

## All Hail 1051

### Chapter 1051: The Battle Is Here

Of course, it was mainly because of the nature of the women's school. It was not deviant. Letting women be sensible, polite, and knowledgeable was also in line with the current trends.

In addition, Mr. Xian Yun and Mr. Hu Shan had clearly expressed their support, so some scholars did not say anything.

All of this was within Yu Youyao's expectations. The consciousness and thoughts of the commoners, as well as the hierarchy of society, progressed slowly with the development of society. If they were forcefully instilled, it would only cause social unrest and tragic consequences. The commoners would still suffer.

Knowledge was the first power of production.

With knowledge, anything was possible.

Instead of wasting time, it was better to let them learn more knowledge and techniques.

The money that the nobles had sponsored far exceeded their budget.

It had also greatly exceeded their expectations.

After thinking about it, Yu Youyao bought a mountain and built the Women's Mountain Courtyard. There was originally a manor on the mountain that occupied a large area. After repairing it carefully and changing the layout, it could be used temporarily.

The Women's Mountain Courtyard had just been established, and there was still a lot to do.

Yu Youyao did not plan to spread it too big. Otherwise, it would be easy to make mistakes. It was better to wait until the Women's Mountain Courtyard was on the right track in the future to consider the expansion.

Ms. Ye did not stay idle either. Every day, she was busy sorting out books, creating teaching plans, recruiting female teachers, and so on.

Madam Huang, General An Yuan's wife, and the others were all pulled over by her to help check the various learning materials donated by various parties.

Just as Yu Youyao was so busy with the Women's Mountain Courtyard that her feet did not touch the ground, news came from the capital—

Yu Zongshen had passed away from illness!

Before he died, he left his last words. "Don't bury me in the ancestral grave after I die. Burn my body clean and sprinkle my ashes into the sea of Quanzhou. I'll be at ease!"

After his death, he held a pomegranate flower tightly in his hand. The fire-like pomegranate flower became the last light of his life.

Pomegranate flowers bloomed from the end of March to April every year, symbolizing the pursuit of trueness, kindness, and beauty in life.

Yu Zongshen had once gone south to Quanzhou in March. During the season when the pomegranate flowers bloomed, he had encountered pomegranate flowers that were as bright as fire. It had brightened his entire life, but it had also dimmed his entire life.

Along with the news of Yu Zongshen's death, there was also news that Duke Duan had died in battle, Hebei had fallen, and that Thief Liang had pointed his sword at the capital.

Yu Youyao sighed softly and couldn't help but think of Yin Huaixi.

She wondered how the front line was doing.

It had been more than three months since December last year when the army of the Northern Barbarians had pressed down on the border. Both sides had probed and fought several times, with casualties on each side. Yin Huaixi did not face the enemy head-on, and the Northern Barbarians did not dare to attack rashly.

For a moment, the battle fell into a stalemate.

The soldiers had enough of this kind of back-and-forth battle, as if they were children playing house. They all asked to fight.

The corners of Yin Huaixi's lips curled up as he said calmly, "We don't lack supplies. Those who should be anxious are the Di people who were affected by the snow disaster and had no choice but to kill sheep, slaughter cows, and chop down horses. The 600,000-strong army of the Northern Barbarians attacked the Great Zhou with the intention of cutting off all means of retreat. It's at its peak. Our military strength is inferior to the Northern Barbarians to begin with. It's best to avoid them."

General An Yuan was an impatient person. "Are we going to keep avoiding them?"

Yin Huaixi shook his head. "Wrong. Avoiding them is only a temporary plan. There's a saying that goes, 'A husband fights with courage.' In one go, they will weaken and exhaust themselves. If we want to defeat the Northern Barbarians, we have to break through their momentum first. The Northern Barbarians lack supplies. Seeing that their rations are depleted, once they panic, their morale will definitely decline."

General An Yuan agreed deeply. "When Wang Jian attacked Chu, because he didn't have the confidence to win, he had never sent out his troops. It was a competition to see who was more anxious. Later, King Chu was anxious and ordered Xiang Yan to send out his troops. Xiang Yan had no choice but to send out his troops, so Wang Jian found their weakness and lost. When people are anxious, it's easy to reveal their flaws."

Yin Huaixi nodded. "That's only one of the reasons. Secondly, when the new and old soldiers in our army alternated, many new recruits trained hard for three years but lacked practical experience. We used this opportunity to train the new recruits and practice the various tactics we've developed in the past two years to target the weaknesses of the Di people."

General An Yuan's heart skipped a beat. "Is there a third reason?"

Yin Huaixi did not deny it. "Although there are many large and small tribes among the Northern Barbarians, the Zhamo and Har tribes are the strongest. This time, the four tribes have joined forces and elected the leader of the Huqiang tribe, Rada, who never revealed his true strength, as the Khan. We have to figure out what kind of person he is. Only by knowing ourselves and the enemy can we win a hundred battles."

The style in which a general commanding a battle could often be deduced from his personality. Only by understanding him could one find his weaknesses and set up corresponding tactics.

Of course, the Northern Barbarians were not fools.

They knew very well that the rations were depleted, and the stalemate in the war was very disadvantageous to them. However, the Northern Barbarians had suffered many casualties, so Rada Khan might want to find out more about King Yue Fei.

This was one of the reasons.

Second, although Rada Khan was elected as the Khan, the voices in the tribe were still not uniform.

This also created a considerable obstacle for Rada Khan.

Third, the magical military formation of the Great Zhou Army was unpredictable and could restrain the Northern Barbarians. Every time they thought of a way to deal with it, the formation would change again on the battlefield, making them a little helpless.

All kinds of reasons caused the original attack plan to be delayed repeatedly.

However, no matter what, the Northern Barbarians really couldn't afford to wait.

Three months was already the limit.

A loud horn sounded from afar, breaking the silence of the morning.

That was the Di people declaring war.

After three months of stalemate and consumption, the Northern Barbarians finally panicked.

"They're here." A smile appeared on Yin Huaixi's lips. He was confident that he would win the battle from a thousand miles away. "Continue fighting!"

The two armies faced each other at Diyu Pass.

Yin Huaixi swept his gaze around and was the first to see Rada Khan. Rada Khan was wearing heavy armor and was armed to the teeth. On his tall horse, he was like a majestic mountain with a heavy aura.

After that, he shifted her gaze to Meng Duo, who was still a general in the opposite army. He was much more depressed than before.

Yin Huaixi drew his knife and raised his voice. "Do you dare to fight me?"

King Yue Fei of the Great Zhou openly challenged the Northern Barbarians on the battlefield.

The Northern Barbarians army was in an uproar as they clamored for battle.

However, Meng Duo's expression changed slightly. There was a faint pain where he had been shot earlier. He was carrying a bow on his back. This bow was a symbol of his strength.

His arms, which were hanging by his sides, trembled slightly.

Thanks to King Yue Fei of the Great Zhou, he could no longer draw this bow.

Yin Huaixi stared at Meng Duo and said in a roundabout manner, "Just like me, you were once the commander-in-chief of an army. In terms of strength, you're enough to fight me. However, in case you think that the strong are bullying the weak, I'll let you have three moves. After three moves, it doesn't matter if you live or die."

As the commander-in-chief of an army, it was indeed a little inappropriate to challenge a general.

However, Meng Duo had also been the commander-in-chief in the past, so he naturally had the strength of a commander-in-chief. Yin Huaixi had given up three moves to avoid an unfair victory, which would make it difficult to convince the crowd.

Chapter 1052: Ruoshui Mountain Courtyard

However, in a battle between experts, life and death were often decided in just one move. Yin Huaixi had let Meng Duo have three more moves, and allowed Meng Duo to have an advantage. No matter if he won or lost, the Northern Barbarians naturally had nothing to say.

Meng Duo did not agree easily. He turned to look at Rada Khan.

Rada Khan acknowledged Meng Duo's strength and allowed him to take advantage of these three moves. Meng Duo had a high chance of winning this battle. In addition, King Yue Fei of the Great Zhou had already said this. If Meng Duo did not fight, wouldn't it mean that the Northern Barbarians did not dare to fight? Wouldn't that increase the ambition of the enemy and reduce the prestige of the Northern Barbarians?!

What was the Northern Barbarian army thinking?

Where was their morale?!

He could not refuse this battle.

Rada Khan looked at Meng Duo. "Go play with King Yue Fei!"

Meng Duo's breathing stopped for a moment. He clamped his horse's stomach and drove it to the place where the two armies were facing each other. In the empty space in the middle, Yin Huaixi was already waiting.

As soon as the two sides met, Meng Duo swung his saber and aimed at Yin Huaixi's vital points.

Yin Huaixi raised his knife to block.

The two of them rode back and forth. The saber shadows intertwined, and there was a clang. Every strike collided, causing sparks to fly.

Yin Huaixi said slowly, "Three moves have passed. It's my turn to attack."

Meng Duo had extraordinary strength, and his saber aura was wide and powerful. His mastery was born from his clumsiness. Every move was unhindered on the battlefield and was endlessly powerful.

Yin Huaixi was not inferior at all. His saber techniques focused on sharpness. He was as fast as and as powerful as lightning. In an instant, he fought Meng Duo for more than ten rounds.

