

Royal Marriage 81

Chapter 81: Making You Die Twice

Could it be that he's grown so disgusted with her that he doesn't even want their child anymore?

Jiang Ning didn't expect this.

She said, "If you dare to force me to abort this child, your father won't let you off."

The Emperor was still quite eager to have more grandsons.

However, Li Hongyuan just sneered even more after hearing this, "I just don't believe that Father Emperor would do anything to me because of an unborn child. What can you do even if I force you?"

Jiang Ning fell silent.

It seemed like he wasn't joking.

The Prince of Yu looked so elegant and poised on the outside, but was actually cold-blooded and ruthless deep down.

He was truly capable of anything.

Now Jiang Ning could feel the movements of the baby in her belly every day, and she had already grown attached to the child. How could she willingly abort.

She lowered her head and whispered, "Can we discuss this when we get home?" "You dared to hide the news of your pregnancy and marry into the family, shaming me greatly. Very good. I really

underestimated your courage,” Li Hongyuan coldly responded, “Once we get home, I’ll have someone send medicine to your room. Drink it obediently, and act as if nothing happened. I can keep you in the mansion like a pet. Otherwise, don’t blame me for being ruthless and causing the death of both you and the baby.”

Jiang Ning said nothing.

Li Hongyuan no longer looked at her. He jumped out of the carriage and returned to his horse.

Jiang Ning lifted the curtain and waved to Huang Ying, who was following by the carriage, “Come here.”

Huang Ying had the coachman stop, and she climbed into the carriage, smiling, “Princess Consort, what do you need? Why don’t you talk more to the Prince?”

“We’ve finished talking.”

Jiang Ning thought, if they continued talking, it would indeed end with a double death.

She said, “I suddenly feel hungry.”

“I brought some refreshments.”

“I don’t want refreshments. I want the dumplings over there.” Jiang Ning pointed to a dumpling stall not far away at the street corner.

Huang Ying laughed, “I’ll go and buy some.”

“No, I want to go down and eat.”

“Let me tell the Prince first.”

Huang Ying went to inform Li Hongyuan, who appeared indifferent and displeased.

However, he didn't object to her eating.

Jiang Ning went to the dumpling stall in a wheelchair. The waiter brought two bowls of dumplings, and Jiang Ning gave him a piece of silver. The waiter hurriedly said, "This is too much; I don't have change for it."

The dumplings were only five coins per bowl, while this piece of silver was worth four or five taels.

Jiang Ning said, "I'm tired now. Young man, help me send a message, and consider this extra money a reward for your trouble."

The waiter quickly offered a smile, "What message do you want me to send, madam?"

"Go to the Prince of Yu's Mansion and send a message to my maid."

Just by delivering a message, the waiter would earn so much money. He was overjoyed and immediately left.

Jiang Ning leisurely ate her dumplings.

At that moment, a bright and youthful voice said, "Are you Little Ning?"

Jiang Ning followed the voice to its owner.

It was a young man in simple blue clothes, with refined features and dressed like a scholar.

He looked to be around sixteen or seventeen.

He had just gotten out of a carriage and was waving to Jiang Ning.

Jiang Ning vaguely remembered him.

His name was He Tang, and he was from a poor family in Chang'an City. He lived not far from Jiang Ning's restaurant and seemed to have a good relationship with the original host, which could barely be called childhood sweethearts.

"Little Ning, I just came back and heard you moved away. I didn't expect to meet you here," He Tang was delighted but became somewhat restrained after noticing her fancy dress, "I heard that you're actually the lost young lady of the Jiang Family."

Jiang Ning glanced at the Prince's carriage not far away.

The Prince of Yu had already ridden far away.

She smiled, "He Tang, can you do me a favor?"

"Just tell me."

"I want to go back to the Jiang Family, but... my carriage broke down. Can I borrow yours? I'll pay for it.."

Chapter 82: The Person is Gone

Jiang Ning finished speaking and looked at Huang Ying.

Although Huang Ying didn't know what she was going to do, she immediately took out a silver ingot and handed it to He Tang.

He Tang waved his hands repeatedly: "I'll take you back, no need for money, really no need. Xiaoning, why are you being so polite to me like this?"

Jiang Ning laughed: "One thing at a time, even close brothers settle accounts properly; using your carriage and horses, I should pay."

Huang Ying insisted on stuffing the silver into his hand.

"Huang Ying, get on the carriage," Jiang Ning said.

Huang Ying helped her up, acting as her crutch, and hesitated as she looked left and right: "What about this wheelchair, I'll call the coachman over to carry..."

"Are you stupid? Your life is at stake, and you still want a carriage. Hurry up and go home, that's the main thing!"

"Ah?"

