

水滸傳

第一回  
林冲  
上梁山

# 將軍只怕怕姑娘逃

《水滸傳》第11回

第一回  
林冲  
上梁山





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# 將軍只怕姑娘逃

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# The General Only Fears the Maiden's Escape

## - Chapter 00-04 Part 1

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# Prologue



## The General Only Fears the Maiden's Escape

### 《將軍只怕姑娘逃》

By Ye Shuang 《葉雙》

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#### Synopsis:

Everyone says that General Chai's personality is cruel and tyrannical, having beaten to death servants and that he prefers men. Even if rumors cannot be completely believed, she doesn't want to go along with her stepmother's social ladder climbing intentions. Although she knows that it is improper, she decides to give him a show of severity to prevent him from coming to propose marriage. But before receiving his consent, her stepmother had already made her move. Not only did she order a servant to bring a muddle-headed her to the brothel, she colluded with the brothel owner to make plans for her, to let the two of them reach the stage where there's no going back, and force her to marry.

Luckily, he knew from the start and took advantage of this to play along and help her escape from this trouble. She discovered then that he actually conducts himself in an upright and honest manner, not at all cruel and ruthless like rumors said.

Who knew that her stepmother would put her under house arrest for money, wanting to sell her to someone as a concubine. He worried about her situation, and did not hesitate at all to look after her in the nights, and even making his liking towards her known, making her realize that she had long carved the imposing and handsome him into her heart.

However, with the day of her wedding approaching, she without freedom did not dare to hope for any results with him. Who knew that in spite of his status of a general, that in spite of criticisms, he would come to steal the bride!

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### **Prologue:**

An expression of displeasure began to form in his bright eyes.

He coldly looked at those unfamiliar old woman, going back and forth exceptionally busily before him.

Thinking back to the last few days and the old women who continuously went to and fro inside his house, he found that there was not only one of them, and they all wore crimson clothes. The cheerful atmosphere that they brought with them didn't require him to give it anymore thought, he could guess that they were probably famous matchmakers in the city.

But however slow he was, Chai She Xia found that there was something not quite right regarding this affair.

He's always hated women, and hated even more women walking about freely in his domain. Sometimes even when his married off sisters came back to the manor to stay, he would avoid them if he could.

Women are noisy, always disturbing him to the point where he feels ill-at-ease, making him want to get really angry.

The old women who had just passed by suddenly all left with smiles, and those huge smiles only let his expression darken.

"Damn it!" Chai She Xia impatiently cursed under his breath. Although he wanted to continue turning a blind eye, but seeing the matchmakers continuously going back and forth, he knew that he could not continue on

peacefully.

If he let Mother carry on like this, maybe one day he would be knocked unconscious, and wake up to find himself tied to a strange maiden and kneeling at the altar, about to marry her.

After no results came from going to Mother's quarters with a few large steps, he turned to go to Father's resting room. Although it was written clearly on his face not to approach him, Ma Ma who wasn't afraid to die blocked his way as he was about to step into Father's resting quarters.

"The Lord and Lady are resting, Young Master should come back later!"

Glaring at the smiling Ma Ma, he hooked up the corners of his mouth and said coldly: "Get out of my way!"

Today, he planned to get Mother to explain what schemes she had been up to lately, and didn't want too crude to the old Ma Ma, but he was impatient and pulled her away.

He walked straight into the hall with such an imposing manner that even if they wanted to, the servants would be too afraid to stop him.

"Mother, what game are you playing?" In a bad mood, Chai She Xia disregarded his upbringing and pushed the solid wooden door with all his might, and bellowed into the inner hall.

Bewildered upon hearing his son's thunder-like voice, the old General Chai Mu Xiu's eyes widened, and he angrily turned over to get out of bed to teach his disrespectful son a lesson.

But as he sat up, a pair of soft hands reached up from inside the warm blankets, and pushed down on Chai Mu Xiu's torso.

"Husband, I'll deal with this young one."

Lady Chai, Ruan Gui Lin, lazily smiled, and with this smile, and even the old general who was a man with willpower like steel turned soft.

"This young one is becoming more and more unreasonable." Even though his wife's smile had taken away his anger, Chai Mu Xiu couldn't help but still say a few words.

“This young one has been angered.” Putting on a screwed and crafty smile, it was clear to Ruan Gui Lin why her son had come.

“What have you done now?” even though many old women had come into the manor lately, household matters were dealt with by his beloved wife and he didn’t concern himself with them, so he didn’t know himself what had happened.

“My Lord, do you want to have a grandson to hold?”

“Of course I do!” Speaking about this, an expression of sentimental longing crept onto Chai Mu Xiu’s heroic and valiant face.

His son was already far beyond a marriageable age, but stubbornly refused to marry. No matter how much he and his wife threatened and cajoled, he remained unswayed, but fueled many rumors and gossip. How could it not cause worry?

“Seeing as the Lord wants grandsons, then don’t bother yourself with this matter. Just wait quietly for me here.”

Ruan Gui Lin put on her clothes smoothly, and suddenly raised her head to catch a glimpse of her husband’s worried face. She promptly put on a confident smile to reassure him.

“My Lord don’t worry, I know my child. Even though his temper is explosive, it that’s towards outsiders. At the end of the day, I’m still his mother and he’ll still show me some respect.”

After hearing that, the worry in Chai Mu Xiu’s eyes lessened a little. Chai She Xia that youngster wasn’t afraid of anything in the world, and the only thing in the world that was able to restrain him by a little was his beloved wife.

Finally, he was persuaded, and looked over calmly at his tidily dressed wife who raised her hand and lowered the curtains around the bed. He continued lying comfortably, and through the curtains, watched his wife’s lithe and graceful body walk in front of their son, and mercilessly rap him in the head.

Not at all caring that her son held a high position in the imperial court of a Grand General of the first rank, in the eyes of the mother, he was clearly still a child.

“What are you making a fuss about, where have your manners gone?”

“Mother...” He didn’t think that before he even began to ask questions, he would be demoralized by his mother’s show of strength. Chai She Xia was distracted for the first instance, and let out an innocent sigh.

“What are you sighing for, is there really a child such as you? What pressing matter is there to justify you barging your way in like that? No manners at all.”

Through the slightly swaying veil, Chai She Xia knew in his heart where his mother’s intense anger came from, but towards the good thing that he had disrupted, he did not feel guilty in the slightest, and panting with rage, faced his mother to ask: “Mother, I want to ask you what those matchmakers are doing in our home?”

Knowing how cunning Mother was, he didn’t give her any chance to evade the question and got straight to the point.

“Of course I’ve invited them here to find a match for you. What else could it be, do you think that they’re here to find a concubine for your father?” Completely ignoring her son’s frightening expression, Ruan Gui Li said, not at all trying to conceal the truth.

Speaking so directly, even the Chai Mu Xiu who was hiding in the blankets broke out in cold sweat for his wife, but he intelligently did not make a sound, and listened quietly.

Because the image of a baby floated into his head, Chai Mu Xiu couldn’t help but want to cheer on his wife.

“I didn’t say I wanted to get married,” Chai She Xia said coldly, glowering towards his mother.

“You didn’t say anything, but I want you to get married. You came from my stomach, so you have to listen to me. Whether or not you’re willing, on the table are portraits of girls that the matchmakers have brought. You can pick one yourself, or I will pick one for you, whichever way you will be married within half a year and give me a grandson within a year.”

She didn’t care at all about her son’s furious expression, and spoke out her decision word by word. With the aggressiveness that her husband had rubbed

off on her these last few years, she would not lose to her son.

“I’m not choosing...” With a most furious glare, Chai She Xia’s words shot towards his mother like an ice bead.

Having expected her son to react that way, she shrugged her shoulders and not allowing him to finish refusing, interrupted him to first say: “Of course you can not choose, I don’t mind choosing for you anyway.”

In any case, she was determined to force her son to take a wife this time, otherwise with his increasingly women-hating attitude, it may become hard for her to ever hold a grandchild in this lifetime.

Thinking about that, she walked towards the desk without explanation, and picked up the portraits that the matchmakers had brought, and stuffed them all into her son’s hands.

“You can leave now!”

“Mother, you...”

The veins on the side of Chai She Xia’s forehead throbbed, he hadn’t expected Mother to be so obstinate and unyielding. He was starting to get a bad feeling about this.

Not taking notice of her son’s face that was turning white and green, Ruan Gui Lin looked towards her much taller son and said: “Remember, I’m only giving you half a years time.”

After throwing down those words, she ungracefully raised a foot, looking like she wanted to kick her son out through the door.

Chai She Xia was so made his face was ashen, but did not know what to do, so could only grind his teeth and say provokingly to his mother: “And if I don’t agree, can you tie me up and force me to kneel at the altar?”

Ruan Gui Lin would not be outdone by her son, and said, “You can try if you want, if you are so determined not to have me as a mother, you can go your own way.”

Facing Mother’s fierce words, he left speechless in the end, and could only unhappily turn around and leave, not wanting to waste anymore words.

In any case, he did not think that he couldn't beat his own mother.

“My Lord, do you think it will work this time?”

Seeing that her son has finally left, Ruan Gui Lin patted her chest nervously, and returned to the bedside to ask hurriedly.

After hearing everything, Chai Mu Xiu could only helplessly look at his wife, and say: “That's your son!”

How would he know whether or not it would work?

He never had many desires in this lifetime, and only hoped that in years he had left, would not see this explosive pair of mother and son destroy each other.

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### **Notes:**

I haven't dropped my translation of Killing of Three Thousand Crows, but it's going to go a lot slower, mainly because I have it in book form and I translate on the go a lot between classes using my phone. It simply takes a lot more time, and my time in front of a laptop is usually reserved for my original fiction.

This is a rather short novel I stumbled upon, and I'll be doing my usual thing—translating as I read. I translated all of this all within half a day while having other things to do, so hopefully this translation goes a lot faster!

On the note of original fiction, I've been writing some of my own stories which are very much in the same vein as c-novels, so I'll probably be posting some online if there's any interest!

# Chapter One (Part 1)

## Chapter One (Part 1):

As far as the eye could see from the little loft, was the sight of flourishing flowers in the yard. On top of that, with the meticulously cared for decorations around her, it could be said that Cui Miao He was raised indulgently within the manor.

Although the Cui Family could not be counted as prominent or high ranking, under the guidance of the Che Family, was able to seek work in the Ministry of Appointments, and was able to have a bit of a reputation to their name in the capital city.

As the eldest daughter of the Cui Family, she naturally should have been spoiled, and her days should have been content beyond any other, but unfortunately, her mother died early and current lady of the Cui Family was a second wife. After she married into the family, she also bore a daughter, and for her own daughter's position in the Cui Family, Lady Cui saw Cui Miao He as a nail in her eye, a thorn in her flesh.

What she looked to, what she thought of, was Cui Miao He committing a wrong so she could drive her out of the Cui Manor in a right and proper way.

Regarding this, although Cui Miao He was very clear what they thought, she didn't care about it too much and lived her own life in a carefree way. Towards the two, she minded her own business and they minded theirs.

They were afraid of consequences as she was related to the Che Family, and so didn't dare to be too presumptuous in front of her.

Until that day, Minister Che somehow offended the current Prime Minister and was accused of misconduct, and even send the Emperor into a rage and had their house searched.

