

My Crown 841

Chapter 841: Feast (2)

A burst of anger instantly surfaced on Noble Consort Zheng's face. She was just thinking of flaring up when she suddenly changed her mind, reaching for her stomach instead and crying out, "Aiyah, my belly, my belly."

With an anxious expression, her attending royal maid Cailing hastily went to support Noble Consort Zheng's body while shouting loudly, "Your Majesty the Queen! Your Majesty the Queen! Please uphold justice! The crown prince consort has caused Her Highness the Noble Consort's abdomen to hurt from anger!"

With a drastic change in expression, Wei Ziqin reached out to hold on to her daughter's hand, and she glared severely at that royal maid called Cailing. "Don't talk nonsense! Thoughtlessly slandering the crown prince consort ought to be sentenced with capital punishment."

After patting the back of her mother's hand to reassure her, Qiao Mu swept Noble Consort Zheng a cool gaze while curving her lips. "Shaoyao, go request for the Royal Physician Building's Old Physician Cao to come make a trip. Just tell him to come examine Noble Consort Zheng since her abdomen hurts."

"Yes." Without any reservations, Shaoyao nodded and was just about to leave.

However, the hand with which Noble Consort Zheng was clutching her abdomen slightly stiffened, and then she immediately exclaimed with a drastic change in complexion, "Stop right there! Crown Prince Consort, I won't be inconveniencing you to go to the trouble! I usually have an acquainted physician diagnose me. I-I don't need you to butt in."

"That won't do." Qiao Mu walked step by step towards Noble Consort Zheng, with her dark eyes staring coldly at her. "If we don't request for the Chief Physician to come take a look, what if later on, something happens to Courtesan Zheng, who insists on putting the blame on me? Then wouldn't I be unable to wash myself of this dirt even if I were to jump into the Hope Sea, hm?"

What an exceedingly shrewd crown prince consort. Everyone was slightly shocked on the inside, and they looked over in awe.

Only Noble Consort Zheng and Cailing were looking straight at Qiao Mu's eyes. They only felt as if the bottom of those pair of eyes seemingly contained countless cold, skeleton arms that wanted to pull them master and servant right into the abyss of hell.

Noble Consort Zheng shrieked in surprise, and she quickly shrunk behind Cailing without caring about appearances.

"Enough!" Queen Zhao was enraged.

At present, she disliked both Noble Consort Zheng and this crown prince consort for stirring up so many upsetting matters on the first day of the new year.

She only felt that the big one and the small one were both troublemakers, being at each other's throats whenever they met.

“Crown Prince Consort, Our Highness is pregnant, so can you speak nicely to her?” Cailing tearfully entreated, fully acting out the part of a loyal servant.

Qiao Mu snickered, and she asked in a soft voice that only the three of them could hear, “Pregnant? You sure?”

Noble Consort Zheng’s complexion suddenly paled, and her malicious eyes promptly produced a hint of incredulity as she gazed at Qiao Mu in slight terror.

The corner of Qiao Mu’s lips cracked open like a woodcut, and she gazed icily at Noble Consort Zheng and her servant while asking coldly, “What if I make this matter public?”

“Don’t!” Noble Consort Zheng screamed. When she sensed the queen and the many royal concubines’ suspicious gazes, she promptly straightened her body as a chill ran down her back. She fixed her expression before chiding, “Cailing, don’t talk nonsense. It’s only that my abdomen feels a bit uncomfortable. With your groundless uproar, making a fuss about nothing, what to do if the crown prince consort were to be wrongly blamed?”

Queen Zhao stared at Noble Consort Zheng with a gaze so biting that it was like she wanted to burn a hole in her face, wanting to see why she suddenly changed her attitude.

After standing up on her own, Noble Consort Zheng forcefully held onto Cailing’s arm, saying, “Help me to sit over there.”

It wasn’t until she had returned to her seat that Noble Consort Zheng looked beside her at the crown prince consort, who had also sat down in her own seat, in sudden realization.

Chapter 842: Feast (3)

Since the crown prince consort was already aware of this matter, why wasn’t she frank about it, informing Her Majesty the Queen?

In other words, the crown prince consort also had some misgivings in her mind about Her Majesty the Queen.

If she could take advantage of the ill will between this pair of mother-in-law and daughter-in-law and put it to use, then perhaps she could...

In reality, Noble Consort Zheng had truly overthought it.

The little stoic had never viewed Noble Consort Zheng as an enemy, and she simply didn’t feel like poking her nose in the royal harem’s trivial matters.

In her eyes, Noble Consort Zheng was already a dead person. It was only a matter of whether this date was sooner or later. She wouldn’t be able to stir up trouble for much longer, so why did she need to waste more effort?

Moreover, she had previously only been harboring tentative suspicions.

After all, in that specially-made beautifying pill that State Uncle Zheng purchased at an astronomical price, she had also added other special drugs in addition to the heat poison.

This kind of drug could guarantee that Noble Consort Zheng need not think of getting pregnant in this lifetime.