"Get on the carriage."

"Oh, okay..." Huang Ying helped her into the carriage.

Jiang Ning said to the coachman, "Go to the Prime Minister's Mansion." Then, she said to He Tang, "Once I get home, I'll have the carriage go to your house; don't worry."

He Tang quickly waved his hands: "No problem, no problem. But Xiaoning, do you have any urgent matters?"

"It's not a big deal; we can chat more when we see each other next time. Thank you, goodbye."

Jiang Ning urged the carriage to go quickly.

The carriage was a bit shabby, and Huang Ying frowned as she looked at it.

“That part is cracked.”

“It’s good enough to have something to sit in, and you’re still being picky. He Tang’s family is living modestly, and this carriage is probably the most valuable thing they have.” Jiang Ning looked outside.

Fortunately, the coachman from the Prince of Yu’s mansion hadn’t noticed this side yet.

Huang Ying asked, “Princess Consort, why did you suddenly want to go back to the Prime Minister’s Mansion?”

Jiang Ning didn’t hide it from her personal maid: “I’m pregnant.”

“This servant knows, it’s a great joy. Could it be that you want to go back and tell the Old Madam yourself?”

“The Prince of Yu doesn’t want the child; he wants me to get rid of the child.”

“...Why?” Huang Ying was shocked.

Would a man not want his own child?

Not to mention, he is the Prince of Yu.

Doesn’t he want to fight for the Imperial Throne?

If the Princess Consort has a son, it would be a great advantage for him to fight for the throne in the future.

After all, the royal family values the prosperity of the family.

Huang Ying really couldn't understand.

Jiang Ning said, "You've seen how much he dislikes me. Perhaps this is hating the house and its crow. Because he hates me, a cripple, he doesn't want the child I give birth to."

"How can he do that?" Huang Ying frowned, "You are the Main Consort, and you have the right to give birth to a legitimate child. The Prince is going too far."

"He can do whatever he likes, if I can't provoke him, can't I hide from him?"

"You're right, when you return to the Prime Minister's Mansion, with the Old Madam there, no one can do anything to you."

The carriage rushed towards Jiang Family's residence.

The coachman from the Prince of Yu's mansion leaned on the shaft and took a nap, occasionally glancing at the dumpling stall. With a glimpse, he saw the wheelchair still there, so he continued to close his eyes and rest.

By the time he finally realized something was wrong, the people were long gone.

The coachman panicked and hurried to report to Li Hongyuan.

"What do you mean the person is gone?"

“The servant doesn’t know, just, just when I looked, the Princess Consort and Miss Huang Ying were both gone...” The coachman trembled in fear, “Please forgive me, my lord, spare this servant...”

Li Hongyuan’s eyes darkened slightly, and he turned the horse’s head to return to the dumpling stall.

As expected, the people were gone, leaving only a wheelchair behind.

He called the dumpling stall owner to inquire.

The owner was trembling: “This humble one really knows nothing, I only saw that lady with the bad legs and her maid get into a shabby carriage and go in that direction..”

Chapter Eighty-Three: The Decision to Divorce The Wife

He was pointing in the direction of the Jiang Family residence.

Li Hongyuan glanced that way, his face turning dark.

That damned woman, she actually ran back to her maternal home.

And right under his nose!

Was he careless?

Who would have thought, a married, pregnant, mobility-impaired woman would have the audacity to take advantage of his negligence and run off so blatantly and unapologetically.

The coachman knelt on the ground, “Your Highness, what... what should we do now?”

“Scram.”

Li Hongyuan kicked the coachman aside, mounted his horse and galloped towards the Jiang residence.

By the time he reached the entrance to the second chamber of the Jiang Family, Jiang Ning had already gone in.

Recognizing him, the doorman quickly went in to pass on the message.

Momentarily, Jiang Yi came out to greet him.

“Greetings to Your Highness,” he gave an impassive bow.

Li Hongyuan asked, “Where is the Prime Minister?”

“My father is indisposed and unable to greet you, I hope Your Highness can forgive him,” Jiang Yi stood up straight, “May I know the purpose of Your Highness’s sudden visit?”

Although the person in front of him was the prince, the Prince of Yu.

He was also his brother-in-law.

There was no need for him to grovel.

Seventh Sister had hurriedly returned, and although the exact reason was not yet known, it was likely that she had suffered some unfair treatment in the prince’s residence. Otherwise, a married daughter wouldn’t run to her maternal home without reason.

He wouldn’t take kindly to the Prince of Yu.

The Jiang Family's Master was a grand marshal stationed in the southwest, the Second Master was the influential Prime Minister. They were powerful figures that even a prince needed to be on good terms with. There was absolutely no need to mistreat their own daughter.

