

## All Hail 161

Chapter 161 - 161 Live Off Someone While Secretly Helping Another

“Old, Old Madam...” Yang Shuwan called out awkwardly. She had unexpectedly seen Yu Youyao. Thinking about what had just happened, new and old hatred welled up in her heart

No wonder Yu Youyao had handed over the household manager’s key so easily. She had been waiting for her here.

In the past, all these dog slaves had been beaten and punished.

This little b\*tch had fed these people some kind of bewitching potion. In just half a month, she had already made these people cozy up to her.

!!

Yang Shuwan pinched her handkerchief and pressed it against the corner of her mouth. Her eyes turned red, and tears welled up in her eyes. Just as she opened her mouth to speak...

When Old Madam Ma saw Old Madam and Eldest Miss, it was as if she had seen her master. She quickly crawled over and knelt on the ground with a thud. She wailed, “Old Madam often said that First Madam is old and careless. She asked us old servants to work harder. I gave First Madam pointers because I’m honest and listen to everything Old Madam says. I really take your words to heart.”

“I’m another old servant who doesn’t know my place. I only said a few unpleasant words, but I offended First Madam. It’s all my fault. Old Madam, please punish me...”

Yang Shuwan immediately gritted her teeth. She did not expect this old villain to complain first. “Old Madam, this...”

At the side, Liu’er knelt on the ground with a thud. “Old Madam, the new rules have been set for many days, and there have been no mistakes in the residence. Everyone has been more dedicated to their work than before. I don’t understand either. This new rule is fine, but why does it have to be the same as before? It’s such a big matter, but the residence doesn’t even have any regulations. We’ve only said a few words, but who knew that First Madam would be so angry on the spot. She opened her mouth and wanted to slap Godmother. She even took a teacup and smashed it on her. Even though Godmother was in the wrong, she’s still loyal to the residence. Old Madam, please understand.”

Yang Shuwan glared fiercely at Liu’er. She felt that this girl looked a little familiar, but she couldn’t remember who she was for a moment. However, she recognized that this girl was from the main courtyard.

This despicable thing lived off her but helped someone else!

She was simply too hateful!

She quickly explained, "I didn't say I wanted to cripple—"

At this moment, a few more old servants knelt down one after another. "Old Madam, it's not that we want to cause any trouble. It's just that everyone is doing their best, but from First Madam's words, it's like we're all lawless, disrespectful, and bullying the master. It's really disappointing..."

Everyone spoke at once, and Yang Shuwan did not even have the chance to speak. Her face turned green with anger.

These dog slaves were indeed not easy to deal with.

Old Madam Yu heard everything but was in no hurry to speak. Instead, she looked at Nanny Liu. "What exactly happened?"

Madam Yang's key had yet to be used, but she had already angered everyone in the residence.

It wasn't that Madam Yang was stupid, but that she was too selfish. No one could sit still when their own interests were involved.

Madam Yang had underestimated Yao Yao's ability to manage people and even used the same method as the previous mistress of the household.

However, when Yao Yao was in charge of the household, she treated the servants as people. In contrast, Yang Shuwan treated them like dogs. No one was stupid, so how could they not feel it?

It was fine in the past.

Now that there was a comparison, who could stand it?

Nanny Liu stepped forward and whispered in front of Old Madam, telling her everything that had happened, including what Yang Shuwan had said previously.

After hearing this, Old Madam Yu felt more confident. She turned to look at Yang Shuwan. "Who said anything about changing the rules of the residence? Have you asked me about such a big matter?"

Yang Shuwan's expression also froze. "Old Madam, you've misunderstood. I didn't say that I was going to change the rules of the residence. It's just..."

Old Madam Yu couldn't bear to listen to her explanation and said sternly, "You didn't say anything, so how did you cause a commotion? Do you think the rules are something that can be settled with just a twitch of your tongue? What do you think our Yu Residence is? After managing the family for a few years, do you think you're the ruler of this residence? Does everyone have to listen to you? Even the emperor has to look for important ministers of the cabinet to discuss matters together. It's serious business."

On the first day of being in charge again, she had been thinking about making her own rules and putting on airs. However, no one was stupid. Once her own rules were created, the new rules that had just been established in the residence would probably be useless.

Even if she did not explicitly say that she wanted to abolish the old rules and replace them, the servants still had to make a scene to prevent Madam Yang from getting her way.

Yang Shuwan pinched her handkerchief. "Old Madam, that's not what I meant. I... Yao Yao didn't discuss this with me when she set the rules..."

Yu Youyao's eyelashes trembled slightly, and her eyes turned red. "It was because of Mother Yang and Zhou Yongchang's matter that made Mother angry. That's why you thought that it was my fault for not managing the household well. Mother was seriously ill, but you still had to worry about the family matters, causing your illness to worsen. I didn't dare to tire Mother out anymore. The rules of the residence were also discussed with the stewards and pushed forward with Grandmother's approval. I was the one who didn't think it through. It was only right for Mother to blame me..."

Yang Shuwan looked as disgusted as if she had swallowed a fly. Her face stiffened. "This, I'm not blaming you, but..."

Old Madam Yu frowned. "You handed in the key yourself. You were the one who said that you had a migraine. The doctor said that you should take good care of it and not interfere with family matters anymore. Poor Yao Yao. She's worried about her mother's health and feels sorry for an old woman like me who still has to continue working at such an old age. That's why she was helping to manage the house. Go out and ask around. Which young miss in the capital needs to help manage the house when she's only Yao Yao's age?"

Yu Youyao lowered her head, her shoulders trembling slightly, as if she was really hurt by Yang Shuwan.

"It's not just because of this..." Upon hearing Old Madam's words and seeing this scene, Yang Shuwan was instantly furious. She wished she could slap this little b\*tch.

Old Madam Yu continued coldly, "It's also because you've worked too hard and are seriously ill that Yao Yao thought of a way to make new rules so that you can be more relaxed in the future. She's being filial, but you, her stepmother, have lost your position and are blaming Yao Yao instead. Just say this out loud and let others hear it. Let's see if you still have any face left."

It was obvious that Yu Youyao, that little b\*tch, had ulterior motives. Now, based on Old Madam's words, it had become her filial piety. Even the rules were set for her?

Yang Shuwan's eyes widened in disbelief as she turned to look around.

Seeing that many servants in the courtyard were actually nodding in agreement with Old Madam, she was shocked that they actually thought so too. Then what had she become? What had she become?

## Chapter 162 - 162 The One That Stood Out

Old Madam Yu patted her granddaughter's hand and said to Yang Shuwan, "If you can't manage the house well, hand over the household manager's key. It's not like this house can't be managed without you. If word gets out about how there was a conflict, it'll become a joke."

"Old Madam!" Hearing this, Yang Shuwan felt dizzy and couldn't help but cry out.

After being reprimanded by Old Madam Yu in front of the servants, she recalled that in the past, Old Madam's health wasn't very good, so she couldn't manage the family. Everyone in the residence couldn't help but be managed by her, and they couldn't stay far away from her.

However, now that Yu Youyao had been in charge of the family for a while, the situation was different.

The old woman was just waiting for her to cause trouble so that she could legitimately hand over the key to manage the household and let Yu Youyao manage it.

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Old Madam Yu turned to look at Old Madam Ma. "Get up. Get a doctor to take a closer look at your face later. Then, you can rest for two days before working again."

Old Madam Ma hurriedly kowtowed. "Thank you for your understanding, Old Madam..."

Old Madam Yu glanced at the servants in the courtyard. "Most of you are servants of the residence. If there's anything, just look for Nanny Liu and report it to me. Don't cause trouble like this anymore. Alright, disperse!"

Indeed, it was Yang Shuwan who was too outrageous. If she did not give the servants an explanation, they would bear a grudge against their master. In the future, they probably would not do her best. Over time, they would probably cause trouble in the residence.

However, she couldn't let these old servants cause trouble. She couldn't let them be too arrogant.

Old Madam Yu reprimanded Yang Shuwan on the spot, which could be considered an explanation to the servants. She also gave them a few words of warning to remind them.

Everyone quickly replied, "Yes."

Everyone in the courtyard left, and Old Madam Yu turned to leave.

Yang Shuwan hurriedly stepped forward. "Old Madam, it's all my fault. I'll definitely take good care of the family from now on. I promise I won't let you worry anymore."

Just now, this matter had finally given her a reminder. She had to be careful when managing the household in the future, lest the old woman caught the mistake and gave Yu Youyao a chance to replace her.

These words suited her thoughts, so Old Madam Yu did not say anything.

