

## All Hail 521

### Chapter 521: King of Wumu Became The North King

Considering her cousin's pride as a man, although she did not say it explicitly, she had racked her brains to help him from all angles so that she could relieve his burden.

Her cousin had arranged for many people to work in the businesses under her name.

If she needed someone, she would ask her cousin for them directly.

However, today, she realized how naive she was.

Her cousin's shops in the capital were mostly antique shops that had high profits and he did not have to worry about their business. One of them, the Jade Treasure Pavilion, was very famous in the capital. Many wealthy families liked to go there to find treasures.

There were also some medicinal herbs shops, casinos, and even trade businesses.

They dealt with private salt, rare tea, special porcelain...

They were all businesses with huge benefits. Although the risks were very high, the guards of the Wang Residence were not to be trifled with. The so-called risks were not worth mentioning to him.

Not only that, but he also had more than a thousand acres of good farmland in the capital. This did not include the businesses under the name of the King Li of Zhou and the Princess Consort, as well as the businesses after he inherited the title.

Yu Youyao knew that there were many relatives and nobles in the capital who had accumulated merit for generations. Without more than ten thousand acres, they would be embarrassed to say that they were nobles.

She did not expect his cousin to be so rich.

These were only his businesses in the capital!

She had as many businesses under her name as her cousin and they were all clean businesses. A stable business was no more risky than her cousin's. If she had more money, she would earn it quickly.

Yu Youyao took a deep breath. She felt that she still had a long way to go in terms of earning money!

However, her cousin had many businesses under his name that were more sensitive, so it wasn't easy to arrange for someone to go over. Yu Youyao only chose some farms, shops, and restaurants that were fully regulated.

After that, Yu Youyao's mind became active. She wrote letters to Qi Sinian, Song Wanhui, and Tang Yunxi to mention this.

Every family in the capital would symbolically do some good deeds and seek some good reputation. Anyone was willing to do such a thing that did not require money or effort.

In just a few days, Yu Youyao and more than ten families in the capital had signed a contract called “Renting Graceful Heart Hall.”

Moreover, they had agreed with the various families that the Graceful Heart Hall would be fully in charge of the morals of these laborers and ensure that these laborers would not cause unnecessary trouble for them. If they needed odd jobs, they would have to hire someone from the Graceful Heart Hall. The Graceful Heart Hall promised that they would not collect any fees.

As a middleman, Yu Youyao had to take risks and use her own connections.

If the Graceful Heart Hall wanted to be done well and grow, it needed to be operated well. Money was indispensable.

Therefore, Yu Youyao decided that the Graceful Heart Hall would draw one-sidedly and take 10% of the recipient’s income as operational fees for Graceful Heart Hall.

To the Graceful Heart Hall, this 10% income was a drop in the bucket and not worth mentioning.

Yu Youyao had to spend most of the money on the operations of the Graceful Heart Hall.

However, she needed to use this method to let those who had been saved understand that there was no free lunch in this world.

The Graceful Heart Hall had provided them with food, accommodation, and work. They also had to contribute to save more people.

In addition, the Graceful Heart Hall also accepted donations from other families and promised that all the donations would be used to save more people.

On the day the contract was sent, Yu Youyao specially sent someone to the government office to sign it.

The Graceful Heart Hall was still in the early stages at the moment.

However, Zhou Linghuai knew that it would be perfected bit by bit each day.

When it was completely perfected, it would be the day Yu Youyao realized her ambition.

He had never underestimated Yu Youyao, but he did not expect her to do so well. She had opened a charity and given many children and women a chance to live. This was kindness.

However, she had also given them the courage and hope to live. This was good

Karma.

It was easy for a person to show kindness, but kindness did not mean a kind heart.

Being kind meant an act of kindness.

Virtue, on the other hand, was the inner beauty behind this kindness.

At this moment, Yu Youyao did not know that the Graceful Heart Hall was already famous in the capital.

Old Madam Song leaned against the couch and heard Song Wanhui mention the Graceful Heart Hall. ‘Yao Yao mentioned this. Our family usually sets up many porridge stalls every winter. We

give up a lot of old clothes and tools in the residence. It's not a big deal to give them to anyone. Only by contributing more to the Graceful Heart Hall can we really help those in need."

Old Madam Song beamed when she heard this. "Yao Yao's ambitions aren't something ordinary people can compare to. Old Madam Yu has been eating vegetarian food and praying to Buddha for decades, but she's really manifested a living Bodhisattva for the family. She's kind and virtuous. Which generation has accumulated such good fortune? This is a good thing. All our businesses will be hiring from the Graceful Heart Hall if we need odd job workers in the future. In addition, isn't the Graceful Heart Hall also accepting donations? In the future, everything our family donates will be sent to the Graceful Heart Hall."

The Marquis of Zhenguo's wife was also full of smiles. "Tomorrow, I'll send a letter to a few kind madams in the capital. I think they're happy to participate in such a good thing."

The same scene also happened in the Qi Residence and the Tang Residence

Then, it was spread to the Li, Zhang, and Du Residences through the Qi

Residence and the Tang Residence...

Graceful Heart Hall was finally on the right track. Yu Youyao heaved a sigh of relief.

Unknowingly, it was the 23rd of December.

In the first few days, the family had sent someone to the manor to bring Yu Jianjia home.

However, Yu Jianjia had caught a cold and her body had just recovered a little. It was not appropriate for her to run around. It was just another day, and the kitchen god festival only involved the men so she was not involved. They asked her to recuperate in the manor for a few days before returning.

Men did not worship the moon, and women did not worship the kitchen god!

As Yu Zongzheng was not at home, Old Madam Yu prepared candies, fruits, wine, lamps, candles, and so on. She arranged for Zhou Linghuai to pay respects to the kitchen god.

After that, Nanny Liu instructed the servants to sweep the entire house.

The entire residence looked brand new.

Yu Youyao entered the kitchen and made patterns with the stove candy. There was peanut candy wrapped in peanuts, sesame seeds, sesame candy, and melon seeds...

There were seven or eight types.

Although the stove candy was sticky, it tasted sweet and incomparable to any sugar. Yu Youyao had always liked it. She tasted some herself. After wrapping it, it was not so sticky to her teeth. Instead, it tasted better.

Yu Youyao sent some to everyone in the residence.

Everyone felt that it was delicious.

At night, the entire family gathered together and ate dumplings and rice cakes. They happily offered them to the kitchen god. After a long day, they finally stopped the celebration.

The next day, the emperor issued a decree. “Yin Huaixi, the heir of the King Li of Zhou, is conferred the title of King of Wumu. His name will be King of Wumu, and he will be in charge of 300,000 troops in the North. He is to suppress the vast territory of our Great Zhou, guard the North, and govern Youzhou. As King Wumu is sick, he is specially allowed to recuperate in the capital for the time being. After the Lantern Festival next year, he will immediately go to Youzhou..”

Chapter 522: What’s a Posthumous Name?

There was a huge commotion in the court.

When King Li of 7.11011 was still alive, he was conferred the title of King of Dingbei and guarded the North.

When it was Yin Huaixi’s turn, the emperor added the title of King of Wumu on the foundation of King Dingbei. It was a little intriguing.

According to Jizhong discovery, “The strong and wise call it martial arts, and it can quell calamity and chaos.”

According to the Posthumous Law, “Wu is related power while Mu means righteousness.

In history, there were only a handful of people who had been given the posthumous title of Wumu. Almost every one of them was an unprecedentedly famous general. Yue Fei had been given the posthumous title of Wumu after his death.

It was obvious how important the word “Wumu” was in every dynasty.

The emperor conferred the title of King of Wumu on Yin Huaixi. How much did he value him?

However, the problem was that the word Wumu was mostly a posthumous name in history.

What was a posthumous name?

It was a posthumous title for the “dead” to remember their deeds, morals, and meritorious deeds when they were alive. A posthumous title was to commemorate meritorious deeds and remembering someone. It could also belittle people.

Previously, the emperor conferred Yin Lixing the title of King Li of Zhou.

A minister in the court jumped out to object and pointed out that the word “Li” was not moral. It had the meaning of “desolation, violence, killing, and evil.” It should not be used.

The emperor said bluntly, “The previous emperor named his younger brother the word ‘Li’ because it means strict, solemn, fierce, sharp. Over the years, his younger brother has been like the sharp blade of the country, peaceful in the inner town, and fierce outside. He did not let the previous emperor down. He should be given the title ‘Li’ to show his ancestors’ virtue.”

“Wumu” was definitely a posthumous title for the dead and no living person had it. Yin Huaixi was still alive, so why had he been conferred the title of Wumu?

Did he feel that only the word “Wumu” was enough to show how much the emperor valued Yin Huaixi?

Or did she want Yin Huaixi to follow in the footsteps of his predecessors and contribute to the Great Zhou?

