

My Crown 511

Chapter 511: You Will All Die

"Y-Young Master." Caiwei's tears threatened to fall from her eyes. She curtsied and said, "Caiwei doesn't know what happened! She was still fine last night..."

"I asked you, where is the Xiao Bao that I had you bring back to instruct yesterday?"

Caiwei's face paled, and her body tottered on the verge of collapse, nearly about to faint. She prostrated on the floor with a flump and repeatedly kowtowed to beg for forgiveness, saying, "This servant arranged for Mu Xiao Bao to stay in one of the rooms in this row. I don't know why, but it got engulfed in a large fire last night."

"It's very possible that Mu Xiao Bao herself didn't tend to her candle flame and didn't even know that her room caught on fire! We put out the fire with great difficulty, but we simply didn't see Mu Xiao Bao at all. I-I don't know if it's because she slept too deeply last night and didn't come out, and has now already b-bu-burned to ashes..." Caiwei's voice got softer and softer as she spoke, completely afraid of meeting the second young master's icy and murderous gaze.

"I had you bring her back for instruction! Yet you killed her!!" Second Qin was enraged and kicked Caiwei's shoulder with his leg.

Caiwei screamed and abruptly toppled to the floor. She only felt like the bones in her shoulder area had shattered, and it hurt so much that her tears really did flow out at once.

She really was suffering from a great injustice!

After taking the little lady's fist to the face once they left the second young master's quarters, she did indeed want to retaliate, which was why she had purposely arranged such a remote and haunted room for her.

But she had never wanted to burn her to death!

Although her heart was burning with jealousy, she also knew that the second young master regarded this young lady quite highly.

She wasn't a fool, and she already knew in her heart that the second young master only kicked the young lady over to her place in a fit of anger to discipline her. He would definitely bring her back in two days. Even if you gave her ten times the guts, she wouldn't dare to surreptitiously put the little lady to death!

"Sister, why did you make Second Young Master so angry? You really shouldn't have done that." A frivolous chortle was heard, and a voluptuous woman around 20 years old ambled over slowly behind a fleet-footed, gray-haired old woman.

When Caiwei saw her face, she instantly understood everything. She bared her teeth, and her face alternated between purple, scarlet, and white as she shrieked, "Cailan, you're the one framing me! You're the one who set the fire!"

“Aiyah, bah bah bah. Sister shouldn’t spout nonsense! Why would I commit arson without rhyme or reason!” Cailan covered her lips as she sniggered. When she saw the young master casting over an icy glance, she immediately didn’t dare to pick a fight anymore and knelt down aggrievedly. She wept piteously as she shouted, “Young Master, you have to do Cailan justice! Sister is accusing others wrongly. How could Cailan know that Sister brought back a little maidservant last night? Nor do I have a reason to commit arson!”

“It’s definitely you who did it!!” Caiwei shrieked with bared fangs and brandished claws. “You want to frame me!! You set the place on fire so that you could set me up!”

“Shut up!” Blue Mountain Courtyard’s Senior Manager, Granny Hong, chastised.

Her austere eyes swept over Caiwei and Cailan before she walked forward to greet Second Young Master Qin. “Second Young Master, please forgive this old servant for her incompetence in teaching the servants! This old servant has troubled Second Young Master.”

Second Qin looked at Granny Hong with a pair of gloomy eyes as he said coldly, “You indeed are incompetent in teaching. Find her by the end of the day, even if you have to dig three feet into the ground. Otherwise, you will all die...”

Granny Hong shuddered, and her gaze turned apprehensive in the blink of an eye.

Cailan also widened her eyes abruptly in disbelief, practically unable to believe her own ears.

Chapter 512: He Gets Infuriated from Looking at Her...

Young Master was going to put them, these managers of the Blue Mountain Courtyard who had served their masters for so many years, to death all for an insignificant b*tchy servant?

Cailan’s eyes bulged in fright, and cold sweat started beading on her forehead.

W-Why was it like this? Second Young Master actually cared about that little b*tchy servant so much? D-Did she do something wrong?”

Although Cailan had never personally waited upon the second young master, she was very clever and knew very well how to treat and get along with others.

She understood this second young master too well. He looked like he didn’t care about anything, but once something caught his eye, he would strive to obtain it by all possible means, fair or foul.

A perverse obstinacy was concealed deep within the second young master’s bones.

At this moment, the second young master’s perverseness was completely reflected in this little b*tchy servant. Second Young Master, he... wasn’t joking at all.

If they really couldn’t find this little b*tchy servant, or... if the little b*tchy servant really was burned alive and died inside the room, then the rest of them would only meet their deaths!

