

## Venomous 371

### Chapter 371: Roping In Pei Lang (6)

Pei Lang hesitated for a moment before raising his cup. He had a strange feeling about drinking with this student of his in the restaurant...

"I wish you a bright future." Shen Miao smiled and finished the wine in one gulp. She drank very quickly, and a trace of wine flowed out of the corner of her mouth, crossing her slightly sharp chin and entering her collar.

Pei Lang looked away. He was not a person who liked to linger his eyes on beauties, but for a moment, he felt that something was very wrong.

A trace of joy flashed across Shen Miao's eyes. Pei Lang was the state preceptor who could decide Fu Ming's life and death in her previous life, but now, he was just a puppet.

However, that joy only lasted for a moment.

When Pei Lang agreed, she knew that there was no need to continue staying here.

After soberness returned, she stood up and raised her chin slightly, returning to the slightly dignified Shen Miao.

"After Miss Liu Ying settles down, I will tell you where the embroidery shop is." Shen Miao nodded. "The bill has been paid. Sir, please take your time to drink. Wine from Qi Lu is rare in the capital."

Pei Lang frowned as he looked at the group of people disappearing from sight.

He picked up the wine and took a sip. It was supposed to be a mellow wine, but it was strangely sour in his mouth.

After walking out of the door, Jingzhe and Gu Yu did not dare to speak. The two of them could tell that Shen Miao was in a bad mood at this moment. They were confused by the conversation between Pei Lang and Shen Miao, but they were sensitive enough to realize that it wasn't a small matter, so they did not dare to speak rashly.

After the cold wind blew past her, the blush on Shen Miao's face dissipated. She closed her eyes. When she opened them again, her eyes were cold.

In the end, she still hated Pei Lang for standing by and doing nothing to save her children back then. No matter how she hid it, she still revealed a trace of hatred.

However, her goal was achieved.

"Back to the mansion." She walked towards the carriage.

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In the hidden room adjacent to the private room where Shen Miao was, the few people were silent.

Just now, they were engrossed in watching the show. Now that Shen Miao was gone, they came back to their senses and were shocked.

Ji Yushu swallowed his saliva. As if he wanted to break the silence, he said, "It's really a good thing to be close to the shopkeeper of this restaurant. At least we get to eavesdrop on conversations. Not only can we listen, but we can also watch. Hehe, isn't that good?"

However, after Ji Yushu finished speaking, the other two people in the room did not respond to him. Gao Yang placed his folding fan under his chin. This was what he usually did when he was deep in thought. Xie Jingxing leaned his head against his elbow and played with the teacup in his hand while lowering his eyes to think.

Unable to stand the atmosphere, Ji Yushu spoke again. "Don't be so quiet. What's so shocking about Pei Lang being the son of Magistrate Pei?"

Shen Miao's story was told casually because she firstly believed that Pei Lang could understand it, which was why it came as such a shock to the three of them.

Magistrate Pei had a son and a daughter. The daughter was Liu Ying, and the son was Pei Lang. On the way to escape, in order to protect Pei Lang, the servants, as instructed by their master, abandoned Liu Ying, and she eventually became a prostitute. Under the arrangement of the Pei family, Pei Lang obtained a new identity as someone who was born in the capital and whose parents had died years ago, leaving him alone in this world.

No one had discovered his real background all these years.

However... Xie Jingxing's lips curled into a strange smile and he said, "How did she know something that even All Knowing Scholar doesn't?"

At the end of his sentence, his voice turned cold, and his eyes were filled with killing intent.

### **Chapter 372: Meeting Again in the Palace (1)**

"What do you mean?" Ji Yushu asked.

Gao Yang rubbed his chin. "Since she wants to deal with Prince Ding, she's definitely not on his side. Crown Prince, Prince Zhou, and Prince Li, which side is Shen Miao on?"

"None of that," Xie Jingxing said.

"Eh?" Ji Yushu found it strange. "What do you mean?"

Xie Jingxing's gaze softened. "Pei Lang is not an ordinary person, but he hasn't become an official yet. Just now, you all heard what Shen Miao said. She was even more tactful than Shen Xin."

She was witty. She did not admit, deny, decline, or accept. Even someone who'd been a bureaucrat for decades might not be as good at negotiating as her. Shen Xin was a general, and so was Luo Xueyan. Where did Shen Miao learn this kind of witty and shrewd tactics? Did the Shen family have a strategist working for them? Xie Jingxing originally thought so, but now it seemed that it was all Shen Miao's idea.

She was able to maximize what she could achieve within her ability. Xue Jingxing couldn't help but wonder how much trouble she would cause if she was given enough power. Even without any bargaining chips, she could still nurture pawns to her use.