Or was it because the emperor wanted to use the word “Wumu” to intimidate the court so that they wouldn’t dare to bully Yin Huaixi because he was young and sick?

In short, no matter what the emperor was implying, since he had conferred the title of King of the North to Yin Huaixi, no one in the court dared to say anything.

The news spread outside the palace and entered Yu Youyao’s ears.

Yu Youyao was so angry that she almost cried. “What exactly does that dog emperor mean? If he wants to be conferred a title, so be it. What title can’t he give? Must he give such an inexplicable title to Cousin?”

Did he think that his cousin was an eyesore if he was alive, or did he think that his cousin’s health was too good? Did he hope that his cousin would die early and reincarnate?

There was a charcoal stove in the room, and there was a grill made of wire on it. The venison was roasted until it was glossy and sizzled. The room was filled with the fragrance of roasted venison and the faint fragrance of wine.

Yesterday’s stag was not small. Everyone in the residence was given some, but there was still more than half left.

Yu Youyao collected deer blood and found an ancient recipe to make deer blood wine. She also made some deer blood powder and liked roasted deer meat very much.

Zhou Linghuai turned the venison over and roasted it. When he felt that the venison was almost done, he picked it up and used a knife to cut it into small pieces that were convenient to eat. He handed it to Yu Youyao. “The venison is roasted. Eat it while its hot.”

Yu Youyao was full of anger. “How can I still eat it?”

Zhou Linghuai smiled. “There was a famous general in the previous dynasty called Wumu. You’ve read a lot of history books recently. Have you read his life stories?”

Yu Youyao nodded. “General Wumu had outstanding military achievements. Due to his high contributions, he was cruelly killed by the Imperial Court on New Year’s Eve because of a groundless crime. Later on, he was framed for more than 80 years before the truth was exposed!”

Zhou Linghuai praised, “The history books weren’t read in vain. 14 years after

General Wumu’s death, Prime Minister Qin died of old age. The Qin family lost power and the pro-war faction in the court saw General Wumu as a chance of quelling the rebellion. They wanted to quell the rebellion for General Wumu but were rejected by Gaozong.”

Yu Youyao had always been smart and understood immediately. “General Wumu’s death was caused by Emperor Gaozong, if General Wumu’s name was cleared, Gaozong’s dignity and reputation will be tarnished.”

How similar was this to when her cousin had avenged King Li of Zhou?!

Zhou Linghuai continued, “It wasn’t until the financiers tore up the peace negotiations and mobilized troops to invade the south in a dangerous autumn that the pro-war faction asked again for

General Wumu and Mu Zhaoxue. Gaozong was forced to put on a show and pardoned the people from the Yue family who had been exiled. This move had nothing to do with resolving the rebellion. He was only forced by the situation to be benevolent. General Wumu kept carrying the name of a so-called traitor.”

Yu Youyao knew that this was only the beginning.

‘Gaozong abdicated and his son, Xiao Zong, ascended the throne. In order to balance the power of the pro-war and pro-peace factions in the court at that time, he redressed General Wumu’s grievances. However, in his retaliation, he wrote about General Wumu’s death in a vague manner. He admitted General Wumu’s grievances, but he refused to say it directly. He did not conduct any screening and review of General Wumu’s injustice. The retaliation was not thorough enough, so General Wumu was still left with a stain and was criticized by the world.”

Yu Youyao nodded. “After Gaozong abdicated, he called himself the emperor emeritus and refused to give up his power. Xiao Zong’s reign was influenced by his father and he did not take General Wumu’s grievances too seriously. It was just that because of the strong request of the pro-war faction at that time, they had no choice but to do this. However, the retaliation was not thorough, and General Wumu still suffered an injustice.”

“In the 17th year of Xiaozong’s reign, the Imperial Court officially bestowed a posthumous title on General Wumu. The Taichang Temple wanted to apply for a posthumous title of ‘Loyalist’, but it was rejected. The outcome of the review was, ‘According to the posthumous law, the imperial army will be punished and General Wumu will obtain the posthumous name of ‘Wumu.’”

Yu Youyao frowned. “General Wumu was wrongfully killed for ‘rebellion’. No matter how important he was and how good his reputation was, he was demoted from ‘Loyalty’ to ‘Wumu’. This was how Xiaozong’s reign belittled General Wumu, but it’s still not completely redressed. To General Wumu, the word ‘Loyalty’ is more important than any word.”

Zhou Linghuai nodded. “After that, those related to General Wumu still couldn’t calm down. They remembered that their loyalty had yet to be revealed and their grievances had yet to be resolved. They kept looking for an opportunity to redress their grievances.”

Yu Youyao was not a fool. He was also a meritorious general who had died unjustly, but General Wumu had been struggling for many years and could not be appeased.

However, King Li of Zhou’s case had been cleared in a few months.

Was this really just because her cousin had pacified Shandong and the world?

That might not be the case!

Back then, even though the Jin people had fought their way to Jiangbei, Emperor Gaozong still cared about his dignity and was unwilling to seek justice for General Wumu. What was a mere Shandong?

Zhou Linghuai continued, "It wasn't until Ningzong ascended the throne after more than ten years that Ningzong did something about Minister Qin's title of King Shen. He changed his posthumous name from 'Loyalty' to 'Disgrace' to point out his sins. However, good things are always delayed. With the loss of power of the pro-war faction and the return of the peace faction that restored the title of Minister Qin, General Wumu still hasn't received a proper title from the Imperial Court.."

#### Chapter 523: Wishful Thinking

Yu Youyao pursed her lips.

Zhou Linghuai smiled. "General Wumu's case wasn't completely solved until the end of the Southern Dynasty when Li Zong ascended the throne. Why do you think that is?"

Yu Youyao felt a little uncomfortable. "Prime Minister Qin wasn't the one who caused Yue Muwu's death, but it was Gaozong's fault. The future generations naturally don't dare to talk about their ancestors' wins and shortcomings.

From this, it can be seen how difficult it is for those who have died unjustly to be completely cleared."

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "So?"

Yu Youyao's expression did not look too good. "Cousin, firstly, we used the power of Shandong to quell the rebellion. Secondly, we used the power of the cabinet to suppress Ning Yuanbo's family, led by the emperor. Thirdly, we used the power of the world to suppress the rebellion. The emperor had no choice but to help King Li of Zhou quell the rebellion."

The reason why Gaozong did not seek justice for General Wumu was because the peace faction that had caused General Wurnu's death back then had gained power.

After her cousin's interference, he had blocked the path of Ning Yuanbo and the cabinet from the beginning and asked the cabinet to help. The emperor had originally wanted to redress the rebellion for King Li of Zhou, but later, because of the cabinet, he had no choice but to do so.

Also, the situation in the North was unstable. Her cousin had proved his ability to stabilize the situation in the North with the battle in Shandong.

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "That's right!"

Yu Youyao said angrily, "The emperor gave you the title of Wumu because he wants to use General Wurnu's matter to show you kindness. He wants you to remember his kindness to your father and warn you at all times. He wants to use this to manipulate Cousin. At the same time, he's also threatening him. If he can help King Li of Zhou redress his rebellion, he can naturally overthrow him. If you don't want King Li of Zhou to end up like General Wumu, Cousin has to be willing to be controlled by him."

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "Exactly!"

Yu Youyao's eyes were already red with anger. "Therefore, he conferred the title of King Li of Zhou on your father. The word 'Li' can be a posthumous title of strictness and sharpness. It can also be a posthumous title of evil. Whether it's praise or evil depends on one's perspective. He's really vicious and sinister.

It's the mind of an emperor again!"

She had actually not guessed this previously. She was happy for King Li of Zhou and her cousin.

Little did she know that the ill intentions of this edict were so well hidden.

Zhou Linghuai knew that she was angry, and her heart ached for him. He stroked her hair. "Whether it's King Li of Zhou or King Wumu, it's wishful thinking for them to try and control me with such small tricks."

Yu Youyao knew that her cousin was not someone who was easily manipulated, but she was still furious. "As the ruler of a country, he doesn't want to govern the court and clean up the officials, but he just plays with power all day. How hateful."

Others felt that the emperor thought highly of his cousin by conferring him the title of King of the North.

However, she only felt aggrieved for her cousin.

Zhou Linghuai touched the silk flower on her head. "It's just a useless evil dragon. I'll just kill it. It's not worth angering yourself." With that, he cut the hot venison again and placed it in front of her. "The venison has to be eaten while it's hot."

These casual words seemed to have come out of his mouth casually.

However, Yu Youyao knew that this had been planned for a long time. From the moment her cousin entered the capital, the world had been a chess board.

Yu Youyao did not think that it was bad, but her heart skipped a beat. She could only pick up her chopsticks and eat the deer meat.

The deer meat was roasted very deliciously. Yu Youyao liked the salty and not greasy texture very much. Unknowingly, she had eaten a lot and stopped thinking about those annoying things.

