

All Hail 591

Chapter 591: Zither

Nanny Xu's eyes lit up. She quickly pulled Yu Youyao to sit in front of the dressing table. She took out jasmine head oil and rubbed it evenly in her hands, slowly applying it on her black hair.

Her black hair was like a waterfall, revealing a smooth crow-green color.

Nanny Xu took out a boxwood comb from the makeup box. She massaged her scalp with the tooth comb and combed her hair again and again. She combed it a hundred times before helping Yu Youyao tie the Feixian buns.

The boxwood comb had been used for more than two years and was as bright as jade.

Yu Youyao stroked the wooden comb, her heart filled with love.

Nanny Xu took out the flower that Matriarch had given her. The bottom of the golden piece was bent to cover the Feixian buns on her head. She sat at both ends and made holes.

Nanny Xu opened the makeup box and asked, "Miss, do you like hairpins, or headbands?"

Yu Youyao picked out a red headband. "This headband it is!"

There were red gems, pearls, and jade embedded in her headband, and tassels at both ends. It matched her outfit very well.

After putting the headband through the hairband and tying it through the holes, the hairband was fixed. The headband with the bow hung behind her head. The embedded pearl jade on it was colorful, and the tassels swayed even more.

Yu Youyao looked at herself in the glass mirror. "Wow, the flower is really beautiful!"

Nanny Xu shook her head and laughed. "The one who looks good is you. You're delicate, generous, and elegant. Although gems, pearls, and jade are dazzling, they're also dazzling when you wear gold and silver."

Most of the people wearing the pure gold headgear were old people, so it could suppress the splendor of them.

Little girls all despised pure gold for being too tacky. They liked jewelry that was inlaid with treasures and jade more.

However, pure gold was pure and brilliant. If anything was missing, it was easy to overshadow the main character, causing jewelry to lose its luster and become vulgar.

Yu Youyao blinked. Her reflection in the glass mirror also blinked at her.

"What brow powder do you want to use, Miss?" Nanny Xu opened the rectangular brow powder box. There were more than ten different colored brow powders neatly placed inside.

Yu Youyao took a look and pointed at a box of greenish-black brow powder. "I'll use this box called Green Mountain Scenery."

“Green Mountain Scenery” was the name that her cousin had given it. It was from a quote that said, “In the distance, the green mountain scenery can be seen!”

The color of “Green Mountain Scenery” was greenish-black and slightly solemn. After mixing the water and raising her eyebrows, they looked like an endless mountain mist, exuding a gloomy green elegance.

Nanny Xu was extremely surprised. “The brow powder that Young Master personally concocted is indeed extraordinary. If he opens a powder shop, just based on his skills, he will definitely become popular in the entire Great Zhou Dynasty.”

Yu Youyao smiled. “Cousin only makes eyebrow powder for me.”

Nanny Xu’s eyes flashed. From the glass mirror, she saw a trace of affection between Yu Youyao’s eyebrows and lowered her eyes.

Yu Miaofu was the legitimate daughter of the first wife of the Yu family. Her grandson, Zhou Linghuai, was also blood-related to the Yu Residence for three generations. When relatives of wealthy families interacted, they would have to be related for five generations.

Therefore, Old Madam Yu naturally treated Zhou Linghuai as one of her own. Even though her granddaughter was old, she did not restrict her granddaughter from interacting with her cousin.

Zhou Linghuai was well-mannered and too deeply rooted in people’s hearts, earning the trust of Matriarch.

Yu Youyao was too well-behaved. Matriarch Yu would not doubt her granddaughter.

The two of them were close cousins, so there was nothing to worry about.

But!

Where was Zhou Linghuai?!

Nanny Xu took some dew and applied it on the little girl’s delicate lips.

Yu Youyao knew that the oil was heavier. When applied between the lips, it could moisten them. When the lipstick was applied later, it would look even more beautiful and not lose its color easily.

The flower dew was refreshing and soft, making Yu Youyao’s skin look even more sparkling and translucent. The rose dew was moisturizing, making her look even more pink and delicate. With a thin layer of cream, she looked full and radiant.

Nanny Xu said, “You haven’t reached the age of 15. Try not to apply any makeup. Take more care of yourself usually. If you’re full of energy, that’s better than anything else.”

Yu Youyao nodded. “It’s not good for my skin if I apply too much powder.”

Nanny Xu took a lipstick pen and dipped it in the rosy lipstick. She gently applied it on her lips, which were plump and beautiful.

A 13-year-old girl was at the age where she was delicate and fragrant. She did not need to dress up deliberately. She only needed to draw her eyebrows and apply lipstick. She was already beautiful.

Nanny Xu was very satisfied. “I’ve never seen a girl more beautiful than you.”

Yu Youyao suddenly stood up, picked up her skirt, and said, "I'm going to look for Cousin!"

When they arrived at The Green House, Yu Youyao heard the sound of a zither coming from the courtyard.

She tilted her ear.

The zither had five tones: the palace tones were peaceful and strong; the shang tones were strong and clear; the angular tones were round and long; the Zheng notes were gentle; and the feather tones were clear.

The zither had nine virtues: its material was "unique" and smooth, its sound was pure and elegant, it was clear and distant, it was pure and quiet, it was smooth and endless, it was round and did not dissipate, it was clear as gold and stone, the strings were smooth and round, and the longer it was played, the deeper it sounded.

If a zither was equipped with five virtues, it would already be a good zither.

If it had seven virtues, it would be a famous zither, such as the "Rare Voice" in her house.

If the nine virtues were present, it would be an extraordinary sound, such as "Burnt tail" and "Primordial Voice,"

Yu Youyao thought of something and quickly ran into the house.

With a thud, the lingering sound was mellow and lingering. Zhou Linghuai pressed the zither strings and his gaze landed on Yu Youyao.

The little girl was dressed very grandly for her birthday today.

The flowers on her head swayed with her light steps, and the branches in her hair trembled. There were butterflies on them, and it was like a gust of wind that blew past the flowers. The butterflies were exquisite, agile and luxurious.

Zhou Linghuai suddenly thought of the poem:

Her beauty was unprecedented. In an instant, her beautiful eyes lit up and she smiled!

"Cousin, is this zither for me?" Three years ago, her cousin had cut down the tree in her courtyard to help her make a good zither.

Yu Youyao had been looking forward to it, but she also knew that making a zither was not something that could be done in a day. The longer it took, the more effort was put in.

There was no hurry. After waiting for a while, Zhou Linghuai took a deep breath. "The strings are ready. I'm adjusting it."

Yu Youyao quickly leaned over. The entire zither was the color of honey. The zither was smooth and beautiful. In addition to the five strings, there were also literary and martial strings. There were a total of seven strings.

It was as if a phoenix was tired of flying and was resting on a parasol tree branch. It lowered its arrogant head, retracted its beautiful wings, and lowered its long tail.

Yu Youyao was overjoyed and smiled until her eyes curved. "I've waited for three years. It's finally here. Cousin surprises me every year."

She shook her head slightly, and the tassels shook as she walked. The butterflies trembled lightly, making her look dazzling and beautiful.

Zhou Linghuai couldn't take his eyes off it. "The zither was completed a year ago. It's just that silk strings are rare. I've looked at more than a hundred types of silk, but none of them were satisfactory.."

Chapter 592: Quality of the Zither

At this point, Zhou Linghuai smiled. "Later, I happened to find a type of spider silk. This spider was created near the copper mine. The silk is as thin as a woman's hair strand. It's difficult to see with the naked eye. It's slightly reddish-yellow and extremely tenacious. Moreover, it's not easy to break. It's twisted into a silk string. Its sound is clear and distant, and it sounds like gold and jade. It's very natural."

Just making silk strings was very difficult.

More than 300 threads of spider silk of the same thickness were twisted into strings. The best strings had to be even and natural. It was impossible to tell with the naked eye that many of them were twisted together.

After forming the string, the silk string had to be firm and smooth.

It was tough and not easy to break. The sound lasted even longer. It felt slippery, was easy to play, and its sound was purer. It did not hurt one's hands, and its sound was more round and clear.

It sounded simple, but it was even more difficult to make.

Zhou Linghuai was used to using silk as strings in the past. This was the first time he had used spider silk. It took him more time to explore and twist it. It took him half a year.

"This zither is really beautiful." Yu Youyao was amazed. Her fingers gently stroked the strings. The silk strings were as smooth as jade. "Thank you, Cousin!"

"Sit over and play a song to see if you like it." Zhou Linghuai smiled and sat at the side, giving the main sitting position to Yu Youyao.

"Okay!" Yu Youyao couldn't wait. She sat where her cousin had just sat and placed her hand on the strings.

