

All Hail 351

Chapter 351 Invitation from the Zhenguo Marquis Residence

Zhou Linghuai was amused by her expression. "This politician was demoted several times in his life. Wherever he goes, he can rule a place with food. In his life, he left behind 66 dishes named after him."

Yu Youyao rested her chin on her hand. "Poor brother. He's either on the way to save him or on the way to save him. He's really pitiful to have such an unreliable brother to worry about!"

When Yu Shanxin heard this, he burst out laughing. "Haha, Eldest Sister, isn't your focus crooked..."

Yu Shuang's eyes lit up. "Why don't we roast our own lamb spine later?"

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Yu Lianyu and Yu Fangfei also looked forward to it.

Yu Youyao, who firmly believed that health started from young, objected. "The mutton is dry. It's nourishing to eat in autumn and winter, and it's good to clear the lungs in spring and summer to nourish the spleen. It's easy to get internal heat after eating this. Why don't we get the kitchen to make Dongpo pork?"

Although it was a little regretful, Yu Shuangbai and the others still gave up on this idea.

The maidservant brought over a copper basin. After Yu Youyao washed her hands a few times, she took out a wrapped Zongzi.

Yu Youyao was good at cooking, so she wrapped it well.

However, Yu Shuangbai and the others had wrapped Zongzi in a mess. "I originally thought that wrapping up Zongzi would be a simple matter. I didn't expect it to be so difficult!"

Eating Zongzi was not difficult at all!

Yu Youyao smiled and said, "I'll teach you."

She carefully guided Yu Shuangbai and the others. The few of them learned seriously, so they had some fun doing it themselves.

Zhou Linghuai looked from the side and also took a Zongzi leaf. He folded it diagonally into a sharp corner and scooped some of the glutinous rice mixed with red beans, red dates, and lotus seeds into it. He folded the Zongzi leaf and wrapped it with Zongzi leaves.

Hence, an exquisite and beautiful Zongzi was completed.

Yu Shanxin clicked his tongue in surprise. "Cousin Zhou, you actually know how to wrap Zongzi. Have you done it before?"

Zhou Linghuai shook his head. "It's my first time."

Yu Youyao quickly took the Zongzi that her cousin had wrapped and looked at it carefully. "Cousin, you're too amazing. This is the first time you wrapped it and it looked so good." With that, she took a handkerchief and wrapped it around the Zongzi, placing it beside her. "The first Zongzi you wrapped in your life is mine."

Zhou Linghuai chuckled. "If you like it, I'll wrap a few more."

In the past, just like Yu Shanyan, he had also said that a gentleman stayed away from the kitchen. He tilted his head to look at the little girl. With his fair fingers, he picked up a Zongzi leaf. The leaf had yet to be steamed, but he suddenly looked forward to the taste of the Zongzi she had personally wrapped. He also wanted to try this mortal fire.

Even though it was just a small Zongzi, he felt a little satisfied.

Yu Youyao smiled sweetly. "Okay!"

Zhou Linghuai wrapped a few Zongzi in a row.

Yu Shanxin did not fall behind either. He clumsily learned how to cook from Yu Shuangbai. One of them taught while the other learned while bickering. The atmosphere was very lively, infecting Yu Shanyan. He, who had always boasted that gentlemen stayed away from the kitchen, could not help but take a Zongzi leaf and ask Yu Lianyu for guidance.

Yu Fangfei's eyes darted around and she saw the shy Yu Shanli. He was at a loss for what to do with the Zongzi leaf, so she quickly leaned over to teach him.

Everyone chatted and laughed. Even Old Madam Yu and Madam Yang, who were in the house, heard the commotion. When they came out, they couldn't help but laugh in relief.

After wrapping the Zongzi, Yu Youyao instructed the small kitchen to steam them.

The group gathered and chatted. Yu Shuangbai said, "It's 1pm now. There's a dragon boat race in the moat. Big Sister, come and play with us!"

Yu Youyao shook her head. "Do I look like I can walk away?"

Madam Yang was locked up. Her grandmother was old and needed her to manage the family. How could she go out?!

Besides, she did not want to trouble Second Aunt too much.

Yu Shuangbai held Yu Youyao's hand and said coquettishly, "Big Sister, let's go. It's a once-a-year event. It'll be a pity not to watch it. Didn't you like to watch the dragon boat race the most in the past? Don't you still have Grandmother and Nanny Liu in the residence? It won't affect anything if you leave for two to four hours. Besides, do you think I don't know that you are very powerful? The servants listen to you. Even if you're not in the residence, the servants can still do everything you instructed..."

Before Yu Youyao could speak.

Nanny Liu smiled and led an imposing maidservant into the courtyard.

It was Yao Huang, who was in front of Old Madam Song of the Zhenguo Marquis Residence.

Yao Huang arrived in front of Old Madam Yu. After bowing, she said, "Old Madam has specially ordered me to come and collect lunch for Old Madam."

Qing Xiu stepped forward and took the wooden tray from Yao Huang's hand. There were Zongzi, realgar wine, Qingtuan, and some ceremonial snacks. They were all the usual delicacies of the Dragon Boat Festival.

Old Madam Yu smiled until her eyes narrowed. "That old thing beat me to it every year." After sighing, she said politely, "Help me thank your Old Madam."

Yao Huang agreed and changed the topic. "There's a dragon boat competition in the afternoon at the moat. Old Madam asked me to ask if Eldest Miss is free today and wants to go with the Zhenguo Marquis Residence to have fun. Third Miss has been making a fuss since yesterday and wants to watch the dragon boat race with Eldest Miss. If Eldest Miss goes, the residence will send a carriage to pick her up later. The family has already arranged it. I guarantee that she will be well taken care of."

Her words were filled with great sincerity.

Old Madam Yu's smile deepened. She turned to look at Yu Youyao. "Yao Yao, it's a rare event every year. It's good to go out and play together. You've already arranged everything at home. With Nanny Liu and Nanny Xu keeping an eye on things, nothing will go wrong. Your Grandmother Song has always been the most appropriate. I'll be at ease if you go with the Zhenguo Marquis Residence."

Previously, she had been worried about how to let Yao Yao go out to play.

Unexpectedly, Old Song had given her some help.

Zhou Linghuai frowned slightly and recalled the scene of Song Mingzhao and the little girl standing side by side at the door and talking on the eighth of April, during the Buddhist Festival.

The little girl was wearing a plain brocade dress, and Song Mingzhao was dressed in dark green. The two of them stood together, and the slight wind swept up each other's clothes, creating a faint sense of affection. It was actually extremely dazzling.

Suddenly, he seemed to have the illusion that they were supposed to be like this.

It was inevitable that she would interact with Song Mingzhao when she went to watch the dragon boat race with the Zhenguo Marquis Residence. Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but look at the little girl.

Would she agree to go?

Although he had drawn a "Dragon Boat Race" for the little girl, how could the liveliness of this painting on paper compare to seeing it personally?

He had always known that the little girl yearned for the commotion outside the residence. She had expressed several times that she wanted to go out and play. How could she not yearn for a grand event like the dragon boat race that only happened once a year?

It would be a lie to say that Yu Youyao was not tempted at all.

But!

Yu Youyao couldn't help but glance at her cousin, feeling a little troubled.

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Chapter 352 Unknowing Feelings

After she left the residence, wouldn't that leave her cousin alone in the residence for the Dragon Boat Festival? Her cousin had even specially drawn a painting of a dragon boat for her previously. She wanted to stay in the residence to spend the Dragon Boat Festival with him.

Even though there wasn't much commotion, she was still happy to have her cousin accompany her.

Then there was another thing!

Initially, she did not want to get too close to the Zhenguo Marquis Residence. In the beginning, she had been forced to befriend Song Wanhui because the two

families were in-laws and aristocratic families. The family's interests were closely related. As the eldest daughter of the first wife, it was necessary for her to befriend Song Wanhui.

Later on, Song Wanhui was indeed not bad, so she was willing to spend more time with her.

However, she was still closer to Qi Sinian.

Although she knew that such a mentality did not seem good. After all, it was just a nightmare. Nothing had happened, and it did not mean anything.

However, she firmly believed that as long as one had nothing to worry about, there would definitely be trouble.

With the relationship between the Song and Yu families, Grandmother Song's love for her, her status as the eldest daughter of the first wife of the Yu Residence, and Song Mingzhao's shocking reputation...

In reality, the possibility of her marrying Song Mingzhao was also very high.

She was still young, so it was far from time to mention this. No matter what her grandmother planned, she couldn't interfere.

The only thing she could do was not get too involved with the Zhenguo Marquis Residence. If she really reached that stage in the future, she would not have many worries when she schemed for herself.

Yu Youyao couldn't help but glance at her cousin. Seeing him rubbing the bracelet on his wrist, she had an idea.

She took a step forward. "There's no need to trouble Grandmother Song. Mother is still sick, and Grandmother's health isn't good, so I should stay in the residence."