The world was like a chessboard. In Ming Qi, there were too many people playing this chess game. However, Xie Jingxing had never considered Shen Miao as his opponent. She was just a weak woman and had no ambitions.

But now, Xie Jingxing saw her ambition through her ability to recruit talents.

"But we still don't know how she found out about Pei Lang's background," Ji Yushu said. "The Exiled Immortal Pawnshop hasn't found out anything."

Magistrate Pei must have done all he could to save his son. Pei Lang did not let his father down. He did not seek revenge or hate the royal family. He hid his identity and became a teacher. No one would notice him, but Shen Miao saw through him and even used Liu Ying as a bargaining chip to make Pei Lang work for her.

It was unknown where she got the information from, just like when she made the Chen brothers her pawns.

"Forget about her." Xie Jingxing said, "Have you finished writing the letter?"

"I did." Gao Yang frowned. "But are you really sure... Once the letter is sent, there's no turning back. Moreover, they haven't received any news about your plan yet. What if they don't agree..."

"Do as I say." Xie Jingxing stood up.

...

After returning to the Shen family's mansion, in the west courtyard, Shen Miao changed her clothes. Just as she removed her hair, she saw Bai Lu rush in and say, "Miss, Madam wants you to go to see her. She has something to discuss with you."

The new year had passed. Because Shen Xin requested to stay in the capital for another half a year, Luo Xueyan had a much easier time. She kept buying clothes and jewelry for Shen Miao, or she asked Shen Qiu to bring her out to eat, drink, and have fun. Sometimes, Shen Miao felt that Shen Xin and Luo Xueyan were trying to turn her into a playboy.

Shen Miao casually combed up her hair and went to Luo Xueyan's room. As soon as she entered the room, she was surprised to see that Shen Xin and Shen Qiu were also there. Seeing her enter, Luo Xueyan quickly pulled her to sit down beside her and said, "Jiaojiao, what did you go out to do today?"

Shen Miao asked Bai Lu and Shuang Jiang to stay in the house today and instructed them that if anyone asked, tell them that she went out to shop. She said, "I felt bored staying at home, so I went out to shop. I happened to pass by the Pleasure Restaurant and brought a few jars of strong wine for Father and Brother."

"I knew my daughter understood me!" Shen Xin's eyes lit up when he heard that. He said, "The wine in the capital is too sweet. How can it be considered wine! Strong wine is better. It's more satisfying!"

## Chapter 373: Meeting Again in the Palace (2)

Shen Qiu was also happy. "Sister, you're so thoughtful!"

"All you know is to drink!" Luo Xueyan rolled her eyes at the father and son and said, "Just let the servants go and buy the wine. Jiaojiao, why do you have to make the trip?"

Shen Xin was displeased "Jiaojiao is doing it because she cares about us. It won't be the same if it's bought by the servants!" It was rare for Shen Miao to be close to them now. Shen Xin was very happy. Even if Shen Miao bought two jars of water today, he would still be overjoyed. Naturally, he had to refute Luo Xueyan.

Luo Xueyan couldn't be bothered to waste her breath on the father and son. She looked at Shen Miao and said, "Jiaojiao, I actually have something to discuss with you."

"Mother, please go ahead."

"You know that we're going to split up from the Shen family. I think it will be done in a few days. Your father and I have thought it through. We have to buy a new mansion. I saw a mansion in the east of the city that's not bad. We can get some servants to clean it. It's just that..." Luo Xueyan looked at Shen Miao and was hesitating if she could continue." In the past, when your father and I went to the Northwest, we could leave you in charge of the Shen family. Now that we've split up, if your father and I leave again, it's not safe for you, a girl, to stay in a mansion alone. So... Jiaojiao, are you willing to go to the Northwest with me?"

Shen Miao was slightly stunned.

"Sister, the Northwest is very fun." Seeing that Shen Miao was in a daze, Shen Qiu quickly said, "It's not as bad as people say. We'll live in Spring City. There are mountains and rivers there, and there are many rare birds and beasts. When the time comes, I can go hunt a white tiger to make a cloak for you."

"Nonsense!" Luo Xueyan scolded him with a smile. "Your sister is just a girl. Why does she need the white tiger cloak?"

Shen Qiu scratched his head. "There's also mines. The gems are huge. Sister, I can make jewelry for you too!"

Shen Miao smiled. She was a little hesitant at first because she still had other things to do in the capital. However, after hearing Shen Qiu's words, she started to yearn for Spring City in the northwest. Who didn't want to live a carefree life? Who wanted to open their eyes every day and think about how to scheme against others? She sighed in her heart. She would go with them this time. At most, she would stay in the capital when she came back next year.

