

## All Hail 211

### Chapter 211 - 211 Yun Xiangxiang's Clothes

Yu Jianjia was stunned for a moment before opening her mouth to explain.

Cao Yingxue giggled and recited a poem, "Her dress is a cloud and her face is a flower. The spring breeze blows on the threshold and the dew is thick. If we hadn't met on the top of a mountain, we would have met under the moon."

As a result, Yu Jianjia bit her lip lightly, but it was not appropriate for her to rush to explain. She smiled and said, "Fifth Miss Lu is bright and generous. When we first met, it was as if I had seen a goddess under the moonlight in front of the Jade Terrace Hall. This name can be considered to be like the moon shining on the water and complement each other."

Although it was a compliment, Fifth Miss Lu was indeed very beautiful. In addition, the Marquis of Weining's Residence had a Consort Lu with six palaces and colorless makeup, so her words did not seem deliberate.

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After being praised for her beauty, who wouldn't be happy? Even Lu Mingyao couldn't help but laugh. "The two of you are trying to make me happy."

Cao Yingxue and Yu Jianjia looked at each other and smiled.

"Which one is your eldest sister?" Lu Mingyao was a little curious. She craned her neck to look, but did not see any outstanding young girl. She only thought that Yu Jianjia's eldest sister was not that outstanding either.

Yu Jianjia shook her head. "It's Eldest Sister's birthday in a few days. Our family has to plan for it, so she's not free. She didn't come out today."

Cao Yingxue was straightforward and naive. "Your mother should be in charge of your eldest sister's birthday. Why is she the only one who's not free?"

Yu Jianjia pursed her lips slightly, and there was a hint of embarrassment on her face. She smiled and said, "Grandmother dotes on Eldest Sister, so naturally, she has to manage it herself. Even if Mother doesn't want Grandmother to tire herself out, it's not good for her to stop her. Today, we're going out not only to buy clothes for the Flower Festival at the Marquis of Changxing Residence, but also to find a decent birthday gift for Eldest Sister. Eldest Sister's tenth birthday is not to be taken lightly."

Lu Mingyao's eyes flickered.

Cao Yingxue pursed her lips. She had heard in the past that the eldest daughter of the Yu family, Yu Youyao, had been raised by her grandmother since she was young. Her grandmother doted on her and often bullied her sisters.

Even though Yu Jianjia tried her best to cover up for Big Sister, no one was stupid.

It was Yu Youyao's birthday, and it was only right and proper for her stepmother to be in charge of it. However, Old Madam Yu did not allow her stepmother to touch it. Not only did her stepmother not dare to stop her, but she even rushed out to the streets to find gifts for her stepdaughter, afraid that she was taking it too easily.

At noon, everyone received an invitation from the Yu Residence.

The Third Miss of the Marquis of Zhen, Song Wanhui, happily received the invitation. When she came out of Old Madam Song's house, she met her older brother, Song Mingzhao, who was going to greet Old Madam Song.

Song Wanhui did not interact much with her brother, but they were still considered close. "Big Brother, you're finally willing to come out of the Precious Peace Temple."

There were many people in the family, and there was no peace every day. Grandmother was worried that she would disturb her eldest brother's studies, so she donated a small courtyard to the Precious Peace Temple. Her eldest brother often went to the temple to stay for a while.

This time, she had gone for the Buddha Festival and only returned to the residence today.

Song Mingzhao nodded, his gaze landing on the invitation card in his hand. It was a pink and white invitation card with a few strokes that drew spring apricots. It was exquisite. The invitation was red to white, and the plants transitioned from flourishing to withering. It looked rather romantic. "This is?"

Song Wanhui looked down at the invitation in her hand. "Oh, this is an invitation from the Yu Residence. Eldest Miss Yu has invited me to her house for her birthday in a few days. Grandmother has also agreed."

Song Mingzhao's expression froze for a moment as he recalled the scene of the little girl wearing a plain wishing silk dress and standing under the green Bodhi tree to make a wish and throw the wishing silk.

The little girl was young, and her figure was also very slender. When she stood on her tiptoes to throw the wishing silk, her willow-like waist was gently bent backward. She was delicate and graceful. Even at such a young age, her eyes were already sparkling with a delicate color.

He lowered his eyes and rubbed the broken jade on the longevity knot. "I remember that Eldest Miss Yu seems to be a year younger than you?"

Song Wanhui did not think too much about it. Her grandmother liked Eldest Miss Yu and often mentioned her. The Song and Yu families were also close, so it was normal for her eldest brother to know. "My birthday is in June, and Eldest Miss Yu's is in April. Coincidentally, she's ten months older than her."

Eldest Miss Yu was also ten years old this year. Song Mingzhao nodded.

Song Wanhui held the invitation and was a little vexed. "Grandmother asked me not to be negligent, but I'm a little vexed. I don't know what gift to give Eldest Miss Yu."

She had just said it casually, not expecting her indifferent elder brother to respond.

Unexpectedly, Song Mingzhao really ignored her. “I have a pair of koi jade pendants from Hetian in my house. One is yellow and the other is red. Together, they’re a pair of round fish pendants. When they’re separated, they become two fish pendants. They’re for girls, so it’s not appropriate for me to wear them. It’s suitable for you to give to Eldest Miss Yu.”

Song Wanhui’s eyes lit up. “Thank you, Big Brother.”

Song Mingzhao nodded and left.

Song Wanhui looked at her big brother’s indifferent back and shook her head. She thought to herself that she was thinking too much. Why did she think that her big brother would pay too much attention to Eldest Miss Yu?

After the invitation was sent out, Yu Youyao did not care about anything else.

At noon, Yu Youyao practiced calligraphy alone in the study for a while. She couldn’t calm down, so she simply threw her brush aside and took out a copy of Spring and Autumn to read.

This book, Spring and Autumn, had been given to her by her cousin. It was filled with notes that had been personally written by her cousin. The handwriting was extremely neat, and it could not hide the depth of analysis. There were also translations and interpretations at the back. The words were easy to understand, and they explained profound things in a simple way. The sentences were all original and unique. As it was easy to understand, she could still learn it herself.

It was obvious that this book, Spring and Autumn, had taken his cousin a lot of effort to comprehend.

After flipping through two pages, Yu Youyao couldn’t take it anymore. She put down her book, rested her chin on her hand, and sighed.

Seeing that the young lady was listless, Chun Xiao couldn’t help but ask, “Young Miss, why don’t you go to the Green House to look for Young Master? Didn’t you say that you wanted to play chess with Young Master?”

Yu Youyao rolled her eyes and waved her hand weakly. “I won’t go look for Cousin today. I’ll stay alone for a while.”

Chun Xiao was inexplicably confused by his glare.

In the past few days, Young Master hadn’t gone to school, and Young Miss’s birthday was approaching. She hadn’t gone to school either. Every day, she went to the Green House to accompany Young Master, worried that he would be bored alone.

Yu Youyao picked up “Spring and Autumn” at the side to read. She really couldn’t take it in anymore, so she put away the “Spring and Autumn” and picked up the zither on the shelf. “Let’s practice under the Chinese parasol tree.”

Chun Xiao immediately ordered someone to set up a table.

After Yu Youyao finished burning the incense and cleaning her hands, she sat under the Chinese parasol tree. She had only played one note and she didn’t want to play anymore. She barely finished playing “Flat Sand and Wild Geese”, but it was also a mess.

Previously, when she played it for her cousin, he had said that it was not bad, but today, her hands were not listening to her.

## Chapter 212 - 212 Cousin Coaxed Me Again!

At this moment, her mind was filled with thoughts. What was her cousin doing? Was he sitting alone at the chess table again playing chess with himself?

Her cousin had a very indifferent personality. Even Chang An did not always serve him personally. He always liked to be alone in the study. Although it was not boring to paint and read, it was still a little lonely to do this every day.

Yu Youyao couldn't play the zither anymore. She climbed onto the piano dejectedly and puffed her cheeks, feeling very vexed.

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Seeing the young lady sigh, Chun Xiao was a little worried. "Young Miss, are you bored in the courtyard? Why don't you go to the Green House to talk to Young Master?"

Yu Youyao glared at her angrily. "Shut up about Young Master. Tomorrow, you can just be Cousin's maidservant. Don't poke at my heart all day."

No matter how stupid Chun Xiao was, she should know that Young Miss was sulking. She quickly asked, "Did Young Miss and Young Master quarrel?"

Young Master doted on Young Miss no less than Old Madam. Usually, he would coax her, afraid that she would feel aggrieved. To put it bluntly, these two were so sweet. How could Young Master bear to quarrel with her?

On second thought, her teeth could even bite her tongue.

