

## All Hail 551

### Chapter 551: Gritting His Teeth

Last year, Yin Huaixi had started a massacre in the North. Everyone in the world thought that it was because he hated the Di people.

In reality, that was not the case—

Yin Huaixi's actions were to intimidate the Di people so that they wouldn't run to the border city of the North from time to time, making him tired and worried Yu Youyao.

Although there was a substitute in the North, Chang Ningbo was in charge of the battle, the Great General of the Huo Cavalry was with him, and the 1,000 Hidden Dragon Army was also arranged in the You army.

The Hidden Dragon Army was suitable for long-range raids. After studying the weaknesses of the Di people, he had arranged his troops and specialized in countering the Di people's army tactics. It could be said that he could defeat the enemy to win.

However, he did not care about anything else. Only Little Miss Yu was someone he valued the most, and the soldiers under him were in his eyes. He had to go over and take a look to feel at ease.

Uncle Sun pretended to sigh. "It's because his health isn't good. Every time he returns to the North, he knows you're worried about him. He wants to recover quickly."

Yu Youyao's expression darkened. She quickly asked, "Will an early acupuncture treatment cause harm to his body?"

Every time her cousin returned to the North, she tried her best to act as if nothing had happened. She tried her best to pack up for him and prepare all kinds of incense medicine that were beneficial to his health. She hoped that he wouldn't hurt himself from the long journey.

She had thought that she had done a good job.

Little did she know that her cousin had seen through her long ago.

Uncle Sun quickly shook his head. "That won't happen. It's just that the treatment process will be more painful and difficult. Now that he has undergone three sessions, his legs have already regained feeling. His condition is almost stable?"

Yu Youyao heaved a sigh of relief. Her mouth was dry and bitter. "He used to endure acupuncture like today..." Was it painful?

In less than ten minutes after the acupuncture, her cousin was drenched in sweat, and his legs were twitching. She saw her cousin holding the armrest of the couch tightly. The veins on the back of his hand were bulging, and his breathing was chaotic.

Previously, when her cousin's leg disease acted up, he hadn't been in so much pain.

Uncle Sun shook his head. "Previously, he didn't feel much in his legs, so he couldn't feel much pain. However, as the treatment went deeper, the feeling in his legs gradually recovered, and the pain increased day by day."

Yu Youyao's face turned pale. "You mean, Cousin's pain will increase every day in the future?"

Uncle Sun nodded. "For at least five treatment sessions. His leg will recover for the most part before the pain lessens."

Yu Youyao couldn't take it anymore and suddenly said, "Can Cousin's body take it? Can we pause the treatment and wait for Cousin's body to recuperate for a while before continuing?"

Uncle Sun shook his head. "No, there's no turning back. He only has this one chance in his life. If he's not cured in one go, he won't be able to be cured in the future."

He had originally planned to help him treat his legs with acupuncture this winter after a year of recuperation.

However, Zhou Linghuai couldn't wait anymore!

Not long after the new year, he wanted to treat his leg. He couldn't persuade him otherwise. He also couldn't tell Little Miss Yu that he couldn't handle Zhou Linghuai's bad temper, so he could only agree.

If he was a year early, the process would naturally be different.

Yu Youyao was very disappointed. "Is there any way to relieve his pain? Uncle Sun shook his head. "How can there be a way? I've tried long ago. He can only grit his teeth and endure the pain. There are a total of seven treatment sessions. He'll be fine after two more treatment sessions."

Yu Youyao felt terrible and was angry at her cousin.

This person looked very obedient on the surface and usually agreed to everything she asked. However, he always did whatever he wanted and hid everything in his heart. It was always worrisome.

However, she couldn't blame her cousin.

Her cousin had been in a wheelchair for five to six years. He hoped more than anyone else that he would be able to stand up quickly, and she was forced to hope that her cousin would recover soon and not have to endure the pain in his leg.

Yu Youyao took a deep breath and calmed down a little. "Cousin has already undergone three treatments. When will he recover?"

Uncle Sun pondered for a moment. "After the acupuncture today, he should be able to barely stand up. In the future, he'll practice standing every day and hold onto the wall for an incense stick to burn. After four treatments, he'll definitely be fine."

Yu Youyao was finally in a better mood.

Uncle Sun sighed slightly. "If you're really worried, just like today. In the future, come over every day to accompany him. With you by his side, he won't have to hold on forever."

In the previous three sessions, he had spent a total of 21 days. Every time he performed acupuncture, Zhou Linghuai gritted his teeth and endured it. He had never fainted halfway like today.

Zhou Linghuai was extremely guarded. Even if he only had half a breath left, he had to hold on to his consciousness and swallow his last breath.

It was the same even in front of him.

Only in front of Yu Youyao was he willing to let down his guard.

Yu Youyao nodded. "I'll accompany Cousin in the future!"

When the time was up, the trembling golden needles finally stopped moving.

Uncle Sun took out the needle unhurriedly. Zhou Linghuai was still unconscious and had yet to wake up. Unknowingly, his tightly furrowed brows relaxed, and his expression became much calmer.

Yu Youyao finally heaved a sigh of relief. "Is today's treatment over?"

Uncle Sun nodded. "When he wakes up, give him another bowl of

Yang-nourishing Five Soup. This is a blood regulating medicine. It has the effect of nourishing the qi, reviving the blood, and clearing the meridians. It specializes in treating paralysis caused by various reasons. He's a person with weak qi and blood stasis."

The medicine was brewed in the room, and the bitter smell of the medicine filled the entire room.

Thinking about how her cousin had sweated a lot previously, Yu Youyao called Chang An over and asked him to get a basin of hot water to help her cousin wash up and change into dry clothes so that he could sleep more comfortably.

Chang An immediately did as he was told.

Yu Youyao avoided the inner room and waited outside. She watched as Chang An carried the copper basin and quickly went in and out to help her cousin.

She couldn't ignore all the differences between men and women.

There was a difference between the teachings of women and the upbringing of women.

Chang An was quick to help her cousin clean up.

Yu Youyao quickly entered the room. Zhou Linghuai had already woken up and was leaning weakly against the couch.

Her cousin was sweating a lot and was definitely a little dehydrated. She quickly went to the table and poured a cup of warm water. She dripped a drop of spiritual dewdrop into the water and brought it over. "Cousin, are you feeling better?"

Although he had been unconscious for less than half an hour, Zhou Linghuai had fallen asleep deeply just now and was still in a daze.

He tilted his head to look at Yu Youyao. He recalled that before he fainted, he had held Yu Youyao's soft hand and confirmed with her that she would always be by his side.

Zhou Linghuai subconsciously said, "You haven't left?"

Yu Youyao nodded. "After Uncle Sun helped Cousin with the acupuncture, Cousin sweated a lot. I asked Chang An to help you tidy up and hid in the outer room. I waited outside."

Zhou Linghuai smiled..

## Chapter 552: Origin of the spiritual dewdrop

“Cousin, you’re sweating a lot. You have to drink more water.” Yu Youyao held her teacup and moved closer to her cousin. Seeing that he was still very weak, she said, “I’ll feed you.”

Zhou Linghuai seemed to be really tired and couldn’t muster any energy. He leaned against the couch and waited for Yu Youyao to bring the cup to his lips and carefully feed him.

After drinking a cup of water, the faint fragrance of lotus lingered in front of his mouth.

Zhou Linghuai frowned. “If you use too much spiritual dewdrop, will it harm the body?”

The effect of the spiritual dewdrop was not very powerful. If it was used alone, it would only have some effect of strengthening the body and expelling poison. Once the poison in the body was removed, it would make one’s ears and eyes sharp, and one’s body feel light. Many powerful Chinese medicines could also achieve the effect of expelling poison. However, the effect was not as obvious as the spiritual dewdrop.

Yu Youyao also knew this, so she rarely used it alone. Instead, she used the spiritual dewdrop to make medicinal herbs and spices to unleash the effect of the spiritual dewdrop better.

However, he did not believe that there was a benefit in the world that had no drawbacks.

He hadn’t noticed anything unusual before, but recently, Yu Youyao had been using the spiritual dewdrop more than before. He was worried that it would be bad for his health if she ate too much.

At this point, Yu Youyao was also a little puzzled. “I don’t feel uncomfortable anywhere. It’s just that in the past year or two, the spiritual dewdrop usage seems to have increased a little. I can use four to five drops a day, but I don’t feel uncomfortable. I wonder what’s going on?”

Zhou Linghuai already knew the origin of the spiritual dewdrop.

It was originally a mysterious Kunlun Jade that Eldest Madam Xie had brought from her maiden home. It had been carved by Grandmaster Hui Neng of the Precious Peace Temple.

