

Royal Marriage 121

Chapter 121 Mutual Dislike

Because of this, the Prince of Yu recruited many chefs.

But the situation did not improve at all.

Quite a few renowned chefs have given up on the picky young prince.

But at this moment, the little prince was eating to his heart's content, licking his lips as if he couldn't get enough. Where does he look like a kid who doesn't like to eat?

The prince still wanted to eat, but the Princess Consort wouldn't let him.

"These are all deep-fried; you're a child, eating too much is not good," said Jiang Ning, taking out a handkerchief to wipe his mouth, "If you behave, Aunt will make different delicious foods for you every day."

"Really?"

"Pinkie promise," Jiang Ning extended her pinkie. "A promise for a hundred years, no changes allowed."

They locked pinkies and held their thumbs together.

Li Tingqian found this quite , "Can I take some for Fifth Imperial Uncle if I don't eat it myself?"

"No."

"Why?"

“Because the food I make can only be eaten by the people I like.”

“Don’t you like the Imperial Uncle? The Imperial Uncle is very, very nice,” Li Tingqian said innocently.

Jiang Ning laughed, “It’s enough if you like him.”

“Then, can Xiaoqian give the fried chicken to someone he likes to taste? Because I like it, I also want the people I like to taste.”

Jiang Ning paused slightly and laughed, “If it’s someone Xiaoqian likes, then it’s okay.”

She ordered Huang Ying to prepare a small food box, filled it with fried chicken pieces, and handed it to Xiaoqian.

Li Tingqian took the food box and went to find Li Hongyuan.

Li Hongyuan was about to leave. When he saw him coming excitedly, he stopped.

“Imperial Uncle, Imperial Uncle!” Li Tingqian held up the food box, “This is for you to eat.”

“What is it?”

“It’s made by Aunt Jiang. Uncle, have a taste.” Li Tingqian opened the food box, picked up a piece of chicken and placed it near his mouth, “It’s delicious.”

Li Hongyuan instinctively frowned and gently pushed his hand away, “Xiaoqian, you eat it yourself, I’m not hungry.”

“Uncle, you have to try.”

"I really don't want to eat."

"Why?"

"Because it was made by Jiang Ning."

Li Tingqian was confused, "Does uncle also dislike Aunt Jiang?"

"Also?" Li Hongyuan looked at him.

"Just now Aunt Jiang said that the food she made was for people she liked, and she didn't like the Imperial Uncle, so she didn't want to give it to you."

Li Hongyuan said indifferently, "The so-called mutual dislike. It's okay, I don't want to eat either. Xiaoqian, since you've eaten enough, I'll take you back to the palace."

"I don't want to. I want Aunt Jiang to tell me stories."

"Those vulgar stories and songs she tells, you're not allowed to listen."

"No, Aunt Jiang tells a story about a monkey wreaking havoc in heaven. It's very interesting. I want to listen."

Li Hongyuan frowned.

Where did this woman come up with so many bizarre stories?

Xiaoqian was still a child after all, captivated by the story of the monkey, making a fuss. Li Hongyuan had to go out hurriedly, he couldn't delay any longer, and had to let him stay.

When he came back, it was already late.

Lamps had been lit in the mansion.

After Li Hongyuan came back and changed clothes, he asked a servant, "Where is the prince?"

"Your Highness, the young prince is still with the princess consort."

Li Hongyuan frowned, "So late, and he's still messing around there? He really doesn't know any etiquette."

"The young prince had a lot for dinner and is now listening to the princess consort tell stories. He is very happy and doesn't want to leave."

"Let Nanny Wei bring the prince back."

"Yes."

Nanny Wei immediately went over, bowed to Jiang Ning, and said she had to take the prince away.

Li Tingqian, who was still enjoying the story, was not willing to leave.

Nanny Wei reached out to pull him, saying, "His Highness said, the young prince is still small and does not understand etiquette. The princess consort should know the etiquette and must know the timing of meals, and the regular routine. Don't make a fuss with the prince.."

Chapter 122: Wet Nurse

Li Tingqian, a child, struggles and cries out, "Little Aunt, I don't want to leave..."

Chunlai irritably spits out, "That damn old woman, she abuses her power and bullies others!"

Jiang Ning says, "If I'm not wrong, the one who tried to feed me the contraceptive soup last time was also this old woman, right?"

Chunlai responds, "Exactly, she really pisses me off."

"Perfect, let's clear old grievances and new in one stroke." Jiang Ning calls out, "Where is Xiaoman? Did she eat enough just now? Let's have some exercise, let me see your strength."

