

All Hail 581

Chapter 581: A Sting in the Throat

Seeing her grandmother leaning against the couch with a tired expression, Yu Youyao was a little worried, but she only thought that her grandmother was tired from the bumpy journey and nodded in agreement.

After Yu Youyao left, the room immediately fell silent.

Old Madam Yu rubbed her forehead and said tiredly, “Just now, Heir Song came over. He said that on the sixth day of the new year, on the way to the Precious Peace Temple, he happened to see the Third Prince enter the rice shop where Yao Yao was giving porridge. Do you think...”

As soon as she heard this news, she was indeed flustered. Then, she thought of Zhou Linghuai and planned to discuss it with him first.

Zhou Linghuai’s gaze darkened. “Heir Song, probably didn’t just say this!”

Song Mingshi was extremely scheming. The sudden prison sentence did not extinguish the delusions in his heart. Instead, it made him brazen.

Good, very good

Old Madam Yu frowned. “TVs indeed not just about this...” Then, she recounted in detail how Yao Yao seemed to have saved Song Mingzhao six years ago in the Precious Peace Temple. She said, “After the broken jade pieces on the longevity knot were pieced together, it was indeed Yao Yao’s longevity lock back then. After it shattered, the other half was missing.”

Zhou Linghuai sneered. “Grandaunt, do you think Song Mingzhao likes Yao Yao?”

Old Madam Yu nodded. “In the past two years, he...”

Zhou Linghuai interrupted him. “Has he ever told Grandaunt that he likes Yao Yao?”

But!

He hit the nail on the head!

Old Madam Yu’s expression also darkened. It was said that bystanders saw things clearly, but those involved were confused. In the past two years, Song Mingzhao had indeed wanted to please her. His actions revealed that he liked Yao Yao.

Song Mingzhao had indeed never said anything that he liked Yao Yao, let alone made it clear. All of this was only part of her inference.

The corners of Zhou Linghuai’s lips twitched slightly. “If Song Mingzhao really likes Yao Yao and can tell Matriarch his intentions, I still respect him as a man. However...” Of course, respect was one thing, but he still had to do what needed to be done. “He’s not sincere enough since he’s being so indirect.”

Her words made Old Madam Yu’s expression turn even uglier. Song Mingzhao swallowed his words, probably out of etiquette.

Zhou Linghuai sneered. "When people drown, they often subconsciously grab the nearest piece of driftwood. He knows very well that Grandaunt dotes on Yao Yao, so you're naturally unwilling to let Yao Yao be involved in the struggle for the throne. You're even more unwilling to let Yao Yao get married and be a concubine. He took advantage of Grandaunt's loving motherly heart." Old Madam Yu came to a realization.

What saving grace of the Precious Peace Temple? This was also a bait that Song Mingzhao had deliberately thrown at her.

When he mentioned the Third Prince, even if she was still a little uncertain about Song Mingzhao, in order to protect her granddaughter, she would still be tempted by this life-saving kindness.

It was just that due to etiquette, some things couldn't be said clearly, but they could always be expressed. It was inevitable that people would feel uncomfortable plotting like this.

Old Madam Yu waved her hand. "Let's not talk about him. Since Song Mingzhao mentioned the Third Prince, it's probably not for no reason. I'm afraid the Third Prince is really keeping an eye on Yao Yao. What should we do about this?"

Indeed, it was easier to fool old people.

After being bewitched by Song Mingzhao for two years, she was already dizzy. She was not as insightful as the young man.

Song Mingzhao was a good person. Although he had many schemes, he only wanted to increase his chips and make himself more confident. For him to spend so much effort planning to marry Yao Yao, it was obvious that he really liked her.

However, the human heart was hidden too deeply. No one could guess it.

They did not happily interact with each other either. As time passed, it was inevitable that they would feel like a fishbone stuck in their throats.

Old Madam Yu couldn't criticize anything. This was also a sore point for most aristocratic families.

Since they were young, their families had high hopes for them. Their words and actions were closely related to the interests of the family. They could not do anything they wanted or did not want.

Zhou Linghuai said calmly, "In three months, the Imperial Court will reopen the examination. Even if there are any actions in the palace, they have to wait until after the examination. At that time, the Third Prince probably won't be in the mood to think about these toads wanting to punch above their weight."

Oh, calling them toads was really flattering.

They were more like worms.

These indifferent words made Old Madam Yu's heart tremble. "What do you mean?"

Zhou Linghuai only said, "There's still Concubine Lu in the palace. Even if she's sent to the cold palace, she used to be the imperial consort in charge of the phoenix seal and the harem."

Old Madam Yu was in a daze. She had been with the emperor's secondary concubine since she entered the residence and had always been respected. How could a woman who had become an imperial consort be defeated so easily?

After many years of managing the harem, it was not easy to eliminate her influence.

Concubine Lu had only been sent to the cold palace, but no matter how many crimes Ning Yuanbo had committed, it did not harm the emperor's interests.

Once the fraud case was over, Concubine Lu might be able to leave the Cold Palace.

Zhou Linghuai said calmly, "If Grandaunt is really worried, I'll get Master Hui Ji to evaluate Cousin's life later and say that she has a water life. It's not appropriate for her to be engaged too early."

Old Madam Yu immediately heaved a sigh of relief. "That's more appropriate."

The problem that had troubled her for two years was easily resolved by Zhou Linghuai.

In his early years, Grandmaster Hui Neng had enlightened him. He was one of the Six Wise Monks of the Precious Peace Temple. With him giving Yao Yao a life evaluation, she would have an excuse to stop the palace arrangements in the future.

Zhou Linghuai said calmly, "Of course I'll protect Yao Yao."

Old Madam Yu did not know how heavy a promise this sentence was. She only knew that after Zhou Linghuai said this clearly, she felt much more at ease.

A few days after the Buddhist Festival, Yu Jianjia returned from the manor.

Yu Jianjia was already twelve years old and had been recuperating for more than two years. She still looked weak, but she no longer looked sickly. She had lived in the manor for a long time, but her bearing, etiquette, and rules had not fallen behind at all. Her every move revealed good family upbringing, and she was no longer as gentle as before.

Old Madam Yu looked at the secret location and asked, "I heard from the clan aunt that you're back this time, but you don't plan to return to the manor in the future?"

Yu Jianjia smiled and nodded. "Imperial Physician Hu said that I'm recuperating well. It's the same if I recuperate at home in the future. Now that I'm old, it's not appropriate for me to stay in the manor all the time. This is not appropriate."

Old Madam Yu nodded when she heard this.

Yu Jianjia changed the topic. "In the past two years, it's been hard on

Grandmother and Eldest Sister to worry and manage everything for me. Now, it's my turn as a granddaughter to be filial to Grandmother and share some of

Eldest Sister's burden."

Even her words were clear. Matriarch Lu also smiled. "We're family. Your big sister and I will be happy if you recover.."

Chapter 582: Showing Off

If she wanted to make Matriarch happy, she only had to mention Yu Youyao more.

Yu Jianjia's gaze darkened. "I brought some wild animals from the manor. I'll send them to Eldest Sister later and thank her in person. Also, I haven't seen you for a long time. I miss you a little."

Old Madam Yu smiled. "It's not a coincidence. Your big sister planted agricultural items in the manor this year. There was sporadic rain yesterday evening, and this morning, she brought Nanny Xu to the manor to see the growth of the agricultural items. She probably won't be able to return to the residence until late in the afternoon."

In the past, if Yu Youyao wanted to go out, as long as she brought Nanny Xu along, she wouldn't stop her.

Yu Jianjia nodded. "Then I'll go over tomorrow."

After working hard all day, she definitely had to rest first when she returned home.

Old Madam Yu nodded. "In the past two years, you've been helping to manage the matters in the manor. Now that you've returned to the residence, you can learn more about managing the household from Nanny Liu. Seventh Aunt usually guides you in your studies. However, she's not as talented as Ms. Ye. You can't neglect your studies at home. Rest for a few days and go to class."

Yu Jianjia was going to the manor to recuperate, so she was worried that it would affect her studies. The clan aunt she had hired was also a little talented.

Although she was not as good as Ms. Ye, she could still teach Yu Jianjia.

Now that she looked at Yu Jianjia again, her personality had not changed much. However, her spirits had changed, and even her words and actions had improved.

It was obvious that one is marked by the company one keeps. She had asked her clan aunt to help take care of and teach her. This step was really the right one.

Every word and sentence was indeed kind, and she was sincerely planning for her. Unfortunately, with Yu Youyao as a comparison, she did not care as much about this grandmother-granddaughter relationship.

Yu Jianjia lowered her eyes. When she looked up again, her eyes were filled with admiration and gratitude. "Thank you, Grandmother."

