

## All Hail 271

### Chapter 271 - 271 What a Wonderful Person

The Marquis of Changxing's wife sent Yang Shuwan into the carriage. As soon as they returned to the reception pavilion, Madam He, the Marquis of Zhenguo's wife, also brought Song Wanhui along. She said that Old Madam was not feeling well and wanted to leave first.

The Marquis of Changxing's wife felt bitter. How could she stop others from going home to "do their filial duty"?

Madam He brought Song Wanhui into the carriage.

Song Wan's eyes sparkled. "Mother, Yao Yao is really a wonderful person. You don't know this, but at that time, Seventh Miss Cao was in a hurry to cause trouble, while Sixth Sister Qi and I were breaking out in a cold sweat for her. We originally wanted to help her, but who knew that Yao Yao was a woman who was invincible..."

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Madam He did not know whether to laugh or cry when she heard this. "A single man can take on ten thousand enemies. How can you describe it like this?"

Song Wanhui told her everything that had happened in the octagonal pavilion. "As soon as Yao Yao said 'Biographies of Exemplary Women', Seventh Miss Cao seemed to have been struck by lightning. Even the young misses present were embarrassed and wished they could cover their faces with a handkerchief."

Madam He was a little surprised. "She knows when to advance and when to retreat. She's neither servile nor overbearing. Her temperament is really extraordinary."

Song Wanhui nodded. "That's right!"

Madam He glanced at her daughter and said, "Eldest Miss Yu is a bereaved eldest daughter. Even if she grew up in front of Old Madam Yu since she was young and no matter how well she was raised, in the future, no matter if she goes outside or meets other people, it's inevitable that others will look down on her. There will be no lack of people like the Marquis of Changxing's Residence who treated her badly today."

Song Wanhui agreed deeply.

She brought bad things upon herself as a result of her bad character. If the person who had invited Nanny Xu was Second Miss Yu or even Third Miss Yu, Cao Yingxue wouldn't dare to be such a b\*tch.

The Marquis of Changxing's wife would not want to ruin Yu Youyao's reputation in public.

All of this was because Yu Youyao was a bereaved eldest daughter. It was also a fact that she had been "educated", so no one could say anything else.

Madam He continued, "Seventh Miss Cao had the intention to humiliate her in today's matter, but Eldest Miss Yu beat her at her own game and scheme. She first used women's teachings to

embarrass Seventh Miss Cao, but also revealed that she was well-mannered. She established her authority in front of the young misses. In the future, no one in the noble ladies' circle will dare to say that she has no upbringing."

Song Wanhui also sighed. "It's all thanks to Yao Yao herself. If it were anyone else, they would probably have pinched their noses and admitted that they were a bereaved eldest daughter in public. They would have lost face on the spot and probably wouldn't be able to raise their heads in the industry in the future."

Madam He nodded. "When the Marquis of Changxing's wife was criticizing her, Eldest Miss Yu used her grandmother, Old Madam Yu, as a tool to intimidate the dignified Marquis of Changxing's wife. From now on, who will look down on her because she's a bereaved eldest daughter? Eldest Miss Yu is shrewd at such a young age. She's using the reputation of the Marquis of Changxing's husband to settle things once and for all for herself and build a reputation for being well-mannered. Even Fifth Miss Lu of the Marquis of Weining is inferior to her. When she's a little older..."

At this point, Madam He stopped talking.

Ordinary families could not suppress Yu Youyao's personality. However, if she was matched with the eldest son of an aristocratic family, such a powerful personality was something that others could not ask for more. From today onwards, many families would probably have their eyes on Eldest Miss Yu.

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When they returned to the residence, Madam Yao arranged for Yu Youyao and Yu Shuangbai to ride in a carriage.

Yu Youyao was talking to Yu Shuangbai when she suddenly felt dizzy. There was a loud bang, clang, and clatter in her ears. This was mixed with screams and cries of pain. It sounded chaotic...

Fortunately, the coachman was skilled and quickly stabilized the horses. Yu Youyao and Yu Shuangbai asked their maidservants to protect them. They were only a little frightened and were not injured.

It was a mess in the carriage. The snacks, fruit plates, tea, incense burner, and so on were all smashed on the ground.

A few maid servants were protecting their masters and did not care about themselves. They were more or less injured. Fortunately, they were all superficial injuries.

After preparing the medicinal oil in the car, Yu Youyao asked Xia Tao to get the medicine. "Help me apply the medicine first. When we return to the residence, we'll get a doctor to take a good look." Then, she turned around and instructed Chun Xiao, "Go and see how Second Aunt is doing."

Chun Xiao alighted from the carriage.

Yu Shuangbai was still in shock. She held Yu Youyao's sleeve, feeling uneasy. "Big Sister, my mother..."

Yu Youyao held her hand. "The coachmen at home have all practiced some moves and are strong. The horses chosen were also the most docile ones. Will the others be fine too?"

Yu Shuangbai's face was pale, and she still felt a little uneasy.

Yu Youyao lifted the curtain and saw a blue-topped carriage parked at the turn in front.

At first glance, there was nothing special about this carriage, but it was made of the best elm and wood. The key parts were made of gold and iron. The carriage was made of very old brown walnut wood. The wood was hard and tough, not easily deformed or cracked, and extremely earthquake-resistant. Even the horses—

Yu Youyao did not know much about horses, but she also felt that the horses looked impressive. After taking a few more glances, she realized that the horses were fierce and unruly. They seemed a little different from the domesticated horses at home.

As she was thinking, a corner of the curtain of the carriage opposite was lifted, and a pair of pampered hands suddenly appeared in Yu Youyao's eyes, as well as the ring she was playing with—the Golden Glazed Jade Ring!!

All the blood in her body instantly turned cold. Yu Youyao's face was filled with shock. She suddenly threw down the curtain and closed the window in panic.

Seeing that she did not look too good, Nanny Xu quickly asked, "You were frightened."

Yu Youyao nodded wildly. When she saw the teacup in front of her, she suddenly felt her mouth go dry. She quickly picked up the teacup and took a few gulps of tea to calm down.

At this moment, Chun Xiao returned. Without waiting for Yu Shuangbai to ask, she said, "Second Madam asked Nanny Qian to protect her."

Yu Shuangbai finally heaved a sigh of relief.

Yu Youyao calmed down a little and asked, "What happened?"

Chun Xiao hurriedly said, "When we turned the corner in front, a carriage rushed out and shocked Second Madam's horses. Our horses also jumped in shock. Fortunately, Second Madam's coachman had the strength to pull the horses off the road, so they didn't bump into each other. The capital doesn't allow horses to gallop. Second Madam is going to use Nanny Qian to argue with the other party."

The horses were shocked. Fortunately, they did not hurt anyone. Otherwise, the consequences would have been unimaginable. It was really dangerous. No one could pretend that they were fine.

Second Aunt was angry and wanted to ask for an explanation. It was only right.

However!

Chapter 272 - 272 Have You Been Cursed

Thinking of the yellow jade ring she had seen just now, Yu Youyao felt uneasy. She said, "Go over and look for Second Aunt. Tell her that Second Sister was quite shocked."

Chun Xiao turned around and saw that Second Miss's face was indeed pale, and her eyes were filled with panic. She quickly got out of the carriage.

After a while, the carriage in the residence made way.

Chun Xiao and Nanny Qian returned together.

Seeing that Second Miss was really frightened, Nanny Qian's heart ached terribly. She quickly pulled her into her arms and stroked her back as she coaxed her softly.

Yu Youyao listened to the sound of hooves hitting the ground.

If one listened carefully, the sound seemed to be heavier and stronger than the horses in the residence. It pierced into their ears one after another, making them panic.

It wasn't until the sound of horses' hooves was far away that Yu Youyao couldn't help but open the car window. She lifted the window and looked back, only to see the hooves of the horses.

The carriage left the Marquis of Changxing's Residence.

Yang Shuwan was furious.

How could she have expected that while the Marquis of Changxing's wife was talking to her, Madam Yao did not even wait for her and only brought Yu Youyao away first. Wasn't she afraid that others would laugh at them?

This was ridiculous.

"Eldest Sister-in-law is the most important. She should be waiting for me. How can she leave first? She hurriedly brought Yu Youyao away. It's obvious that she's hiding a dirty heart and is going to gossip in front of Old Madam."

Madam Yao was amazing. She was the best at pretending to be obedient in front of Old Madam. She couldn't let Madam Yao push all the blame onto her. Everyone said that one aunt was half a mother. As an aunt, Madam Yao couldn't escape her responsibility.

