

## All Hail 121

### Chapter 121 Just to Harm Me

Upon hearing that new clothes had arrived, Yu Qingning was very happy. However, when she suddenly heard the words “Eldest Miss”, she suddenly remembered that her grandmother had asked Yu Youyao to manage the house. She accidentally sprained her ankle, and the books on her head hit her face and fell to the ground.

Yu Qingning cried out in surprise.

Nanny Jin stood up with a smile. “Fourth Miss dropped her books, so we’ll light up another incense stick. Fourth Miss is the young mistress of an official family, but she’s making such a fuss. It’s really inappropriate. Let’s add another incense stick.”

After saying that, she ignored Yu Qingning’s gritted teeth and twisted expression and sat back in her chair, leisurely picking up her tea to drink.

This tea was sent over by Eldest Madam Yang a few days ago. It was top-grade Tieguanyin tea, and it tasted very mellow and fragrant.

Yu Qingning was so angry that tears streamed down her face. She couldn’t help but curse, “That damned Yu Youyao. Instead of harming others, she came to harm me.”

Nanny Jin scoffed. Usually, when she heard such words, she would have to teach the younger generation of the sect a lesson on how to respect the younger generation and how to differentiate between the direct line of descent. However, some people were more ambitious than others, so they naturally couldn’t bear to hear such words. Hence, they started making a fuss again, making others feel that the nanny was useless and would ruin their reputation.

... .

Yu Jianjia stood under the porch in a daze. She looked at the magnolia tree in the courtyard. It was March, and the flowers were blooming beautifully.

She had heard from her mother that this was a very precious magnolia. In the first year of her mother’s marriage to the Yu Residence, in order to please her mother, her father had spent a lot of effort to get it back from Ju Rong Treasure Mountain in Suzhou.

“Young Miss, the physician has just taken Madam’s pulse and is writing a prescription.” Hui Xiang walked quietly behind her young mistress with small steps. She looked at her young mistress, who was alone and filled with heartache.

As soon as Young Mistress finished school, Ai Ye came over to report that First Madam was having a headache again. When she asked, she realized that First Madam was angered by Eldest Miss.

All the servants in the residence were saying that Eldest Miss was as kind-hearted as Old Madam. She was kind and generous, and treated the servants well. She also sincerely respected Eldest Madam, and even Old Master praised Eldest Miss.

The servants did not dare to gossip about First Madam. On one hand, they were full of praise for Eldest Miss, while on the other hand, they kept quiet about First Madam. Even a fool could understand the difference.

On the first day that Eldest Miss was in charge of the household, she stepped on Eldest Madam's head and established her authority in the residence, convincing the servants.

Indeed, she had been taught by a nanny in the palace to use some despicable and sinister methods to harm First Madam and Young Mistress.

Yu Jianjia covered her mouth with her handkerchief and coughed lightly. Her voice was a little hoarse. "I'll go over now."

The physician who was treating the First Madam's illness was surnamed Ding. He was a capable physician who specialized in treating headaches and fevers.

When Xia Tao led Ding Langzhong to the main courtyard, she even told Nanny Li that Ding Lang's Chinese medicine skills were very brilliant. Eldest Miss had spent a lot of effort to invite him into the residence.

She had only hired a physician, but that had already been a huge contribution. Those who didn't know better would really think that Eldest Miss was so filial to Eldest Madam.

Yu Jianjia entered the house. Doctor Ding had already written the prescription and handed it to Nanny Li. Nanny Li casually took the prescription and turned to hand it to Mu Jin, who was beside her. However, her attitude was very cold. She did not even bother to hide it. There was only ink, paper, and inkstone on the table. She did not even bother to serve a cup of hot tea.

The doctor was invited by Yu Youyao, but the patient was her mother. How could she be so negligent!

Yu Jianjia frowned slightly and ordered someone to bring some tea over. After Doctor Ding took a sip, she asked worriedly, "Thank you for treating my mother. How is she?"

Seeing Third Miss Yu's worried expression, Doctor Ding said, "Did First Madam have a migraine previously?"

Yu Jianjia nodded, and her face turned a little pale. "Just two days ago, I invited a physician over to take a look. The physician said that Mother only had a headache occasionally and would be fine after recuperating for a day or two. Who would have thought that she would have another headache today? It's even more serious than before, and she can't even get up."

Doctor Ding nodded in understanding. "The previous deduction based on her pulse isn't wrong. It's just that First Madam's illness is caused by a high level of anger, but it affects the liver, kidneys, spleen, stomach, and lungs. It has to be cleared of heat and activated blood and her vital energy has to be regulated to be fully recovered." The physician looked down at his remaining pulse case and pointed at the words "regulate vital energy". Then, he continued, "The focus is on the word 'vital energy'. If the vital energy is flowing smoothly, the blood will flow smoothly, and if the blood flows smoothly, the vital energy will flow freely. The greatest taboo for this illness is to be highly emotional. When you're emotional, the fire will burn, and the liver will move. When your stomach is burning, the vital energy will stagnate."

Yu Jianjia's breathing tightened. Doctor Ding had made it very clear that her mother was furious. "How should we treat this illness? Can it be cured?"

Doctor Ding nodded. "I've prescribed some medicine for First Madam's stomach fire. It only takes two days for it to take effect. I've also prescribed a few more prescriptions to relieve the internal fire, and most of her illness has been cured. However, First Madam's internal organs were injured this time. She still needs to recuperate carefully in the future before she can recover fully. Otherwise, it will be difficult to treat the root of her illness in the future."

Hearing Physician Ding's certainty, Yu Jianjia understood that the physician Yu Youyao had hired was indeed the best. She pursed her lips and said, "Thank you, Physician Ding."

Doctor Ding shook his head. "Third Miss is too kind."

Yu Jianjia ordered someone to cover the consultation fee and gave him a bag of good medicinal herbs. She asked Nanny Li to follow Doctor Ding back to get the medication.

After arranging everything, Ai Ye returned. "Third Miss, I've gone out to ask around. Physician Ding is indeed an extremely powerful physician in the capital. He's best at headaches and fever, as well as difficult and complicated illnesses. There are many wealthy families in the capital who have invited him into the residence to take a look at their illnesses. He's a useful person. Doctor Ding also has a good reputation. The medicinal herbs in other medicinal halls are of lower grade than his..."

Yu Jianjia listened carefully and nodded.

Yu Youyao had generously hired a physician for her mother. She definitely had to hire the best to show her "filial piety."

She did not suspect that Yu Youyao would tamper with this. However, no matter how good the doctor was, she did not know his background. She was a little worried, so she asked Ai Ye to go out and ask around.

Hui Xiang came over. "Young Mistress, the First Madam is awake."

Yu Jianjia hurriedly entered the inner room. Yang Shuwan leaned against the pillow, her face sallow. "Where's Nanny Li?"

Yu Jianjia sat on the edge of the bed and held her mother's hand. She said gently, "Nanny Li went to get medicine for Mother. Mother's health is tight, and I'm worried about the others."

Yang Shuwan nodded. "You know about what happened in the residence?"

Yu Jianjia nodded slightly and said, "Mother, don't think about this anymore. Take care of your health and get the butler's key back. Eldest Sister is young, but she's only helping out. Mother is the mistress of the household. No matter what, this family can't surpass Mother. Once Mother has regained power, she can think about the future."

## Chapter 122 Slap Her Mouth!

Yang Shuwan was originally filled with anger and resentment, but after hearing her daughter's casual words, her anger dissipated a little. She nodded. "Jia Jia, you're still the one who's thinking too clearly."

Since she couldn't take charge, there was no point in being anxious.

Yu Jianjia heaved a sigh of relief. "I only want Mother to be well."

Yang Shuwan was touched and thought of Yu Zongzheng. "After Yu Youyao's instigation, your father is becoming more and more dissatisfied with me. Now that I'm sick, it's not good for me to approach your father anymore."

Yu Jianjia pursed her lips slightly. "We've been husband and wife for a long time. Father still treats Mother well, but it's only for a moment of anger. This time, Mother is sick. When Father's anger has subsided a little, he'll come over to visit her. Mother, tell Father more about your past together, and don't mention anything about managing the household anymore."

Yang Shuwan nodded. Seeing that her mother's lips were dry, Yu Jianjia asked Mu Jin to pour a cup of hot tea and personally fed it to her mother.

She had originally planned to say some more comforting words to reassure her mother, but to her surprise, Hui Xiang reported, "Young Mistress, Eldest Miss said that she has something to discuss with you and wants you to go to Windfall Courtyard."

Yu Jianjia frowned slightly. Before she could say anything, Yang Shuwan tightened her grip on the corner of the blanket and said hatefully, "This rotten little b\*tch. She's trying to show off her authority as a household manager."

