

Chapter 261: Jade Rabbit Festival (3)

A moment later, Concubine Wan walked in with Jingzhe. Shen Miao looked up at her.

Concubine Wan was wearing a dark blue cloth jacket and a green pleated skirt. There was a plain silver bracelet on her wrist, making her look not vulgar but rather elegant. Her hands were pair and slender and her body was voluptuous. Most men would find it hard to take their eyes off of her. Looking up, Shen Miao saw an oval face, big eyes, fair skin, and red lips. When Concubine smiled, although she tried her best to restrain herself, her charm was still obvious.

This was a woman who knew she should hide her charm and stay away from the limelight. However, she was in too much of a hurry to make a move. As soon as Shen Qing died and Ren Wanyun went crazy, she started to plan her schemes. Shen Miao had seen many such people in her previous life back in the palace harem. Some were smart, and some were beautiful. They thought that as long as they wanted, they could firmly control a man's heart. Little did they know that there were countless gorgeous beauties in the world, and a man's heart was the most unpredictable. If they could restrain themselves from appearing too impatient, they might have a chance to grab a place in a man's heart. However, once they lost their patience, they tended to be the first ones to die.

Concubine Wan was obviously the kind of person who thought she was smart.

Concubine Wan bowed to Shen Miao and sat down on the table opposite her. She was sitting sideways, and her legs were slightly tilted, making her shape look very curvaceous. Shen Miao looked at her calmly and went straight to the point. "Concubine Wan, why brought you here today?"

Concubine Wan did not expect Shen Miao to be so straightforward, which made her stunned for a moment. She heard that Shen Xin and his wife were the most powerful in the Shen family now, and that the most useless Fifth Miss had turned out to be not so useless. She wanted to curry favor with Shen Miao, but she did not expect Shen Miao to not even bother to greet her. Concubine Wan was a little confused, not knowing if Shen Miao didn't know the very basics of etiquette or if she did it on purpose.

In fact, Concubine Wan was thinking too much. Shen Miao couldn't be bothered to talk to her because a concubine was not worthy of her attention.

Concubine Wan smiled apologetically and said, "It's almost the end of the year. I came to see Fifth Miss to wish you a happy new year." She said, "It seems that Fifth Miss has been on bad terms with Second Master and Madam because of Eldest Miss. I apologize to you on their behalf and hope you won't take it to heart."

Shen Miao looked at her with a faint smile. "Concubine Wan, do Second Uncle and Second Aunt know that you're apologizing on their behalf?"

Concubine Wan was stunned for a moment, but she continued with a smile, "It's naturally not my place to apologize for them, but I heard from Second Master that he was a little impulsive that day so he did something he shouldn't have. I took the initiative to come and apologize. I hope Fifth Miss will not mind."

Shen Miao looked at her without blinking. Under Shen Miao's gaze, Concubine Wan looked a little uneasy, but she quickly suppressed it. She smiled and continued, "Actually, Third Miss also wants to come and see Fifth Miss. After all, you are all cousins. However, Third Miss has been a little sick lately. She said that she will come and greet Fifth Miss when she's feeling better."

Shen Dongling? Shen Miao raised an eyebrow.

In addition to the three legitimate daughters, there was also an illegitimate daughter, Shen Dongling from the second branch, who was born to Concubine Wan. In the Shen family, the third branch, Shen Wan and Chen Ruoqiu, only had Shen Yue. Shen Xin and his wife only had Shen Miao and Shen Qiu. The second branch, Shen Gui, had a lot of concubines and illegitimate daughters. However, most of them died very young.

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Shen Dongling was ranked third, so she was called Third Miss. After Concubine Wan gave birth to her, she stayed in the courtyard all day long and did not come out. Shen Dongling was also weak and sickly. In Shen Miao's previous life, she actually had no impression of Shen Dongling at all.

In her previous life, Shen Dongling seemed to have been given to someone by Ren Wanyun to help Shen Gui rise to another height in his official career. In this life, Ren Wanyun had already lost her momentum, and Concubine Wan had taken her place. It was unknown if Shen Dongling's fate would change because of this.

"Third Sister is not in good health. It's best if she doesn't walk around." Shen Miao said indifferently, "If she catches a cold because of visiting me, I won't be able to bear the responsibility."

When Concubine Wan heard this, she was a little displeased, but she still smiled and said, "Among all the cousins, Third Miss likes Fifth Miss the most. It's all my fault. Third Miss was born sick and can only stay in the courtyard all year around. It's all my fault..." After saying that, she turned her head to the side and covered her eyes with the handkerchief in her hand, looking extremely sad.

