

All Hail 511

Chapter 511: Henpecked

At this moment, Zhou Linghuai had already put on his shoes.

Yu Youyao quickly asked, "Cousin, how do you feel now? Does your leg hurt

Zhou Linghuai's expression relaxed, and his faint frown relaxed. "The pain has lessened by half. I think that if I use it every day in the future and add in some internal medicinal wine to adjust it, my leg disease will be mostly be cured."

When Yu Youyao heard this, she couldn't help but call Chun Xiao over. "Hurry up and bring me the jar of medicinal wine I placed in the incense room."

Zhou Linghuai was stunned. "Didn't you say that the medicinal wine can only be drunk after a few days?"

Yu Youyao said, "It's written on the prescription that it's the best to drink after ten days. However, the medicinal wine has spiritual dewdrop in it, so the effect will definitely be good. Cousin, drink it and see how effective it is. It's fine for me to brew some more."

After a while, Chun Xiao brought over a small jar of Myrrh Wine.

The Myrrh Wine was brewed with the best Shanxi distilled wine. The color was light red and crystal clear.

Zhou Linghuai drank a cup. The taste was mellow and fragrant, with the bitter fragrance of Myrrh and taste of frankincense. It was a little like the milk wine he had drunk in Youzhou in his early years. It was pretty good.

The wine was slightly strong. When it entered his throat, it was smooth. After entering his stomach, he felt as if his stomach was on fire.

Although Zhou Linghuai did not like to drink, it did not mean that his alcohol tolerance was bad.

In fact, he was already in the army when he was nine years old. He ate meat and drank wine with the veterans. His mother would still discipline him, but his father did not think much of it. He felt that as a man, drinking some wine was nothing.

He had completely forgotten that his father was a real man. When he drank outside, he never drank more than three rounds.

Whenever someone tried to persuade them to drink, they would say that there was a shrew at home.

Anyone who knew what was good for them would not dare to persuade him anymore.

After all, persuading people to drink was one thing, but it was too much to make people not get along with each other.

People would tease him for not knowing how to have fun. However, his father wasn't afraid to retaliate. "Drinking is harmful to the body. My wife cares for me so how could I not know any better?!"

Upon hearing this, the others also knew

Forget it, King You was under his wife's control. This was like Zhou Yu beating Huang Gai up- one was willing to hit, and the other was willing to suffer. He was completely hopeless.

If they continued to persuade him, they would only be asking for trouble.

If they were at home, his father would not even dare to touch a drop of wine.

Of course, he would also secretly hide some wine behind her back. Occasionally, he would secretly drink a small glass to satisfy his cravings.

His mother also turned a blind eye.

The cup of wine was not intoxicating. The moment the wine entered his stomach, his spirits were lifted. He could not help but feel a little tipsy.

Zhou Linghuai's face was also filled with charm. His lips were like pills, and he felt relaxed. Unknowingly, he became a little lazy and revealed a seductive expression.

In particular, his eyes were filled with endless emotions. It was as if they were extremely beautiful and revealed a demonic aura.

This was the first time Yu Youyao had seen such an enchanting cousin. She subconsciously propped up her cheek and admired him. "He's 15 years old, like the sun in the east. His skin is soft and lustrous and of top quality. How can he just be called 'attractive'? Cousin is indeed unparalleled."

The glass of wine just now seemed to have burned into his eyes, and his eyes were slightly red.

Zhou Linghuai's smile deepened, and his eyes were even more watery. "This wine is a rare good wine. It makes my heart feel relaxed and even my body feels warm."

With the pain gone, his body naturally felt comfortable.

Zhou Linghuai subconsciously picked up another wine jar and poured himself a glass of wine.

Yu Youyao hurriedly said, "Every morning, day and night, it's fine to drink a glass or two of this wine, but you can't drink more." As if worried that her cousin wouldn't listen to her, she continued, "Medicinal wine is also wine. Drink it in moderation. It can strengthen your body and improve your meridians. However, if you drink too much, it will be harmful to your body."

Zhou Linghuai leaned against the wheelchair lazily. "I've finished this glass. I won't drink anymore."

The cousins sat in front of the charcoal cage and talked.

Unknowingly, it was time for lunch.

Nanny Xu rarely cooked personally. She made Laba cuisine. There was Laba tofu, Laba noodle, wheat rice, Laba beans, and a white jade ginseng soup. It

was simple but delicious.

Although this year's Laba Festival was a little quieter, it was also joyous and warm.

The next day, the King of Zhouli was buried.

Hot water was boiled with dried citrus skin in the small kitchen. Chun Xiao helped Yu Youyao bathe. "Take off your clothes today and wash them with citrus water to get rid of your bad luck."

Nanny Liu also instructed the servants to put away the mourning cloth and burn it clean. The room was also sprinkled with citrus water, emitting a faint fragrance.

Zhou Linghuai was not idle either. He chose seven or eight of the largest and best quality Dragon Resting Stones and kept them. He planned to take some time to carve them and give them to Yu Youyao.

The Dragon Resting Stones were of good quality. There was no need to do much work on them. They only needed to be slightly modified.

After picking Yu Youyao's, he picked two pieces that were slightly smaller and of high quality, but of slightly poorer quality. He sent them to An Shou Hall.

As for carving, Old Madam Yu would naturally find a craftsman to carve the stone, so there was no need for him to do it for her.

He also gave the other masters in the residence a piece that was smaller but of good quality each.

It was not that he was stingy. Dragon Resting Stones were rare to begin with.

It was also because he had some connections with the monks of Wutai

Mountain that he obtained the good stones that had been stored in the temple for many years.

Even those of poorer quality were rare good stones. Be it Feng Shui ornaments, carving inkstones, or carving seals, they were all extremely good.

It wouldn't be embarrassing to give them as gifts.

Of course, Zhou Linghuai wouldn't give them anything that he couldn't take out.

On the third day after the mourning period, Marquis of Changxing and the others stood at Meridian Gate at noon— Execution!

Yu Youyao stood in the courtyard in a pomegranate-red cloak with a fox fur collar.

Snowflakes fluttered in the sky. The whistling cold wind was like a roaring ferocious beast that whistled and howled furiously at the heavens and the earth, causing the entire capital to be suffused with a murderous aura.

One could almost imagine what it would be like when the executioner swung his blade down and the heads fell to the ground. Blood would spray on the snow on the ground and the red snow would turn into blood.

Zhou Linghuai turned his wheelchair to her side. "After the Laba Festival, the smell of the new year will become stronger. Every family has to prepare the new year's goods to welcome the new year. They hope that everything will be smooth in the coming year."

Therefore, neither the emperor nor the courtiers were willing to leave the Marquis of Changxing and the others until the new year.

Spring and summer produced all living things, mainly vitality. It wasn't good to create too much blood and go against the heavens.

Autumn and winter, everything withered, and the main thing was death.

The crime of colluding with the enemy and betraying the country and persecuting the royal family was a heinous crime. If they did not deal with it for a day, it would cause trouble. If they did not do it quickly during winter, they would have to wait until after autumn.

Yu Youyao naturally understood what he meant. She sighed slightly.. “When will the people sentenced to exile set off?”

Chapter 512: His Little Girl

Zhou Linghuai said, “Marquis Changxing and the others are all high-ranking ministers in the court. They will be executed at noon today. Those of a lower rank and their relatives will be executed at the entrance of the market tomorrow. As the King of Zhouli’s case involves a lot of people, it will take at least three days to kill them all. Those sentenced to exile will be sent to the market entrance to watch the punishment before they set off for Shangyang Castle. It will take at least three to four days.”

The princes and ministers were to be executed at the Meridian Gate, and the courtiers had to go to watch the punishment. This was also a place that the courtiers had to pass through every morning court session. It was meant to warn and intimidate the other courtiers.

As for the rest, they had to let the commoners watch the punishment at the entrance of the market and serve as a warning to others.

Yu Youyao sighed slightly. “The weather is getting colder. Looks like the charity hall has to be done quickly.”

This winter was much colder than previous years.

It had been snowing since Laba. It had been snowing for three to four days in a row. The snow had not stopped, and the sky was dark. It seemed that the snow would not end anytime soon.

Zhou Linghuai knew that she felt bad. “The courtyard is already done. With a little repair, people can stay there. The subsequent repairs can be done slowly.

You’ve already done very well.”

Yu Youyao was not a passive person. Once she decided what to do, she would not be able to delay it for a moment.

On Laba, she had mentioned that she wanted to set up a charity hall. The next day, she found someone to go to the east of the city to buy a relatively old courtyard house and even found a craftsman to repair it.