Yang Shuwan lifted the curtain and instructed the coachman to move faster, hoping to catch up to Madam Yao's carriage.

When the carriage left in a hurry, it inevitably became a little bumpy.

Yang Shuwan was worried that her daughter's body would be weak and she wouldn't be able to take it. She turned to look at her daughter and was shocked to see Yu Jianjia's pale face.

"Jia Jia, why do you look so pale? Are you feeling unwell?"

Yu Jianjia's eyes were red from the pain. She gently lifted her skirt, revealing her swollen feet. She said hoarsely, "Just now, I accidentally slipped with Seventh Miss Cao and Fifth Miss Lu at the Marquis of Changxing's Residence and sprained my ankle."

Yang Shuwan's eyes immediately turned red with anxiety, and she quickly called out to Nanny Li.

Nanny Li was also shocked. She quickly squatted on the ground and held Yu Jianjia's small feet. "Hey, have you been cursed? Why is it so swollen? Young Miss, bear with it. I'll help you take off your shoes and socks. You can't wrap your feet anymore."

As she spoke, she carefully helped Yu Jianjia take off her jade-soled shoes and socks.

Her fair feet were swollen from her ankles to her toes, like a big carrot. Yu Jianjia gasped in pain, and tears rolled down her face.

Yang Shuwan's heart ached. "Child, you sprained your ankle. Why didn't you tell me earlier? You endured it yourself. You suffered. My heart aches for you."

Yu Jianjia was in so much pain that she couldn't take it anymore. As she cried, she was still comforting her mother. "Big Sister has suffered, but I can't cause you trouble with such a small matter. Mother, don't worry. When we return to the residence later, get a doctor to take a look. I'll be fine after recuperating for a while."

However, Yang Shuwan was furious. "Yu Youyao is such a scourge. She caused a commotion with Seventh Miss Cao and even implicated you into suffering. She's really unreasonable. Poor Jia Jia. You're so seriously injured, but you still think that you're wronged. You don't even dare to make a sound and endured it. You've suffered for no reason..."

Nanny Li asked Ai Ye to pour a basin of cold water on Yu Jianjia's feet and massage her calves.

As the cold water reached her ankles, Yu Jianjia shivered. "I know Mother's heart aches for me, but compared to the grievances that Eldest Sister almost caused to her reputation today, this small injury of mine is nothing."

Yang Shuwan couldn't stand these words. She was so angry that she even raised her voice. "She didn't have a mother to raise her, and she wasn't taught by her mother. Can't others say that she's a bereaved eldest daughter?"

Which young lady who had lost her mother didn't lower her head and behave humbly?

Why was she different from others?

She was a bereaved eldest daughter. How could she be ostentatious?

The more Yang Shuwan spoke, the angrier she became. "She even caused a commotion after saying a few words? However, she almost lost her reputation. Others only think that she's young, but her glib tongue and ability to invert right and wrong are not small at all. She even dared to contradict an elder like the Marquis of Changxing's wife. She's a bereaved eldest daughter, but she didn't get anyone to ruin her reputation. In contrast, the young miss of the Marquis of Changxing's Residence ruined her reputation completely."

At this point, she gritted her teeth. "She's not the one who ruined her reputation. She's not the one who ruined the flower festival and lost all her face. She's not the one who twisted her ankle and suffered. What's there for her to feel aggrieved about?"

Yu Jianjia lowered her eyes and felt a pain in the bones of her feet. "Although that's the case, Grandmother dotes on Eldest Sister. I'm worried that it won't be easy for Mother to answer. Father also values his upbringing the most. Since this matter has reached Father's ears, he would ask about it."

As Yang Shuwan was angry with Madam Yao, her heart ached for her daughter. For a moment, she hadn't thought of this. At her daughter's mention, she was shocked. "Yu Youyao caused a ruckus

with Seventh Miss Cao herself. I wasn't present. No matter how much Old Madam dotes on Yu Youyao, she can't blame me!"

These words were not wrong, but she did not have any confidence when she said them out loud. Old Madam would reprimand her and ask her to go to the house to set the rules.

However, on Yu Zongzheng's side...

Once she said something like "taking the divorce letter back to her maiden home" that hurt their relationship as husband and wife, there would be countless times.

Now, Yu Zongzheng had also begun to despise her for being the daughter of a concubine. She was not presentable and could not manage the family well. He did not trust her as much as before. If there was a commotion, the relationship between husband and wife would be worn down a little.

Thinking back to how she had sided with Seventh Miss Cao at the Flower Festival, Yang Shuwan couldn't help but feel a little panicked. "I wonder what kind of bewitching potion Yu Youyao fed your father. He's so determined that Yu Youyao is a good person that he'll definitely be angry..."

Yu Jianjia bit her lip and looked at her swollen feet. She couldn't help but cry softly. "Mother, it's my fault for what happened today. Seventh Miss Cao had a conflict with Eldest Sister. As her younger sister, not only did I not help much, but I even slipped and lost my composure in public. It was a joke. If I could have helped, it probably wouldn't have come to this..."

Chapter 273 - 273 Become a Joke

Her self-blame made Yang Shuwan's heart ache and she was angry. "What did you do wrong? Yu Youyao caused a commotion with Seventh Miss Cao, causing you to slip and fall. Not only did she lose her status in front of the young misses, but she also sprained her ankle. It's true that Yu Youyao suffered, but not only did you suffer, you were also injured and suffered."

At this point, she reacted.

The reason why Jia Jia had sprained her ankle and suffered was all because Yu Youyao and Seventh Miss Cao had caused trouble and implicated Jia Jia.

Yu Youyao had suffered a little, but Jia Jia had even sprained her ankle.

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As long as Jia Jia's ankle was sprained, Master would dote on her and feel sorry for her. Why would he blame them?!

No matter how much Old Madam doted on Yu Youyao, she couldn't ignore her injured granddaughter at all.

Her feet were soaked in cold water, and soon, a chill seeped into her bones. Yu Jianjia coughed and said, "Mother, don't be angry. As a stepmother, you can't surpass a 'mother'. As a second wife, you can't surpass your first wife either. Eldest Sister was criticized for her upbringing because she was the eldest daughter of a bereaved wife. Even outside, it's not appropriate for you to say anything." She lowered her eyes, her bones feeling cold and painful. "Father has always respected Mother. Even though he accepted Lady Qiu, he didn't forget that Mother is virtuous and magnanimous. You can't be angry with Father and explain it to him."

At the mention of Lady Qiu, Yang Shuwan couldn't help but recall that the second day after Lady Qiu mentioned Concubine Qiu, Yu Zongzheng had left the government office. When he found out that she had a headache, he didn't even go to the study. He went to the main courtyard to visit her and gave her an emerald hairpin to please her. The hairpin was completely green, but there was a touch of bright red on the hairpin. It was extremely pure.

She could clearly see the guilt in Yu Zongzheng's eyes.

That night, Yu Zongzheng rested in her room.

Yang Shuwan reacted and held her daughter's hand. Finally, a smile appeared on her face. "My Jia Jia'er is indeed an understanding woman. You're right. They can't blame me for this either way." At this point, a smile appeared on her face. "Don't worry about Mother anymore. I've been married to your father for many years. He's always on my side."

It was only when Jia Jia mentioned it that she remembered that Yu Zongzheng had taken in a newcomer and felt guilty towards her. She could use a little to manipulate him.

Yu Jianjia was finally relieved. However, when she thought of Yu Youyao's words and actions at the flower festival today, for some reason, she felt suffocated.

The carriage returned to the residence.

Madam Yao had just alighted from the carriage with Yu Youyao and Yu Shuangbai when she saw Qing Xiu, who was waiting in front of the flower gate, step forward and bow. "Old Madam has invited Second Madam over. Eldest Master and Second Master are both there." She took a look and saw that there were two carriages parked in front of the flower gate. "First Madam didn't return with Second Madam?"

Madam Yao said calmly, "After receiving Second Master's message, it's not good to continue delaying. Seeing that Eldest Sister-in-law was talking to the Marquis of Changxing's wife, she brought Yao Yao away first."

"Thank you, Second Madam." Qing Xiu thought about Old Madam's instructions and looked at Eldest Miss. Seeing that Eldest Miss was fine, she heaved a sigh of relief. "Eldest Miss and Second Miss are tired. Go back and rest first."

The matter at the Flower Festival involved the Yu Residence, and it was not a small matter. Madam Yao knew the severity of the matter. She quickly instructed Nanny Qian and followed Qing Xiu to An Shou Hall.

