

All Hail 221

Chapter 221 - 221 Big Sister, Please Spare Me

Before Yu Youyao could react, Yu Qingning had already rushed in front of her and was crying in fear and helplessness. “Big Sister, I beg you to spare me...”

Everyone was stunned and looked at Yu Qingning.

Yu Jianjia’s eyes widened in shock. For a moment, she was stunned and could not react.

Yu Qingning was wearing a set of nine-layered clothes that she needed to wear to learn the rules. Her hair was loose and messy, and there were many hair rings on her head. Her face was as pale as paper. Not only were her eyes dark, but her mouth was also dry, as if she had suffered a huge grievance.

!!

Was this the Fourth Miss of the Yu Residence?

Even if she was just a concubine’s daughter, she shouldn’t be like this!

Before Yu Youyao could open her mouth, Tang Yunmeng was shocked. She covered her mouth with her handkerchief and widened her eyes. She exclaimed in disbelief, “Oh my god, what happened to Fourth Miss Yu?”

Yu Qingning was crying so hard that her face was covered in tears and her eyes were swollen. “Big Sister, please spare me. The nannies in the Education Department are used to using some torture methods. They teach people the rules openly, but they’re secretly torturing them. Big Sister, I really can’t take it anymore. I’ll get up and walk in the morning. Look, look, my feet are swollen from walking. There are blisters all over the soles of my feet.” She simply sat on the ground and pulled out her shoes and socks, revealing her feet. The old blisters on her fair feet had not healed completely, and new blisters had grown again. It hurt...

Anyone who saw this would feel that she was very pitiful.

Yu Jianjia tightened her grip on her handkerchief on the spot. She pursed her lips tightly and looked reluctant.

...

Song Wanhui and Qi Sinian also looked at each other, not knowing what was going on. They looked at Yu Youyao.

Eldest Miss Yu stood there indifferently. Her lips curled up slightly, revealing a terrifying light. Her eyes were shockingly bright, and her eyes reflected her fourth sister’s sorry state. She did not say anything or pull her sister away. She just let Yu Qingning talk and make a fuss.

Yu Qingning cried miserably, her face covered in snot and tears. “Big Sister, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to contradict you last time. Now, I’ve also been taught a lesson. Big Sister, I won’t dare to do it again. Let Nanny Jin leave the residence...”

At this moment, everyone finally understood the inside story.

For some reason, Fourth Miss Yu had contradicted Eldest Miss Yu, so Eldest Miss Yu had asked the nannies in the Education Department to stay in the residence and teach Yu Qingning more about the rules. However, which of the nannies in the Education Department was easy to get along with? All the sisters from wealthy families knew that although these nannies taught the rules well, they were really good at torturing people.

Fourth Miss Yu could not stand the torture, so she took the opportunity to sneak out of the residence to apologize to Eldest Miss Yu and ask her to spare her.

She looked really pitiful.

One was celebrating her birthday in the residence and holding a small banquet. She was so glorious.

However, the other was locked in the courtyard to learn the rules. She was tortured by the nanny in the Education Department and was not even allowed to leave.

Why was there such a big difference between people?

Yu Jianjia opened her mouth but still tried to comfort her. "Fourth Sister, what are you doing? Get up and talk. It's Eldest Sister's birthday today. You can't make such a fuss..."

...

Yu Jianjia had always been kind and polite. She said this out of goodwill, but Yu Qingning ignored her and cried miserably. "Big Sister, please spare me..."

It was a good banquet, but Yu Qingning had caused such a commotion. It was extremely awkward.

Yu Shuangbai was so angry that she stomped her feet. She kept looking at Yu Youyao. When she saw that Yu Youyao was standing at the side and letting Yu Qingning cause trouble as if nothing had happened, she also looked disappointed.

Yu Lianyu and Yu Fangfei also tightened their grip on their handkerchiefs worriedly. They opened their mouths to speak, but they didn't know what to say.

Chun Xiao and the other maidservants were even more anxious.

As Yu Qingning cried, she secretly watched Yu Youyao's reaction, looking forward to seeing her embarrassed, panicked, and at a loss. However, she was destined to be disappointed.

Yu Youyao stood there and looked at her calmly. She was wearing yellow and green clothes, and she looked imposing. Just one look at her made her feel very intimidated, and she almost couldn't breathe.

Yu Qingning suddenly thought of Cousin Zhou from the Green House.

Previously, she had bumped into Cousin Zhou in the residence. Thinking that Cousin Zhou was close to Yu Youyao and was a cripple who had come to their residence, he probably had to give her some face.

At that time, Cousin Zhou did not say anything and just looked at her calmly. For no reason, she felt flustered and hurriedly looked away, not daring to look at him anymore.

Everyone in the Jade Courtyard watched Yu Qingning make a fuss. Yu Youyao did not speak, and no one dared to.

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Under the gazes of these people, no matter how strong-willed one was, they still couldn't take it. After some time, Yu Qingning couldn't cry anymore.

She couldn't help but look around.

Seeing the pairs of eyes staring at her, Yu Qingning was dumbfounded. She kept feeling that these people were looking at her with mockery. No matter how thick-skinned she was, she couldn't take it anymore.

All of this was completely different from what she had imagined.

Today was Yu Youyao's birthday banquet, so how could she allow others to cause a commotion? Seeing her come over, wouldn't Yu Youyao immediately stop her?

This way, it would seem that Yu Youyao was guilty. Others would really think that Yu Youyao was using her status as the daughter of the first wife to bully her younger sister from the Ling family. Yu Youyao would be completely embarrassed. If word got out, it would also confirm Yu Youyao's reputation as a spoiled and domineering woman. In the future, Yu Youyao would no longer have the face to go outside and no family would be willing to interact with her!

But what was going on with Yu Youyao?

She was just going to let her cry?

Wasn't she worried that she would make a fuss and embarrass herself?

However, this had already happened. Even if she couldn't continue, she had to grit her teeth and force herself to play her part. Hence, Yu Qingning crawled on the ground and cried even louder.

Only then did Yu Youyao sigh faintly. She took a step forward and bent down to help Yu Qingning up.

...

Yu Qingning didn't want to get up either. Seeing that Yu Youyao was helping her, she felt even more confident. She didn't want to get up either. She wanted to continue making a fuss and make Yu Youyao look bad on the spot. However, Yu Youyao had the strength to hold her arm and help her up.

Yu Youyao's expression was calm, and she did not show any emotions. She pinched her handkerchief and gently wiped her face. "You're a girl. It's not good to look so disheveled." With that, she turned to Chun Xiao and instructed, "Bring Fourth Miss to my room to freshen up and change her clothes. It's my birthday today. Since Fourth Sister is here, let's have fun!"

With that, she let go of Yu Qingning's hand.

Chun Xiao stepped forward and supported Yu Qingning. "Fourth Miss, let's go!"

Yu Qingning's eyes widened in shock. For a moment, she was stunned. She had not expected that Yu Youyao would be finished just like that.

Yu Qingning asked Chun Xiao to help her walk.

Only then did Yu Qingning remember that she was still acting. She struggled to turn around and cried miserably, “Big Sister...”

Chapter 222 - 222 How Shameless

Yu Fangfei stomped her feet and couldn't hold it in anymore. “Fourth Sister, you're too much. How can you make such a fuss on Eldest Sister's birthday? Can Eldest Sister still go to the Education Department to find a nanny to torture you? Why did we ask the nanny from the Education Department to teach you the rules? You still have the cheek to make a fuss? By making such a fuss, doesn't it prove that you really don't have any etiquette? If the nanny from the Education Department doesn't teach you the rules, who else can?”

Yu Shuangbai also said, “Isn't that so? She has already embarrassed herself, so who else can she embarrass?”

Yu Lianyu also looked disapproving. “Fourth Sister, tell me, how did Eldest Sister let you down? You caused Eldest Sister trouble on her birthday and made her unhappy. Look at the hairpin on your head and the nine layers of clothes on your body. Which one of them wasn't given to you by Eldest Sister? You're really shameless...”

When Yu Qingning heard this, her eyes widened in shock. For a moment, she even forgot to cry and was pulled away by Chun Xiao.

Yu Jianjia frowned and lowered her head, thinking about something.

The atmosphere was a little tense after Yu Qingning caused a commotion. Everyone gave up on playing and went to the hall to eat.

Song Wanhui and Qi Sining pulled Yu Youyao aside.

“This step-sister of yours is really...” Song Wanhui didn't know how to describe her for a moment. She held it in for a moment before saying, “She can really cause trouble. I wonder how she was raised.”

