

## All Hail 301

### Chapter 301 Palace Examination Questions

After receiving Eldest Miss's name, the three maidservants also knelt down and thanked her.

The little girl, who had just entered the residence, had to be taught the rules for a few days first. Once her character was molded and there were no problems, she would then go to her master's house to serve her.

After seeing her, Yu Youyao returned to the house, sat down on a chair, and climbed onto the table.

Nanny Xu arranged for a few maidservants to learn the rules before returning to the house. She saw Yu Youyao crawling on the table, staring blankly at the smoke in the incense burner.

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“Are you unhappy?” Nanny Xu poured a cup of tea and handed it over.

Yu Youyao took the teacup but did not drink it. “Nanny, have you seen Hong Yu in Grandmother's house? She's very beautiful. She's the same age as Qin Xin this year and usually does some needlework. Grandmother treats her as a half sister. Many sachets, small clothes, shoes, and socks in my house are made by Hong Yu.”

Nanny Xu understood immediately.

Old Madam raised Hong Yu and kept her by her side to teach her. In the future, when Yu Youyao was close to her, Hong Yu would be sent to serve her.

After working together for a few years and building a relationship, when it was time to get married, this girl would accompany her.

She was good-looking and had been raised in the same residence since she was young. Such a maidservant was easy to control and was loyal to her master. She was also good at pleasing men. After becoming a concubine, she could help the mistress stabilize her position. She could even fight with the other concubines. In the future, when she was pregnant, she would carry on being a concubine. This child would also help the legitimate son.

No matter which family it was, they had such a maidservant.

Although the families wouldn't make a big move, they wouldn't hide it. Those who were a little older would understand what it meant.

When Yu Youyao saw Qin Xin, she understood what she was thinking.

Yu Youyao pouted. “I'm only a little old. I'm not engaged or married, but I have to help someone's husband raise a concubine in the future. Nanny, I don't like this.”

It was indeed a little inappropriate for a young lady to say such things, but Nanny Xu did not stop her—

“No one likes this. However, after marrying someone, as a daughter-in-law, you have to be filial to the elders in the family.”

“As a wife, you have to help your husband spread his roots and solve his problems. You have to manage the inner residence.”

“As the mistress, you have to manage the household and prosper the family.”

“As a woman, you should still focus on your own cultivation and take care of your dowry. This is your true confidence in establishing your family.”

“As the first wife, you should also raise your children and settle down in the inner residence.”

“What’s more, you have to be responsible for everything from the big issues to befriending others outside to the small events.

“All of this is your duty. However, in fact, once you marry someone, there’s far more you have to do. This way, you won’t have to spend too much time with your husband. No matter how deep the relationship between husband and wife is, it will be worn down by your responsibility as the first wife.”

Yu Youyao’s head went numb. “So, instead of letting those other little vixens with ulterior motives seduce him, it’s better for me to take the initiative to arrange them for him. At the very least, I don’t have to worry that the people around me will be disloyal to me.”

Nanny Xu’s rejection was written all over her face. She sighed softly. “Any young miss from a wealthy family has to go through this too.”

Yu Youyao suddenly thought of the Xie family. “My maternal family won’t be like this. The Xie family has a rule that we don’t take concubines.”

Nanny Xu felt that it was a little unorthodox for Yu Youyao to have such thoughts, but she did not stop her. “A family with such rules as the Xie Residence doesn’t exist in the capital. There are still very few families with such rules as the Yu Residence.”

With Old Madam’s doting on Yu Youyao, she wouldn’t marry that far away in the future. Furthermore, with her current reputation and upbringing, she would definitely marry into a noble family in the future and become the wife and eldest daughter-in-law.

Her future was glorious, but only those who had walked such a path knew how difficult it was.

Yu Youyao pursed her lips and did not say anything else.

She was only a little older, so she shouldn’t have mentioned such outrageous words.

Nanny Xu stroked her head again. “If you don’t like it, don’t force yourself. Other than looking outstanding, Qin Xin is also an efficient and capable person. Just take her as an ordinary maidservant.”

Yu Youyao was unwilling, so she forced herself to do it. If she separated from Qin Xin, no matter how many schemes she had, it would not work.

There was still a long way to go in the future. How could she let her suffer first because of this? She wouldn't even have a good time. It was better to let nature take its course!

Only then did Yu Youyao smile and throw herself into Nanny Xu's arms. "Thank you, Nanny!"

Nanny Xu gently touched the wooden osmanthus incense bead necklace on her neck. It was not impossible to spend more effort and teach her some principles and methods.

This matter ended here.

At dusk, the palace examination ended.

At seven o'clock, the sky turned completely dark!

The carriage in the residence had just brought Yu Shande and the others back to the residence. After taking the examination for an entire day, the few of them were helped out of the carriage by a servant. They were exhausted.

Yu Youyao quickly got someone to bring over the medicinal cuisine.

The few of them used a small bowl of medicinal cuisine to calm themselves down. Then, they asked the servant to help them into the "Jiang Zhi Courtyard" in the front courtyard to wash up. After that, they ate some light food and fell asleep.

The next day, Yu Shande and the others slept for a night and were much more energetic. They went to An Shou Hall to greet Old Madam Yu.

After the imperial examination, the entire court was closed for a day. Yu Zongzheng and Yu Zongshen were both at home.

Yu Zongzheng asked, "What question did you get yesterday?"

Yu Shande replied respectfully, "Ways to manage the vassal state."

As soon as these words were spoken, the hall instantly turned solemn.

The questions in the palace were all personally set by the emperor. Ever since King You was accused of treason, the entire court had been secretive about the people in the vassal state.

How many undercurrents were hidden in the emperor's strategy of managing the vassal state?

It was no wonder that Yu Shande and the others had collapsed after the examination. Little did they know that the emperor had set the questions with an agenda, but the candidates were taking the examination with their heads.

Zhou Linghuai lowered his eyes and gently rubbed the wooden osmanthus incense beads on his wrist, blocking the treacherous light in his eyes.

Yu Zongshen pondered for a moment and asked, "Tell me about your answers."

Yu Shande looked serious. "My answer is to govern farming. By using the wind, soil, and Qi of various places, as well as species that are suitable for farming, I encourage farming and use farming to strengthen soldiers and supplement battles. Youzhou is bitterly cold, and the soil is thin and filled with sand and stones. It should be planted with mulberries, cotton, beans, and other crops..."

Old Madam Yu lowered her eyes and had an idea.

It was neutral and peaceful, but it was also reasonable. It made sense and bypassed the sensitive territorial issues, emphasizing that agriculture was the foundation of everything.

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He had answered the question well and was capable.

However, the answer was too conservative and practical. It could only manage matters and not people.

The top scorers were used to govern people.

The second rankers were used to manage matters.

### Chapter 302 Deep Love

Usually, such questions could result in a good ranking. After going to the Hanlin Academy for two to three years, he would be released and achieve results in local governance. When he returned to the capital, he would be able to advance steadily and have a good future.

The others were also down-to-earth in their answers.

Duke Zhonglie valued agriculture, work, and business. He had even personally compiled relevant books and given them to the Yu Clan. Over the years, this was also the foundation of the Yu Clan's teachings. Just like the Four Books and Five Classics, they had to learn them.

Not only did the children of the Yu Clan have to learn, but they also had to participate in farming. They had to learn fortifications, management, and so on with the respected elders in the clan.

In this way, when encountered with such a question, it was appropriate to apply what he had learned.

Yu Zongshen smiled. "All of you answered well. Agriculture, industry, and business are the foundation of the country. You should take some time to relax. Wait for the rankings to be released!"

Although their answers were not bad, it was not necessarily what the emperor wanted to see. However, it could be seen that their answers were down-to-earth and substantial.

After receiving the affirmation, Yu Shande and the others heaved a sigh of relief, and their expressions relaxed.

However, when Yu Youyao thought of the words "managing the vassal state", she felt like a storm was brewing. She couldn't help but glance at her cousin, only to see him lowering his eyes and gently stroking the wooden osmanthus incense bead bracelet in his hand, his expression indifferent.

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After the palace examination, the capital fell silent for two to three days before it became lively again.

The candidates had gone through many tests and were also physically and mentally exhausted. Now that the dust had settled, it was inevitable that they would meet their friends to discuss the questions or go sightseeing.

As a result, the matters related to the Marquis of Changxing's Residence were like stones that had been thrown into a lake. There were some ripples, and they were immersed.

The matter of Yu Youyao being rewarded by the Empress Dowager also faded.

