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The Evil Prince and His Precious Wife - The Sly Lady - Chapter 01-23

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Chapter 1 – Demoting Wife to Concubine

Semi-conscious, MuRong Xue felt a sharp pain in her chest. Every breath felt like a thousand steel needles fiercely stabbing at her heart, so painful that she tightly frowned. She slowly opened heavy eyelids, but was stunned by the scene that came into view.

White marble table-tops, red sandalwood chairs, golden pillars, silk brocade marble beds; the resplendent great hall was extremely luxurious. In the corner sat a purple-gold twisted-wire furnace which is an extremely expensive antique; at the window were two 1-meter-tall red corals which were even more precious and almost extinct in the modern era; in addition, the wall was embedded with night pearls, so many that it was overwhelming.

Murong Xue couldn't help but be stunned. The modern society would have electric lighting everywhere but this was furnished so quaintly old-fashioned. Even the palace halls of the Forbidden Palace in Beijing might not be as elegant and luxurious as this.

“Your majesty, this humble servant requests that your Majesty grants Princess Yuyuan as my wife and Murong Xue as concubine...”

A cold male voice travelled to her ear, destroying the pleasant surprise brought about by the scene in front of her. Murong Xue turned towards the direction of the voice and saw a man dressed in purple-red brocade robes standing on the red carpet, in the middle of the big hall. His hair, like black silk, was tied up using a purple-gold crown. His expression calm, his young face handsome beyond comparison, and sharp gaze, ruthless.

Murong Xue felt a thud in her head and received a sudden influx of foreign memories, coalescing rapidly with her original memories. She couldn't believe it, but had no choice but to admit – her soul had travelled.

The owner of this body is also named Murong Xue and is the daughter of the first wife in the house of the marquis. She had been engaged to Prince Jing, Ye Yichen, from young. Three years ago, Prince Jing led an army to the borders against the enemy while Murong Xue bitterly waited in the capital city.

After finally waiting for her fiancé to return, unexpectedly, he had returned together with the Princess of Mobei, Qin Yuyan. He had even publicly requested to marry Qin Yuyan as his first wife in front of all the court officials and their families during the welcome home banquet, demoting Murong Xue to concubine. She was caught off guard. Shocked and angry, her old illness relapsed and she died.

In order to give the title of first wife to Qin Yuyan, Ye Yichen unscrupulously used his military accomplishments to request that the Emperor allow the marriage. But what wrong did Murong Xue do? She had only obeyed her parents' wishes to get engaged with Ye Yichen. She did not even have a chance to speak to her fiancé before he had demoted her into a lowly concubine. Her ego as the daughter of a prestigious family was stamped upon heartlessly into the ground.

Sharpness gleaned Murong Xue's eyes. Facing everyone's looks of sympathy, pity, ridicule, disdain and gloating, she slowly raised her head towards Ye Yichen, "I have an engagement with you first, Princess Yuyan's political marriage came second. Don't you think that you are too much to have me demoted to concubine?"

Astonished looks fell upon Murong Xue. Ye Yichen is a war prince and has many military achievements. Even all the court officials would give in and respect him. Murong Xue is only a sickly girl still in her boudoir, and she had dared to mercilessly reprimand him. How audacious!

The middle-aged Emperor sitting on the golden throne also raised his head and looked towards Murong Xue calmly. His sharp and majestic gaze hiding behind white jade tassel, faintly discernable.

Murong Xue turned a blind eye to all these and coldly stared at Ye Yichen. "Yuyan is the King of Mobei's most favourite princess. If she is concubine, it would be a humiliation to Mobei. The two countries, Qingyan and Mobei, will definitely go to war again!" Ye Yichen coldly answered without even sparing her a look. His brow revealed a hint of casualness and annoyance.

Murong Xue begged to differ, and coldly said, "Qingyan is strong as a country with sufficient military strength. If Mobei dares to attack, just send troops to

destroy them. Why should the Prince be scared of them?”

“I am not afraid of going to war. I just do not want our border soldiers to die without reason!” Ye Yichen turned around, and condescendingly looked down upon Murong Xue, coldness showing all around the tips of his eyes and brows. “If both countries can settle war through a political marriage, why should we still need to have an intense war and sacrifice so many soldiers?”

Mobei’s army is aggressive and will not easily surrender. If they agree to a peace treaty and a political marriage, it is likely that the three years of war had caused them heavy losses such that they need to rest and rejuvenate. Even if Qin Yuyan became concubine, they will be vexed and angry, and they will harshly criticize, but they will not easily send troops to the border. Ye Yichen and Mobei have been at war for three years and he definitely knows full well Mobei’s predicament but he still used peace between both countries as an excuse. It is really because he likes Qin Yuyuan and wishes to take her as his first wife!

Murong Xue’s mouth upturned with a touch of ridicule, and coldly looked at Ye Yichen, “The princes of the royal family are all young and capable. The nobles of the capital have also many young and talented men. Princess Yuyan can marry any one of them and form a good relationship between the two countries. She does not have to marry you who already have a marriage agreement.”

Ye Yichen act of mercilessly demoting Murong Xue as concubine in the great hall is simply humiliating her and not giving any respect to her as his fiancée. The original person was angered to death by Ye Yichen; she as the precious daughter of a first wife in a prestigious family will not allow anyone to bully her!

“When both countries came to a truce, the King of Mobei had asked that I personally take care of Princess Yuyuan. I had agreed!” Ye Yichen calmly said, his voice calm and unwavering.

A small condition in return for twenty years of peace between Qingyan and Mobei seems like a very good deal. Ye Yichen is marrying Qin Yuyan for the sake for the entire Qingyan. Demoting Murong Xue to concubine is because he has no other choice. If she continues to reprimand Ye Yichen, then she will be considered selfish and unappreciative.

In a few words, he had rebuked her criticism. Ye Yichen’s methods are really to

the point and unfathomable. His reputation as the god of war is well deserved! But she, Murong Xue, is also not a weak goat up for slaughter, “In that case, Prince Jing and Princess Yuyuan’s marriage cannot be stopped and has no way of changing?”

Looking into Murong Xue’s cool eyes that were like deep pools, Ye Yichen’s heart clenched, as though something surprising was about to happen. He frowned, and coldly said, “Of course!”

“In that case, I request that the engagement with Prince Jing be annulled!”

As soon as she said that, the crowd was in an uproar. Murong Xue wants to break off the engagement and not marry the prince of war who is young and talented and has many military achievements? Is she muddled from her sickness? Qingyan has many young and talented men, but it is impossible to find one who is as accomplished as Ye Yichen! Even as his concubine, she will be better off marrying him than marrying another as first wife.

A gleam of surprise appeared in Ye Yichen’s eyes. When he had decided to ask the Emperor to grant marriage, he had envisaged all sorts of reactions Murong Xue would have and had already thought of all sort of countermeasures. However, he did not expect that she would actually suggest annulling the engagement. His blade-like brow flicked up slightly, and he coldly said, “No way!”

Murong Xue coldly questioned, “Why not?”

Ye Yichen lowered his eyelids, “If it is annulled, your reputation will be affected...”

“In front of so many people, Prince Jing demoted me to concubine without any mercy, making me the laughingstock of the capital. My reputation has already been utterly destroyed,” Murong Xue coldly interrupted, derision showing all around the tips of her eyes and brows.

“Are you blaming me?” Ye Yichen looked at Murong Xue, danger flashing in his eyes.

“I dare not! I only ask that Prince Jing annul the marriage agreement. We each can marry and no longer have any ties!” Murong Xue casually answered with hints of derision and perfunctoriness.

Chapter 2 – Demotion of Wife to Concubine

Ye Yichen's face darkened, lowering his eyes, he patiently explained, "You have been sick for many years, your body is weak, even after annulling the engagement, it is impossible for you to marry into a good family. You have a marriage agreement with me, and have waited for me for so long, I will not treat you shabbily. After marrying into the Prince Jing household, you will be the first concubine, and your position will only be slightly lower than the first wife..."

"The first concubine is still a concubine. I am the Marquis' first wife's daughter. No matter how bad the marriage is, I will never be a concubine!" Murong Xue harshly rejected his proposal, fire brewing beneath her eyes. She had already been so clear, yet Ye Yichen still wanted to take her as concubine. Did he really not understand her or is he acting as if he did not get her meaning?

Ye Yichen is young and handsome, with many military accomplishments. He has control of the army and is highly valued by the Emperor. Lots of girls from prestigious families in the capital would give up a first wife position to marry him as concubine, but those people definitely do not include her, Murong Xue!

Her cold voice pierced through his eye drums and pounded into his heart. Ye Yichen stiffened and frowned as he looked towards Murong Xue. She wore a dress of pink smoke silk; the edges of the skirt lightly brushed the ground, enhancing the delicate shape of her body. Her hair, like a waterfall, was lightly rolled up using a green snow floral pin, revealing a smooth forehead, and a slightly pale but bright small face. Her black eyes were like stars in the dark sky, calm but determined!

Three years since he had seen her. The weak and sickly girl in his memory, that even the wind could blow her down, has grown in a beautiful young woman. Her gentle nature had also become cold and indifferent. Her gaze directed towards him is even colder, with not a hint of admiration and attachment. This is her – noble and proud, elegant and calm, like the red blossoms in the cold winter months, quietly blooming and presenting her beauty, not making a sound but exceptionally attractive.

When she said to annul the engagement, she really meant that she wants to annul the marriage agreement and it was not a bid to play hard and attract his attention!

Her stubbornness has directed the situation into developing the opposite path to which he had envisioned, growing completely out of his control! He really does not like this feeling.

A dark haze passed Ye Yichen's eyes, and he looked up at Murong Xue, "Our engagement is our parents' wishes, and the matchmaker's words, how could one lightly change it."

"The engagement my parents' agreed upon is for me to marry your highness as wife and not to become your highness' concubine. When your highness demoted me to concubine, it already went against the wishes of my parents'!" Ye Yichen destroyed the marriage agreement in front of the entire court and still dared to reprimand her for not obeying her parents' wishes – how utterly shameless! If she were to marry this type of person, don't even mention about being a concubine, even if she were the first wife, she would not even give a care for it.

Ye Yichen's gave her a meaningful look, "You still blame me!"

Such an unfeeling and unrighteous person. He was just wasting her time. All she wants to do now is to draw the line between him and her, and not having anything to do him ever again!

"Prince Jing is marrying the Princess of Mobei for the sake of the people of Qingyan. How could I possibility blame you? By taking the initiative to annul the marriage, I am supporting your Highness and the Princess, and look forward to peace between Qingyan and Mobei. Am I wrong? Unless it is not enough that your Highness marries your beloved Princess Yuyuan as first wife, you also want to take me, the ex-fiancée, as concubine, and so fulfill your carnal desires?"

At the last few words, Murong Xue's tone grew heavy. Ye Yichen heard the derision in her voice, his handsome face became overcast and his eyes flashed darkly. He gave no care to carnal desires; he allowed Murong Xue to be his concubine because...

"Miss Murong, please don't be angry. It is all my fault...", a gentle female voice suddenly rang out in the great hall.

Murong Xue raised her head towards the source only to see a beautiful lady standing behind the marble stage. Glass-coloured butterfly hairpin adorned her small delicate fringe, a long tassel hung down, complementing her elegant long dress; the edges of her skirt were embroidered with fresh-looking begonia flowers. It lightly gathered at the waist, reflecting her slim shape and willow-like posture. That exceedingly beautiful little face was full of apology, "I did not know that Miss Murong and Prince Jing had a marriage agreement. That's why I came to Qingyan. I am so sorry that it caused a misunderstanding between the both of you."

Qin Yuyuan and Ye Yiyuan are deeply in love with each other and would have definitely poured their soul out to one another. How could Qin Yuyuan not have known about their marriage agreement?

Furthermore, we had been debating about the marriage agreement issue for half a day. Qin Yuyuan did not speak up earlier, or wait till later; she conveniently chose an opportunity when Ye Yichen had been rebuked till he had nothing more to say to speak up. She is obviously trying to help Ye Yichen out of his predicament.

Murong Xue sneered internally, and calmly said, "Your Highness is too serious. Your Highness is marrying into Qingyan for peace between both countries. Your Highness' marriage to Prince Jing as first wife is even more so for the millions of citizens of both countries and not for your own selfish reasons. You do not have to be sorry about purposely breaking another's marriage."

Qin Yuyuan looked embarrassed, eyes flashed uncomfortably.

Murong Xue pretended not to notice and continued, "As a woman, and with serious illness, I cannot help my country. The only thing I can do is to annul the marriage engagement with Prince Jing, and allow your Highness and Prince Jing to marry, and doing a small part to help the citizens of both countries. I back off this marriage willingly; no one has forced me. Your Highness really need not blame yourself!"

Qin Yuyuan faintly smiled, "Miss Murong is righteous in doing so but I feel guilty about it. If Miss Murong does not mind, I am willing to be concubine and Miss Murong can be the first wife."

Murong Xue raised her eyebrows. They failed by using force so now they try to entice her, to let her be first wife? It's all just empty talk. After marrying into Prince Jing's mansion, the person making all the decisions is Ye Yichen. After the mansion door closes, who knows whether she will be demoted into concubine or a lowly servant-concubine.

Even worse, he could give her a bowl of medicine and let her "die from serious illness". She's not that stupid and suicidal as to enter the wolves' den, "Your Highness is so kind. Murong Xue is extremely grateful. But Xue cannot bear for your Highness to suffer. It is best that our engagement be annulled!"

"Miss Murong..."

Murong Xue waved her hand to interrupt Qin Yuyuan, looking fixedly at her, "How about the Princess of Mobei be a concubine! Even if your Highness does not care, the King of Mobei will care, and Prince Jing will definitely not allow your Highness to suffer..."

"Prince Jing is a good person and will definitely treat Miss Murong well after marriage," Qin Yuyuan urgently explained, full of sincerity.

Murong Xue scoffed internally and coldly said, "I do not want to come between your Highness and Prince Jing and prevent your marriage. I definitely do not want to be scorned by the people for being a fool and for not being perceptive by impeding upon such a perfect match and happy couple. Please do not stop me from breaking the engagement anymore, your Highness!"

Upon finishing her speech, Murong Xue bowed towards the Emperor, clearly enunciating her words, "I earnestly request your Majesty to order the relieve of the marriage agreement between Prince Jing and I!"

The calm and determined voice travelled to everyone's ears and the court was astonished – Murong Xue really wants to annul the engagement! Qingyan's capital has countless young ladies adoring the Prince of War but she is throwing it away like something she detests, and throwing it to Qin Yuyuan without any reluctance – not wanting it anymore.

Qin Yuyuan stiffened; her gentle and moving smile awkwardly froze on her face.

Ye Yichen's face darkened and he lowered his eyes to cover up the dark flashes within....

Chapter 3 – Demotion of Wife to Concubine

The Emperor gave a meaningful look, his sharp gaze travelled over Ye Yichen and fell onto Murong Xue, “The marriage agreement between Prince Jing and you was agreed upon by your parents and not by issue of my edict. It will be against reason for me to issue an order to annul the marriage agreement. You had better ask the elders in both families to annul the engagement.”

The Emperor does not wish to meddle in the family matters of his courtiers!

Murong Xue narrowed her eyes. She has an idea of how to convince the elders in the Marquis household to agree to break off the engagement but Ye Yichen’s direct elders are a thousand miles away on their fief. The large Prince Jing household only has Ye Yichen as the master. If he conceals this and does not invite his elders to the Capital, where ever shall this engagement drag till before it can be broken off

As though he saw through her worries, the Emperor calmly said, “I will immediately send a letter to old Prince Jing, and invite him to come quickly to the Capital!”

“Thank you so much, your Majesty!” Myrongs Xu’s anxiety immediately left her. The Emperor personally summoned old Prince Jing into the Capital. No matter how audacious Ye Chenyi is, he wouldn’t dare to sabotage. She only needed to wait patiently, once old Prince Jing has arrived, negotiations to annul the engagement can start.

Eyeing her upturned lips and faint happiness that she was unable to conceal, a dark shadow loomed beneath Ye Chenyi’s eyes. She is just so happy that she’s breaking off the engagement with him, huh?

“The feast has ended!” The Emperor sharp eyes scanned though the varied expressions of his courtiers, got up and walked down the golden throne.

“To the Emperor!” The court officials kneeled to respectfully send off the Emperor.

Seeing the Emperor’s bright yellow silhouette disappear outside the great hall,

Murong Xue stood up and with everyone looking on, calmly waltzed towards outside, without even a glance at Ye Chenyi.

Looking at her determined posture, Ye Chenyi narrowed his sharp eyes. Three years on, Murong Xue is no longer that weak-bodied, shy-smiling, carefully-ingratiating Murong Xue anymore...

“Your Highness, you and Murong Xue’s engagement definitely cannot annulled!” Advisor Xu Tianyou quickly walked to Ye Yichen’s side and quietly reminded him, his eyes flashing with severity that only they understood.

“I understand!” Ye Chenyi looked away, the black of his eyes deep, “Go to Prince Jing Mansion. Tell Seneschal Wang to represent me and present the bride price to the Marquis’ Household. I want to marry Murong Xue as concubine in three days!”

“Yes, sir.” Xu Tianyou nodded and strode out of the great hall.

Ye Yichen looked toward the direction that Murong Xue had disappeared to with deep eyes. He is Prince Jing – that who holds the reins of the military. On the other hand, Murong Xue has a serious illness and does not have any remarkable talents. By allowing her to be his concubine is he was already complementing her. He had already promised the position of first wife to Yuyan; Murong Xue had better not meddle in it for even a bit!

Murong Xue had no idea what Ye Yichen was thinking. After leaving the palace, escorted by her maid, she sat onto the Marquis Household’s carriage. The carriage was made of incense wood. Inside the carriage, there was a wardrobe, marble table, tea, chess set, bookshelf and many other furnishings readily available; like a mini-bedroom. The implements on the table were very dedicate; every one of them priceless items. In the corner, a purple-gold stove was lit with expensive orchid perfume. The understated luxury made Murong Xue look down.

She remembered that she had agreed to her best friend’s, Ning Qinqin, invitation to go on holiday to Hawaii. Unfortunately, the private jet had met with a strong storm mid-journey. So strong that even the experienced pilot could not avoid, even though he had tried his very best. The new model was torn to pieces by the storm and her body would have definitely been destroyed till nothing is

left.

In the sudden darkness she overcame her, she thought that she was a goner. She did not expect that when she opened her eyes again, she had been reborn. And actually reborn into such an ancient world. How unbelievable!

“Eh, isn’t that the page boy Shuangxi?” A young girl’s uncertain questioning travelled to her ears. Murong Xue looked up and saw a young boy of about 14, 15 years standing at the door of a mansion; his young face gloomy. It was, without a doubt, Shuangxi.

Murong Xue’s eyes flashed, and gently said, “Stop the carriage!” After the carriage was steady, she was helped out of the carriage by the maid and then slowly walked toward that young boy.

Sensing someone nearing, the young boy quickly turned around and faced head on with Murong Xue’s beautiful face. He widened his eyes, stunned, and stammered, “Young... young Mistress!” What was she doing here?

Murong Xue hummed in answer and asked, “The Young Master is inside?” Shuangxi is her twin brother Murong Ye’s personal servant. If Shuangxi was here, then Murong Ye would definitely be too.

“Heh heh...,” Shuangxi laughed unnaturally, eyes flashing, “Well... well...”

Watching hawing and humming, unable to explain himself, Murong Xue raised her eyebrows and walked passed him into the big courtyard. In the original person’s memory, Murong Ye is a rich playboy that only knew how to enjoy himself, often forgetting the time; it was not uncommon for him to stay out all night. In a month, he would spend twenty over days outside. How rare to run into him! Of course she had to go and see him.

Walking through the large doors, Murong Xue saw dozens of metal cages on the side of the vast training field. In the cages were black, white, and grey dogs. In the middle of the field, a round-shaped space of about 20 square meters was cordoned using a red fence, and within it a black hound and a grey large hound were fighting.

They had cuts all over their bodies; their flesh turning outwards. Red blood coated their fur with large patches here and there; their muscular bodies bloody, but they seem not to notice, still entangled with each other, wildly biting and

scratching.

A young boy in green was standing outside of the fence staring fixedly at the fighting dogs, shouting excitedly, "Bite, bite, bite harder... General Black, bite it to death, bite it to death..."

"Snap!" As though the black dog had understood him, it savagely bit onto the neck of the grey dog until the grey dog had breathed its last.

The young-boy-in-green looked at the broken carcass of the grey and laughed out loud, "Murong Ye, you have lost again. Hahaha... after half a day of fighting dogs, every one that you had bought had died. I really don't know what to say about your taste in picking things!"