Xiaoman had just eaten the most satisfying meal of her life. With nothing to do after filling her stomach, she immediately walks over to Nanny Wei.

Nanny Wei arrogantly declares, "I was the one who breastfed the Prince. I came from the Empress's side, which one of you dares to touch me?"

Jiang Ning laughs, "So you were the Prince of Yu's wet nurse, what a huge credit. Surely others didn't have it?"

Nanny Wei blushes, "How can the Princess Consort speak so rudely!"

"Isn't it you who boasted about it? Since you're proud of having breastfed the Prince of Yu, why not show off such an impressive achievement?" Jiang Ning first covers Xiaoqian's eyes, then tells Xiaoman, "Strip her and throw her out."

Xiaoman steps forward, grabs Nanny Wei's waist, lifts her with a grunt, and slams her to the ground.

Nanny Wei is disoriented by the fall.

Xiaoman steps forward again, grabs Nanny Wei by the collar, and with a slight effort, Nanny Wei's clothes get ripped into two.

All the maids giggle and laugh.

Grabbing Nanny Wei, Xiaoman lifts her up and looks at Jiang Ning, "Seventh Miss, where should I throw her?"

"She was Prince of Yu's wet nurse, of course throw her to the Prince of Yu."

"Alright."

Xiaoman then carries Nanny Wei, running towards Li Hongyuan's residence, the Misty Cloud Pavilion, and with a grunt, throws her there.

The servants of Misty Cloud Pavilion are all stunned.

Li Hongyuan comes out, sees this scene, and almost passes out from anger.

Fortunately, it was already dark, although there were lanterns, they couldn't clearly see Nanny Wei's figure.

Otherwise, it would be a sight for sore eyes.

Nanny Wei, in her shame and fury, wants to commit suicide, but is restrained by others. She says she wants to go to the palace to see the Empress and seek justice for herself.

Li Hongyuan soon learns about what happened.

He's so angry he feels light-headed.

This crazy woman, she actually dared to make a scene like this.

It's simply...

Simply unimaginable!

With a solemn face, Li Hongyuan heads to Crystal Clear Manor.

Jiang Ning has already sent Xiaoqian with others to sleep in the west wing, and she is sitting by her bed reading a book. Seeing Li Hongyuan walk in with a dark face, she doesn't seem surprised, as if she was waiting for him.

"Nanny Wei was my wet nurse, although she's a servant, even my concubine mother shows her some respect, and you dare to treat her this way? Is this something a Princess Consort should do?"

Jiang Ning puts down her book and replies, "A servant is a servant. Even if she's a servant who breastfed you, she's still a servant. If a servant disrespects her master, as Princess Consort of Yu, it's just right that I give her a light punishment."

"Is that how you lightly punish her?"

"Yes."

"You-" Li Hongyuan looks at Jiang Ning's belly, resisting the urge to tear her apart, and takes a deep breath, "Even if you punish her, you stripped her and threw her in my yard. Who are you shaming?"

"Since she always says that she breastfed you, I thought the Prince should take a look at her..."

"Shut up!" The Prince of Yu had had enough..

Chapter 123: A Container for Carrying a Child

Jiang Ning obediently closed her mouth, turned a page of the book, and lowered her head to read.

Li Hongyuan stepped forward, snatched her book away and threw it far away: "I'm talking to you!"

Jiang Ning looked somewhat innocent: "Weren't you the one who told me to shut up? Do I need to close my eyes too?"

"You! Believe it or not, I'll hit you!"

Li Hongyuan clenched his fist, so angry that his temples throbbed.

Jiang Ning smoothed her skirt, changed her lying position, lightly touched her belly, and then looked at him: "Hit me then."

Li Hongyuan:" ..."

This woman's expression was too infuriating.

The two stared at each other.

After a long time, Jiang Ning turned over, showing her back to him, "I won't play with you anymore, I'm sleepy and want to rest."

Li Hongyuan: "...Do you think your behavior is fun? Nanny Wei used to serve by the side of your concubine mother. If this gets out, do you know how many bad reputations you will attract? Even if you have no shame, the Prince of Yu Mansion still needs some!"

Jiang Ning said: "I just hate those who rely on their age to bully others. I will hit such a wicked servant who bullies their master so that she knows who the real master is here."

“A master who wantonly insults her subordinates will only be laughed at by others.”

“A master who is bullied by her subordinates will be the one laughed at.”

“Every time I say something, you have a retort. Jiang Ning, can’t you just behave?” Li Hongyuan took a breath, “Since you are carrying my child, just stay in the backyard honestly and don’t cause trouble. Maybe, in the future, you can personally raise the child.”

