

All Hail 571

Chapter 571: If you seek it, you will get it

She saw her cousin walking over step by step with his cane. After walking for about a while, the person who had been very relaxed just now was a little on the verge of collapse. Even his forehead was covered in sweat.

Yu Youyao quickly went over and helped her cousin into the wheelchair. "Sit down and rest."

Then, she took out a handkerchief from her sleeve and wiped her cousin's sweat. The handkerchief reached his nose. Suddenly, she realized that it was very inappropriate for her to do this, so she retracted her hand awkwardly.

Zhou Linghuai's smile deepened. He held her hand and pulled the handkerchief in her hand out bit by bit. "There's no need to trouble Cousin. I'll do it myself."

If Uncle Sun were here, he would definitely roll his eyes again and complain in his heart, 'She's almost done wiping my sweat. Isn't it a little too late to say that you'll do it yourself?'

However, at this moment, Yu Youyao's focus was not on this. Seeing that her cousin was wiping her sweat with her handkerchief, she opened her mouth, wanting to remind him that it was her handkerchief.

Then, she recalled how she had wiped her cousin's sweat just now. Just as these words were about to come out of her mouth, she swallowed them.

There was a pink and white slanted apricot embroidery on the white silk handkerchief. When the handkerchief landed on his nose, the faint fragrance of a girl lingered in his nose, tempting him.

He couldn't help but smell it with all his might, but he couldn't get past the incense. The more he put in effort, the more he was troubled by it.

The atmosphere was a little strange.

Zhou Linghuai wiped his sweat and put the handkerchief into his sleeve. He chuckled. "I've dirtied Cousin's handkerchief. I'll give you another one another day."

However, he did not say that she wanted to return the handkerchief.

Yu Youyao was about to say that it was just a handkerchief. If it was dirty, so be it. She would just wash it later.

At this moment, Chang An came over. "Young Master, the water for the bath is ready."

Young Miss had previously instructed that when the weather was hot, Young Master had to take a bath after practicing walking. He also had to put medicinal dew in the bathtub to relieve his fatigue, in case Young Master couldn't adjust his body in time after being tired. Otherwise, his legs would hurt him again before they recovered.

He had always followed Young Miss's instructions strictly.

Zhou Linghuai nodded and said to Yu Youyao, "I'll be back soon."

Yu Youyao had originally wanted to return to the Jade Courtyard, but when she heard her cousin's words, she could only nod. "Then I'll wait for you." Chang An pushed Zhou Linghuai into the house.

Zhou Linghuai took out the handkerchief from his sleeve again. The faint fragrance reminded him that his little girl had already become a big girl. She was a delicate and elegant beauty!

Not only was he coveting her, but even Song Mingzhao was spying on her all the time. He even wanted to achieve his goal by currying favor with Old Madam

Song Mingzhao was not the first, let alone the last.

Zhou Linghuai rubbed the handkerchief in his palm and smiled. "If you seek it, you will get it."

The faint fragrance on the handkerchief penetrated the refreshing lotus fragrance of the spiritual dewdrop, but it was tainted. Like a flower bud, it had the fragrance of a girl. Strands of sweetness were bewitching.

He suddenly closed his eyes. When he opened them again, the deep ambition in them was burning like magma.

As Yu Youyao flipped through a few pages of a book, Zhou Linghuai returned.

Yu Youyao stood up in shock. "Why didn't you even wipe your hair? Your clothes are wet. What if you catch a cold?" As she spoke, she quickly instructed Chang An, "What are you waiting for? Hurry up and get a towel. How exactly did you take care of your young master?"

Previously, in the residence, Chang An had reminded Young Master, but was Young Master someone who could listen to him?

No!

Chang An felt aggrieved and ran away.

"Although his hair will dry quickly in this weather, Cousin is sick and weak. You have to be more careful." Yu Youyao hurriedly went forward and circled behind him. She tied up her cousin's long hair and dried the water bit by bit.

Weak body? Such a deep-rooted impression was really inexplicable. Zhou Linghuai's expression paused for a moment. "It's not good to make Cousin wait too long."

Yu Youyao glared at him, forgetting that she was standing behind her cousin.

He couldn't see her even if she glared at him. "I said I wanted to wait for

Cousin. No matter how long it takes, I'm willing to wait."

Zhou Linghuai's grip on the armrest of the wheelchair immediately tightened. He suddenly wanted to ask, "What if it's for a lifetime?"

However, just as the words were about to come out of his mouth, he smiled in disbelief. How could he bear to make the girl he liked wait for such a long time?

How could he let the girl he liked wait for him for the rest of her life?

At this moment, Chang An brought a large towel over and was about to help Young Master twist his hair dry.

Yu Youyao had already reached out her hand. Chang An quickly handed the large towel to her. When he looked down, he could see a faint smile on his young master's lips.

Chang An understood that Young Master was waiting here.

Only Yu Youyao and Zhou Linghuai were left in the corridor.

Yu Youyao held the large towel and helped her cousin dry his hair. Her cousin's hair was black and glossy. It was not as soft as a woman's, but very smooth in her hand.

Yu Youyao couldn't help but praise, "Cousin, your hair quality is really good!"

Zhou Linghuai's expression paused again. "I used the nourishing hair gel that you had previously made after boiling cypress leaves, no harmful fruits, soap, angelica, knotweed, and tea trees."

The little girl was worried that he wouldn't grow tall in a wheelchair.

After a while, she was worried that he would scheme too much all day and overuse his brain, causing him to lose his hair in his prime, or making his hair turn white at a young age. So, she specially modified a health-nourishing hair lotion.

Not only could it nourish his black hair, but it also had the effect of improving blood flow and strengthening his mind.

She had really put in a lot of effort.

At first, Zhou Linghuai had rejected the health nourishing hair liquid. At the thought that the health nourishing hair liquid was made to prevent him from going bald, he couldn't help but shudder.

But!

Zhou Linghuai's body was still very honest. So be it. As long as she was happy, it was fine. He couldn't let her down!

Later on, it really smelled good.

Yu Youyao lowered her head and smelled the refreshing fragrance of soap and medicinal herbs in her cousin's hair. "I thought you didn't like it."

A few days ago, when she gave it to her cousin, he still had a worried expression.

Zhou Linghuai's expression was a little suffocating. Then, he said, "Cousin, the things you make are always more meticulous than others. I'm also used to using things you made yourself, so I naturally have to use them."

The little girl twisted his hair very gently. From time to time, she would pinch his hair and gently pull his scalp. Zhou Linghuai felt his head tighten and loosen. Even the top of his head felt numb.

Her movements were very skilled. Without asking, she knew that she must have often helped Old Madam Yu dry her hair.

Yu Youyao was also meticulous. She treated the people she approved of without any barriers and often helped the people around her with what she could. It wasn't unreasonable for Old Madam Yu to dote on her.

Just like that, he let down his guard against her bit by bit and opened his heart to her. Then, he took her into his heart bit by bit, allowing her to take root in his heart..

Chapter 572: Obedient and Soft

Yu Youyao rambled on, "After washing your hair, loosen and tighten it a hundred times like this to prevent a headache. Look at Grandmother. She's already so old, but she doesn't have any head disease at all. I learned my technique from Nanny Liu. Grandmother is an old woman, so I have to use a little more strength. If Cousin feels uncomfortable, tell me and I'll be gentler."

"The strength is just right." Zhou Linghuai leaned against the wheelchair and felt a sense of relief. His brows relaxed, and the corners of his mouth curled up slightly. He enjoyed this peace of mind and body.

About the time it took to burn an incense stick, most of his hair had already dried and could be tied up loosely.

Yu Youyao called Chang An over. "Bring me the comb and Cousin's hairpin." Chang An flew down from the roof and rushed into the house.

Yu Youyao turned to look at her cousin. "Cousin, can I help you tie your hair

Zhou Linghuai tilted his head. The little girl's bright face was so close that his breathing slowed down. He had done all of this for his mother in the past. He had thought that this was just for fun.

But now he knew that this was not just fun, but a deep relationship.

He did not expect such a romantic gesture. He had never done it for Yu Youyao before, but the little girl had already done it for him first. Zhou Linghuai's voice was slightly hoarse. "Okay!"

There was still a long way to go!

There was nothing he could do for her now. In the future, he still had a lifetime to slowly do it for her one by one.

The rest of his life was long. He had to do everything that his father had done for his mother. He had to do everything that his father had never done for his mother.

Chang An quickly brought over a cow horn comb and a wooden hairpin and handed them to Yu Youyao.

Yu Youyao took a comb and helped her cousin comb his long hair. She tied more than half of it at the top of his head and fixed it with a wooden hairpin. Considering that his hair was not completely dry, she tied it loosely.

