

Royal Marriage 201

Chapter 201: Are You Willing to Remarry?

Jiang Ning shook her head: "I didn't know he would bring the child out. But I think, after all, he is the Prince of Yu, proud and arrogant, and would never allow his ex-wife to marry someone else. If he tries to stop me, I would have a bargaining chip to negotiate with him again. I just didn't expect him to give me the child so directly."

She lowered her head to look at the child in her arms, pulling down the cloth on the wrapping blanket to block out the wind and snow.

The wind and snow were heavy outside.

Huang Ying wanted to call for a carriage, but looking around, she realized they hadn't come by carriage but had walked instead.

There hadn't been so much snow when they arrived.

Now with the young master in her arms, she obviously couldn't walk back like this.

"Xiaoman, you stay here with the young lady and the young master, while I go find a carriage," Huang Ying instructed Xiaoman.

Xiaoman agreed and firmly stayed by Jiang Ning's side.

At this time, a carriage approached from not far away and stopped next to Jiang Ning when it passed by.

Thirteen jumped off the carriage and quickly walked over, asking, "Jiang Seventh Miss, what are you doing here?"

Before Jiang Ning could speak, Xiaoman said, "Our young lady is with the young master and has no carriage to go home."

Thirteen looked surprised and said hastily, "Come on, take my carriage, and I'll take you home."

Jiang Ning thought for a moment, worried that the child wouldn't be able to handle the heavy wind and snow, and nodded, "Thank you." She then said to Xiaoman, "Wait for your sister Huang Ying, and when she comes, tell her I went home first. You go back with your sister Huang Ying."

"This servant will remember," Xiaoman nodded.

Thirteen extended his hand and said, "I'll hold the child. Xiaoman, you help your young lady into the carriage."

Jiang Ning handed the child to him and got into the carriage. After receiving the child back, she saw him standing outside the carriage with snow falling on his head and shoulders, and said, "Thirteenth Young Master, come in and sit as well. It's really cold outside."

"This..."

"It's okay. I don't care about those formalities."

"All right." Thirteen, being straightforward, jumped onto the carriage and sat across from her.

The thick curtain blocked the wind and snow outside.

Jiang Ning sat comfortably, uncovering the swaddling cloth to reveal the baby's face.

The baby was actually asleep, with rosy cheeks and a sweet slumber.

Jiang Ning gently touched his soft cheek and felt incredibly at ease.

Thirteen sat across from her, watching this scene, and smiled: "This child looks a lot like you."

"Really?" Jiang Ning smiled, "People say sons resemble their mothers, and daughters their fathers."

"Now that you've divorced the Prince of Yu, do you have any plans for the future?"

"I haven't thought about it yet. Right now, I just want to raise my two children well."

"What made you take the child out today with such heavy snow?"

"I was supposed to be meeting someone for a marriage interview, arranged by my family," Jiang Ning smiled and glanced at him, "Like the last time I met you. But since the Prince of Yu brought the child, I naturally lost interest in the interview."

Thirteen's eyes lit up, and he lowered his voice to ask, "Would you be willing to remarry?"

Jiang Ning laughed: "With the two children I have, how can I marry again?"

"I don't mind."

Jiang Ning looked up at him.

Thirteen lowered his eyelashes, his voice softer by a few degrees: "I am sincere in asking for your hand, and I hope that Jiang Seventh Miss will seriously consider."

"Given your background, character, and prospects, you could marry a noble and highborn lady. Why would you seek to marry me?" Jiang Ning asked. "Is it just because your political views differ from those of the Prince of Yu?"

"No." Thirteen immediately denied it, then shook his head. "At first, maybe that was part of my consideration. But...."

Chapter 202: The girl is very nice, I like her

"After seeing you, Miss, I find you very likable. I am fond of you."

Jiang Ning smiled, "What do you like about me, Sir? I'm a lame person, remarried, and have even given birth to a child. You can marry any beautiful and innocent noblewoman in Chang'an City."

"I find Miss's appearance extremely beautiful, and your personality is amicable and interesting. If I could spend the rest of my life with someone like Miss, it would surely be a delightful and pleasing experience."

Wen Ren Thirteen noticed the melted droplets on the edge of her veil and took out a handkerchief to gently wipe them off for her.

His movements were gentle, showing a hint of pity.

Jiang Ning raised her gaze to meet his eyes.

Wen Ren Thirteen looked away and said, "If Miss has any intention of remarrying in this life, would you consider me first?"

Jiang Ning smiled, "Why go through the trouble, Sir? I'm not worth it."

"In my heart, Miss is worth it," Wen Ren Thirteen said. "Miss has met my mother, who is exceptionally gentle and understanding. She won't easily interfere with my matters. My mother also likes Miss very much, so you need not worry about my family."

