

E11 - Reducing Two to One

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SIGN The Apothecary Diaries

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SIGN This story is a work of fiction. The names of all of the characters, organizations, and so on are imaginary. It also bears no connection to any specific real-life events.

SIGN Episode 11: Reducing Two to One

[01:44] Fengming

A letter from Concubine Gyokuyou?

[01:46] Maomao

Yes. I was ordered to deliver it directly.

[01:49] Fengming

Lady Ah-Duo is away on a tea party.

[01:56] Maomao

There's something I would like to discuss with you, Lady Fengming.

[02:00] Fengming

I understand.

[02:11] Maomao

*The luggage is all packed up.
That must mean, as I thought...*

[02:15] Fengming

Please.

[02:22] Fengming

So, what did you need today?

[02:25] Fengming

We've finished cleaning this place.

[02:28] Maomao

When are you moving out?

[02:32] Fengming

You're a smart one.

[02:35] Maomao

The big clean-up was an excuse.

[02:38] Maomao

In order to welcome a new high-ranked concubine during the new year's celebration,

[02:42] Maomao

Concubine Ah-Duo must leave this palace.

[02:47] Maomao

Concubine Ah-Duo can't have
children anymore, can she?

[02:53] Maomao

What happened when she gave birth?

[02:55] Fengming

I fail to see how that's any of your business.

[02:59] Maomao

It is my business.

[03:04] Maomao

The doctor who attended
that birth was my father.

[03:10] Maomao

My guess is the misfortune was
that Concubine Ah-Duo,

[03:12] Maomao

the prince's concubine at the time,

[03:14] Maomao

gave birth at the same time
as the empress dowager.

[03:27] (Flashback) Fengming

When is the doctor coming back?!

[03:29] (Flashback) Lady-in-Waiting

He's still at the empress dowager's.

[03:31] (Flashback) Fengming

Lady Ah-Duo!

[03:31] (Flashback) Fengming

Lady Ah-Duo, it's all right!
Fengming is by your side!

[03:35] Maomao

The empress dowager was given higher priority,

[03:38] Maomao

and Concubine Ah-Duo's childbirth had to wait.

[03:47] (Flashback) Fengming

Lady Ah-Duo.

[03:49] Maomao

That must have been when
Concubine Ah-Duo lost her uterus.

[03:54] Maomao

The child that was born to Concubine
Ah-Duo then passed away soon after.

[04:01] Maomao

Lady Fengming, are you
blaming yourself for that?

[04:05] Maomao

You must have been the one taking care of

the baby instead of Concubine Ah-Duo.

[04:15] Fengming

You've figured it all out,

[04:17] Fengming

despite being the daughter of the quack
who couldn't help Lady Ah-Duo.

[04:23] Maomao

You're right.

SIGN ...Luomen, expelled...

[04:28] Maomao

It's thought that the cause
of the baby's death was

[04:30] Maomao

the same toxic make-up
from the other incidents,

[04:34] Maomao

but that's not the case, is it?

[04:38] Maomao

That doctor you call a quack
must have banned that powder.

[04:43] Maomao

You're a wise person. You wouldn't
have let the baby die from that.

[04:47] Maomao

The real cause of death was this.

[04:52] Maomao

Many flowers have poison in them,

[04:56] Maomao

like aconite or azalea.

[04:58] Maomao

Their nectar can be poisonous, too.

[05:02] Fengming

I am aware.

[05:03] Maomao

But back then...

[05:06] Maomao

you weren't.

[05:07] Maomao

You didn't realize regular
honey with no poison,

[05:10] Maomao

the medicine you thought was good for health,

[05:14] Maomao

can be harmful to a newborn baby.

[05:21] (Flashback) Ah-Duo

Thank you for your help as always, Fengming.

[05:23] (Flashback) Fengming

It's no trouble at all, Lady Ah-Duo.

[05:26] (Flashback) Fengming

Please rest and recover soon.

[05:33] Maomao

And thus, Concubine Ah-Duo's child passed away.

[05:38] Maomao

The cause was treated as a mystery.

[05:40] Maomao

My father Luomen, the attending
doctor at the time,

[05:43] Maomao

was blamed for the repeated mistakes,
including the one at childbirth.

[05:47] Maomao

He was expelled from the rear palace.

[05:50] Maomao

But later on, you accidentally learned
the true cause of the baby's death.

[05:57] Maomao

Someone taught you that honey can be
poisonous to infants, didn't they?

[06:04] Maomao

You had to make sure
Concubine Ah-Duo didn't find out.

[06:07] Maomao

She couldn't know you were
the one who killed her only child.

[06:11] Maomao

So, you tried to eliminate them.

[06:15] Maomao

That person is...

