

## All Hail 241

### Chapter 241 - 241 Seeing the Newcomer Smile

Everyone in the residence knew that Eldest Master was going to take in Lady Qiu. She would soon have more authority. Even if it was for Eldest Master's dignity, it was still time to organize something.

Yang Shuwan had been in the family for so many years, but this was the first time she had been in charge of taking in concubines for her husband. How could she be happy?

She was so angry that her head hurt. After letting Nanny Li serve her a bowl of medicine, she had no choice but to perk up and get the servants to tidy up the Rain Autumn Courtyard. Then, she asked the stable to prepare a carriage and a small sedan...

In the past, Yang Shuwan did not know what was going on inside, so she also felt that it was not important to take in a concubine. However, after taking one in, she finally understood the bitterness of being the main wife.

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After all the preparations, Yang Shuwan was so busy that her feet didn't even touch the ground. However, she didn't expect that there would be so many rules for taking in a concubine. It wasn't easy in any way, and she had to do everything herself. If there was anything wrong, Master would lose face. Not only would she make Master unhappy, but she would also end up with a reputation of being jealous.

One thing after another had to be done and she actually couldn't finish it in a day.

No wonder every family had to pick a day to take in a concubine.

However, since she had already said it, even if she gritted her teeth and braced herself, she had to settle the matter first. She couldn't be too careless. If Old Madam found out, she would be in trouble.

Yang Shuwan had worked hard for the entire day, but she still couldn't finish her tasks. Fortunately, she only entered the house tomorrow night, so she could handle the rest tomorrow.

Yang Shuwan returned to the inner room and asked Nanny Li to remove the jewelry on her body. She leaned against the couch and rubbed her forehead.

When Yu Jianjia entered the house, she saw that her mother had just brought in the maidservant, Bi Tao, who came over with a bowl of black medicinal soup yesterday. She knew that her mother had been working hard the entire day and had a headache again.

Her mother's illness was probably chronic.

Previously, Doctor Ding had come to treat her and instructed sternly, "You have to rest well. You can't think too much. If you're too angry, it'll hurt your body, your blood, and your marrow."

However, these days, the residence was not peaceful either. As the mistress of the household, how could her mother not worry?

Yang Shuwan drank the medicine and ate a few snacks to suppress the bitterness in her mouth. Only then did she see her daughter. "Why are you here? Didn't you say that you were feeling a little unwell? Why aren't you resting in your room?"

Yu Jianjia sat beside her mother and said gently, "I just came to see Mother."

Yang Shuwan sighed slightly. "Mother knows that you're worried about me." She forced an ugly smile, her expression filled with fatigue. "Old Madam asked me to prepare to take in Lady Qiu as a concubine. Even though I was unwilling, I didn't think much of it. However, after this, there's a bitterness in my heart."

How could she know some things without going through them?

As she spoke, Yang Shuwan felt a lump in her throat. "Your father and I used to have many loving days in the past, but when he has a new woman, who would hear the old lover cry? Seeing that the new lover has arrived, I still have to arrange it carefully and greet her with a smile. I can't be unwilling at all. I have to do it decently and make your father happy. It's all for your father's dignity. Who will care about my feelings as a wife?"

As she spoke, she pinched her handkerchief and began to wipe her tears, feeling extremely bitter.

Yu Jianjia also felt terrible. "I know Mother's suffering."

Lady Qiu was good-looking and had a beautiful figure. Father had always liked her, but since they were not married, it wasn't good for him to keep coming into her room.

However, now that he wanted to take her as his concubine, his father would no longer have to care about her in the future.

Concubine He was locked up in the courtyard, and Concubine Qiu had probably become the second Concubine He.

Yang Shuwan wiped her tears and stopped crying. If she continued to cry, wouldn't it really be as she had said? She couldn't afford to lose face.

"Don't worry too much. She's just a lowly concubine. How can she surpass me? Even Concubine He is locked in the courtyard now, right?"

As she spoke, Yang Shuwan's eyes turned cold, and her red lips curled into a vicious smile.

Yu Jianjia lowered her head and said nothing.

Yang Shuwan held her daughter's hand. "Too many things happened yesterday, so I didn't ask you. Did you make friends with any young misses at the small banquet yesterday?"

Although Jia Jia had befriended Seventh Miss Cao of the Marquis of Changxing's Residence and Fifth Miss Lu of the Marquis of Weining's Residence, both of them were noble ladies.

However, the Yu Residence was a scholarly family, so they still had to make friends with families of similar status. It would be beneficial to move around in the two circles.

At the mention of this, Yu Jianjia felt an itch in her throat. She covered her handkerchief and coughed lightly. "Mother, it's Eldest Sister's birthday banquet. I had fun with her too and I still have

to prioritize Eldest Sister. I can't rush to befriend them. If others see this, they'll think that I'm rude."

Yang Shuwan frowned when she heard this. "Why are you so kind-hearted? You're only concerned about being sisters and being polite. Don't you know how to be flexible? Your big sister is relying on the fact that she has Grandmother's favor and wants to suppress you to gain the limelight. Other people's young misses are willing to interact with and befriend anyone they want. It's not like Yu Youyao has the final say. How is that rude?"

Yu Jianjia was annoyed when she heard this, so she could only say, "I'm still young. When I turn ten, Mother will also help me hold a small banquet and invite the young misses of the various families into the residence. We can also interact openly."

However, Yang Shuwan did not dare to agree. "It's better to befriend them earlier than later. Third Miss Song and Sixth Miss Qi are both important daughters of the first wife in their families. If they befriend Yu Youyao in advance and develop feelings for each other, they will become distant to you. You will lose to Yu Youyao!"

Yu Jianjia naturally understood this too. Otherwise, she wouldn't have been so vexed. "We'll just invite other young misses."

Yang Shuwan sighed slightly. "It's not that easy. There are only a few legitimate young mistresses who are close to the residence and have similar families. Third Miss Song is the eldest daughter of the first wife, and her Father has become a Lord. The other legitimate young misses in the family are not as precious as her."

When Yu Jianjia heard this, she felt uncomfortable.

Yang Shuwan continued, "Sixth Miss Qi's father is the Imperial Censor. He's a second-rank official and has a few families in his residence. However, Sixth Miss Qi has the highest status. Although Fifth Miss Tang isn't outstanding in terms of looks and has her limelight been stolen by the eldest daughter of a concubine, she's still the first daughter of the family. How can she be more important than them?"

Of course not!

How could Yu Jianjia not know this? However, Third Miss Song and Sixth Miss Qi were focused on befriending Yu Youyao. Even if she found an opportunity to lean over and speak, she would only say a few polite words.

Yang Shuwan was also helpless. "You don't understand the logic behind this. In the future, if your status at the birthday banquet is lowered, won't you be inferior to Yu Youyao? You're both daughters of the first wife. If this gets out, won't people think that you're not as respected as Yu Youyao at home? In the future, even if you go out, you won't be as glamorous as Yu Youyao. That won't do."

Chapter 242 - 242 Who's Crying?

Since they were invited over, they would be on good terms with Yu Youyao in advance and not close to Jia Jia. Then, she would not be able to achieve their true goal of befriending them. The small banquet would be in vain.

Yu Jianjia could only say, "Mother, don't worry about this. When it's my birthday, I'll invite Seventh Miss Cao and Fifth Miss Lu over. They won't be noble ladies from scholarly families, but in terms of status, there aren't many noble ladies in the capital who can compare to them. With them, no one will look down on me."

Yang Shuwan also nodded. "In any case, your birthday is still more than half a year away. There's no hurry to manage this. It's better to find a grandmaster to carve a seal for you first."

At the mention of this, Yu Jianjia felt uncomfortable again. She blamed her mother for being too rash and mentioning yellow field stone, so that her grandmother could take the opportunity to give Yu Shuangbai the more expensive bloodstone.

At this moment, Yu Youyao's longevity peach blossom stone was a part of the residence. Yu Shuangbai's stone was not inferior to hers, and it showed that her yellow field stone was much inferior.

She opened her mouth and wanted to say that she didn't want to carve the seal anymore, but then she remembered that Yu Youyao and Yu Shuangbai also had one. If she didn't, it would indeed be unreasonable, so she closed her mouth again.

Yang Shuwan sighed slightly. "It's a pity that Old Madam gave the blood stone to Yu Shuangbai and wasted the good stuff for nothing. Otherwise, that piece of blood stone would also complement the yellow field stone. The yellow field stone is a little lacking, but Mother can't get a better seed material, so she can only pay a high price to find a powerful master to carve a more exquisite seal to suppress it."