Later on, because of this pendant, it triggered a sisterly conflict.

Old Madam Yu had punished Yu Youyao to kneel in the temple hall. For some reason, Yu Youyao had fainted in the temple hall. She had a high fever and was unconscious for a day and a night, almost losing her life.

When she woke up, Yu Youyao’s Buddha pendant had already reached her forehead. There was a blood jade lotus flower in it. Each flower and leaf would produce two to three drops of spiritual dewdrop every day.

Zhou Linghuai had some guesses that he still needed to confirm. “Is it possible that it has something to do with your increasing age?”

Previously, Yu Youyao was young, so there was a limit to how much she could use?

Yu Youyao shook her head. "That shouldn't be the reason. The increase of the spiritual dewdrop isn't without warning. Actually, it has been imperceptibly increasing in the past year or two. It's just that its origin is more mysterious. When I use it, I can't help but be cautious. Every time I need it, I'll use it in moderation. When I don't need it, I won't use it, so I didn't notice it."

After her cousin found out about the origins of the spiritual dewdrop, he had also reminded her, "You have to be vigilant about things of unknown origins. But don't be too vigilant. From the looks of it, the spiritual dewdrop can only be good. It doesn't do you any harm. If you don't take it from the heavens, you'll be punished. However, you still have to know how to use it."

She agreed deeply.

Yu Youyao continued, "It was also by chance that I discovered later that there was humid water vapor on the lotus petals. It was a little like steam. As the water vapor increased, it would condense into dew. It seemed to have nothing to do with age. Sometimes, there was more, and sometimes, there was less.

There should be a specific reason, but I didn't notice it."

This was how the spiritual dewdrop was produced.

Zhou Linghuai was deep in thought. "The child Buddha sits on a lotus jade pendant. It's a Buddhist treasure that can't be separated from Buddhism. I remember you telling me earlier that when you were young, Grandmaster Hui

Neng of the Precious Peace Temple had once read your fate and said that if you show your virtue, you can reach nirvana. It's very likely that the amount of spiritual dewdrop condensed is related to your virtue. Do good deeds and care for the blood jade lotus flower. More spiritual dewdrop will be created."

Zhou Linghuai had been familiar with the classics of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism since he was young. He had even dabbled in unfathomable witchcraft scriptures. Although he was curious about such a mysterious matter, he was not surprised.

This world was so vast. There were countless things in the world, and there were always secrets that exceeded the imagination of mortals.

However, everything in the world changes.

There were many strange things about Yu Youyao.

Firstly, Grandmaster Hui Neng was the leader of the Six Wise Monks of the Precious Peace Temple. He was already a peerless eminent monk, but he actually made an exception and carved a jade pendant for Yu Youyao.

At that time, Madam Xie had just married into the Yu Residence.

But!

A man would wear a Guanyin pendant and a woman would wear a Buddha pendant. A jade pendant of a child Buddha sitting on a lotus was more suitable for a child. Clearly, Grandmaster Hui Neng had already deduced that Madam

Xie would have a daughter. This jade pendant was carved for Yu Youyao.

Zhou Linghuai's gaze landed on Yu Youyao's wrist again.

The sparkling and colorful blood beeswax prayer beads circled her thin wrist like armbands. Small beads matched her fair wrist. They were incomparably delicate and beautiful.

It was said that this string of blood beeswax prayer beads had been personally sent by Old Madam Yu to the Precious Peace Temple to be blessed by Grandmaster Hui Neng.

Old Madam Yu even asked Grandmaster Hui Neng to take a look at Yu Youyao's

life. The Grandmaster, who had not spoken for a long time, opened his mouth for a little girl. "If you show your virtue, you can reach nirvana!"

What was nirvana?

Buddhism believed that perfection of merit was nirvana.

But!

It was commonly believed that only phoenixes could undergo nirvana.

A peerless monk like Grandmaster Hui Neng was like a rotten cabbage in front of Yu Youyao. He could be invited at any time.

Fortunately, Old Madam Yu was smart and had been hiding it. Otherwise, just based on this honor, Yu Youyao would have long become famous in the world.

She might even have a "natural phoenix fate" and enter the central palace.

Previously, Mr. Xian Yun had also talked about Yu Youyao. "Fate is extremely precious. If you can do good deeds, you will definitely be able to have a good beginning and end!"

Not only that, but Mr. Xian Yun had also vaguely reminded him that this little cousin of his was not ordinary. If he did not protect her carefully, even he would not be able to protect her from her fate.

Many strange things were all done by one person. Many things seemed confusing, but in fact, it was not too complicated. Everything had become very simple.

Yu Youyao's eyes widened. "Cousin, you mean that it's because I've done a lot of good things in the past two years that the spiritual dewdrop has increased?" She had a vague feeling that her cousin's deduction made sense.

Zhou Linghuai had been thinking about the origins of the spiritual dewdrop for more than two years. With this speculation, it was not groundless. "That should be the case. In Buddhism, lotus flowers symbolize holiness, beauty, and charity. The lotus flowers symbolize ten good practices of Bodhisattva..."

Before her cousin could finish speaking, Yu Youyao couldn't wait to ask, "Which ten good practices?"

She couldn't be blamed for being too anxious. The main reason was that this mysterious thing was rooted in her mind. Although it was a good thing, it always made her feel worried.

Her cousin studied Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism at the same time. He was also very proficient in Buddhism.

Moreover, her cousin was knowledgeable. Since he had said this, there must be a reason. Thinking about it carefully, the increase in the spiritual dewdrop seemed to have started two years ago.

What had she done then?

A charitable hall had been built in the capital!

Chapter 553: Stars in Her Eyes

“The first is to be free from all the five impurities of life and death to be pure and flawless.

“Secondly, don’t mix with evil. Eliminate all evil and focus on creating good.”

“Thirdly, incense sticks are to be filled with a wonderful fragrance. You can smell it everywhere. This wonderful fragrance is virtuous.”

“Fourthly, keep your bodies peaceful, and your hearts as clear as a mirror. They should be untainted.”

“Fifthly, be soft and not astringent. Be charitable and benevolent.”

There were many people in the world who did good deeds and virtues, but Yu Youyao was the only one who had good deeds according to the ten practices.

Yu Youyao was fated with Buddha.

Yu Youyao was in a daze, although all of this was just her cousin’s guess.

For some reason, she had a vague feeling that her cousin was right.

Seeing that she was deep in thought, Zhou Linghuai said, “There are all kinds of strange things in the world. We’ll do as we did in the past, now, and in the future. There’s no need to feel confused.’

He knew that the spiritual dewdrop would not be bad to him. In the future, he would use it as carefully as he did now, so he did not have to worry anymore.

After figuring this out, Yu Youyao smiled. “Actually, I’ve always been very glad that I had such a fortuitous encounter. At the very least, it’s because of the spiritual dewdrop that I can help Cousin recuperate.”

No matter how expensive the medicinal herbs were, her cousin’s body was weak and could not be nourished. Only a spiritual item like the spiritual dewdrop could have the effect of nourishing his body.

Although its effect was not especially powerful, in two to three years, her cousin’s body had recuperated a lot and could already withstand the treatment of the internal acupuncture point.

The corners of Zhou Linghuai’s mouth twitched slightly. “It’s all thanks to Cousin’s spiritual dew.”

Yu Youyao suddenly thought of something. “By the way, Cousin, Uncle Sun said that after you wake up, you still have to drink a bowl of nourishing Yang soup.

I’ll ask Uncle Sun if you want to drink it now.”

Zhou Linghuai shook his head. "There's no need to ask him. The medicine is on the stove over there. It's already brewed. I'll just drink it directly. It's always been like this before."

Yu Youyao quickly went to the medicinal stove.

Zhou Linghuai tilted his head to look and frowned. "Let Chang An do it. Be careful not to burn your hands."

"It's not like I haven't done this before, so I won't burn my hands." Yu Youyao took a cloth from the side and wrapped it around the handle of the medicinal jar. She easily picked up the medicinal jar and poured the black medicinal soup into the bowl that she had prepared early on.

In order to prevent the medicine from being too hot and not easy to swallow, she specially raised the medicine jar and slowed down the speed of pouring the medicine. The medicinal soup slowly entered the bowl.

In the past, her grandmother was always sick, and her headache medicine had to be eaten consistently. Sometimes, she would also help her grandmother deliver the medicine.

Zhou Linghuai chuckled.

The black porcelain bowl was burning. When she poured the medicine, the temperature had decreased significantly. It was no longer too hot. With a layer of cloth, it was not hot in her hands.