However, since she couldn't be certain, she was only suspicious at the very beginning.

She didn't expect that a single encounter was all it took for her to bluff Noble Consort Zheng into revealing that she was indeed faking her pregnancy. It was absolutely hilarious.

After Qiao Mu took a seat, all the royal concubines came up to greet her one after another.

Qiao Mu greeted each person politely but distantly, after which she minded her own business and started whispering with Qiao Lin.

"The Vassal King Consort of An'nan is here." After the announcement, a gaunt woman fully dressed in the attire of a vassal king consort walked in from the long passageway outside the hall.

"This subject greets Her Majesty the Queen."

"Will the vassal king consort please rise." After seeing Wu Hongmo, Queen Zhao put on a smile.

The Vassal King Consort of An'nan was one of the vassal kings that the late king had conferred this title upon, so the queen naturally was a bit more respectful towards the Vassal King Consort of An'nan.

"The vassal king consort has gotten much thinner." Queen Zhao commented after observing Wu Hongmo.

"I've troubled the queen to worry." Wu Hongmo smiled, and then she sighed, either intentionally or perhaps unintentionally. "Today is the first day of the new year, the day when the entire family gets together for a reunion. I don't mind if Your Majesty the Queen laughs at us. Today, my sister-in-law woke up at dawn to go visit Xiaosu. Xiaosu is so pitiful, she's a young lady, yet she has to be tormented in that kind of gloomy place that doesn't see the light..."

The queen was a bit embarrassed, and she even furtively glanced at Qiao Mu.

Since her own son was the one who arrested her, she wouldn't dash her son's pride regardless and make the decision to let her out.

Yet when she looked over, the queen saw that the little stoic was conversing with her sister in a low voice, not even sparing Wu Hongmo a look out of the corner of her eye. She wondered if the little stoic was pretending not to have seen the Vassal King Consort of An'nan.

"Your Majesty!" The Vassal King Consort of An'nan suddenly knelt down. "This subject has a presumptuous request."

Queen Zhao's expression slightly shifted, and her gaze turned sharp. "Vassal King Consort, the New Year's feast is about to begin, so you had better return to your seat quickly."

Wu Hongmo proclaimed loudly, "This subject earnestly beseeches that the crown prince consort be merciful. Please pardon my niece Wu Xiaosu's offense and release her from prison!"

Queen Zhao rubbed her temples with a headache. The matters that were occurring in succession early in the morning truly distressed her badly!

Queen Zhao's gaze settled on Qiao Mu.

Furthermore, the gazes of all the royal concubines, commandery princesses, princesses, as well as the noble ladies and young misses, also turned to Qiao Mu.

Qiao Lin tugged at her sister's sleeve while pressing her lips together tightly, and she couldn't help but enrage on the inside.

There were so many of these upsetting matters everywhere in the palace. After sending away a Consort Zheng, it was then some other vassal king who jumped out. *No wonder Sister didn't like the palace!*

Qiao Mu slowly raised her head and settled her bone-chilling gaze on Wu Hongmo, while her voice contained a severe chilliness. "I have never been merciful. I only want to... kill!"

Chapter 843: Feast (4)

The Vassal King Consort of An'nan was stunned, and she fixated on Qiao Mu with a taut expression. The wrinkles that scrunched up on her face could practically squeeze a fly to death.

The crown prince consort completely didn't follow the normal sequence of affairs. How was she able to keep up this self-directed and self-scripted performance now?

She had originally thought that as long as she made a tearful scene in this Brilliant Sun Hall, the little lady would definitely be frantic due to her inexperience. Perhaps, for the sake of her pride, she would first reluctantly promise her to release Xiaosu.

As long as the little lady uttered "okay" here in this Brilliant Sun Hall, even if she had a mind to back out of this after the fact, she, Wu Hongmo, had a way to prevent her from doing that, forcing her to bitterly swallow this grievance.

Yet who knew that this little lady's words and actions would exceed all expectations, causing her to be at a loss as for how to continue the conversation.

Wu Hongmo scoffed, and she just simply turned to face Qiao Mu. She put on an act of curtsying in greeting before dabbing at the glistening tears at the corners of her eyes. "Crown Prince Consort, have some mercy on my feelings as an aunt. Xiaosu is still alone in prison on the first day of the new year. If say that she previously committed some kind of offense, then spending these dozen days inside the prison should have been enough to pay her debt, so please..."

The little stoic, however, still had on a cold and unperturbed expression.

Wu Hongmo made a show of wanting to kneel down, and as she bent her knees, she cried sorrowfully, "Is it that you will only relent if this old one kneels down in front of you!"

This was forcing her!

The crowd of noble ladies and madams with mandates were absolutely silent. Only Wei Ziqin was so incensed that her entire body trembled, and she abruptly stood up to rebuke, "Speaking of which, Vassal King Consort of An'nan, you are the crown prince consort's elder. Making a scene in this hall without regard for your dignity, wailing and kicking up a fuss like a shrew—you're deliberately planning to overwhelm the crown prince consort, right."