Old Madam Yu wanted to persuade her.

Yu Youyao said, "I've already made up my mind. Grandmother, you don't have to persuade me. There's a lot of work at home that needs to be handled. Even if I leave this door, I won't have enough fun. I might as well not go." With that, she smiled slightly and turned to look at her cousin. "Besides, I've already promised Cousin that I'll spend the Dragon Boat Festival with him today."

Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but look up and meet the little girl's smiling eyes. His eyes were bright like the galaxy, and the corners of his lips curled up slightly.

Old Madam Yu waved her hand. "Forget it. If you don't want to go, so be it."

Yu Youyao turned around and bowed. "Thank you, Grandmother Song. It's just that Mother is seriously ill, and it's not convenient for Grandmother. There are many things in the family that need to be taken care of, so I'll have to trouble Sister Yao Huang to go back and report to Grandmother Song. Yao Yao appreciates her kindness."

Yao Huang smiled and said, "Eldest Miss, you're too polite. I'll report it to Old Madam when I get back."

News that Eldest Madam Yu had a headache and needed to recuperate had already spread in the capital yesterday. Now, Eldest Miss Yu was in charge of the main branch of the Yu Residence, and it was even Lord Yu who had personally asked Yu Youyao to manage it.

Yu Youyao smiled and said, "How's Grandmother Song's health?"

When Yao Huang heard this, she understood what she meant. "She drank the medicinal tea that Eldest Miss gave her. She also used the medicinal fragrance and she looks a little energetic recently."

Yu Youyao said logically, "In that case, Sister Yao Huang can bring some back today." With that, she turned around and instructed Chun Xiao, "Go and bring over a few boxes of the medicinal fragrance I made a few days ago and medicinal tea. Let Sister Yao Huang bring them back too."

No matter what, Grandmother Song had good intentions. Since she had rejected this kind gesture, she had to return this favor to ensure proper etiquette.

Chun Xiao received her orders and left.

Yu Youyao invited Yao Huang to sit down and ordered someone to serve tea.

Yao Huang couldn't help but sigh with emotion. Eldest Miss Yu treated everyone and everything with a bearing and demeanor. Her every word and action displayed etiquette and virtue. No wonder a half-grown child could actually manage such a huge family. Not only did she stand out at the Flower Festival of the Marquis of Changxing's Residence, but she also caught the eye of the Empress Dowager.

Yu Youyao chatted with Yao Huang about Old Madam Song's health and some daily necessities. Yao Huang turned to look at Old Madam Yu. In the past, her health was a little worse than Old Madam Yu's, but recently, after seeing her a few times, she became more energetic each time and she was listening carefully.

After chatting for about ten minutes, Chun Xiao returned with a gift.

Only then did Yao Huang stand up. "In that case, thank you, Eldest Miss. I'll go back and report."

Yu Youyao asked Chun Xiao to send her off.

Song Mingzhao lowered his head and looked at the painting on the desk. He tried his best to recall the pink scene he had seen in his daze yesterday, but he couldn't remember it clearly.

It was as if everything was just an illusion.

In fact, it was indeed just an illusion.

He slowly rolled up the painting.

The servant lightened his footsteps and walked into the house. "Young Master, Yao Huang from Old Madam's house is back. Eldest Miss Yu is worried about her mother's serious illness and Grandmother's health. She rejected Old Madam's kind intentions and will not be watching the Dragon Boat Race with the Zhenguo Marquis Residence."

Song Mingzhao tightened his grip on the painting in his hand. After a while, he said, "Got it. You can leave!"

The servant had been serving Song Mingzhao since he was young. He also knew that his young master had a very cold personality and did not care much about anything. Moreover, he seemed to have been paying more attention to the Eldest Miss of the Yu Residence recently?

The study fell silent again.

Song Mingzhao stared at the incense burner on the incense table.

There was incense burning inside. It was the Concentration Incense that Eldest Miss Yu had made. The smell was elegant and otherworldly. When it was burned, it calmed the heart and mind. After burning the incense in the study, there was also a sense of peace.

After using it, he liked it very much.

His grandmother later asked the Yu Residence for some more.

Ever since he had returned to the Precious Peace Temple on the seventh of February to greet Old Madam Yu, the name "Yu Youyao" had been everywhere around him.

Initially, he did not care about this name. However, after hearing it many times, it was inevitable that he would know a lot about her.

It wasn't until April 8th, the day of the Buddhist Festival, that he met the "legendary" Yu Youyao and got to know her. For some reason, he started to care about this person.

At the Flower Festival in the Marquis of Changxing's Residence, his mother brought his third sister home and came to his grandmother's house to report what had happened at the Flower Festival.

At that time, he was sitting in the hall.

He listened as his third sister beamed with joy and vividly explained how Seventh Miss Cao had teamed up with all the young misses present to make things difficult for Eldest Miss Yu on the spot. She wanted to ruin Eldest Miss Yu's reputation with the words "the eldest bereaved daughter", causing Eldest Miss Yu to lose her reputation for the first time when she went out. Once she went out, she would be embarrassed and would never be able to raise her head in the capital again.

Meanwhile, Eldest Miss Yu had used women's teachings to attack Seventh Miss Cao. She was labeled as being uncultured and sidelined by all the other young mistresses present.

Then, he heard his third sister say that the Marquis of Changxing's wife had disrespected her elders and planned to destroy Eldest Miss Yu in public because her daughter had been wronged.

Chapter 353 Let's Pinky Swear

And what about Eldest Miss Yu? She had used her grandmother to attack and bring up the late emperor. She finally brought up the Empress Dowager, causing the Marquis of Changxing's Residence to lose all its reputation and face...

As he drank the medicinal tea made by Eldest Miss Yu, he smelled the medicinal fragrance made by Eldest Miss Yu in his grandmother's house, and listened to Eldest Miss Yu's story. Unknowingly, he was engrossed in it. He couldn't help but wonder how such a thin and petite girl could fight for her reputation and dignity in the Yu Residence.

He also thought of the day at the Buddhist Festival. Her gentle voice was like a delicate oriole, and her voice entered his ears. "Buddhism emphasizes fate. Everything can be stopped when it's appropriate. All I want is peace of mind."

She thought to herself that such a pure woman should have such a temperament.

At this moment, the servant returned, disturbing Song Mingzhao.

Song Mingzhao seemed displeased. "What is it?"

The servant quickly lowered his head. "Sister Huang Yao brought some medicinal tea made by Eldest Miss Yu. It's a medicinal fragrance. Old Madam knows that you like it, so she sent some over."

Song Mingzhao nodded. "Put it down!"

The servant continued, "Third Miss sent someone over to ask if you want to go to the dragon boat competition in the moat."

Third Miss had asked yesterday. At that time, Young Master had replied, "We'll talk about it when the time comes."

Song Mingzhao shook his head. "I won't go."

The servant could not help but be stunned.

Previously, Young Master did not express any intention of not going! It was obvious that he had the intention to go.

Why did he suddenly refuse?

Could it be...

He suddenly thought of Eldest Miss Yu, who was also not going. Could it be related to her?

The servant scratched his head and felt that he was thinking too much. His young master had been pure of heart and desire since he was young. He was like an ascetic monk. How could he suddenly pay attention to a woman?

He must be thinking too much.

After sending Huang Yao off, Old Madam Yu used the excuse that she was tired and asked Madam Yao to help her into the room. Madam Yao knew that Old Madam Yao was not tired at all. She clearly did not want to disturb the younger generation's fun.

With the elders present, how could they play freely?

In the courtyard, the little girl's smile was bright. Even though she couldn't watch the dragon boat race, she didn't seem to care.

Zhou Linghuai lowered his head and rubbed the incense beads on his wrist. "Go if you want. You don't have to worry so much. I'm here in the residence, so nothing will go wrong."

Yu Youyao blinked and looked at her cousin. "Then do you want me to go?"

The little girl looked at him, her eyes bright and dazzling. Zhou Linghuai lowered his eyes and rubbed the beads on his wrist. "As long as you're happy."

Yu Youyao giggled. "I'm very happy now. This is the first Dragon Boat Festival that Cousin has celebrated in the Yu Residence, and it's also the first Dragon Boat Festival that Cousin and I have celebrated. I naturally hope to spend it with you. Didn't you give me a painting of a dragon boat race? I feel very happy."

However, previously, in the face of the Zhenguo Marquis Residence's suggestion, the little girl had clearly hesitated. Zhou Linghuai said in a low voice, "You don't have to worry about me. If..."

When Yu Youyao heard this, she pouted. "Cousin, what do you mean? Why are you chasing me out? Don't you want to celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival with me?"

Zhou Linghuai shook his head. "Of course, but..."