After a few days of peace, Yu Youyao finished embroidering the pouch and showed it to Nanny Xu. Grandma Xu smiled and said, "Eldest Miss's embroidery skills have improved a lot!"

Yu Youyao had only been learning needlework for two to three months, so her embroidery skills were not very exquisite. However, she had an extraordinary talent for matchmaking, composition, and coloring. It was rare for her embroidery to be filled with spiritual energy.

This way, its beauty was 30% due to embroidery and 50% due to spiritual energy. It was 80% of her meticulous focus.

If she practiced for another year and a half, she would almost surpass the skills of others for three to five years.

"I'm going to look for Cousin!" After receiving the praise, Yu Youyao smiled and ran out of the house with her dress.

When she arrived at the courtyard, she saw her cousin sitting under the Parasol Tree and drinking tea.

Her cousin was dressed in sky-green clothes. The color was between light blue and light green. It was really as if it was carved and polished, revealing a jade-like elegance.

Yu Youyao smiled and ran over with her dress. "Cousin, why are you here? I was just about to look for you."

Zhou Linghuai's lips curled up slightly as he rubbed the bracelet on his wrist. His gaze landed on the little girl's eyebrows. Her light gray eyebrows were like smoke, fog and the mist behind the rain. When she smiled, she looked beautiful.

She was not as elegant as before, but she exuded a faint elegance.

Noticing her cousin's gaze, Yu Youyao leaned in front of him. "Cousin, I used the green sparrow brow powder you gave me to draw my eyebrows today. Isn't it beautiful?"

The green sparrow brow powder that her cousin had made was even lighter than the dark gray that was popular on the market, with a faint smoky color. With a gentle sweep, there was a hazy spiritual color that suited her age.

Even Nanny Xu said that it looked good.

Zhou Linghuai's smile deepened. "It's very suitable for Cousin."

The green sparrow brow powder was dark gray, and it was a more solemn color. He was inspired by the smoky eyebrows of the previous dynasty to make an elegant ash color. This color was bright and beautiful, and it made people have distant eyebrows. It was really an extremely beautiful color.

He suddenly thought of the "Bodhisattva" painting. It depicted the little girl's eyebrows, so he also used this green sparrow brow powder.

Upon receiving the praise, Yu Youyao smiled. "I think it looks good too. It's as good as the brow powder that Cousin gave me previously. When Second Sister saw it yesterday and asked me for it, I couldn't bear to give it to her."

Zhou Linghuai found it funny!

A young lady was also very vain.

Every day, he only felt that eyebrows looked good with brow powder. He also felt that the little girl had used it for a long time, so he had made a new green sparrow brow powder for her and asked her to change her brow color.

Yu Youyao smiled again. "I use Cousin's eyebrow brow powder every day."

Zhou Linghuai was stunned and immediately understood. The little girl liked drawing her brows not because she wanted to show off, but because he had given her the brow makeup. Hence, she had to use it every day.

For some reason, an image suddenly appeared in her mind. His mother was sitting in front of a bronze mirror and polishing it. It reflected her mother's hazy and beautiful figure. His father had one arm around her mother's waist and the other hand was holding her eyebrows. He gently used brow powder and carefully drew her eyebrows.

Her father, who had always been rough, always had an indescribable delicateness when it came to this matter. His every move was gentle.

However, each stroke was deeply affectionate.

Her mother always complained coquettishly that her father's paintings did not look good.

Her father was not angry when he heard this. Instead, he said proudly, "The eyebrows I drew were for me to see. If I think they look good, they're really good."

For some reason, Zhou Linghuai's hands were trembling violently.

He stared at the little girl's dark eyebrows and suddenly felt a sense of paranoia. Just as he was about to investigate carefully, he saw the little girl take out a pouch.

Zhou Linghuai's gaze paused in surprise. "The sachet is embroidered so quickly."

Yu Youyao smiled and showed the pouch to her cousin. "I originally planned to embroider a sachet for you, but I made wooden osmanthus incense beads for you previously. You're a man, so it's not appropriate for you to be covered in incense like a woman, so I changed it to a pouch."

"The pouch is also very good." Zhou Linghuai smiled when he heard this.

He looked down at the wooden osmanthus incense beads in his hand. He had only worn them for a few days. It was also because he often played with it that there was a hint of lustre on the surface of the incense beads.

Yu Youyao raised her eyebrows, her sparkling eyes filled with smugness. "My embroidery skills have improved a lot. It's easy to embroider small embroidery pieces like a pouch, so it didn't take long to finish. It's not good to make Cousin wait for a long time every time."

However, she did not say that in order to embroider the pouch as soon as possible, she would embroider it as soon as she was free. She even embroidered it at night.

The smile in Zhou Linghuai's eyes suddenly deepened as he took the pouch. On one side, the branches and leaves were green and beautiful. They were lifelike. He flipped through the inner side and saw trumpet-shaped tung flowers that were beautiful and elegant.

How could it be fresh, beautiful, and elegant at the same time?!

Yu Youyao asked, "Cousin, do you like it?"

Every time she gave something, she had to ask this. She knew that no matter what she gave, he would always be happy and liked it. She had to specially ask and never ignore his feelings.

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Chapter 303 The vassal king will definitely rebel

"Of course I like it." Zhou Linghuai rubbed the embroidery on the pouch. Compared to before, the embroidery on it was much denser, and very smooth.

It seemed that she had spent a lot of effort to embroider this pouch.

Hearing her cousin say that he liked it, Yu Youyao looked at the sachet at her cousin's waist. It was the first time she had embroidered it, so she was even more disinterested. She wondered how her cousin could wear it for so long without changing his expression.

Yu Youyao quickly said, "Cousin, quickly take off the sachet and change it to the newly embroidered pouch."

Zhou Linghuai looked down at his waist. He had been wearing the sachet for a long time. As the little girl's embroidery skills were not good, the embroidery patterns on it were a little loose, and the color was not as bright as before.

After all, it was the young lady's first time embroidering. He She was used to wearing it, so he couldn't bear to take it off and change into a new one.

Yu Youyao did not know what her cousin was thinking. Seeing that he did not react, she quickly leaned over and was about to take off the sachet.

Zhou Linghuai was stunned for a moment. He subconsciously held her hand and stopped her. "I'll do it myself."

Yu Youyao pouted.

Zhou Linghuai untied the knot on his belt. Under Yu Youyao's clear gaze, he smoothed out the sachet he had taken off and stuffed it into his sleeve.

Yu Youyao's eyes widened. "Cousin, the sachet is broken. Why are you still keeping it?"

Wasn't it time to throw it away?

Zhou Linghuai smiled. "How can I throw away something that Cousin gave me so easily?!"

Yu Youyao pursed her lips. "Cousin, you're probably worried that I won't return the sachet to you after I take it, so you want to keep it yourself!"

That was indeed what she thought.

She felt that this sachet was too ugly. It was simply a dark history. It was better to get rid of it.

Zhou Linghuai smiled but said nothing.

Yu Youyao was speechless. Although she really wanted to get rid of the sachet, it wasn't appropriate for her to ask her cousin back what she had given away. Besides, she was actually quite happy that her cousin valued what she had given him.

So be it!

Anyway, her cousin wouldn't mind.

After figuring this out, Yu Youyao took the pouch. "I'll put it on Cousin."

Before her cousin could react, she had leaned over and tied the knot of the pouch to his belt. She even tied a beautiful "gift" knot.

Then, she tilted her head and looked left and right.

The pouch was embroidered very exquisitely. Coupled with her cousin's sky-green accessory, it looked like a burst of green after the rain. It matched very well. No matter how she looked at it, she felt very satisfied.

Yu Youyao sat on the stone chair and rested her chin on her hand. She smiled sweetly. "Cousin, you look very good in this pouch. You won't be a joke in the future."

Zhou Linghuai looked down, his eyes bright. He couldn't help but smile.

The two of them chatted for a while longer.

Zhou Linghuai changed the topic. "After the palace examination, it will soon be time for the triennial official appraisal. After a while, the officials who are sent out would enter the capital one after another. Your second uncle has been in the position of the assistant minister of the Ministry of Revenue for a long time. It's time to move up."

Yu Youyao did not expect her cousin to say this to her. Her eyes widened. "Move up?!"

After every examination, there would be many changes in the court. Those that needed to be moved would be moved, and those that needed to be delegated would be delegated. This was the best opportunity to promote the subordinates.

Second Uncle was Xia Yansheng's disciple. If he moved any further, he would be the Minister of Revenue. He directly passed the Second Grade and advanced two ranks in a row.

