

Chapter 141: Burning the Ancestral Hall (8)

"I asked the maid in the courtyard to buy food and wine and gave them to the guards. They're eating and drinking now. However, it doesn't seem likely that they will leave." Jingzhe was still a little afraid of Xie Jingxing. As she spoke, she looked at his expression.

"Alright." Shen Miao glanced at Jingzhe. "Jingzhe, can I trust you?"

Hearing this, Jingzhe couldn't even be bothered with worrying about Xie Jingxing. She immediately lowered her head and said, "I'm loyal to you. I'll do anything you ask me to."

"Then listen, whether it's you, Gu Yu, or Bai Lu, don't come in later. Don't look for me, and don't stop me." She stuffed the hourglass into Jingzhe's hand. "When the sand reaches here—" She pointed at a small mark on the glass. "Go out and call for help. You have to rush out to the birthday banquet in the east courtyard to shout for help in front of all the guests. I think you are smart and bold. You know what to do."

"This..." Jingzhe was a little confused, not understanding what Shen Miao meant. However, when she saw Shen Miao's expression, she swallowed all her questions and said to Shen Miao solemnly, "I understand."

"Alright, then go out now." Shen Miao instructed with a serious expression, "Remember, no matter what you see or what happens, don't come in."

Jingzhe gritted her teeth and glanced at Xie Jingxing, then at Shen Miao. She nodded and left the ancestral hall.

After Jingzhe left, Xie Jingxing looked at Shen Miao and said lazily, "Why are you being so mysterious? What do you want to do?"

"What do I want to do?" Shen Miao stared at him. Xie Jingxing's standing posture was relaxed, but his beautiful peach blossom eyes were as sharp as knives. When looked at by those eyes, it was as if nothing in her mind could be hidden.

"Young Marquis, if you don't want to be implicated by me, you can leave first," she said coldly.

"No one in the world can implicate me." He spoke arrogantly, but it was as if he really meant it.

"Since you want to die with me, I have nothing to say." Shen Miao turned around.

Xie Jingxing frowned. Before he could understand what Shen Miao meant, he saw Shen Miao suddenly walk up to the incense burner and stop in front of the memorial tablets of the Shen family's ancestors. The next moment, even he was stunned.

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Shen Miao suddenly picked up the neatly arranged memorial tablets and threw them into the charcoal pot on the ground without a word. Wood was easy to ignite. In an instant, the flame that was originally

burning faintly rose high. The fire devoured the wooden memorial tablets, and the name on them was faintly discernible in the firelight.

“Are you crazy?” Xie Jingxing looked at Shen Miao in surprise.

Destroying the ancestral tablet was treasonous and the person would even be expelled from the family. Shen Miao’s sudden actions were really puzzling. Was she venting her anger at being locked up? But if she did this, she would only be punished more in the future.

Shen Miao looked coldly at the gradually charred memorial tablet in the flame. It was not that she was showing disregard for her ancestors, but the most important thing in the world was what was in front of her. Her future, Shen Xin’s future, and the future of the Shen family were obviously more important. If the ancestors knew that her actions could resolve the crisis of the Shen family, they would not be furious.

“Young Marquis, it’s not too late to leave now.” Shen Miao ignored Xie Jingxing’s surprised gaze and threw another bunch of tablets into the charcoal pot. In an instant, the flames burned even more fiercely.

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However, she did not seem to be satisfied. After thinking for a moment, she walked in and took out the few quilts that Gu Yu had taken out to dry. The quilts were all made of cotton, and they were dry and soft.

“Shen Miao!” Xie Jingxing shouted in a low voice, “Do you want to die?”

Shen Miao spread out the quilts on the ground. Most of the structure of the ancestral hall was made of wood, so it was easy to catch fire. She picked up a memorial tablet that was half-ignited by the fire and lit a corner of the quilt.

Flames soared into the sky, and thick smoke gradually rose from the ancestral hall. Jingzhe gritted her teeth and stood outside, her eyes red. When the sand in her hand flowed to the place marked by Shen Miao, the guards in the courtyard outside were alarmed by the flames and ran over to put out the fire. Only then did Jingzhe run out.

She ran to the birthday banquet in the east courtyard in one go. The guests in the courtyard were all enjoying themselves, and no one seemed to notice her. Jingzhe suddenly shouted, “Help, help, the ancestral hall is on fire. Fifth Miss is trapped inside—”

The moment that was said, there was an uproar.