Hearing this, Yu Jianjia did not want to stay any longer. "Mother, rest. I'll go first."

Second Uncle had already said that Zhou Linghuai's carving skills were superb.

She had seen the incense fan that Zhou Linghuai had made for Yu Youyao previously, and it was extremely exquisite. She had also taken a closer look at the longevity peach blossom stone. She wasn't an expert and wouldn't have been able to tell how impressive the carving skills were. However, she wasn't blind either. That seal carving was ridiculously beautiful. How could she find a master who carved better than Zhou Linghuai?

Her mother's words had stabbed her right in the heart.

The next day, Yang Shuwan got up at midnight and continued working. After breakfast, she went to An Shou Hall to mention this to Old Madam Yu.

Old Madam Yu said calmly, "Have you prepared the gifts?"

"Yes, I'm ready." She did not expect Old Madam to even ask about this. Yang Shuwan's smile stiffened a little, and she slowly handed over the betrothal gift list she had brought with her.

When Old Madam Yu saw this, her expression was indifferent, and it was impossible to tell if she was satisfied or not. She only turned around and instructed Nanny Liu, "Offer another 20 taels, gather 80 taels, five pieces of Song Jiang cloth, two boxes of tea, four-colored dried fruits, snacks,

and two pure gold bracelets. Pick a few decent silver accessories and gather 50 kilograms of them. Get someone to send them over and make it more lively.”

Nanny Liu agreed and went to get it done.

She had only prepared 28 kilograms, but Old Madam had asked for 50 kilograms as soon as she opened her mouth. It was considered decent. Even if she carefully looked for a young mistress with a good background outside and accepted her, 50 kilograms alone would be more than enough.

Lady Qiu was just a concubine, so there was no need to give her such dignity.

She still had to brag and cause trouble. Old Madam was deliberately making things difficult for her. Yang Shuwan tightened her grip on her handkerchief. “Old Madam, isn’t this too...”

Old Madam Yu interrupted her. “Lady Qiu and I are master and servant after all. This thing will come from my own pocket, not from the public account.”

This time, Yang Shuwan couldn’t say anything else.

Since they were master and servant, Old Madam was willing to give Lady Qiu face. This was an elder’s matter. How could she interfere?

Nanny Liu helped send the betrothal gifts out and even sent the nanny along. Now, everyone in the capital knew that the Eldest Master of the Yu Residence was going to take in a concubine.

However, she couldn’t help but feel a little puzzled. Taking in concubines wasn’t a small matter. Why hadn’t she heard anything about it before?

Yang Shuwan was indignant, but she had no choice.

Yu Zongzheng rushed down from the government office when it was almost dark. This was only because the government knew that he was taking in a concubine and had asked him to return early. Otherwise, he would have been busy until late at night.

Yang Shuwan asked Nanny Li to help her comb her hair. She changed into a set of purple-gray clothes and combed her hair into a simple bun. She did not even have any additional accessories on her body. She looked dull but a little charming.

Nanny Li saw that her eyes were dark and wanted to cover them with powder.

Yang Shuwan shook her head. “No need. This is fine!”

Yang Shuwan welcomed Yu Zongzheng into the main courtyard and personally helped him change into a set of red clothes.

Yu Zongzheng saw that Yang Shuwan was silent and didn’t say anything else, so he couldn’t help but feel a little unaccustomed to it. He looked at Yang Shuwan, who had her head lowered, looked virtuous. Her neck, which was so fair that it was dazzling, formed a sharp contrast with her purple-gray clothes. He couldn’t help but think of Yang Shuwan’s beauty back then.

Coincidentally, Yang Shuwan raised her head.

Yu Zongzheng looked at her. She was still as beautiful as before, but her beauty had decreased in the end, and there was a hint of fatigue in her eyes.

He wondered if she had worked hard to organize the event because he had taken in a concubine?

Or was it because she felt terrible?

Yu Zongzheng held her hand. "Look at you. You look much more haggard. Even though I've taken in a concubine, you're still my wife. No one else can compare to you."

When Yang Shuwan heard this, tears appeared in her eyes, as if she did not want Yu Zongzheng to see them. She felt that it was inauspicious, so she quickly lowered her head and wiped them with a handkerchief. Then, she raised her head and forced a smile. "It's also a good thing that Master has concubines. Although Master has three daughters and a legitimate son, they're still a little lacking. It's indeed time to plan so that the Yu Residence can have more children."

Yu Zongzheng's brows relaxed. Although Madam Yang was a little petty, she was still sensible.

Yang Shuwan sent Yu Zongzheng out of the door and returned to the house to change into a red and gold peony dress. She combed her hair and placed a large peony flower with red and gold embellishments on her head.

The rubies on it were bright red, pure, and flawless.

She exuded a dignified aura from head to toe, but it vividly displayed her status as the mistress of the household.

Before the sky turned dark, Lady Qiu had already put on the peach-colored clothes that Yang Shuwan had given her. She placed a peach-colored flower beside her ear and entered the small red carriage.

The small sedan chair quietly circled around the Yu Residence until it was completely dark. Then, it was carried into the Rain Autumn Courtyard from the side door.

It was dusk when she got married, and it was dark when she became a concubine!

It also revealed how different a concubine was.

When Lady Qiu arrived at the Rain Autumn Courtyard, before her butt even touched the bed, she was led to the main courtyard by Nanny Li.

Yang Shuwan sat on the main seat. She was dressed in a red and gold peony dress. It looked magnificent and expensive, making Lady Qiu feel a little suffocated.

#### Chapter 243 - 243 Precious Pearl

Lady Qiu knelt on the ground respectfully and kowtowed three times to Yang Shuwan. Then, she took the teacup from Nanny Li and raised it above her head. "Sister, please have some tea!"

Yang Shuwan sat still and looked at Lady Qiu's peach-colored clothes.

She had also worn this set of clothes in the past, but the color was a little too bright. As the mistress of the household, it wasn't appropriate for her to wear this, so she had to change it.

She had specially chosen the clothes she had worn in the past to give to Lady Qiu as a show of strength.

Lady Qiu's figure was a little petite, and her waist was thin. When she wore this outfit, it made her legs and legs look long and her legs look fat.

However, when she saw that this vixen, who was wearing an ill-fitting outfit, actually showing a different aura from before, she suddenly felt a sense of vigilance.

Lady Qiu had followed Master when she was 14 years old, and she was only 17 this year. She was at the prime of her life, and was even more tender than Concubine He. It was no wonder that Master doted on her so much.

Seeing that Yang Shuwan did not move, Lady Qiu added, "Sister, please have some tea."

Yang Shuwan sat upright and did not move.

It wasn't like she had to drink the tea that the concubine had sent over. She had to restrain herself and show off her arrogance so that she could understand her duty as a concubine.

Yu Zongzheng frowned.

Nanny Li smiled and said, "Just hold it in for a while. As you wish, your wives and concubines will get along well. Everything will be good. When a newcomer enters the family, she has to hold it in. This is a good thing."

Since it was a rule, Yu Zongzheng did not say anything else.

She held it in for more than ten minutes.

She did this until Lady Qiu's hand that was holding the teacup trembled and her face turned pale.

Yang Shuwan was worried that if she continued to hold it in, Lady Qiu would lose her composure on the spot. Instead, she would be the one who deliberately made things difficult for her and made Master unhappy. Hence, she picked up her tea, lowered her head, took a sip, and placed it aside.

Yang Shuwan was not in a hurry to let Lady Qiu get up. "You used to be Master's maidservant, and you also served Old Madam and me. We felt that it was very appropriate for you to serve Master after so many years, so we nominated you to be a concubine. Even if you're officially accepted into the family, you have to remember all the rules in the residence in the future and maintain your status as a concubine. You have to serve Master well and help him grow the family as soon as possible."

As for other things, it wasn't appropriate for her to complain because Yu Zongzheng was present. It was better to wait until tomorrow when Lady Qiu came to greet her to teach her the rules of being a concubine.

Her words were generous and polite. Yu Zongzheng was satisfied.

Lady Qiu also lowered her eyes and replied, "Yes, I'll follow Madam's instructions."

After all the necessary procedures, Yu Zongzheng brought Mama Qiu to the Rain Autumn Courtyard.

Yang Shuwan looked at the newlyweds holding hands and felt stifled.