Zhou Linghuai took out a wine jar and poured her a glass of wine. "Tomorrow, I'm going out of the city. Do you want to go with me?"

The sweet wine complemented the strong taste of the venison.

Yu Youyao held her night glass and smiled sweetly. "It's cold outside. Why are you leaving the city?"

Although she did not want her cousin to go out and catch a cold, she knew that he had always lived in seclusion. There must be something important that forced him to leave the city.

Zhou Linghuai's gaze darkened. "Yes, I'm sending an old friend off."

Yu Youyao understood. "I'll go with Cousin tomorrow and bring the deer blood wine that I brewed yesterday. It's cold here. It's best to drink a cup of deer blood wine to strengthen your body."

Since her cousin had asked her to go with him, her grandmother was no longer an obstacle.

Zhou Linghuai nodded.

The next day, the sky, which had been gloomy for more than a month, finally cleared.

After the morning court assembly, Yu Youyao received news—



The Imperial Court had announced many crimes against Song Xiuwen that Ning Yuanbo had reported. After a preliminary investigation, they ordered the Jiangdu Department to investigate and reported Song Xiuwen's dismissal.

Ye Hanyuan would temporarily take over his position and immediately go south. He would temporarily be in charge of the coastal war in Ningbo,

Shaoxing, and Taizhou Prefectures and help investigate Song Xiuwen's case. He had to investigate this case and punish corrupt officials to uphold the justice of the navy.

The orange-red sun hung lazily in the sky, and the repressed mood also cleared up.

There was a charcoal pot burning in the carriage, and there were curtains on all four walls to block the wind. It was also warm.

Yu Youyao and her cousin made small talk. "The Ye Residence in Linjiang has been involved in the imperial examination for generations. Ye Hanyuan's father, Ye Xiaoci, is a civil servant. As his eldest son, why did Ye Hanyuan join the army and not take the imperial examination?"

Zhou Linghuai said, "Ye Hanyuan is the eldest son of Ye Xiaoci's first wife. Logically speaking, it's only right for him to follow his father's wishes and become an official. However, Ye Hanyuan stuttered when he was young and wasn't valued by his father. As a result, he was bullied and mocked a lot.

Gradually, he became wooden and autistic. Furthermore, he was known as Fool Ye in Youzhou."

"What?" Yu Youyao wondered if she had heard wrongly. Ye Hanyuan, who had single-handedly stirred up the entire court, actually stuttered. He even had a nickname called Fool Ye?

This reminded her of how she had mentioned Ye Hanyuan to her grandmother previously. Her grandmother had said that Ye Hanyuan was perverse and stiff.

At that time, she still felt that it was strange. Ye Hanyuan had knocked on the drum angrily. The word perverse was barely suitable for him, but how was he stiff?

Although she was a little curious, she had something on her mind at that time, so she did not probe further.

Today, after hearing her cousin's words, she realized that this was why he was described as stiff.

Zhou Linghuai knew that she was in disbelief. so he smiled. "He used to stutter.

Although it's not a bad illness, it's harmful to the Imperial Court's image.

Someone like him is not allowed to participate in the imperial examination."

Yu Youyao was speechless for a moment. After a while, she asked, "On the day Ye Hanyuan beat the drum angrily, I passed by Chang An Street and heard him shouting about the Marquis of Changxing's ten sins. He didn't stutter. How did he recover after that?"

Zhou Linghuai's gaze darkened. "That's a long story..."

After chatting all the way, Yu Youyao's mood gradually became heavy. How many lives had been buried in King You's case, and how many relationships had been buried?

Unknowingly, they had arrived at the pavilion outside the city..

## Chapter 524: Oath of Love

Yu Youyao lifted the curtain of the carriage and saw a tall and heroic man in the Storm Pavilion. He was wearing silver-white armor and a red cloak that fluttered in the cold wind.

With his tall and straight body, one could see his aura at a glance.

Such an outstanding man belonged on the battlefield.

However, at a glance, she felt that the person standing in the cold wind was actually covered in wind and frost.

Yu Youyao instructed Chun Xiao and Chang An to move everything they had brought into the pavilion.

“It’s cold outside. Cousin, you have to be more careful not to catch a cold.” As she spoke, Yu Youyao took out a large cloak and helped her cousin put it on. She also prepared a sleeve stove and added a velvet blanket to his legs. “Cousin has a lot to talk to Young Master Ye about, so I won’t go over. I’ll wait for you in the carriage.”

Zhou Linghuai did not insist and nodded. “I don’t have a deep relationship with Ye Hanyuan. I won’t be delayed for too long.”

Yu Youyao nodded and pushed her cousin out of the carriage.

Although it was daytime, the sun probably wouldn’t stay up much longer. The weather was also becoming cloudy and cold.

As soon as the cold wind blew against her body, she felt a layer of frost on her face.

Yu Youyao quickly bent down and helped her cousin tighten his cloak. “Cousin, you have to take care of your health.”

Chang An pushed Zhou Linghuai into the pavilion.

Only then did Yu Youyao get into the carriage again.

In the Storm Pavilion, Ye Hanyuan was sitting in front of a charcoal stove. There was a grill inside. He cut two pieces of venison and placed them on the grill to roast. “The little girl who sent you here is Eldest Miss Yu of the Imperial Censor’s family?”

Zhou Linghuai nodded.

Ye Hanyuan was busy applying oil to the venison. “She takes good care of you.” Zhou Linghuai nodded and said nothing.

The atmosphere was silent for a moment, and only the sound of roasting meat entered his ears.

Ye Hanyuan took out a pendant.

This was a red jade mandarin duck pendant. There were ancient mandarin ducks in pairs. Looking at the mandarin duck pendant, it was definitely a Yang pendant.

Zhou Linghuai's expression became complicated. "Back then, my father entrusted my sister to you with the red jade pendant?"

His father had always carried this red jade duck pendant with him.

There was also a green jade pendant that his mother never removed.

Back then, his father had searched the world and found this piece of jade. This piece of jade was naturally abnormal. It was half red and half emerald.

The male can have the red half and the female can have the green half.

Her father was overjoyed. He found the best craftsman in the world and carved a pair of jade mandarin ducks. He wanted them to grow old together and die together. He made an oath with his mother.

This was a token of love between his father and mother.

Ye Hanyuan picked up the wine jar, pulled out the stopper, and gulped down a few mouthfuls of wine. The deer blood wine flowed, and as soon as it entered his stomach, he felt the blood burning. "Back then, the North lost several cities in a row and was retreating step by step. King Li of Zhou reorganized his troops and planned to fight to the death with the Di people at the narrow Yu pass. He already had the intention to die, but he couldn't let go of his wife and children at home."

At that time, Ye Hanyuan, who was only 17 years old, had performed well in the army and was promoted to a sixth-grade guard of the You Prefecture to guard the city.

The 300,000 Di Army soldiers aggressively approached them, and King You gathered resources to fight.

The Imperial Court owed money to the army every year, causing a lack of supplies in the North. The soldiers' armor was damaged, and their warhorses were old and weak. Every year, they lost a lot of troops. 200,000 soldiers was all they had.

The Di Army seemed to know that the North lacked supplies and kept feigning attacks. The soldiers were exhausted from dealing with them, and the consumption of supplies increased, casting an ominous shadow over this battle.

The North had lost several cities in a row, and the situation was not optimistic.

If they did not take the initiative to attack and stop the Di Army outside the narrow Yu pass, it was only a matter of time before the Di Army broke through.

King You reorganized his troops and planned to attack in all directions. "If we win this battle, I'll hold a banquet in the army to reward the three armies and the soldiers. If we lose, I, Yin Lixing, will join the battlefield and we will die together!"

"Let's drink and eat together and have a feast..."

"We'll be together on the battlefield and in the netherworld..."

"Together..."

The morale of the army soared, but this fearless aura revealed a sense of sorrow for no reason.

As the vassal lord guarding the North, King You had no choice.

If the Di people broke through the narrow Yu pass, the Imperial Court would pursue the crime of him not guarding it well. If it were an ordinary soldier, he might have a chance of survival, but as a vassal lord, he could only die.

Only by dying on the battlefield could he protect his wife and children.

That night, King You saw him in the camp. “If I die, my wife will die with me. She definitely won’t live an ignoble life. We have to walk through life and death together. My son is unruly by nature and isn’t restrained. I can’t manage him enough, so I’ll let him cause trouble. Only my daughter is as hot-tempered as fire. I’m really worried.”

Xi’er was scheming. Even if he was worried, he couldn’t worry too much.

It was naturally more appropriate to hand Ruo Tu over to Xi’er to take care of.

However, Xi’er was too vicious and scheming, so he was worried about handing his daughter over to him.

Ye Hanyuan sat in the tent cautiously. He had a wooden personality. Only when he heard King You mention his daughter did his wooden emotions finally fluctuate strongly.

