

## All Hail 251

Chapter 251 - 251 Cousin, Do I Look Good

Yu Shuangbai's eyes widened in shock. "This is your first time walking outside. Aren't you worried that something will go wrong?"

Yu Youyao rolled her eyes. "So what if there's a mistake? Can the Marquis of Changxing's Residence eat us up? Besides, we're all growing children. At the Flower Festival, as long as we don't be rude or do anything too out of line, there's not much etiquette to be observed. How can there be a big mistake?"

Yu Shuangbai thought about it carefully. "That's true. Why didn't I think of this?" Her expression relaxed and she wasn't so nervous anymore. "Big Sister, when we go to the Flower Festival later, you have to bring me along. There will be many social events at the Flower Festival. I don't want to stay by my mother's side. I'll definitely die of boredom."

Yu Youyao smiled. "I've already made an appointment with Third Sister Song and Sixth Sister Qi to play together. They've been outside before and are more knowledgeable than us."

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Yu Shuangbai was finally relieved.

When Yu Jianjia heard this, she felt a little stifled.

It had only been a few days since Yu Youyao's birthday banquet, but she had already written letters to the young misses of the various families. Even the Marquis of Changxing Flower Festival wanted her to come. It was obvious that they were getting closer.

In the second half of the year, it would probably be difficult to invite Song Wanhui and Qi Sinian over for her birthday.

At this moment, there was the sound of wheels outside the door. Yu Youyao's eyes lit up. She picked up her skirt and ran to the door, only to see Chang An pushing her cousin into the house.

Yu Youyao's voice was cheerful. "Cousin, why are you here!"

Her voice made everyone look at the door. Zhou Linghuai smiled. "I copied a Buddhist scripture for Grandaunt."

These words made Old Madam Yu laugh. She turned to Nanny Xu and said, "Listen to him. He's making fun of me. Those who don't know better will think that he's really filial."

He wasn't sending her Buddhist scriptures. It was probably just an excuse. He was worried that Yao Yao was going to the Marquis of Changxing's Residence today, so he was in a hurry to see her.

Nanny Xu smiled. "This is killing two birds with one stone. It's always been perfect. Isn't he really filial?"

Madam Yao also laughed.

Zhou Linghuai and Yu Youyao had a good relationship. This was the first time Yu Youyao had gone out, so he was worried and came over to take a look. It was only human nature. He had to say goodbye to her before leaving.

Yang Shuwan pursed her lips. It was filial piety to copy a few Buddhist scriptures. Some time ago, she had set rules in An Shou Hall and copied countless Buddhist scriptures. She was really filial.

Yu Jianjia looked up and heard Yu Youyao's clear voice. "Cousin, do I look good today?"

She lowered her head and immediately felt sick of it.

Old Madam loved to associate herself with others. She even treated an outsider better than her own granddaughter.

On the second day of Yu Youyao's birthday, Old Madam had given Zhou Linghuai a top-notch carved-tooth calligraphy room. There was a carved-tooth brush, a carved-tooth cylinder, a carved-tooth paperweight, and a carved-tooth brush. They were considered expensive.

"You look good!" Zhou Linghuai looked at the little girl's green clothes, which made her look pure. She looked more elegant and beautiful today than on her birthday.

Yu Youyao smiled sweetly and gently. She took the scripture from her cousin's hand and unfolded it. "Cousin, your handwriting is good. Grandmother will definitely like the Buddhist scriptures you copied."

Zhou Linghuai chuckled.

Yu Youyao took the calligraphy piece and turned to pass it to her grandmother. "Grandmother, look. This is a Buddhist scripture that Cousin copied. I've read it and it's very well copied."

"I have eyes, so I don't need you to help me read it." Old Madam Yu stared at her. Zhou Linghuai had written a script that was strict and neat. Even with just a glance, she felt that it was very dignified.

How could she not like it?

After handing the calligraphy piece to Nanny Xu and putting it away, Old Madam Yu said to Zhou Linghuai, "Your handwriting is good. Even your copying of Buddhist scriptures is different from others."

Zhou Linghuai said respectfully, "As long as you like it."

Old Madam Yu's smile deepened.

Yu Youyao had already moved back to her cousin's side. "Cousin, this is the first time I'm participating in the Flower Festival. Have you participated in the Flower Festival before?"

There were one or two such grand events like the Flower Festival every year, and they were all organized by the noble families in the capital. The imperial family held the most event, but she had never seen one before.

Zhou Linghuai's expression paused for a moment before he said, "Youzhou is bitterly cold, and there aren't many banquets in a year. Such a grand event has never happened before. I used to live in seclusion and rarely participated in banquets."

Yu Youyao sighed softly. "It's really not easy. It's not like the small banquet in the capital that's held every three days or a big banquet every five days. As long as it's an auspicious day and there's no joyous occasion, it can still be festive. This year, it's also the year of the imperial examination. Every family has descendants studying, so they don't dare to cause trouble. In the past, after the new year, invitations from various families would have long arrived."

On the other hand, the peace of mind in the capital was maintained by hundreds of thousands of soldiers in Youzhou who had guarded the cold, suffered, and shed blood and tears. However, King You's entire family did not have a good ending.

A trace of sarcasm flashed across Zhou Linghuai's eyes.

Yu Youyao squatted beside her cousin and whispered, "Cousin, I used to like to read picture book. I've read many picture books from Youzhou."

In the past, every autumn and winter, when Youzhou won a battle, news of victory would spread to the capital. The world admired the strong. Teahouses and scholarly houses were filled with stories about King You. There were many stories about King You, and even the servants in the family had to gather to tell them.

At the mention of King You, he had to tell her about his deep relationship with the Princess Consort.

Once, when she happened to mention it to her grandmother, her grandmother smiled and said, "Back then, His Highness and the Princess Consort were really like what was written in the book. She was a fair and graceful lady. Gentlemen would chase her."

Curiously, she pressed her grandmother.

As her grandmother smiled, she said, "When Prince You was chasing the Princess Consort, that drama was really sensational... Later on, I saw their marriage. Princess Consort You was wearing a phoenix coronet and holding something in her hand." She stretched out her hand to the size of an egg and continued, "It was such a big night pearl. The night pearl was like a red sun or like pigeon blood. It caused a stir in the capital."

Little Youyao rested her chin on her hand as she listened to her grandmother tell her the story of a hero and a beauty. Her eyes sparkled as she felt that Prince You was really a good person.

Yes, he was better than her father. Her father did not treat her mother well at all.

Little Youyao had lost her biological mother since she was young, and her father did not dote on her. In her young heart, she yearned for her father to be more like Second Uncle and Prince You.

She often thought that her father would dote on her like Second Uncle, or be a great hero like Prince You.

Yu Youyao held her cousin's hand and said in a sweet and soft voice, "A place's water and soil can nurture a person. Even in a bitterly cold place, it also raises peerless men like Cousin. There are also unique people like Cousin's friend. Wealth is in the capital, and there's only one Song Mingzhao. It's obvious that Youzhou is also a place of talent."

## Chapter 252 - 252 Marquis of Changxing's Residence

The little girl squatted in front of him and looked up at him. Her pomegranate-red lips were curved and bright, but there was concern in her eyes.

She was probably worried about him because she mentioned Youzhou and was afraid that he would think of those unhappy things in the past.

Zhou Ling's lips curled up slightly. "In that case, don't mention it in front of others."

Yu Youyao pursed her lips and changed the topic. "Cousin, when I return, I'll tell you about the flower festival."

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Zhou Linghuai nodded. "Okay." After thinking about it for a while, he was still a little worried. He added, "There are too many people at the Flower Festival. With all the young misses gathered together, it's inevitable that there will be some conflict. Be careful."

Yu Youyao clenched her fists. "Cousin, don't worry about me. Who would go against a growing child like me? I'm just going through the motions to broaden my horizons. I'm not going to cause trouble."

The little girl was not the type to cause trouble, so Zhou Linghuai nodded and instructed in a low voice, "Remember to watch your surroundings outside and be alert. You have to be calm when you encounter trouble. Don't panic. If anyone causes trouble, don't pester them endlessly, lest you're in a passive position and are controlled by others. Remember, to beat a snake, one must strike seven inches below its head. First, extinguish their prestige, then suppress their arrogance. There's a saying that goes, no matter how bad things get, don't give up. When dealing with others, your aura can't be weak."

The two of them gathered together to talk. No one else listened carefully, but Old Madam Yu heard them clearly. Her grip on the prayer beads tightened.

With Zhou Linghuai's personality, she had underestimated him in the past.

And Yao Yao—

Her granddaughter used to be a little soft, but now did things cleanly and neatly like Zhou Linghuai.

Yu Youyao tugged at her cousin's sleeve and curved her eyebrows, making them look distant. When she smiled, she looked even more charming. "Cousin, I remember everything you said."

Her cousin had said this before.