When she thought of this, Cailan’s entire body quivered, and the cold sweat on her forehead flowed down like rain as her complexion turned even more ghastly pale.

She really did wrong! She had originally wanted to use this incident to get rid of Caiwei that d*mned woman, but she didn't foresee that the second young master would value the little b*tch so highly. This really was out of her expectations.

She then heard a chilly voice interrupting her thoughts, demanding, "What are you all doing, crowding around the door to my room? Step aside!"

When this voice entered the ears of the Blue Mountain Courtyard maidservants, it was tantamount to a heavenly chorus!

Cailan turned her head around, her face in disbelief.

On the other hand, when Caiwei tearily turned her head around and saw the little lady stroll over in her suit of uniform pink maidservant clothing, she suddenly felt like the stoic-faced little lady who was normally haughty, and even arrogant, didn't look so hateful now.

The crowd of Blue Mountain Courtyard maidservants simultaneously let out sighs of relief and hastily cleared out a path for Qiao Mu to pass through.

When our dear Qiao Mu walked up to the gloomy second young master, she cast him a glance but didn't say anything.

"Where did you go?" The second young master was irked.

It was such an unfathomable mystery!

Second Qin had always felt that he was especially able to keep his cool in the past. Even when faced with his sly old fox of an eldest brother's taunts and sarcasm, he could turn a blind eye and deaf ear to them as usual.

But right now, this stoic face had utterly ground away his good temper. He didn't know why, but he kept wanting to get angry whenever he saw this stoic face!

Qiao Mu humphed and then said coldly, "Is that kind of rancid and grungy room meant for people to live in? If the Qin Estate is unable to build decent rooms, then might as well not hire so many maidservants!"

Did this darling's standards look so low that she could even stay in a grungy room?

When Second Young Master Qin saw the little stoic's face filled with disdain, he didn't know why, but he felt... particularly discomfited!

Was his Qin Estate so broke, huh?

Second Young Master Qin glared frigidly at Caiwei, who was still trembling while sprawling on the ground. "Go accept your punishment yourself."

A presumptuous maidservant acting on her own account!

He only told her to teach the little stoic etiquette and the rules on his behalf and didn't mean to torment her in regards to food, clothing, and lodging.

Did he, Second Young Master Qin, seem like such an ungentlemanly person?

“Yes, yes!” Caiwei scrambled away in a staggering scamper.

She really was afraid now. She cautioned herself ten thousand times in her mind to learn from today’s lesson and to not offend this stoic-faced little lady again in the future.

“You, follow me!” Second Qin barked grumpily and turned around to leave Blue Mountain Courtyard.

The little fellow followed after him with a huff. Before leaving, she sent Xiang Yuanyuan a look with her eyes.

Chapter 513: It Seems Like I Was Once Acquainted with this Belle

Xiang Yuanyuan was taken aback, but she reacted without thinking and strode forth with stout steps to catch up to Qiao Mu.

Not long after the two exited Blue Mountain Courtyard, Qiao Mu pulled Xiang Yuanyuan behind the shrubbery nearby. She gazed fixedly at her, stating, “You’re very hungry.”

Xiang Yuanyuan was just about to shake her head when her stomach failed to live up to expectations and let out a growl.

Ah...

Actually, Qiao Mu could hear Xiang Yuanyuan’s stomach’s hungry protests even from where she stood earlier, which was quite far away.

Xiang Yuanyuan’s large face was veiled in a rosy flush.

She was standing before a little lady more than 10 years younger than herself, yet her stomach was so hungry that it was growling. Xiang Yuanyuan’s face burned bright red while feeling abashed internally.

Qiao Mu had Qiuqiu bring out the steaming cabbage pot, and she stuffed it towards Xiang Yuanyuan. “I’ll give this to you. But I ate some of it earlier, if you mind then...”

How would she mind!

The cabbage pot’s aroma stimulated Xiang Yuanyuan’s large belly into releasing persistent growls. She practically snatched over that pot into her arms.

When she raised her head, she found it embarrassing and stammered, red-faced, “I-I... I’ll spoon some into a bowl.”

“No need, you can have all of it.” Qiao Mu shook her head as she glanced at Xiang Yuanyuan’s round belly.

“You’re really giving all of it to me?” Xiang Yuanyuan’s jet-black and bright, round eyes were filled with pleasant surprise.

Afterwards, while scratching her head in slight embarrassment, she said, “I-I didn’t go to the cafeteria that late last night, but I don’t know why I was only given a small half-bowl of porridge...”

She was so hungry that her belly was growling in the middle of the night, causing her to toss and turn sleeplessly.

