

Royal Marriage 241

Chapter 241: The Matter of Tearing Apart

“You’re just stupid beyond salvation. Do you think the Prince of Yu would risk his own wife’s and daughter’s lives to frame the Prince of Huai? Do you know how much he cares about his wife? For his wife, he publicly beat up Wenren Zong in the middle of the street. Don’t you know that?”

Concubine Xian was taken aback.

Thinking about it, that was indeed true.

The Prince of Yu personally sent his precious boy and girl twins to the Jiang Family and visited there frequently. Who couldn’t see his intentions?

As for the divorce, it was Lin Zizi who led her daughter and personally asked the Emperor.

The Emperor allowed it, but it wasn’t the Prince of Yu’s own intention.

That is to say, the Princess Consort of Yu didn’t want to be with the Prince of Yu anymore, but the Prince of Yu still couldn’t forget her deep love. Even after the divorce, he often lingered outside the Jiang residence.

Wenren Zong tried to flirt with the Princess Consort of Yu, and ended up being brutally beaten and seriously injured by the Prince of Yu on the spot.

That’s why the Prince of Yu was punished, locked up and forced to copy scriptures.

These were all well-known facts.

Can anyone say that a Prince of Yu, who values the Princess Consort of Yu so much, would send someone to assassinate the pregnant Princess Consort of Yu to frame someone?

Of course not.

“So, have you figured it out?” Concubine Jin said, “Concubine Xian, this is simply the poison of the King of Chen. If successful, he can not only get rid of the Princess Consort of Yu and her unborn child, but also frame the Prince of Huai. By removing two opponents at once, wouldn’t the Crown Prince’s position be his? Even if he can’t assassinate the Princess Consort of Yu successfully, he can still provoke animosity between the Prince of Yu and the Prince of Huai.”

Concubine Xian’s face changed, and she looked at Concubine Lan.

Concubine Lan hurriedly said, “Concubine Jin, don’t slander people! The King of Chen and the Prince of Huai have always had a close relationship and deep feelings. He wouldn’t harm the Prince of Huai.”

Concubine Jin laughed, “Whether it’s true or not, Concubine Xian, judge for yourself. If you’re not completely stupid, you should know who’s telling the truth. Now that the Prince of Yu is in trouble too, don’t you see who the last winner could be?”

Concubine Xian’s face turned dark and she fiercely slapped Concubine Lan.

“You vile servant!”

Concubine Lan stumbled back to Concubine Jin.

Concubine Jin raised her foot—

Concubine Lan fell heavily into the snow without a doubt.

She was furious and jumped up, shouting, “How dare you hit me?”

"I'm one of the Four Consorts, and you're just a concubine. Why can't I hit you?" Concubine Xian pointed at her, "When you usually followed me, you were so sweet and affectionate. I treated you sincerely, but you and your son harbored evil intentions, calculating like this! Come on, beat her!"

A group of eunuchs and palace maids surrounded her, ready to beat Concubine Lan.

Concubine Lan wouldn't just let them capture her. She struggled and shouted, "Who dares to touch me! Concubine Xian, don't forget that your son is still in jail. If you dare to beat me, I'll report it to the Emperor. Think about the consequences!"

Concubine Xian rushed over and slapped her again, "I'll hit you anyway!"

Concubine Lan cursed at the servants, "You're all dead, aren't you? Hurry up and report to the Emperor!"

It was chaos.

Meanwhile, the instigator who started all this was walking away leisurely, holding a plum blossom.

News of Concubine Xian and Concubine Lan's quarrel soon reached the Emperor's ears.

The two of them, with disheveled hair, knelt before the Emperor.

Concubine Xian tearfully accused her son of being framed and pleaded for the Emperor's justice.

Concubine Lan, with a swollen face, cried bitter tears, claiming her innocence.

The Emperor was annoyed to look at them.

After sending them away, he hesitated for a while before going to the Splendid Palace.

Ever since their last quarrel because of Lin Zizi, this was the first time he had been back..

Chapter 242 I Also Feel Pain for Our Son

She originally thought that after the Prince of Yu was punished, she would come to plead for him. Who would have thought that she wouldn't even show her face?

In the end, he had to take the initiative to go to her.

Concubine Jin was leisurely reading a book.

Seeing her lazy and charming appearance, the Emperor stepped forward: "Zhuzhu, I came to see you."

Concubine Jin picked up a melon seed and cracked it open, ignoring him.

"Zhuzhu, I'll help you peel melon seeds." The Emperor sat down on a small stool across from her, picked up a melon seed, and peeled it open. He took out the kernel and brought it to her mouth.