Yu Youyao suddenly leaned closer and stared at her cousin. "There's no 'but'. It's more meaningful to celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival with my family. Although I'm familiar with the Zhenguo Marquis Residence, there's still a lot of red tape when I go there. How can I be as comfortable as my own family? Besides, the dragon boat race happens once a year. If I don't see it this year, I'll have a chance to see it in the future." She glanced at her cousin's leg and held his hand. "I still want to bring me to see it when your leg recovers in the future."

The little girl's eyes were filled with anticipation. Zhou Linghuai nodded. "Okay, I'll bring you to see it in the future."

Only then did Yu Youyao smile again. "We agreed so let's pinky swear." She reached out her delicate little finger and hooked it around her cousin's. She shook it gently, and her voice was sweet and soft. "You can't change your pinky swear for a hundred years." After pinky swearing, she pressed her thumb against her cousin's and smiled happily. "You can't go back on your word!"

Her childish actions made Zhou Linghuai laugh a little, but he cooperated. Looking at their thumbs, he couldn't help but smile. "Okay!"

Yu Youyao looked up. "I'm very happy to be with Cousin."

Therefore, without her cousin's company at the dragon boat competition, she didn't care about watching it

Zhou Linghuai felt a lump in his throat. "I'm happy too."

The two of them looked at each other and heard Yu Shuangbai's chattering voice. "Big Sister, the Zongzi in the kitchen are steamed. Come and try them."

Yu Youyao turned around and nodded. Then, she said to her cousin, "Let's go over quickly. I still want to try the Zongzi that Cousin personally wrapped."

Previously, when she was steaming the Zongzi, she had secretly marked the Zongzi her cousin had wrapped so that they wouldn't be mixed up.

Zhou Linghuai had the same intention. He turned his wheelchair and walked over with Yu Youyao. The table was filled with Zongzi with red beans, red dates, dried fruits, and flower fillings. There were more than ten types.

As her cousin did not like sweet food, Yu Youyao even wrapped a few salted egg yolk Zongzi.

Seeing them come over, Yu Shanxin's eyes darted around and he suggested, "What's the point of eating Zongzis like this? Why don't we play Hundred Herbs? The winner will eat Zongzi."

Hundred Herbs was also a custom of the Dragon Boat Festival. In the previous dynasty, every Dragon Boat Festival, many young masters and young mistresses of wealthy families would go up the mountain to pick medicinal herbs. Whoever picked the most flowers and plants would be the first to win. Later on, from time to time, they would go up the mountain to pick medicinal herbs themselves and prepare a lot of medicinal herbs. The younger generation in the family would guess the names of the herbs. The winner would be the one who guessed the most herbs accurately.

Yu Shuangbai rolled her eyes and rejected it immediately. "No, no. Eldest Sister has learned pharmacology from Nanny Xu. What medicinal herbs and plants doesn't she know? Playing Hundred Herbs is simply cheating."

The few of them agreed deeply.

Yu Youyao pursed her lips and said, "Why don't we play Shooting? We'll place the Zongzi on the food tray and shoot them with wooden arrows. Those who hit them will eat them. There are many of us, so it'll definitely be interesting to play this."

They all agreed.

Chun Xiao immediately got someone to prepare a table. She placed the wooden arrows on the table and fixed the Zongzi in place.

Yu Shanxin explained the rules again. "You can eat whichever one you hit. Sisters, you can go first, in order from youngest to oldest."

When Yu Youyao heard this, she glared at Yu Shanxin.

However, everyone else agreed. She had no choice but to be dissatisfied.

Seeing her unfriendly gaze, Yu Shanxin raked his hand through his hair. “Eldest Sister, why are you looking at me like that? Is there anything wrong with my suggestion?”

The others also looked at Yu Youyao, their eyes filled with questions.

Yu Youyao smiled insincerely and gritted her teeth as she stared at Yu Shanxin. “Good, very good. Very good.” Good, good my ass. If the Zongzi that Cousin had wrapped was shot away by someone else first...

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Chapter 354 Women Are Not Inferior to Men

I will not forgive you!

Yu Shanxin’s scalp went numb from her stare. He took a step back. “Eldest Sister, can you not smile at me like that? It’s so scary that I have goosebumps.”

Zhou Linghuai’s eyes darkened and the corners of his mouth curled up slightly. “Let’s begin!”

Since her cousin had already spoken, Yu Youyao pursed her lips and looked at the plate of food. There was a Zongzi with a special knot.

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It was the first Zongzi that her cousin had wrapped.

Please don’t be shot away!

Yu Fangfei was the youngest and was the first to try. She took a small bow, pulled a wooden arrow, and aimed at the Zongzi on the plate.

Don’t hit it. Yu Youyao stared at Yu Fangfei and chanted in her heart. Then, she saw Yu Fangfei’s hand tremble, and the wooden arrow immediately tilted and missed.

Yu Youyao cheered. “Oh yeah!”

Yu Shuangbai and the others’ gazes landed on her.

Sixth Sister did not hit the Zongzi. What was Big Sister so happy about?

Yu Fangfei looked at Yu Youyao aggrievedly. “Big Sister, why were you staring at me just now? You made my hands tremble and I missed the target with my wooden arrow.”

Big Sister’s gaze was so intense that it was difficult to ignore it.

When Yu Youyao heard this, she was first embarrassed. Then, she pretended that nothing had happened and cleared her throat. She coughed again. “Ahem,

uh, I-I just wanted to see if Sixth Sister's archery skills had improved. Ha, it's fine if she didn't hit it. Don't be depressed. It's only the first round. This time, you didn't hit it. If you shoot a few more times, you'll definitely hit it."

Looking at Big Sister's curled lips, Yu Fangfei was suspicious. "Why do I feel that Big Sister seems to be very happy that I didn't hit it?"

Yu Youyao quickly said, "There's no such thing. There's definitely no such thing. I will shoot a few more later and give you a few."

Yu Fangfei quickly thanked her.

However, Zhou Linghuai lowered his head and raised his hand to stop the faint smile on his lips.

Then, it was Yu Lianyu's turn. She drew her bow and aimed at the Zongzi which was in the middle.

When Yu Youyao saw that it was the one that her cousin had personally wrapped, she quickly said, "Uh, Fifth Sister, I think it's easier for you to hit the one beside you."

Yu Lianyu's bow, which had just been in position, was messed up by this interruption. "But I think the middle is the easiest to shoot."

Yu Youyao's eyes darted around. "With my many years of archery experience, I'll definitely be able to hit the one beside me. How can I lie to you? If you don't believe me, why don't you give it a try? Anyway, this is only the first round..."

Yu Lianyu felt that it made sense. Big Sister's archery skills were the best among her sisters, so she definitely wouldn't lie to her.

Hence, she got into position again and shot an arrow to the side.

It missed and brushed past the Zongzi in the middle.

If she had shot the one in the middle just now, she would definitely have hit it. Yu Lianyu looked at Yu Youyao resentfully. "Big Sister, are you sure you're not lying to me?"

Yu Youyao's eyebrows kept rising, and she almost laughed on the spot. "How is that possible? Uh, I just felt that I would definitely be able to hit it. If you didn't, it's probably because your archery skills are a little inferior to mine." Seeing Yu Lianyu's thunderstruck expression, she felt that she shouldn't mock her too much. She suggested sincerely, "Why don't you practice more in the future?"

Yu Lianyu was immediately stunned.

Zhou Linghuai also couldn't help but laugh. It was interesting to see her use different methods to fool her sisters.

Yu Shanxin placed one arm on Yu Shanyan's shoulder and covered his stomach with the other. He was laughing hysterically.

When it was Yu Shuangbai's turn, Yu Youyao felt as if she was facing a great enemy.

Second Sister's archery skills were the best among the sisters other than hers. If she wanted to shoot the Zongzi wrapped by her cousin, she would definitely be able to hit it.

Hence, Yu Youyao suggested, "Second Sister, your archery is good. Why don't we make a bet? If you hit the Zongzi that Fifth Sister didn't hit just now..."

Before she could finish speaking, Yu Shuangbai drew her bow. "Big Sister, don't use the same trick that you used to fool Fifth Sister and Sixth Sister to fool me. I won't fall for it."

Yu Youyao refused to give up and was about to speak again...

However, Yu Shuangbai aimed at the Zongzi that was in the middle. "Big Sister, you're disturbing my archery!"

Yu Shuangbai's arrow was about to rush towards the Zongzi that was in the middle!

In her anxiety, Yu Youyao suddenly picked up another small bow from the tray. The moment Yu Shuangbai shot the arrow, she suddenly shot an arrow too.

She drew her bow fully and instantly gathered her strength. She stared sharply at Zongzi in the middle and suddenly loosened her bow...

With a swish, the arrow shot out like a shadow.

Everyone present widened their eyes.

Before Yu Shuangbai's arrow could reach hers, Yu Youyao's arrow suddenly pierced into the Zongzi and blocked the wooden arrow.