Jiang Ning turned to look at him.

Li Hongyuan frowned: “But if you keep making people annoyed and causing trouble, I can’t possibly hand the child over to you.”

“So you mean, now I am just a vessel to carry the child, and once the child is born, it has nothing to do with me, right?”

“It depends on your performance.”

“Alright then.” She stopped talking.

Li Hongyuan said coldly: “I will personally explain the matter today to the concubine mother. I don’t want to see anything similar happening again. You better watch yourself!”

He turned around and left.

Just as he reached the door, a pillow was thrown at his feet.

He glanced down but didn’t respond and walked away.

“Where is the emperor’s eldest grandson?” He asked Huang Ying.

"His Highness the emperor's eldest grandson is asleep in the side room."

Li Hongyuan walked over and gently pushed the door open.

Unexpectedly, he woke Xiaoqian up.

He sat up, rubbing his eyes, his soft and hoarse voice saying: "Fifth Imperial Uncle."

Li Hongyuan's eyes softened, and he walked over, touching Xiaoqian's forehead and the back of his heart, saying, "Why did you fall asleep here? Let your Imperial Uncle take you back."

"I'll just sleep here." Li Tingqian held his hand, "Fifth Imperial Uncle, will that be alright?"

Li Hongyuan caught a glimpse of the red marks on his wrist exposed from his sleeve, quickly picked it up and looked carefully.

It was clearly a mark from being restrained.

He darkened his face and asked, "How did this happen?"

"Nanny Wei."

"You mean Nanny Wei hurt your hand?"

"Yes." Li Tingqian nodded, "I didn't want to leave, but Nanny Wei insisted on dragging me away. Aunt got angry and let Xiaoman's sister hit her."

Li Hongyuan was slightly stunned: "Your Aunt punished Nanny Wei because she dragged you?"

“Yes. Aunt also blew on my wrist, saying a man should not be afraid of pain.” Li Tingqian raised his hand, his innocent smile appearing, “Fifth Imperial Uncle, look, ever since my mother and father left, no one has ever blown on my wrist like this. Aunt also coaxed me to sleep and told me stories..”

Chapter 124: Your Wife is Quite Impressive

Oh

Li Hongyuan lightly stroked his head, not saying a word.

“Fifth Imperial Uncle,”

“Hmm?”

“Can I visit Little Aunt often?”

“Xiaoqian likes Little Aunt?”

“Very, very much.”

“...Alright.”

“Yay!” Li Tingqian cheered up.

Li Hongyuan was infected by his happiness, smiling and patting him on the back: “Go to sleep, Uncle will pick you up tomorrow morning and take you back to the palace.”

After watching Xiaoqian fall asleep, Li Hongyuan walked out and glanced back in the direction of the main room.

There was still light inside the room.

This woman, who was pregnant, was still reading so late at night, and he didn't know if she was reading some messy, erotic s.

He returned to his own courtyard, just as Li Teng arrived.

"It's late, and my lord must be tired," Ms. Li wrung a towel for him, "Let me wipe your face, I have prepared some bird's nest soup, have a taste."

Li Hongyuan walked straight into the room and asked, "Why have you come so late?"

"I'm in charge of the household affairs, and there are some things I need to consult with you."

"What is it?"

"Now that the Princess Consort is back, should we provide the usual supplies to Crystal Clear Manor?"

"It's not like it's her first day living here, just follow the previous practice."

"But..." Ms. Li hesitated, "There is no record of any supplies provided to Crystal Clear Manor in the accounts."

"What do you mean?" Li Hongyuan looked at her.

Her gaze turned cold, causing Ms. Li to lower her head involuntarily, not daring to look directly at him.

"I've checked it, Madam Zhao used to manage the inner courtyard, and never supplied Crystal Clear Manor with a single penny."

“What did Crystal Clear Manor use before?”

“It is said that the Princess Consort used her own private funds. Even the monthly wages of the two servants who came with her dowry were paid by the Princess Consort privately. The daily expenses for the Princess Consort’s food, clothing, and other needs were all paid for by her, and she sent servants to purchase them.”

Li Hongyuan was silent for a while before saying indifferently, “From now on, provide Crystal Clear Manor with supplies as usual. Also, cut Madam Zhao’s supplies by half.”

“I’ll remember.”

“You can go, I still have official business to deal with.”

“My lord, please rest early. I’ll take my leave.”

Ms. Li was gentle and obedient, turning around and leaving.

She didn’t show any displeasure at Prince not coming to her room.

Although she had been in the mansion for a while, even though she had been promoted to Li Teng, Prince had never been to her room.

