnessed Pei Luo'an ambushed by assassins, so she was not very flustered right now.

The competition for the throne had always been full of bloodshed.

However, they still caught the two groups' attention. Pei Yuanjun's eyes passed the pool of blood on the ground and fell on Qu Moying's face with an elusive look.

He saw her stepping back discreetly instead of rushing up, and his lips curled into a pleased smile. It seemed like she was not a stupid girl.

Then he moved his eyes away from her and back on the killers in front of him.

There were around twenty killers initially, and now only about seven of them were left, struggling before their death.

They all surrounded a man to protect him, who looked like their leader and got injured already. The killer leader noticed Qu Moying when she tried to move away and suddenly rushed up to her. He even took a hit from Pei Yuanjun's guard on the way, but his movement wasn't slowed down, heading straight to her.

Since there was no guard around her, swiftly, he rushed up to Qu Moying within a blink.

Yet still, Yu Dong was faster than him, who threw a sharp stone at him immediately.

The killer leader didn't expect a weak maid to attack him. Unguardedly, he spat out blood as the stone hit the spot between his eyebrows hard. Qu Moying tried to avoid him, but his blood still splattered all over her clothes.

After the leader fell on the ground, Yu Dong patted his own chest, his heart pounding. Fortunately, he picked up a sharp stone just in case anything happened, or the killer leader might have killed the Fourth Lady already. When he rushed up to them, Yu Dong saw clearly the murderous intention in his eyes.

"He hasn't died yet!" Qu Moying suddenly yelled while stepping back.

Startled by Qu Moying's words, Yu Dong looked down immediately, while the killer, who he thought was dead, suddenly reached out to grab Yu Dong's leg and pull him down on the ground. As Yu Dong fell, the killer rolled upon his body and pointed his sword at Qu Moying's stomach.

In this critical moment, a sword pierced through the killer's body. His movement suddenly paused as the light in his eyes faded away, and then his body fell heavily.

At the same time, Yu Dong rolled away to dodge his attack and then stood up with a pale face. He quivered, looking at Pei Yuanjun, who was holding a sword behind the killer's body. "My lord."

He failed at protecting his master, Qu Moying, so he was supposed to be killed as punishment!

"Your punishment will be twenty lashes," Pei Yuanjun said expressionlessly as the blood on his sword was still dripping down into the killer's dead body.

"Th-Thank you, my lord," Yu Dong was overjoyed. It was lucky for him that Lord Yun spared his life for the sake of the Fourth Lady.

Qu Moying's eyes fell on the sharp sword held by Pei Yuanjun and recognized it. She not only saw it before but also danced with it once. How come it was owned by Pei Yuanjun now?

"Aren't you afraid?" Pei Yuanjun shook the sword, and more blood splattered on the ground.

"Yes, I am!" Qu Moying said honestly. She looked pretty messy, with her clothes stained by blood, breathing heavily.

However, she was standing still. Even when she was attacked just now, she didn't utter a sound at all.

"Since you are afraid, why didn't you scream?" Pei Yuanjun took out a hanky from his chest pocket and tossed it to Qu Moying. She caught it and wiped her face hurriedly, and the hanky was dyed by blood immediately.

"Screaming doesn't do anything. The killer wouldn't decide not to kill me just because I was afraid and screaming," Qu Moying said calmly.

Pei Yuanjun raised his eyebrow, glanced at the hanky in her hand, and said meaningfully, "Now, you can scream!"

"Now?" asked Qu Moying.

"Yes, right now!" Pei Yuanjun raised his downturned eyes and stared at her calmly.

Qu Moying tilted her head and fell into thoughts for a few seconds. "Okay!" She nodded and passed the hanky back to him, "Thank you for your hanky, my lord!"

"Don't return it to me when it's dirty." Pei Yuanjun ignored it, turned around, and left.

Qu Moying put it back in her pocket and left as well.

When they returned to the door they passed before, Qu Moying suddenly fell over as if she had lost all her strength. She leaned on a rock aside and started to scream, "Assassins!"

She acted like an ordinary weak noble lady and couldn't even get up because of fear, only yelling for help.

Yu Dong and Yu Chun went up to support her on her two sides and screamed together with her in fear, "Help! Assassins! Someone! Help!"

This place was close enough to the peach forest, and their scream immediately was noticed by some people. Some young masters soon brought their servants over and hurriedly rushed up after asking them where the assassins were.

Female guests were all waiting outside the door. Hearing the horrifying news, some of them even passed out due to fear. For a moment, screams were all around the peach forest.

The fight up on the mountain ended fast. After a little while, Pei Yuanjun showed up by the end of the road with his clothes full of bloodstains. He gazed at the people standing by the peach forest, still carrying a trace of ruthlessness from the fight, which made him look even more solemn than usual. No one dared to look into his eyes.

“Which lady screamed for help?” Pei Yuanjun looked around, and his eyes fell on Qu Moying.

“It-It was me,” Qu Moying stepped forward with Yu Chun’s help and stuttered, still looking flustered.

Pei Yuanjun stared at her with a sullen face and fell into silence. After a short, scary pause, he asked, “Which family are you from?”

“Sh-She is the Fourth Lady of the Vice Minister Qu’s Family,” Yu Chun forced herself to speak for her master.

“Fourth Lady Qu, you have my gratitude. I will send some gifts to you later,” Pei Yuanjun snorted. Then he left immediately, followed by several young masters who went to help him before.

They wouldn’t miss such a good chance to build some connection with Lord Yun. Even if they didn’t want it, their families would force them to do so.

Everyone knew that Lord Yun was the most powerful person except for the emperor. The Crown Prince had his current title because he was the righteous heir as the emperor’s first son. But in actuality, who got the throne eventually was up to Lord Yun.

If Lord Yun didn't like the Crown Prince, his title meant nothing!

After all, the Crown Prince had no military power to stand against Lord Yun.

Those young masters who were following behind Lord Yun were still afraid of him. However, they tried to help him kill those assassins, so Lord Yun wouldn't treat them too bad. When they passed by Qu Moying, they couldn't help but glance at her a few times. It was rare that Lord Yun expressed his gratitude in public.

They envied Fourth Lady Qu's luck and wished they could be the one who found Lord Yun in trouble first. They never heard that Lord Yun sent gifts to someone except for those royal members.