Zhou Linghuai noticed that the little girl's hands were like jade, and her ten fingers were delicate. They reflected the slightly reddish-yellow strings. She had yet to play the zither, but she had already made his heart sway.

Yu Youyao took a deep breath and suddenly said, "No, I haven't washed my hands and burnt incense."

Zhou Linghuai chuckled. "It's not that important. It's not a formal occasion. Just do as you please."

Yu Youyao quickly shook her head. Zhou Linghuai's heart was in turmoil again because of the flower on her head. He heard the little girl say solemnly, "This is the first time I'm playing the zither that Cousin personally made for me. How can I be casual?"

The little girl had applied rose lipstick and was sitting side by side. She was used to looking into his eyes every time she spoke, so she tilted her head. When they were face-to-face, he could smell her lipstick.

Zhou Linghuai's mouth was dry as he picked up his teacup.

Yu Youyao called Chang An over and set up an incense table. She burned a medicinal incense pill. The fragrance was cooling and refreshing. Burning a pill when the weather was hot could refresh the mind.

After that, Chang An brought over another basin of water.

Yu Youyao solemnly dipped her hand in the basin for a moment, took it out, and wiped it dry. She sat in front of the zither table, her mind stuck again. "What song should I play?"

Not only was she serious, but she was also nervous. Zhou Linghuai smiled brightly. "Just play the 'Ode to the Zither'. The simplest song can best reflect the pros and cons of the zither music. Don't be too nervous. Just try out the zither. If you don't think it's good, I'll help you adjust it. You'll definitely be satisfied.'

Yu Youyao pursed her lips.

When she came to The Green House just now, she had clearly heard that her cousin's zither had already been adjusted very well. The song he played was sincere, lingering, and carefree. It was very pleasant.

"Alright, the 'Ode to the Zither' will do."

Initially, she had learned the "Ode to the Zither" from her cousin. At that time, she was not too interested in the zither and only wanted to take the opportunity to spend more time with her cousin.

It was only when her cousin patiently taught her the zither technique that she gradually became interested in the zither and learned it diligently.

Everything from the past was still vivid in her mind, as if it was yesterday.

Yu Youyao thought of how she, who was only ten years old, had been sitting in front of the zither table and learning the zither clumsily but she couldn't learn it no matter what. She regretted agreeing to her cousin's request.

Her cousin didn't think she was stupid either. He sat behind her and leaned forward, wrapping his arms around her and helping her correct her fingering over and over again.

Her cousin's legs were inconvenient and he was in a wheelchair. In such a position, it was actually very difficult for him to lean forward.

The person teaching the zither had to work harder than the person learning it.

Sometimes, when she was mischievous, she would deliberately play the wrong fingering technique. Seeing her cousin's helpless expression, she giggled because he couldn't bear to criticize her.

At that time, she knew that there was someone in this world that would not be as harsh as her father. Even if she was mischievous and did something wrong.

This was called favoritism.

From then on, she had the confidence to be fearless and pampered in front of her cousin.

Time with her cousin was always filled with joy.

Yu Youyao played the zither happily.

Zhou Linghuai supported his forehead with his hand. Yu Youyao was delicate and jumped on the silk string. The spider silk was smooth. Even if she played occasionally, she wouldn't hurt her fingers even if she didn't wear zither finger nails.

As soon as the zither notes were played, the sound of gold and jade was clear and wonderful, completely expressing the five notes and nine virtues of the zither.

The reason why "Ode to the Zither" was a basic song was because this song was very simple.

The simple song played a clear and cheerful tone.

It could easily reveal the quality of the zither.

Unknowingly, she had finished playing the "Ode to the Zither". Yu Youyao was a little stunned. "Cousin, how did I play?"

Zhou Linghuai smiled. "The sound of the zither is smooth and unrestrained. The effect is already achieved. Your heart will move accordingly, and you can play it freely. You can even play the zither with others."

Yu Youyao smiled. "It's because Cousin's zither is well-made. When he played it, I felt that there was nothing bad about it. It was transparent, smooth, quiet, round, even, clear, and deep. There was nothing bad about it. Unknowingly, I felt comfortable."

Just now, when she saw the zither, she only felt amazed and impressed. Now that she had played it a little, she was truly satisfied. Just now, when she played the "Ode to the Zither", the sound of the zither entered her heart and her body. It was obvious that the sound of the zither was clear and wonderful. It was clear and untainted. It was not sad and suited her personality.

Zhou Linghuai was also happy. "As long as you like it."

Yu Youyao leaned closer to her cousin and blinked. "Did you give this zither a name? What's it called?"

Zhou Linghuai shook his head. "This is a zither for you. You should name it yourself."

Yu Youyao blinked blankly. "Which one of them doesn't have a good and special name? Such a good zither has five notes, nine virtues, literary thought, and martial qi. It might even become peerless in the future."

The zither was three feet and six inches and five centimeters long, which meant that there were 365 days in a year. The surface of the zither was curved, representing the sky, and the bottom of the zither was flat. It symbolized the ground and the "round sky and place."

There were thirteen "zither emblems", which meant that there were twelve months in a year and a leap month.

There were five strings that symbolized gold, wood, water, fire, and earth.

Later, in order to mourn his dead son, Bo Yikao, King Wen added another string. When King Wu attacked Zhou, he added another string to increase morale.

Therefore, it was also called the “Wenwu Seven -stringed Zither.” However, not every zither was qualified to be called a “Wenwu Seven-stringed Zither.

Chapter 593: Shao Yu

He kept saying that the zither that he had personally made was comparable to the extraordinary sound. This made Zhou Linghuai very happy. Those legendary extraordinary sounds had already disappeared into the torrent of time. He had never seen them before, nor could he make comparisons with them. However, he did not think that the zither that he had spent three years making would be inferior to those extraordinary sounds.

Coincidentally, Yu Youyao thought so too.

The smile in Zhou Linghuai’s eyes deepened. “I can’t name it casually, so I’ll think of a good name seriously.”

Yu Youyao frowned. “Cousin, you should name it. You’re a zither player. No one knows it better than you, and no one is more suitable to name it. No matter what its name is, it won’t be a disgrace.”

Was she worried that if she did not give her a good name, she would disgrace this zither?

Zhou Linghuai flicked her forehead. “Don’t be lazy. Think quickly.”

Her forehead was a little numb, but it didn’t hurt at all. Yu Youyao looked at her cousin plaintively. Seeing his indifferent expression, she knew that she couldn’t be bothered to steal it.

She could only pout reluctantly and start thinking hard.

Sigh, naming was really not something a human could do easily!

“Why don’t we call it Shaoguang? Shaoguang has a beautiful meaning. It means young and beautiful...”

“No, no. Although it’s good to be young, it’s easy to age. It doesn’t seem auspicious.”

“In ancient times, there was a martial elephant named Yu Shun. Why don’t we call it Shaoyu? My surname happens to be Yu...”

“Forget it. I’m not the only person in the world with the surname Yu. The name Shaoyu sounds good, but it doesn’t have any special meaning. The “Bell” was named because of the magnificence of the zither music, like the sound of a bell ringing and the blare of a horn. “Burnt Tail” got its name because there were still burn marks at the end of the zither...

Seeing her conflicted expression, it was very interesting.

Zhou Linghuai chuckled. “Shaoyu is not bad. In the future, when others mention this zither, they will say that it was called Shaoyu because its first owner was a woman surnamed Yu...”

Yu Youyao looked at him resentfully. "There are countless women surnamed Yu in the world. I'm just one of them. There's nothing special..."

"It's different." Zhou Linghuai shook his head. "No one else is a zither player's favorite woman." The tip of his tongue curled up slightly, and he swallowed the words that were about to come out of his mouth.

Yu Youyao smiled and looked at her cousin.

Her eyes were bright, and there was a hint of love in her eyes. Zhou Linghuai's heart skipped a beat, and he subconsciously held her hand. "Later generations will say that this woman surnamed Yu is the zither player's..." Lover. The word rolled on the tip of his tongue again, but when it reached his mouth, he said,

"Most loved woman."

The others were not people that the zither player valued.

Yu Youyao smiled. "Cousin is also my favorite person."

He would be happier if she said "loved" instead.

There was no hurry. The time was almost right.

When Yu Youyao left the confinement of the Yu Residence, she would be able to do as she pleased and have no scruples. Unlike now, when she had too many deep feelings and deal with them secretly.

This wasn't love. It was hurt.

If Yin Huaixi liked someone, he had to do it openly.

And now, he was Zhou Linghuai.