Yu Youyao also returned to the Jade Courtyard.

Nanny Xu brought Chun Xiaoxiao and Xia Tao to treat their injuries.

Dong Mei had received the news early in the morning and ordered the kitchen to prepare hot water to help Yu Youyao wash up and change into comfortable clothes.

Yu Youyao leaned lazily against the consort bed.

Liu'er took a towel and helped Young Miss twist her hair. "First Madam and Third Miss have returned to the residence. First Madam asked Qing Xiu to enter Old Madam's courtyard. Third Miss

sprained her ankle at the flower festival. Nanny Li took First Madam's token and went to invite Imperial Physician Li. It seems that she's seriously injured."

Yu Youyao smiled when she heard this.

Yu Jianjia always acted as if she was aloof from worldly affairs and was polite in every way, but she was proud and arrogant.

At the flower festival today, Yu Jianjia had used her familiarity with flowers to befriend many noble ladies. She was finally in the limelight.

Yu Jianjia fell in public and lost her composure.

Due to Lu Mingyao and Cao Yingxue's noble statuses, the young misses present did not dare to mock them openly. However, once they left the Marquis of Changxing's Residence, they would definitely be criticized and laughed at.

This great limelight had become a joke.

Yu Youyao's lips curled up slightly. "In a while, pick a bottle of top-notch medicinal oil, some medicinal herbs and supplements and send them to the courtyard."

Liu'er agreed. Seeing that most of Young Miss's hair had dried, she took out high-quality jasmine head oil and poured a drop size of a copper coin into her palm. Then, she rubbed it evenly and gently applied it on Young Miss's hair.

The jasmine oil was light and not dry or oily. It was refreshing and smooth.

About ten minutes later, Liu'er was done applying the hair oil. Yu Youyao's hair was already dry. Liu'er took a wooden comb and combed Young Miss's hair and tied it with a headband.

At this moment, Xia Tao ran into the house.

As soon as Yu Youyao saw her, she asked, "Have your injuries been treated?"

Xia Tao stuck out her tongue. "It's just a few bumps. I'll be fine after applying the medicine." After saying that, she quickly changed the topic. "Young Master is here. He's waiting for Young Miss in the small study."

Yu Youyao suddenly got up from the bed, picked up her skirt, and ran towards the study.

Zhou Linghuai held the book in his hand, but he couldn't read a single word. His mind was filled with a glimpse of the bright redness at the end of the little girl's eyes.

She was just a young child, but she had been scolded by someone in public. How could she not feel terrible?

Zhou Linghuai's eyes were deep. He tightened his grip on the book in his hand and saw the little girl run into the study with the hem of her dress. She was wearing a pink and purple half-arm shirt and a pleated skirt. There was a large patch of pink and white roses embroidered on the skirt. She looked pink, delicate, innocent and charming.



“Cousin, what are you thinking about?” Yu Youyao moved over and sat beside her cousin. Her voice was as cheerful as before. “You’re holding the book upside down!”

The little girl looked up and her oval face was bright. Zhou Linghuai had been thinking about it carefully repeatedly, and then editing his comforting words. Suddenly, they were useless.

Looking at the little girl’s smiling lips, he also chuckled. “I’m thinking that a little girl is very delicate and angry. She can’t take anger or grievances. I wonder if she’ll cry if she’s bullied!”

Chapter 274 - 274 I’m Very Obedient

When Yu Youyao heard this, her eyes widened. “I won’t cry.” She pouted and snorted. “Cousin, don’t underestimate me. I’m also very powerful, so I won’t be bullied.”

She recounted everything that had happened at the flower festival.

“... Cao Yingxue used the words ‘the bereaved eldest daughter who was uneducated’ to attack me. Lu Mingyao sat on the side and watched the two sides fight. Yu Jianjia interfered, and the young misses of the various families present gloated. I knew that they were working together to harm me and ruin my reputation.”

At this point, Yu Youyao snorted. “I’m not afraid of them. Of course, I have to make a fuss so that others can see that I’m not easy to bully. In the future, no one will dare to criticize me with words like ‘The eldest daughter of a bereaved wife who was uneducated’...”

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Her chattering was cheerful, like a magpie on a branch. To be honest, it was a little noisy, but no one felt annoyed.

Zhou Linghuai handed her a cup of tea.

Yu Youyao was feeling thirsty. She took a few sips of tea and looked at her cousin with her bright black eyes. Her expression said, “Am I very impressive? Please praise me.” Zhou Linghuai did not know whether to laugh or cry.

He gently rubbed the top of the little girl’s head. Her freshly washed hair was soft and smooth, emitting a faint jasmine fragrance. “Your eyes are red from crying, huh?”

Yu Youyao’s face turned red, and her eyes wandered. “Uh, I-I’m not really crying.” She stole a glance at her cousin and saw the corner of his mouth curl up slightly. He looked at her with a smile, and even his back straightened. “I-I learned this from Yu Jianjia, didn’t I? I-I pretended to be pitiful and weak at first, and shed a few innocent tears. I was a little aggrieved at first, so the others ignored me. This is called suppressing myself first.”

Zhou Linghuai only looked at her and said nothing.

Yu Youyao closed her legs and sat up straight again. “Cousin, this is how I cried, was wronged, pitied and had reason.” She glanced at her cousin from the corner of her eye. “Am I very smart!”

Zhou Linghuai sighed softly in his heart. “Do your eyes feel uncomfortable?”

Yu Youyao smiled. "Liu'er soaked them in chrysanthemum, goji berries and warm water for me. Then, she applied rose dew. It's no longer uncomfortable!"

Zhou Linghuai nodded.

Yu Youyao tilted her head and held her cousin's hand. "I remember what you said. I didn't let anyone bully me. Cousin, don't worry about me. I'm very obedient~"

I'm very obedient~

Zhou Linghuai placed these words on the tip of his tongue and chewed carefully. The sweet, soft, fragrant, and sticky taste spread to his heart.

His throat felt a little dry as he took a box of snacks from the small table. "The new peony cake is served today. Try it and see if you like it."

At this time, the peony flowers were blooming.

The little girl liked to eat snacks, so he had deliberately taken a detour to buy them from a store to make her happy.

As soon as she heard that there was food, Yu Youyao's stomach growled.

Zhou Linghuai frowned. "You didn't eat at the flower festival?"

The banquet was held late and they only started eating at 1pm. The main family would prepare many snacks to avoid starving the guests.

Yu Youyao covered her stomach to stop it from growling. She pouted and complained, "I ate some medicinal cuisine when I left this morning. I didn't even have time to eat any snacks at the flower festival. I'm about to starve to death." As she spoke, she quickly took the box of snacks from her cousin. "Thank you, Cousin. You're the best!"

Zhou Linghuai's lips curled up slightly.

As soon as she unwrapped the layer of oil paper, Yu Youyao could smell the fragrant and strong oil mixed with the fragrance of the fresh and sweet peony flowers. She couldn't help but sniffle and swallow her saliva. Even removing the oil paper became much faster.

When the golden peony cakes appeared in front of her, Yu Youyao's eyes widened.

"The peony cake must be delicious." She couldn't wait to take a handkerchief, pick up a piece of peony cake, and bring it to her cousin's lips. "Cousin, try it first."

The little girl looked at the peony cake eagerly. She was clearly so hungry that she couldn't move her eyes away, but she still remembered to ask him to eat it first. Zhou Linghuai found it funny and was about to refuse...

"You can't refuse me. I just want to share them with you and let you try the cake I've tasted." Yu Youyao moved the peony cake closer to her cousin's lips.

How could he refuse? Zhou Linghuai opened his mouth and took a bite. The peony cake, which was already on his lips, melted in his mouth with the fresh and sweet peony filling. However, it melted in his mouth and did not stick to his teeth. His mouth was filled with sweetness and softness, and he was surprised to find it delicious.

He recalled the little girl's words just now—

I just want to share them with you and let you try the cake I've tasted!

The taste that the little girl had eaten was especially sweet.

Whether it was the cherries she had eaten in the past or the candy she had eaten later.

The thin and crispy skin cracked in her cousin's mouth. The flower filling in the center was wrapped in peony paste. Yu Youyao, who was looking at the beautiful cakes and craving them, immediately widened her eyes. She couldn't be bothered to ask her cousin if it was delicious and quickly put the peony cake into her mouth.

She bit down—

Oh, it was so delicious that she cried!

What kind of divine cake was this? How could it be so delicious?!