“It’s a bit bland, do you want to add some salt?”

“No need, no need! It’s okay as is!” Holding the cabbage pot in her arms, Xiang Yuanyuan felt as if she were holding the whole world in her arms instead, and her face glowed in happiness.

Qiao Mu was a bit dumbfounded. It was only a pot of cabbage and meat slice stew, yet that face of happiness was so effusive that it made her a bit low-spirited.

The little stoic’s gaze softened slightly before she glanced at the large lady and said with a nod, “Then you should hide it.”

Xiang Yuanyuan was only a normal person with slightly greater strength, so she didn’t have an inner world. Who knew how many people would covet her cabbage pot if she just carried it back openly.

Qiao Mu gave her a kind reminder as she didn’t hope for this incident to attract trouble for Xiang Yuanyuan. Xiang Yuanyuan instantly understood and nodded repeatedly.

Xiang Yuanyuan wasn’t dumb, and she immediately took off her outer garment to cover the pot upon hearing the reminder. After thanking Qiao Mu for the third time, she excitedly left to look for a place to eat.

When Qiao Mu turned her head, she saw the second young master standing under a fully blossoming plum tree in the snow. He had fixated on her with an obscure expression for an indefinite period of time now.

He was dressed in a blue brocade gown, and his head of black hair swayed gently. This young master’s demeanor really was as peerless as jade.

Those jadeite-green eyes were brimming with an indescribable and aberrant emotion as they gazed at her.

She strutted over slowly.

Second Qin just gazed fixedly at her as she walked to his side, and he suddenly had a strange feeling, as if he was once acquainted with her.

“Have we... met before?” He asked softly, almost in a murmur.

Hearing this, Qiao Mu was beside herself in alarm on the inside, but her face remained stoic and she went around him expressionlessly.

She didn’t leave him a word in reply.

Of course, Second Qin didn’t need her to reply either. He only passed it off as an unwarranted lapse of schizophrenia. Besides, she might not have heard his low delirious murmur.

The two people ambled on a small path to return to Crane Garden.

That night, Qiao Mu snuck out from her window and slipped into Second Qin’s study to browse for any useful information.

From her observations these past few days, the Qin Estate was an elixirs patrician family that was engrossed in the research and development of pills and elixirs.

Chapter 514: Search

The patriarch, Qin Guilu, was immersed in his concoction room all day, not a trace of him to be seen.

The stepmadam, Yang Liuxu, hadn't given birth to the two young masters. Even though she had married into the family five years ago, she was still without child. Instead, she was looking after a niece and nephew from the Yang Family. The people in the estate addressed them as maternal young master and maternal young miss; however, they had not a lick of relationship at all to the two young masters!

Was there a connection between the Shuntian Prefecture's Liu Yizhi and the Qin Estate?

That day, the old sect master had self-detonated while dragging him up into the sky. She perceived that he had survived from the life lantern's subsequent fragment. However, judging from his state of injury at the time, he absolutely needed to rest for one or two years in order to make a full recovery.

If the Qin Estate wasn't related, then why would its iron tablet appear inside the Holy Water Sect's ancestral temple?

Qiao Mu sneered as she sped up her search.

During the day, she couldn't do anything suspicious at all with Second Qin sitting on the side. Her chance was now...

"Master, someone is coming!" Qiuqiu's voice popped into her mind all of a sudden.

Qiao Mu immediately vaulted out the window and scurried away nimbly and noiselessly, concealing herself inside a low thicket outside.

The sapling's leaves and branches emitted a slight green glow as they extended out from her wrists.

After several seconds, Qiao Mu's entire figure was suddenly cocooned by the rapidly growing shrubbery, cloaking all hints of her presence.

"Young Master, did something happen?"

"I vaguely felt that someone was here just now." Second Qin lit a candle lamp.

The candle flame shone upon his slightly knitted brows as he made a sweep of the surroundings, but he didn't discover anything.

His personal guard heaved a slight sigh of relief and involuntarily said with a smile, "Who would dare to come make trouble in the Qin Estate? Young Master, you're overthinking it. You should go back and turn in earlier."

Hiding under the window, Qiao Mu relaxed slightly after seeing Second Qin depart.

Immediately afterwards, she vaulted nimbly into the study again and performed an extremely swift but methodical search of Second Qin's study. However, she had nothing to show for it and could only depart with knitted brows.

She didn't return promptly to her room to rest and rather left Crane Garden stealthily, her figure flashing agilely through the dark night.

When she happened upon a place called Fugui Garden, her small ears wiggled as she vaguely heard a woman's suppressed moan coming from the window.