"However," Yu Youyao changed the topic and frowned. "I still don't think it's a good idea to call it Shaoyu. Why don't we call it Shaoyi? It's from Shang Shu/Yi Ji. "When the nine songs are played, the phoenix will come. As the stones are hit, a hundred beasts will dance."

Zhou Linghuai did not say anything. Clearly, he preferred Shaoyu.

However, Yu Youyao felt that Shaoyi was better. "It's said that the music is intoxicating. If he plays nine consecutive songs, the phoenix will also hear the music and dance with it. In the Zhou Dynasty, there was 'Shaoyi Dance'. It was created with the harmonies of the ancient orchestra to communicate with the gods, causing auspicious signs to come. Not only does the name Shaoyi have a background story, but it's also very auspicious. I think it's very good."

Zhou Linghuai pursed his lips and said nothing.

Yu Youyao had just said that he was the one who made the zither. No one in the world knew this zither better than him, and no one knew what kind of effort he had put in to make it.

Perhaps back then, when he saw the tree in the Jade Courtyard, he was tempted and decided to cut off the tree and personally make a zither for Yu Youyao.

However, he had never thought that since ancient times, the zither had also been connected to “love.” It was not unfamiliar to use the zither to show feelings and intentions.

The word “attraction” was just the beginning.

In the next three years, for more than a thousand days and nights, he carved the zither, molded it, polished it, painted it, fixed the emblem, secured its feet and so on. There were more than 30 steps.

Every step was divided into many small steps in detail, and each step required a lot of time.

There were hundreds of steps in total. If there was a mistake in any of the major steps, the rare zither material would be ruined. If there was a mistake in any of the small steps, all his previous efforts would be wasted and he would start all over again.

He did not just make a zither.

He wanted to make a good zither that was even more outstanding than Yu Youyao’s “Rare Voice”. It could replace “Rare Voice” that had seven virtues and become a famous zither.

There was almost no one in the world who could make a Seven Virtues Zither.

If Zhou Linghuai wanted to do it, he had to be the best.

This zither was indeed given to the woman surnamed Yu by the zither player. This woman surnamed Yu was the love of the zither player’s life.

He had not thought of the name “Shaoyu” earlier.

Yu Youyao had thought of it herself. He felt that there was no better name than

“Shaoyu.”

Zhou Linghuai said, “Shao and Yu were made popular by Shun. The orchestra plays nine songs in a row to attract the phoenix to the ceremony. It’s similar to etiquette.”

Yu Youyao tilted her head and thought about it carefully. Her lips curled up.

“Cousin, you’re right. Then, we’ll do as you say and call it Shaoyu!”

After confirming the name, she felt that “Shaoyu” sounded better than “Shaoyi.”

Zhou Linghuai was distracted by the flowers between her brows again. “I’ll carve the name on it.”

As if afraid that Yu Youyao would go back on her word, he took the zither and flipped it over. There were two sound holes at the bottom, one big and one small. The bigger one called a dragon pool, and the smaller one was called a phoenix pond.

Zhou Linghuai took out the Kunwu Knife and carved a calligraphy on the left of the Dragon Pool. “When the nine songs are played, the phoenix will come.”

On the right, there was the word “Shaoyu.”

Then, he carved on the left and right of the phoenix pond. “With the glow of the light, a hundred beasts will dance.”

The first sentence meant that the music was beautiful, and the second sentence meant that when the zither was played, a phoenix would fly over and a hundred beasts danced in front of the palace.

When these two sentences were combined, it was a beautiful scene of peace.

This was the scene Yu Youyao was looking forward to.

After carving, Zhou Linghuai carved seals on the top of the dragon pool.

Yu Youyao leaned over. It was her cousin's Qingtian pagodite zither seal. She remembered that she had given the Qingtian pagodite to her cousin, and she had also suggested carving the zither patterns on it..

Chapter 594: Bright Night Like Today

“Jing—” As the seal was engraved with a small seal script, she did not recognize it, so she naturally read the wrong thing.

Later, when her cousin was free, he taught her how to write in seal script. She realized that the word “of” in small seal script was 70 to 80% similar to the word “end”, so she asked her cousin to clarify.

Only then did she realize that she had made a huge mistake.

Not long after, the name and seal were carved.

Yu Youyao couldn't wait to ask, “Are you done?”

Zhou Linghuai shook his head. “The newly carved inscription needs to be painted, and the seal needs to be sanded to be completed.”

Generally speaking, an inscription had to be carved before it was drawn. However, he wanted to give Yu Youyao a surprise. He did not confirm the name of the zither, so he left it until the last step.

Chang An had already brought over the paint and cinnabar.

The calligraphy and sand painting both required meticulous work. The coloring had to be even. There were many different strokes.

Even if it was a carved letter, he could not be careless.

Therefore, even the simple process took two hours to complete completely. The colors were full and heavy, simple and elegant, and it was not easy to lose color.

In this way, the zither was finally completed.

Chang An brought over a black zither box. With just one look, Yu Youyao couldn't take her eyes off it.

Lacquer carvings, Jingtai Blue, Ivory carvings, and the jade carvings were known as the Four Special Skills or Eight Wonders of the capital. Their skills were like treasures. In the previous dynasty, they were once prosperous. It was only in the Great Zhou Dynasty that these skills declined.

However, good lacquer carvings were still sought after.

Yu Youyao liked lacquer carving. Previously, her grandmother had given her a lacquer carving makeup box. It was beautiful.

Her cousin was also good at carving and often made small things for her.

It was not easy to make small pieces of lacquer carvings. It would take at least a month or two, and at most three to five months.

On her makeup table, there were makeup boxes, fat boxes, eyebrow powder boxes, and so on. Most of them were given by her cousin, and there were many different types. There were red, black, color, and yellow...

But!

However, this black zither case was even more exquisite. It would take at least a year or two, and at most three to five years to successfully carve such a large piece.

On the zither box, there were zither patterns carved on it. Green branches with Chinese parasol leaves were entrenched on the long box on the black bottom, wrapping around the entire long box.

Between the branches and leaves, there were strings of yellow-green trumpet flowers. They were bright and beautiful.

On the surface of the box, on the long red table, there was a 25-string zither.

There was no need for gold and jade. The bright patterns on the branches were already so beautiful that they were lifelike and soul-stirring.

Ever since she had come up with an idea and asked her cousin to carve a zither seal, her cousin seemed to especially like the zither patterns. Many of the things he usually gave her had such patterns.

Her cousin's carving skills were good. He could always carve different patterns.

For a moment, Yu Youyao actually had the illusion that she had bought something and returned it.

No, no, no. The zither and the zither box complemented each other.

Hence, Yu Youyao had a feeling that she had received two exquisite gifts on her birthday.

The red lining was filled with silk, so it wouldn't hurt the zither. Zhou Linghuai carefully placed the zither into the zither box and closed the lid.

He looked up at Yu Youyao.

The little girl looked intently at the box in his hand and smiled brightly. Her eyes were curved, and her red lips were beautiful.

Zhou Linghuai's eyebrows were as elegant as melted ink, as if flowers had bloomed. He suddenly stood up from his wheelchair. The servants in The Green House acted as if they hadn't seen him and were doing their own things.

However, Yu Youyao's eyes widened. She subconsciously covered her mouth, her eyes moist as she looked at her cousin in a daze.

It wasn't the first time she'd seen her cousin stand.

However, this was the first time she had seen her cousin. He stood up easily like an ordinary person without any help.

After throwing away his cane, her cousin stretched his back and straightened it. Only then did Yu Youyao realize that her cousin was a little taller than she had imagined.

He stood casually in front of her, his slender body already covering her petite figure.

“Cousin, you..” His leg had completely recovered!

Zhou Linghuai handed the box to Yu Youyao. “I’m overjoyed to hear that you’re getting older. There’s beautiful scenery everywhere. It’s a good year.” He chuckled. “Yao Yao, happy birthday!”

Yu Youyao held the zither case. The moisture in her eyes turned into specks of starlight that shone brightly.

She looked at her cousin. “I only hope that tomorrow will be the same as today. Everyone will be around.”

Three years ago, she had heard someone say that a wish would be fulfilled on her birthday, so she made this wish.

She hoped that her cousin would always be by her side on every birthday in the future.

At that time, she was still ignorant and did not know that some wishes could not be made easily.

This was still her wish on her birthday three years later.

No, perhaps she was even greedier than that.

Yu Youyao thought of the wishing brocade that she had thrown onto the Bodhi of Wishes on the day of the Buddhist Festival. It said, “I hope that you will be a thousand years old. I hope that you will be healthy. I hope that you will be like a swallow on a beam and I will see you at all times!”