However, Xia Yansheng had been the Minister of Revenue for many years, and he was also the Grand Secretary of the East Pavilion. He was the Grand Secretary of the Cabinet, so there was no room for the Ministry of Revenue.

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "The Minister of Revenue."

"Elder Xia is going to step down as Minister?!" After saying that, Yu Youyao gasped.



If Second Uncle became the Minister of Revenue, his status in the cabinet would also improve to second only to Xia Yansheng, and he would become a true second-in-command.

On the other hand, even though Xia Yansheng had lost his position as the Minister of Revenue, he was still the cabinet's Grand Secretary.

This way, Xia Yansheng's influence in the royal court would also deepen.

She finally understood why her second uncle had been staying in the position of the assistant minister of the Ministry of Revenue for so many years. It was because he wanted to hide his talent and bide his time to take over as the minister.

However, why was her cousin suddenly talking about this?

Zhou Linghuai said calmly, "Yao Yao!"

"Huh?" Yu Youyao looked up at her cousin.

Looking at the little girl's clear and bright eyes, Zhou Linghuai suddenly fell silent.

Yu Youyao was a little suspicious. "Cousin, what's wrong?"

Zhou Linghuai's breathing tightened slightly before he said, "Most of the ministers in the cabinet are scholars who have entered the Hanlin Pavilion and have been in the Hanlin Court for a long time. They talk about literature and writing and don't have any experience in governing the country. They have talent but no knowledge. The ministers are in charge of protecting the ranks of the officials, and most of them are mediocre. The eunuchs are also in the middle. The ministers are submissive to the emperor and bow their heads to the eunuchs. They don't dare to disobey, so they corrupt politics."

"Cousin..." Yu Youyao opened her mouth. Why was her cousin suddenly telling her this?

For some reason, she suddenly felt a strong sense of uneasiness.

Zhou Linghuai continued, "Although Xia Yansheng had some achievements, he couldn't help but be accused of overstepping his authority and dictatorship. The emperor was afraid of him, so he praised the Marquis of Weining to keep him in check. Most of the court officials followed the customs in order to avoid disaster. They only tried to curry favor with the emperor to consolidate their power, but they didn't have any opinions on political matters. Politics followed the accumulation of ills. As time passed, King You was convicted of rebellion. Other than a few censors from the Imperial Court who said a few words, the entire court actually went with it and pointed fingers at him."

Yu Youyao's heart was beating wildly. Her cousin's tone was calm, as if he was just saying it casually. However, when he mentioned King You, his tone revealed a strong sense of sorrow.

She roughly knew a little about the situation in the imperial court, but she appeared calm.

Therefore, her cousin's words had a huge impact on her.

Zhou Linghuai lowered his head. As he rubbed the incense beads on his wrist, he said, "The emperor is lazy and lives deep in the inner palace. He's not involved in political matters and doesn't

see any ministers. The cabinet officials colluded and colluded with each other. The harem did political work and pretended to be a conflict between friends. It was a fierce struggle for power among the cabinet ministers. All the cabinet ministers were obtained by pushing each other out. Everyone in the court only knows how to fight but doesn't want to govern the country. The Marquis of Weining even crushed the You King and obtained 300,000 troops from Youzhou."

Yu Youyao was stunned.

King You was known as a rebel, and the entire court was secretive. She had heard a little from her father and guessed that there was probably some inside story.

However, her cousin was now saying that the reason why King You was plotting against him was because he had been schemed against by the Marquis of Weining.

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She gasped and looked at her cousin. Her mouth opened, but she didn't know what to say.

A trace of coldness appeared on Zhou Linghuai's fair lips. "Yao Yao, the vassal lords will definitely rebel. It's time for chaos in the royal court."

Yu Youyao thought of King Ping, who had already entered the capital. Her blood immediately turned cold. She looked at her cousin in a daze and asked, "Cousin, why are you telling me this?"

#### Chapter 304 Little Debt Collector

Zhou Linghuai smiled. "You'll understand soon."

Even after her cousin returned to the Qingqu Courtyard, Yu Youyao's mind was still in a mess. Her cousin's words kept echoing in her mind. "The vassal king will definitely rebel. This royal court and the world should be in chaos!"

Thinking of her cousin's casual tone when he said this, his bone-chilling expression, and his confidence in controlling everything, Yu Youyao's heart beat wildly, each beat more anxious than the last. Even her ears were filled with the sound of her heart beating like a drum.

At this moment, Chun Xiao entered the room. "Sister Qing Xiu is here to pass on a message. Old Madam wants you to go over."

Taking a deep breath, Yu Youyao finally calmed down a little. "I'll go over now."

Yu Youyao picked up her teacup and lowered her head to take a few sips. There was a hint of bitterness in the medicinal tea, and after entering her throat, there was a hint of sweetness. Drinking this when the weather was hot was good for cooling down in the heat and calming the mind.

Hence, after drinking a cup of tea, Yu Youyao completely calmed down. She stood up and tidied her clothes before bringing Chun Xiao out to An Shou Hall.

Old Madam Yu was old and could not stand the cold and heat. It was not even May, but the room had already been changed to a warm and detoxifying incense. There was a hint of medicinal bitterness mixed with a strong sandalwood fragrance. The smell was suffocating.

Yu Youyao frowned. It seemed that it was time to make the cooling summer beads she had mentioned previously.

Seeing her granddaughter come over, Old Madam Yu perked up a little, and a smile appeared on her face. "Yesterday, Madam Yang handed over the butler's key. From today onwards, you'll be in charge of the household with Grandmother."

Yu Youyao was stunned when she heard this. She quickly said, "That won't do. How can I trouble you? Nanny Liu and I will manage the family matters together. It's very appropriate. You have to recuperate carefully."

Old Madam Yu's concerned words made her smile. "Silly child, I know that my Little Yao Yao is capable and can handle everything inside and out. However, you're still young and have many things to learn and do every day. You can't not have elders in charge of the family."

Yu Youyao understood what her grandmother meant. "But Grandmother has only recovered a little..."

Previously, when Madam Yang took the initiative to hand over the butler's key, it was only for a moment. Sooner or later, the butler's key would have to be returned to Madam Yang.

Her grandmother had asked her to help manage the household so that she could take the opportunity to learn how to manage the household.

However, this time, her father had personally said that Madam Yang must hand over the butler's key. It probably wouldn't be so easy to get the key back in the future.

Her father was the head of the family. As long as he spoke, the family would not dare to refute him. A woman is to obey her father at home, her husband when she is married, and her son when her husband dies!

No matter how unwilling Madam Yang was, she did not dare to challenge the authority of the head of the family.

Therefore, her father had asked her to manage the household not just for a day or two, but for a long time.

However, in the end, she was only a growing child. This month and a half was meant for her to share the burden of her elders. It was not suitable as a long term situation.

In such a huge house, it was impossible for there to be no proper elders to manage the household.

Therefore, in the past, when her grandmother was not in good health, she could not manage the family matters at all. That was why Madam Yang was fearless and worked hard at home.

Old Madam Yu smiled and said, "Don't I still have my little granddaughter and Nanny Liu? Besides, there are rules in the family. How will I really work hard? Grandmother's health has improved a little, so it's good for her to exercise her bones."

Yu Youyao thought about it carefully. That made sense.

Old Madam Yu hugged Yu Youyao in her arms and sighed softly. "You don't know that there's a lot of logic in managing the household. I wasn't in good health in the past and didn't have much energy, so I brought you along and raised you carefully. I only doted on you and almost spoiled you. However, you fell sick, so Grandmother woke up and didn't continue to make mistakes. I asked you

to learn the principles of management from Nanny Liu and found Nanny Xu to enter the residence to raise you.”

At the mention of this, Old Madam looked afraid.

She thought about how Madam Yang was such an unbecoming person, but Yu Jianjia had her mother’s care and upbringing. She had also developed a mind of her own.

However, her Yao Yao’er had no mother since she was young. There were many principles that no one could teach her. She was nine years old and still did not know anything.

She had been smart all her life, but she had been muddle-headed for a moment. She had almost raised her granddaughter badly and harmed her for the rest of her life.

Yu Youyao shook her head. “I’m the one who’s disappointing. Just because Grandmother dotes on me, I don’t know how to improve. I’m such a big person, but I always make Grandmother worry.”

That was not the way to put it. What could a child know? She still had to rely on the upbringing of the adults.

Old Madam Yu shook her head and did not continue the topic. “No matter how shrewd Nanny Liu is in managing the household and no matter how capable Nanny Xu is, they’re all servants. There’s always a limit to what they can teach you. Some of the skills of managing others still have to be taught by the masters in the family. I’m much better now and have some energy. Naturally, I have to teach you well.”

