

All Hail 1081

Chapter 1081: Sacrificing Himself

Yin Huaixi was sleeping soundly when he was suddenly woken up by the sound of a crowing rooster. He subconsciously hugged the delicate body in his arms more tightly.

“The rooster is already crowing. Don’t make a fuss. It’s time to go to court.” Yu Youyao turned around and muttered with her back facing him.

Yin Huaixi refused to budge. He wrapped himself around her from behind. As he bit her ear, he asked vaguely, “Why is there the sound of a rooster in the palace? I must have heard wrongly.”

Yu Youyao was so annoyed by him that she fell asleep. “I was the one who asked someone to capture it into the palace.”

“Why did you capture a rooster into the palace?” Yin Huaixi’s breathing was a little turbid as he asked vaguely, “Is it too boring in the palace? I’ll bring you out to play in a few days.”

Yu Youyao was angry. “You still have the cheek to ask. Isn’t it because of you? You lie on the couch every morning and refuse to get up. As a result, Eunuch Zhu has to come over to invite you. I’m too ashamed to face anyone.”

She made it seem like he was the source of trouble. It was really embarrassing.

Yin Huaixi was not ashamed. Instead, he was proud. “The hibiscus tent was warm overnight. It’s just a pity that spring nights are short. We’re newlyweds. It’s only human nature for us to be deeply attached to each other.”

Yu Youyao rolled her eyes at him. “This rooster will crow twice every morning. The first crow will be at 3:30am, and the second crow will be at 5:00am. I heard that no matter if it’s windy or rainy, even if it’s in the dead of winter, it will crow 360 days a year. Not only does it crow every day, but it also crows at the same time.”

If the rooster crowed too many times, Yin Huaixi would not be able to rest well. If it crowed for too long, Yin Huaixi would be vexed as it was too early. She was worried that it would disturb Yin Huaixi’s good dream.

A rooster like this that only crowed twice in the morning was a veritable “lazy rooster” in the farming world. It was relatively rare. It took a few days to find this one in the villages near the suburbs of the capital.

She had put in a lot of effort.

Yin Huaixi rubbed his forehead and laughed. “To think you could think of that.”

Yu Youyao said, “From today onwards, from now on, the rooster will sound twice a day. Get up consciously. Don’t let Eunuch Zhu urge you anymore. Otherwise, I’ll capture 180 roosters and bring them into the palace.”

Imagine a 180 roosters crowing at the same time.

Hmph, couldn't she deal with him?

Yin Huaixi did not know whether to laugh or cry. Those of them who had gone to the battlefield could still snore like thunder even though the killing sounds in front of them were earth-shattering. Did she really think that 180 roosters could scare him?!

Yes, it really worked.

"Alright, I'll listen to you." He was not afraid of noisy chickens and would never let her suffer with him.

Yes, he had sacrificed himself for her.

Therefore, it was not too much to collect some interest!

"Oh, what are you doing..."

"Isn't it just the first crow? It's still early. There's still an hour before the second crow. There's enough time..."

"Oh, you bastard..."

This ordeal lasted until five o'clock.

At dawn, the second rooster crow sounded punctually.

Yin Huaixi hugged the delicate and weak person in his arms tightly. He reached out and brushed the wet hair on her face behind her ear. Then, he left the inner hall and instructed Chun Xiao to get some water.

Chun Xiao drew the water and reported softly outside the curtain.

Yin Huaixi lifted the curtain and brought the water into the inner hall. He gently helped Yu Youyao clean up. He couldn't help but feel a little restless. He couldn't help but wrap around her and kiss her lips, causing Yu Youyao to mutter weakly.

"Alright, I won't disturb you anymore. Once I go to the morning court assembly, you can sleep well and wake up anytime." Yin Huaixi looked at her flushed face. It was like a burning peach blossom, full of beauty. There was a hint of spring in the corners of her eyes and eyebrows. His heart itched. He felt smug and sighed.

How could he have enough doting on such a delicate and soft person?

In answer, Yu Youyao turned around.

It was obvious that she despised him for being annoying and long-winded.

As she turned over, the blanket also slid down, revealing her round shoulders. She had a beautiful jade-like back with two butterfly-like bones. It was as if she wanted to spread her wings to fly. The beauty spread to her waist. She was so beautiful that it was almost soul-stirring.

Yin Huaixi's breathing was a little chaotic. He quickly pulled up the blanket and wrapped her tightly.

This girl was delicate, but she did not notice it at all. She kept putting on an act, causing the control he was so proud of to collapse.

Yin Huaixi stood up and left the inner hall to the side hall.

Eunuch Zhu arranged for him to wash up and lead a group of eunuchs to wait in the side hall.

The new emperor did not like to be served close by. He did everything himself. It only took him half an hour to clean himself and wear it. He was simply swift and decisive.

After putting on his clothes, Eunuch Zhu brought over breakfast.

The Empress's heart ached for the emperor, who woke up early and still had to discuss matters with the court officials. Every night before going to bed, she would personally prepare porridge and medicinal cuisine and ask the emperor to eat some medicinal cuisine before going to court every day.

In the spring and winter seasons, the morning court session started at 6:15am and ended at 8:15am.

The court session would start earlier in summer and autumn. It started at 5:30am and ended at 8:30am.

When the court session ended in the morning, it happened to be time for breakfast.

While Yin Huaixi was eating with Yu Youyao, he suddenly said, "Song Mingzhao has been back in the capital for a while."

Yu Youyao stopped eating and said nothing.

Yin Huaixi stared at her hand for a while. "The Marquis of Zhenguo died for the country. The glory of the Zhenguo Marquis Residence in the past has also disappeared with the destruction of the Great Zhou Dynasty. The Song Clan was blessed by the Great Zhou Dynasty and is also bright on the surface. Very few people hold important positions in the court. The Great Zhao Dynasty has just been established, so we have to hire capable people. The talents of the Song Clan are not obvious, so few people were employed again."

The old nobles looked glorious, but because they were deeply rooted and involved complicated interests, the emperor was most likely unwilling to put them in an important position.

This was unless a particularly talented junior in the family was recognized by the emperor and could protect the family's prosperity.

Song Mingzhao was such a person.

Yu Youyao understood immediately. "As the eldest grandson of the Song family and the most outstanding disciple of the Song family, Song Mingzhao is carrying the rise and fall of the Song family. He wants to enter the capital to seek a future for the family."

After Song Xiuqi's death, the Song family established a cenotaph for him in Xi'an. When Song Mingzhao went to the capital, Second Young Master Song had to stay in Xi'an to mourn for Song Xiuqi.

Yin Huaixi nodded, as if he had thought of something. He said, "Previously, when you were still in Jinzhou, Song Mingzhao stayed in Xiangping for a while."

Yu Youyao had some impression of him. "I heard from Brother Shande that there seemed to be a problem with his health. He came to Xiangping to seek treatment. After all, they've been friends for many years and are cousins by marriage. I asked Brother Shande to send over a greeting card from the Immortal Master of Mount Wanjun."

Seeing her ignorant expression, Yin Huaixi was silent for a moment. Suddenly, he pitied Song Mingzhao a little. "He originally planned to go to Jinzhou, but at that time, there was a battle at the front line. Jinzhou was located at the border and was under full martial law and lockdown. Other than those with the documents of the Imperial Court and the token of the Yue Fei's Residence, no one was allowed to enter or leave."

Chapter 1082: Side Story 2: Forget It!

Song Mingzhao was stopped outside Jinzhou Pass. He had no choice but to return to Xiangping and meet Yu Shande.

Yu Shande had been entrusted by his clan to come to Jinzhou. Elder Yu had arranged for a bunch of clearance documents to be sent to him before he successfully entered Jinzhou.

Yu Youyao only nodded. Most of the immortals of the Wanjun Mountain were helping out in the frontline army. It made sense for Song Mingzhao to come to Jinzhou to seek treatment.

Even though he had made it so clear, she still did not understand. Yin Huaixi rubbed his forehead and chuckled. "After you completed your mourning period, the news of the previous Empress Dowager bestowing a marriage to us completely spread. Then, Song Mingzhao was summoned by his family and returned to the Xi'an family."

At that time, their marriage was not a secret in the court.

The Zhenguo Marquis Residence also knew very well that only Song Mingzhao had been hidden in ancient times. The Song family probably did not expect that their eldest son and grandson, whom their family had high hopes for, would actually be a fool. It was not easy for them to escape from Quanzhou with the help of their family. Not only did they not return to the capital, but they also went to Liaodong from the south.

There was a thousand miles between the south and north.

They had to spend a lot of effort.

If the marriage had not spread, Song Mingzhao might not have returned to Xi'an easily.

Yu Youyao completely lost her appetite. She glanced at him. "What exactly are you trying to say?"

Yin Huaixi was stunned. Yes, what was he trying to say?

Could it be that he had to tell his wife that there was a man who was deeply in love with her and chased after her, wanting to poach her? What should she do?!

Forget it!

Wasn't he looking for trouble?

Yu Youyao did not think too much about it. She had not interacted much with Song Mingzhao. Not to mention the nightmare, she did not have any prejudice against him. Naturally, she did not expect Song Mingzhao to be interested in her.

Hence, she deliberated for a moment. "Song Mingzhao is the top scholar of the previous dynasty. He has a position in the Hanlin Academy and is very valued by Yu Zongshen. He's a talented person. Putting aside the nightmare, I don't have any prejudice against him and acknowledge his talent. Other than being friends with him for a while, I don't have much to do with him. Whether you employ him or not depends on you. You don't have to test me."

