

All Hail 101

Chapter 101: Retrieving the Divorce Letter

Yu Zongzheng suppressed his anger and continued, "Ever since this matter, not only in the capital, but even in the entire Great Zhou, it has been many years since anyone had seen any Tian-tsui craftsmanship. No one has touched this due to bad luck, so no one wears any more Tian-tsuis. Those who know this skill are also hiding it, but you said that you bought it from a shop." He suddenly raised his voice and shouted, "Yang Shuwan, how dare you fool me!"

Yang Shuwan was so frightened that her face turned ashen. She cried out, "Master, I-I didn't know about this!"

Fortunately, back then, she was afraid that Old Madam would find out that she had done it behind her back, so she didn't let anyone know. After receiving the money, the old craftsman returned to his hometown.

If others found out that she had caught kingfishers and made a Tian-tsui, the Imperial Consort Lu of the palace and the Marquis of Weining's Residence would definitely not let Master off easily. If they were not careful, he might even lose his position as an official!

But she really did not know about this!

"Master, please calm down. This is indeed my fault. If I had known about this, I wouldn't have dared to cause trouble for you." Now that things had come to this, it was useless to deny it. Instead, it would completely anger Master. Yang Shuwan regretted it so much that her intestines turned green.

However, she did not expect that she would cause such a huge trouble just by giving her a Tian-tsui. It made Master so angry. It was not easy for her to take advantage of Master's injury and serve him inside and out to coax him. However, Master was unhappy with her again.

If she had known earlier, she wouldn't have wanted to compete with Madam Yao and given Yu Youyao the Tian-tsui. Now that she had given it to her, she hadn't received anything good at all. Instead, she had gotten herself into trouble.

It was also Yu Youyao's fault for not keeping it after receiving it. Instead, she was attracting attention everywhere, only to let Master know about this!

Fortunately, this matter happened in the residence and did not cause any trouble outside. She thought that if she apologized to Master and coaxed him, he would probably calm down.

However, she had miscalculated this time. Yu Zongzheng was not appeased by her apology. Instead, he became even angrier. "Don't you know? But if you don't know how to see with your eyes, can't you use your brain to think?"

Yang Shuwan's eyes turned red from being shouted at. She stared at him with a pitiful expression, looking heartbroken and aggrieved. Master had always liked this look the most. Usually, as long as she showed this expression, Master would definitely feel sorry for her.

However, in his anger, Yu Zongzheng couldn't be bothered to look at her. "All these years, you've been to many other houses. Have you seen anyone wearing a Tian-tsui? No one else is wearing it.

Even if they're stupid, they should have noticed the problem. Can't you learn from others? You've been following Mother's rules for nothing!"

It had been eight or nine years since the incident at Dian Cui. It had probably happened before Yang Shuwan had even arrived.

However, as the mistress of the household, Yang Shuwan's eyes were fixed on the small plot of land in the house. She was not observant at all. Not only was he furious, but he was also extremely disappointed!

Yang Shuwan was speechless after being lectured. She could only pinch her handkerchief and cry.

Large families interacted with each other. Other than socializing, they also probed for information. If there were any major events in the imperial court, it was possible to see some clues from the women in the backyard. Their clothes, words, and even which family they were close to or distant from could all be seen.

Yu Zongzheng was even more furious. "What are you crying for? Have I wronged you? Mothers pay respects to Buddha for the future generations of the family. As children, even if we don't follow our family, we have to be kind and do good things. If you had any filial piety, you wouldn't have done such a ridiculous thing!"

These words made Yang Shuwan feel so flustered and afraid that she even forgot to cry. "Master, I was negligent. I was wrong..."

Yu Zongzheng couldn't wait to hear her explanation. "Fortunately, this matter happened in the residence and wasn't spread outside. Otherwise, I would be at a disadvantage. You would have received the divorce letter and returned to your maiden home."

Yang Shuwan was so aggrieved that tears streamed down her face. Yu Zongzheng had never said such serious words to her. She did not know that once he said them, it would hurt their relationship as husband and wife.

However, Yu Zongzheng was too angry to care about their relationship as husband and wife. "I originally thought that although you were the daughter of a concubine, you had some literary talent and were a sensible person. I didn't expect you to be inferior to Madam Xie. Back then, regardless of whether it was the Xie family's butler or being filial to the elders, there was never a single mistake. Look at you, you're simply a mess!"

At the mention of this, he thought of Yu Qingning. Although Yu Qingning had been led astray by Concubine He, didn't Yang Shuwan, her stepmother, have some responsibility?

He remembered that the second son's concubine's daughters were also raised by his aunt. However, the second son's concubine's daughters were all well-behaved and obedient. They were all matrons of the household. Why was there such a big difference?

"Master, Sister is the first wife's daughter, but I can't compare to her. However, I've been married to you for so many years and have given birth to your children. I haven't contributed much, but I've also worked hard..." Yang Shuwan's eyes were red from crying. In the past, she had always pretended to cry in front of Master. If Master

were to see this, his heart would definitely ache a little. But today, she was really crying!

No one could stand being compared to a dead person!

These words were the most hurtful!

Hearing this, Yu Zongzheng was filled with frustration. He swallowed his words of reprimand and flicked his sleeve. "I can't be bothered to talk to you!"

With that, he went straight to the study.

Yang Shuwan cried a little louder, but Yu Zongzheng did not even turn around to take a look. He did not even stop in his tracks!

Yu Youyao had stolen the limelight in the morning's literary class. Yu Jianjia felt suffocated, and she became even more focused on the talent class in the afternoon, wanting to surpass Yu Youyao in the four arts.

Therefore, after receiving Ms. Ye's praise in the zither class today, the depression in Yu Jianjia's heart dissipated a little, and her face revealed a satisfied look.

After school, Yu Jianjia did not even return to the courtyard. She went straight to the main courtyard, planning to tell her mother the good news so that she would be happy too.

Unexpectedly, as soon as she stepped into the main courtyard, she sensed that something was wrong.

Yu Jianjia quickened her pace and walked into the main room. She lifted the curtain and entered the inner room. She saw Yang Shuwan lying on the bed with Nanny Li serving her.

There was a thick medicinal smell in the room. Yu Jianjia was shocked and quickly walked forward. "What's wrong, Mother? Are you feeling unwell?"

Nanny Li hurriedly said, "Madam's head hurts badly. In the afternoon, she found a doctor to take a look. The doctor said that Madam's liver was stagnated so her head hurt. He prescribed some medicine. I boiled it and fed it to Madam, but it didn't seem to have any effect. She lay down for the entire afternoon."

Yu Jianjia was worried about her mother, and her face turned much paler. "Mother was fine this morning. Why is she suddenly having a headache?"

Chapter 102: So Infuriated That She Became Sick

Nanny Li's eyes narrowed slightly. She lowered her head and did not dare to speak anymore. Madam had been lectured by Master and Madam immediately had a terrible headache. She had sent someone to look for a doctor secretly, but she did not dare to let anyone know, in case it caused more bad rumors.

Yu Jianjia held her breath and was about to ask a question.

Yang Shuwan also regained her senses and opened her eyes. "Help me up!"

Before Nanny Li could react, Yu Jianjia sat on the edge of the bed. "Mother, you're not feeling well, so just lie down. You'll feel better if you lie down."

Yang Shuwan waved her hand and said weakly, "It's not easy to talk while lying down."

Nanny Li helped Yang Shuwan up and stuffed a pillow behind her. She then poured a glass of water and fed it to her.

Yu Jianjia held her mother's hand and looked at her mother leaning against the pillow with golden peony patterns. Her mother's hair was disheveled, and the color of the luxurious peony had faded, making her face look even more haggard.

On a closer look, even the fine wrinkles at the corners of her eyes were visible. She looked like she had aged ten years in an instant.

Her mother was beautiful and usually dressed well. She had never seen her mother so weak and haggard.

Yu Jianjia asked worriedly, "Mother, what happened?"

Yang Shuwan's head hurt terribly. She said hatefully, "It was caused by that b*tch, Yu Youyao."

In her anger, her head throbbed with pain. She covered her forehead and groaned a few times before telling her everything that had happened today, mixed with vulgar and unpleasant curses.

However, Yu Jianjia did not know that so much had happened in the afternoon. "Eldest Sister and I are usually raised in our own rooms. She might know about this, or she might not have done it on purpose."

She was still young, so she rarely went to other houses. She had only heard about what was going on outside from her mother and the maidservants. Who would have known that a small Tian-tsui could be so complicated?

