

Pregnant Before the Royal Marriage

Chapter 16: Chapter 16 Old Master Favors You More

Indeed, she was in a somewhat dazed state.

Once she was the most beautiful woman in Chang'an City, but now she had become like this, all because of losing her beloved youngest daughter.

Jiang Ning stared at her for a while.

Chunlai and Xiaqu, the two maidservants, came over.

"Seventh Miss," they both bowed, "The meal is ready. Will you have it here with Madam, or shall we return to our own courtyard?"

"Let's go back. I have some questions for you."

"What about Madam here..."

"I'll come back later tonight."

Returning to her own courtyard, the table was full of dishes, but most of them were stews with simple flavors.

Although Jiang Ning had no appetite, she was hungry, so she picked up a steamed bun to chew on.

Chunlai laughed, "Why don't you eat some dishes? This chicken soup is good. Let me serve you a bowl and you can try it."

A small bowl of chicken soup was placed in front of her.

Jiang Ning smelled the fishy smell and her stomach suddenly churned.

She threw away the steamed bun and turned around to retch a few times.

But because she hadn't eaten anything, she only vomited a little bitter water.

Chunlai and the other maidservants were all terrified and rushed over.

"Miss, what's wrong? Where do you feel uncomfortable?"

"Is it because the food doesn't agree with your stomach?"

"I don't know." Jiang Ning sat up straight and took deep breaths, "Just take away these greasy dishes. I'll just have some rice porridge and some vegetables."

Although she had no appetite, being hungry was also uncomfortable, so she ate half a bowl of porridge and nibbled on half a white steamed bun.

Although it was dry, when chewed slowly, it had a bit of sweet taste.

The younger maidservants were all dumbfounded, but the older ones were concerned.

After the meal, Chunlai brought a cup of tea and whispered, "Miss, if the food doesn't suit your taste or if you're feeling unwell, you must tell me. You are the legitimate daughter of our family, and I was assigned by Old Master to serve you. I am at your service, so please don't be polite to me."

Jiang Ning glanced at her, "Sister Chunlai, I am indeed feeling unwell, but the doctor in the house can't diagnose it. I want to go outside to find a doctor. Can you help me?"

"Miss, if you want to find a doctor, why bother to go out?" Chunlai smiled, "I can ask the steward to invite a doctor to our house."

"That works too." Jiang Ning coughed softly, "But I don't have any money now."

"Miss just returned, and it's not the time for your monthly allowance. I'll go to Aunt Hua and ask her to advance a few months of allowance for you."

"Go to Aunt Hua?"

"Yes. In recent years, Madam hasn't been in good health, so Aunt Hua, who is Fifth Daughter's biological mother, is in charge of the household affairs."

"Oh... no wonder Fifth Daughter is so domineering."

"Fifth Daughter is smart and clever, with a pretty appearance, and she has always been very much loved." Chunlai smiled, "However, now that you are back, things are different."

"What's different?"

"You are the only legitimate daughter of our family, and you are the most beautiful one. Naturally, Old Master will favor you more."

Jiang Ning chuckled.

Chunlai smiled, "You rest, Miss. I will go and get the money, then have someone invite the doctor into the house."

"Thank you, Sister Chunlai."

"How could Miss say such outsider's words to me?" Chunlai smiled and turned to leave.

Unexpectedly, Chunlai not only failed to get the money but also received a slap in the face.

Aunt Hua and Jiang Yuan were enjoying bird's nest porridge when they heard Chunlai's request. Calmly, Aunt Hua said, "Our household expenses are high, and there is a set amount. It's not good to break the rules.. If you pick up the money today, will she also ask for it tomorrow? How can our family make ends meet then?"

Chapter 17: Chapter 17: A Poor and Dilapidated Family?

Chunlai glanced at the bird's nest porridge on their table and said, "Seventh Miss just arrived at the mansion, and it was the Old Master who agreed to give her an advance on her monthly allowance. How is that breaking the rules?"