Yu Youyao was overjoyed. She quickly threw down her small bow and walked forward while holding her dress. She picked up the Zongzi she had shot and pulled out the wooden arrow. She ran to her cousin proudly. "Cousin, look, this is the Zongzi you wrapped previously. I tied a knot on it. Haha, I shot it..."

Zhou Linghuai pressed his hand to his lips and laughed softly.

Yu Youyao felt that the atmosphere was not right. She couldn't help but feel her scalp go numb. When she looked up, she saw her second sister, Yu Shuangbai, glaring at her with her hands on her hips.

Fifth Sister Yu Lianyu looked indignant, her eyes innocent and aggrieved. "I didn't expect you to be such a big sister. To think that I trusted you so much previously."

The most miserable one was Yu Fangfei. She puffed up her cheeks and shouted, "Big Sister, compensate me!"

Oh no, oh no, I'm exposed!

Danger, Yu Youyao, danger.

Yu Youyao touched her forehead and secretly hid the Zongzi in her hand behind her back. "Um, actually, I can explain. Don't, don't look at me like that. I..." She touched her forehead again and said weakly, "I'm under a lot of pressure!"

Yu Shanxin laughed crazily and gave Yu Youyao a thumbs up. "Eldest Sister, impressive, impressive. You're simply not inferior to men. We're filled with admiration. Even I have to admit defeat to your arrow just now."

Even though it was just a small bow and a wooden arrow, he could still feel the sharp arrow wind. Ordinary people could not shoot such a sharp arrow.

For a moment, he looked at his eldest sister's small body. She actually looked like a female bandit who wanted to rob him.

The item that was stolen was actually Zongzi?!!

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Yu Youyao wanted to beat Yu Shanxin up. "No, no..."

Yu Shuangbai placed her hands on her hips and said indignantly, "Big Sister, we agreed to shoot one by one. Before I could finish shooting, you shot an arrow. You violated the rules. According to the rules, your items are mine now."

When Yu Youyao heard this, she couldn't care less about danger. "Big Brother and Second Brother, did you see it clearly just now? Did Second Sister shoot the arrow first?"

Chapter 355 Too Scheming

What a joke. She was determined to get her cousin's Zongzi. How could she make such a low-level mistake?

Her cousin had said before that the more you wanted something, the less anxious you had to be. You had to be patient. You had to be calm and thorough. Your heart needed to be calm, and your body would move like lightning.

As soon as she attacked, she needed to hit her target.

Once she made a move, she had to be completely confident in preventing any accidents and any possibility of complicating matters. She had to control the situation in her heart.

Only then could she achieve her goal.

Yu Shanyan nodded. "It's indeed Second Sister's arrow that was released first. Eldest Sister's arrow caught up and hit the Zongzi. The rules say that we should shoot one by one. Although Eldest Sister took advantage of the loophole in the rules, it's not against the rules."

Yu Shuangbai's cheeks puffed up in anger.

Yu Shanxin said, "Eldest Sister's arm strength is not bad. When she nocks the bow and draws the string, the arrow's momentum is great. Naturally, she shoots faster than Second Sister. Yes, this is Eldest Sister's ability. It's not against the rules."

Yu Shuangbai was speechless. She glared at Yu Youyao. "Big Sister, you're too cunning. Hmph!"

Yu Youyao's lips curled up. "This is called all's fair in war. In times of need, we naturally have to do extraordinary things. Learn more in the future. Don't study too hard. If you don't know how to be flexible, your studies will be in vain."

Her cousin had said this.

She felt that it made sense.

Yu Shuangbai stomped her feet. "Isn't it just a Zongzi? Do you have to do this!"

Yu Youyao snorted. "This is the first Zongzi that my cousin has wrapped in his life. It's not an ordinary Zongzi. I can't let you get it."

Yu Shuangbai was furious. She turned around and said, "Big Brother and Second Brother, Big Sister is bullying others just because she's good at archery. Why don't you care?"

Yu Shanxin spread his hands. The situation was already so bad that to make it worse made no real difference. "Second Sister, you have to accept your loss. Don't be a sore loser!"

What a joke. Cousin Zhou was just sitting there like a tiger watching its prey. Who would dare to control his eldest sister?!

Did she think that life was too easy?

Or was it because he had eaten too much egg fried rice that was so salty that it hurt?

Yu Shanyan cleared his throat. "Eldest Sister won the Zongzi with her own ability. Second Sister, if you shoot well, you'll definitely be able to hit one in the next round."

He was still counting on Cousin Zhou's notes for Heavenly Works.

Yu Shuangbai was stunned and angry. "I'm so angry. You're not my biological brothers, right? Definitely not!"

Yu Shanxin and Yu Shanyan looked elsewhere.

At this moment, Yu Youyao was already squatting in front of her cousin. She peeled off the Zongzi layer by layer. In the sparkling and soft glutinous rice, there were lotus seeds, red beans, and red dates. They looked very beautiful.

Yu Youyao gently broke the Zongzi into two and handed one half to her cousin. "Cousin, this is a Zongzi that you personally wrapped. You have to try it."

He had originally thought that the little girl liked sweetness, so he had included sweet ingredients. Now, he regretted it a little.

However, Zhou Linghuai had never rejected the little girl. He reached out and took it. "Cousin, it's not easy to get this. Naturally, I have to try it."

Thinking of the little girl's brown eyes just now, the smile in his eyes deepened.

Yu Youyao could tell that he was implying something. She pouted. "Hmph, I shot the Zongzi with my own ability, and I also ate the Zongzi with my own ability."

Zhou Linghuai chuckled and took a bite of the Zongzi. The soft brown meat had the fragrance of red beans, a hint of sweetness from the red dates, and the pink glutinousness of the lotus seeds. It tasted good but was a little sweet.

After the women finished shooting, it was the men's turn.

Yu Shanli went first.

Mr. Hushan had the Six Arts of the Gentleman in his class. He easily shot the Zongzi, but he did not eat it. Instead, he gave the palm to Yu Fangfei.

Yu Fangfei took the palm and immediately beamed. "Thank you, Third Brother!"

Next, it was Yu Shanxin's turn. As his family had specially hired a martial arts master for him, there was naturally no need to mention his riding and archery skills. He took the lead and shot a Zongzi.

He went forward to take the Zongzi and handed it to Yu Lianyu.

Yu Lianyu thanked him happily.

Next was Yu Shanyan. He had learned the Six Arts of a Gentleman well, so it was naturally easy for him to shoot the Zongzi. However, he was unlucky. Zhou Linghuai had taken a fancy to one of the Zongzi.

Zhou Linghuai remembered that the little girl had wrapped five salted egg yolk Zongzi.

That was one of them.

Hence, he imitated Yu Youyao and shot an arrow into the Zongzi.

Yu Shanyan was speechless. He spread his hands and looked at Yu Shuangbai. "You can't blame me!"

Although Cousin Zhou was weak, he did not fall behind in the Six Arts of a Gentleman at all.

If he made a move, what else could they do?

Hence, Yu Shuangbai no longer had a Zongzi. She clutched her chest and looked at Yu Youyao resentfully. "Why am I always the one who gets hurt?!"

Yu Youyao almost cried from laughing. She took the small bow from her cousin's hand and released a wooden arrow. With a whoosh, the wooden arrow left the bow and shot into a Zongzi.

The maidservant brought the Zongzi over.

Yu Youyao handed it to Yu Shuangbai. "Be good. I dote on you."

Yu Shuangbai was so touched that her eyes welled up with tears. "Boohoo, Big Sister, you're still the most reliable. If I'm only counting on my two useless brothers, when will I be able to eat Zongzi?"

The unreliable brother, Yu Shanxin, turned his face away and coughed.

However, Yu Shanyan turned to look at Zhou Linghuai.

Zhou Linghuai had peeled the Zongzi and broken it in half, revealing the salted egg yolk inside. He suddenly realized that when he was wrapping the Zongzi just now, his eldest sister had wanted to wrap the salted egg yolk Zongzi.

Second Sister had also said that salted egg yolk was edible?

So, Cousin Zhou had also taken a fancy to the Zongzi that his eldest sister had wrapped?!

...

Zhou Linghuai handed half of it to Yu Youyao. "Try it. You wrapped them yourself."

Yu Youyao accepted it happily and took a bite.

The salted egg yolk brown was better than she had imagined, but she preferred the sweet Zongzi. "Cousin, this tastes good. You should like it."

Zhou Linghuai took a bite and smiled. "Not bad indeed!"

With this cousin and sister sharing the food, Yu Shuangbai and the others also distributed their share to their brothers.

Yu Youyao and the others played a few more rounds.

They were full from eating Zongzi.

Yu Youyao had ordered someone to brew some hawthorn tea early in the morning. Everyone drank the hawthorn tea and chatted. Unknowingly, it was time for lunch.

Yu Youyao instructed the servants to send each dish to the Tranquil Heart Residence, the Huanhuan Courtyard, the Songtao Courtyard, and the Hanlu Courtyard.

