

Royal Marriage 141

Chapter 141: Today, Little Master Covers the Whole Round

“It’s really delicious, Second Sister, try it! It’s amazing!” Jiang Eighth Son was attracted by the delicious food, not caring about the back of his hand being hit by his sister.

Seeing him like this, Jiang Shan couldn’t help but eat a piece too.

It was indeed delicious.

Fragrant and sticky.

The aroma of the meat on the ribs, mixed with the sticky rice, lingered between the lips and teeth, making people unable to resist eating one bite and then wanting another one.

Jiang Ning looked at Jiang Fourth Son and Jiang Yan: “You all try it too.”

Jiang Yan looked at the dishes on the table, pointing at one that was red and bright, with green leaves underneath, and asked, “Is the meat on top? Why is the color like this...! And can these leaves underneath be eaten as they seem to be raw?”

“This is called Guo Bao meat; you wrap it up and eat it.”

Jiang Yan was dubious, wrapped a piece of meat in the vegetable leaf, and took a bite.

The greasiness of the meat was mixed with the refreshing fragrance of the vegetable leaf, reduced, and really achieved the effect of being rich but not greasy.

She stuffed the vegetable leaf into her mouth and wrapped another piece.

Jiang Fourth Son couldn't help but try it too.

He ate and swallowed his saliva: "So good, so good! Really good!"

Jiang Ning laughed, "Who wants to try these chicken wings?"

Having tasted the deliciousness, Jiang Eighth Son, who was now full of confidence in Jiang Ning's cooking, immediately reached out: "I'll eat!"

He grabbed a chicken wing and took a bite, "Hiss."

"What's wrong?" Jiang Shan asked.

"No one else touch this plate of chicken wings!" Jiang Eighth Son grabbed the plate, "Today, Little Master is going to eat it all!"

"Little brat, you have no manners!" Jiang Fourth Son pretended to hit him, but Second Miss Jiang took advantage of the situation to snatch the plate back.

The brother and sister each took a piece.

"Um!"

Second Miss Jiang suddenly had the urge to keep the plate to herself too.

She looked up at Jiang Ning: "What's this taste? So unique. Seventh Sister, what's the name of this dish?"

Jiang Ning laughed, "It's called Coca-cola Chicken Wings."

"Why is it called Coca-cola Chicken Wings? What's funny about it?" Asked Jiang Yan curiously.

"Because to make this dish, you need a kind of seasoning called Coca-cola."

"I've never heard of it before."

"Actually, there is no Coca-cola in this dish. It's just made with soy sauce, sugar, and wine. The chicken wings are sweet and fragrant, perfect for kids to eat." Jiang Ning looked at them happily nibbling on the chicken wings and suddenly wanted them to witness Grandpa Ken's prowess.

The sisters gathered around the table and polished off the eight dishes Jiang Ning had prepared.

Jiang Eighth Son still wanted more, and even poured the soup into the white rice, mixed it up and ate it.

After eating the last grain of rice, he burped contentedly.

Jiang Shan laughed, "My mother is so worried about Eighth Brother not eating, but Seventh Sister's meal seems to have cured him."

Jiang Ning laughed, "In my opinion, if a child doesn't like eating, it's mostly because the food doesn't suit their taste."

Jiang Fourth Son said, "It's hard to imagine how Seventh Sister came up with such a wonderful cooking method. I've been to countless restaurants, big and small, but I've never seen this before."

"I was just messing around aimlessly, you know, I used to have foster parents who ran a small restaurant." Jiang Ning casually explained.

In her heart, she knew that what she had cooked was just the simplest home-style food.

Her culinary skills were not superb, but the problem was that the food in the Great Sheng Dynasty was too monotonous and insipid.

The common people basically ate stewed dishes, whether it was vegetables or meat, just throwing them into the pot to cook, adding some salt, and when it was cooked, it was done.

There was no color, aroma, or taste to talk about.

The food eaten by the nobility was a little better, but not much.

This meal had thoroughly convinced Jiang's siblings.

After a hearty meal, the oldest sister, Second Miss Jiang, asked, "Seventh Sister, was Prince of Yu here to pick you up just now? Don't delay, you should go back earlier."

Only then did Jiang Ning remember that the Prince of Yu was still waiting for her.

She hurriedly called Huang Ying to push her to find the Prince of Yu.

The Prince of Yu was indeed still waiting.

His face was as black as the bottom of a pot..

Chapter 142: King Yu reports to his father-in-law?

Jiang Ning approached him: "Let's go."

"Are you willing to leave now?"

“Yes, because I’m full.”

Li Hongyuan asked a passing servant, “Has the Prime Minister returned?”

“Your Highness, the Old Master has just returned.”

“Take me to see him.”

“...Yes.” The servant glanced at Seventh Miss, and seeing that she had no reaction, lowered his head and led Li Hongyuan away.