The last sentence directly pointed out the main point. Qi Sining nodded. “To be able to cause such a commotion, it's no wonder that she was locked in the courtyard to learn the rules.”

Even a well-mannered lady from an ordinary family wouldn't cause such a commotion. It was obvious that Yu Qingning had really lost her upbringing. Her stepmother had taught her badly.

...

From this, it could be seen that Yu Youyao's stepmother was probably not easy to deal with.

Tang Yunxi added, “When she cried, she kept looking at Eldest Miss Yu from the corner of her eye.”

Song Wanhui and Qi Sining understood. If she was really sad, she would only care about crying and feeling sad. She would be in no mood to care about others. It was obvious that this grievance was fake and the commotion was real.

They were not really stupid.

After entering the Yu Residence, they had the intention of befriending the sisters. This was the first time they were officially interacting, so she naturally had to take a closer look at their characters before deciding if they would get along in the future.

Although there were also sisters in the family who were born of concubines, they had no intention of looking down on them. However, there was a difference between the first and second wives. There were some occasions where some daughters of concubines really couldn't get involved.

It was rare for Yu Youyao to bring her younger sister out for a banquet on her birthday.

Yu Lianyu and Yu Fangfei from the second house sat beside Yu Youyao with generous expressions. They were not fools. They could tell at a glance that they were on good terms.

When Yu Shuangbai spoke, her eyes would always glance at Yu Youyao, but she ignored the Third Miss, Yu Jianjia. Clearly, she was closer to Yu Youyao.

Yu Jianjia looked gentle and weak, but she was also polite. No one could tell what was wrong, but the relationship between the sisters could be seen. Yu Youyao was more popular in the residence.

When Yu Youyao heard this, she understood that they were expressing their stance. She was also touched. "I don't care how she makes a fuss. Anyway, I'm not the one who's embarrassed. I'm not the one who will be punished after this."

...

These words were really magnanimous, without any grievance at all. It was obvious that not only was Eldest Miss Yu a person with a temper, but she was also a sensible person.

The few of them immediately looked at each other and smiled. They gathered together to talk.

Yu Jianjia watched from afar and immediately felt stifled. She did not expect that after letting Yu Qingning cause a ruckus, not only did these people not have any grudges, but they also seemed to be closer.

Tang Yunxi looked at Yu Youyao's slender figure and was very envious. She had also heard that Eldest Miss Yu had grown a little fatter in the past. She wondered how she had lost so much weight.

Yu Youyao held her hand. "I'll write a few medicinal recipes for you to nourish your body later. Try them. They might be useful."

There was a medicinal cuisine recipe for slim body transformation in the "Food Recipe" book. She would ask Nanny Xu to choose a few that were not harmful to their bodies.

Tang Yunxi was very happy. She held Yu Youyao's hand. "Thank you."

"Don't stand on ceremony with me. In the past, I was just like you. I only lost weight because I was sick and had to eat less. Later, I asked the nanny in front of me to control my diet and learn the Body Modeling Technique. That's how I completely lost weight." Yu Youyao didn't hide anything and told her about the food she had eaten to become skinny.

After chatting for a while, Yu Qingning returned fully dressed.

At this moment, she did not want to make a fuss. Instead, she found an opportunity to join them. However, Song Wanhui and Qi Sining ignored her. Tang Yunxi was a quiet person to begin with. Hence, she returned to Yu Shuangbai's place after being snubbed.

...

Yu Shuangbai and the others rolled their eyes. They came to Yu Youyao's side with Yu Lianyu and Yu Fangfei and chatted together. It was really lively.

Yu Qingning was left alone, so she could only talk to Tang Yunmeng.

As they chatted, Yu Lianyu and Yu Fangfei started showing off their sister.

After a while, everyone knew that Eldest Miss Yu had learned a lot from Nanny. She knew how to mix perfume, make medicinal tea, and even make medicinal cuisine. She had also been learning how to play the zither recently.

In school, her studies were top-notch, and she almost became Ms. Ye's favorite student.

Song Wanhui knew a little about her. "My grandmother's cough is better after taking the prescription she gave me. She only feels better after eating it. Previously, she even gave my grandmother medicinal tea. After drinking it for a while, my grandmother even felt much better. Even my brother likes her medicinal tea..."

At the mention of Song Mingzhao, Yu Youyao's eyelids twitched.

Qi Sinian quickly said, "Is it this tea? No wonder it's different from ordinary tea. I drank a lot just now without realizing it. I've already changed it a few times."

These words sounded fake.

Tang Yunxi happened to be holding a teacup. She pursed her lips and smiled. "I think it's delicious too."

Yu Youyao smiled and said, "If you like it, bring some back later. I've made a lot."

...

They all agreed.

When Song Wanhui heard Yu Shuangbai say that there was sheep's cream, she was very interested. "Do you have a lot of sheep's cream? Use it on me too. I think that each of your complexions is better than the other."

Yu Youyao nodded. "Alright, I made some peach blossom dew a while ago, so I'll give you some too. After cleansing your face, apply some peach blossom dew to your face first. Then, apply sheep's cream. Don't dry your face for the entire day."

Qi Sining hugged Yu Youyao's slender waist. "You're really a treasure. I wonder who will be your lucky partner in the future."

Chapter 223 - 223 Someone Instigated Her

Yu Youyao blushed and punched her. "How shameless. How can a young lady say that?"

Everyone laughed when they heard that.

Before she knew it, it was already late afternoon.

At this age, it was not good for others to stay too long at someone's home, so they had to return home.

The few of them were a little reluctant to part. Song Wanhui held Yu Youyao's hand. "Our house isn't far away. If there's a chance in the future, please come to my house to play!"

Yu Youyao did not want to go, not because of Song Wanhui, but purely because she did not want to have too much interaction with the Zhenguo Marquis Residence. However, she nodded. "Okay."

Song Wanhui carried the big bag that Yu Youyao had prepared and happily got into the carriage.

Qi Sinian smiled. "I'll write to you when I get back."

In the end, it was Tang Yunxi who held Yu Youyao's hand reluctantly. "Yao Yao, thank you for today."

Yu Youyao asked Nanny Xu to take a look at her body. Nanny Xu was especially good at helping people recuperate, so she gave her a few delicate medicinal recipes. She also told her which food to eat more often and which food to avoid. She recommended a nanny who was good at body-building and was in the Education Department.

No one knew about this.

Yu Youyao shook her head. "Remember to write to me when you get home."

Tang Yunxi nodded. She wanted to say more to Yu Youyao, but Tang Yunmeng had already urged her impatiently, "It's getting late. Are you leaving or not?"

Tang Yunxi could only say, "Yao Yao, I'll go back first."

Tang Yunxi reluctantly got into the carriage and waved goodbye to Yu Youyao.

Thinking of the cold treatment she had received in the Yu Residence today, Tang Yunmeng felt unhappy. She said some harsh words like how Tang Yunxi was as fat and ugly as a pig.

Usually, when she heard this, Tang Yunxi couldn't even raise her head. When she returned home, she would definitely cry. However, in the Jade Courtyard today, she saw that after going through what Yu Qingning did, Eldest Miss Yu seemed to be fine. Now, when she saw Tang Yunmeng, she was much calmer, unlike usual when she felt suffocated.

When Yu Youyao returned to the Jade Courtyard, the maidservants were packing up. Nanny Xu was bringing Dong Mei to tidy up the birthday gifts sent by the young misses today.

Yu Youyao had to go over and take a look.

Qi Sinian and Tang Yunxi had both given good gifts. They weren't too expensive, but they looked very exquisite. Clearly, they were gifts prepared by their elders.

After opening the gift from Song Wanhui, Yu Youyao's eyes lit up. "It's a double fish round pendant."

Coincidentally, this double fish round pendant also had a yellow and a red koi fish. It looked very much like the koi fish on the broken longevity lock. Yu Youyao couldn't help but like it, so she played with it in her hand. Soon, she could tell that it was extraordinary. With a gentle twist, the round pendant separated into two koi fish.

Yu Youyao liked it very much, and immediately took the mutton fat jade pendant off and put it on the double fish pendant. She didn't combine the two koi fishes together, and they just hung like that.

As she walked, the two koi fishes hit each other and she realized that the sound was extremely pleasant.

After a while, Liu'er returned.

Chun Xiao's eyes flashed. Today was the Young Miss's birthday banquet, and all the maidservants were busy in the courtyard. However, she had not seen Liu'er for most of the day. Liu'er was not a lazy person.