Yu Youyao felt that it was very novel. There was a very secret joy in the depths of her heart, but she couldn't express it.

She ran up to her cousin and sized up the bun on his head. She smiled until her eyes curved and her lips curled up slightly. "This is the first time I've tied someone's hair. It's not crooked at all!"

Zhou Linghuai had the urge to return to his room and look in the mirror. He also wanted to reach out and touch the bun that Yu Youyao had personally tied up. However, his fingers that were

holding the wheelchair had only just moved when he was worried that he would mess up the bun that she had personally tied up, so he could only give up. However, it was like a cat's claw was gently scratching his heart."

He kept wanting to do something to calm down. Zhou Linghuai felt very uneasy. "As a form of courtesy, I'll help you tie your hair in the future, okay?"

Yu Youyao was stunned.

Her cousin looked at her intently. There were no stars in his eyes, but there was a panic-inducing deepness. It was as if he was about to be sucked in. Yu Youyao's mind was in a mess. For a moment, she couldn't think of what it meant for a woman to tie a man's hair and a man to tie a woman's hair.

It was as if a demon's voice was constantly bewitching her—

Promise him, quickly promise him. You and Cousin have a good relationship, and you've done many close things in the past. One more is nothing.

When you were wiping your cousin's sweat, twisting his hair, and bunning his hair just now, why didn't you think of guarding against men and women? Isn't this appropriate? Could it be that you're really willing to distance yourself from him for the sake of guarding against men and women?

Your cousin will be returning to the North soon, and you won't see him much in the future. Are you really going to give up this short opportunity to get close to him for the sake of these so-called etiquette, dogma, and rules?

If you really care about your reputation, you should keep a distance from your cousin and not stick to him all day.

If you don't say it, Cousin won't say it either. No matter how close you are, no one will know.

As if possessed, Yu Youyao met her cousin's deep eyes and nodded slightly.

"Okay!"

She didn't want to think about what all this meant.

In this world, her cousin was the only one who truly treated her well without weighing the pros, and cons. Such a good cousin was worthy of her following and getting close to.

Zhou Linghuai's expression relaxed, and his lips curled up slightly, revealing joy and satisfaction.

He held Yu Youyao's hand. Her small hand seemed to be boneless. When he held it in his hand, it was as smooth as cream, as if he could knead it as he pleased.

Zhou Linghuai pulled her closer and reached out to brush the messy hair on her cheek behind her ear.

This time, his actions were no longer cautious. His fingers gently scraped across her cheek, revealing a shuddering ambiguity. "Don't be afraid. You said that you would treat me well for the rest of your life, and I promised to protect you for the rest of my life."

Yu Youyao's body stiffened, not because she was afraid.

The tip of her cousin's hand was a little rough as it gently scraped across her cheek, causing her heart to beat faster. Not only did she not resist or dodge, but she even straightened her body out of nervousness.

Her throat was dry, and she said softly, "Yes." Her voice was also dry. "I'll be good."

Her voice was sweet, obedient, and soft. Zhou Linghuai seemed to have been hit by something and pulled her into his arms. He smiled gently. "Good girl!" It wasn't until April that the candidates who had been implicated because of the cheating in the examination were released.

When Yu Zongzheng returned to the residence, he told her about Song Mingzhao's situation. "He was whipped and was covered in blood. He looked really scary. The Zhenguo Marquis Residence invited Imperial Physician Shi to treat Mingzhao. The imperial physician only said that he had suffered physical pain and didn't have any terminal illness. He was just sick in prison for a long time and wasn't treated in time. His vitality was injured and he had to recuperate carefully while he was still young."

This was more serious than Yu Youyao had thought.

In the end, he was still sick. Old Madam Yu was dispirited and could only say,

"It's good that he came out. At least he survived. It's a blessing in disguise."

Song Mingzhao was only 18 years old this year. He only hoped that the root of this illness was not too serious and could recover at a young age.

However, Matriarch still felt uncomfortable.

Old Madam Yu asked Nanny Liu to prepare good medicinal herbs and supplements. "Send them to the Zhenguo Marquis Residence later. Tell them that I'll go over to visit Mingzhao another day.

No matter what, Song Mingzhao had been her "filial grandson" for two years. Now that Song Mingzhao had suffered and his body was injured, she should go over and take a look.

However, because Song Mingzhao had just come out of prison, it would take a few days for him to settle down.

Yu Zongzheng mentioned again, "The President of the examination is Lord

Tang, and the examiner who leaked the question is also a scholar from the Hanlin Academy. Lord Tang has been suspended because of his incompetence in the Imperial Examination and is temporarily involved in the compilation of the Teng library's 'Collection of Documents'. This is also the best outcome for the Tang family. Lord Tang's Yue family has helped a lot."

Old Madam Yu was not surprised. "As soon as Ning Yuanbo was caught for being involved in the cheating in the examination, Lord Tang's concubine, whose surname was Ye, was found in the sick room. A doctor was found to take a look at her. He said that her illness could be contagious, so Matriarch Tang sent Concubine Ye to the manor."

Chapter 573: Battle for the Succession

They were all on good terms. How could Yu Zongzheng not know that this Concubine Ye was originally Lord Tang's distant cousin? As her family had fallen into foster care, the two of them had already had an affair long ago.

After Madam Tang married into the family, he took a noble concubine and doted on her.

Madam Tang's personality was not gentle either, so Matriarch Tang naturally liked her niece more. Madam Tang had suffered a lot.

Yu Zongzheng understood. "Lord Tang has been suspended in name, but everyone knows that once he leaves, his life will be in danger. How long he'll be suspended depends on the emperor. Even if he can't return to the Hanlin Academy, he also can't stay in the Teng library all the time. When the news of the fraud dies down, we'll definitely have to reorganize. We won't lack the help of Lord Tang and the Yue family."

The Court Official's Residence was famous, so the court officials were willing to give them some face.

A few days ago, Yu Youyao received a letter from Fifth Miss Tang. She had mentioned this in her letter.

At the same time, she also said that Tang Yunmeng, the eldest daughter of a concubine, who used to rely on her father and grandmother's love to abuse power in front of her, had been grounded by Matriarch Tang because the concubine was sent to the manor.

What Matriarch Tang meant was that Tang Yunmeng was not young anymore. She had already arranged a marriage last year and planned to marry her off as soon as possible.

Yu Youyao opened her mouth. "Has Ning Yuanbo been convicted?"

Old Madam Yu tilted her head to look at her eldest granddaughter. In the past two years, as long as the family did not talk about some unspeakable private matters, they basically did not avoid her.

Often, her granddaughter hit the nail on the head.

Today was no exception. As she and Eldest Son were familiar with the Zhenguo Marquis Residence and the Tang Residence, it was inevitable that they would say a few more words. However, she was paying attention to Ning Yuanbo, the instigator.

Yu Zongzheng shook his head. "Not yet. Although Ning Yuanbo was sent to jail for cheating in the examination, since he's in jail, it's impossible for them to only investigate this case. He has to be investigated for all his previous crimes before he was convicted. Ning Yuanbo is a noble. There's still time needed to investigate."

When Yu Youyao heard this, she understood. It was good to pull out the radish and bring it out of the mud, but in the end, she still couldn't avoid a partisan conflict. She also felt uneasy.

Ning Yuanbo still had a concubine in the palace. Although Concubine Lu had been sent to the cold palace, she had given birth to a son and two daughters.

At the thought of this, Yu Youyao's heart skipped a beat.

The emperor was obsessed with Taoism and had not selected a successor for many years. Other than a son who had already died prematurely, there were only three princes in the palace at the moment.

Among them, the Eldest Prince was originally born by the Empress and died before the month was up. He did not have a son in the Central Palace and his second son was raised by Concubine Lu. Without the word “first wife” pressing down on him, he became “eldest son.”

The second prince was the eldest son of the second wife of the Great Zhou Dynasty and had always been favored by the emperor. He had heard that the second day after Concubine Lu was sent to the cold palace, the emperor had even praised the second prince’s article in the imperial study.

It was obvious that Concubine Lu’s loss of favor did not affect the father-son relationship between the emperor and the Second Prince.

The Third Prince’s biological mother was Consort Xu.

Other than the empress, who was the master of the harem, the four concubines had the most important statuses.

A superior first-grade Imperial Noble Consort was sealed with a treasure. Her status was second only to the Empress, and she was almost equivalent to a wife. However, she was always inferior in the Central Palace because of the title “first wife.

Next were the noble consorts, Consort Xian, and Consort Shu.

Among them, the imperial concubine was the number one concubine. As it wasn’t often that the imperial concubine appeared, the imperial concubine was indeed the “head of the concubines”. She also had treasures.