Hui Xiang was also furious. She couldn't help but say, "Eldest Miss has something to discuss with Miss, so why can't she come over and look for her herself? She even wanted Miss to look for her? What kind of logic is this? She clearly knows that Eldest Madam isn't feeling well, and Miss has always been filial. Of course, she has to take care of Eldest Madam, but she still wants to order Miss around. I wonder what kind of evil heart she has."

When Yu Jianjia saw her mother's sallow face, an abnormal flush immediately appeared on her face. Her wet gaze landed heavily on Hui Xiang. "Shut up!"

Hui Xiang also realized that she had misspoken and quickly lowered her head, not daring to say anything else.

Yu Jianjia turned around and saw her mother. She tucked her mother in and said, "Big Sister must be looking for me for something. Don't worry, Mother. I'll be back soon."

Yang Shuwan's expression softened and she nodded. "Don't let that b\*tch Yu Youyao bully you. Although your father is dissatisfied with me, he has always doted on you the most. If there's anything, just look for him."

Yu Jianjia nodded and led Hui Xiang out of the main courtyard.

The Windfall Courtyard was close to the main courtyard. There was only a corridor, and it only took a few turns.

Xia Tao was already waiting outside the courtyard. When she saw Yu Jianjia coming over, she hurriedly went forward to greet her. "Third Miss is here. Eldest Miss is waiting for you in the courtyard."

Yu Jianjia nodded and entered the courtyard with Xia Tao.

In the past, no one lived in the Windfall Courtyard. Because it was close to the main courtyard, the servants took care of it very carefully every day. It was also clean and tidy inside. Coincidentally, there was a White Jade Orchid planted inside. It was just an ordinary species, but the trees swayed in the wind, and the white flowers that fell on the branches were like lotuses. The white flowers were dazzling. They were 30% elegant and 70% pure.

Meanwhile, Yu Youyao was sitting at the stone table under the magnolia tree. Under the branches of magnolia flowers, she looked indescribably beautiful.

Seeing Yu Jianjia, Yu Youyao quickly stood up. "Third Sister, come and sit down."

Yu Jianjia sat opposite her and called out gently, "Big Sister!"

The maidservant quickly served the tea. Yu Youyao asked worriedly, "Is Mother's health alright? What did the doctor say just now?"

Yu Jianjia held her teacup and lowered her eyes. In a low voice, she said, "The doctor said that Mother's diet isn't appropriate, and it causes her stomach to heat up. She'll recover after two days of medicine. She'll recover after a few days of rest."

That was indeed what the doctor meant. She was just avoiding the main point.

When Yu Youyao heard this, she heaved a sigh of relief. "That's good. I still have some good medicinal herbs. I'll get someone to send them to Mother later and let them take care of her carefully."

However, she did not say that she wanted to visit her mother. It was obvious that Yu Youyao's so-called "filial piety" was all an act.

Yu Youyao had to go to school, learn the rules from Nanny Xu, and help manage the household. It couldn't be any more tiring. Even if she didn't visit her mother, no one would say anything. This was because helping her mother manage the household was already "sharing her mother's burdens." It was already "filial piety."

Yu Jianjia immediately felt that the tea in her mouth was tasteless. "Thank you, Big Sister."

Yu Youyao shook her head. "We're all sisters. There's no need to be so polite. Besides, I'm also worried about Mother's health and hope that she will recover soon."

Yu Jianjia lowered her head and did not speak.

Yu Youyao did not mention this matter either. Instead, she changed the topic and said, "In the afternoon, Manager Sun from the Jinxiu Manor came to the residence to deliver clothes. Everyone was given a set of clothes to wear first. However, Third Sister's clothes have to be changed, so I asked Manager Sun to bring them back and she will send them to you in two days..."

It was her first day managing the household, so it wasn't good for her to keep causing trouble. "Too shrewd" wasn't a good reputation, so it was inevitable that people would think that she was targeting Yang Shuwan and her daughter.

Yu Youyao wasn't prepared to mention the lanshan either, so she helped Yu Jianjia cover it up.

Yu Youyao was an extremely smart person, so there was no need to say much. She would understand when she asked around later.

Before she could finish speaking, Hui Xiang, who was beside Yu Jianjia, couldn't help but interrupt, "Eldest Miss, what do you mean? Even if there are some mistakes in a piece of clothing, how wrong can it be? How could it be that our Young Mistress didn't even see it before it was taken back by Manager Sun? Although you're the eldest sister, you're also in charge of the family now. You don't have the right to make decisions for our Young Miss."

As she spoke, Hui Xiang glanced at the young mistress. Seeing that the young mistress was pursing her lips and not saying anything, her thin body trembled and swayed a little. However, Eldest Miss was really angry.

The more Hui Xiang thought about it, the angrier she became. "Eldest Miss, you're too much. I'm afraid you'll deliberately make things difficult for my Miss..."

Before she could finish speaking, Yu Youyao interrupted coldly, "How can you talk back to your master? Where did you get the cheek to do so? I think it's because Third Sister is kind-hearted. She allowed you to be so disrespectful and unruly. If she doesn't punish you, wouldn't all the maidservants in the residence learn from you in the future?!" As she spoke, she looked at Chun Xiao. "Slap her mouth!"

Hui Xiang's eyes widened as she subconsciously looked at Yu Jianjia.

Although Hui Xiang had spoken too quickly and allowed Yu Youyao to pick on her, she was still eager to protect her mistress.

Besides, Hui Xiang was her personal maidservant, so she had to be the one to teach her a lesson. No one else had the right to criticize her, even if it was beating a dog.

Yu Youyao was being so blatant, yet she didn't even take her seriously. How could she stand by and do nothing?

### Chapter 123 How Impressive

However, Yu Jianjia couldn't sit still anymore. "Big Sister, I respect you as my eldest sister, but Hui Xiang is my maidservant. She said something wrong just now and offended you, so I should be the one to teach her a lesson. If you don't like what she said and want to slap her, that's overstepping your boundaries. Do you have any intention of asking me?"

Looking at this pale, delicate, and beautiful face in front of her, Yu Youyao suddenly recalled that in that nightmare, even when Yu Jianjia said the most vicious words in the world, she was still so gentle and delicate—

"Third Sister, Hui Xiang said something wrong. It's also your fault for not disciplining her well. I remember that Zhi Zi, who was in front of you, was beaten and sold out of the residence because she had made a mistake. It's obvious that Third Sister is too gentle and kind-hearted, but she can't even manage her maidservants well. She allowed all the servants to bully their masters and not take them seriously. As your eldest sister, I have to be the bad person and teach them a lesson for you. Is that wrong?"

That's right? Not only that, if anyone found out, they would think that she had deliberately allowed her maidservant to treat Yu Youyao disrespectfully. Yu Jianjia felt an itch in her throat and started coughing.

Yu Youyao smiled faintly. "Besides, Hui Xiang is just a maidservant, but she keeps trying to sow discord between us sisters. This is a huge taboo in the family. If Grandmother finds out, I'm afraid it won't just be a few strokes of the paddle and selling her."

As soon as Yu Jianjia opened her mouth, a gust of cold wind suddenly blew into her mouth and down her throat, freezing her heart.

Previously, Zhi Zi had been flogged and sold out of the residence because of Yu Youyao. Now that Hui Xiang had offended Yu Youyao, it could be said that she had been careless. However, one or two of them had offended Yu Youyao, and there were so many old maids watching. How could there be such a coincidence? If this matter really reached her grandmother's ears, what good could she get?

The nanny from the Education Department was still in the residence. She would teach her the principle of seniority!

Yu Youyao looked at Chun Xiao. "Aren't you going to slap her?"

The two old maids pressed Hui Xiang to the ground. No matter how she screamed and struggled, she couldn't move. Chun Xiao stepped forward and slapped her left and right, causing her to scream and cry. After a few slaps, Hui Xiang's face turned red and swollen.

Yu Youyao said in a low voice, "Chun Xiao's father used to be Grandmother's coachman. He used to practice some moves, and Chun Xiao learned them from him since she was young. When it comes to beating people up, her hands never go soft."

Yu Jianjia sat there with a pale face, clutching her handkerchief tightly in her hand. Every slap was crisp and loud. It was obvious that she had used a lot of strength. It had clearly hit Hui Xiang's face, but she felt as if she had been slapped.

After ten slaps, Yu Youyao said calmly, "Stop!"

Chun Xiao stopped and returned to Yu Youyao's side. She received the tea from the maidservant and handed it to Eldest Miss.

Both sides of Hui Xiang's face were swollen like a pig's head. Her hair was messy as she crawled on the ground, sobbing softly. Yu Jianjia asked Ai Ye to help her up.

