

All Hail 141

Chapter 141 - 141 Cousin, Teach Me to Learn the Zither

Yu Youyao smiled. “Okay!”

She hadn’t really wanted to learn how to play the zither, but now she was looking forward to it because her cousin was going to give her a handmade zither.

Although she did not know when this zither would be ready, she felt very happy to be able to play the zither that her cousin will make.

They went to the study together.

At this moment, a section of the tree at the top was finally cut off. Chang An was afraid that it would spoil, so he had already tied a rope around it and hung it down from the tree.

As soon as Yu Youyao returned to the study, she picked up the famous zither she had found in the library and asked excitedly, “Cousin, do you think this zither is suitable for me to learn?”

Zhou Linghuai knew how to play the zither, so he had naturally heard of the famous ‘Rare Voice’.

Mount Liyang had trees, and they were called Mulberry Trees. With mulberry tree wood as the base and ice silk as the strings, the zither shone brightly like pearls, and had a natural charm. Its sound was like ice breaking and snow falling. It was very clear and sharp.

The zither was naturally a good one, but when he saw the little girl carrying it in her arms, his expression paused for a moment. “You’re just learning how to play the zither, so you don’t need such a famous zither. I have a zither in my house that I use myself. You can use it first.”

Yu Youyao’s eyes lit up. She wanted the zither that her cousin had used. “Did you make it yourself too?”

Zhou Linghuai’s expression was slightly bitter, and a trace of darkness appeared in his eyes. He shook his head. “No.”

He had learned how to make a zither at the age of nine. In order to practice his skills, he had made many zithers, but few of them had been completed. The only two completed ones were given to his mother and Eldest Sister, but they had all turned to ashes during the fire.

The zither he used himself was made of carved lacquer. His father had painted it over and over again over the years, without stopping for a single day. It had taken him three years to finish the lacquer zither.

When the zither was first formed, her father had found some strange silk. This silk was slightly thin, and its color was light golden. It shone like gold and jade. He had hired a zither master to finally add the strings on the zither.

The sound of the zither was like cutting through gold and jade, revealing a sonorous sound. After he received the zither, he named it, “Broken Jade.”

This zither had also been destroyed in that fire.

Zhou Linghuai gripped the armrest tightly, the veins on the back of his hand bulging. "The zither is an old item of a friend. After he passed away, he gave it to me. Although it's not a famous zither, it's still a rare good one."

Talking about the owner of the zither, his eyes darkened!

Her cousin rarely mentioned anything about his past in Youzhou. Yu Youyao was a little curious. She wanted to ask her cousin who this friend was.

However, when she saw her cousin's subtle expression, she remembered that her cousin's friend had already passed away, so she changed the topic. "Then is it appropriate for Cousin to lend me the zither?"

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "No one is more suitable."

He called Chang An over and asked him to get the zither from the Green House.

Chang An's eyes narrowed slightly, and he was a little hesitant for a moment. However, seeing that his young master's expression did not change, he did not dare to delay. In a moment, he came over with the zither case.

Zhou Ling personally opened the zither case. "Cousin, look."

This zither was black and red, and had silk strings. On the surface of the instrument, there were the words "Ru Ling" engraved on it. Below it, there was an inscription, "Thousand rock ridge. On this day, I heard the sound of the wind, and cut wood." On the left, there were the words, "18th Year of the Yuan Dynasty."

After reading it, Yu Youyao asked, "This zither is called Ru Ling? Cousin's friend visited the Thousand Rock Ridge in the 18th year of the Yuan Dynasty and listened to the wind blowing the leaves. With a rustling sound, he cut off the wood on the ridge and made this zither?"

Zhou Linghuai nodded. When his gaze landed on the word "Ling", his eyes paused for a moment, then flashed across the words "on this day". "Yes, this friend of mine is a rare prodigy in the world. He could recite books at the age of three, study at the age of five, and study at the age of seven. I learned my zither building skills from him."

He was arrogant and conceited. There were very few people that he liked. This person was one of them.

Her cousin probably valued this friend very much. Yu Youyao felt a little regretful. "The heavens are really jealous of geniuses." With that, she squatted in front of her cousin and held his hand. "Cousin, don't be sad. I'll definitely accompany you for a long time in the future."

Zhou Linghuai looked at the little girl's soft and delicate body, and his heart trembled. "Okay!"

Yu Youyao's voice was cheerful. "Cousin, quickly teach me how to play the zither."

Yu Youyao learned the zither from her cousin for an hour every day. Her cousin explained the structure of the zither to her, as well as the five notes: do, re, mi, so and la. Her cousin explained it casually and did not restrict her learning process. Yu Youyao did not feel any pressure learning it.

After learning for a few days, Yu Youyao could already use the fingering technique. She was memorizing the zither score in her room.

Yu Shuangbai covered her face and rushed into the house like a gust of wind. Chun Xiao and Zhen Zhu followed closely behind, but they stood at the door, at a loss, not knowing what to do.

Yu Youyao quickly put down the zither score, stood up, and walked quickly to Yu Shuangbai. "What's wrong? Who made you angry?"

Yu Shuangbai pounced on Yu Youyao and started crying loudly. Her body trembled from the crying, scaring Yu Youyao.

Nanny Xu's eyes flickered as she quietly left the room. She went to the small kitchen and instructed the chef to make a few more exquisite and rare snacks.

Yu Shuangbai cried profusely.

However, Yu Youyao was confused. She had no idea what had happened, so she naturally did not know how to calm her down. She simply stopped persuading her and let her cry.

Yu Shuangbai cried for a long time, but the more she cried, the more meaningless it was. She felt aggrieved and uncomfortable, so she said angrily, "Are you just going to watch me cry like this? Don't you know how to persuade me and coax me? To think that I've always treated you as my best sister, but you don't care about me at all. Do you not treat me as your sister anymore?"

Yu Youyao was stunned by her words. Before she could speak...

However, the more Yu Shuangbai spoke, the angrier she became. "Ever since you recovered from your illness, you've become a different person. You don't even look for me to play anymore. You only pay attention to me only if I come looking for you. Every time I ask you to play with me, you always make excuses. You either want to learn needlework or medicine and tea techniques."

Upon hearing this, Yu Youyao opened her mouth a few times, but Yu Shuangbai was still in a fit of anger. She said everything she wanted to say, but she did not interrupt.

"... Everyone in the residence knows that you, Eldest Miss Yu, are learning the rules and things from the nanny in the palace. You're a little older, but you're also good at managing the house. Even Ms. Ye likes you, which makes it seem like I'm ignorant and don't know how to improve. Even my mother has been stricter with me recently. She often compares me and..."

Yu Youyao could vaguely guess what was going on and panicked. Once something was said, it was too late to take it back. Even their sisterly relationship was about to be damaged, so she quickly interrupted her—

"What are you talking about? When have I not treated you as my sister? Tell me, I learned from Nanny and didn't have time to play with you, but when did I make something new and not give it to you? When did Nanny Xu made fresh food, didn't I remember you?"

Chapter 142 - 142 Sobbing

Yu Shuangbai was stunned by her words.

Yu Youyao was also a little angry. "You cried the moment you rushed into my room just now. How would I know what grievances you had suffered and what anger you had suffered? How would I dare to coax you? I would have coaxed you badly and made you sad instead. Isn't it better if you cried yourself and let your emotions out?"

"I..." Seeing that she was angry, Yu Shuangbai was a little helpless and forgot to cry.

Yu Youyao glared at her. "You said that I'm learning all sorts of things and don't want to play with you, but I've lost my mother since I was young, and even though I have a stepmother, I still can't escape the reputation of being the eldest daughter of a widowed wife. Grandmother pitied me, so she found Nanny Xu to enter the residence and asked me to learn more rules and things so that I can accumulate some reputation. Otherwise, in the future, someone outside will use the words 'the eldest daughter of a bereaved wife' to criticize me and implicate the reputation of the residence. Grandmother is thinking for me, so how can I let her down? I have to learn well."

At this point, her expression darkened. "I can't compare to you. You have Second Aunt and Second Uncle. Even if you're wronged and angry, you still have some backing. If I don't learn well, even my father won't let me off easily."

Yu Shuangbai's face was filled with shame. Previously, when Eldest Uncle slapped Yu Youyao, everyone in the Jade Courtyard had kept quiet about it. However, all the masters in the residence knew about this.

Not to mention anything else, even when she had broken her father's inkstone and stained it, her father had not scolded her. He had only told her not to be rash in the future.

"It's not like you don't know what kind of person I am. Who would want to learn this and that all day long? I wake up earlier than a chicken and sleep later than a cat. I'm busy all day, like a spinning top. However, I envy you. Second Aunt helps you with everything. Even if she's a little strict with you usually, it's for your own good. She can't really force you to do anything."

