

## **Pregnant Before the Royal Marriage**

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11 Chapter 11: It's true, this is genuine!

Jiang Ning casually handed the bowl over.

Being secretive about it would only raise suspicions.

After all, it's just a broken cat bowl.

She didn't care about it, but in the eyes of Fifth Daughter and Sixth Miss, it was another matter.

"This... seems to be genuine." Jiang Yan muttered to herself, "I once saw it when I went out with my elder brother."

"How is that possible?" Jiang Yuan stubbornly denied.

But deep down, she was already wavering.

Although the two sisters were from a humble background, the Jiang Family had a scholarly reputation and educated their girls equally, so they would be taught by female scholars.

Both of these girls had experience in art and calligraphy and had seen a fair share of the world.

Jiang Yuan carefully inspected it for a long time, and the more she looked, the more convinced she became that it was genuine. However, she couldn't bring herself to believe that such a valuable item would end up in the hands of poor Jiang Ning.

And being used as a cat bowl!

This was too shocking.

"This must be a counterfeit!" Jiang Yuan insisted.

"I don't think so, it seems genuine to me." Jiang Yan whispered softly.

“What do you know? There are skilled counterfeiters out there who produce replicas that look even more genuine than the real thing. How could you tell the difference?” Jiang Yuan sneered, “Besides, I heard that Master Xuanyun’s purple gold bowl is in the royal collection. How could it appear in her hands? Did she steal it from the palace?”

“But I heard from my brother that the genuine purple gold bowl has a unique mark at the bottom of the bowl. A symbol that glows with a golden light that no counterfeit can imitate.”

Jiang Yuan scoffed: “There’s no way this broken bowl has it.”

“Let’s take a look then.”

“Fine, I’ll look at it.” As she spoke, Jiang Yuan flipped over the bowl.

At the base of the bowl, there was a nail-sized character that glowed with a faint, iridescent light, contrasting sharply with the dull grey of the bowl itself.

Jiang Yuan was stunned.

She instinctively tried to scratch at it.

But it was imprinted inside the bowl, not carved or painted on.

It seemed like a natural golden symbol that emanated from the bowl itself.

Jiang Yan cried out, “Ah! It’s real! It’s really there! This is the real one!”

“What are you shouting for!” Jiang Yuan’s heart was pounding.

The bowl was actually genuine!

Just the bowl alone was worth tens of thousands of taels of silver.

And Jiang Ning, this poor girl, actually used it as a cat bowl??

Miaow—

Miaomiao perched on Jiang Ning’s lap and cried out.

Jiang Ning reached out, “My cat is hungry, give me the cat bowl.”

Jiang Yuan glared at her without saying a word.

“Fifth Daughter, this is just a cat bowl. Surely you wouldn’t even want to snatch a cat bowl?”

“Since it’s a cat bowl, why not sell it to me?” Jiang Yuan shifted her gaze.

“In your dreams! How dare you try to snatch a food bowl from my Miaomiao.” Jiang Ning grabbed the bowl and commanded Chunlai to prepare some cat food for Miaomiao.

Jiang Yuan watched in disbelief as the servant took away the cat bowl, brought it back filled with cat food, and instinctively clutched her heart.

Heartache!

Jiang Ning looked at their expressions and thought, these two simpletons actually believed that the cat bowl was a genuine item?

It seemed that the Jiang Family was not as refined as the rumors claim.

At that moment, two old women carried a large box in and asked, “Seventh Miss, where should we put this? The Old Master asked us to bring it here.”

Jiang Ning glanced at it and recognized it as the box containing the miscellaneous items from Old Man Li, and casually said, “Put it in my room, I’ll sort it out slowly.”

She remembered that there were a few nice paintings inside, suitable for hanging in the study as a background wall.

The old women agreed and carried the box over but were stopped by Jiang Yuan.

With ill intentions, Jiang Yuan sized up the box, “This must be filled with your clothes and accessories, right, Seventh Sister? Let me see what you used to wear and what you used to have.”

## 12 Chapter 12: Sister Can Fight You Three Even with a Limp Leg

She reached out to open the box.