Wasn’t Shen Miao recuperating in her courtyard? Why was she in the ancestral hall? Why was the hall on fire?

Ren Wanyun was also shocked. She stood up immediately, not knowing how the fire in the ancestral hall started. She was about to order someone to quickly put out the fire when she saw Jingzhe panting. For some reason, she suddenly thought of something.

If Shen Miao died in this fire, wouldn't her plan be carried out more smoothly

Therefore, Ren Wanyun stood up and said pretentiously, "Everyone, eat and drink. I don't think the fire is too big. It's probably because a child was playing with fire next to it. I'll go and take a look first. You guys," she reprimanded Xianglan, "Hurry up and find guards to put out the fire!"

The atmosphere of the entire birthday banquet immediately became strange. Old Madam Shen was unhappy and hated Shen Miao for ruining her mood even at this moment. However, she still had to pretend to be a kind grandmother and instruct Ren Wanyun nervously, "Go and see what's going on with Fifth Sister!"

However, what she pretended to be was different from what she really was. If she really loved Shen Miao, Shen Miao would not be in such a situation. Chen Ruoqiu and Shen Yue did not even leave their seats, which was enough to show Shen Miao's status in the Shen family. The ladies present were not fools. They could tell what kind of attitude the people of the Shen family had towards Shen Miao, and they felt some sympathy for her.

At this moment, a loud and clear laugh suddenly sounded from outside. "General Shen, Madam Shen, Young Master Shen, have returned to the mansion. Open the door—"

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"What?" Not only the women, but even the men on the other side were stunned. Shen Gui and Shen Wan looked at each other. It must be a joke that Shen Xin had returned to the mansion. There were still many months before the new year.

In the ancestral hall, surrounded by flames, there was a circle of guards from the Shen family outside. Although they were trying to put out the fire, they didn't go in. Everyone loved their lives. With such a fierce fire, no one dared to go in and die.

"Shen girl, do you want to die?" Xie Jingxing frowned when he saw that the beam was also starting to burn.

"Young Marquis, you'd better leave." Shen Miao did not move. "There are more and more people around. Even if you want to leave, you can't."

"Cut the crap." Xie Jingxing grabbed her arm. "Let's go!"

"Let go." Shen Miao broke free from his hand, her gaze firm and stubborn. "Can't you tell? I'm betting my life on the future."

Chapter 143: Settling the Score (1)

"Can't you see? I'm betting my life on the future."

In the fire, Shen Miao's eyes were brighter than the flames, and the determination in them was as firm as a rock.

"What's the point of a future if you are dead?" Xie Jingxing said sternly, "It's too risky."

Shen Miao laughed and looked at him sarcastically. "I'm different from the Young Marquis. The Young Marquis is very resourceful. You have to spend too much effort to get what you want. I'm different. If I don't risk my life, I'll be better off dead. I'm not even afraid of death anymore. Why would I be afraid of fire?" She paused. "Leave."

Xie Jingxing frowned and looked at her, his beautiful peach blossom eyes flashing with deep thought. He was not a good person, nor did he want to do anything to save her. Now that he came back to his senses, he laughed at himself for being impatient. At the thought of this, Xie Jingxing crossed his arms and jumped onto the beam that was not yet burning. He said with interest, "I forgot that you are the smartest person from the Shen family. Of course, you have the ability to escape unscathed. However, I also want to see what ability you have."

His purple clothes actually looked a little golden in the firelight, and what was more dazzling than his clothes was the smile on his lips. The young man looked arrogant, and his eyebrows were as beautiful as a painting. However, there was a coldness and cruelty in his gaze.

At the banquet in the east courtyard, Ren Wanyun panicked when she heard that Shen Xin and his wife had returned to the mansion. She still had a trace of hope in her heart, thinking that it must be a servant who had played a prank on her. However, before she could gather herself together, she saw a servant leading a group of people in. The person in the lead laughed and said from afar, "Mother, I came back to the capital to celebrate your birthday! I'm a little late. Please forgive me!"

Everyone looked at the group. The bearded man and the woman at the front were Shen Xin and Luo Xueyan, and the young man with a warm smile behind them was Shen Qiu.