Yang Shuwan felt a little awkward. She turned to look at Yu Youyao and smiled. "Yao Yao, it was my fault just now. I didn't mean to blame you. Don't take it to heart. I've seen how hard you've been working recently."

Yu Youyao nodded obediently.

As soon as they left the main courtyard, Old Madam Yu turned around and instructed Qing Xiu, who was following behind her, "Go and find a doctor to take a look at Old Madam Ma."

Not long after Old Madam Ma returned to her room, Qing Xiu brought the doctor over.

Old Madam Ma was so grateful that she almost knelt down and kowtowed on the spot. The doctor looked at Old Madam Ma's face and only said that she was fine. She would be fine after recuperating for a few days. He prescribed medicine for her injuries.

Not long after, Mu Jin from the main courtyard came over with a box of pretty good supplements. She said with a frown, "Just now, Madam was also angry, so she smashed the teacup. Who knew that the fragments that fell to the ground would splash all over Old Madam Ma's face? She didn't mean to smash it. Don't misunderstand her."

Old Madam Ma lowered her head in response, but she looked disapproving.

Although Eldest Madam Yang's teacup wasn't aimed at her, her anger was directed at her.

Mu Jin placed the supplements on the table. "First Madam has always been kind. She asked me to bring you a box of high-quality lotus root powder and let you nourish your body carefully. This lotus root powder was bought from the Food Hall. This box is only worth more than ten taels of silver."

The Food Hall was the largest food shop in the capital. It sold a lot of food from all over the Great Zhou Dynasty, as well as some good supplements. Most of the supplements from the various families in the capital were bought from there.

Old Madam Ma was a servant of many generations. She was considered half a master in the residence and had received many rewards. How could she not have seen this before?

Even though she had benefited from this high and mighty attitude, Old Madam Ma still felt uncomfortable. However, she still looked grateful. "Thank you First Madam for your understanding."

Mu Jin walked away arrogantly, but bumped into Qiu Xing at the door.

The two of them looked at each other. Neither of them had any intention of taking the initiative to greet each other, so they looked straight ahead.

When Qiu Xing entered the house and saw Old Madam Ma, she took the initiative to greet her. "Old Madam Ma, your face is injured. Eldest Miss asked me to bring a box of Jade Beauty Cream for you so that your face can recover faster."

When Old Madam Ma heard this, she quickly waved her hand. "How, how can that be? I only have an old face. How can I use such an expensive thing?"

Qiu Xing stuffed the Jade Beauty Cream into Old Madam Ma's hands without any explanation. "It's just a box of Jade Beauty Cream. It's not worth much. Granny is an old woman in the family, and many things in the family depend on you. How can it not be useful? Don't reject Eldest Miss's kind intentions."

At this point, Old Madam Ma couldn't refuse anymore. She hurriedly bowed and accepted it. "Eldest Miss is kind-hearted. Miss Qiu Xing, you have to thank Eldest Miss for me."

A box of Jade Beauty Cream was indeed nothing to Eldest Miss.

Eldest Miss had sent someone to give her the Jade Beauty Cream. Her words were filled with consideration for her despite her status as a servant without any selfish motives.

Compared to Eldest Madam Yang, it was obvious who was better.

After sending Qiu Xing off, Old Madam Ma returned to her room happily. In front of a small bronze mirror, she took out a layer of Jade Beauty Cream and applied it on her old face. The Jade Beauty Cream was refreshing. As soon as it was applied on her face, she felt that her face did not hurt so much anymore.

At this moment, Liu'er had sent the doctor back into the house. As soon as the door closed, she said anxiously, "Godmother, you were too bold just now. Eldest Madam Yang has been sick for a while, and it's the first day she's back in charge. She wanted to find an opportunity to reestablish her authority. Why did you make yourself stand out?"

Even the rest of the servants could not be in such a hurry to be beaten.

Her godmother was a smart person. How could she have done such a stupid thing? She was so frightened just now that she had forgotten that she was from the main courtyard and spoke up for her godmother on the spot.

In that case, Eldest Madam Yang would probably hate her. Her days in the residence would probably be difficult in the future.

Old Madam Ma chuckled. "You don't understand!"

Liu'er was confused.

Old Madam Ma did not keep her in suspense. She looked at Liu'er. "If you're the Old Madam, why would you specially invite a doctor over to take a look at my face?" She placed her face in front of Liu'er. "Take a closer look. There's only a small cut on my face. It's not serious. I'll just apply some external ointment and I'll be fine in two days."

Liu'er replied, "Didn't Old Madam say that it's because of her relationship with the servants?"

"Silly!" Old Madam Ma rolled her eyes and glanced sideways at Liu'er. "There are many servants in the residence like me who bump into each other every day. Why would she specially hire a doctor for me?"

Chapter 163 - 163 Cunning

Liu'er shook her head, but said, "But Godmother is much more dignified than them."

These words made Old Madam Ma laugh. "I've flattered everyone, just as Old Madam wanted. That's why Old Madam still remembers me. Even Eldest Miss remembers my kindness, so she got someone to give me a box of Jade Beauty Cream."

After saying that, she even took out the Jade Beauty Cream for Liu'er to see.

Liu'er's eyes widened. "Eldest Miss is really generous. I heard that this box of Jade Beauty Cream costs twenty to thirty taels of silver."

"Of course." Old Madam Ma couldn't stop grinning. "Our Eldest Miss is just like Old Madam. She's a magnanimous and kind person. She's also very awesome when it comes to doing things for others."

Liu'er agreed and asked suspiciously, "Godmother just said that she had flattered the right person. What does that mean?"

Old Madam Ma looked at her with disdain. "Why did I only accept a blockhead like you as a goddaughter? You saw it today. Eldest Madam Yang hasn't even taken back control of the key properly, and she's already causing trouble. Although she didn't openly criticize Eldest Miss, after two to three days, if she continued to hold the household manager's key tightly, that might not be the case."

Liu'er agreed deeply. "Only by picking on Eldest Miss's butler's mistakes can she show how capable she is. At that time, why would Eldest Master be dissatisfied with Eldest Madam?"

Old Madam Ma nodded. "Old Madam is a shrewd person. How could she not have guessed this? She would definitely take the opportunity to teach Eldest Madam Yang a lesson and make her stop. I'm the one who stood up and instigated the servants in the house to cause trouble. I'm the one who handed the knife to Old Madam. What do you think?"

Liu'er was dumbfounded. "No wonder Old Madam came so quickly. Godmother, you're amazing. How did you guess all this?"

Old Madam Ma looked at her goddaughter. Thinking about how she had risked being punished by Eldest Madam Yang today to plead for her, she felt a little more sincere. "You have to remember that there are three things we can't do as servants. We can't betray our masters, we can't be too greedy and we can't be disloyal. My grandfather's generation kept telling me that none of the servants who betrayed their masters had a good ending. Look at Mother Yang and the others. Their lives were saved, but they were sent to the farm to work. How can they be more dignified than being in charge of the residence? They just made a mistake of being greedy and betraying their masters."

Liu-Er nodded.

"After Eldest Madam Yang regained control of the family, someone in the residence might see the situation and change their mind. They might even eagerly express their goodwill to Eldest Madam Yang. However, if you think about it carefully, you'll know what happened to Mother Yang and Zhou Yongchang. What good would it do to follow her?"

Liu'er was working in the main courtyard, so how could she not know the inside story?

Old Madam Ma continued, "You still have to know how to read the situation. Old Madam dotes on Eldest Miss. Now that Eldest Madam Yang is sick, Old Madam has asked Eldest Miss, who is still young, to manage the household. Isn't this clearly paving the way for Eldest Miss? If Eldest Madam Yang doesn't cause trouble, it's fine. However, as long as she stirs up trouble, it's definitely not wrong for us to side with Eldest Miss. Old Madam is still the one in charge in this residence."

Liu'er finally understood. "Godmother, you know so much."

It was no wonder that Old Madam treated her godmother differently even though there were so many servants in the residence.

One had to know that the main gate guarded the dignity of the residence, while the back gate guarded the secrets of the residence.

Old Madam Ma glanced at her from the corner of her eye. "Although you're an honest person, you've also had some good fortune. Now that Eldest Miss has the honor of being the eldest daughter of the first wife and has gained power in the residence, the main courtyard isn't a good place either. Your kneeling today has also offended First Madam. Eldest Madam Yang is too narrow-minded to tolerate you. In a few days, she'll find an excuse to send you to the outer courtyard."

Liu'er had been feeling terrified previously, but now that she heard her godmother's words, she couldn't help but feel relieved. "Did I benefit from a disaster?"