Because they had always been close to the Che Family, even they were called into question. Officials from the Ministry of Justice came to the Cui Family and searched a few times, and although they did not find any evidence, it allowed her

stepmother to come up with an excuse.

She completely ignored the past friendship between the two families, and urged Father to force her to break all connections with the Che Family to avoid being implicated again.

Not being allowed to visit wasn't much, but even giving them help in the form of money was forbidden. She thought that Father would have at least taken into account old affections, but who knew that Father would take in Stepmother's slanders this time, and not only forbid her from going to find Yuan Yu *jie jie*, but also forbid her from taking any money from the house to help the Che Family who had fallen into misfortune.

How hateful!

Thinking about this, a flaming rage suddenly rose up in Cui Miao He's heart. She's always thought that if others so not offend her, she would not offend others. She didn't think that not fighting would let Stepmother think that she was a pushover.

"Miss, why is your expression so bad, are you feeling unwell?" Huan Huan carried a meal box, and was currently preparing her master's lunch. When she saw her master's dark face, she asked with concern at once.

"I..."

A mouth full of grievances about to spill out, she caught a glimpse out of the corner of her eye of a person. She swiftly held back the anger from her face, and put on a smile on her face as if she was performing a conjuring trick.

She would let Huan Huan see her mood, but wasn't willing to let her little sister who was born of the same father but different mother catch a glimpse.

"Mei Mei, why have you come?" Cui Miao He asked lightly, fixing her gaze on her younger sister's delicate and beautiful face. Although there was a bright smile on her face, it did not reach her eyes.

"I've come specially to congratulate Jie Jie." Cui Yun Xiu sat gracefully in front of her elder sister, and spoke hastily before the servant poured tea.

"Congratulate?" Cui Miao He repeated, not understanding. Her eyebrows

puckered up at the expression of taking joy at other people's misfortunes in her eyes.

Although she and Cui Yun Xiu were sisters in name, she wasn't much closer to her than a stranger.

She was very clear that her stepmother and younger sister saw her as a prick in their eye, a thorn in their flesh, and she was used to treating the two as air. If she could not see them, she would not, and they would mind their own business.

And now Cui Yun Xiu had come bursting into her courtyard without any good intentions.

Her attitude was neither cold nor warm, and not at all in a hurry to get her to leave. She wanted to see what Cui Yun Xiu was up to.

"Of course, I should congratulate Jie Jie."

Under the instruction of Stepmother, Cui Yun Xiu was more like a girl from a wealthy family than her, the eldest daughter.

Seeing her appearance of effortless and composed grace, this act of a wealthy girl attracted notice and praise.

"You keep saying congratulations, but why do you not say from where your happiness comes from?"

Cui Miao He really become curious about where this bout of happiness came from. She had been put under house arrest by Father for the last few days, and her heart had been caught up with the Che *jie jie* who had met with misfortune. These things, that pair of mother and daughter knew very well, and now coming to congratulate her, she was only afraid that they would make a joke out of her.

"Eh, Jie Jie doesn't know yet? Mother has arranged a marriage for Jie Jie already!"

On Cui Yun Xiu's face was a mysterious smile, and if one were to look closely, a faint expression of taking joy in another's misfortune could be seen.

Looking at her crafty smile in her eyes, a bad feeling rose up Cui Miao He's heart. It looked like even if the Emperor's investigation of the Che Family did not harm the Cui Family, it harmed her.

The only support which she had that the mother and daughter were afraid of had fallen, and they had come over to step on her.

Liang Yu Xian never thought well of her, and the man she had found likely wasn't an ideal husband.

Cui Miao He looked quietly at her younger sister, her face still showing a bit of an unaffected and innocent expression. Even though she had always acted lovable and foolishly in front of her two good friends, Che Yuan Yu and Ji Jun Han, she did so because she knew that they genuinely loved her. She didn't need to put an act in front of them, and could wholeheartedly be herself.

She didn't ask any further, and Cui Yun Xiu became anxious. After all, a husband was what every girl hoped for, how could she not be curious? Seeing her elder sister light and calm manner, she couldn't hold it in anymore and asked: "Jie Jie, aren't you curious who he is?"

"Not curious, because I won't agree to this." Pursing her lips. Cui Miao He smiled because she saw the astonishment in her younger sister's eyes.

"You... why do you refuse? Since olden times, a girl's marriage was decided by her parents. If Mother wants you to marry, what right do you have to refuse?" She was beaten by her elder sister again, and Cui Yun Xiu was angered to the point of gnashing her teeth at how composed her sister was.

"If I don't want to marry, who can force me!" With a sweep of her eyes, a cold look burst forth. No matter who the person was, she would not get on the marriage sedan obediently, so she was not curious in the least.

That confidence was really infuriating, and so Cui Yun Xiu didn't care about keeping her in suspense anymore, and said quickly: "No one cares if you agree or not. In any case, Lady Chai has been urgently trying to find Chai She Xia a bride these last few days, and when the matchmakers came to discuss, Mother asked them to take your portrait to General Chai's manor. If General Chai sees something in you, then you will be his wife."

"Oh? So that counts as us trying to connect ourselves with higher ranking people!" Cui Miao He said lightly, the expression on her delicate face completely calm, not at all showing even a thread of anger or difficulty.

“You’re willing to marry Chai She Xia?”

In reality, with Chai She Xia’s family background and now at the peak of his power, he was the wealthy husband that many unmarried girls hoped for.

Even herself once secretly hoped to be able to become Chai She Xia’s wife, to be able to be married off grandly, and to live the rest of her life in riches without any worries.

Who knew that in these last two years, opinions of Chai She Xia gradually became worse, and even though his prospects were the same, and many scandals came out. First, he beat to death a servant girl for a small matter, then it began to circulate that he liked men. Not only did he have secret relations with several gentle and lovely looking men, he would often take pleasures and have fun in the manor. His acts of indecency set abuzz the talk among high ranking officials and noblemen.

At first when she heard these rumors, it was thought that it was a mistake, but slowly as these rumors become old, and more people believed them, even she who had not believed at the start believed in them without any doubt now.

Because of that, her original yearning for Chai She Xia turned into avoiding him at all costs, so when Lady Chai sent over matchmakers, she immediately thought of her elder sister. To her, this was killing two birds with one stone.

Not only could she properly and legally marry off this thorn in her side, she could see Cui Miao He suffer, having to live out the rest of her days like a widow, that was something that really pleased her.

“From the olden days, the marriage of us girls was ordered by our parents and arranged by matchmakers?” Even if the fury in her heart was like a fierce beast, rearing it’s head and snarling to escape it’s cage, but in order to stop her younger sister from catching even a thread of anger, a smile burst from Cui Miao He’s lips and she kept herself composed as she spoke.

“You know that Chai She Xia likes men, if you marry him, you might as well be a living widow for the rest of your life.” Not believing that she would not be able to frighten her older sister, Cui Yun Xiu stared with bright eyes, putting on a show of deep worry and concern.

“Even if it’s true, it’s my life, what is there to be afraid of?”

Knowing that her younger sister wouldn’t be satisfied until seeing her afraid and trembling, how could Cui Miao He let things go her way? So even if she was raging on the inside, she still spoke and smiled, relaxed.

“You...” Seeing her relaxed and composed, Cui Yun Xiu gnashed her teeth with hate.

She should be afraid, because Chai She Xia’s personality was cruel and he liked men. If a woman married that sort of man, what sort of hopes could they have for the rest of their life.

“You’re so concerned about Jie Jie, and I’m endlessly touched by it. Could it be that you’ve come to tell me this today because you’re willing to take my place?”

Her remaining patience had long trickled away to nothing, and seeing Cui Miao He put on yet another smile, and to guess so sweet-tempered and appreciatively, the bold but rather slow Cui Yun Xiu turned ashen, and just as expected, and hastily lied: “I... already have someone I like. Don’t think of pushing that terrifying man onto me, don’t think of destroying my life. You no longer have anyone supporting you now, Mother won’t sit by and watch you act high and mighty. You just wait and marry into the General’s Manor, and spend the rest of your life in misery!”

Not being able to pretend anymore, Cui Yun Xiu simply stopped acting out sisterly affections, and glared at her elder sister before turning and leaving.

Looking at the speedily retreating figure in front of her eyes, the calm expression on Cui Miao He’s face immediately disappeared. Hearing her younger sister’s words, how could she not panic?

She had never thought about marrying anyone, and even if she married, she would never be willing to marry a man who long had a bad reputation. No, that wouldn’t do. She had to think of a solution, she wouldn’t foolishly let herself be taken advantage of by others.

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The artists in the city must have had very good business lately!

Chai She Xia looked coldly at the portraits which almost covered the entire

writing desk, the veins on his forehead could not help but throb.

He easily ripped a few of those portraits, and took a few steps forward, and made a brushing motion with his hand, and the portraits fell all over the floor. Mixed among them were his military books and military strategy diagrams.

Upon seeing this, the servant behind him was speechless towards his master's anger. Before he had the chance to bend down and tidy up, a bright and teasing laugh broke the quiet, causing the master and servant's line of sight to be directed at the newcomer.

“Why are you angry so early in the morning?”

“You've here!” Already used to his good friend's habit of coming in without notice, he just raised his head, not even bothering to hide the impatience on his face.

“Tell me, what are you angry about so early?”

“I'm angry at my extremely bored mother.”

With that one sentence, and seeing the portraits of girls everywhere, Ju Su Sheng was already very clear on where Chai She Xia's anger came from.

“Your mother is taking care of your marriage?”

“Humph!” Chai She Xia didn't answer, and just gave a loud snort.

Ju Su Sheng didn't take his friend's rudeness to heart, and smiled faintly, and flipped through the elaborately drawn portraits.

Eh... it's her!

Looking at the true to life portrait in front of him, he immediately recalled the lovable appearance of the person in the portrait, and couldn't help but grin. Then he looked at the mountain-like Chai She Xia towering in front of him, and got an idea.

This quick-witted and intelligent maiden was worthy of Chai She Xia, and this could be considered as a good marriage!

Still looking at the portrait, he said in a moderate tone: “This maiden has a good look about her, her lips are smiling and her eyes are quick, she looks like a

lively and agreeable maiden.”

“If you like it, you can have it.” He didn’t think that his friend with his exceptionally high standards would so easily praise someone in the portraits. At first, Chai She Xia was stunned, then he spoke hastily to try rid himself of trouble.

He thought that the pile of portraits were exceptionally annoying, and that if anyone wanted them, he would be eager to give them all away and save himself some trouble.

“If you give these away, wouldn’t Lady Chai just find some more?” Towards Chai She Xia’s straightforward personality, Ju Su Sheng couldn’t help but shake his head and smile.

“Uh...” Hearing that, Chai She Xia paused and thought about it for a moment, and knew that Ju Su Sheng’s words made sense.

Even if he gave away all the portraits, knowing Mother’s personality, she would struggle on and send over even more.

This time, she was really determined to find a wife for him. If he yielded and brought a wife home to be put on display, then he would only be afraid that his mother who had been pampered out of control by Father would not give up.

Thinking about this, his mood turned nastier, and another frightening layer of frost appeared on his face.

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### **Notes:**

Something went wrong with the timezone for the schedules posting, so this part accidentally posted while I was asleep and before it was ready ;;

As speed is my goal, and I’m pretty busy these days, I will not be editing chapters so expect typos and grammar mistakes everywhere.

The site I’m reading from has split the chapters into two parts, so I’ll be going by that!