Our dear Qiao Mu's eyelids twitched abruptly.

She wasn't dumb, and although she hadn't experienced the facts of life in her previous life, she had still gone through puberty after all. Even if she hadn't eaten pork before, at least she had unintentionally seen pigs run before.

She was just about to slink away when she heard a groan in protest. "You devil, why are you being so forceful? Do you want to kill me! If by chance I happen to cry out loud, and the master overhears, I'm going to leave you to your death."

A young man replied with a mischievous chuckle. "Then concubine-mother must not cry out loud by all means, or else both me and you won't be able to escape death."

Our dear Qiao Mu felt her scalp tingle from her eavesdropping. She didn't dare to stay longer and speedily made herself scarce, only feeling that the goosebumps all over her body were shedding and pelting the ground.

After she came out, her small figure still involuntarily shuddered twice before she quickly slunk into another yard.

She observed two shadows reflected in the study, so the little fellow wrapped herself in branches and transformed into a little treant as she hid under the window.

She heard a man's aged voice saying ambiguously, "The situation has been especially tense lately, that person... is currently tracking you all down. You should tell your master to lie low for longer."

"That madman has been clamping firmly onto us this entire time, unwilling to let us go. We have to deal with this eventually..." The other young voice that sounded vaguely familiar said through gritted teeth, "Sir hopes for you to take care of something for us. After it's done, we'll be sure to reward you handsomely."

Chapter 515: Conspiring

After that, they must have spoken in whispers since Qiao Mu only heard the words 'pill recipe' and 'secret method.' She was slightly apprehensive that she wasn't able to catch the rest.

"That won't do at all! You can't drag our Qin Estate into this." The aged voice refused vehemently. "If something were to happen to that person while in our estate, then the entirety of our estate would not be able to escape censure. This is definitely a severe crime that warrants property seizure and clan extermination."

"You're still afraid of that muddleheaded old fellow? What can he do? Once you deal with this young one, the old one will not be a threat at all."

“That still won’t do.” The aged voice was faintly fuming. “What you’re doing is tying our entire Qin Estate to the stake and setting it on fire. I absolutely cannot agree.”

“Family Head Qin, don’t forget that we’re all in the same boat and tied to the same boat! If we get completely wiped out, then you people, heh...”

The voices inside the room became muffled again, and at the end, the aged voice said helplessly, “You really can guarantee that everyone in the Qin Estate will get out of this in one piece?”

“Heh, once that person is dealt with, the old one will definitely be out of his wits and at a complete loss. At that time, we’ll...” Qiao Mu could only fret inwardly when they engaged in a series of whispers again.

She kept feeling a bit of discomfort in her heart, like it was suffering.

What kind of person were they plotting against that would result in such a severe punishment of property seizure and clan extermination? The answer basically already surfaced in her mind.

It was the person she dreaded facing and rejected thinking about the entire time during these two years...

She knew it, she really was a total jinx that harmed the people around her!

All the people who doted on her, had almost all died...

She had wavered for a long time before deciding to step out into the world again, as well as make a trip home.

When she read through those letters on her journey, her feelings of wanting to speed home practically urged her to break into a run that very instant.

However, the closer she got to home, the more timid she felt.

Perhaps, it was actually because she resisted returning home from the bottom of her heart!

She had best not return, and not disrupt that tranquility at home!

Even without her, her family had been doing well these few years. She could make out from their letters that they were truly happy from the bottom of their hearts.

She, this little jinx, was actually better suited to spending her days alone. It was for the best that she not disturb anyone again.

Loss really was a very, very, very terrifying thing...

Qiao Mu returned moodily to her room in Crane Garden. Upon entering, her entire body froze involuntarily, and then she took two steps backwards.

A slender figure stepped forward, too close for comfort, and grasped her wrist abruptly. He spat out in his icy voice, “It’s the middle of the night. Where did you go take a stroll?”

Qiao Mu’s entire body stiffened, only feeling as though a venomous snake had wrapped around her wrist.

That hand felt icy, just like in her previous life.

Qiao Mu rapidly wrested out of his grip with a flip of her hand. She then gave him a fierce kick, mercilessly imprinting a tiny footprint on the man's robes.

Second Qin didn't evade her. He simply lowered his head to look at the footprint on his robes before fixating sullenly on this stoic face under the moonlight.

"Who are you exactly? Unmask your true appearance!"

"Get out!" Qiao Mu found him annoying, so she kicked him again, booting him out of the room. She promptly slammed the door heavily in his face!

"Bang!" That sound practically alarmed the whole of Crane Garden.