Jiang Yan whispered, “Fifth Sister, this is not good. Father will be angry if he finds out.”

“It’s just a joke between sisters. Father won’t be angry over such a trivial matter, and he loves me the most anyway.” Jiang Yuan insisted, forcibly opening the box.

The two old women staggered, and some things in the box rolled out.

A small scroll rolled to Jiang Yan’s feet. She bent down to pick it up and, seeing the small seal in the corner, couldn’t help but open it curiously.

As soon as she saw this painting, she was stunned.

Jiang Ning watched the scene calmly, paying no attention to the broken items.

But when she saw her stepfather Jiang Ruobai striding in from the corner of her eye, she stood up and threw herself on the ground, tremblingly picking up a broken porcelain cup and squeezing out a few tears.

When Jiang Ruobai walked in, this was the scene he saw—

His newly found legitimate daughter was bullied by two concubine-born daughters and was lying on the ground with things scattered all over the place.

Jiang Ruobai was furious, and he slapped Jiang Yuan in anger, scolding, “You rascal, who allowed you to bully your sister?”

Jiang Yuan was stunned.

She wasn’t surprised by being hit by her father, but by Jiang Ning’s acting skills.

Ignoring the burning pain in her face, she pointed at Jiang Ning with a trembling hand like a fragile leaf in the wind, “She... She’s sick!”

Smack!

Another slap.

Jiang Ruobai thought she was cursing Seventh Miss for being a cripple and became even angrier, “Your sister’s legs were fine when she was born. She became like this after being abducted and injured!”

Jiang Yuan cried.

Jiang Ruobai quickly picked up his youngest daughter and placed her on the wheelchair, squatting down in front of her with extreme heartache and coaxing, “Seventh Sister, are you alright? Did you get hurt when you fell?”

“It hurts, Fifth Sister and the others bullied me.” Jiang Ning winked at them.

You brats, I can still fight you with my crippled leg.

Jiang Yan hurriedly waved her hands, “I didn’t...”

Jiang Ruobai angrily said, “You’re an accomplice!”

Jiang Yan: “...”

“How dare you take her things?” Jiang Ruobai saw the painting of the setting sun in her hand and quickly snatched it back, carefully putting it into the box.

What a joke, all these things were given by Old Man Li.

If there were any damages, not enough heads in Jiang Family would be enough to pay for it.

What a disaster!

Usually, the two concubine-born daughters seemed quite well-behaved and cute. How could they show such faces in private?

Even bullying the weak and pitiful Seventh Sister.

“Seventh Sister, it’s not safe for you to live here. Father will take you to your mother’s courtyard to live for a while so you can get to know her better, alright?”

“Do I have a mother?”

“Silly girl, you are the legitimate daughter of the Jiang Family, and your mother is the main wife of the Jiang Family.” Jiang Ruobai pushed the wheelchair himself, “Come on, Father will take you to meet your mother.”

After saying that, he looked back at the two concubine-born daughters, “If you dare to touch Seventh Sister’s things again, I’ll cut off your fingers!”

He didn’t even dare to touch those things, but these two girls dared to do it.

If Old Man Li found out that they were bullying his niece, wouldn’t that spell disaster?

After bringing Jiang Ning back, Jiang Ruobai had already sent someone to investigate and found that the emperor had indeed been frequenting Jiang Ning recently, and their relationship was excellent.

As for the reason, he probably had some idea in his heart.

All for Jiang Ning’s mother, Lin Zizi – the first beauty of Chang’an City and the emperor’s beloved.

Back then, Lin Zizi chose him instead of the emperor.

This had always been the emperor’s greatest regret.

Could it be that the emperor had taken a fancy to Zizi’s daughter and wanted to take her as his wife, so he sent her those gifts?

Jiang Ruobai thought about it, and a layer of cold sweat formed on his back.

### 13 Chapter 13: Participating in Prince of Yu's selection of consorts?

Jiang Ruobai pushed the wheelchair, cautiously asking, "Little Seventh, what's the deal with that Old Man Li you mentioned?"

