

My Crown 531

Chapter 531: This Darling Is So Gentle

What kind of expression could Second Qin show anyways? He was almost angered to death! He had already said that it was for Madam Qin née Yang's own good when he blocked her.

Yet she didn't listen! And now, her waist was fractured because of that. How was it possible for her to get up and host the birthday feast tomorrow?

With the madam out of commission, Father could only have his highest-status concubine, Concubine Mei, entertain the madams and misses tomorrow. However, her status as a concubine was unpresentable after all, so there was the worry that the clique of missuses would feel slighted.

Second Qin grew more frustrated as he thought about it, and so he glowered at the unconscious woman lying on the ground.

So stupid, to not realize her own worth before throwing her weight around!

"Xiao Bao, why did you beat Madam into lying on the ground this time?" Eldest Qin shot a glance at the little lady's deadpan expression. It truly wasn't that he wanted to laugh from schadenfreude, but that... it really was super hilarious!

The little fellow had only just thrashed the maternal little sister into being bed-ridden in the afternoon, and then she fractured the waist of that same lady's aunt at night...

This lass was completely unsuited to being a maidservant! She had a lot of attitude as a bossy young woman, and it was impossible to stop her once her temper flared up.

"Annoying, I'm sleeping!" Qiao Mu glared at the servants beside her, and everyone scattered like birds and beasts to open up a pathway.

"Tomorrow, have Concubine Mei come out to receive the noble ladies. Make sure that she doesn't wear her usual white and gloomy clothes and look too unpresentable." Second Qin left his eldest brother this sentence before leaving.

The group of servants looked at each other in fear and trepidation, and they all secretly exclaimed how fortunate they were to not have actually made a move on this little lady just now, or else they themselves would have been the ones lying on the ground.

From the two young masters' attitudes, it seemed that they did not intend to condemn the young lady at all. On the contrary, the madam ended up in such a miserable state... what a close call!

Early the next morning, Qiao Mu couldn't resist twitching her mouth when she saw the senior manager obsequiously greeting her just as she stepped out the door.

Really, what was the senior manager doing so early in the morning? Coming to give her a humble heads-up in advance, saying something along the lines of since a lot of people were coming to the estate today, it was hard to guarantee that there wouldn't be some blind dimwits among the distinguished guests that may offend her for no reason.

So he hoped that she could let them off for the Qin Estate's sake and not snap other people's wrists or fracture their waists at the slightest pretext.

What do you mean! This darling is so gentle! I was never a savage person!

Qiao Mu slunk away expressionlessly. She was going to keep an eye on the kitchen and see if anyone dared to spike the food and drinks.

She had already thought it over. Since the mastermind behind the Qin Family patriarch was so confident as to be able to harm the crown prince as long as the latter were present, then there were only two possible methods.

One, assassination. Two, poison. It wasn't reasonable to assassinate at the beginning. They had to at least wait until everyone had gone through three rounds of wine and gotten tipsy, right?

So the kitchen was an important location that she definitely had to keep a close watch on today.

As the little lady walked over, everyone panicked and retreated as if seeing an enemy. They immediately evaded her when they saw her coming over from far away, as if she were some kind of evildoer!

They truly were a bunch of extremely baffling people.

This darling was normally an accommodating person. What exactly made you all think that I was a violent and terrifying person that would attack others without good cause?

How preposterous!

After Darling Qiao turned the corner in a huff, she saw a plump figure trotting over in her direction with five to eight flowerpots of various sizes in her arms.

"Xiang Yuanyuan!" She remembered this big miss's name.

This Xiang Yuanyuan was among the maidservants that entered the estate at the same time as her. She had a big body but small guts, which made her the easiest to bully. Since she had a large figure, she kept being snubbed by the other maidservants.

However, Darling Qiao quite liked this big miss's carefree personality.

Chapter 532: Trouble Strikes...

These maidservants would have "I simply can't chat with you" written on their faces whenever they saw her. It was as if she really wanted to converse with them!

Only Xiang Yuanyuan didn't disdain her and was willing to talk to her, in addition to giving her kind reminders.

"Ah, Xiao Bao, Xiao Bao." Xiang Yuanyuan was also happy to see Qiao Mu.

However, she was carrying so many flowerpots in her arms, even using her chin to brace them in place. She couldn't make any large movements and stiffened in place.

Qiao Mu got rankled upon seeing her cowardice. "Why didn't you get a small handcart to transport them?"

Someone had definitely bullied her again! Look at her, what use was it to grow such a large body.

If it were her who got duped, she would punch them first before talking. Even if she wasn't their match, she could frighten them into thinking twice.

As long as you overdid your threat, that clique of cowards wouldn't dare to play any more cheap tricks.

"It's nothing, it's nothing." Xiang Yuanyuan smiled simple-mindedly. "Xiao Bao, I still have to send these to the forecourt, so I'm a bit busy. You go play first."

"I'll help you." She simply couldn't look directly at this fellow!

Seeing a flowerpot fall down, Qiao Mu caught it steadily with her leg before kicking it into her own hands.