Subsequently, a black-clothed guard drifted over. He was stupefied as he looked first at the tightly shut door, then at his extremely displeased second young master.

Chapter 516: Perplexed

Why did he want to laugh so much upon seeing that the young master had been refused entrance for no reason?

Second Qin turned his head to glance sullenly at the black-clothed guard. The guard had on a poker face, even if he had long been cramping up from laughter on the inside...

The little stoic swaddled herself in her covers but tossed and turned sleeplessly for the entire night. She stepped out of her room while yawning and immediately glimpsed Second Qin, who was standing inside the courtyard.

To her surprise, it had snowed after she returned last night. Second Qin had draped on a white fox-fur cloak and just stood among the boundless snow, his fine black hair looking like splashed ink and his thin lips pressed slightly together. When he turned his head to look towards her, that moment felt as if it were a lifetime ago.

It couldn't be that this person had just stood on the veranda the entire night after being booted out the door?

Was he suffering from delirium?

"Let's go." He took a shaggy fur cloak from the nearby guard and was about to drape it over her shoulders.

However, the little stoic didn't appreciate his gesture and evaded to the side, observing him guardedly.

Unexpectedly, he didn't get angry and only glanced at her before handing the fur cloak over to her, letting her do it herself.

The weather was indeed quite cold, so she took it and draped it around herself, tying a knot at her collar.

It was already nearing the New Year festival, and the Qin Estate was busy in its preparations, so she had no idea where this second young master intended to bring her.

Last night, she was actually being totally unreasonable. At that time, she was feeling moody, maybe even chagrined, and mulishly booted this second young master out the door!

If it were any other young master, he would have probably dragged her, this insolent maidservant, out and ruthlessly beat her death!

Without a doubt, he had already exposed her problematic identity and even seen through her disguise!

But why didn't he say anything today, even continuing to keep her by his side?

Qiao Mu was unable to understand. She followed him to a pavilion that was veiled with thick cotton curtains, and she could immediately feel an enveloping warmth upon entering.

The charcoal inside the stove was burning red-hot.

The two people took off their fur cloaks and handed them to the maidservants, who docilely led them to the window seat on the second story. There was already an exquisite spread of pastries on the small table, serving as a sumptuous breakfast.

The two people ate the breakfast silently. Qiao Mu felt like she had quite the appetite, but Second Qin, who was sitting across from her, was looking at her the entire time with knitted brows.

"Eat more." The second young master gathered up his wide sleeves while using his chopsticks to put another pastry on the little stoic's plate.

This scene shocked all the secretly observing maidservants present into dropping their jaws. They then hung their heads but continued to peep at them furtively from the corner of their eyes.

Oh my heavens, the young master would actually serve food to that little maidservant? What kind of deity was this little maidservant to receive such a monumental honor?

No matter how they studied her, that girl wore the same pink dress as them. No one would believe that she wasn't a maidservant!

But another more horrifying scene occurred subsequently before their eyes!

The little stoic used her chopsticks to pick up that pastry that Second Qin served her and directly tossed it onto the table. She frowned in displeasure and said, "I'm full."

The maidservants feared that the young master would fly into a rage in the next instant, so they all hastily got down and kneeled on the floor.

Second Qin picked up another pastry with his chopsticks and placed it into her small dish again, but the little lady tossed it aside again.

Second Qin served her all of the dishes once but discovered that the little lady didn't eat any of them. He only gave up then, supposing that she really was full. However, this episode scared the servants nearby so much that their bodies were trembling all over, and none of them dared to raise their head to peek again.

“Withdraw, all of you.” Second Young Master Qin spoke frigidly.

Sounds could be heard from the rustling of robes rubbing against the floor. Before long, the maidservants retreated from the second story of the pavilion in quick succession.

Chapter 517: Fate

“Let’s get to know each other again.” Second Qin said faintly. “I’m Qin Xin, how about you?”

“Mu Xiao Bao.” *When this darling deadpans into the mirror, even I myself feel a bit afraid.*

Second Qin nodded, neither did he expose her for giving a fake name, as he said insipidly, “Xiao Bao, you actually need not be so guarded against me. My Qin Estate is not involved in any shady dealings, so you can stay and investigate for as long you like.”

“Rest assured that I will not mention this to others.” Second Qin’s sleeves grazed the tabletop as he calmly poured a cup of tea for her, pushing it towards her.

Qiao Mu gave this second young master of the Qin Estate an ineffable look, puzzled as to exactly what he had up his sleeves.

There wasn’t anything shady going on? And yet your father was conspiring with someone in the middle of the night just last night.

Unless, this Second Qin was not privy to the plot at all?