He didn’t demand that she go with him, so Jiang Ning was happy to relax and let Huang Ying push her out to the carriage.

Who would have thought that as soon as she climbed into the carriage, the housekeeper would come to call her back: “Seventh Miss, the Old Master asks you to return.”

“What’s the matter?”

“I don’t know the specifics.” The housekeeper looked at her expectantly.

Jiang Ning reluctantly helped Huang Ying get off the carriage and went to the study to see Jiang Ruobai.

On the way, she met Li Hongyuan, who had a cold face and ignored her, walking straight past her.

It was inexplicable.

When did she provoke him again?

He went to see Jiang Ruobai and then Jiang Ruobai immediately summoned her. Was it to file a complaint?

When she arrived in the study, Jiang Ruobai was holding his large tea cup and was happily sipping. Seeing his daughter coming in, he hurriedly put down the tea cup, took over from Huang Ying and personally pushed her into the room.

Huang Ying consciously guarded the door outside.

“Dad, why did you suddenly call me back?”

“Come, Dad has something good for you.”

Jiang Ruobai stopped her wheelchair next to the table, took out a paper-wrapped package from his pocket, handed it to her like a treasure: “My dear daughter, you like sour dates, right? This is a Mid-Autumn Festival tribute for the palace. Dad specially found some for you. Try one. If you like it, I’ll get more for you.”

Jiang Ning was startled.

She didn’t expect Jiang Ruobai to not criticize her, but to give her a snack.

When Jiang Ning was little, she used to imagine countless times that her dad could be like other people’s dads, bringing her a little snack or a small toy when he came back from a trip or work, giving her the gentlest surprise.

Unfortunately, her so-called father followed another woman when she was two years old.

A few years later, her mother was gone as well, leaving the young her to live with her elderly grandparents.

Fortunately, her grandparents gave her all their love.

Although they both passed away the year she was admitted to college.

But their love kept Jiang Ning warm, and she bravely moved forward.

That's why Jiang Ning always felt a nameless closeness to older people, which caused her to be unable to ignore Old Man Li when she saw him collapsed on the ground.

Although she lost her parents early, she was not short of love.

It's just that she was a little obsessed with parental love.

At this moment, with Jiang Ruobai holding the sour dates and trying to please his little daughter, the image perfectly matched that of the father in her imagination.

"Take it." Jiang Ruobai put the paper bag in her hand and looked at her expectantly.

Jiang Ning lowered her head, forced back the tears in her eyes, opened the package, picked up a date, and took a bite.

Sweet with a hint of sourness.

Just to her taste.

"Is it good?" Jiang Ruobai asked.

"Yes," Jiang Ning nodded. "It's very good."

Jiang Ruobai smiled.

He looked very happy and satisfied.

Jiang Ning knew that he had always felt guilty for losing her as a child. Now that he had found her, he tried his best to spoil her.

She was selfish and wanted to take all this fatherly love.

Jiang Ruobai said, "Although it's delicious, you can't eat too many at once. It's bad for the teeth. Dad heard the Imperial Physician say that pregnant women especially need to pay attention to their dental health.."

Chapter 143:1 Am the Only Beautiful One

"I got it."

"I heard you cooked for your sisters?"

"Just the ones in the main house, they helped me."

"There's no need to call it helping, we are all family, so don't be a stranger with them. Besides, cooking is too hard. From now on, let others do these things." Jiang Ruobai patted her back of hand, "My daughter, all you need is to wear the most expensive silk, the best jewelry, and be served by others."

Jiang Ning laughed, "Dad, how come I heard that you and Uncle don't get along?"

Jiang Ruobai also laughed, "What others think, we don't need to care. Just remember this, the two branches of the Jiang Family are one family, breaking bones but still connected by flesh. Since your third brother is not at home, you can go to your eldest brother, second sister, and fourth brother if you need anything."

He paused, then smiled with relief, "I thought you and little sixth wouldn't get along well, but you came back specifically to stand up for her this time, I'm very happy. We Jiang family, regardless of how we appear on the surface, must be clear in our hearts who our real family members are, on whom we can rely."

"I'll remember."

"Good girl." Jiang Ruobai patted her head, "Go back and rest early. Take good care of yourself and give birth to the baby. If anything happens, just send someone to the house to inform us. With the Jiang Family behind you, there's nothing to be afraid of."

Jiang Ning nodded, pushed the wheelchair out, and said to her father at the door, "Dad, thank you."

Jiang Ruobai was going through documents when he looked up, "Thank me for what?"

"Just now, Prince of Yu was here to complain to you, right?"

"Oh, right."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"Such a small matter, it's not worth mentioning specially to you." Jiang Ruobai said, "After all, he is the Prince of Yu, we should give him the respect he should have. But you are my daughter, how can I take his side over yours?"