For a moment, they were evenly matched.

Both sides cheered non-stop.

Yin Huaixi looked at its weakness and quickly realized that there was something wrong with Meng Duo's left arm. He guessed that although Meng Duo had luckily dodged the arrow back then, the arrowhead had been quenched and smeared with black poison. Even if his injuries recovered, he would still have hidden injuries.

This hidden injury was usually not obvious, but on a battlefield where life and death were at stake, it was fatal.

Hence, when Meng Duo's saber slashed over, Yin Huaixi pretended to be forced back by the saber force, revealing a flaw. Meng Duo took the opportunity to pursue him. Yin Huaixi feinted and struck from the left. Meng Duo subconsciously turned his body to the side. Yin Huaixi flipped his wrist and cut off Meng Duo's head.

The outcome was already decided.

The Northern Barbarians army let out sorrowful cries and scolded.

The You army was like the heavens.

The sound of war drums and horns intertwined in the wind, and a huge battle erupted.

This battle lasted from dawn to noon.

The Di Army retreated step by step, with heavy casualties.

However, the You army became braver and braver as they fought.

In late March, there was a report from the front line.

King Yue Fei led his army at the narrow Yu Pass and beheaded Meng Duo to avenge General Ming Wei. He captured the leader of the Zamo Tribe, Zamo He, and more than 30 people from the four tribes. The Di Army had more than 30,000 soldiers and annihilated more than 50,000 people. Rada Khan was not a match and retreated from the narrow Yu Pass. King Yue Fei led his army to chase after him.

As soon as the news spread, the entire North was in an uproar.

This battle of disparity in strength finally became clear.

Yu Youyao finally heaved a sigh of relief.

In the blink of an eye, it was June. The Women's Mountain Courtyard was finally built. Yu Youyao personally looked for Mr. Xian Yun and Mr. Hu Shan and asked them to name the academy.

After Mr. Xian Yun and Mr. Hu Shan discussed it, they said, “Good things are like water, and water benefits all things without competing. Nothing in the world is weaker than water, yet nothing can defeat water. This is called gentle virtue. Let’s call it the Ruoshui<sup>1</sup> Mountain Courtyard.”

Yu Youyao was very satisfied. “Teachers, you’re wise. Women should be like water. They should be gentle and kind. They shouldn’t be high or low. They should follow the shape of things, calm their hearts, cleanse their bodies, soften their character, and clear their temperaments. They should be humble but not inferior. They should be obedient but not competitive. They do not contend but still strive.”

At the mention of writing an inscription, the two of them smiled and rejected it. “The Eldest Princess’s reputation for being virtuous is widespread, and she’s the model of all the women in the world. The Ruoshui Mountain Courtyard was founded by the Eldest Princess, so it’s only right for the Eldest Princess to write the inscription to show the name of the academy and complement your virtue. Everyone will imitate you and treat you as their model.”

In July, Ruoshui Mountain Courtyard officially enrolled students.

The first batch of 300 female students was recruited. A hundred places were given to the nobles who had sponsored the establishment of the academy.

The other 200 spots were only for female students with a certain foundation, regardless of their background.

As soon as the news spread, it attracted the mockery of many people.

Yu Youyao did not care about this.

Although the commoners supported her, their lives had just improved. Not many people were willing to spend money to send their daughters to the academy to study. Even if their families had extra money, they had to prioritize the men in the family first before their daughters.

This was the case in the country, and perceptions needed to change slowly.

The Ruoshui Mountain Courtyard had only taken the first step.

However, it announced to the world that women could also read and write.

When the first and second batch of female students completed their studies in the Ruoshui Academy and obtained a good reputation and a good future, there would be more and more women who yearned to study and change their fate.

At that time, all kinds of female schools would bloom everywhere.

Only then would it become normal for women to read and write.

Yu Youyao had built more than ten cottages at the foot of the mountain of the Ruoshui Academy. Ordinary women could go to the cottage to study and read after paying ten copper coins.

The cottage was only for enlightenment.

The mocking voices gradually subsided, and everyone understood Eldest Princess Shaoyi’s good intentions.

However, to Yu Youyao's surprise—

The establishment of the cottage had a profound impact on the North. Some women who were knowledgeable but did not have a good family background secretly set up a female school in the courtyard to earn money for the family.

All of this was done in private.

In the autumn of August, Liaodong welcomed a bumper harvest. The Ruoshui Mountain Courtyard officially began classes.

The female students left their homes with excitement and arrived at the Ruoshui Academy. They looked up at the majestic door of the academy and read the inscriptions on it.

The inscriptions were personally written by Eldest Princess Shaoyi.

The words "Ruoshui Mountain Courtyard" revealed a majestic aura that was endless. It was graceful like a dragon, and there was still a lingering desire in the area where the brush stroke ended. It seemed gentle but firm, and it had the demeanor of a great family.

They did not expect the Eldest Princess's calligraphy to be so outstanding. Her calligraphy made many men feel ashamed.

The students became excited.

On this day, they met Great Master Ye, who they had admired for a long time.

Her student, Eldest Princess Shaoyi, was famous throughout the world in the name of virtue. Everyone had also called her "Great Master Ye." No one paid attention to the fact that she was a divorcee anymore.

No matter if it was a man or a woman, they should establish themselves in the world with virtue.

Great Master Ye was a model of virtue.

They also saw Eldest Princess Shaoyi, whom they admired. She gently rolled up her sleeves and held a brush in her slender hands.

The stroke of the brush was soft but sharp. It was far more shocking than the inscriptions they had seen at the mountain gate just now.

"People who are like water are gentle and kind. They should calm their hearts, cleanse their bodies, and clear their temperaments. Then, one's nature can be seen clearly. They should be humble but not inferior. They should be obedient but not competitive. They do not contend but still strive. This is what is meant by gentle virtue."

On this day, Yu Youyao planted a seed of independence in these female students' hearts.

They should be humble but not inferior. They did not contend but still strived.

They were determined.

Chapter 1053: The Death of the Great Zhou Dynasty

On this day, there was another urgent report from the front line. King Yue Fei had led his troops to attack the Liaoxi Corridor and enter the Hetao area. He had killed Rada Khan and more than 100 generals of the four tribes. He had killed more than 70,000 enemies and captured more than 40,000 people.

Harmon of the Har tribe led his troops and fled. King Yue Fei took advantage of the victory to pursue and advance more than a thousand kilometers north, all the way to the Di people's hometown in the desert.

For a moment, the world was in an uproar.

The Northern Barbarians were ambitious to break through the defense line of Jinzhou, enter the Shanhai Pass, and enter the Central Plains. Unexpectedly, King Yue Fei broke through the river first and entered the north grassland.

It was really unbelievable.

After that, news of success at the front line spread.

In mid-September, King Yue Fei captured Harmon and carried out a bloody massacre in the various tribes of the desert south. Other than the old, weak, women, and children, all the strong men in the north were slaughtered.

King Yue Fei's reputation for being cruel and bloodthirsty spread.

After this battle, the You army was at their peak.

The army had yet to return. They were still staying in the grassland to cleanse and find the main forces of the Northern Barbarians. When the other tribes saw the situation, they fled into the north.

At this moment, bad news came from the capital.

They had integrated the troops of Jingzhao and Jin County. They used the natural defense of these two areas to stop the 300,000-strong Liang army at the defense line for more than three months. Moreover, the Marquis of Zhenguo, who had severely injured the main force of the Liang army, had died in battle.

Thief Liang broke through the capital and went straight to the Imperial City. He also ordered all the descendants of the Yin family to be slaughtered.

Blood flowed like a river in the capital.

The Great Zhou Dynasty was indeed destroyed!

When the news reached Xiangping, Yu Youyao felt suffocated. Thief Liang had slaughtered the Yin Clan because he wanted to cut off the bloodline of the royal family. However, in fact, most of the relatives in the imperial family had already fled south and north after Henan fell. Those who couldn't escape were mostly unwilling to leave or some idle relatives who were completely down and out.

Yu Youyao was stunned for a long time as her fingertips stroked the small words on the phoenix pearl hairpin.

It was time for Yin Huaixi to return.



Xia Tao walked into the house. “Young Miss, Princess Liyang is here.”

Yu Youyao placed the phoenix pearl hairpin back into the box and stood up to tidy her clothes before leaving the inner room.

It had been a year since Princess Liyang had come to Xiangping.

In the past year, she had lived with Princess Liyang in the Yue Fei’s Residence, but they did not interact much. This was partly because she had deliberately avoided Princess Liyang, unwilling to feign civility and cause more trouble.

It was also because she was too busy and really did not have time to put on a sisterly act with Princess Liyang.

Of course, there was also Princess Liyang who knew what was going on. After looking for Yu Youyao a few times and being rejected by Yu Youyao with the excuse that she was busy, she no longer provoked Yu Youyao.

Both sides maintained the subtlety of minding their own business.

It was also because of this subtlety that Yu Youyao almost forgot that there was such a person in the Yue Fei’s Residence. When she suddenly saw Princess Liyang, she suddenly felt like the dust had settled.

What would come would come.

Although the Eldest Princess had a high status and was famous, there was actually nothing about her status that was worthy of Princess Liyang and the Empress’s attention.