Murong Ye's handsome face turned slightly black and said unconcedingly, "You've only won a few rounds in a row, what is there to brag about? I will immediately buy a ferocious one and completely destroy yours."

"You have said that same thing for over a dozen times; so many times that my ears are going to fall off. Yet I have not seen you win a single round." The young-boy-in-green's lips curled contemptuously as his finger quickly moved through the wad of bills that he had won.

His sore spot touched on, Murong Ye reddened and fiercely said, "I was careless previously. That's why I kept losing. This time I will be more careful and will definitely beat you. Shuangxi, bring me the money, I wish to choose a dog."

Shuangxi kneaded the flat purse and walked up with a sour face, "Young Master, we don't have any more money."

Murong Ye frowned, "Didn't I ask you to bring five-, six-thousand silver taels? Why has it finished so quickly?"

Shuangxi laughed bitterly, "Young Master, you bought four dogs, each costing 500 taels. In addition, every stake was a thousand taels..."

"Alright, alright, you can stop detailing the accounts. Hurry and go home to redraw more money!" Murong Ye interrupted Shuangxi irritably. Since Xu Tianan dared to laughed at his lack of taste, he will splash more money to buy a few more fierce dogs and make him lose every penny. Let's see how arrogant he would be then!

Chapter 4 – Pranking Rich Playboys

“There are a few blocks between the Marquis’ Mansion and here. By the time you bring the money, the sky would be dark, how are we going to fight dogs then?” Xu Tianan casually said, lazily.

Murong Ye’s face darkened, “My money has been used up, and the dog fighting arena and gambling stakes do not allow credit. If I don’t go back to redraw money, how am I to continue competing with you?”

“You can use the pretty lady behind you as collateral!” Xu Tianan looked diagonally behind Xurong Ye, smiling sinisterly.

Pretty lady? What pretty lady?

Murong Ye looked behind him confused and blankly only to see Murong Xue standing two meters away looking faintly at him. His heart jumped, “Sister, what you doing here?”

Sister?! Xu Tianan did a double-take. When he saw Shuang Xi respectfully following behind her, he had thought that she was Murong Ye’s little lover. He never expected her to be Murong Ye’s sister, the one who is engaged to Prince Jing, Ye Yichen..

Rumors have it that she has a serious illness and weak constitution. And that she lived deep in the mansion and seldom showed her face. He didn’t expect her to be such a beauty.

“I was passing by and saw you here, so I came in.”

Murong Xue’s cold voice travelled through one’s eyes and hit straight to the heart. Xu Tianan’s heart fluttered. His brother Xu Tianyou often followed at the side of Prince Jing. According to him, Prince Jing does not like this fiancée of his and even intends to demote her to a lowly concubine. If he humiliates her, does that give Prince Jing a reason to demote her to concubine? When that happens, and Prince Jing is happy, Prince Jing might even give him a reward!

He would have gotten the lady and the Prince Jing’s praise. Definitely a worthy proposition!

Xu Tianan's eyes brightened and sinisterly sized up Murong Xue from top to bottom. She's so delicate and pretty; that body is definitely delicious and soft. He really felt like taking her into his arms and harshly ravage her, "Murong Ye, don't talk about sibling love. Hurry and give me a firm word on whether you are going to use her as your collateral..."

"Xu Tianan, watch your mouth. This is my sister, not an item, how can I use as collateral?" Murong Ye sharply interrupted him, his face black till it could almost drip ink.

Xu Tianan was unconcerned, "What sister? It's just a girl, money-losing goods; what's there to be precious about? If I were you, I'll immediately use her as collateral to exchange for a few thousand taels, pick a good dog, and earn back my ego. And when the servants bring back the money, then just redeem her..."

"I am not as inhuman as you as to sacrifice my sister's reputation to just to fight dogs," Murong Ye's face filled with anger. If the proud Marquis' Household's Young Mistress is used like an item for collateral at a colosseum, the public's cynicism would be enough to drown her. Wherever she would go, she would be laughed at till she's unable to look up.

"Stop sounding so righteous. I think you're just scared of losing!" Xu Tianan leaned against the fence and looked sideways to Murong Ye, eyes filled with arrogance, "You are afraid that your taste is so bad that even if you choose a hundred dogs, you wouldn't be able to win me by a single round. By then, you would have lost your sister and your face..."

"Shut up, Xu Tianan!" Taunted, Murong Ye's chest filled with anger and thundered, all ready to pounce on Xu Tianan and beat him up.

Murong Xue pulled him back and walked a few steps up front. She coldly stared at Xu Tianan, "My brother's luck is just a little bad today. You don't need to goad him. If you wish to fight dogs, I will accompany you."

Murong Ye might be a useless playboy, but he is very protective of her. Naturally, she will not stand on the sidelines and watch him get ridiculed.

Xu Tianan widened his eyes in surprise, "You fight dogs with me?" Murong Xue is a gentle and weak lady, brought up in the depths of the mansion. He reckoned that she has not even seen cock-fighting or cricket-fighting. Now she wants to

dog-fight with him? Is he imagining it?

“Can’t I?” Murong Xue’s said coldly.

“Of course you can!” Xu Tianan looked at her determined gaze and confirmed that she wasn’t joking, but was serious about dog-fighting with him. He haughtily smiled. As long as she is not afraid that the splashes of blood would make her faint, he didn’t mind, “Pay up the 500 taels and choose a dog... how much will you put as stake?”

“For this round, we shan’t gamble with money; we’ll gamble a finger!” Murong Xue’s cold voice travelled into his ears. Xu Tianan froze mid-action while taking out the bills and looked at her shocked, “You mean whoever loses will have to cut off a finger?”

“That’s right!” Murong Xue nodded, “Do you dare to gamble?”

“Of course I dare!” Xu Tianan raised his chin arrogantly and wantonly sized up Murong Xue. Those lecherous eyes openly flashed his wretched and evil desires, “I know best how to take care of ladies. Even if you lose, I won’t cut off your finger. You just need to serve me well for a night and we’ll call it...”

“Smack!” A slap harshly hit Xu Tianan’s face, cutting him off and turning his head to the side. A bright red five-fingered print immediately formed on half of his face, hot and painful.

“Murong Xue, you dare to hit me?!” Xu Tianan was furious. Spitting out the blood at the corner of his mouth, he viciously pounced towards Murong Xue.

He wants to teach her a lesson? How overconfident!

Murong Xue laughed coldly and kicked Xu Tianan.

Xu Tianan did not expect that and was kicked in the stomach. He fell to the ground wincing, brows knotted, and stared hatefully at Murong Xue.

“If you agree to the stake, just nod your head. If not, just shake your head. There’s no need to say so much rubbish.” Murong Xue looked down at him condescendingly, full of contempt and disdain.

Xu Tianan choked. That hateful little girl who has never seen the world actually dared to hit him, kick him, laugh at him, and caused him to lose his face. How

reckless of her! If she wants to court death, he'll grant her wish!

Thinking bitterly, Xu Tianan stood up and quickly walked to the metal cages, pointing at the dogs within saying, "I want this one, that one... and this one. Bring them all over..."

Murong Ye looked complicatedly at Murong Xue. In his impression, his sister is a gentle and beautiful lady. When he heard that he wanted to fight dogs, he was so shocked that by the time he got out of his daze, she had already finished negotiating all the terms with Xu Tianan. The dog-fight was on and he could do nothing to stop it. He lamented in his heart – because he as the older brother did not take good care of his sister, his sister had rashly set the stakes. If his sister loses, he'll cut his finger on behalf of his sister. He has been using these ten fingers for the last 14 years and is quite reluctant to cut whichever of them...

Watching Xu Tianan buy four, five dogs at one go, he shouted angrily, "Xu Tianan, you and my sister are only betting on one round, you only need to choose one. Why did you choose so many?"

Xu Tianan glanced at him, "I like it. What do you care?"

Murong Ye's face darkened, "You have picked all the fierce dogs away, leaving a bunch of useless sick dogs. You obviously want her to lose..."

"So what?" Xu Tianan raised his chin and unabashedly admitted, "If she has ability, why don't she pick a champion from the sick dogs and bite my dog to death!"

"You..." Murong Ye stare at Xu Tianan could almost spit fire, "Despicable coward!"

Xu Tianan coldly snorted and ignored him, urging irritably, "It's getting late, do you want to fight dogs or not? If not, I'm going home."

It's just another despicable, disgusting and old ploy. She really couldn't be bothered.

Murong Xue laughed coldly and slowly walked up. Her calm eyes passed over the cages and stopped at a cage in the utmost corner.

Chapter 5 – Pranking Rich Playboys

In the cage was a small dog. Its fur matted with dirt, making it difficult to discern whether it was white or grey. Its small head rested on this front paw, eyes closed. Its body was half the size of its neighbor, and both its ears were drooping, seemingly lethargic.

Murong Xue's eyes flashed and pointed towards the small dog, "That's the one!"

Murong Ye's initial optimism faded and his heart sank. He knew it. His sister is a kind-hearted, sympathetic good girl, but, "This is a colosseum. If you choose a dog that's so sickly and close to death to fight, you will definitely lose. Choose another!"

"No need to choose again. This dog is good enough," Murong Xue said softly, and personally opened the cage.

The small dog heard the noise and slowly opened its eyes, looking at Murong Xue with a warm smile. Its black eyes glinted with brightness, and it slowly stood up and leisurely walked out of the cage towards the arena; its thin and small body seemed like it would fall with a single gust of wind.

Murong Ye was speechless – this can be considered not bad? After entering the arena, there is no need to even fight, that fierce hound's aura is enough to frighten it to death. Such a lousy dog! It was definitely caught to make up the numbers. Anyone with eyes will never choose it!

Xu Tianan leaned against the fence, watching his 'General Yellow' strut into the arena, arrogantly walking to the front of the small dog and looking down upon it. Its big body shadowed the small dog's closely, like a strict elder arrogantly looking down on a misbehaving child.

He sneered internally. Usually when one fights dogs, even if one doesn't know how to choose, one would also choose a large and intimidating hound. Murong Xue actually bought such a small and skinny dog for the fight! What an utter idiot! After at most a few rounds, this dog will be torn to pieces by his 'General Yellow'. When that happens, he will teach Murong Xue a hard lesson. Let's see if

she still dares to show off in front of him.

‘Dang!’ The bell to signal the start of the fight rang. ‘General Yellow’s’ aura immediately sharpened and it howled towards the sky, pouncing ferociously towards the small dog!

In contrast, the small dog stood there quietly, not moving. His black eyes looking as the ‘General Yellow’ came closer and closer. It is unsure whether the small dog did not know how to react, or whether it was stunned. But with such a vast contrast, it is obvious that the small dog would come to a terrible end. Murong Ye closed his eyes as he couldn’t bear to watch.

‘Crack’ a dull sound travelled into everyone’s ears, and the wild howling stopped suddenly. Murong Ye’s heart dropped to pit bottom. Just one move and the small dog has been bitten to death. How utterly useless!

He had already said earlier that she can’t buy that sick dog but she still did not believe him. Great! Now that the dog is dead, and his sister had lost miserably, his one finger will soon be chopped off...

“How can this be? How is it that ‘General Yellow’ is the one that’s dead?” Xu Tianan’s shocked exclamation, full of disbelief, travelled into his ears. Murong Ye stopped. What? The ‘General Yellow’ is dead?

Looking towards the arena, he saw the mighty ‘General Yellow’ lying on the ground. Its throat ripped out and fresh blood flowing out. Its fierce eyes blank and it was not breathing; it was obviously dead.

The small and skinny dog stood in front of it, looking down upon it. It’s back straight and eyes cold like a haughty ruler.

Murong Ye’s eyes widened in surprise. It is really ‘General Yellow’ that’s dead. Such a small and skinny dog used only one move to bite the strong and ferocious ‘General Yellow’ to death. How incredible!

“Xu Tianan, you have lost! Fulfill the bet!” Murong Xue calmly stated, her voice flat.

A servant of the colosseum carried a prepared tray and quickly walked up to Xu Tianan. On the red cloth of the tray laid an unsheathed dagger. Its sharp edge reflecting coldly under the sunlight, piercing painfully through Xu Tianan’s eyes.

He had lost. He will really need to cut off one of his fingers. How can this be? He is the almighty and precious youngest son of the Minister's Household. How can he become a handicap with missing fingers?!

Xu Tianan's gaze turned cold and he hurried to the cage that he had bought and opened it. Dogs leaped out of the cage and ferociously pounced towards the small dog in the arena.

"Bite it to death, bite it to death!" Xu Tianan watched the chaotic arena, and wildly shouted. His eyes were red and he had only one thought in his mind – if his dogs bite Murong Xue's dog to death then he would win and would no longer need to cut off his finger.

"Xu Tianan, what are you doing? Going back against your word?" Murong Ye was furious and ready to ask the staff of the colosseum to separate the dogs. Just then, the small dog leaped up. It's grey silhouette moving between the group of dogs like a flash of light. 'Crack, crack, crack', four dull sounds rang and all the large fierce hounds had their necks torn out. They fell to the ground awkwardly, eyes wide open without life.

The small dog was unharmed. It puffed out its chest and stood proudly in the centre of the arena.

Murong Ye gaped. That was one against four, and it had won so beautifully. This dog is so powerful. It seems that dogs with a fierce physical appearance might not be fierce and strong; dogs that looks weak and sickly might not be weak when facing enemies.

Xu Tianan picked so many dogs yet all died under this small dog. It is absolute defeat and there is completely no reason to not fulfill the bet. He had been ridiculed by Xu Tianan so much previously; today, he has finally won a round. He can walk with his head high now. Hahaha, after cutting a finger off him, let's see how arrogant he can continue to be!

He looked gloatingly towards Xu Tianan only to see him staring at the bloody arena, eyes wild with panic. All the dogs he had bought are dead. He had lost to Murong Xue. He will need to cut off his finger... How could this happen? He definitely cannot become a handicap!

His eyes hardened. Xu Tianan snatched up the dagger on the tray and rushed

towards Murong Xue in a rage. She had dared to arrogantly force him to submit in public. How dare she! She wants a finger, doesn't she? Then he'll cut off her finger to give to her.

“Xu Tianan, you despicable coward!”

Murong Ye paled and thundered. He was just going to snatch the dagger when he saw Murong Xue turned slightly to the side to avoid the vicious attack and flipped her wrist – the dagger that was in Xu Tianan's hand instantly transferred over to her hand. She waved her hand and the sharp dagger swept across his left hand cutting off all five fingers from the knuckles. Blood squirted and splashed onto the yellow soil on the ground; the red blood shone brilliantly against it.

Xu Tianan's screams pierced through the air, “Ah!”

“Young Master!” A page boy standing not far exclaimed and ran hurriedly to Xu Tianan, ripped off a length of cloth from his robes, grabbed the injured hand and rapidly bandaged it.

Xu Tianan stood shakily, his face white and drained of blood. He looked at Murong Xue, eyes almost spitting fire, “Our bet was one finger. How could you cut five?” His left hand was entirely destroyed. From today, he would be considered a real useless person.

“We had initially agreed to gamble one round for one finger. You let go of five dogs; that's five rounds, and all five rounds lost. Of course it should be five fingers cut.” Murong Xue slowly said, putting the blood-coated dagger back onto the tray.

She had planned to only cut one finger off Xu Tianan. But since he tried to attack her despicably, then he shouldn't blame her for not being merciful.

Chapter 6 – Bride Price

Her crisp voice rang at his ears. Eyes on fire, Xu Tianan gritted, “I only agreed that the first round’s stake is a finger. I did not specify what the stakes for the last 4 rounds were. Who allowed you to make that decision?”

This sickly little bitch seems to be quite skilled. He daren’t confront her head-on. But since she had cut off five of his fingers, he will cut four of hers in compensation.

Murong Xue glanced at him, “After the first dog died, you didn’t say a single word before letting out another four. Isn’t that a continuation of the gamble from the first round? If you had prepared to change the stakes, why didn’t you say anything? Now that the five rounds are over, you claim that that it is unfair? Don’t you think that that’s too shameless?”

“You!” Xu Tianan choked. At that time, he had only thought of killing that weak little dog to save his finger. He didn’t think that far!

“If you want to gamble, then you must be prepared to lose. There are so many people in this colosseum watching. Our gamble is definitely fair. Even if you want to fight in the Dali Temple court, I have no qualms. If you are not resigned, and prepared to find someone to teach me a lesson, that’s fine. I’ll be at the Marquis’ Mansion waiting for your arrival anytime!”

The dogs in the colosseum are for the guests’ enjoyment. After buying them, the dogs become the guests’ private property. Whether dead or alive, the guests can take it with them.

Maid Hongxiu followed closely behind Murong Xue, calmly walking out.

Murong Ye raised his eyebrows and glanced at the bloodied Xu Tianan, who was filled with anger and unwillingness to admit defeat, and hurriedly followed after, “Sister, wait for me!”

In second floor suite of the colosseum sat two men who had watched the entire scene play out in front of them.

“She made the Capital’s playboy so miserable just by casually picking a dog.

This Murong Young Mistress is quite amazing,” the man in tan robes tutted his praise, full of amazement. He glanced toward the man in white robes next to him and said, smiling, “What does your lordship think?”

The man in white robes’ jade-like fingers lightly caressed the white marble wine cup, his eyes lightly lowered, and did not say a word.

The man in tan robes did not mind and continued talking to himself, “Also, the way she had snatched the dagger and that move to cut off the fingers – it’s so smooth and quick that it’s unbelievable. She must have inherited that from the first Marquis. And the rumors in the Capital actually spread that she is a helpless, useless and weak young lady, how hilarious!”

The man in white raised his eyes and looked towards Murong Xue’s dedicate silhouette slowly walking further and further away; his obsidian eyes flashed something incomprehensible.

The colosseum and the Marquis’ Mansion was not far. After walking out of the front doors, Murong Xue did not return to the horse carriage, but walked the small dog and slowly travelled, leisurely admiring the olden beauty of the streets and infrastructure.

Murong Ye followed closely behind her, smiling ingratiatingly, “Sister, how did you know that this small weak dog is so powerful?”

After fighting dogs for so many years, he can be considered to have developed a pair of expert eyes when it comes to examining dogs, but when it came to this small dog, he had looked at it from left to right, top to bottom, and still couldn’t figure out how to tell that it is such a powerful dog.

“Because it is not a normal dog, but a Tibetan mastiff!” Murong Xue calmly explained. Tibetan mastiffs are resolute and are good at attacking; normal dogs are totally not their match.

Tibetan mastiff? What kind of dog is that?

Murong Xue often fought dogs and had developed an understanding of the types of dogs, but it was his first time hearing about Tibetan mastiffs. He had wracked his brain yet he had not been unable to figure out anything about it. However, this did not prevent him from developing a love for this dog, “Sister,

can you give me this Tibetan mastiff? I'll exchange it with 5000 taels, no, 10,000 taels."

Murong Xue turned her head towards Murong Ye only to see him wearing a bamboo-embroidered dark blue robe, dark hair tied up using a marble crown revealing a smooth forehead. His handsome face was slightly innocent, skin white, lips red, and black-marble-like eyes shining; a really beautiful young man.

But when she thought of how this young man is actually famous in the Capital for being a playboy; playing with horses and birds, and not willing to learn, she said, "I don't like money."

Uh, that's right. His sister lives in the Mansion where food, clothes, accommodation and materials have all been taken care of. She also doesn't go out of the Mansion easily, and thus does not have many opportunities to spend. It is quite inappropriate for him to exchange money for the Tibetan mastiff.

"Then what about giving you a few suits of rare clothing and jewelry," Murong Ye said smiling; all girls like pretty clothes and jewelry, and his sister shouldn't be an exception.

Murong Xue continued to undermine his negotiation mercilessly, "Any clothes or jewelry that you can buy, I can too."

Alright. The best clothes come from Yixiang Court and the best jewelry in the Capital comes from Duobao Court. No matter whether it was him shopping, or his sister, they will both be able to buy about the same things.

"Then what will it take for you to give me that Tibetan mastiff?" Murong Ye despondent voice was laced with dejection.

"There are so many dogs in the colosseum, you can buy another one. Why do you want my Tibetan mastiff?" Tibetan mastiffs are fierce and loyal and are very rare. Murong Xue was prepared to bring it back to the Marquis Mansion and use it as a guard dog so that it no longer needed to live a life of fighting in the arena.

"This Tibetan mastiff is so powerful! All the other dogs that I thought was good had been bitten to death by it!" Murong Xue looked towards the mastiff, eyes filled with passion, "If you give it to me, I can use it to battle with the others and win back all the money that it had lost..."

Murong Xue halted suddenly. Murong Ye didn't notice and almost knocked into her. He stumbled a few steps before he got back his balance and asked, puzzled, "What's the matter, Sister?"