Even Concubine He and Concubine Qiu were given a few good dishes.

Concubine He was locked in the courtyard and could not come out.

...

Concubine Qiu had yet to start a family for the Yu Residence, so it was naturally not appropriate for her to come out on such an occasion.

The banquet was organized by Yu Youyao alone. There was calamus wine on the table. There were nine dishes and a soup. Not only did it look, smell, and taste good, but it also took into account everyone's taste.

Whether the banquet was held well reflected a person's etiquette for treating guests. It also showed a household manager's ability.

Chapter 356 Greedy Girl

Madam Yao took one look and smiled.

Madam Yang's loss was not in vain.

Old Madam Yu looked at the calamus wine on the table. "This is the medicinal wine that Yao Yao brewed. There's realgar in it. Just drink a cup as a token of appreciation. Don't drink too much, especially the few of you..."

As she spoke, her gaze swept across Yu Youyao and the other sisters. At their age, they shouldn't be drinking, but the few of them were making a fuss and wanted to try it. With the elders present, it was fine to drink a little.

!!

Hence, she did not disturb them.

Zhou Linghuai tilted his head and saw the little girl looking at the wine glass with sparkling eyes, full of anticipation.

He recalled the night he first came to the Yu Residence. When the residence held a banquet for him and the little girl secretly drank the green plum wine, she looked as cute as a cat. Even though she only had two glasses of green plum wine, she was still drunk. She sat obediently at the table, her face soft and red and her eyes moist. She looked obedient and cute.

For some reason, he suddenly wanted to laugh.

After Old Madam Yu finished speaking, Yu Youyao, who had been waiting impatiently, picked up her wine glass and quickly took a sip.

Before Zhou Linghuai could stop her, he saw Yu Youyao take a sip of wine and immediately widen her eyes. Then, she suddenly choked and coughed a few times. She stuck out her tongue and shouted, "So spicy, so spicy..."

Zhou Linghuai reacted quickly and quickly handed her a cup of water.

Old Madam Yu was already laughing so hard that tears streamed down her face.

Madam Yao also pinched her handkerchief and gently pressed the corner of her mouth. She couldn't stop smiling.

Yu Shuangbai and Yu Shanxin, who were usually jumpy, laughed even harder.

The table was filled with laughter.

Yu Youyao gulped down a few mouthfuls of water and felt a little better. She looked at her cousin with teary eyes. "Cousin, this wine tastes terrible. It's bitter and spicy, and has a strange taste. It's not as good as plum wine..."

Zhou Linghuai did not know whether to laugh or cry. "Do you think all wine tastes the same as plum wine? How can realgar wine taste sweet? Why are you drinking it so quickly?"

Yu Youyao blinked, her eyes watery. She looked at her cousin innocently, pouted, and stopped talking.

Zhou Linghuai was stunned for a moment before he realized that realgar wine had a higher alcohol content. The little girl had drunk it in a hurry just now and was a little tipsy.

He watched helplessly as the little girl's face seemed to be covered with a layer of pink rouge from inch by inch. For a moment, her face was completely dyed pink. Her wide eyes were covered in a layer of moisture. She tried her best to open them, but the fog was getting thicker, making her eyes look sparkling.

The little girl's eyelashes suddenly trembled slightly, and a tear finally fell like an apricot flower in the rain.

The wet marks streaked across her pink cheeks, revealing a different color.

However, she was still looking at him innocently.

Pure and innocent, like a child.

Yu Youyao blinked her misty eyes. "Cousin, I don't want to drink realgar wine. It tastes terrible!"

"Alright, don't drink it if you don't want to." Zhou Linghuai held his breath and scooped a bowl of white jade ginseng soup for her. "Have some soup first. You'll be fine in a while."

Yu Youyao obediently lowered her head and drank a few mouthfuls of soup. Indeed, she felt much better.

At this moment, Old Madam Yu had had enough of laughing. "You greedy little girl, let's see if you still dare to do it in the future and stuff everything into your mouth."

Yu Youyao felt embarrassed. She pouted and looked at her cousin, feeling aggrieved.

Zhou Linghuai quickly comforted her. "Everyone has to drink, not just you."

When Yu Youyao heard this, she was indeed happy again.

The others at the banquet were speechless. They stared at the small cup of realgar wine in front of them and immediately did not dare to touch it.

Madam Yao covered her handkerchief and smiled. "It was originally because you weren't allowed to drink realgar wine. I wonder who was the one who insisted on drinking it. Now that you know that you've been tricked, that won't do..."

With Madam Yao's words, Yu Shuangbai and the others did not want to drink anymore.

Moreover, they were also curious. Was realgar wine really that bad?

They had both fear and curiosity...

Then, there were choking, coughing, and exclamations at the table.

"Wow, this wine is terrible."

"So spicy, so bitter..."

"It's all Big Sister's fault. Why did she instigate us to drink..."

The table was filled with laughter.

As there was a dragon boat competition in the moat at noon, they had to have lunch earlier today. After lunch, it was not long after noon.

Madam Yao chatted with Old Madam for a while to digest her food. Then, she brought her children back to the second house and set off to the moat to watch the dragon boat race.

Old Madam Yu wanted to take a nap at noon.

Yu Youyao did not want to disturb her, so she returned to the Jade Courtyard with her cousin.

The noon sun was too bright, and the room was hot. Yu Youyao and her cousin sat under the Parasol Tree. He guided her in her studies, while she studied seriously.

About an hour later, Yu Youyao was drowsy from the wind under the shade of the tree. She couldn't help but yawn and feel a little sleepy.

"Cousin, I'm so sleepy. I'll sleep for a while. Wake me up later." With that, she curled her legs on the chair and fell asleep against her cousin's lap.

Zhou Linghuai put down the book in his hand and lowered his head.

The little girl's black hair was piled on her cheek like clouds, covering half of her face. His fingers trembled slightly as he gently brushed this strand of hair behind her ear, revealing her beautiful and delicate face.

Her dark eyebrows were curved. She had used the brow powder that he had previously mixed. Her dark green eyebrows matched her green clothes, making her look extremely delicate.

He recalled how the little girl had drunk a mouthful of realgar wine and sat on the chair obediently and innocently, looking dazed and cute. Her pale lips curled up slightly.

When Nanny Xu was done, she looked out.

The canopy of the parasol tree was as green as the clouds. Young Master Zhou was sitting in a wheelchair with a book in his hand. He did not move at all and maintained a posture. His long eyebrows were as beautiful as a painting, and under the mottled sunlight, they were dyed with a faint smile. Although his eyes were on the book, he would occasionally lower his head to look at the little girl sleeping soundly on his lap.

...

Her face was red, and her eyelashes were like small fans that covered her eyes. No one knew what she was dreaming about, but her lips were slightly curved and she looked extremely sweet.

Nanny Xu's eyelids twitched, and she lowered her head, not continuing to look.

Perhaps because she had slept too well. Yu Youyao slept for nearly two hours.

When she woke up, she met her cousin's deep eyes.

She couldn't help but be stunned. Suspecting that she had seen wrongly, she blinked. A smile appeared on her cousin's lips. It was faint, but it made her stare.

Her cousin was not in good health, and his lips were always pale.

However, at this moment, her cousin smiled lightly. From her angle, she happened to be able to see a trace of red between his lips, making his smile look like it was full and revealing faint emotions.

It was really too beautiful!

Zhou Linghuai looked at her with a smile in his eyes. "You're awake!"

Chapter 357 Family Banquet

Yu Youyao seemed to have woken up from a dream. Only then did she realize that she had fallen asleep on her cousin's lap. She quickly got up. "Cousin, weren't we in class? Why did I fall asleep? I didn't press against your leg just now, right?"

In fact, if he maintained this posture for a long time, his entire body would be numb, and he wouldn't be able to feel the pain.

Zhou Linghuai shook his head. "No."

Seeing the smile on her cousin's face, Yu Youyao patted her chest lightly. "That's good, that's good."

Zhou Linghuai handed her a cup of tea.

After sleeping for so long, Yu Youyao was indeed a little thirsty. She took the teacup and drank slowly. "What time is it now?"

Zhou Linghuai took out his watch from his wallet and looked down. "It's 3pm."

Yu Youyao's eyes widened. "I actually slept for so long." She quickly got up from the chair, but she had curled up for too long just now. Her legs couldn't help but go numb and she was about to collapse.

Zhou Linghuai pulled her into his arms and asked anxiously, "What's wrong? Are you feeling unwell? I'll get Uncle Sun to come over and take a look at you."

Yu Youyao lay in her cousin's arms in a daze. Perhaps because he had been using bamboo juice to make tea recently, her cousin had a faint bamboo fragrance on him. Even in the hot summer, he still had a hint of coldness. Even the wooden rhinoceros incense beads could not hide his elegance.

She couldn't help but sniffle and shake her head in a daze. "No, my legs are just a little numb, so I couldn't stand still for a moment. Cousin, don't worry. I'm fine."