Yu Youyao brought the medicine bowl over and sat beside her cousin.

Worried that the medicine was still a little hot, she was in no hurry to feed it to her cousin. She first took the spoon and gently stirred the medicinal soup. After a while, she scooped a small spoonful of medicinal soup and lowered her head to blow on it a few times before bringing it to her cousin's lips.

Every move was meticulous.

When the medicine entered his mouth, it was neither cold nor hot. It was the most suitable for drinking. As soon as he swallowed the medicine, Yu Youyao took a plate of Lingxiang Fragrance Cake from the table and handed it to her cousin. "This medicine tastes too strong. It must be very bitter. Cousin, eat a piece of Lingxiang Fragrance Cake to wash away the bitterness before continuing to drink the medicine."

Zhou Linghuai thought to himself, What kind of bitter medicine had he not drunk before?

Why did she have to be so delicate?

Although he thought so, his body was still extremely honest. He obediently opened her mouth and finished a large bowl of black medicinal soup.

It was clearly a medicine that was even more bitter than Chinese goldthread, but after drinking it, there was a hint of sweetness in his mouth.

Seeing that there was a little medicinal soup at the corner of her cousin's mouth, Yu Youyao subconsciously pinched her handkerchief and naturally wiped the corner of her cousin's mouth.



The thin handkerchief was pressed against her cousin's pale lips, and a soft touch came from her fingertips.

Yu Youyao couldn't help but be stunned when she saw her cousin looking at her deeply.

Only then did she realize that her actions were a little inappropriate.

Yu Youyao moved the handkerchief away in a panic and said reluctantly, "Uh, in the past, Grandmother had always been sick. I would sometimes serve her medicine. I'm used to it, so..."

Towards the end, she couldn't continue.

Zhou Linghuai chuckled. "No wonder you're so proficient."

Yu Youyao panicked a little and avoided her cousin's gaze. However, her cousin kept looking at her. Even though she lowered her head and did not meet his gaze, she could feel that his eyes were as focused as before. When he looked at her, his eyes were always deep and vast, like an abyss. However, every time, she could see the dazzling starry sky in her cousin's eyes.

Once, she said to Yu Shuangbai, "Cousin has stars in his eyes."

Yu Shuangbai rolled her eyes at her. "Cousin Zhou's eyes are clearly a bottomless abyss. Just looking at them makes me feel like I'm about to fall into the abyss and shatter into pieces. I don't even dare to look into his eyes."

Later, she understood that the stars in her cousin's eyes belonged only to her.

Yu Youyao felt that something was amiss. She had only helped her cousin wipe the corner of his mouth.

She and her cousin usually fed each other. What was this?

Besides, her cousin had just finished his acupuncture and his body was still very weak. She should be taking care of him meticulously.

Yu Lianyao had successfully convinced herself to calm down. When she looked up again, she was a little calmer. "I've finished my medicine. Cousin, you should eat something."

After a long morning, Zhou Linghuai was indeed hungry.

There was light and appetizing food prepared in the kitchen. Yu Youyao had lunch with her cousin. "Uncle Sun said that after the acupuncture today, Cousin can try to stand first."

As soon as she said this, Yu Youyao regretted it.

She remembered that her cousin's leg had been broken for five to six years and he had only regained consciousness now. It would definitely not be easy for him to stand up. She could not be too anxious.

She quickly explained, "Uncle Sun means that Cousin's legs will recover after seven treatments. However, Cousin has been in a wheelchair for five to six years. The muscles and bones in his legs need to be reforged to become flexible and gradually recover to their original state. Cousin, don't be too anxious. We'll take it slow."

Zhou Linghuai suddenly tightened his grip on the armrest of the wheelchair. Uncle Sun had said this to him before he performed the acupuncture this morning.

However, that wasn't what he had said.

Qi rushing to the internal acupoints could indeed dissolve the blood and circulate the meridians. This only gave him a chance to recover his legs. Whether he could stand up again depended on him to overcome all kinds of physical, mental, and spiritual obstacles.

The pain of standing up again was like being seriously injured and on the verge of death back then. However, he gritted his teeth and endured it.

Seeing that her cousin was silent, Yu Youyao felt a little nervous again. "It's just a try. It doesn't matter if it fails. There's still a long way to go. I'll just accompany Cousin and take it slow."

Zhou Linghuai suddenly asked, "Do you really want me to stand up again?"

Yu Youyao pouted. "Is there a need to ask? From the first time I saw Cousin, I felt that a person like him shouldn't be trapped in a wheelchair for the rest of his life and suffer the strange gazes of the world. Cousin should stand upright.."

Chapter 554: I'm Standing Up

Zhou Linghuai also felt that his question was quite strange.

Yu Youyao looked at her cousin with sparkling eyes, filled with anticipation. "Chang An said that Cousin's riding skills are exquisite, and his archery skills are even more impressive. He can pierce through someone with an arrow a hundred steps away with one hand and take the head of an enemy general down out of a thousand troops. Back then, in the battle at Di Yuguan, Cousin killed three of Harmon's generals alone. Not only that, but you're also good at the Di people's scimitar technique and have created a saber and horse strategy that specializes in subduing the Di people. I hope to see you riding and doing archery one day."

Last year, during the battle in the Northern Barbarians, her cousin's reputation spread throughout the world again.

She imagined that one day, she would be able to see her cousin riding a horse and leading the army. How heroic would that be?

He also wanted to see how heroic the scene in a poem was.

These were all things she had never understood and belonged to her cousin in the past.

She wanted to see them one by one.

He had always done his best to satisfy her requests. Zhou Linghuai smiled. "Okay!"

He gripped the armrest of the wheelchair tightly and slowly exerted strength under his feet. A strange force was felt in his legs. This force was suddenly poured in, causing his leg to hurt violently.

This pain was like a thousand cuts, cutting flesh and scraping bones.

Even someone as tolerant as Zhou Linghuai suddenly lost his composure and was in a daze.

Zhou Linghuai suddenly remembered that back then, on the battlefield in the North, he had been ambushed by the Marquis of Changxing and fell off his horse. At that moment, the pain of his body shattering almost made him lose his mind.

At this moment, he was “reliving” the heart-wrenching pain from back then.

It wasn't until this moment that Zhou Linghuai finally understood!

Why did Uncle Sun say that his leg had yet to recover completely after the blood clots and his meridians were cleared? Whether he could stand up again and recover to normal depended on himself.

It turned out that the first obstacle to recovering his legs was not the pain during the acupuncture process, but the pain and despair that had been deeply remembered by his body, heart, and mind.

They had already been engraved in his mind, branded in his heart, and fused into his blood.

He needed to use greater willpower, endurance, and perseverance to smooth out these thoughts while enduring this soul-deep pain, eradicating the deep-rooted trauma of the past.

It was never his legs that hindered him from standing up again.

Instead, it was him.

To be precise, it was his former self.

He needed to conquer his mind. What he had to defeat was not his legs, but his past self.

The world was used to seeing other people to defeat, conquer, and even fight.

Very few people treated themselves as enemies and were absolutely submissive to their thoughts. This was human nature. How difficult was it to rebel against yourself?

But so what?

What Yin Huaixi wanted to do was something that no one could stop.

It was just his nature.

If he rebelled, so be it!

His body trembled violently, and his face turned pale and green at a visible speed.

Then, at a terrifying speed, it turned red and purple.

Bead-sized sweat rushed out of his forehead and rolled down his face.

He was breathing heavily, and he made a gurgling sound in his throat.

Yu Youyao saw that the veins on her cousin's forehead were bulging. They couldn't help but jump and twitch on his forehead. Her cousin gripped the armrest of the wheelchair tightly, and the veins on the back of his hand rose in crisscross patterns. Muscles spread from the back of his hand to his arm, looking very terrifying.

Yu Youyao looked at her cousin in horror. She was in a daze, as if she was frightened.

She had thought that standing up again would be an easy task. He would just have to practice more. He had never expected this to be a painful torture for her cousin.

Under Yu Youyao's frightened and confused gaze, Zhou Linghuai stood up.

His face was pale. In a short period of time, his lips had already cracked, but he maintained his swaying figure and looked at Yu Youyao. "I'm standing up." With that, his body tilted and he fell back into the wheelchair.

The wheelchair was fixed to the ground, and fortunately, nothing went wrong.

This time, he only stood for a moment.

Just for this moment, he wanted to prove to Yu Youyao that he could do it. He would help her realize the scenes she was looking forward to.

In just a moment, he had used all the strength in his body and all the willpower he had in his life.

However, this was only the beginning.