Old Madam Yu thought about it again. Yu Jianjia had been missing classes for more than two years, so she said, "You've been recuperating for the past two years. I think you've missed some of your studies. Get someone to look for Ms. Ye later and spend more money to get Ms. Ye to teach you alone for an hour every day. You can catch up."

No matter how hard the clan aunt taught, she was not as famous and talented as Ms. Ye. This was also what Yu Jianjia was worried about. She did not expect Matriarch Ye to consider this for her.

She immediately said, "According to Grandmother's wishes, I'll definitely study hard and improve."

Old Madam Yu smiled. Then, she remembered that Yu Jianjia had a weak personality and was worried that she would lose out in her studies. She comforted her, "Back then, your eldest sister also neglected her studies for a few years. Later, when she learned to work hard, she caught up very quickly. Don't be too anxious. If you fall behind in your studies, it's fine to spend more time

catching up. You're smart to begin with, so I think you'll be able to catch up to the other sisters soon. You don't have to take it to heart. Your health is more important."

Matriarch had said this out of goodwill.

Yu Jianjia could also tell what was going on. Unfortunately, she was clearly comforting her, but she was comparing her to Yu Youyao for no reason. No matter how nice the words were, it was still very unpleasant to the ears.

It was like a fishbone stuck in her throat. Not only did she not feel happy, but she also felt very sick of it. Yu Jianjia lowered her head. "Grandmother is right.

I'll follow your instructions."

As the two of them spoke, Qing Xiu came over to report, "Matriarch, Concubine Jiang is here."

Old Madam Yu glanced at Yu Jianjia. Seeing that her eyes were lowered and she looked gentle, she nodded. "Please come in!"

Yu Jianjia immediately felt that she couldn't even drink her tea.

Two years ago, when her father had just been transferred to the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs, the Matriarch couldn't wait to take in the daughter of an official as her concubine.

Although she was from a small family, no matter how disobedient Yu Jianjia was, all she had to say was that she was the daughter of an official. In terms of upbringing, her mother was indeed inferior to Concubine Jiang.

Come to think of it, that made sense!

The legitimate daughter of a wealthy family had a legitimate mother to plan for her. Even if she spent more money to find a decent nanny in the Education Department and raised her from the side, she could still raise a good daughter.

After all, in a wealthy family, it was impossible for the first wife to let the daughter of a concubine surpass the first wife. Her upbringing would definitely be worse than that of the first wife.

When she met a vicious first wife like the Yang family, it was fine if she did not torture her, let alone raise her well.

Just like her mother, hadn't she also deliberately praised Yu Qingning to death?

No matter how reasonable Madam Yao was, she did not have a powerful nanny by her side to raise her fifth and sixth sisters.

This was the difference.

Fifth Sister and Sixth Sister were also learning from the household manager.

However, Yu Shuangbai was taught by her second aunt and mother, and usually had Nanny Qian to guide her. Fifth Sister and Sixth Sister were learning from the other nannies in the residence.

This was also the difference.

Yu Jianjia felt uncomfortable. In the past two years, her mother's head disease had become more and more serious, and the residence did not even invite a doctor often. It seemed that they wanted her mother to fend for herself.

How could she not understand that Matriarch Jiang couldn't wait for her mother to die so that she could support Concubine Jiang?

The Matriarch kept talking about etiquette and rules, but her behavior was really disgusting.

As she was thinking, Concubine Jiang had already rushed into the house. She was wearing a red outfit. Although it wasn't bright red, the color was vibrant and revealed a hint of charm. However, she was only wearing a few suitable accessories. She didn't look deliberately ostentatious, but she still revealed a good demeanor and aura.

A concubine showing off in front of the legitimate daughter.

Even though Yu Jianjia told herself to endure it, she couldn't help but feel angry.

Concubine Jiang said with a smile, "Our Third Miss has been recuperating in the manor for a while. She looks even better than the last time she came back. I think her body has really recovered. No wonder as soon as I entered the house, I saw Matriarch looking happy. Even her energy was different from usual. This is really a great thing."

Old Madam Yu valued Concubine Jiang and saw how generous she was. Although she wasn't as magnanimous and bright as Madam Xie, she was still a straightforward person.

Yu Jianjia pursed her lips and smiled shyly. "It's all thanks to Grandmother that my body can recover."

These words were not wrong. If it weren't for the fact that her mother was still in the Tranquil Heart Residence, she would probably have been like Yu Shansi, making Matriarch Yu calm down and think that she was really good to her. Concubine Jiang said, "I sent someone to the government office to send a letter to Master and asked him to leave the government office early today. At night, there will be a table of dishes at home. The family will be lively. It can be considered a small banquet to celebrate Third Miss's recovery." Before Yu Jianjia could say anything, Old Madam Yu smiled. "That's great!" Anyone would be happy that her family valued her so much.

However, Yu Jianjia did not think so. She took a look and saw the satisfied expression on Matriarch Jiang's face. She knew that Concubine Jiang's words had not only expressed her virtuous and magnanimous side, but also cultivated goodwill. It was really killing two birds with one stone.

Chapter 583: Embarrassed

However, she couldn't not accept this kindness. Yu Jianjia chuckled and said, "Thank you for your help, Concubine Jiang."

Concubine Jiang's smile deepened, and she changed the topic. "Third Miss's courtyard is cleaned every day. However, the master isn't around, so there are still some things lacking. I just ordered someone to go over and clean it up.

You..."

At this point, Yu Jianjia frowned and said, "Everything in the courtyard was bought for me by Mother in the past. Now that Mother is seriously ill, she has been recuperating in the Tranquil Heart Residence. My health isn't good, so I can't accompany Mother often. I can only look at things and

reminisce about my feelings. Concubine Jiang, please don't interfere in the matters in the courtyard in the future. I'll arrange for someone to take care of all the matters in the courtyard."

An Shou Hall fell silent.

Old Madam Yu lowered her eyes and twirled her prayer beads without saying anything.

"I-I was meddlesome." Concubine Jiang looked awkward. She was the one in charge of household management at home. She had originally had good intentions, but who knew that Third Miss would refute her in front of her? Naturally, she was embarrassed.

Although Madam Yang was seriously ill and had been recuperating in the Tranquil Heart Residence, she did not come out to see anyone.

However, in the end, she was the first wife, so she naturally had to respect her as a concubine.

Third Miss was a legitimate mistress of the residence. Even if she was a legitimate concubine, she could only be considered half a mistress. Naturally, Matriarch would not embarrass her granddaughter for a concubine.

She had long known that although the Third Miss of the Yu Residence looked gentle and weak, she was not as polite as Eldest Miss Yu.

Yu Jianjia nodded.

Only then did Old Madam Yu say, "It's been a long journey for you. Go back and recuperate early. Don't tire yourself out."

Yu Jianjia lost her appetite when she saw Concubine Jiang. She did not want to stay any longer. She stood up and bowed to Old Madam Yu before leaving An Shou Hall.

Seeing Concubine Jiang's awkward expression, Old Madam Yu said gently, "Go down and prepare for the family banquet!"

Concubine Jiang heaved a sigh of relief and quickly agreed.

In the first year, Yu Youyao was a little worried about growing sweet potatoes on a large plot of land.

The next day, before dawn, she had breakfast early and brought Nanny Xu, Chang An, a few maidservants, and eight guards to the Rogue Manor, which was the closest to the capital.

The reason why it was called Rogue Manor was because there were about 70 acres of land in the manor that produced Imperial Rogue rice.

Rogue rice was produced in Fengnan County, Hebei.

In the previous dynasty, there was an emperor who rode his horse to the area of Hebei. He saw that in the ten thousand acres, there was a field of rice that was red, shiny and different from the others. He pinched a few grains and rubbed off the rice shell that was as thin as a cicada's wing. It was as moist as rouge and emitted a refreshing fragrance.

After it was cooked, the rice was exquisite and smooth. It was also rosy and fragrant. Moreover, the texture was soft and tender, with endless aftertaste.

Therefore, he brought this rice back to the palace and conferred it the title of “Imperial Rice.”

It was also awarded to the concubines and all the beloved ministers.

A concubine who looked listless all day because she was not used to the weather in the north would eat it for a few days and she would become lively. Her face would look as if she was wearing rouge.

Seeing this, the emperor named it “Rogue rice.”

From then on, Rogue rice became famous as a nourishing item that nourished the Qi, blood, and internal organs. Many wealthy families planted it.

Unfortunately, Rogue rice required strict weather conditions and very little was produced.

When the previous dynasty’s emperor saw this, he was shocked. “This rice is like a peerless beauty. It’s extremely mellow and precious.”

So far, only Hebei and Jingzhao had areas to grow Rogue rice.

There were only five places in total.