Not only did she hope that her cousin would always be by her side on every birthday.

She also hoped to see his face at all times.

Zhou Linghuai was stunned. Clearly, he had also thought of three years ago.

Yu Youyao placed the zither case on the table and took a step forward. Her cousin was so close that he, who usually wore dark clothes, suddenly changed into a moon-white cloud brocade that was as bright as the moon shining on the lake.

All of a sudden, he stood tall and slender, looking elegant and refined. He had the aura and virtue of jade, and the firmness of stone.

Yu Youyao did not know what kind of struggle she had experienced in her heart. Only then did she muster her courage. Her hands trembled as she wrapped them around his waist. She hesitated for a moment and pressed her face against the chest in front of her. She could clearly hear his heartbeat.

She wasn’t sure if such a fierce heartbeat belonged to her or to her cousin.

The faint fragrance of ink on her cousin’s body had seeped out over time, revealing a hint of elegance. “Cousin, what do you think?”

Zhou Linghuai lowered his head. The little girl’s figure was petite and slender, only reaching his chest. When he lowered his head, his chin pressed against her head, and rubbed against her hair.

He thought of three years ago, when the little girl had held his hand and looked at him with bright eyes.

—I only hope that tomorrow will be the same as today. I hope that everyone will always be around!

“Cousin, what do you think?”

At that time, facing the little girl’s happy, excited, and expectant gaze, how did he answer?

Zhou Linghuai hugged the little girl’s petite figure in his arms. Then, he lowered his head and kissed her gently on the top of her head. “Okay!”

Three years later, his answer was still the same..

Chapter 595: Love

“That’s great!” Yu Youyao was very happy.

When she was with her cousin, she did not care much about rules and principles. However, after growing up, there were many things that she could not pretend to be stupid and ignorant like when she was young.

Due to her upbringing, she still cared a lot about the difference between men and women, and she was rarely so close to her cousin.

She knew this wasn’t good.

However, when she saw her cousin standing up in front of her, this was a scene that she had only seen in her dreams countless times.

She had suffered a huge shock!

Then, she thought of all the pain her cousin had suffered all these years. The tip of her nose suddenly felt sore, and her eyes suddenly welled up. She couldn’t help but want to hug him.

She wanted to comfort him because he was covered in wind and frost and had been miserable for six years.

Perhaps her cousin did not need comfort.

She wanted to do this, so she did it.

When her arms wrapped around her cousin, she was also conflicted. However, her cousin’s strong arms hugged her and said to her, “Okay!”

Yu Youyao suddenly felt relieved.

However, she had not forgotten that her cousin’s leg had just recovered. Without support, he probably wouldn’t be able to stand for long. She quickly pushed him away.

Perhaps because the little girl was older and had grown a figure, she was also soft and boneless when she was carried. She had a fragrance that was very different from when she was young.

He couldn’t tell what was different.

When he had hugged her as a child, he had felt very satisfied.

After she grew up, he was no longer satisfied.

At this age, Zhou Linghuai finally understood what it meant. With the soft jade and warm fragrance in his arms, before he could feel it carefully, he was caught off guard and pushed.

In the past two years, he was already used to grasping the limits of his interactions with her. He had even integrated them into his bones.

She pushed gently with such soft strength that Zhou Linghuai was worried that he would be too rash and subconsciously let go of her.

As soon as he let go, he felt that his arms were empty. Even his heart felt empty.

Only then did Zhou Linghuai realize that it was rare for the little girl to take the initiative to hug him. He could actually use this as an excuse to hug her for a while longer, but it was too late now.

Zhou Linghuai regretted it.

Yu Youyao had already helped him into the wheelchair. "Cousin, how are you? You've been standing for so long. Do your legs feel uncomfortable? Quick, sit down and rest."

Forget it, there was still a long way to go!

Zhou Linghuai rubbed his forehead and chuckled. When he turned around, Yu Youyao quickly poured a cup of warm tea and added a drop of spiritual dewdrop. She immediately handed it to him. "Have some tea to calm down." Indeed!

His image of being "sick and weak" was already deeply rooted in her heart.

Zhou Linghuai really did not know if he should be happy or helpless.

Seeing that her cousin had finished drinking a cup of tea, Yu Youyao reacted quickly. She quickly took the teacup and placed it aside, her face filled with joy. "Cousin, has your leg completely recovered? In the future, you won't need any external help to walk as if you're on flat ground?"

She couldn't believe what she saw and still needed his confirmation for it to be true, Zhou Linghuai nodded. "I've mostly recovered. If I want to recover to my original state, I still need three to five months of recuperation."

This was because of the spiritual dewdrop.

If it were anyone else, it would take at least a year and a half to gradually recover to normal. They would only be able to walk and move as usual, but with the same problem in their legs, they wouldn't be able to move vigorously.

On the other hand, he could recover to his original state.

"That's great." Yu Youyao beamed. She was even happier and more excited than when she had received the zither and the beautiful lacquered zither box.

After her joy, she pouted again. "Why didn't you tell me about such a big matter earlier?"

She shook her head slightly, and the flowers on her head trembled. The butterflies danced and dazzled Zhou Linghuai's eyes. He subconsciously raised his hand and gently touched the butterflies in the flowers.

The butterfly wings trembled lightly, like...

Just now, when the little girl was hugging his waist, her petite figure trembled in his arms. It was so gentle and beautiful.

It made his heart race.

Even his ears could hear her heart beating like a drum, shocking his heart.

Zhou Linghuai's body heated up. He suddenly tightened his grip on the armrest of the wheelchair, not daring to continue thinking. "I plan to give you a surprise."

"Cousin gave me many surprises today. The greatest surprise was seeing Cousin really stand up with my own eyes." Yu Youyao giggled, her voice melodious and pleasant.

She had used Green Mountain Scenery to draw her brows. She had beautiful eyebrows and watery eyes. When she smiled, her eyes were charming and her laughter was even more delicate.

Zhou Linghuai's heart skipped a beat, and half of his body went numb. He had to hold the armrest of the wheelchair tightly to prevent himself from losing his composure.

No matter what, her gaze couldn't help but land on her red lips. The rose lipstick was beautiful. When she smiled, it was charming.

Zhou Linghuai felt his mouth go dry. He wanted to say something to divert his attention. "The walking ornament on Cousin's head is very unique."

Yu Youyao raised her hand and touched it. "It's a birthday gift from

Grandmother this morning. Does it look good?"

She shook her head slightly, and flowers fluttered. It was beautiful and brilliant. Zhou Linghuai's throat went hoarse. "It looks good!"

There was a gauze of clouds and shadows, and flowers were swaying in the wind. It was beautiful. The little girl had finally grown up.

There was no hurry. Let's wait a little longer— Just a little longer— Soon!

Yu Youyao held the gift and returned to the Jade Courtyard with her cousin in satisfaction.

Yu Shuangbai, Yu Shanyan, and Yu Jianjia, as well as Yu Shansi, had already arrived.

Yu Qingning became much more obedient. Her grandmother had allowed her to go to school every day, but she was still not allowed to enter or leave the courtyard at will, so she naturally did not come over.

There were a few tables in the corridor. They were filled with fruits, snacks and so on.

Seeing that Yu Youyao had returned, Yu Shuangbai's eyes widened. She ran over and circled Yu Youyao with a stunned expression. "Tsk, tsk, tsk. Eldest Sister, you're really good-looking today. Look at this silver-red veil. It's really as bright as the mist. Look at the moving flowers on your head. I'm dazzled. Anyone else wouldn't be able to suppress your beauty."

Yu Lianyu also added, "The brightness of the robe is as bright as the sun rising into the morning sky, and as bright as a lotus flower. It's beautiful and calm."

Yu Fangfei stuck out her tongue. “Eldest Sister looks beautiful and expensive.

It’s even appropriate to put on heavy makeup. Oh, you were born beautiful. Makeup for dressing up but you don’t need it.”

Yu Youyao was speechless. “Didn’t you see what I was carrying?”

Zhou Linghuai, who was sitting at the side, clenched his fists and chuckled.

Yu Youyao hugged the zither box all the way and couldn’t wait to show it off. Everyone knew that she was clearly hugging the zither box. When Yu Shuangbai ran over, it became flattery.

This was because holding it made it easier to see clearly..

Chapter 596: Pitting Brothers Against Each Other

Unexpectedly, not only was Yu Shuangbai a bad judge of character, but even Yu Lianyu, who had followed behind, did not understand the little girl’s smug mood. Instead, she praised her.

It was too long to explain.