She looked gentle and obedient. Zhou Linghuai suddenly shook his head and laughed. "Do you think Cousin is talking too much?"

Yu Youyao wrinkled her nose slightly, unhappy that her cousin had said that about her. "Of course not. Cousin, you're not talking too much at all. You're just concerned about me." She pursed her lips and smiled, her eyes sparkling. "If you had a mustache under your nose and were worried about me, you would definitely look like my father." She couldn't help but laugh. She leaned close to her cousin's ear and whispered, "Even my father doesn't care about me as much as you do."

The man was 40 years old and had also started growing a beard a while ago. His mouth was also pale and did not look good at all.

Thinking of her cousin's future beard, she suddenly shook her head and did not dare to think about it.

The scene was too beautiful to look at.

Zhou Linghuai's expression stiffened slightly, and he swallowed the words that were about to come out of his mouth.

Yu Youyao stuck out her tongue and tugged at her cousin's sleeve. She said coquettishly, "Cousin, I'm sorry. I was just joking. I just feel that you're the person who treats me the best other than Grandmother."

The little girl spoke pitifully, and Zhou Linghuai's expression relaxed. Even if he was angry, he couldn't be angry anymore. He said helplessly, "It's not like at home outside. It's better to pay more attention."

Yu Youyao nodded. "Cousin, I'll be obedient."

Cousin, I'll be obedient. Her gentle voice was soft and delicate, making Zhou Linghuai's ears go numb and his heart melt. She was simply too obedient.

After chatting for a while, it was almost time to leave.

Yu Youyao bade her cousin farewell and held Yu Shuangbai's hand as they left with Yang Shuwan and Madam Yao.

There were four large carriages parked at the entrance.

Madam Yao held Yu Youyao's hand and smiled at Yang Shuwan. "Third Miss's body is a little weak, so you can't be careless. Yao Yao, come with me. Take good care of her. It'll be more appropriate."

Yang Shuwan did not want to bring Yu Youyao along, so she smiled and said, "Thank you, Second Sister-in-law." She turned around and held Yu Youyao's hand. She said gently, "Go with your second aunt. Don't cause trouble for her."

Yu Youyao nodded. "Got it, Mother."

Yang Shuwan was satisfied. Yu Jianjia stepped forward and said, "Eldest Sister and Second Sister, I'll see you at the flower festival later."

Yu Youyao and Yu Shuangbai nodded.

After getting into the carriage, Madam Yao smiled and told Yu Youyao and Yu Shuangbai about the Marquis of Changxing's Residence. "The Marquis of Changxing's Residence and the Marquis of Weining's Residence are in-laws. The Marquis of Weining's wife is the biological sister of the Marquis of Changxing. The Marquis of Changxing's wife has two legitimate daughters. The two legitimate daughters are beautiful. Two years ago, the second daughter was sent into the palace and was conferred the title of Concubine Zhuang. She's one of the nine concubines. Her daughter's

name is Yingxue. She's eleven years old this year and is a little older than you. I heard that she has a delicate and charming personality..."

Nanny Xu had told Yu Youyao all this before.

Imperial Consort Lu looked very glamorous in the palace, but she also needed to stabilize her position.

However, in order not to arouse the emperor's suspicion, the Marquis of Weining naturally wouldn't choose his daughter to enter the palace to receive his favor.

In this way, the Marquis of Changxing's Residence, who was related to the Weining Marquis Residence by marriage, was the best candidate. Concubine Zhuang was in the palace, and with Imperial Consort Lu helping to fight for her favor, she naturally gained power.

At the mention of the Marquis of Changxing's Residence, it was inevitable that she would mention the Marquis of Weining's Residence. "The Marquis of Weining's wife has a legitimate daughter who has been in the family for five years. Her name is Lu Mingyao, and she's more than half a year older than Seventh Miss Cao. I saw her once last year. The color she was wearing was the same as Imperial Consort Lu's in the palace. Not only that, but I heard that she's also extremely talented in poetry and calligraphy. She's already a little famous..."

Madam Yao mentioned the other young misses in the capital.

She had told her daughter all this a long time ago. Now, she was telling it to Yu Youyao. Old Madam doted on Yu Youyao, so she had to tell her about it even more clearly.

However, as an aunt, she had to be more careful.

Unknowingly, the carriage had arrived at the entrance of the Marquis of Changxing's Residence.

The red door of the Marquis of Changxing's Residence was open to welcome guests. Even the tall and mighty stone lions outside were tied with a ribbon, revealing how extraordinary it was.

Nanny Qian alighted from the carriage and went forward with the invitation. Immediately, an old maid from the residence welcomed the Yu Residence's carriage into the residence from the side door beside the main door.

The carriage only stopped in front of the pagoda door.

Madam Yao was the first to get out of the carriage and saw Yang Shuwan, who had arrived earlier than them.

Yu Youyao and Yu Shuangbai alighted from the carriage one after another.

Yu Youyao looked up. The sky was blue, and the sun was very bright. It was obvious that the Marquis of Changxing's Residence had chosen a good day.

There was a long table in front of the door. On it, there was a long list of guests. The young misses of the various families were involved.

A steward was announcing the names of guests. His voice was very loud and clear. "The First Madam of the Yu Residence, and the Second Madam, have arrived with the Eldest Miss, Second Miss, and Third Miss."

After announcing their names, he drew a line on the list.

A nanny came forward to receive the congratulatory gift and list. She also handed it to the steward to register it in an orderly manner.

Chapter 253 - 253 The Marquis's wife

"First Madam Yu, Second Madam Yu is finally here." When the Marquis of Changxing's wife received the news, she quickly welcomed her with a smile. Her brownish-gold peony pattern dress was solemn and noble. Even Yang Shuwan's wasn't as outstanding.

Yang Shuwan stepped forward, her bright red figure almost blocking Madam Yao's way. "Eldest Madam, you're too polite. There's no need to welcome us from afar. We have legs. Even if someone leads the way, we can walk over ourselves."

These words made it seem like she had an extraordinary relationship with the Marquis of Changxing's wife. After saying that, she tilted her head to look at Madam Yao, secretly showing off.

Madam Yao smiled and agreed with Yang Shuwan. "First Madam Cao is busy today, so you don't have to deliberately entertain us."

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The Marquis of Changxing's wife quickly waved her hand. "How can that be? Everyone who comes is a guest. It's not necessary to be polite.

With that, she looked at Madam Yao with her slender phoenix eyes. Yang Shuwan glanced behind her and immediately smiled. "Oh, these must be the sisters in your residence. How did you raise such beauties? In a few years, they'll grow up. It'll be amazing. Just looking at them makes me very envious."

Yu Youyao pulled Yu Shuangbai out from behind Madam Yao, and so did Yu Jianjia.

The three sisters bowed to the Marquis of Changxing's wife. "Hello, Madam!"

The Marquis of Changxing's wife first looked at Yu Jianjia. When she saw her moonlight brocade dress, her eyes lit up.

Then, she looked at Yu Youyao. When she noticed the shark silk on her, she secretly took a deep breath.

In the end, she looked at Yu Shuangbai. She was also very beautiful in silver.

The few of them were all beautiful.

Seeing that Yang Shuwan did not introduce them, Madam Yao smiled and pointed at Yu Youyao and the others, introducing them to the Marquis of Changxing's wife.

The Marquis of Changxing's wife smiled and said, "Your family is really lucky to have raised so many little beauties."

Yang Shuwan was furious. She had originally planned to bring Jia Jia to talk to the Marquis of Changxing's wife first, so that she could show that the Marquis of Changxing's wife treated Jia Jia differently. Then, she would introduce her to the other young misses.

Who knew that Madam Yao would ruin her plans?

The Marquis of Changxing's wife instructed an old maid who was following her, "Bring the two madams and young misses to the reception pavilion to talk."

It was unknown if the old maid was deliberately showing off, or if the Marquis of Changxing's Residence was indeed too big because she led them around the building.

Everywhere they went, flowers and trees were planted. There were begonia, crepe myrtle flowers, and evening jade peaches. There were also all kinds of flowers and plants on the railings in the aisle. They were all in full bloom at this time of the year, and there were many peonies.

It was really a magnificent scene.

Yu Shuangbai couldn't help but whisper to Yu Youyao, "There are so many flowers and plants in the Marquis of Changxing's Residence."

Yu Youyao also whispered, "It's really beautiful!"

However, she thought to herself that these flowers might not all have been planted by the Marquis of Changxing's Residence. Most of them had been shipped into the residence from farmsteads. Some had even been bought or rented from flower farmers in the suburbs.

The old woman's ears twitched, and she puffed up her chest with a smug expression.

After walking for about ten minutes, they finally arrived at the reception pavilion.

The reception pavilion was large and imposing. There were already many madams sitting inside, drinking tea and chatting. The young misses at home were also sitting obediently at the side, all of them dressed up.