The manor under Yu Youyao’s name was the manor where Madam Xie had married into the family back then. It was also the only manor in the capital that could grow rouge rice.

Rogue rice was tribute rice. 70% of the Rogue rice produced every year had to be paid to the Imperial Court, and the remaining 30% could belong to the owner.

Even Yu Youyao couldn’t eat it every day. Usually, she would make porridge or add some Rogue rice.

Rogue Manor was planted with Rogue rice. In addition, there was also polished round-grained rice. As the manor occupied a large area and was also planted with other dryland crops, it was also rich in resources.

This year, there was a drought, so the other lands in the Rogue Manor were planted with sweet potatoes.

After speeding up, Yu Youyao arrived at the Rogue Manor.

Seeing that Young Miss was in a daze, Nanny Yue quickly helped her into the residence and quickly prepared warm tea. While Yu Youyao was resting, she went to prepare a bath.

Seeing that Nanny Yue was so enthusiastic, Nanny Xu went to her room to rest.

The people in the manor were efficient. After Yu Youyao drank a cup of tea, she recovered from her daze, and Nanny Yue brought her to the room to take a shower.

There were a few sets of clothes in the carriage. Chun Xiao chose a thin and soft outfit and helped Yu Youyao put it on.

After taking a shower, Yu Youyao felt refreshed.

“I’ll tie Young Miss’s hair.” Nanny Yue was very happy and pulled Yu Youyao to the bed.

Yu Youyao quickly said, "Let Chun Xiao do it!"

Nanny Yue did not let her. "I'll do it. When First Madam was still alive, I was always the one serving her personally. I'm used to doing all of this. It's also because I'm not blessed. If I hadn't left the residence back then, the person who's serving Young Miss now would be me." At this point, her eyes welled up and even her voice choked. "Although I haven't done the job of serving others for many years, all these years, I've been thinking that one day, I would be able to return to Young Miss's side and serve her."

Yu Youyao's heart skipped a beat, so she did not stop her.

Before her mother passed away, although she had entrusted her to her grandmother, the person she really trusted was Nanny Yue.

Due to her mother's death, her grandmother couldn't let Nanny Yue get close to her in the residence so she sent her out.

Nanny Yue had also made a concession for her and listened to her grandmother's arrangements.

Not being able to serve her was probably Nanny Yue's greatest regret.

Nanny Yue was telling the truth when she said that she wished she had the chance to serve her.

The soft towel covered her hair and dried it bit by bit. It was of the right weight, so it had never hurt Yu Youyao. After most of her hair was dry, she pressed her fingers against her scalp and massaged it inch by inch. Yu Youyao's scalp even loosened, and she subconsciously leaned lazily into the bed, feeling a little sleepy.

Nanny Yue smiled and said, "When First Madam was still alive, every time she was tired or in a bad mood, she liked to wash her hair and let me help rub her head. Then, she fell asleep. When she woke up, she was full of energy. Nanny

Liu learned how to massage her head from me."

Yu Youyao also liked it and said vaguely, "Nanny, remember to call me after an hour..."

Before she could finish speaking, Yu Youyao's eyelids fluttered and she fell asleep.

This scene made Nanny Yue think of Eldest Madam Xie in a daze. Her eyes welled up again, and tears fell onto the back of her hand. She quickly tilted her head and blinked a few times before holding back her tears..

Chapter 584: Rogue Manor

About the time it took to burn an incense stick, Nanny Yue stopped massaging and called Chun Xiao into the house to serve her. She went to the kitchen herself, preparing to cook personally.

As soon as Nanny Yue entered the kitchen, she saw that there were a lot of ingredients piled up. She knew immediately.

When the people in the manor knew that Young Miss was here, someone went to the nearby river to catch small yellow croakers and some small fish.

There were also people who were worried that Young Miss would not have a good appetite since she rushed over, so they took out the pickled vegetables and dried vegetables they had made.

There were also people who took out the mushrooms they had picked in the morning.

There was a reason for them to do this.

In the past two years, the new year had not been good, and many tenants in the manor were not having a good time. Eldest Miss had changed the date of the tenant silver distribution early in the morning. Initially, it was paid in half a year, but later, it was paid in March. In the end, it was paid in a month. Now, it was paid in ten days. When the tenants had money, they could stock up on more food.

Young Miss had discounted the prices of the crops in the manor that were slightly inferior and sold them to the nearby farmers first.

The weather was dry, so many crops could not be planted. Some farmers did not have any work to do, so Eldest Miss hired them to cut trees in the mountains and plant some trees that could grow in dry weather.

The farmers' families all had a few acres of land. If the weather was not good, they would not be able to harvest anything.

Eldest Miss had prepared dried and drought-resistant medicinal herbs seeds and asked them to plant them at home. When the medicinal herbs were harvested, they would be sold at market price.

With work to do, the farmers would definitely be able to live well.

The nearby farmers were very grateful to Eldest Miss.

Every month, when the village sent things to the Yu Residence, they would bring some of their items over. The farmers had gone up the mountains to find some precious wild animals. There was not much, but it was a token of their appreciation.

When Yu Youyao woke up, it was already past noon.

She slept for more than an hour.

After Nanny Yue finished helping Yu Yao wash up and comb her hair, she instructed her to prepare dinner. Not long after, the table was filled with dishes. 'Young Miss, you're used to eating Beijing cuisine. I specially made a table of Min cuisine for you to change your taste. It's just that there are limited ingredients, so I only made some small dishes. I wonder if you like them.'

After Nanny Yue finished helping Yu Yao wash and comb, she instructed her to prepare dinner. Not long after, the table was filled with dishes. "Young Miss, you're used to eating Beijing cuisine. I specially made a table of Min cuisine for you to try something new. It's just that there are limited ingredients, so I only made some small dishes. I wonder if you like them."

"Thank you, Nanny. I like it very much." Yu Youyao favored Min cuisine, especially the seafood. Nanny Yue's culinary skills were very good. The simple ingredients made everything 120% fresher.

Yu Youyao ate in satisfaction. After dinner, she drank the digestion tea prepared by Nanny Xu and suggested going to the farmland to take a look.

Nanny Yue looked at the sun outside and hesitated.

Yu Youyao said, "I can't stay in the manor for long. I'll rest for a night at most. I have to return to the residence tomorrow morning. Since it's still early, I'll take a look around first."

Nanny Yue could only agree.

She ordered someone to prepare tea, snacks, umbrellas, and so on before taking Yu Youyao to the farmland.

The manor was filled with fruit trees and flowers. Nanny Yue led Yu Youyao to a path covered by shady trees. After walking for a long time, Yu Youyao was not exposed to the sun.

When they arrived at the farmland, Yu Youyao could see from afar that there were rows of rice planted in a large field.

Nanny Yue said, "This area is the Rogue rice field. The Rogue Rice is planted in late March every year, a month earlier than other rice seeds. Currently, it's not the driest time yet. The rice is growing well. In another month or so, the rice stalks will be harvested. If there's not enough rain, we have to forcefully irrigate it and carry water to the field."

Yu Youyao frowned. "How many wells are in the paddy field?"

Nanny Yue said, "Every ten acres of land, there's a well. The Rogue rice is meticulously prepared, so the harvest can be guaranteed. The white rice should have been planted in the fields in early April, but it hasn't rained until this day.

It's not easy to store water in the paddy fields. They have to be planted in late April at the latest. If it doesn't rain this month, even if they are forcefully planted, the harvest won't be easy."

Yu Youyao saw that in the farmland, there were tenants carrying water into the field. "Go and see how the sweet potatoes are growing."

Nanny Yue nodded.

The manor was very big. Even though she had taken a shortcut, it took at least the time it took to burn an incense stick. Fortunately, Yu Youyao had changed into short boots, so it was more convenient for her to walk. She was not in a hurry to travel, so she did not feel too tired.

When they arrived, Yu Youyao saw rows of ridges in the ground. The dense sweet potato vines were green and unaffected by the sky.

Nanny Yue smiled and said, "The tenants in the manor are all used to tending to the crops. As soon as I told them about the planting of the sweet potatoes, some farmers said that such crops with long stems in the soil had to be planted deep in the sand to grow well. The long vines would then grow very quickly. Taking advantage of the fact that there was a sporadic rain yesterday that wet the ground, they inserted a sweet potato piece to see the situation. If they can survive, they will be planted on a large scale at the end of the month."

The tenants said that the sweet potato vines were a little tender. They estimated that it would be best to cut them before and after the Dragon Boat Festival.

Seeing that the sweet potatoes were growing well, Yu Youyao was completely relieved. It seemed that the sweet potatoes in the North were growing well.

Yu Youyao pondered for a moment. "When it doesn't rain at the end of the month, cut the seedlings of the white rice by half and plant drought-resistant crops in the rice fields. The planting of sweet potatoes will also increase."