Imperial Consort Lu had been demoted to Concubine Lan. Among the princes, the Third Prince of Imperial Consort Xu was the most important.

The Fourth Prince’s biological mother was said to be a little palace maid who had climbed into the emperor’s bed. No one knew if this little palace maid was lucky or unlucky to be pregnant after sleeping with him once. She was about to give birth to an emperor’s child and wealth was at hand, but she died because of the difficulty in giving birth.

The Fourth Prince’s biological mother’s status was so low that he was overlooked for the time being.

But!

The emperor had yet to appoint a crown prince. Concubine Lu’s second prince was the eldest son, while Concubine Xu’s third prince was the most precious son.

Ning Yuanbo’s case also involved the harem and even the struggle for the position of heir. It was far from being settled so easily.

Yu Youyao was in a trance.

The case of cheating in the examination had finally stopped, but the undercurrent in the harem and the royal court had just begun.

Was this her cousin’s so-called sword dance?

It was probably more than that!

From April 6th onwards, all the grain shops under the name of the Yu Residence and Yu Youyao had set up porridge sheds. They even gave away three days of porridge. The porridge was mixed with millet and braised rice.

The commoners finally had porridge to eat.

No one felt that the Yu Residence was unkind.

During the new year, a bag of rice would only cost about 40 to 50 copper coins.

However, in recent years, the price of rice had already increased to 100 copper coins a bag. Ordinary families could no longer afford to eat rice.

The Yu Residence was still willing to build a porridge shed to give out. This was not for the sake of gaining a good reputation, but because they were really kind.

At this moment, a low-key carriage stopped on Zhengyang Street.

The interior of the carriage was rather luxurious. The man, who was about seventeen or eighteen years old, was wearing a purple python robe, but he had a jade dragon-head scale belt around his waist. He leaned against the carriage with an unhappy expression.

Not long after, a feminine-looking and thin young man entered the carriage.

The man frowned. "Why is the road blocked in front? Have they found out everything?"

The young man's voice was sharp. "Master, in front of us is the rice shop of the Left Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs, Lord Yu.

Old Madam Yu is paying respects to Buddha. In a few days, it'll be the Buddhist Festival. The rice shops under the Yu Residence have set up porridge sheds and are giving away porridge. This year, the weather isn't good. When the commoners heard that the Yu Residence was giving up porridge, they ran over to eat it. As there were too many people, they blocked Zhengyang Street."

Hearing his companion mention the Yu Clan, the man first thought of the glory of being one of the top four scholars in the Yu Clan three years ago. His father's intention to place the Yu Clan in an important position was obvious.

Then, he thought about it. Lord Yu was the Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs, a third-rank official. The Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs was in charge of the appointment, dismissal, examination, promotion, and transfer of officials in the country. He was the head of the six ministries.

In addition, Master Yu, Yu Zongshen, was the Minister of Revenue and the Grand Secretary of the Imperial Library. He was the second-in-command of the cabinet and would take over as Xia Yansheng's Grand Secretary.

Seeing his master's thoughtful expression, his servant felt a little flustered. "Master, do you think they can't finish giving out the porridge in a short period of time? Should we take a detour?"

"Take a detour?" The man glanced up at him. "When did I say we were going to take a detour?"

The accompanying servant knew that he had said something wrong and quickly tried to salvage the situation. "Then why don't I make a trip to the Military Department of the Five Cities and ask them

to temporarily chase away the commoners who are eating porridge? It's better than letting Master wait.."

Chapter 574: Fulfill a wish

The Military Department of the Five Cities was in charge of the public order in the capital. It made sense to get the people from the Military Department of the Five Cities to come and deal with the commoners.

The man's expression darkened. He lifted the window and saw a group of ragged beggars running forward.

As they ran, they spoke—

"I heard that the Yu Residence's rice shop will give away porridge for three days in a row for two hours a day..."

"The Yu Residence has often given up porridge in the past few years. They're really kind..."

"Isn't that so? There's a Bodhisattva-hearted Matriarch in the Yu Residence who raised a kind granddaughter. Not only does she often give out rice and porridge, but I heard that she also opened a charity hall in the capital that accommodated many orphans and widows."

"You mean the Graceful Heart Hall? I know that. Not only does Eldest Miss Yu take them in, but she also specially asked a teacher to teach them how to read and write, and how to work as a red woman..."

He had only heard words like "Eldest Miss Yu" and "Graceful Heart Hall." The man kept feeling that he had heard the words "Yao Xin" somewhere before, but he couldn't remember where.

However, it was still related to Eldest Miss Yu.

The man turned around and asked his companion, "What's Eldest Miss Yu's name?"

When she was asking about the news just now, she had also asked about all the relevant personnel in the Yu Residence. "Her surname is Yu, and her name is Youyao. She's the eldest daughter of Lord Yu's first wife. In the past two years, she has quite a reputation for talent and virtue in the capital. Earlier, she surpassed Fifth Miss Lu of Ning Yuanbo's family and became the number one beauty in the capital."

As Eldest Miss Yu kept a low profile and did not walk around often, many people had their own opinions about her being the number one beauty in the capital.

However, now that Ning Yuanbo was in jail, his residence only existed in name. Lu Mingyao had become the daughter of a criminal, so she naturally couldn't be compared to Eldest Miss Yu.

With that said, the man knew more about the name "Yu Youyao." He immediately became interested. "So it's her. Three years ago, she stood out at the Flower Festival in the Marquis of

Changxing's Residence and gained the favor of the Imperial Grandmother. Not only did she give her a palace token, but she also praised her for being kind and kind. Mother has also mentioned her before.

In the past, when Ning Yuanbo's residence was ostentatious, he had seen Lu Mingyao a few times at the banquet of the imperial family. She was luxurious and beautiful, taking after Concubine Lu from the palace. She was also worthy of being the number one beauty in the capital.

She was the number one beauty in the capital who had surpassed Lu Mingyao. He really wanted to meet her!

Her companion nodded. "That's her!"

The man gently played with the yellow jade ring in his hand. "I heard that Eldest Miss Yu's mother is from the Xie Residence in Quanzhou. How old is she this year?"

Her companion quickly said, "She's only twelve or thirteen years old. I'm not sure about the details."

The age of a woman was an extremely private matter. Other than the general date, no one else knew really when she was born.

The fan in the man's hand lifted the curtain of the carriage. "Let's go down and take a look."

Her companion was a little hesitant.

The man chuckled. "What's there to be afraid of? I came out incognito today. No one else can recognize me."

He had a jade dragon head belt. The dragon head was very similar to the dragon head. If one did not get closer, no one could tell which imperial family he was from.

Old Madam Yu did not know that what she was most worried about had still happened.

As the daughter of an official, there were some things that she couldn't escape.

On the eighth of April, on the day of the Buddhist Festival, Yu Youyao changed into plain and elegant light green clothes. She brought along the Buddhist scriptures she had copied recently and went to An Shou Hall.

Old Madam Yu asked Nanny Liu to prepare dinner.

After a simple breakfast, Concubine Jiang came over. "Matriarch eats vegetarian food and prays to Buddha. She's cultivating virtue for the family and accumulations blessings for the younger generation. This is their blessing as juniors. During this period of time, she has also copied a few sections of the

Diamond Sutra and burned incense oil. I'll have to trouble Matriarch to worship Buddha. It's a show of sincerity."

With that, she handed over the box in her hand.

Nanny Liu hurriedly went forward to take it.

Old Madam Yu nodded in satisfaction.

Concubine Jiang took another box from the nanny and handed it to Yu Youyao. “Matriarch lit a lamp for Eldest Sister Xie at the Precious Peace Temple, so she also copied a few pieces of the Wondrous Lotus Sutra during her mourn..”

“Thank you.” Yu Youyao smiled and took the box, handing it to Chun Xiao.

When they arrived at the door, Madam Yao also brought along copied Buddhist scriptures and incense money and waited in front of the door.

After handing them to Nanny Liu, Madam Yao personally helped Matriarch Yu into the carriage. She watched the carriage leave the residence before returning to the Second Mansion.

When they arrived at the Precious Peace Temple, the grandmother and granddaughter first went to the room to settle down. Old Madam Yu brought Yu Youyao to the treasure hall to offer incense.

Yu Youyao thought of today three years ago. At the Bodhisattva of Wishes, she made a pious vow. “May Cousin’s evil illness disappear on its own. May he stay away from calamity and live a peaceful life.”

Three years later, Yu Youyao returned to the Precious Peace Temple and looked at the golden Buddha in front of her. Her wish had already been fulfilled!

Yu Youyao closed her eyes and clasped her hands together. She recited the Diamond Sutra. In the end, she said, “It’s only because of Buddha’s pity that my wish has been fulfilled. I’m here today to thank you for granting my wish.”