With Yang Shuwan around, Madam Yao recognized her and had to go forward to greet her.

Yu Youyao and the other sisters also had to bow.

This was the first time the few of them were out and about. The madams had to size them up carefully and praise them one by one. Only then would their etiquette be considered thorough.

Yu Youyao and the others had to go through this ordeal.

Yu Shuangbai leaned over and whispered, "Fortunately, my mother chose a pair of shoes with cow tendon soles for me. I'll have to wear something softer. Otherwise, I'll suffer."

Yu Youyao pursed her lips and nodded. "I'm also wearing cow tendon soles. I even asked Liu'er to put a pair of insoles in my shoes."

With that, she picked up her tea and drank it. She inadvertently saw Yu Jianjia shrinking her feet beside her. Under her dress was a pair of jade-soled shoes. They were really exquisite.

The jade-soled shoes looked good on her, and they made a soft and crisp sound when she walked.

However, the foundation was also firm. She did not know if it was difficult to walk in.

How could it not be difficult?



After walking for a while, she did not feel anything, but all the madams did not come together. If anyone came, they had to stand up and greet them. If they met someone they were familiar with, they had to bow and greet them.

She was raised in her own room. Even on the furthest road from home, she only walked back to the courtyard every day. In addition, her body was a little weak to begin with, so how could she take it?

Now, her feet were sore.

In the morning, Nanny Qin had helped her pick out a pair of cow tendon soles. However, she despised the fact that the cow tendon soles were not as exquisite as the jade shoes, so she did not listen to Nanny Qin.

She bit her lip lightly. Even if she felt uncomfortable, she couldn't show it.

The adults chatted together, but it was in full swing. It was really pitiful for the sisters in the room. All of them sat there in boredom.

At 10:30 p.m.

The Marquis of Changxing's wife entered the house with another woman wearing red and gold embroidery.

This madam's hair was combed into a high bun, and there was a large phoenix hairpin inlaid with red and gold on her head. There was a golden pearl in her mouth that fell onto her forehead. It was a shark pearl the size of a longan. Everyone present couldn't help but gasp when they saw it.

Shark pearls were rare to begin with, and peanut-sized ones were already precious. This was the first time they had seen one as big as a longan.

No one present could compare to its grandeur.

The Marquis of Changxing's wife said with a smile, "Bring the Marquis of Weining's wife over."

The Marquis of Weining's wife also had a smile on her face, but she was too imposing. Even when she smiled, she gave off an indistinct feeling. "I'm late. Everyone has been waiting for a long time." After saying that, she looked at the bright and generous beauty beside her with a reproachful expression. "My wife was about to go out when she saw that the sun was rising today. She felt that her outerwear on it was too thick, so she folded it back and changed into a thin one. It was torture."

Everyone recognized that the person following behind the Marquis of Weining's wife was Fifth Miss Lu, Lu Mingyao.

Lu Mingyao had been walking around the capital for two years.

She was also present at all the poetry gatherings, flower gatherings, and small banquets. She was beautiful, but she had followed Imperial Consort Lu in the palace. Even her talents were top-notch.

Today, she was wearing an orange-red dress with a smoky veil. On it, there were mountains, rivers, flowers, and birds. She was really beautiful and outstanding.

A madam smiled and said, "But it doesn't matter. This is the year of the imperial examination. It started last autumn and it hasn't ended until April this year. Not to mention the sisters, even we are feeling suffocated at home. This flower festival can be considered a breather for us. It's lively and it's rare for us to go out. We have to do it carefully."

## Chapter 254 - 254 Flattering the Top and Stepping on the Low

Someone else chimed in, "That's right."

Someone even said, "Quick, take a look. Which young miss isn't dressed up today? It's obvious that they all like to look beautiful. Fifth Miss Lu is dressed appropriately for her age."

Everyone was talking at once, all of them praising Lu Mingyao, making her blush.

Cao Yingxue walked out from behind her mother. Her light yellow dress was innocent, charming, and beautiful. She was also a jade-like beauty, causing the eyes of the madams to light up.

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She held Lu Mingyao's arm and giggled. "Fifth Cousin, your face is so red. You're as beautiful as a Zhao peony that bloomed in my greenhouse yesterday!"

Her voice was clear and innocent, making everyone laugh.

Yu Youyao looked at Lu Mingyao.

A Zhao peony was an expensive peony. Fifth Miss Lu was beautiful and dressed very brightly. She was really as beautiful as a peony.

Other than a few people from the imperial family, there was probably no one else who could compete with her for beauty at the flower festival today.

All the madams changed the topic and began to praise Cao Yingxue for how beautiful she was. Cao Yingxue also blushed and couldn't help but twirl her feet, wishing she could hide behind Lu Mingyao.

As they chatted, someone started. "The Marquis of Changxing won a battle in Youzhou at the end of last year. He's really impressive. I heard that Di Ren is tall and strong, much taller and stronger than the men of our Great Zhou..."

When the Marquis of Changxing's wife heard this, she couldn't help but smile. "After guarding Youzhou for three years, he only fought one decent battle..."

Immediately, someone disagreed. "That won't do. The Marquis of Changxing has been guarding Youzhou for three years, and it's rare for the north to be peaceful for three years. It's also because Di Ren is afraid of the Marquis of Changxing's reputation."

It was as if Youzhou had never been peaceful in the past!

When some of the madams heard this, they picked up their tea and drank it to hide the strange expression on their faces.

All the madams tried their best to flatter the Marquis of Changxing's wife.

Although he did not directly mention King You's name, his words were full of praise and arrogance. It really blew the Marquis of Changxing into the sky and was like stepping on King You in the mud.

Yu Youyao felt a little sick of it.

The north was peaceful, but the court was not, especially the vassal lords.

Only by dealing with the internal matters could one be at peace outside. In the past, there was King You guarding the north. Wasn't the north more peaceful than now? Wasn't the court more peaceful now?

She did not know what was going on with the Marquis of Changxing in Youzhou, but one thing was certain. The Marquis of Changxing could not intimidate the vassal lords of various places, let alone the entire court.

After talking for a while, the Marquis of Changxing's wife finished showing off and suggested that they go to watch a show. "The family has invited the Happiness Crew into the residence. They said that they want to sing the new song, 'Dingjun Mountain', Qin opera..."

Yu Youyao's expression changed slightly.

Mount Dingjun was about the old Shu general Huang Zhong. When Cao Cao attacked the important town of Jiameng Pass in Western Shu, he was still strong. He asked Zhuge Liang for an order to reject the enemy and beat back the enemy general Zhang He. Then, he took advantage of the victory to capture the Tiandang Mountain where the Cao army had stored food. Later, he killed the Cao general Xiahou Yuan and captured Mount Dingjun, where the Cao army's main camp was located.

Qin opera was simple, rough, and bold. It was not as elegant as the Kun opera. In the capital, the Kun opera was popular. When the Marquis of Changxing's Residence sang this song, in addition to showing off that the Marquis of Changxing's wife was old and strong, it was meant to show Marquis of Changxing's merits of guarding Youzhou. It could be said that he had put in a lot of effort.

Yang Shuwan immediately smiled and said, "That's good. I've never heard a Qin opera. I'm in luck today."

Everyone agreed. The Marquis of Changxing's wife was also happy, so she said benevolently, "Young misses, go play by yourself. You don't have to sit there and do nothing with us."

Every madam had to give their young misses a few words of advice.

Seeing Yu Shuangbai's excited expression, Madam Yao gave up on bringing her along. "It's not like at home. You can't run around when you're walking with your big sisters."

Yu Shuangbai nodded tightly.

Thinking about how Nanny Xu was following her, and how Yu Youyao was young but also a refined person, Madam Yao held Yu Youyao's hand. "You're the eldest sister, so you're more mature than Shuangbai. If there's anything, get the servant girl to come and look for me."

Yu Youyao nodded. "Don't worry, Second Aunt. We'll play with Third Sister Song and Sixth Sister Qi."

Madam Yao was even more relieved when she heard this.

All the young misses present beamed with joy. They each found their own companions and happily walked out of the hall with Lu Mingyao and Cao Yingxue.

Yu Shuangbai held Yu Youyao's arm and walked together with Song Wanhui and Qi Sining.

Yu Jianjia was a step behind. Looking at the few figures walking in front of her, who couldn't hide their closeness, her chest felt tight. She pinched her handkerchief and gently pressed the corner of her mouth, resisting the urge to cough.

Qi Sinian quietly whispered into Yu Youyao's ear, "This morning, my mother mentioned the Marquis of Changxing's Residence, so she also mentioned your Yu Residence. Before Nanny Xu was released from the palace, Concubine Zhuang went to the Empress Dowager's palace and asked her to hand Nanny Xu over to the Marquis of Changxing's Residence to raise Seventh Miss Cao Yingxue. The Empress Dowager did not agree and sent Nanny Xu out of the palace. Not many people knew about this. It was only when my mother happened to enter the palace that day that she heard it..."