If it weren't for the fact that the soil in the rice fields was fertile and not conducive to sweet potato planting, she would have planted sweet potatoes in all the fields.

Nanny Yue was a little hesitant. "White rice is the main food. How can it be reduced? Moreover, this is the first time the manor has planted sweet potatoes on a large scale. Is it..."

Yu Youyao shook her head. "The Imperial Astronomer has calculated it. There's not much rain this year, so the Imperial Court has long sent out a notice asking for many types of dry crops. There's less production of Rogue rice, so there's no harm in carefully tending to it. The white rice is planted in a wide area, and we can still rely on carrying water now. If there's less rain when we're harvesting, how many fields can we manage with just the tenants? If the weather is too dry, there won't be any place to get water."

Although the weather prediction of the Imperial Astronomer was not always accurate, he was still generally trustworthy.

The most important thing about rice was that it took a month to plant the seedlings and for them to grow. During these two periods, they had to take note of the growth of the rice and the ear of grain. If there was a lack of water, it would mean a reduction in production.

At this point, she sighed slightly. "If we reduce the number of white rice seedlings, even if the weather is serious and the tenants put in a lot of effort, we can still have a larger harvest. Don't be too greedy when the time comes. If we don't care for the crops properly and harvest too little, the gains won't make up for the losses. Moreover, the production of sweet potatoes isn't low. It's not harmful to have more."

Nanny Yue nodded. "I will take note of this."

Rice was the main food. She couldn't accept it for a moment, but after hearing Young Miss's explanation, she knew that no one knew how long the drought would last. If they planted drought-resistant crops, at least the harvest could be preserved. As long as there were crops in the fields, no matter what crops were planted, it would still be food.

Nanny Yue brought Yu Youyao to look at the other crops..

Chapter 585: Kowtow

Most of the sand land in the manor could not be planted on because of the drought, so it was empty. They were preparing to cut the sweet potato vines at the end of the month. The crops were resistant to the drought, so the entire plantation would be useful.

The other portion of the good farmland was planted with drought-resistant food crops. It was not the driest period yet, and their growth was alright.

When they returned to the manor, the sun was already setting.

An old woman came over to report, "Eldest Miss, someone from the Little Li Manor near the Rogue Manor has come. They heard that Eldest Miss was here and specially came over to kowtow to you."

The farmland in the Rogue Manor was rented to the people in the Little Li Manor.

In the past two years, the weather had not been good either. Furthermore, there was a shortage of crops. Many of the farmers in the other farms were not happy. Almost all the farmers in Little Li Manor had a lot of food stored.

It was all because Eldest Miss was kind.

Yu Youyao was stunned for a moment. "Invite everyone in!"

She had originally thought that at most, there would be a steward and a few agile men.

Unexpectedly, as soon as they were invited into the courtyard, there were dozens of people filling the small courtyard.

When the group saw Yu Youyao, they knelt on the ground and kowtowed without any explanation.

Leading the way was the steward of Little Li Manor. He was about fifty years old and was wearing a set of clothes that were neither new nor old, but were very neat.

This reminded Yu Youyao of Zhou Yongchang, the manager of Little Zhouzhuang three years ago.

As a steward, Zhou Yongchang was wearing silk and looked imposing.

However, Steward Li was a very thrifty servant and looked loyal.

Steward Li said, "In the past two years, the new year hasn't been good, and every family hasn't lived well. It's also thanks to Eldest Miss that life in Little Li Manor can be more stable. When the people in the manor found out that Eldest Miss was here, they wanted to come over and kowtow to her."

As soon as he spoke, the others below spoke gratefully.

"The Great Li Manor next door has already run out of food. The people in the manor go up the mountain every day to dig for wild vegetables and scrape tree bark, waiting for the harvest in the second half of the year to happen. It's also because Eldest Miss is kind-hearted and gave us silver in advance. She even reminded us to save our food early..."

"I heard that people in the Wang family village just a few miles ahead eat

Guanyin clay. If it weren't for Eldest Miss..."

"It's also because Eldest Miss is kind-hearted. Not only did she sell the food in the manor to us at a discount, but she also asked us to go up the mountain to cut and plant trees. Our family will also have an additional income now..."

Yu Youyao heard them talking at once, but she did not expect the drought to have such a huge impact.

If the treasury was abundant and the court was clear, someone would have long gone to the Imperial Court to relieve the disaster and prepared to open a warehouse to provide food.

However, now, there was no response from the Imperial Court. They had to wait for the disaster to spread on a large scale before the Imperial Court had no choice but to take action.

At that time, the tragedy would have already happened. How many families would have been destroyed?

The nobles in the capital did not like the noise. Steward Li quickly stopped the families from talking at once. "Country bumpkins don't follow the rules. If they have offended Eldest Miss, please forgive them."

Yu Youyao shook her head. "Get up quickly. I've heard Nanny Yue mention that all these years, the Little Li Manor has done their best in the manor and is very good at taking care of the crops. The method of planting the sweet potatoes was something you thought of. I went over to take a look just now. The sweet potato vines are growing well. Since you're working hard, I can still afford to give you a meal. There's no need to bow!"

If someone respected me, I would respect them tenfold.

Steward Li said excitedly, "Eldest Miss, don't worry. Our Little Li Manor has been working in the Rogue Manor for generations. We're good at tending to the crops. We'll definitely do our job well."

Yu Youyao nodded. "The sweet potatoes in the field are in the first year of planting. There's a drought this year, and it's not easy to plant crops. I'll have to trouble you to take care of them."

Steward Li hurriedly said, "We're all old farmers. Potatoes can definitely be planted well."

Previously, Nanny Yue had taken a fist-sized root and told him that this crop could bear three to four fruits on a vine. Eldest Miss had instructed them to plant the new crops carefully this year.

When he heard that there would be a large production of sweet potatoes, he was interested.

The sweet potato vines were distributed. He pinched a handful of tender leaves and returned home. He blanched them in boiling water and added a little oil. He scooped them up in the pot and tasted them. They were actually more delicious than many wild vegetables. Then, he threw in a handful of braised rice. They could stave off hunger.

How could he not care about the entire edible crop?

The people in the manor did not dare to be careless.

Yu Youyao smiled and nodded. She thought about how they had to take a short path to rush over from Little Li Manor. Now that the sun was out, it would be dark when they returned home.

Then, she instructed Nanny Yue to prepare some pancakes from the kitchen before leaving.

Steward Li and the others thanked her again.

This was also the first time the others from Little Li Manor had seen Yu Youyao. Although this Eldest Miss was dressed imposingly and luxuriously, she treated others very gently. When she spoke, her voice was gentle and she did not put on airs. She was really a good person!

Yu Youyao returned to the inner room.

Nanny Yue said, "The people from Little Li Manor have sent Eldest Miss some mountain goods, a basket of eggs, and ten hens. What do you think we should do with them?"

These things were probably prepared by Little Li Manor.

Yu Youyao was a little surprised. "It's always a token of their appreciation, so just accept it. When they leave tomorrow, I'll bring it back to the residence. I'll give some things to Steward Li and let him handle them himself. Then, I'll get the kitchen to prepare more pancakes and let them bring them back."

Nanny Yue understood. The pancakes were made of flour and oil. They were considered real food. Young Miss had asked them to bring more back to eat with their relatives at home. Although life in Little Li Manor was passable, it must have been a long time since they had seen oil or eaten real food.

She did not take kindness for granted.

A person's kindness always started from a young age. If one couldn't even be kind when young, they would never be truly kind.

Yu Youyao rested at the Rogue Manor for the night. The next day, when it was dawn, she had already rushed back to the residence.

When she returned to the residence, it was already noon.

After freshening up, Yu Youyao felt a little more energetic. Liu'er helped Young Miss dry her hair, took out jasmine head oil, and helped her nourish her hair.

Xia Tao leaned over. "Third Miss returned to the residence yesterday and even brought a little girl back with her. Her name is Bai Ye. Third Miss saw that Bai Ye was smart) so she kept her in her room and planned to take care of her." This was not a big deal. She had to tell Eldest Miss.

Yu Youyao was deep in thought and nodded. "Since Seventh Aunt didn't stop her, I think she has a clean background. As the third daughter of the first wife of the Yu Residence, it's only right for her to take a fancy to a maidservant. Besides, ever since Hui Xiang left Yu Jianjia's side, although she doesn't lack people to serve her, she still lacks someone who can be focused on her needs.."

Chapter 586: A Beautiful Woman

Previously, some of the people in Yu Jianjia's courtyard had been sent to the manor, and some had been sold. Hui Xiang was a child who became a personal maidservant and served a master.

Unless she made a huge mistake and was beaten to death, such a maidservant could not be sent away.