Concubine Jin looked at him: "Your Majesty has free time today."

"I was driven crazy by the quarrel between Concubine Xian and Concubine Lan. Your place is so much quieter and more comfortable."

"Aren't you afraid that I will plead with you to release the Prince of Yu?"

"You wouldn't do that." The Emperor laughed. "Whenever I go to see Concubine Xian and the rest, they always ask for this or that. Only you, Zhuzhu, never ask me for anything. That's why I want to give you all the good things."

Both of them had given birth to princes, but Concubine Lan remained a concubine while Jin Zhuzhu had become a noble concubine.

This affection, from the moment she entered the palace to the present, had not diminished in the slightest.

No matter how many young and tender concubines entered the harem, none of them could take away even the slightest bit of Concubine Jin's favor.

Concubine Jin stretched out her slender finger and said, "The quarrel between Concubine Xian and Concubine Lan was instigated by me."

"Really? You did a good job at stirring them up."

"Today, I went to see the Prince of Yu. I sent him some quilts and charcoal for warmth."

"That was thoughtful of you." The Emperor sighed. "I also feel sorry for our son, but since I punished him, it's not appropriate for me to send him anything. Luckily, you care for our son."

"Just for punching Wenren Zong, you punished him so severely. If one didn't know better, they might think Wenren Zong was your son instead."

"How is that possible?"

"If your daughter-in-law was coveted by others, wouldn't you be angry?"

"I would be angry. However, Jiang Ning is no longer the Prince of Yu's wife..."

"Hehe, do you not know the reason why they divorced, Your Majesty? You broke up your son's marriage just for the woman you like. And you still have the nerve to punish him. The Prince of Yu sent both children to the Jiang Family, and he is locked in the palace now. Don't you think the children feel wronged?"

“Sigh, I don’t want to punish him either, but if I don’t, how can I pacify everyone’s anger and establish him as the Crown Prince?”

“Can he still become the Crown Prince?”

“He must be able to! Zhuzhu, rest assured, the position of Crown Prince must be our son’s.”

“What about Jiang Ning?”

“That depends on the Prince of Yu himself.” The Emperor smiled. “I knew the Prince of Yu would definitely like that Jiang girl. She’s... really something.”

Concubine Jin rolled her eyes.

The more the Emperor doted on her, the more he liked Jiang Ning, which proved his lingering feelings for Lin Zizi.

In a few days, it would be the New Year.

Li Hongyuan spent this year alone in the Hall of Virtue.

Other than the eunuch who brought food, only Li Tingqian came to see him.

Li Tingqian held a food box with steaming dumplings inside.

“Fifth Imperial Uncle, are you cold? Are you hungry? Have some dumplings.” Li Tingqian, wrapped in a thick cotton coat, brought the dumplings in front of Li Hongyuan.

Li Hongyuan smiled: “Xiaoqian, it’s hard on you to worry about me.”

"Fifth Imperial Uncle, I went to the Jiang Mansion today."

"Tell me about it."

"A few days ago, Wenren Zong left the Prime Minister's Mansion and went home."

"Did they announce any marriage?"

"No. My aunt rejected the Wenren Family!" Li Tingqian looked very happy. "During these days, my aunt hasn't left the Jiang Family or met with Wenren Zong again. They must have broken up.."

Chapter 243 - She Really is a Ruthless Woman

Li Hongyuan listened to Xiaoqian, opened the food box, took a dumpling, and took a bite.

"Have you heard anything else?"

"I also saw my little brother and sister. My sister is really pretty, just as pretty as Auntie." Li Tingqian squatted on the ground, cupping his chubby cheeks, "Yesterday, Auntie put on a red dress, it was the first time I saw her in red. She looked more beautiful than the red plum blossoms outside the door."

Li Hongyuan bit his dumpling and looked at the red plum blossom at the door, imagining Jiang Ning in a red skirt.

She was usually seen wearing a white skirt, lazily sitting and napping in a wheelchair.

He couldn't imagine what she would look like when she was completely serious.

With that thought, Li Hongyuan suddenly recalled one morning when he woke up and found himself, under the influence of intoxication, taking advantage of Jiang Ning. She was naked, nestled in his arms and sleeping soundly.

Her soft, warm skin, the sweet expression on her sleeping face.

Other than shock, his initial thought at that time was to take her again...

However, she woke up quickly, forcing him to pretend to be asleep.

Who would have expected her to be so ruthless and tried to kill him with an object, right on the spot.

If not for him waking up early, he would have been battered and bruised by her attack.