Yu Youyao nodded and asked, “After the King of Zhouli case is over, will Li Qiguang’s case also be completed?”

Li Qiguang’s crime of treason was even worse than the crime of the Marquis of Changxing.

Zhou Linghuai shook his head. “What to do with Li Qiguang’s case depends on the progress of Song Xiuwen’s case. It will probably be delayed until after the new year.”

Yu Youyao understood immediately. "In the case of the King of Zhouli, we just have to find out the truth and give the world an explanation. The conspiracy often involves a lot of people and threatens the imperial power. If we don't investigate thoroughly, the emperor won't be at ease, and the ministers won't be able to answer to the emperor."

From the looks of it, Li Qiguang's case was probably even more serious than the King of Zhouli's case.

Who knew how many more people would die.

Yu Youyao suddenly felt cold. "Father set off for Zhejiang in October. It's been more than a month. Other than the long journey, I think there should be some progress on Song Xiuwen's case."

Yu Zongzheng had only sent a peace letter home at the beginning of November, but there had been no news so far.

Yu Youyao was not worried about Yu Zongzheng. She was worried that there would be complications that would implicate the Yu Residence.

Zhou Linghuai raised his hand and tightened the fox fur collar around her neck. "The case should be about done. In the next few days, news should reach the capital."

Yu Youyao was a little surprised. "So soon?"

Logically speaking, Song Xiuwen's case involved a lot of people. It would probably not be so easy to deal with it quickly and completely.

Zhou Linghuai smiled. "Didn't you suggest for your father to bring Song Mingzhao to the south because you wanted to use his identity as the heir of the Marquis to settle this matter as soon as possible to avoid involving too many people? Song Zhao became famous and was taken in as a disciple by Mr. Xian

Yun. His reputation is not unearned."

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

However, she tightened the velvet blanket on her cousin's legs. "Cousin's leg disease has just recovered a little. You can't stay outside for long. You can only stay outside three times a day at most, and each time, you can only drink a cup of tea at most."

The ointment was used externally, and the Myrrh wine was consumed internally. With Uncle Sun's acupuncture treatment, Cousin's leg was indeed much better.

Over the past few days, when Cousin ate, his appetite was a little bigger than before. His face also had a little color, unlike the sickly and pale look in the past.

This also made Yu Youyao heave a sigh of relief. She no longer restrained her cousin from going out like before.

There was a charcoal fire in the house. Staying inside all the time was not good for the body.

She did not want to mention Song Mingzhao, and Zhou Linghuai would not say anything else. He only nodded. "Okay!"

He recalled that on the afternoon of the Laba Festival, after returning to The Green House, Uncle Sun had come to take his pulse. When he realized that his pulse had calmed down, he asked about the situation.

Naturally, he mentioned the ointment and Myrrh wine.

Uncle Sun hurriedly took some from him for research.

Early the next morning, Uncle Sun came to find him excitedly. "Frankincense is good at penetrating the acupoints and regulating Qi. Myrrh is good at circulating blood. When used in combination, it opens up the internal organs and circulates the essential medicine in the meridians. It can enter the heart, kidneys, liver, and spleen, and treat all the pain in the limbs and joints. It's an essential medicine for injuries."

It was said that one could become a doctor after being ill for a long time. Although Zhou Linghuai was not proficient in medicine, he had heard such words many times and naturally understood what they meant. "I used it twice last night. My leg did not hurt as much as before."

Uncle Sun's expression was very complicated. "That's right. Although the ointment is only made with herbs, its curative effect is better than many others. I'll use Angelica, Pill Ginseng, Frankincense, and Myrrh to make a lively spirit pill for you. It'll be applied externally and taken internally. It'll nourish your Qi, blood, and spirit. Your leg illness will be mostly cured then."

As for the remaining half, he still had to work on his internal acupoints to completely recover his legs.

Uncle Sun concocted a lively spirit pill and prescribed a new prescription for him. He used Myrrh and Frankincense in it, and the acupuncture treatment and medicinal bath were also adjusted.

In just three to four days, there was a clear improvement.

After that, Uncle Sun sighed with emotion and pity. "Why did this Eldest Miss

Yu born as a woman? Forget being a woman, why is she an official's daughter? If she's just an ordinary woman, with her talent in medicine, she will definitely be able to inherit the mantle of the Sun family's King of Medicine. In the future, she might even be able to bring the name of the Sun family's King of Medicine to greater heights."

He was not interested in foreign things. It was not that he looked down on them, but he felt that he did not even understand the medical skills passed down from his ancestors. So why would he waste so much effort on foreign things?

He also knew the effects of Myrrh and Frankincense.

However, there were countless medicinal herbs that could achieve the same healing effect. So why would he take the extra step to study other things?

From this, it could be seen that he was much inferior to Yu Youyao.

Zhou Linghuai smiled. Unknowingly, his little girl had already grown to this extent.

Yu Youyao also smiled. "Let's go into the house quickly. I've been studying for the past few days on using Myrrh and Frankincense to make medicinal cuisine. I made a kind of Frankincense cream cake. It tastes a little similar to the Eight Treasures Cake. It's a little bitter. Because it's added with Frankincense, it also has a hint of milk fragrance. I wonder if Cousin will like it."

Knowing that Myrrh and Frankincense were good for her cousin's health, she spent a lot of time and energy studying food and medicinal tea.

Zhou Linghuai smiled. "More haste less speed. Your medicine is already great."

Yu Youyao pouted and did not say anything else. Of course, she knew this logic, but she couldn't care less. She only wanted her cousin to get better quickly so that he would no longer have to suffer from leg problems..

Chapter 513: Beauty is a Graceful Heart

The two of them went into the house together. They each drank a bowl of ginger tea and sat in front of the charcoal cage to warm themselves up.

Chun Xiao brought over the Frankincense cream cake.

The pieces of pastry were light red in color and looked crystal clear. They were very beautiful.

Yu Youyao took a piece and handed it to her cousin. "Try it."

Zhou Linghuai happily took it and tasted it. "This Frankincense cream cake is even more exquisite than the Eight Treasures Cake. It has a slight bitterness and also a clear fragrance of wood. It's indeed very delicious. It tastes much better than it sounds."

Seeing that her cousin liked it, Yu Youyao was very happy. "Which one do you like more than the Eight Treasures Cake?"

Her cousin did not have a strong appetite. Every time, she had to rummage through her brains and prepare a meal that suited her cousin's taste. She hoped that her cousin would like it, so he would eat more and his body would recover.

The Eight Treasures Cake was the only one that her cousin liked.

Zhou Linghuai smiled. "I like both. If we were to say which is better, I would naturally like the Frankincense cream cake that Cousin painstakingly developed."

Yu Youyao smiled. "Since Cousin likes both, I can adjust the taste in the future."

The Eight Treasures Cake strengthens the body and nourishes it. The

Frankincense cream cake relaxes the fascia, revitalizes Qi and circulates blood. The effect of nourishing the body was comparable, but each had their own functions.

After a few more days, the market finally quietened down.

After the beheading of the prisoners, their corpses were left at the entrance of the market for three days. When the three days were over, Soldiers took tattered mats, hastily collected the corpses, and threw them into the mass grave.

At the same time, the prisoners who had been sentenced to exile had also put on shackles. They were only wearing thin prison clothes. They were driven out of the city by the soldiers and set off for Shangyang Castle.

Hundreds of people passed by Changan Street, crying and shouting.

Everyone knew that this was a path of no return.

Just as everyone was lamenting about how the road ahead was vast for these people, and their lives were not on the line, a charity hall called “Graceful

Heart Hall” quietly opened in the east of the city.

They took in orphaned children under the age of twelve, as well as women and children who had no one to rely on.

Children who were 12 years old or older and were orphans under the age of 16 could go to the Graceful Heart Hall every day to get two Momo dumplings. If they were diligent, the hall could step in and vouch for them. They could recommend them to restaurants and shops to do odd jobs in exchange for money.

Yu Youyao had originally named the Graceful Heart Hall “Kindness Hall”.

She hoped that these children who could be saved would have kindness. No matter what situation they encountered, they would still have a kind heart

freed of any jealousy.

Even if they were an orphan, they could still live a virtuous life in the future.

So that they would not be defined by their circumstance.

For this, Yu Youyao even specially discussed it with her cousin. “Kindness and compassion are my original intentions for starting a charity.”

However, Zhou Linghuai felt that this name was not good. “You have to know that overdoing it is as bad as not doing it. If you’re not careful, the name kindness might be criticised by others. I think the Graceful Heart Hall is not bad. It represents being kind and virtuous, and your decision to open a charity hall is an act of beauty.”