Yu Shuangbai lowered her head and thought about how during this period of time, she did not know what was wrong with her mother. For the first time, she was being strict with her. She kept watching her learn the rules and needlework.

In the first few days, she could still tolerate it a little.

However, if she was forced too hard, she wasn't able to take it anymore.

Seeing that she couldn't learn things well and wasn't motivated to continue learning. Her mother scolded her, "You're already a young lady, but you still don't know any rules all day. In the future, when you leave the house, won't you be a joke? Look at your eldest sister. Do you think she's playing around like you? In just three months, she's learned the rules well, and even learned how to embroider. The medicinal tea that was sent over previously was also made by her. Now that she's a little older, she can help manage the house. Can't you learn from your eldest sister?"

When Chu Chu heard this, she did not feel anything.

However, she had been saying it every day, which made her angry.

Hence, she did not hold back her anger and quarreled with her mother.

After the argument, she felt aggrieved. Thinking about Yu Youyao's recent changes, she couldn't help but let her imagination run wild. Somehow, she ended up in the Jade Courtyard.

At this moment, Chun Xiao brought over a copper basin.

Yu Youyao picked up her handkerchief and helped Yu Shuangbai wipe her face clean. Seeing the tears on her face, she felt both heartache and amusement. "You're already so old, yet you're still crying. Aren't you ashamed?"

Yu Shuangbai was stunned and let her be.

Xia Tao took the sheep cream used by Miss.

After crying for a long time, Yu Shuang's white face was tense and uncomfortable. Yu Youyao took a jade spoon and scooped out some cream paste. She made circles with the bottom of the spoon and carefully pushed the paste to spread it evenly.

Yu Youyao used sheep's milk to make the sheep's cream. It took a lot of effort to make it. In the first few days, she had given her a few boxes and said, "Spring is hot, and the sheep's cream is warm and moisturizing."

She knew that Yu Youyao always gave her things that she had personally made.

Yu Shuangbai's mouth was dry from crying, and Dong Mei happened to bring over a cup of medicinal tea.

She had cried hard just now and felt hungry, so Nanny Xu also brought over a few exquisite and delicious snacks.

Qiu Xing also silently washed a pot of cherries and placed them in front of her.

These big cherries had been found outside a few days ago. Yu Youyao did not know where they had come from, but from what she heard, they had ordered a lot of big cherries early in the morning. Everyone in the residence had a small plate of them. They were finally stocked with cherries. Even some of the capable servants could have a taste.

However, Yu Youyao had secretly given her another small plate.

As soon as she arrived at the Jade Courtyard, everyone in the courtyard surrounded her. This was because Yu Youyao sincerely treated her as a sister, so the maidservants treated her like their master.

Yu Shuangbai's eyes turned red. Thinking of what she had said previously, she felt very vexed. She lowered her head and grabbed Yu Youyao's sleeve anxiously. "I was just saying it out of anger. I wasn't serious. I've always treated you as my best sister. You can't anger me."

Yu Youyao felt a lump in her throat. She deliberately looked angry and did not say anything.

Yu Shuangbai panicked. She squatted in front of Yu Youyao and winked at her. “Good sister, it’s my fault this time. I was spouting nonsense. Please be magnanimous and forgive me this time. I’m willing to do anything.”

Yu Youyao chuckled. “You’re so hot tempered. Who would dare to make you work like a slave? If Second Aunt finds out, her heart will ache. You can’t do this next time...”

With her smile, the sisters finally made up.

When Nanny Liu saw this, she couldn’t help but heave a sigh of relief.

Everyone in the house had left. Yu Shuangbai held her medicinal tea and began to complain about her mother. She talked about how crazy she had been recently, forcing her to learn the rules and learn needlework.

Yu Youyao did not say anything and just listened.

Yu Shuangbai spat out a mouthful of bitterness and finally felt a little better. “Tell me, is my mother too much?”

However, Yu Youyao knew very well what Second Aunt was feeling. “Among the sisters, Third Sister is very outstanding in every aspect. She has already gained a reputation for being kind and polite outside. Even if Fourth Sister is a little rash, she still has some good embroidery skills. Fifth Sister is good at poetry. We’re all sisters, so it’s inevitable that there will be differences in strength.”

Yu Shuangbai was suddenly stunned. She had never thought of this before, and her mother had probably cared about her pride and never mentioned it. Now that Yu Youyao had hit the nail on the head, she felt mixed emotions.

The room immediately fell silent.

After a long while, Yu Shuangbai felt a lump in her throat. “But I don’t like to do needlework. My mother has been forcing me.”

Knowing that Yu Shuangbai had figured it out, Yu Youyao heaved a sigh of relief. “If you don’t like needlework, just tell Second Aunt. She’s not unreasonable.”

Yu Shuangbai held her face in her hands in distress. After crying for a while, her carefree face finally had the worry of growing up. “But, if I don’t learn needlework, I don’t know what to learn. You also know that I can barely understand my studies, and I’m not good at playing the zither, chess, calligraphy, and painting. No matter what I learn, I’m not good enough.”

Chapter 143 - 143 Humans Are Like Water

Yu Youyao shook her head. Yu Shuangbai had been spoiled by Second Aunt, who planned everything for her. Over time, she had developed this carefree personality. She did not take anything to heart, so she did not learn much.

In the past, she had been just like Yu Shuangbai. When her grandmother doted on her, she also became delicate. Now, it was impossible to change it.

However, after experiencing a nightmare, no one knew better than her that in the end, one could only rely on themselves.

Yu Shuangbai was fun loving and liked new and interesting things.

Yu Youyao had an idea and pulled Yu Shuangbai to the study.

There was a partition screen in the study room, and there was a tea set on a gold-threaded wooden table. This was where Yu Youyao learned tea making from Nanny Xu every day.

This was the first time Yu Shuangbai had seen so many tea sets. There were small stoves, cups, bowls, teacups, and so on. There were dozens of them. “Are these all for tea making?”

Yu Youyao nodded and asked Chun Xiao to burn a small stove. As she ground the tea brick, she said, “Tea skills involve mainly recognizing tea, distinguishing tea, making tea, brewing tea, dividing tea, whisking tea, and so on. It’s easy to learn the first part. What I want to do is divide tea and whisk tea. It requires an extremely high level of tea appreciation skills.”

Yu Shuangbai was still a little uninterested.

Yu Youyao continued, “Dividing tea is a method of brewing tea. In the previous dynasty, people were flourishing and it was popular. The noble ladies invited their friends to sit together and brew tea, so they used a ladle. They used a few clever tricks to make the tea flow into an object. Beasts, insects, flowers, and plants were beautiful and varied, as delicate as a painting. However, they were lost in a moment. It was called ‘a hundred tricks of tea’. That was how tea dividing was born. In the Great Zhou Dynasty, the method of tea dividing was no longer popular. The technique of whisking tea began to flourish. Built on the basis of tea dividing, the advantages were combined into one, combining the essence of the two.”

After hearing Yu Youyao’s explanation, Yu Shuangbai finally became interested. “You can actually make such a fancy tea? Quick, show me!”

Yu Youyao first displayed her tea-dividing technique. She was skilled, and her every move was beautiful and smooth.

Not long after, the tea patterns in the cup surged, and the tea surface turned into patterns. Yu Shuangbai’s eyes widened in shock. She leaned forward to take a look, and the water surface really did turn into peach blossom patterns.

Yu Shuangbai was extremely excited. “This is too amazing. How did you do it? Quick, teach me.”

Yu Youyao shook her head. “I’m also a beginner. I can only create some simple tea patterns, but I can’t teach you. If you want to learn, ask Second Aunt to find a powerful master to teach you seriously.”

Yu Shuangbai quickly asked, “Can I make any tea patterns that I want as long as I learn how to make tea?”

Yu Youyao nodded. “Logically speaking, that’s right. However, what kind of soup patterns can be made depends on the level of tea brewing.”

Yu Shuangbai looked deep in thought.

After that, Yu Youyao displayed a few simple tea patterns that piqued Yu Shuangbai’s curiosity.

Yu Shuangbai was also excited. She begged Yu Youyao to teach her tea techniques, but Yu Youyao refused. She only said that she was not good at tea techniques and was afraid that she would lead others astray, which made Yu Shuangbai anxious.

As the two sisters joked around, the sun was about to set.

Madam Yao had sent her maidservant, Cai Wei, to look for Yu Shuangbai.

Yu Shuangbai was no longer angry, but she still had a temper. She said, "I've already told Big Sister that I'll stay in her room today and talk to her under the same blanket. I won't be going back."

With that, Yu Shuangbai turned to look at Yu Youyao. "Good sister, I've already said what I wanted to say. You have to agree. Otherwise, how embarrassing would it be for me to run back like this?"