Yin Lixing changed the topic. “Your son and my daughter, Ruo Tu, are childhood sweethearts. If you lose this battle, please take care of her.”

Ye Xiaoci was a parent official of the North and had close connections with the nobles in the North. If the North fell, Ye Xiaoci would definitely have a way to escape unscathed.

Ye Hanyuan was the eldest son of the first wife. Even if Ye Xiaoci did not value him, it was impossible for him to give up on him.

Ye Hanyuan had also been under him for five to six years. He had also watched him grow up. He seemed to be wooden when interacting with others, but he had a rare talent as a general. He was responsible, and his personality was stable. He could be entrusted with something.

With Xi’ers plan and Ye Hanyuan’s help, Ruo Tu would be safe.

Ye Hanyuan, who had always been wooden, mustered up his courage and knelt in front of King You with a thud. “Your Highness, you’ve been with Princess Simu for many years. I’m willing to spend my life with your family and follow the love between you and the Princess to form a good family. We’ll be a pair for the rest of our lives. Your Highness, please fulfill my wish.”

The tent was so quiet that one could hear a pin drop—

Ye Hanyuan knelt on the ground nervously and lowered his head tightly. He did not even have the courage to raise his head to look at King You.

He knew how despicable and shameless he was when he was taking advantage of others.

How noble was Princess Changnings status? How could she not be valued at home? A mere sixth-grade guard could only dream.

However, he knew that this was his only chance.

After a while, King You’s angry voice sounded above his head. “Look up.”

Ye Hanyuan was afraid, but he still clenched his fists and slowly raised his head. As expected, he saw King You looking at him sinisterly, his eyes filled with killing intent..

## Chapter 525: Ridiculous

Yin Lixing sneered. "I see that you have some talent in war and treat you as my disciple. Kid, you actually dare to covet my daughter. You dare to think about it!"

Ye Hanyuan's face was wooden. "Your Highness, please fulfill my wish."

King You was so angry that he laughed. "Heh, I said that you're a toad, but you're still clinging on. How dare you covet my daughter? Let me see if your bones are hard enough."

Before he could finish speaking, he had already rolled up his sleeves and rushed over to beat him up.

Ye Hanyuan did not say a word.

As he hit him, Yin Lixing felt that there was no point in hitting anymore. He stared at Ye Hanyuan faintly. "You'd better dispel this thought in your heart. Although I was also someone who was a toad that ate swan meat back then, I can't tolerate it. You're a toad who wants my daughter, understand?"

Ye Hanyuan's face was bruised and swollen. It was simply a tragic sight.

After being beaten up, Ye Hanyuan was no longer afraid of facing King You again. Instead, he said self-righteously, "Why can't I do it if Your Highness did it back then?"

"You're comparing yourself to me?" King You rolled up his sleeves again in anger.

He said that he was a toad, but did this kid really think that he was a toad?

Even if he was a toad, he was still the most beautiful toad. No matter what, he was still a prince with land, money, and power.

How could Ye Hanyuan, who was not valued by his family, compare to him?

He was courting death!!!

The more he thought about it, the angrier he became. King You kicked him. "Comparing yourself to me? Are you worthy? How many keys do you have? Heh, you're the eldest son of the first wife of the state capital. Do you know what the state capital is doing? You said that you're helping the vassal lords govern the vassal lands, but in fact, you're planted by the Imperial Court in the North to monitor the spies of the vassal lords. You want to marry my daughter. With your status, you're simply delusional."

Not to mention him!

Even Ye Xiaoci himself would not agree to marry the vassal lord. If he was not careful and was convicted of forming a clique, he would lose his head.

Ye Hanyuan pursed his lips. "As long as Your Highness fulfills my wish, I'm willing to leave the Ye Residence and marry into the King's Residence to be

Rucha's wife."

King You's eyes widened. "What did you say?"

Ye Hanyuan continued, "I know that I'm not worthy, but I swear that I'll definitely make contributions in the future and not disgrace you. I'll be loyal to you for the rest of my life and I won't have any wrong thoughts. If I violate this oath, I won't have a good ending."

King You looked at Ye Hanyuan with an incomparably complicated expression. "Marriage? You're getting ahead of yourself. The Ye Residence is a side branch of the Ye family of Linjiang. Their ancestor is the number one literary family in the Great Zhou Dynasty. Marrying into the family depends on your father's approval."

Ye Hanyuan looked up at him and said, "From the day I entered the military camp, Father and I have already written a letter of severance. He can't interfere in my matters."

Otherwise, as an official of the You Prefecture, how could he let his eldest son serve the vassal lord? Due to his stutter, his path of taking the imperial examination had already been completely blocked. Furthermore, as he was autistic and wooden by nature, he couldn't take the path of managing the family and doing business.

Only surrendering himself to the army was a way out for him.

It wasn't that his father hadn't thought of arranging for him to be under someone else's command. He was the one who hadn't been willing. It was his seriously ill mother who had stepped in and written a letter of disownment. She had used his father's seal and secretly handed it to him.

"Don't tell your father yet. You can take it out when it's difficult for you in the Ye Residence in the future."

Severing ties was a mother's last kindness to her son.

This was because she knew very well that when she died, her son would completely have nothing to rely on. There would no longer be a place for him in this family.

Not long after, his mother passed away.

After his mother's funeral ended, he took out the letter of severance. His father was furious, but he accepted this fact out of consideration for his relationship with his first wife.

He resolutely submitted to King You.

Hearing him talk about this past, King You sighed. "Ye Hanyuan, I admire your daring personality and your talent, but..."

Ye Hanyuan was afraid of hearing a rejection. "Your Highness, the princess said that back then, when Your Highness married her, she hoped that she could live as she pleases. I have nothing and can't give the princess all of this. It's only human nature for you to be worried about handing the princess to me. I just want to ask for a promise from His Highness."

Yin Lixing was silent for a long time before asking, "What promise?"

Ye Hanyuan said firmly, "If I can make contributions in the future and give the princess happiness, please allow me to marry the princess. If I can't do it, I'll also take care of the princess for the rest of my life."

A dignified descendant of the Ye family was willing to degrade himself to get a wife. King You felt that he couldn't refuse such sincerity.

Moreover, Ye Hanyuan valued relationships and righteousness, so he would definitely fulfill his promise.

This promise could help his daughter's future. Why not?

So what if Ye Hanyuan couldn't do it?

Yin Lixing did not only have a daughter. He also had a son.

Although this son was born arrogant and might not be able to take good care of his eldest sister, he would definitely not let her suffer.

After a long silence, Yin Lixing took out a red jade pendant from his pocket. "Alright, this red jade pendant is a token of love between me and the Princess Consort. I'll allow you to have my token today, but..."

Before Ye Hanyuan could be surprised, he heard King You change the topic and stare at him sternly. His aura, which was shaped by being on the battlefield for a long time, pressed down on him until he couldn't breathe

"You have to promise me that if Ruocha has someone she likes in the future, and that person is someone she can entrust her life to, you can't rely on my promise and force Ruocha to be with you. It only works if you and Ruocha are willing. There's no wishful thinking. Do you understand?"

His meaning was very clear. This red jade pendant was just his promise, but it did not represent his daughter's wishes. If his daughter did not agree, the marriage would still not count.

Ye Hanyuan was overjoyed. He held the jade pendant with both hands. "Thank you for fulfilling my wish, Your Highness. If I can't fulfill my promise to you in the future, or if Ruocha makes her own choice, I'll naturally return the red jade pendant to Ruocha and won't force her."

However, everything that happened next was so unexpected.

The heir gathered the resources of the North and sent them to the battlefield, alleviating the danger of the rations in the army. Then, it was spread that the heir had brought the guards of the 3,000 residences to support the battlefield in the North. However, at a narrow pass, he met the 8,000 elite troops led by Harmon and killed more than 6,000 people. Among them, several famous generals of the Di Clan beat Harmon until he fled.

When the news reached the front line, the You army's morale soared.

There was food and morale. King You grabbed the opportunity to turn the situation around in one go.

At this moment, there was news from the court that the Marquis of Weining was the commander-in-chief. The Marquis of Changxing was the general of the north and had led an army of 300,000 to help out. This made the likely outcome of this battle clearer and clearer, and everyone in the army was overjoyed.

However, no one knew that an even greater danger had descended..

## Chapter 526: Deep Love

None of them were too worried when King You of the Imperial Court entered the capital. King You had turned the situation in the North around, and Prince

Yin had also prepared evidence to convict the officials and nobles of the North. He was prepared to report it to the Imperial Court when the Imperial Court denounced him.

This way, the crime of King You letting his son commit murder was no longer recognized.

That day, his father suddenly asked him to lead troops to patrol the border.

He had broken off his relationship with his father in name, but the news had yet to be sent out. Before it was time to make a decision, his father would still take care of him.

He did not think too much about it. When there was war in the North, his father naturally stood up to help as an official of the North. It was not a big deal to patrol the border.