Yu Youyao suddenly understood.

The meaning of the name could not be underestimated.

The charity hall was actually not easy to run. There were still many problems that they had to face in the future. No one could guarantee that the charity hall would continue to be smooth sailing.

There were many people in the charity hall, so it was inevitable that there would be mistakes. She was the daughter of an official, and her every move was watched by others. Her reputation was too great, and in the future, there would be many people who would stand at the height of “good karma” and criticize her.

This was like a person naming himself “The Rich”. In the end, this person would be poor all his life. Others would have to use his name to make fun of him.

It was fine if it was an ordinary person, but she was an official’s daughter. Her reputation was too important to her.

Since the name had been established, she had to be responsible for it.

Although her cousin had a good intention in name it Graceful Heart Hall, Yu Youyao felt awkward. “Cousin is right. Kindness Hall might not be the best, but I keep feeling that something is wrong with the Graceful Heart Hall. Why don’t we change it?”

She also knew that starting a charity was not a small matter. As long as she passed through the Yu Residence, it was inevitable that others would discover her. She had never thought of hiding it from others, but it seemed a little...

Attention-seeking!

Zhou Linghuai smiled. “I know you don’t like to be ostentatious, but when you open a charity hall, you have to go through the government office to buy land, settle down, and take in people. Others will use various methods to find out about you. It won’t be good to hide it. Beauty is a graceful heart. This is the Empress Dowager’s praise. With this name, you can avoid a lot of trouble.” Although her cousin made sense, Yu Youyao was a little hesitant.

Zhou Linghuai brushed it gently. The jade bead tassel by her ear swayed gently.

Ever since her cousin returned from Shandong, he would often do intimate things like brushing her hair, tidying her clothes, and pulling out the jewelry in her hair.

At first, Yu Youyao would feel a little awkward, but after a few more times, she did not think much of it. Instead, she liked this kind of intimacy with her cousin in private.

Zhou Linghuai said slowly, “I know that your ambition does not stop with one charity hall. This charity hall is only the beginning for you. You want to open many charity halls throughout the country with whatever power you have. In that case, you have to be prepared to face everything from the beginning.”

Yu Youyao also knew that she could not hide her thoughts from her cousin, so she did not try. She only said, “I vaguely have this thought in my heart. As for what to do, I still have to see the situation of this charity hall in the capital.” At this point, she took a deep breath and smiled. “Since Cousin thinks the name Graceful Heart Hall is good, let’s call it Graceful Heart Hall!”

In that case, the name was settled.

Zhou Linghuai chuckled.

Yu Youyao tugged at her cousin’s sleeve and smiled until her eyes curved into crescents. Her eyes were clear and happy. “Can I leave the plaque of Graceful Heart Hall to you?”

Zhou Linghuai also smiled. “When did I ever say no to you?”

He had never rejected her requests. Even if it was something difficult, he would think of a compromise to avoid disappointing her.

Yu Youyao was very happy. “Thank you, Cousin!”

That day, Zhou Linghuai went to work.

The words “Graceful Heart Hall” were written in large characters. It was as graceful as a swimming dragon, like a tiger lying on a phoenix.

Her cousin was good at calligraphy, so the words he wrote were majestic like endless mountains, and also beautiful and deep. The strokes were strong like the mountains and flowed smoothly like rivers.

He already had his own style

Yu Youyao held the calligraphy and naturally loved it.

She wheedled and asked her cousin to give her a painting of “Graceful Heart is Kindness”. She planned to hang it in her study after it was framed.

That day, Yu Youyao sent this calligraphy piece to be framed. Framing was not easy, and it usually took at least two to three days.

Yu Youyao was in a hurry to use it, so she added more money and asked them to hurry up.

The people who made the plaque were all experienced businessmen. Their craftsmanship were unparalleled. She said that it was needed urgently, and the next day, they finished it and sent it to the Yu Residence..

Chapter 514: Kind and Virtuous

Just like that, Yu Youyao’s first charity hall was hastily organized. Although it was not perfect, at least it could host people.

They would continue to perfect it in the future.

After working hard for a few days, the Graceful Heart Hall finally stabilized.

There were already many children in the Graceful Heart Hall who had received a meager salary with their own hands.

Although there were only a few copper coins, this was their hope for survival.

As children who could only beg and rely on the pity of others to resist the mockery of others, they could only starve and support themselves through their own efforts.

The steward of the Graceful Heart Hall brought over a metal box. “Throw the money you earned today into this box.”

The children subconsciously tightened their grip on the copper coins in their hands and retreated. They looked at the steward warily, unwilling to take out their hard-earned money.

Some children even shouted agitatedly on the spot

“He wants to take our money. Don’t give it to him...”

“Yes, we can’t give it to him. This is our hard-earned money. Why should we give it to him...”

“I used to think that he was a good person, but it turns out that he’s no different from the rascals outside. He deliberately captured us and threatened us to beg along the

streets. Now, he wants to take away the money we begged for and give us half a sour and dry steamed bun every day..."

"You bad people..."

"Bad guy..."

The steward did not say anything. He only watched quietly as they shouted, cursed, cried, begged, and spat out their saliva in anger.

It wasn't that the children didn't want to escape, but they couldn't.

This was because if they escaped, they would have no way out.

Even if the Graceful Heart Hall wanted to take their money, it was at least a place that could shelter them from the wind and rain. They couldn't bear to leave, even though they knew that this was a black-hearted hall.

The children vented for a long time and realized that the steward did not make things difficult for them.

The scene finally quietened down.

At this moment, a clear voice sounded from outside the hall. "No one will snatch the money you've worked hard to earn."

The children were stunned. Their eyes widened in disbelief as they looked at the door.

A little girl was standing outside. She did not look much older than them, but she was wearing a dazzling red cloak with a white collar that covered her from head to toe.

The children thought enviously, 'It must be warm to wear such clothes. Her family must be very rich.'

When the steward saw Yu Youyao, he quickly went forward and bowed. "Eldest Miss."

Yu Youyao nodded slightly. Seeing that he was in a sorry state and the saliva on him had yet to dry, she said, "It's been hard on you."

At this moment, a thin child with dark eyes looked at the 11 or 12-year-old child and asked carefully, "Who are you?"

As soon as he spoke, the other children looked at him as he took the lead.

Yu Youyao did not answer. "Shouldn't you state your name before asking for someone else's name?"

The young man was slightly stunned. He pursed his lips and hesitated for a moment before saying, "My name is Er Dan."

Upon hearing this name, Yu Youyao knew that he was not telling the truth. This young man looked too special among the children. It was obvious at a glance that he came from a good family.

However, Yu Youyao did not plan to pursue the matter.

Er Dan couldn't help but ask, "You just said that no one will snatch our money. Is that true?"

He was not a fool. The steward was so respectful to this little girl. The owner of the charity hall was very likely related to her.

Yu Youyao nodded. "It's true."

A little girl who was about seven or eight years old said in disbelief, "Why does the steward want us to take out the money? We earned all this money ourselves!"

"Yes, we earned the money ourselves. Why should we take it out..."

"I can't take out the money..."

"Bad guy..."

In the blink of an eye, there was a commotion in the room.

Er Dan stopped arguing. "Let's hear what they have to say first." Someone was indignant—

"What else is there to say? They just want to snatch our money..."

The steward couldn't help but say angrily, "How do you get the steamed buns you eat every day, the blankets you cover at night, the charcoal fire in the house, and the job to earn money?"

He could withstand the resentment of these children, but Eldest Miss could not.

No one knew better than him how much effort Eldest Miss had put in and the connections she used for the hall.

The children were stunned, and the room fell silent.

Outside, a white steamed bun cost three copper coins, but in the Graceful Heart Hall, they only needed one copper coin.

Those who were young and physically disabled and couldn't earn money could also do what they could to replace food with work.

They could eat three white flour buns a day and only spend three copper coins. On the other hand, they could earn three to eight copper coins from working part-time for a day. When they slept at night, they would cover themselves with a relatively warm blanket and they had a brazier in the house.

Such a life was something they did not dare to think about in the past.

Yu Youyao raised her hand to stop the angry steward. She bent down and stroked the little girl's head. "You can only buy a white flour steamed bun for three copper coins outside, but in the Graceful Heart Hall, you can buy it for one copper coin. A white flour steamed bun can fill your stomach. There are so many of you. With one copper coin, you can buy many white flour steamed buns. Won't you be able to fill the stomachs of more people?"

The children looked thoughtful.

Yu Youyao said softly, "Do you know why I want to set up this charity?"

It turned out that the Graceful Heart Hall was opened by this good-looking young lady. The young lady's eyes lit up and she couldn't help but ask, "Why?"