Yu Youyao was stunned for a moment. Nanny Xu probably did not know about this either. Otherwise, she would have told her.

Qi Sinian reminded her, "Be careful. Although it's just an insignificant matter, you saw it today. The Marquis of Changxing won a battle in Youzhou. Now that he's in the limelight, he won't really hold it against you. However, you're probably also famous in the Marquis of Changxing's Residence."

Yu Youyao nodded. "I know."

Qi Sinian nodded and changed the topic. "This morning, on the way to the Marquis of Changxing's Residence, we bumped into a carriage from the Tang Residence. Fifth Miss Tang is going to the Huining Nunnery. She said that she wants to stay for a few months to pray for the sick Old Madam Tang."

Emperor Taizong had set up the Hanlin Academy to recruit talents and all the scholars in the world to help the Imperial Court. He had stated clearly, "The selection of the Hanlin Academy is especially important. Disciples have to be of good character and learn well."

However, Eldest Master Tang doted on his concubines and killed his wife. He was not a person of good character. Everyone in the court knew about it, but no one dared to report it to the emperor.

Imperial Concubine Lu also doted on the six concubines and had controlled the harem for many years. Wasn't this also the act of favoring concubines after the wife was dead?

In the early years, the Imperial Court had neglected the pros and cons.

One year, in order to congratulate Imperial Consort Lu on her birthday, the Weining Marquis Residence had wantonly captured kingfishers from all caught by the Great Zhou Dynasty to be made into a "Ten Thousand Jade Feathers Rainbow Dress." This caused the kingfishers in the suburbs of the capital to disappear, and the Imperial Court was very dissatisfied.

Song Wanhui frowned and lowered her voice. "This is too ridiculous. Fifth Miss Tang is only growing. How can she go to the nunnery?"

Yu Shuangbai thought of Tang Yunmeng, the daughter of a concubine, who was as arrogant as her fourth sister, Yu Qingning. "First Madam Tang let Fifth Miss Tang go to the nunnery?"

Chapter 255 - 255 Alone

It was obvious that this concubine's daughter had climbed over the head of the first wife to show off her might.

She no longer cared about the etiquette of a scholarly family.

Yu Youyao knew the inside story. "It's quieter in the nunnery. Old Madam Tang isn't in good health, so it's rare for Fifth Sister Tang to go to the nunnery to pray. In the future, we'll write more letters to Fifth Sister Tang to prevent her from being bored."

After all, they were in someone else's house, so it wasn't appropriate to say much about this.

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The few of them nodded and skipped the topic.

Qi Sinian held Yu Youyao's hand. "My mother hasn't been sleeping well at night for a few days. She's used a lot of methods and even asked a doctor to prescribe a prescription, but it didn't work. That day, I brought the medicinal fragrance home, and my mother ordered it at night. The next day, when she slept until dawn, she prepared the medicinal tea and medicinal cuisine recipe you gave her. She recovered in less than two days. Thank you so much."

Yu Youyao pursed her lips and smiled. "Don't thank me. I'm just worried that you won't bring me along today and let me go alone. I have to put in more effort."

Hearing this, Qi Sinian rolled his eyes and glanced at Yu Shuangbai. How could she be alone?

She shouldn't have thanked her.

Song Wanhui covered her handkerchief and laughed. Suddenly, she remembered that on Yu Youyao's birthday, she had returned to the residence with many bags and went to her grandmother's house first. Her eldest brother, Song Mingzhao, was also sitting in her grandmother's house.

Her grandmother had asked her about Yu Youyao's birthday banquet.

Song Wanhui turned to look at her eldest brother. Seeing that he was sitting still and did not seem to have any intention of avoiding her, she could only tell him everything that had happened at the small banquet.

In the end, she took the medicinal tea and medicinal fragrance that Yu Youyao had given her and left her grandmother's house.

Her eldest brother, Song Mingzhao, came out with her.

Song Wanhui remembered that her brother seemed to like Yu Youyao's medicinal tea too, so she gave him another bag of medicinal tea and medicinal fragrance. "Take these."

Song Mingzhao reached out to take it and nodded. "Thank you, Third Sister."

After receiving the gifts, she strode to the front.

Song Wanhui looked at her eldest brother's indifferent back and felt that something was amiss.

As she walked, she realized that something was wrong. She had left her grandmother's house with her eldest brother, but he did not seem to come and go as he pleased. Instead, he had even walked with her.

He also took her things and left.

It was more like—

He was deliberately waiting for her to deliver the items to him!

Song Wanhui was stunned for a moment. She tapped her head lightly and muttered softly, “How is that possible? How could Eldest Brother have guessed that I would give him the medicinal tea made by Eldest Miss Yu? It must be a coincidence. Yes, that’s right. Besides, Eldest Miss Yu’s things are indeed good. It’s normal for Eldest Brother to like them. Didn’t Grandmother give some to him previously?”

Thinking of this, she did not think much of it.

Song Wanhui came back to her senses. “My mother used the medicinal fragrance you made and felt that it was especially good. She even specially asked me for more and gave it to my eldest brother. My eldest brother lit it when he was studying. It could also calm his mind and nourish his mind.”

If she had known earlier, she wouldn’t have given her the medicinal fragrance. Yu Youyao resisted the urge to purse her lips.

Yu Youyao chatted and laughed with Yu Shuangbai, Qi Sinian, and Song Wanhui along the way. Occasionally, she would stop and admire the flowers and trees planted on the wooden railing.

Yu Jianjia bit her lip.

Just now, when she followed them and saw them chatting and laughing intimately, she unknowingly slowed down. After a while, she fell behind.

Yu Jianjia couldn’t be bothered to lean forward anymore. She tilted her head and saw that not far away, there were a few young misses who were dressed exceptionally well. They surrounded Fifth Miss Lu and Seventh Miss Cao and chatted and laughed. Then, they walked to the wooden railing in small steps to admire the flowers and plants.

Looking at them, she seemed to be really attracted by the colorful flowers. Unknowingly, she walked along the wooden railing to take a look.

“Eh, Third Miss Yu, why are you alone?”

Hearing the voice, Yu Jianjia was stunned for a moment. She subconsciously looked up and saw Lu Mingyao and Cao Yingxue, as well as a few young misses of noble families, standing not far away and looking at her.

The person who was talking to her was Cao Yingxue.

Yu Jianjia hurriedly took a few steps forward and pursed her lips into a smile. “So it’s Fifth Miss Lu and Seventh Miss Cao.” As she spoke, she turned to look at the three people who were with Yu Youyao not far away. She forced a smile and said, “I was only focused on admiring the flowers just now. I didn’t expect to fall behind.”

Cao Yingxue followed Yu Jianjia’s gaze and saw a few young misses chatting and laughing together not far away. It was really lively. She understood that there must be Yu Jianjia’s sisters there.

Looking at the delicate Third Miss of the Yu Residence, Cao Yingxue couldn't help but purse her lips. She wondered what kind of big sister she was.

She clearly knew that her younger sister was weak, but she still ignored her and let her younger sister be alone. She was really too selfish.

Lu Mingyao had a good impression of Yu Jianjia.

After saying that, Yu Jianjia hurriedly changed the topic and smiled. "I've been weak since I was young, so it's not good for me to walk around and cause trouble, so I'm more concerned about these flowers and plants. In order to let me rest in peace, Father built a greenhouse for me. In the past, I've planted flowers in the courtyard, but I've never seen so many flowers in the Marquis of Changxing's Residence." Yu Jianjia smiled and pointed at a carefully placed flower on the wooden railing.

"These Moutan peonies are bright red and beautiful, and there are white spots on the petals. They have a unique aura and are blooming extremely well in the Marquis of Changxing's Residence. The flowers are big and beautiful, and they're really the same as normal peonies. I almost couldn't tell just now that it was actually a camellia." After saying that, she pointed at another pot of white Camellias. "This is a white pearl. It's a rare variety of white camellia. They usually bloom around February to March. It's already April, but they're still blooming so elegantly and beautifully. It's obvious that the Marquis of Changxing's Residence has put in a lot of effort..."

At the mention of the flowers and plants that she was interested in, Yu Jianjia seemed to be in high spirits, and her delicate face turned red.

She explained all the good breeds on the wooden railing in a logical manner. Every time she mentioned something interesting, she couldn't help but praise the Marquis of Changxing's Residence for knowing how to nurture them.

The Marquis of Changxing's Residence held a flower festival. She praised the flowers for blooming beautifully and doing a good job. She also indirectly praised the Marquis of Changxing's Residence for holding a good flower festival.

Cao Yingxue was happy to hear this. She pulled Lu Mingzhu over. "You have a greenhouse in your courtyard. What flowers and plants are there?"