Yu Jianjia pursed her lips and said coldly, "Big Sister, you're really impressive. She was the one who spoke rudely when the joss sticks were in your hands today. However, I have to ask Big Sister carefully. How did Manager Sun manage to take back the finished clothes? Did everyone else have theirs sent back, or were only mine affected?"

Yu Youyao pursed her lips slightly and glanced at Dong Mei. She had been holding a wooden tray in her hand, and there was a plain brocade dress neatly folded on top of it. It was the style that she had picked out previously. Manager Sun had prepared it and sent it over.

Hence, she said slowly, "If you don't mind, you can wear this plain dress of mine. My figure is about the same as yours now, and this dress is also plain and elegant. It's probably suitable for you."

She had originally planned to do this, but Hui Xiang retorted and changed the topic. Now that she had mentioned this again, she wanted to give both parties a way out.

However, Yu Jianjia did not appreciate it. She was certain that Yu Youyao was just as Hui Xiang had said, deliberately making things difficult for her. She pursed her lips, her expression weak and stubborn. "Even if something goes wrong with my own clothes, I have to know where it went wrong. Isn't it too much for Big Sister to deal with it privately? I'll talk to Father and let him comment on this."

With that, Yu Jianjia stood up to leave.

Yu Youyao did not stop her. She only turned to Xia Tao and said, "Go to the front courtyard and borrow a book called "Ritual Dances to Confucius" from Zhao Da."

Xia Tao responded and left.

Yu Youyao said calmly, "When Father's book is here, Third Sister should take a good look at it. Otherwise, Third Sister will think that I'm making things difficult for you and deliberately asked Manager Sun to send your clothes back."

Yu Jianjia felt that something was amiss. It was just a piece of clothing, so why did it have to do with her father? And why was it related to the "Ritual Dances to Confucius"?

At this thought, she calmed down.

Yu Youyao was even willing to give away the clothes in the house, so it was unlikely that she would do anything bad to a piece of clothing. Something must have really happened to the clothes.

It was Yu Youyao's first day managing a household, so it made sense for her to be more cautious. After all, if something went wrong with her clothes, it would implicate her entire family, or even the entire clan!

After figuring all this out, Yu Jianjia was in no hurry to leave. She covered her mouth with her handkerchief and coughed lightly as she apologized, "Big Sister, I'm sorry. I was a little rash just now. Mother is still sick. Big Sister helping to manage the household is also helping to share Mother's burden. It's not easy for Big Sister to manage the household. My health isn't good, so I can't share Big Sister's burden. I'm already too ashamed. How can I kick up a fuss with Big Sister over such a small matter? I'm the one who's being insensible. Big Sister, please bear with me."

She was also furious because of what had happened in the residence. Seeing that Yu Youyao was punishing Hui Xiang in front of her, she lost her composure.

Yu Youyao nodded. "It's good that you understand. I'm the eldest sister. Since you've done something wrong, I naturally have to be more tolerant. Mother is still sick. As her children, even if we can't help much, we should be careful with our words and actions. Everything should be done properly, in case anything goes wrong and Mother gets worried. How can she rest in peace?"



Her calm words made Yu Youyao purse her lips. She didn't expect Yu Youyao to take it so seriously, as if she was really wrong. "Big Sister is right. When Mother is recuperating, I'll have to trouble you to manage the family matters. Thank you, Big Sister."

With that, she looked up at Yu Youyao with a sincere expression.

Yu Youyao, who was sitting under the magnolia tree, was wearing a red eight-piece dress and a gold-plated veil. Her body seemed to be glowing, and even her eyes were dazzled.

The child's face was still very young, but when she swept her gaze over them, there was a hint of coldness, like the bone-chilling cold of spring. Her hands couldn't help but tremble from the pressure!

#### Chapter 124 Just Like Zhou Linghuai

Was this person really the Yu Youyao she knew?

Yu Jianjia resisted the urge to rub her eyes and take a closer look. Suddenly, another cold and distant face appeared in her mind.

Zhou Linghuai—

Yu Youyao's expression resembled Zhou Linghuai's.

It reminded her that every time she met Zhou Linghuai in the residence, she had to greet him. Zhou Linghuai called out to her in a low voice, "Third Cousin!"

He was looking at her, but she had a nagging feeling that she wasn't in his eyes.

Later on, she happened to see Zhou Linghuai and Yu Youyao talking together. Yu Youyao smiled brightly, her eyes sparkling, and she looked just like before.

Meanwhile, Zhou Linghuai, who had always been aloof and distant, had a faint smile on his pale lips as he called out to Yu Youyao, "Cousin!"

Although his voice was still cold, it was like the warmth of the world when the winter snow had just melted.

At first, she did not notice the difference.

Later, she found out that Zhou Linghuai only called Yu Youyao. "Cousin!"

The other young misses in the residence became second, third, and fourth cousins in front of him. It was obvious that in his heart, Yu Youyao was the only cousin he acknowledged.

Xia Tao went all the way to the front courtyard and looked for Zhao Da. "Young Miss asked me to come and get a book called 'Ritual Dances to Confucius.' This book is only available in Eldest Master and Young Master's house. Young Master is still in school."

Zhao Da nodded. "Please allow me to report to you."

Xia Tao quickly said, "Thank you, Steward Zhao."

When Zhao Da went to the study, Yu Zongzheng was writing calligraphy. When he heard that his eldest daughter wanted to read "Ritual Dances to Confucius", he frowned slightly and said, "Bring Xia Tao over."

The Great Zhou Dynasty was open-minded, but there were still many restrictions on the books that women could read as they pleased. For example, the “Ritual Dances to Confucius” described an extremely high standard of etiquette. It was used to encourage students to have high aspirations, to offer gifts, to sing songs, to play music, to be happy, to give birth, and so on. However, women rarely read such books.

Soon, Xia Tao was brought over and she bowed respectfully to the Eldest Master. “Today, Manager Sun from the Jinxiu Manor sent over a new spring robe that was similar to a lanshan. Miss felt that it was a little inappropriate, so she asked me to borrow a book called ‘Ritual Dances to Confucius’ so that she can look at the records of the lanshan and not disrespect any rituals.”

Yu Zongzheng first frowned, clearly feeling that this lanshan was not suitable. “Who made this lanshan?”

However, this question made Xia Tao’s face freeze. She stammered, “It’s, it’s Third Miss. Third Miss came up with a piece of snow satin and designed it to look like a lanshan. She got it done by the Jinxiu Manor. The Great Zhou Dynasty doesn’t have any lanshans, and no one has done it in the past, so the Jinxiu Manor didn’t pay much attention to it. Who knew that when Miss saw that it was a lanshan, she felt that it was a little inappropriate...”

Upon hearing that it was Yu Jianjia who had made the robe, Yu Zongzheng was first stunned, but then he felt that it was an unwritten rule among scholars. It was normal for Jia Jia not to know about it, so it was fine. In any case, after the clothes were sent into the residence, the residence would check them one by one to see if they matched the etiquette system.

But then, he remembered that even Yao Yao knew about the ceremonial robe, so they must have learned about it in school. In that case, Jia Jia was a little out of her depth. “It’s rare that Yao Yao is thorough and appropriate. Take the book over!”

Xia Tao nodded repeatedly.

After Xia Tao left, Yu Zongzheng’s expression darkened. “Madam Yang is really getting out of hand. She’s not even as good as Yao Yao, who’s only half grown child.”

On the first day, Butler Yao had received a set of clothes from the Jinxiu Manor. The style of these clothes had been decided by Madam Yang in the past. This was Madam Yang’s fault. Fortunately, Yao Yao had discovered it in time.

Thinking of what his eldest daughter had done in the residence today, Yu Zongzheng’s eyes lit up and he called Wen Zhu over. “Go to the courtyard and pass a message to Third Miss...”

Soon, Xia Tao borrowed a book and returned to Windfall Courtyard.

Yu Youyao handed the borrowed book to Yu Jianjia. “Third Sister can see it clearly.”

Yu Jianjia was filled with suspicion, so she flipped open the book and read every word. Not long after, the blood drained from her pale face. She felt suffocated, but she held her chest and closed the book with a loud bang. She sat on the chair for a long time before she reacted.

She slowly stood up and said respectfully to Yu Youyao, “Some time ago, I happened to obtain a painting of a banquet from the previous dynasty. When I saw that someone was wearing a lanshan, I

felt that the Great Zhou Dynasty had never seen such a style before. If it were made into female clothes, it would probably look very good. Hence, I drew all sorts of patterns and asked Manager Sun to help me make it. I didn't expect that there would be such an honor among the scholars of the Great Zhou Dynasty. The lanshan was so symbolic in Confucian rituals and I almost caused a disaster."

Yu Youyao's expression was indifferent, but she did not say anything.