Yu Youyao stroked her hair again, and the rough feeling made her heart ache. "If I can eat my fill, I hope that you can also eat your fill. Then, if you can eat your fill, shouldn't you also help your younger siblings eat their fill? Do you know why this hall is called the Graceful Heart Hall? I hope that every one of you who enters the Graceful Heart Hall has a good and kind heart and spread this kindness to more people."

As soon as she finished speaking, the little girl sniffed. "I hope Da Hua can fill her stomach like me, but Da Hua is starving..."

With that) she whimpered softly.

The eyes of the other children present were also red. They had lost their parents and relatives since they were young and relied on begging on the streets. They had even cheated to live. They had seen too many people leave because of death..

"Brother Da Niu is also starving..."

"So is my sister..."

"Boohoo..."

The room was filled with tears. Yu Youyao couldn't help but tear up. She untied her pouch, took out a copper coin, and stuffed it into the metal box..

Chapter 515: Heart of Seven Orifices

Er Dan also pursed his lips and stuffed a copper coin into the metal box. Then, there was a second, a third, a fourth...

Not everyone was willing.

Yu Youyao did not force them. She only asked the steward to memorize their names. "In the future, if others spend a copper coin to buy a steamed bun, they will need to spend two copper coins."

She wanted to tell these children that those who only wanted to get and were unwilling to give would give up even more.

After that, Yu Youyao asked the steward about many things in the Graceful Heart Hall.

Yu Youyao was about to return to the residence when she saw Er Dan at the door.

Er Dan seemed to have waited for a long time, and his face was red from the cold. When he saw Yu Youyao, he stammered, "My name is Lu Jifeng. My grandfather said that a gentleman has to be upright. Can you tell me your name?"

His name meant a light wind and clear moon. The rain would stop and the sun would rise.

It meant that he was magnanimous and open-minded. It implied that he was transparent and honest.

This name captured both the heart of a gentleman and ambition.

Lu Jifeng's grandfather was definitely not an ordinary person. Yu Youyao racked her brains and wondered if a wealthy family with the surname Lu in the capital had a similar situation as Lu Jifeng.

However, she shook her head helplessly.

Lu Jifeng was clearly not a person implicated in King Li of Zhou's case. From the looks of it, he had been lost for at least a few years. In that case, she was really not sure.

However, there was no need to take it too seriously. Yu Youyao nodded. "My name is Yu Youyao."

With that) Yu Youyao walked out of the door.

For some reason, Lu Jifeng had an urge to shout at Yu Youyao's back, "Yu

Youyao, you're a good person."

Yu Youyao paused for a moment, but she did not stop.

Unbeknownst to her, there was a thin young man standing quietly in the snow, looking at her footprints in the snow. He couldn't help but stretch out his foot and follow the string of footprints she had left.

She also did not know that in the future, there would be a young man who would follow her step by step until the rain stopped and the sun rose.

Now, they were just passers-by in each other's lives.

After returning to the residence, Yu Youyao went to An Shou Hall first.

Although she had received her grandmother's permission to go out today, she should inform her when she returned.

Seeing that she had returned, Old Madam Yu smiled. "Come and have a bowl of ginger soup to warm your body."

Nanny Liu quickly poured a cup of ginger tea and handed it over.

Ever since it was winter, it was inevitable that she would have at least a bowl of ginger soup every day. Yu Youyao took it with a look of disdain as she pinched her nose and forced a bowl of ginger soup into her mouth.

After drinking it, she even grimaced.

However, Old Madam Yu laughed. "If you don't like ginger soup, stay in the house obediently. Who asked you to run out on such a cold day? You deserve it!"

Her granddaughter had mentioned it to her long ago.

It was also from then on that she knew that the small inner residence of the Yu Residence could not trap her granddaughter, so she let her do as she pleased.

After that, everything in the residence was left to Nanny Liu and Concubine Qiu to discuss and decide.

"Since the Graceful Heart Hall has been set up, we naturally have to operate it well. Otherwise, people will think we're hypocritical." Yu Youyao finished her ginger tea and Nanny Liu quickly handed over the pastries.

After eating two pastries in a row, she suppressed the strange taste in her mouth.

Old Madam Yu agreed deeply. She changed the topic and asked, “Have you settled everything in the Graceful Heart Hall?”

Yu Youyao nodded. “I just went over to take a look at the reception situation in the Graceful Heart Hall. The Graceful Heart Hall was opened too quickly and has many shortcomings. It still needs to be perfected. However, I can’t be at ease if I don’t go over to take a look. It won’t be good if I do something bad out of kindness.”

She was able to consider the situation thoroughly. It was obvious that she was extraordinary. Old Madam Yu felt both proud and complicated. “You’ve been raised by your cousin, and your mindset is different from others. It’s a good thing to start a charity hall. I won’t restrict you anymore. It’s just that a woman’s reputation is the most important. It’s best to think carefully about what to do with this charity hall.”

Her grandmother was worried that her reputation would be ruined if she was outside.

Yu Youyao understood. “Although the beginning of the charity hall was a little rash, with Cousin’s help, it will definitely be improved gradually in the future.

Grandmother, don’t worry!’

It was only because she knew that with Zhou Linghuai’s help that she could let her granddaughter do whatever she wanted.

Old Madam Yu waved her hand and changed the topic. “This morning, your father handed a memorial to the Imperial Court to complain on behalf of the navy in Zhejiang.”

Yu Youyao smiled when she heard this. “What did Father say in the memorial?”

Although he said that she was going to investigate Song Xiuwen, in the end, he complained on behalf of the navy. It was obvious at a glance that this idea was not something her father could come up with. Thinking of what her cousin had said previously, Song Mingzhao was most likely involved.

Old Madam Yu’s worried heart also relaxed a little. “Your father told the Imperial Court in the memorial that the Zhejiang navy fights with the pirates all year round, and it’s more tiring than ordinary soldiers. The risk of fighting at sea is high, and the death rate is also higher, so the silver compensation is higher than ordinary soldiers. However, the silver offerings from the Zhejiang navy are more than half of those from other areas. He asked if the Imperial Court knows about this.”

Yu Youyao asked, “That’s all?”

Since they were going to investigate the army, there were many places where they could make a big fuss.

When Old Madam Yu heard this, she smiled. “As expected, nothing can be hidden from you. I’m afraid our family has a female top scholar. Even your father is inferior to you.” At this point, she shook her head regretfully before continuing what she had said previously. “Father used the military incident to give the Imperial Court a five-hit combo.”

Yu Youyao could roughly guess which five combos it was.

Indeed!

Old Madam Yu changed the topic and said, “At the beginning of the Great Zhou Dynasty, pirates were everywhere on the sea. As a result, the coastal area was often invaded and plundered by pirates and bandits. At that time, the Great

Zhou Dynasty was troubled internally and externally. It wasn’t until Emperor Gaozu gave the order to seal the sea that this situation improved.”

Yu Youyao also knew about this.

The sealed sea area was actually a treatment for the symptoms but not the root cause. The pirates and bandits still went ashore from time to time to do evil. There were still people from the Great Zhou Dynasty who traded with foreign countries through the sea.

The Xie Residence was one of them.

As they had arranged everything well, the Imperial Court had received practical benefits. The Imperial Court had also turned a blind eye to this.

Of course, there were also people who pointed out that this move was complying with the law on the surface but breaking the law in reality. They should not be biased.

However, the Xie Residence opened a wide trade route. Just the tax money they paid every year was already very large and impressive. Who wouldn’t want to wait to collect money?

It was not advisable to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.

There were many people who wanted to protect the Xie family.

This was the foundation of a family with a long history. Their huge connections and channels were already closely related to the fate of the Great Zhou Dynasty. Therefore, although the Xie family was only a merchant, they were definitely not comparable to ordinary merchants..

Chapter 516: Insatiable Greed

At this point, Old Madam Yu couldn’t help but think of the past. Her eyes were complicated. “Your second uncle joined the Hanlin Compilation and sorted out the old books of the previous dynasty. He had the intention to train the navy and open up a sea route. With Xia Yansheng’s support, he went to Fujian and completed the Map Strategy’ with the help of the Xie family.”

“He summarized the various benefits of open maritime trade, mentioned various drawbacks, and even proposed a solution. These are all the foundations of the Xie family’s past maritime voyages and are extremely valuable. As soon as the Sea Map was presented, most of the court officials supported open maritime routes and the development of maritime trade.” Her grandmother did not mention much about the past. Yu Youyao only knew that her second uncle had been selected by the emperor to join the Ministry of Revenue because of the “Sea Map Strategy”. From the beginning, it had laid a solid foundation for him to enter the cabinet.