Yu Youyao was also helpless. She glared at her. "Second Aunt dotes on you. Otherwise, she wouldn't care about what you do."

Hearing this, Yu Shuangbai stuck out her tongue, and the haze in her heart completely dissipated.

Cai Wei returned to the second house and told Madam Yao this.

Madam Yao held her teacup and sat there in a daze.

In the afternoon, Yu Shuangbai rushed to the main house in a huff. She was also filled with regret. She shouldn't have said those words. Worried that the sisters would cause a ruckus, she also chased after them.

In the inner room, Yu Shuangbai was crying profusely.

When she reached the outer room, she was shocked and afraid when she heard Shuang Bai's unrestrained words. Once she said something, not only would it hurt their relationship as sisters, but it would also cause trouble for Old Madam.

Fortunately, Yu Youyao interrupted Shuang Bai and comforted her.

At this moment, Yu Zongshen came down from the government office. As soon as he returned to the residence, he heard that the mother and daughter were arguing. He entered the house and asked Madam Yao about it.

Madam Yao didn't hide anything and told him everything. "I was wrong. I saw that Yao Yao had changed a lot recently and felt that Shuang'er was still childish, so I was a little strict with her."

Yu Zongshen frowned when he heard this. "Shuang'er is already old. She indeed has to learn the rules well, but Shuang'er is different from Yao Yao. As long as she's sensible and knows the severity of the matter, we'll protect her." At this point, his expression darkened. "Don't be too harsh on Shuang'er. Ruining the sisterly relationship will make Mother unhappy."

Upon hearing this, Madam Yao felt a little uncomfortable, but she still forced a smile and said, "This girl is very angry. She's throwing a tantrum at me, but she's still staying in Yao Yao's room, saying that she wants to share a bed with her and refuses to come back."

With that, Madam Yao lowered her head.

The hot tea in the cup was filled with smoke, causing her eyes to be misty and moist. Everyone envied her for being lucky enough to marry a young talent like Yu Zongshen, who was a Cabinet aide.

She often comforted herself, too.

However, humans were like water, and they could tell if someone was hot or cold.

Madam Yao perked up. "Master has just left the government office. Why don't you rest in the main courtyard?"

Yu Zongshen's expression was indifferent. "No, I still have official documents to deal with in my study." Thinking of Yu Shuangbai, his expression paused for a moment. "I'll go to the main residence to take a look at Shuang'er first."

With that, he strode out of the house without waiting for Madam Yao to react.

Madam Yao suddenly gripped her teacup tightly, her arms trembling.

Yu Zongshen treated her with respect, and gave her the dignity of a first wife. However, she could now sense how much of a couple they were.

They had been husband and wife for many years, but she could not see through his heart.

It was also bitterly disappointing.

In the house, Yu Shuangbai pestered Nanny Xu to teach her tea techniques, and Nanny Xu did not refuse.

Seeing that Yu Shuangbai was really interested, Yu Youyao pursed her lips and chuckled. She glanced at the window and saw that her second uncle had come to the Jade Courtyard at some point. He was standing in the courtyard with his hands behind his back. His handsome and elegant figure was resting under the tall tree, and he actually looked inexplicably gloomy.

This was the first time Second Uncle had come to the Jade Courtyard after she had moved in.

Chapter 144 - 144 Can't Make a Scene

Second Uncle was still wearing his official uniform. He had probably just left the government office to look for his second sister.

This was a father who truly doted on his daughter.

She recalled that she had been seriously ill previously. When her fever was still high, her father had asked Nanny Liu to invite him over to take a look at her after leaving the government office. After that, she had not seen him any more.

Yu Youyao pursed her lips and walked out of the room. Her embroidered shoes made a soft sound on the limestone floor, but he did not notice it until she was behind him.

Seeing that her second uncle was looking at the tree in a daze, Yu Youyao asked, "Second Uncle, do you like this tree very much?"

Every time her cousin returned to the Jade Courtyard, he also liked to sit beside the tea table in the study and look out at the trees.

Yu Zongshen's back moved slightly before he turned around with a smile on his lips. "It's rare to see a tree that's already seven to eight hundred years old. It's a little rare."

Yu Youyao was stunned for a moment. "Second Uncle, how did you know that this tree has been around for seven to eight hundred years?"

Her cousin had said that he wanted to use this tree to make a zither for her. She then ran to An Shou Hall and asked her grandmother about the age of this tree.

Her grandmother only said she didn't know.

Even Grandmother wasn't sure. How did Second Uncle know?

Surely his mother hadn't told him!

Yu Zongshen was caught off guard by her question.

Back then, he and his eldest brother had yet to separate from the family, so saw Xie Roujia a lot. Once, when they bumped into each other at the Lotus Lake, Xie Roujia said that she wanted to repair the courtyard. "Your eldest brother despises my stench of copper and said I don't know how to be elegant. He doesn't even have the patience to talk to me. Hurry up and give me an idea. How should I repair this courtyard? I have a farm in Tongzhou. There's a parasol tree growing on the mountain. I heard that it's seven to eight hundred years old. The parasol tree is an elegant item. I plan to move it into the residence and plant it in the courtyard."

It was tall and straight, with the intention of rising higher.

The green leaves were so thick that they covered the sky.

The leaves were sparse on the branches, and when the autumn leaves fell, they looked even more elegant.

The tree had lived for a thousand years without dying. It had the significance of longevity.

Even though the tree was withered but not rotten, it also had the meaning of immortality.

Parasol trees were auspicious trees, and the older they were, the better. Many wealthy families liked to plant parasol trees in their courtyards.

Yu Zongshen retracted his thoughts and smiled faintly. "I happened to hear your mother mention it. It's a bitter summer, and it's very hot and humid in the capital. When she was cultivating in the Jade Courtyard, she even asked for the opinions of many people in the residence."

Yu Youyao nodded. "I see!"

Yu Zongshen changed the topic and frowned slightly. "Did you cut the branch on top of the Green Parasol tree?"

When Yu Youyao heard this, she immediately beamed with joy. "Cousin wants to teach me zither skills, so he cut off the top branch from the tree to make a good zither for me."

Yu Zongshen was silent for a moment.

When he thought of the usual correspondence between his family and Zhou, he inevitably knew that Zhou was a rare talent in the world. He could read at the age of three, read at the age of five, read at the age of seven, and play the zither at the age of nine.

He also had his doubts about Zhou Linghuai's sudden arrival in the capital. He had used the family banquet to test Zhou Linghuai and confirmed that he was indeed an extraordinary talent. Only then did he dispel his doubts.

Although there were many talents in this world, there were only a few prodigies. There were very few geniuses like Zhou Linghuai and Song Mingzhao.

Yu Zongshen glanced at Qing Wu again and asked, "Is your second sister feeling better? This girl really gives me a headache when she makes a fuss."

Yu Youyao nodded. "She cried so much in the afternoon that I was shocked too. She's fine now. She's pestering Nanny Xu to teach her how to divide and whisk tea. I saw that Second Sister was extremely interested in tea art, so Second Uncle should find a tea master to teach her. She doesn't like learning a dry skill like embroidery."

Yu Zongshen smiled and nodded. "This girl has been spoiled by her mother. She doesn't care much about anything and only knows how to live a carefree life. However, she's not as sensible as you. I'm afraid you'll have to take credit for her dedication to tea."

Yu Youyao pursed her lips and smiled, but said nothing.

Yu Zongshen looked at her. After losing weight, her appearance had also grown. She really looked like her mother, Xie Roujia.

"In the blink of an eye, Yao Yao has already grown so big." Yu Zongshen felt a little emotional. He took a step forward and raised his hand to touch the top of her head, but the hand he raised was as heavy as a thousand gold coins. He gently put it down. "You're only half-grown, but you still have to learn from Nanny, go to school and help manage the household. If you have any difficulties, look for me and your second aunt."

For some reason, Yu Youyao's heart ached. She quickly lowered her head. "Thank you, Second Uncle."

Second Uncle had always treated her well. Whatever Yu Shuangbai had, she would definitely have a share. When her father scolded her, he would also speak up for her if he knew.

When she was young, she was insensible and always secretly thought, "If only Second Uncle was her father."

Therefore, she had always envied Yu Shuangbai.

Yu Zongshen patted her shoulder lightly. "Since Shuangbai is fine, I'll go back first. Let her stay in your courtyard today."

Yu Youyao nodded. "Second Uncle, take care."

The next day, Yu Shuangbai refused to leave the Jade Courtyard. She wanted to pester Nanny Xu to learn tea techniques, so Yu Youyao heartlessly chased her back.

After the commotion yesterday, Madam Yao had also thought it through and called her daughter to the secondary room. "If you don't want to learn needlework, then don't. However, you have to learn the rules. You can't make a fuss anymore."