Shen Miao couldn't stand Concubine Wan's hypocrisy and said indifferently, "No one can decide the body they want to be born into. Moreover, it's not necessarily a bad thing for Third Sister to stay in the courtyard. Eldest Sister has enjoyed all the glory and fame, but look at her. Who knew that she would die so young?" The corners of her lips curled up slightly. "Fate is ever-changing."

As soon as she said that, Concubine Wan looked at Shen Miao in surprise. A moment later, she forced a smile and said, "Fifth Miss, you're right." She suddenly stood up and looked at Shen Miao. "Fifth Miss, I suddenly remembered that I still have something to do, so I'll take my leave first. When you're free one day, I will get Third Miss to come and greet you. She's not in good health. Please forgive her." With that, she bowed to Shen Miao and left. She left in a hurry as opposed to the composed manner with which she came.

Jingzhe had been serving tea at the side. Looking at Concubine Wan's back as she left anxiously, she asked in confusion, "What does Concubine Wan mean? Isn't she here to suck up to us? Why did she

leave so early? And Third Miss, she hasn't left the courtyard for so many years and has only seen you a few times. Why does Concubine Wan make it sound like she knows Fifth Miss very well?"

"That's right." Gu Yu cleared the teacups on the table and said, "Now that I think about it, I can't even remember what Third Miss looks like. She's a daughter of the Shen family as well, but she's been hiding for so many years just to avoid Second Madam. She's really pitiful."

"What makes her pitiful?" Shen Miao picked up the tea on the table and took a sip. "I'm afraid in her eyes, you girls are the pitiful ones."

"Her?" Jingzhe was puzzled. "Miss, are you talking about Third Miss?"

Shen Miao smiled. "I was wrong. There's a smart person in our mansion."

The purpose of Concubine Wan coming over today was obviously to test her. However, for someone as smart as Concubine Wan to think of this method to test her, on the surface, she looked like she could not wait to announce that she had won Chen Gui's favor again, but on careful thought, that was not the case. The elusive Shen Dongling was much smarter than Shen Qing.

However... no matter which side she was on, Shen Miao would not treat her as a friend, let alone a cousin.

"Be careful." She put down the teacup in her hand and reminded the maids beside her.

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On the other side, Concubine Wan hurriedly returned to her courtyard and closed the door. She took three steps forward and said to the girl sitting behind the screen, "Dongling."

The figure behind the screen looked at Concubine Wan. Concubine Wan took a big breath and sat down on the wooden chair, repeating what she had said to Shen Miao today. She was a good performer and had a good memory. She gave an accurate and vivid account of the conversation between her and Shen Miao. After finishing, Concubine Wan said, "Dongling, what exactly does she mean by that? I feel a chill run down my spine. Do you think... What happened to Eldest Miss is related to Fifth Miss?"

"Mother, be careful with your words." The person behind the screen said, "What happened to Eldest Sister is in the past. Don't mention this again. Otherwise, you will only harm yourself."

"I just feel a little uneasy," Concubine Wan said.

A soft sigh came from behind the screen. The person sitting put down the embroidery in her hand, stood up, and walked to Concubine Wan's side.

She was also a beautiful girl. Compared to Shen Qing, who was graceful, Shen Yue, who was gorgeous, and Shen Miao, who was dignified, this girl looked fragile and weak. Having an oval face and big eyes, she resembled Concubine Wan in many ways. If her eyes were more animated, she could attract any young men in the capital. However, her face was pale to the point of bloodlessness. This way, her charm was compromised, making her look like not someone who could harm others.

She was wearing an old light yellow dress that might have belonged to Concubine Wan. This girl's body was not as well-developed as Concubine Wan's, so the dress was a bit loose and baggy on her.

The girl was the daughter of the second branch of the Shen family, Shen Dongling.

"Everything is much better than before." Shen Dongling comforted her. "At least you and I can go out openly and not be threatened by Second Madam."

"The Shen family is not having a good time." Concubine Wan looked at her daughter and felt a pang in her heart. "Back then, I was greedy for wealth and thought that after entering the Shen family, I could enjoy a comfortable life for the rest of my life. Little did I know that the danger looming in rich families was far greater than I expected. I even got you involved in this mess. For so many years, in order to survive under Second Madam's nose, we had no choice but to live like this. The people in this family are very sophisticated. Even the Fifth Miss, who people took to be a fool, became so terrifying now..."