Yu Jianjia was a little embarrassed. "It's just some orchids, camellias, peonies, and Chinese peonies. They're not as expensive and rare as yours."

Her calm flattery made Cao Yingxue take another step closer. "You're really impressive."

Yu Jianjia blushed and quickly waved her hand. "I only asked someone who knows how to help. I wasn't the one who put in the most effort. How could I be impressive?"

Chapter 256 - 256 Pampered by Cousin Zhou

At this point, Yu Jianjia seemed to have thought of something and said gently, "There are a few pots of spring orchids in the greenhouse. Although they're not expensive, the blooming period of the spring orchids is March. These pots of mine happen to bloom in April, and they'll bloom in a few days. If Seventh Sister and Fifth Sister don't mind, I'll give you one tomorrow. You can play with it as you please."

The fragrance of orchids was a rare and elegant thing. No matter what the variety was, everyone liked the fragrance of the flowers.

She did this to build a relationship.

Of course, Cao Yingxue knew this too. However, she had known Yu Jianjia before and had spoken to her a few times. This action was not too sudden, so she agreed happily.

Even Lu Mingyao smiled and said, "Orchids have always been delicate. Even ordinary species are not easy to raise. Not only is Third Miss Yu's flower well-nourished, but you also changed the blooming period of the flowers. You're really impressive. I want to learn more."

Seeing that Lu Mingyao and Cao Yingxue were chatting with Yu Jianjia, the few young misses beside them also came forward.

Which girl didn't like flowers and plants?

Who wouldn't admire flowers at the Flower Festival?

After talking for a while, the other young misses also became interested. Unknowingly, they surrounded Yu Jianjia and admired the flowers and plants with her.

Gradually, other young misses were also attracted.

Song Wanhui took a look and whispered, "Your third sister is in the limelight."

Just now, she had noticed that Yu Youyao was walking in front of them, but she deliberately slowed down. From time to time, she would tilt her head to look at Yu Jianjia, clearly wanting for her to follow them.

However, Yu Jianjia did not seem to have such plans. She walked slower and slower. Later, she turned a corner and headed towards Lu Mingyao.

Yu Youyao tilted her head to take a look and said calmly, "She's been a little weak since she was young and loves to tend to flowers and plants. I think she's very knowledgeable when it comes to admiring flowers. Everyone is here to admire the flowers, so it's inevitable that they joined in."

Seeing her unconcealed coldness, Qi Sinian smiled. "If we're not going down the same path, we naturally won't take the same path. Who cares what she does? We'll do our own thing."

Yu Shuangbai glanced at it and retracted her gaze. She pointed at the octagonal pavilion in front of her. "Let's go over and sit for a while."

Just as the young misses were about to rest, the nannies, mothers, and maidservants of the Marquis of Changxing's Residence came over and brought the nannies and maidservants beside the young misses to the corridor not far in front to rest and drink tea.

When the sisters played together, it was not good for the people in front of them to follow them.



Nanny Xu called out to Xia Tao and instructed in a low voice, “The Marquis of Changxing’s Residence has made arrangements, so it’s not good to get close. There will be too many people at the Flower Festival. If the sisters gather together, it’s inevitable that there will be some trouble. If Nanny and the maidservant aren’t around to guide them, I’m afraid they won’t know the severity of the matter. Keep an eye on them and tell me if there’s anything.”

When they entered someone else’s house, other than showing them etiquette, they had to rely on themselves for everything else. Even if anything happened, it wasn’t their place as servants to stand up for them.

However, she couldn’t leave her young miss’s side and just watch helplessly.

The octagonal pavilion was large and could accommodate more than ten to twenty people.

There was a long wooden chair beside the wooden railing. There was a stone table, a stone stool, a tea table, a chess table, and even a zither table. There was also a desk and a study treasure box on it.

When Yu Youyao saw the chessboard, her eyes lit up. She quickly pulled Qi Sinian over. “Let’s play chess together.”

“So you know how to play chess. I wonder who said that you’re not talented, but you know how to bluff.” Qi Sinian pursed his lips and let Yu Youyao pull her to sit on the chess table.

Thinking that Eldest Miss Yu’s calligraphy skills were decent and her zither skills seemed to be alright, she guessed that her chess skills were not bad either. Hence, she perked up and planned to compete with her on the chessboard.

When Yu Shuangbai saw this, she secretly covered her mouth and laughed.

Song Wanhui was also shocked. She did not know that Yu Youyao knew how to play chess, so she wanted to ask Yu Shuangbai. When she turned around and saw her smiling strangely, she asked, “What are you laughing at?”

Yu Shuangbai whispered to her, “You’ll know in a while!”

Song Wanhui was filled with doubts. She suppressed her curiosity and went over with Yu Shuangbai to take a look. Not long after, the doubts in her heart were resolved.

“I accidentally made a mistake just now. I didn’t plan to go down here...”

“The chess piece hasn’t been released yet, so it’s not settled...”

“You ate so many pieces of mine at once. Don’t you know how to let me...”

Yu Shuangbai’s mouth twitched with laughter. She quickly turned around and covered her mouth to laugh, but her shoulders were trembling. It was obvious that she was laughing crazily.

Even Song Wanhui was speechless. She turned to look at Yu Shuangbai. “Why is your big sister such a lousy player? She’s even regretting her move...”

Yu Shuangbai suppressed her laughter. "Cousin Zhou spoiled her. When she played chess with him, he always gave in to her. If she wanted to withdraw her move, he would let her. If she wanted to win, he would rack his brains to make a game for her to win."

Song Wanhui was even more speechless.

Yu Shuangbai continued, "Not only is she a lousy chess player, but she's also a chess fanatic. After learning chess for two days, she feels that her chess skills are superb. Whenever she sees someone, she wants to play chess with them. My big brother and second brother were both..."

She remembered that on one rare day that Big Brother didn't go to school, he went to the main house to greet his grandmother and asked Big Sister to play chess with him. Big Brother also wanted to give her pointers. Who knew!

"That day, when my big brother returned to the second house, he looked like he was in a daze. It looked like he had been harmed badly. My second brother was the same. He doesn't even want to play chess with her now..."

Song Wanhui couldn't help but cover her mouth and laugh. "Your Cousin Zhou indulges her too much. Look, Sining is so angry that his face is red." She glanced at Yu Youyao, who was scratching her cheeks and ears. "Only your Cousin Zhou can stand her being like this."

Yu Shuangbai pursed her lips. "Isn't that so? No one in the residence plays chess with my big sister. She feels aggrieved, so she went to Cousin Zhou and guess what he said?"

Song Wanhui asked curiously, "You can't force others to play chess with you, right?"

Yu Shuangbai rolled her eyes. "You've underestimated Cousin Zhou. He called the maidservants from the Jade Courtyard over and taught them how to play chess..."

Song Wanhui was dumbfounded. After a while, she said speechlessly, "This is really..." She did not know what to say.

On the wooden chessboard, there were black and white chess pieces. Zhou Linghuai had a white chess piece between his fingers. It was crystal clear, making his fingers look white, smooth and slender like jade.

Rubbing his fingertips, he thought of the chess piece that Yu Youyao had given him.

Even the best jade in his hand was not as dense and heavy as the chess piece. The quality was thick, had a crisp sound moving on the board and when held, its texture was too smooth and soft.

It was really far from it.

As a result, his interest in chess was reduced by 30%.

Chapter 257 - 257 Yin Huaixi Will Definitely Rebel

In the past, it wasn't that he hadn't used chess pieces before. He felt that it was rare and had its own merits. There was no difference between them, and it wouldn't affect his interest in playing chess because of the difference in the quality of chess pieces.

It was obvious that the preferences of chess pieces also varied from person to person. It was also something that the little girl had given him. It was more to her liking and easier to use.

Yu Youyao was spoiled.

At the thought of Yu Youyao, Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but think of the Flower Festival at the Marquis of Changxing's Residence.

"Amitabha." A clear and gentle voice sounded. "Your heart is in a mess."

Zhou Linghuai sneered. "You're a monk, yet you still care if others' hearts are in chaos. I'm afraid you're in the Buddhist Sect and your heart is in the mortal world. Why are you pretending in front of me? It's as if everyone knows who you are."

The gray-clothed monk clasped his fists together, his expression calm. "Please don't speak nonsense. I've been a monk for many years, and my Dharma name is Hui Ji. The past is like three thousand threads of worry which will be cleansed by time."

His eyes were distant as he sat cross-legged on the meditation cushion. He closed his eyes and twirled the prayer beads in his hand. He was as old as Zhou Linghuai. Although he was wearing a gray servant's monk robe, it could not hide his magnificence!

Zhou Linghuai burst out laughing. "Keep pretending. I'll just watch you pretend."

Zen Master Hui Ji's eyes did not move. They were clear.