"It's not that I'm worried about these things."

"I'm not trying to force anything. I just want to express my feelings to Miss. If Miss is interested in remarrying, please consider me," Wen Ren Thirteen spoke softly. "Is that okay?"

Such a gaze and gentle voice would make it difficult even for a heart of steel to reject.

But Jiang Ning wasn't someone with a heart of steel.

She was a person who could be swayed with kindness rather than force.

If others were good to her, she would easily fall for them.

She said, with a hint of playful intention, "If I think of remarrying when you haven't married yet, I will consider you, Sir."

Wen Ren Thirteen smiled, took out a bag of pine nuts, peeled one, and passed it to her lips, "It's very clean."

Jiang Ning, holding the child, hurriedly shook her head, "No need, Sir, you eat it yourself."

Wen Ren Thirteen ate it himself, and after eating two, he saw her staring at him and felt somewhat embarrassed, "I have been handling a case these days, I stayed up all night yesterday and haven't eaten much since then. Please excuse me, Miss."

"You have worked hard, Sir."

"It's not too hard; there aren't many times like this. If we get married in the future, I will try my best to spend more time with you, Miss."

"...Ahem."

Jiang Ning smiled.

The carriage arrived at the entrance of Jiang Residence. Wen Ren Thirteen took over the child with one hand and assisted Jiang Ning out of the carriage with the other.

The servants in the residence had been waiting with a wheelchair and quickly helped her sit down on it.

Jiang Ning took the child back and looked at Wen Ren Thirteen, "Thank you very much for your help today, Sir."

"It's just a small favor," Wen Ren Thirteen said gently with a smile, "In a few days, there will be a play at our residence, would Miss like to come?"

"Why?"

"It's my mother's birthday, and we have invited famous performers for a three-day play. I thought Miss might enjoy it. We have sent an invitation to your residence as well. You may come with your family."

"Oh, okay."

"I will send a carriage to pick you up when the time comes."

"No need, we can go on our own."

"Alright, I will be waiting."

"Please go back, Sir. You have worked hard throughout the night; you should return and rest as soon as possible." Jiang Ning saw the redness in his eyes and couldn't bear to let him stand outside in the wind and snow any longer.

“Alright.”

Wen Ren Thirteen watched her enter the residence before turning around to get on his carriage.

Chunlai and Xiachu came to pick her up, all excited.

“Miss, Prince of Yu’s people have sent little Miss back!”

“How is Lingzi doing?”

“She’s doing well.” Chunlai laughed, “Young Master and Third Young Master have also come. Old Master, Madam, and Third Young Master are all with us, looking at little Miss..”

Chapter 203: A Whole and United Family

Jiang Ning couldn’t wait to return to her own courtyard, and as soon as she entered, she heard laughter.

In the warm, spring-like room, Lin Zizi sat on the couch, holding Lingzi in her red jacket, with Jiang Ruobai, Jiang Yi, and a few others around her, teasing the little Lingzi.

The baby girl stared at them with her round eyes, showing no fear or shyness.

Seeing Jiang Ning, Jiang Yi’s eyes lit up and he immediately took the swaddle from her arms: “Ah, little Wenzan is here too!”

Jiang Ruobai stretched out his hand: “Let me hold him.”

The child was handed from Jiang Yi to him.

He sat down next to Lin Zizi, holding Wenzan, and with a beaming smile, said, "Xiao Bao'er, did you see? Your brother is here too. In the future, our family will be together and never part again, all right?"

Jiang Ning moved her wheelchair over and looked at the little girl in Lin Zizi's arms.

The little girl was chubby, with snow-white skin and round, lively eyes, adorable.

Lin Zizi looked at her daughter and laughed, "The Prince of Yu's Mansion did not mistreat these two children, look at how well they have been raised, so white and chubby."

"Of course, we can't let our precious children be mistreated," Jiang Ruobai said with laughter in his eyes and a loving expression on his face, "Look at my eldest grandson, he's so handsome."

Jiang Yi said, "He's your great-nephew."

Jiang Ruobai glared at him: "I do want a grandson, why don't you give birth to one for me?"

Jiang Yi scratched his head and dared not make a sound.

He had been studying at the Academy for years, and now he had finally achieved something. He was working at the Imperial Academy and it was time to consider his marriage.

The whole family gathered around the two little treasures, fussing over them.

Jiang Yuan and Jiang Yan also came over to watch, and even the two aunts, who had never gotten along well, temporarily put aside their old grudges and happily joined the circle around the children.

There were four children in the Jiang family's second room, but it was Jiang Ning, the youngest, who was the first to become a mother.

So the whole family cherished them.