"He's a greedy, fat old man. I saved him once at the entrance of a restaurant, and he's been hanging around ever since, eating at my place without paying."

"..." Jiang Ruobai secretly smiled bitterly.

His Majesty would probably feel strange knowing he was described as a fat, greedy old man.

This girl still thinks that His Majesty is a freeloader who doesn't pay.

She probably doesn't know that if she took anything from the basket he gave her, it would be enough for an ordinary person to eat for a lifetime.

Jiang Ruobai couldn't figure out the Emperor's thoughts and didn't dare act impulsively, so he did not reveal the truth to her.

He knew that the Emperor's eyes would not easily leave the Jiang Family.

But no matter what, he couldn't let Little Seventh become one of the Emperor's concubines.

The Emperor was old enough to be her father.

Back then, Lin Zizi managed to escape from the Emperor's clutches by marrying him first.

Now, the only way was to quickly arrange a marriage for Little Seventh.

After all, the Emperor still had his dignity and wouldn't just snatch her away.

As Jiang Ruobai thought about this, he pushed the wheelchair to the Black Bamboo Garden.

This was where Lin Zizi, the second wife of the Jiang Family and Jiang Ning's birth mother, lived.

Jiang Ruobai and Lin Zizi had two children: an elder son who studied at the Academy and a younger daughter, Jiang Ning.

"After you went missing, your mother suffered a great shock and her mental health has not been well. So, I'm thinking of not telling her your true identity for now. I don't want her to be overwhelmed," Jiang Ruobai explained.

Jiang Ning nodded, "I understand."

"You will stay in the Black Bamboo Garden as a distant relative of the Jiang Family, and reveal the truth to her gradually when she's familiar with you."

"I get it."

Seeing her obedient manner, Jiang Ruobai felt slightly relieved and pushed her into the courtyard.

Upon entering, there was a grove of black bamboo.

A woman wearing a purple dress leaned against a pillar in the corridor, lost in thought.

This woman was beautiful, but pale and thin, with a blank expression in her eyes.

Jiang Ning muttered, "She really does look like me."

"It's you who looks like her." Jiang Ruobai corrected her, "She's your mother. Of course, you resemble her. She's aged now, but when she was young, she looked almost exactly like you. She was a famous beauty in Chang'an City."

He looked at Lin Zizi and gently called, "Ah Zi."

Lin Zizi looked back and her gaze fell on Jiang Ning.

Jiang Ruobai pushed the wheelchair over and said with a smile, "This is Jiang Ning, the granddaughter of the Fourth Old Master. She'll be staying at our residence for a while. Ah Zi, can you look after her?"

Lin Zizi squatted down in front of Jiang Ning and examined her carefully: "Ningning is so pretty. What happened to her legs?"

Jiang Ning smiled, "I broke them in an accident when I was young."

Jiang Ruobai's eyes darkened upon hearing this.

Lin Zizi touched Jiang Ning's face and smiled, "It's okay. Ningning is beautiful, even if she can't walk."

She looked at Jiang Ruobai, "Our Little Seventh should be this big now, right?"

Without waiting for an answer, she asked Jiang Ning, "Has Ningning gotten married yet?"

"No, not yet."

"Ningning is beautiful. She deserves the best man." Lin Zizi smiled, "Old Master, Prince of Yu is choosing his concubines in a few days' time. Fifth Sister and Sixth Sister are going, why don't we let Ningning go too?"

Jiang Ruobai hesitated for a moment, thinking that it might be an excellent idea.

Let Little Seventh participate in the Prince of Yu's selection for his concubines.

The Prince of Yu was young, handsome, talented, gentle, and courteous.

If he chose her, the old Emperor would certainly not be able to face competing with his son for a bride.

Jiang Ruobai immediately said to her, "Little... Ningning, you should go with your Fifth Sister and Sixth Sister to participate in the selection!"

He almost accidentally said Little Seventh.

However, Jiang Ning didn't pay any attention to his slip of the tongue.

