

Chapter 1 - 1 001 Marry into the Jiang Family Be a stepmother or a

Chapter 1: 001 Marry into the Jiang Family? Be a stepmother or a living widow Chapter 1: 001 Marry into the Jiang Family? Be a stepmother or a living widow Editor: EndlessFantasy Translation The last days of summer were upon them. The sudden night rain cooled the air by several degrees, but once the wind ceased and the rain stopped, the heat once again surged. The air remained sticky and irritable.

Pingjiang, Yiyu Tea House

On stage, two performers, one playing the sanxian and the other hugging a pipa, sang in tender, gentle Wu dialect—a local, famous style of storytelling and ballad singing.

The audience listened to the performance while discussing the most sensational news in Pingjiang City.

“The Jiang Family patriarch is gravely ill, and his children are showing their true colors, each trying to claim their share of the family wealth.”

“The patriarch is sick, yet the Jiang Family celebrates with engagements and weddings, claiming it’s to cheer him up. It’s laughable.”

“They just want to marry off quickly before the patriarch passes, adding more heads in hopes of getting a bigger share of the inheritance.”

“They’ll stop at nothing to get a larger inheritance. Having money isn’t always a good thing.”

“There’s a rumor that the Jiang Family had an informal childhood engagement with the Jiang Family in Sijiu City? It’s said the eldest wants to marry his stepdaughter into the Jiang Family.”

“But considering the Jiang Family has two sons, it’s quite a situation...”

Years ago, the Jiang Family in Pingjiang and the Jiang Family were equally matched. But in recent years, the Jiang Family has waned while the Jiang Family has grown more prominent. It stands to reason that even the legitimate daughters of the Jiang Family don’t quite measure up to the Jiang Family now. Still, that Jiang Family...

The discussion was met with long sighs.

“A stepdaughter? What about the status of the legitimate daughter?”

“No choice, when the stepmother calls the shots, she’ll fight for her daughter’s best interest.”

“This marriage was initially intended for the legitimate daughter. No matter how the Jiang Family is, it shouldn’t be a stepdaughter’s place to interfere.”

In a corner, a young woman got up, settled the bill, and left with a box of snacks.

On stage, the performers were singing a section from “The Story of the Cat and the Crown Prince,” which went,

“...Empress Liu is quite foolish, exchanging the true master is inappropriate. Quickly switching the Crown Prince with a cat, ordering the maid to toss it into the green waves.”

She was, in fact, the center of the gossip—Tang Wan, the Jiang Family’s legitimate daughter.

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Pingjiang Jiang Family Villa

Tang Wan had just parked and turned off the car when a woman in her sixties approached. Despite the signs of hardship on her face, it was clear she was from a family of standing. “Miss, you’re back.”

“What’s going on?”

“The Jiang Family has sent someone!”

“Where are they?” She had not seen any other cars in the courtyard.

“They haven’t arrived yet.”

“Then, these two boxes of snacks I bought for Grandpa might not be enough.” The Yiyu Tea House made them the best, but they were supplied in limited quantities daily and were hard to buy without arriving early.

“At a time like this, you’re still worried about snacks? I heard the Jiang Family is here to discuss the engagement between our two families. Although it’s not imperative that we marry, if the second Miss takes the opportunity, people will be talking behind your back...”

Whether the marriage happens or not is one thing, but having it taken by a stepdaughter adds a different narrative.

“Where’s Grandpa?”

“He went out, said it was stuffy at home, and wanted some fresh air.”

“His health isn’t good, and he’s going out? Asked me to buy snacks, and now he’s gone?”

...

The two of them talked as they walked inside, immediately seeing a mother-daughter pair in the living room. The woman, striking at thirty-five or thirty-six, wore her attractions with a simple black dress but could not conceal her natural seductiveness.

“Wanwan’s back.”

This woman was Tang Wan’s stepmother, Zhang Liyun.

“Aunt Li.” Zhang Liyun had married in when Tang Wan was in middle school, and she couldn’t bring herself to change the way she called her.

“Big Sister,” the girl next to her said quietly.

She wore a princess dress trimmed with lace. Nineteen this year, she was three years younger than Tang Wan—the stepdaughter of the Jiang Family everyone talked about, Tang Mo.

Her name was changed after she entered the family, with no blood relation to the Jiang Family.

Tang Mo took after Zhang Liyun, young but already possessing allure. In appearance she seemed sweet and charming, though Tang Wan had seen her play the role of a lady outside—haughty because she relied on being a Jiang Family daughter.

After Tang Wan caught her, the timid and inferior image she held at home was totally shattered.

Although Tang Wan hadn’t spread rumors, Tang Mo felt guilty and didn’t dare get close to her, and the relationship remained lukewarm as a result.

“Miss, have some tea.” The maid had already brought over a cup of black tea.

Tang Wan accepted the tea and sat down leisurely, seemingly ignoring the apprehension in the eyes of the mother and daughter opposite her.

“Wanwan, actually someone from the Jiang Family is coming over soon,” Zhang Liyun smiled with false camaraderie.

“Really?” Tang Wan’s expression didn’t change.

“They’re here to discuss the engagement between our families. Although it was just a verbal agreement, with no formal documents, the patriarch values his promises and intends to honor the commitment.” Zhang Liyun looked at Tang Wan, with a gentle, maternal expression.

“Even though the Jiang Family said you could choose from the two sons, in that situation...” Zhang Liyun sighed. “It’s natural your father doesn’t want you to marry into that.”

“If your father were here today, and if the Jiang Family came over, it might not end well.”

The Jiang Family had two sons. They said the Jiang Family could choose freely, seeming very sincere. But the problem was...

The eldest son of the Jiang Family, though renowned and aristocratic, had a son whose mother was unknown;

The younger son, on the other hand, was sickly and rumored to be unwell, not expected to live past twenty-eight, hence his eccentric and violent temperament.

Even so, many sought to marry their daughters into the Jiang Family. As long as they were secure there, they could live in affluence.

Zhang Liyun was the kind who would try hard to get her daughter in.

But Tang Wan's father favored her and felt that, despite the Jiang Family's wealth, marrying there would mean suffering, which is why the marriage hadn't been decided yet.

After all, marrying into the Jiang Family...

Would mean becoming a stepmother or being destined to be widowed!

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Meanwhile, in the private room of the Yiyu Tea House

Two men, one old and one young, sat opposite each other.

“How about it? Isn’t my granddaughter beautiful?” The old man laughed, with the sound of a laugh that was hoarse and weak.

The man across from him took a sip of tea, glancing at the spot Tang Wan had sat.

From his position, he could barely make out her profile in the bustling crowd, yet remembered her eyes vividly—lovely like the city of Pingjiang after the rain, delicate, ethereal.

“Tang Old Master, people outside say I won’t live past twenty-eight. Maybe your idea of finding her a protector should involve my brother.”

The old man said nothing, only evaluated him. How such a good person...

was fatefully destined for a short life!