He did not suspect anything.

It wasn't until he received the Marquis of Changxing's abnormal movements at the narrow Yuguan that he sensed that something was amiss. After returning halfway, he saw the clouds rolling in the sky from afar.

When he rushed to King You's residence, the fire had turned everything to ashes.

King You's residence was completely burned.

At this moment, he realized that his father had long known that the Marquis of Weining and the Marquis of Changxing had plotted to frame the King Li of Zhou and steal the military power of Youzhou.

However, because of the Holy Decree, although her father did not help the wicked, he chose to watch coldly.

In fact, in order to prevent him from being implicated, he had deliberately sent him away in the name of patrolling the border.

The red jade pact became empty words!

After hearing this past, Zhou Linghuai looked a little sad. "Since my eldest sister has passed away, I'll make the decision. The agreement you made with my father and my sister will be over. From now on..."

Although he had a good relationship with Ye Hanyuan, their relationship was not deep.

The person who had always been close to Ye Hanyuan was his sister, Princess Changning, Yin Ruocha.

All these years, he had not interacted much with Ye Hanyuan, so he did not know about this old matter.

Ye Hanyuan interrupted him. "That day, I fled from the North to the capital.



After breaking off my relationship with Father, I left a severance letter. Now, I'm about to go to Jiangnan to take over Song Xiuwen's position. It can be considered a meritorious deed. I've already fulfilled my promise to King Li of Zhou. Prince Yin, please return the other green jade pendant to me."

Zhou Linghuai's eyes turned cold. "My eldest sister is already dead."

However, Ye Hanyuan was expressionless. "Marriage is a matter of parents' orders and matchmaking. My agreement with the King Li of Zhou is still there.

It's not something that you can clarify with just a few words. Prince Yin, please hand the green jade pendant to me. Ruocha was born to be with me in life and death."

Zhou Linghuai tightened his grip on his teacup and looked at him steadily. "Ye Hanyuan, after you get married and have children in the future, where will my sister's place be?"

Ye Hanyuan's expression darkened. "If it isn't your sister, it won't be anyone else."

Zhou Linghuai suddenly thought of something.

Back then, Ye Hanyuan had joined her father's army. Once, when she had gone to the army with her sister, the gloomy and wooden young man had hidden in the dark of the tent and stared straight at her sister.

Zhou Linghuai did not like his gaze.

Only now did he understand that Ye Hanyuan was looking at his entire world.

If Yin Huaixi was still the same Yin Huaixi from before and he had never met a girl called Yu Youyao in the capital, he would definitely reject Ye Hanyuan coldly.

However, he had changed in the end.

Zhou Linghuai turned to look at the carriage not far away.

A corner of the curtain was lifted. Although the person in the carriage did not follow him, she had been paying attention to his every move. She was also his entire world.

He was the one who had made a great promise to protect her for the rest of his life.

He wouldn't do this for anyone else.

This was not a promise.

Instead, it was a dream they wanted to achieve in their life.

Zhou Linghuai took out an emerald green jade pendant from his sleeve. "If you change your mind one day, return this pair of mandarin duck jade pendants to me."

Ye Hanyuan took the green jade pendant and intertwined it with the red jade pendant in his hand. The two jade pendants fused into one, turning into a pair of round mandarin duck pendants that crossed each other's necks.

Ye Hanyuan gently rubbed the round pendant in his hand, his eyes filled with sorrow and joy. After a while, he said, "Thank you for fulfilling my wish, King Wumu."

He did not call him Prince Yin anymore.

Prince Yin was the only relationship he had with Yin Huaixi in Youzhou in the past.

King Wumu was the person he would be loyal to from now on.

It was windy in the Storm Pavilion. Even though there was a charcoal stove, it was bone-chilling. Zhou Linghuai felt cold.

He took out a small jade gourd the size of his palm from his waist. It was filled with Myrrh wine. He raised his head and took a sip. The Myrrh wine rushed into his throat. As soon as it entered his stomach, he felt the coldness dissipate.

After the venison was roasted, Ye Hanyuan picked up one of the pieces and placed it on the plate in front of Zhou Linghuai. "Your sister used to like the meat I roasted the most."

This was the first time he had roasted meat for someone else.

It was also the last time.

Zhou Linghuai took a dagger and cut the meat into small pieces. After taking a bite, he felt that it was better than his roasted meat. Thinking that Yu Youyao also liked roasted meat, he asked, "How did you roast it?"

Ye Hanyuan explained some of his barbecue techniques expressionlessly.

Zhou Linghuai was enlightened.

He had already said everything he needed to say. After eating the roasted meat and drinking the deer blood wine, Zhou Linghuai said, "It's still early. The suburbs are a distance away from the Precious Peace Temple. Aren't you going to bid farewell to the scenery?"

The commander-in-chief was under the jurisdiction of the state capital. In terms of closeness, Ye Hanyuan was closer to Jingzhi.

Ye Hanyuan was stunned for a long time. After a while, he said, "Back then, when the situation in the North changed drastically, Jingzhi helped you gather rations and stabilize the situation in the North. Only then could you lead the 3,000 elite guards of the residence to help the battlefield and ease the situation in the North. After that, he fell sick and couldn't get up. Later, the Marquis of Weining and the Marquis of Changxing wanted military power in Youzhou. Uncle Zhou was worried that he would be implicated, so he drugged him and sent him to Mount Wutai."

At the mention of this past, Zhou Linghuai had a complicated look. "Even if he's here, he can't save King You's residence."

If the emperor wanted him to die, he had no choice.

His mother had always been smart and virtuous. It was precisely because she understood this that she was so determined.

His eldest sister was also smart and fiery. It was precisely because she knew all of this that she was willing to die with her mother.

Ye Hanyuan lowered his eyes. "A deep love doesn't last long, and extreme wisdom will definitely hurt him. After the shocking change in Youzhou and the calamity in the family, Jingzhi's health deteriorated day by day. Later, Grandmaster Hui Neng went to Mount Wutai to talk about

meditation. After seeing the scene, he said bluntly that he was fated with Buddha. Jingzhi became a monk and stopped caring about the mortal world. His health actually improved day by day.”

However, there was no Zhou family in this world anymore. There was only the

Six Wise Monks of the Precious Peace Temple and Zen Master Hui Ji.

Zhou Linghuai also knew this.

Jingzhi was still brooding over what had happened back then. Even as a monk, it was rare for him to have peace. Later, he suggested using Zhou Linghuai’s identity at the price of redressing the Zhou family.

If he wanted to go to the capital, why would he need to use Zhou Linghuai’s identity?

He was just using this to cut off all connections between the mortal and his identity as Jingzhi..

Chapter 527: A Scene that Radiates Light

They were both smart people. There were many things that did not need to be said explicitly to know each other’s intentions.

At this point, the act was over.

He had also used Zhou Linghuai’s identity to go to the capital, but because of his identity as “Zhou Linghuai”, he had an inexplicable fate with the Yu

Residence and had an alliance oath with a young lady for the rest of his life.

It was probably all predestined.

He was destined to have an inexplicable fate with Zhou Ling, and that was indeed the case.

Ye Hanyuan sighed slightly. “Since he has severed ties with the mortal world, I won’t disturb him.”

The person in charge of Youzhou was a young master. Although he was born sick and weak, he was born with wisdom. His father named him Linghuai. The name “Jingzhi” meant looking up when there is a tall mountain.

He hoped that he would be both talented and capable. If he saw a tall mountain and could admire it, he would always be humble. Only then would he see virtue.

Later on, this young master of the Zhou family with the name “Jingzhi” met another young heir with the name “Jingzhi.”

They had an incomprehensible fate.

King You had named Yin Huaixi Jingzhi from a quote. “In the grand hall room, the scenery will follow the light. Cross the vast sea and to reach the river.” He hoped that Yin Huaixi could become a noble person in the future.

One who would see a tall mountain and look up to it.

One who would be a noble mountain and radiate light.

This was the entanglement of fate .

At that time, King You probably wouldn't have thought that Mount Song was too high to reach.

A dragon swam unafraid of the vastness of the four seas.

Everything was just about fate.

Zhou Linghuai did not say much and only said, "This trip to Jiangnan is filled with danger. I hope you take care!"

Ye Hanyuan nodded. "You take care."

With that, Ye Hanyuan did not stay any longer.

After walking out of the pavilion, with a whistle, the sound of hooves came from nearby. A tall horse with black mane galloped over.

In the blink of an eye, it stopped beside Ye Hanyuan.

Ye Hanyuan stroked the horse's head and got on.

"Giddyup!" The horse raised its head and neighed, galloping towards the official road like a gust of wind.

Ye Hanyuan held the reins of his horse, and the cold wind whistled in his ears. It was as if the young girl in red was whispering in his ear—

"Ye Hanyuan, with me protecting you in the future, no one can bully you..."