Old Madam Ma nodded. "When the time comes, I'll find a housekeeper I'm familiar with in the Jade Courtyard and get you into the Jade Courtyard. Perhaps you'll be able to match up to Eldest Miss's second-in-charge. If you're on good terms with Xia Tao, she'll gain face in front of Eldest Miss. Although she won't be a first-class maidservant, she'll be no different from Chun Xiao and Dong Mei. With such a relationship, you'll be able to stand tall in the Jade Courtyard."

Eldest Miss and her two maidservants were very close.

When it came to the second-rate maidservants, Xia Tao and Qiu Xing were enough. However, Eldest Miss had the honor of being the eldest daughter of the first wife, so she was no longer the same as before. She should command more respect.

When Eldest Miss's tenth birthday arrived and it was time for her to go out into society, she would definitely have to bring two second-class maidservants to serve her.

She had some reputation in the residence, and Liu'er had some relationship with the Jade Courtyard. In addition, Liu'er was honest and efficient. Even in the past, she had no mistakes in the main courtyard.

She was old and couldn't serve for many more years. Naturally, she wasn't afraid of offending Eldest Madam Yang.

However, Liu'er would have a long time to live in the future. After entering the Jade Courtyard and getting along well with Eldest Miss, she would follow Eldest Miss when she got married in the future. It would be reasonable for her to be married off, and she would not have to continue living under Madam Yang.

In the afternoon, Yu Zongzheng returned to the government office and went to the large study. He "accidentally" heard from Old Madam Ye in the courtyard about what had happened in the residence in the morning.

Yang Shuwan was afraid that the servants would gossip, so she specially reminded them.

However, no matter how hard she tried, she could not guard against the large study. Everyone in the large study was personally arranged by Old Madam.



Yu Zongzheng did not care much about the affairs of the residence, but when he heard that something had happened in the residence, it was inevitable that he would be angry, so he asked Zhao Da to ask around.

After Zhao Da returned, he told him everything in detail, angering Yu Zongzheng. “This family has only taken a pause for a few days, but they’re already causing trouble again. Madam Yang is an adult household manager, but she’s not as good as a half-grown child like Yao Yao.”

Back then, when Madam Xie had failed to get pregnant after three years, his mother had originally planned to find a concubine for him. Who would have known that now that Madam Xie was pregnant, the matter of taking a concubine would be left unsettled?

He did not have a good relationship with Madam Xie either. Even the bedroom arrangements at home were arranged by Madam Xie, so it was difficult at night.

Hence, after having a feast in the Yang Residence, he was momentarily in a daze. After drinking a few cups of millet wine, he couldn’t control his lower body and mistook Madam Yang for a maidservant.

He had always felt guilty towards Madam Yang. After that, he coveted Madam Yang’s tender body and was determined to marry Madam Yang as his second wife.

However, her mother did not agree. She said, “Yang Shuwan was raised by my mother, so it’s fine for her to be a step-wife to an ordinary family. However, the Yu Residence is a scholarly family after all. The rules are a little stricter than ordinary families, so it’s a little inappropriate.”

At that time, his mind was filled with guilt towards Yang Shuwan, and his heart was filled with Yang Shuwan’s fair and tender body. Even when Madam Xie had died, he didn’t care much and hung out with Yang Shuwan. How could he have listened to her?

#### Chapter 164 - 164 A Storm Is Coming

But now that he thought about it, his mother was right.

In the past, with his mother helping to manage the family matters, he did not think much of it. In the past few years, as his mother grew older, he could no longer take on any more work, so all the family matters were handed over to Yang Shuwan.

After that, the house was not as peaceful as before.

Seeing Yang Shuwan in such a bad state, Yu Zongzheng also had a headache. He called Wen Zhu over and sent a message to the main courtyard.

Then, she looked for Zhao Da. “Go to the Jade Courtyard and talk to Eldest Miss. I’m going to discuss it with my advisor today. Ask her to prepare a few suitable dishes and send them to the main study. In the future, she’ll be in charge of everything in the main study.”

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Recently, the Imperial Court had been tense. With Yang Shuwan’s incompetence, he did not dare to let Yang Shuwan interfere in the matters in the study anymore. He had no room for mistakes to happen and couldn’t cause a disaster.

Previously, when Yao Yao was in charge of the household, everything in the main study had been arranged well. Even the dishes that she brought every day were more meticulously eaten.

After sending Zhao Da off, Yu Youyao fell into deep thought.

After the imperial examination, her father became busier and busier. Even though he had injured his leg previously and was recuperating at home, he still had to deal with many official matters every day and discuss matters with his aides.

These days, her father's time in the office was getting longer and longer.

After returning home, she he did not even have time to eat dinner. Instead, he called for his aides to discuss matters. Most of the time, the food was sent to the main study.

It wasn't just her father.

Even Second Uncle left early and returned late.

Yu Youyao was already familiar with the situation of the various families in the capital. Gradually, she began to pay attention to the outside world. The more she knew, the more she felt that a storm was brewing.

Yu Youyao suddenly thought of that nightmare.

There was no beginning or end to that dream, and there were also some fragmented scenes. One thing was certain, in the nightmare, the splendor of the Zhenguo Marquis Residence was far from what it was now.

In her nightmare, she married into the Zhenguo Marquis Residence at the age of fourteen.

Only three or four years had passed since then.

Now, in the capital, the Weining Marquis Residence was like oil on fire. It was the most illustrious and noble place. With the Weining Marquis Residence around, how could the Zhenguo Marquis Residence still have glory?

Yu Youyao's heart skipped a beat. She suddenly clutched her chest, not daring to think too deeply.

It was just been a nightmare. There had been warning signs, but no foreknowledge. Nothing in the nightmare had happened. She couldn't rely on a dream to deduce the future.

Chun Xiao was a little worried when she saw Young Miss's expression change. "Young Miss, what's wrong?"

Yu Youyao calmed down and shook her head. "Let's go and take a look in the small kitchen."

Spring was fickle and easily warmed the heart and lungs. It was not good to be greasy.

Yu Youyao instructed the kitchen maid to make yam and kelp pork ribs soup, stir-fried pork with fungus, lotus seed soup, stir-fried asparagus, and a few other snacks and fruits.

This way, there was soup, broth, vegetables, and so on. It was light and nourishing.

At this moment, Xia Tao ran into the kitchen. "Young Miss, Master asked Wen Zhu to send a message to the main courtyard..."

Yu Youyao glanced at her, not knowing what to say.

Liu'er had stood up for Old Madam Ma, so she probably wouldn't hear any news from the main courtyard. Where had she heard this news from? It was really amazing.

"Recently, the court has been tense, and Eldest Master has been leaving early and returning late. He wants First Madam to handle the family matters carefully and stop causing trouble at home because Eldest Master will worry."

When Yang Shuwan heard Wen Zhu's words, the smile on her face completely disappeared.

"... Old Madam is old, so how can she withstand such torture? It's just that you're unfilial as her daughter-in-law..."

The words "unfilial" made Yang Shuwan stagger. Her vision darkened, and she suddenly felt a wave of resentment. However, Wen Zhu was still speaking, so she couldn't interrupt.

"... Eldest Miss is a little young, but she has grown up in front of Old Madam since she was young. She has managed the family for a while and has never made a mistake. However, she has some of Old Madam's demeanor. If Eldest Madam has any issues, she can discuss it with Eldest Miss so that the family can be more stable."

These words were said by Wen Zhu.

First Master's original words were to let Eldest Madam Yang and Eldest Miss manage the household together.

Yang Shuwan was so angry that she felt dizzy and breathless, but she had no choice but to squeeze out a smile. "Yes, Master is right. There are many things to do at home. I've also told Yao Yao to help me more in the future."

Wen Zhu lowered his head and did not say anything. He only said, "Master also said that in the future, all the matters in the study will be handled by Eldest Miss. Eldest Madam has just recovered, so it's not good for her to work too hard and tire herself out."

Master's words were much stricter, but no matter what, Wen Zhu was just a maidservant. She couldn't really say everything.

Yang Shuwan suddenly tightened her grip on her handkerchief, and her expression stiffened.

Wen Zhu lowered her head. "I will return to Eldest Master."

Only then did Yang Shuwan react and quickly asked Mu Jin to send Wen Zhu off.

At this moment, Yu Jianjia had just come back from school. From afar, she saw Wen Zhu coming out of the main courtyard. She frowned slightly and quickened her pace to the main courtyard.

The atmosphere in the courtyard was different from usual. Yu Jianjia entered the house and dismissed the servants before lifting the curtain and entering the inner room herself.

As expected!

Yang Shuwan sat at the table and wiped her tears with a handkerchief.