When the two of them could no longer be seen, after a while, she reached out and waved her hand to sweep the teacup that Lady Qiu had just served to her to the ground with a clang.

There were a few tables of wine in the residence. Lady Qiu took out her own money and added a few decent dishes. She gave a few to Old Madam and Madam Yang, as well as Concubine He from the Clear Autumn Courtyard. She even treated the stewards, famous nannies, and mothers to wine.

Lady Qiu mentioned that the residence was also doing well and was a little lively.

Yu Youyao sat in the embroidery pavilion, holding the embroidery shed and threading the needle. Her slender hand pinched the thread gently and twirled the thin needle. It was difficult to hide her calmness and beauty.

It was indeed a little troublesome to do needlework at night.

After embroidering for ten minutes, Yu Youyao felt that her eyes were playing tricks on her. She put down the embroidery shed and rubbed her eyes for a while. Then, she drank a cup of medicinal tea and heard movement in the room.

When she turned around, she saw Dong Mei coming out of the side room with a box. "Why aren't you drinking? Nanny Xu, Chun Xiao, and the others are all there."

Lady Qiu had invited a good-looking nanny from the residence, her mother, and the maidservants to drink wine. Nanny Liu had also gone, so Nanny Xu couldn't refuse and went along.

Dong Mei shook her head. "I won't join in the fun. There can't be no one around Miss."

Yu Youyao picked up the embroidery shed again. "You should go and join in the fun. It won't take long. I'm embroidering in the embroidery pavilion now, so I don't need to be served. Liu'er is still outside. If there's anything, it's the same if she attends to me. I have a lot of things in my room, and it's also difficult for you to manage. It's good for you to go out instead of staying in the Jade Courtyard all the time."

Dong Mei still shook her head. "I can help Liu'er. Don't worry, Miss."

Chun Xiao and Xia Tao were in front of her, so she had to keep them by her side. Qiu Xing was in the study, and Liu'er was mainly responsible for running errands. She didn't always have to do this job, so it could help her a lot.

Yu Youyao did not insist and only said, "Previously, Nanny Xu mentioned to Nanny Liu that she wanted to pick a few people from good families from the manor. I reckon there will be news in a few days. When the time comes, we'll teach them some rules and you can order them around. You can't do everything yourself. You'll be exhausted."

There were also young maidservants in the residence, and they were all taught the rules well. They were definitely more capable than the ones chosen by Zhuang Shangzi.

However, Nanny Xu felt that the ones picked from the farmstead were cleaner and easier to train.

The few maidservants in front of her were also capable, so there was no need to rush this matter. She could slowly find and train them, and they would be more loyal to the Jade Courtyard in the future.

Dong Mei smiled and nodded, then changed the topic. "Young Miss is embroidering at night again. If Nanny Xu finds out, she might teach you a lesson again."



When Yu Youyao heard this, her eyes widened as she looked at Dong Mei. “I only did it for a short while. I didn’t plan to do it for long. I didn’t hurt my eyes at all. Don’t tell Nanny.” As she spoke, she looked down at the embroidery shed that only had a single leaf embroidered on it. “I just wanted to embroider the sachet as soon as possible and give it to Cousin.”

This was the first time she had seen her mistress so concerned about needlework. Dong Mei couldn’t persuade her otherwise, so she opened the box in her hand.

Yu Youyao’s breathing stopped.

There was one thing in the world that gathered and nurtured the light of the sun, moon, and stars in the sky. The wind was clear, the rain was moist, and the mountains and rivers on the ground were bright when it was around. The essence, soul, and auspiciousness of the world would be fused into one.

It was a legendary pearl—

Yu Youyao exclaimed, “Night Pearls!”

Under the dim candlelight, the two night pearls were quiet and emitted light, like the bright moon spitting out silver. At a glance, they were dazzling and mysterious.

Both night pearls were the size of lychees.

One was moon-white and a faint light blue. It was as bright as moonlight.

The other was a warm yellow color. It was as brilliant as the morning sun shining through the clouds.

Yu Youyao took one of the Night pearls and held it in her palm. The moonlight shone on it and blended in with the dim light emitted by the candlelight beside her. “Why didn’t I know that I had such a good item?”

#### Chapter 244 - 244 Moonlight

Dong Mei smiled. “Young Miss has too many things, so how can you know everything? Old Madam was the one who kept these two night pearls for you in the past, and she never deliberately mentioned them. This moon-white pearl is called the “moon pearl”. It was given to your mother by the Old Master of the Xie Residence when Eldest Madam Xie was born.”

It turned out that it was her mother’s dowry. After her mother passed away, her mother had left it to her. No wonder she didn’t know about this.

Yu Youyao immediately felt that this pearl had become even more intimate. She smiled until her eyes curved. “What’s the name of this warm yellow pearl, and what’s its background?”

Night pearls were rare. Although they were the size of lychees, they were still very rare. She had two of them!

It was also because of the long history of the Xie Residence in Quanzhou that such a treasure existed.

Dong Mei continued, “This is called the ‘Sun Pearl’. After Young Miss was born, your maternal grandfather, Old Master Xie, personally gave it to you. It means ‘the apple of his eye’. At that time, you were still in your infancy and the pearl was too precious, so Old Madam had always helped to

keep it well. It was also after Young Miss took care of her own mother's dowry that Old Madam gradually sent some things to the Jade Courtyard for me to keep."

At this point, Dong Mei recalled what Old Madam had said when she had called her over—

"In the past, Yao Yao was still young, and she didn't dare to hand these things over to her for safekeeping, in case she didn't know the severity of the situation and was lied to. Now that Yao Yao can manage things herself, she has to take good care of these things."

"I'm old, so I won't be able to handle anything. At that time, it'll probably be very difficult for the things in my room to reach Yao Yao. Even if the Xie family from Quanzhou brings a list over and pushes it onto a dead person like me, won't the Xie family still be able to cause trouble?"

"Let's not talk about anything else. Yao Yao cares about her grandmother's future and reputation. She has to accept it. Sometimes, it's better to make plans early."

Every word and sentence was meant for Eldest Miss, but she was really a kind mother. Thinking of Eldest Miss's filial piety to Old Madam, it was not surprising.

She had mentioned this to Young Miss before, but she had many good things in her hands and did not care much about worldly possessions. In addition, Young Miss had been very busy back then, so she probably did not take it to heart.

"The apple of your eye." Yu Youyao took the "Sun Pearl" again and held it in her hand. The bright smile on her face complemented the bright light of the sun, looking extremely resplendent. "Grandfather, Grandmother, my uncles and cousins all dote on me very much."

Dong Mei smiled too. "Isn't that so!"

Yu Youyao asked curiously, "Sun pearl and moon pearl. The names are really good. Are these two night pearls a pair?"

One was white, and one was yellow. Even their names were exquisite. No matter how she looked at them, they had a story.

Dong Mei nodded. "I heard so, but Old Madam doesn't know much about it, so she only mentioned it to me a little. If you want to know, you can write a letter and ask the Xie family." As she spoke, she looked at the embroidery shed in Young Miss's hands. "Today, I saw Young Miss embroidering at night and was worried that the light would hurt her eyes, so I thought of using these two night pearls to protect her eyes."

The Night-Luminescent Pearl was dazzling and eye-catching.

Yu Youyao carefully took the "Moon Pearl" and placed it on a candlestick at the side. The bright white light chased away the dimness of the candlelight, making it look gentle and white. "This is really good."

She turned to look at the “Sun Pearl”, and a smile appeared on her lips.

Yu Youyao embroidered for an hour under the reflection of the moon and the sun pearls, and then embroidered another parasol leaf. She flipped the embroidery surface, and there were also two yellow-green parasol flowers on the other side. The stitches were flat and tight, and they looked very beautiful.

Yu Youyao put away the embroidery shed and asked Dong Mei to put away the Night Pearl. Such an expensive item could not be placed outside. If others saw it, it would cause trouble.

The next day, Yu Youyao learned etiquette, had breakfast, and went to school early.

Due to the birthday banquet, Yu Youyao did not go to school for five to six days.

Ms. Ye tested Yu Youyao on her recent studies. Yu Youyao had the copy of “Spring and Autumn” that her cousin had given her, and her cousin had given her a lot of guidance. She answered the questions fluently without any mistakes.

Ms. Ye nodded in satisfaction. “You didn’t neglect your studies. How’s your zither skills?”

Yu Youyao replied, “I learned a new song.”

When Ms. Ye heard this, she smiled. “I heard that you’ve been learning chess recently?”