She was worried that Yin Huaixi would have a grudge against Song Mingzhao because of the nightmare and was unwilling to employ him, so her words were very pertinent.

Song Mingzhao's talent had already shown signs of showing during the flood in Zhejiang. He could handle such a complicated situation in Zhejiang with ease and even handled the conflict between Zhejiang Qingliu and the capital of Zhejiang. Later on, Song Xiuwen was in jail, but he had never been convicted. The Zhenguo Marquis Residence was not affected at all.

Of course, Yin Huaixi was also involved.

However, it was also true that Song Mingzhao had helped Yu Zongzheng escape from Zhejiang unscathed.

It was indeed a pity to give up such a talent.

Yin Huaixi said, "I flipped through Song Mingzhao's examination paper back then. There are more than 3,000 words in the entire paper, but every word is a gem. He's a capable minister who can manage officials. If he can be used well, he and Yu Shande will be able to manage officials and complement each other. As the emperor, I'll be much less worried."

At that time, he would have more time to accompany Yu Youyao.

What was governance?

The purpose of governance in the world was to manage the officials. Not only did he want to employ Song Mingzhao, but he also wanted to nurture him to be the next Grand Secretary.

Yu Youyao nodded. "It's your decision."

Yin Huaixi chuckled. "The Song family has returned to the capital. You used to have a good relationship with the women of the Song family. Do you want to summon them into the palace to meet them?"

Putting Song Mingzhao aside, Old Madam Song treated Yu Youyao very well.

Yu Youyao had the same intention. "Call Grandmother Song and Auntie Song into the palace for a meeting with them."

Yin Huaixi smiled and did not mention this. He picked up some sour bamboo shoots with his chopsticks and handed them to her.

He was not a magnanimous person. It was not bad for him to admire Song Mingzhao's talent, but at the thought of his feelings for Yu Youyao, he couldn't help but feel a lump in his throat.

Therefore, even though Song Mingzhao had been in the capital for a while, Yin Huaixi had never made up his mind to employ him.

Now, it seemed that he was thinking too much.

Using Song Mingzhao was more beneficial than harmful.

After the Marquis of Zhenguo of the previous dynasty, Song Xiuqi, died for the country, Old Madam Song made the decision to separate the four branches. Old Madam Song followed the first branch.

This time, Old Madam Song had brought the first and third branches back to the capital. This was because the original ancestral residence of the Marquis of Zhenguo had been bestowed by the previous dynasty's Zhou Gaozu. Now that the Great Zhao was newly established and the new emperor had ascended the throne, the previous residence could no longer be lived in. The Song family could only live in a courtyard that they had previously bought in the capital and wait for the imperial court's edict.

They waited for half a month.

Song Mingzhao looked for Yu Shande to gather information.

Yu Shande was very confident in Song Mingzhao. He patted his shoulder and said, "Brother, don't worry. You're Mr. Xian Yun's disciple. There are rarely any great talents in the world. After the new emperor ascends the throne, he'll take in scholars and speak kindly. It's the clearest. Wait a little longer. I think there'll be news soon."

His words were sincere, so Song Mingzhao naturally appreciated his kindness, but he actually did not find out anything.

When he returned home, he told his grandmother.

Old Madam Song's expression was solemn. "He's a virtuous person. If there's any news about you in the court, it's impossible for him not to reveal it at all. From what he's saying, it seems like there's no news at all..."

The Song and Yu families were family friends and in-laws. This time, the Yu family had entered the capital together with the first and third branches of the Song family. Due to this relationship, the Yu Clan had helped a lot after they went to the capital.

Yu Shande was the Grand Secretary of the East Pavilion and was in the center of power. If the court chose a capable scholar, the cabinet would definitely agree. Mingzhao had returned to the capital for so long and had also sent a letter to the Imperial Court. With Mingzhao's talent, there should be news from the cabinet.

Song Mingzhao coughed lightly. "The emperor should have suppressed it."

Old Madam Song's eyes turned red. She understood what he meant and felt terrible.

Her grandson was only 23 years old. He was not old yet, but his black hair was mixed with silver at the temples and was gray. The once noble and handsome young master of an aristocratic family had also become thin.

The immortal of Mount Wanjun had given him a medicine called the Essence Enhancing Pill. Mingzhao's health had improved a lot. In the past few years, he had not suffered from heart disease often, but his body seemed to have lost weight.

Mingzhao liked Yao Yao. It was so obvious that it was impossible for the emperor not to notice.

It was really a sin!

When Old Madam Song thought of Yu Youyao, tears rushed out of her eyes. "Since you've decided to return to the capital, put away your thoughts. After two years, I'll carefully find another marriage for you. I won't let you suffer..."

Song Mingzhao lowered his eyes. "We'll see!"

His tone was very calm, and he couldn't hide his perfunctoriness. Old Madam Song cried silently.

The room was silent for a moment.

At this moment, Madam Zhu rushed into the house with a happy expression. "Matriarch Mingzhao, someone from the palace has come. They said that the Empress wants to summon us."

The Marquis of Zhenguo's wife was from the Zhu family in Hebei. Her father had once been a general under Duke Duan and was guarding the Rehe area. He was a third-grade official. Thus, she was the daughter of a general.

When Thief Liang rebelled, the Zhu family entered the capital to seek refuge with the Marquis of Zhen. After Hebei fell, Father Zhu died in battle, and the Zhu family fled north with the Song family.

Chapter 1083: Lost Long Ago

Old Madam Song was also excited. The Empress wanted to summon them. It was obvious that she had taken into account their past relationship. It was time for the matter of Mingzhao entering the court to be settled.

Old Madam Song and Madam Zhu quickly washed up and followed the eunuchs into the palace.

Yu Youyao was only wearing her informal clothes, but she was still noble and dignified. Old Madam Song and Madam Zhu quickly knelt down and bowed, but they sighed deeply.

They had liked Yu Youyao since she was young. They felt that it was too rare for her mother to die early, and for her grandmother to be seriously ill and lingering on the bed. Her father did not dote on her, and her stepmother was scheming. In such a family, she was still bright-eyed and not timid.

However, who would have thought that the delicate and cute person in the past would have such good fortune?!

Yu Youyao quickly asked someone to help them up and give them seats.

When the two sides met, they sighed with emotion. It was inevitable that they would reminisce about their old relationship and talk about the current situation. However, because Yu Youyao's status was different, Old Madam Song and Madam Zhu inevitably sounded a little reserved when talking.

Yu Youyao had mixed feelings. She turned to ask Song Wanhui, “How’s Third Sister Song?”

At the mention of Song Wanhui, a smile appeared on Old Madam Song’s face. “Not long after our family went to Xi’an, the clan helped to matchmake and arranged a marriage for Wanhui. It’s General Huaiyong, who’s guarding the Wei River. In the past, he was a small general under the emperor. General Huaiyong’s family has some ties with our family. After we arrived in Xi’an, we came to visit. For some reason, he took a fancy to Wanhui...”

Yu Youyao knew this.

General Huaiyong was a direct descendant of Yin Huaixi and was a fourth-grade official. He was 26 years old. When the two sides agreed to marry, Yin Huaixi received the news immediately. He reported General Huaiyong’s character and the entire situation in the family to her in a letter.

General Huaiyong’s father had also been a young general under King Li of Zhou. After he died in battle, there were only orphans and widows left in the family, and he had received a lot of care from King Li of Zhou.

After Yin Huaixi ascended the throne, General Huaiyong was rewarded based on his contributions. He was conferred the title of General Zhaoyong. He was a third-grade official and was also a border official.

Yu Youyao smiled. “General Zhaoyong’s character is precious. The emperor often praises him, and it’s also a rare good marriage. The Matriarch has good taste.”

General Zhaoyong only had his mother in his family, and she also had a good personality. General Zhaoyong had a good personality and was worthy of being entrusted with for the rest of his life. Therefore, after knowing about this marriage, Yu Youyao did not get involved.

The smile on Madam Zhu’s face deepened. “Isn’t that so? I was worried earlier that the two of them had just gotten engaged and were already in a hurry to get married. I was always feeling uncertain. Who knew that after Wanhui married into the General Residence, she and her mother-in-law had the same temperament? There were no messy matters in the family. The two of them are husband and wife, and their lives are stable. I was happy to see it.”

At that time, General Huaiyong was 26 years old, six or seven years older than Wanhui. She was a little unhappy, but it was her mother-in-law who insisted on getting married. Wanhui was also a little interested in General Huaiyong, so she could only reluctantly agree.

Considering that both parties were not young, the marriage was quickly arranged. She was originally worried that Wanhui would suffer.

Unexpectedly, on the day of the wedding, General Zhaoyong left the city before dawn to hunt a pair of live geese and followed the bridal escort team to the Song family.

It was said that from the moment the two sides were engaged, General Zhaoyong had started searching for wild geese every day.

Geese were loyal birds. They would die together with their spouses. When geese flew south and north, they would fly as a pair. They were no longer alone. There was a meaning of “holding your partner’s hand and growing old with them.”

Only then did the Song family truly agree to this marriage.

Looking at the smiles on Madam Zhu and Old Madam Song's faces, she knew that Song Wanhui was living a comfortable life. Yu Youyao was sincerely happy for her.