There was really no need to deliberately pretend to be on good terms with her.

It wasn’t difficult to deduce that she was here for Yin Huaixi.

Seeing Yu Youyao come over, Princess Liyang chuckled. “Eldest Princess, do you have time to walk around the residence with me? Speaking of which, I’ve been in Xiangping for a year, but I haven’t had a chance to tour the Yue Fei’s Residence or chat with you.”

How could a guest take the initiative to stroll around someone else’s house?

Her intention to overshadow the host was undoubtedly revealed.

Yu Youyao lowered her eyes. Actually, she was not a legitimate master in the Yue Fei’s Residence. She had just taken the opportunity to move in. After a year and a half, she had actually become so used to it that she had forgotten to move out.

It was indeed not appropriate to say that Princess Liyang was overshadowing the host.

She said slowly, “The Princess specially came to look for me. I don’t think you want to stroll around and chat with me.”

As soon as the two sides met, before they could finish being polite, they went straight to the point.

Princess Liyang’s punch landed on cotton, so she could only say, “I heard that the old Princess Consort of Long County personally stepped in to matchmake you and King Yue Fei. All the

etiquette in the three books and six etiquettes was also handled by the imperial family. I think with King Yue Fei's return, your marriage should be arranged."

As soon as she opened her mouth, she was at a disadvantage.

The two of them were not familiar with each other to begin with, so it was taboo for them to talk shallowly. However, it was a little rude for Princess Liyang to mention Yu Youyao's marriage.

However, Eldest Princess Shaoyi had clearly gone straight to the point. She probably did not have the patience to chat politely with Princess Liyang.

Princess Liyang had to ask after all.

"The tea is a little cold." Yu Youyao put down her teacup. The bottom of the cup touched the table lightly, making a soft clang. It was neither loud nor soft, but it seemed abrupt.

The children of wealthy families had learned etiquette since they were young. When teacups hit the bottom, they made a sound. In terms of hospitality, it was usually not allowed.

However, if the guests were rude and offensive, they could use this as a warning to remind the guests to speak carefully, lest their words hurt each other's harmony. The host would be embarrassed and the guests would feel awkward.

It would also restore each other's dignity.

The Eldest Princess did not answer this, making Princess Liyang feel a little awkward. However, no matter what, she had to finish performing today's scene. It did not matter if it was awkward or not.

Princess Liyang could only say, "I was rude. It's just that my Mother is very concerned about your marriage with King Yue Fei. Now that the war in the North has been settled, I asked."

After using Empress Ning as a tool, it was as if all the suddenness and rudeness had become self-righteous. Yu Youyao closed her eyes. "It's good that the Princess knows that marriage is originally decided by one's elders. How can it be said by the person getting married? Anyone who knows some rules can't be embarrassed. The Princess's words really make things difficult for me. I don't know how to answer."

She was just short of saying that she did not know the rules and was shameless. She was a young lady who had yet to get married, but she was actually blatantly talking about marriage.

No matter how well-mannered Princess Liyang was, her expression couldn't help but darken. She was so stunned by these words that she couldn't even say the words she had thought of later.

Princess Liyang forced a smile and said, "I've never liked to read the Four Books for Women since I was young. My Mother always lectured me and said that I was unruly, but she had always indulged me. After I reached adulthood, my Mother wanted to arrange a marriage for me, so she asked me what kind of husband I wanted to choose. I told Mother that I should choose one from the imperial family, in case she felt that I was unruly when I went to someone else's house. Moreover, most of the descendants of the Yin family are sentimental. I'm the dignified princess of the Great Zhou Dynasty. I should be matched with someone who treats me wholeheartedly."

Princess Liyang seemed to be chatting with her. Her voice was cheerful, but it was cold.

Yu Youyao's entire body turned cold. Princess Liyang had made it clear that she wanted to finish this scene today. She had the freedom to say what she wanted, so no one could stop her.

Princess Liyang turned to look at Yu Youyao and said word by word, "But when my Mother heard this, she said that I was too naive!"

She emphasized the words "too naive" with a hint of emphasis. Even her speech deliberately slowed down, as if she was afraid that Yu Youyao wouldn't hear her clearly or not understand or care.

Chapter 1054: Secrets of the Palace

It was clearly what Empress Ning had said to Princess Liyang.

At this moment, when Princess Liyang spoke, it seemed as if Empress Ning was talking to Yu Youyao, who was sitting beside Princess Liyang at this moment, through Princess Liyang.

Yu Youyao looked up and met Princess Liyang's probing and scrutinizing gaze. She smiled faintly. "You're quite naive."

She couldn't tell if it was a consensus or a sarcastic remark, but it made Princess Liyang feel stifled. She subconsciously looked away. "My Mother said that it's only right and proper for a man to have four wives and four concubines. You only saw the longevity of the descendants of the Yin family, but you didn't see that behind it were Emperor Gaozu and the Empress. They were of the same mind, but they still accepted Madam Hua, the daughter of a commander, as a concubine."

"Not only that, but Emperor Gaozu respected Madam Hua as if she was his first wife. After Emperor Gaozu ascended the throne, he conferred the title of first wife to the Empress, and conferred the title of Imperial Consort Mu to Madam Hua. The Imperial Consort has never appeared in all the dynasties. Emperor Gaozu set a precedent."

All the blood in Yu Youyao's body immediately froze. She heard Princess Liyang's deliberately cheerful voice.

"You only saw that Emperor Mingzong doted on the former head palace maid alone and did not enter the harem for many years. However, Emperor Mingzong had two sons and five daughters, and none of them were born by the head palace maid. However, for this unique favor, the palace maid drank childless medicine, causing damage to her body and causing her to contract an incurable illness. She died of illness before she was 30 years old."

"Emperor Xianzong was even more loyal to the Empress. However, the Empress was accused of being unscrupulous and jealous. She hadn't been pregnant for many years and almost ended the emperor's heir. There are three types of unfilial behavior, and the most severe type is to have no descendants. The Great Zhou Dynasty is governed with filial piety. The emperor had no children, was immoral, and disobeyed filial piety. In helplessness and despair, the Empress drugged Emperor Xianzong and asked the palace maid following her to put on

her clothes and accessories, put on her makeup, sprinkle her usual incense powder, and personally send her to her bed. As a result, the husband and wife became estranged until the Empress passed away from illness and Emperor Xianzong followed her.”

Yu Youyao’s heart was in turmoil. Outsiders did not know about these palace secrets. She only knew that Emperor Cheng succeeded Emperor Xianzong and the Empress, but she did not know that there was such a secret.

Her entire body went cold, and even her voice was a little impatient. “I’m very busy. I don’t have time to listen to you talk about these palace secrets.”

“That’s true.” Princess Liyang smiled and did not embarrass herself anymore. “The Eldest Princess is so smart. She’s definitely a sensible person. It’s not my place to say anything. I’m the one who spoke too much.”

Through her knowing face, Yu Youyao saw the ambition in her eyes, and her heart skipped a beat.

Princess Liyang changed the topic. “King Yue Fei has been out on an expedition for a year. I’m sure the Eldest Princess is very concerned. Now that Thief Liang has broken through the capital, King Yue Fei should have returned successfully. I specially came over today to let the Eldest Princess know that King Yue Fei has other important matters that will delay him for a while. However, as this is a serious matter, it’s not convenient for me to tell you. Eldest Princess, don’t worry. I think you’ll understand everything soon.”

Yu Youyao found it funny. As Yin Huaixi’s fiancée, she still had to let others tell her about Yin Huaixi. Did others actually know more about Yin Huaixi than her?

Was there something even she couldn’t know?

Princess Liyang’s gentle and magnanimous attitude made Yu Youyao very sick of it. She also knew very well that although Princess Liyang seemed to have said a lot, she had actually not said anything. She seemed to have taken the initiative, but she was actually bluffing. She knew even better that this was just Princess Liyang’s way of sowing discord.

However, it was this seemingly instigation that was really brilliant.

This was because there were some things that she had to face sooner or later.

Princess Liyang only placed what she had always buried deep in her heart and did not dare to face in front of her.

Yu Youyao chuckled. “Thief Liang broke into the capital and killed many people outside the palace, but there’s still no news from Empress Ning. I’m sure that even before Thief Liang broke into the capital, Empress Ning was already hiding somewhere in the palace. After all, there are many places to hide in the inner courtyard of the palace.”

Previously, she had heard Yin Huaixi mention that there were many secret passageways in the palace. As the Empress, it was impossible for Empress Ning not to know at all.

After Thief Liang broke into the capital, Princess Liyang did not panic. She was still in the mood to chat with her about some interesting topics. It was obvious that she knew Empress Ning's situation quite well.

"In that case, it's not difficult to guess. It's nothing more than King Yue Fei using Empress Ning's control of the inner palace. Before Thief Liang broke through the capital, King Yue Fei planned in advance in the palace. Once Thief Liang invades the capital, he'll be like a turtle in a jar. Then, he'll cooperate from the inside and out. Thief Liang is nothing to be afraid of."

This should be what Princess Liyang meant by "other important matters".

Princess Liyang was shocked and speechless for a long time.