Murong Xue didn't answer but instead coldly stared straight ahead.

Murong Xue followed her gaze only to see dozens of servants carrying numerous trunks standing at the front of the Marquis' Mansion. The trunks were made of incense wood, embellished with numerous round gold buttons; dignified yet not losing any of its splendor. One look and one would be able to tell that it was expensive. The items within were naturally more precious.

A middle-aged man in dark blue robes walked out from the crowd towards the Marquis Mansion.

"Seneschal Wang!" Murong Ye softly exclaimed.

Upon hearing the exclamation, the middle-aged man stopped and looked over. Seeing that it was Murong Ye and Murong Xue, he joined his hands together in salute, "Young Marquis, Miss Murong!"

Murong Xue's father was originally the commander of the three armies. He was seriously injured when fighting in the front lines 10 years ago and died from his injuries. When her mother heard of the bad news, she was so depressed that she passed not long after, leaving behind the four-year-old twins. As such, the Marquis is now fourteen-year-old Murong Ye.

Murong Ye hummed calmly and pointed towards the long line of procession that was carrying trunks, and asked, puzzled, "Seneschal Wang, what are you doing?"

Seneschal Wang lightly smiled, "Your Honor, I have been ordered by his highness to bring the bride price and negotiate a day to marry Miss Murong!"

Murong Ye's eyes brightened. His sister was going to get married; that's good news, although, "My sister is to be Prince Jing's wife. Ye Chenyi should personally deliver the bride price. Why did he let you bring the bride price? Also, in accordance to the traditions of the Princess, the bride price should be a 120 trunks, why did you only bring 64? The Prince Jing Household is a Prince's household, and Prince Jing had just delivered war achievements, he should not

be lacking in money, should he?

Chapter 7 – A Thrashing

The Marquis Household is a noble family, not lacking in gold and silver. They don't really care about Prince Jing's bride price, but now, when the bride price is given, not only did Prince Jing not personally come, the amount is much less than what is normal. Prince Jing obviously does not respect his sister. If he accepts the bride price without a word, his sister will definitely become a laughingstock.

Listening to his reproach, Seneschal Wang showed disbelief, "His Highness had already announced to the Capital that he will be marrying Miss Murong as concubine. Your Honor did not know?"

Murong Rong was startled, surprised and angry, "When did this happened?"

"Just at the welcome feast earlier. All the court officials had heard it. Your Honor actually have not heard of it? Did you not attend the feast?" Seneschal Wang softly said teasingly.

Murong Ye gave an uncomfortable light cough. He had not been back to the Mansion for a few days. Although he knew that Ye Yichen had returned to the Capital victorious from the war, he did not know that the welcome feast was today...

"His Highness is forced to follow with this poorer plan to achieve peace between Qingyan and Mobei. Miss Murong has suffered because of it but I hope your Honor can be magnanimous enough to forgive." The Prince's Seneschal bowed deeply and respectfully towards Murong Ye apologetically.

Murong Ye stared at Seneschal Wang, a complicated expression flitted pass his face. It was after a while before he said, "Well, since your Prince does not like my sister, then let's annul the engagement. There's no need to act so falsely and humiliate my sister."

Seneschal Wang froze, a look of surprise appeared. He didn't think that this useless playboy will also suggest annulling the engagement after hearing his sister get demoted to concubine level...

"My sister is the Marquis' Household wife-born daughter. Although both our

parents have passed and she is sick and weakly, but she is still of noble status. Any noble gentleman in the Capital will be willing to take her as his first wife. She has no need to lower her status and become someone's concubine."

Murong Ye's determined and strong voice travelled into his ears. Seneschal Wang smiled faintly. It seems that the Murong family has a strong backbone. It's too bad their opponent is Prince Jing, "Your Honor, his Highness is also in a difficult position..."

Murong Ye waved his hand and interrupted his speech, looking coldly at him, "Ye Yichen is well-versed in the art of war. If he really likes my sister and wishes to marry her as first wife, he would have fought so hard that Mobei would have taken the initiative to surrender without daring to mention a single condition. Demoting my sister as concubine for the sake of peace between both countries? You dare to give me such a cursory excuse? Do you think I am three years old?"

After being idle for so many years, he is still able to evaluate the situation clearly, hitting all the key points – Murong Ye is an exceptionally smart person. However, the marriage to Murong Xue is very important to the Prince. The Prince will definitely not allow Murong Ye to break it off.

"Your Honor, I am only obeying the Prince's orders to give the bride price. Please do not make things difficult for us," Seneschal Wang said softly, giving a look to the servants carrying the trunks.

The servants understood his signal and carried the trunks towards the front door of the Marquis' Mansion; so quickly that the others could not react in time.

By the time Murong Ye realized, the first few servants of the possession had already carried the bride price into the Marquis' Mansion. "What are you all doing?" Murong Ye was angry and agitated, and thundered. He ran quickly into the Mansion and fiercely kicked the trunks over.

The servants carrying the trunks did not expect that and the trunks between them flipped over onto the ground, spilling over the countless gold and silver jewelry, antiques and paintings, and silk satin. Every one of those items were extremely valuable and blinded everyone's eyes.

But Murong Ye did not even notice. He glared angrily at the servant and snapped, "This is the Marquis' Mansion, not your Prince Jing Mansion. You all

dare to force your way in? Who gave you the courage?”

The servant lowered their heads, silent, but whether intentionally, their eyes casted glances to the side!

Murong Ye followed the direction of their glances and saw Seneschal Wang. The fury in his eyes burned like fire. Seneschal Wang is Ye Yichen's closest aide. If he had asked the servants to force their way into the Marquis' Mansion, then it must be based upon Ye Yichen's instruction.

“I had initially thought that Ye Yichen is an upright man and a great hero. Even if we do not become related, we could still be friends. I never imagined that he is such a despicable person. Failing to abide by the marriage agreement, and even worse, using his power to try and force my sister into being his concubine. How very shameless!”

“Although my Household is not as noble as Prince Jing's, but we will not allow others to trample over us wantonly. Seneschal Wang, go back and tell Ye Yichen. The Murong Family no longer cares for him. Even if he wants to take my sister has his first wife now, we will no longer be interested. We want to annul the engagement!”

Even before the marriage, he had insulted his sister such. After marriage, he will definitely be worse. If his sister marries into Prince Jing's Household, it would be like marrying into a den of monsters; she might lose her life at any time.

Everyone looked at him shocked. He dared to call Prince Jing despicable? How audacious!

Murong Ye did not bother to notice and he sharply ordered, “Throw these dirty things out!”

“Yes, sir!” The guards of the Marquis Mansion hurriedly walked up, as though they had just woken up from a dream, picked up Prince Jing's servants and the bride price those servants had brought and mercilessly threw them out.

Murong Ye watched the chaos and cries of Prince Jing's people, his fury gradually calming. He walked up and took Murong Xue's hand, striding towards the Marquis Mansion, “Let's go in, lest these filthy people offend our eyes!”

“Alright!” Murong Xue nodded happily.

Ye Yichen had disregarded her wishes and forcibly tried to give the bride price in order to take her as concubine. She, too, was disgusted and had been ready to harshly teach Seneschal Wang and his gang a lesson. She never expected Murong Ye to action first and mercilessly push back against the arrogance of the people from Prince Jing's Household. He swept Prince Jing's face to the ground and defended her. There's no need for her to make any move; she'll just sit back and enjoy the benefits.

Watching Murong Ye and Murong Xue step into the Mansion and walking further away, Seneschal Wang narrowed his sharp eyes. He had delivered the bride price, but Murong Ye did not accept it; he had completed the Prince's task. However, he did have another thing to notify Murong Ye about, "Your Honor, the Prince will be here three days later to take Miss Murong as concubine..."

'Crack!' A piece of wood flew and hit Seneschal Wang in the mouth, making him swallow his words.

Seneschal Wang turned livid, and coldly looked towards the dedicate figure in front of him. He spat out a mouthful of blood; two white teeth were mixed in with the blood, making it particularly noticeable.

The chaotic crowd froze and looked at each other. Who was so audacious as to slap Seneschal Wang on the mouth?

They quietly looked up only to see Murong Xue silently standing a few meters away on the bluestone road, back-facing them. Her cold voice travelled with the wind into everyone's ears, "Who dares to cause trouble in front of the Marquis Mansion's front door? All guards of the Marquis Mansion, listen to my orders – anyone who tries to force their way into the Mansion, or speak nonsense in front of the Mansion's main doors, chase them out with your swords regardless of their lives."

"Yes, ma'am!" The guards answered, and enthusiastically started chasing away the people from Prince Jing's Household. Chaos in the front of the Mansion ensued.

Murong Ye ignore all that and looked at Murong Xue in surprise, "Sister, where did you learn martial arts from? Just by picking up a piece of wood and throwing it strongly, you had knocked off two of Seneschal Wang teeth. Seneschal Wang is

known for being a martial arts expert, and he didn't even manage to avoid your thrashing. When did you become so powerful?"

Chapter 8 – Teaching the cousin a lesson

“What martial arts? I’ve only seen too many of the guards sparring and picked up a few moves!” Murong Xue causally said, her eyes flashing uncomfortably.

Being reborn is too unbelievable a story. If it had not happened to her, she would definitely not believe either, not to mention Murong Ye who was only fourteen years of age. If she had told him the truth, Murong Ye might think that she had been bewitched. She had better keep that secret to herself.

“Really?” Murong Ye frowned, obviously not believing a single word she had said.

“Of course, why should I lie to you?” Seeing that Murong Ye wanted to further pursue the topic, Murong Ye quickly said, “It’s getting late. I’m going to take the Tibetan mastiff for a bath. It’s so dirty that it is definitely uncomfortable.”

Upon hearing the two words – Tibetan mastiff – he immediately forgot about his suspicions and looked towards the Tibetan mastiff, eyes shining, “Since you are not feeling too well, sister, you shouldn’t work too hard. Leave this type of manual labor to me.”

Murong Xue smiled, “I’m going to ask the maids to wash it, not do it myself, what hard work can there possibly be?”

Murong Ye shook his head disagreeing, “The mastiff’s fur is so matted that you can’t even tell what the original color is. It must have utterly soiled. Those maids in your house are all so skinny, they wouldn’t have enough strength; they probably wouldn’t even be able to wash it out before dark. You had better pass the dog to me and I’ll ask the male servants to wash it clean before giving it back to you.”

Since his sister treated the Tibetan mastiff so preciously, and refused to lend it to him, he’ll establish a good relationship with the dog. And then when his sister doesn’t notice, he’ll take it out on the sly; that would be enough to build his reputation.

“Alright then!” Murong Xue ‘reluctantly’ nodded, and ‘reluctantly’ put the

Tibetan mastiff into Murong Ye arms and carefully instructed him, "It's fur has knotted so tell the servants to be careful when they are washing it. Don't pull on the fur..."

"I know, I know!" Murong Ye nodded his head and quickly walked the dog away; the Tibetan mastiff is a rare and powerful dog and his future God of Wealth. Of course he will instruct the servants to be careful.

After walking for a bit, he halted and turned around to look at Murong Xue. Under her curious gaze, he asked tentatively, "Sister, I didn't ask for your opinion before I decided to annul your engagement. You don't blame me, do you?"

In this year, he had been spending less and less time at home, and had only seen his sister a handful of times. But he knew well that his sister really liked Ye Yichen.

"Of course not," Murong Xue laughed softly and carelessly said, "When Ye Yichen demoted me to concubine during the welcome feast, I had already raised the annulment. His Majesty was not against it and actually ordered Old Prince Jing to come to the Capital to discuss matters regarding the annulment..."

"Really?" Murong Ye's eyes brightened, "You don't like Ye Yi anymore?"

Murong Xue sniffed, "Such a terrible person is not deserving of my affections."

"That's exactly right!" Murong Ye nodded in agreement, "Ye Yichen does have you in his heart and eyes. He is not the best person for you. It is absolutely correct to have taken the initiative to annul the engagement and cleanly break off ties with him!"

"Woof woof woof!" The little Tibetan mastiff saw that the two persons were conversing without a care for anyone else and couldn't help but bark.

Murong Ye looked at it delightfully and said, "Impatient, aren't you? Let's go, I'll bring you to get a bath!"

Watching Murong Ye disappear around the corner, Murong Xue followed the bluestone path and leisurely walked. From far, she heard laughter like tinkling bells. She raised her eyebrows and followed the sound towards the main courtyard.

Stepping into the courtyard, she saw a group of maids and housekeepers standing in front of the west wing. Each of them held a delicate ebony wood box. In the boxes were sapphire hairpins, ruby earrings, jasper bangles and other varieties of delicate jewelry; each one of them extremely valuable.

A young girl in pink skirt was fluttering here and there between the delicate jewelry, wearing this and that. Her smile was brighter than the flowers.

Murong Xue smirked and slowly walked towards them, "What are you all doing?"

Upon hearing the cold voice, the maids and housekeepers turned around and casually bowed, "Young Mistress!"

The girl in pink, Song Qingyan, gave her a glance and carelessly said, "Cousin is back. Grandmother saw that I wearing too plainly so she has decided to gift me some jewelry and is letting me choose."

The Grandmother that she mentioned is not Murong Xue's real grandmother, but her step-grandmother. She had given birth to a pair of brother and sister, Murong Jian and Murong Rou. The original Marquis Murong Yue was given birth to by the original wife.

Song Qingyan is the wife-born eldest daughter of Wu An Marquis' Household and is Murong Rou only daughter. Thus she was extremely pampered by the Marquis' dowager. Everytime she visited to the Mansion, she would dress plainly and when she goes back, she would be well adorned and full of delicate jewelry.

Murong Xue sneered internally and slowly said, "If Grandmother is gifting you things, you should be picking from Grandmother's treasury. Why are you picking from my mother's dowry?"

Song Qingyan froze midway while wearing an earring and frowned. Previously, when she had visited the Mansion, she had always taken jewelry from here and Murong Xue never said anything. Today, she actually mercilessly questioned her, what's wrong with her? "Your mother is my aunt. It's not too much for her to gift me a few pieces of jewelry right?"

"If my mother had personally said that she's giving it to you, that's call gifting. Taking the jewelry without my mother's permission is called thieving and

robbing.

On the last few words, Murong Xue's voice grew heavy and her tone was mercilessly sneering. Song Qingyan reddened and glared at her, "Your mother has been dead for ten years, how am I supposed to speak to her? Murong Xue, enough is enough, don't be too much."

Murong Xue's face darkened and coldly said, "My mother's jewelry is being stolen by others. I've only asked a question and that's considered too much? Then isn't it worse that you as a noble's daughter is stooping to steal others' jewelry?"

"I am not stealing anything," Song Qingyan said fiercely, "I took the key and opened the lock and openly took out the jewelry."

Murong Xue's mouth curled slightly – she was just waiting for her to say that. "Who is the keeper of the treasury keys?"

"It's me!" A thirty-plus year-old old maid stood out, not a single piece of her hair out of place. Her face was clean but gaze was dark; one look and one would be able to tell that her was a sharp woman.

"Somebody, drag her away and hit her a hundred times with the paddles then sell her!" Murong Xue ordered harshly.

The old maid was shocked and shouted in surprise, "Young Mistress, what have I done wrong?" Murong Xue is very gentle and has never been angry at the servants. Why is she so fierce today, and even wants to punish her and sell her?

"When my mother had passed you the keys, it was to ask you to guard the items within the treasury, not giving you the treasury. You did not ask the masters' permission before privately opening the treasury. That's considered 'bullying the masters'. Shouldn't you be sold off?"

The original person was kind, resulting in some opportunistic servants forgetting who was the real owner of this treasury. She doesn't mind helping to remind them.

Song Qingyan's face turned white. The old maid had opened the treasury resulting in Murong Xue ordering the punishment by paddles and being sold off. Murong Xue looks like she's punishing the old maid but in actual is giving her a

slap.

Like 'killing the chicken to warn the monkeys', and giving oblique accusations, she had lost and yet she couldn't find a reason to rebuke. Murong Xue's ploy is really masterful and hateful.

The old maid looked around for help only to see the other maids and housekeepers keeping their heads down, afraid to even breath too loudly for fear of angering Murong Xue.

Since no one dared to help her, she can only save herself. The old maid gritted her teeth and loudly proclaimed, "I wish to inform the Young Mistress that I was obeying the dowager lady's orders to open the treasury..."

Chapter 9 -The battle against the step-grandmother

“Shut up!” Murong Xue slapped Old Maid Qiu’s face, “You dare accuse the dowager lady when you had done wrong? Are you tired of living?!”

Old Maid Qiu’s face immediately formed a bright red five-fingered impression, hot and painful. A dark shadow formed across her eyes and she gnashed her teeth in anger, saying, “Young Mistress, I am really not lying. It really is the dowager lady...”

“Still dare argue?!” Murong Xue slapped her again till she fell to the ground and looking down upon her. She was going to harshly teach her a lesson when a strict voice rang, “What’s the commotion about? What’s going on?”

She had only had a few sentences and help had arrived. How quickly servants in the Marquis Mansion sends messages. However, the maids in front of the west wing are all the dowager

lady’s servants. The only one not serving her is Old Maid Qiu, and even she is a traitor. Of course *that* person would come so quickly.

Murong Xue’s mouth curled into a sneer and leisurely turned around. It was really the dowager lady Du slowly walking over with the support of a maid. Her white hair was tied up high pinned lightly by a dark green jade pin. A dark grey head wrap with bamboo embroidery had been decorated with a piece of emerald, complementing the jade pin, dignified without losing its severity.

Her mouth was tight and she glanced at Old Maid Qiu with the swollen cheeks, frowning tightly, “What’s going on?”

Old Maid Qiu looked at her like she had found her backbone. Eyes bright and tears like broken pearls dripping down, both knees kneeling on the ground and kowtowing till it sounded, she said, “Old Mistress, save me! Young Mistress wants to sell me away!”

Murong Xue raised her eyebrows and casually said, “Old Maid Qiu opened the treasury without permission and had pushed the blame on to Grandmother. By teaching her a lesson, I am helping the Mansion discipline any bad practices, if

not some people will think that since they are more experienced, they can bully young masters and boss around the Mansion.”

“Really?” The Dowager lady’s cold sharp gaze passed over Old Maid Qiu, whose forehead was red and swollen, and fell upon Murong Xue. “But Old Maid Qiu was not lying. I am the one that asked her to open the treasury to retrieve the jewelry. You are teaching the wrong person a lesson.”

For the sake of her precious granddaughter, she had ordered the servants to open her daughter-in-law’s treasury without permission – that wouldn’t sound good. But Du did not come up with excuses to push the blame and even admitted it straightforward. It seems that she really hates Murong Xue.

If the original person had been standing here, she would definitely not be able to raise her head from the harsh scoldings of Du. But she is from a 21st century noble family and definitely wouldn’t bow down to this old piety woman. “Which law in Qingyan states that the step-mother-in-law can use her dead daughter-in-law’s dowry at will?”

A dark shadow flashed across Du’s eyes and she coldly looked at Murong Xue, “When your mother married into the Marquis’ Household, she had belonged to the Household. Her dowry is naturally the Marquis’ Household’s assets. I manage the internal Household and have the authority to touch anything related to the internal Household. My treasury did not have any appropriate accessories, therefore it’s only reasonable to ask Qingyan to pick a few pieces from here.”

“Qingyan’s law clearly states that when the first wife passes on, the dowry is passed on to her children. The things in this treasury is left behind by my mother for me and my brother and has nothing to do with anyone else in the Murong family. As long as my brother and I are still alive for a day, you, step-grandmother, have not right touch it.”

After her parents had died, Du had left Murong Xue in the Ruoxue Court and did not care about her survive. In the few times she had seen her, if it was not to pick on something, then it was to reprimand her. If Du did not treat her like her granddaughter then she does not need to treat Du as her grandmother.

“Now, without my brother’s or my permission, you have violated Qingyan’s law

by opening the treasury and picking my mother's dowry."

"Really?" Du glanced sideways to Murong Xue, her eyes full of disdain. "Well then, step-granddaughter, are you prepared to sue your step-grandmother and send her to jail?"

"The jewelries are still here and not lost. Step-grandmother need not go to court. You only need to beat his bullying and sly slave a hundred paddles and sell her off." Murong Xue said lightly.

Upon hearing that, Du's face darkened. She was ridiculing Murong Xue – didn't Murong Xue understand? She actually followed along and decided Old Maid Qiu's punishment. What a slow idiot!

"What are you waiting for? Didn't you understand the Old Mistress' meaning? Drag Old Maid Qiu down and harshly beat her a hundred paddles, then sell her!" Murong Xue harshly instructed.