Yu Shuangbai threw herself into her mother's arms and said coquettishly, "Mother, I know I was wrong. I didn't mean to cause trouble with you. I have to be patient when learning needlework. It takes an hour to sit down. How can I sit still? Isn't this asking for my life? I can't learn such a dry thing."

Seeing that her daughter had taken the initiative to admit her mistake and was as close to her as before, Madam Yao pinched the tip of her nose and teased, "If you can't learn it, how did your big sister learn it?"

Yu Shuangbai leaned into her mother's arms. "Big Sister isn't as lucky as me. She doesn't have a mother who dotes on me as much as you do. In the past, she had to brace herself and learn even though her hands were covered in bloody holes. If she doesn't learn well, won't she suffer even more? I'm only like this now because you've spoiled me."

She had only understood these principles this morning.

Big Sister got out of bed at dawn and walked in the courtyard for an hour.

Big Sister had a special blue and white plate on her head, which was filled with a thin layer of water. When she walked, she couldn't let the water splash out.

Eldest Sister fell twice. Nanny Liu helped her up and took a sip of tea before letting her continue walking.

She clearly saw a bruise on Big Sister's wrist.

Yu Shuangbai told her mother about what had happened this morning. Madam Yao's heart ached when she heard this. She sighed softly. "Mother won't force you anymore."

No matter how much Old Madam doted on Yu Youyao, how could she dote on her more than a mother?

However, she could not bear to see her daughter suffer like this.

Chapter 145 - 145 Cousin, Save Me!

Yu Shuangbai felt a little sad, so she said, "I've thought about it carefully. I'm already an adult, but compared to my sisters at home, I'm not scholarly. I'm not good at studying, and I'm not good at needlework. I'll make you worry. Yesterday, when I saw Big Sister making tea, I felt that it was interesting and novel, so I wanted to learn tea techniques. It's also an elegant skill. In the future, I won't be a laughing stock outside."

These words stunned Madam Yao.

Yu Shuangbai continued, "I'm also greedy. I feel that I can still put some effort into food, so I plan to learn that too. Mother, what do you think?"

She looked up at her mother.

Madam Yao came back to her senses and smiled. "I'll immediately get someone to find a powerful tea master to teach you well. As for your culinary skills, learn how to make some exquisite snacks. Learn them when you have time. Don't tire yourself out."

Yu Shuangbai returned to the courtyard happily.

Madam Yao hurriedly called Nanny Chen over. "Hurry up and ask around. Find out who are the best tea masters in the capital. Shuang'er is taking the initiative to learn tea arts. I have to find a good teacher for her."

When Nanny Chen heard this, she was overjoyed. "Sister has grown up and become more sensible. Madam, you have to be at ease in the future."

When Madam Yao heard this, she paused for a moment. "I heard that Yao Yao has been learning the zither recently? I have a good zither score in my collection, and it's a rare one. It's all thanks to Yao Yao. Find the score and send it to her."

Even as her mother, she hadn't thought that Shuang'er liked interesting and novel things. However, Yao Yao had thought of these things and even made Shuang'er interested in tea.

Sixth Sister, Yu Fangfei, was younger than the other sisters, so she had to study harder. As time passed, she could no longer keep up. She was originally an innocent girl, but as time passed, she became more sensitive and inferior. Every time she returned to her room to greet them, she would lower her head and ask questions.

It was also because Yao Yao had been improving recently and was doing well in her studies. Yu Fangfei often borrowed her notes and asked her for guidance if there was anything she didn't understand. Soon, her studies improved greatly.

In the first few days, she heard that Ms. Ye had even praised her once. She seemed to have become more cheerful.

It was rare that Yao Yao had grown up and knew how to take care of her sisters.

Yu Youyao was very happy to receive the zither score from Madam Yao.

When she found out that Yu Shuangbai not only wanted to learn tea techniques, but also make some snacks, she also found two good snack recipes and asked Nanny Chen to bring them back for Yu Shuangbai.

At night, Yu Youyao fell asleep and returned to the side courtyard of the Zhenguo Marquis Residence.

Two stout old maids were holding her head and feet down so that she couldn't move.

Nanny Qin, who was serving Yu Jianjia, picked up a slender silver needle and inserted it into her chest, straight into her heart.

She cried and even begged in pain. Only when a drop of blood emerged from her heart and Nanny Qin placed it in a white jade bowl did she take out the needle and ask the old maids to let go of her.

She clutched her chest as she lay on the bed, in so much pain that she couldn't even breathe...

"Cousin, save me..." Yu Youyao screamed.

Zhou Linghuai suddenly woke up with a start. His pupils constricted rapidly, and he panted heavily. It was lonely in the dark night.

Chang An, who was on duty outside, heard the commotion and quickly entered the room. He saw his young master sitting on the bed in a thin shirt. His forehead was covered in sweat, and his face was pale and gloomy.

“Young Master, did you have another nightmare?” Chang An took a robe from the rack and draped it over his young master. The room was a little cold, and he was worried that his young master had caught a cold.

Zhou Linghuai didn’t seem to hear him. He let out a series of coughing sounds from his throat, and his chest kept rising and falling violently. Yu Youyao’s shrill cry still echoed in his ears. “Cousin, save me!”

Her shrill voice was filled with despair.

He couldn’t help but think of the little girl’s empty eyes.

“Yao Yao!” Zhou Linghuai’s eyes were about to crack. His entire heart was like a ball of paper, and the pain of being crushed inch by inch made him almost unable to breathe.

“Young Master, Young Master...” Chang An was very worried. He called out a few times, but there was no reaction from Young Master. He was in a trance due to the nightmare.

In the past three years, Young Master had nightmares almost every day. He would wake up from them every night. It was only after coming to the Yu Residence that he had fewer nightmares.

Zhou Linghuai seemed to have woken up from a dream as his hands suddenly tightened around the blanket.

Naturally, the dream was fake!

But his feelings were so clear!

It was as if all of this had really happened.

“What time is it now?” Zhou Linghuai’s voice was hoarse and a little piercing. After he woke up, he immediately felt a dull pain in his knees, as if someone had taken a rusty ax and chopped his head off.

It was excruciating, but it hurt even more than usual.

Sweat beaded his forehead again.

“It’s past 2:00 a.m.” Seeing that his young master was not in a good mood, Chang An became even more worried. In the past, after his young master woke up from his nightmare, he could quickly adjust his emotions. However, something seemed to be different today.

Just now, he seemed to have heard his young master call out, “Yao Yao?”

Could it be that Young Master’s dream just now was related to Yu Youyao?

Zhou Linghuai tilted his head to look out of the window and heard the sound of rain. He muttered, “It’s raining...”

Chang An did not hear what he said and looked out of the window.

It was raining outside, and the weather was damp and cold. He was worried that he would catch a cold, so he closed the windows tightly. “Young Master, it’s still early. You should sleep again.”

Zhou Linghuai’s leg hurt badly, so he didn’t want to sleep anymore. “Let’s go wash up!”

“But...” Chang An opened his mouth. After Young Master had injured his leg, every time it rained, the weather would be wet and cold, and his leg disease would act up. Every time it hurt, he would take medicine and have needle therapy. He had tried all kinds of methods, but none of them worked. It had rained tonight, and he was worried that Young Master’s leg would hurt, causing him to not sleep all night.

Zhou Linghuai said calmly, “Today is the ninth day. I think the wood should be ready by now. I’ll go over and take a look to prevent any mistakes.”

Chang An opened his mouth again—

Young Master had not had a good rest for eight or nine consecutive days. In the first few days, he did not sleep at all. He stayed by the bed day and night and did not even go to school.

It was also because most of the wood had dried that it did not need to be placed in the kiln to be heated with charcoal. It only needed to be baked close to the fire. He closed his eyes every day but he could not sleep for more than an hour. He had to get up and go to the kiln room to take a look to feel at ease.

In the first few days, Young Master had felt the change in the weather and his legs were uncomfortable. Once the rain fell, his legs would definitely hurt again.

Even so, he was still focused on the Paulownia wood. He did not think that if this continued, his body would be exhausted.

Chang An watched as his young master opened his mouth but closed it again. His lips moved, but he decided not to say anything. Even if he did, his young master wouldn’t listen to him.

Chapter 146 - 146 Making the Zither

He finally understood that as long as Young Master touched anything related to Yu Youyao, he would be careful and cautious. He hoped that the zither could be made as soon as possible so that Young Master could be more at ease.

“It’s raining outside, and the weather is very cold. Young Master, you have to wear more layers.” Chang An helped Young Master put on a thick jacket and a cloak with white fox fur and deer fur.

It was already March. April was in sight.

However, Zhou Linghuai was wrapped up tightly, as if it was winter.