"Mother." Shen Dongling shook her head. "Regardless of whether Fifth Sister has anything to do with what happened to Eldest Sister or not, we are also the ones who benefited from it.. It's very difficult for Second Madam to make a comeback now. Even if Second Brother is powerful, he is practically alone."

"That's true." Concubine Wan looked at Shen Dongling in relief. "But Dongling, you asked me to test Fifth Miss today. Fifth Miss is quite cold to me. I'm afraid she doesn't want to befriend us. What should we do now?"

"So be it." Shen Dongling smiled. "Fifth Sister seems to be a smart person. In that case, it's better not to provoke her from now on. If possible, let her deal with Second Brother."

"Second Young Master?" Concubine Wan was stunned. "Second Young Master has already become an official. Fifth Miss is just a little girl. How can she deal with Second Young Master?"

"Mother, don't worry." Shen Dongling said, "Fifth Sister is not as simple as she appears. She's the sharpest knife in the Shen family."

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Outsiders probably didn't know about the shows unfolding in the Shen mansion. They thought that the Shen family was still in harmony. This indeed had always been the case before this year. Unfortunately, things in the world were always changing, but in what direction they were changing, no one knew.

Chapter 264: Jade Rabbit Festival (6)

In the courtyard dedicated to training outside the Shen family's mansion, Mo Qing was practicing with Shen Qiu's personal guard, Ah Zhi. Ah Zhi was currently the most skilled guard in Shen Qiu's crew, but Mo Qing was actually on par with him. When Shen Miao introduced Mo Qing to Shen Qiu, Shen Qiu wanted to test Mo Qing's ability. It turned out that Mo Qing far exceeded his expectations.

Shen Qiu was naturally very happy. There were no weak soldiers under a strong general. The more strong soldiers he had, the more famous the Shen family's army would be. Ever since he recruited Mo Qing, Shen Qiu had been praising Shen Miao for having a good eye for talents. Occasionally, he would pester Shen Miao to go and find more talents like Mo Qing for him, but Shen Miao said no with a roll of

her eyes. In her previous life, she only knew one commander. It was not like everyone could be a commander.

After practicing with Mo Qing, Ah Zhi was so tired that he was sweating profusely. He took a big gulp of water and said, "It's really satisfying to fight with Brother Mo! Brother Mo's swordsmanship is really superb."

Mo Qing cupped his hands. "Brother Zhi, you flatter me. My sword technique is not superb. There is always someone better than me."

"Is there anyone better at swordsmanship than Brother Mo?" Ah Zhi smiled and said, "Then I really want to see him!"

Mo Qing did not speak, but what appeared in his mind was that night at the Wolong Temple. He carried Shen Qing to change rooms with Shen Miao. That night, a man in black rushed in from the window and easily snatched his sword. In front of that person, Mo Qing felt as weak as a child. He heard Shen Miao call him, "Young Marquis Xie."

That young man's swordsmanship was truly superb.

Ah Zhi sighed and said, "I wonder how satisfying it will be to kill enemies on the battlefield with Brother Mo. I actually can't wait. Unfortunately, General has to stay in the capital for another half a year for Fifth Miss. If you want to defeat the enemy with us, you have to wait for half a year." He looked at Mo Qing. "Speaking of which, Fifth Miss is really good at finding talents. Someone as rare as you is not easily found."

"Fifth Miss is indeed an amazing person," Mo Qing said. Over the days being with Shen Miao, he did look down on some of the things she did. As a woman, Shen Miao was cruel, heartless, vicious, and cold, but she could not be hated because the people she dealt with were all people who wanted her dead.

Mo Qing remembered that day when Shen Miao lifted the curtain of the carriage and asked him with a smile, "Are you willing to serve my family with your martial arts?"

Talents are all eager for someone who can appreciate them. In a way, Shen Miao was his benefactor.

Ah Zhi elbowed him. "Tomorrow will be the Jade Rabbit Festival. You must make sure Fifth Miss is safe and sound."

"Huh?" Mo Qing suddenly looked up.

"What's wrong?" Ah Zhi followed his gaze and said in confusion, "There's nothing."

"I was probably being too vigilant." Mo Qing shook his head, ignoring the strange feeling in his heart.

On the other side of the wall, there were two people leaning against the wall. These two people were both wearing hemp clothes and bamboo hats that covered their faces tightly.

One said, "There are indeed many talents in the Shen family. Even a guard is so trained. We were almost discovered."