But she was in no hurry.

There was plenty of time.

As long as Prince had her in his heart, cared for her, she was not in a hurry.

The next day, Li Hongyuan took Nanny Wei to the palace.

Nanny Wei knelt in front of Concubine Jin, sobbing as she recounted her humiliating experience, and claimed that she couldn't live with this shame.

Having been in the palace for so many years, she still had some dignity in front of the concubine, but the new Princess Consort had humiliated her so.

What was the point of living?

Concubine Jin was cracking melon seeds on the couch.

"The Princess Consort of Yu stripped off your clothes?"

"Yes."

"And threw you naked into Prince Yu's courtyard?"

"...Yes." Thinking of the scene last night, Nanny Wei shivered with anger.

Concubine Jin looked up at her son: "Your wife is quite impressive."

Li Hongyuan said, "Jiang Ning is out of line, causing trouble for Mother Concubine."

"This palace doesn't care, as long as she didn't throw a naked old woman in front of me. What about you, did you see?"

"..." Li Hongyuan seemed to have grown accustomed to his concubine mother's words, his face expressionless, "It was dark, I didn't see anything."

“Oh dear..” Concubine Jin patted the melon seed shells on her hand, took a drink from her teacup, “So what are you here for? Don’t you know I’m busy?”

Chapter 125: Delaying My Snacking on Melon

Seeds

Li Hongyuan remained silent.

He knew the temperament of this Consort far too well.

Busy?

The busy she meant was probably just eating sunflower seeds, listening to opera, or simply lazing around.

With such a cold temperament, she wouldn’t even treat her own son, let alone the Emperor, hospitably unless she was in the mood.

If she was in the mood she would entertain, but if she wasn’t, she would claim to have a headache and not see anyone.

With this kind of temper, it was truly a miracle that she could maintain her position for twenty years without decline.

“I shouldn’t have disturbed the Queen Mother, but what should I do with Nanny Wei...?” he asked.

Nanny Wei was still kneeling, her face tearful and covered in dirt.

She deliberately made herself look like this, just to make Concubine Jin feel pity for her.

However, she still did not understand her old master.

Concubine Jin frowned: "So dirty, take her away."

Li Hongyuan said: "I don't want her, so I'll leave her with Concubine Mother."

"She is your wet nurse, who else would want her if not you?"

"Isn't she one of Concubine Mother's people? How else would she come to ask you for help when she was wronged?"

"You are too heartless," Concubine Jin said lightly. "Besides, wasn't she bullied by your wife?"

"It wasn't Jiang Ning who bullied her; it was she who harassed Xiaoqian first. Jiang Ning stepped in because she couldn't stand it."

"Are you speaking for your wife?" Concubine Jin looked at him with a hint of a smile, "I thought you didn't like her."

"It's not about whether I like her or not. I'm just being objective."

"Fine." Concubine Jin stretched lazily. "Since she is an evil servant who bullies her master, I don't want her here. If you don't want her, just deal with her as you wish."

Nanny Wei's face changed, and she hurriedly kowtowed, "Please, Your Highness, save me! I know I was wrong!"

Concubine Jin frowned slightly: "My good mood for the day has been ruined. Take her away."

Li Hongyuan gave a look to the eunuchs on both sides.

The eunuchs immediately came over and dragged Nanny Wei out.

“This son takes leave.”

After Li Hongyuan’s bow, he turned and left.

Concubine Jin continued to eat sunflower seeds without paying any attention.

When Li Hongyuan came out, the eunuch asked him how to deal with Nanny Wei.

Weiping cried as she knelt down, “Having raised you, please spare me this once for the sake of our past relationship.”

“You dare to lay your hands on the emperor’s eldest grandson? Shall I keep you on to continue bullying my Master?” Li Hongyuan coldly ordered the eunuchs, “Send her to work in the Clothing Bureau, and she need not come out after that.”

With that one sentence, Nanny Wei’s future was ruined.

Her dream of spending the rest of her life living comfortably and arrogantly because of her status as Prince of Yu’s wet nurse was now dashed.

The eunuchs dragged her away mercilessly.

Li Hongyuan withdrew his gaze and left indifferently.

Nanny Wei struggled and cried out not to be sent to the Clothing Bureau.

The eunuch kicked her and scolded her, "You old hag, if it weren't for Master's generosity, you would be nothing but a lowly servant. Yet you still bully the Master. Aren't you courting death? I advise you to behave yourself or you won't live long!"

Nanny Wei felt utterly hopeless and stopped struggling.

Only at this moment did she realize that Prince of Yu's cold and ruthless persona was not an act.