Fourth Lady Qu earned Lord Yun's appreciation for free just by screaming. It was like winning the lottery!

Soon after Pei Yuanjun left, Qu Moying walked away with her maids' help while everyone was still gossiping there. Speaking of Fourth Lady Qu, people had to share the story about her canceled many-year engagement with Young Master Yongning and her famous stepmother Yu.

No matter which version of the story people heard, they all had some negative impressions of Xu Lipeng, even though he was also an unlucky victim, forced to marry a shrew and break off his own engagement. If he was still Fourth Lady Qu's fiancé, he would get so many benefits just because Fourth Lady Qu saved Lord Yun today.

But here he was, missing all the good luck for some good reasons...

For a moment, the forest was buzzing with people's talking sounds, and many of them seemed to enjoy the gossip a lot. As for Yu, the stories about her were even more entertaining. Some people even mentioned what happened here among the ladies of the Qu Family. The rumors started to get more and more exaggerated...

Xu Lipeng, who had just arrived, heard the rumors about him and flew into a rage. Irritated, he turned around and left immediately.

Yu Qingmeng and Qu Qiuyan were in the crowd, too. Yu Qingmeng saw Xu Lipeng leaving and wanted to catch up with him, but got stopped by Qu Qiuyan, who was wearing a sullen face...

## Chapter 77 Don't Ever Think About the Royal Hairpins

"Cousin, wait." Qu Qiuyan gnashed her teeth.

That low-life bitch's existence reminded everyone of Qu Qiuyan's mother's shameful history at any second. Only her death could make people completely forget about it.

"Cousin, I think Young Master Xu looks mad. I need to go check on him." Yu Qingmeng noticed the sullen look on Xu Lipeng's face and got anxious.

"What are you going to do now? Let him vent his anger on you? I think I saw Second Lady Duan following behind Young Master Xu just now. If you are there with Young Master Xu, she will definitely make you suffer," Qu Qiuyan sneered and released Yu Qingmeng's sleeve from her hand.

"Then...what should I do?" Yu Qingmeng felt more flustered. She heard that Duan Jinxiang was a shrew, and she was mad at Xu Lipeng marrying Yu Qingmeng. It was possible that Duan Jinxiang beat her out of anger, and Yu Qingmeng couldn't afford to be insulted like that in public.

But when did she get to the Dabei Temple? Did she come for Young Master Xu?

"You can't do anything right now. Just wait a bit. I'm not sure if the person I saw is really Duan Jinxiang. Maybe I was wrong!" Qu Qiuyan's voice was sarcastic.

"I'll go to meet him later," Yu Qingmeng said immediately.

Qu Qiuyan was pleased to see Yu Qingmeng acting obediently, and then she asked, "How's the preparation? When will you do it to Qu Moying?"



Qu Moying's good reputation had no benefit for Qu Qiuyan. In fact, it would only bring adverse effects. She couldn't allow people to have a better impression of Qu Moying than her.

"Second Young Master Yan said he will help me, but..." Yu Qingmeng sounded hesitant.

"Then do it fast. The longer we wait, the more trouble we will have. Don't wait until you miss the chance," Qu Qiuyan said coldly. "It's not about me, Cousin. My life won't be affected by her anyway, but yours is different. If it weren't for her, you should be Young Master Yongning's righteous wife instead of just a concubine. You are not even a noble concubine. Cousin, I really can't understand what you were thinking. How can you agree to be just a concubine?"

Qu Qiuyan's voice was heavy with sarcasm.

Hearing her words, Yu Qingmeng pulled a long face in embarrassment.

Before, Yu Qingmeng always told Qu Qiuyan confidently that she would be Young Master Yongning's wife. She said it was pretty much confirmed already because Xu Lipeng loved her so much and wouldn't make her suffer from anything.

Qu Qiuyan's words rubbed salt on her wound. Feeling shameful, Yu Qingmeng didn't even know what to say.

If she could go back to the past, she would never brag about Xu Lipeng's love for her again.

"I get it. You... The royal hairpins...you mentioned last time..." lowering her head, Yu Qingmeng bit her lip and asked.

"Don't ever think about the royal hairpins," Qu Qiuyan said coldly as she sized Yu Qingmeng up. "Cousin, it's not that I don't want to trust you, but you make it hard for me. Those royal hairpins were my backup plan. Since they were given to me by Lord Jing, I won't be blamed even if anything happens. If the Crown Prince sees them...maybe my plan will work even better than I expect. So, I have to use them carefully."

Qu Qiuyan meant the royal hairpins were her backup plan after Yu Qingmeng failed, so she wouldn't let Yu Qingmeng use this method.

Getting distrusted even before doing it certainly didn't feel good. Yu Qingmeng pulled a long face and stamped her foot heavily in aggrievedness, "Cousin, don't worry. I promise it will work this time."

"Then that would be great, and I don't need to worry about it. I'll go back by myself first, or people will laugh at me if they see me walking with a concubine like you. I think Qu Moying probably will go to worship the Buddha sculpture later, so get yourself prepared. My grandmother is a devout Buddhist, so she will definitely ask Qu Moying to express her appreciation to the Buddha for giving her such good luck."

Qu Qiuyan curled her lips into a sarcastic smile. After she reminded Yu Qingmeng, she walked away, leaving Yu Qingmeng behind.

Standing awkwardly, Yu Qingmeng gnashed her teeth and looked resentfully at the direction where Qu Moying disappeared long ago. This time, she had to make it.

After the Old Lady heard what happened, she sent Granny Wu to look for Qu Moying immediately. Qu Moying hurriedly got washed and changed after she returned to their yard. Then she followed Granny Wu to the Old Lady's yard.

"Ying, are you alright? Did you get hurt?" Seeing Qu Moying coming in, the Old Lady stood up at once. She grabbed her granddaughter's hand and sized her up carefully. After making sure Qu Moying was safe and sound, the Old Lady let out a sigh of relief and then sat down with her.

The Old Lady was so worried hearing the news that she almost passed out.

"Don't worry, Grandma. I'm fine. It's just I met some assassins when I went there, and then I yelled for help. I didn't do anything else," said Qu Moying, looking a bit embarrassed.

"How come you went there? That door has always been locked, and I don't think ordinary people can get in." After hearing Qu Moying's description of the place, the Old Lady remembered she had seen it a few times. She could tell there must be some secret hidden behind that mysterious door.