At this point, she sighed slightly.

At the Flower Festival in the Marquis of Changxing’s Residence, Yao Yao’er had gained the reputation of being clean and honest. There was naturally no need to mention her future.

Some of the skills that Nanny Xu had taught were just small tricks. A true noblewoman still had a lot to learn. Among them, the most important thing was structure, but it was not enough.

She had to bring her along and raise her carefully.

This was probably her grandmother’s true goal. Yu Youyao nodded. “Grandmother, I understand, but I can’t tire myself out.”

Old Madam Yu nodded. “Even if it’s a little debt collector like you, you have to stay strong. I still want to live a few more years and support you for a few more years.”

Yao Yao’er, who had gained her father’s favor, would have a better future. However, Eldest Son’s personality was capricious and easy to manipulate. Besides, the court was not peaceful. How could he be counted on?

She couldn’t let Yao Yao’er lose her mother and her grandmother’s power.

Only then did Yu Youyao throw herself into her grandmother’s arms. “Grandmother, you have to be well.”

Old Madam Yu asked Nanny Liu to bring over the account book from the government. As she flipped through it, she instructed Yu Youyao, “The greatest achievement of the government is to return the courtesy of the various families in the capital...”

Yu Youyao listened carefully. She still did not know much about this matter. Nanny Liu had taught her a little previously, but the gift list had been drafted by the masters of the family and handed over to the servants to prepare. The masters had their own considerations about what gifts to send and what gifts to return. Previously, Nanny Liu had also taken the gift list made by her grandmother and only taught her the tradition of reciprocation in the residence.

After talking for a while, Old Madam Yu asked Nanny Liu to take out a treasure box. She took out the key from her sleeve and opened the treasure box.

Yu Youyao was stunned for a moment before she understood that the key to the treasure box was something that her grandmother carried with her all day long and never left her side. It seemed that the things in the treasure box were very important.

### Chapter 305 Old Bastard

Indeed!

Old Madam Yu took out a small booklet from the treasure box. This is a list of the various families that the Yu Residence has interacted with in the capital. There are some relations on the surface and some in the dark. It looks like a small booklet, but the relationships inside are complicated. It involves the family, the clan, the government, and the henchmen. If we were not careful, we can cause a huge disaster

Grandmother Yu Youyao was a little surprised. She opened her mouth, wanting to ask why her grandmother suddenly told her this.

Old Madam Yu patted her hand and continued, You have to be clear about this before you know how to manage relationships, how to grasp the limits, how to weigh the severity of the situation, and how to weigh the pros and cons. You will understand that everything has its limits. This is called mind power, and it's also something I want to teach you.

!!

Yu Youyao's heart skipped a beat again. Then, she recalled what her cousin had said to her previously and felt a little uneasy.

To put it bluntly, what her grandmother wanted to teach was the power of the Yu Residence in the royal court.

Old Madam Yu only taught her for an hour before she felt a little tired and did not continue. The words mind games sounded simple, but it involved the Yu Residence, the Yu Clan, diplomacy, court affairs, and strife. It was a very huge matter concerning almost the entire imperial court. It was not easy to learn, and it still had to be learned step by step.

Yu Youyao roughly remembered what her grandmother had taught her and returned to the Jade Courtyard in a daze.

Ever since the Flower Festival in the Marquis of Changxings Residence, many things had changed. Her cousin had mentioned the matters of the royal court to her without hiding anything. He had even said that the vassal lords would definitely rebel, and it was time for the royal court and the world to be in chaos.

Meanwhile, her grandmother had also forcefully perked up and taught her the mind games. This was a method of inducing change.

She couldn't bear to think about what it all meant.

The only thing she could do was to learn what her grandmother had taught her.

Yu Youyao forced herself to perk up. Then, she thought of how Madam Yang had handed over the butler's key. It had been a few days since the palace examination, so it was time for Yu Shansi to move into the courtyard.

Thinking of Yu Shansi, Yu Youyao called Xia Tao over. When will the Songtao Courtyard be repaired?

This matter was left to Xia Tao.

Xia Tao explained the situation in the Songtao Courtyard and said, Master takes the Songtao Courtyard very seriously. Just now, after leaving the government office, he specially went over to take a look and made some requests. I reckon it will take another three to five days to finish repairing.

Yu Youyao frowned. This was taking longer than she had expected.

At this rate, the Songtao Courtyard would be ready when the Dragon Boat Festival started. Her father clearly wanted Yu Shansi to move in before the festival.

However, as time passed, it was inevitable that trouble would arise.

Yu Shansi was her father's only legitimate son. From the moment he was born, Madam Yang had been watching him closely, afraid that something would happen to him.

Yu Youyao and Yu Shansi did not have much interaction and usually avoided each other. They rarely met in the same residence.

However, there were too many people in the residence, and she had Xia Tao by her side, so she more or less knew that Yu Shansi had been pampered since he was young. Even though he was young, he was not easy to get along with. Previously, because the palace examination was imminent, Madam Yang and Yu Jianjia also knew the severity of the matter, so they naturally did not dare to let him cause trouble.

But now that the palace examination had passed, the matter of moving courtyards probably wouldn't be so smooth.

Yu Shansi naturally did not dare to cause trouble in front of his father.

But that might not be the case for her!

If he really caused a commotion, the people involved would be the only legitimate son they valued and the eldest daughter of the first wife whom they did not dote on much. Everyone knew what was important and what was not.

Yu Youyao had a headache. Keep an eye on Fourth Young Master these few days.

At this moment, the fourth brother that Yu Youyao was talking about, Yu Shansi, had been slapped by the teacher again. In front of the teacher, he smashed all the brushes, ink, paper, and inkstones on the ground and ran back to the main courtyard.

After handing over the butlers key, Madam Yang was deep in thought. She didn't know when she would be able to get it back. From now on, the household would be under Yu Youyaos control. She felt uncomfortable and stayed in her room.

Nanny Li was worried that Madam would have a headache, so she did not dare to mention this matter. She sent someone to look for Third Miss. Although Fourth Young Master was arrogant, he was willing to listen to Third Miss.

Previously, Eldest Master had asked Fourth Young Master to move into the courtyard. When Fourth Young Master received the news, he cried and wanted to look for Eldest Master.

Seeing that the palace examination was imminent, there was nothing more serious than this. How could she let Fourth Young Master cause a commotion? If Eldest Master found out, he would definitely reprimand First Madam for not knowing how to raise her children.

First Madam was also shocked. She tugged at Fourth Young Master and tried her best to persuade him, but to no avail.

In the end, it was Third Miss who persuaded her.

Hence, she stopped for a while.

Once the habit of smashing things was developed, it became an addiction. Every time he was angry, he had to smash things.

As soon as Yu Shansi returned to the house, he started smashing things.

As soon as Yu Jianjia walked into the house, she heard banging sounds coming from the inner room. There was also Yu Shansi cursing old man and old bastard.

Although they were in the main courtyard, Old Madam and Yu Youyao were now managing the household together. If anyone heard this

Yu Jianjia hurriedly called out, Fourth Brother, then lifted the curtain and entered the room.

The room was in a mess. Yu Shansis personal servant, Mo Cai, covered his swollen face and stood at the side with his head lowered, not even daring to breathe loudly.

After all, she was a six-year-old child. After throwing a tantrum, Yu Shansi felt a little better. When he saw his sister coming over, his eyes lit up. Sister, you havent recovered from your sprained ankle. Why are you still here to visit me?

As he spoke, he had already leaned over.

m much better. I can walk a few steps now. Its nothing important. Yu Jianjia smiled and stroked her brothers head. Who made Fourth Young Master angry again?

At the mention of this, the smile on Yu Shansi's face disappeared, and he looked furious. It was Teacher Li. He asked me to memorize the text. When I memorized a few things wrong, he wanted to hit my hand. He had already received Mother's money, so why should he hit my hand? How dare he?

Yu Jianjia stroked her brother's hair from time to time with a gentle smile on her face. Father values Fourth Brother's homework, so he thinks that if Teacher Li is more rigid and strict, he can better enlighten Fourth Brother and fulfill his responsibilities as a teacher. That's why he invited Teacher Li into the residence to enlighten Fourth Brother.

Fourth Brother was pampered by his mother. Only his father could shock him in this residence.

As expected, after hearing his sister's words, Yu Shansi's face fell. He was no longer angry, but he was still indignant. That old man relied on the fact that Father invited him over, so I didn't dare to do anything to him. He just treated me like a tyrant. I'm Father's only legitimate son. How can I be punished by him every other day?