“Mom, I’m fine.” The stoic face was still quite expressionless as she sent her mother a placating gaze. “Sit down first.”

Afterwards, she directed her gaze to Wu Hongmo.

“Vassal King Consort of An’nan, why haven’t you knelt yet?” Qiao Mu questioned icily, “Some time has passed since you said that you would kneel. It’s not that your knees have gone bad, right? It’s not like this crown prince consort doesn’t dare accept your kneeling.”

Everyone was stupefied, and it was practically so silent inside the hall that one could even hear a pin drop.

Queen Zhao had also straightened her body.

Previously, when she heard that the crown prince consort had pulverized the Classics Reverence Chamber, beaten Handsome Fairness Huang, and kicked Noble Consort Zheng, that was all hearsay, and she hadn’t personally witnessed it.

As expected, upon seeing for herself today, this daughter-in-law of hers wasn’t of a benevolent ilk.

The Vassal King Consort of An’nan is probably going to get whupped today! Everyone silently shouted in their minds.

Subsequently, Wu Hongmo’s face started trembling. If not for the fact that they were inside Brilliant Sun Hall, she probably would have jumped up to tear Qiao Mu’s mouth apart.

It simply made one too depressed and angry!

However, Qiao Mu wasn’t done yet. She eyed Wu Hongmo coldly before gripping her tea cup and scoffing, “So it turned out that it was only an act. I had originally thought that you cared for your niece very much, yet I didn’t expect that it was only to this extent. You can’t even go down on your knees, let alone anything else.”

“I’m telling you, Wu Xiaosu’s three-month prison sentence can’t even be reduced by a single day.”

“Wanting to fish her out with just a few sentences, it’s not that easy.” With a bang, the tea cup in Qiao Mu’s hand was crushed into fine powder. “Death or three months in prison, make your choice!”

The entire Brilliant Sun Hall was pervaded by a deathly silence, as everyone didn’t even dare take a deep breath.

They hadn’t imagined that a little lady could actually emit such terrifying pressure. At this moment, let alone the other people who couldn’t utter a sound, even the Vassal King Consort of An’nan felt her heart quaking endlessly.

Chapter 844: Feast (5)

It was even to the point that Wu Hongmo was slightly regretful at this time.

She had said that this plan wouldn’t work, yet her sister-in-law was so annoying, insisting for her to go beg the queen for mercy on this important day, the first day of the new year.

Yet look at what happened, she rashly ended up shooting herself in the foot so painfully.

Wu Hongmo was completely unable to keep up with her act now, but she couldn't make a graceful exit either. In the end, her entire body stiffened in extreme embarrassment.

Fortunately, at this moment, someone announced that Noble Lady Ying had arrived.

Subsequently, everyone's gazes turned to the entrance. If Noble Lady Ying didn't have some compelling reason to be late in coming, then it could be regarded the same as disrespecting Her Majesty the Queen.

Sure enough, Queen Zhao's complexion instantly turned very unsightly.

Her gaze seemed to be smeared with ice dregs as it settled on a pretty figure that walked in delicately and gracefully from the entrance.

This beauty was only 28 years old. Her small face was like a just-peeled egg, with a rosy and fair complexion. Her pair of eyes were as gentle as water, seemingly able to captivate a man's soul with a single glance.

No wonder His Majesty was running towards Pearl and Jade Lane every day now.

When Noble Consort Zheng saw this woman, her pearly teeth clamped down even more tightly, wishing for nothing more than to devour her whole.

*It was this b*tch who had pretended to faint by the side of the road in the middle of the day, encountering the king by chance, and thus climbing onto his royal bed in one bound[1]**!*

"This concubine pays her respects to Her Majesty the Queen, as well as wishes for the good health of all Her Highnesses." The petite woman timidly uttered in a feeble voice, as if fearing that someone might startle her.

Noble Consort Zheng commented with an artificial smile, "Aiyoo, Noble Lady Ying, you literally are busy as a person of eminence[2], only coming to wish Her Majesty the Queen a Happy New Year at this time of day. What pretentious airs you are putting on."

Queen Zhao also coldly fixated on Noble Lady Ying with a sullen expression.

Noble Consort Zheng's few words were naturally unable to arouse her ire. After all, Noble Consort Zheng was eager for her to punish this young beauty, but why should she fulfill her wish?

Noble Lady Ying was not a person who got conceited just because she was favored by the king. Upon seeing this situation, she docilely knelt down and gave Queen Zhao a kowtow before explaining unhurriedly, "This concubine had originally set out early in the morning, well aware that punctuality was a must when paying Her Majesty the Queen a new year call."

Noble Consort Zheng couldn't stand this delicate and soft-spoken appearance of Noble Lady Ying's the most, so she turned her head aside to roll her eyes at her, and her lips even involuntarily turned up in a sneer.