Even Aunt Liu, who had always been sharp-tongued and sarcastic, was fond of them and sent over two pairs of gold bracelets, which made Jiang Ruobai think better of her. That evening, he even made a special visit to her room.

Aunt Liu became even happier and took extra care of the children, visiting them three times a day.

When the Prince of Yu ordered the children to be brought over, he also brought their wet nurses, nannies, and maids who had been attending to them.

With the love and care of Jiang Ning and the entire Jiang family, the two children adapted well, eating when they were hungry, sleeping when they were full, and playing when they were awake.

They were so adorable that they drew everyone's affection.

The day after the children moved in, it was snowing outside, and the room was warm and cozy. Jiang Ning sat in front of the two cradles, holding one hand in each, chanting nursery rhymes, while several maids were doing needlework on the side.

From time to time, the little ones cooed and gurgled.

Xiaoman squatted next to the cradle, listening to her own mistress's nursery rhymes, her head nodding off in sleepiness.

The door curtain was lifted quietly.

Xiaoman was the most alert and immediately raised her head to see a tall, slender figure of a man walking in. At first, she thought it was the Third Young Master, and then she realized it wasn't right. She looked closely and saw that it was actually the Prince of Yu.

As she exclaimed, she jumped up.

Jiang Ning raised her head and looked at her: "Xiaoman, hush."

Xiaoman pointed at the door: "Your Highness..."

Jiang Ning turned around and saw Li Hongyuan, wrapped in a cloak, standing at the door.

She frowned, "Why are you here? How did you get in?"

This was the back courtyard, and to enter from the front yard, one had to go through the second gate, third gate, and then the small courtyard gate. Each gate was guarded by someone.

There shouldn't be anyone coming without notice..

Chapter 204: It's just one night, and you don't recognize your father?

Li Hongyuan casually untied his cloak, hung it on the rack by the door, then stepped towards the brazier. He warmed his hands at its flame, dispelling the wintry chill he had brought from outside.

Only after doing all of this did he approach Jiang Ning and look at the two children in the cradle.

Instinctively, Jiang Ning nudged her wheelchair forward a step, putting a distance between him and the cradle. She didn't want him too near the children.

Li Hongyuan slightly raised his brow. "I am the biological father of these children. You were granted custody, but does that deprive me of even the right to have a look at them?"

His comment left Jiang Ning unable to retort.

"You're allowed to see them, but you should at least send word ahead of time. How could you just show up unannounced? Where are your escorts?"

"Who would dare to stop me from visiting my wife and children?"

"Prince Yu, you and I are divorced and share no ties. As a male visitor, should you not inform me before entering my private quarters?"

"Very well, in the future, I will take note."

She had assumed he would be unreasonable and overbearing but was taken aback when he simply agreed.

Jiang Ning frowned and retreated in her wheelchair. "Then you look around, I'll head into the inner room."

"Do you think I am a tiger who'd eat you?" stated Li Hongyuan indifferently. "Even though we are no longer husband and wife, our ties will never be severed as long as we have these two children. You can avoid me today, but can you avoid me for a lifetime?"

He reached out and pulled her wheelchair towards him. "Come here, I have a question for you."

Jiang Ning didn't have a choice and was pulled closer.

She grimaced. "What is it?"

"Why does our daughter seem thinner today?" Li Hongyuan picked up Lingzi, catching her between sleep and wakefulness. Jolted awake, she quickly fell back asleep in her father's arms.

Jiang Ning retorted, "She was just with me yesterday. How could you notice she's grown thinner in merely a day? Are you pulling my leg?"

“Can’t a tiny person like her lose weight in a day?”

“Quit stirring up trouble.”

Li Hongyuan put Lingzi down and then picked up Wenzan.

To his surprise, as soon as Wenzan was lifted, he began to cry.

Stunned, Li Hongyuan asked, “Did you forget your father, after just one night?”

Jiang Ning quickly extended her hand, “He doesn’t like you, hand him to me.”

“Nonsense. When you’re away, isn’t it me who holds and pampers him? How can it not be the same after just one day?”

“Didn’t you see him crying? Give him to me.”

Unfortunately, since she was sitting and he was standing, even if he refused to hand the child over, she was powerless to do anything about it.

Li Hongyuan asked, “Is he hungry?”

The wet nurse, having heard the cries, entered the room and upon spotting Prince Yu, quickly lowered her head in respect.

“Take the child and feed him,” instructed Li Hongyuan.

Flustered, the wet nurse came over and took Wenzan to feed him. By this time, Lingzi had woken up too and started crying. Another wet nurse hurriedly came to take her for feeding as well.

Jiang Ning commented, "They were perfectly fine until you got here. The moment you stepped in, all hell broke loose."