At this moment, Old Madam Yu had already finished offering incense.

Yu Youyao stepped forward and lit three incense sticks. She bowed three times piously and inserted them into the incense burner. Then, she took two banknotes from her pouch and placed them into the golden bowl in the monk’s hand.

The monk lowered his eyes. “Amitabha!”

Old Madam Yu took a look. 2,000 taels of silver in one go. It was really a big deal, but she did not say anything. It was not a large amount to donate to Bodhisattva.

Yu Youyao helped her grandmother out of the hall.

Yu Youyao recalled that three years ago, on the seventh of the second month, the entire Yu Residence had gone to the Precious Peace Temple together.

In a moment of curiosity, she drew a lot.

It was a lucky fortune. “It’s very difficult to win. You’ll be busy fighting for your marriage. In the end, those who try to target you will fail and nobles will guide you to your noble hometown.”

The monk who had untied the lot said, “Fortune and misfortune depend on each other. It’s an omen of a blessing in disguise. Everything is auspicious. Although you have the intention to make change, you will be safe in the end. If you run into anything, you can approach the nobles.”

The word “1u” had an extraordinary meaning.

In the beginning, it referred to Zhuolu County. The Emperor and Chi You fought in Zhuolu County and finally unified the world. Later, the Emperor led the ancestors to settle down in Zhuolu County.

This was because the place where the people competed for supremacy was naturally harmonious. It was also beneficial for reproduction.

The dragon's horn referred to deer antlers. It was a symbol of power. King Zhou of Shang had built the Lu Building, but it was not a place that was devoid of principles. Instead, it was a symbol of the Shang Dynasty declaring sovereignty in the world.

After that, there was also a book called "Biography of the Marquis of Huaiyin".

When the Qin dynasty fell, all the heroes in the world wanted to conquer it."

Since ancient times, the word "lu" was associated with commoners. Kings did not easily use the word "lu", and scholars rarely wrote the word "lu.."

Chapter 575: Fate Dictates Whether People Become Close or Distant

The meaning of the words "missed arrow" was obvious.

She recalled that in the past three years, she had experienced many things. However, because her cousin was around, she was still safe. Her cousin was probably the noble mentioned!

Yu Youyao smiled.

After leaving the hall, Old Madam Yu asked, "Why did you also donate the money for incense?"

Yu Youyao smiled. "Three years ago, I made a wish for Grandmother and

Cousin at the Bodhisattva of Wishes. Now that Grandmother is healthy and

Cousin has recovered a little, it's only right for me to make a donation."

Old Madam Yu smiled until her eyes narrowed. "It's indeed time after you fulfilled your wish."

It was rare for her to come to the Precious Peace Temple, so Old Madam Yu wanted to go and listen to the meditation. Yu Youyao sent her grandmother to the meditation room and returned to her room.

The little monk sent over a bag of Bodhi leaves.

When Yu Youyao checked, she found a note in the bag.

Yu Youyao chuckled and brought Chun Xiao and the two burly old maids to Master Hui Ji's meditation room to listen to the meditation.

When they arrived at the meditation temple, the two old maids consciously guarded the door.

After entering the courtyard, Chun Xiao also consciously stayed in the outer room.

Yu Youyao entered the meditation room alone.

In addition to her cousin, there was another gray-robed monk sitting in the meditation room.

Yu Youyao's eyes widened. The little monk was sitting cross-legged on the meditation cushion, but she saw that his eyes were distant and elegant. It was difficult to hide his magnificence.

Yu Youyao had seen her third cousin, Xie Jingliu, before. He was handsome and carefree.

Song Mingzhao was handsome and elegant.

Her cousin was as smooth as a knife, elegant and noble.

She had originally thought that they were already the most outstanding celestial beings in this world. She did not expect that there would be someone in this world who could compete with her cousin.

The gray-clothed little monk was bright and clear, and he looked like a treasure. He had a holy aura that could not be profaned.

Compared to him, her cousin was dressed in moon-white and looked as simple as a cloud. He was like an immortal.

The two of them were sitting opposite each other, playing chess.

Yu Youyao consciously sat down beside her cousin and saw that he was holding a white chess piece.

The young monk opposite him was holding a black chess piece. It was an intense game.

At a glance, the chessboard was densely covered with black and white chess pieces. There were not many places where a chess piece could be placed, but the winner had yet to be decided.

In the past few years, even though Yu Youyao did not have any talent in chess, her chess skills had improved a little under Zhou Linghuai's tireless guidance.

However, Yu Youyao was dizzy from watching this game of chess, so she couldn't tell what was going on.

She was stunned and looked at the chessboard innocently. She was obedient and soft. Zhou Linghuai chuckled. "Come, let me introduce you. The person opposite is Master Hui Ji, one of the Six Wise Monks of the Precious Peace Temple."

Yu Youyao's eyes widened even more. "I heard that the Six Wise Monks of the Precious Peace Temple are currently the highest-ranking eminent monks. For example, Grandmaster Hui Neng, Grandmaster Hui Ci, and Grandmaster Hui Tong. They're all..."

"They're all very old!" Zhou Linghuai continued her unfinished sentence.

Due to the fact that Master Hui Ji was present, Yu Youyao couldn't say anything. Master Hui Ji, who was one of the Six Wise Monks, was really too young. He was very different from what she had imagined.

Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but stroke his forehead and laugh. "He's so young.

Does he look like a fake monk?"

Yes! Yu Youyao swallowed the words that were about to come out of her mouth.

The words "fake monk" successfully made the gray-clothed monk, who was standing opposite him like a mountain, look up. "Amitabha. Buddhism teaches fate and values wisdom. Buddhism doesn't depend on age."

In other words, he could become one of the Six Wise Monks because he had the roots of wisdom and a deep understanding of Buddhism.

Then, Master Hui Ji took a look at the person who became like a dog ever since his “cousin” had come over. He changed the topic. “My name is Zhou Linghuai, and my courtesy name is Jingzhi. I have some affinity with Almsgiver Yu, but I’m a monk. My past is already incomplete.”

Just now, when she saw Master Hui Ji, Yu Youyao had already guessed it and was not very surprised.

“Grandmaster has escaped from the mortal world. I’ve seen everything there is to see in the world and am at peace. I don’t dare to disturb your peace, so I don’t dare to acknowledge you. Since you’ve mentioned your identity, I’ll be bold and call you Cousin Zhou. It can be considered a fated meeting with you.” Zhou Linghuai smiled meaningfully.

He was secretly overjoyed to be called “Cousin Zhou.” It had to be known that Yu Youyao had never treated him as an outsider in terms of address. She had always only called him “Cousin.”

Master Hui Ji’s eyes did not move as he looked at the young girl sitting beside Yin Huaixi. Her light green clothes were as bright as a green cloud after the rain.

It was early in the second month!

Just this fresh and bright color was already a rare beauty in the world.

Master Hui Ji glanced at Yin Huaixi and said, “Amitabha. Everything in the world is born from fate. Fate dictates whether we are close or distant. Fate gathers and dissipates. It’s all karma. That’s how it should be.”

Yu Youyao said, “In that case, I hope that Cousin Zhou will be in good health and have a Buddhist heart. I hope that you will be at ease and reach nirvana.”

Master Hui Ji smiled. “Excellent!”

Now that she had acknowledged her real cousin, Yu Youyao could be considered to have resolved one of her worries. However, she felt a little disappointed and frustrated. Perhaps it was because this affinity was short-lived and was ultimately a little shallow.

Zhou Linghuai glanced at Hui Ji unhappily. “This guy’s brain is clean, but he’s a fake monk with a mouth full of Buddhist principles.” With that, he picked up the only plate of pastries on the table and placed them in front of Yu Youyao. “This is the begonia pastry of the Precious Peace Temple. It’s crispy on the outside and sweet on the inside. It’s soft and moist. It tastes not bad. Try it.”

“I’ve never eaten this before.” Yu Youyao’s attention was quickly attracted by the delicate and beautiful pastry on the plate.

Her grandmother liked the vegetarian dishes at the Precious Peace Temple. From time to time, she would get someone to book a table at the Precious Peace Temple.

Yu Youyao had eaten vegetarian dishes often, but this was the first time she had eaten this pastry.

Zhou Linghuai smiled. “This is a vegetarian meal that has to be offered to the palace. No one else can eat it.”

The vegetarian kitchen of the Precious Peace Temple was very famous. The monks picked ingredients on the spot and ate all kinds of flowers, trees, fruits, and vegetables planted in the temple, as well as the precious wild vegetables at the back of the mountain. Even the nobles in the palace praised them endlessly.

On the first and fifteenth of every month, the Precious Peace Temple would send these ingredients into the palace.

Begonia pastry was one of them.