Even so, Zhou Linghuai still felt that the cold air was seeping into his legs. No matter how many clothes he wore, he still felt cold and gloomy.

Chang An touched his young master's hand, which was still cold. "I'll prepare a hand warmer for you and start the fire in the house."

Zhou Linghuai nodded slightly and turned his wheelchair to leave.

There were a few lanterns hanging under the corridor, and they were sparsely lit. The overwhelming darkness outside the corridor seeped in, making the lights seem even more clear and dim.

There was a pot of hanging orchids above Zhou Linghuai's head. Between the narrow leaves, a long flower stem hung down. At the end of the flower stem, there was a small cluster of light yellow flowers that fell in front of his eyes.

Zhou Linghuai smiled gently and pushed the wheelchair along the outer corridor. After turning a corner, he arrived at the kiln.

Flames danced in the furnace. Dressed in black, Yin San hid in the shadows. "Young Master!"

Zhou Linghuai nodded. Seeing that the Paulownia wood was still a little lacking, he took out a book and flipped through it. The firelight danced on his face, making his sickly face look even more noble and graceful. He was elegant and charming.

Yu Youyao's face was pale as she woke up from a nightmare. She sat on the bed with her hair disheveled, her hands tightly gripping her clothes as she panted heavily.

Only when she felt a chill did Yu Youyao hear the sound of rain hitting banana leaves outside.

It was raining!

Yu Youyao got out of bed and walked gently to the window. She pushed open the window frame, and a cool breeze blew against her body.

Chun Xiao, who was on duty outside, heard the commotion and quickly entered the house.

Seeing Miss standing in front of the window in unlined garments, she hurriedly took out her outerwear and rushed over. "They say that spring rain is like winter. Be careful not to fall sick from the cold."

Yu Youyao obediently put on her clothes. "What time is it now?"

Chun Xiao said, "It's already past midnight. Why is Miss awake in the middle of the night?"

"I had a nightmare. After I woke up, I didn't really want to sleep." Yu Youyao's chest felt a little cold. She couldn't help but tighten her clothes and change the topic. "When did this rain start?"

Chun Xiao said, "It's been raining since 10pm. It's not that heavy, but it's not light either. I'm afraid it'll be raining for a few days."

Yu Youyao chuckled. "Spring rain is as important as oil. It's another good year."

Chun Xiao also smiled. "Isn't that so? Whether the crops are good or not depends on how much spring rain falls. If this rain falls for a few days, it will probably be guaranteed this year."

Just now, she had felt suffocated and anxious. Now that the cold wind blew, Yu Youyao felt that even her body was cold.

Chun Xiao quickly closed the window. "Young Miss, go and warm yourself up on the bed first. I'll prepare some hot water. You can soak in it to get rid of the cold. Young Miss was shocked by the cold wind just now. It's wet and cold with the cold rain. Unknowingly, the cold air will enter your body, and you'll fall sick."

There was an old woman on duty in the small kitchen, dozing near the stove.

Chun Xiao entered the small kitchen.

The old woman opened her eyes warily and quickly stood up. "Miss Chun Xiao, is there anything you need?"

This Eldest Miss of theirs was not a master who knew how to torture the servants. She was also generous to the servants. Nanny Xu was also very capable in managing them. Everyone in the courtyard was also very dedicated.

Chun Xiao said, "Young Miss woke up at night and was accidentally startled by the wind. Quickly prepare hot water for her to soak in."

The hot water on the stove had been boiling in the pot. The old woman was quick to carry a bucket of hot water into the side room and quickly prepared a bath.

After taking a bath, Yu Youyao felt warm and comfortable.

Chun Xiao was worried that Young Miss would catch a cold, so she brought over another bowl of brown sugar ginger water for Yu Youyao to drink. "If you catch a cold, you will make Old Madam and Young Master worry. You have to drink a bowl of ginger soup to warm up your body."

"You're the only one who knows how to talk. When did you learn Nanny's tricks?" Yu Youyao glared at her. Although she was unwilling, she still frowned and drank.

Her mouth was filled with a spicy taste that could not be concealed even with sugar.

Chun Xiao brought over a cup of medicinal tea. Yu Youyao felt better after drinking it.

After all this, Yu Youyao was a little sleepy. She covered her mouth and yawned, letting Chun Xiao rush her to the bed. She lied down on the bed and was covered with a blanket.

Listening to the pitter-patter of the rain outside and the pitter-patter of the rain hitting the leaves, she unknowingly fell asleep.

She felt like she had just woken up from a nap.

When Chun Xiao heard the commotion, she entered the room and saw that Young Miss had already gotten up. "Young Miss, sleep a little longer. Nanny knows that you had a nightmare last night and

didn't fall asleep. She didn't let us call you and said that you don't have to learn etiquette this morning. You can sleep as long as you want."

Yu Youyao shook her head. "I've been up early for a while. This will make me lie back down and sleep again. I'm not used to it. I'll wash up!"

Chun Xiao pursed her lips and chuckled, preparing to wash her mistress up.

Yu Youyao heard the pitter-patter outside. "It's been raining for the entire night?"

Chun Xiao nodded. "Yes."

After washing up, Yu Youyao changed into a thick set of clothes. It was rare for her to not learn etiquette in the morning, so she still felt uncomfortable.

It was still early, so she had to wait for a while for breakfast. It was also still early for school. Yu Youyao did not know what to do for a moment, so she asked Chun Xiao to move a couch to the corridor to sit and watch the rain.

Dong Mei found a green silk cloak and draped it over her mistress. "It's cold outside. Miss, be careful not to fall sick from the cold."

Outside the corridor, the rain was misty. The raindrops were like threads, falling one by one. The old tree had sprouted green overnight. The tender green leaves were small and elegant, looking fresh and cute.

The parasol tree did not like wet or cold weather. This year, the weather was a little cold, and the leaves also grew later.

Yu Youyao turned to Dong Mei and said, "After this rain, the leaves of the Parasol Tree will grow. In April, the green leaves will appear. Cousin will definitely like it."

After breakfast, Yu Youyao changed into small sheepskin boots and went to school with an oil-paper umbrella.

It was still early, but Yu Youyao had already arrived.

Ms. Ye called her over. "Have you been learning the zither recently?"

Yu Youyao nodded. Afraid that Ms. Ye would misunderstand, she explained, "Grandmother feels that although I'm good at studying, I still have to learn some other talents. However, Mother is sick, and Grandmother is old. I have to help manage the household, so I don't have much time and energy to learn extra skills, so I just started learning it casually from Cousin."

Chapter 147 - 147 Role Model Sisters

Ms. Ye did not mind who she learned the zither skills from. She called Old Madam Su over. "Bring me the zither in my room."

Old Madam Su responded and left.

Yu Youyao looked at Ms. Ye curiously. Mr. Ye said, "Your grandmother is right. Only by learning some talent can you show off your abilities. Otherwise, others will think that you don't know how to be elegant and are a nerd."

Yu Youyao nodded obediently.

Old Madam Su carried the zither out. Yu Youyao took a closer look. The zither was dark green and looked elegant and simple. “Ms. Ye, your zither is really beautiful.”

Ms. Ye’s fingers hooked, picked, wiped, tapped, and twirled. The Ode to the Zither flowed between her fingers. It was clear, strange, light, and distant, like the endless spring rain.

It wasn’t until the sound of the zither gradually faded and the lingering sound lingered in her ears that Yu Youyao finally understood. “Ms. Ye, you’re really good at the zither. That’s why you can capture the scene with the zither.”

Ms. Ye nodded calmly. “You do it.”

Yu Youyao panicked when she heard this. She waved her hands frantically. “Forget about me. I can’t even play a complete song. How can I play in front of you...”

Ms. Ye said calmly, “Let’s see how much you’ve learned and give you some pointers.”

Now, Yu Youyao couldn’t refuse. She sat down bitterly in front of the zither table and placed her trembling fingers on the zither. She took a deep breath and picked the strings with the intention of dying early.

She was also playing the Ode to the Zither.

This was an entry-level piece of zither music, and it was the simplest. The eldest daughter learnt it quite well, and there were no mistakes. It was just that she had not practiced it well, so the tune seemed unfamiliar. Since she was not used to it, it was a little out of tune.

After the song was over, Ms. Ye nodded. “The zither requires a lot of practice. Practice more in the future. If there’s anything you don’t understand, you can ask me.”

Yu Youyao heaved a sigh of relief and bowed to her. “Thank you, Ms. Ye,” she said solemnly.

Ms. Ye’s expression softened a little. “You’re talented and smart. Other than your zither skills, you can also dabble in chess and painting. Even if you don’t want to be a talented woman of the arts, you have to be someone who’s eager to learn.”