If it were in the past, Ren Wanyun would still be able to maintain her composure and go up to greet Shen Xin. With Ren Wanyun's glib tongue, she would definitely be able to make Shen Xin and his wife happy. However, today, they came back too suddenly, and their daughter was still trapped in the ancestral hall. For a second, Ren Wanyun didn't know what to do.

Old Madam Shen was even more so. She had no idea what to do. She only knew how to throw her weight around in the mansion. Even when dealing with Shen Miao, she would only use underhanded methods. In front of everyone, she was flustered.

Chen Ruoqiu was a little anxious. Although she also wanted the second branch and the first branch to suffer heavy losses, she was attending the banquet now. If Shen Xin did not return today, it would be fine if Shen Miao died in the fire. After all, the dead could not testify. They could say whatever they wanted. However, when Shen Xin returned, he would be able to see it. Anyone with a discerning eye could tell what was going on. What should she do?

Shen Qing and Shen Yue were both a little afraid of their uncle. Because Shen Xin was a general after all, he always had a decisive and fierce aura. The two delicate little girls were always terrified of him for no reason. Seeing their mother so afraid, they were even more so.

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Shen Gui and Shen Wan looked at each other with solemn eyes. All these years, they had been putting on a show and never made a mistake, so their eldest brother didn't get angry at them. However, if

anything happened to Shen Miao today, what would Shen Xin do? At the thought of this, they felt a chill run down their spines.

Chapter 144: Settling the Score (2)

While they were thinking, Shen Xin, his wife, and Shen Qiu had already walked up to Old Madam Shen. Seeing that the guests were silent and only staring at them with strange expressions, Luo Xueyan frowned. She was sensitive enough to sense that something was wrong, but she did not know what was wrong.

Shen Qiu took a look at the tables and then looked around seriously. He asked in confusion, "Eh, Grandmother, why isn't my sister here?"

Hearing that, Shen Xin and Luo Xueyan also noticed it. Shen Yue and Shen Qing were both there, and even Chen Dongling, the illegitimate daughter of the second branch, was there. Among the ladies, Shen Miao was nowhere to be seen. Shen Xin smiled and asked, "Mother, where did Jiaojiao go?"

Old Madam Shen didn't know what to say. Ren Wanyun kept saying that she wanted to call for guards, but she was still sitting at the table. It was obvious that she did not take this matter to heart.

"General Shen!" Feng Anning suddenly stood up and said loudly, "You're back at the right time. The ancestral hall was on fire just now, and Fifth Miss Shen is trapped in the fire!"

Feng Anning was favored by the Feng family. Not to mention today's situation, even if she fell in the house, everyone would come to ask about her well-being. However, when Shen Miao was in danger, everyone in the Shen family looked calm and composed. She felt sorry for Shen Miao.

As soon as she said that, Shen Xin and Luo Xueyan were stunned. The ancestral hall was filled with goods, and Shen Miao was trapped in the fire. Why would Shen Miao go to the ancestral hall for no reason? More importantly, why were these Shen family members still drinking and having fun at the banquet when Shen Miao was in danger?

Ren Wanyun came back to her senses and quickly explained, "Brother, Sister-in-law, I was just about to look for guards when you returned..."

Before she could finish speaking, Shen Xin brushed past her without a word. The look he gave Ren Wanyun made her feel like she had fallen into an icehouse. It was really too terrifying and fierce.

Luo Xueyan and Shen Qiu also came back to their senses and rushed towards the ancestral hall.

In the ancestral hall, the fire was getting stronger and stronger, almost turning into a huge inferno. Inside it, Shen Miao covered her mouth and nose with a wet handkerchief that she had prepared in advance, but Xie Jingxing looked at her with a frown. Even in the choking dust, he looked very relaxed and did not panic at all. He said to Shen Miao, "If you don't go out now, you'll really die here."

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"If you don't go out, you can only die with me," Shen Miao retorted.

“You have a glib tongue.” Xie Jingxing smiled indifferently. “What are you waiting for?”

Before he could finish, he heard a roar from outside. “Jiaojiao!”

Xie Jingxing suddenly rushed to the window. He could see clearly that the people outside were none other than Shen Xin, his wife, and Shen Qiu.

Shen Xin and Luo Xueyan did not expect the fire to be so fierce. The hall was surrounded by guards, but none of them went in to save Shen Miao. They only found some buckets to splash water on the fire. However, at this rate, Shen Miao would eventually be dead.