“This is a lacquer carving?” Yu Shuang’s eyes widened again. She only felt that this long box was beautiful and vivid. “Oh my god, I’ve never seen such a big piece of carving. Big Sister, quickly show it to me...”

As she spoke, she reached out to take it.

Yu Youyao dodged to the side. “This is a birthday gift from Cousin. You can only look at it and not touch it, in case you accidentally break it.”

Seeing her energetic expression and the smugness on her face, Yu Shuangbai rolled her eyes. “I heard that lacquer carvings and embellishments have been around for a thousand years. They don’t decay, fade, or lose color. How can they be broken just by touching them?”

Yu Youyao said righteously, “What if it happens? It took Cousin more than three years to finish carving such a big piece. I have to be careful.”

Every word and sentence was filled with pride, making Yu Shuangbai speechless.

However, she had also heard that large-scale lacquer carvings were very expensive. They were almost extinct among the commoners. The best were the furnishings of the nobles of the royal family.

Such a long box could already be considered a valuable item. He had to be careful.

It would be a pity if it was broken.

Yu Youyao entered the corridor and carefully placed the box on the table. She said, “Look!”

After being envious of the zither box, when the box was opened, she would probably be envious of the zither again.

Not only Yu Shuangbai and the others, but even the usually steady Yu Shanyan and Yu Jianjia, who did not like to gather together, subconsciously surrounded the table. Even their eyes widened.

Yu Shanyan was amazed. "I heard that carving on a smooth, soft, and easily deformed layer is a test of one's skills. There's always the saying that one has no regrets, especially when it comes to large-scale carving. It's very difficult to carve properly without decades of cultivation. It's much harder than jade carving, ivory carving, and so on. Therefore, lacquer carving was once at its peak in the previous dynasty. After the war, its skills were almost lost. Good lacquer carving is very rare on the market. Cousin Zhou is too amazing..."

Yu Shanxin also sighed. "Three years! It's not three days, three months, or 300 days, but three years. That's more than 3,000 days. Cousin Zhou is really willing to spend time on Eldest Sister."

The colorful box in front of her was so dazzling that it almost hurt Yu Jianjia's eyes.

Three years ago, on Yu Youyao's birthday, Zhou Linghuai had given her a Longevity peach blossom stone seal that he had personally carved.

What had he given her two years ago?

Oh right, it was the Dragon Resting Stones that Zhou Linghuai had obtained from Mount Wutai.

More than ten Dragon Resting Stones had been transformed into natural landscape stones by Zhou Linghuai. When one or two of them were placed in the house, not only were they beautiful, but the entire house was also cool.

A year ago, he had given her a huge painting of the Bodhisattva.

It was said that this huge painting had taken two years to complete. As soon as it was taken out, it stunned everyone in the Yu Residence. Second Uncle praised it endlessly, saying that this painting was divine in all aspects. It was a rare masterpiece in the world.

This year, he had taken another three years to complete the embroidery box.

They were both cousins, but Zhou Linghuai treated Yu Youyao differently.

Yu Shuangbai's face almost hit the zither box. She glanced at Yu Youyao enviously and glared at Yu Shanxin and Yu Shanyan resentfully.

Yu Shanxin was frightened by her glare and asked warily, "Second Sister, why are you looking at me?"

Yu Shanyan quietly took a step back, and his entire body was blocked by Yu Shanxin's tall and strong body.

Indeed!

Yu Shuangbai looked indignant. "We're all brothers. Why is there such a big difference?"

Yu Shanyan scratched his head and looked honest. "Uh, you can't say that.

Although we're both brothers, there's a difference between cousins and biological brothers, right?"

Her cousin was better than her biological brother. How was that reasonable?! Yu Shuangbai stomped her foot. "You're still angry with me!"

Yu Shanxin really did not understand why she was angry. He looked inexplicably puzzled. "Are you joking? How can I be angry with you?" That was not all. In the end, he added, "Besides, it's not like

Cousin Zhou has been treating Eldest Sister well for a day or two. Even Third Sister isn't angry. Why are you angry?

The first and second branches had already split up. No matter how capable Cousin Zhou was, he was still from the first branch. Wasn't it only right for him to spend so much effort to treat his eldest sister well?

Shouldn't the person who should be angry the most be her third sister, who was also the daughter of the first wife?

Cousin Zhou had never put in much effort to please his third sister!

Yu Jianjia was implicated for no reason. It was simply heart-wrenching. Even her smiling expression was a little forced, so she could only lower her head.

Yu Shuangbai's eyes widened as she glared at him. "Cousin Zhou treats Eldest Sister well because they're close. Am I angry about this? You, you're asking for a beating..."

Yu Shanxin was enlightened. "So it's you who's angry. I don't treat you as well as Cousin Zhou treats Eldest Sister. It's really unreasonable for you to be angry. Not everyone in this world is as capable as Cousin Zhou. There's nothing you can do if you're angry with me..."

"You even said that you weren't angry with me. You're asking for a beating..." Yu Shuangbai was furious. She picked up her dress and chased after Yu Shanxin.

She was already angry. So what if he coaxed her a little?

Not only did he not coax her, but he also deliberately added fuel to the fire. He wasn't really angry to begin with, but after hearing her words, he was furious.

Compared to Cousin Zhou and Eldest Sister, she had two brothers. One was studying all day and couldn't be distracted, while the other was busy with his practice every day and went out. They really ignored their biological sister too much.

This was probably the case between siblings of wealthy families. In families with stricter upbringing, when a girl was twelve or thirteen years old, even her father, brother, and younger brother had to avoid her.

However, with Cousin Zhou in the Yu Residence, they were all a big family. How could there not be a comparison?

She was just saying it. She wouldn't really be angry over such a thing!

Yu Shanxin was chased until he jumped up and down like a monkey. He had learned martial arts from a martial arts master for three years, so it was not difficult for him to fly over roofs and walk on walls. This caused Yu Youyao and the others to laugh repeatedly.

"Stop right there. Don't run..."

"Only a fool would stand still and let you hit him..."

"If you don't stop, I'll tell Father that you bullied me..."

"We're all brothers. Why are you chasing after me alone instead of Big Brother?"

Without waiting for Yu Shuangbai to answer, Yu Shanyan quickly said, "Because you deserve a beating. Look, I've never made Second Sister angry."

There was no one else who would pit brothers against each other.

Indeed!

As soon as Yu Shuangbai heard this, she shouted, "That's right. It's precisely because you deserve a beating. Why don't you reflect on yourself? We're all brothers.. Why don't I chase after Big Brother instead of you?"

Chapter 597: Guan Shanyue

The two of them made a fuss for a long time until Yu Shuangbai couldn't run anymore. She bent down and held her stomach, panting. Only then did Yu Shanxin feel guilty and apologize. The siblings reconciled.

Yu Youyao laughed until her stomach hurt. She vaguely understood that the relationship between her second sister and her second brother was like that of normal siblings.

She and her cousin seemed to be a little...

She pursed her lips!

After laughing, Yu Shuangbai drank her tea and ate her fruit. She also came back to her senses and asked curiously, "Big Sister, what's this box for?"

For a moment, no one could think of what such a big box could be for. It couldn't have been specially made to be an empty box!

Yu Jianjia looked at the box again. With just one glance, it seemed to be lifelike and bright, piercing her eyes. Her eyelashes trembled slightly, and she lowered them to hide the envy in her eyes. She said in a low voice, "This length should be a zither case."

Yu Lianyu quickly asked, "Big Sister, is it really a zither box?"

Yu Youyao smiled. "Three years ago, Cousin said that he wanted to help me make a zither, so he made a zither case in passing. After all, a good horse is matched with a good saddle, and a good zither is also equipped with a good case. Only then will it complement each other."

The word "in passing" made Yu Shuangbai roll her eyes again.

It had taken three years to make. How could this be called "in passing"?

Did she have some misunderstanding about the words "in passing"?

She was showing off so openly that it was almost written all over her face. She couldn't be envious. Who asked her not to have a capable brother like Cousin Zhou?

Yu Fangfei focused on the main point and opened her eyes. "So, is the zither box filled with the zither that Cousin Zhou gave you?"

Yu Youyao nodded. "That's right. The zither and the zither box were both birthday gifts from Cousin."

It had been three years. If not for this, Yu Shuangbai would have almost forgotten about this. She quickly went to the table. "Cousin Zhou made a zither.

Let us take a look."

Even Yu Shanyan and the others were very interested.

Yu Jianjia felt upset, but she also wanted to see with her own eyes what the zither that Zhou Linghuai had personally made was like. Was it as impressive as his painting and carving?

Yu Youyao followed suit. She carefully opened the zither box, carried the zither out, and placed it on the table.