Others who learned a lot of things might bite off more than they can chew. However, Eldest Miss Yu was a rare person with wisdom, character, and spirituality. Such people usually learned everything.

Yu Youyao looked thoughtful.

Seeing that she had listened, Ms. Ye nodded in satisfaction. “I’ve seen your handwriting recently. It’s tactful and reserved. Are you using the Seven Purple Three Sheep brush?”

Yu Youyao nodded. “I didn’t have a chance to use the brush that you gave me.”

A smile appeared on Ms. Ye’s face. “It’s fine. It’s more difficult for women to learn calligraphy. Many people can’t control their wrist strength. The seven purple three sheep brush is a little soft, but it has a higher requirement for wrist strength. I’ve underestimated your talent. I’ll make a set of brushes for you another day. There are seven purple three sheep, six purple four sheep, and four purple four sheep. You can use them interchangeably.”

Yu Youyao was pleasantly surprised. “Ms. Ye, the brushes you make are good. They’re better than the ones I have. Thank you.”

The two of them chatted casually.

At this moment, Yu Jianjia walked over with an umbrella. She was wearing a light green dress that was very simple and clean. However, there was a pile of pear blossoms embroidered on the hem of her dress, making her look even more beautiful.

The faint ones were flowers, but the beautiful ones were people.

The weather was cold and the rain was slightly cold. She held a green pear branch umbrella and did not even wear a cloak to block the wind. Her figure was as slender as a branch.

Yu Youyao took a look and did not know what to say.

Wouldn’t she freeze like that?

If she wasn’t sick, who would be?

Nanny Xu said that an eight or nine-year-old girl was at the age where she knew how to appreciate beauty.

At this time, she still didn’t know how to be thin, what to wear, how to be beautiful, and how to lose weight. Her young body could also withstand the cold, but when she grew older, she would know that she had unknowingly hurt her body when she was young and ignorant. She would suffer from colds sickness.

Most young ladies from wealthy families had such cold diseases. They couldn’t be cured, and the older they got, the more uncomfortable they felt.

They were also warned not to be overconfident in the cold.

Yu Jianjia immediately saw Yu Youyao and Ms. Ye sitting opposite each other. There were zithers, books, tea, and incense on the small table. She pursed her lips and walked forward to greet Ms. Ye.

Seeing that she was wearing very little, Ms. Ye reminded her, “The weather is cold. You should wear more in the future, in case you fall sick from the cold and suffer.”

These were clearly words of concern, but in Yu Jianjia’s ears, they sounded a little harsh.

She tilted her head and glanced at Yu Youyao.

Yu Youyao was wearing a green cloak that blocked the wind. She was also wearing a green dress, but the color of the dress was a little darker, like a new bud after the rain. It was very elegant.

Ms. Ye compared her thin clothes to Yu Youyao’s thick clothes. She said, “Thank you for your concern.”

After that, Yu Shuangbai and the others also came in.

When she saw Yu Youyao, Yu Shuangbai immediately smiled and jumped forward. She was about to hold Yu Youyao’s arm when Yu Youyao gave her a look.

The sisters had a good relationship, so they had a tacit understanding. Yu Shuangbai immediately stopped in her tracks. When she saw Ms. Ye, she obediently stepped forward and bowed. “Hello, Ms. Ye!”

Ms. Ye nodded.

Only then did Yu Shuangbai move closer to Yu Youyao. “Big Sister, my mother found a nanny who knows how to make tea in the Education Department. Although that nanny is a little strict, her tea skills are really good. I’ve been learning from her for two days, and she even praised me for my talent. I even made hibiscus cake with the kitchen maid this morning. It tastes pretty good. I brought some over. I’ll let you try it later...”

Yu Youyao smiled as she listened. After receiving praise and affirmation from others, she became more motivated and worked harder to learn.

Yu Fangfei also leaned over. “It’s all thanks to Eldest Sister. My studies have improved a lot recently, so I asked the Concubine to teach me how to make hair ornaments. If they don’t look good, please don’t mind.”

With that, she took the wooden box from the maidservant and opened it.

Inside were headflowers made of different types of silk and brocade. There were peonies, camellias, plum blossoms, and various other shapes. The gems were sewn into the center of the flower, the golden threads were used as the stamens, and the jade beads were used as the tips. They were exquisite and bright.

Yu Youyao’s eyes lit up, and she picked out a silk camellia. “In the Great Zhou Dynasty, there were pearl flowers, hairpin flowers, head hairpins, flower crowns, and so on. It’s rare to see cloth-like hair flowers. Sixth Sister, you’re really skilled.”

The flower head wasn’t as precious as the gold, silver, and jade, but it was also more exquisite. Gold, silver, and jade couldn’t make such a realistic flower shape.

Seeing that Big Sister liked it, Yu Fangfei was also happy. “I’m only good at this. As long as Big Sister likes it.”

Yu Youyao picked a light yellow parasol tree flower and handed it to Chun Xiao. “Help me put it on.”

She was wearing green clothes today, so this flower was suitable for her.

The trumpet-shaped parasol tree flowers were small and delicate. Strands of stamens protruded from the center of the flower. A yellow stamen was at the bottom and the filaments hung by her ears. They swayed slowly, but were extremely beautiful.

At this moment, even Yu Lianyu, who was standing beside Yu Jianjia, couldn’t help but lean over.

Chapter 148 - 148 Thank You Very Much for Miao’s Reward

A gust of wind blew over with the cold rain. Yu Jianjia, who was standing alone at the side, immediately felt that her body was completely cold. She couldn’t help but cough.

In just two to three months!

The lazy Yu Shuangbai became dedicated and learned things seriously. Yu Fangfei, who was a little timid in the past, was also more generous and lively. Even Yu Lianyu did not get too close to her and kept circling around Yu Youyao.

It was as though if Yu Youyao advanced, so did the others.

They were really sisters who went through life together.

—

Zhou Linghuai was guarding the bed.

At noon, the wood was brownish-yellow in color, and his pale face was stained with some emotions. He took out the wood and weighed it in his hand. He tapped it gently with his fingers a few times and listened carefully. After a while, he said, "Light, loose, crisp, and smooth. All four are good." There was a hint of a smile on his lips, and even his hoarse voice was filled with joy. "Great!"

This time, it just so happened that it was drizzling on the last day. It was a blessing from the heavens. Originally, the quality of the zither was good, but with this trace of moisture, this could be more compatible with the little girl than the famous zither. Thinking of this, he thought of the little girl's zither, and its rare sound. When he finished this zither, the rare sound would also become inferior.

Chang An also heaved a sigh of relief. "Young Master, the materials are ready. You have to rest well."

Zhou Linghuai stroked the zither, his deep eyes filled with rare joy.

There was charcoal in the kitchen, and it was warm inside. However, he felt that his legs were cold and painful. Previously, he was worried that something would go wrong with the wood that was about to be finished, so he kept staring at it, not feeling anything.

However, at this moment, he felt an unbearable pain in his leg.

His leg hurt badly, and he wanted to do something to clear his mind. Zhou Linghuai lowered his head and looked at the top-grade zither in his arms.

His voice was hoarse. "Go get my carving knife."

Chang An disagreed a little. Caught off guard, he took a step forward and took the tung wood from his young master's hand. He placed it far away. "Young Master, it won't be done in a short time. You can't continue to endure it. Your body won't be able to take it."

Zhou Linghuai frowned and suddenly gripped the armrest tightly, panting in pain.

Only then did Chang An notice his young master's abnormality and was shocked. In the past, his young master's leg had never been in such unbearable pain. "Young Master, I'll get Uncle Sun to take a look."

At this moment, an anxious voice came from the door. "Cousin, what's wrong?"

Zhou Linghuai held his breath and looked up.

The little girl was wearing a green dress. On the pleated dress, there were small yellow-green parasol flowers embroidered. The trumpet-shaped flowers were dense and beautiful. They were scattered, but they were bright and beautiful.

Yu Youyao rushed into the house and immediately saw that her cousin's face was pale and his forehead was covered in a layer of sweat. She immediately panicked. "Cousin, what's wrong? Are you feeling unwell? I'll get someone to get a doctor immediately."

As she spoke, she was about to run out in a panic.

Zhou Linghuai suddenly held her hand and said hoarsely, "Don't be worried. It's just a leg problem."

His leg had started hurting a few days ago. He didn't want the young lady to worry, so he didn't let her know.

"Leg disease? What kind of illness is this? Why haven't I heard Cousin mention it before? Is it very serious? Cousin, you look so pale and you're sweating a lot. Is it very painful?" Yu Youyao panicked even more when she heard this. Her voice was quick and anxious, and she was choking up. She was about to cry. She took a handkerchief and wiped her cousin's sweat. "Where's Uncle Sun? His medical skills are brilliant. Why didn't he treat Cousin? He just let him suffer like this..."