# Chapter One (Part 2)

## Chapter One (Part 2):

“Therefore, rather than having your mother pester you endlessly, why don’t you just pick one that’s nice to look at.” Ju Su Feng suggested.

“Women, how troublesome!” Chai She Xia refused without a second thought. Just thinking of his few experiences with women, even him, the young general who had fought a hundred battles shivered.

“Women are troublesome, but right now it’s even more troublesome that you do not have one.” In Chai She Xia’s mind, he thought that even ten women wouldn’t be as troublesome as his headstrong mother. He really hit the nail on the head with that sentence. “So I should listen to my mother, and find trouble to place by my side?” Chai She Xia said stuffily, ten thousand sorts of disagreement flickering through his face.

Seeing as he still had noble aspirations in his heart, he wholehearted looked forward to the chaos in the imperial court to settle, to take soldiers to the northern desert borders and to conquer new territories for the dynasty.

“This trouble might not necessarily be trouble.” This sentence was also not necessarily said to be comforting.

Thinking about their good brother Zhang Sun Cheng Yin, wasn’t he concerned about Che Yuan Yu?

“How is it not trouble. Remember that Fang Qing girl last year, and Wu Tong. Weren’t they all trouble?” Chai She Xia said in an unpleasant tone.

Just thinking about the trouble that Fang Qing and Wu Tong had caused, the wrinkles in his forehead could crush a bug to death.

Fang Qing was a servant that his mother had arranged for him, but she actually fell in love with a scholar who had rushed to the capital to take the examinations. In order not to ruin the Chai Family’s reputation, and taking Fang Qing’s happiness into consideration, he had no choice but to put on a show and

“beat to death” Fang Qing so she could change her name, and return home with the scholar and live out the rest of her life in bliss.

Although he had done a benevolent thing, those who did not know the true story cursed his heartlessness behind his back.

So for women, he had sufferings that could not be spoken!

And that Wu Tong girl, she was obviously a girl but liked to dress as a man. That in itself wasn't anything to worry about, but she completely disregarded differences between men and women, and liked to get touchy-feely with him on the busy streets, and so the rumour that he liked men spread like wildfire. That would have been forgotten about, but then she ended up saying that she didn't want to be trapped in the small courtyard of the Chai Manor, and after a while of them being all but husband and wife, she insisted that he was a brother to her, and relying on his love for her, went far away to roam distant lands.

She was alright having walked away from the problem, but had brought him a bad reputation.

His personality had always been careless, and he didn't really care what other people thought of him, and those rumours had brought him a time of peace.

But who knew that once those rumours reached Mother's ears, they brought about much fuss over nothing. Although Mother reasonably let Wu Tong leave, she was afraid that he would not be able to take a wife because of those rumours, and so she would not be able to have a grandchild. So, she was doing the best to make sure he married in the short amount of time, and produced a fat little child.

So, the portraits in front of him were the poison left behind by those rumours.

“They are troublesome, but even more troublesome is your mother, right!”

That was right on the spot. Chai She Xia heard what was said, and his tall figure went stiff.

“To attack the root of the problem, so your mother stops bothering you, you should do what doesn't make her worry.”

Ju Su Sheng said that naturally, with the air of brotherly affections like he

wished the best, but craftiness flashed through his eyes.

“So what you mean is that I should choose a woman myself?”

Wouldn't that be just making it troublesome for himself? In the future, there would be large troubles and small troubles. Did he even want to live anymore if it was like that?

“Of course, pick a woman to calm your mother down. After, you'll have time to make plans, and you would have earned yourself some peace and quiet. Isn't that right?”

“That...”

After hearing that, Chai She Xia thought that it made a bit of sense, but also thought that it was a little strange, so he stared at Ju Su Sheng, trying to figure out what he was up to.

“Hey, you think I would try to hurt you?” Ju Su Sheng did not try in the least to cover up that he thought that Chai She Xia had no conscience, and even brought up an expression of faint dejection on his face.

“You're always full of sinister plots, who knows what you're calculating now?” Chai She Xia said unpleasantly to Ju Su Sheng's dejected face.

Since they met, he with the careless personality had been tricked by his words many times. Thankfully no harm came of it, but who could blame him for doubting him.

“Alright, seeing as you don't recognise good intentions, I won't say anymore.” Spreading out his arms, Ju Su Sheng shut his mouth, an annoyed expression on his face.

Upon seeing this, Chai She Xia felt guilty. He and Su Sheng had always been good brothers, and along with Cheng Yin, the three of them helped each other achieve goals in the imperial court. He really shouldn't have doubted him.

He changed his mind, and thought that his good friend had a bit of a point, and for the sake of some peace and quiet, would try to fix a lost cause.

“Then you tell me, who do I pick?”

Hearing this, Ju Su Sheng's eyes flashed, and pretended to carelessly point at a

picture on the ground. “Her!”

Following his good friend’s finger, Chai She Xia’s gaze travelled to the portrait, and seeing the alert and crafty eyes of the person in the picture, he did not think that it was a good idea.

He opened his mouth, wanting to say something, but his friend was one step ahead and said: “Then what do you think should be done?”

Hearing his always resourceful friend asking what else could be done, the rough Chai She Ye didn’t know what else he could say, and could only his lips and stare at the portrait on the floor.

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The peonies placed in the main hall, apart from being eye-catching, in the last few years, because the imperial concubines in the palace started a trend of bestowing peonies, the common people began to like them as well. This brought about peonies becoming expensive, and if one did not have some family status, then they would not be able to get peonies.

Looking at the peonies which represented riches and honor, Cui Miao He did not think that there was anything special about them. Compared to the grace of the peony, she preferred the cool elegance of the daffodil.

Even though peonies were not the flowers she liked best, she still wanted reach out and touch the blossoming flower. Just when it was almost within reach, a cold shout suddenly sounded—

“Stop!”

Hearing that, she immediately turned towards the owner of that voice to see Stepmother staring coldly at her, saying: “Is that flower something that you can touch?”

Towards this stepdaughter, although she had never truly mistreated her, but never had a good expression to show her either.

Cui Miao He glared back at her cold faced stepmother, and pursed her lips and didn’t talk.

Although she was discontent, she didn’t flare up at once. She wanted to know what Stepmother called her over to the main hall for.

Liang Yu Xia became nervous because of the glare, and became angry.

“Don’t you know how precious the peony is?”

Towards this question, Cui Miao He just sneered, not even wanting to bother moving her lips at Stepmother’s discomfort.

“You...” Because of this sort of stare that seemed to penetrate one’s heart, she had never been able to see Cui Miao He as her own child.

Before, Liang Yu Xia would take into consideration the reputation of her relative, Che Hui Dong, and would not be too severe on her on the surface, but since the Che Family was in trouble, she no longer had so many qualms, and was eager to kick this eyesore out of the house.

“You called me here so urgently just to tell me how expensive this pot of flowers is?” Cui Miao He finally opened her mouth, and although her tone was steady, the impatience in her voice could be heard.

Right now, Liang Yu Xia was taking unfair advantage of the fact that she had no one to lean on, and sometimes even when Father was faced with Stepmother’s strength, he would rather have less to do and more peace, and so would turn a blind eye to her increasingly stepping over his head.

Before, Cui Miao He wouldn’t find trouble before herself, but since knowing that Stepmother had thought deliberately and carefully about roping in the Chai Family, she brazenly wanted to push her into a pit of fire. The anger in her heart raged and burned, and she didn’t care about being accommodating anymore.

“Seeing as you know how precious it is, why did you reach out to touch it?”

“It’s the property of my Cui Family. If i want to cherish it, then I will. If I don’t like it, then I can ruin it. What right do bystanders have to point the finger of blame at me?”

“You...”

This damned girl, she had formally thought that she was an ordinary girl from a wealthy family. Where did she learn to be so clever and eloquent?

If she didn’t marry her off quickly, the day would come when she would climb up over her head into a higher position.

She thought again, Cui Miao He and Yun Xiu were about the same age. If she didn't marry off Cui Miao He quickly, then how would Yun Xiu find the ideal husband?

Thinking of that, she restrained the anger boiling inside, and forced out a smile, and said: "Your father hopes that you can go get close to Lady Chai for a while, to let her get to know you better. If you can get Lady Chai and General Chai to like you, then that will greatly increase your chance of marrying into the Chai Family, and live out the rest of your days happily. Also, General Chai is an important young person in the court, if he could say some good things about your father to the Emperor, it could help your father's career, and using General Chai's name, his old position could be restored or he could even have a higher one."

After hearing that, Cui Miao He wore a sweet smile on her face, and just when Liang Yu Xia thought that she would obey, she said: "Seeing as you're concerned about Father's career, why don't you let my younger sister try to get Lady Chai's favour? If we talk about appearance, she is a great beauty, and don't you always say that her skill in the four great arts suppresses mine?"

Seeing as the mother and daughter didn't know of not doing to others what they would not like done to themselves, then why should she be polite?

"How can I send Yun Xiu, that Chai She Xia's reputation..."

Liang Yu Xia hastily tried to backtrack, but once the words left her mouth, she saw a cold smile on Cui Miao He's face, and swallowed her unsaid words. Her eyes widened, unable to believe that she let down her guard like that, and couldn't hold up her smile for any longer.

"I'm telling you, this time even if you don't want to marry you still have to. Your father has already sent your portrait to the Chai Manor. If General Chai chooses you, then even if I have to tie you up, I will marry you off there. Don't mention the value of the betrothal gift, but the help that his position will give to your father. This is an important responsibility that you have as the eldest daughter of the Cui Family."

After she finished talking, Cui Miao He just stared coldly at her.

That stare was like it was telling her, there was no one in the world who could

force her to do something she was unwilling to do.

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**Notes:**

And, that's the end of chapter one! I can't wait for the male and female lead to meet heh.

I've been on a roll with these translations, so fingers crossed that this translating streak continues!

# Chapter Two (Part 1)

## Chapter Two (Part 1):

Disliking someone was actually a very easy thing to do, and after being provoked by Liang Yu Xia and Cui Yun Xiu, Cui Miao He had already decided to dislike that man, Chai She Xia.

And seeing as she had decided to dislike him, she certainly wasn't willing to marry him.

What's more, Liang Yu Xia used the wording "to choose."

Who did this man think he was, only the current Emperor had the right to pick and choose girls, he was only an insignificant general, what right did he have to choose her with that high and mighty attitude?

What's more if that in the streets, the news regarding him preferring men and beating to death the concubine was all abuzz, how could she like a man who treated human lives like grass?

If she guessed correctly, Liang Yu Xiang and her daughter were counting their chickens before they hatched, and were trying their best to climb up the social ladder using this marriage with the Chai Family, and let Chai She Xia help with Father's career while letting her be mistreated or eliminated at Chai She Xia's hands.

They never cared what sort of suffering she would have to endure, or maybe they hoped that her coming days would be spent miserably, so they could let the hate in their hearts decrease a little.

But she never understood, what did they hate her for?

"He'er!"

While her mind was in a turmoil, Father had entered her small pavilion, and her thoughts were broken and she raised her head, and saw that Father's face and figure was like he had gotten older.

"Father!" Cui Miao He just opened her mouth to quietly call, and the ways in

which she had been wronged for the last few days floated into her mind, and tears appeared at the corners of her eyes.