At Crystal Clear Manor.

Li Teng arrived with the steward's wife and brought the monthly allowance.

From Jiang Ning, to the maids below, and even Jiang Fu's family of three, no one was left short.

Ms. Li feigned a kneel, and respectfully kowtowed to Jiang Ning, saying softly, "This servant should have come sooner to kowtow to the Princess Consort...."

Chapter 126: Playing Cute

"I've been ill these past few days and was worried about passing it on to the princess consort. Now that I am finally better, I just hope the princess consort won't hold it against me."

This was the first time Jiang Ning had met the so-called "Miss Li," who had since been promoted to a chambermaid and was in charge of medium-level servants. She was a dominant figure in Prince Yu's backyard.

Ms. Li looked gentle and weak, clean and pitiable.

Any man who saw her would instinctively want to protect her, she was that kind of rare woman.

Even women could hardly guard against her.

To Jiang Ning, this was what you would call powerful charisma.

Anyway, when she spoke this way, whatever her intentions might be, it was hard for Jiang Ning to dislike her.

Jiang Ning smiled and asked, "Why did you send silver this time?"

Ms. Li replied, "As per the rules, the princess consort receives eighty taels of silver each month, and each of the first-rank maids in your service receives two taels of silver per month. The rest of the maids' wages decrease accordingly. This time, I also included previous unpaid months. From now on, they will be delivered on time, so you don't need to worry."

"Well, it's not a matter of feeling wronged, but does the prince know about this?"

"Although I manage these affairs, it's only because the princess is pregnant and unwell. Once you recover, naturally, you will be in charge again. I am merely acting on your behalf. As long as the prince is informed, it will be fine," Ms. Li replied with a smile.

Jiang Ning raised an eyebrow, "You are obedient."

"I am inexperienced. If there is anything I don't understand, I hope the princess will guide me and help avoid any embarrassment."

"I don't understand either."

"That's the sign of the princess's modesty," Ms. Li stood up, smiling, "You need to rest, princess. I won't disturb you any longer. If you need anything, just instruct me through a servant. I'll try my best to accommodate."

She stood up, suddenly remembered something, and quickly added, "Oh yes, I almost forgot. I've reduced Madam Zhao's expenses by half. I hope you were informed."

"Why?"

"Because Madam Zhao disrespected the master and dared to deduct his expenses," Ms. Li said softly with a smile. "I know this punishment for her is quite lenient, but after all, she has served the master for many years. Out of respect for that, I'm giving her some face. If it happens again, she will certainly be severely punished."

"You've already made a decision, so there's no need to tell me."

"As your servant, Princess, no matter what I do, it is my duty to inform you first."

"Okay, I understand."

"I shall take my leave now," Ms. Li, supported by a maid, left gracefully.

Jiang Ning tapped the tray with her fingers and ordered Chunlai, "Distribute the monthly allowances. Since it's given by Li Hongyuan, it would be a waste not to spend them."

Huang Ying walked over, massaging Jiang Ning's calf, she asked, "Why did you say it was given by the prince?"

"Do you really think all these were Ms. Li's ideas?" Jiang Ning laughed, "She's just acting obedient. Given Madam Zhao's temper, do you think Ms. Li could have halved her monthly expenses without Li Hongyuan's approval?"

Xiachu commented, "It did seem like she was in complete control, coming here to claim credit as if it were all her idea. She's really shameless."

"Who doesn't want to save face?" Jiang Ning laughed, "Just wait and see how Madam Zhao reacts."

“Even if she makes a fuss, she won’t dare to bring it here.”

“That remains to be seen.”

Not long after those words, Madam Zhao indeed appeared in a great fluster.

As soon as she arrived, she fell to her knees, “Princess, please do me justice! Ms.. Li actually deducted half of my expenses! How does she expect me to survive?”

Chapter 127: Got Pregnant Before Even Crossing the Threshold?

Jiang Ning said indifferently, “When you were the housekeeper, you didn’t give me a single penny, yet I didn’t starve to death.”

Madam Zhao’s face turned pale and she lowered her head, speaking softly, “The Princess Consort is from the Prime Minister’s Mansion, even without the money it doesn’t matter. But I am from a humble background...”

“Having money means I owe you? Your humble background, is that my fault?”

“No, I mean...”

“Now that Li Teng is in charge, crying to me won’t help. After all, I can’t be the master of this manor.” Jiang Ning interrupted her, “You should know who the real master is, why not beg him?”

“But the Princess Consort is the mistress of this manor...”