Yu Youyao nodded, then shook her head and said weakly, "No." She decided to be angry at her cousin one-sidedly and not look for him. This couldn't be considered a fight!

Hmm, why did it feel strange?

Chun Xiao was stunned. "If you didn't quarrel, why are you angry?"

She made it sound like she was the one who was making a fuss. Yu Youyao's cheeks puffed up in anger as she glared at her again. "What do you know? Cousin is too much. He didn't tell me what gift he was going to give me on my birthday and deliberately made me anxious. Don't you think that's too much?"

When Chun Xiao heard this, she almost laughed out loud.

Young Miss had been spoiled by Young Master. How could she be really angry? Perhaps it was because Young Master had not satisfied her curiosity that she had become angry and wanted to do something.

Chun Xiao quickly restrained the smile on her face. "Yes, Young Master is really too much. He clearly knows that Miss is curious, but he refused to tell you about your gift. I'm afraid you will lose all desire for it if you keep thinking about it."

Yu Youyao nodded vigorously, feeling that the maidservant in front of her knew her best.

However, when she heard Chun Xiao say that something was wrong with her cousin, Yu Youyao felt that something was amiss. “Actually, Cousin isn’t too overboard. It’s just that in the past, every time he gives me something, it isn’t big. That’s why I’m especially looking forward to it and curious about it.”

Just now, she even said that Young Master was too much.

At this moment, it was not up to others to criticize Young Master. Chun Xiao tried her best not to laugh.

Who would ask others what kind of gift to give in advance?! Yu Youyao opened her mouth, but was too embarrassed to say it out loud. She felt that her temper was really unreasonable, and she couldn’t help but blush. “Forget it. On the account that Cousin prepared a birthday gift for me, I won’t get angry with him!”

Chun Xiao turned around and laughed hard.

Yu Youyao stood up from under the Chinese parasol tree. Her green dress was very youthful, making her look extremely fresh. “Let’s go to the Green House to look for Cousin.”

As soon as she finished speaking, Yu Youyao heard the sound of wheels.

Looking up, Yu Youyao immediately smiled. “Cousin, you’re here!”

As she spoke, the little girl picked up her dress and ran to her cousin. Zhou Linghuai pursed his lips and chuckled. “I came to see if Cousin’s chess skills have improved.”

Yu Youyao tilted her head. “Cousin, you can’t laugh at me.”

Zhou Linghuai smiled again. He took out a palm-sized jade box from his sleeve and handed it to her. “Although I can’t tell you about the birthday gift in advance, I can give you a small gift before your birthday.”

Yu Youyao’s eyes widened, then she laughed. She held the jade box and was in no hurry to open it. “Cousin, Cousin, what’s in this box?”

Zhou Linghuai did not answer. “Open it and you’ll know.”

Yu Youyao refused to listen. She tugged at her cousin’s sleeve and frowned. “This time, I want Cousin to tell me personally.”

Zhou Linghuai did not refuse. “It’s just a small thing I carved. It’s not worth much. It’s just something new.”

Yu Youyao was finally happy. She quickly opened the box to take a look.

Inside was a yellow jade pendant with a curved crescent moon. On it were carved two fishes playing with a lotus. The two fishes were waving their tails and playing among the lotus leaves. It was vivid and exquisite.

Yu Youyao held the jade box and pouted. “Cousin, you’re coaxing me again!”

These random words stunned Zhou Linghuai. He also wondered how he had offended the little girl just now. Then, he saw the little girl's lips curve and heard her cheerful voice. "Cousin, your carving skills are so good. How can you say that it's not worth anything? You almost scared me."

Zhou Linghuai heaved a sigh of relief, but then felt helpless. "You silly girl..."

He was probably the one who had almost been fooled into thinking that she was angry.

Yu Youyao held the pendant and looked at it over and over again. The more she looked at it, the more she liked it. "Cousin knew that I had broken a longevity lock that Mother had given me, and there was a pair of fish playing with a pearl on it, so you carved a pair of fish for me. However, you were worried that it would be the same and make me miss her. You didn't want me to be unhappy, so you changed it to a pair of fish playing with a lotus for me."

She saw through his thoughts. Zhou Linghuai chuckled. "As long as you like it."

Yu Youyao tugged at her cousin's sleeve, her face looking a little guilty. "Cousin, I-I wasn't that angry with you before, but I was just a little angry." She raised her hand and gestured with two fingers, forming a small slit the size of a needle. "Annoyed!"

Zhou Linghuai said nothing.

Yu Youyao stole a glance at her cousin's expression and smiled ingratiatingly. "However, I'm still very happy that you've taken the trouble to prepare a birthday gift for me. I was just about to go to the Green House to look for you when you came over." She looked at her cousin with sparkling eyes and tugged at his sleeve. "Do you think this counts as telepathy?"

Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but laugh. He raised his hand and flicked the little girl's forehead. "I'll spoil you!"

Yu Youyao smiled. "I wasn't like this in the past. Cousin, you have to be responsible for me. In the future, you have to always spoil me."

Zhou Linghuai's expression paused for a moment. The little girl's eyes were as clear as water, but there was a hint of a sparkle in them. At a glance, it was like water reflecting on a lake, and even his heart was rippling, so he nodded lightly.

Yu Youyao giggled. "Cousin, I'll go into the house and find a red string. I'll wear the pendant."

The little girl ran back into the house happily. Zhou Linghuai smiled and shook his head helplessly.

## Chapter 213 - 213 His Heart Trembled

When the little girl left yesterday, she was frowning and pouting. She looked helpless and amused, but he couldn't help but feel a little worried. The little girl was really angry.

Hence, he spent the night carving the pendant of the two fishes and lotus.

Today, after setting up the chess game and waiting for an entire morning, he still did not see the little girl coming over, so he simply brought the double fish pendant to the Jade Courtyard to look for her. From afar, he could hear her playing the song "Flowing Sand and Wild Geese" in a mess and was frustrated. He guessed that the little girl was indeed angry.

However, he did not know whether to laugh or cry!

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Soon, Yu Youyao ran over with a red string and sat in front of him. She first put the yellow jade pendant into the string and nimbly pierced it with her fingers. “Cousin, look, I’ve also tied a plum blossom knot.”

Zhou Linghuai’s breathing slowed down as he thought of the golden Buddha pendant on his neck.

Yu Youyao leaned over, and Zhou Linghuai suddenly tightened his grip on the armrest. He froze and did not move. The little girl gently lifted the collar of his shirt and took out the golden Buddha pendant hidden in his shirt.

Yu Youyao stepped back and showed the yellow jade pendant to her cousin. “Cousin, what’s the texture of this yellow jade? It looks very similar to golden beeswax.”

“It’s Golden Steatite Stone, not jade.” Zhou Linghuai lowered his head. The golden beeswax Buddha pendant shone brightly under the sun. After wearing it for so long, he was used to having such an item on his chest. Now that he had suddenly lost the warmth of the beeswax, he was a little unaccustomed to it.

Yu Youyao’s eyes widened bit by bit. “Golden Steatite Stone!”

Seeing her shocked expression, Zhou Linghuai explained, “The yellow frozen stone is golden in color and as thick as beeswax, so it’s also known as beeswax stone. It’s originally from the remaining stone material that I engraved previously. When I saw that you liked it, I engraved this yellow frozen stone pendant.”

Yu Youyao looked incredulous. “You actually used Golden Steatite Stone to carve the pendant. You’re wasting such a precious treasure. Why didn’t you carve a seal for me? I’m already ten years old and can already use a seal...”

Yu Youyao was also used to seeing good things. Golden Steatite Stones were rare, but she still recognized them. She had even seen her cousin’s Golden Steatite Stone seal before.

However, she had never expected her cousin to have carved such a precious and rare pendant.

Of course, she had mistaken the Golden Steatite Stone for jade.

Zhou Linghuai’s lips curled up slightly, but he hid his smile. “Even if I use the remaining scraps, it won’t be easy to carve a seal for Cousin.”

Yu Youyao pouted in frustration. “I don’t mind. I’m willing to use a seal carved from the same material as Cousin!”

Zhou Linghuai stopped talking.

Yu Youyao sighed and looked down at the exquisite and lifelike lotus pendant in the jade box. She was delighted again. “So be it. I’ll be happy no matter what Cousin gives me.”

The little girl’s happy expression made Zhou Linghuai chuckle.

Yu Youyao handed the Golden Steatite Stone pendant with the plum blossom knot to her cousin. “Cousin, help me put it on.”