“I see.” Yu Youyao took a piece of pastry and bit it gently. The pastry was thin and crispy. Zhou Linghuai quickly reached over and caught the crispy crumbs to prevent them from staining Yu Youyao.

The crispy surface was salty and fragrant, and it melted in her mouth. The bright red syrup overflowed, and his mouth was filled with the fragrance of begonia flowers. However, it was sweet but not greasy.

It was the flavor she liked. No wonder her cousin had said it tasted good.

“The begonia pastry is delicious. Cousin, try it too.” Yu Youyao smiled and took another piece of begonia pastry. She handed it to her cousin casually. With her other hand, she specially raised her handkerchief high, worried that the crumbs and kernels would fall on him..

Chapter 576: Being Generous

Zhou Linghuai’s eyes were filled with smiles, and his ink-like eyebrows were also beautiful. He took a small bite. It wasn’t his favorite taste, but he still felt that it was exceptionally sweet.

After one bite, he shook his head and stopped eating. “Eat it yourself.”

The scene of the “cousins” acting as if no one was around made Hui Ji’s eyelids twitch. He suddenly felt that his head was a little cold and bright.

Yu Youyao ate two pieces of begonia pastry and her mouth felt a little dry.

Zhou Linghuai handed her a cup of tea. “It’s the Pu Er Tea planted in the back mountain of the Precious Peace Temple. It was transplanted from Yunnan.

There aren’t many of them alive, so there aren’t many of them. The Precious Peace Temple has been covering it up and not letting anyone know. They keep the tea for themselves to drink. Look, these monks are so good at enjoying themselves. They don’t look like real monks.”

Yu Youyao took the teacup and glanced at Master Hui Ji.

Even though he had been criticized, Master Hui Ji was still as still as a mountain. His eyebrows did not even tremble. His clear fingertips held a jade-like teacup.

Even the teacup used by monks was top-notch porcelain!

She actually felt that her cousin made sense?!

Yu Youyao quickly got rid of the strange thought in her mind. “Uh, isn’t there a saying that goes, wine and meat pass through the intestines, and Buddha keeps it in his heart? No one has stipulated that monks have to have simple meals.”

Master Hui Ji smiled. “You’re a bright person.”

Zhou Linghuai snorted softly.

It wasn’t that she wanted to speak up for Master Hui Ji, but her cousin had said that he was a fake monk in front of him. It seemed a little inappropriate!

Yu Youyao quickly lowered her head. The tea in her cup was red and thick, and it was very pure. She took a small sip. “It tastes mellow, sweet, and refreshing. It’s very special.”

Zhou Linghuai chuckled. “Bring some back later. Pu Er tea with pastries tastes not bad.”

Hui Ji took a deep breath.

If he remembered correctly, the tea and snacks were all his!

Did he ask her to bring them back?

Yin Huaixi was really becoming more and more bold.

However, he had known this person for many years. This guy always looked unpredictable. Whether he smiled or not, his emotions did not reach his eyes.

But!

This did not include Yu Youyao.

In fact, as soon as Yu Youyao entered the house, this person’s eyes never left her. His eyes were charmed and they reflecting Yu Youyao’s beauty and brightness. Even his body felt more alive.

He still remembered the situation with Yin Huaixi, whom he had seen on Mount Wutai six years ago.

At that time, Yin Huaixi had just experienced the destruction of his family and the pain of his illness. He had already lost weight, and his broken skeleton barely supported his weak body.

He was already in hell. The abyss was in his eyes, and the Asura was in his heart.

Later on, Yin Huaixi used his identity to enter the Yu Residence.

He also got to know his cousin, Yu Youyao.

From then on, his cousin also became Yin Huaixi’s “cousin.”

Yin Huaixi’s eyes lit up, and he was willing to bow down to someone.

Master Hui Ji subconsciously thought of King You and felt that this was quite good. “You guys chat first. I still have a scripture to copy.”

Yu Youyao suddenly realized that there was someone else in the room. Then, she and her cousin had just...

Yu Youyao quickly put down her teacup and stood up. “It’s getting late. I should go back to my room and not disturb Master Hui Ji’s cultivation.”

Zhou Linghuai guessed what she was worried about and squeezed her palm.

“I’ll send you off.”

Yu Youyao hesitated.

Zhou Linghuai said calmly, “Master Hui Ji and I are old friends. It’s fine to talk to him at the Precious Peace Temple.”

Hui Ji suddenly felt that the tea in his mouth was no longer fragrant.

Yu Youyao thought about it carefully. Even if her grandmother knew that her cousin had come to the Precious Peace Temple, it didn’t seem to be a problem. It was impossible for her to suspect his identity because of this.

Seeing that Yu Youyao had put down her worries, Zhou Linghuai called Chang An over and gave him a few instructions.

After Old Madam Yu finished listening to the meditation and returned to the room, Qing Xiu, who had stayed behind to guard the room, reported. “Eldest Miss has gone to bring Chun Xiao and two old maids to Master Hui Ji’s meditation room to listen to the meditation. They haven’t returned yet. Young Master went to the Precious Peace Temple to visit his friends and sent Chang An over to ask about you. When he found out that Old Madam was listening to the meditation in the meditation room, he said that he would come over to accompany her for lunch later.”

Old Madam Yu frowned. “If he wanted to come to the Precious Peace Temple, why didn’t he come with us? Could it be that he feels that his legs are inconvenient and is afraid of delaying today’s schedule? This child, really!”

Qing Xiu also thought the same. “Young Master is a steady and considerate person.”

Even though his body was disabled, he had never caused any trouble for the Yu Residence after entering it. Not only that, but he also often guided the brothers and sisters in the residence in their studies.

Wasn’t he stable and considerate?

To the Matriarch, the Buddhist Festival was naturally a solemn matter. Every year, when Eldest Miss went to the Precious Peace Temple, she would also go to the Lantern Pavilion to add incense oil for Eldest Madam Xie.

It was reasonable for Young Master to think this way.

Old Madam Yu agreed deeply and continued, “Master Hui Ji’s Buddhist teachings are exquisite, but his health isn’t good, so he rarely talks about meditation. His meditation room only accepts fated people. Yao Yao heard Master Hui Ji’s meditation three years ago. I think she has some Buddhist affinity with him.”

The Six Wise Monks of the Precious Peace Temple were all enlightened monks.

It was also a rare blessing to be able to listen to them talk about meditation. Naturally, she did not suspect anything.

Old Madam Yu drank her tea and ate some vegetarian food.

At this moment, Nanny Liu entered. "Matriarch, Heir Song has specially come to greet you."

Old Madam Yu was stunned when she heard this. "Mingzhao is also in Precious Peace? Didn't they say that he fell sick in prison?" After being shocked, she reacted. "Hurry up and invite him in!"

Not long after, Qing Xiu led Song Mingzhao into the room.

After being in jail for more than a month, he was already a little thin, but he was even more slender.

He was wearing a dark green outfit and had a straight back. However, his face was pale and he looked sick. He had yet to recover from his illness in prison.

It was obvious that he was seriously ill.

Old Madam Yu's eyes welled up with tears. She pinched her handkerchief and pressed the corner of her eye. "Mingzhao, you're here. Quick, sit down and talk. Child, why are you here at the Precious Peace Temple? Are you feeling better?"

Song Mingzhao followed suit. After bowing to Old Madam Yu, he sat down. "Grandmother Yu, don't worry. The prison is humid. It was just a moment of carelessness. The cold entered my body and I fell sick. After I was released from prison, I've already recovered a lot thanks to Imperial Physician Shi's amazing skills. However, this illness has delayed my recovery for a long time. I have to recuperate carefully to recover."

Every word and sentence was true.

However, just because he wasn't lying didn't mean that what he said was the entire truth. There could also be half-truths..

Chapter 577: Incurring Disadvantages

He was indeed seriously ill and the root cause was not healed.

However, sometimes, people only believed what they saw.

Moreover, they firmly believed in their judgment.

Hence, they ignored many things.

When Old Madam Yu heard this, she heaved a sigh of relief. "Why didn't you continue to recuperate in the residence?"

She did not doubt the authenticity of these words. It was impossible for the Zhenguo Marquis Residence to joke about Song Mingzhao's health. If Song Mingzhao was really seriously ill, it was impossible for him to come out.

Song Mingzhao explained, "It's also because there are many complicated matters in the capital. It's not as peaceful as the Precious Peace Temple, so I might as well go to the Precious Peace Temple to recuperate. Master Hui Tong's medical skills are also outstanding, so the family is naturally at ease. In three months, the Imperial Court will restart the examination. I reckon my body will be almost recovered."

He didn't finish what he planned to say.