"Ah, no need, no need!" Xiang Yuanyuan shook her head hastily and looked at Qiao Mu with the large pile of flowerpots in her arms. "Come, put it in my hand, and I'll carry it over with the rest..."

"Forget it. Should I put it on your head?" Qiao Mu glanced at her grumpily. Xiang Yuanyuan was already carrying so many, so where else would there be space to put it? "It's fine, I'll go with you."

"Give me two more pots." Qiao Mu was expressionless.

"No need, no need." Xiang Yuanyuan shook her large head again, saying, "I can carry them. They're heavy, and your limbs are so slim. I'm afraid you'll drop them."

Qiao Mu twitched her mouth. This darling actually wasn't that weak!

The snow had stopped falling, but a thick layer of it had blanketed the ground, not having melted yet.

On the way over, Qiao Mu purposely treaded a long line of crooked footprints, matching Xiang Yuanyuan's line of large footprints to make a pair.

Xiang Yuanyuan chattered nonstop with her cheerfully. Thus, although the chilly wind was blowing in her face, she didn't feel that cold.

After turning the corner into a long red cypress hallway, the two trod forward on the creaking floorboards. However, they soon glimpsed a batch of distinguished guests walking in their direction from far away.

"Please come, please come. The banquet hasn't started yet, so will Sirs follow this old servant to the scenic hall to take a rest for now." The second manager subserviently led over about a dozen young masters and sirs, while Concubine Mei had already brought the young ladies and missuses over to the snow gazebo to admire the plum blossoms.

The second manager had long noticed Mu Xiao Bao, this little great aunt, and he surreptitiously cupped his hands in a bow with a fawning face.

Qiao Mu wasn't a person that liked to stir up trouble, so she and Xiang Yuanyuan stepped to the side of the hallway to let the people pass by.

The hallway itself wasn't that wide, but there was enough room to spare even if people walked side by side.

It was only that Xiang Yuanyuan took up quite a bit of space...

When a young sir, with oiled hair and a powdered face, accidentally struck Xiang Yuanyuan's belly with his elbow, Xiang Yuanyuan immediately sucked in a breath and tucked in her belly while shrinking backwards.

Yet, that distinguished sir retracted his arm disdainfully. He glared at Xiang Yuanyuan, his thick eyebrows forced together into a pronounced frown. He raised his hand to give her a sound slap on the face. "You b*tch! Are you blind! You dare to seduce this young master when you're just a fat piece of pork!"

Sh*t, there's trouble now! The second manager's tears flowed out immediately...

Just as expected, he saw the little great aunt stepping before Xiang Yuanyuan the next second. She ruthlessly kicked the stomach of that powdered-faced young sir, which sent him up into the air in a curve. With a crash, half of his body dangled from the hallway's railing.

Yet the great aunt still wasn't placated! She promptly smashed the large flowerpot she was carrying squarely into the back of the unlucky young sir's head!

Chapter 533: I Get Frightened When You Stare at Me Like This, Duan Yue

The group of young masters and sirs were stupefied and were even suspecting if something had happened to their eyes...

How did this extremely audacious maidservant dare to beat up the young master from the Marquis of Su'an's[1] family?

"It's quite lively here."

An apathetic but very familiar voice suddenly floated into Qiao Mu's ears.

Qiao Mu instantly retracted the small hand that she used to smack the powdered-faced young sir. She ran back to Xiang Yuanyuan, who was still in a daze, and nudged her. "Let's go."

However, where could they go? The dozen or so young people were blocking the path further down the hallway, so Qiao Mu could only brace herself to tug on Xiang Yuanyuan while turning around.

Two men were walking towards her. The one on the right was about 25 or 26, his looks average and mediocre.

On the other hand, the one on the left had a handsome face and moist peach-blossom eyes that reflected light. He was around 20 years old, with a slim and upright posture underneath his gown. His long hair, tied loosely, was draped behind his waist.

Qiao Mu felt sheepish and didn't really dare to lift her head, but she still felt that burning gaze land on herself.

She reassured herself inwardly: *Don't be afraid, this darling has already changed her appearance into this darn look. Even Dad and Mom wouldn't recognize me if they came. Probably no one else would be able to recognize me aside from myself!*

However... why the heck was Duan Yue that guy's gaze so scorching that it made her a bit fearful?

Everything's fine, calm down, get a grip, you must get a grip on yourself! You can't loosen up your expression at all.

If he were to recognize her from this greatly transformed face, then it really would be unbelievable!

Our dear Qiao Mu raised her head up expressionlessly and fearlessly met Duan Yue's gaze head-on.

However, it was this glimpse that made her realize "shoot." Her heart jolted, and her brain heated up, immediately wanting to take to her heels and run away...

Duan Yue really was staring steadily at her!

His terrifying gaze fixated on her, as if it wanted to gobble her up. Not a hint of a warm smile was present in that pair of beautiful peach-blossom eyes. Rather, a heaven-clamoring wrath churned in their depths!

How was this possible? Darling Qiao was promptly dumbfounded!

She had already disguised herself to this extent. How was it possible for him to recognize her with a single glance? That's not right, she was definitely just scaring herself!