Previously, after testing Yu Youyao’s zither skills a few times, she realized that every time she learned a new piece, her old piece would still be played well. She knew that her cousin was a capable person and was very concerned about her learning the zither. There was no need for her to deliberately test her.

At the mention of this, Yu Youyao looked embarrassed and quickly waved her hand. “It’s... it’s probably me. I don’t have much talent in chess, so I only know how to play. I don’t know anything about arranging chess and array formations. Cousin said that it’s good to have some fun.”

Ms. Ye laughed when she heard this. Her calm face was like a green lotus that had water coming out of it. “It’s fine if you want to learn, but you don’t have to be proficient. Your cousin is right.”

Initially, she had thought that Eldest Miss Yu was a woman with natural intelligence. She knew everything and was good at everything. Now that she knew that she also had chess skills that were not good at. She felt that she was very cute.

Yu Youyao nodded and said, “I used the brush that you gave me yesterday for a while. It’s very useful. Thank you for your trouble.”

It was her birthday, but Ms. Ye did not have to specially send her a birthday gift.

Since Ms. Ye had given it to her, it meant that she sincerely treated her as her disciple.

Ms. Ye was a little surprised. “I thought that you would only be able to use this Five Purple Five Sheep after a while. I didn’t expect you to be so talented in calligraphy and improve so quickly. You can already use the Five Purple Five Sheep. Are you going to use the Seven Sheep and Three Purple in the future?”

A girl’s wrist strength was weaker. Not only was it difficult to write with a soft pen, but it was also much slower.

Yu Youyao nodded. "I'll use the Five Purple Five Sheep for a while, then switch to the Seven Sheep and Three Purple Sheep. I won't use Full Sheep. Not only is it tiring, but it's also slow to write. I won't be able to do it well."

Ms. Ye also felt that this was not bad. "I'll make you another Seven Sheep and Three Purple. However, you have to come up with something yourself this time. I don't have much good stuff in my hands."

According to Yu Youyao, she had to use the Seven Sheep and Three Purple Pens often in the future. Naturally, the better the material, the better the quality of the brush, and the longer it would take to make.

An inkstone and a brush were better if they were older.

Yu Youyao was overjoyed, but she did not decline. She bowed respectfully to Ms. Ye. "Thank you, sir."

Everyone treated one another respectfully. Ms. Ye treated her sincerely as her disciple. She also respected Ms. Ye as her master.

Chapter 245 - 245 Cousin, Praise Me!

Ms. Ye continued, "I used the medicinal tea you sent over previously very well. You're too kind."

Yu Youyao quickly said, "It's not worth anything. I just made it to pass time. If you like it, you can just get Old Madam Su to come and get it when you've finished it."

At noon, Yu Youyao left school.

Xia Tao leaned over and said, "This morning, Concubine Qiu arrived at the main courtyard at dawn to pay her respects to First Madam. First Madam only saw her after breakfast. Concubine Qiu waited for more than two hours before she offered First Madam tea. First Madam didn't hold the teacup properly and spilled hot tea all over Concubine Qiu. Concubine Qiu's face turned pale from fright, and she immediately knelt on the ground, not daring to get up."

Yu Youyao had long guessed that the main courtyard would probably not stop this morning. Madam Yang's actions were really as she expected.

Yesterday, Yang Shuwan had wanted to show the dignity and magnanimity of a legitimate wife.

The second day of greetings was the main event.

Every first wife would suppress a concubine and put her in her place.

Xia Tao continued, "First Madam was good-tempered and wasn't angry, so she asked Nanny Li to help her to the inner room to change her clothes. Later on, First Madam didn't sleep well last night and felt uncomfortable. Everyone in the main courtyard was in a mess. Another two hours later, Nanny Li left the inner room and realized that Concubine Qiu was still kneeling on the ground."

Yu Youyao held her teacup and sipped on it.

Everyone in the residence knew that Yang Shuwan was very petty. Yesterday, a new person entered the family. No matter how magnanimous she was, she would definitely suffer.

She hadn't slept well at night, and her head was already acting up. This was completely expected.

Xia Tao said, "Nanny Li was shocked and exclaimed. Concubine Qiu, why are you still here? Why haven't you returned to your courtyard? Get up, get up. You're a newcomer. How can you kneel like this? Our First Madam is a gentle and magnanimous person. Many people in the capital know that."

Xia Tao imitated Nanny Li's exaggerated tone when she spoke usually. It was simply wonderful.

Yu Youyao laughed and put the teacup aside. She couldn't drink this tea anymore.

However, Nanny Li's words were really interesting.

Yang Shuwan wanted to take Concubine Qiu down a notch. But when the words came out of her mouth, it sounded like Concubine Qiu was kneeling there on purpose, as if she was being bullied by the main wife and was trying to frame her.

Yu Youyao asked, "Where's Concubine Qiu? Did she really get up just like that?"

Xia Tao cleared her throat. "She couldn't get up like this, but Master woke up an hour late today. Concubine Qiu served..." She felt that it wasn't appropriate to say this in front of Miss, who had yet to get married and was still a young lady. Xia Tao changed the topic. "Madam Qiu woke up late and didn't have time to eat in the morning, so she went to the main courtyard to pay her respects. She waited in the main courtyard for two hours and knelt for two hours. When she got up, she fainted on the spot and was carried back to the Autumn Courtyard."

Yu Youyao was amused. "None of them are simple."

There was no use for breakfast. She wanted to pay her respects to the matriarch, but her health had suffered. If her father found out, his heart would ache.

It was not unreasonable for Concubine Qiu to serve her father for three years. Being obedient did not mean that she was a fool.

Xia Tao couldn't help but laugh. "This time, First Madam became anxious. She couldn't care less about her head disease and ran to the Yuqiu Residence to visit Concubine Qiu. In front of Concubine Qiu, she complained that Nanny Li was insensible and actually caused the newcomer to suffer. Nanny Li apologized to Concubine Qiu on the spot. After that, First Madam even got someone to invite a doctor over."

This way, the wife-and-concubine conflict in the main courtyard could be considered to have stopped.

At this moment, Chun Xiao came over. "Young Master is here. He's waiting for Miss in the study."

Yu Youyao hurriedly got up. Before she could even get her clothes ready, she ran to the study. Now that she had gone to school, her cousin came to look for her at noon, just like before.

Zhou Linghuai was looking at the Three Character Classic that Yu Youyao had written with a brush.

The words on the top of the Three Character Classic ranged from simple to difficult. This was the first time she had changed to a new brush, so she used this to practice her calligraphy.

"Cousin, I can use the Five Purple and Five Sheep brush now!" Yu Youyao moved closer to her cousin, unable to hide the smugness on her face. She was already saying the words "praise me quickly, praise me quickly" on her face.

Zhou Linghuai smiled. "Yes, Cousin, you're really amazing. When I just started studying, my progress wasn't as good as yours. It took me two months to practice before I could change my brush."

What he didn't say was that he was only five years old at that time. He had already taken medicinal baths every day, practiced the fundamentals, and memorized everything. However, his bones were still a little tender.

Moreover, he had not exchanged his brush for five purple and five sheep at that time, but six purple sheep and four purple sheep.

However, calligraphy meant that the younger one was, the greater their improvement. The older they were, the less room for improvement. Yu Youyao started late, but her improvement was much faster than most people. It was also because of her own diligence.

At the thought of this, Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but think of how the young lady had almost cried from anger when she first learned calligraphy. In the end, he had suggested coming over every day to teach her calligraphy, but she was still unwilling.

At that time, her expression was really interesting.

Even he couldn't help but go along with her words and tease her.

In the end, seeing the young lady's pitiful face and drooping head, he reluctantly agreed. He couldn't help but find it funny.

At that time, he did not expect this young lady to improve so much in such a short period of time. In just a few months, she had almost caught up with two to three years of hard work by others.

After being praised by her cousin, Yu Youyao became smug. How could she have thought of this? She asked happily, "Cousin, the brush of the Five Purple and Five Sheep was a birthday gift from Ms. Ye. I think it's good, and the words written are also different. Cousin, take a look. Have I improved again?"

"Your strokes are steady and not light. It's obvious that you've already mastered the essence of handwriting. The sizes of the strokes are mixed, and the retraction and release are well-matched. They're also dense and appropriate. Compared to the calligraphy yesterday, they're a little more reserved." Zhou Linghuai praised her for a while, then glanced at the most eye-catching bamboo brush hanging on the brush rack.

This time, it was purple bamboo.