She had indeed heard Jiang Fifth Daughter mention something about the Prince of Yu choosing his concubines.

It seemed that this Prince of Yu was a highly sought-after catch.

But what did that have to do with her?

She still had a child of unknown origin in her belly. If it was discovered that she was trying to deceive the royal family by bearing a child that wasn't of royal blood, that would mean death!

#### 14 Chapter 14: A Face of Innocent Sweetness

Although Jiang Ning felt unfortunate for having to time travel, she definitely did not want to court death herself.

She hurriedly replied with a smile, "Thank you for your kindness, Madam, but in my condition...I'm handicapped, I can't take care of myself. I don't deserve to be with the noble Prince of Yu."



Though she had no idea who the Prince of Yu was or what he looked like, but given the way Jiang Yuan and Jiang Yan fawned over him, he must be a man of both talent and looks.

However, her adopted father seemed determined.

"Ningning, you're beautiful, and it doesn't matter if you're physically impaired. You don't need to do any physical labor," he said.

"It really won't work," she insisted.

"If I say it will, then it will," Jiang Ruobai responded firmly, immediately calling the housekeeper over, "Add Ningning's name to the list of women to be selected."

"Sir," hesitated the housekeeper, "The list was sent out yesterday."

"Then bring it back and modify it!" Jiang Ruobai said, coldly, "Is there really need to discuss such a minor matter?"

"I shall handle it at once," the housekeeper nodded, making it seem like it was indeed a trivial matter.

Upon hearing this, Jiang Ning felt doomed.

Although she didn't quite understand the process of imperial son's concubine selection at this time, she clearly understood what the term 'selected women' implied.

Don't the selected women have to undergo physical examination?

They couldn't have any defects, right?

As a pregnant woman, wouldn't her condition be discovered immediately?

If the Jiang family dared to send an unmarried pregnant daughter for selection, they were clearly courting disaster.

She quickly pulled her father aside to a corner and whispered, "Father, you need to call the housekeeper back right now."

"Seventh Sister, don't worry. Even if you're handicapped, I am confident I can help you rise to power," he reassured her.

"My dear foster father, please stop it." Jiang Ning was almost crying, "I have to tell you the truth... I'm actually pregnant!"

Jiang Ruobai's eyebrows, which had risen at the term 'foster father', dropped again upon hearing what she just said.

"What did you say?" he asked.

"I might be pregnant!" Jiang Ning made up her mind to spill everything.

"Pregnant?" Jiang Ruobai was taken aback for a moment, then slowly put his hand over his heart.

Oh no, could it be the emperor's child?

That old lecher, he's a man of advanced age already, yet he still covets a fully grown woman, and now her daughter too. This isn't all, he dare to take advantage of Seventh Sister?

Jiang Ruobai felt a pang in his chest, his face turned pale, and he seemed to be on the verge of fainting.

Jiang Ning looked up at him, "Father, are you okay?"

"How can I be okay?" Jiang Ruobai extended his trembling hand, "Could the child's father... could it be Old Man Li?"

"It probably isn't?" Jiang Ning frowned in thought, "I don't remember."

"How long has it been?"

"I don't know," Jiang Ning replied with an innocent face.

Jiang Ruobai felt another pang in his chest, and he weakly barked for someone to fetch the doctor.

As Lin Zizi fell sick every other day, the household had two doctors. One of them came running with a medicine box, only to find Madam in good health, sitting next to a remarkably beautiful young girl.

Jiang Ruobai managed to squeeze a few words through his gritted teeth: "Check her pulse."

The doctor quickly took out a clean silk kerchief, laid it over Jiang Ning's wrist, and squatted on the ground to focus on taking her pulse.

He tilted his head, furrowing his brows, and took quite a while to finish.

An impatient Jiang Ruobai asked, "Well?"

The doctor was quick to withdraw his hand and said, "Sir, this young lady is fine, just a bit weak, probably due to poor diet. She needs to eat well and rest."

Jiang Ning was taken aback.

Jiang Ruobai hurriedly asked, "Anything else?"

"No, besides that, this young lady is getting along quite well," the doctor assured confidently.