"Sure." Under everyone's expectant gazes, Shen Miao nodded. "I also want to broaden my horizon."

Luo Xueyan heaved a sigh of relief. Shen Xin laughed loudly and said, "I knew Jiaojiao would definitely agree! After coming back this year, I found that Jiaojiao has changed a lot."

“Sister, Sister.” Shen Qiu was also excited. “When the time comes, I’ll bring you to see my brothers. They all know that I have a sister but they have never seen you. Also the grandparents on Mother’s side. They haven’t seen you since you were born. They won’t be able to recognize you this time.”

Luo Xueyan’s family was the general of the northwest. They only rushed over to the capital once when Shen Miao was born. Later, because it was thousands of miles away, they had not seen each other all these years. Shen Miao lowered her eyes, deep in thought. In her previous life, after Luo Xueyan died, the Luo family cut off all contact with the Shen family. Shen Miao did not have a deep relationship with the Luo family to begin with, so she did not know what happened to the Luo family in the end. However, with Consort Mei’s ruthless methods, she would definitely have a way to make Fu Xiuyi wipe out the Luo family.

After chatting for a while, Luo Xueyan asked Shen Miao to go back to her room to rest.

After Shen Miao washed up, she sat at the table and looked at the dancing flames of the candle. She couldn’t help but sigh. If she really wanted to go to the Northwest with Shen Xin, she had to settle everything within the next half a year.

### **Chapter 374: Meeting Again in the Palace (3)**

The only thing worth being happy about now was having roped in Pei Lang.

She had always known very well that it was not good for the Shen family to be involved in the affairs of the palace. However, she was just a girl and did not have the chance to come into contact with inside information. Moreover, many things had already changed in this life, so she had to make Pei Lang her ears and eyes in the palace.

There was probably some luck involved in recruiting Pei Lang. Back then, when Fu Xiuyi recruited Pei Lang, it was also because one of his subordinates had a relationship with Magistrate Pei that he found out about Pei Lang’s background. At that time, it was also because Fu Xiuyi helped Liu Ying settle down that Pei Lang became loyal to him.

The Pei siblings were both stubborn and opinionated. After Liu Ying became a prostitute, she put all her past behind her and dedicated to being a prostitute. Perhaps it was because she found recalling her identity in the past too painful. As for Pei Lang, he never thought about taking revenge and just settled down as a teacher.

Liu Ying was unwilling to admit her real identity and was also angry at the Pei family for abandoning her to save Pei Lang. If Pei Lang proposed to free her from the brothel, Liu Ying would resist with all her might. However, Shen Miao gave Liu Ying a way out. Once she had Liu Ying in control, she indirectly had Pei Llang in control.

“Miss, it’s better to rest early.” Jingzhe smiled and said, “Tomorrow, you still have to go with Madam to see the mansion in the east of the city.”

Shen Miao nodded.

However, she did not expect that her plan could not keep up with the changes.

The next morning, after Shen Miao had breakfast, Luo Xueyan's maid came over and said that after Shen Miao changed her clothes, they would go and take a look at the new mansion.

However, before Shen Miao could finish dressing up, a palace maid came, asking Luo Xueyan to go to the palace. She even said that if Shen Miao was free, she had to come long.

Shen Xin and Shen Qiu's expressions immediately darkened, and Luo Xueyan was a little confused when she heard that the palace maid was instructed to deliver the message by a consort.

After all, Luo Xueyan did not have much of a relationship with any of the women in the palace.

Shen Xin and Shen Qiu found it strange that Shen Miao was also asked to go along. Could it be that someone wanted to take advantage of Shen Miao? Once Shen Miao was concerned, they were always especially nervous. Shen Xin said, "Madam, I'll go and keep you company."

"Why?" Luo Xueyan said, "You are not invited. Don't cause unnecessary trouble. I'll bring Jiaojiao along." She hesitated for a moment. "There are so many people. They won't do anything out of line. Besides, I'm not a weak woman. If..." She wanted to say that if anything happened, she wouldn't protect Shen Miao at all costs.

Shen Xin nodded. "I don't think the situation in the palace is dangerous at this moment. Don't worry. Just go."

Luo Xueyan held Shen Miao's hand and got into the carriage arranged by the palace. She originally planned to go and see the mansion early this morning, but her plan was delayed by this sudden occurrence. No one knew if it was a good occurrence or not.

#### **Chapter 375: Meeting Again in the Palace (4)**

Shen Qiu and Shen Xin were at the entrance of the mansion. Seeing the carriage leave, they asked uneasily, "Father, will Mother and Sister be alright?"