[06:18] Maomao

Concubine Lishu.

[06:22] Maomao

During the previous emperor's reign,

[06:23] Maomao

Concubine Lishu was close to
Concubine Ah-Duo, who was her elder.

[06:28] Maomao

Concubine Ah-Duo was also
fond of Concubine Lishu.

[06:31] Maomao

A young girl, taken from her parents,

[06:34] Maomao

and a woman who could no longer give birth.

[06:38] Maomao

There may have been a type of

codependency developing.

[06:42] Maomao

During that time, you learned
from Concubine Lishu

[06:44] Maomao

that she almost died eating honey as a baby.

[06:49] Maomao

To make sure Concubine Ah-Duo
never heard that story,

[06:52] Maomao

you started to chase Concubine Lishu
away from the Garnet Pavilion.

[06:56] Maomao

Later, the previous emperor passed away,

[06:59] Maomao

and Concubine Lishu was forced to leave the
rear palace, unaware of why she was chased out.

[07:06] Maomao

You must have felt quite relieved.

[07:09] Maomao

But Concubine Lishu, who you
thought you'd never see again,

[07:13] Maomao

returned to the rear palace.

[07:16] Maomao

As another high-ranking concubine.

[07:18] Maomao

As a threat to Concubine Ah-Duo's status.

[07:22] Maomao

That insolent child tried to visit
Concubine Ah-Duo many times,

[07:26] Maomao

as if trying to be with her mother.

[07:29] Maomao

To protect Concubine Ah-Duo,
who is incapable of childbirth,

[07:32] Maomao

and to hide the issue with the honey...

[07:36] Maomao

You poisoned Concubine Lishu's soup.

[07:43] Fengming

What do you want?

[07:46] Maomao

There's nothing.

[07:50] Fengming

Anything. Just ask.

[07:59] Maomao

You must know that's meaningless.

[08:21] Fengming

Hey. Do you know what's most precious
to the person most precious to you?

[08:31] Fengming

The moment I met Lady Ah-Duo,

[08:34] Fengming

I knew I would never serve anyone else again.

[08:38] Fengming

Despite being a woman,

[08:39] Fengming

she had a strong will, and the ability
to speak on even grounds with the prince.

[08:44] Fengming

I had nothing but the deepest
respect for Lady Ah-Duo.

[08:47] Fengming

Compared to me, who just followed my
parents' orders to become a lady-in-waiting,

[08:52] Fengming

she was such an astonishing person.

[08:56] Fengming

Despite that, I...

[08:58] Fengming

I took what was most precious
to her with my own hands...

[09:03] Fengming

I took him away!

[09:05] Fengming

The baby that Lady Ah-Duo loved so dearly!

[09:10] Fengming

With these hands!

[09:12] Fengming

Back then...

[09:14] Fengming

Lady Ah-Duo told us this.

[09:17] (Flashback) Ah-Duo

Do not blame yourselves for this.

[09:19] (Flashback) Ah-Duo

Babies can die for any
reason until they're seven.

[09:23] (Flashback) Ah-Duo

Even the slightest illness
can easily kill them.

[09:26] (Flashback) Ah-Duo

My baby simply followed
the will of the heavens.

[09:36] Fengming

And yet, I knew she cried
herself to sleep every night!

[09:50] Maomao

*What was her mental state like, as she served
Lady Ah-Duo for the past sixteen years?*

[09:55] Maomao

*Without having her own partner,
sacrificing everything for Concubine Ah-Duo...*

[10:01] Maomao

I can't relate.

[10:03] Maomao

*I don't have it in my heart
to keep someone so close.*

[10:09] Maomao

*If he hears my story, Master Jinshi
will surely apprehend Fengming.*

[10:14] Maomao

*There's no way she'd
escape capital punishment.*

[10:18] Maomao

She's a smart woman. She knows all of that.

[10:24] Maomao

I have a suggestion.

[10:30] Maomao

The only thing I can do is to take
your two motives and make it one.

[10:35] Maomao

It won't change the results.

[10:37] Maomao

But if that's still preferable
to you, please hear me out.

[10:53] Maomao

So tired...

[10:55] Maomao

A bath... No, it's too late for that.

[10:58] Maomao

Guess I can at least get changed.

[11:02] Maomao

I wore layers of stiffened
oil paper, just in case.

[11:06] Maomao

Glad I didn't need it.

[11:08] Maomao

Getting slashed would hurt.

[11:13] Jinshi

And so, Fengming turned herself in.

[11:17] Jinshi

Do you know anything about it?

[11:19] Maomao

What do you mean?

[11:20] Jinshi

I heard you had Gaoshun
collect some information.

[11:24] Maomao

Yes. I'd hoped to figure something
out, but it was all for naught.