Yu Youyao took a sip of tea and stood up from her chair. "To Grandmother's house."

Chun Xiao and Liu'er followed behind.

When they arrived at An Shou Hall, Old Madam Yu sat on the couch with a dark expression, not even twirling her prayer beads.

Yu Zongzheng had probably just left the government office and had yet to change into his court clothes.

Yang Shuwan was sitting upright on a chair. She was wearing a formal dress with golden peony embroidery, revealing an oppressive beauty. Below her, Concubine He, whom she had not seen for a long time, was kneeling. She was wearing a bean-green willow branch dress and looked much more elegant than before.

However, probably because she had been grounded in the courtyard, her figure had become much slimmer. Even though she was kneeling, she still looked delicate and charming.

Yu Zongzheng couldn't help but glance at her a few times. However, when his gaze landed on Yu Qingning, who was kneeling beside her, his expression darkened.

Yu Youyao went forward to greet Old Madam Yu.

Old Madam Yu's expression softened a little. "Have you sent all the guests away?"

Yu Youyao nodded. "I gave them the medicinal tea I made and the ointment. Third Sister Song, Sixth Sister Qi, and Fifth Sister Tang invited me to their houses to play. They even said that they wanted to exchange letters."

Old Madam Yu smiled. "It's our first time holding a banquet, and you've already arranged to exchange letters. It's obvious that our Yao Yao is doing well. It's not like anyone is causing trouble."

With that, she glanced gloomily at Yu Qingning, who was kneeling on the ground.

Yu Zongzheng also smiled. "Yao Yao has become a big girl and is becoming more mature." Even though Fourth Sister was making a fuss, her family's reputation wasn't damaged.

Yu Youyao pursed her lips and chuckled.

Old Madam Yu stared at Yu Qingning coldly. “Who allowed you to come out?”

After the commotion, Yu Qingning also knew what was going on. When Old Madam’s gaze landed on her, she cowered. “I-I saw that there were no old maids guarding the door, so...”

Initially, she had only wanted to go over and make Yu Youyao feel uncomfortable. However, along the way, she had heard everyone talking about how glorious Yu Youyao was. Unknowingly...

Old Madam Yu sneered. “You went to the Jade Courtyard to cause trouble?”

Yu Qingning glanced at Yu Youyao viciously, shrank her stomach, and lowered her head, not daring to say anything else.

Old Madam Yu stared at her. “You’re sabotaging your own family.” After saying that, she waved her hand as if she was chasing away a fly. “Go back to your own courtyard. Nanny Jin will stay in the residence. She will only leave when you’ve learned the rules well.” Under Yu Qingning’s frightened gaze, Old Madam Yu turned to look at Nanny Liu. “All the maidservants in Hanlu Courtyard will be beaten ten times each and sold. None of them can stay. Lock the doors of Hanlu Courtyard tightly. Without my permission, Fourth Sister is not allowed to come out.”

Yu Qingning looked horrified. Before she could react, a heavy slap landed on her face, causing her to see stars and her ears to ring. She tilted her head—

The person who had hit her was her mother.

Concubine He knelt on the ground and cried bitterly. “Old Madam, Qingning is still young. She didn’t mean to cause trouble at Eldest Miss’s birthday banquet. Someone must have instigated her. Please investigate.” After saying that, she turned to look at Yu Qingning and said coldly, “Hurry up and apologize to your Eldest Sister.”

Qingning had moved into the Hanlu Courtyard. She was grounded in the Clear Autumn Courtyard and couldn’t help much. Old Madam had hired a nanny from the Education Department to detain Qingning in the courtyard to learn the rules. How could she not know how powerful these nannies were? How could she not worry about her daughter?

It was also because it was her eldest sister’s birthday banquet that the family was busy organizing it. That was why she found an opportunity to buy some wine and got someone to send it to the old woman guarding the door of the Hanlu Courtyard. Only then did she pass something to Qingning...

Chapter 224 - 224 Old Madam’s Kindness

Who knew...

Concubine He looked up at Yang Shuwan, who could not hide her smug expression, and her eyes burned with anger.

Yu Qingning reacted immediately. With a burning face, she rushed to Yu Youyao. “Big Sister, I’m sorry. I-I didn’t do it on purpose. I just heard from the maidservants and old maids that Big Sister even invited the fifth and sixth sisters of the second branch to the birthday banquet, but you didn’t invite me. I was angry, so... please forgive me...”

Yu Youyao slowly picked up her tea and lowered her head to take a sip. Then, she said, “As an older sister, I naturally won’t argue with my younger sister, but Fourth Sister should indeed learn the rules.”

Yu Qingning’s tears fell even more fiercely. “Big Sister...”

Concubine He also panicked. She crawled to Yu Youyao and begged, “Eldest Miss, Fourth Miss has been spoiled by me since she was young. I’ll definitely discipline her well from now on. As her elder sister, please forgive her this time...”

If Eldest Miss did not forgive Qingning today, Qingning would probably only be able to stay in the courtyard in the future. When she was old, she would casually arrange a marriage and she would get married hastily. Her life would probably be ruined.

Yu Youyao put down her teacup. The bottom of the cup knocked against the table, producing a loud thud. “I’ve already forgiven her. Otherwise, do you think that just based on the fact that she caused a commotion at my birthday banquet, she would still be able to sit down and eat well? As her elder sister, I’m not only giving her face, but also giving her respect. However...” She changed the topic slightly, her voice sounding calm and tactful. “Face is something that you have to fight for yourself, and it’s never given to you by others.”

As Yu Qingning cried, she looked at Yu Youyao viciously, and a sense of ruthlessness rose in her heart.

Concubine He opened her mouth...

“Shut up!” This time, it was Yu Zongzheng who spoke. A terrifying anger was brewing on his face. “Don’t think that just because Yao Yao has forgiven her, this matter will be over.”

Concubine He’s face turned pale. “Master...”

Old Madam Yu waved her hand. “Take them away.”

Seeing Concubine He and her daughter being dragged out of An Shou Hall by the two old maids, Yang Shuwan almost couldn’t help but smile. She lowered her head, pinched her handkerchief, and gently pressed the corner of her mouth. When she raised her head, she unexpectedly met Old Madam’s turbid but cold eyes. Her heart immediately skipped a beat. She subconsciously put away the handkerchief at the corner of her mouth, folded her legs, and sat up straight.

Old Madam Yu sneered. “Where did Mu Jin go this morning?”

Yang Shuwan’s pupils constricted, and she quickly said, “It’s Yao Yao’s birthday banquet today, so I didn’t bring Mu Jin along. I asked her to help make the noodles in the main kitchen.”

There were many of her people in the main kitchen, so she could definitely cover it up.

Old Madam Yu sneered. “Do you think that I’m old and don’t care about the family anymore? Do you think you can control everything in the family?” She turned to look at Liu’er. “Tell me.”

Liu’er took a step forward and met Yang Shuwan’s murderous gaze. She lowered her head and said, “There was a banquet at home tonight, so Eldest Miss asked me to go to the main kitchen to help. I

saw Miss Mu Jin this morning, and she only returned when the other young mistresses entered the residence.”

She used to work in the main courtyard and knew the people there. Eldest Miss was worried that something would go wrong on her birthday today, so she asked her to keep an eye on the main courtyard.

Yang Shuwan tugged at her handkerchief. “This girl, Mu Jin, probably went to hide somewhere...” She lowered her eyes and glanced at Mu Jin.

When Mu Jin walked out from behind Yang Shuwan, her legs went limp and she knelt on the ground with a thud. “Old Madam, it’s my fault. First Madam got up at dawn today and was in charge of the residence early in the morning. She asked me to go to the main kitchen to help. When I went to the main kitchen, I saw that it was orderly and there was no need for me to do anything, so I went to the backyard to hide.” As she spoke, she cried. “First Madam didn’t know about this. It’s all my fault...”

Yu Youyao looked up. The skinny Mu Jin was kneeling on the ground, her body trembling.

Even if she admitted her mistake, she still had to mention how much Yang Shuwan, her stepmother, cared about her birthday. It was obvious that she was really loyal.

In this way, even if Liu’er snitched on Mu Jin and said she went to the Hanlu Courtyard, Mu Jin could also say that she had gone there to slack off and that Eldest Madam did not know about this.

She would say it was her fault and not implicate Madam Yang at all.

Old Madam Yu lowered her eyes. “The person in front of you can say whatever you want.” She glanced at Mu Jin. “This girl is sly and doesn’t even listen to the orders of the main family.”

Yang Shuwan’s face stiffened, but she did not dare to say anything else.