The next day, Song Mingzhao received an edict to enter the palace to visit the new emperor.

Seeing the dignified emperor sitting on the dragon throne, Song Mingzhao suddenly recalled that from the time he went to the Yu Residence to visit, the new emperor was still "Cousin Zhou". He sat beside his "cousin" and took small tweezers to help peel the longans and pine nuts for her to eat.

Only he knew whether the heart of the lotus seed was truly bitter.

Song Mingzhao slowly lowered his head, feeling crazed and indignant. At this moment, when he saw such a new emperor and thought of the scenes in the past, he suddenly realized something.

He had lost long ago.

Song Mingzhao made up for the lack of the Left Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs that Yu Zongzheng had been thinking about. He was also appointed as the Grand Secretary of the Imperial Library. He entered the cabinet and rise through the ranks.

After Song Mingzhao returned home, the palace sent over an oral order from the new emperor.

He would return to the old residence of the Zhenguo Marquis Residence and bestow the name of the Song Residence. Old Madam Song would also be conferred with the title of "Madam of the State of Qin." As for Madam Zhu, it would depend on her son, Song Mingzhao.

Since ancient times, conferring titles of honor on the wife of a deserving official and making his sons heirs to his titles was nothing much.

After returning to the "Song Residence", Song Mingzhao was almost sick. He renovated and decorated the Jiuzhao Pavilion bit by bit according to the appearance of "Yu Youyao" after marrying into the Zhenguo Marquis Residence in his nightmare. It was as if only in this way could she truly have a place in his heart. The dream that used to make him suffer in the past had now become his only comfort in his life.

After Song Mingzhao entered the court, Emperor Zhaoyong issued a decree to confer the title of Duke Wenzhong on Yu Zongshen.

He became the second minister to receive the posthumous title of Duke Wenzhong, after Duke Zhang Wenzhong.

For a moment, there were various opinions.

Some people felt that Yu Zongshen had dedicated himself to the Great Zhou all his life and died of illness. He was worthy of Duke Yu Wenzhong's reputation.

Some people also felt that when Duke Yu Wenzhong was still alive, he had abandoned the capital to protect the north to help the new emperor pacify the North. It was only right for the new emperor to bestow a posthumous title.

There were also a few people who were jealous that the Yu Clan was placed in an important position by the new emperor.

They felt that Yu Zongshen was deceiving the world. After the new emperor ascended the throne, he had employed a large number of members of the Yu Clan. It was obvious that he was blinded by lust and doted on his relatives.

Then, he cleared the names of some ministers of the previous dynasty, including the Duke of Ning, the heir of the Duke of Ning, Elder Lu, and so on.

He had regained the title of Duke Ning and was conferred the title of Marquis of Zhongyong.

Having two titles was also very rare in the past dynasties.

In addition, Empress Ning was also conferred the title of “Madam of the Rong Nation.” Even Princess Liyang was given the title of “Princess Qiuli.”

The Great Zhou Dynasty had long been destroyed, and the previous titles of Empress Ning and Princess Liyang were only in name. They were no longer as honorable as before.

He had given her enough dignity.

If the Ning Clan could be more diligent, they would also be placed in an important position after entering the court. The revival of the Ning Clan would be imminent.

Yin Huaixi said calmly, “Did the Madam of the Rong Nation say when she would leave the palace?”

Eunuch Zhu hurriedly said, “Previously, the Madam of the Rong Nation requested to see the emperor and was sent away by me. There hasn’t been any news from the Yi Kun Palace these past few days. I think she hasn’t seen the emperor and will be delayed for a while.”

His words were very tactful, and his meaning was complicated. He was just short of saying that the Madam of the Rong Nation was greedy and unwilling to leave the palace just like that. She refused to leave until she saw the emperor.

He also felt that Empress Ning was insensible.

Chapter 1084: Demoting a Wife to a Concubine

The emperor’s words carried weight. Since the decree had been issued, how could there be any reason to change it? This was on the account that she had some relationship with the emperor. She even wanted to control the emperor.

Previously, Princess Liyang had privately looked for the Eldest Princess, which had already angered the emperor. He had also lost his patience with Empress Ning. Did she still want to see the emperor? The country had just been settled, and the emperor was busy with political matters every day. He felt that it was not enough to spend the rest of his time by the Empress’s side, so how could he have time to see her?

No matter how smart a person was, once they were in the face of power, their brains would not be clear.

The corners of Yin Huaixi’s mouth twitched. “Make a trip personally. I’ll give them three days to move out of the palace and into the palace courtyard I’ve given them. How can an empress of the previous dynasty live in the Central Palace?”

Although he and Yao Yao did not live in the Yi Kun Palace and planned to eat and live together in the Chengqian Palace like ordinary husband and wife, the Yi Kun Palace was a place in the Central Palace. Regardless of whether they lived there or not, it represented Yao Yao's honor. How could she let others occupy it?

It had been three days since the emperor's imperial decree was issued.

Madam Ning, the Madam of the Rong Nation, lived safely in Yi Kun Palace. She looked after the flowers and grass every day and was free.

However, Princess Qiuli, who lived with Yi Kun Palace, was not in such a good mood.

She had been raised in the palace as a legitimate princess since she was young. Previously, when her aunt wanted to arrange for her to become Emperor Zhaoyong's concubine, she was also unhappy.

The Ning Residence had suffered annihilation because of Emperor Zhao Yong and his father.

Her aunt also did her best to support Emperor Zhaoyong to the throne.

Emperor Zhaoyong had to remember the efforts of the Ning Residence and his aunt and confer her the title of Empress.

However, her mother advised her, "The marriage between King Yue Fei and Eldest Princess Shaoyi was bestowed by the previous Empress Dowager. The three books and six etiquettes are more than thorough. Marriage is not a child's play. At this point, there's no reason to cancel the marriage!"

She was indignant. "Doesn't King Yue Fei want to change the dynasty? At that time, there's no need to respect the decree of the Empress Dowager of the previous dynasty. If they can't call off the marriage, can't he demote his wife to a concubine? Anyway, they haven't even arranged a marriage. It's still flattering him to say that he's demoting his wife. It's not like there hasn't been such a situation in history. Mother, you've helped the emperor ascend to the throne and worked hard..."

"Shut up." Empress Ning's expression was solemn as she stopped her. "The previous Empress Dowager was famous for her virtue. King Li of Zhou and his son have always been indebted to her. No matter what, King Yue Fei has to be grateful for her kindness. He can't disobey. There's no room to change the marriage."

"In short, I don't want to be a concubine." Princess Liyang was still very indignant. She pursed her lips and looked unhappy. "The imperial concubine is also a concubine. When she sees the empress, she still has to bow. Who is Yu Youyao? Is she worthy of worshiping me? She's just the daughter of an external minister. Do you want me to be under her feet for the rest of my life? When have I ever suffered such grievances in the past?"

Empress Ning sighed slightly. "I don't want to wrong you either, but when King Yue Fei formed a relationship with the Eldest Princess, the two of them were childhood sweethearts, and they shared joys and sorrows. Their relationship was very deep. The Eldest Princess's reputation for being

virtuous was widely spread throughout the world, and the subsequent position was given to her by everyone. The Yu Clan is loyal and resilient, and they're also extremely famous among the people under the heavens. The emperor's contribution to pacifying the Northern Barbarians and the Eldest Princess Shaoyi's external family is also indispensable. No matter how you look at it, Yu Youyao is the best choice for the Empress."

What did the Ning Residence have?

They were just living under the new emperor's nose. Otherwise, she wouldn't have schemed so painstakingly.

In the end, it was still Yu Youyao's fault.

If it weren't for Yu Youyao's reputation as a virtuous person and the Xie family's wealth that could rival a country to stabilize the situation in the North, how could King Yue Fei have easily calmed the North?

If it had been any later, she would have been able to plan to help the Fourth Prince ascend the throne and marry Liyang to a general with a large army. With military power in her hands, she would have been able to firmly hold the new emperor in her palm and enjoy the status of Empress Dowager forever.

In the end, the situation was better than the person.

No matter how much she thought, under Yin Huaixi's ambition, she could only abandon her pawn to protect the carriage.

Although she was dissatisfied, Princess Liyang still accepted this arrangement and obediently went to Xiangping City under Empress Ning's arrangements.

It wasn't until the capital had just been settled that Princess Liyang would return to the capital and move into the Yi Kun Palace. She had originally planned to take advantage of the fact that Eldest Princess Shaoyi hadn't returned to the capital to visit a nearby pavilion.

When Eldest Princess Shaoyi returned to the capital, everything was already set in stone, and it was no longer up to her.

Princess Liyang was scheming. She had also thought of all kinds of opportunities to create a chance to "meet" Emperor Zhaoyong.

However, she did not expect that she would not even have the chance to approach Emperor Zhaoyong.

Her mother had also used excuses to ask to see Emperor Zhaoyong time and time again, wanting to create an opportunity for her and Emperor Zhaoyong. She had always been rejected by Eunuch Zhu because the emperor was busy with state affairs.

With this, Yu Youyao was dragged into the capital. Emperor Zhaoyong simply did not return to the palace. He moved into the Eldest Princess's residence without any scruples and even "moved" the Hall of Diligent Governance into the Eldest Princess's residence.

Even after Yu Youyao was registered, Princess Liyang had not seen Emperor Zhaoyong.

Once, when she was really indignant, she went to the Chenggan Palace to ask to see Yu Youyao. She wanted to meet Emperor Yongzhao openly in the name of knowing Yu Youyao.