“Cousin, you...” Before Zhou Linghuai could stop her, he watched helplessly as the little girl took a bite of his unfinished peony cake.

Instantly, his breathing stopped, and the flower cake choked in his throat. His face turned red to the tips of his ears, and he couldn't help but cover his mouth and cough.

“C-cousin.” Yu Youyao was shocked. She stuffed the remaining peony cake into her mouth and chewed hard a few times. However, she swallowed hard and asked vaguely, “What's wrong?”

He was better off with a mouthful of flowers!

She was greedy. No wonder Old Madam Yu kept calling her a little piglet.

However, Zhou Linghuai was both angry and amused. He suppressed the cough in his throat. “I'm fine. I just accidentally choked.”

Yu Youyao quickly poured a cup of warm tea. Just as Zhou Linghuai was about to reach out to take it, the little girl approached him and brought the tea to his lips. “Cousin, drink some water. After drinking it, your throat won't feel uncomfortable anymore.”

Zhou Linghuai did not even have a chance to refuse.

After drinking a cup of tea, Zhou Linghuai's throat felt a little better, but he still felt a little uncomfortable.

Yu Youyao had an expression that said, “I really don't know what to do with you.” She put down her teacup helplessly and naturally reached out to smooth her cousin's back. “Are you feeling better?”

Chapter 275 - 275 I Really Don't Know What to Do With You

Her soft hand was pressed against his back, caressing it from top to bottom. The warmth in her palm penetrated the thin material of his shirt, causing Zhou Linghuai's back to stiffen.

Zhou Linghuai's heart couldn't help but tremble. He suddenly tightened his grip on the armrest. "I'm fine now."

Her cousin's voice sounded a little hoarse and dark. He was not as cold as before. However, she did not hear any discomfort. Yu Youyao felt much more relieved and looked reproachful. "Cousin, you're too careless. You choked on your own food after taking a bite of the pancake." She shook her head and sighed in an old tone. "I really don't know what to do with you."

Zhou Linghuai was immediately speechless.

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Let's make it clear, who exactly can't do anything to who?

However, he was spoiling her more and more.

Zhou Linghuai suddenly remembered that the little girl had eaten the peony cake that he had bitten. He felt that it was a little inappropriate and hesitated for a moment. "In the future, don't..." Seeing that the little girl's eyes were as clear and bright as water, the words that came to his mouth changed to, "Is the peony cake delicious?"

Yu Youyao did not know how conflicted her cousin was. She took another peony cake and ate it. As she ate, she nodded. "It's delicious. Did Cousin specially buy it for me?"

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "I was out today and happened to pass by the store."

Yu Youyao swallowed the cake in her mouth. "Cousin, you're lying again. The Precious Peace Temple isn't on the way. I've been to the Precious Peace Temple and know the way. You can't lie to me!"

Her cousin's legs were inconvenient. After entering the Yu Residence, he also lived in seclusion. The only place he could go was the Precious Peace Temple.

Zhou Linghuai immediately did not want to speak.

Yu Youyao wrinkled her nose. "Cousin, what's wrong with you? You're clearly treating me well, but you insist on being secretive, afraid that I'll find out how well you treat me." She pursed her lips and glanced at her cousin from the corner of her eye. "Why are you so awkward?!"

Zhou Linghuai choked on his cake. Now, he almost choked on his tea. Suddenly, his hands felt itchy. "Cousin arranged it all."

Yu Youyao pouted and ate her cake.

Seeing that she had taken another piece of peony cake to eat, Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but remind her, "Have a few pieces of peony cake to fill your stomach first. If you eat too much, can you have lunch later?"

Yu Youyao blinked. "Cousin, on the way back, the horses were shocked, and so was I. Can I eat an extra peony cake to calm down?"

Zhou Linghuai's eyebrows sank. "What happened?"

Her cousin's expression was dark and scary. Yu Youyao quickly said, "When we turned the corner, a carriage suddenly rushed out. Aunt's horses were shocked at the front, and the horses behind also jumped..."

Zhou Linghuai interrupted her. "Were you injured?"

Yu Youyao waved her hand. "With Chun Xiao's protection, I wasn't not injured. I just jolted a few times and felt a little uncomfortable. Cousin, don't worry."

Zhou Linghuai heaved a sigh of relief. "Whose carriage is it?"

Their carriages almost collided. No matter which family it was, they had to find out.

Yu Youyao suddenly thought of the yellow jade ring she had seen at a glance. She shook her head. "Cousin, is pure yellow jade only used by the Imperial Prince?"

The Book of Rites taught about clothes etiquette. Her cousin had taught it to her, and Ms. Ye had also taught it in class. However, when she panicked, she felt a little uncertain.

Zhou Linghuai's gaze suddenly darkened. "The yellow jade is also known as a jade huang. The emperor and the nobles use it as a pendant. The full one is a ring. Most of the time, it's bestowed by the emperor to warn someone not to be complacent. In addition, the vassal lords who have heavy troops in their hands and are guarding the vassal lands will be bestowed with the jade carving ring. The dragon is carved with its head and tail connected. The dragon has no horns and lies on the ground. Therefore, they can't ride the clouds in the sky and bow down to the true dragon."

Yu Youyao's face turned pale.

Zhou Linghuai gently rubbed the top of the little girl's head. "It's not the first or second time the vassal king has made a move. It's only a matter of time before he enters the capital. Just pretend you didn't see him. Don't worry about anything else."

Hearing her cousin's words, Yu Youyao calmed down a little. "Cousin, do you know which vassal lord entered the capital?"

These words were more or less a test. The Yu Residence had long known that Third Cousin had brought news of the vassal king's unusual movements into the capital, but they had yet to hear any news.

Zhou Linghuai said calmly, "It's King Ping of Liangzhou. Liangzhou is located in the south. The south is filled with mountains and miasma. It's very far from Quanzhou, but it resonates a little."

Yu Youyao's heart skipped a beat. She subconsciously looked at her cousin and opened her mouth, not knowing what to say.

How did Cousin find out about something that even Second Uncle couldn't hear?

Back then, at the Precious Peace Temple, after she had accidentally discovered her cousin's tracks, she had vaguely sensed that he was very mysterious and his identity did not seem to be simple. Her cousin did not deliberately guard against her, so she also knew that her cousin was living in the

residence now and was also bound to the Yu Residence. She should not be worried that her cousin would harm the Yu Residence, so she did not probe further.

However, she kept feeling that the vassal lord's strange actions seemed to be related to her cousin, so she couldn't help but worry.

The little girl did not say anything, but her bright eyes were filled with worry for him. Zhou Linghuai chuckled and rubbed the little girl's hair hard.

Yu Youyao quickly covered her head to prevent herself from rubbing it. "Cousin, you've messed up my hair."

Zhou Linghuai laughed. "You're still young. Why are you worrying? Be careful not to grow taller in the future."

Yu Youyao quickly leaned back and dodged her cousin's demonic hand. She pouted. "Cousin, you still have the cheek to criticize me. You're not much older than me. You make it sound like you're old. Be careful not to grow taller in the future."

With that said, she was really a little worried that her cousin's leg would be damaged and he would grow slower than others. She had to ask Nanny Xu later if she had any medicinal cuisine for growth.

Zhou Linghuai did not know what she was thinking. If he knew, he would probably not know whether to laugh or cry.

At this moment, Qiu Xing entered the study. "Young Miss, Miss Qing Xiu is here. She wants you to go to Old Madam's house."

Yu Youyao quickly stood up. "Cousin, if you're not busy, wait for me in the study. When I return, I'll have lunch with you."

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "Okay!"

Only then did Yu Youyao leave the study and go to An Shou Hall with Qing Xiu.

Second Uncle and Second Aunt were no longer around. Her father was sitting and drinking tea with a dark expression. Yang Shuwan was sitting beside him. Her slightly raised eyebrows inevitably revealed a hint of smugness.

Yu Youyao bowed and greeted her elders before sitting down obediently beside her grandmother. "Grandmother!"

"Oh my, my dear granddaughter, you've suffered so much today..." Old Madam Yu pulled her granddaughter into her arms and wiped her tears with a handkerchief.

If it weren't for the fact that she had to hand over a token in advance to enter the palace and find the time, how could she still be sitting in the house?

Chapter 276 - 276 Thank You, Miao's Branch Leader, for the Reward

As she cried, Old Madam Yu was furious and started scolding, "Damn it, the wife of the Marquis of Changxing is even bullying a growing child. They're really shameless. Even if my old bones are paralyzed, it's not up to her to climb over my head and abuse her power. Tomorrow, I'll wear heavy

makeup and enter the palace to seek the Empress Dowager's opinion. I definitely can't let my Yao Yao suffer such grievances for no reason..."