The honey-colored zither shone brightly, and it looked even more exquisite and beautiful.

Among the Six Arts of a Gentleman, one of them was music. Even Yu Shanxin could stammer and play two songs.

Although they did not know how to play the zither, they had come into contact with it and had an understanding of it. Although they did not know how to appreciate it, they had seen the world and could tell if it was good or bad.

This zither was smooth and beautiful, exuding a noble and beautiful aura from the inside out. They couldn't help but sigh.

"Oh my god, is this Cousin Zhou's zither? It's too beautiful!"

"Cousin Zhou is too good..."

"That's amazing..."

Yu Youyao pursed her lips and smiled as she listened to everyone's amazed praise. She did not say that this zither had all nine virtues. After all, they would only know if the zither music was good after playing it.

Yu Jianjia was a little frustrated.

Two years ago, her father had looked for a great teacher and ordered an "Ice Jade" zither for her. As its sound was as clear as jade, it was named "Ice Jade."

The pine tree was extremely permeable. The sound of the zither was bright and mellow, with the charm of gold and stone. However, its stability and longevity were slightly inferior to the fir tree.

However, the older the wood, the denser the material would be, which could make up for this flaw.

Initially, she did not want to be inferior to Yu Youyao, but old wood was too rare. Which family had such a good thing? If they did not hide it themselves, how could they take it out and give it to others?

She had no choice but to choose a 300-year-old fir tree. It was peerlessly famous. Even if it was made of fir wood, it wouldn't be much inferior to Yu

Youyao.

Unexpectedly, this zither was made by a great master. It was a rare fir zither. It was golden in color and had ice threads as strings. The sound of the zither was clear and delicate.

Even Ms. Ye praised her endlessly.

Yu Jianjia was good at the zither and understood it. At a glance, she could tell that the zither that Zhou Linghuai made looked natural and did not have a hint of craftsmanship. It was obvious that his skills were superb, and there was no comparison with “Ice Jade.”

She just didn’t know if it looked good on the outside but sounded bad on the inside! She thought about it with some malice.

At this moment, Yu Shuangbai asked, “What’s the name of this zither?”

Yu Youyao’s lips curled up again. “I was the one who named this zither—Shaoyu. Cousin engraved it with an inscription. With the glow of the light, a hundred beasts will dance.”

Yu Shanyan clapped his hands. “This name is good. According to legend, Emperor Shun was first conferred the title of Yu. The founder of the country was called Yu. Shaoyu means music and celebration. Emperor Shun is benevolent in governing the people and his virtue is passed down to the world. Later, there was the scene of him dancing with a hundred beasts and the phoenix coming to perform. It was a peaceful scene of singing and dancing. Very good, very good!”

Yu Youyao was very happy that her name had been affirmed by others. “Cousin likes this name too.”

In fact, between Shaoyi and Shaoyu, she had finally chosen the name Shaoyu. Just as her big brother had said, she hoped that a wise ruler would govern the country and it would be peaceful and prosperous. The joy of Shaoyu would be remembered in the future and last forever.

Yu Lianyu’s zither skills were good, but it was rare to see such a good zither. She was also extremely excited. “Big Sister, why don’t you play a song and let everyone hear the sound of this zither?”

Eldest Sister had also been learning the zither for three years, and she was not inferior to them when it came to playing the elementary zither. That was why she had made this suggestion.

Just as Yu Youyao was thinking this, she quickly ordered someone to set up an incense table. She burned the incense and cleaned her hands, looking very serious. She flicked the string with her fingers, and the ancient and boundless sound of the zither flowed out from her fingertips.

There was a vast and thick feeling of the bright moon leaving the Heavenly Mountain and going to the sea.

It had the heroic aura of “The long wind blows tens of thousands of kilometers through the Jade Gate.”

There was also sadness and sincerity.

There was also the gentleness of a guest looking at the side and thinking about home.

“Guan Shanyue” was a short song. Yu Youyao played it three times before the song finally stopped.

However, the aftertaste of the last sentence, “On this night, a tall building should sigh without resting,” was heart-wrenching for a long time. It left a lingering aftertaste, and the sorrow in her heart did not stop.

Zhou Linghuai felt it deeply.

Yu Shanyan was also stunned for a long time before he praised, “Eldest Sister, your zither skills are impressive. Your ‘Guan Shanyue’ is bold, pure, and natural.” He couldn’t help but glance at Zhou Linghuai and add, “As expected of a great teacher’s disciple!”

Yu Youyao played so well that she forgot that her original intention for listening to the zither was to appraise it.

This was the first time Yu Jianjia had heard Yu Youyao play the zither. Her thoughts of comparing skills suddenly faded. It wasn’t that her zither skills weren’t as good as Yu Youyao’s.

Instead!

She had started memorizing the zither score at the age of five, and officially learned the zither at the age of seven. It had been six to seven years since then, but Yu Youyao had only learned for three years, and she had already caught up to her foundation of six to seven years.

Her sense of superiority over the zither had completely disappeared, and she couldn’t help but feel a little dejected..

Chapter 598: Public Execution

Yu Jianjia felt uncomfortable and suddenly said, “This zither is made of wood. Its material is strange and ancient. Its sound is loose and transparent, and its sound is quiet, moist, round, clear, and even. The song played by this zither should also be heavenly. It’s rare to hear it in the world, and it’s almost comparable to peerless music.”

Yu Youyao’s eyes lit up and she couldn’t help but look at her cousin.

Zhou Linghuai’s expression darkened. “That’s not right. The zither has nine virtues, but the ones who can play them are humans. A person can easily find and select talents, but what is more rare are the talents themselves.”

He turned to look at Yu Youyao. After being praised by Yu Jianjia, his lips curled up in a silly smile, and his eyes were filled with smug joy. It was as if Yu Jianjia was happier than anything else when she praised him.

He did not even think about whether Yu Jianjia meant what she said.

It was as if the reason why Yu Youyao could play “Guan Shanyue” well was not because she was good at the zither, but because the zither was good.

At the thought of this, Zhou Linghuai glanced at Yu Jianjia indifferently. “A good zither and a beautiful woman complement each other.” He asked meaningfully, “Third Cousin, don’t you agree?”

Yu Youyao’s goal in playing the song was to appraise the zither. It was not wrong for her to praise it for being good. No one would think that there was anything wrong with her words.

However, Zhou Linghuai’s words had indirectly exposed her unbearable thoughts.

She had nowhere to hide.

Under Zhou Linghuai's indifferent gaze, Yu Jianjia did not dare to breathe too loudly. She subconsciously bit her lip and said, "It's my short-sightedness. Cousin Zhou is right. No matter how good the zither is, if the person playing it isn't good, she won't be able to play it well. Eldest Sister has been learning the zither for three years, but her zither skills are actually so impressive."

She saved the situation so beautifully.

Unfortunately, some people did not buy it.

Yu Shuangbai pursed her lips. "Of course. Big Sister learns everything quickly. In three years, she's already caught up to our six to seven years of cultivation. It's not comparable, nor can we be envious."

These words were straightforward and heart-wrenching, making Yu Jianjia feel stifled.

Yu Lianyu had a gentle personality and said gently, "Although we can't compare to Eldest Sister when we learn the zither from Ms. Ye, what we've learned has already surpassed many of our peers. Besides, Third Sister's zither skills have always been the best among us sisters."

These words were already very sincere.

However, in Yu Jianjia's ears, it was extremely ear-piercing. First, she said that she couldn't compare to Yu Youyao, then she praised her for having the best zither skills among her sisters. It was obvious that she had praised Yu Youyao and stepped on her.

Yu Fangfei also said, "Although I've never heard the song Cousin Zhou plays, I've heard that the person who's proficient in the zither might not be a zither master, but a zither master must be proficient in the zither. This zither has nine virtues. Cousin Zhou's zither skills are naturally top-notch. Eldest Sister is

Cousin Zhou's disciple, so of course her zither skills are good!"

Yu Youyao glanced at Yu Jianjia and smiled. "'Guan Shanyue' is just a short piece. It's not difficult to play. In terms of foundation, it's not as solid as yours." At this point, this was the end.

Yu Shansi sat beside Zhou Linghuai and looked at the colorful zither box with sparkling eyes. He asked softly, "Cousin Zhou, can you teach me how to make lacquer carvings?"

Zhou Linghuai did not like Yu Shansi, nor did he hate him. "Why do you want to learn lacquer carving?"

Yu Shansi couldn't help but glance at Yu Youyao. "I like lacquer carvings. Eldest Sister also likes it very much."

Engravers were all very respected. Yu Shansi's studies were not outstanding, but he had displayed some talent in carving. This also added a lot plus points to his mediocrity.