However, what remained in his memory at this time was not her rage when she woke up, but the scene of her lifting the cup to hit him and exposing her body when the cup slipped...

Li Hongyuan took a deep breath, suppressing the impure thoughts that emerged within him.

"Fifth Imperial Uncle, are you feeling uncomfortable?" Li Tingqian squatted in front of him, tilting his head to look at him.

"No."

"Then why is your face red?" Li Tingqian blinked his eyes.

"It's nothing, it's cold in the room, that's why."

"It's not cold, there's a brazier, isn't there?" said Li Tingqian, full of curiosity.

"...Why do children always have so many questions?" Li Hongyuan put down his chopsticks, "What else did you see?"

Li Tingqian shook his head, "Nothing else. However, Fifth Imperial Uncle, will my little brother and sister stay in Jiang's house forever? Will they never come back?"

"Who told you that?"

"I heard the maids in Auntie's room talking about it. They were whispering that since Prince Yu won't be made the Crown Prince, the young master and young lady won't need to go into the palace."

Li Hongyuan laughed coldly.

This woman, he had underestimated her.

She used Wenren Zong to provoke him, letting Emperor Father lock him up, then resolutely kicked Wenren Zong out of the Jiang Family.

What a ruthless woman.

"...Fifth Imperial Uncle, are you angry?" Li Tingqian asked in a low voice.

"Of course not, Fifth Imperial Uncle is happy."

"Happy about what?"

"Happy that your Auntie is a formidable woman." Li Hongyuan patted his head, looking out at the red plum blossoms with profound eyes.

Late at night.

Every family was keeping vigil.

Jiang Ning hugged the heater, letting Huang Ying push her to the living quarters to check on the two children.

They were sleeping side by side on the bed, warm and sound.

Jiang Ning touched Lingzi's forehead, then kissed each of the children's cheeks.

Huang Ying whispered, "It's past midnight now, Miss should also go to sleep, you need to get up early tomorrow."

Jiang Ning: "Alright."

Huang Ying pushed her back to the room, she got up from the wheelchair and sat on the edge of the bed.

Huang Ying called Chunlai and Xiachu to help her change clothes, undo her hairstyle, and remove her jewelry.

After Jiang Ning lay down, she told them to go to sleep as well. Huang Ying left Chunlai to keep watch.

Apart from Li Hongyuan and Jiang Ning, the only one who knew the truth about that incident was Huang Ying.

The rest of the maids, even Chunlai, were oblivious..

Chapter 244 - Don't Touch Me!

Ever since that incident, despite Jiang Ning never requesting it, Huang Ying still arranged for a maid to keep vigil on a small bed outside every day.

Today, it was Xiachu's turn.

Among several maids, Xiachu was lively and had a shallow sleep. She would wake up at any slight movement.

Huang Ying felt most at ease having her on duty.

After lying down, Jiang Ning turned off the lights, closed her eyes, and quickly fell asleep.

She did not know when, but she suddenly woke up.

She opened her eyes and found it was still very dark outside.

The day had not yet broken, and all was quiet.

She closed her eyes again, wanting to sleep a bit more, but for some reason, she couldn't fall asleep and felt a sense of uneasiness.

She called out for Xiachu.

Xiachu responded groggily, her voice heavy with sleep.

Jiang Ning then put on a jacket, reached for her cane by the bed, and limped out of the room.

She looked over towards the room where her children were sleeping and noticed a faint light there.

Jiang Ning's eyebrows wrinkled.

She had already told the wet nurse not to leave the light on at night as it wasn't good for the children.

Why didn't she listen?

Jiang Ning was a bit angry, and supported herself with her cane to walk over, pushed the door open, but was met with a scene that horrified her.

She saw a towering figure sitting in front of her children's small bed.

"You – " Before she could scream, the man turned his head and in the faint light, revealed an exceptionally handsome face.

It was Li Hongyuan.

Jiang Ning was even more shocked, "You, why are you here?"

It seemed that Li Hongyuan hadn't expected her to suddenly appear.

After the initial surprise, he quickly calmed down, stood up, and said, "Did you honestly think that the guards of the Hall of Virtue could stop me?"

"I don't care if they can stop you or not, I want to know why you're here!"

"I was thinking of Wenzan and Lingzi."

"Even so, you can't just sneak in here like a thief in the middle of the night! Are you a thief?" Jiang Ning seemed on the verge of collapsing.

Why does this man persistently haunt her?

Seeing her in such a state, Li Hongyuan appeared even more relaxed, "I am under arrest. Do you think I can freely stroll out in broad daylight? As a mother, don't you understand the feeling of missing one's children?" "Sneaking out isn't defying the Emperor's orders?"