Li Hongyuan knew very well, Jiang Ruobai was not sick at all.

Wasn't he full of energy during morning court? And now he falls sick?

Clearly an excuse to avoid meeting him.

Li Hongyuan said, "I'm here to take the Princess Consort back."

Jiang Yi said, "Seventh Sister just came back, Your Highness need not be in such a hurry to take her back, right?"

"As a prince, if I want to take back my wife, is there a problem?" Li Hongyuan's gaze was cold.

"She is indeed Your Highness's Princess Consort, but she is also my Jiang Family's daughter," Jiang Yi did not give an inch.

"A girl who has been mistreated by her husband's family naturally has her own family protecting her. Do you actually believe that once a daughter is married off, she's as discarded as spilled water and her family won't care or intervene?" Li Hongyuan said, "I want to see her."

"Seventh Sister isn't feeling well right now and can't meet with Your Highness, please return," said Jiang Yi.

Li Hongyuan, the mighty Prince of Yu, was denied entrance and was stopped right at the door of Jiang residence.

His anger was of no use.

To a prince who just turned eighteen and had just established his own mansions, his power was still nowhere near that of the Jiang Family.

Li Hongyuan returned, defeated.

Before he left, he dropped a line, "If she doesn't return in seven days, I will have someone send a letter of divorce."

Jiang Yi watched him leave, turned back to Jiang Ruobai and recounted the incident.

"I'm not sure why Seventh Sister came back, but the attitude of Prince of Yu doesn't seem good."

Jiang Ruobai dropped his pen, admiring his calligraphy while asking, "Didn't you get the news from the Palace?"

"What?"

"Seventh Sister is pregnant."

"Ahhh, that's good news, the Prince of Yu should be happy. Why would they quarrel then?" Jiang Yi asked.

Jiang Ruobai put down his brush, relishing his calligraphy. After a long while, he said unhurriedly, "The Prince of Yu didn't marry our Seventh Sister willingly. He's simply after the Jiang Family's power, and Seventh Sister's beauty."

"So you mean, the Prince of Yu doesn't like Seventh Sister?" Jiang Yi frowned, "But Seventh Sister is already pregnant, she has to go back in the end, doesn't she? It seems like if Seventh Sister doesn't return, he's going to divorce her." Jiang Ruobai threw down his pen, "Divorce her? Then I will arrange a better marriage for Seventh Sister.. We'll see who'll be in a hurry then!"

Chapter 84: Not Planning to Go Back Anymore

As for Jiang Ning's return to her mother's home, the entire Jiang Family did not show much reaction.

Because the Jiang Family is powerful and protective of its own.

If their married daughters suffer any grievances, the Jiang Family will take them back and force the husband to come and apologize.

This situation was quite common among the last generation of daughters in the Jiang Family, including Jiang Ning's aunts, as well as occasionally among the elder cousins who married out.

Therefore, when Jiang Ning rode a broken carriage back to her mother's home, even Jiang Yuan, who she had the most difficult relationship with, did not say anything sarcastic.

It was as if a married daughter who returned to her mother's home was just here to visit.

However, her pregnancy caused a sensation throughout the Jiang Family.

Less than a month after she got married, she was found to be pregnant.

This pregnancy was truly incredible.

Jiang Yuan's face crumpled green with jealousy and envy.

She whispered to Jiang Yan, "Is she really pregnant? It's so fast. I think there's an 80% chance she's faking it, otherwise, why would she have a conflict with Prince Yu and come back?"

Jiang Yan replied, "Today is Concubine Jin's birthday, and during the banquet at the palace, the Imperial Physician diagnosed the pregnancy. How could it be fake?"

“Then why did she come back?”

“I don’t know, it’s their private matter as husband and wife, it’s not for us to say.” Jiang Yan lowered her head to do some needlework.

Since standing up to Jiang Yuan a few times with Jiang Ning, Jiang Yan’s courage gradually grew, at least she no longer blindly echoed her.

“Let’s go see her.” Jiang Yuan took her needlework away, “You come with me.”

Jiang Yan had no choice but to be dragged to Jiang Ning’s room.

Jiang Ning had just returned from Lin Zizi’s place and was lying down to rest.

Jiang Yuan looked at her carefully, “Are you really pregnant?”

Jiang Ning replied, “The Imperial Physician’s words are true.”

“...What nonsense.”

“Do you have anything important to say? If not, leave, I need to rest.”

“When do you plan to return to Prince Yu’s residence?”

“I don’t plan to go back.”

“What?” Jiang Yuan’s eyes widened, “Are you serious?”

It's normal for a couple to have conflicts nowadays, but very few would actually split up.