“Little girl, what’s wrong? Has someone wronged you?” Cui Ming Yuan saw his daughter’s red rimmed eyes, and asked at once, the expression with which he examined his daughter not without doting.

Seeing that doting, the wronged feeling in her heart eased up by a lot, but when she opened her mouth, her voice was still a little choked. In order not to let Father worry, she tried very hard to smile. “I’m fine.”

It’s alright, even if Stepmother never liked her, Father still loved her.

“If there’s nothing wrong, then why are you crying?” Towards his motherless daughter, although he loved her, but because he wanted some peace and quiet, he turned a blind eye to the doings of his second wife as long as they weren’t excessive.

But because he did that, he became more and more distant with his eldest daughter.

“I heard your mother say that after your talk today, you’re willing to marry Chai She Xia. Is she making it all up?” Cui Ming Yuan was seldom serious, but evidently was displeased at his daughter crying.

“I...” She wanted to tell the truth about Stepmother’s plans, but then seeing how exhausted Father was, and how he had been implicated in forging salaries and been demoted, she swallowed those words.

Whatever, she won’t tell on them.

Even if she told the truth now, it would only make Father more depressed, and however it was said, even though Liang Yu Xia was a second wife, he was still Father’s wife.

Even if it was not for the sake of the monk, it was for the sake of the Buddha.

She didn’t want to stop talking now, and make Father’s mood worse.

Lowering her head with a sigh, Cui Miao He said: “I’m really fine, it’s just that I’ve been inside for so long that I feel trapped in. I want to go out for a walk.”

Hearing that, Cui Ming Yuan knew that his daughter was blaming him for

distancing himself from the Che Family, and he reached out to rub the top of his daughter's head, saying calmly, "He'er, it's not that I doesn't let you go out, it's just that your uncle's matter is all over the place. I know that you and the Che Family have always been close. I'm only keeping you inside because I'm unwilling for you to get involved. You don't blame me, do you?"

His daughter and Che Yuan Yu grew up together, so she was naturally worried about the situation of that girl from the Che Family, but as a father, how could he look on blankly as his daughter gets roped into that mess?

"Father, I'm not someone without propriety, but Yuan Che *jie jie* and I are cousins, and even with we cannot clear the Che Family from guilt, but as for monetary assistance, can't our Cui Family help?"

"But your mother..." Serving in the imperial court with Che *da ren* for many years, it wasn't that he didn't want to help, but thinking about how his second wife would throw a tantrum, Cui Ming Yuan's face screwed up.

"Father, Mother actually left some money behind. If I don't use the family money, then she can't say anything right. Let me leave the house!" As Cui Miao He spoke, she took took her father's hand and swung it from side to side, an affectionate expression on her face.

"This..." He was originally hesitant, but seeing his daughters lovable and innocent appearance, his pampering feelings came up, and couldn't repress them, so he could only agree, "Alright. I still have some money. Take some and give it to Yuan Yu, and tell her to find a doctor for her father!"

Very good, Father agreed to let her go out. Her eyes shone brightly, she had to go to the Che Family, but...

There really was an imposing manner!

Looking up at the layer upon layer of eaves, and the curved engraved railings on the bridge pier, Cui Miao He snorted coldly inside. Her impression towards Chai She Xia, a son of a rich family, worsened somewhat.

Even though the word on the streets said that this young general was a rare unrivaled genius, and that he won every battle and was unable to be beaten.

She originally took those words as stories, and listened to them before

dismissing them, but now the man in those tales was now unfathomably involved with her life, and her displeasure towards him slowly accumulated.

Even though logic told her that all this was because of Liang Yu Xia and her daughter, but she could not let go of his behavior in choosing his wife.

Suddenly, the leading servant stopped and respectfully said, “Miss, that’s our Young Master’s study room just ahead.”

“What, won’t you take me in?” Cui Miao He asked, confused by the servant stopping.

The servant only nodded, and said fearfully, “The Lady made it clear that I’m not allowed to disturb you and the Young Master talking, so I can only take you up to here.”

“But...” Seeing that terrified face, she was full of doubt and wanted to ask more, but the servant had gone in an instant.

Looking at the quickly disappearing figure, then turning to look at the completely silent study, was there the need to be that afraid? This family was really strange, when she suddenly came to see Chai She Xia, not only Lady Chai not look displeased in the slightest, but was frightfully enthusiastic. Not only did she find a servant to show the way, but earnestly held her hand and told her to come to the General’s Manor often.

Her enthusiasm caused her to be suspicious. Could Chai She Xia seriously not find a wife?

Tilting her head to think, but not coming up with a solution, she put on a brave face and walked towards the tightly closed door.

“Attend to me!”

Her hand had only just touched the door, and hadn’t had the chance to push it open, a low, clear shout sounded from inside, giving her a fright.

It sounded like the owner of the voice had a bad temper, no wonder he beat to death his own bed servant, but this sort of man didn’t seem to be the type who liked men!

Without time for her to think, another shout came from inside—

“Who is standing outside, why don’t you answer?” Thinking that it was a servant outside, Chai She Xia waited for a while and when no one answered, he yelled the question again.

After that day when he and Ju Su Sheng decided to find a woman to appease Mother, his mood had gotten worse by the day.

He knew that he should go find the girl in the portrait, Cui Miao He or something, but when he thought of doing something that would bring himself trouble, he hesitated, and in his indecisive state of mind, his bad temper was aroused.

After asking loudly and angrily, and the person outside still did not respond, the anger in Chai She Xia’s heart started to burn like like a crazed wild horse.

He walked over in a few large steps, and roughly pulled open the door, wanting to teach the servant a lesson, but that lovable face entered his line of vision.

He started blanking at that familiar yet unfamiliar face, this was the first time he saw her true appearance.

“You are... Miss Cui?!” He didn’t think that the portrait was so true to life that he was able to tell who the newcomer was with a single glance.

There wasn’t enough time for the anger on his face to vanish, and was about to ask her why she was here with a dark expression, but Cui Miao He was one step ahead and rebuked– “I am Cui Miao He.”

“You...”

Hearing her confirm her identity, he was about to open his mouth, but who knew that she rebuked him again. “I came to tell you that don’t want to marry you even a bit, I don’t want to power and influence of your Chai Family, neither do I want the riches, so I will not allow you to send anyone to my house to propose.”

Glaring at him, who was as grand and formidable as a mountain, the slender Cui Miao He seemed to become much more delicate, but she proudly raised her head and warned him sternly.

She had decided already, her stepmother would meddle and plot endlessly, it

would be better if she took drastic measures and decisively cut off the negative effects.

As long as he didn't pick her, even if Liang Yu Xia and her daughter wanted to act up, there was nothing they could do!

"Why?" Seeing her look at him with a loathing expression like he was something filthy, Chai She Xia naturally could not accept it.

"I'm not some woman who you can manipulate at will, I don't want to be your wife and live the life of a living widow. Do you understand?"

Facing such a large and frightening man, she would be lying if she said that she wasn't afraid, but she knew that she could not cower.

Seeing the contempt in her eyes, Chai She Xia's eyes suddenly widened, the anger in his heart about to come out in full strength, in a moment, he understood what she meant.

She really believed that he would beat his wife and preferred the company of men?

He had always believed that rumors would be dismissed by intelligent people, so he never denied those rumors, but he didn't think that there were so many stupid people in the world.

If it was in the past, whenever he met this sort of person, his way of resolving the issue would be to turn around and leave, but... suddenly, his eyes sized up this pretty and delicate maiden without restrain.

He didn't think that before he had the chance to avoid troublesome women, she had been a step ahead in avoiding him.

Breathing in deeply, keeping down the disgust in his mind, he glared at her and said, "So you're determined not to marry me?"

"The person I marry must be someone I love deeply, do you think you're that person?" Returning his glare, Cui Miao He said the words extremely staunchly.

She didn't want to marry into glory and splendor, neither did she want to marry into money, her only wish was to be together forever with a man that she loved.

“You haven’t tried yet, how do you know that you won’t fall in love with me?”

“I don’t even need to try to know! No matter what your reason for provoking me is, I can tell you for certain, I won’t agree to marry you.”

If she went against Mother’s wishes and married a man with such a bad reputation, surely Mother would not be able to feel at ease in the underworld!

“So you won’t come to the Cui Family to propose, right?” Remembering the mother who loved her dearly, she looked towards him, wanting to hear him promise.

“I...” He should have told her that she didn’t want to get involved with her anyway, but seeing her impatient expression, Chai She Xia’s stubborn personality reared it’s head, and he glared at her, asking, “What right do you have to control whether I will or not?”

“How are you a person who doesn’t do as they say?” Cui Miao He said as she puckered up her brows and stomped her feet.

She thought that he had agreed, just as she calmed down her heart, it was suspended up again. She looked at him disbelievingly, but saw that there was not even a thread of a guilty conscience on his face.

“I never promised you anything.”

It was her who had thought that they had reached that conclusion, and now she was pinning it onto his head? This girl was interesting!

“You don’t need to waste your thoughts, I definitely will not marry you, and you don’t truly want to marry me, you are an important young person in the current imperial court, a minister that the Emperor heavily relies on, you’re going to marry some princess. With someone like me with no family background, and with a mother and younger sister at home who just sees you as an easy source of money, I’m so troublesome, what are you provoking me for?”

To break off this chain of thought, she criticized her family’s shortcomings to the fullest extent, hoping to make him retreat.

Staring at her, a smile suddenly floated up into Chai She Xia’s eyes. She was a peculiar girl.

In order to dispel him from the intention of marrying her, she unexpectedly wasn't afraid to say things to ruin her and her family. If he was a cultured and refined honest person, then he swear not to provoke her anymore.

But unfortunately, he was born rebellious. The more someone didn't want him to do something, the more he wanted to do it.

“What I will or will not do, that is up to me to decide.”

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**Notes:**

Two chapters in one day! I want to see what happens next so much ;A;

## Chapter Two (Part 2)

### Chapter Two (Part 2):

His words were extremely ambiguous, and it made her heart jump into a mess.

“What do you actually want for you to promise me?” Glaring angrily at him, she wanted to turn away, but thinking of the predatory stares of stepmother and daughter, she asked him through gritted teeth.

“Do you want to negotiate conditions with me now?”

This girl really didn't know the meaning of the two words, “giving up!”

Seeing her quick eyes flicker around, the Chai She Xia who had always respected woman from a distance couldn't help but have thoughts about teasing her.

“Then what conditions do you want in order to agree?”

“I don't know yet, so why don't you let me think first.” He spread his arms, and put on a helpless tone.

Actually, he didn't want to demand any conditions from her, but seeing her so desperately wanting to draw a line between them, he didn't want her to get her way too easily.

So this was the feeling of being avoided by someone?

This was the first time he had experienced this feeling!

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A heavy feel of hopelessness filled her from head to toe, her normally lively body seemed to appear clumsy, she only shifted a little, but she was huffing and puffing.

Realising that there was something wrong, she tried to calm her frantic heart, wanting to clear up everything that had happened lately.

Last night, she was inside reading a book, and the servant Huan Huan brought in congee for her as a midnight snack.

At that time, she saw that Huan Huan's complexion wasn't good, and had asked her if she was okay, but Huan Huan only have a brief answer and repeatedly urged her to eat.

She didn't think too much about it, Huan Huan was a playmate that her mother had picked for her when she was young, and she had always been loyal and devoted she hadn't need to put on her defences around her.