Even the Old Lady was curious at first and wondered if she could get inside. But after seeing a lord's wife was stopped outside, the Old Lady gave up on the idea of entering.

Too many people died of knowing too much, which she was clearly aware of!

The Old Lady had always been discreet about the unknown and kept a low profile since she was not born in an aristocratic family.

"Grandmother, I don't know. Somehow I just walked there and saw the door open, so I went in to look around. I didn't expect..." Qu Moying lowered her head as a trace of fear showed on her face.

Any noble lady would be scared in this kind of situation.

"Fortunately, nothing big happened. You have to go worship the Buddha later for the good luck he gave you." Imagining her granddaughter's situation at that time, the Old Lady felt a bit scared too. She rubbed her forehead and said, "I will go with you."

"Madam, you haven't recovered yet. It's better not to move too much," Granny Wu reminded her hurriedly.

The Old Lady had been having this health problem for a long time. Although she felt better after taking some medicine, she still needed a lot of rest. Before she came to the Dabei Temple, she thought she would have some chill time with her four granddaughters. However, unexpected things kept happening, and every one of them was related to her youngest granddaughter, which made the Old Lady more flustered.

"I'm fine. It will just be some walk. No big deal," said the Old Lady.

Seeing the Old Lady's determined attitude, Qu Moying said, "Grandmother, I will be totally fine going there by myself. Nothing happened to me, even when I met some assassins, which means the Buddha has been protecting me. Don't worry. Your granddaughter has some really good luck. It's just worshipping the Buddha. Nothing dangerous will happen."

"I still can't let you go there alone. Ask your First Sister to accompany you this afternoon," the Old Lady said after thinking for a few seconds.

Qu Moying still wanted to persuade her, but the Old Lady had made up her mind. Knowing there was no use in rejecting her, Qu Moying nodded at her obediently, "Okay, I will do as you ask, Grandmother."

"Good, good!" Qu Moying's words were a big relief for the Old Lady. Among all her granddaughters, her oldest granddaughter was the most reliable one and seemed to have good relationships with the other three. The Old Lady would be the least worried if Qu Moying was in Qu Xuexin's hand.

Yet, another thing came across the Old Lady's mind.

"Was it really Lord Yun?" the Old Lady asked hesitantly.

"Yes, everyone said so," answered Qu Moying.

Then the Old Lady started to talk in a low voice, telling Qu Moying everything she knew about Lord Yun.

"Lord Yun is the emperor's cousin, and the emperor has liked him since he was a kid. He grew up in the royal palace, but he asked the emperor to assign him to the border after becoming a teenager. Since then, he rarely came back to the capital. During this period, his father, old Lord Yun, gave his position to him and left to travel around. The emperor has asked him to come back from time to time, but he rejected the emperor most of the time, saying he had some emergency to deal with at the border..."

Qu Moying knew the Old Lady told her this because she was worried that Qu Moying, growing up in the village, didn't know anything about Lord Yun. The Old Lady was trying to remind her in case she did something inappropriately and offended Lord Yun.

He rejected the emperor, saying he had some emergency to deal with? It was very arrogant of Lord Yun to do things against the emperor's will. Pei Luo'an thought Lord Yun's attitude towards the emperor showed enough of his ambition and always felt annoyed about it.

However, the emperor couldn't do anything to him!

Pei Luo'an once said the crucial reason that stopped the emperor from opposing Pei Yuanjun's will was his military power. However, the emperor's weak reaction even led to further development of his power. Every time Pei Luo'an mentioned Pei Yuanjun, he seemed irritated. No one expected Pei Yuanjun, who used to be a weak boy, would find his place at the border and become a dragon one day.

Naturally, Pei Luo'an's goal was to cut Pei Yuanjun's wings and trap him.

In her past life, her father knew better about Pei Yuanjun's story and told her about it before. However, Qu Moying sensed something different from the Old Lady's words. She only thought Pei Yuanjun was a threat to the throne, and the emperor would get rid of him sooner or later, but it was a while ago. The situation was totally different now since Pei Yuanjun had become the most powerful person except for the emperor within such a short period...

"Grandmother, how's Moying?" Qu Qiuyan's voice came from outside as she showed up at the door.

"Where have you been? How come you come back so late?" Sizing up Qu Qiuyan, who was gasping a little bit, the Old Lady sounded displeased.

"Grandmother, I was looking at the peach flowers. After I heard about what happened to Moying, I headed back immediately." Qu Qiuyan walked up to the Old Lady and curtsied to her gracefully. Then she turned to Qu Moying with a concerned look, "Moying, how are you? Did you get hurt?"

Her sincere attitude and the sweat on her forehead were very persuasive. If it was someone else who held a grudge against her, the person would probably believe her words and feel a bit touched.

However, Qu Moying was not someone else. A trace of sarcasm showed up in her eyes. She wasn't really freaking out in the back mountain and saw people around clearly. She noticed Xu Lipeng, Qu Qiuyan, Yu Qingmeng, and some other young masters and noble ladies were all present.

Qu Qiuyan dared to act in front of Qu Moying probably because she believed Qu Moying was too panicked to notice her at that time.

"Thank you for your concern, Third Sister. I'm alright." Qu Moying stood up and curtsied to her.

"Really? Let me have a good look at you. I heard many people died there." Qu Qiuyan's face was pale, and her words sounded horrifying, making the Old Lady worry again. Qu Moying didn't mention to her that many people died just now.

Qu Moying held the Old Lady's hand and patted it gently to reassure her. Then she said to Qu Qiuyan, "Because some assassins tried to ambush Lord Yun and had a fight with Lord Yun's guards. I saw it from a distance and ran away immediately because I was so scared. After hearing my scream, some young masters took their servants there to rescue Lord Yun."

"Okay, that's enough. Talking about it too much will bring us bad luck. Qiuyan, since you are back, go to worship the Buddha with your sister later," the Old Lady gave a glare at Qu Qiuyan and said.

"Emm, Grandmother, but...I might..." Qu Qiuyan sounded very hesitant. She looked at Qu Moying awkwardly as if she was asking for Qu Moying's help.

## Chapter 78 Please Take This Pearl Hairpin as My Apology

Qu Moying lowered her head and curled up her lips, amused by Qu Qiuyan's acting skill.