She subconsciously wanted to knock her little head, as she felt that this life had taken a strange turn.

It was poles apart from her previous life, in which many events had caught her off guard, preventing her from making any preparations at all.

In her previous life, that bastard Fan Qiuhe had captured her when she was about 20 years old, tormenting her for a full two years.

When she was 22, she was rescued by this ‘master,’ and she stayed by this ‘master’s’ side for at least four years.

She couldn’t say that she especially understood the person before her, but at least she was, more or less, familiar with his personality.

He was so obstinate that it practically bordered on bigotry.

He treated others harshly, as could be seen from his “taming” methods.

Her heart at that time was even more closed off than now. As a paralyzed cripple stuck in a fixed spot all day long, eating, drinking, and sh*tting in the same place, she didn’t have a shred of dignity to speak of. She didn’t want to stick her nose into other matters at all.

She only knew that the place she stayed at was not the Qin Estate at all.

Besides, even though she absolutely didn’t know where she was, she knew that it definitely wasn’t Guanlan City.

Perhaps the him at that time had already moved out into his own estate.

At present, her encounter with Second Qin was brought forward a full seven to eight years in advance!

This was her inescapable fate—

The people she was meant to encounter, she would encounter, just as in the past.

However, the present her would hold her destiny entirely in her own hands. No one should even dream of controlling! Her! Future!

Qiao Mu cupped the toasty teacup with both hands as she swept a detached gaze at the man before her, before hanging her small head slightly.

The second young master's heart jolted faintly. For some reason, when he saw the little stoic's emotionless face and her ice-cold eyes, he felt immensely upset on the inside, wanting very much to warm up her eyes with his hands.

"Young Master." The senior manager's voice rang abruptly from the door.

"What is it."

"It's about the master's birthday feast. This servant needs to discuss some details regarding the VIP list with Second Young Master again."

"En." Second Young Master Qin stood up and then gazed at the little fellow who was hanging her head, saying, "Return to Crane Garden first. I'll go back later."

As he walked outside, he reminded impassively, "It'll be cold going back, so remember to wear your fur cloak."

When Qiao Mu raised her head, casting a glance at the window, she saw him exit the pavilion after descending the stairs.

At some point in time, snow danced about in the sky again. The accompanying senior manager respectfully bent his waist as he held up an umbrella for the young master.

Qiao Mu also stood up to head down the stairs. When she reached the stairs, a maidservant with her head lowered handed her the fur cloak.

Qiao Mu thanked her as she took it, casually draping it around her shoulders, before descending from the pavilion and walking outside.

Chapter 518: Slapped Across the Face

The light snow that fell last night accumulated into a thin layer on the ground. Originally, it was very normal for her, with her cultivation, to leave no trace of trodding in the snow.

However, Qiao Mu purposely treaded a line of small footprints in the snow, one footprint for each step, stringing them together crookedly.

As she trodded, she mused over the matter that the senior manager came to report about earlier, oblivious to the several figures passing by on the nearby path.

The birthday feast of the master of the Qin Estate and the VIP list—were they thinking of adding Crown Prince Mo's name on to it?

Last night, was he the person Family Head Qin and that person with a somewhat familiar voice were conspiring against? How were they going to plot against him?

Would the crown prince really come?

He was busy with state affairs, so he probably wouldn't go so far as to come personally to give his felicitations for a mere Qin Estate, right?

She stomped out a pair of small footprints with a hop as she ruminated: *Even if he really came, she wouldn't let anything happen to him.*

The little fellow ran her fingers over her small face. Since she disguised her appearance, this current face of hers was very ordinary, unrecognizable amongst a crowd.

She was probably going to bump into many acquaintances on the day of the birthday feast, but as long as she didn't speak, no one should be able to recognize her.

However, the amount of confidence that the little fellow exuded in her facial disguise right now would equal the degree of her stupefaction later on...

Suddenly, a light chuckle entered her ears.

When Qiao Mu turned her head, she saw an exceptionally fine young master dressed in a dark purple robe, his long, loose hair slightly disheveled, with a spot of vermillion between his brows. He was currently leaning against a snow plum tree, glimpsing at her small, purposely-crooked footsteps with smiling eyes.

"Who are you." Qiao Mu's face remained stoic as she asked frigidly.

"Insolence!" A woman next to the young master rebuked lightly.

Qiao Mu only then noticed quite a few young and pretty women of all body types trailing behind this man.

The person who spoke had wrapped herself in a crimson woolly cloak. Her pair of soft mounds were half-concealed and half-revealed, her body buxom and full-figured.