He was bluffing her! Darling Qiao continued to reassure herself. She didn't say anything and poked Xiang Yuanyuan, urging her to leave quickly.

Yet just as she passed by Duan Yue, she felt her wrist tightening suddenly. He had abruptly gripped onto her.

"You're very well!" Duan Yue had been trying to repress his stomach full of fury from the instant he saw this little stoic! He, like a fool, had been searching for her across the whole world...

He didn't eat nor sleep well and had been deeply worrying for more than two years.

However, he didn't expect that this young lady had snuck into the capital, lurking right under his nose.

Qiao Mu was frightened to death as she belatedly realized that Duan Yue really did see through her disguise! Was it just one glance? How was that possible! Her disguise was undoubtedly that perfect!

In the meantime, the second manager ran over tearfully and tried to bar Duan Yue's way. He kept apologizing politely the entire time and exclaimed, "S-Sorry, Young Master Duan. We've disturbed you! This old servant will lead you over..."

Seeing the second manager bar his way, Qiao Mu seized the chance to make herself scarce. She only heard him bellowing frustratedly, "Stand there! You're fleeing? Let me see where you can flee to!"

Qiao Mu skedaddled out of the long red cypress hallway, but then she happened to see Situ Yi walking over upon turning the corner.

Situ Yi was taken by surprise, but he still greeted her immediately. "Little Junior Sister?"

Utter bewilderment was written all over Qiao Mu's face now. She ran all the way to the garden and kept checking both sides of her profile in the pond's reflection.

What was happening? Even Situ Yi could recognize her with one look? What exactly was the problem with her perfect disguise?

Meanwhile, Situ Yi was rooted to the spot, dumb as a wooden chicken. Did he just see the little junior sister who had disappeared for more than two years? Could it be that his eyes were playing tricks on him?

"Hurry, hurry, hurry. Hurry and report to Master that the crown prince's carriage has almost arrived at the main entrance." A high-spirited servant shouted out as he dashed over.

The Qin Family patriarch, who was distressed over how to account to his superiors, abruptly leaped up from his stool upon hearing these words. His eyes flickered, and he said, "Quickly inform the two young masters to welcome him with me at the main entrance."

What was going on? Didn't the crown prince say that he wouldn't come? He had already received Noble Consort Zheng's definite news that the crown prince wasn't coming. Besides, he had already welcomed His Highness Eldest Prince Mo Jiao. Who anticipated that...

His Highness the Crown Prince truly was an unfathomable person!

Chapter 534: Invisibility Talisman

Qiao Mu was rooted to the edge of the pond as she checked her face from all angles without any signs of stopping, her small face full of bewilderment.

A series of chaotic footsteps travelled past her ears. When she turned her head over, she saw quite a few maidservants hastily running past her on the cobblestone path.

"Hurry up, hurry up!"

"Family Head ordered for everyone to assemble at the main entrance."

"The crown prince's carriage has already arrived at the entrance."

"Ah—" The maidservants' excited screams rose and fell in disarray.

They had long heard that His Highness the Crown Prince was a peerless pretty boy that didn't lose out to Eldest Young Master and Second Young Master's beauty.

What to do? They were so excited! His Highness the Crown Prince rarely appeared in public normally. Ahhhhhh, so he was coming to the Qin Estate today?

"Quickly help me take a look. Look at me, did my makeup run?"

"Heavens, if I had known, I would've worn that begonia hairpin today."

The little fellow had already thrown the women's squeals to the back of her mind.

Qiao Mu didn't have time to think it over and abruptly scampered towards the kitchen.

That idiot, why did he really come?

There were people who wanted your life, you dummy!

You're an aloof and detached crown prince. Why were you joining in on the fun for no reason? Didn't you know the rule of thumb that banquets were fertile ground for enemies' conspiracies?

The little fellow ran to the kitchen's back door in one stretch, and with a graceful leap, she perched on top of the kitchen's beams. She squatted there while supporting her chin with her hands, observing closely for a while.

The people in the kitchen were currently buzzing about in a frenzy.

People pushed in handcarts loaded with all kinds of ingredients in an assembly-line fashion. It was very busy as people performed their assigned tasks: washing, chopping, boiling, sautéing.

One of the kitchen manager's men was currently shouting repeatedly, "Hurry up, hurry up! Why are you dillydallying so much? I said to quickly wash it, the pot is almost ready for it!"

"The guests have already been seated in their places, and the banquet is about to begin. Everyone, hasten up, ah! Quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly!"

Qiao Mu was still squatting on the beam, but she pursed her lips in frustration.

An idea suddenly popped into her mind. If she sent this feast into chaos and turmoil, would a certain person run back to the palace in a fit of anger?

Our dear Qiao Mu blinked her eyes, and her gaze landed on a line of dishes that had been set aside, ready to serve.

A talisman suddenly appeared at her fingertips. After the little fellow silently activated the talisman, her figure instantly vanished from on top of the beam.

Before long, a bowl lid swayed while floating up into the air, hovering in empty space. A pile of seasonings also flew over from nearby.

Very quickly, a bunch of oil, salt, sauce, vinegar, etc., were sprinkled inside...