Is it possible that this strange feeling she got after waking up was because of Huan Huan? How could that be?

Cui Miao He felt panicked, and tried to move her stiff four limbs, but they were weaker than usual.

Dammit!

She was so panicked that there were beads of sweat on her brow, but the more panicked she was, the more she couldn't move.

Finally, she could only stop struggling, and let the beads of sweat run down her face, and through the sweat, she saw a graceful figure.

"You're awake?"

She got a shock. Wasn't that Stepmother? What did she want to do?

"You ungrateful girl. I told you nicely to find a way to marry into the Chai Family and to help your father's career out, but you refused, do don't blame me for what I'm about to do."

Towering from above, Liang Yu Xia spoke down to the powerless and unable to move Cui Miao He.

"You... you... what are you planning?" She suddenly got a very bad feeling in her heart, Cui Miao He used all her strength, but could only weakly ask a question.

"What can I do? Of course I'm going to lend a helping hand, and let you and Chai She Xia get to a point of no return!" She said without concealing a thing.

"Don't mess around... Father don't let you get away thing this!"

She knew that Stepmother had always been an ambitious person, and she had

never been content with being the wife of a low ranking official, but she had never thought that she would be so bold and plan to this sort of thing!

“You think that your father will save you?” Liang Yu Xia laughed coldly after speaking. “Didn’t you know that the Emperor sent your father to Zhejiang to do things, I’m afraid that he won’t be back for half a year at the quickest.”

After they reached the point of no return, even if the master came back, nothing could be changed, and everything that she did was so he could move up in the world!

“What do you want to do?”

She thought that due to her status, other than words, Stepmother wouldn’t dare to do anything else to her, but she didn’t think that she would keep the news of her father going down south from her. It looked like she had long planned this.

Thinking of that, Cui Miao He got panicky again, and stared at coolly at her, saying: “Even if Father isn’t here, the family elders are still here. Aren’t you afraid that you’ll be kicked out if you do something like this?”

“What am I afraid of, by the time they know it’ll be far too late, and they benefit off me. Do you really think that they’ll find justice for you?”

In order to dominate over all household matters, she had already had a plan in order to give her and her daughter a safeguard, she had already bribed those elders.

“You...” Cui Miao He’s mood was a mess, and used all her strength to try stand up, but her four limbs were as weak as before, and had no strength.

Seeing Stepmother’s dark face, she knew that she was determined this time. She had to get away, otherwise...

“These few years you relied on your father’s doting, and never respected me. I clenched my teeth, waiting for this day.”

She spat out the resentment that had hidden in her heart for years. Actually Liang Yu Xia knew that she was taking a desperate risk this time, but she couldn’t not do this.

These few years, in order to support her worthless elder brother, she took back Cui Family property in order to fill up that bottomless abyss that he created. Today, the Cui Family was not as impressive as it looked, she could only rely on an extremely high betrothal price for the Chai Family in order to prevent the Cui Family from collapsing.

But as a mother, how could she sacrifice her own daughter, so after consideration, Cui Miao He was naturally the most suitable choice.

Seeing as she was someone else's daughter, even if Chai She Xia was a crude man like the rumours said and treated women badly, so what? Even if Cui Miao He was ground to death by him, what did that have to do with her?

"What do you want to do?" Holding on to her last bit of clearness, Cui Miao He asked through clenched teeth.

Stepmother wouldn't drug her for no reason, she must be afraid that she'd run away or resist. Could it be that... A thought flashed through her mind, but she didn't dare to believe her own guess.

"Seeing as you won't get on General Chai's good side, then it's up to me as a mother to lend a helping hand!"

"Chai She Xia won't accept." Even though they had only met once, and didn't part on bad terms, she believed that he was not the sort of person who would take advantage of the difficulties of others.

"If it was at our house, of course he wouldn't accept. But what if it was at a brothel?"

"What do you mean by that?" As if forcing her to marry wasn't enough, was she going to sell her into a brothel?

Cui Miao He's complexion went green and white as she stared at her stepmother, unable to believe that she was bold enough to do something so rash.

"Of course I wouldn't sell you into a brothel, but if someone abducted you there, and your innocence was accidentally ruined by the drunk General. When I hurry worriedly over to the brothel to find you, I'll see that you'll either have to die to protect your beliefs, or you'll have to marry him. Which ever you choose,

it'll benefit me and do me no harm." This was her long-planned scheme to kill two birds with one stone, and could not go wrong.

"Aren't you afraid that I'll speak out about your evil plan?"

"That'll just be crazed words after experiencing a severe shock. Who will believe you?" For the last few years, she appeared to have managed the Cui Family well, and not only did people inside the house praise her, even outsiders praised her. She had worked so hard, so who would believe Cui Miao He?

Seeing Stepmother's determined expression, Cui Miao He breathed deeply. At a time like this, she could not panic!

Her ear was still full of Stepmother's unending confident speech, but the more she listened the more indistinct it became. Her mind became more dizzy... gradually she was swallowed by darkness.

"Even if I manage to marry into the Chai Family Manor like you want, aren't you afraid that I'd use the power of the Chai Family to teach the two of you a lesson?" Even in her dizziness, she couldn't help but continue mumbling warnings.

Who knew that when Liang Yu Xia heard those word, she was not only unafraid, but smiled widely. "I already heard that Chai She Xia is not a tender person, if he was tricked into marrying you, won't he think that you're a scheming person? Wanting to get his love, I'm afraid that it'll be harder than flying. Don't think that he'll get revenge for you." As she spoke, there was an extremely confident expression on her face.

This matter she had thought about for a long time, although it was not flawless, but there were a few degrees of certainty. NO matter what happened, she would have to try and save her parent's family.

While dazed, Cui Miao He vaguely felt herself being carried out of the house and into a carriage and carried into a small pavilion.

With great difficulty, she became a little more clear headed. She originally didn't know where she was, but hearing obscure words of love, and also vulgar decorations all around, sound of a party coming from outside, she knew that she was in a man's cave of ecstasy.

Her heart felt like it had dropped into a bottomless abyss, she wanted to open her mouth and call for help, but she could not make a noise.

Originally although her body was weak, she could still talk, but as she left the manor, Stepmother drugged her again and after she drunk that, it was as if her throat was locked up, unable to make a sound.

It looked like Stepmother was really determined to think of her as a tribute to give to Chai She Xia to enjoy, having so heartlessly taken away even her ability to cry for help.

Cui Miao He became anxious, but her body was powerless. She opened her eyes wide and looked around, trying to find herself a way out.

Suddenly, she heard the sound of the door being pushed open, she struggled to clearly see the person in front of her, or even stop them from approaching. But the more she struggled, the more she felt that person approach.

When that person's hand touched her, she was so anxious that a tear rolled down, thinking that the person's claws were going to tear her and eat her up, but he just move her aside like she was a decoration, and and sunk down onto the soft bed next to her. The slope of the bed caused her powerless body to lean against the man's body.

“Wu, wu, wu...”

Cui Miao He used all her strength, and with great difficulty was finally able to make a sound. She wanted to ask for help, but who would have thought that the person thought she was noisy.

“Be quiet, I want to sleep.”

What a familiar voice, wasn't that Chai She Xia's deep and low voice?

Realizing that the person next to her was him, her heart grew even heavier. Stepmother really used a great amount of strength, and even dared to drag a general into her plans.

They can't sleep! She wanted to yell, but couldn't make a sound. If they slept, even if nothing happened between them, then it would be putting gold in the mouths of others, and their reputations would be ruined.

“Wu...” With extreme difficulty, she made a sound again. Who would have thought that Chai She Xia would sweep her up with an arm, and hold her to his chest, wrapping his arms and legs around the weak and powerless her.

Startled by his action, cold sweat appeared at her forehead, afraid that his rumored viciousness would burst forth.

She held her breath with rapt attention, and waited for a while with her heart beating madly, but he just coiled around her like an octopus, and then she heard steady breathing next to her ear.

This man had really taken her to be a pillow.

Hearing his increasingly steady breathing, a bitter smile appeared on her lips. It looks like her innocence really would be destroyed.

She just didn't know how this man would react when he woke up, she thought that with a man with steely arrogance definitely wouldn't like to be tricked like this.

His wrath would definitely be like gigantic waves crashing from the sky, and the one who would be on the receiving end would be her.

This could be assumed that it was Stepmother counting her chickens before they hatched, wanting to use his hand to teach her a lesson.

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### **Notes:**

Finally getting to the good stuff heh.

Sorry if you were notified about the next part being published– I accidentally pressed published instead of safe draft =\_\_=

# Chapter Three (Part 1)

## Chapter Three (Part 1):

Cui Miao He originally thought that she would not be able to sleep after everything that had happened, but the sound of his steady breathing was like a lullaby, and calmed her down.

In the haze, the stillness around them was suddenly broken by noise and disorder. She startled and immediately got up from the bed, her indistinct train of thought gradually becoming clear.

They're coming?!

The panic which filled her heart unexpectedly vanished in that moment, replaced by an inexplicable calm. She tried to look around, and although her movements were sluggish, she was not powerless like last night. The effects of the drug had faded.

She sat up slowly, and realised that she was not wearing clothes. Her thoughts suddenly came to a stop.

She promptly looked around, but as far as she could see, there was nothing she could use to cover herself, and the noise gradually got closer. She hurriedly jumped off the bed, and turned the room upside down, and with great difficulty, finally found some clothes in a drawer.

She immediately put the clothes on, and out of the corner of her eye, saw the still sleeping Chai She Xia. She paused for a moment, then hurriedly dashed forward. "If you suffocate, don't fly into a rage. Even if it'll be difficult for the two of us to escape Stepmother's trap, I have to try."

And with that, she took a blanket and covered him, still sound asleep. With a toss of her hands, the veil in front of the bed lowered, and in this crucial moment, Liang Yu Xia burst inside at the head of a group.

Cui Miao He sighed inwardly, and the nervousness on her face disappeared without a trace, the calmness on her face as if the chaos of yesterday had never

happened.

“Miao He, Mother has finally found you.” Liang Yu Xia’s expression was frantic, like she was really a mother who was worried because of her disappearance. So Stepmother could act this well. Inhaling deeply, Cui Miao He put on a smile. If she wanted to act, then Cui Miao He wasn’t going to lose.

She took a few deliberate steps towards her stepmother, and warmly took Stepmother’s hand. “Mother, why have you come searching for me so early? Disturbing someone’s business, weren’t you blocked from coming in?” She acted like she didn’t know anything, her lips moving slowly.

Even the best plan had faults, and as long as she could even plant a thread of doubt, then it would benefit her.

“You didn’t come home night, how could I not be worried, especially as your father has been sent to Zhejiang by the Emperor. If a mishap happened to you during this time, how could I face your father? I had people search through the night, and finally got news that you were here. I was so anxious, how could I care whether or not I offended anyone?”

“Hm, how about the brothel owner?”

“Blocked downstairs by a servant I brought.”

Actually, the brothel owner had already accepted her bribes, and would naturally go along with her bursting in.

“What were you anxious for Mother, don’t I look fine to you?” Although she was fretting on the inside, the smile on Cui Miao He’s was bright.

That composure made Liang Yu Xia nervous, just what was that girl plotting, with her impatient personality, how could she remain so calm after something like this happening, it couldn’t be something had happening in the night that she didn’t know about?