Yu Jianjia's body trembled slightly, and her voice softened a little. "Thank you, Big Sister, for covering up this matter for me. It's my fault today. My health isn't too good, so it's a little difficult for me to discipline the maidservants in front of me. I've also treated them much more kindly, but I didn't expect them to become so rash. I'll punish her with half a year's worth of monthly salary. In the future, I'll leave her in the courtyard to manage the matters in my room and not bring her out anymore. She offended Big Sister, and it's also my fault for not being strict with her. Please forgive me, Big Sister."

Yu Youyao nodded slightly and turned to Dong Mei. "Bring the clothes to Third Sister!"

However, she did not say anything about forgiving her!

Yu Jianjia pursed her lips and accepted the clothes gratefully, then handed them to Ai Ye. "Thank you, Big Sister."

Ai Ye helped Hui Xiang back to the courtyard first, while Yu Jianjia made a trip to the main courtyard. Nanny Li had returned with the medicine and was instructing Mu Jin to brew the medicine. "Put away the medicine that Doctor Ding gave you, and brew the prescription that was previously prescribed for you."

Yu Jianjia walked over with small steps. "Whose idea is this?"

Nanny Li was stunned by the question. She quickly said, "It's what I-I meant. Doctor Xiang is the doctor that Eldest Madam needs. The medicine that Madam took previously was also effective."

Yu Jianjia's voice turned a little cold. "You heard what Physician Ding said previously. Although Doctor Xiang's prescription is not bad, it's only treating the symptoms and not the root cause. Mother's migraine disease has been acting up repeatedly, which shows that there's a problem."

Nanny Li lowered her head, not daring to say anything else.

Yu Jianjia continued, "Eldest Sis has been managing the household for a day. Even if she were to hire a physician, she would still have to hire the best one. Just now, she displayed her 'filial piety' outside the residence. I've asked Ai Ye to ask around about Young Master Ding, and I've also learned a little about him. There's no harm in using him first."

Nanny Li hurriedly said, "Third Miss has thought it through. I'll get Mu Jin to change to Doctor Ding's medicine now."

Yu Jianjia nodded. "There's no need to let Mother know about this. Her recovery is more important."

Nanny Li nodded in agreement.

Yu Jianjia entered the house. Yang Shuwan was leaning against a pillow, waiting for her. When she saw her, she quickly asked why Yu Youyao was looking for her.

## Chapter 125 Cousin, You've Worked Hard

Yu Jianjia did not say much and only said, "Manager Sun sent someone to send the clothes over. Eldest Sister asked me to go over and take a look to see if there's anything wrong."

It turned out to be such a small matter. Yang Shuwan felt relieved, and her mind couldn't stay awake anymore. Her eyelids kept twitching, and before Yu Jianjia could say anything, she had already fallen asleep.

Yu Jianjia tucked her mother in and turned to leave the room. She asked Nanny Li to take care of her carefully. "Report to me in the courtyard if there's any news."

After returning to the courtyard, Yu Jianjia didn't even get a chance to take a sip of hot tea.

Wen Zhu came over. "Master asked me to come over and pass a message to Third Miss. Master said that it's rare for Eldest Miss to be thorough and appropriate, so he asked Third Miss to learn more about how to deal with people from Eldest Sister in the future."

When Yu Jianjia heard this, her throat felt itchy. She covered her handkerchief and coughed lightly a few times. "Sister Wenzhu, please tell Father that Eldest Sister has grown up in front of Grandmother, so she naturally has more principles than us. As her younger sister, I naturally have to learn from Eldest Sister."

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

Her eldest sister, Yu Youyao, had borrowed a book, which showed how thorough and appropriate she was. Her father praised her endlessly, which made her seem like she didn't know her limits.

Other than having her grandmother guiding her behind her back, she probably would have received some teachings from Nanny Xu.

Yu Jianjia suddenly thought of Zhou Linghuai.

She did not have a good impression of this poor relative who had come knocking on her door with broken legs. However, now that there was suddenly another person in the family, she naturally had to find out more.

Usually, it was inevitable that one would be dwarfed if they lived under someone else's roof. Even if they were relatives, it was very likely that things would not go as planned. However, Zhou Linghuai had only stayed in the Yu Residence for less than a month, but he had already curried favor with Yu Youyao. Not only did he teach Yu Youyao how to write, but he also often guided her in her studies. This allowed Yu Youyao to be in the limelight at home, and people were impressed by him. Therefore, he had also received special treatment from Old Madam, and even her father and second uncle paid attention to him.

He was probably the one who had taught Yu Youyao these tricks. Otherwise, how could she have known how important the lanshan was?

After an entire afternoon, Yu Youyao was exhausted. As soon as she returned to the Jade Courtyard and found out that her cousin was waiting for her in the study, she quickly went to complain to him.

Zhou Linghuai put down his book and tilted his head to look at the little girl sitting beside him. She held her oval face in her hands and pouted as she complained—

“Cousin, I’m still a child, and I have to learn to manage the household like an adult. Just thinking about it makes my head hurt, but since Grandmother has already asked, how can I refuse?”

“Madam Yang handed over the key and said that she wanted Nanny Liu to manage more matters in the residence. However, how could there not be a proper master in the residence? She deliberately used her migraine to make Grandmother work hard.”

“When Grandmother works too hard and gets tired, Father will also know that it’s not easy to manage the household. Not only will he feel guilty towards Madam Yang, but if anything happens to the household in the future, Father won’t blame Madam Yang anymore. With Father’s support, what worries will Madam Yang have in the future?”

“I won’t hold it against Madam Yang no matter how she schemes, but I’m unwilling to let her deliberately think of ways to trouble Grandmother. Grandmother dotes on me, so no matter how hard it is, I have to share some of her burden.”

“Grandmother trusted me, so she asked me to help manage the household. How could I disappoint her? I definitely have to do things well to reassure her, lest she worries that I won’t be able to do anything and not feel at ease.”

“By dealing with Mother Yang, she’s also teaching Madam Yang a lesson. She doesn’t stop scheming all day long. Not only did she anger Grandmother, but she’s also so annoying in the residence.”

Hearing her nag for a while, Zhou Linghuai listened and did not find it noisy. A smile gradually appeared on his lips. His jade-like fingers gently touched the pink camellia teacup. Feeling that it was not hot, he picked it up and handed it to her.

After talking for a while, Yu Youyao was indeed a little thirsty. She took the teacup and took a few sips before handing over the empty teacup.

Zhou Linghuai reached out to take it and placed it on the table.

Ever since he had returned from school, he had heard about the young lady’s glorious achievements in the residence. Everyone in the residence praised her for being kind, generous, and respectful.

It was because of this that he came to the Jade Courtyard.

“...If it weren’t for the fact that Cousin had told me earlier about the clothes, food, and residence of the emperor, princes, and marquises, as well as their harems, madams, and other servants in The Book of Rites, I would have definitely made a mistake.”

She had read less than Yu Jianjia. If her cousin hadn’t mentioned it, how would she have known?

This was the difference between her cousin and Ms. Ye.

When Ms. Ye taught her, she abided by her rules and principles. She would never say anything that she shouldn't. However, her cousin was good at everything. He never restricted himself or cared about the difference between men and women.

Seeing that the young lady had stopped talking, Zhou Linghuai placed a large silver covered cup with flowers and birds on it in front of her. "Cousin, you've worked hard."

Yu Youyao's eyes lit up and she opened it eagerly. There were indeed big red cherries inside. They weren't as red as before, but their skins were thin and sparkling. She couldn't help but smile. "Thank you, Cousin."

Zhou Linghuai rubbed the top of her head. "I washed it."

Yu Youyao happily ate the cherries. Then, she remembered that the cherries in the south should be transported to the capital in a few days. Now that she was in charge of the household, she should get someone to pay attention to them as soon as possible, lest they were late. The best cherries would be obtained by other families. As she thought about this, she called Chun Xiao over and gave her some instructions.

When Chun Xiao received her orders and left, Yu Youyao reacted. She had complained bitterly the moment she saw her cousin, but she had even forgotten to ask, "Cousin, why are you here?"

"I heard that it was your first day managing the household, so I came over to take a look." Zhou Linghuai's eyes narrowed slightly, but they looked even more long and narrow. The little girl was dressed in a pomegranate dress. The flowers on her dress were as bright as fire and fully bloomed. They complemented her gold-plated pomegranate outerwear and it was still dazzling and eye-catching. "Cousin, you really have the aura of a household manager."

Yu Youyao pouted. "Cousin, you only know how to laugh at me. I'm still so young, so how can I have the aura of a household manager? Nanny Xu helped me pick out this outfit and asked me to wear it so that I could put on a show. I can't scare anyone with my aura, so I dressed up in expensive clothes. If I'm dressed in jewelry, I can still suppress others. The servants won't dare to act rashly in front of me."