It wouldn't be good if someone who had served her master personally revealed any secrets about her outside and damaged her reputation.

Hui Xiang would reject a maidservant like that.

In the past two years, Ai Ye had been the only one by Yu Jianjia's side. Her grandmother had originally wanted to choose a suitable maidservant to give to Yu Jianjia.

It was Yu Jianjia who did not agree.

Her grandmother did not force her, so she sent more people to serve Yu Jianjia.

It was not a big deal to take in a maidservant. As long as she passed her grandmother, it would be an easy process.

Xia Tao mentioned An Shou Hall again. "Yesterday, in front of Matriarch, Third Miss embarrassed Concubine Jiang and prevented her from interfering in the matters of her courtyard. She even mentioned Eldest Madam Yang. Not only did Concubine Jiang hold back her anger, but she also set up a banquet to welcome Third Miss home tonight."

Yu Youyao leaned against the couch. "I haven't been home for a long time, so I have to take the opportunity to establish my authority in the residence. It's only logical to start with the household manager's concubine."

Her methods were quick, but Yu Jianjia did not have to do this.

Even though Yu Jianjia was recuperating in the manor, the family did not treat her badly. Now that she had returned home, the servants did not dare to be negligent.

Didn't she see that Concubine Jiang was in a hurry to prepare a banquet for Yu Jianjia?

However, Yu Jianjia was cold by nature and thought too much. It wasn't that she couldn't see or feel how well others treated her. It was just that this was not in line with her interests, needs, and ambition. Due to her vanity, she would feel that others weren't treating her well enough. She was the classic type of person who would resent others for their kindness.

It wasn't exactly accurate to call her an ingrate.

Yu Jianjia's personality was like that. No matter what, she had to be calculative and try to take advantage of the situation. She was always scheming and this included her friendships.

She was like this to Madam Yang.

Whether it was an ingrate, a wolf, or a real villain, they were not as terrifying as—

A hypocrite!

Yu Jianjia was such a person. She disguised herself perfectly at all times, but she had all kinds of thoughts and schemes behind her back. She was wearing a sheepskin, so others did not know that she was actually a wolf.

As she was thinking, Chun Xiao came over to report, "Third Miss is here. She's waiting in the reception pavilion."

Yu Youyao's expression darkened. "Go and freshen up!"

After rubbing her head, her hair was already dry. Liu'er's hands were skillful as she combed her young miss's hair into a Feixian bun, revealing her smooth forehead. The hair at the back of her head was also tied up with a hairpin. The tassel pendants on it swayed lightly, like a real person. She was beautiful and noble.

The word "extraordinary" was the best description.

Thanks to her biological mother, Madam Xie's beauty, the number one beauty in the capital was indeed worthy of her reputation.

Even Yu Jianjia, who was conceited about her appearance, felt a little ashamed.

She subconsciously pinched her handkerchief and bowed respectfully to Yu Youyao. "Hello, Big Sister."

"I've made Third Sister wait for a long time. Sit down and talk!" Yu Youyao returned the greeting and saw a submissive maidservant in a dark blue sleeved shirt standing behind Yu Jianjia.

It should be Bai Ye that Xia Tao had mentioned.

Noticing her gaze, Yu Jianjia said, "This is Bai Ye. She's my new maidservant. Bai Ye's ancestral grandmother used to clean Grandmother's house. Later, after the First and Second Mansions split up, the residence sent a group of older old maidservants over. Bai Ye's ancestral grandmother is one of them." Yu Youyao looked at Bai Ye again and said, "She's a well-behaved girl."

The servants who had signed a death contract were in the hands of the main family. They had basic loyalty to their masters. The children of the family would serve them for generations, so they were basically entrusted with heavy responsibilities.

The servants who could be released were all servants who had signed a living contract.

Bai Ye's grandma probably did the same.

However, with Bai Ye's situation, it was probably impossible for her to be promoted to a maidservant. There were other reasons.

Indeed!

Yu Jianjia changed the topic and said, "Coincidentally, Bai Ye's family is in the Liu Village under the hot spring manor. Her parents have passed away, and she depends on her ancestral grandmother. Her ancestral grandmother is old and her health isn't good, so she asked Bai Ye to sign a death contract and work in the manor. Bai Ye is used to serving her ancestral grandmother and knows some pharmacology. She also knows how to take care of others.

Seventh Aunt saw that she was smart and taught her a little, so she placed her in my house to serve her. Yesterday, I brought Bai Ye to An Shou Hall to visit Grandmother. Grandmother was also very satisfied with Bai Ye."

Hence, she naturally mentioned the maidservant.

Yu Youyao understood immediately.

Bai Ye's ancestral grandmother had a master-servant relationship with the Yu Residence. She also had a clean family background. Coincidentally, the hot spring manor was in the Liu Residence, so it was a rare fate.

After signing the death contract, Bai Ye was proficient in pharmacology and knew how to take care of others. Seventh Aunt was also very satisfied with her.

She was the most suitable person to serve Yu Jianjia.

In the past two years, Yu Jianjia's health has been improving. The people serving her must have contributed greatly.

Under such circumstances, it was only logical for Bai Ye to be her maidservant.

“It’s rare to meet a girl you like. It’s also because you’re fated with her.” Yu Youyao smiled faintly. Yu Jianjia had brought her to her to take a look.

No matter what Yu Jianjia did, no one could find fault with her.

Yu Jianjia turned to look at Bai Ye and instructed, ‘Greetings, Eldest Miss.’

Bai Ye quickly walked out from behind Third Miss and knelt on the ground with a thud. She kowtowed three times to Yu Youyao. ‘Greetings, Eldest Miss.’

Yu Youyao said calmly, “Third Miss has a gentle and kind personality. Shes never harsh on the servants. Your Master is kind. You have to thank her for her kindness and serve her with all your heart. Don’t bully her and be arrogant.”

After what had happened to Lan Zi, Hui Xiang, and the others, as the big sister, she naturally had to teach the new Bai Ye a lesson.

Bai Ye hurriedly said, “My ancestral grandmother’s health isn’t very good. It’s because Third Miss is kind-hearted and hired a doctor to treat my ancestral grandmother. Eldest Miss, don’t worry. I’ll definitely not let you down and serve you well.”

Yu Youyao nodded. ‘Get up!’

After Bai Ye kowtowed to thank her, she stood up and retreated behind Yu Jianjia.

Yu Jianjia’s gaze darkened, and even her lips curled up slightly.

The maidservant changed her tea. It was clear and yellow, glossy, and fragrant. Yu Jianjia liked tea, so she subconsciously picked up a teacup and took a sip.

The maidservant changed her tea. It was clear and yellow, glossy, and cinnamon. After it entered her throat, she immediately felt mellow and refreshed. After the tea entered her stomach, she savored it carefully, leaving a wisp of cinnamon fragrance between her lips and teeth.

Even when drinking warm tea, it did not have a hint of bitterness. Instead, it was very refreshing.

It was very special..

Chapter 587: A Beauty’s Death

Yu Jianjia subconsciously asked, “Big Sister, what tea is this?”

Yu Youyao smiled. “This is a special jade laurel leaf from a manor in Wuyi Mountain. After it’s made into tea, it’s also called Rougui tea. It’s also delicious to drink it warm. If Third Sister likes it, I’ll give some to you later.”

The fragrance of the Rougui tea was unique and nourished the blood and qi. It was more suitable for women’s taste

In addition, the weather was hot. Drinking hot tea would make one sweat. If the tea was cold, it would damage the taste of the tea leaves.

The Rougui tea was hot and had a warm taste.

Yu Jianjia thanked her happily, "Thank you, Big Sister."

"You're welcome." Yu Youyao shook her head and changed the topic. "I went to the manor yesterday to see the growth of the crops. I was delayed by some matters, so I rested in the manor for the night. I didn't know that Third Sister had returned to the residence. I heard that the family held a banquet for her yesterday. I hope that my absence didn't dampen her mood."

Yu Jianjia smiled gently. "There was a drought this spring, and Eldest Sister's Rogue Manor has been planted with imperial farm rice. Naturally, we can't be careless. It's more appropriate to go to the manor to take a look. Even Father praised Eldest Sister yesterday for being a person with foresight."

Every year, the Yu Residence would receive a lot of rewards from the Imperial

Court for the rogue rice. With this honor, her father would be more stable in the royal court.

At least 20% of the remaining 30% of the Rogue rice was given out in return. A bowl of rice was more than a thousand taels. No family in the capital did not want it.

The remaining 10% was for the residence to eat.

Fortunately, Yu Youyao was generous. In the past two years, she had eaten porridge made with Rogue rice for breakfast every day. Naturally, there were benefits from eating it.

This was a natural medicinal rice that was very nourishing.