Zhou Linghuai was stunned for a moment before taking the red string. The plum blossom knot on it was no different from the one on his neck. The double fish and lotus pendant in his hand was also golden in color, and it was very similar to the texture of the beeswax Buddha pendant. Even he found it difficult to tell them apart. However, on closer inspection, it was a little more colorful than the beeswax Buddha pendant. It seemed that the little girl looked very beautiful when she wore it.

Yu Youyao turned around and squatted in front of her cousin. After waiting for a while, she did not see her cousin move. She turned around and said, "Cousin, help me put it on."

This impatient posture made Zhou Linghuai smile. His jade-like fingers gently twirled the red string around the little girl's neck, but he carefully avoided touching her.

After that, Zhou Linghuai looked at the red strings at both ends and felt troubled.

Previously, when the little girl had helped him wear the beeswax Buddha pendant, she had tied a plum blossom knot behind his head to keep it in place. But he didn't know how to tie a plum blossom knot!

After waiting for a while, before her cousin could help her knot the pendant, Yu Youyao urged again, "Cousin, I'm still waiting."

Zhou Linghuai pursed his lips and seriously tied a "gift" knot for her. He had never learned how to tie a rope. Other than the "gift" knot, he did not know anything else.

A knot was a knot. Zhou Linghuai still had to help the young lady adjust the tightness of the pendant, but the young lady suddenly turned around. Zhou Linghuai's fingertips brushed past the young lady's fair face, and his fingers felt sticky. Just like the Golden Steatite Stone he had played with in his hand previously, it felt moist to the core, and his heart trembled slightly.

Yu Youyao was also stunned for a moment, but she did not take it seriously. "I'll wear the Golden Steatite Stone pendant that Cousin gave me well. I definitely won't take it off easily."

Zhou Linghuai lowered his eyes to hide the strange look in them. When he looked up again, his eyes were already clear. "Okay!"

Yang Shuwan brought Yu Jianjia back to the residence in the middle of the afternoon. She went to An Shou Hall to report Old Madam Yu.

Seeing the unsatisfied expressions on their faces, Old Madam Yu knew that they probably had something else to do outside today.

Yang Shuwan was worried that Old Madam would be unhappy that she had only brought her daughter out and not Yu Youyao, so she said, "I went to the Thousand Gold today and found some fashionable and beautiful jewelry, so I also bought a set for Yao Yao." She paused and thought of Yu Qingning, who was detained at the Hanlu Academy to learn the rules. "Even Qingning has one."

How could Old Madam Yu not know what she was thinking? She waved her hand. "You're too kind."

Yu Jianjia bowed to her grandmother. "Mother and I picked the first one together. I thought that since it was Eldest Sister's birthday in a few days, it should be arranged outside."



These words were really said beautifully. She had said that the clothes Yang Shuwan had brought her out to wear for the flower festival were meant to celebrate Yu Youyao's birthday.

Old Madam Yu glanced at Yu Jianjia indifferently and did not say anything.

However, Yang Shuwan reacted and asked with a smile, "I wonder how Yao Yao's birthday is going? Which families have you invited? Have you sent out all the invitations?"

It was Yu Youyao's tenth birthday. Even if she, as her stepmother, did not have much experience, she should ask about it.

Old Madam Yu's expression did not change. "We've invited the Song family of the Marquis of Zhenguo, the Tang family of the Hanlin Academy and the Qi family of the Zuodu censor. These three families are close to us, and there are also sisters around Yao Yao's age."

Yang Shuwan could no longer maintain the smile on her face. "You didn't invite the Yang family?"

The Yang family she was talking about was her maternal family, the Yang Residence, where the left censor was from.

On Yu Youyao's birthday, she had to invite elder sisters of similar age to visit, but she did not invite her maiden family. Even though she did not have much feelings for her maiden family, she could not help but feel a little uncomfortable.

Even Old Madam Yu's voice softened. "Yao Yao doesn't have much contact with your family."

These words made Yang Shuwan's expression stiffen.

Logically speaking, if she married into the Yu Residence and became Yu Youyao's stepmother, then her maternal family would become Yu Youyao's external family.

Chapter 214 - 214 To not admit that one has received a benefit

However, not only did Old Madam Yu not interact much with the Yang Residence, but she also did not allow Yu Youyao to get close to them. Even when the people from the Yang Residence came to visit, Yu Youyao had to avoid them.

This was really a slap to her face.

Old Madam Yu couldn't be bothered to say anything else. "It's been a long day. We will quickly go back and rest!" She didn't want to stay here any longer. She would have an eyesore and would feel unhappy.

Yang Shuwan looked annoyed as she led Yu Jianjia out of the door.

After walking for a while, Yu Jianjia pursed her lips. "I wonder if Eldest Sister will invite Fourth Sister to her birthday." At this point, she sighed faintly. "Fourth Sister is really pitiful. She's been trapped in the courtyard to learn the rules for so long. I wonder when it'll end. If Eldest Sister invites Fourth Sister, Fourth Sister can also take the opportunity to come out and relax."

When Yang Shuwan heard this, her eyes narrowed.

Not long after, Yu Youyao received a set of headgear that Yang Shuwan had asked Mu Jin to send over. She opened it and saw that it was a set of pure gold peony headgear. It looked very expensive and exquisite, but it was just an ordinary set. It was not considered fashionable.

She pursed her lips and let Dong Mei put it away in the box.

Everyone in the family knew that it was Eldest Miss's tenth birthday, so they did not dare to be careless. After a few days, it would be April 18th.

Early in the morning, Old Madam Yu asked Qing Xiu to invite Yu Youyao to An Shou Hall.

When Yu Youyao passed by the lotus lake, she saw that the begonia was blooming beautifully. She picked up her dress, plucked a few and happily carried them to An Shou Hall.

Old Madam Yu looked at her granddaughter, who had just turned ten years old, carrying the flowers into the house. The delicate flowers were not as beautiful as the young lady's face and her straight back.

Although the young lady's face and figure were not fully developed, she was still very beautiful. She was getting more beautiful by the day. If one was not careful, they would be mesmerized by this flower. Only by rubbing their eyes and looking carefully would they know which flower was truly fragrant. Not only did a rich family have to look at etiquette, but also looks.

Old Madam Yu suddenly realized that Yao Yao had really grown up. Not only did she have a delicate face, but she also had a strong personality. Her eyes welled up with tears. Thinking that it was her granddaughter's birthday today and it was inauspicious for her to cry, she pinched her handkerchief and rubbed her eyes.

"Grandmother, our begonia flowers are blooming beautifully. I've brought some over to arrange the flowers for you. Grandmother's house is too quiet. The begonia flowers are bright red, and they look lively too." After Yu Youyao finished speaking, she handed the flowers to Qing Xiu and asked her to change the magnolia in the vase.

Qing Xiu smiled and agreed.

Old Madam Yu smiled and waved. "Come to me quickly."

Yu Youyao lifted her skirt and sat beside her grandmother, leaning against her. She saw an exquisite sandalwood box on the small table in front of her grandmother.

Old Madam Yu picked up the box and stuffed it into her hand. "Open it quickly."

Yu Youyao had already guessed what it was. She stroked the cloud patterns on the sandalwood box, and her eyes welled up with tears.

When Old Madam Yu saw this, she hurriedly said, "It's your birthday today. It's a good day. You can't cry and ruin your luck."

Yu Youyao sniffed and tried her best to hold back the tears in her eyes. She carefully opened the box. There was indeed a longevity lock inside.

This time, the lock was in the shape of a koi fish's mouth. There were two koi fishes on each side. In the fish's mouth was a lock. The scales on the fish were made of red and yellow jade. They looked exquisite and beautiful.

“This embedding technique is really beautiful.” Yu Youyao liked it the moment she saw it. This was the second longevity lock that her mother had given her. Unfortunately, the previous one was broken!

She flipped the longevity lock over. On the back, there was an engraving that said, “Long life and wealth, good fortune comes from the east!”

Old Madam Yu first undid the longevity lock that her granddaughter had been wearing for a year. Then, she took the longevity lock that Yu Youyao loved so much that she couldn’t bear to part with it. She held it in her hand and looked at it carefully. “There’s a special rule about giving longevity locks. It’s only a suitable gift from ancestors, not parents. Therefore, your mother made 15 longevity locks and handed them to me to keep. She asked me to help you wear them on your birthday every year. It’s also considered a gift from me.”

Yu Youyao felt a lump in her throat and nodded vigorously.

Old Madam Yu placed the longevity lock on Yu Youyao’s neck and hugged her granddaughter. “You have to be good. I look forward to seeing you grow up well for the rest of my life.”

Yu Youyao threw herself into her grandmother’s arms and called out softly, “Grandmother.”

Her voice was as tender as a swallow’s, and Old Madam Yu’s heart melted. “You’ll be a big girl in the future. You can’t always be in Grandmother’s arms.”