Aunt Hua's face changed, and she said, "So, we have such a sharp-tongued and unruly girl in our house. Aren't you going to slap her? Or should I do it myself?"

An old woman came forward and slapped Chunlai across the face.

Jiang Yuan said, "If she wants to get her monthly allowance, she can do it herself."

Chunlai returned with a swollen face.

At first, they tried to keep it from Jiang Ning, but she eventually found out.

Jiang Ning stroked her chin, "For an aunt, she seems a bit too arrogant and doesn't fit her role."

This was troublesome; if the aunt who managed the money wouldn't give her any, what could she use to pay the doctor?

Xiaqu angrily said, "If Madam's health wasn't poor, she wouldn't have a chance. Miss, we can't tolerate this. Otherwise, they'll continue to trample on us."

At this moment, Dongxie ran in, panting, and said, "Miss, they said they caught a child in the front courtyard who claimed to be looking for you."

“A child?” Jiang Ning thought of Xiaoqian and hurriedly said, “Bring him to me quickly.”

“I was told that the child has already been tied up and taken to Aunt Hua.”

“Damn it, are all of you in this mansion bandits? Why would you tie up a child?” Jiang Ning flared up, “Take me to see Aunt Hua.”

When Jiang Ning arrived at Aunt Hua’s courtyard, she heard Xiaoqian’s struggling cries.

Her heart tightened, and she quickly pushed her wheelchair in.

It was indeed Xiaoqian.

The once clean child now had a dirty face.

Xiaoqian saw Jiang Ning and bit the old woman who was holding him, then ran over to her, pouting and tearing up, “Little Auntie, I finally found you.”

Little Auntie? What the hell?

Jiang Ning didn’t care, reached out to hold him, and wiped his face, “Xiaoqian, are you alright?”

“I’m fine.” Xiaoqian turned to face Aunt Hua and the others, “You just wait, I’m going to have my grandpa chop off your heads!”

Aunt Hua ignored him and said indifferently, “Seventh Miss, it’s not your fault that you’ve suffered these years and were raised among the commoners, so you know only the poor and fallen. But it’s not good for you to bring these unclean children into the mansion.”

“You scoundrel, how dare you say I’m unclean?” Xiaoqian was furious, “And who did you call poor and fallen just now?”

“Xiaoqian, she was talking about me,” Jiang Ning said.

“What? The mere Jiang Family dares to call my Little Auntie poor?” Xiaoqian couldn’t bear to see his aunt looked down upon, “Let me tell you, any random thing my Little Auntie has is enough to feed you for three years!”

The surrounding maids and old women burst into laughter.

Aunt Hua covered her mouth, “Oh, this child may be poor, but he sure loves to boast.”

Jiang Yuan sneered, “Birds of a feather.”

"What are you laughing at?" Xiaoqian's face turned red with anger.

An old woman laughed, "Little boy, do you know that just now she sent a maid to ask our mistress for her monthly allowance of a few taels of silver?"

Xiaoqian looked back at Jiang Ning, thinking that she must have been unwilling to part with the treasures the emperor had given her and thus did not want to exchange them for money to spend.

Little Auntie was really too kind.

He thought for a moment, his eyes lit up, and he took a silver banknote from his pocket, handing it to Jiang Ning, "Little Auntie, I came here to tell you something.. Someone outside is willing to pay a thousand taels of silver for one of your paintings or calligraphy!"

Chapter 18: Chapter Eighteen: You, Will Not Be Chosen.

Jiang Ning was startled.

Although her calligraphy was passable, her painting was a stretch.

Who would have so much money to burn, to buy her calligraphy?

It was highly likely that Xiaoqian was up to something.

Considering Old Man Li's destitute appearance, how much money could he possibly have at home?

Surely, the silver ticket in Xiaoqian's hand must be fake, a child's plaything. How could he possibly deceive the experienced housekeeper, Aunt Hua?