Yu Youyao cried and threw herself into her cousin's arms. "Cousin, don't try anymore. We won't try it anymore. We'll try again after Cousin receives treatment again, okay..."

She did not know what her cousin had experienced while he was trying to stand up.

In fact, her cousin did not stand up immediately.

She watched with her own eyes as her cousin's hands went from holding the armrests of the wheelchair tightly to supporting them with his arms. Bit by bit, he used his bent elbows to support his entire weight and his legs. From the intense pain to the struggle and gritted his teeth. He used his arms and broken legs to support all his strength.

This process was not short. It took at least half an incense stick of time (five minutes).

It was too scary.

"Don't, don't cry..." As soon as he opened his mouth, there was a fishy taste in his mouth that choked in his throat. Zhou Linghuai coughed hard, and blood foam flowed out of his mouth and nose.

"Cousin, why are you bleeding?" Yu Youyao panicked and used a handkerchief to wipe the blood from her cousin's mouth and nose. "What's going on?" Seeing her cousin paralyzed in the wheelchair, his face was pale and sallow. She quickly shouted in panic, "Chang An, Uncle Sun, come quickly..."

It was all her fault for being too rash. She should have asked Uncle Sun to keep an eye on him.

Zhou Linghuai held her hand and comforted her. "I'm fine. I just gritted my teeth too tightly. The roots of my teeth are bleeding. I'm not injured. Don't worry, I want my leg to recover. I have to walk back and forth this time. I want to let you see the first time I stand up with your own eyes. I..." He looked at Yu Youyao steadily and smiled. "I'm very happy."

Standing up again was more difficult than she had imagined.

However, because she was present, everything was easier than he had imagined. At the very least, it was impossible for him to be a failure in front of the girl he loved.

The first step was always the hardest.

After the first time, it would be easier in the future.

Uncle Sun did not leave his pharmacy and stayed in the study beside him. When he heard Yu Youyao's shout, his heart skipped a beat. He quickly walked into the house. "What's wrong?"

Yu Youyao's face turned pale. When she saw Uncle Sun, it was as if she had seen a life-saving straw.. "Uncle Sun, just now, Cousin suddenly stood up and..."

Chapter 555: Everything Will Be Better

Before she could finish speaking, Uncle Sun had already come over to take his pulse.

Yu Youyao could only shut up and stare at Uncle Sun nervously.

After taking her pulse, Uncle Sun asked, "Did you stand up just now?"

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "Only for a moment."

Uncle Sun gasped. This kid was too rash. He stood up just like that without any preparation?!

At the very least, he had to call him over.

Although he had already been treated for three sessions, today was the fourth session. According to his pulse, the feeling in his legs had already recovered and he could try to stand.

He was talking about trying!

He hadn't wanted this kid to be so insistent and really stood up in an instant.

He had originally planned to let Zhou Linghuai try to stand on the fourth treatment. After seven days, he should be able to stand up. On the fifth treatment, he could hold something and try to walk.

On the sixth treatment, he could walk on his own.

After the seventh treatment, Zhou Linghuai could train his muscles and bones to recover in his legs.

But it was only the first day of the fourth treatment, and he was already standing?

Wasn't it a little too fast?

After all, Uncle Sun was someone who had seen many storms. He suppressed the surprise in his heart and asked, "Is there anything wrong with your body?"

Yu Youyao immediately held her breath.

Zhou Linghuai frowned. "My legs hurt when I was standing. I'm a little exhausted now, but I don't feel any other discomfort."

He really mentioned leg pain casually. Was that just leg pain? Uncle Sun was speechless. "Open your mouth and let's take a look."

Zhou Linghuai originally wanted to ignore him, but when he saw Yu Youyao's pale face and nervous expression, he could only open his mouth.

Uncle Sun leaned closer to take a look, then nodded. "There's nothing wrong with his pulse. He used too much strength, causing his body to be weak and exhausted. Next time, before you practice standing, bite a ball of cotton wool in your mouth to prevent your teeth from bleeding again."

Yu Youyao suddenly heaved a sigh of relief, still feeling worried. "Is Cousin's health really fine? The way he stood just now was too scary..."

Uncle Sun loved and hated this girl who liked to question him. He rolled his eyes. "This will happen sooner or later. After what happened today, it'll be easier next time. Why are you crying? Your cousin has been in a wheelchair for five to six years. Shouldn't you be happy now that he's finally standing up? No matter how bad he is at it, can it be worse than him paralyzed in a wheelchair? As expected, you're still too young. You're inexperienced and panicked when he encountered something."

Yu Youyao felt a little relieved and asked, "Cousin seems to be..."

Uncle Sun glared at him angrily. "He's just exhausted. He'll be fine after resting for a while. Are you the doctor or am I? Since you're worried, why don't you learn medicine yourself and treat your cousin's leg?"

Yu Youyao knew that she was in the wrong and quickly shut up.

If she had met her cousin three years earlier, she would definitely have learned medicine herself and treated his legs.

After confirming repeatedly that Zhou Linghuai was fine, Uncle Sun left angrily.

Yu Youyao called Chang An in again and helped her cousin clean up again. Seeing that her cousin's expression had softened a lot, she finally felt a sense of security.

What followed was indescribable excitement and joy.

She knew that this was only the first step, and she was also worried that she would be too agitated and pressure her cousin, so she suppressed the joy in her heart bit by bit.

Yu Youyao poured a cup of warm water with spiritual dewdrop and handed it to her cousin. "Congratulations on standing up again, Cousin."

Although Yu Youyao tried her best to appear calm, Zhou Linghuai still saw the joy in her sparkling eyes. He smiled. "Thank you!"

After drinking the water mixed with spiritual dewdrop, Zhou Linghuai felt much better.

Chang An brought over pineapples.

The yellow flesh was cut into small pieces. It looked bright and beautiful. Even from afar, Zhou Linghuai could smell it, making him drool.

This was much sourer than cherry oranges. Zhou Linghuai frowned and was about to refuse.

Yu Youyao picked up a piece of fruit and brought it to his lips. "Cousin, this is pineapple. Although it tastes sour and sweet, it's good to try it."

Zhou Linghuai refused in his heart, but his body was still very honest. He opened his mouth and ate the pineapple that made his teeth ache. Sourness rushed to his face, and blood rushed to his face.

Just one piece and he couldn't eat anymore.

After drinking two glasses of water, he suppressed the faint soreness between his teeth.

Yu Youyao giggled and did not force him to continue eating. Instead, she secretly ate a small plate of pineapples one by one.

After that, Yu Youyao said to her cousin. “There are already results from the planting of the sweet potatoes. There’s a drought in spring this year, and the weather isn’t good. I plan to plant all the remaining sweet potatoes in the fields. In May, I’ll try to use the cutting method. The vine leaves and stems of the sweet potatoes can be eaten by humans and animals. Moreover, there are many vines and leaves, so it’s more cost-effective than ordinary crops.”

Zhou Linghuai nodded. “We’ll also plant them on a large scale in the North. We’ll do as you say.”

Yu Youyao tried to plant sweet potatoes mainly to solve the problem of the lack of supplies in the North.

In the first year, the sweet potatoes were planted in the manor in the capital. She arranged for a few old servants from the King’s Residence who were good at farming to bring a portion of the sweet potatoes back to Youzhou to test the seeds.

Every year, there would be merchant ships bringing foreign crop seeds back to the Great Zhou.

Every year, the Imperial Court would distribute new seeds and encourage them to be planted. However, there were very few that were really alive. Even if they were planted, they would not grow well because of the various problems of acclimatization.

At first, Yu Youyao wanted to try planting sweet potatoes. Although Zhou Linghuai was very supportive, he did not take it too seriously.

Until the sweet potatoes grew in the North successfully.

Only then did Zhou Linghuai realize that he prided himself on being knowledgeable but in terms of sensitivity to agriculture and general affairs, he was far inferior to Yu Youyao.

Zhou Linghuai wanted to promote the planting of sweet potatoes in the North, but sweet potatoes were controlled items in Luzon and could not be traded. There were also very few merchant ships that could be brought back in private, so they could not be planted on a large scale.

Yu Youyao could only get the people in the manor to improve the planting of sweet potatoes.

In the end, he discovered that the sweet potatoes that were about to sprout had been cut and planted. Only then did the yield increase greatly, and there were some sweet potatoes left behind that could be planted.

This year’s planting should be quite impressive.

Next year, it would not be a problem to promote it on a large scale.

Yu Youyao chuckled. “Last year, cotton was also planted in the North. As the climate was not suitable, the seedlings were planted a little late, so the cotton did not bloom well. This year, the seedlings were planted early in March, so they should be able to be planted on a large scale. With cotton and sweet potatoes, everything in the North will become better..”