"Ye Hanyuan, so what if you can't take the imperial examination? It's not like there's only one path in the world. At the very least, I've never heard that stutterers can't join the army..."

"Ye Hanyuan, it's not like you were born with a stutter. As long as you work hard, you'll definitely be able to overcome it..."

"Ye Hanyuan, it's a deal. In the future, come and look for me at this time every day. I'll help you overcome your stutter..."

"Ye Hanyuan, recite it with me. Yin Ruocha is the most beautiful girl in the world. If you dare to stutter, you'll be dead..."

"Ye Hanyuan, that Young brat, Yin Huaixi, mocked me. He said that I was a tomboy and would definitely not be able to get married in the future. He was beaten up by my father. My father said that if I couldn't get married, I could be matched with someone. There are many good men with a bright future in the army. As long as he gives the order, there will be many people queuing up to be my husband..."

"Ye Hanyuan, do you have any dreams? Is there something you want to do with your life?"

My lifelong dream is to marry you.

Even though you're no longer around!

I want to miss you like this too!

Zhou Linghuai watched Ye Hanyuan's horse leave, his heart filled with sorrow. The sky had just cleared not long ago, but at some point, it was dark. The cold wind carried the rain and snow into the Storm Pavilion.

Yu Youyao got out of the carriage and walked into the pavilion through the snow. "It's snowing."

Zhou Linghuai nodded and raised his hand to lift the hood on the little girl's fox fur cloak and put it on her head. "Let's go back!"

Soon, it would be difficult to walk on the main road in the rain and snow.

Chang An pushed the wheelchair and sent Young Master back to the carriage. Then, he returned to the pavilion to help Chun Xiao pack her things.

The carriage was warm. There was a small charcoal stove on the table and ginger tea was brewed. The entire carriage smelled of ginger and spicy food.

Yu Youyao took a bowl of ginger tea and handed it to her cousin. "You were freezing outside for a long time just now. Hurry up and drink a bowl of ginger tea to warm your body."

Zhou Linghuai noticed that she had raised the teapot high and slowly poured ginger tea into a bowl.

When Jiang Cha handed it to him, he reached out to take it.

The temperature was no longer hot. He lowered his head and took a sip.

Although it was still a little hot, it was more suitable to take small sips. Often, her every move was considerate.

Yu Youyao asked curiously, "What did Cousin say to Ye Hanyuan just now?"

Zhou Linghuai held the ginger soup. "He asked me to fulfill the promise my father made to him back then and fulfill his marriage with my eldest sister. He wanted me to give him the other half of the token."

Yu Youyao was suddenly stunned.

Actually, when she came, her cousin had told her about the fate between Ye Hanyuan and King You's residence in the carriage. He had mentioned Princess Changning, Yin Ruocha, a lot, and she had vaguely guessed something.

As the son of a state official, there was no need for Ye Hanyuan to submit to the King Li of Zhou. He had endured the burden in Youzhou for many years and risked his life. He did not hesitate to turn against his father and escape into the capital to avenge the King Li of Zhou.

Everything he did did not match the upbringing and responsibilities of a descendant of an aristocratic family.

But he had done it.

Yu Youyao felt a lump in her throat. "Then Cousin..."

"I've fulfilled his wish." Zhou Linghuai lowered his head. Smoke rose from the ginger tea in his bowl. There were red dates and longevity meat floating on the ginger tea.

“He’s never been on my chessboard. If it wasn’t him, it would have been someone else. He willingly joined the game and was willing to be reduced to a chess piece. He’s already done enough for King You’s residence and my sister.”

Yu Youyao felt terrible, but she tried her best to smile. “He got what he wanted.

Don’t feel bad.”

King Li of Zhou was benevolent.

Ye Hanyuan was the same.

This was just a grievance after having no more choices left.

Since ancient times, there had been empty regrets. Good dreams were the easiest to wake up from.

How could it be easy to free oneself from holding a torch for someone? Poor thing.

Things change quickly, and things change in a blink of an eye. A lover’s heart is easily changed.

If it weren’t for the parting, his heart would have broken, and his tears would have drenched his clothes.

This poem was the best portrayal of Ye Hanyuan’s long life in the future. How sad was it? It was also like the snow that filled the sky.

The carriage clattered back to the residence along the official road.

Yu Youyao and her cousin went to An Shou Hall.

Old Madam Yu quickly prepared ginger soup. She stared at the two of them until they finished it before looking away.

Yu Youyao looked bitter.

Zhou Linghuai casually picked up the golden orange on the table, peeled it, and handed it to her to eat.

Old Madam Yu shook her head and changed the topic. “This morning, Heir

Song sent a greeting card to the residence and planned to visit tomorrow..”

Chapter 528: Difficult to Fill

It was already the end of the year, and every family was busy celebrating the new year. It was not appropriate for them to visit uninvited, so they had sent a greeting card in advance. If it were in the past, there would not have been a need to do this.

Yu Youyao was stunned. “Heir Song is back?”

Zhou Linghuai turned to look at her and saw her frown. In the blink of an eye, she returned to normal, as if that moment of emotion was just his imagination.

Old Madam Yu did not notice this and nodded. “I returned to the residence yesterday. It’s just that the weather is cold and the journey is long. He probably suffered too. As soon as he returned to the

residence, he fell sick. He only felt better after receiving a prescription from Imperial Physician Shi and taking some medicine.”

It was also because the Zhenguo Marquis Residence had sent a greeting card to the residence and explained the reason that she knew that Song Mingzhao had returned.

Although it was a little strange, in the end, it was still the Zhenguo Marquis Residence’s own business, so she did not probe further.

Yu Youyao looked thoughtful.

Zhou Linghuai said calmly, “Since Song Xiuwen’s case was sent to the Imperial

Court, it was also investigated clearly. It’s almost the end of the year. Song Mingzhao is neither an official nor an aide. It’s only right for him to return to the capital first.”

Old Madam Yu nodded. “That’s right.” She changed the topic and said, “Heir Song is young and smart. I think he’s helped your father a lot this time.” Yu Youyao nodded but said nothing.

However, she felt that it was strange. Song Mingzhao had followed Yu Zongzheng south. If he had returned to the capital in advance, he should have sent a message to the Yu Residence immediately.

What kind of illness was it? Not only did he have to invite Imperial Physician Shi over, but he also had to delay the news for a day?

The Zhenguo Marquis Residence was a military family. Although Song Mingzhao had taken the path of an imperial scholar, he had also practiced martial arts since he was young. Although his martial arts weren’t that good, he was still physically strong. As it was cold, it was reasonable for him to fall sick after a long journey back to the capital. But wasn’t this “sickness” a little too serious?

The Zhenguo Marquis Residence had said that they had invited Imperial Physician Shi over. Naturally, this was true. After all, this matter would be clear as soon as they asked around.

Imperial Physician Shi had already retired. Usually, he would not do external consultations unless it was very important.

So Song Mingzhao was really sick?

He was also seriously ill.

She thought of Song Mingzhao’s previous incident of vomiting blood and fainting for no reason. Could it be that he had some extraordinary illness?

But all of this was just speculation.

Since Song Mingzhao was coming over tomorrow, his condition must have improved a lot.

As Yu Youyao was thinking, she heard her grandmother say to her cousin,

“Heir Song will come tomorrow. I think he’s here because of the matter in Jiangnan, so you’ll have to greet him and talk about political matters. We women and children of the inner residence don’t know much.”

Zhou Linghuai nodded in agreement. He also wanted to meet this talented and famous heir of the Song family.

The next day, Yu Youyao finished her breakfast and worked for a while before going to An Shou Hall.

Zhou Linghuai had already arrived and was chatting with the Matriarch about the situation in Jiangnan. "Song Xiuwen is also involved in Li Qiguang's rebellion. I think as soon as Ye Hanyuan arrives in Zhejiang, the imperial envoy will release Song Xiuwen into the capital. After the trial, he will probably be convicted. Song Xiuwen's case also implicates many officials in Jiangnan. Next, the emperor will vigorously reorganize Jiangnan. The officials in Jiangnan won't sit back and do nothing. They will definitely take action." Old Madam Yu frowned when she heard this. "What do you think they'll do?"

Zhou Linghuai pointed out, "They'll start from whatever the Imperial Court cares about the most."

Old Madam Yu's expression immediately darkened. "What the Imperial Court is most concerned about is exterminating the pirates. If they use this to suppress the Imperial Court, I'm afraid it won't be easy for the Imperial Court to reorganize Jiangnan. In that case, I'm afraid Jiangnan will be in chaos."

This chaos would continue for a long time.

With the chaos in Jiangnan, most of the court was in chaos.

Song Mingzhao stood outside the door and did not move. The servant who had welcomed him into An Shou Hall did not move either. He only entered the Hall after Old Madam Yu finished speaking.

Zhou Linghuai did not go to Jiangnan, but he had already guessed most of the situation there.