Yu Jianjia hurriedly stepped forward. “Mother, what’s wrong?”

Seeing her daughter, Yang Shuwan cried as she recounted everything that had happened in the residence today—

“...Those dog slaves let Yu Youyao manage the house for more than half a month, and they no longer care about me, the mistress of the household. Not only did they cause a ruckus in front of me, but even Old Madam allowed them to bully their master one by one, not giving me any face. In front of all the servants in the residence, she reprimanded me.”

As she spoke, she gritted her teeth and said hatefully, “The most hateful person is still Yu Youyao. She pretended to be innocent, making me look like a vicious stepmother. Didn’t you see how the servants looked at me differently...”

When Yu Jianjia heard this, she immediately understood the key point. She pursed her lips tightly and held back the cough that was about to come out.

Even a fool should know that it wasn’t easy to change the seal of the residence. Her mother didn’t say that she wanted to abolish the rules of the residence. She just wanted to set up her own rules so that she wouldn’t be restricted and have Yu Youyao lead her by the nose. This was human nature.

However, this plan was ruined by Old Madam Ma.

The more Yang Shuwan thought about it, the sadder she felt. “Your father actually specially asked Wen Zhu to come and pass on a message to me. He’s saying that my household management is inferior to Yu Youyao’s, and he won’t let me interfere in the matters in the study in the future...”

Yu Jianjia sighed softly and took a handkerchief to wipe Yang Shuwan’s tears. “Mother, Eldest Sister is currently in the limelight in the residence. As her stepmother, you have to avoid the limelight more carefully. After taking the household manager’s key and taking over the family again, they will stop while they’re ahead. You’ve been in charge of the family for many years in the past, so you’ve long had the dignity of a mistress. It won’t be long before you can establish your authority again. It’ll take a day or two.”

Chapter 165 - 165 The Older The Wiser

After crying, no matter how upset Yang Shuwan felt, she calmed down. “Yu Youyao has been in charge of the household for more than half a month, and the sky in the residence has also changed. Your father has praised her three or four times in front of me, so I can’t help but feel a little anxious.”

At this point, she gritted her teeth. “Besides, the rules in the family were all set by Yu Youyao. Even if I were to take over again, I would have to do things according to Yu Youyao’s rules. How can that be? As the mistress of the household, I had to arrange my own rules. Who knew that Old Madam Ma would cause a commotion?”

She did not have the guts to abolish Yu Youyao’s rules. She felt wronged.

Yu Jianjia also knew that this matter could not be blamed on her mother, so she only said, “Mother, Eldest Sister is different from before. It’s time for you to change your attitude towards her. However, you shouldn’t treat her like a child anymore. Don’t forget that she has Grandmother’s

guidance and a powerful nanny by her side. Zhou Linghuai from the Green House is also helping her. Compared to her, you seem to be alone.

She also understood.

!!

Old Madam Ma had clearly received Old Madam's instructions today and was deliberately making a fuss, taking the opportunity to knock her mother down so that she wouldn't become frivolous and cause trouble for Yu Youyao.

Her mother was too anxious. She had thought that she was the mistress of the household in the past, but she had underestimated Yu Youyao's current situation in the residence.

Although they did not criticize Yu Youyao openly during the meeting, no one was a fool. How could they not understand what she meant?

Wouldn't Old Madam Ma start making a fuss?

Once Old Madam appeared, her mother would definitely be controlled by her grandmother.

From now on, she would be in charge of the family. How would she dare to act rashly?

It wasn't that her mother's methods weren't good, but that Old Madam's methods were too powerful. Everyone said that the older one was the wiser. In the past, when Yu Youyao was still young, Old Madam had turned a blind eye to the matters in the residence.

However, now that Yu Youyao had grown up, Old Madam wanted to pave the way for her. If her mother interfered, wouldn't Old Madam use her methods to counter her?

Old Madam had been in charge of the family for most of her life, and her two sons were both capable officials. In the capital, who would dare to be disrespectful to Old Madam?

How could Mother be a match for Old Madam?

How could she gain anything from Old Madam?

Yang Shuwan thought about it carefully. Her daughter was right. Yu Youyao had indeed improved a lot during this period of time.

However, in her heart, she still thought that Yu Youyao was only a half-grown child, so she had underestimated her. If she was not careful, she would suffer at her hands.

However, when she heard Yu Jianjia mention Zhou Linghuai, Yang Shuwan couldn't help but feel puzzled. "What future can a cripple have? Only Yu Youyao would come knocking on his door. Why did you mention him?"

Yu Jianjia shook her head. "Mother, you can't underestimate him. I heard from Big Brother that Zhou Ling was born with a great talent. Second Uncle said that he's not inferior to Prince Song."

Second Uncle was definitely right.

It was a pity that she had misjudged Zhou Linghuai due to his legs previously. Otherwise, Yu Youyao wouldn't be the one sending good things to him. She wouldn't have pushed him to Yu Youyao for nothing and let him think of ways to help Yu Youyao go against her.

What Zhou Linghuai had crippled was his legs, not his brain. With such a powerful person by his side, he would also be of help in the future.

Yang Shuwan was also shocked. "Did your second uncle really say that?"

Yu Jianjia nodded. "Big Brother told me personally that even Mr. Hu Shan from the school treats Zhou Linghuai differently. From the looks of it, even if Zhou Linghuai doesn't become an official in the future, he can still become a scholar."

Yang Shuwan immediately felt vexed.

Yu Jianjia also felt that it was a pity, but since things had come to this, she couldn't say anything else. Hence, she changed the topic. "Mother, don't think too much. Isn't the Xie Residence going to visit in three days? At that time, you have to manage it carefully so that the people in the residence can see your ability as the mistress of the household."

When Yang Shuwan heard this, she couldn't help but flare up again. "She's from Xie Roujia's family, yet I still have to suck up to her and serve her? Then what am I?"

She knew the logic, but she couldn't help but feel indignant.

Yu Jianjia felt a tightness in her chest. She also knew that it wasn't easy for her mother. "Mother, think about it another way. Doesn't it take skill to manage the family? It's usually not obvious, but it can only be shown during big events. At the very least, Yu Youyao hasn't held a banquet in the past few days. If you do it well, the residence will be proud, and you'll also be praised. Who will dare to say anything about you?"

With that said, Yang Shuwan indeed calmed down a little.

Nanny Li quickly served a cup of tea.

Yang Shuwan took a sip and composed herself. Then, she said, "Although Xie Roujia is dead, there are many businesses in the Yu Clan that still rely on the Xie Residence. All these years, Old Madam was afraid that her relationship with the Xie Residence would fade, so she tried her best to get Yu Youyao to get close to the Xie Residence. It's true that Old Madam dotes on Yu Youyao, but how much scheming is involved behind this affection? After weighing the pros and cons? It's ridiculous."

Yu Jianjia did not say anything. There was no love or hate in this world for no reason.

Yang Shuwan rubbed her stiff head and stopped talking about this. Instead, she asked about Yu Jianjia's studies.

Yu Jianjia's expression froze for a moment before she said, "It's alright!"

However, she did not smile gently like usual and tell her mother many things about class.

In the morning's literature class, Ms. Ye was completely biased towards Yu Youyao. The class was also going faster and faster, and she couldn't take it anymore. Every day, when she returned to the courtyard, she would spend some time learning the content carefully.

Yu Shuangbai and the others had Yu Youyao's notes. Although it was a little difficult to learn, they could still keep up.

Yang Shuwan frowned and felt that something was amiss. Seeing that the girl's expression was normal, she did not take it to heart. Jia Jia had always been her pride.

After the mother and daughter finished talking in the main courtyard, Yu Youyao asked Chun Xiao and Xia Tao to pack the prepared food into a lunch box and personally went to the main study.

Zhao Da stood guard at the door. Seeing that Yu Youyao had come personally, he did not stop her.

Yu Youyao entered the house directly and heard Yu Zongzheng's deep voice. It made Yu Youyao's heart skip a beat and she even held her breath.

"Last winter, first, King Ping of Liangzhou suffered a defeat in the south and suffered heavy losses. The Southern Barbarians burned, killed, and looted in the southern border before leaving. As it was about to be the new year, the Ministry of War had been suppressing this matter. Later, in Youzhou, the Di people rode into the city. The Marquis of Changxing was still powerful despite his age, and he led his troops to kill more than a thousand enemies. After the Di people retreated, he reported to the Imperial Court and asked the emperor to credit him the moment the new year began. Coincidentally, the imperial examination was imminent, and the cabinet suppressed this matter."