Chapter 556: Hidden Deep Meaning

Cotton was a strategic reserve of the Great Zhou Dynasty and was very scarce under the control of the Imperial Court. Commoner merchants had a quota for selling and buying cotton. It was bitterly cold in the North. People could still think of some ways to get food, but they could not resolve the problem of cold-resistant cotton clothes.

The Di people liked to attack in autumn and winter, and their cotton clothes were also damaged.

Without warm and cold clothes, the soldiers would suffer even more.

The You army was clearly a tiger's army, but because their armor couldn't withstand the troops and their clothes could not withstand the cold, they became tigers with those claws pulled out.

After testing whether it was feasible to plant cotton in alkaline lands, Yu Youyao became serious. She found someone proficient in agriculture and specially went to Long Province to learn how to plant cotton.

With the hard planting, the cotton was planted with much anticipation.

The successful planting of the sweet potatoes and cotton gave Yu Youyao a lot of inspiration.

Yu Youyao placed more importance on agriculture and did not care much about the butler's matters in the residence. She invested more energy, material, human, and financial resources into experimental planting.

In the escort business under her name, she had arranged for stewards who were proficient in agriculture. The stewards followed the escort around. When they arrived at a certain place, they would ask about the soil, climate, crop situation, and planting techniques of a certain place. They would record them one by one. They would also buy some local crop seeds and test them on the farmstead.

Yu Youyao felt that she had only done the same thing under the influence of Heavenly Works.

However, she did not know that the agriculture books that she would write would become more influential in the future.

Zhou Linghuai had already foreseen this day.

He was looking forward to the earth-shattering changes that cotton and sweet potatoes would bring to the North. "Everything is getting better." After getting to know Yu Youyao, everything was getting better.

His leg was already beginning to heal.

In the past two years, the North had not lacked military supplies, but Yu

Youyao had kept her promise to him. Every year, she would use some channels of the Xie family to prepare 300,000 silver for the North.

This portion of the army was basically filled with medicinal herbs and cotton clothes.

The North was also getting better.

"Astragalus, angelica, licorice, and other medicinal herbs that are resistant to cold and drought can also be planted in the North." Yu Youyao added some commonly used medicinal herbs that were resistant to drought and spine.



As she spoke, she did not hear her cousin reply for a long time.

She tilted her head to look at her cousin. At some point, he had already fallen asleep against the couch. His sleeping expression was rarely calm, and his long eyebrows, which were dyed black, had relaxed to his temples.

In the afternoon, as soon as Yu Zongzheng returned to the residence, he asked Nanny Liu to invite him to An Shou Hall.

It was unknown what Old Madam Yu had said to Yu Zongzheng, but when Yu Zongzheng left An Shou Hall, he was a little dejected and did not mention this again.

Yu Zongzheng continued to be a “kind father” in front of Yu Youyao, as if the matter of “adoption” had never happened.

All of this was within Yu Youyao’s expectations. “Although Yu Zongzheng is very straightforward, you can’t be too straightforward with people like him.

You have to know how to beat around the bush.”

Nanny Xu smiled ambiguously. “So, Matriarch mentioned that she wanted to adopt Yu Shanming under your mother’s name. You rejected her bluntly. Then, she suggested that Yu Shanming be adopted under Madam Yang.” Anyone who heard this would just listen.

However, when Nanny Xu heard this, she knew that there was a deeper meaning behind this.

Yu Youyao smiled. “I was taught something before. Never to try to fight head-on with someone who can control your lifeline. That way, there won’t be a good outcome. There are thousands of paths in this world. I can still achieve my goal by choosing a roundabout path.”

Nanny Xu had taught her this.

She had always kept it in mind.

Nanny Xu looked impressed. “When rejecting someone, you have to pay attention to the strategy. You can’t embarrass them, so you can’t deny them completely.”

Yu Youyao smiled but said nothing.

Nanny Xu continued, “You rejected Yu Zongzheng’s suggestion to adopt Yu Shanming under your mother’s name. As a father, Yu Zongzheng will definitely be angry. However, you also suggested that Yu Shanming be adopted under Madam Yang’s name. This means that you actually agree very much with the adoption. The reason why you don’t agree is because it’s not appropriate to put Yu Shanming under Eldest Madam Xie’s name. It’ll be more logical to put him under Madam Yang’s name.”

This way, Yu Zongzheng would no longer hold it against her. If Yu Youyao disobeyed him, he would instead think that Yu Youyao had thought it through and done everything for him and the Yu Residence.

The highest realm of the art of speech was often to inadvertently grasp the right to speak and let others think according to your words.

Yu Youyao said calmly, “The Yu Residence relied on the Xie Residence’s connections and channels to open up the situation in the court. The Yu Clan enjoyed the benefits of my mother. This is also

true. My mother doesn't have any children under her name, and the aristocratic families value the bloodline of the clan. Yu Shanming's adoption under my mother's name can be because of Yu Zongzheng's guilt towards my mother, or because of Grandmother's compensation to my mother. It can also be because the clan has accepted my mother's kindness."

From the Yu Residence's standpoint, this was actually a good thing.

As a married woman, it was also glorious for her to be worshiped by the clan for generations.

From a daughter's standpoint, it was extremely good for her reputation for her mother to enjoy such an honor.

As the adopted heir, Yu Shanming also became a bridge between the Yu and Xie families. It was also in line with the interests of the Yu Clan and the Yu

Residence.

But!

All of this was based on the fact that her mother had not been killed.

From the day she found out that Yu Zongzheng had caused her mother's death, her father-daughter relationship with him had already dissipated. There was no kindness between her and Yu Zongzheng. There was probably only benevolence.

What she was doing for the Yu Residence now was repaying Yu Zongzheng's kindness and her grandmother's kindness.

However, this bit of kindness would not become a framework to restrain her.

When she got married or left in the future.

This was the end of her kindness.

In the future, she was destined to drift away from the Yu Residence. How could she tie the Xie Residence to the Yu Residence?

It didn't matter if her mother enjoyed generations of offerings. As her daughter, she would always remember her mother.

The Xie family would also remember her mother.

She believed that her mother in the netherworld was no longer willing to be involved with the Yu Residence.

Yu Youyao smiled faintly. "Yu Zongzheng wants his son to be adopted because he has taken a fancy to the Xie family's connections, channels, and wealth. Since he can't be adopted, it's even more impossible for him to be adopted under Madam Yang's name."

Yu Zongzheng had a legitimate son. At this stage, Yu Shanming did not meet his expectations or conditions.

This was even if Yu Zongzheng wanted to carry on his legacy.

Her grandmother was such a shrewd person. How could she not have thought of this? Naturally, she would not allow it..

## Chapter 557: Once and For All

Yu Youyao continued, “Wouldn’t the family be in chaos after this? Concubine Qiu’s son can even be adopted under the first wife’s name and become an heir, enjoying the title of the legitimate son. Does Concubine Jiang still want to give birth in the future? She’s a legitimate concubine. If she gives birth to a son, will she also be adopted?”

She and the Xie family needed to agree to take over under her mother’s name. It concerned the interests of the entire Yu Clan, and it was something the entire Yu Clan was happy to see.

Even though Concubine Jiang was indignant, she could only swallow her anger and not dare to have any objections to this matter.

However, Madam Yang was only a second wife, so it was only up to Matriarch Yu Zongzheng to decide.

Concubine Jiang wouldn’t let it go so easily.

This was a chaotic situation. How could such a shrewd person like her grandmother do this?

Nanny Xu said casually, “Madam Yang has been sick for more than two years, and her condition has been recurring, but she hasn’t recovered. Now, even doctors don’t enter the residence often, and she’s also living a hard life. If Madam Yang passes away, what kind of person do you think Yu Zongzheng is more suited to marry into the residence as a second wife?”

Yu Youyao’s scalp tingled. “In the past few years, the court hasn’t been peaceful either. Even when he gets married, it has to be a stable relationship. Yu Zongzheng has already been married three times, so it will more or less affect his reputation.”

Although it was common for people in the court to marry three or even four times, it was undeniable that this matter was not good for a man’s reputation.

“Yu Zongzheng has two sons and three daughters. He has the eldest daughter of the first wife and the first son of the first wife. It’s fine if he has the first wife suppressing him, but there’s still a second and third wife. What’s this? A family with a similar family background won’t be very willing to marry their well-mannered daughter to his second wife’s son.”

“On the other hand, because of Madam Yang’s example, Yu Zongzheng is probably not very willing to marry another concubine’s daughter as his second wife. He would rather marry a legitimate daughter than a concubine’s daughter.”