"However, it couldn't be helped that while en route, this concubine encountered..." Her voice faltered, and her gaze unnaturally drifted in Noble Consort Zheng's direction.

Seeing her insinuation, Noble Consort Zheng couldn't help but be exceedingly indignant. "Noble Lady Ying, you don't mean to say that you arrived late all because of this noble consort, right?"

"This concubine doesn't dare." Noble Lady Ying timidly uttered before clammng up. She then hung her head, assuming a posture of allowing them to punish her as they pleased.

Queen Zhao was super fed up on the inside, but she still asked, "What exactly happened, it won't hurt to speak."

"Will Your Majesty the Queen exercise your penetrating judgement. This morning, while on the way here, this concubine encountered the fifteenth princess's wet nurse, tearfully begging people everywhere to fetch a physician from the Royal Physician Building for an examination." Noble Lady Ying lamented with a sigh, "This concubine saw that the wet nurse, while carrying the princess, was truly incredibly pitiful. Hence, this concubine instructed my royal maid Cuiqiao to go request for the royal physician on duty at the Royal Physician Building to come over. This was what caused my delay. It truly is this concubine's fault, so please pardon this offense, Your Majesty the Queen."

On the side, Consort Cheng couldn't help chuckling in amusement. "As it turns out, it really is the noble consort's fault. Look at how you've troubled Noble Lady Ying."

Chapter 845: Feast (6)

Noble Consort Zheng's expression turned unusually unsightly in a jiffy.

Upon seeing this, Queen Zhao felt much more at ease, and she even secretly praised Noble Lady Ying for knowing how to get things done.

Yet on the surface, she maintained the stance of the main mother as she inquired in deep worry, "My pitiful Little Fifteenth, how is she right now?"

"In answer to Her Majesty's question, the fifteenth princess has been examined by the physician, so her condition has stabilized. However, the physician has also said that the fifteenth princess's illness requires someone to attentively take care of her by her side." While speaking, she still knelt there submissively without moving, assuming an obedient attitude of allowing the queen to punish her as she pleased.

Queen Zhao smiled while remaining calm and collected, "Noble Lady Ying, you can rise. You've saved Little Fifteenth's life, so it's nothing much to have arrived a bit late. You've done very well. Someone, come give her a reward."

Noble Consort Zheng's expression turned particularly unsightly at once, and her pointy nails practically pierced into her palms. In her mind, she lambasted that d*mned wet nurse a thousand times as malevolent thoughts surged forth.

"Thank you, Your Majesty the Queen." Noble Lady Ying smiled bashfully, and she accepted the queen's reward from the tray before bowing and retreating to her seat, mindful of her place.

Qiao Mu shot a glance at her, whose seat was quite far away from her own, with many commandery princesses and princesses between them.

It was also at this moment that Wu Hongmo escaped her embarrassed situation and stealthily slunk back to her seat, omitting any mention of pleading for Wu Xiaosu again.

Since she wasn't bringing it up, Qiao Mu didn't feel like dealing with her either.

She only heard Queen Zhao using this incident as a pretext to reprimand Noble Consort Zheng. "Sister Zheng, don't you know to watch over Little Fifteenth more closely since her body is frail? If the wet nurse didn't carry Little Fifteenth outside, coincidentally finding Noble Lady Ying to plea for help, tell me, how would things end up?"

Noble Consort Zheng couldn't help but be indignant. On the inside, she had ground her pearly teeth to bits, but on the surface, she had no choice but to stiffly pivot her neck and express her thanks to Noble Lady Ying from a good many short tables away.

Noble Lady Ying shook her head. "It is not worthy of Your Highness's thanks. This concubine only saw that the princess was a bit pitiful, wrapped with only a thin blanket in such cold weather. Since Your Highness is now pregnant and is afraid of getting tainted by the princess's ill vital energy, it is not without fault that Your Highness placed the princess in the side chamber to recuperate. However, some of the princess's daily necessities should not go neglected."

"What?" Queen Zhao was greatly alarmed upon hearing this. "Little Fifteenth has only turned three years old, yet Noble Consort Zheng, you tossed her into the side chamber to recuperate? Even neglecting her to this extent!"

Subsequently, Noble Consort Zheng's eyelid jerked continuously, and she frantically stood up, almost overturning the drinks next to her. "T-That is not so, Your Highness."

"Outrageous!" Queen Zhao seized this opportunity to give Noble Consort Zheng a dressing-down.

The entire Brilliant Sun Hall had gone silent again. Everyone only freaking felt that this New Year's feast today was simply a challenge to their own hearts!

Noble Consort Zheng, the Vassal King Consort of An'nan, the Crown Prince Consort, Her Majesty the Queen—these females of high status were enacting a continuously-revolving full-scale traditional opera. Those noble ladies and madams with mandates didn't even know whether they should continue sitting there, or quickly withdraw so that Her Majesty the Queen could deal with this family affair...

"You really are heartless enough!" Queen Zhao forcefully pounded the table and hollered, "No wonder no one paid any attention when the wet nurse was going everywhere to plead for a doctor, it turned out that it was you! You neglected Little Fifteenth!"