Old Madam Yu looked up again. “She doesn’t look young anymore. She’s in her twenties, right? These maidservants are getting more scheming as they age.” She changed the topic and her tone suddenly became stiff. “Just drag her out to be matched with the servants in the residence. It can be considered as her way of serving you.”

When a maidservant made a mistake, most of them would be sold after being flogged. She had money in her hands, so if she spent some money, she would have a good exit.

She did not look outstanding, and Master did not like her either. First Madam had originally wanted to keep her around. In the future, when she was older, she would be the person in charge of the main courtyard. She was First Madam’s maidservant, and she was usually arrogant and domineering. However, being downgraded was not a good way to live. She could still live a good life if she was matched with someone good but if she was matched with an old and ugly person, her life would be over.

Mu Jin’s face turned pale with fright. She kowtowed repeatedly. “Old Madam, I know my mistake. Please show mercy...”

Old Madam Yu lowered her eyes. At this point, Mu Jin still insisted that it was her fault. It was obvious that she was being controlled.

Madam Yang still had some tricks up her sleeve.

When Liu'er saw this scene, she recalled her previous days in the main courtyard and felt a chill down her spine.

Whatever his master had instructed him to do, whether she was right or wrong, she had to do it carefully. If anything went wrong, she would be used as a sacrifice. It was the life of a servant.

Liu'er glanced at Eldest Miss, glad that she had followed a good master.

“What do you think?” Old Madam Yu looked at Yang Shuwan. After all, she had served her for many years and wanted to hear what she had to say.

Yang Shuwan turned her face away, not looking at Mu Jin's expectant eyes. She gritted her teeth and said, “I don't dare to have such a cunning servant anymore, so I'll follow Old Madam's instructions.”

Old Madam Yu waved her hand, feeling bored.

If Yang Shuwan could put in a few good words for Mu Jin, she would still think highly of her. However, Yang Shuwan was cold and indifferent. She did not put in any good word for her maidservants and they would still have to work hard.

Mu Jin was pulled down, crying and shouting. “Old Madam, please show mercy, First Madam, First Madam...”

Chapter 225 - 225 Suffering a Double Loss

Mu Jin deserved this outcome for what she had done, but Yang Shuwan thought that everything would be fine after pushing Mu Jin away. That was impossible.

Old Madam Yu sneered. “It's your duty as a wife and mother to take care of your husband and children and be filial to your elders. You're Fourth Sister's stepmother. Fourth Sister's behavior shows that you're not raised well as a stepmother. You're not strict with the family and have raised the daughters in the family without any rules.”

Yang Shuwan did not acknowledge this. She pinched her handkerchief and said, “Fourth Sister has always been with Concubine He...”

Old Madam Yu interrupted her. “Everyone knows that Yao Yao has grown up in front of me since she was young. Her upbringing has nothing to do with you. Fourth Sister is the daughter of a concubine and has been raised by her mother since she was young. However, don't forget that you're a mother. It's the responsibility of a proper wife to raise the children. It's the same even for a concubine's daughter. It's the same for any big family. You raised Jia Jia yourself. If Fourth Sister isn't raised her well, how can Jia Jia be respected in the eyes of outsiders?”

Yang Shuwan's eyes widened in shock.

Old Madam Yu smiled faintly. “They're all grown up now. In a few years, it'll be time for them to go into society. Even if you're scheming, I'll have a say in their future.”

With just one sentence, Yang Shuwan was completely under her control.

No matter which family Yu Jianjia wanted to marry into in the future, other families would definitely have to ask her elders. If her elders said no, no matter how good the marriage was, it would not work.

Now, Yang Shuwan had no choice but to pinch her handkerchief and wipe her tears.

Yu Zongzheng was annoyed and said coldly, "Mother is right. It's the duty of a wife to take care of her husband and teach her children. If you can't even do this well, you might as well take the divorce letter home."

With that, he flicked his sleeves and left.

Yang Shuwan's body went limp and she almost fell to the ground.

Old Madam Yu lowered her head. As she pinched her prayer beads, she said, "Concubine He has been locked up in the courtyard and Eldest Master still needs someone to serve him."

Yang Shuwan's heart skipped a beat and she held her breath.

As expected, Old Madam Yu changed the topic. "Lady Qiu has a clean background and has learned some poetry and books in the past. She was originally chosen from the manor to enter the residence, so she's also loyal. She has served Master for quite a few years and is also liked by him. He arranged for Lady Qiu to become his concubine and stay in the Rain Autumn Courtyard. As the main wife, you can manage it yourself!"

Yang Shuwan's eyes widened in shock. "Old Madam, Lady Qiu's family is a little weak. Should we carefully find someone with a better background as a concubine for Master?"

She did not really want to take in a concubine for Master. After all, if she took in a new concubine, wouldn't the concubine be seducing Master? It was also an excuse to delay this matter.

She had spent so much effort today not only to embarrass Yu Youyao and help Jia Jia, but also to kill two birds with one stone. She wanted to lock Concubine He in the courtyard again so that she wouldn't be a vixen.

However, this little b*tch, Concubine He, had been locked up in the courtyard and wouldn't be able to come out for a while. Before she could even gloat, Old Madam wanted to make Concubine Qiu his new concubine.

Then what was the point of bringing Mu Jin into this scheme?

Wouldn't that be a double loss?

Then, she thought of Concubine Qiu's willowy figure. Master had always loved this. Yang Shuwan almost tore her handkerchief. That vixen was already doted on. If she mentioned Concubine He, wouldn't she be like Concubine He in the future who climbed over her head and abused her power?

Furthermore, Lady Qiu was Old Madam's woman and was wholeheartedly on her side. In the future, if she were to be exposed in front of Master, wouldn't Master's heart side with Old Madam?

How could Old Madam Yu not understand Madam Yang's thoughts? "Why don't I find someone with a good background and take in a concubine for Master? In the future, I'll help you manage the household and you can also rest."

Yang Shuwan's expression turned miserable. "Your d-daughter-in-law only said it casually. Lady Qiu has served Master for many years. It's time for her to be a concubine."

Although the status of a concubine could not be compared to that of the first wife, she still had a status. Wasn't the Imperial Concubine Lu in the palace a concubine?

She had even suppressed the Empress of the Central Palace for many years as a concubine.

She was a concubine's child who married into this family. If Master really wanted to marry a concubine, she would definitely be the daughter of a concubine with a good family background. How could she suppress it righteously?

Wouldn't she let the noble concubines climb over her head and act like a tyrant?

Old Madam Yu said calmly, "Go and make the arrangements!"

If it weren't for the fact that she was worried that a noble concubine would mess up the house, she really wanted to do this.

After Yang Shuwan left, Old Madam Yu hugged her granddaughter. When she heard about the small banquet today, a gratified smile appeared on her face. "You've done well. You took the initiative to send an invitation and invited her over. You weren't arrogant and asked her to eat at your banquet. Yet, she still felt unhappy. There's a room full of young ladies. What's the point of poetry and talent? Isn't it just putting on an act? It's better for things to be lively so that you can see them clearly."

Now that the guests had arrived, not only were the others looking at Yao Yao, but she was also looking at her.

Yu Youyao smiled. "That's what I think."

Old Madam Yu chuckled. "It's also because you've been open with them from the beginning, so Yu Qingning's ruckus has become a farce in their eyes. They've taken a fancy to your personality, so they naturally don't care about these daughters of concubines."

If Yao Yao didn't open up at the start, Yu Qingning would cause a commotion and embarrass her.

Yu Youyao straightened her back. "I don't have anything to feel guilty about, so I let Yu Qingning cause trouble. Even if she makes a fuss, I'm not afraid."

Old Madam Yu smiled again. "You're smart."

Yu Youyao stuck out her tongue.

Old Madam Yu stroked the top of her granddaughter's head. "In the past, I always thought that my children and grandchildren would have their own blessings, so I didn't care about anything and just let Madam Yang do whatever she wanted. She could still put on an act and fool others, but after managing the family for a few years, she's become more and more controlling. Seeing that you were in the limelight, how could I be willing to accept it? I couldn't have made a stupid move. Lady Qiu is still considered well-behaved. She can also distract Madam Yang."

In the past, Fourth Sister had also been a little smart. She knew how to please her father, how to work hard in school, and how to care about her reputation. It was just that she had been too

ambitious and did not want to seek a future for herself. All she wanted was to climb up the social ladder to be a legitimate daughter.

After being locked in the courtyard, she did not learn the rules, but became resentful.