"I'll go to the Ministry of War." Shen Xin turned around. "Stay in the mansion. If anything happens, we will go to save them."

Shen Qiu nodded.

In the carriage, Shen Miao's face was tense, but all kinds of thoughts were running through her mind.

She did not feel that she was in any danger because no one at this point would scheme against her. Moreover, she knew better than anyone what the consorts in the palace were up to. Even if they really had an ill intention, they would definitely not do it openly today. The royal family cared about their reputation the most. If anything happened to her in the palace, the royal family would be the first to be criticized.

Shen Miao's gaze darkened. The women in the palace had nothing to do with Luo Xueyan, but they summoned Luo Xueyan to the palace to talk. Perhaps they wanted to ask Luo Xueyan something. Was it about the Shen family or Shen Xin?

However, why did they suddenly pay attention to Shen Xin? Shen Xin had been keeping a low profile in the capital these days, and he was not so close to Fu Xiuyi like in her previous life. Even if the royal family wanted to suppress the Shen family, they had to have a good reason. Could it be that they already had a reason?

Shen Miao was a little confused. They wanted Luo Xueyan to bring Shen Miao into the palace probably to just warn her that if anything happened, she wouldn't be able to keep her daughter. The more Shen Miao thought about it, the more likely it seemed. Shen Miao couldn't help but feel a little nervous. Many things in this life were different from her previous life, especially the situation in Ming Qi. She tried her best to avoid and delay the tragedy of the Shen family, but she still couldn't avoid fate. This time, why?

Seeing that Shen Miao's expression was not normal, Luo Xueyan thought that she was afraid. Her heart ached as she said, "Jiaojiao, don't be afraid. We're just going to the palace to talk to the ladies. It'll be over soon. Then, we'll come and take a look at the new mansion."

Shen Miao smiled faintly, but she was still a little distracted.

When they arrived at the entrance of the palace, there were already palace maids who came to pick them up. When they saw Shen Miao and Luo Xueyan, they led the two of them in. On the way, Luo Xueyan asked the maid which consort she belonged to, but the maid smiled and did not answer.

At this moment, in the palace's Yaoguang Hall, two women in luxurious clothes were chatting with each other. The woman on the left had a fairy bun and was dressed in a red and gold palace dress. She was gorgeous. She had a beautiful face. Although she was smiling and talking, her eyes were a little absent-minded, and she was extremely disrespectful to the woman beside her. However, although she was acting like this, the woman beside her was not angry. Instead, she smiled and replied. This woman was wearing an apricot-colored dress. Her face was not as outstanding as the woman on the left, but she looked gentle, polite, and elegant.

These two people were none other than the consorts who invited Shen Miao and her daughter to the palace today. The woman in red on the left was Consort Xu, and the elegant one on the right was Consort Dong.

"I understand why His Majesty asked us to invite Mrs. Shen, but why did Miss Shen have to come too?" Consort Xu was a little impatient. "They're really something. We've been kept waiting for almost an hour."

"The General's Mansion is quite a distance from the palace." Consort Dong smiled and said, "Sister, don't be anxious."

Consort Xu smiled. "Sister, you're really a kind person, aren't you?" She suddenly thought of something and smiled mischievously. "Speaking of which, that Miss Shen once liked Prince Ding. Are you very satisfied with her and want her to be your daughter-in-law?"

Consort Dong's face froze for a moment before she smiled and said, "Sister, you must be joking. However, since His Majesty wants the two of us to come over, it's better to be serious about it. Fifth Miss Shen is just following her mother. I'll get the palace maid to take her out later."

## Chapter 376: Meeting Again in the Palace (5)

With the mention of Emperor Wen Hui, the domineering Consort Xu could not complain. Just as she was about to say something sarcastic, she suddenly saw her maid enter. Consort Xu asked, "Are they here?"

The maid nodded. Not long after, Luo Xueyan and Shen Miao walked in. After nodding to the maid, Shen Miao stood at the side with Luo Xueyan with her head lowered. She did not look up. A slightly sharp voice said, "Mrs. Shen, this must be your daughter, right? Look up and let me take a look at you."

Shen Miao paused and slowly looked up. When she saw who was sitting on the right, her heart tightened and she felt her blood boil.

On the left was Consort Xu. She was the mother of Prince Zhou and Prince Jing, and on the right was Consort Dong. She was Fu Xiuyi's biological mother. At this moment, Consort Dong looked at Consort Xu with a smile and said to her, "She's really a delicate girl. Her face shows she has a bright future ahead of her."

Consort Dong looked at Shen Miao with a gentle expression. Those who didn't know better would have let down their guard.