However, Old Madam Yu understood that Song Mingzhao would participate in the imperial examination again in three months. This meant that his body was indeed fine, and it also showed that he had not been defeated by the prison.

He would only have to wait for three months. He would take back the glory that belonged to him and definitely not let himself be tainted at all.

Old Madam Yu was gratified. She felt that she had not misjudged him. "You're only 17 or 18 years old this year. You're at the prime of your life. As long as you take care of your health, there's no illness that you can't recover from."

He looked quite sick, but he was still able to come out and walk around. He could probably recover if he was more careful. When Linghuai first entered the Yu Residence, his sickly body had recovered a lot after recuperating for a few years.

Feeling much more at ease, a smile appeared on her face.

Song Mingzhao nodded. "Grandmother Yu is right."

Old Madam Yu then recalled that although the case of cheating in the examination had come to an end, there were still many rumors in the capital. It was probably because of this that Song Mingzhao had gone to the Precious Peace Temple to recuperate.

Hence, she comforted him again. "According to 'Poetry', every step you take in life will not be in vain. You're a young genius. Although it's a good thing to be successful at such a young age, it also means that your character, literary talent, cultivation, values, and so on have to be like bones, horns, ivory, and jade. The suffering you're experiencing now is all a trial of life." Song Mingzhao listened attentively and respectfully.

Old Madam Yu changed the topic and said, "On the first day that my grandnephew, Linghuai, entered the residence, Yao Yao heard her cousin say that since the heavens were about to confer a great responsibility on a person, they had to first torture their will, exhaust their muscles and bones and starve their bodies. They had to do whatever they could to endure temptation. In the end, they would benefit and do what they couldn't before. tempted and tolerated, benefiting what they couldn't do." At the mention of this matter, a smile appeared on her face. "At that time, she couldn't even memorize the essays and blushed."

Hearing the Matriarch mention Yu Youyao, Song Mingzhao subconsciously tilted his ear again. "Third Sister said that Miss Yao has already become Ms.

Ye's favorite disciple."

Old Madam Yu's smile did not fade. "More like her cousin's favorite disciple."

Ms. Ye had indeed taught Yao Yao a lot, but Yao Yao was learning too quickly. Ms. Ye had to take care of the other sisters in the family, so she couldn't just focus on teaching Yao Yao alone. Afraid that she would delay Yao Yao, she had long stopped asking her to go to school again. She only said that if there was anything she didn't understand, she could look for her in private.

Everyone in the residence knew that Yao Yao had been taught by her cousin.

At the mention of Zhou Linghuai, Song Mingzhao subconsciously lowered his eyes and looked at the longevity knot on his wrist. "Grandmother Yu, on the day of the Buddhist Festival six years ago,

I was relaxing at the Bodhisattva of Wishes and was almost injured by a fugitive. In a daze, I heard someone call their father and scare the fugitive away, saving my life.”

Old Madam Yu’s eyelids twitched as she recalled what had happened six years ago.

It was also on the day of the Buddhist Festival that Yao Yao, who was not even six years old, ran out on her own and disappeared after a few words with Yu Jianjia.

She had heard that a thief had entered the temple and injured someone, but she had been so frightened that she had almost lost her soul. She had not seen anyone everywhere. It was the monks in the temple who had sent her granddaughter back to her room.

At that time, she had thought that if word got out that Yao Yao, the eldest daughter without a mother, had been implicated by a thief, it would be bad for Yao Yao’s reputation. Hence, she had silenced the monks in the temple who knew about it and even warned the few people around her.

As she had covered it up well, even Madam Yang and her daughter only thought that Yu Youyao had just been playful and hurt her head.

After that, her granddaughter had a big scare and a high fever for the night.

When she woke up the next day, she couldn’t remember much about this.

She did not expect that the person who had been injured by the fugitive was actually Song Mingzhao. However, from what Song Mingzhao said, the person who had frightened the fugitive away might be Yao Yao?!

Even Old Madam Yu’s blood froze.

She had never expected that six years ago, her granddaughter had already walked through the gates of hell without her knowledge.

It was said that the fugitive had killed countless people and had dozens of lives in his hands. If Song Mingzhao was telling the truth, it was no wonder that Yao Yao had forgotten about this when she woke up.

How old was Yao Yao at that time?

How could she not be afraid when she saw the fugitive injure someone?

Old Madam Yu’s heart trembled, but she drank her tea calmly. “I’ve never heard your grandmother mention this.”

Song Mingzhao secretly saw Old Madam Yu’s reaction and was a little disappointed. “It’s also because it’s a serious matter that the family hid this matter and didn’t make it public. However, I’ve always remembered this life-saving favor and have been investigating this matter for many years.”

A drop of water should be repaid with a spring. It was only right that Song Mingzhao remembered his life-saving grace. Old Madam Yu nodded in understanding, but she still did not say anything.

Song Mingzhao could only say, “I know. Every year, during the Buddhist Festival, Grandmother Yu will bring Miss Yao to the Precious Peace Temple to add incense oil for Eldest Madam Xie. In the past two years, she has also investigated some clues.”

Old Madam Yu did everything flawlessly, and the monks in the Precious Peace Temple kept quiet about this matter. At that time, he was in a daze and could only hear a girl's voice. He couldn't hear her clearly, so he couldn't deduce her exact age.

On the day of the Buddhist Festival, there were many visitors in the temple. Everyone was secretive about the thief and did not want to mention it, afraid that they would be implicated.

Many things could not be investigated.

He had also noticed Yu Youyao on the day of the Buddhist Festival three years ago. He had bumped into Yu Youyao at the Bodhi of Wishes and casually asked the monks in the temple which family she was from.

The monk actually recognized Yu Youyao.

After investigating for more than two years, they actually did not find anything.

There was once when he had accidentally heard from his grandmother that before Eldest Madam Xie died, she had made 15 longevity locks for Yu Youyao. One of them looked like a red and yellow embroidered fish.

Only then did he suspect Yu Youyao.

Old Madam Yu was enlightened. No wonder Song Mingzhao suddenly liked Yao Yao. In the past two years, he had often entered and left the Yu Residence. This was an explanation.

He did not come over for no reason. After understanding why, she felt more at ease..

Chapter 578: Constantly Implicated

However, she had lived a long life. Old Madam Yu only said, "Back then, Yao Yao did leave the room. She fell until her head bled and she fainted. After that, she had a high fever. When she woke up, she was so shocked that she forgot what had happened before she fainted. The monks in the temple also kept quiet about the fugitive and pretended they didn't know about this."

She only mentioned that her granddaughter had fallen outside and bled. She neither admitted nor denied it.

Her words were flawless. Indeed, the older the wiser. Song Mingzhao lowered his eyes and said, "Grandmother Yu, don't misunderstand. I specially mentioned this today with no other intention. If it was really Miss Yao who saved my life back then, then Miss Yao has already saved me twice. I should repay such kindness no matter what."

Old Madam Yu's words were vague, and the meaning of her words was unclear. However, even though he had specially looked for Old Madam Yu, he deliberately mentioned this not to make her admit what had happened back then.

Instead!

Old Madam Yu prayed to Buddha and believed in fate and karma.

Yu Youyao had saved his life twice. This was not a coincidence, but fate. It was said that a drop of water should be repaid with a spring. Then what about the favor of saving his life?

With the huge favor of saving her life, Old Madam Yu would probably have more thoughts.

“I’ve been wearing this bracelet for many years. The few pieces of broken jade on it were left behind by my benefactor back then. I’ve always carried them with me.” Song Mingzhao untied the longevity knot on his wrist and removed the pieces of broken jade one by one, piecing them together.

Old Madam Yu had indeed seen Song Mingzhao wear this bracelet for many years. It seemed that he had never taken it off or she had never looked at it carefully. Now, she narrowed her eyes—

The few pieces of broken jade that had been pieced together actually looked like a yellow embroidered fish.

Old Madam Yu confirmed that the other half of the longevity lock that Yao Yao had broken back then was in Song Mingzhao’s hands.

It was indeed Yao Yao who had accidentally saved Song Mingzhao.

Even though she had a guess, Old Madam Yu was still a little surprised. She only smiled and said, “Yao Yao has a longevity lock with two fish on it, one red and one yellow. Her mother made it for her. Unfortunately, half of it was broken six years ago, and the other half was missing. It’s a little similar to the piece of fish on Heir Song’s hand.”

However, she couldn’t help but feel conflicted. She didn’t know what fate had formed between Yao Yao and Song Mingzhao in their previous lives, but this life-saving grace couldn’t be forgotten.

Old Madam Yu was vague. Clearly, she did not want to mention what had happened back then.

Song Mingzhao had achieved his goal and did not mention it anymore. He changed the topic. “Grandmother Song, there’s one more thing. I don’t know if I should say it or not.”