Old Madam Yu only mentioned this briefly before changing the topic. “Therefore, I’ve borrowed many relevant maritime matters from the previous dynasty. Your father’s five-hit combo revolved around ‘Sea Map’. It can be said to be brilliant.”

When Yu Youyao heard this, she understood. Her grandmother had first mentioned the “Sea Map Strategy”, then mentioned that Yu Zongzheng had asked the Imperial Court about the “Sea Map Strategy.”

Yu Zongzheng had used the “Sea Map Strategy” to increase his persuasiveness. No one suspected if the memorial was real or fake anymore. They would only care about the memorial. It was very important.

Indeed!

“Your father’s second question was this: Many soldiers have cold legs before the age of 40 because they fight in the water all year round. They fall sick and suffer from pain. The Imperial Court empathizes with the hardships of the navy and more or less distributes some comfort money every year. However, the Zhejiang navy says that they have never received any comfort money. May I ask if the Imperial Court has distributed the comfort money to the Zhejiang navy?

Yu Youyao asked, “How did the Ministry of War react?”

When talking to smart people, it was really easy to understand the situation. Old Madam Yu smiled. “How could the Ministry of War dare to bear this crime? They immediately took out the military comfort records of the Zhejiang navy and said that every year, the Imperial Court would distribute relevant military comfort silver according to the number of active soldiers reported by the Zhejiang navy. On average, each person would receive no less than five taels.”

If the soldiers did not get the consolation money, who would?

Everything was obvious.

He saw the situation and avoided drawing out swords. He took a detour and threw all the problems to the Imperial Court, the Ministry of War, and the emperor. He could achieve her goal better.

Such a scheme was definitely not something Yu Zongzheng could have.

In that case, other than Song Mingzhao, no one else would think about it.

In that case, her cousin was really right. He had really used the right amount of strength to suggest that Yu Zongzheng bring Song Mingzhao along.

Yu Zongzheng was intentionally getting involved in a messy situation. Only a scheming person like Song Mingzhao could handle it.

“Your father’s third question was: The soldiers who have retired from the army due to injuries and illnesses will also receive a sum of money. This sum of money will not be less than ten taels of silver. If they die in battle, the Imperial Court will also distribute pension money ranging from fifteen to a hundred taels of silver to their families. However, many families of martyrs said that the pension money was only five to ten

taels of silver. Some families didn't even get the blood money. They asked the Imperial Court if the pension money that the Zhejiang navy is distributing every year is in place?

Yu Youyao smiled. "Father's questions are very skillful. The money used to comfort the army is only a small sum, but the pension money is the main thing. He went deeper and deeper, peeling back layer by layer. The emotions of the people who read the memorial would be like an endless fire. In the end,

I'm afraid they'll have a shocking anger."

Old Madam Yu nodded. "That's right. Your father's words were directed at the Ministry of War. The Ministry of War is afraid of taking responsibility, so they can't care about anything else. They can only took out the booklet distributed by the Ministry of War to prove their innocence. This way, the responsibility will fall on Song Xiuwen and all the relevant officials in Zhejiang."

This kind of questioning of the Imperial Court was actually indirect scolding.

From the beginning, they had blocked the path of the Ministry of War, making it impossible for them to hide. If they wanted to cover up for Zhejiang, they had to see if their heads were enough. With the evidence of the Ministry of War, Song Xiuwen and all the officials in Zhejiang had nowhere to hide.

What had Yu Zongzheng done from the beginning to the end?

Just complaining on behalf of the Zhejiang navy?

What did he do?

He didn't do anything?

They didn't like him?

However, you've mistreated the Zhejiang navy. I'll complain on their behalf. With 300,000 navy members protecting me, you can't stand me or kill me.

If I die in Zhejiang, not to mention how the Zhejiang navy will cause trouble, you will be convicted. The Imperial Court has a reason to reorganize Jiangnan. If I die, there will be thousands of corpses in Jiangnan.

Yu Youyao took a deep breath. "I was originally worried that Song Xiuwen's case would Implicate the Interests of the other officials In Jiangnan and that they would be deeply involved and couldn't extricate themselves. I suggested that Father start with the navy and only deal with Song Xiuwen to get the dirty money. Who knew..."

Her father had still poked a hornet's nest in Jiangnan.

So be it. He had even brought 300,000 navy soldiers with him. Now, he was fearless.

At this point, this case could no longer be said to be done well. It could be said to be very clear. He had shaken the entire Jiangnan alone and could escape unscathed.

This was enough for Yu Zongzheng to brag about for the rest of his life. In the future, when Yu Zongzheng entered the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs, he would definitely have a place in the history books.

She guessed that Song Mingzhao had contributed greatly.

However, guiding her father and pulling 300,000 navy soldiers into a hornet's nest in Jiangnan was definitely part of her cousin's plan.

How could she have purely thought that her cousin had taken a fancy to Song Xiuwen's position? With her cousin's ambition, how could he only want to satisfy 300,000 Zhejiang navy soldiers?

He even wanted to take the wealth from Jiangnan!

If he didn't stir up a hornet's nest, how could he accumulate wealth wantonly?

Old Madam Yu also had mixed feelings. "Your father's fourth question was: He has counted the number of active soldiers in the Zhejiang navy. He asked if the Imperial Court gave them enough military salary every year. If not, why was the life of the Zhejiang navy so difficult?"

Yu Youyao knew immediately that the main point was here.

Layer by layer, they went deeper and deeper. The money used to comfort the army was a small sum, and the compensation money was a big sum. The main point was the army.

The number of active-duty soldiers in the Zhejiang navy was not something that could be investigated just because you wanted to. If the general in charge of the navy wanted to hide it, it was basically impossible to find out.

Since Yu Zongzheng could find out about this, it must have been arranged by his cousin.

Old Madam Yu continued, "These words and questions made the emperor even angrier. When the Imperial Court was furious, the Minister of War was so frightened that he fainted on the spot. It was the Right Assistant Minister who checked. The number of active-duty soldiers reported by the Zhejiang navy every year was seriously inconsistent with the number of people reported by your father. Among them, there were 100,000 vacant spots. That was, they had falsely reported the number of people and the salary of the army. Every year, the greedy took the salary of 100,000 people.."

Chapter 517: Going Crazy

Yu Youyao gasped and suddenly raised her voice. "How dare they!"

It was obvious that An Shou Hall was burning Di Long and had a charcoal fire. It was much warmer than the Jade Courtyard, but she only felt her body turn cold.

She had heard from her cousin that the military salary distributed by Youzhou every year could pay 100,000 soldiers.

However, there were already so many greedy people in Zhejiang every year.

How dare they?

How could that be?!!

Just hearing her grandmother say this made her so angry that she couldn't control herself. One could imagine how she had felt at that time.

Old Madam Yu's expression did not look too good either. "After that, your father asked if the Zhejiang navy had suffered a huge loss in recent years, and thousands of people had died every year. Was it because of the lack of military supplies?"

This last question was like a slap to the emperor and the court officials.

Everyone in the court knew how King Li of Zhou had died.

In the end, it was still because of the word 'military'.

"The Ministry of War was already scared out of their wits. How could they dare to take on this responsibility? Immediately, they took out the military booklet distributed by the Zhejiang navy every year and said that every year, the military salary was given by Zhejiang first, not a single cent less. Then, they took out the memorial submitted by the Zhejiang navy every year and realized that the number of casualties was seriously inconsistent with the number of people reported. They clearly lied about the number of casualties and falsely reported the number of casualties..."

It had to be known that every year, the Imperial Court would reward the Zhejiang navy with a lot of silver and good things.

Only the officials and generals of Zhejiang could be rewarded.

This was clearly disregarding human lives and asking the Imperial Court for benefits.

Yu Youyao's heart trembled. "Among all the crimes that Ning Yuanbo reported to Song Xiuwen, there was the crime of killing commoners and asking for merits. I think those people that were not reported were all pirates and bandits. They still made a report to the Imperial Court and asked for benefits!"

This was the main point of the fifth question. Anyone who heard the words "casualties" would feel their scalps go numb and think of the key point.

Yu Zongzheng's actions were indeed brilliant.

He used all the questions in Zhejiang to question the Imperial Court, directly pushing the Ministry of War into the limelight. The Ministry of War did not want to be accused of embezzling money from the army, so they could only throw the responsibility to the Zhejiang navy.

The five consecutive questions during the memorial were really each more sharper than the last. They were just short of saying explicitly that Song Xiuwen and the officials of Zhejiang were misusing resources.

They only mentioned the Zhejiang navy and did not mention anything else.