Chapter 166 - 166 The Xie Residence's Visit (1)

"Now that the dust has settled on the examination, it's time to put these two matters on the agenda. After the palace examination in April, I'm afraid we'll have to come up with a solution. The cabinet is waiting for the Court of Investigations' reaction, but they haven't made a move. However, at the mention of the vassal lord, it is impossible to get past King You. The Court of Investigations isn't willing to provoke him, so they haven't made a move yet."

During this period of time, he was also in a mess.

An aide frowned and said, "It's easier to settle it in Liangzhou. We can just order Prince Ping to enter the capital to meet the emperor and punish him. However, it's not easy in Youzhou."

Another aide also said, "That's right. The Marquis of Changxing is a direct descendant of the Marquis of Weining. He has been guarding Youzhou for three years, so it's considered stable. With his contributions this time, the emperor will definitely reward him. But in that case, wouldn't it increase the arrogance of the Marquis of Weining? I'm afraid Elder Xia won't sit back and do nothing. When the time comes, there will still be room for negotiation."

"If there's any commotion in the Imperial Court, the first to bear the brunt is still the Imperial Court. Master, you should be more careful. Otherwise, you'll offend both sides and cause trouble."

!!

Hearing this, Yu Youyao already knew that her premonition was right. This stable court was probably going to be chaotic soon.

Just as Chun Xiao was about to speak, Yu Zongzheng's sharp voice came from inside. "Who is it?"

When they stopped talking, Yu Youyao simply walked to the door of the inner room and said through the curtain, "Father, it's me. The food is ready. I've brought it over for you."

Yu Zongzheng's expression relaxed. "Then send it in!"

Yu Youyao lifted the curtain and entered the inner room. Chun Xiao and Xia Tao followed behind obediently, their eyes fixed on the tips of their shoes.

There were three people in the room, including her father. Yu Youyao instructed Chun Xiao and Xia Tao to place the hot dishes on the table.

On the other side, when Yu Zongzheng saw that it was Yu Youyao, he no longer had any reservations and continued to talk to his aide.

"Youzhou is located in the north. If you retreat, you can rush to the capital to help. If you advance, you can fight with the Di people and coordinate with the capital from afar. King You will guard Youzhou and intimidate the vassal lords. The Imperial Court will also be at ease. However, if King You rebels, you are aware that the Marquis of Weining is a new noble. For the moment, he can't suppress the vassal lords of the three lands, and the court is becoming more and more tense."

With that, Yu Zongzheng also sighed loudly, lamenting the possibility of King You being a hero.

The aide also said, "Master, you're right. In the past few years, the vassal lords haven't been behaving well either. In the past, they were afraid that they would suffer a defeat and be inferior to King You, so they couldn't answer to the Imperial Court. However, if they fought hard, the other races wouldn't dare to be rash. Now, there are also wars every year, but every time they submit a memorial, it's because the war has consumed too much energy. They want to recruit troops, money, food, clothes, and weapons. If the Imperial Court doesn't give it to them, they won't have any money if they lose."

In the early autumn last year, there had been a commotion in the Imperial Court.

Fortunately, the Marquis of Changxing, who was guarding Youzhou in the north, had won a beautiful battle. Only then did the vassal lords stop and could they live a stable new year.

However, after the new year, there was a commotion again, and the Ministry of War suppressed it. However, it was not a good idea to keep suppressing it. Sooner or later, it would cause a commotion.

The table was filled with dishes.

Yu Zongzheng immediately stood up and sat down. He called for the aides to eat, drink, and discuss matters.

Yu Youyao had prepared bamboo leaf liquor. The liquor was fragrant and refreshing, but not too strong. Coupled with the light and delicious dishes, Yu Zongzheng's tense expression finally eased.

After returning to the Jade Courtyard, Yu Youyao felt a little uneasy, but she also understood that there were some things that she could not interfere in.



Just like that, two to three days later, it was time for the Xie Residence to visit.

The classes of the first and second families had stopped.

Early in the morning, Yang Shuwan was busy preparing for the banquet. She was either instructing the maidservants to set up the banquet hall or rushing into the kitchen to instruct the kitchen maids to cook. She was as busy as a spinning top and did not feel tired at all. She was wearing a bright red dress with golden peonies and looked imposing and radiant. She was clearly the mistress of the household.

After breakfast, Madam Yao brought the family to the main house. She first went to greet Old Madam Yu, then asked Yang Shuwan for help.

Yang Shuwan was feeling smug as she instructed the servants, so how could she agree? She said, "We can't trouble Sister-in-law. It's rare for her to come to the main residence. Why don't we find Old Madam and spend more time chatting with her and show her more filial piety?"

Although her words were polite, they were not pleasant to the ears. Madam Yao's expression immediately darkened. "The Xie family's visit is a huge matter, so I'll have to trouble you to take care of it."

It wasn't that she was in a hurry to help. It was just that Master had specially instructed her to come over earlier today to help more. She couldn't neglect the people from the Xie family.

She also knew that Master had joined the Hanlin Academy in his early years. At that time, pirates were rampant along the coast, and the sea routes were sealed. Master had read through history books and felt that the trade route was smooth and beneficial to the country and the people. Hence, with the support of the Cabinet Grand Secretary, Xia Yansheng, he went to Quanzhou and wrote "The Theory of the Sea," which he presented to the court.

It was also because of this book that the imperial court had sent troops to suppress the enemies. They had opened a sea route and a trade route, causing the coastal area to prosper.

Only then did Master join the Ministry of Revenue. It was also because of this that he could successfully enter the cabinet.

As soon as she married into the family, she heard from Old Madam that Master had been able to write "The Theory of the Sea" because of the Xie Residence's help. That was why the Yu Residence had formed a relationship with the Xie Residence, and this was also why Xie Roujia had married into the Yu Residence.

Master remembered their kindness back then. As his wife, she naturally had to follow suit.

Madam Yao returned to An Shou Hall.

Old Madam Yu was not surprised. She pointed at the chair beside her and asked, "I wonder how Brother Yan and Brother Xin's studies have been recently?"

At the mention of this, a smile finally appeared on Madam Yao's face. "Every three days after leaving the government office, Master would call them over for an examination. He said that they had improved even more than before. Even Brother Xin, who has always liked to play, has been able to calm down and study recently."

When Old Madam Yu heard this, she was amused. "That's a good thing. We have to call them over and reward them well."

However, Madam Yao smiled and said, "I still have to thank you, Linghuai. He is a few years older than them, and is also mature. He has been learning well in school, and it was also him who brought Brother Yan and Brother Xin along to learn in school."

Previously, when Brother Yan had mentioned Zhou Linghuai, she was a little hesitant.

But now, she was convinced.

Old Madam Yu's smile deepened. To be able to think of Yao Yao and help the Yu Residence, it was obvious that Zhou Linghuai was a grateful person.

Madam Yao continued, "It's better for Brother Yan, and especially Brother Xin. He doesn't like to learn usually, so your son told him about what happened in Youzhou in the past and even about the war. How could Brother Yan have heard of this in the past? Of course, his interest was piqued. After he finished speaking, Linghuai asked Brother Yan how he was going to repel the enemy if the Di people attacked. Won't this make things difficult for Brother Yan?"

#### Chapter 167 - 167 The Xie Residence's Visit (2)

Commanding errands was a military duty. The juniors in the family also had to learn some military strategies.

If nothing happened to the Zhou family, it would be his turn to inherit the position in the future. In addition, there were wars every year in Youzhou, so it was common knowledge for him to know about this.

At the thought of this, Old Madam Yu felt another wave of pity.

"...So, Linghuai took the 'Art of War' and pointed at the schemes of the higher-ups. He explained how to use the plans one by one. Brother Yan listened in admiration and immediately said that he wanted to learn the art of war."

At this point, Madam Yao couldn't help but laugh. "Linghuai then said, 'You don't know much about learning or history. Even if you learn the art of war, how can you use it on the enemy?' Brother Yan didn't have much to say, but Linghuai mentioned some famous generals from the past and present. In the end, Brother Yan was convinced."

!!

Brother Yan was not good at studying. In the past, he had liked to fool around, but Mr. Hu Shan ignited his passion to play with knives and guns.

Seeing that he had some talent in this field, Master had hired a martial arts master for Brother Yan. It was obvious that he wanted him to take the path of a general. It would be great to send him into the army to train and arrange for him to be a decent guard.

Zhou Linghuai's actions were exactly what he wanted.

Old Madam Yu smiled. "We have to let them learn well. This family will still have to rely on the two of them in the future."

These words were serious, but Madam Yao felt proud. "Not only has Brother Yan and Brother Xin improved, but even Shuangbai, Lian Yu, and Fangfei have improved a lot."