[11:30] Jinshi

Fengming's motive, as you said,
was to try to make sure

[11:34] Jinshi

Concubine Ah-Duo could stay in the
position of one of the four concubines.

[11:38] Maomao

I see.

[11:39] Jinshi

But Concubine Ah-Duo has already been
determined to leave the rear palace.

[11:44] Jinshi

She'll live in the detached
palace to the south.

[11:48] Maomao

Does this incident have
anything to do with that?

[11:51] Jinshi

No, the decision was made a while ago.

[11:54] Jinshi

It was the emperor's call.

[11:56] Maomao

I see.

[11:59] Maomao

This flower.

[12:01] Jinshi

Hongniang came by earlier to put it on display.

[12:05] Maomao

Yes, it's out of season.

[12:17] Jinshi

It's sweet.

[12:18] Maomao

Poisonous, though.

[12:21] Maomao

It's not lethal. Don't worry.

[12:26] Maomao

My suggestion to Fengming, back then...

[12:31] Maomao

*The poisoning of Concubine Lishu.
The cause of death for the baby.*

[12:34] Maomao

If these two motives become one,

[12:37] Maomao

*she could hide the cause of the baby's
death from Concubine Ah-Duo.*

[12:42] Maomao

Even if her own death is inevitable...

[12:45] Maomao

*That was the best I could do,
as a girl with no power.*

[13:04] Maomao

I can't sleep.

[13:07] Maomao

Maybe I'll take a walk.

[13:30] Maomao

Fengming was executed.

[13:33] Maomao

*Concubine Ah-Duo is set to leave
the rear palace tomorrow.*

[13:37] Ah-Duo

Oh, someone beat me here?

[13:42] Ah-Duo

You're that girl who came
to help clean the other day.

[13:46] Maomao

I'll leave right away.

[13:48] Ah-Duo

No.

[13:49] Ah-Duo

Care to join me for a drink?

[13:52] Maomao

Whoa! Booze!

[13:55] Maomao

Thank you very much.

[14:06] Ah-Duo

Pretty masculine, aren't I?

[14:08] Maomao

I feel like you're giving
that impression on purpose.

[14:13] Ah-Duo

You're an honest one.

[14:16] Ah-Duo

After my son left me, I became
the emperor's friend, not his concubine.

[14:24] Ah-Duo

Or rather, I *returned* to being his friend.

[14:29] Ah-Duo

I never thought I'd become a concubine.

[14:34] Ah-Duo

I was a concubine in name only,
given the role out of pity.

[14:38] Ah-Duo

I wanted to hand it off to someone
else as soon as possible.

[14:42] Ah-Duo

Why cling to it for so long...?

[14:45] Maomao

*She probably would have said the same
things to whoever she'd met up here.*

[14:56] Ah-Duo

It must have been cold in that water.

[15:00] Ah-Duo

It must have been painful.

[15:07] Maomao

You're probably right.

[15:09] Ah-Duo

Stupid, don't you think?

[15:13] Maomao

Perhaps she was.

[15:16] Ah-Duo

We're all stupid.

[15:25] Maomao

Perhaps we are.

[15:36] Maomao

I think I get it now.

[15:40] Maomao

That servant was indeed a suicide.

[15:44] Maomao

Concubine Ah-Duo noticed that.

[15:47] Maomao

Maybe Fengming helped set it up.

[15:51] Maomao

To take suspicion away from Concubine Ah-Duo,

[15:54] Maomao

*the servant chose to sink down
into the cold water.*

[15:57] Maomao

To keep her secret hidden,

[15:59] Maomao

Fengming chose to step up to the gallows.

[16:04] Maomao

*Regardless of Concubine
Ah-Duo's own wishes,*

[16:06] Maomao

*there are those who
sacrifice their lives for her.*

[16:11] Maomao

I should go now, too.

[16:17] Jinshi

What are you doing?

[16:23] Maomao

Ow... Who's that? You startled me.

[16:25] Jinshi

My bad.

[16:28] Maomao

Master Jinshi? Why are you here?

[16:31] Jinshi

I should ask the same of you.

[16:33] Maomao

I'm sorry. I'll get up now—

[16:37] Maomao

Could you let go?

[16:40] Maomao

Let go, please.

[16:43] Jinshi

Don't wanna. It's too cold.

[16:45] Maomao

You'll catch a cold without a coat.

Please go back to your room.

[16:50] Maomao

Are you drunk?

[16:52] Jinshi

I had to. I was sharing a drink with someone.

[16:54] Maomao

Sharing, huh?

[16:57] Jinshi

The host invited me to drink,

[16:59] Jinshi

loaded me up full of booze,

[17:01] Jinshi

then just took off.