Yu Youyao nodded and asked, "How's your health recently? Did you invite Imperial Physician Hu to treat you after returning to the residence yesterday?"

It was impossible for Yu Youyao not to know how healthy she was. Yu Jianjia nodded. "As soon as I returned to the residence yesterday, Grandmother invited Imperial Physician Hu into the residence. After taking my pulse, he said that I was recuperating well."

Yu Youyao also knew that Yu Jianjia had indeed recuperated well. In the past, her foundation had been damaged. Now, she only recuperated 60 to 70%. She probably won't be able to recover more in the future.

If Yu Jianjia was willing to listen to Imperial Physician Hu and recuperate in peace, it would be fine except that she might have some difficulty having children.

However, if it was like before, this 60-70% recovery would not be enough.

Her body had not fully recovered, so she had to pay special attention to the storage and nourishment of the essence oil. If she boiled the oil faster than she did, she would die from boiling the oil. She would be destined to not live for long.

Yu Youyao smiled. "Since I'm still young, I think I'll be able to recover after recuperating for another two years." Advice was unpleasant to the ears. Yu Jianjia was clearly not someone who would listen. She changed the topic and asked, "Have you visited First Madam?"

Yu Jianjia lowered her eyelashes slightly to hide the coldness in her eyes. "I went to take a look at her yesterday afternoon."

Ever since news spread in the residence that her mother had caused First Madam Xie's death, Yu Youyao no longer pretended to be a filial daughter. She was not even willing to call her "Mother". Instead, she called her "First Madam."

Her grandmother and father also knew, but no one said anything.

The first wife of a wealthy family was married to a noble lady of the same social status. If the first wife died, with the status of a second wife, she could overshadow the first wife.

The first wife was domineering, and the children of the first wife basically did not call their second wife "mother." They all called her "First Madam."

It wasn't considered unruly, but it didn't necessarily mean that they were very respectful.

After all, she couldn't say anything about the first wife. Yu Youyao tapped her teacup lightly. "I've been busy recently and haven't visited First Madam in a long time. How's she doing?"

Just because she hadn't been there to take a look didn't mean that she didn't know. Now that her mother was sick and bedridden all year round, she had lost weight. She looked neither human nor ghost.

Yu Jianjia's heart seemed to have been stabbed by someone. Even her expression darkened as she said worriedly, "It's still the same."

Earlier, her mother had been having nightmares every day. She had always felt that her mother's madness was unusual.

After Concubine Jiang entered the residence, her suspicion became even stronger.

All these years, relying on her father's love, she had many connections in the residence. She secretly checked her mother's daily meals, medicine, incense, and so on, but did not find anything unusual.

Yu Youyao also sighed softly and did not mention this anymore.

Previously, she had gone to visit Madam Yang. Madam Yang's bones had dried up, and even her body had become withered. She was even more terrifying than the exhausted Yao Yao from her nightmare.

Yu Jianjia forced herself to perk up. "By the way, I returned to the residence yesterday and picked up some wild animals from the manor. I specially brought some over for Eldest Sister to try. It's not anything rare." Yu Youyao nodded. "Thank you, Third Sister."

Although Yu Jianjia often lived in the manor, she was very close to the residence. From time to time, she would send some farm animals, wild animals, mountain goods, and some small things that she made herself into the residence.

After a while, even Grandmother felt that she was a little closer to her third granddaughter.

After chatting for almost an hour, Yu Jianjia made an excuse. "I've disturbed you for so long. I think you're tired, so I won't disturb your rest."

Yu Youyao did not ask her to stay. "I'll send Third Sister off."

Not long after Yu Jianjia returned to the courtyard, Liu'er sent over a box of jade laurel tea and a Four Treasures of the Study set. The gifts were to make up for yesterday because Eldest Miss had failed to welcome Third Miss home.

Yu Jianjia accepted them politely.

After that, Yu Jianjia stayed in the courtyard and continued to recuperate. Other than going to An Shou Hall every now and then to greet Old Madam Yu, she did not come out much.

The weather was getting hotter and hotter day by day. Yu Youyao felt bitter and hot, so she ordered someone to get the Dragon Resting Stones that her cousin had given her from the ice cellar. They were placed in the study and bedroom.

The Dragon Resting Stones were as cold as ice.

Although a piece couldn't cool the entire room down, when she sat closer to it, it was very cooling.

Yu Youyao's birthday was next.

In the first two years, every time the Buddhist Festival ended, Old Madam Yu couldn't help but start talking about her granddaughter's birthday, and the family began to make preparations.

On April 18th, she invited her good friends into the residence to have fun. Although Yu Youyao kept a low profile and did not go out often, because of her reputation for talent and virtue, many families in the capital fought to befriend her. Her birthday was also grand.

However, this year!

Old Madam Yu sighed slightly and rubbed the blessing bag in her hand.

This was Master Hui Ji's order for his granddaughter.

One of the orders said, "This woman's life depends on fire. There's a calamity at the age of 14. This calamity should be related to marriage. It's the fate of a beauty to die tragically. It's not appropriate to be engaged before the age of 14.

Otherwise, her life will be in danger."

When the Matriarch saw this, she was so shocked that she trembled and fell onto the couch. She clutched her chest and panted..

Chapter 588: Born with a Phoenix Fate

"Matriarch—" Nanny Liu was shocked. She quickly took out the incense pill that Eldest Miss had prepared in the house and crushed it. She fed it to Matriarch and served her a cup of tea.

Only then did Old Madam Yu recover, but she still did not look too good.

Nanny Liu had lingering fears and quickly said, "Matriarch, what's wrong? Are you feeling unwell? I'll get someone to get a doctor immediately..."

Old Madam Yu shook her head. "I'm fine. It's just that when I suddenly saw Master Hui Ji's orders for Yao Yao, my heart suddenly palpitated so much that I couldn't calm down for a moment."

At that moment, she almost couldn't breathe.

It was as if the words written on it had already happened.

Old Madam did not show her Master Hui Ji's order, so Nanny Liu naturally did not dare to ask further. However, Old Madam's reaction just now was too terrifying, and Nanny Liu was worried that the order was bad.

Eldest Miss had been taken care of by her since she was young, so how could she not worry?

Hence, she asked carefully, 'Eldest Miss is blessed. There's no better eldest sister in the capital.'

Old Madam Yu looked at her deeply and sighed slightly. "I'm just afraid that she's too good. We're too blessed. Our family can't afford to provide for her or protect her."

Nanny Liu's heart was in her throat.

For some reason, she thought of the Third Prince.

Master Hui Ji's second reading. "This woman was born with a phoenix life!"

The next morning, Old Madam Yu used the excuse of having a bad dream to go to the Precious Peace Temple and ask to see Master Hui Ji. Nanny Liu knew that Eldest Miss's life was too terrifying.

Perhaps it wasn't bad.

It was too good.

Master Hui Ji did not see the Matriarch and only asked a small monk to pass on a message. "Master said that whether it's true or false, the good and bad of the world are all reliant on you."

Old Madam Yu's face turned pale. She recalled Grandmaster Hui Neng's order back then. "Showing your virtue can bring you to nirvana!"

Wasn't the word "Nirvana" related to the word "Phoenix"?

Then, she thought of the Third Prince, who seemed to have his eyes on Yao Yao.

If she was born with a phoenix's fate and should be with the Third Prince, then Yao Yao would have to marry into the Third Prince's residence first and become his secondary consort in the future...

No matter which prince's future was noble, letting Yao Yao become just a "concubine" was enough to make Old Madam Yu feel like she had eaten a fly and wished she could cover her granddaughter up tightly.

As a result, Old Madam Yu was no longer in the mood to organize her granddaughter's birthday.

Large families usually had to be engaged at the age of twelve or thirteen.

Yao Yao's marriage had yet to be settled. If she held a big birthday celebration, wouldn't it be obvious to others that her daughter had just grown up and was available?

Since she did not plan to get her granddaughter engaged, it was better to keep a low profile on her birthday.

Smarter families could also see some signs, which saved them some trouble.

As soon as Old Madam Yu returned to the residence, she burned Master Hui Ji's second reading and held the first reading tightly. Only then did she feel a little comforted.

If anything happened in the palace, at least this life seal could block it. With Yao Yao's talent and reputation, and the situation at home, no one would say anything even if she was engaged at a later age.

The young misses were invited to a banquet, and the invitations should be sent over in three to five days. However, there had been no movement from the Yu Residence. Those who were familiar with them knew that the Yu

Residence did not plan to hold a small banquet.

Old Madam Song glanced at Song Mingzhao. "It seems that Old Yu is planning to keep Yao Yao for another two years!"

Song Mingzhao lowered his eyes. He didn't know what had gone wrong, but Old Madam Yu suddenly changed her mind. She wasn't in a hurry to get her granddaughter engaged.