Yu Youyao continued, "Empress Ning sent you to Xiangping to be protected by Yin Huaixi because of Yin Huaixi's sincerity to her. You're also a hostage and a pawn of Yin Huaixi. From the looks of it, the cooperation between Empress Ning and Yin Huaixi is nothing more than to protect you. As for anything else, it's just your own scheme."

She found it funny and really laughed.

However, her smile was a little pale.

It turned out that the so-called sisterly relationship that Princess Liyang had with Yu Youyao was actually such a "sisterly relationship." No wonder she was willing to lower her status and express her goodwill repeatedly. Even though she was treated coldly, she did not seem to care and could still mind her own business.

What was this?

After being exposed, Princess Liyang's expression did not look too good. "King Yue Fei probably did not tell the Eldest Princess that the previous emperor had left behind an edict. This edict concerns King Li of Zhou. It used to be in the hands of Duke Ning, but now it's in my mother's hands."

Yu Youyao's heart was in turmoil.

Yin Huaixi had a lot to do with Empress Ning in the palace. He did not deliberately hide it from her, but he did not deliberately mention it. She did not deliberately probe further. She would eventually know what she needed to know.

However, she knew that their cooperation was definitely not as simple as ordinary cooperation.

Princess Liyang smiled again. "The previous emperor was sick and couldn't take it anymore. He had once wanted to make the fifth son of the emperor the crown prince. However, as the fifth son of the emperor didn't have any external protection and was weak in the court, and because Concubine Hui was of low birth and had always been sick, he had very few supporters in the court. The previous emperor valued literature over martial arts and had offended many generals in his recuperation. As a result, Concubine Hui died early, and the fifth son of the emperor was secretly harmed several times."

Yu Youyao understood. The former fifth son of the emperor was the current King Li of Zhou.

The edict in Duke Ning's hand was very likely to be the edict of the heir.

The ancestors of the Ning Residence had contributed greatly. Just like the Zhenguo Marquis Residence, they were old nobles whose power had been passed down from their great ancestors. The position of the old nobles had been passed down for generations and had a huge power in the court. The benefits behind them were even more complicated and deeply rooted. They were often involved.

#### Chapter 1055: Cannot Exist Together

It was also because of this that the emperor was very afraid of the old nobles. There was welfare and preferential treatment, but these were not too important.

The power of the old nobles had been passed down for generations, but they had also fallen from generation to generation. They were no longer as prosperous as before.

Without great contributions or the great merit of expanding the territory, it would be very difficult for the old nobles to return to their former prosperity.

The previous emperor had chosen the Ning Residence and targeted the huge benefits behind it. He wanted to support the Ning Residence to protect the fifth son of the previous emperor.

The Ning Residence had been placed in an important position by the previous emperor. In the future, if they helped the new emperor, they would be able to ensure the prosperity of three generations.

This was an opportunity and a huge gamble.

Seeing that Yu Youyao did not look too good, the smile in Princess Liyang's eyes deepened. "The previous emperor had the intention to nurture his henchmen for the fifth son of the emperor. The Ning Residence was one of them, but the world was unpredictable. Not long after, the previous emperor fell sick and lost his power. It was the Empress Dowager who surpassed the emperor and bestowed a marriage to the daughter of the Ning family for the fourth son of the emperor. She joined forces with the relatives and many noble generals in the court to initiate the palace riot."

Yu Youyao understood the key point.

Since the previous emperor had nurtured his henchmen for his fifth son, it meant that the previous emperor's body might not have reached the point of being seriously ill. Princess Liyang had also always said that the previous emperor was "ill and weak" but had never mentioned that he was seriously ill.

When a person was sick, it was inevitable that they would be exhausted. This was a very normal situation.

In that case, there was probably another reason why the previous emperor had fallen sick.

With the previous emperor's illness, the Ning Residence, which he had single-handedly promoted, had become a useless chess piece. In the end, it benefited the Empress Dowager.

The Ning Residence had no choice.

The previous emperor's edict had become a death warrant for the Ning Residence. Not only could the Ning Residence not reveal anything, but they also had to do their best to be a loyal dog to the current emperor.

“The fifth son of the previous emperor did not participate in the power struggle, but the previous emperor liked his fifth son and had the intention to establish him. Everyone knows that after the current emperor ascended the throne, it was the Empress Dowager and the Ning Residence who protected him. In addition, the fifth son of the previous emperor was a good-for-nothing. That's why he was not implicated. However, it doesn't mean that the current emperor doesn't have a grudge against the fifth son of the previous emperor. This also planted a root of trouble for the subsequent destruction of the Ning Residence.”

Yu Youyao felt a chill run down her spine. The dog emperor was suspicious by nature. Due to the fact that he had just ascended the throne and was controlled by the Empress Dowager and the court officials, and because the fifth son of the emperor was the previous emperor's favorite son, it was not appropriate for him to kill everyone as soon as he ascended the throne, so he could only let the fifth son of the previous emperor off.

However, his grudge against the fifth son of the previous emperor deepened day by day.

His dissatisfaction and suspicion towards the Ning Residence also deepened day by day.

The root of the problem had been planted from the beginning.

It wasn't just because the fifth son of the previous emperor had made outstanding military achievements in the North and became the famous King You.

Princess Liyang sighed softly. “The current emperor is in an improper position and is controlled by the Empress Dowager. He's always worried about his personal gains and losses. He suspects that his dragon position is unstable and that the previous emperor has a backup plan. Anyone who's related to the fifth son of the previous emperor will be suspected. Due to the previous emperor's edict, the Ning Residence is also walking on thin ice in the court.”

He wasn't worthy of his status, so he was worried about his gains and losses.

“Back then, the emperor personally conquered the north. The Ning Residence could have refused to go to war, but in order to dispel the emperor's suspicion and regain his trust, the Ning Residence had no choice but to support the emperor's personal expedition. It was also because of the emperor's suspicion of the Ning Residence that the entire Ning Residence was loyal but suffered an injustice.”

Supporting a personal expedition to the north was a helpless move not only for the Ning Residence, but also for the Empress in the palace and the eldest son of the emperor who had just been born.

If the Ning Residence refused to go to war, the emperor would be even more suspicious and dissatisfied with the Ning Residence. The Empress's situation in the palace was obvious.

Meanwhile, the eldest son of the emperor would lose his holy heart and become the target of public criticism.

Her grandmother had mentioned the old matters of the Ning Residence to her in the past, but Yu Youyao did not understand. Duke Ning used to guard the North and was also a fierce general who had been through hundreds of battles. How could he support such a ridiculous act of personally conquering the north?

It was as if he was asking for trouble.

Now, it seemed that he had no choice.

That edict was like a guillotine hanging over the head of the Ning Residence. If they could not gain the emperor's trust, the outcome of the Ning Residence could be foreseen.

At this point, Princess Liyang looked at Yu Youyao with a faint smile. "Eldest Princess, you don't know this, but Duke Ning was guarding the North earlier and had many connections in the North. The Empress Dowager asked King Li of Zhou to become the vassal lord because she borrowed the protection of the old subordinates of the Ning family. Otherwise, how do you think King Li of Zhou could easily recover hundreds of thousands of troops as a profligate son after arriving in Liaodong? Without the help of his old subordinates, how could he have established himself in the North so quickly?"

So this was it.

In the past, there were some things that she couldn't figure out or didn't make sense. Now, they were all connected. Yu Youyao's scalp went numb, and she suddenly couldn't stand it anymore.

Empress Ning and Yin Huaixi were not just fated.

The destruction of the Ning Residence was directly related to King Li of Zhou. King Li of Zhou was protected by the old subordinates of the Ning Residence. This was also an indelible kindness.

The interests between Yin Huaixi and Empress Ning had long been inseparable.

Previously, when Empress Ning had brazenly schemed against her marriage, Yin Huaixi had not said anything. He had only gone with the flow and schemed against the Empress Dowager to arrange a marriage for them.

As long as there was such a "kindness", Yin Huaixi's entanglement with Empress Ning and Princess Liyang would be endless.

It seemed only right for Princess Liyang to have such thoughts.

Her marriage with Yin Huaixi had been given by the Empress Dowager and could not be changed. Before they got married, someone came knocking on her door and hinted to her in a righteous and matter-of-fact tone.

"I'm your fiancé's future concubine. My mother and your fiancé have an extraordinary relationship. You have to be magnanimous. We can call each other sisters and live in harmony. If you don't like it, at most, we can mind our own business."



How should Yu Youyao react?

“You’ve provoked me.” She stood up and looked at Princess Liyang arrogantly. Her voice was cold and hard. “I don’t care what schemes you have, nor do I care about the entanglement between Empress Ning and Yin Huaixi. Just one thing. Listen carefully—” She paused for a moment and her lips curled up slightly. “In the Yue Fei Residence, we cannot exist together.”

Princess Liyang frowned, her expression a little ugly. “Eldest Princess, what do you mean?”

Yu Youyao turned a deaf ear to her and stepped out of the reception pavilion with a cold expression.

Chun Xiao and Xia Tao quickly welcomed her.

Yu Youyao said slowly, “Go prepare the carriage and pack up to return to the Yu Garden.”

Chun Xiao was shocked and subconsciously looked at the sky outside. “Are you leaving now? It’s already midnight. Isn’t it inappropriate?”