### Chapter 306 Mu Jin's Death

At this point, Yu Shansi looked up at his sister. "Sister, I don't like Teacher Li. Tell Father to change me to a new teacher, okay?"

Yu Jianjia sighed softly. "Fourth Brother, although Teacher Li is a rigid person, he's very knowledgeable. Even if Mother asks, he can't be changed."

If she could, her mother would have changed his teacher long ago. How could she let Fourth Brother be punished every day?

Yu Shansi looked disappointed and said nothing with a dark expression.

Yu Jianjia looked helpless. "Fourth Brother, you're not young anymore. You should know some things. Learn from the teacher. Things are different now. It was a little inappropriate for you to be like this in front of Teacher Li. In the past, you had a mother who took care of the family and covered for you, so Father wouldn't look for you."

These words stunned Yu Shansi. "Doesn't Mother manage the household now?"

Yu Jianjia nodded sadly. "Eldest Sister's reputation was almost ruined at the Flower Festival in the Marquis of Changxing's Residence, so he vented his anger on Mother and asked her to hand over the right to manage the household. From now on, the family will be managed by Grandmother and Eldest Sister."

During this period of time, Yu Shansi had heard many servants in the residence say that Yu Youyao had received rewards and praise from the Empress Dowager just because she had participated in a flower festival.

Although he was young, he was not a fool.

Yu Youyao had benefited. Not only had her sister, who had also participated in the flower festival, sprained her ankle, but she had also been punished by her father to copy many teachings.

Her mother was also angry with her father. Every day, she had to go to her grandmother's house to set the rules. She even handed over the butler's key.



He often heard his mother hiding in her room and scolding Yu Youyao, saying that she was the one who had caused all of this.

He couldn't help but hate Yu Youyao.

Yu Jianjia coughed lightly and looked helpless. "I shouldn't have said this to you in the first place, but you're not young anymore. You should know the severity of the matter. If word gets out that you're not learning well and disrespecting your teacher, no one will help cover it up. If Grandmother finds out, Father will definitely hear about it. At that time, he'll definitely be angry."

When Yu Shanyan heard this, he instantly understood.

After harming his mother and sister, Yu Youyao was going to harm him. He immediately looked angry. "Mother is right. Yu Youyao is clearly a scourge."

Yu Jianjia was shocked and quickly said, "Fourth Brother, how can you say that? Eldest Sister is the eldest daughter of the first wife. You should respect her. You shouldn't call her by her name. If Father hears this, he'll definitely reprimand you."

Every word and sentence was said earnestly, and she was thinking for her younger brother. However, Yu Shansi was furious when he heard this. "I'm Father's only legitimate son. I'm not afraid of her. If Father finds out, he can let Yu Youyao see who Father sides with and see if she dares to harm us in the future."

Yu Jianjia's scalp went numb when she heard this. She covered her mouth and coughed until her face turned red. "Fourth Brother, how can you think that way? In a while, you will move to the Songtao Courtyard in the front courtyard. How can Mother and I be at ease with you living alone?"

At the mention of moving into the courtyard, Yu Shansi was even angrier. He had originally found it strange that his father had suddenly asked him to move into the front courtyard when he was living well in the main courtyard.

Only then did he suddenly understand that this was definitely Yu Youyao's scheme to harm him.

Yu Shansi was furious. As his sister coughed, she said, "There's order in seniority. Eldest Sister is the eldest, and we're younger siblings. As siblings, we should respect her. If you quarrel with her, no matter how much Father dotes on you, he'll still be angry with you. Grandmother dotes on Eldest Sister, so you'll definitely be the one at a disadvantage. Now that Father is angry with Mother and has punished me, no one will help you. Are you trying to anger me to death?"

When Yu Shansi heard that his sister had finished speaking, he started coughing violently again. He immediately panicked. "Sister, don't be angry. I-I'll listen to you and not cause trouble with you..."

When Yu Jianjia heard this, her coughing eased a little, and a gratified expression appeared on her face. "Fourth Brother has grown up. He knows how to dote on Sister..."

Unknowingly, it was May.

The roses and roses in the corner of the Jade Courtyard bloomed brightly.

The parasol tree was as green as jade, and its green cover was like a cloud. There were yellow and green trumpet flowers blooming between the branches. Long stamens fell from the leaves, but they were beautiful and swaying.

The weather became hotter day by day. In her spare time, Yu Youyao made medicinal tea and medicinal fragrance to relieve the heat. She even sent some to the second branch.

The cooling bracelet was also being made.

However, the cooling medicinal fragrance beads were not easier to make than the wood rhinoceros incense beads. Previously, the process was also simple, and it was easy to make. It only took three to five days.

The making of the medicinal fragrance beads was complicated to begin with, and the Cooling Beads were even more so. There were more than 30 types of medicinal herbs alone, including more than 20 expensive medicinal herbs. In addition, they also needed to be mixed with medicinal herbs, spices, and so on. The process of making them included washing, steaming, simmering, soaking, baking, frying, boiling, and dozens of other types.

The agarwood had to be soaked in rose juice;

Sandalwood needed to be dipped in wine and stir-fried on the stove;

Rhubarb and Ligusticum striatum needed to be steamed.

The most troublesome ones were still dried Chrysanthemums, Chinese goldthread, Forsythia, Simpleleaf chastetree, Angelica dahurica, Phellodendron amurense, and so on. They needed to be fried and boiled three times to make paste.

Not only that, but she also had to pay special attention to the fire strength. If there was even the slightest mistake, all her previous efforts would be wasted.

This was the first time Yu Youyao had made such a complicated medicinal fragrance bead. It would take more than three to five days to make it, so she wasn't in a hurry.

At this moment, Liu'er came over. "Young Miss, Miss Mu Jin is gone."

"Gone?" Yu Youyao was stunned when she heard this. Then, she realized what Liu'er meant by "gone." "What happened?"

How could a perfectly fine person disappear just like that?

Liu'er said, "Miss Mu Jin had made a mistake previously and was punished by Old Madam, so she has been locked up in the Windfall Courtyard to wait to be assigned. During this period of time, there were too many things to do at home, so no one cared about this matter. Perhaps it was because she had been locked up for too long and had let her imagination run wild, so she took it too hard and had the intention to die. Today, she begged the old maid guarding the gate of the Windfall Courtyard to visit First Madam. The old maid guarding the gate received Old Madam's permission and let Miss Mu Jin out. Unexpectedly, when Miss Mu Jin returned to her room, she swallowed rat poison. When she was discovered, she was already dead."

Yu Youyao's breathing tightened. "Where did she get the rat poison?"

Mu Jin used to be Madam Yang's most capable maidservant, and her temperament and methods were also powerful. She did not seem to be someone who would end her own life.

Liu'er explained, "Every once in a while, the residence has to use rat poison. This medicine is also always available, and ordinary servants can't come into contact with it. However, Miss Mu Jin used to be First Madam's eldest maidservant, so she definitely has it."

### Chapter 307 Going to Hell

Thinking of what had happened to Cao'er, it was still unknown if she had swallowed the medicine herself.

Liu'er did not dare to say anything else.

At this point, Yu Youyao understood that regardless of whether Mu Jin was looking for the short sword or not, she should not interfere in this matter.

Mu Jin had made a mistake and was punished by her grandmother. However, she would still be a member of the main courtyard. In name, she would still be Madam Yang's servant girl.

!!

Although she was in charge of the household, as Madam Yang was her stepmother, she still had to avoid involving Madam Yang.

In this world, there was no daughter who brazenly interfered with her mother.

Not to mention, now that someone had died while she was managing the household, it was even more difficult for her to get involved. If she was not careful, she would be in trouble.

Yu Youyao felt a chill in her heart. "Have you investigated everything?"

Liu'er nodded. "When the old maids in the servants' room realized that Miss Mu Jin was no longer breathing, they immediately reported it to Old Madam. Old Madam interrogated the servants who had come into contact with Miss Mu Jin today and confirmed that Miss Mu Jin had eaten the rat poison herself."

Yu Youyao did not say anything for a long time. She stared blankly at the fine powder on the plate.

Although she had eaten the rat poison herself...

However, there was still a way to explain how and how she had eaten it.

After her grandmother asked about Mu Jin's death, she did not plan to investigate further.

The death of a little girl was an insignificant matter.

However, if anything was involved, it would be a huge matter that concerned the family's reputation.

When wealthy families encountered such a matter, most of them would settle it peacefully. This concerned human lives, so it might cause a huge commotion.

Yu Youyao's breathing tightened as she asked hoarsely, "Why didn't you come over earlier to report?"