Shen Qiu gritted his teeth. “I’m going in to save my sister!” With that said, he was about to rush in. However, before he could take two steps, the eaves outside fell in front of him with a bang, stopping him from entering.

“Jiaojiao!”

“Sister!”

In the room, Xie Jingxing raised his eyebrows and said, “So your pet name is Jiaojiao. It doesn’t match you at all.”

Chapter 145: Settling the Score (3)

“The people I’ve been waiting for are here. Young Marquis, think of a way to get out yourself.” Shen Miao’s eyes were filled with anger. She had put on this show for Shen Xin to see clearly what was going on in this seemingly harmonious Shen family and what kind of evil intentions those relatives who claimed to love her had. Generals valued friendship and loyalty. They were not stupid. They were just unwilling to see people as vicious and evil. She did not have much time to let Shen Xin slowly understand it. This was the only way to let them see clearly.

She picked up a piece of ignited log from the ground and touched her arm with it. Xie Jingxing was stunned for a moment. Shen Miao gritted her teeth, and large drops of sweat flowed down her forehead. She threw away the log, and a burn mark appeared on her fair arm.

Xie Jingxing could not hide the shock in his eyes. It was not that he had never met a woman who was ruthless to herself in his life. The women among those death warriors would also treat themselves like this without hesitation. However, Shen Miao was not a death warrior. She was just a delicate little girl from a powerful family. Her life should be like that of the young ladies of the royal families in the capital.

He saw that Shen Miao had stood up and staggered out. However, her movements were extremely precise, and there were no flames where she staggered past. Xie Jingxing narrowed his eyes and saw clearly that the road was narrow. Just now, there was a small hole in the burning ancestral hall. Someone must have prepared it long ago and poured something that could not catch fire on it for Shen Miao to escape.

Everything was arranged by Shen Miao. She really betted her life on a future, and she won. Then, the unlucky one would be the others.

Xie Jingxing smiled and looked meaningfully at the figure that disappeared into the fire. He rushed to the other exit, which was the back door of the ancestral hall. His figure was light like a swallow. With a punch and a kick, he rushed out of the extremely dangerous fire cage.

The people on the other side were already waiting there. Seeing him come out, they all heaved a sigh of relief. "Master."

"The thing is not in the ancestral hall. Shen Xin is back. Let's go," he said quickly and turned to disappear into the bushes behind the ancestral hall.

Outside, Shen Miao stumbled out.

Seeing Shen Miao, Shen Qiu jumped up. "Sister!"

Shen Xin and Luo Xueyan were almost crying with joy. They had already tried to rush in, but they couldn't enter at all. Now that they saw Shen Miao run out, they were overjoyed.

"Jiaojiao!"

When Shen Miao ran out, her legs went weak and she fainted. Shen Qiu quickly caught her and saw a shocking burn mark on her left arm. Shen Qiu's eyes turned red, and Shen Miao leaned into his arms. She closed her eyes and muttered, "Let me out. I won't marry..."

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When Shen Xin and Luo Xueyan, who had rushed over, heard this, they were immediately stunned.

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The room in the west courtyard was filled with a strong medicinal fragrance. The servants inside and outside seemed to have all become busy. This desolate courtyard seemed to have suddenly been upgraded.

"I asked two sister-in-laws to take care of Jiaojiao because I thought that I trusted you. Now, it seems like that's not the case. If not for the fact that I came back at the right time today, I'm afraid no one would have known that Jiaojiao died in this fire." Luo Xueyan crossed her arms and sneered. She was naturally not someone who was easy to get along with, and she was even called "Raksha Girl" on the battlefield. She was usually polite to the people of the Shen family. But today, she was furious and naturally did not hesitate to use the harshest words.

Chapter 146: Settling the Score (4)

"Sister-in-law, it's not like that." Ren Wanyun explained with a smile, "I've already asked the guards to put out the fire just now. I treat Jiaojiao as my own daughter. How can I watch her fall into danger? Sister-in-law, you know very well how I've treated Jiaojiao all these years. Otherwise, why would Jiaojiao be so close to us?" She was also anxious. Luo Xueyan had never been angry with anyone before. She used to be easy to coax, but when she was really angry, her aura was very shocking.