It was probably also Madam Yang who controlled the Hanlu Courtyard and let the old maids gossip in front of Yu Qingning every day.

Learning the rules was difficult to begin with, and Yu Qingning was not willing to learn. She was already unhappy to begin with. After hearing these words, the resentment accumulated deeper and deeper, making her feel even more embarrassed.

Chapter 226 - 226 Really Terrifying!

Yu Youyao listened and said nothing.

In the past, Lady Qiu used to serve her grandmother. When she was older, she looked outstanding, so her father took a fancy to her. Her grandmother asked Lady Qiu for her opinion, and Lady Qiu was also willing to serve her father, so she arranged a room.

Lady Qiu had served her father for three years. She was a quiet person, so Yang Shuwan had never taken her seriously.

Old Madam Yu sighed slightly. "It's not peaceful outside, and there's also a commotion at home. If this continues, there will be trouble sooner or later. However, I'm already half-dead and not afraid of anything. Your father and second uncle are both officials in the imperial court, and they're always holding their heads high. Whether it's good or bad depends on themselves. I'm only worried that you'll be implicated..."

!!

Yu Youyao held her grandmother's hand and said softly, "Grandmother, there's no way out. We'll just have to do it ourselves. Let's live our lives well. The rest will depend on fate."

When Old Madam Yu heard this, she smiled. "You're so young, but you speak like an adult."

Yu Youyao lowered her head in silence.

Old Madam Yu was also a little tired. "You've been busy for most of the day. You're tired too. Go back and rest. There's still a family banquet tonight. You'll definitely be busy again."

Yu Youyao nodded. "Grandmother, hurry and rest too."

Yang Shuwan was in a daze as she walked back to the main courtyard. Thinking of Old Madam's words and Master's dissatisfaction with her, she couldn't help but break out in a cold sweat. She waved her hand—

The cups and plates on the table immediately fell to the ground with a clang.

"That damned old woman just doesn't want me to have an easy time." Yang Shuwan couldn't help but feel her heart ache when she thought of her scheming mother.

After a while, Yang Shuwan calmed down a little and called Nanny Li over. "Where's Mu Jin?"

Nanny Liu hurriedly said, "They locked her up in the side courtyard to be matched with a partner!"

She thought about how Mu Jin had been her most capable maidservant in the past, and how she had been involved in many things. Then, she thought about Old Madam's turbid but insightful expression, and Master's words of "taking the divorce letter home"...

Yang Shuwan gritted her teeth. "Mu Jin has been with me since she was ten years old. I think she's a little smart and knows how to please others. She's raised like a young miss, and she's also delicate. How can the servants in the outer courtyard be good? If she's matched with them, she'll be ruined by them. How can she have a good life?"

Nanny Li's eyelids twitched when she heard this, and even her back bent. She stared at her toes and thought of the grass in the courtyard earlier.

On such a hot day, she broke out in a cold sweat for no reason.

After saying this, Yang Shuwan's face also turned cold. "Set up a mat and throw it into the mass grave. Give her mother a sum of money and say that outsiders will buy her. That way, we can forget about it and she will not cause any trouble."

Nanny Li was used to it and agreed calmly.

Yang Shuwan also sighed. "I have no choice. That girl, Mu Jin, has served me for more than ten years, and I like her too. In the future, if I get let her tortured in the outer courtyard, it's hard to guarantee that she won't resent me. If she doesn't die, I'll be giving Old Madam some benefits. In the future, if Old Madam doesn't let go, how can I live peacefully?"

Nanny Li was like a clay doll, motionless and silent.

Yang Shuwan lowered her head. "In the past ten years, I've treated her well. Such a life can be considered to have fulfilled my kindness to her. Tomorrow, I'll copy a Buddhist scripture for her and hope that she'll be reincarnated into a good family in her next life. I don't want her to be a shameless servant."

She had casually snatched away a life.

Yang Shuwan heaved a sigh of relief and gritted her teeth. "Call that b*tch, Lady Qiu, over."

In Langhai courtyard.

Hui Xiang was chattering non-stop, saying that Concubine He was grounded by Old Madam He again, and Yu Qingning was locked in the courtyard and not allowed to go out. Yu Jianjia couldn't hear a single word.

Her mind was filled with thoughts of how Yu Youyao had stolen the limelight at the birthday banquet today.

She had originally wanted to use Yu Youyao's birthday banquet to befriend the noble ladies of the various families, so she had also hidden some tricks in her dressing.

However, she never expected this!

First, it was Yu Shuangbai from the second house. Then, Yu Lianyu and Yu Fangfei, the two daughters of concubines, changed their ways to praise Yu Youyao. She couldn't even find a chance to stand up for herself.

She was not in a hurry. When Yu Qingning caused a commotion, there would be plenty of opportunities for her to stand out.

After all, Yu Youyao was a member of the main family. If Yu Youyao embarrassed herself on the spot, it would show her kindness and etiquette as the third daughter of the first wife.

In this way, she would naturally take over Yu Youyao's limelight. She would step on Yu Youyao's face and use her birthday banquet to befriend the various young mistresses.

Yu Qingning had caused a commotion.

However, Yu Youyao was not as embarrassed as she had imagined.

Her indifferent attitude was like that of Zhou Linghuai, who had lost his leg in the Green House. Even though he was sitting in a wheelchair and living under someone else's roof, he was still calm and indifferent.

Such an attitude would make anyone look up to her

She vividly expressed the words, "As long as I don't feel awkward, other people will feel awkward."

What surprised her even more was something else!

The daughters of the second branch actually defended Yu Youyao without a care. This way, Yu Qingning had completely become a joke, and this commotion completely became a farce.

The people who came to attend Yu Youyao's banquet were all personally selected by Old Madam Yu.

She was also the first daughter of the first wife, who had been carefully taught by her mother. None of them were stupid. Not to mention why Yu Qingning was making such a fuss, just based on Yu Youyao's reputation at home, they were also willing to interact with her.

No matter how many schemes she had, they would all fail.

Yu Jianjia was flustered, and an itch appeared in her throat. She took a handkerchief and coughed a few times. In the end, she spread out the rice paper, planning to practice writing for a while to calm herself down.

"Young Miss, Old Madam has punished Miss Mu Jin..."

Hui Xiang chattered on, making Yu Jianjia feel frustrated. She dipped the tip of her brush in ink and shook it gently. A drop of ink fell from the tip of the brush and quickly spread on the paper.

Yu Jianjia closed her eyes and suddenly opened them. She stared at the incense stick, and her eyes were wet. "Shut up!"

"Young..." Hui Xiang's breathing stopped, and she suddenly shivered. She felt a chill run down her spine, and she suddenly got up.

She looked up instinctively and saw Miss looking at her.

Her sickly, delicate, and pure face was no different from usual. However, for some reason, she felt that the young miss at this moment was really terrifying!

Hui Xiang felt a little cold and instinctively lowered her head.

Yu Jianjia took a deep breath, bit her lip, and said gently, "It was because Sister Mu Jin did something wrong that Grandmother punished her. Sister Mu Jin has served Mother for many years, and their relationship is different. I think Mother doesn't feel good either, but I'm a little worried about Mother..."

Chapter 227 - 227 Even If I'm Not Sick, I'll Get Sick From Holding It In

"It's my fault for speaking carelessly and making you feel uncomfortable for no reason." Hui Xiang suddenly heaved a sigh of relief. It turned out that Miss was worried about Madam.

It was also because she had forgotten that Madam had previously instructed her to tell Young Miss as little about the residence as possible in the future, in case Young Miss worried and got in the way.

Yu Jianjia lowered her head. There was a ball of ink on the snow-white paper, which was really dazzling. She crumpled the paper into a ball and threw it into the wastebasket.

She laid out a new piece of paper and wrote a few words. Then, the phrase that Yu Youyao had written appeared in her mind again. For some reason, she felt that the small handwriting that she had been so proud of was too feminine.

!!

Yu Jianjia frowned slightly. "When Cousin Zhou first came to the residence, where did you keep the calligraphy notes that he gave me? Go and find them!"

It had to be admitted that Zhou Linghuai's handwriting was indeed very good. Even Yu Youyao, who had been writing like a dog for a short period of time, managed to write well.

Hui Xiang was stunned again and found the notes as instructed.

Yu Jianjia slowly opened the notes. Zhou Linghuai's writing was not sharp, but it revealed an astonishing aura.

She spread the copy on the desk, re-laid the paper, dipped it in ink, and copied the words accordingly.

She had practiced calligraphy for many years, so copying was not difficult for her. A smile gradually appeared on Yu Jianjia's lips. If Yu Youyao could do it, so could she.