However, Yang Shuwan suddenly raised her voice. "She doesn't know? Nanny Xu, who's beside her, came out from the palace. She must know about the beautiful feathered dress. The master and servant must be plotting against me together."

Yu Jianjia felt an itch in her throat. She wanted to cough, but she was afraid that her mother would worry, so she endured it, feeling very uncomfortable.

"This little b*tch, she's always making things difficult for me!" Yang Shuwan shouted in exasperation. However, as soon as she shouted, it felt as if someone was using a chisel to dig at her head. It hurt so much that she felt a wave of disgusting filth surge into her throat. She covered her mouth with all her might.

Yu Jianjia was shocked and exclaimed, "Mother..."

Nanny Li hurriedly scooped out the bowl from under the bed and handed it to Yang Shuwan.

Yang Shuwan loosened her grip and vomited. She even vomited the bile in her stomach.

There was a foul and unpleasant stench in the room. Yu Jianjia also felt nauseous. She pinched her handkerchief and covered her mouth to retch a few times, then couldn't help but take a few steps back.

After a long while, Yang Shuwan finally stopped vomiting. Nanny Li poured a cup of hot tea and handed it to her.

Yang Shuwan rinsed her mouth with water, but still felt a sour taste in her mouth. She only felt better after drinking three cups of tea in a row.

Yu Jianjia's heart felt heavy. She quietly walked to the window and pushed it open a crack. She stood by the window and exhaled a few times, then took a few deep breaths. Only then did she suppress the nausea in her heart. The stench that lingered in the room also dissipated a little.

After vomiting for a while, although Yang Shuwan felt a little better, her headache had worsened. She leaned against the pillow and groaned softly. Her face had become sallow, and in just a short while, there seemed to be brown spots and wrinkles on her face. She looked even older.

Yu Jianjia sat back on the edge of the bed and said in a low and gentle voice, "Mother, you're not feeling well. Don't get angry again. It won't be good for your health."

Not only did Yang Shuwan have a splitting headache, but she also felt terrible. She couldn't help but pinch her handkerchief and cry. "How could I not know all this? But this time, your father really angered me. He pointed at my nose and scolded me for not being filial to Old Madam. He said that Madam Xie was better at managing the household and even asked me to take the divorce letter back to my family..."

It was actually that serious?! Yu Jianjia sucked in a breath of cold air. Her lips trembled, but she could not say a word.

Yang Shuwan's face was filled with panic. Her head was hurting and in a mess, and she was a little incoherent. "Jia Jia and Mother, what should I do? I'm afraid your father won't let me off easily this time. What should I do?"

Yu Jianjia couldn't help but cough into her handkerchief.

Yang Shuwan reacted and was also shocked. She endured the throbbing headache and said, "Jia Jia, I've been married to your father for many years. Even if he's angry with me, it's only temporary. After a few days, when his anger has subsided, I'll coax him and he'll be fine. Imperial Physician Hu said that you have to think less about your illness and rest more. It's my fault that you're worrying. I shouldn't have said these things in front of you and made you worry. Don't take it to heart."

Nanny Li quickly poured a cup of hot tea and handed it to Yu Jianjia.

Yu Jianjia took a few sips of tea and felt a little better. "Mother, you're right. Father has always treated you with great respect. Since you're sick, stay in the main courtyard and recuperate. Leave the matters in the residence to Nanny Liu. Don't continue to work so hard."

With the power in her hands, how could Yang Shuwan be willing to hand it over? "But..."

Yu Jianjia held Yang Shuwan's hand and looked at her with a burning gaze. "Mother, there are no buts. Father feels that you can't manage the family well. If you continue to do so, it's a lot of effort. Not only is it hard work, but it's also not good in front of Father. By handing over the authority of managing the family, one reason is to recuperate, while the other reason is to reflect on your mistakes. When Father finds out, he'll instead feel that you've learned from your mistakes and will feel guilty."

Yang Shuwan was still a little hesitant, her sallow face full of hesitation. "But, I've always been in charge of the family. I..."

Yu Jianjia frowned slightly and said in an unquestionable tone, "Mother, although Nanny Liu is Old Madam's right-hand woman, she's still just a maidservant after all. She doesn't really have the power to manage the household. Grandmother is old and doesn't have the energy to manage the household. Father is usually filial, but he won't trouble Old Madam. The power of the household will return to you sooner or later. Mother, you can't be foolish."

After hearing Yu Jianjia's explanation, Yang Shuwan also came to a realization. "This is for me to use a ruse to gain your father's pity."

Yu Jianjia's face was pale. She bit her lip and said worriedly, "As the saying goes, everything is fine when there's peace at home. I can't bear to see my father and mother not getting along well, so I naturally hope that you two will be loving, united, and harmonious at home..."

Chapter 103: It's Hard to Be a Stepdaughter

Yang Shuwan gritted her teeth and nodded. "Even a dog would find it annoying to be in charge for three years. I'll take this opportunity to let your father know how hard it is for me to manage the family. They can't do without me in this family, and he'll also know how important I am. In the future, he probably won't be angry at me because of the matter of managing the family."

Yu Jianjia nodded. "That's right."

After Yang Shuwan thought it through, her mood brightened and she immediately felt her headache ease. "However, Old Madam asked Mother to go to An Shou Hall tomorrow to set up rules. Do you think..."

Yu Jianjia's heart skipped a beat, and she quickly said, "Mother, just listen to Grandmother's instructions. Don't think about anything else. Don't make things difficult for you by angering Grandmother."

Her mother probably wanted to use this as an excuse to play a trick on her grandmother.

However, this trick had to be used on her father. What was the point of using it in front of her grandmother? It wouldn't make her grandmother unhappy. Even if her father felt guilty towards her mother, it would be greatly discounted.

Yang Shuwan thought about it carefully. Master was easy to fool, but Old Madam was smart. There was no need to complicate matters as it would be self-defeating.

Seeing that her mother had figured it out, Yu Jianjia heaved a sigh of relief. "Mother's illness can't be treated lightly. We have to find a capable physician and treat it carefully. Otherwise, Mother will suffer in the future."

Yang Shuwan was touched by her daughter's caring and thoughtful words. She held her daughter's hand and said, "How could I not know that? I'll definitely listen to you and recuperate well. Fortunately, I have you by my side. Otherwise, I really wouldn't know what to do."

Yu Jianjia frowned slightly. Thinking back to how her mother had casually mentioned Yu Qingning just now, she hadn't expected that Yu Qingning would be so useless. After causing a commotion, she didn't manage to cause any trouble. Instead, it gave Yu Youyao a chance to perform in front of her father.

She was really unable to do anything right!

Yu Jianjia felt a little uncomfortable again, but she still said, “Mother, get someone to send 20 taels of silver and some expensive cloth and supplements to Nanny Qian later to appease her. Fourth Sister’s life will be better in the future. Fourth Sister hit Nanny Qian. If this matter gets out, even the reputation of the other young misses in the residence will be affected. We have to deal with it well.”

At the mention of this, Yang Shuwan finally thought of this and quickly nodded. “I’ll get Nanny Li to go over immediately.”

After returning to the courtyard, Yu Jianjia called over another maidservant, Fu Ling. “Has the Scarlet Orchid bloomed in the greenhouse?”

The Scarlet Orchid was one of the more expensive types of orchids. The veins of the leaves were clear and transparent, and the plant was majestic, but it did not lose its beautiful and elegant appearance. The flowers bloomed like lotus petals, and the outermost layer of petals was as green as jade. The inner layer was as white as a lotus flower, and the petals were bright red, making them look beautiful, elegant, and imposing.

Fu Ling had been brought up by her mother after Lu Shui had been chased out of the residence. She usually helped Nanny Qin take care of her room, so she was a reliable person. “It has bloomed this morning. It will take about two to three days for it to fully bloom.”

Yu Jianjia’s expression relaxed, and she said, “Send Chi Chanlan to Father’s house. Tell him that I specially nurtured it for him. Don’t say anything else.”

After receiving the order, Fu Ling went down to handle it.

Yu Jianjia sat in her room and drank tea. Not long after, Fu Ling returned with a scroll in her hand. “Young Miss, Master was very happy to have received your Scarlet Orchid. He picked out an ‘Orchid Painting’ and asked me to bring it back for you.”

Yu Jianjia’s slightly furrowed brows finally relaxed. She hurriedly took the scroll and carefully unfolded it...