"Yes, ma'am!" Two lowly old house maids stepped forward and stuffed a rough piece of cloth into Old Maid Qiu's mouth and dragged her out so quickly that others couldn't respond in time.

Sounds from the paddle and Old Maid Qiu's painful wails rang out. The maids and housekeepers looked at each other silently – the Young Mistress had lost her temper and they didn't want to be implicated.

The Dowager lady's face so scarily dark and she started at Murong Xue, haze forming beneath her eyes.

Murong Xue pretended her didn't see and quietly looked towards those ebony boxes which contained fine jewelry, "Close the boxes and bring them back to the treasury."

"Yes, yes, yes!" The maids answered. Carrying the boxes, they hurriedly ran back to the store, afraid that if they were to walk too slowly, Murong Xue will punish them and they would end up in a pathetic situation similar to Old Maid Qiu.

Looking at the empty courtyard, Song Qingyan paled and clenched her hands tightly under her sleeves – she had almost got the sapphire pin and ruby earrings, all of which she loved. Now it's all gone, how hateful!

“It’s not the first time Cousin Qingyan has taken jewelry from here, is it?”

Hearing the cold voice, Song Qingyan froze and looked cautiously at Murong Xue, “What do you mean?”

Murong Xue laughed softly, “You don’t need to be flustered. I am not going to teach you a lesson but only to ask that you return all the jewelry which you had taken.”

Song Qingyan secretly sighed in relief. She scared her – if Murong Xue is not thinking of teaching her lesson than that’s good. However, the jewelry she had taken are all carefully chosen and each one of them precious. She liked them very much and couldn’t bear to return them to Murong Xue. Furthermore, she had been wearing those jewelries for so long, she should be hers already. “You are my cousin. Just treat those few jewelries as presents that you have given to me. Don’t you think it’s too petty to ask her for them?”

Murong Xue glanced at her and casually said, “Cousin, you come to the Mansion at least thrice a month. Each time you would take away two to three hair pins, earrings, necklaces, jade bangles, finger sets and many other accessories. In these two years, you have not taken only a few pieces of jewelry but more than a hundred pieces, enough to fill 3 trunks!”

Song Qingyan did not care, “So what? Your mother had so much dowry. You are lacking in these hundred pieces of jewelry.

Murong Xue sneered. After snatching away others’ jewelry, she can still be so righteous about it. How shameless! “When my aunt married, she also brought with her ten miles of dowry. She definitely does not lack in jewelry. How about this – return my mother’s dowry and give me another 2 or 3 trunks of delicate jewelry so that I can also enjoy my aunt’s generosity.”

“My mother’s jewelry is mine. How can I give it to you?” Song Qingyan exclaimed. Immediately after, she realized that she had been fooled and was just going to explain further when Murong Xue said first, “My mother’s jewelry was also left for me, how can it be in your hands? I want to see those jewelries before dark, if not, we’ll see in court!”

Chapter 10 – Naming the Tibetan mastiff

Relationship Diagram

“Because of such a petty matter you want to take it to court. Do you think that the Marquis’ Household has too good a reputation or do you think that you have not lost enough face?” The Dowager lady coldly looked at Murong Xue and harshly reprimanded.

Do not air the family’s dirty laundry. When other families’ have these type of scandals, they will try all sorts of ways to cover it up and hide it. This Murong Xue is great – as though she can’t wait to announce to the whole Capital. She doesn’t know what’s for her.

“It is because you stole my mother’s dowry, that’s why I am taking it to court. Even if it will lose face, it is your faces that are lost. Don’t forgot, our relationship is very sensitive.” Murong Xue leisurely said, faintly smiling.

The Dowager lady’s shrewd eyes narrowed. Muong Xue and Murong Y’s parents died when they were young, and she was not their directly related grandmother. Her youthful son and daughter are also not exactly Murong Xue and Murong Ye’s uncle and aunt. If Murong Xue sues her and her children for conspiring to take their private assets, outsider will definitely believe them.

“Qingyan, go home and bring back all the jewelry you have taken.” The dowry in the treasury are all valuable items and she had been eyeing them for a long time and had been prepared to split them evenly between her Jianer and Rouer. However, these things have to be done quietly and can definitely not let outsiders know about it.

“Grandmother!” Song Qingyan looked at Du, teary. Those jewelries were very dedicated and very beautiful and she liked him very much. She didn’t want to return even a single item. Grandmother can’t help her fight for it?

“What now? You don’t listen to me anymore? Quickly go back and take the jewelry.” Du ‘s face darkened. Returning the jewelry now is to pacify Murong Xue

and so that she will not pursue this issue. When Murong Xue lets down her guard, she will slowly scheme and swallow all the dowry in that entire treasury.

Looking at her strict expression, Song Qingyan froze and pitifulness accumulated in her eyes. Grandmother actually reprimanded her because of Muong Xue, how hateful!

“Humph!” Song Qingyan stamped her feet and ran out wiping her tears.

“My mother’s dowry is registered with the bureau. Any jewelry lost will be written on the list. I hope that when Cousin Qingyan returns the items, they are all real and not mixed in with fake items to hoodwink me.”

The cold caution rang out and Song Qingyan paused and turned towards Murong Xue, gritting her teeth, “Don’t worry cousin. Yan’er is also the first-wife’s daughter of the Marquis’ Mansion. I have countless jewelry; it is not worth it to steal such a bit.”

“That’s great then!” Muong Xue casually replied, obviously not believing her.

Song Qingyan choked, anger stuck in her chest, unable to let out. She hatefully glared at Murong Xue and furiously walked out. She really had originally planned to casually return 2 boxes of jewelry to hoodwink Murong Xue. She didn’t expect that Murong Xue would uncover her ploy and now she must return the real and beautiful jewelry. How very hateful!

A young maid walked quickly into the main courtyard and lowly muttered something in the Dowager lady’s ear.

Her face immediately darkened and sharp gaze shot towards Murong Xue like arrows, “You want to annul your engagement with Prince Jing?”

“Yes that’s right.” Murong Xue nodded, “Ye Yichen brought back his sweetheart and so that he is able to live a perfect live with his sweetheart, he had demoted me to concubine. The public will point fingers if the Marquis’ Household’s first-wife’s daughter become a concubine. For the reputation of the Household, I suggested annulling the engagement.”

“Marriage is determined by the parents and matchmaker. How could you break off the engagement without the elder’s permission?” Du reprimanded harshly.

Murong Xue smiled faintly at her, “The elder in your words refers to yourself, step-grandmother?”

Du’s eyes turned cold, “Your parents have both passed on. Even though I am not your blood-related grandmother, I am still your step-grandmother and can be justified as your elder. I am concerned about your marriage, is that wrong?”

Murong Xue glanced at her and leisurely said, “The engagement between me and Prince Jing was set by my father and old Prince Jing without passing through the internal household’s permission. As long as a male elder agrees, the engagement can be annulled, and need not go through step-grandmother’s permission.”

“Your second uncle...”

“My second uncle is in Jingzhou and need more than a month to return. This matter is extremely urgent and there is no time to ask for this permission. My older brother is the current Marquis. Older brothers are like fathers. He has already agreed to the annulment. Step-grandmother no longer need to worry about this matter.” Murong Xue smiled cheerfully at her, eyes flashing meaningfully.

After Murong Ye died in battle, Du had happily thought that the noble position will fall on Murong Jian. But the Emperor had issued an edict letting only four-year-old Murong Ye inherit the title and transferred Murong Jian to faraway Jingzhou. Till today, he hasn’t been called back. This is the real reason why Du hates the brother and sister.

Du’s face was scarily dark. Demoting Murong Xue as concubine will definitely affect the Marquis Household’s reputation but in comparison to the Household’s reputation, she is more than happy to see Murong Xue run out of luck. After all, Murong Xue is Murong Yue’s daughter and has not much to do with her. She could always draw the line. It’s all Murong Ye, that brainless playboy, fault. He

actually was convinced by Murong Xue and agreed to annul the engagement. How hateful!

“Woof woof!” A flash of white sped in and jumped into Murong Xue’s arms.

Murong Xue looked down only to see a snow white little dog lying in her arms, wet eyes looking at her, that adorable look melting hearts.

This is the Tibetan mastiff that killed five large dogs? Murong Xue couldn’t believe her eyes.

“Mastiff, little Tibetan mastiff!” Murong Ye breathlessly ran over only to see it cuddled in Murong Xue’s arms acting all cute. He was immediately angered, “I asked people to give you a bath and brush your fur, serving you comfortably. You speedily ran here without a word of thanks? Ungrateful little thing!”

“It’s still small and ignorant. Don’t fuss over it anymore.” Murong Xue rubbed the Tibetan mastiff’s little head and happily said, “Let’s give it a name. It’s not nice to keep calling it Tibetan mastiff.”

Murong Ye brightened. His best at giving dogs names. “It’s awesome at fighting. Why don’t we call it General Victory.”

Murong Xue bright face turned black, “Now that it’s with me, it will not go to the colosseum anymore. Don’t give it any names relating to fights. Think of a normal one.”

He had fought dogs in the colosseum for many years. All the names he had given were somewhat related to fighting. He had really never picked a normal name before.

Murong Ye frowned. Seeing both of them getting along well, he casually suggested, “Sister, since you like this Tibetan mastiff so much, how don’t you call it Precious?”

“Precious?” Murong Xue raised her eyebrows, “Seems weird!”

“Then how about Baby?” Murong Ye softly suggested. Seeing her gradually darkening face, he quickly changed, “Called it Beibei?”

“Beibei? That’s alright, let’s call it Beibei then.” Murong Ye’s standard of picking names is only as such and Murong Xue couldn’t think of an especially good name either, so they settled on Beibei.

Looking at the happily talking Murong Xue and Murong Ye, Du’s face darkened. Two juniors conversing as though there’s no one else and entirely ignoring her presence – are they purposely treating her as transparent or prepared to show her off?

Her lips moved and she was just prepared to teach them a lesson when Murong Xue spoke up first, “Since Cousin Yan will need at least two hours before she can return the jewelry, Hong Qiu, lock the treasury first and bring the key over.”

“Yes, ma’am!” Hong Qiu curtsied and locked the treasury door before putting the key in Murong Xue’s hands.

Murong Xue is planned to personally oversee the treasury!

Du’s eyes flashed and she loudly said, “Nobles in the Capital always passes the key to their personal maids to manage. As a noble lady, you actually want to personally manage these material goods. Are you not afraid of becoming a laughingstock?”

“I don’t have any old maids that I can trust so I can only personally keep the key. When I find someone I can trust, I will naturally pass the key to her. Grandmother need not worry.” Murong Xue slowly said, rebuking her words.

Du choked and a dark haze flashed beneath her eyes. If the treasury key is in Murong Xue’s hands, she wouldn’t be able to find a chance to swallow the dowry within at all. “Ye’er, persuade your sister. An unmarried lady worried all day about her dowry? Is she not afraid of others laughing at her?”

Murong Ye frowned and quietly said, “Grandmother, my sister is already fourteen years of age and will soon marry. There is nothing wrong in learning how to manage her dowry and manging the matters of the internal household.”

“You... you...!” Du was furious and her bitter cold gaze swept from Murong Ye

to Murong Xue and from Murong Xue to Murong Ye. She wanted to say something but ultimately did not speak it. She loudly tutted and without a glance backwards, turned and walked out.

Looking at her retreating back, Murong Ye was confused, “Did I say something wrong?”

“Nothing. Step-grandmother is happy that you have matured!” Murong Xue smiled brightly and comforted him. Her eyes were slightly cold – Du is probably resenting that they had cut off her fortune. Du had her eyes on the dowry and will definitely think of a million ways to get it! However, she is not afraid of them; she will just deal with it as it comes.

Chapter 11-Paying respects to the dead on the day of marriage

Relationship Diagram

Prince Jing Mansion

Xu Tianyou looked at the pile of expensive ebony trunks in the courtyard and raised his eyebrows – Murong Xue actually refused and returned the bride's price, sweeping Prince Jing's face to the ground. How arrogant!

His cold gaze swept towards the servants who were carrying the trunks and saw their bruised faces. He didn't understand and asked, "You've only carried the bride's price to the Marquis' Mansion. How is it that you all are injured?"

"Answering your question Mr Xu, Murong Young Mistress was angry that the Prince is forcing the marriage and ordered the guards of Mansion to chase us away. We couldn't avoid in time and were injured." The servant quietly said respectfully.

Xu Tianyou narrowed his sharp eyes, "Is it Murong Xue that personally ordered that?"

"Yes, sir." The servant nodded his head, paused and then carefully said, "Seneschal Wang also had 2 teeth knocked out by Murong Xue.

"Really?" Xu Tianyou looked towards Seneschal Wang in surprise only to see him tighten his lip without a word. His sullen face showing that the servant was telling the truth.

Seneschal Wang had been taking care of Prince Jing since young and is deeply trusted by Prince Jing. Prince Jing's advisors and staff and even friends are all respectful towards Seneschal Wang. Murong Xue actually dared to hit him? How arrogant and stupid! However, "Murong Xue is well-known for being gentle. How is it that she's suddenly become so aggressive? Unless she's trying to attract his Highness' attention?"

"I don't think so!" Ye Yichen walked out of the study, wearing loose purple long robes, long and elegant. His gold and purple crown reflecting brightly under the

bright sunlight, complementing his unbelievably handsome appearance, “If Murong Xue is trying to attract my attention, she only needs to do things related to me. There wouldn’t be a need to cut off all five of your brother’s fingers.”

“What? Murong Xue cut off Tianan’s fingers!” Xu Tianyou was shocked and his face turned scarily black, “When did this happen?”

“Not long after the welcome feast ended, Murong Xue gambled with your brother in the coliseum. Your brother lost.” Ye Yichen lightly described.

Xu Tianyou gritted his teeth in anger after hearing about it. Fighting in animals in the coliseum usually uses money and precious items, or silk cloth, or antiques and paintings as stakes. Murong Xue actually gambled on fingers and really chopped them off making Tianan handicapped. What a bully! “Your Highness, Murong Xue is only pretending to be kind and gentle. The real her is arrogant and ruthless. This type of person will not be a good match.”

“I know. I have never thought of letting her be first wife,” Ye Yichen eyes were cold.

Upon hearing that, the shadows under Xu Tianyou’s eyes half dissipated. The Prince likes Princess Yuyan; he was being overly worried. “Then what should we do about the wedding three days later?”

“No need to make it big but definitely need to make sure that everyone knows. Invite all court officials and their families to the wedding celebrations and prepare a pink small sedan chair to carry her in...” Ye Yichen instructed in an orderly fashion.

Xu Tianyou eyes turned brighter as he heard more and more. The Prince’s concubine can sit on a four-person wedding sedan chair into the Mansion. The Prince actually is giving her a pink small sedan chair – obviously he wants to humiliate her, bully her. That’s a real concubine and is the lowest of rank in the Prince’s Mansion.

Murong Xue is so arrogant and refuses to be concubine. The Prince then demotes her to the lowest of concubines and step her into the mud, making her lost face in front of the all the court officials and suffer the disdain of the public. Let’s see how arrogant she can be then!

Murong Xue doesn't know her abilities and time and again provoked Prince Jing. This is her best outcome. He can't wait to see Murong Xue lowly like dirt and pathetic look.

The sun was bright, birds chirping and flowers blooming.

Murong Xue washed up and ate breakfast before slowly walking out of Ruoxue Court.

These three days, she had been staying in the treasury store in the main courtyard auditing her mother's dowry. She had only finished doing so at 9pm last night. Including the three and a half trunks of jewelries, there was not an item missing; she can finally rest and breathe some fresh air.

Opening the door, she saw Murong Ye standing just outside pacing back and forth, his handsome with a slightly immature air was filled with worry. "Brother, what has happened?"

Murong Ye halted and looked at her confused before he sighed heavily, "Today is the day Ye Yichen is preparing to take you as his concubine. How are you not anxious?"

"I am not going to enter Prince Jing's Household as concubine, what is there to be anxious about? Can he force me to get married?" Murong Xue was not flustered and walked passed Murong Ye leisurely.

Murong Ye followed behind her closely. His eyes like black jade flashed an uncommon severity, "Ye Yichen has achieved a lot and holds the reins to the army. Even the Emperor's princes give way to him. He could really force the marriage."

Murong Xue tutted lightly, "Even if he dares to force me to marry, we have to give him a chance before he can success. If we are not in the Marquis' Mansion, even if he carries the marriage sedan chair, he will have to return empty-handed."

Murong Ye was stunned and stared closely at Murong Xue. She was wearing a dress that was white. Her black hair was only tied up loosely using a white jade pin. She wasn't wearing earrings or jade bangles. The light breeze picked up the hems of her dress making her look like a fairy who was going to ride the wind.

“Sister, why are you dressed like that?”

Murong Xue laughed lightly, “I am going to the ancestral cemetery to pray to our parents and grandfather. Of course I have wear simply.”

“Ah!” Murong Ye only then realized that Hongxiu and Anxiang were each holding a basket filled with paper tael, joss sticks and other items needed for prayers.

“Do you want to come along?” Murong Xue softly asked.

“Yes, yes!” Murong Ye nodded his head heavily. Ye Yichen is a powerful man. He had also sent out invitations to everyone, inviting all court officials and their family to attend his concubinage feast. Even if he cannot marry his sister, he will definitely not give up easily!

He is young and without much talent, and wouldn't be able to oppose Ye Yichen. But before nightfall, he will stay by his sister's side and protect her.

Murong family's ancestral cemetery was located in the countryside and off the main road. After Murong Xue and Murong Ye got off the carriage along the side of the main road, they walked to the ancestral cemetery.

Lighting the joss sticks and putting it in front of the combined tomb of Murong Yue and wife, Murong Xue started to burn the paper money. In life they were together, in death they lay together; this couple is really loving. She can only hope that in their next life they will lead a good one, in peace and happiness for their whole life.

Murong Ye took the other basket to the Old Marquis' tombstone and set up the joss sticks and prayer offerings. In the past, he will only come here to give offerings during festivals or the new year. This is really the first he has come here without no purpose to provide offerings and burn paper money...

“Ping ping ping ping!” Faint fighting sounds travelled into their ears and interrupted Murong Ye's thoughts. He frowned, puzzled, and looked towards the source, “What happened?”

To protect his sister, he had brought twenty over guards when they left the Mansion and had asked that they guard the surrounding area. It was only just peaceful and quiet. Why has fighting suddenly start? The countryside of the

Capital always has officers patrolling. He has never heard of any bandits and robbers.

“Nothing!” Following the cold answer, a young man strode out of the woods. He was wearing a formal red wedding clothes; his posture tall like an oak tree, handsome face cool like ice, sharp eyes like the stars. It was Prince Jing – Ye Yichen!

Chapter 12 – Prince Jing wants to force the marriage

Relationship Diagram

Murong Xue rises her eyebrows, no wonder the Mansion's guards did not manage to give a warning when the enemy has come – they had met Ye Yichen.

Ye Yichen's people are all blood-soaked soldiers who have climbed out from the dead. They were good at martial arts and every move was filled with wrath. They would be able to easily defeat the Mansion guards who have not been out of the Capital such that other than fighting for their lives, the guards could not manage any other.

A flash of dark blue stood in front of her eyes – it was Murong Ye blocking in front of her, using his thin and weak body closely protecting her. Black jade like eyes cautiously looked at Ye Yichen, "What are you here for?"

"To welcome my concubine!" Ye Yichen coldly answered. His sharp gaze swept over Murong Ye and looked towards Murong Xue who was standing behind.

He knew that Murong Xue will not docilely get onto the wedding sedan. He had thought of all the ways of dealing with her. No matter how difficult Murong Xue will be, he would be able to easily marry her into the Prince Jing Household.

But he never imagined that she wear a plain white dress and run to the cemetery to pray to the dead on their wedding day!

Is she not happy with her status as concubine, or is she purposely trying to bring bad luck to their wedding?

Murong Ye didn't know what Ye Yichen was thinking. He glared at him and said word-by-word, "My sister will never be anyone's concubine. If you want to marry my sister, then use an 8-person sedan chair to carry her into the Prince Jing Mansion as first wife. If you are unable to do so, then break off the engagement!"

Ye Yichen glanced at him, “Murong Xue and my marriage is none of your business!”

That look of contempt and casual tone showed that he totally did not think much of Murong Ye.

Murong Ye’s handsome face reddened and he thundered, “I am her older brother – her older brother from the same mother. Her issues are mine. Why do I not have any right to meddle?”

Ye Yichen smiled at him disdainfully. He didn’t care to waste his breath with idiots!

He lightly treaded and move towards Murong Ye step by step, “Move away!”

Ye Yichen was a battle worn veteran and from his bone emitted an aura of decisive ruthlessness, making anyone afraid. But he was also a scholar – the refined aura combined with his sharp stance made people less afraid of him.