Yu Youyao did not agree. “Even if I’m a big girl, I’ll always be Grandmother’s granddaughter. Why wouldn’t I crawl into Grandmother’s arms? Grandmother won’t dote on me anymore.”

Old Madam Yu’s sadness immediately dissipated.

Yu Youyao raised her head from her grandmother’s arms and looked at her anxiously. “Grandmother, where’s my birthday gift? You can’t forget it.”

Old Madam Yu glanced at her angrily and said, “Isn’t it on your wrist?”

Yu Youyao puffed up her cheeks. “Grandmother, Grandmother, you promised to give me a birthday gift.” As she spoke, she raised her wrist and revealed the blood beeswax prayer beads on it. “This doesn’t count. You can’t go back on your word.”

Old Madam Yu poked her forehead lightly. “I’m afraid of you. If I don’t give it to you, I’m afraid you won’t stop asking today.”

As she spoke, she called out to Nanny Liu to bring over the gift she had prepared early in the morning.

Yu Youyao finally understood that it wasn’t that her grandmother didn’t want to give a gift to her. She was clearly teasing her on purpose. She was furious. “Grandmother, you’re just making fun of me.”

Old Madam Yu laughed. She took the box from Nanny Liu and stuffed it into her granddaughter’s arms. “Take it!”

After receiving the gift, Yu Youyao couldn’t care less about being angry. She hugged the box and smiled. “But Grandmother gave it to me yourself. I didn’t ask you for it.”

When Old Madam Yu heard this, she glared at her. “You’re still pretending after receiving such a benefit.”

Yu Youyao spat out a laugh and quickly opened the box to take a look. There was a small crown of pearls inside. On the crown, there were various kinds of gems, pearls, and jade. There were tassels on all four sides, and they were all covered in light gold and shiny shark pearls. Each of them was the size of a peanut. They were plump, bright, round and noble.

The shark pearl was also a type of pearl. It was a faint golden color and shone brightly under the light. It was even more dazzling than pure gold. It was much rarer and more precious than the southern and eastern pearls.

It was obvious that her grandmother had already prepared this small crown in advance.

#### Chapter 215 - 215 Cousin Also Knows How to Make Brow Powder

Old Madam Yu smiled and said, “You’re the birthday girl today, so it doesn’t matter how you dress. Just wear it!”

After all, a young lady couldn’t dress too luxuriously when she went outside.

Yu Youyao’s eyes turned red again.

Old Madam Yu waved her hand and started to chase her away. “Hurry up and go back and prepare. We’re going to start welcoming guests at 10am. You’re the host today, so you have to greet them yourself. We old things won’t get involved.”

Only then did Yu Youyao carry the box and return to the Jade Courtyard with the longevity lock her mother had given her.

At this moment, the entire Jade Courtyard was busy. Nanny Xu had entered the small kitchen at dawn and had yet to come out. Nanny Liu had also brought some capable people from An Shou Hall to decorate the place.

Yu Youyao called Liu’er over and lowered her head to instruct, “Don’t have the intention to harm others, but don’t let your guard down. Go!”

Liu’er nodded and left the room.

At this moment, Chun Xiao brought over some medicinal cuisine. “Young Miss, quickly have some medicinal cuisine. Nanny Xu said that since the guests aren’t here yet, you can’t eat too much. Have a bowl of medicinal cuisine to fill your stomach.”

Yu Youyao knew that when the sisters gathered, they would eat, drink, and play. There were dozens of types of snacks that Nanny Xu had prepared. There were also all kinds of fruits, soup, and fruit tea. The guests could eat and enjoy themselves.

After finishing the medicinal cuisine, Yu Youyao was pushed into the bathroom again. “Nanny Xu prepared a medicinal bath for you. Miss, soak in it and rest. It’s just a small banquet, but it’s very tiring.”

After taking a bath, Yu Youyao was pulled into the room by Dong Mei. “Nanny Xu has picked out some clothes for Miss. It’s Miss’s birthday today, so you have to dress up well. You have to look presentable.”

Young Miss was still young, so she couldn't apply makeup. She only used the flower dew to rub into her face. After that, she applied a moisturizing cream. The flower dew nourished her face, making her skin look fresh and tender. The cream moistened her face and added a little more luster.

Dong Mei picked up the brow powder again, wanting to draw Miss's eyebrows.

Yu Youyao shook her head. "I don't need this."

Dong Mei smiled. "You should use it. Young Master asked Chang An to send it over early this morning. Young Master also personally mixed it. I saw that the color isn't too ordinary. It's even more beautiful than the one Young Master sent over this time."

Yu Youyao's eyes lit up when she heard that it was sent by her cousin and that it was personally prepared for her. "Since Cousin made the brow powder, I definitely have to use it."

Dong Mei picked up her eyebrow pencil and dipped it into brow powder, carefully moving it along to the young lady's eyebrows.

The shape of the young lady's eyebrows was good. They were dense and exquisite, making her look beautiful. She looked like a crescent moon, bright and radiant.

As soon as she traced her brows, Dong Mei could tell that they were extraordinary.

There was a hint of smoky green in this color and it made the girl's eyebrows look like a mountain valley. In the mist, there was a gleam of mountain light.

In Dong Mei's mind, she suddenly thought of a poem: "The water is bright and clear, and the mountains are empty and rainy."

Wasn't this young lady's eyebrows the same color as when the mountains that were covered in mist after the rain?

Yu Youyao stared at the glass mirror carefully. Her eyebrows curved slightly, and she said coquettishly, "Cousin, you're really amazing."

"Isn't that so? I don't even know what Young Master doesn't know." Dong Mei pursed her lips and smiled. She helped Yu Youyao comb her hair with a single conch and put on the small crown of beads that Old Madam had given her. She fixed it with a headband.

The tassels on all four sides hung down, and the pearls at the front fell on young miss's smooth forehead. They flowed lightly and were extremely bright, making the young lady look radiant. The pearls on both sides fell to the young lady's ears and swayed.

After that, Dong Mei helped Yu Youyao dress up.

At the innermost part of the outfit was a small top that matched the sleeves. Below it was an eight pleated skirt with yellow-green parasol flowers embroidered on them. On the outside, there was a yellow-green top and light golden gauze sleeves. On the gauze sleeves, there were embroidered branches and green leaves.

She was dressed in yellow and green, looking delicate and beautiful. She also looked elegant and noble. When Dong Mei put the little crown on the girl's head, she looked even more delicate.

After this, Yu Youyao was already having a headache even before the banquet. "It's only my tenth birthday. There's no need to be so formal. People who don't know better will think that I'm an adult."

Dong Mei pursed her lips and smiled. "But Old Madam ordered it."

At the mention of her grandmother, Yu Youyao pouted and became obedient.

When Yu Youyao was ready, Madam Yao brought Yu Shuangbai, Yu Lianyu, and Yu Fangfei into the house. When they saw Yu Youyao dressed up, their eyes lit up. "Yao Yao is really beautiful."

Yu Youyao was a little shy. "They've been working so hard for so many hours. I have to look good or they would have worked so hard for nothing."

Hearing her words, everyone in the room laughed.

Madam Yao said with a smile, "I went to look for Nanny Xu first to help manage it. It's your big day today, so I can't be careless."

With that, Madam Yao left in a hurry. She sincerely came over to handle things.

Yu Shuangbai and the others immediately went up to Yu Youyao and spoke to her.

After a while, Yang Shuwan finally arrived with Yu Jianjia. At a glance, she saw the small crown of pearls on Yu Youyao's head. It was a light golden color and looked very dazzling.

Yu Jianjia lowered her head and bit her lip. She suddenly felt that she couldn't bring out the pearl headgear that she had carefully selected with her mother yesterday.

It was impossible for her to surpass Yu Youyao in terms of dressing at the Flower Festival of the the Marquis of Changxing's Residence.

Immediately, she even lost interest in the Flower Festival.

She forced herself to perk up and smiled. "Big Sister is really radiant today."

Yu Youyao nodded and said calmly, "Thank you for your praise, Second Sister."

As she spoke, she sized up Yu Jianjia.

The snow-green dress looked very elegant, but there were layers of pink and white embroidery on it. It was like a blooming peach tree, but it was dazzling. The pink color of her lips vividly displayed how delicate her beauty was.

She was extremely elegant.

Yang Shuwan came back to her senses and said with a faint smile, "You guys chat with each other. I'll go to the small kitchen to take a look."

At 10 o'clock.

Yu Youyao walked with Nanny Xu to welcome the guests.

The ladies were not old. Even if they went to other houses as guests, they would bring along their nannies. Nanny Xu would lead them to the side to entertain them.