Nanny Xu nodded. “That’s it.”

Yu Youyao’s expression became complicated. “Concubine Jiang’s family has farmers and scholars for generations. Official Jiang was born as a scholar and has a sixth-grade official position. It’s fairly important. Concubine Jiang is also the eldest daughter of the first wife in the family. After entering the residence, she has indeed been raised by the first wife. Grandmother has long planned to support Concubine Jiang as soon as Madam Yang leaves. Even if it’s out of consideration for

Concubine Jiang's face, it's unlikely that Grandmother will accept Yu Shanming being adopted by Madam Yang."

It was not uncommon for concubines to be promoted.

With Concubine Jiang's background, even if she was promoted, no one would say anything. It was probably not only the residence, but the entire capital knew about this very well.

No wonder Auntie Jiang was willing to marry her raised daughter into the Yu Residence as a concubine.

Previously, she had not thought about this because she had ignored Madam Yang's life and death. Now that Nanny Xu had exposed it, everything became clear.

Nanny Xu sighed slightly. "Madam Yang has been sick all this time, so we can't let her drag the family down. Your grandmother is old and there are many things that can't be planned now. We can't let you get involved. Concubine Jiang's matter can be considered settled once and for all."

With Old Madam Yu's personality, if it weren't for the fact that she really had no choice, she probably wouldn't have become a concubine. Although it was common knowledge, it was not justifiable in terms of etiquette.

It was very difficult for Yu Youyao to say that something was wrong.

The Yu Residence was also a huge family business. Just the hundred people in the residence alone could not be left unattended.

The family's businesses also needed someone to take care of them. There were still elders in the family who urgently needed filial piety and care. They could not lack people in charge for a day.

It was the same for every family.

There were even many families whose first wife was sick and had yet to die. They had already secretly searched for her replacement. Some families even had to personally choose a good replacement when their first wife was sick. When they died, they would welcome the newcomer into the residence.

Her husband had already done his best to mourn for his first wife for half a year and he was even praised.

No one would feel that something was amiss if he did mourn for his first wife for a day.

Back then, Yu Zongzheng welcomed Madam Yang into the residence. Within a hundred days, although there were some rumors in the capital about "romantic affairs", no one felt that it was wrong.

At that time, her grandmother was sick and there was still a newborn baby at home waiting to be fed. The first wife had lost control of such a huge family business. Who was going to handle this matter?

However, Yu Youyao couldn't agree with this. "I won't get involved in family matters in the future.

Actually, after Concubine Jiang entered the residence, she had no longer interfered in the big and small matters of the residence.

If Concubine Jiang could handle it herself, she would handle it herself. There were also fewer and fewer things that Nanny Liu needed to handle.

She put more effort into the Graceful Heart Hall and the planting test.

After two years of management, the Graceful Heart Hall had already become more and more perfect. With her cousin's help, Yu Youyao smoothly ran the Graceful Heart Hall in the North.

She chose a woman who was proficient in needlework embroidery to teach the women and children in the Graceful Heart Hall how to weave, embroider, tailor, print, incense, and so on.

On the one hand, she hoped that they would have a skill in the future and their lives would be better.

On the other hand, the Graceful Heart Hall would buy what they made based on the quality of the finished products. Then, they would sell it through the shops under Yu Youyao's name. This was a win-win situation.

Every year, she would prepare a batch of cotton clothes for the North, and they were all made through their hands.

Unknowingly, March had arrived.

There was always a way out. After three months of drought, it finally rained heavily.

It had only rained for an hour, but it had also poured through the ground.

The commoners began to plant the spring seeds anxiously, afraid that they would miss the season, but also afraid that they would miss this spring rain.

Nanny Yue also seized the opportunity to quickly plant the sweet potatoes into the ground. With this timely rain, the sweet potatoes this year would almost be guaranteed.

After her cousin finished the fourth treatment, he could already support himself against the wall and walk a few steps. The recovery of his legs was far faster than Uncle Sun had expected.

However, Yu Youyao was not too happy.

She watched as the acupuncture process became more and more painful day by day. She watched as her cousin collapsed after practicing standing. Other than feeling heartache, she did not have any other thoughts.

The next morning, after Yu Youyao accompanied her cousin to perform acupuncture, she returned to the Jade Courtyard and went to the kitchen to make Eight Treasures Cake, Frankincense cream cake, and Guilinggao that she had copied from the Guilinggao recipe.

The Guilinggao had the effect of strengthening the body and nourishing the brain. It could also strengthen the kidneys and nourish the Qi. It tasted salty and fragrant, and her cousin liked it very much. The pastries that her cousin often ate were also made.

Although her cousin did not have a strong appetite, he did not get tired of eating the Eight Treasures Cake and the Frankincense cream cake for two to three years.

However, Yu Youyao was still very active in testing the making of other health-nourishing pastries, hoping to let her cousin try something new often.

After finishing the pastries, Yu Youyao returned to the house and changed her clothes again.

Xia Tao entered the house. “Young Miss, the results were released this morning..”

## Chapter 558: A Request

Yu Youyao’s hand that was holding her tea paused.

Xia Tao’s tone was excited. “There’s one in our clan who obtained 179th place. Heir Song of the Zhenguo Marquis Residence also took the first place and obtained the title Huiyuan. Heir Song took first place in the academy, township, and general examinations. I heard that there are only a handful of people like him in every dynasty.”

This year’s imperial examination was a little later than usual. It was only in late March that the examination officially began.

It was also a few days late for the rankings to be released. It had been delayed to March.

In the Yu Clan’s generation, other than Yu Shande and Yu Shanyan, the others who participated in the Spring Quarter Examination were not ranked too high.

Yu Shanyan was still young. He still had to wait three years for the next imperial examination to take place.

Yu Youyao was not surprised that one of the talents made it even though there weren’t many outstanding ones this year.

The results of the examination would be used as a reference for the second examination and the palace examination. The final ranking was 179th. This ranking was only medium but it was alright.

As for Song Mingzhao passing the imperial examination, this was expected. Yu Youyao did not care too much.

At the mention of Song Mingzhao, Xia Tao had endless things to say. “Next, it’s the second examination in front of the hall. Everyone is guessing that perhaps Heir Song will excel in all five exams. I’m afraid the title of the top scholar this time will belong to him. It’s already spreading like wildfire in the capital. Everyone is talking about how talented and promising Heir Song is...

Heir Song was already 18 years old and had long reached the age of marriage. He was originally a handsome and extraordinary talent. Now that he had shocked the world with a single brilliant feat in the imperial examination, he had even become the dream lover of the daughters of the various families in the capital. There were many families in the capital who were eyeing Heir Song.

Seeing Xia Tao’s excited expression, Yu Youyao frowned. “Go and see if the pastries in the kitchen are steamed. When they’re steamed, put out a plate of each and send them to Grandmother’s house. The rest will be sent to Cousin’s house.”

Her grandmother was old, so it was appropriate for her to nourish her.

One or two pieces a day was enough. There was no point in eating too much.

Xia Tao vaguely felt that Young Miss did not seem to like it very much. She felt strange at the mention of Heir Song.

The Song and Yu families were family friends. Since Young Master Song had done well in the imperial examination, Young Miss had to say a word or two. Why didn’t she even mention it?

However, as a servant, she naturally wouldn't ask.

There was only one disciple in the clan who had been awarded a tribute. It was a rare opportunity, and the entire residence was filled with joy.

The family banquet had been prepared since morning.

At night, the men at home left the government office. There were three tables for the two families of the Yu Residence, Yu Shande and the others, as well as the juniors who were participating in the imperial examination this time.

In the past two years, the Yu Residence had been keeping a low profile.

Even if someone in the clan passed the examination, they only had a closed door celebration. The family was lively and celebrated. The next day, at dawn, the residence returned to calm. They did what they had to do.

After being lively in the capital for a few days, it returned to calm.

The next day, after Yu Youyao accompanied her cousin for the acupuncture, she returned to the Jade Courtyard.

Chun Xiao came over to report, "Heir Song is here. Matriarch wants you to go over."

Yu Youyao nodded calmly and returned to her room to change her clothes. Then, she brought Chun Xiao to An Shou Hall.

Song Mingzhao was probably really indebted to the Yu Residence for "saving his life". He treated Old Madam Yu as half a grandmother to show filial piety. In the past two years, he had often come to the Yu Residence.

In addition, the court had not been peaceful in the past two years, and the relationship between family friends had become closer.

The relationship between the Song and Yu families was also better than before.

Yu Youyao watched from the sidelines and was no longer surprised.