Zhou Linghuai, who was in unbearable pain, suddenly smiled. "It's just a lingering illness from when my leg was injured. It only hurts because the weather is a little wet and cold. It's not a serious illness. It'll pass in two days. I'm used to it."

It would have been better if he hadn't said anything. As soon as he did, the tears in Yu Youyao's eyes fell.

Zhou Linghuai was stunned. Tears fell on the back of his hand, but it hurt and splashed into his heart, making his heart tremble uncontrollably. "I'm fine, you..."

"It's already March, but Cousin is still wearing a thick jacket and a deer fur coat. It's so painful that he's even gasping for breath when he speaks. You still say that you're fine. Cousin, you're awful. You only know how to coax me. You didn't even tell me about your leg disease. If I had known earlier, I could have thought of a way. How could I have let Cousin suffer like this..."

Yu Youyao sobbed, blaming herself for being too careless and not paying attention to her cousin's health. She held her cousin's hand, which was as cold as ice, and rubbed it repeatedly, even blowing hot air on it from time to time.

The little girl's actions were so silly that Zhou Linghuai was stunned again.

At this moment, Uncle Sun arrived late.

Yu Youyao seemed to have found her backbone and quickly said, "Uncle Sun, Uncle Sun, Cousin's leg hurts badly. Hurry up and treat him..."

Uncle Sun glanced at her. "If it can be treated, do I need you to tell me about it?"

With that, he ignored her and turned to take Zhou Linghuai's pulse.

Yu Youyao panicked. She opened her mouth to ask why it couldn't be treated, but seeing that Uncle Sun was taking her cousin's pulse, she could only swallow her words.

About ten seconds later, Uncle Sun finished taking his pulse and stroked his long beard. "Young Master, is your leg hurting more than before?"

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "The pain is unbearable."

Uncle Sun pondered for a moment. "Young Master's foundation has improved, and the feeling in his legs has also recovered a little. It can be seen that the medicinal cuisine that Eldest Miss sends every day has some effect. This is also a good thing. However, Young Master will have to suffer more in the future."

Yu Youyao was stunned for a moment before she understood.

The medicinal cuisine that Uncle Sun had mentioned was the spiritual dew that she had secretly put into supplements every day. She did not expect that the spiritual dew would have a recovery effect on her cousin's leg. Should she add more in the future?

However, her cousin's body was a little weak, so she wondered if he could take it.

Moreover, his cousin was so smart. As soon as the effect was obvious, he would definitely sense it.

It wasn't that she had to hide the matter of the spiritual dew, but this matter was too strange, and she didn't know if she should tell her cousin.

After thinking about it, Yu Youyao decided to put in more in the future. She didn't want to think about anything else. She only wanted her cousin to be well and didn't want him to suffer.

After thinking this through, Yu Youyao couldn't help but ask, "Uncle Sun, is there really no way to treat Cousin's leg? Is there a way to relieve the pain?"

Uncle Sun shook his head and took out a set of silver needles from the medicine box. "What do you know? This is bone pain. There's no way to treat it, but it can be relieved a little with acupuncture. It can reduce the pain for two to four hours after being pricked once. However, this needle can't be used to prick him too much. It can't be done more than twice a day."

Chapter 149 - 149 Worried About Cousin's Leg Pain

Yu Youyao bit her lip, feeling terrible. "But Cousin is in a lot of pain..."

Her cousin had many secrets, but he did not deliberately hide them from her. In the past, she only knew that Uncle Sun knew some medical skills, but after interacting with her cousin, she also knew that Uncle Sun was the descendant of the "King of Medicine". His medical skills were not inferior to Imperial Physician Hu's in the palace, and few people could compare to him. He said that her cousin's leg illness was incurable, so it was probably really incurable.

Uncle Sun sighed. "It can't be helped."

"What should Cousin do then?" Yu Youyao panicked, and tears welled up in her eyes again. She was about to cry.

Tears welled up in her eyes and trembled slightly. They were about to overflow from her eyes. Zhou Linghuai's heart ached, and he felt his heart tremble terribly, making him feel bitter. "Don't cry. Didn't you hear Uncle Sun say that the more painful my legs are, the better they are? I don't want to spend the rest of my life in a wheelchair."

If his legs didn't recover, he probably wouldn't live long.

In the past, he had only wanted to endure for three to five years and take revenge for his family. Even if he died, it would be a clean death.

But now, he was filled with greed, anger, infatuation, and desire. If he didn't feel satisfied after three to five years, it would definitely take a long time.

Yu Youyao tried her best to hold back her tears and not let them fall. She felt terrible, so she squatted in front of her cousin and buried her face in his knees. "Cousin, I'll definitely think of a way to treat your leg. Otherwise, you'll suffer for the rest of your life."

As she spoke, she suddenly thought of the "Divine Physician Xie" in her nightmare. He seemed to be from the Medicine King Valley, a martial arts sect. He was also a rare famous doctor in the world. She wondered if he could treat her cousin's leg disease.

Yu Youyao bit her lip lightly.

In her nightmare, she had become a medicine source because Divine Physician Xie could cure Yu Jianjia's heart disease. Although it was just a dream, every time she thought of this person, she would feel a sense of trepidation and panic. Divine Physician Xie used human blood and human hearts to concoct medicine. He was evil. She didn't know if he was good for her cousin or not.

She wondered if she should tell her cousin about this.

"Cousin, I..." Yu Youyao looked up and opened her mouth.

Seeing the little girl's teary eyes, Zhou Linghuai asked worriedly, "What's wrong?"

"I..." Yu Youyao's breathing stopped for a moment. For some reason, the words that were about to come out of her mouth were stuck in her throat. For a moment, she couldn't spit them out. She shook her head. "No, nothing. I'm just worried that Cousin's leg will hurt."

With that, the little girl's voice choked as she lay on his lap, her small shoulders trembling.

Zhou Linghuai frowned slightly. The little girl clearly had something to say to him just now, but for some reason, she did not say it out loud. He raised his hand and gently rubbed the top of her head. "Do you have something to say to me?"

Yu Youyao was stunned for a moment. Then, she choked and said, "There are so many famous doctors in the world. There must be someone who can treat Cousin's leg. Cousin, don't be discouraged. I'll write to Grandfather later and tell him about Cousin's situation. I'll ask him to help find him."

That wasn't what the young lady wanted to say! Zhou Linghuai pursed his lips slightly. "Okay!"

Uncle Sun wiped the silver needle and lowered his eyelids. "Can't you wait until I'm done with the acupuncture?"

Yu Youyao quickly jumped away. "Uncle Sun, quickly insert the needles into Cousin's leg."

Zhou Linghuai's gaze darkened. "After the acupuncture, I still have to wait for an hour before I can take it out. Cousin, you don't have to wait here. Go back first. You've already learned Ode to the Zither that I taught you previously, but you still have to practice more to play it well."

Yu Youyao pursed her lips. "Cousin, you're deliberately sending me away. I won't fall for it. I didn't know that you had leg problems in the past. Now that I know, I definitely have to know more." As she spoke, she waved her hand. "Besides, Cousin's leg hurts badly. If I talk to you, perhaps you'll feel better. Cousin, don't persuade me. I won't leave anyway."

The little girl ignored her cousin and went up to Uncle Sun to ask him about his leg condition.

Thinking about how her cousin had hidden her leg illness from her previously, she had learned to be smarter this time. Thinking that her cousin's body was a little weaker, she asked carefully about his health.

Uncle Sun chose what he could say. He avoided some serious matters, but overall, it was not bad.

Seeing that the little girl was not leaving, Zhou Linghuai felt helpless. He lowered his eyes to hide the obscurity in them. "My legs have been injured for three to four years. They're a little different from others, but it's not good for Cousin to see them."

His family had undergone a huge change, and he was filled with bone-corroding hatred. The reason why he was able to survive was because he did not care about his legs at all.

However, at this moment, he did not want the little girl to see his increasingly ugly and unsightly legs.

When Yu Youyao heard this, she fell silent. She opened her mouth to say that it was fine, but her cousin did not want her to see them.

Feeling a pang of bitterness in her heart, the little girl pursed her lips slightly and said in a sad voice, "Then, I, I'll return to the Jade Courtyard first and ask Nanny Xu if she has any way to ease Cousin's leg problem."

With that, the little girl ran out of the courtyard like the wind.

Zhou Linghuai's heart skipped a beat. "Cousin."

It was drizzling outside, so this little rain was not enough to wet the little girl. However, when it landed on her body, it was cold, and she would fall sick from the cold.

Hearing her cousin call her, Yu Youyao stood at the door and turned around. She had been crying for a long time, and her eyes were red and puffy, making her look adorable.