The first to arrive was Song Wanhui, the Third Miss of the Marquis Residence.

Song Wanhui hadn't seen Yu Youyao for a long time. When she first saw her, she was stunned for a moment and almost didn't recognize her. In her memory, Yu Youyao was round and likable. Every time her grandmother mentioned Eldest Miss Yu, she would smile and say, "Yao Yao is a lucky child."

#### Chapter 216 - 216 Doting on His Concubine

Seeing that she looked like she had seen a ghost, Yu Youyao was speechless. "Keep your eyes to yourself. Otherwise, I won't be responsible for picking them up if they fall to the ground."

Song Wanhui finally came back to her senses. "When did you lose so much weight? I almost mistook you for your third sister. I was stunned."

Yu Youyao pursed her lips. "I was sick previously. I also learned the rules from my Nanny. How can I not lose weight?"

Song Wanhui looked at Yu Youyao. "You're really beautiful. Grandmother often said that no woman is as beautiful as your mother. Look at you, you've taken after your mother. I'm really envious."

When she was rounder in the past, she also looked like jade. Now that she had lost weight, she looked very delicate and beautiful.

Yu Youyao squinted at her. "Do you still envy me?"

Song Wanhui was wearing peach powder today and had a standard full moon face. This face was also called a peony face. It looked as bright as the moon and was elegant. It was a face that everyone liked.

After chatting for a while, Fifth Miss Tang of the Hanlin Academy, Tang Yunxi, came over. Along with her was a slightly older young lady.

Tang Yunxi was wearing a bean-green dress and was short and fat. She lowered her head and followed behind the young lady. The young lady was tall and looked to be about eleven or twelve years old. She was wearing a rose-red dress that accentuated her delicate face.

Yu Youyao was stunned and did not react for a moment.

Song Wanhui nudged her with her elbow and asked softly, "You invited Tang Yunmeng?"

Yu Youyao did not know Tang Yunmeng and shook her head. "I only invited Fifth Miss."

Seeing that she was a little confused, Song Wanhui explained in a low voice, "Eldest Master Tang has a younger cousin who was his childhood sweetheart. Her family has fallen from grace and she's living at home. Before Eldest Master Tang's first wife even married into the family, the two of them already had a relationship. A month after Eldest Madam Tang married into the family, Eldest Master Tang couldn't wait to welcome his younger cousin into the family to be his concubine."

"Tang Yunmeng is the daughter of that noble concubine. She's the eldest daughter of a concubine in the Tang Residence. Eldest Master Tang likes this daughter very much and has repeatedly wanted to put his eldest daughter under the name of the first wife. However, Madam Tang is also stubborn and refused to agree. Fifth Miss isn't very outstanding looking and isn't favored in the

residence, so Tang Yunmeng stole all the limelight. Usually, she visits the other families. Tang Yunxi might not go, but Tang Yunmeng will definitely follow the first wife.”

Yu Youyao only knew a few things about the Tang family, but they were not as detailed as what Song Wanhui described. She pursed her lips tightly. Eldest Master Tang’s behavior was exactly the same as his father’s.

The so-called etiquette and shame of the scholarly families had become a joke.

The current emperor doted on his concubines and ignored his official wife. He doted on Imperial Consort Lu, but the court officials followed his lead.

In the past, with King You around, the entire imperial court could still restrain themselves a little. Now, with King You’s rebellion, it was as if all of them had lifted the cloth covering their shame. The Great Zhou Dynasty was rotten to the core.

Tang Yunmeng’s eyes darted around, and she pulled Tang Yunxi forward. She looked at Yu Youyao’s aura and pushed Tang Yunxi lightly.

Tang Yunxi quickly looked up at Yu Youyao, then lowered her head and introduced softly, “This is my eldest sister, Tang Yunmeng.”

Before Yu Youyao could react, Tang Yunmeng said with a smile, “My fifth sister is a little timid and usually doesn’t go to other families often. First madam was worried, so she asked me to come along. I wonder if Eldest Miss Yu welcomes me.”

Yu Youyao smiled faintly. “Everyone who comes is a guest, so of course you’re welcome.” After saying that, she looked at Tang Yunxi. Seeing that she had her head lowered and seemed to be very nervous, she stepped forward and held Tang Yunxi’s hand. “Fifth Sister, you’re finally here. Just now, Third Sister Song was asking when you were coming.”

Tang Yunmeng stood rooted to the ground.

Tang Yunxi was also stunned. Her long bangs covered her forehead and almost covered her eyes. Eldest Miss Yu smiled so widely that her eyes curved into crescents. She looked at her with eyes clearly welcoming her without any of the mockery she had seen on the other young mistresses’ faces. “I-I’m late. I-I’m sorry.”

Then she quickly lowered her head again.

Yu Youyao smiled and said, “It’s not time for my banquet yet. How can you be late?”

Song Wanhui also smiled and said, “I heard from Yao Yao that she had prepared a lot of exquisite food today. I wanted you to come over quickly so that we could eat together. I’m starving.”

Tang Yunxi pursed her lips and was no longer so nervous.

Tang Yunmeng stood alone at the side, feeling really awkward. Just as she was about to interrupt, another carriage stopped in front of the door.

Sixth Miss Qi and Qi Sining also came over.



Qi Sinian was 11 years old and a little older than them. He was handsome. As soon as he entered the house, he saw Yu Youyao. "Hey, where did this little beauty come from? You're in such a hurry to show off."

Yu Youyao blushed at her teasing. "Don't talk about me. You're showing off before me."

As soon as Qi Sining arrived, all the people Yu Youyao had invited were present.

The few of them chatted and laughed as they went to An Shou Hall to greet Old Madam Yu. Tang Yunmeng fell behind and called Chun Xiao before following awkwardly.

On her granddaughter's birthday, Old Madam Yu had also changed from her usual dull clothes. She was wearing a brown-gold longevity-patterned jacket, and the headband on her head had a Swastika that Yu Youyao had embroidered previously. She asked Nanny Liu to remove the seven treasure pearls on her forehead and turn it to the other side. On this side was the word "Longevity." She looked extremely happy.

Madam Yao and Yang Shuwan were both sitting in the hall.

The few young ladies chatted and laughed together. With their youthfulness and the fragrance of the flowers, the eyes of the few people present could not help but light up.

Yang Shuwan did not see Yu Jianjia, so she knew that Yu Youyao was welcoming guests outside. There were many sisters at home in the courtyard, so it was not appropriate for her to follow her.

The few young mistresses were also well-behaved. After greeting Old Madam Yu, they greeted Yang Shuwan and Madam Yao one by one.

Old Madam Yu chuckled and asked about their elders.

As she spoke, Yu Youyao heard the sound of wheels and turned around.

Chang An pushed Zhou Linghuai into the room.

Zhou Linghuai was wearing a set of green clothes with golden patterns. There were branches and leaves embroidered on his collar, sleeves, waist, and the hem of his clothes. He looked less thin and more elegant.

Yu Youyao's eyes lit up.

She made this set of clothes for her cousin a few days ago.

Song Jin's clothes were decorated with grass and trees, and the color was darker and more elegant. There were two layers at the bottom and the top which were respectively light and dark. The layers were especially clear. Cousin's clothes were embroidered with dark patterns of gold and bright patterns were light green. When they were interwoven, they made him look even more regal.

Zhou Linghuai looked up and saw the little girl looking at him with sparkling eyes.

His gaze paused for a moment. The little girl's curved eyebrows were especially beautiful, like a crescent moon that revealed a bright color. They actually captured the beauty of the mountains and rivers, and the brilliance of the moon.

Her pale lips curved slightly.

“Linghuai is here.” Old Madam Yu looked at Zhou Linghuai with a smile on her face.

Zhou Linghuai was used to being indifferent, and most of his clothes were green. It was rare for them to be so expensive. Today, he was wearing this because of Yao Yao’s birthday.

It was obvious that just like her, he really had Yao Yao in his heart.

Zhou Linghuai responded and went forward to greet Old Madam Yu.

The few of them were already almost grown up, so there was no need to avoid him. They also looked at Zhou Linghuai openly. They saw him sitting in a wheelchair, dressed in Song wishing silk and golden leaves. His temples look like they had been cut by a knife, and his eyes were like a painting.

In particular, his eyes were like a deep abyss, as if they contained all the stars in the sky. They were deep and boundless, and hidden in their beauty was a bottomless darkness.

Qi Sinian turned to look at Yu Youyao and whispered into her ear, “This is your cousin from Youzhou?”

Yu Youyao nodded.

“He’s really good-looking.” Qi Sinian praised. Seeing that Song Wanhui was talking to Yu Shuangbai, he leaned close to Yu Youyao’s ear and whispered, “He’s as good-looking as Heir Song.”