Zhou Linghuai heaved a sigh of relief and let go of Yu Youyao. "You have to be more careful in the future."

Yu Youyao nodded. "Cousin, I'll go back to the house to wash up first. I still have to go to the main kitchen later to see how the dinner preparations are going."

She did not have time to accompany her cousin anymore.

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "I'll be reading under the Parasol Tree. Go ahead!"

Yu Youyao smiled. "When I'm done, I'll come back and play chess with you. My chess skills have improved recently. I have to impress you."

The corners of Zhou Linghuai's mouth twitched. "Let's wait and see."

Her chess skills were getting worse by the day. Fortunately, he had already come to terms with it and treated it as playing with the little girl. He also felt that it was interesting.

Yu Youyao was so busy that her feet did not touch the ground.

When she was done, it was already 4pm. Madam Yao brought her children back to the residence after watching the dragon boat race.

Zhou Linghuai and Yu Youyao went to An Shou Hall.

Yu Shuangbai's face flushed red. She pulled Yu Youyao along and happily told her about the dragon boat race in the moat. "... Big Sister, it's a pity that you didn't go with us. The dragon boat race this year was very interesting. The emperor personally came, and a hundred officials accompanied him. The dragon boat race was prepared very grandly. Even the Zhenguo Marquis Residence prepared a dragon boat. I heard that it was third place. The emperor rewarded the winners with a lot gifts..."

When Yu Youyao heard this, she was a little surprised.

In the past, the emperor had never seen the Dragon Boat Race.

However, Yu Youyao did not feel any regret.

At midnight, Yu Zongzheng and Yu Zongshen returned and greeted Old Madam Yu.

Rewards came from the palace and they were the Dragon Boat Festival gifts sent by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to reward the meritorious officials. There were Zongzi, realgar wine, sachets, and other items. It was not surprising. It was a tradition every year.

Everyone from the Yu Residence knelt down one after another to thank the emperor for his kindness and politely sent the eunuch out of the residence.

The entire family gathered and chatted about today's Dragon Boat Festival.

Yu Youyao arranged for the servants to prepare the banquet.

This was Yu Youyao's first time holding a family banquet and Madam Yao did not help. However, she sent a nanny to watch from the side. She had to give her a chance to train.

At 7pm, the banquet was ready, and everyone moved to the reception pavilion.

Yu Zongzheng had never cared about the affairs of the family, but he saw that the table was done well. Be it the arrangement or the patterns, everything was exquisite. He was much better than Madam Yang, so he couldn't help but feel overjoyed. He patted Yu Youyao's small shoulder on the spot. "Yao Yao, you've worked hard today."

Yu Youyao chuckled and said nothing.

Everyone sat down. Xia Tao came over to report, "Eldest Madam, Third Miss, Fourth Young Master, Fourth Miss, the dishes for the two concubines have all been sent over."

When everyone heard this, they also felt that Yu Youyao was a meticulous person.

“Let’s begin!” After Yu Youyao finished speaking, she picked up a piece of steamed bass and placed it in her grandmother’s bowl.

Old Madam Yu smiled until her eyes narrowed. “This is Yao Yao’er’s first time holding a family banquet, and she’s already holding it well. She’s much better than when Grandmother was young.”

Madam Yao had always been sensible. “Isn’t that so? At noon, I didn’t have time to help. At night, I couldn’t help even if I wanted to. Yao Yao is young, but she’s not careless at all.”

Yu Youyao was a little embarrassed by the praise. She quickly said, “There are also traditions in the family, so I arranged for a meal. We also have to thank the servants.”

Old Madam Yu smiled.

No matter how capable the servants were, they had to give in to their master.

For example, Madam Yang was flustered even at a small family banquet.

The family banquet lasted until 9pm before it ended.

Yu Youyao instructed the servants to pack up. It took another hour.

After everything was arranged, Yu Youyao left the hall and saw her cousin sitting alone under the corridor, reading a book. There was a lantern above his head, and the sparse lights shone on him. Even though the lights were dim, he looked as if he could glow.

Yu Youyao couldn’t bear to disturb him anymore.

“Is everything arranged?” Zhou Linghuai closed the book and looked up at her. The sparse light shone into his eyes, and there seemed to be a faint fire flickering in them.

Yu Youyao smiled and nodded slightly. “Yes, did Cousin wait for a long time?”

After a long day, everyone went back to rest. She did not expect her cousin to still be waiting for her.

Zhou Linghuai asked instead, “Are you tired?”

Yu Youyao walked to her cousin’s side and shook her head and nodded. “I didn’t feel tired before, but I’m suddenly a little tired now.”

Her cousin had said that she did not need to act in front of him!

Zhou Linghuai pursed his lips. "I'll send you back. Rest early today."

...

Yu Youyao returned to the Jade Courtyard with her cousin. "The candlelight is dim outside. Cousin, you can't read in the dim light in the future. It's not good for your eyes."

In the silent night, she only heard Zhou Linghuai say, "Okay."

Along the way, the lights were dim, illuminating the long corridor. It seemed to have no end, but it also stretched their shadows...

The lively afterglow of the Dragon Boat Festival ended after two to three days.

After a heavy rain, the weather became hotter and hotter.

Yu Youyao had already changed into the summer clothes that were made in Jinxiu Manor.

Chapter 358 King Ping Enters the Capital

In her free time, she finally completed the making of the Cooling Summer Pearls.

She repeatedly pounded the incense clay.

It wasn't until the incense mud was as delicate as dough, soft, gently stretched, and tough that the incense beads made wouldn't crack and shrink. The fragrance would also last longer.

After hammering the incense clay, Yu Youyao began to rub the beads together. They were shaped and dry!

!!

After working for two hours, Yu Youyao stretched. It's finally done. It'll be done in three days.

Chun Xiao handed her a cup of tea.

Yu Youyao took the tea and drank it. Only then did she suddenly realize that she was sweating a lot. It was very uncomfortable for her clothes to stick to her body. Get some water from the kitchen. I want to take a shower.

Moulding the incense clay was a physical task that lasted for two hours.

Chun Xiao quickly went down to make arrangements.

After Yu Youyao finished bathing, Xia Tao ran in in a panic. Young Miss, Young Miss, it's all over the news outside. His Highness, King Ping, has brought his heir

into the capital. This morning, he dragged his seriously injured son to the palace gate and asked to see the emperora

What?!Yu Youyaos eyes widened in shock. She lost her grip on the teacup in her hand and it fell to the ground, shattering into pieces.

The news of King Ping entering the capital spread throughout the court like a thunderclap.

Xia Yansheng, the Cabinet Grand Secretary who was over 70 years old, had just left the court. He had just changed into his usual clothes and did not even have time to take a sip of tea. His old body trembled as he asked the servant beside him to put on his court clothes. He sat in a small sedan chair and was carried into the palace.

The Assistant Minister of Revenue, Yu Zongshen, who was also the Grand Secretary of the Imperial Library, and the fourth-grade Imperial Censor, Yu Zongzheng, rushed into the palace, including the other court officials.

It was said that King Ping, who was over forty years old, had entered the capital at full speed. Without even taking a break, he carried a bundle of thorns and headed straight for the palace gate.

King Ping had a burly figure and exuded a heroic aura. He took off his python robe and knelt at the palace gate.

Under the scorching sun above his head, he shouted one after another, Liang Xiao, King Ping of Zhenliang Prefecture, and my heir, Liang Jingye, request to see His Majesty.

Last year, he had been seriously injured in the battle with the Southern Barbarians. Before his injuries had recovered, he had been riding his horse at full speed, causing his old injuries to relapse and blood to stain his chest.

He was originally a young and strong king who controlled a large number of troops. He was in charge of a war and guarding his territory.

However, at this moment, her face was withered and he was kneeling at the palace gate in low spirits. He was so weak that he seemed to be on the verge of death.

Kneeling beside him was his only legitimate son, Liang Jingye, the heir of King Ping. Liang Jingye, and my father, Liang Xiao, King Ping, request an audience with the Emperor.

The journey was tiring. Even the young and strong Liang Jingye was in a sorry state.

When the officials passed by the palace gate, they couldn't help but take a few more glances at the father and son. They couldn't help but feel anxious and panicked.

However, no one dared to chat with them and rushed into the palace.

Liang Xiao, King Ping of Zhenliang Prefecture, and my heir, Liang Jingye, request to see His Majesty.

Liang Jingye, and my father, Liang Xiao, King Ping, request an audience with the Emperor.

The father and son knelt at the entrance of the palace and shouted, but they did not dare to cross the line.

The royal court was already in an uproar.

The emperor, who had not been to court for a long time, did not even have time to change out of his dragon robe. He only wore his Daoist robe and went up to the throne room.

He was almost 50 years old. As he had not been to court for a long time and had been taking mineral pills for a long time, his forehead was green and his eyes were slightly dark, making him look listless. When he heard the court officials arguing below, he was annoyed. He supported his arms and rested his forehead on the dragon throne.