When one was old, the thing they were most willing to listen to was their descendants' ambition. It was obvious that Madam Yao was really sensible. Old Madam Yu's smile deepened, and she pretended to be all ears.

Madam Yao continued, "Shuangbai has been learning tea techniques from Nanny recently, and she's already quite good. Nanny also said that she's talented and willing to put in the effort. She's learning very well. Lian Yu's studies have improved a little, and even Fangfei has gradually caught up with her current studies. She's also become much bolder. A few days ago, she made a few very exquisite hair ornaments and gave them to me. Old Madam, take a look..."

As she spoke, she moved her head closer to Old Madam Yu.

Old Madam Yu took a look. It was a silk-like golden peony. It looked just like the real thing. The petals were well-arranged and inlaid with various small beads, making it look exquisite.

Old Madam Yu smiled. "Oh, I haven't seen such an exquisite head ornament lately. I didn't expect Fangfei to do this as she's timid and usually doesn't show her face. She's actually so smart." With that, she looked at Madam Yao with a smile. "This is also thanks to your good upbringing."

Actually, she had raised her daughter well because she wanted to settle down in the inner residence. Look at Yu Qingning in the main house. Even if she learned the rules, she wouldn't be secure. She should know that the upbringing of a concubine's daughter was important.

Madam Yao could see this clearly and had done a good job.

Madam Yao smiled in front of Old Madam Yu. "This isn't my hard work. As the first wife, I can still teach them some manners, but I don't have the ability to make them improve."

Old Madam Yu looked up and waited for her to continue.

As expected, Madam Yao changed the topic. "It's all thanks to Yao Yao. She's ambitious and knows how to bring her younger sisters along. Shuangbai cried to me a few days ago, and after Yao Yao's persuasion, she became interested in tea art and even learned how to cook snacks. Fangfei is young, so she has a hard time learning. She only learned well because of Yao Yao's notes..."

Old Madam Yu had also heard about the commotion that the second branch had caused a few days ago, so she could probably guess a little. Later on, when she saw that Yu Youyao and Yu Shuangbai were getting closer, she pretended that nothing had happened.

Now that Madam Yao had taken the initiative to mention it, she had to thank Yao Yao for her kindness. How could she not be happy? "Sisters should help each other."

Madam Yao nodded repeatedly and praised with a smile, "Yao Yao has been raised in front of Old Madam since she was young. She already has the demeanor of a legitimate elder at a young age. It's all because of Old Madam's good upbringing, isn't it? If it weren't for Old Madam's old age, I would have sent Shuangbai to your house to be taught carefully."

Old Madam Yu was amused.

At this moment, Qing Xiu entered the house. "Old Madam, Nanny Li, who follows in front of First Madam, is here. She said that there's a shortage of manpower in the main kitchen and wants to borrow a few people from you."

Madam Yao's eyes flashed.

There was a small banquet at noon, but the big banquet happened at night. If she was busy now, she could still manage it and didn't have to borrow someone from Old Madam.

She was probably just borrowing someone else to show off in front of Old Madam.

Old Madam Yu's smile faded as she waved her hand. "Choose a few capable ones and let her do as she pleases."

In the Jade Courtyard, Xia Tao was also talking about this. "Mu Jin ran over and asked to borrow someone, including Mother Zhao. How could I agree? I said that Eldest Miss was making medicinal cuisine in the kitchen and couldn't leave. Mu Jin was a little unhappy and left."

Yu Youyao nodded. "Then we'll pick two capable old maids from the kitchen. First Madam has worked hard, so I should also do my best. I don't want to get any gossip."

Xia Tao pursed her lips. "This isn't Miss's fault. Back then, you personally asked First Madam if she wanted help. It was First Madam who was unwilling to let you interfere."

Yu Youyao flipped through the zither score. After learning the zither for a few days, she had learned it and played it for her cousin. Her cousin also said that it was not bad and taught her a new song.

Xia Tao continued, "But she's commanding the maidservants around so much that they don't even know what to do. She's shouting so loudly, as if no one knows how to do anything without her command. It's not like there hasn't been a banquet in the residence in the past. How can she torture people like this?"

Yu Youyao's gaze paused for a moment. "Well, she lost face so she can only redeem herself and get respect from them this way. Only then can she vent her anger."

Wasn't that so? Xia Tao agreed deeply.

Yu Youyao turned around and instructed Chun Xiao, "Choose two people and send them to Madam Yang first. Then, instruct the kitchen to make a few medicinal dishes that are suitable for their tastes. Keep a close eye on them."

Chun Xiao agreed and left.

Xia Tao couldn't help but ask, "Eldest Miss, are you worried that First Madam won't do her best during the banquet?"

After all, she was Eldest Miss's mistress. As the second wife, how could she not have any grudges?

"Look at Madam Yang. Do you think she won't do her best?" Yu Youyao asked. Old Madam Ma had caused a commotion in the residence, and there was a deep meaning behind it.

Other than preventing Yang Shuwan from making a fuss in the residence because she wanted to take advantage of her mistakes, it was also to let Yang Shuwan carefully arrange for the Xie Residence to enter the capital. This was to prevent her from causing trouble that could not only hurt her relationship with the Xie Residence, but also embarrass the residence. In the past, everyone who visited from the Xie Residence was a servant. As long as they did not make any mistakes on the surface, they would not lose their manners.

But!

Chapter 168 - 168 Going to Cousin's Courtyard

Now that Third Cousin was visiting, they had to be more cautious.

Yu Youyao vaguely sensed that her grandmother's attitude towards the Xie family was a little unusual.

Xia Tao shook her head. "Then Eldest Miss..."

Yu Youyao chuckled. "There's a small banquet at noon and a big banquet at night. It's not easy for Madam Yang to manage it alone. It's always good to prepare more help."

Xia Tao nodded. "Young Miss, you've thought it through."

Yu Youyao did not say anything else. She instructed, "Bring the clothes that Manager Sun sent yesterday and go to Cousin's courtyard."

Following Yang Shuwan's instructions, the clothes were made for the ladies in the residence first. The second batch was for the elders, and the third batch was for the brothers.

She had ordered five sets for her cousin, but this time, she sent two sets. She had yet to send the rest to him.

After leaving the Jade Courtyard, Yu Youyao bumped into Yu Qingning on the way.

She had forgotten that the Xie family was going to visit today. Even Yu Qingning, who had been detained in the house to learn the rules, was allowed to come out and walk around.

After not seeing her for many days, Yu Qingning had lost some weight.

Perhaps because she had suffered, she had also started to lose weight. She had grown a lot taller, even taller than Yu Youyao. Her face, which originally had baby fat, had become thinner and her chin had become sharper. She was already a little more beautiful. However, her eyebrows were tall and her eyes were narrow, making her look arrogant. She was so beautiful that she looked like she had thorns and was aggressive.

She looked very much like Concubine He, but not as delicate.

When she saw Yu Youyao, Yu Qingning was also stunned. Then, she tightened her grip on her handkerchief and stepped forward. "Big Sister, where are you going?"

"Cousin's room." Yu Youyao smiled faintly. However, Yu Qingning's upbringing were a little more strict. At the very least, she didn't glare at her, throw her face around, and ignore her like before...

However, it was obvious from the handkerchief in her hand whether she had improved or not.

Yu Qingning smiled and said, "The Xie Residence is coming today, and we're very busy. Why do you still have time to go to the Green House? Aren't you going to help Mother manage it?"

With that, she pressed a handkerchief against the corner of her mouth and chuckled.

Her manners were not bad, and she knew how to beat around the bush. Yu Youyao smiled. "Mother will take care of the family matters. I'm just a child, so I won't go."

Yu Qingning went up to Yu Youyao. "I usually stay in the courtyard and learn the rules from Nanny. I often hear from the servants that Eldest Sister is very capable when Mother is sick."

At this, her smile widened.

No matter how capable household manager Yu Youyao was, so what? Once her mother recovered, wouldn't she have to obediently hand over the household manager's key and follow her obediently?

It was really a thankless task.

How could Yu Youyao not hear the mockery in her words? She did not respond to her and only said calmly, "Fourth Sister, you flatter me."

Yu Qingning immediately felt that her punch had hit cotton. She retorted calmly, and the smile on her face disappeared. "I won't stop Eldest Sister. I'll go to Grandmother's house first to greet her."

Yu Youyao nodded and said nothing.

Yu Qingning stepped forward, but unexpectedly, her feet slipped and her body tilted to the side. She bumped into Yu Youyao's shoulder, causing her to stagger...

"Young Miss!" Xia Tao was shocked. Helpless, she was holding a wooden tray in her hand and couldn't help her for a moment. She could only watch anxiously.