Xia Tao had entered the residence since she was young. As she was smart and likable, not long after she entered the residence, she was transferred to serve the Young Miss. Everyone said that the Young Miss was mischievous, but her Young Miss had never criticized the servants, nor did she show any expression. She had served her Young Miss for so many years, but this was the first time she had seen her Young Miss’s expression so ugly. She subconsciously glanced into the room.

Princess Liyang was still in the house and had not left.

Chapter 1056: Heart-Wrenching Words

Yu Youyao was furious. Her lips curved. “It’s also my fault for not knowing etiquette. I don’t have any status, but I was shameless and refused to leave. As a result, others looked down on me for no reason.”

On the surface, Princess Liyang pretended to be on good terms with her, but in her eyes, she was still the same as when Yu Youyao first entered the palace and met Princess Liyang. Princess Liyang smiled generously, but her eyes were filled with a high and mighty scrutiny.

If she hadn’t underestimated Yu Youyao, how could she have strutted around?!

Princess Liyang would not dare to be so blatant in the Yu Garden.

When Xia Tao heard this, she stomped her feet in anger. “Young Miss, why are you saying this about yourself? Back then, it was Butler Wen who took His Highness’s personal letter and personally went to the Yu Garden. He invited you to the Yue Fei’s Residence to preside over it. In the past year, the large and small battles at the front line have never stopped. It was you who presided over the Yue Fei’s Residence and mobilized the military supplies. It was also because you were presiding over the Yue Fei King’s Residence and complemented the state government office that the transportation of supplies was guaranteed. There were no mistakes. It was also because the war ahead had yet to stop that you were worried and did not leave. How did it turn into a situation where you acted shamelessly...”

She knew that Princess Liyang was staying in the Yue Fei's Residence and refused to leave. She definitely had ill intentions.

Yu Youyao knew that she had misspoken just now, but she felt suffocated. She held back her anger and couldn't let it out, making her feel extremely uncomfortable.

She took a deep breath and calmed down. "What are you talking about? Hurry up and prepare the carriage."

Xia Tao cursed Princess Liyang in her heart. She stomped her foot and quickly went to prepare the carriage.

Chun Xiao saw that the corners of the Young Miss's eyes were slightly red. She didn't know if the Young Miss was angry or aggrieved, but her heart ached and she felt terrible. "Do you want me to inform Butler Wen?"

Yu Youyao suppressed the complicated thoughts in her heart and shook her head. "No, let's go back and pack."

Princess Liyang was involved in the entanglement between Yin Huaixi and Empress Ning. It was fine if Yu Youyao didn't know about it in the past, but now that she did, she didn't want to get involved.

Yin Huaixi had yet to return, so all of this was only Princess Liyang's one-sided story. No matter what, she had to listen to what Yin Huaixi said and did.

There was no need for her to degrade herself, causing her to panic at this moment and get involved with Princess Liyang, lest she fell into a disadvantage and lost her upbringing.

In the future, no matter what decision Yin Huaixi made, she would support him.

However, it was not up to anyone to interfere in her own decision.

She understood what was going on.

However, sour emotions kept surging in her heart. It was her courtyard, but the short journey seemed to have no end.

In her mind, she couldn't help but think of everything that had happened with Yin Huaixi in the past. Those beautiful, warm, and affectionate scenes had all become knives at this moment, burning her insides.

Yu Youyao couldn't help but let her imagination run wild. She couldn't suppress the grievance in her heart either. She endured her tears and rushed into the courtyard. Before she could return to the house, tears rushed out of her eyes.

She suddenly squatted on the ground and buried her face in her knees. She cried aggrievedly and sobbed softly, like an injured little beast, filled with confusion and helplessness.

It had been a long time since she had suffered such grievances. She watched helplessly as Princess Liyang strutted around in front of her.

She seemed to have said a lot, but she actually did not say anything.

She seemed to have said nothing, but in fact, she had said everything.

However, every word was heart-wrenching.

The trick of hiding something only for it to become more conspicuous was specially used to deal with three people. She had only mentioned 30% of the matter, but Yu Youyao already understood it.

Chun Xiao immediately panicked and quickly looked around. Seeing that there was no one around, she felt a little relieved. However, when she saw her Young Miss squatting on the ground and crying, she did not know what to do.

Yu Youyao had never been a magnanimous person since she was young, and she was even more calculative when it came to Yin Huaixi. When she was young, she even made a fuss at Yin Huaixi just because Yin Huaixi did not tell her in advance what birthday gift he had prepared for her.

She was so angry that she cried just because Yin Huaixi had deliberately teased her, making her think that Yin Huaixi had forgotten her birthday and did not prepare a birthday gift for her.

Not long after, Wen Youyou found out that Princess Shaoyi had prepared a carriage to return to the residence. He immediately felt a headache coming on.

He quickly sent someone to find out what had happened. Why was she leaving before the battle was over?

As the butler of the residence, the entire residence was under his control. Nothing could escape his notice. Not long after, Butler Wen found out that Princess Liyang had spoken to the Eldest Princess. He did not know what the two of them had said, but as soon as the Eldest Princess stepped out of the reception pavilion, she instructed someone to prepare a carriage and return to the residence.

However, this angered the butler so much that his face turned green. "She's only lived in the residence for a few days, but she doesn't treat herself as an outsider. How can she be so shameless? She's only a legitimate princess, but she's not as legitimate as the Eldest Princess at all. How can she still have the cheek to put on airs in front of the Eldest Princess? She's not beautiful, but she's dreaming. I only gave her some dignity on account that she knows her place and doesn't cause trouble. When will it be her turn to interfere in the residence? She's really shameless."

Princess Liyang had come to Xiangping to avoid the limelight as the legitimate princess. It was in the way of the clan's etiquette and Empress Ning's dignity. Indeed, they could not just throw Princess Liyang away and ignore her.

They had already given her enough dignity by barely bringing her into the Yue Fei's Residence.

Previously, he had thought that she was obedient and didn't play tricks. If she was in a king's residence, she would definitely be able to observe etiquette. Who knew that she was just pretending?

Butler Wen was really furious. "Someone, pick a nanny who knows the rules and send her to Princess Liyang. Since she's staying in the Yue Fei King's Residence for the time being, she has to abide by the rules of the Yue Fei King's Residence. She can't play with her prestige in the palace in the past. In addition, clean up a courtyard in the city and send Princess Liyang over in a few days. If anyone wants to leave, Princess Liyang will be the one leaving."

It was obvious that he wanted to teach her the rules before letting her leave.

It wasn't very harmful, but it was extremely insulting.

When the news reached Yu Youyao's ears, her things had already been packed. She could send someone over another day to pack up some things that were not important.

Butler Wen rushed over to persuade her, saying a lot.

However, he still did not dispel Yu Youyao's intention to return to the Yu Garden. "Butler Wen, you don't have to persuade me anymore. It's already against the rules to move into the Yue Fei's Residence early on, but things are urgent, so it's reasonable to prioritize the overall situation. However, the war in the North has just ended, so it's a little inappropriate for me to continue living in the residence."

Butler Wen opened his mouth, and his heart turned cold. The Eldest Princess probably had a feud with His Highness because of Princess Liyang.

In ancient times, there were three books and six etiquettes for official marriage.

The three books included a betrothal letter, a gift letter, and a welcoming letter.

The six etiquettes were the proposal, the matching of birthdates, presenting the betrothal gifts, sending wedding gifts, arranging the wedding, and holding the wedding ceremony.

Chapter 1057: Besieging the Capital

Among the six etiquettes, the welcoming letter and the ceremony had to be personally completed on the day of the wedding. The other two books and five etiquettes were all handled by the elders of both sides.

According to the Book of Rites, the family of the groom would present betrothal gifts to the woman's family.

Then, the marriage would be established.

After receiving the betrothal gifts, the marriage would be ready. Therefore, after the giving of betrothal gifts was completed, the marriage contract was completely established.

At this point, the marriage was more than halfway done. They just had to wait for His Highness to return so that they could arrange the marriage directly. However, everyone knew that the war in the North was tense, and His Highness was busy, so he naturally couldn't come back to get married.

There was no proper master in the king's residence. Usually, it was fine, but when it came to war, the operations of the king's residence were closely related to the war. The Eldest Princess and King Yue Fei were also bestowed by the Empress Dowager. At this time, it was only logical for the Eldest Princess to step forward and manage the matters of the residence. No one outside said anything.

Now that she was using the "rules" to speak, she was estranged from the king's residence.

Yu Youyao softened her voice. "If there's anything important in the king's residence, send someone to send me a message. If it's not important, do as you did in the past."

Butler Wen's heart turned cold as he sent the Eldest Princess out of the residence.

As soon as she returned to the Yu Garden, Yu Youyao went to the Xie Residence.

The Old Madam held her hand and shouted with heartache, “Why do you look thinner again? Child, why don’t you know how to feel sorry for yourself? The merchant ship that went out to sea a few days ago returned with a lot of western ginseng. This western ginseng nourishes the blood and qi. It’s very beneficial to women. You have to nourish yourself well.”