Not getting any response from Qu Moying, Qu Qiuyan inwardly cursed her for not being grateful. However, her acting was not affected at all. "Grandmother...Second Young Master Yan...Second Young Master Yan..."

"What's the matter with him?" the Old Lady hit the table hard and said angrily. Yan Yu's name was the last thing she wanted to hear now. For what happened before, he became a thorn in her flesh.

"He's still in the Dabei Temple. I worry that if he...he will offend Moying, that will be bad," Qu Qiuyan sounded concerned.

Qu Qiuyan talked as if there was something between Qu Moying and Yan Yu. Qu Moying lifted her head and stared at her coldly, "Third Sister, why won't Second Young Master Yan offend you? Why does it have to be me?"

"I have nothing to do with Second Young Master Yan. I..." subconsciously, Qu Qiuyan argued back at once. Then she realized she had said something wrong. Lifting her eyes, she saw the Old Lady's sullen face and fell into silence in embarrassment.

She intended to create a false impression on the Old Lady that Qu Moying and Yan Yu were interested in each other, but of course, she didn't want the Old Lady to notice her intention.

She had already given enough hints to Yu Qingmeng. Knowing her cousin's personality well, Qu Qiuyan was expecting something malicious from her.

"Third Sister, since you have nothing to do with Second Young Master Yan. I don't understand why you said that just now," Qu Moying's voice was icy.

"Explain yourself, Yan!" the Old Lady added.

"Grandmother, I'm sorry. I-I might misunderstand something. I thought, I thought..." Qu Qiuyan stood up, curtsied to the Old Lady, and then said to Qu Moying with an apologetic look on her face, "Moying, I'm sorry that I misunderstood it. Luckily, no outsider is around to spread rumors."

Qu Qiuyan meant she said it unintentionally, and it was no big deal since they were talking in private. Qu Moying's eyes darkened. Except for the beginning when she was just reborn Qu Qiuyan used reckless methods to kill her, it had been quite tough to deal with her now.

She only sent a maid to murder Qu Moying because she underestimated her blind younger sister and thought it would be easy to get rid of her. Now, Qu Qiuyan was her normal self, planning everything carefully.

However, what did she want to do right now?

With Qu Caiyue and Yu Qingmeng doing all the dirty work for her, she didn't need to do anything by herself!

The Old Lady's look softened, and she nodded. "Second Young Master Yan has nothing to do with any of you. Even if you run into him on the way, just get away from him. Since you don't have a brother to help you anyway, at the most, you can just make a curtsy to him from a distance!" the old Lady reminded them.

"Yes, Grandmother. Don't worry, I will protect Moying. I have another thing to tell you, Grandmother," said Qu Qiuyan smilingly.

"Yeah?" pleased by Qu Qiuyan's respectful attitude, the Old Lady's voice softened.

"My cousin came to the temple with Young Master Yongning too. If they run into...Moying, I feel it will be a bit awkward," Qu Qiuyan took a glance at Qu Moying and said meaningfully.

People all felt pity for Qu Moying right now, whose engagement was broken off by accident. Meeting her ex-fiance and his newly married concubine? That certainly sounded embarrassing.

Although the Old Lady knew the engagement was meant to be canceled, she didn't expect an accident like that happened on her own birthday banquet. Moreover, the accident became Xu Lipeng's reason to break it off and put Qu Moying at a disadvantage, making the Old Lady dislike Xu Lipeng more.

"Just avoid them when you see them."

"But she's my cousin..." Qu Qiuyan muttered as she lowered her head and clenched the hanky in her hand. No matter what Yu Qingmeng had done, she was still Qu Qiuyan's cousin who lived in the Qu's Mansion for a long time and grew up with her. Qu Qiuyan was much closer with Yu Qingmeng than Qu Moying.

"Grandmother, if we see Lady Yu, Third Sister can go over to talk to her while I can just avoid her," Qu Moying said in a soft voice while sneering inwardly.



Was this Qu Qiuyan's excuse to leave her alone later? As Yu Qingmeng's cousin, she had to talk to her when meeting her. Then, if something happened to Qu Moying later, no one could blame Qu Qiuyan for leaving Qu Moying alone. What a cunning girl!

However, Qu Moying decided to give Qu Qiuyan an opportunity to carry out her evil plan. Otherwise, she wouldn't find any chance to fight back if Qu Qiuyan didn't do anything...

"If you want to go talk to Yu Qingmeng, just go. I'll ask your First Sister to accompany Ying then." The Old Lady frowned at Qu Qiuyan, feeling displeased with the idea of Qu Qiuyan getting too close with anyone from the Yu Family.

The Old Lady didn't find anyone good-hearted from the Yu Family – Yu Qingmeng and Yu were the best two examples. If Qu Qiuyan spent too much time with the Yus, they would definitely have a bad influence on her.

But after all, the two families were related, so the relationship couldn't be suddenly cut off. They had to go through the formalities, at least.

"First Sister will go with us, too?" That's unexpected for Qu Qiuyan. She lowered her eyes and fell into thoughts. She agreed to accompany Qu Moying in the first place because she could use the chance to take Qu Moying to a place and leave her alone there with a perfect excuse. But if they were with Qu Xuexin, it could be troublesome.

"Yes, I'll just let your First Sister accompany Moying to worship the Buddha. If you have your own appointment, you don't need to go with them," the Old Lady sounded a bit impatient.

"Grandmother, I don't have any appointments. I'm just worried that if I meet my cousin and she insists on talking to me, I will feel bad leaving Moying alone. If First Sister comes with us, that will be perfect. It's the first time that Moying came to the Dabei Temple, and I don't want anything bad to happen to her again."

Qu Qiuyan surely knew how to pick her words. After she said so, the stern look on the Old Lady's face softened immediately.

Pleased by her polite behavior, the Old Lady waved her hand at her two granddaughters, "Alright, you can go after having lunch. Go eat first, and make sure you leave the yard together."

It was a bit late now. Since the Old Lady was still taking medicine, her lunch was specially made light. The Old Lady didn't ask them to eat with her, thinking the young ladies wouldn't prefer her bland food. So, every lady's lunch was sent to their own yard separately.

"Grandmother, then we will take our leave," said Qu Qiuyan.