However, after writing a hundred words, Yu Jianjia's nose was covered in sweat. Her wrist was sore and soft. With a shake of her wrist, another large drop of ink fell.

She bit her lip and looked down at the words she had written.

The handwriting was very similar to Zhou Linghuai's, and there was also a feminine aura between the words. It was superficial and did not have any aura. It was far inferior to Yu Youyao's.

Not everyone could practice calligraphy, and not everyone could learn it well.

Seeing that Young Miss was in a bad mood, Hui Xiang subconsciously said, “Young Miss, Young Master Zhou is just a cripple who came to visit. He’s just a piece of trash. Why are you suddenly...”

However, this cripple, who she did not think much of, had turned the once stupid and useless Yu Youyao into a scholarly woman.

Not only was she better than her in school, but she was also better than her mother when it came to managing the family. Now, she even had good calligraphy skills and was learning the zither... Yu Jianjia stared at Hui Xiang and said in a soft voice, “Is it because I’ve always been too indulgent with you that you dare to say anything in front of me?”

Hui Xiang panted and couldn’t help but feel goosebumps all over her body. It was as if there was a slippery poisonous snake wrapped around her body, constantly tightening. Young Miss’s words were like a snake’s tongue that was flicking out. As she swallowed, she let out a soft sound and knelt on the ground with a thud. “Young Miss, I was careless with my words. I was wrong. I won’t dare to do it again...”

Yu Jianjia’s delicate and fair lips were as gentle as a flower, but they were so cold that there was no warmth at all. “Get up. This won’t happen again!”

Hui Xiang quickly stood up and looked up. Miss was still the delicate and polite Miss from before.

When she thought about how she had not only been taught a lesson by Eldest Miss, but also made things difficult for her, she felt a little ashamed.

Young Master Zhou was a cripple who had come to visit her, but he was still a young master after all. He was not someone a servant like her could interfere with. Young Miss had always been kind and polite. If she heard this, she would definitely be unhappy.

Seeing that Hui Xiang was still standing there, Yu Jianjia was a little unhappy. “Aren’t you going out?”

Hui Xiang reacted and was about to leave, but she couldn’t help but say, “Old Madam has made the decision. She wants Madam to arrange for Lady Qiu to be a concubine. The news has already spread throughout the residence...”

Yu Jianjia suddenly tightened her grip on the pen in her hand. The old madam had punished Mu Jin and had also mentioned that Lady Qiu would be a concubine. Clearly, she knew about Mother’s scheme in the residence today had completely angered her.

As for her father...

Yu Jianjia suddenly felt like she couldn’t breathe. The words “Yu Youyao” had never pressed down on her so clearly before, making her feel a sense of panic that she couldn’t shake off.

Yu Jianjia felt dizzy and fell into a chair, her face as pale as paper.

Hui Xiang was shocked and rushed over. “Young Miss, Young Miss...”

Yu Jianjia’s heart felt suffocated. The strong palpitation made her heart ache. She panted, “Medicine, medicine...”

Hui Xiang immediately understood that Young Miss was having an attack. She panicked. “The medicine that Young Miss is taking is being boiled on the stove every day. I’ll get someone to bring it over immediately.”

Hui Xiang shouted for Ai Ye.

Ai Ye hurried into the house. Before she could react, Hui Xiang asked her to get the medicine. When Ai Ye heard this, she ran as fast as she could, not daring to delay.

“I sent someone to find Madam...” As Hui Xiang spoke, she pressed the acupuncture points on Miss’s hand.

This was a method taught by the doctor who treated Miss every day. Ten fingers were connected to the heart. When Miss’s illness acted up, pressing the acupuncture points on her hand could relieve her illness.

“No need.” Yu Jianjia was a little breathless, but the situation wasn’t too serious. Thinking that today was Yu Youyao’s birthday and her mother had suffered a loss at her grandmother’s hands and even her father probably knew about this...

If she fell sick at this time, wouldn’t it be obvious that she was looking for trouble with Yu Youyao?

Fortunately, Imperial Physician Hu’s medicine was effective. After taking the medicine and resting for a while, she would be fine.

Zhou Linghuai was reading in the study. The little girl was busy today and would only see him at night when it was time for the family banquet. He put away the book in his hand and felt that the room was cold. He was actually not used to it.

During this period of time, the little girl would come to the Green House every day to accompany him. He was really used to it.

Shaking his head, Zhou Linghuai put away the distracting thoughts in his mind. Thinking that the little girl had been learning The Analects recently, he planned to write annotations and send it to her. This way, it wouldn’t be difficult to learn it, and the little girl would be able to learn more and even have more fun.

The little girl was delicate and lazy, but he was unwilling to let her be a spinning top all day and not have any free time.

Zhou Linghuai took a copy of The Analects from the bookshelf and returned to his desk. He picked out a fine brush and dipped it in ink. Then, he covered his ears and a smile appeared on his pale lips.

He looked up at the door.

As expected, he saw the little girl run into the study with her skirt in hand. In a daze, he realized that ever since the little girl ran into the Green House, he actually had the habit of not closing the door.

“Cousin, why do you always stay in the study every day? Aren’t you bored?!” Yu Youyao pouted and snatched the fine brush from her cousin’s hand. She placed it on the pen and closed The Analects that he had just turned a page of. “You’ll get sick even if you’re not sick. Cousin, you’re already so old. Why don’t you take good care of yourself?”

Chapter 228 - 228 A good man caught in difficult circumstances

As she spoke, the little girl shook her head and sighed as she looked at her cousin. Her helpless expression made Zhou Linghuai not know whether to laugh or cry.

Zhou Linghuai changed the topic and asked, "How was the small banquet?"

Yu Youyao nodded. "I've discussed with Nanny Xu about the people we're inviting for today's small banquet. Grandmother has also approved of them, so we've made a post. Third Miss Song is dignified and generous. We've played together in the past. Sixth Miss Qi is straightforward. Fifth Miss Tang is gentle, and her rules and upbringing are top-notch. It's easy to get along with her."

As she spoke, she also recounted what had happened at the small banquet. When she mentioned Yu Jianjia, she couldn't help but purse her lips. When she mentioned Yu Qingning, her eyebrows didn't even twitch.

Zhou Linghuai was not surprised. "In that case, you can take care of each other when you attend the Flower Festival at the Marquis of Changxing's Residence."

Since the Marquis of Changxing had invited the ladies of the Yu Residence, they had to invite other families as well.

He wasn't worried that something would happen to Yu Youyao at the flower festival. However, it would be the first time she was going out, so it would be more appropriate to have someone she knew accompanying her.

Yu Youyao nodded. "That's what Grandmother wanted too."

Zhou Linghuai lowered his head and saw the embroidered fish pendants tied around the little girl's waist. He could tell that this was a pair. When they were combined, they became a pendant. When they were separated, they were two pendants. Yu Youyao had always liked such exquisite things.

Noticing her cousin's gaze, Yu Youyao lowered her head and reached out to fiddle with the embroidered fish pendant at her waist. The beautiful jade pieces clanged against each other, and the sound of the jade pendants was pleasant to the ears. "This is a birthday gift from Third Miss Song today. It's similar to the embroidered fish on the longevity lock that my mother gave me previously. I think it's exquisite, so I'm wearing it."

Zhou Linghuai's expression paused for a moment. He would carve a more exquisite one for the little girl another day.

Yu Youyao smiled and raised her eyebrows. She looked at her cousin's green and gold-patterned robe. It looked really good, but...

When her gaze landed on the sachet on her cousin's waist, Yu Youyao wanted to cover her face. "Cousin, why are you still wearing this sachet? You've been wearing it for a long time. The petals inside definitely don't smell good. It doesn't match your outfit today at all."

When she had just finished embroidering this sachet, she had been so proud!

This was the first double-sided embroidery she had ever done.

When she gave it to her cousin, she also felt that her skills were a little crude. Nanny Xu had probably praised her too much. She felt that it was very impressive that she could learn double-sided embroidery. She didn't feel that it was ugly, so she didn't feel that she couldn't give it to him.

But now, her embroidery skills had improved a little. Looking at this sachet again, she felt that it was unbearable to look at. To think that her cousin didn't mind and actually wore it out.

Zhou Linghuai lowered his head. "It's alright!"

He did not think that there was anything bad about this sachet. As it was personally embroidered by the young lady, he still felt that it was perfect.

He was also used to rubbing the embroidery on the sachet when he was thinking. The rough texture was a little awkward, but it calmed him.