"Yes." Jiang Ning laughed, "Is there a problem?"

"You... Are you just going to give up on Prince Yu?"

"Yes."

"...You're crazy." Jiang Yuan found it hard to believe and couldn't understand.

Jiang Yan gently pulled her, whispering, "Seventh Sister, were you mistreated over there? I heard that Prince Yu has a very favored concubine. You can be upset about this sort of thing, but don't really break things off. No matter how favored a concubine is, she can't compare to you, the main wife."

Although that was not the reason, Jiang Ning still smiled at her out of appreciation for her good intentions.

Her smile was breathtaking, her eyes sparkling like stars.

Jiang Yan suddenly felt a bit overwhelmed by the attention.

Jiang Yuan snorted, "Let me tell you, Prince Yu came here before and told Third Brother that if you don't go back within seven days, he'll send a divorce letter." "Divorce? Did I commit any of the seven sins?" Jiang Ning glanced at her leg, "I have an illness, that just barely counts. Let him divorce me then, it's exactly what I want."

"What nonsense are you talking about?" Jiang Yuan glared at her, "Such a good marriage, so many noble ladies would kill for it, and you're just going to throw it away after getting lucky enough to marry him?"

"Get this straight, it's him who doesn't want me." Jiang Ning picked up a piece of watermelon to chew on.

Jiang Yuan said, "Didn't you hear? Prince Yu said that if you go back within seven days, he won't divorce you. If you feel wronged, it's okay to stay home for a few days, but you can't just stay at your mother's house and not leave, right?"

Jiang Ning glanced at her, "I'm staying here, and I'm not eating or drinking your stuff, what are you worried about?"

Chapter 85: So Awesome

"If you get divorced) it will affect my and Sixth Miss's reputation. At least you've been married, but I haven't!"

Jiang Ning laughed and said, "If a family thinks poorly of you because of this, it means their character is no good, and you should be grateful for their not marrying you."

"Don't talk nonsense." Jiang Yuan snorted, "I'm telling you, if you get divorced, do you believe that Prince Yu will immediately marry another noble lady? By then, you'll have nowhere to cry with regret."

"Well, we'll talk about that then."

Jiang Ning calmly ate her watermelon.

She was extremely satisfied with her current situation.

Everyone knew she was pregnant, and the child was Prince Yu's. The baby in her belly now had a legitimate origin and didn't have to hide anymore.

She could give birth to the child with peace of mind.

Moreover, she didn't have to return to Prince Yu's residence, deal with his deadpan face, or put up with his multiple consorts.

It was just too perfect.

If she had any previous dissatisfaction with Jiang Ruobai for sending her to the selection, she was now deeply grateful.

This father of hers was simply a genius.

Going around, she got herself a title and a generous dowry.

Oh, come on.

Could there be a more profitable deal than this?

Jiang Ning was overjoyed and didn't care about Prince Yu's life or death at all.

A moment later, there was a commotion outside.

"Miss, Miss, we are back!"

Chunlai, Xiachu, Dongxie, and Jiang Fu's family of three all returned with large and small packages.

Fifth Daughter and Sixth Miss were stunned.

She was really determined not to go back, bringing all her dowry maids with her.

"How did Prince Yu let you come back?" Jiang Yuan asked.

Chunlai replied, "We received a message from Miss that we should come back, so we packed up and returned. No one tried to stop us."

"It's strange that Prince Yu could tolerate this?"

Jiang Yuan and Jiang Yan both puzzled.

In fact, Prince Yu couldn't bear it, of course.

First, he found out Jiang Ning had run home, followed her and tried to negotiate, but failed, leaving a threat behind. By the time he returned to his residence, the housekeeper informed him that all the maids in the Princess Consort's room had left.

It wasn't that he had agreed to let them go, but rather he hadn't known at all.

How could Li Hongyuan not be furious?

He felt like he was going to be driven mad by Jiang Ning.

He rushed to Laurel Garden, only to find it empty.

"Did everyone leave?" He took a deep breath and asked the housekeeper coldly.

The housekeeper trembled, "Yes, yes, they all left, along with the people Jiang Ning brought in her dowry. They took everything they brought with them." "Could they have taken all the dowry with just a few of them?"

"The dowry... this servant doesn't know. It should be in the small storeroom."

The small storeroom was locked, and not only locked but secured with five or six additional locks.

Considering her wealth, why did she need so many locks? How worried was she about someone coveting her belongings?

Looking at the row of locks, Li Hongyuan felt like smashing the door and strangling that woman before feeding her to the fishes in the pond.

He had never felt so humiliated in his entire life.

He thought he had calculated everything well—marrying the daughter of the Emperor’s young white moonlight—so he could gain favour with the old man. It would be an advantage in his struggle for the Imperial Throne.