“You said it yourself, I ‘sneaked out’. Naturally, the Emperor Father doesn’t know.”

“You—” Jiang Ning leaned against the door frame, raising her cane, “Get back to your prison cell quickly, don’t implicate me and the children!”

“Implicate you?” Li Hongyuan laughed, “Originally, I just wanted to take a glance at the children and leave. But now that you’re here, it’s convenient for us to settle some accounts.”

“What account can I possibly have to settle with you.”

“Oh, why don’t you tell me how you used Wenren Zong to harm your children’s father.”

Li Hongyuan walked up to her, reaching out his hand—

Jiang Ning quickly stepped aside, “Don’t touch me!”

Li Hongyuan gave her a look, and closed the door.

Jiang Ning:”...”

“You’re overthinking things.” Li Hongyuan walked back to the bed, “Come over and talk.”

Jiang Ning looked at the small bed, the twin boy and girl were fast asleep, showing no signs of waking up.

As for the wet nurse and maids who were attending them, they were all lying in the corner of the room.

Jiang Ning raised her hand, “They—”

“They’re fine, just temporarily unconscious.”

“You didn’t do the same to Wenzan and the others...”

“Do you really think I’m mad enough to drug my own flesh and blood?” Li Hongyuan coldly interrupted her, “Do you think I’m cruel enough to harm my own children? Besides, they’re so small, even if they hear what we’re saying, it doesn’t matter..”

Chapter 245 - A Beauty Bringing Disaster?

Jiang Ning felt slightly relieved and, leaning on her crutch, slowly moved to the chair opposite him.

Li Hongyuan watched her movements.

She walked very slowly and carefully, seemingly afraid of falling.

Her leg...

If not mistaken, was it the right leg?

Her leg, which he had seen that day, didn’t look much different from her normal left leg, slender and straight, very beautiful. He wondered why it couldn’t be healed.

He patiently waited until she finally sat down.

Jiang Ning placed the crutch to the side, exhaled gently, and beads of sweat trickled down her nose.

It was only a short distance, but it was difficult for her to walk.

Thinking about the difficulties she faced in her daily life, Li Hongyuan’s heart softened a bit.

“Your leg... I’ll have Dong Chaofeng take a look at it another day.”

“I’ve already seen him.” Jiang Ning took out a handkerchief, wiped her sweat, and her face was slightly flushed.

From such close range, her porcelain-like face was incredibly delicate.

There wasn’t a single flaw on her smooth, white face.

Her eyes were the most beautiful part of her face, with long, thick eyelashes, and eyes shining like stars.

She put down the handkerchief, “The Imperial Physician said that it has been too long since the injury. Unless...”

“Unless what?”

“Unless the leg bone is broken again and allowed to regrow. But it’s hard to grasp the right degree for this. If not careful, it could make the injury worse, and there will be no hope for this leg.”

Li Hongyuan felt a chill in his heart.

“For now, let it be. I’m almost used to it anyway.” Jiang Ning looked up at him, “What did you want to tell me? Finish up and go back soon. If it’s found out you left your confinement without permission, it’ll be troublesome.”

“Are you worried about this prince?”

“I’m worried about you implicating me.”

“You truly are a heartless and ruthless woman.” Li Hongyuan sneered, “I want to know why you used Wenren Zong to harm me.”

“Who says I’m using Wenren Zong? I’m just a disabled woman without that kind of ability. Wenren Zong is so smart, how could he be used by me? This is a complete joke.”

Li Hongyuan stared into her eyes.

This woman was lazy and her words were a mix of truth and falsehood.

She was simply unfathomable.

“Do you really hate me that much? Wanting to hinder my future?” he asked.

“Your Highness thinks too much. I really don’t have that capability.”

“If I can’t become the Crown Prince, then you can continue to raise the two children, right?”

“With your generous heart, Your Highness, even if you become the Crown Prince, you still won’t have the heart to separate the three of us, mother and children. Right?” Jiang Ning showed him a smile.

The room instantly brightened.

Li Hongyuan was slightly stunned.

In his memory, it seemed that she had never smiled at him like this.

So, her smile was actually this beautiful.

For such a smile, he suddenly lost the interest to investigate whether she had plotted against him or not.

Was this what they called a femme fatale?

Such a beautiful face, no wonder Emperor Father couldn't let go of Lin Zizi after all these years.

He shifted his gaze to the two children on the small bed.

"Are you done talking? If so, go back." Jiang Ning urged him, "By running out like this, you're committing a grave sin of disobeying the Imperial Edict. Your reputation in the Imperial Court is already bad enough. If you don't properly accept your punishment, you can forget about becoming the Crown Prince!"