Qu Moying stood up and excused herself as well. Then the two walked out of the Old Lady's house.

"Moying, do you like the royal hairpins I sent?" Qu Qiuyan waited until Qu Moying caught up with her and then gave her a smile.

"Thank you for the hairpins, Third Sister," Qu Moying said in a flat tone.

"Those don't cost too much, but they are new products from the royal palace. You can wear them if you like. You've always dressed too plainly. I understand it won't be a problem in the village, but now that you have come back to the mansion, we can't let other people look down on our family. After all, our father is a vice minister. Moreover, your engagement was just broken off. It's the critical time to show others your courage and confidence," said Qu Qiuyan with a serious look.

Qu Qiuyan talked as if she was a good older sister who cared a lot about her younger sister.

If Qu Moying didn't know her personality clearly, she would be misled by her acting and think she was nice.

After all, all the things that happened before, including Qing He's attempted murder, might not be planned by Qu Qiuyan but rather her mother, Yu.

At least, that was how the Old Lady thought about it right now.

Qu Moying's eyes looked up and fell on Qu Qiuyan as she curled up her lips. "Thank you for your concern, Third Sister."

"Don't even mention it. We are sisters, sharing happiness and pain together. Compared to First Sister and Second Sister, we are even more closely related. I don't want anything bad to happen to you since it doesn't do any good for me."

Qu Qiuyan faked a smile.

These pretty words she uttered were quite impressive!

Qu Moying was almost amazed by her acting skill.

"Thank you, Third Sister," Qu Moying repeated her gratitude softly. She was smiling, but there was no warmth in her eyes.

"How about we wear the royal hairpins together later? Then people will know we are sisters immediately," Qu Qiuyan sounded a bit excited.

"I don't think it's appropriate to wear those bright hairpins in the Dabei Temple," Qu Moying said hesitantly.

"Oh dear, thank you for the reminder. I'm too happy to remember that we are in a temple. It's indeed not appropriate, especially since we are going to worship the Buddha later. If people see us wear them, they will definitely think we are disrespectful. It's my fault to suggest it." Qu Qiuyan realized it in shock and patted her forehead gently.

She must've known it was inappropriate to wear such bright hairpins in the Dabei Temple, but Qu Moying didn't know her intention of mentioning it yet. Quietly, she waited for Qu Qiuyan's following words.

Suddenly, Qu Qiuyan pulled out a pearl hairpin from her head and passed it to Qu Moying. "Moying, I'm sorry for suggesting that. Please take this hairpin as my apology. I believe this one is much more

appropriate to wear in the Dabei Temple. It took some time for Father to find the pearls on the hairpin. These twelve pearls are not the biggest ones, but each is particularly round.”

Qu Qiuyan shook the hairpin in her hand as the hairpin gleamed beautifully under the sunlight. Those pearls on it were purple, with pretty much the same size, which was rare enough. The hairpin might not be invaluable, but it matched well with their identity as a vice minister’s daughters, who came to worship the Buddha.

Qu Moying was also wearing a pearl hairpin, which had only one relatively big pearl on the tip of it but nothing else. It looked roughly made compared to the one Qu Qiuyan had that was clearly more exquisite.

Qu Qiuyan had always worn more like a real noble lady born in a wealthy family than Qu Moying. Even though they were in the Dabei Temple, she still wore three hairpins on her hair. They matched well with her whole dressing style, elegant but not showy.

“Father made a pair for me before, and I can wear another one later with you. It was Father’s gift for me, and now, I give one to you, Moying. I hope you like it,” Qu Qiuyan said smilingly. She pushed the hairpin closer to Qu Moying, looking like a generous older sister.

Qu Qiuyan’s attitude made it hard for Qu Moying to reject her gift. Moreover, they were still standing in the Old Lady’s yard while Granny Wu stood at the door, watching them leaving with an amiable smile. The yard was not big, so Granny Wu could see everything they were doing right now.

Qu Qiuyan’s words were pretty, but the implication was harsh.

Their father clearly showed his bias in terms of his two daughters. He pampered Qu Qiuyan while treating Qu Moying as a stranger, maybe not even close to a stranger.

Qu Moying gave a cold glance at Qu Qiuyan. She slightly moved her body aside to block Granny Wu’s sight and then took the hairpin from Qu Qiuyan. “Thank you, Third Sister.”

A trace of sarcasm flashed across Qu Moying’s eyes. It was a pair of hairpins or a set of four hairpins? This delicate hairpin was obviously not as simple as Qu Qiuyan said!

However, now Qu Moying had a good guess about Qu Qiuyan's intention...

## Chapter 79 The First Lady Was Sick Again!

"We are sisters. Don't even mention it." Qu Qiuyan gave Qu Moying a smile, looking a bit complacent. She couldn't take anything from Qu Moying, but she could give her things as she wanted.

However, not every person deserved her gift!

The two young ladies said goodbye to each other friendly at the Old Lady's yard door and left the different directions.

Strolling to her yard, Qu Moying held the hairpin in front of her eyes and watched those pearls clattering each other. It was indeed an exquisite hairpin, unique enough for her to remember it till now.

She saw the same hairpins at the empress' place. There was a set of four hairpins sent to the empress as a tribute. That day, the empress invited her over to pick some accessories. When she got to the empress' place, Noble Consort He was there too. After the set of hairpins was presented to them, Noble Consort He's eyes lit up, and she asked the empress for the hairpins immediately, saying that it would be a nice gift for Lord Jing's future wife. Plus, the number four was a sign of good luck in their culture.

At that time, she noticed Noble Consort He picked County Lady Jingyu as her son's wife candidate. Hearing Noble Consort He's request, the empress looked a bit unwilling and even signaled her to ask for those hairpins too. She thought it was unnecessary to compete with Noble Consort He over some hairpins and ignored the empress' hint.

In the end, Noble Consort He got the hairpins while she was scolded by the empress in private.

The empress even asked her if she didn't want to bring good luck for her and the Crown Prince's marriage and blamed her for being useless.

Moreover, the empress didn't let her leave the royal palace until Pei Luo'an came to explain for her.

Now, everything had changed, but surprisingly, she saw the same hairpin again, giving her a complex feeling.

Two of the four hairpins were in Qu Qiuyan's hands. She claimed herself to be the future Madam Jing, but Lord Jing didn't seem willing to make their relationship public. Not to mention, his heart had been wavering between the Guardian General's daughter and County Lady Jingyu.