In An Shou Hall, Yu Youyao was chatting with Old Madam Yu when she mentioned the Tian-tsui. “Mother had someone give me a piece of Tian-tsui, and it’s bright and beautiful. I didn’t have such exquisite jadeite jewelry in my hands, so I couldn’t help but wear it to homeschool. I thought that it would fulfill Mother’s wishes, but I didn’t expect the Tian-tsui to be so infamous. I also didn’t expect Grandmother to pay respects to Buddha because of it, so I couldn’t bear to see this.”

Old Madam Yu frowned when she heard this. After a while, her expression softened. “Yao Yao, you don’t have to think too much about it. You weren’t born yet, so how would you know how amazing the feather dress was? You’ve never seen such exquisite craftsmanship in the past, so it’s inevitable that your eyes will be dazzled when you see such an exquisite thing. Besides, your mother has given you something, so you definitely can’t hide it. Even if you’re a polite person, it’s timely to put it on and show off. If others find out, it’ll be good to show the mother-daughter gift. It’s not wrong for you to do this. It’s also because your mother doesn’t know the severity of the matter so she didn’t stop herself from giving it to you.”

She didn't blame Nanny Xu for not reminding Yao Yao. It was human nature to dress like mother and daughter, but it wasn't a hindrance for Yao Yao to wear it in private.

Yang Shuwan was used to causing trouble, but she wasn't a magnanimous person. If Yao Yao didn't wear some jadeite, she might even feel dissatisfied and cause more trouble.

As Yao Yao's stepdaughter, she had to be more cautious when it came to her stepmother, Madam Yang. If she was careless, it might cause rumors to spread, and people would start speculating about her. It wouldn't be good for Yao Yao's reputation either.

It was difficult being a stepmother!

But it was even more difficult for her as a stepdaughter!

It would be Yao Yao's fault if she didn't wear it, and it would be Madam Yang's fault if she did. Not only was it right for Yao Yao to wear a Tian-tsui, but it was also a very appropriate thing to do.

Yu Youyao still looked uneasy. "But Father seems a little unhappy..."

Old Madam Yu waved her hand. "Your father is also angry that your mother is too ridiculous and careless. It has nothing to do with you. Your mother should also know how capable she is, lest she keeps her eyes on the land in this residence and causes trouble sooner or later."

Eldest Son was obsessed with official matters. Since it concerned his future, he couldn't help but be concerned.

Yu Youyao finally heaved a sigh of relief.

At this moment, Qing Xiu walked into the house. "Old Madam, First Madam is not feeling well. She has just invited a physician into the residence."

Old Madam Yu raised her eyebrows. She did not suspect that Madam Yang was pretending to be sick. After all, with Eldest Son's personality, most people would not be able to take it. "Pick some good medicinal herbs and supplements and send them to the main courtyard. Let Madam Yang recuperate well. She doesn't have to come over tomorrow to set the rules."

Qing Xiu was dismissed.

Yu Youyao held a brightly colored teacup and turned to Xia Tao. "Go back to my courtyard and bring some good medicinal herbs and supplements over. Let Mother recuperate well."

However, she had no intention of going over to take a look.

Madam Yang's illness was definitely real, so naturally, she was also angry. She was her stepdaughter. As long as she was magnanimous and did not let others find fault with her, it would be fine. She did not have to force herself to be a "filial daughter." Even if she was truly filial, Madam Yang would not accept her. There was no need to make things difficult for herself.

Chapter 104 Cousin, You're So Kind!

104 Cousin, You're So Kind!

With her grandmother around, no one dared to use the word "unfilial" to attack her.

Old Madam Yu nodded approvingly and turned to instruct Nanny Xu to set the table.

After dinner, Yu Youyao returned to the Jade Courtyard. Xia Tao quickly came over and said, "Young Mistress, I heard that not long after you left Master's place in the afternoon, First Madam went to the front courtyard and was taught a lesson by Master until she cried. Then, she said that she had a headache and asked someone to secretly hire a doctor."

Yu Youyao glanced at her sideways. "Where did you hear this?"

Her grandmother didn't even know about this. She really hadn't let down her reputation as a godly reporter.

Xia Tao giggled. "There's a servant girl in First Madam's house called Liu'er. She entered the residence with me. In the beginning, she was a servant girl in the residence. Not long after she entered the residence, she fell sick. I was the one who took some money and grabbed a few sets of medicine for her to recover, so our relationship became a little closer. Liu'er acknowledged the maidservant who guarded the back door as her godmother. The maidservant pulled some strings and was sent into First Madam's house to be a servant girl. I occasionally chatted with her. The physician that First Madam hired today was secretly brought into the residence from the back door."

Those who could guard the back door were all trusted people of the residence. They were much more respectable than ordinary servants.

Yu Youyao couldn't help but laugh. "I remember that Old Madam Ye in Father's courtyard fell down a few days ago. You often went there too."

Xia Tao hurriedly said, "This is called forming a good relationship. Old Madam Ye is a servant in Master's house. If she doesn't recover soon, how can she serve Master well?"

Yu Youyao chuckled. "You don't do proper work all day."

Seeing that Miss was not angry, Xia Tao giggled.

The next morning, the news that Madam Yang was sick spread throughout the residence. Yu Youyao went to school but did not see Yu Jianjia. Only then did she know that Yu Jianjia was worried about her mother's health and had applied for a day off from Ms. Ye.

During class, Yu Youyao realized that Ms. Ye's voice was a little hoarse. Old Madam Su usually brought over tea twice in a class, but today, she brought over tea four times.

After the class ended, Yu Youyao called Xia Tao over. "Go back to my house and get me a box of pear paste."

The pear paste was good for clearing one's lungs and improving one's complexion. It also had a good cough reducing effect. She had prepared a lot of it in the house.

After school, Ms. Ye did not ask Yu Youyao to stay.

Yu Youyao called out to Old Madam Su, "I heard that your voice was a little hoarse. Are you feeling unwell?"

Old Madam Su was a little surprised. "Ms. Ye slept late last night and caught a cold. When she woke up in the morning, her throat felt a little uncomfortable. She took some medicine and felt that it wasn't serious, so she didn't say anything."

However, she did not expect Eldest Miss Yu to be so meticulous.

Yu Youyao felt much more relieved. She took the pear paste from Xia Tao's hand and handed it to Old Madam Su. "I made this pear paste myself, so I'll help you soothe your throat. Although it's just a sore throat, you can't be careless. I'll get someone to get a doctor to take a look later."

Old Madam Su quickly accepted it and said sincerely, "Eldest Miss, you're too kind."

Yu Youyao nodded. "Let her rest well."

Seeing that Eldest Miss Yu had left with her maidservant, Old Madam Su hurriedly returned to the inner room with the pear paste. She heard Ms. Ye cough and clear her throat. It was obvious that the medicine from this morning was useless.

Old Madam Su hurriedly said, "Ms. Ye's throat isn't feeling well, so Eldest Miss Yu specially sent a box of pear paste for you to use. I've heard from the servants in the residence that Eldest Miss learned this from a nanny in the palace. Most of the things in her hands are from the palace, and they're excellent. This pear paste is probably the same."

When Ms. Ye heard this, her brows relaxed a little, and a faint smile appeared on her lips. "She's really considerate."

"Isn't that so?" Old Madam Su agreed deeply. She added, "All the young misses in the residence have attended Ms. Ye's class, but no one noticed that Ms. Ye's throat was unwell. Only Eldest Miss Yu noticed it. It's obvious that she truly respects Ms. Ye."

Ms. Ye's expression was indifferent, and she did not speak.

In the past, when Eldest Miss Yu was bad at studying, no matter if it was a lecture, a punishment, or a beating, she had always stubbornly endured it without crying or making a fuss.

Even so, every time she faced her, her eyes still revealed reverence and no resentment. It was obvious that she was pure and naive.

It was also because of this that she was more strict with Yu Youyao, hoping that she could learn something!

"I'll use this pear paste to mix with water. Ms. Ye, quickly try some." Old Madam Su poured a cup of hot water and opened the blue and white round box. The light yellow pear paste had a faint sweetness to it. She took a small spoon and mixed it into the hot water.

Ms. Ye took it and took a sip. It was faintly sweet that was not too strong, and very palatable. There was also a faint lotus-like fragrance. As the bowl of pear paste entered her stomach, the discomfort in her throat indeed eased a little. "It's quite good."

Old Madam Su laughed.

Ms. Ye said, "Send the bamboo brush that I made previously to Eldest Miss Yu."

The brush made by Madam Ye of the Linjiang Prefecture were quite famous in the Great Zhou Dynasty. Most of the brushes used by scholars everywhere were from the Ye Clan.