This made him feel that he had miscalculated.

Old Madam Song held her teacup. The clear yellow jade osmanthus tea was unique.

She liked it, but her grandson, Song Mingzhao, liked it even more.

Old Madam Song sighed slowly. "Three years ago, on the seventh of the second month, I suddenly saw Yao Yao at the Precious Peace Temple. She had become a big girl, so I had an idea."

Song Mingzhao pursed his lips. That day, Eldest Miss Yu seemed to be wearing pink and white clothes. At that time, he hadn't looked at her carefully and had only vaguely caught a glimpse of her when she was greeting Old Madam Yu.

However, he still remembered Eldest Miss Yu's bright and clear eyes.

Old Madam Song glanced at Song Mingzhao again. "At that time, I thought to myself that I had underestimated Yao Yao since she was young. Although she was used to being pampered by Old Yu and was a little ignorant, she had also been raised well. She was an unpolished jade. Once she was taught how to be a good household manager, she would be able to become a great person."

Third Miss Yu was also a sensible person and knew the rules. You could tell she was good at one glance. However, since her personality was not revealed, she did not think much of her.

Song Mingzhao's hand that was holding the teacup trembled.

Old Madam Song's expression was a little gloomy. "Yao Yao is still young. Old Yu has the intention to take two years off before you become a High Scholar. Our family doesn't want you to get engaged early and disturb your growth." At this point, her face was filled with regret. "If I had known earlier that there were still variables in this marriage..."

Men usually looked at the engagement when they were 17 or 18 years old. It wasn't appropriate for Song Mingzhao at that time. She had originally thought that when Mingzhao passed the imperial examination and Yao Yao turned 13, the palace examination would almost be over. When the Imperial Court released the rankings and mentioned this matter again, the Yu Residence would feel proud, and it would also show how much the Zhenguo Marquis Residence valued Yao Yao.

Who would have thought that a fraud in the examination would mess up this matter?

Old Madam Song sighed again. "I wonder what Old Yu is thinking. Yao Yao is too outstanding. How can she be kept? I'm there will be a disaster is she is kept!"

She was too outstanding, but they did not have a compatible family background.

Song Mingzhao suddenly stood up and walked up to Old Madam Song. He knelt on the ground firmly. "I want to ask Grandmother for a favor."

Old Madam Song looked at Song Mingzhao with a complicated expression. After a long while, she said, "Tell me!"

Song Mingzhao's heart ached. Unknowingly, even his voice had become hoarse as he endured it. "I like Eldest Miss Yu and want to be with her for a hundred years. Grandmother, please stand up for me."

As expected!

It wasn't that Old Madam Song hadn't noticed Song Mingzhao's thoughts. Seeing that he wasn't anxious and had a plan, she didn't expose him.

Even Old Madam Song did not expect her grandson, who had always been indifferent, to be flustered because of Yu Youyao. "Why are you so anxious? After a while, when the Imperial Court reopens and you take the examination, wouldn't it be more logical to mention this matter?"

Song Mingzhao clenched his fists. "In case anything happens, I don't dare to wait, nor do I want to."

As there were too many variables, he was always worried that if he continued to wait, there would definitely be additional complications. Perhaps on the day of the Buddhist Festival, he shouldn't have gone to look for Old Madam Yu. Instead, he might have alerted the enemy.

Old Madam Song closed her eyes. "Ever since you were young, you've never asked me for anything, and you're not close to your family. Sometimes, I often regret it. Back then, when Old Master wanted to send you to the Precious Peace Temple, I should have objected vehemently.."

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Chapter 589: Don't Lie

Old Madam Song said tiredly, "All these years, I've seen you become more and more silent and indifferent every day. I keep thinking of how you were also so shrewd when you were young. You were smart and no one in the family could control you when you caused trouble. You're not like who you are now, silent and having no desires..."

How could such a noisy child become so quiet so easily?

It was the family law's whip that hurt his flesh.

It was painful to kneel in the ancestral hall.

She was also used to scolding and lecturing her.

Every word and sentence was an expectation that pressed down on his small shoulders.

Everyone said that the Zhenguo Marquis Residence was well-mannered and could raise such an outstanding junior like Mingzhao. However, sometimes, they often wondered if they were nurturing Mingzhao or destroying him.

Mingzhao had distanced himself from everyone in the residence and was even on guard. Even though he liked Yao Yao, he kept it to himself and did not want anyone to know.

He trusted no one but himself. The more he wanted and valued something, the less he dared to let anyone know. He was always afraid that he would become another cat who had been “falled to his death.”

He had never been fulfilled by anyone. He needed to scheme for what he wanted.

It was because something had suddenly happened to the marriage he wanted that caused Mingzhao to panic. That was why he had begged her.

A man had gold under his knees. He would rather kneel and beg her, his grandmother, than be like a real grandson and express his feelings to her openly.

As Old Madam Sone spoke, her eyes welled up with tears.

Song Mingzhao only knelt stiffly on the ground, not knowing how to react.

Old Madam Song pinched her handkerchief and gently pressed the corner of her eye. She took a deep breath and said, “I’ll make a trip to the Yu Residence tomorrow. Get up!”

Song Mingzhao kowtowed respectfully to Old Madam Song. “Thank you, Grandmother.”

The solid kowtow made Old Madam Song’s heart bleed. The grandfather and granddaughter treated each other like outsiders. “Mingzhao, are you... blaming me?”

Song Mingzhao was stunned when he heard this. He slowly lowered his head. “I wouldn’t dare.”

It was true that he did not dare to, but it was not that he did not. Perhaps even Mingzhao did not sense the difference.

Old Madam Song’s body went limp, and she forced herself to calm down.

“Don’t lose your composure. Everyone says that good things happen often. Old Yu dotes on Yao Yao. It’s impossible for her to be happy about the engagement unless she’s blind with anxiety. Even if a Heavenly Immortal is in front of her, she can still pick out 30% of the mistakes. We have to take a closer look and think about it.”

When Song Mingzhao heard this, he did not feel comforted. “Thank you for worrying about me, Grandmother.”

With something on her mind, Old Madam Song tossed and turned for the entire night without sleeping soundly. The next day, even her eyes were dark. After washing up and combing her hair, she applied some powder to cover them up. The maidservant prepared a meal, but she did not have much of an appetite for the top-grade Rogue rice porridge. After eating a few mouthfuls, she ordered someone to get a carriage and went to the Yu Residence.

Old Madam Yu felt uncomfortable thinking about the order, although it was Linghuai who had stepped in to invite Master Hui Ji to calculate it.

However, monks did not lie.

She did not care about her natural phoenix fate. If she wanted to cover up this matter, no one would know. However, every time she looked at that fate, she would panic and feel uncomfortable.

Nanny Liu thought that she was not feeling well, so she specially invited an imperial physician into the residence.

The imperial physician only said that the Old Madam's liver was not in good condition. He prescribed a prescription for liver relief. Eldest Miss had also prepared fragrance and tea for the Old Madam to drink.

Therefore, when she found out that Old Madam Song was here, Old Madam Yu couldn't perk up either.

Seeing that her eyes were dark and listless, Old Madam Song was also stunned. "You old thing, what's wrong? The last time I saw you, you looked like you had a grandson. Why do you look bitter?"

Old Madam Yu sighed. "Whether it's children or granddaughters, they're all sins of my previous life. I have endless worries about the debts of this life!"

When Old Madam Song heard this, she understood that this endless worry was not only related to marriage. It seemed that there was more to it.

After thinking for a moment, she said, "In the capital, no young miss is as outstanding as your Yao Yao. Isn't she fine? Why do you have to worry about

Old Madam Yu rolled her eyes at her. "Stop pretending in front of me. Do you think I don't know why you're here?"

At the mention of this, Old Madam Song's spirits collapsed. "Mingzhao likes your Yao Yao. I think you've been well aware of this for the past two years. You don't know this, but he's trying his best to amaze everyone in the Spring Quarter Examinations this year. He's also confident and asked me to come to your house to propose."

Old Madam Yu lowered her eyes and the corners of her mouth curled up slightly, but she did not say anything else.

On the day of the Buddhist Festival, Song Mingzhao had been scheming. Although it was unpleasant, it was understandable. However, Song Mingzhao was so scheming that he had overstepped in front of his elders, making her a little angry.

Old Madam Song changed the topic. "He almost collapsed after an incident regarding the cheating in the examination. You don't know this, but Mingzhao was tortured miserably. He received many punishments in prison and almost lost his life. It was only after he was released from prison that he asked Shi Yu for treatment. Later, Master Hui Tong gave him a prescription for his recuperation and he felt better..."

However, even so, he was still sick.

Imperial Physician Shi only said that he could recuperate well if he recuperated carefully while he was young.