Zhou Linghuai chuckled. "It's very nice."

Yu Youyao's eyes lit up. She took a big cherry and handed it to her cousin's lips. Zhou Linghuai was stunned for a moment, but he subconsciously opened his mouth. It was only when the juicy cherry burst open in his mouth that he realized what was going on. "Naughty!"

Chapter 126 Cousin, It's Too Difficult for Me

After suddenly receiving the big cherry, her cousin's fair face also turned a little red. Yu Youyao couldn't help but chuckle. "Cousin, you really can't take sour food."

This time, the cherries were a little more sour than before. The sweetness and sourness collided, and it made his mouth water. He suddenly felt that they were a little sour, but the more he ate, the more delicious he felt they were. It was probably because the variety was different.

Zhou Linghuai slowly took the teacup and lowered his head to take a few sips. Only then did he ease the sourness in his mouth. He looked up and another osmanthus candy was brought to his lips. He was about to refuse and say that he did not like sweet food, but when he saw the little girl looking at him with a smile, she said, "Cousin, have some candy!"

Zhou Linghuai's mouth almost fell open.

!!

When the osmanthus candy entered his mouth, it tasted sweet and rich. The sweetness that he usually hated actually felt very good now.

Seeing that her cousin had eaten the osmanthus candy, Yu Youyao was very happy. "Cousin, after eating the sour cherry, your mouth won't feel sour anymore."

Zhou Linghuai nodded, but it was difficult to speak with the candy in his mouth.

Yu Youyao's eyes lit up. "Cousin, you should eat more candy. Eating candy can improve your mood. Ever since I was young, when I missed my mother, my grandmother ordered someone to make osmanthus candy for me. She said that my mother also liked osmanthus candy, so eating osmanthus candy would slowly improve my mood."

Her cousin was always full of worries and seemed to have a lot of unhappy things on his mind. She hoped he would be happier.

Zhou Linghuai was stunned. The osmanthus candy in his mouth melted bit by bit, and the sweetness seeped into his heart.

He suddenly felt that his cousin was probably telling the truth.

Zhou Linghuai lowered his gaze and asked, "How do you know that I'm in a bad mood?"

"You like to frown when you're unhappy." Yu Youyao suddenly reached out and stroked her cousin's glabella, as if to smooth out the faint crease between his brows. "Cousin, don't always frown like a little old man." She wrinkled her nose in disdain. "It's so ugly."

When the young lady got closer, her eyes were filled with a beautiful light, and it was so piercing that even his eyes felt sore. Zhou Linghuai sat stiffly in the wheelchair. His back straightened bit by bit, and his hands holding the armrests of the wheelchair tightened.

The gentle touch between his eyebrows was like a feather, gently brushing against his heart. He almost forgot how to breathe.

Seeing that her cousin was no longer frowning, Yu Youyao retracted her hand. "If you frown, you'll age very quickly. Cousin, don't frown so much in the future."

Zhou Linghuai's tense heart suddenly relaxed, and his gaze landed on the little girl's slender fingertips.

The little girl's sharp fingers quickly untied the golden pouch embroidered with pomegranate flowers at her waist. She placed the pine nuts, osmanthus candy, and crispy candies in the box in

front of her into the pouch one by one. Then, she closed the bulging pouch, tied it to his left belt, and made a beautiful bow.

Zhou Linghuai's fingertips trembled as he suddenly held her hand.

Yu Youyao was stunned. "Cousin?"

Zhou Linghuai slowly let go of the little girl's hand. "The pomegranate pouch is more suitable for Cousin."

Yu Youyao pouted. "Cousin, you're not allowed to take it off. You have to wear it often in the future. When you want to frown, eat a piece of candy. Pomegranate flowers are suitable for men and women, and it looks good on you too." Even her voice became softer at the last sentence, revealing a hint of guilt. Then, she added, "Yes, it's festive!"

It just didn't match her cousin's clothes.

Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but laugh out loud. He gently rubbed the exquisite embroidery on the pomegranate flower embroidered gold pouch. "Whatever Cousin says, I will listen."

Yu Youyao smiled. "Cousin, you look really good when you smile like that."

Zhou Linghuai frowned. "Have you practiced your calligraphy today?"

Yu Youyao immediately couldn't smile anymore. Her face fell. "Cousin, it's too difficult for me!"

The little girl looked pitiful and dejected. Zhou Linghuai gently rubbed the top of her head.

"According to Meng Zi's Teng Wen Gong, it's said that it's either the mind or labor. Those who labor with their minds govern others; those who labor with their strength are governed by others. Those who are governed by others feed others, and those who govern live by others."

Yu Youyao was confused. She clearly did not understand!

Zhou Linghuai explained, "It's the hierarchy of work. The people who are smart use their brains but the people who are in charge use other people. You have to learn to use other people."

Her cousin was guiding her in managing the household. Yu Youyao immediately perked up. She held her face in her hands and looked at her cousin with admiration and anticipation. "Cousin, quickly teach me how to manage the household. Although the population of the Yu Residence is small, there are many people outside the residence. Tomorrow, Grandmother still wants me to meet the people of the manor. It's very troublesome!"

The little girl looked at him with a burning gaze, her eyes filled with trust. Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but clench his fists and press them against his lips. He coughed and cleared his throat. "There are many servants in a big family, Master can't manage them all, so he set a rule and let the servants manage themselves. As long as there aren't any major mistakes, Master won't ask too much."

Yu Youyao nodded. There were nannies in charge of all the courtyards.

Zhou Linghuai said, "There's one thing that's bad about this. The higher-ups are in charge of their servants. They rule over them as they are their direct authorities. As time passes, the managers accumulate a lot of power, and their rules become greater than those of the master. It's inevitable



that there will be cases of slaves deceiving their masters, and no one dares to report it. Everyone will follow their orders.”

Yu Youyao was deep in thought. “Mother Yang and Steward Zhou were in cahoots. Although they were doing it carefully, there’s no wall in the world that doesn’t leak information. There must be someone in the main kitchen who knows about it. It’s precisely because Mother Yang is in charge that no one dares to say anything bad about her. Even if she’s discovered, Mother Yang would just send her away for three to five copper coins. With money, who would be willing to offend Mother Yang? Who would do such a stupid thing?”

This was the same as a slave deceiving their master. No one dared to report it, so they followed the instructions.

Zhou Linghuai nodded slightly.

Yu Youyao wrinkled her nose in distress. “Cousin, what should I do?”

Zhou Linghuai picked up a cherry, removed the stem, and brought it to the little girl’s mouth. The little girl looked at him and did not notice the cherry on her lips. She opened her mouth to eat the cherry, and a smile appeared on his pale lips. “You want to centralize power.”

The sour taste of the cherry filled her mouth. Yu Youyao’s fair face was also covered in a layer of light pink. She swallowed the cherry meat and was about to spit out the seeds when a blue handkerchief was brought to her lips.

Yu Youyao naturally spat out the seeds on the blue handkerchief and wiped the corner of her mouth with it. “What do you mean by centralized power?”

Zhou Linghuai took back his blue handkerchief and poured the cherry seeds onto a small plate at the side. “Make a better and comprehensive reward and punishment rule. This way, the life and death of the servants will be in your hands. If they make a mistake, the rules of the residence state that they will deal with you, and the stewards have no right to deal with them.”

## Chapter 127 Cousin, You’re Really Amazing

Yu Youyao’s eyes lit up. “This way, the servants won’t have to worry about being in the hands of the managers, so they won’t be afraid of them or try to please them. Instead, they’ll be worried that if they don’t do a good job and end up in the hands of the master. The people they fear will become the main family, and they’ll work harder.”

She felt that this was a really good idea.

However, after thinking about it carefully, she felt that it was a little inappropriate. Yu Youyao asked, “But if that’s the case, the steward of the residence will probably be unhappy. There will be a commotion. I’ve just started managing the household, but I’ve already caused such a huge commotion. I’m afraid it’ll be difficult to convince them!”

Since she could think of this, his guidance was not in vain. Zhou Linghuai smiled. “You still want to split the power?”

Yu Youyao was confused by him. Why did he mean by wanting to split the power?

Zhou Linghuai continued, “The servants in the residence are all managed based on ranking, but the power is all concentrated in the hands of the household manager. You have to distribute the rights in

your hands and let them manage themselves and be responsible for their own profits and losses. Every month, according to profits or losses, they will publicly receive dividends, rewards, or warnings and punishments. The authority of the people in charge will be greater, and their benefits will be greater. At the same time, their responsibilities will be greater, and they will do things more seriously.”

Yu Youyao’s eyes widened. “It weakens the prestige of the people in charge, but also increases their authority and responsibilities. Once they receive benefits, they won’t make a fuss.”