She was adorned in pearls and jade, but she still jealously gazed at the precious white fox-fur cloak on Qiao Mu's shoulders. There was a tempestuous air surrounding the woman, as if she was going to swallow Qiao Mu whole in the next instant.

"You even dare to be so rude before the Eldest Young Master? Little b*tch, you're not going to kneel down in greeting?" A yellow-clothed woman also popped out from behind the trees, glaring at Qiao Mu as she criticized.

Oh, so it was Eldest Young Master Qin, Qin Xuan.

No wonder his eyes had some similarities with the second young master's.

However, compared to the second young master's breezy and unaffected exterior, this Eldest Young Master Qin's eyes were flirtatious, harboring a frivolous wickedness within. He was undoubtedly an unparalleled Casanova.

Qiao Mu glanced at them before turning around, intending to leave, but Eldest Young Master Qin's figure warped, appearing beside her in the next instant. He stretched his hand out flippantly, wanting to lift up her small chin.

Yet without waiting for an explanation, Qiao Mu kicked at him. Just as he was about to catch her small leg with his outstretched hand, Qiao Mu abruptly pulled it back before immediately smacking him with a big slap across his face, so handsome that it rankled both the heavens and mortals.

Qin Xuan was caught off guard, and neither did he expect that there would be a woman that would raise her hand against him. He was immediately bewildered after being soundly slapped across the face by the little lady.

The accompanying females had already started screeching in fright, as if our dear Qiao Mu had done something insane and unpardonable. Those series of shrieks were practically about to pierce through her eardrums.

"Scram!" Qiao Mu kicked the eldest young master in irritation before forcefully pushing him away, running away in a huff.

Chapter 519: Poisoned into Mutes

Qin Xuan abruptly recovered his wits, and his gaze subsequently burned in rage as he swiftly chased after her.

It didn't even take a second for him to block Qiao Mu's way again.

"What, you want to run after hitting someone else? How is such a convenient thing possible?" He was so enraged that his heart and liver were aching. Where did this little country girl come from, having no manners to speak of!

She actually dared to immediately engage in an all-out fighting performance when she didn't like what she heard, getting physical and slapping his face? How outrageous!

"Young Master, Young Master!!" The orioles and swallows all ran over in one go and pointed fingers at Qiao Mu, yammering all at once while cursing at her angrily.

"Noisy!" Qiao Mu turned around and scattered a large handful of medicinal powder at the flock of orioles and swallows.

The world instantly quieted down, while the women clutched at their throats in horror. They only felt that their throats were burning in searing pain after inhaling that poison powder, completely unable to speak.

Witnessing this, Qin Xuan narrowed his eyes at Qiao Mu.

As the eldest young master of an elixirs patrician family, he was naturally well-versed in pharmacology. He could tell with a glance that the little fellow's handful of poison powder was of high quality, and its effects were also very prominent.

From just that handful, he reckoned that the women's throats wouldn't be able to recover nor would they be able to speak for three days.

"You little fellow are quite intriguing!" Eldest Young Master Qin did not get angry and rather laughed out loud. His eyes sweeping over her face flippantly. "How about this, I'll request Second Brother to hand you over to me? You'll stay by my side in the future."

The flock of orioles and swallows beside the eldest young master all glowered with horrific and queer expressions, but as none of them could speak, they could only glare frigidly at Qiao Mu with tears in their eyes.

Qiao Mu's gaze didn't waver in the slightest, tranquil and without a ripple, like a well that had dried up for a thousand years. She gazed at him coldly before turning around to head towards Crane Garden.

Qin Xuan's brows involuntarily creased.

The little lady really didn't have a good temper. Besides, her pair of eyes nursed an apathy, which truly didn't corroborate with her age, that told others that she had seen the vicissitudes of life.

"You all should return." The eldest young master threw down this sentence before promptly strolling towards Crane Garden.

The flock of orioles and swallows had originally accompanied the eldest young master in high spirits to admire the plum blossoms, but they now all gazed with teary eyes at the back silhouette of the eldest young master, who had left without any hesitation.

The red-clothed beauty draped in a wool cloak stared aggrievedly and belligerently at the eldest young master's departing silhouette with her beautiful eyes.

Practically the entire estate knew that the second young master now had an extremely brazen maidservant by his side. However, after seeing her today, Ping'er felt that that woman was far more than brazen, and was simply willful and reckless.

The immense interest that the eldest young master showed in the little b*tch instantaneously stabbed Ping'er's heart with pain.

She knew all too well what this gaze of men's meant. It was the intent to forcefully seize a newly discovered toy, all to satiate their desire for a momentary delight...