Li Hongyuan looked at her: "You schemed to confine me. Now that I'm going against the edict, if it's discovered, won't it be even more to your advantage? Why would you urge me to leave?"

Jiang Ning replied, "You are ungrateful. If you dare, don't go back tonight!"

"Do you think this prince wouldn't dare?"

Chapter 246 - If I Didn't Like You

"You are the Prince of Yu, of course you dare. So, stay here tonight and see what will happen when the palace finds out you are not there tomorrow. I'm looking forward to it!"

Jiang Ning stood up, reaching for the crutch.

But she couldn't move it.

Looking down, she found that damned Li Hongyuan had a foot on the crutch.

"What are you doing?"

“As a prince, my word is my bond. I said I won’t leave, so I’m not leaving tonight. In that case, shouldn’t you stay with me too?”

“I want to go back to sleep.” Jiang Ning frowned, “Move your foot.”

Li Hongyuan lifted his foot.

Jiang Ning glared at him, grabbed the crutch, and turned to leave. As she reached the door, she reminded him, “If you want to stay, just stay. I don’t care about the rest, just don’t disturb the children’s sleep. It’s hard enough for them to have a good night’s sleep these days.”

Li Hongyuan followed her to the door.

Jiang Ning leaned on the door, pushed it open, and carefully stepped outside.

Li Hongyuan said from behind, “It’s snowing again.”

Jiang Ning looked up.

Sure enough, there were tiny snowflakes falling, the ground covered with a thin layer of snow.

She inhaled a cold breath, slightly boosting her spirits, and headed for the main room.

After taking a few steps, her foot slipped.

Li Hongyuan quickly reached out to support her arm.

Jiang Ning looked back at him, “Let go.”

“No appreciation for kindness.” Li Hongyuan withdrew his hand and said softly, “With your bad legs, you still run around everywhere. Be careful, or you’ll fall and cry again.”

“Don’t worry, even if I do cry, it won’t be for you to see.”

“Haven’t you cried enough in front of me? I finally understand now – all those tears were fake! Did you also use tears to deceive Wenren Zong?”

“What’s it to you? Mind your own business,” Jiang Ning didn’t look back, irritated by his mocking words. All she wanted was to get back to her room quickly.

The ground was slippery from the snow, and she hurried, finally causing her to fall onto the ground.

Li Hongyuan watched her for a moment.

She fell pretty hard, unable to get up for a while.

Unable to bear it any longer, Li Hongyuan strode forward and scooped her up, heading for her bedroom.

“Put me down!” Jiang Ning yelled.

“Shut up!” Li Hongyuan said coldly, “If you don’t want everyone to know I am here, keep your mouth shut and be quiet!”

Jiang Ning didn’t speak anymore.

Li Hongyuan carried her to the bedroom. Hearing the commotion, Xiachu tried to get up to check, but he quickly knocked her unconscious with a concealed weapon.

“You—”

“That was the mildest way.” Li Hongyuan cut her off, “If I didn’t like you, do you think I’d go to all this trouble to sneak out of the palace and knock out all the servants here? Do you think I have nothing better to do?”

Jiang Ning looked at him in surprise.

He placed her on the bed, saying coldly, “What are you looking at? You were so clever when you were calculating Wenren Zong and me. After all this time, don’t you know why I keep coming to the Jiang family home?”

Jiang Ning didn’t say anything.

Li Hongyuan asked, “Where exactly did you hurt when you fell just now? Where is it painful?”

“Nowhere. You can go now.”

“Is it your arm?” He had seen her fall, her arm hitting the ground first.

“I told you it’s not. Are you leaving or not?” Jiang Ning was getting impatient.

Li Hongyuan looked at her, squatting in front of her, lifting her arm and rolling up the sleeve.

As expected, it was slightly scraped.

“Where’s the medicine?”

“I don’t have any!” Jiang Ning pulled her hand back, frowning, “It’s just a small scrape. I don’t care about it. What’s with you? Hurry up and leave! It was just a joke earlier, go back to the palace as soon as possible..”

Chapter 247 - Not Letting Go

Li Hongyuan said, "Even if you leave, let me apply some medicine for you first."

"I'll have someone else help me."

"They won't wake up anytime soon."

"I don't need your help!" Jiang Ning raised her foot to kick him, "Didn't I say last time that I never want to see you again? You still insist on coming and being annoying. Do you know that I really hate you and don't want to see you at all?"

She kicked him in the knee.

It hurt a lot.