Zhou Linghuai sneered. "You little bald donkey, you're really smart. In order to cleanse these three thousand threads of trouble, you probably polish them every day. You're really fooling me."

Zen Master Hui Ji couldn't be bothered with him. "It's your turn."

Zhou Linghuai simply lost interest in playing chess. With a flick of his finger, he flicked the white chess piece between his fingers onto the chessboard. "In any case, there's no winner. It's boring."

Zen Master Hui Ji finally looked up. "It's not as interesting as playing with your cousin."

His tone was calm, and the word "your" exuded a faint strange aura.

"You're just a little bald donkey. Why are you comparing yourself to my cousin? To see whose head is smoother?" Thinking of Yu Youyao's long raven-colored hair that was soft and beautiful, Zhou Linghuai waved his hand. "No, no, you win!"

In the past, when he played chess with Yu Youyao, the little girl would scratch her ears, bite her lips, pinch her earlobes, frown, and roll her eyes while chattering non-stop...

Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but laugh.

He was used to letting the little girl cause trouble. Now that he was playing chess with this little bald monk, he felt bored.

However, the little girl had led him astray.

No matter how well-mannered he was, Zen Master Hui Ji couldn't help but twitch his temples. "Your cousin also knows that you're a person that looks down on people?"

Back then, this person had dismantled a few night pearls on her mother's phoenix crown and played with them. When his father discovered this, he was so angry that he took a whip and chased him away for three streets.

Zhou Linghuai smiled faintly. "You're not pretending anymore?"

These words successfully made Zen Master Hui Ji shut up.

The two of them sat in the quiet meditation room and did not speak for a moment. Only the Qingtian Light Stone in Zhou Linghuai's hand was elegant and colorful.

The beauty of stone depended on quality.

The quality of the stone depended on its appearance.

He examined its skin, then touched it. He analyzed the inside of the stone and observed its spirituality.

Zhou Linghuai frowned. With the Kunwu Knife in his hand, the knife and stone collided, and a clang entered his ears.

There were many types of tools used for carving, but the more skilled an inscriber was, the fewer tools they needed. A top-notch inscriber would only need one Kunwu Knife.

Zhou Linghuai did not even raise his head as he said calmly, "King Ping and his son arrived in Tongzhou this morning. They can enter the capital before midnight at the latest."

Zen Master Hui Ji looked down at the wooden chessboard. He took out a white chess piece and placed it on the chessboard. The entire chessboard exuded a murderous aura.

He pressed his palms together, and his face revealed sorrow and compassion. "Life is like chess. All living beings in the world are nothing. In the universe, there are white knives and black blades."

Zhou Linghuai said nothing.

Zen Master Hui Ji said, "Back then, after you and Mr. Xian Yun interacted, Mr. Xian Yun personally came to my house to meet me. He said that in the important place of the capital, under the emperor's rule, there was only a talented Song Mingzhao. Since ancient times, there have been outstanding people and places in the south, but only Xie Jingliu was unique."

Zhou Linghuai was a little surprised.

Zen Master Hui Ji continued, "There's a prince in Youzhou who's a genius, and there's also someone like him. There's no other in the world. People like you are rare in the world. Even if one comes out in sixty years, they can manage the prosperity of the country for half a century. Now, once four of them appear, it'll be chaos and cause the collapse of the country."

Zhou Linghuai was slightly stunned but said nothing.

Zen Master Hui Ji said, “There can’t be two tigers on one mountain. The four heroes of Youzhou will monopolize two. They will be divided into rulers and ministers. If Yin Huaixi doesn’t die, he will definitely rebel.”

Zhou Linghuai chuckled. “Yin Huaixi is already dead.”

Master Hui Ji looked at him. “Back then, the Di people mobilized a large number of troops and approached the north. The You King led his troops to fight. The heir, Yin Huaixi, had already seen through the first move, so he used Youzhou as a chessboard to set up the overall situation. Then, the twelve-year-old heir of the You King rushed to the battlefield and turned the tide to recover the lost land. However, when he fought the Di people, he asked one of the generals under the Marquis of Weining, the Marquis of Changxing, to shoot his horse and he was trampled to death.”

There was a smile on Zhou Linghuai’s lips, making it impossible to tell if he was happy or angry.

Master Hui Ji lowered his eyes. “As far as I know, when Yin Huaixi was on his way to the battlefield back then, he used his status as the heir to write a letter to the vassal lords of the three lands. No one knows the contents of the letter, but it’s not difficult to guess. Zuo Ji only sensed that the You King’s residence was doomed, so he hoped that the vassal lords of the three lands could help save King You’s life when his life was in danger.”

Zhou Linghuai lowered his head and carved.

Master Hui Ji said, “Yin Huaixi thinks highly of himself. All the ordinary people in the world are in front of him, and he doesn’t take them seriously. How can he not know that the vassal lords of various places are governing separately? How can he have feelings for them? How can he not know that the Imperial Court is afraid of the vassal lords? How can he take the risk to plead for King You? Others think that he’s just a child who’s desperate, but this letter is really heartbreaking.”

Zhou Linghuai gently carved the patterns on the stone.

“After killing all the benevolent and loyal hearts of the vassal kings, disputes arose when the vassal kings moved. King Ping brought the heir into the capital. It’s obvious that Young Master Yin knows everyone’s hearts.” At this point, Hui Ji looked up at him.

Zhou Linghuai blew on the stone chips on the Qingtian stone. “Ye Hanyuan is about to enter the capital.”

Zen Master Hui Ji suddenly closed his eyes and did not move. After a while, he said, “There is karma. He’s also seeking benevolence.”

Zhou Linghuai put away the Kunwu Knife, wrapped the light stone in a silk cloth, and placed it in his sleeve. Then, he took out a palm-sized round box. “Uncle Sun has refined a special pill called the Essence Protection Pill. It can nourish one’s vitality. Take it once a day and split it into two portions. It’s not beneficial to take too much.”

Chapter 258 - 258 Cousin, Ask Quickly

The sound of wheels in his ears made Zen Master Hui Ji close his eyes and recite a scripture. “Amitabha. The heart is formless. A person’s appearance will change according to the good and evil

of the heart. With a thought, one will be foolish, and with a thought, one will be wise. Protect your true heart, and in an instant, it will be eternal. You can't say that you're comprehending the words of Buddha. You have to walk the path of Buddha..."

Zhou Linghuai left the meditation room. The Buddhist scripture was still echoing in his ear. His gaze was deep. In the distance, the wishing Bodhi tree cover was like a cloud, and the red wishing silk on it fluttered in the wind.

Suddenly, he remembered that on the day of the Buddhist Festival, the little girl was in this meditation room. She gently tugged at his sleeve. "Cousin, Cousin, did you see the wishing Bodhi outside the meditation room? I went there to make a wish just now. I'm very strong. The wishing silk was thrown high up, so it will definitely hang for a long time. The longer and higher the wishing silk is hung on the tree, the more effective it will be."

He had never believed in ghosts and gods, only himself. However, Zhou Linghuai was amused by the little girl's chatter.

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Yu Youyao chatted on. "When I was throwing the wishing silk just now, a strange wind blew from somewhere, scaring me. Fortunately, there was a good wind. I borrowed the force to send the wishing silk to a high branch. The auntie who sold it said that this was a good sign and auspicious."

Zhou Linghuai chuckled. "It's indeed a good sign that the wind sent it to the top branch."

"Yes, yes." Yu Youyao nodded vigorously. Then, she tugged at her cousin's sleeve and asked happily, "Cousin, why don't you ask me what I wished for?"

He did not believe this, so there was naturally nothing to ask. However, he saw Yu Youyao pouting slightly and looking at him with sparkling eyes with anticipation. Her face was filled with the words, "Cousin, quickly ask, quickly ask." Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but smile and ask smoothly, "I wonder what wish Cousin made just now?"

Yu Youyao giggled and tilted her head. "I can't tell Cousin. It won't work if I tell him!"

Zhou Linghuai immediately felt his hand itch. He raised his hand and tapped her forehead lightly.

Yu Youyao looked aggrieved. "Cousin, I won't be smart if you knock me again!"

Zhou Linghuai suddenly laughed. He looked up and saw the green clouds above his head. Only then did he realize that he had unknowingly arrived under the Bodhi tree.

He sat under the tree and looked up. The red silk of the tree swayed in the wind. It was as if he could see a little girl in a plain dress standing under the tree on her tiptoes.

A Bodhi tree did not attract dust. It represented Prajna, and was extremely pure

He wondered which one belonged to the little girl.

He wondered what the little girl wished for.

Occasionally, when a gust of wind blew, the branches and leaves of the Bodhi tree would move, and the wishing silk hanging on the tree would fall. The monk who was sweeping the ground bent down to pick up the wishing silk.

Zhou Linghuai asked calmly, "What will the temple do with the wishing silk that fell from the tree?"