She did not ask her why Yu Youyao had suddenly returned without even saying a word. She did not ask Yu Youyao how she was doing in the Yue Fei’s Residence and only cared about her wholeheartedly.

Yu Youyao felt relieved. Now that she had someone to back her up, she felt at ease.

She couldn’t help but smile and nod. Then, she changed the topic. “My Third Cousin has been out at sea with the merchant ship for a year or two. Didn’t he come back with the ship this time?”

After arriving in Liaodong, her Third Cousin Xie Jingliu completely let himself go. Most of the time, he followed the merchant ship out to sea and traveled overseas. He even wrote a lot of travelogs.

The travelogs recorded many things that he had seen and heard overseas. There were also some medical skills, incense medicine, and agricultural skills from overseas countries. Yu Youyao had learned a lot from them.

The Xie family could already make more exquisite clocks, and they were very popular in the North.

There was a very precious insect dye overseas that was used for lipstick. It was as red as rouge and bright. It was the only pigment that could compare to cinnabar.

Yu Youyao used insect dye to make exquisite lipstick.

At the mention of this grandson, Old Madam Xie felt a toothache. She was also extremely vexed. “He’s already so old, but he’s still hanging around outside all day. How can the outside world be better than his home? He asked me to arrange a marriage for him so that he can start a family as soon as possible so that he can calm down...”

Yu Youyao liked to hear her grandmother chatter. It was funny.

The family’s business was gradually handed over to her cousins. Her cousins’ marriage had yet to be settled. It wasn’t that the family wasn’t anxious. Now that the situation was chaotic, it couldn’t be rushed.

It was all because of this chaotic world.

After chatting for a while, Yu Youyao returned to the Yu Garden.

Old Madam Xie sighed softly and turned around to look for Old Master Xie.

Who in the entire Yue Fei’s Residence could anger Little Yao’er?

The only exception was Princess Liyang, who was temporarily living in the Yue Fei’s Residence and had the title of the legitimate princess. Her status was lower than Little Yao’er’s, but her style was much more exaggerated.

On the day of Little Yao'er's coming-of-age ceremony, Princess Liyang was almost even more impressive than Little Yao'er. To think that Little Yao'er's gown and crown were made by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

On the surface, she looked intimate, but in Little Yao'er's eyes, there was an obscure and cold scrutiny. She was clearly not an easy person to get along with.

In less than two days, Princess Liyang moved out of the Yue Fei's Residence and into a separate courtyard in Xiangping City.

Right on the heels of that, there was another piece of news. King Yue Fei had pursued a portion of the main forces of the Northern Barbarians to the Wolf Residence Mountain. He had imitated the Marquis of Guanjin and became the fifth person in history to have offered a sacrifice on the Wolf Residence Mountain."

King Yue Fei had returned with his army after a great victory. When he suddenly heard the bad news in the capital, he did not even take a deep breath. He followed the Liaoxi corridor and went straight to the north of China, leading his army to besiege the capital.

Yu Youyao's lips curved. This was what Princess Liyang had meant.

King Yue Fei had other important matters to attend to, but because of the seriousness of the matter, it was not convenient for him to tell the Eldest Princess. It seemed that it would not be long before the Eldest Princess would understand everything.

Thief Liang had fought his way into the capital from Henan and fought with King Duan and the Marquis of Zhen. At this time, they had suffered heavy casualties and were exhausted. They urgently needed to gather the remaining troops of the capital, replenish the army, and reorganize their strength. Then, they would quickly occupy the natural defense of Jingzhao and Jin County, blocking all the crusading troops outside the capital.

Jingzhao and Jin County had a natural defensive advantage. These areas had been easy to defend and difficult to attack since ancient times.

As long as the Liang bandits controlled the defense line in the capital and bought enough supplies and time for the Liang army to rest, the capital would be unbreakable, and the Liang bandits' plan to rebel would be mostly successful.

However, Yin Huaixi had taken Thief Liang by surprise. Taking advantage of the fact that Thief Liang had just entered the capital and had yet to control the defense line in the capital, he cooperated with Empress Ning, causing Thief Liang to completely become a turtle in a jar.

The timing was perfect.

As soon as the news of King Yue Fei besieging the capital spread, the King of Dongning, who had one foot in the defense line, retreated to Shandong in a panic, but he still had no intention of returning to the vassal lands.

He even had the intention of reaping the benefits.

Under the banner of "going north to save the king", the King of Zhenxi simply stepped away and shouted at King Yue Fei, "King Yue Fei is the orthodox of the royal family. Thief Liang kept saying

that he would usurp the throne and steal the country. Why didn't he say whose throne he would usurp and whose country he would steal?! I'm willing to mobilize a portion of my troops and let the generals of the west army lead the army north. They will listen to King Yue Fei's orders to help King Yue Fei kill Thief Liang and stabilize the country."

In other words, he wouldn't go to the capital, but his troops would go to the capital and listen to King Yue Fei's orders.

Indirectly, he handed over his military power and even flattered King Yue Fei.

He changed sides quickly and completely, making everyone dumbfounded.

The aide covered his face. "Your Highness, aren't you surrendering too quickly..."

The King of Zhenxi smiled and said, "He led his troops to besiege the capital, so he's naturally unwilling to be inferior to others. He's originally the orthodox descendant of the royal family, and his fiancée, Eldest Princess Shaoyi, is famous in the world. It's simply too logical to fight for the throne."

If he and Yin Huaixi fought for the throne, wouldn't there be something seriously wrong?

As a vassal lord, how could he compare to King Yue Fei?

King Yue Fei returned too quickly.

He sighed slightly. "You only saw me surrender quickly, but you didn't see the blood flowing like a river on the grassland. You didn't see Yin Huaixi offering a sacrifice on the Wolf Residence Mountain. The You army washed the grassland and killed until their eyes turned red. Look at what happened to the Di people. Do you think Yin Huaixi can tolerate vassal lords leading his troops?"

The aide was speechless, but he couldn't refute.

His lord was shocked by King Yue Fei's ferocious actions of slaughtering the enemies in the grassland.

Chapter 1058: Siege

Seeing the speechless expression on the aide's face, the King of Zhenxi felt embarrassed. "Yin Huaixi is far away in the southern desert. We don't know what the news from the grassland is like. The news that came back was all spread by him. Who knows whether he returned early and set up a plan in advance in the North? Otherwise, why would he besiege the capital without any warning? Thief Liang broke through like a hot knife through butter and entered the capital. Even the King of Dongning doesn't dare to underestimate him. How can he be easily besieged?"

Just because Thief Liang had entered the capital did not mean that he was completely in control.

Yin Huaixi had used the news from the southern desert to numb the King of Liang, making him think that King Yue Fei was still far away in the desert and had yet to return. He had let down his guard against King Yue Fei, which was why he had fallen into King Yue Fei's trap and was unexpectedly besieged.

The aide agreed deeply and couldn't help but sigh softly. "Thief Liang probably never dreamed that King Yue Fei would flatten the grassland in less than a year. Before he could realize his dream of

ascending the throne, King Yue Fei caught him off guard. If the King of Liang had succeeded in ascending the throne and gathering the people in the capital, the entire army wouldn't have been so passive."

King Zhen wiped his face. "Isn't that so? Once the King of Liang controls the defense line in the capital and controls the general situation in the capital, even the King of Dongning, who fought his way to Tianjin, will be in danger."

The capital was famous for being easy to defend and difficult to attack.

Since ancient times, it had always taken more than three times the number of troops to attack the city than to defend it, so it was much easier to guard the city. Ten thousand to 20,000 people could often defend against 70,000 to 80,000 people. The Marquis of Zhenguo reorganized the troops in the capital and resisted with all his might. He used the natural terrain, defense, and resources of the capital to cause Thief Liang to suffer a lot.

"Not to mention that Thief Liang didn't expect it, I'm afraid no one expected it. King Yue Fei fought the Northern Barbarians as if it was a game. The arrogant Di people who dominated the grassland were actually unable to withstand a single blow from King Yue Fei. Not only was the 600,000-strong army wiped out, but they were also beaten to their hometown in the desert and their Khan was beheaded. Who would believe this?!"

Therefore, it wasn't that he had surrendered too quickly, but that he had surrendered too slowly and lost his life!

The aide's heart skipped a beat. "I'm afraid King Yue Fei has long planned a north expedition. The 600,000 troops of the Northern Barbarians are just a logical opportunity for him."

If he was not wrong, King Yue Fei was too terrifying.

King Zhenxi's expression was solemn. "That's most likely the case. Look at him. Not only has he grasped the topographic map of the grassland and understood the distribution of the Di people's activities, but he has also led his troops deep into the grassland and attacked the various tribes of the grassland. No matter how I look at it, he seems to be familiarizing himself with the terrain of the grassland in advance. I also heard that King Yue Fei has trained a military formation that specializes in subduing the Di people's bows and horses. No matter how I look at it, it's not a battle he wasn't prepared for."

The two of them looked at each other and saw the shock in each other's eyes.

This battle was clearly a battle of knowing oneself and the enemy.

The aide was even more glad that he had followed a clear-minded master. If he really waited until King Yue Fei dealt with the King of Liang and had time to settle the score, an aide like him who had joined the King of Zhenxi's Residence would definitely have no way out.