Ping'er swore to prevent this b*tch from becoming a part of Drizzle Court. There was absolutely no way!

Our dear Qiao Mu was fuming so much that her head hurt, so she holed herself up in her room after running back to Crane Garden. She didn't know that the eldest young master, that playboy, had directly run over to look for the second young master, demanding to have her.

Of course, the two brothers parted on bad terms in the end.

This incident travelled to Willow[1] Court, into the Qin Estate's Stepmadam's, Yang Liuxu's, ears when it was almost 5 o'clock in the afternoon.

Her niece Yang Fengyan ran over while weeping in complaint, saying that the two young masters almost started fighting in Crane Garden for a mere b*tchy servant. At that moment, Yang Liuxu wondered if there was something wrong with her ears, and if she heard wrongly?

"Aunt!" Yang Fengyan sobbed while nestling in Yang Liuxu's embrace.

Chapter 520: Adoration

Yang Liuxu patted her niece's back gently, as she naturally knew about her niece's feelings towards the second young master.

Although she wanted to matchmake them, to the point of insinuating this to the master more than once during their pillow talks.

But unfortunately, her niece inherited her looks from the Yang Family, who were not astounding beauties. Her talent was also very mediocre, still only a level-four mystic cultivator at present, so the second young master probably wouldn't be interested.

After marrying into the Qin Estate five years ago, she soon brought this nephew and niece pair who suffered bitter fates from their parents' early deaths into her custody. She really treated them well with all her heart, as evidenced by how their food, clothing, lodging, and pocket expenses were basically the same as the Qin Estate's two young masters.

However, it was still very difficult for Fengyan to marry into the Qin Estate. Setting aside the second young master's celestial bearing, he also naturally maintained a higher standard than normal people's. Additionally, their Yang Family was declining with each passing day, totally not comparable to the Qin Estate at all.

Other than concocting pills daily, Family Head Qin basically didn't bother with his two sons' affairs. Sometimes, she even felt like the master's laissez-faire attitude towards them was practically just... like they weren't his sons.

Yang Liuxu sighed, and she patted her niece Yang Fengyan's hand with her own. "Fengyan, our Yang Family has been going downhill these two years. You also know that the Yang Family hasn't produced any promising offspring. If not for my occasional material assistance, they would be even worse off..."

As she said this, she heaved another long sigh. "You had best make mental preparations regarding the matter with you and Second Young Master."

Yang Fengyan's eyes widened abruptly, and her tear-streaked face was filled with unwillingness and indignation. "Aunt, you promised me! You said that you'll definitely make it so that I can marry into the Qin Estate, and to Second Cousin."

"I refuse, Aunt! Aunt, I will only marry Second Cousin in this lifetime! You have to take charge for me, Aunt!" Madam Qin née Yang had spoiled Yang Fengyan into being extremely unruly, so she was naturally unwilling to give up after hearing that her desire couldn't be fulfilled.

Yang Liuxu's head hurt from her whines and protests, and she could only promise her repeatedly for the time being to appease her.

Afterwards, she probed again, saying, "Actually, since there are so many noble young masters from prominent families in the capital, why should you tie yourself down to Second Young Master? Aunt heard that the Duan Estate has welcomed back their youngest young master. He would actually be a good choice, having outstanding looks as well as astoundingly high cultivation. Besides, he's also not as... unapproachable as your Second Cousin."

"Although that youngest young master of the Duan Estate is surnamed Duan, his father's identity is an enigma, and so he lives with his mother in the Duan Clan. The Duan Clan's Old Patriarch dotes on this maternal grandson very much. His standing in the Duan Clan is not inferior to any of the legitimate young masters. There has even been a rumor going around that the Old Patriarch will pass down the seat of the patriarch to this maternal grandson."

"I refuse, I refuse, I refuse!" Yang Fengyan jumped up and rejected, protesting, "What youngest young master of the Duan Estate? He's just a fatherless bastard. I don't want to marry this kind of person without identity nor status."

Her aunt must be tricking her. Who else's elegance in this world could match that of Eldest Cousin's and Second Cousin's?

She wasn't going to believe her, of course. She had fallen in love at first sight with Second Cousin five years ago. She wasn't going to marry anyone other than him in this lifetime!

Seeing that she had already made her decision, Madam Qin née Yang could only nod in resignation. "In a few days, a lot of people will be coming to the estate for the master's birthday feast. You have to exhort your older brother thoroughly to not cause trouble with his frivolousness. He must not offend the noble ladies visiting the estate."

Madam Qin née Yang really did worry herself sick over her nephew Yang Jiazhen, having cleaned up many of his messes.