It was a faint grayish-purple color with specks on it. Ms. Ye had carved extremely simple orchid patterns on it as the finishing touches. The entire brush looked elegant.

He remembered that the brush pen hanging on this spot two days ago was the one he had used in the past and given to Yu Youyao later.

Now that pen—

Zhou Linghuai's eyes narrowed slightly as he looked at the seven purple and three sheep brush that Yu Youyao had placed by the brush rack.

For no reason, he felt that the pen Ms. Ye had given her was a little dazzling.

However, he had never given the five purple and five sheep brush he had used to Yu Youyao. At that time, he had used a four purple and six sheep brush. It was softer, and Yu Youyao wouldn't have been able to handle it.

#### Chapter 246 - 246 I Like Cousin Praising Me

He wanted to see the young lady holding the brush he had held in the past and writing with it.

This was probably impossible.

Zhou Linghuai felt a little regretful. If he had known back then, he wouldn't have gone against his father in order to change to a softer brush. Not only did he suffer, but he also didn't anger his father in the end.

He remembered that he had gone to look for his father with the words his teacher had praised him for writing well.

His father held the piece of paper and read it word for word. In the end, he even patted his shoulder hard and laughed. "You're indeed my son. You're so smart. You're just like me. You're only five or six years old, but you already know how to use soft brushes. If word gets out, I'll be so proud." Then, his father patted his shoulder smugly. "You've really made me proud."

Back then, when he was in the capital, he didn't like to study and his handwriting wasn't good either. Every time, the elder of the Imperial College would slap his palm. He was often laughed at.

Who is making you proud? Look at how your son's handwriting is better than yours. Let's see if you have any shame.

There was more!

With how silly his father was, if he really took after his father, wouldn't he be a little silly child?

Didn't he know what kind of blockhead he was?

How dare he brag here!

Couldn't he have some self-awareness?

This was called being gifted. He had taken after himself. What did it have to do with his father? His young face was scrunched, and he thought to himself that he had miscalculated.

His father was still smug. "The best thing I've done in my life was marry your mother. Your mother was a famous genius in the capital back then!"

Forget it, how was this not knowing his limits? He was clearly too self-aware.

That was why he chased after her like a dog chasing after a bone. He had shamelessly gotten her into his hands. Wouldn't he have gained face by giving birth to such a powerful son?

Thinking of the past, Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but laugh. He composed himself and looked at the young lady's words. "Cousin has worked hard."

Practicing calligraphy required focus and diligence. She had done both to the best of her abilities.

Yu Youyao smiled. "Cousin teaches me calligraphy every day. I can't let Cousin work too hard, let alone embarrass him."

Everyone knew that her cousin was guiding her in her calligraphy. Her cousin had also personally written calligraphy for her. If her handwriting was bad, wouldn't she embarrass her cousin?

This wouldn't do!

In the past, the young lady did not like to practice calligraphy at all. She felt that practicing calligraphy was boring and irritable. It was also because of him that she made up her mind and gritted her teeth to practice it.

Zhou Linghuai's expression froze for a moment, and he felt a lump in his throat. "From now on, you just have to take an hour to practice every day. You don't have to push yourself too hard like usual. Your writing has already become quite orderly. There's not much benefit in immersing yourself in writing."

In the end, he looked at the young lady's smile.

Her lips were good-looking. They were thin, but they looked plump and soft. At such a young age, they were already red and smooth like butter. When she smiled, her lips were like a budding spring apricot that was suddenly tender.

Seeing such a smile, he also felt that she was delicate. Even the flowers of her heart bloomed with her. He was free from all forms of worries and stress.

Yu Youyao nodded vigorously. "Cousin, I've been practicing calligraphy for a long time. I find it interesting too. I see that I'm improving every day, and the words I write every day are better than the day before. I'm also very happy. Cousin, look. I even left the words I wrote in the past."

With that, Yu Youyao really dragged out a large wooden box from under the bookshelf. She sat down beside her cousin and opened the box in front of him.

Inside were the calligraphy pieces Yu Youyao did as practice. Not every piece was saved. She just felt that she had improved, so she kept them as a memento.

Zhou Linghuai took a look and froze.

Yu Youyao took out the small script she had written in the beginning. "Look at how ugly my handwriting used to be. I couldn't even stand it myself. Fortunately, Cousin is amazing. In such a short period of time, he's already made me improve so much. Otherwise, in the future, when I write letters to other people, I'll have to ask a maidservant to write for me. When I go out, I'll be a joke."

With that, she looked at her cousin with sparkling eyes.

Zhou Linghuai did not say anything. He took the stack of papers from her hand and looked at them carefully.



Every piece of paper showed traces of the little girl practicing hard. Some of them were practiced when he was around, but most of them were practiced by her alone in the study when he was not around.

He recalled that every time after he left, the little girl would still bury her head in her desk and write furiously. Whether rain or shine, she was unbothered. Only a calligraphy piece that he had personally written was spread on the desk to accompany her through this dry and boring time.

Young ladies usually liked crowds.

In the past, she couldn't sit still either. She always wanted to go out and play. Otherwise, she wouldn't have been punished by Ms. Ye at home.

Seeing that her cousin was silent, Yu Youyao called out softly, "Cousin?"

Zhou Linghuai came back to his senses and smiled. "It's nothing. I just feel that Cousin is working hard, so I feel a little..." He swallowed the word "heartache". Hence, there was a lump in his throat. He changed the topic and said slowly, "I'm relieved!"

Yu Youyao tilted her head and smiled. "Every time Cousin praises me, I feel happy!"

Zhou Linghuai laughed when he heard this. He tapped her forehead lightly. "You're already ten years old. Why are you still acting like a child? Aren't you ashamed?"

Yu Youyao covered her forehead and pouted. "What's there to be ashamed about? Even if I'm ten years old, I'm still Cousin's cousin. In front of Cousin, of course I can do whatever I want. It's so uncomfortable to pretend to be an adult!"

Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but laugh.

Yu Youyao suddenly thought of something and quickly called out to Chun Xiao.

Chun Xiao was guarding the outer room. When she heard Young Miss call her, she put down the embroidery in her hand and quickly walked into the room.

Yu Youyao pointed at the curtain by the window. "Quickly pull up the curtains in the room."

Zhou Linghuai was stunned when he heard this, but he did not understand. The little girl had thought of something and pulled the curtain up.

Chun Xiao was also puzzled, but she did not ask. She quickly stepped forward and pulled the curtains in the room. The bright study room, which had just been filled with sunlight, immediately became dark.

After Chun Xiao finished pulling the curtains, she saw that Young Miss had no other instructions and left the study.

Looking at the tightly covered curtains, Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but feel curious. "Cousin, what are you doing?"

Yu Youyao tilted her head to look at her cousin. "Cousin, wait. I'll show you something good."

Chapter 247 - 247 Heart skipped a beat

Zhou Linghuai looked at the tightly drawn curtain and saw the little girl tiptoe to take a wooden box with yellow rosewood patterns from a secret compartment on the bookshelf.

Yu Youyao placed the box on the desk and smiled. "Cousin, come closer. Don't be so far away from me."

Zhou Linghuai pursed his lips and leaned over.

"Lower your head a little, a little more," the little girl said as she moved closer to her cousin, her little head almost touching his chest.

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Zhou Linghuai felt a little uncomfortable and wanted to lean back, but he heard Yu Youyao say, "Cousin, don't blink!"

Zhou Linghuai's body stiffened and he did not move. He did not even blink when he heard the little girl's words. He saw her carefully open the lock on the box. She covered the surface of the box with one hand and gently opened the lid a crack with the other...

Zhou Linghuai's expression paused for a moment. In the dark study, he could see a dazzling light seeping out from a small crack, so he guessed what was inside.

As the lid of the box was lifted and opened, the light of the Night-Luminescent Pearl spread out from the box and filled the entire room.

The dark room was instantly as bright as day.

Yu Youyao tilted her head to look at her cousin. Her fair face reflected the moonlight, making her look even more beautiful. "Cousin, it's a night pearl. Does it look good?"

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "Where did Cousin get it from? It's really rare."

The two Night-Luminescent Pearls were the size of lychees. They weren't too big, but they weren't small either. One was moon-white, and the other was sun-yellow. The color wasn't special, but their quality wasn't bad.

Night-Luminescent Pearls were rare, and it was rare to see them among the commoners. Most of them were kept in the palace, and only a few families kept them well, afraid that others would find out.