Before Jiang Ning could say anything, Aunt Hua burst into laughter, "A thousand taels of silver! What kind of calligraphy could possibly be worth such a price? Kid, did you just draw this silver ticket yourself?"

With a serious face, Xiaoqian replied, "You can take it and exchange it at any money house. If you can't cash it in, I'll take your surname."

"Is it real?"

Aunt Hua gave a signal to a maid at her side.

The maid took the silver ticket and looked at it carefully for a long time before saying, "Madam, this... appears to be real."

"Impossible!"

Aunt Hua snatched the ticket, scrutinizing it back and forth. The longer she looked, the more her face fell.

Because she failed to identify the ticket as a fake.

Which meant that the silver ticket was indeed genuine.

Someone was actually willing to pay a thousand taels for Seventh Miss's calligraphy?

"Do you believe it now?" Xiaoqian said, "Auntie, you just need to write a couple of characters."

"Write... what?"

"Hmm... just write 'High Mountains and Flowing Rivers.'"

"Oh..." Jiang Ning glanced at the silver ticket in her hand, thinking to herself that it was indeed genuine, even Aunt Hua couldn't tell it wasn't.

Could it be that Old Man Li's family makes counterfeit tickets?

Even if it was fake, she couldn't let Xiaoqian lose face in front of everyone.

"Auntie, you should write now," Xiaoqian shook her hand.

"Well, paper and pen," Jiang Ning looked at Aunt Hua, "Lend me your account book for a moment."

Aunt Hua watched in disbelief as Jiang Ning picked up the brush and wrote the words 'High Mountains and Flowing Rivers' on a yellowing page of the account book. She tore off the page and handed it to Xiaoqian.

The sight gave Aunt Hua and Jiang Fifth Daughter a shudder.

Her calligraphy was trained through copying from famous masters, it looked decent and professional.

Xiaoqian's eyes brightened when he saw it, "Auntie, you have a good handwriting."

"Just average, just average," Jiang Ning modestly replied.

Xiaoqian shoved the silver ticket back into Jiang Ning's hand, "Auntie, you take this. Your calligraphy is worth a thousand taels per character, so these four characters should be worth four thousand taels. I'll have that person send another three thousand taels later!"

Aunt Hua and the others were stunned.

Jiang Yuan, in particular, was astounded. Were her words really that valuable?

Xiaoqian cradling the calligraphy, he turned to Aunt Hua and Jiang Yuan and snorted, "You dare to call me dirty and bully Auntie, you just wait. Auntie, let's go."

Jiang Yuan muttered, "What can you do, you're just a kid."

Xiaoqian turned to her, "You're the daughter of the Jiang family; it looks like you're also planning to enter the palace for the selection of the Princess Consort of Yu, right?"

Although Jiang Yuan was puzzled by the boy's tone, she didn't deny it, "That's none of your business."

"Indeed, it's none of my concern, but I can assure you, you won't be chosen."

"What did you say?"

"Hmph."

Xiaoqian ignored her and followed Jiang Ning's wheelchair out of the room.

Back in her own courtyard, Jiang Ning returned the silver ticket to Xiaoqian, laughing, "You mischievous sprite, you shouldn't play with such things. What if someone decides to hit you?"

Xiaoqian waived it off, "I know you're not short of money, Auntie, so just keep this as pocket money. It's getting late, I need to go home. Otherwise, my grandpa will scold me.."

Chapter 19: Chapter 19: The Concubine Is Going to Commit a Crime

Jiang Ning hurriedly said, "Xiaoqian, slow down, where is your house? I'll have someone take you home!"

"My house is nearby. I'll come to see my little aunt next time! Little aunt, remember to make me delicious food!"

Xiaoqian waved and ran away.

Jiang Ning told Dongxie to follow, to make sure the kid wouldn't be bothered by Jiang family's servants and old women again.