Li Hongyuan frowned, wanting to get angry, but when he saw her injured arm, he endured it.

He didn't say anything, went to the Treasure Pavilion, found a bottle of wound medicine, and forcefully grabbed her arm to apply it.

Jiang Ning just stared at him coldly.

Li Hongyuan said, "In my entire life, I've only been slapped and beaten by you."

Jiang Ning didn't speak.

Li Hongyuan continued, "You've seen what happened to Ms. Zhao. I've also thought about why you dare to treat me this way, and why I still keep you and think about you. I finally realized it's because I like you."

He looked into her eyes, "Jiang Ning, if I've ever expressed my feelings for you in the wrong way, then I apologize."

Jiang Ning looked away, "There's no need for that, Your Highness. You are the Prince of Yu, and I'm just an ordinary person. I can't handle your affection."

"Since I'm sure that I like you, I won't deny it. I took the risk to come here tonight because I missed you and wanted to see you. It's not because I wanted to see the children."

"You're such a great father."

"Jiang Ning, can you forgive me?" Li Hongyuan held her hand.

Jiang Ning shook him off, "But I really don't like you and don't want to see you. If you really care about me, let me live a peaceful life with the children without any disturbance. That'd be the best thing for me."

"Why?"

"To like someone, one doesn't need a reason. The same goes for disliking someone. I just don't like you. Just like you disliked me back then."

"At that time, I didn't really dislike you, I just hated having to go against my own wishes."

"How ridiculous." Jiang Ning sneered.

Who forced him?

Wasn't it because he wanted to become the Crown Prince, gain the Emperor's favor, and marry her?

Now he suddenly denies it, such thick-skinned.

Jiang Ning said, "I'm going to sleep. Can you leave now?"

"I'm not leaving."

"You—" Jiang Ning flipped over her pillow, grabbed a pair of scissors, and pointed them at him. "If you dare to treat me like last time, I'll stab you to death."

Li Hongyuan raised an eyebrow, "You hide scissors under your pillow?"

"To deal with shameless thieves like you!"

"Last time, I was drunk and didn't mean to take advantage of you or mistreat you." Li Hongyuan looked at her wariness and coldness, feeling somewhat regretful.

Although he enjoyed that night and had thought of it many times, he regretted causing her shock and harm.

Jiang Ning said, "When you're drunk and want to find a woman, you can go back to your concubines. They must be looking forward to serving you. Why bother with me, a disabled person?"

"Do you really want me to go find them?"

"You can find anyone you want, just don't bother me."

Li Hongyuan moved closer, grabbed the back of her head, and said softly, "Jiang Ning, the first time I ever liked a woman in my life, I won't let go no matter what. I must become the Crown Prince and then marry you as my Princess Consort."

He lifted her chin and kissed her..

Chapter 248 - The King Really Wants to Stay

Jiang Ning raised her hand to slap him, but he grasped her wrist.

“Do you think you could hit me if I don’t want you to?” Li Hongyuan took her by surprise and kissed her.

Jiang Ning, infuriated, attempted to kick him, but he easily restrained her.

He pinned her down on the bed,

Jiang Ning bit down hard on his lips.

Feeling the pain, Li Hongyuan pulled back, touching his lips.

Blood.

She had bitten him.

Li Hongyuan bent down and gave her another harsh kiss. He then released her and stood up.

Jiang Ning’s lips were smeared with blood.

A stunning, shocking sight.

She glared furiously at him.

“Scoundrel!”

She cursed him, raising the pair of scissors in her hand to stab him-

Li Hongyuan's eyes flickered and he immobilized her by pressing a point on her body, rendering her unable to move.

Jiang Ning's hand remained suspended midair.

Li Hongyuan gently took the scissors from her hand, whispering, "Such a beauty, you shouldn't be talking about fighting and killing all the time. It ruins the scenery."

Jiang Ning glared at him, her eyes practically blazing with fury.

Unfortunately, all she could do was express her anger through her eyes; she couldn't even move a finger.

Li Hongyuan took out a silk handkerchief, sat next to her and carefully wiped the blood from her lips.

She was only wearing a simple dress, with a cloak thrown over it when she went out.

Li Hongyuan took off her cloak, picked her up, and tucked her into the quilt.

"You will be able to move freely in half an hour. You'll be fine," he said.

Jiang Ning closed her eyes, refusing to look at him.

Li Hongyuan looked at her, "Although I would love to stay, but... never mind."

He turned around and left.

Jiang Ning watched the door, ensuring he had truly left. She finally took a sigh of relief.

Although the burning sensation on her lips reminded her of his bullying, he...