Back then, his family had a box of Night-Luminescent Pearls. The big ones were as big as tea bowls, and even the small ones were like lychees.

When he was young, he was playful. He felt that the shine of the Night-Luminescent Pearl was very beautiful, so he stole it and flicked it on the ground like a ball. Later, when his father found out, he whipped him.

Only then did he realize that this box of Night-Luminescent Pearls had been obtained by his father when he was at the palace and dug out the emperor's brother's private vault as a betrothal gift for her mother.

Yu Youyao's eyes narrowed with a smile as she pointed at a moon-white pearl. "This one is called the moon pearl. My maternal grandfather gave it to my mother." As she spoke, she pointed at another sun-yellow pearl. "This one is called the sun pearl." The smile on her lips became brighter and brighter. It was not inferior to the brilliant night pearl. "My maternal grandfather gave it to me."

Zhou Linghuai smiled. "So they're a pair."

The Night-Luminescent Pearls were all individuals, and he had really never heard of a pair. He took a closer look at the "sun pearl" and "moon pearl" in the box. Indeed, one was like the moonlight, and the other as bright as the sun. One was yellow and one was white, and there was a hint of blue and a wisp of white. It was a little strange.

Yu Youyao suddenly held her cousin's hand.

Zhou Linghuai was stunned for a moment, and his hand trembled slightly. He looked down at the little girl and gently opened his palm, placing the "sun pearl" on it.

"Cousin, you always like to stay in the study at night and read until late at night." At this point, she glared at him and pouted unhappily. She said reproachfully, "You're like a child. You don't listen no matter what." She sighed and shook her head. She said helplessly, "In the future, Cousin, you can put the Night-Luminescent Pearl in the study. You won't have to worry about hurting your eyes."

Zhou Linghuai was not surprised at all. He tightened his grip and wrapped the sun pearl in his palm. There was still light between his fingers. "Okay!"

Yu Youyao tilted her head and looked at her cousin's face, which was so close to hers. It reflected the bright light of the sun, and his fair face looked as beautiful as if it was glowing. She couldn't help but smile, and her curved eyebrows shone brightly.

The two of them were extremely close to each other. The little girl suddenly tilted her head, and Zhou Linghuai's heart skipped a beat. The little girl's delicate and beautiful face was reflected in his eyes, and his eyes were pierced by the dazzling light of the night pearl in her bright eyes. The eyelashes on her eyes were thick and slender, trembling slightly like butterfly wings. They gently tugged at his heartstrings, and even his heart couldn't help but skip a beat.

Zhou Linghuai tightened his grip on the armrest of the wheelchair, his fingers turning pale. He slowly lowered his eyes, and the little girl's smiling lips caught him off guard.

When she smiled, her red lips were like a beautiful peach that had bloomed to the limit. When the little girl leaned close, he could almost smell a trace of sweetness.

The little girl usually used rosy lipstick. It was pink and delicate, and she was very beautiful. This was the first time he had seen her use red. She looked especially fresh and beautiful. It was probably a new product brought by the Xie family this time.

Since when did he start paying attention to the little girl? Things like eyebrows and lips? Zhou Linghuai felt that it was inappropriate. He looked up again and changed the topic. "The day after tomorrow is the Flower Festival in the Marquis of Changxing's Residence. Although Grand aunt asked Second Aunt to bring you along, when you're outside, she won't be able to surpass Madam Yang, your stepmother. I'm afraid she won't be able to interfere in anything. You have to rely on yourself. Don't let yourself suffer."

Yu Youyao recalled that her cousin had said that he would take care of everything for her. She wasn't a fool, so how could she not tell that he wasn't joking at all? Her heart couldn't help but skip a beat. She kept feeling that her cousin was very mysterious, as if nothing in this world could stop him. Even a prominent family like the Marquis of Changxing's Residence was nothing but an ant in her cousin's eyes.

At the thought of this, Yu Youyao did not dare to think about it anymore. Anyway, her cousin treated her well and would not harm her no matter what.

She smiled. "Cousin, I understand. During this period of time, Nanny Xu has taught me a lot of etiquette. She has also told me about the members of the various families in the capital. Even if there's anything, I'll know how to deal with it."

It was worth mentioning that Seventh Miss Cao of the Marquis of Changxing's Residence, Cao Yingxue, and Fifth Miss Lu of the Marquis of Weining's Residence, Lu Mingyao, had to interact with them at the Flower Festival. Naturally, they had to be especially careful.

There were also some noble ladies of the imperial family with important statuses. Most of them were slightly older and probably wouldn't get along with them, so there was no need to be too nervous.

The Flower Festival of the Marquis of Changxing's Residence was about to arrive. Old Madam Yu picked suitable ladies and gave Yu Youyao, Yu Shuangbai, and Yu Jianjia each an exquisite piece of jewelry.

#### Chapter 248 - 248 Too Selfish

The young misses were very happy. They came to An Shou Hall together to greet Old Madam Yu. The few of them could be seen gathered together. Even the cold An Shou Hall became lively.

Yu Youyao gave her grandmother her new medicinal tea.

Yu Shuangbai used the medicinal tea that Yu Youyao had given her to perform the tea-dividing technique on the spot. The tea had the word "longevity" on it and this made Old Madam smile.

Yu Lianyu had written a poem of the Five Blessings, which was auspicious. When Old Madam Yu saw this, she couldn't help but take a few more glances at her. She was talented in poetry. Even outside, she could compete with outsiders.

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Yu Fangfei's hands were skillful, so she made a headband that looked like the Five Blessings. Old Madam was old and couldn't stand wearing a hairpin and a crown. She felt that her head was heavy and uncomfortable. This headband was made of cloth, so it was very light when she wore it at home. It was obvious that the youngest, Yu Fangfei, was also smart and considerate.

Old Madam Yu smiled so widely that her wrinkles appeared. "All of you have grown up."

Even when An Shou Hall fell silent, the smile on Old Madam Yu's face did not fade. She said to Nanny Liu, "Look, everyone in the family is presentable. Be it their character or talent, they're all top-notch. When they're older and introduced outside, news of the Yu Residence's good upbringing will probably be spread."

The sisters in the family were well-mannered, and it was also because the Yu Residence had a good family background.

Nanny Liu also smiled and said, "Isn't that so? Second Madam is well-mannered, and her sisters are also well-mannered. Eldest Miss has also shown the demeanor of a legitimate elder by teaching her sisters well."

These words touched Old Madam Yu's heart. On second thought, she thought of Yu Qingning. "It's a pity that Yu Qingning has been spoiled by Madam Yang, and Eldest Son has spoiled her. Concubine He has also been spoiled. Otherwise, with her embroidery skills, she would have been praised."

At the mention of Yu Qingning, she couldn't help but think of Yu Jianjia.

"As for Third Miss..." Old Madam Yu pondered for a moment. She was only a nine-year-old child, but her expression revealed some consideration. "She's too scheming. She's also too selfish like Madam Yang, but her personality is hard to determine. Even I can't tell if she's good or bad."

Nanny Liu agreed deeply and smiled. "Children have their own blessings. All the sisters in the family are outstanding and filial. Your blessings are yet to come."

Which old lady did not like to be surrounded by family when she was old? Old Madam was a little mild-mannered, so the sisters in the family were more afraid of her than respectful.

It was also during this period of time that the sisters from the second house often came to the main house to play with Eldest Miss. They would definitely come to An Shou Hall to greet her. It was also because of Eldest Miss that the juniors in the family were much closer to Old Madam. It was obvious that Old Madam's mood had become much brighter.

After Yu Youyao returned to the Jade Courtyard, she went to the incense room.

Just now, in her grandmother's house, she had seen her grandmother change a string of agarwood beads. The fragrance reminded her that she was wearing agarwood beads.

The Heavenly Fragrance Records recorded many ways to make incense beads, so she wanted to make them herself.

The medicinal fragrance could only be used at home, and the fragrance of the sachet could not last long. The fragrance pearl was often worn on the body. It could be worn on the head, ears, neck, wrist, and waist. It was suitable for men and women.

Nanny Xu smiled and asked, "What incense do you want to make?"

Yu Youyao took the Heavenly Fragrance Records and flipped to the section on incense beads. "Let's make osmanthus incense beads. The production of incense beads depends on patience and craftsmanship. It's even more difficult. I've never done it before. The osmanthus incense beads are simple to match. Moreover, the fragrance is innocent, faint, and refreshing. Wearing them makes one feel relaxed and calm."