"That is not so, Your Majesty the Queen."

"My pitiful Little Fifteenth." Queen Zhao's eyes were suffused with a cold light. "Hurry and carry this queen's pitiful daughter over so that I can take a careful look!"

At this, the flames in Noble Consort Zheng's heart leaped a meter high, yet her blood abruptly ran cold for no reason.

Chapter 846: Feast (7)

This drama came so quickly that she wouldn't believe it if someone didn't deliberately plan out this scheme!

How could it be so coincidental that Noble Lady Ying just so happened to encounter the wet nurse carrying the child out to find a doctor?

Noble Consort Zheng was highly anxious, and she even wanted to dispatch her personal attendant Cailing to quickly return to her palace to take a look.

However, Queen Zhao coldly stopped her. "It is best if Younger Sister waits here. This queen also wants to see how exactly Little Fifteenth, this child, is being taken care of in Sophora Flower Palace. It couldn't be that a legitimate daughter of the king only has a single wet nurse to tend to her? The other maidservants inside Sophora Flower Palace are all corpses?"

All of the sweat on Noble Consort Zheng's forehead immediately rolled down at Queen Zhao's statement. "Your Majesty the Queen, since Noble Lady Ying has said that treatment has already been concluded, perhaps the child is sleeping right now..."

Meanwhile, a senior royal maid walked inside with fear and trepidation and inquired in a soft voice, "Your Majesty, it is time to eat the dumplings, do you want them to be served now?"

Noble Consort Zheng was enraged. "Eat what dumplings at this kind of time? Scram!"

The senior royal maid shuddered.

Yet Queen Zhao said with a smile, "That's just perfect. Serve all the dumplings, and we'll eat while waiting. It won't take too much time to make a round trip to Sophora Flower Palace."

Noble Consort Zheng's eyes were practically about to shoot out a poisonous light.

*Sure enough, this daughter of hers was only born to collect debt from her[1]**!* Naturally, she bitterly hated that scheming person who used her daughter as a weapon against her too.

The dumplings were exactly the ones that Queen Zhao and the many noble ladies and madams with mandates had wrapped together yesterday on New Year's Eve as a mere formality.

Since Qiao Mu had eaten breakfast, she wasn't hungry at all. However, she still ate two in consideration of the queen's pride.

Everyone silently ate dumplings, not daring to speak either. They were oblivious to the taste of the dumplings going down their throats, only feeling that all their internal organs were trembling uncontrollably.

This was the silence before the storm!

Soon, a woman dressed in thin clothing, while carrying a small three-year-old girl, blindly followed suit behind a royal maid into the Brilliant Sun Hall.

It was probably the little girl's first time around seeing so many people, and she shrunk into the wet nurse's embrace at once while anxiously peeking at her surroundings.

Queen Zhao revealed a benevolent smile and beckoned towards the wet nurse. "Carry Little Fifteenth over for me to take a look."

The wet nurse knelt to the ground at once, and she trembled while crying out in a low voice, "Please forgive me, please forgive me."

Noble Consort Zheng's heart hung high up in the air at once, and she hit the table and stood up vigorously with furrowed brows and blazing eyes. "Wet nurse, what kind of act are you putting on?"

"You come over!" Qiao Mu impatiently beckoned towards the wet nurse.

The wet nurse gazed blankly at her, and then she looked up at Queen Zhao.

"Come over!" Qiao Mu shouted, scaring the wet nurse so much with her imposing manner that she scrambled over.

Afterwards, Qiao Mu clapped her hands at the child. "Come."

Little Fifteenth turned her head around, and she glanced at Qiao Mu with eyes so red they looked like a bunny's before suddenly extending her arms towards her.

The wet nurse couldn't help being momentarily dumbfounded.

The princess had never liked it when other people came close to her, even hiding far away from Noble Consort Zheng whenever she saw her.

"Crown Prince Consort." Queen Zhao coldly called out.

Qiao Mu looked up at her stand-offishly, and then she placed Little Fifteenth on her knees, undoing the small thin blanket wrapped around the child.

"Both her arms and legs have bruises. She had just been beaten by someone two days ago." Qiao Mu said dryly while taking out her needle pouch from her inner world. "Her asthma isn't too serious, but she hasn't been well cared for from young."

Chapter 847: Feast (8)

"Three acupuncture treatments will alleviate it initially. Nine acupuncture treatments will be able to completely cure it once and for all." As Qiao Mu spoke, she was already rapidly administering acupuncture on Little Fifteenth.

"Severe malnutrition." Qiao Mu coldly shot a glance at Noble Consort Zheng before snickering, "I had never imagined that the child of the great Noble Consort Zheng would also suffer from hunger."

"Audacious Noble Consort Zheng." Queen Zhao berated, "How are you taking care of the fifteenth princess!"