However, she was blocked outside by the guards of the Chenggan Palace. "The emperor has ordered that no one in the Yi Kun Palace is allowed to approach the Chenggan Palace. Those who disobey will be executed immediately."

She was so frightened that she collapsed to the ground on the spot. She asked the palace servants beside her to support her and escape.

The next day, they received an imperial edict from Emperor Zhaoyong.

Her mother had been conferred the title of Madam of the Rong Nation and was given another residence outside the palace.

She conferred the title of Princess Qiuli.

She would also address her "mother" as her aunt.

"Aunt, what should we do now?" Princess Qiuli did not want to leave the palace. She had lived in the palace since she was young and was already used to being high up in the air. "I can't even see the emperor..."

The Madam of the Rong Nation accidentally cut off the bud of a spring tea. "Are you anxious now? You've finally made me rest easy."

Princess Qiuli lowered her head.

"Back then, I sent you to Xiangping City because I hoped that you could befriend the Eldest Princess. No matter what, there's still a path in the future. Who knew that you would be so anxious? The Eldest Princess is from a noble family, and her personality is the most unyielding. How can she be controlled by a mere 'Princess' like you? Why don't you think about it? How can your schemes compare to the Eldest Princess, who has been living under her stepmother since she was young? Her intelligence and shrewdness are comparable to Emperor Zhaoyong's."

Yin Huaixi was proud and arrogant. Not everyone caught his eye.

She had not lost to Yin Huaixi.

Instead, she lost to Yu Youyao.

If it weren't for Yu Youyao promoting the planting of sweet potatoes and encouraging the raising of silkworms in the North, allowing the North to alleviate the lack of supplies, King Yue Fei wouldn't have been able to escape the restraint of the nobles so easily. If it weren't for Yu Youyao promoting green fertilizer and animal husbandry techniques in the North, Yin Huaixi wouldn't have had the confidence to launch an army all the way to the desert.

Without the support of the Xie family's wealth, the drought and snow disaster in the North would not have passed safely, causing the cohesion of the North to reach its peak.

Then, the population in the North increased, revealing an unprecedented prosperity.

All of this created a powerful opportunity for Yin Huaixi to pacify the Northern Barbarians.

Chapter 1085: Kick You to the Curb when You've Outlived Your Usefulness

Princess Qiuli bit her lip. Although she was indignant, she still said, "Aunt, I'm sorry. I ruined your plan."

With the relationship between the Ning Public House and the emperor, after she befriended the new Empress, regardless of whether the matter of the imperial concubine could be successfully planned, it would ultimately be beneficial.

At that time, the new Empress would treat them more politely, regardless of whether they were in or out of the palace.

Now that they had offended the new Empress and caused trouble, even the emperor did not like them.

The emperor had given them dignity, but she had caused trouble.

The Madam of the Rong Nation put down her small golden scissors and washed her hands. "You can't be entirely blamed for this matter. It's still because of the conflict between me and the previous Empress Dowager. I never expected that the previous Empress Dowager would be a step ahead and not forget to attack me before she left. She had long been wary of me. She used her identity as the Empress Dowager to make a big fuss about the marriage between the Eldest Princess and King Yue Fei and roped in the Eldest Princess and King Yue Fei. She had long cut off my way out. If it weren't for the fact that I was cautious and deliberately instigated the officials to suggest choosing a good wife for King Yue Fei to test him, causing this betrothal to be exposed, I'm afraid we would have become rebels."

She had originally planned to pair Liyang with King Yue Fei.

Then, she would betroth Princess Shaoyi to the Fourth Prince.

When the time was right, she would help the Fourth Prince ascend the throne.

She would enjoy the title of Empress Dowager.

Unexpectedly, all of this scheme was ruined in the hands of the previous Empress Dowager.

Princess Qiuli's face turned slightly pale. "Aunt, the imperial edict has already been issued. The emperor has even given you another residence. Clearly, he doesn't want us to stay in the palace forever. Do we really have to move out of the palace..."

Of course, the Madam of the Rong Nation understood that it was also inappropriate for her to stay in the Yi Kun Palace all the time. She said, "The emperor has regained your Father's title and even posthumously titled his elder brother the Marquis of Zhongyong. Even I, the Empress of the previous dynasty, have been conferred the title of Madam of the Rong Nation. He has even given you the title of princess. It can be said that he has done his best for the Ning family."

Princess Qiuli's lips moved. "But I don't want to leave the palace."

Even if she was an imperial concubine, she was second only to one person and above ten thousand people.

“Silly child, you can’t just look at the surface.” The Madam of the Rong Nation chuckled gently. She seemed charitable. “What’s the use of superficial glory?”

Princess Qiuli looked confused. Didn’t her mother say that the emperor had done his best for the Ning family? Why did she say that this was just on the surface?

The Madam of the Rong Nation sighed softly. “If the emperor really treats our Ning Clan well, why didn’t he choose a capable person from the Ning Clan to inherit the title of Duke Ning of my father? The title of Duke Ning is hereditary. Now that the emperor has recovered the title and my father is no longer around, it’s only logical to choose someone to inherit the title.”

However, the emperor did not do that. He did not want Madam Ning to regain power.

“Even if he doesn’t want me to live in the palace, he can return the old residence of the Ning Residence and let me return to the Ning Residence to live. Why did he have to give me another palace courtyard in the mountains in the suburbs of the capital, far away from the mountains of the capital and the royal court?”

Princess Qiuli was dumbfounded.

The Madam of the Rong Nation cursed her for being insensible in her heart before continuing, “He just thinks that I’m too scheming. After the previous Empress Dowager passed away, I’m very close to the previous dynasty. The emperor is worried that I’ll interact with the court officials in the capital and interfere in politics.”

Princess Qiuli’s expression did not look too good. “Aunt helped the emperor ascend the throne. How can he kick you to the curb when you’ve outlived your usefulness?”

The Madam of the Rong Nation shook her head. “Let’s talk about you again. Yin Huaixi has changed the dynasty, and your title as a princess only exists in name. Since the emperor wants to give you a good title, why didn’t he choose another title? Why did he give you a title with the character “Li”, which is in your name? He’s just reminding you to remember your identity and not cross the line and get in the way of that person from the Chenggan Palace.”

Princess Qiuli’s face turned pale. The difference between being a legitimate princess and a princess had already made her feel terrible. Now that she knew that there was another meaning behind her title, she felt even worse.

The Madam of the Rong Nation sighed. “I originally hoped that you would catch the emperor’s eye and be conferred the title of an imperial concubine. The Ning family can also use your power to regain power. At the very least, we can befriend the new empress and let her matchmake you with the talents of the Yu family. Our Ning family can also use the Yu family to rise again.”

Princess Qiuli’s eyes immediately widened in disbelief.

Her aunt had never said anything about this before.

The Madam of the Rong Nation said, "I took a fancy to Yu Shande a long time ago. He's from the line of the Yu Clan's Clan Chief. Not only is he glorious in the clan, but he's already very valued in the previous dynasty. Later, he took on a position in the Hanlin Academy and followed Zhang Wenzhong's magnificent feat of disaster relief in public relations. He's gained a reputation for himself. After the new emperor ascended the throne, he was personally appointed as the Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Works and became the Grand Secretary of the East Pavilion. In the future, he'll definitely be a high-ranking official and become the second-in-command of the dynasty. If you rely on the Yu Clan, you will have the support of the Empress and the Clan Chief. There's no better future than this."

In the past, the Grand Secretary had always come from the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs or the Ministry of Revenue. The members of the Yu Clan were hardworking and exempted, so they could do more practical work in the Ministry of Works. The emperor cherished talent. This arrangement was to let Yu Shande, who had long been aware of the people's situation and was extremely famous among the commoners, make a big move in the Ministry of Works. With Yu Shande's reputation in the world, in the future, all the fortifications in the Ministry of Works would go smoothly.

The Grand Secretary was temporarily given to Elder Yu, but he was over 60 years old. He probably had to start nurturing the next Grand Secretary for the Imperial Court so that he could retire.

Other than Yu Shande, there were currently no very outstanding talents in the Yu Clan. The eldest son of the Yu Residence's Second Mansion, Yu Shanyan, was a little talented. However, he was only a high scholar and his future was not obvious for the time being.

From the looks of it, it was impossible for the Grand Secretary to be from the Yu Clan.

She thought more highly of Song Mingzhao. When Yu Zongshen was around in the previous dynasty, he had the intention to nurture Song Mingzhao. Song Mingzhao was indeed talented.

The Song Clan and the Yu Clan had been on good terms for generations. In the future, Song Mingzhao would not be able to surpass Yu Shande in the court. The two sides complemented each other, but they also kept each other in check.

The prosperity of the Yu Clan was still far behind.

Unfortunately, this scheme was ruined in the hands of this fool.

Princess Qiuli felt dizzy and immediately thought of the young man she had met by chance in the palace earlier.

He was not as handsome and noble as Song Mingzhao, nor was he as graceful and noble as the emperor. However, his eyes were wide and light, as if they were hiding a world. He was only wearing a grayish-white robe and stood there with his hands behind his back. He actually had the aura of an exiled immortal.

She had only seen this aura from Mr. Hu Shan and Mr. Xian Yun in the past.

She stood still and looked at it for a long time. She couldn't help but ask the palace servant, "Who is this person?"