However, Song Mingzhao was a guest, so someone in the family needed to greet him. Her grandmother was an elder, and Concubine Jiang had yet to be promoted. It was fine for her to represent the family outside and receive guests.

Her cousin was also a man and she accompanied him a lot. However, she still had to step in to take care of others.

On the surface, she was still in charge of this house. Since there were guests in the house, it was only right for her to step in.

Although she was old, she had also reached the age where men and women had to be wary of each other.

However, the Great Zhou Dynasty did not have the custom of hiding from outsiders and not showing their faces. It was also etiquette for men and women to be wary in front of their elders.

Even if they met outside, as long as they followed a nanny and did not interact privately, it was common for them to greet each other.

This was also why Yu Youyao was annoyed.

When they arrived at An Shou Hall, Zhou Linghuai had already arrived.

Yu Youyao looked at her cousin first before going forward to greet Song Mingzhao.

At this point, Song Mingzhao's gaze darkened. Eldest Miss Yu was wearing a set of sky-green enamel. Her delicate figure was light at her waist, looking very much like a sky-green ruyao beauty bottle that he had accidentally obtained a few days ago.

It was extraordinarily beautiful.

Ruyao craftsmanship had already been lost. This beauty vase was rare and unique.

Song Mingzhao saw a yellow-green madder pattern rising from her flexible and slender waist. There was a yellow crab claw flower in front of her chest.

She was bright, pure, charming, and noble.

In a month or so, Eldest Miss Yu would turn 13.

Song Mingzhao lowered his eyes and gently rubbed the longevity knot on his wrist. "In this examination, the Imperial Court only mentioned 'Jiangnan'. It's obvious that the emperor's tolerance for Jiangnan is almost over."

As Old Madam Yu twirled her prayer beads, she sighed slightly. "This scene is so similar to three years ago?!"

Three years ago, the emperor, who had not been involved in the royal court for a long time, had for the first time mentioned the word "ruling the vassal state" on the palace examination question. This caused the descendants of the aristocratic families to immediately shrink back and not even be able to show their true standards. This was the prelude to King You's case.

This shocking case implicated the entire court. It even involved Li Qiguang's rebellion and Song Xiuwen's case.

Now, "Jiangnan" was just the beginning. Next, there was Zhejiang.

There was also the extermination of pirates.

As they went deeper, this storm would be a terrifying smoke that would spread throughout the entire royal court. These peaceful days would probably not last long.

Old Madam Yu looked at Zhou Linghuai. "If Zhejiang threatens the Imperial Court with the navy again..."

Zhou Linghuai said calmly, "After asking a tiger for its skin, they ultimately suffered a backlash. The capital of Zhejiang is no longer in control of the situation in Zhejiang. The chaos in Zhejiang is set to happen." Old Madam Yu lowered her eyes and twirled her prayer beads.

The atmosphere in the room was a little heavy.

Song Mingzhao put down his teacup. "I specially came over today to ask for a favor.

Hearing this, even Yu Youyao, who was holding a teacup and looking down, couldn't help but look up at Song Mingzhao. She was really curious.. What exactly had made Song Mingzhao come to the Yu Residence and ask for a favor?



## Chapter 559: A Pavilion Close to Water

Old Madam Yu asked curiously, “Tell me what it is.”

She did not agree immediately, nor did she say no.

Song Mingzhao did not want to leave someone hanging anymore and went straight to the point. “Next, there’s a second examination in front of the hall.

The palace examination only tests strategy questions and not scripture theory. I’m not proficient in strategy questions, so I want to borrow the Yu Residence’s precious land. In the next period of time, I hope to go to the Yu Residence and learn from Mr. Hu Shan.’

Although the strategy question was also an essay, there were many particularities in the writing and calligraphy. There were also many tricks involved. Mr. Xian Yun was a carefree person to begin with. In terms of knowledge, few people in the world could compare to him. However, in terms of the imperial examination questions, he might not be good, and Mr. Xian Yun had never taught him the strategy questions.

Of course, just because Mr. Xian Yun did not teach him did not mean that Song Mingzhao did not know how to do it.

On the contrary, he often studied the strategies of many famous ministers in the past dynasties. He was also familiar with the strategies and did not need to deliberately learn them.

Yu Youyao was a little surprised. She really did not expect Song Mingzhao to make such a request.

A few days ago, Xia Tao had mentioned that Song Mingzhao had shocked everyone in the examination. There were many rumors in the capital. Some people even said that if Song Mingzhao would definitely be the top scholar.

Could it be that Song Mingzhao was affected by his public reputation and did not have the confidence to score in the next two imperial examinations?

Yu Youyao felt that it was very likely.

It wasn’t that she had underestimated Song Mingzhao, but there were many variables in the imperial examination. Just because one was talented didn’t mean that everything would be fine. One’s heart was unpredictable. Who could guarantee what the emperor would come up with in the palace examination?

Three years ago, the words “ruling the vassal state” had stumped countless students who had been carefully nurtured by the aristocratic families and shocked the world in the imperial examination.

Song Mingzhao was Mr. Xian Yun’s disciple and had a shocking reputation.

Now, the more famous he was, the greater the pressure was on Song Mingzhao. Almost everyone in the world was paying attention to Song Mingzhao’s examination results.

If he failed the examination or did not meet the expectations of others, it would be a huge blow to his reputation and the reputation of the Zhenguo Marquis Residence.

In the future, even Song Mingzhao would be affected when he entered the royal court.

Naturally, if he was proficient in some questions, his confidence would be greater.

Mr. Hu Shan was very proficient in strategy questions. His reputation was not inferior to Mr. Xian Yun's. Listening to him was better than studying for ten years. It was only right for Song Mingzhao to want to ask Mr. Hu Shan for guidance on strategy questions.

As for what Song Mingzhao thought of her, Yu Youyao had never thought about it, nor would she.

As a man, Zhou Linghuai knew very well that it was impossible for him to tell Yu Youyao.

With that nightmare, Yu Youyao would definitely not be so narcissistic as to think that Song Mingzhao would have any thoughts about her. Although she did not hate Song Mingzhao, she still kept a respectful distance.

Even Yu Youyao thought so. Old Madam Yu's thoughts were not far from hers.

Zhou Linghuai, who had his head lowered as he drank his tea, immediately had a cold gaze. "The last test of the examination is a theory of strategy. Since Heir Song can stand out from tens of millions of students and become famous throughout the world, I think his strategy and essays are incomparably exquisite. If you say that you're not proficient, you're really too humble."

The talented Song Mingzhao still needed to go to the Yu Residence to learn essays before the examination?!

Saying that he wasn't proficient in strategy questions was simply nonsense.

It was obvious that he had an ulterior motive.

Although his tone seemed casual, Song Mingzhao could also hear a hint of mockery. He said calmly, "There's no end to learning. Mr. Hu Shan has been virtuous for a long time. If I can learn from him, this will also be a rare opportunity."

Mr. Hu Shan was a contemporary Confucian who was as famous as Mr. Xian Yun. He had even participated in the compilation of the Book of Law. It was only right for him to take the opportunity to learn from Mr. Hu Shan.

No one could find fault with this.

The Song and Yu families were family friends and were close. The interests of the two families were closely related. There was no reason for the Yu Residence to refuse his request.

A faint sneer appeared on Zhou Linghuai's lips. "I see."

Great—

Song Mingzhao, right—

He wanted to enter and leave the Yu Residence openly and take the opportunity to get close to Yu Youyao so that he could enjoy the benefits of a favorable position?

Had he asked him for permission?

If it weren't for the fact that the Song and Yu families were family friends and their interests were closely related, he would have killed Song Mingzhao countless times over the past two years.

Now, his plan was really working!

Song Mingzhao's expression remained the same. "I often hear Mr. Xian Yun mention that Young Master Zhou is a rare genius in the world. His knowledge is not inferior to his. The Eldest Young Master of your residence admires Young Master Zhou, his cousin, even more. I yearn to learn from him. Young Master Zhou, please enlighten me."

His words were very humble, indicating the reason why he wanted to study in the Yu Residence. Firstly, the Yu Residence had a good teacher, and secondly, the Yu Residence was a friend that could benefit. This was something that all the scholars in the world dreamed of.

Just this sentence blocked Zhou Linghuai's subsequent words. Not only did he have no reason to object, but he also had no excuse to be dissatisfied.

Zhou Linghuai's thin lips curled up slightly. "My mere crippled body doesn't deserve Heir Song's praise. I can't teach you much, but it's fine for us to spar with each other."

Heh, he wanted to ask him for guidance?

That would only happen if Song Mingzhao came to the Yu Residence.

Song Mingzhao cupped his hands. "Young Master Zhou, you're too modest."