Consort Dong was not favored in the harem. Emperor Wen Hui had countless women by his side. Some had a background, some were talented, some were beautiful, and some had personalities. Consort Dong, on the other hand, was gentle and calm. She did not fight for anything and did not snatch anything. On the surface, she was the one with the least status among the four consorts, but Shen Miao knew that Consort Dong was definitely not a harmless woman.

When Shen Miao married Fu Xiuyi in her previous life, Consort Dong also praised her for being delicate. However, later on, when Fu Xiuyi became more and more powerful, Consort Dong treated her indifferently. When she returned from the State of Qin, Consort Dong, who was the empress dowager, even worked together with Consort Mei to bring Shen Miao down. In Consort Dong's eyes, Shen Miao was just a chess piece to rope in the Shen family, a vulgar chess piece that was not presentable. Later, when Fu Xiuyi abolished the crown prince, Consort Dong was the first to step forward and help Fu Sheng become the crown prince.

Shen Miao quickly lowered her head to hide the hatred in her eyes.

Consort Xu and Consort Dong thought that Shen Miao was shy. Consort Xu asked casually, "How old are you this year?"

"Your Highness," Shen Miao said softly, "I'm fourteen."

"Fourteen..." Consort Xu pondered for a moment before saying with a smile, "You'll reach the marriage age soon."

These words made Luo Xueyan inexplicably nervous. What she was most worried about now was Shen Miao's marriage. If Shen Miao married into the palace and got involved into the power game... Luo Xueyan's expression was very ugly. Seeing that Luo Xueyan all tensed up, Consort Xu chuckled and said, "Madam Shen, why are you so nervous? Are you afraid that I'll be the matchmaker for Miss Shen?"



Luo Xueyan quickly said, "I wouldn't dare!"

"Don't worry." Consort Xu said, "Even if I'm really going to be the matchmaker, I won't just pick a random man for Miss Shen. I'll help her choose the best man I know of. Speaking of which..." Consort Xu looked at Shen Miao and smiled maliciously. "Miss Shen, do you have someone in mind now?"

Everyone knew that Shen Miao had once loved Fu Xiuyi to the core. This question was also intended to embarrass Consort Dong in front of everyone. Consort Xu had always been arrogant and domineering because she was favored by Emperor Wen Hui. Among the four consorts, Consort Dong was the easiest to bully. Consort Xu had always enjoyed making fun of Consort Dong.

"Thank you for your kindness, Your Highness. I don't have anyone in mind yet," Shen Miao said with her head lowered.

Consort Xu seemed to be a little bored. She felt that Shen Miao was dull and was not as stupid as the rumors said. Otherwise, she could still make some fun of her. She waved her hand. "Forget it then."

### **Chapter 377: Meeting Again in the Palace (6)**

Luo Xueyan became more and more cautious. As long as Shen Miao was involved, she had no choice but to be vigilant. Just as she was thinking, she heard Consort Dong say with a smile, "Madam, don't be nervous. The reason why the two of us invited you to the palace today is actually just to chat with you." After a pause, she continued, "The two of us have never been to the Northwest. Madam, we're very curious about the North, so we wanted to ask you about it."

Consort Dong's voice was gentle and amiable, like a spring breeze that comforted people's hearts. However, Luo Xueyan did not relax, and Shen Miao became even more suspicious. She knew that Emperor Wen Hui must have some other motive for summoning them to the palace today. Emperor Wen Hui wanted to probe something through the mouths of Consort Xu and Consort Dong. One of them was domineering, and the other was gentle. With the two consorts working together, it was easy for people to be confused and fall into a trap.

Shen Miao was a little nervous.

"Thank you, Your Highness." Luo Xueyan smiled. "It's just that the North has always been boring. I'm afraid Your Highness won't like it."

"It's fine." Consort Dong smiled and said, "I wouldn't have invited you here if we were worried about being bored." She paused and suddenly thought of something as she looked at Shen Miao.

Fu Xiuyi knew that the emperor wanted them to test Luo Xueyan, and he also knew that Luo Xueyan would bring Shen Miao along. Yesterday, he told Consort Dong that if Shen Miao was present, she had to send her away during discussion. Fu Xiuyi was Consort Dong's son, so Consort Dong naturally wouldn't suspect anything. However... no matter what, she couldn't tell what was there to be wary of about this slightly dull and timid young lady.

Shen Miao lowered her head, so her expression could not be seen clearly. Consort Dong said, "But this kind of talk will definitely be boring for the little girl to hear. Tong Yao, show Fifth Miss Shen around the garden. When she's tired, bring her to a living room to eat snacks. Take good care of her."