Her grandmother bowed to Buddha and smelled of sandalwood. Yu Youyao felt very at ease. She clearly did not feel aggrieved, but she could not help but cry too.

"Grandmother, Yao Yao doesn't feel aggrieved. Yao Yao is a bereaved eldest daughter, so it's understandable for others to say a few words. In any case, I've ruined my own reputation, so I won't implicate my younger sisters. However, as the eldest daughter of the first wife in the family, I've been raised by Grandmother since I was young. The Marquis of Changxing's Residence bullied me, but it's a slap to the Yu Residence's face and it's even a slap to Grandmother's virtuous reputation..."

When Old Madam Yu heard this, she wiped her tears again. "My good granddaughter, you understand so much at such a young age. Even after being wronged and humiliated, you can still think about your family and compete with others for the family. You've suffered..."

!!

Yang Shuwan couldn't raise her head after hearing this.

Instantly, she came to a realization!

Yu Youyao's reputation had almost been ruined because she was the "old mistress's eldest daughter." As her stepmother, she could not surpass her biological mother in terms of "education." As a second wife, she could not surpass her first wife in terms of "etiquette." She was irrelevant.

However, the reputation of the Yu Residence and Old Madam had a lot to do with her.

Yu Youyao, this little b\*tch, was really impressive. With just one sentence, she had pushed her over the fire.

This was not the end. The more Old Madam Yu cried, the more upset she felt. "It's all my fault for being old and useless. Usually, I can still protect my little granddaughter at home, but when I'm outside, my eyes are completely dark. Poor obedient granddaughter. You lost your mother at a young age, and your stepmother is an incompetent person. She only cares about her daughter's sprained ankle and doesn't protect my little granddaughter. She almost ruined my little granddaughter's reputation. How is she like a stepmother?"

"Old Madam, I..." Yang Shuwan opened her mouth, but no words came out.

Just now, when Old Madam was criticizing her, she had also used Jia Jia's sprained ankle.

After a round of tears, Yu Zongzheng was concerned about Jia Jia and was distracted. He did not care about anything else, so Old Madam did not say anything else. Instead, he asked about Jia Jia's injuries.

Unexpectedly, this old woman was waiting for her.

At this moment, Yu Zongzheng also realized that he couldn't even drink his tea. He put down his teacup heavily and the bottom of the cup hit the table with a clang.

Just now, Second Brother and Second Sister-in-law were present so his mother did not say much because she cared about his and Madam Yang's reputation. Hence, she allowed Madam Yang to brush off the matter of Jia Jia spraining her ankle.

However, Jia Jia had sprained her ankle and would be fine after recuperating for a few days.

If Yao Yao's reputation was ruined in public, her entire life would be ruined.

As her stepmother, Madam Yang actually couldn't figure out which was more important?

Her eldest daughter had been humiliated, and it was also the Yu Residence's face that had been hurt. Even a growing child knew this. As the mistress of the household, Madam Yang actually did not know?

Yu Zongzheng looked at Madam Yang and couldn't help but feel disappointed. After all, she raised the little girl. She was really unpresentable.

At this moment, the curtain in the inner room was lifted.

Yu Youyao looked up—

Hui Xiang and Ai Ye helped Yu Jianjia into the house.

Her thin figure trembled like a lotus bud in the wind. Her face was pale, and she frowned slightly. She bit her lip and endured the pain. Her forehead and the tip of her nose were covered in sweat like dewdrops, making her look even more innocent and pure.

It was obvious that she had suffered.

Yang Shuwan tightened her grip on her handkerchief, her heart aching uncontrollably.

Old Madam Yu quickly said, "Sit down."

"Thank you, Grandmother." Yu Jianjia asked the maidservant to help her sit beside Yang Shuwan. She couldn't help but glance at Yu Youyao, who was sitting beside Old Madam.

However, she realized that Yu Youyao was also looking at her. Her black eyes were so bright that they hurt her eyes.

Yu Jianjia panted slightly. Her eyelashes fluttered slightly, and she slowly lowered her eyes.

Old Madam Yu looked reproachful. "Child, you sprained your ankle. Why didn't you rest in your room? Your mother said that she had invited Imperial Physician Li into the residence. Did he take a look? What did he say? Was the injury serious?"

Yu Jianjia had returned to the residence for a while, and the imperial physicians were not far away. They probably entered the residence.

Yu Jianjia's voice was gentle and hoarse. "Imperial Physician Li just entered the residence and helped me take a closer look. He said that I had sprained my tendons and that my bones weren't injured. He gave me medicinal oil that will clear my tendons and move my meridians three times a day. I'll be fine in about half a month. It's not good for Grandmother, Father, and Mother to worry,



so I came over to tell them.” At this point, she bit her lip lightly. “It’s my fault for being disappointing and making the elders worry.”

“It’s good that you’re fine.” Old Madam Yu felt much more at ease. She said gently, “Don’t let your imagination run wild. I know that you’re a filial child. Your body is a little weak, so you have to take care of your health more often.”

Yu Jianjia heaved a sigh of relief and nodded.

Yu Zongzheng was furious, but he couldn’t flare up in front of his mother. Seeing his daughter’s pale face, he was also worried. “Your grandmother is right. You have to recuperate carefully in the future.”

“I understand, Father!” Yu Jianjia agreed obediently. From the corner of her eye, Yu Youyao said something to Bai Kui. Bai Kui bowed and nodded, then lifted the curtain and entered the side room.

Yu Jianjia lowered her head and drank her tea.

At this moment, Bai Kui came out of the side room with a soft pillow and walked up to Yu Jianjia. “Third Miss sprained her ankle, so she can’t use too much strength on her foot. Eldest Miss asked me to bring a soft pillow for Third Miss to lean on so that she can feel more comfortable.”

Yu Jianjia was flattered and quickly looked at Yu Youyao. “Thank you, Big Sister!”

Yu Youyao nodded and said nothing.

Ai Ye took the soft pillow and quickly placed it behind Yu Jianjia. Yu Jianjia leaned against the soft pillow and immediately felt her body relax a little. Her feet felt lighter.

Yu Zongzheng couldn’t help but sigh with emotion. His eldest daughter was becoming more and more like an elder sister. She always thought of her younger sister at home.

Old Madam Yu sighed slightly. “I originally thought that it was just an ordinary flower festival. The few of you aren’t young anymore. If you go over to join in the fun, you can also broaden your horizons. Who would have thought that the Marquis of Changxing’s Residence was actually a dragon’s den? Not only was Yao Yao’s reputation almost ruined, but you also sprained your ankle. They’re really bullying us.”

When Yu Jianjia heard this, her heart couldn’t help but skip a beat. She couldn’t help but cover her mouth with her handkerchief and cough twice. Then, she said softly—

Chapter 277 - 277 Denunciation

“It turned out that she had also been admiring the flowers with the young misses of the various families and gotten to know Seventh Miss Cao. She also thought that since Seventh Miss Cao was from the main family, she would have to introduce her to Eldest Sister. Cough, I didn’t know that Seventh Miss Cao had taken a fancy to Nanny Xu, who followed in front of Eldest Sister, and was

dissatisfied with her. Cough, she actually made things difficult for Eldest Sister on the spot. I'm sorry that Eldest Sister has suffered."

Yu Jianjia's gentle words were hoarse and sad. From time to time, she would cough a little. Occasionally, she would glance at Yu Youyao with an innocent gaze.

She had already sprained her ankle, and there was still a trace of pain between her slightly furrowed eyebrows. Her face was pale, revealing her illness vividly.

With just a few words, she had cleared her name.

Song Wanhui had seen Yu Jianjia, Cao Yingxue, and Lu Mingyao talking together in the Thousand Gold Building. Yu Jianjia had known Cao Yingxue for a long time, and the two of them had an extraordinary relationship.

Cao Yingxue did not hide her hostility towards her. She did not believe that Yu Jianjia had nothing to do with this.

Yu Youyao chuckled. "Third Sister is just being kind. There's no need to blame yourself."

These words did not reassure Yu Jianjia. She lowered her head and carefully considered her words. "Big Sister's reputation was almost ruined at the Flower Festival, but as her younger sister, I sprained my ankle and couldn't help at all. I feel that I've let Big Sister down." At this point, she looked at Yu Youyao sincerely, her eyes filled with tears. "Big Sister, please forgive me."