Noble Consort Zheng anxiously explained, "This noble consort has always properly looked after Little Fifteenth. What do you mean, Your Majesty the Queen, Little Fifteenth was born from my womb..."

Qiao Mu didn't listen any further, nor was she interested in watching the rest of this drama. While carrying the child, she stood up and walked towards the exit of Brilliant Sun Hall.

When she passed by the kneeling wet nurse, she coldly gazed at her before sneering, "Selling out your master for glory. Take a guess, will your master let you off?"

The wet nurse looked up at her in shock, and then her entire body started shaking uncontrollably.

"Crown Prince Consort, Crown Prince Consort." Several royal maids came running after her, softly reminding, "The official noon banquet hasn't started yet."

Did the crown prince consort not see that there were already dark clouds looming over Her Majesty the Queen who was seated in the chief seat?

Or was it that the crown prince consort had seen it, yet pretended to not have? She was looking down on Her Majesty the Queen too much, right.

"I'm full." Qiao Mu's icy gaze swept across the several royal maids, scaring them into abruptly withdrawing their hands, not daring to stop her anymore.

She had never been a person that made herself suffer. Since this Brilliant Sun Hall was so depressing that it made her want to go out to take a breath of fresh air, why did she have to force herself to continue sitting there?

"This subject will go check on the crown prince consort." Wei Ziqin was worried about her daughter, so she got up with Qiao Lin. After curtsying towards the sullen queen sitting in the chief seat, she then pulled along her daughter and strode outside by taking two steps in place of two.

"Ha, how can someone that comes from a small household be presentable. She doesn't know a bit of etiquette at all." The female who spoke was twenty-five years old. She was dressed in a garnet red jacket with overlapping lapels, which was embroidered with flower clusters in a two-tone jade-green and earthy-brown color scheme. The hairpin she was wearing was a rose gem set in gold wiring, grandiosely flaunting her wealth and status. Her face looked quite gorgeous, but her brows gave her a very harsh look.

This was precisely the Mo Kingdom's one and only fourth princess Mo Shuang. She had been married, but she kicked up a row to divorce with her now ex-husband, forcing the pitiful him to death. At present, she was keeping gigolos even though she was supposedly living in widowhood.

Although Queen Zhao was angry at the little stoic, she was even more infuriated upon seeing this fourth princess, and she glared ferociously at Consort Liu. "Why did you bring her too?"

Consort Liu was precisely the fourth princess's birth mother, and she protested aggrievedly, "Your Majesty the Queen, today is the first day of the new year, according to the rules..."

"Alright, alright." The queen wasn't patient enough to listen to Consort Liu's rebuttal, and she declared while gazing coldly at Noble Consort Zheng, "This matter, I will report to His Majesty in detail. Since you are unable to take care of the fifteenth princess, then this queen will make a decision for you."

"What do you want to do?" Noble Consort Zheng shouted in alarm.

On the other hand, when Wei Ziqin chased outside with her younger daughter in tow, she happened to see her eldest daughter carrying a small child and standing beneath the veranda to wait for them.

Seeing that her mother and sister followed her out, Qiao Mu's icy gaze eased up slightly, and she nodded at them while comforting, "I'm fine, Mom. You don't need to worry."

"You child." Wei Ziqin sighed, and then she pulled Qiao Lin along as she walked up to and hugged her eldest daughter. "But you're unhappy on the inside."

Chapter 848: Seeing Through with a Glance

This child had been a sharp one from young, so she should have perceived at a glance Her Majesty the Queen's displeasure toward her.

With Little Fifteenth in her arms, Qiao Mu walked forward while following the meandering cobblestone road.

Inside the wilting flower garden that was characteristic of the winter season, only several small flowers that were unafraid of the bitter cold burrowed out of the dirt.

Due to the fear that the flowers and trees would mutate, the palace had long undertaken an all-out project to comb through the various flower gardens. They promptly cut down any strange or exotic flowers and plants, generally growing only the most commonly seen kinds that had also never mutated before.

"Mom, I'm thinking, whether I've been too rash with this marriage." Qiao Mu sat on a wooden swing and lightly pushed her toes against the ground.

Her body swung up slightly, and she raised her hand to stroke the skinny and frail Little Fifteenth in her embrace.

Wei Ziqin's eyes were permeated with faint bewilderment and uncertainty. *Could it be that her daughter was thinking about backing out?*

"Qiaoqiao, Mom is telling you, Xiao Mo is a good child, so you must not take out your anger on him." *Wasn't it unfair to the crown prince?* The responsibility for the trouble these Highnesses were stirring up all fell upon him.

As an onlooker who saw the situation more clearly than the actors, Wei Ziqin had witnessed how well Xiao Mo, this child, treated her daughter. If he had treated her even the tiniest bit badly, then she would definitely not have agreed to let him marry her daughter.

"Mom, that wet nurse was one of the queen's people."

That was to say, this drama was simply what Queen Zhao had arranged to play out.

However, with the interference of Noble Lady Ying as a variable, or perhaps, after the inclusion of Noble Lady Ying as a variable, this drama became even more brilliant and interesting.