According to Liu'er, it had been some time since Mu Jin had died. Now that she was helping to manage the family, she shouldn't have delayed reporting until now.

Liu'er lowered her head and quickly explained, "Old Madam has instructed that Eldest Miss is young. Such a messy inner residence issue shouldn't stain your hands. She asked me to tell you after it's settled."

Yu Youyao came to a realization. It was indeed not good for a daughter who had yet to marry to get involved in these private matters of the inner residence.

Logically speaking, Mu Jin had swallowed the rat poison because she hadn't thought it through. This was the best situation.

Mu Jin had signed a contract to sell herself. Whether she lived or died was the Yu Residence's business.

However, when she thought about how Mu Jin's life had been lost just like that, Yu Youyao felt a little uncomfortable.

No matter what Mu Jin had done in the past, no matter if her death had anything to do with Madam Yang, Mu Jin had served Madam Yang for more than ten years. They had been master and servant for many years. Even if she did not make any contributions, she had worked hard. She did not expect to end up like this.

The coldness of the human heart was inevitable.

Yu Youyao closed her eyes and left the incense room. She returned to her room to change her clothes before bringing Liu'er to the servants' room in the side courtyard of the main courtyard.

Now that someone had died in the house, Grandmother had already ordered someone to guard the door of the servants' room early in the morning. She had also informed the other servants. Everyone did their jobs obediently and did not dare to bring this up.

However, it was inevitable that they felt sad!

Although Mu Jin had made a mistake, it was not a huge mistake. Old Madam was not a harsh person. Even if Mu Jin was matched with someone, she would not have an outcome that was too bad. She could continue to live in the outer courtyard.

How could she have taken it too hard and swallowed the rat poison?

Previously, Mother Yang and Steward Zhou had almost been sent to the government by First Madam because of their greed for the money in the residence. It was only when Eldest Miss had stepped forward that the two of them had a way out.

Mu Jin used to be First Madam's most capable person. She was such a dignified person. However, she had died silently.

Seeing Eldest Miss coming over, the two old maids quickly opened the door.

Yu Youyao entered the courtyard, where her grandmother sat with a dark expression.

Yang Shuwan sat at the side and lowered her head to wipe her tears. "Why is this girl so stupid? Even if she's in the outer courtyard and has a partner, she can still continue to serve in the residence. Why did she take it so hard and swallow the medicine just like that?"

She kept mentioning that Mu Jin had made a mistake and only mentioned that Old Madam Yu had punished her. If those who did not know the truth heard this, they would think that Old Madam did not give her a way out and forced her to death.

Old Madam Yu closed her eyes and twirled her prayer beads. When she saw Yu Youyao coming over, she opened her eyes. "You're still young, so don't interfere."

She sighed inwardly.

Someone like her, who had lived for most of her life, had seen everything. However, every time she saw a dead person, she would panic from the bottom of her heart, and she couldn't sleep for a few days.

How could a half-grown child like Yao Yao be calm after seeing a dead person?

Yu Youyao nodded and asked about Mu Jin's death.

Initially, she had only come over to take a look. After all, she was in charge of the house now. There were many things that she could not avoid.

Old Madam Yu also sighed. "... I originally thought that she was getting on in years and had more thoughts. Furthermore, she was a girl who had made a mistake, so I planned to carefully find someone who could let her live a good life in the outer courtyard for her to settle down with. I didn't expect this girl to be so stubborn."

Yu Youyao understood immediately.

If she was casually matched with someone, why would she need to search? Her grandmother also wanted to help her find a good family, so she delayed this matter.

Old Madam Yu twirled her prayer beads and said softly, "What a sin!"

Yu Youyao's eyes flickered as she said in a low voice, "Grandmother, who were you planning to pair Mu Jin with?"

Old Madam Yu said, "He's Carpenter Zhao's son from the outer courtyard. He's an honest and sincere person. He's just turned 20 this year, three years younger than Mu Jin. It's said that when a woman is three years older, she can hug gold bricks. Carpenter Zhao's family has an ancestral carpentry skill that they have to use in the residence. With this skill, his future won't be bad. I originally planned to look for Carpenter Zhao in two days to talk about this. Who knew..."

He was indeed a good person!

After her cousin entered the residence, the carpentry work in The Green House was also done by the Zhao father and son. They had good skills and they did their best. It was obvious that her grandmother had put in a lot of effort.

Yu Youyao held her grandmother's hand. "She's not blessed then."

Carpenter Zhao was useful in the residence. No matter where a craftsman was, he would be valued. He was better than a maidservant who served tea. When Mu Jin went to the outer courtyard, she could also live a decent life. How could it be worse than being in the main courtyard?

As the grandfather and granddaughter spoke, they ignored Yang Shuwan, who was lowering her head and wiping her tears.

Yang Shuwan couldn't even cry.

...

She had delayed and refused to hand over the butler's key, not only because she really did not want to hand it over, but also because the matter with Mu Jin had yet to be resolved. She was worried that after Yu Youyao took charge of the family, she would not be able to interfere in this matter.

After making some arrangements, she handed over the butler's key.

#### Chapter 308 Without Arousing Suspicion

After Mu Jin was locked up in Windfall Courtyard, the servants gloated and mocked her—

She had sent someone to keep an eye on Windfall Courtyard. When she heard two old maids talking about Mu Jin, she secretly sent an old maid who used to be on good terms with her over to deliver something to her.

Old Madam locked Mu Jin up, but she did not forbid others from visiting her. Usually, it was fine to send some food over.

As soon as the old woman entered Windfall Courtyard, she heard a sarcastic remark. "She's been locked up for so long. I wonder what kind of person she'll be matched with. She was such a glorious person in the past. Tsk tsk, how pitiful..."

!!

When the old woman heard this, she was furious. She raised her voice and shouted, "What are you talking about? Mu Jin was just discovered lazing around. That's why Old Madam punished her. It's been so long, but Old Madam hasn't matched Mu Jin with anyone. Mu Jin is from the main courtyard after all, and she's First Madam's most capable maidservant. She's served First Madam for more than ten years. Even if she hasn't contributed much, she's still worked hard. First Madam has always thought of Miss Mu Jin's kindness and has mentioned her a lot recently."

The next day, Mu Jin said that she wanted to meet her. It was obvious that she had taken her words to heart. She wanted to see her and plead with her. Perhaps she wouldn't have to be matched with someone.

Mu Jin had been locked up for a few days. After leaving Windfall Courtyard, she definitely had to return to her room to wash up and eat something.

She arranged for someone to send the soup mixed with rat poison to Mu Jin.

Mu Jin ate it without realizing it. After taking her last breath, Nanny Li quietly went over to clean up the scene.

All of this was arranged so that no one knew.

Even Old Madam couldn't find anything.

At this moment, Yu Youyao had finished talking to her grandmother. She turned to look at Madam Yang and said gently, "I know that Mother feels terrible. Mu Jin started when she was seven or eight years old and has been serving in Mother's courtyard. She has a deep master-servant relationship with Mother. Previously, Mu Jin lazed around and made a mistake. Mother was also furious, so she agreed to drag Mu Jin out to be matched with someone. Who would have thought that Mu Jin was

also a loyal maidservant? Before she died, she still missed Mother. She probably felt that she could no longer serve Mother in the future, so she took the medicine.”

That day, Mu Jin had disrupted her birthday banquet and lied that she had been lazy, taking all the responsibility on herself and taking the blame off Madam Yang.

Her grandmother accepted it and used it to matchmake Mu Jin.

Mu Jin was also stubborn and insisted that it was her fault.

Grandmother remembered that Mu Jin was Madam Yang’s eldest maidservant. It wasn’t appropriate for her to deal with her casually, so she asked Madam Yang for her opinion.

It was also Madam Yang who did not care about their master-servant relationship and said, “I don’t dare to have such a sly servant anymore, so I will follow Old Madam’s instructions.”

It would also cut off Mu Jin’s future prospects.

Today, before she died, Mu Jin had said that she wanted to meet First Madam. She had been sent to An Shou Hall using the words of the old maid from the Windfall Courtyard. Many people must have known about this.

Yu Youyao was right.

Yang Shuwan opened her mouth, afraid that she would make more mistakes if she said too much. She only said hoarsely, “How would I know? This girl is so stubborn. I regret it so much...”

Initially, it was also because the old maids were guarding the Windfall Courtyard that it was not convenient for them to make a move. That was why they had set up a trap and asked for Mu Jin to be released from the Windfall Courtyard.