[17:04] Jinshi

When she finally came back,

[17:06] Jinshi

she told me she was satisfied

now, and threw me out.

[17:10] Maomao

I didn't know anyone in this rear

palace could treat this guy like that.

[17:15] Maomao

But that's not related to this right now.

[17:19] Maomao

I don't want to put up with a clingy drunk.

[17:22] Maomao

*Wait... Come to think of it,
he did catch me as I fell.*

[17:28] Maomao

*Maybe it's rude to just make him let go
of me without even thanking him.*

[17:33] Maomao

Master Jinshi—

[17:45] Jinshi

Just a little longer.

[17:47] Jinshi

Keep me warm, just a little longer.

[18:07] Maomao

Neither of them seem hungover.

[18:11] Maomao

*Concubine Ah-Duo, in order
to leave the rear palace,*

[18:13] Maomao

*returns the crown signifying
her as Pure Concubine.*

[18:16] Maomao

*That crown will be bestowed on another girl
who will join the rear palace later.*

[18:28] Maomao

Ah, I see.

[18:30] Maomao

I knew she resembled someone.

[18:33] Maomao

It's Master Jinshi.

[18:36] Maomao

Those two might as well swap outfits...

[18:41] Maomao

Swap...

[18:43] (Flashback) Ah-Duo

After my son left me...

[18:46] Maomao

"Left me," she said. Not "died"?

[18:51] Maomao

*I can almost interpret that
to mean he's still alive.*

[18:54] Maomao

Concubine Ah-Duo's child and

the then-empress dowager's child...

[18:59] Maomao

What if the two babies were swapped?

[19:03] Maomao

*It must have been clear to Concubine Ah-Duo,
through her experience in childbirth.*

[19:07] (Flashback) Luomen

*What are you doing?! I must
tend to Concubine Ah-Duo...*

[19:10] (Flashback) Eunuch

The empress dowager takes priority!

[19:11] (Flashback) Fengming

N-No!

[19:13] Maomao

*After all, she was just a nurse's daughter,
a childhood friend of the prince.*

[19:18] Maomao

*Her son would live a better life
as the empress dowager's son.*

[19:24] Maomao

*Maybe she wasn't in a state
to decide what was right or wrong.*

[19:29] Maomao

*But if the decision resulted
in her son surviving...*

[19:33] Maomao

*That would have been all that
Concubine Ah-Duo could have wished for.*

[19:37] Maomao

*What if people found out
the babies were swapped later?*

[19:41] Maomao

If that was after the one baby had died,

[19:44] Maomao

*that would explain why my dad would be
physically punished for not noticing.*

[19:51] Maomao

And if that were the case,

[19:53] Maomao

*it would explain why the emperor's younger
brother is in a delicate position,*

[19:57] Maomao

*and why Concubine Ah-Duo,
who's supposed to be a realist,*

[20:00] Maomao

stayed in the rear palace for so long...

[20:06] Maomao

Complete nonsense.

An idiotic delusion of a story.

[20:09] Lishu

Please, wait!

[20:10] Kanan

Lady Lishu!

[20:15] Maomao

As always.

[20:18] Maomao

*As a lonely concubine, to have
a lady-in-waiting she can trust...*

[20:24] Maomao

How reassuring that must be.

[20:29] Kanan

Lady Lishu!

[20:38] Maomao

*At that moment, her masculine, noble face
suddenly took on the expression of a mother.*

[20:52] Gaoshun

Here is the list of Fengming's family
and those connected to them.

[20:57] Jinshi

I heard she was kidnapped and sold off, but...

SIGN Jade Pavilion

Maomao

[21:06] ED Lyrics

Not just some superficial sweetness

[21:12] ED Lyrics

I want more warmth than I can even use, oh

[21:18] ED Lyrics

Having these selfish idealistic thoughts

[21:23] ED Lyrics

*I swallowed them again today
before putting them into words*

[21:28] ED Lyrics

*Still in my memories,
the scent of fragrant olive*

[21:33] ED Lyrics

The color of twilight in the city

[21:36] ED Lyrics

We were laughing...

[21:41] ED Lyrics

*Filled with sadness,
the tears welled up in my eyes*

[21:53] ED Lyrics

I found a glow during those days

[22:01] ED Lyrics

I guess I took everything for granted

[22:06] ED Lyrics

The wind was so loud I covered my ears

[22:18] ED Lyrics

I gotta stop being like that

[22:26] ED Lyrics

Even if I stumble over the words of love

SIGN Next Time

[22:46] Narrator

*Next time: "The Eunuch
and the Courtesan."*

SIGN Episode 12: The Eunuch and the Courtesan

Revision #1

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