In other words, even without Noble Lady Ying, the wet nurse would have still grandiosely lodged this complaint to the queen in front of all the madams and misses.

The queen wanted to strip Noble Consort Zheng's custody of her daughter in an ostentatious and highfalutin fashion.

Yet Wei Ziqin looked at her daughter in shock. "You? How do you know?"

Qiao Mu laughed self-deprecatingly before sighing softly. "Perhaps, it's because I have keen eyes."

"Sister, you're really awesome!" With her face full of admiration, Qiao Lin plunked down on the other swing and swayed back and forth while staring at her sister with a worshipping gaze. "Since you can even perceive this, then you certainly won't be at a disadvantage in the future."

"Sis, Ta!" The small child sitting on Qiao Mu's lap parroted with poor enunciation.

"You have a dad and a mom, yet you are a luckless child without a dad or mom..." Qiao Mu stroked Little Fifteenth's head while gazing off into the distance.

Amidst the withering winter scene, it seemed as if her gaze had settled somewhere far away.

As Qiao Lin looked at her sister beside her, she seemed to have a feeling that her sister shouldn't be touched.

It was just like at this very moment, her sister was merely a mirage made of bubbles, and she would shatter if touched.

"Qiaoqiao." Wei Ziqin couldn't stand it the most when this child had on this kind of almost empty and numb expression. After quickly pulling her off the swing, Wei Ziqin immediately hugged her in her embrace while vigorously patting her back.

"Qiaoqiao, you're Mom's daughter. There's Mom here no matter what happens."

"Sister, there's also Xiao Lin'er here too! Xiao Lin'er will protect you!" Qiao Lin also jumped down from the swing, and she stretched out her small, thin arms, doing her best to lift them up and hug her sister from the back.

Qiao Mu finally regained her senses, and she couldn't help smiling. "What are you doing? I'm alright."

She was only filled with all sorts of feelings inside her heart.

Little Fifteenth burrowed her tiny head out from between the two people, and she peered at this one and that one in complete bewilderment.

"Qiaoqiao, let's return home!"

Chapter 849: I'll Adjust to You

Qiao Mu couldn't help laughing. "Mom, why have you gotten willful too?"

"I can't be willful this once when my daughter is unhappy?" Wei Ziqin barked petulantly.

"Okay okay okay, then let's go shopping on the streets." Qiao Lin promptly raised both hands and feet in approval.

"You wish!" Immediately afterward, Wei Ziqin raised her hand to swat her younger daughter's head.

"Who would set up a stall to sell things today?"

As the trio was chatting, some branches nearby shook, and Crown Prince Mo suddenly popped his head out.

“Brother-in-Law.” Qiao Lin happily called out.

However, Wei Ziqin swiftly covered up her small mouth. “Don’t make a racket. Let’s go, come over there with Mom.”

As she spoke, she also stealthily sent her son-in-law a look. Immediately, this son-in-law cleverly understood his mother-in-law’s meaning: *Your wife’s in a bad mood!*

Qiao Mu glanced up at Crown Prince Mo before lowering her head again indifferently. Sure enough, she was alienating him with her attitude.

Crown Prince Mo’s heart sank with a thump, and he quickly ran over, stretching out his hands to carry her.

Slap! Qiao Mu warded off his hand neither lightly nor forcefully, and she once again sat back on her swing while carrying Little Fifteenth, not even in the mood to spare him a glance out of the corner of her eye.

“Qiaoqiao, I’ve heard what happened. You’ve suffered.” With a repentant attitude on his handsome face, Mo Lian hastily took the initiative to make an apology. “Rest assured, after the end of this New Year’s feast, we won’t come again if it’s nothing serious.”

“Is Noble Lady Ying a person you arranged into this.”

Mo Lian’s voice abruptly faltered, and he very carefully peered at Qiao Mu. “Her? What did she say to you?”

“She’s too clever. Even when intervening midway through, she could even act in concert with your Royal Mother to complete the performance.” Qiao Mu abruptly stretched out her hand to fling away the crown prince’s hand. “I won’t be adjusting to this kind of life full of schemes and intrigue.”

Rather than having her scheme against other people, she might cleanly finish off that person directly with her own hands instead...

Meanwhile, Mo Lian felt his heart squeezing, and he hastily scooped her into his embrace. “You don’t have to adjust to it.”

“Let me adjust to you?” He restlessly snuggled his head into the crook of her neck. “Wherever you go, I’ll go. I’ll even follow you up into the skies and down into the seas! It’s decided then, okay?”

Qiao Mu was stunned, yet for some reason, half of the resentment that had been stifling her heart had disappeared. She then peeked at him doubtfully. “Why do you always give in to me?”

“You are my little emperor darling. What can I do if I don’t give in to you?” Crown Prince Mo declared as a matter of course. “You like to fling away my hand when you’re angry, and that makes me feel so hurt inside.”