"Your own daughter?" Luo Xueyan sneered. "Our Jiaojiao doesn't have a vicious mother like you." She faced Ren Wanyun and forced her to retreat step by step, but her tone was cold. "I also want to ask you, Sister-in-law, since it's Old Madam's birthday, why is Jiaojiao alone in the ancestral hall?"

"Fifth Sister wants to go to the ancestral hall to offer incense to the ancestors..." Under Luo Xueyan's intense gaze, Ren Wanyun panicked and found a clumsy excuse.

"Ren Wanyun!" Luo Xueyan shouted sternly, "You're lying to me with these excuses. Do you think I'm stupid? You locked her up in the ancestral hall and forced her to marry. I'll settle the score one by one. I won't let this matter rest so easily. Ren Wanyun." Luo Xueyan was fierce to begin with. When she was angry, she had a domineering aura. "If anything happens to my daughter, I'll make you pay!"

After she finished speaking, everyone in the room trembled in fear. Luo Xueyan was not in the Shen family's mansion all year round, and the servants in the house had long stopped treating her as their madam. Most of the people in the house were Ren Wanyun's spies. Every time Luo Xueyan returned, she always had a smile on her face. She was broad-minded and straightforward, and she did not fuss over small matters. Everyone thought that she was easy to talk to and had never seen her so stern.

Shen Miao, who was sleeping in the room, turned over, facking the wall. Her eyes were bright and clear. She had tried her best to put on this show and even leave a scar on her body to make sure the plan succeeded.

Now, Luo Xueyan no longer trusted Ren Wanyun and Chen Ruoqiu as much as before. She treated the people of the second and third branches like enemies. At least Shen Miao didn't hurt herself for nothing.

At this moment, Shen Xin and Shen Qiu were confronting Shen Gui and Shen Wan.

"Brother, this is all a misunderstanding." Shen Gui was a little flustered. He did not know that Ren Wanyun wanted Shen Miao and Shen Qing to be married off, and Shen Miao was locked up in the ancestral hall because she had made a mistake previously. Shen Gui had been holding a grudge against Shen Miao for talking back to him at Rongjing Hall that day, so he naturally had no objections to Shen Miao being locked up in the ancestral hall. Unexpectedly, at this critical moment, the ancestral hall was on fire.

"Second Uncle, this is not a misunderstanding." Shen Qiu took a step forward. He clenched his fists tightly and tried his best to control his urge to go forward and flip the two of them over. He said, "During Grandmother's birthday banquet, my sister was locked up in the ancestral hall alone. I want to ask what kind of mistake she made. Why are there so many guards guarding the door? These guards didn't save her and just watched from outside. Second Uncle, Third Uncle, can I understand that these guards are not there to save her but to block others' way and think of ways to kill her?"

After all, Shen Qiu was young and impetuous, so he naturally wouldn't think twice before saying something. He didn't disappoint Shen Miao, and his words were even more harsh than she thought. As soon as he said that, Shen Xin's expression darkened, and Shen Gui and Shen Wan were shocked. Shen Wan hastened to say, "Nephew, how can you say that? Shen Miao is our niece. How can we harm her?" He looked at Shen Xin. "Brother, what happened today was an accident. Brother, if we wanted to harm Shen Miao, why would we bring her up? Don't you believe us?"

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Chapter 147: Settling the Score (5)

Shen Wan was a scholar to begin with. He pretended to be upright, as if he was the only righteous person in the world. However, Shen Xin did not fall for this. If it were in the past, he would probably think that this was a misunderstanding. After all, they had raised Shen Miao well for so many years, and she was even willing to be close to them. However, after what happened today, he felt that these people were just greedy people.

Therefore, under Shen Gui and Shen Wan's shocked gazes, Shen Xin cursed, "Bullsh*t! Do you think I'm easy to fool? I handed Jiaojiao to you, but you want to kill her, lock her in the ancestral hall, and force her to marry. Shen Gui, Shen Wan, don't think that just because I'm not in the capital, you can bully my daughter. When Jiaojiao wakes up, we'll see!"

Shen Gui and Shen Wan were dumbfounded. Although Shen Xin was a rough general, he had always restrained his rough temper in front of them for so many years. For a second, Shen Gui and Shen Wan didn't know what to say.