"Why is he angry?"

"Because you ignored him, overlooked him."

Jiang Ning gave a slight recollection and suddenly laughed, "That's true, after all, he is the noble Prince of Yu, who is always surrounded by people wherever he goes, treated like a treasure, so he can't stand being neglected now."

Jiang Ruobai laughed, "You underestimated the Prince of Yu. He is not that narrow-minded."

"Then why is he angry?"

"My daughter, you have to figure this out yourself." Jiang Ruobai laughed, "Some things, I can tell you, teach you. But some things, you have to experience yourself. Where is Huang Ying? Make sure to serve Seventh Sister well."

Huang Ying came in immediately, pushing Jiang Ning to leave.

When Jiang Ning returned to the carriage, Li Hongyuan was not far away, sitting on his horse.

He glanced at her, saw the sparkle in her eyes, the smile on her lips, and the snack in her hand, and knew right away that Jiang Ruobai not only didn't criticize her for being rude, but also tried to please his little daughter by bringing her delicious food.

Really...

A doting father spoils his daughter!

It must be his own bad luck to have met such a person in his past life.

Li Hongyuan withdrew his gaze, coldly ordered to return to the mansion, and rode his horse first.

As a husband leaving directly after leaving his wife's family, it certainly doesn't look good. At least it proves that the Prince of Yu doesn't really care about his own Princess Consort.

Jiang Ning didn't care.

Mainly, she didn't care about this man.

With the love of her parents, her brothers and sisters, and the money, that was enough.

Upon returning to Prince Yu's residence, Xiachu came forward to serve her, and whispered, "Prince came back first, and as soon as he returned, Li Teng from Lan Pavilion went to see him."

"Keeping a close watch." Dongxie snorted, "I really don't understand why men like such pretentious women. If it were me, I would kick her out. Isn't our princess a thousand times more beautiful than her?"

Jiang Ning stroked her own face, "Isn't it great for me to be beautiful alone?"

Chapter 144: Is It a Boy or a Girl?

Huang Ying smiled and said, "With your beauty, it would be a waste not to share it with others."

"What a sweet-talker you are, here, have a reward."

Jiang Ning stuffed a sour jujube into her mouth.

Huang Ying's face immediately scrunched up: "Sour..."

Jiang Ning laughed and said, "Turns out you're afraid of sour."

"It really is very sour... Miss, you must be having pregnancy cravings; I can't handle the sourness with my teeth."

"You're exaggerating, this is a tribute product after all. You all come and have a try."

Jiang Ning looked at the other maids with disbelief.

The maids all scattered and ran off.

Laughter filled the Crystal Clear Manor.

When the stewardess led the Imperial Physician over, they saw such a scene.

After Nanny Wei, who used to control the backyard, was neatly dealt with by Jiang Ning, Nanny Xu, who had been oppressed, took over her position.

They were all from the palace and were qualified to be called nannies; usually, they could only be called old women.

Nanny Xu, very respectfully, led the Imperial Physician and didn't even enter Jiang Ning's room, waiting outside the door.

Generally speaking, only the cleanest maids were qualified to serve their masters closely and enter their bedrooms. Old women, who were considered unclean, would not enter.

Although it was not explicitly stipulated, it had long been an established custom.

Married women would no longer serve their masters closely.

The previous Nanny Wei, relying on her own decency, not only entered and exited Jiang Ning's room freely, but also dared to pull the little crown prince. Regardless of her merits, no master would like such behavior.

This was a trampling and contempt of the rights and privileges of the upper class.

This was also the real reason why Concubine Jin and her son did not protect her.

Jiang Ning lay on her side on the couch while Chunlai massaged her legs.

Although she was only five months pregnant, her legs were already slightly swollen.

Moreover, she couldn't walk normally and had to sit most of the time, which made the situation more serious.

After the Imperial Physician bowed, he squatted down to take Jiang Ning's pulse.

This time, the Imperial Physician was an old and steady man.

Jiang Ning didn't know him and asked his name. She learned that he was Master Dong Chaofeng, the dean of the Imperial Medical Academy.

Jiang Ning smiled and said, "I've heard of a genius doctor named Dong Feng whose name differs from yours by only one character."

Imperial Physician Dong quickly replied, "Princess Consort, your knowledge is profound. Dong Feng was indeed my ancestor."

"I see."

Imperial Physician Dong carefully diagnosed Jiang Ning for a long time. He then withdrew his hand, stood up, and respectfully said, "Princess Consort's body is fine, and the baby in your womb is also healthy. Although your legs are inconvenient, you still need to walk around more often to avoid sitting or lying down all the time."

Huang Ying promptly responded. Xiachu quickly asked, "Master, can you tell if our Princess Consort is carrying a boy or a girl?"

Huang Ying glared at her, "Don't ask what you shouldn't!"