Although Consort Xu didn't understand why Consort Dong did this, she didn't suspect it because she thought that Consort Dong was instructed by Emperor Wen Hui to do it. Luo Xueyan felt a little uneasy. It was best to put Shen Miao by her side, but in the current situation, she also realized that the talk with the two consorts couldn't really be a casual one. At least... in broad daylight, these people wouldn't dare to harm Shen Miao.

At the thought of this, she felt a little relieved. She smiled and said to Shen Miao, "Jiaojiao, go to the garden with the maids. After I'm done talking to the ladies, I'll come and look for you."

Shen Miao did not refuse, but she was uneasy. Why did they send her away for no reason? She could naturally kick up a fuss and clamored to stay here, but that would seem too deliberate. Why wasn't she allowed to hear their conversation? Could it be that she had already aroused the suspicion of others? The person who spoke was Consort Dong. This was the first time they had met in this life... Could it be that Fu Xiuyi was reminding Consort Dong? This thought suddenly flashed across Shen Miao's mind.

However, she did not say anything. She stood up respectfully and bade farewell to the consorts before following Tong Yao out.

Tong Yao brought Shen Miao to the garden. There were gardens everywhere in the palace. However, Shen Miao was not in the mood to admire the scenery. She was more familiar with every inch of the garden here than anyone else and had been here countless times.

Tong Yao also noticed that Shen Miao was distracted and said, "Miss Shen, if you're tired, I'll bring you to the living room. There are snacks there."

Shen Miao nodded. Halfway to the living room, a young eunuch ran over and whispered something into Tong Yao's ear. Tong Yao said apologetically to Shen Miao, "The living room is the hall over there. Miss Shen, go in first. I'll come over after delivering the things. It won't be long."

Shen Miao nodded and did not mind. The living room was right in front of her, and there were guards everywhere in the palace. She had been here before and knew the way very well.

She walked to the door of the living room, opened it, and walked in. The door closed with a bang on its own. Shen Miao's heart skipped a beat. Before she could react, a pair of hands covered her mouth from behind. Without thinking, Shen Miao bit down and knocked into the door behind her.

With that, Shen Miao heard a gasp behind her, but her elbow was grabbed and she couldn't move. A familiar voice sounded with suppressed anger. "Shen Miao, are you a shrew?"

Shen Miao was slightly stunned. The person behind her had already let go. She turned around and looked at him. Opposite her, Xie Jingxing was rubbing his hand, looking a little angry. However... that was not what Shen Miao cared about.

Unlike his usual playful and rebellious self, today, he was wearing a dark red official uniform with exquisite cufflinks and a long hat and green boots. He looked like a different person from before. Shen Miao had never seen him like this and was stunned for a moment.

Xie Jingxing locked the door and turned around to look at her with his arms crossed, looking like he was going to settle the score.

However, Shen Miao was not afraid of him. She only frowned and said, "What are you doing here?"

"When I came out of the palace, I saw you, so I came over to say hi." Xie Jingxing said casually, "Did the emperor summon your father to the palace?"

Shen Miao's heart thumped. "What do you mean?"

### **Chapter 378: Requesting to Go to War (1)**

"What do you mean?" Shen Miao asked.

Xie Jingxing would not say such a thing for no reason.

Xie Jingxing raised his eyebrows and looked at her. "Shen Yuan is Prince Ding's man."

Shen Miao was slightly shocked and did not speak.

"Before Shen Yuan got into trouble, he talked to Prince Ding in secret." Xie Jingxing said, "The Shen family is now at odds with each other. Other than dealing with your father, what else can they do?"

"Impossible!" Shen Miao cried out.

Xie Jingxing stared at her, as if he wanted to see through Shen Miao. He asked, "Why?"

Shen Miao's palms were slightly wet, and her heart was in a mess. Shen Xin wasn't supposed to be the target this early. The royal family would only start to deal with him a few years later, because at this point, they had no reason to justify targeting Shen Xin. Shen Yuan worked for Prince Ding, and the two of them were extremely cautious people. They would not make a move unless they were extremely confident. For example, in her previous life, she only found out at the end that the second and third branches were also involved in scheming against Shen Xin, and Shen Yuan must have only collected all the sufficient evidence at the very end.

However, the evidence Shen Yuan collected should be insufficient at this time. Why did Fu Xiuyi choose to make a move now?

How did things turn out to be so different?

She looked up and met Xie Jingxing's thoughtful gaze. Shen Miao's heart skipped a beat. Xie Jingxing was quick-witted, so he probably could tell something from her expression. At the thought of this, she smiled and said, "Shen Yuan is my second brother. Why would he want to harm my father?"