Ambergris is the most fragrant thing in the world, but in front of sweet-scented osmanthus, it would only be ranked second.

Osmanthus incense was comparable to ambergris.

This was her first time making incense beads, so Yu Youyao was worried that she wouldn't be able to do it well. "Nanny, will you guide me from the side?"

Nanny Xu nodded in agreement.

Yu Youyao took out some dried osmanthus flowers and grinded them carefully. She needed to calm down to wash and slowly grind them.

The incense had spirituality, and there were some simple incense recipes. However, everyone's methods were different, and the environments were different. The people who made the incense had different mental states, and there were also differences in the composition of the incense.

Sunlight shone through the hall, illuminating the room. The fragrance of the osmanthus rose from light to thick. Unknowingly, it filled the room with a faint sweetness.

When Nanny Xu saw this, she couldn't help but nod to herself.

As long as Yu Youyao wanted to do something, she could calm down and abandon all distracting thoughts. It was also because of this that no matter what she learned, she learned quickly and was good at everything. The little girl had already prepared such good medical cuisine from the beginning. Later, when Zhou Linghuai taught her calligraphy, studies, and zither skills, her personality was polished.

The dried osmanthus flowers had been ground into fine powder. Yu Youyao rubbed her sore arms and took a thin sieve from the side to sieve the grounded dried osmanthus flowers.

Dry osmanthus powder had to be paired with agarwood, cloves, amber, and borneol. She often used borneol and agarwood to make medicinal fragrances, and they were all grounded on the spot.

Yu Youyao needed to grind the lilacs and amber herself.

By the time Yu Youyao finished grinding the osmanthus incense, it was already two hours later.

Nanny Xu brought her a cup of tea. "You have to make it with incense mud."

Yu Youyao happened to be thirsty, so she took it and drank it. Only when she finished the cup of tea did she put it aside. "Nanny, what water should I use to mix the incense mud?"

Nanny Xu said, "Weren't a few jars of snow water collected in the cellar last year? The weather is getting hotter and hotter, and the snow water is clear. When used to combine with the fragrant mud, it will also have a hint of sweetness and cleanliness. The smell will be more refreshing."

There was a small ice vault in the Jade Courtyard and a cold cellar beside it. Usually, they would put some things that needed to be chilled in the cellar.

Nanny Xu went to the cold cellar to get a small bottle of snow water.

It was snowing in winter, and the snow was especially pure. A wisp of coldness could pierce through one's heart. Yu Youyao added some spiritual dew. After washing her hands, she kneaded the incense mud while slowly adding water to beat it.

She repeatedly kneaded and pounded until the clay became soft and firm.

Yu Youyao began to knead the beads, turning the incense clay into a pearl the size of a cherry. This was a process that required effort. Yu Youyao took a sharp wooden stick and carved patterns on the beads.

She had carved two types of patterns. One was the "Longevity" pattern, and the other was the "Fortune" pattern. They were inserted with small sticks and dried.

Nanny Xu was very satisfied. "If it's placed in a place that's sheltered from the sun, it'll dry in two to three days. The rest of the time is more focused on craftsmanship and patience, and it's especially torturous."

Yu Youyao had originally planned to make more, but Nanny Xu stopped her. In the end, there were only about 50 incense beads that she had kneaded. However, it took eight to four hours, and she had even forgotten about her meal.

It was obvious how difficult it was to make incense beads.

In the blink of an eye, it was time for the Flower Festival at the Marquis of Changxing's Residence.

This was the first time Yu Youyao had been outside, so Nanny Xu took it especially seriously. She picked out a green silk sleeveless dress.

#### Chapter 249 - 249 Flower Festival (1)

The color of the tree leaves was clear and bright. The light yellow to green silk parasol flowers were exquisite, highlighting the trumpet-shaped flowers on her dress. They did not have petals, revealing their extraordinary beauty.

Not only that, but the outside of the dress was covered with shark silk that looked like smoke and water. Against the silk parasol flowers, it revealed the freshness of a new parasol tree after rain.

Nanny Xu smiled in satisfaction and took the opportunity to teach Dong Mei and the others. "Only young ladies who are growing up look good in red and green. They don't have to use all kinds of tricks to attract people's attention. This is the first time Eldest Miss is walking around outside, and she's with her stepmother and auntie. She has to broaden her horizons. It's more important to see and think more about the world. It's not good to be too eye-catching. She shouldn't wear red. Green is good."

Dong Mei and the others listened carefully and understood. The young lady was young and tender to begin with. It was not too much to dress up well, but she could not be flashy. It was more important to show her status and upbringing.

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"There are also many different shade of green. You have to be particular when choosing. You have to choose a pure color. Aquamarine is just right. This is jade. The color is pure, bright, and beautiful."

As Nanny Xu spoke, she picked out a small crown with a cluster of pure gold parasol flowers on it. In the middle, there were stamens, and below the stamens were green jade beads.

Yu Youyao listened attentively.

Nanny Xu placed the small crown hairpin on her head and looked at it carefully. Then, she smiled in satisfaction. "Family background, status, etiquette, and upbringing are first revealed through the material, style, patterns, and jewelry. A person's character is determined by what kind of clothes and what kind of jewelry one is wearing. Everyone from wealthy families have seen the world. How can they not tell? Then, everything is revealed through their words and actions."

No matter how eye-catching your outfit was, what others ultimately wanted to see was your upbringing.

Dong Mei and the others nodded, looking enlightened.

Nanny Xu lifted Yu Youyao's thin wrist and put on a string of jade beads for her. The bright green beads made her wrist look slender and fair, complementing her fresh appearance. She was really beautiful.

After she was done dressing up, Yu Youyao looked at the foundation on the dressing table. "Nanny, quickly put on the foundation for me."

Nanny Xu couldn't help but laugh. She had to put it on every day to feel that she looked good. However, the color of this powder was indeed fresh and suitable for Yu Youyao.

At this age, it did not matter even if she drew her eyebrows.

Hence, she opened the brow powder box, picked out some brow powder, mixed it with water, and carefully traced Yu Youyao's eyebrows.

Her drawing of her eyebrows was even better than Dong Mei's. When she raised her eyebrows, they looked like a pair of curved eyebrows, but also like distant mountains, exuding an oppressive aura.

Dong Mei looked at it more carefully and even asked about Hua Mei's technique.

Nanny Xu did not hide anything.

After drawing her eyebrows, Nanny Xu took out a box of pomegranate red lipstick and applied some. The bright color made Yu Youyao's mouth look full and soft. It actually complemented the string of blood beeswax beads on her wrist, and she looked indescribably radiant.

Nanny Xu smiled. "It's pretty good."

It looked simple, but this ordeal took two hours. It was really time-consuming, tiring, and strenuous. However, which young lady didn't dress up carefully outside?

Old Madam was worried and sent Nanny Liu over. "This is the first time Eldest Miss has been outside. Last night, Old Madam was nagging about it. Today, she got up at dawn and rushed into the warehouse to pick something for Eldest Miss."

As she spoke, she pushed the wooden tray forward.



There was a small pomegranate crown on it. The red tourmaline stones were crystal clear and extremely pure. There was also a small green crown with green cat eye stones on it. They were also expensive.

Yu Youyao pursed her lips and smiled.

Nanny Liu looked at Eldest Miss's outfit and couldn't help but smile. "Eldest Miss's outfit is fresh and delicate. A growing child should dress like this. It's really beautiful." After saying that, she looked down at the wooden tray in her hand and placed it on the table. "From the looks of it, there's no need for this. Old Madam has worried for nothing."

Yu Youyao smiled. "How can I worry for nothing? It's not just for this time. I'll be able to wear it in the future."

Nanny Liu also smiled. "I have to tell Old Madam, in case she thinks about it."

When Yu Youyao was almost done, she brought Chun Xiao, Xia Tao, and Nanny Xu to An Shou Hall. Her family received an invitation and were going out. They could only go out after bidding farewell to their elders.

When they arrived at An Shou Hall, Old Madam Yu was leaning against the couch, not even twirling her prayer beads. When she saw her granddaughter coming over, she quickly waved her hand. "Oh, my good granddaughter, come over and let Grandmother take a look."

"Grandmother!" Yu Youyao picked up the hem of her dress and walked forward. She spun around in front of her grandmother, and the hem of her dress, which looked like a sycamore flower, spread out at her feet.

Old Madam Yu's eyes lit up when she saw this. "Our Yao Yao's outfit is really fresh and delicate. A growing child should dress like this. It's really beautiful. Nanny Xu really put in a lot of effort."