"That's right." The other one lowered his voice and said, "There are many guards outside the Shen family, and Shen Xin's soldiers are also around. I'm afraid it'll be hard for us to make a move."

"The higher-ups gave us an order." Another one said, "Capture her and get the information we want. We are so close to becoming rich and powerful. How can we give up now?"

"Of course we can't give up." The man in the bamboo hat chuckled. "Didn't the two guards say just now that Shen Miao will be going out tomorrow for the Jade Rabbit Festival? At that time, the streets will be crowded and it will be easy for us to make a move. We just have to separate her from her guards and take her away."

"Do it cleanly." The man's words were cold and ruthless. "In order to get rid of future troubles, tie her up and throw her into the lake when you get the information. Don't have any designs on her."

"Got it."

Chapter 265: Missing (1)

The day of the Jade Rabbit Festival was indeed especially lively.

After Shen Miao finished dinner, Bai Lu and Shuang Jiang rushed in and said to her excitedly, "Miss, someone is setting off fireworks in the city. I heard that they're going to set off fireworks non-stop tonight. It's very beautiful."

"Why are you getting so excited?" Gu Yu reprimanded them as she combed Shen Miao's hair. "We will go out to look at the fireworks anyway. There's no hurry."

Before she could finish her sentence, she heard Shen Qiu's joyful voice outside. "Sister, are you done dressing up? Father and Mother are waiting for us in the front hall."

"Young Master," Jingzhe replied from outside. "Miss is still doing her hair. Please wait a moment."

"Why does it take so long for a young girl to do her hair?" Shen Qiu muttered, "My soldiers don't need this much time to put on their armor." With that, he shouted into the room, "Sister, I'll wait for you in the front hall. Come over when you are done."

Shen Miao responded through the window. Gu Yu happened to have finished combing Shen Miao's hair and was fumbling in the boxes. In the end, she found a jade hairpin and put it on for Shen Miao. Shen Miao glanced at the bronze mirror and was stunned. "Why this one?"

"I think this hairpin matches your clothes very well." Gu Yu smiled and said, "Moreover, this hairpin is exquisite but simple. It suits Miss very well."

Shen Miao couldn't help but reach out to touch the hairpin on her head. It was the jade hairpin given to her by Xie Jingxing. This hairpin was later appraised by a few pawnshops and was said to be priceless. Shen Miao wanted to return it to Xie Jingxing, but later on, she thought better of it. She thought that she might be short of money one day and could probably use it to exchange for some money. However, if Xie Jingxing found out that this hairpin ended up in the hands of a pawnbroker, he would probably be furious.

“Miss, don’t you want to use this hairpin?” Seeing Shen Miao was hesitating, Gu Yu said, “How about I find another one for you? There is a lot of jewelry in the boxes. I can probably find some good-looking hairpins.”

“There’s no need.” Shen Miao interrupted her. “I’m afraid it will only waste more time. Let’s just settle for this one.”

Gu Yu adjusted Shen Miao’s collar and put a cloak on her. She smiled and said, “This looks perfect.”

“Don’t forget the hand warmer.” Jingzhe stuffed a hand warmer into her hands.

When Shen Miao and her maids arrived at the main hall, everyone from the Shen family was already there. In the past, the Shen family always went to the Jade Rabbit Festival together, so it was the same this year.

Chen Ruoqiu and Shen Wan were talking. Shen Yue was wearing a light pink dress with a long skirt. In such cold weather, she still chose to wear thin clothes. Though she put on a cloak to keep warm, it wouldn’t help much. When she saw Shen Miao, she smiled and called her, “Fifth Sister.”

Shen Miao nodded at her and turned to look at Shen Gui. If there was anything different this year from the previous years, it was that Ren Wanyun was not around, and neither was Shen Yuanbai. In the past, it was Ren Wanyun who brought Shen Yuanbai along, but now, Ren Wanyun was delirious and could not go out. Shen Yuanbai was too young, and there were so many kidnappers on the street. Old Madam Shen kept Shen Yuanbai in the mansion to stay with her. Shen Yuan stood beside Shen Wan, and behind him, Concubine Wan was holding the hand of a girl who was looking over.

This was the illegitimate daughter of the second branch, Shen Dongling.

Shen Dongling was wearing an apricot-colored long jacket. It was probably because she was ‘afraid’ of the cold, the jacket was extremely thick. which made her look tiny and thin in contrast. In fact, seriously speaking, her facial features were as beautiful as Concubine Wan’s, but for some reason, her aura was so faint that she appeared almost invisible. She did not greet Shen Miao and just looked at her in silence. It was unknown if she was being shy or cold.