Didn't take advantage of the situation and did something else, he was...

Disgusting.

Jiang Ning interrupted her thoughts.

What a scoundrel, just because he didn't violate her, it didn't mean he was any better.

Unable to move, Jiang Ning fell asleep unknowingly.

When she woke up and turned over, she realized she was free to move.

She sat up and saw the sky was already bright outside.

Just like Li Hongyuan said, although she was immobilized for half an hour, she didn't feel anything uncomfortable after waking up.

Right then, Huang Ying walked in with a furrowed brow.

"What's wrong?" asked Jiang Ning.

"I probably didn't sleep well last night. I woke up with a headache." She touched her forehead, "What's strange is that Chunlai and the others also have a headache. Did we stay up too late last night?"

Jiang Ning knew in her heart that it was Li Hongyuan's doing.

"Is it severe? Should we call the doctor?"

"There's no need. I am not that weak. I am just a bit dizzy, and it will pass," laughed Huang Ying as she approached. "Miss, you are awake. You all come in to serve."

Chunlai and the other maids hurriedly came in to assist her in dressing and combing her hair.

As soon as they finished, Jiang Yi rushed in. He came in, grabbed a teacup from the table, and drank it all at once.

Jiang Ning laughed, "Doesn't Third Brother have tea in his house?"

"No, I just came back from outside." Jiang Yi sat down to catch his breath, "Something has happened."

"Who's in trouble?"

"In the palace, the Prince of Yu."

"Prince of Yu?" Jiang Ning's heart skipped a beat, "Isn't he under house arrest? What could possibly happen to him?"

"It's exactly because of his house arrest. The Hall of Virtue has caught fire!"

Catching fire, means it's set aflame.

Jiang Ning was astonished, anxiously asking, "What about Prince of Yu..."

After a pause, she softened her tone and asked, "He should be alright, shouldn't he?"

Chapter 249 - Accident

Jiang Yi shook his head: "He's locked in there. How could he be fine?"

"So how is he now?"

"He was unconscious when he was rescued, and he hasn't woken up yet." Jiang Yi frowned. "It should have been just before dawn, when people are in their deepest sleep, that the fire was set. The Emperor is furious and investigating."

Jiang Ning thought about last night. He had already left the Hall of Virtue, but she forced him to go back.

If she hadn't driven him away last night, maybe he wouldn't have had an accident.

Jiang Ning frowned.

Jiang Yuan looked at her. "Seventh Sister, are you worried about the Prince of Yu?"

"No, I just don't understand who would dare to set a fire in the palace."

"Isn't it just those few people..." Jiang Yi said quietly, "The heir will be established after the new year. Who would benefit most from eliminating the Prince of Yu? Just think about it."

The Prince of Huai was locked up in jail, leaving only the King of Chen and the Prince of Wei.

The Prince of Wei was ignorant and incompetent, not favored by the Emperor.

He himself had no ambition, just wanting to be a leisurely wealthy prince.

It was basically impossible for him.

So that leaves only the King of Chen.

In the court, the Prince of Yu's biggest opponent was the King of Chen, who had the most power.

But the Jiang family didn't think it was likely the King of Chen.

"Third Brother, think about it. Even we can suspect the King of Chen, wouldn't the Emperor think so too? If the King of Chen were really so stupid, he wouldn't have the ability to compete with the Prince of Yu for so long."

"Your thoughts are the same as Father's, but there is no one else besides King Chen."

"Doesn't the Prince of Huai also have ambition?"

"But he's locked up."

"You don't think that the King of Chen actually went and set the fire himself with firewood, do you?"

Jiang Yi laughed, "That's not what I meant... The Prince of Huai is locked in jail, even if he had the heart, he wouldn't be able to plan."

Jiang Ning was not convinced.

Li Hongyuan was locked in the Hall of Virtue, with Imperial Guards guarding the entrance, yet he was able to sneak out. Could the Prince of Huai really be obediently staying in jail?

After all, they were princes.

Jiang Yi stood up and said, "The palace is in chaos right now. The Hall of Virtue has been burned down, the Prince of Yu is unconscious, and no one knows the situation. Father is still in the palace. I'll go and find out more."

He looked outside and sighed, "Since early morning, my eyelids have been twitching, and I always feel that something big is going to happen."

"Third Brother, be careful," Jiang Ning warned.

"Don't worry. I'm just going to take a look. No matter what, the Prince of Yu is my nephew's biological father. Compared to the King of Chen, our Jiang family is closer to the Prince of Yu."

Jiang Ning nodded her head, watching him leave.

The faint sound of children crying came.