The dividends and rewards from the main family will not only satisfy the vanity of the servants, but they will also gain real money. When they receive face and money, they will definitely prefer that over being discovered by the main family and sent to the government for punishment and exile.

The more Yu Youyao thought about it, the brighter her eyes became. She said excitedly, “Every month and every season, the most profitable sector will receive 50% of the profits. The manager will also receive additional monthly and quarterly dividends. The loss-making sectors will be punished according to the size of the losses. If they make losses for three consecutive months, the manager’s contract will be terminated...”

Zhou Linghuai chuckled and said nothing.

“... The various large farms will form a benign competitive relationship. As their enthusiasm for doing things increases, they will naturally do things better. Everyone is in a competitive relationship, so it’s inevitable that they will supervise and restrict each other. They wouldn’t dare to play tricks behind each other’s backs. Everyone’s interests are maximized. This is a win-win situation. No one will disagree.”

Yu Youyao nodded excitedly. “Gathering power to govern people and dividing power to govern matters complement each other.”

Zhou Linghuai took another big cherry and handed it to the corner of the little girl’s mouth. The thin and sparkling cherry matched the little girl’s delicate lips and looked very charming. “Concentrating power shows your absolute right to lead. Dividing power is governing by balancing incentives and might. One is hard and the other is soft. Only by using both can you manage others.”

Yu Youyao smiled as she chewed on her cherry. “Cousin, you’re amazing.”

Zhou Linghuai chuckled. “As a person, you have to remember to be strong and gentle at the same time. If you’re too strong, it’s easy to make too many enemies and harm yourself. If you’re too gentle, you’ll also be bullied and hurt yourself. You performed very well today.”

Mother Yang and Steward Zhou had colluded and embezzled money. Although they had been the ones to blame, it had been arranged by the young lady. Mother Yang and Steward Zhou must have known this too. But in the end, why didn’t Mother Yang and Steward Zhou hate the young lady? Instead, they were grateful to her?

It was because the little girl had displayed a clear distinction between reward and punishment. Her grace and authority were convincing.

There was also the matter of the lanshan. If Yu Jianjia obediently accepted the plain brocade dress given by the young lady, this matter would pass quietly.

However, Yu Jianjia had allowed the servants to contradict Yu Youyao. Clearly, she was dissatisfied with her.

In the residence, Yu Jianjia had a reputation for being kind and polite, and she was very popular. The matter of the lanshan was neither big nor small. If Yu Jianjia were to get hold of it and use it as a pretext to make a fuss, Yu Youyao's reputation would naturally not last as long as Yu Jianjia's.

However, Yu Youyao did not waste any time. She directly ordered someone to slap her face and use her authority as a household manager, not giving Yu Jianjia any chance to argue. She also asked Xia Tao to borrow "Ritual Dances to Confucius" from Yu Zongzheng. She used Yu Zongzheng's power to intimidate Yu Jianjia, and also to prevent Yu Jianjia from using this matter to cause trouble because of her indignation.

It was just a small matter, but it was resolved just like that.

It was clean and neat.

Centralized power and division of power all required a person of high status to have extremely strong control. He had seen that the young lady had already gone through the motions. She could control both centralized and divided power.

Upon being praised, the little girl beamed with joy, and her face also revealed a smug expression. "Cousin, not only are you good at reading, but you understand profound principles. You're also good at keeping the Four Books and Five Classics, Daoist scriptures and Buddhist scriptures simple and understandable. Even when it came to the tedious task of managing the household, you were able to make things clear with a few words." Her little face was filled with admiration as she gently counted with her fingers. "Cousin, your handwriting is good, and your paintings are also very good. Last time, I heard from Chang An that you know how to paint, carve, make ink, play the zither, process tea..." After counting with both hands, the little girl suddenly looked up at her cousin and asked, "Cousin, is there anything you don't know?"

When Zhou Linghuai heard this, he was slightly embarrassed. "The world is so big, and there are so many things that I don't know. What I know is only a drop in the ocean. I don't know much about cooking, incense, and medicine. I'll have to trouble Cousin in the future."

Yu Youyao pouted. "Fortunately, Cousin is a man. A gentleman should stay far away from the kitchen, and it's not convenient for him to touch incense or powder. Otherwise, how could we girls survive? Is Cousin really only 15 years old?"

It took a lot of time, energy, and hard work to understand so much at such a young age. She really wondered how her cousin had learned it.

Zhou Linghuai chuckled and said nothing.

Actually, his real age was a little younger.

When he was young, he had relied on his intelligence, his photographic memory, and his ability to recite whatever he was curious about. Often, when he learned something, he would throw it aside and be attracted to new things.

One year, he did not like the spring tea that the residence had sent over. Hence, he went up the mountain to pick some wild tea leaves and learned how to make it from ancient books.

If the five-stringed zither that his father had prepared did not look good to him, he would find his own master and learn the lute...

When he was young and frivolous, he felt that he was omnipotent and could do anything.

His mother doted on him and his sister helped him. Even if his father wanted to discipline him strictly, he couldn't resist his beloved wife and daughter. As time passed, he let him be.

His family had power and influence, so he could find the most powerful masters to teach him whatever he wanted to learn. Those masters did not dare to hide anything, and he was willing to learn, so he had twice the result with half the effort.

Unknowingly, he had learned a lot.

The cousins chatted in the study. Not long after, Nanny Xu ordered someone to prepare dinner, and Zhou Linghuai also stayed for dinner in the Jade Courtyard.

After dinner, it was already late. It was not appropriate for Zhou Linghuai to stay in the Jade Courtyard for long, so he returned to the Green House.

#### Chapter 128 Do You Still Want Me to Live?

Yu Youyao sorted out her cousin's previous words and added some of her own ideas. After two hours, she had written a lot of words, and could be considered to have completed today's calligraphy task.

After that, Yu Youyao found Nanny Xu and discussed with her about centralizing and dividing power.

Nanny Xu had come from the palace and was knowledgeable and cautious. With her help, it would definitely be useful.

The two of them discussed until nine o'clock before making a preliminary decision.

After Nanny Xu helped Yu Youyao with bone molding, she went to prepare the medicinal bath. Yu Youyao had already learned the movements of the Flexible Body Technique on the couch. She could easily finish it in ten minutes. After doing it, her bones did not hurt nor did her body ache. Instead, she felt very light and experienced the benefits of the bone molding from the Flexible Body Technique.

Perhaps because she was tired, Yu Youyao was a little sleepy as she soaked in the medicinal bath. She said to Chun Xiao, "Tomorrow morning, go to Ms. Ye and help me take a day off. Tell her that Mother is sick. I want to help manage the household and ask Ms. Ye about the classes she is going to teach. I'll learn them myself in my room. After I've made my notes, I'll let Ms. Ye check them."

She still had a lot of things to deal with tomorrow, so she couldn't go to school.

The next morning, after Yu Youyao finished learning etiquette, she was covered in hot sweat. Her body felt sticky and uncomfortable, and she only felt a little refreshed after soaking in the medicinal bath.

Yu Youyao sat in front of the glass mirror and pouted as she complained, "The weather is getting hotter and hotter. Every day, I wear twelve layers of clothes to learn etiquette. After an hour, the layers of clothes inside are drenched. It's simply too uncomfortable."

Nanny Xu smiled but said nothing.

Seeing that Nanny Xu did not reply, Yu Youyao pouted in disappointment. "Nanny, didn't you praise me for learning etiquette well? Then when can I stop learning etiquette?"

Nanny Xu smiled and said, "At least until May."

Yu Youyao's eyes widened in shock. "Nanny, do you still want me to live?"

Nanny Xu patted the little girl's head. "Nonsense. Look at Master. He wears a thick official's uniform to court every day, but his expression doesn't change. You know why I asked you to wear twelve layers of clothes to learn etiquette? In addition to courtesy, there's also the importance of being restrained. When you're drenched in sweat, and you can still maintain your expression and act calmly, you won't have to learn etiquette anymore."

If she knew etiquette but lacked the ability to control her emotions, it was also bad for her reputation.

Moreover, if Yu Youyao married into an official family in the future and became a mingfu, she would have to wear at least seven layers of clothes to meet the nobles on a hot day. That would be truly unbearable.

In the past, when she was in the palace, she had seen many mingfus. On hot days, they would wear their thick attire and sweat. There were even some who had caught a heatstroke.

"Sigh, it's really too difficult for me." Yu Youyao's face fell again. When it was cold, she had to wear nine layers of clothes to learn etiquette. The morning was very cold. She was not allowed to light up the underground heater in the house, let alone light up a brazier. She was so cold that she was trembling and could not even walk steadily. Her body hurt every day from falling. She had finally adapted to it, but now it was going to be bitterly hot again.

It was really scorching hot. When would this end?!