The monk who was sweeping the floor retracted his gaze. "Amitabha. Bodhisattva originally did not have a tree, and the mirror was not a platform. It originally did not have anything, so how could it cause dust! Bodhisattva only seeks what is in its heart, so why should it seek enlightenment from the outside? Naturally, it was consecrated in front of Buddha and received incense offerings. After chanting for 49 days, it was burned clean. It sought Buddha but sought the heart, so it could be considered as resolving the karma."

Zhou Linghuai noticed the copper coins on the wishing silk and suddenly understood. What was hanging on the tree was wishing for money, and what had fallen to the ground was also incense money.

So much for karma.

His cousin's wishing silk was probably no longer on the tree. Zhou Linghuai looked up at the tree with a disappointed expression. He turned his wheelchair and prepared to leave.

At this moment, a wishing silk fell to the ground at his feet with a clang. The breeze blew, and the wishing silk was flipped. "May Cousin's evil illness disappear on its own, and all his illnesses disappear. May he stay away from calamity and live a peaceful life."

Zhou Linghuai's gaze suddenly paused. It was the little girl's handwriting.

He bent down and picked up the wishing silk. His fingers gently stroked the words on it. He could feel that when the little girl wrote this line, she was reciting Buddhist scriptures in her heart and filled with pious hope.

He smiled. "Yin San!"

Yin San, who was hiding in the rockery, suddenly appeared and bowed. "Young Master."

Zhou Linghuai handed the wishing silk to him and instructed, "Tie it to the highest point of the tree."

Since this was his cousin's wish, he had to be the "good wind" to help her achieve her wish. She had to let this wishing silk hang at the highest point for a long time.

"Yes—" Yin San took the wishing silk and jumped onto the tree. In a moment, he was at the top of the tree and tied the wishing silk to it.

Zhou Linghuai stood under the tree. The Bodhi tree towered into the clouds, covering the sky like the tree in the Jade Courtyard. However, he could still see a bright red color between the green clouds. It would probably take a long time for it to fade.

He looked at it for a long time until his neck felt sore. Then, he lowered his head.

He wondered how the little girl was doing in the Marquis of Changxing's Residence.

Qi Sinian, who was playing chess with Yu Youyao, watched as she twirled the white chess piece in her hand and stared at the chessboard, scratching her cheeks and ears. "Where am I going to do now?" Seeing a gap in the middle, he reached out his hand. "Is this okay?"

As he spoke, he looked up at her.

Seeing that she did not answer with a straight face, Yu Youyao moved her hand to another spot. "Or here?"

The veins on Qi Sinian's forehead also twitched, but he resisted the urge to flip the chessboard.

He finally understood. Eldest Miss Yu had said that her talent was not good, and she was not lying at all. He had seen people with bad chess skills, but she had never seen anyone as bad as her. However, she was a lousy chess player, and her chess skills were extremely poor. It was infuriating.

After waiting for a long time, Yu Youyao still did not make a move. Qi Sinian was a little impatient. "Are you going to play or not?"

Yu Youyao pouted. "I haven't thought about it yet, okay? Don't rush me. My cousin said that you have to think carefully when playing chess. I'll make a move after I've thought it through."

Qi Sinian's face was wooden. "Your cousin is right, so you have to play chess with him."

At this moment, a few young misses escorted Lu Mingyao, Cao Yingxue, and Yu Jianjia towards the octagonal pavilion. The group chatted and laughed. It was really lively.

They had finished admiring the flowers.

The two of them looked at each other and naturally picked up the black and white chess pieces from the chessboard in tacit understanding. They placed them into the chessboard and did not plan to continue playing.

A maidservant served tea and they picked it up to drink.

Yu Youyao sat still, not planning to go up and curry favor. However, after Yu Jianjia entered the pavilion, she saw her immediately. She even brought Lu Mingyao and Cao Yingxue over.

Since they had already walked over, it was not appropriate for Yu Youyao to sit any longer, so she stood up.

Yu Jianjia warmly held Yu Youyao's hand and introduced her warmly, "Big Sister, this is Seventh Sister Cao of the Marquis of Changxing's family and Fifth Sister Lu of the Marquis of Weining's family. They're both polite and kind people."

She had befriended a noble lady at the Flower Festival, so she couldn't wait to introduce her sisters to her. In the eyes of anyone, she was polite and kind.

Chapter 259 - 259 The Bereaved Eldest Daughter

Since she had already been introduced, Yu Youyao couldn't just stand there. She went forward and bowed.



She was dressed in a green parasol tree patterned outfit. It was not as bright as Lu Mingyao's orange outfit, nor was it as beautiful as Cao Yingxue's yellow outfit. However, when she stood with Lu Mingyao and Cao Yingxue, the young misses present realized something.

Eldest Miss Yu was beautiful and pure. She clasped her hands by her sides and bowed gently. Her skirt was gently piled up like a parasol flower. She looked elegant and noble, not inferior to Lu Mingyao. Even Cao Yingxue was inferior to her.

Lu Mingyao held her teacup tightly and sat still.

The nanny by her side was the best in the palace.

Her etiquette was also the best in the capital. No matter where she went, she would be praised.

However, at this moment, when she saw Yu Youyao, whose name was similar to Yu Jianjia's, her eyes couldn't help but narrow.

"So it's Eldest Miss Yu." These indifferent words made it seem like Yu Youyao rushed over.

Cao Yingxue ignored her and turned to hold Yu Jianjia's hand. "Let's have a poetry recital."

When the young misses of the various families gathered together, it was inevitable that they would show some talent.

Yu Jianjia felt a little uneasy. She bit her lip and turned to look at Yu Youyao, her eyes filled with apology. However, Cao Yingxue pulled her to sit at the stone table at the side.

Immediately, a yellow-robed girl comforted her. "You're just being kind. Fifth Miss Lu, Seventh Miss Cao, and the others want to play with whoever they want. It's probably because your big sister isn't pleasing to the eye and they don't like her. Don't let your imagination run wild."

Yu Jianjia bit her lip. "My big sister also has a good personality. Perhaps fate still matters between people."

These words made the few young misses present purse their lips. They also felt that Yu Jianjia was too kind. Although they couldn't agree with her, everyone liked to be with such a person.

A group of young misses sat around the stone table and wrote poems. It was really lively.

Yu Shuangbai was furious. She lowered her voice and said, "As long as they're well-mannered, people will reciprocate when they're greeted. What do Lu Mingyao and Cao Yingxue mean?"

Song Wanhui looked at Yu Jianjia thoughtfully. "When I went to the Thousand Gold Pavilion earlier, I happened to see Third Miss Yu, Seventh Miss Cao, and Fifth Miss Lu together."

She had to stop when she spoke.

Yu Youyao understood.

Seeing how lively the group of women in the octagonal pavilion was, Qi Sinian couldn't stand staying any longer and suggested, "Let's go outside to admire the flowers."

Just as Yu Youyao was thinking this, the few of them stood up—

Cao Yingxue, who had ignored them just now, turned around and invited with a smile, "We're holding a poetry recital. Eldest Miss Yu, come over to play. It'll be more lively with more people."

When Yu Youyao heard this, she was stunned for a moment. She quickly waved her hand. "I don't know poetry, so I won't join in the fun. I don't want to disappoint everyone."

Cao Yingxue covered her mouth with a fan and smiled. "This is the first time I've seen Eldest Miss Yu today, so I want to befriend you. Eldest Miss Yu, you have to give me face. Don't refuse."

Yu Youyao's voice was gentle. "Seventh Sister, are you trying to embarrass me? You can't include me, lest it spoils everyone's mood and it becomes my fault."

There was a smile in her gentle voice. It was neither soft nor hard, but it was very polite. It sounded like sugar beans wrapped in frosting in one's ears. It was sweet, but also very unpleasant.

Cao Yingxue's expression darkened on the spot. Her lips were smiling, but her face was dark. "Eldest Miss Yu, you're a guest. I originally wanted to invite you to play with me so that I could do my best as a host. It's fine if you don't give me face, but you're even slandering me."

After saying that, Cao Yingxue even turned to look at Yu Jianjia and said sarcastically, "To think that you've always praised your big sister in front of me. You said she grew up in front of Grandmother and learned the rules from the nannies in the palace. Her etiquette is excellent. Now, it seems that it's nothing much."

It was probably because Grandmother had spoiled her that she had hired a nanny to be educated in the residence.

She did not expect these words to implicate her.

Yu Jianjia was stunned for a moment. She glanced at Seventh Miss Cao, then at Yu Youyao. She bit her lip lightly, and her fair lips immediately turned red, making her look even more delicate and innocent.

Qi Sinian and Song Wanhui also understood that Cao Yingxue did not hide her hostility towards Yu Youyao. Inviting Yu Youyao to a poetry recital was an excuse. She was deliberately making things difficult for her.

The two of them looked at each other and frowned.