Yu Zongzheng could escape unscathed.

However, once Yu Zongzheng returned to the capital, there would probably be a shocking wave in Jiangnan.

Yu Youyao suppressed the anger in her heart and asked, "How did the ministers in the court react?"

Old Madam Yu sighed slightly. "What other reaction can there be? All of them were shrinking their heads, so how can they dare to show their faces? Do you think that the King Li of Zhou's case wasn't enough? Or do you think that they've lived for too long?"

Yu Youyao couldn't help but say, "Aren't the huge profits from maritime trade enough? Isn't it enough to collect and suppress pirate ships and bandits at sea? Zhejiang is golden everywhere, and there's profit everywhere. Zhejiang is greedy, but they're actually so greedy that they targeted the Imperial Court and the emperor."

If this wasn't self-inflicted, what was?

Old Madam Yu agreed deeply. "Every year, when we ask the Imperial Court for a military salary, the Imperial Court will first give it to Zhejiang, not daring to miss a single word. Only when Zhejiang was given enough will they give it to other places. Why do you think the annual military salary in the North is insufficient? From this, it can be seen that King Li of Zhou's death is related to Zhejiang."

Yu Youyao's body even trembled. She was angry and sarcastic. "Heh, if Zhejiang wants a military salary, how can the Imperial Court not give it to them? Zhejiang is a place with heavy taxes. Not to mention the huge profits from maritime trade, just the weaving, salt, tea, porcelain, food, crafts, and so on in Jiangnan are all sources of taxes for the Imperial Court. The pirates went ashore to burn, kill, and plunder. The ones who suffered the most were the Imperial Court and the emperor. They were clearly fearless and greedy!"

If the Ministry of Revenue was rich, why wouldn't they allocate money to the Ministry of War?

The Ministry of War had enough military salary. As for the annual salary, not only was it insufficient, but it was also decreasing?

As long as there were more troops in Youzhou, the Di people would not be so sure that Youzhou was short of supplies and invade wantonly. If they did not invade wantonly, there would not have been the battle four years ago.

The Marquis of Changxing and the others would not have the chance to steal the military power of Youzhou and persecute the King Li of Zhou's family.

She finally understood why her cousin had targeted Zhejiang.

The rich have too much wine and meat to eat, while the poor are dying of cold and hunger on the streets.

Jiangnan was already extremely rich, but they were still greedy for the

Imperial Court's military salary and harmed the interests of the Imperial Court. They had become accomplices in persecuting King Li of Zhou. They were simply a group of parasites and were even more hateful than the Marquis of Changxing.

If they weren't eliminated, it would be difficult to relieve the hatred in their hearts!

Old Madam Yu also sighed. "That's right. Less than 80 0/0 of the money that was

given out was actually used in war. The remaining 70% was actually all coveted. Don't you think it's infuriating?

Yu Youyao was furious.

She had the same thoughts as Yu Youyao. If Zhejiang hadn't coveted the Imperial Court's army, the tragic incident in Youzhou wouldn't have happened.

Yu Youyao felt terrible.

Old Madam Yu sighed slightly. "Zhejiang is corrupt. It's a pity for Song Xiuwen. He's a general and has a large army. When he comes to Zhejiang, if he doesn't lean towards Zhejiang, I'm afraid he'll end up like King Li. If he doesn't want to die, he can only follow the crowd."

If they did not join Zhejiang, they would be mortal enemies.

In the past, even the King Li of Zhou, who had 300,000 troops and was a relative of the royal family, could not defeat a group of officials and nobles in the North. On the other hand, Jiangnan had always been a rich place with vast land and abundant resources. How many people would go crazy for it?

How could he defeat half of the Great Zhou?

Yu Youyao also felt that it was ironic. "The Imperial Court doesn't allow officials to form cliques for personal gain, but the Imperial Court still has to split into the Summer Party, the Royalist Party, and the Consort Party to fight for power. Which official above the sixth-grade doesn't take sides? Which one doesn't form cliques? Even if they don't rely on the nobles, they have to band together to reinforce their power. The Jiangnan Province is so powerful that they have long disregarded the Imperial Court. A border feudal official like Song Xiuwen has no choice."

She suddenly understood why her cousin had said that such a world should come to an end.

Song Xiuwen was easy to deal with. When Yu Zongzheng returned to the capital and reported Song Xiuwen's crimes, the imperial envoy would release him into the capital.

However, the emperor was not stupid. It was impossible for Song Xiuwen to embezzle military money alone. With the emperor's personality, if his own interests were involved, he would definitely not let Jiangnan off easily.

There was still more to do in Jiangnan.

Jiangnan was in chaos, and the world was unstable. Wasn't it still far from the vassal lord's rebellion?

Yu Youyao closed her eyes. In less than three years, or at least three to five years, the world would be in chaos..

Chapter 518: Surrounded by Tigers and Wolves

Old Madam Yu suddenly asked, "Your father's memorial was sent to the capital, and all the crimes investigated are clear. Next, who do you think the Imperial Court will send to fill Song Xiuwen's gap and take charge of the Zhejiang navy?"

It was probably time for the court officials to discuss this matter tomorrow.

It wasn't until this moment that Yu Youyao realized how deep her cousin's scheme was. "If I'm not wrong, it should be Ye Hanyuan!"

After Ye Hanyuan entered Zhejiang, it was equivalent to half of Jiangnan being in her cousin's hands.

Old Madam Yu was stunned when she heard this. "During this period of time, the wind and clouds in the capital have been changing non-stop, and the rain has been falling non-stop. I almost forgot about the son of the prefecture's governor, Ye Hanyuan."

Ever since Ye Hanyuan struck the drum, he had been locked up in the Court of Justice.

After the King Li of Zhou's case was investigated, Ye Hanyuan was released from prison. It was said that the emperor had given him a residence and specially allowed him to recuperate in the capital. After that, there was almost no news about him.

At the thought of this, Old Madam Yu asked, "I heard that Ye Hanyuan joined the King Li of Zhou in his early years and made a lot of contributions. He's very appreciated by the King Li of Zhou. However, Ye Hanyuan isn't good at water battles, so he might not be able to command the Zhejiang navy. Moreover, it's very difficult to lead a navy. Why do you think that the emperor will send Ye Hanyuan to Zhejiang?"

Yu Youyao explained, "He's not good at it, but there must be generals in the Zhejiang navy who are good at it. The key is that Ye Hanyuan was once recognized by King Li of Zhou. This already shows that this person is definitely not an ordinary person. No one is born with the ability to fight in the water. There's no need to worry about not having a chance to learn in

Zhejiang. This is only one of the reasons."

When Old Madam Yu heard this, she assumed a listening posture.

Yu Youyao continued, "The second reason is that the Consort Party of the Marquis of Ningyuan's faction has been suppressed by the cabinet, making the emperor very displeased. For example, the royalist faction of the Marquis of Zhen's faction. As Song Xiuwen is a direct descendant of the Song Clan, the emperor won't trust him. The other generals are experienced but their statuses are too low. They're not enough to deal with them. They might even intimidate the tigers and wolves of the Jiangnan faction."

Old Madam Yu understood the crux of the matter and immediately sat up straight, not even twirling her prayer beads.

Yu Youyao smiled. "Grandmother, think about Ye Hanyuan's background."

Old Madam Yu's expression became complicated. "Ye Hanyuan is from the side branch of the Ye family of the Linjiang Prefecture. The Ye family is the number one literary family in the Great Zhou Dynasty. Just this identity is enough to intimidate all the officials in Jiangnan."

In the entire Great Zhou Dynasty, there were all kinds of officials from the Ye family of the Linjiang Prefecture, including people from the Ye family.

Although Ye Hanyuan was from the side family, he had gained power and was no longer just a side family member in the Ye family.

Ye Hanyuan's status was still not very useful in the north.

If he went to the south, he would be like a fish in water. Someone would make way for him.

Yu Youyao nodded. "As for the third reason, Ye Hanyuan's father, Ye Xiaoci, is from the Youzhou Prefecture. He's a third-grade official to begin with. After King Li of Zhou's case, the North is about to be reorganized. Later, when Prince Yin returns to Youzhou, it would be another storm. Anyone would have to be wary and take a detour. Unless Jiangnan wants to rebel, they definitely won't dare to go against Ye Hanyuan."

She was just short of saying that Ye Hanyuan had the entire North as his backer.

Now that Yin Huaixi had returned to the court, the North was already his. No one in the court dared to provoke it.

Old Madam Yu was enlightened.