Ms. Ye was very good at writing. She had inherited all of Madam Ye's skills, and often, people would send money over to invite her to write.

However, Ms. Ye had rules. She had to prepare the materials for making a pen every three months. She only accepted some handicraft fees and was unwilling to earn money from this.

The bamboo brush made by Ms. Ye was made from the bamboo from the Xiaoxiang Forest in the Yu Residence. It was originally meant for Eldest Miss Yu.

After returning to the Jade Courtyard, Yu Youyao asked Xia Tao to look for her cousin.

Suddenly, she heard a faint and clear voice from outside. "Cousin, are you feeling unwell?"

Hearing this voice, Yu Youyao was overjoyed. She turned around and saw Chang An pushing her cousin into the house. Her eyes lit up and she quickly shouted, "Cousin, you're here!"

The young lady's face was rosy, and she did not seem to be feeling unwell at all. Zhou Linghuai's lips curled up slightly. "You came back early today. Didn't Ms. Ye ask you to stay?"

Yu Youyao stopped laughing and shook her head. "I heard that Ms. Ye's throat wasn't feeling well. I was about to get Xia Tao to look for a doctor to take a look at you."

With that, she saw her cousin holding a large silver cup with flowers and birds on it. She hurriedly took it and lifted the lid to take a look!

Inside were bright red cherries that were smaller than longans. They were bright and full, like beautiful rubies.

"It's a cherry!" Yu Youyao exclaimed softly. She couldn't take her eyes off the cherry in the big silver cup, and her mouth was still watering.

Seeing her greedy expression, Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but laugh. "It's for you."

"I love cherries." Yu Youyao cheered, her voice crisp and sweet with joy.

"Cousin, you're the best!"

A cherry was an expensive item that had been shipped from the south.

Chapter 105 Cousin, Is The Cherry Sweet?

The cherries were easily damaged. As soon as they were picked, they had to be frozen and sent into the capital at full speed. On the way, the ice had to be changed constantly, so that it wouldn't melt. Otherwise, the cherries wouldn't be fresh.

There were only a limited number of them in the capital every year until late March.

Yu Youyao could eat cherries every year, but there weren't many in the residence. Each person only had about ten cherries at most, and that included her grandmother's portion.

These cherries were bigger, fresher, and fuller than what she usually ate. They were bright red, and there was even ice at the bottom of the pot. Yu Youyao counted them one by one. After counting more than 30, she was so happy that she was about to go crazy.

She had never eaten so many cherries.

Chun Xiao washed a plate of cherries and brought them over.

After the bright red cherry was dipped in water, it looked beautiful and fresh. Yu Youyao's mouth was full of sourness, and she was ravenous. She took a big cherry and removed the stem on it. Then, she brought a handkerchief to Zhou Linghuai's lips, her black eyes shining brightly. "Cousin, eat first."

Zhou Linghuai didn't like to eat such sweet and sour food, but the little girl was clearly craving it and kept swallowing her saliva. However, she didn't think about eating it herself. Instead, she first wanted to bring it to his mouth. Her sparkling eyes looked at him expectantly. He suddenly felt his mouth water, and he couldn't help but open it.

As soon as the ice-cold cherries entered his mouth, he felt that they were cool and refreshing. With a gentle bite, the juice burst out in his mouth. It was sour and sweet, but more sweet than sour. The cherries that he usually found sour now tasted surprisingly delicious.

Yu Youyao looked at him eagerly and asked, "Cousin, are the cherries delicious? Are they sweet?"

Zhou Linghuai subconsciously smiled and nodded. "It's delicious and sweet. Eat it yourself. It won't be fresh after a while."

"Okay!" Yu Youyao's jade-like fingertips gently pinched a bright red cherry and placed it into her mouth elegantly. Her delicate red lips were even more beautiful than the cherry.

Zhou Linghuai's pupils constricted slightly, and his hands on his knees suddenly tightened.

"Cousin, this is the best cherry I've ever eaten." Yu Youyao's eyes sparkled. She couldn't help but eat them one by one. She ate more than ten of them in one go before feeling a little satisfied.

Seeing that her cousin was sitting at the side and watching her eat the cherries, she felt that she was too greedy. She was so focused on eating alone that she had actually forgotten about her cousin. Hence, she took a cherry in shame and was about to feed him. "Cousin, eat too!"

Zhou Linghuai looked at the big red cherries in front of him and shook his head. "I don't really eat sour food. I'll just try one or two occasionally." Seeing that Yu Youyao really liked them, he added, "If you like them, I'll send more over another day. The cherries are too cold. I can't eat too many at once."

"Thank you, Cousin!" Yu Youyao smiled and automatically ignored what her cousin had said.

She did not ask where her cousin, who had fallen from grace and was seeking refuge with his relatives, had gotten these cherries from. They had been delivered to her before there were any cherries in the capital.

She had never thought of giving the cherries to her grandmother and the others. After all, she had no idea where her cousin's cherries came from.

After eating half of the cherries, Yu Youyao stopped eating in case she couldn't have lunch later.

Chun Xiao iced the remaining half of the cherries and left them for the young lady to eat in the afternoon.

At this moment, Dong Mei led Old Madam Su into the house.

Yu Youyao hurried over.

Old Madam Su handed a bamboo box to her. “Ms. Ye’s throat feels a little better after using the pear paste Eldest Miss gave him. She’s fine now. She ordered this old servant to give Eldest Miss a bamboo brush that I made myself. She instructed Eldest Miss to practice her calligraphy well.”

Yu Youyao, on the other hand, was very surprised. She quickly took the bamboo box with both hands and opened it without hiding anything. Inside was a brush pen with seven wolves and three sheep. The green bamboo tube was carved with detailed bamboo patterns, making it look simple, generous, and elegant.

“Granny Su, thank Ms. Ye for me. Tell her that I like this brush very much.” Yu Youyao did not hide the joy on her face.

Old Madam Su’s smile deepened as Yu Youyao personally sent her out.

Back in the house, Yu Youyao held the brush lovingly. She didn’t know what was so good about this brush, but she liked it a lot. “I didn’t expect Ms. Ye to know how to make a brush.”

Zhou Linghuai said indifferently, “The Ye Family brush of the Linjiang Prefecture is famous throughout the world. Among them, Ms. Ye is the most famous brush maker. It’s difficult to find a single brush.”

He could tell at a glance that this pen had been specially made for Yu Youyao by Ms. Ye. Be it the length, the size, the weight, or the hairs, they were all made according to Yu Youyao’s writing habits. It was very appropriate to use this brush to practice writing. It seemed that Ms. Ye had indeed treated Yu Youyao as her favorite student.

Yu Youyao’s eyes widened. “Ms. Ye is that awesome?”

Zhou Linghuai nodded. “That’s not all. Ms. Ye is good at making brush, but not at making money from them. Every brush she makes is top-notch. Earlier, her reputation had spread to the Empress Dowager, and she had even made brushes for her.”

Yu Youyao’s mouth opened slightly in surprise. When she regained her senses, she said excitedly, “Cousin, let’s go to the study to practice our calligraphy!”

Zhou Linghuai said indulgently, “Let’s go!”

Chun Xiao and Dong Mei looked at each other. Had Young Master and Young Miss forgotten that it was almost time for lunch? Should they go over and remind them?

In the study, Yu Youyao dipped her brush in ink and waved it around like flowing water. She felt that this brush was like an extension of her arm, but it was very handy. She looked down and saw that even the words she had written looked different from usual. She couldn’t help but praise, “Ms. Ye is really amazing!”

Zhou Linghuai suddenly remembered that the young lady often said to him in admiration, “Cousin, you’re really amazing!”

He pursed his lips slightly and changed the topic. "After practicing calligraphy for a while, you can use a slightly softer brush. I have a seven-purple and three-sheep brush here. I've used it before. I'll get Chang An to send it over later. You can try using it."

"I want the brush that Cousin used." Yu Youyao happily took her cousin's arm and said gently, "Thank you, Cousin."

The corners of Zhou Linghuai's mouth twitched slightly as he replied with a soft "Mm."

After lunch, her cousin went to school and Xia Tao returned from Xiaoxiang Pavilion. "The doctor took Ms. Ye's pulse. She only caught a cold and will be fine after taking a few pills."

Yu Youyao heaved a sigh of relief. "Send some top-notch medicinal herbs and supplements over and ask Ms. Ye to recuperate well."

Xia Tao responded and left.