The more complicated the situation became, the more amusing it felt for Qu Moying.

"My lady..." Noticing Qu Moying fell into silence, Yu Dong looked at the distance and reminded her in a low voice. He sensed some noise and movement as he had better sight and hearing than ordinary maids.

Qu Moying shook her head quietly and didn't turn back to look at him.

Suddenly, an old maid rushed out behind a tree in front of them and bumped into Qu Moying rudely. As Qu Moying lost her balance and staggered back, Yu Chun and Yu Dong hurriedly went up to steady her.

"Hey, watch out! Didn't you see us here?" Yu Chun said in rage while holding Qu Moying's hand.

"Sorry, sorry, I'm really sorry!" The old maid kept apologizing with her head lowered.

After standing still, Qu Moying frowned, "Let's go!"

That hit was pretty hard just now, and her arm still hurt.

"Thank you, my lady. Thank you, my lady." The old maid turned around and ran away immediately.

Everything happened too fast. Before they realized it, the old maid had already disappeared.

"My lady, I couldn't even see her face," Yu Dong said in an annoyed voice, looking in the direction where the maid left. No matter how good his sight was, he couldn't see the person clearly since the old maid moved too fast and kept lowering her head during the whole time.

"There's no need." Qu Moying shook her head and looked down at her empty hands, moving her fingers.

"My lady, where's the hairpin?" Yu Chun noticed it at the same time and exclaimed in shock.

"It dropped," Qu Moying said carelessly.

"It dropped? Where?" Yu Chun looked at the ground and searched around. But no matter how carefully she looked, she couldn't find the pearl hairpin, making her more and more flustered. "My lady, Third Lady said she wants to wear the same hairpin with you. But it's gone now! What should you wear later?"

"Just the one I'm wearing right now," Qu Moying said calmly, looking at the distance. It was such good timing. Right after she got the hairpin from Qu Qiuyan and held it in her hands, an old maid came out of nowhere and bumped into her, making her lose the hairpin.

The hairpin would probably be handed to Qu Moying's maid if the old maid came out a bit later. The person behind it set the timing right after Qu Moying got the hairpin, guessing she would take a careful look at it first.

"Yu Chun, Yu Dong, speak louder," Qu Moying whispered to her two maids with a smile. They were standing beside Qu Xuexin's yard, and she noticed a maid peeked at them through the slightly opened door and returned inside.

Knowing their master's intention, her two maids immediately started to talk in a loud, flustered voice, "My lady, we have to go tell the Old Lady. It is the old maid's fault that you lost the hairpin."

"My lady, that old maid did it on purpose! She must've seen the Third Lady giving you the hairpin and waited here for you to steal it. But the odd thing is, how did she know the Third Lady would give you the hairpin?"

“My lady, let’s go to the Old Lady’s yard.”

“Yeah, let’s go right now. Maybe someone wants to set you up.”

The two maids talked loudly, feeling aggrieved for their master.

“It’s no big deal. We can tell Third Sister when we see her later,” Qu Moying said carelessly.

“My lady, it is a big deal! You have to do it as soon as possible!” Yu Dong’s voice was stern.

“Alright, I will tell Third Sister later,” Qu Moying sounded more indifferent. With her two maids, she passed by Qu Xuexin’s yard. As she glanced at the yard, the slightly opened door moved a little bit, but no one came out.

When they returned to their yard, the lunch had already been served. Qu Moying ate a little and asked her maids to clean the table up. Not in a hurry to go out, she took a sip of the tea served by Yu Dong, slowly put the teacup down, and asked Yu Chun, who had just come back from outside, “Is First Sister feeling unwell again?”

“Yeah, her maid says her coughing is pretty bad, and she is still lying on her bed. She really wanted to accompany you this afternoon, but she couldn’t make it.” Yu Chun sighed, “How come the First Lady’s body is so weak? Her health condition seems even worse than the Old Lady’s.”

At least, the Old Lady was not lying on her bed all day long. She looked less energetic than usual, but she could still spend some time chatting with her granddaughters.

However, the First Sister’s sudden sickness seemed very odd.

Yu Chun always thought her master had been a weak girl and often got sick when they were back in the village. Moreover, Qu Moying’s sickness even lasted for years. But even so, if she could, Qu Moying would definitely get off from her bed unless it was terrible. Hearing the First Lady had to lie on her bed, Yu Chun wondered how heavy her sickness was.



As she thought so, Yu Chun also felt it was unfortunate that the First Lady got sick right now.

The Third Lady clearly was not holding any good intention. If the First Lady could go with them, she would be a help.

"The First Lady is a smart girl, and smart people always know when is the right time to get sick," Qu Moying blinked at her confused maid and said with a smile.

"My lady, do you mean...she's pretending she's sick?" Yu Chun understood it immediately and asked in shock. She was never a foolish girl. Hearing Qu Moying's hint, the odd feeling she got immediately found its answer.

In her opinion, her master and the First Lady didn't have conflicts in terms of benefits, living in separate mansions. The Fourth Lady had always treated the First Lady respectfully, and the latter always looked polite and mild. Yu Chun couldn't understand why the First Lady would do such a thing.

"Of course, she is pretending. The last time she got sick was after she left with the Second Lady and the Third Lady at the market. The Fourth Lady was suspected, and the Second Lady got into trouble that time while she was gone, saying she was sick. Now, the Fourth Lady needs her companionship, and here she is, sick again. If she is really sick to the point where she can't get off her bed, why hasn't she sent a servant to leave the temple and call a physician over or just return to the mansion directly? The Qu's Mansion is not too far away from the Dabei Temple."

Yu Dong, having a better grasp of the situation, pressed his lips and said disdainfully.

"The First Lady is indeed smart. Knowing the Third Lady is going to frame the Fourth Lady, she chooses to avoid it to protect herself. Consequently, no matter what happens later, she will have nothing to do with it."

"How can the First Lady do that?! She is...but she is the First Lady..." Yu Chun took a deep breath in shock and muttered. She never expected the First Lady, who always looked mild and gentle, to be such a person.