The vassal kings are not allowed to enter the capital without an order. Otherwise, they will be punished with treason. King Ping is so rebellious, he should be killed on the spot.

That's not right. King Ping was seriously injured all the way into the capital and even brought his heir along. He must have something important to discuss with the emperor. The emperor should meet King Ping before dealing with him.

That's true. King Ping is guarding the southern border, and this is a serious matter. In the past few years, the Southern Barbarians have been restless and invading. There aren't many generals available in the court, and even if there are suitable candidates, the Southern Barbarians are good at poison and have strange methods. Only by knowing one's own strength and the enemy's strength can one defeat the enemy and win. Therefore, we still have to rely on King Ping for the war in the southern border. We really shouldn't be so arbitrary and execute them on the spot.

What a joke. Our Great Zhou Dynasty is a vast country. Do you think we're afraid of that small Southern Barbarians?

King Pings entry into the capital without an edict violates the ancestral teachings. This trend cant continue, and this behavior cant be indulged. Otherwise, if the vassal lords everywhere follow suit, wouldnt it be chaotic? Although King Pings actions are not rebellious and have no ulterior motives, his heir is seriously injured and he has even brought his heir into the capital alone without bringing a single soldier. What else can he have in mind? No matter what, King Ping has violated the ancestral rules. He shouldnt be tolerated.

King Ping has guarded the southern border for many years and has worked hard. With his status, entering the capital on his own will only lead to death. However, he still entered the capital. Even if the emperor is here on account of the relationship between the emperor and his subjects. He should meet King Ping.

In the court, the court officials argued until their faces turned red. Some tried to mediate, while others added fuel to the fire.

Immediately, there was chaos.

The current emperor, who was sitting in the golden hall, only felt countless flies buzzing in his ears.

The scene in front of him reminded him of the Di Clans wanton invasion of the north more than three years ago. King You, Yin Lixing, had been defeated repeatedly and lost several cities.

When the news reached the palace, the court officials also talked about how Yin Lixing had a large army and his contributions were shocking. It was only right that King You, Yin Lixing, enter the capital to meet the emperor and let the Marquis of Weining take over the war in the north.

Note: Yin Lixing is the father of his heir, Yin Huaixi. He guards Youzhou and is known as the King of the North. Due to his outstanding military achievements, everyone in the world respects him.

While King You was still on his way to the capital, there was news from the capital that his heir, Yin Huaixi, had died in battle without a corpse. Consort You and the princess had committed suicide by taking poison and burning the You Residence.

When King You saw him, he said, If you want me to die, I have no choice but to die!

Then, he vomited blood and died in the golden hall.

King You had committed suicide before the three divisions had even gone through the trial. If news of this matter were to spread, it would damage the

reputation of the royal family and it would be difficult to explain to the vassal lords everywhere. In order to prevent the world from being in turmoil and the court from having the same goal, King You's death was not announced. After pretending to go through the three divisions trial, they hastily convicted King You of colluding with the enemy to commit treason. The emperor took into account their brotherhood and gave him a cup of poisonous wine. This matter was let off lightly.

King You liked to eat, drink, and play since he was young. He was not good at literature or martial arts. He was famous for being a good-for-nothing.

Chapter 359 Punishment

The only thing that Yin Lixing had done in his life that was out of line was to marry Wen Ruqin, the Imperial Secretary of the Hanlin Academy at that time, the Grand Tutor of the Crown Prince, the Grand Secretary of the East Pavilion, and the daughter of Wen Zhicheng, the second-in-charge of the cabinet.

For this woman, he was willing to travel to Youzhou and never step foot into the capital again even though he was pampered since he was young.

Before this, he had never suspected him.

As news of the You Prefecture's success came every year, the name of King You, Yin Lixing, spread throughout the world. He suspected that his image as a playboy in the past was all an act.

Once the seed of doubt was planted, it would sprout in the heart and grow stronger day by day.

In the end, the Di clan invaded the north wantonly. The invincible King You, Yin Lixing, was defeated badly. He even lost several cities, and the court officials all went up to him, wanting King You to enter the capital to be interrogated.

It was done. It was the last straw.

The court officials below were arguing and becoming more and more intense.

The emperor felt suffocated and frustrated. Anger rushed to his head. He waved his hand, and there was a series of bangs.

He swept everything on the dragon table to the ground.

"Your Majesty, please forgive..." The court officials in the hall knelt on the ground.

The hall was silent.

After throwing a tantrum, the emperor was also a little weak. His eyes darkened, and he kept panting heavily. However, he was inhaling more and exhaling less.

At this moment, a eunuch rushed into the hall. His legs went weak and he knelt on the ground with a thud. "Your Majesty, His Highness, King Ping, has fainted outside the palace gate because he was seriously injured after a long journey."

The emperor took a deep breath. "King Ping is here for an audience. The imperial physician will see him."

The hall was so quiet that one could hear a pin drop.

The eunuch beside the king brought over a golden plate with a green-gold pill the size of a longan on it.

The emperor took the pill and stuffed it into his mouth.

The chief eunuch quickly handed him another cup of tea.

The emperor took the teacup and swallowed the pill with the tea.

As soon as the pill entered his stomach, the emperor's greenish-gray face regained its rosy color at a visible speed, and the sides of his cheeks were abnormally red.

The emperor propped his elbows on his hands and closed his eyes.

After an unknown period of time, two trembling eunuchs carried King Ping, who was lying on a stretcher, into the hall. Liang Jingye followed them.

Liang Jingye knelt on the ground with a thud. "Greetings, Your Majesty. Long live the Emperor."

The emperor, who had closed his eyes to take a nap, finally opened them. He saw that the heir, Liang Jingye, was dressed in white. Then, he looked at the unconscious Liang Xiao, who was lying on the stretcher. He had also taken off his python robe. His chest was already dyed red with blood.

It seemed that it was not a lie that his injuries were serious.

The emperor glanced at the imperial physician, who was kneeling at the side and not even daring to breathe loudly. "How's King Ping's health?"

Naturally, the imperial physician knew what the emperor wanted to hear. He hurriedly said, "Your Majesty, His Highness's injuries are critical. If he can recuperate well, he can recover in two to three months. However, before His Highness is exhausted, so his new injuries haven't recovered yet. Furthermore,

he has old and new injuries. Numerous injuries arose at the same time. It's a very dangerous state and I'm afraid his life is in danger."

The emperor looked down at the half-dead King Ping and ordered, "Wake him up."

The imperial physician hurriedly took out a porcelain bottle from the medicine box and poured out a brownish-black pill. He fed it to King Ping. This was the Ten Rescue Pill, a secret medicine that was specially used to nourish and prolong one's life. Then, he ruthlessly pinched King Ping.

After a while, King Ping slowly woke up.

When he realized that he was in the golden hall, he ignored his injuries and struggled to get up from the stretcher. He knelt on the ground. "I'm Liang Xiao, the King of Ping in Zhenliang Prefecture. Greetings, Your Majesty. Long live our emperor."

The emperor rested his forehead on one hand. "King Ping, you entered the capital without an edict. Your entire family should be executed. Do you know your crime?"

Liang Xiao fell to the ground and lay on his stomach without moving. However, his voice trembled as he said, "I know my mistake, but although I might die, I don't regret it. Last year, the Southern Barbarians invaded the southern border wantonly. It was my fault for not guarding it well, causing the Southern Barbarians to kill the citizens of our Great Zhou, rob our Great Zhou of our money and food, and damage our Great Zhou's prestige and the face of our emperor. I knew that I was guilty, so I requested a decree several times to ask Your Majesty to punish me. However, I didn't expect that in the blink of an eye, Your Majesty still hasn't reacted. I was in Liangzhou in a panic and entered the capital privately. I only wanted to meet Your Majesty to prove my loyalty."

His words were heartfelt and sincere.

Upon hearing his words, the court officials simultaneously recalled that more than three years ago, it was also because King You had suffered a defeat when he was finally summoned to the capital to be punished with treason. His son had died, his wife and daughter had died, and his entire family had turned to ashes.

Now, the situation in Liangzhou was very similar to that in Youzhou.

The Imperial Court had never punished them. If it were anyone else, they would also be in fear and trepidation, worried that the Imperial Court was holding back some big move.

King Liang was terrified that he would end up like King You. He could only take a gamble and drag his seriously injured body into the capital with his heir to show his loyalty to the emperor.

Immediately, someone shook his head and sighed.

After three years, King You's rebellion had finally shocked the vassal kings. All of them were in fear and trepidation, as if they were walking on thin ice, afraid that they would anger him.

If the court officials could think of it, how could the emperor not? He turned to look at Xia Yansheng, the Cabinet Grand Secretary. "Is that true?"