On the second day after King Yue Fei besieged the capital, at midnight, the troops that the King of Liang had deployed in various parts of the capital were attacked separately. It was unknown where



elite troops had come from, but they used the cover of the night to catch the King of Liang off guard. Before he could react, news spread that King Yue Fei's troops were approaching the city.

Large amounts of torches illuminated the city tower like it was daytime.

The King of Liang ascended the city tower and looked down. King Yue Fei, who was sitting high on his horse and standing in the middle of a thousand troops, almost gritted his teeth on the spot.

He sneered. "Isn't King Yue Fei still fighting the Di people in the desert? Why did he suddenly besiege the capital? I, the King of Liang, think that I've been smart for a lifetime, but I was tricked by a young child like you and benefited you for no reason." At this point, he was already exasperated. He laughed in anger. "Good, really good. King Yue Fei is really scheming..."

At this point, what else was there not to understand?

Yin Huaixi had used the death of King Li of Zhou to stir up trouble in the Great Zhou Dynasty, creating an opportunity for him to rebel. This made his ambition grow wildly. When the time was right, he would interrogate Ning Yuanbo again and make him lose his composure. In order to prevent his collusion with Ning Yuanbo from being exposed by the Imperial Court early, he could only start early.

All of this was within Yin Huaixi's plan.

Yin Huaixi rolled his eyes at him and said slowly, "Everyone has to punish rebels."

"You." The King of Liang's face was ashen. He gritted his teeth and squeezed out a voice from between his teeth. "Yin Huaixi, are you sure you want to go against me? You have to think carefully. The You army is brave and good at fighting one against ten, but my Liang army is not to be trifled with. When two tigers fight, one will die and the other will be injured. Wouldn't that allow the King of Dongning, who's hiding in Shandong, to benefit for no reason?"

The King of Dongning sat in Shandong and was less than 600 to 700 kilometers away from the capital. The King of Liang had always treated the King of Dongning as the greatest threat and was wary of him. He had deployed his most elite army to the defense line in Tianjin, causing there to be insufficient troops in the capital. He had never expected to be caught off guard and be attacked from both inside and out by the King of Yue Fei. It was already the end of the line.

Yin Huaixi looked up and said nothing.

The King of Liang felt that he had convinced him, so he struck while the iron was hot and continued, "I believe that King Yue Fei is a smart person. You should understand how to make a choice. If King Yue Fei retreats now, from now on, the entire Youzhou will be under King Yue Fei's control. I won't interfere."

To put it bluntly, he wanted King Yue Fei to establish himself as a king in the North.

He handed over half of the north side.

He felt that he had made the greatest concession.

However, Yin Huaixi sneered. "Don't think too highly of yourself."

The King of Liang was furious. “Yin Huaixi, don’t be too arrogant. I’m useless, but this capital isn’t something you can take down just because you want to. Why don’t both sides take a step back? If you insist on becoming my enemy, at most, we’ll fight to the death...”

Yin Huaixi was speechless. He had already said that he shouldn’t think too highly of himself. Where did he get his confidence from? How could a mere 200,000 crippled soldiers fight to the death with his 300,000 You soldiers?

With such self-righteous intelligence, did he still want to be an emperor?

Wasn’t he dreaming?!

Yin Huaixi couldn’t be bothered to waste his breath on him. He raised his hand and ordered, “Attack!”

The King of Liang’s pupils constricted when he saw King Yue Fei’s army approaching not far away. Seeing that the army was in range, he shouted, “Fire!”

The dense rain of arrows was like a net of arrows that shot down from the city tower. With a loud shout, thick shields blocked the siege army from the front, back, above, left, and right. The siege army kept advancing with an unstoppable aura.

Seeing this situation, the King of Liang’s heart turned cold.

These were the elites of the You army.

Yin Huaixi followed closely behind the siege soldiers. When the two rows of crossbows reached the shooting range, he ordered the crossbows to be released. The crossbows were large-scale crossbows that were necessary for sieges. The crossbows had a long range and could shoot more than ten arrows at a time.

Chapter 1059: A Turtle in a Jar

The soldiers in heavy armor pulled the crossbows together, and a dense rain of arrows shot towards the city tower.

The King of Liang had already retreated behind the wall. The other party shot wave after wave of crossbow bolts, and every time, they could take the lives of the Liang army guarding the city. The King of Liang’s heart kept sinking. “Open the side door and rush out. Kill one person and you will be rewarded with ten taels!”

The side doors on both sides opened, and the Liang army welcomed the army that was attacking the city like a ferocious tiger.

“Boom—” The side door closed tightly again.

The Liang army, who had rushed out of the city gate, understood that they had no way out. Only by killing the enemy in front of them could they survive.

The dense crowd charged forward regardless of life and death. The arrow rain on the city wall never stopped. Young and strong bodies fell to the battlefield and could no longer get up. Blood dyed the ground outside the city red.

The way forward was paved with blood and corpses, but they were still moving forward. No one took a step back.

Someone had set up a ladder to ascend the city wall.

Warriors climbed the city wall ladder one after another. Just as they were about to ascend the city wall, hot oil was splashed on them, stones were smashed down on their heads, hot water was poured on them, and they were stabbed by long rods. They fell with screams.

Someone raised the logs used to attack cities and hit the city gate hard.

The unbreakable city gate gradually cracked.

The siege lasted from night to dawn, and a golden star slowly rose in the sky.

The King of Liang was mentally and physically exhausted. If it weren't for the fact that a portion of the Liang army's main forces were deployed in the defense line of Tianjin, far water couldn't resolve a nearby fire. The troops deployed in various places in the capital were attacked to varying degrees, causing him to suffer heavy losses and be unable to be transferred over to help defend the city, the Liang army might have been able to fight them.

Hearing the banging of the door one after another, the King of Liang suddenly felt powerless.

In order to take down the capital, he had thought of countless possibilities.

The only thing he did not expect was that the 600,000-strong Di army, as well as Rada Khan, who had unified the grassland, would be so vulnerable in front of King Yue Fei. In less than a year, Yin Huaixi flattened the grassland and quietly returned with his troops. Moreover, he had made arrangements in the capital and caught the King of Liang in a trap, making the King of Liang fight like a cornered beast.

There was a loud clang.

Someone shouted, "The city gate is open. Kill..."

The siege army braved the rain of arrows and charged forward, rushing towards the city gate like a swarm of bees. The crowd quickly pushed open a gap in the city gate that could accommodate a single person. Warriors squeezed into the city one after another.

The Liang army guarding the city tower was in chaos, and flesh and blood flew everywhere.

With a bang, the city gate was pushed open by a crowd.

Shouts, killing cries, and screams intertwined.

When the deputy general saw this, he grabbed the King of Liang's arm. "Your Highness, the city gate can't be defended anymore. Let's retreat quickly..."

King Liang gritted his teeth and cut off the head of a You soldier who was rushing over.

"Let's go. When King Yue Fei enters the city, we won't be able to leave even if we want to." The deputy general protected the King of Liang and killed the enemy. "If we stay, where's there's life there's hope. We still have 100,000 main forces on the defense line in Tianjin..."

The King of Liang watched as the Liang soldiers fell one by one under the charge of the main force of the You army. Finally, he took a step back and fought and retreated under the cover of his deputy general and soldiers.

When the sun rose in the east, the commoners in the city felt the ground tremble from afar.

Some bold commoners secretly looked through the crack in the door. The black and gold flag fluttered in the sunlight. Warriors in armor were like a long dragon winding around Chang An Street.

Some commoners couldn't help but tear up. "It's King Yue Fei's army. King Yue Fei has entered the city. He's here to save us..."

King Yue Fei's achievements of taking in refugees and guarding the North were too deeply rooted in people's hearts. At this moment, no one suspected that King Yue Fei was the same as Thief Liang, a rebel who had brought war and chaos to them.

They firmly believed that King Yue Fei was the hero who had calmed the flames of war and saved them.

The army broke through the city gate, but the King of Liang had deployed a lot of troops in the capital, and the battle was still ongoing.

Empress Ning was in charge of 10,000 imperial guards and cooperated with King Yue Fei to outflank them. The 3,000-strong Hidden Dragon Army changed from the dark to the light and quickly wiped out most of the King of Liang's main forces in the capital.

Next, they had to continue to eliminate a portion of the bandits' troops scattered in the capital.

It was already ten days later when Yu Youyao received the news.

At this moment, Yin Huaixi had already broken into the capital and captured the father and son alive. He had also wiped out Thief Liang's troops in the capital one by one.

Some of the main forces deployed by the King of Liang at the Tianjin defense line could not save them in time. When they found out that the King of Liang and his son had been captured alive by King Yue Fei, they immediately put away their weapons and surrendered.

Their master had already been captured. No matter how much they resisted, it would be useless.

No one was willing to die if they could live.

Could it be that the King of Dongning, who wanted to reap the benefits, had been tricked by the remaining clans in Shandong?

The matter was not complicated. King Yue Fei had broken into the capital overnight. The King of Dongning immediately felt that something was amiss and evacuated Shandong overnight, planning to retreat to the east.

The King of Dongning had never dreamed that the Liang army, which had broken through the capital like a hot knife through butter, would be so vulnerable. They had lost too quickly.