The palace servant replied, "It's Little Lord Yu, the brother of Eldest Princess Shaoyi. The emperor has ordered Little Lord Yu to return to the court. Little Lord Yu entered the palace to visit the emperor today."

She thought for a long time before she thought of a person like Yu Shande.

Why did she have an impression of Yu Shande?

It was because Yu Shande was once a close vassal of the previous dynasty's master. Everyone had to pay attention to him.

Even as a legitimate princess in the past, he was extremely dignified.

She suddenly felt bitter and regretful.

Chapter 1086: Regardless of Success or Failure

The Madam of the Rong Nation shook her head. "I heard that the Yu Clan has the intention to marry him into the Qi Residence and has taken a fancy to Lord Qi's daughter, Third Miss Qi. I heard that she used to befriend the new empress with a handkerchief. This marriage must have something to do with the new empress. I don't think there's any room for negotiation."

Her tone was filled with regret.

Princess Qiuli slowly lowered her head.

Madam Rong sighed softly. "Recently, the country has been busy. After a while, when the emperor isn't busy, I'll think of a way to meet him and test his intentions. If it doesn't work, I'll ask the emperor to give you a good marriage."

Whether the Ning Residence could rise or not depended on Qiuli.

If it weren't for the fact that she was worried that Qiuli would be too arrogant and ruin her plan, there was no need to tell her this so that she could recognize the reality and be obediently used by her.

Princess Qiuli was filled with bitterness and did not know where to start. "Qiuli will follow Aunt's arrangements."

The emperor seemed to dote on the Ning family, but the two of them were walking on thin ice in the capital. The emperor was wary of her aunt and wanted to send her to the old forest in the suburbs. He did not want the Ning Residence to take over.

In the end, her aunt did not want to harm her. She had already ruined her aunt's plan by doing things on her own.

She couldn't ruin her aunt's plans anymore.

Otherwise, their situation would be even more difficult.

As soon as the aunt and niece finished speaking, an eunuch came in to report, "Madam, Eunuch Zhu is here."

The Madam of the Rong Nation quickly brought Qiu Li out to welcome him. "Eunuch Zhu specially came over. Does the emperor have any instructions?"

“The Madam of the Rong Nation’s prediction is really godlike.” Eunuch Zhu smiled and flattered her, looking very polite, but his words were not polite at all. “The emperor ordered me to come to the Yi Kun Palace to pass on a message. The Yi Kun Palace is an important place in the Central Palace and is the residence of the previous empresses. The emperor has given the Madam of the Rong Nation a residence and limited her to move out of the palace within three days to prevent chaos in the harem.”

Even though the Madam of the Rong Nation was no longer recuperating, her expression couldn’t help but change. “Eunuch Zhu, please report that I have something to ask of the emperor...”

Not only did the emperor want to kick her to the curb once she had outlived her usefulness, but he also clearly wanted to chase her out of the palace.

Eunuch Zhu frowned. His voice was sharp and ear-piercing. “The Madam of the Rong Nation, you’re really making things difficult for me. The emperor is busy with thousands of matters every day and is really busy with the country’s matters. If the Madam of the Rong Nation has anything, why don’t you tell me and let me pass it on?”

The Madam of the Rong Nation could no longer maintain her expression. “Is the emperor really unwilling to see me?”

Seeing that she had changed the topic, Eunuch Zhu simply made things clear. “As the empress of the previous dynasty, how can you keep saying that you want to see the emperor? Does the emperor have to see you? Where did his aura come from? The emperor cares about being old friends with the Ning Residence and is already taking special care of you. You can put away those thoughts. Otherwise, the last bit of the emperor’s dignity will be ruined.”

The emperor did not owe the Ning Residence anything.

All these years, he had been ordered to take care of the Madam of the Rong Nation in the palace, both openly and secretly. Otherwise, how could the Madam of the Rong Nation have such a luxurious life today?!

The Madam of the Rong Nation felt suffocated. “I— I overstepped my boundaries.” At this point, she still refused to give up. “I still have an old item from Gaozu in my hand. I want to hand it to the emperor personally. Eunuch, please convey it for me.”

After Emperor Zhaoyong ascended the throne, he called King Li of Zhou “the Great Emperor”. His posthumous name was “Emperor Gaowu”, and the name of his temple was “Gaozu”. Historically, he was called “Zhao Gaozu.”

The so-called “old item of Gaozu” was actually the edict that had been secretly handed over to the Ning Residence for safekeeping when the emperor established the previous dynasty.

She insisted on seeing the emperor, but she didn’t want to scheme to make Qiuli the imperial concubine. Instead, she planned to ask the emperor to give Qiuli a good marriage. She had already chosen a candidate.

If Yu Shande failed and retreated, Song Mingzhao would also succeed.

She had secretly asked around. When Old Madam Yu and Old Madam Song were still alive, the two families were close and even planned to improve their relationship.

The Eldest Princess also had some entanglements with Song Mingzhao. She had once saved his life. However, the fate between the two of them was still a little shallow.

Song Mingzhao was infatuated. In the end, he had made a mistake.

The Madam of the Rong Nation couldn't help but sigh. "Fate really makes fools of us!"

Since Song Mingzhao's thoughts were so simple, the emperor must know about it. With such a person constantly thinking about his wife, the emperor must also have a fishbone in his throat.

The Ning Residence was the same as the Zhen Residence. They were both descendants of loyal ministers and good generals. Their family backgrounds were similar, so they would not disgrace Song Mingzhao. The Song family had no reason to refuse. This marriage was far more logical than a marriage with Yu Shande.

The emperor might be tempted.

As for whether Qiuli was willing to live a happy life in the future, it was not within her consideration. She had chosen Song Mingzhao to borrow his power in the future.

She thought that the words "old item of Gaozu" were enough to move the emperor.

However, Eunuch Zhu's eyebrows did not even twitch. "You should listen to my advice to pack up and leave the palace as soon as possible. There have been dynasties over the years, and how many of the concubines have a good ending? Almost all the concubines with ranks in the palace have to die for the country. The Empress of the previous dynasty was the first to bear the brunt. Even if she couldn't bear to part with her lowly life, she had to be lowly to the end. She had to be a slave and a maidservant. She has to be that b*tch and escape from the palace. A woman can't establish a household. She will either become a beggar or a prostitute. Even if she meets a benevolent monarch, she will definitely be exiled to the border city to suffer..."

Princess Qiuli's face was already ashen.

The Madam of the Rong Nation subconsciously bent down a little. Previously, she had the intention of establishing the Fourth Prince, so she planned to use this imperial edict to make a big fuss.

An imperial edict could not be faked.

But what if it was really an imperial edict?

There were many things that could be done. The Fourth Prince was also legitimate and the world was loyal.

Eunuch Zhu said, "The emperor cares about old ties and values friendship. He keeps his promises. This is a blessing that others can't ask for. With this relationship, it's more useful than any power or wealth. In the future, when the Ning Clan enters the royal court, they will definitely be valued by the emperor. Those who are truly talented and virtuous will have a good future."

Didn't the Madam of the Rong Nation scheme so much just to let the Ning family take over again?

However, how could she hand over her authority to someone for no reason?

Even if she wanted power, she had to have the ability first.

The Madam of the Rong Nation did not look too good after failing to achieve her goal. She was still indignant, but after hearing Eunuch Zhu's words, she felt a little better.

After all, Eunuch Zhu represented the emperor.

Eunuch Zhu's words made it clear that if there was a talented person in the Ning family, the emperor would definitely give him a chance to stand up for himself.

Although it was very different from what she had thought, the next best thing was a promise.

The Madam of the Rong Nation's face was ashen. She ordered someone to get a box from the inner room. Holding the box, she laughed bitterly.

One's successes and failures were both due to the same person!

Back then, the Ning Residence had relied on the things in the box to gain an important position as the emperor of the previous dynasty. The Ning Residence had regained its ancestral business and gone from dire straits to prosperity.

Chapter 1087: Imperial Farming Ceremony

However, it was also because of the things in the box that the Ning Residence went from prosperity to destruction.

Now, because of the things in the box, she had also gained some dignity from the emperor, giving the Ning family hope for recovery.

The rise and fall of life really did not depend on people at all.

The Madam of the Rong Nation held the box and slowly knelt on the ground. She raised the box high and shouted, "Long live our emperor."

Princess Qiuli was shocked and quickly knelt on the ground.

Eunuch Zhu couldn't help but heave a sigh of relief. He solemnly took the box and handed it to the servant at the side. He quickly took a step forward and was about to help her up.

"The Madam of the Rong Nation, please get up. I'll definitely report your intentions to the emperor."

The emperor had long known that the Madam of the Rong Nation was holding this edict. Although it was not an important thing and the emperor did not care much, such an imperial edict which they did not know the content or details of was in the hands of someone who had schemed too much. There were too many things that could be used. It was not appropriate, so he had always tolerated the Madam of the Rong Nation.

Everyone in this world was smart. When they didn't know the limit, they couldn't help but push their luck. They probed step by step and jumped repeatedly.

Once they knew the bottom line, they would know when to advance and when to retreat.

They would know what to choose.

After Eunuch Zhu finished his job, he quickly brought the edict back to the Hall of Diligent Governance to report.

Without even looking at it, Yin Huaixi ordered Eunuch Zhu to burn the edict to ashes on the spot.

On the first day of February, news of Yu Shuangbai's "death" came from the clan. Yu Shuangbai was a young lady who had yet to get married and her identity was sensitive, so this matter was not made public.