Two days later, Yang Shuwan was still sick and did not seem to be getting better. Nanny Li helped her into An Shou Hall and handed over the key to the residence.

Yang Shuwan looked haggard. "I'm suffering from a migraine. The doctor has instructed that I have to recuperate carefully for a while, and I can't worry about the matters in the residence anymore. At this time, I'll have to trouble Nanny Liu to manage the matters in the residence."

Chapter 106 Doing It Herself

On the other hand, Old Madam Yu was very surprised. She saw that Yang Shuwan's eyes were dark and swollen. Although her lips were smeared with lipstick, they were also dry. The thick powder could not hide her haggard expression, and she did not seem to be pretending.

It seemed that a few days ago, Eldest Son had gone too far.

Old Madam Yu nodded. "In that case, you should rest well for a while. Nanny Liu and I will handle the matters in the residence, so you don't have to worry. Resting is a big deal, especially for your head."

Her tone also revealed rare concern.

Yang Shuwan looked grateful and quickly said, "Thank you for your concern, Old Madam. I understand. However, I won't be able to be filial to you these few days."

Old Madam Yu nodded. "Your health is the most important."

Yang Shuwan gratefully let Nanny Li help her out of An Shou Hall.

Old Madam Yu wrapped the prayer beads around her wrist and looked at the large bunch of keys on the table. She turned to Nanny Liu and asked, "What do you think Madam Yang's intentions are?"

Nanny Liu did not dare to say anything. She quickly said, "I think First Madam is indeed very sick."

Old Madam Yu rolled her eyes at her and did not press her further. Instead, she said coldly, "She has her eyes on this piece of land in the residence, trying to gain benefits for herself. How can she hand over the benefits so easily? She has an expert to guide her."

As for who this expert was, was there even a need to think about it?

Nanny Liu agreed deeply. The Old Madam had seen through everyone in her life, and no one could escape her sharp eyes. It was also because of her eyes that her two sons had become successful.

Old Madam Yu sighed slightly. "She's just sick, but she doesn't know how to stop. She's so scheming. No wonder Eldest Son is fooled by her. However, Yang Shuwan is indeed a little unpresentable, but she still knows how to hold on to Eldest Son's heart. In this aspect, she's better than Madam Xie. I really admire her."

If Madam Xie had Yang Shuwan's temperament, she wouldn't have died so young.

Nanny Liu lowered her head and did not dare to breathe too loudly.

Old Madam Yu was silent for a while before changing the topic. "Since Madam Yang has handed over the right to manage the household, you can bring Yao Yao along to manage the household during this period!"

Even Nanny Liu was stunned.

After following Old Madam for so many years, there were times when she really couldn't understand her thoughts.

Eldest Miss was in charge of the household at this time. Not only was she "filial," but she had also gained a virtuous reputation. She could also learn more about the ways of managing the household, win over the hearts of the people in the residence, and establish her authority in the residence. In the future, she would have a legitimate reason to interfere in the matters of the residence.

Even if First Madam recovered and regained her authority, the Eldest Miss probably would have more control of the matters in the residence.

It was time to show off Eldest Miss's honor as the eldest daughter of the first wife.

She wondered how First Madam would feel when she found out about this.

First Madam was living a good life, but all she wanted was to fool others. No matter how magnanimous Old Madam was, she would not allow her to use her methods and schemes on Eldest Master.

This person! She really couldn't take it.

As soon as she did that, she was implicated as well.

That day, Yu Youyao asked Qing Xiu to invite her to An Shou Hall after school.

Old Madam Yu mentioned this matter. "While your mother is recuperating, you'll help Nanny Liu manage the house. I know that you're learning from Nanny Xu, so it won't take up too much of your time. You'll just take an hour every afternoon to read some accounts and settle some important matters in the residence."

Yu Youyao was a little surprised. "Grandmother, I'm still young. How can this be?"

Old Madam Yu waved her hand and said, "Why not? Your mother is sick, so it's not good to let her manage the household. I'm old and don't have the energy to manage the household. How can Nanny Liu manage so many things alone? As the eldest daughter of the first wife, even though you're young, you should learn to share your mother's and grandmother's burdens."

At this point, how could Yu Youyao refuse? She hesitated for a moment before nodding. "I'll listen to Grandmother."

Old Madam Yu smiled and held her hand. "That's right. I know that it's a little difficult for you to manage the household at such a young age. Don't worry too much. Learn more from Nanny Liu and listen to Nanny Xu. No matter what, you have me. I won't let you suffer."

Yu Youyao felt relieved. "Grandmother, I understand."

Old Madam Yu hurriedly called Nanny Liu over. "Call all the servants in the residence over."

Nanny Liu responded and quickly got someone to arrange it.

Yu Youyao also took the opportunity to ask Xia Tao to go to the second house to look for Chang An. She told her that she would be taking care of the house at noon and that she would not be practicing her calligraphy today. She also told her cousin not to run back and forth.

In less than ten minutes, everyone had arrived.

Old Madam Yu did not beat around the bush. "First Madam is not feeling well and needs to recuperate for a while. During this period, Nanny Liu will help Eldest Miss manage the household." Everyone was in an uproar when they heard this.

A few good-looking housekeepers couldn't help but step forward. "Eldest Miss has to go to school every day and doesn't have time to manage the house. Old Madam, you have to think twice..."

"Although Eldest Miss is smart, she's still a little young. It's not easy to manage a household either. Isn't that a little rash?"

"Eldest Miss is still a little young. If anything happens, won't..."

Old Madam Yu said coldly, "She's young, but there's still an old woman like me in this residence. All of you are old people and have been doing things for many years. All the rules in the residence have been set, and there are also some special cases. Everyone has to follow the rules. How can there be anything wrong? Don't be careless. If there's a mistake, that means you're useless."

As soon as these words were spoken, the few nannies fell silent.

Old Madam's words were truly impressive. If there was nothing wrong with the family affairs, it was because Eldest Miss was good at managing the family. If the family affairs were managed well, it was all Eldest Miss's efforts.

However, if anything went wrong, it would become their fault and they would be the ones punished.

It was precisely these words that made those who thought that Eldest Miss was young and wanted to take advantage of her seniority stunned. They did not dare to be rash.

Old Madam Yu waved her hand and dismissed the servants, leaving behind a few useful stewards.

Seeing this, how could they not understand that the Old Madam was determined to have Eldest Miss take charge of the household? They could not help but look at the two young mothers who were wearing average-looking clothes and quietly exchanged glances.

Yu Youyao, on the other hand, had seen this scene correctly and recognized it. Of these two unusual mothers, one was wearing a dark green ball-patterned jacket and was in charge of buying things in the main kitchen, while the other was wearing a lotus flower-patterned jacket and was in charge of the storeroom. Both were very important.

She pretended not to see them. Looking at the stacks of ledgers on the stone table, she casually picked out one from the big kitchen and flipped through a few pages. Then, she chose the mother wearing a dark green ball-patterned jacket.

Chapter 107 Take Someone Down a Notch

“Mother Yang, it’s already March. The vegetables and fruits in the farmsteads in the suburbs of the capital have also grown out one after another. The vegetables on the market are only worth one yuan per catty. There’s three yuan here, which is three taels of silver. It’s just that vegetables are rare in winter, so that’s the price.”

Yu Youyao’s words stunned everyone present. Many people gasped.

The account book had been brought over by them when Old Madam had ordered them to. Eldest Miss would definitely not have seen it in advance, so this Eldest Miss of theirs was someone who hid her abilities well and knew how to read the account book.

On the other hand, the account books in the main kitchen were very complicated. Even those who knew how to read the account books did not know much about the internal affairs. Even Eldest Madam Yang, who had been managing the household for many years, did not know everything.

However, Eldest Miss took a casual glance and anyone could tell at once that she was promising. It really made one feel timid. How could she dare to fool them?

She really did not expect that Eldest Miss was already so good at reading accounts even though she was not even ten years old. It was no wonder that Old Madam was so assured and bold to let Eldest Miss manage the household.

The atmosphere became much more tense, and everyone looked at Yu Youyao solemnly.

Mother Yang, who had been called out in public, had a change in expression. She immediately put away the trace of disapproval in her heart and bowed. “Eldest Miss, it’s a little colder this spring than usual, and it only gradually warmed up in February. The vegetables also grew later than usual, and the price is much higher. In addition, the vegetables that I ordered were ordered from the best farm in the suburbs of the capital. They’re better than the ones on the market, so they’re naturally more expensive...”

This was a good excuse, but it did not convince Yu Youyao.