In fact, Shen Xin was also extremely angry. When he saw his daughter in the sea of fire, his heart was filled with anger and pain. Later, what Shen Miao said before she fainted became the last straw that broke the camel's back. The less she said, the more people would dwell on it. It even made Shen Xin imagine what kind of life Shen Miao was living in the Shen family. The more he thought about it, the more he hated his two brothers. If possible, Shen Xin wanted to draw his sword and kill these two animals!

"Shut up!" A furious shout came from behind. Everyone turned around and saw Old Madam Shen coming over, held by her two maids.

Old Madam Shen was so angry that she almost fainted. She had always cared about her reputation the most in her life, but today, she made a fool of herself in front of the most famous people in the capital. The guests saw how Shen Xin and Luo Xueyan were accusing her with their own eyes, so they left in a hurry. At this moment, all the guests had left, so she rushed over to condemn them. Unexpectedly, she saw Shen Xin questioning Shen Gui and Shen Wan, so she naturally spoke without hesitation.

Shen Qiu turned around and saw Old Madam Shen. When Shen Yuan was around, Old Madam Shen favored him. Everyone said that it was because Old Madam Shen did not like to fight and kill. Shen Yuan was a civil servant, so Old Madam Shen favored him. However, Shen Qiu did not like to be close to Old Madam Shen. Later, when he came back less often, he became even more distant with her.

This time, knowing that after Shen Miao was in trouble, the banquet still went on as usual, Shen Qiu was furious. Without seeking justice for his sister, he couldn't take it lying down.

Old Madam Shen glanced at Shen Qiu and then at Shen Xin. In the end, she put on airs and said, "Shen Xin, what are you doing? Are you putting on airs as a general in my Shen family?"

When Old Madam Shen was young, she was a singer. She was still gentle and virtuous on the surface, but behind the scene, she had a lot of dirty tricks up her sleeve. Before Old General Shen died, he told Shen Xin that Shen Gui and Shen Wan were civil servants, and only Shen Xin had inherited his position as

a general. He wanted Shen Xin to support his two younger brothers and make sure the family was harmonious. When Old General Shen was alive, he had a deep relationship with Shen Xin. Therefore, over the years, Shen Xin's respect for Old Madam Shen had not changed at all.

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Chapter 148: Settling the Score (6)

Parents doted on their children, and children doted on their children, but very few doted on their parents more than their children. It was the same for Shen Xin. He naturally did not hesitate to choose his own flesh and blood.

He cupped his fists at Old Madam Shen. "Mother, it's not that I'm putting on airs in the house, but what happened today is unacceptable. As a general, I can't even protect my daughter. How can I face the ancestors of the Shen family? I'll definitely get to the bottom of this matter. Today, I should be celebrating your birthday, but I really can't watch Jiaojiao fall into a predicament and pretend nothing happened. I will go and apologize to you in person when this matter is resolved."

Old Madam Shen stood rooted to the ground. Shen Xin had always been obedient to her. When she was young, she had also thought of using tricks to kill Shen Xin, but the old general doted on Shen Xin like his life, so she did not even have a chance to do so. When Shen Xin grew up, she was no match for him. Fortunately, Shen Xin treated her with respect. This was the first time Shen Xin had refuted her so harshly, and she was so shocked that she couldn't say anything.

Shen Xin turned to look at Shen Gui and Shen Wan and said in a serious tone, "I will naturally find out what exactly happened. Second Brother and Third Brother, farewell." He turned around and strode away. Without even looking at the others, Shen Qiu quickly followed.

After walking out of the east courtyard, Shen Xin said to Shen Qiu, "Give the wolf cloak to your sister later. I think the mansion is as dangerous as the battlefield. Your sister needs it more than Old Madam."

"Yes." Shen Qiu was overjoyed. Then, he thought of something and said, "Father, before Sister fainted, she mentioned something about a marriage. We have to investigate it. We weren't informed of her marriage at all back in the Northwest."

"Hmph." Shen Xin said in a low voice, "I think there are many demons in the General's Mansion. This time, your sister almost lost her life. Find out who wants her to die and I'll punish them one by one!"

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At the Marquis of Lin'an's Residence.

When Xie Jingxing returned to the house, he saw that there was already someone sitting at the table. The person was dressed in white and was smiling at him.

"What are you doing here?" Xie Jingxing put down his sword and asked.

"I heard that you went to the Shen family to look for something. How did it go?" Gao Yang asked with a smile.

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“Nothing.”