Two days later, her Grandmother mentioned in her letter that Yu Shuangbai had already boarded a merchant ship and gone out to sea with it.

The huge burden in her heart was finally relieved. Yu Youyao held the handwritten letter from Yu Shuangbai, which she had handed to her grandmother to pass to Yu Youyao. She was both happy and sad.

She did not know when they would meet again after this farewell.

On 2nd February in the second year of the Great Zhao Dynasty, Emperor Zhao Yong officially issued an edict to the entire country. He said, "Farming is the foundation of the world. On 20th February, the Imperial Farming Ceremony will be held. I will personally lead the plowing and bow to persuade the commoners. Under the rule of the Great Zhao, anyone with meritorious achievements will farm 10 acres of land for 15 days. During the plowing, they will live with the commoners and feed on coarse food. The Imperial Court has personally sent people to patrol the fields. Anyone who is negligent will be treated as deceiving the emperor..."

The Imperial Farming Ceremony originated from Fuxi. Fuxi emphasized on agriculture and plowing the fields. Every year, on 2nd February, he would personally farm. Thus, 2nd February was also known as the day of the "Dragon Raising Its Head." When King Wu of Zhou took over, he would hold a grand ceremony every year on 2nd February and call for all the civil and military officials to farm personally.

Later generations of emperors fought to follow suit.

However, it was still the Han Dynasty that caused the Imperial Farming Ceremony to leave a strong impression in history.

After Emperor Wen of Han took over, from the king to the officials under him, they would participate in the Imperial Farming Ceremony every year. Not only did the emperor personally farm, but he would also go to the farming platform to watch and patrol.

If the emperor valued it, the officials below would not be negligent.

This was the first "Imperial Farming Ceremony" after the new emperor ascended the throne. He had to pay enough attention to it to be able to rule the world. Anyone who was smarter would not lie about it.

In the past, the emperors who established a dynasty had always fought on the battlefield to rise to power. No one was soft-hearted. These emperors even had a reputation for bloodthirst and ruthlessness.

The Imperial Court began to prepare for the Imperial Farming Ceremony.

On the day of the Imperial Farming Ceremony, Emperor Zhaoyong, who was wearing auspicious clothes, brought Empress Zhaoyi along. Under the guidance of the legal driver, he accompanied the civil and military officials to the farming altar to pay respects to the God of Agriculture. Then, he changed into his farming clothes and went to the farming field in the suburbs of the capital to perform the “bowing and plowing ceremony.” The officials of the capital followed him.

There was a sea of people around the field, and the commoners came to admire the emperor.

Lord Qi tilted his head to look at Elder Yu, who was beside him. “I heard that when the emperor was in the North, in order to alleviate the lack of supplies, he promoted the tuntian system in the North, where soldiers were sent to farm in the wastelands. During the busy season, the border army will be guarding the city 30% of the time and planting 70% of the time. Each soldier will be given a portion of the wasteland. The Yue Fei’s Residence will provide oxen, farming tools, and seeds, and collect food accordingly. It’s said that the army in the North has about 50,000 to 60,000 acres of farmland.”

The wasteland was barren and the land was not fertile, so the harvest was not good.

Even if one spent 120% of their effort, they could only collect 20% of the food. The difficulty was unimaginable.

However, it was also a way out.

“In addition to a large number of farming troops, after Eldest Princess Shaoyi went to Liaodong, she also implemented the commercial system in the North. She encouraged merchants to recruit people to settle in the border areas. These people would reclaim wasteland and pay in food to replenish military rations. Based on how much food the merchants paid, she also gave them a reduction and exemption from taxes. It was also this method that led to the agricultural development of the entire North.”

The tuntian system was divided into the military, commercial, and civilian systems. It originated from Cao Wei. Due to Cao Cao’s control of the emperor to command the nobles, Cao Wei was known as a treacherous court official who was shameless. Thus, few people admired the tuntian system.

The evaluation of the tuntian system in the history books was also derogatory. It was Cao Yi’s selfish method of making Cao Wei rule with a high degree of centralization in order to monopolize military power.

It was not bad to have a derogatory tone, but it was the truth.

However, there were indeed many advantages to the tuntian system. At the most difficult time for the You army, it became their only hope.

Elder Yu nodded. “Not only did our emperor implement the military farming system, but he also farmed the land with the soldiers every year. He’s good at plowing.”

Therefore, as soon as the edict for the Imperial Farming Ceremony was issued, all the officials and students in the country who needed to participate in the ceremony panicked. They quickly ran to the fields to learn farming before the Imperial Farming Ceremony began.

The action of the Imperial Farming Ceremony was too big. Not only did the emperor personally lead a hundred officials, but all the officials and students in the country also had to farm on the specified day. It was very difficult for Lord Qi not to think too much.

“Do you think the emperor is going to implement...” Was he going to implement the military farming system?

After Thief Liang and the King of Dongning were imprisoned, the soldiers under them had all surrendered to the Imperial Court. The military expenses of a million soldiers were not a small expenditure. The focus of the tuntian system was on the army. The emperor raised the army with agriculture and made the army self-sufficient. The government opened convenient doors in the army. Fields, seeds, farm tools, farming oxen, and so on were all provided by the Imperial Court. They were no longer restricted by the Imperial Court.

This was regardless of whether it was in terms of court politics or military power.

These ministers had become true “working ministers” for the emperor. The power in their hands was all given to them by the emperor. Once the emperor was unhappy, it could be easily taken back.

Elder Yu was silent for a moment. “Most likely.”

The Empress had established a Chamber of Commerce in Hebei. How similar was the way the Chamber of Commerce operated to the current situation of the Imperial Court?

With the emperor’s military and political power in hand, all the work was done by the ministers.

If they did a good job, it was only right.

If they didn’t do a good job, it would be malfeasance.

The two of them looked at each other and silently turned away.

The old farmer arranged by the Ministry of Rites quickly pulled a strong yellow ox into the ground and set up a wooden plow.

Supporting the plow required strength. The ox walked forward and dragged the wooden plow. Yin Huaixi needed to push the wooden plow and roll over the solid soil. It was a very difficult job.

Chapter 1088: Mulberry Ceremony

The surrounding commoners were all used to farming, so they couldn’t help but discuss this matter.

“The emperor is really good at plowing. He’s really not inferior to us old farmers who are used to farming.”

“Isn’t that so? It’s obvious at a glance that he has a style.”

“I heard that when the emperor was guarding the North, he often explored and planted food with the soldiers because of the difficulties in the army.”

The emperor was good at plowing, but some of the court officials panicked. Under the gazes of the commoners, they went down to farm.

“They have no skill. They can’t even hold the plow tightly.”

“Such good land is being ruined. It’s as if they’re doing the dog paddle. The land is not as dense as the land farmed by the emperor.”

“What a mess. If the land is thin, it’ll be poor. It won’t retain fat or water. Even if the seeds are inserted, they won’t live. Even if they can barely live, they definitely won’t grow well. There won’t be any harvest...”

“...”

The censor of the Imperial Court took a booklet and personally asked the nearby commoners for guidance. He also recorded the officials’ performance in the fields.

It was as if a demon mirror was pointed at all of them. Thus, they were unable to hide on the spot.

The officials were not farming as well as the emperor. It was enough to leave a strong and colorful mark in the history books.

Yu Youyao was also wearing rough hemp clothes. She wrapped her hair in a headscarf and carried a basket. She followed behind Yin Huaixi and cleared the weeds in the plowed ground.

Weeds had tenacious vitality and couldn’t fertilize. If they stayed in the fields, they would compete for the nutrition of the crops.

Since the empress had personally gone to work, these well-dressed married women could no longer sit still and quickly followed her to the ground.

“You don’t even know how to shake the soil on the roots when picking weeds. If you do it like this, won’t the soil in the soil become thinner?”

“What are you stepping on? The freshly turned ground is flat.”

“Such a big weed is by your hand. All of you, open your eyes. It’s obvious that there’s nothing in your eyes...”

“Don’t ruin it...”

The commoners around them were filled with righteous indignation, wishing they could rush into the field and teach them what to do.

There was a strange comical feeling to the scene.

In late February, the temperature rose with the sun. Before five o’clock, there was news from the field that someone had fainted from the sun. The accompanying imperial physicians quickly carried them away.

When the commoners saw this, they couldn’t help but complain, “Pfft, the emperor plowed for a long time without even panting. Are all of them more precious than the emperor?”

Yin Huaixi simply worked until noon.

The court officials could only grit their teeth and follow suit. Even if the emperor finished plowing, they couldn't leave immediately. They had to plow for another half an hour before they could leave.

At noon, the emperor gathered all the officials and had a simple meal together. The coarse cake was mixed with tall beams and wheat bran. There was no oil on the plate of vegetables.

The ministers had never suffered like this before. All of them had worked all morning and were tired and hot. They already had no appetite to begin with, so how could they eat something that was difficult to swallow?

However, not only did the Empress's expression not change as she ate, but she also remembered bitterness and sweetness. "Sixty percent of the food in the army is made of mixed grains, while the remaining 40% is made of bran. When they're roasted in the furnace, they're hard and piercing to the throat. What we're eating only has two portions of bran. There's also enough oil. It tastes good."

Did that mean that they were complaining that they had eaten too well?

The ministers quickly stuffed the cake into their mouths, not daring to show how bad it tasted.