In the past two years, he had often entered and left the Yu Residence, partly because he wanted to find out the truth about Zhou Linghuai. After interacting with him for two years, he knew very little about him. He really echoed his father's words. "Those who are good scholars in ancient times are subtle and mysterious, deep and unrecognizable. We can decipher them so we are forced to tolerate them."

He knew that this person was deep and unfathomable. He could not guess his words and actions so he could only forcefully figure it out.

His deepest impression of Zhou Linghuai was that this person had a deep relationship with Yu Youyao and they were very close. Although there were outsiders present and they were very polite to each other, the way they occasionally looked at each other revealed a tacit understanding that no one else could interfere. Therefore, he was very wary of Zhou Linghuai.

He knew very well that Zhou Linghuai's crippled body was not a threat to him. Even if his body was fine, just based on the fact that he was Old Madam Yu's grandnephew and was considered close to the Yu Residence's bloodline, it was not appropriate for him to get married.

Even so, every time he saw Yu Youyao look at Zhou Linghuai with affection and joy, Song Mingzhao felt very uncomfortable.

For some reason, every time he faced Zhou Linghuai, he felt like he was an old enemy.

It was as if the two of them were natural enemies.

Old Madam Yu admired Song Mingzhao very much and they were close. However, she treated Zhou Linghuai as family. When she heard Song Mingzhao praise him, her smile deepened..

Chapter 560: I Despise it!!

“This is good. The two of you are of the same age, so it’s also a good thing for you to spar and learn from each other. As for Mr. Hu Shan, I’ll get someone to send a message later. Mr. Hu Shan cherishes talent, and Mingzhao is Mr. Xian Yun’s disciple. I don’t think he’ll refuse such a good seedling.”

Even on account of Mr. Xian Yun, Mr. Hu Shan would gladly agree.

Song Mingzhao had achieved his goal and quickly thanked her. “Thank you for fulfilling my wish, Grandmother Yu.”

Old Madam Yu smiled. “As the saying goes, one can’t take advantage of others. In the past two years, you’ve been filial to me a lot. How can I not agree to such a small matter?”

With this joke, the atmosphere in the room relaxed again.

At noon, Song Mingzhao naturally stayed in the Yu Residence for lunch.

Kong Qing was serving food at the side. He paid attention to which dish the Heir ate more often.

Unknowingly, the Heir ate a lot.

‘Two years ago, after the Heir fell sick for no reason, his health was not as good as before. The family thought that the root of his illness was not cured and used the best medicinal herbs and supplements to help him recuperate carefully for two years. He was fine afterwards.

However, he was serving in front of him, so how could he not know? The Heir’s illness was very strange. He usually acted as if he was fine, but from time to time, his heart would ache for no reason.

The Heir did not let him tell his family either. He privately looked for Master Hui Tong, who was proficient in medicine at the Precious Peace Temple.

Master Hui Tong took the Heir’s pulse and said, “You still need a heart medicine for your heart disease.”

There was nothing else.

As for why the Heir had a heart disease and what his heart disease was, even he, who had been serving him since he was young, was at a loss.

Due to this heart problem, the Heir’s appetite had decreased.

However, it was unknown if it was because the food in the Yu Residence was more to the Heir’s liking, but every time the Heir came to the Yu Residence, his appetite became very good.

In private, he had also arranged for the small kitchen to make similar food to the Yu Residence.

However, after leaving the Yu Residence, the Heir’s appetite returned to normal.

The Heir’s appetite increased in the Yu Residence. It was likely due to the chefs of the Yu Residence, and even the people of the Yu Residence.

With this thought in mind, Kong Qing couldn't help but secretly look at Eldest Miss Yu, who was sitting opposite him. She looked delicate and beautiful, and her figure was slender.

She was only twelve or thirteen years old and was still a flower bud. Before she grew up, she had already caught up and snatched the title of the "Beauty of the Capital" from Fifth Miss Lu of Ning Yuanbo's family.

No one knew what would happen if she was a few years older.

After lunch, Song Mingzhao couldn't stay any longer.

With her cousin around, it wasn't Yu Youyao's place to send him off.

Yu Youyao chatted with her grandmother for a while before returning to the Jade Courtyard.

Zhou Linghuai said nothing along the way and sent Song Mingzhao out.

Seeing that the door was in sight, Song Mingzhao suddenly stopped in his tracks. "I heard that Young Master Zhou had a deficiency from birth, causing his body to be so weak that he couldn't support himself. He accidentally fell and injured his spine, so he had to sit in a wheelchair?!"

Zhou Linghuai's expression was indifferent. "May I know what you're thinking of, Heir Song?"

Song Mingzhao explained, "Young Master Zhou, don't misunderstand. I naturally don't dare to accept your teachings. It's just that I know a divine doctor who knows a little about how to treat paralysis. He has once treated similar patients. If Young Master Zhou doesn't mind..."

Before he could finish speaking, Zhou Linghuai's lips curled up slightly. "I despise it!"

The unfinished words were stuck in his throat. Song Mingzhao looked at Zhou

Linghuai deeply. "When I heard Grandmother Yu mention Young Master Zhou, I couldn't help but worry about your health. Mr. Xian Yun also felt that it was a pity and praised Young Master Zhou, so I couldn't help but take it to heart. I was rude. Please forgive me."

It was indeed a little rude to mention this rashly, but it was understandable that he had good intentions.

The Song and Yu families were family friends. Out of concern, it was not too rude for him to ask.

However!

Just now, he had quietly noticed Zhou Linghuai's expression. Even when it came to his body, Zhou Linghuai had never even had any emotional fluctuations.

He was a little confused—

Did Zhou Linghuai not care about his health at all?

Or did she simply not want to accept his kindness?

Or could it be that this person hid his thoughts too deeply and was unfathomable?

Zhou Linghuai's lips curled up slightly. "Heir Song, you don't have to worry about such a small matter. The ancestors of the Xie family in Quanzhou passed down ways to treat paralysis. Although the inherited formulation is missing, there are still some remaining medicine methods. Previously,

Cousin had already asked the Xie family for medicine to nourish my body. Now, my body is much better.”

The Lingxi Bug Liquid was indeed a medicine that could strengthen the body and extend one’s lifespan.

He was clearly using a calm tone. Perhaps it was an illusion, but Song

Mingzhao could actually hear the mockery from the bottom of his heart.

Anyone who knew the Xie Residence in Quanzhou knew that the Xie Residence in Quanzhou was one of the pre-Qin Jiumin. They had been in Quanzhou for generations. In terms of foundation, not many in the entire Great Zhou could compare to them. This was also the reason why many aristocratic families did not look down on the Xie Residence even though they were clearly merchants.

A wealthy family’s background was important, and aristocratic families were more particular about foundation.

The foundation of the Xie Residence was already enough to obtain the respect of the Imperial Court and even many great clans. However, respect and friendship were one thing. Marriage still depended on the contractual matching families.

The Jiumin was good at Gu medicine. In terms of Gu medicine, the Jiumin was an ancestor.

It was simply to teach one’s grandmother how to suck eggs to mention the Gu medicine in front of the Xie family, whose ancestors had passed it down through generations. It was a joke.

However, this was not what Song Mingzhao really cared about.

Instead!

Song Mingzhao lowered his eyes and rubbed the broken jade piece on the longevity knot around his wrist. “The relationship between Young Master Zhou and Cousin is really enviable.”

He had asked around before.

Zhou Linghuai would specially take time out every day to teach Yu Youyao her studies, practice calligraphy, the zither, and even chess. Even when Eldest Miss Yu reached the age where men and women were on guard, she did not fall behind in her daily studies.

The two of them often stayed together.

Yu Youyao’s excellent handwriting had been refined by Zhou Linghuai’s personal calligraphy.

He had privately obtained Zhou Linghuai’s brush and ink through the Teng library. Compared to Yu Youyao’s brush and ink, their handwriting was 60% to 70% similar.

Yu Youyao was also very concerned about her cousin. There were all kinds of medicinal cuisine brewed in the small kitchen of the Jade Courtyard all year round. It was all prepared for Zhou Linghuai to nourish his body.

Not only that, but in her spare time, Yu Youyao would also personally cook and prepare delicious snacks and meals for her cousin.

Almost all the fragrances and teas that Zhou Linghuai had every day were made by Yu Youyao.

When he first found out about this, he was vaguely very envious of Zhou Linghuai.

Yu Youyao was a very rare and intelligent woman in the world. She was kind, good, and virtuous. Her heart was exquisite and clear. She had the world in her eyes, but her heart was untainted.

How lucky was he to be treated sincerely by such a woman?