Previously, she had only heard Song Mingzhao mention it casually, but she did not know how serious it was. Old Madam Yu could not bear to see him like this either.

Thinking about how this child had suffered in prison, no matter how angry she was, it was almost over.

She could roughly understand Song Mingzhao's thoughts.

He was originally filled with confidence, but his sudden cheating had disrupted his plan. He was worried that something would happen to the marriage, so he used the topic of "saving his life" to go against the "Third Prince".

Of course!

She also understood that Old Song was a shrewd person. He had said this to soften her heart.

Old Madam Song sighed slightly. 'You're right. Whether it's children, granddaughters, or grandchildren, they're all sins of her previous life and debts of this life. Yao Yao suddenly stopped holding a birthday banquet, and Mingzhao was panicking. Look, I'm here to beg you.' At this point, she changed the topic and said, "I came over today to ask you what you think of Yao Yao's marriage."

Old Madam Yu felt uncomfortable. "Mingzhao is top-notch in terms of looks and talent. The Song and Yu families are family friends, and your Zhenguo

Marquis Residence has also been an honorable family for hundreds of years. There's naturally no need to mention your family background. You've doted on

Yao Yao since she was young. Your eldest daughter-in-law also likes Yao Yao. There's no family I'm more at ease with than your family."

At this point, she looked helpless. She took out her pouch and handed it to Old Madam Song. "You should read it yourself, in case you think I'm fooling you.."

Chapter 589: Don't Lie

Old Madam Song said tiredly, "All these years, I've seen you become more and more silent and indifferent every day. I keep thinking of how you were also so shrewd when you were young. You were smart and no one in the family could control you when you caused trouble. You're not like who you are now, silent and having no desires..."

How could such a noisy child become so quiet so easily?

It was the family law's whip that hurt his flesh.

It was painful to kneel in the ancestral hall.

She was also used to scolding and lecturing her.

Every word and sentence was an expectation that pressed down on his small shoulders.

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Chapter 590: Ridiculous

Old Madam Song did not understand, so she took the pouch and pulled open the rope. She took out a wooden slip and looked down. Her eyes widened. "This is..."

No wonder Old Yu had gone to the Precious Peace Temple twice in a row this month.

Old Madam Yu had thought of an excuse. "Our Yao Yao has gained Master Hui Ji's discerning eye. She went to Master Hui Ji's meditation room a few times to listen to meditation, and Master Hui Ji approved Yao Yao's fate. He said that Yao Yao's fate is good, but she has a huge calamity..."

This time, Old Madam Song did not know what to say. "I heard that Master Hui Ji was enlightened by Grandmaster Hui Neng a few years ago. No wonder you look like your bones have been pulled out."

Everyone knew that Grandmaster Hui Neng was proficient in fate reading.

Old Madam Yu's eyes welled up with tears, and even her voice became hoarse. "Yao Yao is my lifeblood. Ever since I received this reading, I've never felt at ease. I keep feeling that my precious granddaughter is going to suffer."

Old Madam Song comforted her. "Yao Yao is a blessed child. She's just turned

It's fine if she takes a year or two before she gets engaged. You can't scare yourself. If you really get sick from fright, Yao Yao will be worried."

For some reason, Old Madam Yu couldn't help but tear up.

After much persuasion, Old Madam Song also cried for the time it took to burn an incense stick. Her eyes were swollen from crying, and only then did her tears gradually stop.

After persuading Old Madam Yu, Old Madam Song did not stay long and returned to the residence.

At this moment, Song Mingzhao was already waiting in the Glorious Fortune Hall.

Old Madam Song knew that he was anxious. She only sighed softly and told him about Master Hui Ji's orders. "Your Grandmother Yu was shocked by this.

Yao Yao's marriage will definitely take a year or two to be settled."

Song Mingzhao's breathing tightened and he felt a sharp pain in his heart.

Many of the scenes in the dream were blurry, but he vaguely remembered that the first time he dreamed of the girl, she seemed to be fourteen or fifteen years old.

Coupled with Master Hui Ji's orders, he felt that it was an absurd coincidence.

Was he the one involved in Eldest Miss Yu's calamity?

This was impossible!

Old Madam Song still thought that he was a little disappointed, so she advised,

"Don't be anxious. Gather your energy and deal with the next examination well. I'll help you ask next year."

The marriage had been delayed for a year or two. It wasn't that he couldn't afford to wait. At least, if it wasn't him, it wouldn't be anyone else. Song Mingzhao lowered his eyes. "Thank you, Grandmother."

Unknowingly, it was April 18th, Yu Youyao's birthday.

Early in the morning, Qing Xiu came to the Jade Courtyard and invited Yu Youyao to An Shou Hall.

Old Madam Yu said auspicious words as she took off her longevity lock. She also took out a new longevity lock with red gold and jade embroidery and put it on her granddaughter again.

The surface of the lock was carved with peony flowers. There were leaves and stems, and each flower was exquisitely carved. In the middle, there was a red and lustrous lotus pattern embedded. On the edge of the carving, there were the words "Longevity and Wealth" carved. Seven beads could be seen on it. They were gold, silver, glass, coral, clams, red beads, agate. The seven treasures of Buddhism.

Old Madam Yu looked at her granddaughter, who was standing on the branch like a flower. Her heart ached and she felt proud. “Our Yao Yao is already a 13 -year-old girl.”

Yu Youyao smiled until her eyes curved. She held her grandmothers arm and wheedled, “Grandmother, what gift did you prepare for me? Quick, take it out for me to see.”

Old Madam Yu pinched the tip of her nose lightly. “You’re asking for gifts every year. It’s as if people will forget. I’m afraid of you.”

With that, she called out to Nanny Liu.

Nanny Liu returned to the inner room and brought over the gift she had prepared long ago. “Matriarch has been preparing since March. She’s put in a lot of effort.”

Old Madam Yu glared at her. These words sounded intentional. It was as if she spent a lot of effort deliberately emphasizing it.

Yu Youyao pursed her lips and smiled. She couldn’t wait to take the gift.

As soon as the ebony box was opened, there seemed to be a golden light bursting out of it. Even her eyes flickered.

Yu Youyao blinked and took a closer look. It was a large pure gold flower.

With the golden piece as the base, the thin golden piece was a cluster of six-petal flowers in the shape of a half-moon. Dozens of small flowers surrounded it, and the center of the flower was decorated with pearls and jade.

Every flower stem was curved into a spiral and swayed gently. The flowers trembled slightly. On the flowers, a silver thread raised a butterfly high.

Yu Youyao could imagine the beautiful scene of the flowers and butterflies dancing when she put it on her head.

Although the craftsmanship of the pure gold flower was more mature, such exquisite and complicated craftsmanship was still very rare.

In particular, the treasures on it were even more pure in color and texture.

Every one of them was expensive.

Yu Youyao was pleasantly surprised. “Wow, this flower is too beautiful!”

Old Madam Yu smiled. “It was two years ago when I saw Sixth Miss give you a silk flower that was made into a hairpin. I saw that it was exquisite and beautiful, so I found a craftsman to make a pure gold one. When you go back later, comb your hair into a Feixian bun and put the gold flowers in front of you. You’ll be a little fairy.”

Such flowers did not exist on the market. The craftsmanship was more complicated, and those with poor skills could not make them. She had also searched hard for a craftsman to make them.

It wasn’t that she was boasting, but Yao Yao’s beauty was worthy of being the number one beauty in the world.

The Feixian buns were simple, and only required simple combing methods. There were also complicated combing methods. The same buns could be combed into a hundred different styles. With new jewelry, they would have a different style.

She liked to see her granddaughter. Her hair was combed into a Feixian bun, and she looked refreshed and delicate, like a little fairy.

Yu Youyao hugged her grandmother and called her softly, "Thank you, Grandmother. I like you too much!"

Her voice was like the cry of an oriole, but it made Old Madam Yu's heart turn into a pool of water. She hugged her granddaughter and retracted her hand.

The grandmother and granddaughter chatted for an hour before Yu Youyao left reluctantly with the gift from her grandmother.

After returning to the Jade Courtyard, Nanny Xu picked out a silver-red dress with narrow sleeves. "The silver-red dress is specially named the Cloud Shadow Silk. It's like smoke and fog, like mist. It's Miss's birthday today, so it's not an exaggeration to dress up."

Yu Youyao's life was exquisite, but she was not an extravagant person. Usually, she would wear whatever she felt comfortable at home. She rarely wore bright and grand clothes.

Indeed!

The clothes made of the gauze were thin and impenetrable, like the wings of a cicada. When they put on Yu Youyao's body, they complemented each other, making her look radiant and beautiful.

The little girl's chest was raised. Her tube dress revealed that she was a girl..