Xia Yansheng cupped his hands and replied, "From last year to today, King Ping has been asking the Emperor to punish him 6 times. However, the year end is approaching, and the imperial examination is imminent. The Imperial Court has recruited talents, which is the foundation of a prosperous country. It's urgent and cannot be underestimated. After the cabinet's discussion, this matter will be discussed later."

Last year, in addition to King Ping's defeat, the Marquis of Changxing had also won a battle.

As the saying went, there were punishments and rewards. If he King Ping won a battle, shouldn't he be rewarded too?

He had been suppressing this because he planned to wait until after the imperial examination. After Yu Zongshen took over as the Minister of Revenue, he would report it to the emperor and reward him.

This way, they could also keep the Marquis of Weining's faction in check.

The emperor nodded in agreement.

Liang Xiao said with a trembling voice, "I'm loyal to His Majesty. The sun and moon can be my witness. I came to the capital this time to..."

The sound of wheels came from inside the room.

Yu Youyao subconsciously looked at the door and saw her cousin turning his wheelchair into the house.

Zhou Linghuai glanced at Xia Tao indifferently and said calmly, "You can leave!"

Young Master Zhou's glance made Xia Tao hold her breath and her mind go blank. By the time she reacted, she was already outside the door and had even thoughtfully closed it.

“Cousin, do you know why King Ping entered the capital?” After being shocked, Yu Youyao calmed down. After all, she had known about this for a long time, so she had a feeling that he was finally here.

...

She was shocked but not surprised.

Chapter 360 Unfilial Heart

Zhou Linghuai came to the chess table by the window. Outside the window, the green canopy of the tree towered into the sky. The thick shade covered the window lattice and sprinkled a layer of adorable shade. Last year, the Southern Barbarians invaded the southern border on a large scale. King Ping led his army to resist, but he was accidentally ambushed and seriously injured. That's why he was defeated. The Southern Barbarians plundered wantonly in the southern border, and countless people died.

Yu Youyao sat opposite her cousin. It's almost the end of the year, and the vassal king has been defeated. It's not a small matter. Once there's a commotion, I'm afraid the entire court will inevitably be in turmoil. The cabinet has temporarily suppressed this matter. Then, news of the great victory in Youzhou spread, causing an uproar. No one mentioned King Ping's defeat again.

After the new year, it just so happened that there was a triennial imperial examination. Everyone in the court was unwilling to break through this talent selection opportunity to replenish new blood. Therefore, this matter was delayed for half a year.

On the day of the Flower Festival in the Marquis of Changxing's Residence, she had found out that King Ping had entered the capital and specially ordered someone to investigate this matter carefully.

!!

She only felt that it was ironic.

The court officials only cared about internal strife. They wanted to use the triennial imperial examination to strengthen their henchmen and cultivate their power. They thought that if the Marquis of Changxing guarded Youzhou and won the battle, he would be able to intimidate the vassal lords and they would not even have to deal with the fact that the vassal lords had suffered a defeat.

Yu Youyao pursed her lips slightly. The vassal king is not allowed to enter the capital without receiving an edict. Otherwise, he will be treated as a traitor. King Ping entered the capital on his own accord. Does he want to die?

She had never been able to figure out why King Ping wanted to enter the capital. Didn't he know that entering the capital with his status was equivalent to courting death?

However, her cousin did not intend to talk about this previously, so she could not ask.

The corners of Zhou Linghuai's mouth twitched slightly, and there was a hint of mockery in his eyes. What if King Ping can prove his loyalty to the emperor and the Imperial Court?

Yu Youyao was stunned. But the emperor is suspicious. How could he

Even King You couldn't escape the emperor's scheme. So what if it was King Ping?

Zhou Linghuai picked up a black chess piece and placed it gently on the chessboard. What if Liang Jingye stays in the capital and becomes a hostage of the Imperial Court?

Yu Youyao's mind suddenly exploded. But if King Ping really wants to disobey, I'm afraid he won't take his mere son seriously!

This idea was very thorough, but unfortunately

Zhou Linghuai smiled. The title of heir isn't something that can be given to just any son. It has to be given by the Imperial Court. After discussion with the court officials, it will be decided by the emperor and an imperial edict will be issued. Once the heir is conferred the title, he will be the future heir to the throne. If the heir dies, it won't be easy to get another title.

At this point, he revealed a rather playful smile. Therefore, everyone who can be conferred the title of heir is the eldest son of the first wife, and also the son with their highest hopes. We can't give up on him easily. After all, the title of first wife is extraordinary to the family and even the clan.

Yu Youyao was deep in thought. I heard that after the Imperial Clan Lord invites the heir to be conferred the title, there will be an examination by the court officials to verify the character of the person who has been conferred the title. After that, it will have to be approved by the Imperial Court. Then, after the court officials have discussed it, the emperor will issue a decree. In that case, the person who has been conferred the title will have nowhere to hide. No wonder

The dynasty valued the eldest son of the first wife, and the crown prince always prioritized him.

Not to mention the heir?

In that case, the Prince of Liang had indeed sent the heir into the capital to show his loyalty.

Zhou Linghuai nodded. That's only one of the reasons.

Yu Youyao couldn't help but ask, What's the second reason?

Zhou Linghuai held a black chess piece in one hand and a white chess piece in the other. His left hand and right hand played on the chessboard. Even a vicious tiger doesn't eat its cubs. In the future, if the King Liang has the intention to rebel, as the heir of the Liang family, Liang Jingye, he will definitely die. At that time, there will be officials in the court who will publicize it wantonly. As a minister, King Liang will be disloyal and unrighteous, and as a father, he will be heartless. Such disloyal, heartless, and unrighteous people can be said to be rebels. Everyone in the world can denounce them.

Zhou Linghuai held a black chess piece in one hand and a white chess piece in the other. His left hand and right hand played on the chessboard. Even a vicious tiger doesn't eat its cubs. In the future, if the King of Liang has the intention to rebel, as the heir of the Liang family, Liang Jingye, he will definitely die. At that time, there will be officials in the court who will publicize it wantonly. As a minister, the King of Liang will be disloyal and unrighteous, and as a father, he will be heartless. Such disloyal, heartless, and unrighteous people can be said to be rebels. Everyone in the world will denounce them.

Zhou Linghuai tapped on the chessboard. It's true that he's loyal, but it's not necessarily true!

Yu Youyao was momentarily stunned by his twisted words. Didn't Cousin say that King Ping sent his heir into the capital as a hostage to show his loyalty? Why do you say that King Liang was disloyal?

Zhou Linghuai stared at the chessboard for a long time. Those who steal the hook will be executed, and those who usurp power will become princes instead. Killing one person is considered evil, and killing everyone in the world is considered an unparalleled ambition. It's still too early for thieves to show themselves. It's just a matter of victory and defeat.

On the surface, Liang Jingye had become a hostage, and there were many disadvantages to King Ping.

However, on the other hand, wasn't King Ping taking the initiative to send a hostage into the capital to gain the trust of the Imperial Court? In the future, it would be more convenient for King Ping to do things in Liangzhou.

Yu Youyao panted and felt suffocated. So, King Ping has the intention to rebel?

Those who steal the hook will be executed, and those who usurp power will become princes instead. Killing one person was considered evil, and killing everyone in the world was a peerless hero. When her cousin said these words, there was a ruthless killing intent in his tone, making her almost suffocate.

Instead of answering, Zhou Linghuai asked, Yao Yao, do you think that a mere hostage can really dispel the emperor's doubts about the vassal lord?

Yu Youyao's chest felt tight. She kept feeling that the cousin in front of her was unfamiliar, making her feel both terrified and heartbroken. She was filled with uneasiness.

Zhou Linghuai sneered. Why did King Ping secretly enter the capital and choose the day of the Marquis of Changxing's Flower Festival?

Yu Youyao had a bad feeling.

Zhou Linghuai looked up at her. The ultimate goal of the Flower Festival at the Marquis of Changxing's Residence is to cover for the vassal lords entering the capital. This is because once the vassal lords enter the capital, their words and actions will be under the surveillance of the Imperial Court.

Yu Youyao understood. There was an old saying, It's easier to do things with someone in the court.

King Prince Ping had entered the capital on his own accord with his heir to dispel the emperor's suspicion. However, if the emperor did not fall for this, his life would be over. The reason why he had taken the risk was because there was someone in the imperial court to protect him. x

However, it was a huge taboo for vassal lords to collude with the court officials.

King Ping's ambition was obvious.

In that case, King Ping had only sent a hostage into the capital to show his loyalty. His real goal was probably to plot a rebellion with the court officials.

Rebellion was not something that could be explained clearly in letters. If someone obtained it, it would be a huge crime.

Only by colluding face to face could they show their sincerity.

Previously, her cousin had said that the imperial court was going to be in chaos.

So that was what she meant!

Zhou Linghuai revealed a meaningful smile. When the vassal king enters the capital, the emperor will show his great kindness to intimidate the vassal king. He will reward the heroes without restraint.