Although he lowered his voice, he did not hide it from outsiders.

Yu Youyao and Yu Shuangbai gathered together to discuss clothes and beauty.

Yu Jianjia did not go over. Coincidentally, she heard Yu Shansi's words just now. She felt as if she had been punched in the chest and felt a dull pain. As Yu Youyao liked carvings, Yu Shansi abandoned his studies and learned how to carve from a teacher. He had been pampered since he was young and had never suffered or been doted on. In order to learn how to carve, his ten fingers were

injured, but he did not say a word. It was all because he wanted to personally carve something for Yu Youyao on her birthday!

Just because Yu Youyao liked lacquer carvings, he wanted to learn lacquer carving to please her?!

Yu Shansi was her biological brother, but in his heart, his biological sister was not as important as Yu Youyao?!

Seven years of sibling relationship was actually no match for his three years of interaction with Yu Youyao?

A sense of betrayal, neglect, and anger lingered in Yu Jianjia's heart.

She wished she could rush forward and slap Yu Shansi's face to wake him up completely so that he would know who his biological sister was.

But!

Yu Jianjia clenched her fists.

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "I have books related to lacquer carving in my house.

I'll get someone to send them to you later."

However, he did not say that she wanted to teach him.

However, Yu Shansi was very happy. "Thank you, Cousin Zhou!"

Lacquer carving was a very precious skill. He was already very happy that Cousin Zhou was willing to give him a book. He could learn some basic skills from a craftsman.

When his foundation was solid, he could go to school.

When it was Eldest Sister's birthday next year, he could also make a lacquer carving for her.

Yu Jianjia couldn't help but remind him, "Fourth Brother, it's also good that you want to learn the craftsmanship of lacquer carving. Don't be distracted by external things and neglect your studies, lest you anger Father."

The meaning between the lines could not hide her worry and comfort for him.

However, the last sentence made Yu Shansi feel uncomfortable. Even his excited expression faded a little. "I understand, Third Sister."

His mother was sick in the Tranquil Heart Residence, and his biological sister was also recuperating in the manor and rarely returned to the residence. His father did not dote on him as much as before, and because his studies were mediocre, his father's high hopes for him had faded.

He often heard the servants say behind his back, "Eldest Madam Yang made a huge mistake. Matriarch and Eldest Master hate Eldest Madam Yang to the core. If it weren't for the fact that Eldest Madam Yang gave birth to Eldest Master's legitimate son, Eldest Master would have divorced her long ago." This made Yu Shansi realize that he was no longer the only son of the first branch of the Yu Residence.

While he was feeling dejected, uneasy, and terrified, Third Sister was recuperating in the manor. It was Eldest Sister who had sent him the books he studied in the past.

It was also because of this that he had improved a lot in his studies. Although he was not outstanding, he was not too far behind.

Eldest Sister was not like Third Sister who would whisper to him and ask about his well-being.

However, Eldest Sister had asked him to trust her after losing his mother's protection, his father's love, and his studies. He did not have to worry about being treated unfairly and receiving strange gazes in the residence.

In the afternoon, Yu Zongzheng and Yu Zongshen left the government office one after another.

Concubine Jiang had also prepared a family banquet.

The elders had all prepared a birthday gift for Yu Youyao. Before Yu Youyao could show off, Yu Shuangbai had already shouted, "With Cousin Zhou in front of you, the other gifts pale in comparison.."

Chapter 599: Pomegranate Flowers Are Like Fire

Old Madam Yu was not surprised at all. She only asked curiously, "What did your Cousin Zhou give your big sister this year?"

Yu Zongzheng and Yu Zongshen were also very interested.

Madam Yao put down her teacup and stopped drinking her tea.

Yu Shuangbai sighed. "I can't say. I have to give Eldest Sister a chance to show off.'

Everyone in the room laughed, but they were also whetted by her sighing attitude.

Yu Youyao glared at her. "You don't want the three pomegranate flowers anymore?"

"Big Sister, I was wrong. I was wrong, okay?" When Yu Shuangbai heard this, she rushed up to Big Sister and quickly apologized.

It was April, and the pomegranate flowers were as red as fire.

Eldest Sister had picked pomegranate flowers that were as hot as fire and made pomegranate water. It was clear and refreshing. She had also extracted the dew of the pomegranate flowers, making one's face look rosy and delicate. She even made pomegranate flowers look beautiful.

Not only her, but even Yu Lianyu and Yu Fangfei came over. They served tea and fanned themselves, making the elders in the room laugh non-stop.

Madam Yao's eyes lit up.

In the past few years, the family had been used to using the ointment and fragrance that Yu Youyao had made.

Yu Youyao liked incense medicine and had taught a few useful maidservants by her side. It was not difficult, and the elders would not take her things for nothing. They would always compensate her in other places.

Yu Youyao was caught between laughter and tears. "Go to my house to get it later. I'm really afraid of you..

The juniors joked around. For some reason, Yu Zongzheng glanced at his second brother, Yu Zongshen.

He thought about how he had been suppressed by his second brother since he was young. Even when he married, his mother had to sacrifice him to pave the way for his second brother. In terms of resentment, it was not to the extent of jealousy and unwillingness.

However, at this moment, Yu Zongzheng suddenly felt proud.

His eldest daughter was stronger than his second brother's daughter.

Yu Zongshen's fingers trembled slightly as he looked down at the teacup in his hand. His ears were filled with the sweet laughter of an oriole, clear and bright. When he heard it, he couldn't help but feel dazed.

That year, the pomegranate flowers were as bright as fire. He went to Quanzhou and accidentally met Eldest Master Xie.

The first time he visited the Xie Residence, he was standing at the white jade bridge above the lake. The lake was filled with green leaves.

Xie Roujia was wearing a gauze dress with pomegranate flowers. She stood under a pomegranate tree and instructed the maidservants to press down on the pomegranate branches. She stood on her tiptoes and twirled the flowers into the basket. Her figure was light and slender, and the flowers were like fire. From a distance, her delicate voice could be vaguely heard.

Later on, he often used the excuse of being at sea to enter and leave the Xie Residence.

Although the Xie Residence was a merchant family, be it knowledge, breadth of mind, or horizons, they were definitely not ordinary. He had wild thoughts, but he did not dare to show them rashly because they were of equal status.

The Xie Residence was not so easy to fool.

Without his mother's approval, he did not even dare to reveal his thoughts to anyone. He was worried that he would be rude to Xie Roujia, and even more worried that the Xie family would find out that he had ulterior motives and would not allow him to enter and leave the Xie family...

He had gotten into the rankings and entered the Hanlin Academy. He was the "Prime Minister." His mother had always hoped that he would marry a daughter-in-law of a suitable family.

His mother was a widow. She had suffered for him and his eldest brother for many years. He couldn't disappoint her.

In this way, he had to let his mother know that the Xie family had done him a favor and this was beneficial to his career.

He had used the "Sea Map Strategy" to make a contribution and ask for credit from the emperor for the Xie family. He claimed that the Xie family had contributed greatly to his completion of the "Sea Map Strategy". In the future, when the sea ban was lifted, he still needed the Xie family's help.

Indeed!

The emperor rewarded the Xie family and valued them very much.

He even instigated Xie Jingliu to take the scholarly examination. With this scholarly status, the Xie family was not just a merchant family.

It was true that Xie Jingliu had not even taken the Elementary Scholar examination at that time, but he was not in a hurry.

Xie Jingliu was talented and even 30% better than him. As long as he convinced his mother to postpone his engagement for a year or two later, Xie Jingliu's stunning talent would sooner or later spread throughout the world.

At that time, everything would fall into place.

However, he had never expected...

Immediately, praises, sighs, and gasps sounded in the room. Yu Zongshen's hand trembled, and the teacup in his hand shook. The tea spilled onto his hand, and even his sleeve was wet.

He composed himself, put down his teacup, and looked up.

The first thing he saw was the lively and bright zither box. The first thing he thought of was that on the Eight Treasure Pavilion of the Qianqing Palace, there was a peony-patterned colorful vase that was half the height of a person. It had been passed down from the previous dynasty. After a thousand years, it was still as bright as before, but when compared to it, be it in terms of carving skills or craftsmanship, the peony-patterned colorful vase was still inferior.

Then, he saw the seven-stringed zither in the box and was stunned for another moment.

All kinds of amazed and admiring voices sounded in his ears— "It's really an eye-opener today..."

"This zither that took three years to make is just different from ordinary zithers..."

"Linghuai is good at the zither, chess, calligraphy, painting, carving and so on.

I wonder what else he doesn't know..."