Great talents could always catch a glimpse of the overall situation.

Sima Qian of the Han Dynasty once wrote, "I'm not as good as Zhang Liang." He was also inferior to Zhou Linghuai.

As soon as Song Mingzhao entered the house, Old Madam Yu was shocked.

After making a trip south, Song Mingzhao's face was sickly pale. He looked even weaker than Linghuai. He was wearing a large cloak, but it couldn't hide his skinny figure.

He was really seriously ill.

Song Mingzhao took off his cloak and handed it to Kong Qing. Then, he went forward to greet Old Madam Yu and Zhou Linghuai. However, his gaze moved slightly as he quietly sized up Zhou Linghuai.

Zhou Linghuai sat in a wheelchair, his bones exuding a rugged aura. He was one of the few people in the world who looked dignified. There was a quote to describe him. "In ancient times, there was nothing like him in the world. He was beautiful and dignified, as bright as the moon. He was unparalleled."

Zhou Linghuai nodded slightly and said calmly, "Please forgive me for the inconvenience."

Song Mingzhao retracted his gaze and stepped forward to greet Yu Youyao.

Yu Youyao stood up and bowed back.

The two of them did not interact. However, Song Ming's gaze when he looked at Yu Youyao was as deep as a ravine, making Zhou Linghuai's eyes darken.



“Heir Song is sick, so there’s no need to be too polite. Please sit!”

Old Madam Yu reacted and quickly said, “Linghuai is right. Sit down and talk.”

Song Mingzhao followed suit.

It was unknown what incense had been burned in An Shou Hall, but the fragrance was strong and slightly pungent.

As he smelled it, he also felt that his body, which was freezing just now, had warmed up. Unknowingly, his mind also relaxed.

Seeing that he had sat down, Old Madam Yu asked, “I heard from your family that you fell sick as soon as you returned yesterday. Are you feeling better?”

Song Mingzhao said respectfully, “It was almost the end of the year. Song Xiuwen’s case was almost done being investigated, so I was in a hurry to rush back. I accidentally caught a cold. It was also because the family was too tense that I fell sick. Grandmother Yu, don’t worry.”

He had practiced martial arts since he was young and his health had always been good.

However, this time, after following Lord Yu south to Zhejiang for a few days, he broke down. His chest often hurt. Although it wasn’t too painful, it was still torturous.

Lord Yu had found a famous doctor in Zhejiang to treat him. The doctors all said that there was nothing wrong with his body. He was probably just not used to the weather, so he prescribed medicine and took it. It did not work too well.

He vaguely knew that this illness was very likely related to the last time he suddenly vomited blood and fainted.

After investigating Song Xiuwen’s case, he returned to the capital in advance.

As soon as he arrived home, his grandmother was shocked to see that he had lost all his vitality. She was also worried that his previous illness had not recovered completely, so she quickly invited Imperial Physician Shi over.

After Imperial Physician Shi took his pulse, he only said that he might have fallen ill and had to recuperate carefully.

After taking the medicine, the pain in his chest indeed eased a little..

Chapter 529: Unfathomable

However, Song Mingzhao kept feeling cold. No matter how many clothes he wore. He also felt uncomfortable with too many charcoal stoves burning in the room.

It was only after entering An Shou Hall that he suddenly felt a little better after smelling the incense.

Old Madam Yu felt a little relieved. “Although it’s nothing serious, look at you. Your face is still pale. Why aren’t you recuperating at home? Why did you still come to my place? If there’s really anything important, get someone to send a message. A letter is fine too! You’re still young. You have to take good care of your health. Don’t be careless.”

These words were also the truth. No matter how important the matter in Jiangnan was, women like them could only listen. There was nothing much they could do to interfere.

Song Mingzhao glanced at Eldest Miss Yu. "It's been more than two months since I went south this time. I haven't seen Grandmother Yu for a long time.

It's almost the end of the year. I have to pay you a visit."

His calm words made Old Madam Yu smile. "You're too kind."

Ever since Song Mingzhao fell sick last time, he had become much closer to the Yu Residence. Usually, he would only see them during the holidays, but they would come to visit every once in a while.

He really treated her as half a grandmother.

Song Mingzhao changed the topic. "Song Xiuwen's case is very important, so Lord Yu can't return before the new year and celebrate the new year with his family. Lord Yu is worried about his family, so he asked me to bring some family letters and some specialties from Zhejiang. I brought them all over today. Lord Yu is well. Don't worry, Grandmother Yu and Young Master Zhou." He glanced at Yu Youyao again. Seeing that she was listening with her eyes lowered, he paused for a moment and continued, "Miss Yao, don't worry." With that, he respectfully handed over the letters.

Qing Xiu quickly went over to get the letters and handed them to Old Madam Yu.

After taking the calming pill, Old Madam Yu was in no hurry to read the letters. She took them and placed them aside.

After saying that, the maidservant served tea at the right time.

Song Mingzhao picked up the tea and smelled it. He felt that this tea was strangely like Jiang Xin, with a hint of herb wood. It was mellow and fresh, but sharp and lasting.

As soon as it entered his mouth, he felt a little energized, and the fatigue in his body faded.

Song Mingzhao had never drunk this tea before, so he guessed that this must be a new tea made by Eldest Miss Yu. He couldn't help but ask, "What kind of tea is this? It's different from ordinary tea."

Old Madam Yu smiled and said, "This is a type of herbal tea from Mount Wuyi. The fragrance of the tea is strong. It's like cinnamon, but it's fresher and more mellow than cinnamon. Yao Yao made it into tea. Not only have you never drunk it, but it's also unique to our family in the entire Great Zhou Dynasty. No one has drunk this tea."

When she said this, her tone was clearly filled with pride.

The Rougui tea was fresh and mellow, and she liked it very much. Yu Youyao lowered her head and drank her tea with her teacup.

Song Mingzhao asked, "How is this tea made?"

Old Madam Yu smiled until her eyes narrowed. "It's because Yao Yao has a tea plantation on Mount Wuyi that has a kind of jade laurel tree growing on the mountain. Everyone in the plantation knows that Yao Yao likes incense medicine. Seeing that the fragrance of this jade laurel tree is special, I brought some along when I sent the new year goods into the residence a few days ago."

He had drunk a lot of high-grade Wuyi tea. Those teas were warm but not cold, and their fragrances resembled white orchids. The tea was good, but Song Mingzhao did not like it very much. This was the first time he had heard of Rougui tea from Wuyi Mountain, so he could not help but be a little surprised.

At the mention of her granddaughter, Old Madam Yu always had endless things to say. “Yao Yao also felt that the fragrance of this jade laurel leaf was special, so she studied the use of the jade laurel leaf. She happened to discover that the jade laurel leaf had a sharp fragrance that lasted after soaking it. It also helped to relieve fatigue, expel cold and moisture, warm the spleen and stomach, clear the blood vessels, and relieve digestion. She kneaded and stir-fried the tea. I didn’t expect that she would really discover the true benefits of jade laurel.”

The jade laurel tree grows on Mount Wuyi every year. Yu Youyao was definitely not the first person to discover that it was special. However, only Yu Youyao had researched the uses of the jade laurel tree.

Song Mingzhao’s heart was beating wildly, but he did not show it on his face. He couldn’t help but praise, “Rougui tea is even more fragrant and sharp than famous tea. Miss Yao’s ingenuity is really rare in the world.”

When Old Madam Yu heard this, she glanced at her granddaughter. Seeing that she was holding a teacup and lowering her head, she even thought that she had blushed after being praised. She smiled and said, “How is she ingenious? She’s just afraid of drinking a bowl of ginger soup every day. During this

period of time, she’s been thinking of ways every day to study incense medicine that can replace ginger tea. She’s almost obsessed. I didn’t expect her to really create this Rougui tea and bring it to my house yesterday.”

There were also many incense medicines that could ward off the cold and warm the body.

But most of them had to be accompanied by ginger.

It was fine if she did not add ginger, but the effect of expelling colds and preventing illnesses was not as obvious and fast as ginger.

Rougui tea had an excellent body-warming effect. With a little ginger juice added, it would increase the effect of repelling the cold and warming the body.

The tea itself was clear and mellow, making the ginger taste even more fragrant.

She liked drinking it, so she took it out to entertain Song Mingzhao today.

She did not expect Song Mingzhao to like it too. Old Madam Yu smiled. “If you like it, bring some back later.”

These words were exactly what Song Mingzhao wanted to hear. He immediately thanked her.

“Thank you, Grandmother Yu.” After saying that, he even looked at Yu Youyao. “Thank you, Miss Yao.”

Old Madam Yu quickly waved her hand. Yu Youyao’s lips curled up slightly.

“Heir Song, you’re too polite.”

Her calm words were as polite as before.

However, Song Mingzhao could hear the distance in her voice. He lowered his eyes. From the corner of his eye, Zhou Linghuai peeled a pot of Rougui pork and handed it to her.