Who knew he had been thoroughly tricked?

He was cuckolded, and the woman had fled.

Worse still, he couldn’t even publicize this matter.

The newlywed wife of the distinguished Prince Yu was pregnant with someone else’s child, a child who turned out to be his own father’s.

If this got out, wouldn’t he become the laughing stock of Chang’an City, no, the entire Great Sheng Dynasty?

Chapter 86: Promoting Ms. Li to the Rank of Teng

Li Hongyuan was so furious that his head was spinning. He returned to his own courtyard and drank cold tea to calm himself down.

But there were still people who didn't know better and came to add fuel to the fire.

Madam Zhao and Palace Maid Fang spoke ill of the Princess Consort in front of him, saying that she didn't understand the big picture, and relied on her pregnancy to ignore the dignity of both Prince of Yu's mansion and His Royal Highness. They complained about her willfulness, which was unbearable.

"The Princess Consort's pregnancy should have been a joyous occasion, but she shouldn't be so willful." Madam Zhao sighed, "I am now in charge of the household affairs, working so hard every day that my hands and back are sore. Yet she went back to her maiden home to enjoy a peaceful life."

Li Hongyuan kept a straight face while holding his teacup: "If you find it too tiring, then don't do it."

Madam Zhao's face changed.

She just wanted to act spoiled so that he would feel bad for her and visit her room at night.

How did it turn out like this...

She didn't find it tiring, nor did she want to give up the power of the housekeeper!

Madam Zhao hurriedly explained, "Your Highness, I don't find it tiring, I just..."

"Does my word mean nothing?" Li Hongyuan swept her with a cold glance, and Madam Zhao didn't dare to make a sound.

To outsiders, the Prince of Yu had a handsome appearance and must have a gentle temperament like a charming young man. Only those close to him knew that he had a bad temper, cold and gloomy.

Palace Maid Fang secretly rejoiced in her heart.

She hadn't said a word here. If Madam Zhao couldn't handle the household affairs anymore, then only she was left...

She was a little excited, her hands hidden in her sleeves were trembling.

Li Hongyuan called the housekeeper and said, "From today on, promote Ms. Li to Maid Teng and temporarily put her in charge of the household affairs."

The housekeeper was slightly surprised but immediately complied.

Madam Zhao and Maid Fang were completely dumbfounded.

They had heard that the Princess Consort went back to her maiden home and had come to gloat, as well as to catch more glimpses of His Royal Highness to make him visit their rooms at night.

Who would have thought that they would not only fail to please His Royal Highness but also lose the power of the housekeeper!

It was bad enough to lose the power, but how could they let Ms. Li, that little slut, take their place?

She appeared delicate and weak, with a pair of misty eyes that made people feel pity for her. But in the eyes of the two palace maids, she was nothing more than a foxy seductress, a slut.

In comparison, the Princess Consort's laziness and straightforwardness were more likable.

Originally an ordinary girl without fame, she suddenly became Maid Teng, with a higher status than them.

What was going on?

Were they here to help her?

It was infuriating!

Madam Zhao was so aggrieved that she fell ill,

saying she had a headache and couldn't get out of bed. She sent a servant to tell His Royal Highness and asked him to visit her.

When the servant came back, she told Madam Zhao that Maid Teng was with Li Hongyuan.

Madam Zhao gritted her teeth in anger: "Well done, Ms. Li, you've really reaped the benefits! I won't let this go!"

Palace Maid Fang said, "His Royal Highness likes her the most, there's nothing we can do. She's so disrespectful and ignores even the Princess Consort."

"The Princess Consort? She's useless too! As the main wife, she can't even deal with a little slut like that!" Madam Zhao cursed in anger.

Palace Maid Fang sighed, "With the Princess Consort not here, Ms. Li has taken advantage of the situation. If we had known, we wouldn't have said anything in front of His Royal Highness, and instead have begged him to bring the Princess Consort back. The Princess Consort is pregnant, can't she suppress that little slut?"

"What's the use of saying this now?" Madam Zhao rubbed her temples, "I can't just let it go, I need to think of something."

Li Hongyuan endured for seven days.

Jiang Ning did not come back.

On the eighth day, he had his staff write a letter of divorce and ordered the housekeeper to send it to the Jiang family..

Chapter 87: You Really Don't Know Yourself

The Divorce Decree arrived in Jiang Ruobai's hands without ever being seen by Jiang Ning.

Jiang Ruobai took the letter to the palace, knelt down in front of the Emperor, and tearfully complained about the injustice his daughter had suffered. He said that the Prince of Yu favored his concubines over his wife, allowing them to climb onto his daughter's head even after the main wife had entered the household, and she couldn't even hold the power of a housekeeper.