She was suspicious on the inside, and although she wanted to implement her plan in a spurt of energy, Cui Miao He’s confidence made her hesitate.

But that hesitation was only a moment, when she remembered that if she didn’t kick out Cui Miao He, that thorn in her side, in a single move, then it would

become hard for her to do things in the Cui Family from then onwards.

So today, she could only take a chance that her calm and composure was only a bluff.

Her eyes circles the veil, knowing that Chai She Xia was within it. If she could go forward and lift it, then she could push Cui Miao He onto him, and achieve her goal.

“He’er, did you stay here by yourself last night?” Liang Yu Xia asked as she calculated inside.

“Of course not!” Knowing that Stepmother wouldn’t give up so easily, and even though her heart was about to jump out of her chest, she still spoke calmly.

“Is there still someone on the bed?”

“Of course!” She nodded her head without a thread of hesitation.

“Who is on the bed?” Liang Yu Xia asked, she had already taken a large stride forward, wanting to lift up the curtain.

Reaching out to grab her stepmother’s hand, Cui Miao He was still smiling, and said into her ear gently, “Mother, you should understand whether or not you can bear the consequences of lifting up the curtain.”

Because she couldn’t think of a way to escape this situation, she could only delay it, moment by moment.

Hah! She had almost been scared off by that girl, if she hadn’t seen her tremble, then she really would have thought that her plan went wrong.

She leant over to say in Cui Miao He’s ear, “He’er, if Mother hasn’t guessed wrongly, then it should be Chai She Xia inside. If I lift up the curtain now, then he has corrupted your innocence. You’re an unmarried wealthy girl, how could you not marry him?”

“Do you really think that the grant General Char is so easy for you to manipulate?”

After hearing that, Liang Yu Xia’s hesitated again, but then thinking again, she had already agreed upon with the brothel owner, and seeing as it would benefit her so much, she wouldn’t let it go and would have arranged everything

properly.

And her people had already stood guard outside for many hours, and didn't see Chai She Xia leave, so the person inside the veil must be him.

With confidence, she looked towards Cui Miao He with a smile, her tone like victory was within grasp. "Daughter, this is the most important integrity, you are a maiden, and stayed overnight in a brothel, don't you think that this will make people criticise?" Insincerely gently reprimanding her daughter in front of an audience, Liang Yu Xia threw off her arm and slowly reached towards the veil.

"Yesterday I just came to find a courtesan *jie jie* to chat, and I forgot about the time and fell asleep here."

Seeing the decorative items and this secluded location, it was unlikely to the maiden who could use this building was unheard of, but she didn't know who the owner was, so she could only make up nonsense.

"When and how did you strike up a friendship with Miss Ruo Ban, and how did I not know?" Not thinking that Cui Miao He would be able to hold her in a deadlock for so long, Liang Yu Xia almost couldn't up up the act of a caring mother anymore.

"Mother has always reminded me that if I were to strike up friendships, then it should be with useful people. This Ruo Ban *jie jie*'s identity wouldn't be permitted by Mother, so I didn't dare to tell you." She already started to lie, so these words which implied that Liang Yu Xia was snobby came smoothly out.

"Is that so? Then I can overlook your rudeness, and see this famous Miss Ruo Ban."

Liang Yu Xia was someone who had seen these aspects of society, Cui Miao He was stalling, what could she do?

Anyway, she was determined to let the Chai-Cui marriage reach the point of no turning back, and didn't want to hear Cui Miao He talk nonsense to her anymore, so with a large stride, she pushed away Cui Miao He roughly.

"Mother?!" Not thinking that Stepmother wouldn't consider her status, and push her aside in such an uncivilised manner, Cui Miao He shouted out suddenly, and stabilised herself with great difficulty.

The waves of discussion came wave by wave, and Cui Miao He couldn't help but close her eyes. She wanted to escape, and a sort of feeling that everything was about to be destroyed enveloped her.

“Wow, this Ying Liu Pavilion is so lively so in the morning.”

Suddenly, a deep voice penetrated through the audience outside the room and into Cui Miao He's ear. She was stunned, and swiftly raised her head—

He... How was he there?!

Seeing Chai She Xia's unrestrained expression, Cui Miao He's heart was securely lowered down from it was hanging in midair. Although she didn't know what method he had planned, but his appearance has saved her from an abyss of suffering.

This was the first time she felt infinitely grateful towards him, even if he was looking at her with those smiling yet unsmiling darkeyes.

“You...”

She was about to ask questions, but he was one step ahead.

“Madam Cui, why have you brought so many people to rush into Miss Ruo Ban's rooms?”

Being the Emperor's favoured General, who dared to be rash around him?

“General... General, please quell your anger, I tried to stop Madam Cui as well, but all of my men have been blocked, if we alarmed the General, I hope that you can be forgiving.”

The previously missing brothel owner finally came out to apologise, and although the bystanders didn't notice anything, Cui Miao He thought it was strange, but couldn't quite put her finger on it.

“Then we should ask Madam Cui why she disturbed me.”

“I... came to find my daughter.”

“You came to a brothel to find your daughter. Madam Cui, do you deliberately not want your daughter to have a reputation anymore?”

Chai She Xia's indifferent few sentences pointed out the contradictions

between the mother and daughter, and caused the audience to whisper.

“I... was just anxious. Miao He didn't come home for the night, I thought something had happened and was really panicked, so didn't think about what I was doing. I hope that the General can please forgive me.”

As Chai She Xia listened, the smile on his face became knowing, causing Liang Yu Xia to become scared inside.

“Then Madam Cui is quite good at searching, rushing so boldly into Miss Ruo Ban's rooms. Unless Madam Cui thought that Miss Ruo Ban kidnapped Miss Cui?”

“I...”

Don't look at Chai She Xia's violent personality, if he became calm, then it really made one tense all over. To be swept over by his gaze which was as cold as ice, the originally calm Liang Yu Xia immediately got panicky.

“Yesterday, it was I who invited Miss Miao He and Miss Ruo Ban to dine together with me. We didn't notice that it had become late, and Miss Ruo Ban who got along with Miss Miao He at first sight was afraid that it would be dangerous for her to go home alone, so invited her to stay for the night. Madam Cui, your rude actions put Miss Miao He in an impossible situation.”

“General Chai, I... I was only worried?”

Trying hard to squeeze out a stiff smile, Liang Yu Xia no longer had the aggressiveness she had just then, she even unconsciously looked over at Cui Miao He, wishing that she'd say something in defence of her.

At Stepmother's pleading gaze, Cui Miao He felt delight in her heart. The way that she had been tossed aside last night, she remembered it well, so she pursed her lips and didn't say a word, until she saw that Stepmother's face was deathly pale, and she didn't want the matter to spread so that her father in Zhejiang would worry, so she said, “General Chai, I think that Stepmother was just panicked which is why she forgot her manners. You are an important person so be generous and don't bother with her.”

“Seeing as Miss Cui has spoken, how can I be unreasonable.”

Anyone with ears could hear the protectiveness in his words, and then he looked towards the brothel owner, and the brothel owner immediately dispersed the crowd.

Although they hadn't actually seen anything, but after that uproar, Cui Miao He knew that within half a day, the streets would be full of gossip about her.

The daughter of an official setting foot in the pleasure district, being friends with a courtesan, important families probably wouldn't want her to marry into them now.

Although a faint sense of loss floated into her heart, but... it was actually good this way. A smile burst onto her smooth white face.

"Many thanks to General Chai for helping me out just then, but... how did you do it?"

Although she had escaped that disaster, Cui Miao He was still full of questions, she had been certain that he who had been deep asleep had been hidden within the veil, how had he appeared at the door?

"I actually knew about your stepmother's plan yesterday."

Towards her distrust, he was honourable, that and towards that honest attitude that did not flee or avoid, she had changed her voice.

"When your stepmother came to find the brothel owner, I unintentionally heard her plan. At that time, I was angry at your rejection of me, so I didn't want to pay attention, and take the opportunity to let the brothel owner take the money, I wanted to let her taste the bitter results of trying to plot against me. But then... I saw that you were really carried in, and I didn't have the heart, so..."

Actually, he maybe shouldn't have said that, his following plans would go more smoothly if she was full of gratitude, but he remembered that she knew clearly that the circumstances were bad, but still tried to project him against being used by others in that sort of underhand scheme.

This was a secret that only his good friends and the Emperor knew, but he didn't know why, he told her without hesitation.

In the Imperial Court, he was an important general, unfailing when he took

soldiers to war, but in the dark, he was in charge of collecting intelligence for the Emperor, and the mingling of snakes and dragons at Ying Liu Pavilion was the best place to collect information.

“So my stepmother finding this brothel owner to plot against you was just her putting herself on a road to disaster!”

Hearing this, Cui Miao He finally came to a realisation, and a satisfied feeling suddenly filled her chest.

So it turned out that this man who looked tall and sturdy had this sort of meticulous thoughts, and thanks to his secret helping hand, she wasn't trapped into a situation with no retreat.

Remembering Stepmother's deathly pale face just then, pleasure rushed into her thought.

“You were right!” She was an intelligent maiden, understanding with only a hint. A few threads of contemplation added to Chai She Xia's gaze upon her. This girl's performance really exceeded expectations.

“But even if it was like that, how were you able to come in from outside? When I put down the veil, you were still sleeping on the bed.” Like an eager to learn student, she asked the questions in her mind at once.

Laughing brightly, Chai She Xia pulled her hand very naturally, and took her over to the bed, lifted the veil, and showed her the smooth bed.”

“Hm, there's nothing different!” Her eyes were full of life and opened wide, full of curiosity, but from she start she hadn't noticed his actions, and had only looked at the bed. She peered at it for some time, but couldn't get a clue.

She then raised her head to look at Chai She Xia, to see a smile on his handsome face. He pulled at the top of the bed with his right hand, and the bed started to shift open at the two sides, and the space was just big enough to fit a person.

“Oh... So...” She didn't think that there would be such an elaborate mechanism in Miss Ruo Ban's house, Cui Miao He was dumbstuck.

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**Notes:**

So, I finally had some time to sit down and I ended up translating basically the entire chapter in one go >.>

Updates will probably be slower than before, perhaps once or twice a week as I really have to study and write my own fiction haha.

Also!! If anyone is really wanting some good historical romance set in Ancient China to tide you through while waiting for translations, definitely check out Jeannie Lin's [My Fair Concubine](#) (super cute!!), [The Lotus Palace](#), and [The Jade Temptress](#). Please don't ask me where you can read them for free— I bought the ebooks off Kobo so I literally don't know.

## Chapter Three (Part 2)

“That’s right, it’s all thanks to My Lord, but you don’t need to be so grateful, I saw that he had a lot of fun with this.”

After those words sounded, a woman who was charming from head to toe walked in confidently.

Cui Miao He’s mind was quick, and quickly realised that this maiden was the master of the house, the famous courtesan, Miss Ruo Ban.

“The disturbance yesterday may have disturbed Miss Ruo Ban, I’m apologising to you now.”

Saying this, Cui Miao He sincerely paid her respects, and the Miss Ruo Ban, who always treated others coolly, liked her.

Maidens who were brought up to the Confucian code of ethics usually scorned prostitutes, but Cui Miao He’s eyes were sincere without the slightest amount of disdain.

“So this is the maiden that General Chai went to great troubles to protect. The General really does have good judgement.”