Yu Youyao chuckled. "Although the coarse grain doesn't taste good, it's good for digestion and the stomach. It's most suitable for scraping the intestinal oil after eating fish and meat."

As soon as she finished speaking, Yin Huaixi's gaze swept across the ministers below.

The ministers were shocked. They lowered their heads and ate the coarse grain cake crazily. The fatter ones were still holding their breaths and quickly retracted their fat stomachs so that they wouldn't look as big as before. Although this wasn't useful, it was their strong desire to live.

Yin Huaixi chuckled playfully. "Ever since I ascended the throne, I've been eating a bowl of coarse grain porridge every day. All the ministers are trusted ministers of the court. Usually, when you're busy with the country, you have to pay more attention to your health. How can you always eat fish and meat? Why don't we do this? From now on, in the morning court every day, why don't you eat coarse grain with me to nourish your health?"

He had always had the habit of eating coarse grain porridge in the morning. Yu Youyao said that it could accelerate the digestion in the intestines and increase the power of the stomach, making the intestines smoother. This prevented him from accumulating fat and filled his stomach with nutrition.

How could the ministers dare to say no?!

After the emperor ascended the throne, many palace servants were sent away one after another. When the ministers saw this situation, their hearts tightened. They quickly sent away the concubines in the family and strictly bought concubines according to their ranks. They did not dare to overstep their boundaries, let alone dote on their concubines and neglect their wives.

They did not dare to be negligent when the emperor reduced the expenses of the harem. They quickly reduced the expenses of the family.

The emperor had to let them experience the hardships of the people so that they could wholeheartedly serve the people and abandon the luxurious and enjoyable style of the previous dynasty. Since the emperor was an example, they could only follow his instructions.

Not only did they have to eat rough food with the emperor in the morning court, but their family also had to eat with them.

For 15 consecutive days, Emperor Zhaoyong plowed the land every day and ate simple tea and rice.

The hundred officials were indescribably miserable. Not only did they have to work with the emperor, but they also had to do more than the emperor.

If the emperor plowed five acres of land in a day, they had to plow more than six acres that day. It didn't matter if they couldn't finish. They would hold lamps at night and rush to finish plowing at night. They couldn't let the emperor plow much more than them.

Therefore, after the initial chaos, the ministers all took the Imperial Farming Ceremony seriously. Those who did not farm well quickly looked for the old farmers for guidance.

The rest were quite similar.

Yin Huaixi's heart ached for Yu Youyao. He asked her to get off the ground for an hour every day and did not let her farm again. Yin Huaixi took over her job.

Hence, Yu Youyao gathered the mingfu and taught them how to raise silkworms, reel silk, weave cloth, print flowers, dye cloth, and so on. Even the farmers in the nearby farms came over to listen to the class.

How could the mingfu dare to be negligent? Not only did they have to learn from the Empress during the day, but they also had to find someone proficient to learn from at home.

Fifteen days later, the Empress returned to the palace.

Ten thousand people sent her off from afar.

According to the records of the Great Zhou's history, "On 2nd February of the second year of the Great Zhou Dynasty, Emperor Zhaoyong carried out the Imperial Farming Ceremony and personally plowed. Empress Zhaoyi followed him and carried out the Mulberry Ceremony to personally teach the people how to weave silk. The emperor and empress made a memorial and persuaded the farmers to learn. All the people fought to watch and learn. The people were happy and shared a close relationship with the rulers. From then on, the world was loyal."

The second day after returning to the palace, Emperor Zhaoyong exempted the world from taxes for two years.

The tuntian system was issued.

Everyone was happy.

At the same time, the emperor had indeed dismissed a group of officials who had not performed well during the Imperial Farming Ceremony.

There were also some mingfu who did not perform well during the "Mulberry Ceremony", which also implicated the men in the family and caused them to be demoted.

The emperor said, "Only by cultivating yourself and managing your family can you run a country and bring peace to the world. It's difficult to take on a big responsibility if one can't even cultivate their family."

At the same time, a group of officials who performed well were promoted.

Then, an edict was issued to reopen the examination by grace in August.

All the students in the world were overjoyed and praised the new emperor's benevolence.

Chapter 1089: No Child in the Central Palace

Emperor Zhaoyong valued agriculture. Ever since he ascended the throne, he had promoted the green manure and the fertilization method throughout the country, causing the production of crops to increase greatly. The assessment of farmland also caused the population of the Great Zhao to increase greatly.

The Great Zhao venerated Confucianism in practice and Daoism on the surface.

Internally, Confucianism was used to govern the country. On the surface, Daoism was used to govern the people. The Great Zhou took the path of recuperating and multiplying its population.

In August of the second year of the Great Zhao Dynasty, Emperor Zhaoyong personally conquered the Southern Barbarians and scattered more than ten clans. Then, he sent a 100,000-strong army to guard the Southern Barbarians. It was strange and unpredictable. The Southern Barbarians, which the Great Zhou was still afraid of, now belonged to the Great Zhao and bowed down to it.

In February of the third year of the Great Zhao Dynasty, it occupied the east sea and often disturbed the Dongyi in the east, causing the Dongyi to escape far away. From then on, the Dongyi did not appear, and it was known in history as the "Distant Movement of the Dongyi."

In the resource-rich southeast area, without external disturbances, the people had already lived and worked in peace.

The Great Zhao was filled with internal troubles.

More than ten countries neighboring Dazhao, such as Fusang, Goguryeo, Luzon, Annan, Siam, and Java, surrendered to the Great Zhao and sent envoys to Dazhao to pay tribute.

For example, India, Ross, and Persia, which were neighbors with the Great Zhao, also made a request to the Great Zhao to befriend them and officially trade with them.

Emperor Zhaoyong sent people to open up trade routes on the way to various countries and eliminated bandits. He also set up a capital guard at the border between the two countries. The capital guard sent elite troops to patrol the borders. The merchants who came and went had to pay tariffs. At the same time, the capital guard provided protection to the merchants, guaranteed the safety of their lives and assets, and provided a good business environment for them.

From then on, a new era of peace in the four seas and pilgrimages from ten thousand dynasties began.

After Yin Huaixi finished dealing with the government affairs, he returned to the Chenggan Palace.

"You're back." Yu Youyao's eyes were sparkling, and she was as delicate as before. "This morning, Dandong paid a tribute of 200 pieces of tussar silk. The silk is lustrous and green, like the brilliance of a sparkling gem. It's even better than the wild silk that the four families of Liancheng gave me back then."

“Oh, let me take a look.” Yin Huaixi’s interest was piqued. He strode forward. The luster of the tussar silk was natural, and it was sparkling like a green wave under the cover of the green mountains.

Yu Youyao sighed. “You definitely didn’t expect that these pieces of tussar silk would be made by three former refugees.” Thinking of the past, a smile appeared on her lips. “Even I didn’t expect this. I only forced myself back then. It was originally just a small episode, but it really came true one day.”

There were too many coincidences in the production of tussar silk, and it was too rare. All the silkworm farming areas in the Great Zhao only had 20 pieces a year, and there were no more.

Of course, it was possible that some pieces of tussar silk were hidden.

However, other than the rewards from the palace, no one dared to wear such a rare tribute like the tussar silk openly. Otherwise, they would be punished for overstepping the rules.

Back then, she could obtain two pieces of tussar silk from the four families of Liancheng because she was valued by the Empress Dowager at that time. With her status at that time, she was qualified. In order to please her, the four families specially kept two pieces for her.

Yin Huaixi smiled and pulled her into his arms. He kissed the top of her head. “If it weren’t for your kind intentions and virtue back then, I’m afraid they wouldn’t have achieved what they have today. You have to know that the words and actions of great people often affect a person’s life. This is called forming good karma and obtaining good karma. In this aspect, I’m far inferior to my wife.”

He had once heard Yu Youyao mention that before she left Liancheng back then, she had booked the Moon Pavilion in Liancheng for a day in her own name and organized an exchange with the various retail investors who raised silkworms.

At that time, there were also three refugees who had learned the technique of raising silkworms. These three people had all received her kindness. After entering the city, they went outside the courier station to kowtow to her. She asked Xia Tao to prepare three pieces of tussar silk and give them to them, hoping that they could encourage themselves and raise silkworms diligently.

They were simply three refugees. Ordinary people probably did not take them seriously and would not bow to them.

However, not only did Yu Youyao take them seriously, but she also took them to heart.

Yu Youyao looked impressed. “Hong’er, who raises tussar silk, is about the same age as me. According to the memorial handed over by Dandong, the tussar silk has been successfully raised. It will be farmed on a large scale this autumn. Next year, the production of tussar silk will increase greatly. At that time, tussar silk can be used as a luxury item for trade with overseas countries.”

The silk of the Great Zhao Dynasty had always been in high demand overseas.

“In addition, one of them, Auntie Mei, has nurtured a new silkworm breed. The new breed is easier to raise, and the luster and tenacity of the silk are stronger. Its quality is not inferior to mulberry silk. At the same time, its production has

increased. The silk export trade of the Great Zhao Dynasty will also increase, and the internal affairs income will also increase.”

She was overjoyed. Yin Huaixi valued import and export trade very much. The Great Zhao had opened up sea and land trade and opened the country’s doors. It also provided many business opportunities for all the merchants in the country, making it much more convenient and causing business to prosper. He also had a series of measures to suppress the merchants inside to prevent the tragedy of the merchants in the North from happening again.