“The people in your family are too annoying!” Qiao Mu suddenly gave him a kick. “It’s all your dad’s fault, marrying so many concubines who just look for trouble all day long!”

“Right right, this can’t be blamed on me, it’s all on my dad.”

“Your concubine mothers are all such troublemakers that it’s awfully annoying.”

“Isn’t that right, in the future, we won’t enter the palace nor will we see them.”

“And your mom, her expression when she looks at me, it’s so freaking stiff and unsightly! It’s not like I absolutely have to get married to you! If it won’t do, then forget... mfmph!”

Qiao Mu abruptly stopped talking, since Mo Lian had already aggressively plugged up that rambling small mouth of hers.

He simply didn’t give her the opportunity to continue speaking.

This kiss completely made the little stoic forcibly swallow down all her complaints.

“I’m telling you, I can admit to any fault, but you’re prohibited from saying things like ‘forget it’ again.” Mo Lian furiously bit down heavily on her lips.

Yet Qiao Mu screamed, “Were you born in the year of the dog!”

While raising his phoenix eyes, Mo Lian stretched out a finger to lift up her small chin.

Chapter 850: Say Sister-in-Law

“Qiaoqiao, I can give in to you and go along with you for anything. However, only this matter is absolutely out of the question. You are mine, mine, and I won’t allow you to leave me.” His pair of phoenix eyes dyed in ink were enshrouded in a dense profoundness. It seemed as if there were endless whirlpools rotating among the two pitch-black lotus fires that were leaping up from the bottom of his eyes.

All at once, Qiao Mu watched him blankly, spellbound as she stared at his eyes. She touched his face with her small hand and murmured, “Mo Lian, in your eyes...”

Right now, however, Mo Lian refused to hear the little fellow saying things like “forget it” and “let’s part” with her stoic expression.

He didn’t wish for her heart that was firmly confined inside layers of ice to once again shrink back into itself bit by bit.

“In my eyes, it’s all you.” Sighing gently, he then grabbed her small paw to give it a light bite. “Punishing you for saying something that you shouldn’t. You’re prohibited from saying it again in the future.”

Qiao Mu pulled back her hand and glared at him grumpily. When she lowered her head and saw Little Fifteenth goggling at them curiously with big eyes, she was even more embarrassed.

“So despicable.” She pushed him away with a burning face. “Your younger sister is still here.”

“Sis, Ta!”

Mo Lian's face darkened at once, and he eyed the child. "You've called wrong, say Sister-in-Law."

What the heck would the child know about a 'Sister-in-Law?' The child only felt that Crown Prince Mo looked very scary with his darkened face, so she quickly snuggled back into this sister's warm embrace before her expression finally eased up.

"Your dad fathers so many babies, yet he doesn't know to take good care of them." Qiao Mu's anger flared up again. "What a scumbag dad."

"Mhm, mhm, Dad is really useless. It's still Qiaoqiao who's the best."

Qiao Mu rolled her eyes at him. "Where is your mother sending this child?"

Mo Lian paused briefly, and then said soon afterwards, "She's sending the child to Zhaoyi He. The State Duke of Qing's second wife, née He, is Zhaoyi He's aunt."

"Doesn't she have her own son?"

"Mhm, Sixteenth is younger than Fifteenth by quite a few months."

After saying "oh," Qiao Mu continued, "Starting tomorrow, bring her to my home, and I'll administer eight more acupuncture treatments on her to completely cure her asthma and properly nurse her back to health."

"Okay." Crown Prince Mo immediately promised cheerfully, and he was so happy inside that he could fly.

Wasn't that just to his liking? Now he could see his Darling Qiao every day.

After the duo conversed for a while longer, and Qiao Mu's mood calmed down, she told him to first return to the King's Palace.

What happened at the noon banquet wasn't anything much, since the main act at night had yet to start.

That was the full-scale drama of the traditional court official patrician families against the eight emerging great patrician families.

As an actor in the drama, Qiao Mu was already unable to extricate herself!

Finally, there were no more hiccups in the New Year's noon banquet in the Brilliant Sun Hall, and the guests behaved appropriately as they partook in the meal. On the surface, they interacted joyously and harmoniously with happy laughter and cheerful voices, seemingly having already thrown the various awkward incidents that had occurred early in the morning out of their minds.

Noble Consort Zheng wasn't absent either. No matter how much she was burning with anger on the inside, she still stayed in her seat and tastelessly chewed on some food.

It could be seen that Noble Consort Zheng's smile was a bit forced.

There actually wasn't much meaning in her bracing herself to keep sitting there. After all, the people around her were afraid of touching the lioness' tail, nor did they dare to speak with her.

For the very first time, Noble Consort Zheng experienced the feeling of being ostracized from the social circle.

Rage burned in her heart, and just as the noon banquet ended, she found an excuse that she still had matters to attend to at Sophora Flower Palace and left in a hurry.

Queen Zhao didn't stop her, merely sweeping her a cold glance out of the corner of her eye as her lips curled up into a sneer.