Hearing this, Xie Jingxing smiled meaningfully and said, "Shen Miao, do you really take me as a fool?"

"Since Young Marquis Xie told me this, how will Prince Ding deal with my father?" Shen Miao said seriously.

Xie Jingxing shook his head.

Shen Miao did not have much hope to begin with. Even if Xie Jingxing knew, there was no reason for him to tell her. The Xie family was also involved in the affairs of Ming Qi. If they chose a side rashly, they would also be implicated. If she was Xie Jingxing, she would also choose to remain silent.

However... Shen Miao sized up Xie Jingxing's official uniform and asked in confusion, "What brought you to the palace?"

Xie Jingxing said lazily, "I came to request to go to war."

"General?" Shen Miao was stunned for a moment and subconsciously asked, "To war?"

Xie Jingxing smiled but did not say anything. Shen Miao suddenly looked at him. "To the Northern border? To fight off the Xiongnu?"

This time, Xie Jingxing asked in surprise, "How did you know?" The matter of the Xiongnu in the northern border was a secret. Before the edict was issued, Shen Xin might not even know, let alone Shen Miao. Xie Jingxing had always been curious about where Shen Miao got all her information from. She even knew about the secrets in the palace. This made Xie Jingxing even more surprised.

Shen Miao looked at him in a daze, her heart in turmoil.

In the land of the northern border, the constant harassment from the Xiongnu had never been settled. However, the terrain of the northern border was complicated, and the people of the northern border were ferocious and brave. Emperor Wen Hui only sent small armies to engage in skirmishes with the Xiongnu but never wanted to face the Xiongnu head-on. Later, the Xiongnu became even more aggressive. Emperor Wen Hui had no choice but send Xie Ding to war. The Xie army was brave, but they were all wiped out on the battlefield. At the end of the year, Xie Ding was sent back as a corpse and the entire country was in grief. The next spring, Xie Jingxing went to war on behalf of his father. The army was defeated like a landslide and he was shot by thousands of arrows and hung up by the Xiongnu as a warning to Ming Qi.

Xie Jingxing died when he was 22 years old. Now, he was only 19 years old.

Shen Miao felt suffocated for a moment. It was unlikely for the emperor to want to deal with the Xiongnu at this time. Xie Jingxing requested to go to war, and Xie Ding was probably still kept in the dark at this moment. From the looks of it, Xie Jingxing's request must have been granted.

### **Chapter 379: Requesting to Go to War (2)**

Changed again! Changed again!

All the events were brought forward. If Xie Jingxing went to war now, would he end up dead just like in his previous life?

Shen Miao originally wanted to save the Xie family for the future to deal with the royal family. Would the fate of some people still follow the trajectory of the past? Was the arrogant young man with red lips, white teeth, and beautiful eyes really going to walk towards his demise?

When Xie Jingxing noticed Shen Miao's abnormal expression, he did not find it suspicious. His eyes flickered and he said, "You seem to be very worried."

At this moment, Shen Miao was not in the mood to joke around. She looked at him and said, "You... are you going to lead the Xie army?"

"Pay attention to the soldiers in the Xie army and the people around you," Shen Miao said word by word. At first, she was a bit awkward saying that, but in the end, her tone gradually became serious. "The wind and sand in the northern border are strong, and the armor of the soldiers is heavy. No matter what, don't take off the mirror armor." In her previous life, Xie Jingxing's heart was pierced by thousands of arrows. Perhaps, wearing the mirror armor would save him. More importantly, Shen Miao felt that Xie Jingxing's death was too strange. How could the young general, who was outstanding in battle tactics, lose so miserably? In addition, later on, she gradually understood the situation and knew that the royal family was cracking down on the big families. There might be some people from the royal family hiding in the Xie army, and the death of Xie Ding and Xie Jingxing might be a conspiracy by the royal family.

Shen Miao was focused on the big picture, but she did not know that with her current relationship with Xie Jingxing, they could by no means be called friends. Therefore, her words of concern seemed a little strange.

Xie Jingxing was also surprised by her reaction. He suddenly smiled and approached Shen Miao, lowering his head slightly. He was extremely close to Shen Miao, his eyes smiling as he teased, "Are you so concerned about me?"

Shen Miao was engrossed in her thoughts and did not notice that he was already so close to her. Suddenly, she came back to her senses and looked at Xie Jingxing with her big eyes.

Xie Jingxing was caught off guard by that innocent look of hers. He was a ruthless person and only regarded the Shen family as his chess piece. He knew that Shen Miao was scheming and her methods were uncommon, and she was definitely not as harmless as she looked on the surface. However, sometimes, he felt that she was just a little girl who did not understand anything.