Imperial Physician Dong just smiled and didn't say much. He got up and packed his medicine box, "Princess Consort, rest well. I must take my leave and report back to His Majesty."

Huang Ying said, "Dongxie, please see Master Dong out."

Dongxie quickly escorted the Imperial Physician out. Before leaving, she handed him a silver ingot, smiling, "Thank you, Master. We will have to trouble you to come and examine our Princess Consort from time to time."

Imperial Physician Dong hurriedly laughed and said, "Princess Consort is too polite; this is all part of my duty."

Dongxie smiled brightly and placed the silver ingot in his hand, seeing him out.

This silver ingot was worth twenty taels.

Jiang Ning was very generous in such matters.

Furthermore, the other party was the head of the Imperial Medical Academy; there was no harm in ingratiating with him.

Imperial Physician Dong went to the front yard to see Prince Yu and reported Jiang Ning's condition to him..

Chapter 145: Finally, I'm Going to Have A Royal Grandson Again!

Li Hongyuan lowered his head to write, and said indifferently, "This prince understands, thank you Master Dong."

"It is this official's duty. Also, even though the Princess Consort likes sour food, she still needs to consume it in moderation and not too much. Her legs and feet are not convenient, and if she does not walk and exercise, it is easy to experience swelling, which is not good for the child."

Li Hongyuan raised his head: "She is a cripple, how do you expect her to walk?"

"This... The Princess Consort's right leg is just not good, if she is helped, she can still walk."

"Alright, I understand."

Seeing that he didn't seem to care much, Imperial Physician Dong had to bow and take his leave.

Upon returning to the palace, without even having time to take a sip of water, he hurried to meet the Emperor.

The Emperor was reviewing the memorials, holding a teacup, and frowning.

"This official pays his respects to Your Majesty." Dong Chaofeng knelt down.

The Emperor looked at him: "Did you go to the ends of the earth to take someone's pulse? Don't you know that I am waiting for your reply?"

Dong Chaofeng hurriedly kowtowed: "Your Majesty, please calm down. Since Prince of Yu and the Princess Consort were having dinner at the Jiang residence, I waited for a while."

"Speak."

"To report to Your Majesty, the Princess Consort is generally in good health, and the fetus is also fine."

“What else?”

“Based on my pulse diagnosis, the Princess Consort should be carrying a male fetus.”

“Really?” The Emperor’s eyes widened, “Are you certain with your diagnosis?”

“As for the ability to diagnose the gender of the fetus through the pulse, although I am not as accurate as my late father, I still have some confidence.” Dong Chaofeng lowered his head and said, “Moreover, the Princess Consort’s fondness for sour food is also an indication of carrying a male fetus.”

“Good, excellent!” The Emperor slapped the table, his face full of delight, “I will finally have a royal grandson again!”

The matter of heirs to the royal family has always been a concern for him.

He is already this old, with five sons, but now there are only four left. Although they are all married, not a single grandson has been born.

The only son who had given birth to a grandson had already passed away early.

It can’t help but make people wonder if the remaining princes are not quite up to it, as there are so many wives and concubines, yet they only give birth to daughters and not sons.

The Imperial Court has been discussing the matter of establishing a Crown Prince.

Establishing a Crown Prince early would also prevent disputes in the Imperial Court and unrest among the people.

Though according to the ancestral rules, the heir should be the oldest legitimate son. As there is no more legitimate son, the second son should be considered. But everyone has an unspoken understanding, whoever among the princes can have a son first will have a greater advantage in the matter of establishing a Crown Prince.

In recent years, the second, third and fourth sons have been desperately taking concubines and having children, working tirelessly every day.

A lot of children have indeed been born, but none are boys.

It's simply ghostly.

It has stirred up rumors among the common people, with all kinds of talk.

In his heart, the Emperor is more inclined to have the fifth son as the Crown Prince. The Fifth Prince excels in everything, and he is the son of his most beloved Concubine Jin. But in terms of birth, he is of higher status than the other princes.

But the Fifth Prince, let alone having a son, does not even have a daughter.

Moreover, he is ranked fifth, neither legitimate nor eldest.

It is really difficult to find a reason to establish him as Crown Prince.

Now that he finally knows that the heir in the Fifth Prince's wife's belly is a boy, he is naturally overjoyed.

"Summon someone!"

The Emperor called for the chamberlain, "Immediately go to the Prince of Yu's Mansion, reward the Princess Consort of Yu! Also, order the Prince of Yu to take good care of the Princess Consort of Yu, there must not be any negligence."

The chamberlain took the order.

The Emperor also said: “Moreover, tell the Prince of Yu that if he dares to make the Princess Consort of Yu suffer again, causing any harm to the child, I will have his life.”

The chamberlain had long been accustomed to the coarse language of His Majesty the Emperor and hurriedly left.