Li Hongyuan remained silent for a moment. In a soft voice, he said, "I simply wanted to see them because I was restless and couldn't sleep. If it displeases you, I will leave immediately."

He turned around and started to leave.

Jiang Ning said, "You don't need to play the victim in front of me. You're their father, and I have no reason to stop you from seeing them. But you must inform me in advance. Do not show up uninvited again."

"Very well."

Without turning back, Li Hongyuan lifted the curtain and stepped outside.

Huang Ying walked over, "Miss, the prince forgot to take his cloak. It's snowing heavily outside."

"Go bring it to him."

"Yes, I'll go right now."

Hurrying, Huang Ying picked up the cloak and ran after him, shouting "Your Highness, your cloak!"

Chapter 205: Ningning Looks Really Beautiful

Li Hongyuan waited for her to approach, took the cloak and put it on, asking, "Huang Ying, have the two children been throwing tantrums these past two days?"

Huang Ying replied, "Your Highness, the young master and young mistress have been very well-behaved and not causing any trouble at all."

Li Hongyuan nodded and turned to leave.

"Your Highness," Huang Ying called out to him.

Li Hongyuan looked back.

Huang Ying hesitated for a moment, then said, "This servant can see that Your Highness cares about our young lady in your heart. Our young lady has a temperament that if others treat her well, she will treat them twice as well. If Your Highness treats the young lady kindly, your visits to see the young master and young mistress will be more pleasant in the future."

"This Prince understands."

"May I be excused, Your Highness?"

Huang Ying curtsied.

Entering the room, she saw Jiang Ning lost in thought. She walked over and rubbed her mistress's leg, laughing, "Today His Highness came and his temper has really improved greatly."

"Really?"

"Yes. Prince Yu is famous for being cold-hearted, and aside from the Emperor and the noble consort, he has never had a kind word for anyone else. Now, when he speaks to the young lady, he is much gentler. This shows that he cares about her in his heart."

Jiang Ning laughed, "Huang Ying, does one appreciate someone who first slaps them and then offers them a date?"

“This servant doesn’t understand.”

“You will in the future.”

The next day, Lin Zizi sent over a few sets of clothes for Jiang Ning to choose from, intending to take her along to Madam Wenren’s birthday celebration at the Wenren Family residence.

Normally, only legal wives and legitimate daughters could attend such events.

Back when Jiang Ning was not present, Lin Zizi was ill and couldn’t leave the house, so there were no legitimate daughters within the family. Jiang Yuan had taken advantage of this and followed her older sisters out several times.

Now that Jiang Ning had returned, Lin Zizi had recovered, and there was no longer any involvement for concubine-born daughters.

After selecting a set of pink-purple clothes, Jiang Ning instructed Huang Ying and Chunlai to look after the children properly. She only took Xiaoman with her to see Lin Zizi.

Xiaoman was strong, which made pushing the wheelchair and helping her on and off the carriage much more convenient.

Huang Ying was steady and meticulous, leaving her to watch the children was reassuring.

Lin Zizi was also dressed and refreshed, with a radiant smile on her face.

Seeing her daughter, she laughed, “Ningning looks so beautiful.”

“It’s the clothes that are beautiful.”

The clothes were indeed magnificent.

Lin Zizi laughed, "These were my clothes from before. Now, I can't wear them anymore, but they fit you perfectly. Don't be repulsed."

"Ah, these were Mother's clothes from before? No wonder they are so beautiful."

"Seeing you wear them makes me think back to when I was young." Lin Zizi was somewhat nostalgic.

Jiang Yuan and Jiang Yan came over to pay their respects. Seeing Jiang Ning like this, they were both very envious.

Jiang Yan laughed, "Seventh sister's beauty shines brightly in these clothes, adding more splendor to the already splendid dress. In the past, Mother was considered the number one beauty in Chang'an City, and now, Seventh sister is undoubtedly so as well. It's right to go out and let them see for themselves." "What's there to see? You can't go anyway." Jiang Yuan said.

Jiang Yan hung her head.

Before, Jiang Yuan would occasionally go out, but Jiang Yan had never been to any of these high-society gatherings with noble ladies and young misses.

Jiang Ning said, "Mother, since we're going, why not bring both of them along, it'll be livelier."

Lin Zizi looked at the two concubine-born daughters and laughed, "Would you two like to go?"

Jiang Yuan and Jiang Yan exchanged glances.

"Yes!"

"Can I... really go?" Jiang Yan asked, somewhat disbelieving.

“Why not? I’ll be with you.” Lin Zizi said with a full-faced smile.

She was originally a very attractive, gentle and graceful woman. After losing her daughter and being devastated by the news, she hadn’t left the house for over a decade. Now, she was gradually recovering and beginning to regain her former soft gracefulness and beauty..