Yu Youyao continued, "Fourthly, Ye Hanyuan dared to beat the drum and send the six divisions of the Imperial Court, the Marquis of Changxing, the cabinet ministers, and thousands of officials and nobles in the North to the execution ground and the Shangyang Castle. Even if those people in Jiangnan had the guts of a bear, they wouldn't dare to provoke him easily."

Old Madam Yu sighed slightly. "You're right. Although Yin Huaixi has many schemes in the King Li of Zhou's case, the key is still Ye Hanyuan. Ye Hanyuan can shake the entire court alone. Just his boldness and bravery alone makes no one dare to provoke him. I reckon that he's not afraid of anyone. This Ye Hanyuan is very arrogant."

Everyone knew about the King Li of Zhou's death, but no one dared to stand up for him.

However, Ye Hanyuan dared to.

It was impossible for the Marquis of Changxing to let him do this. He probably almost died in Youzhou.

"Fifthly, after Ye Hanyuan struck the drum, he has been recuperating in the capital. He hasn't received any rewards for a long time. If he doesn't want to be placed in an important position, it's only logical to give him a glorious title and send him back to Youzhou. However, he has to hide and stay in the capital to recuperate. Clearly, not only do we have to use him, but we also have to put him in an important position."

"Song Xiuwen's case involved the interests of the Imperial Court and the emperor was completely angered. If the emperor wants to deal with Jiangnan, he has to send a sharp knife that can be used by him. Ye Hanyuan is this sharp knife."

Old Madam Yu said thoughtfully, "You understand best."

Yu Youyao lowered her eyes. It wasn't that she understood, but that her cousin had never hidden it from her. Jiangnan was also part of her cousin's plan, so it was very easy to deduce her cousin's goal and Jiangnan's movements.

Yu Youyao changed the topic. "It seems that Father won't be able to come back in time for the new year."

At the very least, her father would only return after Ye Hanyuan went to Zhejiang. It would be the new year in a few days. Jiangnan was a long way away, and it would take almost half a month to travel by water.

Old Madam Yu waved her hand. “There are so many things happening. This year isn’t easy.”

Li Qiguang was still locked up in the prison of the Ministry of Justice. Song Xiuwen’s case had caused such a huge mess, and half of the Great Zhou

Dynasty was broken.

After accompanying her grandmother for a while, Yu Youyao returned to the Jade Courtyard.

Her cousin had also come over.

Ever since her cousin’s leg disease had mostly eased, Yu Youyao had also allowed him to stay outside for a while every day. Her cousin had returned to his usual habit of going to the Jade Courtyard every day.

At first, Yu Youyao would nag him a little. Later, when she saw that her cousin was not feeling unwell, she ignored him.

Meanwhile, her cousin had been staying in the Jade Courtyard for longer and longer.

In the past, he would stay more than two hours a day but he definitely wouldn’t stay for more than two hours.

Now, her cousin came over every morning and would stay until seven in the afternoon. He would come early and leave late. Basically, he would be in the Jade Courtyard all day.

Gradually, her cousin’s books appeared in Yu Youyao’s large study.

Thinking about it carefully, Yu Youyao suddenly realized that her cousin’s things occupied almost half of her study.

When they were busy, they each went about their own business without disturbing each other. When they were free, they sat in front of the charcoal cage, talking and warming themselves by the fire.

Occasionally, when she was in the mood, Yu Youyao would roast corn or meat, and share it with her cousin.

The days were calm and warm.

Seeing that she had returned, Zhou Linghuai smiled.. “You’re back!”

Chapter 519: Bright Wind and Moon

These simple words warmed Yu Youyao’s heart. She quickly said, “I drank a big bowl of ginger soup in Grandmother’s house. I don’t have to drink it anymore!”

Zhou Linghuai was caught between laughter and tears. “I didn’t ask you to drink the ginger soup. Yin San hunted a stag. Nanny Xu personally cooked the deer soup and simmered it on the charcoal fire. Have a bowl to warm your body.”

Every day, she would drink ginger soup with a bitter expression. Her expression was as if she was facing death.

That was why he had asked Yin San to hunt the deer.

However, this deer was not easy to hunt. It depended on luck. There were some families in the capital who specially raised deer in their manors. However, a deer was not easy to raise.

Yu Youyao's eyes lit up. "Eating deer in autumn and winter is superior nourishment. The deer's entire body is a treasure. Deer meat can nourish the spleen and stomach and nourish the blood and qi. Eating deer meat in autumn and winter is both warm and nourishing. Cousin, you should eat more. Deer blood is good too. It can be made into deer blood wine to nourish your weakness, regulate blood vessels, and dissipate the cold. It can also be made into deer blood powder. It's good for your health..."

It was clearly venison soup that had been prepared for her, but the first thing she thought of was the benefits of deer to him.

Zhou Linghuai took the venison soup from Chun Xiao. "Have some soup first."

Yu Youyao took the bowl but put it aside. She scooped another bowl of soup from the bowl Chun Xiao had brought and handed it to her cousin. "Cousin, have some too."

Zhou Linghuai's lips curved.

Nanny Xu's culinary skills were very good. The deer meat soup was fragrant and not greasy, and the meat was also very soft. There were ginseng, angelica, licorice, fungus, large dates, and other medicinal herbs in it. As soon as the soup entered her mouth, she felt a dryness in her body. This dryness came and went quickly. When the dryness disappeared, she felt comfortable all over.

Yu Youyao liked it very much. "Let's set up a charcoal stove in the house at noon and roast the venison, okay?"

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "I still have some grape wine from last time. I can have a glass or two with the roasted meat."

At the thought of the sweet and strong taste of wine, Yu Youyao's eyes lit up again. "Cousin, you actually hid the wine from me."

Real wine was rare. Her cousin had distributed some to everyone in the residence and also given her a small bottle. Nanny Xu did not let her drink it during the day, but she would let her drink a small cup every now and then before she fell asleep at night. She would finish it not long after.

She had thought that the wine was gone.

A smile appeared in Zhou Linghuai's eyes. "Since you like wine, I kept a little more. If I hadn't hidden it, how could I have kept it until today?"

Yu Youyao smiled. "Since it's reserved for me, it's all mine."

Seeing her teary eyes, Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but laugh. "It's yours. It's all yours. I'll get Chang An to send it to you later."

Nanny Xu knew her limits and wouldn't let her drink too much at once.

Yu Youyao was overjoyed. "Thank you, Cousin. By the way, have there been any families with the surname Lu in the court who have been dismissed or demoted in recent years?"

She was just asking casually.

Zhou Linghuai's gaze flickered. "There are at least dozens of officials surnamed Lu in the Imperial Court. I don't know everyone who has been dismissed or demoted, but one of them is a little special."

Yu Youyao quickly asked, "Who is this person?"

To be able to take out such an ambitious person like Ji Feng, he did not look like an ordinary court official no matter how she looked at it. Perhaps he was the person her cousin had mentioned.

Seeing that she was curious, Zhou Linghuai said, "The former Minister of Justice, Lu Guangren, came from a poor family. He was a lucky scholar who entered the Hanlin Academy and became the Minister of Justice and Grand Secretary of the Jianji Hall. The previous emperor valued Lu Guangren very much and every time he was entrusted with a heavy responsibility. His reputation in the cabinet had once far exceeded that of the Grand Secretary, Xia Yansheng. He was on par with Xia Yansheng and kept each other in check, so they were fine."

Yu Youyao's eyes widened. "What happened next?"

Zhou Linghuai smiled and said, "Four years ago, when the emperor invited the

King Li of Zhou into the capital, Lu Guangren objected strongly. However, at that time, Xia Yansheng said that he was sick at home, and there were people in the cabinet who colluded with the officials and nobles of the North. The Marquis of Weining and the Marquis of Changxing helped to encourage him. Lu Guangren was alone, but in the end, he couldn't persuade the emperor."

She did not expect that Lu Guangren was really related to King Li's case. Yu Youyao frowned. "With Elder Lu's status in the court at that time and his status as an elder of the two dynasties, persuading the emperor to retract his order was only to fulfill his duties as a minister. It seems a little unreasonable to dismiss him from his official position. Is there any inside story after that?"

For some reason, she had an inexplicable feeling that Lu Jifeng's grandfather was probably this elegant Elder Lu.

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "King Li of Zhou committed suicide in the golden hall.

The court officials only wanted to hide the truth. Lu Guangren was furious and spouted nonsense in the royal court, pointing out that the emperor was unworthy of being the king and shaking the country. As his words were alarmist and treasonous, the emperor convicted him of offending his superiors. On account that he was an elder of the clueless dynasty, he was asked to resign in his old name."