"It's getting late, miss. Are you going to Madam's place?"

"Yes."

Just looking at Lin Zizi's face, Jiang Ning could tell she was the original host's birth mother. Since she came back with Jiang Ruobai, she should cooperate with him and help Lin Zizi recover.

Chunlai said, "But Miss, you are not feeling well. What about calling the doctor?"

Jiang Ning looked up at the sky: "Tomorrow."

Back at the Black Bamboo Garden, Jiang Ruobai had just returned. Seeing the silver note in her hand, he couldn't help but be surprised: "Seventh Sister, I just heard from outside that our family's young lady is a thousand gold per word. Is it true?"

"Gossip spreads fast." Jiang Ning held up the silver note, "This is a fake, can't be taken seriously."

"Fake? What's going on?"

"My father's concubine bullies people. My little friend couldn't stand it and decided to help me out."

"Are you talking about Aunt Hua? What happened to her?"

"She didn't give me any money."

Jiang Ruobai was furious, thinking about the fact that his hard-won little daughter had been bullied by a concubine. Of course, he was angry.

But he appeared calm on the surface, took the silver note, and said with a smile, "Which little friend of yours managed to get a fake silver note? Let me see."

Jiang Ning handed it to him casually: "It's Xiaoqian, Old Man Li's grandson."

Jiang Ruobai's hand stiffened as he took the note: "Xiao, Xiaoqian..."

"Yes."

"...This silver note should be real."

As if the emperor's eldest grandson would carry fake silver notes when going out.

Jiang Ning laughed: "Even you were deceived. Aunt Hua and Jiang Fifth Daughter didn't even realize it was fake."

Jiang Ruobai coughed lightly: "Seventh Sister, do you know your father's identity?"

"An official."

"That's right. I'm the Minister of Revenue, managing the financial affairs of the whole country, referred to as His Majesty's Housekeeper," Jiang Ruobai said, "Do you think I would misjudge the authenticity of a silver note?"

Jiang Ning took the silver note back and looked at it: "This is really real?"

"It couldn't be more genuine."

"How is it possible? Old Man Li is so poor. How could his grandson casually take out a thousand tael silver note?" Jiang Ning was stunned, "Does that mean Old Man Li is actually a hidden tycoon?"

Jiang Ruobai didn't say anything.

"Are they really that rich and still come to my place to mooch off every day?"

"..." Jiang Ruobai forced a smile.

Mooching off food?

Didn't they give you money for food?

This girl is really...

Blind.

Jiang Ning clenched the silver note: "Poor Xiaoqian came looking for me and didn't even get a meal. Not only did he lose a silver note, but he also got tied up."

Jiang Ruobai opened his mouth: "What did you say?"

"Food..."

"The last sentence!"

“Xiaoqian came looking for me, but before he could come in, he was captured by your concubine. If it weren’t for me getting there in time, your lawless concubine would have committed a crime in public!”

Jiang Ruobai’s face turned pale, and his hand trembled a little.

Aunt Hua, that hopeless fool.

Daring to tie up the emperor’s eldest grandson.

This emperor’s eldest grandson was His Majesty’s beloved, always personally taken care of by His Majesty’s side.

Such a precious baby, actually got tied up by his own concubine!

If he went back and casually lodged a complaint, the Jiang Family would be screwed..

Chapter 20: Chapter 20: Thunderbolt on a Clear Day

Jiang Ruobai was in the midst of thunderbolts on a sunny day.

Jiang Ning was still applying eye drops for him: “Dad, isn’t it time to deal with that little concubine of yours?”

“Yes, yes... it’s time to deal with her.” Jiang Ruobai was completely bewildered.

“And your precious Fifth Daughter.”

“What happened to Fifth Daughter?”

“She wants to participate in the talent selection with that attitude? She doesn’t look like a lady at all, opening her mouth to say that Xiaoqian is unclean and poor... Xiaoqian is fair and cute, where is he unclean?”