After rejoicing for a long time, the Emperor ordered someone to take him to Concubine Jin’s Splendid Palace so he could share the good news with her..

Chapter 146: Pampering Her and Indulging Her

The Emperor arrived at Splendid Palace.

He came in with great enthusiasm, waved at the kneeling maids and eunuchs at the entrance, and went straight into Concubine Jin’s room.

Concubine Jin was lying on the couch, eating melon seeds, listening to a maid playing the pipa nearby.

The room was cool and refreshing.

“The Emperor is here, Your Highness.” The maid whispered to remind her.

Concubine Jin raised her phoenix eyes, glanced at the Emperor, gave a faint response, and continued eating melon seeds.

She didn’t even bother to offer him a proper greeting, and giving him a look seemed like she was doing him a big favor.

The surrounding maids and eunuchs also appeared very calm.

It seemed like they had gotten used to this situation.

The Emperor walked up to Concubine Jin with his plump body and sat down casually beside her. He smiled and said, "Jin'er, I have some great news to tell you."

He waved his hand to make the maid stop playing the pipa.

Concubine Jin put down her melon seeds and looked up at him.

The Emperor awkwardly said, "Continue playing, continue playing."

"What are you doing here?" Concubine Jin asked.

"I have some good news to tell you. I haven't even told the Empress yet."

"What good news?"

"The child in the Princess Consort of Yu's womb is a boy." The Emperor looked at Concubine Jin's beautiful face and rubbed his hands together, excitedly waiting for her to smile.

However, Concubine Jin just uttered an "Oh" and continued eating melon seeds. The Emperor asked, "Aren't you happy?"

Concubine Jin replied, "It's not me who's pregnant, why should I be happy? This has nothing to do with me."

"...She's still your daughter-in-law, after all."

Concubine Jin responded, "What's so surprising about a daughter-in-law being pregnant? If you'd told me my own son was pregnant, I might have been shocked."

The Emperor chuckled, "That would be a mess! What I mean is, now that my fifth son's wife is pregnant with a boy, when the child is born, I can make my fifth son the Crown Prince."

"That's good," Concubine Jin said, still coldly and elegantly eating her melon seeds, as if this issue concerning the whole world had nothing to do with her. The Emperor stretched out his hand to touch hers—

Concubine Jin looked at him and asked, "What are you doing?"

"I haven't spent the night with you in a long time. Tonight..."

Concubine Jin interrupted, "You're excited because your daughter-in-law is pregnant? You're still thinking about this at your age. Don't you have other concubines to visit?"

The Emperor looked wronged, "But you're the most beautiful of all my concubines. Can't I, as a man, have such desires? You're a concubine, and you're supposed to serve me. What's with your attitude?"

Concubine Jin replied, "This palace is tired today and cannot serve Your Majesty. Please go to the Empress's room."

"The Empress no longer shares the bed with me..."

Concubine Jin suggested, "Then go to Concubine Huang, or Lady Ding. They're all young and not ugly."

"I want to be with you."

"I just got my period."

The Emperor came in high spirits and left with a crestfallen look.

The personal eunuch attending to him remarked, "Our Concubine's temper grows worse. Why don't you visit other courtyards? Lady Ding is also beautiful..."

The Emperor snapped, "Do you think I visit her just because she's pretty?" "Your Majesty, please calm down. Your servant knows that you feel guilty for Concubine Jin and that's why you always favor her and let her act this way." "Back then, she was also a gentle and charming young woman. It's all because of me that she miscarried... They were boy and girl twins, ah..." The Emperor sighed with heartache, "Though we had our fifth son later, Concubine Jin's temperament changed. She barely cares for the boy, let alone me..."

Chapter 147 Congratulations on Your

Highness's Great Joy

Concubine Jin couldn't be bothered with the Emperor, relaxing languidly while munching on sunflower seeds.

The palace maid advised her softly, "His Majesty has always been considerate to you over the years, Your Highness. You should show him a little gratitude." "How so?" Concubine Jin replied indifferently, "Haven't you seen what he looks like these days? He's become obese, aging, and pudgy. I'd rather not serve him. There are countless ladies in the harem, let whoever can stand him serve him. He won't be missing me."

The palace maid stifled a chuckle, "Only you dare to say such things. Despite the Emperor's age and weight, didn't Concubines Huang and Lan still look forward to serving his bed as if he were a divine delicacy?"

"Compare the Emperor with my fifth child and then tell me about devastation. I swear, I won't serve his bed until he loses some weight. Carrying around such a huge belly, is it not nauseating?"

"My lord, please stop. Although you are favored, these words are not proper to be overheard."

Imagine the consequences if word spread that someone dared to describe the Emperor's appearance as repulsive!

The Emperor is the celestial dragon incarnate. Who dares question his looks?