Intermediate-level talisman—invisibility talisman: It made a person invisible for a quarter of an hour, but was ineffective in front of those with higher cultivation.

After triggering the fourth jade slip, she newly learned several intermediate-level talismans. The diamond talisman was the first type, and the invisibility talisman was the second.

Qiao Mu was finally satisfied after making sure to add a lot of extra ingredients to each plate.

After squatting there and busying herself for a while, Qiao Mu realized that there hadn't been any anomalies.

She couldn't help being puzzled. Could it be that Family Head Qin didn't plan on poisoning the food but had rather prepared an assassination?

However, poisoning food was indeed a bit on the low-end. The crown prince had a specialized doctor beside him that would first examine all the food he was served.

Our dear Qiao Mu drifted out of the kitchen while contemplating, heading in the direction of the Qin Estate's center courtyard.

Hm, what kind of expressions would they show once they tried the well-seasoned dishes?

If Duan Yue that germophobe were to eat a mouthful of mud, haha, his expression would definitely be exceptionally entertaining!

At this time, Qin Estate's patriarch, along with his family members, was currently welcoming Crown Prince Mo with a bow at the wide-open main entrance.

The guests had also been informed, and they simultaneously stepped forward to give their salutations.

Mo Lian soon alighted from the carriage, and his indifferent gaze fixated on Family Head Qin, who was at the head of the procession.

Chapter 535: Demanding for an Explanation

Cold sweat ran down Qin Guilu's forehead.

Even he was intimidated when the crown prince was silent, and he felt as if an incorporeal hand had tightly squeezed his heart.

"Family Head Qin is the birthday celebrant today, so there's no need for so many formalities."

Mo Lian only said this in a low voice after quite a while, waving his hand to forego the formalities.

Qin Guilu felt as if he had received amnesty, and he hurriedly straightened his body while putting on a wide smile. "The crown prince has honored this humble one with your presence, bringing light to my humble dwelling. Please pardon this humble one, Your Highness, for any negligence."

"Family Head Qin, you don't need to go through the conventional greetings. We came today..."

"Ha ha, the crown prince has come." An insipid and drawn-out voice abruptly cut off Mo Lian's words.

A man, around thirty years of age and wearing a large, bright yellow, deerskin cloak, walked over while surrounded by other guests. He stood at the center of attention, just like how the stars worshipped the moon.

Mo Lian coldly cast a glance at him. "Eldest Royal Brother."

"Ha ha, it's not that Eldest Brother purposely wanted to steal your limelight and offer birthday congratulations to the Qin Estate's patriarch in your stead, but it's that Royal Father had especially instructed me to make this trip. I didn't expect Sixth Brother to be interested, too. But that's right, that's right. Many people from the various large patrician families have come today, Sixth Brother should also come out to socialize more..."

Even though the eldest prince hadn't yet finished his spiel, the crown prince had already strode towards the interior.

As soon as he started moving, Family Head Qin led the two young masters, as well as the rest of the procession, to shuffle along. It immediately landed Mo Jiao into an awkward situation, and his fists clenched tightly within his sleeves.

This was the crown prince's attitude towards the other princes: willful, prideful, and treating them as nothing.

When he was willing to give you a second glance, he would. If he wasn't willing, then he wouldn't speak an extra word of nonsense with you.

"Your Highness, this way, please." Qin Guilu bent his waist slightly as he personally guided the crown prince towards the banquet hall.

When the procession was only halfway to their destination, they heard a series of dainty and delicate voices coming from the flower garden. Evidently, the group of missuses and young ladies were admiring the plum blossoms in the rear garden at the moment.

When Eldest Prince Mo Jiao remembered his purpose for coming today, his eyes shifted, and he quickly caught up to the crown prince, egging him on. "Sixth Brother, since there's still time before the banquet starts, why don't we first take a stroll around the flower garden? I've always heard how the Qin Estate's plum blossoms bloom the most beautifully. It also just so happens to be the best season to admire plum blossoms, too."

Qin Guilu immediately smiled and concurred. "Your Highnesses, please follow me. The estate has a rare thousand snow plum tree that is in full bloom at the moment. It is indeed worth a look."

However, Crown Prince Mo wasn't in the mood to admire any plum blossoms.

Just as he was about to refuse in impatience, he lifted his eyes and saw Duan Yue that guy walking over with Situ Yi as a pair.

A young adult man with average looks also followed closely behind the two. He trailed behind Duan Yue, wanting to speak up the entire time, but he couldn't find the opportunity to chime into Duan Yue and Situ Yi's exclusive conversation.

"Youngest Young Master Duan, Young Master Situ." Qin Guilu cupped his hands with a chuckle.

Duan Yue nodded, his apathetic gaze sweeping across the crowd. Suddenly, he started picking a bone with Second Qin. "Second Young Master, just now, your mischievous maidservant smashed the Marquis of Su'an's family's fifth young master with a flowerpot. Shouldn't you ferret her out to give Marquis of Su'an's Fifth Young Master an explanation?"

Second Qin: ...

Eldest Qin was instantly speechless. How many people had the little lass smashed up these two days now? She really had some fearless guts.