Seeing his serious expression, Old Madam Yu had a bad feeling. “Go ahead.”

Song Mingzhao nodded and said, “On the sixth day of the new year, on my way to the Precious Peace Temple, I happened to pass by a rice shop under Miss Yao’s name. At that time, the rice shop was giving out porridge, and there were many people eating porridge outside. As it blocked the street, the carriage went to the roadside to wait. However, I happened to see Third Prince bringing his companions into Miss Yao’s rice shop.”

With that, he lowered his eyes and tried his best to swallow the cough in his throat. He had painstakingly created a situation where his body was fine. He couldn’t let Old Madam Yu notice anything amiss.

In the prison, before he fainted, he saw the girl in his nightmare clearly. He had been in a daze for a long time and it had even made him sick— It was Yu Youyao!

At that time, he had just been whipped and was already a little dizzy. He did not know if it was an illusion.

However, that was no longer important.

He had never been afraid of the sudden prison sentence. When he was tortured, he was not thinking about his future.

Instead!

He had originally thought that after the five exams, he would be confident enough to ask his grandmother to personally go to the Yu Residence to propose marriage.

However, all of this was ruined by this sudden prison sentence.

Now, he was only 20 to 30% confident.

Grandmother Yu doted on Yu Youyao. The first thing she had to consider was his health.

Therefore, he ignored his grandmother's obstruction and insisted on going to the Precious Peace Temple to recuperate.

It was because he had long known that on the day of the Buddhist Festival,

Grandmother Yu would bring Yu Youyao to the Precious Peace Temple. As long as he saw Grandmother Yu, she would naturally think that his illness was not as serious as she had imagined.

This way, he was 30 to 40% confident.

This was the first step of his plan.

He had deliberately mentioned that Yu Youyao had saved him at the Precious Peace Temple back then. Old Madam Yu was a Buddhist and believed in fate and karma.

At the very least, it could increase his chances of success.

Old Madam Yu had painstakingly planned for Yu Youyao. After the two life saving encounters, it was impossible for her not to think about him. At the very least, he could increase her confidence in him.

Later on, when the matter of the Third Prince was mentioned, he could increase his confidence by 20%.

This way, he could almost succeed in what he wanted.

Indeed!

When Old Madam Yu heard this, even though she had lived for most of her life and was used to storms, her expression couldn't help but change. Her wrinkled hand trembled, and the cup slid to the ground with a bang. It shattered with a clang, and the tea in the cup spilled on her dress, turning a dark color.

Nanny Liu was shocked and quickly stepped forward. "Matriarch, are you alright?"

The crisp sound in her ears woke Old Madam Yu up. She tightened her grip on the armrest of the chair and said calmly, "It's fine. Just clean it up."

Nanny Liu quickly went to clean it up.

Old Madam Yu pinched her handkerchief and wiped the tea stains on her hand. Then, she said, "Thank you for telling me about this, Heir Song."

The emperor had yet to establish a heir, so it was inevitable that there would be a struggle for the position. The marriage of a prince would also become a very powerful bargaining chip in their hands.

The main concubine had to be the young miss of a noble family with military power or a high position.

A secondary concubine had to be someone with an outstanding family background and a good reputation.

The Assistant Minister of Official Personnel Affairs was a third-grade official position, and the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs was the head of the six ministries. Just this point alone was very eye-catching.

Eldest Son wasn't born in Hanlin. If he wasn't from Hanlin, he wouldn't be able to enter the central country of power. It was such an average family background that made things difficult.

For a family like the Zhenguo Marquis Residence, as long as the person who targeted Third Miss Song was not the current emperor, it would depend on whether the Zhenguo Marquis Residence was willing.

Not to mention that Yao Yao's maternal family, the Xie Residence, controlled nearly 30% of the country's trade routes. They had money and channels. Anyone would covet them. In addition, Yao Yao had been praised by the Empress Dowager.

This young miss's status was still a little low even though she was wealthy, beautiful, and had a well-connected family. However, a prince could marry two other secondary concubines in addition to the first concubine. Although the secondary concubines were also married in glory, they were fundamentally different from the lower-ranking concubines.

However, in terms of status, she was still a concubine..

Chapter 579: A Strong Attachment

Song Mingzhao had achieved his goal, so he did not want to stay for long. He used the fact that he had yet to recover and bade farewell.

Old Madam Yu looked at his back for a long time.

Nanny Liu also felt uneasy and couldn't help but ask softly, "Matriarch, what do you think we should do now? Since Heir Song has said this, he definitely didn't say it for no reason. If Third Prince really likes Eldest Miss, just because the Empress Dowager has praised her, Consort Xu only has to ask the emperor for a decree to betrothe her..."

The word "betroth" made Old Madam Yu feel a little dizzy. She gripped the armrest of the chair tightly. After a while, she said with difficulty, "Don't, don't panic!" After saying that, her body was already trembling, and even her breathing became heavier. "Let me think about it again."

After leaving the meditation room, Yu Youyao did not return to her room immediately.

The "cousins" strolled along the limestone path in the temple.

Chun Xiao and a few old maids followed from afar.

It was already noon, and the sun was shining brightly. However, the Precious Peace Temple was filled with flowers, trees, and green paths. There was a breeze, and it was a little cool. Even his mood became comfortable.

Unknowingly, they had arrived at the lake and mountain of the Precious Peace Temple.

Yu Youyao pointed at the old branch and apricot tree at the lake. "Cousin, the apricot flowers on the tree are blooming really well. They're as beautiful as three years ago."

Zhou Linghuai's eyelids couldn't help but twitch. He avoided the main point and said, "Yes, I even broke an apricot branch that bloomed just right for you."

He still remembered that the little girl was holding an apricot branch. The bright red buds on the branch were filled with pink and white flowers, complementing the little girl's young and innocent fair face. She was delicate and bright.

It was also because of this that he suddenly began to look forward to the sachet that the little girl had made for using with the thick and beautiful apricot flowers.

He waited for more than ten days.

The first sachet that the little girl had made was for him. The embroidery was very crude, but he liked it very much. He wore it every day, and Yu Shanxin despised it a lot.

Then, he said, "This is from my cousin."

Yu Shanxin's disdainful expressions turned to envy, because Yu Shuangbai was not good at needlework.

In the past two years, the little girl's embroidery skills had improved. It did not take much time to make sachets, fans, handkerchiefs, socks, waist seals, and so on, so she often gave them to him.

Yu Youyao's lips curled up as she deliberately said, "Cousin, if you hadn't mentioned what happened three years ago, I would have almost forgotten. At that time, if I was pricked, my entire body would feel pain!"

At that time, she was so afraid that she was about to die. Later, she was bewitched by the apricot branch that her cousin had given her. Just like that, she was coaxed until she couldn't remember anything!

Every time she mentioned what had happened three years ago, her cousin looked like he was facing a great enemy. He looked very interesting, so she couldn't help but want to tease him.

She had never cared about what had happened three years ago.

For some reason, her cousin seemed to be brooding over this.

Zhou Linghuai's expression froze for a moment. He untied the sachet at his waist and handed it to her. "Open it."

Her cousin liked zither patterns, so Yu Youyao made him something with this pattern. Later, she embroidered other patterns. Although her cousin liked them too, he did not wear them as often as this.

"What's there to see? I changed the dried flowers in the sachet not long ago." Yu Youyao took the sachet in confusion. As she muttered, she opened the sachet and looked in—

She couldn't help but be stunned!

There were some dried flowers stuffed into the sachet, but there was a strand of hair mixed in. This strand of hair should have been cherished by its owner and was often maintained with head oil. Even though it was separated from her scalp, it was black and shiny.

Everyone said that ten fingers were connected to the heart. Yu Youyao's fingertips trembled slightly, and so did her heart. "This, this strand of hair, did I leave it behind three years ago?"

It was obvious, wasn't it?

If she already knew, why did she still ask?

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "At that time, I didn't know that you were the one behind the rockery, so I didn't have time to stop you." At this point, he sighed softly. "I frightened you."

Although he hadn't hurt her, she was in shock. Every time Yu Youyao mentioned this, he couldn't help but feel a little short of breath.

He was very worried. What if Yu Youyao suddenly dug up old scores?

His father said, "Only villains and women are difficult to deal with. No matter how understanding and sensible a woman is, as long as she's unreasonable, she'll dig through the old scores with all her might. When she finds out and you're kneeling and begging for mercy, you still have to think of ways to coax her. Otherwise, the next time, she'll catch this old score and there'll be no end to it."

He spoke with a weathered expression and sighed.

It was obvious.

Thinking back to how his father had used many unscrupulous methods to pester his mother in order to marry a wife, he could most likely guess— Sooner or later, he would have to return the favor!