Another thunderbolt on a sunny day left Jiang Ruobai scorched on the inside and tender on the outside.

The Jiang Family is finished!

Jiang Ruobai weakly asked, “The... cough, what did that little friend of yours say?”

“He’s a kid. Of course he’s going to be angry and threatening.”

“Wh-what kind of threats?”

“Just the kind of harmless words kids say, like ‘you wait for me’, ‘I won’t let this go’, and oh, he said he would ask his grandfather to cut off their heads.”

“...” Jiang Ruobai leaned on a nearby tree for support.

Jiang Ning grinned, “Do you think Old Man Li might be a butcher who kills pigs? Xiaoqian’s words are quite bloody and violent.”

Killing pigs...

Butcher...

Jiang Ruobai forced a smile, looking worse than if he were crying.

“Did he say anything else?”

“Why are you so interested in what a kid says?”

“No, no... I just want to know how nasty Aunt Hua and her daughter are.”

“They’re extremely nasty.” Jiang Ning suddenly remembered something, “I don’t know how Xiaoqian found out about this.”

“What?”

“He asked if Jiang Fifth Daughter was going to participate in Prince Yu’s wife selection and said before he left that he guaranteed Jiang Fifth Daughter wouldn’t be selected.” Jiang Ning started to mutter to herself, “I don’t know if Old Man Li is a butcher or a fortune teller, raising such a cryptic child.”

Jiang Ruobai:

At this moment, Lin Zizi came out and saw Jiang Ning. Her eyes lit up, and she waved, “Ningning, where did you go? I asked someone to prepare dinner. Come and eat.”

Jiang Ruobai looked at his wife and his eyes softened. He said to Jiang Ning, “Go and accompany your mother.”

Jiang Ning said, “Dad, I want to go out and invite a doctor.”

“Why? There are two doctors in the mansion, both skilled.”

“I can’t eat, I keep throwing up.”

“Did you catch a cold?” Jiang Ruobai touched her forehead, “Don’t worry, I’ll find a doctor for you tomorrow. As for Aunt Hua, I’ll take care of it. No one in the house will dare to bully you again. If anyone does, tell me, and I’ll deal with them.”

“Thank you, dad.”

“Go on.”

Jiang Ruobai watched her push the wheelchair toward Lin Zizi, then turned around and left. He called the housekeeper and asked about what happened in the afternoon.

The housekeeper said, “Seventh Miss spoke the truth.”

“You useless fool, what were you doing, allowing the servants to kidnap Seventh Miss’s friend?”

“Well... Old Master, these past few years Aunt Hua has been the one calling the shots in the mansion, there was nothing I could do. Besides, it was just a child, it’s not a big deal.”

“Just a child?” Jiang Ruobai sneered, “Do you know who that child is?”

“Who?”

“Did you hear what Seventh Miss called him?”

“I think it was something like... Xiaoqian?”

“That’s the emperor’s eldest grandson, Li Tingqian!”

The housekeeper’s legs went weak, and he knelt down trembling, “How did Seventh Miss become acquainted with His Highness the emperor’s eldest grandson? He even called her ‘Little Aunt’! Aunt Hua and Fifth Daughter weren’t exactly polite to him... Oh, that’s why he guaranteed Fifth Daughter wouldn’t be selected before he left...”

Jiang Ruobai’s face darkened.

The housekeeper carefully said, “Old Master, there are still two days until the talent selection. It’s not too late to withdraw Fifth Daughter’s name.” “Withdraw my ass!”

“The emperor’s eldest grandson will definitely go watch. Wouldn’t he be angry if he sees Fifth Daughter? She definitely won’t be selected then.”

“You fool, is that the issue right now?” Jiang Ruobai snapped, “Even if Fifth Daughter doesn’t go, we have to force her to go, just to let the emperor’s eldest grandson vent his anger!”