“Even though our family lives in two separate mansions, the West Mansion is the main one since my father has a higher official rank than my uncle. First Sister is a smart person, so she will never offend Qu Qiuyan. Maybe she will even choose to help Qu Qiuyan bully me, depending on the situation. Right now, her doing nothing is the best I can get from her,” Qu Moying said carelessly.

None of the ladies in the Qu Family treated Qu Moying sincerely. But Qu Moying didn’t care about it since she had no feelings for them too.

The only person she cared about was the Old Lady, and right now, the thing she wanted to figure out the most was her grandmother’s “health problem”. If the Old Lady was healthy, things wouldn’t get to the current point, but unfortunately, she was sick while Qu Moying needed her the most. However, unlike Qu Xuexin, who hid in her room and faked her sickness, Qu Moying could tell the Old Lady was really sick with her own eyes.

“How’s the arrangement with Chun Xiu?” Qu Moying pulled herself back from her sarcastic thoughts and asked Yu Dong. While sending Yu Chun to visit Qu Xuexin, she also ordered Yu Dong to make some arrangements with Chun Xiu.

Since Qu Qiuyan spent so much effort on freeing herself from the blame after her evil plan was carried out, Qu Moying certainly would not let that happen.

She would make Qu Qiuyan fall into the trap she set herself...

A maid showed up at Qu Moying’s yard door. She curtsied to the main room and asked in a loud voice, “My lady, the Third Lady asks can you leave now?”

The room fell into silence for a few seconds, and then Yu Chun walked out. He beamed to the maid, “We are ready to leave. If the Third Lady is prepared too, let’s go.”

“Okay, then I will go back to report to the Third Lady. Have you asked the First Lady? If you haven’t, I can go to invite her when passing by her yard.” The maid Qu Qiuyan sent was a clever one. She clarified everything quickly and even thought about inviting Qu Xuexin.

If it were before, Yu Chun would just react to what she said. But right now, she was calm and confident, having her master's explicit order. Yu Chun shook her head with a smile, "The First Lady sent maid tell us she's sick and can't get off from her bed for a while. She said you can go without her, and she will hold a dinner party to apologize to you later when she feels better!"

"The First Lady is sick again?" the maid asked in shock. However, the trace of surprise on her face didn't seem natural, as if she faked, knowing it was going to happen anyway. Hurriedly, she said, "the First Lady has always been quite weak. I hope the Third Lady won't mind."

## Chapter 80 A Scholar Surnamed Gao

"Don't worry. It's me bothering Third Sister anyway. I have been pretty weak too, and luckily, I feel fine during this trip."

"Don't even mention it, Fourth Lady. The Third Lady is your older sister, and of course, she will take care of you."

"Alright, then please tell the Third Lady that we will meet her fifteen minutes later under the tree outside of the Old Lady's yard," responded Yu Chun.

Without saying anything else, the two maids curtsied to each other and left. Yu Chun did everything as Qu Moying told her and returned inside.

The other maid quickly returned to Qu Qiuyan's yard. After seeing Qu Qiuyan, she curtsied to her and reported, "My lady, the First Lady said she feels unwell and can't go with you this time. Fourth Lady said she will meet you fifteen minutes later under the tree outside of the Old Lady's yard."

"Qu Xuexin refused to go with us again? She is getting more and more smart," Qu Qiuyan sneered. She picked a hairpin and passed it to the maid who was helping her dressing up behind her. The maid cautiously picked the hairpin up and put it in her hair. Qu Qiuyan had always liked wearing multiple hairpins simultaneously, but she would choose them carefully so that they could match up well, making her look elegant but not showy.

Qu Qiuyan was proud of her own styling since it showed her unique beauty but still made her keep a low profile. This was something that other noble ladies couldn't compete with her for.

As for Qu Xuexin, she never cared about her in the first place.

She knew Qu Xuexin was a coward and didn't dare to accompany Qu Moying in this situation. To be honest, Qu Qiuyan preferred her absence too since she didn't want Qu Xuexin to ruin her plan.

"Is my cousin ready?" Qu Qiuyan turned her head and asked another maid who had just returned.

"Everything is ready, and all you need to do is wait, my lady. You won't get involved since all you did was just give a hairpin to the Fourth Lady. You have no idea about what will happen later," the maid reported carefully and even imitated Yu Qingmeng's tone while speaking.

Qu Qiuyan pressed her lips. She still couldn't trust Yu Qingmeng, but her distrust didn't matter now.

After the last lesson, Yu Qingmeng must be more discreet this time. Qu Qiuyan couldn't intervene too much since she didn't want to leave any possibility of her getting into trouble.

Meanwhile, Yu Qingmeng was anxiously striding back and forth in her room. Suddenly, she stopped with a sullen face, deep in her thoughts. Right now, she had two choices. The first and most suitable one was Second Young Master Yan, but she somehow had this weird feeling about him since he failed last time.

"My lady," her maid Ju Xiang said worriedly.

"Give the hairpin to Gao," Yu Qingmeng said while gnashing her teeth. After a while, she finally made up her mind.

She chose to trust her gut feeling and use the second candidate – a scholar surnamed Gao. Her aunt Yu found him before and planned to use him to set Qu Moying up when she was still in the village. However, none of them expected the Old Lady to call Qu Moying back. Luckily, she asked Gao to come to the Dabei Temple this time.

Compared to Second Young Master Yan, who seemed very unpredictable, Gao always acted obediently and seemed much more reliable for her plan.

“My lady, will Third Lady Qu get mad?” asked Ju Xiang.

Third Lady Qu said she wanted to use this person too, and she hadn’t known that this man was brought here by Yu Qingmeng yet. Ju Xiang was worried that her master would get scolded because of it.

“There’s no time. I will explain it to my cousin later. As long as we can get rid of Qu Moying this time, Gao will become useless to us anyway!” Yu Qingmeng sounded determined.

She knew Second Young Master Yan was the most suitable person to carry out her plan since he had already talked to Qu Moying before. However, every time Yu Qingmeng thought about Second Young Master Yan, she would feel unsettled as Gao seemed reliable as well.

“Yes, my lady!” Ju Xiang took the hairpin from Yu Qingmeng’s hand, put it into her pocket, and left in a hurry.

Ju Xiang looked around after leaving the yard and turned to the area where all the male guests stayed. The male and female areas were separated by two Buddha halls, but they were not too far away from each other. She walked around the halls and headed to a more remote place. After a while, she finally stopped in front of a shabby little house. It was quiet around as Ju Xiang didn’t see anyone passing by.