Now, the Prince of Yu was embarrassed and angry, and he sent the Divorce Decree.

Who was this insulting?

The Jiang family would never accept a Divorce Decree.

Even if they were to be separated, it must be a peaceful divorce.

After a series of complaints, the emperor opened his old eyes, "Ah, my fifth son doesn't understand things. Prime Minister Jiang, there's no need to fuss over a child's affairs. In a marriage, aren't quarrels inevitable?"

"But the Divorce Decree has arrived, and my daughter is still struggling to carry a child." Jiang Ruobai sobbed, "Forget it, forget it. My daughter is unfortunate. I'll tell her to accept the Divorce Decree, abort the child, and wait peacefully to remarry."

Emperor: "Prime Minister Jiang, why are you acting like a child yourself? Is this a matter to be joked about?"

"It's all because of my daughter's foolishness. For this Divorce Decree, my Jiang family will suffer!"

Jiang Ruobai turned to leave.

"Ah, wait, Prime Minister Jiang. It's all because my fifth son is unreasonable. I will definitely scold him thoroughly and have him bring your daughter back soon."

"What about the Divorce Decree...?"

"Return what Divorce Decree? She's already pregnant. Mentioning the Divorce Decree is inappropriate." The Emperor ripped the Divorce Decree into pieces.

After Jiang Ruobai left, the Emperor ordered Li Hongyuan to be summoned.

The Emperor looked at his son and slowly said, "Fifth son, it has been seven days. When do you plan to go to the Jiang family to bring back your wife?"

Li Hongyuan was reluctant to face his unrestrained father, but still had to answer, "This son will not bring her back."

"What?"

"I've already sent a Divorce Decree to sever ties with her. From now on, we have nothing to do with each other!"

"If you divorce her, tomorrow, Prime Minister Jiang can remarry his daughter to someone else."

"That has nothing to do with me."

"Your son following another man's surname and calling someone else father has nothing to do with you?"

Li Hongyuan glanced at his father and muttered, "What does it have to do with me, it has to do with you."

"What are you mumbling?"

"As your son, I meant that since I have divorced her, whatever she does afterwards is none of my business, and I don't care whether she wants the child or not."

"Nonsense!" The Emperor slapped the table, "The bloodline of the Li family is precious, and you dare to push the child onto someone else? I'll break your legs!"

Li Hongyuan could not bear it any longer, "The child is not mine anyway!"

The emperor was taken aback, "Who says the child isn't yours?"

"She has been pregnant for at least two or three months." Li Hongyuan said coldly, "Wouldn't I know if we shared a bed or not?"

He really wanted to expose the Emperor Father on-the-spot.

As an emperor, as a man, one must admit to their actions.

Didn't he have any responsibility?

But he didn't dare.

Although he was his biological father, they were first and foremost ruler and subject, and only then father and son.

Could a subject defy his ruler?

He absolutely did not want to suffer that kind of ending.

But Emperor Father's attitude was too annoying.

You made this mess, you clean it up.

Why do you have to pin it on your own son?

Li Hongyuan was incredibly annoyed and wanted to leave.

But the Emperor's next words stopped him in his tracks.

The Emperor said leisurely, "You're right. You were with her, but you truly didn't know.."

Chapter 88: How Great It Would Be to Marry a Chef Directly

Li Hongyuan fell silent for a moment, then said: "Emperor Father, this is something I don't wish to mention. But... I really didn't lay my hands on her. That wedding handkerchief..."

"Fool, when I say the child Jiang Ning is carrying is yours, I naturally am not talking about the incidents post your wedding."

"Emperor Father, I don't understand. Jiang Ning and I had no contact prior to this."

"I am saying you did. It's just you that didn't know."

"I don't understand."

"Do you still remember, three to four months ago, when you accompanied me out?"

"I remember." Li Hongyuan had an excellent memory, "We encountered assassins on that outing."

"Yes, and you protected me by leading the assassins away, even sustaining some injuries." The Emperor looked at his son, a hint of tenderness in his eyes, "You are a filial child."

Li Hongyuan asked: "Could it be, did something else happen thereafter?"

"Then I met that child, Jiang Ning."

"So that's how Emperor Father met her."

"At that time, I didn't know she was Prime Minister Jiang's daughter. She mistook me for a beggar and gave me half a bowl of porridge. Only later did I find out that it was the last bit of food she was left with."

The Emperor looked at his son, "If it were you, would you risk starvation, to give your last bit of food to a stranger?"

Li Hongyuan fell silent for a while, then shook his head: "I wouldn't."

The Emperor smiled: "Neither would I. That's why the child's heart is precious."