Chapter 266: Missing (2)

Shen Miao retracted her gaze and heard Shen Qiu say, “Sister, you’re getting better and better looking!”

“Brat.” Shen Xin kicked Shen Qiu. “What are you talking about? Your sister always looks good.”

Luo Xueyan also smiled and walked to Shen Miao’s side. She held her hand and said, “Our Jiaojiao is already a big girl.”

Everyone in the hall looked at Shen Miao, their eyes filled with confusion. A year ago, Shen Miao was still a silly girl who liked putting gold and silver on her. Now, she was wearing a simple purple dress in addition to a cloak that was the color of a peony with exquisite flowers embroidered on it. She only chose to decorate her hair with a single hairpin, which surprisingly gave her a gorgeous noble aura. Her facial features were delicate and clear. For some reason, people found the girl unapproachable and inviolable.

All the women in the room had a surging feel of inferiority when compared to her.

A trace of jealousy flashed across Shen Yue's eyes. She didn't expect that Shen Miao, who was the most inferior to her in this mansion, could actually steal her thunder without her knowing. Shen Yue was most confident in her scholarly elegance and beauty, but today, when she saw Shen Miao, she actually felt ashamed. She looked up at Chen Ruoqiu, hoping to see some disdain for Shen Miao in her mother's eyes. However, she also saw a trace of seriousness in Chen Ruoqiu's eyes, which made her heart skip a beat.

Concubine Wan sighed in her heart and subconsciously tightened her grip on Shen Dongling. She did not have any other thoughts. She only felt that Shen Miao really lived up to her identity as the legitimate daughter of the first branch. No matter how smart her daughter was, she was still incomparable to Shen Miao in terms of nobleness.

The men in the room did not have too strong a reaction. Other than Shen Xin and Shen Qiu, Shen Gui and Shen Wan only frowned. As for Shen Yuan, he stared at Shen Miao with a deep gaze, thinking about something.

Chen Ruoqiu was the first to speak. "Since everyone is here, let's set off now."

Old Madam Shen was old, so such a journey was not suitable for her. In the Shen family, only Old Madam Shen, Shen Yuanbai, Ren Wanyun, and the concubines of the second branch were left. The rest all went to the street to participate in the Jade Rabbit Festival. In the past, they would chat and laugh along the way. However, this year, because Shen Miao was almost burnt to ashes in the ancestral hall, Shen Xin and Shen Qiu deliberately estranged themselves from the other two branches and only talked to Luo Xueyan.

The guards of the Shen family followed behind. In fact, every year, in order to protect the safety of the people and prevent bandits from causing trouble when the streets got too crowded, the capital would send many guards to patrol the streets, so it was considered safe to stroll around.

Shen Xin did not speak to Shen Gui and Shen Wan, so Shen Gui and Shen Wan did not ask for a snub. The two of them only chatted with each other. Shen Yue used to chat very happily with Shen Qing and Shen Miao because with Shen Miao around as a contrast, she would appear much smarter. Now, Shen Miao ignored her, so Shen Yue could only talk to Shen Dongling. Seeing that Shen Yue was willing to be close to her daughter, Concubine Wan was naturally overjoyed. However, Shen Dongling did not seem to be very enthusiastic about talking with Shen Yue. Instead, she looked a little sheepish. After a while, Shen Yue lost interest.

As the group walked on the street, the atmosphere was strangely awkward.

Chapter 267: Missing (3)

As Shen Miao walked, she looked at the lanterns and riddles on the street seriously. Shen Xin and the others hated guessing lantern riddles the most because they were all rough people from the military. They had no patience to dwell on a riddle. Shen Qiu said, "Sister, if you like that prize lantern, tomorrow,

I'll find the best craftsman in the capital for you to make one. You don't have to go to the trouble of guessing the riddles."

Shen Qiu could not understand the point of this whole thing. After waiting for Chen Ruoqiu and the others to finish guessing the riddle, the group walked on. At this moment, Concubine Wan suddenly said to Shen Gui, "Master, I heard that Fairy Jade Rabbit will be dancing at Wanli Lake tonight. This year, the Jade Rabbit Lantern will also be set free there. Let's go and take a look."