"In the past, there were rumors in the capital that in order to please the

Princess Consort, Prince Li of Zhou, who had yet to marry into the Prince's Residence, found many craftsmen who were good at lacquer carving and learned how to carve. Today, in order to please his cousin, he spent three years making this zither. Oh my, why do I find it funny..."

"Our Linghuai is really impressive. There's no one else in the entire Great Zhou..

Hearing that everyone was praising her cousin, Yu Youyao felt both proud and happy. She couldn't help but look at her cousin. His eyes were as dark as ink, and he looked a little out of place in this noisy and lively environment.

As if noticing his gaze, Zhou Linghuai looked up.

Yu Youyao fell into his eyes.

In an instant, she was sucked into a dazzling galaxy.

The family banquet soon ended.

Yu Youyao and her cousin left the north courtyard together. Suddenly, she looked back. The north courtyard was silent after the celebration.

An indescribable feeling lingered in her heart.

“Yao Yao—” Zhou Linghuai called her.

Yu Youyao suddenly came back to her senses and looked at her cousin. She couldn’t help but smile. “What’s wrong?”

Zhou Linghuai also smiled. “I’ll send you back to the Jade Courtyard.”

Yu Youyao nodded. “Thank you, Cousin!”

In the dead of night, there were sparse lanterns hanging on the corridor. The lights were dim, and the light and shadow were lingering.

When they arrived at the entrance of the Jade Courtyard, Zhou Linghuai wanted to return to The Green House.

Perhaps because the lights along the way were dense and she felt emotional, Yu Youyao suddenly felt a sense of reluctance. She watched as her cousin turned his wheelchair and was about to return. For some reason, she didn’t want him to go.

“Cousin!” Yu Youyao called out.

Zhou Linghuai’s hand paused, and the wheelchair stopped.

Yu Youyao picked up her skirt and ran to her cousin. “I forgot to say goodnight to you just now.” Her heart was beating wildly, and her heart was in turmoil. She panicked.. “Goodnight!”

Chapter 600: You ‘re Really Killing Me

The little girl stood under the lamp, and the red light shone down on her head. Her fair face also looked gentle and hazy. When she spoke to him, she had to specially bend down to look at his eyes. Her slender waist was gently bent, and even the tips of her head revealed her beautiful figure. In particular, the veil on her body was like smoke and fog under the hazy light, like a peach blossom.

It was soul-stirring and heart-stirring.

Zhou Linghuai felt a lump in his throat, and his voice was hoarse. “Good night!”

“Brother Jingzhi.” Yu Youyao smiled until her eyes curved. Under the light, her bright eyes were as clear as water. “See you tomorrow!”

Zhou Linghuai’s chest couldn’t help but tremble. He saw that the little girl had already run away from him with her sleeve made of the cloud veil. He suddenly had a strong urge!

“Yao Yao—” He opened his mouth to call her.

Yu Youyao nodded and suddenly turned around.

The dress bloomed at her feet, like a brilliant peach blossom flower. The two of them looked at each other from afar, as if they were separated by a thousand mountains.

It was already late at night, and there was no one around.

Zhou Linghuai suddenly stood up and stepped on the sparse lamp water on the ground. He arrived in front of her. “What did you call me just now?”

Yu Youyao’s eyes slowly widened. Perhaps because she was used to seeing her cousin in a wheelchair, this was not the first time she had suddenly seen him stand up. However, she was still shocked by his slender and tall figure. Her aura was stolen by his refined and elegant aura, and she subconsciously became delicate.

She had called him that without thinking just now. Now, she was a little embarrassed to open her mouth. “Cousin...”

Zhou Linghuai suddenly took a step forward.

Yu Youyao panicked and subconsciously swallowed the word “brother” that was about to come out of her mouth. She subconsciously retreated and pressed the heel of one foot against the wall.

Zhou Linghuai took another step forward. “Not this!”

“I...” Yu Youyao took a step back with her other foot, and her back suddenly pressed against a solid wall. There was her cousin in front of her and a wall behind her. She felt a sense of fate.

“Be good—” Zhou Linghuai’s low and hoarse voice was like the chords of a lute. His ears and temples rubbed against each other, and he spoke in private with a hint of bewitchment and seduction. “Call me Brother Jingzhi! ”

It was difficult under the ice—

Yu Youyao suddenly thought of this poem. At this moment, her cousin’s voice was like water flowing under ice, but its flow was obstructed. It was low and hoarse.

Every word and sentence seemed to stir the strings in her heart.

Yu Youyao lowered her head in resignation. Her voice trembled slightly as she shouted softly, “Brother Jing... Brother Jingzhi—”

The night fell silent—

Yu Youyao heard the cold night wind blowing past the trees. The shadows of the trees on the ground fluttered, and the unknown cries of insects filled her ears. It was noisy and quiet.

Her voice sounded like a delicate cry, with a hint of timidity.

“Brother Jingzhi” bloomed on her lips like a flower, trembling as she said it. His delicate voice revealed a hint of inexperience.

Zhou Linghuai subconsciously thought of a green plum tree planted in The Green House. Every year, when the green plum tree hung fruits, green fruits would hang on the branches, attracting attention.

Even though he knew that the green plum fruit was young and inexperienced, he couldn’t help but want to pluck one and take a small bite. He let the sourness rush into his throat. After the sourness seeped through his body, the sweet aftertaste always made him greedy.

Zhou Linghuai lowered his eyes. The little girl's head was lowered, and the swaying flowers on her head were dazzling under the sparse lights.

He reached out and lifted her chin. Her bright face looked hazy and beautiful under the sparse lights.

"Cousin..." Yu Youyao subconsciously called out to him.

Zhou Linghuai hissed, "Call me that again."

"Brother Jingzhi—" Yu Youyao's mind turned white. She opened her mouth and said without thinking.

When she called out to Brother Jingzhi, her voice was trembling, and her voice seemed to have a hook at the end that could steal a person's soul. It was not at all like usual. When she called him "Cousin", it was gentle and sweet, filled with joy.

Zhou Linghuai smiled. "Call me that again..."

"Brother Jingzhi—"

Before she could finish speaking, her body, which was against the wall, fell into a broad and firm embrace. Yu Youyao was stunned for a moment. There was a faint fragrance of incense and ink lingering in her nose.

Zhou Linghuai smiled hoarsely. "You're really killing me!"

Yu Youyao raised her hands and slowly and gently hugged her cousin's waist. Her face was pressed against his chest. This time, she heard it clearly. Her heart was beating in her ears. It was her cousin's.

For some reason, she suddenly felt very happy.

This time, Zhou Linghuai really felt that Yu Youyao's petite body was as soft as bone. She was trapped in his arms and trembling gently.

Before she hugged him, she was worried.

When she hugged him, she thought about it wildly.

Wait, just wait a little longer. Zhou Linghuai sighed softly and finally let go of her. "See you tomorrow."

Yu Youyao was afraid that he would leave, so her slender fingers pinched his sleeve.

Zhou Linghuai recalled that when he first entered the Yu Residence, the little girl had also been like this. She had carefully pinched a corner of his sleeve. At that time, the little girl was round, delicate, and cute. Her fingertips were fair, unlike now.

Zhou Linghuai's arm stiffened. "What's wrong?"

"IN-nothing." It was just that she suddenly couldn't bear to see her cousin leave. The rest of her words were about to come out of her mouth when Yu Youyao reacted. Her fingers felt like they were burning, and she quickly let go of his sleeve. "Good night!"

With that, she picked up her dress and was about to escape.

For some reason, Zhou Linghuai held her hand.

Yu Youyao was caught off guard and bumped into his arms. The tip of her nose hurt, making her eyes turn red as she looked up at him.

Her rose lipstick was bright and beautiful under the light. Her lips were as beautiful as flowers and trembled lightly.

Her lips were fragrant—

Zhou Linghuai subconsciously lowered his head. The tip of his nose touched hers, and the soft texture of her lips tugged at his heartstrings.

Yu Youyao's eyes widened as she looked at her cousin in a daze. She was at a loss.

Zhou Linghuai suddenly pulled away and suddenly pressed the petite girl into his arms. He lowered his head and planted a gentle kiss on her hair. "Go back quickly! "

Yu Youyao nodded blankly. She looked back three times with every step and entered the Jade Courtyard.

It wasn't until Yu Youyao disappeared through the arched door that Zhou Linghuai heaved a sigh of relief. The night was as cold as water. Zhou Linghuai sat in his wheelchair and slowly returned to The Green House, gradually cooling down.

However, he could not cool down. There was a restlessness in the depths of his heart.

That night, Zhou Linghuai had a dream..