“I already guessed that it’s not in the Shen family.” Gao Yang shook his head with a trace of disappointment. “If it’s not in the Shen family, what are you going to do next?”

Xie Jingxing sat down opposite him and poured himself a cup of tea. “What else can I do?”

“However, after Shen Xin returned to the capital this time, there might be a turmoil in Ming Qi.” Gao Yang looked at him and paused for a while before continuing, “At this time, will the royal family...” He placed his hand on his neck and did a cutthroat gesture.

“This day will come sooner or later.” Xie Jingxing took a sip of tea and commented calmly without any sympathy.

Gao Yang shrugged and suddenly thought of something. He took out a small green bottle from his pocket. “I heard from Tie Yi that your hand was injured last time. I made this for you.”

“What medicine do I need for a small injury?” Xie Jingxing frowned.

“My medicine doesn’t leave a scar.” Gao Yang stuffed the medicine bottle into Xie Jingxing’s hand. “It won’t be good if it leaves a scar.”

“I’m not a woman.” Xie Jingxing threw the medicine bottle back like he was avoiding a plague. “Take it back!”

“If you were a woman, you would be crying and begging me for it,” Gao Yang said. “Take it. This medicine is very expensive. A bottle is worth a thousand gold.”

Xie Jingxing glanced at him and smiled in disdain. However, he suddenly thought of the scene of the girl burning her arm in the sea of fire without hesitation.

Would she be afraid of leaving a scar?

After a moment of silence, he reached out and put the bottle in his pocket.

Chapter 149: Shen Qiu (1)

Shen Xin’s sudden return to the capital caused a huge sensation.

People praised Shen Xin for being heroic and invincible. This time, he had received a letter of surrender from the enemy army in advance. When he attended the court banquet, the emperor would definitely reward him greatly. However, now that Shen Xin was already a first-rank official, he could not be promoted anymore. Everyone guessed that this reward would probably be given to Shen Xin’s son, Shen Qiu.

The other thing was that on the day Shen Xin returned to the capital, it happened to be Old Madam Shen’s birthday. However, the ancestral hall suddenly caught fire, and what was more accidental was

that his daughter was trapped in the ancestral hall. On that day, Shen Xin saw how cold the Shen family treated his daughter. People were afraid that the Shen family would not be peaceful in the future.

These two things spread like wildfire in the capital. Some people only laughed when they heard it, while others were anxious.

In the boudoir of the west courtyard of the Shen family, Shen Miao stood up with her coat on. Shen Xin and his wife had been summoned to the palace by the emperor today, but before they left, they specially mobilized the guards in the army to guard the west courtyard.

Yesterday, Shen Xin came back in a hurry and went around to look for a doctor. Later, Shen Miao went to rest, so he didn't disturb her and hadn't had a chance to talk to her.

"Miss, do you feel better?" Jingzhe asked worriedly. Her gaze landed on Shen Miao's arm, and her eyes turned sour. She said, "If I had been faster yesterday, Miss wouldn't have to suffer like this. Now, there are even scars..."

The burn marks were deep, and the doctor said that she could only rest and take good care of herself. It was impossible for her not to have any scars. Women all cared about their appearances. Now that Shen Miao was scalded, Jingzhe blamed herself every time she thought about it.

"I'm fine." Shen Miao looked at her and smiled. "You did well yesterday. You didn't barge in because you were anxious. If you barged in, you would have ruined my plan."

Jingzhe lowered her head. Later, when Shen Miao fainted, Shen Xin and his wife flew into a rage. She thought about it and roughly understood Shen Miao's plan. It was precisely because of this that Jingzhe felt even more sorry for Shen Miao. She probably had no choice but to put herself in such a dangerous situation to let Shen Xin and his wife see the true colors of the Shen family.

At this age, a girl should be playing like other girls. Every move Shen Miao made was related to her life. She had to plan for everything herself. A small mistake would have cost her life.

"I'll do whatever you say," Jingzhe muttered.

.....

Shen Miao was relieved. Jingzhe was indeed the bravest of the four maids. In the future, she could still trust Jingzhe to do it. Naturally, she had to slowly nurture Gu Yu and the others. She was not the naive Shen Miao, but the empress of the world. She definitely had to have her own trusted aides. What she faced in the future was much more dangerous than what she was facing now. She already got used to it, but these girls had to learn to get used to it.