She was kind and innocent. Even if she made a little mistake, no one could say anything else.

After all, she was also innocent!

She did not know that Cao Yingxue was hostile to Eldest Sister. She was an innocent party and wanted to help her. However, she had sprained her ankle and did not have the energy to help her. She felt guilty that she had not helped Eldest Sister, but she had already apologized. As her Eldest Sister, how could she hold it against her younger sister?

This was Yu Jianjia's thought.

From the moment she stepped into An Shou Hall, everything she had said, every expression, and every move she had made had been carefully planned.

Every word and sentence was sarcastic and meaningful. She played the role of an innocent victim vividly and disguised every strand of her hair.

Even her grandmother could not tell what kind of deep and terrifying scheme was hidden under Yu Jianjia's weak and innocent expression.

"Third Sister, you're being too serious." Yu Youyao met her teary eyes and looked pitiful. "Third Sister sprained her ankle because of me. I should be the one apologizing."

Yu Jianjia calmed down and quickly said, "Big Sister, don't say that. It's also because I'm weak and disappointing. How can I blame you?"

“I’m relieved that Third Sister doesn’t blame me.” Yu Youyao heaved a sigh of relief and smiled.

For some reason, when Yu Jianjia saw the faint smile on her face, she suddenly felt a strong sense of uneasiness.

As expected!

Seeing Yu Youyao smile, Yu Jianjia heard her suddenly change the topic. “However, I have a few words to ask Third Sister.”

Yu Jianjia’s uneasy heart suddenly rose to her throat, and her throat itched again. She couldn’t help but cover her mouth and cough lightly.

Yu Youyao did not care if she responded or not. She chuckled and said, “At the Flower Festival, Third Sister was originally kind enough to help me out. That’s why you apologized to Seventh Miss Cao in front of all the young misses. As your elder sister, I should thank you. However, Third Sister said that I had offended Seventh Miss Cao. I don’t understand how I had offended her.”

When Old Madam Yu heard this, she looked at Yu Jianjia.

Yu Jianjia was still covering her mouth and coughing, unable to speak for a moment.

Yang Shuwan quickly handed over a cup of warm tea and helped to explain, “Jia Jia has a gentle personality. Perhaps she saw that Eldest Miss had a conflict with Seventh Miss Cao and was worried that Eldest Miss would suffer, so she mediated the conflict. She wanted to settle the matter out of goodwill.”

Yu Youyao stared at Yu Jianjia with a burning gaze. “Mother, you’re right. Third Sister was just being kind, so she introduced me to Seventh Miss Cao. Seventh Miss Cao wanted me to recite poetry with her, does this mean I should have considered Third Sister and not rejected her? However, I’m not proficient in poetry, and Third Sister knows about it. In order not to dampen everyone’s spirits, I rejected her politely. I didn’t expect to anger Seventh Miss Cao and for her to criticize me in public.”

Yu Jianjia closed her eyes. Even her breathing was cold. She couldn’t remain silent anymore. “Big Sister, I’m also...”

Yu Youyao continued in a gentle voice, “I know. Third Sister had good intentions. She wanted to calm the matter down because she was worried about me, so I can understand why she apologized to Seventh Miss Cao on my behalf. However, Seventh Miss Cao forced me to recite poetry. It was rude of her to insult me for losing my mother. She was the one in the wrong. Why should Third Sister apologize on my behalf? Why did Third Sister say that I had offended Seventh Miss Cao?”

Old Madam Yu suddenly tightened her grip on her prayer beads when she heard Yao Yao saying that she had good intentions. Even she felt a chill down her spine.

She wasn’t sure if it was out of kindness, but whether a person was kind or not was never measured by the starting point. Instead, it depended on the outcome of this person’s words and actions.

Even if she had done something bad out of kindness, it couldn't be said that she had done it out of kindness. Cao Yingxue had used the words "bereaved eldest daughter" to attack Yao Yao. Instead of defending her big sister, Yu Jianjia was anxious to apologize on her sister's behalf.

What kind of apology was this?

Wasn't she rushing to give Yao Yao's face, upbringing, and reputation to Cao Yingxue to step on?

Fortunately, Yao Yao was quick-witted. Otherwise, her reputation would have been ruined.

Did her granddaughter not know what was wrong from right or...

Old Madam Yu's gaze suddenly turned sharp as she stared fixedly at Yu Jianjia.

Sensing the sharp gaze on her head, Yu Jianjia's heart skipped a beat, and she almost couldn't breathe. She knew that her grandmother suspected her.

She believed that every move and word of hers in the Marquis of Changxing's Residence had been carefully planned and flawless. However, she had never expected that it would be ruined by Yu Youyao's words.

Yu Jianjia panicked and opened her mouth to explain, "Big Sister, I didn't mean anything else..."

Yu Youyao was still smiling. "Third Sister had good intentions. You're gentle and kind. As you're on good terms with Seventh Miss Cao, you can't bear to see me get into a conflict with her. However, Third Sister has apologized and given Seventh Miss Cao enough face. Have you thought about how I should respond as your eldest sister?"

Chapter 278 - 278 Too Disappointing

Yu Jianjia opened her mouth, but no words came out.

Yu Youyao couldn't help but tear up. Even her voice choked. "You're trampling on my face, upbringing, and reputation for Seventh Miss Cao."

"No, Big Sister, you've misunderstood. I cough..." Yu Jianjia explained anxiously. Unexpectedly, because she was in a hurry, she suddenly gulped down a mouthful of cold air, choking until her throat itched. However, she could only lower her head and cough a few times...

Just as her throat felt a little better, Yu Jianjia was about to speak again in a hurry when she heard Yu Youyao holding back her tears and saying hoarsely, "I know that Third Sister is just being kind, but just because I've had no mother since I was young and am a bereaved eldest daughter, do I deserve to be despised outside? Even my own sister thinks that I'm a bereaved eldest daughter, so I deserve to be inferior to others. Should I deserve to be looked down on and scolded? Even if I've been humiliated, am I the one in the wrong? I'm the one who should apologize?!"

!!

Yu Youyao kept saying that she had good intentions. Every time she said something, she had to bring it up. In her ears, it sounded like a huge mockery.

Yu Jianjia's chest felt tight, and her face turned pale. "That's not what I meant. Big Sister, please believe me..."

“Bam—” Yu Zongzheng couldn’t stand it anymore. He slammed the table and the teacup on it clanged. “Shut up!”

Yu Jianjia opened her mouth, and suddenly, a gust of cold air rushed into her mouth and into her throat. It was so piercing that her throat itched, and even her heart turned cold.

She looked at her father in shock.

In her memory, her father always looked at her with relief and pride. When he spoke to her, even his voice was gentle. She had never seen her father so angry.

Yu Zong looked at Yu Jianjia with a disappointed expression. “Jia Jia, you’ve disappointed me too much.”

Yu Jianjia’s eyes turned red, and large tears rolled down her face. “Father, I-I don’t think Big Sister is inferior, nor do I have any intention of looking down on her...”

He thought of his fourth daughter, who was still locked up in the courtyard to learn the rules.

Then, he looked at his third daughter, who was crying pitifully.

Then, she thought of Madam Yang, who had caused Jia Jia’s sprained ankle.

What else did Yu Zongzheng not understand? “You’ve been weak since you were young, so it’s inevitable that I doted on you a little. I originally thought that you were gentle and kind, and had always had high hopes for you. I didn’t expect you to be so ignorant. You’re actually like Fourth Miss and you’ve been taught to have a bad attitude by your mother. Such a petty person is not presentable at all. You haven’t learned the demeanor and bearing of a scholarly family at all.”

Yang Shuwan, who had originally wanted to speak up for her daughter, immediately felt her eyes darken and her throat choke. She couldn’t say a word.

Her father had reprimanded her for not knowing the severity of the matter, for being petty and lacking the demeanor of a scholarly family. These words had always been used by her father to reprimand Yu Youyao in the past!

Her father even compared her to Yu Qingning, the daughter of a concubine?!

For a moment, Yu Jianjia thought that there was something wrong with her ears and that she had heard wrongly.

However, when she saw her father looking at her with disappointment, Yu Jianjia finally realized that she hadn’t heard wrongly. She almost fainted on the spot.

“Father, I didn’t do it on purpose...” Her lips trembled as large tears fell. She looked at Yang Shuwan innocently and blankly. “Mother, I didn’t...”