"I'll stop then. Pour me a cup of tea, these seeds are making me thirsty. Switch the tune while you're at it, this one is too gloomy," instructed Concubine Jin, gesturing at the maid to resume her pipa playing.

The palace maid came over with a cup of tea, stating softly, "The Princess Consort of Yu is pregnant with a boy, this is indeed great news."

"What's so great?" Concubine Jin replied indifferently, spitting out a seed husk, "All those second, third and fourth children of mine have been doing everything to give birth to children, only to get a bunch of girls. Now that my fifth's wife is married in, she already conceived a boy. Would they not be jealous?"

"That's true," the maid furrowed her brows, "what should we do now?"

"In my opinion, it's best to keep it under wraps," Concubine Jin said lightheartedly, "But this stupid Emperor goes around proclaiming it as if he's afraid someone might not know that his fifth son's wife is pregnant with a boy."

The palace maid chuckled, "It's because His Majesty is overjoyed. There's only been the emperor's eldest grandson as the heir to the throne all this while, so you can't blame the public for gossiping."

"Well, let's see. Those second, third, and fourth sons of mine won't just sit back and let the fifth one be the father of a son."

"Your Highness, will you not intervene? What if something were to happen to the Princess Consort of Yu?"

"Then blame it on the Emperor."

The residence of the Prince of Yu.

A messenger arrived from the palace, bringing with them many gifts.

Gold and silver jewelry, food, and drink.

All exceptionally practical.

Jiang Ning, holding a phoenix hairpin, chortled, "It seems our Emperor is in the habit of rewarding people, even his subordinates know what gifts to prepare."

Once the eunuch had finished delivering the gifts, he went to the main court to meet the Prince of Yu.

"This servant has arrived to deliver His Majesty's decree," the eunuch announced amiably.

Li Hongyuan immediately put down his brush to receive the decree.

The eunuch continued, "His Majesty says you should take good care of the Princess Consort of Yu. If anything were to happen to her or the little heir in her womb, you'll be held accountable."

"I will receive this order."

Li Hongyuan rose and looked at the eunuch, a sudden realization washing over him. "What did you just say, Eunuch?"

"His Majesty commanded that you should take care of the Princess Consort of Yu and the precious little prince in her womb."

"The heir?"

“Did Your Highness not know? Master Dong of the Imperial Medical Academy personally took the Princess Consort’s pulse and confirmed that she’s carrying a boy. Only after that did we send over these gifts and commanded me to deliver the message.” The eunuch laughed and made a salute, “This humble servant must congratulate Your Highness on the great joy.”

A wave rippled through Li Hongyuan’s heart.

This so-called ‘great joy’ doesn’t only refer to the Princess Consort carrying a male fetus, but also hints at the future Crown Prince’s position.

It can be said that if the little prince is born smoothly, he would have already secured half of his success in becoming the Crown Prince.

Wasn’t the reason he chose Zizi, Lin Zizi’s daughter, as Princess Consort for this very purpose?

Chapter 148: The Backyard House

Li Hongyuan pondered a few thoughts in his heart, but his expression remained calm.

He asked the housekeeper to escort the eunuch who had delivered the imperial edict out.

As usual, the housekeeper prepared a generous reward and personally escorted the eunuch to the door.

Even if it was a prince or a noble, it was still necessary to please these eunuchs by the emperor’s side.

After all, they were the closest people to the Emperor.

And easier to influence the Emperor.

Just as Li Hongyuan sat down to continue writing his water control plan, he saw the housekeeper come in and say, “Your Highness, the Princess Consort sent someone to say that she wants to go out for a stroll tonight.”

“Going out for a stroll again? How restless is she? No! She can’t go!”

“Yes, this servant will go and tell the Princess Consort.”

After the housekeeper left, she came back panting after a short while, “Your Highness, the Princess Consort says her stomach is uncomfortable and asks for you to invite Imperial Physician Dong to take a look.”

Li Hongyuan stopped writing: “Didn’t Imperial Physician Dong just come and check her?”

“These things related to pregnancy can be unpredictable.”

“I think she’s pretending.”

“But what if she isn’t?” The housekeeper said cautiously, “Pregnancy is a big challenge for women, and anything can happen while the child is in her womb. It’s better to be cautious. Princess Consort also said...”

“What else did she say?”

“She said that if you don’t invite him, she’ll go home and ask Prime Minister Jiang to invite the Imperial Physician to the palace.”

“Is she threatening me?”

The housekeeper hung her head and did not dare to speak.

Li Hongyuan was silent for a moment: "Let her go out for a stroll."

The housekeeper immediately smiled: "This servant will go and tell the Princess Consort."

Li Hongyuan looked at the smiling housekeeper and said indifferently: "Why are you so happy about her going out? Are you going with her?"

"No, Your Highness." The housekeeper hesitated, "In fact, not only this servant but all the servants in the residence are quite happy."