Now, Murong Ye overconfidently challenged him caused him to rage internally. The iron-blood like powerful aura mercilessly pressed on. Even if army generals were here, they would be stunned and afraid, not the least Murong Ye.

He also couldn’t breathe properly and both of his legs was trembling. His body was also frozen into a block but he stubbornly refused to give in, gritting his teeth and saying word-by-word, “No way! Unless I am dead, I won’t allow you to forcefully marry my sister!”

Ye Yichen heard and contempt flashed across his eyes. He wants to die? I’ll grant his wish!

Seeing Ye Yichen clench his fingers and was going to lash out, Murong Xue eyes flashed and she raised her arm to pulled Murong Ye behind her, coldly looking towards him, “Prince Jing and Princess Yuyan are in love with each other. I had also suggested breaking off the engagement and letting both of you be. Why do you insist on taking me as concubine?”

“You are Uncle Yue’s daughter and you are weak and sickly. I respect Uncle Yue and am prepared to take you into the Household as that I can more conveniently take care of you!” Ye Yichen lightly said, his tone casual.

Murong Xue sneered internally, her eyes full of ridicule, "If your Highness' definition of taking care is by taking me as concubine, and letting me face the hate, disdain and the people's ridicule and humiliation, then forget it."

"I'd rather not marry for the rest of my life, and die old in the Marquis Mansion. At least I am still the noble Young Mistress of the Marquis Household and can be buried in the Murong family ancestral cemetery when I am buried. If I enter Prince Jing's Household, when I am live, I am the lowly concubine, humiliated by everyone, after I die, I am so lowly that I do not even have the right to be buried in the ancestral cemetery."

Heartlessly demoting her, stamping on her, and he still wants to gain the reputation of being righteous and caring? How utterly shameless! Of course, all the court officials and the citizens in the Capital will not laugh at Ye Yichen and definitely will not reprimand him, because he is the always victorious God of War, holding the reins of the armies and deeply entrusted by the Emperor. Talk about him behind his back? Not unless they don't want to continue living.

Watching her furious like an angry cat, Ye Yichen's eyes flashed something, and he amazingly resisted his temper, "Yuyan is caring and kind and innocent. As first wife, she will take care of you and will definitely not bully you. She will definitely not let the servants humiliate you. You will enjoy the same benefits as the first wife and after you die, I will instruct that you will have to be properly buried into the ancestral cemetery..."

"Really?" Murong Xue smirked.

Qin Yuyan is the Princess of Mobei and had lived in the palace for over ten years experiencing it. Even if she had not actually used those inner palace's shameless and dirty methods, she would have definitely seen them. After a long while in that environment, she is definitely not innocent. Caring and kind? Innocent? He thinks that she's blind and cannot see that?

Ye Yichen's sweet talk is very tempting. Pity, she had heard countless of such pledges in modern television that she has already developed immunity towards such sweet talk.

“Of course, Yuyan cares a lot about you. When I left the Mansion, she had kept telling me to quickly marry you so that you both can be good sisters.” Ye Yichen’s deep voice said in all seriousness.

But Murong Xue laughed internally. As a woman, she knew clearly that if a woman loved a man, she will wish that that man’s whole heart is on her, and will not spare a single glance at other women.

Qin Yuyan is a noble and arrogant lady. Even if she is used to men having multiple wives, she will still definitely hope that in Ye Yichen’s eyes and heart, he only sees her and is unable to store other women!

Ye Yichen promised that her status will only be just below her first wife status, and marry first into the Household, and he thinks that she will happily hope that I will marry in? You can’t even get that lie pass a ghost!

“Does your Highness know that being together refers to a man and a woman really loving each other such that they are unable to have a third person? There should be 2 reasons why Princess Yuyan encouraged you to take a concubine. First, she is jealous and wants to test your attitude. Second, she doesn’t love you so she is able to open up her heart and not care if you take a concubine.”

“Nonsense!” Ye Yichen’s face turned scarily black and coldly stared at her, “Murong Xue, know your status and don’t provoke the relationship between Yuyan and I!”

Murong Xue tutted, “I am not interested in provoking your relationship. If you want to know whether I am right, you only need to go back to the Mansion and test Qin Yuyan!”

“I will return to the Mansion, but you have to come with me!” Ye Yichen looked at Murong Xue, his eyes flashing darkly.

“Ye Yichen, my father, my mother and my grandfather’s graves are all here. Today, in front of them, I will state clearly you – I, Murong Xue of the Marquis’ Mansion, is able to take care of myself and do not need you hypocrite!”

The cold voice passed through eardrums and hit directly at his heart. Ye Yichen’s handsome face turned black till it could almost drip ink, and his eyes

colored with darkness. She dared to sneer that he is a hypocrite? How audacious!

He moved like a light cloud and suddenly stood in front of Murong Xue and reached out to grab her...

Chapter 13 – Murong Xue battles Prince Jing

Relationship Diagram

Catch me? He wishes! .

Murong Xue lightly sneered, tapping her toes lightly, her delicate silhouette moved backwards two steps in a flash. The wind carried her hair and brushed the tips of Ye Yichen's fingers, barely missing his clutches.

Ye Yichen looked at his empty hands, his eyes darkened – after learning martial arts, be it alive or dead, if he wanted to catch it, he would be able to catch it in his hands. But Murong Xue actually escaped his clutches. What is happening?

“Your highness, the hour is almost over!” A careful reminder came from behind him. Ye Yichen's confused look immediately turned clear and his handsome face returned to the usual coldness. He coldly replied, “I know!”

Raising his head and looking towards Murong Xue, his eyes flashed, “Murong Xue, return with me to my Mansion immediately. I can overlook the wrong words and actions you just did!

Upon saying that, two servants carried over a small sedan chair. Its pink roof and curtains formed a halo of warm light, hazy and aesthetically pleasing!

But Murong Xue's eyes filled with derision – a pink small sedan, used only for marrying concubines!

Three days ago, she had thrown out Ye Yichen's bride price. Three days later, Ye Yichen didn't even bother with marriage formalities, didn't register with the authorities, and didn't even send a welcome party. A marriage sedan – he directly used a pink sedan chair to bring her into the Prince Jing Mansion as the lowest of concubines, saving on the bride price and humiliating her, completing stepping over her!

No wonder he's the God of War. He's always thinking about revenging on

people who have gone against him.

She is the wife-born lady of the Marquis' Mansion. In front of all the court officials and the Capital, by sitting this concubine pink sedan chair, being carried into the Mansion from the side door or even the backdoor, she will definitely be looked down upon, disdained and laughed at, becoming a side-joke at dinners and even pointed at till she is unable to look straight.

This is what Ye Yichen called taking care? More like he thinks that he is not ill enough, and not dying fast enough, and is prepared to help her towards death!

Murong Xue curled her lips, and lightly sneered, "What if I say no?"

Ye Yichen had been observing Murong Xue. When she saw the pink small sedan chair, her calm eyes stirred up a storm and then immediately returned to calmness. Her rejection made him frustrated and he blurted, "Then don't blame me for not being courteous!"

Murong Xue tutted disdainfully, "When has your Highness been courteous to me?" Since Ye Yichen returned to the Capital, he had given her if not humiliation then insult, not a bit of respect, least to say courtesy!

"Murong Xue!" Ye Yichen's face darkened and his cold voice revealed him gritted his teeth in anger. He had patiently explained to her so much, but she didn't reveal any happiness and didn't even have a change of heart – only to reply to him a heartless rejection! How overconfident!

If she doesn't accept his kindness, there is naturally no need for him to be courteous!

Ye Yichen's eyes filled with cold hostility and his clenched fingers abruptly opened. Heavy internal strength gathered in his palm forming an unseen deadly rage dispersing into the air, bringing fear into people.

Murong Xue narrowed her eyes. The original person was a weak and delicate lady without any internal strength. Although she is good at fighting techniques, but without the help of internal strength, she definitely cannot go up against Ye Yichen!

Wind rushed towards her. It was Ye Yichen making his move. Her eyes flashed

and she was just about to avoid him when she saw Murong Ye pounce in front of Ye Yichen and held his right wrist tightly, shouting, “Sister, go quickly!”

His move blocked, Ye Yichen’s face darkened till it was scary and he used the back of his palm to hit Murong Ye’s chest.

Murong Ye did not avoid in time and was hit to the ground. But without even thinking, he stretched out his arm against to tightly hug Ye Yichen’s leg!

Looking at his pale face, Murong Xue’s eyes flashed a complex look, “Brother!” Although Muong Ye is an incompetent playboy, but when it came to his sister, he gave a hundred percent of his care!

“I’m ok!” Murong Ye looked up towards Murong Xue and forced a smile – it was worse than a look of crying. “I am a Marquis, Ye Yichen will not dare to kill me. Quickly run and find a safe place to hide. After today it’ll be fine!”

Ye Yichen returned victorious and is watched by the Capital. Since he went all out to take her as concubine, he definitely did not cover up his movements and there should be a lot of people in the Capital that knew he came to the Murong ancestral cemetery to ‘welcome’ the marriage!

If he killed Murong Ye here, then his position as Prince Jing will be at its end.

“Take care, brother!” Murong Xue solemnly said and without a look back, turned and ran – Ye Yichen had come to ancestral cemetery for her. If he knew that she has gone, Ye Yichen will not stay any longer and Murong Ye will be safe!

Seeing Murong Xue run further and further, and Ye Yichen’s leg was like bound to a rock, unable to move for a bit, a darkness formed in his eyes and he harshly kicked Murong Ye, “Scram!”

A sharp pain passed through his chest and immediately dispersed to his extremities. Murong Ye cried out in pain and his arm unwilling gave way. His entire being rolled into the bushes, his handsome face pale, and whole body so painful that he burst out in cold sweat!

Ye Yichen ignored his plight and strode towards Murong Xue, chasing.

Hongxiu and Anxiang looked at each other and rushed forward, prepared to stop him!

Ye Yichen, expressionless, flicked his finger and two bouts of internal strength lashed out and mercilessly hit Hong Xue and Anxing such that they flew out 6, 7 meters out and heavily knocked against a tree branch before falling to the ground. Both were concussed and despite several tries, could not get up.

Ye Yichen didn't even bother looking at him before he walked passed them and gave chase towards the direction Murong Xue had disappeared to.

Murong Xue left the cemetery and blindly ran in the tall grass. After god know how long, a cliff appeared in front of her. The cliff was very steep and not scalable. At the bottom of the cliff, tens of meters down, were rapids with an unknown destination. The opposite cliff was tens of meters away and could not be crossed!

Murong Xue's eyes hardened and she was just prepared to run back when she saw Ye Yichen leisurely emerged from the bushes. His purple gold crown and red wedding robes not even a bit messed up. Even in the bushes, he was a look of leisure. He calmly looked at her, and his eyes flashed an unexplainable brightness, like he had chased a prey of interest. He happily said, "Why have you stopped running?"

"There's no road anymore!" Murong Xue snapped. The original person's body was sickly and even when paying her respects to the ancestors, she had only explored the area around the cemetery and had never gone far before. She didn't know the way and had ran flustered onto this dead-end.

"In front of you is a cliff, at the back of you are your pursuers, what are you prepared to do?" Ye Yichen asked lowly, moving step by step towards Murong Xue.

"Neither because I don't want to jump the cliff nor do I want to be a concubine!" Murong Xue lightly smiled like a hundred flowers blossoming.

The bright smile looked strange in Ye Yichen's eyes and he had a bad feeling.

Chapter 14 – The First Meeting with Lord Ouyang

Relationship Diagram

A white light flashed in front of his eyes and a sharp aura of the sword with limitless intention to kill mercilessly came towards him!

Ye Yichen narrowed his eyes and quickly turned sideways to avoid the killing move. He raised his head only to see Murong Xue's mouth curled into a cold smile. She was holding a long sword that flashed cold light. She waved the sword into a stance and lurched towards him again; her pale-colored ribbon at her waist moved with the wind like a gracefully dancing butterfly.

She knows martial arts!

Ye Yichen's eyes flashed a look of surprise and then disappeared. His mouth curled into a sneer – rumors are merely what people spread and guess and he actually believed it. How amusing. The gentle person that everyone speaks about are all nonsense and invented. This character is the real her, hidden in the Mansion and not reveal to anyone else.

A strange feeling formed in his heart but was suppressed quickly.

He looked at Murong Xue, gaze deep – after interacting with her for long, even with his good sight, he didn't not manage to spot the soft sword hidden at her waist. Her disguise is astonishing.

However, ladies love to accessorize around the waist. Even if anyone spots something abnormal at her waist, they would think that it is just a unique accessory and will not link her sickly constitution to the killing weapon.

“You want to kill me!” Ye Yichen flicked his finger to push away Murong Xue soft sword, coldly looking at her.

“You deserve it. Who asks you to go too far in your bullying!” Murong Xue coldly replied, the long sword in her hand pierced towards Ye Yichen's chest.

Ye Yichen flicked his fingers to wave away the sword, a complex look forming beneath this eyes. He is familiar with the roads near the Capital. Since Murong

Xue had ran to the cliff, not only is it because she is not familiar with the roads, he had also forced her to it. He had assumed that her resistance and rebellion against him is because of her Mistress of the Marquis' Household position and ego. If he forced her to a dead-end, she will give in and quietly go back to Prince Jing Mansion as his concubine!

After all, everyone is afraid of death. Facing death, and given to option to be the concubine of Prince Jing's Household, enjoying the wealth and prosperity that everyone envies, peacefully living her life will be such a beautiful and good thing.

But when Murong Xue stood in front of the cliff, she did not, like he had envisioned, give into him, and beg him, but had drawn out her sword and mercilessly attacked him...

She would rather be a murderer than his concubine.

“Swish, swish, swish!” Three cold lights flashed and Ye Yichen's red wedding robes had three only cuts. The edge of the robes had even been cut off and it flew into the air, leisurely circling before floating to the ground. The red, brighter than blood, signifies immense taunting.

Ye Yichen looks at the damaged wedding robes, his face scarily black. After learning martial arts, very few people can get near him, least to say injure him. He had only used half his skill just now and was distracted by his thoughts, allowing Murong Xue to audaciously slash his clothes!

What a overconfident little girl, taking advantage of his courtesy and becoming increasingly audacious. He must harshly teach her a lesson and let her know that her little life has always been in his hands! If he let her live, then she lives, if he wants her dead, then she must die!

Lightly clenched hands suddenly opened and inner strength accumulated to form an invisible knife, harshly hitting towards Murong Xue.

The strong and dense murderous aura swept towards her with all intents to destroy everything. Murong Xue eye's formed a rare seriousness – this is inner strength? The attack power is definitely extraordinary. However, it is also not so easy to kill her!

Murong Xue clenched her soft sword tightly and welcomed the invisible knife with flashes of silver. “Dang, dang, dang” rang out and the sharp knife was twisted into nothing. Even the smallest threat was removed.

Looking at a woundless Murong Xue, Ye Yichen’s sharp eyes narrowed. Without any inner strength help, and only using the sword, she had disseminated his inner strength. What a good move! Is this the Murong family swordsmanship? It deserved this reputation! How rare for Murong Xue to reveal the amazing swordsmanship of Murong family. Well then he will give it his all and battle with her!

The fingers beneath the wedding robes opened and closed and bursts of masculine and strong wind was thrown out from under the large sleeves with the most accurate technique and fastest speed, and come towards Murong Xue from all directions!

Murong Xue raised her eyebrows. When she used the sword against Ye Yichen, it wasn’t really to kill him, but to injure him so that he will not be able to care about forcing her to marry him. After all, everyone knows that Ye Yichen had went to the cemetery to ‘welcome’ her. But she doesn’t want to be Prince Jing’s concubine. If Ye Yichen dies, the murderer will definitely be her. She is not afraid of death but she doesn’t want to implicate nine generations of Murong clan to be beheaded!

Furthermore, she had just came to Qingyan and in such a weak body. She can’t even manage to unleash half the strength she had in the modern era. But Ye Yichen is highly skilled at martial arts and had profound inner strength. Even if she wanted to kill him, she will not be able to do so.

Her sword moves previously had torn Ye Yichen’s wedding robes. It did not hurt him but angered him. Throwing out so much inner strength – he is prepared to kill he!

She is a weak lady without inner strength and without much strength. But if Ye Yichen wants to kill her, it wouldn’t be that easy either!

Murong Xue’s mouth curled into a slight smile and she leapt to two meters away, waving her sword rapidly!

Standing from Ye Yichen’s perspective, he could clearly see – Murong Xue had

stood on the central attack spot of his inner strength. Bursts of silver light flew around her, protecting her tightly and hitting his inner strength towards the huge rock on the side.

“Ping, ping, ping!” A loud noise rang, and bits of rock flew apart and soil flew into the air, choking Murong Xue till she kept coughing. She quickly backed up a few steps and waved her hand to break up the cloud of soil.

A slight breeze blew and the top of the cliff was a lot clearer. Ye Yichen tall and straight silhouette appeared 5-6 meters away!

Murong Xue held on to the soft sword, her whole body on guard, only to see him stare straight ahead, “Ouyang Shaochen!” The low voice did not carry any expression, not letting anyone guessing what he was thinking.

Murong Xue startled and followed his gaze only to see that 3-4 meter large rock had been smashed till only a meter tall, revealing an octagonal pavilion. The pavilion had a stone table and chairs and a young man sat in front of the stone table, holding a white chess piece. His eyes were slightly lowered towards the chessboard on the stone table.

The man wore a snow white long robe, its material smooth like water, and the snow-white sleeve brushes across the bluestone surface, with no speck of dirt. His black silk hair was tied up into a white crown and dispersed over his back.

Handsome black eyes slanted into his fringe and the handsome face was like dream-like out of a painting. His cold aura like the lonely moon, like ice, like snow, bringing awe into people’s hearts!

Murong Xue’s cold eyes flashed a look of surprise. She had seen many types of handsome men in the modern age. After coming to the ancient era, she had also Murong Ye and Ye Yichen’s handsome looks and is kind of immune to handsome men. But the appearance of this man was so handsome that she almost could not look away.

He is Lord Freedom’s heir Ouyang Shaochen! According to rumors, he left the Lord’s mansion when he was eight and had a mysterious teacher. Without much effort, the policy papers he writes becomes famous; without much effort, the flute he blows causes people to be drunk within the music. Generals that have been given pointers by him become undefeatable in battles and wars. He has

also a god-like presence!

For the last ten years, he had travelled to many countries but very rarely step onto Qingyan's soil. Why has he suddenly returned to the Capital?

Chapter 15 – Harassed by the young Lord

Murong Xue looked towards Ouyang Shaochen only to see him flick his fingers. The white chess piece between his fingers mercilessly shot towards Ye Yichen. His thin lips coldly spat out one word, “Scram!”

Ye Yichen’s eyes flashed. Strong inner strength shot out from his finger and hit that chess piece head on. “Ping!” The chess piece disintegrated mid-air and the inner strength dispersed suddenly as well!

He looked at Ouyang Shaochen, who was calm like the clouds and wind, and his face darkened, “I did not mean to destroy your game. Don’t be too much...”

Chess game? What chess game?

Murong Xue curiously looked at the chess board on the stone table, only to see pieces of rock all over messing up the orderly black and white chess pieces. There were even a few pieces of chess fallen onto the ground after being hit by the rocks. A piece here and there made it very conspicuous...

She coughed lightly and her eyes flashed uncomfortably. Ye Yichen’s inner strength had destroyed the rock resulting in bits of rocks flying and messing up the chess pieces on the board, spoiling Ouyang Shaochen’s game! It is only natural if Ouyang Shaochen comes after him!

There were black and white pieces on the chessboard. Obviously Ouyang Shaochen had been playing with himself for a long time. She had been at the cliff for such a long time and didn’t even realize that there was someone nearby. Is it because her level of alertness had dropped or because Ouyang Shaochen is too good?

Ouyang Shaochen stood up, his snow-white long robes falling like water, showing off his slim and lanky shape. His black jewel-like eyes were like a deep pool, drowning people within and not letting them reach the shore. Golden rays dyed his surroundings forming a halo of warm light, causing people to be unable to look away.

“Since you had destroy my chess game, why not compensate me with one?”

The clear voice was like a chord, melodious.

Ye Yichen was stunned then a look of understanding crossed his eyes. He gave a faint smile, “Since Lord Ouyang is interested then I will keep you company to the end!” His hand moved slightly under his sleeves and a few pieces of rocks the size of eggs flew up from the ground and like an arrow shot towards Ouyang Shaochen!

Ouyang Shaochen stood tall and calmly looked the wave of rocks. His snow-white sleeve lightly floated and a few pieces of white chess pieces shot out and heavily hit against the rocks mid-air. “Ping, ping, ping!” A few muffled sounds and the rocks and chess pieces disintegrated into dust mid-air...