"What happened next?" Li Hongyuan asked.

"I discovered that she looked just like Lin Zizi when she was young, and also knew that Prime Minister Jiang lost a daughter. So, when I returned, I had it investigated. Sure enough, she was the daughter of Prime Minister Jiang and Lin Zizi."

Upon hearing this, Li Hongyuan couldn't resist asking a question that had been troubling him for a long time: "Emperor Father, what was the matter between you and Madam Jiang the second, when you were young?"

The Emperor's old face stiffened a little: "Why are you being so nosy?"

Seeing that he was just a little embarrassed and not angry, Li Hongyuan quickly followed up with another question: "As a monarch, wouldn't Emperor Father be able to win over a vassal?"

"That was me showing magnanimity, what would you understand!" The Emperor waved his hand impatiently, "We are discussing your affairs now, don't bring up irrelevant matters!"

Li Hongyuan had pretty much figured it out.

The Emperor did indeed have feelings for Lin Zizi, but she was plainly not interested in him. Her heart was set on Jiang Ruobai.

Despite this, the Emperor did not use his imperial status to force anything. He ensured their happiness, which showed his genuine affection for Lin Zizi.

The Emperor glanced at him and said: "I have only these sons. Your eldest brother is gone, the second, third, and fourth have all been married, only you are left unmarried, and your age isn't far off from that child's. What I was thinking was, since I couldn't marry Lin Zizi, if my son could marry her daughter, it would be like fulfilling my wish."

Li Hongyuan was somewhat speechless.

Why should he fulfill his Father's youthful dreams?

"You mentioned earlier that I have been with her, what do you mean by that?"

“Ah, right.” The Emperor seemed to suddenly remember this matter, “Didn’t I later find that child, Jiang Ning, appealing? She’s beautiful, kind-hearted, and exceptionally good at cooking. So I thought of making her my daughter-in-law.”

Li Hongyuan inwardly sneered.

Since when did being good at cooking become a criterion for being a daughter-in-law?

If that’s the case, he might as well marry a chef.

Moreover, what kind of food could that woman possibly make?

Li Hongyuan felt like this was just some absurd reason the Emperor had concocted to make him willingly marry Jiang Ning.

The Emperor glanced at him as if he had seen through his thoughts: “Jiang Ning’s cooking, it’s really tasty..”

Chapter 89: Five Thunderbolts Strike the Top

Li Hongyuan was doubtful.

Could it really taste better than dishes cooked by the imperial kitchen?

Seeing his expression, the Emperor laughed, “Just by looking at you, I know you’ve never tasted Jiang Ning’s cooking.”

Li Hongyuan replied, “I’m not interested. I’m afraid she might poison me.”

“Nonsense.” The Emperor’s face darkened, “I know you have a strange temperament, just like your concubine mother. Now that Jiang Ning is married to you and is pregnant with your child, how could you leave her in the Jiang Family’s home? Go fetch her back!”

Li Hongyuan said, “Emperor Father, that child really isn’t mine.”

“Do you remember getting drunk three and a half months ago?”

“Yes.” Li Hongyuan had an impressive tolerance for alcohol and rarely got drunk, so he remembered it clearly.

That day, he only had one drink, and he didn’t know what kind of wine it was. After drinking it, he felt strange and uncomfortable, and he couldn’t remember everything that happened afterward.

But how did Emperor Father find out?

The Emperor smirked, “I added something to your drink.”

Li Hongyuan:” ...”

The Emperor continued, “That day, I was upset by something your concubine mother had done, and I was annoyed by you...”

“How did I offend you, Emperor Father? Why were you annoyed with me?”

“Second child, third child, and fourth child have all married and had children, but you still hadn’t. I think Jiang Ning is a great girl in every way, and she’s perfect to be your Princess Consort. So I... used some small means.”

Li Hongyuan:” ...”

Now, he felt like he was struck by lightning.

He was actually drugged by his own father?

After a while, he stuttered, "So, did you drug Jiang Ning too?"

"Of course." The Emperor laughed shamelessly, "The medicine I used was really good. It made both of you forget everything afterward and didn't harm your bodies..."

"Could you please just stop talking?" Li Hongyuan couldn't take it anymore.

Even the Emperor seemed to realize that he had said too much and coughed lightly before continuing, "In any case, you can rest assured, Jiang Ning is your woman, and the child in her belly is yours too."

Li Hongyuan didn't know what to say.

What kind of father was this?

It was simply preposterous!

He was a Prince and the Prince of Yu, not just some random nobody, and yet he was casually paired off like this?

"Emperor Father, if you want me to get married, I will. But was it really necessary to go to these lengths?"