When Chen Ruoqiu heard that, she frowned and said softly, "That Fairy Jade Rabbit is from the Treasure Fragrance Chamber. I'm afraid it's not appropriate for us to go there." What kind of place was the Treasure Fragrance Chamber? It was the largest brothel in the capital. The girls there were all enchanting. How many men abandoned their wives for the sake of sleeping with the girls of the Treasure Fragrance Chamber? However, no matter how much those madams despised the Treasure Fragrance Chamber, they could not change the fact that the girls there were all talented. Therefore, this year, the Jade Rabbit Fairy was still played by a girl from the Treasure Fragrance Restaurant.

"Second Madam." Concubine Wan said softly, "Although that's the case, I think Fairy Jade Rabbit won't do anything inappropriate in front of so many people. We're out for some fun tonight. How can we miss the show? There's no need to be so serious." Concubine Wan did not want to argue with Chen Ruoqiu at first, but just like Ren Wanyun, she could not stand Chen Ruoqiu pretending to be high and mighty.

Everyone heard the confrontation between the two of them. For a moment, the awkward atmosphere became a little exciting. The men would not interfere in the women's argument. Shen Dongling only held Concubine Wan's hand and closed her mouth tightly without saying anything. Shen Yue wanted to speak up for Chen Ruoqiu, but she felt that it wasn't her place to speak. For a moment, no one spoke.

"Who said that Fairy Jade Rabbit is the only thing to see in Wanli Lake?" Shen Miao said softly, breaking the silence, "The grand occasion of thousands upon thousands of people lighting the lanterns is not something that can be seen every day. Moreover, one can't choose their family background. You don't have to look down on others because of what they do for a living. No matter what her trade is, she's Fairy Jade Rabbit tonight. Why do you care so much about who she really is?"

Everyone was stunned at first. Shen Xin was the first to laugh out heartily. "Jiaojiao is right. You can't choose your family background. What's the point of looking down on others?"

Luo Xueyan also smiled. When they fought on the battlefield, some of the soldiers in the army came from official families, but most of them were commoners. Some of them could not even afford to eat, and some of their parents were about to starve to death. Therefore, she would never look down on poor families.

"Sister." Shen Qiu patted Shen Miao's shoulder. "You sound like a heroine who has a heart for the world."

Shen Miao knew that Shen Qiu was teasing her, but hearing that, she lost in deep thought. In her previous life, it was indeed because of love that she married Fu Xiuyi at first and became the empress, but as the empress, many responsibilities were thrust upon her. She had to ensure that the dynasty was in peace and people led a harmonious life.

Chapter 268: Missing (4)

Chen Ruoqiu's face was livid. Wasn't Shen Xin praising Shen Miao just to make her look hypocritical? Shen Wan's expression was also a little dark, and Shen Yue was already furious, but she suppressed her anger and did not mock Shen Miao.

Concubine Wan thought that Shen Miao was helping her, so a trace of joy appeared on her face. When Shen Dongling saw this, she shook her head slightly. Shen Yuan still had no expression on his face while Shen Gui pretended not to know.

"Then let's go to Wanli Lake," Luo Xueyan said. She was used to being a female general, so it was natural for her to give orders. No matter how unwilling the Shen family was to go there, they had no choice but to follow along because the guards were from the Shen army.

Wanli Lake was located in the west of the center of the capital. The entire lake was embedded in the center of the city. In spring, it was like a piece of jade. In winter, when the snow fell, the lake would be covered in a thin layer of snow, looking quite ethereal.

There was snow today. Under the light of countless lanterns, the snow was like crystal clear jade flowers that fell from the sky. The willow trees by the lake were all covered in snow. For a moment, it was difficult to tell whether they were in reality or in a dream.

Before they reached the lake, they heard the sound of fireworks. They looked up and saw that in the dark night, a grand firework show was playing, dazzling their eyes. Below in the crowd, lovers were holding hands, and families had a smile on their faces. They were all looking up at the fireworks, wanting the time to stop at this moment.

"Miss, Miss, look." Jingzhe said excitedly, "That's the firework. I heard that the fireworks will be on all night!"

"It's really beautiful," Gu Yu muttered.

"Ha, the capital is really prosperous." Shen Qiu said to Luo Xueyan, "It's much more fun than the Northwest desert."

Luo Xueyan sighed as she walked.

As they walked on, they suddenly saw the crowd around them running forward. Shen Xin grabbed a man who was running past him and asked, "Brother, what's over there? Why is everyone running forward?"