Who would have thought that Yu Youyao, this scourge, would use this excuse and push Mu Jin’s death onto her? Although she did not say that it was her fault, she knew very well how Mu Jin had died. How could she feel comfortable?

Yu Youyao sighed slightly. “Mother, don’t be sad. I still have to rely on you to manage Mu Jin’s funeral. Only then will there be a master-servant relationship. Mother, you have to be there.”

This was all an insignificant matter in Madam Yang’s house. She did not want to interfere, nor did she want her grandmother to work hard over this matter. Madam Yang should handle it herself.

Old Madam Yu’s eyes darkened. “Yao Yao is right. After all, you and Mu Jin have been master and servant for more than ten years. You should be in charge of her funeral. You don’t have to come to An Shou Hall to set the rules these few days.”

Madam Yang lowered her head and couldn’t help but tighten her grip on her handkerchief.

Mu Jin was already dead, and she did not want to get involved in the matter of her death again. However, Yu Youyao and Old Madam were in cahoots, so she had no choice but to get involved.

Initially, she had said that she couldn’t just roll up a mat and have a mass burial.

Yang Shuwan thought about the cause of Mujin's death, and also recalled that she was the one who finished the task with a broken mat. Now she had to come forward in person and her scalp was tingling anxiously.

Yu Youyao helped Old Madam Yu back to An Shou Hall.

Old Madam Yu tilted her head to look at her granddaughter. She had been silent the entire way and sighed softly. "Do you think this matter shouldn't be let go so easily?"

In the end, she was still young and inexperienced. Her heart was soft.

She did not even think about it. All these years, Mu Jin had done a lot of evil by following Madam Yang.

In the past, there was a maidservant in the main courtyard who seemed to be called Cao'er. She seemed to have quarreled with Mu Jin for a while before she complained to Madam Yang, saying that Cao'er had seduced Eldest Master in the courtyard.

Coincidentally, Cao'er was slender and looked delicate. When Madam Yang found out about this, how could she let her off?

In a few days, Cao'er fell sick.

In the end, she even lost her life.

Mu Jin's current outcome was not worth pitying.

Yu Youyao shook her head. "That's how it should be handled."

A life had been lost in the family. In order to prevent further complications, they had to resolve the matter quickly. Only then could the impact of the matter be minimized.

No one cared if an insignificant girl was dead or alive.

Whichever family in the capital had such a situation, it would be dealt with like this.

Moreover, since Madam Yang could do this, she was confident that she wouldn't let anyone catch her red-handed. This concerned a human life, so she couldn't say anything without evidence.

Even if Madam Yang was careless and someone caught her red-handed, so what?

Mu Jin's indenture was in Madam Yang's hands, and she was also a servant girl who had made a mistake. As the mistress, Madam Yang had the right to deal with her. It was also because her methods were too cruel that even the family had to help cover it up, in case word got out and the reputation of the residence was damaged.

Old Madam Yu patted her granddaughter's hand and sighed softly. "Whoever has sinned, karma will get back at them. If you don't want to bear the karma, don't ever do such a shameful thing."

"I understand, Grandmother." Yu Youyao lowered her head. It wasn't that she sympathized with Mu Jin, but she just didn't agree with Madam Yang's disregard for human lives and heartless actions.

Even so, she felt her teeth turn cold.



That afternoon, Yang Shuwan ordered someone to report the cause of Mu Jin's death to the government office, and they sent someone over to remove her.

After that, the residence prepared a thin coffin and invited a few Daoists to hold a funeral. They asked Nanny Li to send Mu Jin back to her own family and asked her parents to bury her.

It was done quickly and did not take much effort.

Mu Jin was just a maidservant. It was inauspicious for her to die in the residence.

...

### Chapter 309 Duke Zhonglie

The Yu Residence was only willing to help with the funeral arrangements because they were kind. If she encountered a harsher family, they would roll her up in a mat and throw it into the mass grave.

A living human life was like a stone thrown into a lake.

Yu Youyao had been learning the "mind games" from her grandmother for an hour. Old Madam Yu was a little tired, so she asked Bai Kui to get a box and handed it to Yu Youyao.

Yu Youyao asked curiously, "Grandmother, what is this?"

!!

Old Madam Yu smiled and said, "It's a few books left behind by our ancestor. Just like the Four Books and Five Classics, they're also books that the descendants of the Yu family have to read. Although you're a woman, you'll be in charge of the family business in the future. Naturally, you have to know more about the things inside so that the servants won't mess around."

Yu Youyao understood immediately.

The ancestor that her grandmother was talking about was "Duke Zhonglie" who was known as the "First Minister of the Six Dynasties." After the descendants of wealthy families were enlightened, the first thing they learned was family history.

From this moment on, it was closely related to the rise and fall of the family.

In the future, her every word and action had to prioritize the honor of her family. She could not do anything that would humiliate her ancestors and betray her ancestors.

The Yu Clan also had very complicated feelings towards "Duke Zhonglie." There was respect, admiration, and resentment. The name "Duke Zhonglie" was like a monument on the back of the Yu Clan.

Generation after generation, the Yu Clan was almost suffocated.

Due to their Duke Zhonglie, the Yu Clan's reputation was unprecedented. The previous emperors of the Great Zhou also treated the Yu Clan well.

It was also because of their Duke Zhonglie that the Yu Clan had gone from prosperity to decline.

Furthermore, because of the reputation of "Duke Zhonglie", the Yu Clan had been treading on thin ice for many years. They were cautious and low-key, afraid that if they made a mistake, they would disgrace their ancestors' reputation and cause the world to poke their backs.

Yu Shande was quite talented, but he encountered the phrase “ruling the vassal state.” Due to the monument on Madam Yu, he could only answer farming questions.

Whether he succeeded or failed, it would be due to the same person!

Old Madam Yu sighed slightly. “Read these books well when you go back. I don’t ask you to understand them now. If you learn them, you have to read carefully to understand them.”

Yu Youyao nodded and asked Chun Xiao to carry the box back to the Jade Courtyard.

There was a stack of books in the box. There were a total of 12 books. Nine of them were written by Duke Zhonglie, and the other three scripts were “Heavenly Works.”

Yu Youyao knew this book.

When she was young, the elders in class had specially mentioned this book.

This book was highly praised by its ancestors, who called it the work of a “rich and powerful citizen.” It was the only “encyclopedia” in thousands of years.

It was also because of this book that after Duke Zhonglie became an official, he placed great importance on agriculture, industry, and business. Later on, he wrote many related books, all of which were also influenced by Heavenly Works.

Yu Youyao took the first book and opened it.

The words in the book were easy to understand, but the amount of knowledge was too great. Most of the knowledge involved was on a level that she did not understand, so it was really difficult to read.

However, “Heavenly Works” was indeed a rare and extremely practical book on the market. For example, the first volume, “The Valley”, talked about soil, climate, and cultivation methods for farming.

It was not dry and boring to read.

After reading for a while, Yu Youyao was a little tired. She might as well get someone to remove the book in her hand—

Yu Youyao was stunned for a moment before she looked up and saw her cousin flipping through the Heavenly Works. “Heavenly Works is indeed a rare and good book. Back then, when Duke Zhonglie read this book, he left behind the words, ‘I caught a glimpse of it and knew the entire picture, so that everything in the world is in my hands’.”

At this point, he paused and continued—

“After Duke Zhonglie became an official, the previous dynasty was filled with internal and external troubles. It was rotten. He vigorously developed agriculture, industry, and business, reformed the court’s politics, rose and fell, and turned the tide. He prolonged the reign of the previous dynasty, but was accused of overstepping his authority. He was ostracized and framed by traitors, causing

the regime to split. At this moment, the previous dynasty was embroiled in a war, and external and internal troubles erupted. It was already impossible to reverse the situation, so there was the matter of regicide.”

The previous dynasty had perished because of the internal and external conflicts between the court officials.

And how similar was the current Great Zhou Dynasty to the previous dynasty?

With Xia Yansheng to balance the royal court and the government, and Yu Zongshen to manage the Ministry of Revenue, so what if the treasury was empty?

Once internal troubles erupted, external troubles would definitely arise. It was time for the Imperial Court and the world to be in chaos.

Yu Youyao was curious. “Cousin, you’ve also read Heavenly Works?”

Zhou Linghuai nodded. “Duke Zhonglie feels that the principles of the Four Books and Five Classics are profound and biased towards teaching. The Daoist Canon is mysterious and biased towards management. A scholar studies hard, but his limbs are not diligent. How can he manage the royal court and calm the world? On the other hand, Heavenly Works is practical, and it makes up for this. Therefore, this book is very respected among scholars. Most people will read it.”