Seeing her daughter’s heartbroken expression, Yang Shuwan couldn’t hold it in anymore. As she wiped her tears, she said, “Master, you’ve watched Jia Jia grow up. How can you not know her personality? She’s just too gentle and kind, so she felt aggrieved and admitted the mistake for Yao Yao. However, Master, you’re saying it’s all her fault.”

At this point, her voice also became hoarse. “Your heart aches for Yao Yao, who almost ruined her reputation and suffered grievances at the Flower Festival. However, Jia Jia slipped in public and lost her balance. She became a joke and even sprained her ankle. How can you say that about her? It’ll hurt the child’s heart. Jia Jia’s body is weak to begin with. If anything happens to her, what should she do?”

Yu Zongzheng was stunned when he heard this. Then, he heard a weak cough from the room. His third daughter lowered her head and covered her mouth to cough lightly with a pale face.

Immediately, he regretted being so harsh just now.

Although Jia Jia did not know the severity of the matter, he had still underestimated her. Her personality and character were unquestionable. Although she was flawed in her handling of matters, she was only nine years old. Furthermore, this was the first time she had been outside. She could still be nurtured well later.

Yang Shuwan knew Yu Zongzheng well and continued to cry. “Master despises me for being the daughter of a concubine in the family and thinks that I’m not presentable. I have nothing to say, but I can’t vent my anger on Jia Jia. Jia Jia has always been obedient and sensible. She’s also considerate and filial to Master. She’s innocent...”

With that said, Yu Zongzheng couldn’t help but think of his third daughter, who was usually obedient, sensible, filial, and considerate.

At this moment, Yu Youyao, who had been silent all this while, said hoarsely, “Father, I know that Third Sister is innocent. Her body is weak, so as her elder sister, I naturally won’t hold it against her.”

After she finished speaking, Yu Jianjia’s throat itched again.

Her father had always doted on her. Even though her body was weak, he would not really criticize her.

However, Yu Youyao’s move of retreating in order to advance made her father realize that she was weak and Yu Youyao had also suffered grievances. As a result, her father felt very sorry for her and softened his stance.

Thinking about how his eldest daughter’s reputation had almost been ruined at the flower festival today, Yu Zongzheng’s expression darkened again. His eldest daughter did not mind, but as her father, he could not pretend that nothing had happened.

Yu Zongzheng looked at Yu Jianjia. “Since your big sister won’t hold it against you, I won’t punish you either. You should reflect on yourself and learn what a woman should do. Learn and reflect. Your big sister has grown up in front of your grandmother since she was young. She has principles and rules. In the future, learn more from her and learn how to deal with people.”

She had learned the teachings that a woman should learn from the age of seven to the age of nine. There were dozens or hundreds of books in total. This was obvious that he was criticizing her for not learning the teachings well in the past. If she was asked to learn them again and had to copy them after learning them, it would be indirectly saying that she was unruly and ill-mannered. It would completely deny her studies and hard work for the past three years.

He even asked her to learn more principles and rules from Yu Youyao.

He was stepping on her to praise Yu Youyao.

Since when was she inferior to Yu Youyao in her father's heart?

Chapter 279 - 279 Guess Who I Am?

Yu Jianjia slowly lowered her head, revealing a long and thin neck. She said hoarsely, "Yes, Father!"

Although his third daughter did not know the severity of the matter, she was still able to listen to him. Yu Zongzheng felt a little comforted. "Since you sprained your ankle, go back to the courtyard and rest well."

Yu Jianjia stood up shakily. Ai Ye and Hui Xiang quickly helped her up.

She endured the pain in her feet and bowed. "Grandmother, Father and Mother, I'll take my leave first!"

When they reached the door, Yu Jianjia couldn't help but pause. She tilted her head and glanced at Yu Youyao, who was sitting in front of Old Madam. Her eyes were cold, and tears welled up in them.

Yu Youyao looked up and saw the curtain of the inner room fall, as well as a corner of Yu Jianjia's moonlight dress.

As soon as Yu Jianjia left, Yu Zongzheng's anger turned to Yang Shuwan. He glared at her fiercely. "I originally thought that although you're the daughter of a concubine in the family, you've also read books and have some literary talent. That's why I ignored my mother's objections and insisted on marrying you into the family. I didn't expect you to be so unpresentable. You don't manage the family well, and your children aren't raised well. They're so disappointing."

Yang Shuwan's body went limp and she almost fell to the ground. She cried out miserably, "Master..."

In the past, when he saw Yang Shuwan's behavior, he couldn't help but feel that Yang Shuwan had been wronged. His heart ached, and he had to protect her a little.

However, today, Yang Shuwan had implicated him. Yu Zongzheng only felt annoyed. "From tomorrow onwards, you'll go to Mother's house to set the rules. The butler's key will also be handed over to Yao Yao, and she'll be in charge of the household. Third Miss and Fourth Miss have all been taught bad habits by you. Brother Si, probably can't be taught well by you so I will ask him to move into a courtyard."

"Master, how can that do?" Yang Shuwan exclaimed, and even her voice became shrill. "Brother Si is only a little more than six years old. How can he move into another courtyard so early..."

Yu Zongzheng interrupted her. "Si'er's birthday is in June. He'll be seven in two months. I've already made up my mind. You don't have to say anything else."

Yang Shuwan's eyes widened in disbelief. "Master..."

Yu Zongzheng ignored her and turned to look at Yu Youyao. "Tomorrow, pack up the Songtao Courtyard in the front courtyard and help arrange for your fourth brother to move in as soon as possible."

Yu Shansi was the only legitimate son in the family. His father valued him very much, and Yu Youyao did not want to get involved in Yu Shansi's matters.

However, since her father had asked, Yu Youyao couldn't refuse. She could only nod. "Okay, Father. It's just that there are many things in the front courtyard that I haven't done in the past, so I'm worried that I won't be able to handle it well. It's also a big deal for Fourth Brother to move into the courtyard, so it's more appropriate for Zhao Da to help me."

Yu Zongzheng valued his legitimate son highly. Seeing that his eldest daughter was so cautious, how could he not agree? "We'll do as you say." As he spoke, he felt that not only was his eldest daughter smart and magnanimous, but she was also a well mannered person. Even if there was something she didn't understand, she wouldn't cause trouble. She said it openly and asked someone to help. "In the future, you'll have to spend more effort on the family matters."

Yu Youyao smiled and nodded.

Yang Shuwan watched as the father and daughter spoke back and forth. She was even responsible for making arrangements for her son who had come out of her womb. This made her even angrier.

Si'er would be moving to the front courtyard and would no longer be by her side. If anything happened in the future, it would be too late for her. How could Yu Youyao be evil? Now that she was in charge of the family, what good was there for Si'er?

In the future, when Yu Zongzheng saw his son, he wouldn't come to the main courtyard anymore. This way, Yu Zongzheng would spend fewer days in the main courtyard.

Yang Shuwan was indignant. "Master..."

Yu Youyao couldn't stand listening to her anymore, so she stood up and smiled. "Grandmother, Father and Mother, if there's nothing else, I'll go back first. Cousin is waiting for me to have lunch."

Old Madam Yu's heart ached again. "I almost forgot. Yao Yao has been working so hard, but she didn't even have lunch. She's starving. Go back quickly, go back quickly..."

Yu Zongzheng also said, "Go back. Don't make your cousin wait too long."

Yu Youyao bowed to her elders and left. When she reached the door, she suddenly remembered that King Ping had entered the capital. She hesitated, wondering if she should tell her grandmother about the scene she had seen on the street today.

However, when she thought of how her cousin had asked her to pretend not to see it, she gave up.

The vassal king had entered the capital without an edict. He was guilty of conspiracy and rebellion, and it involved a lot of things. If she was not careful, she would be in trouble. It was definitely not something a growing child like her should be involved in.

When she returned to the Jade Courtyard, there were already simple and appetizing dishes prepared in the small kitchen.



Zhou Linghuai sat in the hall and looked up at the painting on the wall.

He used gold, silver, pearls, agate, coral, pine stone, lapis lazuli, cat's eye stone, cinnabar, and other ores to paint. He mixed them with saffron, yellow, indigo, rose balsam, musk, and other plants.

Looking at this painting, Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but think of the Bodhi tree he had seen at the Precious Peace Temple today.

In his mind, he repeatedly pictured the little girl in a plain brocade dress. She would raise her jade neck and gently lift her toes. She would hold the wishing silk with both hands and throw it.

He still remembered that the wishing silk had a message that said, "Cousin, I hope that your illness will go away and all your illnesses will disappear. I hope that you will be free from calamity and live a peaceful life..."