Agriculture was the cornerstone of a country’s development. However, if businessmen were rich and the people were poor, who would farm and support the billions of people of the Great Zhou?

“There’s also someone called Yu An. He doesn’t have much experience in raising silkworms, but he’s extremely knowledgeable in cultivating trees. So far, he’s already cultivated mulberry trees in the Dandong area. They’re very adaptable and have a certain effect on the mulberry silkworm cultivation in Dandong. He’s also cultivated a kind of Northern Di oak tree. This Northern Di oak tree is golden in color every autumn. The silk that the silkworm spits out has a faint golden pattern. It’s very beautiful. It’s just that the oak tree has only been successfully cultivated recently. This time, only three of them were offered as tribute.”

The three of them had all achieved extraordinary results in silkworm cultivation.

“Tomorrow, use this silk to make a few more sets of clothes.” Yin Huaixi changed the topic and said, “The three of them have contributed greatly, so they should be rewarded. I’ll get the cabinet to discuss the reward tomorrow.”

Yu Youyao had also contributed to this matter, so he had to publicize it wantonly. Those old fellows should stop for a while, and his ears should be quiet for a few days.

Otherwise, she would be criticized for having no children in the Central Palace every day.

Yu Youyao rolled her eyes at him. “You’re full of official language. Get lost.”

Yin Huaixi was embarrassed.

The Empress had been in the palace for three years, but she had not produced children in the Central Palace, causing a lot of criticism. During this period of time, there had already been many people who had reported inaccurately and asked the emperor to choose a new candidate. Although he had suppressed them, news still reached Yu Youyao’s ears.

This matter made her furious. Seeing that the world was venting its anger on him and criticizing him sarcastically at the slightest disagreement, she was unhappy. She shouted that she wanted to return to Xiangping and never return to the capital or be with him.

When she was angry, she would cry to the point that his heart ached. He wished he could kneel on the ground and beg for mercy.

He had never seen someone so short-tempered before.

What could Yin Huaixi do?

He could only bear with it.

In the end, she was the one who had suffered.

Chapter 1090: Pregnant

Chun Xiao ordered someone to prepare lunch.

As the imperial kitchen was a little far away, when the food was delivered, it was often almost completely cold. It was better in summer, but in winter, it had to be heated up again. The overheated food did not taste as good as before. Yu Youyao arranged a small kitchen in the Chengqian Palace and usually opened fire in the Chengqian Hall.

The imperial chefs in the imperial kitchen all took turns to work in the Chengqian Palace.

“You’ve lost a lot of weight. I got someone to prepare some nourishing medicinal cuisine.” During this period of time, Yu Youyao had not been in good spirits. She had been angry for a long time and had eaten less than before. The imperial chefs had done their best, but she still saw that she had lost weight.

Seeing that her palm-sized face had become much smaller, making her eyes look big and innocent, Yin Huaixi couldn’t help but pity her. He quickly took a small bowl, scooped a bowl of white jade sea cucumber soup, and placed it in front of Yu Youyao.

He lowered his eyes and couldn’t help but feel a killing intent.

It seemed that he had been too benevolent recently.

Yu Youyao picked up the white jade ginseng in the small bowl and took a bite before spitting it into the bowl. “Eh, what’s this strange smell? It’s fishy and smelly. It’s too disgusting. I’m not eating it. Hurry up and take it away...”

Seeing her disgusted expression, Chun Xiao quickly wanted to get some water, but Yin Huaixi was faster than her and quickly handed her the teacup. “Quickly rinse your mouth and press it down.”

Yu Youyao quickly rinsed her mouth. For a moment, she couldn’t suppress the nausea. She endured the churning in her stomach and looked very uncomfortable with a pale face.

“Are you still feeling unwell?” Yin Huaixi picked up the sea cucumber soup and sniffed it. There was a salty and fresh smell, but it wasn’t as fishy as she had said. He thought that her appetite wasn’t good for a moment, so he quickly scooped a bowl of porridge and handed it over. “Have some chicken porridge to suppress it.”

Yu Youyao lowered her head and sniffed. She quickly put the spoon back and said with a pale face, “This is also fishy. Which imperial chef is in charge today? Did he make sea cucumber soup without washing the pot, or did he forget to remove the fishy smell?”

“Let me try it.” Yin Huaixi took a sip of the shredded chicken porridge. The rice was soft and melted in his mouth. The shredded chicken was a little salty and fresh, but there was no fishy smell.

Could there be something wrong with his taste buds?

Yin Huaixi scooped another bowl of pork head soup. Unexpectedly, as soon as Yu Youyao took a sip, she vomited all over. Yin Huaixi was shocked. "Hurry up and call the imperial physician..."

After lunch, Yu Youyao was exhausted. After vomiting, her entire face turned pale and she lay weakly on the bed, her chest feeling suffocated.

Imperial Physician Hu sat outside the bed curtain and covered her wrist with a thin handkerchief. Under the emperor's murderous gaze, his forehead was covered in cold sweat. After taking her pulse for a long time, he quickly knelt on the ground.

Yin Huaixi's heart couldn't help but sink. Before Imperial Physician Hu could speak, he asked impatiently, "How's the Empress's health? Tell me the truth."

Imperial Physician Hu's forehead was covered in sweat. He quickly said, "Congratulations, Your Majesty. It's a joyous pulse. The Empress is already two months pregnant. Her pregnancy is very stable. She's fine."

Yu Youyao was completely dumbfounded and did not react for a moment.

Yin Huaixi was worried about Yu Youyao, so he didn't listen to Imperial Physician Hu for a moment. He was furious. "She's already vomited and can't even eat. Are you telling me that she's fine? Take the Empress's pulse carefully again. She hasn't been in good spirits recently, and her appetite has decreased a lot." At this point, he looked at Imperial Physician Hu and said word by word, "Make yourself clear before talking."

Imperial Physician Hu was so frightened that he trembled. He crawled up and returned to the bed uneasily to continue taking the Empress's pulse.

Yin Huaixi stared at his hand. "Imperial Physician Hu, why is your hand trembling? Can you take her pulse like this?"

Imperial Physician Hu groaned inwardly. However, the emperor was staring at him. He couldn't help but tremble!

Seeing that his hands were still trembling, Yin Huaixi frowned. Just as he was about to speak, Yu Youyao shouted back, "Shut up. Can't you let him take my pulse?"

Yin Huaixi obediently shut up, but his eyes were still fixed on Imperial Physician Hu.

Yu Youyao shouted at him again, "Look away too."

Yin Huaixi looked up at the sky reluctantly.

Imperial Physician Hu secretly wiped his sweat and composed himself. After a while, he knelt down and said, "Your Majesty, the Empress is indeed pregnant. During this period of time, the abnormalities in the Empress's body are all caused by her pregnancy. During a woman's pregnancy, not only will her sense of taste change, but her personality will also be different from before."

Only then did Yu Youyao feel that it was a little more real, but she was still a little confused. "Am I pregnant? But I had my period last month."

She had a nanny personally chosen by Auntie Xu with her. If she was pregnant, they would definitely notice something amiss.

However, she did not know that during this period of time, when she had a bad temper and her personality changed drastically, the nanny had some guesses in her heart. Since she had her period, her guess was not right, so she temporarily suppressed her thoughts and planned to observe for a while longer.

Yin Huaixi did not have too many feelings about the pregnancy. His attention was all on Yu Youyao. “What’s going on? Will it affect the Empress’s health?”

Imperial Physician Hu hurriedly said, “Your Majesty, don’t worry. Everyone’s physique is different, and their reactions after pregnancy are different. Her Majesty is in a normal situation, so it won’t affect her health at all.”

Yin Huaixi was finally relieved. Only then did he realize that Yu Youyao seemed to be pregnant. He suddenly realized what this meant to him.

He was about to have a child. It was his and Yu Youyao’s child.

Was he going to be a father?

Yin Huaixi was immediately dumbfounded.

Yu Youyao couldn’t suppress the joy in her heart. “Recently, I’ve been feeling stuffy and frustrated. I lose my temper at the drop of a hat. Is it related to my pregnancy?”

Recently, her temper had been capricious, and Yin Huaixi had suffered a lot. She had also tried to control her temper, but every time, it was like a firecracker. She couldn’t hold it in anymore.

Imperial Physician Hu nodded. “In the early stages of pregnancy, there will more or less be some reaction. This is also a normal situation. Empress, don’t worry. After three months, when the pregnancy stabilizes, the situation will improve.”

Yu Youyao heaved a sigh of relief.

Imperial Physician Hu explained many things that she needed to pay attention to after getting pregnant. Yu Youyao noted them all down.

Only Yin Huaixi and Yu Youyao were left in the room.

Yu Youyao leaned against the pillow and stroked her deflated stomach, still in disbelief. “Yin Huaixi, I’m pregnant. Did you hear what Imperial Physician Hu said? I’m pregnant. I’m going to be a mother...”

As she smiled, her eyes turned red.

Yin Huaixi shuddered and immediately reacted. “I’m going to be a father. Imperial Physician Hu just said that I’m going to be a father...”

The two of them looked at each other in the same silly manner.

Yin Huaixi was excited. He suddenly picked Yu Youyao up and spun her around the room. Yu Youyao was so frightened that she screamed. As she patted his shoulder, she shouted, “What are you doing? Put me down quickly. The baby hasn’t stabilized yet. Be careful and let me down quickly...”