"What do you mean?" Li Hongyuan was puzzled.

"Your Highness is not often in the backyard, so you might not know. If you go and have a look, you'll understand."

Li Hongyuan frowned, "Alright, I know. You can go."

As he watched the housekeeper leave, he called for the steward and asked: "Has there been anything going on in the backyard recently?"

The steward's expression became a bit difficult.

Li Hongyuan raised an eyebrow: "Speak."

The steward said: "Nothing major, it's just about the Princess Consort. Recently, she's been having the servants go to the Crystal Clear Manor. What they're doing specifically, I don't quite understand."

"Is she abusing them?"

"No, she isn't. But all the servants in the residence are quite afraid of going to the Crystal Clear Manor. They're all very happy when the Princess Consort goes out or visits her parent's house."

Li Hongyuan grew increasingly confused.

What on earth was that woman messing around with?

At this time, Li Yuanyuan brought a tray with tea and snacks. She spoke softly: "Your Highness, I've prepared some refreshments and tea for you. Please have a taste."

The steward looked back and saw her, and quickly said: "Li Teng, the Princess Consort wants you to go to the Crystal Clear Manor."

"What does the Princess Consort want me to do?"

"She wants to know if you can dance."

"...I can."

"Then that's fine, you go. I still need to find someone else." The steward bowed to Li Hongyuan, wiped the sweat from his forehead and hurriedly left.

Li Yuanyuan looked at Li Hongyuan: "Master..."

"If she asks you to go, you go."

"I heard that every servant who is called to the Crystal Clear Manor by the Princess Consort comes out crying..." Li Yuanyuan looked pitiful, "Master knows that I have always had a weak constitution and cannot bear any struggles."

"She won't hit you."

"I know. But still..."

"Ms. Li, you must listen to the Princess Consort's words.."

Chapter 149: Obey Her Unconditionally and Serve Her

"This servant doesn't disobey. But... should I obey even if it's unreasonable?"

"She is my Main Consort. Do you understand what that means?"

Li Yuanyuan shook her head: "This servant listens to your teachings."

"It means no matter if she is right or wrong, whether I like her or not, she is the Main Consort, and she is your Master. You must obey her unconditionally and serve her. Do you understand?" Li Hongyuan said, "Have you forgotten the outcome of Nanny Wei?"

"This servant understands." Li Yuanyuan's eyes filled with tears, "These are the pastries this servant made, which you always loved to eat. If there's no opportunity to make them for you in the future, I hope you will remember the good things about this servant..."

She lifted her sleeve to wipe away her tears.

Li Hongyuan gave a faint grunt without saying anything else.

Li Yuanyuan looked up and saw him continue writing with his head down.

She choked up, softly calling out, "Master..."

“You go ahead.” Li Hongyuan didn’t even raise his head. “Remember, do whatever she tells you to do. Don’t disobey her, and don’t make her angry. If you make me angry instead, you know the consequences.”

Li Yuanyuan had been with him for several years and understood his temperament.

It was entirely different from his dazzling outer appearance.

As dazzling and noble as his appearance and status were, his nature and temper were just as cold-hearted and ruthless, without considering the means.

Li Yuanyuan knew very well that the Prince of Yu wouldn’t mind a woman occasionally being coquettish and willful. However, if she was unreasonable resulting in his impatience, he wouldn’t take any past sentiments into account.

Nanny Wei and Madam Zhao were perfect examples.

At one point, Nanny Wei managed the front courtyard while Madam Zhao was in charge of the affairs of the rear palace. Were the Prince not attaching importance to them?

But once they made mistakes, they were thrown out mercilessly.

Although Li Yuanyuan considered herself to have the longest time and highest favor with the Prince, she never dared to challenge his patience.

After finishing writing the flood control plan, Li Hongyuan put down his pen, rubbed his slightly aching wrist, stood up, and left the room.

The early autumn weather was cool and comfortable, with a faint fragrance of osmanthus wafting in the breeze.

It was very pleasant.

Everything was quiet around him.

Not even the movement of servants could be seen.

Li Hongyuan was puzzled at first but then remembered the strangeness of the Crystal Clear Manor that the servants had mentioned.

What was the peculiarity in Crystal Clear Manor that scared the servants away and made Li Yuanyuan teary eyed?

Generally, Li Hongyuan didn't care about the matters of the rear courtyard as long as they weren't excessively disruptive.

He initially intended to go to the Ministry of Works to discuss the details of the flood control project with several officials and dine in the palace. However, his steps still led him towards the direction of the Crystal Clear Manor.

Attendant Chashan followed: "Master, are we going to Crystal Clear Manor?"

Li Hongyuan's steps paused: "Why would I go to Crystal Clear Manor? Head to the palace."

The attendant quickly followed.

As they walked on, they saw several maids with tearful faces coming out.