They did not expect that King Yue Fei and Empress Ning would collaborate from the inside and out, causing Thief Liang to become a turtle in a jar.

He did not expect that King Yue Fei would defeat 600,000 Di army soldiers in less than a year, making him his greatest enemy. Furthermore, he made Thief Liang, who had deployed his main elite troops at the defense line in Tianjin, a joke.

He thought of the King of Zhenxi, who had surrendered quickly and completely.

The King of Dongning sighed. "It's really fate."

But it was too late to regret now.

He retreated to the east to express his intention to surrender to King Yue Fei. When the situation in the capital was settled, he would send a surrender letter to King Yue Fei to express his intention to submit.

The east side was also his lair and occupied a natural defensive position. If Yin Huaixi did not take it seriously, he would have to consider it carefully.

He had planned it well.

However, he never expected that on the way to retreat, the Dong army would be jointly surrounded by the navy led by Ye Hanyuan and the remaining forces of the clan.

Only then did the King of Dongning realize that the so-called "riot of the rebel army in Shandong" was clearly a trap that Yin Huaixi had personally set for him.

The so-called "rebel army" was not really a rebel army, but the navy of the Dengzhou Guards.

Dengzhou was an important town on the border with the sea. It was an important road between Goryeo and Japan.

Ye Hanyuan was originally the governor of south Zhili. Shandong was originally not under his jurisdiction, but because the pirates often disturbed the southeast coast, Dengzhou was also a major war zone. The emperor ordered Ye Hanyuan to help defend Dengzhou.

As a result, Ye Hanyuan had the right to enter and leave Shandong.

As Ye Hanyuan entered and left Dengzhou many times, and helped the Dengzhou guards repel the pirates, he was extremely famous among the navy. Thus, the navy of the Dengzhou guards gradually took him as their leader.

Thief Liang had rebelled, and the Imperial Court only existed in name and its control over the place had greatly decreased. Thus, the King of Dongning couldn't accurately obtain information about the area. Yin Huaixi used these factors to join forces with the remaining forces of the local clans to stage a "rebellion" and confuse the public.

Chapter 1060: The Winner Is the King and the Loser Is the Bandit

Yin Huaixi had calculated that the Imperial Court would definitely send a document to the King of Dongning to calm the riot in Shandong out of helplessness.

He was even more certain that the King of Dongning would definitely use this opportunity to lead his troops into Shandong.

In the past, in order to eliminate the clan's ills and gain the emperor's trust, he acted logically and controlled Shandong. He wantonly destroyed the ancient books and records that had been passed down for generations in the clan, such as statues, history books, and so on. The local clans hated him to the core because of this matter. In order to take revenge on him, they did not hesitate to use themselves as bait to lure him into Shandong.

The King of Dongning spat out a mouthful of blood on the spot and shouted, "I believe that back then, when King Yue Fei quelled the rebellion in Shandong, the emperor was afraid that the clan would rise again and ordered me to help govern Shandong and eliminate the ills of the clan. It must be related to King Yue Fei!"

There were pros and cons to cooperating with Shandong.

On the one hand, he could take the opportunity to plant his own connections in Shandong and control the resources in Shandong in his hands. In the future, he could naturally control Shandong, so he fell for King Yue Fei's trap.

On the other hand, the emperor had asked him to govern Shandong together not because he trusted him, but because the reputation of the Imperial Court had increased greatly after King Yue Fei pacified Shandong. It was the best time to eliminate the ills of the clan. In order to avoid the emperor's suspicion and to gain his trust, he had no choice but to damage his reputation and help the Imperial Court eliminate the ills of the clan as soon as possible.

If he could really control Shandong and attack the capital, it would not be a big deal to damage his reputation.

But what if all of this had been planned by King Yue Fei long ago?

The King of Dongning roared, "What a good scene..."

It turned out that he had done all the thankless and annoying work, but it had benefited Yin Huaixi.

Now, the Shandong Clan had been disrupted by him. They were already in a mess and were incompetent. The ills of Shandong over the years had completely been eliminated.

The clan was loyal, but they were loyal to Yin Huaixi.

Now that Yin Huaixi had helped the clan eliminate him, wouldn't the clan be even more grateful to Yin Huaixi?!

The King of Dongning had lived for most of his life, but he had actually been played by a young man?!

Just thinking about it made him feel ridiculous.

Ye Yuanhan's face was cold. "The King of Dongning took advantage of the rebellion of Thief Liang and the internal strife to lie about the riot in Shandong. He forged the documents from the Imperial Court to quell the riot and secretly entered Shandong in the name of quelling the riot. After entering Shandong, in the name of quelling the riot, he harmed the people and accumulated wealth. He hoarded food and plundered the wealth of the people and went north without an edict. His intention to rebel is witnessed by the world. Everyone can kill rebels."

When the King of Dongning heard this, he spat out another mouthful of blood. "The winner takes all. King Yue Fei is really good. I'm impressed, impressed..."

It had already been a month since the war had completely calmed down.

Princess Liyang, who lived in the Xiangping Residence, had already secretly returned to the capital after King Yue Fei captured the Liang father and son alive.

It was November.

It was cold and snowy in Xiangping City. There was news from the capital that King Yue Fei was going to establish a new court and ascend the throne.

Yu Youyao sat in front of the dressing table and looked at herself in the mirror in a daze. She recalled that the last time she had seen Yin Huaixi was in June last year.

At that time, the Northern Barbarians were busy electing the Khan and unifying the grassland tribes. Yin Huaixi would lead troops to attack the Northern Barbarians from time to time, and the war between the two sides was in a stalemate.

She was still in the Jinyuan Garden in Jinzhou.

Yin Huaixi rode into Jinzhou overnight without alarming anyone.

When she saw him, he was covered in dust, and his determined face was filled with fatigue. He stood at the door and opened his arms to her with a smile. "I'm back!"

Yu Youyao was both shocked and delighted. Like a swallow in his arms, she ran into his arms. She tiptoed and gently stroked the dark circles under his eyes with the tip of her hand. Her heart ached so much that tears streamed down her face.

"Why did you come back? You tortured yourself so much that my heart aches for you. Is that so? Why are you so bad? It's fine if you make me worry every day, but you also make me feel terrible."

In her anger, she even raised her fist and punched his chest a few times. In the end, she did not hurt him. Instead, she hurt her hand. She felt so aggrieved that she buried her face in his chest and cried until the sky fell and the ground caved in.

Yin Huaixi coaxed her for a long time, but he couldn't coax her. Instead, he tortured himself until he lost his temper. He pinched her small waist and pressed her into his arms for a long time.

After everything calmed down, Yu Youyao blushed and prepared a medicinal bath, clothes, and food for him like a little wife.

That night, she slept soundly in Yin Huaixi's arms.

When she woke up the next day, there was no one around. Yu Youyao thought that she was dreaming until she sat in front of the dressing table and realized that there was an additional eggshell porcelain makeup box on it.

The light green eggshell porcelain was as thin as a cicada's wings.

It was a box of brow powder.

Filled with melancholy and joy, she raised her eyebrows and held the eyebrow pencil. She gently traced her thin eyebrows. Her dark drawn eyebrows spread out like smoke, but they were smoky and purple, like the mountains in the distance after the rain. There was a faint cloud of smoke, and in the evening mist, the mountains were a dense purple.

She was extremely beautiful.

She had named this box of brow powder “Dusk Mountain Brow Powder”. From now on, she would use it to draw her eyebrows every day and never let it fade. She wanted to use up the brow powder. At that time, would Yin Huaixi return?

Yu Youyao sighed softly and put away the empty eggshell porcelain makeup box.

At this moment, Xia Tao rushed into the house. “Young Miss, His Highness has sent someone to fetch you to the capital.”

Yu Youyao was completely stunned.

She had thought about what would happen if Yin Huaixi ascended to the throne one day, but when all of this came true, she was a little confused and at a loss. Her mind went blank for a moment.

There was a flurry of footsteps in the room.

Yu Youyao looked up in a daze and called out blankly, “Grandmother.”

Old Madam Xie’s eyes couldn’t help but turn red. She pulled her granddaughter into her arms. “Good child, don’t be afraid.” She held her granddaughter’s hand and took out an envelope from her sleeve. She solemnly placed it on her fair palm. “Your great-grandfather asked me to give it to you so that you can see it and feel more at ease.”

It was a blank letter without a seal, as if it was nothing important. However, what her maternal grandfather had given her must be important.

Yu Youyao took out the letter and shook it gently. Familiar words appeared on the paper, such as “agile as a dragon” and “tiger rests in the phoenix pavilion”. Every word was written with great ease. The strokes were bold and unrestrained, and they were quietly added together. Upon closer inspection, they were vigorous and open. Their Qi meridians were interlinked, giving off a flowing and endless feeling.

It was Yin Huaixi’s handwriting.

Yu Youyao read it word for word, and her expression became very complicated. She opened her mouth and asked in an obscure voice, “Back then, the Xie family...” Her throat was dry. As soon as she opened her mouth, the tears in her eyes made her eyes turn red. “For Yin Huaixi’s promise, they used all their wealth and tried their best to help Yin Huaixi pacify the North, the Northern Barbarians, and the world.”