"Of course it was necessary. If I didn't do this, would you be willing to marry her? If I didn't do this, would the cunning Prime Minister Jiang be willing to let his daughter marry into the royal family?"

Elated, the Emperor said, "I finally outsmarted that old fox, Jiang Ruobai."

Li Hongyuan deadpanned, “What did you outsmart?”

“You don’t need to worry about that. Anyway, everything is under my control.” The Emperor laughed proudly, “At first, I didn’t want to reveal this. But you, that unfilial son, actually made Jiang Ning go back to her parents’ house and wanted to divorce her. I had no choice.”

Li Hongyuan couldn’t help but laugh, “Even if what you did before was out of necessity, why didn’t you tell me earlier?”

“Well, this sort of thing, after all, isn’t very nice to mention, and it would tarnish my wise and mighty image.”

Li Hongyuan glanced at him, thinking that someone like him could be wise and mighty?

It was fortunate that he had inherited his mother’s beauty, otherwise he didn’t know what he would look like.

Li Hongyuan said, “Sometimes, I really doubt that I am your own son.”

The Emperor glared at him, “What did you say?”

Chapter 90: The Die is Cast

“Why is it that each of my brothers has married a talented and virtuous girl from a prestigious family, and I, of all people, end up with a cripple?”

Enraged, the Emperor threw the inkstone he was holding: “You ungrateful wretch! In what way is Jiang Ning not good enough for you? In terms of looks, who in Chang’an City can outshine her?”

"I don't find her beautiful at all. In fact, I think she's lazy and shameless."

"You have no taste!" The Emperor sneered. "If you look down upon her so much, why did you choose her during the selection, even throwing the flower ball in her direction in front of the Empress and the other concubines? That was not something I forced you to do."

Li Hongyuan was silent for a moment before he spoke, "What if I hadn't chosen her back then?"

"Would you have not chosen her?"

"No, I wouldn't."

"That's right. I am your father; don't I know you well?" said the Emperor. "In any case, everything happened because of my whims. Things have already reached this point, and there is no turning back. Is there anything else you want to say?"

Say?

What else is there to say?

You, as the Emperor and my father, are just capricious, but always right!

Li Hongyuan felt like gouging out both of his eyes right now.

However, the Emperor added, "If you don't believe me, you can check the records at the Evaluation Office. They have a clear account of my whereabouts and every action I took on that day."

Li Hongyuan:

No, he didn't want to check.

He was afraid of dying on the spot.

What kind of madness had possessed this foolish and stinky old man? Instead of simply targeting him, he had also implicated an innocent young girl.

What kind of logic was this?

But since such a thing had already occurred, there was no point in feeling regretful.

The key issue was that he had already sent the divorce letter with those words.

How could he possibly reverse everything now?

Li Hongyuan so wished he could kick this old fool out of the way and become the Emperor himself.

While he was at it, he might as well slaughter those obnoxious, weird, and wayward brothers of his – the second, third, and fourth child – too.

He really didn't know what kind of misfortune he had brought upon himself to be born into this royal family.

Seeing Li Hongyuan's face turning pale, the Emperor urged, "What are you still standing there for? I thought that once you saw a beauty like Jiang Ning, you would fall in love with her at first sight. I wanted you two to develop some feelings for each other, but who knew that you not only failed to develop any feelings but also sent her back to her parents' home? Hurry up and bring her back now! If anything happens to Jiang Ning and the child in her womb, see how I'll deal with you."

Li Hongyuan sneered: "Can all this be blamed on me? If only Emperor Father had explained everything earlier, it would never have come to this."

“You chose your own Princess Consort but instead of treating her well, you let two of your concubines manage the prince’s residence – who are you trying to disgust?” The Emperor slammed the table, “Don’t think you can act with impunity just because of your concubine mother. These days, both inside and outside the Imperial Court, people are clamoring for me to name the Crown Prince. Among you four, I haven’t decided yet who will be the Crown Prince!”

After leaving the Imperial Palace, Li Hongyuan’s mind was still in chaos.

He couldn’t believe that his own Emperor Father had ruthlessly manipulated him, causing a girl to become pregnant without his knowledge.

From the moment he met Jiang Ning, every step thereafter had been within his father’s calculations.

Both Prime Minister Jiang and he had unwittingly walked right into the trap.

Although the Emperor seemed careless, he was in fact meticulous and extremely dangerous.

Li Hongyuan looked back at the Imperial Palace with a cold expression on his face.

But the next moment, when he thought of Jiang Ning, the child in her womb, and the divorce letter he had sent, he suddenly felt a headache.

If Prime Minister Jiang, that old fox, really let his daughter remarry, wouldn’t his son end up calling another man ‘father’?