Zhou Linghuai sighed softly and came to the door. He bent down and picked up the oil-paper umbrella on the ground. The little girl had casually thrown it down when she came. "It's still raining outside. Use the umbrella. Be careful not to get wet."

After receiving the umbrella from her cousin, Yu Youyao's sad face lit up again. "Thank you, Cousin. I'm not going to school in the afternoon. I'll come over to visit you later."

"Okay!" Zhou Linghuai watched as the little girl opened the paper umbrella and walked into the drizzle. The apricot flowers on the umbrella were slanted, and she looked beautiful.

Yu Youyao was a little sad that her cousin did not want her to see his injured legs, but she quickly let it go. As long as her cousin was fine, she would be happy.

After returning to the Jade Courtyard, Yu Youyao went to the kitchen first.

Mother Zhao, the cook in the kitchen, quickly stepped forward with a smile. "Young Miss, if there are dishes that you want to eat, I'll definitely be able to make them."

Mama Zhao could cook some of the eight major dishes. Her culinary skills were really good.

Yu Youyao smiled and said, "The spring rain is as cold as winter. Grandmother has a cold disease, and when it gets cold, she'll feel uncomfortable. It's the same for Cousin. I plan to make some nourishing medicinal cuisine personally to nourish their bodies. Mother Zhao can guide me from the side so that I don't spoil it. Although I've learned some medicinal cuisine from Nanny, I've never worked properly in the kitchen."

Chapter 150 - 150 Medicinal Dew

"How can that be? I know how to make medicinal cuisine too. Why don't you guide me and I'll make it like usual?"

After saying that, Mother Zhao even took a look at Eldest Miss's slender fingers. Her fingers had never been dirtied before, so how could she do rough work near the stove? She would hurt her hand.

Yu Youyao shook her head. "There's no need."

After failing to persuade her, Mother Zhao stopped persuading her.

Yu Youyao and Mother Zhao picked out a chicken together. "Pick a tender chicken and an old hen."

Mother Zhao was puzzled. Old hens were definitely the most nourishing when it came to stewing soup. Just as she was about to ask, she heard Eldest Miss say, "Cousin's body is a little weak, so it's not good for him to receive so much nourishment or it would hurt his body."

Mother Zhao suddenly understood. She picked a one-year-old chicken and a three-year-old chicken, then instructed the old maids to clean them up.

Yu Youyao did not stay idle either. She took seven to eight medicinal herbs, such as angelica, ginseng, and deer antler, and stuffed them into the cloth bag used to make soup. She soaked them in water and even added some spiritual dew.

Soon, Mother Zhao brought back the cleaned chickens and quickly crushed them into pieces.

Yu Youyao first placed the tender chicken into the pot to cook. When it was done, she scooped it up and washed it with clean water. Then, she added some spices and some clean water to cook it.

When it boiled, a thick layer of chicken oil appeared on the surface.

Yu Youyao was worried that it would be too greasy and nourishing, so she threw away the oil and scooped up the chicken and soup together. She placed them in a purple clay pot and slowly simmered them with the medicinal packets made of ginseng, deer antler, and other medicinal herbs.

Mother Zhao watched from the side, but she did not have the chance to give any pointers. “This is the first time Miss has been in the kitchen seriously, but she’s not careless at all.”

Eldest Miss was very unfamiliar with the work on the stove, but she did it in an orderly manner. It was obvious that she had not learned in vain from Nanny Xu.

Yu Youyao smiled and prepared the old hen as well. She put some angelica and ginseng in it and instructed, “The ginseng and deer antler chicken soup is for Cousin. Stew it for two hours. The angelica chicken soup needs to be stewed for four hours. Watch the heat.”

Mother Zhao smiled and agreed.

After giving her instructions, Yu Youyao looked for Nanny Xu.

When Nanny Xu heard about Young Master’s leg condition, she pondered for a moment. “I do know of a medicinal oil formula that can improve blood circulation and relax tendons and meridians. It also has the effect of reducing swelling and pain. Young Master should be able to use it.”

Yu Youyao’s eyes lit up. “Nanny, tell me quickly.”

“Don’t be anxious. I have the prescription for the medicinal oil, but I still have to concoct it. Go to the incense room first. I’ll teach you how to make it.” After Nanny Xu finished speaking, she went to the incense room with Yu Youyao.

The Jade Courtyard was very large and had many rooms. Yu Youyao was very interested in making incense and had learned it with all her heart. She specially had a room with all kinds of medicinal herbs and spices.

To make this medicinal oil, more than 20 medicinal herbs such as osmanthus leaves, cinnamon, citronella, dried ginger, blood exhaustion, turpentine, and so on were needed. However, these medicinal herbs had to be made into medicinal dew first.

In the previous dynasty, when fragrance was at its peak, an incense maker used a wine vessel to steam the fragrance and extract its essence. They placed the spices and medicinal herbs into water and boiled them with charcoal. Then, they steamed them and used an instrument to extract the dew. This way, the dew could be made.

The medicinal dew that was needed for the medicinal oil was not expensive either. It was made of all common herbs. Many incense sticks also needed to be used. Yu Youyao had made a lot of them when she was practicing mixing incense. Now, she didn’t lack anything.

In less than two hours, Yu Youyao had finished making the medicinal oil.

The smell of the medicinal oil was very pungent. Yu Youyao couldn’t take it anymore, but she still endured the discomfort. She wiped some on the back of her hand and rubbed it hard. Soon, the back of her hand was red and hot.

Nanny Xu nodded. "Perfect."

Yu Youyao heaved a sigh of relief. When she was making the medicinal oil, she added some spiritual dew. The effect should be pretty good.

After that, Yu Youyao asked Chun Xiao and Dong Mei to make two pairs of leg warmers. They were good at needlework and were quick with their hands. There was no need to embroider the leg warmers. They could be done quickly.

Then, she asked Xia Tao and Qiu Xing to burn the mugwort leaves. Yu Youyao gathered the mugwort ash and made them into two mugwort ash medicine bags, which she sewed into the inner layer of the leg warmers.

When Nanny Xu saw this, she couldn't help but praise, "Sister, what a coincidence. The mugwort ash also has the effect of activating blood circulation and reducing cold and moisture. You can sew the mugwort ash into a medicinal bag and sew it into the leg warmers. You can warm it over the charcoal fire and tie it to your leg. Not only can it warm your leg, but it can also be heated for a long time. When it's cold, it can also be easily replaced."

Yu Youyao smiled. "Cousin's legs can't stand the humidity. It's more convenient and warmer than a foot warmer."

The foot warmer couldn't keep his legs warm all the time. Nanny Xu agreed deeply. "The Empress Dowager also has an old cold and can't stand the humidity. I used to learn a good massage technique from Old Yu in the palace. I'll teach you how to use it together with the medicinal oil. The effect will be better."

Yu Youyao's eyes lit up and she quickly nodded.

Nanny Xu brought over an acupuncture chart and first taught Yu Youyao to identify the three acupuncture points on her leg. "It's mainly because there are three finger techniques for each of these three acupuncture points. The acupuncture points are different, and the finger techniques are also different. Each acupuncture point takes the time of an incense stick to burn out. It takes more than an hour to complete a set. It's a little strenuous."

Yu Youyao rolled up her pants, revealing her shiny calves. "If you do it on my legs, I'll pick up the technique."

Nanny Xu nodded and found an acupuncture point on her leg. "There are three methods here. Press, circle, and press. Take a closer look."

As she spoke, Nanny Xu pressed her thumb on this area. With the acupuncture points as the center of gravity, she pressed and circled. Soon, Yu Youyao's leg was red. She felt that this area was a little hot, so Nanny Xu pressed down hard.

Yu Youyao immediately felt her legs tighten and loosen. Her entire leg was numb. After feeling numb, she felt relieved.

Sensing the benefits of the massage technique, Yu Youyao learned it even more seriously. She had a photographic memory and could understand these simple movements at a glance.

Nanny Xu explained the fingering method of the three acupoints and the areas that she had to pay attention to. After doing it again, Yu Youyao learned it.

As Yu Youyao thought about it, she continued, "Although Uncle Sun's medical skills are good, he's not as meticulous as Nanny when it comes to nourishing a body. Nanny, find me some medicinal recipes, incense, medicinal baths, and ways of soaking a body. Although these are useless for the time being, they will be effective in the long run. Cousin, on the other hand, is weak and can't take any nourishment. He still has to start from his daily life habits and recuperate bit by bit."

However, she thought to herself that these things were not very effective, but if she added the spiritual dew, the effect would be different. As for whether her cousin would notice anything, she did not think about it.

Nanny Xu naturally agreed, and the two of them discussed.

At this moment, Chun Xiao came over. "Young Miss, the deer antler and ginseng chicken soup is ready."