At this moment, Dong Mei took out an apricot-yellow dress with embroidered red apricot flowers and a short jacket. "Young Miss, are you wearing this today?"

The apricot color was a little more refreshing and beautiful than the pomegranate red, but it wasn't too dazzling. Yu Youyao nodded. "This is very good."

Nanny Li nodded. The people in Yu Youyao's courtyard had all been personally chosen by Old Madam Yu. In the past, before they moved into the courtyard, Nanny Liu had helped to manage Yu

Youyao's room. The maidservants had all followed their masters and were a little undisciplined. Now that they had moved into the new courtyard and were carefully taught, they were all reliable.

Dong Mei was a steady and careful person.

Chun Xiao was considerate and loyal. She also had some tricks up her sleeve, so it was very good for her to serve her personally.

The most surprising person was Xia Tao. Initially, she had only given her a few words of advice when she realized that this girl was smart. Who would have thought that this girl would become someone who had a knack for finding out things? She knew everyone in the residence and could ask about everything in detail.

Even Qiu Xing, who was the least outstanding, was a cautious and quiet person. She did her work well and had never made a mistake.

It was only because the people in the courtyard were reliable that Yu Youyao could arrange a good show yesterday.

After washing up, Chun Xiao also returned from Xiaoxiang Pavilion. "Ms. Ye is going to teach the Book of Rites today. Ms. Ye said that she will go through the last chapter of the Book of Rites. Tomorrow, she will start teaching Spring and Autumn, one of the Five Classics. She will also teach the third chapter of the Analects, Eight rows."

Yu Youyao's heart skipped a beat.

Yesterday, her cousin had mentioned the "Ritual Dances to Confucius" and "Eight rows" in passing. Eight referred to the emperor, six referred to the princes and dukes, four referred to scholars and two referred to soldiers.

There were a total of sixty four people and eight people in a row. It was the highest form of etiquette.

After talking about Eight rows, it was impossible not to talk about the "Six Rows Sacrificial Dance". Then, the act of wearing lanshans to respect to Confucius would naturally be mentioned.

It was obvious that Ms. Ye had also heard about the incident with the lanshan.

The Yu family was a family of scholars, so it was impossible for the commotion in the residence to be hidden from her grandmother. A lanshan was nothing much, but if she really wore it out, she would be exposed. It was also normal for her grandmother to ask Ms. Ye to emphasize this etiquette.

Yu Youyao asked Chun Xiao to bring the new tea she had made a few days ago and went to An Shou Hall.

It was rare that her grandmother was still asleep, so Yu Youyao did not ask Nanny Liu to wake her up.

Nanny Liu asked, "Eldest Miss, you're officially in charge of the household today. Do you want to call the servants over at 7am so that they can familiarize themselves with the people and matters in the residence?"

7 am? Yu Youyao was stunned for a moment before she reacted.

Every ten days, the residence would summon all the servants in the residence to give a lecture and show the dignity of the head of the household. The servants did not dare to slack off.

Hence, she shook her head. "I won't call for anything."

Nanny Liu did not say much.

Yu Youyao took a thick stack of papers from Chun Xiao. "If I don't manage the household, I don't know the hardships of being in charge. During my first day managing the household yesterday, I felt that the matters in the residence were complicated and messy. After a day, I couldn't do anything else, so I discussed some ways to manage the household with Nanny Xu. I don't know if I can use them, so I still need Nanny's help."

Nanny Liu was a little surprised, but then a smile appeared on her face. "That's good. If Eldest Miss's method of managing the household works, there will be less trouble in the residence in the future. I can also relax a little and serve Old Madam carefully."

Eldest Miss was magnanimous, kind, and capable. She really resembled Old Madam.

She could even handle the matter yesterday without any flaws. After Old Madam found out, she had a rare good night's sleep yesterday, but today, she was still asleep.

It was obvious that she was really at ease with Eldest Miss.

Yu Youyao pursed her lips and smiled. "I'm just trying to slack off. Nanny, you're not allowed to laugh at me."

#### Chapter 129 Biased Towards Your Cousin

Nanny Liu's face scrunched up with a smile. She held the thick stack of papers and read through it carefully. At first, she didn't think much of it, but as she read, she couldn't help but be shocked and impressed.

When she was young, she had helped Old Madam manage the household and was the most capable person by her side. Now that she was old, she was still helping to manage the residence. She was the most experienced person. Eldest Miss's strategy of centralizing and dividing the power seemed a little bold and presumptuous at first glance, but the lives of the servants were in the hands of their masters, so they could not be rash. The profits and losses of the manor were all borne by the stewards, so there was no need to worry about the residence suffering losses. If the manor did not do a good job, they could also be dealt with openly and stop the losses in time.

Nanny Liu couldn't help but be shocked. "I think Eldest Miss's method of managing the family is feasible, but I think some of it needs to be more detailed..."

This was the reason why Yu Youyao had specially looked for Nanny Liu.

Nanny Liu had been in charge of the household for many years, so there was nothing in the house that she did not know. With Nanny Liu's input, it would be more thorough and perfect.

The two of them discussed for almost an hour. When they were done, they realized that Old Madam Yu was sitting quietly on the couch.

Yu Youyao approached her grandmother with a cheerful smile and said in a clear voice, "Grandmother, Grandmother, when did you get up? I didn't even know."

Old Madam Yu smiled and held her granddaughter's hand. "I heard what you discussed with Nanny Liu. Tell me quickly, which expert is guiding you."

It wasn't that she looked down on her granddaughter. How could she, who had just been in charge of the family for a day, think of such a method?

Yu Youyao stuck out her tongue. "Grandmother, you know the answer. Who else could it be other than Cousin?!"

Old Madam Yu laughed and pinched the tip of her granddaughter's nose. "Your cousin has great talent. If it weren't for his broken leg, he wouldn't be missing out on such a brilliant talent. Even the heir of the Marquis of Zhenguo can't be the first."

At the mention of Song Mingzhao, Old Madam Yu's expression froze slightly, and even her gaze deepened.

Her granddaughter's face had grown, and her figure had also grown. She exuded a delicate aura, and her every move was elegant. She was like a painting. Even the princesses and princesses she had seen in the palace in the past were not as good as her. It was obvious that Nanny Xu had taught her to become a noble daughter.

Yao Yao would be ten years old next month. She should plan ahead...

She suddenly remembered how Old Madam Song had openly shown that she liked Yao Yao back at the Precious Peace Temple. Old Madam Yu suddenly tightened her grip on her prayer beads.

Upon hearing the words "Song Mingzhao," Yu Youyao's heart skipped a beat. She pursed her lips and said, "Heir Song is a young and talented man, and he's in high spirits. However, Cousin is as sharp as a knife. Even if his legs are inconvenient, he's still like a piece of jade. Grandmother, you're not allowed to talk about Cousin's legs."

Old Madam Yu could tell that she was defending her cousin, so she couldn't help but laugh again. "You're praising your cousin so much. You little ingrate, I always take care of you, but you're biased towards your cousin."

Yu Youyao threw herself into her grandmother's arms and wheedled, "Grandmother, you're not allowed to wrong me. When I came over just now, I didn't forget to bring you the new tea I made previously. I was worried that you would get tired of the tea from before and wanted you to try something new. Look, I've been thinking about you all the time."

Old Madam Yu tilted her head to take a look. Indeed, there was a blue and white porcelain box on the table. She smiled so widely that her eyes couldn't be seen. "At least I didn't dote on you for nothing." With that, she hugged her delicate granddaughter again. "I'm more than happy to see you getting along with your cousin."

If Zhou Linghuai could think of Yao Yao, with his personality and methods, he would definitely be able to protect her in the future. Now that Yao Yao had grown stronger, she no longer had to worry about her.

Old Madam Yu lowered her head and looked at her granddaughter's beautiful eyes. Her heart skipped a beat. "Your Grandmother Song sent me a letter a few days ago. She said that she had been



eating your pear paste recipe for a while, and her cough has indeed improved a lot. She even asked me to thank you.”

Yu Youyao was very happy. “It’s great that Grandmother Song is feeling better.”

Her tone was completely sincere. Old Madam Yu lowered her eyes and stared at the prayer beads. “Your Grandmother Song has suffered a lot from coughing all these years. We’ve been friends for many years, so I naturally hope that she’ll be well. The health enhancing tea you made is also not bad. Why don’t you get someone to send some over?”

Relationships were always developed through mutual interaction. After a long time, feelings would develop.

Yu Youyao was a little unwilling, but since her grandmother had already asked, there was no reason for her to refuse. “Okay, get Xia Tao to send a few boxes over later. Grandmother can send them as she sees fit.”

It was fine to give it away without spiritual dewdrops. Although the effect would be weaker, drinking it often was also extremely good for the body.

Her father had been drinking medicinal tea recently, so he felt better. A few days ago, he had asked Wen Zhu to come over and get a few boxes.