"Fairy Jade Rabbit is here!" That person said, "Everyone is going to see Fairy Jade Rabbit!" He glanced at Shen Xin and suddenly said, "Brother, are you new here? This year, Fairy Jade Rabbit is played by Miss Liu Ying from the Treasure Fragrance Chamber. Brother, hurry up and go!" With that, he ran away happily.

Shen Xin turned around and heard Luo Xueyan say indifferently, "What are you waiting for? Hurry up and go to see Miss Liu Ying."

"Madam, what are you talking about?" Shen Xin wiped the sweat off his forehead. "Seeing you is enough. Miss Liu Ying is definitely not as beautiful and generous as you."

Since they were already here, Luo Xueyan would not ruin everyone's mood. Just as they squeezed through the crowd, they suddenly heard someone shout, "Miss Liu Ying is here! Miss Liu Ying is here!"

Shen Miao was too short to see what was happening, so Shen Qiu pulled her to the stone platform at the side and lifted her on it. He stood beside Shen Miao. Shen Miao looked up and saw a carriage surrounded by people.

In the winter, this flower carriage was actually filled with flowers, which was enough to show how much effort they put into this festival. The flowers were colorful, and for a moment, she felt like everything was unreal, but at this moment, she saw the person inside the carriage.

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It was a young woman who was wearing a moon-white cotton dress and a velvet cloak. Her hair was combed into a bun, making her look like a fairy. She had beautiful eyebrows and teeth that were like a jade. The most attractive thing about her was the pair of long and narrow eyes. The corners of her eyes were slightly raised, making her look more charming for some reason. She was cold and tempting, as if with her arrival, the wind around her also became fragrant.

Chapter 269: Missing (5)

Liu Ying was not born particularly beautiful. In terms of facial features, she was even slightly inferior to Concubine Wan. However, the cold and enchanting aura coming out of her was irresistible. It was hard to tell if Fairy Jade Rabbit was an immortal or a demon. However, to ordinary men, this kind of aura was fatal.

Shen Miao's gaze stopped on Liu Ying for a moment, then she turned to look around to see if that person was here. After looking around, she did not find him. When Shen Qiu saw that, he asked curiously, "Sister, what are you looking for?"

"Brother, why don't you look at Miss Liu Ying?" Shen Miao asked instead of answering.

Hearing Shen Miao ask this, he replied, "I don't find her attractive."

Shen Miao raised an eyebrow and said, "Then what kind of woman do you like?"

Shen Qiu couldn't answer that.

Shen Miao found Shen Qiu's embarrassed expression very interesting and wanted to laugh. In her previous life, Shen Qiu married a vicious wife and never had the chance to really meet a girl he liked. In this life, she wondered if it would change.

"Let's go." Shen Qiu reached out to Shen Miao, wanting to lift her down from the stone platform. Just now, in order to let Shen Miao see Miss Liu Ying clearly, Shen Qiu brought her here, about ten meters away from Shen Xin and the others. Now that they were done watching the show, they naturally had to return to Shen Xin's side and go to the lake to light the lanterns.

Just as Shen Miao was about to jump down, she suddenly heard a child's cry. Shen Qiu also heard it. The two of them turned around and saw a three or four-year-old child hanging upside down from the beam of a shop. The child was probably naughty and climbed to a high beam to watch the show, but he slipped. At this moment, his hands were tightly clasped together, and half of his body was hanging down. If he fell like this, he would have a small chance of survival. The people around him had already gone to get a ladder, but the child could not hold on for long. Seeing that his hands were getting weaker and weaker, the child's mother was already covering her face and crying.

"Sister, wait for me here." Seeing this, Shen Qiu quickly instructed Shen Miao. It was probably only a few meters away from the stone platform, so he immediately ran over to help.

Before he could reach the child, the child's hand went limp and he fell. The surrounding people immediately exclaimed. Shen Qiu tapped the ground with the tip of his foot and stepped on a pillar beside him. He soared into the air and caught the child, barely in time. The people around him cheered for the move he made. Shen Qiu returned the child to the child's mother. The child's mother thanked him with tears in her eyes, making Shen Qiu feel a little embarrassed.

After comforting the mother and son, Shen Qiu was about to return to the stone platform to pick up Shen Miao. As soon as he turned around, he was stunned.

The stone platform was empty.

Shen Qiu's heart tightened. He pushed through the crowd and ran to the stone platform. There was no one there. Shen Qiu looked around and shouted, "Jiaojiao!" However, no one answered him.

He grabbed a person standing not far from the stone platform and asked, "Where's the girl who was standing here just now? Did you see the girl here?"