How could Qin Guilu stay unperturbed after hearing this? "What? How is the situation of the Marquis of Su'an's family's fifth young master right now? Which maidservant is so audacious! Quickly track her down!"

The group of servants from the Qin Estate involuntarily rolled their eyes: *Master, those are some nice acting chops you have there!*

Chapter 536: Mutual Slaps

Didn't you long realize who it was? Other than the one who beat Maternal Young Miss and Madam into being bed-ridden, one after the other, who else was so audacious and insolent?

Second Qin bowed in greeting towards Duan Yue while wearing an insipid expression. "Young Master Duan, I am extremely apologetic. She is still young and immature, so she does things completely according to her preferences. I ask you to please pardon her."

Everyone widened their eyes in astonishment. The other party had already come to confront you, demanding for an explanation. Was it okay for Second Young Master Qin to be so overprotective? What kind of maidservant was so unbelievably audacious? Are you sure that she was a maidservant and not Miss High and Mighty?

Duan Yue's eyes shot out a raging fire.

Look, look, look, look, what kind of trifle was this?

Second Qin's attitude of shouldering all the responsibility for Darling Qiao's exploits inexplicably ticked him off!

Mo Lian glanced at Duan Yue while creasing his brows. Why was this fellow acting so odd today?

Berating someone's maidservant for no reason? Thinking about it, he wasn't such a bored person.

At this time, a racket sounded from the flower garden.

A maidservant, with sweat beading down her forehead, rushed over to report, saying that Miss Qianqian of the talisman patrician family and Third Miss Xu Mingzhu of the Marquis of Placation's Estate had gotten into a fight in the rear garden. Both sides' retainers weren't able to hold them back, either.

Everyone in the procession looked at each other.

Qin Guilu only felt the veins on his forehead bulging.

The birthday feast hadn't even started yet, yet look at the trouble that's already been stirred up!

He recognized this maidservant as Concubine Mei's personal maidservant. The situation must have already escalated out of Concubine Mei's control, which was why she sent someone over to report it.

When the eldest prince heard the report, he became spirited and eagerly blurted out, "Then hurry, we should quickly go over to take a look. It would be awful if someone were to get hurt."

Mo Lian swept him a glance with a snicker. You're just thinking about the miss of the family of the Assistant Minister of Imperial Banquets!

What a good-for-nothing.

The group of people listened to Concubine Mei's maidservant recount the incident on the way to the garden's snow gazebo.

“Everything was fine at the beginning. The madams and misses were all harmoniously admiring the blossoms and the snow near the snow gazebo.” That little maidservant trembled after being glared at by the master and continued, “It was the talisman patrician family’s Miss Mu who said that it was boring and suggested having a beast fight.”

Beast fighting was a game that aristocrats played for amusement in their idle time.

Of course, they didn’t use their own mystic beasts to fight. They would normally fight with small or young beasts, and the two small beasts would basically end up covered in injuries and on the brink of death.

While passing by the garden after drifting out of the kitchen, Qiao Mu got attracted by the wails of the small beasts.

When she arrived, the two small beasts were already at their limits after tearing into each other.

Nonetheless, it was obvious that Miss Mu’s beast was a cut above, so it was her win!

Therefore, the chagrined Third Miss of the Marquis of Placation’s Estate, Xu Mingzhu, was so infuriated that she took out her sword to hack at her small beast that had lost.

Qiao Mu was enraged when she saw this happening, and she ran over to stop Xu Mingzhu, giving her a sound slap while she was at it.

And then it all went south from there!

As our dear Qiao Mu was still invisible at the moment, Third Miss Xu thought that this slap was Miss Mu’s handiwork, so she immediately turned around and mercilessly returned a slap to Miss Mu’s face.

Miss Mu was stupefied and didn’t expect Third Miss Xu to be such a sore loser. She couldn’t stifle her anger and immediately pounced over to smack Xu Mingzhu back.

The two people promptly engaged in an all-out brawl—you hit me, I hit you. They were not of a benevolent ilk, and it frightened Concubine Mei into crumpling onto the ground. “My goodness, don’t fight, stop fighting! Quickly send for the master, hurry!”

It would have been better if she hadn’t yelled. The moment she did, all the goosebumps on Qiao Mu’s body were triggered, threatening to pop off. Wasn’t this that unfaithful voice she heard from the window that night when she was scouting out the Qin Estate?

Chapter 537: Don’t Run

Concubine Mei crumpled to the ground in fright. None of the other madams were willing to help her up because they disdained her status as a concubine.

The madams were already very displeased when the Qin Estate sent a concubine to receive them for the birthday feast.

Right now, they felt as if they had swallowed a fly upon seeing Concubine Mei’s petty, pampered, and unrepresentable behavior, and they looked down on her even more.

Madam Mu smiled and sat there without moving. She didn't stop her own daughter, either, since her daughter wouldn't lose out anyways. After all, that Xu Mingzhu wasn't her Qianqian's match at all.

She gazed frostily at the third miss of the Marquis of Placation's Estate.

She was only a mere miss of a powerless marquis's estate, yet she dared to attack her daughter. She deserved to be taught a lesson.