Fortunately, Yu Youyao's figure was flexible. Her toes touched the ground, and she spun around before taking a step back and stabilizing herself.

Today, when the Xie Residence came to visit, Yu Youyao was also dressed up and put on makeup. She was wearing a silver-white embroidered dress with red lotuses. She also wore a small crown on her head, which was filled with flowers. Exquisite beads fell gently into her hair.

With a spin, the pendant on her head trembled lightly, and her dress rippled. She was like a white and red lotus between these ripples, floating on the water and trembling beautifully.

"Fourth Sister has learned some rules from the nanny in the Education Department. Why are you still so rash?" Yu Youyao looked at Yu Qingning indifferently with a cold gaze.

Yu Qingning's expression did not look too good, but she endured it and did not lose her temper. "I'm sorry, Big Sister. You also know that I've been learning rules and etiquette from Nanny Jin recently. This morning, I asked Nanny Jin to restrain me for two hours to learn how to walk, so my feet hurt. I didn't expect that I would accidentally bump into you. It's my fault, alright? I apologize to you."

She had learned some etiquette from the nanny from the Education Department. She was originally proud of her manners. After bumping into Yu Youyao, she might have had the intention to show off in front of her.

She had deliberately bumped into Yu Youyao just now because she wanted Yu Youyao to embarrass herself in public and let the servants in the residence see it.

If Yu Youyao lost her composure in public, it also made her look outstanding.

However, she was not mature enough. Yu Youyao's etiquette was better than hers, and she was still standing well. What was so great about that? She had only studied for a short while with her Nanny.

If she had learned more, she would definitely have done better than Yu Youyao.

Although her words were appropriate and generous, Yu Youyao did not fall for it. "Nanny Jin originally planned to teach Fourth Sister for a month first, but after learning for so long, Fourth Sister can't even walk well. I'm afraid a month isn't enough, so she'll learn for another two months."

Upon hearing this, Yu Qingning's brows furrowed. "Yu Youyao, who are you? What right do you have to control me? Don't forget that in the family now, the person in charge is Mother, not you. Don't try to show off in front of me. Do you think I'm afraid of you?"

Yu Qingning hated Nanny Jin so much that she wanted to send her away immediately.

How could she stand her for another two months?

This b\*tch, Yu Youyao, was in charge for a few days, but she really thought of herself as the master of this residence. If she were to show off, it would be a joke.

Indeed, after saying less than ten sentences, she revealed her true colors. It was obvious that she had really not improved and had learned the rules for nothing.

Yu Youyao also sighed softly. She turned around and instructed an old woman not far away, "Send Fourth Miss back to the Hanlu Courtyard and get Nanny Jin to teach her more carefully."

Yu Qingning's eyes widened, but before she could react...

The old maid immediately agreed. She put down the cloth and strode forward, pulling Yu Qingning's arm. "Fourth Miss, please!"

Yu Qingning was shocked. "What are you doing? Let go of me, you dog slave. Who allowed you to touch me? Let go..." As she shouted, she struggled with all her might. However, the old woman had the strength to pull Yu Qingning towards the Hanlu Courtyard.

After struggling for a while, Yu Qingning's face was red and her neck was stiff. She was panting and knew that she couldn't break free. She turned to glare at Yu Youyao. "Yu Youyao, how dare you treat me like this? Father..."

Yu Youyao smiled and continued, "If Father knew that you were 'willing' to learn more rules from Nanny Jin, he would definitely be very gratified."

Chapter 169 - 169 I Like Everything Cousin Makes

When Yu Qingning heard this, she immediately screamed, “Who’s taking the initiative to agree? Yu Youyao, stop spouting nonsense. If Father finds out that you’ve treated me like this, he definitely won’t let you off easily. Hurry up and get this dog slave to let go of me...”

Yu Youyao ignored her. Seeing that Yu Qingning was pulled away by the old woman, she left with Xia Tao.

After Yu Youyao left, Yu Qingning stomped her feet in anger. “Yu Youyao, Yu Youyao, come back. What right do you have to make Nanny Jin stay in the residence for another two months...”

The old woman shook her head and dragged Yu Qingning away. “Fourth Miss, you have to stop. You’re learning the rules of the Hanlu Academy, but you don’t know that Eldest Master trusts Eldest Miss. Even if First Madam takes over again, all the matters in the study were handed over to Eldest Miss. Even if you make a fuss until Eldest Master is around, will Eldest Master still stand up for you? Don’t anger Eldest Master. Nanny Jin will stay in the residence from now on.”

To be honest, Fourth Miss was really outrageous.

After learning the rules from the nanny, she was still so disrespectful to her eldest sister. She even shouted, not knowing the difference between the first and second wives. What good was there in going against Eldest Miss like this other than suffering?

Eldest Miss was a magnanimous person. In her eyes, there was no difference between the first and second wife. There was only the relationship of sisters. The second, fifth, and sixth daughters of the second family had been taken care of by Eldest Miss a lot.

It was also because Fourth Miss did not see the situation clearly.

When Yu Qingning heard this, it was as if she had been struck by lightning. “How is that possible...”

Even though Yu Youyao knew how to manage the household, it was also her grandmother who guided her from behind. The servants also doted on her because of her grandmother, so they also flattered her and fawned on her, right?

She knew Yu Youyao well!

She was so stupid. How could she really have the ability to manage a family?

The main study was an important place in the Yu Residence. It was where her father dealt with official matters of the imperial court and discussed matters with his aides. Why had her father handed such an important place to a half-grown child like Yu Youyao?

How was that possible?

No matter how good a child was at managing his family, could she compare to her mother?

She had heard from the servants that her father was very satisfied with Yu Youyao and had praised her a few times. She did not expect her father to think so highly of her too.

When they arrived at the Hanlu Courtyard, the old servant looked for Nanny Jin. “Eldest Miss said that Fourth Miss hasn’t learned the rules well, so I’ll have to trouble Nanny Jin to stay in the residence and teach Fourth Miss more.”



When Nanny Jin heard this, she beamed. "Of course. I'll definitely teach Fourth Miss well."

She knew that this Eldest Miss of the Yu Residence was not an ordinary person. She did things beautifully. It was a rare occasion for Yu Qingning to come out and meet Eldest Miss Yu, and then cause trouble with her. That was why this had happened.

Eldest Miss Yu had gained face in the residence and the honor of being the eldest daughter of the first wife. Other than being filial, her status in the residence was not lower than Eldest Madam Yang's.

Eldest Miss Yu had even gained Eldest Master Yu's trust, so she was even more extraordinary.

Naturally, she was happy to listen to Eldest Miss Yu.

She usually walked around the various families in the capital. It was rare to see such a generous and quiet main family like the Yu Residence. It was also a good thing to stay for a few more days.

After the old woman left the Hanlu Courtyard, Nanny Jin heard Yu Qingning making a fuss. "That b\*tch, Yu Youyao, I'll never forgive her."

Nanny Jin shook her head.

Yu Qingning, the daughter of a concubine, had been raised by Eldest Madam Yang as the daughter of the first wife, but she was overshadowed by Yu Youyao.

Eldest Madam Yang did not think that such a noisy concubine's daughter would cause trouble from time to time. In the future, she would suffer in the inner courtyard, and sooner or later, the effects would spill over on her.

At this moment, Old Madam Yu also knew that Yu Youyao had sent Yu Qingning back to the Hanlu Courtyard. She had even asked Nanny Jin to teach her the rules for two more months. She nodded and said, "It's because it's not easy for her to learn the rules, so I asked her to go out and walk around. Since she hasn't improved, it's better for her to learn more."

When Yang Shuwan heard this, she frowned. She did not like Yu Youyao making decisions on her own, but when she thought about how busy the residence was today and how she was worried that Yu Qingning would cause trouble, she did not say anything.

In the past, she used to think that Yu Qingning's personality was highly praised by her. She always went against Yu Youyao and made her and Jia Jia get along well.

But now, Yu Youyao had improved. It was easy for her to control Yu Qingning, but Yu Qingning's noisy personality also revealed her lack of responsibility as a legitimate mother.

If she wanted her to learn the rules, so be it. Otherwise, she would be a nuisance.

Yu Youyao did not take this episode to heart. When she arrived at the Green House, she took the wooden tray from Xia Tao and went to the study alone to look for her cousin.

Zhou Linghuai held the Kunwu Knife and was carving on the zither. The carved wood had gradually taken on the shape of a zither after his meticulous work over the past few days.

The door wasn't closed, so Yu Youyao stood outside and stuck her head in sneakily.