As she spoke, she couldn’t help but look at his legs, and a trace of pity flashed across her eyes.

How could Song Mingzhao compare to her cousin?! Yu Youyao pouted but did not show it. She only smiled and said, “Not only is my cousin good-looking, but he’s also good at studying.”

Seeing her show off, Qi Sinian was speechless. She turned to look at Young Master Zhou, then turned back to look at Yu Youyao. “Your outfit today is very similar to your cousin’s.”

Yu Youyao did not notice this and quickly looked at her cousin.

Her cousin’s green and gold-embroidered outfit had the same pattern as her yellow and green dress.

Old Madam Yu turned to wave at Yu Youyao and the others. “It’s rare that you’re all of the same age. Go play on your own. As elders, we won’t find it annoying either.”

The Song, Tang, and Qi families weren’t the only families in the Yu Residence that were familiar with each other. It was true that these three families were closer, but Yao Yao’s first small banquet was to befriend them. If she forged deeper relationships and got to know familiar faces in each family, she wouldn’t be alone when she went out in the future, and could share information with them.

In that case, the people they invited had to be of high quality and they couldn’t invite too many of them.

Family background and character were the key.

Upon hearing her grandmother's words, Yu Youyao quickly ran up to her cousin. "Cousin, you look really good today."

Zhou Linghuai smiled. "Cousin too."

Yu Youyao smiled and left An Shou Hall with her sisters.

The young mistresses were usually raised in their own homes. Other than their fathers and brothers, they rarely saw other men. Now that there were no elders watching them, how could they hold back?

"This cousin of yours is really good-looking..." Song Wanhui was also amazed. In the past, she had always felt that her brother, Song Mingzhao, was first-rate in terms of talent and looks. No one else could compare to him.

However, after seeing Zhou Linghuai today, he realized that there was always someone better.

Unfortunately, Zhou Linghuai had damaged his leg. Otherwise, his reputation would probably have spread throughout the capital.

When someone praised her cousin, Yu Youyao's eyes lit up and she looked proud.

Yu Shuangbai felt stifled when she saw this. "Come on, he's not our cousin. He's clearly my big sister's cousin. Our cousin has a very indifferent personality, and he's the closest to my big sister." The group happened to walk onto the white stone bridge, and the green trees in the jade courtyard gave it shade. She stretched out her finger and pointed over. "Do you see that green tree? The top branch was cut down by Cousin Zhou. He said that he wanted to personally make a zither for my big sister. We were so envious."

Song Wanhui and the others quickly looked up and saw that there was indeed a broken section on the head of the towering tree.

There was another long burst of exclamations—

"Cousin Zhou even knows how to play the zither. He's so amazing. Can't my brother..."

"Cousin learned the zither at the age of nine." Yu Youyao's lips curved into a smile. She took the fan from Chun Xiao's hand and unfolded it bit by bit. On one side, there were apricot flowers, and on the other side, there were tung flowers. They looked extraordinary.

However, Yu Shuangbai was speechless. "That's not all. My cousin is a capable person. Look at the incense fan in my big sister's hand."

Who would show off their cousin like this? She was afraid that others would look down on him because of his broken leg.

Which half-grown girl didn't like these exquisite things? When Qi Sinian saw the incense fan in Yu Youyao's hand, he was both surprised and envious.

"Quick, let me take a look." Song Wanhui quickly played with it in her hand.

The fan was exquisitely made, and it was light in her hand. With a light sniff, she could smell the faint fragrance of the resin. It was very fresh, especially the carving on it. It was simply exquisite.

Qi Sinian's hands were also itching. He took it from Song Wanhui and looked at it carefully. "Where did this fan come from? I've never seen such an exquisite one before..."

Yu Youyao smiled happily. Yu Shuangbai waved her hand. "Don't even think about it. This incense fan is her cousin's." She pointed at Yu Youyao and shook her head. "It was personally made using the remaining wood that was used to make the zither. The carving on it was also done by Cousin Zhou himself. Only my eldest sister has it in the residence. Others can't afford to be envious."

Yu Lianyu covered her mouth and chuckled. "That's not all. Cousin Zhou's calligraphy is also good, and his paintings are also excellent. He gave a lot of calligraphy treasures to my eldest sister. She's hanging them in the house like treasures. You'll see them when you go to the Jade Courtyard later."

Yu Fangfei also smiled. "My father said that Cousin Zhou is talented."

With this display, everyone knew that the young master of the Yu Residence who had come to seek refuge, could not be underestimated.

Song Wanhui returned the fan to Yu Youyao and said angrily, "We both have brothers, so why is there such a big difference? My brother has never given me anything. The first time he wanted to give me something, it wasn't for me. It was only..." At this point, she realized that she had misspoken and quickly said, "Cousin Zhou is really amazing!"

After all, the fish jade pendant had come from her brother. It was fine to give it to someone else, but it was not appropriate for others to know.

Yu Youyao did not notice anything amiss, so she did not take it seriously. She pursed her lips and smiled. "Cousin has always doted on me."

These words were really suffocating.

Among the few sisters, which one of them did not have an older brother? However, these older brothers were busy studying and taking the scholarly examination, so they did not interact much with each other. None of them were like Zhou Linghuai, who was willing to spend time on his younger cousin.

How enviable.

The few of them chatted and laughed. Tang Yunxi pursed her lips and glanced behind her.

Tang Yunmeng was following behind them in frustration. She wanted to interrupt a few times, but Eldest Miss Yu always avoided her. No matter how generous she usually pretended to be, she was still so angry that she tugged at her handkerchief and stomped her feet heavily on the ground, wishing she could crush it.

She had gone to other houses a few times in the past, but every time...

## Chapter 218 - 218 Showing Off Her Cousin

This time, when she received Eldest Miss Yu's invitation, she was originally unwilling to come over. However, her mother insisted that she come over, saying that the Tang and Yu families were close. If she did not come, it would be rude, so she could only bite the bullet and agree.

Unexpectedly, just as she was about to leave, Tang Yunmeng dressed up and came over. "Fifth Sister is a little timid and doesn't go out much usually. Father is worried that Fifth Sister will be rude in another family, so he asked me to follow and watch over her."

Her mother fell back in anger, but there was nothing she could do.

She was short and fat, and she did not look outstanding. Her father always felt that she was embarrassing, but her mother did not dare to make a fuss because of her feelings. She could only pinch her nose and accept it.

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This was the first time she had seen Tang Yunmeng suffer.

Tang Yunxi pursed her lips, a careful smile in her eyes. When she turned her head, Eldest Miss Yu, who was beside her, was smiling like a begonia tree she had just seen. She was extremely charming. When she spoke, she did not forget to look at her. She was not talking to her but she did not neglect her.

Due to this, Third Miss Song and Sixth Miss Qi also looked at her from time to time.

After crossing the lotus lake, they arrived at the Bamboo garden. Tang Yunxi saw a small hole in a thick bamboo and couldn't help but ask softly, "Why is there a small hole in the bamboo?"

Yu Youyao took a look and explained with a smile, "This is light bamboo. There's bamboo water in the joints. According to The Golden Gate Records, there will be rain at noon on May 5th. If you cut the bamboo quickly, there'll definitely be divine water in it. We can drain it and use it as medicine. Every May, when it rains, our family has to cut bamboo to make tea. This water is good for the body and tastes good. The holes in the bamboo are left behind after we drained the water in the past."

Qi Sinian was also interested. "Is there bamboo water in the bamboo joints now? Shall we get some for tea later?"

Yu Youyao shook her head. "Probably not. I heard that bamboo water only appears after the rain. When it rains, I'll collect more and send some to you."

Tang Yunxi's eyes lit up.

Song Wanhui quickly nodded. "Since you said so, don't forget."

When they arrived at the Jade Courtyard, their horizons were broadened.

Their families were not weak, and their residences were also the best in the capital. Their houses were also large, and they were all the first daughters of their families. The courtyard they lived in was also the best in the family, but it was still much inferior to Yu Youyao's Jade Courtyard.

Not only was the Jade Courtyard big, but it was also close to water.

Yu Youyao brought them into the courtyard. Yu Shuangbai and Yu Jianjia walked over together. Yu Youyao introduced them, and everyone greeted each other before heading to the reception pavilion.

Qi Sinian pointed at a painting on the wall, and his eyes widened. "This painting was drawn by Cousin Zhou?"

Yu Youyao nodded. "That's right." She pointed at the piece of paper beside her and a painting of spring apricot. "These are all Cousin's ink and brushwork. I like Cousin's ink and brushwork and always pester him to send them to me. Cousin can't reject me, so he can only agree."