When the retainers hollered, "His Highness the Crown Prince is here," our dear Qiao Mu, who was originally watching the drama with gusto, jolted in fright. She immediately turned around and fled wildly from the scene.

She kept feeling like a line of extremely prickly gazes were burning into her back!

Dang it, I've already turned invisible, why the heck can't I still escape your discerning eyes?

So our dear Qiao Mu fled swiftly, but how could it compare to the crown prince's terrifying speed?

He sprung over, and his hand was just about to latch onto her first.

Yet our dear Qiao Mu quickly stuck multiple speed talismans onto her own body and hightailed it out of there.

The crown prince halted and didn't chase after her, gazing aggrievedly in the direction that she escaped to.

Huh! You know how to feel guilty now? And dare to avoid me too!

You really are a naive darling. You think you can escape after showing yourself?

"Your Highness." Mu Qianqian's maiden's heart was about to leap out of her chest when she saw the crown prince heading swiftly in her direction.

"I-I'm fine, Your Highness doesn't have to worry." Having overthought things, Mu Qianqian blushed and smiled coyly.

She thought that the crown prince came over swiftly because he saw that she had gotten bullied...

She thought that His Highness the Crown Prince was worried about her.

In reality, besides that invisible and fleeing darling, no one else existed in Mo Lian's eyes.

He didn't even realize that Mu Qianqian was standing next to him until she started speaking, and he was immediately sickened by how she was currently looking at him both bashfully and embarrassedly.

His mother was recently busy with playing matchmaking for him. Apparently, she quite liked this talisman patrician family's Eldest Miss.

Mo Lian was preoccupied and ignored her, walking up to Duan Yue instead. After he sent the latter a look, the two walked to the side.

Qin Guilu was vexed. He reprimanded Concubine Mei and then consoled the two patrician families' misses. He felt greatly distressed by how so many incidents had already occurred before the banquet had even started.

Like an arrogant peacock, Mu Qianqian gloated at the discomposed Xu Mingzhu before returning to her mother's side. Her large eyes fixed expectantly on the crown prince's back figure.

Madam Mu patted the back of Mu Qianqian's hand, signaling her to be patient.

The position of His Highness's legal wife definitely belonged to the Mu Family!

Meanwhile, our dear Qiao Mu ran back towards the pond and examined herself in the water's reflection again.

Right right right, invisibility talismans were ineffective in front of people whose cultivation was higher than hers!

No wonder a line of prickly gazes had been drawn to her location.

She had been completely unable to cover her traces!

Luckily, she had escaped quickly. Otherwise, wouldn't she have been caught?

Ah, bah bah bah, what was she feeling guilty for anyways?

Why the heck did she have to run away? She would get caught, at worst... a certain someone started feeling sheepish again when she thought about getting caught.

Our dear Qiao Mu checked herself out in the pond's reflection for a while. No matter how she looked at it, her face right now was totally different from her own!

Her disguise was totally flawless. How in the world did they recognize her?

She touched her "totally flawless" face.

Chapter 538: The Crown Prince Eats Sh*t

After the banquet started, the ambience was especially peculiar.

The crown prince was silent, which made others afraid of talking casually, too.

Qin Guilu gave an artificial cough and respectfully reminded, "Your Highness."

The crown prince raised his head and looked at the two rows of guests seated below him. He nodded and said, "Today is Family Head Qin's birthday, so everyone need not be reserved. Let's start eating."

Everyone's expressions then relaxed, and they picked up their chopsticks, nonchalantly taking a bite.

Afterwards: ...

"Ah, bleck, bleck."

"Bleck..."

"Puh?"

“Cough, cough!”

All sorts of strange spitting noises sounded from these aristocrat and patrician families’ mouths.

Everyone looked speechlessly at the confounded Qin Guilu. They saw him try a taste too, and his face turned green!

He didn’t know whether to spit it out or not now.

Everyone had on very entertaining expressions when savoring this mouthful. It felt as if a bunch of seasoning bottles had been knocked over into the dishes. There were all kinds of bizarre flavors! Oh, it was like they had eaten sh*t...

“Pfft.” Duan Yue supported his forehead with his hand as he laughed so much that his shoulders shook.

Oh boy, how delighted was everyone to have eaten a piece of sh*t!

Luckily, he had taken his time picking up his chopsticks. Look at the great crown prince’s weird expression, hahahahaha! Serves you right! You deserve it! It’s all because of your indulgence, so you ought to eat this sh*t!

When he connected the dots with the invisible figure they saw stirring up trouble in the garden just earlier, it was plain as day as to who committed this fine deed!

Qin Guilu immediately stood up, pale from fright, and kneeled before the crown prince. He didn’t dare to raise his head or peek at the crown prince’s weird expression. “Please forgive me, Your Highness. This humble one has been incompetent in managing the servants, which led to a bit of a situation in the kitchen. Your Highness can rest assured that this humble one will find the culprit as soon as possible and punish them severely.”

Mo Lian gracefully took the tray that a junior eunuch handed to him and silently spit out the foreign matter in his mouth. He waved his hand and said, “Rise, it’s not your fault.”