Chapter 206: The Fame Is Too Great

Refreshing as a spring breeze.

Jiang Yuan and Jiang Yan, the two sisters, were bubbling with excitement.

“I have to go back and change my clothes!”

“I have to redo my hair!”

The two of them quickly turned back to head home.

Jiang Ning was beaming with joy.

Lin Zizi laughed as she spoke, “Who knew you’d be, of such good temperament. You’ve had a hard life these past few years, yet they’ve had it better than you. Now that you’re back, you still treat them kindly.”

Jiang Ning smiled and said, “We are family and thus will see each other sooner or later. We can’t become enemies.”

“Oh, you’re such a sweet child, you make my heart ache.”

“I’m not as good as you think.”

Jiang Ning was not sure whether if she were the previous host, she would be jealous and resentful of her two sisters. However, she, herself, harbored no such feelings.

After all, she did not personally experience the various hardships that the original host had endured.

Although Jiang Yuan was short-tempered, vain, and sharp-tongued, she was still a good sister who honored her promises. Jiang Yan was a wallflower, timid and weak, but she was genuine towards her family.

She wanted the entire family to live harmoniously and happily.

When they arrived after getting dressed, the carriages were already prepared.

Lin Zizi, along with her three daughters, visited the Wenren residence.

The Wenren family was a well-known clan in Chang’an City, their status was not inferior to the Jiang family.

A feast was held to celebrate Madam Wenren’s birthday, which drew a lively crowd at the entrance.

They thought they would need to wait at the entrance for a while, but as soon as they arrived, a housekeeper ushered them straight to the back courtyard.

Lin Zizi thanked the housekeeper, who replied with a smile: “You flatter me, Madam. It was our Thirteenth Young Master who gave the instruction. And I just carried it out.”

“Thirteenth Young Master?”

Lin Zizi and the sisters looked at Jiang Ning.

Jiang Yuan clicked her tongue, "No wonder we got in bypassing all those carriages at the front. So, we have to thank Seventh Sister. The Thirteenth Young Master just can't forget about her, can he? If you ask me, just marry him."

Jiang Yan replied, "Or is it you who wants to marry him, Fifth Sister?"

"Bah, he's not interested in me, and I won't disgrace myself by throwing myself at him." Jiang Yuan spat out the words, then turned and walked away.

Many young ladies visited that day. Jiang Yuan had some friends, and went to mingle with them.

Jiang Yan didn't know anyone, so she stayed with Lin Zizi and Jiang Ning.

Lin Zizi's arrival caused quite a stir among the noble ladies.

Her beauty was renowned in her youth, and in returning to high society after so many years, she naturally attracted a lot of attention.

Although she had aged, her daughters who accompanied her had completely inherited her beauty, which made others envious and jealous.

It was just a pity that one of them was confined to a wheelchair.

A beautiful jade with a flaw always induces some regret.

Madam Wenren personally received them. Holding Lin Zizi's hand with watery eyes, she said, "Zizi, it's been so many years. I'm glad you're finally willing to come out."

It turned out they were once good friends.

Close friends naturally have a lot to catch up on when they meet.

Jiang Ning didn't want to join in the gossip, she simply let Xiaoman push her around to take in the sight of the Wenren residence.

Not many people came to talk to her.

Since she publicly thrashed Princess Ling'an in the street and vehemently broke off with Prince Yu, these glorious "accomplishments" made other girls shy away from her.

Initially, Jiang Yan was accompanying her. However, after some time, Jiang Yan had wandered off somewhere to have fun.

There were many noble ladies and young girls in the backyard, and since Jiang Yan also had a maid with her, Jiang Ning did not have to worry about her safety.

"Xiaoman, are you hungry? Let's go find something to eat," Jiang Ning said to Xiaoman.

Xiaoman loved two things in life – her lady and food..

Chapter 207: Gentle and Considerate, Upright and Capable People

The snow has let up a bit.

The tiny, delicate snowflakes float gently down, with hardly any wind. It's not too cold.

The Wenren residence is vast and beautiful.

There's a lake in the backyard, surrounded by many weeping willows. Right now, the lake is frozen, and snow drifts across the ice, creating a vast expanse of white. It's simply stunning.

Scattered groups of people are admiring the snow around the lake.

Across the lake, there are a few pavilions, from which faint laughter can be heard. It seems that the male guests are gathered there.

Xiaoman pushes Jiang Ning along the lake for some time before they spot Wenren Thirteen walking towards them, holding an umbrella.

Today, he is dressed in a narrow-waisted robe with arrow sleeves, a jade belt around his waist, and his hair bound with a jade crown. He looks very much like a refined and elegant young nobleman.