When she finished, her eyes lit up.

Song Wanhui was young, but she already had some talent outside. She had good taste. "Cousin Zhou is young, but his attainments in calligraphy and painting are peerless. My brother is better at calligraphy, but I've never seen him paint. He learns the brush strokes carefully, so he's good at calligraphy. Mr. Xian Yun took a fancy to my brother's calligraphy back then, so he accepted him as his disciple."

Her tone inevitably revealed a hint of showing off.

When Qi Sinian and Tang Yunxi heard this, they listened in silence.

They also had brothers in the family who were famous in the capital. However, compared to the talented Song Mingzhao and Zhou Linghuai, who were amazing, they were far inferior. How could they show off?

Yu Youyao's eyes dimmed a little, but the smile on her lips did not fade. "My cousin wrote Wang Xizhi's calligraphy. I'm also learning it now, and I'm practicing my cousin's calligraphy."

If she practiced calligraphy from her heart, her strokes would definitely look good!

The brush did not lie, but people did. Only the human heart knew if one was righteous or not. How could one see the real thing from the handwriting?

She had no intention of blaming everything that had happened in the nightmare on Song Mingzhao in reality.

However, one couldn't judge a book by its cover.

Tang Yunxi's interest was piqued. She said in a low voice, "Writing requires an extremely high wrist strength. My wrist strength isn't good, so I learned smaller scale calligraphy." She looked at the wall and pointed at a piece of calligraphy. "Was that calligraphy written by you?"

A few days ago, when she had nothing to do, she had come to the part of "The Book of Medicine" that her cousin had written. "I wish that my body will be like glass. Clear inside and out. Pure and untainted. Bright and vast. Filled with merit. I wish for my body to be good and stable. To burn like a flame. Brighter than the sun and the moon. Enlighten all living beings in the Netherworld. Freedom to do whatever I want."

Yu Youyao almost covered her face. She wished she could rush up and take the calligraphy down. She turned to glare at Chun Xiao. "When did this calligraphy piece get hung there?"

Chun Xiao smiled and said, "It was hung up a few days ago. Young Master said that Young Miss's handwriting had improved a lot, so he specially instructed us to hang it up."

Yu Youyao stomped her feet. "Why didn't Cousin say anything?"

Although she had practiced calligraphy for a period of time and had also mastered the art of calligraphy, there was still a gap between her calligraphy and the young misses who had started practicing since they were young.

As soon as Qi Sinian saw this handwriting, he knew that it was still lacking and had only been practiced recently. However, Eldest Miss Yu's handwriting was smooth and natural, revealing her talent. "You're showing off. Your handwriting is impressive. Compared to you, our Hairpin Flower Small Script is more feminine. It's only good in appearance but not in style."

She wasn't lying.

The calligraphy was strong and did not depend on the appearance. The hairpin script was feminine and it was obvious who was better.

The cousins liked to show off each others' work. Wasn't Zhou Linghuai asking the maidservant to hang this to show off his cousin?

Yu Jianjia looked at Yu Youyao. Taking advantage of Zhou Linghuai's limelight, she pursed her lips slightly and looked up at the letter that Yu Youyao had written. She suddenly remembered the calligraphy piece that Zhou Linghuai had given her the day he entered the residence.

Yu Youyao studied calligraphy for a while, but her handwriting looked very much like Zhou Linghuai's.

The snacks and tea were served endlessly.

The few of them ate and chatted happily. Tang Yunmeng was unwilling to be left out, so she looked around and saw the two maidservants in front of Third Miss Yu talking softly not far away.

She pretended to be casual and took a few steps forward. Without attracting anyone's attention, she tilted her ear—

"Today is Eldest Miss's birthday. Third Miss has instructed us to bring a few exquisite snacks to the Hanlu Courtyard so that Fourth Miss can bask in Eldest Miss's joy. It's not easy for Fourth Miss to be detained in the courtyard to learn the rules."

Upon hearing this, Tang Yunmeng's eyes darted around again. After thinking carefully for a moment, she remembered that there was another fourth young miss in the Yu Residence.

However, today was Yu Youyao's tenth birthday. She had even invited the fifth and sixth young misses of the second branch, but she had not invited this fourth young miss. There must be some inside story.

## Chapter 219 - 219 Attracting Trouble

Tang Yunmeng tightened her grip on her handkerchief and looked at Eldest Miss Yu, who was dressed in yellow and green not far away. She snorted coldly.

The light green color complemented the light yellow color. When the two colors were mixed together, they looked elegant and noble. On the outside, she was wearing a shark gauze layer that

was as thin as a cicada's wings. It was also embroidered with branches. She had only seen the fifth young miss of the Marquis of Weining, Lu Mingyao, wearing this outfit before.

Then, she looked at Tang Yunxi, who was sitting beside Eldest Miss Yu.

The person who usually followed behind her with her tail between her legs was now sitting beside a group of glamorous legitimate daughters. She straightened her back and her expression darkened.

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At this moment, everyone was discussing what to do.

"Let's recite poetry!" Yu Jianjia suggested. Most of the girls from wealthy families, especially those from scholarly families. They played all kinds of fancy games to show their talent, so everyone agreed.

Tang Yunmeng did not want to be left out, so she smiled and ignored everyone else who was chatting warmly. "Eldest Miss Yu, I heard that you have a fourth sister at home. It's your birthday today, so why isn't she here?"

As soon as these words were spoken, there was silence.

It would be a lie to say that the few young mistresses present were not curious.

However, it was Yu Youyao's birthday today, and they were also here to befriend her. Other people were unimportant, so they naturally wouldn't ask and make Yu Youyao unhappy.

Yu Jianjia pursed her lips and picked up her tea to drink.

Yu Shuangbai was about to speak when Yu Youyao held her hand. Without even looking at Tang Yunmeng, she smiled and said, "That won't do. I'm not good at poetry, so I won't be able to raise everyone's spirits later. There are many of us, so it'll be lively no matter what we do. How about we play beat the drum, pass the flower. The losers will perform their talents. This will also be more interesting. Without elders accompanying us today, we'll be as happy as we want."

This suggestion received a warm response from everyone present.

There were more tricks to playing beat the drum, pass the flower, so it was naturally more interesting than poetry. However, usually, when they went to other places, the young mistresses would be more reserved and not play too much.

Yu Youyao asked Xia Tao to prepare a flower ball and a flower drum...

Just like that, Tang Yunmeng was ignored by everyone present. She stood on the spot awkwardly, her face turning red and green.

Chun Xiao came over to invite her. "Eldest Miss Tang is probably tired. Why don't you go to the side and eat some snacks?"

With that, she held Tang Yunmeng's arm and pulled her to a small table at the side, without any explanation. Tang Yunmeng was furious.

However, she was a guest, so she naturally had to be polite. She couldn't really make a fuss.



Everyone saw this scene and couldn't help but think highly of Yu Youyao.

She was a person with a temper.

When interacting with such people, she naturally felt more at ease than those who were smiling but had a knife in their hearts.

When Yang Shuwan came out of An Shou Hall and walked to the intersection between the Jade Courtyard and the Hanlu Courtyard, she saw Mu Jin walking over from the Hanlu Courtyard.

A smile appeared on Yang Shuwan's face. She looked around and retracted the smile on her face. She asked impatiently, "Is everything done?"

Mu Jin quickly nodded. "It's done. News about Eldest Miss's birthday banquet was spread to the Hanlu Courtyard through a few old maids."

Yang Shuwan smiled again. "Have you finished organizing the old maids guarding the door?"

Mu Jin said, "Eldest Madam, don't worry. The old maids guarding the door of the Hanlu Courtyard are usually very cautious. It's just that they can't bear to smell alcohol and urine. After a few cups of yellow urine, they won't be able to guard the door anymore."

Yang Shuwan couldn't help but smile. She asked cautiously, "You can't implicate me."

When Mu Jin heard this, she quickly said, "Today is Eldest Miss's birthday, and the residence is busy with the Jade Courtyard, so it's a little more relaxed than usual. I sent someone to mobilize Concubine He from the Clear Autumn Courtyard. Concubine He made her own wine and asked the maidservants in the courtyard to send things to Fourth Miss secretly. If this matter blows up, it'll be Concubine He's fault, and it won't be Eldest Madam's fault."

Yang Shuwan was also completely relieved. She smiled and said, "You're so smart. Seeing that Concubine He might have an opportunity, she might even try to seduce Master. This move will probably cause trouble in the house for another month or so."

No matter how much Lady Qiu was doted on, she was just a maidservant.

Concubine He was a legitimate concubine. If she really seduced him, she probably won't be able to hold back her arrogance in the future.