Although Yu Youyao was a guest, Cao Yingxue couldn't do anything to her.

However, as long as Cao Yingxue embarrassed Yu Youyao in front of the young misses, how could Yu Youyao still have the face to continue living in the noble ladies' circle in the future?

It was obvious how vicious she was.

Yu Youyao pursed her lips slightly. "I already said that I don't know poetry, but Seventh Miss Cao still embarrassed me. Isn't that making things difficult for me? I'm also a guest. Seventh Miss Cao has to do her part as a host, so she can't make things difficult for me."

She did not even call Seventh Sister. It was obvious that she was angry.

Cao Yingxue's eyes widened in anger. "You're so sharp-tongued."

Yu Youyao waved her hand. "You flatter me."

Cao Yingxue was speechless for a moment, and the atmosphere froze.

Lu Mingyao's sharp fingertips gently rubbed the pink and colorful patterns on the teacup as she changed the topic. "I heard that Eldest Miss Yu learned rules and upbringing from a nanny from the palace?"

Yu Youyao had lost her mother since she was young. She couldn't deny it even if she wanted to.

It was also true that "The eldest daughter of a bereaved wife has no teachings."

As long as it involved upbringing, Yu Youyao would not be able to defend herself. No matter how sharp-tongued she was, could she still defend herself?

Before Yu Youyao could speak.

Cao Yingxue reacted and covered her mouth as she giggled. "Did Nanny teach you to leave your weak sister behind to play when you're a guest at someone else's house?"

Yu Youyao's smile was gentle. Cao Yingxue hated Nanny Xu for entering the Yu Residence, so she had also vented her anger on her.

If Yu Jianjia did not leave with them, how would she think that her Big Sister had left her behind? Yu Shuangbai's eyes widened in anger, and she was about to retort—

Then, she heard Yu Jianjia explain anxiously, "Seventh Sister, you've misunderstood. Just now, I saw that the flowers of the Marquis of Changxing were blooming well. I was too engrossed in admiring the flowers and unknowingly fell behind. Big Sister isn't..."

One of the young misses frowned. "Even if you fall behind, doesn't your big sister know how to wait for you? How can she be like this? You're still covering for her. You're too easy to bully..."

## Chapter 260 - 260 Splashing Tea on Her Face

Seeing that this was making things worse, Yu Jianjia's face turned pale.

Although she was explaining for her, her face looked as if he had been wronged. Yu Youyao found his pretense funny.

She was the eldest daughter of a widow, but she still dared to show off in front of her. She was also very stupid. Cao Yingxue smiled faintly. "I heard that Eldest Miss Yu lost her mother since she was young, so they hired a nanny from the palace to teach her the rules. This girl was naturally raised differently. She has a bad taste in her bones..."

Yu Youyao knocked on the teacup and slowly stood up. Her slender figure was so gentle that the other young misses present couldn't help but look over in awe.

!!

Eldest Miss Yu's bearing was really good!

"Seventh Miss Cao, are you saying that I'm ill-mannered?" Yu Youyao looked down at the teacup in her hand. The top-grade Biluochun was curled up like a conch. It was green and fragrant.

Yes, it was a pity about this good cup of tea.

Cao Yingxue was stunned by the question. She looked at Yu Youyao, who was dressed in green and pure clothes, standing in front of her. Her slender figure was delicate and beautiful, and she was not inferior to her cousin, Lu Mingyao.

However, she had clearly heard Yu Jianjia mention it by chance.

Yu Youyao used to be obese. It was only after Nanny Xu entered the residence that she had changed completely in just a month. It was as if she had become a different person.

All of this was thanks to Nanny Xu!

Nanny Xu was the Empress Dowager's most powerful aunt. She was also the nanny she had taken a fancy to, but Yu Youyao had snatched her away.

Cao Yingxue suddenly felt a surge of anger in her heart. She laughed sarcastically. "The books say that the eldest daughter of a widow has no manners. Who else is there but you? You still have the cheek to rebuke. Are you afraid that others won't know that you're ill-mannered?"

As soon as these words were spoken, a few young misses couldn't help but burst out laughing.

"This Eldest Miss Yu really doesn't know what's good for her. Seventh Miss Cao kindly invited her to play with her, but she actually doesn't appreciate it. She's really uneducated... and rude." The word "uneducated" circled her mouth. She still felt that it was inappropriate, so she changed it, but the meaning was similar.

"Seventh Miss Cao is a polite and kind person. She can't stand seeing Eldest Miss Yu leave her weak sister alone. Isn't it rude of her to joke around with other young misses?"

"This is the first time I've seen someone who doesn't give the host face. The eldest daughter of a widow has no manners. Saying this is already being nice."

In the octagonal pavilion, more than ten young misses were sitting on round stools. They surrounded Cao Yingxue, Lu Mingyao, and Yu Jianjia. Some were holding their handkerchiefs to cover their mouths and laughing lightly. Some were holding fans to cover half of their faces and laughing. Some were simply not hiding it and were openly looking at Yu Youyao with disdain and mockery.

The scene was too beautiful.

However, the words that came out of the young misses' mouths were filled with mockery. Behind the handkerchiefs and incense fans, they hid their disdainful faces.

Yu Jianjia looked worried. She opened her mouth slightly, and she parted her lips, making her look tender and bright. "Seventh Sister, my eldest sister didn't mean to offend you. Please don't take it to heart..."

Since she had pleaded for Yu Youyao, the young misses around her inevitably felt that she was gentle and kind.

However, Yu Youyao could vaguely see the corners of Yu Jianjia's lips curl up.

Yu Jianjia had bitten her lip today. There was a hint of paleness and weakness on her pale pink lips, but it did not make her look sickly. Instead, it only made her look weak.

Cao Yingxue raised her head proudly and sneered at Yu Youyao. "Heh, since Jia Jia pleaded for you, I won't hold it against you. After all, you're a guest. No one will think that I'm deliberately making things difficult for you. They'll think that the Marquis of Changxing's Residence doesn't treat our guests well..."

Yu Youyao's lips curved slightly, and her pomegranate-red lips were as bright as fire. "Seventh Miss Cao is indeed magnanimous."

Cao Yingxue raised her chin. "Of course, I..."

"I hope Seventh Miss Cao can continue to be so magnanimous!" Yu Youyao's fair fingers were beautiful against the pink color of the teacup.

Cao Yingxue's heart constricted, but before she could react—

Yu Youyao raised her hand and filled a cup with warm tea, immediately splashing it on Cao Yingxue's face.

Her blatant behavior stunned all the young misses present. They gasped and exclaimed—

Not everyone could match up to the status of the Marquis of Changxing's Residence. Which young miss who could be invited to the Flower Festival was not a young miss of a prestigious family?

When have they ever seen someone splash tea on someone's face at the slightest disagreement?

Even Cao Yingxue was stunned.

Her face that had delicate makeup was covered in tea leaves. The tea flowed down her wet face and dripped from her chin, drenching the expensive clothes she had carefully chosen.

Yu Jianjia was shocked and said in a panic, "Big Sister, what, what are you doing? You're a guest. How, how..."

She bit her lip, but she didn't know what else to say.

Lu Mingyao had already stood up and stared at Yu Youyao coldly. "Eldest Miss Yu, Yingxue has already forgiven you and doesn't care about the mistakes you've made. You actually repaid kindness with ingratitude and splashed tea on her face. You're too much."

She was dressed in bright orange and was a little taller than Yu Youyao. When she stood in front of Yu Youyao, she looked condescending and domineering.

Yu Youyao glanced at Yu Jianjia indifferently, and a smile appeared on her lips. "My third sister is right. I accepted an invitation from the Marquis of Changxing's Residence to participate in the Flower Festival. No matter what, I'm a guest. As the host, Seventh Miss Cao, you have to treat me well. Only by doing your best as a host can you show the hospitality of the Marquis of Changxing's Residence. I wonder how I offended Seventh Miss Cao? On the other hand, Seventh Miss Cao was

rude and forced me to do something I didn't want to do. She was rude at first, then she said vicious words. After offending me, how did I become the one in the wrong?"

Yu Jianjia's heart skipped a beat and she opened her mouth.

What she meant was that Yu Youyao was a guest. How could she do such a rude thing as splashing tea on someone? However, Yu Youyao had deliberately misinterpreted her words. Instead, she had used the hospitality of the Marquis of Changxing's Residence to say that Seventh Miss Cao was rude and offensive.

Lu Mingyao was speechless.

He looked at Yu Youyao standing there. Her posture was calm and beautiful, but her thin and straight back was like the green parasol tree. It was straight on the inside and the outside. Even though it was full of leaves, it did not hide its scorching beauty. There was a tenacity that could not be shaken.

She was really elegant.

She pinched her handkerchief and retorted, "Eldest Miss Yu splashed tea on someone's face just because of a disagreement. This isn't something a well-mannered young miss from a wealthy family would do."