Unlike the guest yards with multiple houses, this house had the simplest layout with only one room. Located in a remote place, it looked more like a storage room of the temple.

After Ju Xiang knocked on the door, a good-looking young man with a pale face opened the door. Not surprised seeing Ju Xiang, he bowed to her politely, “Miss Ju Xiang.”

He was wearing a clean dark blue robe made of coarse cloth. It was obviously washed many times since the color started to fade

“Come here. Listen...” Ju Xiang whispered in his ear.

While Ju Xiang was talking, the young man seemed awkward and frowned. After Ju Xiang finished her words, he asked slowly, "Will it be too inappropriate?"

"Do you even care? Stop faking it. You will have the good reward you deserve." Ju Xiang pulled out a check and passed it to him, "Whether it fails or not, you can have this."

"Thank you, Miss Ju Xiang." The young man took the check, looking very timid.

However, Ju Xiang couldn't help but roll her eyes. She couldn't believe a shameless man like him pretended to be such a polite and simple man. If she didn't know his history, she would be deceived by his innocent look too.

With her job finished, Ju Xiang left immediately. Even a maid like her looked down on him...

After Qu Qiuyan got washed, she walked outside with her maid Qing Ju. At the same time, they saw Qu Moying walking over with Yu Dong. Seeing her younger sister, Qu Qiuyan acted excitedly, walked up to Qu Moying, and held her hand. "We arrive at the same time, Moying! Let's go. I'll show you some good views here, and then we can go worship the Buddha."

"I don't think it's a good time to watch the views. If Grandmother knows about it, she will be mad," Qu Moying said hesitantly.

"Don't worry. Grandmother likes you the most. She won't do anything to you," said Qu Qiuyan carelessly, holding Qu Moying's hand more tightly.

Qu Moying pulled her hand back and avoided her intimate touch. "Third Sister, I'm sorry. I'm not used to holding hands with other people."

"Oh, okay. Then let's go. I know some of the Buddha halls are really popular among the guests, where many people's wishes came true after they worshiped the Buddha. We can go pray there, draw divination sticks, and let a monk analyze them for us. We are only with me this time, so you don't need to be so restrained."

Qu Qiuyan was beaming with a trace of excitement on her face, not irritated by Qu Moying's avoidance. However, when she glanced over Qu Moying's hair, her expression suddenly changed. "Moying, where's the hairpin I gave to you? How come you are not wearing it?"

"I'm sorry that I lost the hairpin, Third Sister. I was about to tell you this. When I was walking before, an old maid bumped into me and made me drop the hairpin," Qu Moying lowered her head and said worriedly.

"Moying, you can't lose such a private thing like a hairpin! Did you look for it? If someone picks it, your name will be ruined! We should go look for it right now." Qu Qiuyan reached out, trying to hold Qu Moying's hand again.

Qu Moying avoided her hand. "Then we can look for it while walking. If I see that old maid again, I'm sure I can recognize her. Then I can ask it back from her."

"Okay. That sounds good," Qu Qiuyan agreed, still wearing a worried look on her face. Meanwhile, she sneered inwardly. Looking for that old maid? Yu Qingmeng was not a stupid girl, and she must have sent the old maid away from the temple. Even if Qu Moying searched every inch of the temple, she wouldn't find that old maid.

The two walked along the way, and Qu Moying would enter every Buddha hall they passed by to worship the Buddha, saying the Old Lady asked her to show her gratitude to the Buddha for protecting her this morning.

The Buddha halls Qu Moying had entered were just some small ones with very few visitors around.

After Qu Qiuyan accompanied Qu Moying to worship in several small halls, she suggested, "Moying, there are many Buddha halls in the Dabei Temple. If you go to every one of them, you can't finish your worship even in the evening. How about we go to the most popular ones? More divine power is gathered there, and in this way, the Buddha can feel our devout pray better."

"Go to the most popular Buddha halls?" Qu Moying seemed a bit convinced.

“Yes, the most popular ones. I can take you there, and then we can draw divination sticks to test our luck. If you could know going out in the morning was unlucky for you, you could’ve avoided the trouble.” Qu Qiuyan thought her words worked, and her voice got even softer, talking like a concerning older sister.

Qu Moying was almost entirely convinced. She only hesitated for a few more seconds and then followed Qu Qiuyan.

This time, they passed by several Buddha halls and stopped in front of a big one. It should be one of the biggest halls in the Dabei Temple, looking much more spacious and solemn than the ones they went before. Guests were coming and going, and many of them went up to worship the huge Buddha statue in the hall’s center.

In the corner of the Buddha hall, a monk was helping people analyze their divination stick, with a long queue in front of him.

After the two worshiped the Buddha statue, Qu Qiuyan suggested drawing a divination stick and letting the monk analyze it for them.

Qu Moying tried to refuse her, but Qu Qiuyan acted too enthusiastic about it. Having no other choice, Qu Moying picked the stick holder from the table and shook it until a stick dropped out. It wrote, “End in the water, start in the fire. The path ahead is yet to be unfolded!”

Qu Moying didn’t care about it too much until she saw the words written on the stick. She clenched the stick hard, with her eyes wide open in shock.

“Moying, what’s written on your stick? Let me see.” Qu Qiuyan noticed her unusual reaction and turned around to look at her stick.

Qu Moying took a deep breath and flipped the stick down. “Nothing really. It’s just some vague words that I can’t even understand.”

“That’s normal. Let’s go listen to the monk’s analysis,” Qu Qiuyan stood up, still sounding excited.



It would be too odd if she refused to let the monk analyze her stick after drawing one. Qu Moying looked around and noticed everyone who drew a stick queued up, waiting for the monk. There were many people, but they all seemed polite and peaceful, no one trying to cut in line.

“Okay!” Qu Moying stood up with Yu Dong’s help. She suppressed the shock in her heart, followed Qu Qiuyan, and slowly walked to the queue.

In her past life, Qu Moying had never been superstitious, believing in stuff like fate. However, after she was reborn, she became a devout believer. If gods or Buddhas didn’t exist, she would never get the chance to be reborn and revenge herself.

The words written on the stick couldn’t be more evident to her. When she recalled the moment she fell into the icy cold lake, it still felt like yesterday...