"What's going on?" Chashan stopped them.

The maids saw the Prince of Yu and quickly knelt down to salute, saying that they had come from the Princess Consort's manor.

“Why are you crying?” Li Hongyuan asked.

The maids kept their heads down and did not dare to utter a word.

Li Hongyuan frowned, changed direction: “To Crystal Clear Manor!”

Although he didn’t pay much attention to the rear courtyard, if the Prince of Yu’s mansion – which had only been established for a little over a year – were turned into a smoke-filled mess by the newlywed Princess Consort, it would become a laughingstock among officials!

With this thought, Li Hongyuan hastened his steps.

As soon as he reached the entrance of Crystal Clear Manor, he heard shouts coming from inside.

“Go, go!”

“Go, maids!”

“Go, household team!”

“You useless bunch, can’t even win against women!”

“Women can hold up half the sky, beat them!”

That last, earth-shattering sentence was clear and full of energy..

Chapter 150: Venting anger on me because things didn’t go well with the concubine?

It was Jiang Ning.

Upon hearing the commotion, Li Hongyuan had an immediate headache.

This woman was really stirring up trouble again.

He approached the courtyard gate and saw Jiang Ning sitting on a chair under the porch, waving a small fan in her hand and shouting to Cuihong: "Hold on! You're at the end. As long as you hold on, we won't be pulled away!"

In the courtyard, ten male servants and ten maids lined up, each holding a rope, tugging it from opposite sides.

The maids and servants were straining so hard that their faces had turned red.

A red handkerchief was tied to the middle of the rope.

The red handkerchief was slowly moving toward the maids' side.

The onlookers went wild, stomping their feet, shouting, and waving their arms until their voices became hoarse.

The red handkerchief steadily moved towards the maids' side.

In the end, all the male servants were pulled to the ground and dragged a good distance by the triumphant maids.

This caused the surrounding maids, young wives, and old women to shriek with laughter.

Jiang Ning grinned and waved her fan: "Well done, all of you on the maids' team will be rewarded today!"

Another cheer erupted.

The male servants' team was in defeat, utterly humiliated, and could only face the taunts and disdain from the other servants.

"We can't even outpull a bunch of women! What a bunch of useless wimps!" The male servants felt they had lost face.

"And how are you going to get a wife like this? Don't end up in bed and find you can't even handle your wife..."

This remark was quite vulgar.

Jiang Ning gave Huang Ying a look.

Huang Ying immediately pointed out the male servant who made the comment, "Xing'er, go over there and do a hundred push-ups! Don't stop until you're finished!"

Xing'er complained: "Why? I didn't lose!"

"Because your mouth is filthy, and it dirties the ears of the Princess Consort! Now go!"

Xing'er dared not resist and reluctantly went to do push-ups with a mournful face.

He was grinding his teeth in frustration.

The other male servants immediately surrounded him, and teased him relentlessly.

Meanwhile, Huang Ying called for the maids to go and receive their reward from Chunlai.

The maids, beaming with delight, went out and only then noticed Prince of Yu, who had been standing at the entrance for some time.

They quickly knelt down to greet him.

Li Hongyuan, with a stern face, walked into the courtyard and said to Jiang Ning, "Come in, this Prince has something to discuss with you."

Huang Ying quickly came over.

"You leave." Li Hongyuan said coldly.

Huang Ying didn't move, looking at Jiang Ning for instructions.

Li Hongyuan said, "So, in this mansion, this Prince's words don't carry any weight now."

Jiang Ning casually fanned herself, and said slowly, "Huang Ying came as my dowry, so, naturally, she obeys me. As for you, you're nothing but the son-in-law of our Jiang family. Huang Ying, stay right here, don't go anywhere."

Huang Ying acknowledged and stepped closer to Jiang Ning's side.

Li Hongyuan reached out and snatched the fan from her hand, throwing it away.

Jiang Ning nonchalantly grabbed a teacup from the table and threw it at him.

It was freshly poured, scalding tea, which splashed all over him, some even splattering onto his hand.

The teacup rolled across the ground and shattered.

Huang Ying gasped and hurried to fetch cold water, “Your Highness, quickly put your hand in the basin, or it will blister soon.”

Li Hongyuan’s hand turned red immediately.

He stood still, staring at Jiang Ning.

She said slowly, “I told you before, we live as strangers. So why are you coming to my courtyard, causing a scene? Do you think I’m easy prey for you to manipulate? Don’t flaunt your status as the Prince of Yu in front of me. You once begged me to marry you, and now you beg me to come back and give birth to your son. What, are you not satisfied with your concubines, so you’re taking it out on me?”

“You—”

“What ‘you’? Are you angry?” Jiang Ning let Huang Ying pick up the fan and resumed fanning herself, “Hold it in. I’m not your punching bag now, and I never will be..”