When the Great Zhou Dynasty was first established, their great-grandfather placed great importance on agriculture. Every year, the Imperial Court would distribute new seeds to the farmers for free. When the new seeds were successfully planted, the Imperial Court would directly reward them with good farmland. In this day and age, farmland was the lifeblood of the farmers. Who wouldn’t want to do it?

Meanwhile, the local officials also encouraged the farmers to plant new seeds. Once the seeds were planted, it would be a political achievement. During the examination, there would inevitably be a “good” evaluation, so it was easy to move up.

In the Great Zhou Dynasty, fruits and vegetables from the previous dynasty were more expensive than oil.

Even in winter, there were still farms that wanted to build straw sheds to grow vegetables. Some large farms even used underfloor heaters to grow vegetables. Although vegetables and fruits were also expensive in winter, the price was not that ridiculous.

Not to mention during normal times.

As a servant, Mother Yang was indeed greedy, but she was not as bold and greedy as Madam Yang. Hence, the money could only go into Madam Yang’s pocket.

However, Yu Youyao did not intend to expose her. However, it was still necessary for her to establish her authority on the first day. “I remember that our family has a plantation in the suburbs of the capital. We plant vegetables and fruits and send fresh ones to the residence every day. The plantation under my mother’s name will also send some fruits, vegetables, mountain delicacies, and wild animals to the residence from time to time. There aren’t many people in the residence, so we have enough vegetables. There’s no need to buy so many, right?”

Clearly, she had made a false account.

In reality, they hadn’t bought that many vegetables, but the rest of the money had been stolen.

Many of the people present were already starting to break out in a cold sweat. Although the madams and young misses who were raised in private houses were well-versed in literature and calligraphy, they were all people who did not know anything about such trivial matters.

Even though she knew how to read some accounts, she did not know about the outside world. She could easily fool others with just a few words.

This Eldest Miss was too shrewd. With just a glance at the account book, she had already figured out what was going on.

Mother Yang’s heart skipped a beat, and she became a little nervous. “Eldest Miss, you might not know this, but it’s a little cold this year, and the vegetables in the manor aren’t growing as well as in the past. The suburbs are also a little far away, so some of the vegetables are no longer fresh when they’re sent into the residence. Eldest Madam knows that I’ve been shopping outside.”

By the time she finished speaking, her body was already covered in a layer of cold sweat. Her sweat-soaked clothes stuck to her back, but it sent a chill down her spine and into her bones.

Yesterday, when Madam was about to hand over her authority as the housekeeper, she had found a few useful stewards to give them a lesson. The main point was to make sure that they wouldn’t forget about their old master just because they had a new one.

She had asked them to clean up the accounts again so that Nanny Liu wouldn’t notice anything amiss.

They were used to doing this, so they were naturally not afraid.

Although the vegetables were much more expensive, they had already found an excuse. Despite Nanny Liu's appearance, she was still a servant. As long as they brought up First Madam, they probably wouldn't be able to make things difficult for her. She also wouldn't go to Old Madam for such a small matter.

However, before Nanny Liu could check the accounts, news of Eldest Miss's taking over spread, scaring them into a daze. Just as they were feeling delighted, Eldest Miss took them down a notch.

Nanny Liu was a servant, so she was not afraid to mention First Madam.

However, Eldest Miss was the person in charge, and she had Old Madam's support. Since Eldest Miss had asked, they could not fool her. They had to make things clear.

But how could she understand such a thing? The more she said, the more mistakes she would make.

When Yu Youyao heard this, she smiled faintly. "So you've gotten Mother's approval. Let's do it this way then!"

Mother Yang suddenly heaved a sigh of relief. She thought about First Madam's reputation. Even though this matter with Eldest Miss was over, she had to be more cautious in the future.

However, just as she wiped her sweat, she heard Eldest Miss ask in a clear voice, "Did the person who sent the vegetables over come over today?"

What did this mean? Mother Yang was stunned for a moment. Then she quickly said, "They won't arrive until about this afternoon."

Yu Youyao nodded. "When they come over, they'll come over to inform us. I heard from Mother Yang that the vegetables at the top farm haven't been growing well this year, so the other crops have probably been affected as well. I have to understand a little more, and at the same time, I can find out more about the other crops. After all, the future of the residence depends on the harvest from the top farm. We shouldn't let the residence suffer."

Mother Yang felt dizzy. She did not expect that not only did Eldest Miss know how to read accounts, but she was also smart enough to think of this.

If the crops in the farmstead were not good, even if the people in the farmstead did not manage it well, no one would dare to bear such a responsibility easily. They would definitely give themselves away.

However, she did not dare to implicate First Madam anymore.

At that time, she would be the one in the wrong, and the responsibility would be hers.

Old Madam Yu sat at the side and did not say anything. She did not even pinch her prayer beads anymore. When she saw this good show, even her turbid eyes lit up.

Yao Yao was really smart. Her method of killing the chicken to warn the monkeys had almost frightened her.

After everyone had left, Old Madam Yu said to Nanny Liu, "Call over the manager of the shop outside and the manor tomorrow for Yao Yao to meet."

Nanny Liu replied with a smile.

Old Madam Yu nodded in satisfaction and asked Yu Youyao, "How did you know the value of vegetables outside?"

Chapter 108 Housekeeping Spirit

The young misses in the residence were all raised in their own courtyards, so most of the matters in the city would not reach their ears.

Even the mistress of the household might not necessarily know about the prices outside, so she was fooled.

Yu Youyao said, "Nanny Xu asked me to find out about the prices outside from time to time. She said that the change in prices is related to the internal residence and the state affairs. By understanding the prices, I can notice the movements of the various residences in the capital and even the royal court."

Old Madam Yu really admired Nanny Xu now. "Nanny Xu is right."

Her master was a sensible person, so the subordinates naturally did not dare to fool her easily. Just this point alone was already better than most people. If they had more experience, they would really become "housekeepers".

This was just like Madam Xie.

Old Madam Yu asked again, "When the people from the manor enter the residence, how do you plan to deal with this matter? I can see that the situation inside is very complicated."

Yu Youyao stuck out her tongue slightly and turned to Chun Xiao. "Mother is sick, and Grandmother is old. I'm helping to manage the household now. You're the first maidservant I need, so I have to rely on you a little. Mother Yang is a responsible and capable person. You have to follow her around and see how she does things. Learn more, and you'll be able to help me."

When Chun Xiao heard this, she nodded. "Young Miss, I understand. I'll go find Mother Yang now."

Old Madam Yu was amused again. "I think I've underestimated you. Since you can even think of this, I'll probably go back and rest."

Nanny Liu helped Old Madam Yu back to her room and poured a cup of medicinal tea.

Old Madam Yu held her cup and took a sip. "I was originally worried that Yao Yao was still young and wouldn't be able to control others. I was still thinking of finding a way to support her, but I didn't expect her to be so capable."

Nanny Liu added, "That's right. Eldest Miss's first sentence just now shocked me too."

Old Madam Yu put down her cup and smiled. "A master doesn't need a reason to punish any servant. She can do it at will. The key is to establish your authority and convince the public. You also have to abide by the rules. Look at Madam Yang. She's been in charge of the family for so long. She's good at bribing people, but she made everyone in the residence respect her. Everyone has to follow her instructions and deceive their superiors."

Nanny Liu agreed wholeheartedly.

Old Madam's methods of managing the household were as clear as a mirror, so she had asked her to help First Madam manage the household. Now that First Madam had some considerations, she also restrained herself a little.

Old Madam Yu continued, "On the first day, Butler Yao wanted to attack the Yang family's people to establish her authority. She wanted to let the people in the residence know that the Yang family wasn't the only one in the Yu Residence. It was also for the sake of convincing the public. Yao Yao knows how to read accounts and settle accounts. She's also proficient in common affairs and knows how to reward and punish clearly. Naturally, the servants were convinced and didn't dare to act rashly."

Nanny Liu smiled and said, "Since Eldest Miss knows how to manage the household, Old Madam can rest easy in the future."

Old Madam Yu also smiled and said, "That's right."

At this moment, Chun Xiao also caught up with Mother Yang, who was about to go to the main courtyard to look for First Madam. She asked with a smile, "Mother Yang, why are you leaving in such a hurry?"

She took a step forward and stood in front of Mother Yang. She finally understood why her young mistress had asked her to look for Mother Yang. She thought to herself, "Young Miss is really good at predicting things!"

Mother Yang was burning with anxiety. When she saw Chun Xiao standing in front of her, her expression stiffened.