Living in this place, she had seen every sort of person, and she felt familiar at first sight with Cui Miao He, and in a rare gesture, she took a few steps forward, took Cui Miao He’s hands, pulling her towards a table to sit. The two women began to talk, and chatted for an hour, and their talk was all interesting things about Chai She Xia.

Whenever something interesting came up, the two maidens would laugh brightly. At the side, Chai She Xia didn’t try to hurry them up, but whether intentionally or not, his gaze was concentrated on Cui Miao He’s face...

With the remnants of a smile, Cui Miao He followed Chai She Xia out of Ying Liu Pavilion. When she stepped out, she paused and called out to him, and raised her clasped hands.

“Thank you for today, if not for you, then Stepmother’s plan may have succeeded.” Thinking of her own circumstance, a layer of cold sweat covered her

back.

Her behaviour once more exceeded all expectations, and let Chai She Xia have a whole new level of respect for her. Even if others did not know, but he knew clearly in his heart, that in all honesty, just that act from last night had already ruined her innocence.

But not only did she not bother him about it, but defended him, and now thanked him with sincerity.

The Chai She Xia who never saw women in a good light couldn't help but pay a lot of attention to her.

“You don't mind the consequences of what happened today?”

Even if they weren't caught in the act today, but it still damage her reputation. And what's more, which daughter of a rich family would be involved with a famous courtesan?

Hearing him speak of that, Cui Miao He's smiling eyes darkened for a moment, but immediately cheered up again, and said, “It's even better if my reputation is harmed, I don't want her trying to sell me for a second time. Once I have no reputation, let's see where she tries to find me a buyer.”

“You... really think this way?”

Was she naive? Although this had thwarted Liang Yu Xia's evil plans, but it had also thwarted her future.

“Thinking this way... is pretty good.” That tone was quite grudging, she didn't just seem naive in appearance, but she really was!

If even the servant closest to her could betray her, then it was likely that the entire Cui Manor had long been under the control of her Stepmother.

Ruining her reputation could stop her from plotting against her for a while, but it still could not be considered a good thing.

Seeing soft concern appear on Chai She Xia's face, her heart felt heavy, but this was her own problem, how could she involve others.

That he could save her from danger, that was already an enormous virtue.

If she had believed even a thread of those rumours before, now she disbelieved them without exception.

This sort of man definitely could not have done things like that, those rumours must have been falsehoods which had been exaggerated as they spread!

“General Chai, looking at the time, I should go.”

Even though she clearly knew that once she went home, Stepmother would not let her off easy, but it was still her home. In the past, she would still have her two *jiejie*, Ji Jun Yin and Che Yuan Yu to lean on, but unfortunately, Uncle Che had angered the Emperor lately, and their house had been searched and possessions confiscated. The Ji Family had more or less been implicated, how could she go and add to their troubles? She could only hate that she hadn't been born a boy, otherwise she could travel all over the world as she pleased.

“You're not afraid that once you go home, Madam Cui will make trouble for you?”

“Don't worry, General. Don't judge me on my light age, I'm not someone who is easy to deal with.”

Chai She Xia couldn't help but smile at her words of self-praise. If she wasn't hard to deal with, would she have really been carried here and almost have had a serious mistake happen?

But merely seeing the crafty smile on her face, and remembering the courage she had displayed just then, he knew clearly in his heart that her courage could not be compared to other maidens.

Seeing her unhesitant and determined footsteps, Chai She Xia said, “I'll take you back, so Madam Cui doesn't make things difficult for you.”

“There's no need.” Faced with his warmheartedness, Cui Miao He was a little at a loss. The times she had seen him before, she didn't feel like he was such a warmhearted person. What had happened?

“It's no trouble, just a walk for me.” Chai Shi Xia disregarded her refusal, and grabbed her arm, and she had no choice but to walk next to him.

“General Chai, this isn't proper.”

There were many people street who gossiped. They had just escaped that pit, but immediately walked into another.

“You didn’t care about your reputation just then, isn’t it ridiculous that you care about this?” Seeing her embarrassment at the impropriety, Chai She Xia couldn’t help but laugh.

“I acted like I didn’t care earlier so you wouldn’t get dragged into it. Now that I have a choice, why would I willingly jump into a pit?”

Cui Miao He was not happy at being teased, and her cheeks became tinted with red, giving her the look of a charming little girl.

“Little girl, you’re actually pretty sincere.” Under her stare, Chai She Xia wisely let go of her hand, but his eyes could not leave her pretty face.

To be surrounded by politics, he had seen many people who only pretended to be polite. Cui Miao He’s behaviour was really a breath of fresh air for him. Furthermore, she wasn’t like the typical delicate daughter of an official’s family, and it really made him take notice of her.

Walking down the street, Chai She Xia couldn’t help but open his mouth and ask, “Little girl, let’s negotiate a deal.”

“What deal?” Thinking that she didn’t really have any deals to make with him, like a child she had already been distracted by the row of brightly coloured snack stalls on the side of the street.

“I’ll send someone to your house to discuss to bride price. How’s that?”

In a moment, a dumbstruck expression replaced the originally pleasant and dainty manner. Cui Miao He’s mouth fell open, unable to believe what she had heard. “You... What did you say?!”

“My meaning is, after what happened today, the important families in the city will not accept you as a wife, so why don’t you marry me?”

“You’re insane!” She stared at him, but could only spit out those words.

He had escaped with his life with much difficulty, and now he was willingly wanting to go die. In her opinion, Chai She Xia the great general wasn’t as amazing as other’s said if he could say something as stupid as that.

“I need to wife to put to an end my mother’s crazy methods of forcing me to get married. You’re not happy living in the Cui Manor, so why don’t you come to the General’s Manor and live a comfortable life. This way... don’t we both get what we want?”

Originally, Ju Su Sheng had suggested that he trick her, but unfortunately he had always been a bold person, and dishonourable methods did not agree with his character, so he decided to get straight to the point and ask her. After all, this girl was worth that sort of treatment.

That was not good, not good at all!

“Don’t joke like that!” Cui Miao He reprimanded with a roll of her eyes.

Although after associating with him these two times she did not despise him as much as before anymore, but it was one thing to not despise, and another to marry.

He was a grand and important general, and she was an insignificant girl with a predatory stepmother lurking in the shadows. He had no need to lower himself, and she didn’t want Stepmother to get what she wanted.

“I’m not joking!” He turned his eyes to stare earnestly at her. From the two times that they had met, he knew this woman was a good woman. Although she looked innocent and naive, when it mattered, she was still able to act.

“You must have drunk too much last night, and still be drunk now, to say something so foolish. I don’t need you to see me back, you should hurry back home and rest!”

His gaze sent shivered down her spine, and her instincts told her to slip away, but her movements weren’t as agile as Chai She Xia, who practised martial arts. Before she had gone two steps, he had grabbed her collar.

“I said that I’ll see you back home, and so I will. As for my proposal, I won’t force you for the time being, and give you some time to think about it.” He hadn’t become angry because of her rejection, and hadn’t even asked the reason behind it. He was in no hurry, and it wouldn’t hurt to wait a little longer.

“I...”

Cui Miao He opened her mouth to tell him that she didn't even need to think about his proposal, but his clear eyes swept over her. She didn't know what happened inside her, but she was unable to voice it out.

"I'll take you home now." Afraid that she'd slip away again, although the hand holding onto her collar loosened, he didn't really let go.

"You're an important general, and must be very very busy. I can take care of a small matter like going home by myself."

She originally thought that there was no harm in having him see her home, but his words just then had shocked her, and now she was eager to put distance between them in case it stirred up trouble.

"I'm not busy!" A smile slowly came onto his determined but as Chai She Xia spoke lightly, but there was a heartwarming care in his eyes.

Cui Miao He thought to herself, Stepmother had almost made a huge mistake today, she would probably lay low for a while, so she smiled politely to decline. "You really don't have to trouble yourself, General. If you really aren't busy with military affairs, then find yourself a wife to ease Lady Chai's mind."

At those words, the veins on Chai She Xia's forehead quivered. Of course he understood that she was evading him, but how could he give up so easily?

"But your stepmother..." After thinking carefully, he was still not reassured. Even if he knew clearly that it was none of his business, he still wanted to protect her.

"It's nothing. After this, I'll be more careful. Actually, after my mother died when I was young and Stepmother entered the household, she treated me well. She only started to plot against me these last few years because my younger sister Yun Xiu has grown up in these last few years, and Stepmother fears that I would affect her chances at a good marriage, and that I would seek the family wealth as I'm older."

As the saying went, it was every man for himself. Stepmother originally couldn't be criticized too harshly, but she never in a thousand years should have used a method as lowly as drugging her to deal with her.

She was heartless, so why should she speak up for her?

She had originally said that so he would not be too concerned for her, but as she said it, her mood became worse.

“If that’s the case, then you should accept my help even more and use my power. That way when she does anything in the future, she will have to keep my reputation in mind.” In any case, he was still a general, and Liang Yu Xia wouldn’t provoke him rashly.

“General, you shouldn’t have been dragged into this mess in the first place. I appreciate your kindness, but you should go back home quickly!”

Although her thoughts on Chai She Xia had changed, the moment she thought about Stepmother’s predatory gaze, she didn’t want her to get any information which could be used against her, so still declined in the end.

Besides, they could both now be considered people with bad reputations. If they associated too closely, people would talk.

Repeated rumours become fact, and after escaping today, she didn’t want to be strung up by rumours, and have no choice but to become his wife.

“You... are seriously going to stay well away from me?”

He had never understood how to care about people, especially women. She had managed to reach his bursting point. He was never someone with a good temper, and after being thoroughly declined by her, he couldn’t hold down the displeasure inside any longer, and his eyebrows furrowed.

“Take care of yourself, General Chai.” Cui Miao He seemed to ignore his anger, and turned to bid him farewell before walking off. Looking at her gradually disappearing figure, Chai She Xia had never liked to mind other people’s business, and the first time he did so, it was not welcomed at all. Whatever, there were so many maidens, and even if he had to find one to get Mother to get off his case, it didn’t have to her!

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### **Thoughts:**

CSX’s puppy love is adorable. He’s like an extremely angry puppy ;-;

So, update after about a month. I hadn’t planned for the update to take so long, but shit happens and I have a load of online commitments.

I usually update my progress in the sidebar as I translate. Each chapter is roughly 2000-2500 words, so you can see for yourself how much I've translated so there's no need to leave comments asking if I don't update in a while.

## Chapter Four (Part 1)

Winding her way back to the main door of the Cui Manor (崔府), and seeing those vermilion doors that she had seen growing up, Cui Miao He's heart actually skipped a beat.

This was the house she had lived in for over ten years!

Home should have been the most steadfast place, but today, was it no longer so?

“Young Mistress (大小姐), you're finally home!” The moment the gatekeeper, Uncle De (德叔) saw the Young Mistress, he scrambled forward, unable to keep calm.

Uncle De was an old servant in the household, and because he had no home to return to, so Father specially allowed him to be the gatekeeper, and just look after the door.

All the old servants watched her grow up, and it didn't need to be said that they loved her dearly.

“Uncle De, what's happened to you?” asked Cui Miao He at once, concerned. It was rare to see the steady Uncle De so flustered.

“Young Mistress, nothing has happened to me, it's you that must be careful!”

After hearing that, knowing that Uncle De intentionally waited here to report that to her, she stopped and faced Uncle De, asking, “What has happened inside?”