Qin Guilu immediately felt as if he had been granted amnesty, and he wiped his forehead of sweat, repeatedly uttering his thanks as he got up.

“Where is the Marquis of Su’an’s Estate’s Old Fifth?” The crown prince suddenly inquired. His gaze met Duan Yue’s for a moment before averting it.

The extremely miserable-looking fifth young master of the Marquis of Su’an’s Estate, whose head was wrapped in a cloth bandage, was immediately dragged over.

The fifth young master was confused and couldn’t comprehend the situation. He had already boarded his carriage, planning to return home, but was forcibly invited back because the crown prince had summoned him.

Even though it was an ‘invite,’ the people’s attitude was very unyielding and unreasonable, which was characteristic of the crown prince’s behavior.

Second Young Master Qin knitted his brows slightly. He had rapidly made arrangements just earlier for people to take care of and send this Marquis of Su'an's Estate's Fifth Young Master home. But now, he came back again?

Second Qin sniffed something fishy going on. Starting from just a moment ago, the Duan Family's young master had been targeting Xiao Bao, unwilling to let go. However, now, even the crown prince too?...

The second young master raised his head and locked his cold gaze with the crown prince's, but the latter was indifferent.

"Marquis of Su'an's Estate's Old Fifth, how are you feeling? I heard that an unbelievably audacious maidservant smashed your head?" The crown prince didn't even know the name of this fellow in front of him, so he could only call him 'Marquis of Su'an's Estate's Old Fifth'...

Huifeng stood on the side and silently twitched his mouth.

Marquis of Su'an's Estate's Old Fifth Hu Youkang, the powdered-faced young man, was overwhelmed by the unexpected favor. He immediately bowed in greeting and replied, "I have troubled Your Highness the Crown Prince with worry. This humble subject is fine and was just planning to return home to rest."

"Marquis of Su'an's Estate's Old Fifth." The crown prince's profound gaze eyed the unlucky fella below him whose head was wrapped in bandages. "Don't worry, We will definitely do you justice. What do you think of finding that maidservant so that you can confront her personally?"

Chapter 539: Go on, Keep Pretending!

The powdered-faced young man was excessively overwhelmed by the crown prince's favor. He knelt down, nodding repeatedly while saying his thanks, "Yes, yes! Thank you for Your Highness's favor."

The crown prince nodded in satisfaction before turning to look at Qin Guilu. "Family Head Qin, call that maidservant over! Look at the state that she put the Marquis of Su'an's son into! How can this incident be dismissed so easily?"

Cold sweat beaded Qin Guilu's forehead, and he stealthily glanced in his two sons' direction.

Second Qin beckoned to a servant and instructed in a low voice, "Go bring the young lady over. Tell her that she doesn't have to be afraid. There's still me to deal with everything."

Qin Guilu let out a slight sigh of relief. He was worried that this child Second Qin's temper would flare up and butt heads with the crown prince on the spot, causing things to spiral out of hand.

Seeing that he had sent someone to bring her over, Qin Guilu's expression relaxed slightly. He cupped his hands and said, "I have already notified the kitchen to prepare the meal anew, so ladies and gentlemen, please wait for a short moment. Why don't we first enjoy a song and dance for now?"

When Jade Hue Parlor's Miss Ran appeared, all the aristocrats and noblemen immediately cheered.

Soon, the sh*t-eating episode was forgotten, and everyone zealously watched Miss Ran perform her rarely-seen moon dance.

The crown prince wasn't anxious, either. He swayed the wine cup in his hand, occasionally sweeping his gaze over the guests below him. The corner of his mouth curled up into a terrifying smile: *Qiaoqiao, are you prepared yet...*

Qiao Mu shook her head like a rattle-drum. "Not going."

The Qin Estate's servant that was charged with bringing her over felt his mouth twitching unceasingly. He cupped his hands and bowed repeatedly. "Little great aunt! Please just follow me over! Young Master and the rest are waiting for you!"

"You can rest assured, Young Master said that he'll claim responsibility for everything. He'll certainly ensure that nothing will happen to you!"

Qiao Mu wrapped her hands around a tree, evading to the side. "Nope, not going."

The servant coughed. He had a sudden flash of inspiration and goaded, "You were so full of spunk when you beat up the Marquis of Su'an's Family's Fifth Young Master earlier. You're not scared now, are you?"

"Me, scared?" Qiao Mu eyes flared. However, she hung her small head despondently immediately afterwards. *Alright, alright, she was scared...*

Seeing the crown prince made her feel guilty. She had promised him two years ago that she would look for him in the capital, but in the end...

"Let's go, little great aunt! We really can't stall any longer." The servant begged her bitterly with both wheedling and coaxing, before successfully herding her to the banquet's anteroom.

The male and female guests were seated separately in this birthday feast. However, as Qiao Mu needed to pass through the female guests' seating area in order to reach the anteroom, she received many of the madams and young misses' puzzled gazes along the way.

What's meant to come will come! Darling Qiao's state of mind had turned tranquil now.

What was she scared of? Wasn't it just growing fat from eating her words? Wasn't it just hiding away for two years, not particularly inclined to see others!

Humph! What could he do to her...