“The Prince of Yu is the true master in your hearts. I know you’re cunning, so why not compete with Ms. Li? Win back the power of the housekeeper, and you can resume your prestige.”

These words rendered Ms. Zhao speechless.

She also felt frustrated.

She had thought that the lame Princess Consort of Yu would be easy to manipulate, someone with a soft personality who allowed Li Teng, a girl of humble origin, to climb to the top without making a sound. But she turned out to be so useless.

Ms. Zhao kowtowed, got up, and left the room.

Returning to her room, she angrily vented her frustration.

"The woman in Crystal Clear Manor is useless too!" she cursed, "Born as a legitimate daughter of the Prime Minister's mansion and now pregnant, she still allows that lowly woman, Ms. Li, to climb on top of her."

Ms. Fang calmly said, "Sister, there's no need for such words. It won't do you any good if they spread out."

"If you don't go and tell, who will know?"

"Of course, I won't tell, but you never know who might have a loose tongue." Ms. Fang put down her teacup, "Sister, don't worry about the events in Crystal Clear Manor; The Prince doesn't care for her anyway, he's just appeasing her family's influence. Haven't you seen the divorce letter arriving?"

"The divorce letter arrived, but wasn't it brought back in the end? He apologized in public; what a big scene!"

"Who let her have such luck? Born from the belly of the Madam from Prime Minister's Mansion, and now carrying our master's seed. Even if the Prince doesn't like her, he has to take care of her."

After a moment of silence, Ms. Zhao suddenly said, "Speaking of which, it's strange."

"What's strange?"

"When I went to Crystal Clear Manor today, I saw the size of the Princess Consort's belly; it seemed pretty big already."

"After all, she's pregnant..."

"I know she's pregnant, but it's been not long since she entered the door, right?" Ms. Zhao frowned, "Given the timeline, the only time the Prince stayed in her room overnight was on the night of their big wedding. It must have been that night when she got pregnant. It's only been two months, right?"

"Yes."

"In two months, should the belly be visible?" As Ms. Zhao spoke, she stood up, adjusting her skirt around her waist, "When I saw the Princess Consort today, her belly was bulging like this. I know I've never been pregnant, but I've seen many women who were. It should take at least four or five months for the belly to be that big."

"Is that so?"

"I thought it was strange at the time, but I didn't realize it." Ms. Zhao frowned, "Do you remember? When the Princess Consort first married here, she always felt nauseous and sleepy. How can it be like that during the early stages of pregnancy?"

Ms. Fang's face also grew serious, she looked around and lowered her voice, "Are you saying that she was pregnant before she married here?"

"This is just my suspicion."

"But if it's as you said, her belly shouldn't be that big."

"No, I must find out." Ms. Zhao sneered, "I heard that she was lost from the Jiang Family for more than ten years before being found. Such a precious legitimate daughter, shouldn't she be doted upon? But as soon as she returned, she was married off.. Isn't that strange? Who knows what unspeakable things she did before she was found?"

Chapter 128: Childhood Sweethearts

Ms. Fang excitedly asked in a low voice, "What happens if they really find something?"

"What happens? She'll be done for." Ms. Zhao sneered.

"In my opinion, if they really find something, then we should..."

"Do what?" Ms. Zhao pricked up her ears.

"Get someone else to do our dirty work." Ms. Fang nodded towards the Lan Pavilion where Li Teng's men were situated.

Mrs. Zhao's eyes lit up: "Good idea. In this way, we can eliminate the two of them at one stroke and not get our hands dirty."

Ms. Fang said, "Don't celebrate too early, Elder Sister. It's too early to say if this is true or not."

"I will find a way to verify it."

"How will you investigate?"

"I'll start from before she was taken back by the Jiang Family."

The Jiang Family reclaiming their legitimate daughter was a sensational news in Chang'an City.

The small courtyard where Jiang Ning lived before had already been cordoned off by Jiang Ruobai. Otherwise, it would probably be crowded with onlookers every day.

There's not much to talk about Jiang Ning's life over those twelve years, since she had broken her leg as a child and her foster parents were old and frail. They never let her go out.

Her only playmate was He Tang, the only son of the He Family that lived not far away.

One could say that, before Jiang Ning's life was turned upside down, besides her deceased foster parents, the person she was most familiar with was He Tang.

Although He Tang came from a humble family, he was intelligent, diligent and aspiring. He couldn't have been indifferent to this beautiful childhood friend.

However, his parents disapproved of their union back then.

After all, Jiang Ning at the time was just a parentless cripple with nothing but beauty to her name. No normal parents would have agreed.