Huang Ying frowned, "It seems like the little Young Master and little Miss are crying."

Chunlai said, "The wet nurses and maids sent by the Prince of Yu Mansion are getting more and more arrogant, letting the children cry without care. I'll go scold them."

Jiang Ning said, "What child doesn't cry? I'll go see."

Huang Ying hurried over to help her sit in the wheelchair and pushed her over.

It was indeed the little boy and girl twins who were crying.

The wet nurse was holding them and trying to soothe them, her forehead covered in sweat.

"What's going on with you all? You're making the little master and the little lady cry early in the morning." Xiachu scolded them, "If you made the little master and the little lady cry until they're sick, you'll suffer the consequences!"

The wet nurse hurriedly said, "The Princess Consort, please forgive us. We don't know what happened today. The little master and the little lady just won't stop crying... It's never been like this before."

Jiang Ning's heart stirred slightly.

Could these two little children already sense that something had happened to their father?

Chapter 250 - Panic

Jiang Ning picked up Lingzi, kissing her soft cheeks and comforting her.

After Lingzi quieted down, she held Wenzan.

Although they stopped crying, the two children were still restless, unable to be put down, or else they would fuss.

Fortunately, there were many servants and wet nurses in the room, so they took turns holding them, not feeling too tired.

Jiang Ning returned to the room, let Chunlai prepare paper and pen, and continued to write the recipes. She had already written a small stack, all in preparation for opening a restaurant.

Usually, as long as she started writing recipes, she would become very calm.

But today, she just couldn't settle down.

She would become distracted after writing a few characters.

Jiang Yi didn't return until noon.

He came straight to Jiang Ning and said that the Prince of Yu had woken up, but had been choked by smoke and burned his arm; he would need some time to recover.

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“Did they find out anything?” Jiang Ning asked.

“No. The emperor has issued several fires. The Imperial Guards guarding the Hall of Virtue have all been imprisoned and interrogated, and have been tortured all morning, but nothing has been found out.” Jiang Yi laughed, “Fortunately, the Prince of Yu is not seriously injured.”

“Where is the Prince of Yu?”

“He has been sent back to his palace to rest. With such a condition, the three-month confinement is over, and there is no penalty. His hands can’t write or copy scriptures either.”

Jiang Ning nodded.

Jiang Yi continued, “Father asked me to prepare some things to send to the Prince of Yu’s palace. Do you have anything you want to bring or say to the Prince of Yu?”

“No,” Jiang Ning said coldly.

Jiang Yi was taken aback, then laughed, “Although you two have divorced, it was an amicable parting, but now you seem like enemies.”

He understood his sister’s situation.

If they were truly happy together, she wouldn’t have chosen to divorce.

It wasn’t appropriate for others to speculate about what had happened between them.

But he felt that deep down, Seventh Sister still cared about the Prince of Yu.

He rushed to share the news upon arriving, clearly noticing the concern in her eyes.

Jiang Yi didn't expose her concerns, just stood up and said he would take care of the preparations and left.

Jiang Ning picked up her teacup, took a sip of tea, and continued to write her recipes.

After the new year, the weather gradually warmed up.

Jiang Yi would come to Jiang Ning every day to report on the Prince of Yu's condition.

He didn't care if Jiang Ning wanted to listen or not, he just said his piece and left.

Jiang Ning initially showed impatience, but later got used to it, doing her own thing and letting him say whatever he wanted.

The Prince of Yu was getting better day by day.

But one day, Jiang Yi did not come to report on the Prince of Yu's condition.

He usually came in the early evening, but today it was already dark, and he still hadn't shown up.

Not only him, but Jiang Ruobai also didn't return.

Even Lin Zizi was somewhat uneasy, staying with her daughter while sending the housekeeper to inquire about the situation.

As a result, the housekeeper didn't return either.

The atmosphere suddenly became tense.

Nobody knew what had happened.

At the same time, a large number of guards suddenly appeared in Chang'an City, cordoning off the residences of major officials and nobles.

The Master of the Jiang family was far away in the northwest, and only the Lady and First Brother were left to manage the household. Since First Brother was still young and panicky in this situation, he took his mother and siblings to hide in the second residence of the Jiang family.

"Has Second Master not returned yet? What's going on?" The Lady was frantic.

The siblings in the room all had solemn expressions.

With her red-rimmed eyes, Jiang Yan, the most timid and frightened, leaned against Aunt Bai, sobbing softly.

Among the women and children in the room, only Lin Zizi and Jiang Ning could make decisions.

Lin Zizi said, "We don't know what's happening outside, so for now, we can only guard our home and hope nothing goes wrong.."