A smile appeared on Zhou Linghuai's lips. He put down the Kunwu Knife and gently brushed away the broken wood chips on his body. He looked up at the door. "Why aren't you coming in?"

Hearing her cousin's words, Yu Youyao's eyes lit up. She quickly carried the wooden tray into the room and said happily, "I'm just worried that I'll disturb you, Cousin. Didn't you say before that the zither making technique is complicated? If there's a mistake in any of the steps, all your efforts will be in vain!"

Zhou Linghuai glanced at the wooden tray in her hand, and the smile in his eyes suddenly deepened. "You came at the right time. Come and see if you like this zither structure. If you don't like it, I can change it."

Yu Youyao placed the wooden tray on a round table not far away and quickly walked over to take a closer look.

It was actually the structure of a phoenix tail. Its head was lowered, making it look slender and graceful. The body of the zither was shaped like a nine-feathered tail. There were a total of eight tail feathers carved on the middle, right, and left. There were four feathers on each side, symmetrical and complementing each other. At the end of the tail was the longest tail feather. The tail feathers were lowered, complementing the phoenix head.

It was a Nine-feathered Phoenix Tail.

Yu Youyao felt that it was strange, but on careful thought, the zither was an elegant item, and the methods used to make it were also strange. Many famous zithers were mostly modeled after dragons and phoenixes. If they were made correctly, they wouldn't be commented on by others. Her cousin wouldn't have not considered this.

At the thought of this, Yu Youyao felt relieved. She smiled brightly. "I like whatever Cousin does."

If anyone else had said such words, he might have felt that it was perfunctory, but the little girl was sincere. Zhou Linghuai nodded. "In that case, let's do it this way."

It was fine if she saw the incomplete zither.

He wouldn't show it to her again until it was completed in the future. Otherwise, how could there be a surprise?

Yu Youyao nodded and ran to the table to bring over a wooden tray. "Cousin, the clothes that I made for you previously were sent over by the Jinxiu Manor first. Take a closer look. One is moon-white, and the other is black. The moon-white color is used for regular clothes, and you can wear the light-colored clothes at home. Cousin, you're young, so you can't always wear green clothes."

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As she spoke, Yu Youyao unfolded the clothes to take a look.

The moon-white outfit was light blue and white. On it, there were light blue orchids embroidered on it. Half of it was embroidered discreetly, while the other half was embroidered brightly. It was very elegant and could not hide its nobility.

Yu Youyao was very satisfied. She turned around and asked, "Cousin, I drew the style of the clothes myself and asked Jinxiu Manor to make it. See if you like it."

Most of the men's clothes were simple. They were not as varied as women's clothes. If one wanted to stand out, they would have to spend some effort on embroidery.

Zhou Linghuai did not care much about the clothes. He only felt happy that it was a token of the little girl's sincerity. When he heard that the little girl had spent a lot of effort, he took a few more glances and nodded. "Not bad."

Yu Youyao smiled and raised her eyebrows. She carried the clothes forward and stuffed them into her cousin's arms. "Cousin, go and see if they fit. If they don't, get the embroiderers in the residence to change them again."

The measurements were made according to the previous ones, but after a while, his cousin had also gained and lost some weight. Even if it did not fit well, it was not the fault of the Jinxiu Manor.

Zhou Linghuai was stunned for a moment and did not move.

Yu Youyao blinked, her eyes filled with anticipation. "Cousin, hurry up and go. This is the first time I'm making clothes for you. I don't know what suits you so I took some liberties."

The inner room of the study was the usual room for taking a nap, so there was no need to go to the bedroom.

Zhou Linghuai swallowed the rejection that was on the tip of his tongue and said, "Okay!"

Zhou Linghuai pushed the wheelchair into the inner room. Yu Youyao called Chang An over and asked him to serve him. It was inconvenient for her cousin to walk, so she had to trouble him.

After her cousin left, Yu Youyao leaned over to take a closer look at the zither structure. It was still a rough prototype, but it was in its early form. However, the zither structure was beautiful, like a spiritual phoenix. She could already vaguely see the beauty of it. The more she felt the meticulousness of this violin embryo, the more she smiled.

After a while, Yu Youyao heard the sound of wheels. She turned around and her eyes widened.

The light blue to white moon-white pattern was light and elegant. The patterns on it were dark and light, interweaving with each other. It was like the moonlight was all over him body, and the luster flowed.

There were mountains and rivers around her cousin's heart, and they were reflected in his eyes. The moon seemed to be shining all around him, and his surroundings seemed to have lost their luster, revealing an indescribable nobility.

Yu Youyao's eyes lit up even more. "Cousin, you look really good." As if she despised her lack of vocabulary, Yu Youyao wrinkled her nose. She had learned a lot of essays recently, but there was also a feeling that she hated not having read enough books. Hence, she racked her brains and racked her brains. She really thought of something. Instantly, her lips curved into a smile. "Accumulation of stones like jade, as green as pine trees, you're handsome and unique."

In the past, she had felt that her cousin was just like the sea in her grandfather's letter. He was unfathomable. He was always dressed in green clothes. Some were light, some were deep, and some were insipid and reserved. Just this color alone suppressed his elegance by 30-40%.

Zhou Linghuai clenched his fist and coughed.

Hearing her cousin cough, Yu Youyao took a closer look and saw that the tips of her cousin's ears were slightly red. His pale and sickly face immediately revealed a hint of beauty.

Yu Youyao's eyes lit up, and she said without thinking, "You're beautiful, like a god. Not only are you good-looking, but your expression is also beautiful."

The redness at his ears immediately spread to his face. Zhou Linghuai said helplessly, "You've become more capable after learning a few lines of poetry."

Yu Youyao giggled and squatted in front of her cousin. "Cousin, you look really good when you blush. I've never seen you like this before."

Zhou Linghuai felt helpless again and tapped her forehead lightly. "Don't spout nonsense again. If others hear it, they'll definitely laugh at you."

Yu Youyao pursed her lips. "There's only Cousin and me in the house. Who will listen? Cousin is too serious like a little old man. In the future, he should smile more like now. Only then will he live a comfortable life."

For a moment, Zhou Linghuai did not know whether to laugh or cry. He did not know if this girl was praising him or despising him.

Previously, she had said that he looked like a "little old man" with a frown. Now, she wanted him to smile more. He finally understood that this girl was relying on the fact that he doted on her and pushed his limits.

After Yu Youyao finished admiring her cousin's magnificent face, she saw another black outfit on the wooden tray. She quickly brought it over. "Cousin, this black outfit is more grand and suitable for some grand occasions. Today, the family has an important event. Can you wear this?"

Since there was a banquet at home, it was a little inappropriate to wear ordinary clothes.

As expected, she was pushing her luck. Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but shake his head and laugh. Looking at the little girl's sparkling eyes filled with anticipation, how could he refuse?!

Seeing that her cousin had gone to the inner room, Yu Youyao's eyes flashed with mischief.

Chang An, who had been called in again, followed behind Young Master with a wooden expression.

Young Miss's ability to appease others was really getting better and better, but Young Master did not feel annoyed at all, let alone angry. He was still willing to cooperate and let Young Miss do as she pleases.

It was really Zhou Yu hitting Huang Gai. One was willing to hit, and the other was willing to take it.

Ever since he came to the Yu Residence, his understanding of his young master had changed drastically. He had never seen his young master so indulgent towards anyone in the past. He was almost like... his old master.

In the past, Young Master had always said that Old Master was already so old, but he was always so clingy with Madam. It made his teeth ache.

When the old master heard this, he slapped his young master on the head and said, “What do you know? Sooner or later, it’ll be your turn. If you don’t get a chance to do it, you’ve lived your life in vain. It’s proof that I’m stronger than you. Don’t be jealous of me if you don’t have face.”

Wasn’t it?

It had only been a short while, but the tables had turned.

He just wanted to ask Young Master, “Does your face hurt?”

As he thought about it, Chang An felt that something was amiss. Old Master and Madam were husband and wife, but Young Master and Young Miss... How could they be compared to them?

Why did he think of this? Chang An slapped his forehead.

“Why are you standing there like a fool? Aren’t you going to come over and serve me? I don’t want Cousin to wait long.” Zhou Linghuai had trained his arm strength, so he could take care of his daily life. However, it was hard and time-consuming.

However, Zhou Linghuai usually did not let others serve him. He did all the basic necessities himself.

Therefore, Chang An was speechless when he heard his young master’s words.

It was obvious that Young Master was really under his cousin’s spell.

In the past, Young Master did not even allow anyone to touch his legs. However, Young Miss had instructed him to massage his legs every morning and night, and he had actually accepted it.