Quite different from his usual scholarly official appearance.

He holds the umbrella over Jiang Ning's head and, with a flourish, offers her a paper-wrapped package.

Jiang Ning smiles, "How did Thirteenth Young Master end up here?"

"I saw Miss Jiang from afar on the other side, so I thought I'd come over to check upon her since it's snowing."

Among the guests, there is only one person in a wheelchair: her.

It's easy to attract attention.

"What's this?" Jiang Ning asks.

"Snacks," Wenren Thirteen says softly with a smile. "I don't know if it suits Miss Jiang's taste, but the banquet won't start for a while yet, so have something to eat."

“Thank you, sir.”

Jiang Ning looks at the snacks on her lap and thinks that Wenren Zong truly is a gentle, considerate, upright, and competent person.

“Let’s not stay out in the snow. I’ll take you somewhere quiet and away from the wind to rest. There won’t be anyone there to disturb you.”

He assumes that Jiang Ning doesn’t want to be with the other young ladies, which is why she’s out here on her own.

Jiang Ning nods in agreement.

As promised, Wenren Zong brings her to a quiet, wind-sheltered pavilion where they can still enjoy the snowy scenery by the lake without feeling cold.

He orders servants to bring a brazier and tea, along with fruits.

Jiang Ning tells Xiaoman to go and eat. Xiaoman grabs a handful of fruits and squats outside the pavilion, munching happily without any fear of the cold.

Wenren Zong moves the brazier closer to Jiang Ning’s feet and asks, “Are you still cold?”

Jiang Ning shakes her head, “I’m not cold. Thank you, sir. I would actually be fine without the brazier.”

“It’s alright, young ladies are often more sensitive to the cold.”

“You seem quite knowledgeable about that.”

"I have a younger sister, and she's always cold like that too." Wenren Zong smiles, pouring her a cup of warm tea. "Drink something warm."

As Jiang Ning takes the tea, her fingers brush against his hand.

"Your hands are so cold?" Wenren Zong gently touches her fingers. "And you say you're not cold."

"That's just how I am," Jiang Ning says, holding the teacup. "I don't feel cold even when my hands and feet are cold."

Wenren Zong gently places his hand on the back of hers, murmuring softly, "You're still cold, nonetheless."

Jiang Ning glances at his hand.

His hand is quite warm.

But he quickly withdraws his hand, apparently realizing that it might be inappropriate.

"Would you like some fruit?" he asks.

"Yes, please." Jiang Ning smiles.

Wenren Zong hands her a round fruit. She takes a bite as he also shows a smile, sitting down beside her and gently patting her head.

"May I call you by your name?" he asks.

"Of course," she replies.

“Ningning?”

“Whatever you like.”

“Then you shouldn’t call me ‘sir’ anymore,” Wenren Zong looks at her sideways. “Call me by my name.”

“Alright, then... Thirteen.”

“The snow today is truly beautiful,” Wenren Zong looks out at the lake. “It’s the best snowfall so far this winter.”

“It is quite beautiful,” Jiang Ning agrees, nibbling on the fruit. “However, the banquet will begin shortly, and I should be there. Xiaoman, let’s go back and watch the performances..”

Chapter 208: Child Marriage

“Oh, time to watch the play!”

Xiaoman cheered, stuffing a handful of fruit into her mouth and getting up to leave with her.

Wenren Zong stood up and asked from behind, “Ningning, there’s a restaurant here with amazing bass. Would you like to try it another day?”

“Sure.”

Jiang Ning replied simply.

Wenren Zong revealed a smile.

Xiaoman tilted her head and said, “Miss will have fish with Master Wenren.”

“Bass is really delicious,”

Jiang Ning laughed.

She knew Wenren Zong was expressing his feelings to her.

Wenren Zong came from a noble background, was gentle, polite, intelligent, and progressive. Especially, he was just too tender and considerate.

He was so much better than Li Hongyuan.

Jiang Ning had no reason to dislike him.

She was not a conservative ancient person, so why would she refuse a pleasant date?

Upon returning to the banquet, the play had already begun.

Lin Zizi and Madam Wenren were sitting together, beckoning her to come over.

Jiang Yuan and Jiang Yan were each sitting among the young ladies.

Jiang Yuan’s temperament allowed her to blend in quite well, while Jiang Yan was more transparent but, being a daughter of the Jiang family, she wouldn’t be excluded and even made some friends.

Jiang Ning was pushed over by Xiaoman, and Lin Zizi pinched her face, complaining, “Look how cold your face is.”

Madam Wenren immediately ordered someone to bring a hand warmer and stuffed it into Jiang Ning's hands, "Girls should keep warm. Don't rely on your youth. It won't be comfortable when you're older."