So, He Tang studied day and night, thinking that once he passed the imperial examination and became an official, he could decide for himself. He'd vowed to marry his childhood friend in glory. Unexpectedly... before he could pass the imperial examination, she had already become the honoured daughter of the Jiang household and swiftly married the Prince of Yu, becoming the Princess Consort of Yu.

He Tang was extremely frustrated.

He even fell ill at home for a time.

All these events could easily be uncovered with some careful probing.

Ms. Zhao spent some money and a few days, and managed to clearly find out all about these matters.

She set her sights on He Tang.

After consulting with Ms. Fang, they had always felt that before Jiang Ning returned to the Jiang family, she must have had some kind of relationship with He Tang. After secretly conceiving a child, she returned to the Jiang household and was discovered by Prime Minister Jiang, who hastily married her off.

Otherwise, how could they explain Prime Minister Jiang's behaviour?

How could they explain Jiang Ning's bulging belly?

Upon finding out this information, their excitement made them tremble with joy.

They could finally get rid of that despicable Ms. Li!

Quickly, Ms. Zhao devised a way to subtly leak this information to Li Teng's men, suggesting that the size of the Princess Consort's belly was inconsistent with a mere two-month pregnancy, could it be twins? Additionally, she mentioned that someone had been inquiring about the Princess Consort, a young man with the surname He.

Yet, despite the information being disclosed for several days, Li Teng made no moves; she went about managing household affairs and visited the Prince in Main Court, as well as greeted the Princess Consort in the backyard as usual.

She was moving at her own pace, without any sense of urgency or slackness.

This inaction drove Ms. Zhao and Ms. Fang to their breaking point.

“Is this despicable woman so stupid that she can’t even catch on to hints?” Ms. Zhao exclaimed while wringing a handkerchief.

Ms. Fang said, “If all else fails, we’ll have to give her a push.”

“How are we to help?”

“Elder Sister, think about it.. Doesn’t she go to greet the Princess Consort every day? If something happens to the Princess Consort, who would be the prime suspect?”

Chapter 129: Thinking of Her, Feeling

Annoyed

Ms. Zhao hesitated a bit: “What if it’s traced back to us...”

“No, it won’t. We won’t go near Crystal Clear Manor during this period, even if the Prince investigates, he won’t find us.” Ms. Fang comforted her, “Besides, we won’t do much, just give her a little push.”

“How do we do that?”

“Like this...” Ms. Fang whispered in her ear.

That day, Jiang Ning was strolling around the courtyard after having a full meal.

She held a crutch and walked slowly.

Although one leg was crippled, if she didn’t move, the other good leg would also be affected.

Every day, she would set aside time and walk by herself.

Just as she was walking, Li Teng came with a food box in her hand, saying that she had made some snacks herself and wanted to let the Princess Consort taste them.

Huang Ying immediately put down her needle and thread, smiling, "Thank you for your kindness, Li Teng."

She reached out to take the food box.

Jiang Ning said, "You look like you don't eat mortal food. You can make snacks too?"

"It's not bragging, but my cooking skills are pretty good. This is an osmanthus cake, with osmanthus from Madam Zhao. I thought it looked so good, I made it. Princess Consort, please taste it and let me know if you like it, so I can make it again."

"Thank you." Jiang Ning continued her stroll.

Ms. Li also wisely bowed and withdrew.

Huang Ying picked up the osmanthus cake and called for Chunlai, "Throw it away."

Chunlai complied and walked out.

Xiachu asked, "Why throw away the perfectly good cake?"

"Forget that our Lady is pregnant now, even if she wasn't, she wouldn't eat anything from them. Chunlai poked her forehead, "You, be more vigilant. With you by our Lady's side, people won't feel at ease. Don't think Ms. Li and Ms. Zhao are easy to deal with. Just come to greet, but don't expect anything else from them."

Huang Ying laughed, "It's okay, as long as we have Chunlai with us."

Tired from walking, Jiang Ning threw away her crutch, sat down in the wheelchair, and waved her hand, "Bring me the snack to have a look."

"Mistress, you can't eat it."

"I just want to look." Jiang Ning took the box and opened it. The snacks were neatly made but far from exquisite. They could only be described as passable.

Huang Ying and a few maids looked at her anxiously, fearing she would pop a piece into her mouth.

Who knows if Li had added anything extra to the snacks?

Jiang Ning closed the box and said, "Isn't Li Teng the favorite concubine of the Prince of Yu? How could the Prince not taste the snacks she made personally?"

Huang Ying whispered, "What does Mistress mean?"

"Chunlai, send the snacks to Misty Cloud Pavilion."

Chunlai immediately brought it over.