Yu Youyao smiled and glanced at Nanny Liu, who was smiling at her. She felt that they were indeed master and servant. Even their words were the same.

"Grandmother, don't worry about me. Nanny Xu is going with me today, so I won't leave her eyes no matter where I go. Xia Tao is also smart, and Chun Xiao knows some tricks. Yesterday, Third Sister Song and Sixth Sister Qi sent me letters saying that we have to take care of each other at the banquet."

Seeing that Yu Youyao was in good shape, Old Madam Yu was indeed a little relieved.

Yu Youyao was about to plunge into her grandmother's arms when Old Madam Yu blocked her. "He, you can't do this. You'll mess up your combed hair. You have to be obedient."

Yu Youyao pouted. "Grandmother usually says that she's old and has experienced everything. She's eaten more salt than anyone else. Why can't she withstand it? A flower festival has already intimidated you. The Marquis of Changxing's Residence isn't a dragon's den or a tiger's den. How can it eat me? I'm just a little older. Even if something happens, it won't be on me. I'll just go through the motions and take a look. I can use this experience to grow up and become more knowledgeable. At most, I'll just have some disagreements with other sisters. What else can it be?"

These words stunned Old Madam Yu. When she heard this, she really did not know whether to laugh or cry. Nanny Liu, who was at the side, lowered her head and started to laugh.

Old Madam Yu glared at her. “You’ve grown up. You even mocked your grandmother.” As she spoke, she waved her hand. “Fine, fine, fine. I’ve been worrying for nothing. You’re so smart. You know better than me. Indeed, you’re useless when you’re old.”

## Chapter 250 - 250 Flower Festival (2)

Yu Youyao was very smug. She held her grandmother’s arm and smiled. “Grandmother isn’t old at all. In the future, I’ll make medicinal cuisine for you every day to nourish your body and you will live a long life.”

When Old Madam Yu heard this, she immediately beamed with joy. There was no need to worry.

Yu Youyao heaved a sigh of relief and sighed in her heart. It was getting harder to coax old people these days. Sigh, it was really too difficult for her!

After chatting for a while, Yang Shuwan brought Yu Jianjia over to greet Old Madam.

The bright red Flowing Light Brocade was embroidered with large dark golden peony patterns. Her entire body was glowing. She was really dressed brightly and looked radiant.

This outfit was suitable. Although it was a little beautiful, it did not look frivolous.

However, this was too ostentatious. She had completely forgotten about the elegance of the scholarly family.

Old Madam Yu did not like it very much, so she looked at Yu Jianjia.

She was wearing a light red embroidered lotus outer shirt and a moonlight dress. There were red, yellow, and green ribbons that made it look like a pleated dress. It was light and deep, and the hazy halo was as lively as the moon. She was also wearing a small crown with beads on her head. She used red, yellow, and green pearls that were inlaid. Each pearl was plump and smooth, and they were also very expensive.

From head to toe, she looked precious and meticulous.

Old Madam Yu nodded secretly. She still had some sense of propriety, unlike in the past, when she wanted to be beautiful and dressed to show “filial piety”. She was easier to look at..

After greeting her, Yang Shuwan looked at Yu Youyao. “I originally thought that it would be Yao Yao’s first time outside, so I sent Nanny Li to the Jade Courtyard to check on the situation so that she could help manage it. Who knew that Nanny Xu would be so capable? As her mother, I didn’t have to help out.”

She was afraid that others would say that she only cared about her biological daughter and did not care about her stepdaughter.

In some ways, Yang Shuwan’s reputation and skills were really impressive. Yu Youyao pursed her lips and smiled. “Third Sister’s body is a little weak, so she has to be especially cautious when she goes out. You can’t be careless at all. Mother naturally has to take care of Third Sister first, but I don’t dare to distract her.”

“Yao Yao, you’re really sensible. You’re always taking care of your younger sister.” Yang Shuwan’s smile faded a little.

When she first saw Yu Youyao, although she felt that she looked very beautiful, she was still inferior to Jia Jia's elegant moonlight brocade dress.

However, when she took a closer look, she could tell that it was extraordinary.

The silk might not be more expensive than the Moonlight Brocade, but the shark silk on the outside was as thin as a cicada's wings. There were even hazy patterns on it. At first glance, it was nothing special.

Yu Youyao's figure swayed, and the shark silk became vivid. The patterns on it actually changed endlessly.

For every blink, there was a new pattern. There were ten patterns for ten different pairs of eyes. If a hundred people had a hundred eyes, there were a hundred patterns.

With such a layer of shark silk on her body, Yu Youyao looked extraordinary.

Jia Jia's Moonlight Brocade looked ordinary.

How could she be happy?

"Nanny Xu from Eldest Sister's courtyard is a difficult person to deal with. She took good care of Eldest Sister." Yu Jianjia pursed her lips and smiled. Her eyelashes fluttered slightly, blocking the emotions in her eyes. However, her grip on the handkerchief inevitably tightened. "Eldest Sister, you look really good today."

Yu Youyao was not inferior at all. She was just right.

However, if one took a closer look, they would be able to sense the refinement and upbringing emitted from inside and out. Coupled with the gentle demeanor of her words and actions, she really had the aura of a noble lady that could not be ignored.

Yu Youyao nodded. "The Moonlight Brocade is beautiful and elegant. It suits you very well."

This was also true.

After the sisters flattered each other, Madam Yao brought Yu Shuangbai over.

Madam Yao was beautiful and solemn. She was dressed in red with silver peony embroidery. The silver color was bright, making the red look even more vivid and beautiful. She was dignified and luxurious. She was really not inferior to Yang Shuwan's deliberately ostentatious outfit.

From their clothes, the sisters-in-law had already revealed their family background and temperament.

As soon as Madam Yao arrived, she held Yu Youyao's hand and sized her up. "This is the first time Yao Yao has been outside. I came over early to support you. Now that I've seen you, it's time for Nanny Xu to help Shuangbai. After all, she's seen the world more than me."

With that, she really covered her face with her handkerchief and glanced at Yu Shuangbai.

Yu Shuangbai's white and silver dress was engraved with a pink rose pattern. On top was a thin rose waist-length shirt, and on the bottom was a yellow dress that reached her waist. It was pieced

together and looked very delicate. The silver color was eye-catching, and the roses were wild. It looked both generous and beautiful. There was a small rose crown of pure gold on her head, and pink pearls fell from her lower head. She looked extremely delicate.

Old Madam Yu's eyes lit up. "Second Sister has also become a big girl. Look at her delicate appearance. She's really beautiful."

This time, Yu Jianjia finally noticed the difference and couldn't help but cough lightly.

Yu Youyao and Yu Shuangbai were both wearing pure colors. One was wearing green which made her look pure and beautiful, while the other was wearing silver which made her look beautiful and generous.

As a result, even though her Moonlight Brocade was unique and beautiful, it was not as pure as theirs.

Upon closer inspection, she also realized that the style of clothes were a little too big. She did not look like a growing child. Instead, she looked like a twelve-year-old girl who had already grown up.

"Second Sister's crown is really unique. The gold and silver kerbs on it are as small as real petals, making Second Sister look radiant." Yu Jianjia felt bitter.

With that, she couldn't help but glance at her bright red and flamboyant mother. She finally understood why her grandmother had always looked down on her mother.

Madam Yao was from the first wife, so her upbringing, knowledge, and bearing were more meticulous.

Her mother had read poetry and books, and she was still a little talented. Her manners and upbringing were not bad, but compared to the knowledge of a legitimate daughter, there was still a gap.

She immediately felt like turning around and returning to the courtyard to change into pure-colored clothes.

However, she knew that this was just a thought.

It was getting late, and it was easier said than done.

The jewelry, makeup, and everything she was wearing had to be changed again. She had already spent two hours in the morning. If she changed again, she might not look better.

Yang Shuwan did not notice this. She only felt that although Madam Yao's outfit today was luxurious, it was not as bright as hers. She could not hide her smug expression.

Seeing that Madam Yao was making fun of Old Madam Yu, she couldn't interrupt for a moment. She could only tighten her grip on her handkerchief and smile stiffly.

Yu Shuangbai leaned towards Yu Youyao and asked softly, "Why do I feel that you don't seem afraid at all?"

Yu Youyao thought for a moment. "I'm just a little nervous."

Previously, she had been a little afraid, but her cousin had already told her not to take it too seriously and not to let herself suffer at the flower festival. There was no need for her to be afraid.