Murong Xue widened her eyes in surprise. This is what they meant by ‘playing chess’? It is definitely different when experts exchange blows.

She raised her head towards mid-air only to see black and white chess pieces and rocks hitting each other and bursting into clouds of dust. The chess pieces shot out very rapidly; after a batch had been shot out, the next batch followed closely. Piece by piece, overwhelming the vision. The broken rocks also shot out quickly but were lacking in just a bit of strength.

Wave and wave of strong clashes disintegrated countless chess pieces and small rocks. In the cloud of dust, Ye Yichen realized that the area where both clashed was inching towards him.

His sharp eyes narrowed. Ouyang Shaochen is relying on his deep inner strength and is prepared to silently push the clashing of chess and rocks towards him so that he will be seriously injured by the explosions. What wishful thinking!

The lightly clenched palm suddenly opened and strong inner strength shot out. Countless rocks and gravel flew from the ground and like the sound of lightning shot towards Ouyang Shaochen.

Ouyang Shaochen’s eyes turned cold. Beneath his sleeves, his hands opened and closed and countless black and white chess pieces immediately floating in front of him and flew towards the incoming rocks!

“Ping, ping, ping!” Chess pieces and rocks clashed and a thick dust cloud blocked their vision!

Ye Yichen was just prepared to move more rocks when he saw a few chess pieces fly out from the cloud shooting towards him.

His rocks had also disintegrated yet Ouyang Shaochen's chess pieces were still intact. How amazing.

Ye Yichen's eyes flashed coldness and he flicked his fingers to disintegrate the chess pieces. Suddenly, a pain hit his knee and he involuntarily took a step back. He looked down only to see a black chess piece lying on the ground in front of him, obviously the culprit that had hit his knee.

Ouyang Shaochen actually surprise attacked him. How hateful!

Ye Yichen's eyes slightly cold, opened his palm and was just prepared to use his inner strength when he saw chess pieces fly out from the dust cloud and immediately to his front. He couldn't stop them in time, thus quickly stepped backwards. The ground beneath him disappeared and the red and tall body fell like a broken kite to the bottom of the cliff. "Splash!" Water sprayed up!

Murong Xue hurried walked to the edge of the cliff and look down only to see endless flowing water. The famous God of War Prince just hit into the valley, unsure whether he is dead or alive. How inconceivable...

In front of her passed a corner of a white sleeve. Ouyang Shaochen leisurely walked over, his snow-white sleeves floating like a butterfly, enhancing his aura of peace and nobility!

With the ground as the chessboard and stones as the chess pieces, Ouyang Shaochen had won well, and with such expert skills at chess, he was daunting!

A faint bamboo scent waffled to her nose. Murong Xue's eyes flashed uncomfortably. She had a role in destroying Ouyang Shaochen's game as well. Ouyang Shaochen had bullied Ye Yichen so badly; he will definitely not let her off easily. She didn't have any inner strength and can't move a piece of rock; she couldn't battle Ouyang Shaochen using small rocks like Ye Yichen did, and definitely did not want to have such a sad ending by falling off the cliff like Ye Yichen. She had better run!

Murong Xue secretly glanced at Ouyang Shaochen only to him stand at the edge of the cliff looking down upon the flowing water at the foot. His eyes

lowered, covering his expression, unsure of what he was thinking of. He didn't notice her at all. She silently sighed in relief and quietly turned around to hurriedly run.

“Stop there!” A clear male voice travelled into her ear and Murong Xue froze. She halted for a while then without looking back she continued running. Ouyang Shaochen definitely knew that she was also a culprit in destroying his game. Calling her to stop was only to teach her a lesson. She's not an idiot; she will not stop so that he can throw her into the valley.

A breeze came from the back of her and Murong Xue's arm was caught and pulled backwards.

Murong Xue did not expect that and her slim body fell heavily into the man's arms. Her small face touched his outer robe, like touching cool silk, smooth and soft like nothing.

She smelled faint bamboo, like bamboo after the rain, the refreshing scent intermixed with moisture, uplifting spirits. The man's warm breath breathed onto her hair. Murong Xue was both startled and anger. She is a noble lady. It has always been her teaching others a lesson. Today, she's actually being harassed by someone!

Soft as thought boneless body leaned into his arms. The lady's unique lotus smell drifted into his nose. Ouyang Shaochen's tall body startled and his heart raced. His black jeweled eyes flashed a strange look.

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Chapter 16 – A Joke

Relationship Diagram

Ouyang Shaochen's eyes darken and grabbed her wrist, "You do not have any internal strength and therefore cannot beat me."

The fair wrist was warm and soft. Beneath the layers of clothing, he could still feel her delicate skin, soft and firm. Suddenly, he felt reluctant to let go.

Ouyang Shaochen is strong and powerful at martial arts, and his internal strength is deep. On the other hand, she is often sickly with a weak constitution, of course she is not able to beat him. When she attacked him, it wasn't to win him, it was to escape.

Murong Xue's mouth twisted into a strange smile. Her slim arm suddenly bent into an impossible angle and she cleverly broke free from Ouyang Shaochen's hold and kicked the gravel on the ground towards him.

She then turned around and, without looking back, hurriedly ran forward – Ouyang Shaochen's too good at martial arts, based on her currently abilities she is not able to go against him, but she can hide!

Ouyang Shaochen twisted his body to avoid the gravel and watched her run into the bushes and she gradually furthering slim silhouette. He didn't chase her but just stood there, arms behind his back, his silver embroidered snow white robes softly fluttering in the wind, emphasizing his elegance and nobility, and masterful talent.

She knew that her martial arts level was not as good as him. If she dragged on, it might be detrimental for her, so she had diverted his attention and made a surprise move to escape. What a smart move, what quick reflexes!

A faint smile appeared in Ouyang Shaochen's eyes. Amongst the gravel suddenly flashed a light. He stared and leisurely walked up to pick it up – it was a clear white jade hair pin. The pin had rose carvings on the pin was elegant and delicate, and vivid, and it seemingly still carried the unique and faint lotus fragrances she emits.

Ouyang Shaochen's eyes flashed and his mouth curled into a barely noticeable smile – Murong Xue, we will meet again soon!

After Murong Xue left the cliff, she sprinted on till her body almost gave out and beads of sweat dotted her brow, before she stopped and looked back. It was deserted and the surroundings were quiet. Other than her, there was not a single soul. She breathe a sigh of relief – Ouyang Shaochen didn't chase her. What a blessing in disguise!

Her whole body relaxed and she felt a pain coming from her left wrist. She lifted her sleeve to take a look and saw five clear blue-black fingerprints where Ouyang Shaochen had grabbed her. Her small beautiful face immediately darkened and she gritted her teeth – Ouyang Shaochen!

"Sister!" A surprised call rang. Murong Xue put down her sleeve and looked towards the call, only to see Murong Ye hurriedly running over. He examined her head to toe; his jade-black eyes filled with worry, "How are you?"

"I'm fine!" Murong Xue said smiling.

But Murong Xue frowned. His sister had insisted not to be concubine and went against Ye Yichen's wishes. After he had caught up with her, he would have definitely fiercely teach her a lesson. How could his sister be fine...

"Ye Yichen... er... Where's Ye Yichen?" Murong Ye asked after looking back and forth, left and right a few time but didn't spot Ye Yichen.

Although his sister had first run out tens of meters, but she doesn't know martial arts so Ye Yichen would have definitely caught up to her. How is that he's not with her?

"He fell into the valley!" Murong Xue casually said.

"Ah!" Murong Ye widened his eyes in surprise. Ye Yichen is such an expert at martial arts, how could he have fallen into the valley?

"You had pushed the Prince into the valley!" Following the cold interrogation, a man in green robes strode over. His eyes flashed with ice-cold sharpness, as though he really wanted to execute her by a thousand cuts.

Ten Prince Jing guards stood behind him and split into two units and into a

line. They emitted a deathly aura from within their bones, making people afraid in awe.

Murong Xue casually glanced at the man. In the original person's memory, during the few meetings she had with Ye Yichen, his person was always at Ye Yichen's side. "You are called Xu Tianyou right? Young Master Xu, open your eyes wide and see carefully. I am only a helpless weak lady. Do you think I can push you famous Prince of War into the valley?"

Xu Tianyou's sharp eyes narrowed and carefully examined Murong Xue, only to see her slim as though the wind can fall her to the ground. A pair of jade-like hands did not have any sign of practicing martial arts. Her small beautiful face was pale; it is the color of those who are often sick and bed-ridden.

"He wasn't careful and slipped and fell into the valley!" Murong Xue's cold voice was with undisguised glee – although Ouyang Shaochen had used the chess pieces to attack Ye Yichen, but the real reason why Ye Yichen fell into the valley was because he was not careful while avoiding the chess pieces. She was technically not lying.

"That's not possible!" Xu Tianyou snapped in denial, he stared at her in fury with fire almost spitting out. "The Prince is powerful in martial arts, how could he have slipped..."

Murong Xue tutted with disdain, "Your Prince is only called the God of War by people. He not a real god. After removing the shining battle armor, he is but a normal human with flesh and blood. If other people can slip and fall into the valley, why can't he?"

Xu Tianyou choked. After removing his martial arts, talent, status, Prince Jing is no different from a normal person, "But..."

Murong Xue waved her hand to cut him off. She calmly looked at him, "Rather than wasting time arguing with me about the real reason of why Ye Yichen fell off the cliff, why don't you take your men and search the valley. If you are lucky, you might find Ye Yichen's body, if not... sigh..."

Xu Tianyou turned black till it could almost drip ink, and coldly looked at her, "You just wish so much for Prince Jing's death?"

“Ye Yichen’s life or death does not concern me. I’m just saying that since the cliff is so tall and the water is so fast, Ye Yichen’s survival is quite unlikely. Just giving up a heads-up so that you can prepare yourself for it. And when you find the body, you wouldn’t be flustered and crying.” Murong Xue casually said.

Sounds like caring words but in Xu Tianyou’s ears, it was like cursing Ye Yichen to death. He face was scarily dark and he fiercely glared at Murong Xue, saying word by word, “No need for Miss Murong to be concerned. His Highness will definitely make it through!”

Murong Xue was doubtful, “Life and death, wealth are all in the hands of god. You and I are not Hades. Who is to say for sure about Ye Yichen’s life or death!”

“You!” Xu Tianyou choked in anger. He could see that Murong Xue is happily hoping that Prince Jing dies in the valley. Every sentence she says curses Prince Jing. If she continues, he will be angered to death!

“I’ll take my leave!” Xu Tianyou tossed his sleeves and walked towards the cliff without looking back. Prince Jing’s guards followed closely behind.

“I won’t see you off!” Murong Xue casually replied.

After seeing them leave far, Murong Ye looked towards Murong Xue, his jade-black eyes filled with a rare solemnity, “Sister, Ye Yichen was really not pushed off into the valley by you?”

“Of course not!” Murong Xue vehemently denied. If she had done it, she will admit to it; if she didn’t do it, she will naturally not take responsibility.

Murong Ye released his anxiousness in relief but his eyebrows knotted more tightly, “If Ye Yichen dies...”

“If he dies then he’s dead, what is there to worry about?” Murong Xue didn’t think much of it. If Ye Yichen didn’t chase her to the cliff and didn’t viciously force her using his martial arts prowess and deep internal strength, he wouldn’t have offended Ouyang Shaochen and fall off the cliff. Even if he’s really dead, he deserved it.

Murong Xue sighed heavily, “You and Ye Yichen have a marriage arrangement. If Ye Yichen dies, people will say that you cursed your husband.”

Murong Xue raises her eyebrows, “I have already raised it to Ye Yichen to annul the engagement. His first wife is now the Princess of Mobei, Qin Yuyan. Even if Ye Yichen dies, it should be Qin Yuyan that cursed him.”

Murong Ye shook his head, his eyes filled with helplessness, “Ye Yichen’s and your marriage agreement has not been annulled. Qin Yuyuan and his marriage has also not been announced. If Ye Yichen dies, the one that cursed him would be you!”

“Ye Yichen has already fallen into the valley. We cannot do anything about his life or death. Don’t think so much into it. It’s getting late. Let’s return home!” Murong Xue said smiling. Darkness flashed in her eyes – she doesn’t care about whether she had cursed him; the most important thing now is she has to openly go back to the Capital. Whether Ye Yichen is alive or dead, she will send him a unexpected ‘present’!

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Chapter 17 – Prince Jing’s Poison Plan

The sun set behind the east mountains, red clouds filled the sky, and the golden bits reflecting from the surface of clear water faded.

Along the river bank, green grass was lush, forming bushes that were good looking. A bit of red complemented the grass like dotting eyes to a dragon, bringing the surrounding greenery to life.

However, the red was from a flower, but a red wedding robe. Its owner lay in the bushes, lanky and tall body revealed that he is a man. But his black silk hair messily covered his face, blocking most of it, not letting anyone see his looks clearly.

Suddenly, his eyelashes fluttered and he slowly opened his eyes. Looking at the unfamiliar surroundings, his eyes had a brief moment of mist then bit by bit become sharp. He suddenly sat up, his black hair fell over his back revealing his handsome face – it is Prince Jing Ye Yichen!

The surroundings were quiet, with not a single soul. The wed red wedding robes clung to his skin making it very uncomfortable. Ye Yichen flicked his fingers and a faint mist surrounded his body before immediately disappearing. The red wedding robes were then fresh and cool, and not the least bit uncomfortable anymore.

Ye Yichen slowly stood up. Deep internal strength quickly circulated through his tendons, unblocked. He silently breathe a sigh of relief – He doesn’t know how to swim and upon falling into the rapids, he had hit his head on a rock and lost consciousness. After being carried for thousands of meters, he only has superficial wounds, how very lucky

Recalling the culprit that caused him to fall into the valley and suffer and almost lose his life, a darkness crept up over Ye Yichen’s eyes – Ouyang Shaochen!

“Your Highness!” A surprised call rang. Ye Yichen looked up only to see Xu Tianyou hurriedly running over. He carefully examined him, eyes flashing obviously joy, “Are you alright?”

“I’m fine!” Ye Yichen shook his head and glanced that the ten guards that followed behind, before calmly saying, “Murong Xue has been taken care of?”

Xu Tianyou paused, the smile on his face frozen.

Ye Yichen’s sharp eyes narrowed, and coldly looked at him, “What? You didn’t force her into the pink sedan chair and carry her back to the Mansion?”

Xu Tianyou’s eyes flashed uncomfortably, “Your Highness had fallen into the valley and your survival unknown. I was worried about your Highness so...”

“So you brought all the guards to look for me and allowed Murong Xue to openly return to the Marquis’ Mansion.” Ye Yichen continued his sentence, eyes flashed with slight anger. Tianyou had followed him for many year and had always done things to his liking. How is it that he is so careless this time and actually shelved such an important thing?

“Please do not be angry, your Highness. I will immediately lead people to the Marquis’ Mansion and will definitely let Murong Xue sit in the pink sedan chair and carry into the side door of your Mansion within the next 4 hours.”

Prince Jing has always been an invincible God of War in Xu Tianyou’s heart. No one can surpass him in his world, and no one can harm him. Upon suddenly hearing that Prince Jing had fallen into the valley, he became flustered and that’s why he only bothered about looking for Prince Jing and neglected the real reason why they were here.

Luckily, the protocols for marrying a concubine is very simple and need not bother too much about auspicious hours. As long as Murong Xue is carried into the Prince’s Mansion using the pink sedan chair by midnight today, Prince Jing’s banquet will be considered completed.

Ye Yichen hummed in agreement, and earnestly said, “No matter what you do, you must always remember your final purpose. Even if other things happen, when dealing with those issues, you must also put some of your energy into what you had originally set out to do. Remember that you cannot be distracted and forget about your original goal.

“Yes sir!” Xu Tianyou solemnly nodded. He was just about to hurry back to the Capital when a surprised male voice was heard, “Prince Jing!”

Xu Tianyou followed the sound of the voice only to see a middle-age man in official robes riding a black handsome horse, speeding towards them. Behind him were a hundred guards in military uniform with swords and as they passed through, they kicked up clouds of dust.

That's... The commander-in-chief of the five-city's military division. What was he doing here?

In the period that they were confused, the middle-aged man had already come close. He crisply dismounted and saluted towards Ye Yichen, "Your subordinate Yang Tai, greets Prince Jing!

"Dispense with the formalities!" Ye Yichen looked at Yang Tai, his voice calm, "Official Yang has always been stationed in the Capital, why have you suddenly brought guards here?"

Yang Tai stood up and respectfully said, "In reply to your Highness, I had received a call for help from Shuntian Magistrate Court's Official Lin to bring men to conduct a search and rescue for your Highness."

Ye Yichen's eyes flashed and a bad feeling rose internally, "What happened?"

"About noon, Miss Murong of the Marquis Mansion, escorted by the guards of the Marquis Household, returned to the Capital and headed straight for Shuntain Magistrate Court, saying..."

Yang Tai secretly looked at Ye Yichen only to see him pale. He should be lightly injured. The red wedding robe had large tears and the sleeve was even missing a piece. The corner of lips twitched – Although Murong Xue had repeatedly emphasized that the Marquis' guards had been injured unintentionally, but 20 guards bruised altogether, even an idiot wouldn't believe her story. Now looking at Prince Jing's injuries, it is easy to piece together that both sides had clashed and fought. It is not difficult to guess regarding the reason for the fight.

As outsiders, they cannot meddle in Prince Jing's and the Marquis' Household's private matters, and daren't meddle. As long as he did his job, that's enough. "Miss Murong said that your Highness had accidentally fell into the valley and asked the Shuntain court sent people to rescue. They did not have enough people so Official Lin had asked for my help..."

The five-city military division was in charge of maintaining order in the Capital, fire safety, and had the most manpower. It was entirely appropriate to ask for their help.

Ye Yichen's face became scarily black and a dense haze flashed beneath his eyes. Everyone in the Capital knew that he had brought guards to the Murong ancestral cemetery. Even if one used toes to think, they know that the Marquis guards' injuries were due to Prince Jing's guards.

Murong Xue flaunted their serious injuries publicly. Even if she didn't tell him the truth and what had happened, all the Capital's courtiers would know, and commoners will definitely also guess, that he had used his status to force Murong Xue to become his concubine but had failed, and even caused himself to fall into the valley.

The veteran Prince Jing, awe of Prince Jing's Household, have all become a laughing matter of people.

Murong Xue, you're good, very good!

Surrounding Ye Yichen immediately rose an aura of death, and his eyes flashed with harsh coldness, leading Xu Tianyou to believe that if Murong Xue were here, Ye Yichen would tear her to pieces without any hesitation. "Your Highness need not worry. The reputation of Prince Jing is widespread and the officials nor people in the Capital will dare randomly discuss!"

They only dare not discuss openly, but privately they are definitely laughing at him, and ridiculing the entire Prince Jing Household!

Ye Yichen's eyes flashed with sharp coldness and he clenched his hands tightly under his sleeves. Just a sickly person on her deathbed and she dared destroy the reputation that he had built over many years. How audacious! Since she had given him such a big present, he naturally has to gift her one, and let her have a taste of what's it like to feel like death is better than living!

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Chapter 18 – Causing Trouble

As the clouds parted, the mists gradually subsided, streaks of golden light spills through the clouds, illuminating Earth.

Dressed in a light blue long skirt, Murong Xue sat under a Hydrangea tree and sipped tea. As the pink flower petals slowly fall from the tree, her beauty glowed, so captivating it was almost as if she was an immortal.

“Miss Murong, Prince Jing has gone back to the Capital.” Maid Hong Xiu, hurriedly told her while walking over, with a faint panic in her voice.

Murong Xue’s eyes turned cold, and stopped sipping her tea, “When did he go back?”

“Last night between 19:00 to 21:00!” Hong Xiu uttered softly as she kept her eyes low. “The city guards said Prince Jing rode back to the Capital alone, looking normal, and should not be injured.”

Murong Xue’s narrowed her eyes and pondered. Have fallen from such great heights off a cliff, and swept away by fast rapids, even if any ordinary person would not die, he would be seriously injured and unconscious. Yet, Ye Yichen did not suffer even the slightest injury, his life is really big. He is the epitome of the phrase: Good people do not live long, but the evil ones live for a thousand years.

“Miss Murong, Prince Jing is very highly ranked and powerful, you had schemed him into being ridiculed by the people of the Capital and officials, he certainly will not let this slide so easily?” Hong Xiu says softly, her voice laced with concern.

“I know!” Murong Xue nodded, her eyes turning cold: her words yesterday were so vague, given that the people in the Capital has such wild imagination, they will certainly think that Ye Yichen want to force her to be his concubine, and had a fight with the Marquis’ guards, during which he accidentally fell of the cliffs.