Seeing that her cousin was looking at her seriously and did not notice her, Yu Youyao's eyes darted around and she had an idea. She gently picked up her skirt and walked silently behind her cousin. Caught off guard, she covered her cousin's eyes and deliberately said, "Guess who I am?"

Was there a need to guess? Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but smile. "Naughty~"

"Who's Naughty? I don't recognize her. Cousin, you're wrong. Guess again." Yu Youyao smiled until her eyebrows curved. She covered her cousin's eyes and refused to let go.

Zhou Linghuai smiled. "Isn't it you?"

Yu Youyao puffed up her cheeks, feeling a little indignant. "I'm clearly Cousin's smart, obedient, cute, and beautiful little cousin."

Zhou Linghuai smiled and removed the little girl's hands from his eyes.

The little girl had a pair of red and soft hands. When he held them in his hands, they looked boneless. They were soft and fragrant, like cream. Her thin fingers already looked delicate and beautiful.

Yu Youyao pouted and glared at him. "Cousin, don't you know how to cooperate?"

He had never played such a childish trick when he was two years old. How could he cooperate? Zhou Linghuai's expression paused for a moment. "Why don't you do it again?"

Yu Youyao was speechless. She reached out and took the book from his lap. "Cousin, you should read less in the future."

Her evasive thinking made Zhou Linghuai confused and helpless.

Chapter 280 - 280 Even Cousin Is Disgusted

"I heard that if you study too much, you'll become a bookworm." Yu Youyao felt that her cousin had studied too much. He was so mature at such a young age. There was no fun at all.

Zhou Linghuai did not know whether to laugh or cry. This girl was finding him boring. “You’ve grown up. Now, you even despise Cousin. It seems that you don’t need the notes Cousin used in his studies in the future.”

Yu Youyao’s eyes widened and she looked innocent. “When did I despise you? You said it yourself. I don’t acknowledge it.” She looked at her cousin with a fawning smile and changed the topic. “I just feel sorry for you. You stay in the house all day reading. Not only are you bored alone, but it’s also harmful to your eyes. That’s why I want you to read less and come out to walk more when you’re free. It’s good for your health to take a break, right?” After saying that, she even looked at her cousin aggrievedly. “I’m doing this for your own good. Cousin, you’re not allowed to accuse me.”

Her little mouth was full of words, and when she coaxed someone, it was simply fatal. Zhou Linghuai laughed when he heard this.

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Seeing her cousin smile, Yu Youyao squatted in front of him and looked at him eagerly. “I really like the notes you wrote for me.”

Zhou Linghuai shook his head, took the thick book from her hand, and stuffed it back into her hand. “Women don’t take the imperial examination, and there’s a limit to what they can learn from the Four Books and Five Classics. It’s fine if you learn it, but you have to read this book carefully.”

Yu Youyao lowered her head to take a look. On the blue cover of the book, there were four words written in large letters, “Zizhi Tongjian.” It was a book that was as thick as a brick. Immediately, even her scalp went numb. “It’s so thick?”

Zhou Linghuai nodded. “Reading history can allow you to be knowledgeable. You can understand the past and present, and you can gain wisdom. This is a book I’ve read in the past. There are also notes and explanations written on it. It probably won’t take too much effort for you to read it. Zizhi Tongjian is a rewritten book of the previous dynasty’s Confucian scholars. There are many small stories about famous people inside, so it won’t be boring.”

Yu Youyao smiled. “Thank you, Third Cousin.”

She carefully opened Zizhi Tongjian. It looked a little old, and the pages were a little yellow. The ink brush on it alternated between old and new, and the words were also old and new. “Is this a book that Cousin has read before?”

Zhou Linghuai nodded. “Yes, some of the words on it were left behind by me in the past. Later on, when I had a new understanding, I would also write new thoughts down, so words look messy. If there’s anything you don’t understand, remember it and I’ll tell you in detail. However, history books help you gain wisdom. Cousin, you should try to understand it yourself.”

He had originally planned to tidy it up again and give it to her after that. However, she suffered at the flower festival today. He couldn’t help but worry, so he brought this book over to coax her.

Yu Youyao smiled as if she had received a treasure. “I’ll definitely read what Cousin has read.”

Seeing her flipping through her book excitedly, Zhou Linghuai reminded her, "Aren't you hungry? Go have lunch!"

Only then did Yu Youyao remember that she was still hungry. She quickly went to eat with her cousin.

Zhou Linghuai had lunch at noon. After accompanying Yu Youyao for a few bites, he put down his chopsticks. In the end, the little girl wheedled and forced him to drink a bowl of white jade ginseng soup.

After lunch, Yu Youyao hugged Zizhi Tongjian and read it with relish.

Zhou Linghuai returned to the Green House and went to the study.

He took out a piece of paper and spread it on the table. He flattened it with a paperweight. Zhou Linghuai held his sleeves in one hand and a brush in the other. With just a few strokes, the outline of the Bodhi tree could already be seen.

Under the Bodhi tree, there was a small person with only an outline. She held the wishing silk in both hands and weighed it lightly with the tips of her feet. Her skirt fluttered like snow, and her lithe figure seemed to be about to fly away with the wind.

"Young Master, the news has already been sent to the palace..."

The dyes mixed with mineral plants emitted a heavy but fragrant aura. In the air, there was only the faint sound of paper and ink.

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Longevity Palace!

The Empress Dowager, who was more than sixty years old, was wearing a red silk golden phoenix robe. She had combed her hair into a high bun and inserted a large phoenix hairpin with red phoenix wings. There was a round and pure ruby in the middle of her forehead.

She was reclining on the phoenix couch, one hand supporting her forehead. There were agarwood prayer beads wrapped around her wrist, and one hand was casually placed on her lap. She was wearing a long red gold tortoiseshell finger accessory on her pinky finger, and was closing her eyes to take a nap.

There was incense burning in the incense burner, and it was rising slowly.

In the huge side hall, the little palace maid kneeling on the ground was talking about what had happened at the Flower Festival in the Marquis of Changxing's Residence.

The little palace maid was proficient in ventriloquism. She imitated the words of Yu Youyao, Seventh Miss Cao, the Marquis of Changxing's wife, and even the other madams present.

About ten minutes later, the little palace maid finished speaking and knelt on the ground, not daring to look up.

Aunt Shen, who was serving her, also stood with her head lowered, not even daring to breathe loudly.

After a while, the Empress Dowager's fingers trembled slightly, and she slowly opened her eyes. Her turbid eyes revealed the reverence of paying respects to Buddha all year round, but there was a calm and sharp look in the depths of her eyes.

The Empress Dowager extended her hand.

Aunt Shen quickly picked up the tea and touched the wall of the cup with her fingertips before handing it to her. "The temperature of the tea is just right. Empress Dowager, drink slowly."

The Empress Dowager received the tea and lowered her head to take a few sips. The pearls on her forehead trembled slightly, and the pure color had a suffocating dignity.

After finishing the tea, Aunt Shen quickly took the teacup.

The Empress Dowager folded her hands on her lap and looked down at the prayer beads on her wrist. "What incense did you use in the house today? It seems a little different from usual?"

Aunt Shen glanced at the phoenix head incense burner and hurriedly said, "It's a calming incense. I burned the same incense as yesterday. The incense yesterday was made by Auntie Xu before she left the palace. Yesterday, it was already the last incense stick, and it was also the smell that the Empress Dowager was used to. The incense today was concocted by Auntie Ye. Auntie Ye was personally taught by Auntie Xu and has inherited all of her teachings. It's probably because everyone is different, and the way they make the incense is a little different. The scent is also a little different. I didn't expect the Empress Dowager to smell it."

It was obvious that Auntie Xu had served the Empress Dowager for many years, and their relationship as master and servant was extraordinary.

When the Empress Dowager heard this, she couldn't help but sigh. "Auntie Xu has been out of the palace for two to three months. She has been serving me since she was young. She knows everything I eat, wear and use. She was the one who arranged everything. One year, when the south had a drought, the production of my favorite tea decreased. It was also because she was worried that I wouldn't be used to other tea leaves, so she spent a lot of effort making medicinal tea with similar tastes..."

The Purple Essence Tea was a variant of Pu'er. It was purplish-black and glossy, which was how it got its name. It was produced in Yunnan and took more than ten days to be picked. It was rare and precious.

The fragrance of the Purple Essence Tea was pure and rich, with a hint of rose and medicinal fragrance. She liked the Purple Essence Tea. Almost all the new teas that were offered as tribute every year entered the Longevity Palace.