Jiang Ning, who thought she had some basic medical knowledge, wondered how the doctor could say she wasn't pregnant when she could already feel the baby moving?!

## 15 Chapter 15: A False Alarm

Jiang Ning quickly said, "Doctor, please examine me more carefully."

The doctor felt a little unhappy when he heard this: "Miss, I have been practicing medicine for decades, can't I even diagnose whether it's a happy pulse or not?"

"I didn't mean to say that I don't trust you, just..."

"Old Feng, just examine her again!" Her stepfather spoke up.

The doctor obediently checked her pulse again. After a while, he was still adamant: "Miss, you are just weak. Just eat well and rest, and there is nothing else wrong."

He finished speaking and glanced at Jiang Ning's expression.

Jiang Ning resisted the urge to roll her eyes and stayed silent.

Jiang Ruobai, on the other hand, was overjoyed.

Lin Zizi gently smiled and said, "Ningning is just a child and doesn't understand these things. I've been there before. When I was pregnant with my eldest, I didn't feel anything. But when I was pregnant with Seventh Sister, I couldn't eat for three months because I was vomiting so much."

Jiang Ning said, "Actually, I feel like throwing up when I eat greasy food too, really."

"You just have a weak spleen and stomach," the doctor interrupted.

Jiang Ning glared at him.

The doctor silently lowered his head.

“Hahaha!” Jiang Ruobai was overjoyed, patting his chest, “False alarm, false alarm.”

Jiang Ning asked, “If I were pregnant, you wouldn’t want to kill me for ruining the family reputation, would you?”

“What are you thinking, child.” Jiang Ruobai had a full smile and was in a great mood, “As long as it’s not Old Man Li’s child, everything is negotiable.”

Jiang Ning touched her chin and pondered secretly.

Could it be that Jiang Ruobai knew Old Man Li?

Old Man Li was short and fat, looking much older than the gentle and elegant Jiang Ruobai.

Jiang Ruobai smiled and said, “Ningning, you will stay here for the next few days. I will find a nanny to teach you the rules. In two days, you will follow your sisters into the palace to meet the Empress and the imperial concubines.”

Jiang Ning made a bitter face: “People say that entering the palace is like entering a deep abyss. Why are you pushing me into the fire pit?”

Jiang Ruobai said, “Silly girl, Prince Yu moved out of the palace last year. If you don’t get selected properly, that’s when you’ll really enter a deep abyss.”

“What do you mean?”

“Don’t worry, I won’t let you enter the palace.”

What a mess, she didn’t answer what she asked at all.

She was too lazy to think about whether to be selected or not.

What she was struggling with now was whether she was pregnant or not.

If she wasn’t pregnant, going to the selection wouldn’t be a big deal. After all, she couldn’t be chosen, so she could treat it like a one-day tour of the Imperial Palace. No normal man would choose a cripple as a wife.

But if she was pregnant and it was discovered...

That could be a matter of losing her head.

She had been in this world for more than two months, and she hadn’t had her period once. She also felt breast swelling and nausea when she smelled oil and meat. If it wasn’t pregnancy, what could it be?

Besides, Doctor Feng just now looked dishonest and unreliable.

Jiang Ning thought for a moment and decided to find another doctor for a thorough diagnosis.

If it wasn't pregnancy but some other incurable disease, that would be even worse.

In order to find another doctor, she needed money first.

Now her pockets were truly cleaner than her face.

She didn't have a single penny.

"Dad," while Lin Zizi was not paying attention, Jiang Ning pulled Jiang Ruobai aside and whispered, "Lend me some money."

"Money? Oh, I didn't bring any money with me. Just tell the housekeeper, ask her to advance some silver taels from your account." Jiang Ruobai didn't think much of it, "Seventh Sister, you stay in the mansion and accompany your mother to rest well. Dad has to go to the palace to arrange things and find a good nanny for you."

He left in a hurry.

Jiang Ning turned and saw Lin Zizi sitting under the porch holding a round fan, looking infatuated, and seemed to be muttering something to herself.