With his father's example, he had never dared to lie or be perfunctory when it came to Yu Youyao. He had to get her approval first.

Only this matter could be considered a small mistake.

At first, he did not notice Yu Youyao. Just as he was about to leave, he saw a strand of black hair on the rockery. He couldn't help but think of Yu Youyao, holding the apricot branch and looking delicate and happy. He had no idea that she had just walked through the gates of hell even after she kept saying, "Cousin, you're the best."

Perhaps she knew!

However, after he let go of his killing intent, this little girl, whose heart was as clear as glass, also let down her guard and fear towards him.

By the time he reacted, he had already taken off this strand of black hair. Later, he received the sachet that Yu Youyao had promised.

It was unknown how she had felt at that time, but he had placed this strand of carefully kept hair into his sachet and carried it with him.

Unknowingly, it had become a habit.

In the past two years, his sachet had often been changed. Only this strand of black hair had always been with him and had never left his body.

He had a strong emotional attachment to it.

At that time, this might have been an insignificant move of his, but who would have thought that it would be so meaningful? He hadn't even noticed it himself.

In this life, there was no action that was meaningless.

It stemmed from the heart.

He had a strong emotional attachment to it.

He followed his heart and kept this strand of black hair in his palm. It was already destined that love would surround his heart.

He had been arrogant and rebellious all his life, but he would never go against his heart!

This was probably the reason why he had always carried this strand of hair with him.

He needed to get her.

Yu Youyao's fingertips trembled slightly as she gently rubbed the embroidery on the sachet. "Have you always carried this strand of hair with you?"

It was pure coincidence that she had mentioned this strand of hair. It was just a strand of hair. Why did her cousin always carry it with him? Her heart couldn't help but tremble..

Chapter 580: Greed

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "I have to keep your things well."

When her cousin said this, a smile appeared on his lips. It was like a gust of wind that suddenly wrinkled a pool of spring water. Ripples spread on the sparkling water surface layer by layer.

This smile made Yu Youyao's heart surge like a ripple on a lake. "Why?"

Why? If I want to do it, I'll do it. Why are there so many whys? Zhou Linghuai's smile deepened. "Probably because I'm worried that one day, you'll dig up old scores with me?"

This was different from what she had expected. Yu Youyao pouted. "Cousin, are you still afraid of this?"

In her heart, her cousin was omnipotent, as if nothing frightened him.

"Yes, I'm afraid!" Zhou Linghuai admitted openly. He did not feel that the word "afraid" seemed to be a little cowardly, and it would also damage his manhood.

He took Yu Youyao's hand and held it gently.

Zhou Linghuai's palm was very big, wrapping her delicate hand in it, as if they were naturally compatible. "I'm very afraid of you. Because you're angry with me, you'll ignore me in the future."

Yu Youyao's eyes widened in disbelief. "Then, help me break a bunch of apricot branches. I promise that I won't ignore you because of this in the future." Since her cousin had been brooding over this matter, let's call it even. "I want the best apricot branches on the tree."

Zhou Linghuai's smile deepened. "Okay!"

Chang An pushed Zhou Linghuai to the lake. With a flick of his finger, a white chess piece shot out with a whoosh. With a crack, a red, pink, and white branch from the apricot tree fell from the tree and was caught by Zhou Linghuai.

He repeated his move and the branches fell one after another.

Chang An pushed Zhou Linghuai back.

Zhou Linghuai handed the apricot branches to Yu Youyao. "Do you like them?"

Yu Youyao quickly took the apricot branches and smiled happily. "I like it. I like it too much. Cousin's taste is definitely the best."

Although the peach blossoms were beautiful, they were not as beautiful as the apricot flowers.

Apricot flowers were beautiful, but they were not as bright as Yu Youyao.

After obtaining the apricot flowers, Zhou Linghuai changed his path.

After taking a few steps, Yu Youyao saw two rows of silver flowers planted on both sides of the limestone path. The trees were strange, strong, simple, and elegant.

It wasn't even May but the crepe myrtle had already surrounded the blooming branches. It was beautiful.

The beautiful scene made her feel very good. Unknowingly, they had arrived at the Bodhisattva of Wishes. Yu Youyao stood in the pavilion not far away and looked out.

The pavilion was located at a high spot, taking in the tall wishing Bodhi.

Yu Youyao pointed at a red ribbon at the top of the Bodhi of Wishes and exclaimed, "Cousin, look, someone can throw a wishing silk so high!" Zhou Linghuai took a look but smiled without saying anything.

Yu Youyao was only curious. "I heard that if you're sincere, it'll work. The higher you throw the wishing silk, the more effective it will be. I wonder if the owner of the wishing silk has fulfilled his wish."

Zhou Linghuai said meaningfully, "Perhaps it has already been realized."

Yu Youyao nodded. "The Bodhisattva of Wishes is really effective. The wish I made three years ago has also been fulfilled."

When Zhou Linghuai heard this, he deliberately asked, "What wish did you make? Previously, you didn't tell me because you were worried that your wish wouldn't come true if you said it. Now that your wish has been fulfilled, you can tell me, right?"

Yu Youyao blinked. "Guess?!"

Zhou Gonghuai chuckled. "Probably something about health."

Yu Youyao's eyes widened. "How, how did you guess?"

As he had already seen it, Zhou Linghuai smiled and said, "You said that my wish had already been fulfilled. In the past three years, the biggest change in me was probably that my legs and my body had recovered."

Yu Youyao pursed her lips. "You've already guessed it, but you're still deliberately asking me."

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "I just want to confirm it."

"Cousin, wait for me. I'll make a wish." Yu Youyao picked up her dress and ran out of the pavilion.

Zhou Linghuai did not follow. He saw her slender figure dance like a butterfly, light and agile, like a bright mountain light in the thick green.

Chun Xiao bought a wishing silk.

Yu Youyao held the brush for a long time. It was so long that the ink drop on the tip of the brush landed on the wishing silk. She hurriedly tried to salvage the situation and wrote down her wish. "I hope that my husband will live for a thousand years. I hope that I'll be healthy. I hope that we'll live together until we grow old."

Chun Xiao took out a hundred copper coins.

Yu Youyao placed them on the wishing silk one by one. She weighed them and frowned. "Not enough!"

Chun Xiao was stunned for a moment. She remembered that three years ago, when Young Miss made a wish, she had used a hundred copper coins. At that time, she felt that it was too little, but Young Miss said, "Buddhism emphasizes fate. Everything can be stopped when it's appropriate. All I want is peace of mind. "

But today, it was also a hundred copper coins to make a wish. Why did Young Miss feel that it was too little?

Chun Xiao was a little puzzled. She took out another string of money from her pouch and handed it to Young Miss.

The copper coins were strung onto the wishing silk one by one. When she was done wearing the wishing silk, Yu Youyao held the slightly heavy wishing silk in her hand and realized that she had unknowingly added a thousand copper coins.

Seeing that Young Miss was looking at the wishing silk in her hand in a daze, Chun Xiao instinctively felt that she was not in a good mood. She asked carefully, "If it's not enough, I..."

"It's enough!" Yu Youyao suddenly interrupted her. "This will do!"

The more copper coins strung on the wishing silk and the higher it was thrown, the more auspicious the outcome would be. Only then would it be easier to fulfill the wish.

Three years ago, she had only used 100 copper coins and wished for her cousin to be healthy. She had only asked for peace of mind.

However, now, this string of wishing silk that cost a hundred copper coins was too little and too light. She was worried that it would not be thrown high enough and end up inauspicious. She was even more worried that her wish would not be fulfilled, so no matter how much it was, she felt that it was too little.

In the end, she was still greedy.

What the hell was wrong with her?

Yu Youyao closed her eyes. When she opened them again, she looked down at the wishing silk in her hand. She stood on her tiptoes, closed her eyes, and casually threw it into the tree.

After throwing it, she opened her eyes.

She saw a lot of the same wishing silk floating on the tree. With the branches and leaves covering it, she could no longer tell which one she had thrown up just now.

Yu Youyao regretted it a little, so she asked Chun Xiao, "Which one did I throw just now?"

Chun Xiao shook her head. "I only saw that Young Miss's wishing silk was thrown high. There was a light in the crack of the tree, and it pierced into my eyes. For a moment, I didn't see where the wishing silk was thrown."

Yu Youyao was a little disappointed. She looked at the Bodhi of Wishes in a daze for a long time before saying, "Forget it. Cousin is still waiting for me. Let's go back!"

When they returned to the pavilion, it was getting late. Yu Youyao and Zhou Linghuai returned to their room along the way.

After they greeted each other, Old Madam Yu turned to look at Yu Youyao. "Your cousin wants to stay in the room for lunch.. Go down and prepare dinner!"