Mu Jin quickly smiled. "I pity Concubine He. She's been locked in the courtyard for more than a month and can't even see her daughter, so I just made it convenient for her."

She made it sound like she was being kind.

Yang Shuwan laughed when she heard this. She didn't mention Concubine He anymore. "Fourth Sister was asked by Yao Yao to stay in the house to learn the rules. I don't know when she can come out. It's Yao Yao's birthday today, so she can come out for a breather."

She had raised this daughter of a concubine. No one knew better than her what kind of personality she had and how to control her. One was holding a banquet in the residence, while the other was being tortured in the courtyard. No proud person could stand such a difference.

Mu Jin nodded repeatedly. "Eldest Madam is kind."

Yang Shuwan sighed slightly. "I hope that Fourth Miss has learned some rules from the nanny in the Education Department and can be more well-behaved. Otherwise, after being locked up for so many days, the resentment that she has been holding in the house will flare up and she will definitely cause trouble during this birthday celebration. Yu Youyao will be embarrassed, and the sisters she invited probably won't be willing to befriend her. In the end, she will lose all her face after holding a small banquet. In the future, she won't have the face to go out anymore. How can Old Madam let Fourth Miss off easily?"

If Yu Youyao embarrassed herself, it showed how obedient and polite Jia Jia was.

Whether the sisters were good or bad, they had to be compared. When they were compared together, it would show how different they were.

Mu Jin also looked worried.

Yang Shuwan glanced at the Hanlu Courtyard and said, "Let's go and take a look at the main kitchen. Eldest Miss is having a banquet today, and the main kitchen is preparing a meal. As her stepmother, I have to go over and manage it."

Yu Qingning was woken up by Nanny Jin at dawn to learn the rules. She no longer had a book on her head and was carrying a blue and white plate. She walked carefully, afraid that the blue and white plate would fall from her head and smash.

As a result, the journey was very difficult. After two hours, Yu Qingning smashed three round plates and did not even take a break. Nanny Jin punished her continuously for most of the morning.

At 11am, Nanny Jin stared at her for a long time. She was a little tired, so she asked her to rest for an hour and continue learning the rules of serving tea.

When Yu Qingning walked into the courtyard, she heard two old maids sitting together. They were munching on melon seeds and chatting

Chapter 220 - 220 Play beat the drum, pass the flower

"Eldest Miss's tenth birthday is held today, and she's holding a small banquet in the residence. It's a grand banquet. Not only did she invite the other young misses into the residence to play, but there's also a banquet in the main kitchen. It's said that Eldest Miss took out her own money and organized a table for all the masters in the courtyard. Even the servants have a table."

"Isn't that so? Just now, I happened to see Eldest Miss. She was dressed in yellow and green, and her skin was fresh and tender, like a flower bud. The small crown on her head was specially made by Old Madam. The top was inlaid with pearls, and each of them was the size of a peanut. When Eldest Miss stood in the middle of the young misses, no one was more eye-catching than her."

"Eldest Miss is indeed very glorious. Poor Fourth Miss..."

“Isn’t that so? I heard that Eldest Miss even invited the fifth young miss of the second house. Even Sixth Miss was invited but she didn’t invite our fourth miss...”

!!

Before Yu Qingning could even catch her breath, she was already furious...

At the Jade Courtyard, a group of young ladies sat on stools in a circle. Song Wanhui took a flower ball and passed it to Yu Youyao.

Before Yu Youyao could pass the flower ball, the drum sounded.

Song Wanhui smiled. “After playing a few rounds, it’s finally your turn. Otherwise, I would have thought that your family members were cheating together.”

Everyone covered their mouths and laughed.

The smile on Yu Jianjia’s lips deepened. All the young misses of wealthy families were talented. As the eldest sister, she did not attend talent classes except literature classes. However, when young misses played together, who cared about this?

They all wanted to showcase their talent.

Yu Youyao held the flower ball in her hands. “Didn’t you cheat? All of you play the zither, play chess, read books, write poems, and have all kinds of talents. When I saw this, I was afraid and how could I have the guts?” After saying that, she turned to look at Yu Shuangbai. “I only learned literature at home.”

Eldest Miss Yu was very generous. Even if her talent was not outstanding, she was neither servile nor overbearing. Qi Sinian smiled. “Listen, I’m afraid she’s deliberately being unreasonable and doesn’t want to perform anymore.”

Suddenly, she thought of the Green Parasol Zither Painting hanging in the hall. Eldest Miss Yu might really be talented.

Tang Yunxi’s eyes were also sparkling. She said timidly, “You’re the host today. You have to show us your skills and have fun with us.”

After saying that, she looked at Eldest Miss Yu uneasily.

Yu Youyao was not angry. She stood up with a sigh. “You’re the guests. You’re right. Even if I embarrass myself, I have to bite the bullet.” With that, she turned to look at Yu Shuangbai. “Lend me the flower ball.”

Yu Shuangbai hurriedly handed the flower ball over. In the end, she asked worriedly, “Big Sister, can you do it?”

As soon as these words were spoken, everyone laughed.

Yu Youyao pulled a long face. “We’re sisters. How can you undermine me like this? How can you ask if I can do it? I have to do it even if I can’t.”

With that, she kicked off her shoes. It wasn’t exactly a rule.

She threw up the ball of flowers in her hand and lay down on the ground. She raised her leg and caught the ball with the tip of her foot. The ball spun on the tip of her foot but did not fall.

It was unknown how her little feet had grown. The backs of her feet were taut and straight, forming a straight line with her leg bones, but the soles of her feet were curved like crescent moons. Even though she was wearing socks, they revealed her graceful curves. She was a half-grown child, and her feet were not grown. They looked very small and beautiful, even more beautiful than a three-inch golden lotus.

The eyes of all the young mistresses present lit up.

Eldest Miss Yu put her leg up, and the flower ball was thrown up again. She flipped her body and lay on the ground. She stretched out her leg and happened to catch the flower ball that had fallen. The flower ball was then pressed against the tip of her foot. The person lying on the ground folded her legs behind her and pressed the tip of her foot against the back of her head...

Tang Yunxi cried out in surprise. Her eyes widened, and she did not even blink.

Song Wanhui turned to Qi Sining and said, "Her figure is really flexible!"

Qi Sinian nodded. "I've learned how to soften my body from Nanny since I was young, but I can't do it like her. She's like water. She can do whatever she wants."

What was rare was that Eldest Miss Yu was not talented or weak, so she did not do anything fancy. She really did as she said.

It was obvious that Eldest Miss Yu was also a straightforward person.

At this moment, Yu Youyao folded her hind legs and sent the flower ball on the tip of her foot to the top of her head. She slowly moved her body and stood up from the ground. The flower ball was still on her head.

This performance was extremely exciting. No other girls would play like this when they were together. It was really eye-catching.

Yu Youyao stood up and shook her head slightly. The moment the flower ball fell, she caught it in her hand. "Everyone, just treat it as a joke. Don't make me laugh."

Song Wanhui immediately smiled and clapped her hands. "Today, everyone is gathered together to have fun. We're not as impressive as you. You've broadened everyone's horizons. All we know is some poor literature."

Qi Sinian also said, "Isn't that so? I was just about to ask how you trained your figure. I'm so envious."

Yu Youyao sat down with the flower ball and said with a smile, "I was born with it. Others can't envy me."

These words were really asking for a beating. Qi Sinian immediately reached out his hand to tickle her armpit. Yu Youyao was caught off guard and was tickled. She was a half-grown girl and was embarrassed. How could she withstand such tickling? She giggled and quickly hid behind Song Wanhui.

Qi Sinian scratched Song Huiwan, and the three of them immediately laughed. Tang Yunxi watched with sparkling eyes, filled with envy.

Yu Jianjia immediately felt that the tea in her mouth was tasteless.

She also did not understand why Third Miss Song and Sixth Miss Qi had become so close to Yu Youyao after taking a liking to her.

However, she did not know that when people interacted with each other, what mattered was not talent, but their temperament.

It did not matter if Yu Youyao was talented or not. What was important was that she had done what she had said previously. She did not mind showing off as much as she wanted. She was really playing openly.

This was called treating others with sincerity!

Just as everyone was having fun, a young maidservant rushed in. “Eldest Miss, Fourth Miss is here. We...” It wasn’t good to stop her, nor could they stop her. Fourth Miss was determined to come here. If she caused a huge commotion, it would be rude in front of the guests. After all, Fourth Miss was still their mistress...

Before she could finish speaking, she saw Yu Qingning run in a sorry state. She looked at Yu Youyao, who was standing in the middle of the crowd like a moon surrounded by stars. Ignoring the maid servant’s obstruction, she rushed over.