If it had been any other maidservant in the residence, she would have slapped her and scolded her. However, Chun Xiao was Eldest Miss's personal maidservant and had an extraordinary status. Even if she was angry, she had to hold it in. Not only did she have to hold it in, but she also had to greet her with a smile. She could not offend her.

Mother Yang forced a smile. "Didn't Eldest Miss want to see the person in charge of the manor? I'm in a hurry to ask the people below when they will arrive so that I can get confirmation. I can't keep Eldest Miss waiting."

Chun Xiao nodded. "Mother Yang is indeed capable."

Mother Yang quickly changed the topic and said, "Miss Chun Xiao, what a coincidence. We actually bumped into each other here. Where are you going?"

"Unfortunately." Chun Xiao looked at Mother Yang with a smile. She didn't miss the flash of panic in Mother Yang's eyes when she said those words. Her smile became even brighter. "Young Miss ordered me to specially come to look for Mother Yang."

Mrs. Yang's vision turned black and she almost fainted on the spot. This time, she couldn't even smile. Instead, she said in fear and trepidation, "Does Eldest Miss have any instructions?"

In the past, she had never taken Eldest Miss seriously. She had always felt that Eldest Miss was the one in charge but she had her ways of fooling her. After all, she was also someone who had been in

the residence for a long time. She could even fool Eldest Madam Yang, so why should she be afraid of a young girl?

But now, she truly understood how powerful Eldest Miss was.

Just now, in the side courtyard of the An Shou Hall, Eldest Miss had chosen her without ordering anyone else, precisely because she wanted her to establish her might.

At first glance, the questions she asked seemed to be ordinary questions. In the past, Eldest Madam Yang would often ask about the prices of items and the accounts. Even Old Madam used to be like this in the past. Unknowingly, people would let down their guard.

However, Eldest Miss had gone deeper and had managed to trap her.

The question in the ledger had fooled her.

Eldest Miss did not get angry. Instead, she turned around and asked about the crops.

At this moment, she realized that something was amiss and hurriedly brought up First Madam's name, thinking that Eldest Miss was her stepdaughter after all. She couldn't possibly surpass First Madam.

As expected, when she heard that First Madam also knew about the selling of vegetables, Eldest Miss did not continue asking.

She was relieved.

However, immediately after, Eldest Miss asked to see the person in charge.

Mother Yang was already a little flustered. She was also worried that the manor would shift the blame to her, so she planned to go to the main courtyard to meet First Madam and let her make a decision.

Unexpectedly, she was stopped by Eldest Miss's maidservant.

Chun Xiao shook her head. "Mother Yang is the most capable person by First Madam's side. It's said that she wouldn't mind doing something out of consideration for someone else. How can Young Miss order Mother Yang around? It's just that Young Miss wants to manage the family in the future and feels that I'm not of much use. She asked me to follow Mother Yang and watch and learn more, in case anything goes wrong."

Mother Yang's face immediately turned ashen, and her mouth trembled. "Eldest Miss is really too kind."

She was probably afraid she wouldn't get First Madam's approval.

With such a person by her side often, there was nothing she could do. She could only wait obediently for the person in charge of the manor to enter.

Chapter 109 None of You Are Good

Eldest Miss was just a young person. Why was she so scheming?

Her methods were much more impressive than Eldest Madam Yang's.

Chun Xiao took off the jade bracelet on her wrist that was of good quality and stuffed it into Mother Yang's hands without any explanation. "Mother Yang, you have to teach me how to do things properly. Otherwise, I really won't be able to answer Young Miss."

Mother Yang didn't dare to accept it and quickly declined. "Miss Chun Xiao, this can't be done. Hurry up and take it back, take it back..."

Chun Xiao refused to take it back either. The two of them pulled each other for a long time. It was unknown who accidentally dropped the jade bracelet, but it fell to the ground with a loud crash and shattered into pieces.

"This..." Mother Yang was stunned, not knowing what to do.

Chun Xiao was also stunned for a moment. When she regained her senses, she squatted down and picked up the jade bracelet pieces one by one, placing them on her handkerchief. Seeing this, Mother Yang couldn't stand still anymore and also picked them up.

After picking them up, Chun Xiao looked at the broken jade on the handkerchief and said in a sad voice, "This jade bracelet was given to me by Miss earlier. I didn't expect..."

Upon hearing Chun Xiao mention Eldest Miss, Mother Yang's body trembled, and her expression was even uglier than when she was crying. "I've let Miss Chun Xiao down just now."

Chun Xiao wrapped the jade bracelet and forced a smile. "Mother Yang, don't say that. It's fine if it's broken, but it wasn't on purpose."

After all this, Mother Yang looked like she was about to cry. She couldn't refuse even if she wanted to.

Although Chun Xiao had stopped Mother Yang from looking for Yang Shuwan, Yang Shuwan had a strong desire for control. Although she had handed over the key, how could she be willing to let go completely?

She asked Nanny Li to keep an eye on the situation in the residence.

When Old Madam had asked Nanny Liu to gather the servants, Yang Shuwan had found out that Old Madam had asked Nanny Liu to help Yu Youyao manage the household.

At that moment, she smashed the cup and bowl in her hand in exasperation and said hatefully, "I didn't expect that after handing over the butler's key, I would actually let that b*tch, Yu Youyao, benefit from it for no reason. Even if that old woman doesn't want me to benefit, she can still find an opportunity to pave the way for her precious granddaughter."

When Nanny Li heard this, her face turned pale with fright. She hurriedly rushed to the window and looked out, then closed the slit tightly.

Fortunately, she also knew First Madam's personality. When she returned, she dismissed the servants. However, she was still a little worried and took a few more careful glances.

After confirming that there was no one else around, Nanny Li returned to Yang Shuwan's side. "First Madam, you have to keep your voice down. Although the main courtyard is filled with your people, it's still hard to tell if they're hiding anything."

After Yang Shuwan's anger subsided, she calmed down, but she was still furious. "There's only one or two of them, and none of them are good people. They're all trying to make things difficult for

me!” The more she thought about it, the angrier she became. She couldn’t help but flare up again. “Did you find out what the butler in the residence said?”

“I did.” Nanny Li quickly told her everything she had heard previously. Then, she said, “Eldest Miss singled out Mother Yang. She said that the vegetables in the residence were expensive and that prices had gone up. She didn’t let Mother Yang brush it off with a few words. She also said that she wanted to meet the people in the manor to understand the situation of the crops.”

Yang Shuwan’s heart skipped a beat, and she felt a little uneasy. “Yu Youyao is so young, how could she have thought of all this? She must have received guidance from Old Madam and wanted to use my people to establish her authority in the residence.”

Nanny Li nodded. “That’s what I mean.”

The Old Madam’s intervention made things a little tricky for Yang Shuwan, so she felt a headache coming on. “About Mother Yang...”

Nanny Li hurriedly said, “She must be fine. Otherwise, how could Mother Yang sit still? She would have immediately come to look for you and let you make the decision. Don’t you know Mother Yang well? She’s so sly that even Nanny Liu can’t control her. How could she let Eldest Miss take the wrong side?!”

When Yang Shuwan heard this, she felt relieved. However, for the sake of caution, she instructed, “Find an opportunity in the afternoon to call Mother Yang over. I’ll ask her in detail again and ask her to come over quietly. Don’t let anyone know.”

She was still sick, but she could no longer worry about the matters in the residence. Furthermore, she had handed over the right to manage the household, so how could she speak to the manager openly? If others found out, they would think that she was pretending to be sick.

Nanny Li nodded. “I understand.”

At this moment, Madam wanted to see Mother Yang immediately and ask for an explanation. However, Old Madam had just spoken to the stewards, so it wasn’t appropriate for her to call Mother Yang over immediately. This was too eye-catching.

Yang Shuwan thought of the steward in charge of the manor and felt a little worried. “I remember that it was Little Zhou who sent vegetables and fruits to the residence every day. Has the steward at the manor been settled?”

Nanny Li hurriedly said, “Everything has been arranged. Steward Zhou is a smart person, and he’s also an old servant of the residence. Madam, don’t worry.”

Yang Shuwan felt a little relieved. Then, she heard Nanny Li continue, “The area around Little Zhouzhuang is filled with people with the surname Zhou, and they’re all from the same family. The fields on the farm are all rented out to the nearby farmers. Steward Zhou is from Zhou Villa and is very respected there. All the farmers nearby listen to him.”