The Prince of Yu was in the study, discussing matters with several aides. Hearing that someone from the Princess Consort's side had sent something over, he couldn't help but frown.

Why couldn't this woman just stay quietly in the backyard, preferably not making any noise at all?

Thinking of her made him feel restless.

Hearing her name made him worry about what mischief she was up to.

The attendant said, "It's Chunlai from Crystal Clear Manor, who brought some snacks for you, Master."

Li Hongyuan said, "Just leave it here, and don't come over without a reason to disturb me."

Chunlai thought, doesn't Li Teng come by often?

Even her own Princess Consort sending over snacks is not appreciated.

Tsk.

She muttered as she left.

Li Hongyuan was discussing matters with his aides, and lunchtime had been delayed. He casually pushed the snacks to the aides, "Eat these snacks as a filler, and let's wrap up this discussion."

The aides didn't dare to disobey and, indeed, felt hungry, so they reached out for the snacks to eat..

Chapter 130: Hold me and take me to lie down on the bed

Li Hongyuan didn't feel like eating, holding a cup of clear tea, and looking at documents.

It's almost autumn, and the south is rainy. The Emperor Father asked him to manage the flood control issue, which is very important.

Five or six staff members finished a plate of snacks.

There wasn't much to begin with.

They ate, and then trouble began.

In just a moment, several staff members felt stomachaches and couldn't hold it in; they all had to go to the toilet.

One or two might be fine, but all six members having this problem – that was strange.

Li Hongyuan waved his hand to dismiss them, and his gaze fell on the plate of snacks.

Only some residue was left.

Some staff members had diarrhoea for the entire day.

After the doctor came, he said they had ingested a large dose of Croton mixed with laxatives.

The staff members were drained.

Although the doctor provided medicine, one frail staff member couldn't stand it any longer; he miraculously had diarrhoea for three days and eventually died from dehydration.

Li Hongyuan asked the doctor to examine the residue of the snacks, and indeed, the truth was revealed.

Li Hongyuan went to Crystal Clear Manor.

Jiang Ning was having Chunlai and Dongxie massage her injured leg.

If she didn't get regular massages, her leg would atrophy.

That would be too ugly.

The weather was hot, and she was pregnant, which made her feel even hotter. She wore only a thin white silk dress, leaning back in a lounge chair, her long black hair spread out like flowing clouds, with a fair, pink little face in between, a touch of rouge on her lips, making her stunningly beautiful.

But Li Hongyuan had no appreciation for it.

He bent down, grabbed Jiang Ning's wrist, pulled her up, and coldly said, "Do you want me dead so badly?"

Huang Ying and the other maids screamed, "My Prince, be careful of the Princess Consort's body..."

"Get out!" Li Hongyuan yelled.

Jiang Ning frowned, "You're hurting my hand."

"You damned woman, why did you try to poison me?"

"Oh?"

"What are you 'oh'ing about!" Li Hongyuan, seeing her expression, became more annoyed, pulling her closer, staring into her jet-black eyes, "You're so unwilling to come back with me that you're trying everything to kill me and become a widow?"

Jiang Ning suddenly let out a low groan, her eyebrows furrowed and bent down, "...It hurts."

Li Hongyuan frowned, "What are you doing now?"

Jiang Ning's eyes turned red, her voice trembling, "Li Hongyuan, my stomach hurts so much... Please let me go..."

Li Hongyuan was startled and glanced down at her stomach subconsciously.

She was shivering slightly.

"What's wrong with you?"

"My stomach hurts so much..." Her eyes reddened, tears brimming, her slightly upturned nose also reddened, her lips glistening.

Li Hongyuan stared at her lips for a moment, and a strange feeling rose in his heart.

He asked hesitantly, "How can I help you with your stomachache?"

"First, carry me to the bed to lie down."

Li Hongyuan didn't hesitate, bent down to pick her up, carefully placing her on the bed, looking intently at her face, "Does it still hurt? I'll call the housekeeper immediately to invite the Imperial Physician."

Jiang Ning closed her eyes briefly before opening them again, "It doesn't hurt anymore."

"Huh?" Li Hongyuan didn't react immediately, his mouth slightly open, his handsome face filled with confusion.

Jiang Ning turned on her side, a smile on her face, "I love lying in bed being served; it's so comfortable."

Li Hongyuan:" ..."

In this situation, what more did he not understand?

What stomachache? She was completely faking it.

Li Hongyuan immediately felt a sense of being toyed with.

He lifted his hand, wanting to slap her, but he hesitated.

“You woman, you...” He had never been so humiliated in his life, and his head felt dizzy from anger..