Old Madam Yu nodded and changed the topic. “Tell me how you plan to manage the family.”

Yu Youyao quickly handed over a stack of papers. Her grandmother was the mistress, and her horizons were different from Nanny Xu’s. Naturally, she had to show her grandmother her idea.

Old Madam Yu could tell that Zhou Linghuai had come up with the idea, but she knew very well that this was her granddaughter’s interpretation.

The servants in the residence had made mistakes, damaged things, broken the rules, and had dirty hands. How should they be dealt with one by one?

In the past, it was always the steward who asked his master for instructions and dealt with it himself. However, now that there were clear rules, the rules of the residence were greater than that of the steward’s words.

How should they divide the profits of different segments and reward the stewards?

If there were losses, how should they be punished?

There were dividends every month and quarter. The benefits of being in charge were obvious. The premise was that the managers could do real work and benefit the residence.

Every month, if a steward did not do a good job, he would be warned three times. If he still could not make a profit, he would be fired and investigated!

Those who harmed the interests of the Yu Residence and made major mistakes would be severely punished.

The people-in-charge had the right to manage the servants but the servants had the right to report, denounce and praise them. Those who reported wrongdoings would be rewarded.

The main family, the stewards, and the people working under them would supervise and keep each other in check.

It was a three layered relationship!

The pros and cons were all tightly intertwined. If one was involved, it would affect the entire structure. If anyone was dishonest and wanted to play any tricks, they would not be able to avoid the two sides.

Old Madam Yu was already very satisfied. She took a closer look and gave her a few pointers. "Since we're going to make rules, we have to make the rules bigger, so that others won't feel that it's not a big deal. In the afternoon, when the stewards of the manor enter the residence, you can discuss the rules with them and listen to their opinions."

Chapter 130 A whole new level of respect

Yesterday, Yao Yao had single-handedly arranged a big show. Even Mother Yang and Steward Zhou, who were old servants, were under her control. How could the stewards in the manor dare to put on airs in front of Yao Yao?

Besides, this method was brilliant because it was a win-win situation. The stewards' interests were maximized. When their power was high, who wouldn't want a fair and square dividend?

Even if some people had ulterior motives and did not want to agree, it was probably not up to him.

Yu Youyao nodded and picked up her pen to increase the punishment.

After discussing with her for a while, Old Madam Yu asked Nanny Xu to prepare breakfast.

After breakfast, Madam Yao came over to greet Old Madam Yu. "I heard that Eldest Sister-in-law is sick. Now that Yao Yao is helping to manage the household, I came over to see if there's anything I can help with. Yao Yao is also a half-grown child, so she won't be tired."

The first and second branches were only separated by a door. There had been a commotion in the residence the entire afternoon yesterday, so how could she not know?

When Old Madam Yu heard this, she smiled. "You're too kind." This second daughter-in-law of hers was a considerate person. She did and spoke very respectfully. She turned to look at her granddaughter. "Your second aunt is a capable person. She's good at managing people. You have to learn from her."

Before Yu Youyao could say anything, Madam Yao had already blushed and waved her hand. "Old Madam, you're really embarrassing me. When I first married into the family, I didn't know anything either. It was Old Madam who didn't mind and taught me step by step. Now, I can still be of some use. In terms of managing the household, Old Madam is the best. Yao Yao has grown up by your side and can already help manage the household at a young age. It's obvious that she's learned a lot from you."

Not only did she praise Old Madam quietly, but she also praised Yu Youyao. Anyone who heard this would be happy.

Old Madam Yu thought of Madam Yang.

When Madam Yang had first entered the family, she did not like her for not staying in her own room. She had already gotten together with her eldest son and even had a secret affair. However,

since she had already married into the family, she could only teach her a little more in the interest of peace and prosperity in the family.

However, Yang Shuwan was not someone who was willing to be taught. After keeping her by his side for a few days, Eldest Son thought that Madam Yang had suffered a huge grievance in front of her. In less than two years, he had also fallen out with her, his mother.

From then on, she gave up on teaching her and let her do whatever she wanted.

It could be seen that not everyone was like Madam Yao and Yao Yao, who were willing to be taught. After comparing them, she naturally taught Madam Yao more diligently.

Madam Yao turned to look at Yu Youyao. "Good child. You're so young, but you already know how to share your grandmother's and mother's burdens."

Yu Youyao pursed her lips and smiled. "It's only right."

Madam Yao held her hand. "You don't know how hard it is to be in charge, but my heart aches for you. It's really hard on you to learn to help manage the household at such a young age. I don't have any experience in managing the household, but I've been in charge for a few years. I still have some experience, so I'll tell you."

Yu Youyao was very happy. "Thank you, Second Aunt!"

The two of them chatted for a while. Seeing that it was getting late, Madam Yao got up. "Old Madam, have a good rest. I'll go to the main courtyard to visit Eldest Sister-in-law. Do you want Yao Yao to come along?"

Yang Shuwan was sick. As a sister-in-law, she had to go over and visit her.

Yu Youyao shook her head. "There are still some unfinished matters in the residence. Second Aunt, you can go first!"

Madam Yao's smile deepened. Without saying anything, she took some supplements and herbs and left for the main courtyard.

Yesterday, she heard about what had happened in the main residence. She felt that Yu Youyao had used Mother Yang and Steward Zhou to establish her authority in the residence on the first day because of Old Madam's guidance.

But now, she no longer thought that way.

When Yu Youyao talked about the butler's matters, she was very organized and confident. When she asked her for advice regarding her experience with butlers, every word was said and done in a commanding manner. The way she handled the butler matters was really impressive.

In the first two months, Yao Yao was still a child. Now that she had fallen sick and broken through the gates of hell, she had grown up.

Madam Yao then thought of Yu Shuangbai at home. They were both half-grown children, and their ages were not far apart. However, Shuangbai was still a child. She was greedy, lazy, and fun loving. She was taught the rules from Nanny for a long time, but she did not learn anything well. Her embroidery was a mess, and her kitchen skills could start a fire.

Madam Yao shook her head. A family of sisters couldn't be too far apart. She couldn't let outsiders talk about it. She had to be stricter with Shuangbai later.

After chatting with her grandmother for a while, Yu Youyao returned to the Jade Courtyard. She wanted to study the Four Systems of Mourning from the Book of Rites, and the third chapter of the Analects, Eight rows, in advance.

During this period of time, in addition to teaching her how to write, her cousin would also guide her in her studies. She gradually caught up with the lessons she had missed in the past.

The Four Books and Five Classics were profound, but there were many similarities. Even if she hadn't learned them before, she could still understand a little. If there was anything she didn't understand, Yu Youyao would memorize it and ask her cousin for guidance when he came over in the afternoon.

Sunlight shone through the window, illuminating the quiet area. The incense in the incense burner rose meticulously.

Xia Tao walked over quietly. "Young Miss, the new steward of Zhouzhuang is here."

Yu Youyao paused for a moment and put down the pen in her hand.

Last night, Zhou Yongniu and the others had returned to Zhouzhuang in the dark. Without even bothering to return home, they had gone to look for Zhouzhuang's Li Zheng and told him everything that had happened in the Yu Residence.

When Li Zheng heard this, he was so shocked that he did not even bother to put on his clothes properly. He gathered all the people that Zhouzhuang could speak to and sent more than thirty people to look for Elder Zhuang.

Zhouzhuang's Elder Zhuang was an old scholar in his sixties. He had taken the examination a few times when he was young and did not manage to pass the provincial civil service examination, so he returned to the village to start a school.

Zhouzhuang had the Yu Residence behind it, so its days were pretty good. That was why he had the confidence to set up a school.

Old Master Zhuang was knowledgeable and had seen the world. He was very knowledgeable about Zhouzhuang and the person to speak to if one had questions. As time passed, Old Master Zhuang became a resident of Zhouzhuang.

Elder Zhuang stroked his long beard and listened as Zhou Yongniu recounted what had happened in the residence.

Everyone in the main room was talking at once, complaining that the Yu Residence had increased the harvest and rent. Many people were cursing Zhou Yongchang for being wicked. He had embezzled money and even implicated them.

Elder Zhuang listened without saying anything.

After listening to everyone talk for the time it took to burn an incense stick, Old Master Zhuang finally said, "Zhou Yongchang has embezzled the main family's money, which is equivalent to betraying the main family. He has to be punished with 30 strokes of the paddle first and sent to the government. Then, he will be punished with 30 strokes of the paddle and sent to the Shangyang

Castle for exile. Now that the main family has resolved the contract with the steward, they want him to plant trees in the mountains and receive money every month. It can be considered a job. If he works well, he can also support his family.”

As soon as he spoke, no one else spoke. They all lowered their heads to listen to him.