“Even if Eldest Miss wants to use Manager Zhou as a tool, I’m afraid she won’t be able to do it. After all, this will affect him greatly. If Manager Zhou doesn’t

recover, the farmers in the Zhouzhuang won't be happy. If something happens... I'm afraid even Old Madam won't be able to handle it."

When Yang Shuwan heard this, her brows relaxed and she sneered. "Heh, Old Madam did have a plan, but she didn't think about it. How can this family be easy to manage? There are too many people in the residence, and it's something that a young girl like Yu Youyao, who hasn't even grown a strand of hair, can handle. She will cause a mess in this family."

Nanny Li leaned over and lowered her voice. "Isn't that good? It'll also help Master see her bad side clearly, so that she can focus on you and Third Miss in the future."

Yang Shuwan sneered. "Doesn't Yu Youyao want to manage the family? I'll let her manage it. If anything is damaged, it'll show how good my management is."

Old Madam Yu had asked Yu Youyao to manage the house. Although she was angry, she did not panic at all. She did not believe that a young lady who had not even learned how to manage the house carefully would manage it well.

Besides, she had been in charge of the household for many years. Everyone in the residence was under her command. How could Yu Youyao order them around?

She was just waiting for Yu Youyao to embarrass herself.

In the afternoon, around two o'clock, the people from the manor finally entered the residence.

Little Zhouzhuang was located beside a mountain and a river. The soil was good too. There were some fruits and plants planted on the mountain, and the fields were filled with some expensive crops. The Yu Residence usually ate crops from Little Zhouzhuang.

Chapter 110 Little Zhouzhuang

After Xia Tao found out more, she came over to report, "Butler Zhou also has four men following him who are helping him with some manual labor."

Yu Youyao looked thoughtful. "Most of the farmers near Little Zhouzhuang have the surname Zhou, so they're also called Zhouzhuang. That's why the farmstead in our residence is called Little Zhouzhuang."

Xia Tao nodded and hesitated for a moment before saying, "Young Mistress, are you punishing Steward Zhou?"

Yu Youyao's expression was indifferent and she did not answer.

Xia Tao bit her lip again. "Young Mistress, I was born in Zhouzhuang. My name was Zhou Tao in the past, and my family had six maidservants in a row. My father saw that I was born smarter and heard that the Yu Residence was kind, so he sold me into the residence. After I entered the residence, he asked the nanny who taught the rules to change my name to Xia Tao."

Yu Youyao was a little surprised, but she still did not say anything.

Xia Tao could only say, "Zhouzhuang is a big family town, and we're all ancestors and relatives. When I was young, someone from the neighboring Zhengzhuang, almost bullied a young lady. That family couldn't take it lying down, so they came knocking on my door with a hoe."

“When Zhouzhuang’s men caused trouble at Zhengzhuang’s place, Zhengzhuang’s men were unhappy, so someone helped to beat up Zhouzhuang’s men.”

“This time, Zhouzhuang’s men aren’t happy. They called dozens of people to attack Zhengzhuang together.”

“In the end, the two villages fought until their eyes turned red. The more they fought, the more they hated each other. In the end, it became a hundred-odd people fighting in a group. It was only when the officials were alerted that this matter stopped. However, the law did not punish everyone. Those who caused trouble were only taught a few words of punishment before leaving and returning to their respective homes.”

Yu Youyao’s expression froze for a moment. “Are you worried that if I punish Steward Zhou, Zhouzhuang’s people will kick up a fuss?”

Xia Tao nodded. “I’ve heard of him since I was young. Steward Zhou is very respected in the Zhouzhuang, and everyone listens to him. If anything happens to him, the villagers in the Zhouzhuang will probably cause a commotion. Although they’re all commoners, they are also relatives. If they cause a commotion, it will be in groups, and the authorities won’t be able to do anything to them. When that happens, everyone will know...”

Eldest Master was an official in the imperial court, and Eldest Miss was a young miss who had been raised in her own home. If this were to get out of hand, it would affect the reputation of both Master and Eldest Miss.

Yu Youyao’s expression turned serious as she nodded. “It’s rare that you’re so devoted to me. There’s a jade bracelet with floating flowers on my dressing table. The quality is not bad. You can have it.”

“Thank you for your reward, Miss. I’m in front of you, so naturally, I have to think about you all the time.” Xia Tao was overjoyed. Naturally, the things that Miss had rewarded were not bad. Most importantly, she had received a reward from her, so it would be very dignified to wear in the future.

Yu Youyao smiled.

Previously, Nanny Liu had taught her how to manage the household and had mentioned some things about the village. She also knew a little about the situation. When she decided to see Steward Zhou, she had already thought of a countermeasure, so naturally, she was not afraid of anything.

After Xia Tao’s reminder, she also realized that although her method was feasible, there were still some loopholes. If she was not careful, she might really cause trouble.

Now, she naturally had to be more thorough.

At the thought of this, Yu Youyao turned around and instructed Xia Tao, "Bring the four men who came with Steward Zhou to the side courtyard of Tinglan Courtyard to rest. Get someone to prepare a table of food and drink."

Xia Tao was quick-witted. She rolled her eyes and said, "I'll do it now."

The manager of Little Zhouzhuang was called Zhou Yongchang. He was about forty years old and wore a robe made of silk. He looked rather wealthy and respectable.

Zhou Yongchang's father used to be the manager of Little Zhouzhuang. When Zhou Yongchang was a few years old, he had worked for the Yu Residence with his father. Later on, after Zhou Yongchang's father passed away, Zhou Yongchang took on the role of the manager of Little Zhouzhuang and continued to work for the Yu Residence. He was an old man in the Yu Residence.

Four tanned and tall men were helping to move things.

"Mother Yang, look carefully. Is there anything wrong with these vegetables?" As he spoke, Zhou Yongchang glanced at the maidservant beside Mother Yang.

She was wearing a light purple muslin shirt with a few clean and clean lilacs embroidered on it. She also had silver jewelry on her head and ears. She looked a little out of place.

When did Mother Yang have such a decent maidservant by her side?

Zhou Yongchang couldn't help but feel a little suspicious. It was obvious that this maidservant following beside Mother Yang was asking all sorts of questions. Even Mother Yang, who had always had eyes on the top of her head, answered all her questions.

Could it be that one of Mother Yang's relatives was learning from her?

Mother Yang's expression stiffened. "No, no problem, but..."

Before she could speak, a voice came from outside. "Is Mother Yang here?"

"Yes," Mother Yang hurriedly replied and walked out. When she saw that it was Dong Mei, she forced a smile. "Miss Dong Mei is here."

Dong Mei nodded.

Mother Yang led Dong Mei into the house and introduced her to Steward Zhou. "Eldest Madam is sick. Now, Eldest Miss is in charge of the household. This is Eldest Miss's maidservant, Dong Mei."

If he remembered correctly, the Eldest Miss in the residence seemed to be less than ten years old, but she was already managing the household? Steward Zhou was shocked and quickly greeted, "Hello, Miss Dong Mei."

Dong Mei smiled and said, "Manager Zhou, you've worked hard. Young Mistress heard from Mother Yang that the weather is cold this year and the crops in the manor aren't growing well, so she wanted to see you."

Steward Zhou was stunned for a moment. "Of course, of course. I'll go see Eldest Miss with Miss Dong Mei now."

Although he was a little flustered, he remembered that Eldest Miss was just a young lady. How could she understand the matters in the manor? She could be appeased with just a few words, so he calmed down.

Everyone left with their own thoughts. When Steward Zhou saw that the people he had brought were actually not outside, he couldn't help but ask, "They came with me..."

Dong Mei immediately smiled and said, "Look at my memory. I actually forgot to tell Steward Zhou that it's quite tiring for the four people who came with him to guard outside. So, I got someone to bring them to the Tinglan Residence to rest. It'll be good for them to have some tea and some food. They'll be exhausted."

The people in Eldest Miss's house were indeed extraordinary. They were thoughtful and generous in every way, but Butler Zhou was not happy at all.

As the saying went, once a person comes into power, the people below him will be changed.

Usually, he would follow Eldest Madam Yang around, but today, there was a new miss in the residence. Seeing Mother Yang's cautious attitude, it looked like the sky had changed.

He had also heard that Old Madam had always doted on Eldest Miss the most. Although Eldest Miss was a little young, she had Old Madam behind her back.

Feeling a little more cautious, Steward Zhou quickly said, "Eldest Miss, thank you for your understanding."

He thought to himself that those four people were all people he trusted and kept their mouths shut. All these years, they had been coming and going from the Yu Residence. Even in front of Old Madam, no one suspected anything.