However, given Ye Yichen’s arrogance, he definitely will not confess that he was knocked off the cliff by Ouyang Shaochen. Since he had failed to force the marriage, all the gossip and talk will echo in his ears every day. As long as he

thought of her, Ye Yichen will be reminded of the shame he suffered, and must hate her tremendously, but for the sake of his Household's reputation, he will never try to force the marriage again openly.

And she has ponders on, she realizes it is Ye Yichen's layer of consideration, because the Marquis' guards are simply just ordinary guards, whereas Prince Jing's guards are strong veterans, these two are simply not comparable. Her constitution is weak. Even if she is supported by her modern skills, she is still a far cry from Ye Yichen who has strong martial arts abilities and deep internal strength.

With absolute power, all people and things are vulnerable. If Prince Jing openly fights against Marquis Household, Marquis Household absolutely does not have the power to fight back. But once Ye Yichen have this layer of consideration, then he will not openly display force, but will deal with her secretly, with his underhanded tricks and schemes, she may lose out to Ye Yichen!

Looking at her eyes glowing with confidence, Hong Xiu heaves a sigh of relief, yet she was still worried, "Young Mistress, it is easy to hide against the open attacks but difficult to guard against schemes, we have to be more careful."

"I know that!" Murong Xue nods, a small smile forming on her lips: this time, Ye Yichen was able to return safely and unharmed, is because when Ouyang Shaochen forced him down the cliff, he had no injuries. Given his powerful martial arts ability, the chances of him surviving the water rapids are higher than the possibility of death!

If he dares to plot against her, she would poke a few holes in his body, so that even if he did not die from serious injuries, he would die from profuse blood loss.

"Sister ... sister ...," a voice drifts over, Murong Ye excitedly rushes towards Murong Xue, the edge of his dark blue robes fluttered with the wind brought up by his haste. His lips moved a little, yet no words came out!

Murong Xue glanced at him: "Is there something?"

"Sister, please let me borrow Beibei for a day!" Murong Ye smiles sweetly as he asks, his handsome, childlike face eager to please.

Murong Xu's beautiful small face instantly darkens, Beibei is a Tibetan mastiff,

good at the attacks, the reason why Murong Ye wants to borrow it goes without saying. “Beibei is my pet, it will no longer visit battle grounds and fight with other dogs you should give up.”

Upon hearing this, Murong Ye neither got angry nor seemed dejected. Instead, he laughed cheekily and said “Then why not you give me ten thousand taels, I will go buy another dog.”

Murong Xue frowns and says: “Where do you originally get all your money? Isn’t there no more there?” Based on her memory, no matter how much Murong Ye was seen as a wastrel, he would never ask her for money.

“I have always got my money from Uncle Hui, but when I went to look for Uncle Hui just now, he said that based on Dad’s instructions, I have used more than this month’s withdrawal limit. He would not give me any more money before the end of this month. However, I want to participate in dog fighting, so I have you come to you, sister. “Murong Ye said lightly.

Upon listening to this, Murong Xue narrows her eyes. Uncle Hui’s name is Ge Hui, and was previously Murong Yue’s right hand man. However, he was seriously injured during battle, and can no longer be on the battlefield. He then became the butler of Marquis’ family, and is in charge of external affairs.

After the death of Murong Yue and his wife, Uncle Hui shouldered all responsibilities and took care of external matters relating to the house, and also took care of young Murong Ye and Murong Xue. You could say, the responsibility of the external matters did not fall into the hands of the old lady dowager, which added a layer of consideration, ensuring that Murong Ye and Murong Xue both grew up well and safe.

Ge Hui is Murong Yue’s official, and is also the benefactor of the two siblings (Murong Ye and Murong Xue). But, Murong Ye is still the master after all while he is a servant. Despite the fact that Murong Ye engages in dog fighting activities, bringing shame to the family, Ge Hui does not dare to be strict and discipline him, and can only try his best to limit the amount of waste, to ensure that the proceeds are more than the outflows, hoping that the large Marquis Household will not decline under the hands of Murong Ye.....

“Brother, you know that I have such little monthly allowance, even if I were to

add up my allowance over 10 years, I would never get ten thousand taels.....” Murong Xue says. If Gehui does not want Murong Ye to engage in dog fighting, Murong Xue does not want him to ruin the family name either. She does have a fair bit of money, if Murong Ye had the intention to use it for proper reasons, she would not hesitate to give it to him, but since he wants to use it for dog fighting... .. hehe, it’s better that she keeps the money.

Murong Ye disagrees and says cheerfully: “Aren’t you holding the key to mother’s dowry treasury”

Murong Xue’s head snaps up and looks at him, her eyes flaring and cold : “You want to sell your mother’s dowry in exchange for silver to engage in dog fighting, are you not afraid that Mother’s spirit cannot rest in peace!”

Upon getting reprimanded severely, Murong Ye Zhang instantly turned red, anxiously waves his hand dismissively, and explains hastily. “No no mother’s dowry will certainly contain some silver, I simply want those silver, I will never take the rest of the things! ”

He understood that we should respect the dead, and even more so knows that the inheritance left by our elders should be properly safe kept, and not easily tampered with. Even if he were to ruin the family name, he would not go to the extent of selling mother’s dowry.

“How do you know that mother’s dowry contains silver?” Murong Xue frowns and looks at Murong Ye. When the women of Qingyan get married, the dowry will have a document that details the specific amount of silver. But after the women settles into the family, very seldom will they count the silver, because silver is a circulated currency and can be spent any time.

Murong Xue remembered the accounts had written down the amount of silver, while she was checking the inventory of the dowry, there was not much silver left. She did not count it, because mother had died in ten over years, even if she were to ask the whereabouts of the silver, there would be thousands of excuses where she will be dismissed by Du.

Upon looking at Murong Xue calm down, Murong Ye quietly breathe a sigh of relief, his sister will no longer misunderstand him, and that’s really great!

Upon seeing her puzzled expression, he smiles and says mischievously: “While I was coming out of seeing Uncle Hui, I happen to hear Hong Qiao and another servant quietly talking about mother’s dowry, and that is how I happen to find out that mother’s dowry has some silver.”

Murong Xue laughs, Hong Qiao is Master Du’s second-class servant, who has gained the trust of Du. When Murong Ye lacks silver, it cannot be such a coincidence that Hong Qiao happens to talk to others about mother’s dowry, this is simply old-wives’ tricks.

The key to the Treasury in Murong Xue’s hands, Du can no longer want to take mother’s dowry. To use Murong Ye’s weakness for dog fighting, and motivate him to pawn or sell the dowry, while they use this opportunity to buy them up at low-cost, is such a good plan!

Given that Du’s viciousness, wasn’t her previous lesson not enough? Looks like I have to teach Du a very memorable lesson this time, let her know that what’s the meaning of trying to steal a chicken and ending up losing rice to try to take advantage only to end up worse off than before.

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Chapter 19 – Borrowing Money

Murong Xue stood up and leisurely walked out. Her elegant and long robes dragged along the floor, and lightly brushed the clean surface, forming a long mark.

“Sister, where are you going?” Murong Ye looked as she walked further away, filled with uncertainty.

“Going to Yutang Court to see step-grandmother!” Murong Xue did not stop and answered without looking back.

His sister and grandmother had never gotten along. Why did she suddenly think of going to Yutang Court?

Murong Ye was confused, “Sister, I will go together with you.”

“There’s no need. Just wait here for me to come back!” Murong Xue is going to Yutang Court to teach Du a lesson. If Murong Ye went along, it is not convenient for her to carry out her plan.

His suggestion rejected, Murong Ye frowned and unwilling pulled back on the step he took. He said dejectedly, “OK!” Hearing his sister’s reasoning, it seems like she has something private to speak to grandmother about and it is not convenient for him to follow. Then he shall not follow, but send someone to watch outside of Yutang Court. If they both start a dispute, it will not be too late for him to rush over.

Yutang Court is Du’s permanent residence. It was filled with maids and house servants in and out. Seeing Murong Ye coming over from afar, an old maid quickly went indoors to inform Du!

When Murong Xue stepped into Yutang Court, a level three maid and lowly old maids were in the courtyard sweeping and cleaning, going about their work. A level two maid walked up and politely curtsied towards her, and said smiling, “The lady dowager is inside, please come in Young Mistress!”

Murong Xue lightly hummed in reply and slowly walked through the curtain that the maid had pulled aside into the room, only to see Du lying on the soft

couch against a large cushion, slowly eating a bowl of double-boiled milk! Faint golden sunlight shone on the sapphire on her forehead, reflecting a bright light.

Du saw Murong Xue and lifted her eyes, calmly saying, “Anything’s the matter?”

Murong Xue lightly smiled and leisurely said, “It is not anything huge. My brother wants to battle dogs but has no money. I have come to borrow some from step-grandmother.”

Du paused mid-action of eating the milk pudding – Chen’s (Murong Xue’s mother) cash in the dowry had cleverly been spent finished by her. She had let Xiangqiao reveal the information about the cash in the dowry to Murong Ye to let Murong Ye look for Murong Xue for money. If Murong Xue is unable to produce that much money, wouldn’t she pawn some of Chen’s dowry to pool the money? What has she come here to borrow money?

The noble Marquis’ wife-born daughter borrowing money to spend. Isn’t she afraid that she will be a laughingstock?

However, it’s good this way as well. That way she can openly ask for Chen’s dowry, “How much do you want?”

“A hundred thousand taels!” Murong Xue said lightly and pretended to sigh helplessly, “My brother has always been a spendthrift. These hundred thousand taels will probably will be enough for ten days...”

Du’s eyes formed a smirk. She is clearer anyone else about how prodigal Murong Ye is. The more playful and incompetent he is, the better it is for her. Naturally, she is willing to allow it to connive it. However, her condition for conniving is that it cannot hurt her interests.

“A hundred thousand taels is not a small sum. Converting it into physical money can fill a few large carts. We don’t have an blood ties. If I were to just lend it to us, it wouldn’t be too good, right?”

Murong Xue smiled, “I can write you an IOU. When my brother wins money, I will immediately return it with interest.”

Du raised her eyebrows and looked at her. She snorted, “Out of every ten bets, nine loses. If Murong Xue can never win back that hundred thousand taels, will

you never return the money then?”

Murong Xue blinked, “Then what does step-grandmother think?”

Du thought about it and pretended to be casual saying, “Use a trunk of your mother’s dowry as collateral then. When you win the hundred thousand taels then you can retrieve that trunk.”

Murong Xue smiled, coldly smiled. Of course Du had her eye on her mother’s dowry. Every trunk of that dowry is worth 200-300 thousand taels. Du actually wants to buy that with a hundred thousand? How overconfident and whimsical she is!

“I remember that my mother’s dowry accounts had listed a few shopfronts. They are all managed by step-grandmother, is that right?”

Du was taken aback. From money, to dowry and suddenly to stores, Murong Xue really changes the topic quickly.

Back then, Chen had a quite a number of stores that came with her dowry. The store name, locations were all clearly written on the dowry list. She cannot deny it and therefore unabashedly said, “So what if I am?”

“Those stores are located on a busy area. Ten years of profit probably equal to a few hundred thousand taels, isn’t it...” Murong Xue trailed off and didn’t continue, smirking at her. For the past ten years, the original person did not see a cent of the profits as they were all pocketed by Du.

“Those six stores are not doing very well and are seldom visited by customers. Each store has at the most a thousand taels in profit every year, hardly enough to cover household expenses...” Du lied unabashedly.

“Really?” Murong Xue looked at Du and casually said, “Then I would like ask step-grandmother to bring out the accounts and let me see.”

“It’s not the start nor the end of the month. The accounts are all in the hands of the store managers. How would I have it.” Du lightly said, her mouth curved in joy. She never liked this step-granddaughter and every time she sees her beaten down and suffering a setback, she will always feel exceptionally comfortable!

“Someone go and call the 6 managers of my mother’s dowry stores here and

ask them to bring the past ten years of accounts!” Murong Xue coldly instructed, her gaze cold. Didn’t Du say that there are little profits? Then she will question those 6 managers in front of Du to see if they really have little profits or did someone cook the books.

“Yes ma’am!” Hongxiu, who was standing outside, acknowledged and went.

Du’s face suddenly turned black until it almost dripped black ink. Naughty girl, going against my wishes and suspecting my words – how unappreciative she is of my kindness! Calling the managers over with the accounts is really because Murong Xu suspects that the accounts are not right and wants to verify. She’ll see what problems this unworldly young lady can discover.

An hour later, the managers arrived and waited outside the room.

Murong Xue lifted up the curtain and walked out, “You have been waiting for long!”

The managers lifted their heads only to see a young lady walking over. Her bright and small face, and dedicate hair-do, was filled with attractiveness, fascinating people. She just lightly smiled, fresh and natural, but her eyes were very deep and carried a hidden devilishness, stunning everyone with her aura that they held their breath.

The managers immediately woke up from their infatuation and quickly bowed, “My respects to the Young Mistress!”

Murong Xue lightly smiled, “You managers do not need to be so polite, sit down and have some tea. I will first take a look at the account and if there is anything I don’t understand I will ask for your help!”

A middle-aged manager with a moustache under his nose smiled brightly and said, “My lady is too kind. If there is anything you don’t understand please ask. I will tell you everything I know.”

“Yes, yes, yes. Please instruct us if anything, young mistress!” The other five manager agreed with all smiles.

Murong Xue lightly smiled and leisurely sat at the round table piled with accounts and picked up the topmost accounts book, carefully analyzing it.

The managers sat at the long table not far off and slowly drank the tea. The large waiting room immediately quietened.

The sun rose higher and higher. Murong Xue continued to sit there without moving, flipping through the accounts. The more she saw, the more she frowned.

The managers rested their heads on their hands, bored, with their eyes slightly closed as though they were sleeping.

Suddenly, “clap!” a bright sound rang and the sleepy managers were immediately alert. They quickly turned their heads to look only to see Murong Xue closing the account book and furiously looking at them...

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Chapter 20 – Angering

“How are you managers?”

The cold reproachful voice went straight into their ear and hit their hearts. The managers shuddered and their face showed fluster, “Young Mistress, is it that the accounts are not right?”

The Marquis’ Dowager lady will check the accounts every month. If there is something wrong, she will scold them or if the situation is worse, she might even report them to the magistrate. As such, they have never dared to do anything funny with regards to the accounts after so many years.

“The accounts have nothing wrong with them. It’s the receivables that are too much and too long!” Murong Xue’s dedicate hand waved and the account book accurately fell into the managers lap.

“When you open for business, you might let customers put it on the tab. But there must be a limit to how much. It’s ok if it’s 3 or 5 months; 1 to 2 years might be straining it but see the accounts in your hands. From 10 years ago owing till now, for rogue customers who do not pay a cent, you still dare to let them take things from the store? Do you want to close the store down?”

Are there much rogue customers? How is it they don’t remember?

The managers looked down bewildered to flip through the book. Looking at the debtors’ name, they all turned bitter, “Young Mistress, it’s not us that make the decision to allow them to owe, but those that come to take things from the store are all from the Wu’an Marquis household...”

“So what if it’s the Wu’an Marquis household? Even if it’s the lady herself, Murong Rou personally, she’s also a customer, and you only need to carefully serve her. Who let them take things and only need to owe and not pay?” Murong Xue sharply interrupted them, her gaze cold as ice.

The managers looked at each other and lowered their heads, their voice soft as a mosquito, “It’s... It’s the old Lady that allowed...”

Murong Xue’s mouth curved into a sneer, she knew it would be like that.

Ten years of accounts piled together makes it quite tall. She didn't flip through all of them but pick a few from ten years ago, five years ago and then saw the latest two months. She found that from 10 years ago, Wu'an Marquis household would come to the clothing store and order large batches of new clothes. Ten to twenty rolls of high, medium and low quality types of cloths will be used – from Wu'an Marquis Household's dowager lady, to the lowest of maids and servants will all be tailored from here!

Just like that for 10 years – they had only recorded the debt but had never paid a single cent.

Also, from the jewelry store, they also often visit. Every season, they would take away quite a number of sets for old, ladies and young mistresses.

Every 2 to 3 months, Wu'an Marquis household's people will also go to the antique shop to take one or two antiques, paintings and never pay a single cent...

No wonder Du righteously said that she didn't steal the earnings from her mother's dowry stores. It is because the money earned have all gone to fill the debt left by Wu'an Household, and thus have hardly any money left. Even if she wanted to steal, there was nothing left.

“This is the way step-grandmother helps my mother take care of her stores?” Murong Xue flipped open the curtain before walking into the inner room, sneering at Du.

Du glanced at her and answered without care, “Your aunt makes their clothes and jewelry there to help the store's business...”

“Taking things and paying up is called helping the business. Taking things and not paying, and taking for ten years with ease is called thick-skinned!” Murong Xue unceremoniously interrupted what she was saying, word-by-word saying, “The noble Wu'an Marquis Household is not beggars on the street, actually doing such a shameless act like street thugs. Even they don't feel ashamed, I feel ashamed for them.”

“Rou'er is your dear aunt. How can you say such a thing about her?” Du snapped, her eyes flashed with cold sharpness.

As the mistress of the Wu'an Marquise household, Murong Rou held the reins

to the household's internal matters. Tailoring new clothes and making jewelry *etc.* falls under her purview. If Murong Xue ridicules Wu'an household's people for being shameless, it is ridiculing her.

Murong Xue tutted in disdain, "My mother is her direct older sister-in-law. She shamelessly takes goods from her older sister-in-law's dowry stores without paying anything, and I can't even said a few words about her?"

"You..."

Murong Xue waved her hand to cut her off and lightly looked at her, "Don't say anymore to me. She is my aunt. As her niece, giving her a few sets of clothing and jewelry is part of respecting her. I am her niece, and both my parents have passed down, how can she not take care of me and make me a few sets of clothing and jewelry every month at her dowry shops?"

"You..." Du pointed at Murong Xue, so angered that she was speechless. This little bitch – doesn't she not like to speak much? How is it that she has become so eloquent?

Murong Xue glanced sideways at her and coldly said, "My mother's good dowry shops have been 'taken care' by you until such a mess. If I let you continue 'taking care' of them, the 6 shops will definitely have to close. Could I trouble step-grandmother to return the deed of the 6 shops to me. I will personally take care of them. Whether managed well or badly, it will have nothing to with step-grandmother anymore!"

Du's face darkened and lowered her eyelids. After Shen's death, she had her eyes on these 6 shops. However, Gehui also knows about these 6 shops and after Murong Ye and Murong Xue have grown up, she will have to return them. As such, she cannot openly take over but can only do it on the sly

Gehui's very sharp and if the shops made false account, he will definitely discover. Hence she thought of this underhanded method – by randomly taking things from the shops and quietly moving the assets out of the shops and into her pockets.

Over the ten years, they had moved most of the shops' assets. In a few more years, the 6 shops will be entirely theirs. They never imagined that at this crucial moment, Murong Xue found out about it.

If she hands these shops over to Murong Xue, they will no longer be able to take things from the shops. The shops still have a number of valuable items. It would be painful to just give it up!

Eyeing her changing expressions, Murong Xue knew what she was thinking about. A sneer formed and she said, "Step-grandmother, if you want to spoil your daughter, I can't meddle in what you want to give her, and also can't be bothered to meddle. But, please do not use my mother's dowry shops to get favors because those shops have been left to me and my brother by my mother and has entirely nothing to do with you! If you insist on continuing to manage, I might not be able to resist telling other how the shops have been 'developing' over these ten years..."

Du abruptly looked up at Murong Ye, her eyes flashed with cold sharpness – this bitch, she dared to threaten her! Well, very well!

"It's just 6 shops. I don't even think much of them. If you want them, I'll give all of them to you!" Du picked up an olden ebony box and quickly opened it, taking a few pages of deeds and huffily threw them at Murong Xue, "Get out of Yutang Court now. You are not welcomed here!"

Murong Xue took the deeds and carefully looked. After ensuring that they were correct, she nodded, satisfied, "No need to trouble step-grandmother. I am utterly disgusted with Yutang Court. Since I have the deed, we have nothing linking us anymore. Even if you beg me, I wouldn't want to come!"

"You..." Du choked and picked up the tea cup in front of her and threw it across, "Scram!"

Murong Xue tutted, grabbed the curtain and threw it forward. *Ping!* The tea cup knocked onto the curtain, tea splashed everywhere and the tea cup shattered...

The 6 managers stood in the corner, heads down, not looking anywhere else, and pretending that they didn't see the sparks flying between Murong Xue and Dowager lady Du. The family matters of the Marquis household doesn't concern them as store managers, and they dare not be concerned either. It is better that they protect themselves.