She took a small silver stick and ate happily. She looked at Zhou Linghuai with sparkling eyes, her eyes filled with joy and even dazzling dependence.

Third Sister had said that Eldest Miss Yu and her cousin had an extremely good relationship.

He knew it was real.

However, he still had some doubts about how close they were. After all, Zhou

Linghuai was still living under someone else's roof. It was naturally impossible for him to be close to the people from the Yu Residence without any grudges.

But now, he realized that he was wrong.

A person like Zhou Linghuai would not be used to living under someone else's roof. No matter where he went, his aura would always make people respect him.

Judging from this person's description, he was reminded of Song Yu's 'Ode to a Goddess'.

Looking at this person's bearing, he couldn't help but think of Laozi—

Those who were kind in ancient times were mysterious and unrecognizable.

The only thing she didn't understand was her husband, so she forced herself to be polite.

He was like someone who stepped on the ice surface of a river. It was very dangerous. If he was not careful, he would slip and fall.

He was simple yet as broad-minded as the high mountains and empty valleys.

A person like Zhou Linghuai was subtle, deep, and knowledgeable. He was so deep that it was difficult to judge him. It was precisely because it was difficult to judge that it was hard to describe him!

He was so shrewd and cautious, as if he was stepping on river ice in winter.

He was so meticulous and vigilant, as if there were powerful enemies around everywhere.

He was respectful and self-possessed, as if he had always been a guest.

It was as if the ice was about to disintegrate and melt. He was simple and indifferent, and none of his outstanding abilities could be seen. He was open and vast, like the void.

It was really indescribable!

Chapter 530: Official Collusion

This was the young hero that Mr. Xian Yun praised endlessly.

After the Zhou family's name was cleared, the emperor allowed Zhou Linghuai to enter the Teng library and participate in the compilation of the "Collection of Documents". After this matter spread, many people in the capital discussed this matter.

As Zhou Linghuai was not famous, many people felt that his position was undeserved. He had entered the Teng library with the emperor's grace.

Later on, a student from Youzhou couldn't help but sneer. "You're ignorant.

The peace in the capital has lasted for too long, so you've become frogmen.

You only know how to open your mouth and look at the sky from a well."

"Four years ago, the Di people invaded the North wantonly. It was Young Master Zhou who dragged his sickly body and helped Prince Yin gather rations in a short period of time to stabilize the situation in Youzhou. That was why Prince Yin had no worries and brought the 3,000 kings to protect the elite troops to support the battlefield. That was why Prince Yin and Harmon led 8,000 elite troops to meet on a narrow path. With 3,000 elite troops, they forced Harmon to flee."

At the mention of this, someone was curious about Young Master Zhou and would definitely ask a lot of questions.

Later on, he found out that because of his congenital deficiency, Young Master Zhou was sick and weak. It was even difficult for him to walk in the ground. He had been in a wheelchair since he was young and lived in seclusion.

Therefore, he had read all the books in the world and was extremely talented, but his reputation had never been prominent.

Everyone sighed.

He was not surprised when he heard this.

Song Mingzhao only felt that there was a reason for it. He changed the topic. "The Jiangdu Imperial Court is under the jurisdiction of the Zhejiang Imperial Court. The Zhejiang Imperial Court is directly under the left military governor's office. After Song Xiuwen's case was investigated, he was locked up. Recently, there have often been pirates and bandits disturbing the coastal areas of Zhejiang."

Old Madam Yu frowned. "Has it always been like this in the past, or only after Song Xiuwen was imprisoned?"

When Yu Youyao heard this, she understood that her grandmother was suspecting that Song Xiuwen and the entire Zhejiang capital were colluding with the pirates.

Song Mingzhao put down his teacup. "Lord Yu secretly visited the soldiers who had retired from the army because of their injuries and illnesses. According to them, the pirates and the water bandits along the coast often go ashore to do evil. They usually engage in small fights. Therefore, the strength of the navy to eliminate the pirates isn't high. However, compared to before, the pirates have been coming more often recently."

Old Madam Yu's expression darkened.

It seemed that they were also pirates and water bandits. They often disturbed the borders to begin with. Now, they would do it a little more frequently than in the past. Without conclusive evidence, it couldn't be said that they had colluded with the pirates and water bandits.

The capital of Zhejiang controlled the navy along the southeast coast. Without evidence, the Imperial Court could not do anything to them.

On the other hand, the pirates and water bandits were rampant, so there was no lack of navy battles.

Otherwise, if the pirates and water bandits went ashore to do evil, the Imperial

Court would be the one to suffer.

They were really fearless!

Zhou Linghuai smiled faintly. "Song Xiuwen's case directly affected the entire Zhejiang capital. Even the Left Military Governor's Residence was implicated.

All the officials in Zhejiang are in danger, and the navy is also disorganized. Without a capable general, the navy is like a paper tiger. I don't think they can stop the pirates' ships. It's only a matter of time before the pirates come ashore. At that time, the Imperial Court will face a problem. Should we eliminate the pirates first or reorganize Jiangnan first?"

This was the method that the Zhejiang navy had used to deal with the Imperial Court.

If they eliminated the pirates first, the Imperial Court would not be able to leave the Zhejiang capital. They would not be able to reorganize Zhejiang. The Zhejiang navy would be even more arrogant and disregard the Imperial Court.

If they reorganized Zhejiang first, then it was inevitable that the pirates and water bandits would invade the coastal area. At that time, the pirates and water bandits would plunder the sea officials' ships and merchant ships. The Imperial Court would suffer huge losses. They would go ashore to burn, kill, and plunder, causing the dignity of the Imperial Court to be lost.

No matter what, the Imperial Court would not do well.

What should the Imperial Court choose?

Yu Youyao frowned. "Is the Zhejiang capital so confident that they can control the generals sent by the Imperial Court and the Zhejiang navy isn't strong enough? Is that why they're fearless?"

In that case, why did Cousin scheme for Ye Hanyuan to go to Zhejiang?

Just as Song Mingzhao was about to speak, Zhou Linghuai explained, "Lord Ye isn't proficient in water combat. He won't be able to subdue the Zhejiang navy for a while. After he goes there, he still needs time to learn water combat."

When Yu Youyao heard this, she understood. "However, the Zhejiang capital, the pirates, and the water bandits might not give Lord Ye time and opportunity to learn. As soon as Lord Ye arrives in Zhejiang and hasn't controlled the navy, the pirates and water bandits will start being disruptive. If we lose this battle, Lord Ye's dignity in Zhejiang will be lost, and he won't be able to control the navy to fight. In less than two to three years, he will be transferred. What's worse is that the pirates and water bandits will cause trouble, and the Imperial Court will still question him."

It was no wonder that they were so confident in Zhejiang.

Song Mingzhao nodded. "Such a situation is already common in Zhejiang. If it weren't for Li Qiguang's rebellion and Song Xiuwen's crime reported by Ning Yuanbo, Song Xiuwen would have been transferred back to the coast of Shandong next spring."

Unfortunately, things were unpredictable, and Song Xiuwen still didn't make it back.

Yu Youyao understood. Although Song Xiuwen had arrived in Zhejiang, he had not completely subdued the navy under his name.

Song Xiuwen's crimes were very likely to be a scapegoat for the Zhejiang capital.

Yu Youyao's expression did not look too good. She could not help but look at her cousin. "Then what should Lord Ye do when he arrives in Zhejiang? Song Mingzhao was frowning when Zhou Linghuai said calmly, "We can only nurture our own navy."

Song Mingzhao's expression changed slightly, and he couldn't help but tilt his ear.

Yu Youyao frowned. "But it's not easy to nurture a navy. Without a year and a half, it's impossible for a navy to fight at sea. Even if they're nurtured for a year and a half, they can't compare to the pirates and water bandits who stay at sea all year round."

Zhou Linghuai said with a faint smile, "Not everyone is evil at sea. There are also bandits who specialize in robbing pirates. If they can be incorporated into the army, they can also become a leader at sea. Moreover, many soldiers in the Zhejiang navy are discharged from the army every year because of injuries and illnesses. Why? It's because the money they receive is limited and they don't get extra money other than family expenses. As long as they're recruited again with benefits, they're very willing to return to the navy."

These casual words hit the nail on the head and would break the predicament of the Zhejiang navy.

He had made a trip to Zhejiang and had a secret chat with Song Xiuwen before understanding the current situation of the Zhejiang navy. Zhou Linghuai had already seen the entire situation in the capital.

Song Mingzhao said calmly, "It's not easy to recruit bandits on the water."

Song Xiuwen was also a very capable general. After being transferred to Zhejiang, he had tried to recruit water bandits and new veterans, but he had failed.

He did not deny Ye Hanyuan's ability.

However, in the past, Ye Hanyuan was not proficient in water battles in the North, so it was even more difficult for him to recruit the water bandits..