“This morning, the Madam came home in a rage, and has shut herself in the house for hours, even her lunch did not get in.”

“Oh.” Without much care, she let out a breath. If their places were exchanged, and her scheming was made a fool of, she would be so angry that she wouldn't want to eat for days!

“Young Mistress, you should take this seriously.” Seeing the Young Mistress' attitude, Uncle De couldn't help but become worried. He had been part of the

Young Mistress' mother's dowery as a house servant, and so of course he treated the Young Mistress better, and felt deeper concern for her.

Uncle De had always been carefree, and rarely had worry etched all over his face. Upon seeing that, Cui Miao He was about to reassure him, but who knew that he would come forward first.

“Young Mistress, you must take this seriously. Even though the Madam was so angry she didn't eat lunch, she wasn't being idle either!”

“What else did she do?” She wasn't naive as to think that Stepmother would let go so easily, and so she wasn't the least bit surprised when Uncle De said that.

“All the elders of the Cui Family has been called to the Ancestral Hall by the Madam, and all the maids and kitchen hands have been thrown out. No one knows what they're discussing inside.”

It was because no one knew what was being discussed that they would be worried. Cui Miao He felt her heart seize for a second.

She hadn't thought that Stepmother would show this hand.

This was bad, in an large clan like the Cui Family, the decision of the elders went above all else. If Stepmother was able to make the elders make a decision that would be harmful to her, then she may be forced to suffer in silence.

“Damn it!” Thinking of all the pros and cons, Cui Miao He couldn't help but curse out loud.

She actually despised the strength of Stepmother's retaliation, after all, the one who had used despicable tactics was her. She shouldn't even have the time to to cover it up, it was unexpected that she would do this.

Why?

Cui Miao He pondered quietly. Going by Stepmother's inclinations, it was unlikely that she would go so far as to do something foolish, but she had done it, so there must be a reason.

“Miss... Miss...”

Seeing the Young Mistress standing still and staring into space, Uncle De

became worried and called her a few times, as the Second Young Mistress (二小姐) approached.

Snapping back, Cui Miao He saw her younger sister in her face, and felt disgusted.

Had the pair of mother and daughter arranged this? Not willing to give her a second of quiet?

Sliding off the amiable face that she had when facing Uncle De, her expression became cold.

Towards this younger sister with a different mother, Cui Miao He once loved her, but because of Stepmother's interference, and her younger sister's constant bothering, even with a high level of tolerance, it was hard for her to continue loving her like her own younger sister, and it had continued until it reached the level of today.

"Uncle De, I'll be going inside first. I'll just trouble you to take note of all the things that happen inside the household." Cui Miao He didn't want to clash with her younger sister while so tired, and after saying that to Uncle De, tried to leave.

But Cui Yun Xiu was determined, and blocked her way, not letting her leave.

After being caught in a deadlock for some time, she finally raised her head, and coldly looked at Cui Yun Xiu. "*Meimei*, is there something the matter?"

"Nothing much, I just came to find *jiejie* to talk of private matters. Why do you try to distance yourself?"

There were no private matters to be discussed between the two of them, and Cui Miao He didn't want to waste her energy, and said indifferently, "I'm tired, and want to go inside to rest."

"Of course *jiejie* is tired. After mixing with others for an entire night before returning, how could you not be tired?"

The words were threatening, but did not disturb Cui Miao He's mood, and her expression stayed calm at her younger sister's words, taking the chance to brush past her.

She hated being ignored the most, because it felt like she was being looked down upon, and that sort of resentment followed her everywhere.

Reaching out her hand, she suddenly grabbed Cui Miao He's arm, the rough movement making Cui Miao He scrunch up her eyebrows.

"What do you really want?" Cui Miao He asked coldly after glaring, and brushing away the hand on her arm.

"Do you think you can be this high and mighty forever?"

Cui Yun Xiu didn't understand, when both of them were young mistresses of the Cui Family, why the one that Father and the servant really cared about was Cui Miao He.

She really couldn't accept it!

She had sworn to herself, that she would make Cui Miao He yield to her.

"If you've just come to pick a fight with me, then I really am tired, and I'm going to my room to rest." Even seeing the fury in her younger sister's eyes, Cui Miao He spoke coolly.

"You..." At her uncaring attitude, Cui Yun Xiu was spitting with anger, glaring at her retreating figure, she said hatefully through clenched teeth, "How long do you think your identity of Young Mistress can last you. You've already ruined your reputation by staying in a brothel last night, and Mother is discussing with the elders, and trying to marry you off as fast as possible."

But this news was not able to shock Cui Miao He the slightest, because she had already thought of what to do.

She had long anticipated that Stepmother would be unyielding, and she could not naively believe that the war against the mother and daughter would ease up today.

But she would not give in so easily. If there was something that she didn't want to do in this world, even if they burnt jade and stone, they would not be able to force her.

At being ignored again, she lashed out with anger, and once all the logic escaped Cui Yun Xiu's head, all that was left was anger.

She knew that this was not something to make known, because once Mother had arranged everything, she could smugly watch Cui Miao He cry as she entered the marriage sedan.

But, she was unable to bear it! Really!

She couldn't wait that long, she wanted to take apart Cui Miao He's mask of calm.

"If you don't think a great general, Chai Zhe Xia is worthy, then you must think that Landlord Wu is worthy."

Landlord Wu? Who is that?

After hearing that, Cui Miao He couldn't help but pause, trying to remember, but she had no impression of him.

Seeing that, Cui Yun Xiu quickly came forward, pleased, and said, "Do you know what Mother is discussing with the elders?"

Cui Miao He responded with silence. She didn't want to care what the pair were were planning. If they really fought, she wouldn't necessarily lose to them.

"You don't know how much effort Mother had put in for you, a daughter with a ruined reputation. That Landlord Wu isn't one of the richest men in the city, but can be considered somebody in the business world, only... he's already over fifty years old, and isn't short of wives and concubines at home. For someone like you with a ruined reputation, marrying there wouldn't be considered bad. Let me think, how many concubines does he have?"

As a pleased Cui Yun Xiu spoke, she made a show of counting them on her fingers.

"It doesn't matter how many concubines he has, it has nothing to do with me. If you want to marry, then I can speak on your behalf to Father." Cui Miao He finally turned her head, glaring at her coldly as she spoke.

She didn't think that Stepmother wanted to kick her out so badly. The plan this morning had just failed, and now in the afternoon, she had already thought of a replacement.

She... really was horrible! "Do you think that this won't happen just because

you don't want it to?" Her mother had a gifted tongue, and it would not be hard to convince the elders while Father was away, but Cui Miao He acted as if she had been talking about someone else's matter, someone else's life.

There was only one thing that made her curious. Stepmother had always hated her, but had never showed it so openly, so there must be an ulterior motive.

"Why are the two of you so eager to kick me out of the house?" She asked while she was off-guard.

When Cui Yun Xiu was asked that, a flash of panic went through her eyes, but then she said calmly, "Mother is doing what is best for you. You have a ruined reputation now, and you may not be able to find a good person, so she put in the effort to find a good family for you, so you will never be short of food or clothes."

In a situation like this, Cui Miao He knew that there was something wrong with the words, and seeing Cui Yun Xiu's lack of confidence, she knew that she was right. She said calmly, "Please tell your mother that I will not marry Landlord Wu, even if the power of the clan won't work, so tell her to give up as soon as possible. Otherwise, if I can't escape, I think that Landlord Wu would not like to take a dead concubine home."

After coldly throwing down those words, Cui Miao He turned to leave. She'd rather die than marry that Landlord Wu who had a bad reputation. If she had to marry, she'd rather marry Chai Zhe Xia. Suddenly, his silhouette floated into her mind.

Facing Stepmother's unending tricks, she was tired of them. Maybe she should seriously consider Chai Zhe Xia's offer, he wasn't really that bad of a man...

Thinking of that, her heart suddenly stirred, and felt something, but there wasn't enough time for her to grasp onto what she truly felt.

He said that Ying Liu Pavilion was his, and that if one wanted news, that sort of social place was the best.

In other words, if she wanted news, that was the best place.

Therefore, when she wanted to figure out Stepmother's secrets, the first person she thought of was Chai Zhe Xia.

If he was be one step ahead in Stepmother's plot, then surely he must know why she was so eager to kick her out.

Looking up at the vermillion front doors of the General's Manor, there was hesitation in Cui Miao He's heart, and she paced back and forth several times, but in the end, was unable to make the decision to go in.

Originally, when something like this happened, she would go find her sisters, but whether it was Yuan Yu *jiejie*, or Jun Yin *jiejie*, the sudden disasters in the family had left it in a pitiful state, so how could she bother them in a time when they are so busy?

But... apart from them, she had no other friends. In this crucial time, Chai Zhe Xia was the only person that she could think of.

Should she go in? She rejected him that day, so would an arrogant man like him forgive her?

The anxious Cui Miao He walked backwards and forwards, until a trench almost formed where she walked, but she was still unable to make a decision.

"If his proposal from last time was real, then when I go inside, wouldn't I be jumping out of one hole and into another?"

Cui Miao He mumbled under her breath to herself, but when she was about to turn and leave, another thought came to her.

"But he's the only person I can go to, his official position is high, and so his family is important, there aren't many people in the city who would dare to offend him. He really is the best person to help me."

Having thought of that, she spun on her heel, turning back to face the front door.

After having gone backwards and forwards for the length of time it took an incense stick to burn out, she still couldn't grasp onto a plan, and didn't know what to do.

Suddenly, someone ruthlessly struck the back of her head with such force that she saw stars, and wasn't able to tell apart the ground from the sky.

In these muddled moments, Cui Miao He thought that she was being grabbed

by someone, being pulled away while dizzy.

Because she didn't know who had plotted against her, she immediately became frantic, and started struggling inside her head.

Don't be misled by her appearance of being calm and collected, in fact, being plotted against by someone for no reason, she had long become a person who frightens easily.

Not only did she no longer trust the maids in the courtyard, but no longer even dared to touch the food prepared by the cook.

She was very clear that she was lucky last time, that she had met Chai Zhe Xia who long knew of the plot.

Then how about this time? Who would dare to grab someone in the middle of the street?

Could Stepmother's be behind it again?

The footsteps in front of her stopped, and Cui Miao He whose head was still in disarray, couldn't deal with it, and bumped into the person.

That person's back felt as if there was a piece of iron stuck to it, and the bump made her cry out again, it hurt so much. Cui Miao He used one hand to rub her sore forehead, and at the same time, quickly opened her mouth to curse, "Which hothead not only dares to grab someone from the street, but caused me to hurt my forehead. Don't you know that my father is an important official, and can lock you up in prison at any time."

She was panting with rage and threatening, she very rarely used her father's position as an official to pressure people, but she had been unfathomably grabbed by someone, and knocked around until she was befuddled, this time, her temper would come to light.

"I actually do want to see whether or not your father can touch me." Chai Zhe Xia saw that she was so angry that she had gone red, and with a bright smile on his face without a hint of sympathy.

### **Notes:**

I had a little time to spare these past 2 days before I fly off (again) for a long

weekend in Hong Kong and Macau, so I did a little translating!

I'm thinking of translating/summarising [娘子不像话:妖孽殿下来敲门](#) for my next project. Yes, no, any suggestions/recommendations?

Also, does anyone know any good novels set in China between 1900-1949?