But she was very terrified, what to do...

Her small hand was inexplicably dripping with cold sweat! Wuwuwu... Was it really good to be so scared?

When the servant entered to make his report, Jade Hue Parlor's Miss Ran had also just ended her dance, so the entire room was quiet.

The crown prince curled his lips and stated coolly, "Bring her in."

Everyone turned their heads and observed a little lady wearing a stiff expression enter from the anteroom.

The crown prince's gaze locked fixedly on the child's body the instant she entered. He stared single-mindedly at her, his emotions both sentimental and turbulent. He couldn't suppress the rampaging fire in his heart...

The little lady pattered forwards on the stone floor tiles with both her hands tucked into her small sleeves. Her gaze was focused, and her poker face made it seem as if she turned her nose up at everyone and anyone, causing people to involuntarily split their sides laughing.

"Little Junior Sister, it's really you!" Situ Yi was the first to jump up and glared at her incredulously. He had thought that he was dreaming when he saw her earlier.

"Who are you?" Qiao Mu turned to him, her expression impassive.

When this low voice came out of her mouth, Situ Yi truly was dazed this time.

Because, Qiao Mu had also altered her voice with medicine. Her voice now was a few pitches lower than her previous silvery and soft voice. She now had a much deeper intonation...

Qiao Mu involuntarily felt giddy inside when she saw him being dumbstruck.

Look, look. I knew that you were tricking me! You didn't recognize me at all!

Humph, how could her totally flawless disguise fail her?

Chapter 540: Who Did I Smash?

Situ Yi was rooted to the spot, dumb as a wooden chicken.

He couldn't make heads or tails of it. Why was this voice different from his stoic-faced little junior sister's?

But look at this face. That was undoubtedly his stoic-faced junior sister, ah? There couldn't be a second little stoic in the world that was as cheeky as her!

The crown prince's gaze didn't budge from the little fellow's body at all, and the corner of his mouth curved faintly.

Darling, you think you've ascended to the heavens?!

You've changed not only your looks but also your voice. Ha, you're so brilliant! You think no one can recognize you after doing that?

That action, that expression, that frosty gaze, that longing imprinted deep within the bone and diffused into the blood...

Even if you wrapped yourself up completely from head to toe in a black robe, We can still recognize you with a glance!

I definitely will never forget!

Our dear Qiao Mu peered sneakily at the crown prince, who was currently supporting his jaw with one hand. However, she discovered that his slightly upturned phoenix eyes were glimmering as they stared at her without blinking!

The little stoic reflexively extended two fingers and furtively traced the direction of his gaze before realizing that his gaze was making a beeline right for her!

The little fellow sheepishly tucked back a strand of hair that blew in front of her eyes. She was deeply bemused.

I made such a perfect maneuver to change not only my looks but also my voice! What was the situation exactly? She really wanted to ask them how they recognized her.

Next time, she definitely had to pay attention to those aspects to complete her totally flawless disguise...

“Cough!” Seeing that everyone was unexpectedly quiet, Qin Guilu involuntarily laughed dryly before chiding Qiao Mu. “Come over! What’s your name? Why did you smash up the Marquis of Su’an’s Family’s Fifth Young Master?”

Eldest Qin facepalmed and simply couldn’t continue looking at his father faking it!

How was it possible for Family Head Qin to not be aware of all the events that happened in the estate? Why are you asking when you already know the answer!

“Why? Speak up!!” Family Head Qin glared angrily at a certain someone who was keeping silent, even smacking the short table heavily.

The extremely miserable Marquis of Su’an’s Family’s Fifth Young Master, Hu Youkang, whose head was encircled several times with the bandage, also got up from the floor following Family Head Qin’s censure. His scarlet eyes glared at Qiao Mu, demanding an explanation.

Qiao Mu was baffled!

She thought inwardly: *What’s with the situation? Didn’t they call her over because the crown prince wanted to confront her in person and expose her identity?*

Asking her about that whatever marquis’s estate’s Fifth Young Master all of a sudden, how would she know?

Ever since she bumped into Duan Yue and was recognized with a glance, the little stoic had been freaking out over one riddle after another: “It’s over, it’s over, I’ve been seen through,” “What’s going on? How did they recognize me,” etc. She had long thrown the episode where she smashed up the fifth young master in the long red cypress hallway to the back of her mind.

Asking her about that whatever Marquis of Su’an’s Estate’s Fifth Young Master now—in truth, she truly did forget!

In addition, even though she did attack him, she totally didn’t see what that fifth young master looked like clearly! That’s why she was at a loss and still had on an innocent, stoic face even when that fifth young master was glaring at her menacingly.

Observing her expression, Mo Lian understood that she had long forgotten about beating up the Marquis of Su’an’s Estate’s Fifth Young Master.

Duan Yue twitched his mouth before giving a kind reminder. "He's the person whose head you smashed with a super huge flowerpot in that long hallway!"

"Right! You're the one who smashed my head! Don't think about denying it!" Hu Youkang roared with a flushed powdered face.

A wave of low chuckles broke out among the guests.

Duan Yue averted his head, unable to look at the simpleton directly.