"Thank you, Madam," Jiang Ning smiled.

"Ah, this child looks even more beautiful when she smiles," Madam Wenren said enviously, pulling Lin Zizi, "Back then, I said we should arrange a childhood engagement for them. But your family turned around and promised her to the Prince of Yu."

Was there really an arranged childhood engagement?

Lin Zizi laughed, "That was just a joke back then, nothing serious."

"You may not have taken it seriously, but I have been concerned about it,"

This matter, if it weren't for Jiang Ning's disappearance, would have been treated as a real issue.

It's a pity she went missing, so the whole thing faded away.

Nobody dared to mention it.

At this time, a noblewoman sitting nearby laughed, "Isn't it better to resume the engagement now that they are both unmarried? There's nothing stopping them."

Divorced women with a bad reputation were difficult to marry, but remarriage for divorced women was usually easier.

However, upon hearing this, Madam Wenren and Lin Zizi remained silent.

Lin Zizi may dote on her daughter, but she was not blind. She knew that her daughter's situation was not compatible with the clear and noble Thirteenth Young Master.

As for Madam Wenren, it was not because she was disgusted by Jiang Ning's marriage and childbirth, but she considered the relationship with the Prince of Yu's residence.

If they married Jiang Ning, the Wenren family's relationship with the Prince of Yu would get worse.

Moreover, her son's motives were not pure from the beginning, and she didn't want to complicate things.

Thus, they didn't want to talk about it.

Both sides fell silent, and they continued watching the play in silence.

After watching the play, eating at the banquet, it was time to disperse and return home.

Jiang Ning, anxious about the two little ones, hurried back after the banquet without waiting a moment longer.

Lin Zizi knew what was on her mind and didn't delay, leading her sisters back to the Jiang family residence.

Jiang Ning didn't even have time to change her clothes and went to see the children as soon as she returned.

The two children had just fallen asleep after eating, lying peacefully and sweetly on the small bed.

Jiang Ning kissed one and stroked the other, then finally felt satisfied and went back to change her clothes. Just as she finished changing, Jiang Yi came in, laughing and discussing their plans to open a restaurant together.

The siblings planned to go into business together.

Being an official couldn't earn much money; they had to do business..

Chapter 209: This King Isn't as Impatient as You

Jiang Ning was quite willing to spread her cooking skills far and wide.

After discussing for a long time, it was time for dinner. Jiang Ning personally cooked a few dishes, while Jiang Yi brought a jar of wine, saying he would have a drink with his sister.

As soon as the wine was poured, the old servant came to report that the Prince of Yu had arrived.

Jiang Yi frowned, "Why is he here again?"

"He's here to see his son and daughter, who can stop him?"

"He doesn't need to come every day, though." Jiang Yi glanced at his sister and laughed, "Looks like the Prince of Yu isn't here just for the wine, is he?"

"What do you mean?"

"He says he's entrusting the children to our family, but he keeps coming here every few days. Is it really just to see the kids?"

"What else?"

"I think his motives are not pure."

"Does Third Brother want to say that he's here for me?" Jiang Ning smiled.

“Why are you laughing? My Seventh Sister has a beauty that can topple cities. Even if he’s here for you, he won’t lose face.”

“How can I not see where he likes me?”

“So what do you think of him?”

“He’s not that great.” Jiang Ning picked up a wine cup, took a sip, and savored the rich taste on her lips and tongue. “I think Wenren Zong is a little better.” “Wenren Zong?” Jiang Yi raised an eyebrow. “When did you start to be interested in him?”

“Not really. It’s just that when it comes to people, having no comparisons means no harm.”

“That’s true. Honestly, compared to the Prince of Yu, I also think Wenren Thirteen is more suitable as a husband.” Jiang Yi laughed, “If Seventh Sister likes him, I’ll help you.”

“Third Brother, don’t bother with matchmaking.”

“Speaking of which, you almost had a prearranged marriage with Wenren Zong, and now it’s like rekindling a past relationship. Wenren Zong is so suitable, even though he’s not as handsome as the Prince of Yu, he’s still not bad. And his family background is self-explanatory, most importantly he’s gentle and courteous, and he’ll dote on his wife in the future. You see, the Prince of Yu has several concubines, but Wenren Zong doesn’t.”

Jiang Ning said, “Brother, did Wenren Zong give you any benefits for speaking so highly of him?”

“What are you talking about? Am I that kind of person? I wasn’t there when you were in the selection, otherwise, I would have never agreed. What’s the point of marrying the Prince of Yu and being part of his royal family? In my opinion, you should just marry Wenren Zong!”

“Who wants to marry Wenren Zong?”

The voice of the Prince of Yu came from outside the door.

The maid quickly lifted the curtain.