Du schemed against Murong Ye to make her pawn her mother's dowry. Then

she came here and took away 6 deeds, causing Du and Murong Ruo to not only fail but lose their own interests as well. Seeing Du hopping mad, she felt really comfortable!

Murong Xue's mouth curved into a faint smile and she leisurely walked in front of the managers, arrogantly saying, "We can no longer tolerate the ten years of debt that Wu'an Marquis household has owed. The six of you should immediately return to the store and send your staff to Wu'an Marquis Mansion to collect the debt!"

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Chapter 21 – Making trouble for Wu’an Marquis Household

Du and Murong Rou, both mother and daughter, were wealthy yet they were still unscrupulous in stealing both her and her brother’s assets. How greedy and ambitious. Any little relationship between them have been destroyed by both mother and daughter. The goods in her mother’s dowry shop can be given to anyone except for Wu’an Marquis Household.

“Er...” The managers looked at each other, their faces turned bitter, “Reporting to Young Mistress. We send our staff to the Wu’an Mansion every month to ask for money but they still stalling and never give any money...”

“That’s right, Young Mistress. Wu’an Marquis household’s people are very cunning. No matter what our staff say, they only say one sentence – we will pay next month...”

“Until our staff asked for money next month, they will continue saying that they will pay the next month. This way, they have delayed payment from ten years ago till now...”

The manager noisy discussed. Murong Xue’s mouth curled into a sneer – Du and Murong Ruo is prepared to quietly move all the goods away from Chen’s dowry shop? How ambitious. They are really skilled in the art of silently stealing.

Now that she has taken over the management of the shop, the mother and daughter’s schemes should end here, “I have thought of a way. If you follow my instructions, I promise that Wu’an Marquis’ Household will obediently pay up the money owed.”

“Really?” The managers’ eyes brightened and looked towards Murong Xue in unison, “What way?”

The streets of the Capital were busy and crowded. Early spring breeze mixed with the fragrance of hundreds of flowers making people happy. The light sunlight shone onto people making them warm.

A grand horse carriage slowly travelled and steadily stopped in front of Wu’an

Marquis' Household. The curtain opened and a young girl in pink stepped out. Her face was bright like blossoms, her hair like dark clouds, her brow like spring's mountains and her eyes like autumn's water – it was Wu'an wife-born oldest daughter Song Qingyan.

Stepping onto the steps and off the carriage, Song Qingyan held onto her maid's arm and follow walked into the Mansion. Her eyes glanced towards the oak wood box, her mouth curved into an elegant smile – the jewelry shop's new jewelry suited her very much so she had taken them without any hesitation.

Oldest aunt's (Chen's) dowry shop was good like that – whatever she saw she could take, and only need to record in the accounts without paying.

“Young Mistress!” The guard respectfully bowed towards her.

Song Qingyan acknowledge with a hum and gracefully walked into the main door. She was just about to enter the main hall went a male voice came from behind her, “I am the staff from Zhuyu Court, under the order of the manager to clear the accounts of Wu'an Marquis' household. Please help me inform.”

Song Qingyan's beautiful brows frowned slightly. She turned towards the staff only to see him wear a gray rough robe, was of average height, common looks and was the type that could stand in the crowd and definitely not be noticed.

“Isn't Zhuyu Court and the client's accounts settled once a month? It is not the start nor the end of the month, what are you settling?” She had just taken new jewelry from Zhuyu Court, and now that staff from Zhuyu Court has come to Wu'an Court to settle the accounts. Are they chasing for money? How annoying.

The staff looked towards the sound and see Song Qingyan. Recognizing that she is the frequent customer Wu'an Marquis Household's Young Mistress, he smiled and said, “Young Mistress, I have come to settle not last month's account but the previous accounts – those that should be been settled last month...”

“Alright, alright!” Song Qingyan interrupted him impatiently, “It has been busy in the Mansion recently and we don't have time to settle the accounts. Come again when it's at the end of the month. Get all the accounts in order and we will settle them together.”

The staff's mouth curved slightly and a flash of disdain appeared beneath his

eyes. These perfunctory statement again. He has heard the same until he could almost grow ear wax. Luckily Zhuyu Court is now under Murong Young Mistress and he doesn't need to bother about not offending this demanding lady anymore.

“Song Young Mistress, I also know that it is the wrong time to come. But the manager has said that if I cannot settle the accounts this time, he is going to fire me. I have elderly and young dependent on me and cannot lose this job. Please Song Young Mistress, pity me and settle the accounts!”

The staff cried as he said that, looking extremely pitiful. Passerby's were all attracted by the commotion and gathered in crowded pointing, “What is happening...”

“I don't know. It seemed like he is asking for payment...”

“If he wants to settle the accounts then just settle it. Why scold him until he's so pitiful...”

“Who ask her to have the Wu'an Marquis as her father. Her status is extremely noble. Who dare to blame her for scolding just a shop staff...”

Bits and pieces of discussion was traveled into her ear and Song Qingyan's pretty face immediately turned red in anger. She glared at the public and angrily argued, “I am not scolding him!”

Everyone was not convinced. She is the only master around her. If she wasn't bullying that person then who else could it be?

Song Qingyan was furious. She strode over to the shop staff and grabbed his clothes and pushed him in front of everyone, “Tell everyone that I did not scold you!”

The staff was caught off guard and fell to the ground. A sharp pain traveled from his elbow making him suck in a breath. He looked up towards Song Qingyan, and said word by word, “I have today only to collect the debt owed to Zhuyu Court by the Household. Why is Song Young Mistress making things difficult for me?”

Song Qingyan was guilty and her eyes flashed uncomfortably. She impolitely said, “Where did I make things difficult for you? I have already said to let you

come again at the end of the month...”

Upon hearing that, the staff became angry, “Every time I come to Wu’an Marquis Mansion to settle the accounts, the staff always give me excuses like that. I dare not trust Young Mistress’ perfunctory statement anymore. Now, Zhuyu Court has become short of cash because Wu’an Marquis Household has owed 10 years worth of debt. We need this cash urgently...”

“Wu’an Marquis Household has not settled 10 years worth of accounts. Is that real?” A commoner said.

“Of course it’s real. If you don’t believe, brother, I will read it to you.”

The staff quickly took out the copied accounts statement and loudly read, “On XX year, XX month, XX day, Wu’an Marquis’ lady brought a set of Southern pearl jewelry, a set of sapphire stone jewelry, a set of pearl jewelry, a pair of Southern pearl head jewelry, worth 20 thousand taels. On XX year, XX month, XX date, Wu’an Marquis’ lady bought...”

“It’s really the date from 10 years ago... Is the list not fake...”

“Who dares to falsify such things to scheme against the Wu’an Marquis’ Household. Unless he doesn’t want to live anymore...”

“That’s true. Zhuyu Court’s reputation is good. The manager is also an honest person. He wouldn’t falsify such a thing to harm others...”

“The noble Wu’an Marquis household takes people’s goods and not pay up. When people chase for ten years worth of debt, they still try to delay payment. How... how... sigh...”

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Chapter 22 – Bullying Murong Ruo

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“This Wu'an Marquis Mansion looks quite grand. It shouldn't be lacking in money right...”

“Who knows? Maybe they really do not have enough money. Or maybe they have money but do not want to give and is prepared to default on the payment...”

“The character of people in this Wu'an Marquis Household is really quite bad...”

“Who says it isn't...”

Everyone's criticisms travelling into all ears. Song Qingyan's beautiful small face turned red – so what if she takes things from Zhuyu Court? That's she aunt's dowry shop. No matter how much she takes, she didn't destroy these peoples' interest. Why are they so indignant?

Slight fury appeared beneath her eyes. She was just prepared to teach everyone a lesson when a middle-aged man rang first, “I am Jingxiu Silk Warehouse's staff. Wu'an Marquis Household had been buying 10 years of silk cloth from our warehouse without payment. When I collect payment at the beginning of each month, they also use all sorts of excuses. Today, I have met Zhuyu Court's staff who are in the same boat. Sigh... I shall also read out of the list to everyone...”

“On XX year, X month, X day, Wu'an Marquis' lady bought 2 batches of Shu brocade, 2 batches of Yun brocade, 2 batches of Su embroidered brocade, worth 10,000 taels. On XX year, XX month, XX day, Wu'an Marquis' lady brought...”

“Me too, me too. I am from the antique goods shop. Wu'an Marquis' lady have also been taking quite a bit from the antique goods shop over these ten years.

And similarly has not paid a single cent. Every time I ask for payment, they will make excuses. I have brought the list along now and shall read to everyone as well...”

Six shopkeepers representing six shops stood in front of the main entrance of the Wu’an Marquis Mansion in a line each holding a long list and loudly and clearly reading out the list in measured cadence. The large amount of each item sent people into hysterics.

“Wu’an Marquis Household really spend so much. Each time they buy almost close to 10,000 taels worth...”

“I would be willing to buy as much clothing, jewelry and antiques as possible if I could only record my debt and not payment anything...”

“If you don’t have money then don’t buy so many thing. How can one take things without paying... Wu’an Marquis Household really is... like street thugs and gangsters...”

“If someone owed me that much money and refuses to pay, but continues to take antiques and paintings from my shop, I would have sued them in court...”

Ridicule and disdainful criticisms came from all sides, scolding Song Qingyan until she daren’t look up. Face red, she urgently instructed, “Mei’er, Mei’er, hurry and go inform my mother...” The situation has gotten big and she couldn’t handle it on her own.

“Yes!” The maid Mei’er nodded and turned around to go into the Mansion when she saw Murong Ruo accompanied by a group of maids hurriedly walking over.

Her hair was raised high, revealing a beautiful small face that was well-taken care of. Her elegant robe was grand and colorful, making her look more elegant and noble. Her red lips were pursed tightly and her cold gaze swept across the line of 6 shopkeepers. Her beautiful brows tightly frowned, “What is going on?”

The 6 shopkeepers looked at each other. The staff from Zhuyu Court stepped out and bowed deeply towards Murong Ruo, “Lady Song, we have come to settle the debts!”

“If you want to settle the accounts, go and look for the butler, why are you

making a ruckus here?” Murong Ruo snapped. After standing in front of the Wu’an Marquis Mansion entrance and reading out that long list of accounts, the people of the Capital will all know that Wu’an Marquis household likes to take things without paying and even owe up to ten years. By then, the household’s face will be all lost.

“Lady Song, when we looked for the butler previously, the butler always made excuses and delay the settlement. This delays has been going on for ten years. We really have no other choice that why we are doing it this way.” Zhuyu Court’s staff explained bitterly.

“That’s right, Lady Song. Because we cannot collect these debts, our shops cannot turn around and is almost going to cease operations. I beg you to settle the accounts.” The shopkeeper of Jingxiu Silk Warehouse continued, loudly begging.

“Yes, Lady Song, I beg you. We have elderly and young dependent on us. If the shop closes, we have no way to feed our family...”

The 6 shopkeepers stood in front of the entrance begging and crying, looking extremely pitiful!

The surrounding crowd shook their heads and sighed, “Isn’t the saying – the creditors are the bosses and debtors are the dogs? How come it’s the opposite here? The debtors are the bosses and creditors become the dogs.”

“Who ask them to be owed to by Wu’an Marquis household? The common people cannot fight with the officials – even if they do fight they cannot win...”

“I heard that Shuntian Magistrate Court’s Official Lin is an upright official. If you sue them there, you should be able to seek justice...”

“Official Lin’s rank is entirely not Wu’an Marquis’ level. Even if you go to court, it is hard to say...”

“That’s true. If the official’s rank is high, it can crush people. If Wu’an Marquis puts pressure on Official Lin’s judgment... Sigh...”

Ridicule poured in and attacked them. Murong Ruo’s face turned scarily dark, and her cold gaze fell on to those 6 shopkeepers. She controlled her temper and gave a false smile with much difficulty, “Any accounts with the shops have been

managed by the butler. I don't know anything about it..."

Since the issues has exploded, the reputation of Wu'an Marquis' household has been damaged. Her mother-in-law and husband will definitely be furious. She needs to take herself out of the equation and can definitely not carry much a bad accusation.

Everyone were not convinced. Murong Ruo holds the reins to Wu'an Marquis' household's internal affairs. Every month she will check the expenses of the household. She makes so many silk batches, jewelry from the shops but her butler is not paying them – shouldn't she be able to see?

Even if she didn't notice, it is forgivable if it's once or twice. But over ten years, she would have checked the accounts 120 times and didn't notice till now... Hehe... Even the blind are not as dumb as her...

The antique goods store's staff walked up and quietly said, "Lady Song, we do not want to dispute over the debt issue anymore. All we want now is to collect the payment. Please fulfill our wish!"

Whoever wants to carry the charges of damaging the reputation of the Wu'an Marquis household can do so. That has nothing to do with them. Their objective of coming here today is just to collect the debt!

Murong Xue's eyes flashed sinisterly and then returned to normal. She smiled lightly and said, "The 6 of you need not worry. Our household has always seen our reputation as important. The debt that we owe your shops will be returned without a cent missing to all 6 of you." The crowd was very agitated. If she dared to say a word of rejection, she would drown in their accusations.

The 6 shopkeepers immediately smiled widely and their eyes shone as they looked at Murong Ruo, "That's fantastic. Would Lady Song be paying in cheque or cash?"

"We don't have many cheques in the Mansion but we do have a lot of cash. However, ten years of accounts is quite a lot. Given your weak bodies, I just afraid that you are able to carry that much..." Murong Ruo said smiling, her eyes flashed with sharp coldness. She will first make a promise to replay and disperse the crowd then she will harshly teach these six incompetent bastards a lesson...

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Chapter 23 – Settling The Debt

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“Thank you for your concern my Lady, but we have already prepared for that!” Zhuyu Court's staff snapped a finger while smiling. From around the corner, dozens of large horse carriages appeared and each carriage was accompanied by 3 or 4 guards in battle robes, holding knives and swords!

“The managers know that the debt amount is large. To prevent any accidents, they have informed the bank and asked them to bring people and transport here and will deposit the money directly into the bank.”

Murong Ruo's face turned green and her fists clenched tightly under her sleeves. They had already guessed that she would say that and thus had planned such a trap for her to jump into. How hateful!

“Lady Song, can we settle the accounts now?” Zhuyu Court's staff softly inquired; his eyes shone with undisguised happiness making Murong Ruo burn in fury, and could not wait to tear this face that was triumphant and provocative.

The crowd was watching from the sidelines so Murong Ruo could not kick up a fuss. She held in her anger and said, “Of course. Lan'er, bring some to the treasury to withdraw the money!” Her calm voice revealed a slight gritting of teeth.

“Yes, ma'am!” Maid Lan'er curtsied and said towards the 6 shopkeepers at the bottom of the steps, “Gentlemen, please follow me!”

“Thank you for your effort!” The 6 shopkeepers politely bowed and invited Huitong Bank's staff and strode into the Wu'an Marquis Mansion.

Looking at the way they thought it was in their right to do, Song Qingyan hatefully stomped her feet. She hurriedly walked towards Murong Ruo and lowered her voice, “Mother, are we really going to settle all the accounts. We don't have that much money in the Mansion!”

In these recent years, she had often followed Murong Ruo in and out of Zhuyu Court, the silk shop, and had always taken many things each time. It is definitely going to be a huge amount.

“I know!” Murong Ruo’s eyes flashed with coldness, “But the fact that Wu’an Marquis household owes them 10 years worth of payments will spread widely. If we do not settle the bills completely today, we will prove to them that we do not settle our bills and will be laughed at by the people of Capital, ridiculed by the nobles and everywhere we go we will be pointed at by people until we are not able to walk with our heads high. Wu’an Marquis household will not be able to continue staying in the Capital.”

“That serious?!” Song Qingyan frowned hard and her arrogant little face sank. She grumbled resentfully, “Grandmother is too much. If she wants the money then she should just say. Why did she let the 6 shopkeepers make a scene and make us, Wu’an Marquis household, lose face? It will also not reflect well on her...”

“Do you think that Zhuyu Court and the antique goods shop is still being managed by your grandmother?” Murong Ruo glanced at her and scoffed.

Song Qingyan paused, “Mother means that Zhuyu Court, the antiques good shops and Jinxiu silk warehouse have all changed hands... It might be trouble caused by Murong Xue, that little bitch. Last time she schemed against me and took back all the jewelry I had chosen from my aunt’s dowry. This time she’s even worse; she actually schemed against the entire Wu’an Marquis household...”

“Don’t say so much!” Murong Ruo waved her hand and interrupted her. She took out a bunch of keys from her sleeve and gave it her, “Quickly go to the treasury and take out that set of jade jewelry, Southern pearl jewelry, and red emerald jewelry... bring them to Duobao Court and exchange them for cash...”

Song Qingyan listened to the list of jewelry names and widened her eyes in shock, “Mother, those are your dowry. You liked them the most!” And even promised that when she got marriage, they would be given to her as her dowry. How can they be sold?

“For ten years we have taken at least a million taels worth of goods from

Zhuyu Court and those 6 shops. The money we have in the Mansion, inclusive of the cheques, will not add up to that much. We must pawn these jewelry to gather up the money...”

Murong Ruo said quietly, her eyes flashed coldly and lightly patted Song Qingyan’s shoulder, “Don’t worry. When we have endured the hurdle in front of us, Mother will redeem all of them for give it to you for your dowry!”

“Alright!” Song Qingyan nodded. Holding the key, she reluctantly walked towards the treasury.

Murong Ruo looks at the guards from Huitong Bank walking here and there. The handkerchief in her hands were twisted into knots and her beautiful eyes narrowed slightly – when Qingyan was forced by Murong Xue to return Chen’s jewelry, she had thought that it was just an argument between little girls and did not take notice.

She never imagined that only a few days later, Murong Xue had not only snatched the shop deeds away from her mother, but had also attacked her unexpectedly, forcing her to return everything that she had swallowed from the 6 shops, and even damaged her reputation, causing her to lose face in front of everyone. What a good trick!

This weak and sickly niece of her is definitely not a simple character. It seems like she needs to find a time to return to the Marquis’ Mansion and meet this niece that she has never taken a good look at before!

Bright sunlight shone onto the water surface, reflecting bits of golden light. A light breeze caressed and brought with it a sky filled with raining flower petals.

Murong Xue wore a pink robe made of thin cloth and gracefully sat in front of the round table underneath the viburnum flower tree. She sipped lightly at her tea and casually counted the bills.

The 6 managers stood not far off from her and looked at the large amounts on those bills. They did have not envy or jealousy, just respect. They had used all sorts of ways to demand for payment over the last ten year and did not even let Wu’an Marquis household spit up a cent. Once Murong Xue’s plan was carried out, Wu’an Marquis household had hurriedly returned all the money owed. So brilliant!

When they stood at the corner of the street and saw the carts of silver taels bring pulled to Huitong Bank, they were still stunned. Wu'an Marquis' household had so much money yet they kept delaying on their payment. What terrible character they have. When they left the street corner, they heard people discussing and criticizing how bad a character the people of Wu'an Marquis household have.

“The debt has been entirely settled. All of you have put in hard work. Please money is to award everyone. Managers, staff, everyone has a share!” Murong Xue had finished calculating the bills and confirmed that there was no error before taking out 6 bills and putting them onto the table.

The 6 managers walked up one by one and picked up the bill. When they saw the amount on the bills, they all smiled brightly, “Thank you so much, Young Mistress!” After managing the shops for so many years, this is the first time they have seen so much in bonuses. Young Mistress is so generous.

“If the shops' profits for this year is 10% more than last year. I will also give all of you a huge bonus at the end of the year!” Murong Xue smiled lightly, like a hundred flowers blooming.

The managers' eyes immediately shone. Young Mistress is generous. If she says that the bonus is huge, it will definitely be not a small amount of taels!”

“Thank you very much Young Mistress. We will definitely do our best in managing the shops and will definitely not disappoint Young Mistress.” The managers solemnly promised and walked out of Luoxue Court full of thanks.

Murong Ye quickly walked forward and looked at that thick wad of bills, full of astonishment, “Sister, how did you manage to think of such a method to collect the debt?”

His sister had easily resolved what was causing the managers such a huge headache and what even he thought hard but couldn't find a solution. How brilliant!

Murong Xue took a sip of tea, her eyes bright and active, “Wu'an Marquis household is a noble family and places great importance on their reputation. They will definitely not allow any blemishes on themselves. When I asked the shopkeepers to read the accounts at the entrance of Wu'an Marquis Mansion, it

is airing their dirty laundry. If Wu'an Marquis household does not wish to continue airing their dirty laundry, then they might obediently paid up!"

"I see!" Murong Ye nodded with half-understanding. His gaze turned bright at the sight of the thick wad of bills, "Sister, since you have so much money, give me ten thousand taels to spend please!"