Xie Jingxing quickly shook off the thought. He took a step back and said, "The Shen army is too powerful. It's not a good thing."

Shen Miao replied, "It's my mother who was summoned to the palace today, and the people who summoned her were Consort Xu and Consort Dong." When she said Consort Xu and Consort Dong, her expression was not respectful, as if she was talking about two ordinary people. Xie Jingxing was used to Shen Miao being so calm.

He said, "Retreat."

"Retreat?" Shen Miao asked.

Xie Jingxing stopped talking. In the end, he still gave Shen Miao a hint. If Shen Miao was smart, she would understand what he meant.

Shen Miao lowered her eyes and thought for a moment before saying, "Thank you. May I know when you are leaving."

“Ten days later.”

“So soon?” Shen Miao exclaimed.

“Why?” Xie Jingxing turned to look at her and said with a faint smile, “Can’t bear to part with me?”

“No...” Shen Miao said expressionlessly, “In that case... I wish Young Marquis a triumphant return.”

“If I get rewarded after I return.” Xie Jingxing said indifferently, “I’ll give you a little something as a gift.”

### **Chapter 380: Requesting to Go to War (3)**

Just as Shen Miao was about to speak, she saw Xie Jingxing pressing his hand on the scabbard and saying, “Someone’s here.” Then, he smiled at Shen Miao and said, “See you again, Shen’s Jiaojiao.” He turned around and flew out of the window of the living room.

This person jumped in and out of the window as if he was walking through the door of his own house. Shen Miao was still in a daze when the door was pushed open and Tong Yao walked in. Seeing Shen Miao standing in the middle of the room, she asked curiously, “Miss Shen, why aren’t you sitting?”

Shen Miao came back to her senses and smiled. She walked to the side to sit down, but she was still thinking about what Xie Jingxing said just now.

Xie Jingxing was due to set off in ten days. Ten days later wouldn’t that be exactly the same date as three years later? Three years later, at this time, Xie Jingxing would go to war, and then the father and son of the Xie family would never be able to return.

The Xie family was already walking towards an inevitable ending like in her previous life. What about the Shen family? What would happen to the Shen family? Before Xie Jingxing left, he gave her a hint, but that was not the ending she wanted to see. If the Shen family retreated like this, although they could save their life, without power, they couldn’t even protect themselves. The experience in her previous life made Shen Miao understand clearly that only by standing in a higher position than her enemy could she truly control her fate.

What should she do?

In the next few hours, Shen Miao kept thinking about this. The snacks on the table were untouched, and she did not take a sip of tea. She was not in the mood to read the story books either, which made Tong Yao look surprised. She did not know why a little girl like Shen Miao could sit there for the entire afternoon without fidgeting. Even the good-tempered consorts in the palace did not have such patience.

After waiting for a long time, a young eunuch came to deliver the message. Tong Yao brought Shen Miao out and saw that Luo Xueyan was already waiting for her daughter at the door. Seeing Shen Miao, she smiled faintly and immediately left the palace with her.

Although Luo Xueyan tried her best to pretend that nothing had happened, Shen Miao, after struggling in the harem for decades, had long learned to read people’s expressions. She could tell that Luo Xueyan was worried, so she asked, “Mother, what did they say to you?”

Luo Xueyan replied with a smile, "Nothing. They just asked me something about Spring City in the northwest. They probably haven't been there and are curious."

Shen Miao asked, "Is that really the case? But if that's the case, why would they summon us to the palace to talk? Isn't it a little too strange?"

Luo Xueyan rubbed Shen Miao's head. "What's so strange about that? The consorts in the palace can't travel far away and are probably too bored with their lives. I told them something that happened in the far northwest to relieve their boredom, and they smiled quite happily." Even so, Luo Xueyan still felt inexplicably worried. Although she did not get involved in the matters of the imperial court, it did not mean that she did not know about the dangers lurking in the imperial court. Today, she dealt with the situation carefully, but it was precisely because the consorts were both asking her about her daily life in the northwest that Luo Xueyan was even more puzzled.

The people in the palace were all smart. However, today's conversation did not involve military matters at all. They did not even mention the Shen army. Instead, they only talked about the people of Spring City, which puzzled Luo Xueyan.

People who fought battles were sensitive to danger. Luo Xueyan clearly felt that danger was approaching, but she did not know what danger it was. This made her feel frustrated.

However, she was afraid of scaring Shen Miao, so she did not intend to tell her about this. Shen Miao did not ask her anymore. When they returned to the mansion, it was almost evening. Shen Qiu and Shen Xin had been waiting at the entrance. Seeing the two of them return, they heaved a sigh of relief.