Li Hongyuan walked in expressionlessly.

Jiang Yi put down his wine glass, stood up and bowed, "Greetings to the Prince of Yu."

"Never mind that." The Prince of Yu went straight to the table and sat opposite Jiang Ning, "Just now, I accidentally overheard a few words."

Jiang Ning said, "The Prince holds a high position, yet he enjoys eavesdropping."

"Just a few days after the divorce, you're anxious to remarry?"

"It seems to have nothing to do with Your Highness. Your Highness can marry someone else right away."

"I'm not in a hurry like you."

"Well, after all, Your Highness doesn't lack women to serve him."

"Do you lack men to serve you?" Li Hongyuan's eyes narrowed slightly.

"I do miss that, actually."

"Ahem." Jiang Yi couldn't bear to listen anymore.

What kind of suggestive words were these?

These people who have been married and have children are really different.

He better not be here anymore.

"I suddenly remembered something. Well, Your Highness, Seventh Sister, you guys chat. I'll go first." He got up and left.

Jiang Ning leisurely drank from her wine glass, "The children are not here, they are in the side room sleeping.."

Chapter 210: Your Highness, Calm Down

"I'm a bit hungry now."

Li Hongyuan reached out to grab the wine pot and poured himself a cup.

"Your Highness really makes yourself at home."

"This is my children's grandparents' house. Why would I feel like an outsider?"

"...Fine, then eat."

"Did you cook all these dishes?" Li Hongyuan glanced at the few dishes on the table.

They certainly looked unique and he had never seen them before.

He suddenly remembered what his concubine mother had said.

Many people, including Emperor Father and Xiaoqian, had praised Jiang Ning's cooking skills, saying that even the Imperial Chef from the Imperial Kitchen couldn't match her taste.

It wasn't just the taste; her methods were entirely different.

Such highly acclaimed culinary skills, and as her husband, he had never tasted them.

From this, it could be seen that Jiang Ning was indeed full of disdain and disgust for him.

Li Hongyuan drank half a cup of wine in one breath, picked up his chopsticks, clipped a piece of bright red fish and put it in his mouth.

"What is this?" he asked.

"Squirrel fish."

"Squirrel?"

"Don't worry about the details; it's just a cooking method." Jiang Ning's cooking, while unremarkable in modern times, could be considered masterful in the eyes of these short-sighted ancient people.

From the moment he took his first bite, Li Hongyuan's chopsticks barely stopped.

He was not a greedy person, but rather, he had a bit of a defiant attitude.

His concubine mother said she couldn't eat Jiang Ning's dishes, so he insisted on eating them.

He even had a feast.

In the end, he not only finished the dishes on the table but also all the wine.

The wine was brought by Jiang Yi, a strong liquor with a powerful aftertaste.

Li Hongyuan's face was flushed, and he was clearly drunk and unable to walk.

The sky was already dark, and the wind and snow were strong and bone-chilling.

There was no way he could ride back on a horse in this state.

Jiang Ning called Xiaoman and two maids to help him to the front yard, where the housekeeper would arrange a guest room for him.

After making an elaborate feast, she hadn't eaten much herself.

Fortunately, every day, Lin Zizi would have the kitchen prepare Bird's Nest Porridge for her as a late-night nourishment.

After eating a bowl of porridge and checking on her children, Jiang Ning prepared for bed.

In the middle of the night, she vaguely sensed some movement outside.

Sitting up, she could faintly see a shadow.

Thinking of her children, Jiang Ning couldn't help but put on a coat, pick up her cane by the bedside, and slowly shuffle to the door, carefully opening it.

A gust of wind blew in.

A tall figure stumbled in.

Jiang Ning was startled and instinctively backed away, but was caught by the person.

“You—”

Her voice was muffled as her mouth was covered.

Hot lips pressed tightly against hers.

Intoxicating alcohol filled her nostrils.

Jiang Ning was shocked and furious, struggling against the man, her cane falling to the ground.

Unable to support herself, she was tightly embraced.

She couldn't exert any strength or make a sound; fear and anger intertwined in her heart.

The next moment, the man lifted her by her waist and placed her on the bed.

A low murmur reached her ear: “Jiang Ning, you damn woman...”

It was Li Hongyuan's voice!

Jiang Ning was surprised, but her fear subsided somewhat. She raised her hands to push him away:
“Your Highness, calm down!”

Li Hongyuan ignored her, pressing both her wrists above her head and kissing her deeply.

How could Jiang Ning's strength compare to his?

Huang Ying and Xiaoman were not around, and even if she wanted to scream, she couldn't. Her muffled cries of resistance were stifled by his mouth.

Though she had given birth, Jiang Ning had never really experienced such intimacy..