Yu Youyao was enlightened and immediately perked up. “Cousin, Grandmother gave me a box of books today and asked me to read them well. However, only one book, ‘Heavenly Works’, is the most basic. It’s already very difficult for me to read it. I haven’t read more than a few pages in an hour.”

Seeing the little girl looking at him expectantly, Zhou Linghuai couldn’t help but laugh. “Although Heavenly Works is basic, it has a lot of knowledge. It’s normal for it to be difficult to read. In the future, I’ll take an hour every day to help you interpret it so that it’ll be easier.”

Yu Youyao held her cousin’s arm and smiled sweetly, as if she had honey in her mouth. “Cousin, you’re so good. Fortunately, I have you. Otherwise, I would be exhausted from learning so much every day.”

At this point, she couldn’t help but pout.

Now that she had learned more, her knowledge was also increasing. Even her scalp felt numb, and she looked bitter.

Sigh, it was really too difficult for her.

Ever since the Flower Festival at the Marquis of Changxing’s Residence, everything had changed.

Zhou Linghuai couldn’t help but frown. “Don’t push yourself too hard.”

Sensing her cousin’s worry, Yu Youyao quickly shook her head and said, “Nanny Xu has helped me arrange my daily study schedule again. The etiquette time has been reduced by ten minutes. The pharmacology class has been canceled. It has been combined with medicinal fragrances, medicinal tea, and medicinal cuisine to be taught together for a total of two hours a day. The needlework class has also been canceled and tracing words has been added. This way, I’ll be studying for about two hours a day.”

“In addition, Cousin guides me in my studies, helps me practice calligraphy, and teaches me the zither every day for about two hours.”

“It takes about two hours to manage the household, look at the accounts, and do some miscellaneous things.”

“I took a nap and read for about an hour...”

“Are you tired?” Zhou Linghuai’s frown deepened. She still had to go for school for four hours in the morning.

### Chapter 310 Protecting You

After calculating, the little girl was busy every day for a total of 14 hours. She only had 10 hours to rest and did not even have time to play.

Yu Youyao thought for a moment. “There’s still more time. If I can maintain sleep for more than four hours a day, I won’t feel tired during the day.”

In the past, with her grandmother protecting her, she wanted to be a carefree little fish.

But!

After a nightmare, she looked at the people around her seriously and realized that people without strength were not qualified to be free small fish.

Because they would be eaten!

Ms. Ye was right. It was always good to learn more principles at such a young age.

Fortunately, with her cousin around, it wouldn’t be too difficult for her to learn anything. Otherwise, how could she take it?

It was great to have a cousin! The little girl looked at her cousin with sparkling eyes, filled with admiration and gratitude.

Zhou Linghuai pursed his lips. He still remembered the day he first entered the Yu Residence—

The little girl sat beside Old Madam Yu. She was small, exquisite, round, and smooth. She was a little “rounder” than the other young mistresses in the residence, and she looked delicate and bright.

It had only been three months! She had already lost weight.

The petite girl had also grown a lot taller. Even the carefreeness in her eyes had been replaced by a fierce glow. She was already like a big girl.

Zhou Linghuai’s heart trembled. “In the future, you’ll learn the zither every three days. You’re young, so it’s good for you to learn more, but you still have to play.”

In the past, she had been such a delicate, lazy, greedy, and playful person. Unknowingly, she had grown up to the point where she could take responsibility. However, he did not feel relieved at all.

His heart ached for her.

Yu Youyao tilted her head and smiled. “Cousin, you’re so impressive. As your cousin, I naturally can’t embarrass you. Even if I can’t be as impressive as you, I have to learn more.”

So, all of this was because of him?

Zhou Linghuai's heart trembled. "You don't have to force yourself. I'll have never asked you to..."

I've never asked you to do anything you don't like for me.

I just want to protect you and make you happy for the rest of your life.

Protect your heart that's like glass, pure and flawless!

Yu Youyao shook her head and interrupted her cousin. "I'm not forcing myself. Cousin spends a lot of time teaching me every day. Although I'm the one who has to learn, the one who's suffering is Cousin."

She had notes written by her cousin for her studies every day, so it wasn't difficult for her to learn them. Now that she wanted to learn Heavenly Works, she also had her cousin to help her interpret it.

The person who was really suffering was her cousin.

She felt a little sorry for her cousin.

Zhou Linghuai stroked her hair gently. "I don't have anything else to do now. While guiding you, I can also revise and learn new things. That's good. I don't feel tired."

Yu Youyao looked at her cousin and smiled.

In the blink of an eye, the Dragon Boat Festival was approaching.

This was a rare grand event in the capital. Every year, during the Dragon Boat Festival, the capital would be lively. Everyone prayed for the wind and rain to be smooth, to eliminate illnesses and disasters, and to avoid evil and filth.

On the Dragon Boat Festival, there were traditions in the residence, so Yu Youyao did not have to worry.

Yu Youyao was also happy and relaxed. She went to the Songtao Courtyard with Xia Tao.

The renovation of the Songtao Courtyard was almost complete. All the household items, decorations, tools, and so on were moved in one after another.

The courtyard was very big. There were orchids and bamboo inside, and the pines and cypresses were adorable. It was very elegant. There was even a lake in the courtyard. Beside it was a small rockery. The water slowly flowed into the lake from the rockery. There was also an octagonal pavilion at the side. When she walked into the pavilion, she saw an elegant scene.

After Yu Youyao saw this, she nodded. "Check it carefully again. Fourth Brother is still young, so it's inevitable that he'll be playful. Especially the fence around the small lake. We have to check that it's safe."

As Yu Shansi was still young, Yu Youyao instructed the craftsmen in the residence to circle the lake with wooden railings. This way, it would be safer.

Xia Tao did not dare to be careless and quickly agreed.

Yu Youyao explained some more safety matters and said, “When Father comes back tonight, I’ll ask him when Fourth Brother will move in.”

Xia Tao quickly said, “Young Miss, don’t worry. General Songtao Courtyard’s matters have been arranged this afternoon.”

Yu Youyao nodded and glanced at the door of the Songtao Courtyard from the corner of her eye. There was a servant looking around.

She saw that this servant was not tall and was only eight or nine years old. There was a bruise on his eyes and the corner of his mouth. Looking at his injuries, he seemed to have been beaten up.

Yu Youyao frowned and turned to ask Xia Tao, “Do you recognize him?”

Xia Tao followed Young Miss’s gaze and saw the servant shrink his head, but she still saw him clearly. “He should be the servant in front of Fourth Young Master, Mo Cai. He’s Fourth Young Master’s nanny’s son.”

Yu Shansi was about to move to Songtao Courtyard, so it made sense for his servant to come over in advance to investigate.

However!

Yu Youyao’s eyes flickered. “Go and ask around about the injury on Mo Cai’s face.”

Xia Tao wanted to say something but hesitated.

When Yu Youyao saw this, she knew that Xia Tao had probably heard about it long ago. She said, “If you have something to say, just say it. There’s no need to hesitate.”

Only then did Xia Tao say, “I heard that Fourth Young Master didn’t learn well from his teacher. Every time he was punished by the teacher, he would vent his anger on Mo Cai and often smash things.”

Hearing this, Yu Youyao was a little surprised.

Her father valued Yu Shansi very much. Other than the fact that Yu Shansi was his only legitimate son, the main reason was that Yu Shansi was talented and smart. At a young age, he had been diligent and motivated. Her father was often proud of this.

In the past, when had her father ever reprimanded her without speaking up for Yu Shansi? “As the eldest sister, you’re not as sensible, studious, and motivated as your younger brother in the family...”

She did not have much contact with Yu Shansi. Although she had heard that he had a problem with being spoiled, she thought that he was still a child after all. He should really be a little smart, which was why her father had taken such a fancy to him.

However, after hearing Xia Tao’s words today, it seemed to be completely different?

...

Yu Youyao frowned. “Where did you hear that?”

Xia Tao said, "Liu'er used to serve in the main courtyard. Although she was only a little girl in charge of sweeping, she could more or less hear some news about such matters. I also heard some specious words in the residence..."

Liu'er was quiet, while Xia Tao was smart. Neither of them was someone who spoke without thinking. Since these words had reached her ears, they were most likely not groundless.

After returning to the Jade Courtyard, Yu Youyao called Liu'er over and asked about Yu Shansi in detail.

Liu'er lowered her head and said, "Eldest Madam is personally in charge of everything in Fourth Young Master's house, and the people she uses are all her trusted aides. The maidservants in the courtyard are not even allowed to approach Fourth Young Master's door without permission."