If he stopped wearing it one day, he probably wouldn't be used to it.

"No, no." Yu Youyao looked embarrassed. She quickly squatted in front of her cousin and reached out to undo the sachet on his waist. "Cousin, you can't wear it anymore. It's too ugly. Hurry up and undo it."

Zhou Linghuai grabbed Yu Youyao's hand and frowned. "I think it's good."

Yu Youyao pouted, but her eyes were also filled with joy. "Of course I'm happy that Cousin likes the sachet I embroidered but..." she changed the topic and her tone became more serious, "Cousin has been wearing this all this time. If others see this, they will also think that my embroidery skills are crude and can't be shown in public. I won't admit it. My embroidery skills have improved a lot now. Nanny Xu said that I'm already on par with those who have practiced for three years."

It turned out that she was worried that others would laugh at her because of this sachet. Zhou Linghuai let go of the little girl's hand and protected the sachet at his waist, not letting her take it off. "It's nothing serious. You don't have to care too much about what others think."

Yu Youyao was at her wit's end. "At most, I'll just embroider another sachet for Cousin. You can't keep wearing this sachet. Even if you don't mind, I can't afford to lose face."

Zhou Linghuai's lips curled up. "When Cousin is done embroidering it, I'll replace it."

How could Yu Youyao not understand what he meant? She pouted, feeling both happy and troubled. "Alright, then. What kind of patterns do you like?"

Zhou Linghuai looked at the little girl's bright and beautiful yellow and green clothes. "I like the pattern of the tung tree leaves. One side is a tung tree leaf, and the other is a tung tree flower. It'll be very elegant." Then, he added, "Just like Cousin's clothes."

Yu Youyao looked down at her outfit and felt that it was not bad, so she nodded. "Alright, I'll embroider it later. The sachet is very small and doesn't take too much time."

She would take some time to do it every day and would be done in three to five days.

Zhou Linghuai nodded. The young lady usually did not care much about needlework. He didn't think that she would be able to get it done in a short period of time. After all, the previous few times, she had dragged it out for a long time.

Yu Youyao forced herself to look away from the sachet. She grabbed her cousin's sleeve and shook it gently a few times. "Cousin, your clothes today are very similar to what I'm wearing. It's like..." She tilted her head and her eyes lit up. "Yes, it's a sibling outfit."

The dress she was wearing had been custom-made at Jinxiu Manor.

Later on, when she was making clothes for her cousin, she remembered that he liked parasol trees, so she chose Song brocade and embroidered a Chinese parasol tree. She didn't think much of it before, but now that he was wearing it, the similarities were obvious.

Zhou Linghuai did not notice this. Upon hearing her words, he took a closer look at the little girl's yellow and green embroidered clothes. They were indeed very similar to his green and light gold clothes.

In particular, the patterns on hers were fresh and delicate, while his were elegant and deep. It suddenly reminded him that every time his father went out to wear something in the past, he would always choose something similar to his mother's. "When I wear this and walk with your mother, anyone can tell that this woman beside me is my legitimate wife!"

At that time, he had joked, "It's also a good way to let others know I am a good man caught in difficult circumstances."

As a father, he was good at leading troops and fighting wars. However, as soon as he touched her mother, he became a fool. Even after marrying into the family for so many years, he still had the attitude of "there will always be unruly people who want to snatch my wife". He showed off shamelessly at home, but outside, he still had to show off.

Everyone in Youzhou knew that the You King and the Princess Consort were deeply in love.

His father was so angry that he raised his foot and was about to kick him. "I'm showing off my love. Men are heroes outside, but at home, they're like bears. Do you understand? This is a couple's interest."

He mocked, "It's a public display of affection. In the Han Dynasty, Zhang Kai was too loving and showed off too much, making the emperor at that time feel that he was too sentimental and useless. In the end, he wasn't ranked as a minister."

Chapter 229 - 229 Cousin, I'm Angry

However, his father was so angry that he took off his shoes and threw them at his face. "Back then, I relied on this method to win over the beauty. Otherwise, there wouldn't be a brat like you. You should learn from me. In the future, you might be able to rely on this to get a wife. Otherwise, with your bad character, you won't be able to have a wife and children in this lifetime."

It turned out that when his mother was in her private room, her father had done this. As time passed, outsiders probably knew that the You King desired his mother. As long as one wasn't stupid, they wouldn't dare to snatch her away.

Besides, the two of them always wore similar clothes, so it was inevitable that people would think that they were having an affair. Her mother was a fairy, so if her reputation was tarnished, wouldn't she have to accept it?

Previously, his father had always scolded him for being a hooligan.

Now, he knew that he had taken after his father.

At that time, he looked down on his father. “It’s a good thing that my mother didn’t become stupid from reading ‘The Maiden’s Ring’ and ‘The Legend of the Fierce Maiden’. Otherwise, as long as she was a fierce person, she would have ended up with a white ribbon around her neck. Let’s see where you can find a wife.”

At that time, his father was very proud. “As for those who became stupid from studying, I don’t think much of them either...”

“Cousin, even Third Miss Song and Sixth Miss Qi praised you for looking good today.” Yu Youyao looked at her cousin and smiled. Her eyes were filled with joy, as if she was the one being praised.

Zhou Linghuai came back to his senses. When he looked at the little girl’s yellow and green embroidered clothes, for some reason, he felt his palms, which were holding the armrest, sweating slightly.

Yu Youyao’s voice lost a little of its childishness and became a little more tactful. “Cousin will play the zither, make incense fans, and carve pendants for me. He’s worried that I won’t be able to keep up with my studies, so he’ll guide me in my studies every day. He’ll teach me how to write, play the zither, and play chess. He’ll also make patterns for me. Other people’s brothers aren’t as good as Cousin. They’re all very envious of me since Cousin dotes on me so much.” As she spoke, she looked smug. Her curved lips were sweet and soft. “In the past, I was envious that Second Sister had Eldest Brother and Second Brother doting on her. Now, Second Sister is envious of me!”

Zhou Linghuai tightened his grip on the armrest again and said nothing.

After saying that, Yu Youyao held her cousin’s hand again. “Cousin, look. I used the brow powder you gave me this morning. Don’t my eyebrows look good? Tell me you made the brow powder.”

“I usually paint and often mix my own dyes, so I mixed indigo with minerals, resin, and so on. The color is fresher.”

In the first few days, after using the indigo dye, a poem suddenly popped into his mind: “At the age of eight, I stole a mirror. I can already draw with my long eyebrows.”

She thought about the little girl’s beautiful eyebrows. If they were to be drawn...

For some reason, he used dyer’s woad, true indigo, and Chinese indigo to make the brow powder. The rest of the process was not very complicated. It was only dried this morning.

The well made brow powder had a hint of green in the black. It was dipped in water and drawn on the eyebrows. The heavy color spread out, making the black and green colors look even more beautiful.

Yu Youyao was full of praise. “Only the Persians have them. One of them costs more than ten gold coins, and it’s rare. Cousin, you’re really amazing. You even know how to make it.”

Zhou Linghuai chuckled. “This isn’t the typical brow powder. The color is a little similar, but there’s also a big difference. Mine is a little more fresh, and the texture is thicker.”

He didn't know how brow powder from Persia was mixed, but he had been very interested in some "unorthodox methods" since he was young. He had learned how to mix dyes and knew the procedures for making brow powder, so it wasn't complicated anymore.

Yu Youyao smiled. "I like the brow powder that Cousin makes. I heard that it's complicated, so I won't learn it. In the future, if I lack brow powder, I'll ask Cousin for it."

She wasn't worried at all that he would refuse and Zhou Linghuai indeed didn't refuse. He nodded. "Okay!" In the end, he added, "I'll try to make another color. You can use something different in the future."

With that, he looked up at the little girl's eyebrows.

The little girl's eyebrows were good-looking. She had a pair of slender eyebrows that looked like the crescent moon, but they also looked as distant as a mountain region far away. She could try different types of brow powder in the future.

The stone powder was thick and heavy, making her look dignified. The copper powder was peacock green, and after applying the color, she would look delicate. The green sparrow powder was dark gray, making her look even more solemn.

However, in his opinion, these colors were not worthy of a lady. They had to look good in different ways.

Yu Youyao was overjoyed. "Thank you, Cousin!"

Zhou Linghuai looked at her sweet smile and subconsciously smiled.

Yu Youyao smiled and tilted her head. She looked at her cousin with anticipation in her eyes. "Cousin, it's my birthday today. Have you forgotten something?"

Surely she wouldn't be dismissed with a box of brow powder!