As she was thinking, she suddenly heard a hearty laugh from outside. "Sister!"

Shen Miao turned around and saw Shen Qiu walking in. He had taken off his armor and was only wearing a green shirt, making him look exceptionally handsome. He had wheat-colored skin and two dimples when he smiled, making him look young and friendly. He walked closer and looked at Shen Miao carefully before asking, "Sister, do you feel any discomfort?"

Shen Miao suddenly closed her eyes, and memories of her previous life flooded her mind.

In all fairness, Shen Qiu did his best to be her brother. Back then, no matter how cold she was to Shen Qiu, Shen Qiu was still as enthusiastic as ever. Later, something happened. Shen Qiu took a girl's virginity and was forced to marry that girl. From then on, everything changed. He often made mistakes in military affairs. Later, he fell off his horse and broke his leg. Later, that girl made a cuckold of Shen Qiu. In a fit of anger, Shen Qiu killed the adulterer. The adulterer turned out to be the only son of a minister. The minister sued Shen Qiu. Shen Xin spent all his money and managed to save his son's life. However, Shen Qiu still died one winter morning. Someone found his corpse in the pond.

Chapter 150: Shen Qiu (2)

At that time, Shen Miao was already married to Fu Xiuyi. When she heard the news, she rushed back to the mansion and saw Shen Qiu's swollen corpse.

Even though she was not close to Shen Qiu, they were after all siblings. She was sad and in pain because of this and fell seriously ill, but Fu Xiuyi didn't give Shen Xin time to grieve and ask him to go to war at that time.

That cold winter sun, the wet corpse outside the pond, and Shen Qiu's pale and deformed face made Shen Miao unable to breathe.

Shen Miao covered her chest, panting heavily.

"Sister!" Shen Qiu was shocked. He helped her up and shouted, "Go and call the doctor! Quick! My sister is not feeling well!"

A hand grabbed Shen Qiu's arm. He turned around and saw Shen Miao standing up with his hand in hers. She said to the person behind her, "No need, I'm just a little giddy."

"You are not fully recovered yet. It's better to get a doctor to take a look at you." Shen Qiu shook his head and said with concern.

"I'm fine." Shen Miao said to Jingzhe, who was hesitating, "You guys can leave."

Her tone was firm and calm, making Shen Qiu stunned for a moment.

"Sister, what's wrong?" Shen Qiu asked. As soon as he spoke, he was a little annoyed with himself for being too harsh. He usually faced rough men in the army and forgot to be gentle to little girls. Therefore, he softened his voice and said, "When I came back yesterday and saw you trapped in the fire, I was shocked. Sister, why were you in the ancestral hall? Were you locked up?"

Shen Miao shook her head and smiled at him. "I haven't seen you for a year, Brother. How are you?"

Hearing that, Shen Qiu scratched his head and said with a smile, "I'm alright. I've made a few small contributions. When His Majesty rewards me, I'll let you choose what you like." Then, he seemed to have thought of something and said happily, "By the way, Father hunted a rare wolf and skinned it to make a cloak. I'll get a servant to bring it to you later. That cloak is invulnerable to swords and spears, and it's impervious to fire and water. If you had that cloak, you wouldn't have been burned yesterday..."

Before he could finish his sentence, Shen Qiu froze. Shen Miao stepped forward and wrapped her arms around him, resting her head on his chest.

Even though they were siblings, they were not children after all. For a moment, Shen Qiu was a little embarrassed, but he was also a little happy. It had been a long time since Shen Miao was so close to him, so he was a little flattered. He was happy, but then his heart sank. Shen Miao suddenly became so close to him probably because she had suffered greatly.

He asked anxiously, "Sister, did someone bully you? If someone did, just tell me. I'll beat them to death..."

She slowly let go and looked up to meet Shen Qiu's concerned gaze.

"Sister..." Shen Qiu was also stunned. The girl in front of him had bright eyes. When she faced him, her gaze was no longer impatient and agitated like before, but pensive. That feeling was a little unfamiliar to him. He carefully sized up the girl in front of him. After a year of not seeing her, Shen Miao had lost a lot of weight. Her originally slightly round face actually revealed a chiseled chin, making her look much more delicate. Her facial features were becoming more and more clear. At some point, there was no trace of her naivety. When she looked at him, there was a faint relief and a loneliness that one found strange.