Yu Youyao sighed in her heart. "What hurts an old minister like him the most is that the king he's loyal to doesn't have the heart to guide the country and rule the world, but he only knows how to look at the sky from a well and play with power. On the other hand, in the court, he's greedy for power and has caused a loyal minister to die in vain. He even has to bear a bad reputation. It's probably fine if he doesn't become an official."

Otherwise, with Elder Lu's status, it probably wouldn't be so easy for the emperor to remove him from his official position.

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "Not long after Elder Lu was dismissed from his position, his whereabouts were unknown. Previously, the court was very secretive about King Li of Zhou's case, and very few people mentioned it. It was naturally the same for Elder Lu, who had resigned because of King Li of

Zhou. Even though King Li of Zhou has been rehabilitated, Elder Lu has resigned because of his old age, so no one mentioned him.”

Elder Lu’s arrogant words back then had now been verified. For the sake of the emperor’s face, no one dared to mention this person.

As an elder of two dynasties, he had once been an official and a deputy minister. He had contributed to the country and was virtuous. It had only been three to four years since the dynasty, but no one had cared about him. Perhaps someone had deliberately downplayed Elder Lu’s previous achievements in the dynasty and deliberately tarnished his previous reputation. This was simply a great irony.

Just by looking at Lu Jifeng, she knew that this Elder Lu, who used to be in charge of the court, had probably long been buried in the soil.

Yu Youyao felt stifled and sneered. “Did no one mention it, or did no one dare to? The cabinet has agreed on the follow-up to the King Li of Zhou’s case. Most of the people who were implicated in King Li of Zhou’s case back then were avenged, but only Elder Lu was bypassed. No one will believe that there’s nothing fishy.”

It was obvious that Xia Yansheng had something to do with Elder Lu’s official position.

If Xia Yansheng did not mention Elder Lu, who in the court would dare to?

Then, she thought of all these years of inaction by the cabinet. How could Yu Youyao not know that Xia Yansheng had suppressed Elder Lu, causing the originally clear rules of the court to become more and more toxic?

Zhou Linghuai changed the topic.. “Why are you suddenly asking about this?”

Chapter 520: Death Is Not Worthy

When Elder Lu came to court, Yu Youyao was only five or six years old, so she didn’t know much about the previous dynasty. Later on, no one asked about Elder Lu’s name, so it seemed a little abnormal to suddenly ask about it.

Yu Youyao shook her head. “I was just a little curious when I happened to hear someone mention it.”

This wasn’t lying to her cousin. She was indeed just curious for a moment.

It wasn’t that she was deliberately hiding it from her cousin.

Lu Jifeng’s alias was Er Dan, and he refused to reveal his real name to anyone.

The reason why he told her was because he felt that he had received her favor and it involved the privacy and secrets of others. Naturally, it wasn’t appropriate for him to tell her everything.

Since it wasn’t too important, there was no harm in it.

She said it casually, so Zhou Linghuai naturally wouldn’t care about such a small matter. “Do you know the news in the royal court today?”

Yu Youyao pursed her lips and nodded. "I heard it from Grandmother when I went to her house just now."

Seeing that she was in a strange mood, Zhou Linghuai asked, "Isn't there anything you want to ask?"

What should she ask? In such a huge game of chess, how many people had become chess pieces and how many chess pieces had to be sacrificed to finally achieve the victory he wanted?

Yu Youyao did not dare to think about it or ask.

She only knew that her cousin had done nothing wrong. Those dog officials were even worse than the Marquis of Changxing. A hundred deaths was not enough for her to pity them.

Taking a deep breath, Yu Youyao asked, "You threw out Song Xiuwen as bait from the beginning to stir up the situation in Jiangnan to achieve your goal of disrupting the court?"

She had thought that Song Xiuwen was just a chess piece under her cousin's control in Zhejiang.

However, she did not know that this was only a part of her cousin's plan.

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "If there's no chaos in Jiangnan, the vassal lords won't rebel."

Yu Youyao took a deep breath. "As soon as my father arrived in Jiangnan, you led him by the nose and investigated the Zhejiang navy. Those unknown tricks made them step into the trap you set up step by step..."

It turned out that her cousin's heart was big enough to contain the entire Jiangnan.

Zhou Linghuai did not deny it. "It's me."

Yu Youyao felt a little complicated. "You chose my father because he's a straightforward person. Although he's not very talented and his personal virtue is a little lacking, the mistakes he makes are common to most men. On the surface, he's never made a mistake. This means that he still has some responsibility as a minister. Although he's not an official, he's still upright and not timid. If you lure him into the situation step by step, he won't be able to stay out of it..."

It could be said that her cousin had schemed against Yu Zongzheng completely.

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "There aren't many people in the court who can do this. Your father is one of them." At this point, he changed the topic. "Your father has been an official for many years and his political achievements are mediocre. Even if the emperor thinks highly of him and he enters the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs, your father was not born in the Hanlin Kingdom.

Secondly, he was not promoted to the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs. Thirdly, he has no political achievements and won't be stable in the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs in the future. The more he investigates Song

Xiuwen's case, the more beneficial it will be for him."

Yu Youyao suddenly smiled. "Cousin, are you explaining it to me?"

Zhou Linghuai hesitated for a moment but said nothing.

Yu Youyao burst out laughing again. "I don't mean to blame Cousin. I just think that Cousin calculated it so well from the North to Shandong and then to Jiangnan. Everything is linked. You don't even take a deep breath. You're so awesome."

With that, she seemed to feel thirsty, so she lowered her eyes and brought over some tea. She held it in her hand and lowered her head to drink.

Actually, she had already vaguely known what her cousin wanted to do.

However, she did not dare to think about it, let alone ask.

Song Xiuwen's case only further confirmed the guesses in her heart. However, all of this was too heavy for her to bear now, so she subconsciously avoided it.

Zhou Linghuai pursed his lips and said nothing.

After taking a few sips of tea, Yu Youyao calmed down and changed the topic. "Cousin, there are many people and things to do in the Graceful Heart Hall. We have to find some reliable people to deal with the situation. Do you still have soldiers who have retired from the army due to injuries and illnesses under you? Can you find a few for me? I want to arrange for them to be in the

Graceful Heart Hall. Firstly, they can control those disobedient children. Secondly, they can teach them some martial arts. In the future, they can also have some ability to protect themselves. Thirdly, they can guard the Graceful Heart Hall. No one else will dare to behave atrociously."

She had gone to the Graceful Heart Hall to take a look today, and it was generally alright.

There were also many problems. Those children lived on the streets all year round and did not have anyone to teach them. They did not know any concept of right and wrong. Some children were unruly and difficult to control. These were all problems.

Since she had saved these children, she had to be responsible for them.

Saving them but not teaching her would just mean a moment of kindness. It was a departure from her original intention of being "good."

If she hadn't mentioned it in advance, Zhou Linghuai wouldn't have brought it up. "I'll send them to you in a few days."

There were also many such people in the capital. It would take two days to choose someone who was skilled, had a good character, and was useful. As long as it was Yu Youyao's request, he would not be negligent.

Look, this was what she should be concerned about.

Getting the Graceful Heart Hall set up properly and saving more children was something she could do well now. As for other things, she couldn't manage them now, so why should she trouble herself?

After figuring this out, Yu Youyao smiled. "If I want to save more children, I definitely can't rely on just my few shops in the capital. Didn't the emperor reward you with many shops and manors in the capital previously? Can you arrange for some children who are 12 years old to go over and do some chores?"

Although restaurants and manors often needed people to do odd jobs, they had limited manpower. Of course, she hoped that more children would have something to do and be paid.

That wasn't much money, but they could still make a living. Those who were smarter could even learn something.

Seeing her bright smile, Zhou Linghuai's lips curled up. "Sure. During this period of time, the cabinet has been investigating the businesses under my parents' names. They plan to give them to me. In addition, Ye Hanyuan will be heading south soon. Before he goes south, it's time for my imperial edict to be issued. At that time, the Imperial Court will reward me with good farmland, manors, and so on according to my title. We also need a lot of people. Get

Chang An to bring over the list of existing businesses under my name first.

You can make the arrangements yourself."

In the afternoon, Zhou Linghuai returned to The Green House.

Not long after, Chang An brought over a medium-sized box. "All the businesses that Young Master has been managing in the capital all these years are here."

The key was hanging on the box. Yu Youvao opened it and was stunned by the stack of title deeds inside.

Previously, she had guessed that her cousin was not someone who did not succeed. Now that King Li of Zhou had suffered, he definitely had many backup plans. He probably had a lot of businesses under his name.

However!

Thinking about how her cousin still had many princes' guards and secret guards to support, it must have been difficult for him after so many years..