Although she liked her cousin's cooking very much, she still felt that it lacked some surprises.

Zhou Linghuai was stunned for a moment. "What did I forget?"

Upon hearing this, Yu Youyao pouted and was a little angry. "Cousin, you actually forgot. How could you do this? Think about it quickly. You have to remember."

Zhou Linghuai frowned and really thought about it.

Yu Youyao stared at her cousin. Seeing that he did not even remember it, she became even angrier. "Cousin, think about it quickly. Think about it quickly. If you don't, I'll be angry!"

Zhou Linghuai felt a little helpless. "I really can't remember. Cousin, why don't you tell me directly?"

Yu Youyao glared at her cousin angrily. Tears welled up in her eyes, and even her voice sounded aggrieved and choked. "Cousin, you're too annoying. I-I'm angry. I..." With that, she suddenly stood up and stomped her feet. "I'll ignore you from now on!"

With that, she turned to run out.

However, Zhou Linghuai held her hand.

“Why are you pulling me? Let go!” Yu Youyao was so angry that she turned around and glared at him. Her eyes were red, but she looked like she was about to cry. If anyone saw this, their hearts would ache.

Zhou Linghuai’s scalp went numb, and he quickly said, “I almost forgot to give Cousin the birthday gift I prepared for her.”

With that, he took out a dark wooden box with golden silk that was much smaller than a baby’s palm. There were carved branches and apricot flowers on it, making it look elegant and exquisite.

Yu Youyao’s eyes widened immediately. When she saw the corner of her cousin’s lips, she understood that she had been played by him. She was furious. “Cousin, you’re too much. How can you bully me like this? Hurry up and apologize, or I’ll really ignore you in the future!”

Zhou Linghuai pulled the little girl to sit down and admitted his mistake without any hesitation. “Okay, okay, okay. I was wrong. I’ll apologize to you now. Don’t be angry with me.”

Chapter 230 - 230 Cousin Knows Me Best!

Yu Youyao pouted and glanced at the gift her cousin had prepared. She was a little unwilling. “Forget it. On account of the birthday gift you’ve prepared for me, I’ll forgive you this time. You can’t do this in the future.”

With that, she couldn’t wait to take the box from her cousin.

Zhou Linghuai smiled. The young lady had forgiven him so quickly because of the birthday gift he had prepared.

Yu Youyao stroked the patterns on the box before slowly opening it. “Cousin, you’re coaxing me again!”

!!

Previously, when her cousin had given her the Golden Steatite Stone pendant in Shoushan Field, she had complained that he had wasted it and had not carved a seal for her. What had her cousin said at that time?

“Even if I use the remaining scraps, it won’t be easy to carve a seal for Cousin.” She remembered it clearly.

Unexpectedly, she did not understand what he meant.

It wasn’t easy to give her the remaining scraps, but he could use other good materials!

Wasn’t this a good Longevity peach blossom stone seal?

The Great Zhou Dynasty was known for its precious stones and jade. The Longevity peach blossom stone was also known as the Longevity Stone. It was a top-notch precious material for engraving seals. A thumb-sized peach blossom frozen stone was already rare in the world.

Among the four famous materials, the Longevity Mountain Stone was ranked first before the Lapis Lazuli, the Blood Stone, and the Balin Stone. It enjoyed the reputation of being the “Stone Emperor” and the “Queen of the Stones”.

Cousin was too annoying!

Seeing the joy and frustration on Yu Youyao's face, Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but laugh. "It's not good to tell you in advance about the birthday gift."

Yu Youyao was extremely excited. She carefully held the seal in her hands and leaned closer to take a closer look. She couldn't help but exclaim, "It's really beautiful. It's as smooth as jade, and its color is brilliant. The red dots are fine and thin, but they're of different depths." She raised her hand again and raised her eyes to take a closer look. "However, it looks like it's filled with emotions. It's thick and faint, and the dots are clear. It's like peach blossoms falling on a stream of water in March that are not moving. They're like flowers floating in the still water, beautiful and delicate. It's also like rain pouring on a peach blossom tree. They're bright and beautiful, just like what's written in books."

However, her cousin's carving skills were superb. The small pieces of Longevity peach blossom stone were beautifully carved. A cluster of apricot flowers bloomed on the branches, and they were dyed red.

She flipped to the bottom and saw that there were also apricot patterns engraved on it.

Yu Youyao felt that the apricot pattern was complicated and beautiful. Looking at it carefully, she could tell what it was. "Cousin, you actually carved the apricot pattern into words."

The young ladies of the upper-class society liked to play such tricks. They would carve their names into beautiful flowers and write them in letters with other families, making them look beautiful and elegant. She did not expect her cousin to know such tricks.

Yu Youyao quickly focused her eyes and read. "Yu. You. Yao." Her eyes lit up and she exclaimed, "It's my name!"

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "Yes, a girl's name is used to show how much her family values her. From time to time, she would also use her own name to write letters to others."

It was also because of their scholarly background that they were more particular. Some noble families only gave their women a courtesy name when they reached adulthood, and some did not even give them courtesy names.

He had engraved the little girl's name on it. The longevity peach blossom stone, which was slightly bigger than his thumb, could not withstand so many inscriptions. It would look stiff and ugly if he kept carving.

Then, he engraved the words.

Yu Youyao was overjoyed. In the middle of the apricot pattern, there were two words. It was "Zhiyao." These were her words.

She suddenly remembered that her cousin had asked her if she had gotten a courtesy name. At that time, she told him about the courtesy name her mother had given her before she died.

With this in mind, Yu Youyao asked, "Cousin, has this seal been prepared for a long time?"

Zhou Linghuai's expression paused for a moment before he said, "I'm good at this, so it didn't take much effort."

Engraving was much more difficult than carving. Therefore, there were many master sculptors in the world, but there were very few inscribers, and even fewer who had become famous. This longevity peach blossom stone not only had to be carved, but it also had to be chiseled carefully. It was even more difficult. He had spent a long time carving. Almost every step was meticulous. If there was even a millimeter of error, it would be destroyed.

It had taken him a month to carve the cluster of apricot flowers on top. During this time, the apricot flowers were in full bloom. He sat under the apricot tree and observed the shape of the apricot flowers while holding the Kunwu knife and carving them bit by bit...

“Cousin, you’re lying!” Yu Youyao pouted with an expression that said, “I’ve already seen through you. Don’t even think about coaxing me anymore!”

Zhou Linghuai smiled but said nothing.

“I remember that Cousin asked me about my name previously.” At this point, the little girl looked at her cousin with an expression that said, “I remember everything. Don’t even think about denying it.” Then, she said, “It’s just that Cousin wrote that cursive script in my study previously. I thought I liked it, so I asked you for it. I even said that I wanted to embroider a fan for you personally.”

She looked at her cousin triumphantly, with an expression that said, “See, I really remember.”

Zhou Linghuai was amused, and a smile appeared on his pale lips.

Yu Youyao continued, “At that time, Cousin had taken out the private seal made from the Golden Steatite Stone. When I saw it, I liked it immediately. Cousin asked me if I liked it, and I said I did, so he asked me for my name.”

She remembered every big and small thing that had happened with her cousin.

Zhou Linghuai held his breath. He did not expect her to remember it so clearly.

Yu Youyao pouted. “Cousin, you must have been planning to carve seals for me since then. Although it took a long time, I remember it clearly. Cousin, don’t try to fool me.”

This longevity peach blossom stone steal had been slowly carved by his cousin for a long time.

Zhou Linghuai smiled. “I happen to have a rare peach longevity peach blossom stone in my hand. I think that compared to the golden steatite stone, you would prefer the longevity peach blossom stone as it is more beautiful.”

Top-grade longevity peach blossom stone was even rarer than golden steatite stone.

The piece in Mr. Xian Yun’s collection was top-grade. Its texture was like beeswax, and it had the six features of being thin, knotted, moist, greasy, warm, and condensed. It was dazzling and beautiful.

It was unique in this world. It was also rare.

Yu Youyao’s smile was sweet and soft. “Cousin knows me the best!”

Zhou Linghuai's breathing paused for a moment, then he said, "I also hope that Cousin will be prosperous in the morning and glorious in the evening. I hope that your heart will be filled with the Chinese spirit, and you will be outstanding. Every year, you will grow up well and get closer to the stars."

Yu Youyao looked at her cousin without blinking. As she listened to her cousin's birthday speech, she suddenly said, "I only wish that you will be around tomorrow like today."

She hoped that her cousin would always be by her side on every birthday in the future.