That person replied impatiently, "What little girl? No, no!" After saying that, he glanced at him. "Did your daughter get kidnapped? There are many kidnappers at the Jade Rabbit Festival. Most likely, she was kidnapped."

Shen Qiu's body trembled violently. He, someone who wouldn't bat an eye when killing an enemy on the battleground, panicked, and his expression changed drastically.

Chapter 270: Missing (6)

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On the street by Wanli Lake, two people were walking in the crowd. One was wearing a blue shirt and a jade crown, looking dignified, and the other was wearing a purple robe, looking strikingly handsome.

They were both good-looking, especially the purple-clothed youth. His movements were elegant and noble, and the faint smile on his lips made the surrounding women glance at him from time to time.

"How long are you going to follow me?" Xie Jingxing asked.

Su Mingfeng shook his head. "As good friends, we naturally have to spend time together on such a rare occasion. Why do you sound so unhappy?"

"I still have something to do."

"How many men have we not been to the Jade Rabbit Festival together?" Su Mingfeng was dissatisfied. "You're really becoming more and more mysterious."

Today, Su Mingfeng came out with the Su family and happened to meet Xie Jingxing alone, so he dragged him to join them. The Su family and the Xie family were on good terms, so Mr. Su did not say anything. At this moment, Mr. Su and the others were walking in front, and Su Mingfeng and Xie Jing were walking behind.

Su Mingfeng asked, "Your father isn't angry that you came out alone again today?"

The Jade Rabbit Festival was typically an occasion where the entire family would participate together, but Xie Jingxing was clearly by himself. Xie Ding was probably furious at this moment, but there was nothing he could do.

"With his two sons accompanying him, why does he need me?" Xie Jingxing said casually, "I'm not that free."

Su Mingfeng shook his head. "You're quite carefree."

As he spoke, he saw a group of people walking over. Su Mingfeng was stunned. "Isn't that General Shen?"

Xie Jingxing looked up and saw Shen Xin rushing over. Following closely behind him were Shen Qiu and Luo Xueyan, and behind them were a group of guards. Everyone's expression was very solemn and nervous. Su Mingfeng rubbed his chin and said, "It seems like something happened to the Shen family. Why do they all have such expressions?"

In the crowd, the expression of the Shen family was in sharp contrast to that of the rest of the people. Without a doubt, something bad had happened. Mr. Su also saw them and stopped chatting. Xie Jingxing and Su Mingfeng did not go forward and just stood far away, observing.

Mr. Su asked, "General Shen, where are you going?"

"Ha, I'm just looking around." Shen Xin said, "It's just that my wife suddenly feels unwell, so I have to go back first. Mr. Su, have a good time." With that, he cupped his hands and left without looking back.

The Shen family and the Su family were not on good terms when it came to political opinions. Seeing that Shen Xin did not want to talk to him so much, Mr. Su naturally felt not happy. He could not be bothered and walked forward. On the other hand, Su Mingfeng said to Xie Jingxing, "General Shen doesn't look like he's telling the truth. Even if his wife is not feeling well, there's no need to go back in such a hurry, right?"

Xie Jingxing glanced at the guards and said, "Fifth Miss of the Shen family is not around."

"Huh?" Su Mingfeng was stunned.

"Shen Miao is not around." Xie Jingxing glanced at the Shen family. With Shen Miao's relationship with the other two branches, it was impossible for her to stay and enjoy the lanterns with them at this time.

It was not likely that Shen Miao didn't go out today at all. On such a big festival, even if Shen Miao did not want to go out, Shen Xin would not leave her alone in the mansion.

At this moment, he suddenly heard a childish voice. "Sister Shen is missing!"

Xie Jingxing lowered his head. At some point, Su Minglang had slipped past Mr. Su and ran to Su Mingfeng's side. He grabbed the corner of his brother's shirt and repeated, "I secretly snuck up to them just now and heard them say that they must find Sister Shen as soon as possible."

Su Minglang was so small that he was almost invisible in the crowd. He was quite bald and was not afraid of being lost in this flowing crowd.

"They said that Sister Shen might have been kidnapped by a kidnapper." Su Minglang continued, "Brother, let's go and save Sister Shen!"

"Missing?" Xie Jingxing looked at the back of the Shen family thoughtfully and suddenly said to Su Mingfeng, "Don't tell anyone about this. I'll get going first." He looked down at Su Minglang and smiled evilly. "If you say a word about this, I'll sell you to a kidnapper."